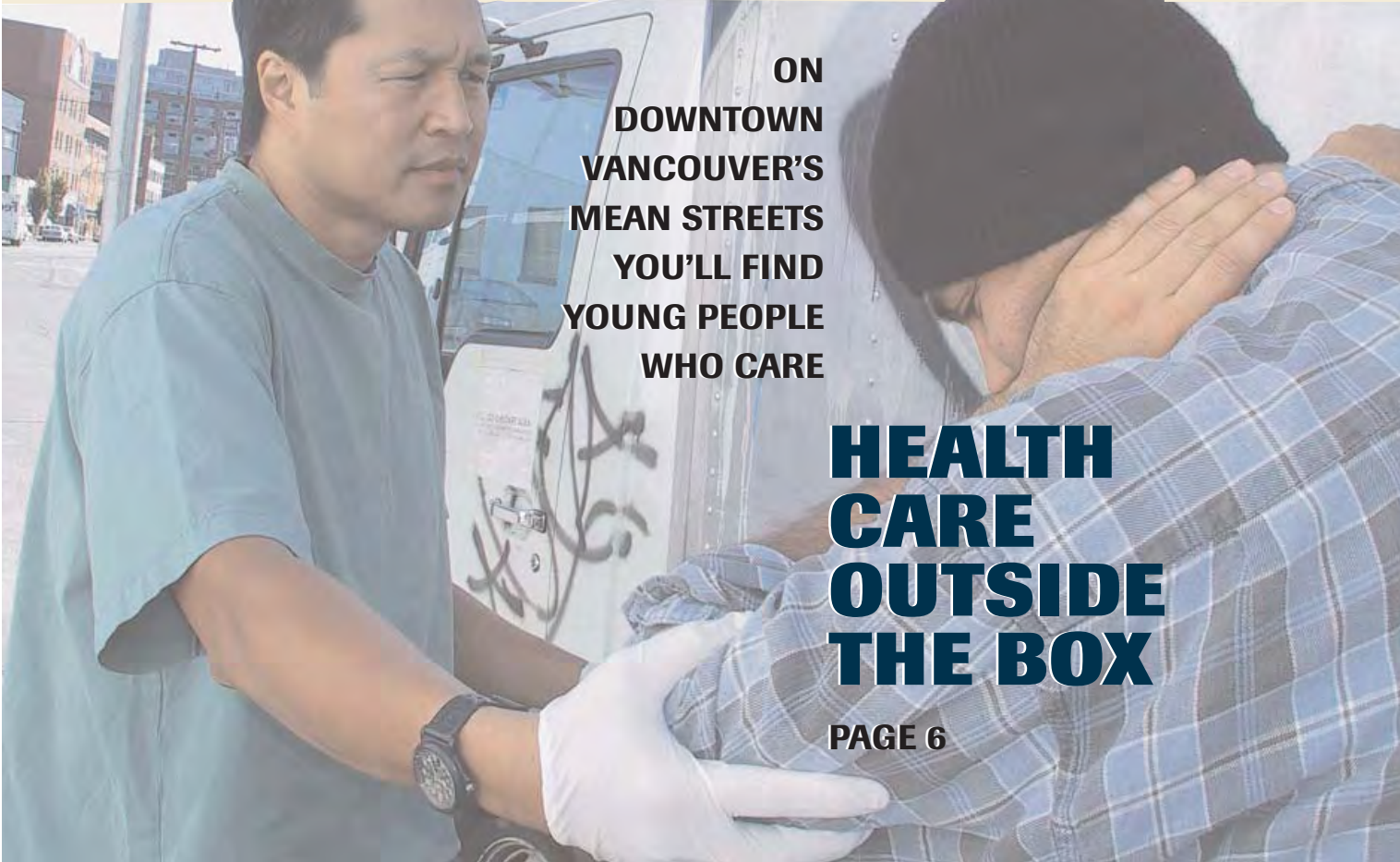


GUARDIAN



FALL 2003 MBER 4 • THE VOICE OF THE HOSPITAL S' UNION



ON
DOWNTOWN
VANCOUVER'S
MEAN STREETS
YOU'LL FIND
YOUNG PEOPLE
WHO CARE

HEALTH CARE OUTSIDE THE BOX

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Circumnavigating the rules

Down under, prime minister-in-waiting
Paul Martin's name is mud

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Feisty Northerner
fights to save her
community

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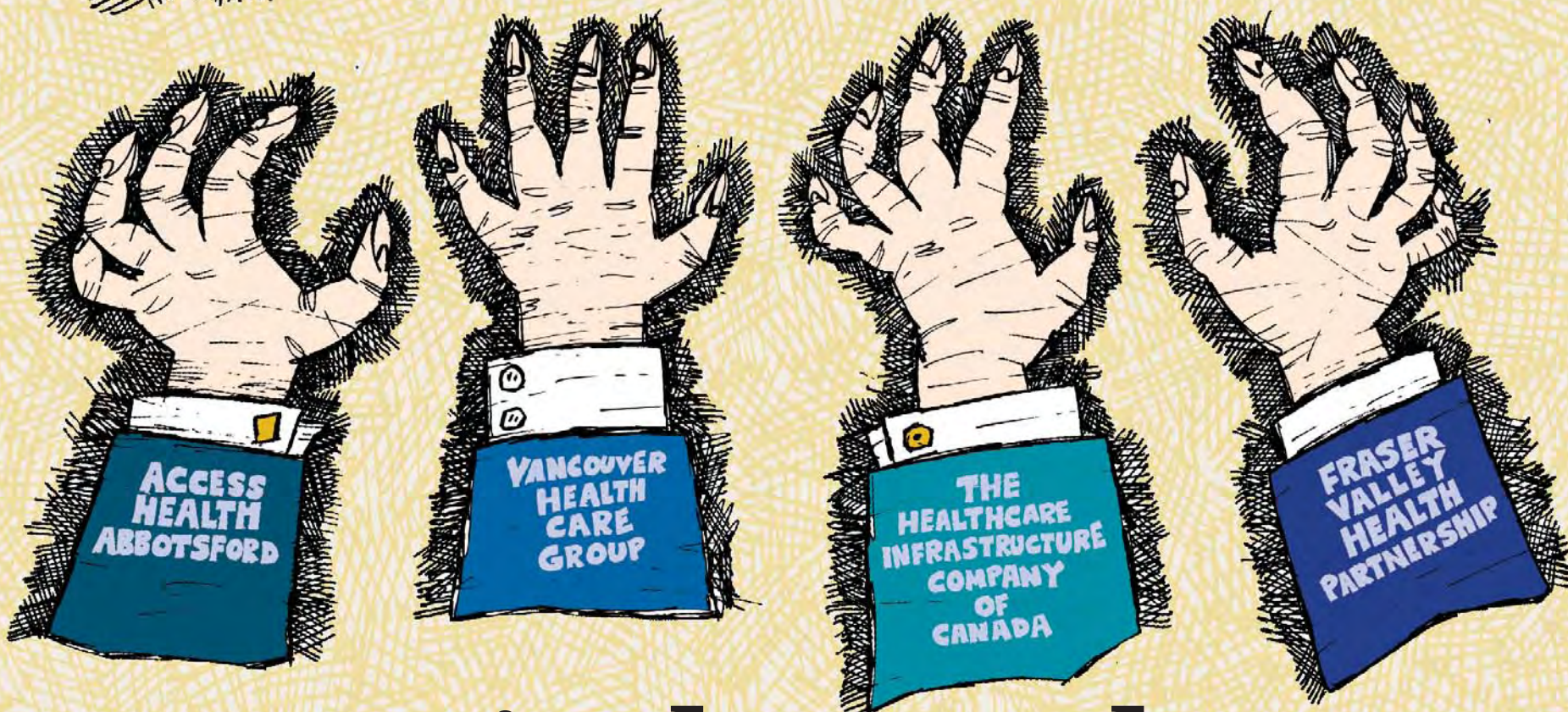
HEU members
driving local
negotiations

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Ontario's blackout enlightening SEE PAGE 5

ABBOTSFORD PRIVATE HOSPITAL



Hospital poachers

Four private groups have been shortlisted to build and run the new proposed hospital in Abbotsford. But their corporate track records show that Victoria is taking a big risk with hospital P3s. Is this the future of health care? PAGE 8



CHRIS ALLNUTT

The fight continues

Exposing the follies of privatization will make us all stronger

As hundreds of skilled and dedicated workers are being tossed onto the unemployment rolls, the B.C. Liberals are stepping up their attacks on the women and men who work in health care and on the public health care system in which they work.

The contract-breaking power of Bill 29 is becoming increasingly evident as more and more employers discard decades of dedicated service, contracting out work to multinational companies who have no stake in public health care – quite the opposite. The workers – both those ones remaining at the workplace and the ones who have already lost their jobs – are under tremendous pressure.

At health care facilities across the province, workers with years of experience under their belts can't help but wonder if they will be next to be laid off, plus they are coping with increased workloads resulting from a reduced and less experienced workforce.

The workers who have been laid off ask why the government and their employers don't

recognize the valuable role they have played within the health care system. They ask, "Why can't they see that contracting out our jobs will not work?"

There is already evidence of problems with Crothall Services Canada, a branch of U.K.-based Compass Group that has the cleaning contract for B.C. Cancer Agency and Children's and Women's Hospital. They have offered cleaners a \$50 bonus if they stay to the end of the month! Plus they will award a \$100 finder's fee if they refer other workers that end up being hired.

That's a very worrisome development for patients and for other health care workers whose health and safety depends on the critical part these workers play in infection control.

That's one important reason that HEU is setting up a privatization watch in the workplace. Exposing the follies of privatization will make us all stronger. Bringing mistakes and problems to the light of day will bring us closer to the time when the government will have to curtail its privatization agenda. Maybe even reverse the projects it's already launched.

In Ontario, it took a tragedy like the contamination of a town's water supply in Walkerton to lay bare the problems of cutbacks and privatization of public services. Hopefully it won't take such a tragedy in B.C. for the government to change its ways.

voice.mail

From both sides now

As an LPN and a patient I should know LPNs are an important part of the nursing team.

Let me tell you a little about myself. In 1991, with a lot of hard work, I became an LPN. My working career was short-lived, however, because I was in a motorbike accident as a passenger in 2000.

I was in a coma for two months, lost the vision in my right eye, the hearing in my left ear, had a feeding tube, was in a wheelchair and had a walker, couldn't write with my right hand and can't drive. So I know the importance of LPNs and not many people can say they've been a practicing nurse and a patient too.

Since I've been home I've had to become my own therapist, and as a nurse I know the importance of that and how LPNs are important to the

nursing team. If not for the LPNs, the RNs and doctors doing their jobs properly, I would be in worse shape than I am right now. LPNs do make a positive contribution to the nursing team.

LEE-ANN MAIN
LPN, Chetwynd General Hospital

Old folks deserve our loving care

Open letter to Premier Gordon Campbell:

I am a care aide at a care facility in New Westminster. Right now we are going through a decertification vote. Some of the employees have decided it is best to get out of the union so they can keep their jobs at a lower rate of pay and less benefits.

The rate of pay is what we got eight years ago. How can single moms and spouses with one person with benefits give the proper medical and dental attention to their children?

Is the government going to step in and help them out?

I was also wondering, Mr. Campbell, if you have ever visited a care facility? If not, I am inviting you to visit ours; spend a day and see if you can do the job.

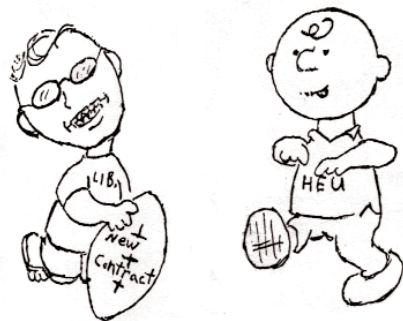
Do you know exactly what it is like to take care of an Alzheimer's patient? What their daily needs are? These people are the forgotten people. They sit there all day with their heads on tables because they are not allowed to get back into bed.

Could you take care of 16 residents at 7 a.m., getting them up out of bed, some into a wheelchair, taking them into the bathroom, getting them back out of the wheelchair, onto the toilet, washing them, dressing them, getting them back into the chair and to the dining room? That's by 8 a.m.

Would you only like to have one bath per week?

Contracting out is not the answer! These people become our grandmas and grandpas. They know us, they smile at us, and if we can get one of them to smile and have a little bit of sparkle back in their eyes, we know our day was well worth it.

So, Mr. Campbell, I am challenging you to come to Kiwanis Care Centre in New



CARTOON BY KEVIN STEWART,
SECURITY GUARD,
ROYAL INLAND HOSPITAL

\$17.9 million housekeeping bill." This is faulty reasoning. Working people create

the wealth which builds communities. Money, in reality, is nothing more than a man-made measurement of what working people are doing.

When the Cowichan Citizens Coalition fought long and hard to save our brand new, locally paid-for CDH laundry we were concerned about the 11 valley families who were losing their incomes. Joe Murphy said to us, "Do you think a laundry worker earning \$19.00 or \$20.00 an hour in the hospital union is worth more than a laundry worker in the private sector who will do the same work for \$12.00 an hour?"

If our community is to survive, our citizens must have enough income to allow them to buy the goods in our local stores.

There is something terribly wrong with what is happening here. Joe Murphy receives a taxpayer-funded salary of \$164,946.00 plus bonuses. How can he possibly feel good about cutting someone else's low salary down to something even less?

• Reprinted from the Cowichan Valley Citizen

ANNE WILKINSON
Duncan, Cowichan
Citizens Coalition

Westminster. Spend a day, see what kind of love and dedication goes into our facility.

We hope we can keep our union, because we would like to keep our jobs just how they are and our residents happy and healthy.

• Reprinted from the Surrey Leader

LINDA TURNER
Care Aide, Kiwanis Care Centre

Healthy pay for health care workers

There are about 33 full-time equivalent HEU positions at CDH [Cowichan District Hospital] and Cairnsmore Place.

As a coalition fighting for the health and well-being of the citizens of the Cowichan Valley we must ask once again that MLAs Graham Bruce, Brian Kerr and other elected local municipal leaders speak out loud and clear in defense of our community.

Thirty-three jobs lost means 33 incomes lost to this community. These are real people. These are the people who voted for you.

Joe Murphy, vice-president of VIHA's Clinical and Operations Support, said, "The idea is to cut VIHA's annual





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◀ Singing janitor spreads joy to old folks • 13

Women paying the price of globalization • 14

Members act to save jobs, public health care

Local negotiations protect 500 jobs from privatization

This fall, HEU members have wasted no time seeking alternative solutions to the privatization and contracting out of their work.

On the heels of a decision by the Health Employers Association of B.C. allowing local employers to negotiate variations to the province-wide collective agreement, seven HEU locals have signed and ratified deals protecting nearly 500 jobs from contracting out.

Others are in the works.

Another agreement, covering HEU members working in the Northern Health Authority, failed to gain the level of support required in the union's constitution.

Local and regional negotiations are taking place under a set of criteria established by HEU's Provincial Executive in August after the union pres-

sured HEABC to loosen up on local employers.

Committees negotiating local agreements must have local executive and PE representation with the results of talks subject to ratification by affected members.

The PE policy also requires any variations to the province-wide collective agreement to expire on March 31, 2004 and not contain concessions exceeding those in the tentative framework agreement defeated in the spring.

Seven local agreements that protect nearly 500 jobs from contracting out and keep health care public have been reached so far this fall.



Prince George Regional Hospital members voted October 7 on a tentative deal that would have traded concessions for a six-month hold on contracting out.

They were ratified at St. Joseph's General Hospital in Comox (see box below); Dania Home, Normanna and St. Michael's in the Lower Mainland; Mount St. Mary's and Victoria Chinatown Care Centre in Victoria; and Glacier View Lodge in Courtenay.

But a tentative deal between the Northern Health Authority and health unions that would have traded wage and other concessions for a six-month freeze on contracting out has been rejected.

Although 56 per cent voted in favour of the memorandum of agreement, it did not receive the constitutionally required support of two-

thirds of Hospital Employees' Union locals affected.

In exchange for a six-month hold on contracting out, health care workers would have taken wage cuts, worked longer hours and given up vacation time and statutory holiday pay during the remaining six months of their current collective agreement.

Despite the vote, Allnutt is urging NHA officials to put their privatization plans on hold.

"Contracting out critical health care functions will rob economically vulnerable northern communities of family supporting jobs and break up the health care team," says Allnutt.

"While this agreement would have provided temporary protection for these jobs, health employers and unions have another opportunity to reach more lasting solutions when the current collective agreement expires next spring."

Allnutt says the NHA can avoid the mistakes made in the Lower Mainland where privatization has already resulted in a reduction in quality and where low wages have caused a shortage of skilled hospital cleaners.

HEU rejected a move by the Interior Health Authority to seek massive contract concessions from its workers, despite a \$50 million surplus and being on target to meet government-established cost savings.

Comox hospital workers ratify agreement

Hospital Employees' Union members at St. Joseph's Hospital voted 65 per cent in favour of an agreement with their employer that provides protection against privatization for more than 400 of their members at the Comox facility.

In exchange for concessions, HEU's Comox local reached a memorandum of agreement with their employer that automatically reinstates current wage rates and other contract provisions if HEU jobs are contracted out during the term of the agreement.

Local chairperson Bonnie McGlashan says her members agreed to significant concessions in order to prevent privatization and to retain the skilled and experienced workers at the hospital.

"HEU members have acted in solidarity in defence of workers under immediate threat and in defence of

public health care," says McGlashan, a front desk receptionist at the hospital. "We took this collective action so that we can continue the battle together."

Workers providing support services – laundry, housekeeping, food services and maintenance – took an immediate wage rollback of \$1.92 an hour. The hourly wage for direct care is reduced by 20 cents and by 40 cents for all other classifications.

Workers will also pay back wage and pay equity adjustments that came into effect earlier this year, give up three days of annual vacation and work a longer work week.

In return, the hospital management has agreed to immediately reinstate 2003 wage rates and all other concessions if they serve notice to contract out any HEU jobs.



COFFEE BREAK

All stories guaranteed factual.
Sources this issue: all from the Internet

Jest signs

Alongside the Athi River in Kenya: When this sign is under water, this road is impassable.

In a cemetery: Persons are prohibited from picking flowers from any but their own graves.

On the menu of a Swiss restaurant: Our wines leave you nothing to hope for.

On an Italian hotel brochure: This hotel is renowned for its peace and solitude. In fact, crowds from all over the world flock here to enjoy its solitude.

In a hotel lobby in Bucharest: The lift is being fixed for the next day. During that time we regret that you will be unbearable.

In a Hong Kong supermarket: For your convenience, we recommend courteous, efficient self-service.

In a Swiss mountain inn: Special today – no ice-cream.

Flyers and fixers

Here are some actual logged maintenance complaints and problems as submitted by Qantas pilots and the solutions recorded by maintenance engineers – who are not without a sense of humour.



- Problem: Target radar hums.
Solution: Reprogrammed target radar with lyrics.
- Problem: Dead bugs on windshield.
Solution: Live bugs on back-order.
- Problem: Autopilot in altitude-hold mode produces a 200 feet per minute descent.
Solution: Cannot reproduce problem on ground.
- Problem: Evidence of leak on right main landing gear.
Solution: Evidence removed.
- Problem: Friction locks cause throttle levers to stick.
Solution: That's what they're there for.
- Problem: Aircraft handles funny.
Solution: Aircraft warned to straighten up, fly right and be serious.

Yikes!

Patient: How much to have this tooth pulled?

Dentist: \$100.00.

Patient: \$100.00 for just a few minutes work?

Dentist: Well, I can extract it very slowly if you like.

Classification reviews reap results

The classification review process has made significant progress for two groups of HEU members.

In recognition that Pharmacy Technicians work with a great degree of autonomy, the classification referee has established a new benchmark that raises wage rates for the Pharmacy Technician I by 3.25 per cent.

The referee ruled that those holding the Pharmacy Technician I positions did not require their work to be checked by a pharmacist for accuracy and completeness, but in fact checked

each other's work. With the change in duties comes a shift in wage rate from a PC 11B to a PC 12, and as part of the review, the class series has been changed to Pharmacy Technicians from Pharmacy Assistants

HEU is moving to make changes to the Pharmacy Technician II benchmark to recognize similar shifts in responsibility.

Meanwhile, evolving professional requirements for ECG Technologists have been recognized in a long-awaited job review arbitration award.

Stemming from a 1993 job review request from Royal Jubilee Hospital in Victoria, the award acknowledges the upgraded qualifications required by ECG techs and in particular, the requirement to maintain registration in the Canadian Society of Cardiology Technologists.

Society registration includes a mandatory two-years training. With the award in place, the union is now in a position to create a new benchmark for ECG Techs and argue for an adjustment to the rate of pay.

Deep cuts made behind closed doors

Health care workers are demanding that the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority come clean with the public on the impact of \$175 million in cuts it plans to make to health services in the region.

The VCHA redesign and budget management plan for 2003/04 to 2005/06 – with no other notification than posting quietly on its website – fails to identify the risks associated with the cuts planned for seniors' care, mental health programs, hospital care and a number of other areas.

HEU secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt said the plan's lack of detail is characteristic of a deepening crisis of accountability in the health care system, and he called on the VCHA to immediately schedule public hearings on the impact of the cuts.

"Our health authorities are run by un-elected boards who are accountable to no one but their political masters in Victoria," he said. "It took a

Supreme Court judge to force them to hold public meetings, but they still appear to have difficulty with the concept of openness and transparency."

Service cuts and fee increases contained in the plan include:

- \$25 million in cuts to acute care services over three years;
 - 277 long-term care beds lost over three years;
 - residential care and home support slashed by \$12 million this year;
 - \$2.2 million in cuts to public and population health programs this year;
 - \$1.4 million in cuts to mental health programs this year;
 - \$4.2 million in resident fee increases to seniors and the disabled in long-term care facilities; and
 - \$80 million in cuts this year to hospital cleaning, food services, laundry, security and other critical areas.
- "These cuts are real and will have a profound impact on health care in our region," says Allnutt. "It's unfortunate that the provincial government and its health authority won't give the public the straight goods about their plans."

Unions appeal Bill 29 decision

The Hospital Employees' Union, the B.C. Government and Service Employees' Union and the B.C. Nurses' Union will appeal a B.C. Supreme Court judgment that dismissed their constitutional challenge to Bill 29 – the *Health and Social Services Delivery Improvement Act*.

B.C.'s health authorities have used provisions of Bill 29 to close 50 health facilities and cut services and jobs across the province and radically expand the role of private corporations in the public health care system. Bill 29's impact on the working lives and economic position of women – who make up the vast majority of health care workers – has been especially damaging.

HEU secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt said, "Important principles like the value of freely-negotiated collective agreements are at stake. Bill 29 poses a threat to the rights of every union member, not just in this province, but across the entire country."



Disabled review useless, harmful

After the B.C. Liberals forced almost 62,000 mentally and physically disabled people through a lengthy reapplication process, about 400 were cut off from government assistance.

Advocates for the disabled say the review was useless and harmful.

The forms were too difficult for some people to fill out, and caused them an inordinate amount of stress, claimed the B.C. Coalition of People with Disabilities.

Margaret Birrell, spokeswoman for the coalition, said the review also tied

up the time of doctors and other health care professionals.

Time to buy savings bonds

Each year from late September to late October, Canadians can purchase Canada Savings Bonds from the Payroll Savings Program. Since 1946 this program has helped Canadians save more than \$45 billion. Today approximately 12,000 companies and about 850,000 Canadians participate in the program every year.

The Payroll Savings Program is a simple and effective method to help workers save money.

Now it's been streamlined to offer increased flexibility while purchasing

the bonds through automatic payroll deduction. Key features include:

- interest earned daily on your bond purchases from the day the Bank of Canada receives your funds; and
- one-time enrollment to activate and maintain your bond purchases.

You can redeem funds in your CSB plan either by calling a toll-free number at the Bank of Canada or through the CSB website.

In addition to receiving an annual



A float in Revelstoke's B.C. Day parade was part of the town's ongoing campaign to stop the government from closing Moberly Manor.

Continuing care crisis growing

Seniors' care in British Columbia has been undergoing radical changes from the time the B.C. Liberals took over the legislature more than two years ago. They have overhauled the collective agreements of the people who care for seniors, gutted Pharmacare programs, raised rent for seniors in care, shrunk home care services and trashed long-term care.

The government is plowing ahead with a plan that so far has closed or is about to close more than 3,300 long-term care beds. This flies in the face of forecasts that say the population of seniors in B.C. will increase by 68 per cent over the next 20 years. This, despite their *New Era* commitment to build 5,000 new long-term care beds by 2006.

And it's going to get even worse, according to a confidential health ministry discussion document that contemplates cutting long-term care by as many as 5,600 beds by 2006/07 and replacing these services with assisted living units and, for the first time, with already over-burdened home support services.

The BC Health Coalition says that's

a problem, because the province's health authorities have announced plans to provide for only 3,300 assisted living units, and that's less than half of what is needed under the report's most conservative scenario.

"Even by their own assumptions, the government's seniors' care strategy is in shambles," says BCHC coordinator Terrie Hendrickson. "It's time for government to admit that it has no workable plan for seniors' care and engage in a real discussion with com-

IWA violating CLC rules

The Industrial, Wood and Allied Workers Union and its local 1-3567 are in violation of the Canadian Labour Congress' constitution as a result of its activities in B.C.'s health care system.

That's the finding of a neutral umpire appointed by the CLC to investigate a charge laid against the IWA by the Canadian Union of Public Employees – HEU's national union.

implement and will include education and training.

For example, along with the purchase of any piece of equipment the funding will cover maintenance and staff training.

Last year the FHA installed ceiling lifts in the Finlay Pavilion at Peace Arch Hospital and is evaluating the effectiveness of the lifts.

Shirley Dean Pavilion at Surrey Memorial Hospital will also be fitted with the lifts, which have been shown to reduce back and shoulder injuries among health care workers.

munities across B.C. on how to provide quality health care for our growing seniors' population."

The Seniors Network of BC co-chair Joyce Jones says the government must be held to account for their lack of planning and for the anxiety they've caused the frail elderly, the disabled and their families.

"When it comes to residential care for seniors and the disabled, this government has lost its way and we're paying the price in communities across the province," says Jones.

In fact, communities are up in arms. News stories abound of demonstrations, rallies, and town meetings that citizens are organizing to protest the closure or possible closure of long-term care facilities in their towns. Along with health care workers, they are trying to come up with alternative ideas.

But the government seems to be turning a deaf ear to the citizens of towns like Cranbrook, Dawson Creek, Revelstoke, Salmon Arm, Kamloops, Creston and Trail who care about the places where their seniors go when they need a place where they can receive the care of trained and experienced workers that they trust.

As a result of the ruling, CLC president Ken Georgetti gave the IWA an October 2 deadline to outline how it will comply with the constitution.

In his ruling September 17, umpire Victor Pathe found that the IWA and its local 1-3567 failed to respect the established work relationship HEU/ CUPE had at certain B.C. health facilities by making agreements with private contractors.

HEU secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt welcomed the ruling.

"It's critical that the trade union movement stand together in opposi-

Blackout was illuminating

The late summer power blackout in Ontario was a serious wake-up call, says the Canadian Union of Public Employees. Failed market schemes and entanglement with the U.S. electric system brought Ontarians the result long predicted by CUPE and other opponents of for-profit, deregulated power: inadequate electricity supply and widespread blackouts.

The Ontario government tried to hide deregulation pitfalls with a tax-subsidized price cap that leaves Ontarians paying private companies through the back door for higher electricity costs.

Voters didn't forget that the Ontario Tories put the reliability and stability of electricity at risk by breaking up Ontario Hydro and forcing reliance on a privatized electricity market for new supply, while sharply increasing integration with the electricity systems.

Looking across the border into a well-lit Quebec, many Ontarians saw proof that integrated public generation, transmission and distribution of electricity through one Crown company works.

tion to Victoria's agenda of contract breaking and privatization," he said. "This process also reinforces the importance of belonging to a national union," added Allnutt. "We're especially grateful for efforts made by CUPE national president Judy Darcy on behalf of HEU members."

Allnutt also thanked Larry Brown of the National Union of Provincial and Government Employees and Brooke Sundin of the United Food and Commercial Workers for their solidarity and for interventions during the hearings.

Health records for sale

This summer the Campbell government put out a request for proposals for a private company to run the information and administrative services of the province's Medical Services Plan and Pharmacare.

The MSP premium assistance program – for those who cannot afford to pay the monthly premiums – is linked to Canada Customs and Revenue Agency records. That means for poor people and seniors there is a potential for abuse, with private companies able to track their personal data including information about a person's illnesses and prescriptions. Now only security-trained and cleared government work-

ers in the B.C. Ministry of Health Services work with this information, according to the B.C. Government and Service Employees' Union.

BCGEU says the government should have learned its lesson after contracting out the temporary call centre to handle MSP 1-800 calls. The backlog of enquiries has increased substantially since then. Official statistics show that at peak times, up to 60 per cent of callers to the privatized call centre are getting busy signals. "The MSP program is our gateway to public health care and should not be privatized," said Sandy McLean, a member of the union's BCGEU provincial executive.

continued on page 6

statement of your plan you can access the details of your account at any time through the CSB website. To stop, suspend or reduce deductions you contact your employer.

It is as easy as a phone call. Canada Savings Bonds and accrued interest are fully guaranteed by the Government of Canada.

Protecting health workers' backs

The Fraser Health Authority is spending \$1.5 million to purchase lift and transfer equipment for health care facilities in its region.

The project will take two years to

Taking health care to the streets

Health care in Vancouver's downtown core is definitely 'outside the box'

Although many of us still associate health care with images of hospital buildings and walk-in clinics, in places like Vancouver's downtown core a different picture of health care work is emerging – one that includes needle exchanges, peer counseling, health outreach vans and meal programs for street-involved youth.

Our expanding definition of health care work was given a boost in recent months with two new youth-oriented certifications at Dusk to Dawn Resource Centre (a night drop-in for street youth operated by Family Services of Greater Vancouver) and the Downtown Eastside Youth Activities Society (DEYAS).

Both have helped to open up a place for young workers within HEU as well as shine a light on what many would consider cutting edge health care work.

Front-line staff at Dusk to Dawn provide a unique range of front-line services for street youth and must be age 26 or under. Many have previously lived on the streets themselves and know firsthand that supporting youth with a safe space, counseling, meals and crisis intervention is a critical element of health care work.

Our work is about trying to keep kids alive

“Our work is about trying to keep kids alive and helping them to get healthy,” says peer counselor and shop steward Lashen Orendorff. “By giving them a supportive place to regroup and talk to someone they trust, or to get a rest from street life, they become more able to work at the



Manny Cu (above left) is part of a team that is helping some of our most marginalized citizens access the health care services they need.

things that will improve their health.”

Orendorff is concerned, however, that cutbacks in welfare and residential care services is translating into more kids living on the streets.

At DEYAS, health care work is focused on helping those who want to make lifestyle changes, or leave the street, as well as promoting health and safety among those who are not able to leave their situations.

Local shop steward and community

health support worker Manny Cu, who drives the agency's health outreach van, says his program is there to “help anyone and everyone in the downtown eastside who requires medical attention.

“We assist people who are often very resistant to accessing health care on their own – people with addiction issues, for example, who may have pneumonia, infections, abscesses or other illnesses not being attended to.”

Together with a registered nurse, Cu provides a range of care including counseling, referral, needle exchanges, hospital support and sadly, attending funerals of long-time clients.

Like those working at Dusk to Dawn, DEYAS staff provide a unique type of health care support that reaches far beyond the traditional, public institutions most of us rely on for medical attention.

It's one that is largely invisible, but critical to the health needs of those living and surviving in the city's downtown core.

Dusk to Dawn and DEYAS workers join HEU members from St. James community Service Society and Central City Lodge who also provide services in Vancouver's inner city.

PATTY GIBSON

HEU COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

Livelihoods at risk, say HEU members

While nearly four out of five believe their jobs are at risk from cuts and privatizations, HEU members are divided on how to protect them, according to a summer survey filled out by more than 3,400 members across the province.

More than half of respondents said concessions should be considered in return for protection against privati-

zation and contracting out. But most aren't sure what those concessions might be and are split on whether to bargain now or wait until the expiry of the current agreement.

“These results were an important factor in the Provincial Executive's decision to authorize discussions at the local level to vary the terms of the current collective agreement until a new province-wide contract is reached,” says HEU secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt.

“It's clear that these discussions must be conducted in a way that

keeps local officers and union members at the centre of our efforts to negotiate alternatives to contracting out.”

While the survey cannot be considered statistically accurate, it did provide useful feedback to PE members as they considered the union's response to the health employers' late summer lifting of their ban on local bargaining.

And members' written responses to open-ended questions were transcribed and circulated to the entire PE.

continued from page 5

Libs' support is slip-sliding away

The B.C. Liberals' performance on health care is rated as poor by 47 per cent of British Columbians, according to a Mustel Group poll commissioned late this summer by HEU.

“Facility closures, service cuts and privatization combined with MSP and Pharmacare hikes are eroding public confidence in this government's health care reforms,” said HEU secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt. “They've discovered that the *New Era* commitment to health care

‘where and when you need it’ is an empty commitment.”

Sixty per cent say they're not persuaded by health authorities' claims that they can replace existing staff with private contractors and still maintain high quality health services. “The public understands we can't build a quality health care system by throwing thousands of skilled, experienced workers out on the street,” said Allnutt.

The buck stops here

Starbucks came off looking like a bully, and not a little silly, when it told the owners of a Queen Charlotte restaurant to change its name.

HaidaBucks is a 60-seat restaurant in Masset and has been in business – under that name – since 1999.

When Starbucks fired off a letter last spring telling the HaidaBucks owners to stop using the “confusing” variation of the Starbucks name and trademark, it quickly grew into an international story of David and Goliath proportions.

Darin Swanson, speaking for the group of owners that includes members of the Haida Nation, said they did more than defend their name when they refused to knuckle under to Starbucks' threats of a lawsuit.



“We defended our honour as indigenous peoples and our right to our heritage.”

The situation turned into a nightmare for the Seattle giant, which promotes itself as an ethical company that supports local communities and fair trade. Eventually it had to back down, handing a sweet victory to the owners of HaidaBucks.

Heed Romanow

Unions, employers agree public health care is in the collective interest of all

Unions have long been a force in the fight to save our public Medicare system. Now, in a concentrated effort to bring corporations onside and to demonstrate to them that universal health care is in the best interests of all Canadians, the leadership of the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union met with corporate heads of some of Canada's largest corporations.

This resulted in an appeal to the federal government from labour and business to put Roy Romanow's report into practice.

In letters to Jean Chrétien, CEP and the heads of Bell Canada and Abitibi Consolidated Inc. expressed alarm over the government's wishy-washy commitment to funding Medicare.

"We jointly urge your government that the federal dollars committed in the First Ministers' Accord and the

budget carry out the spirit of the Romanow report," said the joint letter from CEP national president Brian Payne and John Weaver, president and CEO of Abitibi Consolidated. Another letter signed by Payne and Michael Sabia, president of Bell Canada, expressed the same concerns to Chrétien.

Payne carried his message to boardrooms of 15 of the country's largest companies, representing the forestry, oil and gas and media industries. The message was clear. "The undermining of public Medicare transfers health care costs to workers and employers and is already resulting in labour relations strife.

"We told employers that health care will be the bargaining issue of the next decade if privatization and Medicare cutbacks continue," said Payne.

In Canada, employers are beginning to recognize that it's in the collective interest of all that health care remain a right for everyone.

Seniors' care: are banks pulling strings?

After reading through briefing notes and e-mails obtained through freedom of information requests, HEU's secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt said the provincial government had let financial institutions call the tune on its seniors' care policy.

"And while they were listening to bankers, they turned a deaf ear to seniors' and community groups and to health care workers," said Allnutt.

The notes revealed a rattled financial community threatened to pull out

of funding arrangements with long-term care homes after the Interior Health Authority announced they were going to close five care homes and other health authorities said they also planned closures. Banks suspected they would be left holding the bag if institutions were closed before their loans were paid off and threatened to stop extending mortgages for seniors' care homes. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation warned that mortgage insurance was at risk.

Deputy minister Tamara Vrooman said concessions were not given to banks, but Allnutt said the paper trail and policy changes clearly show the banks were pulling the government's strings.

VCHA's dangerous gamble

The Vancouver Coastal Health Authority is prepared to gamble with patient health by offering health care workers the chance to win \$300 in gift certificates if they don't call in sick for six months.

The VCHA is promoting a raffle as an incentive to reduce the number of sick days that stressed out staff are taking, but health care workers say that encouraging people to work when they're ill will put patients at risk.

HEU secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt said that health care workers are under enormous strain to provide care to patients and the raffle

scheme won't help. "I find this scheme shocking and disgusting," said Allnutt. "It's appalling that such an idea would be put forward. Health care executives should be focusing on improving health care delivery and reducing stress in the workplace."

City and police to monitor hospital security

Contracted out security services at Vancouver's inner city hospitals won't meet the unique protection needs of a health care environment, but they will download costs onto the municipality by putting more demands on police and other protective services.



FRED MUZIN

Public must join our fight to save Medicare

Ever since union members of the Health Care Facilities Association rejected the Tentative Framework Agreement, many health care employers have been zealously firing HEU members, primarily women, for no justifiable reason. While the original proposal capped layoffs due to contracting out to 5,000 people, we are now rapidly approaching 9,000, with many more on deck in medical transcription, maintenance and laboratory services.

The cold hearted, arrogant and ignorant manner in which many employers are treating their long-term staff is disgraceful.

Health care employers have never been particularly progressive or sensitive to their workforce prior to January 28, 2002. Bill 29, which is a powerful,

blunt instrument intended to reward the Campbell Liberals' friends by selling off our Medicare system via contracting out, permits abuse, both of the public and our members. No matter how much propaganda the government spews out, it is clear

that this Thatcher clone exercise has nothing to do with balancing budgets or receiving value for taxes. Just look at the latest ploy to replace the Abbotsford Hospital with a public-private partnership.

Successful companies understand that their most valuable asset is their investment in the skills, training and abilities of their employees. When economic times are tough, these people band together to help each other and their employer in planning for revival. Intelligent bosses in B.C. should be having a field day by hiring displaced, fully-trained, experienced and committed health care workers who really care about their work.

The damage done to the public by the Liberals' privatizing and dismantling of Medicare may prove to be beyond repair. Once services are treated as commodities, they become subject to trade rules under NAFTA, the GATS and the WTO and nearly impossible to regain as public services.

While thousands of health care support workers are considering accepting massive concessions in order to keep our services public and protect quality care for patients and residents, Canadians as a whole must wake up to the war being waged against our seniors, the poor, the disabled and those prepared to advocate on their behalf. We cannot rely solely on the democratic election process in 2005 with MLAs who have no regard for democracy and no accountability for the long-term impact of their shortsighted ideological agenda. Enough is enough. We must increase solidarity and take dramatic disruptive action. If not, we will become as complicit as health care employers and as guilty as the perpetrators of the injustice.



Roger Kishi warned Vancouver's City Council and police board about privatizing hospital security.

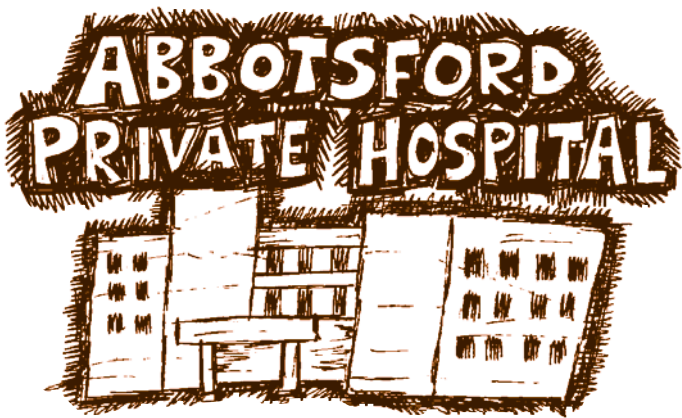
That was the message health care workers at St. Paul's Hospital and Vancouver General Hospital took to Vancouver's police board and city council in mid-September.

After hearing a joint presentation from Roger Kishi (HEU), Charline

Hooper (BCNU) and Tonya McLaughlin (HSA), police and council both agreed to watchdog the situation.

Council also agreed to communicate its concerns about contracted out security to the boards of Vancouver Coastal Health and Providence Healthcare.

Despite warnings from doctors, nurses and other health care workers who called for the preservation of their in-house security teams, the health authorities awarded a \$23 million contract for security services to Paladin Security Group in mid-August. Approximately 200 security officers will lose their jobs in October and November.



Here come the Privatization Poachers

They've formed themselves into groups called consortia, one of which might build B.C.'s first private hospital by 2008

2001

Spring NDP government approves new, public health facility in Abbotsford.

August Campbell government hires PricewaterhouseCoopers to evaluate P3 hospital option.

October 19 HEU exposes Victoria's plans for a private hospital deal.

October 23 Health minister says Fraser Valley residents won't be forced to accept private hospital.

December 10 HEU files first of several FOI requests re: private hospital.

2002

March 18 PWC report finds cost savings of less than one per cent over 30 years with private hospital deal.

April 4 HEU engages forensic auditor Ron Parks to review PWC report.

May 8 Parks' review concludes that data used was "suspect."

November 13 Premier announces that new Abbotsford hospital will be a P3.

2003

January 23 Government issues expression of interest for Abbotsford Hospital and Cancer Centre.

May 27 Government announces four short-listed bidders.

August 21 HEU poll shows 58 per cent oppose P3 hospitals, highways, schools.

September 29 Government issues request for proposals.

2004

April Selection of final two bidders.

September - December Selection of successful bidder, final contract.

2008

March Occupancy of facility.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT
www.heu.org

If the track records of the four international consortia invited to bid on the Abbotsford public-private partnership hospital project are any indication, the odds are stacked against taxpayers and patients. The profiles paint a disturbing picture of the potential risks of the provincial government's privatization plans for health care.

On September 30, Partnerships British Columbia – the government agency responsible for public-private partnerships – issued a request for proposals for the Abbotsford Hospital and Cancer Centre P3 to the short-listed consortia: the Vancouver Health Care Group; Access Health Abbotsford; the Fraser Valley Health Partnership and the Healthcare Infrastructure Company of Canada.

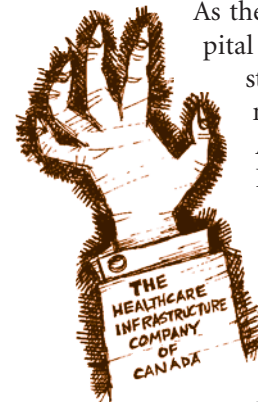
The RFP reveals that taxpayers will be on the hook with the successful bidder for a 33-year contract worth at least \$1.2 billion. And it appears that Victoria is also prepared to make sweeping changes to labour laws to sweeten the deal. Initial project costs have already increased by more than 40 per cent from \$210 million to \$300 million with no increase in bed capacity. Annual service payments to the winning consortium are estimated at \$40 million – double the amount projected last year.

Those payments will come out of the operating budget of the Fraser Health Authority. The project was bumped from the government's capital spending plans in the last budget.

"It's a major long-term commitment of scarce health care dollars," said HEU secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt. "But some of the revelations contained in the profiles we're releasing today will have the public wondering if it's money well-spent or an irresponsible gamble.

"With the failure of the Coquihalla P3, this government is desperate to sign on the dotted line with one of these consortia for the Abbotsford Hospital P3," said Allnutt.

Healthcare Infrastructure Company of Canada



As the winner of Ontario's two hospital deals, the Healthcare Infrastructure Company of Canada may be the favourite for the Abbotsford project.

HICC is Borealis Infrastructure Management Inc., Carillon Canada Inc. and EllisDon Corporation with Carillion, the Compass Group and the Oxford Properties Group providing facilities management, EllisDon and Carillion providing construction and CIT Structured Finance and BMO Nesbitt Burns for financing.

Carillion Plc, parent of Carillion Canada, is a major U.K. PFI (Private Finance Initiative) and general construction company. It's involved in several controversial PFI hospital projects there, including Swindon's Great West Hospital and the Dartford Hospital where cost overruns and poor facility design top the list of problems.

The Compass Group is one of the world's largest contracted-out service companies with \$22 billion in revenue annually. Already known in B.C., its workers in several Vancouver-area hospitals are paid \$9.50 an hour. Compass subsidiary Medirect was caught up in a public outcry over cleanliness and infection control standards in Glasgow hospitals.

Borealis was a key player in Nova Scotia's ill-fated P3 school scheme – a plan that a newly-elected Tory government dumped in 2000 because the schools grew too costly.

Until 2002, CIT Structured Finance and its parent, the CIT Group, were part of scandal-plagued Tyco International Ltd. whose former top executives face allegations of looting the conglomerate of more than US\$600 million. The CIT Group has been caught in the Tyco fallout and now faces a class action lawsuit launched on behalf of shareholders.

Ontario's privatization: Cancel the deals, CUPE tells premier-elect McGuinty

CUPE, the Ontario Public Service Employees' Union, the Service Employees' International Union and the Ontario Health Coalition went to newly-minted Liberal Premier Dalton McGuinty to cancel two P3 contracts signed by the defeated Conservative government for new privately-financed, -owned and -operated hospitals in Brampton and Ottawa.

"It won't cost a penny to cancel

these contracts, but it will cost tens of millions if they don't," said CUPE national president Judy Darcy. "It's time for pre-election McGuinty to take a firm stand against the privatization of our health care system."

During the campaign, McGuinty repeatedly stated his opposition to health care privatization but remained unwilling to promise that he'd break any P3 contracts signed

before the election, claiming he needed to see the deals first because it may be too expensive to get out of them.

"Even if there were a penalty for canceling the deal," said Darcy, "it would cost the people of Ontario far less than the cost of lining the pockets of the private consortium shareholders over the 60 years of the lease."

In late September, CUPE, OPSEU and the Ontario Health Coalition filed a court challenge to quash any P3 deals that had been signed for the Royal Ottawa Hospital and the William Osler Health Centre in Brampton. The group argues that the contracts contravene the province's *Public Hospitals Act*. If the courts cancel the deals, no penalties associated with them would have to be paid.

Vancouver Health Care Group

Vancouver Health Care Group is Aramark Canada Ltd.; Acon Buildings of Acon Construction Group Inc., as well as sister company Turner Construction; and Acon Group Inc. plus Gibralt Capital Corporation, supported by TD Securities, providing finance.

Aramark is a global leader in public service privatization and in July won a \$100 million, five-year lucrative contract to clean Vancouver-area hospitals. Aramark's CEO Joseph Neubauer banked US\$4.2 million in salary and stock options last year. Aramark housekeepers in B.C. hospitals start at \$9.25 an hour.

The *St. Petersburg Times* exposed problems in the company's food service operations in Florida state prisons that led to fines of more than US\$100,000.

Aramark donated US\$44,500 to Jeb Bush's 2002 gubernatorial campaign.



The Manitoba auditor general has identified the company's role in a food services project for Winnipeg hospitals that experienced significant cost overruns.

VHCG's construction and finance expertise comes from Acon Group Inc. which has a majority stake in the consortium that built Ontario's 407 toll highway. A recent C.D. Howe Institute report raised safety concerns related to cost cutting in engineering and design decisions and says the jury's still out on whether the project provided value for money.

Acon is a major player in a controversial Israeli highway project that some reports say could uproot 6,000 Arab families in 75 communities.

Acon's largest shareholder, Hochtief AG, faces criminal charges in Lesotho for its role in a consortium that allegedly paid more than US\$700,000 in bribes to obtain World Bank projects for water infrastructure.

Acon provided major political donations to former Ontario premier Mike Harris.

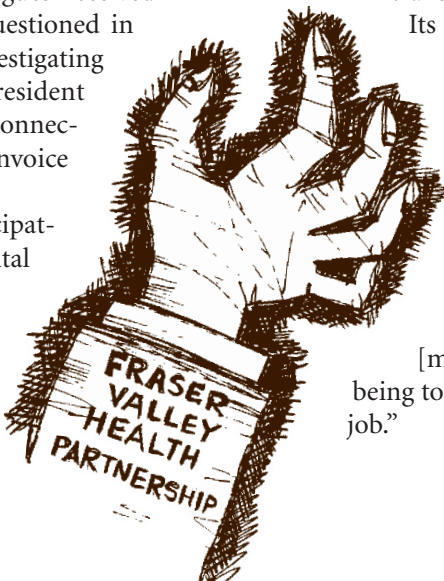
In another – the West Middlesex University Hospital – nursing staff have been up in arms and six have resigned because of a "catalogue of errors" including design faults and poor staffing levels.

Stuart Olson Construction is a successful Canadian company that donated \$2,550 to the B.C. Liberals' 2001 election campaign. The Independent Contractors and Business Association, to which the company is affiliated, donated more than \$155,000.

Macquarie Canada is the Canadian arm of the Macquarie Bank of Australia. They have a stake in the Highway 407 toll road in Toronto and provided P3 advice for Vancouver's RAV rapid transit project.

Its 10 highest paid executives earned \$27 million last year.

The company is digging itself out of a PR disaster over its ownership of a Birmingham toll road set to open next year. A senior Macquarie executive boasted the company "can put up the tolls by whatever we like," and "if [motorists] don't complain about it being too high, then we haven't done our job."



Fraser Valley Health Partnership

The Fraser Valley Health Partnership is the French construction firm Bouygues and its subsidiaries Ecovert FM to cover facility management, Bouygues Bâtiment Canada and Stuart Olson Construction to cover construction, and the Macquarie Group for financing.

Bouygues – the fourth largest construction group in the world with 2002 sales of \$35.6 billion – also provides support services through Ecovert.

In addition to \$3.2 million in salary, bonuses and director's fees, CEO Martin Bouygues received lucrative stock options. He was questioned in 1996 by a French magistrate investigating alleged corruption. Ex-vice-president Jacques Dupuydauby was jailed in connection with an investigation for invoice forgeries and misuse of funds.

Ecovert FM/Bouygues U.K. participated in three London-area P3 hospital deals.

In one scheme – the Barnet Hospital redevelopment – more than eight per cent of the project value went to consultants.



Fraser Valley residents have led the campaign to replace Abbotsford's MSA Hospital, because Victoria's privatization scheme will only result in second-class care, more cost to taxpayers and lucrative profits for the private developers.

Access Health Abbotsford

Access Health Abbotsford consists of Brookfield Lepage Johnson Controls (BLJC), the Canadian branch of ABN Amro Bank, N.V., and PCL Construction Group.

BLJC, a joint venture partnership between U.S.-based Johnson Controls and Brookfield Properties of Toronto, is the recipient of numerous federal contracts including \$219 million per year to manage over 280 Crown buildings.

Brookfield Properties is a major player in the North American commercial real estate market.

Johnson Controls, a major facilities management and system controls company with 113,000 employees and over US\$20 billion in revenue in 2002, has business interests in over 2,000 hospitals. In 2002, the company's board chair James H. Keyes received US\$15,880,076 in total compensation.

Amsterdam-based ABN Amro Bank N.V. is the world's 14th largest bank. It is linked to the failed privatization of the Latrobe Regional Hospital in Traralgon, Australia where the bank and its partners racked up millions in losses and launched a lawsuit against the state government. When the partnership unwound, the hospital and its employees were taken back into public hands.

PCL Construction Group Inc. of Edmonton is one of Canada's most successful construction companies. In 2001 it racked up CAN\$3.2 billion in billings. Prominent projects include the controversial private/public partnership schools in Nova Scotia and phase two of the private Cambie Surgical Centre in Vancouver. In 2002, PCL donated \$33,740.00 to the B.C. Liberal Party.



Light at end of tunnel for pay equity

Canada's longest-running pay equity case celebrated its 20th anniversary this year, but the good news is there is light at the end of the tunnel. The Human Rights Tribunal heard final arguments from the PSAC/Union of Postal Communications Employees and Canada Post over 11 days this summer. The union filed the complaint under the *Canadian Human Rights Act* in 1983. Hearings started in 1992, running for more than 400 days. The tribunal is expected to take about a year to make its decision.

Union Update/PSAC/CALM

Boss wins, workers lose

Unions serious about organizing the unorganized know that when workers don't have to face the boss's full-court anti-union press, most will vote to unionize.

But an unfortunate tradition in the labour movement called the "sweetheart contract" appears to be making a comeback.

Hallmarks of sweetheart contracts are: a backroom deal negotiated by union officials, without workers' involvement or, sometimes, even their knowledge; terms favourable to the company; often, the employer's desire to be "protected" from another, less compliant union.

Unions involved in such deals say the low wages they agree to are only a "foot in the door," but they often sign away their right to bargain better terms in the future.

July 2003 LaborNotes

Martin company told to obey law

Some say it is a forgone conclusion that Paul Martin will succeed Jean Chrétien as Canada's next prime minister. That's not good news for Canadian workers or taxpayers. The record of his association with Canadian Steamship Lines (CSL) demonstrates that when it comes to making a profit, Martin is not above circumnavigating the rules.

When Martin took CSL international back in 1992, it meant that he didn't have to pay taxes on profits funneled through foreign shell companies. It also meant Canadian seafarers lost their jobs to foreign crews on ships that flew these "flags of convenience."

Four years ago, CSL International added several Australian ships to its fleet. After three years "down under," CSL got into trouble by trying to take advantage of a loophole in Australian maritime labour law that allows foreign freighters – and their crews – to work in domestic waters if no domestic ship or crew is available.

According to Paddy Crumlin, head of the Maritime Union of Australia, "They basically took an Australian ship [the *CSL Yarra*], sacked the crew, took the Australian flag off and put the Bahamas flag on."

"And then [CSL] said, 'Oh look! There's no longer an Australian ship available, let's use this ship – which was our ship – with a foreign crew.'"

The fired crew barricaded themselves on board the ship, and Australia's maritime unions took the shipping company to court, arguing that it was undermining the jobs of



The crew of the *CSL Yarra* staged a sit-in aboard ship after they were fired in favour of foreign seafarers.

Australian maritime workers.

The High Court agreed with the unions, ruling that it didn't matter what flag a ship flies, or where the crew comes from. If it is in Australian waters, it has to observe Australian laws governing wages and labour standards – something CSL was not doing.

Here in Canada, as Martin gets ever closer to his dream, he has had to hand over control of CSL to his three sons, something many felt he should have done long ago.

Back in 1992, Canada's auditor general was going after Canadian businesses that were funneling profits through tax havens – saying hundreds of millions of tax dollars were being lost while ordinary Canadians were paying their taxes.

A year later, as the new minister of finance, Martin proclaimed, "Certain Canadian corporations are not paying an appropriate level of tax. Accordingly we are taking measures to prevent companies from using foreign affiliates to avoid paying Canadian taxes which are otherwise due."

He didn't shut them all down, though. He kept Barbados open for Canadian business, and that's where CSL went. They set up nine shell companies there, eight of them at the same address and a tax rate most Canadian businesses would envy: 2.5 per cent. But after Martin left the finance ministry, clearing the way for his leadership race, the new minister followed the auditor general's advice and closed the Barbados loophole.



MARTIN



Seniors were also the target of a few Liberal election promises

Seniors living in fear – it's a crime

Gordon Campbell gave his word to health care workers in these very pages that they would be okay under a Liberal government.

Once in office, it didn't take him long to start breaking that promise. Health care workers were betrayed.

The Liberal health agenda is being carried out by the health authorities that are headed by appointees who are accountable to no one but their masters in Victoria. The *New Era* promise? "Ensure that appointees to regional health boards are representative of their communities' needs and accountable for their performance in meeting provincial health standards." HEU had to haul them to court to open their meetings to the public – and they are still not complying one hundred per cent.

The province's seniors were also the target of a few Liberal election promises, and they too have reason to feel betrayed. They have really had the rug pulled out from

under them. Pharmacare used to be a universal program. Now seniors have to go through an intimidating and what many of them consider a degrading process of filling out a bunch of forms to prove they deserve help from Pharmacare to pay for medicine they need to stay as healthy as possible. Or alive.

Home care services have been reduced, and sometimes with no reason given other than the government is cutting costs. This is despite another *New Era* promise to "provide better home support and home care services."

And it is criminal that although many seniors are standing up and fighting these attacks, there are many others who are afraid – really afraid – to speak up and complain about the cuts they may personally be experiencing. They think if they complain too loudly, they may be noticed and have even more taken away from them.

That is a crime.

DALE FULLER • COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

Cut overtime pay, says Bush

Enough Republican Senators broke rank with their boss, American president George W. Bush, to sabotage his proposal to take overtime protections away from more than eight million workers.

A Republican attempt to hold the vote when many Democrats would be out of town was successively blocked by Tom Harkin, a Democrat from Iowa who sponsored the amendment on the proposal to gut the protections guaranteed in the U.S. under the *Fair Labor Standards Act*.

Bush may still prevail in his crusade to raid American worker's paycheques, when the Senate sends the amended proposal to a joint House of Representatives/Senate committee, where it will be combined with a version already passed by the House – without an amendment to protect workers' entitlement to overtime pay. The committee will then present the bill to Congress for a vote.

Spokespersons for Bush say the president will veto the bill if it includes the Harkin amendment.

A recent survey commissioned by the AFL-CIO found that three in four Americans oppose the Bush administration's proposal to eliminate several million employees' right to overtime pay, and opposition is overwhelming regardless of political affiliation, race, income or geographic region. By 17 to one, the public believes that federal laws governing overtime should be changed to cover *more employees* rather than fewer employees, while 38 per cent support current coverage.

Bush says his proposal will affect 644,000 workers, but the Economic Policy Institute says the number is closer to eight million. Those likely to be affected would include nurses, firefighters and retail clerks.

If Bush does veto the bill, it will take a two-thirds majority of both houses to override him.

From the AFL-CIO

Women occupy suit factory

Argentinean police evict them after 16 months

After Argentina's economy imploded in late 2001, the owners of many factories simply closed up shop leaving their employees high and dry.

At the Brukman factory, a manufacturer of men's suits in Buenos Aires, the workers received no notice or back wages when the bosses simply didn't show one day. They didn't even have bus fare to get home, so they stayed for 16 months.

The 57 mostly middle-aged female garment workers – who call themselves *Las Leonas*, the Lionesses – knew occupying the factory was a radical move, but the situation could not have been more desperate.

And it was not so unusual on the face of it. In fact, 10,000 Argentinean workers took over 200 workplaces and formed co-operatives in the midst of the country's deep economic crisis.

"Here in Buenos Aires, every week brings news of a new occupation: a

four-star hotel now run by its cleaning staff, a supermarket taken by its clerks, a regional airline about to be turned into a cooperative by the pilots and attendants," wrote Canadian journalist Naomi Klein in the British newspaper, *The Guardian*.

The government sanctioned the co-operatives, and deemed them to belong to the workers if they agreed to pay for their workplaces and take on the debts of the previous owners.

Las Leonas said, "No way, we won't pay."

They learned how to run a garment factory, organizing production of the shop floor, negotiating new contracts and paying the bills.

But just days before this spring's presidential election, 600 police stormed the building and ejected the women. Three days later, four of the women, backed by thousands of supporters, attempted to retake their workplace, resulting in many injured

and many more under arrest.

The workers felt that the timing was no coincidence and was staged to boost the chances of presidential candidate Carlos Menem, a friend of the Brukmans.

Menem was defeated, but the new Argentinean president, Néstor Kirchner, although considered to be the workers' friend, is leaving the Brukman workers out in the cold and sent the matter to the courts.

Since April *Las Leonas* have been camped outside the gates of the factory with their sewing machines, making sheets and clothing for the needy. Inside policemen stand guard. They are all waiting for the courts to decide whether the factory is legally bankrupt – clearing the way for government expropriation – one of the workers' demands, along with reinstatement of their employment with decent wages and decent working conditions.

Las Leonas said, "No way, we won't pay"



maquila
solidarity
network

Improvements at MEC

Thanks to the Maquila Solidarity Network (MSN) and other groups, Canadian outdoors sportswear retailer Mountain Equipment Co-op (MEC) has launched a new sourcing policy that will hold its suppliers to higher labour standards and introduce some public reporting on the results of factory monitoring.

Over the past year, MSN has been consulting with MEC about possible improvements in its code of conduct and factory monitoring system.

Although MEC's new sourcing policy brings the co-op's labour standards more in line with International Labour Organization conventions on issues like freedom of association, collective bargaining rights and hours of work, its public reporting program does not yet provide enough information to identify common worker rights violations or to track steps taken to improve practices.

Update/Maquila Solidarity Network/CALM



Allende was determined to transform our society

Thirty years ago, another September 11

The people of Chile remember President Salvador Allende with special affection as a man who loved and respected his people, and who 30 years ago on September 11 gave his life defending them.

It's not too hard to remember the day that changed forever the lives of 10 million people. I was getting ready for school when the radio and TV announced that a military coup was in progress.

Allende spoke to the nation from the Moneda Palace. "This radio station will be silenced and my quiet voice will no longer reach you. But it does not matter; you will continue to hear it. I will always be with you, remembered as a man of dignity who was loyal to his people," he said.

The coup leader, General Augusto Pinochet, demanded Allende's resignation, but the answer was firm.

"I am going to defend the mandate that the people of Chile gave to me. I am going to fight and die if necessary

defending the democratic rights and freedoms of our people."

The Air Force bombed the presidential palace and President Allende was killed, ending three years of the democratically-elected Popular Unity government.

Enjoying the support of workers, unions, intellectuals, students and progressive sectors of the middle class and the Catholic church, Allende was determined to transform our society. That included agrarian reform and the nationalization of American-held copper mines. This enraged Chile's rich and the foreign investors. Abetted by the American government, they sabotaged the economy, setting up the conditions to justify a military coup.

Now Chileans have an elected government again, but they are still waiting for answers about the fate of thousands who disappeared or were executed under Pinochet's dictatorship after that other fateful September 11.

MAGNOLIA VILLALOBOS • ECG TECHNICIAN II

Thousands rally for Port Alberni hospital

Thousands of Port Alberni residents rallied outside MLA Gillian Trumper's constituency office on September 25 to demand an end to the cutbacks that are threatening West Coast General Hospital (WCGH) and other health care services in the region. Police estimated the crowd of seniors, health care workers, residents and union members at 4,000.

The protest rally was called to fight plans by the Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) to close hospital beds and move surgical services to Nanaimo. Speaker after speaker condemned government cutbacks and VIHA's actions, calling for an end to



KAREN BODEN PHOTO

the attack on Port Alberni's health care services.

But if those messages were in danger of falling on deaf ears, the sudden collapse of rally participant Henry Nedergard, a long time health care advocate and unionist,

underscored Port Alberni's need for responsive, quality health care services. Nedergard was whisked away by ambulance after his collapse and taken to the very hospital that's at risk of losing vital services and bed capacity.

Taking a leap

Diving from a plane at 10,000 feet on a sunny day in Abbotsford might not be everyone's idea of how to jumpstart a weekend, but for six HEU members who took the plunge on September 13 – it was awesome. And it went a long way toward raising funds for the 18th annual Aids Walk, held the following weekend.

Organized by HEU's Lesbian and Gay Standing Committee, the first annual Sky is the Limit fundraiser raised more than \$1000 from pledges gathered by the jumpers and a day-long, on-site barbeque for spectators.

The participants, who generously paid for their own jumps, included Thom

Marshall, Kiwanis Care Centre; Victor Elkins, Children and Women's Hospital; Brenda Whitehall, HEU Provincial Office; Ria Reutemann, Western Human Resources; Erin Antle, HEU family member and Sandra Currie, Kiwanis Care Centre.

A team of HEU members and supporters also joined the September 21 Aids Walk, which drew more than 7,000 citizens and raised almost half a million dollars.

Retirement seminars

The Municipal Pension Plan is holding its retirement seminars this fall and winter. The schedule is on the <www.pensionsbc.ca> website, click on Municipal Pension Plan on the left-hand side of the page

BALANCING IT ALL

CHRIS MONTGOMERY

With her community hemorrhaging its life blood, **YVONNE LATTIE** took a stand and was joined by many others, including her 18-year-old daughter and 73-year-old mother.

THERE'S NO CHOICE BUT TO FIGHT

IT WAS CLEAR in an instant that the strongest way to stand up for her community was simple "no."

Yvonne Lattie stood in the warm, mid-August sun outside the sawmill in Carnaby. She was chained between two vehicles, carefully watching as police worked the crowd of protestors. The workers were asking for an end to the dismantling of their idled sawmill; the police just wanted them to go home.

As officers approached her, Lattie knew without thinking that she would say no. She suspected that the power of her refusal would give the others the strength to refuse too.

It did.

Two men were arrested in the August 9 protest, but the blockade succeeded. And for Lattie, like the rest of the citizens of the communities surrounding Hazelton, the lesson had been learned – strength in unity, belief in their own power.

The mill, formerly owned by Skeena Cellulose, has been idle for more than two years since it was bailed out by the provincial government and sold to NWBC Timber and Pulp. Protests began in earnest in late July, when the company attempted to remove heavy equipment and begin dismantling the mill and selling it off in pieces.

The 100 workers, members of Local 404 of the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers' Union,



Yvonne Lattie and the townspeople of New Hazelton had no option but to try and stop the dismantling of the old Skeena Cellulose pulp mill.

are demanding the owners find a buyer who can operate the mill and save the surrounding communities, the workers' jobs and their families.

Lattie, a lifelong resident of New Hazelton and a worker at the mill for 17 years, says there's no choice but to win. "The mill means employment to our community," she says. "With our fibre flowing out of the community, and whole logs being exported or sent to other mills, it's depriving our community of a way of surviving.

"We have a 95 per cent unemployment rate. This community has put all its eggs in one basket – forestry. That basket has been dropped and all the eggs are cracked.

"(If the mill disappears), we have nothing to look forward to," says Lattie, who, like her husband,

worked as a lumber grader. "I have such a love for my people, both the Gitksan and the non-Gitksan, and I'm seeing my people suffer. Many of them have lost their homes, their vehicles. Many have had to move.

"It's really difficult on families. There's all kinds of abuse now – alcohol, drug abuse, sexual abuse, verbal – it all stems from depressed people.

"You have people with a Grade 3 education who have been able to move from mill to mill, learn their jobs and work their way up the ladder, where they're 30 to 40 years with the mill. And now they're told they have to retrain, and they have to learn to read and write before they can even begin to start that."

Which is why, that sunny morning, Lattie found herself wrapped in cable and padlocked to two cars. Tipped off that more equipment was to be hauled from the mill, Lattie and others worked through the night erecting teepees to block the mill's two entrances, pounding the last nail at six the next morning.

As Lattie ran home to pick up her 18-year-old daughter in nearby Hazelton, she spotted tow trucks on the highway. In a frenzy, she screamed at her daughter to grab some cables and the two sped back to the mill. Lattie chained herself between two vehicles blocking access to the mill; her daughter cabled herself inside one teepee.

And then police arrived and began asking people to leave. Lattie found herself saying no. Her daughter, still chained in a teepee about to be bulldozed, said no. Her 73-year-old mother, who suddenly hauled herself into position in front of Lattie with the help of her walker, said no too. The crowd of protestors, which had grown well over 70, stood their ground, taking their cue from three generations of women determined to save their community.

Their struggle has been noted.

Joy Langdon, CEP National rep, says, "Without the courage of people like Yvonne and her mother, these struggles would all be lost.

For Lattie, the issue of community activism cuts even deeper than courage.

"We have to decide what matters most," she says firmly. "The almighty dollar – or life?"

and it will take you to the schedule. The seminars began in September, and continue on into December. Changes were made to the schedule to take the Okanagan fires into account.

MPP recommends that members who are within five years of retirement attend the seminars to aid them in their retirement planning. Those intending to attend should fill out the application which is also on the website. Seminars are of about three hours duration.

A spring 2004 schedule will be posted on the website sometime in October.

Meanwhile, a group of MPP retirees formed a new association to promote the rights and interests of their mem-

bers. They've called it the Municipal Pension Plan Retired Employees Association and held their first annual general meeting in September in Penticton. Anyone interested in joining should call Steven Polak at 250-768-6769 or Keith Wilson at 604-589-5767.



Shaking 'em up at Under the Volcano

HEU's booth at this summer's Under the Volcano festival attracted a good deal of interest from other unions, the public and HEU members.

The festival is an annual event that celebrates culture, music and the practice of

political resistance.

The most gratifying queries, according to HEU temporary organizer Doug Herasymuik, were from youth who work in retail or telecommunications jobs and wanted to know about organizing unions.

He passed their names on to the appropriate unions' organizers.

It was an all-day event, and Herasymuik and Lashen Orendorff, from the new Dusk to Dawn certification, passed out Frisbees, bubbles and HEU stickers.

At the Under the Volcano festival, HEU's stickers were a big hit – passed out by Doug Herasymuik and Dusk to Dawn local shop steward, Lashen Orendorff.

Training for LPNs available

An increase of \$1.7 million over last year's \$5 million budget for nursing strategies is available for LPN training.

And HEU secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt is encouraging all LPNs to take advantage of the needed educational opportunities these funds provide.

HEU has persistently lobbied for stronger educational support for B.C.'s LPNs through such avenues as the government's Nursing Advisory Committee and the Nursing Human Resource Working Group.

continued on page 14

AFTER THE SHIFT

PATTY GIBSON

Playing for "old folks" meant **PETER CAMPBELL** had to learn the music that brings tears and smiles

OLD-TIME TUNER

PETE CAMPBELL'S PASSION for music and love for "the old folks" are becoming something of a phenomenon at various long-term care homes throughout the Lower Mainland. When he's not on shift at Little Mountain Place, or playing the clubs with one of his two bands, "the singing janitor" straps on his acoustic guitar and brings some of the old tunes to life for what he considers to be his most appreciative audiences – seniors, who don't hesitate to sing along, shed a tear, or share a memory that has been sparked by the music.

"It's not unusual to have a person come up to me at the end of a show in tears because they've enjoyed a particular song that much," he says. "People just light up when you play what they love – unlike nightclub audiences which tend to be a bit standoffish."

Pete's been a second-generation member of HEU since 1978 when his mother, Carole Campbell, suggested he leave a job at McDonald's to work at Aberdeen Hospital on Vancouver Island. At the time he was 17 and Carole was a strong member of the union who a few years later went on to become a member of HEU's Provincial Executive.

The idea of playing for the seniors he supported, however, didn't present itself until several years later when a new resident to Little Mountain Place brought along his guitar when he moved in. Although the resident could no longer play, the guitar's presence in the special care unit inspired Pete to pick it up and play a few tunes. Before long, he was performing at facility birthday parties, pub days and other special events he'd participated in, but had never considered playing.

From there he learned 150 old-time songs and



PATTY GIBSON PHOTO

Musician Peter Campbell, also known as the "singing janitor," devotes much of his off-shift time to playing tunes seniors love to hear.

started playing a new circuit – one that brought his work world and his "after the shift" world together.

"There are many thankless jobs in this world," he muses, "but singing to the old folks is definitely not one of them."

These days, when he's not working, or entertaining at a local long-term care facility, or playing for a protest rally, you might catch Pete at a local venue playing with his acoustic band *Pete Campbell and His So-Called Friends* or the punk/pop band *The Sweaters*.

Or perhaps you've run into him before and just didn't know it. He and union brother Keith Richards facilitated a workshop at HEU's summer school in 2002, where they wrote the song *This union don't mind walking* (sung to the tune of *These boots are made for walking*).

As for booking Pete at your facility – it's easy. Contact him on e-mail at <bosspop@hotmail.com>.

Accenture – the company associated in many people's minds with the Enron scandal through its previous incarnation as accounting firm Andersen Consulting – has its fingers

in a lot of pots, including B.C. Hydro. Now, it is allied with election.com, a company that according to its

website "provides complete election management solutions – voter registration and database management, poll site and remote electronic voting, advance security solutions, accurate tabulation, and custom demographic reporting for political jurisdictions and private sector clients." They are clearly playing on the fear of the chaos created by the last presidential elections in the United States, but using this type of service could erase the public's ability to scrutinize or question any election results.

Researchers at the John Hopkins School of Public Health have found that Americans receive lower levels of health care service than most other developed countries, despite the fact that health care costs in the U.S. lead the world. The study found that patients in the U.S. spend less time with doctors and in hospitals than in other countries.

Labor Notes/CALM

There are dozens of websites devoted to exposing Wal-Mart's anti-union tactics.

Some of the best are:

<www.walmartyrs.com>

<www.walmartwatch.com>

<www.therighttochoose.com>

The Voice/UFCW 1977/CALM

continued from page 13

The strategy's components include:

- \$100,000 for pharmacology education for LPNs, up from last year's allotment of \$20,000;
- \$800,000 for recruitment of non-practicing nurses (including LPNs) and grants to help individuals complete academic and ESL courses;
- \$3 million (\$500,000 for each health authority) for specialty and continuing education.

Given each health authority's autonomy in directing how these funds will be spent, however, LPNs are encouraged to lobby at their local level to ensure they are included in any initia-

tives for nurses.

For more information, check <www.healthplanning.gov.bc.ca/ndirect/index.html> or contact Janice Murphy, HEU research analyst, at jmurphy@heu.org; telephone: 604-456-7040.

Sally Ann turns back on workers

When health care workers from Sunset Lodge, a Victoria seniors' care home run by the Salvation Army, showed up at Sally Ann's Burnaby headquarters to talk to divisional commander Lieut-Colonel Don Copple, he called the RCMP.

After an earlier request for a meeting had been ignored, the workers, set to lose their jobs two days



Salvation Army Lieut-Colonel Don Copple told Sunset Lodge workers he would not meet with them.

later, felt they had no choice but to demand a meeting face-to-face.

Looking down on the health care workers from the reception-area staircase, Copple informed them that he had called the police.

The decision to lay them off was a "done deal" and it was no use trying to talk to him, he said.

"Most of us have worked for you for years," said Brenda Jordison, the chair of the Sunset Lodge local. "We have been the ones to care for the people who come to you for help. We think you owe us at least five minutes of your time."

Copple said he would not break contracts that he had

signed with the private company, but was silent when asked about breaking contracts with his own employees.

HEU members to be polled

This fall HEU members may get a call from the Mustell Group, who will be seeking union members' views on a variety of issues.

If you choose to participate in the survey, your responses will be completely confidential.

HEU has been using the Mustell group to help sound out what union members as well as the public think or feel about many issues over the years.

OCTOBER

NOVEMBER

DECEMBER

OCTOBER 27-31

CUPE National Convention, Québec City, Québec

NOVEMBER 11

Remembrance Day, HEU offices closed

NOVEMBER 12

Deadline for credentials and hotel accommodation forms for 2004 HEU Wage Policy Conference

NOVEMBER 20

Transgender Day of Remembrance

NOVEMBER 21-23

NDP Convention, Vancouver

NOVEMBER 24-26

B.C. Federation of Labour Policy Convention, Vancouver Convention Centre

DECEMBER 1

World AIDS Day

DECEMBER 6

National Day of Remembrance

DECEMBER 11

Deadline for proposed bargaining demands for 2004 HEU Wage and Policy Conference

DECEMBER 25-26

Christmas and Boxing Day HEU offices closed

Few are sharing fruits of struggle

Immigrant women are playing a pivotal part in the "new world economy" according to *Global Woman: nannies, maids and sex workers in the new economy*.

One of the editors of the book, renowned American feminist Barbara Ehrenreich, said at the launch of the book in Scotland that the benefits of American feminism have been paid for by the enslavement of poor migrant women.

She contends that there is a new "servant culture" in the western world that is instilling racism in its children, while destroying families in the developing world.

That is the thread that runs through *Global Woman*. Seventeen essayists look at how the dynamics of the current world economic system are playing out on the ground – and that means in the women's homes in the developing world and the homes where they work.

It also examines the whole business of mail-order brides and the world of the brothels that are an important piece in the economic machinery of several countries.

"Imperialism used to extract gold and other resources," says Ehrenreich. "Now we are taking love from the poorer countries."

The women who come to work in the homes of the economically-privileged parts of the world are often thought of as "part of the family," but that is no guarantee against instant dismissal.

And immigrant workers who are part of the household are often required to live up to petty and dictatorial demands – like rules about when they can bathe, rules against getting their laundry mixed up with the family's laundry, when the lights must be turned off, etc.

Transgress the rules and a nanny or maid who comes from another country can be out on the street with zero notice.

Ehrenreich says feminism has failed poor and migrant women. "We thought entirely in terms of reforming men, which hasn't worked yet," she says.

Failing that, it became a trend for Western families to contract out the domestic chores to an army of invisible women who care for their children, clean their homes and cook their meals.

Governments often collude with the trade in domestic ser-

vants. That's because the money sent home to families is a significant contributor to the national gross domestic product of some countries. For example, one of the contributing writers, Rhacel Salazar Parreñas, says 34 to 54 per cent of the Filipino population is sustained by remittances from abroad.

BOOK

Global Woman

Edited by
Barbara Ehrenreich and
Arlie Russell Hochschild

reviewed by Dale Fuller

The damage done to children and families left behind is deep and is well-documented in this collection of essays. How many western families whose children are being cared for lovingly by a nanny know that she very probably left her own children in the care of her mother, sister or unemployed husband and will perhaps see them only two or three times, if at all, during their growing-up years?

They leave because they are poor, and in leaving, their own family has a chance at survival.

And this is true whether they go as domestic servants, nannies or for the sex trade.

Or as health care workers. Although the title of the book doesn't mention health care workers, the subject is woven into the material.

One chapter is dedicated exclusively to those who care for disabled adults who live at home.

A controversy swarms around these workers. Should they be called "personal attendants" or "care providers?"

This is a reflection on the need to recognize the desire to live as independent a life as possible, while honouring the work of the caregiver for what it really is – providing care.

The book is disturbing, and the women's stories are heartbreaking, although often inspiring.

Most of the writers offer solutions. They are revolutionary and would see governments making big changes that go against the recommendations of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

Polly Toynbee, in reviewing the book for the *Guardian* in the U.K., says "If post-feminism means that it's all right for some other woman to be exploited instead of you, this [book] should fire up some of that good old-fashioned passion."

Ehrenreich says the feminist revolution is not over yet.

"Sooner or later someone will have to finish the job," she says.

Duncan activist won't quit fighting

Housekeeping supervisor **Jeanne Hardy** has retired after more than 23 years on the job at Cowichan District Hospital. She's served on her local's executive as chief shop steward (10 years) and secretary and was on the OH&S committee for 10 years. She'll enjoy curling and her grandchildren. She enjoyed being a part of HEU and sees herself getting involved in health and seniors issues in her community – still working to fight the government.

Northern LPN retires after 33 years

Sharon Kanary retired from St. John Hospital in Vanderhoof after 33 years of service. Kanary worked as an LPN and ward clerk. She also served as secretary-treasurer for the Omineca local for two years. She continues to work for Omineca safe homes and looks forward to spending more time with family and friends.

STAFF

Member of organizing team calls it quits

After 12 years of working as an organizer at HEU, sister **Meg Stevens** is retiring. She's not quite sure how she will spend her retirement yet; but she's going to take some time figuring it out.

She began her job at HEU's head office after many years



STEVENS

in health care doing a variety of jobs. She also did a stint at Burnaby General as a unit clerk and then an LPN. Living up on the Sunshine Coast, she worked for about four years at Kiwanis Care Centre. Before and after that she was at Mt. St. Joseph's. She was working there as a rehab assistant when she made her move to HEU as an organizer.

She says working with the organizing team at HEU was the most rewarding part of her job. She'll miss them. And they are going to feel her absence as well.

The first thing she is going to do is to go stay with her grandchildren for awhile. She says what she will do next "will come to me." In other words, she's not quite sure yet.

One thing she is enthusiastic about is the Municipal Pension Plan Retired Employees Association. "I want to help it grow up on the Sunshine Coast," she says.

Stevens also says she is going to invest a lot of time in getting reacquainted with her friends. "When you're working so many odd hours, your friendships suffer a lot,"

she says. "I am really looking forward to enjoying my friends. Maybe I'll even make some new ones."

Vancouver Island rep is a senior now

Long-time Vancouver Island HEU representative **Eileen Henneberry** retired at the end of August after 18 years with HEU.

She was hired as a rep at the Victoria office in 1985 after completing Labour College. She's very proud that she was HEU's first female representative.

Henneberry came to HEU from Nanaimo Regional Hospital where she was a medical records technician for 17 years. When HEU opened its Nanaimo Regional Office, Henneberry started working there.

Like many who retire, she's going to spend lots of time with her grandchildren. She's involved with the Brownies and Girl Guides in Victoria, where she now lives.

She has no intention of taking it easy, is learning how to play golf and makes regular trips to the gym.

She's been engrossed in her hobby of stamping for years, and will certainly continue with that. She explains that it is very complex and even involves paper-making.

Now that she is officially a senior, she says she will become involved in working for seniors' rights.

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Ethnic Diversity

One union, many colours! Working across our differences! To participate, please call and leave us your name!



PRESS 3

Lesbians and Gays

For support: afraid of being identified, feeling isolated, want to know your rights? Call for information on same sex benefits, fighting homophobia and discrimination. <www.pridepages.org>



PRESS 2

First Nations

First Nations members would like to hear from you! Please call if you would like to help educate our union brothers and sisters on issues that affect First Nations people.



PRESS 4

People with disAbilities

If you are on WCB, LTD, or if invisibly or visibly disabled in the workplace, let us know how the union can better meet your needs. <www.alberni.net/PeopleWithdisAbilities>



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