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THE NEWS and VIEWS Letter about people
and happenings at
Vancouver Community College
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VANCOUVER COMMUNITY COLLEGE

ARCHIVES



INTERCOM

United Way '82

VCC GOES WAY OVER THE TOP!



On Saturday, October 23, 97 people came out for the second No Name challenge run against the Y. Club members panted and puffed their way around the Stanley Park seawall, with half their race fees going to United Way.

This year's campaign was a resounding success with VCC raising \$20,434, 14.6 percent over the \$17,800 target! We are up an astounding 32.5 percent over last year.

Here is the breakdown:

Langara Campus	\$ 5,363.01
KEC	\$ 8,190.91
VVI	\$ 3,325.20
Central Administration & CE	\$ 3,555.20
TOTAL	\$20,434.32

Many thanks go to the untiring work of campaign co-ordinators, Mary Perry at Langara, Mary Griffith at KEC, George Clark at VVI and Ross Carter at Central Administration/CE. They did a superb job, with support from the College Executive Committee.

KEC organized three fund raising events — a chili party, a rainbow sale and bake goods sale. And the college's inveterate jock Dave Greenall co-ordinated the second annual fun run with the VCC No Name Club challenging runners from the Y, with proceeds to United Way. The group toured around the seawall, taking one of three alternate routes.

Thanks to all who contributed their time and dollars to the campaign. Your care will go a long way toward helping those not as fortunate.

Max Fleming
United Way Co-ordinator

See more pictures on back page

A Tradition Starts

Marking a first in its 33 year history, this fall Vancouver Vocational Institute held a joint graduation for students in business and health, technical, industrial and services divisions.

About 150 students from all four divisions, ceremoniously arrayed in their convocation robes, received certificates in front of friends and family at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre. Board members Virginia Giles, Carmella Allevato and Barry Sleigh acted as presentors. Graduates received good wishes from President Tony Manera and special messages of congratulations from division chairmen Syd Hartley, Art Griffiths, Tony Wood and Roy Wren.

Though this was the first such ceremony, it certainly won't be the last. By joining students from across the campus together for graduation, the organizing committee hoped to increase the sense of occasion. "We wanted to give the graduates a feeling of taking part in a ceremony of graduation from VVI rather than just their particular department or division," committee member Tony Wood explained. "I think it increases their affiliation with the campus."

Those active in planning this ceremony were Tony Wood, Syd Hartley, department heads with graduating students and research assistant Arlene Skene.



A proud LPN accepts her certificate from board member Virginia Giles.



VVI students from all divisions were awarded certificates at the fall graduation in Queen Elizabeth Playhouse.

President Takes Strong Case to Council

Vancouver Community College is effective, efficient and economic projections for the Lower Mainland indicate there will be high demand in the future for the college's training capabilities. This is the strong message President Tony Manera carried to Academic Council when its members met at Langara Campus December 6.

Academic Council is made up of government-appointed representatives from across the province who act as liaison on funding matters between colleges and institutes and the Ministry of Education. At VCC, Langara Campus's arts and science program and some career programs, as well as VVI's business and health programs, come under their scrutiny.

Manera pointed out to the council that the college's arts and science transfer rate into university was 20 percent, against a province wide average of 12 percent.

"This is particularly significant," he said, "when you consider that the number of students ineligible for university when they enter the college is much higher than the average for other colleges across the province."

A poll done in the fall of 1979 indicated only six percent of those who had left the program and were looking for work had failed to find it. This compared with a provincial unemployment rate of 9.3 percent among those 20 to 24.

For graduates of career programs under the council's jurisdiction, employment prospects remain good despite the recession. A survey last year concluded 79 percent were in jobs that took advantage of their training, while a further 5 percent at some point had a training-related job.

In vocational programs under the council's mandate, the success rate is good as well. Nine months after graduation 83 percent are in jobs related to their training.

Manera stressed that VCC's costs per student contact hour for programs funded by the council were \$3.82, more than a dollar less than the average for most other colleges and institutes.

"VCC's unit costs are significantly lower than those throughout most of the system," he said. "Though our operation does lend itself to some economies of scale, I think this argument has been overused in justifying our funding. There is a point at which these savings are no longer relevant and we have passed that point."

The current economic downturn, Manera stressed, provides an opportunity to train the labour force in areas where skills will inevitably be in high demand when recovery comes. Moreover, he said, by giving students the opportunity for training now, colleges and institutes lessen frustration and pressure brought on by individual's inability to find work.

"This fall we estimate that approximately 900 students were unable to register at Langara," he said.

Looking to the future, Manera noted that major developments now on the drawing board — B.C. Place, A.L.R.T., the Trade and Convention Centre, Expo '86, among others — would bring thousands of new jobs to the city.

"Many of these jobs come in areas where Academic Council funds training," he explained.

He told the council that if across the board reduction were made in the college system next year, as they were this year, the most efficient institutions will be most severely penalized and it will be increasingly difficult for these institutions to provide the productivity councils and government expect of them.

"If VCC is unable to close the gap on its anticipated \$3 million shortfall for next year, we would lose roughly 567,000 student contact hours," he said. "This would be the equivalent in lost instruction of closing Emily Carr, the Pacific Marine Training Institute and the Justice Institute."

Private Sector Helps Out



KEC award winners Sharon Musto and Patrick Brown with Principal Harry Pankratz.

These are hard times for educational institutions. More than ever we look to the private sector for a helping hand. By coming to our aid they not only provide us with needed dollars, they give us support, a pat on the college back.

Recently, 33 students, representing all divisions at KEC, were presented with awards, ranging from \$50 to \$250, by organizations as diverse as drug companies, the KEC student society and the Vancouver Foundation. They were a recognition of the effort and enthusiasm these students brought to their studies at KEC. And they were an acknowledgement of the important role that campus plays in helping people of all ages and from all walks of life make new and better futures for themselves.

Many of the students were not typical award takers. Some had long and difficult struggles to reach this milestone. There were single parents, upgrading their education so they could better provide for their children, new Canadians holding down day jobs while they studied English at night, students in wheelchairs and those without hearing or sight.

In a presentation ceremony in the instructor's lounge, Principal Harry Pankratz paid tribute to the donors: Stanley Drug Products Ltd., Shoppers Drug Mart Ltd., Merck Frosst Canada Inc., Overseas Chinese Voice, B.C. Tel, the KEC Students Society, Howard-Yano Architects, the Credit Union Foundation of B.C., Lyon's Delicatessen, American Building Maintenance and the Vancouver Foundation. A plaque, to be hung in the new campus, names these campus supporters.

Rita Gonzales and Jackie Griston, both in the homemaker program, were surprised to hear they had been singled out from the 17 students in their class for awards. Both are grandmothers and until this fall it had been more than a few years since either had set foot in a classroom.

Were they nervous about a return to school? "Very!" they said. "But we all support one another in class," Griston explained. "We work together and our instructor, Mrs. Cornish, is just great. She goes over everything step by step so everyone will understand."

Gonzales, the mother of ten who came to Canada from Haiti 11 years ago, had always wanted to take a program so she would have some qualifications to work. She found out about the homemaker program when her daughter, a student at VVI, brought home a calendar. Griston wanted to work in a longterm care and Manpower sent her from 100 Mile House to take the homemaker program.

Both said their children were excited and impressed when they found out. "They were really proud," Griston said. "One of my daughters really laughed when I told her, she said, 'Oh mom you come home and tell us you are so confused and it so difficult but then you win an award,'" Gonzales said.

Both agreed that school was more fun than they had anticipated it would be. They acknowledged that coming to school at their age had been a difficult decision, but they would encourage other older women to take the plunge. "It is really worth the effort," Griston said.



Preparing lunch for 24 day care children gives food services technician students an idea of the pressures and demands in running an institutional kitchen.



Co-op work terms give data processing students a chance to put their class skills to the test.

WORKING while you LEARN

Experience — one dictionary defines it as practical knowledge gained by trial or practice. It is what most employers look for when they hire. And it's what most college students are short on when they go looking for work.

To get around this dilemma, a number of career programs at Langara Campus build elements of practical, on-the-job experience into their offerings. These range from data processing's co-op program, where students complete two four month work terms in the computer industry, to other less formal situations, such as the food services technician program, where students regularly go into industrial catering or institutional kitchens to fill in for sick or vacationing workers and manage on campus food service for the day care centre.

What do students get from this "real world" experience that they can't pick up in the classroom? And in this sluggish economy what induces employers to spend time, effort and money on student employees?

InterCom recently talked with some students and their employers about work experience.

Obviously, the greatest attraction for students is that job experience makes them marketable.

"It certainly gave me an edge in obtaining employment after graduation," said Debbie Kilchiski, who completed two work terms with Safeway and who is one of three VCC data processing co-op students recently offered permanent employment by the company.

In fact, Lou Ross, systems manager for Safeway, says one of the primary reasons his company takes co-op students is because it is a good process for evaluating future employees. "It is like a four month interview" he said, "with no commitment on either side. We see their capabilities, how quickly they learn, their potential for development. And, in turn, they see what it is like to work here, what kind of employer Safeway is."

"This is a perfect co-op love story," says data processing employment co-ordinator Glyn Lockyer, with a grin.

"Co-op is an excellent opportunity for the student to build industry contacts and even, in a small way, to establish a reputation to draw on at graduation," explained student Lee Clements, who worked for Univac.

She noted too, that from the mature student's perspective — she is 34 and had a broad range of business experience before returning to the classroom — co-op provides a testing ground for new skills and assurance that the program is the route to a more satisfying and financially rewarding career.

"The mature student, you must remember, is constantly measuring the potential benefits of returning to college against the costs, most important of which is the loss of steady income," she said.

In the food services technician program, where students are preparing for supervisory positions in institutional and commercial food services, there are two aspects to work experience. Students do field work in institutional kitchens and they are called on to work in a kitchen on campus that manages food preparation and service for the day care centre.

As department head Suzanne Steves explains, their jobs in the field are not supervisory. In fact, they are kitchen helpers, preparing trays, delivering them to patients or operating equipment.

"Though they are training to become food service managers, doing this somewhat more menial work gives them a good overall view of institutional food services management," she noted. "To supervise an operation you have to understand all its aspects, how the kitchens run. Getting in and working as a kitchen helper is the best way to find out. They see first hand the importance of team work and communication to the operations."

By providing a lunch food service to the children in campus daycare, students get experience in running their kitchen. They graduate through all levels of the operation from kitchen work, to supervisor and manager.

"They have to work together to produce lunch for the children, but the pressures aren't the same as in a huge institutional setting," Stevens noted. "They make some mistakes here, but by seeing what can go wrong they are better equipped when they go out into the field. They can anticipate the pitfalls."

Like many of the data processing industry employers, those who take food services technician students use the field experience to screen for future employees. "And by seeing the students in a work situation we can also have some input into the program to ensure it is meeting our needs," said Joan Benedict, director of dietetics at Vancouver General Hospital.

Data processing students who want co-op positions must go through a rigorous selection process, preparing resumes, then going through interviews where they are competing with computer science students from Simon Fraser University and the University of Victoria for a limited number of co-op jobs.

"The situation is 'real world' in all respects," Lockyer said. He spends a good deal of time with the students assisting them in resume preparation and easing anxieties about interviews.

As Chris Berryman, who has finished two work terms at Safeway noted, even for those who don't get hired the exercise of preparing resume and going to interviews provides valuable experience.

Clements noted that jobs usually go to those with high marks so co-op helps motivate students to maintain high grade point averages.

Students in both programs agreed that an important plus of work experience was the chance to apply the theory they'd learned in the classroom.

"To actually be able to use the knowledge I'd gained at school made everything seem worthwhile," Kilchiski said. "Sometimes what we learned in class didn't seem very relevant but you got out there and you could work with it, you could see how the data

Working while you learn, cont'd

processing environment functioned. Everything sort of fell into place."

"When you work it is focused learning," Clements observed. "You're not dividing your attention between five or six different subjects. You have to bring all that theory together and focus it on the task at hand."

"A school term can't possibly give you a feel for what it is like to work in the field," Jan Sawyer, who worked for B.C. Systems Corporation and Safeway, said. "It clarifies, on a practical level, things that were only concepts at school. There is a context to fit the theory in. Things make a lot more sense that way. My grasp of what we cover in the program would be much weaker if I hadn't had the work experience."

"Because you are having to work quickly in a large operation, you learn to put together a lot of the detail necessary to doing a whole variety of jobs," observed Stephen Brown, a food services technician student, who did field work at U.B.C.'s extended care facility.

"You see that there are many different ways of operating a kitchen, there is no one single way of doing things," Diana Christmas, another food services student who worked at St. Paul's Hospital, noted. "You have to learn to adapt."

Another benefit of work experience is the confidence it builds. Students find out they can succeed "out there."

"I found out what I was taught in school was very relevant to the industry," Gwenda Ellwood, who begins her second work term at Burroughs in January, said. "I was really shocked at how well prepared I was to handle the work they gave me."

"I found out about a lot of technical areas we can't cover in school," Berryman said. "You find out there is a lot more to learn than just programming or systems analysis."

Ellwood noted that one of the important things she learned on the job was how professionals cope with pressure and how they problem solve. "When we problem solve at school I know I tend to get tense and upset. But when I was in the industry I saw how the professionals do it. The worse the situation gets the more relaxed they are. You see how they work as a group, and you find out you can do it too."

Work experience, then, gives students a needed boost into the job market, gives them a chance to put their classroom theory into practice, builds confidence and, not unimportantly, provides some support to finance their education. But are there any thorns among the roses, any drawbacks?

For the data processing students co-op work terms can increase their study time by eight months. "It is sometimes hard when you see the people you started out with, who didn't do work terms, graduate months ahead of you," Kilchiski said.

"It is long term, but it is the best approach," added Berryman. "You're better off if you have some experience behind you before you go out looking for permanent work, especially in this economy."

Food services technician students have to do field work as part of their qualifications for graduation. "If they came out without any experience, with only theory they simply wouldn't be any good to us," explained Benedict of V.G.H.

Except for a three week unpaid practical at the end of their program, food services technician students take over the duties of already existing jobs in their field work. Data processing students are not usually hired to fill an established, ongoing need in their companies. So in some instances students thought more consideration and planning could have been done to make use of their skills in a constructive way and those with whom they worked on a day to day basis could have been better prepared for their arrival.

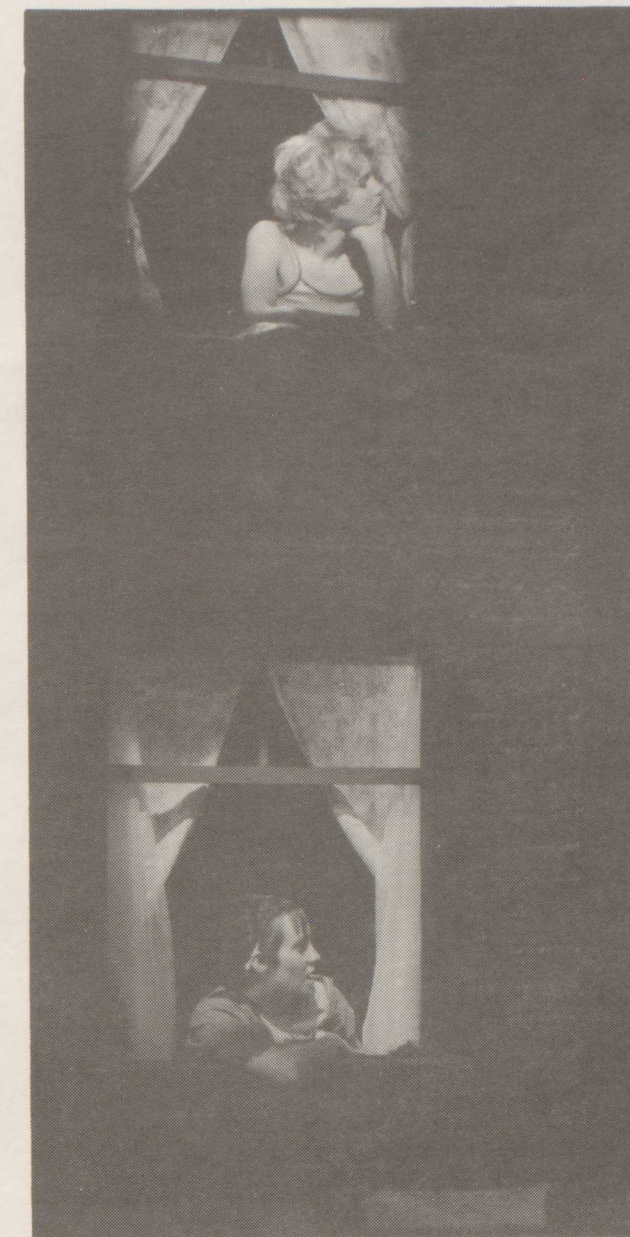
"In some cases you get the idea that someone higher up the ladder has said, 'Yes, we'll take a student' but they haven't communicated this commitment down the line," one student observed. "So you get there and no one is expecting you and they don't really know what to do with you."

Giving students an opportunity for work experience not only provides employers with a good view of their capabilities, with intelligent planning students provide relatively inexpensive back up to regular staff.

"We aren't a charitable organization," Ross said. "Safeway makes good use of students. They can update existing programs for us, so they reflect new terms or conditions."

"Students are a good source of cheap labour," states Stennett. "And in Burroughs case, because we are an equipment supplier, they provide us with good P.R. No matter what they end up doing, whatever part of the industry they work in, they can talk knowledgeably about us."

Another benefit both acknowledged was the enthusiasm students bring to the workplace. "They are like a breath of fresh air," Stennett said. "They have tremendous energy and new ideas."



A scene from Studio 58's recent production of Michel Tremblay's "Broken Pieces."

Dear Santa:

As you know, we at Vancouver Community College have been more than good this year. In all modesty, we've been exemplary! When the call came we stretched dollars to the absolute maximum. We fit students into every nook and cranny (if you don't believe us just try getting into a washroom between classes at Langara). In case you haven't heard, we give more learning for the dollar than any place else. So we figured, you know, that you might like just a couple of tips on what we'd like to see under the college tree on Christmas morning.

At Langara Campus a high rise parking garage would be appreciated. Some of the people are finding the hike from the Oakridge lot a bit much. Speaking of which — a few extra offices would also come in handy. I mean it isn't very pleasant when people get into fist fights over which of the four instructors in an office gets to use the desk! Last, but not least, a gift certificate from Johnny On the Spot would be wonderful (see above).

At King Edward Campus everyone says "Thanks!" We know the elves are hard at work on the big gift. Any chance, though, that we could move in a bit sooner? Not to complain, but I'm sure you understand no one wants to eat a cheese sandwich from a vending machine for lunch everyday. And one member of the staff has had her car blocked in the parking lot for the last two years.

Those at VVI really like the new tower, Santa. About all that's left on the list would be for the baking students to do cheesecake more than once a week and for the dining room to open up the bar during lunch.

In CE, the desires are simple and few. More registrants please for "Holistic Healing Through Bean Sprout Cookery" and "Self Fulfillment Through Pac Man." I mean there are people out there who need this help. Maybe you could just give those hacks in the P.R. department a kick. If they'd only get us an interview with Barbara Frum, our problems would be over.

To be loved and respected — that's all Central Administration wants. You'd think those people out on the campuses could just once say, "Those fellows in central administration, what a great bunch of guys. We'd really be in a bind without them." Where do they think the pay cheques come from, eh?

Well, Santa, that's more or less it. Regards to Rudolf and the bunch.

the gang at VCC

ON STAGE Are actors fashioned or are stars born?

A little of both, according to Antony Holland, actor, director and head of Langara Campus's theatre arts program.

"Effort alone won't do it," he says. "Though talent without effort won't suffice either."

"There is a tendency with the highly talented to be very permissive. We try not to do this. No matter how talented an individual may be he needs discipline to become an actor."

Every year more than 300 aspiring William Hutt or Margot Kidders apply for one of the 50 places in VCC's theatre arts program. Tony Holland personally interviews everyone of them and, in the course of 15 minutes to half an hour, sizes up their talent and that other, more elusive quality, their desire.

An "A" in high school chemistry won't necessarily translate into a credible Hamlet, so Holland goes on his own assessment and intuition, without much back up from transcripts.

"Obviously acting favours the extrovert," he says. "I think every child has the potential to be an actor because he is very much wrapped up in fantasy, that's what play is. But along the road to adulthood most people loose this quality. An actor has to maintain this child-like sense. Acting really is indulging in fantasy at a prescribed hour and date and place."

Obviously, not all those who make their way through the two year diploma program are destined to make their livings in the theatre. But, Holland points out, the skills they learn and the talents they hone become assets in other careers.

"This is particularly true in fields where they work extensively with other people, such as sales or social work," he said. "In fact, we send students out to B.C.I.T. where they role play as difficult patients for student nurses and they recently did the same sort of thing for the Ministry of Human Resources in a film on sexual harassment. Actors must be good at putting themselves in other peoples' shoes. There aren't many other careers where this isn't a strength."

Theatre arts and Antony Holland predate VCC as such. The program got underway at King Edward in 1965, Holland explains, "... when the performing arts really began to move in Vancouver." Before then,

The program is modeled on the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School, where Holland got his training and worked as an actor and director. Like that famous company the Langara program, too, has its own performing company, Studio 58.

"Studio 58 is what makes this program different from most of the others in Canada," Holland said. "Most schools do their training in the lab, behind closed doors. Occasionally they will do a public performance. On the other hand, we do about ten productions a year, each with an average three week run."

This is on-the-job training, along with classes in voice, dance, acting and theatre skills give students a taste for the heavy demands and high degree of commitment required by the profession.

Holland says there are graduates of the Langara theatre arts program working all over the country — from Stratford to Vancouver Island. "In town I can open up the theatre ads and find our graduates in nearly every production, some acting and some working backstage," Holland said.

Theatre arts is a relatively expensive program to run. Holland estimates it costs in the vicinity of \$250,000 each year. But, he points out, unlike most conventional programs it generates revenue through Studio 58 to defer its high operating costs. "We bring in about \$50,000 a year through ticket sales and our 50 students pay about \$30,000 in tuition, so I'd say that covers about a third of our costs."

While the theatre arts graduates don't fuel the fires of industry or offset a critical skills shortage, Holland maintains there could be a growing market for actors with the advent of pay t.v. "They are going to have to fill it with something," he says. "And don't forget, there is more to acting than the stage. We have people in films and doing commercials, as well as television productions."

"And if our entrepreneurs had more imagination we could employ more talented people. There are studios sitting empty that could be used for production. Look at England where they sell productions like Masterpiece Theatre all over the world. But in Canada it seems no one will take a chance. I think the government could help spur some initiative on this front."

"There simply can't be too much talent in a country. We have to encourage this very special resource."

COLLEGE NOTES

- Students in print production at VVI got an early Christmas present recently when Evergreen Press Ltd. of Vancouver donated a collator and tipping machine to the program. This will aid in bindery instruction.
- Once again instructors at Langara Campus have generously contributed their talents to a fall lecture series at Robson Square. The Thursday noon hour series gave downtown workers an insight into "Great Lovers of the Past", exploring the life and times of romantics from Perikles and Helen of Troy to Admiral Nelson and Lady Hamilton.
- Photography tech students Ron King, Janet Hammond and Con Stark, along with instructor John Noble walked off with fully half the prizes at this fall's Pacific Northwest Biological Photographers' Association and Scientific Industrial Photographers of B.C. photo contest. It should be noted that stu-

dent work was judged along side that of professional photographers.

- The federal government's Management Excellence in Small Business program has funded Langara Campus student Pauline Hasting's proposal to produce a step-by-step guide for an advertising campaign suitable for use in the small business program.
- VCC and the Vancouver Medical Association continued their successful collaboration with this fall's Info/Health series. These free talks at Langara Campus dealt with topics ranging from the medical consequences of nuclear war to teenage dietary difficulties.
- Construction progress reports indicate that KEC China Creek should be ready to open its doors to students in March, with central administrative offices taking up residence a short time later.

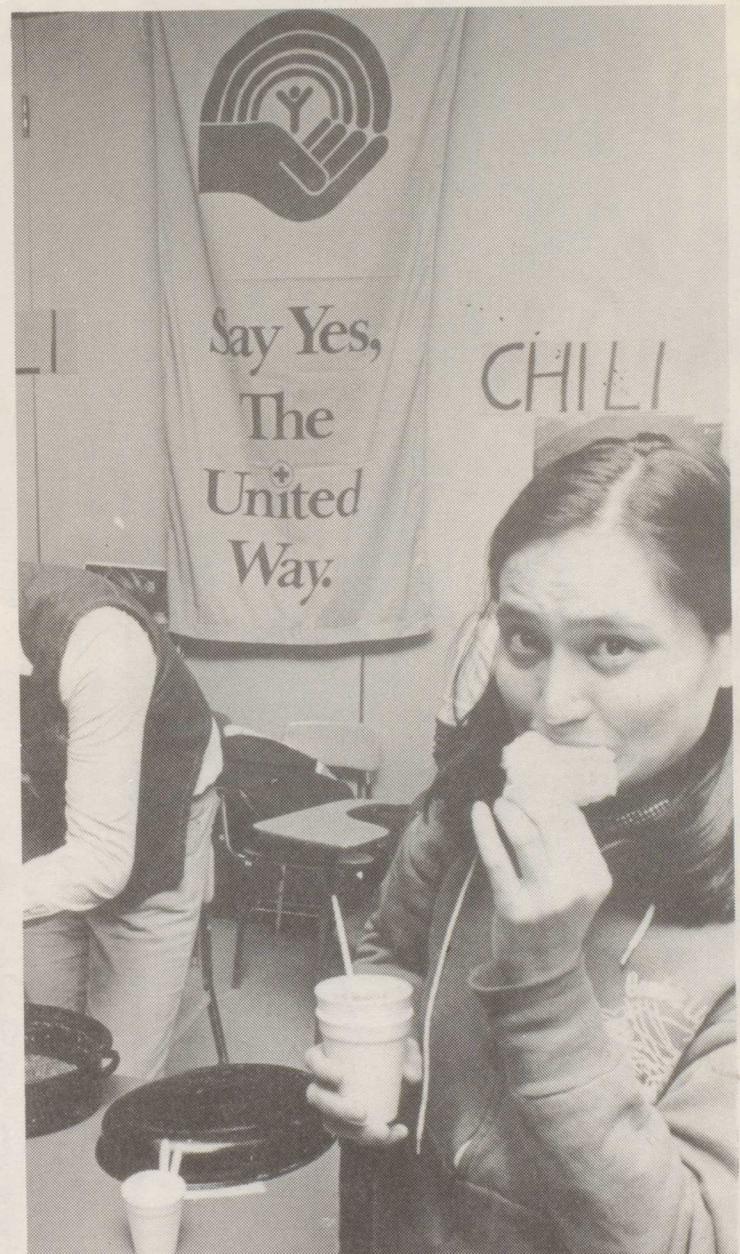
SPEAKING of MONEY...

Take Note

As of January 1 we will all see a drop in our pay cheques. Unemployment insurance premiums are slated for an increase of between 30 and 50 percent. What the increase is in your case, depends on your income. Those who earn more pay more in premiums. Our consolation is that it is better in this case to be paying than receiving!

INTERCOM

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KEC United Way Chili Party.