

## At B.C. long term care facilities

# HEU Study Details Health Care Problems



Windermere Unit members as well as representatives of HEU staff and the Union's Provincial Executive staged a demonstration at the Parliament Buildings in Victoria May 8. Windermere Unit members are now into the third month of strike in their contract dispute with Trizec Corporation.

## Demonstration Staged At Parliament Buildings

HEU brought the Windermere dispute to the B.C. Parliament Buildings in Victoria May 8 in a demonstration that included Union staff, Provincial Executive members and Windermere Unit members.

Health Minister Jim Nielsen, target of the protest outside the legislative buildings, did not make himself available for discussion, but the Union did deliver him a letter asking him to intervene in the strike, which is now in its third month.

The HEU delegation did meet with the NDP human resources committee while in Victoria and explained its concerns regarding Trizec Corporation's use of

strikebreakers from Ontario during the strike, which began April 4. Trizec is the owner of Windermere Central Park Lodge.

Former Health Minister Dennis Cocke addressed the HEU delegation and said Trizec is exploiting health care employees at Windermere.

"Because of the colour of their skin and the fact they are not Canadians, Trizec believes they can get away with exploiting them by paying substandard wages," said Cocke.

HEU Secretary - Business Manager Jack Gerow said Trizec's knee-jerk reaction to charges of racism in May was to import black strikebreakers from Ontario.

Gerow added that the Union has asked Nielsen to order Trizec to pay the standard B.C. wage or to cancel Trizec's licence to operate in the province if it does not comply with the order.

"Trizec is one of several multinationals that have stretched their tentacles into B.C.'s subsidized long-term care program. These companies seem to primarily have only one motive — and that's health care profit," said Gerow.

Windermere Unit members at the demonstration wore placards that read:

"Health Care, Yes ... Real Estate, No"; "No More Public Money for Private Profit"; "What's Fair For 30,000 Is Fair For Us"; "The Standard Rate Or Arbitrate"; and, "Profits Up, Health Care Down".

Many of the 21,000 elderly citizens in B.C. health care facilities are not receiving proper care, due in part to a shortage of staff, according to a 134-page HEU study released in May.

The HEU long-term care brief, the result of a nine-month Union study involving over 1,300 workers in 79 facilities, found four primary and seven secondary problems that seriously limit quality of long term care in B.C.

The primary problems cited were:

- inadequate fire safety measures;
- too few staff available to provide human as well as physical needs of residents;
- vague care facility regulations that are often loosely enforced;
- substandard care in profit-making facilities;
- no security of tenure of residents at profit facilities due to threat of eviction when more lucrative business ventures arise;
- insufficient regulations to prevent private owners from skimping on supplies;
- no assurance that taxpayers' money provided to the private owner will be used to provide better resident care.

- Other problems cited were:
- lack of orientation and in-service training for nursing staff;
  - scarcity of special facilities for psycho-geriatric reasons;
  - careless drug use;
  - insufficient efforts to inform residents of their personal financial resources;
  - limited dietary choices and rushed meals;
  - shortages of supplies;
  - inadequate infection control.

The study added that HEU regards more stringent fire safety measures as a top priority for protecting elderly lives. The study found that less than 22 per cent of the care facilities examined hold the regular monthly drills called for by government regulations.

HEU members in only a few facilities indicated that their

facility deserved a good or excellent fire safety rating.

The Union's recommendations, outlined in the brief, include:

- adoption and implementation of the new fire safety guidelines that have been written by the Fire Commissioner's Office. (the brief noted that guidelines are not good enough, however, since certain guidelines already in effect are being ignored);
- installation of smoke detectors and sprinklers in all care facilities;
- provision of fire safety education for all new staff during their first day's orientation training;
- setting fixed government staffing requirements for every care facility, with regulations that recognize the need for increased staff to provide levels of care that are required by today's residents;
- an overhaul of all regulations, guidelines and standards;
- the drawing up of one set of regulations so that the quality of care is uniform throughout the province's health care facilities;

- the launching of an aggressive government program of purchase and, if necessary, expropriation of all profit-making facilities;
- conversion, where geographically possible, of all profit-making care facilities into non-profit satellites of acute hospitals so that operating costs can be reduced by shared professional staffing and joint purchasing.

A copy of the HEU study is being sent to each Unit. Extra available copies of the report may be obtained upon request from the Provincial Office.

HEU has requested a meeting with Health Minister Jim Nielsen to discuss the study and its recommendations, according to Union Secretary-Business Manager Jack Gerow.

"We would certainly like to meet with the minister as soon as possible to discuss the report. The recommendations we've suggested will not only save lives, but also bring the livability standards at health care facilities up to a decent level."

## \$20,000 Contributed From 55 HEU Units

Fifty-five HEU Units have now responded with financial support for Windermere Unit members presently on strike against the Trizec Corp.

During May an additional 32 Units sent donations to supplement donations sent from other Units in April.

The more recent Unit contributions are: Burnaby, \$1,000; Powell River, \$200; Sechelt, \$200; White Rock, \$1,000; Richmond, \$500; St. Vincent's \$500; G. F. Strong, \$200; Shaughnessy, \$2,000; Holy Family, \$200; Florence Nightingale, \$100; Inglewood, \$200; Edith Cavell, \$200; New Vista, \$300; King George, \$141; Chilliwack, \$500; Parkholme, \$100; Grand Forks, \$200; Kimberley Special Care, \$200; Pouce Coupe, \$50; 100 Mile House, \$200; Burns

Lake, \$250; Fort Nelson, \$500; Noric House, \$75; Overlander, \$250; Ponderosa, \$200; Salmon Arm, \$250; Gorge Road, \$150; Priory, \$100; Cumberland, \$300; Campbell River, \$300; Queen Alexandra, \$200; Mount St. Mary, \$200; Victoria General, \$1,000. Vancouver General donated an additional \$2,000 recently after initially contributing \$3,000.

The total of HEU Unit contributions is now over \$20,000.

## July/August Guardian

There will be one edition of The Guardian published for the months of July and August.

The "summer" Guardian will be sent to HEU Units in August.



These members of the Cranbrook Unit gathered for this photo during a Unit meeting May 7 with their staff representative. Included in the photo in the front row are Chairperson Josie Cavelle, Secretary-Treasurer Barb Hunt and Provincial Executive Kootenay Regional Vice-President Margaret McMahon.

Marion Perry photo



"In humble dedication to all those who toil  
to live"

## The Hospital Guardian

Official Magazine of the  
 HOSPITAL  
EMPLOYEES'  
UNION LOCAL  
180

Editor: Nuccio Spitale

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# Editorial Page

## Comment On HEU Study

(Editor's Note: The following opinion appeared on The Vancouver Sun's editorial page May 25th.)

What the Hospital Employees Union has to say about the operators of private hospitals in the province and the way the elderly and chronically ill are treated in those profit-oriented hospitals will undoubtedly concern a lot of people.

But the statement by the director of the health ministry's long-term and home-care program that "we couldn't manage without them" should concern them even more.

It means that for the foreseeable future the provincial government is committed to living with both the best and the worst of private hospitals and reduced to negotiating deals that in the final analysis have as much, and possibly more, to do with the well-being of the owners than with the well-being of the citizens in their care.

According to the health ministry's Phillip Scott, the government has no intention of either buying or expropriating any of the privately run care hospitals that 1,300 union members so roundly and generally condemn in the HEU study released this week.

The union, we have no doubt, was under no illusion that the government would give up that easily but, convinced that things would be a whole lot better if the profit motive were removed from long-term health care, the demand had to be made.

Ideally, the union is right. And we have no doubt that privately the government agrees that it is right, but to admit it publicly . . . that would require an admission that there are not now, and have never been, enough tax dollars to spare for the government to take care of all those who are no longer capable of caring for themselves.

Since we're not likely to get that, and since the government has been forced to accept a relationship with owners of private hospitals, it is imperative that the government not compound its original errors by ignoring everything the employee has to say about the way things are being run.

The health ministry — which even now, we are told, is conducting its own study into the quality of care and is developing a comprehensive report on standards — would do well to take into account the complaints of all 1,300 employees in 79 long-term care hospitals who contributed to the HEU study.

And it should act as expeditiously on those as it plans to do in trying to eliminate inequities in the current flat-fee rate structure, which, it admits, allows some operators to make excessive profits while others are penalized by higher costs.

## Saving Money

There is little doubt that the provincial Ministry of Health has a financial interest in the strike at Windermere Central Park Lodge.

From the ministry's point of view, the longer the strike the greater the chance HEU's standard of wages and benefits will be broken.

If the health ministry, which provides standard per diem subsidies for facilities like Windermere, can aid and abet the breaking of our standard agreement, then they'll be saving themselves some money now and in future collective agreements.

Long-term care facilities like Windermere are run for profit and the Minister of Health still has a goal to curtail costs. The lower the wages paid by private operators, the less money the government has to fork out in future subsidies.

We know that if the ministry was genuinely interested in ending the dispute, it could instruct Windermere to pull from its subsidies enough money to pay employees the same wages and benefits that are already in effect at other subsidized health care facilities around the province.

Windermere is getting exactly the same amount of money as others around the province and as a result of paying low wages it is ringing up excessive profits and exporting them back to Ontario where Trizec, the owners of Windermere, are located.

It should be clearly understood that it is B.C. taxpayers who are subsidizing Windermere's profits in this province through funds provided by the Ministry of Health.

We wonder how those taxpayers who are looking for jobs are going to react at the ballot-box come the next provincial election when they learn that the Minister of Health has been an accomplice to the exporting of excessive profits and valuable jobs to Ontario strikebreakers. Is this his way of attempting to alleviate the number of unemployed in B.C.?

Trizec made \$16 million last year. We don't think it's too much to ask them that if they are going to make money in B.C. that they pay B.C. workers prevailing wages and benefits.

This provincial government has repeatedly proclaimed that "B.C." is not for sale.

Why then is the Ministry of Health selling B.C. taxpayers short by paying subsidies to an Ontario company to operate in B.C. at excessive levels of profit and then subsequently sit back and watch B.C. employees receive substandard wages and benefits when the Ministry has made provision for the B.C. standard?

It's clear to us that the government has sold out for the calculated purpose of breaking the standards it already recognizes and pays for.



## To prove Windermere is a hospital

# HEU Going To Supreme Court

HEU is going to the B.C. Supreme Court June 23 in an attempt to legally prove that Windermere Central Park Lodge is a hospital and thereby covered by the province's Essential Services Disputes Act legislation.

The B.C. Labour Relations Board in May rejected the Union's appeal for reconsideration of an earlier LRB decision that Windermere is not covered by ESDA.

"We're not about to give up now after coming this far," said

Secretary-Business Manager Jack Gerow.

"We've gone to the LRB. We appealed their original decision and now we are going to the B.C. Supreme Court since we firmly believe that the services provided by HEU members at Windermere are indeed essential," said Gerow.

In his rejection of the HEU appeal, panel chairman Don Monroe stated... "we decline to find that Windermere is a hospital within the meaning of ESDA."

However, farther along in his written decision, Munroe said: "Speaking in the context of this case, where the essential character of a facility is that of a hospital under any of the three definitions under the Hospital Act, and where it is licensed as such, panels of the Board should be inclined to find that it is a hospital under the ESDA as well."

Gerow said the ruling means that if HEU is successful in persuading the B.C. Supreme Court that Windermere is a hospital under the Hospital Act, then the LRB should rule that ESDA legislation applies to Windermere.

If the LRB were to rule in the appeal that the services provided by HEU members at Windermere fell under ESDA because that facility was a "hospital," HEU would immediately elect to settle the dispute by arbitration and would cease all strike activity.

The Union's position from the outset has been to have the Windermere dispute settled by arbitration.

## Union Committee Assisted With Study

HEU members on the Union's Long Term Care Committee assisted in the preparation of the long term care study released May 19 by HEU.

The members were: Phil MacLeod, Queens Park Unit; Carol Sanders, Kiwanis Unit; Fe Datwin, Edith Cavell Unit; Barb Roberts, Como Lake Unit; Eileen Snary, Dogwood Lodge Unit; Melva Poyser, Normandy Unit.

Barb Roberts told The Guardian it was a "real honour" to be selected on the committee.

"We've wanted this study for a long time. The data is something which everybody who works in a long term care facil-

ity, especially at a profit-making one, already knows about," said Roberts.

"We've met as a committee just about every Wednesday for a year now and have gotten deeper and deeper into it all the time. There was just so much information that we kept uncovering."

"The study puts my mind at ease a bit now since the conditions that I've personally witnessed over the years are now documented for everybody in the health care field to read. I just hope the government listens to our recommendations."

## Government Defends Profit Hospitals

The use of profit-making hospitals for the care of the chronically ill and the elderly was defended by the provincial government following the release of the HEU study.

"We very badly need the beds by private operators," said Philip Scott, director of the health ministry's long term and home care program. "We couldn't manage without them."

Scott told the Vancouver Sun that the provincial government had no intention of phasing out private hospitals, but added that provincial negotiators are hammering out a new financing scheme with private operators aimed at redistributing ministry funds more equitably.

Jack Gerow, Union Secretary-Business Manager, said Scott's defence of the ministry is "not based on any reasoning let alone sound reasoning. As long as there is a profit motive in the delivery of health care, the quality of health care will run a poor second to quantity of profit in terms of priorities."

At Guardian press time, Health Minister Jim Nielsen had not commented on the HEU report.

## Victoria Picnic Cancelled

The Victoria General Unit has cancelled its annual summer picnic in order to donate \$1,000 to Windermere Unit members.

"This sacrifice was well worth it as far as our members were concerned," said Secretary-Treasurer Vivian Kirk.

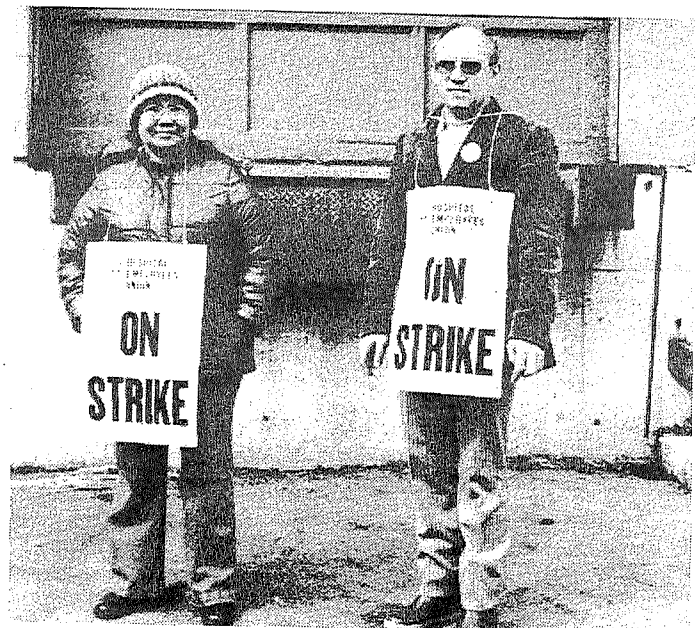
"It was unanimously decided at our May Unit meeting to forego the picnic so we could help out the Windermere members," added Kirk.

## Altamont Contract Negotiations

HEU has returned to the bargaining table in its contract dispute with Altamont Private Hospital in West Vancouver.

"As a rule, it is certainly preferable to have a contract negotiated directly by the two parties concerned rather than seeing it go to arbitration," said Union Secretary-Business Manager Jack Gerow.

The contract negotiations with the West Vancouver health care facility are an attempt to renew a previous collective agreement which had been scheduled for arbitration.



Provincial Executive Northern Regional Vice-President Andy Kozyniak and Windermere Unit member Josefa Hermans formed a picket line at Abcourt Food Distributors in May.

## In The Dark Of Night, A \$13,000 Grocery Bill

The scene was like one out of the old "Untouchable" TV series, and in this case the role of "bad guy" Frank Nitti was played by Ian Brady of Windermere Central Park Lodge.

In the dark of night, Abcourt Food Distributors was told by Brady to bring \$13,344.11 of groceries in a truck to a residence on West 4th Avenue in Vancouver, where Brady would be with a rented truck to pick the groceries up.

That all happened at midnight on the evening of April 11 as it was retold recently to a Labour Relations Board panel.

The \$13,344.11 worth of groceries were destined for Windermere Central Park Lodge, where HEU members have been on strike since April 4.

HEU won the application before the LRB for reconsideration regarding picketing at Abcourt.

The April 28 LRB decision

stated: "In our view, if the evidence which we have heard was heard by the original panel, the result would or should have been that the picketing of Abcourt, which was permissible initially, would continue to be permissible for one further week."

As a result of the decision, HEU was allowed to picket Abcourt from April 29 to May 5.

The decision stated, in part:

"There may be instances, then, where the ally, in order to prove its regained neutrality, will have to demonstrate not only its willingness to avoid a pattern of conduct but also that the allied assistance is no longer a major factor in the labour dispute; or at least that upon a balancing of all considerations, the degree of harm by continued picketing outweighs the degree of benefit still be experienced by the struck employer."

## Separate Wage Policy Conference

The HEU Constitution and By-Laws provide for a separate wage policy conference for Units not involved in the HEU-HLRA Master Agreement province-wide bargaining.

Units called to a separate wage policy conference shall not be called to the Provincial Wage Policy Conference, according to Article XII of the Union's Constitution and By-Laws.

The date for a separate wage policy conference for Units not covered by the Master Agreement will be announced at a later date.

## Laura Balotti Steps Down

Members of the Sunny Hill Unit in Vancouver recently held a surprise luncheon in honour of Unit member Laura Balotti's many years of service to the Sunny Hill Unit.

"Unit members gathered to congratulate Laura on the 15 years of loyalty and devotion she showed as Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the Unit," said Unit Secretary-Treasurer Violet Hudson.

Sister Balotti was presented with a crystal vase and a corsage at the luncheon.

Laura was elected Vice-Chairperson when the Unit was first certified in 1966 and was elected Chairperson three years later. She served as Chairperson until January of this year when she stepped down from office.



These members of the Kimberley Special Care Unit attended a Unit meeting May 5 with their staff representative. Marion Perry photo



A surprise luncheon was held recently by Sunny Hill Unit members in honour of Laura Balotti. Laura, shown here cutting her cake, held elected office from the first day of Unit certification 15 years ago until stepping down from the Chairperson's position in January.



## High risk of work stoppage

# Equal Pay Struggle At Hospitals

B.C. hospitals have been targeted as the next major battleground in the trade union fight for equal pay for work of equal value, according to HEU Secretary-Business Manager Jack Gerow.

"The risk of a work stoppage is very high, both because of the nature of our goal and the pent-up feeling that we have waited too long already," said Gerow.

Although the Union's master agreement with about 110 public hospitals does not expire until the end of the year, Gerow said the union has started its campaign early in order to ensure that all members — especially the 20 per cent who are male — understand the implications.

"I anticipate that equal pay for work of equal value will be our first priority at the bargaining table. This time, the hospitals will not be able to escape it."

The HEU demand, as proposed by the Provincial Executive, is similar to what municipal unions were seeking during the recent municipal strike — equal base rates for male jobs and predominantly female jobs.

This would mean bringing all HEU classifications up to the level of hospital cleaners, whose \$1,500 (August 1, 1981) monthly salary is as much as \$400 a month ahead of the lowest-paid clerical jobs.

Gerow agreed that equalizing base rates is a form of "rough justice" in winning the difficult philosophical concept of equal pay for work of equal value.

"But it's quick and just as effective as any kind of job evaluation technique, which is really just an employer's tool to bring male rates down," he said. "The answer is to bring women's rates up substantially and then apply a general wage increase. We can only do that through collective bargaining, not through job evaluation."

Gerow said the municipal strike, although the unions did not achieve their equal pay demands, was helpful in creating both public and membership awareness of the issue.

"Employers should be getting the message that if there's anything that will characterize collective bargaining in the early 1980's, the keynote will be equal pay for work of equal value," he said.

Unlike previous negotiations, Gerow said the Union this time intends to reject binding arbitration under the Essential Services Disputes Act if an impasse develops and resort instead to job action against hospitals.

"ESDA arbitrators have to follow an averaging process, so we could only get something as good as the average settlement around," he said. "We're not going to get equal pay that way."

Local HEU units currently are studying the proposed demands, which include, in addition to equal pay, a one-year wage increase of \$2.50 an hour. The Union's contract proposals will be finalized at a wage policy conference in October.

HLRA President Peter McAllister's comment on equal pay, as reported in the Vancouver media, was that the way to achieve equality in wage rates at B.C. hospitals is through job classification and not confrontation. He said in May that HEU seemed willing to ignore a joint



union-management attempt to develop a fair rating system for evaluating hospital jobs.

Gerow said he was "at a loss to understand McAllister's reasoning."

"The current classification exercise is based primarily on the premise of comparability with provincial government health care workers. I have not seen anywhere that the Peck Tribunal has the jurisdiction to establish equal pay for work of equal value. If that's a new HLRA proposal, we will certainly give it every consideration," said Gerow.

## Student Proposal 'Undermines' Standard

HEU has rejected an HLRA proposal for employing students under the Provincial Youth Employment Program because of what Secretary-Business Manager Jack Gerow cites as "an HLRA attempt to undermine the HEU standard of wages and benefits."

In April, HLRA proposed rates of pay for students that included a \$4.87 per hour rate for a secondary school student.

"Our position is if we agree to a student working to \$4.87 an hour as a dietary aide, for example, then the next thing we know

HLRA will be saying that that is the wage rate our members should receive, too," said Gerow.

"And besides that wage proposal being a serious attempt to undermine our standard, why should HLRA discriminate against students? If the students are going to do the work, then pay them at the standard union rate of pay."

Gerow added that it is up to individual employers to "top up" to the standard wages if they want the government subsidy under the Youth Employment Program.

## Equal Pay Buttons

HEU has sent "Equal Pay For Work Of Equal Value" buttons, designed like the logo that accompanied the equal pay stories in The Guardian this year, to HEU Units.

The buttons were attached to a pamphlet which outlined reasons for taking up the struggle to bring up women's wages during upcoming HEU/HLRA negotiations.

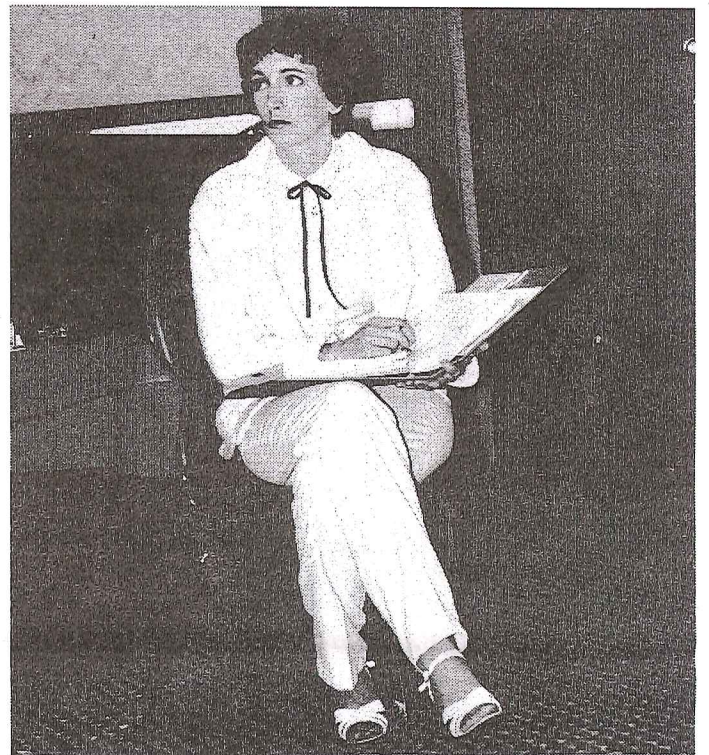
## Columbia View Officers

The Columbia View Unit elected officers for 1981 are: Rena Folvik, Chairperson; Mary Milne, Vice-Chairperson; Brenda Bent, Secretary-Treasurer; Bev Young, Trustee.

The Edith Cavell Unit elected officers for 1981 are: Fe Datwin, Chairperson; Vijari Deo, Vice-Chairperson; Rita Bal, Secretary-Treasurer; Matilda Araujo, Trustee; Jajinder Sandhu, Trustee; Roshan Dahya, Trustee; Irene Chaive, Conductor; Rajinder Sileia, Warden.



Amelia Fukala, Chairperson of HEU's Kootenay Lake Unit in Nelson, was present for a three-day Union education seminar May 11-13 in Cranbrook.



Judy Holmes is a shop steward at HEU's Kootenay Lake Unit in Nelson. Judy is shown here during the education seminar May 11-13 in Cranbrook.

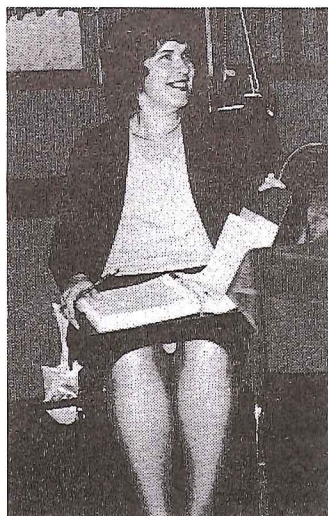


Crystal Perry, Creston Unit shop steward, at the Union's education seminar held in Cranbrook in May.



Myrt Waterer, a former Trustee of the Invermere Unit, attended HEU's education seminar in Cranbrook last month.

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Simone LaPlante, Chairperson of the Rossland Unit, at the Union education seminar May 11.

## Casual Arbitration Dates

Arbitration dates are being called for as per the addendum of the HEU/HLRA Master Agreement regarding casual employees (Article 1, Section 2).

At an arbitration hearing in November last year, charges were made that there were clear violations of the agreement by the Employer regarding casual employees.

HEU's position regarding the application of the collective agreement is as follows:

- casuals to be called-in in order of seniority;
- reclassification to regular part-time employee after 180 hours of work in 12 weeks with full retroactivity of seniority and benefits;
- notice of lay-off where hours of work are reduced;
- no additional probationary period where employee is reclassified to regular part-time;
- posting of all temporary positions lasting one month or more (e.g. vacation relief).





Doris Foesier, the morning cook at Cranbrook and District Hospital, was hard at work in the kitchen when this Guardian photograph was taken.

## Non-Classified Groups To Be Sent Material

HEU will be sending questionnaires and job descriptions to all non-classified groups in the near future.

Nursing will be the next group to set up classification committees, to be followed by Stores, Laundry, Housekeep-

ing, Utility/Maintenance and, finally, special categories.

HEU's Provincial Bargaining Committee began negotiations May 13 directly with HLRA on the classification of dietary workers.

## Giovanna Has 31 Years At Cranbrook Hospital

Giovanna Martin has worked at Cranbrook and District Hospital for over 31 years and the way she ended up in Cranbrook is very interesting.

Born in the mining town of Michel, about 80 miles east of Cranbrook, she was taken to Italy along with her brother and a sister by her mother when her father died in a mining accident. After World War II, her brother talked the family into returning to Michel, which at the time was one of the bigger communities in the East Kootenay.

Her brother found a job at the mine easily, however Giovanna and her sister Ines could not and subsequently travelled to Cranbrook in search of work. They both landed jobs at the Cranbrook hospital in the dietary department.

"The hospital wasn't the one that stands today. In those days, the hospital (which is now a hotel) was run by the Catholic nuns. The facilities were much less sophisticated than the

modern hospital we work at now," Martin told The Guardian.

"It was very tough to make a living in the 50's. We were making about \$90 a month and paying \$40 a month for room and board for a place right at the back of the hospital."

"There wasn't much left at the end of the month, especially for us since we came to Cranbrook with practically nothing. But we somehow managed and can now look back at the experience with humour," added Giovanna.

Giovanna, known as Joanna around the hospital, has been a head cook in the kitchen for a number of years since initially starting as a dietary aide.

"If I were younger, I'm not sure I would do it all over again. I might have chosen something easier, but it's not really that bad at the hospital. The girls in the kitchen all get along really well with each other and that makes the day go by faster."



Giovanna Martin, shown here with Cranbrook Unit member Ennis Zuccolin, started work at Cranbrook and District Hospital in 1950. Martin, now a head cook at the hospital, found her way to Cranbrook in an interesting way. (See story above).

## Sunny Hill 'Volunteer' Memo

Sunny Hill Unit members expressed disbelief to the administrator's request in May, via memo, to have all the hospital employees voluntarily work after hours in order to prepare for the hospital's official opening.

In his May 8th memo to all of the Sunny Hill Hospital For Children employees, Dave Richardson said, in part: "There is not enough staff time nor contract budget remaining to do this work and so I thought a number of us could have some fun touching up the walls during some of our valuable spare time on May 20th."

"I am sure the paint-in will create a few aches and pains, particularly among those of us who aren't used to physical labour and therefore would like to try out the new therapeutic pool to measure is therapeutic benefit."

Violet Hudson, Unit Secretary-Treasurer, told The Guardian the memo was quashed by Richardson the day after it was put up on notice boards at the hospital.

"The members felt that if that type of work was done by Union members, Union wages should be paid for such work," said Hudson.

## Crisis In Hospitals Says Cocke

Dennis Cocke (NDP MLA New Westminster) sharply criticized the Social Credit government in May and called for an emergency debate to resolve what he described as a "crisis in B.C. hospitals."

"Throughout the province there are long-term care patients improperly occupying acute-care beds and extensive waiting lists for surgery of all kinds. There is a growing number of incidents where urgent or emergency cases are turned away from our hospitals because of the lack of availability of beds," said Cocke.

Cocke cited the situation in Surrey, where "in March this year there were 1,400 persons on the waiting list for elective surgery at Surrey Memorial Hospital. The wait can be up to seven months."

At Vancouver General Hospital, according to Garry Lauk (NDP MLA Vancouver Centre) there are 1,890 persons waiting for elective surgery. "Of these, some 200 await open-heart surgery," said Lauk.

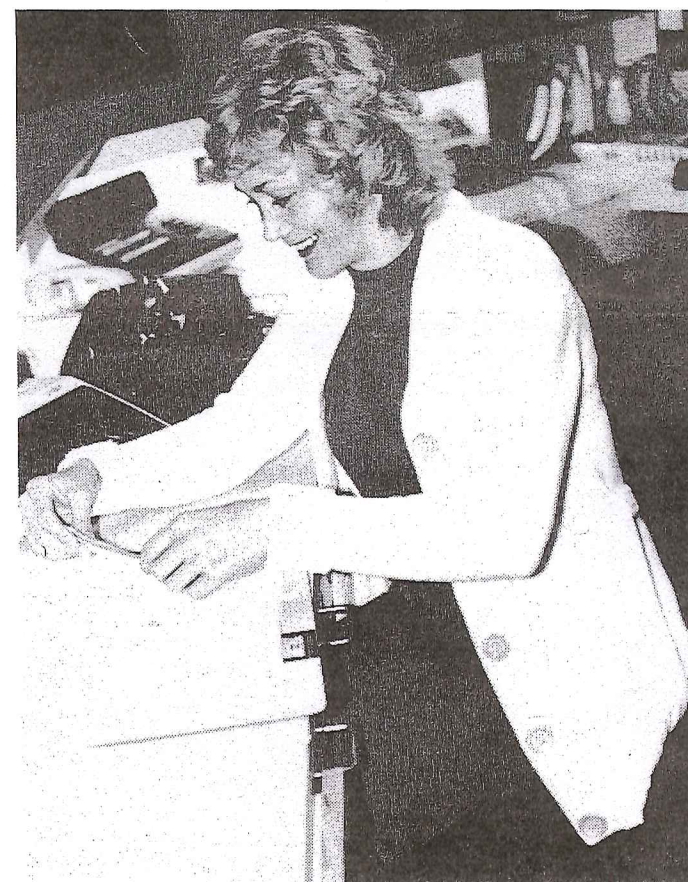
Gordon Hanson (NDP MLA Victoria) said the situation in Victoria is similar: "The two Victoria hospitals report more than 2,000 persons on the waiting list for surgery. Every doctor in town tells stories of persons who travel from out-of-town for definite surgical appointments, taking time off work and arriving to find there are no beds."

"The Royal Jubilee Hospital in Victoria describes 433 of those on the waiting list as 'urgent' cases. These urgent cases must wait an average of two to three months before receiving surgery. To live in the city of Victoria is to run an unacceptable risk because of the failure of Social Credit policy," said Hanson.

Minister of Health Jim Nielsen was quoted in the news media in May as saying he had "no idea" whether the situation in the two Victoria hospitals was as bad as described by hospital officials.



Ollie Reed (left) and Evelyn Hartung ham it up for the camera during a break from duties at the Dr. F.W. Green Memorial Home in Cranbrook.



Maureen Woods, pictured here at the Cranbrook Hospital's switchboard area, has several duties including that of being switchboard operator.

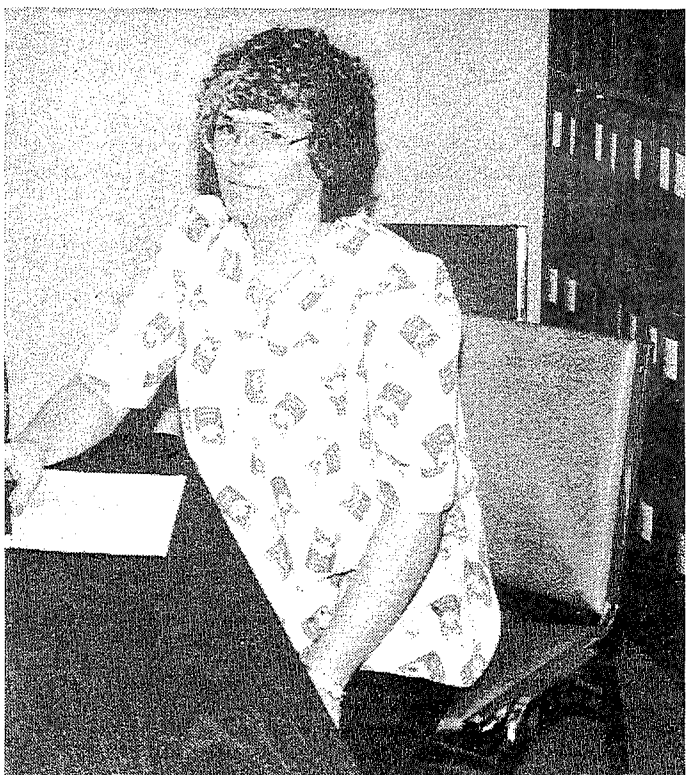
*Did you know . . .*

HEU/HLRA

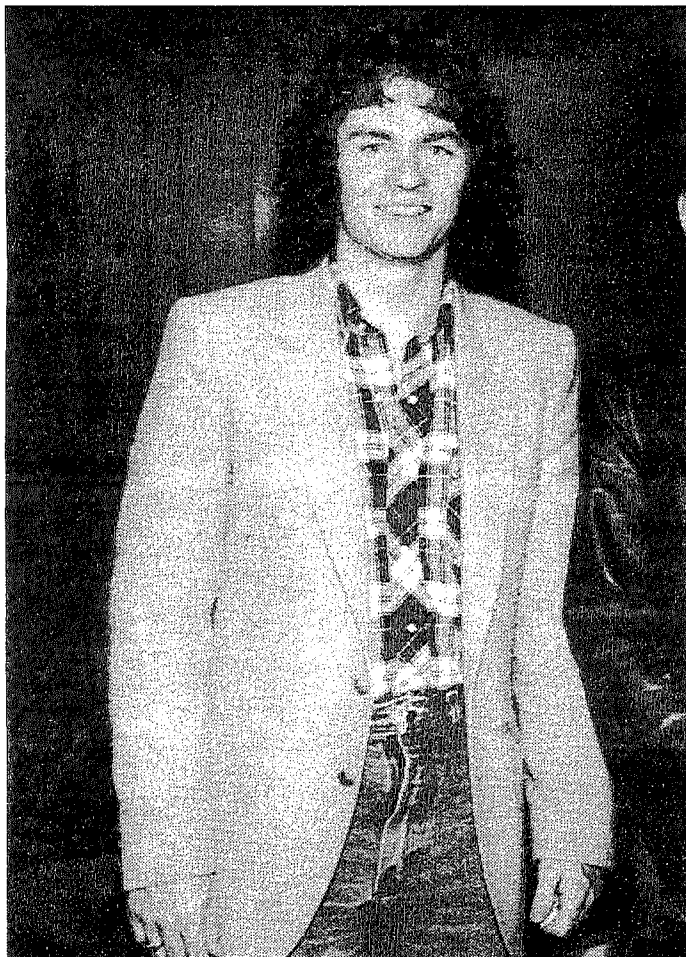
There shall be a minimum of twelve (12) consecutive hours off-duty between the completion of one work shift and the beginning of the next. When it isn't possible to schedule 12 consecutive hours off-duty between shifts, all hours by which such changeover falls short of the 12 consecutive hours shall be paid at overtime rates. Article VIII, Section 3(b) and (c) Page 35.

Master Agreement





Chris Ferguson, former Secretary-Treasurer of the Vancouver General Unit, has been appointed as an HEU staff representative. Chris will work out of the Provincial Office.



Mark Atkinson has been appointed as a staff representative for HEU's northern region office in Prince George. Mark is the former Chairperson of the Overlander Unit in Kamloops as well as former Okanagan Regional Vice-President on the Union's Provincial Executive.



Lynn Taylor, a former staff representative of the Canadian Labour Congress, has been appointed by HEU as a staff representative. Lynn will work out of the Provincial Office.

The Hospital Guardian, June 1981/Page 6

## June 30th Deadline

Although the C U and C Health Services Society itself pays up to \$100 to HEU members under the Extended Health Care Plan under the HEU/HLRA Master Agreement for prescribed drug bills, any amount over the \$100 figure is paid for by Pharmacare.

HEU members are reminded that the cut-off date for applying for reimbursement of expenses under the Extended Health Care Plan under the HEU/HLRA Master Agreement is June 30th.

## Members Determined

Bebeth DelaRea and Maura DelaRosa are determined to fight to the bitter end to obtain the prevailing standard of wages and benefits for HEU members at Windermere.

In an interview with The Guardian while on picket duty, Bebeth and Maura said it was the first strike they have been involved in.

"This is the first time I have ever been involved in something like this (a strike). At first I was not very angry about the whole thing but after seeing the scabs going through each day, it makes me really mad," said DelaRea.

Maura, who said it was also her first strike, said she was upset with Windermere management for failing to understand the workers situation.

"The cost of living in Vancouver is very high. I have three children. How am I supposed to make it on a wage of \$4.50 an hour? I don't think we are asking for too much," said DelaRosa.

Bebeth, who is also married and has two children, agreed that the cost of living in B.C. is very high.

"Everything is so expensive. On what we were paid before the strike, it is impossible to raise a family decently," she said.

The Guardian also talked to Balbeer Kaur, a single person, who is said the strike was "a new experience" to her.

"Even for a single person like myself, my wages disappear too quickly. How far can \$4.50 go in the city of Vancouver? Not very far that's for use and I know that for a fact," said Kaur.

## Terrace 'Fitfest'

Fifteen HEU members from the Terrace Unit took part recently in "Hospital Fitfest '81", an event sponsored by Action B.C. designed to keep hospital employees in good physical condition.

Terrace Unit Secretary-Treasurer Betty Misfeldt said the "fitfest" was a lot of fun and enjoyable for all participants.

"We had a volleyball game one evening and there were exercise classes in the Physiotherapy Department. We all had fun and now are hopefully in better shape," said Misfeldt.

## Swan Valley Agreement

An agreement was ratified in April between HEU and Swan Valley Lodge in Creston.

The agreement, based on HEU's Master Agreement, expires March 31, 1982. There are 18 HEU members in the Swan Valley Unit.



Duncan Unit Chairperson Merlin Gutensohn, shown here with his wife Betty at a Unit Christmas party last year, brings his own sound equipment periodically to the extended care section of the Cowichan District Hospital for the benefit of the hospital residents. "They appreciate the music and we enjoy doing it for them," says Merlin.

Unit photo



Donna Thomson, a data entry clerk at the Cancer Control Agency of B.C. in Vancouver, appeared as an HEU witness March 20 before the Peck Arbitration Board on classification.

## Charlotte Member Related To U.S. Actor

Ruth Kristofferson gets the same question all the time and it was no different at the April 10 HEU education seminar in Prince George.

"Are you related to Kris Kristofferson?" The Guardian asked.

"Yes, he is my husband's sixth or seventh cousin. It seems everyone asks that question. I guess because Kristofferson isn't too common a name and it is spelled with a K at the front instead of the usual Ch," responded Ruth.

Ruth found out about the family connection with the well-known American singer-actor after her husband's uncle completed a family tree.

"Yes he is a distant relative and we have yet to meet him. Although you never know, someday we might," said Ruth.

Ruth is the Vice-Chairperson of the newly-formed Queen Charlotte Unit at the Queen Charlotte Islands Hospital.



Ruth Kristofferson, whose husband is a distant cousin of American singer-actor Kris Kristofferson, is Vice-Chairperson of the Union's Queen Charlotte Unit.



## HEU RETIREES

### St. Mary's Unit Will Miss Evelyn

Evelyn Vopni, an HEU member at St. Mary's Hospital in New Westminster since July, 1976, has retired.

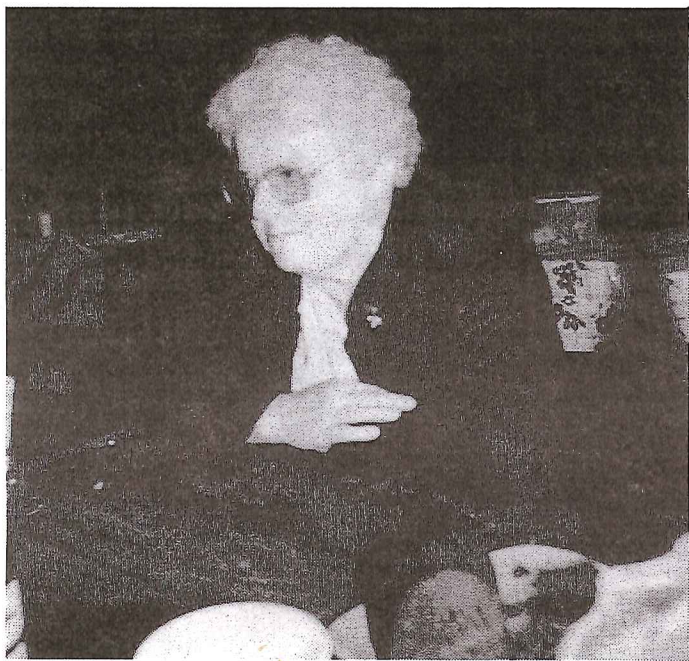
Evelyn served as Secretary of the St. Mary's Unit for five years and was also on the Unit's social committee, according to Unit Chairperson Lynn Halstead.

"Evelyn was responsible for organizing those fantastic Union barbeques and picnics and, thank goodness she will be helping again this year," Halstead told The Guardian.

The Unit has donated \$50 as a gift to Sister Vopni for her retirement.

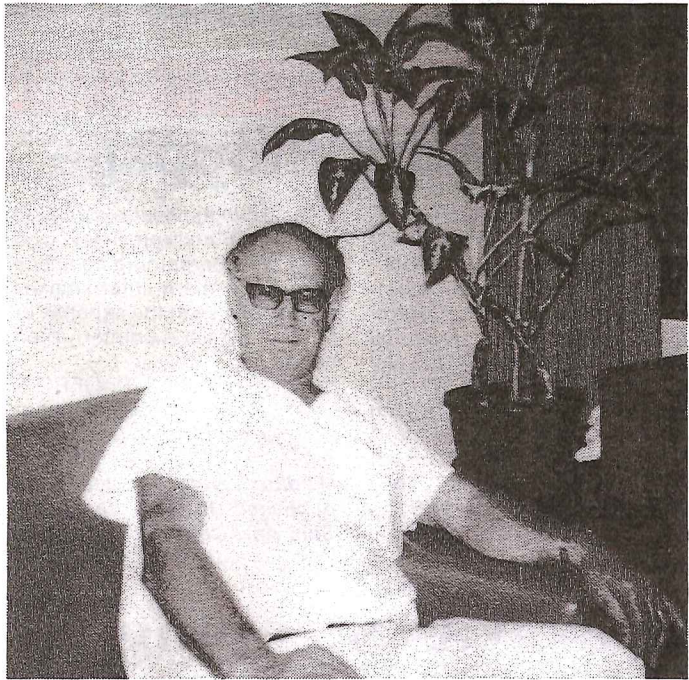
An avid bowler and bingo player, she plans to take life easy and use the extra time to enjoy her family.

"Evelyn is a warm, understanding person who always greets you with a smile and an open heart. She is very much missed by the girls in dietary," said Halstead.



HEU member Evelyn Vopni has retired from service at St. Mary's Hospital in New Westminster. Evelyn, shown here at a Unit picnic, served as Unit Secretary for five years.

Unit photo



Louis Brier Unit member George Marks officially retired from service at the Vancouver private hospital March 8. George, who worked at Louis Brier for 11 years, was given an honorary luncheon by Unit members on his last day of service.

Unit photo



Royal Jubilee Unit member Julia Buhlers retired April 15 after nearly 18 years of service. Julia plans to spend more time on her favourite hobby of birdwatching during her retirement years.

Unit photo

### Maplewood Elected Officers

The Maplewood Manor Unit elected officers for 1981 are: Linda Jones, Chairperson; Judy Boukal, Vice-Chairperson; Jo-Ann Van der Burg, Secretary-Treasurer; Rex Matthews, Trustee; Satwart Sanghara, Trustee; Sherrill Lawry, Trustee; Alarra Lawry, Conductor; Maria Bosma, Warden.

### Shareholder Criticizes Extendicare

Extendicare Ltd., a Toronto-based company that owns health care facilities in Canada and the United States, and recently purchased Mount Paul Private Hospital in Kamloops, was accused by a shareholder of "profiting by trafficking in human lives" at the company's annual meeting in Toronto in April.

Jessica Hunt, 69, of Toronto, was the only person at the company's annual meeting to question president Harold Livergant and chairman Michael Burns about a fire in Mississauga last July that killed 25 persons, according to an April 22 report in the Globe and Mail newspaper.

Mrs. Hunt asked the company's executives why fire drills were not carried out regularly in the home, as called for in Ontario's Nursing Homes Act, and why the building had several structural flaws.

"Had the building been fire-resistant, only one life would have been lost," said Hunt.

She asked whether any of the \$1,500 profit per bed that Extendicare earned in its 36 health care facilities (3,750 beds) in Canada and 28 facilities (2,622 beds) in the United States would be used to provide "safer conditions and trained staff."

After the meeting, Livergant said there was "no simple answer" to Hunt's concerns about safety.

In answer to a question about Extendicare building an empire out of health care facility profits, Livergant replied that "spinning off profit to various other forms of activity is not necessarily a bad thing. It's true that nursing home profits formed our base, but a lot of financial fuel is coming from other investments now, like Crown Life (an insurance company)."

### Julia Buhlers Honoured

After 17 years and eight months at Royal Jubilee Hospital in Victoria, Julia Buhlers' retirement day came April 15, according to Unit spokesman Bev Watson.

"Julia's many years were spent mainly at the student nurses' residence, which is soon to be closed," said Watson.

A tea was held in Julia's honour at which time she received a back-pack and a thermos from the housekeeping staff.

"Julia's face will certainly be missed at our Unit meetings," added Watson.

Sister Buhler's favourite hobby is birdwatching and she hopes to do more of that during her retirement. Before the birdwatching, however, Julia scheduled a week of fun in Reno in late May.



Members of the Clearwater Unit at Dr. Helmcken Memorial Hospital gathered recently for a meeting with their staff representative. Pictured are: Elsie Breda (Chairperson), Judy Schurack (Secretary-Treasurer), Loisann Sonneson, Diane Smith, Ann Dahle, Diane Yaciw, Mickey Yaciw and Lucy Gorovenko.

Marion Perry photo

### 'Work Now, Grieve Later' For Unfair Assignments

An award handed down by an arbitration board in February could serve as a reminder to HEU members that the "work now, grieve later" approach to unfair job assignments could avoid employer charges of insubordination.

An HEU member at Kootenay Lake District Hospital twice refused to accept a work assignment in another position and as a result received a five-day suspension.

In its ruling, the board reduced the original suspension to three days because the employer had not informed the grievor of the consequences of

her refusal to perform the assignment requested.

The board decision was based on what board Chairman Mark Thompson called "the oldest arbitral cliché in cases involving an employee's refusal to carry out an assignment — the industrial workplace is not a debating society."

"Since the employees enjoy the protection of a Union and a grievance procedure, they are not entitled to debate the propriety of management's instructions beyond the conventional exceptions of the employee's belief that the work is unsafe, unlawful or beyond physical capacity," wrote Thompson.

### LPNs' Annual Meeting Held In Vancouver

The Licensed Practical Nurses' Association of B.C. held its 15th Annual General Meeting in Vancouver, May 12-15.

The new executive elected during the meeting: Pat Campbell, President; Cheryl McQueen, 1st Vice-President; Elinor Turrill, 2nd Vice-President; Helga Rahn, Treasurer; Gerrie Fehr, Corresponding Secretary; Helen Burritt, Recording Secretary; Newsletter Editor, Agnes Magnone; Molly Beddington, Victoria; Loretta Neill, Annual Convener; Wenda Mason, Membership Public Relations; Evelyn Fallick, Education Chairperson; Helen Burritt, CAPNA Representative; Sandra Tahouney and Evelyn Fallick, CAPNA delegates.

Vancouver Vocational Institute is holding its 100th graduating class ceremonies July 3.

### Mountain View Officers

The Mountain View Unit elected officers for 1981 are: Wil Pelfrey, Chairperson; Vivian Hildebrand, Vice-Chairperson; Janice Buttus, Secretary-Treasurer; Bette Flegel, Trustee; Lorraine Muldoe, Trustee; Eileen Prest, Trustee.

### Ching Finds Home

A stranger wandered into the extended care section of the Cowichan District Hospital a couple of months ago and, according to HEU Duncan Unit Shop Steward Jean Cameron, it has been love at first sight.

"The stranger is a stray cat which goes by the name of Ching Ching, and the staff and residents have fallen in love with her," Cameron told The Guardian.

"We advertised in trying to find the rightful owner, but no one came to claim her. So, with the Hospital Board's approval, she has become a fixture in our building."

"Ching never ceases to delight the residents with her antics and her favourite sleeping place is the "In" basket on my desk," said Jean.



## HEU Members On The Job

### At Cranbrook and District Hospital

# Sam Knows His Way Around The Boiler Room

Sam Cross, a maintenance engineer at Cranbrook and District Hospital, knows his way around a steam boiler and that should come as no surprise since he's been working with them for about 30 years.

Sam moved to Galloway, a small community about 45 kilometres east of Cranbrook, from his home town of Chatham, Ontario, in 1952.

"I started as a steam engineer at the sawmill in Galloway in '52. I got a lot of experience while I was there and in 1966 I moved to Cranbrook," recalls Cross.

## CUPE Member Supportive

Dear Sir:

Perhaps it is an oversimplification to imply that if we, as ambulance attendants, encounter a picket line it will simply disappear, thus enabling us in "good conscience" to cross it.

A case in point is the Central Park Lodge on West 12th Avenue, Vancouver (across from VGH). Our sisters at Central Park organized themselves as a unit of the Hospital Employees' Union, Local 180, well over two years ago, in accordance with the provisions of the B.C. Labour Code [Sec. 45(1) and 46(a)] and were certified as the legitimate bargaining agent by the B.C. Labour Relations Board. Yet, the management of Central Park Lodge, a multi-million dollar real estate and investment conglomerate — notoriously known across Canada for their intransigence towards organized labour — have flatly refused to negotiate a first contract. In my opinion, this is a flagrant contravention of the proviso to bargain in good faith set out in the B.C. Labour Code [Sec. 6] and, as a union, we are well within our rights to not enter their premises — except in an emergency.

Central Park's management has steadfastly refused to offer more than \$4.70 an hour to our sisters in their attempt to secure a decent wage (and dignity, job security, and self-respect).

To me, this is a travesty and a slap in the face to every trade unionist in British Columbia. If we continue to cross the picket lines of our sisters at Central Park Lodge without qualification, we, as a trade union, will be contributing to the dilution of the strength of the Canadian Labour Movement — and ignoring the enormous personal sacrifices made by our forebears over the last century.

After all, many women these days are the sole support of their families, and who today can keep a family, let alone themselves, on \$4.70 an hour, with dignity and comfort?

Fraternalty yours,  
Vincent C. Shea

**Editor's Note:** The above letter was hand-delivered to HEU's Provincial Office by Brother Shea, who is a member of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 873.

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"I didn't start working at the hospital until 1969, so it's been about 12 years that I've been here."

Sam and his wife Harriet are the proud parents of three boys, Michael, Frank and Russell, all of whom live in the Cranbrook area.

"It was a bit hectic sometimes trying to properly raise three boys, but when Harriet and I think about it, we realize it was well worth the trouble. The rewards far outweighed the problems."

Cross said he and his wife are thankful they chose to raise their family in south-eastern British Columbia.

"As everyone knows, this is really beautiful country in the East Kootenay. We regularly go camping at the many lakes around here like North Star and Moyie. We sometimes don't appreciate how lucky we've been to be able to take advantage of the beauty in these parts."

As a maintenance engineer in the four-person department, Sam's responsibilities include the steam and hot water boilers at the hospital. As a maintenance engineer, he mixes chemicals for treating the water and the steam boilers so that the heating and air conditioning function properly.

"We are on call 24 hours a day in the event of emergencies like power failures, which crop from time to time. Power failures, of course, can affect things like surgery, so we have to respond

quickly to calls when we're at home."

Sometimes emergencies can be of a less serious nature, as was the case recently when two teenage boys were caught in the hospital elevator.

"The kids were caught between floors and in this case it was their own fault as they jammed the elevator door open before they reached their floor. I got them out, but I guess they learned their lesson not to fool around with elevators."

And there are even funny "emergencies", like the time a mouse was loose in the extended care wing of the hospital.

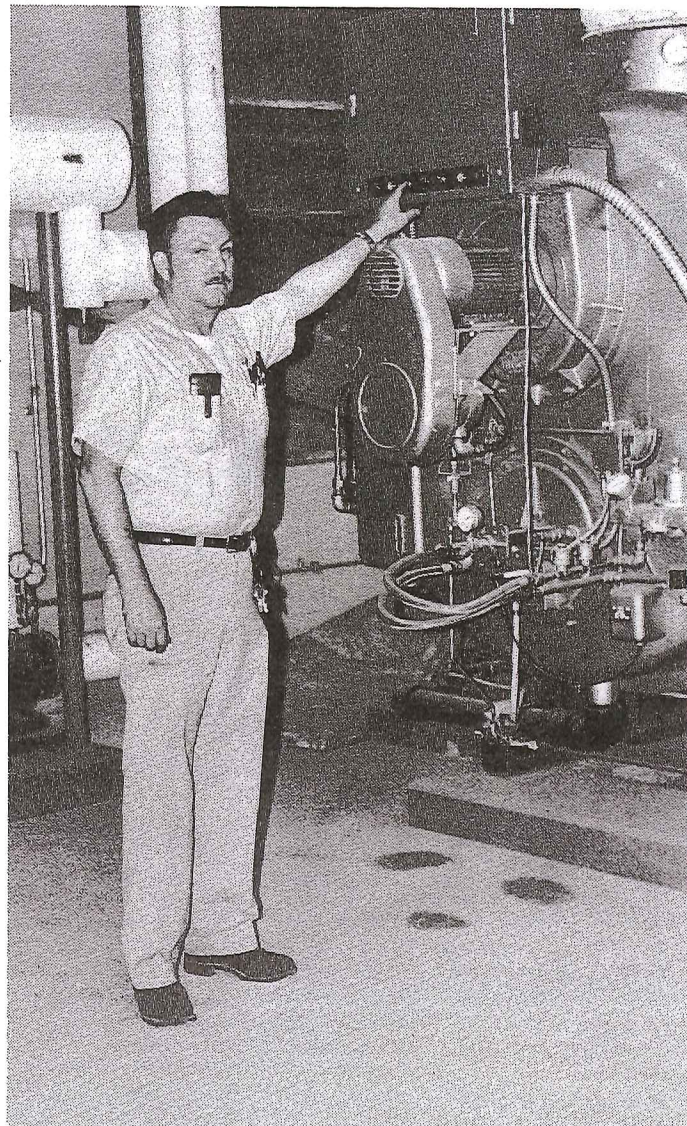
"That was pretty funny. There were women running around all over the place trying to stay away from the mouse. Those kind of emergencies are the easiest to handle."

And there are also emergencies of the wet kind, like flooding which occasionally happens at the hospital.

"Flooding occurs once in a while and the important thing is to quickly find out where the leak is and to get the water shut off. The mopping up can take a long time, too, when you're standing in three or four inches of water," says Cross.

Sam says the crew in the maintenance department works a day shift on an extended hours basis and everyone gets along very well.

"We all like our jobs and that helps to create a healthy working atmosphere. It is a responsible job and I always try to do my best."



Sam Cross has been a maintenance engineer at the Cranbrook and District Hospital for the past 12 years. Among Sam's duties is the maintenance of steam and hot water boilers at the hospital.

## LETTERS

# Facts On The Cancer Control Work Stoppage

When I read your editorial of April 13 under the heading "The Helpless" I felt as if I was reading something out of the National Enquirer. The editorial was based more on emotionalism and sensationalism than on fair comment and fact.

• The members of the Hospital Employees Union at the Cancer Control Agency were not on strike and were not sitting in — they were honoring a legal picket line set up by HEU members at Windermere Central Park Lodge, who have been trying since July 1979 to get a first collective agreement.

• Not all members of the HEU at the agency were required to stop work. Those who were performing essential services were instructed to continue to work so that there would be no immediate or serious threat to the health of those who use the agency's services. In fact, during the picketing additional people were required by the HEU to continue working as they were needed.

• Those members of the HEU at the agency who honored the picket line were called to a central location in the agency instead of being sent home, so that in an emergency they would be able to respond to it.

• Further, the picket line set up by HEU members from Windermere was inside the agency, so that other employees would not be faced with a

picket line, but could continue to work. Among such employees were registered nurses and paramedical professionals.

• The agency must have concluded that essential services were being maintained, because it made no apparent effort to control the picketing by applying to the B.C. Supreme Court or the B.C. Labour Relations Board. Instead, the agency appears to have spent its efforts participating in a showy news conference.

• The agency must have been aware it would face legal picket lines by using the services of an ally or strikebreaker from the Windermere Central Park Lodge's dispute, because a similar dispute at another institution, the Holy Family Hospital, occurred two days earlier. At the hospital the matter was settled in less than two hours, but the agency took all day to make up its mind not to use the services of the ally or strikebreaker.

• The Windermere employees did not go out on strike as a first choice, but were forced on strike by the refusal of the multi-billion-dollar, out-of-province corporation that owns Windermere to admit that the services performed there are essential and refuses to agree with the union's long-standing proposal to settle the dispute by arbitration.

If you are really interested in writing an editorial that is based

on fact and includes fair comment, then why don't you say something about the responsible way in which HEU members at the Cancer Control Agency maintained essential services? Or why don't you say something about the Windermere employees who have been making every reasonable effort to reach a collective agreement by way of arbitration? They have been offered only \$4.50 an hour, when the appropriate

standard in the health care field is about \$8 an hour. They, who have been bargaining against a corporate giant that makes private profits at the expense of public funds and uninterrupted health care.

J. D. GEROW  
Business Manager  
Hospital Employees Union  
2286 West 12th Ave.

**[Editor's Note: This letter was published in The Vancouver Sun, April 28th, 1981]**

# Who Was Sleeping Under Those Covers?

Dear Sir,

As a follow up of your interview with me (May Guardian), I would like to relate a humorous thing that happened to me once when I was an Orderly. I think other HEU members might find it funny.

We had a patient in a private room who had had a leg amputation. He had a habit of sleeping with the urinal in bed with him all the time. We Orderlies were in the habit, when we were on nights, of first going in and reaching under the covers, taking out the urinal, emptying it, and then putting it back in place.

This particular night, I was on shift and I went in to empty it. You have to appreciate that we never bother to turn on the lights, so all I had was my flashlight and I'm not looking at the patient's face.

Well, I'm groping under the covers for the handle to this thing, when all of a sudden a woman's voice screamed, "Sir, what are you doing?"

It was as if I'd been struck by lightning. I dropped the flashlight, let out a yell, and stumbled backwards out of the room. The nurse came running up and asked what was the matter, so I told her.

Well, she woke up the whole ward laughing. She forgot to tell me they had put a woman in that room.

Every time I passed that room for a long time after that, I went over to the furthest side of the hall. I also told the nurse she had better explain to that patient what had happened — and why.

Stan Feren  
Prince George Unit