



Ramsey on reform

B.C.'s new health minister Paul Ramsey talks about what happens next, in a special *Guardian* interview.

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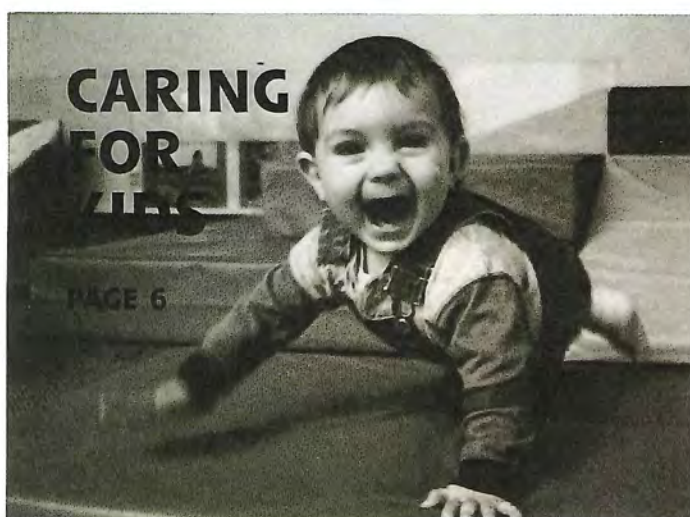
VOL. 12 NO. 1 THE VOICE OF THE HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1994

UNLOADING ON WORKLOAD OVERLOAD

Care aide Deb Hills was rushing to make up lost time on the day she sprained her back. It was a costly but preventable accident.

Thousands of HEU members like Hills are affected by the symptoms of workload overload: stress, fatigue, and an epidemic of injuries. That's why HEU has targeted workload in a special campaign.

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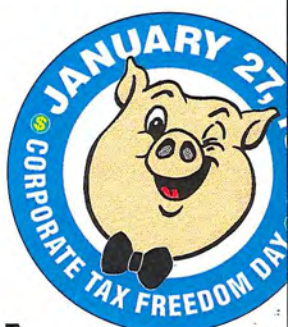


CARING FOR ZIES

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CORPORATE PIGGIES

Corporate tax freedom day highlighted the free tax ride enjoyed by many profitable companies.



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Saving jobs

The employment security deal has kept hundreds of health care workers working. Electrician Rick Hastings is one of them.

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COMMENT

Time to stop cuts in acute care services and build community care

by Carmela Allevato

One year ago, the provincial government unveiled its New Directions in Health Care for British Columbia. Individuals and communities were to take more responsibility for their own health and for the direct delivery of services. The stated goal was to deliver health care "Closer to Home;" out of the hospitals and into communities and homes where people live.

Two weeks after the New Directions announcement, the provincial government announced the closure of Shaughnessy Hospital. This was the first dramatic step to reduce hospital services. British Columbia's third largest teaching hospital, with world class programs employing more than 3,000 people, would be eliminated. The programs were to be transferred to remaining facilities and acute beds were to be increased in other parts of the province.

In spite of a huge public outcry, the government proceeded with the closure. A subsequent task force was critical of the government's process. But that's water under the bridge. Shaughnessy closed last September. Some programs were transferred to other facilities, some beds were transferred to the Fraser Valley, and some services remain on the site administered by other Vancouver hospitals. The provincial government saved \$40 million.

Indeed, 1993 was a very good year for the provincial government in terms of underspending the health care budget. It spent approxi-



mately \$300 million less than it budgeted for. And preliminary reports indicate that the total of 1993 B.C. hospital operating deficits are less than half of normal. The cost overruns predicted by opponents of the Employment Security Agreement didn't materialize at all.

The Royal Commission on Health Care and Costs stated in its 1991 report that to achieve the closer to home objective, hospital care services should be available to British Columbians on the basis of a formula of 2.75 beds per 1,000 population. This target was to be reached by 1995 and, coupled with a healthy increase in community services, education and prevention, represents the acceptable level of hospital care in British Columbia.

According to provincial government officials, the 2.75 bed target translates into 850 patient days per 1,000 population. This figure of 850 is significant because it is the objective stated in the Employment Security Agreement. More importantly, this target has been achieved.

It has been achieved through the closure of Shaughnessy Hospital, the reduction of hospital services in some communities and also through the impact of the reduction of the work week from 37.5 hours to 36 hours without loss in pay for 50,000 health care workers.

What has not been achieved is a healthy increase in community services. Doesn't it make sense that a hospital could make its discharge planning more effective if home care services were tied in with the hospital, as in Revelstoke, instead of the casual or nonexistent relationship that exists elsewhere?

The experience of moving mental health services closer to home during the 1980s was a bleak one for British Columbians, and must not be repeated.

The Hospital Employees' Union wants the reduction of hospital care to stop. We remain committed to New Directions, but to the whole plan, not just to part of it. Without community services in place to substitute for hospital care, New Directions won't be so new after all. ■

letters

THE GUARDIAN WELCOMES LETTERS TO THE EDITOR. PLEASE BE BRIEF. WRITE TO 2006 WEST 10TH AVE., VANCOUVER V6J 4P5.

Ramsey liked Armstrong Report

• From a letter to HEU secretary-business manager Carmela Allevato.

Thank you for your letter of November 4, 1993, and for the copy of the report "Closer to Home: More Work for Women" by Dr. Pat Armstrong. The goal of the Closer to Home initiative is to ensure more local management of health services and to provide more services in homes, local communities and regional areas.

An adequate supply of professional and employed health care providers and an effective mix of providers, are essential requirements in this initiative. The intent is to provide better support for voluntary caregivers in their appropriate roles, not to offload the

responsibilities of professionals onto these caregivers.

The Hospital Employees' Union's interest in caregivers, and women caregivers in particular, is much appreciated. Dr. Armstrong's report will indeed contribute to the discussion around the design of our revitalized health care system.

Thank you for your effort and initiative helping to address these important issues.

PAUL RAMSEY,
Minister of health

Duncan member didn't reap benefit of 36-hour week

I am writing in response to the Sept./Oct. Guardian article regarding 36-hour work week schedules.

Our local is part of the minority of facilities that had most of our

presented schedules denied. Our employer took the position that only employees in direct patient care will be back-filled with replacements. Our schedules were denied before they were even presented. We now have to work 18 minutes less each day, but we still have the same amount of workload! Our workday is even more stressful than before.

It's a shame that all dues-paying HEU members didn't benefit from this reduction and that the minority of us have to bear the burden of this agreement instead of reaping the benefits!

JUDI CLARKE,
Duncan local

• Sister Clarke and other Duncan members still have a chance to reap some benefits. The positive 36-hour week experiences in facilities across the province should help them press their employer to modify the imposed schedules.

Tragedy strikes former member in Chile

Former HEU Holy Family member Rosa Rojas and her husband Alejandro came to Canada after a brutal military dictatorship was imposed in their native country of Chile in 1973. With the help of a priest at that horrible time, Alex, a union and social activist, was released from prison on the condition that he leave Chile.

Like one million other Chileans the Rojas family was sent into exile. They came to Canada.

Once here Rosie worked at every-

thing from janitorial services to child care worker. Alex found work in mines all over Canada which took him away from the family for months at a time.

In the late 1980's Rosa became a patient care aide working for two years at Holy Family Hospital and for a time at Evergreen Lodge in North Vancouver.

In 1990 Alex was allowed to return to Chile. He and their two children went back promptly, while Rosa stayed behind to support them in their repatriation.

A strong union supporter, she was appreciative of those that had built the union and negotiated wages that allowed her to support her family with more dignity.

Rosa joined them in Chile in 1992 and in 1993 Alex got a mining job just outside their home town of La Serena.

They were all just beginning to enjoy a stable family life when sometime in the early hours of Feb. 7th Alex's truck went over an embankment at the mine site. He died instantly. Under Chilean law a married woman may not hold a bank account so the little funds the family has are inaccessible now to Rosa.

Friends are organizing support. Anyone wishing to contribute emotional and/or financial help can do so by calling Heather Keely at 254-2577 or writing 2666 Eton Street, Vancouver, B. C. V5K 1K1.

HEATHER KEELY,
B.C. Nurses' Union,
Vancouver



Guardian

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

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What we're up to

Penticton local acts on unsafe conditions

Health care workers in extended care at Penticton Regional Hospital successfully used WCB provisions in late November to refuse unsafe work to force their boss to deal with a violent patient at the facility.

"The system worked for us," said HEU local activist Susan Burgess.

But the incident also shows how employers don't give a damn about improving hazardous working conditions.

Burgess said the problems with work in the violent patient's room had been raised for the last 18 months. But the employer took no action. So as a last resort to address the unsafe conditions, staff on the ward refused to enter the patient's room Nov. 25, following the WCB 8.24 regulation to the letter.



HEU president Fred Muzin was quite taken with haggis, the traditional Scottish meal, at a recent Robbie Burns Night benefit sponsored by the Vancouver labour council to aid a breakfast program in an eastside school.

But the boss went ballistic and suspended an HEU shop steward.

"When the employer tried to harass people participating in the 8.24, our members stuck together," Burgess said.

After being told by WCB staff that the suspension was out of line, the employer admitted a mistake had been made.

Revelstoke certification a win

A recent Labour Relations Board victory by HEU opens up an opportunity to bring non-unionized health care workers under existing union collective agreements.

The LRB ruling involved the Revelstoke District Health Society which operates Queen Victoria Hospital, where HEU represents workers, and a homemakers service. In November, the 20 home care workers joined HEU, and the union applied to bring them into the hospital local because they had a common employer.

The LRB ruling means the

home care workers are now covered under the master agreement. The employer is appealing the ruling.

Cadillac salaries Chilliwack style

A Chilliwack local member passed on the details of an investigation by a newspaper reporter into salaries paid to top public sector bosses in the Fraser Valley community.

The results of who got what were no surprise. Chilliwack Hospital had four bosses in the top 10 salary sweepstakes. With a 1992 salary of \$131,000, hospital president Etta Richmond won the competition hands down.

HEU celebrates 50 years of caring

The union is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. A number of initiatives are planned as part of the celebration.

These include new letterhead; the publication of *The Heart of*

Health Care: The HEU Story, a book chronicling the rich history and tradition of the union's fight for justice and medicare; and special convention events in October.

HEU members have also been invited to participate in a contest to design the convention pin logo. Deadline for entries is March 18.

Regular report on Provincial Executive decisions, issues

In a move to enhance communications with union locals, HEU's Provincial Executive is now providing all locals with a regular report on the executive's decisions and key issues.

The reports will be sent through regular secretary-treasurers mailings, says union president Fred Muzin.

Muzin would also appreciate suggestions from locals on improvements to the reporting format and issues to be covered.

continued on page 4

Battle for first contract heats up

Come Share is still on strike

HEU is stepping up its efforts to win first contracts for the more than 1,000 health care workers who have joined the union's ranks in the past year because of a recent Labour Relations Board decision on first contract arbitration and the ongoing Come Share strike.

"Workers cannot be asked to subsidize health care reform"

Faced with employer stonewalling in the fight to win first contracts for many new certifications, HEU applied to the LRB last year to enact the labour code's arbitration process to get agreements for Bevan Lodge in Abbotsford and Yarrow Lodge near Chilliwack. But after a lengthy delay, the board refused HEU's request and instead implemented guidelines that favour employers.

HEU secretary-business manager Carmela Allevato said the decision fails to

fully protect workers from employers who wish to prevent unions from bargaining fair contracts.

"The LRB had a chance to send a message to employers to get serious about first contract negotiations," Allevato said. "They blew it."

"Instead, the decision encourages employers to propose substandard collective agreements."

The LRB ordered mediation for the disputes at Bevan and Yarrow. Meanwhile, though more than 200 Eagle Ridge Hospital workers achieved their contract goals, the struggle is proving harder for many other new units, particularly in the emerging community sector.

HEU is pressing health employers and Victoria to recognize the principle that care providers in the community sector deserve comparable pay to that earned by their sisters and brothers in long-term care and acute care facilities.

That's at the heart of the two-month old strike at Come Share adult day care in White Rock and Newton, where HEU members are lobbying government to



STANDING TOGETHER A broad cross section of trade unionists from public and private sector unions turned out to support HEU's demand for first contract action at a Dec. 1 rally at the Labour Relations Board.

provide sufficient funding to achieve a fair settlement. HEU took that message to women's equality minister Penny Priddy in a meeting in February. The strike is in Priddy's riding.

"We've told the government that community care workers cannot be asked to subsidize the health care reform pro-

cess," Allevato said. "With Come Share wages and benefits 40 per cent less than the wages earned for the same work in long-term care, it's clear the government must act. We need a clear statement from government that it expects wages in the community sector to rise to a level comparable to those prevailing in long-term care and acute care. The changes can be phased in, but we need a signal that justice for adult day care workers is on the agenda."

HEU is also negotiating with employers at South Island Community Living and Western Human Resources, and Victoria Community Resource Society, all on Vancouver Island, and Western Human Resources in the Lower Mainland.

HEU members at Maple Ridge Intermediate Care are bargaining with a 100 per cent strike mandate and a strike vote has also been taken at Royal City Manor, in New Westminster, where the employer has threatened a lockout.

Negotiations are also under way at more than a dozen other facilities where HEU members are seeking first contracts. ■

Prince George review recommends LPN return

Armed with the recommendations of a special government task force, HEU has entered into discussions with Prince George Regional Hospital on ways to increase utilization of licensed practical nurses at the facility.

"We're exploring ways to allow LPNs to provide their full range of skills in



WILEY

patient care, and reinstate deleted LPN positions," said HEU's northern regional vice-president Mary Pat Wiley.

The discussions were triggered by the Nov. 26 report of the Prince George External Review, which was ordered by Victoria last year to deal with community concerns about hospital bed closures. The hospital has closed 87 beds, or about 30 per cent of its total since mid-1992.

The review, which also analyzed community-based services and held

public hearings in surrounding communities, was sharply critical of the management of health services in the region.

"It confirms the view that services in the area are so badly coordinated that the system is suffering," said union secretary-business manager Carmela Allevato.

Allevato called on health minister Paul Ramsey to provide sufficient funding to maintain acute and community services while the reports recommendations are implemented. ■

WHAT WE'RE UP TO

continued from page 3

Simon Fraser delivered the beef big time

More than 60 unresolved grievances and a cancelled labour management meeting were the last straw for Simon Fraser Lodge members.

So they took action Jan. 14 to call public attention to their problems and force the boss at their Prince George facility to meet with them to resolve the many problems, including health and safety, in the workplace.

It started with an information line in front of the facility which was covered by the media and escalated to an informal meeting of most staff around the administrator's office at 1 p.m. There, staff members told the boss what they thought of the situation.

The frank exchange of views worked, because finally the boss agreed to a two-day labour management meeting later in January to start resolving problems.

"This was a great morale booster for my members," says local chairperson Cyndie Stephens. "They all enjoyed being in charge for a change."

It was also a good warmup for bargaining — the Simon Fraser contract expires March 31.

Parking rate battle in Greater Vancouver

A number of Lower Mainland locals are waging a running battle over exorbitant parking rate increases being considered by the Greater Vancouver Regional District for parking facilities it operates at hospitals in the region.

HEU has been successful in rolling back the first proposal — a 50 per cent boost. A delegation of union reps attended a November GVRD meeting and argued about the impact of the increase on staff, and the lack of dependable 24-hour public transit service to their facilities.

GVRD officials admit current

parking rates cover all operating costs at the facilities, and even provide a profit. But now there's an effort to have parking rates to also cover the bank loan payments which financed construction.

The latest proposal is for a 25 per cent boost, while HEU is calling on the regional government to hold the line with a five per cent boost.

Services increased in balanced budget

After a lengthy and tough budgeting process, the Provincial Executive has adopted a balanced 1994 HEU operating budget as prepared by financial secretary Mary LaPlante.

"The new budget provides increases in areas that provide direct services to members like education programs, campaigns and projects, and more staff representatives," LaPlante said.

The 1994 budget also designates funds to cover unexpected



Golden Hospital food service worker Lorna Joy on Alberta's slash and burn deficit reduction crusade.

costs incurred in 1993 for bargaining the Employment Security Agreement.

"Who would have thought in December 1992 that we'd be back bargaining again in 1993?" she said.

On the revenue side, LaPlante said the health care reform process has made predicting dues income an even tougher job, and LaPlante says it will have an impact on the union's revenue base.

It was a gruelling experience,

but LaPlante says it's part of a move to a more comprehensive budgeting process.

Election of local officers

With each HEU local electing officers at the first local meeting of 1994, now is the time to pass on the results to Provincial Office.

Please fill out the local officers and committee forms, then return them to the Provincial Office so the union can update its mailing and contact lists.

Surpassing her goal

Jennifer Ritson came close to winning a school board election on her first try

by Stephen Howard

Jennifer Ritson spent election night, Nov. 20, in the kitchen of her Salt Spring Island home. "I was cooking things with lots of chocolate in them, because that's what I do when I'm nervous. I was thinking in a way 'what am I doing?' and then I kept telling myself 'you can manage.'"

Ritson, a nurse aide and housekeeper at Lady Minto Hospital, was taking her first stab at elected local politics, vying for one of five school trustee positions on her local board.

She ran because she wanted to play a role in her children's education as they grew up. She was also concerned about cut-backs to progressive school curriculum and was committed to maintaining good labour relations with teachers and support staff.

Campaigns on Salt Spring are a modest affair. She attended an all-candidates meeting, giving a speech and answering questions, and there were buttons and car posters but no door-to-door.

Instead, word of mouth is the most effective means of getting the word out, and health care workers at the hospital were among her strongest supporters.

"It's like having everyone you know telling their friends 'my friend Jennifer Ritson is running for school board.'"

She set herself a modest target of winning 150 votes. But when the final count came in election night, Ritson had far surpassed her goal. She pulled in 721 votes cast by 2,000 islanders and came within an inch — 69 votes — of winning the final trustee spot.

Balancing



It All



EVEN KEEL There are days when Jennifer Ritson feels like packing it in, but a commitment to her children and her Salt Spring Island community keeps her going.

Ritson was pleased with the outcome.

"Hopefully I'll run again in two and a half years, and this time win."

For now, she'll stay involved in the education system by serving on her local parents advisory committee and volunteering one day a month in her son Zander's school.

Prior to even deciding to run in the election, Ritson attended a seminar on empowering women put on by the Victoria labour council. It was an important experience for her hearing from women who already held political office, like former B.C. NDP MP Lynn Hunter.

"Hunter told us she wasn't superwoman, and that women have the ability to do it. We just have to make a start at it," she said.

A commitment to her community and her two sons is what has driven Ritson since 1986, when she returned to the island and went to work at the hospital.

"I got a lot out of growing up here. Getting involved is one way of giving things back."

She's held a number of elected executive positions in her HEU local, attended union conventions, and, thanks to onsite child care, the 1992 HEU summer school. Her son still remembers when 'that lady' (sec-

retary-business manager Carmela Allevato) gave him a summer school button. "He calls HEU 'our union,'" Ritson says.

Ritson is also involved in her youngest son's preschool, she's a Beaver leader, and active in her church, where she was part of a fundraising committee that raised \$500,000 in 11 months to expand their facility.

"Everyone said we couldn't do it," but they did.

Ritson manages to balance it all by making conscious choices about work and family life. She bid into a part-time housekeeping job from her nurse aide position to get weekend-only shifts.

She can also rely on her husband Philip, a greenskeeper at the local golf course, to look after the kids

on the weekends and to do his share of housework. "He's always been accepting of the things I do and want to do," she says.

To help keep things on an even keel, both her boys are in school and then child care on Fridays. "It's my day off."

There are days when Ritson admits she feels like packing it in. But there are too many other moments "when it's all worthwhile," that keep her going. ■

I kept telling myself 'you can manage'

WHAT WE'RE UP TO

CLC call for Toronto convention

HEU will be sending a full delegation of 44 members to take part in what is shaping up to be a very crucial Canadian Labour Congress convention in Toronto May 16 - 20.

In addition to the Provincial Executive, 23 delegates will be selected from locals in each of HEU's eight regions. To be eligible for selection, locals must be affiliated to their local labour council. The deadline to apply for delegate status is April 8.

Locals were also urged to submit resolutions to the convention prior to the Feb. 21 deadline.

Beagle story placed struggles in wrong area

Mickey Beagle, profiled in our last issue for her long career of labour activism, was characteristically embarrassed by the play the article received, but asked us to correct two small errors.

"The Westwood where I lived

in California was in the North, in the forests," she told us soon after the article appeared, "not southern California as you said. The Westwood in southern California is where all the hoity-toity people live, and I sure wasn't there."

Beagle also reminded us that although she worked closely with migrant workers, she wasn't a migrant worker herself. She was a welder, however, at a time when women were even rarer in that field than they are today.

CUPE leads national action by health unions

A national meeting of health care unions agreed in Ottawa in January to undertake a national program to defend medicare and health workers' employment security. The Canadian Union of Public Employees is coordinating the work, which HEU has enthusiastically endorsed. The first meeting was dominated by discussion of B.C.'s experience with the

Employment Security Agreement.

"We had observers from Local 1199 in New York who are confronting similar problems," said HEU secretary-business manager Carmela Allevato.

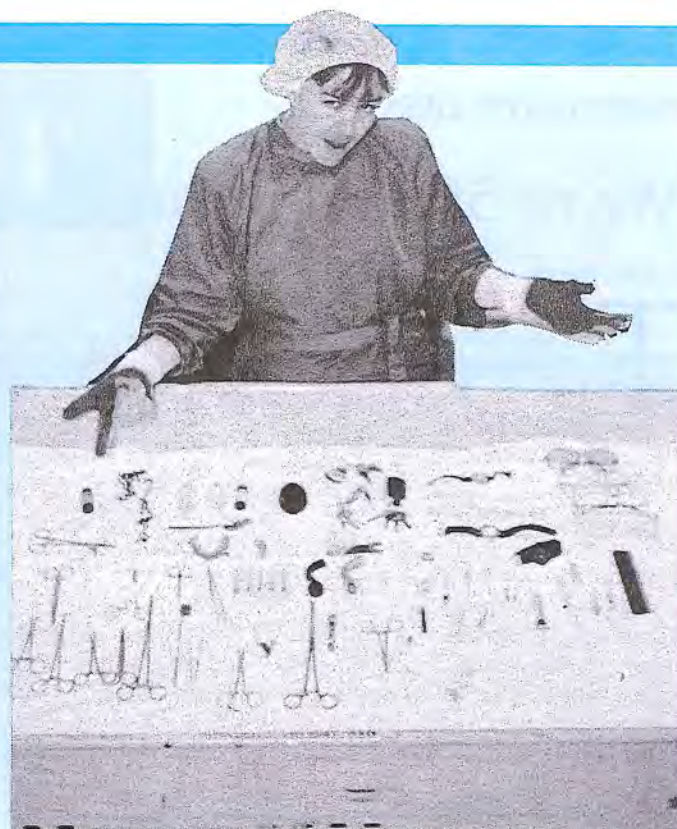
The unions agreed to intervene in the upcoming national consultation on medicare promised by the Liberal government.

New biomed waste guidelines soon

Long-awaited recommendations on new biomedical waste regulations should finally be released before the end of February.

It is expected that the report of waste reduction commissioner Dorothy Caddell will recommend tougher workplace action to deal with the problem of sharps that pose a major health and safety risk for many HEU members.

Caddell will also present an action plan to reduce the biomedical waste stream and new disposal methods to replace aging incinerators.



HEU K-Bro local member Andrea Worden surveys the cache of sharps found during a normal two-week period at the Cumberland laundry.

New plan boosts wages, creates more hurdles

by Chris Gainor

Pay equity arbitrator Stephen Kelleher has decided on a new pay system that should give pay increases ranging from two to 37 per cent to nearly 95 per cent of HEU members over several years.

Kelleher's plan is based on a proposal from health employers to wrap up the fifth step of the pay equity process contained in the Master Collective Agreement.

The result is a new pay system with increases for HEU members that will be worth more than \$112 million. No one will see their wages cut or red circled.

But Kelleher's decision also means that HEU will have to continue to work in the next round of bargaining to win a pay equity plan that eliminates wage discrimination against health care workers.

"This award is the largest pay equity adjustment to date in Canada," HEU secretary-business manager Carmela Allevato said. "But we have a long way to go before we win true pay equity."

Kelleher also decided the 1993 adjustments for HEU members retroactive to April 1, 1993. Members earning the PC3 wage rate of \$2,380 a month or lower will get a \$52 a month wage increase.

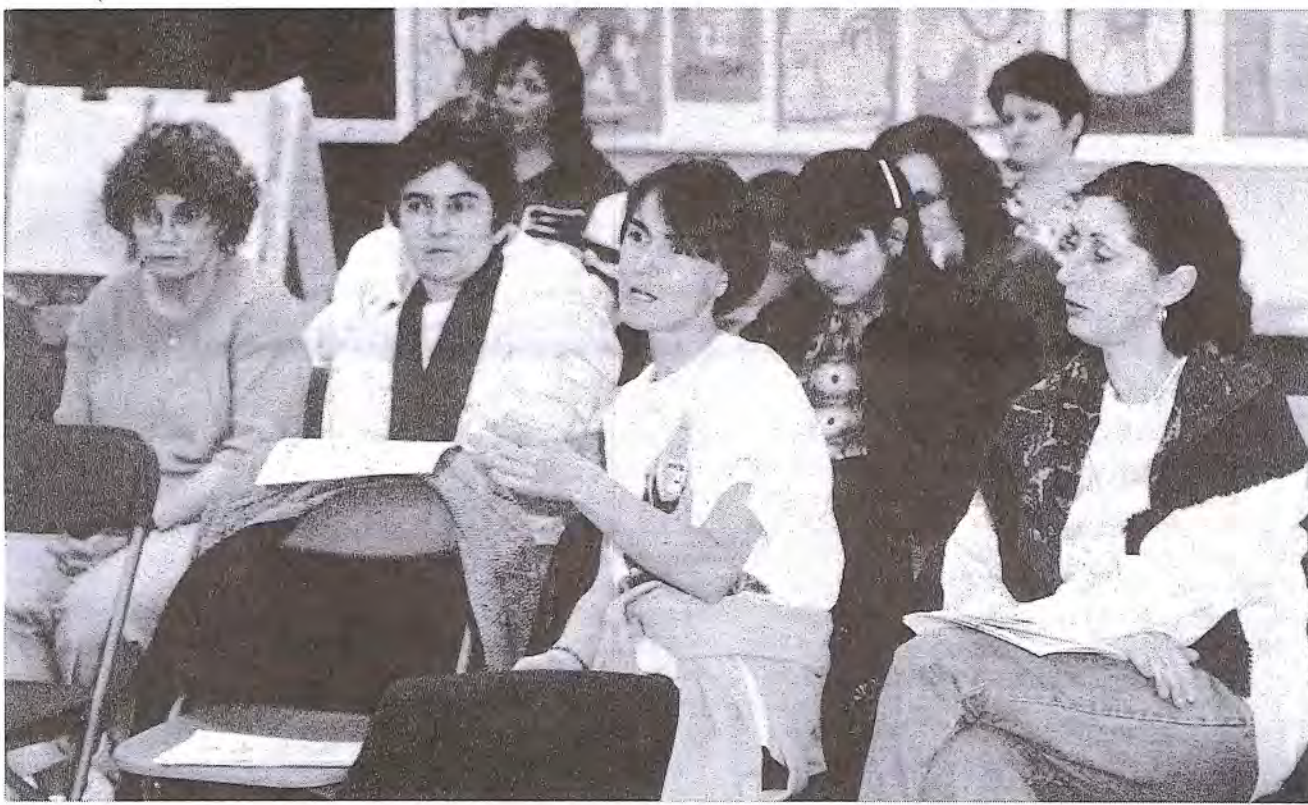
The wage rate for the housekeeping aide (BMW 1) is being raised \$52 a month and the cleaner (BMW 2) is being raised \$10 a month. These adjustments equalize the rates at \$2,292 a month.

Pay equity wage increases for 1994 and 1995 will be decided soon.

HEU has proposed that the rest of the system be implemented with pay increases in 1996 and 1997, but employers have rejected this proposal.

If the increases are paid out at one per cent of payroll, it will take 18 years to implement the new system.

"There must be an industry wide adjustment, and we must put pressure on employers to implement in the next five years the full wage grid that we have won under this plan," she said. Allevato said the union is still pushing for a true pay equity plan including an industry-wide adjustment and a five year implementation period. ■



PREPARING TO WIN Members of HEU's Cedarview local in North Vancouver discussed ways of winning equal treatment and employment security at a special meeting in January at which a report on the status of bargaining was given.

CCERA deadline nears

Action planned to get job security talks moving

by Geoff Meggs

With less than a month remaining before the expiry of their collective agreement, HEU members in long-term care facilities signatory to the CCERA Standard Agreement are turning up the heat for a new contract.

A province-wide round of membership meetings with CCERA locals in January gave HEU's bargaining committee a renewed mandate to demand extension of the Employment Security Agreement in a new contract that eliminates second-class status for long-term care workers.

But faced with apparent indifference by the Health Employers Association of B.C., HEU and the BCNU began implementing a series of joint actions designed to get negotiations moving. They include:

- joint HEU and BCNU action in the workplace to serve notice on employers that the membership's patience is wearing thin;
- an HEU decision to force employers to arbitration in the face of their refusal to pay previously-negotiated pay equity increases;
- initial preparations for essential service designation in affected facilities; and
- increased pressure directly on the leadership of the Health Employers As-

sociation of B.C. to return to the table.

No talks have been held since employers walked out of negotiations in December. The outstanding issues are extension of the Employment Security Agreement

"Long-term care workers deserve equal treatment"

to remaining long-term care facilities, implementation of the pay equity adjustments and parity with the master agreement.

"Extension of the Employment Security Agreement is critical for long-term care workers," said HEU secretary-business manager Carmela Allevato.

"With the massive changes to come in health care, long-term care workers deserve equal treatment with all others in the system. We will not back down on that goal." ■

PRESIDENT'S DESK

We're 50 and proud!

by Fred Muzin

This year HEU is 50 years old. A major milestone is a time to reflect on where we've been and to celebrate our successes. It is also an opportunity to plan for the future, to have a vision for what is possible, to go where nobody has gone before.

We have a proud tradition. In 1944 we were established at the Vancouver General Hospital, where one of the major issues was wage fairness – equal pay for equal work for practical nurses and orderlies.

Although we have now grown to 38,500 members at over 260 facilities and are the largest union of women in the province, we have not forgotten our roots.

There are important constants in our union. Our members are principled and genuinely care about the services that we provide for patients and residents. Our activists are committed and outspoken. Our leadership is not afraid to take progressive positions even when it is unpopular to do so. Our organization is prepared to be militant



"In 1944 we were established at the Vancouver General Hospital, where one of the major issues was wage fairness."

when necessary – we know that it is essential to negotiate from strength.

1994 will be a year of rejuvenation and renewed commitment. Last year, negotiating and implementing the Job Security Agreement and pressing forward on the pay equity process strained our resources. We know that we have to re-evaluate our systems and resources and find better ways to deliver services. This year will focus on achieving justice for our members not covered under the Accord, combatting excessive workload, improving and expanding education, local building, securing our place in the formal house of labour and preparing for our biennial convention.

Our achievements are only possible if we are strong at the local level. Our newly elected local executives and shop stewards need to take time from their daily advocacy responsibilities to plan – to determine what resources they have available and what assistance they can realistically provide for the membership. We must be innovative and creative. We must take the time to remember what it means to be a trade unionist and recruit new activists so that our goals become attainable. Our staff resources must complement the local initiatives.

It is imperative that we as HEU members control our union and are confident of our future. Our strength grows from grass roots solidarity. Let us nurture it well. ■

They care for kids

by Stephen Howard

Caring for kids is tough and challenging, but three new HEU members bring a wealth of experience to the job at Vancouver Hospital's spanking new on-site child care centre.

Sonja Abma, Judy Anderson and Zivana Mic are trained early childhood educators who provide care for the children of health care workers at the Kids in General centre which opened Jan. 4. It's the first hospital-based 24-hour child care centre in the province, the result of years of planning by hospital officials and health union representatives.

Abma earned her early childhood education diploma in Toronto six years ago after a serious accident ended her dancing career. She works in the infant centre with six to 18-month-olds because she enjoys it most.

"Every day there's something new, the children are walking or they have a new sound," she said.

Anderson has been a child care worker at non-profit and on-site corporate centres in Vancouver for 20 years, earning her ECE diploma along the way. Working with the 18 to 36-month old toddlers is her forte. "It's a really nice job to have. It's really fun," she says.

Mic works in the pre-school centre with three to five-year olds. She's worked in the child care field since 1979 both as an educator and as the director – "chief cook and bottle washer," she says – at two worksite programs in Montreal.

Starting a new program is a lot of work, and hard on kids, says the centre's director, June Baker. While they're enrolled to capacity – 25 preschoolers, 12 toddlers and 12 infants – starting dates for each child are staggered to help keep them settled and to give staff the time to get to know their individual needs.

Four HEU members have their children cared for in the centre.

All support services are provided by the hospital and Baker has nothing but praise for staff in departments



GIVING ALL THE TIME Child care workers play a key role in the development of children. They juggle the needs of children, parents and co-workers while they fight for the respect and government support for their work. HEU members on the job are, at right, Judy Anderson; inset right, Zivana Mic; and below left, Sonja Abma.

like dietary, laundry and transport, for making things go smoothly.

"It's gone beautifully," Baker says.

Fees reflect the high cost of daycare these days and, while the standard of care and facilities are exceptional, monthly charges are comparable with other centres in Vancouver.

Operating hours are tailored to the work schedules of parent. It's now open from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., although new 12-hour hospital shifts will soon keep the doors open to 7:30 p.m.

Surprisingly, there's yet to be a demand for consistent 24-hour care, but Baker says similar hospital on-site programs have taken years to get 24-hour care started.

Abma, Anderson and Mic think that the hospital has gone about setting things up the right way. The facility is a far cry from the church or school basements occupied by a lot of centres, and with the hospital



assuming management functions it allows workers to focus their attention on the kids without having to worry about enrolment, funding, scheduling etc.

It also means they receive decent pay – about \$15.50 an hour based on the master agreement.

But caring for kids is demanding, balancing the needs of co-workers, children and their families, they say. "You're giving all the time," Abma said.

They also feel that society doesn't value their work. Despite their skills and the important role they play in a child's development, they find themselves fighting the "babysitter" tag. ■



Subsidy program could help with care costs

Child care is an expensive reality, but HEU members could benefit from a little-known government subsidy program that could make it more affordable.

The Ministry of Social Services program is based on financial need and family size. Maximum subsidies range from \$350 to \$574 per month per child.

For example, a single parent with two children needing child care could qualify for full subsidy with a monthly net income from all sources of \$1,752, according to figures from the ministry. Higher net income earners could qualify for a partial subsidy up to a cutoff amount.

"It's important that people know about the subsidy program," says childcare advocate June Baker.

Baker, who is director of the Kids in General child care at Vancouver Hospital says few people

have heard about it. She regularly sends parents to apply.

But Baker says the program has one major fault: subsidy rates haven't increased since 1991, while child care costs have.

The worst part, she says, is that the maximum subsidy only covers a portion of the cost. It means that lower income parents have to come up with the difference between the fee and the subsidy – which can be hundreds of dollars.

"This means even if you qualify for the full subsidy, you may not be able to afford care. I've had to turn people away who couldn't get enough subsidy support to afford care for their kids," she said.

"Subsidies need to be increased to come closer to the real cost of care."

Information on the subsidy program can be obtained by contacting the local Ministry of Social Service's family and children's services office. ■

Labour

NOTEWORTHY NEWS ABOUT ISSUES AFFECTING WORKING PEOPLE HERE AND ABROAD



Union video tackles AIDS from health workers' perspective

The AIDS crisis has had an even more profound effect on health care workers than society at large. Whether they work in acute care, long-term care, home care or community clinics, health workers are facing the disease every day in ways that affect them deeply.

Now the Bread and Roses Cultural Project of Local 1199, New York's union of health care workers, has produced a powerful new video which tackles the topic from the workers' standpoint.

Called Facing AIDS: Stories of Healthcare Workers, the 30-minute production is a moving educational and emotional experience.

We sit with nurse Barbara Norris at a New York medical centre as she prepares to tell a patient he is HIV-positive. "It's not easy...I sit down, I meditate and I pray before I tell them."

Nurse aide Yvonne Hoyte, of the Bronx Lebanon Hospital, is the last friend in the world for an AIDS patient whose family has deserted her.

"I have to know how to introduce myself to patients," she says, "and let them know I'm not frightened of them."

And nurse Lorraine Thebaud, at San Francisco General, tells of her efforts to win improved health and safety procedures to protect fellow workers from needlestick injuries.

Most moving of all is a San Francisco community nurse, himself HIV positive for nine years, who takes the camera on a home care visit and then into his own home to meet his partner. It is hard to imagine a more effective way to humanize the tough struggle against this disease.

Available to unions for only U.S.\$100, this important video comes with a discussion guide on the effects of HIV, how it is and is not transmitted and safe work practices.

It is highly recommended. For information, contact the HEU Communications Department or write directly to Bread and Roses, 22-D Hollywood Ave., Hohokus, New Jersey, 07423. ■



RACE FOR THE TROUGH Eight little piggies representing Canadian corporations that pay little or no tax raced for the trough Jan. 27 at the B.C. Federation of Labour's Corporate Tax Freedom Day event. Federation leader Ken Georgetti says corporate income tax accounts for only seven per cent

of federal tax revenues, down from 21 per cent in 1961. The Jan. 27 date is about seven per cent into the year. At the finish line, the Royal Oak Mines piggy won by a snout. The company paid no income tax on 1991 profits of \$13 million, and also raked in a credit of \$250,000.

BOB. AKESTER PHOTO

Giant troubles continue

YELLOWKNIFE, N.W.T.

The vicious labour dispute is supposed to be over, but the bosses at Yellowknife's Royal Oak Mines are still picking fights with mineworkers and the Canadian Association of Smelter and Allied Workers.

Of the original 234 in the bargaining unit at Giant Mine, just over 100 are working there, including about 26 scabs. Fifty more were fired during the 18-month lockout, and Royal Oak is fighting their return.

The Federal Court of Appeal will hear Royal Oak's challenge of the Canada Labour Relations Board ruling that led to the end of the lockout. As a result, CASAW overwhelmingly voted to accept a watered-down version of the company's last contract offer — but with its provisions protected by special mediators Vince Ready and Don Monroe.

Arbitrations for the fired workers were part of the board's ruling, which carried the force of a court order. "We are using the agreement for guidelines only," mine manager Bill Heath wrote to CASAW on December 31. "We do not feel we are legally bound to adhere to the terms of that agreement."

On the low end of the pay scale, wage rates set in the agreement were ignored. Union intervention was required before workers were paid for statutory holidays on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's. Some returning workers were told this was because they were "new employees." Others, struggling with tight finances after the long dispute, faced delays in getting overtime pay.

When two grievances were filed, one by a replacement worker disciplined for working too slowly, Royal Oak claimed "there is no collective agreement. That being the case, there is no opportunity for you to file a grievance."

In the mine itself, Royal Oak has done

little to improve its safety record, infamous for being the worst in the Northwest Territories. During a recent power outage, there was no ventilation because the emergency system did not kick in. Scooptrams were left running, fouling the air and creating a fire hazard, and other vehicles were in use. "One scab kept on drilling," said another miner. Had their been an accident, phones were not working. Workers say the mine is being run as if there's no tomorrow. Parts for heavy equipment are often unavailable. Machines sent to mechanics'

shops sometimes lose parts used for other repairs.

Distrust and bad labour relations led to the terrible industrial dispute in 1992-93, but management's attitude has changed little. Most union members blame Peggy Witte, Royal Oak's hard-line, Nevada-born CEO. They're not alone in that opinion. Witte recently earned the "Bed of Nails Award" for having "the toughest corporate hide" in 1993 from the host of CBC television's Venture business program. ■

From the bottom of her heart

"We had a wonderful Christmas. The kids loved the presents the old Shaughnessy local sent us. I want to thank them from the bottom of my heart," said June Roberts.

The founding president of CLASS, the ladies auxiliary of the mineworkers' union at Royal Oak's Giant gold mine in Yellowknife, has been out of the volunteer job since last April. She resigned to have her fourth child, Hayley, who is prospering after a very premature birth.

Husband Derek is back to work on the skip hoist at Giant, pulling a rotating shift that keeps the ore moving seven days a week. He worked graveyards both Christmas and New Year's Eve, but his holiday pay wasn't included in his first cheque. "The shift boss said he was a new hire," June exclaimed.

The labour dispute took its toll on the

Roberts family, though their resilient spirits are sound and intact.

"We had our power cut off in September and the power company was going to shut off our power again a few weeks ago. We only owed them \$200," Roberts said. A friendly neighbour powered their furnace, refrigerator, light and television with an extension cord.

Despite some strong new friendships made during the dispute, June and Derek are thinking about leaving Yellowknife once they've caught up on their bills. "We're hoping to leave. I just don't like it here. I don't like the atmosphere," she said.

Travelling to Edmonton for Hayley's care, she realized how much the pressures of Yellowknife had affected her. "I actually had a good sleep down there."

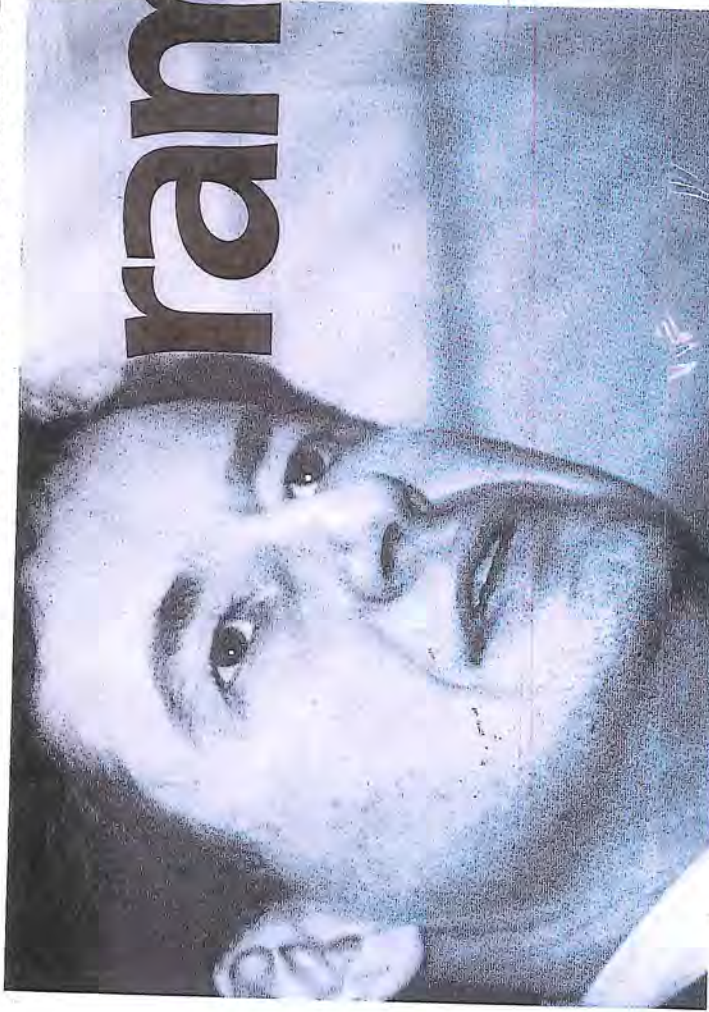
Still, she notes, that they've thought about leaving the North before but never did. "We'll see when the time comes."

It's a day-to-day outlook that served her well in not only enduring, but rising above the rigors of the worst labour dispute in Canada's recent history. ■



ROBERTS

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ramsey on reform

A GUARDIAN
INTERVIEW BY
CHRIS GAINOR



Paul Ramsey, who became B.C. minister of health

in the September, 1993, cabinet shuffle, is now facing the huge challenge of implementing the package of New Directions health care reforms drawn up by the previous health minister, Elizabeth Cull.

Ramsey is a college instructor and former president of the College Institute Educators' Association, which bargains for community college instructors. Ramsey was first elected as the MLA for Prince George North in the 1991 election.

In this interview in late January with *Guardian* associate editor Chris Gainor, Ramsey talks about the health reform process, hospital budgets for 1994, and bargaining for HCU members in long-term care and in new certifications.

HEALTH BOARDS AND COUNCILS

Have you made a decision yet on conflict of interest for health providers serving on regional health boards and community health councils?

It is something that I felt was important enough that I should take to cabinet because it is not a decision that can be made just within health care.

I think conflict of interest and perceived conflict of interest are major issues for governments, whether it is at the provincial legislative level or whether it is the level of community health councils. I believe we have to be very careful that the public perceives that the councils are serving the community and not serving any interest group within the health care providers.

I think that administrators within the health care system are in an equal conflict of interest with workers, and I believe that they face the same problem of conflict or perceived conflict. I believe that the same is true of physicians and other care providers who may not be direct employees but whose income is clearly dependent on the health system.

What else has been going on with the reform process since you became minister?

Nobody I've talked to thinks that our current system works. What we had is a real mishmash of direct government operations, funded agencies, independent societies, working sometimes in cooperation, sometimes at odds with one another. People in some areas of the province are saying we are ready to get on with forming the community health council if you would please tell us where the boundaries are around our community. Well, we don't even have a process for establishing that, so we have

FACING THE CHALLENGE A first-time MLA from Prince George, health minister Paul Ramsey inherits the challenges of the nuts and bolts implementation of New Directions and health care reform.

to work on doing that. Other people say we are quite willing to move forward on regionalization but we must have some decisions on how capital projects are going to be funded in the future.

1994 HOSPITAL BUDGETS

I would like to ask what we can expect in terms of hospital budgets in the coming year.

Obviously I cannot announce the budget. That's the prerogative of the minister of finance. But I will say that the downsizing of the acute sector which is contemplated by the Employment Security Agreement will continue, and that means there will be fewer jobs in the acute sector at the end of the next fiscal year than there are currently. We will be working with the hospitals and with the Labour Adjustment Agency to make sure that the provisions of the Employment Security Agreement work and provide health workers with the options that the agreement has set out in terms of retraining and early retirement and possible job sharing and relocation.

SHIFTING SERVICES

We have felt that there has been more emphasis placed on cutting acute care services than on funding new services in the community. What do you say to that?

I know that there is some dispute about whether the level of community services is adequate. The last two budgets have done substantial shifting of resources into the community based services. The figures that I have seen indicate that over the last two budgets we have shifted something like close to one quarter of a billion dollars into the community services area. Some of that seems to be largely invisible. But it is there in communities around the province. We have increased living accommodations for those who suffer from mental illness, we've increased the number of home support hours, we've increased the emphasis on prevention, immunization programs and the like. There has been a wide range of stuff that has gone on.

EMPLOYMENT SECURITY AGREEMENT

How do you see the importance of the Employment Security Agreement, and the work that is being done by the Healthcare Labour Adjustment Agency?

The Labour Adjustment Agency has surely taken more than its fair share of knocks in the press in the last little while. My belief is that the agency is going to become the vehicle that all the signato-

ries to the Employment Security Agreement thought it would. This is, in terms of Canadian public sector, a revolutionary sort of agreement. Having taken those bold steps to say we should not do the needed shift from acute to community sector on the backs of health care workers, it is no surprise to me that the figuring out of how we do the nuts and bolts of making sure that doesn't happen is difficult. We have employers who are not used to thinking of themselves as a system. The workers do. The key to the Labour Adjustment Agency working is working with the employers to make sure that they function as a system so that they can see their needs identified early, so that matches between workers needing a job and job postings are done as broadly as possible so that people do have a job to go to.

Is there going to be money for job sharing and for more early retirement?

Yes. First I'm firmly committed to try and get more money for early retirement. Job sharing is something that should be able to

be done within existing budgets. I think there needs to be concerted work on the idea of job sharing.

What job sharing contemplates is proportional salary and benefits, but with all the security of full-time positions. This is a different sort of "part time" employment arrangement.

I think that is something that must be promoted to assist workers in assessing that accurately, and seeing if it fits with what they want from their employment relationship and how it fits into the rest of their life. The average age is probably moving toward 40 or above, and increasingly people in the workforce are saying, 'Maybe I don't want to work full-time hours anymore.'

But if I went to say, two thirds of a job, could I still have the same security of employment and benefits that I would have as a full-time employee? That is where we have to make sure that this happens.

CCERA & PRICARE TALKS

One issue which we are facing right now is trying to get the Employment Security Agreement extended to our members working in long-term care under the CCERA and Pricare contracts.

Candidly I have not wrapped my head around all the complexities of that set of negotiations right now. I hope we can get on and move toward an agreement in the new year. The goals remain the same in that I want to see movement towards equity in relation to the jobs that are done in the health sector.

But I also know that we have to figure out how we do that within the financial resources we will have in any budget year. Those fiscal realities are not something we can ignore.

FIRST CONTRACTS

Another related issue is first contracts for some of our members. We have in the neighbourhood of 30 or 40 new certifications. Have you given any thought as to how you are going to fund these facilities so that we don't have two or three or four tiers of health care workers?

First, I am aware of the issue that we need to have one tier of health care workers, not three or four. The issue is much the same with the CCERA and Pricare negotiations.

How do we move towards that goal and how fast do we move towards that goal? I don't think we can do it in one step. I think it is going to be a journey which may stretch out over several years. It is going to have to be, given the financial situation of this province.

I see the situation where the people in this province and across the country are saying very clearly to their governments, 'we are not pulling any more money out of our pockets for publicly funded services, even those we value above all others, like health care.'



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Pay on form



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But if I went to say, two thirds of a job, could I still have the same security of employment and benefits that I would have as a full time employee? That is where we have to make sure that this happens.

BEAR PIT Ramsey faced some tough questions when he met in a special session with HEU delegates at December's B.C. Federation of Labour convention in Vancouver. It was the first time that a B.C. minister of health had ever done so. Ramsey's willingness to consult with the three health unions has so far set him apart from his predecessor Elizabeth Cull.

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RIBBON CUTTING The health minister was on hand to open the new spinal cord unit at Vancouver Hospital, which was transferred from Shaughnessy. Ramsey made a prompt commitment last year to implement the recommendations of the Shaughnessy task force report that was critical of the way the hospital shutdown was handled.

How do we move towards that goal and how fast do we move towards that goal?

I don't think we can do it in one step. I think it is going to be a journey which may stretch out over several years. It is going to have to be, given the financial situation of this province.

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by Stephen Howard

Dinner was late. Care aide Deb Hills was rushing trying to make up lost time so she could meet her residents' needs on the day she hurt herself. She bent over quickly to pull a tray off the bottom cart rack. Her back snapped — it turned out to be a lower lumbar sprain — and she was off on a Workers' Compensation Board claim for four weeks.

What makes her really mad is that her costly accident was preventable. If her employer gave a damn about her and health and safety, then a 1990 hospital study on workload wouldn't be locked away collecting dust.

That study backed up what health care workers have been saying for years: workload overload and short staffing is a sure-fire way to promote injuries. It recommended modest, affordable increases in staffing to reduce the high injury rate among extended care aides like Hills. But the hospital did nothing.

Thousands of HEU members like Hills are affected by the symptoms of workload overload: stress, fatigue, anxiety, and serious injury.

That's why HEU's Provincial Executive has given the go ahead for a special grassroots campaign to win solutions to the workload overload crisis.

"It's a straight forward plan to win small but meaningful gains to improve the situation for HEU members," says the union's director of education Karen Dean. "It's also a way to take advantage of a number of positive moves at the WCB level and to give some teeth to the new workload language won in the last master agreement."

Hill's local, which is part of the Greater Victoria Hospital Society, was chosen to be part of the first group of 16 locals to implement the campaign at their facility.

Two locals from each region, one acute care and one non-acute facility, were selected in the first phase. These locals sent their health and safety activists to a special two-day workshop in Vancouver in mid-January. The activists returned to their locals with action plans to tackle workload overload with ongoing support from HEU's occupational health and safety representative Ana Ramsey.

There will be three phases in the campaign, Dean says, with the next one set to start in mid-March.

Already, the campaign can boast a victory.

At Ponderosa Lodge in Kamloops, a phase one target facility, laundry workers Anna Stimack, Emily Peay and Jean McKeoghnie prepared quickly and thoroughly to regain weekend hours to help reduce their workload problem. They argued persuasively with their boss for 12 scheduled week-end hours and a modest hours boost during the week. And they won.



"It's a good start," says Dean, "and a sign that if we keep our goals simple and achievable we can win."

Other campaigns are also moving forward. At Simon Fraser Lodge in Prince George, local



AIMING FOR ACTION Deb Hills' Gorge Road Hospital local wants increased staffing and new mechanical lifts to help halt an injury epidemic. An employer study found that 267 extended care LPNs, care aides and RNs were off on lost time accidents between 1986 and 1989. Meanwhile, Simon Fraser Lodge activists have targeted their laundry to win workload solutions.

Unloading on workload overload

members have also targeted laundry for action. Their goal is to win additional staffing to deal with an overload situation that can leave residents' personal laundry stinking in bins for two weeks before it can be cleaned.

As a first step, workers there have agreed to take proper breaks and not to come in early and stay late. With support from residents' and their families, local members stand a good chance of winning.

"I'm 47-years old and I don't want to get crippled up," says Gorge Road Hospital care aide Deb Hills. "I would like to retire healthy. My roommate calls me a dreamer."

Hills' dream of staying healthy is shared by all health care workers. But employer neglect and inaction make the odds of staying healthy extremely low when you work in health care — B.C.'s most dangerous industry.

According to recent WCB statistics health care facilities have more lost time claims of any industry in the province.

About 7,000 health care claims were made in 1992 — more than in logging and sawmills combined, more than in heavy industry and construction, according to recent WCB statistics.

Health &



Safety

Yet the plight of health care workers and employer neglect has not been ignored by the WCB and its chief James Dorsey.

Eighteen months ago, Dorsey met with the top hospital bosses on the board of the former Health Labour Relations Association. He gave them hell for their inaction, and he threatened them with the big stick: clean up your acts or the WCB will do it for you.

Obviously, employers didn't listen to Dorsey then. They made a mistake.

So now the board has moved on a number of different fronts that will benefit HEU members says education director Dean.

The board has designated field officers in each region to serve as inspection specialists for health facilities and formed a special health care task force to ensure that health and safety issues are more appropriately dealt with.

There's a new audit process being implemented to come to grips with the epidemic of strain and sprain injuries and prevention programs. And new draft ergonomics regulations promise to open the door for workload overload solutions.

Together with the WCB developments, HEU's campaign is a good idea, says Deb Hills. She wants to make her dream of a healthy retirement come true. ■

Local members have role in organizing drive

Do you have friends or relatives working in non-union community-based health services, or unorganized long-term care facilities?

If you do, HEU wants to hear from you, because you can play an important part in the drive to bring protection and decent wages and working conditions to the many health care workers who don't have the benefit of union representation.

At a local level, members are being asked to provide names of people they know working in home care services, mental health group homes, adult day cares, children's services, and community living support programs.

"These are difficult fields with small bargaining units and substandard wages," said union secretary-business manager Carmela Allevato.

"But we've had great success in organizing many new locals in the last year because as B.C.'s biggest health care union we can specialize in meeting the needs of these workers," she said.

"Organizing in these sectors is a top priority. These are the areas that will grow as a result of health care reform."

Since the beginning of 1993, HEU has organized 30 new locals covering 1,200 members, one of the best records of any union since the NDP's new labour code made it easier to certify.

Since the beginning of December, HEU has certified six new locals including:

- workers at Parkview Place adjacent to the Enderby and District Hospital;
- members at the McBride and District Hospital;

- six workers at the Quesnel Alcohol and Drug Abuse Association;
- 21 members at the Revelstoke Homemakers;
- Canadian Mental Health Association Salmon Arm branch workers; and

• 90 new members at Salmon Arm's Bastion Place long-term care facility.

The B.C. labour code gives every worker the right to belong to a union.

Employers are prevented by law from firing, refusing to hire, discriminating against or threatening a worker because of union activity. ■

• Members with organizing contacts or tips to pass on should contact HEU's organizing department in the Provincial Office at 1-800-663-5813, or 734-3431.

HEALTH REFORM

Downsizing target achieved

Thanks in part to the Employment Security Agreement, the government's New Directions goal for an efficient, leaner acute care hospital system has already been achieved more than two years ahead of schedule.

In a brief circulated to government officials in Victoria, the HEU, B.C. Nurses' Union and Health Sciences Association affirm their support for the reform process.

But the unions warn "that it is essential now to maintain existing services in the acute care system while the governance structure and infrastructure in the community sector catch up."

The government's New Directions strategy and the Employment Security Agreement both reflect goals of reducing the acute sector to 2.75 beds per thousand population, a target set by the Royal Commission on Health Care and Costs, "in conjunction with the en-

hancement of community-based services" by 1996.

That figure works out to a province-wide average annual utilization rate of 850 patient days per thousand population.

Ministry of Health figures confirm that the goal of achieving 850 patient days per thousand was achieved in March or April of 1993, more than two years ahead of schedule.

Continued funding pressure on hospitals will meet cuts in services, the unions warn, and put tremendous budget pressures on hospitals.

As yet, the community sector is not ready to support the affected services

and the workers who provide them.

The three unions urge a number of measures to smooth the transition, including:

- assurance of sufficient funding in the acute care sector to maintain existing services;

- quick action to extend the Employment Security Agreement to remaining long-term care facilities previously represented by CCERA and Pricare;

- additional funding for the early retirement program of the Health Labour Adjustment Agency; and

- direct government co-ordination of the shift of hospital-based services to the community. ■

Saving jobs for health workers

Security deal, adjustment agency come through for HEU members

by Geoff Meggs

The Employment Security Agreement has provided early retirement, employment security or a new job to more than 700 health care workers—including hundreds of HEU members—in its first six months of operation, according to B.C.'s Health Labour Adjustment Agency.

That figure does not include hundreds of additional positions—at least 430 in HEU's case—that were protected by the shift to the shorter work week, which was a major feature of the first year of the deal.

The HLAA, a joint labour-management agency designed to facilitate implementation of the Employment Security Agreement, opened its doors in August after final ratification of the deal. HEU is directly represented on the HLAA board.

"There's no question the agreement is proving its value," says HEU secretary-business manager Carmela Allevato. "Without the agreement, hundreds of HEU members would have faced permanent layoff. A large part of the credit for that achievement belongs to the agency."

Operating out of a small office on West Broadway in Vancouver, the agency is implementing a wide range of programs to protect health workers' employment security as the health care reform process unfolds. (For an assessment on whether community services are keeping pace, see the related story above.)

HEU members using the agency will recognize some familiar faces, including former Shaughnessy local activist Rosemary Benes, who acts as the agency receptionist and performs a wide range of other duties to help move displaced workers to comparable jobs.

An example of how the agency came through for one HEU member is the story of Shaughnessy electrician Rick Hastings, who found himself caught in the hospital's closure after five years on staff.

He registered with the agency and expressed a willingness to move outside the Lower Mainland. On Nov. 8, he learned that the early retirement of HEU member Robert Warren had opened a position at Nanaimo Regional General Hospital.

Hastings was interviewed Nov. 17 and started work five days later. "It was a decision that will change the rest of my life," he told *The Guardian*. "There are a few wrinkles in the system, but it did work."

With his three-month qualifying period complete, Hastings now is arranging to move his family from Delta.

"The whole philosophy behind the idea (of the Employment Security Agreement) was good," Hastings says. "If you can keep hospital people working in hospital jobs, it's good for everyone."

And it's important to have an independent agency running the show, he believes, with strong union involvement. As far as Hastings is concerned, an agency run solely by employers "wouldn't work."

For many HEU members, particularly workers displaced from Shaughnessy, the happy ending is still to come. Because vacancies in the acute sector are hard to come by and because the agreement has yet to be extended to all long-term care facilities, several hundred members are working in temporary positions awaiting placement.

But 300 other workers, whose positions could be filled by those needing work, have received early retirement and the HLAA's other programs are starting to come on line.

"The agency went through a difficult period after start-up," acting executive



MABBOTT



MATCHMAKERS MATCH Labour Adjustment Agency staff, at right, helped match former Shaughnessy electrician Rick Hastings, above, with a new job in Nanaimo. HEU has a strong presence at the agency with former employees Mary Donaldson, Rosemary Benes, and Anita Connolly on staff providing key clerical support. Provincial Office researcher Sylvia Siuofi, far right, is a labour adjustment officer.



director John Mabbott told a media briefing in January, "but we've seen a lot of progress and co-operation to find solutions."

With a staff of only 14, including support workers, the agency is stretched thin to handle the high volume of placements required in the wake of the Shaughnessy closure.

Nonetheless, the number of Shaughnessy workers placed in permanent positions was rising toward the 200-mark at press time, leaving as many awaiting new posts.

(Detailed reports on agency activities

are issued by HLAA at regular intervals and mailed to every facility in the province.)

Matching displaced workers to new jobs is a complex task, Mabbott said, that takes time to do well. Simply matching a person to a vacancy isn't good enough.

"There's no point in sending people through a process if both sides find it unsatisfactory," says agency officer Meribeth Hardern. "We could mechanistically apply the criteria and the computer will produce matches, but it would not make sense to put a food service worker into a laundry position, although technically the match is there."

The extra effort is paying off in a 93 per cent success rate on job matches.

Still under development are new programs to assist workers in retraining and job sharing.

The retraining initiative, in particular, holds the promise of easing the transfer of workers from one job to another.

It all adds up to employment security, a rare commodity in today's uncertain economy. ■

AGREEMENT PROTECTS HEALTH WORKERS

August 1993 to January 31, 1994

Displaced workers placed in comparable job	154
Workers taking early retirement	199
Workers taking voluntary layoff	8
Total:	457
Displaced workers awaiting placement	294
Grand total	764
HEU share (estimate)	350
HEU positions protected through 36-hour week	430
Total estimated HEU positions protected	780

Source: HLAA, HEU Research Department

HEU endorses federation action on Canadian Legion

HEU will join with other affiliates of the B.C. Federation of Labour to urge the Canadian Legion to adopt by-law changes which would "condemn racist actions such as the discrimination against Sikhs which occurred at the Newton Legion."

The Newton branch refused admission to a Sikh veteran on Remembrance Day because his turban violated a "no-headgear" rule. A resolution, adopted unanimously at the convention, also called on members of the Canadian Legion "to ensure that no Legion in B.C. ever again attempts to bar Sikhs because of their religious attire or for any other reason."

Labour urges review of health boss salaries

The financial management practices of the Health Labour Relations Association, the Continuing Care Employee Relations Association and B.C. Pricare, as well as individual hospital corporations merits a legislative inquiry, says the B.C. labour movement.

A resolution calling for such an inquiry, proposed by the Victoria Labour Council, was adopted Nov. 29 by convention delegates.

HEU Royal Jubilee delegate David Ridley told delegates of the broad inquiry into employer organizations ordered by health minister Paul Ramsey.

"This inquiry was long overdue," Ridley said. "The ridiculous inefficiency at the top of the pyramid should be not be allowed to continue."

Rally demands ruling on first contracts

"We're here to collect on the promise of arbitrated first contract settlement," HEU president Fred Muzin told more than 200 HEU members outside the B.C. Labour Relations Board Dec. 2. "There's no use organizing if you can't get a contract."

HEU organized the demonstration, which was supported by a number of other unions, to protest the board's delay in ruling on an HEU application for an imposed first contract for newly-organized HEU members in two locals. The decision was released later than month. For details see page 3.

The provincial government had refused proposals by many unions, including HEU, to bring in a new form of sectoral organizing rights because the law would give the board the authority to impose a first contract when all else failed.

Instead, Muzin said, the board has been reluctant to use its new powers and hundreds of new HEU members are without a contract.

"If they don't have the guts to come through, our members will not put up with it," Muzin said. ■

Unions back health workers on reform process

Community-based health care services must be up and running before hospital-based services are reduced, says the B.C. Federation of Labour, and the provincial government should increase its consultation with health care unions "prior to any changes in the role of a health care facility."

Delegates to last November's federation convention gave their full support to a series of resolutions proposed by HEU and the Health Sciences Association in the course of the four-day convention.

Two of the resolutions called on both the federal and provincial governments to maintain adequate levels of funding to our health care system.

In particular, labour will push the federal government to re-establish federal cost-share funding of medicare with annual increases based on the gross national product and growth in populations.



Convention delegates also gave their full support to health workers' demand to have full participation in community health councils and regional boards.

Health care workers should not be excluded from running for office, the convention agreed, by bogus "conflict of interest" regulations. The proposed structure of councils, with some members appointed and some elected, needs to be re-examined.

The federation favours a delay in the process of establishing new governing bodies "to ensure full discussion and consultation."

The three major health-related resolutions passed by the convention obtained near-unanimous support. ■

Sharing and working together

"Unless unions and aboriginal people work together, divided we all fall," says HEU activist Trudy Erickson.

Erickson, a Gitksan nation woman and a member of HEU's Royal Jubilee local, issued that warning Dec. 1 in a key debate on aboriginal land claims at the B.C. Federation of Labour convention.

The economic struggles of First Nations have much in common with the struggles of working people, she said, recalling how her grandfather had been unable to feed his family after federal fisheries officers seized his net.

Like forest workers, her people believe in the need

for silviculture, she said, but have been unable to participate in the forest industry because of the lack of comprehensive treaties.

Erickson urged delegates to support a resolution calling on the federation to "reaffirm its solidarity with the struggle of aboriginal people," to provide visible support whenever disputes arise and to lobby the provincial government to provide speedy, fairly negotiated settlements.

"We must share and work together," HEU Penticton

delegate Minnie Dennis told the convention. Also a Gitksan woman, she urged labour and First Nations "to share and work together in solidarity. Only in this way can we move forward."

The convention debate followed a strong appeal to delegates from Joe Mathias, a chief of the Squamish Nation and a major figure in the land claims struggle.

"There is an ugly, vulgar sentiment emerging which I term anti-Indian," Mathias said.

"It emerges from a great field of uncertainty, from not knowing what's coming down the pike."

First Nations "are not here to threaten you or your jobs," Mathias said. "We are not here to send anybody back to Europe. It scares me that the process we're trying to develop may be dismantled simply because of misunderstandings."

Through the treaty-making process, Mathias said, "we want the opportunity to participate at all levels of the economy. We want jobs and the capacity to create jobs."

Together, he said, unions and First Nations "share the same aspiration to the basic human right to have a decent-paying job to benefit ourselves, our families, and over the long-term, the B.C. economy." ■



ERICKSON



DENNIS

Beware of rich men in suits

Wealthy Canadians who have benefited from generous tax breaks and high interest rates are fighting to maintain those privileges and force other Canadians to pay the price of the federal deficit, says author Linda McQuaig.

"The egalitarian nature of our society is under attack," McQuaig told convention delegates.

Social programs such as health care, unemployment insurance and welfare fight inequality in society because they distribute wealth to lower income Canadians. Yet powerful corporate lobbies have blamed these programs for the deficit problems faced by federal and provincial governments, she said.

But a Statistics Canada study shows that the cost of social programs has hardly risen in the last 20 years, causing

only six per cent of growth in the national debt.

The other 94 per cent was caused by tax breaks introduced in the 1970s and 1980s by Liberal and Conservative governments, and the high interest rate policy pursued by those governments, said McQuaig, who has written a book on Canada's tax system.

Big business is lobbying governments to cut social programs but maintain tax breaks, most of which benefit wealthy Canadians and corporations. She said organized labour must continue its work of introducing and defending social programs.



TAX EXPERT McQuaig said labour must defend social programs.

"There's a real class struggle going on. So far, they've been winning it," McQuaig said of wealthy Canadians.

Cutbacks are costly because more unemployment means more pressure on our health system and on social programs, she said. "Austerity can be very expensive. Beware of men in suits offering solutions to the deficit crisis." ■

PERK SCANDAL

Mounties eye Austin

The government probe into the spending habits of Gordon Austin was handed over to the RCMP commercial crime squad Jan. 19 for a criminal investigation of the former Health Labour Relations Association boss.

"We'll be looking at all the various aspects that the comptroller-general's people have queried and compare it to the parameters of the law," said inspector Earl Moulton of the RCMP commercial crime squad.



AUSTIN

But Moulton, who will be questioning Austin and other HLRA officials, said he'd be "very surprised" if his investigation was completed before June. Once it is done, fraud or theft charges could be laid, he said.

Austin was fired, reluctantly, by the HLRA board Oct. 15, after leaked documents sparked an expose of his lavish spending habits and perks paid for by taxpayers.

Reached at his home by *The Guardian*, Austin refused comment on these or other developments.

The case was sent to the RCMP by provincial comptroller-general Allan Barnard, who was called in by the government when the perks scandal erupted.

Police involvement means that the results of the comptroller-general's work will remain confidential for some time still.

Union secretary-business manager Carmela Allevato said HEU is pressing the government to release the full account of the scandal investigation once the crime squad has finished its work.

"It's a basic matter of accountability," Allevato said. "The public has a right to know just what was going on at HLRA, why no one stopped it, and what measures are being taken to make sure that this type of abuse doesn't happen again."

HEU also wants the three remaining government investigations of the activities of health employers organizations to be made public. These include the multi-million dollar investment losses of the HLRA health and benefit trust, and HLRA's management and accounting practises.

Meanwhile, the HLRA director of finance who spearheaded an internal effort to get Austin's expenses under control was forced to leave the organization only one week after his termination.

Maureen O'Connor told *The Vancouver Sun* she was shunned because she was blamed for the media leak of secret documents that caused Austin's downfall.

"Nobody said they were pleased with what I'd done," O'Connor told the paper. "It was my job, I had no choice," she said of her efforts to get the HLRA board of directors to act on her concerns about impropriety. ■

PEACEFUL SOLUTION
HEU is calling for a peaceful solution to the anti-NAFTA Zapatista uprising in Chiapas for land and social and economic justice.



Respect human rights in Chiapas

With media reports documenting the repressive measures used by the Mexican government to crush an uprising in the southern state of Chiapas, HEU has called on the Mexican government to respect the human rights of the area's indigenous peoples.

In a letter to Mexican president Salinas, union president Fred Muzin urged a dialogue and negotiations with the Zapatista National Liberation Army "so that a non-violent solution to this conflict can be found, preventing further bloodshed."

The letter was also critical of the government for eliminating constitutional protection for indigenous communities that helped preserve their traditional landholdings.

At press time, demonstrations of indigenous and peasant organizations had again erupted in Chiapas and two other states in southern Mexico.

Meanwhile, the Provincial Executive's international solidarity committee met with Mexican economist and NAFTA opponent Salvador Peniche in January.

Peniche, who is in Vancouver working on a project at UBC, said that more than just extreme poverty and the fight for economic justice were behind the uprising that erupted New Year's Day. According to Peniche, it was symbolic of the crisis facing his country's repressive and corrupt political system.



PENICHE

"Mexico's carefully crafted modern image was destroyed in one week"

"The Zapatistas want democracy, elections, and the right to elect their own representatives and to get rid of the corrupt Mexican landholding system. The image of Mexico as a modern country so carefully cultivated over the last 10 years was destroyed in one week," he said. "The uprising was a real defeat for the government."

He also said that racism against indigenous people is now a national issue.

Peniche said the conflict, in which hundreds of people were killed by the army, could have a key impact on August's presidential elections. However,

he warned that the governing party, which has ruled Mexico continuously since early in this century, was again prepared to resort to widespread electoral fraud to hold on to power. ■

The new 36-hour week facts of life

Ever since the 36-hour work week became a fact of life last September 30, HEU members have become familiar with a new term: extra day off, or EDO.

For Helen Bryson, an activity aide at Cottonwoods in Kelowna, the three letters mean something more. "EDO," she said, "that's heaven's day."

Bryson spends the extra day off she gets every five weeks on herself. It's a needed break from her work and from her family responsibilities. "I think it's wonderful because we need the extra time. It's given me more time for myself."

The workers in her department now work 7.5 hour shifts, and the new shift schedules give her two weekends out of five with her family, instead of one out of five as in the past.

For Ken Prokopetz, who works in maintenance at Kelowna General, the new eight-hour shifts give him every second Friday off.

"It's improved every one of our people's morale," he said. "The work gets done. The extra half hour each day helps us finish the job."

The employees in the department,

which has six full-time workers and two part-timers, sat down and worked out the days off they wanted.

As in the cases of these departments at Kelowna General and Cottonwoods, health care unions and employers were able to agree on 90 per cent of new shift schedules without taking the matter to arbitration.

Arbitrator Colin Taylor, in a recent ruling on the shift schedules, called the high degree of cooperation on the new shift schedules "an extraordinary achievement."

Taylor's decision will allow this cooperation to continue, because he decided that disputes over new shift schedules will be resolved through agreement or arbitration, and not by a decision of employers.

The issue of future schedule changes came up last fall in talks to make what are known as "consequential amendments" to the master agreement, when employers insisted that they have the unilateral right to change the new 36-hour shift schedules.

HEU, the B.C. Nurses' Union and the Health Sciences Association refused to



BETTER MORALE Kelowna General maintenance worker Ken Prokopetz says the new shifts have improved morale.

accept the employer's position, and the matter was referred to binding arbitration.

Taylor's ruling emphasizes the importance of mutual agreements on shift schedules. But when employees do not agree to a new schedule, the award puts in place a new, quick process for employees to challenge management's schedule.

Taylor also ruled that no particular shift schedule should be given priority of consideration by arbitrators, and that shift schedules brought in with the 36-hour work week may not be changed without agreement or compelling reasons.

"We have won an important right to have an ongoing say in our shift schedules," said HEU secretary-business manager Carmela Allevato. ■

MARCH 3/4

HEU table officers meeting, Vancouver Island North, Nanaimo.

MARCH 9/10

HEU table officers meeting, Lower Mainland 1, Vancouver.

MARCH 14

HEU workload campaign phase two begins.

MARCH 14/15

HEU table officers meeting, Lower Mainland 2, Vancouver.

MARCH 29/30

HEU table officers meeting, Fraser Valley, location TBA.

APRIL 5/6

HEU table officers meeting, Lower Mainland 3, Vancouver.

APRIL 11/12

HEU table officers meeting, Okanagan South, Kelowna.

APRIL 14/15

HEU table officers meeting, Okanagan North, Kamloops.

APRIL 25/26

HEU table officers meeting, Northern Region, Prince George.

MAY 4/5

HEU table officers meeting, Kootenays, Castlegar.

MAY 10/11

HEU table officers meeting, Kootenays, Cranbrook.

OCTOBER 23

HEU convention and 50th anniversary celebration, Richmond Inn, until Oct. 28

What caused the Westray disaster?

A miner's-eye account of a tragedy that shouldn't have happened

Review by Art Kilgour/CALM

It's been almost two years since an explosion at the Westray coal mine in Nova Scotia killed 26 men, some of them buried forever under coal and rock. Shaun Comish's 82-page book, a miner's-eye account, takes you into the heart of a modern-day mine that was run like something out of a previous century.

A 12-year veteran miner, Comish describes a workplace where rockfalls, high methane levels, excessive coal dust and fires were everyday occurrences. It "was like playing Russian roulette with three bullets in a six-shooter," he says, "and it was your turn to spin more often than you wanted to."

Comish carries a dreadful guilt because, as an experienced miner, he knew a tragedy was inevitable. The only question was when and how bad it would be.

It is now generally accepted that the explosion, at 5:18 a.m. Sat. May 9, 1992, started with a spark, which ignited ever-present methane gas, which in turn triggered a massive eruption of airborne coal dust. The explosion roared up the mine shafts, incinerating everything in its path.

It blew the mine entrance — two kilometres from the coal face — to bits and caused massive rockfalls followed by lethal build-ups of methane gas. The coal dust sucked up all available oxygen as it burned. Death probably came instantly to those underground.

As a trained mine rescue man, Comish spent much of the next 72 hours making trips into the mine, hoping against all odds to save a life. "I could not believe my eyes as we descended into what can only be described as hell. Cement bulkheads that had been two and three feet thick had been smashed into little pieces and thrown 100 feet or more. Steel doors that had stood 12 and 15 feet high and 12 feet wide were now crumpled, twisted pieces of metal."

Deteriorating conditions soon forced abandonment of the rescue. Only 15 bodies were recovered, 11 remained unlocated but presumed dead, a total of 26 deceased, mostly 30-something men with young families.

What caused the Westray disaster? Comish suspects vent tubes, which had been blocked the day before the explosion,

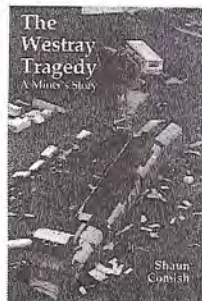
THE WESTRAY TRAGEDY:

A MINER'S STORY

by Shaun Comish

FERNWOOD PUBLISHING, HALIFAX

\$10.95, Paper



caused the build-up of methane gas which was ignited by sparks from a drill.

He faults mine managers, who permitted and encouraged unsafe practices, and belittled or threatened anyone who complained. Provincial and federal politicians who bankrolled the new mine despite the coal seam's history of explosions, and 244 previous mining deaths are also to blame.

Comish criticizes the recent flooding of the mine, which was also opposed by the survivors' families. But he says, "once again the victory went to the Goliath of this story."

Finally, Comish issues a warning to future miners, should Westray ever re-open. "Be safe, be tough and don't compromise your right to a healthy and safe workplace." ■



Books

The case for a shorter work week

Review by Geoff Meggs

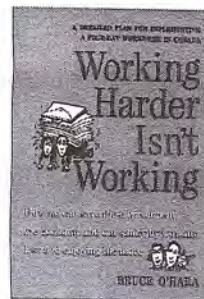
Has Canada got a job shortage or a labour surplus? Author Bruce O'Hara believes the problem is labour surplus and the solution is a shorter work week. O'Hara's new book, entitled *Working Harder Isn't Working*, makes the persuasive case that most of the world's problems — from unemployment to pollution and ill-health — stem from an obsession with working hard, long hours.

"North America suffers from an epidemic of workaholicism rivaling in size and severity the problem of alcoholism," O'Hara says. The result: pressure on the environment, social breakdown, unemployment

and plenty of misery for all. His proposed solution is a phased-in 32-hour week, starting with a ban on overtime.

O'Hara's philosophy is not new. In fact, similar thinking was behind the reduction of the work week in HEU's Employment Security Agreement implemented last fall. The fight for shorter hours has been a top labour priority for more than a century.

What is new in this book is the enthusiastic effort O'Hara makes to link this economic demand with the needs of people far beyond labour's ranks in the unemployed, in developing countries and even the environmental movement. It's a good read. ■



WORKING HARDER ISN'T WORKING

by Bruce O'Hara

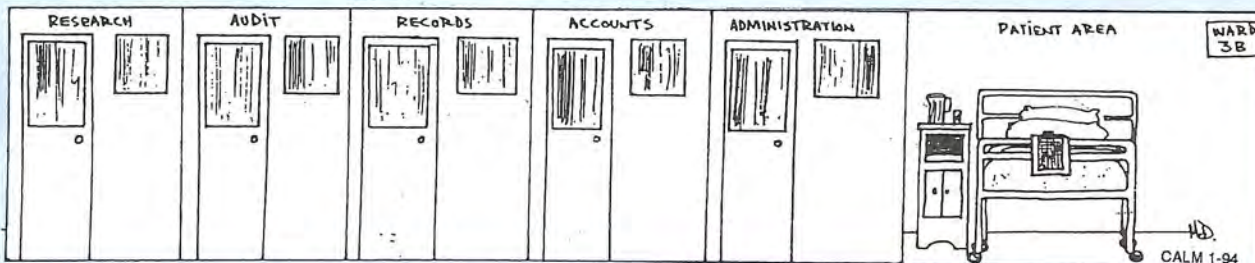
NEW STAR BOOKS, VANCOUVER

\$14.95

Coffee break



All stories guaranteed factual.
Sources available on demand.



Signs of the times

Actual signs found around the U.S. as noted in Richard Lederer's *Anguished English*:

At a restaurant and gas station: Eat here and get gas.
Or, at another gas station: We sell gasoline to anyone in a glass container.

In a New Hampshire jewelry store: Ears pierced while you wait.

In a New York restaurant: Customers who consider our waitresses uncivil ought to see the manager.

On the wall of a Baltimore

estate: Trespassers will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law — Sisters of Mercy.

In a Florida maternity ward: No children allowed.

Glass action suit?

A Toronto lawyer plunged to his death from the 24th floor of an office building after repeatedly throwing himself at a window to test the strength of the pane.

Boss helps workers sleep on the job

Tokyo subway drivers and conductors who work the late shift

sleep at the depot. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, they are awakened for their morning part of the shift by pillows that inflate at the right time.

He was just following orders

At the A.E. Stanley plant in Decatur, Illinois, the Allied Industrial Workers' Union is involved in a bitter contract dispute with management.

The company recently fired union activist Dan Lane for following orders to remove all union logos and slogans from the plant.

Lane complied by cutting the union's logo from a sign at the plant entrance that also displayed the company logo and the motto, "Partners in Quality."

Contracting-out costs billions

While the federal government doesn't keep track of the total dollar amount of contracting-out in the federal public service, the Public Service Alliance of Canada estimates the figure at about \$6 billion every year.

The government has not disputed the union's figure.

HEU PEOPLE



REID

Pine Grove's Reid says farewell

Verda Reid, a nurses aide at Pine Grove Lodge in Kam-

loops, retired in 1993 after 24 years as an HEU member and activist.

Reid served as vice-chair for her local and saw to the good and welfare needs of her brothers and sisters. Active in church groups and choir, Reid plans to spend more time with her husband, visit with relatives and travel.

Whoops, KGH's Harry O'Neill still on job

The *Guardian's* September/October issue made it out as though Kelowna General Hospital member and union activist Harry O'Neill had retired after a long and glorious career.

We were wrong! Brother O'Neill hadn't retired from his job, he'd just stepped down from a union position.

Local chairperson Maureen Shepherd reports that O'Neill has been basking in enjoyment of congratulatory calls from across the province since the article appeared.



BLACK

Sorry Harry, it's time to set the record straight.

Smailes to relax, enjoy life

Peggy Smailes started working in Royal Inland Hospital's dietary department dietary department in 1978.

Now, after a quarter century of work, the Kamloops' cook is calling it quits. She plans to relax, enjoy life and spend time with her granddaughter.

On her retirement, Smailes received a pin and gift from the RIH local.

Albert Black takes early retirement

Mount St. Mary's Hospital cleaner Albert Black took advantage of the early retirement option in the Employment Security Agreement and called it quits Jan. 28 after 20 years.

Though Black never held a local executive position, local secretary-treasurer Mary Jetko writes that he always attended local meetings.

His retirement was marked by a special dinner, where he received an HEU jacket, retirement certificate and a pin.

Black plans to fish and travel to Scotland for a visit.

Scholarships awarded to CLC labour school

The Provincial Executive has awarded 16 scholarships for members to attend a variety of labour education courses at the 1994 Canadian Labour Congress Winter school held in January and February at Harrison Hotsprings.

The \$540 scholarships were awarded equally by region. Those members receiving them were Jean Scholefield, Shorncliffe; Janice Power, St. Paul's; Richard Perkins, Eagle Ridge; Doreen Plouffe, VGH; Lisa Sami, Louis Brier; John Rogers, Royal Arch; Terry Perks, Mount Tolmie; Susan Vaughan, Nanaimo; Nancy Zacota, Prince Rupert; Peggy Christianson, Williams Lake; Lorna Hendrickson, Overlander; Ruth Hendriks, Sagebrush; Nina Zibin, Grand Forks; Diane Merriman, Mount St. Francis; Crystal Rudy, Jackman; and Kate Marleau, Mission.

Short but sweet

Finnish Manor housekeeper Seija Renfors retired Feb. 28. Renfors worked at the Burnaby long-term care facility since 1980.

Staff on the move

After a three year stint on loan to the federal government in Ottawa, HEU's Emil Shumey has returned to B.C.

Shumey, who worked with Labour Canada, will take over the position of director of the Kelowna office after a quick reorientation session in Vancouver.

Trails' Whaley benefits from early retirement

Ron Whaley retired in late January after almost 20 years as a maintenance worker and groundskeeper at Trail Regional Hospital.

The Trail local calls it a "West Kootenay's success story" under the Employment Security Agreement. About 200 HEU members took advantage of the early retirement option.



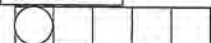
WHALEY

PUZZLE

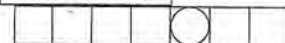


Unscramble the words, then unscramble the circled letters to discover the missing element of the cartoon caption. The words are all to be found in Article 8 of the Master Collective Agreement.

TRHIG



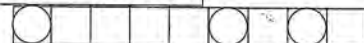
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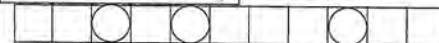
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Solutions next issue!

Weekend labour

Employees at Walt Disney Co., it is said, work so hard and the budgets are so tight, that they say, "If you don't work on Saturday, don't even think about coming to work on Sunday."

Work generates gastric grumbles, Glaxo says

If work makes you sick to your stomach, you're not alone.

According to the Glaxo pharmaceutical company, half of all workers suffer from stomach disorders.

It surveyed 1,251 workers and found:

- eight per cent had missed a day of work in the past year because of stomach problems
- work-related stress was the culprit for 34 per cent of those surveyed

- fear of losing a job caused problems for 14 per cent

- too much coffee, tea and pop was the problem for 39 per cent; half blamed food
- 20 per cent pinned their problems on smoking or alcohol.

Janitors get beating justice

Janitors who were brutally beaten by Los Angeles police during a rally three years ago have won a \$3.5 million settlement from the city.

The 1990 beatings during a peaceful Justice for Janitors rally organized by their union focused a national spotlight on the organizing and bargaining campaigns of the predominantly Latino workforce.

The settlement will be split among 148 union janitors and their supporters who were beaten at the rally.

The job killed him

The widow of a man who died after working 360 days in a row is not entitled to compensation, Japanese government officials ruled.

They said the amount of work was not excessive.

NAFTA jobs pipe dream

Some Mexican economists predict that even if foreign investment in Mexico doubles under the North American 'free' trade pact only 12 per cent of new job-seekers in that country will find employment.

Meanwhile the impact of the deal's agricultural provisions could drive almost 15 million poor peasant farmers off their land.

Sources: CALM, Frank

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First contract front

A bad decision by the Labour Relations Board means HEU is stepping up efforts to win first contracts for 1,000 new members.

PAGE 3



CCERA action

As the March 31 contract expiry deadline looms, action is planned to win the employment security deal for CCERA members.

PAGE 5



Ramsey on reform

B.C.'s new health minister on what's next in health reform. An exclusive Guardian interview.

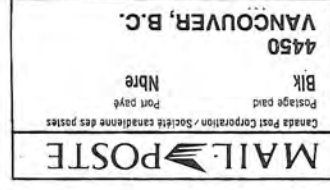
PAGE 8



Workload overload

Thousands of members are affected by workload overload. HEU has targeted the problem in a special campaign.

PAGE 10



*Much to be proud of
Much left to fight for*

Stylish enamel and brass International Women's Day lapel pins based on the above design can be ordered from the Provincial Office for \$4.



MARCH 8th

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY '94