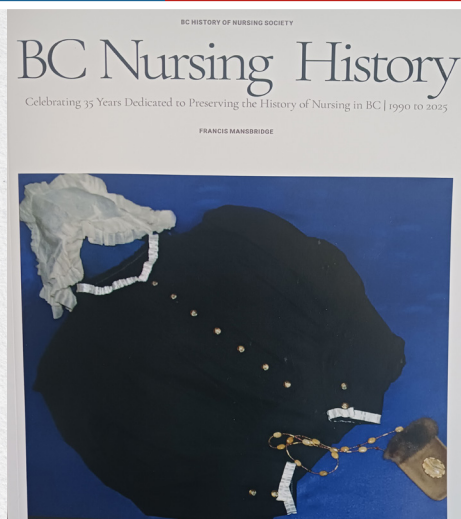




BC History of Nursing Society

NEWSLETTER

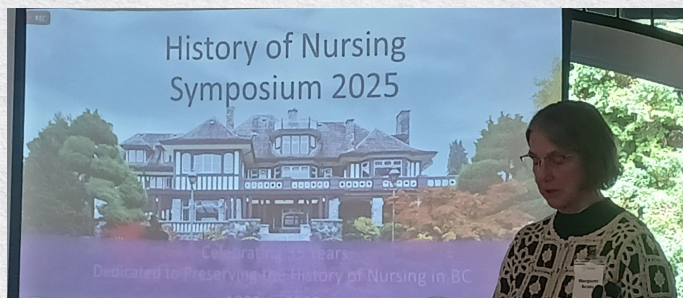
SPRING 2025
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ISSUE 1



BCHNS 2025 SYMPOSIUM

Opening Remarks from Geertje Boschma

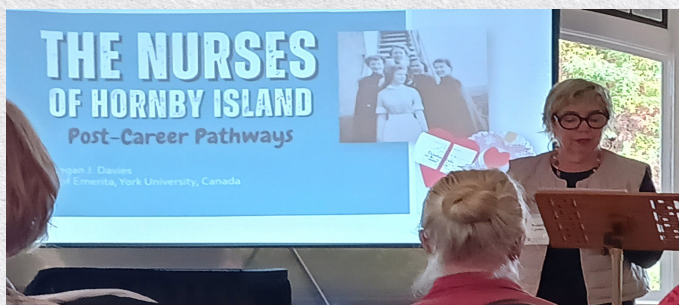
Thirty people attended the B.C. History of Nursing Symposium 2025 in person with an additional twenty people online from around the world. The symposium took place on a beautiful spring day in April at the Cecil Green Park House on the UBC campus. Nan Martin reflected on 'how lovely the event was, in a beautiful setting with just the right number of people so we could talk with everyone'. Nan told us she had read Francis Mansbridge's book that evening & thought it was "wonderful". Our guest speaker, Megan Davies' presentation explored the work of a group of nurses pivotal to the establishment of an early home support society on BC's Hornby Island in the late 1970s.



[photo: Margaret Scaia, facilitated the panel discussion "Sharing Experiences of Preserving our History".]

The Hornby Island nurses - many of them retirees - served as volunteer members of the society's board, transcending their professional practice by engaging with a new provincial "social health" program, sometimes as health activists representing elders from their remote rural community. Yet they remained definitively nurses. Themes of nursing leadership, nursing identity, nursing practices of organization and management and shared nursing knowledge and ways of seeing shaped their work, and also this study.

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[photo: Megan Davies' presentation]

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newsletter committee

Frances Affleck, Angela Long and Lenore Radom.
The BC History of Nursing Society Newsletter is published 2 times per year.

SUBMISSIONS ARE WELCOME.

Deadline for the Fall Issue is September 5, 2025.
Please send submissions to: biomedic@dccnet.com



Archival Corner

Frances Ellen Benedict (1902-1997)

Just over 100 years ago Frances Ellen Benedict (1902-1997) graduated from UBC in 1923 with a B.A. She taught at various schools in BC, also pursuing graduate studies. When her mother died, she studied at St. Paul's Hospital, achieving the highest marks in the provincial nursing examinations. She stayed on at St. Paul's as a teacher, later becoming Educational Director.

After nine years she left for nursing positions in Montreal and later Manitoba before returning to British Columbia, where she joined the teaching staff at the Royal Columbian School of Nursing. Here she became Educational Director until her retirement. Students and others remember her for her kindness and understanding.

An oral history with Frances is one the 210 interviews you will find on the BCHNS Website
<https://bcnursinghistory.ca/oral-histories-full-list/>



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Geertje Boschma

Hello Everyone!

Welcome to springtime and to a special year for our organization. This year marks the 35th year of the BCHNS. An occasion for celebration, and an opportunity to acknowledge the important work of our founding members. They now 35 years ago, envisioned and founded a professional practice interest group on BC nursing history, under the umbrella of the Registered Nurses Association of BC (RNABC). In 2008, this group continued as the BC History of Nursing Society, when the RNABC changed into the College of RNs of BC (CRNBC), and interest groups discontinued. Just recently, at the Nursing History Symposium on April 14, we celebrated the 35th anniversary milestone of the organization.

Megan Davies delivered a fantastic keynote presentation on The Nurses of Hornby Island, followed by a Panel about the BCHNS' contributions to nursing history, presented by Margaret Scaia, Francis Mansbridge, Nan Martin, Lenore Radom and Anita Petersen. We also presented the booklet on the history of the BCHNS, BC Nursing History, written by Francis Mansbridge for the occasion.

This newsletter includes photographs with descriptions of the event with more to follow on our blog and renewed website. A recording of the Symposium presentations will become available in the UBC Library's Open Collection. Once the recording is in the library system, we will share the link with you.

Another milestone has been the renewal of our website. We truly acknowledge the valuable work of Lenore Radom, Beth Fitzpatrick and Margaret Scaia in collaboration with Anita Petersen on the website renewal. The website is the key communication tool for our organization and the public at large. It features BCHNS' overall goal, that is, to discover, disseminate and preserve nursing history.

We also thank the other members of the Board of Directors for their continued leadership, and last but not least, thank you all, our members and student members, who constitute the BCHNS. We held several online meetings and presentations and engaged in lively conversation. Great you were able to join. Sadly, during the course of the year, we lost several of our longstanding members who have passed away, Marjory Ralston, Carol Harrison, and Cheryl Entwistle. We keep them in our memory, and acknowledge their important contributions to the organization. A special tribute to them is also on our website.

We held the annual general meeting on April 15 via zoom. The full report on the AGM will be included in our summer bulletin, which you will receive in a couple of months. In June, the board and committee members will hold a final meeting to plan for next year's activities. We will start next fall with an open meeting and presentation for everyone to join on September 16, the details of which will follow later. Next fall we also anticipate the move into the new building along with the UBC School of Nursing, likely sometime later in the fall. The in-kind support of the SON will continue, offering space to meet and to store the artifact collection. I wish you happy reading of the newsletter, and, if you have not already done so, have a look at our renewed website, which keeps us up to date on nursing history resources and events.

Respectfully,





FOUNDING MEMBERS



[photo: Bev Du Ga First President]



[photo: Helen Shore Second President]



[photo: Sheila Zerr]



[photo: Irene Goldstone]



[photo: Don Ramson]



[photo: Glennis Zilm]



[photo: Nina Rumen]



[photo: Ethel Warbineck]



[photo: Brenda Flynn]



[photo: Mary Nicol]



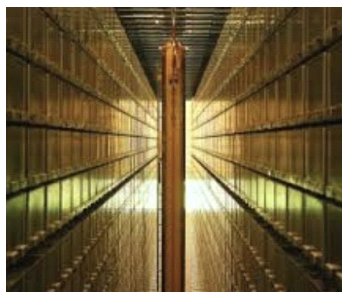
[photo: Nora White]

Lenore Radom (left), Vice President & Website Chair (with Ani-ta Petersen Website Designer joining us via zoom) are previous winners of the 2017, BC Best Website Award. Their presentation walked the audience through the rebuilt BCHNS website, highlighting specific aspects of its functionality & accessibility. The final product ensures the new website contains current up-to-date information i.e. forms, titles, & importantly preserves historical details.



[photo: Margaret Scaia, facilitated the panel discussion "Sharing Experiences of Preserving our History".]

Nan Martin (middle), Chair of the Archives Committee 2016 to 2024. The Vintage Nursing Cap (Lenore is holding) & carrying case, was purchased in 2016 at a garage sale in Sicamous, BC. Donated to BCHNS Archives in September 2022 by T.R. Stinton. Nan described 'another memorable highlight was receiving a donation of a nursing cap and carrying case which looked odd and more like a maid's cap. After much research and help from my colleagues, I was led to a blog site - oldfoolr - and, lo and behold, on the cupcake page, there was a picture of an identical cap. It shows that it was from the Mack School of Nursing,



[photo: (left) Archival Storage system at the Rare Books and Special Collections, UBC. (right) Artifact Collection BCHNS at the UBC SON]

St. Catherine's General and Marine Hospital, Niagara, Ontario - the first Nightingale hospital in Canada. - 1874' Margaret Scaia (standing) followed describing how the BCHNS fonds which include information on individual nurses, nursing groups, the UBC School of Nursing, biographical files, oral histories, photographs, and reference material. Are now housed in the University of British Columbia Library, Rare Books & Special Collections. The archives can be accessed in the UBC Archives reading room.



[photo: Nan Martin & Linda Quiney at the Archive Corner display.]

Francis Mansbridge (right) is the author of eight books on local history. Over the past twenty years, he has engaged in various archival & writing projects, including a rewarding decade as the archivist for the History of Nursing Society. Francis discussed his most recent experience in writing BC Nursing History: Celebrating 35 years Dedicated to Preserving the History of Nursing in BC | 1990-2025.



[photo: (left) Marg Gorrie & Lenore Radom in the Conservatory. (right) Linda Quiney & Irene Goldstone catching up.]

Beth Fitzpatrick (online) from Connecticut commented "how impressed she was of the panel & in particular how Francis Mansbridge pulled out stories & contributions of some of our members who are no longer with us".

Wendy Trigg reported she had 'thoroughly enjoyed the day - from the speakers to the food'. (commenting) 'It would be lovely to get together every year'. Geertje concurred, seeing this as future goal to which there were many positive nods.



[photo: (left) In the Library perusing the many historical books that were available to take home. (right) Mohadeseh Saki & Amanda Payne (students) staffing the registration desk.]

PAGES OF HISTORY

In Honour of Kathleen Viola Raisbeck October 1929 – July 2024 ***Sponsored by Perioperative Nurses Association of BC***



[photo of Kathleen Viola]

Kathleen [Kay] was born in Hanna, Alberta and was the eldest of 5 children. She was raised on a farm just east of Drumheller until the family moved to Craigmyle.

At the age of 18 Kay made her way to BC to pursue a career in Nursing. She began her training at Essondale Nursing School where she graduated as a Psychiatric Nurse. Kay then moved to Vancouver General Hospital School of Nursing from where she graduated as a Register Nurse in 1954. After a few months working at the Calgary General Hospital, Kay then returned to Vancouver General Hospital [VGH] and began her extensive career there retiring in 1983.

In 1963 Kay was awarded a Diploma in Administration of Hospital Nursing Units at Univer-

sity of BC's Autumn Congregation, and became Charge nurse in the Eye & ENT department. Before retiring Kay was appointed Supervisor for Scheduling working alongside the anaesthesiologists, and for Equipment and Supplies in the Operating Rooms at VGH. During this time, she was elected 8TH President of the BC Operating Room Nurses group [now PNABC], a position in which she served from 1980 to 1982.

Following retirement Kay expanded her volunteering to include a variety of roles at VanDusen Gardens including as a guide, a volunteer in the membership department, and assisting with the Christmas lights. She also assisted with the running of the VGH School of Nursing Alumnae Association where she became a life member. Kay was an exceptional nurse and pillar of the profession. She was also a great supporter and champion for the BC Operating Room Nurses Group and VanDusen Gardens.

Member News

Passings

The past few months have seen the passing of three of our long-time members. Each contributed immensely and uniquely to preserving our history.



Marjory Ralston was an active member in the BCHNS in past years and held a position with the BCHNS Archives. Marjory passed away just short of her 98th birthday!

Carol Harrison, a long-time member from Terrace, BC, has passed from her battle with cancer. Carol donated her Public Health uniforms to the BCHNS archives which we greatly appreciated. We used them in our "Preserving Nurses Cultural History Costume Parade" which is on the website, under Online Exhibits.

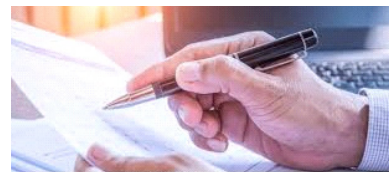
Cheryl Entwistle a few short months after the passing of her life partner. Cheryl was a good friend to many of us within the BC History of Nursing community. We appreciated her enthusiasm for wearing costumes and setting up displays at our nursing events. A true, thoughtful, kind friend and advocate for Nursing.

We have also sent condolences to Beth Fitzpatrick who has recently lost her husband of 52 years.



September 16th at 4pm Guest Speaker

Catherine A. Floe will share with us her new biography which focuses on the life of her mother, born Mary Brigid Power and nicknamed "Lil" (1912–1993). In telling Lil's story; Ever a Nurse also touches on nurses' training in the 1930s and the early treatment of infectious diseases, and it documents one Irish Catholic family's post-war immigration to Canada. After moving to Vancouver in 1957, Lil Sheehan resumed her long-suspended nursing career, with sterling success—as a private nurse. Her expert professional skills, caring manner, and charming personality made her much in demand by Vancouver's elite established families.



Articles, news, and ideas for items to be included in the Fall 2025 issue should be sent by September 5th to Frances Affleck: biomedic@dccnet.com

PUBLISHED TWO TIMES A YEAR

Thank you to all who contributed to this issue of the BCHNS newsletter

BC History of Nursing Society

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Special thanks to all who contributed to this issue of the BCHNS newsletter