



**CAMPBELL
LIES**

On April 23, health workers blocked the entrance to the meeting room where the Liberals' massive cuts to health care were about to be announced.



MIKE OLD PHOTO

Solidarity looks just like this

Almost every day Gordon Campbell's "new era" brings another attack against working people. But rather than retreating in defeat, British Columbians are finding allies, forming coalitions and fighting back.

AFTER MONTHS OF SPECULATION, the Liberals' axe has finally fallen on health care in British Columbia. The day after Campbell held one of his "open cabinet" meetings, the head honchos of all the newly constituted health authorities gathered in the heart of corporate Vancouver and made their pronouncements about closures and job losses. Back in the regions, some employers were threatening employees, telling them to not speak out in public.

It's at a time like this that solidarity is very important. At the Wall Centre on April 23, a group of health care workers tried to break the corporate barrier and enter the room where for almost five hours the health authority bosses held forth.

In the following month, as hospitals closed in towns like Kimberley and Summerland, communities protested by holding rallies, marches or candlelight vigils. In Vancouver, HEU members from around the province staged an overnight sit-down at Women's and Children's Hospital in solidarity with the sisters and brothers who would be losing their jobs. And against the selling off of their jobs to private for-profit contractors. Then they joined the National Save Medicare Day rally where a seniors' theatre group took on the roles of the saviours of Medicare.

And in Revelstoke, a whole town came to the defense of seniors who were given 30 days to find "somewhere else" to live. They won a reprieve that they intend to make permanent.

As the Labour Code, Employment Standards and workers' safety standards are gutted by this dictatorial government, British Columbians are going to find more power in solidarity, not less.

On May 25, after an overnight sit-in at Children's and Women's Hospital, these HEU members from around B.C. joined the National Save Medicare Day rally in downtown Vancouver.

MARGI BLAMEY PHOTO



news



Cuts to long-term care beds break Liberal promise • 4

Caught red-handed: talking blacklist • 5

Seniors don doctors' threads to defend Medicare • 6

Unions taking Libs to court • 7

B.C. workers set back 100 years by Liberals • 11

Anti-choicer loses contract at abortion-performing hospital

Hospital admits mistake, says patient and worker safety paramount

HEU and pro-choice activists were claiming victory after the cancellation of a housekeeping contract at Children's and Women's Hospital with a company owned by a notorious anti-abortion kingpin.

A & A Service Company, co-owned by Cecilia von Dehn, well-known anti-choice crusader, won the contract to clean the new ambulatory care centre at Women's and Children's. She is notorious for her regular protests outside abortion clinics, even going so far as to buy a house next door to the Everywoman's Clinic in Vancouver.

"This is a chilling example of how in its rush to dismantle and sell off our health care system, this government is putting at risk the health and safety of patients and health care workers who provide abortion services," said HEU secretary-business

manager Chris Allnutt. "Clearly, the Campbell Liberals and their health authorities don't know what they're doing," says Allnutt. "Two weeks ago, we witnessed evidence of collusion and a conspiracy by private contractors to blacklist union members in the privatization tendering process."

"Now, in their efforts to contain the damage from that scandal, health bosses have blindly staggered into yet another disaster."

Health Services Minister Colin

This government is putting at risk the health and safety of patients

Hansen said he's concerned. "There could have been more diligence."

But Allnutt says the public would be shocked to learn that the government's own health employer organization is advising its members to not too closely scrutinize potential private contractors' employees in order to avoid health union challenges to contracting out.

"This is the obvious result of that instruction," Allnutt says.

And red-faced hospital officials

conceded they did not know that von Dehn was co-owner of A & A.

The hospital has reviewed the contract and terminated it with 90 days notice. In the meantime, extra security to monitor the cleaning staff has been added.

In addition to a moratorium, HEU called for an independent investigation into the impacts of privatization and contracting out in health care. An April 9 - 16 McIntyre and Mustel/HEU poll released late last month indicated that 72 per cent of British Columbians would support such a call.



Three days before news broke of the awarding of a contract at Children's and Women's Hospital to a notorious anti-choice crusader, 15 HEU women health workers staged a sit-in at the facility, calling for a moratorium on contracting out health services and an investigation of privatization of patient care.



Some HEU members and staff spent weeks preparing a float for the march - a float that represented an auction where public services were being sold off to the highest bidder.

Stop cuts, say thousands

More than 40,000 joined a march and rally in Vancouver on May 25 to protest against the Liberal policies.

The diversity of the crowd reflected the reality of how many in B.C. have been affected by Gordon Campbell's draconian measures.

"Since he became premier, seniors, women, children, teachers, health care providers, students and workers have all felt the blow of his axe," says HEU secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt. "This steamroller just has to be stopped. It can't go on like this."

There were other rallies across B.C., but many travelled to Vancouver.

Jim Sinclair, president of the B.C. Federation of Labour, which organized the rally, said people have to have a place to voice their dissent.



Fighting back works

On April 22, at their farcical “open cabinet” meetings, Campbell’s Liberal government laid the groundwork for the next day’s announcements by the health authority head honchos.

That was when British Columbians learned that instead of 5,000 new long-term care beds – one of the “new era” promises – many senior citizens would be cold-heartedly turfed out of their residences.

The government assured British Columbians that no one would be forced out of their residence before there was somewhere else to go. Consultation with family and the community was also promised. But it quickly became evident that once again the government's word could not be trusted.

Within hours after the health authorities' press conference in Vancouver, 19 residents of Moberly Manor in Revelstoke and their families found out that within 30 days their home would be closed. Think of that, with no consultation, no prior indication even, these elderly residents learned that they had to leave home.

Once again the government's word could not be trusted

voice.mail

Blacklisted or what?

When the staff of Moberly Park Manor were given their layoff notices they were told there would not be a place for them at Queen Victoria Hospital except for the interim time to get Moberly residents settled. We are a different bargaining group so we all realize we cannot bump QVH staff out of their jobs – nor do we want to.

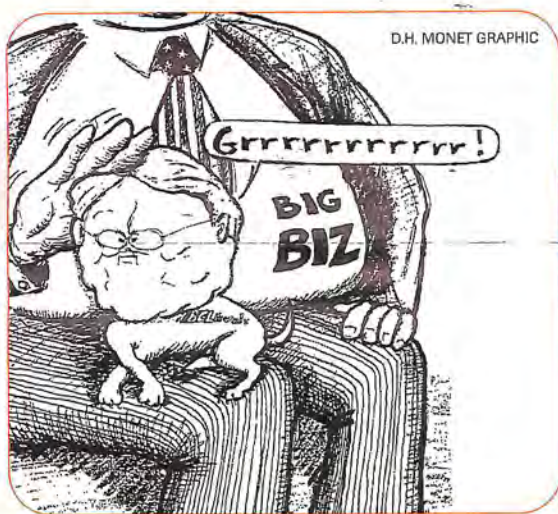
We are a very qualified group of health care professionals and we feel we have as much right to apply as anyone else to work at QVH if they need new staff.

We realize that by standing up to the Interior Health Authority for the rights of our residents, we have put our future jobs in jeopardy, but everyone must follow their own moral code.

Then we hear on TV that the government is cutting deals with companies that want to blacklist anyone who is an HEU member. Union busting is one thing, but to punish someone because they have ever belonged to a union is malicious.

To assist with our staff layoff, the Interior Health Authority committed to supply career counseling for the staff. While we were trying to find out the who, when and where of this, staff members received a memo with the following quote from Mr. Mike Jackson, Human Resources, Salmon Arm, "The session is for employees who have lost regular employment and have no option for re-employment."

We cannot believe the ignorance of this statement. It shows the continuing total lack of respect for quality employees who



work at Moberly. On one hand they give career counseling for us as part of layoff, but on the other hand they have (in their great wisdom) deemed us unemployable.

Staff have basically run the day-to-day operations of Moberly Manor since the health authorities took over four years ago.

"Kick you when you're down" must be the new motto. I'm disgusted.

MARLA MANSON

Moberly Park Manor Local

**I don't deserve
this, Mr. Campbell**

This week, according to the Liberal agenda, a devalued, overpaid hospital cleaner who takes no health risks and is therefore unworthy of earning a decent wage, was poked by a needle, drawing blood.

Upon careful removal and following strict procedure of changing a sharps container, I was pricked by a hidden but protruding needle, which was discarded in a careless way.

This was done with a lack of respect that bordered on the obscene. Anyone who works with the elderly in health care knows such a traumatic move can be deadly for the frail elderly.

HEU members at Moberly Manor decided to fight back. Rather than just accepting this devastating edict from on high, the community, the families and the Moberly staff organized to stop the government's plans in its tracks.

Four hundred people rallied on the Saturday following the health authorities' pronouncements. Civil disobedience was the only option some saw to protect the elderly residents.

The call to physically bar the management from moving residents came after a failed effort to move a resident against her wishes. The media was alerted through the entire process. The government's cruelty and stupidity was exposed.

The government was forced to back down. The first closure of a long-term care facility in B.C. was stopped. The layoff notices to HEU members were revoked. And the Interior Health Authority agreed to do what it should have done in the first place – consult over the coming months about the best way to provide seniors care in Revelstoke.

The victory at Moberly Manor sends us a clear message: fighting back works.

alarmed by the Campbell government's attacks on our health care system. These picket lines were honoured by many health care union members.

I found myself in the distinctly unpleasant situation of having to cross the picket line at Vancouver General Hospital as I work in the ER, which is generally recognized as a genuinely essential service.

However, even though I had no choice but to report to work, this was the first time I have found myself at work during a picketing situation, and I did not like it one little bit. It's particularly difficult continuing to receive pay from the employer when others who do not cross the line are being deprived of income and possibly exposing themselves to reprisals from hospital administration.

As a result, I have decided to donate the pay I received during the three hours the picket line was up. I am enclosing a cheque for \$97.26 payable to HEU. Please use it as a contribution to your strike fund, or in financing your campaign to preserve Medicare. I will consider it money well spent.

I only wish I had been able to stay out on the line with those other people from the community who were present that day.

WILL OFFLEY
BCNU VGH Steward

Gordon Campbell and Colin Hansen are comparing our duties and health risks to those of hotel workers. They are deliberately devaluing housekeeping's role as only "support services in need of cutbacks."

They don't have their facts straight. Now, while I and thousands of others face imminent wage rollbacks, privatization and layoffs by Bill 29's "chosen" contract breaking, I patiently await blood test results (HIV, hepatitis, etc.). I wonder what my future holds and will I be looked after efficiently?

Was doing my underrated
job really worth this?

BARB NELSON
Peace Arch Local

In solidarity

- This letter was addressed to HEU president Fred Muzin.

As you are probably aware, On Monday, May 6, picket lines were set up at various hospitals in the Lower Mainland by concerned citizens who are





COFFEE BREAK

All stories guaranteed factual.
Sources this issue: HEU, Internet

Where are you, Señor Blair?

Nelson MLA Blair Suffredine is making quite a name for himself. Back in January, when the government announced they were going to cut thousands of public service jobs, he made himself scarce. "Where's Blair?" stickers popped up everywhere around Nelson.

You'd think he would have learned his lesson, but apparently not.

After April 23 – a critical moment when the government announced deep health care cuts – Suffredine was again nowhere to be seen. His constituents soon learned he was taking it easy down Mexico way. So, HEU produced a Spanish version of the sticker: "Blair, ¿dónde estás?"

constituents soon learned he was taking it easy down Mexico way. So, HEU produced a Spanish version of the sticker: "Blair, ¿dónde estás?"

Om-m-m

I think I have found inner peace. My therapist told me a way to achieve inner contentment was to finish things I had started. Today I finished two bags of potato chips, a lemon pie and a small box of chocolates.

I feel better already.

What will be will be

It's a good rule to never try and predict the future. Here are a few who tried:

"I think there is a world market for maybe five computers." – Thomas Watson, chairman of IBM, 1943

"This 'telephone' has too many shortcomings to be seriously considered as a means of communication. The device is inherently of no value to us." – Western Union memo, 1876

"We don't like their sound, and guitar music is on the way out." – Decca Recording Co., rejecting the Beatles, 1962

"Drill for oil? You mean drill into the ground to try and find oil? You're crazy." – Drillers who Edwin L. Drake tried to enlist for his project to drill for oil in 1859.

Learn from Alberta, says expert

The Campbell Liberals have borrowed a page out of Ralph Klein's play book with their plans to throw care for seniors into upheaval by substituting assisted living in place of long-term care beds.

And based on the results in Alberta, B.C. seniors and their families should be deeply concerned about what's in store, says Edmonton-based consumer advocate Wendy Armstrong.

Hired by HEU to provide an analysis of the Klein approach, Armstrong

warns that the move to substitute assisted living in Alberta has "resulted in significant offloading of the burden of care and costs to individual recipients and their families."

She also says that the massive reduction of almost 8,000 long-term care beds in Alberta meant that "desperate families – not just the rich – were forced to pay \$2,000 to \$5,000 a month for private care because there was no alternative."



ARMSTRONG

• Want the full expose on the failures of assisted living in Alberta? HEU has a video of Armstrong's presentation to a recent Vancouver conference on seniors care. For a copy, contact HEU's communications department.

Liberals mistreating seniors

That the Liberals' commitment to build 5,000 new not-for-profit long-term care beds had become just another broken election promise became painfully obvious when B.C. health authorities presented their three-year plans in late April. Not long after the election they dropped the reference to "not-for-profit" and by fall 2001 were talking about 1,500 long-term care beds and 3,500 "assisted living" units.

Now the health authorities' "new design" includes not only no new long-term care beds – with the sole exception of a facility in Vanderhoof – the plan is to actually reduce the number of long-term care beds by 3,111 over the next three years.

And the 3,800 new assisted living units will not be backed up with much of a change in the level of home nursing and home support services available in the province – presumably the "assistance" component of assisted living.

HEU researcher Marcy Cohen says, "There are serious implications not only for frail seniors and their families but for anyone trying to access health care services in this province. A short-

fall in long-term care beds will intensify the pressure on every other part of the health care."

In 1999 the Ministry of Health foresaw a need for almost 4,500 additional long-term care beds by 2001/2002 to meet the needs of a growing and aging population. Little construction has led to a shortage of almost 5,000 long-term care beds, and predictions of a marked increase in the senior population have proven true.

Now the government has introduced new rules to qualify for ever-more-limited beds. Only those with "complex" care needs will be eligible for residential care. Others can go into assisted living, stay home, or go into private residential care homes, they say.

Health care workers know that assisted living is a positive model for seniors – but only for those with limited care needs. It is not an effective substitute for residential long-term care. And assisted living is unaffordable for many.

The push will be in the direction of private care – both in residential long-term care and assisted living – when the province's needs to care and house seniors are not met by the public system.

Assisted living is unaffordable for many

<<newsbites>>

Safety agency safe – for now

At its board meeting on April 9, the government representative to the Occupational Health and Safety Agency announced there were no current plans to cut the agency's funding or subject it to the government's downsizing core review process.

The agency's March newsletter states that since its inception it has implemented or advised on 108 different projects across the province – addressing a broad scope of occupational health and safety concerns.

"The creation of this important agency was a proud moment in HEU's

history," says HEU secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt. "I am happy to see that it is not charted for cuts, at least not yet. I hope this government realizes what a valuable tool it is for workers and management alike."

Since September 2001, 148 members of the HEU/OH&S Joint Committee have received OHSAH training.

1952 Robeson concert commemorated

Fifty years ago the great American singer, actor and political activist Paul Robeson was invited to sing at the 1952 Mine Mill Conference in Vancouver. When his government



The Solidarity Notes Labour Choir from Vancouver joined in the Peace Arch celebration.

would not allow him to leave his country, Robeson stood on the back of a flatbed truck and sang songs of defiance and solidarity to 40,000 people at Peace Arch Park, which straddles the U.S./Canadian border.

On Saturday, May 18 about 2,000 Canadians and Americans remembered that concert at the very same park – remembered with music and the spoken word.

Tapes reveal plans to freeze out HEU health care workers

Unions react quickly, file complaint with LRB

The Hospital Employees' Union has joined other B.C. health unions in filing an unfair labour practices complaint against the provincial government, health authorities and the corporations implicated in recorded conversations that exposed plans for deep wage cuts, mass firings of health care workers and a conspiracy to exclude HEU members from contracted out health jobs.

The B.C. Federation of Labour shocked British Columbians on May 3 with revelations contained in recorded telephone conversations between B.C. Government and Services Employees' Union staff and officials representing corporations bidding on contracts for hospital support services.

A regional boss of multinational corporation Sodexho Inc. and a rep of

an unnamed corporation attempted to cut deals with BCGEU, deals that included blacklisting HEU members. BCGEU handed the tapes over to the B.C. Fed, who then made them public.

"It appears the Campbell Liberals have led health authorities and multinational corporations to believe they have a green light to blacklist thousands of front-line health care workers



Supported by her colleagues, Tilbury laundry worker Lillian Chiu, at right, talks to media about the seamier side of the Campbell Liberals' health care privatization agenda - blacklisting HEU members.

and turn our hospitals into low-wage ghettos," says HEU secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt.

In light of such damning evidence, the unions immediately appealed to Premier Gordon Campbell to cancel all ongoing and recently completed tenders for privatized support services in public health care facilities.

Then the unions asked the Labour Relations Board to put the brakes on health privatization schemes pending a hearing into their complaint during which they intend to subpoena witnesses from corporations like Sodexho and top executives from B.C.'s health authorities.

"There appears to us to be a foul conspiracy between multinational corporations, health authorities and our government to fire and freeze out long-term, experienced health care workers, most of whom are women," said BCGEU president George Heyman. "Their overriding goal is corporate profit. Our goal is quality patient care and fair treatment for workers. There will be no labour peace in B.C. while workers are threatened with removal of their basic rights."

"It's also clear from the tapes that the tendering process by which health authorities are carrying out Victoria's privatization agenda may have been seriously compromised," Allnutt added and called on the Auditor General to investigate. The most disturbing evidence comes from a taped May 1 conversation involving Spencer Green, the regional boss for French multinational Sodexho. Green claims that:

- top Sodexho officials had lunch May 1 with a health care CEO;
- a Children's and Women's Hospital executive with responsibility for the tendering process for janitorial services is a "personal friend" of Green's; and
- Sodexho and hospital officials would use "pilot projects" to gain an inside track to expand into hospital-wide contracts without first going through another tender.

Seniors organize to just say 'no'

Seniors and Medicare advocates are advising long-term care residents and their families to take the provincial government at its word and reject individual care plans that involve moves to an inappropriate or temporary care setting.

The Seniors' Network BC and the B.C. Health Coalition called for a moratorium on the closure of long-term care facilities pending a full public consultation on the Campbell government's strategy for seniors' care.

"This government has failed to con-

vince us that their plans for seniors' care will be anything but disastrous," says Seniors' Network BC's Joyce Jones. "But the long-term care minister Katherine Whittred said that no resident will be moved without their family's consent."

"In the face of looming facility closures and ill-defined plans for alternative care, residents and their families may have no choice but to block these moves," adds Jones.

The Network's Ben Swankey says the plan to cut costs by replacing

long-term care beds with assisted living arrangements is more bad news for seniors already hit with increased MSP and Pharmacare costs.

"Seniors fought hard for public health care and supported it all their working lives," says Swankey. "Now this government wants to make us pay more to receive less health care."

"I don't know who this government consulted when it dreamed up this seniors' care scheme," he says. "But it sure wasn't seniors. This government could benefit from our perspective."

At a special booth, people told their stories of this man who was revered in so many countries. He was a man of gigantic size and principle, and he paid dearly for his beliefs. But he inspired millions and today he is still remembered with great affection.

Labour and gospel choirs, actors, singers and trade unionists were among those raising their voices to celebrate Robeson's commitment to social justice.

Meeting casts doubt on Campbell's political savvy

Gordon Campbell was on the defensive after an HEU investigation shed

light on implications of a meeting between the premier and a certain Richard L. Scott in New York City in early February.

Scott is the disgraced former CEO for the giant American hospital corporation Columbia/HCA and has been at the heart of a sweeping U.S. government investigation since 1997 focusing on fraudulent company practices for bilking various government programs. While only partially complete it has already resulted in the largest fraud settlement in U.S. history, US \$840 million plus US \$39 million in interest.

The revelations cast significant doubts upon Campbell's political

acumen. But they also raise serious questions about what's in store for B.C.'s public health care system.

Campbell sent an appreciative follow-up letter saying Scott's track record provides "an invaluable resource for government leaders, like myself, who see the need to reform and rebuild health care." Then he invited Scott to visit B.C. to meet with his government. Campbell withdrew the offer to Scott when questions were raised in his inner circle after HEU submitted a Freedom of Information request later in February.

Meanwhile, Scott may still face the prospect of criminal charges.

Government backs down from impossible demand

Negotiations between the Victoria Association for Community Living and its HEU caregivers were temporarily suspended when a crisis developed around the Liberal government's insistence that VACL had to trim \$600,000 from their budget or else be shut down.

Six hundred thousand dollars was the amount the government claimed to be VACL's portion of the Ministry of Child and Family Development's deficit. The agency said we have no

continued on page 6

Abbotsford private hospital could be more costly – Parks

HEU is saying build it public, build it now

A privately owned and financed hospital for Abbotsford could be a much more costly alternative than a traditional publicly owned and financed facility, forensic accountant Ron Parks concluded in his review of a controversial \$250,000 government health care privatization study.

Commissioned by HEU, Parks' review also warned that the privatization study prepared for Victoria by consulting firm PricewaterhouseCoopers relies on "suspect data," is inconclusive and "should not be used as the basis for a definitive govern-

ment decision" on how to proceed with the project to replace Abbotsford's aging MSA hospital.

"If Victoria wants to pursue a private-public partnership (P3) policy for health care or public infrastructure projects," says Parks, "it definitely has a lot more homework to do."

HEU is urging the Campbell Liberals to heed Parks' findings and move quickly to meet the health care needs of Fraser Valley residents. "Our message to the Premier is very clear," says union spokesperson Chris Allnutt. "The hospital should be built public, and it should be built now."

In his review of the financial comparisons between a P3 private hospital and a traditional publicly financed and owned facility, Parks confirmed the small costs savings projected by PWC (about \$2.6 million dollars on a \$300 million plus project – less than one per cent over 30 years). But, said



On May 31 HEU, BCGEU and CUPE B.C. organized a rally in downtown Vancouver outside the hotel where 200 corporate privateers attended a pro-P3 conference organized with the support of the Chretien and Campbell governments.

Parks, that may be the very best possible outcome. He noted an array of other costs that haven't been factored into pricing the private option, and was clear that even minor changes in the many variables in the financial modeling could lead to a more costly project than a traditional public one.

Concerned about the veil of secrecy surrounding the seven-month PWC report, HEU hired the highly respected Parks and his Calgary-based colleague Derek Malcolm in early April to review the multinational consultant's study, and to provide independent and unbiased analysis.

U.K. expert says P3s poor value

A British medical expert says private-public partnerships (P3s) are "poor value for money" that compromises the quality of care.

Speaking before a big crowd at a May 29 public meeting organized by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, Dr. Matthew Dunnigan warned that privatization of public services is the number one issue in the U.K. that may seal the electoral fate Labour PM Tony Blair.

The success of private corporations in winning government approval of P3 hospitals relies not on sound research, but on "spin, propaganda and distortion of the facts," said Dunnigan.

He recounted research that shows P3 hospitals have resulted in shocking bed reductions of up to 35 per cent accompanied by equally high cuts in nursing staff.

Another element in the U.K. P3 model is privatization of support services to consortiums that own the private hospitals.

He was also critical of government reliance on consultants like PricewaterhouseCoopers. Theirs is not an independent role he said.

May 15 – a call to care

Communities across B.C. joined the call to save Canada's universal health care system on May 15, National Medicare Day.

The theme of the day – A Call to Care: Patients not Profits – reflected a growing awareness that the spread of for-profit health care threatens patients and will destroy Medicare.

In Vancouver, 100 people gathered for a public meeting at the Seniors' Centre before joining others at Cathedral Park next door to listen to

speakers at a Medicare rally and enjoy some seniors' street theatre.

In Victoria they wrapped up the legislature with a red "Save Medicare" ribbon. In Nelson, people walked to Blair Suffredine's office after a noon-hour rally, then held a Town Hall meeting to support Kootenay Lake Regional Hospital. In Castlegar, participants in yet another Town Hall meeting discussed health care and the closure of the town's hospital.



MIKE OLD PHOTO

<<newsbites>>

continued from page 5

deficit, we've always balanced our own budget. No matter, meet this demand, or you're out of the picture, they were told.

But now the government has changed its tune. So for the 125 HEU members, it's back to the negotiating table.

VACL was formed 47 years ago by a group of families to help support people with special needs and keep them out of institutions.

Its 500 disabled clients live in 10 houses or are part of six day programs. They benefit from programs like parents' support, supported

employment, supported independent living and supported apartment living. HEU's certification at VACL dates from the 1970s. This has meant stability for the clients, workers and the employer.

HEU members occupy northern newspaper office

On May 16, several health care workers attending an HEU workshop in Prince George wanted to submit a letter to the editor of the *Prince George Citizen*.

The previous day the Active Voice Coalition had participated in a



The *Prince George Citizen* was the scene of HEU sit-in on May 16.

National Save Medicare Day rally by wrapping the Prince George Regional Hospital in a symbolic red ribbon. In a report about the event, the newspaper printed a disparaging comment made by MLA Pat Bell.

The HEU members wrote a letter to the editor about the MLA's remarks and went to the *Citizen* office to per-

sonally deliver it. When they were told the editor was unavailable, they staged a sit-in for one hour. Many songs later, a reporter took the letter to be printed at a later date.

Candlelight vigil for Summerland Hospital

To protest the Liberal government's closure of the 101-year-old Summerland Hospital, area residents and health care workers staged a candlelight vigil and then hunkered down for a "sleep-over" in front of the hospital.

They stayed until the next afternoon when the facility was officially closed.

Bill 29's not legal

HEU and other health care unions launch a wave of legal suits against Liberal government

As part of the fight to protect health care services for British Columbians and jobs for health workers, health care unions launched a series of court challenges to Gordon Campbell's government's Bill 29.

The unions say the contract-breaking bill violates the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and is unconstitutional. They want B.C.'s Supreme Court to nullify the legislation, reinstating the negotiated contract provisions that Bill 29 unilaterally eliminated.

It would also strike down the Campbell Liberal's radical health restructuring plans that include facility closures, deep service cuts and the largest privatization scheme in Canadian history.

Bill 29 has two distinct sections applying to health care and community social services, so the unions launched two separate challenges. Health care bargaining associations representing health care workers launched the first challenge on March 19. Two months later, on May 28, four unions representing community social services workers started the second Charter challenge against Bill 29.

On another front, the Labour Relations Board has agreed to an expedited process into the unfair complaint. HEU lawyers will subpoena top corporate executives from the likes of Sodexo along with top health authority bosses for the hearing, which is expected to start in early June.

The unfair labour practices complaint came on the heels of the release of legally taped conversations with corporate representatives that suggest the government's health privatization

plans include blacklisting thousands of HEU members from future jobs.

The jobs that are up for grabs are HEU jobs that have been eliminated and offered to private companies to bid on. And in many cases health care workers are being deprived of earning a living without the proper notice.

This prompted an HEU complaint with the LRB that B.C. health authorities violated the Labour Code when they failed to give the required notice

Health care workers are being deprived of earning a living

of their intention to embark on wholesale layoffs and elimination of services. Section 54 of the code holds that employers must give at least 60 days notice

before finalizing any change that affects the "terms, conditions or security of employment" of large numbers of employees.

"The employer must give notice the moment it is reasonably certain that it will proceed with wholesale changes affecting significant numbers of employees," says HEU secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt.

"A number of leaked documents made public by HEU clearly show the government and health employers were 'reasonably certain' that they would proceed with massive cuts much earlier in the year. But they failed to meet their legal obligation to provide required notice at that time."

Bill 29 slashed bumping and seniority rights built up over many years of faithful service for many HEU members who are losing their jobs. That's the reason HEU is seeking to have the health authorities in each region declared the employer. If successful, seniority will be regional, not just specific to the facility where one works. This also means that certifications within regions would be consolidated.



MUZIN

PRESIDENT'S DESK

Sideshow is no fun for many in B.C.

The wheels are starting to come off Gordon Campbell's bandwagon. After just one year in power, the agenda to privatize anything that moves and to destroy unions is clearly the Liberals' only elixir for B.C.'s economic recovery.

Acting like some circus sideshow carney rather than a premier, he's auctioning off B.C. Hydro, ICBC, "assisted living" facilities for seniors, hospital support services, highways, provincial parks and raw logs.

Step right up and place your bets, folks – the show's about to begin. As user fees kick in for talking books and park access for the disabled, medication for seniors, tuition fees for students and private surgery for the sick, the gap between the rich and the rest of us will increase. We don't need legal aid, the Human Rights Commission, workers' compensation, child care, pay equity or a balanced labour code if Gordocchio determines they are unfair competitive advantages.

Run away and join the circus – you can earn \$6 an hour plus all the Liberal "candy floss" you can eat. You've learned everything you'll ever need or can afford by kindergarten anyway – why wait until you're 15-years-old to embark on your career?

The public doesn't trust or believe the Campbell government for good reason. Its ideologically driven initiatives don't stand up to objective scrutiny.

Privatizing B.C. Hydro will result in raising domestic rates by 40 per cent and crippling many businesses. Wrecking public auto insurance will undermine safety and preventative programs and reinstate discriminatory pricing.

Public Private Partnerships have serious flaws, as indicated by the Ron Parks' audit of the PriceWaterhouseCoopers proposal for the MSA hospital. Eloquent, Drs. Allyson Pollock and Matthew Dunnigan have detailed the British experience whereby services are drastically reduced while the 30-year costs to the taxpayer skyrocket.

The Alberta experience with "assisted living" for seniors indicates user fees of \$35,000/year for "non-essential" services such as food, bathing and activation. Many of these pensioners suffer from dementias such as Alzheimer's disease and so their care will default to already over-stressed families.

We must build strong opposition in every community to make certain we protect democracy and ensure it works for all of us. We have to be sure that Campbell's Ferris wheel doesn't grind to its inevitable halt with the Liberals still stuck near the top.

The public doesn't trust or believe the Campbell government



Jean Duhamel and Linda Sherwood burn Gordon Campbell's card in front of Summerland Hospital.

"We didn't believe Campbell would talk to us," said Duhamel. "So we burned the card."

At least that was the plan, but then they got wind that the premier was in Penticton to address a convention of broadcasters.

A few of them sped off to the hotel and actually came face to face with Campbell. He took one look and turned his back on them. Later when a reporter asked why he hadn't spoken to the health care workers, he said, "I didn't see them."

But he told the reporter to give them his card and tell them to give him a call. Summerland local chair Jean Duhamel and Kelly Care local chair Linda Sherwood ceremoniously burned it.

Pharmacare saves money, research shows

A group of Harvard researchers found that for at least one commonly used medication, Pharmacare's reference-based pricing system saves a lot of money. And is harmless to patients.

Reference-based pricing of prescription drugs began under the NDP government in 1997, and the research was conducted using data from its first year of operation on a drug called antitensin-converting-enzyme inhibitors which is used to treat high blood pressure.

In the study, published in March 2002 in the *Canadian Media Assoc-*

iation Journal, lead author Dr. Sebastian Schneeweiss and his colleagues analyzed what happened when the government capped payments for the ACE inhibitors.

In the program the government agrees to pay \$27 per patient per month for the ACE inhibitors. Patients can then choose to use a pricier alternative, but pay the difference themselves. The research showed that reference-based pricing saved six million dollars for that drug alone in the first year of the program.

"It definitely was a success," said Schneeweiss in the report for the *Journal*.

Wreaking havoc



Privateer watch

Here are only some of the private, for-profit companies that may be answering the Liberal call to privatize B.C. health care:

Sodexo

One of the largest three corporations in North America offering "outsourced" support services – including food, house-keeping and laundry services – to public institutions. And as the B.C. Federation of Labour exposed in May, Sodexo to freeze HEU members out of any contracts it wins in B.C.

Aramark

This Philadelphia-based company ranks as the world's third largest food service company. It also does business in facility maintenance and uniform rentals.

Compass

Another of the Big Three food services corporations.

Baxter

An international corporation providing renal dialysis services already seen roaming the halls of Royal Columbian's renal dialysis unit.

Fresenius Medical Care

This German renal supplies/services company took over National Medical Care. The Ontario government had to back out of a public/private partnership with NMC when it became known that it was under criminal investigation by the FBI for fraudulent billing to Medicare and for selling defective products.

Paladin Security

Vision Security and Investigations Inc.

Formerly Wespac Security

Keefer Laundry Ltd.

Echo Technology

This company already provides laundry services at Surrey Memorial Hospital.

Uni-First (laundry)

Canadian Linen



KELOWNA DAILY COURIER PHOTO

Angry health care workers rallied against Liberal health cuts outside Penticton MLA Bill Barisoff's on April 24.



A little over a year ago, many British Columbians voted for the Liberal candidate in their riding after listening to their promises and those made by their leader, Gordon Campbell.

Some may even have read the Liberal *New Era* document.

HEU members read about Campbell's commitment to protect their jobs and the health care system in the pages of this very publication.

No mandate for sweeping change

In the intervening year, the Campbell government has embarked on a program that could see wide-scale privatization of many areas of the public service. Health care especially is on the auction block.

Privateers have been given the green light to invade B.C.'s public health care system. Much of the talks that have been going on have been behind closed doors and have only come to light through HEU and other unions' Freedom of Information searches, or by out-and-out leaks.

"While the Liberals won an overwhelming majority of the seats in the legislature," says HEU secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt, "they only won 45 per cent of the popular vote."

"Those who did not vote for Campbell – and those who are sorry they did – do not have a voice in the legislature right now. And the social infrastructure of the province is being fundamentally changed without the say-so of the people."

Health care is one area that has been particularly hard-hit. Hospitals are closing, seniors are being chased from their beds, and health workers are losing their jobs. In some communities that means a large segment of wage-earners are having their livelihoods terminated. In larger urban settings, the loss of these workers will have a major impact on the delivery of health care in their communities.

All British Columbians are affected by these cuts, not just health care workers. People are beginning to hurt, and it will only get worse unless the government begins to listen.

On the ground

"Seniors, students, families, health care workers, forestry workers, public sector workers, the disabled, the poor, young workers in the service industry – for all of these people the avenues of dissent are narrowing," says Allnutt.

Many have tried talking to their MLAs – to no avail. They are met with locked doors or nervous assistants that let them in two or three at a time.

That's why we are seeing more demonstrations, rallies, candlelight vigils, town hall meetings. "Gordon Campbell's Liberals are wreaking havoc and sending people out into the streets because that



WE OBJECT! HEU's no-holds-barred fight-back campaign

We're in the forefront of the struggle against the Campbell government. On the ground, across the province in communities like Revelstoke, Duncan, Chilliwack, Sechelt, and Port Alberni, HEU members are working with coalition partners to

organize rallies, demonstrations, political protests and occupations.

Strike votes

We're undertaking the largest membership vote process of any B.C. union to approve a comprehensive fight back strategy. Two-thirds finished, already close to 15,000 members have voted.

Support for taking all necessary action to fight Campbell's reckless agenda is running at 90 per cent.

Legal counterattack

To defend members and the health care system, HEU has launched an aggressive legal fight back against the Campbell government in the courts and before the Labour Relations Board.

Exposés and PR

Our ongoing investigations and exposés into the corruption involved in contracting out and

18 VOC

Gordon Campbell's New Era means hospitals are closing, seniors will be kicked out of their beds, health care workers are losing their jobs and our health care system is on the auction block.



DALE FULLER PHOTO

May Day protesters tell public G.F. Strong's rehab services to seniors and disabled are to be axed.

is the only way left to make themselves heard," says Allnutt. Like in West Vancouver in early April when residents' families, caregivers and supporters flooded into Park Royal Mall to express outrage over the proposed closure of the 217-bed Capilano Care Centre.

Or when health care workers rallied on May 6 in support of residents and their caregivers who were fighting to keep Vancouver's St. Vincent's Hospital open.

In Kimberley, New Denver, Enderby and Summerland – communities that are losing their acute care hospitals – there were candlelight vigils and rallies.

People were defending their right to "the care they need, where they live, when they need it" – another Campbell election promise.

After the giant rallies in Victoria on February 23 and in Vancouver on March 23 and May 25 Campbell still isn't listening.

Seattle Post-Intelligencer columnist Joel Connelly wrote on May 27 about the May 25 rally, "Campbell has declared that no protest will disrupt his plan to create a 'new era'."

This political commentator from south of the border observes that in the 19th century western Canada was governed with "peace, order and good government."

"The maxim for British Columbia in the early 21st century may be: None of the above," he concludes.

Liberals "blink" Moberley Manor to stay put – for now

After the Campbell Liberals announced the closure of Moberly Park Manor – giving the residents 30 days to pack their bags – family members, staff and the community waged a high profile campaign against the closure.

Now the residents of this Revelstoke facility can unpack their suitcases – at least for a few more months.

The Interior Health Authority informed the HEU in mid-May that the time frame for closing Moberly Manor has been extended to between six and 12 months. The IHA also rescinded layoff notices for the front-line staff at the facility.

"The community of Revelstoke spoke out and the Campbell Liberals blinked," says HEU secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt. "And they won't be the last community to win a reprieve for their long-term care facility."

"This government has failed to convince British Columbians that it has a credible plan to care for seniors," adds Allnutt. "And communities like Revelstoke are refusing to stand by while this government shuffles seniors around like deck chairs on the Titanic."



REVELSTOKE REVIEW PHOTO

Revelstoke shamed the government into rethinking a 30-day notice to Moberly Manor's elderly residents.

Taking action: defiance in Duncan

Community activists in Duncan and Chemainus signaled their anger with the policies of the Campbell government on May 30, setting up picket lines at more than 16 worksites – including hospitals and long-term care facilities – in the two Vancouver Island towns as part of a community-wide "day of defiance" protest in the riding of labour minister Graham Bruce.

"The provincial government is bent on a course that will guarantee poverty and ruin for all working people," said Duncan community coalition spokesperson Eden Haythornethwaite.

"We cannot lie down and let the Liberals turn back the clock and demolish the advances working people have sacrificed so much to win."

IN A MOVE THAT was a resounding success and could be a catalyst for action in other communities hurt by Campbell's reckless agenda, picket lines went up around Cowichan and District Hospital first thing in the morning. It was strongly supported by both HEU and BCNU members. That kicked off a wave of protest activity as lines were set up at 15 more worksites including high schools, ICBC, B.C. Hydro offices and government buildings, along with other health care facilities.

MID-DAY AS THE LINES came down, protesters rallied outside the office of MLA Bruce, who was leading Victoria's efforts to ram through three pieces of legislation attacking working people.

HEU secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt saluted the protest organizers.

"While our union was not involved in the planning, we support the very courageous and well-organized actions by the community coalition."

"What we've seen today shows just how angry communities are about cuts to health care, education, and public services," he added.

"Clearly, today's events could unleash a strong and vocal protest force to counter a government that lies, tears up contracts, and runs roughshod over the basic needs of British Columbians."

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Again with the support of CUPE, we're ready to mount an organizing campaign to beat back the Liberal's privatization efforts to rollback wages and quality of service standards in health care.

Three stories Cuts hurt real people

Alfred and Grace Potvin were happy at Parkholm Lodge in Chilliwack. After 60 years of marriage, they were living in private rooms across the hall from each other. But the Campbell government decided to close Parkholm and moved the couple to Heritage Valley. There they only see each other with great difficulty as they were placed in different wings of the facility.

The couple's daughter says that the elderly do not relocate easily, and her parents are extremely anxious about the change.

In February, 75-year-old **Bruce Partridge** fell on the ice and broke his wrist. When the cast was removed six weeks later, he was sent for physiotherapy. He attended

four times and conscientiously did the prescribed exercises. Then he couldn't afford it anymore.

The bill was for \$160.00. "Prior to the Campbell cuts, this would have been paid for by MSP or my extended health insurance, both of which I pay for," he says.

Now he's developed carpal tunnel syndrome and will probably have to undergo surgery so he can continue his work as a writer. Partridge blames the government's cuts to health care.

As a result of an on-the-job injury, 48-year old **Roz Moorby-Klaasen** had her leg amputated. Attempts at fitting her with prosthesis have proven extremely painful. She is receiving only \$550 per month from Workers' Compensation, and must spend \$160 of that on medicine. Now she faces the loss of her home, her dogs, and her ability to care for her terminally ill father.

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labour

NOTEWORTHY NEWS ABOUT ISSUES AFFECTING
WORKING PEOPLE HERE AND ABROAD

No sale, says judge

Judge Arthur Gans of the Ontario Superior Court ruled on April 19 that the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers and CUPE were right when they said the Ontario government does not have the authority to sell its interest in Hydro One.

Shares were to go on sale in June in the biggest initial public offering in Canadian history. The sale was expected to raise \$5 billion.

Neither CEP nor CUPE directly represents the workers at Hydro One, but Gans ruled unions have interests that go beyond "mere economic gains for workers."

CALM



CALM GRAPHIC

Chocolate back on menu

On April 16, workers at Purdy's Chocolates ratified their collective agreement, giving them higher wages and better benefits.

Last year's decertification of the union was not a victory for the company in the end. Working class British Columbians stood by the Purdy's workers and went without the company's chocolates until a collective agreement was reached with their employees.

The new agreement runs until April 30, 2005.

Baristas on 'unstrike' at Starbucks

JORDAN OLIVER PHOTO



CAW local chair and barista Kevin Bell tells two coffee drinkers why 140 Starbucks workers are on an "unstrike" before they enter the Starbucks at Second and Commercial in Vancouver to have a cup of java.

Instead of going on strike in frustration at their boss' foot-dragging bargaining strategy, about 140 mostly young workers at 11 Starbucks coffee shops in British Columbia, members of Canadian Auto Workers Local 3000, are 'unstriking.'

The union says that Starbucks is bent on busting the union in this round of bargaining.

National representative Jef Keighley accuses the company of taking a fundamentally anti-union position despite their marketing image of a "corporation with conscience."

On the contrary, Keighley says "they have totally rejected each and every one of our bargaining proposals aimed at achieving justice and dignity in the workplace and are demanding the effective elimination of our members' contractual right to a more secure future with hours of work maximized and scheduled with respect to seniority."

They have been dragging their feet in bargaining and continue to say a flat NO to each and every proposal we have put forward.

They are proposing the virtual elimination of any seniority affecting job security and scheduling of hours. Effectively, Starbucks wants to create a situation where the only difference between union and non-union stores is the payment of union dues."

So on April 22, these young coffee servers and one brewer served 72-hour strike notice for the CAW Starbucks UnStrike for Justice and Dignity.

Let the baristas know you are behind them

This type of innovative action involves the union membership continuing to work while disregarding Starbucks' dress code and leafleting customers and the general public to solicit their support.

CAW is asking the public to continue to patronize only union Starbucks until a new and acceptable agreement is ratified by the membership.

The outstanding issues concern education leave, social justice, health and safety, human rights and harassment training, seniority, hours of work and shift assignments, inter-store transfers, annual vacations, health and welfare benefits, paid sick leave, laundry allowances, dress code and a fair wage increase.

"Starbucks' position is not acceptable to our members and we don't

think it will be acceptable to fair-minded Canadians, many of whom are regular Starbucks customers," says Keighley.

HEU secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt says young people in this situation are very vulnerable, especially with the Labour Code and Employment Standards that have just been gutted. "Go have a cup of coffee at a unionized Starbucks, and let the baristas know you are behind them 100 per cent," he says.

Unionized Starbucks locations are at: 2531 E. Hastings; 1702 Robson; 811 Hornby; Royal Centre Mall; 1752 Commercial Drive; 1015 Denman; 3451 Kingsway; 1095 Howe; 1641 Davie; 1395 Main at the Skytrain; 222-3645 Gossett Road, Westbank Shopping Centre, 3492 Cambie. This last is the subject of an LRB appeal over CAW allegations of a Starbucks-inspired decertification.

>>notebook>>



There was a huge public outcry

Do it right – stop the contracting out

As the *Guardian* goes to print, the news has just come out that B.C. Children's and Women's Hospital has cancelled the controversial cleaning contract with A&A Service Co., a private company co-owned by outspoken anti-abortionist Cecilia von Dehn.

No one could have dreamed of a fictional debacle more spectacularly inept than the real-life story of the search for a private company to clean the new ambulatory care building at C&W. The contract was already mired in controversy after the B.C. Federation of Labour, the B.C. Government and Service Employees' Union and HEU exposed a plan by French multi-national Sodexho to blacklist fired HEU members from working in health care.

Transcripts and tapes recorded the Sodexho official indicating that the tendering process had been severely compromised. It was widely speculated that Sodexho was the lead candidate for the C&W contract but since the corporation

was publicly tainted, a local company was chosen – A&A Service Co.

However, A&A Service Co. is co-owned by von Dehn. Von Dehn has a public history of harassing abortion providers, even buying a house next door to the Everywoman's Health Centre to have a staging ground for her activities.

Her company was cleaning right next door to Women's Hospital where services to women – including abortions – are provided. There was a huge public outcry, including demands from women's groups for the contract's cancellation. They also joined HEU's call for a moratorium on the Campbell Liberals' privatization plans.

On May 31, the hospital officials did the right thing and protected patients and care providers by canceling the contract. Now they should utilize the hospital's existing HEU cleaners in the ambulatory care building, just the way they should have in the first place.

MARGI BLAMEY

Lumber tariff will hurt Canadian, American workers

The U.S. government listened to a powerful lumber lobby and on March 22 imposed anti-dumping and countervailing duties totaling 29 per cent on all Canadian softwood lumber exports to the U.S. That means massive job loss for forestry workers, which coupled with the slashing of public sector and health care jobs, means the devastation of many B.C. resource communities.

The fallout will not only affect those directly employed in forestry but hundreds of small-town businesses that either are industries secondary to forestry or are dependent on the income of forestry workers.

Forestry workers in B.C., most of whom are represented by the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers' Union or IWA Canada, know that for American workers this tariff will only result in more costly housing and lumber products for them.

The IWA has an action plan to raise the profile of the issue with American consumers and with the Prime Minister. That's why they are leafletting American tourists at the border as they enter or leave Canada.

The woodworkers' union also called on the Canadian government to help laid off forestry workers by providing them with extended Unemployment Insurance benefits and other forms of assistance.

The CEP's approach questions the Canadian government's bargaining stance during the important negotiation and urges the inclusion of forestry workers in any further talks.

"The tariff against our lumber industry is unfair and an attack on our vital economic interests," says CEP president Brian Payne. "Canada must take retaliatory measures on trade and adjust our foreign policy to reflect the true state of Canada/U.S. relations."

Worker protections slashed But HEU's injured members shielded from cuts

The Campbell Liberals launched a new offensive to roll back fundamental basic rights and protections for working people at the end of May when they passed three pieces of legislation that target the labour code, injured workers and the basic laws that govern non-unionized workplaces.

"Again we have an authoritarian government using its huge majority to ram through these draconian changes without any opportunity for public input or consultation," says HEU secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt. "These revisions are offensive — it's an appalling abuse of democracy."

The three labour bills target key protections like workers' compensation, the labour code and employment standards laws setting basic terms of employment for unorganized workers. The Liberals have:

- cut WCB benefits to injured workers such that benefit payments are

reduced from 75 per cent of gross pay tax-free to 90 per cent of net pay; dramatically scaled back pensions for injured workers upon retirement;

- ended safeguards against child labour;

- reduced incomes for non-unionized workers by eliminating existing overtime provisions and the eight-hour day standard that unions fought to win decades ago, and cut minimum shift payments from four hours to two; and

- radically revamped the labour code to give employers even more power, enshrining "profit" and "productivity" at the core of the code, rather than fairness and justice for workers.

But fortunately, says Allnutt, a tough stand by HEU members against concessions in bargaining last year means that most injured health care workers on WCB will be protected

against the benefit cuts. That's because HEU fought hard against employer rollback demands and maintained injury on duty leave provisions which mean injured regular full and part time employees covered by the facility sector agreement will receive 100 per cent of their net pay.

However, the top up provisions doesn't protect casuals, community health or community social services workers. They will have their benefit payments reduced.

The B.C. Federation of Labour says the change amounts to a 10 per cent cut in incomes for injured workers. Changes to WCB pensions will reduce retirement incomes by 20 per cent for injured workers who retire with a permanent disability.

Federation president Jim Sinclair says that overall, the changes in WCB laws are a \$300 million gift from the Liberals to their corporate friends.

It's an appalling abuse of democracy



Good night, Tommy!

Tommy Douglas, the father of Medicare, was fond of telling the story of a Saskatchewan farmer rushed to the hospital with appendicitis shortly after the introduction of public hospital insurance.

With a full emergency ward, he was taken to the maternity ward and curtained off from the expectant mothers. He heard the experienced mothers advising the first-timers to "be sure and ask for 'twilight sleep'," referring to the effects of a sedative

then used to reduce labour pains.

The doctor who told him he'd be operated on the next day asked if he wanted anything.

"Yeah, Doc," the farmer said, "I want some of that twilight sleep."

"But that's only for labour," the doctor told him.

To which the exasperated patient replied, "There's that damn Tommy Douglas for you! Everything for labour and nothing for us farmers!"

CCPA Monitor/CALM

>>voices>>



The changes are devastating to B.C.'s workforce

Why I will not work for this government

After 16 years with the B.C. Ministry of Labour, I recently resigned my position as a manager with the ministry's Employment Standards Branch. The branch, through the Employment Standards Act, ensures minimum standards for all employees working under provincial jurisdiction.

The Act, by educating employers and convincing them to comply, created a level playing field for all.

We all expected substantial changes with the election of the B.C. Liberals. What was not clear was that they would fundamentally change the nature of our social contract. Seeing what was happening within my own ministry, out of the public eye, led to my decision to resign.

The government is changing the substance as well as the approach to enforcement of the Act. By the end of this year, more than half of the existing ESB offices will close.

Campbell's Liberals have now introduced a first round of changes with more expected in the fall.

The changes are devastating to B.C.'s workforce, robbing workers of protections they have enjoyed for decades. Minimum standards for hours of work, overtime and statutory holiday pay, protection from an employer's insolvency, even knowing when one will work in advance — these are all drastically reduced or swept away with the changes.

The government is also moving away from an enforcement model of Employment Standards. Now employees will be expected to take on employers on their own. Many will simply walk away from such an intimidating experience. And the ESB can refuse to investigate complaints if employees haven't made this attempt at self-enforcement.

Industry associations will monitor the actions of their members. Unscrupulous employers will intimidate employees, delay as long as possible and finally offer to settle for a portion of wages owing. For honest employers, the pressure will be enormous to join this frenzy or perish.

DAVE AGES • FORMERLY WITH EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Chilliwack seniors are fighting mad

The Campbell Liberals' cuts to seniors' care had an immediate impact on the 85 seniors at Parkholm Lodge in Chilliwack. They learned their home was going to close by March 2003.

Two days after the government sprung seniors' care facilities' closures on the public, Parkholm managers and health authority representatives hurriedly called a meeting and tried to reassure residents and their families that everything would be just fine. They failed.

United in their opposition to the closure, the Parkholm folk have adopted the B.C. Seniors' Network's "Just Say No" strategy, staged march-

es, lobbied their elected politicians and collected more than 11,000 signatures on a Save Parkholm petition which they turned over to MLA John Les to table in the legislature.

Supported by the HEU Chilliwack local, the Chilliwack Coalition of Concerned Citizens and the Cultus Lake chapter of the Old Age Pensioners' Organization, the growing opposition to Parkholm's closure isn't going to go away any time soon.

Again seniors, health workers stand together

Health care workers from around Vancouver met at Queen Elizabeth Park for an early morning rally on May 6.



St. Vincent's Hospital's Heather Street site saw hundreds of seniors and health care workers tie a yellow ribbon around the facility.

HEU secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt joined representatives of seniors' organizations as well as front-line health care providers on the speakers' podium. Then they marched en masse to the nearby St. Vincent's Hospital in support of the

fight of the residents and their caregivers to keep the seniors' care facility open.

Included in health officials' April 23 pronouncements was the news that they plan to shut down St. Vincent's, home to 75 seniors in residential care.

Pink slips at Richmond's Rosewood Manor

The ink was barely dry on the regulations supporting Bill 29 when the management at Rosewood Manor laid off 20 HEU members working in laundry, housekeeping, dietary, building service and as activity aides at this seniors' care facility in Richmond.

On March 15, HEU members from that facility as well as other locals around the Lower Mainland, stood together and all the "pink-slipped" workers handed in their notification to the employer that they would be exercising their bumping rights. HEU financial secretary Mary LaPlante was at the

BALANCING IT ALL | DALE FULLER

A community activist who is fighting mad at the Liberal government, ELLEN WOODSWORTH says Gordon Campbell's cuts hit women and seniors the hardest

SHE'S IN THE SENIORS' CORNER

E LLEN WOODSWORTH IS a presence to be reckoned with in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. She's been an advocate for the vulnerable and the underprivileged all her adult life, and right now she is incensed about what Gordon Campbell's government is doing to the lives of the people she sees and deals with everyday.

In her work at the Downtown Eastside Seniors' Centre, Woodsworth is dealing with the fallout of the government's cuts. "The Downtown Eastside is being decimated by what Campbell's Liberals are doing," she says. "I am furious. He is destroying people's lives. The attack has been primarily directed against women, and has hit seniors severely."

Woodsworth sees an acute need to stand up to the government, because the health and well-being of women and seniors are more at risk than ever.

Through her work as coordinator at the Centre and at the Seniors' Summit, a group that was formed at the time of the International Year of the Older Person, she is deeply involved in fighting for the right of older people to live in dignity.

Life as an activist started for Woodsworth at the University of British Columbia. "At UBC I joined the Women's Caucus," she says. "We were so full of ideas, but we wanted to focus on one issue that cut across race and class. We decided to make abortion rights our cause."

Soon she joined her sisters on a cross-country caravan, visiting communities along the way, talking to

people about a woman's right to choose.

"That was 1970. In Ottawa we joined women from all over Canada, demonstrated, tried to talk to MPs. Not very successfully, so we walked in and chained ourselves together in the House of Commons," recounts Woodsworth.

Soon school took a back seat to activism. She wanted to start up a women's liberation newspaper, but since Vancouver already had one, she returned to her hometown of Toronto. There she started *Other Woman*, and with some friends outfitted an old school bus as the Women's Liberation Bookmobile.

Next stop was London, England for three years to work on the International Wages for Housework Campaign.

The 1980s found her back in Vancouver, working with single mothers on welfare, helping them do research on unpaid work. She served on a national advisory committee that was successful in getting a question about women's unpaid work on the national census. "We were the first country ever to recognize women's work that way," she says.

"In the middle of the 1990s I was looking for work. My mother, president of a seniors' umbrella organization called One Voice, suggested I consider working as an advocate for seniors," says Woodsworth.

She followed her mother's advice, and has been at the Downtown Eastside Seniors' Centre ever since. She coordinates a team of five "neighbourhood helpers" who work with seniors that live in the "single room occupancy" hotels in the area.

Woodsworth is dealing with the fallout of the government's cuts

"Many of the neighbourhood seniors use this 37-year-old centre like a living room. Often they don't have that kind of space where they live," she says.

Right now she's working on a project called Breaking the Silence, which helps senior women look at domestic violence and its relationship to racism and poverty. Her other half-day job is working with the Seniors' Summit.

"The Summit has done some very good work — a lot of research around housing, health, women, globalization, and this information is proving very useful to other organizations, like the Seniors' Network BC and Women Elders in Action," says Woodworth.

Very important to Woodworth is her work as chair of the Bridge Housing Society for Women, which one year ago completed a seven-storey residence for women of the Downtown Eastside.

Future plans include a run at a city council seat in November — giving the people she considers to be her constituents the political voice that they so badly need right now. Meanwhile, she joins others in her community at the Strathcona Community Gardens, part of the city's Green Streets program.

Her work in the community was recognized this year with a nomination for the YWCA Women of Distinction award in the social action category.



Ellen Woodsworth sits in on a conversation colleague Ginger Jones is having with a visitor to the Downtown Eastside Seniors' Centre, a lively gathering place for the neighbourhood's elderly citizens.

demonstration and said, "Rosewood Manor management has laid off all the ancillary staff without giving any thought to how the facility would run without them. And not only have they not considered how devastating this is to the health workers and their families, they've completely ignored the needs, comfort and care of the residents."

Consideration of seniors in the provinces residential care facilities indeed seems to be the last thing on the Liberals' minds – or agenda.

Protesters spent night at C&W

An noon on May 14, 15 women health care workers began an occupation of the

ambulatory care building at B.C. Children's and Women's Hospital to protest the Campbell Liberals' extreme health care agenda that puts corporate profits ahead of patient care and turns hospitals into low-wage ghettos.

They were demanding an immediate moratorium on all contracting out of health care services pending independent investigations into the impacts of privatization and evidence of corruption in the tendering of these contracts.

A contract for privatized housekeeping at the new building was mired in controversy. It began when an official with French multinational Sodexho outlined in a taped conversation that HEU members would be blacklisted

and that wage rates for Sodexho staff would be cut to as low as the minimum wage when this company won that contract.

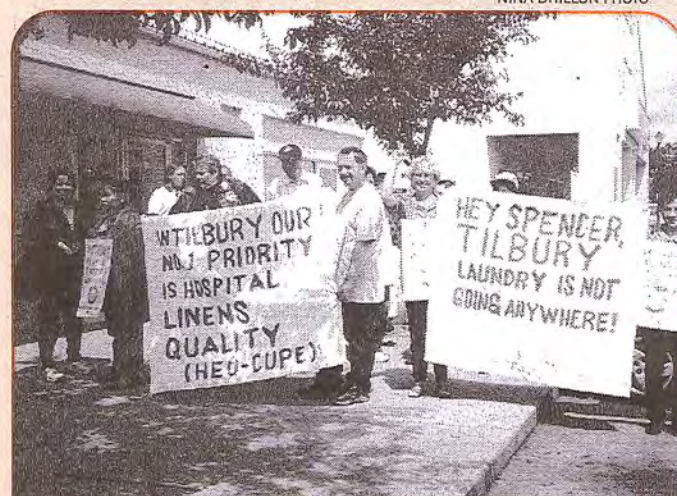
The controversy veered off into even more turbulent waters when the hospital awarded the contract to A&A Services instead, owned by a well-known anti-abortion crusader (see page 3).

Libs pushing seniors and disabled out of G.F. Strong

Workers from G.F. Strong Rehabilitation Centre took to Oak Street and 25th Avenue on May 1 to stand up for the people they care for – the disabled and the elderly.

continued on page 14

NINA DHILLON PHOTO



On May 28 about 20 HEU members from Tilbury Laundry went to B.C.'s Sodexho headquarters in Tsawwassen to leave a message for Sodexho boss Spencer Green – "We are not going to go away." Sodexho stated in secretly-taped telephone conversations they would not rehire HEU members at any sites where they were awarded contracts.

>>factfile



The U.S. Foundation for Taxpayer and Consumer Rights recently issued a comprehensive review of the California energy crisis that caused rolling blackouts during the winter of 2000-2001. Using government and industry data, the report shows that the state's electricity system did not fail according to the laws of supply and demand, as has been widely portrayed. Instead, the California energy crisis was a hoax – orchestrated by a power industry freed from price regulation – a hoax that will cost every Californian \$2,200.

The Victoria General local is sponsoring a terrific website, full of information. They call it Voice of B.C. and say it gives all British Columbians a place where they can express their opinions at open forums and polls. Website is www.voiceofbc.ca/home.

Shopping will be good at HBC – at its 2002 shareholders' meeting in May, a resolution calling on Hudson's Bay Company to put in place a process to end alleged sweatshop abuses in its supply chain was supported by more than 36 per cent of the voting shares. This represents the largest vote in support of a social resolution before a Canadian corporation and a significant gain over last year's vote on a similar proposal that received approximately 15 per cent of the vote.



AFTER THE SHIFT

DALE FULLER

Victoria native DUNCAN SMITH may be one of the top bridge players in B.C. history, but he just likes the people he meets, from street people to judges

BRIDGE MASTER

I F YOU EVER HEAR THAT Duncan Smith is cleaning up, it may not be referring to his job as a housekeeper at Victoria General Hospital. It might very well be about his winning yet another bridge championship.

Between 1976, the first time he ever entered a tournament, and this spring, when his team won the provincial title, there have been many championships.

Now Smith is one of the best bridge players in British Columbia. According to brother Matt, who directs bridge tournaments all over North America, "Duncan has been Vancouver Island's leading bridge player for over 30 years and has consistently been one the top players in the province."

The bridge bug bit Smith when he was still a boy. He grew up in a household where bridge was an important part of his parents' life. Then came that fatal day in 1963 when his parents took him along to a tournament they were competing in.

Bridge, like golf, uses caddies to serve the players during games. Usually youngsters. "Someone noticed that I was just hanging around with nothing to do, so decided to make me useful," says Smith. "I spent a whole week doing that, listening to the talk, just observing. I was hooked."

So that tournament at the Empress Hotel in Victoria was where he got his start.

"I had absorbed a lot at home before that," he says. "But I never was interested in being a part of it. It was just something my parents and their friends did."

Bridge is a complicated game and it took him many years to acquire the skills that have made him



Victoria Bridge Club president Van Buchanan presents Duncan Smith with a certificate proclaiming his team to be the B.C. bridge champions for 2002.

a champion. But once he did he just couldn't stop. Aside from the years 1994 and 2001 when he didn't play, Smith has been winning championships. He's gone onto the national championships 16 times – and won in 1992, representing Canada in the internationals in 1993.

Bridge is a team sport, you can't play it alone, says Smith.

"The best part of bridge is the opportunity to meet people. Bridge players come from all walks of life. It's really amazing – from street people to supreme court justices. But at that table what we're judged on is our ability to play bridge."

Smith and his teammates will be competing for the national championship in June in Edmonton. Smith says they're considered the underdogs, but he hopes they'll win and go on to the international competition in Montreal in August.

continued from page 13

They lined up with 'for sale' signs, balloons, music and postcards to send to the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority – telling them that their senior and disabled clients are going to suffer if they go through with the Campbell's Liberals' plan to close G.F. Strong and transfer all their clients to Vancouver General Hospital.

The workers say that an acute care hospital is not the place to care for those who often need rehabilitation in order to live life to their fullest potentials.

Many of those who passed out leaflets to pedestrians and people in stopped cars had received notice of their impending

layoff the day before.

"This world-class facility fulfills an important role in the provincial health care system, and Liberals just want to wipe it off the map," says HEU secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt. "It's more proof the this government is putting patients last – right along with their caregivers."

New members in Surrey

Metis Family Services is a new HEU certification in the community social services subsector.

Twenty-two HEU sisters and brothers provide support for Metis people primarily in the Lower Mainland. The stated pur-

pose of the society, formed in 1992, is to administer Métis child and family care on behalf of Métis people. Negotiations for a contract are underway.

HEU vote is strong

With membership balloting two-thirds complete, backing for HEU's action plan to protect jobs and Medicare is running at 90 per cent, as close to 15,000 members have already cast their votes.

Support for doing whatever it takes – including job action – to fight Gordon Campbell's reckless agenda is especially strong among members in rural communities already hit by a downturn in resource industries.



MIKE OLD PHOTO

Satire's a powerful tool, this time poking fun at 200 corporate privateers who were inside the Hotel Vancouver on May 31 carving the country up into P3 fiefdoms.

"These members have an added sense of urgency," says HEU's Chris Allnutt. "Their families have already been hurt by issues like softwood lumber, and

they're determined to protect decent jobs and incomes to support their families and their communities."

Final results are expected by the end of June.

JUNE

JULY

AUGUST

SEPTEMBER

JUNE 22

Miners Memorial
Cumberland, B.C.

JUNE 29

Gay Pride Day
Nanaimo

JULY 1

Canada Day
HEU offices closed

JULY 9

9 a.m. – Deadline for locals' submissions for credentials, amendments, and resolutions for 23rd HEU Biennial Convention

AUGUST 4

Gay Pride Parade
Vancouver

AUGUST 5

B.C. Day
HEU offices closed

SEPTEMBER 2

Labour Day
HEU offices closed

OCTOBER 7-11

HEU 23rd Biennial
Convention
Richmond, B.C.

His films counteract media

Glen Sanford's social conscience surfaced at an early age. At 10 years old, when the threat of nuclear arms testing in Amchitka, Alaska caused outrage among British Columbians, Sanford and a school chum wrote up a protest petition, rode their bikes around their rural community and gathered signatures to send off to American president Richard Nixon.

That was just the beginning.

Before leaving for the mainland and beyond in 1979, Courtenay-born Sanford racked up four years of journalistic experience at the Comox and District *Free Press* while going to high school. Before returning to Vancouver Island 20 years later, Sanford honed his craft to emerge a seasoned journalist, researcher, political organizer, social activist and filmmaker.

Fast forward to April 2002. Sanford has just won the National Film Board of Canada's award for Best Emerging Canadian Filmmaker of a Non-Fiction Work at the Images Festival in Toronto for *USELESS*, his unconventional documentary about Subhuman punk rocker turned direct action saboteur turned ex-con Gerry Hannah. In the film, Hannah and his mom reflect on punk, politics, prison and the nature of freedom.

The NFB nod is not Sanford's first film award, but it's a significant recognition complete with funding. A quick read of his filmography resume promises it won't be the last.

Much of Sanford's artistic work has explored complex social issues using his non-traditional, documentary style.

Clear Dying Vision (1985) examined how being an artist impacted the way one individual lived – and died – with AIDS. *Breathe Life*, a project-in-progress about quadriplegics who require ventilators to breathe, documents the setbacks, successes and ongoing struggles of the participants to live independent, productive lives. Both demonstrate his self-professed "deep dedication to the production of art and the documentation of compelling stories."

Sanford believes it's more difficult today to critically analyze information and that the media is partly responsible because

mainstream news affects how we see the world. He hopes his productions provide a different perspective.

FILM

Glen Sanford
Filmmaker,
Social Activist

by Margi Blamey

But filmmaking isn't Sanford's only forte. A highly regarded political organizer, he has worked for several noteworthy New Democrats including former member of parliament Margaret Mitchell, party leader Audrey McLaughlin and current Vancouver East MP Libby Davies. He describes Davies' 1993 takeback of the Vancouver eastside constituency as "pretty monumental" but holds the ongoing experience of working with people with disabilities as "unbelievably inspirational."

Sanford has been on contract with the B.C. Coalition of People with Disabilities since 1999, concentrating on the fight for adequate home support services. He credits activists from the disability community, especially those from the Home Support Action Group in Victoria, for his increased awareness and education on a variety of concerns.

"Lots of [socio-political] activists aren't really aware of health and independence issues if they don't have people with disabilities in their lives," Sanford says. "For a lot of the issues it really does take putting your head into them."

Sanford believes that the many forms of cultural expression can take important yet marginalized issues and bring them forward in ways that will cause people to link the arts more readily with progressive social change. He thinks that's worthy of our support and participation.

"In the same way that a lot of social and political activists don't have a connection to the disability community, they don't have a connection to the arts community," he says.

Sanford wants to help make that connection.

• *USELESS* is one of a selection of best films from the Vancouver Underground Film Festival to be shown in the city this summer as Best of the Fest.



SANFORD

HEU PEOPLE



BLAMEY



HURREN

Sad news from St. Paul's

St. Paul's activist **Ed Chow** passed away recently at the young age of 35. Active in his local since 1996 when he became a steward, he was a staffing clerk in hospital's renal department. Chow was active in HEU's Gay and Lesbian Standing Committee. PE member Kelly Knox said Chow was generous to a fault. "And he loved to shop. He would scour the newspaper every week for deals." His union sisters and brothers are saddened at his death and will miss his giving spirit.

Relaxing's on the agenda

Rina Sandri retired from her job in the housekeeping/ laundry department at Cumberland Health Centre after nearly 23 years on the job. The staff misses her always-ready smile. Right now she's enjoying her grandchild, her family and playing cards with her friends.

Two Shorncliffe retirements

Gesa Reid is a charter member (since October 1983) of the Shorncliffe local, and now she's retiring from her job as a cook. She's served her local as chairperson, treasurer, trustee and shop steward. She looks forward to working in her garden, hiking, playing tennis and golf.

Care aide **Ina Grafe** is also retiring from Shorncliffe, where she has worked since May 1993. She also has traveling in her plans and will do volunteer work in her community.

New communicator

Margi Blamey is the new permanent communications campaign coordinator. She has been with the union since January 1998 as a copywriter, a communications officer and, since September 2000, the temporary communications campaign coordinator.

Before HEU, Blamey worked at the Canadian Labour Congress on the 1997 People's Summit on APEC and for Health Canada. She was the first national equity officer of the National Health and Welfare component of the Public Service Alliance of Canada, focusing on women's and workers' human rights and the impact of trade agreements on Canadians' social systems like public health care.

Blamey shares her home with her daughter, son-in-law and two grandchildren.

Long-time director retires

John Hurren was director of HEU's Prince George office from 1982 until he retired on

April 30, 2002. Before his 20 years with HEU, Hurren served many years as the assistant director of bargaining and arbitration at BCGEU.

He says that he saw many changes during his tenure in Prince George.

"We did a lot of organizing. Perhaps the biggest achievement was organizing the First Nations health care workers at Skidegate, Nisga'a and Gitskan," he says.

He says he has lots to do now that he's retired. He's finally learning to use a computer and enjoys spending time with his granddaughter.

He plans to bring his wealth of experience in arbitrations as a free-lance counselor/union nominee.

New head of HEU North

Kathy Jessome takes over from John Hurren as director of HEU's Prince George office.

A dietary worker at Royal Inland Hospital, Jessome served the Kamloops local as steward and chairperson before starting work as a rep in HEU's Kelowna office in 1990. The following year she moved to Prince George to begin work as a rep/organizer.

She's relentless in her pursuit of fighting for working people, but she's also known for her laughter and a ready smile.

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PRESS 2

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PRESS 3

Lesbians and Gays

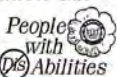
For support: afraid of being identified, feeling isolated, want to know your rights? Call for information on same sex benefits, fighting homophobia and discrimination.



PRESS 4

People with disAbilities

If you are on WCB, LTD, or if invisibly or visibly disabled in the workplace, let us know how the union can better meet your needs.



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

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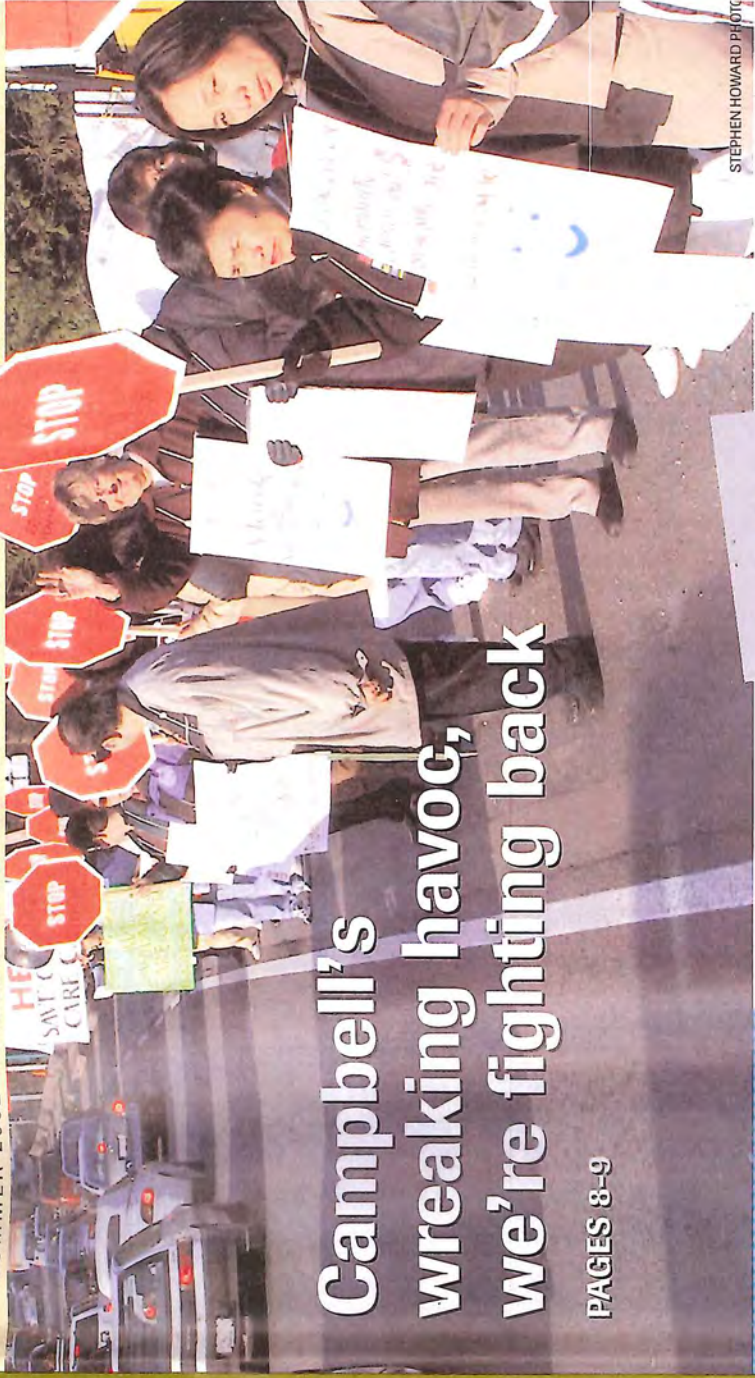
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Campbell's wreaking havoc, we're fighting back

PAGES 8-9

STEPHEN HOWARD PHOTO

MARGI BLAMEY PHOTO



LIBERALS SAY Parkholm Lodge in Chilliwack must close.
Community takes to the street to protect their seniors. **PAGE 12**

Disgraceful

Hospital awards private cleaning contract to anti-abortionist.

PAGE 3

Blacklist revelations

Multi-national planned to ban HEU members from health care jobs.

PAGE 5

Do homework,

says Parks

Government shouldn't decide on private hospital before further study.

PAGE 6

Unstrike at Starbucks

Coffee giant balks at barista demands for a decent contract.

PAGE 10