

Solidarity Times

HUMAN RIGHTS DAY
ROBSON SQUARE DEMO, NOON, DEC. 10
FAB FOUR IN WAX
NOSTALGIA FOR BEATLES BUFFS /15
SHORT RECESS BEFORE NEXT ROUND

Schoolyard rumblings

By Keith Baldrey

It was West Coast Story.

The two opponents circled one another warily. Crowded in the unlikely setting of the Hyatt Regency's opulent ballroom were union Jets. Across the Strait were government Sharks. The Jets had a message for the Sharks.

"There's going to be a rumble in this province," thundered burly Mike Kramer, B.C. Federation of Labor secretary-treasurer.

"There is going to be a rumble in this province the likes of which we have never seen before," echoed Lief Hansen, a meatcutter.

Don Garcia, a longshoreman, said: "A government without honor should not be a government at all."

Delegates to the B.C. Federation of Labor's annual convention were plenty steamed. They had been "double-crossed" by the Sharks.

A shaky truce to respect the other's turf was off.

What started as a routine gathering of trade unionists turned into a tumultuous affair.

It had all the earmarks of a religious revival. Scorching sermons led delegates, who had spent the early part of the convention sitting on their hands, to spring to their feet, banging tables in support.

There was Andy McKechnie, of the Ferry and Marine Workers Union, threatening to give free swimming lessons to cabinet ministers. "I know our union brothers and sisters fly those government planes. The cabinet ministers can damn well swim to Victoria."

See page 12: STAGE

TEACHERS: ENDANGERED SPECIES



Classrooms could close again if settlement disintegrates/3

BEV DAVILA PHOTO

Cassiar collapse leaves fishermen adrift

Most of the summer's salmon catch lay stashed in the Cassiar Fish Packing Co.'s warehouse.

It was late August, the time when the shaky cycle of the sea economy takes a regular turn. Packing companies traditionally underwrite bank loans for boats, and even personal homes, to guarantee fishermen's loyalty. The fishermen owed \$5 million and about \$100,000 in licensing fees to Cassiar. The company, in return, owed \$1.8 million to fishermen.

On Aug. 31, the Royal Bank stepped in and pulled the plug on Cassiar and Royal Fisheries Ltd., a wholly-owned subsidiary.

If you're an employee, like a

cannery worker or the tendermen who work on packing boats, you take your last paycheque and start looking for a new job. But fishermen are co-adventurers, like suppliers in most other industries, and are therefore unsecured creditors.

So suddenly fishermen are getting only 20 cents on the dollar for their catch, but still owe a dollar for every dollar borrowed.

"Fishermen didn't collect a dime all summer and they're expected to pay off their debts," says Danni Tribe, of the United Fishermen and Allied Workers Union. "The week people started to draw money out of Cassiar, they threw it into receivership. If

we had known, we wouldn't have sold them the fish."

The company's two shareholders — A. Ewan Macmillan of Vancouver, with 51 per cent; and Marubeni, Japan's fifth largest trading company, with 49 per cent — won't inject more capital into Cassiar.

"Cassiar is just a paper-clip account to them," says Tribe. "It's part of the whole fallacy about the benefits of attracting foreign capital — when profits slip, they pull out. They have no community ties."

The likelihood of the federal government tossing a lifebuoy to the floundering company is overshadowed by fishing inquiry commissioner Peter Pearce's recommendation that

half the B.C. fishing fleet be scuttled.

Mike Burgess, Fisheries Association of B.C. executive director, estimates it would cost \$300 million to buy back half the province's fishing licences.

"Realistically, a 30 per cent reduction would be sufficient," Burgess said.

"That would cost \$150 million. The government allowed excessive licensing, which has caused suffering for the industry and the fishermen. There are too many fishermen chasing too few fish."

The union says diminished

See page 10: FISH

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10/26/84

This Week

Fed uproar over school bucks cut

By Stan Persky

The B.C. Federation of Labor was halfway through its annual convention.

The 1,000 or so delegates and guests encamped in Vancouver's Hyatt Regency hotel were, after five months of battling Premier Bill Bennett's right-wing legislative package, in a mood that ranged from feisty to funereal. The trade unions and community groups who had formed the unprecedented Solidarity Coalition, many of whom were represented around the tables of the Hyatt's gloomy ballroom, had protested in record numbers, hit the bricks for two weeks in November, and concluded an unorthodox verbal agreement at Bennett's Kelowna home Nov. 13.

The trade unionists had forced the government to back off on contentious labor legislation that would have



B.C. Fed's Mike Kramer: "... going to have a rumble."

shredded bargaining rights and scrapped seniority provisions in the public sector. For organized labor, the battle had resulted in at least partial victory. But for community groups concerned with human rights, social service cutbacks, landlord-tenant mediation services, and education funding, the outcome was far from clear. The delegates, along with an unusual number of invited guests from non-

affiliated unions and the community, were here to ponder the next steps for the fledgling coalition and its labor component.

From the first, it was apparent the fight had not gone out of labor. On Nov. 28, as the convention opened with a keynote address from federation president Art Kube, delegates made it clear they would not heed the recent call from Canadian Labor Con-

gress president Dennis McDermott to begin raiding the building trades unions, currently not affiliated to the country's largest labor central. In B.C., particularly, despite the jurisdictional squabble, building trades representatives had maintained close informal ties with the B.C. Fed, and were present in force as "fraternal" delegates at the annual get-together. "We don't see anything like that happening in B.C.," said B.C. Fed spokesman Gerry Scott, referring to the CLC raiding call.

When CLC president McDermott arrived Nov. 29, he quickly got the message. McDermott promptly soothed ruffled feathers by announcing the congress call for raids on building trades unions did not apply to B.C. He apologized for the congress communiqué coming to Lotusland, where construction unions are "an integral part of this province's labor movement."

By mid-week, the convention had heard from outgoing NDP leader Dave Barrett and Solidarity Coalition co-leader Renate Shearer. Bennett's "farewell" speech condemned the Socreds, the federal Tories, the nation's banking system and the nuclear arms race.

Shearer urged the convention to maintain labor's backing for the coalition's fight to counter the provincial government's social policies. "We vowed then, when the cuts were announced, and we vow now to fight the budget and

the legislative package," Shearer told the delegates. After receiving the convention's longest standing ovation, Shearer, joined by Kube, led about 800 delegates to a Robson Square noon-hour rally to demonstrate their anger over the government's removal of the human rights commission.

Throughout the sessions, Kube called on delegates "to strengthen the Solidarity Coalition and continue the struggle on behalf of human rights, tenants' rights, and social rights." The trade unionists took him at his word. When the federation executive brought in a 12-point action plan to maintain the alliance on Nov. 29, delegates rejected it and told their leaders to come back with something stronger.

The federation needs to adopt a "fighting program of action that is going to demonstrate clearly to the workers that we're going to fight this bloody legislation," said Canadian Union of Public Employees delegate Harry Greene. "Our long-term program is to elect an NDP government, but our short-term goal is to fight this government and its programs until they are taken off the books. I am not prepared to sit back and wait until we elect an NDP government." Neither was the majority of the convention.

While delegates debated, one outstanding contentious issue continued to simmer: See page 12: DELEGATES

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The fight against the July 7 legislation will continue.

NEWS

BEV DAVIES PHOTO

UBC students slapped with huge hikes

Students at the University of B.C. are staggered by administration plans to double tuition fees over the next three years.

Provincial student organizers meanwhile, anticipate a similar move at all the province's universities, and think that colleges, too, will peg fees at the new high of 20 per cent of total education costs.

Student groups at UBC were surprised by the administration proposal Dec. 1 when it was introduced moments after their own presentations against higher tuition fees. They had warned that doubling tuition fees and introducing even higher fees for foreign students would damage the university's reputation and quality.

But the university's governing board completely ignored the students' arguments, said Lisa Hebert, student council external affairs coordinator.

The administration wants student fees to account for 20 per cent of the university's operating costs by 1986, compared to their current share of 11 per cent. In two years foreign students will pay two and one half times what Canadians will pay.

Under the new system, a first year arts student would pay an annual tuition fee of \$1,764, compared to the current fee of \$882. At the other end of the scale, a medicine or dentistry student would pay \$3,046, up from the current \$1,532.

Student board member Dave Frank said he and some other board members were led to believe those figures were purely informational, and wouldn't be included in the proposal presented to the meeting.

"Picking 20 per cent out of the air is the least creative and most arbitrary way of setting fees," Frank said. "It means that even if the government came up with a lump of funding (in addition to its grant), students still must pay the 20 per cent."

Board members told students the university was forced to make students pay more of the university operating costs because of a possible funding decrease of \$12 to \$16 million next year.

Administration president George Pedersen blamed the hike on provincial government funding policies: "There was no other option open to us in the light of indications from the provincial government that there will be no increase, and quite possibly a decrease, in operating grants over the next three years."

A spokesperson for the Canadian Federation of

Students' Pacific region said an increase at UBC would be adopted elsewhere.

"What they're trying to do now is to keep them all at the same level," said executive officer Donna Morgan. She said she anticipated colleges would also hike fees to match the most expensive institute in the province — the B.C. Institute of Technology, with yearly fees of \$970.

"They say there's student aid, but lots of students aren't eligible for student aid, and lots of them will just look at these fees and be discouraged," Morgan said.

Fed backs woman seeking equal pay

By Trish Webb

Three years after charging Army and Navy department stores with discrimination, Beverly Jaworski is back where she started: on the sidewalk in front of the store.

She launched a class action suit on behalf of all the store's female employees in January, 1981, when she discovered a junior employee was being paid more than her because he was male.

"When I complained to management, one of the managers, Rick Jackman, openly admitted that Army and Navy discriminated against women and he was surprised that women's groups and trade unions hadn't been picketing the store a long time ago," she said.

Despite warnings not to press the matter further, she filed a complaint with the human rights commission under sections of the code dealing with wage discrimination and unequal opportunities for promotion based on sex.

Her case was accepted and an investigation launched, but after 10 months of interviewing Army and Navy employees and reviewing their pay records, the commission was shaken by problems of its own. Human rights director Nola Landucci was fired and the officer responsible for Jaworski's case quit her job. A new officer was assigned after a few months delay, only to announce Jaworski's file containing the conditions for settlement had disappeared.

With her own copies of the document of her case, Jaworski sought independent legal representation at the Vancouver Status of Women and the Service, Office and Retail Workers Union of Canada.

The new human rights director, Hanna Jensen, finally took Jaworski's case to Labor Minister Bob McClelland in December, 1982. He deliberated for 10 months before writing a two-sentence letter stating he would not put the case before a board of inquiry.

Army and Navy offered

Jaworski \$150 in back pay to stop pressing for compensation for all the store's female employees, but she refused. Starting wages for men and women are now the same, but Jaworski says she wants equal pay on the basis of seniority.

"I saw wage records at Army and Navy that showed the difference in earnings of women who had been there 10 years and men who had worked there for two years. The men had already beaten the women in terms of wages," Jaworski said.

"It's like they're living in the Middle Ages at that place."

She won't be alone on the sidewalk. The recent B.C. Federation of Labor convention passed a motion of support for Jaworski. And on Dec. 10, the Equal Pay Information Committee, which picketed the store in May, plans a workshop about equal pay in front of the store from 2 to 4 p.m.



Coughing up cash at the A&N boutique.



The Canadian Farmworkers Union is looking for volunteers to tutor people in English. Without language skills farmworkers are subject to rip-offs in many aspects of their jobs. Teaching weights, measures and the language of labor contracts is a major step in ensuring the most exploited group of workers get what is owed them on time and in full.

Other unions' help seen as crucial to possible teacher walkout

Teacher support for another mass walkout from B.C. schools hinges on the involvement of other unions in the job action, says Pat Clark, of the B.C. Teachers Federation.

"Our people are still quite tentative, they're still questioning the Kelowna settlement," Clark said. "It's difficult to tell (how much support there is for another walkout). But if it came down to something like a general strike, I'd be pretty confident our members would be involved in a substantial way."

Any attempt to force

teachers to work three days without pay would be a "betrayal" of the settlement reached in Kelowna Nov. 13 that halted their three-day strike, Clark said.

The Nanaimo school board proposal that teachers work an extra eight minutes a day to make up for the three days lost in the strike was "stupid," Clark added.

"I can't see teachers accepting or going along with something that stupid. We're not going to work without being paid, period. And the money saved during the strike

has to go back into the budget to save jobs."

Clark said his members got a morale boost from the support given to teachers from other unions at the B.C. Federation of Labor annual convention last week.

"It was quite gratifying. It demonstrated quite clearly that we're not operating on our own. I just wish every teacher could have been there."

It was "reassuring" the labor movement showed its commitment to "the stand we've taken," he said.

NEWS

Protesters erase borders for peace

The inscription on the Peace Arch reads: "May these gates never be closed."

But 150 anti-nuclear protesters spurred border officials to stop traffic at the Blaine U.S.-Canada border crossing for minutes Dec. 3.

Canadians and Americans illegally walked across the Canadian border, ignoring orders from border officials to turn back. They joined hands on Canadian soil, singing as three distress flares were set off.

They then marched back through Peace Arch park, and passed American border officials as they crossed illegally into the United States.

The action was part of Canada/U.S. Solidarity Days aimed at uniting Canadians and Americans against the Cruise missile. The event also declared the participants free from governments and the boundaries of nation-states.

Saturday's civil disobedience was the culmination of a 24-hour peace camp directly under the Peace Arch. A dozen protesters illegally set up tents Friday afternoon, ignoring the prohibition of cam-

ping in the park and declaring the border crossing a nuclear free zone.

No arrests were made during the 24-hour demonstration.

Broadcast beams Solidarity message

Vancouver Co-op Radio has joined the Solidarity Coalition.

The radio station's unprecedented step—up to now it has belonged only to broadcasting groups—was taken so it could be part of the fight against the government's legislation, says station coordinator Vinny Mohr.

"Our members felt that since we were a community station, we should become involved in the budget fight," said Mohr.

She said some station members voted against joining the Coalition, because they felt the station's news coverage would be compromised when it reported on Coalition activities.

"Some people thought we would prejudice our objectivity," Mohr said. "They were worried that it would prevent our station from criticizing the Coalition."

Other members expressed

concern that Coalition membership would endanger the station's broadcasting licence, but Mohr said those fears are groundless.

"When you get a broadcasting licence, you're not asked to list what groups your station belongs to," said Mohr.

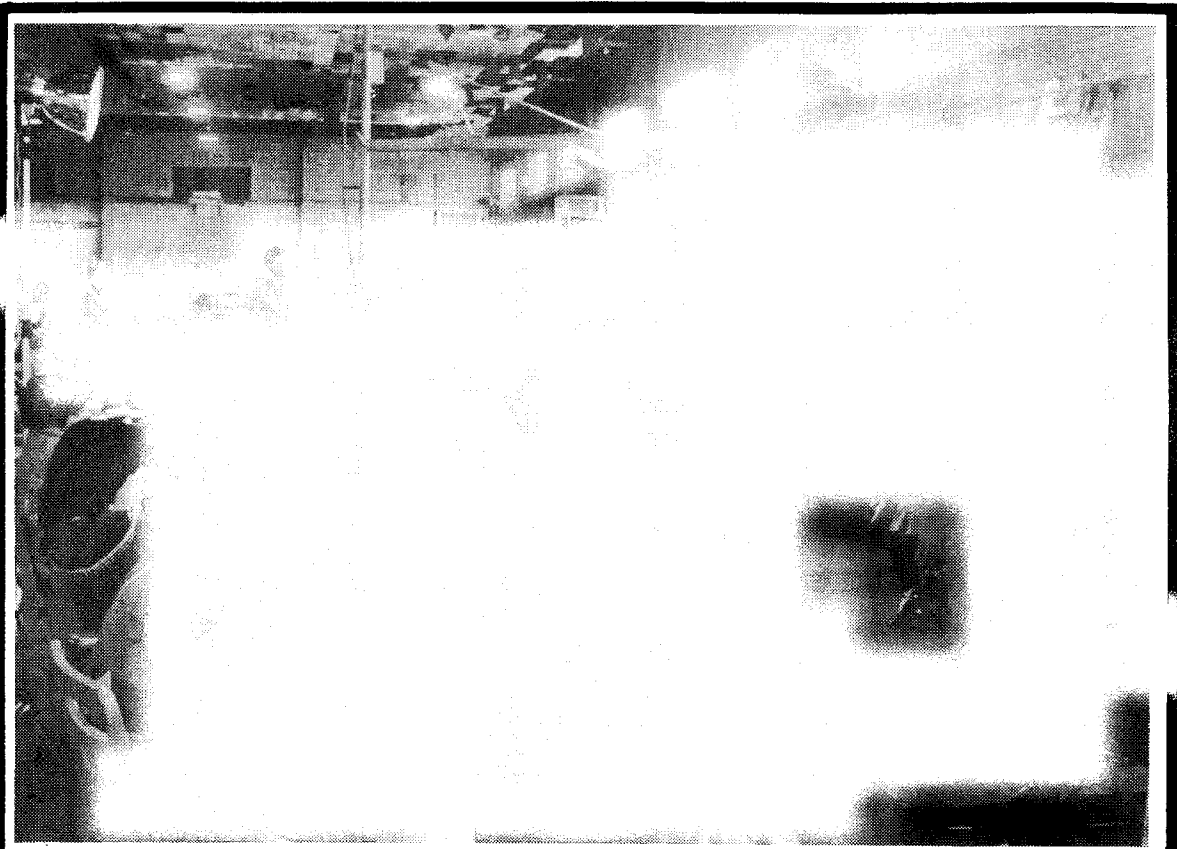
Dec. 10 rally marks rights' day

Human rights activists in B.C. are not lighting any fireworks for Dec. 10 for the 35th anniversary of the United

Nations declaration of human rights.

Instead, they will gather at noon in downtown Vancouver's Robson Square for a rally sponsored by the B.C. Human Rights Coalition and the Lower Mainland Solidarity Coalition.

Raj Chouhan, president of



The Coalition For Aid to Nicaragua held a reception Saturday to finish off the 'Tools for Peace' boat project. The Coalition raised \$892,000 in money and implements to send to Nicaragua.

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the Canadian Farmworkers Union, said the planned rally is necessary to tell the provincial government in the strongest possible terms that it must recall its human rights bill.

Chouhan said the bill was a direct attack on minorities because they did not vote for the Social Credit government.

"What we need in B.C. is the further improvement of the existing code," said Chouhan. "We have seen it in history that every time there has been a crisis it's colored people, immigrants, minorities who come under attack."

"The government says that they are going to make a stronger code: that is just a farce," he said.

Peter Beaudin, co-ordinator for the B.C. Human Rights Coalition, said the bill violates the Canadian charter and international human rights agreements and conventions.

There's no provision regarding discrimination without 'reasonable cause' in Bill 27, which brings Bill 27 into conflict with the Canadian charter of rights, he said.

The lack of an appeal procedure, a section on penalties for human rights violators and changes allowing discriminatory advertisements break international agreements, Beaudin said. And he said Canada's international agreement to provide education about human rights is violated by B.C.'s removal of all provisions for public education in Bill 27.

Rent hikes go through the roof

By Trish Webb

Rental accommodation in Vancouver has never been cheap and plentiful, but if you once found a place for less than \$700 a month, rent controls gave you protection from unfair rent increases. In the old days, landlords could raise rents 10 per cent once a year, or when a new tenant moved into a suite.

But after rent controls disappeared July 7, landlords started slapping on increases, some of them as high as 100 per cent. An example is Zen and Aquilini, Vancouver's biggest landlords. Already notorious among tenants for their disregard for by-laws and building standard regulations, Zen and Aquilini recently hit some of their tenants with rent increases of more than 100 per cent.

And now Vancouver's vacancy rate is half what it was last spring.

It's expected to drop further and there are few places to go.

Rentalsman Jim Patterson blames the falling vacancy rate on the increased immigration of people from other provinces and the end of federal subsidies to apartment builders.

Despite what many people think, the Rentalsman's office is still open. They are currently mediating landlord-tenant

disputes and handling unjust eviction appeals.

Rent increases can still be appealed by the tenants, but the percentage of the increase is no longer considered a factor when the Rentalsman decides whether or not to roll back the rent. Instead, the price of comparable accommodation in the area is used to determine if the new rent is fair.

Because Bill 5, the Residential Tenancy Act has not been debated in the legislature the tenure of the rentalsman is unknown. But the rent review process will remain until at least October 1984.

Tenants can also appeal to city hall for redress if their building does not conform to building standard by-laws.

Committee of Progressive Electors Ald. Libby Davies says it is important that city councillors become familiar with the rental situation.

"Council has some leeway to enforce general maintenance by-laws. It is useful to know where rent hikes are going on so that we can look into the condition of the building," she said.

10-cent stamp cancelled

Canada Post is licking its chops after the Canadian Labor Relations Board cancelled the scheme for dime-letters.

The Canadian Union of Postal Workers proposed the temporary rate as a Christmas gift for consumers. Sorters were going to allow dime-letters through the system next week as a protest against the elimination of greeting and Christmas card rates for ordinary people.

Canada Post told the board the sorters' action, in accepting cheap letters, would be an "apprehended strike." The board agreed in a Dec. 6 ruling.

The union, representing 23,000 postal workers, has called its national executive together to draft a response to the ruling. Their decision was unavailable at press time.

But one union official thinks the scheme was a success, even if not a single dime-letter is mailed.

"Even if nobody puts a letter with a 10-cent stamp in the mail, we've still achieved what we set out to do," said Rudy Baird, a B.C. union representative. "We wanted to show the public what's going on inside the post office."

Canada Post and the union have had fragile relations for more than a decade. The latest conflict centres around a five-year plan created by post office head Michael Warren, who has promised to make the Crown corporation self-sufficient by 1986.

Baird says corporation plans for an emphasis on pre-sorting, incentive rates, the contracting out of services provided at post office wickets, and the hiring of



Vancouver Postal Workers Union protest against rent controls.

more casual and part-time workers, are a move to weaken the union.

"We're trying to protect jobs," Baird said. "That's a union's function. We also wanted to draw the public's attention to where they've cut down on staff. Last year they deleted 1,000 positions. The mail is just not getting through the way it's supposed to."

Third-class rates for greeting cards were eliminated two years ago. Only companies are offered bulk rates today, from 13-and-a-half to 24 cents a piece, while all personal mail is 32 cents.

DERA: Drunk plan all wet

By Trish Webb

The Downtown Eastside Residents Association is fighting with city hall — again.

The mayor's task force on alcoholism has developed a plan for shipping chronic alcoholics to treatment centres far from the beer parlors of downtown Vancouver, so they can dry out and make an informed decision about their drinking.

DERA's Sue Harris, who sits on the task force, says the program discriminates against poor alcoholics.

"Alcoholism is not higher here than in other parts of town, it's just that most other people have living rooms," she said.

DERA wants city hall and the provincial government to enforce building and liquor regulations, and build more recreational facilities instead of sending people away.

"DERA does not appreciate the problem of the geography

of the downtown," says task force head, Tony Mears. "I don't argue that you should have facilities for people but there are many non-residents engaged in activities downtown."

The program is aimed at people who slip past community agencies and social services. While the Criminal Code definition of chronic alcoholism is loose, the following procedure will determine the program's participants:

A person found drunk in a public place and brought to the detoxification centre 20 times in six months will be examined by two doctors to determine if his health has deteriorated to the point where he is a danger to himself. The doctors will decide if the person should go before a judge who can order treatment.

Plans to tie human resources ministry assistance to "voluntary" treatment are under negotiation.

Harris claims those people will return to the dingy, overpriced rooms downtown where 85 per cent of Vancouver's bars are located.

The task force and DERA are both trying to have Chinese cooking wine and Lysol removed from stores, or at least altered to make them unpalatable.

Thirteen months of lobbying Lysol's manufacturer resulted only in a recommendation by the company's corporate relations head that they lobby the product's local distributor.

"We as a group have to have more guts," says Harris. "Some members of the task force are still afraid to go after a corporation."

The task force is consulting

with the Human Resources ministry to change social assistance payments, so that cheques are issued throughout the month, Mears said. Now, the downtown eastside is plagued with public drunkenness and petty crime on the last Wednesday of each month.

The task force is composed of representatives from DERA, the Human Resources ministry, Carnegie Centre's look-out program, urban core workers, the liquor distribution branch, the provincial alcohol and drug abuse program, the city hall social planning department, the detox centre, an area merchant and a police officer.

B.C. jobless jump

Teachers and government workers facing the axe Jan. 1 as a result of the B.C. government's "restraint" program got cold comfort from Statistics Canada last week.

The learned they'll be joining 13.9 per cent of B.C.'s labor force who were unemployed in November. While StatsCan reported Canada's slowly falling unemployment rate stalled at 11.1 per cent last month (unchanged from October), in B.C. the rate jumped from 13.5 per cent to nearly 14.0 per cent, the third highest jobless percentage in the country.

The figures show unemployment, despite periodic federal and provincial announcements about the recovery, is a continuing problem. In all, 1,281,000 people were out of work in Canada in November, 43,000 more than the previous month. Hardest hit are young workers: the unemployment rate for youth rose to 18.8 per cent nationally.

EDITORIAL

Socred slow learners get 'F' from teachers

This is a government filled with slow learners.

After weeks of hemming and hawing over what to do about money not spent in wages during last month's three-day teacher protest against education funding policies, Jack Heinrich at last opened his mouth. The neanderthal nonsense that

tumbled out was hardly caused by a lack of information. In the new B.C. spirit of "consultation" resulting from the Nov. 13 settlement of an 85,000-worker public sector strike, Heinrich had consulted far and wide.

Education minister Heinrich and his principal, Bill Bennett, wanted teachers strapped. They insisted pro-

testing teachers make up the three lost school days. But that's not what their consultants advised.

In slowly pronounced one-syllable words, teachers' leader Larry Kuehn, school trustees' president Joy Leach, and school superintendent Dante Lupini, all told Heinrich he had a bad idea.

Kuehn explained that forcing teachers to work an extra three days was impractical and that it would violate the Kelowna Pact which stipulated no reprisals against protestors. Leach also said the three extra days made no sense and that school boards, as the teachers' employers, should be left to make the decision about unspent money. Consultant Lupini also advised the minister the make-up scheme was a stinker.

Well, so much for consultation. Heinrich spoke. School boards had two weeks to come up with a plan to make teachers do three days of punishment work. Even then there was no guarantee the \$18-\$20 million in "savings" (actually it wasn't money saved, but teachers' lost wages) would be applied to the 1984 education budget to stave off crowded classrooms and mid-year disruptions that will follow a wave of

teacher firings slated for Jan. 1

All that good consultative advice was wiped off the blackboard in a single stroke of the eraser as teachers were ordered to write "I will not protest government education funding policies" a hundred times.

The decision gets an F for "failure." It's mindless, mean, and in the words of labor leaders, a "double-cross" of the Kelowna settlement.

Of course, Heinrich also picked the perfect moment to deliver his edict: right in the middle of a B.C. Federation of Labor convention filled with delegates more than a bit suspicious of the government's good intentions.

Even those normally supportive of Bennett's policies were taken aback. "The government should forget the whole idea," urged the morning daily's editorial. "It is a recipe for renewed strife."

"It's almost as if the B.C. government is setting up its truce with organized labor to fail," wrote Province analyst Barbara McLintock. This from a commentator not notably friendly to Bill Bennett's opponents.

The lesson, to date, appears to be: consultation is not the way to deal with schoolyard bullies.



COI

SENSE

Argo 'landslide' matches Socred 'mandate'

By Lanny Beckman

Black Sunday

Sure I hate Toronto, but I backed the Argos in the Grey Cup. Ordinarily I'd have put my dime on the Lions but this was no ordinary football game. It was a political event. Using the Lions as delivery boys, Bill Bennett was determined to buy a Grey Cup for B.C. Place. He didn't make it.

In fact, he and the Lions got clobbered. The Argos' 18-17 win might not seem like a landslide, but let's put it in perspective. The score is almost identical to the ratio of Socred to NDP votes in the last election (49 to 45 per

cent) — and that added up to one huge mandate.

Confused? See visual aid.

* * *

Cold Feet

It's hard to explain why Marjorie Nichols' gyroscope goes haywire every so often. For months her attacks on the Socred budget were pretty similar to Solidarity's. But when Solidarity moved from ink on paper to feet on pavement, Marjorie's feet got cold. After slipping horseshoes into her gloves and turning 180 degrees, the lady was ready for war — the War to Make the World Safe for Hyperbole.

Like a kangaroo with an inner ear infection, she began flailing out at all things Solidarity. Eventually she got around to the bold and decent rag you hold in your hands. She seems to doubt the Times qualifies as a free press. She says — get this — "it's about as independent as Pravda"! This loony accusation doesn't merit a reply, but let's supply one anyway. Art Kube personally took time out from his hectic schedule to deny the B.C. Federation of Labor has any control whatsoever over Pravda. And that's good enough for me.

You hate to do public psychoanalysis on someone whose only means of defence is a thrice-weekly column, but Marjorie just might have some unconscious personal investment in this free press business. After all, doesn't she work for the Southam Megalopolis, the newspaper chain now in court on charges of conspiracy, merger and trying to stamp out as many rival papers as possible? Could she be trying to absolve her own guilt by projecting it onto a safe and innocent target like the Times? Or could it be that all of this amateur psychiatry is just plain stupid?

Who knows, maybe once the

penicillin kicks in, Marjorie will devote a series of columns to her boss's campaign to drive free competition out of the newspaper business. Meanwhile, keep your left up and don't hold your breath.

* * *

Hammer Gonna Be the Death of Me

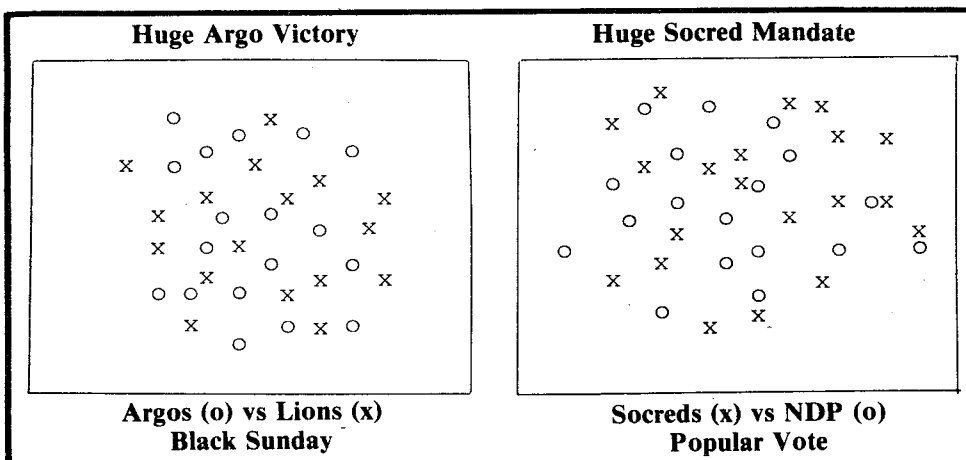
Have you caught that Workers Compensation Board commercial for Daon Development? It's the one with the dapper Daon officer explaining how the corporation ensures A-1 safety conditions on its job sites.

"I could say, 'Do this, don't do that,' but what's the point?" asks the executive hero in the hard hat and three-piece suit. Instead of a shotgun approach to safety, what's needed is a "system," and that's what the company provides.

Those who don't rely on TV commercials for their history lessons might believe unions have initiated almost all of the improvements in health and safety over the years, while companies have initiated almost all the resistance.

Well, the taxpayer-financed ad lays that myth to rest. You learn something new every 30 seconds.

Lanny Beckman is publisher of New Star Books in Vancouver.



Solidarity Times

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Solidarity Times is a politically independent weekly newspaper that supports the aspirations of Solidarity Coalition, trade unions, workers, women, ethnic minorities, native people, the handicapped, pensioners, social service recipients, gays and lesbians, tenants, defenders of human rights, environmental and peace activists, consumers, students, artists, and religious people seeking a socially relevant church. It is published by a non-profit society and is not the spokesperson or official organ of any organization.

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PUT IT IN WRITING

Don't put profits before Johnny On The Spot

Last week, I had occasion to see an edition of your newspaper. One of the main articles bothered me: it seemed to imply the degradation of older people as opposed to the fine young men who are destitute. I agree with your position on young people; however, I take exception to the impression of older broken workers.

I'd like to draw your attention to some outstanding loggers who make up the history and folklore of people before us. Loggers such as Johnny On The Spot and Rough House Pete ended up on Skid Row. Eight Day Wilson and Lefty Roberts finished their lives in destitute shacks. The common denominator of these and many others was poverty in its worst form.

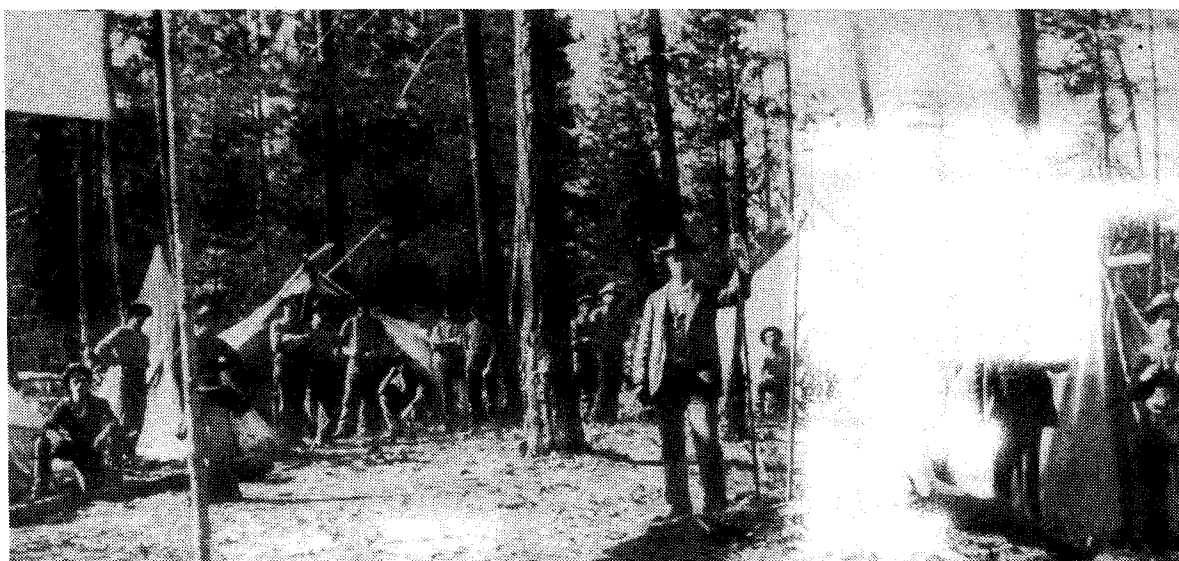
You will say the compensation board doesn't allow such foolishness now. True, but they do allow miners to get black lung, millworkers to breathe sawdust and handle chemicals. Operators run heavy equipment too many hours a day and fallers say the white-hands disease, the broken health, and deaths

could be reduced greatly. All this goes on while the compensation board weasles its way out of its responsibility in the interest of profits. Unless and until priorities are placed on our welfare instead of profits, your fine young people will take our place and like us, will become a byproduct of industry and the profit system.

Your paper can serve, and is serving, a useful purpose. Its main purpose is to unite us to win the issues at hand and avoid the artificial differences.

Otto McDonal
Port Alberni

Hopefully, your editorial staff is inclined to be young, so you may have the energy to research a subject which badly needs attention, particularly in B.C. and on the island where various "entrepreneurs" are making eyes at empty buildings and land for their high-tech ventures. I suspect at least 60 per cent of the population are as ignorant about computers and their future place in our lives as I am.



The company gets the bucks, the workers get the breaks.

Labor unions are particularly in need of information about what computer technology can mean to their members' lives (it's mostly bad, I suppose, but does it have to be?).

After seeing three would-be investors in a high-tech computer business on Webster! last week, I began to worry.

Take as a starting point nothing more than one statement by a brighter-than-most mogul in the computer

business: "We're faced with a situation in which increasing numbers of people no longer have hopes for a rising standard of living . . . The people begin to say to their rulers: 'We don't care what you do, just make sure we keep what we've got.' And suddenly you're back to autocracy, dictatorship."

This statement sharply accents a bit of the fear and insecurity that ran through the

thinking of working people in B.C. during the recent strike. Were a large scale layoff to be brought on by high tech, what possible answer would working people have? We're totally unprepared for that, as we were by Bill Bennett's "without cause" layoff threats. I hope you will deal with this.

Mabel Richards
Victoria

SO X

Starving schools? It's a myth, says Curtis

By George Victor

Mention Finance Minister Hugh Curtis' name or his statistics to a group of economists and you're likely to get snickers.

When the province's chief custodian of the cashbox spoke to the B.C. Association of Professional Economists last month, the number crunchers had to make a special effort to keep a straight face as Curtis undertook to "dispel the myth that Socreds are starving the schools."

"The fact is," declared Curtis, "we are spending more per pupil in the kindergarten to Grade 12 school system than at any time in the history of the province. Real per pupil spending in 1983 is \$3,937, compared to \$3,845 last year." Even by his own reckoning that's only a 2.4 per cent increase, hardly anything to write home about. Nonetheless, the minister added, "This can hardly be deemed starvation of our public school system."

Given that the government appears to be dragging us once more to the brink of general strike over the question of education funding, it would be nice to know exactly what we're fighting about. Curtis' claims about the financing of the education system are quite different from what school boards, teachers, parents and students are saying.

Who's right? Unfortunately, it's not as easy as simply hauling out your pocket calculator. B.C. education financing is enmeshed in an accounting nightmare of numerous budgeting procedures calculated by "calendar," "fiscal" and "school" years. If analyzed thoroughly, the subject could easily occupy a shelf-full of reading guaranteed to put you to sleep.

But it is not a matter for total despair. There are a few numbers that even besieged taxpayers can unders-

tand. For instance, according to Curtis' July provincial budget, \$1.406 billion is being spent on education in 1983. According to the drudges in Curtis' finance department, this is an increase of seven per cent over 1982 spending. That sounds pretty good. At least it's above the inflation rate.

It is crucial to realize, however, the government's education ministry budget includes the costs of teacher certification programs, support for private schools, and vocational school funding, not to mention the enormous resources required to operate the ministry's own bureaucratic apparatus. Therefore, the budgetary increase of seven per cent does *not* mean a seven per cent increase in local school board budgets. That's not so good.

School district budgets are now made up from a combination of provincial grants and additional money raised through local property taxes. Increasingly, in the last years, and especially as a result of the 1982 interim Education Finance Act, the education minister has been acquiring more and more power to centrally control education financing. That's why local school boards have been squawking about local autonomy of late.

A look at 1983 school board operating expenditures shows school districts increased expenses by only 0.4 per cent over last year. That's far below the inflation rate, and far below the comfortable seven per cent increase to the ministry.

What's happened, in fact, is that once inflation is taken into account, real school spending in 1983 has declined. As for Curtis' boast that B.C. is spending \$3,937 per pupil, B.C. School Trustees Association executive director Graham McKinnon simply shrugs his shoulders and says, "That's politics."

1981 District operating estimates \$1.294 billion*

Per pupil operating cost	\$2,729
Enrollment	485,560
Teachers	29,075
Pupil/Teacher Ratio (PTR)	16.7

1982 District operating estimates \$1.494 billion (15.5 per cent)

Per pupil operating costs	\$3,206	(17.5 per cent)
Enrollment	482,255	(-0.7 per cent)
Teachers	28,183	(-3.1 per cent)
PTR	17.1	

1983 District operating estimates \$1.501 billion (0.4 per cent)

Per pupil operating cost	\$3,263	(1.7 per cent)
Enrollment	479,110	(-1 per cent)

(other figures not yet available)

*Source for statistics: B.C. School Trustees Association.

McKinnon stands by the BCSTA figure of \$3,263.

So does B.C. Teachers Federation researcher John Malcolmson. When you mention Curtis' higher per pupil figure, he just laughs. When Malcolmson called school trustees around the country recently to obtain comparable figures, the results were not heartening. Ontario spends \$3,342 per pupil, Saskatchewan \$3,371, and Quebec \$3,702.

One other part of the "myth" that deserves examination is the pupil/teacher ratio. The ratio (17.1 in 1982) is a figure the government uses to show how soft a teacher's life is.

The reality is something else. The figure is arrived at by adding up the total teaching staff including principals, vice-principals, counsellors, librarians, school nurses and other instructors. While the 1982 ratio was 17.1, actual class sizes last year averaged close to 23 pupils.

Even the average doesn't give the true picture. A vast increase in special education programs in the past five years has created a situation where 10 to 15 per cent of the school population is part of "special ed," requiring in-

creased teacher attention. As well, there are increasing numbers of non-English speaking students who need English as a second language training, once more necessitating smaller classes and individual instruction.

The realities disappear under the cold numbers. B.C.'s ratio of 17.1 is at the high end of the scale compared to Alberta (16.7), Saskatchewan (16.8) and Manitoba (15.9). Yet, as part of its "restraint program", the education ministry is demanding the ratio jump to 19 in 1984.

It sounds like a small increase. After all, what's two more kids in a classroom? But listen to BCSTA president Joy Leach: "Within a very short period of time, we will be experiencing class sizes of more than 40 pupils . . . I think one of the expectations we can have with larger classes is that the dropout rate will escalate, and this at a time when B.C. is already experiencing youth unemployment in the neighborhood of 30 per cent."

A closer look at the facts leads to the conclusion it is Curtis and his government who are creating "myths" when they boast about the extent of their "financial concern" for education.

PU

WRITING

Hold out for more

No one will be surprised at the outcome of Solidarity's program of action on Nov. 13. After all, it was with a great deal of hesitation, outweighed only by a collective repugnance for Bill Bennett's repressive legislation, that most of us joined forces with Operation Solidarity. The usual antics — hand-picking delegates, preventing grassroots input, disregard for due process and internal political manipulation went largely unchallenged, for we all knew that this was the way the game was played here. The slogan, "It's the only game in town," could be heard ringing from the rooftops for all of August and September. In reluctant solidarity we marched towards the legislature.

No one is surprised at the sellout. But surely, after thousands of workers have faced reprimands and termination, given up their much-needed pay, and tromped around in the rain for more than 10 days on behalf of some naive sense of justice — surely, we could have held out for a little bit more? Even a pretense of a fair exchange would be more satisfactory than this slap in the face.

Kathy Chopik
Victoria

The University of Victoria Solidarity Committee is a grass-roots group which has been organizing support for Solidarity on campus. Our work has come to a standstill since the "settlement" reached between Bill Bennett and Operation Solidarity. Our anger with the course of events stems from the following:

1. We at no time had even the most remote input into the appointment of a spokesperson or to the "settlement" agreed to.

2. We were left in the dark for almost a week as to what the exact course of events were leading up to the "settlement" and the nature of that agreement.

3. The government has since made it known that education funding will still be cut as planned in this year's provincial budget. It would seem that coalition members in the education sector have gained nothing. This means that students shall have tuition increased over the course of the next year.

4. It would seem, from the statements issued to date, that other members of the coalition have gained very little as well.

Our anger, added to the confusion surrounding the "settlement" has meant that we no longer have a clear framework around which to work. We continue, nonetheless, to organize events on campus.

We wish to make a number



They were on the line. Could they have gotten more?

BEV DAVIES PHOTO

of things clear. First, because the government's attitude towards education has not changed, our attitude towards the government has not changed. We believe that the coalition should continue to escalate actions to put pressure on the government.

Second, we believe that any reprisals taken against anyone, including teachers, who participated in Coalition activities should be responded to by appropriate job action, up to and including a general strike.

Third, we believe that there are serious problems with the democratic structure within the coalition. We demand that the "settlement" agreed to be presented to members of the coalition in black and white and that any further negotiations be televised. Backroom deals go against the spirit of democracy. Fourth, we wish to reaffirm our support for other members of the coalition and stress that we are still fully behind public sector unions in their fight against Bills 2 and 3.

We believe that one of the most valuable things which can potentially come out of the current period is a strong and democratically based grass-roots movement. The way in which the "settlement" was reached undermines the growth of such a movement because of its undemocratic nature and also because it has sown discord and suspicion within the coalition. We believe that this discord is extremely harmful and so would like to take this opportunity to state that we still support and continue to be members of the Coalition.

Karyn Segal, on behalf of the
University of Victoria
Solidarity Committee
Victoria

Boy, do we need an alternative to those other newspapers. In your province, Bill Bennett and his bunch just keep on being parroted on "restraint" by all the media regardless of opposition statements. To some extent

you'll need to state old issues in clear terms.

May I suggest less massed grey print and more bold so that the casual reader can get

the gist at a glance. Keep up the good work.

B. Farel
Calgary

Teachers put jobs on line for kids

White Rock Elementary straddles a couple of blocks in the middle of White Rock. The playing fields are bordered by giant chestnut trees. It is a medium-sized school, fairly conservative, strict, and staffed by caring, supportive teachers. It has a good relationship with the

small community it serves. Its students do well academically and athletically. For the past six years, the White Rock team has won the trophy at the South Fraser Junior Olympics track meet.

My children have been attending White Rock Elementary since 1978 and they, along

We want to hear from you.

Solidarity Times welcomes letters, criticisms, comments about articles we've published, and brief analyses of social and political developments. Put It In Writing is a forum for Times' readers and we urge you to use it.

Here's how to Put It In Writing: write to Letters, Solidarity Times, 545 W. 10th Ave., Vancouver, B.C., V5Z 1K9.

with their fellow students and teachers, share a quiet pride in their school. Old students return regularly to visit favorite teachers.

Yet for one week, these quiet, dedicated teachers put their jobs on the line and surrounded their school with pickets. They were out not to better their own lot but to improve that of their students. They know what damage the cutbacks are wreaking on the quality of education. They struggle daily with diminishing supplies, vanishing programs, increased class sizes and the certainty that conditions will further deteriorate after Christmas. They are tired of being the scapegoats of a government that keeps telling them they don't care about kids. They have had enough!

White Rock Elementary is typical of hundreds of schools across B.C. and I find it moving in the extreme that its teachers take this stand for our children. We owe them our deep gratitude.

Marie Kootnikoff
White Rock

Christmas '83

The day moves on, the social truce, the crisis — people are edgier, minds shy away from questions of principle. You can feel your own mind, not-thinking Solidarity. Do some cling to economists' talking heads on The Journal, saying 1983 will be the best Christmas since 1979? while others watch stilly, as a Pershing rocket emplacement is dragged over the soft earth of their minds?

The pace of international events picks up, the limousines are waiting. The Rapid Deployment Force, in Kansas they burn the Soviet flag. The Warriors are out in the street with baseball bats & colored faces like the boys who painted themselves like Indians & threw the tea into Boston harbor. & Brazil can't pay, & "ragged men & women shouting anti-IMF slogans" trash supermarkets in Sao Paulo, & women & boys fight each other for Cabbage Patch Kids dolls in Hamilton, the best Christmas since '79.

Maybe it is, if we're more aware of the people who are living in the next house, or on the next block, of who's working and who isn't.

If we try to drown ourselves in the holiday daze, we find we can't ("It's been like this for years now"), we keep coming to,

on Granville Mall, or 3rd Avenue Prince George, or driving the Squamish highway, or the Kitimat highway, or even in the midst of gorging on whiskey & turkey & football & beer & dope & rock & red paper & lights, to realize this is British Columbia, Earth, not Disneyland, & it's only as safe as we make it, you & me, & our kids' teachers.

George Stanley
Terrace

ON THE JOB

Mr. Nickle-and-dime

Junk dealer "Eric Watt" spoke with Tom Hawthorn.

The first thing that started me on this business was when I went into a junk store a few years ago. There was a little old man sitting in the back. Got talking to him. He said, "Oh yes, I take in about \$300 a week." That was pretty good money in those days.

I said, "just sitting here in this junk store you're making \$300 a week?! Wow! Where do you get all the stuff?"

"I go to the auction. So, say, a box comes up and it's got three toasters, a couple of irons in it, a couple of other things. I get the box for five bucks, right. Sell the toasters for \$10 each. It's easy."

This is gre-e-a-t, I thought. I got a truck and started going to auctions. Some auction houses have afternoon auctions, where junk dealer things are brought in. You start going through those, trying to get anything you could get for a dollar. Buy all kinds of rubbish. You're just starting out, you don't know.

You buy things like really badly beaten up armchairs for a dollar and you take them out to the flea market and some poor slob would come along and buy them for 10 bucks. "Wow, I made a thousand per cent profit." Meanwhile, you've been hauling around a great big heavy armchair, an ugly thing that's depressing to look at, to make eight or nine bucks.

I could call myself an antique dealer — that's spiffier — but let's face it, it's not all antiques. I deal in a lot of different things, so a generic term like junk dealer is probably pretty good.

I buy collectibles, antiques, books, records, items of practical value for the home like pots and pans and appliances.

Every one of these fields requires a certain amount of expertise before you figure it out. Mainly learning the market: what people want. When you first go into it, you have no idea.

When I started out, a little porcelain figurine was a little porcelain figurine. But if little porcelain figurine has Made in Japan on the bottom, it's worth about a buck. But if it has R.S. Prussia on the bottom, it's worth several hundred. These are the little things you have to learn.

I learned a lot about the trade from J. He really taught me a lot, mostly by ripping me off. He didn't have a vehicle and he used to go to sales with me in mind. He'd go around scooping up all these wonderful things right before my eyes. I'd find some things too, then afterwards we'd trade. Then he'd explain to me how the things I traded him are worth 10 times the things he gave me. It's a school where one learns very quickly or dies!

I didn't use to know anything about photography or famous photographers. It was just a subject I'd never researched or paid much attention to. I did know for an old photo you could sometimes get 25 bucks.

So one day I saw an old photo of an



"You learn very quickly, or die!"

Indian at a garage sale and it was very nicely framed. The guy wanted \$25 for it. I went, well, the frame's worth about that. Is this a photo or photogravure? It had a name on it — Edward Curtis. Never heard of him. So I go to a friend of mine, "You ever heard of Edward Curtis?" "Yeh," he said. "I have, I have." I hummed and hawed. He finally said, "I think I'll take this." So he bought it. He knew full well what it was. He's still got it and the last price he had quoted on it from Sotheby's or Christie's was \$4,000. That sort of thing kind of jars you and sparks your interest.

It's always a big event when some new person gets into the field. They'll show up at the flea market with all the things they found for 10c, 50c and a dollar, that they're selling for \$2 and \$2.50. Some of the stuff is great, 'cause

it's worth \$10. You can pick up a whole bunch of stuff at once without having to do all the running around. It is cruel.

I'll go anywhere. My main source is garage sales. Get up very early on a Saturday morning and I'll have made a map the night before with all the sales that are on in the Friday paper, and I get the Saturday paper in case there's a few that get in that same morning. I start at about 7, try to get to each sale an hour or two before the time it says. And go to as many as 30 sales in one day if there are that many to get to.

Ideally you bring several hundred dollars, but I usually scrape together \$80 to \$150. But there's always the chance there'll be something sitting there like a really fine Persian rug that's worth several thousand dollars,

going to \$200. And you won't have the \$200. It hasn't happened yet, but I've always had this feeling I should have more money with me when I go out.

You often get to a garage sale and there's a couple of cartons of books, they're all 50c or something. You go through those and pick out the ones that look like you can get two or three bucks for.

Most of the stuff I do is the process of trying to change quarters into dollars, as opposed to changing hundred dollar bills into thousand dollar bills. It's much easier to find something for a dime you can sell for a dollar, than it is to find something for 10 bucks you can sell for a hundred.

The best I've done, I guess, was a book of photos I sold the last time I was here, that I bought for \$18 and sold for \$500. People I know are finding these kinds of things all the time. Maybe not on quite the heroic scale of the sort that's going to set you up for life, but certainly the kind of thing that can pay for your vacation.

That aspect of treasure hunting is best. Rather than going skin diving for Captain Kidd's treasure, you're going garage sale-ing for it. There's always the thought that somewhere, somehow, you are going to stumble on that Picasso, or that Tiffany.

It all requires a certain amount of chutzpah. You gotta have the nerve to make lower offers, or to go to people's garage sales early. There's a whole crew of people you never see at garage sales on Saturdays; if the person puts the ad in on Thursday, they go around to the person's house on Thursday. I don't do that. I'm afraid they'll set the dogs on me.

There can be a real difference in garage sales. Some people put out five broken plastic toys. You feel like lecturing them: "You ought to be ashamed of yourselves for having a garage sale with such poor stock. I'm going to report you to the Junk Dealers Association."

Then there are the pests — they once bought something like an oak-framed mirror at a garage sale for \$5, so they've established for all-time all oak-framed mirrors must be \$5. If you're selling it for more than that, you're a rip-off.

Mind you, it is a field where you can be fairly eccentric. You can dress the way you want, look the way you want. You can even be fairly anti-social, because if your prices are low enough, people will buy from you no matter how mean you are. And those old guys, some of them are right nasty.

The stigma attached to being a dealer, you have to shrug that one off. The lack of prestige and social status. If people were to rank: at the top is judge, at the bottom is garbage picker, and you're a glorified garbage picker. Really, one shouldn't care about that sort of thing, but it does make a difference in your life. I don't seem to mix with the better class of people. I don't get invited to the right dinner parties.

Casting complete for roles in second round of monumental showdown

By Keith Baldrey
Analysis

The scene would have been hard to imagine as little as a year ago: a non-affiliate leading the B.C. Federation of Labor's charge into a bitter fight with the provincial government that could result in a general strike.

But B.C.'s teachers are front and centre in the battle, and they are indicative of the rise of public sector unions within the federation. Since Nov. 1, the B.C. Government Employees Union, the Canadian Union of Public Employees and the teachers have been at the focal point of the fight against the government's budget legislation.

Private sector unions like the International Woodworkers of America have found themselves in an unusual backseat role as their public sector colleagues lead the battle.

The public sector unions' new influence was evident at last week's federation convention. Teachers were given broad support, and CUPE's warning that Bill 3, the Public Sector Restraint Act, still posed a threat seemed to have an impact on other delegates.

But will the teachers and other public employees continue to head the pack if the latest dispute erupts into another massive strike?

Probably not, because this time the private sector has promised to back any job action aimed at the legislation by putting their own members on the picket lines as well.

If current forestry negotiations continue unproductively, the forest unions could find themselves striking anyway. Building trades unions are most worried about pending labor code changes which could favor management interests, and would likely fight those changes with job action.

There is also little doubt anymore who will lead the next strike, if it occurs. Federation president Art Kube firmly established himself at

the convention as the leader of Operation Solidarity.

Kube has also made it clear that social issues, like tenants and human rights, would not be discussed at the bargaining table. The next dispute will most certainly focus on labor issues, eliminating the confusion during the November strike about what government concessions were needed to end the walkouts.

The important question is whether the same militancy that was shown by convention delegates exists among labor's rank and file.

They could be asked to walk out over a seemingly insignificant issue, such as the teachers' dispute over the three days of class time lost in the strike. But Operation Solidarity's selling point will be that the government has broken the Kelowna deal, and in union terms, that's like breaking a collective agreement.

"If there's one thing union members understand, it's that a deal is a deal," Kube told reporters during the convention.

'Fish have got bad press. They smell.'

From page 1

salmon stocks are caused not by over-fishing, but by industries polluting spawning grounds.

"Logging is one of fishes' biggest enemies," says Trive. "They can wipe out a whole spawning ground with a few logs or a bulldozer, but no one wants to curtail logging activity because it has a high profile in our economy."

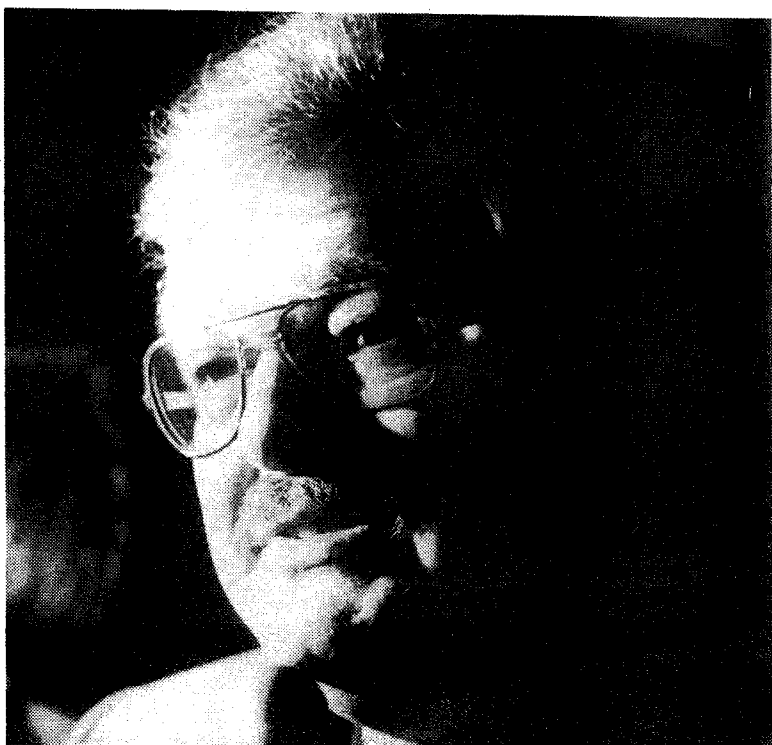
"Fish have gotten bad press. They're smelly and no one can relate to them positively. People can relate to wood."

The squabbles over both the bankruptcy and the Pearce report might soon be decided by circumstance — the receiver-manager is auctioning 100 Cassiar-owned boats.

From Russia with Bossin



String band: (left to right) Bob Bossin, Marle-Lynn Hammond, Dennis Nichol and Calvin Cawns.



Fed president Art Kube: his image has radically changed since July 7.

String band's Bob Bossin arrived in Russia the day before the KAL jet was shot down. It set the stage for an interesting trip.

By John Mackie

Oftimes we North Americans are fed the impression all Russians are thick-headed vodka swillers whose main preoccupations are eating perogies, playing hockey and devising ways to rule the world. This is a tad off, says Bob Bossin of Stringband, who recently returned from a 26-city concert tour of the western Soviet Union. (He's giving a talk on his experiences this Sunday, Dec. 11, at 8 p.m. at La Quena, 1111 Commercial Dr. Admission \$3.)

Stringband's tour was two years in the making. Vancouver's internationally-known bassoonist, George Zuckerman, who's toured the Soviet Union several times, arranged it through a Russian state concert agency. After two years of negotiations, it almost didn't pull off, for Stringband only arrived in Russia the day before Flight 007, the Korean Air Lines (KAL) passenger jet, was shot down. They were originally booked on an Aeroflot (the Russian airway) flight, which would have been cancelled in a retaliatory gesture by the federal government, but luckily they'd arranged another flight. The Moscow Circus was forced to cancel a cross-Canada tour, too, but Bossin felt the Russians showed no animosity towards Stringband.

"It's interesting," he says, "we were there all that time so we heard that stuff second-hand, and I gather now that we're back that everybody was concerned that we would be cancelled in retaliation, but it never entered our minds, or their minds. They really want and crave western contacts, so they in fact loved us there. When I was being interviewed I was asked what I thought about the cancellations here . . . and I remember saying that I thought it was damn silly. Well, they thought that was wonderful. Because that's how they felt about it.

"Ultimately, it was the cold war that killed all those people," he says. "The Russians couldn't pick up the phone and call the Americans and say 'we have a problem, we've got one of your spy planes here,' and the Americans say 'it's a passenger plane.' Relations are so deteriorated that that sort of thing doesn't happen.

"What seems to have happened with the KAL thing is the initial reporting here was these crazed, vicious Russians intentionally murdered these innocent passengers, who just happened to be a few miles off course," he continues.

"It was real hysterical. Subsequently, for anybody who has been listening, what had come out is much more like what the Russians were saying at the beginning, that they did give all due warnings according to international law, that they didn't have any way of knowing it was a passenger plane.

"And the Russians certainly didn't help by not saying anything for nine days," he says. "There, initially, everyone on the street was asking us. Everyone on the street knew something was up. People kept asking us, 'have you talked to anyone on the outside, what are they saying?' Finally they had this big major press conference where they had charts and maps and gave their account of it, which is the one that has been borne out, subsequently.

"I don't think either side could have handled it much worse, short of going to war," he reasons. "It was a hysterical misrepresentation on this side, which didn't help. Russia is an incredibly defensive nation. One of the main differences between life here and there is the level of national candor in the west . . . which is not to say that politicians in the west don't lie, they lie all the time.

"Generally in our way of dealing with things, at some level somebody makes a joke or something or sort of says, 'yeah, well, we did kind of goof'," he says. "In the Soviet Union, it doesn't function that way. The Soviet Union never admits to making a mistake. It's a whole different way of approaching public utterance. I found it really frustrating. It's important for us to learn that part of the mania of the KAL thing was not just the response to the plane, but the response to their way of dealing with it, which is a secretive, slow, plodding, formal way of going about making a public utterance. It served them very, very badly."

Travelling throughout Russia, Bossin noticed several things that he held in the back of his mind were misconceptions. For one, "people smile a lot in the Soviet Union," he says. "It's embarrassing to say that was surprising, but it was." There were others.

"I called my mom after I got wind of the KAL thing," he recalls. "To let her know how I was doing. It was a two minute call and very expensive. Later when I got to Paris I got a letter from my mom saying that she hadn't wanted to talk on the phone about the KAL because she figured the line might be tapped. That was the kind of conception I went there with. It's utterly

ridiculous, they don't tap every phone call or follow every folk singer in the Soviet Union! They don't have unlimited manpower.

"I went up to visit a couple living in a small town," he recalls. "When I reached their house the husband was out, and the wife asked how I got to the house without being stopped by the KGB. They weren't allowed visitors and people had been stopped from doing so in the last week. It turned out the KGB don't work weekends. They go to the countryside like everybody else."

One of the biggest differences is that, in a complete reversal from what happens in the west, the most free people are the ones on the bottom of the social ladder — as you climb up, you have to toe the line.

"Here freedom is correlated to your wealth and status in society," Bossin says. "There people are more restricted in their freedom due to higher position or status.

"There's a band called Kooperpillid," he explains. "They're the Stringband of Estonia. Apparently they liked Stringband, but did not meet with us in person so as not to jeopardize their chances of international travel as a band by mixing with foreigners at home.

"The musicians we did meet knew they were never getting out of the country," he says. "They were frustrated by the bureaucratic bullshit involved in playing professionally, so instead they work odd jobs and play on the side."

Believe it or not, there are actually hippies in the Soviet Union.

"We met hippies who had been travelling around with one rouble in their pocket," he says. "They hitchhiked all over and crashed on people's floors. They kept turning up at our concerts in different cities. They said they were interested in travelling the world, but they weren't interested in leaving Russia for good."

Bananas are a luxury item and are often used to bribe people to vote for the one candidate running for electoral office; Russians have a vast knowledge about the dangers of nuclear war, but are in the dark about the dangers of nuclear power; rent and food are cheap, but there isn't the range of choice we enjoy in the west; there's full employment, but a big absentee problem.

"Criticism is not fostered in the USSR," he says. "Whereas here it exists, but who necessarily reads it? I explained the last election — people there

could not understand how someone like Bill Bennett could get elected with the amount of information available on the Social Credit party."

The USSR is a complex society, says Bossin, and he feels people shouldn't make snap judgments about them.

"People do things in different categories," he says. "The same with nations. They're not about to let any of their border states out of their control. Czechoslovakia does not have the autonomy to liberalize. Poland doesn't have it. I think it's a bad thing. And they will invade (countries like) Afghanistan.

"But it's a different thing to think they are behind the insurrection in El Salvador, or that they would invade Canada if they could," he says. "The impression I got is that this isn't the case. There is a country that has known war. With some 20 million dead (in the Second World War), wherever you go someone will mention that. We played in Minsk. One-quarter of the population, someone in every family, died in World War II. The whole town was virtually gutted. It was designated a national hero as if it was a person. We had a meeting with the international cultural society in Minsk and they showed us war movies. Everywhere you go there are peace posters put up by the government. Here they are put up by protest movements against the government. This is not to say that they are for unilateral disarmament, or that they are immediately going to withdraw from Afghanistan.

"I'll tell you a story. One of the guys I knew had a friend who came home and found this little pile of dust on the carpet. He looked at the dust and looked at the ceiling, and there was a little tiny hole. So he went up to the attic, found some wire and followed it to a little German microphone. I think this guy was into collecting pre-revolution Latvian literature. So he pulled out the microphone and hid it.

"A couple of days later he got called into the KGB, and they asked him, 'where's the microphone?' They said, 'we know you've got it. Look, it's a foreign microphone. We bought that with hard currency. Give it back!' He still said he didn't know anything about it. Finally a cop on the street said, 'look, John, you've got to give it back. These guys will lose their job. So he finally gave the microphone back.

"Russia's monolithic, but not as universal as we think."

Delegates were ready for it

From page 2

educational funding for 1984. The top priority for 45,000 educational workers who had joined Operation Solidarity picket lines the previous month was restoration of 1984 school funding to current levels. When Bennett and Solidarity representative Jack Munro hammered out an unwritten agreement Nov. 13, that's what teachers thought they had won.

The government thought otherwise. Bennett and Education Minister Jack Heinrich instead announced teachers would have to make up three school days lost during the protest despite a no-reprisal stipulation in the deal, and offered no guarantee the \$18-\$20 million "saved" in teachers' wages would be used to forestall teacher firings slated for Jan. 1. In the two uneasy weeks following the Nov. 13 "truce," the government paused long enough to "consult" with teachers, school trustees, and superintendents. All of them urged Heinrich to forget his make-up scheme and to let school boards decide

what to do with the unspent money.

Ignoring the advice, Heinrich chose the middle of the convention to proclaim a hard line course of action on behalf of the government. School boards had until Dec. 15 to come up with a plan to force teachers to make up lost class time. If they failed to do so, they would forfeit their share of the unspent money.

By dawn the next day, Dec. 1, the labor convention was in an uproar. Federation officers met at 7:30 a.m. to draft a response. The convention floor heard fighting words. B.C. Teachers Federation president Larry Kuehn called the Heinrich edict "a declaration of war." Solidarity negotiator Munro declared: "There is absolutely no doubt that Heinrich is screwing this agreement up." B.C. Fed's Mike Kramer said, "We are going to have a rumble in this province."

Delegates were ready for it. They voted unanimously to launch job action in both the public and private sectors if any education worker was laid off after Jan. 1 because of Victoria's refusal to recycle strike savings. As Sun labor reporter Doug Ward put it: "Dust off those 'Prepare the General Strike,' buttons. B.C. is back

on the edge of the abyss — just in time for 1984."

Meanwhile, school boards in Nanaimo, Qualicum, Fernie and Windermere issued layoff notices to teachers. More would follow as school districts implemented further government-ordered cutbacks.

Stage set for showdown

From page 1

When the orations ended, the emergency resolution they were debating (it promised job action if a single teacher was laid off because money saved during their strike was not put back into the education budget) was passed unanimously.

That set the stage for a monumental showdown between the government and Operation Solidarity, a showdown which could overshadow the public sector strikes of last month.

This time the dispute is not about government employee bargaining rights, but about whether teachers can be penalized for their part in the strike. The agreement between Premier Bill Bennett and woodworkers union head Jack Munro specified there would be no penalties.

Other issues are involved of course: fears that pending labor code changes will gut union strength and decimate union memberships and uncertainty about exemptions currently being negotiated to Bill 3, the Public Sector Restraint Act.

Those fears led delegates to reject a proposed "program of action" put forth by federation leaders, for not being tough enough.

"All it (the program) tells me is that I've got to educate myself for the next three years," said one delegate. "What we need is some education with our feet."

Why was a watered-down program presented in the first place? "We came into the convention with a strong statement, but we weren't going to lead anyone down a path," Kramer said after the convention.

"If it hadn't been for that government screw up, I don't know what would have happened," he said, referring to Education Minister Jack Heinrich's statement that teachers would be forced to work the three days without pay as a condition for putting strike savings back into the education budget.

As it was, the same program

of action — with a few minor changes — was passed the next day anyways, moments after the passage of the emergency resolution. This gave federation leaders the "flexibility" for calling for job action when they chose, instead of being tied to a rigid schedule.

"There are some people here who would have us spell out the time, place and date of our job action, but you can't have a schedule like that in this fight," federation president Art Kube told reporters.

The program gives federation leaders the power to call for job action over government reprisals against those who participated in the November strike, or over changes to the labor code.

The program also mapped out a three-year plan to keep Operation Solidarity alive, involving education, funding and closer ties to the NDP.

Did the angry speeches reflect the federation membership's feeling? "The delegates wouldn't say those things on a whim," said Kramer. "They're not prone to get caught up in convention rhetoric. They were stating what they truly believed."

If so, then January fireworks loom.

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ENTERTAINMENT

By John Mackie

After cranking out music for five long years, DOA still only makes as much money in a year as certain mega-rock star groups put up their noses in a day. By their own standards, though, they're doing well. They've risen to the point where the mention of their initials sparks a flame within the breast of spikey-haired young'uns from Dayton, Ohio, to Charlottetown, PEI.

Instead of snuffing out, the band like punk rock in general, has smouldered and continues to grow. Other groups and trends spring up and fall by the wayside, spent by the frenetic pace and overwhelming odds against success, but DOA carries on, driving around the continent in this-side-of-falling-apart vans like mad evangelists preaching a loud scripture. Temporary setbacks, like when their American record company folded without giving them any money for the 18,000 copies they sold stateside of **War On 45**, never knock the band off their course.

A new album, **Bloodied But Unbowed**, is set for release, and they headline the Commodore this Friday (Dec. 9) with support by the Actionauts and Shanghai Dog. The new record is a compilation of songs from their two out-of-print albums, **Something Better Change** and **Hardcore 81**, plus some singles. Everything has been remixed and the sound quality is far superior to the original releases.

Their latest single is a commentary on the B.C. political situation. It's called **General Strike** and it serves as a good example to show how far DOA have come. The hard edge is still there, but their playing and studio expertise displays a new-found polish that should make their sound a bit more palatable to the general public. The tune is a crisply-executed hard rocker with some great growling vocals by lead singer Joe (Shithead) Keighley. "Stand up/stand and unite/ it's time for a general strike," goes the chorus, which should lay to rest any fears that DOA have compromised over the years.

"**General Strike** is basically about people getting together and trying to control their destiny somewhat, rather than having a bunch of people who don't give a shit about them control it for them," says Keighley, sitting around with bassist Brian (Wimpy) Goble, guitarist Dave Gregg and new drummer Gregg James. "If you think the so-called parliamentary democratic system we've got is representative, you're mistaken, 'cause they (Socreds) got maybe 50 per cent of the people who actually voted, which probably amounted to 15 or 20 per cent of the actual people in this province, and they think it gives them a free hand to run right over everybody."

"One of lines goes 'we're tired of workin' for nothing,'" adds Dave Gregg, "and what I think we're gettin' at there is that people basically are working for nothing unless they start thinking about the quality of life that they're creating by their sweat or their labor. One thing that I thought was really cool with what happened in B.C. is that it seemed to have some sort of basis in morality, quality of life."

"Quality of life" has an ironic ring to it, considering the interview was conducted in "Gore Manor," a one-step-up-from-a-mud hut abode where a

Social issues for people

Checking out the dire straights with DOA



DOA's Brian Goble, Gregg James, Dave Gregg and Joe Keighley in test shot for *Gentlemen's Quarterly*.

BEV DAVIES PHOTO

few members live. Gore Manor is classic slum housing: there's no heat in the can, the walls probably haven't been painted since dinosaurs stalked the earth and a general aura of poverty pervades. One aspect of the economy going pffftttt all across the the continent is that more Gore Manors exist, people get politicized and punk picks up new adherents. DOA have been able to see first-hand the deterioration of society.

General Strike is basically about people getting together and trying to control their destiny somewhat, rather than having a bunch of people who don't care control it for them.

"One thing that sticks out in my mind is the first couple of times we went to Detroit, how dead the inner city actually is with the bad economic times," says Dave Gregg. "We were

playing in a club that was in what must have been an eight-story building, and the actual little space of the club was the only thing in that building that was used for any purpose, the rest of it was completely deserted. Through the fire escapes I explored the whole building. Down underneath there was an Olympic-sized swimming pool, directly underneath the club. There was a big old restaurant, and six stories of apartments. A big old grand piano in one room, courtyard up above . . . it was just unbelievable. None of this stuff was being used."

"Right by where we were staying in Detroit, a fire had destroyed a portion of a rooming house, and it was deserted," says the guitarist. "You could walk in and go through rooms full of people's stuff. They had just left it."

"Somebody told us about some incredible deal somebody got on property in Detroit, like \$65,000 for a whole city block," adds bassist Goble.

"The whole city block where the original mortuary where Henry Ford was interned, right," explains Keighley. "It used to be a big fancy place, a big entranceway with big marble pillars and big everything. You can really just see out of that the whole mismanagement of the way they run the country. The same thing's pretty evident up here, 'cause we're sort of a cottage industry of the States, here in B.C. especially, but also in Canada as a whole. If that place dies, we die even

harder, right. It's really no way to run things."

All this adds fuel to fire DOA's lyrics. "It's basically, like, social issues for people," says Keighley.

"We still haven't really solved anything with our subject matter to this point, right," says Goble. "Everything we sing about is still true, probably more true than it was a long time ago."

"It's gotten worse, if anything," adds Keighley. "We wanna reach people, and rather than divide 'em up into categories where 'I'm for this, I'm for that' and everybody's better to get people moving in one direction, working for themselves. Power really comes from a great unification."

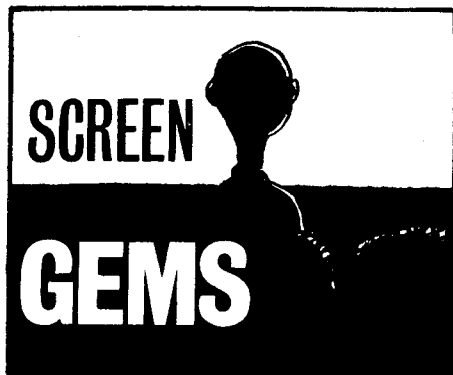
Rather than just mouthing ideals, DOA have stuck with them. This last weekend they made up a date at Cariboo College in Kamloops cancelled earlier because they refused to cross a picket line.

"People are out there trying to get some control over things that are happening to them, rather than being completely run over," says Keighley. "It was obviously an economic loss to us, and we could've been doing something else trying to help out our dire straights, financially-speaking, but it would've been like total bullshit for us to say one thing and then go do another thing."

Lest you be misled that DOA is ultraserious about everything, let it be

See page 18: DRUNKEN

No looking back leans over the edge



MARK VATNSDAL GRAPHIC

By David Hauka

No Looking Back is a raw-edged film which cuts deeply into the centre of our society. We witness a merciless attack on the family, social role models and sexuality. It is not pleasant. The film's characters are as real as a night in the gutters of skid row — people we recognize and who engage our sympathies. But we don't want to identify — indeed, cannot identify — with characters who are so repulsive.

Directed by Dennis Hopper, the film was shot in Vancouver in 1979. When released, it was a smash hit in Europe with the title **C.B.** (the original title was **Out of The Blue**.) New York was not so kind. To paraphrase one critic: "Take Dennis Hopper, Raymond Burr and Canadian Film Development money, and Wham! An awful film." The result of this bashing is the film took four years to get back to the town it was shot in.

Central to the attack on **No Looking Back** is the unwillingness of today's film audience to "work" intellectually. The films that rule the silver screen are the escapist fantasies of Lucas and Spielberg. Their films ask nothing of the viewer, save to sit back and enjoy

the ride. **No Looking Back's** difficult matter, combined with its cumulative structure, distances the viewer, forcing a withdrawal from a dream-state. We have to deal with the reality of child abuse and cultural failure.

Linda Manz plays C.B., a fifteen year old who is the product of social/cultural crimes which escalate monstrously as the film lurches on. She surrounds herself with symbols of death, asking the image of Elvis for love and guidance. C.B. clothes herself in the "biker" leather jacket and hat of her truck driving ex-con father, Hopper. She desperately searches for protection from a memory that never was.

Manz's performance is as harsh as the film. Her voice and dialogue grate on the ear as she chants punk catch-phrases like a religious fanatic reciting teachings whose meanings they don't fully comprehend. "Subvert Normalcy", "Disco Sucks" . . . such are the things little C.B. dreams of. She is also a sexual object on display, but not to her peer group. The eyes of her Father and Mother's generation devour her with a lust that is repulsive. We see this every day on the street, and are unmoved. C.B. is an abused child that looks to the models provided by society for protection. What she finds is hollow rhetoric and perverse desire.

Dennis Hopper portrays the perfect image of social failure, smashing through the role of Father like a semi-trailer through a school bus. This man is driven by society to act out his role, but he can't sustain it. After release from prison, he works at a landfill, operating a huge bulldozer. As Hopper buries the waste of his society, we see him as being trapped in the dinosaur-like machine he drives. It is odd that the most visually striking moments of



Pointed Sticks Bill Napier — Hemy, Tony Bardach, Gord Nicholls, Dimwit and Nick Jones back in 1979 when **No Looking Back** was still called **Out Of The Blue**.

the film take place in the garbage dump. Huge seagulls turn in a cobalt blue sky beneath them, the fresh brown of the open earth. Music is played over the scene, lowering the "real" sounds to a distant rumble. It becomes visual poetry — poetry that speaks of hopelessness and desperation.

This film with no heroes possesses a further liability — the story is not laid out in standard Hollywood form. The narrative seems to clunk along, never seeming to do more than link dimly associated scenes. It is a deceptive style, one that builds upon itself, slowly driving you up the back of your chair. Combined with the subject matter, it makes **No Looking Back** a particularly difficult film to watch. But it deserves to be watched, if only to reactivate your critical functions.

We watch C.B. propelled through a landscape we are familiar with. Vancouver never seemed so strange and

alive. In addition there is an interesting view of our city's punk scene. In 1979 Vancouver boasted 95 punk bands. Somewhere near the top of his pantheon were The Pointed Sticks. Hopper stages a critical instant around a Sticks concert. C.B. has run away from home. In the anti-established actions of the punk scene, she finds an all too brief solution to her society's ills. Watching a landscape we are intimate with, or seeing people we recognize in a film adds an interesting tension to the movie. We are popped in and out of the film's already difficult story, seeing streets we recognize, and, perhaps, faces we know.

"If you've gotta message, call Western Union!", said Louis B. Mayer to a screen writer with high ideals. Well, he was wrong. The "Message" film outdistances the market research variety by light years. Go see **No Looking Back**.

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Beatles junk fab

By Tom Hawthorn

Years ago, Mr. Jones took Judy's box of Beatle junk and gave it the heave-ho.

Today Mr. Jones would trade his stock portfolio for a little of that blue-chip junk. The crassest stuff conceived by the mad minds of Madison Avenue is now the stuff of museums.

For years Jeff Walker, the owner of a used record store, let Beatle booty slip past his cash register. But around the time John Lennon was given the American hero's treatment, Walker saw it was time for a little I, me, mine. He started collecting.

Walker has put together a fab floor of fond memorabilia above his store at 456 Seymour St. in downtown Vancouver. Four inflatable Beatle dolls watch inside the two showcases crammed with the best of Beatlemania.

Some items are true rarities: a rejected cover proof for the Let It Be album, a gold Abbey Road album, early German singles by Tony Sheridan backed by the "Beat Boys," and the Christmas flexi-discs for the fan club.

But much is from the Joneses' trashcan. There's a Revell Authentic Kit with Ringo on the "Wildest Skins in Town." Or Beatles sneakers, or 39c Beatles hair brushes. Or the Beatles' "Flip Your Wig Game." Or truly cheesy Textures Mesh, Seamfree nylons with a generic Beatles image.

Or there's "the only authentic Beatle Wig" by the Lowell Toy Mfg. Co of the Bronx. Or four Beatles' Bobb'n Head car mascots with "accurately sculptured heads" for your '65 Chevy. Or...

"It seemed like really disposable stuff at the time," says museum curator Dale Wiese with a shrug.



Paul, George, Ringo and John bob their heads to the beat at the new Beatles museum.

"That's exactly what happened to it: it got disposed of. Nobody kept it."

"Take Beatle wigs. There were just literally hundreds of thousands made. But where do you see them today?"

Apple-cheeked Wiese, only 23, missed much of the decade of Beatle madness, but offers a magical tour into the mysteries of Beatle trivia.

He'll sneak you a peak at the Two Virgins album cover, still censored in its brown, under-the-counter wrapper. Under the museum's own counter lies a rare copy of the infamous "Butcher Cover" for the Yesterday... And Today album. The Fab Four are pictured grinning, while on their shoulders and in their laps lie hunks of

bloody meat and severed doll parts. (Disc jockeys given promotional copies were so horrified they returned their copies, scaring the record company into replacing the art with a stunningly bland photo of the four posed around a trunk.)

Both those albums are for sale — at a hefty collector's price — as are old magazines, movie posters and stills. The museum buys Beatle artifacts and sells some too, but only duplicates. Admission is free.

The month-old museum also has a recording of a Beatle press conference in Vancouver on Aug. 22, 1964, their first visit to Canada, which is reason enough for a museum.

They rushed through 11 songs that night before a near-riot of 20,261 fans at Empire Stadium. The crowd crushed dangerously against the barriers in front of the stage. Several teenyboppers fainted. Only 29 minutes and 12 seconds after appearing, the Beatles fled on a signal from police and sped for the airport. Legend has them dining on cheeseburgers from Wally's Drive-In on Kingsway.

One front-page newspaper account the next day read: "I do not know how it came, why it came and when it will go away. But go away the Beatle phenomenon will, and with it will go the Beatles. The day has yet to come. When it does, music lovers everywhere can rejoice — yeah, yeah, yeah."

Bring out the incense, daddy-o

Those were the days, my friend

Special to the Times

When anyone plays '60s music at a party, the bulk of that music, if not all of it, consists of tunes by the big three — that's right, some early Beatles, some songs from the Rolling Stones, usually from their overrated output of the '70s, and the Who.

It is occasionally permissible to include ditties on a party tape from the lesser lights of the '60s galaxy, like the Monkees (very trendy these days), Paul Revere and the Raiders, Herman's Hermits, or the Dave Clark Five.

Anyone who has gone to the effort of digging out all those wonderful nuggets of sound by one- or two-hit wonders will be rewarded by some nerd shouting he hasn't heard Mick Jagger snarl for the last five minutes and would like this oversight to be rectified.

Almost completely forgotten and suppressed by the nerds are the groups that populated every town, had a handful of local or regional hits, played all the school dances, provided the mainstays for local clubs, and provided opening acts for the major bands.

Vancouver has been blessed with a very rich music scene over the years. Some of it has been shared with music lovers all over the continent but unfortunately and inevitably, much of it was consigned to dusty singles bins in people's basements.

In 1979, local rock historian Michael Willmore brought Vancouver's rock history back to life with a series of documentary shows on Vancouver Co-op Radio. The series rekindled interest in the groups from our past, even among the commercial stations that had enriched themselves with this music, but refused to provide financial assistance to Willmore's important work.

Now some of those songs are surfacing on what is hoped to be a series of four records, the History of Vancouver Rock and Roll, produced by the Vancouver Record Collectors Association.

The first of those records, now in the stores, is volume three, covering 1966 to 1972. This record was made possible by the profits generated by the association's record swap meets, and healthy sales of this record will allow the

See page 18: FUNKY

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Mistral's Daughter bores

PULP ON PAPER

MISTRAL'S DAUGHTER
BY JUDITH KRANTZ
BANTAM, 564 PAGES, \$4.95

By Ralph Maurer

In the last few years mainstream media has finally noticed the escapist romance novel.

This has a lot to do with embarrassment and little to do with genuine interest in the subject: here was a field of literary expression that was thriving in the face of the literary establishment's scorn. Much as they would like to, the media could no longer ignore the subject.

But what is there to say about Harlequin romances, about Judith Krantz and Joy Fielding and all the rest of them? That these books are popular and make a lot of money, but that's obvious.

You could say essentially nothing (as Tom Alderman did on a CBC Journal documentary a few weeks ago). Or you could duck the question entirely, arguing that reflection on this phenomenon is a job for the cultural critic and not the literary critic (as Eliot Fremont-

Smith did in a Village Voice piece on Janet Dailey a while back).

What all this "serious" coverage of this — after all completely serious — topic has in common (besides being completely unhelpful in helping us understand what's going on) is its condescension to anyone who would read this stuff ("Who reads romances?" Fremont-Smith asks rhetorically. "Why? How?").

But it's no good telling 50 million people they're wasting their time when they obviously don't think so. The question is, what are people doing with their time when they read these books?

If the book they're reading is **Mistral's Daughter**, the answer is they sure aren't being entertained. **Mistral's Daughter** is on the best-seller lists not on its own merits but on the reputation of author Judith Krantz, who became a top-ranked blockbuster machine with **Scruples** and **Princess Daisy**.

The recipe she uses for **Mistral's Daughter** calls for all the ingredients, but the result is a little heavy and a little bland.

The novel spans 60 years. Maggy Lunel, a teenager, leaves her rural French farm for Gay Paree, where she sets out to become an artist's mannequin. She's the lover of up-and-coming young painter Julien Mistral just long enough to spark his creative talent, then has a child by a handsome

American expatriate who immediately dies.

Maggy is left to her own devices, but since she is the most beautiful and talented woman in the world, she is able to move to New York and set up the world's biggest modelling agency almost before we have time to reflect on how tough it must be to be an immigrant, single mother. The child, Theodora Lunel, emerges from the awkward cocoon of her adolescence to become a post-war America's top model.

On assignment in France, she runs into Mistral, who lights a spark in his original muse's daughter, this time the resultant act of creation being not a painting but a child. Fauve, Mistral's daughter, becomes the great painter's protegee until she learns his awful secret, that his collaborating with the Nazis occupying France resulted in many Jewish deaths. Fauve, acutely aware of her (and Maggy's, and Teddy's) Jewish ancestry, turns her back on Mistral, steadfastly rejecting the old painter's peace overtures.

The conflict between Fauve and father, over her Jewishness and his insistence that his art must come before friendships and politics, is the core of the novel, and the 200 pages it encompasses are the strongest of the book.

See page 18: UNCONVINCING

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Sketching the big, bad city

Jim Cummins talking heads

BUT IS IT ART?

By John Mackie

Jim Cummins is the Great Artiste for the new millennium, according to various critic-types, but talking to the 28-year old man who scrawls "I Braineater" on everything he touches, you get the feeling such lofty aspirations rarely cross his mind. He may produce black and white versions of the big city, but Cummins is no manic-depressive waiting for the bomb to drop and end a pathetic existence. If anything he's a giddily-happy sort who gives off an aura of lightness, like he could float with the breeze in his fringed black leather jacket, black pants and black hat.

Reared in Langley, he escaped to Vancouver as soon as he was of age. (One funny tale from his valley days is that David Mitchell, who just wrote a fawning biography of W.A.C. Bennett, used to be lead singer in the Mount Lehman Grease Band, which included future Young Canadian, Los Popularos Art Bergman on guitar.) He had been selling paintings since he was 13, so he decided to pass on art school. The punk scene was just starting, and it provided subject matter for the young artist.

"I just started doing hyper-realistic scenes from punk parties," says Cummins. "Hyper-realism is generally something that is realistically done, but done in such a breathtaking way that it ... becomes a hyper-realism, I suppose. It's detail to detail, like a photograph. Pretty easy to do, too. (laughs).

"I would go to parties and walk around with my camera, snapping shots now and then, develop them and find out areas that were good and work that into these hyper-realistic paintings. I then showed them at the finer small-gallery dining situations around town, and as that went along, I put together a little bit of money and proceeded to get washed away in the sweeping current," he says. "I was no longer watching things, I was part of it. You couldn't do anything else, unless you wanted to go into the mainstream of society, or if you wanted to keep your hair growing and keep doing drugs, which seemed like a ridiculous idea."

The lines between artist and sub-culture blurred even further when Cummins decided to venture into the main thrust of punkdom, music. He and ex-Modernette Buck Cherry came up with the concept of Braineater in the basement suite of the West End apartment they shared.

"The premise was a ridiculous idea versus a dim future," he says. "Braineater seemed to be the perfect vehicle to exhortate off on. It was just create the most outrageous punk band the city had ever seen. Everything you were afraid to ask for was gonna be in this one."

Braineater has been outrageous, to say the least, a bizarre audio-video ex-

travaganza that crops up every few months with new concepts and members. The latest incarnation has Cummins' doing everything himself on his new LP, *I Here, Where You?*, which he recorded on his own 4-track studio.

Cummins began signing Braineater to his paintings, and his subject matter began to focus on weird, square headed beings stomping around in an in-

hospitable urban environment. Colour for the most part disappeared from his paintings as he began to create his own little world.

"I think the black and white thing goes back to the first imagery you picked up in your life when you're a little kid out of your house was on the TV set," he explains. "And for my age group we were still watching black and white TVs when we were three years



Braineater Jim Cummins looking hyper-realistic ...



... and some of his art.

old. So I think there was something implanted there. All the paintings have something of a glossy nature on the surface, and I think the TV screens you saw were glossy, so there was sort of a separation between you and this other world, that's why I like the glossy surface.

"Later in life, you started seeing things in colour and a lot of it was pretty poor and tasteless, and I started reverting back to the stuff that I thought was great as a child, and discovered that they were black and white movies and things like that," he says. "They had more fascination or fantasy, more of the type of life that seemed that way in black and white films. I felt like I was recapturing that trauma, that drama. It also gives one a separation, removed a lot of possibilities and opened the doors for a lot more. I proceeded to explore and discovered that it was really big, and I've basically been muddling through it ever since."

What about the heads?

"Everybody seems to be asking about the heads, and I've never even thought about it," he says. "It's probably once again back to those old movies: when you watch a TV screen one of the things that stands out are the close up shots they would do. So there's probably a lot of training I picked up as a child sitting in front of the old black and white TV that pushed me in those directions. I like people, I like personalities. Basically above the waist."

At his current show at the Unit Pitt gallery are the latest examples of his work. One, entitled "The Impression/Men Come To The City And They Lose Just Like The Man Who Made This Stance. Will You Lose, All That You Have To Give?", featuring an old, weatherbeaten rubby clutching his hand to his chest, is a human look at how people are dehumanized.

Others, like "I Don't Know/Where's Mom/I Don't Know/Where's The Station Wagon/I Don't Know/Where's The Station Wagon/I Don't Know/Two Children Lost At A Service Station/They Were Told Not To Get Out Of The Station Wagon," aren't quite so serious. Egg-shaped heads with donut lips and inverted happy face expressions look lost, just like when you were a kid.

A similar theme is expressed in "Get Out Of My Way, Or I'll Hit You In The Head With Another Rock," where a demented, scared kid with one big eyeball and a woozy expression gets yelled at by the bully who always hit you in the head with rocks.

"I like things fast sometimes, it's like sometimes you can learn more about painting in ten minutes than you can working at something for two weeks," says Cummins, who's a master at whipping off small paintings using cheap materials (house paint and cheap wood) for cheap cost to the consumer. "And I think it's good as an artist not to get too hung up or too sacred about your work. I think it's good to exercise your abilities, exercise your ideas and your hand, and if I didn't sell them for 10 or 12 or 20 dollars, directly afterwards I'd soon have no money to continue and no money to study with."

"I'm still in the process of studying," he explains, "as opposed to the process of saying this is the end-all and be-all. I like it when people buy the work, cause they take care of it, they take the child. It's sort of weird, it's sort of like I'm going through an art history book. When I started it was in the classical period and now it's going through some points of modern and the thing is I've got to pair way through this history book, every period before I can come and paint something that hasn't been before."

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Stan Persky
Editor

Funky mix

From page 15

association to press volumes one, two and four.

Volume Three, subtitled Fourth Avenue Days, contains 14 tracks from groups such as Spring, the Tom Northcott Trio, the Self Portrait, the United Empire Loyalists, and Winter's Green.

My favorites are "Looking at a Baby," the Collectors' masterpiece of profound psychedelia, "My Home Town," featuring the tight guitar-driven sound of the Seeds of Time, The Painted Ship's "Frustration," featuring one of those wonderful cheap electric organs that are so much a part of the late '60's and the funky mixture of drugs and religion that kept Orville Dorp's "Jesus Marijuana" off the air.

Also included is a 16-page booklet featuring photos and posters of the day, and a text by Willmore based on his research for his Co-op Radio series that brings back to life the Kitsilano club scene of the late '60s.

It's a very rich mixture of music and memories, and it's needed now that popular music is entering another creativity gap similar to the one we endured in the '70s before punk and wave barged in.

The \$8 price tag will ensure some of the Vancouver music that came before and after this era will be returned to circulation, fighting the homogenization of experience that fading memories and shrinking record catalogs bring.

Drunken bear

From page 13

said that humor has always been a major part of their act. The flipside of **General Strike** is a hilarious rendition of **That's Life**, with Keighly's vocals adding a somewhat off-centre tilt to the lyrics. It sounds like a drunken bear is singing.

"The humor, I think, is one of my fortes," says Keighly. "People have taken real offense to songs like Let's F—, but it's basically just your spiel about, all those guys like Lover Boy, 'I've been down on my knees making love to whoever I please', just sort of making a total parody of that. If you want to get f—— why not just come right out and say it? We just made a total joke of that."

"I think humour is a huge part of it," says Dave Gregg. "When the Sex Pistols came out . . ."

"It was f—— funny," injects Keighly.

"One of the biggest parts of it that I

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picked up on was the satire they were making about what rock music has become," continues Gregg. "Music is really important to a lot of people, you can't make a mistake about that, and when you start satirizing what people find important and identify with on sort of a social or cultural level, you're playing with fire. That's when you get violence, that's when people get mad and want to bash your head 'cause you're punk rock."

Plans include recording another six song EP for release in the new year, plus a British tour in February. "We're trying to like gain a little bit of foresight so that we come out with something that's not three years out of date when we put it out, it'll only be about a year and a half out of date," says Goble.

"The concept that we originally went down to record with was a follow-up to **War On 45**," says Gregg. "**War On 45**'s concept being talking about the issues of war: physical war, war in the head, class war, war in the east, war in the west . . ."

"War in the ass," jokes Keighly.

"I think financial is our goal," says Goble.

"I kind of sum it up like taking all the best ideas that Woody Guthrie ever had," says Keighly.

And Keighly also remains optimistic about the political situation in B.C. "What I would say is people shouldn't be scared of power, 'cause it can be like the ultimate weapon. It can bring, like, assholes to their knees."

Drags and drags

From page 16

Unfortunately, we must wade through 400 pages to reach it, 400 pages that drag and drag and drag because, let's face it, superpeople like these characters just don't interest us.

Not only do we have nothing to identify with, but their talents are so awesome there is no question of them ever being overcome by obstacles. The whole point of luxury is the fact that it takes place alongside need; universal luxury ceases even to be glamorous.

The novel's resolution is also unconvincing. Mistral does regret his ways, as we learn at the very end of the book, and as his penance devotes his last and greatest paintings to Jewish themes. Some penance, some retribution: it's like a bank robber repaying society by offering to buy lunch for everybody in the courtroom.

Mistral's Daughter also has bad guys, namely Mistral's wife Kate and their daughter Nadine. But their heavy-handed, black-Stetson brand of nastiness is so obviously ineffectual in the face of the combined goodness of Mistral and the three Lunels that there is little real suspense as to the novel's outcome. The novel has a bit of sex, too, but Krantz writes it as if she feels she's obliged to include it; and there's romance (like with the bad guys there's never any doubt). But mostly there's a lot of dull passages to be skimmed, and a lot of disappointment.

C'mon, Krantz, how's anybody supposed to take you seriously when you come up with one like this?

GET SERIOUS

THURSDAY, DEC. 8 VANCOUVER

• "Syndicalism," a discussion by the University of B.C. anarchy club with guest speaker from the Service, Office and Retail Workers Union of Canada, 12:30 p.m., Buchanan Building, room D352.

• Women Against the Budget's weekly meeting, 7:30 p.m., 320 E. Hastings.

FRIDAY, DEC. 9 VANCOUVER

• "Freedom and Justice for Leonard Peltier," with guest speakers Stuart Rush and Steve Robideau, 7:30 p.m., Carnegie Centre, Main and Hastings. Sponsored by the Society of the People Struggling to be Free.

SATURDAY, DEC. 10 VANCOUVER

• Solidarity rally for human rights, noon, Robson Square.

SUNDAY, DEC. 11 VANCOUVER

• Folksinger Bob Bossin, of Stringband, recounts his latest journey in "Across Russia by Stage," 8 p.m., La Quena, 1111 Commercial Dr. Tickets \$3. For info call the Vancouver Folk Music Festival at 879-2931.

• Federal NDP Vancouver Centre annual general meeting, 1:30 p.m., Kitsilano Neighborhood House, 2305 W. 7th (at Vine). For info call 738-9601.

• Women Against the Budget conference, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., 805 East Pender. For child care registration or billeting, call 255-7820. Bring your lunch.

MONDAY, DEC. 12 VANCOUVER

• Film, "Battle of Algiers," fine political thriller, 7:30 p.m., Hollywood Theatre, 3123 W. Broadway. Until Dec. 18.

• Three evening film series titled "On Guard for Thee," looks at Canada's national security police. Part 1 tonite at 7:30 and 9:30 p.m., Part 2 (Tuesday, Dec. 13) and Part 3 (Wednesday, Dec. 14) at same times. At the Pacific Cinematheque, 1155 West Georgia. For info call 732-6119.

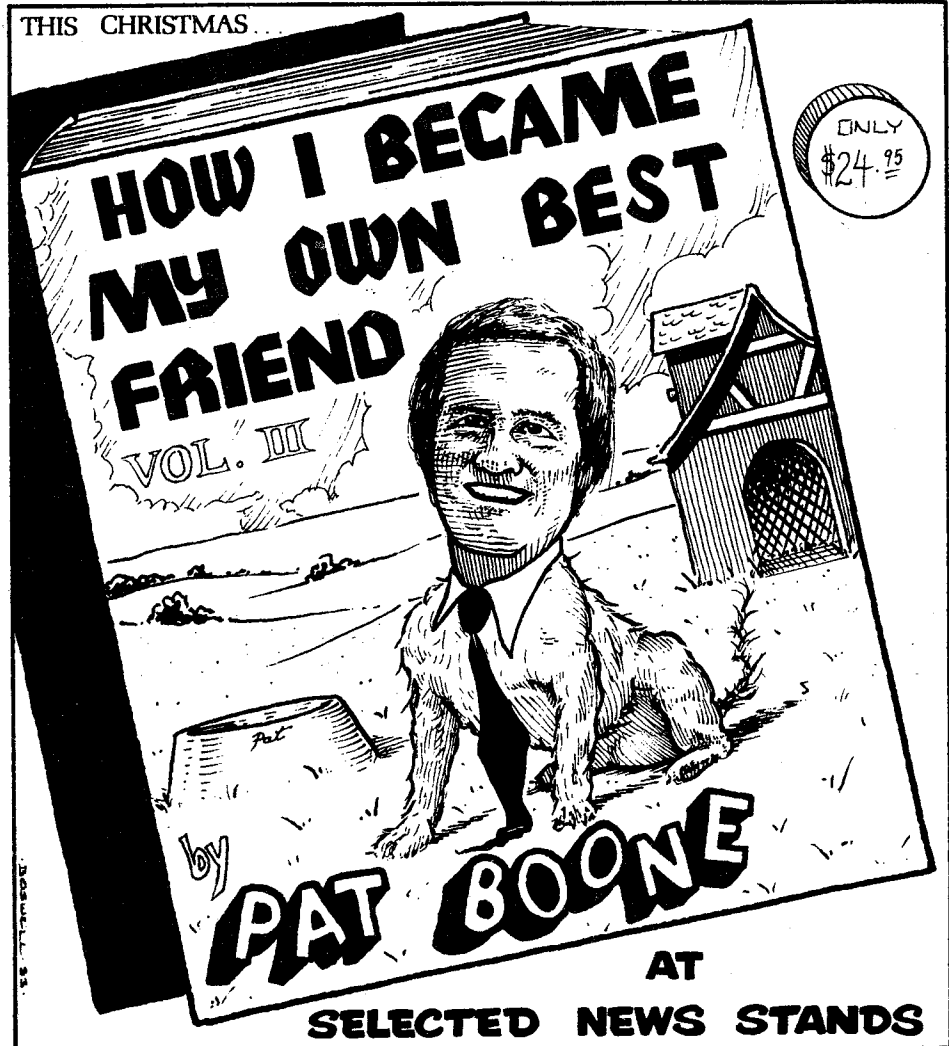
WEDNESDAY, DEC. 14 VANCOUVER

• Panel discussion on The Labor Movement in B.C. Today, with speakers from the International Woodworkers of America, Hospital Employees Union, United Fisherman and Allied Workers Union, and the Canadian Association of Industrial, Mechanical and Allied Workers, 7:30 p.m., Fisherman's Hall, 138 East Cordova. For info call 291-3521.

BLATHER

Send your messages, preferably typed (so if there is a screw-up, you can blame us), to Get Happy, Solidarity Times, 545 West 10th Ave., Vancouver, B.C. V5Z 1K9. Deadline is noon the Friday before the issue you want to see your announcement in. We reserve the right to edit for space.

THIS CHRISTMAS



GET HAPPY

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 7 VANCOUVER

• Two films, "Stormy Weather" and "Ain't Misbehavin'", 7:30 p.m., at Pacific Cinematheque, 1155 West Georgia. For info call 732-6119.

• Vancouver Playhouse presents "Godspell," 8 p.m., Queen Elizabeth Playhouse. For info call 872-6622. Until Dec. 31.

• "Working," a musical based on Studs Terkel's books, 8 p.m., Studio 58, basement of main Langara campus building, 100 W. 49th Ave. Tickets \$4.50 Tuesday or Thursday, \$5.50 Friday and Saturday. For reservations call 324-5227.

THURSDAY, DEC. 8 VANCOUVER

• Rene Allio's "Les Camisard's," 7:30 p.m., Pacific Cinematheque, 1155 West Georgia. For info call 732-6119.

FRIDAY, DEC. 9 VANCOUVER

• Benefit for Solidarity Coalition, with folk, ethnic and rock music, 7:30 p.m., Ukrainian Hall, 805 E. Pender. Tickets \$5, \$3 for the unemployed.

• Bluegrass showcase with Mountain Railway and Waterbound Stringband, 8:30 p.m., Oddfellow's Hall, 1720 Gravelly. Tickets \$4, \$3 for Pacific Bluegrass and Heritage Society members.

• DOA with Actionauts and Shanghai Dog, 8:30 p.m., Commodore Ballroom, 870 Granville mall. Tickets \$7.50 advance, \$8.50 day of show. For info call 280-4411.

• Arlette Beach performs folk, blues and political music, 8 p.m., La Quena, 1111 Commercial Dr. For info call 251-6626.

• Weekend art sale, open house with handmade cards, drawings, etchings, lithographs, serigraphs and woodcuts, 7 to 10 p.m., at 619 Heatley (at Keefer), Suite 17. From noon to 5 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday. Call 251-5314 or 253-1743 for info.

VICTORIA

• Inter-Agency Christmas party, time TBA, at 558 Cornwall St.

COMING SOON

A satire on the Bennett government and its so-called "restraint" program: The Friends of Private-Eye Zashun, a novel by Desmond Lindo. It's a satirical look at the people who turned "mandate" into a dirty word. Guaranteed to laugh them out of town.

TRAILER

Nicaragua: Report From the Front, a film reviewed in last week's Times, is available from Idera Films, 2524 Cypress St., Vancouver. Call 738-8815.

SATURDAY, DEC. 10 VANCOUVER

• Sean Muldoon performs folk, country and political tunes, 8 p.m., La Quena, 1111 Commercial Dr. For info call 251-6626.

• Eritrea night, including film and supper, 6:30 p.m., International House, University of B.C., near Gate 4 entrance. Tickets \$7, \$5 students and unemployed. Sponsored by the National Union of Eritrean Workers and Students.

• Frywork reunion, 8 p.m. to midnight, Kitsilano Neighborhood House, 2305 W. 7th (at Vine). Snacks and daycare provided. Tickets \$1.

VICTORIA

• Amnesty International benefit poetry reading, 8 p.m., Open Space Gallery, 510 Fort St., to celebrate Human Rights Day. Readers include P. K. Page, Stephen Scobie, Dorothy Livesay, Doug Beardsley, Rona Murray, Mike Doyle, Phyllis Webb and Joe Rosenblatt. Tickets \$3.50.

SUNDAY, DEC. 11 TERRACE

• International Pot Luck dinner, 1 to 5 p.m., Terrace Recreation Centre banquet room. Celebration of human rights with East Indian and native Indian foods, bagpipe players, and German and Philippino dancers. For info call Ross Fedy at 365-3170 and 365-7979, or call 365-4631, or 365-2977.



Martin Sheen does the chicken in *Dead Zone*, which reviewer David Hauka told us was a real killer last week. It continues at the Denman Place.

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