

AAHN BULLETIN

*American Association for the
History of Nursing*

FALL 2014

NO. 110

IN THIS ISSUE

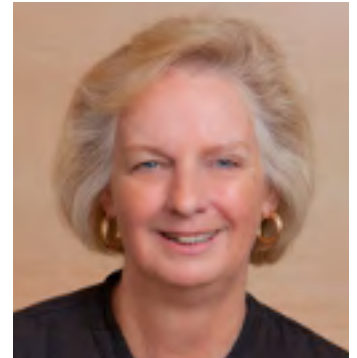
President's Message Fall 2014	1
"Talking History" Forum November 12, 2014	3
31st Annual Conference — A Recap!	4
Dr. Elaine S. Marshall Receives 2014 President's Award	5
Memories of the Conference	6
Briana Ralston, 2013 AAHN Grant Winner shares her work.....	8
Looking ahead to the 2015 conference!.....	9
Member News.....	11
From the Editor's Desk...	11
Important Update to your AAHN Membership.....	12
Research Connection Corner	13

President's Message Fall 2014

I begin by declaring the 31st AAHN Annual Research Conference, co-sponsored with the University Of Connecticut School Of Nursing, the "Best Conference Ever!" Yes, I know declaring each conference the best ever is a firm AAHN tradition—but that does not take away from the fact that UCONN really did plan and execute the best conference ever. From the superb papers and posters, to insightful scholarly discussions, to great networking opportunities, to good food and socializing, the UCONN conference was one to remember.

Thanks for such an exceptional conference go to LAC Co-Chairs Jennifer Telford and Brigid Lusk. In particular, Jennifer, as on-site LAC Chair, guaranteed that all went smoothly and professionally and held to the high standards of both the UCONN School of Nursing and the AAHN. The LAC committee, including Barbara Slater, Joyce McSweeney, Avery Krueger Rondeau, Lisa-Marie Griffiths, Valori Banfi, Carol Daisy, Mary Gibson, Rusty Lusk, Thomas Long, Steven Park, Betsy Pittman, Jennifer Ryer and Maria Tackett put in numerous hours of work on every aspect of the conference. Their efforts were well rewarded, as was evidenced by the many complements received from attendees. We send a very special thank you to Dean Regina Cusson for inviting us to UCONN, providing us with amazing staff to organize our annual event and being the perfect, welcoming host.

On the AAHN side, many individuals also gave generously of their time to make the conference happen. The Abstract Review Committee under Chair Jeannine Uribe and members Arlene Keeling, Rima Apple and April Mathias made outstanding choices in selecting the papers and posters. Over the past 2 years, the Committee has received a record number of submissions resulting in an abstract review process which is much more competitive. This speaks to the strength of the Association as well as the rigor of the evaluation process. The Pre-Conference Planning Committee, under the leadership of former chair Marjorie Baier and committee members Karen Egenes and Claire Chatterton, graciously accommodated the LAC in planning for the THATCamp pre-conference and also deserves our thanks. Those who attended THATCamp reported that it was informative, innovative and fun! I thank our 2nd Vice President and Program Chair, John Kirchgessner, for his tremendous effort in coordinating the event.



Jean Whelan



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Abstract Review Chair	Jeannine Uribe, 2014-2016
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Appointed Positions

Editor, <i>Nursing History Review</i>	Patricia D'Antonio
Editors, <i>Bulletin</i>	Adrian Melissinos; Tess O'Neill
Archivist	Gertrude B. Hutchinson

Executive Director: David Stumph

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE – CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

This is John's first year as program chair, one of the most demanding positions in the Association, and John has been wonderful at taking the helm of that job and doing it so well.

This was the first AAHN conference administered by our management company, the Kellen Company. Two years ago, we entered into an expanded agreement with Kellen, to take over the administrative management of the conferences as a means of more efficient planning and coordination. This was a deliberate decision on the part of the Association made to capitalize on the potential of the conferences for promoting the AAHN. Further, it relieves some of the burden placed on the LACs so they can spend more time on planning the scholarly content. We expect to see over the coming years conferences that are more consistent and offer additional activities of interest to members. I give a great deal of thanks to Dave Stumph, our Executive Director who has demonstrated not only expert skills in carrying out all the administrative details and does it with tremendous grace. I also thank Dave's team all of whom contributed to this event, Kristi Klinke, Paula DeViney and Ruth Gleason Roth. And I especially thank Andrew Van Wasshova for his professionalism and patience in dealing with all the details and demands that go into making a conference happen.

One of the best ways to get a conference off to a good start is to have a fabulous keynote presentation. The 3rd Annual Eleanor Krohn Herrmann Keynoter, Dr. John Warner of Yale University, offered us a thoughtful, scholarly and intriguing paper which set a high tone for the rest of the conference. We had a record 34 papers, 2 panels and 3 poster presentations. The scholarly portion of the conference ended with a special plenary session excellently presented by Dr. Jane E. Schultz of Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis which everyone enjoyed. Saturday's Annual Banquet also lived up to expectations when two unexpected and very famous guests, Connecticut's own Katherine Hepburn (AKA Sandy Lewenson) and her alter ego 21st century Katherine Hepburn (AKA Mary Ann Cordeau) arrived to graciously and dramatically serve as auctioneers. Assisted by Annemarie McAllister and LAC members, the live and silent auction raised over \$8300. This set a new and very welcome fundraising record for the Association. And the items available for bidding were well worth the money spent on them. For example, I managed to successfully bid on a

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE — CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

genuine rhinestone pin—how often do you get to buy genuine rhinestones! And the luckiest person of the evening was Barb Mann Wall who walked home with a free—absolutely free—registration to next year's Dublin Conference after placing the winning bid. On behalf of the Association I want to thank Barb for being such a generous bidder. It is because of the generosity of members like Barb that we were able to offer 3 research grants this year and hope to do so again next year. The money raised through the auctions fund one of the worthiest program the AAHN offers, the Research Grant Program. If we want to sustain historical research in a time of sparse funding opportunities, the Association's grant program needs to remain financially strong. High bids will achieve that goal. So I thank Sandy, Mary Ann, Annemarie and the donors of the auction items for making this the most successful auction ever and urge you to think like Barb when we see you next year in Dublin.

The conference also included some new events. Linda Sabin and Shannon Perry facilitated two special lunchtime

special interest groups, one on Art and Nursing History (Linda Sabin) and the other on Historical Nursing Research for new researchers (Shannon Perry). Both groups received tremendous interest and we plan to include such sessions in our conference planning for next year. Sandy Lewenson and the Communications Committee also held a special session to introduce members to some of the work they have carried out over the year. This was the first AAHN conference at which attendees were able to tweet about the proceedings and while some members displayed hesitancy about fully embracing new social media tools others are ready to go full steam ahead. As the Communications Committee works out all the fine details, the Association is committed to utilizing the best means possible to get out the word about our programs and history.

At Sunday's business meeting, members received reports on the status of the Association—which is very good! The Talking History Sessions will continue. The next session is on November 12 from 12

Noon to 1:30 PM (EST), hosted by Dr. Sandy Lewenson and entitled *Can We Talk?: Integrating Nursing History into the Curriculum*. Members will receive call-in information via e-blasts. Other plans for the coming year include re-designing the website banner to better reflect the diversity of the nursing profession and inaugurating a new section of the website highlighting member publications. Members also shared news of exciting opportunities and projects. Laurie Glass reported on the significant work of the American Academy of Nursing's Expert Panel on Nursing History and Policy. Julie Fairman announced the inauguration of an important new blog, sponsored by the Bates Nursing History Center on nursing history and policy, *Echoes and Evidence* (<http://historian.nursing.upenn.edu/>). And Brigid Lusk reported on some exciting programs held by the Midwest Nursing History Research Center. We also asked members to actively join in promoting the AAHN by encouraging colleagues and friends to join. If you are going to a professional meeting or conference please let Andrew Van Wassenova

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15



“Talking History” Forum November 12, 2014

“Can We Talk?: Integrating Nursing History into the Curriculum” will be hosted by Dr. Sandra Lewenson on November 12, 2014, 12N-1:30p (EST). She will cover ways and means of integrating history into the nursing curriculum. Join in to discuss how to educate future nurses through the framework of nursing historical inquiry. Learn new ideas and share your thoughts at this informative session.

To join the conversation:

Domestic: 855-212-0212;

International: 530-881-1212;

Access Code: 639-138-863#

31st Annual Conference — A Recap!



This conference tried a new innovation with THATCamp – and from all the chatter and reports, it was a complete success! The UConn campus was beautiful and signs of fall were already visible. If you have not seen the displays and rooms at Storrs Hall on the UConn campus, you missed a wonderfully welcoming space that champions the history of nursing. Each year, the papers and presentations get better and better. To check out the official conference program, visit the AAHN website: <http://www.aahn.org/pastconf.html>.

Awards:

The following members were honored as recipients of the 2014 AAHN Awards. The recipients are:

Lavinia L. Dock

Award: Naomi Rogers, PhD for her book *Polio Wars: Sister Kenny and the Golden Age of American Medicine*



L: Joan Lynaugh, AAHN Awards Chair; R: Patricia D'Antonio, 2014 Nutting Award Recipient



Front: Joan Lynaugh, AAHN Awards Chair; Back L-R: Jean Whelan, Julie Fairman, Patricia D'Antonio, 2014 Roberts Award Recipients

Mary Adelaide Nutting

Award: Patricia D'Antonio, PhD, RN, FAAN for her article *Cultivating Constituencies: The Story of the East Harlem Nursing and Health Service, 1928-1941*

Mary M. Roberts Award: Patricia D'Antonio, PhD, RN, FAAN, Julie Fairman, PhD, RN, FAAN, and Jean Whelan, PhD, RN for their edited book *Routledge Handbook on the Global History of Nursing*

The following members received

2014 AAHN Research Grants:

Lea Williams, PhD, Norwich University, received the H-15 Research Grant

Doctoral Student Sarah Craig, PhD(c), MSN, BSN, RN, CCNS, CSC received the H-31 Pre-Doctoral Grant for her proposal *A Delicate*

Balance: Employee Advocate or Industrial Pacemaker? The Development of the Industrial Nursing Specialty, 1890-1925.

Hanna Metheny, MA received the H-31 Pre-Doctoral Grant for her proposal *Forty Years Late? The Creation of the US Army Corps*



L: Lea Williams, 2014 H-15 Grant Recipient; R: Cynthia Connolly, AAHN Research Review Chair



L: Cynthia Connolly, AAHN Research Review Chair; R: Sarah Craig, 2014 H-15 Grant Recipient

A very special thank you to Roger Castonguay with Defining Studios for the photographic support!

Dr. Elaine S. Marshall Receives 2014 President's Award

At the 31st Annual Conference, President Jean Whelan announced that Dr. Elaine S. Marshall was the recipient of the 2014 American Association for the History of Nursing's President's Award. The President's Award recognizes sustained and distinguished service to the Association. In her remarks, Jean noted Elaine's impressive career as an educator, clinician, researcher, historian and nurse leader.

Elaine earned a BS and MS in Nursing, and PhD in Health Education and Nursing from the University of Utah. Her clinical background is in family-child and community nursing. She has worked in hospitals and in community health, and served for 18 months as a health services missionary in Colombia, South America. Elaine has held numerous positions in academia including that of Dean at Brigham Young University's College of Nursing. Currently, Elaine is Chair of the Department of Health Restoration and Care Systems Management at the University of Texas Health Science in San Antonio. Elaine is a prolific writer, authoring numerous publications including books, book chapters, professional, and popular articles and has been honored with many awards and distinctions over her career. She is a Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing.

Jean's decision to choose Elaine as the 2014 President's Awardee was predicated on Elaine's excellent service to and support of the AAHN. Elaine has served as Vice-President of the Association. She has been the recipient of the Lavinia L. Dock Award. Of particular importance to the Association was Elaine's chairing not one but two LACs in two different parts of the country. Both conferences were highly successful and upheld the reputation of the AAHN for having fantastic conferences. Elaine is also famous for quilting. She has quilted and donated three quilts to the AAHN auction which resulted in raising large amounts of money for the Research Grant Program. The AAHN's grant program is one of the most important programs the association sponsors, for not only does it allow members the funds to carry out their research—it insures that superb scholarship will continue in the future. Jean applauded Elaine for her tremendous amount of service, advocacy and devotion she has given to the Association over many years. Dr. Elaine S. Marshall is an excellent and worthy choice for this prestigious honor. Congratulations Elaine on this impressive distinction.



Dr. Elaine S. Marshall, 2014 President's Award Recipient, with husband, John Marshall



Elaine Marshall with AAHN President Jean Whelan

A very special thank you to Roger Castonguay with Defining Studios for the photographic support!

Memories of the Conference



“Present Day” Audrey Hepburn presenting a Live Auction item



2014 AAHN Live Auction (left and below)



Left: Your Live Auction Emcee, Audrey Hepburn



Right: Our wonderful UConn volunteers!
L-R: Lisa-Marie Griffiths, Joanne Blum, Joyce McSweeney, Valori Banfi



UConn School of Nursing Dean, Dr. Regina Cusson, with husband, John Cusson



Attendees at the Saturday Night Banquet

A very special thank you to Roger Castonguay with Defining Studios for the photographic support!



Winifred Connerton staffing the Wine Pull Auction table, with Brigid Lusk



Your 2014 Live Auctioneers, "Present Day" Audrey Hepburn and the original Audrey Hepburn



Above and below: Attendees at the Saturday Night Banquet

A very special thank you to Roger Castonguay with Defining Studios for the photographic support!



Briana Ralston, 2013 AAHN Grant Winner shares her work

Briana Ralston, MS, RN, doctoral student at the Barbara Bates Center for the Study of the History of Nursing University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing was the recipient of the 2013 AAHN H-31 pre-doctoral research grant and shares her work.

A Story in Black and White: Photographs as a Data Source for Examining the Role of Nursing in the Development of Neonatal Intensive Care Between 1955 and 1982

Today, tens of thousands of infants receive care each year in neonatal intensive care units (NICUs) from nurses specifically trained in the care and management of sick newborns. NICU's began to open in the early 1960s across the country and built on established nursing models that had been found in many premature infant units in hospitals since the 1920s. These new intensive care units for newborns provided around-the-clock care delivered by nurses specially trained in matters of newborn thermoregulation and nutrition. These nurses also managed increasingly complex machines such as incubators and later medication pumps and ventilators. Literature published during the first half of the 20th century regarding newborn infant care in hospitals consistently argued that the nurse was a vital part of any premature infant unit, an assertion that continued in the scholarly textbooks through the 1960s. Nurses played important roles in how these units formed and emerged within the models of newborn intensive care that emerged in the 1960s.

While hospital archives, oral histories, scholarly publications, and textbooks all provide important data for understanding the roles these nurses played in the implementation of neonatal intensive care, the use of photographs as a data source has been largely underanalyzed in the scholarly literature to date. The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, which opened one of the early NICU's in the

country, documented its unit through a series of photographs published in their annual reports between 1955 and 1980. While these photographs do not necessarily reveal candid moments in the everyday functioning of the unit, they do give us an idea of how the hospital administration chose to portray the unit to the public. This portrayal included a strong focus on the particular nurses, the specific care they gave their newborn patients, and the tools they used to deliver that care.

Hospital administrators sent CHOP's annual reports internationally to patrons, philanthropists, and a much broader medical community. These photographs portrayed an image of the NICU, carefully chosen by CHOP's administration, as part of its development. The nurses depicted by CHOP during this time period were exclusively white women, but the pictures reveal the complexity of care; these women did more than hold and feed babies. They participated in a developing system of care, in spaces where that care was given, and they exercised incredible skill and were part of a trusted team of healthcare providers. Once CHOP physicians and administrators acknowledged this, they used these nurses to represent a technological system of care: in this case CHOP's NICU. These nurses stood at the forefront of many points in healthcare where gender, race, and technology intersected.

This work is still in progress and is laying the foundation for future work as I continue my research

trajectory regarding the nursing role in the formation of NICUs in the United States between 1955 and 1980. I will continue to collect data to appropriately contextualize these photographs and refine my analysis. These images have raised many questions that I will address in my dissertation, but their use as data will move far beyond the scope of my current work and will inform further research projects – hopefully not just my own.

This funding supported the work I undertook to access and include this data in my broader dissertation work. Receiving this award allowed me to meet the financial expenses required of this project as I engaged the archives related to the images themselves and the institution that presented them. After utilizing the funds to proceed with data collection, I presented the initial findings at the 2013 American Association for the History of Nursing Conference in Cleveland, Ohio. At that conference, I received profound feedback that has impacted how I have moved forward with my analysis. I have also received important guidance from AAHN faculty and members as I have collected oral histories, received guidance regarding data analysis, and continued to contextualize these photographs appropriately. I am thankful for the resources this grant has given me to continue the work, and for the support of The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and the College of Physicians of Philadelphia where CHOP's archives are housed.

Looking ahead to the 2015 conference!



Battlefield panel, Kevin Barry Memorial Window, courtesy of University College Dublin

32nd ANNUAL NURSING & HEALTH CARE HISTORY CONFERENCE September 17-21, 2015

AAHN
*American Association for the
History of Nursing*

**Alexander Hotel,
Dublin, Ireland**

Co-sponsored by
UCD School of Nursing,
Midwifery and Health Systems

Call for Abstracts

Thirty-second Annual History of Nursing & Health Care History Conference Dublin, Ireland • September 17-20, 2015

The American Association for the History of Nursing and University College Dublin's School of Nursing, Midwifery and Health Systems are co-sponsoring the Association's thirty-second annual conference to be held in Dublin City. The conference provides a forum for researchers interested in sharing new research that addresses events, issues, and topics in any area of nursing and health care history, broadly construed to encompass the history of nursing, global nursing history, nursing practice, health care institutions, caring, illness, healing work and public health. Submissions pertaining to all areas and regions of the world are welcome. Papers and posters that expand the horizons of nursing and health care history and engage related fields such as labor, technology, economic history, and race and gender studies are encouraged. Individual papers, posters,

and panel presentations are featured at the conference. If submitting an abstract for a panel, please clearly state on the abstract that it is for a panel presentation. Only panels consisting of 3 to 5 presenters will be considered. Additional information about AAHN and the conference can be obtained at www.aahn.org.

Guidelines for Submission: A one-page abstract of a completed study will be accepted by email. Submit two copies of your abstract; one must include the title, author's name(s), credentials, institutional affiliation, phone/fax and email. If more than one author is listed, indicate who is acting as the contact person. Indicate whether a paper, poster, or panel presentation is sought. The second copy of the abstract should include only the title, and mode of presentation with no other identifying information.

Abstracts must include: Purpose of study, rationale and significance, description of methodology, identification of major primary and secondary sources, findings and conclusions. Each section of the abstract should be clearly identified. Abstracts will be selected on the basis of merit through blind review.

Abstract preparation: Margins must be one and one-half inches on the left, and one inch on the right, top, and bottom. Center the title in upper case, and single space the body using 12 point Times (New Roman) font. Accepted abstracts will be printed as submitted in the conference program; thus, when printed, the abstract must fit one side of one 8.5" x 11" paper.

Submission deadline: Abstracts must arrive on or before **January 31, 2015**.

Submit to: abstracts@aahn.org

2015 Eleanor Krohn Herrmann Keynote Speaker

Dean Dorrie K. Fontaine, RN, PhD, FAAN – the Sadie Heath Cabaniss Professor of Nursing at the University of Virginia and Associate Chief Nursing Officer for UVA Health System – has led the School of Nursing since 2008.

Founder of the School’s Compassionate Care Initiative, a program that teaches clinicians about resilience and mindful practices, Fontaine is a former trauma nurse who has taught and held administrative positions at University of California, San Francisco, Georgetown and the University of Maryland.

A fervent supporter of interprofessional education – an effort that links medical and nursing students in practice scenarios to teach collaborative, team-based care – Fontaine also lectures frequently about end-of-life care, healthy work environments and critical care issues. At UVA she teaches leadership, medical-surgical theory, as well as a “Cells to Society” course in the School of Medicine.

Past-president of the American Association of Critical Care Nurses and current president of the Virginia Association of Colleges of Nursing, Fontaine holds degrees from Villanova, Maryland, and the Catholic



University of America. The AACN awarded her its Lifetime Member Award in 2004. She became a Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing in 1995, and received the Presidential Citation from the Society of Critical Care Medicine in 1999.

Keynote Abstract

Compassionate Care through the Centuries: Highlights in Nursing History

Using a variety of secondary sources as well as primary source materials from the Eleanor Crowder Bjoring Center for Nursing Historical Inquiry, Dr. Fontaine’s keynote address will trace the theme of compassionate care in nursing. Beginning with examples from the work of the Lutheran deaconesses in Kaiserswerth, Germany in the mid-19th century and highlighting Nightingale’s work in the Crimea, the presentation will trace significant 20th century historical events in which nurses gave compassionate care. These will include examples from: the home front during the 1918 influenza epidemic, the work of nurses in Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941; the activities of the Mississippi public health nurses

(Benoist collection, Bjoring Center), nursing care in the leper colonies (Rita Chow collection, Bjoring Center) and others. The presentation will close with highlights of compassionate nursing care in which nurses at the University of Virginia have been involved in the 21st century, including stories from their participation in the response to the earthquake in Haiti, the Regional Area Medical (RAM) clinic in southwest Virginia, and the Limpopo project in South Africa. It will end with an account of the introduction of “The Pause” used at the University of Virginia Medical Center Emergency Department in 2012.

Member News

Welcome the newest members of the AAHN!

Helps us welcome the newest members of AAHN, who have joined since the end of the 2013 Annual Conference:

Susan Riley
Michelle Rumble
Karyn Holm
Melissa Wohltman
Ruth Stiehl
Michele Beatty
Carole Bennett
Marian Farrell
Nancy Traylor-Heard
Peggy Kotowski
Marian Moser Jones
John Barbieri
Janet Watson
Beth Hundt
Carol S. D'Alessandro
Sara Bolten
Kathleen Stephenson
Carole King
Heather Lothamer
Mary Ann Thompson
Anthony Paterniti
Hafeeza Anchrum
Dana Lusher
Eileen Thrower



While visiting the John Michael Kohler Art Center in Sheboygan, Wisconsin, I came upon the most interesting sculpture. It is comprised of over 600 invalid feeders. The artist is Denise Pelletier from Rhode Island. It's titled "On Coming To Be and Passing Away" and is slip-cast, hand built vitreous china with glaze. Pelletier originally slip-cast over 1000 feeders. Some feeders developed mutated spouts, handles and ornamentation.

Laurie K Glass RN, PhD, FAAN
Professor Emerita, and Director
Center for Nursing History
UW- Milwaukee College of Nursing

From the Editor's Desk

Greetings! As this is my last issue as editor of *The Bulletin*, I want to thank Publications Committee Chair Barbara Gaines, and President Jean Whelan for their support and to all members who have contributed articles over these last two years. Adrian Melissinos and Tess O'Neill will be assuming the editor duties with Issue 111. I wish them the best of luck as they continue on.

Until the next issue,

Judy

AAHN Membership Announcements

Important Update to your AAHN Membership

Dear valued AAHN member,

This letter is to inform you of some important actions taken by the Board of Directors affecting how and when your AAHN membership is renewed. Currently, membership renewal is based on the date you joined the organization, also known as your anniversary date. At its fall meeting, the Board voted and approved a change to this type of renewal which will now be on an annual renewal schedule.

What does this mean?

An annual renewal membership is one that begins on the first of every year (January 1st) and expires the last day of the year (December 31st). This makes renewing your membership easier to remember and even easier for your institution or employer, if your membership is a cost they cover.

How does this affect me and my membership?

With the transition from an anniversary to an annual renewal membership, the affect is minimal and you will only see it in the first year. Because most active memberships are not currently on the calendar year, when you renew for 2015, your membership rate will be prorated to cover your membership through the rest of 2014, and will include the full year of 2015.

If your expiration date already falls in 2015, you will see this prorated extension when your current membership is up for renewal. For example, if your membership expires August 31, 2015, your membership dues will be prorated so that you will expire December 31, 2015.

To see what this means for you, [click here](#) to view a breakdown of the different one-time prorated rates to cover you through the rest of 2014/2015.

Why was this decision made?

It is always difficult to budget for membership dues income when it is received on a rotating basis. This change will streamline our budgeting process and make our accounting practices more efficient. We have also heard from members that a set timeframe for dues renewal would help them in their budget planning for membership, meeting registration and other organizational activities. We hope that an annual date membership will help to streamline the renewal process for you.

As an AAHN member, we want to be sure that this process is as smooth and effortless for you as possible. Please do not hesitate to contact AAHN headquarters for any questions or concerns you may have. You can reach the office at 303-422-2685 or via email at aahn@aahn.org.

If you would like to renew now, you may do so online, completing and returning the membership form, or calling headquarters.

We appreciate and value your membership and look forward to working with you in the future.

Sincerely,

Jean C. Whelan
President, AAHN

Research Connection Corner

From AAHN member Dr. Rima D. Apple:

“Prof. Nicole Elizabeth Barnes, Duke University, Department of History, located the following letter in the archives of the American Bureau for Medical Aid to China (now called the American Bureau for Medical Advancement in China). The archives are held at the Columbia University Rare Book and Manuscript Library. A racially and nationally integrated association, ABMAC was established by three Chinese Americans in New York City in 1937. The letter illustrates the international reach of the Kentucky Frontier Nursing Service. I thank Prof. Barnes for supplying me with a typescript of the letter and for her permission to publish it in the *Bulletin of the American Association for the History of Nursing*.”

Kentucky Frontier Nursing Service

by Dr. Yeh Shih Chin (Translated by Bliss Kao Wang)

ABMAC files at Columbia University Rare Book & Manuscript Library | Folder 42: Midwifery – Undated ¹

“Kentucky, President Lincoln’s birthplace, is indeed a unique world of its own. The lively and heroic nurses, climbing the towering mountains and crossing the roaring water-falls, have been performing incessantly the most fascinating, admirable and chivalrous drama of life.

On May 7th, I boarded the train from Chicago, and headed toward Hyden². All the way, I enjoyed the expansive plains and narrow gorges as well as the deep and green forests which unfurled themselves before my eyes.

A fellow-passenger took the trouble of explaining the background and characteristics of the mountain people. I learned that they are usually tall and thin, with great self-confidence, deep religious feeling. Due to their isolated life, they are self-contained and have, what seems to us, eccentric ways. The men are usually sharp-shooters. They have the qualities of brave soldiers. However, they often cause trouble for the commanding officer, as they detest the daily drills and are homesick most of the time. As for the girls, they are usually married at the tender age of fourteen. When they [have] reached twenty-four, they already have a whole brood of children. These mountain people are mostly farmers,

although some are miners, or timber cutters. Their daily routine starts at 3 a.m. and they are busy all day long. Their log cabins are very poorly constructed. There are many cracks in the roofs and the walls. Therefore, in the warm weather, it is hard to keep the flies out and in the cold winter, it is practically impossible to heat the cabins. All they have to keep themselves warm is an iron stove around which they all huddle, while the temperature of the rest of the cabin is about the same as the outdoors.

I was told that the pioneer organizer of the Kentucky Frontier Nursing Service was a woman by the name of Mrs. Mary Breckenridge. She has devoted her life [to p. 2] to this unique and important task for twenty-two years. During these years, in connection with her work, she has used thirteen horses and three donkeys [sic.]. In order to carry on this type of work a great deal of tenacity and perseverance is necessary. On one of her trips, her new horse became panicky due to the stormy weather and threw her off. As a result, she suffered a broken back and was forced to stay in bed for more than two whole months. However, she

did not stop working for a single day, because she commenced to direct work and give instructions from her bed. What a noble woman!

Dr. X came to meet me at the station, and drove me to the hospital. They gave me a welcoming dinner party. During the dinner, I learned a great deal of their work.

The following day (May 9th) I met many of the nurses at breakfast. They were a treat to my eyes, as they all appeared in their neat, white uniforms. I was enchanted with their gentle smiles, low voices, airy footsteps and calm mannerisms. Their very presence lent an indescribable charm and peace to the clinic and the sick rooms.

As the nurses have to visit their patients at their homes, there is only one nurse left to take care of the patients in the clinic. The way she handled the patients, who crowded the clinic, proved that she was in love with her profession and had a deep well of sympathy and understanding for her charges.

In the afternoon, one of the nurses came to take me along with her to attend a post-partum case. I was surprised to see the complete

change in her attire. She appeared in something like a Western cowboy outfit. She handled the little jeep with agility and skill. We drove through torturous terrain, then left the jeep and started climbing a mountain. The nurse picked up the two saddle bags—weighing forty pounds—and started climbing a mountain. Pretty soon I began to feel the strain of the steep climb and I noticed the nurse, with the saddle bags hanging from her shoulders, was panting a little too. She turned and smiled at me and suggested we stop for a second. [to p. 3]

As soon as we entered the log cabin, located half-way up the mountain, the nurse immediately put on her apron and went to work with efficiency and tenderness. On our way down, I asked her how is it that a family of ten have [sic.] only two beds at their disposal. She told us that most of these families have very little income and too many children. So it is common for all the kids to crowd into one bed.

The home of the second family which we visited was perched high up on stilts. The patient was a very lovely young woman. She sat at the edge of her bed and answered every question in a low voice and shy manner. She reminded me of the shy Chinese women who lead a very sheltered life and hardly ever cross the threshold of their own gates. She was devoted to her new baby. Whenever the baby cried, she would pick it up and feed it, exactly as a mother would do in China.

The third family which we visited had a three-day old baby. The nurse attended to both the mother and the baby and at the same time she tried to give the mother some elementary knowledge of child care and simple hygiene. The young mother pointed at one of her older children and said:

“This child has had diarrhea for about ten days now.” The nurse told the eldest girl to get the boy ready for an examination at the hospital. I helped the child to change his clothing, but I could not find the face towel to clean his face. The eldest sister rushed over with a big but filthy terry-cloth towel, dipped it in water and started wiping the boy’s face. I learned that the towel was used by the whole family.

After supper, we went for a walk on the playground. One of the nurses played tug of war with a huge dog which weighed over seventy pounds. They fought with all their might and many times she tumbled and rolled on the ground, panting and laughing heartily. It was wonderful to see how carefree she could be after a day’s hard work.

I visited the midwifery school, also located on a steep hill, not far from the hospital. The equipment of the school is fairly complete, comparable to the standard of other American medical institutions which I have inspected. My guide [top. 4] gave me a brief account of the history of the school. Due to the high infant and maternal mortality rates, Mrs. Breckenridge selected Kentucky to tabulate the causes of infant and maternal deaths in 1922, and proved that the chief cause was due to non-trained midwives. In 1923, in a state where the benefit of doctors, nurses together with the medical services which come from them, and the facilities of modern transportation, such as highways and airplanes were non-existent, she started the Kentucky Frontier Nursing Service.

The program of the Kentucky Frontier Nursing Service had three-fold activities—preventive, medical and delivery service. Two groups of nurses were attached to the service; the English nurses who came directly

from Great Britain, and the American nurses who received midwifery training in England. In 1939, at the beginning of the Second World War, the English nurses were recalled. Therefore, a midwifery school was established to meet the ever-increasing need for trained midwives in November, 1939.

After six months of intensive training and a final examination, the students receive a certificate. They become midwifery nurses. In order to recruit the right type of students, the initial screening is very strict. The teachers themselves set the example of hard work and qualities of perseverance. Every nurse is expected to lead a very busy and spartan life while in the service. Many a time, a nurse has to go on horseback through torturous mountain roads and roaring streams with that forty pound pack of medical saddle bags. At times both she and her horse must swim through several streams before they reach their destination. Sometimes, the nurse must make more than one trip in the same day. During the busy season, she must get only four hours sleep in three days.

May 13th—I finally reached Wendover, the headquarters of the Kentucky Frontier Nursing Service, where Mrs. Breckenridge directs the work. There are several log cabins on the compound. The research, statistical, planning, social service and medical projects are all conducted from this center. At tea time, I was approached by a slightly hunch-back, white-haired lady whose apparel was well-worn [to p. 5]. She spoke about her work with such precision, clarity and enthusiasm. It dawned on me that this must be the well-known Mrs. Breckenridge. I considered it a privilege to be actually learning about this social service from the very source. After supper, she lighted an oil

lamp in one corner of the sitting room and invited me to sit down beside her for a period of reading the newspapers and magazines. Outside, nature's orchestra was playing the harmony of the running brook, creaking frogs, hooting owls, the [and] chirping crickets. Inside, under the oil lamp, I was sitting beside the white-haired humanitarian. An indescribable calm and peace enveloped me, the slightly home-sick traveler.

May 14th—I visited the health stations. Besides the centers at Wendover and Hyden, there are five health stations, scattered on the high mountains and in deep valleys. We rode in jeep to get to Brutus. I noticed that the nurse who was in charge of the clinic had to administer preventive injections, give vaccinations, examine the pregnant women, change bandages, take blood pressure and examine urine. She always instructed the patients to go to the Hyden center for problems which are beyond her field of work. She was not only careful in carrying out her duties, she also conducted herself in such a way that only persons with the deep conviction serving humanity could manifest such deep interest and concern.

I was very eager to accept the opportunity to learn something about horse-back riding. So I accompanied the nurse on one of her delivery calls. Old newspapers came in very handy for cleaning up after delivery. The nurse seemed to be glad to have my assistance. I asked her what are her particular problems in delivery. She replied with a smile: "Well, the cracks in these log cabins constitutes [sic.] handicaps. Summer time, there is no way to keep the flies out, while in winter time, the indoor temperature is about the same as the outdoor, with the exception of the little circle around the iron stove. During one delivery, I turned around to pick up a pair of

forceps, and found it was already frozen in the water!"

May 18th—I went along to observe another delivery, where the teacher gave detailed demonstration as to how it should be done. I was deeply impressed by the [to p. 6] methodical way the teacher demonstrated the whole procedure. After bathing the expectant mother, she even drained and cleaned the bed-pan. In a nation where modern toilets seem to be prevalent, I admired these teachers and nurses who were willing to do such things for the patients.

In closing, I wish to reiterate that this group of women are exceptionally

courageous and hard-working in their task of serving the poor and needy people. They are not only shining examples among the medical field, but they are also the guiding light for American womanhood."

Notes

¹Although this file is undated, Dr. Yeh states that Mrs. Breckenridge began public nursing in rural Kentucky in 1922 and had been working for 22 years, thereby dating this record to 1944.

²Hyden is the county seat of Leslie County. The KFNS was begun in 1925 in Perry, Leslie, and Harlan counties in southeastern, rural Kentucky by Mrs. Mary Breckenridge.

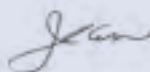
PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE – CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

know and he will be happy to send you AAHN promotional materials to hand out.

The Business meeting was also a time to welcome newly elected Board Members: Second Vice President, Chair of Strategic Planning Shannon Perry, Treasurer Patrick Kenny, Communications Committee Chair Sandy Lewenson (elected to a full term), Awards Chair Winfred Connerton, Research Review Panel Chair Rima Apple, Nominating Committee members Brigid Lusk and Linda Maldonado and re-elected By-Laws and Policies Chair Annemarie McAllister. We also thanked outgoing Board members Mary Tarbox (1st Vice President, Strategic Planning), Jennifer Telford (Treasurer), Joan Lynaugh (Awards Chair) Cindy Connolly (Research Review Panel Chair) and Nominating Committee members Sylvia Rinker (Co-Chair) and Diane Mancino. The Association is very grateful for the time and effort put into the work by outgoing Board and Nominating Committee members and hopes they will consider either running again or serving in another capacity in the Association.

Previous to this year's election, the president's office was one term only. A by-laws change enacted in 2009, and made to promote the Association's stability, now permits the President to serve two consecutive terms. With that in mind, I thank the members for placing their trust in me through my re-election. I am honored to serve another term and look forward to the next two years as ones that will continue to strengthen, enlarge and advance the mission and scope of the AAHN.

Best,





AAHN members from the Eleanor Crowder Bjoring Center for Nursing Historical Inquiry enjoying the 2014 Annual Conference.

AAHN
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