

# HISTORY OF NURSING NEWS

VOLUME 13 ISSUE 4

SPRING 2003

## Mary L. Richmond 1920-2002

The History of Nursing Professional Practices Group lost one of its founding members with the passing of Mary Richmond on November, 29, 2002. Miss Richmond influenced the lives and careers of an untold number of nurses in British Columbia and across Canada. She gave dedicated service and leadership in nursing for over fifty years.



Mary was born and grew up in Vancouver. When she finished high school in 1937 the depression dictated that there was no way that funds could be found for her to enter university. Instead she spent two and a half years as a volunteer in the Canadian Youth Congress before entering nurses training. This experience imbued her with the philosophy "I believe that being a "nurse" means serving on community boards to help people recognize our broader concerns for a healthful environment. This service confirms the nurse as Citizen."

Miss Richmond graduated from Vancouver General Hospital in 1943 and stayed on as assistant head nurse and classroom instructor. She taught Anatomy and Physiology and Materia Medica until 1950 then took a year at McGill University. From 1951 to 1955 she was Director of Nursing at the Royal Jubilee Hospital in Victoria. She returned to RJH from 1956-1960 after obtaining her MA at Columbia University.

then taught for four years at McGill University. Vancouver General Hospital reclaimed Mary where she was a very busy Director of Nursing, on the Canadian Nurses Association's Committee of Nursing Service, and chairing Western Canadian Board of Review on accreditation of schools of nursing.

Mary Richmond returned to Victoria in 1974, assuming concurrent positions as Director of Educational Resources at RJH and Acting Director of the School of Nursing at the University of Victoria. She helped with the transition from hospital-based programs to community colleges. She was on a committee instituting a School of Nursing at Camosun College.. Mary's duties at RJH concluded in 1982 but she remained as a professor at UVic until 1988 and Acting Director of the School of Nursing until 1992 when she retired.

Mary volunteered for several natural history organizations, took daily walks of approximately 5 km, and assisted at the Cubbin Adult Day Care.. She was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Laws by UVic in 1991 and received the RNABC Award of Honour in 1993. A Memorial Service on January 4, 2003 was held in the Interfaith Chapel, University of Victoria so that family and friends could share farewell thoughts for a much loved lady.

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**Deadline May 15,2003**

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**Coroner's Inquest Examines Three Suicides**

*Reference to this hearing was made on CBC radio in January 2002. A friend in Ontario kindly sent clippings from the **Kitchener –Waterloo Record**.*

An 18 day inquest heard 53 witnesses at a Waterloo courtroom between January 6 and February 9, 2002. Jurors were requested to "Make reasonable and practical recommendations to prevent similar deaths." Coroner Dr. Karen Acheson cautioned jury members not to lay blame or assess legal responsibility.

Three deaths at Kitchener's Grand River Hospital provoked families and community members to launch lawsuits against the hospital, attending psychiatrists and nurses to seek compensation for the loss of their family members.

Wayne Cutler, 31, a paranoid schizophrenic, hanged himself in his hospital room on November 20, 2000 and was found at 10:30 pm. He used the cord from the waistband of his pyjamas. Testimony indicated that Cutler was so agitated that checks were to be made every fifteen minutes during his waking hours.

On February 4, 2001, Cory Wibberley, 20, attempted to jump off the roof of the hospital parking garage but was rescued by a police officer. During the following week he told fellow patients in the psychiatric ward that his girlfriend could never love him again because of that suicide attempt, therefore he had to kill himself. He was found dead in the bathtub in his room at 2 am on February 12<sup>th</sup>.

David Lumgair, 30, was brought to the emergency ward at 11 pm on March 27, 2001. He had attempted to hang himself at home, had taken 20 to 30 of his medication prescribed for depression, and he had been drinking. By 12:20 am a crisis clinic nurse, accompanied by a security guard, had interviewed Lumgair, who refused to don a hospital gown at that time. Dr. Dhaksi Mahesam was told twice that Lumgair talked about suicide but she was detained by a major medical emergency. At 2:40 am on March 28, 2001, Lumgair was found dead, hanging by a hospital gown in his cubicle.

The jurors heard testimony from staff, family members and an outside psychiatrist. They were then addressed by six lawyers representing the crown, the hospital and families of the deceased. Daphne Jarvis, lawyer for the hospital and its staff, suggested that the No. 1 recommendation should be the adoption of the US Surgeon General's guidelines on how the news media report on suicide. Such stories commonly lead to copycat action. A headline in the **Record** reads 'Inquest Ends With Debate Over Patient Safety , Privacy.'

*If you had been on that jury, what would you suggest ?*

**Never Surrender: The Motto of an Arthritic**

*By Naomi Miller assisted by his daughter, Mrs .Mair*

Lex McKillop had a lively mind in an immobilized body. Care by a devoted wife, plus a succession of nurses and therapists, kept this gentleman involved with the social and academic world for thirty years. McKillop was an energetic elementary teacher with a dream of becoming a professor at UBC. He pushed himself to work for an MA in Honors History by taking three successive summer schools. Rheumatoid arthritis was sneaking up on him. Wracked by pain and fever he collapsed at the door of the room where he was to write a final exam. He was left one course short of his MA on that fateful day in August, 1937.

Doctors ordered complete bed rest. Lex had no energy to resist that order. The fever retreated and he was allowed up for short periods but already his ankle joints had stiffened. He was fitted with crutches and special shoes. He struggled to live and work as before, and to enjoy outings with his wife and small daughter. Dr. Edith Lucas, the head of the Department of Correspondence Education invited him to handle senior Social Studies courses. He enjoyed that challenge and contributed revisions to the course papers, or comments on the student's work, by typing one finger style on an old faithful machine. Periodic flare ups, however, immobilized other joints. He became increasingly dependant on a wheelchair ... At that time when neither sidewalks nor public buildings were wheelchair accessible.

Therapists of the fledgling Arthritis group were consulted on how to adapt plumbing, tables or mechanical devices for individuals. Their home with the traditional bedrooms upstairs was less and less hospitable to the poor young man. A view lot was purchased and an architect hired to design a wheelchair friendly home. The house had a large sunny room facing a deck. Lex was now in a hospital bed. A member of the Victorian Order of Nurses came in twice a week to care for him. McKillops kept in touch with the UBC School of Nursing offering room and board to someone who



would "Lex sit" during the evening. When both Mrs. McKillop and the boarder had to go out, my roommate and/or I were alternate sitters. Sometimes the two of us would go over just to talk to Lex. He could talk on subjects from Shakespeare to the Spanish war, helicopters to herring fisheries, poetry to politics, and more. By the time I knew him his hands and shoulders were fused. He could not feed himself, or raise a glass to drink. He could read but needed help to turn pages. He was able to type with one finger when the typewriter was set on its special table and the paper inserted by a helper. He had to graduate to an electric typewriter following an accident. A well-meaning volunteer took him out in his wheelchair, struggled with a high curb dumping Lex forward. His wrists were broken. The emergency room physician applied plaster casts as was the habit at that time and the last vestige of flexibility was lost from those wrists.

Lex attracted many to come and chat with him. Doctors, lawyers, professors, historians, bankers, brokers and others arrived to visit, to challenge and be challenged. Among his circle of friends were the physicians and therapists who were planning, and lobbying to create the Arthritis Society. The C.A.R.S. (Canadian Arthritis and Rheumatism Society) was officially incorporated in 1948. The B.C. Division of C.A.R.S. was soon offering therapy from mobile units, and preparing educational material for professional people and the public. Executive director Mary Pack was describing a film almost ready for distribution to schools and community groups. Lex brightly suggested "Never Surrender" as a possible title for the film and he continued by reciting Bliss Carmen's poem *Triumphalis* to define his source.

**Thou shalt grow strong again  
Confident, tender,  
Battle with wrong again,  
Be truth's defender,  
Of the immortal train,  
Born to attempt, attain,  
Never Surrender!**

Lex was generally optimistic and outgoing. One of his comforts was smoking the occasional cigarette. A big brass bowl was held on his chest by a chain around his neck. The caregiver would put a cigarette in his mouth and strike a light for him to start puffing. He might pause to talk, nodding carefully to put the "fag" on the edge of the ashtray. Many times the cigarette slid down and would have to be retrieved by the caregiver. It was a good thing the bowl prevented ashes from dropping or a fire from catching his clothing or paper.

When I brought my future husband to meet McKillop, they "clicked." They talked about oilfields in northern B.C., longshoremen, the price of rice in China, everything. After we were married and living on the prairies we heard that Lex was in Banff Hospital. He went to Banff to give his wife a summer holiday, and to benefit from the care of Dr. Dean Robinson, one of Canada's earliest rheumatologists. Peter had a long weekend off. We headed to Banff. Lex was delighted to see us. "We're going out. I'm treating you to supper." An orderly arrived to help Lex don shirt and trousers then to lift him into his wheelchair. During our supper Lex told us of an incident which occurred a few days earlier. Lex had needed cigarettes so a caregiver wheeled him down Banff Avenue to a smoke shop. That shop was too small to admit a wheelchair, so Lex sat near the doorway enjoying the sunshine. Suddenly a "clink" disturbed his reverie. An American tourist had thrown a silver dollar into the shiny ashtray on our friends chest. Lex erupted using every swear word he could remember. He ordered the donor to remove the money. He was NEVER intending to beg. Witnesses declared that the heat of his declamation peeled the paint off nearby buildings. Remembering that event made Lex thirsty. He called for another beer - which I dutifully held for him to quaff. As twilight fell we moved to take Lex back to the hospital. Throngs of tourists strolled along Banff Avenue. Our progress was slow, then stopped when an overweight woman stood window shopping, blocking all traffic. Lex sensed everyone's impatience so his voice boomed out, "Lady, Get your butt out of the way.!" Peter winced and hoped that she realized the patient had spoken, not the pusher of the wheelchair. The lady glared but moved. We said goodbye and never crossed McKillop's path again.



McKillop continued to care for her immobilized husband until 1962. Her daughter had married and moved away. Despite assistance from the Victorian Order of Nurses and others the beautiful home was no longer suitable. Lex McKillop moved to a nursing home where he passed away in 1968 at age 63. His friendly outgoing personality kept visitors at his bedside for challenging conversations.

McKillop continued to care for her immobilized husband until 1962. Her daughter had married and moved away. Despite assistance from the Victorian Order of Nurses and others the beautiful home was no longer suitable. Lex McKillop moved to a nursing home where he passed away in 1968 at age 63. His friendly outgoing personality kept visitors at his bedside for challenging conversations. He survived in his almost invisible shell determined for many years to "Never Surrender."

Secretary of the History of Nursing Group, Inga Von Maydell (shown here) was presented with flowers on her 70th birthday at the February meeting. Smiles and laughter were the order of the day.



### March 15, 2003 Program

Inga Von Maydell will speak at the University of B.C. School of Nursing, Third Floor, UBC Hospital on Saturday, March 15 at 1:30 pm. Her topic : *100 Years of German Nursing, 1828-1928. From Kaiserworth to International Recognition through Agnes Krall.* Inga is the former Executive Director of the German-Canadian Care Home, and prior to that she was Occupational Health Nursing Supervisor of Canada Post BC and Yukon Division.

Street parking is available near the hospital for \$3 a day or in the parkade or hospital lot for \$2.50. Coffee and refreshments will be served following the presentation.

### **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

I have some information which will be of interest to you.

Our **Annual Meeting** will be held on Monday, April 14, 2003 in the Lord Byron Room at the Hyatt Hotel from 8:30-10:30. The executive is recommending Nina Rumen be awarded Honorary Life Membership in our History Group. Please join us in celebrating Nina's wonderful contributions. The room will be open at 8 AM so join us for coffee prior to the meeting.

### **Notice of change to our Bylaws**

The executive has recommended one small change to our Bylaws, which has to be approved by the members at this meeting. The change is as follows:

Present Bylaw

6.7 The officers shall serve for the specified terms of office or until their successors are elected. The terms of office shall be 2 (two) years, except for the president elect (if the office is established), whose term shall be 1 (one) year.

**Recommended change:**

The terms of office shall be 2 (two) years, except for the *officers whose term may be revised by a 2/3 vote during a General Meeting.*

This change will give us some flexibility in setting the terms of the president and other officers.

### **Election of officers.**

The following positions need to be filled on the executive 2003-05

Secretary

Treasurer

Membership chair

Member-at-large

Your assistance is needed in keeping the History Group alive and functioning, so consider volunteering for one of these positions. You will receive lots of support. And we have lots of fun too!

### **RNABC Annual Meeting Resolution**

We submitted the following resolution for the 2003 Annual Meeting.

That the RNABC Board support our effort in the year 2003 to ask each nurse in British Columbia to donate an hour's wage toward the Archival development fund of the B.C. History of Nursing Professional Practice Group's goal for a small museum and archives.

We have raised \$20,000 to date but that falls far short of our ability to support a permanent home for our historical artifacts and documents. The collection continues to grow as there is no other site in BC for the preservation of our Nursing History, other than a few Nursing Alumnae Group Archives. Our plan is to develop a virtual museum on the Internet so there is public access, but it still takes a great deal of money to develop and maintain the site as well as store the original items. So we need a permanent home.

We hope the resolution receives the approval of the delegates. If any of you plan to attend the Annual Meeting we would appreciate your support at the microphones.

If you are unable to attend the meeting we would appreciate receiving your comments on any of the above. You can email me at: [warbinek@telus.net](mailto:warbinek@telus.net) or reach me at 604-538-5066.

Ethel Warbinek, President



## **PROPOSAL FOR RESOLUTION FOR ANNUAL MEETING OF THE R.N.A.B.C. 2003**

### **BC NURSING MUSEUM/ARCHIVES**

#### **BACKGROUND**

At the RNABC (Registered Nurses Association of British Columbia) Annual Meeting in April 1999, the assembly approved the resolution put forth by the HNPPG (History of Nursing Professional Practice Group). The resolution asked that the Board of Directors and members of the RNABC support in principle the HNPPG quest for a permanent archives facility and the fund raising efforts to achieve this goal.

The HNPPG has developed a number of fund raising projects to further their goal for a museum/archives. The RNABC has given continued (non financial) support by providing opportunities for HNPPG members to promote their efforts and raise RNABC members awareness of the need for a permanent home for our historical artifacts and documents. We believe many RNABC members are now more aware of the need to preserve our historical materials. With this new resolution we are seeking to obtain tangible support i.e. financial donations, because without money a permanent facility is not possible.

The R.N.A.B.C. houses a portion of the history of nursing in B.C. in the form of oral tape recordings, biographies, and the Memorial Book for nurses making outstanding contributions to nursing in British Columbia. There is a need to establish a permanent facility to house the many historical nursing artifacts and materials held by individuals and nursing alumnae that are not presently in safe storage. Provincial historical archives have been established in three other provinces; New Brunswick, Ontario and Alberta. The History of Nursing Professional Practice Group of British Columbia is raising funds but requires the help of all nurses to reach the goal of a permanent facility to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of RNABC in 2012. The History of Nursing Professional Practice Group has established an Archival Development Fund and has raised close to \$20,000.00. This fund has been granted charitable status and tax receipts can be issued for donations to the fund. We have set a goal to collect \$500,000.00 in the next 5 years.

Nurses' salaries in British Columbia begin at \$24.70 (minimum hourly rate) and range upwards depending on position and seniority (British Columbia Nurses Union 2002 hourly wage scale). We believe nurses want to preserve their history and would pledge an hours wage to establish a museum and archives.

**RESOLVED:** We recommend that the RNABC Board support our efforts in the year 2003 to ask each nurse in British Columbia to donate an hours wage towards the Archival Development Fund of the History of Nursing Professional Practices Group's goal for a museum and archives.

### NEWS AND NOTES

The Queen's Jubilee Medal was presented to Sheila Rankin Zerr at a ceremony in Tsawassen on January 24<sup>th</sup>. Sheila was honoured for many years of nursing service, working as a member of the Delta Community Health Council and chairing the St. John's Ambulance Health Care Advisory Committee for the province. Four men and one other woman were chosen as recipients in MLA Val Roddick's riding. Sheila is immediate Past President of the History of Nursing Group. She was congratulated, then presented flowers by Ethel Warbinek. Note the smiles in the picture below.



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Sonya Grypma, PhD student at University of Alberta, is looking for information on nurses who worked in China, 1921 - 1951 -- 'Particularly United Church nurses who worked in North Honan (e.g.: Margaret Gay; Clara Preston; Janet Brydon; Jeanette Radcliffe). Sonya can be reached at: [grypma@telusplanet.net](mailto:grypma@telusplanet.net); or 1418 - 20 Ave South, Lethbridge, AB T1K 1E9.

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Dr. Sally Thorne of the UBC School of Nursing presided over the September 21, 2002 graduation ceremony for the first class of the Guru Nanak College of Nursing in India. Assistant Professor Susan Dahinten accompanied Dr.



Thorne on this international initiative. UBC faculty members have been assisting their Indian counterparts. Sally was delighted by the quality of this class of baccalaureate nurses who are setting out to meet the challenges of improving the health of the people of India.

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Betty Cawston, Professor Emeritus at UBC, passed away on January 9, 2003. She had an impressive career in acute care nursing, then public health including a stint with the Venereal Disease Clinic, then teaching community health nursing. Betty was a close friend of Beth McCann and was instrumental in developing the Elizabeth Kenny McCann Fund for scholarships.

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Glennis Zilm recently gave a one-day preconference workshop at the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Ethel Johns Nursing Research Forum. The workshop, *From Practice to Print*, focused on how to write up clinical innovations and practice successes for dissemination and publication.

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Honorary Member Esther Paulson is now living at South Granville Park Lodge, 1645 West 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Vancouver, B.C. V6J 2E6. Esther will soon be celebrating her 97<sup>th</sup> birthday (April 9) and would enjoy receiving cards. Esther graduated from the Royal Columbian Hospital School of Nursing in 1928 and received a Public Health Nursing Diploma from UBC from UBC in 1934. (Miss Paulson was "boss" of your guest Editor Naomi Miller at Pearson Hospital when it was beginning. We take this opportunity to send love and Best Wishes).

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Genelle Leifso has been awarded the Vancouver General Hospital Nurses Alumni Association Clara Lim Scholarship this spring. Genelle is currently on leave from her position as Clinical Educator, Perioperative Services at VGH so she may complete her MScN courses at the University of B.C. School of Nursing

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New member Avril Briggs of Prince George is collecting the names and stories of pioneer nurses in Prince George and area.

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Mary Nicol was guest speaker at a program in November 2002. Her topic was *Fictional Nurses*. She was much appreciated as she read excerpts from six of her books, each of which features young nurses.

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Gertrude (Watt) Fraser, widow of Cabinet Minister MLA Alex Fraser, passed away in Quesnel on February 17, 2003 at age 91. Gertrude became Matron of Quesnel's Baker Hospital at age 25 and has been a pillar of that community ever since.

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Student member Lynda Johnston is in a Masters Program until September 2004. She would like to see the story of the VGH School of Nursing completed and would like to know if anyone else is working on this topic and/or be willing to share information. Please contact Lynda at #201 - 67 Miner Street, New Westminster, V3L 5N5. Home phone 604-525-7352 or email [lyndajohnston@telus.net](mailto:lyndajohnston@telus.net)

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A display on *Fever Nursing* has been in the hallway glass case at the University of B.C. School of Nursing. This exhibit created by Beth Fitzpatrick features a question and answer board in the Learning Center. It has reportedly sparked interest among students in nursing history. Shown are a collection of antique mercury thermometers and typical fever charts (TPR records). In future this display will be moved to the cafeteria in George Pearson Hospital.

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The History of Nursing Group's June luncheon will be held starting at 11:30 am at the Vancouver Lawn Tennis and Bowling Club. After dinner speaker will be Jan Robertson of Kwantlen University College in Surrey. Her topic will be the Queen Alexandra Memorial Window which honours 21 nurses massacred on February 16, 1942 in the Far East. Mark June 14, 2003 on your calendar and plan to attend..

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***Have you renewed your membership yet? Deadline March 30, 2003 If not, this will be your last newsletter***

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## SAYS NURSES FROM NELSON HOSPITAL MAKE LOW MARKS

Graduates Do Not Compare  
With Others, Says Miss  
H. Randall

Stating that graduates of the Kootenay Lake General hospital received about the lowest standard of any in the province, Miss H. Randall of Vancouver, superintendent of the British Columbia Nurses' association, advocated the addition of a third graduate nurse as an assistant supervisor at the hospital, in an address at a meeting of the board of directors of the hospital last night. She claimed that two graduate nurses could not efficiently supervise and instruct the nurses-in-training.

### ASKING TOO MUCH

"The girls here are not over 21 years at the very most and they need supervision," Miss Randall said. "You are asking two graduate to do more than they possibly can. In choosing a third graduate I would suggest that you go slowly and see that you get one that can supervise the girls. You might get a woman who had had a lot of experience in a hospital but not in training nurses."

J. A. Irving protested that the hospital was now from \$8000 to \$10,000 in debt and if the expenses were to be increased the hospital must soon close its doors. Miss Randall replied that "you must have efficiency to get revenue."

### PROPER TRAINING

"If you take girls in here for three years of their life," Miss Randall continued, "you must give them proper training."

Mr. Irving, holding that the hospital had operated with two graduate nurses over a staff of 21 nurses-in-training for three or four years, said it would have to continue for another three or four years or until the hospital was clear of debt.

Miss Randall continued to point out that the nurses were not receiving efficient training. "They are not comparing with others," she said.

### LOW STANDARD

Mr. Irving was of the opinion that the nurses graduating from the hospital had as high standing as others. Miss Randall replied that all but one of the nurses might have passed their graduation examinations but not with as high marks as those in other hospitals.

"Nursing is gradually receiving lower remuneration," Miss Randall said. "And girls considering going in training are thinking of that. The training school must give them something for those three years spent in it," she said.

### ALL GRADUATES

Miss Randall believed the hospital could be run as cheaply if all graduate nurses were employed and no nurses-in-training taken in. In this case a staff of about 11 or 12 would be needed, each nurse being capable of looking after five patients.

Asked for her opinion on prohibiting smoking in the public wards, Miss Randall said she did not think that it was right that those smoking should be allowed to take the oxygen in the air from those who were really sick and needed it. She was in favor of a smoking room being established on a lower floor.

### NURSES' HOME

Touching on the nurses' home Miss Randall stated that even though considerable money had been spent on it there were still further expenditures to be made before it would be completed. She drew attention to the fact that the sitting room was not completely furnished and that the floors, especially in the halls and the stairs, needed covering.

"You must deal with the young women of today," she said. "You must make life cheerful for them while they are in training."

### Invermere and Beyond

As told to Naomi Miller

Margaret Ashworth Foreman went through training known to colleagues as "Magee" to differentiate her from half a dozen Margarets at St. Eugene's Hospital in the mid 1940s. She had been born in that hospital in Cranbrook before her parents moved to Invermere.

Margaret remembers chafing at the morning routine with prayers and uniform inspection. She especially wished that she did not have to wear a cap (though the cap was a cherished symbol for a large percentage of her peers.) She did agree with the principle of clean white shoes and automatically polished her shoes every night before bedtime. On days when prayers were held in the chapel and Sister Denise would intone, "Let us pray that the seniors pass their examinations" Magee inwardly sneered, "If they haven't studied, prayers are not going to help them !"

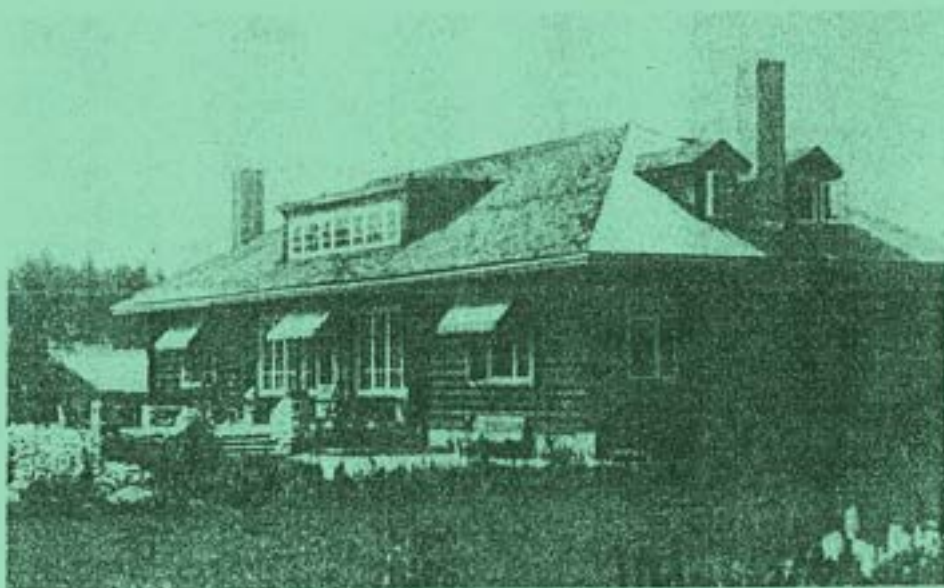
She did her best to achieve the "full bath and bed change in twenty minutes:. At one point she assisted Sister Domitille with lab work and X-ray. Margaret became so proficient that she was assigned to those duties while Sister went on holidays for a month. When she wished to visit her home in Invermere she had to work two weeks to be allowed two days off, arrange to ride on the freight truck north,, and be driven back to Cranbrook by one or both of her parents. Should that be a three day weekend, she was scheduled to work the following two weeks with no day off.

Near the end of her training Sister Denise administered a Mantoux test which burst into a violent ( plus 4) reaction on Margaret's forearm. Many of the students had no reaction so were subjected to a second test with a larger dose of OT (old Tuberculin) but obviously Margaret did not need that second test. She passed her Registered Nurse exams in January 1945 and promptly went to work in the Lady Elizabeth Bruce Memorial Hospital in Invermere.

The hospital was a log building "Pynelogs" built for the bride of Robert Randal Bruce. It was intended to be luxurious and modern by 1914 standards. Specifications, however,



exceeded the capabilities of local contractors and Lady Elizabeth died of a ruptured appendix in September 1915 before the home was ready for her to occupy. Robert Randolph Bruce lived there when on business in the Columbia Valley. After his term as Lieutenant-Governor of the province he donated Pynelogs for use as a hospital. He even paid for renovations to turn the mansion into the community hospital and cut the ribbon to open it on Coronation Day in 1937. This hospital served Invermere till 1957.



*Pynelogs - The home of Randolph Bruce served as the Lady Elizabeth Bruce Memorial Hospital 1937-1957. It is now the Columbia Valley Cultural Centre operated by the local Arts Council.*

Photos courtesy of Windermere District Historical Society and Amor Larson, AS27.

Margaret enjoyed the variety of challenges at the Lady Elizabeth Bruce Memorial Hospital. The individual on duty cared for as many as eight patients, did all the cleaning, and frequently had to prepare meals. It was commonplace for the nurse to recruit a convalescent patient to peel vegetables or prepare and serve the bedtime cocoa and

cookies. If a patient died the nurse bathed the corpse and prepared it for the undertaker. Young strong men were recruited to carry the deceased out to the Carpenter's Shop. Laundry was done twice a week by hand and hung on outdoor clotheslines. When it was very busy the laundry woman had to come in extra days.

Two doctors, Dr. Tripp and Dr. Ken Williams, served a large geographical area which included the Ktunaxa people on the Columbia Lake Reserve to the south and the Kinbaskets on the Shuswap Reserve to the north. Patients from the reserves were very appreciative of the care and services provided by medical personnel. Margaret recalls nursing a five year old Ktunaxa boy with pneumonia. When the lad had recovered she left a message with the Chief (who had the only phone on the reserve). The mother was out harvesting Christmas trees and finally came to reclaim her little boy five days after the phone notification.

The Christmas tree business needed workers to cut trees after the first frost (usually mid-October) up to early December. The part time workers were given no safety training or equipment so there were numerous injuries during the busy season. Workers came in to have cuts sutured. The commonest self-inflicted cut was between thumb and forefinger. At times each of the doctors would be cleaning up a cut, reconnecting the ligament between digits while the nurse was caring for ward patients and observing a mother in labour. Margaret and the other RN were expected to deliver many babies born in Lady Bruce Hospital. The doctors supervised them when they were new on staff and laid out their post partum instructions. With telephones few and far between a doctor might or might not be notified instantly. All calls had to go through a local switchboard where the operator went off at 11 pm. At night one line was connected between the hospital and the doctor on call. - but no outside emergency call could be placed until 7 am next day.

By October of her graduation year Margaret was diagnosed as having active tuberculosis. She was admitted to Willow Chest Centre in Vancouver for several months then sent home to Invermere to convalesce. Drs Tripp and Williams decided that Margaret could use her allowed active hours to perform X-ray and lab duties at the



hospital. The only time that X-rays could be taken was between noon and one pm. Electricity was denied other citizens for that hour because otherwise the power plant's output was insufficient to run the X-ray.

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When Margaret's lungs were considered healed she was advised to seek light duty so she worked at the Jericho Beach DVA Hospital. She did three months in charge of night shift then was ordered to return to Willow Chest Centre as a patient. This time she was treated with pneumothorax and later a phrenic crush. After months of patience as a patient she again returned to Invermere. Again she was recruited to take X-rays at noon hour. She remembers another example of expediting service when the doctors and nurse were busy. A patient with an arm or a leg in a cast would be informed that the x-ray showed that the broken bone had mended, then he was handed a cast cutter. Many a logger, miner or Christmas tree harvester removed the plaster cast and went on his way rejoicing.

Miss Ashworth's nursing career resumed when she returned to Vancouver, this time on staff at Willow Chest Centre. A handsome gentleman came into her life and after three years courtship they eloped to Blaine, Washington and became Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Foreman. Ralph's apartment was downtown. Margaret wanted to be able to walk to work so she quickly obtained a position on staff at St. Paul's Hospital. Ralph followed a business lead to California. There Margaret became nurse-anaesthetist with an Oral Surgeon. She administered Sodium Pentathol to ease the patient through painless dentistry. She enjoyed her autonomy and overall good relationship with staff. Things purred along for almost seven years when illness raised its ugly head. She was diagnosed as having a tubercular kidney.

She opted for a Canadian doctor. Ralph took her back to Vancouver where surgeons at St. Paul's removed the diseased kidney. They returned to California. Ralph died in 1962 but Margaret stayed on until 1981. She became Supervisor in the 300 bed St. Joseph's Hospital in Orange County. She came back to Victoria to be near her

## **History of Nursing News**

mother. In Victoria she worked in the Oak Bay Kiwanis Pavilion where she and one aide cared for 43 residents. She retired in 1987 at age 65. Unhappily her Mom broke her hip at that exact date so she had to nurse her mother, who eventually died at age 102 in 1992. Following her mother's death Margaret returned to Invermere. Her feeling of goodwill to her childhood home continues as she volunteers to drive for Meals on Wheels or to help other Seniors.

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### **Obituary- Florence Dougherty 1912-2003**

We report, with regret, the passing of former History of Nursing Group member Florence Dougherty (nee Kirkpatrick) of West Vancouver. She was born in Manitoba and had a short career in teaching before she decided to go into nursing. When World War II erupted she enlisted in the Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps and served as a nursing sister, first in the United Kingdom and then in front line hospitals in Belgium, Holland, France and Germany. Upon her return to Canada she continued her nursing education (Nursing Administration) then was employed as Administrative assistant at Shaughnessy Hospital in Vancouver until her retirement in 1972. She married near the end of her career. Florence and her husband Frank enjoyed retirement when they traveled and became very active in community affairs.

One of her special projects with the Nursing Sisters Association was the financing for the initial development of the Nursing Sister Note Cards. These were first sold to raise money to renew the stained glass window in Canadian Memorial United Church in Vancouver. Then the funds were channeled into the Canadian Nurses Foundation Scholarship for nursing sisters. The cards were then continued as a project by the History of Nursing Group. These cards are now in their fifth printing and proceeds go to scholarships for nursing students interested in nursing history.

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**BOOK REVIEWS**

***DON'T SHOOT FROM THE SADDLE***, by D.A. Holley, Heritage House Publishers, 2000, 192 pages, paperback, \$16.95

This autobiography, subtitled "Chronicles of a Frontier Surgeon", was written by Dr. Holley of Quesnel following a stroke in 1997 which forced him to retire from medical practice. It is delightful reading. The story starts in Saskatchewan in the Depression years, the family move to BC, the years that the family lived on venison, grouse and fish harvested locally, his student years in Quesnel, then the University of Alberta, summer jobs and finally graduation.

The young MD interned at Royal Jubilee Hospital, worked for a year at Fort Rae, NWT, for Indian Affairs, then opened a practice in Quesnel. There he upset the status quo. Even his wife was snubbed by wives of the established physicians. His love of horses, plus a few friends, quickly earned him a place in the community, plus appointment as Rodeo Doctor for the Quesnel Rodeo and the Anahim Stampede. Once the Holley Clinic was firmly established the author did extensive post graduate work to hone his surgical skills in Montreal, New York and Cleveland. On his return he organized an Intensive Care Unit (4 beds) in Quesnel Hospital, the first in British Columbia.

Geographical isolation did not hamper this keen surgeon. Holley was able to phone specialists in other centers and act quickly on their advice, saving the life of many a local citizen (including two who carelessly shot themselves while in the saddle.) In his description of crisis cases Holley acknowledges the cooperation of others, most especially the anaesthetists. Only in the conclusion of his story does he give a collective thanks to the many nurses who scrubbed for him and nursed his patients post operatively.

Dr. Holley took temporary retirement to become a character on the streets of Barkerville for several summers. From 1957 to 1984 Al Holley was a thorn in the side of Baker Clinic, yet in 1987 he was induced to return to the G.R. Baker hospital as surgical assistant.

Holley was not only a physician and surgeon, he was a cowboy, a good citizen and a jokester. The story he wrote covers many scenarios- richly illustrated with words and pictures and, wherever possible, with many chuckles.

Naomi Miller

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**Have you renewed your Membership for 2003 ? See the pullout in the Winter newsletter or follow directions on back cover. If you do not send in payment no further newsletters will be sent to you.**

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## HISTORY OF NURSING PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE GROUP OF THE REGISTERED NURSES ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

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### Web Site Update

If you haven't visited our web site ([www.bcnursinghistory.ca](http://www.bcnursinghistory.ca)) for awhile you are in for a treat. Web master Kevin Lee has recently re-designed the site to make it more attractive and easier to navigate. There is now a site map which allows you to directly click on to pages of interest (such as upcoming events) and read recently posted articles and news.

If by chance, you have misplaced the pink membership renewal form that was inserted in the Winter newsletter, you can visit the Membership section, print out the renewal form and mail it in with your check.

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Dues for 2003 are: Full and Affiliate \$30; Students \$5. Membership year is January 1 to December 31. Send name, address, telephone number, or name of the educational program. Make checks to "History of Nursing Group" and send to: **Lois Blais**, Treasurer, P.O. Box 72082, RPO Sasamat, Vancouver, B.C. V6R 4P2.

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Published quarterly by the B.C. History of Nursing Group, P.O. Box 72082, RPO Sasamat, Vancouver, B.C. V6R 4P2

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Canada Post, Canadian Publications Mail Sales Product Agreement 40622042

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