

# Guardian



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THE VOICE OF THE HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

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## Pay equity: it's about money — and lots more

HEU's Bargaining Committee has been busy during the summer and pay equity is at the top of the agenda. It will take money to achieve pay equity in health care, but HEU's wide-ranging proposals go much further and include a call for worksite daycare.

HEU member and early childhood education teacher Linda Tomori (above) works with children like Hunter Wood, 4 1/2, (left) and Katie Innis, 4, at just such a daycare at Vancouver's G.F. Strong Rehabilitation Centre in Vancouver.

Details on her work, page 5, details of pay equity bargaining, page 3.

WITH MORE THAN  
300 BEDS CLOSED  
COMMUNITIES SAY:

## 'KEEP OUR HOSPITALS OPEN!'

Across B.C., the Social Credit government's final budget has produced an unprecedented wave of permanent bed closures and lay-offs of health care workers.

At press time, the HEU had identified more than 300 permanent acute care bed closures and an equal number of lay-offs in every part of the province.

From Terrace to Cranbrook, HEU activists have joined with other health care unions and community organizations to tell the government those beds must stay open.

Details of the campaign on

PAGE 12



## Blowing the whistle on Social Credit

More than 200 HEU Summer School students marched on Premier Rita Johnston's Vancouver offices Aug. 15 to blow the whistle on Social Credit claims to be defending our health care system. With the provincial election now upon us, health workers have a chance to blow the whistle once and for all. A Health Workers' Guide to Social Credit:

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## Your vote is vital to the future of health care

**T**HE 1991 B.C. provincial election, which should be under way as you read this issue of *The Guardian*, is shaping up as a decisive election for the health care system and for HEU members.

During the summer, HEU locals around the province were in action to defend the system against Bill 82 and against sweeping bed closures which resulted from the Social Credit government's spring budget.

As the crisis worsened, HEU joined forces with the B.C. Nurses' Union and the Health Sciences Association to produce a special province-wide tabloid paper on health issues for distribution to every home in the province. (Look for it in your local newspaper in September).

Part of the research for the project included an opinion poll commissioned by the three health care unions on health issues.



## COMMENT

by CARMELA ALLEVATO

There's no doubt that British Columbians share our concern about the state of health care — and they respect the role of health workers as defenders and promoters of the system. In my opinion, this is a tribute to the tremendous efforts of HEU activists all over B.C.

Although British Columbians generally are satisfied with the health care system, 34 percent believe it has deteriorated in the past few years. A full 78 percent of those polled agreed that hospitals are either somewhat understaffed or very understaffed.

Even more impressive was the fact

that 79.7 percent of those contacted believe that health care spending should be increased, primarily by shifting priorities and by raising corporate taxes.

The public still relies on doctors as reliable sources of information about health care, but 88 percent see other health care workers as either somewhat reliable or very reliable sources.

Only 30 percent would consider the health minister "somewhat reliable" and only 20 percent consider premier Rita Johnston as "somewhat reliable."

The message is clear: British Columbians share our concern about the health care system and have no confidence in the present government's policies.

This issue of *The Guardian* contains two important articles for you to consider as you prepare to mark your ballot. On page 10, we recall the Social Credit government's deplorable record on health care.

On page 5, you can see for yourself what NDP leader Mike Harcourt has promised his government would do to improve the health care system. It's clear that the defeat of the Social Credit government and the election of a strong NDP majority is absolutely vital to the future of our health care system.

## Guardian

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

EDITOR  
Geoff Meggs  
ASSOCIATE EDITOR  
Brad Teeter  
DESIGN CONSULTATION  
Kris Klaasen  
PRODUCTION &  
PRINTING  
Broadway Printers  
DESKTOP GRAPHICS  
Carol Bjarnason

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Bill Macdonald, Carmela Allevato, Mary LaPlante, Fred Muzin, Nancy Macdonald, Irma Mohammed, Julia Amendt.

The members of the Provincial Executive are:

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Regional Vice-President  
Vancouver Island

The Union maintains offices at:

**Provincial Office:**  
2006 West 10th Ave.,  
Vancouver V6J 4P5  
734-3431

**Okanagan Office:**  
Suite 100, 160 Douglas Rd.,  
S. Kelowna V1X 3J4  
765-8838

**Kootenay Office:**  
745 Baker St.,  
Nelson V1L 4J5  
354-4466

**Vancouver Island Offices:**  
1402 Stadacona Ave.,  
Victoria V8S 3T1  
595-4433

**Northern Office:**  
629 Victoria St.,  
Prince George V2L 2K7  
564-2102

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The Guardian welcomes letters to the editor. Please be brief. Write to 2006 W. 10th Ave., Vancouver V6J 4P5.

### Why does B.C. insist on premiums for health care?

It isn't fair that doctors should treat uninsured patients and not get paid. But it's far worse that tens of thousands of uninsured patients are reluctant to go to the doctor because they can't afford Medical Services Plan premiums. It's even worse because poverty causes poor health. People who are poor need health care more than others.

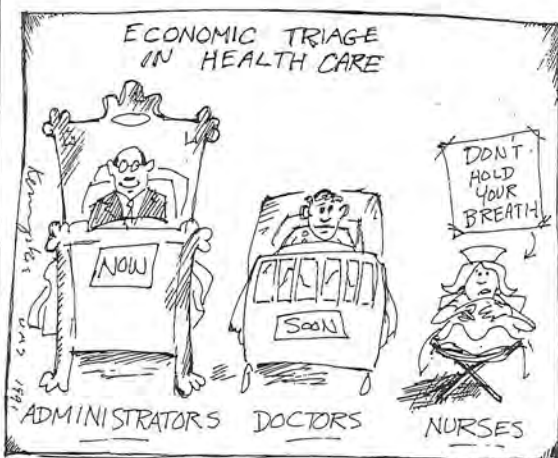
B.C. and Alberta are the only provinces that have health care premiums. The B.C. government should enter the civilized world and abolish them. Medicare should be paid for with taxes on people and corporations who have the greatest ability to pay.

**JEAN SWANSON,**  
Co-ordinator,  
End Legislated Poverty,  
Vancouver

### ERT program meets goals set for it

I am an HEU member at Penticton Regional Hospital and have been a working LPN here for the last 14 years. I'm writing to express my thoughts about the article dealing with patient violence in *The Guardian* of March, 1991.

The first thing I noticed is that LPNs are not mentioned as part of the nursing team. Only nurses, aides and orderlies are listed. Too often we are forgotten!



The article cites the government's budgetary restraints in health care, and the closing of psychogeriatric facilities as the major cause of understaffing and the rise of WCB cases involving violence in the workplace. This seems a logical conclusion and I agree with it.

The article then goes on to say that the Penticton Regional Hospital has put together an Emergency Response Team and that since the start of this program, the WCB cases at PRH resulting from patient violence are down 56 percent.

I know from talking with staff that since the program began there have been many more benefits: a greater sense of total staff morale and peace of mind that comes from knowing you are no longer alone in situations where staff are

threatened with verbal or physical abuse.

This is what the ERT is designed specifically to do and it is working very well. The ERT is not designed to, and never should have to, "address the core issue of understaffing." That is the responsibility of the unions, management and the government.

The ERT is simply the best way to handle and defuse the situations that arise and will continue to arise in our work.

**MARIE FILIPENKO,**  
Penticton

### Enjoyed HEU's Heart of Health Care taping

On behalf of the Chilwack NDP constituency, I would like to thank HEU for inviting us to your performance of Heart of Health Care June 13 at the

Vancouver East Cultural Centre. We thoroughly enjoyed it.

**ANNABEL REMPEL,**  
Constituency Secretary,  
Sardis

• Following are a selection of responses from the public published in the Daily Press in the wake of HEU's disclosure of administrators' salary increases.

### Angry and disgusted at bosses' salaries

I am angry and disgusted to learn what is paid senior administrators of the Greater Victoria Hospital Society. Having received increases of up to 54 percent in the last two years, the top six people are now paid almost three quarters of a million dollars.

How can Herman Crewson, president of the B.C. Health Association, call this a good deal? People are dying while waiting to get into hospitals that have had to close beds and underutilize operating rooms caused by a shortage of funds. This scandalous situation must be rectified immediately. A good start would be to roll back this excessive allotment to administrative salaries.

**LESLIE PAGE,**  
Saanichton

### Perhaps it's time to cut from top

I object to the salary increases obtained by hospital administrators. It is my belief

that hospital executive staffs are top heavy. In many hospitals there are people appointed to positions at a high salary who have very little to do with patient care. This contributes to bed closures, as there are not adequate funds to hire nurses and therapists in sufficient numbers.

The press recently reported that Calgary General Hospital fired 35 senior staff. No doubt the hospital will continue to function adequately with these positions abolished. Maybe this example could be looked at in reducing our hospitals' excessive operating costs.

**JUNE EICHELL,**  
Vancouver



# What we're up to

People and events around the HEU. If you have news for us — a retirement, an election, a rally, a vote or whatever — please, let us know.

## HEU safety manual mailed to locals

Union local secretary-treasurers received copies of HEU's draft Occupational Health and Safety Manual late in July. Produced in a handy pocket format, it outlines HEU's health and safety philosophy, the work of health and safety committees and members' rights under the regulations. The manual is considered a working draft and will be distributed to all health and safety committee members.

Local activists have been asked to review the manual, put it to use and advise the Provincial Office how it can be improved.

## HEU-sponsored video analyzes free trade

Trade union activists, including HEU's Kathy Dinning, are among the many Canadians featured in *We Can Say No*, an excellent new videotape produced by the Action Canada Network. The 25-minute tape, which was sponsored in part by HEU, explodes the myths about free trade in a lively and hard-hitting fashion. Hosts Maude Barlow, of the Council of Canadians, and Tony Clarke, of the Action Canada Network, detail the devastating costs of free trade and outline the ways we can gain control of our country.

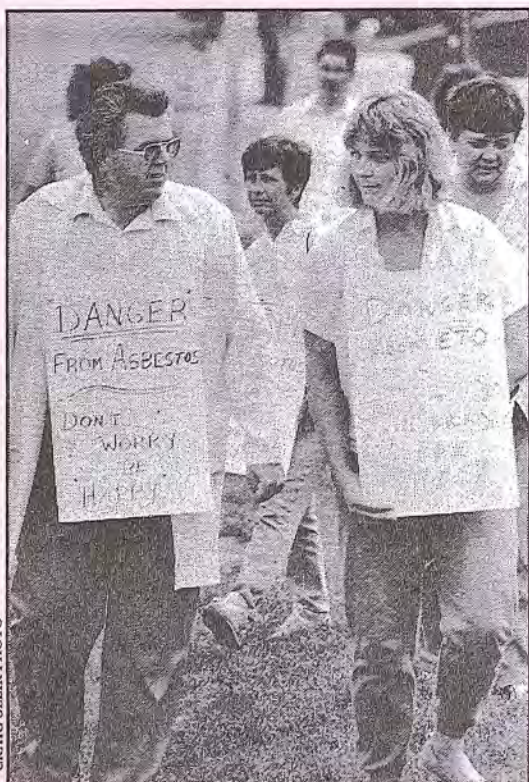
On the same cassette is a comprehensive analysis of the economic consequences of free trade by Mel Hurtig, of the Council of Canadians. Copies of the tape may be borrowed from Provincial Office or ordered from Repeal The Deal Productions, 211-465 West Broadway, Vancouver, phone 879-1209.

## HEU introduces new telephone system to improve member service

That annoying busy signal will soon be a thing of the past for callers to the HEU Provincial Office switchboard.

A new HEU telephone system offering members better contact with whoever they are attempting to reach is coming this fall.

Yes, callers will still be served by a friendly operator, but during those busy times when the number of calls is overwhelming, an automated attendant will facilitate connections.



CRAIG SLEET PHOTO

**SAFETY FIRST:** Members of HEU locals in the Kamloops area, including Royal Inland members Ken Preiss (left) and Melynda Cadarette demonstrated outside the hospital June 10 to protest an employer safety conference which focused on getting accident victims back work rather than on avoiding accidents in the first place.

## HEU joins National Action Committee on Status of Women

The HEU's Provincial Executive has voted to affiliate the union to the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, the umbrella organization of the Canadian women's movement.

NAC chairperson Judy Rebick participated during August in the HEU's Summer Leadership School on a special panel on the threats to medicare.

## Union appeals to Strachan to help Buchanan residents

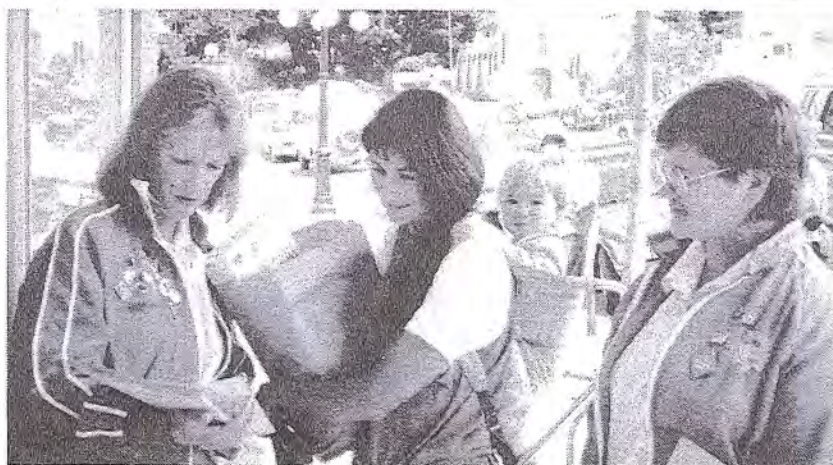
HEU appealed to health minister Bruce Strachan early in July to come to the aid of 15 New Westminster multiple sclerosis patients living at Buchanan Lodge. As the result of a bureaucratic blunder, the residents were placed in the Salvation Army facility even though they required intermediate care, not the group home style of care planned for the lodge. There was no problem until this spring, when city officials ordered a major upgrading to improve fire and safety standards.

When the Salvation Army decided to disperse residents to other facilities, union members at the lodge joined residents and their families in protest. HEU urged Strachan to direct his officials to consider other measures to keep the residents together. Strachan did not reply.

## Burnaby General gas sterilizer not up to par

A June WCB inspection of the EtO gas sterilizer at Burnaby General Hospital found a number of deficiencies, reports local member

*Continued on page 4*



**FIGHTING WAGE CONTROLS:** HEU's summer campaign to raise public awareness about Bill 82 won widespread attention. Above, Provincial Executive member Della McLeod (left) and local activist Gerry McIntyre advise a Nelson resident about the legislation's impact.

## HEU campaign builds opposition to Bill 82

HEU's summer campaign against Bill 82 included a reminder that a freeze on the wages of health care workers has a powerful impact on local economies.

Following an earlier Bill 82 protest in Victoria and formal petitions calling for repeal of the anti-labour Act, the union's summer campaign targeted the Kootenays and northern B.C.

"People sometimes lose sight of health care being a major contributor to the economy," HEU secretary-business manager Carmela Allevato told reporters in

interviews in Trail, Kimberley, Prince George and Prince Rupert.

Allevato noted that HEU members in the Kootenay region alone contribute some \$32 million in wages to the local economy.

Across B.C., Bill 82 directly impacts about 163,400 workers or about one-fifth of the province's workforce, B.C. Federation of Labour president Ken Georgetti told a July Vancouver forum.

"If Bill 82 reduces wage increases by even three percent, that could mean more than \$37 million less circulating in the Lower Mainland," said Georgetti.

The HEU effort, together with anti-Bill 82 campaigns by teachers and other trade unions helped further divide the already splintered

Social Credit party.

Premier Rita Johnston found herself all alone defending the Act at the July Socred leadership convention after public pressure forced other candidates to seek changes in the legislation. "I support Bill 82," the premier told reporters in mid-

## News

July. "Somewhere along the line, somebody has got to take a stand against these wage hikes."

HEU advertisements in community newspapers and on the radio in the Kootenays and northern B.C. hammered home the message that Bill 82 is bad news for everyone.

"Every family and community in B.C. will feel the pinch if this freeze on the spending power of so large a sector of the B.C. population is not repealed," read the HEU message.

In addition to radio and newspaper advertisements, HEU members undertook letter writing campaigns, distributed information leaflets at community centres and met with other local labour leaders and municipal and provincial politicians.

## Pay equity obstacle defeated

HEU solidarity helped persuade health care employers to back away from a costly, defective job evaluation plan that had threatened to stall pay equity bargaining.

The Health Labour Relations Association (HLRA) announced at an Aug. 14 bargaining session that it would not advance the Aiken job evaluation program as the only route to pay equity.

HEU members — in accordance with union policy — refused to participate in the survey. In a letter last June, HEU secretary-business manager Carmela Allevato urged all union members not to answer survey questionnaires, advising members to turn the forms over to the union.

HLRA's decision to back away from the Aiken plan is a victory for HEU, says Allevato. "Our members have served notice to the employer

that the union is united and strong."

The HEU bargaining committee had feared the costly Aiken system would delay long overdue pay equity benefits.

Recently, the Ontario Pay Equity Hearings Tribunal found that a system similar to the Aiken plan resulted in pay discrimination against women because the system did not value the skill, effort, responsibility and working conditions required in female dominated classes of the bargaining unit.

The HEU pay equity program is based on the concept that all health care workers' wages are depressed because traditionally, health care has been considered "women's work" and is consequently undervalued. The union has tabled extensive material documenting the extent of wage inequities.

# What we're up to



**SUMMER SCHOOL:** Some classes at HEU's Summer Leadership School were able to move outdoors into the sunshine for some sessions. Above, the Women in the Union course, led by Jackie Larkin, winds up a session.

## Cont'd from page 3

Don Allen, who forwarded copies of the nine orders to Provincial Office. In addition to improvements to evacuation and testing procedures, the orders required development of a respirator program.

As if that wasn't enough, the inspector found "suspect asbestos containing material in deteriorated condition in the sterilizer room." The hospital is required to test the material and remove it if it is asbestos.

## Paradise workers still seeking wage settlement

HEU was forced to take legal action on behalf of members at Paradise Care Home in New Westminster in June when their employer failed to pay wages and was closed down. The troubled facility was quickly sold and the new owner sought to open a rooming house, a move resisted by local residents.

## HEU veterans keynote speakers at school

Two of the women who presented key-note addresses to HEU's Summer Leadership School in Vancouver last month are former HEU members who have gone on to

major achievements in other walks of life.

One was Rose Point, of the Musqueam Band. Its territory includes all of downtown Vancouver and the University of B.C. lands where the school was held. Now a senior leader of the Musqueam people, Rose Point worked many years at Vancouver General Hospital and carried an HEU card.

Another veteran of the HEU from Vancouver General Hospital is Judy Rebeck, now chairperson for the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, who told delegates her care aide job at VGH was the toughest job she ever had. Rebeck addressed the school's panel discussion on the future of medicare. Point spoke at the evening forum on Aboriginal Peoples and Native Claims.

## New cooks' trade ticket qualification policy available

HEU has provided directors and staff representatives with copies of the new Ministry of Advanced Education and Job Training policy for recognition of cooks' experience in qualifying for trades tickets. The on-the-job experience of hospital cooks (but not dietary aides)

could count in Trades Qualification Examinations. Ask your staff representative for details.

## Patient care was highlight of his career

Leandre Joseph Chabot plans to practice gourmet cooking and travel in the wake of his retirement Aug. 30 from Shaughnessy Hospital. Chabot joined HEU in 1965 as a nursing orderly, was night senior nursing orderly from 1969 to 1979, and from January, 1980 to his retirement was dispatcher for patient escort services. "All of my working years, patient care has been the most exciting, rewarding and educational," he says. "I especially enjoyed working with all the staff."

## Shaughnessy veteran plans to 'just enjoy life a bit'

Joyce Brown, a 33-year veteran of Shaughnessy Hospital's housekeeping and dietary departments, retired June 26. Brown, who was honoured by her local for many years of service, moved to Vancouver from Winnipeg in 1968. At Shaughnessy, Brown spent 22 years in dietary before switching to housekeeping. She plans to travel, volunteer at Broadway Pentecostal Lodge in False Creek, "help out at my two churches and just enjoy life a bit."

## Ponderosa bids farewell to Edith Miller, Helen Clarke

A long awaited trip to Bonn to visit a half-brother she hasn't met in 38 years is the first retirement project of Edith Miller, who started at Ponderosa Lodge as a dietary worker in 1976, and retired April 30. A tireless community volunteer, Miller is a sewing instructor and a strong supporter of children's sports.

Helen Clarke, a cook at Ponderosa since 1976, also retired April 30. She's bought a motor home and Palm Springs is a key destination.



**GET THE POINT:** A hit of this year's HEU Summer School was a "zipper song" contest in which various classes competed to write the best original lyrics for well-known rock and folk songs.



**VOTER REGISTRATION:** HEU and other health union members launched a joint voter registration campaign in June that ensured hundreds of British Columbians would not lose their right to vote. Employer resistance had to be overcome at Peace Arch Hospital in White Rock, where HEU local chairperson Denise Rogers (second from left), HSA member Carol Turrie (right) and members of BCNU had to set up their table at the front door. Holding HEU's banner is Kathy Bereska.

## Native leaders see progress on claims

A resolution to the thorny problem of Native claims is moving closer, two Native leaders told HEU summer school students Aug. 14, and trade unionists can take some of the credit.

In a special evening forum at the school, Native leaders Rose Point, of the Musqueam band, and Miles Richardson, the chairperson for the Council of the Haida Nation, outlined their peoples' goals.

Point, a former HEU member at Vancouver General, told HEU members how her people hunted and fished for thousands of years over the land now covered by the University of B.C. campus.

"We had our own medical services and medical specialists," she said. "We fished the Fraser just as we do today and caught sturgeon where the airport is now. These are the ancestral lands of the Musqueam people and we hold aboriginal title to it."

Despite legal betrayals and economic hardship, "we still know who we are," Point said, "that we belong to this place."

But this claim is no threat to non-native people, the two Native leaders said.

"Sovereignty and title need not be the bogeymen they've been set up to be," Richardson said.



POINT



RICHARDSON

"If we can just respect ourselves as human beings, we will find the point of co-existence. I believe it will happen."

Richardson told HEU members of the decisions of an historic task force on Native claims established this spring by the federal government.

The task force produced a process to accelerate the claims talks, Richardson said. The objective is to achieve settlements which "give a reasonable degree of certainty" to economic and political life in the province.

"But we should not expect you to be under my thumb or me to be under your thumb," Richardson said to strong applause. Native peoples want an agreement that "includes an acceptance of a respect for your well-being and destiny as a people."

The possibility for collective action has been demonstrated right on the Queen Charlottes, he said. During the past two summers, the Haida have sought to control elite sportfishing camps which have squatted on traditional Native fishing locations.

The Haida were assisted in their fight by 250 commercial fish boats which moved into the area to protest the uncontrolled harvest of chinook salmon by the sportfish operators.

"There was a real feeling of solidarity," Richardson said.

Richardson paid tribute to unions, including the HEU, which have declared their support for the Native people. "We will prevail," he said. "Time is on our side."

## Union attacks laundry deal

The HEU will fight in B.C. Supreme Court the decision by two Vancouver Island hospitals to award without public tender laundry contracts worth more than \$500,000.

An application has been filed under the Judicial Review Procedures Act jointly by the union and HEU member Robert Hornsby attacking the Saanich Peninsula and Mt. St. Mary Hospitals' handling of the laundry contracts. If successful, the court action will void laundry contracts given Vancouver Island Linen Supply (VILS).

The hospitals decided last February to transfer laundry services from the Greater Victoria Hospital Society to VILS, a firm owned by the brother-in-law of former Socred cabinet minister Mel Couvelier.

Hornsby was one of at least 15 HEU members bumped from their jobs at the GVHS Fairfield laundry because of the loss of the laundry contracts.

The union, in an argument supported by a Health Ministry report, argues the hospitals broke both their own bylaws and government regulations by not tendering the contracts.

# Harcourt spells out NDP health agenda

Unfair labour laws like Bills 19 and 82 will be gone. Health care funds will be spent more effectively. Hospital boards will no longer be able to close down abortion services. And pay equity will become a reality in B.C.

These were among the promises made by New Democrat leader Mike Harcourt when he spoke to HEU members Aug. 13 at this year's Summer School in Vancouver.

"We're going to have fair and balanced labour laws, and that means Bill 19 is gone. There will be no room in a Mike Harcourt government for Bill 82," he added.

Speaking as he was gearing up for this fall's election, Harcourt said he will consult with labour and management about new labour laws and pay equity, and consult with health care workers about how better to spend the current health budget.

While promising "immediate action" against hospital boards which refuse to give women the right to choose on abortion once he becomes premier, the opposition leader said he is considering replacing the current hospital board structure with elected "health boards" overseeing community health needs.

When questioned about the use of lottery funds in health care, Harcourt said he doesn't like the idea of using lottery funds to run hospitals, but added that this

funding may be used to deal with emergencies. Lottery proceeds should be used for health research, he said.

"We have a government that has taken waste to the nth degree," he said. "We're going to live within our means."

Harcourt praised the HEU for publicizing bed closures around B.C. and the huge salary increases to hospital administrators.

Harcourt promised negotiations for a "just and fair" settlement of Native land claims in B.C. The government will also develop affordable housing.

"We're going to achieve women's equality in this decade.

"The Social Credit approach is a total failure — turning working people into the enemy. I am picking up in this province that people are ready for a change."

Harcourt said he has urged HEU members on previous occasions to prepare for an imminent election. "I



**STRAIGHT GOODS:** NDP leader Mike Harcourt spent more than an hour in discussion with 200 HEU members at the Summer Leadership School Aug. 13 detailing his party's plans should it form the next provincial government.

tell you, it is going to happen this fall because it's mandatory. If they don't go by November 15, I'll slap them with a law suit."

HEU President Bill Macdonald

thanked Harcourt and made a promise of his own: "It's not going to be business as usual at the Hospital Employees' Union when the writ's dropped."

## Socreds shut down health debate

VICTORIA — The Social Credit government used closure to shut off debate on its health budget before closing down the Legislature and heading off for the summer.

NDP health critic Tom Perry condemned the move, which ended examination of health spending

which resulted in province-wide bed closures. It was the first time the Socreds had cut off debate in that fashion since 1983.

"The Socreds won't answer for their manhandling of health care services so they're trying to stop the source of the questions," Perry said.

"B.C. still has huge surgery wait-

ing lists, it's still lacking adequate health care in the regions, but we're seeing no government action to deal with that."

The use of closure meant the opposition had no chance to question the government on local health care, mental health and seniors' issues.

## LOOK BACK

### It took firm action to win settlement

*HEU launched demonstrations in 1975 to force anti-discrimination payments*

JUST over 15 years ago members of the Hospital Employees' Union were forced to the brink of their first province-wide strike when hospitals refused to pay anti-discrimination money negotiated 10 weeks earlier.

The union had served strike notice across the province and workers in three hospitals had voted overwhelmingly to back the union. Most dramatic was a three-hour demonstration on March 25 in front of Vancouver General Hospital by workers from hospitals throughout the Lower Mainland.

The workers were protesting the failure of hospitals to pay up to \$37.50 for each month of 1975, a total of \$450 to workers whose wages fell below the cleaner rate. Some 10,000 HEU members were affected. The payments — designed as a one-shot interim measure pending completion of the government's job evaluation program — were negotiated between the union and Socred health minister Bob McClelland on Jan. 5, with the Health Labour Relations Association agreeing to the terms.

**STRIKE THREAT:** HEU's 1976 talks were marked by Social Credit interference and a province-wide strike vote.



But even though some hospitals had the cheques made out, HLRA refused to allow the payments, claiming it was up to the union to get the money from the government.

The street protest also targeted threatened layoffs and unfair shift scheduling at VGH. In the evenings leading up to the action, workers handpainted picket signs.

The protest turned into more of a festive affair than people anticipated because militancy by the

union had the desired effect. That morning the HLRA sent a telegram authorizing hospitals to pay the \$37.50. On the street union reps were able to circulate copies of the telegram to the information pickets and the union leadership was able to call off its strike notice.

## AFTER THE SHIFT

### Building women in the arts

An HEU member lends a hand

An impulsive decision to produce a theatrical revue, starring herself and two friends, catapulted HEU activist Louise Hutchinson into an important role in B.C.'s women's theatre movement.

Hutchinson, a tireless organizer, was no stranger to volunteer work and promotion when she took a night school board drama course in 1989. She was active in the union, worked at Vancouver Co-operative Radio, and had helped in NDP campaigns, but she had no theatre experience whatsoever.

When the course was over, she and her friends were casting about for a way to put their learning to use when the idea for a revue was born. "We said, 'we're all Geminis, let's do it,'" Hutchinson recalls.

When the combination of monologues, readings and stories was ready, the three invited 80 of their closest friends "to come and pay money," says Hutchinson, "and they did!"

The one-night show at Vancouver Little Theatre was a success and brought Hutchinson into contact with View: The Performing Arts Society, a non-profit group sponsoring a women's arts festival which has a province-wide reputation.

View needed a fund-raiser and Hutchinson agreed to



**WORKER OF ART:** Children's Hospital worker and HEU activist Louise Hutchinson turned an interest in theatre into a commitment to help women succeed in the arts.

help. "I believe in promoting something I believe in and I believe in theatre and in social justice issues," she says.

View sponsors works which have been submitted to a jury of people experienced in the arts for approval. Performers who win approval in this jury process find a much larger audience through View.

Random Acts, for example, the two-woman team which starred at HEU's Summer School, was able to develop a much larger audience after its successful debut in the View festival.

Hutchinson, now in her second term on the View board, helps scare up the funds needed for its ambitious program. One frustration is "to see how cheap the corporations are when it comes to sponsoring community-based organizations."

Hutchinson, now an admitting clerk at Children's Hospital, says her work with View reflects both her commitment to the women's movement and to grassroots activism.

"I do View because it's a women's organization," she says. "Our stories as women need to be heard and validated, and men have a part in that."

"I believe in people," she adds. "I grew up in a small town. I believe in people pitching in. When you need someone they will help you out."

In Hutchinson's mind, a similar drive gets people active in the union.

"If you believe in the trade union movement, you believe in social justice and believe we are brothers and sisters," she says, "but that's not why we do it. We do it because it makes us feel good."

## editor's notebook



By GEOFF MEGGS



**O**N THE EVE of the Gulf War, the Hospital Employees' Union joined with the B.C. Federation of Labour, the B.C. Teachers' Federation, End the Arms Race and a wide range of other groups to sponsor a special advertise-

ment in the Vancouver *Province*. Headlined "No Blood For Oil," the ad appealed to the Mulroney government to pursue sanctions against Iraq and to resist armed intervention.

A number of HEU members called the Provincial Office to protest the ad. Some questioned whether or not the position taken was consistent with HEU policy — it was — but others questioned whether the union should take any position on matters outside narrow collective bargaining.

It was precisely that issue — the right of the union movement to participate in broader social controversies — that was decided in June by the Supreme Court of Canada.

In that landmark case, called the Lavigne decision, the court unanimously rejected the view of an Ontario college instructor who was opposed to the use of any part of his dues dollars to support the New Democratic Party, choice on abortion or other social issues.

The court's decision makes interesting reading because it dramatically separates Canadian unions from their counterparts in the United States, where courts have hamstrung the union movement.

Consider the following excerpts from the 162-page decision, compiled by the Canadian Association of Labour Media.

"The interests of workers reach far beyond the adequacy of the financial deal they may be able to strike with their employers," wrote Justice Gerald La Forest.

There are two reasons why unions should be free to spend money on things not immediately related to collective bargaining, he continued.

"The first is to ensure that unions have both the resources and the mandate necessary to enable them to play a role in shaping the political, economic and social context within which particular collective agreements and labour relations disputes will be negotiated or resolved."

"Government policy on daycare, for example, will affect what a union can achieve for its members at the bargaining tables."

The second reason why governments and courts should not restrict union spending is that it "contributes to democracy in the workplace. It is for the union to decide, by majority vote, which causes or organizations it will support in the interests of favourably influencing the political, social and economic environment."

The court rejected Merv Lavigne's objection to the use of union dues to support the New Democratic Party. "There is evidence to support the view that the cause of unionism and of working people generally has been advanced by the NDP...It is inconceivable that support of the NDP could be considered irrelevant to the union's obligation to represent those who pay dues to it."

## ON THE JOB

### Her kids are HEU, HSA kids Union members run hospital daycare

Heaven is having daycare available in your own workplace.

At least that's the view of HEU parents working at Vancouver's G.F. Strong Rehabilitation Centre, home of an integrated daycare facility for some 35 children.

Intimate knowledge of the daycare facility and the staff — fellow HEU members — helps ease the extra responsibilities experienced by a working parent. And the facility's extended hours of operation — 6:45 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. — gives parents needed flexibility in planning their day.

Most importantly, children are happy to have a parent nearby, says G.F. Strong preschool teacher Linda Tomori, who has six years of



**TOMORI**

formal education in preschool teaching. Children of G.F. Strong employees are given a tour of the parent's work area and the parents are available to pop in for birthdays and other special events.

The children — age grouped in classes named ducklings, raccoons and pickles — just love it and in the process they learn about their parent's job, says Tomori, an HEU member. "For instance, we have toddlers able to tell the dif-

ference between a physiotherapist and an occupational therapist."

About 12 of the children at the centre are from G.F. Strong employees' families, several others are children of union members from other health care facilities and the rest are children with disabilities referred by the ministry of health.

The integrated concept of the daycare centre in a facility catering to the physically disabled has given the children a special awareness and understanding of physical differences, says Tomori.

"They see persons in wheelchairs working to gain mobility and others with disabilities — such as a missing leg — but there is no fear or mystery, just an acceptance and awareness."

A desperate need exists for the expansion of the daycare service into other facilities across B.C. The G.F. Strong daycare centre waiting list bears more than 200 names.

# Labour

## Aussie health workers fight Big Mac privatization attack

Bringing McDonalds' Big Macs into the Melbourne's Royal Childrens' Hospital is a Big Mistake, say Australia's health care workers.

The Health Services Union, a new union formed by the merger of the Hospital Employees' Federation and the Health and Research Employees' Association, is campaigning to get McDonalds turfed out of one of the country's most prestigious institutions.

Union members say the new restaurant in a hospital extension is the beginning of a drive to privatize dietary services at the expense of jobs and nutrition.

They first learned of the scheme when the hospital identified a need for "a family restaurant with a separate kitchen" where parents and children could "retreat from the traditional hospital environment."

The hospital asked for tenders, but denied funds to the existing service to prepare an in-house bid. Within days, McDonalds had the deal and a 20-year lease.

"The unions were told of the decision to award the contract to McDonalds after it was made," says *Pinpoint*, the union paper. Union members decided to fight back.

A broad range of community groups are joining the protest, worried about privatization, the nutritional value of McDonalds' food and the environmental problems from the firm's packaging.

HSUA is circulating a petition against the hospital's decision, but it appears the fight will be a tough one — McDonalds and Pizza Hut now are seeking contracts to provide food services in local schools.



"The fast food industry obviously views hospitals and schools as untapped markets and ideal areas to promote the fast food culture."

## Air unions warn of danger in 'Open Skies'

Canada's airlines will be less safe, smaller and foreign-owned, say airline unions, if the Tory government pursues its "Open Skies" policy.

"Open Skies" is the way federal transport minister Doug Lewis describes his "free trade in the air" scheme to integrate Canadian and American air services.

But Canada's airline workers charge that the policy will eliminate nearly all government restrictions, even weakening safety regulations.

Canada is ready to let American carriers fly passengers between Canadian cities, says Cheryl Kryzaniwsky, president of the Canadian Auto Workers Local 2213, which represents 7,000 airport and reservation agents.

Air Canada and Canadian Airlines are already cutting deals with American carriers to divide up Canadian routes, and there are signs both would like to invite more foreign ownership of their operations.

Open Skies might seriously jeopardize airline safety if Canada reduces its standards to American levels, says Richard Banis, a researcher with CUPE, which represents 9,000 Canadian flight attendants.

Canada requires an attendant for every 40 passengers, but American planes need only one for every 50, a real hazard in the event of an accident.

"Canada will suffer permanent job losses, air service that is poorer and less safe and yet another humiliating loss of sovereignty," says Kryzaniwsky.

"We have no choice but to work to stop this."

*Pro-Canada Dossier*

## Court affirms union rights



**STORM WARNING: PSAC members undertook national protests in August to warn the Conservative government of their determination to strike if necessary to break Tory wage controls.**

## PSAC braces for strike

Thousands of federal public servants walked off the job during August to underline their determination to break through Tory wage controls to win a decent contract.

The members of the Public Service Alliance of Canada have taken a national strike vote and union president Daryl Bean has vowed that his union will use that mandate if necessary.

The first-ever national strike by PSAC could come during September, hard on the heels of the confrontation between Canada Post and the Canadian Union of Postal Workers.

Pay equity is a major issue for PSAC, because the federal government has stalled on implementing pay equity improvements awarded by third parties.

The Supreme Court of Canada struck a blow for union rights June 27 when it ruled against an Ontario college teacher who was challenging his union's involvement in social and political issues.

Merv Lavigne was asking the court to stop the Ontario Public Service Employees' Union (OPSEU) from spending about \$2 of his dues money on political lobbying.

The amount was trivial, but the principle of the matter was profound. It was aimed at ending the long Canadian tradition of "social unionism."

Lavigne had the financial backing of the right-wing lobby group, the National Citizens' Coalition (NCC). Their objective was to restrict unions by law to a narrow "business unionism," and prevent them from speaking out in the larger society.

Lavigne and the NCC tried to attack the principle of social unionism by using the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

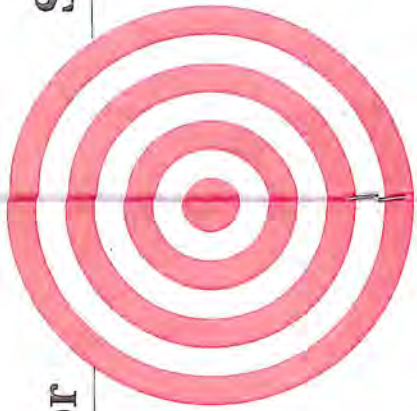
They argued that Lavigne's individual rights were violated when OPSEU donated a small portion of his dues money to the New Democratic Party, and on political lobbying for causes he didn't personally support, like abortion rights.

The highest court in the land dismissed this argument saying unions should be free to spend money on more than just collective bargaining.

"Many activities," wrote Justice Gerard La Forest, "be they concerned with the environment, tax policy, daycare or feminism, can be construed as related to the larger environment in which unions must represent their members."

The judge also said it wasn't up to court or the government to tell unions how to spend their money. "It is for the union to decide, by majority vote, which causes or organizations it will support in the interests of influencing the political, social and economic environments."

*OPSEU News Update/CALM*



by CHRIS GAINOR

**F**IVE years ago, British Columbians elected a Social Credit government headed by Bill Vander Zalm. This fall, the clock runs out on the government, and British Columbians must again make a choice. The choice in this fall's provincial election is between Social Credit and the New Democratic Party.

Bill Vander Zalm is gone, but the Social Credit Party is now led by a person who has been Vander Zalm's closest political associate for nearly 20 years.

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entered provincial politics, he picked Johnston to succeed him as mayor. When he left provincial politics temporarily, he picked Johnston to take his seat in Surrey.

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Since becoming premier, Johnston has withstood a challenge from those in the Social Credit Party who wanted a change.

So when we wonder what Social Credit would do if they win this fall's election, it makes sense to look at the record of the last five years.

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"I think you'll just have to assume we aren't abusing those airplanes."  
Government services minister CAROL GRAN, justifying her refusal to release logs of government aircraft. The records were later released. Subsequently, it was learned that millions were spent to lease private aircraft for air ambulance service because the government jets weren't often available.

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"I'm suspicious of any allegations by HEU."  
Health minister BRUCE STRACHAN, commenting on HEU's release of news of elimination of 50 beds at St. Paul's Hospital, Vancouver Sun, July 15, 1991.

# Why is Social Credit bad for your health?

## EMPTY BUILDINGS

For nearly two years, a huge new hospital tower has loomed over Vancouver. The tower, a point of pride for administrators at Vancouver General Hospital, became a point of controversy when HEU revealed that the \$36 million tower shell was empty and that most of it would stay that way for years. More than a year later, not a single patient has used the new tower.

Municipal politicians, who must find funds for 40 percent of hospital construction, complained they were in the dark about Victoria's building binge on the eve of an election.

Many hospitals all over B.C. are undergoing major building projects, including Nanaimo Regional General Hospital, Kelowna General Hospital, Chilliwack General Hospital, Royal Columbian Hospital, and St. Paul's Hospital. Like VGH, most of these hospitals are closing beds while the construction projects go on. The 1991 B.C. budget promises \$285 million to fund hospital and health building programs.

## WAGE CONTROLS

Through much of his term, Bill Vander Zalm helped keep wages down with Bill 19, the anti-union law which replaced the old Labour Code. By making it difficult for unions to do their work, Bill 19 held down wages.

But this clearly didn't satisfy the Vander Zalm government. This year, the government passed Bill 82, re-establishing the Social Credit wage restraints of the 1980s. This time, the wage

commissioner was given full power to overturn any negotiated contract provisions, not just those affecting wages.

That means that Ed Lien, the \$100,000-a-year commissioner, can block any effort by HEU to improve patient care through better staffing or health and safety programs.

During the 1991 Socred leadership race, only one candidate favoured keeping Bill 82 intact: Rita Johnston.

## WAITING LISTS

Early last year, the ministry of health announced that B.C. patients requiring open heart surgery would be sent to U.S. hospitals for their surgery.

After refusing to admit that underfunding was behind the cardiac waiting lists, which had ballooned beyond 700 people, the government announced last year that it would spend \$3 million to deal with this problem.

Since then, hospitals where heart surgery is done have been forced to cut back operating room schedules due to tight budgets. Waiting lists for heart surgery are still a fact of life in B.C.

Other patients have had to wait for services, as well. Recently, some prostate cancer patients were told that they may have to seek treatment outside B.C. Kidney dialysis patients are now facing cutbacks.



## BED CLOSURES

The number of sick British Columbians has not declined, but Social credit has cut more than 300 beds out of our province's health care system.

The blows are falling the hardest in key regional hospitals which are shutting down a significant portion of their acute care beds. But urban areas are suffering, too, as Social Credit squeezes the health care system. The quality of care is suffering and morale in hospitals is plummeting as staffs are cut and remaining workers try to make do with less.

Rita Johnston has continued the tight-fisted policies of her predecessor, Bill Vander Zalm.

## NURSING TEAM

The past decade has been particularly difficult for licensed practical nurses, orderlies and patient care aides, who bore the brunt of layoffs in B.C. hospitals when budgets were tightened.

Nursing managers, often biased against non-registered nurses, took advantage of these budgetary problems to move toward all-RN nursing and elimination of team nursing.

On several occasions, the HEU asked the government to oblige hospitals to retain LPNs, orderlies and aides. These calls were refused.

## CONTRACTING OUT AND PRIVATIZATION

The Vander Zalm government has encouraged privatization of government services, and one of the ministries where privatization was carried out with special zeal was Rita Johnston's transportation and highways ministry.

HEU members have seen privatization of many health services. Many long term care facilities are operated by profit-making corporations.

The management of food and housekeeping services has been contracted out to companies like Versa Services and Marriott.

The government has refused to fund replacement of aging hospital laundries. The result is that laundry work is being farmed out to private laundries and regional laundries.

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## BELIEVE IT OR NOT

Since Bill Vander Zalm became premier five years ago, there have been 12 resignations from cabinet related to scandals, including the resignation of Bill Vander Zalm himself. None of the original members of the Vander Zalm cabinet is in the same spot today, and more than 40 of the 47 Socreds elected in 1986 have had a turn at the cabinet table since then.

Of the many scandals that have rocked the Vander Zalm government, one was directly tied to health care. In May, 1990, deputy health minister Stan Dubas was fired and former health minister Peter Duck left cabinet after reports that the two had travelled to Germany in 1988 with their wives and received food and accommodation from Siemens Electric, a giant manufacturer of imaging equipment. Dubas has since been charged over the matter, and Duck returned to cabinet after being cleared by police.

It also came out that two board members of the Greater Victoria Hospital Society, including Susan Brice, then the mayor of Oak Bay and now a Socred candidate, had gone to Germany in 1986 with expenses paid by Siemens Electric. The following year, GVHS bought Siemens equipment worth \$2.7 million without going to tender.

Throughout the 35 years of Social Credit government in B.C., creative bookkeeping has been used to foster the idea that B.C. is debt free or has less debt than other provinces. Premier W.A.C. Bennett boasted his government was "debt free," yet in fact there was debt labelled as "contingent liabilities."

Bill Bennett squandered off debt to crown corporations so that it wouldn't show up on the books, but Bill Vander Zalm and his finance minister, Mel Couveller, reached new lows when they created the Budget Stabilization or B.S. Fund. In the words of the auditor general, the government's bottom line with the B.S. fund, is a "meaningless figure."

Although the end of the B.S. Fund was announced in this year's budget, it was used one last time to cook the books. The Socreds claimed the deficit this year will be less than \$400 million, when in fact it exceeds \$1.2 billion.

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## MAKING THE POOR PAY

Even before Vander Zalm left office, his government had hit the average annual B.C. household with more than \$3,000 in taxes and fees, while corporations got \$2 billion in tax breaks. The number of fee increases was 784, including 229 new fees.

Rita Johnston's finance minister, John Jansen, former minister of health, imposed new fee increases in his budget this May.

In health care, the Vander Zalm government established a policy that MSP premiums finance half the cost of doctors' services. The result was major premium increases in 1989 and this year.

B.C. and Alberta are the only provinces charging medicare premiums, which are a regressive tax. Premiums for B.C. families will exceed \$800 this year, and thousands of poor British Columbians go without medical care because premium assistance is so limited and cumbersome.

As well, the Socreds have increased the Pharmacare deductible on several occasions, most recently to \$375. This places an enormous burden on ill British Columbians of limited means.

It has been proven that user fees don't save the health system any money, and only deter poor people from going to the hospital. In spite of these facts, Rita Johnston wants to impose them.

For most British Columbians, the Socred election victory was an expensive one. Another Socred victory could be even more expensive.

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## HOW HEALTH CARE BOSSES WORK

By Brad Teeter

An HEU Summer School course designed to take the wraps off cleverly disguised union busting techniques has already helped at least one union officer identify upcoming problems at her workplace.

A Vancouver Island HEU shop steward is sounding the alarm on plans to introduce a smartly packaged quality circle or team management approach that threatens working conditions and worker benefits.

Jane Slaughter, author of *Choosing Sides: Unions and the Team Concept*, told HEU Summer School students that employers' are pushing a definition of quality and team work that has little to do with reality.

The employers' understanding of quality involves protecting management rights and convincing workers to do as much work as possible for as little pay as possible, said Slaughter.

The HEU shop steward, who asked to remain

anonymous to allow time to consult with fellow workers, told *The Guardian* that managers at her facility plan a September weekend retreat to finalize a shift to the quality circle management style.

Quality circle catch words and phrases found on a hospital letter describing the retreat alerted the shop steward to the management's agenda. HEU members are wary of such phrases as flexible or lean production, worker participation and management by responsibility.

The quality circle team concept has already managed to blur job classifications in the hospital's dietary department, where, — for the "good of the team" — Cook 1 job assignments have been stretched to include Cook 2 tasks, says the union activist. She said the higher paying Cook 2 classification is in danger of being removed.

HEU Summer School students identified abusive quality circle programs al-

ready underway at their facilities. New Westminster shop steward Darlene Biglow said housekeepers at Royal Columbian Hospital are graded like school children on the quality of their work. And, said Biglow, the marks were influenced more by how much the boss liked you than by job quality.

The grades, designed to intimidate workers into doing a good job, are now largely ignored. "But it's still hard on new members," said Biglow, "because they think it's important."

Further evidence that the quality circle management attack is well underway in B.C. was provided in the career section of the Aug. 10 *Vancouver Sun*.

A career opportunities ad for Burnaby Hospital called for candidates who could provide leadership in quality/risk programs. The successful candidate, noted the advertisement, will work with multi-disciplinary teams in a progressive environment.

**Q**

QUALITY of working life and "team concepts," the Japanese management techniques to build assembly-line productivity and improve quality while holding down costs, are sweeping into the health care system.

Across B.C., health care bosses are asking workers to "join the team" in an effort to improve service and cut costs. What are the bosses looking for? Speed-up, reduced costs and even lay-offs, designed and implemented by the workers themselves.

Employers are spending large sums of money for consultants who teach them how to "reorganize" the workplace and increase productivity. These slick management techniques are designed to squeeze out more from each employee, erode the strength of the local union, and increase the real power of management.

Many hard-won union gains will be lost if the threats posed by the "team" concept are realized. Unions must develop counter-strategies which strengthen their locals while at the same time responding to the real concerns of their members regarding work organization and power relationships.

Perhaps the best definition of these programs is the simplest: "their team concept is another name for speed-up and union-busting." Team concept programs take advantage of the desire of workers to do a good job and to gain greater control of the workplace by subtly using the rhetoric of "quality" and "cooperation" against them.

We have to keep a clear head when faced with team proposals. No employer is interested in simply giving up control of the workplace. All employers have as their primary goals improved productivity (i.e., more work for less pay) and greater management rights. The team concept is one way to reach those goals.

In recent months, the team concept has been introduced in workplaces as varied as municipalities, hospitals, and university libraries. It has been spotted in provinces as different as British Columbia, Quebec, Alberta and New Brunswick. Everywhere it has shown up, it has posed a serious challenge for the local union.

Workers are often attracted to the promises made by team concept boosters. This is especially so in workplaces in which our members have rarely been consulted in the past about any aspect of their working lives. Employers form "teams" and "task forces" and ask those groups to look at various aspects of the way our work is organized.

Workers are given the strong sense that their "input" will really make a difference. Who wouldn't be attracted by that?

The problem lies both in the "hidden agenda" of management and in the degree to which promises about workplace reorganization are kept. While some changes may be made in response to team recommendations, the real goal of management during this process is to erode support for the union.



**MANAGEMENT TEAM IGNORES QUALITY INPUT:** Despite the team approach managers talk of promoting, most decisions concerning the operation of B.C. health care facilities continue to flow from a handful of managers in male dominated boardrooms.

In British Columbia, the municipality of Richmond introduced a concept called "Management by Responsibility."

"Management by Responsibility" is a sophisticated effort to increase productivity by getting employees to take on more (management) work without receiving extra pay or a promotion.

The stated goals are to "improve workplace attitudes" and to increase the responsibility for success or failure felt by all municipal employees.

Workers were actually told that "a manager's purpose is to serve employees by helping them realize that they bear 100 percent responsibility for their own success."

This is dangerous nonsense, of course, since the only employee who bears 100 percent responsibility is the one who enjoys 100 percent control over the work, but it is a classic example of what

some labour observers refer to as "Management by Stress."

By convincing employees that they bear all of the responsibility for what happens at work, employers using the team concept can simultaneously increase the stress which workers feel while reducing pressure on management from vocal employees.

This particular version of the team concept appears designed to confuse workers about the real power relations in the workplace; to make workers feel guilty when they speak out for their rights or criticize the employer; to trick employees into believing they are managers; and to increase productivity by convincing employees to take on more work without any increase in pay.

Because team concepts tend to follow the same pattern when introduced, it should be possible for locals to be alert to them. Whatever buzzwords are used to describe them (such as "Strategic Planning," "Vision and Values," "A Journey to Becoming the Best," "Team Building," "Management by Responsibility," etc.), team concepts are usually introduced in the following way:

1. A management consultant is hired by the employer. Usually the consultant is from the United States.
2. The consultant conducts a seminar which is restricted to managers and supervisors only. Often this seminar is held in a resort or retreat location some distance from the workplace. At this seminar the basic goals of the project are outlined for administrators and they are trained in how it will be applied.
3. The employer announces (often in a newsletter or other new communication method) that some variation of the team concept is about to be introduced. The employer may not refer to "teams" but may have another name for the project. The consultant may be personally introduced to workers.
4. Psychological personality tests may be introduced. Workers may be labelled as individual "types" or a review may be done of the results for the workforce as a whole.
5. "Mission statements," "value statements," or organizational goals are written down. Workers participating in the process come to a consensus on these statements. Often these goals sound very positive and can be hard to disagree with.
6. "Teams" or task forces are created to deal with a wide variety of workplace issues and to implement the goals of the mission statement. The membership of these committees is determined by the employer. Once again, union activists are not usually selected. If these teams become well entrenched, the employer has created a structure which is parallel to and completely separate from the union or labour/management committees. Members of the

# THE QUALITY GAME

*Everyone agrees improved hospital quality is a good thing. But why do current plans leave workers out of the decision making?*

by  
**BLAIR REDLIN**

"teams" are told that their input really matters (whether it is in fact listened to or not).

7. Workers on these teams are asked to take on certain management or supervisory responsibilities. In essence, they are asked to monitor the work of their co-workers and to do what they can to encourage higher productivity. The members of the teams may be given paid time-off to attend meetings, but they are not actually promoted to management jobs. They are not paid extra for taking on extra supervisory responsibilities.

8. Personnel issues which would normally be dealt with through the grievance process begin to be referred to the teams. Workers are told this is a less confrontational approach and are made to feel guilty if they are not being "co-operative."

Workers are attracted to team concept proposals because of a feeling that their ideas are not being heard at the workplace. All workers (and the unions which represent them) are interested in work which is happier, healthier and more satisfying.

Workers tend to disagree with management on how that can be accomplished because we have fundamentally different interests. The team concept can confuse workers about the real interests of management.

Our collective goals as unionists include items such as increasing pay; placing more real decision-making power in the hands of workers; protecting job security; protecting workers' rights; reducing hours of work; and protecting ourselves as a group through our collective agreements.

All employers have fundamentally different goals, such as protecting management rights and convincing workers to do as much work as possible for as little compensation as possible.

The challenge for all local unions faced with team management or quality circle schemes is to strengthen the union from the bottom up, while at the same time trying to respond to the desire by our members for more control over their work.

No one strategy will suit every situation, but the basics of any good organizing campaign are necessary to respond to team concepts.

In their book *Choosing Sides*, Jane Slaughter and Mike Parker suggest that "...the basic tools needed to keep team concepts out are the same as those needed to fight any kind of concession: education, organization, communication, and an alternative."

**Health care bosses are turning to a plan called 'management by stress'**

• Redlin is B.C. research director for the Canadian Union of Public Employees. Reprinted from CUPE Facts



**PREMIER CHALLENGED:** More than 200 HEU Summer School students urged premier Rita Johnston to drop the writ at an August rally outside her downtown Vancouver office. HEU members blew the whistle on government mismanagement that has led to hundreds of hospital bed closures and layoffs across B.C.

## B.C. communities unite to fight bed closures

by BRAD TEETER

**A**RMED with petitions bearing tens of thousands of names, anti-Socred placards and even piercing whistles, HEU members waged a summer-long protest against scores of hospital bed closures and lay-offs.

The disaster forecast when the Social Credit budget was released last May was as bad as predicted. At press time, more than 300 beds had been closed and hundreds of health care workers displaced from their jobs.

B.C. health care unions, calling for community-wide responses, urged residents to remember this summer's hospital service cuts come election day.

"You need your city council to be on your side; your chamber of commerce, your local labour council — everybody — to stand up and say, No!" said HEU secretary-business manager Carmela Allevato at a July union rally in Cranbrook.

Health care unions charged the government with mismanagement, questioning construction of empty hospital towers and new additions when underfunding is leading to service cutbacks at existing facilities.

The anti-bed closure union movement peaked in the northern B.C. town of Terrace where a determined public campaign pushed the government to postpone lay-offs and bed closures at Mills Memorial Hospital pending further review.

"We discovered how strong we can be when we all work together — really putting our minds to it," says campaign spokesperson Pigeau. The three unions, with help from neighbours, relatives and friends, organized a remarkable campaign that in the end boasted a

12,644 signature petition backing their cause.

In Powell River where 12 hospital beds had been cut, an HEU-driven community response prompted a lively debate on the future of health care in the community. Marie Lacourciere's HEU local, with help from BCNU and HSA, prompted a turnout of more than 200 residents at an election style rally against the cuts.

Hospital after hospital across B.C. announced bed closures and lay-offs within weeks of finance minister John Jansen's budget despite his promises of no bed closures or lay-offs.

The finance minister knew better. Service cuts and lay-offs were immediately predicted by hospital workers and administrators upon finding that hospital budget increases were restricted to between 5.3 and seven percent.

By July 24, HEU's research department had identified at least 319 permanent bed closures at 23 health care facilities.

The union response was province-wide, largely flowing from three broad initiatives.

- a call from all three unions for an emergency meeting with the health minister — finally accepted by the Minister after a noisy, HEU Summer School demonstration in mid-August at the premier's Vancouver office
- a demonstration July 19 outside the Social Credit leadership convention
- a special skills workshop Aug. 1 to help Lower Mainland locals mount community-based campaigns

The government to date has ignored HEU's request for an emergency funding allocation to ease the budget crises.



**THE CONFRONTATION:** HEU's Mary LaPlante (right) and BCNU's Debra McPherson turn up the heat on Health Minister Bruce Strachan in Cranbrook, where the beds closed.



**VGH PROTEST:** Members of all three health care unions rallied at Vancouver General Hospital in June to protest lay-offs and bed closures.



**TWELVE THOUSAND NAME PETITION:** HEU member Elaine Pigeau, fellow hospital worker and Howie the Health Care Bear rally support in Terrace where 12,000 signed a petition protesting cuts.

### Empty Social Credit promises

Since the budget figures came down, the following permanent bed closures have been reported in the media.

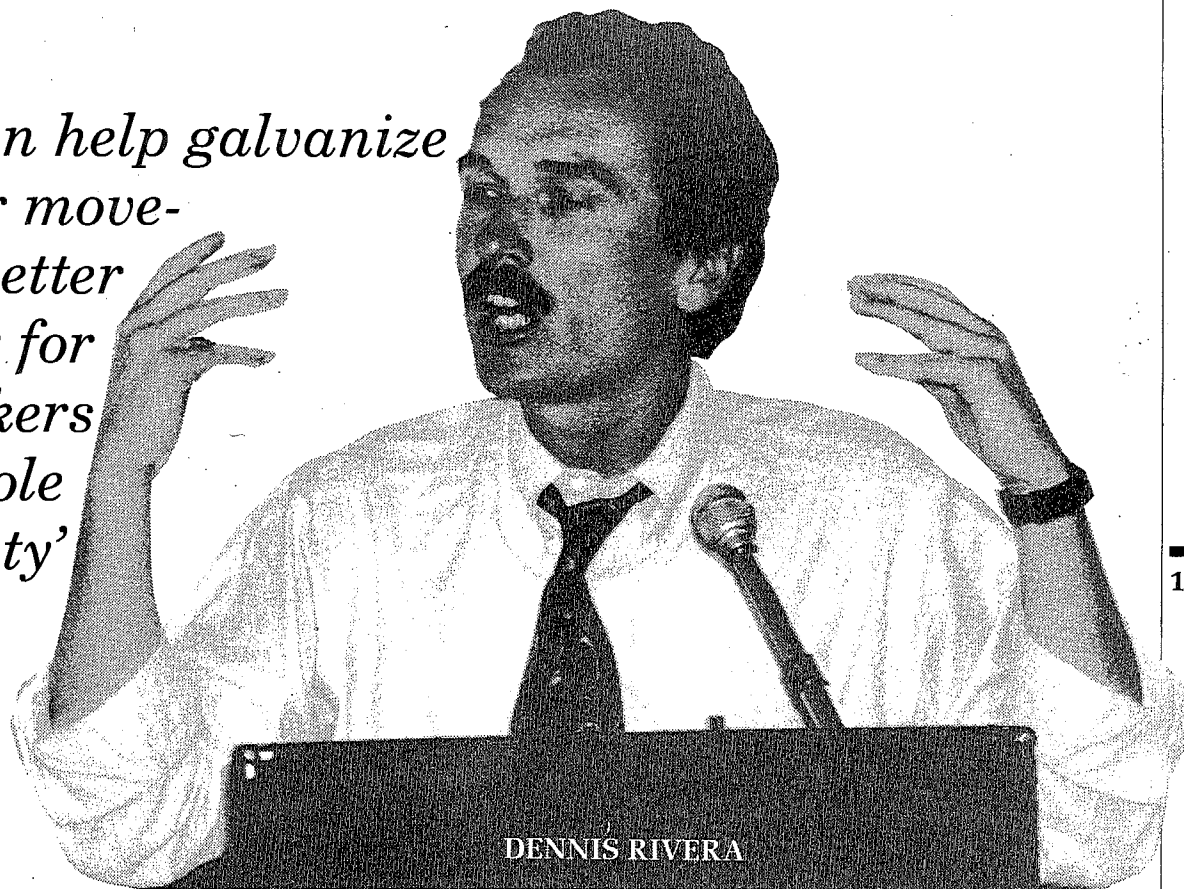
Burnaby.....	55	St. Paul's .....	35
Cranbrook.....	21	Terrace.....	24
Nanaimo.....	41	Vernon.....	16
Powell River .....	12	Vancouver General.....	26
St. Mary's Sechelt.....	11	West Coast District.....	17

and over 250 others

Province-wide total — 371

(does not include 125 summer bed closures at St. Paul's)

*'We can help galvanize  
the labour move-  
ment to a better  
future not only for  
health care workers  
but for the whole  
society'*



# REBUILDING U.S. LABOUR

By BRAD TEETER

**A** STUNNING 1989 bargaining victory by New York health care workers provided a rare moment of glory for a U.S. labour movement badly battered in recent years. HEU activists were told Aug. 12 in a captivating talk by the president of a New York health care workers' union.

Local 1199 Hospital and Health Care Employees' Union President Dennis Rivera painted a dismal picture of the plight of U.S. labour in a lively HEU Summer School presentation before some 200 union members.

But he challenged Canadian health workers to step up the defence of medicare so that American workers have a goal before them in their fight for better conditions. And he invited HEU to join with American health workers in a continent-wide campaign to rebuild the labour movement by a massive organizing drive.

"Our labour movement is in a deep crisis," said Rivera. "And, the lower the union density is in the U.S., the lower the wages and benefit conditions."

Rivera said labour suffered under the punishing Reagan presidency which shifted the tax load from wealthy corporations to lower income earners and transferred tax dollars from people and services to the military budget.

And, he said Reagan's attack on

union rights and benefits continues under the Bush administration, leaving workers demoralized and impoverished.

Rivera said a fundamental rebuilding process is needed to overcome worker cynicism and apathy. And, leading the way in the U.S. is the health care sector, said Rivera.

Local 1199's successful strike in 1989 showed that militant action by a united membership can produce gains, Rivera said, and the New York labour movement had followed up that victory by defeating an attempt to break the unions at the New York Daily News.

The relatively stable health care field, one of the only sectors of the U.S. workforce not

decimated by government policy, will act as a cornerstone for the revitalization of the wider labour movement, Rivera explained. "We can help galvanize the labour movement to a better future not only for health care workers but for the whole society. We are very optimistic."

Rivera said an effort is now under way in which the big three U.S. health care unions will undertake a joint, nation-wide organizing campaign targeting some 10 million health care workers currently without union affiliation.

A brighter future will depend on workers understanding that working together within the trade

union movement will positively impact every part of their lives, said Rivera. "We have to say that life may be difficult but we can change it."

He said workers must be reminded that at stake are benefits impacting every part of their lives from their children's daycare programs to their summer vacations.

Rivera challenged the HEU to continue defending the Canadian medicare system for the sake of more than 40 million Americans who cannot afford health care insurance under that system's privately run health system.

He said U.S. studies show that if the U.S. was to adopt the current Canadian public health care model — "and I know the struggle that you have with people who want to chip away at your system" — a saving of \$70 billion would be realized and health care could be provided for every American.

"It's very important for us that you fight to have the best kind of health care in Canada. Because when you fight, you're not fighting only for yourself, but for something that we in the U.S. — 250 million people — are trying to achieve."

The recent Local 1199 bargaining success flowed from years of preparation and planning after an earlier bargaining setback.

"It took careful preparation, building the union, department by department, chapter by chapter, and we made a calculated plan that as soon as we could strike we would send a message to the employer," said Rivera.

To a cheering HEU audience, Rivera concluded, "The more prepared you are to strike, the more ready you are to strike, the more determined you are to strike, the less you will have to strike."

"If the employer knows that you have been gearing up to strike, that you have lined up all your community friends and allies, that you have mobilized the political community behind you and you have invested millions of dollars in a public relations campaign. At that moment, they say 'we'd better come to terms with these folks.'"

# Coffee Break



## A model for Social Credit?

Speaking to a conference of South American medical authorities, Dr. Alaos Miguel Carlo denounced "mad politicians" who have six times held ribbon-cutting ceremonies at Colombia's General Hospital. Although the six different ceremonies, held by six different party leaders, were to open the facility, the electricity has never been turned on. Cost of the openings exceeded six million pesos, mostly for drinks and snacks.

## Pay equity reaches animal kingdom

According to the *Globe and Mail*, keepers at the New Delhi zoo recently undertook a hunger strike. Each tiger in the zoo eats \$85 worth of buffalo meat a month but a keeper's monthly salary is only \$27. The union members want parity.

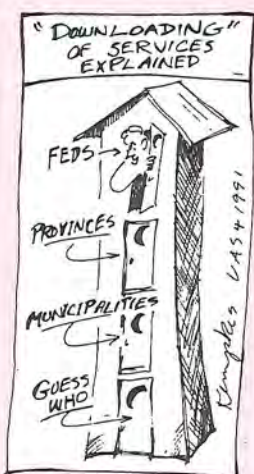


## Apartheid's walls hard to tear down

The much-heralded end of apartheid in South Africa promises to be slow in coming. In a recent speech to the Transvaal Assembly, in South Africa, Dr. van Rughen promised that "the regulations which barred laundries from using the same suds to wash the clothes of white and black customers will be deleted. But I cannot say that the former regulations will be abandoned by local authorities such as hospitals."

## They're hearing heavenly tones

British bell-ringers are experiencing a form of religious uplift with a difference — they are being killed and injured. According to a recent article in the *British Medical Journal*, bell-ringers are in grave danger of "high speed lift" if the bell goes out of balance and the ringer fails to let go. The ringer rockets upward at speeds of up to 90 kilometres an hour. Last year, bell-ringers suffered five deaths and 742 injuries, including rope burns and lacerations.



## An answer to understaffing?

Administrators at Stanford University hospital have a unique solution to the problem of wards without windows. They have installed computer-driven light boxes with simulated views of the Palo Alto hills to soothe patients in the windowless rooms. The computer produces tiny changes in light which simulate sunrises and sunsets. What's next? Illuminated pictures of care aides? Or will they speed up the cycle of sunsets so they can release patients after two computerized days?

## It could have been worse

"We were enjoying a TV snack when they began to demolish our house," Mrs. Ervin Hallman, a retired security guard in Pompano Beach told *Florida Today*.

"My husband tried to open the front door but it was blocked by a bulldozer. I got out through the window and met an official, who turned out to be Hank Willis, the assistant building director. He asked me what had become of the demolition order his department sent us three months ago."

"Before I had time to answer, his men had driven a hole through the side of the house. When my husband came over to him, Hank Willis said, 'It's a bit messy, I agree, but as we've only removed one load-bearing wall you haven't that much to complain about. A coat of paint and it will be as good as new.' It was then that we attacked him."

## Your tax dollars in action in Japan

When prime minister Brian Mulroney flew to Tokyo in April to open the new Canadian embassy, his office felt it necessary to fly in two chefs from Edmonton to ensure the Japanese guests were well-enter-

tained. There were eight different buffets, one offering merely Canadian cheese and fruit. Another station, however, offered this average Canadian fare: Carved Rack of Northern Caribou with Curried Chutney Sauce, Smoked Arctic Char with Dill Mustard Sauce, Duck Quenelles with Green Peppercorn Port Wine Sauce, Baffin Bay Grilled White Scallops with Lemon Ginger Marinade, Steamed Fiddlehead Dumplings and Marinated Vegetables.

Other tables featured Loin of Muskox with Baked Crab Apples and Roasted Tenderloin of Buffalo with Potato Garlic Dip.

Just what the average Canadian tucks into for Sunday dinner.

## Practice democracy — or you're fired

The president of a Wisconsin publishing company is giving his employees time off to lobby for his political beliefs. He shut down his plant for an hour in May, and provided the 250 employees with pens, paper, stamps and envelopes. He asked them to write their senators to complain about tax increases to support education. One hundred of the employees did so.

## Equality notebook

Some figures from a recent study by the Aga Khan Foundation, reprinted in the *Globe and Mail*:

Percentage of the world's working hours performed by women: 66.

Percentage of the world's food produced by women: 50.

Percentage of the world's property owned by women: 1.

Percentage of female workers in the U.S. paid less than the minimum wage: 75.

Percentage of women who think males still run everything and usually don't include females when important decisions are made: 41.

SOURCES: CALM, PRIVATE EYE, GLOBE AND MAIL, FRANK



HEART OF HEALTH CARE: HEU delegates at Evergreen State College sang their sisters a rousing version of Heart of Health Care.

## HEU members exhilarated by women's conference

When 13 HEU representatives headed to a five-day union women's school in Washington State during July, they expected to learn about women in the global economy.

They did that, says Jean Whiting, who represented Victoria's Royal Jubilee local, but they also learned a lot about themselves: their power as women, their strength and their ability to make change.

"It was so powerful when it all wrapped up," Whiting said. "Each group had to speak or sing. You felt you could just go up and give a sister a hug."

"Prejudices had dropped away, racial prejudices, prejudices against lesbian women."

Whiting and the other HEU delegates — all of whom are Provincial Executive members — joined about 49 other Canadian women at the week-long seminar at Evergreen State College in Olympia, which attracted 200 trade union women from Alaska, Hawaii and the American coast states down to California.

Sponsored by the Education Research Labour Centre, the program featured a series of high-level courses on the global economy on topics as varied as Organizing for Social Change and Power in the Workplace.

Adding an important balance to the academic program were core

groups named after important women trade union activists. According to Whiting, the combination meant that "anyone who went in on Sunday came out on Friday a changed person."

The program became a course of personal discovery for Whiting. She realized, for example, that even women can be sexist if they evaluate each other by their figure or their style of dress.

"We began to see other people as a person, a sister. I felt I could be more sensitive, promote women more."

Health care workers, who work in largely female workplaces, had a lot to learn from women carpenters and mechanics, who had endured substantial discrimination and sexism in the workplace.

At the same time, American women were impressed by the Canadian health care system and had to rethink the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement.

"They are worried about losing jobs to Mexican cheap labour if Mexico is added to the agreement," Whiting said. "We said, 'you are the cheap labour for Canadians,' and they hadn't looked at it like that."

Next year's conference will be held in Vancouver and Whiting is on the organizing committee.

Every woman in HEU should try to attend the Vancouver conference, Whiting says, but no one should expect a quiet week. After five days of 10 and 12 hour days, the HEU delegation concluded "only women would put this much in a one-week course."



WHITING

## Arbitration upholds HEU on contracting-out clause

An important arbitration decision at Vancouver General Hospital should put an end to abuses of HEU's contracting-out protection.

All too often, health care employers contract out work to private operators first and advise the union later.

An expedited arbitration award handed down at Vancouver General Hospital July 13 says that's wrong.

Arbitrator Don Munroe was hearing an HEU grievance against VGH's practice of contracting-out renovations to existing facilities without asking the union in advance.

This is wrong, Munroe said, and is ruled out by Article 59 of the Master Collective Agreement, which bans

any contracting-out of work which "will result in the lay-off of employees."

It requires the employer to discuss with the local any contracts which "could otherwise be performed by members of the HEU within a facility, except where an emergency exists."

Munroe's decision ruled the union must have "reasonable prior knowledge" of contracting to facilitate discussion before the contract is let.

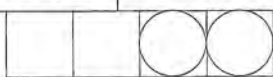
As a result, HEU will be insisting on prior knowledge. Union policy is that discussions must take place prior to the tender being let and each tender will be discussed individually.

## PUZZLE

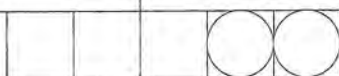
Unscramble these five jumbled words; one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

Now arrange the circled letters to form the answer suggested by the cartoon.

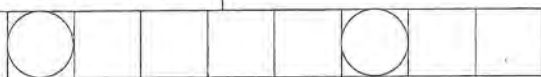
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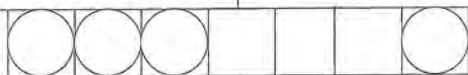
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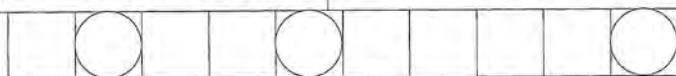
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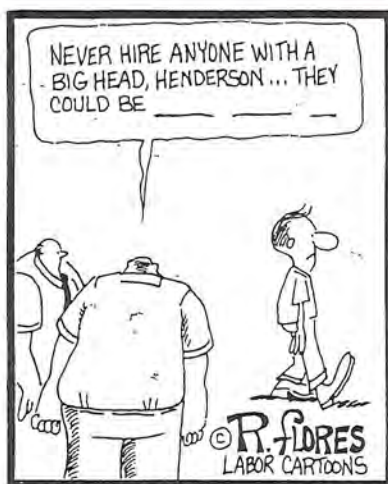
UARATURECB



Print answer here



Answers: BOSS, PAPER, HOSPITAL, MANAGER, BUREAU, CRAT — "SMARTER THAN US"



## CALENDAR

The Guardian welcomes insertions for Calendar. Mail to 2006 West 10th Ave., Vancouver or phone 734-3431. HEU notices will get priority in the space available.

**21 SATURDAY,** Vancouver hearing of the Citizen's Inquiry into Peace and Security, a national commission sponsored by the Canadian Peace Alliance which will report to Parliament on Canada's involvement in the Gulf War. Call End the Arms Race for details.

**25-27 WEDNESDAY TO FRIDAY,** HEU Provincial Executive Meeting, Vancouver.

**14-18 MONDAY TO FRIDAY,** National convention of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, Winnipeg.

**18, 19 FRIDAY AND SATURDAY,** A Conference on Labour and Team Concepts, sponsored by the Vancouver and District Labour Council and the Labour Studies Programme at Capilano College.

Includes a debate Friday between James Matkin of the Business Council of B.C. and Norm MacLellan, vice-president of the Canadian Paperworkers' Union. Saturday sessions include Team Concepts, American experience and participation from Canadian workers, including HEU members, facing team concepts on the job. All sessions at Maritime Labour Centre, 1880 Triumph St., Vancouver. Information: Labour Studies Programme, 2055 Purcell Way, North Vancouver, V7J 3H5. Phone 984-4954.

**23-25 WEDNESDAY TO FRIDAY,** HEU Provincial Executive meeting, Vancouver.

**26 SATURDAY,** National Day of Protest against the Tory agenda, sponsored by Action Canada Network and the Canadian Labour Congress.

Includes a debate Friday between James Matkin of the Business Council of B.C. and Norm MacLellan, vice-president of the Canadian Paperworkers' Union. Saturday sessions include Team Concepts, American experience and participation from Canadian workers, including HEU members, facing team concepts on the job. All sessions at Maritime Labour Centre, 1880 Triumph St., Vancouver. Information: Labour Studies Programme, 2055 Purcell Way, North Vancouver, V7J 3H5. Phone 984-4954.

**26-29 MONDAY TO FRIDAY,** B.C. Federation of Labour convention, Vancouver.

**27-29 WEDNESDAY TO FRIDAY,** HEU Provincial Executive meeting, Vancouver.

**11-12 WEDNESDAY, THURSDAY,** HEU Provincial Executive meeting.



ON VIDEO!

CHECK OUT THESE  
EXCITING VIDEOS FROM  
THE HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

# THE HEART OF HEALTH CARE

Available now, for a modest \$8 charge, this 45-minute video captures all the drama, music and fun of HEU's Heart of Health Care musical revue, which toured B.C. during the spring.

## ALSO AVAILABLE

### Pay Equity: The Time Is Now

In this keynote address to HEU's 17th Biennial Convention of the HEU, Saskatchewan Federation of Labour president Barb Byers makes a compelling case for pay equity in the health care field. 29 minutes.

### HEU: Fight for Democracy

The union's battle against Bill 19, Social Credit's repressive labour legislation. 15 minutes.

### We Can Say No

This 25-minute production gives a devastating analysis of free trade's impact on our country and lays out a way we can regain control of our future. Sponsored by HEU and other members of the Action Canada Network.

### HEU 11th Biennial Convention

Originally produced as a film, this 26 minute review of the 1978 convention gives us a sense of our union's roots.

### On the Move for Victory - 1199

In 1989, beleaguered New York city hospital workers ended a period of division in their union and mobilized to shatter their employers' united front. This 20-minute tape, which features appearances by Jesse Jackson and Local 1199 president Dennis Rivera, is an inspiration and a guide to action. Highly recommended.

call **734-3431** or your nearest  
regional office to get your copies today

HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

video



## Health care target

B.C.'s health care system has been the target of Social Credit cutbacks and wage restraint. On voting day, remember the Social Credit record.

PAGE 8



## How bosses work

A special report on new tactics public sector employers are using to get workers playing their game.

PAGE 10



## Keep the beds open!

HEU members around B.C. have mobilized their communities to fight unprecedented bed closures by the Social Credit government.

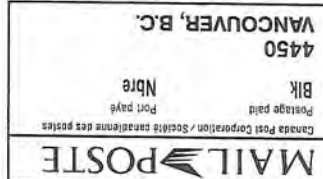
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## Rebuilding labour

A New York health care union leader challenges Canadian unionists to lead the fight for a better labour movement.

PAGE 13



Return address:  
The Guardian,  
2006 West 10th Ave.,  
Vancouver, V6J 4P5

# Social Credit is bad for your health

A good health care system is not only good for patients, it's good for health care workers.

The Social Credit health care philosophy has failed.

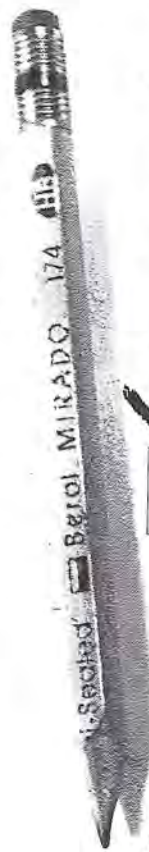
For the patients in our health care system, it's been four years of bed closures, waiting lists, funding cutbacks and misplaced priorities.

Patient care standards crumbled. Social Credit built new hospital buildings it can't use while closing beds in existing facilities.

Meanwhile, health care workers are struggling to keep the system going.

We've seen privatization, contracting out and we've suffered increased injury and illness due to short-staffing and hospital overcrowding.

The final gift was Social Credit's wage control bill, Bill 82, which not only freezes salaries but also attacks every other contract condition. For HEU members there can be only one conclusion: Social Credit is bad for your health.



Vote on



election day

HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

