



# Canadian Association for the History of Nursing

## Association canadienne pour l'histoire du nursing

### Newsletter

Volume 18, Number 1, Summer 2005

#### President's Message

It has been little more than a month since our Association's conference in Ottawa. As I write these comments I am reflecting on the feast of Canadian nursing history presented during the week! Lynn

Kirkwood did a great job of planning and organizing the conference, resulting in a most interesting program and range of activities. The Hannah Lecture, sponsored by Associated Medical Services (AMS), was provided by Dr. Margarete Sandelowski and was entitled "What Things Contribute to the History of Nursing." Dr. Sandelowski's presentation was stimulating and provided new perspectives on ways to think about the materials of nursing.

The CAHN/ACHN conference included a tour of the Canadian Museum of Civilization exhibit "A Caring Profession: Centuries of Nursing in Canada." As well, the curator of the exhibit, Christina Bates, gave a presentation at the CAHN/ACHN banquet, providing insights into her goals in creating the exhibit and some of the challenges encountered in the years of planning and creating the show. For those of you not able to see this most interesting exhibit in Ottawa, the Museum website may provide you with a taste of the range of artifacts on display at [www.civilization.ca/cmhc/nursing/nurse.html](http://www.civilization.ca/cmhc/nursing/nurse.html). The book *On All Frontiers: Four Centuries of Canadian Nursing*, edited by Christina Bates, Dianne Dodd and Nicole Rousseau, was launched with the opening of the Museum exhibit.

The CAHN/ACHN conference was preceded by the Hannah 2005 Nursing History Conference "Identities, Diversity, and Canadian Nursing History" at the University of Ottawa. The creation of the first Canadian Nursing History Research Unit was announced at the conference. This Unit is jointly sponsored by the University of Ottawa and AMS and will be a center for training future historians amongst its many planned activities.

Another first in nursing history occurred in the past year with a bequest having been given to CAHN/ACHN by Miss Vera Roberts. This endowment is to be used for research into and publication of the history of northern nursing with priority given to circumpolar regions. During the past year Anne-Marie Arseneault worked effectively to assure the trustees of the estate that CAHN/ACHN met all of the requirements of the will. During the Ottawa conference Joyce MacQueen presented a brief biography outlining Vera Robert's nursing accomplishments. Florence Melchior and members of the Scholarship Committee are now developing criteria to award funds from this endowment.

Membership continues to increase with 148 members at the time of our Annual General meeting, thanks to the continuing efforts of Sonya Grypma and her committee.

Marg Gorrie

#### Officers & Committees 2005-07

##### Past President

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## Congratulations

### **Honorary doctorate Awarded to Shirley Stinson**

Shirley Stinson received the honorary degree Doctor of Sacred Letters from St. Stephen's College, University of Alberta in October, 2004. The degree was awarded in recognition of Dr. Stinson's outstanding contributions to the integration of health and spiritual well-being.

### **National Dissertation Award Presented to Veryl Tiplilski**

Veryl's dissertation "Parting at the Crossroads: The Development of Education for Psychiatric Nursing in Three Canadian Provinces, 1909-1955" was selected by the Canadian Society for the Study of Higher Education as the national winner of the 2004 Geis Dissertation Award. At the award presentation on May 31, it was noted that the dissertation was a major contribution to Canadian nursing history. The researcher's meticulous historical account, the thorough analysis and the balanced discussion provides valuable insights into the relationship between education, psychiatric nursing and larger societal forces. Veryl was the 1999 recipient of the CAHN/ACHN Scholarship Award.

Margaret Suttie, a graduate of Montreal General Hospital, School of Nursing and currently in charge of the School's archives would like to notify the alumnae of the Montreal General Hospital that she has started a website to keep members, spread far and wide, informed about their history. The address for the Alumnae Association of the Montreal General Hospital School of Nursing is: <http://www.sympatico.ca/mmsut.mtl/>

## **Officers & Committees 2005-06, continued**

### **Membership Chair**

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### **Nominating Committee**

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Beverly Hicks (2004-06)  
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### **Conference Chair 2005**

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### **Conference Chair 2006**

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### **Conference Chair 2007**

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### **Scholarship Committee**

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## Membership Report, June 2005

These are very exciting times for the CAHN-ACHN, with much to celebrate and look forward to in the upcoming months and years. I have enjoyed watching our membership virtually double since this time last year, to a current total of 152 members. We extend a warm welcome to the 40 members who have joined us since January. We look forward to getting to know you!

I am especially pleased to report an increase in student membership. This year, the executive board decided to provide free memberships to new student members. We have given out 6 free student memberships to date, and have a few more to give away. Please contact me if you are a student, or know a student who would like a free membership for 2005!

There is one area of membership that deserves special mention. As the Membership Chair, I have the privilege of witnessing the generosity of members who give donations in addition to their dues. As the CAHN-ACHN continues to grow, your donations provide opportunities to support new history of nursing initiatives. Thank you to each of you who have contributed to the CAHN-ACHN in this way.

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|-----|--|---------------------------------|
| (1) | Member Dues Paid in 2005                         | = 139 (includes 6 free student) |
|     | Member Dues Outstanding (paid 2004)              | = 13                            |
|     | TOTAL  | = 152                           |
| (2) | New Members in 2005                              | = 40                            |
| (3) | Donations  |                                 |
|     | a. 28 Members gave donations in addition to dues |                                 |
|     | b. Donations ranged from \$10.00 to \$100.00     |                                 |
|     | TOTAL donated = \$1013.00                        |                                 |

Can't remember if you've paid? Not to worry, I will be sending reminders out shortly! Moving? Just send your change of address to me by email to [grypma@telusplanet.net](mailto:grypma@telusplanet.net)

Sonya Grypma  
Membership Chair

## Treasurer's Report, June 2005

With our newly expanded membership CAHN's finances are much more comfortable and we look forward, as a result, to being able to sponsor more initiatives to forward nursing history. Our 2005 conference was also financially, as well as intellectually and culturally, very successful. We had over 100 nurses and their guests at our banquet on the Friday night, and Chair Lynn Kirkwood arranged to have C.N.A. sponsor one reception and the Libraries and Archives of Canada sponsored a lovely luncheon, all of which made our expenses lower than has sometimes been the case in the past.

We are very grateful to Associated Medical Services who generously helped to sponsor individuals who attended the Hannah Invitational Conference and also presented papers at our conference. The universities of several presenters who attended both conferences paid their entire costs and as a result of the AMS gift, we were able to reimburse fifteen other individuals who gave papers at our conference.

Our \$200,000 bequest from the Vera Roberts estate is now safely invested in very conservative Royal Bank of Canada mutual funds. The will specifies that we cannot spend the capital and that the interest must go to work on northern, and especially circumpolar, nursing. A sub-committee of the Scholarship Committee is working on the criteria for awarding grants from this legacy. When these criteria have been established and the interest and dividends from our investments have built up, we will be able to award a scholarship.

All in all, thanks to very successful teamwork on the part of our board and conference chair, we have had a very successful fiscal year.

Carol Helmstadter  
Treasurer

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### New Books

Burrows, B. (2004). *Healing in the wilderness: A history of the United Church mission hospitals*. Madeira, BC: Harbour Publishing.

McGann, S., & Mortimer, B. (2004). *New directions in nursing history: International perspectives*. London: Routledge.

Beaton, M., & Walsh, J. (2004). *From the voices of nurses: An oral history of Newfoundland nurses who graduated prior to 1950*. St. John's. Nfld: Jespersion Publishing.



## Communications Committee Report

This edition marks the last Newsletter we will produce as co-editors. Although we have enjoyed our five years on the Communications committee, other responsibilities, primarily academic, have regrettably necessitated our resignation. During the time we have been responsible for publication of the Newsletter, we have been fortunate to have had assistance and support from many individuals. First of all, thank you to all the contributors who helped make the Newsletter interesting and informative. The Newsletter is a significant cost to CAHN/ACHN, but it is also a very effective way to keep our membership informed about recent developments in the scholarship of nursing history. In this regard, a big thank you to Sonya Grypma who, as membership chair, provided the address labels for our mailings.

We want to acknowledge two individuals who have made a special contribution to our committee. This year, Judith Hibberd, the web diva, was formally added to our committee. We believe this development will facilitate timely posting of information on the CAHN/ACHN website. The CAHN/ACHN website has migrated to a new location: CAHN-ACHN.ca and we hope having a stand-alone website with a .ca address will enable the association to offer its membership and interested scholars worldwide with important information about our activities as well as provide them with links to other internet sites devoted to the history of nursing and medicine. We are grateful to Judith and Judy Norris for the many hours they devote to the upkeep of the website and look forward to its continued development.

We wish the new editors of the Newsletter, Marilyn Beaton and Jeannette Walsh, great success and offer them whatever advice and support they might need as they take on the exciting and challenging task of producing the Newsletter and coordinating the flow of

information to our membership.

Janet Beaton & Marion McKay  
Co-editors

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## New Editors

The new editors of the CAHN newsletter are Marilyn Beaton and Jeannette Walsh from Newfoundland and Labrador. Marilyn and Jeannette have over 60 years of combined nursing experience primarily in nursing education. Both were actively involved in achieving the goal of BN 2000 in their province. Both have served in administrative positions and have taught nursing courses by distance.

Jeannette is retired from active nursing but continues to be involved through her research into the history of nursing in Newfoundland and Labrador and her volunteer activities with the Lillian Stevenson Nursing Archives/Museum. Jeannette is a former President of the Association of Registered Nurses of Newfoundland and Labrador and recently coordinated the successful 50th Anniversary celebrations of that organization.

Marilyn is still involved in nursing education and also participates in a variety of research projects. Currently she is a member of a team involved in a \$5 million CIDA project working with the poor in Vietnam. In addition to her research in the history of nursing in Newfoundland and Labrador, Marilyn is also interested in research in distance education and management.

Marilyn and Jeannette are used to collaborating having just published their first book entitled "From the Voices of Nurses: An oral history of Newfoundland nurses who graduated prior to 1950". Published by Jespersion Press.

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## Announcements

The Miss Margaret Robins Archives of Women's College Hospital is pleased to announce the opening of its new archival facility at 76 Grenville Street in Toronto within Women's College Ambulatory Care Centre. The Archives' collection documents the rich history of Women's College Hospital that began in 1883 with the founding of Woman's Medical College through the records of its Board of Directors, doctors and administration. In addition the Archives acquires and preserves the records of Women's College Hospital School of Nursing that was formed in 1915 and maintains records of its Nursing Alumnae Association including class photographs, graduation pins and nursing uniforms. The Archives also possesses an extensive photograph collection and the Hospital's official portrait collection. For further information please contact: Heather Sobolewski, Archivist Miss Margaret Robins Archives of Women's College Hospital 76 Grenville Street Toronto, ON M5S 1B2 (416) 323-6400 x4076

The UK Centre for the History of Nursing has a new home and a new name. In June 2004, the Centre joined forces with the School of Nursing Midwifery and Social work at the University of Manchester and added midwifery to their title to become the UK Centre for the History of Nursing and Midwifery. As a result, the website of the UKCHNM migrated to Manchester and can be found at [www.ukchnm.org](http://www.ukchnm.org). The papers from the Centre's inaugural conference, held in Edinburgh in 2000 has recently been published by Routledge under the title *New Directions in the History of Nursing: International Perspectives*.

Professor Sioban Nelson of the University of Melbourne, and editor of *Nursing Inquiry* has announced that, as of September 2004, the publication will include an annual issue devoted to nursing history. It is possible to subscribe to the history issue alone.

## CAHN/ACHN Annual Conference, June 16-19 2005

The Library and Archives of Canada in Ottawa was the site of this year's annual CAHN/ACHN annual conference. Conference participants were treated to two fascinating and informative presentations on the National Archives Nursing Fonds. These fonds contain materials related to World War I and World War II nursing sisters, the VON, the Aboriginal Nurses Association of Canada, the Canadian Association of Hospital Auxiliaries, the Canadian Nurses Association and the personal papers of individual nurses. Information on the nursing collections

held by the National Archives can be accessed at [www.collectionscanada.ca](http://www.collectionscanada.ca). An additional feature of the Conference was the display of the contents of an Australian bush nurse's kit ca 1930 lent by the AMA Medical History Museum and Archive, Hobart, Tasmania and brought to the Conference by Marita Bardenhagen. Seventeen papers were presented at the Conference on topics ranging from military nursing to midwifery practice in Canada and Australia, from missionary nursing in China to "home nursing" instruction by the St. John Ambulance Association.

Gender and its impact on nursing, and nursing roles, whether in the armed forces, Florence Nightingale's Harley Street Hospital or the Saskatchewan Mental Health Services, was a major theme of the conference. The conference ended on an elegant note with a reception hosted by the CNA in honour of the seventieth anniversary of the publication of the *Canadian Nurse*. Conference organizer Lynn Kirkwood is to be congratulated on an excellent and thoroughly enjoyable three days of nursing history.

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## Associated Medical Services Nursing History Research Unit/Unite De Recherche Sur L'Histoire Des Sciences Infirmie Res De L'A.M.S.

*School of Nursing, University of Ottawa*

On 15 June 2005, the Associated Medical Services (AMS) Nursing History Research Unit at the University of Ottawa was announced. Spearheaded by Dr Meryn Stuart, Associate Professor in the School of Nursing, and Dr Bill Seidelman, President and CEO of AMS, it was endowed with the generous support of AMS and the University of Ottawa. Dr Mary Ellen Jeans, Vice President of the AMS Board, advocated actively for this initiative. This Unit offers the only academic centre in Canada for research on the history of nursing, and now joins other international nursing history units situated in Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States. The Unit is located within the School of Nursing at the University of Ottawa, with Dr Meryn Stuart as Director, Dr Cynthia Toman as Associate Director, and Dr Jayne Elliott as Research Facilitator/Administrator.

The purpose of the Unit is to enhance the development and dissemination of nursing history research in Canada, raising its profile within Canadian history and within the larger world of nursing research. Recognizing the historically contingent nature of the definition of nurse and nursing work, the Unit will also welcome research exploring the

roles of midwives, community healers and familial caregivers located at the boundaries of formal nursing. Working together with scholars in the history of medicine and other health sciences fields, we will encourage and facilitate the interdisciplinary production of knowledge, helping to advance our understanding of the history of health care in general.

A major focus of the Unit will centre on the training of a new generation of nursing history scholars and will thus support nursing students in masters and doctoral programs who wish to pursue aspects in the history of nursing. Postdoctoral students from

nursing or non-nursing faculties will also be welcomed. Both Drs Stuart and Toman have established a strong research program on Canadian nursing history, and the Unit is committed to bringing together both Francophone and Anglophone researchers. Because the study of nursing history touches on such themes as colonization, migration, urbanization, industrialization, women's work and family life, etc., the Unit will also promote links with the rich networks of resources and expertise available from a strong cadre of other researchers in different faculties at the University as well as from international nurse historians.

*Continued on next page*



*Left to right: Cynthia Toman, Meryn Stuart, Jayne Elliott*

Other objectives of the Unit include new research projects involving scholars from across Canada and the world; publications, and the presentation of a yearly spring seminar series. Summer Institutes are also planned to offer an internship and research direction to nurses and others who wish to learn more about how to conduct historical research in the field. To help meet the urgent need for undergraduate education in the history of nursing, the directors intend to develop an online nursing history credit course. A long-term goal will focus on establishing an electronic Canadian nursing history journal.

For more information, contact Dr. Jayne Elliott, Research Facilitator/Administrator, Nursing History Research Unit, [jelliott@uottawa.ca](mailto:jelliott@uottawa.ca). Look for our website in September 2005.

Meryn Stuart

## **Identities, Diversity, and Canadian History**

### **Hannah 2005 Nursing History Conference**

On June 15-16, 2005, nurses and historians from Canada, the US, Britain and Australia gathered at the University of Ottawa to explore contemporary issues in the history of Canadian nursing. Supported with funding from Associated Medical Services, conference organizers Dr. Meryn Stuart and Dr. Cynthia Toman invited historians from across the country to explore how nursing has shaped and been shaped by place, religion, philanthropy, race, nationalism, and its educational programs. Dr. Meryn Stuart opened the conference with a thoughtful paper on First World War nurses, and the impact that identity and gender had on their experiences in the far-flung reaches of the British Empire. Dr. Kathryn McPherson closed the conference with a discussion of the many themes identified by the conference speakers and encouraged members of the audience to share their own thoughts about how the 14 papers presented at the conference contributed to their understanding of historical and contemporary issues in Canadian nursing. Most agreed that nursing history cannot be examined in isolation from its social and political context. The most powerful theme emerging from this discussion was the belief that courses in the history of nursing should be incorporated into the undergraduate and graduate curricula of nursing educational programs. Another highlight of the conference was the reception hosted by the University of Ottawa School of Nursing, at which the establishment of the AMS Nursing History Unit was announced. Meryn, Cynthia and their conference planner, Linda Souliere-MacLeod are to be congratulated for a thought provoking and timely examination of the current state of knowledge of Canadian nursing history.

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## **Canadian Museum of Civilization History of Nursing Exhibit**

Thursday June 11 marked an important milestone in the History of Canadian nursing. Over 800 nurses gathered at the Canadian Museum of Civilization [CMC] to witness the opening of *A Caring Profession: Centuries of Nursing in Canada*. This project has been many years in the making. In 1998, Mary Ellen Jeans, then Executive Director of the CNA, approached the CMC in the hope of finding a repository for the Association's growing museum and archives collection. In 1999, a formal tripartite agreement was signed by the CNA, the CMC, and Library and Archives Canada. Archival material and artifacts were formally transferred to the latter two organizations with the understanding that these valuable collections would be both preserved and made more accessible to historians and others interested in the history of Canadian nursing. As part of the agreement, the CMC agreed to mount an exhibit on the history of Canadian nursing. In addition, it also coordinated the writing and publication of *On All*

*Frontiers: Four Centuries of Canadian Nursing*, edited by Tina Bates, Dianne Dodds, and Nicole Rousseau.

Tina Bates, the museum's Historian and Assistant Director, Archeology and History, curated the exhibit. As part of the planning process, Bates conducted extensive focus group sessions and surveys with nurses and members of the general public. She found Canadians wanted to celebrate nursing's proud legacy from its beginnings in 17th century New France to the present. Bates also discovered two interesting facts about Canadians' perceptions of the profession. First, most were only aware of nursing's role in the hospital setting. Second, Canadians were quite ambivalent about nursing's right to take job action to better working conditions and wages for its members. The reality of nurses on the picket line did not sit well with those whose primary image of nurses centred on their role as selfless angels of mercy. With this information in hand, Bates created nine sections

depicting many aspects of nursing's history, including *Nursing in Canada, In the Hospital, At the Bedside, In the Home, In the Community, On the Frontier, On Campus and On the Picket Line, and On the Battlefield* (by guest curator Cynthia Toman). A final section, *The Nurses' Station*, provides interactive presentations with volunteer nurses, and offers books and electronic resource materials.

The exhibit is set out in a series of interconnected circles, allowing the individual to move from one exhibit to another in a seemingly uninterrupted flow. Many unexpected surprises await the exhibit's visitors, including a real railway speeder car, a mode of transport frequently used by nurses in remote areas to transfer seriously ill patients to hospital; an early 20th century patient log book from the St. Boniface General Hospital; and Toronto public health nurse Cathy Crowe's backpack, the late 20th century equivalent of the community-based nurse's black



nursing bag. Many sections included a short video clip dramatizing scenes from nursing's past. In one, a French nun beseeched God to steady her hands as she performed surgery on a patient. In another, a young soldier described the horrors of being gassed on a First World War battlefield. An on-site public feedback process, consisting of yellow post-it notes, provided another, more immediate dimension to the exhibit. "My mom is a nurse," wrote one school-aged visitor, "and I am very proud of her." Despite the many drawbacks of public history, including its lack of critical analysis of the profession's history, I was one of many current and former nurses who were nearly moved to tears by what I saw and heard. Since opening day, thousands of visitors have made A Caring Profession the CMC's most popular attraction. It will run until September 4, 2006.

Marion McKay

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## Nursing History Digitization Project: Nursing Education in Nova Scotia

The Nursing History Digitization Project, which was launched by the Mount Saint Vincent University Archives, is the first of many digital projects which the Archives hope to develop for the study of women's history. The Nursing History Digitization Project, which can be found at <http://www.msvu.ca/library/archives/nhdnp/>, focuses on the history of nursing education in Nova Scotia from the 1890s, when the first formal education of nurses took place in the province, to approximately the late 1970s.

The website includes an overview of nursing education, as well as the history of the several nursing schools, which include the Halifax Infirmary School of Nursing, the Victoria General Hospital School of Nursing, the Dalhousie University School of Nursing, and the Mount Saint Vincent University School of Nursing. The history of the schools are explored using narrative text,

photographs, and digitized documents, such as memos, correspondence, curriculum materials, reports, poems, and brochures. In addition, the website also includes some activities and lesson plans for public school teachers.

The project was made possible through the Canadian Culture Online Program of Canadian Heritage, Library and Archives Canada and the Canadian Council of Archives and also included partnerships with the Sisters of Charity, Halifax, Congregational Archives, the Victoria General Hospital Nurses Alumni Archives, and the Dalhousie University Archives.

Throughout the twentieth century, over 25 different nursing schools operated in the province of Nova Scotia. In the future, the Mount Saint Vincent University Archives hope to include additional materials from other nursing schools in Nova Scotia, both the schools that have long been closed but not forgotten, and those that still remain. If you have any questions or comments about the project please contact the Mount Saint Vincent University Archives at (902) 457-6401 or [archive@msvu.ca](mailto:archive@msvu.ca).

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## New Appointment

Sioban Nelson, a noted Australian nursing historian, has been appointed Dean of the Faculty of Nursing at the University of Toronto effective November 1, 2005. She is the author of *Say little do much: Nurses, nuns and hospitals in the nineteenth century*, published by the University of Pennsylvania Press (2001) and the monograph *A genealogy of care of the sick* published from her PhD research on the relationship between care of the sick, subjectivity and ethical practice by Nursing Praxis Press (2000). Professor Nelson was also instrumental in establishing the Australian Nursing History Project to increase public awareness about nurses and their contribution the Australian history.

## Conference

**"Nursing History: Profession and Practice"**  
**Mandec Centre, The University of Manchester, UK, November 18, 2005**

A one-day conference organized jointly by the History of Nursing Society of the Royal College of Nursing and the United Kingdom Centre for the History of Nursing and Midwifery at the University of Manchester. The conference will be devoted to research in the history of Profession and Practice in nursing and midwifery.

For additional information contact:  
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## Recommended Reading

Thank you to Shirley Stinson for drawing to our attention three biographical sketches of important Canadian nursing leaders which appeared in the following recent issue of the *Canadian Journal of Nursing Leadership*.

Dubey, A. (2004). Focus on leaders: Helen Carpenter, Helen Mussallem and Helen Glass, *Canadian Journal of Nursing Leadership*, 17(4), 22-27.

## Reprint

CEF Books has announced the reprint of *Lights Out! The Memoirs of Nursing Sister Kate Wilson, Canadian Army Medical Corps, 1915-1917*. The reprint has dozens of new photos, maps and artwork, most of which was supplied by Kate's daughter and can be ordered from the CEF website.

## Margaret Allemang: Co-founder of CAHN/ACHN

Family and friends of Margaret Allemang were saddened to learn of her sudden death on April 14th at her Toronto home. Characteristically, Margaret's final week was filled with engagements. She attended the April 9th meeting of the Allemang Centre and was at a symphony concert the day of her death. The funeral on April 20th at St. John's Lutheran was attended by many family and friends.

Margaret was born in Toronto on July 19th, 1914, one of twins. Her childhood was shadowed by illness (chronic osteomyelitis) which delayed high school graduation by several years. She was 22 when she entered the School of Nursing, University of Toronto (U of T). Given her medical history, Margaret was surprised she was accepted but historian Lynn Kirkwood considered that Director Kathleen Russell prized intellect and Margaret must have impressed her. In any case, Margaret's health stood up and she graduated in 1940 with an RN and public health diploma. She had many happy memories of residence life, admired Russell and thought highly of teachers Jean Wilson and Dorothy Percy.

### Early Career

When Margaret graduated, the U of T School of Nursing paid her salary for three months as assistant head nurse on the cancer ward at Toronto General Hospital (TGH): Russell's aim was to show sceptics that university graduates were as good as any. Subsequently, Margaret was hired by TGH Superintendent Jean Gunn. Following a successful year at TGH, Margaret joined the growing number of Canadian nurses volunteering for wartime service and enlisted in the Royal Canadian Air Force. Between 1942 and 1945 she served in a variety of air force hospitals in Ontario and Alberta but, at war's end, was glad to return to civilian life. She used her "re-establishment credits" to complete a BA and BScN at the University of Toronto and then spent

two years teaching at the Belleville General Hospital School of Nursing. She considered this a challenging and rewarding experience.

### The School of Nursing University of Toronto

In 1951, Margaret was invited to teach at her alma mater and remained there, except for study leave, for the rest of her career. Initially she taught medical/surgical nursing to undergraduate students and guided many through their clinical experience at Toronto General. But from 1970, she became closely identified with the masters program supervising a heavy load of MScN theses and teaching graduate courses including one in nursing history.

### Further Studies

In the 1950s Canadian nurses frequently sought graduate education in the US. Margaret chose the department of Education at the University of Washington in Seattle where she hoped to gain a good grounding in research methodology. For her master's thesis she looked at the effect of sleep on patient recovery, apparently the first clinical nursing study at that university. Back at U of T, Margaret undertook a patient care study, "The Experience of Eight Cardiac Patients in a General Hospital." The published report (1960) was quoted by Alice Girard (as an example of nursing research) in her submission to the Commission on Health Care (Hall Report). In the 1960s, Margaret returned to the University of Washington to pursue doctoral studies. All went well until it came time to work on her dissertation. As various proposals were rejected, she said it was lucky that she was a persistent person. Margaret had a strong interest in philosophy and invested much time and thought into a proposal to develop a theory of nursing based on existential philosophy; she was bitterly disappointed when her committee was decidedly unenthusiastic. Luckily, a proposal to study the history of nursing education in Canada and the US met with approval. Margaret had found her niche

and the promotion of nursing history became a "crusade" for the rest of her life.

### Preserving Nursing History

In the mid 1970s Margaret received a grant from the Hannah Institute for the History of Medicine (AMS/Hannah) to interview World War One and later, World War Two Canadian nursing sisters. She was a well known member of the Nursing Sisters Association and many she interviewed gave her photos, uniforms, medals and memorabilia from their time in the services. Margaret's dining room began to resemble a mini-museum. Her interviews have proved a valuable resource for historians.

In the 1980s, interest in nursing history was on the rise and Barbara Keddy (Dalhousie University) contacted Margaret to discuss the possibility of forming a nursing history association. Over the next year, the two gauged interest across the country through a letter writing campaign, hand written in Margaret's case, and through phone calls (the days before email). June 8th, 1987 was the date set for an inaugural meeting at the University of Toronto and CAHN/ACHN was born. Barbara was elected President and Margaret Vice President. It fell to Margaret to organise the first conference in Charlottetown, PEI, no mean feat without a local arrangements committee. The "hot" topic at the time in nursing history was British historian Monica Baly's book *Florence Nightingale and the Nursing Legacy*. Barbara knew Baly and secured her as keynote speaker. Margaret secured funding from AMS/Hannah for travel expenses and CAHN was off to an auspicious start. Those present will remember the day following the excellent keynote address with its marathon session of papers and Baly valiantly providing a closing summary (Margaret had been loath to turn down any abstracts).

Around the time CAHN was created, a small group, organised by Natalie Riegler, was meeting regularly at Margaret's



house to discuss issues in nursing history, to encourage each other's work, or to listen to a speaker. Known informally as the Ontario Society for the History of Nursing, the group incorporated in 1993 as the Margaret M. Allemang Centre for the History of Nursing. Since then, the Centre has worked to promote nursing history and to preserve nursing archival materials. Margaret maintained a strong interest in both CAHN and the Allemang Centre to her death.

Margaret led a full life. She admitted to a stubborn streak, a quality which no doubt enabled her to achieve many goals in her life. She was loved and highly regarded by family and friends. As a colleague and teacher Margaret generously gave of her time and expertise. She will be greatly missed.

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## Book Review

Tom Olson and Eileen Walsh (2004). **Handling the Sick: The Women of St. Luke and the Nature of Nursing, 1892-1937.** Columbus: The Ohio State University Press.

*A review by Geertje Boschma, RN, PhD  
Assistant Professor, School of Nursing,  
Univ. of British Columbia*

Tom Olson, historian and nurse, currently associate professor of nursing at the University of Hawai, and historian Eileen Walsh, recently received the 2004 AAHN Lavinia L. Dock Research Award for their study of nursing work and education in one US hospital.

Based on a careful analysis of the archival records of St. Luke's Hospital Training School for Nurses, St. Paul, Minnesota from 1892 until the school's closure in 1937, the authors document the experiences of nurses, following their career from application, admission, through apprenticeship training and graduation. They ponder

the much debated question whether nursing is a craft or a profession. Examining ordinary nurses' motivation to go into nursing and their work experience, they provide a different perspective on the value of skilled work and apprenticeship. The nurses of St. Luke's took pride in nursing as a skilled craft. For them the aesthetic value of a finished appearance typified good nursing care, the outcome of the craft-based ability to handle or manage the sick well. The authors juxtapose this perspective on nursing as craft with often taken for granted beliefs about the notion of nursing as a caring profession. Many nursing histories written from a framework of professionalization devalue craft traditions in nursing, they argue. The authors challenge current historiography by demonstrating that nursing as experience-based craft was central to the ordinary nurses' understanding of their practice. They argue that a better historical understanding of nursing's craft tradition is of prime importance in providing context to current debates on the educational, research and practice goals of nursing.

In eight chapters the authors lay out their argument. Chapter 1 maps out the main themes of the book. In chapter 2 demographic characteristics of the nurse applicants are examined. Somewhat unfortunate is the authors' perpetuation of the common myth that the emergence of nursing as a female occupation in the late nineteenth century, somehow started with Nightingale. Yet, they provide a valuable perspective on the rural background of most of the applicants, still closely related to their rural communities of origin. High educational standards, emphasized by nurse leaders of the time, were less prominent in deliberating the quality of applicants than "good sense and practicality" (p.29). Chapter 3 and 4 examine the motivation and expectations of the women who took up training and analyze their experience of training. Religious inspiration did not figure prominently in nurses' motivation for the work, the authors conclude.

Rather applicants expected to work hard and valued the training, practice and apprenticeship to obtain their skill, embracing the apprenticeship model so often devalued by nurse leaders. In chapter 5, the authors challenge current claims to caring by providing historical evidence of the language nurses used at the time to describe their knowledge and practice. Chapter 6 analyzes the nurses' reasons for leaving their training, which adds important information about their motivation for nursing. Chapter 7 examines what nurses' took with them from their apprenticeship training. Nurses clearly considered themselves part of a larger community of women, working in nursing. They formed energetic alumni organizations, reflecting occupational loyalty and a strong interest in local and national nursing issues. Their identity as a nurse was lasting. In the concluding chapter 8, the authors outline what a model of the nature of nursing would look like according to the experience of the nurses of St. Luke hospital. Throughout their analysis, the authors challenge current historiography of the history of nursing, which, they argue, often aligns with the dominant vision of nurse leaders, whose elitist views are at odds with the work experience and motivations of ordinary rank-and-file nurses. Although at points, the authors seem to jump a bit too easily from past to present without taking into consideration the profoundly changed context of health care in the latter half of the twentieth century, their analysis is thought provoking and challenging. Examining the meaning of nursing's craft traditions is timely and essential as a context for current nursing debates.

## Calls for Abstracts

### **History of Nursing Conference CAHN/ACHN 19th Annual Meeting Vancouver, BC, June 8-10, 2006**

Hosted by the BC History of Nursing Professional Practice Group, the Conference will be held at historic St. Paul's Hospital, 1081 Burrard Street, Vancouver, BC. The Conference Theme is: "Frontline Nurse: Historical Milestones. A highlight of the Conference will be an evening dinner and opera excerpts from "Florence: The Lady with the Lamp".

Papers should be 20 minutes in length. The programme committee welcomes proposals for symposiums. Sessions should include three 20-minute papers, a 20 minute comment from the chair or moderator, plus another 20 minutes for questions and discussions from the audience.

Guidelines for submissions:

1. Abstracts should be 250 words in length double-spaced, font size 10-12 and may be in either English or French.
2. Submit via Email (Microsoft Word) or Fax followed by hard copy.
3. Abstract should include a complete title, the author's name, address, and institutional affiliation. Please include contact information: telephone numbers, Email address, fax and full postal address.
4. Receipt of confirmation will be sent via return Email.
5. Notification as to status of submission will be no later than March 15, 2006
6. Deadline for submission of abstracts is on or before January 15, 2006.

Submit abstracts to:

Lynne Esson  
Email: [esson@nursing.ubc.ca](mailto:esson@nursing.ubc.ca)  
604-822-7474 (w)  
604-822-7466 (fax)

Mail to: CAHN 2006 Conference  
C/O Lynne Esson  
#5 - 8060 St Albans Road  
Richmond, BC  
V6Y 2K9

### **2006 Australian and New Zealand American Studies Association Conference University of Tasmania, Launceston, Australia, July 9-12, 2006**

#### *Performers, Practitioners and Audiences in American Studies*

Proposals that address the conference theme will be keenly welcomed. The concepts of Performers, Practitioners, Audiences and American Studies should be broadly construed. Proposals that address other themes in American Studies will also be welcomed.

Proposals should include an abstract of the paper (250-300 words), academic affiliation and contact details. Please indicate any technical support that may be required such as power point, a slide projector, etc.

Each presenter will be allotted a total of 30 minutes; it is anticipated that most papers will be delivered in approximately 20 minutes, with the remaining time left free for questions and discussion. Normally there will be three papers in an hour and a half session.

Proposals for conference panels will also be welcomed.

Send abstracts via email or post to:

Tom Dunning  
ANZASA 2006 Conference  
Convenor  
School of History and Classics  
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Locked Bag 1-340  
Launceston, Tasmania 7250  
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### **2nd Biennial ANU Missionary History Conference**

#### *Asia-Pacific Missionaries: At Home and Abroad*

#### **The Australian National University Coombs Lecture Theatre August 25-27, 2006**

Presentations on Canadian, New Zealand/Aotorean, Pacific Islander, Hong Kong, Singaporean, Malaysian, South African and Australian contributions to Christian mission, domestic and foreign, in the Asia-Pacific region, are invited. A common background with British missionary outreach links the 2006 conference.

Abstracts close May 30, 2006

Postgraduate papers are encouraged. A special focus of the conference is the contribution of women to the missionary enterprise. The conference is open to anyone interested.

For further information contact:

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