

# HON

B.C. HISTORY OF NURSING SOCIETY NEWS  
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## ORAL HISTORY NOT JUST STORYTELLING

BY ETHEL WARBINEK

Oral history captures aspects of a person's life which would disappear unless recorded. It helps us understand past events by engaging others in talking about life experiences from their perspective in time- something one cannot achieve from written records. To capture the expressed emotions and feelings is a unique opportunity. It is a very personal and subjective research tool and thus its strength. The opportunity to sit and talk to nurses about their lives and to have them share their knowledge about nursing from their perspectives is an experience hard to describe – always inspiring and enjoyable.

Our History of Nursing group has been collecting oral histories since 1989 when the group formed. There are now 192 recordings in the College Library. Some of these were conducted by RNABC in celebration of its 75th anniversary in 1987.

I had the pleasure of interviewing Jean Fernie and Margaret Mainwaring – two incredible women who graciously shared their stories with me. The interviews were tape recorded, copied on CD's and placed in the CRNBC library. Jean died recently and it brought to mind the brief time line we have in gathering these personal life experiences before they are lost.

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE





## JEAN FERNIE 1917-2011

In 1935 Jean began her nurses training in infectious diseases at Knightswood Infectious Diseases Hospital in Glasgow, Scotland and in 1938 started her 3-year General Nursing Training at Glasgow Western Infirmary. From 1941 -1946 she was a Sister – head nurse - in charge of the Infectious Diseases Ward at the Western Infirmary in Manchester. In

1946 Jean enrolled in a Midwifery course and became the Sister in charge of neo-natal nursing. While in the UK, she won many nursing awards and scholarships including “Nursing Beyond the Call of Duty” for her dedicated work in treating patients of the Glasgow smallpox epidemic of 1950.

In 1951 she immigrated to Canada and began her 27 year career at Vancouver General Hospital. In the 1950s she nursed patients through the polio epidemics. In the late 1960s she was recruited for 3 months to work for the World Health Organization in Burma, India and Hong Kong. She returned to V.G.H. and became the Infectious Disease Control Officer.

In retirement Jean spent 25 years as a volunteer with the White Rock Hospice Society. She adored babies, children and dogs. She passed away peacefully on March 22, 2011 at Peace Arch Hospital in White Rock BC. She was an amazing nurse and woman who dedicated her life to caring for others. She had the unique ability to make every person she met feel special and will be lovingly remembered by all who knew her.

**To learn more about Jean’s and Margaret’s lives and nursing experiences, described in their own words , listen to the oral history tapes found in the College Library.**

**We are always looking for volunteers to conduct interviews. If you are able to assist, please contact Ethel at [warbinek@telus.net](mailto:warbinek@telus.net)**

## MARGARET (NEILY) MAINWARING

Margaret was born in Toronto and moved to Vancouver as a young child. She attended school in Cranbrook, BC and entered Vancouver General Hospital School of Nursing in 1930. Her first student residence was West House where she shared a five- person dormitory. After graduation in 1933 she worked at VGH and shared a room in a boarding house near the hospital- had a gas plate and a box outside the window for a refrigerator. At that time VGH paid the highest wages for graduate nurses in Canada - \$54/month + board and laundry. In 1935, she moved to Port Alice BC as jobs were at a premium during the Depression of the 1930s.

In 1941 she joined the Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps and after several delays arrived in Scotland March 1942. She nursed in military hospitals in England and then was sent to North Africa and Italy. She remembers being one of the first nurses to administer Penicillin – “It was thick, brown and injected every 3 hours.” At the end of the war, she returned to Vancouver and nursed in Hawaii, later moving to Wells BC (near Barkerville) where she worked as Matron of the 10-bed hospital. She married Gerry North, a widower with three young boys. A daughter, Moria, was born in 1951.

In 1957, the family moved to Vancouver and Margaret did some “special nursing” and worked at Pearson TB hospital for a while. Her husband, an accountant, and she became interested in long term care, so opened Park View in New Westminster and a year later, the Cyrpess Nursing home in Vancouver. They discovered many residents wanted private rooms, so opened Garden Manor in Ladner. Margaret was the charge nurse, assisted by a RN and aides. All three homes were licensed and they operated them until the mid 1970s. After Gerry died, Margaret moved to White Rock in 1976 and married her second husband - Mickey Mainwaring - who unfortunately died six months later.

Living independently in her apartment, Margaret leads an active life enjoying ballroom dancing, lawn and carpet bowling. She celebrated her 100th birthday with family and friends on February 5, 2011.



# EDITOR'S DESK

BY ETHEL WARBINEK



Our summer issue traditionally contains the Society's annual reports which provide information on our activities over the past year. As you can see, our directors and committees have been very busy and involved in a myriad of activities. We welcome Marjory Ralston as the new chair of the Archives Committee.

Our feature article - Preserving a Tiger's Treasures: Artifacts as a Research Tool By Young Suk Park, and Glennis Zilm, describes their illuminating journey working with the artifacts and memorabilia of Ruth Saunders. A significant outcome of this project is the importance of collaboration between countries to preserve and

collect history of nursing. I know you will enjoy reading this.

Our December 2010 newsletter received the prestigious newsletter award from the BC Historical Federation. Nan Martin reviewed the 4 newsletters published last year and selected the December one – an excellent choice as it won! Nan and Sheila Zerr attended the annual meeting of the Federation in Powell River – read their interesting account of this meeting.

Now that hockey is finally over and our beloved Canucks earn a well deserved rest -we still love them even though they did not win the Stanley Cup this year -our thoughts turn to summer. It is time for flip flops and a cool one on the patio. Our next issue will be out in the Fall so in the meantime enjoy your summer – I know I will.

OUR DIRECTORS  
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HAVE BEEN  
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WELCOME MARJORY  
RALSTON AS THE  
NEW CHAIR OF  
THE ARCHIVES  
COMMITTEE.

## NEWS

**OUR GUEST SPEAKER AT THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING WAS SARA TUNG, A 2009 SCHOLARSHIP WINNER.** Her topic, based on her UBC MSN major essay, was "Policy Development and Cultural Change in BC Residential Elder Care 1950-2005". The purpose of her study was to show how efforts to reform and improve care of the elderly in institutional settings have been ongoing. An historical review provides insight in not only what happened, but also what made change difficult. Current policy to generate change in nursing homes can build upon earlier efforts.

**A PRESENTATION BY DR. YOUNG SUK PARK AND GLENNIS ZILM "PRESERVING A TIGER'S TREASURES: ARTIFACTS AS A RESEARCH TOOL" WAS HELD AT THE UBC SCHOOL OF NURSING ON JUNE 10, 2011** The presentation reported on artifacts from the estate of Ruth Saunders, a Royal Jubilee Hospital School of Nursing graduate who served as a nurse missionary in Korea from 1955 to retirement in 1989. With the help of Dr. Young Suk Park, a "home" for these artifacts has been found at Wonju Christian Hospital in Wonju, Korea. Dr. Park is a Professor, Department of Nursing, Korea Open University, Seoul Korea, and is a visiting scholar on a one-year sabbatical at the University of BC School of Nursing. See full article on page 11



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*Newsletter Committee*

Barbara Bavinton, Beth Fitzpatrick, Naomi Miller,  
Ethel Warbinek, Lynne Esson & Sheila Zerr (co-chairs).

*The BC History of Nursing Society  
Newsletter is published 4 times per year. Submissions are  
welcome. Deadline for the Fall Issue is Sept 30, 2011.  
Please send submissions to:  
Beth Fitzpatrick: [bethfitz32@shaw.ca](mailto:bethfitz32@shaw.ca)*

# BC HISTORICAL FEDERATION NEWSLETTER AWARD

We are so proud to be the recipient of the 2010 BCHF newsletter award. This was a great honour as our December 2010 newsletter was chosen from the 130 organizations and members. Special thanks to Beth Fitzpatrick, editor, and to Anita Petersen for her design. The award was presented by Barry Gough, BCHF 2nd vice president, who praised the historical quality of our newsletter. Nan Martin and Sheila Zerr attended the meeting and wrote the following.

We enjoyed the 2011 BC Historical Federation (BCHF) AGM and Conference in Powell River May 5-8. The conference was held in the Historic Dwight Hall - a charming venue. Conference participants enjoyed a tour of Texada Island and a glimpse into the island's fascinating history and geology. A bus tour of the Powell River area revealed the history of a pulp and paper town site where all services and housing were provided by the company owners. Early health care was provided by the company and the tour included a look at the early hospital site and a visit to the restored home of Dr. Henderson, Powell River's first doctor. Each conference package included a book by Emma Levez *People of the White City: Stories from the Powell River Mill* and many other historical treasures from the area. Nan Martin presented our BC History of Nursing Society report giving a comprehensive picture of our accomplishments in 2010. The highlight of the conference came at the banquet and awards ceremony when Nan accepted the 2010 award for the best newsletter. We received a beautiful certificate and cheque on behalf of our society for Best Newsletter Award.

Thank you to the Powell River Historical Museum and Archives for hosting a most enjoyable conference. The catering by local chef David Bowes was superb.

Thanks to all who sent congratulations for this honour – we really appreciate your support. *Photo from: Welwoods*



# B.C. HISTORY OF NURSING SOCIETY 2010 ANNUAL REPORTS

*The following reports were presented at the Annual Meeting – April 8, 2010*

## 01. President's Report



The BC History of Nursing Society has continued to carry out the purposes outlined in the Constitution and Goals determined for the year. Despite limited financial and human resources the group members were able to:

- Provide a forum for those interested in the history of nursing in BC to exchange ideas and information through regular meetings, the website, newsletters, attendance at public events and special luncheons with guest speakers
- Stimulate interest in the history of nursing in BC through displays at the CRNBC, UBC, membership promotion, oral histories/ biographies, Pages of History, fund raising.
- Promote study and research into the history of nursing through Scholarships.
- Preserve historical materials in the Archive holdings and nominations to the Memorial Books.
- Encourage the teaching of nursing history in educational programs.

The society executive and committee chairs continued to meet at the CRNBC building on a regular basis and have been pleased to welcome guests to the meetings.

Julie Lapinsky became the Membership Chair and has quickly learned the various aspects of this role.

The Society was delighted to present an Honorary Life Membership to Naomi Miller in May at a reception held in the VGH School of Nursing Alumnae Association space at VGH.

The Executive accepted Don Ransom's resignation as Chair of the Archives Committee with regret and thanks him for carrying out this role since July, 2008.

Sincere appreciation is extended to the talented and dedicated members who have devoted many hours to accomplishing the work of the society. As with many groups, the amount of work is limited by the financial and human resources available. However, The challenge of preserving nursing history in BC is still important

## 02. Treasurer's Report **BY: SHEILA OXHOLM, TREASURER**



- The 2010 Annual Report, fee and list of directors was forwarded to the Ministry of Finance, Victoria
- Information was filed with Canada Revenue Agency to demonstrate compliance with the transfer of Archival Development Funds to the B.C. History of Nursing Society.
- The budget was balanced in 2010. The December 31, 2010 bank account of \$6,067 included \$4,913 from a GIC cashed in December 2009 to be used if needed for the webpage.
- Pages of History payments will now be considered as donations and an income tax receipt will be issued.
- The 2010 audit was completed by Margaret Boyes and Cheryl Entwistle – thanks to both.
- The GIC's will be combined under the B.C. History of Nursing Society. 33% of the annual interest could be applied to scholarships and 67% to archival activities.



## 03. Archives **BY MARJORY RALSTON, CHAIR**

*MEMBERS: Marjory Ralston (Chair) Nan Martin, Lydia Wytenboek, Jennifer Stephens  
Archivist: Michelle Curran*

- The Vera McIvor fond was completed by the archivist. Bernie Ratsoy's archival materials were pre sorted by the committee, with Ethel Warbinek's help, ready for the archivist to create a fond.
- The Newsletters from 1990 until 2006 have been retrieved and sorted ready for the archivist to digitize them this Summer.
- Forms: Deed of Gift, Accession, Outgoing Loans, and Record of Transfer were revised and updated.
- A file cabinet was cleared ready for hard copies of all Newsletters and other HON documents.

## 04. Biographical **BY: ETHEL WARBINEK, CHAIR**

*MEMBERS: Linda Lidster, Ethel Warbinek (Chair)*



During the past year 12 new files were added and 10 additions to existing files were copied and placed in the CRNBC Library. Originals were filed in the HoN office at UBC. A list of biographical files can be viewed on our web site, kept current by our archivist Michelle Curran, and can also be viewed on the CRNBC library web site. Biographies can be read at the CRNBC Library, but not borrowed. Special thanks to Linda Lidster for her valuable assistance in photocopying and to Joan Andrews and her staff at CRNBC.

## 05. Oral History **BY: ETHEL WARBINEK**

*MEMBERS: Carol Harrison, Marjorie Ralston, Sheila Zerr, Ethel Warbinek*

- Interviews completed since April 2010 and CD's added to the collection in the CRNBC library: Nan Martin, June Newton & Ethel Wait.
- Two cassette tapes of interviews of Margaret (Duncan) Jensen by Beth McCann in 1981 were found in our office at UBC and have been copied to CD's.
- Referrals have been slow again this past year. Selected cassette tapes are being copied to CD's and this process and summarizing takes time.
- Carol Harrison continues her work in Terrace. Marjorie Ralston has kindly assisted with summarizing CD's.
- Interviews scheduled for 2011: Kathy Murphy.
- Thank you to committee members for your time and interest. We are always looking for help with interviews, so please contact me if you are interested in this very rewarding project. at warbinek@telus.net

## 06. Newsletter **BY: LYNNE ESSON & SHEILA ZERR**



**Meetings:** At the call of the chairperson. Meetings were held 4 times this year.

**Activities:** Four issues of the newsletter were published. All were guided by Anita Petersen's design and graphics. It was difficult to choose an issue to submit to the B.C. Historical Federation for their newsletter award contest (as all were outstanding). Nan Martin assisted with the selection and chose the winter issue edited by Beth Fitzpatrick. We thank Julie Lapinsky for her assistance with labels.

**Editors for 2011:** Spring- Sheila Zerr, Summer- Ethel Warbinek, Fall- Lynne Esson. Winter - Beth Fitzpatrick

**Future Plans:** We continue to work on the archival holdings and digitalization project. We will work with Chris Hives, University Archivist, to place our newsletters in the UBC collection.



## 07. Pages of History **BY: SHEILA J. RANKIN ZERR, CHAIR**

*MEMBERS: Sheila Zerr (chair) Lenore Radom, Sandra Broad*

**Funds:** Funds raised go to the BC History of Nursing Society

**Pages to date:** There are 84 pages of history in three sets of display albums. Two sets are used at History of Nursing Society display sites and one is on display in the CRNBC library.

**On Going project:** We plan to update the pages project by placing future pages on our web site. A hard copy will be kept in an album held by Sheila but no copies will be added to the display albums as they will appear on the web site. The donation will increase to \$50. Here is the description of the project that will appear on our web site.

We ask that you give a donation to the BC History of Nursing Society to cover expenses to develop the page of history and to ensure that we can preserve and display your page in the future. A donation of \$50 will receive a receipt for tax purposes. The display albums are housed in the Helen Randal Library of the College of Registered Nurses of British Columbia (CRNBC). Simply follow the steps found on this web site and please sign the consent form to allow us to display your page of history on our web site. [www.bcnursinghistory.ca](http://www.bcnursinghistory.ca) click on donations then pages of history.

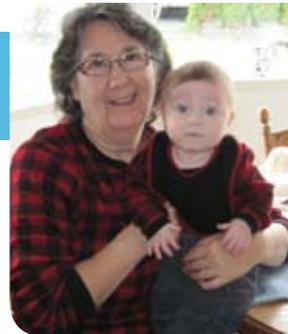


## 08. Scholarship **BY: KATHY MURPHY, CHAIR**

*The Scholarship Committee reviewed fewer applications for funding in 2010 and was pleased to award Scholarships to: Helen Vandenberg whose proposed study was her dissertation project for her Doctorate in Nursing. The project was titled "The History of Japanese, Chinese and East Indian Health Care and Services in BC from 1880-1920." Christine Switzer who collected and prepared historic nursing materials which tracked the life of her great grandmother, Mary Isabel MacDonald (1891-1970).*

## 09. Program **BY: LENORE RADOM**

- **MAY 2010:** Several members participated in nursing week activities
- **JUNE 2010:** A delightful tea honouring Naomi Miller with an "Honourary Life Time Membership" award was hosted by Kathy Murphy at the VGH Alumnae where we enjoyed the archive collections.
- **NOV 2010:** Successful Fall luncheon at Vancouver Lawn Tennis Club with 40 registered guests and speaker Barb Bavinton who gave a very interesting presentation on the first 6 Navy Nurses for BC on the West Coast during WW1.
- **MARCH 2011:** Fundraising lunch and book launch for Karen Abbott & Sharon Simpson from Kamloops Cariboo College, was well attended with 40 registered guests - 37 attended. Don Ransom, retiring archives chair, was recognized and thanked.
- Hope to have more success this next year in securing students, who have received scholarships, to report at future meetings.



## 10. Note Cards **BY: GLENNIS ZILM**

- Cards were given to executive members to use as promotion and to reduce the inventory. Approximately 120 free packages were given away in 2010.
- 2010 Sales: \$535.19
- Postage Costs: \$ 45.03. Our rates do not cover the mailing costs.
- Number of cards on hand are worth approximately \$ 4,000.00

*Thank you Glennis for faithfully looking after the Note Cards and promoting sales at every opportunity.*

## 11. Membership **BY: JULIE MARIE LAPINSKY**



As of April 10 2011, membership figures are: \*DENOTES both current and now 'past due' members for 2010 year (along with some 'full members' who have not paid since mid-2009).

- |                     |     |                      |     |
|---------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|
| • Honorary Members: | 6   | • Affiliate Members: | 20* |
| • Full Members:     | 82* | • Student Members:   | 69* |

Emails sent to all Affiliate and Full members needing to 'renew' as of March 25th, 2011. I shall be 'removing people' from the lists as of JULY 1, 2011 as by then I am hoping all who wish to renew will have renewed by this date.

## 12. Nominations **BY: MARJORY RALSTON**



The following Directors were elected for a one-year tem ending after Annual General Meeting in 2012

<b>President</b>	<i>Kathy Murphy</i>	<b>Vice President</b>	<i>Ethel Warbinek</i>
<b>Secretary</b>	<i>Lynne Esson</i>	<b>Treasurer</b>	<i>Sheila Oxholm</i>
<b>Membership</b>	<i>Julie Lapinsky</i>	<b>Member-at-Large</b>	<i>Nan Martin</i>

## 13. Parks Canada Nomination **BY: NAN MARTIN**



- **Ethel Johns (1879 - 1968)** Designated a National Historic Person of Canada. Planning is underway for the placement of a commemorative plaque on the UBC Grounds.
- **Laura Holland (1883 - 1956)** Board discussion but no decision to date.
- **Canada's Military Nurses as a national historic event.** Nominated August 2010 by Canadian Association for the History of Nursing with the support of BCHON. Glennis Zilm wrote the proposal on behalf of CAHN and BCHON.

## 14. Website **BY: LENORE RADOM, CHAIR**

- *Members: Lenore Radom (chair) Sheila Zerr, Beth Fitzpatrick, Glennis Zilm, Marjory Ralston. Don Ransom (retired)*
- It has been another year with the preoccupation of working with the webmaster. The Domain name is paid to 2016. Our relationship with Biz ala carte was completed Dec 31, 2010 and we have a new contract with Technica Systems as our new Webmasters . It will be reassessed Nov 31, '11. The monthly hosting fee is paid to Dec '11. The website has been tidied up and additions made including fonds added by our archivist, Michele Currans. We are desperately working to get everything onto the website by the end of May by which time we will be able to maintain and make additions ourselves with the new webmasters responsible for back end management.
- A request was made through HoN member Frank Gillespie to BCNU for a donation and \$100 was received and we thank them for this. The website and salary for the archivist are our largest expenses.

## NEW ARCHIVIST

We are pleased to announce the appointment of our new Archivist, Francis Mansbridge, who will commence work the last week of June. Francis has an impressive work experience. He received a PhD in English at the University of Ottawa and taught English for many years at the college level. After studying in the Archival programme at UBC, he was appointed archivist for North Vancouver from 1994-2006. He now does contract work and has written three books: Vancouver Then and Now, Hollyburn: The Mountain and the City, and Launching History based on the history of the Burrard Dry Dock. It won the BC Lieutenant-Governor's award for history in 2002. His newest book about the history of West Vancouver will be launched on Sept.15.

## WEB SITE TO VISIT: [www.medscape.com/nurses](http://www.medscape.com/nurses)

This site is free but you must register. Interesting item on "What Happened to the Cap?"

# 15. Displays BY: CHERYL ENTWISTLE

*Members: Cheryl Entwistle, Margaret Saunders*

## **Members continue to look after the two displays at CRNBC.**

### *1. Boardroom Display Case featured the following:*

- Tribute to Edith Adman (Bates)
- Nursing Competencies of the Past is an interesting collection of nursing equipment CRNBC Library
- Military Nursing
- "Lest We Forget"
- Tribute to June Newton
- Tribute to Edith Bates

### *2. University of British Columbia School of Nursing Displays*

Glennis Zilm, with assistance from Ethel Warbinek, Sheila Zerr, and others, continues to look after the two displays at the UBC School of Nursing. During 2010, the displays in the Hall Case featured: the history of blood pressure equipment used by nurses; UBC Alumnus Edith ("Toddy") Tisdall Hatfield; and a "Lest We Forget" display (with many items donated by Nina Rumen) for Remembrance Day and November. Two separate displays in the Learning Centre discussed how changes in technology affect nursing equipment (such as bed pans and bandage rollers). The mannequin in the Learning Resource Centre was dressed in a number of costumes throughout the year.

## **The current displays at UBC School of Nursing**

1. Display Case: "Nursing Collectibles" display with many small collectibles from Glennis Zilm's collection
2. Learning Centre: "Military Nursing during the Northwest Campaign 1885" (featuring materials on Mrs. Miller, Canada's first military nurse. The mannequin is dressed in a blue Mrs. Miller replica costume

## **DISPLAYS UPON REQUEST:**

- Women's History Fair - April 10, 2010 at the Local Public Library Atrium.
- BCNU Conference May 5 and 6th , 2010
- Royal Columbia Hospital May 12, 2010
- BCNU Day – June 11, 2010 at Vancouver General Hospital



*Namoi Miller being congratulated by Kathy Ebbehoj*

# MEMBER NEWS

**THE 2011 ALLEMANG SCHOLARSHIP** was awarded to two doctoral students this year Michelle Filice and HoN student member Helen Vanderberg. Helen is a doctoral student at the University of British Columbia, and is studying the organization of health care for populations from Japan, China and India during 1880- 1920 in British Columbia supervised by Dr. Geertje Boschma.

**CHARLENE RONQUILLO, A RECIPIENT OF OUR OF HON SCHOLARSHIPS IS NOW THE NURSE RESEARCH FACILITATOR (NRF) FOR FRASER HEALTH.** Her history of nursing research at UBC involved oral histories of Filipino Nurse Migrants in Western Canada. Her new job involves promoting research among point-of-care nurses as well as making connections between academic and research groups. She is hoping to work together with the Society with projects from Fraser Health.

**2011 UBC NURSING ALUMNI AWARD OF DISTINCTION WAS PRESENTED TO HON MEMBER NAOMI MILLER** at the Annual Nursing Alumni Luncheon at Green College on May 28, 2011. Congratulations Naomi. She was featured in our July 2010 newsletter.

# PRESERVING A TIGER'S TREASURES: ARTIFACTS AS A RESEARCH TOOL

BY YOUNG SUK PARK, RN, PHD,  
AND GLENNIS ZILM, BSN, MA



In 2009, the BC History of Nursing Society was asked if it would take a collection of awards and honors, most written only in Korean. The collection of more than five large boxes containing awards, books, documents, and photographs was from the estate of Ruth Saunders, RN. Saunders had graduated in nursing in BC, but spent her career as a missionary nurse in Korea.

Her artifacts and memorabilia were now the property of her niece, Pat Cross of Campbell River. Mrs. Cross works as a volunteer with the local archives, and thought these artifacts would be significant to nursing historians. The Executive of the BC History of Nursing Society, based on the initial information, decided

the Society could not take these artifacts. The collection was huge and the Society has little storage or display space. Furthermore, Saunders had not made her contributions to nursing in BC. However, the family was given some suggestions about approaching other archives.

A year later, Mrs. Cross once again got in touch with the History of Nursing Society; she had tried all the suggested venues, but no one was interested. However, at the suggestion of the Royal Jubilee Hospital Nurses Alumnae archivist, she had taken photographs of the awards items. Glennis Zilm volunteered to look at the 75 photographs. Almost immediately, it became obvious that this unique collection would be valuable to nurse researchers, both nationally and internationally. Ruth Saunders had made significant and important contributions in Korea and probably should be better known in Canada as well. Almost all of the awards were in Korean script, and family members had no idea what the awards represented. There also were no written details of Saunders' life, and little documentation to support the huge collection.

## Identifying the Materials

Zilm began to look for someone to identify or translate the script, and through the University of BC School of Nursing, she found Dr. Young Suk Park, a visiting scholar who is a professor of nursing at the Korean Open University in Seoul and who was in Canada on sabbatical to take part in an international research



project. Dr. Park has associations with the Korean Nurses Association, Yonsei University in Seoul, and Wonju Christian Union Hospital in Wonju. She agreed to help.

Because it was difficult to read the inscriptions from the photographs, Pat and Mike Cross brought the five large boxes from Campbell River to White Rock. Dr. Park and her husband, the Crosses, and Zilm met to discuss the materials. Dr. Park was impressed with the quality of the awards and, at that meeting, tentatively suggested approaching the agencies in Korea to see if one might be interested. Wonju Christian Hospital was, indeed, eager to take the materials! The Administrator there was curious to know more about the materials and about contributions made by Saunders, who had been administrator there until her retirement in 1989. They did not have many records about her work.

However, it was necessary to identify the objects and documents, and make a record about Saunders. Once Zilm began to appreciate the significance of this nurse, she suggested to the BC History of Nursing Society that its Archives should establish a biographical file or fonds on Saunders. As archival and museum collections should be kept together, it was decided to send all original materials to Wonju Hospital. Zilm would make copies of enough materials for the BC History of Nursing Society to provide nursing and history researchers in North America with basic information, and initiate links to the Wonju Hospital collection and other related archives.

In consultation with the family, selected documents were copied and a photographic record made of items shipped to Korea. A few items of family significance (such as early family photographs and World War II medals) were returned to the family; photographs of these were made for Wonju Hospital and the BC History of Nursing Society Archives.

## Developing a Biographical Record

More importantly, working from the artifacts and information from family and a variety of secondary sources, a time line and full notes were made to give an overview of the life of this remarkable nurse who made such extraordinary contributions to health care in Korea. Ruth Saunders was born in 1923 in Alberta, but grew up in BC. After high school, she joined a Canadian Wom-

en's Army Corps Military Band and served overseas. On her return, she used her military benefits to support her entry into the School of Nursing at Royal Jubilee Hospital in Victoria. Following graduation in 1950, her first job was in Cold Lake, Alberta. She attended the United Church of Canada Missionary Deaconess School, then worked at the Church's Home Mission Hospital in Manning, Alberta, as general duty nurse and administrator. She also took courses at Yale to begin to learn the Korean language.

In 1955, after the end of the Korean War, Saunders was sent as a public health nurse for the UCC Mission to Pusan (now spelled Busan), a hilly province with a largely rural population in the southern part of South Korea. There, she first worked in rural clinics and, with one Korean nurse assistant, ran Well Baby Clinics where the two looked after some 1,000 children a week.

During this time she also was called to set up a 300-bed emergency hospital in Pusan to care for patients from an encephalitis epidemic. She described this work in a short article that was included in a UCC magazine; this journal was among her artifacts. In the article, she wrote that, fortunately, they did not admit that many patients at any one time. But they did reduce the death rate among the infected from 35% to 22% and significantly reduced complications.

Saunders, along with other UCC medical missionaries, also was also involved with health care for a leper colony in a village some 90 miles from Wonju.

Eventually, Saunders was drawn into a plan, originally organized by the USA Methodist Ministries, to establish a hospital in Wonju. The United Church of Canada mainly provided rural clinics, but eventually agreed to support the hospital. When the 50-bed Wonju Christian Union Hospital opened in 1959, Saunders was its first nursing administrator. In captions for photos of herself in her photo albums, she frequently referred to herself as a Tiger meaning she tried to be tough with staff and students, much in the sense of a paper tiger that seems fierce, but is not. She remained in this position at the growing Hospital until she retired in 1989. She not only was administrator, but also established a School of Nursing and taught in it, and later transferred the School to university settings and taught there, too. The Hospital continued to run rural clinics, and Saunders herself often accompanied the team of staff and students to these.

Saunders continued her studies in Korea, obtaining a Bachelor of Social Work from Mon Joo [Wonju] College, Kangwon, in 1968. In 1982, she graduated from Yonsei University, Seoul, with a Masters of Nursing; a copy of her thesis, written in Korean, was part of the collection.

Many more awards and honors were given to her throughout her stay, and when she was nearing retirement, special ceremonies were held and national, provincial, and local tributes poured in. A television news documentary, in Korean language of course, and video cassettes of those ceremonies are among the materials sent to Wonju.

Saunders retired and returned to Canada, setting up a home in Campbell River near her sister. In 1991, the UCC British Columbia Conference presented her with a Certificate of Recognition for her 37 years of service.

## Conclusions

It has been an illuminating journey to work with the artifacts and memorabilia of Ruth Saunders; we learned many things. Perhaps the most important is to recognize just how nursing must integrate use of artifacts and museum items into research and teaching. And this, of course, raises many further questions: only a few nursing archives exist in Canada and most are not willing to take artifacts. But from artifacts and memorabilia that would not normally be part of an archives, nurse researchers can gain much valuable data.

Through this project, we also learned about collaboration needed between countries to preserve and collect history of nursing. This is essential if nursing is to develop a true international understanding of nursing and health care. Perhaps this small project will lead to more Canada-Korea exchanges.

This project reveals that research is needed on Canadian nursing missionaries who went to Korea. Such work could be done similar to the excellent data collected by Dr. Sonya Grypma and Dr. Janet Beaton about Canadian nurse missionaries in China. It is hoped that development of a useful biographical file or fonds on Saunders for the BC History of Nursing Society Archives will help stimulate interest in this area. It also can ensure that there are links with the United Church of Canada Archives in Toronto and with the Royal Jubilee Hospital Nursing Alumnae Archives in Victoria.

As well, Zilm plans to try to make Saunders and her accomplishments better known in Canada. For one thing, she believes that Saunders should be nominated for inclusion in the Canadian Nurses Association Memorial Book at CNA House in Ottawa. She has already begun work on this project.

Dr. Park, too, has been stimulated by this history of nursing research. Although her primary research efforts will continue to focus on Community Mental Health Nursing, Adolescent Health, and Health for Life, she will likely become more involved with the faculty who teach history of nursing at the Korea Open University and with international exchanges.

Dr. Young Suk Park is Professor, Department of Nursing, Korea National Open University, Seoul, Korea. Glennis Zilm is an honorary professor in the UBC School of Nursing and a long-time member of the BC History of Nursing Society.

## References

*Information in this article is based on the primary source materials (mainly artifacts) loaned to the BC History of Nursing Society and then given by the family to Wonju Christian Hospital. Translation and information about the Korean artifacts was done by Dr. Young Suk Park, with assistance from Dr. Michael Yoon. As well, basic information is from the BC History of Nursing Society's Biographical Form on Ruth Saunders completed by Pat Cross (her niece and executor of her estate) and on interviews and sent email queries to Pat Cross.*

*A Time Line with references to this primary data and reference notes to secondary sources used for this article are available in the Ruth Saunders files – BC History of Nursing Society Archives.*



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