

Guardian



THE VOICE OF THE HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

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make it public!

HEU and HSA are joining forces in a campaign to promote increased use of hospital labs. The goal? Preserve jobs and improve service.

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Paul Martin's budget continues the attack on funding for health and social programs. But there is an alternative.

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IWD

HEU members will join women from around the world to celebrate International Women's Day, March 8.

Women looking out for health care



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY MARCH 8 '97

COMMENT

Voice and vote a positive move, but Surich sours

by Chris Allnutt

ONE SIGNIFICANT change in the government's health reform agenda has given health care workers a voice and a vote in decision-making. It's an unprecedented move in British Columbia that provides us with an opportunity to use our frontline knowledge and experience to shape decisions made by the 11 new regional boards and 34 community councils.

For the first time ever, we'll be at the decision-making table with the ability to keep administrators honest and with a platform to advocate for change that's part of a progressive plan for health reform.

Already, HEU activists David Ridley, Sheila Rowswell, Dan Hingley and Barb Burke have rolled up their sleeves and participated in board meetings of the respective regional bodies they've been named to. And as part of the appointment process agreed to by the health unions, 15 more HEU activists will soon be named to similar positions on community councils.

These new positions also create challenges for health unions, like how the new reps remain accountable to all caregivers in the region or community. And a cynic would ask what difference will it make



'Gordon Austin got to keep his \$500,000, but Victoria says BCGEU members are out of luck'

when one health worker can be voted down by the 14 other board members.

Our goal since the outset of health care reform has been to be part of the solution in making the changes that will improve health services for British Columbians. The health union rep positions may not be the complete answer. But they will give HEU new opportunities to advocate for the needs of health workers and to press for changes that will make our Medicare system better.

On other fronts, as NDP activists prepare to meet for the party's annual convention, I wanted to highlight two areas where Victoria's actions have been less than exemplary. One relates to the community sector, the other to pay equity for BCGEU caregivers.

At the NDP convention two years ago, pressure brought by HEU helped bring a government commitment to end inequality in wages and working conditions for community caregivers. A deal is a deal, right? Wrong, as thousands of community workers will attest to.

So at this year's convention health workers will again be pressing for justice and reminding party activists of the commitment made by officials of the old Harcourt government.

Finally, the recent uproar over the pay equity settlement for BCGEU members in health care leaves a bitter taste. In rejecting BCGEU's claims that a deal is a deal, Victoria says its former "troubleshooter" Jo Surich, who made the pay equity commitment in 1996, exceeded his mandate.

Surich is no stranger to straying from the yoke. He's the bureaucrat who acted on his own in severance dealings with disgraced ex-health boss Gordon Austin last year.

Two Surich deals, two "exceeded mandates." Gordon Austin got to keep his \$500,000, but Victoria says BCGEU members are out of luck. Something doesn't add up.

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.

Marineview member's Medicare letter goes unpublished

• A number of HEU activists had letters to the editor published during National Medicare Week in November. But in North Vancouver, Marineview activist Graham O'Neill's efforts to highlight problems facing Medicare went unheard because the North Shore News wouldn't publish it. So we've reprinted it here.

Throughout this country people are supporting National Medicare Week (Nov. 4-9) because they believe strongly in the value of a medical insurance program that is publicly funded and available to all. They don't want to see a U.S. style two-tier system that will ultimately destroy Medicare.

As our federal government has cut funding to provincial health programs — as well as to education and social services — it is understandable provincial governments are looking at ways to reduce costs.

Canadians must, however, reject any attempts by their government to promote a system that removes universal accessibility from their provincial health care, or, one without full public accountability.

Dialogue is needed for us to work together on saving and strengthening Medicare. We can't achieve this with consideration of a two-tier system. It has failed in the U.S. where health care costs are higher than any other developed country, yet 40 million Americans live without proper medical insurance because they can't afford it, while large corporate 'health' centres and insurance agencies make obscene profits.

Health care, for me, is primarily concerned with people's need, not financial greed — a way we are, not just a method of treatment when we get sick. I believe my view is shared by the majority of Canadians and I implore them to fight for health care before it is too late.

GRAHAM O'NEILL,
Marineview Local

Union draws fire on technologists stand

I have a number of concerns relating to the HEU position on the EEG technologists transfer to HSA issue. First, this issue was decided in an undemocratic manner. This may well be true, as a truly democratic resolution would have been to allow this group of technologists to vote on whom they wish to be represented by. I don't think HEU would agree to this resolution as it would set a precedent HEU would have to live with in the future.

I'm fairly sure HEU knows what the outcome of such a vote would be. These technologists, did after all, make application to the LRB for change in representation.

Secondly, and far more disconcerting is the HEU position that this group does not meet the paramedical professional criteria as defined by LRB decisions. It has always been my understanding that unions were there to support and help advance the worker's position in the workplace.

For HEU to state officially, in front of health employer representatives that this group, and I presume other similar groups, don't use technical proficiency or scientific knowledge, that their degree or diploma means nothing, that their professional organization means nothing, that they don't exercise independence of judgement, that their job isn't important to the outcome of the patient, and that they don't have similar aspirations and goals as others doing similar work, is contemptible, disrespectful, and ill thought out.

HEU's ability to represent these people and others in similar posi-

tions, in the future, has been compromised. Management must be laughing all the way to the bargaining table. Well done HEU.

BRITT PARISH,
B.C. Children's Local

Change a sure sign of a healthy organization

It is a healthy organization that is able to recognize its problems and come up with ways to improve itself. HEU is in the process of that now. The opening up of seven PE committees to include representation from the membership allows for more involvement in the union's decision-making process. I am honoured to have been selected for the OH&S Committee.

The equity process within HEU is moving to a different level. There is now formal recognition of the caucuses within the union structure. Caucus members will be working on future projects and programs at the next Equity Conference in April 1997. HEU will be prominent at CUPE's first National Anti-Racism Conference with 12 members in attendance. CUPE has asked Sister Minnie Dennis and me to speak at the conference.

Like other unions, HEU is looking at ways to increase activism and involvement in the union. Employers are doing everything in their power to divide us, thus weakening the union. We must keep an open mind, and look at all our options. We must always remember our strength is in unity and solidarity, not only within HEU, but with the entire trade union and social justice movements.

ROGER KISHI,
St. Paul's Local

Guardian

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

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What we're up to

Ashcroft reunion celebrates 25th fete

From its founding in 1913 until 1972, it was known as the Lady Minto hospital. Since the latter date it's been the Ashcroft and District General Hospital. During all those years a lot of people have worked there or volunteered their time and they're invited to mark Ashcroft's 25th anniversary this summer.

Members of the HEU local are involved in the event on Aug. 2-3 (admission \$20).

But whether or not you can make it, the reunion committee would appreciate any photos, memories or stories.

For more information contact the ADGH Reunion Committee, Box 488, Ashcroft, B.C. V0K 1A0; phone 250-453-2211; fax 250-543-9685; email: grainey@mail.netshop.net.

Avoid deadline panic! Get that CALM feeling

So you want to communicate with your members, and aren't sure how. Try a newsletter.

Does that sound scary? Well, stay calm. In fact, get CALM.

To help overcome the hurdles of writing fear and other phobias, CALM - The Canadian Association of Labour Media - offers *The CALM Handbook for Union Editors*.



The 30-page booklet gives tips on writing style, grammar, layout and the resources you'll need to produce that snappy, informative alternative to employer propaganda.

If you're already producing a newsletter, the CALM info can only make the task easier and more rewarding.

We have extra copies of the handbook in the communications department (the *Guardian*, like most other labour newspapers in Canada, is a member of CALM).

But you might want to consider joining CALM directly. That way you'll receive services like CALMideas, a newsletter about putting out newsletters, and the CALM news and graphics service.

Solidarity in action

HEU members in Campbell River demonstrated labour solidarity by presenting striking graphic arts workers with a cheque for \$250 and walking their picket line in December.

Three members of the Yucalta Lodge Local including chair John Gaudreault participated in the picket of Kask Graphics, where workers were in the sixth month of a strike. Eight members of the Graphic Communications International Union are seeking gains in wages and job security.

Other unions demonstrated their support, including CUPE and the Campbell River and District Teachers' Association, in a rally Dec. 14.

The Kask strikers thanked local unions for their support at a February meeting of the labour council, Gaudreault reported.

Bad boss spotlight

Over the past year, HEU has developed a new relationship with a number of forward-looking employers to make the workplace and Medicare better.

But a recent arbitrator's ruling shows that there are still too many dinosaur bosses in health care.

The case at hand involved an HEU member who applied for special leave when she stayed home for a day to be with her child who had come down with the chicken pox.

The employer claimed that a child with chicken pox didn't constitute an emergency, and the request was denied.

Fortunately, HEU won the issue in arbitration, but it highlights the petty and rigid attitude of some employers that only serves as an obstacle to progressive health care reform.

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HEABC delays essential service talks as unions press politicians for settlement

HEALTH employers have blocked completion of the process to set global levels in the community sector, which will delay the ability of HEU, BCGEU and UFCW to commence essential services discussions with employers at a local level.

HEABC is footdragging on a number of key issues, and these and other more minor ones in dispute have gone to a formal hearing at the Labour Relations Board Feb. 19 and 21.

"Unfortunately, this is consistent with HEABC's overall approach to community sector negotiations," says HEU bargaining spokesperson Zorica Bosancic.

And at press time, community caregivers from the three unions were getting set to make their case for a fair contract settlement with MLAs and at the NDP convention in Vancouver.

In an action plan outlined to community sector members at special report out meetings in January, Bosancic said it was essential for frontline workers to lobby politicians and other decision-makers to press for justice and a fair settlement to bridge the significant



FAIRNESS NOW Hundreds of community sector caregivers and supporters rally Feb. 26 outside the Health Employers Association office.

wage gap in the community.

Talks with the Health Employers Association of B.C. broke off in December after eight months of employer stonewalling. Under the labour code, essential service levels must be set to provide specified health services in advance of any job action in health care. Global orders are negotiated first,

and are a roadmap for implementing essential service agreements at a local level.

LRB vice-chair Emily Burke, who will rule on the outstanding issues, has promised a quick decision that will settle the global order issue and a clear time frame to complete local essential service agreements.

NDP boosts B.C. hospital funding

Three days after announcing an increase of \$6.5 million to reduce coronary surgery and kidney dialysis wait lists, Premier Glen Clark and health minister Joy MacPhail announced on Feb. 20 a 2.8 per cent or \$83 million increase in funding for B.C. hospitals for 1997/98.

"We want our children to grow up healthy, families to get immediate care or surgery when they need it, and our parents to get the care to help them live in dignity and security in their own community," MacPhail said.

HEU's Chris Allnutt gave MacPhail and Clark top marks for the increase that will bring hospital spending up to \$2.97 billion.

"This announcement is a welcome antidote to an otherwise grim week for health care in Canada," says HEU's secretary-business manager. "While Paul Martin continues slashing health transfers to the provinces, B.C. remains the only province to apply significant new funds to patient care."

The government's commitment to stable funding and employment secu-

rity, says Allnutt, means health care reform and regionalization in B.C. will take place in a manner that preserves patient care in a publicly-

administered health care system.

"Victoria must now turn its attention to health services in the community sector where there is a significant need for increased funding to provide for a needed expansion in services and to help bridge the gap in wages between community caregivers and their colleagues in hospitals and long-term care."



MACPHAIL

Local merger plan vital for HEU to keep up with change

After a number of years of discussion and a series of convention mandates, the union's Provincial Executive has adopted a plan to change the union's existing local structure.

The goal of the plan is to take the union's 335 local unions - of which about half have fewer than 50 members - and merge them into larger locals based on geographic and/or common employer lines.

The move reflects one of the challenges HEU activists have been coming to grips with for a number of years: How can the union make changes in its structure to ensure that HEU can best represent members in the workplace and strengthen our role as progressive advocates for health care reform?

Locals with 50 or fewer members will be required to merge with a larger local or with other smaller ones to achieve a larger local unit. Likewise, bigger locals will have a responsibility to accept merger partners. This is to be in place no later than January 1998 so that newly merged locals will be up and running before bargaining in 1998. The only exceptions will be for geographic or other compelling reasons.

The Provincial Executive urges all locals to begin discussions with potential merger partners identified to achieve the goal of building bigger, stronger locals.

Beginning in March members of the Provincial Executive will be assigned to assist small locals with the phase one merger plan. They'll help answer questions like local executive representation and size, the shop steward structure to cover multiple worksites, how to deal with local funds and bank accounts, representation entitlements for conventions, educationals etc.

All locals have received a comprehensive communications package outlining the local merger plan in detail and identifying possible merger partners.

WHAT WE'RE UP TO



HEU's Shorncliffe local members elected a "full slate" of 15 executive members to send a message to their employer.

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Shorncliffe local fills all posts

Talk about your strong locals. The 56 members at Shorncliffe long-term care facility have filled all possible executive positions: 15, to be exact. The Sechelt-based local elected such positions as warden, conductor

and alternate OH&S officer. Up to five people contested some positions. How was this done?

Shorncliffe local chair Charlotte Fortin figures members form a kind of extended family at the facility, and they get along fairly well with their administrator, too. "Not that he does everything we ask, but he listens," Fortin remarks.

Union members contribute to their communities

The union creed "what we desire for ourselves, we wish for all" was put into local action by a number of HEU locals recently. In Victoria, the *Times Colonist* reports that union members in the city are among the most generous contributors to the paper's 1,000 Fund. The Royal Jubilee local raised \$250 and other area locals contributed another \$1,000 when challenged to match or beat Royal Jubilee's donation. Local financial secretary Laura Neil said the Victoria Cancer Clinic employees topped Royal Jubilee's effort. Asked why the local is doing this, Neil said, "We thought it was proper that we look after things at home, as well as afar."

In the Peace River, the Child Development Centre in Dawson Creek received a Christmas gift

of \$200 from the HEU Rotary Manor local. The contribution, from the local's funds, was voted on at the November membership meeting, said local chair Sherry Nornberg.

Nornberg was featured in the *Peace River Block News* handing the cheque to Kim Hughes-Brinsky, also an HEU member at Peace Haven intermediate care facility. Nornberg said the 40-member Rotary Manor local routinely votes financial support for two agencies each Christmas.

Family aid group gets HEU donation

An organization that aids families facing added medical costs has benefited from a raffle held by a Comox Valley local.

In January the Glacier View local handed \$800 to YANA, which stands for You Are Not Alone. YANA gives financial aid

to working families whose children must leave the area for emergency medical care.

Local chair Dorothy Law said two members were recent beneficiaries of YANA, which maintains apartments in Vancouver for parents. "We have a lot of women members with children, so if they have to go with their children this is a big help."

All members of the 110-strong local pitched in to sell raffle tickets and the community responded, said Law. "It was absolutely unbelievable, the support we got."

Kamloops biomed techs act for wage fairness

Biomedical engineering technologists at Royal Inland Hospital in Kamloops have launched a campaign to press employers to eliminate the historically significant wage gap between BMETs who were part of HEU and BMETs from HSA

Accepting Andrea

Coming to terms with her sexuality and gaining support from co-workers has made a union activist of Andrea Senechal

by Dan Keeton

THERE was a time when he'd go to work as Andre, and spend her off-hours as Andrea. After the breakup of a 12-year marriage, that was life for personal care assistant Andrea Senechal, and it took a heavy toll.

"I had not come to terms with it yet," says Senechal, an employee of Holy Family Hospital.

At that point, between 1994 and 1995, Senechal's internal conflicts were making her anti-social which, along

during the next year Senechal started regularly taking hormones. "Then my hair grew and I started trimming my eyebrows. People grew more and more uncomfortable."

The hormones also took their toll. "I became so forgetful, I couldn't remember something told to me five minutes ago. I was very negative and irritable."

Management was unsympathetic. "I received a warning letter from human resources. Their basic attitude was, 'leave your problems at home.'"

Things changed in mid-95 when Senechal was sidelined with a back injury. It kept her off the job for six months and allowed her time to assess the direction of her life.

She sought help from HEU's education department which contracted a human rights specialist. Along with the chief shop steward, they had a series of confidential meetings with the hospital's human resources director.

"They saw a need for some kind of preparation before I returned to work." The employer arranged educational sessions for staff and management.

"They discussed how people should treat me; how to address me, how to explain the situation to residents."

Outside of work, Senechal must still deal with being addressed as "sir." She was denied a social insurance number as a female because she has not yet undergone surgery for the change.

Washroom and shower facilities were modified to accommodate Senechal. For her part, this is not ideal; she believes transgendered women should be accepted as women, but for now is prepared to compromise.

Senechal praises the hospital for its



OVERCOMING DENIAL Andrea Senechal relaxes at home, where photographs of her parents and children are a sign of her family ties.

initiatives, but her chief praise is for her union. "If it wasn't for HEU, the employer wouldn't have done anything. I'd have been fired long ago."

Since January of last year she has lived as a woman, but she rejects the notion that this change was the result of a decision.

"Some people might say it's a big decision, but it's more like coming to terms with your personality."

Last summer Senechal participated in an HEU retreat dealing with discrimination. From that came two videos, *Telling Our Stories* (reviewed in this issue), one of which deals with Senechal's situation through play-acting.

And in January she attended CUPE's anti-racism conference in Toronto. Senechal recalls with warmth a lesbian

trade union activist's call for understanding of transgendered women at a conference workshop.

She also took a few days to travel to Montreal and re-acquaint herself with her parents and siblings.

The visit went well, which she finds gratifying because Senechal places strong emphasis on family.

While praising HEU for its support, Senechal thinks the union can go further the next time it sits at the bargaining table. "One thing I'd like to see in the Master Agreement is a six-month leave for those who have

made a gender change, similar to maternity leave. It's a big adjustment.

"There are a lot of people out there who need help. Education and sensitivity training are ways to overcome that problem."

'If it wasn't for HEU, the employer wouldn't have done anything. I'd have been fired long ago'

with discrimination from management and colleagues, brought on problems at work and a near emotional breakdown.

Now, Senechal is an HEU activist who accepts her sexuality and who credits the union with helping pave the way to a more harmonious work situation.

Born in Montreal, Senechal lived most of her 41 years as many other transgendered women have — in denial.

She married after coming to B.C. in 1980 and fathered two children. Still, despite promises to her wife, the pressures persisted, finding outlets in cross dressing and ingesting estrogen pills.

It led to a separation in 1993 and

BALANCING



IT ALL

WHAT WE'RE UP TO



HEU delegates, pictured at left, who attended CUPE's anti-racism conference in early February were energized by the meeting.

who are now part of HEU as a result of a labour relations board decision.

The Kamloops BMEs are limiting overtime to emergency situations only.

Their pay grievances are being given top priority by HEU in talks with employers over allocation of the \$5

million made available in the recent Master Contract settlement to "level" wage rates in the facility sector.

"We want to bring all BMEs up to the top former HSA rate," said union spokesperson Zorica Bosancic. An arbitrator's decision on the levelling issue is due by the end of February.

Health care workers get public's support

It's usually doctors or nurses who get the praise for performing beyond the call of duty in health care, but a quick glance at some letters to local newspaper editors shows the public appreciates HEU members' contributions as well.

In the *Abbotsford News*, MSA Hospital patients wrote of "new appreciation for these health care workers" during a stay in hospital over Christmas when the area was paralyzed by snow. "Many nurses, kitchen workers, housekeepers, and even security personnel had to stay in the hospital. The staff here did not complain, nor did they lessen their care."

And the *Daily News* in Prince Rupert carried these comments: "I was so impressed by the good spirits and kindness of each and every professional whom I had contact with, from

the housekeeping staff to the nurses. These people are not appreciated for the often difficult jobs they perform," wrote a former patient of Prince Rupert Regional Hospital.

Learning alert!

Capilano College's labour studies program has released its spring line up of courses that offer a wealth of educational opportunities for HEU members on issues ranging from advocacy techniques for stewards to unions on the Internet.

Under HEU policy, the union will reimburse members for the cost of these labour studies courses once a receipt is given to the union to a maximum of \$300 per member per year.

Contact your secretary-treasurer for information on the course offerings. Any similar courses offered elsewhere in B.C. are also eligible for support.

WCB spousal benefits expanded retroactively

There's good news for spouses of workers killed by job-related injury or illness. Under old legislation, benefits were cut off by the Workers' Compensation Board if the survivor remarried. A few years ago a court ruling reinstated benefits to those who remarried after April 17, 1985.

More recently, the B.C. Supreme Court has ruled all survivors are entitled to benefits, regardless of marital status. That means many people, quite a few of them women, are entitled to retroactive benefits. But many might not know about it.

HEU members can be of particular help in locating these survivors, since a number are elderly and subsequently may be resident in senior and long-term care facilities.

For information, contact the WCB at 604-231-8858, or 1-888-922-3700 (toll free).

New language and pay rates on way

As the *Guardian* goes to press, arbitrator Stephen Kelleher is poised to hand down a decision on contract language for a common collective agreement for all health workers in the facility sector, and adjustments to create common pay rates in the sector.

The process, called levelling (common pay rates) and melding (one collective agreement), flows from last year's contract settlement for members of HEU, the BCGEU and the Operating Engineers in the facility sector. As soon as Kelleher brings down his ruling, we'll advise members of the changes with a comprehensive communications package," said HEU negotiator and assistant secretary-business manager Zorica Bosancic.

Kelleher's hearing capped a four month process of talks with the Health Employers Association of B.C. The arbitrator had until Feb. 28 to bring down his final ruling.

On the pay adjustment side, the unions want the wages, benefits and classification system in the old Master Agreement applied across-the-board. About 10 per cent of HEU members – mostly in long-term care – will be covered by the adjustments, which when implemented will be retroactive to April 1 of this year.

The biggest immediate change will be the revamping of the collective agreement article numbering system. Bosancic says that 99 per cent of the articles will have the same language provisions, but they'll be assigned a new number.

Unions have voice, vote as new health board positions approved

HEU'S DAVID Ridley made a little bit of history at the beginning of February.

The Royal Jubilee Hospital biomedical engineering technologist and member of the HEU's Provincial Executive was the first union representative appointment to a regional health board to formally participate in the proceedings with voice and vote.

Ridley says the new positions are "an opportunity to take the concerns, opinions and knowledge of caregivers who work on the frontlines and bring that information to other members of the board."

The positions for union representatives on the 11 regional health boards and 34 community health councils were established by health minister Joy MacPhail in November.

So far, eight of the 11 regional union rep appointments have been formally made, and, in addition to Ridley, three other HEU activists have been appointed:

HEU'S FOUR HEALTH BOARD REPS



RIDLEY



ROWSWELL



BURKE



HINGLEY

• Provincial Executive member Sheila Rowsell to the Vancouver/Richmond Health Board;

• Provincial bargaining committee member Barb Burke to the North Okanagan Health Board; and

• Provincial Executive member Dan Hingley to the Central Vancouver Island Health Board.

It's anticipated the appointments of the 34 union representatives on community health councils will be named by MacPhail's ministry before April.

As the biggest health union, HEU has four representatives on the regional boards and 11 on the community councils.

But, as Ridley points out, union-appointed board members are there to represent all health care workers and their unions,

not just the interests of one particular union.

The unions are putting the finishing touches on a consultation and communications plan to ensure that the union reps are accountable and do reflect the interests of all health workers in a region or community.

Make OH&S rules the law, HEU says

HEU and the rest of the labour movement will be demanding that a royal commission into the *Workers' Compensation Act* ensure that workers get their say on the future of occupational health and safety laws.

The three-member commission begins its hearings soon and will examine all facets of the act, including the structure and services of the Workers' Compensation Board. It's the first royal commission since 1966, and B.C.'s unions say it's long overdue.

'Virtually no worker rights are guaranteed in this province's legislation'

The commission is composed of business representative Oksana Exell, former IWA-Canada president Gerry Stoney and provincial court judge Gurmail Singh Gill, the chair.

One key aim of labour is to enshrine occupational health and safety rules in law, something enjoyed in most other Canadian jurisdictions.

In British Columbia, employers' use of special consultants to discredit claims has resulted in more claims being rejected by the board. That gives a false impression that the number of injuries is decreasing.

The key problem, states the B.C. Federation of Labour is that "virtually no worker rights are guaranteed in this province's legislation."

Employers have been challenging some WCB regulation proposals claiming it has no power to enact them.

It's necessary "to give the ... board the legal jurisdiction to enact necessary regulations," states the Fed.

HEU is calling on the commission to hold two kinds of hearings: community public hearings and more formalized hearings with witnesses and cross-examination.

"The hearings should be accessible to individual citizens throughout the province," states the Fed in a letter to the commissioners.

Labour has long been dissatisfied with the *Workers' Compensation Act*, and alarmed at developments around North America in which employers have aggressively tried to change Workers' Compensation legislation in order to pay less in claims.

PRESIDENT'S DESK



Coming up: a year of change and opportunity

by Fred Muzin

1997 will be a year of dramatic change and challenge for everyone working in health care in British Columbia. Remarkably it has taken more than five years since the Seaton Royal Commission *Closer to Home* report was issued for all of the components to be in place.

The Korbin Commission recommendations to streamline the public service and public sector created the Public Sector Employers' Council and replaced HLRA, CCERA and Pri-Care with HEABC. The Dorsey Commission restructured bargaining by creating five province-wide sectoral contracts. The regionalization review exercise eliminated needless bureaucracy and mandated direct union representation on 45 new regional health boards and community health councils.

HEU members have a unique opportunity to influence the new agenda. We are frontline workers with a vast knowledge of what works best in the delivery of health services. We can advocate for workable regionalization proposals that are realistic, efficient and worker friendly.

'Health workers should not be in more pain than the patients they serve'

For instance, the current scenario being advanced by the health care unions for returning laboratory testing to the public sector makes sense. It ensures that health care funds are returned to the public system rather than being bled off as profits for multinational corporations. There is an inherent conflict of interest in doctors referring patients to labs that these same physicians own. We have a responsibility to educate the public.

We don't need consultants to tell us that Bill C-91, the drug patent legislation, is wrong. While research and development is important, this act provides 20 years of guaranteed profits for business without assurances of job creation for designing improved and new products. The high cost of pharmaceuticals impacts the ability to fund Medicare. We must promote public need rather than corporate greed.

We already know that the solution to high injury costs is not to hire claims managers to fight WCB appeals. Health care has the highest injury rates of any workplace in B.C., and claims are denied at the rate of eight per cent – twice that of other workers. Creating healthy and safe workplaces and investing in prevention and enforcement creates productive health providers and improves morale.

The regional health boards and community health councils must learn what HEABC ignores; health workers should not be in more pain than the patients they serve.

To achieve success we will have to supplement our traditional activism.

In partnership with other health care unions, we must develop and lobby for proposals that fight privatization and ensure the continuity of high quality Medicare as services move into the community.

As April 1st and the transfer of funding to the RHBs approaches, the number of schemes for health reform will mushroom. The potential profits from privatized services is enormous, and we are uniquely situated to provide better alternatives.

Change is always scary but can also be exciting. By staying united and demanding that we be in on the ground floor we can build a sustainable and equitable health care system that truly serves all Canadians.



VISION Intermediate care worker Cindy Dodd is calling on HEU musicians.

Musical member seeks band

by Dan Keeton

At age five, she joined a children's choir. In high school she entered a battle of the bands, and toured with a band after that. For virtually all her life, Cindy Dodd has been singing. Now she'd like to put that talent to use for the union and health care institutions. But she needs help to do it.

Dodd wants musically inclined sisters and brothers to join her in an effort to form a versatile band to play at HEU and other events. And a place to practice wouldn't hurt either, says the HEU shop steward at Haney Intermediate Care Centre.

"The idea is a band that would do both original material and cover tunes," says Dodd. She's looking for a drummer, bass player, rhythm and lead guitars and keyboards. Ability to sing is an asset, and if you can double on harmonica or saxophone, great.

"The idea came to me while I was at the B.C. Fed [convention]," says Dodd. Plus friends and co-workers were always urging her to sing at rallies.

Dodd says she comes from a musical family and that her brother was a major influence.

She toured with a heavy metal band called Reform School after completing high school, but found that it was a strain on the vocal chords. Since then

she's played with a variety of groups and is currently making a tape with some fellow musicians. She likes writing original songs but also covers pop tunes. Dodd likes blues music, but figures the proposed HEU band can and should play a variety of musical styles.

AFTER



THE SHIFT

Dodd started at Haney Intermediate 13 years ago, working in dietary. She's since switched to house-keeping, but that isn't the only change in her routine. Initially non-involved when HEU won the certification in 1986, Dodd became a union activist.

"I've taken the stewards' course, classes on OH&S.

What really attracted me was that the work was getting really dangerous, but there were slight improvements to working conditions after the union came in.

"I've always been a spokesperson for the underdog, and the unity idea really attracted me. My dad was also a big influence. He worked for the IWA for 40 years," Dodd relates.

She's performed concerts for the residents of Haney Intermediate, and in a less formal setting Dodd often sings as she works. "The residents love it, and the nurses encourage it," she notes. An HEU band can perform at union functions or even help facilities' fundraising efforts, says Dodd. "It's something I've wanted to do for a long time."

NOTEBOOK

Election spotlight: Which side is Chretien on, eh?

by Stephen Howard

Earlier this year a lot of "good news" started leaking out of Ottawa about the federal Liberal's deft handling of Canada's finances. As the rumours went, Jean Chretien and crew were doing a better than anticipated job dealing with the deficit through cuts to health care and social programs.

That left them with billions of dollars to craft their strategy to hold on to power in an election that was to happen this spring.

But finance minister Paul Martin's budget – another cruel one for health care – has come and gone and still no election call has been made. Now it seems the earliest Canadians could go to the polls is the early summer, or more likely later in the fall.

Covering the looming election is something that we've wrestled with in this *Guardian*. We've put together a number of stories on important issues for health workers, that look at choices the federal government has made and whose priorities its policies reflect.

One of the key issues is federal funding support to the provinces for Medicare, post-secondary education and social programs. In a special *Guardian* feature, activist Seth Klein takes a look at the Liberal's deficit strategy and its costs: sick social programs, high unemployment, increased poverty, alongside massive tax breaks for



'Deal with the deficit through job creation, fair taxes, strong social programs'

corporations and the rich. But more importantly, Klein outlines a viable alternative budget blueprint that Ottawa could follow. It's one that would deal with the deficit through job creation, fair taxes and strong social programs.

Also covered is federal patent protection for multinational drug companies. It's another issue where the federal Liberals are supporting the interests of big corporations. The protection allows these corporate giants to syphon off more of our scant health resources in the form of profits.

The legislation – first passed by Brian Mulroney – is up for review and should be removed. HEU and other groups want it rescinded, but the Liberals – who opposed the protection in opposition – are bucking any changes.

Issues that speak to credibility are an important measure of any government's record. That's why we've included coverage of the campaign to restore funding to the CBC. In the last election, the Liberals pledged to restore funding for our national public broadcaster. Alas, a broken promise, as Chretien's own regime of cuts have put the CBC in critical condition.

Finally, something about everyone's favourite issue – taxes. Our coverage of the B.C. Federation of Labour's Corporate Tax Freedom Day highlights one of the worst inequities of Liberal economic policy: a tax system that benefits corporations and the rich.

As the clock counts down to a federal election, we'll continue to focus in on key issues in upcoming issues of the *Guardian* and in other special HEU materials. Stay tuned.

Labour

NOTEWORTHY NEWS ABOUT ISSUES AFFECTING WORKING PEOPLE HERE AND ABROAD

Massive strikes force Korean labour law retreat

by Dan Keeton

STRIKING South Korean workers forced a retreat by their anti-labour government in January despite the apathy of world leaders, say Canadian trade unionists.

Following a visit to the Asian nation, Jean-Claude Parrott, executive vice-president of the Canadian Labour Congress, stated that the South Korean president Kim Young-sam promised to send a contentious labour bill back to parliament. "It's happened because of the courage of striking workers and practical support from the international trade union movement," Parrott said.

During late December and most of January South Korean workers and others staged massive strikes and demonstrations after governing members of parliament passed legislation in a secret session stripping workers of job security and union protection.

The laws forbade collective bargaining for teachers and other public sector workers and continued the ban on the popular labour federation, the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions.

The government issued arrest warrants for seven strike leaders, who claimed sanctuary in a cathedral in downtown Seoul, the capital.

"If we had shrugged this off as 'just another labour dispute' as Prime Minister [Jean] Chretien did, there

would be a lot of union leaders and democracy activists suffering in jail or worse," said Parrott, who was met by secret police agents when he landed in South Korea in January as part of an international trade union delegation investigating labour and human rights abuses. One agent hopped into his cab

while a car filled with other agents followed him to his hotel.

Chretien was strongly rebuked by Canadian labour leaders for his comments on the strikes, which shut down the Korean economy during the visit of the Canada trade mission.

Chretien trivialized the conflict, saying "every one of us in Canada, we have our problems with our unions and it seems they have their problems here."

CLC president Bob White charged that, "the PM, visiting a country with a long history of repression, is responding to a fundamental violation of democratic rights as if this was just another disagreement between an employer and some workers."

White said the prime minister traveling abroad "represents more than the business community. He has an obligation to represent the broad views of Canadian citizens."

"When the world's nations [are forced to] recognize basic rights, then global competition will be based on which country is most productive instead of which can most mistreat their workforce," White declared.



WHITE



PARROTT



TROUGHSTERS A host of labour leaders, including HEU president Fred Muzin, far right, cajole their corporate piggies to be first to the trough at the B.C. Federation of Labour event to promote fair taxes.

TAX FREEDOM!

Corporate piggies day an election-eve fair tax forum

Corporate piggies raced to the money trough in a downtown Vancouver hotel and in several other Canadian cities Canadians held events marking Jan. 30 as "Corporate Tax Freedom Day."

In Vancouver the B.C. Federation of Labour hosted a lunch-time event in which key labour leaders like HEU president Fred Muzin and Buzz Hargrove, president of the Canadian Auto Workers, prodded fuzzy, battery-powered piggy toys along a tabletop race track to a straw lined trough filled with play money. Affixed to the toys were banners depicting each of the several tax loopholes the federal government grants big corporations.

Jan. 30 is corporate tax freedom day because big business taxes now account for only eight per cent of the total federal tax revenue and January takes up about eight per cent of the year, says the B.C. Fed.

With a federal election looming, B.C. Fed president Ken Georgetti said the Liberal's re-election bid should provide a forum for a debate "on whether our tax system is working in the best interests of all of us or a privileged few."

"And Canadians should have a right to know why the federal government has created a corporate tax system that gives away \$12 billion a year in tax breaks to profitable big business while every day we are told we cannot afford valuable public services like health care and education," Georgetti said.

"Back in 1950, personal income tax generated 27 per cent of all federal tax revenue, and corporate income tax generated 28 per cent," he said.

Now individual Canadians contribute

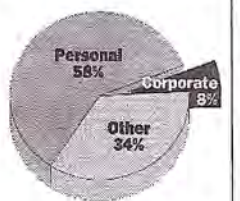
58 per cent of the federal income tax revenue, and the federal government's seemingly endless list of corporate tax breaks come out of your pocket, the tuxedo-clad federation president said.

For example, the meals and entertainment deduction "cost Canadian taxpayers about \$341 million in 1996." And an item called "fast write-off" for exploration and development dinged the treasury for \$730 million last year, said Georgetti.

The federal government defends corporate tax breaks on the promise that big business will create jobs with the money. The B.C. Fed says there's no proof that happens and cutting corporate tax breaks would provide money for job creation. Said Georgetti, "\$1 billion in tax breaks could create 25,000 direct jobs paying \$40,000 each."

Share of federal revenues

1994
Corporate 8%
Personal 58%
Other 34%



1950
Corporate 28%
Personal 27%
Other 45%



Sip a unionized cup of java

Workers at six Starbucks Coffee locations in Vancouver are now pressing for a first contract with their profitable U.S.-based employer after they voted to join the Canadian Auto Workers' union late last year.

Wages, benefits and hours of work are the key issues for the workers who start at \$7 an hour. CAW rep John Bowman says employees are aiming for wage hikes to \$10-\$13 an hour with overtime provisions.

Negotiations have begun, but, "the employer is slow getting their act together," said Bowman. "We're looking at doing something to get the process moving along."

The six Starbucks outlets are the first in Canada and probably in North America to go union. CAW is continuing the drive.

You can offer your support to these new union members who are helping the trade union movement break new ground in the service sector by taking a cuppa at one of Starbucks' six unionized cafes:

- Lower Robson (by Manhattan Books)
- 811 Hornby St.
- 1095 Howe St.
- Royal Centre
- 3492 Cambie St.
- 1752 Commercial





DAN KEETON PHOTOS

HEU and HSA are joining forces in a campaign that will promote increased use of hospital labs to improve services, preserve jobs and protect medicare

make it public!

by Stephen Howard

OUR HOSPITAL labs are on the frontline of health care restructuring, and big changes are taking shape. To deal with these challenges, HEU has teamed up with the Health Sciences Association in an ambitious campaign to promote greater public use of our hospital labs, and to press Victoria to bring all lab testing – inpatient and outpatient – into the public sector.

With the rallying call of *Make it Public*, the unions will tell the public that they can take a doctor's test requisition with the name of a private lab company on it to a public hospital lab instead of private labs, which have a stranglehold on the lucrative outpatient testing market.

Another campaign element is joint work with forward-looking employers and the Health Labour Adjustment Agency to improve the services public hospital labs provide to outpatients. These outreach programs involve significant changes so that hospital labs can compete head on with the private sector.

'It shows the public sector can be more efficient than the private sector'

The outreach programs – some of which are already up and running – are designed to improve convenience, customer service, and accessibility for the public. That means increased hours of operation, a "customer friendly" location within the facility, designated parking spots, and "one-stop" shopping features like quick testing times, test reporting systems, clinical consultation services, and customer education programs.

The lab campaign, says HEU secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt, provides both challenges and opportunities for the two unions. "The lab issue is a good example of the new ways that we're making changes in our health system to preserve Medicare," he said. "We're protecting jobs as new automated testing technology and work processes, which have an impact on employment, are being implemented.

"We are also protecting Medicare because increased use of public labs means our health care dollars stay in the public health system instead of boosting the profits of big private sector operators like MDS Inc.," says Allnutt. He estimates that \$50 million each year are siphoned out of our B.C. health care



system in the form of profits for MDS, B.C. Biomedical and other private operators.

But just as important, Allnutt says, it's proof that the public sector can change, can innovate, and be more efficient than the private sector, while providing a higher quality service.

"I think the lab outreach efforts will serve as a catalyst for integrating services between community and facilities which is the goal of health care reform. And I'm confident that Victoria has the political will to resolve the public versus private debate on the delivery of labs services in favour of the public sector."

Lab expert Joan Ruddell agrees that the new outreach programs will create links between hospitals, community services and long-term care to help integrate services and save resources.

Hired by the Health Labour Adjustment Agency to work with employers and HEU and HSA on outreach initiatives, Ruddell says this will translate into important gains for HEU and HSA members. "This is an excellent opportunity to provide health workers with new skills through appropriate training programs to meet new outreach needs," she says.

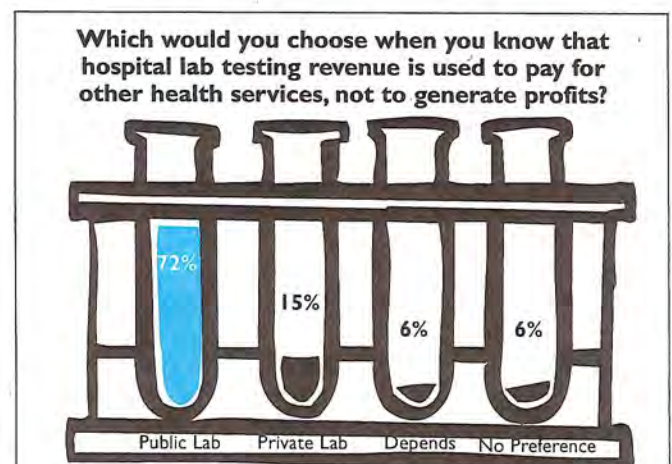
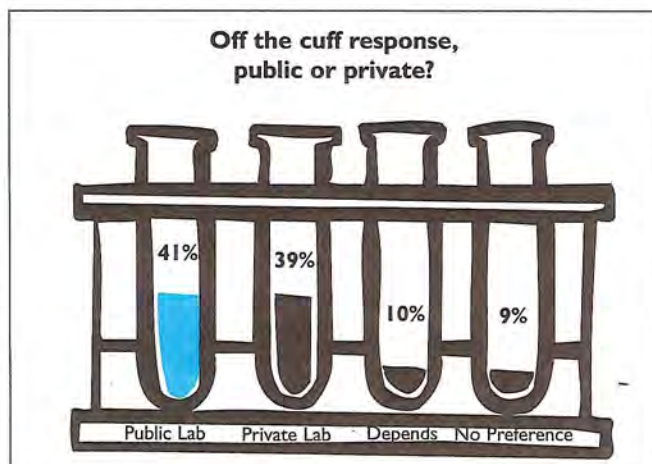
Ruddell knows the strengths and weaknesses of both sides of

HARD AT WORK Shabnaz Ramji, above left, slices thin wafers of wax to place on slides before immersing them in hot water. Sharon Christensen, above, prepares a petrie dish with a nutrient solution. Both women are medical technologists at Vancouver Hospital and HSA members.

Poll shows people prefer public labs

An HEU poll posed a two-part question on labs. Off the cuff, preference is split evenly.

But when private supporters learn that public labs recycle testing revenue to pay for other health services, support for public labs balloons.



SOURCE: HEU/MCINTYRE & MUSTEL POLL

THE LAB CAMPAIGN EXPLAINED

1

Protecting jobs

We're using the security of the health accord to improve and expand service to the public.

2

Controlling utilization

Only the public sector has the checks and balances to ensure that only necessary tests are performed.

3

A test is more than just a result

That's why hospital labs educate the public about appropriate testing, wellness programs and discharge planning. The private sector doesn't.

4

We're full-service providers

Public labs perform a full range of tests. Private labs cherry pick a limited number of profitable, high volume tests.

5

Quality care, not profits

Quality lab services are an important part of the continuum of care. Only public labs are positioned to be a part of the integration of community and facility-based health services.

6

Strengthening Medicare

Using public labs means our health care dollars stay in the public health system. And that strengthens Medicare!



STAIN ABILITY
Medical technologist Harjinder Garcha carefully stains a slide for viewing in a microscope.

the fence. She worked in both the public and private lab systems in B.C. for 25 years, including a stint in a senior management position at B.C. Bio. But since 1991, she's been working to bring more lab business back into the public sector. "It's been based on my belief in the Canadian health system, in our public Medicare system," she says. "A public lab system supports the new continuum of care that is developing. We should all be doing whatever we can to protect it."

With critical knowledge of how the private sector operates, Ruddell says "it's absolutely key that health unions and employers are working together on this, moving forward. It will help stabilize jobs and also create new ones in the community."

Across Canada, lab restructuring is proceeding quickly, as hospitals in most urban areas are developing a core lab system utilizing new high volume automated testing equipment — a move that's having a huge impact on employment.

The Vancouver/Richmond Health Board is currently dealing with a proposal to bring a core lab system to hospitals in its jurisdiction. Under the plan Vancouver Hospital and Health Sciences Centre would be designated the core testing centre. Labs at St. Paul's and Children's would serve as rapid response labs performing tests with turnaround times of less than three to four hours, as well as performing specialized tests.

Lab outreach is also a part of the Vancouver/Richmond restructuring proposal, which will measurably cushion the employment impact of the new technology. The two health unions, employers and the HLAA are working together to get a major outreach initiative up and running before summer.

But alarmingly, in many provinces the technological change goes hand-in-hand with privatization efforts as governments like Harris' in Ontario and Klein's in Alberta are encouraging big private sector lab companies to take over hospital lab testing. While B.C. hospitals are implementing new technology like their counterparts in the rest of Canada, HEU's Allnutt says that's where the similarities end.

"Fortunately we're not seeing the accompanying push for privatization here for a number of reasons," he says. "For one, we have a provincial government that is committed to maintaining Medicare and public provision of services. There's also the Employment Security Agreement which provides security, stability and resources for health workers to use their frontline knowledge to play a role in making changes," he says.

But another key factor is that a number of forward-looking employers are opposed to the privatization fix, and want to expand the role of public labs in B.C. The Greater Victoria Hospital Society is a good example of how employers can opt for a progressive approach. In 1995 the facility started its lab restructuring plan with the core lab — which opened last fall — at Victoria General. Coincidentally, it started the outreach initiative, working with HEU and HSA representatives and consultant Joan Ruddell to set up the lab outreach program.

Despite all the changes that took place there was no actual job loss for HEU positions. In fact there were even some gains in positions and others had increases in hours. It wasn't an easy process, says Allnutt, and required a lot of work for labour adjustment committees and involved some disputes, but overall it proved successful.

The lab outreach project has worked well and GVHS has been able to attract new business, and provide better service that even the private sector can't compete with. Take Victoria Cancer Clinic patients, for whom a private lab turnaround time for the blood work required before each chemo treatment was one to two days. In the new GVHS lab the turnaround time is about an hour. It means cancer patients complete their lab work and chemo treatment within four to five hours.

Vancouver Island is a showcase of lab outreach initiatives. Saanich Peninsula Hospital has had the most success expanding the role of public labs by providing better service than the private sector. The hospital has a number of off-site specimen collection storefronts and state of the art testing facilities. The outpatient testing revenue it generates strengthens its financial base.

But other hospitals have been slow off the mark. Burnaby Hospital, which has promoted a number of privatization efforts in other areas, is typical of facilities where management has made no effort to improve public lab services.

While the drive to expand the use of public labs is gaining momentum, there are a number of challenges still ahead. One major roadblock, says Allnutt, is that the Medical Services Commission in Victoria has stopped granting new collection site licenses, which will make it hard for the public lab system to open new community-based collection sites. He also warns that private sector lab companies and their doctor allies wield a great deal of power and should not be underestimated.

"They have a lot at stake, and will be strong opponents to our efforts to make lab work public."



CHECK PLEASE
Receiving clerk and HEU member Carolyn McMullen checks in a delivery of test tubes.

PROFILE OF A LAB GIANT

MDS "partnership" plan a shrewd play for privatization

A major Toronto lab testing giant that already has a stranglehold on the B.C. outpatient testing market has entered the fray with a proposal to the Vancouver/Richmond Health Board for a "public/private" partnership that would expand their role.

The carefully worded and unsolicited MDS Inc. plan calls for a "feasibility assessment" of a new model of lab services that ultimately would expand the role of the private sector in an important part of our Medicare system.

The proposal is based on other so-called "public/private partnerships" — the new buzzword for privatization — that MDS Inc. has entered into in Alberta and Ontario. Under the right-wing Harris and Klein governments, the company has grabbed a significant piece of lab testing for hospitals in Calgary, Edmonton and Toronto.

MDS Inc. enjoyed a record financial year

in 1996, with revenue of more than \$800 million in 1996 and \$51 million in profits — a 50 per cent increase from the year before. Revenues are forecasted to hit \$1.3 billion by 2000.

The Toronto company — which has inked significant lab contracts with the biggest U.S. hospital chain — moved swiftly into B.C. in the early 1990s. First MDS bought out Metro-McNair labs and then swallowed Island Medical Labs on Vancouver Island.

Then the company built an \$11 million state-of-the-art high capacity lab in Burnaby. But insiders say the new lab is operating well under capacity, and MDS needs to gain inpatient testing work already done by hospitals to make the lab financially viable.

The company has a smart strategic approach to win new business. They hired the ex-treasurer of the Ontario NDP who serves as a smooth talking vice-president.

In an effort to grease the wheels in Victoria to expand their B.C. market, they signed up former NDP finance minister Elizabeth Cull as a lobbyist last summer. And when the Greater Victoria Hospital Society began its lab outreach programs, MDS Inc. hired Canada's biggest public relations firm to run interference.

HEALTH GROUP, LABOUR FIGHT BILL C-91

HEU part of effort to repeal patent protection for drug giants

Federal legislation called Bill C-91 that extends lucrative patent protection to multinational drug companies is a major threat to Canada's Medicare system and needs overhauling, says the trade union movement and the Canadian Health Coalition.

That's why HEU is part of a campaign to press Ottawa to make changes to the act which is siphoning billions of dollars from the Canadian system through skyrocketing drug costs while fattening the profits of big drug firms.

"Canadian health care is moving from a system of caring and prevention to one of promoting prescription drug use," warns HEU president Fred Muzin.

Muzin says HEU locals are being mailed packages outlining the issues and actions for members to participate in, including writing letters to their MPs on the issue, while the union's Provincial Office is busy lobbying government and the committee which will review the legislation.

The Canadian Health Coalition, a labour-backed organization fighting for the socialization of medicine, calls Bill C-91, "a prescription for plunder."

Called the *Drug Patent Amendment Act*, it was passed during the final days of the former Mulroney government in February 1993, after intense lobbying from the big pharmaceutical companies and to the outrage of labour, community groups and anti-poverty activists.

The act extends the patent on drugs for 20 years before they can be copied and sold as a much cheaper, generic product.

The coalition says generic drugs should be allowed after four years of patent protection. It supports the alternative federal budget which calls for a National Drug Plan to ensure access to drugs as a right under the *Canada Health Act*.

Bank bigwigs' pay and perks under scrutiny

A LEADING anti-poverty activist is hailing a court ruling that forces two of Canada's big banks to offer a shareholders' vote on the huge salaries they pay their CEOs.

Lynne Toupin, executive director of the National Anti-Poverty Organization (NAPO), said the ruling dovetails with efforts by NAPO to make banks more accountable. CEO salaries and the general issue of the private way banks are run came under the

spotlight recently thanks to a court action by a Quebec investor rights activist. As a result, the Quebec Superior Court ordered two banks to offer shareholders an opportunity to vote on a plan limiting the salaries of top executives. The action was launched by Yves Michaud, a former journalist and former international representative for a Parti Quebecois government.

The ruling meant that the Royal Bank and the National Bank of Canada were to place a motion at their shareholders' meetings in March to limit top salaries to 20 times the salary of the average bank employee.

Other elements of the plan include barring any executive member from serving as chair of the board of directors, prohibiting any board member

from providing services to the bank, and limiting terms on the board to no more than 10 consecutive years.

The Royal Bank was to appeal the ruling, while the National Bank had not made a decision. Both banks had shareholders' meetings slated for March.

Michaud's victory is significant since ordinary shareholders usually have little power to set the agenda for annual meetings. And it also underscored the issue of enormous salaries paid to top executives and the lack of control shareholders and consumers have over bank decisions.

"It certainly brings into the public debate the massive salaries and massive profits of banks when there are so many people at the other end of the economic scale," said Toupin.



SAVE CBC CAMPAIGN Veteran broadcaster Daryl Duke, left, civic activist Mel Lehan and David Suzuki plant a lawn sign to kick off the Friends of CBC campaign. They want Prime Minister Chretien to keep his election pledge.

CBC friends fight broken promise

The Canadian labour movement has a long history of support for publicly owned broadcasting, said the president of the Canadian Labour Congress to the nation in a unique conference call in January.

Addressing six cities across Canada, including an unseen audience gathered in CBC Vancouver's Broadcast 1 studio and a caucus of Liberal MPs in Quebec, Bob White said trade unionists don't want to get all their news "through the eyes of CBS, ABC and NBC."

"The free market cannot be allowed to dominate everything," White declared to MPs and supporters gathered together by the coalition Friends of the CBC.

Despite pre-election promises, Prime Minister Jean Chretien's Liberal govern-

ment has cut millions from CBC's budget, continuing a trend started by the Conservatives. Cuts announced late last year chopped CBC Radio's budget by 25 per cent. By April 1, 850 jobs will be gone.

The event was one of several staged by the Friends coalition to prevent further financial cuts to the publicly owned broadcasting system. Earlier that month, prominent British Columbians David Suzuki and Daryl Duke helped hammer a Support CBC sign into a lawn outside a Kitsilano home in a major publicity drive to preserve the beleaguered corporation. Four hundred attended a rally in Vancouver on Feb. 13, and another was set for the following week.

Local and regional television services

have been chopped by 50 per cent, axing all regional arts and entertainment, and community programming.

"There used to be three things that

'Trade unionists don't want to get all their news through the eyes of CBS, ABC and NBC'

united us a country," said Deborah Bourque, vice-president of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers from Ottawa. "Those were trains, the postal service and the CBC. The Tories destroyed the trains, and now this government seems hell-bent on destroying the postal service and the CBC."

Peter Dimitrov of the Rally for Canada Committee said in Vancouver that "the CBC reflects the soul of this country." He said Canadians need an independent broadcaster and suggested the government end tax breaks to corporations and tax bank profits instead of cutting public broadcasting.

From the Quebec caucus meeting, Vancouver-Quadra Liberal MP Ted McWhinney thanked the Friends of the CBC for the "hundreds of letters" and suggested they come up with "concrete suggestions" for preserving the CBC.

Further cuts are threatened in the next federal budget. The government plans to reduce the CBC's parliamentary allocation by 33 per cent between 1994 and 1998.

Friends of the CBC has launched a petition demanding the cutbacks cease, and is urging citizens to write their MPs. No postage is required.

Yarrow points way for community workers

WORKERS at Yarrow Lodge have made great gains since joining HEU, virtually doubling their wages and establishing seniority rights at the community institution.

It's an impressive beginning, but they still lag seriously behind their sisters and brothers in the facilities sector, say union activists seeking to close the gap at talks for a community sector contract.

Yarrow is part of that sector which has traditionally been a low-wage, no benefits ghetto. Before the Yarrow employees signed their union cards in 1992 they made wages barely above the provincial minimum. Now they take home pay cheques that reflect the value of their work.

And there are the other things. "Before we got the union, I worked all my stats [statutory holidays]," notes activity worker Chris Boogerd.

"Now we've got things like extended medical benefits," says care aide Wendy Taylor, one of 14 full-time staff at the long-term care facility for psychiatric patients.

Boogerd and Taylor are, respectively, chair and secretary-treasurer for the local at the facility which takes its name from a small village nestled in the Fraser Valley near Chilliwack.

Boogerd is a nine-year employee who helped negotiate the first collective agreement at the private, for-profit facility. Taylor is a long-time health care worker with five years' seniority at Yarrow Lodge.

"It's like training management all over

again," remarks Taylor. "It took two years to get our contract and another two years to get it signed."

Wages have almost doubled since HEU began representing Yarrow workers. Before the collective agreement, a care aide made \$7.20 per hour; the job now pays \$13.61. Activity workers went from \$9.50 to \$13.91.

Part of the collective agreement allows workers to attend courses upgrading their skills. Management pays half the tuition and wages for the time off.

Work with psychiatric patients can be routine and then suddenly explode into danger.

Both Boogerd and Taylor have been attacked by patients; in Taylor's case, she was struck a year and a half ago.

Taylor says the situation has im-



IMPROVEMENTS Yarrow Lodge workers Kathy Hendrix, left, Chris Boogerd and Wendy Taylor cite better wages and benefits with HEU.

proved since the HEU contract but the local is seeking changes to the staffing ratio, which currently is one worker to 19 patients.

Unlike most facilities, Yarrow staff generally get along with management,

says Taylor, who reports there have been only about 10 or 11 written grievances since the workers certified.

Going union posed challenges for the workers as well, says Taylor. "It's a hard change, but a good change."

HEABC community move prompts sit-ins

Arrowsmith Lodge in Parksville has protested attempts by the Health Employers Association (HEABC) to remove adult day care and drug and alcohol counselling services from the facilities subsector, a move which prompted job action at several facilities in January.

In a letter Jan. 14 to HEABC, Arrowsmith management criticized the association for launching an action at the Labour Relations Board without consulting the long-term care facility.

In January, HEU members took action to protest HEABC's attempt to place adult day care workers in the low-

wage community sector, where workers make up to \$7 per hour less than those doing the same work at facilities.

In Victoria, caregivers at Juan de Fuca Hospital held a 15-minute study session Jan. 9 concerning the hospital's adult day care at the site. The next morning Arrowsmith Lodge workers staged a half-hour study session to support adult day care workers. Members from every department participated. Three HEU members work in the centre which is very much a part of the facility.

Caregivers who took part received letters of discipline and local chair Kathy Gilmour was warned she would be fired

if she engaged in further actions.

But Arrowsmith administrator Hector Pitcher also wrote HEABC to complain about the association telling the LRB that Arrowsmith's day care centre is distinct from the facility. "We are disappointed HEABC did not check with us," Pitcher wrote. "It would be totally inappropriate to place our adult day care program in the community subsector."

About 100 members met in the cafeteria of Queen's Park hospital in New Westminster Jan. 13 for 15 minutes to discuss the possible loss of what is called the Day Health Program in that facility.

Bosses pay, perks lead to damage control exercise

Stung by widespread media criticism over big pay boosts for community sector employers and the Mulchey severance scandal, B.C.'s health employers organization has embarked on a widespread damage control exercise.

Amid public outrage at year's end, a government investigation into Mulchey's \$500,000 golden handshake found that St. Paul's Hospital lied about the circumstances surrounding his departure. At first, the hospital claimed that Mulchey had voluntarily retired. But under the scrutiny of the investigation, it was revealed Mulchey had in fact been forced out, which prevented the government from clawing back the half million dollar payoff.

Following that was the revelation by HEU and its community bargaining partners of pay boosts of up to 32 per cent for community administrators to achieve parity with their facility counterparts.

In a flurry of correspondence in early January, Health Employers Association head Gary Moser scurried to find out who makes what on the management side in a bid to head off any new revelations of excessive pay boosts and perks for administrators.

"It can be expected that when [Master] bargaining recommences health

care unions will raise the question of management salary increases," wrote Moser. HEABC needs data, he says "so that we can address this issue."

Coincidentally, Victoria's public sector employers council has pressed HEABC to immediately prepare a report on salary boosts for employers in the \$100,000-plus a year bracket dating back to March 1993, when on-again-off-again provincial government wage controls on high-paid administrators first kicked in. It's another sign that the NDP is acting on concerns over compensation levels.

But in one of the letters, Moser hints at how employers can get around potential violations of the wage freeze.

"Where any such changes [in salary] have been made," he said in paint-by-numbers fashion, "it is important to indicate specifics of the change such as changes contained in an existing employment contract, or changes reflecting a modification in job responsibilities or organizational structure."

Meanwhile, in another letter regarding compensation boosts for community sector employers, Moser says that pay boosts for administrators "must be financed by existing funding sources" which a community health agency receives to provide services to clients.



LOCKED OUT since Oct. 28, community caregivers at the Ottawa Valley Autistic Homes Association rally to win a fair contract settlement for their 60 members. The CUPE members' employer used new Ontario labour legislation to hire scabs, a move copied by a number of other Ontario community health employers in a spate of similar lockouts.

Poised to go to the polls, Jean Chretien's Liberals will trumpet their budget measures that have reduced the deficit. The cost? Savage funding cuts on health and social services and high unemployment. It's a scenario that's

OUT OF balance!



check this out:

- under the Liberals official unemployment rates are stuck at 10 per cent.
- the poverty rate is rising, and the number of children living in poverty is rising even faster.
- Chretien and his crew have so far cut \$6 billion for health, education and social assistance.
- there are budget alternatives that deal with the deficit through job creation, fair taxes and strong social programs.

It's budget time again. On Feb. 18, the federal Liberals tabled their fourth budget – likely the last before a federal election. And as Chretien and company prepare to test the election waters, the Liberals claim this is a good news budget.

They say job creation is right around the corner; action is being taken on child poverty; and according to Finance Minister Martin, "There have never been a better set of economic indicators than now."

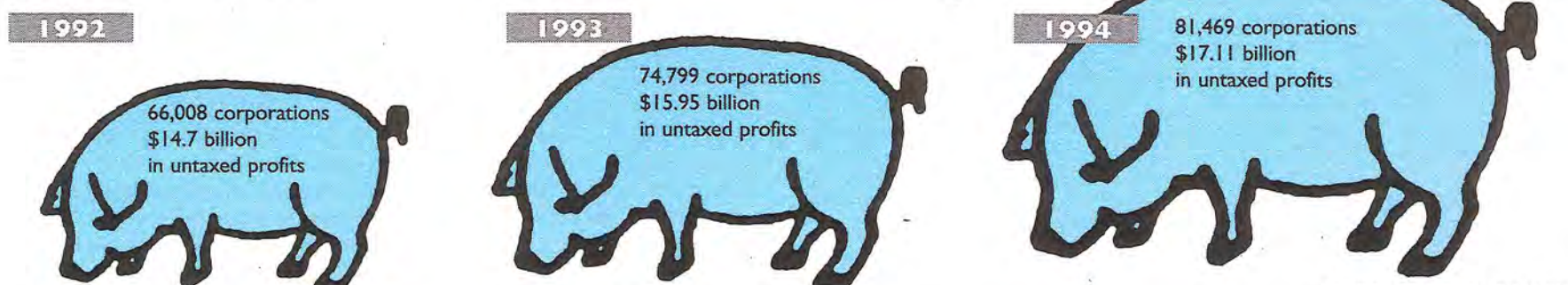
Oh really? Three years ago, Martin announced that Canada faced a fiscal crisis, and his response was to embark on the most savage program of spending cuts in Canadian history. As a consequence, Canada faces a crisis in public funding, a jobs crisis, and a crisis of confidence in the future.

The Liberal's promise of job creation rings hollow, federal "action" on child poverty barely scratches the surface, and while the "economic indicators" of interest to investors may look bright (deficit targets are being surpassed, profits are up, and inflation is low), the indicators that matter to most Canadians haven't been this bleak since the 1930s.

Official unemployment is stuck at 10 per cent, the real per capita gross domestic product (GDP) is lower than it was in 1989, the poverty rate is 18 per cent (up 3.7 points since 1989), the child poverty rate is

YO! BELLY UP TO THE TROUGH! MORE COMPANIES PAY NO TAXES AT ALL.

The number of profitable corporations that pay no income tax on profits has increased under the Liberals.



SOURCE: STATISTICS CANADA

BY SETH KLEIN

at 21 per cent (up 5.7 points since 1989), and real wages are stagnant. While short-term interest rates have come down, this is a reflection of the economy's weakness, not its strength, and relative to inflation, interest rates remain historically high.

"We have no choice — there is no alternative," goes the chorus from government and big business. Martin insists government programs had to be cut. He claims slashing transfer payments to the provinces for health care, post-secondary education and welfare by 40 per cent was unavoidable. He maintains eliminating over 50,000 federal public sector jobs was necessary. Not so.

There is a choice

On Feb. 12, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, the Manitoba CHOICES coalition, and the Canadian Labour Congress released the third Alternative Federal Budget (AFB). We insist that politics is about choices — that there are alternatives.

Budgets matter. Beyond outlining a government's revenues and expenses (how it will tax and what it will spend on programs), budgets reflect a society's values and priorities. But the budgets of recent years haven't reflected the values of most Canadians; rather, they have catered to the interests of the wealthy and large corporations.

The AFB sets new targets for the government to meet the needs of ordinary Canadians by the year 2000:

- reduce unemployment to at least six per cent;
- reduce poverty to at least 12 per cent;
- lower the federal debt to 60 per cent of Canada's GDP.

The AFB results from a national consultation process involving hundreds of individuals, trade unions and community groups from across the country. These people share a common belief that the best way to reduce the deficit and debt is to create more jobs, lower interest rates, and build a fairer tax system. Indeed, our approach lowers the debt-to-GDP ratio at a faster rate than the government, because our program is not based on cuts that stifle growth, depress real wages, and squash public confidence and expectations.

We need a million jobs

Budget debates are plagued by hypocrisy. Those who say there is no money for social programs and job creation have lots; those who dismiss the reality of stagnant real wages have seen theirs soar.

The AFB lists a vast array of job creation proposals, and offers specific recommendations for employment equity, youth employment, First Nations employment, and improved opportunities for people with disabilities. AFB job creation proposals include:

- a further reduction in interest rates to encourage investment in job-creating enterprise;
- establishing an Emergency Job Creation Program to invest in community social and environmental needs, including an ecological infrastructure program, increased spending on roads, bridges and mass transit, and a national social housing construction program;
- a plan to redistribute work time;
- strengthening public sector employment by increasing spending on social programs and public services, including establishing a national child care program;
- creating a National Investment Bank, funded by financial institutions, to invest in community economic development.

Enhancing Medicare

The Liberals insist their cuts to transfer payments haven't threatened Medicare. This is simply not true. B.C. alone has lost close to \$350 million in health care funding this year. We are witnessing the gradual privatization of health care services; private spending

on health care has risen from 23.6 per cent to 28.2 per cent of total spending over the last 20 years. Federal cuts have impelled most provincial governments to reduce hospital services and staffing; and with less federal money going towards health care, Ottawa is rapidly losing its ability and moral authority to protect the tenets of the *Canada Health Act*.

The AFB recommits the federal government to the *Canada Health Act* and to providing cash transfers necessary to ensure standards are met. We direct new money towards health care, and propose a National Drug Plan aimed at lowering prescription drug costs.

There is no reason why one of the richest countries on earth cannot eliminate poverty. The AFB outlines numerous income support and child support proposals that take direct aim at poverty.

Paying for our plan

The loudest voices calling for tax cuts already got theirs. By international standards Canada is not over-taxed. Total taxes collected in 1993 (the latest year for which statistics are available) amounted to 35 per cent of GDP — the 12th lowest level among major industrialized countries.

But 81,469 profitable corporations paid no income taxes in 1994.

During the last two years, untaxed profits in the financial sector exceeded \$5 billion. And last year, 250

Canadians earning over \$250,000 were able to avoid paying income taxes altogether through perfectly legal tax breaks.

While approximately 80 per cent of the increased revenue needed to finance our AFB proposals are expected to come from increased growth and employment, about 20 per cent is to come from new taxes. These include:

- taxing capital gains at the same rate as income;
- instituting an inheritance tax for wealth transfers over \$1 million;
- re-introducing two new upper-income tax brackets on incomes over \$100,000;
- a minimum corporate tax, ensuring corporations cannot "stack" deductions to eliminate their taxable income;
- eliminating personal and corporate tax deductions such as the meals and entertainment deduction;
- a surtax on bank profits.

The AFB proposes to lower taxes for low-income people, who we know spend their money in our communities.

The AFB shows that deficit/debt reduction can be achieved without tearing apart our social safety net and consigning over a million Canadians to unemployment.

We have an alternative that is hopeful, economically viable, fiscally responsible, and meets the real needs of people and communities.

And the good news is most Canadians agree. A recent *Globe and Mail/Environics* poll found that 57 per cent of Canadians support our view that government should spend more on social programs, and only nine per cent support an across-the-board tax cut.

Now if we could just get a government prepared to concentrate on economic and social security for everyone.

• A former freelance writer, researcher and activist, Seth Klein is the Coordinator of the new B.C. office of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. Copies of the 1997 AFB can be obtained from the HEU Provincial Office.

THE INCREDIBLE SHRINKING FEDERAL TRANSFER PAYMENTS

The Liberal's "successful" deficit reduction strategy is based on cutting funding to provinces for health, education and social programs. Federal cash transfers will decline from \$18.8 billion in 1994/95 to \$11 billion in 1999/2000, a cumulative total cut of \$25.2 billion.



SOURCE: FEDERAL FINANCE DEPARTMENT

MARCH 11-13

Introductory shop stewards course, Okanagan region, Kelowna.

MARCH 24-26

HEU Provincial Executive meeting, Richmond.

APRIL 2/3

Special province-wide workshops on restructuring and regionalization kick off in the Fraser Valley, Abbotsford.

APRIL 2-4

Introductory shop stewards course, Kootenay region, Nelson.

APRIL 7/8

Restructuring and regionalization workshop, Vancouver Island region, Victoria.

APRIL 8-10

Introductory shop stewards course, northern region, Prince George.

APRIL 10/11

Restructuring and regionalization workshop, Lower Mainland, Vancouver.

Targeting prejudice on the job

HEU produces two new videos, *Margaret's Museum* also reviewed

DISCRIMINATION hurts, and just how much it hurts sometimes becomes uncomfortably clear in two new HEU videos that members should consider required viewing.

Last year Actor's Equity members Patti Fraser and Stephen Hill helped HEU members dramatize their on-the-job experiences during a summer retreat.

The result was a series of skits captured on videotape and presented as two videos collectively entitled, *Telling Our Stories: Speaking Out* and *Inhuman Resources*, and are available through the HEU education department.

There are tears in these tapes, and it's hard not to shed a few in sympathy. But there are also some good laughs to be had while learning about discrimination against union brothers and sisters on the basis of ethnicity, colour, physical challenges or sexual orientation.

In the tape called *Speaking Out*, a group depicts workers on their coffee



HARD ACT TO FOLLOW HEU members role play discriminatory behaviour for the HEU video *Telling Our Stories: Speaking Out* and *Inhuman Resources*.

break. Outwardly friendly, in private they engage in putdowns of each other. The remarks are typical: Asians buy up all the houses and gays "swish" when they walk.

Testimonials can be hard to take, as when a Native woman describes her rough past, or when transgendered Andrea reveals in a skit her problems with co-workers and hospital management on the tape, *Inhuman Resources*.

But the mini-plays are structured to allow audience intervention — a volunteer takes the place of a character in the skit to try for a more satisfying resolution to the conflict. In that way, all participants are empowered and better equipped to deal with discrimination, whether against themselves or, perhaps more importantly, on behalf of a sister or brother.

Margaret's Museum

In the early part of the century, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia was known for its coal mines — and for the terrible toll in lives before the advent of trade unions

and the push for health and safety laws.

Margaret's Museum, based on the best-selling book of the same name, brings this era to life, along with the rugged beauty of Atlantic Canada.

British actor Helena Bonham Carter, who usually portrays young women of refinement in a host of Merchant Ivory films, excels as the tough talking title character courted by an itinerant fiddler who swears he'll

never go down in the mines.

But where else do you go when the mines are all there is?

Canadians Kate Nelligan and Kenneth Welsh round out the stellar cast in this part tragedy, part comedy revolving around the contents of Margaret's little museum.

And when we think about it, things haven't changed all that much, considering the current scandal around the Westray mine disaster. It makes this video truly relevant.

• *Margaret's Museum* is available at major video outlets.



HEALTH CARE ON WORKING TV

Health care issues to be featured on B.C.'s award-winning labour show

The community subsector, Bill C-91 and nursing levels at long-term care facilities will be in the spotlight on Working TV, labour's power half-hour starting around the end of March.

Call 253-6222 or 1-800-562-1622 for precise times as that period draws near, or check the Vancouver and District Labour Council web site: www.vcn.bc.ca/vdlc.

Working TV is now weekly beginning Thursday at 6:30 p.m., repeated Friday, 7:30 p.m. and Monday, 1:30 p.m. on

Rogers Community 4 network for Lower Mainland viewers.

For Campbell River, it's seen Wednesday at 6:30 p.m. and Monday at 8 p.m. on CRTV 10, and in Revelstoke it's Wednesday at 9 a.m. and Thursday at 11 a.m.

Repeat shows are also carried nationally on Vision TV's program, *Over the Fence*, airing at 2 p.m.



Coffee break



All stories guaranteed factual. Sources this issue: *American Journal of Nursing*, *Canadian Dimension*, *Georgia Straight*, CALM

End to a sad era in B.C. hailed

An end to institutionalizing people with developmental disabilities came last October when the final two residents left Woodlands institution for new homes in the community.

Their departure makes B.C. the first province to end the practice which began more than a century ago with the opening of Woodlands in the Lower Mainland.

Some 1,600 were housed in the institutions when the process of integrating residents into the community began in 1981.

Hail Caesar! If the juice is Canadian

Nothing is more Canadian than a "bloody Caesar." And the United Food and Commercial Workers wants to keep it that way.

The union has been waging a boycott of Mott's Clamato Juice because the owner, Cadbury Beverages Canada, announced the closure of its profitable plant in St. Catharines, Ont.

All operations are moving to the U.S., along with 175 jobs, even though most Clamato juice is consumed by Canadians.

The UFCW advises that instead of using Mott's, you can make your bloody Caesar with President's Choice Tomato Clam Cocktail, union-made in Canada.

Talk about a world "bankquet"

At the recent meeting of the World Bank's board of directors, \$10 million was spent on 700 social events during a single week in Washington, D.C.

The biggest single event was a formal banquet for 10,000 invited guests.

The seven-course menu



began with caviar, proceeded through lobster, duck, artichoke bottoms and hearts of palm, and culminated in chocolate with raspberry coulis and flaming coffee.

Following the dinner, World Bank president Barber Constance urged the directors to continue to "look at the world through the eyes of the most under-privi-

leged, because we are here to serve their needs."

Wind makes flag flap

A snowbird couple residing in a Florida trailer park were forced to take down the Canadian flag flapping outside their domicile.

HEU people

Quesnel local mourns activist Phyllis Nadeau

With great sorrow the Quesnel Local reports the passing, at age 62, of active member **Phyllis Nadeau**, who lost a courageous battle with cancer Dec. 6.

Phyllis started at G.R. Baker Memorial Hospital in 1979 and was working part-time in laundry when illness overcame her.

At various times she was the local's secretary-treasurer and chair, and was chief shop steward, and occupational health and safety representative when she died.

"Her passing has left a big hole at G.R. Baker and she will be greatly missed," remarked Quesnel local secretary-treasurer, Jean Birch.

"The large number of fellow workers who attended her funeral was a demonstration of their respect and friendship."

Tree, bench memorial for Lorraine McClaren

Her union brothers and sisters have purchased an oak tree and a bench in memory of **Lorraine McClaren**, a member at Queen Victoria Hospital in Revelstoke.

A dietary worker, sister McClaren, 40, passed away Sept. 12 after a difficult battle with cancer.

The tree and bench, which will bear a memorial plaque, are located in the Rose



Phyllis Nadeau, far right, at a 1992 meeting with then Premier Mike Harcourt.

Garden on the hospital grounds. The site is frequented by rabbits which sister McClaren cared for after they were abandoned there.

"Lorraine loved nature," recalls Darlene Dabell, chair of the hospital local. "We miss you, Lorraine, and think of you often."

She is survived by her husband Jim and son Stephan.

Activists appointed to HEU Provincial Executive committees

Rank-and-file involvement has taken a leap forward with the inclusion of local activists on Provincial Executive committees.

At its December meeting, the PE appointed some 30 activists. On the Nursing Team Committee local activists are **Doreen Plouffe**, VGH; **Kathie Anderson**, Lions Gate; **Anna Koochin**, Kootenay Lake; and **Christine Truden**, Prince George. They join Provincial Executive members **Dan Hingley**, **Gordie Logan** and **Merilyn McKerracher**.

Interim appointments were made for the Equal Opportunities Committee. They are

Roger Kishi, St. Paul's; **Laura Muzin**, VGH; **Trudy Erickson**, Royal Jubilee; and **Darlene Bown**, Royal Jubilee. PE members are **Blair Thomas**, **Della McLeod** and **Dan Hingley**.

Now active on the Political Action Committee are **John Rogers**, Royal Arch; **Jean Birch**, Quesnel; **Ruby Bone**, Creston; and **Bob Peacock**, Broadway Pentacostal, with PE members **Iris Reamsbottom**, **Linda Hargreaves** and **Louise Hutchinson**.

Serving on the Women's Committee are **Patricia Charter**, St. Paul's; **Lorna Partridge**, Arranglen; **Judy Little**, Surrey; and **Linda McNamara**, Kamloops. They join PE members **Iris Reamsbottom**, **Louise Hutchinson** and **Sheila Rowswell**.

On the new Regionalization/Workplace Restructuring Committee are: **Sylvia Turner**, Creston; **Sonja Damani**, Prince George; **Teressa Prentice**, Queen's Park; and **Donisa Bernardo**, Kamloops; who join **Sheila Rowswell**, **Sandy Harper** and **Maurice Smith** from the PE.

The safety experts on the OH&S Committee are **Teressa Prentice**, Queen's Park; **Paulette Meier**, Kamloops; **Lance Fritz**, Glengarry; and **Roger Kishi**, St. Paul's; along with PE members **Kelly Knox**, **Nancy Zacota** and **Margaret Cavin**.

Arleta Keppler, Royal Jubilee; **Britt Parish**, Children's; **Ken Preiss**, Kamloops; and **Tilly Hiscock**, Burnaby are the rank and file activists on the new Technical and Professional Issues Committee. They'll be working with PE members **David Ridley**, **Blair Thomas** and **Maurice Smith**.

Finally, the four new members on the International Solidarity Committee are **Ruby Hardwick**, Kimberly Special Care; **Maddie Singh**, Three Links Care Centre; **Bruce Leeming**, Victoria General; and **Robert Dunn**, Crossroads. PE members are **Linda Hargreaves**, **Merilyn McKerracher** and **Gordie Logan**.

New staff and a fond adieu

It's a double-header as the communications and research department gets two new staff.

Mike Old, most recently a CUPE staffer and before that with the performers' union, ACTRA, replaces **Chris Gainor** in the campaigns section of the department.

Dale Fuller replaces new department director **Stephen Howard** as communications officer primarily responsible for the *Guardian*.

Former rep II staffer **Dollia Ferguson** is now a director of servicing reps for the Lower Mainland.

Katherine Dinning, Evergreen Local, is a temporary

representative I in the Provincial Office's WCB department.

Meanwhile, we bid a fond adieu to long time staffer **Stan Reese**, who's taking a position with the Compensation Employees' Union over at the WCB.

Most recently a regionalization coordinator, Stan is a former Rep II

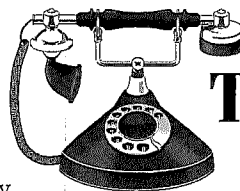
and a 10-year veteran staff member in Vancouver and the Kootenay office.

Prior to that he served on the Provincial Executive and in various local union capacities at Kootenay Lake hospital.

We wish Stan all the best in his new job.



REESE



TALK TO US ... TOLL FREE!

You can call any HEU office toll free to deal with a problem or to get information.

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

It turns out the park's manager was following up on a complaint by a neighbour, even though the park had no rules concerning flag displays.

The offended party was 73-year-old Frank Bohlinger. Declared the World War II veteran, "I don't know who came up with this idea to let everyone fly their flag. This is America. This isn't everywhere else."

And no trading with Cuba, either

Recently U.S. President Bill Clinton extended for another six months a freeze on the Helms-Burton Act, which allows American firms to sue companies in other countries doing business with Cuba, if the business involves property seized from those firms after Cuba's revolution.

The law has outraged European countries and Canada, which do considerable business

with the Caribbean nation.

An imaginative response comes from two Ontario Liberal MPs. Their private members' bill would allow Canadian descendants of the United Empire Loyalists, forced to flee the U.S. after the American Revolution, to sue for lost property. The total value of such property, including large tracts in Manhattan, Boston and Philadelphia is estimated at \$6.2 trillion.

Workers pay a "just do it" price

Running shoe manufacturer Nike pays more to basketball star Michael Jordan to endorse the company's goods than it does in total to the thousands of Indonesian workers who make the shoes.

Production costs - including wages - for Nike's flashy footgear average about \$5 for each pair of shoes that Nike sells for \$100-plus.

You can

1. save HEU money
2. save trees
3. get your *Guardian* quickly

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COUNT YOURSELF IN!

HEU Equity Conference 97

HEU CAUCUSES FOR EQUITY-SEEKING GROUPS:

- First Nations
- Ethnic Diversity
- Lesbians and Gay Men
- People with DisAbilities

Members of HEU who identify with one or more of the caucus groups are invited to apply to attend the 1997 Equity Conference. Conference participants will elect the members and spokespersons for each of the Standing Committees and make important decisions about ongoing work.

New members are welcome to join.

APPLICATION FORMS ARE AVAILABLE FROM YOUR SECRETARY-TREASURER OR BY CALLING THE HEU PROVINCIAL OFFICE:

**734.3431 or
1.800.663.5813**

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VOL. 15 NO 1

THE VOICE OF THE HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1997



More money

Despite ongoing federal cuts, health minister Joy MacPhail gives B.C. hospitals a big funding boost for 1997/98.

PAGE 3



Guaranteeing safety

HEU and the labour movement want a royal commission on the WCB to make health and safety rules the law.

PAGE 5



Make it public

HEU and HSA are promoting greater public use of hospital labs that are competing head on against the private sector.

PAGE 8



Out of balance

Ottawa continues its scheme of deficit reduction through savage cuts in health care funding. A *Guardian* exclusive outlines budget alternatives to create jobs and build strong social programs.

PAGE 12

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