



Canadian Association for the History of Nursing

Association canadienne pour l'histoire du Nursing

Newsletter

Volume 20, Number 1, Spring 2007

President's Message - Marg Gorrie

By the time you receive this newsletter, I hope you will have received a copy of the proposed changes to our Association's Constitution and Bylaws (or they will be arriving shortly!). Prompted by the bequest provided by Vera Roberts, the Executive has updated the constitution and bylaws for approval by members at our Annual General Meeting on May 31st. The proposed changes are intended to provide a sound structure for management of the Vera Roberts Endowment (VRE) and associated awards and are consistent with the VRE recommendations approved at the 2006 AGM. As well, additional changes are proposed to reflect current practices in the Association, such as the number of members on committees. Information on the VRE is now available in both French and English, thanks to Anne-Marie Arsenault and Nicole Rousseau for their assistance in working with the translator. The VRE provides a terrific opportunity to support nursing history researchers interested in northern/outpost nursing history.

Our conference this year will be held in conjunction with the Canadian Society for the History of Medicine in Saskatoon. Dr. Gertje Boschma and Dr. Sandra Bassendowski have been working with their CSHM counterparts to organize the conference program and other activities. The Associated Medical Services (AMS) has offered to support students to attend the Saskatoon conference. I look forward to an exciting program and the opportunity to see many of you in Saskatoon. We can look forward to meeting on the prairies again in 2009 when the University of Manitoba Faculty of Nursing will co-sponsor the CAHN/ACHN conference.

The AMS Nursing History Research Centre in Ottawa has generously offered to assist CAHN/ACHN with our membership. Jayne Elliot, Administrator/Research Facilitator, has offered to take on the management of CAHN/ACHN membership database at least until the end of June 2010. This would provide a permanent address for membership renewals making renewals a bit easier for members.

This is my final president's message and I wish to thank all of the executive and committee members for their assistance and patience as I learned about this role!

Executive, Board and Committee

Members 2006-2007

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Editors' Message -

Marilyn Beaton & Jeanette Walsh

Hi from Newfoundland and Labrador. Hopefully like us you are all seeing the first signs of Spring. For us that includes unexpected snow storms, lots of RDF (rain, drizzle and fog) and some very brave little flowers that show their heads above the snow. We started this newsletter concerned that we would have enough to fill its pages but thanks to the many contributors we have a newsletter filled with a wealth of information and have had to defer some items until the Fall edition. One of the items in the newsletter is the call for nominations for the upcoming year. It comes as a real surprise that our term as Editors is up. Despite a few challenges from this end it has been a marvelous opportunity for us to meet people who are so committed to preserving nursing history. For us it has been a real eye opener to see what is happening across the country in relation to nursing history and also to discover some of the things that are happening locally. We have increased the circulation of the newsletter by distributing it to professional associations and special nursing interest groups across Canada. All Canadian Schools of Nursing will be added to this mailing list and it is available to all interested persons on the web. In this part of the country we would still like to see more nurses involved in CAHN/ACHN and we will continue to spread the word about the important work of this group. Thank you for the opportunity to be involved. Marilyn and Jeanette

Executive, Board and Committee Members **2006-2007**

Publications

Marilyn Beaton (2005-2007)
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Scholarship & Awards

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Long-Range Planning

Geertje Boschma (2005-2007)
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Conference Chair 2007

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Geertje Boschma (2005-2007)
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Judith Young
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Conference Chair 2009

Marion Mckay
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CAHN/ACHN Scholarship & Awards Committee

Members: Florence Melchior (chair); Heather MacDougall, Diana Mansell; Judith Young; and Cynthia Toman.

Maragaret Allemang Scholarship: We have received three applications for the Margaret Allemang Scholarship—two at the master's and one at the doctoral level. The committee will, through e-mail discussion, make decisions by the beginning of April and then forward recommendations to the executive.

Vera Roberts Legacy: We have not received any application. Please remind researchers and others about the availability of the fund.

CAHN/ACHN Nominations Committee Call for Nominations 2007-2009

Anne-Marie Arseneault

CAHN/ACHN has increased its membership over the past few years and we hope that the increased membership will facilitate the recruitment of new members to fill the Executive and committee positions that will become vacant in June 2007.

The number of members on each committee is defined by the Association's By-laws. Persons who have terminated a first mandate may wish to remain for the 2007-2009 period. Please advise of your willingness to take on a second term.

The following committees require members for the next two years:

Vice-President

Secretary

Communications Committee: 3 positions

Members-at-large: 1 position

Membership: 3 positions

Finance Committee: 1 representative of the public

Long-Range Planning: 1 position

Please consider membership in one of these committees or nominate a member.

Send nominations to either of the following Nominations Committee members :

Marion McKay Marion_mckay@umanitoba.ca;

Laurie Clune lclune@ryerson.ca

Kathy Gates kgates@Ryerson.ca

Anne-Marie Arseneault arsenam@nb.sympatico.ca, Chair

Comité des candidatures de la CAHN/ACHN Appel de candidatures 2007-2009

Depuis quelques années, l'Association a réussi à augmenter le nombre de membres. Nous espérons que cette augmentation facilitera le recrutement de personnes qui accepteront de devenir membre, soit du bureau de direction ou d'un comité. Le nombre de membres de chaque comité est défini dans les Règlements et un deuxième mandat peut être accordé aux membres des comités. Veillez, s'il vous plait nous indiquer si vous souhaitez un deuxième mandat.

Des candidatures sont sollicitées pour la période 2007-2009 pour le bureau de direction et pour les comités suivants:

Vice-présidente

Secrétaire

Comité des communications: trois (3) membres

Représentantes générales: une (1) membre

Comité des adhésions: trois (3) membres

Comité des finances: une (1) représentante du public

Comité de planification à long-terme: une (1) membre

Veillez s'il vous plait proposer des candidatures pour ces postes et faire parvenir le nom des candidates ou des candidats à une des personnes suivantes, membres du Comité des candidatures :

Marion McKay

Marion_mckay@umanitoba.ca;

Laurie Clune lclune@ryerson.ca

Kathy Gates kgates@Ryerson.ca

Anne-Marie Arseneault [ar-](mailto:arsenam@nb.sympatico.ca)

[senam@nb.sympatico.ca](mailto:arsenam@nb.sympatico.ca), présidente

Nurse Myra Bennett's House, Daniel's Harbour – Lara Maynard

Lara Maynard is Municipal Outreach Officer with Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador. She has found through her work that often historic buildings have connections to prominent men, but we tend not to learn as often about prominent women in the same manner. In her work she is attempting to show how interesting women of particular historical importance are also associated with historic properties in Newfoundland and Labrador. Nurse Myra Bennett's story and the Bennett House came to the forefront.



Nurse Myra Bennett with women in Daniel's Harbour 1935

At eighty-four years of age, Myra Grimsley Bennett once said, "I've had a wonderful life.... I did what I wanted to do. I went where I wanted to go, and I stayed there because I wanted to be needed." Bennett lived to be 100 years old, and the home she shared with her husband, Angus -- and any number of medical patients -- in Daniel's Harbour is now a museum.

Myra Grimsley came to Newfoundland from London, England to work as an outpost nurse in 1921. The district that she served for some fifty years, whether paid by government agencies or as a volunteer, was a 300 kilometre stretch of coastline on the west coast of Newfoundland. Until proper roads were constructed in the 1950s, she traveled the area by boat, dog team, horse or foot. Daniel's Harbour, about thirty kilometers north of what is now Gros Morne National Park, was the nurse's home base.



Nurse Myra Bennett preparing to pull a tooth, 1955

Grimsley married local resident and ex-merchant marine Angus Bennett in a small, early morning church ceremony in January of 1922. Afterwards the bride and groom went to their newly built home where Angus's mother had prepared a meal of hot cocoa and baked beans. During the first winter of their marriage, Myra and Angus lived and worked in the only two rooms finished in the house: the kitchen, which also served as a makeshift medical office, and the bedroom, which they sometimes shared with patients. In 1942 an addition was built onto the home to contain a medical clinic.

A trained midwife, Bennett delivered several thousand babies in her district -- including her own grandson whose early arrival in 1956 interrupted the Bennett family's Christmas dinner. During her tenure she also trained local women as midwives, and encountered tuberculosis, scarlet fever, broken bones, wounds and medical emergencies of all sorts.

In addition to her nursing work and all the tasks of homemaking in a Newfoundland outpost of the period, Myra Bennett was involved in many community based activities. She was particularly active with the local church parish, and was an advocate for improvements in her district and for healthcare in general. Myra and Angus had three children, and fostered four others. One "hard done by" eleven-year-old runaway who spent a pleasant night in the Bennetts' house cried out upon waking in the morning, "I thought I was in heaven."

Myra Bennett has been recognized for her outstanding contribution to health care in Newfoundland through many prestigious awards, including the Order of Canada, the Member of the British Empire, and an honorary Degree of Doctor of Science conferred upon her by Memorial University of Newfoundland in 1974. The Bennett home in Daniel's Harbour has been designated as a Registered Heritage Structure. And the resourceful woman who lived there has been portrayed onstage in *Tempting Providence* by playwright Robert Chafe, telling the story of the British-trained nurse who became "The Nightingale of the North."

Web Links:

Nurse Myra Bennett House Registered Heritage Structure -

- register.heritagefoundation.ca/frnSiteDetails.aspx?hpid=1528
- historicplaces.ca/rep-reg/affichage-display_e.aspx?Id=2186
- A Life of Service—Nurse Myra Bennett

www.virtualmuseum.ca/pm.php?id=story_line&lg=English&fl=&ex=0000240&sl4808&pos=1



Nurse Myra Bennett receiving honorary Degree of Doctor of Science from Memorial University of Newfoundland in 1974.

Book Review

Book Review of *Labor of Love. A Memoir of Gertrude Richards Ladner 1879 to 1976*. Sheila J. Rankin Zerr, Glennis Zilm, and Valerie Grant. Delta: ZGZ Publication, 2006. By Deborah Hamilton

The book *Labor of Love. A Memoir of Gertrude Richards Ladner 1879 to 1976* is a fine example of the ways in which the memoirs of one person's life can illuminate so many new ideas about nursing, medicine, and family life in the 19th and 20th Western Canadian experience. In this self-published book, Sheila J. Rankin Zerr, Glennis Zilm, and Valerie Grant provide the reader with a rich biography of Gertrude Richards Ladner's family and nursing life. These authors believe Richards was an ordinary woman of her day, but when reading her memoirs it becomes apparent that Richards broke a stereotype that nurses were 'shrinking violet[s]', or handmaidens to the doctors they worked with. The selections based on the memoirs Richards wrote during her student nurse days at the Provincial Royal Jubilee Hospital in Victoria between 1902 and 1908, and the pages of her nursing note book provide a reader who is interested in nursing history with a fascinating and rather rare record of nursing knowledge, nursing life, and the work of nurses.

This book has six chapters, the first being about Gertrude Richards Ladner's family life. Richards' Original Memoir compiled by Richard's daughter in 1976 then follows in a second chapter. The memoir is reprinted in a more readable font in chapter three. It is complete with an historical analysis drawn from primary and secondary sources in footnotes so as not to disturb the flow of the original memoir. When the footnotes are read independently, they reveal a broader social history of trends in nursing and society in Victoria, BC. For example, there is a story about a boy Richards was treating in the hospital. He told her he had a bomb in his pocket. Richards calmly informed the boy she would get the doctor. Her actions revealed the importance of critical thinking on the part of a nurse to the health and safety of everyone. Secondly, we learn that this child was the son of a prominent businessman in Victoria. The fourth chapter includes a copy of an original booklet outlining the history of Provincial Royal Jubilee Hospital outlining the expectations of student nurses on duty as well as off duty. Sections of Gertrude Richards' student nursing notebooks form the fifth chapter. Pages and pages of chemistry formulas, basic anatomy and physiology taught by doctors during Richard's training have been published. This notebook is extremely impressive because it indicates nurses were in ways expected to learn medicine, pharmacy, and dietetics to nurse patients with extremely complex treatments. For example, Richards wrote "Ergot is taken from Rye is used to contract the smaller blood vessels & involuntary muscles" and in another section she wrote "carbolic-oily crystalline solid... A hundred parts of the acid dissolved in five parts of water makes a thick oily fluid" (p. 84). This chapter is foot noted explaining that Richards would have to know this information since carbolic was an important surgical disinfectant nurses prepared and used in hospitals as well as in the community. Finally, the book ends with a well-researched analysis of the nursing uniforms worn by nurses in the 20th century.

This book makes an important contribution to the history of nursing because the memoirs of Gertrude Richards Lander have been published for others to enjoy. It is typical for nurses not to write diaries of their working experiences and nursing history has therefore been written by early nursing leaders, such as Nightingale, Nutting, Randall, and Johns and has largely chronicled the history of professionalization of nursing. This book reveals nursing history from the point of view of a general duty nurse who actually contributed to the making of nursing history. Perhaps this book by Rankin Zerr, Zilm, and Grant is a labour of love, but for anyone wanting to read nursing history today this book is a gift.

Conferences

1. Conference call for the 2007 CAHN/ACHN conference at the University of Saskatchewan on May 31 - June 2 - **Reminder**

The 2007 CAHN/ACHN conference will be held jointly with the Canadian Society for the History of Medicine (CSHM). The CSHM meets once a year in conjunction with Congress of the Social Sciences and the Humanities.

The theme of the 2007 Congress of the Social Sciences and Humanities will be, "**Bridging Communities: Making public knowledge, Making knowledge public.**"

The AMS-CAHN-Hannah Lecturer will be Maureen Lux, Assistant Professor of History, Brock University, the author of *Medicine that Walks: Disease, Medicine and Aboriginal People in the Canadian West 1880-1930*.

For further information please refer to the CAHN/ACHN web site (www.cahn-achn.ca) OR contact

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2. 2008 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE HISTORY OF NURSING

Borders, boundaries and political context in nursing and health care history

The Canadian Association for the History of Nursing/l'Association Canadienne pour l'Histoire du Nursing is pleased to be sponsoring the fourth international conference on the history of nursing. The first conference was held in Edinburgh in 2000, sponsored by Queen Margaret University College and the Royal College of Nursing. The United Kingdom Centre for the History of Nursing, with help from the Wellcome Trust sponsored the second conference at Oxford University in 2003. The most recent conference was sponsored by the University of Melbourne in Australia in 2005 and was co-chaired by Judith Godden from the University of Sydney and Sioban Nelson, then Dean of Nursing at the Melbourne University, now our Dean of Nursing at the University of Toronto.

These prestigious conferences attract scholars from Europe, Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States as well as some of our own Canadian historians of nursing. The many different countries from which presenters come mean that those who attend find a rich variety of perspectives on our history. As well, historians of nursing seem to be especially sociable and friendly people and the conferences provide wonderful networking opportunities.

For our annual CAHN/ACHN 2008 conference we are planning a two-and-a-half day international conference Thursday June 5 through Saturday June 7 2008. It will be hosted by the Faculty of Nursing, University of Toronto and will be held in the Health Sciences Building at 155 College Street. As well as the University of Toronto Nursing Faculty, Women's Studies at York University, the Ryerson School of Nursing and the Allemang Centre (the Ontario provincial nursing history organization) are co-sponsoring the 2008 conference.

The conference theme will be borders, boundaries and political context in nursing and health care history. There will be four sub-themes: (1) the colonial and political contexts of health care, (2) religious influence focusing on nursing sisterhoods and missionary nursing, (3) the political context of psychiatric practice, and (4) Northern nursing and regionality. We believe the Northern panel bring our new Vera Roberts Scholarships to the fore.

We are planning two Hannah lectures as was done so successfully at our Vancouver conference in 2006. We have been successful in attracting two distinguished international scholars on nursing history for the lectures. The first is Karen Schultheiss, Assistant Professor of History at the University of Illinois, Chicago, who is the author of *Bodies and Souls: Politics and the Professionalization of Nursing in France 1880-1922*. This fine book is a political history of the demise of religious nursing in France. The

second is Catherine Choy, Associate Professor from the Department of Ethnic Studies at the University of California Berkeley. She is the author of the highly acclaimed book, *Empire of Care: Nursing and Migration in Filipino American History*. This book deals with American imperialism and racism and the persistent tensions nurse migration creates in health care. The focus of both of these scholars' work is strongly linked to the core conference themes, the powerful influence of religious sisterhoods in nursing politics and policy and the politics of nurse migration in colonial context.

The Local Arrangements Committee has chosen the Delta Chelsea Hotel on Gerrard Street as the conference hotel. It is within easy walking distance of the Health Sciences Building that the Faculty of Nursing shares with some faculties within the Medical School. The Faculty's new home has commodious quarters that provide an ideal setting for a large conference. While the Delta Chelsea will be the conference hotel we will also secure some rooms at a corporate rate at a less expensive hotel. Unfortunately there are no cheaper hotels as close to the Health Sciences Building as the Delta Chelsea. Student residence rooms at the university will be available as well.



Osgoode Hall

Conferences continued.

Included in the conference fee will be a cash bar and welcome buffet reception on the opening Thursday night, continental breakfasts and buffet lunches on Friday and Saturday and tea and coffee breaks in the mornings and afternoons. On Friday night there will be a banquet held in the beautiful and historic landmark of Osgoode Hall. Set in the middle of a field with access to the core of the city by a mud road when the first wing was built in 1828, the building is now in the heart of downtown Toronto, close to the Delta Chelsea. It is the Court of Appeal for Ontario. The Superior Court of Justice and the Law Society of Upper Canada also reside at Osgoode Hall.

On Saturday there will be an informal workshop for students during the lunch break. CAHN is providing breakfast and lunch on site for two reasons: first because it is difficult for people who do not know the city to get out, find a restaurant for lunch and get back within the allotted time, and second and more important, the breakfast and the lunch breaks provide a pleasant opportunity to meet and network with the other registrants. CAHN and the co-sponsors are covering the cost of these items rather than adding them to the conference fee.

Please watch our website (www.cahn-achn.ca) for further information. The call for abstracts is already posted and we have already received a number of abstracts.

3. First Amphictyony of Societies and Associations of History of Medicine & Ethics in Medicine, which will be held in the island of Kos on May 25-28, 2007. For further information please email: amphictyony2007@triaenatours.gr

Call for Abstracts

2008 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE HISTORY OF NURSING

Borders, boundaries and political context in nursing and health care history

Toronto, Canada, 5-7 June 2008

This conference is organized by the Canadian Association for the History of Nursing/Association Canadienne pour l'Histoire du Nursing and co-sponsored by the Faculty of Nursing, University of Toronto, the School of Nursing, Ryerson University, the School of Women's Studies, York University, the Allemang Centre for the History of Nursing, and the AMS Nursing History Research Unit.

Details of the conference are outlined above.

Please submit a one page abstract on completed research by e-mail of no more than 300 words. State the title of the paper at the top and at the end list name, institutional affiliation or city, contact information, and whether you are a student. Let us know if you would like your e-mail to be published along with the abstract, and if you have any audiovisual or other special requirements. Abstracts will be peer-reviewed.

Submit abstracts to geertje.boschma@nursing.ubc.ca

Abstracts must be received by Nov. 15, 2007. Notification of acceptance will be sent out by Feb. 1, 2008

For further information contact Judy Young, judithy@primus.ca or Carol Helmstadter, Carol.Helmstadter@rogers.com

Please refer to the CAHN/ACHN website (www.cahn-achn.ca) for further information. The call for abstracts is included in this newsletter and can be found on the website.

Enclosed in this newsletter is a bookmark that serves as a pre-conference announcement

NOTICES

1. Review of the Constitution and Bylaws

The revised constitution and bylaws have been mailed to you. These will be discussed and voted upon at the AGM in Saskatchewan. Those attending the conference are reminded to please review them prior to the AGM. If you are a member of CAHN/ACHN but not planning to attend the 2007 AGM and wish to have input please forward your comments to any of the CAHN/ACHN officers listed on the back page of the newsletter.

2. Notice regarding the error in numbering of 2006 newsletter

The 2006 Fall issue of the CAHN/ACHN newsletter was wrongly numbered as Volume 20 when it should have read Volume 19. Please be advised that this has been corrected on the web site. The newsletters for 2007 will be numbered as Volume 20.

3. Group photo, Fall, 2006 newsletter

Judy Young advised us that the photo in the last newsletter was taken outside the University of Toronto Faculty of Nursing, June 1987 following the inaugural meeting of CAHN. She has a similar photo belonging to Margaret Allemang. Judy identified some, but not all of the group. We are going to attempt to identify all those in the picture and publish in an upcoming newsletter.

4. Thank you

CAHN/ACHN was profiled in the February issue of the Canadian Nurse Journal. We want to thank Nicole Rousseau for writing it on behalf of CAHN/ACHN. We were unable to get permission to reproduce it for this newsletter but it will be included in the next. Thanks again, Nichol

5. New Developments in the Vera Roberts Endowment Fund for Nursing Research

Anne-Marie Arseneault and Nicole Rousseau have worked with a translator to make the Vera Roberts Endowment Fund guidelines and application form available in French. Our website now has this information available in both English and French. Anne-Marie and Nicole's efforts ensure applicants are invited to provide the same information in either language. The availability of this information in both French and English broadens the range of potential applicants who may wish to research northern nursing. Many thanks to Anne-Marie and Nicole for this work.

Please be advised that the date for submission of applications for the Vera Roberts Endowment has been Extended to November, 2007.