

# Guardian



THE VOICE OF THE

HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

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## ready to bargain!

HEU's Wage and Policy Conference sets the tone for upcoming bargaining. We've got a six-point plan, a clear set of demands, and a united front.

The details start on

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KATE WILLIAMS PHOTO



*Quiet fighter on front lines*

Care aide Lorna Partridge addresses the problems of racism and abuse often experienced by front-line caregivers.

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Nurses, care aides to tell stories

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## DOCS SAY 'NO' TO TWO-TIER

In the wake of polls showing Canadians massively opposed to the erosion of Medicare, the country's doctors change their tune on privatization.

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## COMMENT

# We must be ready

by Chris Allnutt

**H**EU ACTIVISTS have reason to feel confident in the wake of this year's Wage Policy Conference. Several recent victories, combined with a 1998 bargaining blueprint, have reinforced a familiar message – when we fight, we win.

HEU was first off the block among B.C.'s public sector unions to set an agenda for 1998.

Our main priority was to link our bargaining demands with the concrete work experiences of our members. That's why we're demanding one contract for all, a healthier workplace, a fair wage increase, improved benefits for members in crisis, a professionalized workplace (including full use of the nursing team), and a stronger role for caregivers in changing times.

As in 1996, these bargaining goals are strongly supported by the public. Once again, more than 95 per cent of British Columbians polled by HEU believe that protecting health care services means protecting our sizeable investment in health workers' skills and training.

The difference this time is that health care workers may actually have more say in how to protect that investment.



In previous years, the HEABC as an employer group wasn't all that different from its dinosaur ancestors – HLRA, CCERA or Pricare. But this year, HEABC is undergoing significant reorganization to reflect the new health care employers: regional health boards and community health councils. A reconstituted HEABC may be more prepared to sit down with us and bargain an agreement based on a shared desire to make health care reform work.

As promising as these developments seem, however, we must be ready to fight.

Even as wage policy delegates were hammering out resolutions supporting a wage increase, we learned that the NDP wants public sector wage freezes of zero and zero for 1998 and 1999. This province's public sector employees – led by HEU's 44,000 members – have told the government loud and clear: wage controls don't work, they're not fair, and they won't happen.

## 'Wage controls don't work'

In a similar spirit of vigilance, we have to recognize that the recent historic settlement in the community sector was only a first step in eliminating the wage ghetto and breaking down the wall that divides community sector caregivers from their facility colleagues.

In order to be ready, throughout October and November, bargaining preparation workshops are being held in all the regions to mobilize for 1998 contract talks.

At the same time, we'll be working alongside our sisters and brothers in BCNU, HSA, BCGEU, UFCW, and IUOE to discuss common issues.

Stay tuned. As bargaining heats up, we'll need every one of our members ready, willing and able to take action.

## voice/mail

THE GUARDIAN WELCOMES YOUR FEEDBACK. SEND LETTERS TO 2006 WEST 10TH AVE., VANCOUVER V6J 4P5 OR PHONE 1-800-909-4994. PLEASE BE BRIEF.

### St. Paul's housekeeping cuts fiscally unsound

For some time we have been told that housekeeping jobs must be cut to offset cost overruns in other areas of the hospital. At the same time we have been told that St. Paul's has done a good job of managing its financial affairs.

To start with, approximately \$250,000 saved by the job cuts will finance the new "miracle" Westeck computer system for the department. The rest is earmarked to offset other fiscal problems, including nursing. (What's a few lost jobs in housekeeping, or a dirtier hospital for the patients?)

It is common knowledge that HEABC has been financed and designated by the provincial government to act as the advisory resource and legal representative for St. Paul's labour relations. In practice, St. Paul's has chosen to disassociate itself from HEABC's legal representation and hire out

of its own budget expensive private lawyers to represent itself at third party hearings. If the hospital were winning most of the grievances, perhaps there could be [some] rationale behind this waste of taxpayers' monies. However, it is my understanding that this is hardly the case, and that labour relations is seeing to it that valuable health care dollars are wasted by duplication of spending.

After noting this blatant waste, it is not surprising to see housekeeping at the top of the scrap heap, with senior management looking for every additional means to carve out a penny!

**J. HARRIS,**  
Housekeeping, St. Paul's

### Coverage 'unjust'

As food service supervisors at Burnaby Hospital we are extremely disappointed in the negative bias toward the food service department at Burnaby Hospital ("Shared food service LGH a bust" *Guardian* May/June). Whatever happened to getting both sides of the story?

Have you forgotten that Burnaby Hospital is an HEU local just as much as Lions Gate?

The article implied that the problems, financial or otherwise, were directly attributable to Burnaby Hospital. May we suggest that LGH's voice was louder than ours and therefore assumed to be right? This article has upset the very individuals that for years have supported our union financially and have dedicated much time and effort to its concerns.

There are several inaccurate statements. First, there was always more than enough food available to LGH. Whether or not LGH bought high cost, prepackaged food from the private sector is unknown to us. Second, some of the food products mentioned in your article were never supplied by Burnaby Hospital. For example: "... toast, soggy and limp; french toast, like foam rubber; peach that jumped ..." All union members involved in the cook chill system worked diligently to ensure its success. We went out of our way to accommodate Lions Gate by changing some of our own recipes to theirs and changing production schedules to meet their demands.

In the future, we hope that the union will be an advocate for fair and equal treatment of all its members. And we expect that the union will defend its members against inaccurate reporting and unjustified criticism.

**A. TAI, L. BUCHANAN, S. SAUNDERS,**  
**A. MAK, B. HAMILTON, S. LOMER,**  
**C. MCMURTRY, D. VOGL, D. SPAIDAL,**  
**S. KELLY, H. RADOSEVIC, B. THOMPSON,**  
Food Service Supervisors,  
Burnaby Hospital

### BCNU document slams LPNs

While BCNU president Ivory Warner is correct to state that the BCNU campaign does not attack LPNs directly, and that the purpose of the campaign is to protect RN jobs, this is the mandate of any union in representing their members. However, in many articles the perception is that LPNs are placed in the category of non-professional health care workers. This is false and misleading.

I am in full support of balanced nursing ratios as recommended by the Royal Commission, and that no one discipline should lose their job in place of another discipline. The client in our health care system deserves professional nursing services delivered by professional, regulated nurses.

My concern is that, as a result of the need to protect RN jobs, BCNU has portrayed RNs as the only nurses to care for the health care client.

Further proof of this is the report presented to the Health Professions Council regarding scopes of practice. In it, LPNs are documented as making professional errors at the cost of patient care and safety. The document states that the only person who should be allowed to use the designation of nurse is the registered nurse.

I urge all LPNs to write to the Health Professions Council and obtain a copy of the BCNU document and respond to the council regarding its contents.

**BARRY E. PHILLIPS,**  
LPN, Kelowna

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## Guardian

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

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# What we're up to

## Nanaimo LPNs, care aides demand greater role

A Nanaimo rally Oct. 1 revealed how financial mismanagement is siphoning tax dollars from patient care that could be better spent on an "appropriate skill mix" of nursing team members.

According to figures obtained following a Freedom of Information Act request, Nanaimo Regional General Hospital's management team has approved overtime and workload expenditures totalling



DANIEL GAWTHROP PHOTO

An Oct. 1 rally at Nanaimo Regional General Hospital revealed how full utilization of the nursing team can improve patient care while saving health care dollars.

\$4.03 million in the previous 18 months – equivalent to 120 full-time LPN positions.

"Your labour adjustment committee has worked hard to promote fiscal responsibility," said local chair Vicki Bertram. "But we must keep the pressure on management to ensure that our work is not undervalued."

VGH secretary-treasurer Doreen Plouffe described her career as an LPN working for change.

Susan Hargreaves, LGH LPN, and spokesperson for the Licensed Practical Nurses Association of B.C., described new opportunities for LPNs and care aides to provide cost-effective care.

HEU president Fred Muzin urged LPNs and care aides to lobby the regional health board, "Limited health care tax dollars should be spent on an appropriate skill mix that utilizes all members of the nursing team."

## Menno local wins phase one of dangerous chemical fight

HEU's Menno local is optimistic after the Abbotsford facility was forced to remove two dangerous cleaning agents from hospital premises.

Several HEU members had complained of nosebleeds, headaches, throat irritation and other symptoms after exposure to the ammonium-based disinfectant Ster-bac and another, iodine-based solution. In early July, the chemicals were finally removed from the site.

But the battle's not over yet. With the director of dietary determined to bring back the toxic solutions, a union-management meeting has been set for late October to resolve the issue.

"We think we have enough evidence to prove that not only are they carcinogenic, but they're not cost-effective either," says shop steward Bill

Risidore, adding that members are using Sunlight detergent or bleach tablets to replace the toxic cleansers.

Menno local encourages all members exposed to similar cleansing agents to leave messages at HEU's Abbotsford office (604-852-6571) or contact the local by e-mail: jingles@bc.sympatico.ca. Technical assistance and advice on organizing strategies are also available through the union's OH&S department at Provincial Office.

## Inter-member conflict manual approved

HEU locals now have a union guide and code of ethics with which to address on-the-job conflicts between members.

The four-part manual includes tips on receiving complaints, how to ensure impartiality, when to involve the full executive and how to handle

continued on page 4

# Lab guidelines expected soon

*Government has heard HEU's recommendations and now is poised to set the direction for public labs*

by Mike Old

**A**LL EYES will be on the provincial cabinet in late November, when the government is expected to issue long-awaited guidelines on the structure and funding of diagnostic laboratory services. And it won't be a moment too soon according to HEU secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt.

"In the absence of government guidelines, regional health boards have struck out in various directions looking for solutions for the integration of laboratory services," says Allnutt.

"Clear guidelines from Victoria are the first step in ensuring a public solution to lab reform that is more cost efficient than the current public-private mix."

HEU has told Ministry of Health officials that guidelines must have the long-term goal of securing and expanding the public sector role in all aspects of laboratory work. That would require the Medical Services Commission to change its policy by providing hospital labs with more collection station licenses in the community.

It would also mean a change in the role of private lab companies like MDS/Metro-McNair. "We can move forward with lab integration in a manner that uses the full capacity of public sector labs and workers," said Allnutt.

"And we can do this in a manner that allows MDS and others to concentrate on their core areas of expertise in a manner that benefits the B.C. economy."

"But the bottom line is that the principle of public administration in health care must apply to lab testing."

Allnutt says lab reform includes reaching out to private sector lab workers. "Labour adjustment issues are part and parcel of lab reform," says Allnutt.

"We've made it clear to the government and the private sector that employment security measures should be extended to private sector lab workers."

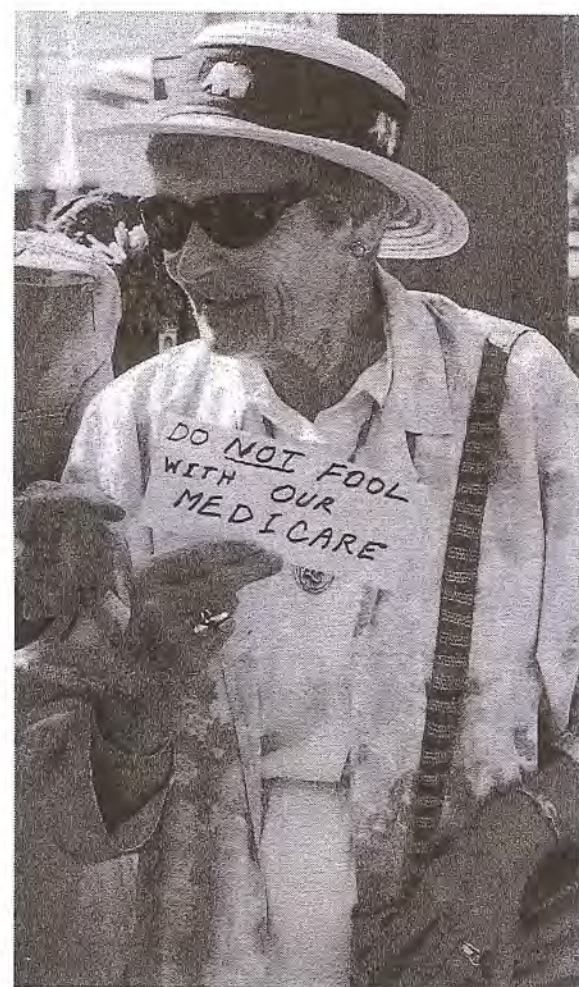
Recent proposals for lab integration in the Lower Mainland, Fraser Valley, Okanagan, and Kamloops areas haven't had the benefit of full union input. At the same time, many of the planning exercises carried out by regional health boards have included strong representation by private lab interests, such as MDS and B.C. Biomedical.

A July HEU/McIntyre & Mustel public opinion poll indicated growing support for public labs. When respondents were asked whether they want lab revenues to go to a private company or be recirculated within the public health care system, four out of five chose a public hospital laboratory for their lab test.

"There's clear public support for a public solution to lab integration," says Allnutt. "Let's get on with it."

**'Clear guidelines from Victoria are the first step'**

**NO FOOLING**  
This woman was part of a crowd of HEU and BCNU members, and representatives from seniors' and community groups, which rallied in front of the Victoria Convention Centre during the CMA annual general meeting. They were there to urge doctors to vote against a proposal supporting two-tier medicine.



DALE FULLER PHOTO

## Doctors reject two-tier

Even though its new president is well-known for his support of two-tier medicine, delegates to the Canadian Medical Association annual meeting rejected a resolution for more private money in the Canadian health care system.

HEU joined other unions and community groups at the Aug. 17 to 20 meeting in Victoria to urge doctors to work with them to press the federal government for increased funding to the health care system.

Before holding a press conference, the coalition against two-tier health care rallied in front of the CMA meeting, distributing leaflets and buttons to delegates.

"It's critical that we build on this vic-

tory in the fight against two-tier medicine," said secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt, who represented HEU at the press conference, noting that CMA president Victor Dirnfeldt loudly opposed B.C. legislation banning extra billing by physicians.

"With our allies in the community, caregivers must challenge hard-line doctors, insurance companies, and private health corporations whenever they roll out their two-tier agenda," says Allnutt.

HEU and its coalition partners are making plans to expose the two-tier agenda of the Fraser Institute when the corporate-funded think tank holds a conference on private health care in Vancouver Nov. 4.



## WHAT WE'RE UP TO

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complaints about local officers and shop stewards.

"Many of the complaints that we receive result from personality conflicts and workplace stress," says HEU president Fred Muzin. "As much as possible, it's better to resolve these in a timely manner at a local level."

The manual also includes protocol and procedures regarding the HEU Charges, Trials and Penalties section of our Constitution; union policy on human rights protection; and a code of ethics for shop stewards and local officers.

### Retired union members' group

BC FORUM is an organization which represents the interests of retired and active trade unionists who have reached the age of 50.

The 50+ provision allows

members to continue their extended health/dental and other essential benefits after they retire.

BC FORUM, which is the popular name for the B.C. Federation of Retired Union Members, is a registered, non-profit society dedicated to advancing the interests and well-being of the more than 100,000 retired union members and their families.

It works to ensure that the security, bargaining, and political power of the union can benefit members after retirement. BC FORUM puts the spotlight on issues of concern to retired workers and provides access to products and services at a reduced cost.

You can join BC FORUM, which is supported and endorsed by the B.C. Federation of Labour, by phoning 1-800-896-5678 (Lower Mainland 688-4565) and asking for Kara.

### Employers directed to pay bio-meds

HEU pressed HEABC to send out a directive to its affiliates confirming Stephen Kelleher's levelling award, because of the refusal of some employers to implement the \$100 a month interim adjustment for bio-meds. This was part of the 1997 pay equity allocation.

This elicited a response from HEABC on Sept. 16. The employers' organization sent out a letter to its members, explaining the award, telling them to determine the biomedical technicians in their employ to whom it applies, and pay it immediately, retroactive to April 1, 1997.

### APEC social clause debated at pre-summit conference

HEU activists were in attendance at the Maritime Labour Centre Sept. 12 as Sunera Thobani and Ed Broadbent

DALE FULLER PHOTO



Sunera Thobani addresses an anti-APEC meeting while John Fitzpatrick of the Vancouver and District Labour Council looks on.

held an impromptu debate on whether to support a social clause at the upcoming Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) conference.

The discussion was part of an outreach conference held in advance of the 1997 People's Summit on APEC, which will run Nov. 17 to 24, the week preceding the APEC conference in Vancouver. The purpose of the Summit is to raise awareness about human rights abuses and

mobilize opposition to global trade deals like the Multilateral Agreement on Investments (MAI).

Thobani, former NAC president and current chair of Women's Studies at Simon Fraser University, argued against a social clause. "It's wrong because it accepts globalization," she said. "The social clause will lead to trade sanctions by powerful countries against weaker ones."

# Ethnic diversity chair fights for fairness

*She says attacks on care aides, accusing them of patient abuse, are way out of line*

by Dale Fuller

**L**ORNA PARTRIDGE is fighting mad. A recent *Vancouver Sun* series about the abuse of long-term care residents by care aides completely contradicts her experience: as a care aide and union activist, Partridge regularly hears of the physical, sexual and psychological abuse of workers by residents.

As the chair of HEU's ethnic diversity caucus, she knows that people of diverse ethnic backgrounds suffer overt and at times virulent racism at the hands of the people for whom they care.

This is a problem the caucus has been tackling, but it is a difficult and complex issue.

"How do you teach people who have dementia and have probably been racist all their lives, that this is not appropriate behaviour?" asks Partridge.

She thinks that incoming residents should be told health care workers come from many different ethnic backgrounds, and that racist behaviour is not acceptable.

Little did Partridge re-

alize, as she studied to be a diplomat in her native Philippines, that she would eventually put that training to use as a union activist in faraway Canada.

She came here in the early 1980s, fresh out of university. She found a job in a non unionized long-term care facility in Vancouver, earning \$3.00 an hour. Hired as a care aide, she was often called on to do other jobs, like cooking.

"I did everything that they asked me to do. I was just brand new in the country. It was hard," says Partridge.

She changed jobs in 1983 when she heard of an opening at UBC Hospital.

This was a unionized job, but she was not active in the union.

By 1987 she was married, and she decided to leave the workforce to raise her two small children.

The family moved to Qualicum Beach in 1990, and Partridge found a job as a care aide in another long-term care facility.

Partridge's activism sprang out of a grievance.

She was hurt on the job, and her employer told the Workers' Compensation Board that she was not as hurt as she



DALE FULLER PHOTO

**AT THE MIKE** Lorna Partridge urges delegates at the recent Wage Policy Conference to support the establishment of an international solidarity fund. The resolution passed.

claimed to be. She went to the union, which filed and won a grievance.

Before long, she was attending meetings and became a steward.

Initially, her coworkers were reluctant to come to her with their problems. Then a care aide in her department applied for a kitchen job and was turned down because of lack of experience.

"Everyone accepted that, but I didn't. I read the contract and it said that what counts in an entry level job is seniority. And she had that. So, I filed a grievance for her and she won."

After that, Partridge had a steady stream of workers coming to her with their problems.

"I am quiet. I talk only if I want to say something that is important to me, something I believe in," says Partridge.

This was evident at the recent Wage Policy Conference.

She spoke passionately about the racism directed at many HEU members. She spoke as well to support a bargaining resolution to have employers and members contribute to an international solidarity fund.

On the latter issue, she told about her recent return to the Philippines and how the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and the imminent Multilateral Agreement on Investments (MAI) are having such a devastating effect in her native country.

Partridge spends a lot of time travelling on behalf of the union.

Like many working women and union activists, she sometimes feels guilty about being away from her family. But she was very proud of herself and her children recently when she asked them to write down what they most liked about their mother.

"They said that they were very proud of me because I stand up for people," Partridge says. "And that makes it all seem worthwhile."

Partridge is one of the thousands of people who come to Canada with rich and varied backgrounds to contribute so much to this society. HEU is lucky to count her, and so many others like her, among its membership.

• **BALANCING IT ALL** is a regular Guardian column about the challenges facing women activists.

## BALANCING



## IT ALL



## WHAT WE'RE UP TO

But Broadbent argued that a social clause would improve human rights by allowing people in Third World countries to form unions.

The former federal NDP leader, who visited China, Indonesia and Thailand during a six-year stint with the International Centre for Human Rights and Development, said that a social clause "may not equalize wages, but it will obligate governments to enforce freedom of association."

### Justice urged for Mexican toy factory workers

HEU has called for the Mexican government to prosecute the Mattel-owned Mabamex company after four women working in a *maquiladora* making toys were illegally detained and forced to sign resignation letters to leave the company.

In September 1996, Delfina Rodriguez, Rosario Arroyo, Guadalupe Dominguez, and Lucia Lopez were interrogated against their will for 10 hours and accused by Mabamex of carrying "subversive" materials (the women were circulating a questionnaire by a respected human rights organization, Alianza Civica).

The women, realizing they could not return to work at Mabamex, decided to pursue criminal charges against the company and its managers.

But in March 1997 the state court ruled that the detention did not constitute illegal confinement since the managers had not demanded ransom money.

"This ruling ignores the fact that the resignations were a condition of release," HEU president Fred Muzin wrote, in a recent letter to state governor Hector Teran. "It is simply a different form of ransom."

### Labour board decision pending on Paladin

Despite the employer's continuing efforts to block an HEU organizing drive at Paladin Security, the union is confident that the Labour Relations Board will rule in its favour.

As this issue of the Guardian went to press, the LRB had yet to announce its decision on Paladin, a company with contracts at several hospitals in the Lower Mainland. HEU had applied to the board Sept. 11 to represent workers from Paladin's hospital division.

The application follows a successful organizing drive and the Aug. 22 reinstatement of Paladin site supervisor Norm Kelly, who had been transferred out of his position at Vancouver Hospital to a construction site.

Kelly, an HEU member at Vancouver General local, was instrumental in the union's

efforts to organize workers at Paladin. The mediated settlement, which returned Kelly to his position on Aug. 31, included back pay amounting to seven 12-hour shifts.

### Food retailers urged to support strawberry workers

HEU president Fred Muzin wrote letters to the CEOs of four major food retailers in Canada, urging them to support California strawberry workers. The strawberry pickers are doing stoop work, requiring 10 to 12 hours a day of bending down in slippery and muddy ditches.

Exposure to pesticides is one of their main issues. (Previous actions, such as the grape boycott led by Cesar Chavez, exposed the uncontrolled use of pesticides.)

Accommodations are abysmal; child labour and sexual abuse are not uncommon.



Eight thousand dollars a year is a typical salary, while the 270 employers rake in \$650 million annually.

"As a socially conscious food retailer," Muzin wrote, "you have a role to play in ensuring that these people achieve dignity — a living wage, clean drinking water, bathrooms in the fields where they work, job security, health benefits, and an end to sexual harassment and other abuses."

The CEOs of Safeway, IGA, Costco, Overwaitea and Save-On Foods all received copies of the letter.

## Nurses tell it like it is

**F**IFTY-FIVE care aides and licensed practical nurses met at the end of September to learn how to bring their issues and concerns to the public eye.

In the light of the registered nurses' own campaign of the past few months and the recent attacks on care aides in the *Vancouver Sun*, these HEU members were eager to master the skills they will need to go out into the community.

A brochure entitled *In the family of nursing* was hot off the press on Sept. 24, the day that the nursing team conference started.

The brochure clarifies the issues of utilization of LPNs, workload, and training/upgrading. Nurses and their advocates will be able to use it to help them in their campaign to educate decision-makers about the nursing team role in the health care system.

The conference concentrated on teaching delegates how to make their case before regional health boards, community health councils, the media, or community groups.

They learned how to present their issues in a creative and interesting way. Facilitators Denise Nadeau and Victor Porter said the best way to do this is for the nurses to tell their own stories.

Merilyn McKerracher, chair of the nursing team committee, was very impressed with the conference and the participants.

"The mood was very positive. This was about set-



**WORKLOAD OVERLOAD**  
Shirley Vaillancourt of Omineca Lodge and Janet Moira Sparks of Prince George dramatize what happens when a health worker attempts to lift a patient without the proper equipment. Below: One of the target audiences which participants identified during workshops.

HOSPITAL  
BOARDS MAY  
BE RECEPTIVE  
TO OUR PRESENTATION.

ting our own agenda, not about bad-mouthing anybody. Everybody came away from the conference feeling that we are headed in the right direction," she enthused.

Naturally, some delegates initially felt intimidated about the idea of making theatrical presentations in front of strangers. This had changed to eagerness by the end of the conference.

They must now go to their locals and share what they learned with their co-workers.

Part of what they learned at the conference was to "direct" them in their presentations.

Some conference participants said that their toughest audience may well be their co-workers. But the final presentations at the end of the second day were

informative, moving and attention-grabbing. The participants had indeed learned how to convey their message through the telling of their stories. They left feeling equipped with the right tools to appear before regional health boards/community health councils and the public.

As LPNs, they will be able to convey that they need to be more fully utilized, that they are struggling with unmanageable workloads, and that to meet the needs of health care now and in the future they will require more training.

Caregivers will be dealing with elderly patients with dementia on an ever-increasing basis, and attention to those areas will help improve their working conditions and the delivery of health care in B.C.

## Union moving to protect Red Cross workers

Front-line workers in B.C.'s blood system know a little more about their future post-Red Cross following a decision by Canada's health ministers to form a new blood agency.

In September, B.C. health minister Joy MacPhail joined federal counterpart Allan Rock and other health ministers to announce the National Blood Authority, slated to assume full operation of the blood system as early as September 1998.

Though the NBA will be funded centrally by the provinces, it will have key financial controls giving it

the autonomy to make critical decisions related to the safety of the blood supply.

The ministers also put in place a transition bureau to coordinate all aspects of the transfer of Red Cross blood system operations to the NBA. Capital Regional Health Board CEO, Ken Fyke, has been appointed to the bureau.

"We'll use the collective agreement and work with the transition bureau to make sure our members' move to the National Blood Authority happens with minimal disruption," says HEU secretary-business

manager Chris Allnutt. "The employment security agreement will also help in the transition."

One hurdle in the transition has already been addressed. The Red Cross had been pressing forward with plans to transfer some workers to a defined contribution pension plan on Nov. 1. But after a complaint of unfair labour practices at the labour board, HEU, HSA and BCNU have reached a tentative deal with the Red Cross protecting members' pension plan and surpluses while setting out a process to renegotiate the terms of the plan.



## PRESIDENT'S DESK



### HEU there for health workers at CUPE convention

by Fred Muzin

**D**ELEGATES to the CUPE National Convention that concluded Oct. 10 in Toronto, voted to strengthen the union and send a clear message to both employers and governments that public sector workers are prepared to fight back. We have the resources, energy, solidarity, and commitment to counter right wing attempts to annihilate quality public services.

HEU delegates joined more than 24,000 teachers and school board workers at Maple Leaf Gardens to oppose Ontario's Omnibus Education Bill 160 that would allow government to control every aspect of education simply by passing regulations. With no debate, the government could increase classroom time and class sizes, allow non-teachers to run classes, cut high school teachers' preparation time in half and slash \$1 billion and tens of thousands of jobs from the education budget. Chanting "We won't back down," thousands of supporters proceeded to a candlelight protest at the legislature. By week's end, the minister of education was out.

CUPE has been front and centre in mobilizing for a general strike to oppose Harris' Bill 136. This bill attempted to eliminate the right to strike, allow the government to decide all bargaining issues, and corrupt the arbitration process. The intent was to promote massive contracting out of public services by government appointed arbitrators, with the type of arbitration also being unilaterally determined. Although

### 'Public sector fights are not restricted to central Canada'

the Tories were forced to back down and amend the legislation as it applies to 80 per cent of public sector workers, health workers remain vulnerable. At a huge noon hour rally, we joined our sisters and brothers in supporting the Ontario Council of Hospital Unions (OCHU) to demand that democracy be restored and the Ontario Hospital Association be held accountable for remaining silent.

After two days of heated debate, the more than 2,000 delegates voted to raise the CUPE national per capita from 0.7 per cent to 0.85 per cent of the average weekly salary. This will allow us to achieve balanced budgets, pay off the debt, replenish the defence fund and keep organizing and mobilizing.

Public sector fights are not restricted to central Canada. Although the B.C. NDP government believes in the value of public services, they are susceptible to budget hysteria. The pressures for privatized, two-tier services is enormous, especially from multinational corporations seeking a greater market share.

The Public Sector Employers' Council is once again attempting to impose wage controls on us of zero per cent, zero per cent and two per cent over three years. This demonstrates no appreciation for our work and the increased workload, stress, and injury rates faced as we continue to provide quality health services.

The Health Employers' Association of B.C. is incapable of treating workers as peers. At our Wage Policy Conference, delegates described their frustrations with HEABC and reaffirmed that consultation with front-line caregivers is crucial for health restructuring. Proper resource allocation must mandate the utilization of the full range of skills and abilities of all members of the nursing team.

The CUPE National Convention added important elements to our preparations for 1998. As we begin our bargaining strategy conferences, we know that militancy, resources, and solidarity will be critical to our success.



REBUILDING Nurses aide Cindy Moser is rebuilding her home, which was destroyed by a freak debris slide (inset.)

## Ninety seconds of terror!

by Stephen Howard

SLOCAN PARK – Aside from work, HEU member Cindy Moser spent most of her waking hours this summer trying to rebuild a big part of her life – her house – in this small Kootenay community about 40 kms south of Nelson.

For her and her husband, Richard Kosior, it's now a race to erect their new home before the snow falls, putting an end to 18 months of anxiety since a freak debris slide destroyed their near-new three level accommodation.

Moser – a nurses aide at Nelson's Mt. St. Francis long-term care facility – is still emotional about that night, which she describes as "ninety seconds of terror." With her and Kosior getting ready for bed, a fast moving mix of logging slash, huge boulders, and a slurry of mud raced down the slope that rises sharply from the south shore of the Slocan River, smashing into the house. The upper floors collapsed as the torrent pushed the building 15 meters off its foundation. Their cars were left a mess of tangled metal.

"My first thought was that Richard was dead," says Moser, "and then that we were going into the river."

With the help of neighbours, the two survived the initial shock with only physical scrapes. But they got another

one two days later, when an insurance adjuster gave them more bad news. The slide was "an act of God." They wouldn't get a penny of insurance money.

That's where perseverance and community came in. With the bank at their heels to keep up mortgage payments,

they applied for and received provincial disaster relief funds. Moser's Mt. St. Francis colleagues took a collection that allowed her to buy a replacement car. "I still get choked up thinking about that," she says. HEU members at the nearby Willowhaven facility also pitched in.

With tenacity they produced a new mortgage from their bank. West Kootenay Power freed up a company house for them. Moser's neighbours organized a fundraising dinner at the local community hall. "They're amazing," she says. "If it hadn't been for them, we'd have been long gone." Loggers, hippies and environmentalists all lent a hand.

Over the last year, Moser and Kosior salvaged what they could from their flattened house. This summer they moved back to their scenic lot, living in two tents while rebuilding a new foundation away from the slide path. "I don't really care about living in a tent," says Moser. "I'm back on my own land."

### AFTER



### THE SHIFT

## NOTEBOOK

### Care aides know what's what

by Dale Fuller

A recent series of articles in the *Vancouver Sun* addressed the problem of resident abuse in long-term care facilities in British Columbia. The writer concentrated his attack – and it was an attack – on abuse perpetrated by care aides. Under the provincial freedom of information legislation, he obtained copies of investigative reports of resident abuse in the Lower Mainland. He did not visit any facilities; the article was written at his desk.

Anybody who read the articles and knows anything about long-term care facilities would know that the reporter's observations and his solution – criminal checks and a central registry for care aides – were highly simplistic. Anyone working in such a facility and caring – in every sense of the word – for the elderly residents would be incensed.

And they were.

The newspaper received many letters in response. And it certainly shows that care aides are able to defend themselves.

"Care aides eat, breathe, grieve, and cry with them [the residents]. We feel their pain, we share their laughter, we exchange gifts on



### 'The newspaper received many letters in response'

special occasions and we go that extra mile to ensure they are as comfortable as possible. We do this even though we are punched, kicked, spat at, sworn at, and often injured," wrote Gordie Logan.

That is something the reporter might have learned if he had accompanied, even for a short time, a care aide on the job.

The sad fact of the matter is that many of the residents suffer from dementia, and dementia can render a person violent at times. Care aides know this; they see it every day. To top it off, workload pressures and inadequate staffing levels place enormous strains on the front-line caregivers.

The number of seniors in long-term care will only grow. It is time to come up with constructive ideas for solutions.

HEU's nursing team committee is set to launch a campaign on a range of issues, including long-term care. An article appears on page 5 about the nursing team conference which was held on Sept. 24 and 25. There participants learned the skills to make their case before regional health boards and community health councils, administrators and governments to provide solutions and press for action.

The letters to the editor in response to the *Sun's* articles illustrate that front-line caregivers are ready, willing, and able to make their case to anyone who will listen – and maybe to some who don't want to.



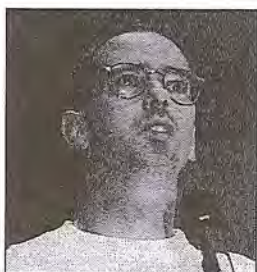


*fighting for fairness, fighting for health care*



KATE WILLIAMS PHOTO

BRING ON '98 Chair Anna Koochin and bargaining demands committee colleagues prepare for the next motion at HEU's Wage Policy Conference.



KATE WILLIAMS PHOTO



DELEGATES John McKenzie, B.C. Women's local, and Melva Strudwick and Luisita Halstead, both of Normandy local.

# ready to bargain!

*Our Wage Policy Conference sets the strategy for our 1998 bargaining*

## the 6 point plan

**one** one contract for all means fairness for caregivers

**two** a healthy workplace by easing workload and improving health and safety conditions

**three** a fair wage increase

**four** helping members in crisis by improving long-term disability and other benefits

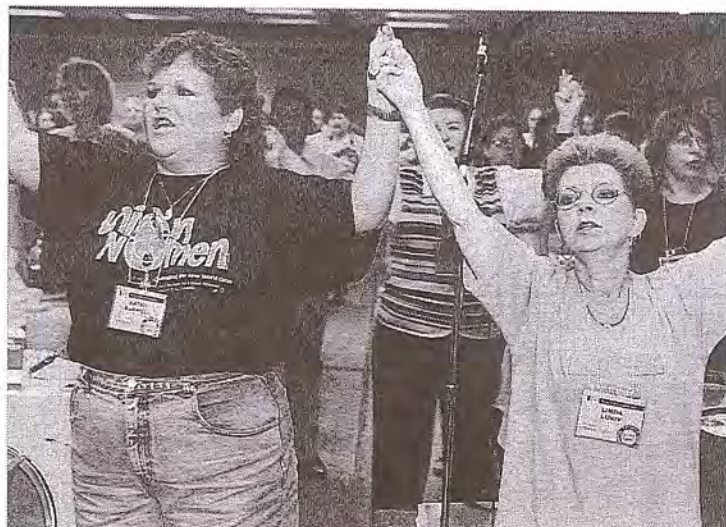
**five** professionalizing the workplace by recognizing technical work and the nursing team

**six** in changing times, caregivers must be involved in improving health care delivery

Over 370 HEU activists emerged from the Sept. 22/23 wage policy conference with a comprehensive action for 1998 bargaining. The outcome puts HEU in a leadership role as more than 150,000 public sector workers head into negotiations next year. Delegates hammered out a six-point bargaining strategy backed by a unanimous pledge of no concessions, a commitment to oppose wage controls and a key demand for full parity for all health workers. They also elected activists to the new provincial bargaining committee that will negotiate 1998 master agreements in the facility and community sectors. Delegates handed HEU's new bargaining committee a negotiating blueprint linking bargaining demands to the defence of Medicare and progressive health care reform.

Coverage of the Wage Policy Conference starts on page 8.

IN SOLIDARITY Prince George's Kathy Burwell and Mission's Linda Lukiv.



KATE WILLIAMS PHOTO



## OUR BARGAINING TEAM IS READY

**the** bargaining committee that will sit at the negotiating table for HEU in 1998 is made up of 10 elected members and the president, financial secretary and secretary-business manager of the union. Nominations came from the

floor, and many dedicated activists ran for the coveted positions. Some of the members are incumbents from the last bargaining committee and some are new, but they all have their work cut out for them.



**Fred Muzin**  
President  
HEU



**Chris Allnutt**  
Secretary-  
Business Manager  
HEU



**Mary LaPlante**  
Financial  
Secretary  
HEU

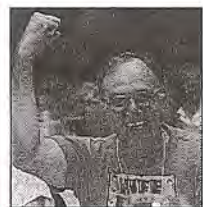


**Anna Koochin**  
LPN  
Kootenay Lake  
Hospital

## CONVENTION NOTEBOOK

### A COLOURFUL TRADITION

Delegates at Wage Policy have a little fun by trying to guess the colour and number of the next ballot used for bargaining committee elections. Throw in one quarter for each vote and you're in. With 75 ballots printed in a rainbow of colours and 32 votes taken, there was much excitement when president Fred Muzin announced the next ballot. A cry of jubilation easily identified a winner like Martin Hill of the Tofino local, seen above.



### OUTSOURCING ALL OVER MAP

Royal Jubilee local's David Law says positions for food prep aides have been lost at his facility because of international outsourcing. "We've got bean salad that comes from Kentucky, we've got chicken from Texas and potato salad from Idaho," says Law. Delegates want stronger language in the contract defending work against contracting out. HEU will press for a joint province-wide industry-union body to monitor progress on contracting out issues and guarantees that spending on rehabilitative and diagnostic services in the public sector doesn't slip relative to the private sector.

### THEY KEEP TABS ON ELECTION PROCESS

Outside the fray of Wage Policy debate, one of the toughest tasks at HEU bargaining conferences is serving on the tabulations committee. Sixteen Wage Policy delegates from around the province oversee the bargaining committee elections and other formal votes. Committee chair Laurie Harper from St. Mary's said that more than 10,000 ballots were cast by delegates during the conference, with more than 370 delegates casting ballots on more than 30 occasions.



KATE WILLIAMS PHOTO



KATE WILLIAMS PHOTOS

# United for '98

## Delegates hammer out bargaining blueprint

**A**FTER TWO DAYS of intense debate, more than over 370 delegates to HEU's Wage Policy Conference mapped out a program for 1998 bargaining that builds on past victories and once again puts B.C.'s caregivers on the cutting edge of health care reform in North America.

Delegates mandated the bargaining committee to achieve full parity and one contract for all. Delegates were clear that full parity in the community sector, and an end to the wall that divides the community from facilities, must be achieved in this round of talks. They also made it a priority to achieve full parity for long-term care workers under former CCERA and Pricare agreements for benefits, the long-term disability plan, and health and safety provisions.

HEU will be joined by other public sector unions in a common front to oppose Victoria's plans for no wage increases in 1998 and 1999.

Delegates adopted a three part strategy on wages: full parity, a minimum \$1 an hour hike in each year of a two-year agreement, plus cost of living adjustments. HEU will demand full pay equity before the expiry of

the new agreement. The bargaining program includes a mandate to negotiate increased rights for local unions and activists by expanding union leave provisions, guaranteeing shop steward representation and space for local union offices. Delegates adopted a plan to extend the time frame the union has to launch policy grievances on behalf of members, and to improve access to hearings and grievance meetings for HEU stewards and witnesses.

The bargaining committee has clear direction to win gains in occupational health and safety and workload issues. Delegates want strong language on workload to counter staff shortages resulting from health care restructuring and budget restraint, including full replacement of absent staff and an enforceable ergonomics program. A comprehensive position was hammered out calling for improved health and safety committees, employer-paid health and safety courses, and greater employer accountability for workplace safety concerns.

In a move that protects health workers' employment security in the context of health care reform, delegates gave overwhelming support to expand bumping and posting provisions to a three-step process, starting at

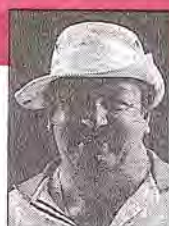
## the plan explained

**1** One contract for all is in the best interest of progressive health care reform and addresses the key issue of fairness in the treatment of caregivers. Building on the milestone community sector agreement, and with an eye to improved benefits and health and safety provisions for former CCERA and Pricare members, HEU will be bargaining for parity across health care.

**2** A healthy workplace will be achieved by bargaining language that strengthens health and safety committees, makes employers more accountable for health and safety concerns and puts in place an enforceable ergonomics program. Strong language on workload and the collective right to refuse unsafe work will go a long way towards making the workplace safer.

**3** A fair wage increase means rejecting government wage controls. HEU's demands include full parity across health care and a fast track for full pay equity by the end of the contract. The bargaining team will seek a minimum \$1 an hour increase in each year of a two year contract plus cost of living adjustments.





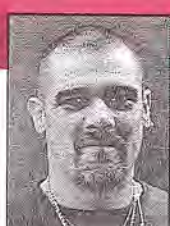
**Tom Knowles**  
Instrument  
Technologist  
St. Paul's Hospital



**Marty Norgren**  
Employment  
Counsellor  
Coast  
Foundation



**Barb Burke**  
OR Booking  
Clerk  
Penticton  
Regional Hospital



**Richard Dennis**  
Food Service  
Supervisor  
Yaletown House



**Laura Neil**  
Unit Clerk  
Royal Jubilee  
Hospital



**Doreen Plouffe**  
LPN  
Vancouver  
Hospital



**Chris Dorais**  
Food Service  
Worker  
Kiwanis Lynn  
Manor



**David Lowther**  
Sterile Supply  
Worker  
Victoria General  
Hospital



**Donald Allen**  
Transportation  
Attendant I  
Burnaby Hospital



**ONCE MORE WITH FEELING** Magnolia House's Yvette Reisig, far left, with Richmond Hospital delegates Vivian Love and Kathleen O'Neill. Left, Marie Sawyer of the Skidegate local speaks to the assembly.

the worksite level, then within the region/community and finally province-wide. To deal with changing times, demands were ratified for broader protection against contracting out and outsourcing, enhanced training and a proposal to establish pilot projects showcasing new ways of integrating health service delivery.

With an eye to job creation, delegates rousing adopted a plan to create new full-time jobs, especially for young people, by eliminating all but emergency overtime. "When we allow the employers to spend large amounts of money on overtime ... we are preventing people from getting jobs," said Nanaimo local's Vicki Bertram. "We have to stop spending money unwisely."

Following up on 1996 LTD gains, delegates ratified measures to improve sick leave and LTD provisions to take better care of members who are hurt or become sick on the job. These include a reduced LTD waiting period, and improved LTD monetary benefits. HEU members who face a \$7,500 limit on extended health benefits will demand parity with health care bosses' \$1,000,000.00 life-time benefits cap.

HEU seeks to join other CUPE workers, the Canadian Autoworkers and the Steelworkers in bargaining an International Solidarity Fund bankrolled by the em-

ployer at a rate of one cent for every hour worked by a member.

"We have much to learn and much to gain from working with people in countries where the International Monetary Fund has attacked social programs," said International Solidarity chair Linda Hargreaves.

The newly-elected bargaining committee will soon get down to work fine-tuning the union's strategy for talks. HEU will start meeting with our bargaining partners – the BCGEU, UFCW, Operating Engineers, HSA and BCNU – to discuss common concerns.

HEU activists will continue preparing for 1998 bargaining in regional conferences kicking off in Prince George in mid-October.



**CHARTING THE COURSE** St. Paul's delegates Raj Sandhanwalia and Claude Hewitt discuss resolutions.

## SECRETARY-BUSINESS MANAGER

# 'When we fight, we win'

In his keynote address to wage policy delegates, HEU secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt said the clear lesson from the last round of bargaining is, "When we fight, we win."

And winning wage increases in the face of government wage controls for the public sector of zero in 1998 and zero in 1999 will be a fight.

"Wage controls just aren't on for 1998 bargaining in the public sector, said Allnutt. "It's not fair, it's not reasonable and it won't happen."

Winning means continuing to build inter-union solidarity that grew out of 1996 bargaining. The employer, says Allnutt, was betting on union disunity at the table in 1996. But "the exact opposite happened."

Allnutt acknowledged those community sector locals who fought in the first skirmish to achieve justice in a sector-wide agreement. "We won because we took on employers who were bent on maintaining the wage ghetto, employers who want to build a low cost alternative work force to deliver services," Allnutt said.

Significant gains were made in the community, said Allnutt, but the wall created by Bill 48 stands in the way of complete parity. "The wall dividing community and facility-based health services contradicts the goals of health care reform. Everyday, as health care reform advances, the contradictions of the division become more clear," he reported.

As illustration, Allnutt pointed out employer plans in the Okanagan/Similkameen Health Region for the establishment of a region-wide corporation to administer finance, accounting and stores. Despite the fact that most transferred work would be from facilities, legislation would put the work in the community sector.

"We need to approach these situations strategically," said Allnutt, "to make it so the government will reconsider the wisdom of shoring up this wall that divides the community from facilities. But removing the wall would take more than a wrecking ball: our approach must also take into account the sensitivities, needs, and apprehensions of our bargaining association partners."

Allnutt said that HEU activists' success in linking caring conditions to public medicare would be critical to the union's success at the table in 1998.

"Fully 97 per cent (of the public) believe that to protect health care, the investment in the skills of health care workers must also be protected. Almost 88 per cent say health care reform should not be carried out at the expense of health care workers."

## Leaders pledge common front

Wage Policy delegates received solidarity greetings and a pledge of joint action in upcoming bargaining from key public sector union leaders.

"It's important that as the largest public sector union that we take a stand," CUPE B.C. president Barry O'Neill told delegates. HEU's membership in CUPE gives the national union 107,000 members in British Columbia.

O'Neill said that in recent rounds "fighting back to zero is becoming the norm in the public sector" and wage controls in the public sector have to end now. "We need to fight. But more importantly, we need to fight smart," he said.

The BCGEU's Daryl Barnett told delegates that



**O'NEILL**

despite historical and cultural differences, the unions bargaining in the last round won a good agreement. That solidarity will be important in the next round, he said, because Bill 28 will bring more partners to the union side of the table.

Barnett said direct government workers are concerned about the protection of public sector jobs. "We need to continue public debate about public services being offered in the public sector," said Barnett.

And on the wage freeze, "Zero and zero is not acceptable – it will not fly," Barnett called for parity for community health and community living workers. "The provincial government must live up to its commitments to end that discrimination."

HSA president Cindy Stewart and Al Bowering of the Operating Engineers also extended greetings.

**4**

Members are in crisis because LTD, sick leave, health insurance and other benefits are inadequate. HEU's demands include a higher percentage of wages while on LTD, a shorter waiting period and employer-coverage of benefit premiums for recipients. HEU will press for parity with health care employers who currently enjoy a \$1,000,000 life-time limit for extended health care benefits.

**5**

Professionalizing the workplace means establishing a review of benchmarks and adjusting pay rates to reflect the training and responsibilities of HEU members. On the table will be a demand for higher utilization of the nursing team in health care. HEU wants paid time off and coverage of expenses for caregivers who enroll in courses to maintain certification and licensing requirements.

**6**

The collective agreement must reflect changing times in health care. HEU's list of demands includes broadening access to promotions and providing greater employment security through a three-step process, starting at the worksite level, then within the region and community, then province-wide, stronger protections against contracting out and an employer-paid, jointly managed training fund.



## letters

continued from page 2

### More on LPNs

I am writing with some concerns about all this negativity directed toward LPNs with no apparent rebuttal from the union. I find it unacceptable for the union not to promote or protect its members who are being viciously attacked by another union.

BCNU president Ivory Warner's horrendously inaccurate statements on HEU's nursing teams (aides, orderlies and LPNs) have caused great harm, fears, concern and confusion within the public sector! HEU's inability to mount any sort of rebuttal to her inaccurate advertising is very offensive to fellow health caregivers. Aren't we part of the nursing team within the health care industry? In the past, it has always appeared that LPNs were only considered an "after thought" within the overall structure of the union. And/or, 'if we, the union, give LPNs a few bread crumbs, maybe they will go away.'

Because of the small LPN representation

within the union, we often feel ignored and abandoned by the union, and that we are always looking over our shoulder to see if our jobs will be eliminated.

This is not good for the morale and effectiveness of fellow trained professionals. Why is there a lack of leadership from the BCNU and HEU in dealing with JOB JURISDICTION?

Can't this be resolved by senior management, with their negotiating and communication skills, to promote a larger vision which will enhance performance satisfaction, thus job stability?

CHARLES S. DYSON  
LPN, VGH

### Getting it right

Finally, the union is getting it right with the recent full page article on regionalization ("Checkup on Change," *Guardian* July/August). For too long now our members have been left out in the dark concerning what is happening with the process of regionalization.

Can I make a suggestion that you continue this full page spread with more

details on what is happening in every edition of the *Guardian*? Get right into the details of what is taking place in each region. Our members really want and need to know what's going on. Because, as you know, in the absence of real fact some pretty bizarre rumors start to circulate around. Keep up in the know and up to date. Thanks for the great article.

JOHN MCKENZIE,  
B.C. Women's

### Peace Arch fiasco sugarcoated by Sun

On August 29 the *Vancouver Sun* ran the first in a series of stories about Pat Zanon, the centre of the Peace Arch Hospital fiasco. And what a delightful story it was. Isn't Pat nice: she's a grandmother, she's a gardener, she's an antique car buff. It all made me want to bake a cake and take it to her.

The part of Zanon we are interested in is the side of her that is CEO of the South Fraser Health Region, chair of the Health Employers Association of British Columbia (HEABC), and the role her organization is playing in what seems to have become

the "Healthcare Restructuring Circus."

This spring my facility, Yaletown House, decided to fire our dietitian, and contract these services to St. Paul's Hospital. As the food service supervisor, I questioned this move in terms of cost saving versus negative impact on the quality of nutritional care we provide to our residents. As a concerned taxpayer and union activist, I questioned the amount of the payout. My questions were dismissed by our administrator.

Realizing the methods used to achieve a goal are sometimes as important as the goal itself, HEU, along with the other unions representing the front-line health care workers in this province, negotiated into our collective agreement a provision for "Enhanced Consultation." Yet, despite the fact that the HEABC and employers agreed to worker and union involvement on issues related to health care restructuring, countless dollars and human resources have been wasted opposing meaningful input from front-line workers almost every time we have asked for it.

RICHARD DENNIS,  
Chair, Yaletown

# CUPE dues boost gives members the resources to fight public service cuts

by Stephen Howard

**I**T TOOK two days of heated and passionate debate, but delegates to the Canadian Union of Public Employees' convention voted to boost their dues to give Canada's largest union the tools to continue to fight right-wing governments that are cutting public services like health care and gutting wages and working conditions for workers who provide those services.

The 2,100 delegates from across Canada — including 29 from HEU — who attended the Oct. 6 to 10 convention in Toronto also approved a comprehensive action plan to protect jobs and public services and to fight privatization — especially in its new manifestations of public private partnerships and 'competitive bidding.' And, in Mike Harris' backyard, they gave unanimous support to Ontario health care workers' fight against hospital closures and regressive labour legislation designed to gut their job security protections.

In her convention address, Geraldine McGuire, national secretary-treasurer, reminded delegates they put off dealing with the union's financial hurdles at the 1995 convention. While they did not give the required two-thirds approval to a dues increase back then, they did authorize deficit budgets to take on employers and right-wing governments. But McGuire said CUPE was running a \$4 million annual deficit on its \$70 million operating budget — much of it attributable to special fightback campaigns in Ontario, Alberta and Quebec — and needed a sizeable dues increase to keep going.

Highlighting the struggles of a number of CUPE locals — "stories of courage and solidarity from every part of the country," — McGuire warned "unless we

give CUPE the financial strength it needs, we will not be able to give CUPE members the resources to fight."

Speaking in favour of the dues increase, HEU financial secretary Mary LaPlante said that the 460,000-member union's difficult financial straits undercut its strength. "This union can't survive at the rate we're going. We must fight, we must fight strong."

A delegate from Newfoundland said support from the national union was vital to workers' struggles in his province. "Without the assistance of CUPE National, a number of union locals in Newfoundland wouldn't exist," he said, urging delegates to okay the boost.

HEU president Fred Muzin also argued for the increase. The biggest impediment that multinational corporations face is a strong labour movement and strong public sector unions, he said. Speaking in French, the Montreal-born Muzin said "we must fight together to preserve our liberty."



**RE-ELECTED** CUPE national president Judy Darcy, left and secretary-treasurer Geraldine McGuire. HEU president Fred Muzin won a second term on CUPE's national executive board.

Eventually, delegates voted 67 per cent to boost dues by an equivalent of \$15 million annually. But Quebec activists, who'd voted en bloc against an increase, left the convention floor for a special caucus meeting with only about 30 per cent returning to participate in other debates. A subsequent resolution boosted strike pay from CUPE's defense fund to \$200 a week from \$150. This will directly benefit HEU if members are involved in any extended job action.



**BACK OFF HARRIS** More than 2,000 CUPE convention delegates and Toronto health workers rallied against Ontario Premier Mike Harris' attacks on health care. HEU delegates from right, Mary LaPlante, Wynn Dale and Kelly Knox support the no concessions stand.

The CUPE dues increase won't affect HEU members' dues. LaPlante said. She says the additional cost to CUPE's B.C. Health Services Division, about \$400,000 a year, would be borne from HEU's operating budget.

While McGuire focused on finances, CUPE national president Judy Darcy issued a fiery challenge to right-wing politicians and Canada's corporate elite. Reminding delegates that "fighting back works," she highlighted numerous victories by CUPE members — from laundry workers in Calgary to Canadian Airlines flight attendants against the corporate agenda and attacks on public services by governments.

"In Canada, our access to public services doesn't depend on our wealth," she said. "Public services help make us equal." CUPE's fight to preserve those services is more than protecting jobs, she said. "It's about protecting a decent standard of life for every man, woman and child in this country."

Darcy singled out Ontario health workers, who have mobilized against

Mike Harris for two years, yet still face the threat of widespread layoffs though hospital closures. They're poised to take illegal strike action to defend their jobs and Medicare. Throwing down the gauntlet, she warned Harris to negotiate a resolution. "The choice is yours," she said at a boisterous rally held during the convention. "Don't take on hospital workers. Don't take on CUPE."

The convention — the second for HEU since it rejoined CUPE in 1994 — also gave health workers from across the country an opportunity to share information and expertise. At a special health workers caucus, activists shared mobilizing strategies and approaches for dealing with restructuring and change. And HEU made a commitment to work with CUPE National to organize further discussions among CUPE health union leaders for later in the spring.

On the election front, Darcy and McGuire were returned for two year terms in the union's top two positions. HEU president Muzin was re-elected as regional vice-president on CUPE's national executive board. He'll serve with CUPE B.C. president Barry O'Neill, who was also elected as an regional vice-president.



# WCB deals with latex allergies

*A new booklet from Workers' Compensation describes risks and prevention of allergy*

**T**HE WORKERS' Compensation Board recently published a booklet called *Dealing with "Latex Allergies" at Work*. This is in response to a growing number of people who are suffering from serious allergies and irritations as a result of working with products made of rubber latex.

Workers in Canada use these products — such as gloves, respirators, aprons, and boots — as protective equipment. Ironically, protecting themselves from one health hazard has created another.

The booklet describes the health problems related to exposure to latex products, who is at risk, and how to minimize those risks. Health care workers are at the top of the risk list.

"Some studies have tested health care workers and found up to 17 per cent of them had a positive test reaction to latex proteins," says Dr. Stephanie Mah, an occupational doctor in the WCB's prevention division. "This number rose to 36 per cent in those who had a history of allergies."

A rash is the most common reaction and may be caused by the soaps, powders or dampness from sweating when gloves are put on.

Chemicals used in the production of the rubber products or proteins in the natural rubber latex can trigger a far more serious reaction and attack the body's immune system. Symptoms can include hives, itchy eyes, sneezing, asthma, and in extreme cases, a potentially severe allergic reaction known as anaphylaxis.

One HEU member is very familiar with the latter condition.

Mary Ellen Beavers was so ill that she was unable to continue to work.

She eventually won a substantial award from WCB, but she had to make her case through considerable research first (see the September/October 1994 and May/June 1997 *Guardians*).

Copies of the guide have been distributed to HEU locals.

They can also be obtained through the WCB Films and Posters section at 276-3068 or toll free 1-800-661-2112, local 3068.



IT WAS NO KITCHEN FIRE that Bill Smorang put out with a fire blanket.

## Cedarview cook rescues resident

On Sept. 6, residents at Cedarview Lodge were sitting in the TV room watching Princess Diana's funeral. In a little nook set aside for smokers, an elderly viewer dozed off with a cigarette in her hand. The pillow supporting her back caught on fire and soon she was engulfed in flames.

In the nearby kitchen, the smoke alarm went off.

Cook Bill Smorang's safety training kicked in. He was closing all the doors to the kitchen when he heard cook Susan Henriksen yell, "Oh my God, she's on fire!"

"I grabbed a fire blanket and started

running. I saw the fire extinguisher out of the corner of my eye as I passed through the swinging door, but I didn't think I had time for both the blanket and the extinguisher," said Smorang.

He enveloped the woman in the blanket, which quickly extinguished the fire. But the woman had already sustained substantial burns.

Smorang says, "It was touch and go there for awhile. They didn't know if she was going to make it."

He says he believes she is much better now, and is stable enough to have the skin grafts that she will need.

## A SAFE WORKPLACE WILL SOON BE LAW

**MSI: Injury or disorder of the muscles, tendons, ligaments, joints, nerves, blood vessels or related soft tissue including a sprain, strain and inflammation, that may be caused or aggravated by work**

The long-awaited Ergonomics Regulation has been finalized into law under the Workers' Compensation Board regulation process.

By April 1998 the employers will be required by law to "eliminate or, if that is not practicable, minimize the risk of MSI to workers."

Many HEU health and safety activists participated in public hearings which were held around the province. This is an important issue for health care workers, as most of the injuries suffered by health care workers are MSIs.

Of course, any law or regulation is only strong if it is enforced. Employers will be required to consult with the occupational health and safety committees in identifying, assessing, and controlling risk. The new regulation also calls for committee involvement in designing and providing worker education and training.

HEU has distributed the text of the regulation to all locals.

The WCB will be providing supporting material and education in the coming months.

## Corporate services plan may cause disruption at Okanagan/Similkameen

At least five material management positions at Penticton General Hospital have been slated for transfer to the communities subsector in Kelowna under a proposed corporate services certification that would be carved out of existing bargaining units in the Okanagan/Similkameen region.

More than 100 HEU positions are likely to be transferred under the new system, which will absorb finance, human resources, stores, patient portering and possibly laundry.

Transferred employees will work beside union colleagues who earn lower wages under poorer conditions in the communities subsector.

At a mid-October meeting of the Oka-

nagan/Similkameen Regional Health Board, HEU expected to learn more about the future of information systems and finance — the latter of which is facing the elimination of 15 of its 60 positions.

HEU has filed an LRB submission requesting that transferred members remain in the facilities subsector beyond the current agreement.

"Situations like Okanagan/Similkameen will arise more and more frequently," said HEU secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt.

In the meantime, HEU will continue its strategy of pushing the government to dismantle the wall between the community and facility sectors.

## Health care scholarships benefit HEU members

A health care scholarship fund offered by the Ministry of Education, Skills and Training has benefited 125 HEU members since the program began in the fall of 1996. The bursary, governed by an advisory committee of union representatives and ministry officials, offers \$3500 for skills upgrading so that workers can remain in health care employment.

Carey Adams, a Peace Arch Hospital care aide, upgraded to an LPN through

Vancouver Community College after receiving her award in May. "It's a really positive thing, because it gives me a better chance of getting a job," says Adams.

"There's not a lot out there for someone like me."

Joni Jacobsen, a casual laundry worker at Cumberland Regional Hospital, was upgraded to a resident care att-

endant with studies at North Island College. "I didn't know anything about the bursary," says Jacobsen.

"I was well into the resident care program before I knew about it. I put my application in about two days before the deadline."

For Jacobson — now juggling casual shifts at Cumberland, an intermediate

care unit and an extended care unit as well as raising five children — the bursary couldn't have come at a better time. "It's tough to go to school, work and raise a family, so it definitely took a lot of the pressure off."

Other recent recipients include Lisa Doran, a laundry worker at West Vancouver Care Centre upgrading to an LPN, and Steve White, a St. Paul's cleaner upgrading to biomedical engineering technologist.

**'The bursary couldn't have come at a better time'**



# Poll says 'Yes' to HEU goals

**H**EU MEMBERS head into 1998 bargaining armed with polling numbers that show clear cut public support for the efforts of front-line caregivers to protect medicare during a time of significant pressures and change.

The results – which emerge from HEU's 1997 public opinion poll, carried out in July by McIntyre and Mustel – also offer important insights into public perceptions of B.C.'s health system and issues related to two-tier care and privatization that will help guide the union's efforts at the bargaining table.

The survey of 428 British Columbians was completed in July and reported to the union's Provincial Executive in mid-August. It has five per cent margin of error, 19 times out of 20.

HEU's pollster Evi Mustel says "the public continues to find arguments concerning health care workers and their contribution to the system highly persuasive." Here are some of the key findings that backstop the HEU's bargaining efforts:

- 98 per cent say we need to preserve and protect our health services;
- 97 per cent agree that to protect health services we need to protect our investment in health workers' skills;
- 91 per cent recognize that health workers are doing their best to keep the system going during tough times;
- 87 per cent agree that health reform shouldn't be carried out on the backs of health care workers.

HEU also polled for opinion on two new issues: parity for the community sector, and the role that health workers should play in making changes to our health system. In a boost for HEU's efforts to achieve parity for all caregivers, 78 per cent of respondents agreed that community sector health workers should be paid the same as their acute and long-term care counterparts. Only 17 per cent disagreed.

And the public also recognizes that front-line caregivers have the skills and expertise to develop better ways to deliver health care services. An overwhelming 94 per cent of respondents said caregivers should have a greater role to develop proposals for change. The result is a slap on the wrist for many health administrators who have tried to ignore existing enhanced con-

sultation provisions. The survey also reflects public awareness that employment security for health workers is necessary to maintain health service levels, a central theme of HEU's 1996 bargaining. Asked if the number of health care workers can be reduced without affecting the level of health care, 82 per cent said "no" – an increase of five per cent since 1996.

Broader public perceptions on our health system show that a large number of British Columbians think B.C.'s health system is deteriorating. The number of people who rate our system as excellent or very good fell to 41 per cent, the lowest combined score in the seven years that HEU has tracked opinion on the question. Consistent with last year, about 42 per cent of respondents said the health system is deteriorating.

On the other hand, the results show a rising sentiment for increased health care spending by government. More than 80 per cent of respondents recognize that federal government funding cuts to health and social programs has had a negative impact on medicare.

And there's a growing desire – 77 per cent support – for increased health spending, a sharp increase from last year's result.

There's good news for health workers

in the polling results on privatization. Despite a concerted effort by the B.C. Medical Association and large multinational corporations for two-tiered care and a larger role for the private sector, public interest in expanding privatization remains unchanged. More than 50 per cent of British Columbians want

the private sector role in health care to stay the same or to be reduced. Only one-third want it to increase.

Support for Victoria's ban on private surgical clinics remains constant in the 50 per cent range, while opposition to the ban approached 40 per cent.

On credibility issues, health care workers are viewed as reliable sources of information, pulling down a favourable rating of 91 per cent. Nursing staff represented by BCNU, HSA and HEU get top marks with a 95 per cent credibility rating, while doctors followed with a 92 per cent score. Health care unions have boosted their ratings considerably since 1995, scoring a 60 per cent rating.

The poll results also support HEU's efforts to reach a cooperative agreement with the B.C. Nurses' Union to bring about cost effective changes in the skills mix in health to allow LPNs to be utilized to their full scope of practice.

**'There's good news for health workers in the polling results on privatization'**



**Here are some of the other highlights from the recent HEU/McIntyre and Mustel poll on public attitudes towards health care.**

**80%** of British Columbians would use a public lab for a test.

**77%** agree prescription drug costs are contributing to the rising cost of health care.

**77%** of British Columbians are aware of HEU. The union scores a favourable impression from more than two-thirds.

**75%** of the public have been a patient or used the services of a hospital, long term care facility or community health service in the last year.

**67%** of the public would oppose privatization if it resulted in workers taking wage cuts.

**49%** would put doctors on salary to make more money available for other services. About 44 per cent want to keep fee for service payments.

**37%** gave Victoria a good to excellent rating in handling health issues. A similar amount graded the NDP's performance as fair.

## PROTECT SERVICES

**98% AGREE**

We need to preserve and protect our health services

## PROTECT HEALTH WORKERS

**97% AGREE**

To protect our health care system we need to protect our investment in the skills of our health care workers

## GREATER ROLE IN CHANGE

**93% AGREE**

Health workers have expertise and knowledge to provide better services. They should be more involved in changes to the system

## DOING OUR BEST

**91% AGREE**

Health workers are doing their best to keep the system going in tough times

## NOT ON OUR BACKS

**87% AGREE**

Health reform shouldn't be carried out on the backs of health care workers

## PARITY

**78% AGREE**

Health workers in community services should be paid the same

## Most members happy with union efforts

A companion opinion survey of HEU members also conducted by McIntyre and Mustel shows that health workers are satisfied with the union's performance, are more positive about health care reform and Victoria's handling of health issues, but have significant concerns relating to workload and other workplace issues.

Just shy of 70 per cent of union members are satisfied with their union's overall performance, while 13 per cent are not. In specific areas, members' satisfaction rating was highest with HEU's handling of health and safety issues, 82 per cent; and bargain-

ing, 75 per cent. Satisfaction was lowest on the union's efforts to solve workload problems and provide training and upgrading opportunities, at 46 and 51 per cent respectively.

Given the low score on workload, it's not surprising that more union members identify workload changes over anything else as the one thing that would most improve working conditions and job satisfaction.

And 76 per cent of members said their workload on the job has increased in the past few years.

Survey results show that 87 per cent of union members are women, while 43 per cent work in direct patient/resident/client care.

It also finds the health workforce older and better educated than it was two years ago. About 85 per cent of union members are 35 years or older.

Only two per cent of members are 24 years or younger.

In terms of education, 60 per cent of union members have some form of post-secondary education, compared to 55 per cent in 1995, while eight out of 10 members want more retraining and skills upgrading opportunities.

With their front-line expertise, health workers are often the government's hardest critics. Since the last membership survey in 1995, their view has changed for the better. Fewer gave the NDP a negative rating (23 per cent versus 36 per cent in 1995).

Those giving the government a good to excellent rating increased by seven points to 35 per cent.

Union members are also less pessimistic about the impact of health reform than they were two years ago. But 40 per cent of union members still

feel that restructuring will deteriorate quality. Like the public poll, they're adamant that adequate community services are not being provided to take up the slack from changes in acute care. And the union's strategy of working with government to implement progressive health reform is endorsed by more than 75 per cent of members.

The membership poll also provides a wealth of information that will be part of the union's 1998 bargaining preparations.

Members' priorities include maintaining employment security, health and safety, workload, retraining, parity for the community and general wage increases. Almost three out of four members said they would be interested in working in the community sector if wage and contract protections were the same.



# Labour

NOTEWORTHY NEWS ABOUT ISSUES AFFECTING WORKING PEOPLE HERE AND ABROAD

## Job-cutting Skeena pact approved in PPWC vote

Despite a capital expenditure program that will cost at least 161 jobs and a concessions clause that may cost even more, members of the Pulp, Paper and Woodworkers' Union voted Oct. 3 to approve an eleventh-hour agreement that will save more than 2,000 jobs at four Skeena Cellulose pulp and paper operations in northwestern B.C.

"There's going to be some hard feelings, no doubt about it," said Rob Grodecki, PPWC Local 4 financial secretary, referring to the various concessions the banks forced on his union's members at the last minute. "Now we're in a much more vulnerable position than we were before."

Crucial to the deal was the provincial government's commitment of \$155 million, including a last-minute \$26 million to compensate for the 7.5 per cent wage reduction and 17.5 per cent benefits reduction for workers.

In an earlier agreement announced Sept. 12, the government, union and banks had agreed to roll back wages by 10 per cent over seven years.

But the government announced the deal before any agreement on benefit reductions had been reached, and the banks protested.

The banks insisted on a contract clause that would permit any job-flexibility concessions negotiated at one of the province's 18 major pulp and paper mills to become part of the Skeena contract. (The PPWC wanted this "me-too clause" to apply only to the Fletcher Challenge mill, where workers are currently on strike.)

With Skeena Cellulose facing a bankruptcy deadline and permanent closure Oct. 3, 62 per cent of the PPWC membership reluctantly voted to endorse the package.

Skeena Cellulose ceased operations June 27, putting hundreds of Local 4 members out of work.



LAFON/MECALM GRAPHIC

*It's labour's victory as the Mike Harris government retreats, but the battle for justice is not over*

## HARRIS BLINKS

FACED with the threat of province-wide walkouts, Mike Harris' government backed down on legislation restricting the right to strike, imposing first agreements on unions and limiting strikes for "important" services.

"We've won a major victory in the right to strike sector – the first major victory against the Harris government," said CUPE president Judy Darcy.

"Clearly the mobilization worked. Through our strike votes and rallies and by demonstrating that we were prepared to stage a province-wide walkout, we forced the government to back down from the worst of its proposals."

Bill 136, affecting 450,000 public sector workers, is part of the Ontario government's plans to amalgamate municipalities and school boards and consolidate and close hospitals. The government introduced amendments Sept. 29 removing the most objectionable elements from the law.

Darcy says that despite this victory,

CUPE remains concerned that Bill 136 skews health care arbitrations in favour of employers.

"We want to send a clear message to the minister that we will not tolerate political interference in settling contracts," said Darcy. "If our worst fears are realized for health care workers, the government will be confronted with the full force of CUPE, its members and the broader public sector."

"We won't let the government pick off the job security and contracting out provisions of health sector contracts without a province-wide fight," said Darcy.

A dispute involving 20,000 health workers may soon go to arbitration. CUPE is watching to see if the government uses Bill 136 to impose final offer selection – a winner-take-all approach – on workers.

"All of our efforts will be directed to achieving a negotiated settlement," said Darcy. "We will not participate in an arbitration process that is rigged against the workers. And we won't allow the government to divide health care workers from the rest of our members."

**'We forced the government to back down'**

## Why code is unfair

Why do B.C. labour laws need a sweeping overhaul? Just ask Lori Harvey, a Nanaimo mental health caregiver.

Harvey and 17 of her HEU colleagues face an uncertain future, as do their clients, because the ministry that funds the group home program where they work has stripped their current employer of the contract. On Nov. 1, a new contractor will be in place. Harvey and the other members could be out of work and their clients forced to adapt to a new set of non-unionized care providers.

Current labour laws provide no protection – called successor rights – for workers in Harvey's situation. New contractors have no obligation

to maintain existing staff, and they can pick and choose who they rehire. For clients, it removes any previous guarantee of quality care.

"We are always at risk of losing members and having our voices silenced," says Harvey. "We're at the mercy of the ministry and employers."

Harvey and her local are mounting a campaign to keep their jobs. And HEU is highlighting their plight in its submission to the government review panel making recommendations on labour law by the end of the year. The review was called after a multi-million dollar campaign by the business community forced the NDP to withdraw important labour law changes in the summer. HEU's sub-

mission calls on the government to provide full successor rights, improve first contract negotiation provisions, create stronger sectoral bargaining structures to make it less difficult for newly unionized workers to obtain decent wages and working conditions, and re-establish the union's right to arbitrarily refer bargaining disputes to arbitration.

HEU has also endorsed the submission of the B.C. Federation of Labour, and will be part of a strong B.C. Fed campaign lobbying for change.



HARVEY

## Canadian union women connect

The 1997 CLC Women's Conference in Ottawa was a time to reconnect with our sisters from across the country and share stories and ideas. The purpose of the conference, which took place in June, was to examine the impact of current economic and social changes on women's lives at work, in our unions and at home.

Delegates were encouraged to make women's issues more relevant both within the union movement and in the general community. The challenge will be to put aside some of our reservations

and work together to find common ground in the community.

One interesting discussion on the impact of low unionization rates in the U.S. revealed how the lack of organized labour leaves communities vulnerable to manipulation by big business in its efforts to make ever-increasing profits.

Another big issue was the feminization of poverty, especially in light of recent optimism surrounding the Canadian economy. Pay equity, childcare, and cutbacks to national programs such as medicare, post-secondary education,

UI and welfare, were all on the agenda.

One highlight of the conference was the march and rally in support of federal public service workers, who have been awarded pay equity but still have not received it.

One of the international speakers at the rally was Lai Ha Cheung, vice chair of the Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions. She told the shocked delegates how the little figurines that McDonald's hands out to North American children are made with child labour in the Orient.

Said delegate Iris Reamsbottom, "Workers must build solidarity among regional, national, and international unions and supportive organizations to exchange ideas, support one another and build coalitions and friendships."

Louise Hutchinson added, "We'll hear more in the future about international issues as the CLC is embarking on a campaign against child labour."

• Report prepared from contributions by the HEU Women's Committee and members in attendance at the convention.



#### OCTOBER 20/21

Bargaining preparation workshop, Maritime Labour Centre, Vancouver.

#### OCTOBER 27/28

Bargaining preparation workshop, Coast Harbourside, Victoria.

#### OCTOBER 29/30

Bargaining preparation workshop, Capri Hotel, Kelowna.

#### NOVEMBER 6/7

Bargaining preparation workshop, Best Western, Chilliwack.

#### NOVEMBER 11

Remembrance Day, all HEU offices closed.

#### NOVEMBER 17/18

Bargaining preparation workshop, Prestige Lake Resort, Nelson.

#### DECEMBER 3-5

B.C. Federation of Labour Convention, Vancouver.

#### DECEMBER 6

National day of remembrance for women murdered at Montreal's L'École Polytechnique.

## UBC members display artistic talent

by Daniel Gawthrop

**A**S HEU members, medical stenographer Penny Lim and technician Peter Stancer share the same workplace at UBC Hospital's department of anaesthesia. But this summer, the two shared a different part of their lives with the public.

Lim, a printmaker who specializes in stone lithography, and Stancer, a photographer, were featured artists at the Moat Gallery's August exhibit at Van-

couver's Central Public Library. "I'd been down there in a collage exhibit, and when I saw how good the space was I was inspired to book it," says Lim, a graduate of Vancouver's Emily Carr Academy of Art and Design.

Lim, who works part-time at UBC Hospital, spent a year in China studying Chinese-style wood-block printing.

Here in Canada she has participated

in several solo and juried group exhibits and teaches drawing through the Vancouver School Board's Continuing Education Program.

"I'm very fond of still life and landscapes," she says, quoting Swiss artist and philosopher Paul Klee's method, "A line going for a walk."

Stancer, who studied graphic arts and photography at Toronto's Central Technical Art School and fine arts at UBC, has had a camera for most of his life.

"My interest in photography is in composition, light and subject matter," he says. "We see a lot of things in passing that when you stop and look at them are really fascinating. I think that film is a great medium for expressing this."

Stancer, who works full-time at UBC Hospital, is occasionally hired by HEU members to do wedding portraits. He's also done fashion shoots.

"I find working full-time in health care doesn't leave a lot of time for other things, so I was glad to have the opportunity to exhibit my work at the library," says Stancer, who's currently exploring new exhibit ideas and commercial ventures.

**'This summer, the two shared a different part of their lives'**



### HEALTH CARE ON WORKING TV



#### Health care and global issues highlighted in November on WTV

For special programming in November around the APEC conference, check the Vancouver District and Labour Council web site: [www.vcn.bc.ca/vdlc](http://www.vcn.bc.ca/vdlc) or call 253-6222

or 1-800-562-1622.

Working TV is now weekly. First showings are on Friday at 7:30 p.m. and repeated on Monday at 1:30 p.m. and Thursday at 4:00 p.m. on Rogers Community 4 network for Lower Mainland viewers.

For Campbell River, it's seen Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. and Monday at 8 p.m. on CRTV 10.

In Revelstoke it's Wednesday at 9 a.m. and Thursday at 11 a.m.



#### TWO ARTISTS

*Dog Days of Summer*, top, was one of several colour photos by Peter Stancer exhibited at Vancouver Public Library's Moat Gallery this summer along with the lithographs by Penny Lim. Lim's *Tale of Three* is pictured left.

## Coffee break



All stories guaranteed factual. Sources this issue: *The National Times*, *Vancouver Sun*, *UNA News Bulletin*

### Hippocrates forever

Things are so tough in two-tiered America that even the doctors are compelled to unionize.

In New York City, where no one is exempt from the accountant's scalpel, administrators have been "putting the squeeze" on doctors to increase productivity.

In response, a group of physicians started a group in the spring of 1996 called the United Salaried Physicians and Dentists. Based in New York City, the organization now claims 500 members.

The Committee of Interns and Residents is a 40-year-old New York union whose members work in public and private hospitals and other health facilities. With 10,000 members in New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Washington, D.C., Ohio, Florida and

### How CEOs bargain for their pay

"We demand a 40% pay raise - no strings attached!"



"Gee ... Well ... O.K."

California, CIR is the world's largest union of employed physicians.

In 1996, the CIR grew by 50 per cent. "Doctors' burgeoning interest in unions," writes Annette Fuentes for *In These*

*Times*, "can be attributed in part to the way managed-care health delivery [is] turning doctors into employees at an ever increasing rate."

### The absent-minded physician

The following bloopers were taken from actual medical records as dictated by physicians, courtesy of Dr. Fiorenza C. Albert-Howard:

- patient has chest pain if she lies on her left side for over a year
- on the second day the knee was better and on the third day it had completely disappeared
- patient was released to outpatient department without dressing
- discharge status: alive but without permission
- patient refused an autopsy
- patient's past medical history has been remarkably

insignificant with only a 40-pound weight gain in the past three days

- she slipped on the ice and apparently her legs went in separate directions in early December
- when she fainted, her eyes rolled around the room

### Nursing terminology for lay people

ANTIBODY: against everyone  
ARTERY: the study of fine paintings  
BACTERIA: back door to a cafeteria  
CARDIOLOGY: advanced study of poker-playing  
DILATE: to live longer  
INPATIENT: tired of waiting  
OUTPATIENT: a person who has fainted  
PARALYZE: two far-fetched stories  
RECOVERY ROOM: place to upholster furniture  
SURGERY: a reason to get an uninterruptable power supply



# HEU people

## Willman first to retire from Columbus

HEU members at Vancouver's Columbus Residence marked their first retirement party with the departure in May of care aide **Elina Willman**. "Elina's presence was a great asset to Columbus," says secretary-treasurer Sharon Aspinall. Staff and residents wish her "peace, happiness and good health" in retirement.

## Care aide Toh bid a fond farewell

Richmond Hospital care aide **Margaret Toh** retired in April after 22 years of service. Margaret will be remembered as a caring nurse's aide. Staff will especially miss the excellent Chinese food lunches she prepared for them!

Margaret plans to travel to Malaysia to see family and friends, as well as seeing other parts of the world.

## Activist Remple retires

Kaslo Victorian Hospital cook **Sadie Remple** retired in August after more than 18 years of faithful service.

Sadie will be remembered as a good union member who held various local executive

positions over the years. She plans to visit family, travel, and go fishing with her husband Jim.

## Australia in Paulson's retirement plans

100 Mile & District housekeeper and former chair **Mary Paulson** retired in June after



PAULSON

24 years as an HEU member. Mary worked at Burnaby General as a physio aide from 1973 until 1980, when she joined the staff at 100 Mile House as a cook. Two years later she transferred

to housekeeping where she remained until her retirement.

Mary and her husband Robin are planning a trip to Australia.

## Tribute paid to an admired supervisor

On July 30, members of the Burnaby local celebrated the life of dear friend and colleague **Jo-Ann Peggy Wallace**, who died peacefully in her sleep on July 24.

Jo-Ann began at Burnaby Hospital in 1969 as an admitting clerk and currently held the position of admitting supervisor.

Throughout her career she was a strong union supporter and local activist.

Secretary-treasurer Don Allen noted that members will always appreciate her effort to establish a supervisor's handbook to assist HEU supervisors' relationships with workers.

## VGH fire and security officer, Arsenault, dies at 35

A memorial service was held on Aug. 14 for VGH fire and security officer **W. James Arsenault**, who passed away at home on Aug. 7 at the age of 35.

James is survived by his wife and son, both parents and several relatives on the West Coast, in Nova Scotia and in Germany.

James' family has asked that donations be made to the Canadian Arthritis Foundation or to the Canadian Diabetes Association.

## Change in finance

**Norbert Bulling** is retiring after six years at HEU as controller in HEU's finance department.

**Nancy Eng** will fill the vacancy and **Kim Lim** has been hired to replace Eng.

Bulling was educated in Zimbabwe and South Africa, and lived in Germany and

Montreal before coming to British Columbia. He worked as a financial officer in various fields, including the B.C. Transplant Society and the B.C. Cancer Agency, before coming to HEU.

Bulling valued his working relationship with HEU's financial secretary, **Mary LaPlante**.

"She always had trust and confidence in me, and I really appreciated that," said Bulling.

He and his wife Margaret will probably go to Johannesburg for a visit, but will not do a lot of travelling. "We live in the loveliest place on earth," he said. "Why would I want to leave?"

Bulling, a passionate reader,

plans to do some volunteer work in the literacy field.

After graduating from the University of British Columbia, **Nancy Eng**

worked as a certified accountant for Smythe Ratcliffe in Vancouver for several years.

She started working at HEU in February 1995 as an accountant. Eng is expecting her first child in January.

Kim Lim takes over Eng's position as accountant. She comes to HEU from Goodmark Apparel Inc., a Vancouver clothing company, where she was vice president of finance. Before that Lim was controller at Yellow Cab. HEU welcomes Lim to the fold.



BULLING

## Promotion

**Karen Dean** is the new coordinator of servicing and staff development. She has been at HEU since 1987, most recently as director, education and occupational health and safety.

Dean worked for the Tenants' Rights Action Centre

and the Canadian Farm Workers' Union before she started at HEU. At TRAC she trained people in tenants' advocacy.

As a paralegal at CFWU she set up a literacy program, did WCB appeals, and fought discriminatory unemployment insurance provisions against farmworkers.

## TALK TO US ... TOLL FREE!

You can call any HEU office toll free to deal with a problem or to get information. It's fast, it's easy, and it's free.

### PROVINCIAL OFFICE

Vancouver site  
1-800-663-5813

### PROVINCIAL OFFICE

Abbotsford site  
1-800-404-2020

### VANCOUVER ISLAND OFFICE

Victoria  
1-800-742-8001

### NORTHERN OFFICE

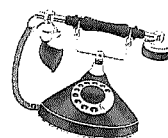
Prince George  
1-800-663-6539

### OKANAGAN OFFICE

Kelowna  
1-800-219-9699

### KOOTENAY OFFICE

Nelson  
1-800-437-9877



## HEU LESBIANS & GAYS

*for support:* afraid of being identified?, feeling isolated?, being harassed?, want to know your rights?

*for information:* same sex benefits, fighting harassment, combatting homophobia, fighting discrimination

739-1514 (Lower Mainland)  
1-800-663-5813, loc. 514

Confidential Service of HEU Lesbian & Gay Caucus



## PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

We're working hard to make our union better for HEU members with disabilities. We'd like to hear from you. If you are on WCB or LTD, or if you're invisibly/visibly disabled in the workplace, let us know how the union can better meet your needs.

### TALK TO US

604.530.9493

LEAVE A MESSAGE AND WE'LL GET BACK TO YOU. ALL INFORMATION IS CONFIDENTIAL.

HEU  
People with  
Disabilities  
Caucus



## ON VIDEO FROM HEU

3 of HEU's 1997 distinguished summer school speakers were captured on video and are available to HEU members for loan.

**NEIL BROOKS**, a tax expert from Osgoode Law School in Ontario, addresses the fact that large corporations pay next to nothing in taxes.

**LIBBY DAVIES**, new member of parliament and former HEU staff person, talks about her role in Ottawa as the NDP critic on children, post

secondary education and social policy. **MAUDE BARLOW**, director of the Council for Canadians, concentrates on the Multilateral Agreement on Investments (MAI) and the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), how governments are losing ground to multinational corporations, and why this is so dangerous. Each video lasts exactly 27 minutes, 30 seconds.

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## Nurses get ready

Delegates to the nursing team conference in September learned how to take their stories to the people who make health care decisions.

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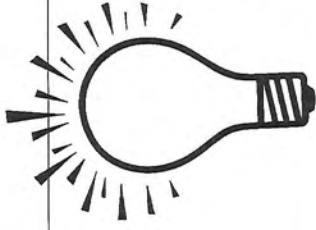
## Ready, set, go

The Wage Policy Conference set the stage for 1998 bargaining. Over 370 delegates voted on the resolutions and elected the bargaining committee.

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## Poll shows strong support

Crucial to next year's round of bargaining, the HEU-commissioned McIntyre and Mustel poll shows backing for the union's stance on important issues.



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## Artistic duo

Two visual artists from the same local exhibit at Vancouver Public Library's Moat Gallery.

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