

THE PROVINCIAL BUDGET

NDP budget boosts: good news

THE MARCH 28 provincial budget announcement of increased funding for hospitals and community health services is a good move, and shows the NDP government's commitment to health care,

says the Hospital Employees' Union.

"We're happy to see that health facilities and vital community services are getting more generous increases this year than last year," said Carmela Allevato, the union's secretary-business manager.

In her budget, NDP finance minister Elizabeth Cull outlined a three per cent funding boost for hos-

pitals, a substantial rise from last year's increase of only one per cent. Funding for community-based health services, which are the cornerstone of the government's health reform plan, increased by seven per cent.

ANALYSIS

Overall, health care spending increased by nearly four per cent to \$6.6 billion.

Allevato warned, however, that hospital budgets will remain tight and she called on hospital administrators to start complying with the downsizing targets for management staff set out in B.C.'s health reform objectives.

"Health care workers have met the downsizing targets for a leaner hospital system. But health administrators haven't, so we'll be watching to make sure the increased funding is spent wisely," she said.

Allevato was also optimistic the increased health funding along with the budget surplus would help solve the problems faced by HEU and other unions in first contract negotiations for hundreds of poorly paid health workers in the community sector across the province.

"The workers who are seeking fair wages and pay equity measures, have been stymied," Allevato said, "by provincial wage 'guidelines'. We should have a bit more flexibility now to resolve their needs."

HEU also offered strong backing to the government's announcement in the throne speech of a plan to outlaw private for-profit clinics that are increasingly active in providing acute care services.

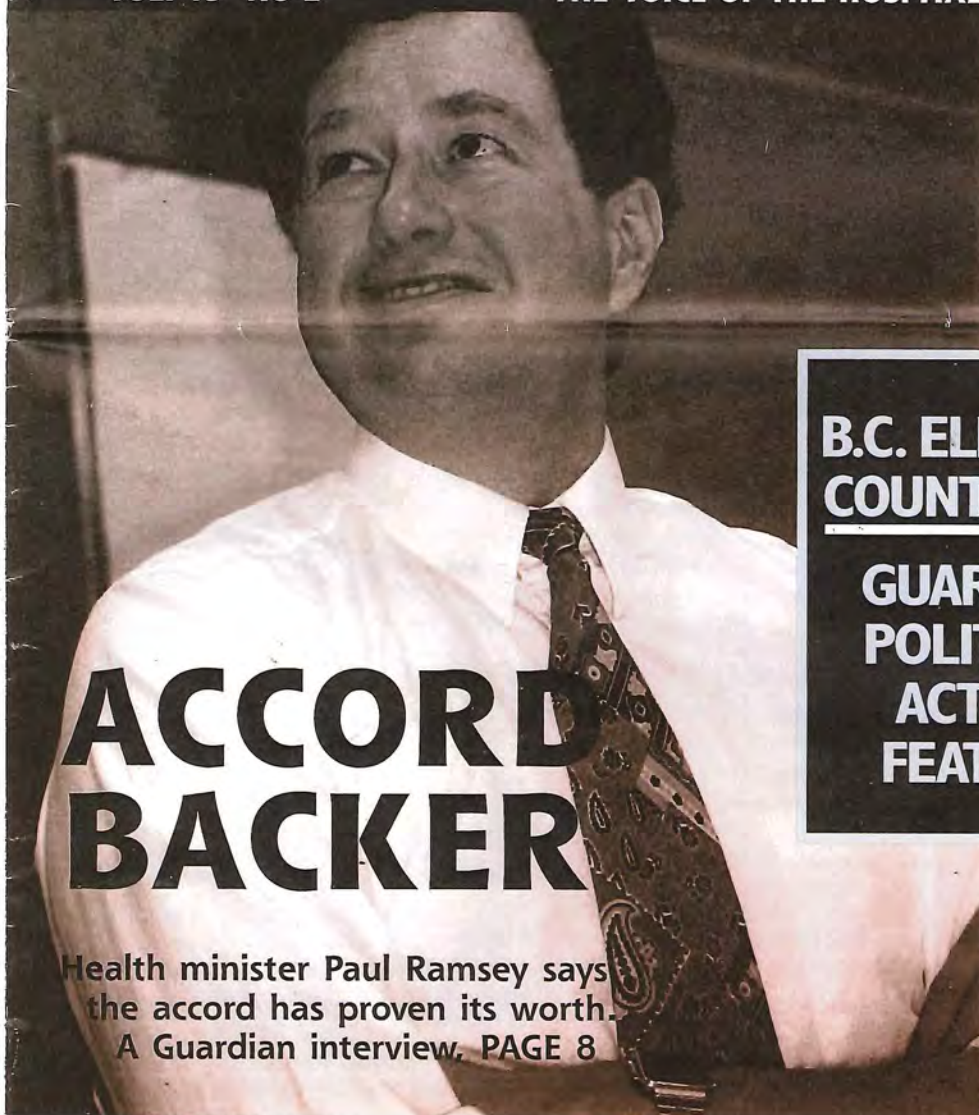
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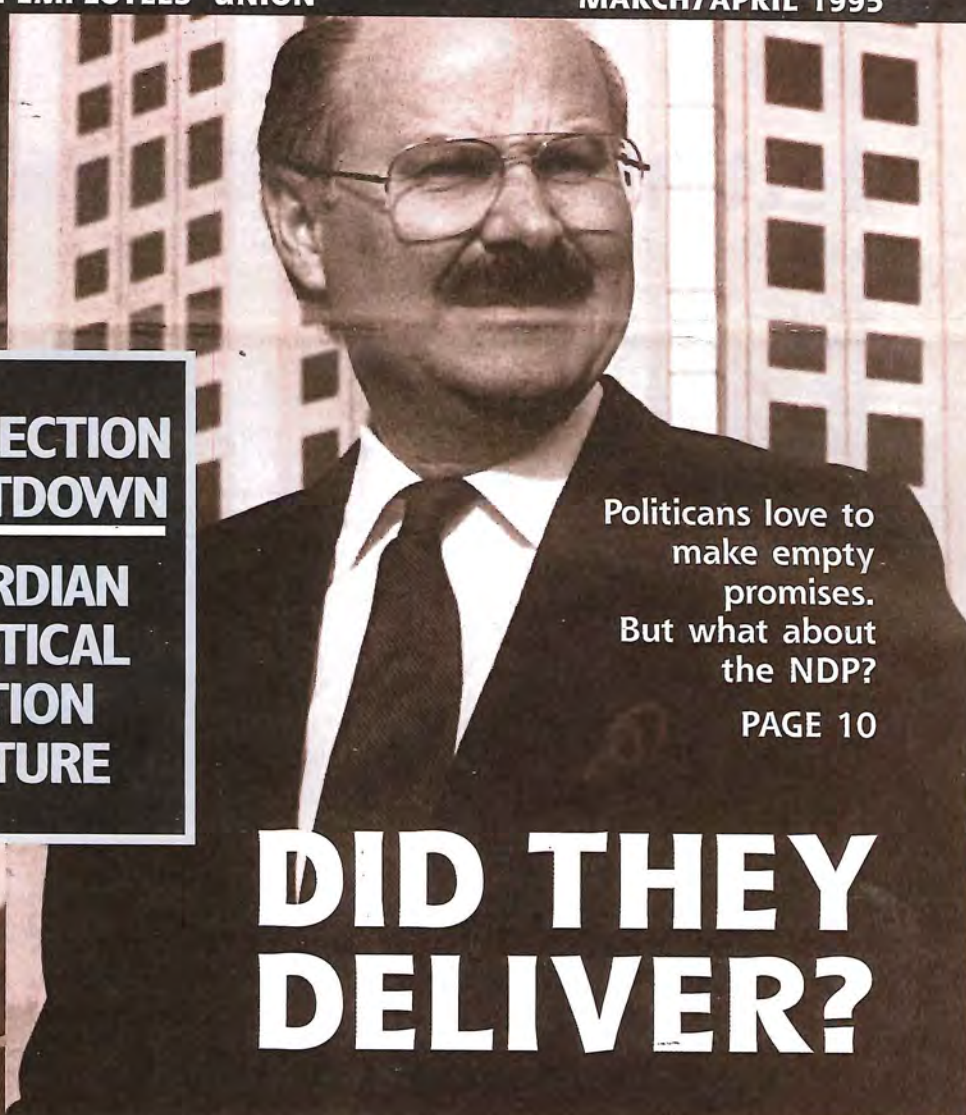


ACCORD BACKER

Health minister Paul Ramsey says the accord has proven its worth.
A Guardian interview, PAGE 8

B.C. ELECTION COUNTDOWN

GUARDIAN POLITICAL ACTION FEATURE



Politicians love to make empty promises. But what about the NDP?

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DID THEY DELIVER?

DAFT

We're organizing against a consultant's plan for massive change in food services at Lower Mainland facilities. PAGE 3

DRAFT



THE WAGE CONTROL WALL: HEU FIGHTS BACK/5

HAMBLY PHOTO

COMMENT

Renewed accord is food for thought

by Carmela Allevato

IMAGINE EVERY health care system patient between UBC Hospital and Hope receiving his or her meal from a single kitchen. Imagine that kitchen operating somewhere in the Lower Mainland. Imagine hundreds of food service workers laid off while others transfer to a multi-million dollar kitchen miles from their communities.

You've just imagined the most favoured option for health care food services in a massive new consultant's plan unveiled by health administrators last month.

If ever there was an argument for a renewed health accord — one designed to protect services and the public's investment in the skills and training of HEU members — this is it.

In the private sector, profit-minded employers have known for some time that the only way to achieve real improvements in service and productivity is by tapping the creativity and skills of their workers.

They can't do that if they're laying them off.

Private sector employers have also turned more and more to a flatter, more decentralized form of decision-making. You won't find health administrators heading in that direction.



Of course, the goal in the private sector is more profit, not better conditions for workers. That's why unions tackle these problems at the bargaining table to make sure that workers' interests are protected.

In a publicly-funded health care system, we must ensure that quality services are provided in a cost-effective way. That's our responsibility to British Columbians who are footing the bill. But that means workers must have a voice in decision-making and effective consultation.

The health accord was designed to give health administrators a way to sit down, at last, and bring workers into the picture. HEU's polling shows that British Columbians expect and demand that kind of co-operation. So far, those running our health care system are refusing to accept that kind of accountability.

HEU will not oppose — in fact we will facilitate — changes designed to improve and enhance our medicare system. We will not support change at the expense of the health care workers delivering service and care.

The angry reaction of food service workers to this latest consultant's

'The angry reaction should be a warning to employers that health reform will fail if it is done at caregivers' expense'

scheme should be a warning to employers that health care reform will fail if it is done at caregivers' expense.

That's why a renewed and expanded health accord is vital not only to medicare and for health workers — but also for employers.

letters

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

Hawthorn members say thanks for the support

All the members of Hawthorn Park local wish to extend their heartfelt appreciation to all those who extended their support — morally, financially, and on the picket line — during our strike.

Many thanks!

ELAINE PROULX,
Chairperson,
Hawthorn Park Local,
Kelowna

• Hawthorn Park members have finally won a first contract after a bitter fight. See page five for details.

Attention 1996 bargaining committee

What are you going to do for the benefit of casual employees? Are we going to be able to bid into permanent full-time or

permanent part-time jobs like we used to have the right to do previously?

As you are well aware, we have been ignored in the current contract. We have been deprived of our right to bid into any kind of job even if a casual's seniority hours outstand a permanent or part-time employee.

We also belong to HEU and pay the same union dues like everyone else.

I urge the casual employees to speak up now for your lost rights, before the new set of negotiations start. Otherwise we shall never move upwards, perhaps go downwards and work only four hours a shift.

I hope and expect the bargaining committee shall take care of this casual employee issue and restore their lost rights.

Please give us the dignity and the honour which everyone else enjoys. Please bring us on par with other



employees so that we could also bid on full-time or part-time jobs.

A member is a member.

AMARJEET K. THIARA,
Duncan Local

HEU aids Port Alberni struggle

On behalf of the B.C. and Yukon Building and Construction Trades Council and its affiliates I wish to express our thanks for your generous contribution in support of our struggle with Macmillan Bloedel's anti-union, open shop campaign.

This has been a very expensive fight to date and we are a long way from reaching a satisfactory resolve. The Open Shop campaign is growing rapidly in this province. Some of the major players are Westcoast Energy, Macmillan Bloedel, Slocan Forest Industries, Fletcher Challenge and Methanex.

Once again we thank the executives and membership of Hospital Employees' Union for your kind assistance and support.

TOM GALBRAITH,
Secretary-Treasurer,
B.C. and Yukon Building
and Construction Trades

Cull says balanced budget will save social services

• Union secretary-business manager Carmela Allevato received this response after she pressed the government to place a priority on social services and health care funding.

Thank you for your letter regarding government spending on health care, education and social services.

As outlined in my 1995 Pre-Budget Guide, the government has placed a high priority in maintaining its commitment to protect services to people.

Over the three year period, 1992/93 to 1994/95, spending on the core services of health, social services, and skills and education has grown by 15 per cent, 42 per cent, and 18 per cent respectively. These increases both protect and enhance programs for people.

In order to protect the province's ability to sustain our services to people over the longer term, the government is also committed to strong management of the province's finances.

In this regard, the government has established a provincial debt management plan which will balance the provincial budget by 1996/97.

This plan represents a necessary course of action to preserve and strengthen our current health, education and social programs.

ELIZABETH CULL,
Minister of Finance



Guardian

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

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What we're up to

Solutions sought for Smithers problems

HEU's Smithers local is one of the movers and shakers behind a community campaign for government action to solve long-standing funding problems at the Bulkley Valley Hospital that were highlighted recently when, in desperation, the facility's board implemented \$450 daily user fee charge for extended care patients.

The local and chief shop steward Donna Schrader are

playing a widely-recognized constructive role in helping the community resolve their hospital's problems, which are based on a policy of neglect from previous Socred governments.

Union efforts were instrumental in attracting province-wide media coverage for the community and winning an upcoming meeting with local MLA and cabinet minister Jackie Pement.

HEU's support and problem solving efforts got support of the board chair, Klaus Mueller Jr., who extended his thanks to HEU in a radio interview.

Local activist Schrader, who's received wide media exposure, was pleased with the community campaign efforts which now focus on a petition drive. She credits the Employment Security Agreement with laying the groundwork for the cooperative union/board efforts to solve funding problems.

Phil MacLeod, retired HEU Queen's Park local activist, is now vice-chair of the Oliver-Osoyoos Community Health Council. With hospitals downsizing, he says the big challenge is to ensure that the services stay in the community.

Union ranks keep growing

Health workers at two B.C. long-term care facilities have recently joined HEU to win better working and caring conditions.

About 100 employees at the German Canadian Home in Vancouver joined for the benefits of a union contract. They work at a 144 bed non-profit government funded long-term care facility.

Also joining were 23 employ-



ees at the Bonnymuir Lodge, a 36-bed for-profit funded facility in Surrey.

Welcome to all our new members!

What do YOU think?

That's a question the union is going to be asking about 1,400 union members who will be randomly selected to participate in one of the two important surveys of HEU members that will be conducted in confidential 20-minute telephone

interviews by the respected polling firm of McIntyre and Mustel.

Both surveys will give union members an opportunity to express opinions on important issues. The results will be used by the Provincial Executive to address key issues.

The first survey is designed to get feedback that will help shape the bargaining agenda for 1996. The second survey - part of an initiative mandated by the last HEU convention - is an effort to obtain a better demographic snapshot of the diversity of HEU members.

In the first step of the computer-generated random sample, about 6,000 union members will receive a letter from president Fred Muzin outlining the procedures for the surveys. Then the computer will again randomly select the final 1,400 person survey base.

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Equity conference opens doors for more involvement

HEU will hold a ground-breaking equity conference in Vancouver April 24 to 26 to help create an action plan that ensures that HEU is open to all members of the union.

Union members who are aboriginal people, people of colour, lesbians and gay men, and people with challenges are invited to this meeting, which is taking place as a result of a resolution passed at HEU's 19th Biennial Convention last October.

"We need members from various groups to help us fill in the gaps in HEU so that we more accurately reflect all of our members at every level," said HEU secretary-business manager Carmela Allevato.

Members of these groups will form four equity caucuses which will share experiences, define issues, and design the action plan to involve members from these groups more fully in the work of HEU.

Each caucus will develop a plan and elect a steering committee to work with the Provincial Executive over the time leading up to HEU's 20th Biennial Convention in 1996.

Application forms and more information are available from local secretary-treasurers or the Provincial Office.

HEU turns thumbs down on food services controversy

by Stephen Howard

About 50 union activists from Lower Mainland facilities didn't buy the sales pitch from a high-priced consultant at a March 15 meeting on proposals for massive change in food service delivery at Lower Mainland health facilities in the next five to 10 years.

Instead, the activists urged health employers to drop the controversial \$250,000 consultant's plan for a centralized shared food service system that would have a drastic impact on service quality and jobs.

They told employers to consult with health workers and the public.

Acknowledging "the apprehension of health care workers" employers described the consultant's efforts as "an exploratory process from a macro perspective." A final decision on a shared food service model, which would require more than \$100 million in capital costs, will be made by mid-June.

"The driving force behind the plan is cutting costs, not improving service and quality," said HEU secretary-business manager Carmela Allevato.

HEU locals from Vancouver to Hope will be setting up presentations to their



NO WAY Food service workers Barbara Sundara, Teresa Prentice, and Jacqueline Morgan want employers to go back to the drawing board and involve front line workers to focus on plans to improve food service quality.

boards to lobby against the proposed changes, and press for a renewal of the Employment Security Agreement as a necessary first-step before any long-term change is implemented.

Up to 1,000 HEU food service work-

ers would be affected by the consultant's study, which outlines three options for centralized food production factories along with separate assembly plants that the consultant, Toronto-based Marrack Watts, claims would save up to \$12 million annually.

Up to 500 workers - one in five - would lose their jobs, while 500 more would be redeployed from their facility to the central production factories.

The shared production plan would utilize the cook-chill system which came in for a lot of criticism from food service workers. "It's been nothing but a disaster," said Trish McLean of St. Paul's hospital, where cook-chill was introduced three years ago. "We're back to producing 50 per cent of our meals through conventional cooking."

Burnaby Hospital dietary aide Laurie Schieber said her facility is "five months in to cook-chill, and I just don't see quality food."

Liberal budget hits health care

by Chris Gainor

Paul Martin's 1995 federal budget deepens the cutbacks to social programs and health care begun by the former Conservative government, says HEU secretary-business manager Carmela Allevato.

Although Martin claimed that the cutbacks amount to only about four per cent next year and the following year, they actually mean much larger

cuts to cash transfers to provinces for these programs, she said.

B.C.'s health minister Paul Ramsey already calculates the cuts will cost the provincial health budget about \$170 million next year.

But B.C. Liberal leader Gordon Campbell said his federal counterparts didn't go far enough in axing program spending to reduce the deficit. And Campbell said the Employment Security Agreement should be scrapped to make up for the cuts.

Martin announced that starting in 1996, federal transfers to the provinces for health care, post-sec-

ondary education and welfare will be cut by \$2.5 billion from what the provinces would have received under the current arrangements. In 1997/98, the cut will amount to \$4.5 billion.

Federal documents estimate the total cost to B.C. of these cuts at \$282 million in 1996-97, but B.C. finance minister Elizabeth Cull put the cost at \$457 million for 1996-97 and \$801 million for 1997-98.

These reductions will be on top of Tory cutbacks to health care payments, which now cost the B.C. health care system \$1 billion a year, nearly a sixth of B.C.'s health budget.

WHAT WE'RE UP TO

continued from page 3

HEU adds voice to labour, NDP debate

The Canadian Labour Congress and the federal NDP have embarked on a joint effort to try and re-energize the party after its poor showing in the last federal election.

So HEU has offered its opinions on how to get the NDP back on track.

The HEU brief recognizes the gains that labour has made under NDP governments.

But, it says the party fared badly for a number of reasons, including the NDP's support for the unpopular Charlottetown Accord and the deficit reduction focus of provincial NDP governments.

HEU offered a host of ideas on how to turn the situation around, like building stronger links between the party and

social movements, more grass roots organizing, and making political action a daily priority instead of just at election time.

"The rise of the Reform Party," says the brief, "shows working people are not afraid of radical measures. What they need are radical options that head towards social democracy, not away from it."

Bargaining preparation begins at spring meetings

With HEU's wage and policy conference six months away, preparation for 1996 bargaining gets under way with a series of special bargaining strategy meetings in all regions of the province starting May 9 in the Fraser Valley.

The two-day meetings, which will wind up by the end of May, will start identifying

the ways that HEU can achieve its bargaining goals, which include extending employment security, pay equity, comparability, workload, and one contract for all HEU members.

Details on the strategy meetings have been sent to all secretaries-treasurers.

Fraser Valley office getting closer

Improved union servicing for Fraser Valley locals is close at hand.

At pres time, HEU was evaluating various real estate options to purchase office space for a new location in the Valley.

The decision to buy was made after careful study of leasing opportunities.

June is the target opening date for the new office.

As part of the agreement that brought HEU back into the fold of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, the two unions will share the office



They're budget busters! From left, Laura Johnson, Margaret Ratzloff, Linda Lockerie, and Wendy Johnston joined president Fred Muzin at a March 19 rally against the federal budget in Vancouver.

Activist juggles the ups and downs

Marianne Davies talks about success, stress, tragedy and family

by Stephen Howard

"The end of last year had its highs and its lows," says veteran HEU Cumberland local activist, and single parent Marianne Davies.

On the up side, Davies had just been elected to the B.C. Federation of Labour's executive council, topping the polls in the election of four new positions drawn from the ranks of B.C.'s

labour councils. On the down side, stress build up from overwork coincided with the tragic death of her brother in an industrial accident.

The Comox Valley resident was able to deal with the stress attack by stepping down from her local executive position to concentrate on being secretary on the Courtenay and District Labour Council.

But her brother's death was a more difficult wound to heal. "It was impossible to concentrate for a few months. I was still trying to do things and not let things slide, but you can't always do it. My brother's death made me realize that

life is so short, so try to do the best you can and always try to do what's good — helping people — like he always did."

For the up-and-coming labour leader, Davies describes her B.C. Fed election as "exciting." But she almost didn't run, and it was only after a lot of people approached just prior to the convention that she actually made her decision to stand.

She joins HEU's Fred Muzin, Carmela Allevato, and Mary LaPlante at the top leadership level of B.C.'s provincial labour organization.

Family plays an important role for Davies, driving her commitment to justice, and offering the support that allows her to be involved.

"I wouldn't be doing this if I didn't have a family that helped," she says. For Davies, "the union" was part of her upbringing. Her grandfather was an organizer for the IWA who settled in the Comox Valley in 1938. Her father was an IWA member as are her brothers.

It was her parents who helped out minding her daughter Kristine, now 15. Her dad is in an intermediate care home now, so in the past few years it's been her mother, Florence Bell, who's provided key support.

"There's always someone to talk to, always someone to help out like my mom and all kinds of encouragement," says Davies about the role her family plays in her life.

Even under the best circumstances there are some things that everyone learns the hard way. In her relationship with her daughter Davies is no different. "One of the things I found — the hard way — was that you have to spend time at home."

With mom out of the house regularly, Davies says her daughter starting "hav-

ing fun" instead of doing school work. Her schedule "really affected the relationship that Kristine and I have. I had to make a conscious effort to stay home more, to pay more attention to my daughter."

Surprisingly, Davies says that balancing a single parent's responsibilities

with the demands of an activist's schedule doesn't always pose difficulties.

For instance, she doesn't have to worry about what a partner would think or what their priorities would be. She knows that other women activists face these pressures.

But then sometimes it bugs her because she doesn't have a personal

life. "I miss someone to go places with, someone to talk to, someone who puts their arm around your shoulder and tells you everything will be alright — even if it won't."

Like all activists, Davies is still plagued by stress and burnout. She says people need to delegate more.

"When you get involved you have a tendency to take on too much because you want to make a difference. But there's so much coming down the pike you'll get burned out if you try to take it all on."

She relaxes by listening to classical music and by having a couple of ciders or a glass of wine, but only on the weekend.

"I only drink at the end of the week because it's too easy to get away on you. You could do it all the time if you didn't think about it."

Davies also takes her commitment into community activities as well. She's a girl guide leader, is active in a local women's group and in the annual Courtenay Film Festival.

BALANCING



IT ALL



DELEGATE That's Davies' message to other activists fighting overwork and burnout. Share the load she says because there's too much coming down the pike.

WHAT WE'RE UP TO

space to enable both to enhance servicing for Fraser Valley locals.

Chilliwack MLA backs unions on patient focused care

Liberal MLA Robert Chisholm set off a minor shock wave when he criticized Chilliwack hospital administration for the way it "imposed" patient focused care in a recent letter to health minister Paul Ramsey.

It was a shot in the arm for the tri-union campaign for a public review of PFC. It also put Chisholm at odds with Liberal leader Gordon Campbell and health critic Linda Reid. Earlier this year, Reid got a red carpet tour of the hospital, and without bothering to talk to health workers, issued her party's lavish praise for PFC.

One of the problems with PFC, says Chisholm, whose own

unannounced hospital tour included discussions with health workers, is that "it was imposed from the top down. It should have been negotiated between management and employees," he wrote.

Victoria workers await word on Broadmead transfer

HEU members at Victoria's Memorial Pavilion were awaiting word at *Guardian* press time on whether or not workers caring for veterans at the facility would transfer with the patients to Broadmead pavilion.

When Broadmead refused the transfer, HEU members began a public campaign that was widely picked up in the media.

HEU secretary-business manager Carmela Allevato raised the issue directly with

health minister Paul Ramsey and other government officials.

But the health ministry seemed unable or unwilling to respond.

The HEU members' positions were being filled by BCGEU members displaced from their jobs at Glendale, a mental health facility. The government also had not responded to GEU calls for those workers to follow their work into the community.

Witte woman of the year a bad choice

The union added its voice to the chorus of boos and outrage that greeted *Chatelaine* Magazine's selection of Yellowknife mining boss Peggy Witte as woman of the year for 1994.

"It's a slap in the face to hundreds of thousands of Canadian women," said HEU secretary-business manager Carmela

Allevato in a letter to the magazine.

"Witte's determination to break the union at Yellowknife's Giant gold mine led directly to the tragic death of nine miners and untold hardship for the families of miners on both sides of the picket line."

In a response, *Chatelaine* acknowledged being hit by a "barrage" of letters slamming the Witte selection and promised it would listen to readers who look at women of distinction as ordinary women whose "actions on behalf of her community can inspire the rest of us."

Helping hands make a difference

"I hope it's not too late," writes Penticton local chairperson Susan Burgess, "but in these times of cutbacks and restraint we wanted to show there are

still 'Christmas stories' happening right here in our hospitals!"

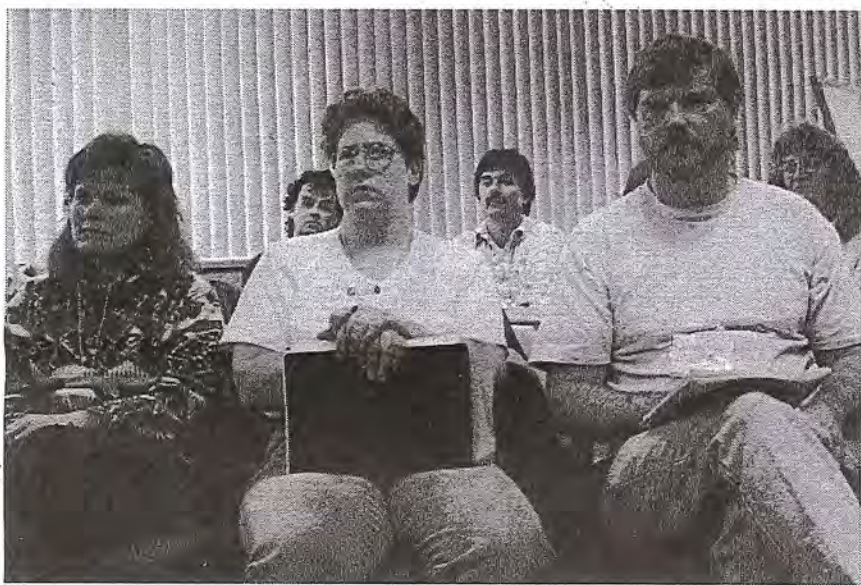
Workers in the Penticton hospital's dietary department "adopted" a family, a young couple with a three-month child, through a local agency last Christmas.

To raise money for the project they built a huge gingerbread house — complete with lights and stained glass windows — that was raffled off.

Their family was overwhelmed with the generosity, and the workers hope to make this an annual event.

The raffle was so successful that they had money left over, so they donated it to the local women's shelter.

The admitting department also adopted a family, a single mother and her 12-year old son. Gifts included hockey equipment, kitchen appliances, clothing, and some much needed Christmas cash.



SEEKING JUSTICE Activists from 20 HEU locals at left, including reps from the striking Group of Five facilities, prepare to step up pressure for fairness at a recent strategy meeting. In Quesnel, Sharon Jenkins tends the grill at a special community BBQ.

Cull's wage controls block fairness for low paid workers

HEU members at the Group of Five social services facilities in Victoria have begun job actions after bargaining for a first contract reached an impasse due to wage "guidelines" imposed by the provincial government.

The same "guidelines" which were drawn up by the Public Sector Employers' Council with the approval of finance minister Elizabeth Cull are being used to deny a fair contract to the striking members of HEU's Quesnel Alcohol and Drug local and to nearly 20 other locals seeking first contracts.

The 150 Victoria members, who work at Cornerstone, Crossroads, Kardel, South Island Community Living, and Victoria Community Resources, operate group homes and day programs for persons with mental and physical disabilities.

"We've been focusing our work entirely on our clients, and that's been very positive," said Margaret Cavin of the Cornerstone local. "All the other work has been left to the managers. There has been some resistance on their part."

Coordinating job actions in the five locals' 17 worksites has been difficult, she said. But participation has been strong and the job actions are being coordinated at regular meetings.

Cavin said the locals are now working on actions to bring their dispute to the attention of the general public.

The five facilities have been certified for more than two years.

Workers in the facilities earn about 30 per cent less than workers in similar facilities, and benefits vary from few to none.

Employers have offered a two-year contract with no wage increase in the first year and two per cent in the second year. The offer does nothing to address wage disparities among the facilities.

Hawthorn workers win big gains in new deal

HEU Hawthorn Park Lodge members have won a new contract and significant gains in wages, benefits and working conditions after a bitter 20 month battle with the multinational companies that own and manage the Kelowna facility.

"It's wonderful," says local chairperson Angie McWilliams. "Having a

contract is fabulous. It was definitely worth the struggle."

The deal, obtained in mid-February through arbitration, provides for wage increases of 25 to 35 per cent, significant benefit improvements, grievance and shift scheduling processes, and a pension plan.

"This is a significant victory and it will be a springboard for the workers to win standard conditions next time," says union secretary-business manager Carmela Allevato. "I'm proud of our Hawthorn members who had the strength and determination to win

justice against no end of obstacles imposed by the powerful men behind Diversicare Inc."

McWilliams said her members are relieved because "finally we have some stability."

Allevato said the whole union will continue to be on guard for the Hawthorn members because Diversicare Inc. has no intention of letting the members savour their contract gains.

"This is the new breed of private sector employer that will fight tooth and nail to maintain their profit margins."

PRESIDENT'S DESK



It's time to fight to save medicare

by Fred Muzin

CANADIANS ARE on the verge of losing medicare, our most cherished, social program. Why? Because the recent federal budget sharply reduces transfer payments to the provinces for health, education and social services.

According to estimates from B.C.'s health minister Paul Ramsey, that translates into a \$170 million slice out of our health care budget next year alone. And the cuts will get even deeper in future years.

In addition, the federal government has surrendered other measures that gave it the clout to keep provinces from allowing practises such as extra billing. Without an ability to enforce our medicare standards, national health care will die.

The Liberal government is continuing on with the Mulroney agenda of supporting private, wealthy corporations at the expense of Canadians. We are now seeing the impact of the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

Health care is nothing but a commodity, patients and residents become customers and buyer beware! American pharmaceutical and insurance companies are chomping at the bit to increase their profits in the Canadian 'market.' Doctors are planning to build private hospitals so that there are alternatives to the public system, if you can afford them.

The free market system creates some winners but many losers. In the States, 40 million Americans have no health coverage and illness can result in life-long debt.

'As front line health care workers, HEU members must be active in this fightback'

But their system does have lots of high-priced consultants who are hatching new ideas, like patient focused care, for employers to save money with no regard for the quality of services.

We are rushing headlong towards drive-through medicine where hospitals will have no beds and loved ones will be left at home to cope as best they can.

There are already groups organizing to fight back against this right-wing agenda. Medicare unites all of us — trade unions, seniors' groups, students, anti-poverty groups, the B.C. NDP government, women's groups, ethnic organizations, churches and others committed to social justice.

As front line health care workers, HEU members must be active in this fightback. Our work provides us with inside knowledge regarding the effect of cutbacks. We can educate the public — by leafleting, at rallies, through newsletters and speaking to community groups. We must meet with our MPs and MLAs and impress upon them that medicare is not for sale. We have to be visible at labour councils and involved in mobilizing.

Time is running out. If we fail to act and fight now, the destruction of Canada's kinder, gentler society is inevitable.



SLEEP DISORDERS HEU's Diane Hynds operates specialized equipment that diagnoses corrective measures to help bring problem sleepers a good night's rest.

Desperately seeking a good night's sleep

If you suffer from a sleep disorder anywhere in the Interior or North and require medical assessment, there's a good chance you'll spend a night under the trained eye of Diane Hynds.

A polysomnography tech, Hynds operates special equipment that's used to help people with severe sleep disorders five nights a week between 8 p.m. and 6 a.m. at Kamloops' Royal Inland Hospital.

Hard core snorers, insomniacs, apnea suffers (people who literally stop breathing when asleep), newborns or adults, Hynds has treated them all. "I really enjoy my job tremendously, I enjoy meeting the people," she says.

When the patients — normally two a night — arrive in the evening, Hynds checks medical data in the referral and conducts interviews for more details.

She tries to get her patients ready for bed as normally as possible. Then she attaches 16 electrodes and monitoring devices wired back into her machines on various parts of the body, like the scalp, eyes, nose, chin, chest and legs.

These monitor breathing, pulse, brain activity, muscle movement and blood/oxygen levels.

The hookup stage can be overwhelming, she says. "Most people are really good about it and because they have disorders, they're tired and don't have a lot of difficulty getting off to sleep. It's the quality of sleep that's a problem."

Hynds monitors her patients through the night, waking them up one at a time shortly after 5 a.m. if their own body clocks don't. The data she collects typically runs to 1,000 pages a patient. It goes to the lab for analysis.

When she's finished her shift Hynds heads home to try to get through her own five stage sleep. But like all shift-workers, getting a good "night" in can be difficult.

"It's especially a problem in the summer when your neighbours are out cutting the lawn or the kids are out screaming. You miss out on social functions, your friends never know when to call, these are downsides to the job."

ON THE



JOB

NOTEBOOK

Opinion poll provides handy information

by Stephen Howard

We're asking a lot of questions these days to gather important information that will give us a jump on preparing for bargaining in 1996 and a provincial election that will surely happen around the same time.

While our bargaining-based survey of HEU members is set to begin, the numbers are in on a public poll to test the opinions of British Columbians about our health care system.

The poll, carried out in February, shows the public takes pride in our health care system and respects the role that health workers like you play.

More than 80 per cent of those polled rate B.C.'s health system as good or excellent for quality.

And, in a clear rejection of budget chopping pledges of provincial Liberal and Reform politicians, 61 per cent oppose health spending cuts and reject any notion that we can't afford our existing level of services.

But the talk of two-tiered health system — one for the rich and one for the poor — advanced by doctors, corporations and deficit-crazed



'The public respects the role that health workers like you play'

politicians clearly has the public worried. In fact, 69 per cent agreed that medicare is in danger.

Health workers scored top marks on a number of fronts. You have the public's respect because 89 per cent of respondents recognize you're doing your best to keep the system going in some pretty difficult circumstances.

We also asked respondents to identify reliable sources of information about what is happening in the system. We've got an 89 per cent reliability rating, on par with doctors and nearly 30 points higher than the boss.

There's also strong public support on questions that underpin our Employment Security Agreement.

We asked whether health reform should be carried out on the backs of health workers. The response was an overwhelming 77 per cent no. By an 85 per cent score, the public recognizes the need for measures that protect the investment in the skills of caregivers.

As HEU activists prepare to meet with local MLAs and reach out to the community to outline the benefits of extending the ESA, these are important numbers to have under our belts. We start our campaign to safeguard our medicare system and win a new security agreement that preserves health services and jobs with a lot of respect, understanding and credibility.

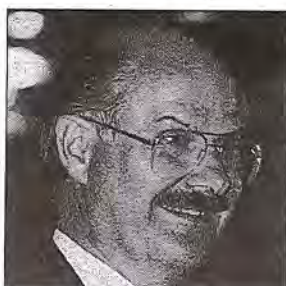
It will come in handy because it's going to be a tough battle.



WHERE DO THEY STAND?



**LIBERAL LEADER
GORDON CAMPBELL**
He's talking tough
on the health
accord, but does
he know the
realities?



**NDP PREMIER
MIKE HARCOURT**
Will he support
health workers'
proposals to
improve health
reform?



**B.C. REFORM
LEADER JACK
WEISGERBER**
What's his party's
policy for the
medicare system?

WE'RE GOING TO FIND OUT.

by Geoff Meggs

The clock is running out, both on the HEU's Master Collective Agreement and the current term of Mike Harcourt's NDP government. The contract expires March 31, 1996, and Harcourt must go to the polls some time before September next year.

For HEU members, who won employment security that averted thousands of layoffs under the current contract, that means political action is moving to the top of this year's bargaining agenda.

"We're going to be meeting with politicians, telling them where we stand and demanding a commitment," says HEU secretary-business manager Carmela Allevato.

Well before an election, HEU will be reporting to members on where each of the parties stands on matters of concern to health workers through a special publication which carries each party's replies to questions posed by the union.

At table officers' conferences now under way across the province, HEU president Fred Muzin and Allevato are

urging locals to make sure that candidates from all political parties hear from HEU at the grassroots level.

"Our ultimate employers are the people of B.C.," Allevato says, "and without their support, politicians will not feel pressured to negotiate fair agreements."

"Our polling tells us that British Columbians not only have a lot of respect for health care workers, but they trust them to tell the truth about the health care system."

"That means our local's leaders are the best possible people to get our message out."

Locals will be working on a regional basis to get HEU's message out both in the community and to local politicians. The goal is to build support for HEU's three main policy goals:

- enhancement of medicare, including legislation banning the development of a two-tier system through the introduction of user fees or privatization;
- increased confidence in health care reform by maintaining acute care services until new community services are in place; and

- commitment to a new partnership with health care workers, including an expanded health accord to protect services and the skills of health care workers through employment security, retraining and other measures.

During the spring, HEU will be circulating a brief outlining its policies, which are based on convention decisions, throughout the province.

Local officers have been supplied with a political action manual which includes the brief, suggestions on lobbying and a contact list for every provincial politician in the province.

With the assistance of staff representatives and political action co-ordinator Kristina Vandervoort, who is based in the Provincial Office, local officers are going to make sure that local politicians come to grips with health policy in the next few months.

"The politicians need to hear from health care workers," Muzin says.

"It's vital that they be held accountable for their actions and that they are aware of the policies we will be pursuing."

POLITICAL ACTION FEATURE

Ready for action

HEU's plan to protect services and extend employment security.

PAGE 7

Steering reforms

Where's the health minister going? An interview with Paul Ramsey.

PAGE 8

Accountability test

Did the NDP come through on their promises to workers?

PAGE 10

HEALTH ACCORD 2

Protection of services is goal

A renewed health accord should make protection of medicare services its main objective, says the HEU.

In a brief outlining the union's objectives for 1996, when the Employment Security Agreement must be extended, the union calls for "a health services protection agreement" which would facilitate the retraining and redeployment of health care workers in a reformed system.

Such an accord would maintain employment security, but improve measures such as retraining, upgrading, early retirement, job sharing and voluntary transfer to enable the system to respond to changing needs.

It would also ensure that caregivers like licensed practical nurses are able to work to the full limit of their training. It would ensure appropriate compensation for workers in newly-emerging jobs and extend pay equity.

Finally, it would facilitate implementation of ergonomic regulations to reap savings for workers and employers by designing safe workplaces.

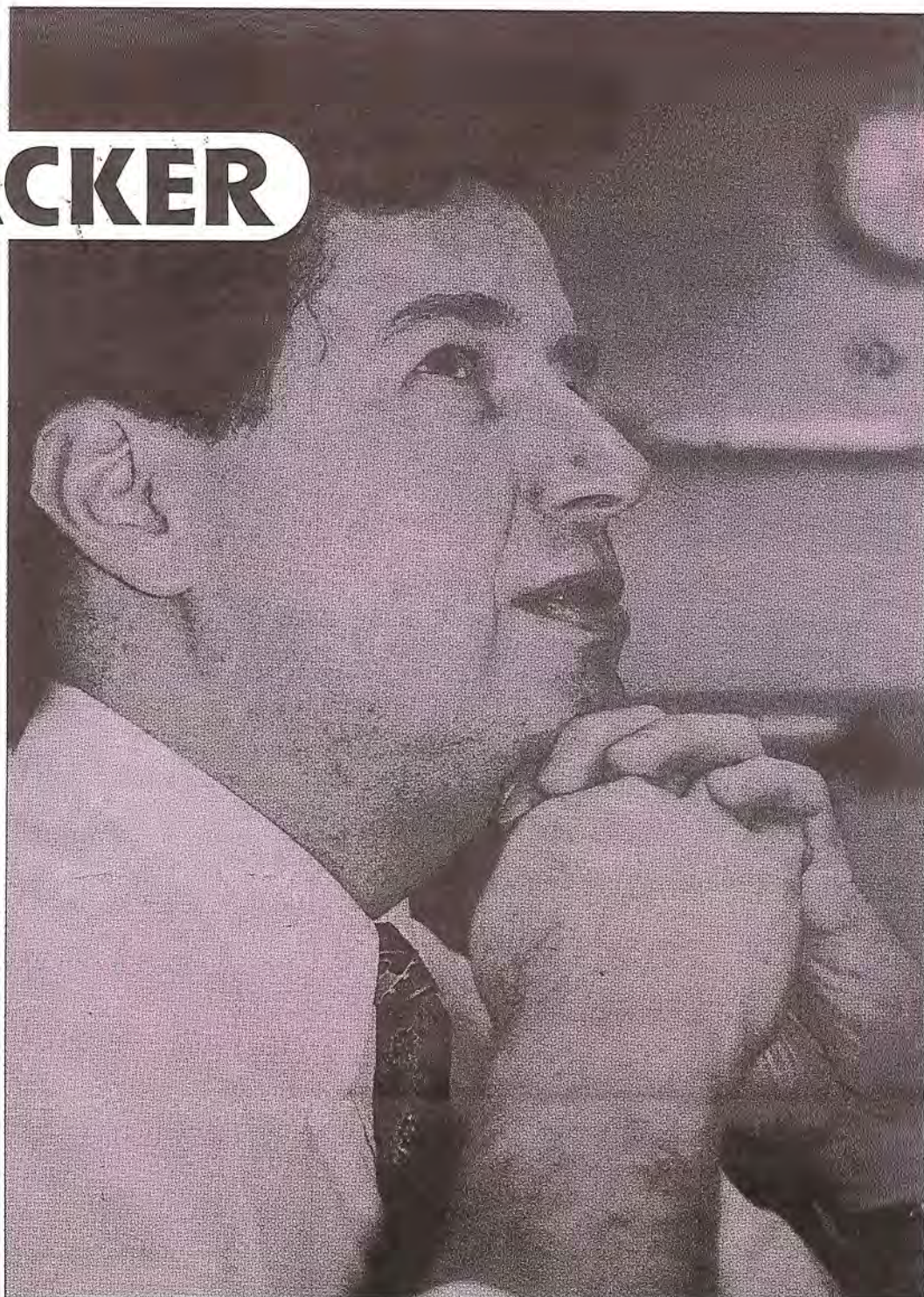


PARTNERSHIP COMMITMENT HEU says it's time to determine how the Employment Security Agreement can be improved to advance health reform goals. Present for the announcement of the first accord in 1993 were from left, then finance minister Glen Clark, Maureen Whelan, HSA, Debra McPherson, BCNU, Carmela Allevato, HEU, employers' rep Ron Mulchey and Elizabeth Cull, then health minister.

ACCORD BACKER



'I think the Employment Security Agreement has proven its worth and that will set the stage for negotiating what happens after March 31, 1996'



A

FTER A YEAR and a half as minister of health, Prince George North MLA Paul Ramsey has overseen the implementation of the New Directions reforms of the B.C. health care system and the groundbreaking Employment Security Agreement. Ramsey reviewed the progress of his ministry's work in an interview conducted in late February by *Guardian* associate editor **CHRIS GAINOR**.

I will start by asking you where we are right now with the Employment Security Agreement, and what we can look for in the next couple of years.

I think the Employment Security Agreement has proven its worth. I think that there are now a majority of employers who are finding this sort of arrangement has worked for them. My sense is that health care workers obviously find this sort of contractual arrangement was badly needed, particularly in a time of rapid change.

The Accord is also taking a hell of a political kicking. I get nailed regularly by both Reform and the Liberals for what they continue to call a sweetheart deal with health workers. I say it's an essential part of respecting care providers when we are changing the way the system functions.

I think it has proven its worth and I think that will set the stage for negotiating what happens after March 31, 1996, from both the employer and the government side, as we look at what happens after March '96. And that's really all I can say right now.

A big concern we've had at HEU is the growth in the ranks of administrators.

I don't know what it is with some of the administrators who run our health facilities. I have said very clearly to them that their tar-

get is a demonstrated reduction in administrative costs of about 15 per cent over two budget cycles. So when I see some indications that instead of moving in that direction they are actually trying to fatten up administration, I shake my head.

These guys aren't getting it. The days of padding administration are over and increasingly, this government is going



'These guys [administrators] aren't getting it. The days of padding are over and this government is going to hold them accountable for getting lean'

photos by
**Stephen
Howard**



to be holding them accountable for getting lean and effective on the administrative level.

The other part of that, that both Elizabeth Cull and I have been figuring out what the next step should be, is the continued tendency on the part of some boards and senior administrators to give themselves obscenely fat pay cheques and benefit packages. When we had to axe the CEO out at Ridge Meadows, we found that he had a severance package worth a quarter of a million dollars. I don't think that's on any more in senior public sector jobs.

What about the workload situation in hospitals?

There is no doubt that the downsizing of the acute sector and the shift of what is done in the hospitals and what is done in the community has created some strains for some health workers.

My hope continues to be that after we get through some of this transition process, get this thing stabilized, and get away from the times of some pretty cockamamie experimentation by some employers that we will have workloads that allow the sort of patient care that I know health workers want to give.

This leads us into the more general question of how the reforms are going. Could you tell me where we are now both in terms of shifting to the community and getting the new boards and councils set up.

We now have all 20 regional health boards designated. We will have virtually all of the 84 community health councils designated by the end of March.

Now comes the hard work of developing health plans for communities that integrate services, the hard work of getting care providers and employers to work as a team rather than as rivals, the hard work of making sure the voice of those who have not been heard at the government's table are heard — whether it is women, ethnic communities, aboriginal folks, or people with disabilities. It is starting to happen.

We have more than 50 per cent women sitting on councils and boards right now. When I consider who ran health in this province for a generation, that is a real change.

What will be the role of health care providers, our members, in the governance in the health care system?

I think there have to be several principles embodied in how health care providers have their voice heard and have a seat at the table.

First, it has to be on a care providers committee that has legislated status and I hope to be introducing legislation in this session of the legislature to do that. It has to be composed of people who are selected by their co-workers, not appointed by employers, and it has to have a clear and significant mandate. It must be more than window dressing that the boards and councils bow to, it must be a built in voice for those who work day in and day out.

I'd like to ask about the main topic of your address to our convention last fall, which was dealing with privatization in the health care system.

I intend to act this spring in the legislature to make sure that two things happen.

One, there will be no financial barriers to access for medical services and that means whether a person ends up going to a private clinic or a hospital he or she won't have to pull out the wallet or purse to pay for essential health services. There are a bunch of private clinics and health entrepreneurs who want to, as I see it, raise the financial barriers to access higher. I and my government have exactly the reverse view and we intend to enforce it by legislation.

The second thing that has to be done is to find a mechanism for regulating where private facilities develop.

I think the next year and a half to two years will probably be the most crucial time in the Canadian medicare in a generation. We are facing a revisiting of the same ideological, fundamental differences that we battled over during the establishment of medicare.

What is the upcoming provincial budget going to look like for the health care system?

We face some serious budget challenges, not the least of which is what I think will be an increased offloading from the federal government.



'I intend to fight hard for improving the Canadian medicare system. I grew up in the U.S. and I know what it's like to need medical services and not know how you are going to pay for it'

I hear the federal finance minister talking about cutting transfer payments yet again. We are about a billion dollars shy in transfer in what we would have had for health had the agreements of the late seventies held. A billion a year. And that is being made up out of your pocket and my pocket and every taxpayer in the province.

We are not going to do the Ralph Klein approach and simply pass on those cuts to the health system.

One of the reasons that I intend to fight so hard for preserving and improving the Canadian medicare system is that I grew up in a different system. I grew up in the United States and I know what it is like to be very ill, to be needing medical services and not know how you are going to pay for it.

It is not an experience that most Canadians have had because for a generation they haven't faced that. And I don't want them to ever face it because it is a horrible feeling, to lie, at the age of 22, in a hospital bed, just having had an emergency appendectomy, and not knowing how I was going to pay for the doctor or the hospital bills, and what this was going to do to me as a young man starting out with a new family.

We don't want to have people face that.

But we will have people face that if we throw overboard the principles that we have built our medical system on, and I'm quite determined that as long as I am minister of health and the NDP is the government of this province, we will not move towards that horrible situation.

In spite of the very generous agreement which they obtained before you became minister of health, the B.C. Medical Association is pressing to get more health services into the private sector.

I challenge the BCMA to show me any jurisdiction where the development of a second, private tier has improved the public tier of health care.

Everywhere it happens, that I know of, it has resulted in decreased support for the public sector and decreased quality and access of health services.

I don't think we should sacrifice our universal system for the sake of enhancing income for the few.

OPEN DOOR Ramsey is never afraid to wade in with answers to tough questions from caregivers about health reforms. Here he meets with tri-union activists at Surrey Memorial Hospital, including HEU local chair Kathy Darvill, at left in foreground, secretary-treasurer Judy Little, and Marg Jackson, at Ramsey's left.

CHRIS GAINOR PHOTO



Usually, promises from politicians are a dime a dozen. So, with B.C.'s NDP heading for an election, we asked...

DID THEY DELIVER?

P

RIOR TO THE last provincial election on Oct. 1, 1991, Mike Harcourt's New Democrats made a number of promises to HEU and the labour movement. The central events of the years since the New Democrats took office for HEU members were the difficult 1992 round of bargaining and the negotiation and ratification in 1993 of the Employment Security Agreement.

While the ESA wasn't envisioned before the 1991 election, the government's decision to proceed with downsizing in acute care following the recommendations of the 1991 Royal Commission on Health Care and Costs, coupled with HEU's show of strength in 1992 bargaining, convinced the government such an agreement was necessary.

The groundbreaking ESA provides HEU members with job security while acute facilities downsize. Instead of throwing workers onto the street, the ESA uses attrition, early retirement, retraining, and the Healthcare Labour Adjustment Agency to avoid layoffs and keep health workers' expertise in the system.

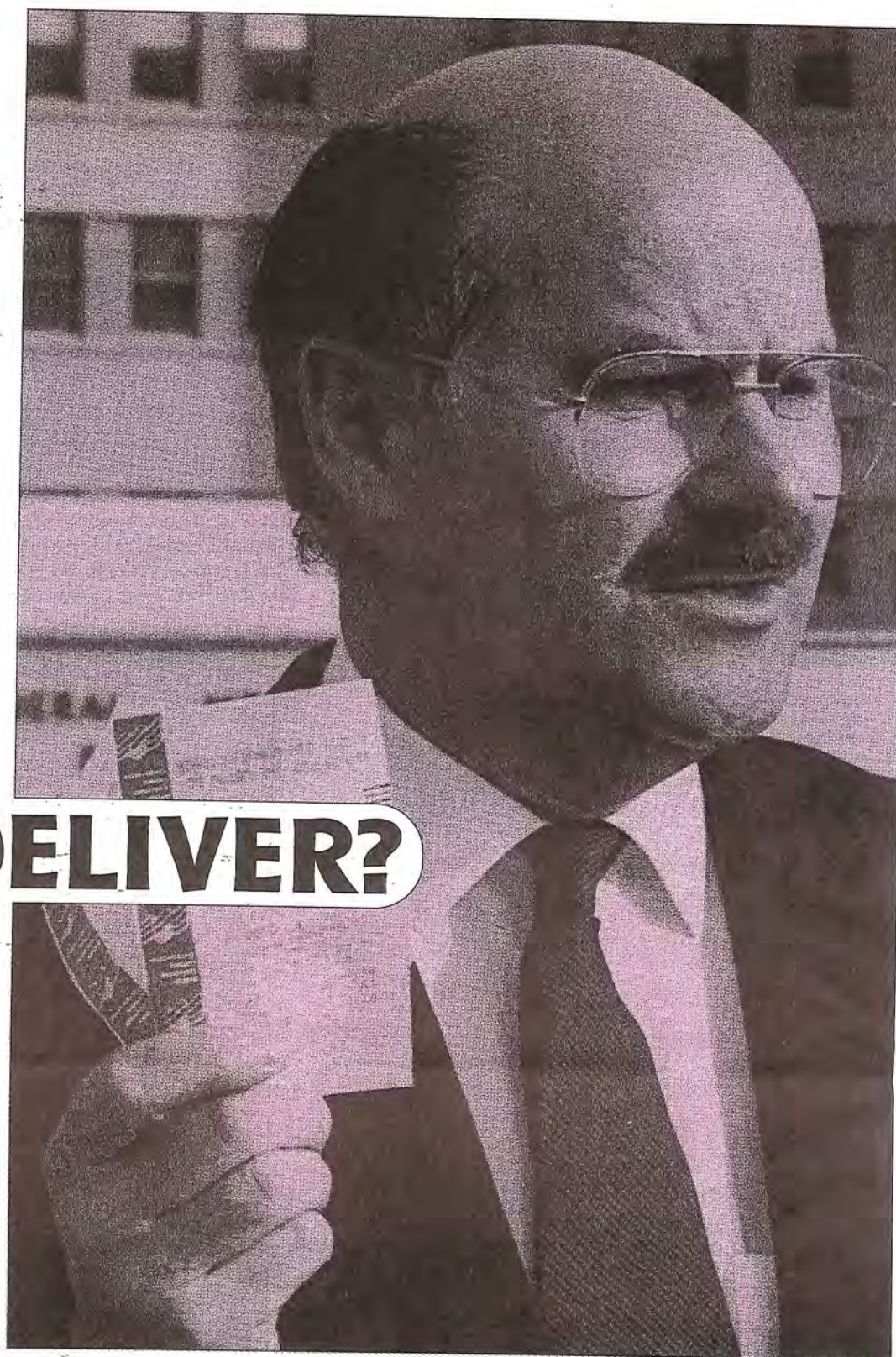
The ESA also attempted to deal with the workload crisis by reducing the work week from 37.5 hours to 36 hours. Provisions negotiated in 1992, notably HEU's pay equity plan, were extended.

Here's what the New Democrats promised and what they delivered on since they took office in 1991.

Health Care

Smarter spending of health care dollars after consultation with front line health care workers.

While government efficiency moves included closing down Shaughnessy Hospital without consultation, the Employment Security Agreement which took effect after the Shaughnessy decision gives health care workers input into changes made to the



INPUT Under the NDP health workers have had unprecedented input into health policy.

health system and health facilities.

The NDP has been open to input from HEU and its members, unlike Social Credit governments, which ignored workers. HEU is also represented on key health ministry committees.

Consider elected community health boards to run health facilities.

As part of the New Directions health care reforms, the government is bringing in Regional Health Boards and Community Health Councils to replace hospital, facility and agency boards. Only a third of the community councils will be made up of elected persons, and health care providers are not eligible to serve.

The provincial government will appoint a third of the members of the councils, another third will be appointed by municipalities and school boards, and the remaining third will be elected, starting in November, 1996. The regional boards will be selected by the community councils in the region.

The government will give health workers a voice through provider committees which will advise boards and councils.

Action against hospital boards that deny women the right to choose on abortion.

The government acted immediately to permit abortions in hospitals where anti-choice groups had taken over the boards. As well, the government has provided funding to abortion clinics.



WE HELPED Union activists like Julia Cook, from Simon Fraser Lodge in Prince George, worked hard on campaigns that got the NDP elected in 1991.



Freeze medicare premiums.

Medicare premiums have not increased since the government took office. Premiums for more than a half million lower income British Columbians have either been removed or lowered.

End chaotic mismanagement of health care finances.

The reorganization of health care as part of New Directions is supposed to include restrictions on health care administrators' pay and more efficient health care spending.

Gordon Austin was fired as president of the Health Labour Relations Association, and his lavish spending is still under police investigation.

But as demonstrated in the rich payouts to executives from Shaughnessy Hospital and the continued growth in the ranks of management while workers face downsizing, there is still work to be done in this area.

No two-tiered medicine or extra billing.

After a long fight with doctors, the government signed a rich agreement with the B.C. Medical Association which only begins the job of restraining the \$1.3 billion spent annually on doctors' services, and doesn't challenge the fee-for-service pay system.

But the government is moving to curb private clinics which would have created two-tiered medicare and caused health care spending to spiral out of control.

Restoration of team nursing.

Although the government did not take any concrete action to remedy the reduced use of licensed practical nurses, the coordinated assault by hospital management on team nursing and LPNs slowed in most facilities in the past four years.

Labour

Get rid of Bill 19, Bill Vander Zalm's assault on labour rights, and replace it with "fair and balanced" labour laws.

The NDP government repealed Bill 19 and replaced it with a new Labour Code in their first full year in office.

The NDP's Labour Code made it easier for workers to join trade unions without harassment from employers, and banned the use of scabs in strikes and lockouts.

HEU was disappointed that the new Labour Code did not include sectoral bargaining, which would benefit women and service workers who are currently unorganized, and with technical aspects of the essential services regulations in the code.

Eliminate Bill 82, the Socreds' so-called Compensation Fairness Act, which imposed wage controls and eliminated free collective bargaining in the B.C. public sector.

Bill 82 was repealed and HEU was able to negotiate and freely bargain a new collective agreement in 1992. As part of the Employment Security Agreement, that agreement was extended to 1996.

But the NDP has since attempted to restrict wage and benefit improvements in the public sector using "guidelines," which act like wage controls.

New employment standards legislation to protect unorganized workers.

After a lengthy consultation process, the government made major changes to employment standards regulations. The NDP has increased the minimum wage by 40 per cent, and it will rise to \$7 an hour in October.



RESPECT As finance minister, Glen Clark helped develop the groundbreaking Employment Security Agreement.

BREAKFAST TALK Quesnel health activists take their concerns about hospital downsizing directly to the premier. After a rocky start, the government is now listening.



The Employment Standards Act will now include previously excluded groups of workers including domestics, agricultural workers, newspaper carriers and taxi drivers.

Persons with disabilities will be entitled to full minimum wage, and farm contractors will operate under new restrictions which will make it harder for them to ignore the law.

Industrial health and safety laws will be extended, and injured workers will be assured of fair compensation.

While the Workers' Compensation Board has run in a more effective manner than it has in the past, employers have succeeded in stalling approval of new ergonomics regulations.

Women

Extension of pay equity in the public sector by legislation, and development of phased in pay equity for the private sector.

While HEU bargained a ground breaking pay equity plan in 1992, the government has failed to bring in pay equity legislation covering the public sector. And the NDP's wage "guidelines" limit the money available for pay equity payments.

Work to establish full equality and equal opportunity for women.

A ministry of women's equality was set up when the government took office, and seven members of cabinet are women.

The government has taken action to ensure that its appointments at all levels ensure representation for women. For example, more than half of the members of regional health boards and community health councils are women.

Affordable child care for families who need it.

The government has provided 5,000 new child care spaces and committed \$32.3 million in funding through the BC 21 program to build 7,500 child care spaces in work places such as hospitals.

Grants to child care providers to provide infant and toddler care spaces have also been provided.

Others

The government has been active on several fronts, cleaning up the messes left by Social Credit governments.

A New Forest Practices Code and the CORE process have been the most comprehensive effort mounted to end conflicts in B.C. forests between forest companies and environmentalists.

Comprehensive negotiations to finally settle the question of native land claims in a fair manner are under way.

The budget deficit is being eliminated this year, after the government inherited a huge shortfall left by the Socreds.

Anti-pollution laws have been toughened, the agricultural land reserve has been maintained, and new parks have been opened.

Under the BC 21 program, the government has moved to build schools, hospitals, highways, transit and other infrastructure that had suffered due to neglect by previous governments.

Nisga'a fight the backlash

With Reform politicians attacking a land claims settlement for B.C.'s Nisga'a nation, we asked chief Joseph Gosnell Sr. to debunk some land claims myths

by Joseph Gosnell Sr.

FUNNY, for most of these past 21 years we thought no one cared. Since 1976 we have been sitting alone among B.C. First Nations at the lands' claims table. Progress has sometimes seemed infinitesimal; public interest, even slighter.

But now, when we are closer than ever to achieving an agreement-in-principle the backlash has begun. Suddenly it is fashionable again to attack Indians. And as the only game in town, so to speak, we have been the target of most of the flack.

Amid all the self-serving nonsense from the Reform party and their kin, describing natives as living in South Seas type paradises and alleging government giveaways and secrecy, the whole point of the land claims exercise, conveniently for our opponents, has been buried.

Those who for their own purposes do not want to see a settlement with the Nisga'a and other native nations have been hawking an image of negotiations as a wild spending spree by government. They talk about land claims agreements as being unaffordable, as if

which weighs so heavily on Canadians, if it is not paid, it will remain a dead-weight burden upon your future and your children's future.

Your governments are negotiating with us for reasons of moral and legal obligation. In the rest of Canada the British acknowledged both Indian ownership of the land and the obligation to obtain Indian consent before white settlement in the last century.

But most B.C. First Nations were never given the opportunity to sign treaties allowing white settlement of our traditional lands. We never surrendered or abandoned our rights over the territory our ancestors inhabited for thousands of years, even as the government handed over huge tracts of land for resource extraction and private development.

It is pointless to rekindle the arguments over our aboriginal rights. They have been recognized by the courts. They are enshrined in Canada's Constitution.

In 1992 the federal and provincial governments made a solemn commitment to resolve all other outstanding native land claims with the signing of the accord establishing the B.C. Treaty

Commission. And despite attempts by our opponents to interpret court rulings to fit their own particular bent, the highest judicial authorities have recognized that

natives still have rights to our traditional land and resources.

Our own case decided by the Supreme Court of Canada 21 years ago gave Ottawa the impetus to enter into formal land claims negotiations with us.

But it was not until 1990 that real progress became possible in B.C. That was when the provincial government ended its century long refusal to recognize native claims, and joined the Nisga'a negotiation table.

Legal obligations aside, the current scare mongering about the cost of land claims ignores the frightful costs to all



GOSNELL



GARY FIEGHEHN PHOTO

FUTURE HOPE The land claim settlement offers hope for a new generation of Nisga'a, like Ashley Azak. They're close to ending a decades long struggle against injustice that began when they established their land claims committee in 1913, at right.



Canadians of not settling. One federal study, for example, estimates the cost of uncertainty over land claims at more than \$1 billion in foregone investment.

The highest cost of all which our opponents fail to factor into the hard math of land claims is the cost to taxpayers of keeping the current system. No one, not us, not non-natives, approves of the billions of dollars spent annually to keep aboriginal people in the blinding poverty of our tiny reserves. Beggars in our own land.

What we are seeking at the bargaining table is straightforward. We want to negotiate our way into the economy, not take it over as powerful interests claim.

We have made it clear we seek only to support ourselves from our traditional lands. We have said it again and again that we will not take away title to anyone's home. We want to share in the ownership and management of forests, fish and minerals.

It is no secret that a land settlement must provide the Nisga'a with an economic base. Working out the details of this is a big part of the negotiations. After seeing millions of dollars stolen from our ancestral lands, we are com-

mitted to a fair division of lands and resources within our territory, a degree of compensation for our losses through the years and the economic and jurisdictional base for self-government within Canada.

We know the people of Canada do not have the cash to pay the back rent, that is, the money properly owed us for the seizure of our lands and the plunder of its natural resources without consent or compensation. But we are not about to settle for the 20th century equivalent of trinkets and beads.

Surely we would all be better off if the Nisga'a and other First Nations could pay their own way as other Canadians are allowed to do. The biggest step toward that goal will be when Canadians retire the historic debt which has been weighing on us all in lost opportunities and buried resentments, as much as in dollars and cents.

• HEU supports the lands claims process between the Nisga'a and government covering the Nass Valley area north of Terrace. We're committed to promoting education and debate on this important issue. We welcome your comments on this article.

'We want to negotiate our way into the economy, not take it over'

they were discussing a new car, a refrigerator or some other discretionary expenditure.

It is wrong and beside the point to describe land claims settlements as unaffordable and to speculate that government offers are excessively generous. But this has been the strategy of anti-settlement types.

These negotiations are not about generosity. This is not charity. This is a debt, unpaid for 150 years and rising, as our ancestral lands are efficiently stripped by multinational resource companies. Like that other federal debt

Labour

NOTEWORTHY NEWS ABOUT ISSUES AFFECTING WORKING PEOPLE HERE AND ABROAD

Wall Street wins, Canadians lose

Budget caters to business demands, hurts working people, unemployed

FEDERAL FINANCE minister Paul Martin may get support for slashing spending and cutting 45,000 jobs in his recent budget from bond traders and speculators but his February budget brings little comfort to the thousands of Canadians who are lined up for jobs around the country, says Canadian Labour Congress president Bob White.

"The number one problem in Canada is still job insecurity and unemployment," said White. "Unfortunately, Martin's budget makes this problem worse. This budget caters to Wall Street, and does next to nothing for most Canadians."

"We should look at the context in

which these cuts are made. We have record exports and persistent joblessness. We have record profits and few wage increases. We have record corporate bonuses and budget cuts. We have a self-satisfied elite, a nervous middle class and growing child poverty. We have an economy that is exceedingly good for a few, yet hard on the many."

White was particularly critical of the Chretien government's pledge to cut 45,000 public sector jobs, and tearing up negotiated job security protection for members of the Public Service Alliance of Canada.

PSAC, whose members occupied federal offices in a Feb. 28 Vancouver protest, has pledged to fight the mass pink slips.



SAVE JOBS When Martin's axe fell Feb. 27, Public Service Alliance of Canada members occupied a federal office in Vancouver to fight the 45,000 job cuts.

Martin's much bally-hooed measures to make the rich and corporations pay more will still let those with the means duck their fare share. "Even after these changes corporations will pay less than 10 per cent of the overall tax burden while the rest of us cover over 90 per cent."

White outlined a series of alternatives that Martin could have implemented that were developed by the CLC as an alternate budget for Canada. Under the labour plan to get at the deficit, getting 1.2 million unemployed Canadians back to work over the next three years should be the top priority.

Other measures included tougher taxes on the wealthy and corporations, including the elimination of lucrative tax loopholes, cutting interest rates, while getting tough on international corporate currency speculators who are holding Canada's economy hostage.

White says these are just some of the measures that are credible alternatives to the Liberal's slash and burn approach.

"There are choices that would allow the government to reduce unemployment and restore Canada's fiscal health at the same time. We have alternatives that work," White said.

Finance minister Martin is a leading tax dodger

Great Canadian and federal finance minister Paul Martin is one of the country's leading corporate tax dodgers, according to recently uncovered information.

Martin is owner of Canada Steamship Lines, a company that made \$19 million in profits in 1990, paid no income tax and got a \$400,000 tax credit to boot.

In addition, Martin's company has replaced Canadian crews on its international ships with third world workers paid much less than union rates, and has registered its ships in the Bahamas to avoid taxes and safety regulations.

That point was driven home at an early February dockside rally where one of Martin's ships was berthed for repairs on Vancouver's waterfront.

The ship was built in Canada with the help of a rich government subsidy, but is now registered in the Bahamas.

"This is an example of what is wrong in Canada," said B.C. Federation of Labour president Ken Georgetti.

"From the finance minister on down, corporations are avoiding paying their fair share of taxes while working people pick up the tab."

• CALM



VICTORS Striking BCIT janitors, who are members of CUPE, won their battle for better wages with profit-rich Marriott Canada Ltd. after an eight day strike.

Janitors battle Marriott

Poorly paid janitors who work for Marriott Canada Ltd. at the B.C. Institute of Technology in Burnaby won a significant pay boost after an eight day strike that highlighted the exploitative nature of private sector service contractors.

Under the new deal that expires in May 1997, the 44 janitors, who are members of CUPE local 3643, will earn \$1.26 an hour more, bringing their rates up to \$8.86 and \$9.50 an hour.

CUPE national representative Robin Jones said it was a tough fight for fairness with Marriott, a company that many HEU members are familiar with because it manages food service and housekeeping operations at a number of B.C. health care facilities.

U.S.-owned Marriott made record profits of \$56 million from its Canadian operations in 1994. In fruitless bargaining leading up to the strike, Marriott had been demanding wage rollbacks

"This is a large and aggressive outfit doing the best they can to keep pay rates barely above the minimum wage," Jones said.

In addition to the wage increases and other improvements, Marriott agreed to remove two supervisors and to set up a process to review company hiring practices, with arbitrator Vince Ready on call to help forge a resolution about how workers are treated.

Jones said both the BCIT student association and the BCGEU, which represents other BCIT workers, were understanding and supportive during the job action. But he was critical of BCIT management for their role, which included a threat to terminate the Marriott contract and turf the workers.

"Our view quite clearly is that BCIT management has a social responsibility. They can't avoid it by contracting out the work and exploiting new Canadians who are struggling at minimum wage."

WORKING TV APRIL/MAY SCHEDULE

For television "from the point of view of those of us who do the work," check out Working TV, which runs on the Rogers community 4 channel in the Lower Mainland.

Here's the April/May schedule for the HEU-backed show.

Thursday 9 p.m.: April 6, 20, May 4, 18; Vancouver

Saturday 5:30 p.m.: April 8, 22, May 6, 20; full network

Monday 7:30 p.m.: April 10, 24; May 8, 22; Vancouver, Burnaby, Richmond

Tuesday 3:30 p.m.: April 11, 25, May 9, 23; full network

APRIL 12/13

HEU table officers meeting, south Okanagan region, Kelowna.

APRIL 18/19

HEU table officers meeting, north Okanagan region, Kamloops.

APRIL 20/21

HEU table officers meeting, west Kootenays region, Castlegar.

APRIL 24-26

HEU table officers meeting, east Kootenays region, Cranbrook.

APRIL 25/26

HEU equity conference, Richmond.

APRIL 26-28

HEU Provincial Executive meeting, Vancouver.

APRIL 28

National day of mourning for workers killed or injured on the job.

MAY 1

May Day, the international workers' day.

MAY 2/3

Introductory OH&S seminar, west Kootenays region, Nelson.

MAY 9/10

Bargaining strategy conferences begin with the Fraser Valley.

MAY 9/10

Introductory OH&S seminar, Northern region, Prince George.

MAY 15/16

Introductory OH&S seminar, Vancouver Island region, Victoria.

Another injury that didn't have to happen

Every movement Rebecca Sharp made on the job unleashed another explosion of pain in her elbow. Brushing away tears, the 37-year old cook at Cooper Place long-term care facility in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver would fight the tortuous pain until her shift ended.

Sharp's agony and the efforts of B.C. unions like HEU to win ergonomics regulations is the cover story in the latest issue of *Our Times*, a national labour magazine.

Local writer Dan Tatoff tells the sorry tale of how the serving-spooning-slicing-ladling movements of Sharp's job left her with a painful – but preventable – repetitive strain injury, commonly known as tendinitis.

But draft ergonomics regulations and code of practice that would save workers like Sharp from the workplace accident carnage are marooned at the

WCB, after approval was delayed by an employer campaign to defeat them.

HEU believes these regulations should come off the table and be put into effect, so that health care workers and their sisters and brothers in other workplaces do not have to put their health on the line every day they go to work.

The union is developing a campaign to put pressure on employers, Victoria and the WCB to adopt the regulations.

The campaign involves pressing for the regulations at occupational health and safety meetings in the workplace, and bringing this demand to the atten-

tion of labour minister Dan Miller. Miller should be informed of every incident that could have been avoided if the ergonomics regulations were in place.

"It is vital that these new ergonomics regulations be put into place to protect workers," said HEU secretary-business manager Carmela Allevato.



SUZANNE AHEARNE PHOTO

We're the experts in safety success

by Chris Gainor

Further proof that HEU members are the experts in dealing with workplace injury problems comes from an extended care unit at Surrey Memorial Hospital.

When HEU members took charge of an injury and sick leave problem in ECU 1 at SMH last year, sick time fell by 43 per cent and lost time accidents related to moving and lifting patients were eliminated.

As a result of the success of the HEU members' plan management agreed to put it into effect in ECU 2, ECU 3 and the Activation Ward.

"The injury rate was climbing and now it's fallen through the floor," said

local vice-chairperson Marg Jackson, who added that the plan has paid for itself because the hospital's Workers' Compensation Board premium assessment has been reduced.

The story began last year when HEU's workload campaign was coming to Surrey Memorial just as the employer was considering buying a new lift for extended care, and the WCB was preparing to audit Surrey under a special injury prevention program.

At the time, injury levels were high in ECU 1, sick time was averaging more than 20 days a year for each full-time worker, and workers went home exhausted due to high workloads.

The hospital agreed to the workers' plan on a trial basis, and costs were kept down by using lifts on loan from the suppliers.

"You have to go in to the employer with a plan," said local chairperson Kathy Darvill. "You can't leave a problem for the employer to solve, because it won't be done."

Elaine Charlton, who works in ECU 1, said the new lifts and increased hours for the bath team have improved conditions.

"Now we still have a heavy workload, but it's manageable," Charlton said. "When people go home, they feel like spending time with their families. They aren't going home exhausted."

Coffee break



All stories guaranteed factual.
Sources this issue: CALM, Adbusters.

They're the roadkill on the info highway

Bell Atlantic of Philadelphia sent 1,200 workers home without pay last summer because they came to work wearing T-shirts that showed them to be "road kill on the information superhighway."

The members of the Communication Workers of America were also suspended for one day, and lost two day's pay.

The company announced in August it would eliminate 5,600 jobs – 7.7 per cent of its workforce – to cut costs so it can expand from its traditional phone business to a vast video network.

The union has filed charges with the U.S. labour relations board.

News? What news?

A Denver media monitoring group recently taped all prime time news coverage in their city

for a week and then did a simple content analysis. They found that 33 per cent of all news programming time was taken up with commercials. Actual news coverage accounted for 39 per cent of air time, sports 12, weather nine, and chatter, previews and promos the remaining eight per cent.

How to get a job

Author Bob Weinstein promises, "practical advice ... for the fiercely competitive '90s job market." The name of his new book is *I'll Work for Free!*

New book promises to straighten out "problem" employees

Publisher Prentice-Hall has published the second edition of its management guide for problem employees. *The Supervisor's Factomatic* arms managers with "the real reasons why workers display specific kinds of abnormal behaviour."



"Henderson.....you have a fine arts degree. How would you arrange the pepperoni and mushrooms?"

It deconstructs personality types like Antagonistic Albert, Bottleneck Bertha, Foulball Fred, and Sourpuss Samantha. Then, according to the book's promo flyer, it gives supervisors the secrets to "get them off your back once and for all."

Unfortunately, you have to

cough up \$49.95 US for the 736-page tract, and the flyer doesn't spill any beans about *Factomatic's* recommended methods of discipline.

It does promise, however, that, "you don't need a Master's degree in psychology to apply the methods with good results."

HEU people

She's off to the Mediterranean

Mission Memorial Hospital housekeeper **Elsie O'Hara** is set to retire soon after 11 years of service at the Fraser Valley facility.

O'Hara's not wasting any time putting retirement days to good use. She's planning a cruise to Malaga in southern Spain.

Royal Jubilee LPN a proud HEU member

Consuelo Hunt, an LPN at Victoria's Royal Jubilee Hospital for 27 years, retired at the end of 1994.

"I am very proud to have been a member of HEU," says Hunt, reflecting on her long years of union membership.

Currently the president of the Victoria Filipino Canadian Seniors Group, Hunt plans to travel and get involved in volunteer work.

Yucalta's Hayes battled cancer

Bridget (Birdie) Hayes, a beloved HEU member at Yucalta Lodge in Campbell River, passed away late last year after a courageous battle with cancer.

Hayes, 54, worked in the dietary department and was not only a workmate but a dear friend to all she encountered.

Survived by her loving family, Hayes will be sadly missed by everyone who knew her.

Staff on the move

At press time HEU legal counsel **David Tarasoff** and senior researcher **Suze Kilgour** really were getting set to move – to Burnaby and their new digs at the CUPE regional office. Their move is part of the agreement that marks HEU's reaffiliation with CUPE, ratified by union members last October.

Tarasoff will provide legal counsel on health care labour relations issues for both organizations, while Kilgour will focus on health care related research needs.

There have also been a number of changes at the senior staff level as HEU moves to implement more of the improvements recommended in an outside 1994 study of union administration and staffing.

Libby Davies assumes the new post of human resources coordinator March 27. Davies is a highly respected former Vancouver city councillor who served as a complaints investigator under the Master and CCERA contracts. She takes over some of the responsibilities of **Zorica Bosancic**, who now assumes the position of coordinator of servicing and staff development.

And **Raj Chouhan** has been named director responsible for first contract bargaining, in a move made necessary by the sheer volume of contracts that must be negotiated because of the union's organizing successes. Chouhan reports to secretary-business manager **Carmela Allevato**.

Occupational health and safety representative **Ana Rahmat** is back from maternity leave and returns to her



SHE'S PROUD Retiring LPN **Consuelo Hunt** reflects with pride on her many years of union membership.

duties. Staff representative **Gary Spence**, who filled in for Rahmat, returns to servicing duties.

A welcome is extended to staff representative **Gordon Bailey**, who was hired at the end of 1994 to fill a temporary rep position until May, 1996. Formerly with the Vancouver Municipal and Regional Employees' Union, Bailey is currently servicing locals in Greater Vancouver, Squamish and Pemberton.

Sylvia Sioufi has returned to HEU after an 18-month secondment at the Health Labour Adjustment Agency. Sioufi's task will be to focus on developing proposals for retraining opportunities for HEU members.

And last but not least, **Nancy Eng** has been hired on a temporary six month accountant posting. Eng is filling in for **Michel Bonnier**, who is on extended sick leave.

HEU's Confidential Human Rights Harassment Process

Complaints investigators can help if you are being harassed at work because of your

- sex – including sexual harassment
- race
- sexual orientation
- disability
- religion

CALL 1-800-310-6886

for a recorded message about the process

(see Article 1.03 Master Collective Agreement or Article 1.05 Standard Collective Agreement)

HEU LESBIANS AND GAYS

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- feeling isolated?
- being harassed?
- want to know your rights?

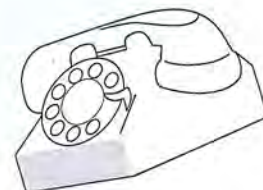
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1-800-663-5813, local 514

*Confidential Service of HEU
Lesbian and Gay Issues Group*



Board of education flunks lifesaving

"Clarence Notree barely had time to act when a gunman burst into the elementary school gym," reported the *Associated Press*.

"As the bullets flew, the physical education teacher spread out his arms to shield the children and pushed them out the door to safety. He got shot in the wrist. His school and community lauded Notree as a hero, but the Chicago Board of Education insisted that he wasn't entitled to Workers' Compensation benefits. They said that saving children's lives was not part of his job."

Contract with God not binding

A British couple fired by the Salvation Army lost their appeal to a labour tribunal because, reports the Reuters news agency, they had a contract with God, not a legally binding agreement.

When **Graham** and **Amanda Glasgow** were fired last May,

Salvation Army leaders told them they had no employment rights because they were "answering a call from God." The tribunal agreed.

The couple lost their Army-supplied home as well as their jobs. But they plan to appeal to a higher court – the European Court.

Uninstalled and out the door

A real winner in the best new doublespeak for firing competition comes from the computer industry. In high tech land when you get the boot you're not fired; you're "uninstalled." Call a vice-president at this company and the voice-mail message will tell you that "you have reached the number of an uninstalled vice-president."

Mickey Mouse is a Teamster

More than 18,000 workers at Disney World in Florida have won contracts with wage increases after turning down concession demands from the company.

The workers sell tickets, operate attractions, drive buses, do laundry, clean, wait tables, and provide technical support. Mickey Mouse is actually a Teamster.

The six unions at Disney motivated their members with an aggressive campaign, helped by that fact that Disney made \$1.1 billion in profits last year and paid its CEO **Michael Eisner** \$203 million.

Notable quotables

Peggy Witte, the Royal Oak Mines CEO who was named "Woman of the Year" by *Chatelaine* had this to say about sexual harassment – "Lighten up, joke with them, tease them along, get them to communicate."

"The last four plants opened by **Macmillan Bloedel** are non-union and for that I make no apology," says **Gary Johncox**, **Macmillan Bloedel** vice-president of human resources. "These non-union mills are without angry union newsletters, seniority ..."

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HEU EQUITY CONFERENCE '95



GEK-BEE SLOW GRAPHIC

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**April 24, 25, 26
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HEU MEMBERS WHO ARE:

- First Nations
- People of colour
- Lesbians and gay men
- People with challenges (disabilities)

The Hospital Employees' Union needs your help. We are asking members from these equity groups to come to a working session, share experiences within your caucus and develop a plan of action to help us reach out and include all of our diverse members.

Application forms are available from your secretary treasurer or by calling the HEU Provincial Office:

734-3431 or 1-800-663-5813

Guardian



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MARCH/APRIL 1995

It's thumbs down!

HEU members are opposed to a consultant's plan that would radically reshape food service delivery and cut jobs in the Lower Mainland.



PAGE 3

Where do they stand?

That's what HEU is asking B.C.'s political parties as part of a campaign for an employment security deal that protects services, jobs, and medicare. A *Guardian* feature starting on

PAGE 7



Land claims backlash

B.C.'s Nisga'a nation answers the attacks of right-wing politicians.



PAGE 12

He's a tax dodger

Paul Martin's federal budget didn't make corporations pay their fair share. It's no surprise because Martin's own company is at the tax dodging trough.

PAGE 13



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