

SHE'S A CLERK II AT STEP C...

Ms. X, I'll call her, has worked full-time for the University since 1989. Her monthly net income is \$1502. She is the single parent of a 10 year old boy for whom she receives no child support.

Ms. X pays \$525 per month for a 2 bedroom basement suite in South-East Vancouver near Knight Street. The rent hasn't increased in two years - "I have a good landlord who knows I can't afford it". All of her furniture is second hand and most has been donated. She has no household insurance. Heat and light cost \$60 a month, phone and cable average out to \$17 and \$17.50 each month.

Food costs have been increasing as her son grows. Bulk food buying, fresh vegetables from friends' and relatives' gardens, and the use of a friend's freezer all help the grocery bill which runs to approximately \$240 a month. Her church has a food bank and clothing available for low income families. "At first I was too proud to go to the food bank", she told me, "but it helps me make it through the month."

Clothing, averaged out over the year, works out to about \$150 per month. Ms. X's son is big for his age and into men's sizes for clothing and shoes. He's a very active boy and sometimes wears clothes out before growing out of them. Most of his mother's clothing comes as 'hand-me-downs' from friends and from second hand stores.

Ms. X brought a car while she still worked in the private sector where she lost her job when the company she was working for went bankrupt. Monthly payments for her 1988 small car are \$250, gas is \$70, and car insurance averages out to \$80 a month. She hasn't kept up the maintenance checks. She told me she has considered selling it but without a car getting bulk foods home and getting her son to and from his activities would be difficult. Also relying on the transit system would add considerably to both ends of her working day at UBC and that would result in less time and energy for the part-time work she does, when she can.

Day care averages out to \$66 a month. She tries to schedule her holidays for the expensive summer months when her child is out of school. Her day care costs would be higher, she told me, if it weren't for her ability to use the subsidized 'Boys and Girls Clubs' for low income families.

A 'miscellaneous' \$80 a month covers school supplies, hot dog day, a recorder, books, son's bus fare and allowance, as well as haircuts for both - if one gets a haircut this month the other will wait until next month.

Ms. X's bare monthly expenses total \$1556; subtract \$1502 net means she goes in the hole at the rate of about \$54 a month. Her part-time work, a charge card and income tax refund keep her continually juggling.

There is no entertainment line in this woman's budget, no savings, no vacations, no sports for son, no long distance telephone calls to relatives in the east, "... no money for additional education for me".

Her child is growing up before his time -- he has occasionally used his allowance to buy things for their home. He doesn't always bring his school photos home because he believes they can't afford them. And when he looks in the fridge, as growing boys do, he'll ask "which is cheaper, milk or juice?"

In the media Ms. X would be referred to as one of the 'working poor'. Her story is not unique in our bargaining unit. From responses to our contract committee questionnaire of more than a year ago, we know that there are a significant number of you out there whose circumstances are similar.

Single parents in the higher pay grades are only marginally better off. If Ms. X netted, for example, my LA IV Step C \$1690 (my income tax and pension fund deductions are higher - I have no deductions for bonds) she would take home an additional \$188 per month. That money would help considerably but she would continue to be one of the 'working poor'.

ANN HUTCHISON
for the Contract Committee



DIFFERENCES IN SALARY INCREASES: CUPE 2950 vs UBC ADMINISTRATORS

	1981	1990	% Inc. 1981-1990	\$ Inc. 1981-1990
A. Gail Robertson Admin. Officer Faculty of Commerce	27,423	49,806	81.6%	22,383
B. Margaret Friesen Inter Library Loans Main Library	36,489	59,950	64%	23,461
C. Erik de Bruijn Univ. Librarian Main Library	48,591	77,578	59.6%	28,987
D. Peter Lusztig Professor & Dean Faculty of Commerce	77,500	128,754	66%	51,254
Clerk II	16,344	23,436	43%	7,092
Sec. III	17,892	25,116	40%	7,224
LA IV	19,500	28,440	45.8%	8,940

