

AAHN BULLETIN

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History of Nursing

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President's Message

Dear AAHN Members and Friends,

As I sit down to write to my fellow AAHN members, the beauty of spring is around us and I am so grateful for the new beginnings that the vibrant leaves and flowers signal. At the same time we experience endings – the loss of our dear friend, Jean Whelan, who contributed so much to our association. It makes me ponder that our professional and personal lives are constantly in flux – beginnings and endings constitute the pattern of our lives.

In another part of the *Bulletin* you will read a tribute to Jean, but I wanted to share the experience of her funeral service for those who could not be there. At least ten members of AAHN attended and several from a significant distance. Those present couldn't have imagined not being there. Rabbi Beth Kalisch officiated and hauntingly sang *A Mourner's Kaddish* acapella. The service was solemn and Jean's husband, Mark, presented a eulogy linking many happy and sad aspects of Jean's life for all of those present; prominently featured was her love of AAHN, and her dedication to her own historical work. The ceremony closed as the congregation sang *Amazing Grace*. Seeing Jean's family and friends come together to honor and celebrate her life well-lived made everyone's trip so worthwhile. We will all remember the day sadly since Jean was taken from us too soon, but also with fondness for our friend and colleague, keeping in our hearts the many personal stories and anecdotes that will sustain her memory.

Turning to AAHN business, I am pleased to announce that while we have challenges, we have begun to activate our strategic plan which addresses many of them with the establishment of three new task forces. Our biggest current challenge is **sustaining and increasing our membership**. To this end, we have established a Membership Task Force led by April Matthias that has developed some solid strategies for improving our member numbers. Another challenge is marketing our terrific association to new audiences. Amanda Mahoney and her Marketing Task Force colleagues are in the process of working with Kylie Smith, our Communications chair, to identify and develop new ways to make AAHN more visible not only in traditional ways, but on social media and on the web. Finally, we are in the process of building our Education Task Force, led by Melissa Sherrod which will develop new ideas to uncover, share and disseminate important nursing



Mary E. Gibson



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- Editors, *Bulletin* Adrian Melissinos & Tess O’Neill
- Archivist Gertrude B. Hutchinson

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Please send all *Bulletin* items: reports, short articles, and news to:

Adrian Melissinos Email: melissin@aol.com
or

Tess O’Neill Email: tmoneill@bellsouth.net

Have you been published lately? Won an award, or a grant, or given a great presentation? Do you know about new funding opportunities, or archives, or conferences that our members, or the public, should know about?

Please send details to your communications chair, Dr Kylie Smith at kylie.m.smith@emory.edu and we can get it out on social media.

And don’t forget to follow us on Twitter at **@aahn_nursing** or on Facebook. If you’re attending a conference or see something great, share it on Twitter and add our twitter handle so we can see and retweet it, or use the hashtag #histnursing

Send me your news!

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In Memoriam

Jean Whelan, 1949 - 2017

By Julie Fairman

Jean Whelan, Adjunct Associate Professor in the School of Nursing, University of Pennsylvania, lost her battle with cancer on March 7, 2017. She was a nurse for over 45 years. She came to the University of Pennsylvania in 1987 as a graduate student. She really never left and we were the better for it. She served as the Director of the Seminar Series at the Barbara Bates Center for the Study of the History of Nursing and was the Assistant Director of the Bates Center for over six years. She was critical to the Center's daily functioning. We could not have achieved our Center successes without her.

Jean was one of the earliest people to move in the social media sector. In the mid-1990s she was part of a group of history of nursing scholars who developed the proposal to the American Academy of Nursing to form an Expert Panel in Nursing History. Part of the proposal included the development of a website, *Nursing History and Health Care*, that is still live today on the Bates Center website with almost 100,000 hits to date. She also spearheaded the Center's digitization project with the

Schoenberg Center for Electronic Text and Imaging that resulted in the website, *Imaging the Nurse: The Photographic Collection of the Philadelphia General Hospital School of Nursing*. Jean also led the development of the Bates Center Blog, *Nursing History and Health Policy: Echoes and Evidence*. This blog was the first to focus on the intersection of history of nursing and health policy and the blog was reposted by Philly.Com and several other national news outlets.

Jean's research focused on the history of nursing and health care with emphasis on health care policy, workforce issues, the nurse labor market and the supply of, demand for, and distribution of nurses to the public. She presented her work at venues all over the globe and published extensively in books and journals. She was one of the first nurse researchers in the history of nursing to be awarded a Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Award (NRSA) Individual Predoctoral Fellowship (Parent F31) (1997). She followed with several other federal and private grants to support her scholarship and media efforts. When she died, she was completing a manuscript that was under contract to Rutgers University Press. It will be completed by a group of her colleagues.

One of her proudest professional moments was her election to two terms as President of the American

Association for the History of Nursing from 2012-2016. She worked tirelessly to improve the integrity of the review process for grants, awards and abstract reviews. Even as she underwent chemotherapy she continued to work for the organization and attended an international meeting in Ireland.

Jean also had many other interests. She was many things to many people--a friend, a colleague, a scholar, a fighter, a wife, and a mother. She loved her family above all else and cared for them tirelessly. She grieved quietly for her young daughter Emily and had a photograph of her prominently in her office. She loved garnets and we frequently visited antique jewelry stores to find them. She visited Disney World and Avalon, New Jersey every year, sometimes more than once. She exercised regularly-- We frequently arranged to bring our exercise clothes to meetings and walked early (and I mean early!) in the morning before the meetings started. She helped rescue her mother-in-law from her apartment after Hurricane Sandy. Above all, she had incredible spirit even in the face of difficult side effects brought on by her treatments. She desperately wanted to live, but in the end left us too soon. We will miss Jean, our friend and colleague, and carry her spirit with us as we also move forward in our lives.

In Memoriam will be printed in volume 26 of the *Nursing History Review*.

Please see below for an article from The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth) School of Nursing regarding a documentary produced by the school.

School of Nursing Documentary Examines Corrupted Third Reich Caregivers

(Jan. 13, 2017) – The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth) School of Nursing has created a new documentary film that tells the grim cautionary tale of nurses who participated in the Holocaust and abandoned their professional ethics during the Nazi era. The film, *Caring Corrupted: the Killing Nurses of the Third Reich*, had its premiere during a reception last night at the Holocaust Museum Houston attended by about 100 guests.

“Each student enrolled in the UTHealth School of Nursing will be shown the film in Orientation,” said Dean Lorraine Frazier, Ph.D., R.N. “We earnestly hope that none of our students are ever faced with such conscience-searing moral choices as were the nurses in the film.”

The 56-minute film casts a harsh light on nurses who used their professional skills to murder the handicapped, mentally ill and infirm at the behest of the Third Reich and directly participated in genocide. During on-camera interviews, experts and survivors ponder the causes and meaning of such horrifying ethical violations in medical care.

“These Third Reich nurses lost their moral ‘true north’ – and, instead of easing the suffering of vulnerable individuals and defying immoral orders, their ethical compasses were diverted, and they lost their bearings of professional responsibility and



The School of Nursing premiered its 56-minute film January 12th at the Holocaust Museum Houston.

compassion,” said Frazier, who also is the John P. McGovern Distinguished Professor.

UTHealth School of Nursing’s former dean (1984-2015) **Patricia L. Starck**, Ph.D., R.N., was the driving force behind development of the film. Her interest originated in 1977 at the beginning of her doctoral studies, when she came across the work of a Jewish psychiatrist and neurologist named Viktor Frankl who had survived the Auschwitz death camp. Frankl had gone on to write the classic *Man’s Search for Meaning* (1946) and develop a rehabilitative method known as “logotherapy” born from the horrors of the Holocaust.

“The most puzzling of all questions to me was: how could nurses – the angels of mercy, the most compassionate, caring and trustworthy of all

professional groups – do these things?” Starck said. “Was it intimidation, coercion, sadism, secondary benefit to self, disassociation?”

Starck and several colleagues – including UTHealth School of Nursing Vice Dean for Academic Affairs **Cathy L Rozmus**, Ph.D., R.N., and former UTHealth faculty member **Susan Benedict**, Ph.D., CRNA – pursued a shared academic interest in nursing ethics during the Holocaust.

“Our journey culminated in the production of this film, which we hope will shed light on the ethical slippery slope that nurses and others – past, present and future – can fall victim to,” Starck said.

Frazier, the school’s current dean and the Huffington Foundation Chair for Nursing Education Leadership, is

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convinced of the relevance of the film and the issues it raises.

“We know from our own experiences that our students will be faced with frequent decisions of smaller consequence that, if decided wrongly, may cause unneeded suffering and pain; but, if decided rightly, guided by an accurate and well-maintained moral compass, will help them fulfill their highest calling as a nurse,” Frazier said.

Producers and academic experts made two overseas trips – one in 2013 to Germany and Poland, and another in 2015 to Austria and Poland – where they visited the sites of Nazi concentrations camps and gathered material for the documentary. Initial filming started in spring 2013. The final interviews were conducted in fall 2015.

UTHealth School of Nursing’s Director of Educational Technology **Linda L. Crays**, M.A., took on multiple roles as production

coordinator for the difficult three-year project.



“Linda had perhaps the hardest job of all – herding us busy people, handling the permissions, the contracts, the copyrights, the schedules, the hitches, and everything else that came up – but doing so as a compassionate believer, not just a manager,” Starck said.

Donors who generously provided funding for the project were:

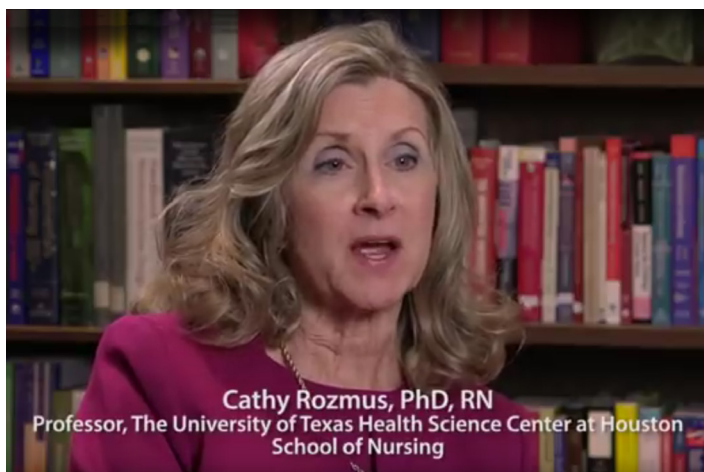
- The Texas Holocaust and Genocide Commission
- The Marvin and Joan Kaplan Foundation
- The Joe Levit Family Foundation

Caring Corrupted: the Killing Nurses of the Third Reich was produced by Sunset Productions, Houston: James Bailey, Producer and Screenwriter; Mark Susman, Director of Photography

“We offer this film to help viewers keep their moral compass pointed to true north, to take their professional responsibilities and moral obligations with great seriousness,” Frazier said. “This film will be a reminder to each of us to never forget.”

The 56-minute film can be viewed on YouTube by clicking [HERE](#).

— **David R. Bates**, UTHealth School of Nursing
713-500-2111



From Rima Apple:

Final rules have been issued that exempt oral history and journalism from IRB oversight. You can find the story on pages 14 and 15 in the newsletter of the AAHM (American Association for the History of Medicine), <http://histmed.org/newsletters/February2017web.pdf>

Jubilee: A Celebration of 100 Years

By Shirley Morrison, PhD, RN

District 9 of the Texas Nurses Association (TNA) in Houston, Texas organized a Jubilee event to recognize the 100th anniversary (1916-2016) of the professional association. The Jubilee planning committee considered it important to honor and research the historical underpinnings of its century of accomplishments. For example, Association activities were described in relation to historical events such as the Great Depression. In addition, effort was made to relate efforts of the Association with current professional goals, such as how nurses are an important presence on hospital boards of directors. A research grant was applied for and received from a local university chapter of the Sigma Theta Tau, providing support for the research.



Display at Jubilee



TNA District 9 boxes at the archive

The 100th Anniversary Jubilee Program, held on the founding anniversary date, September 12, 2016, included displays from the archives of the Association, a video of long time members sharing recollections of important District 9 efforts and activities, and a 1 hour continuing nursing education program. The program highlighted significant events in the history of the Association.

- The early 20th century activity of the Association facilitated the work of private duty nurses.
- The Great Depression eliminated the market for private duty home care. The Association responded by raising funds, creating a fund to support the further education of nurses for roles in public health and administration.
- The nursing registry was a major way for graduate registered nurses in Houston to facilitate their successful practice.
- A review of the activities of the 1970's revealed that the Association leaders served on Hospital boards of directors.

The Jubilee provided an opportunity to recognize the transfer of the TNA District 9 archives to the John P. McGovern Historical Collections and Research Center at the Texas Medical Center Library in Houston, Texas. Thirty-five boxes of materials that include records, minutes, scrapbooks, ledgers, and photos are now available for research.



Shirley Morrison & Lynn Wieck, PhD, RN, former President TNA District 9



Send us your accomplishments – inquiring minds want to know!

2016 Research and Research Grant Awards

AAHN Grant Report

Dr Kylie M. Smith BA PhD

In 2015 I was honoured to be awarded the AAHN H15 Grant for my project entitled “Mary Starke Harper, civil rights and minority mental health in the USA 1950-1990.” This grant enabled me to travel for lengthy periods of time throughout 2016 to the Barbara Bates Centre for the Study of the History of Nursing at the School of Nursing, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, where Mary Starke Harper’s papers are located.

My interest in Dr Harper stems from my current research project, which is a book called “This anxiety riddled age: Knowledge and power in American psychiatric nursing”. I have been working on this book for a few years, travelling to the US from Australia, until I started work at Emory in November 2015. Now I am much closer to the American archives, especially those located in Atlanta, it became obvious that the narrative I had been constructing was a very white, northern one. I turned to the archives of Dr Harper to look for a different perspective on the way in which mental health and psychiatric nursing had evolved in the US, especially in the period after WWII and in the context of the Civil Rights movement. What I discovered changed the direction of my research entirely.

Dr Harper was initially educated at the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama in the 1940s. She left Alabama to

pursue further education in the North, earning a Bachelors and Masters degree at the University of Minnesota, and then a PhD in sociology and psychology from St Louis University. She worked initially as a nurse in Veteran’s Administration, including as Director of Nursing services back at Tuskegee. In the early 1960s, she joined the National Institute of Mental Health in Washington DC where she helped establish the Centre for Minority Group Mental Health Programs, which went on to fund a new generation of health professionals in mental health. Dr Harper was an advisor to four consecutive presidents on matters of minority, rural and aging mental health, and when she retired from the NIMH, she moved to Atlanta to work with Rosalynn Carter’s Caregiving Institute. Dr Harper died in 2006, and the geriatric psychiatric wing of the old Bryce Hospital in Tuscaloosa Alabama is now named in her honor.

Dr Harper’s archives were a treasure trove of research materials related to a broad variety of subjects in minority mental health, and African American health more broadly. Her papers largely relate to her work at the NIMH and provide the background to the numerous speeches, articles, textbooks and advisory papers she wrote throughout her career. They cover topics such as alcoholism, depression, the over-prescription of medication to elderly patients, and the racism of diagnostic and treatment approaches in mental health. Importantly, her papers, and

the research materials she collected, clearly articulate the long term effects of slavery and segregation as sources of trauma and disparities in health care. Her papers included an extension collection of scholarship from various black health professionals, including psychiatrists, psychologists and sociologists who were active in the 1960s and 1970s in the attempt to articulate the link between race and mental health. Work from journals such as *The Black Scholar*, the *Journal of Black Psychology*, and the *Journal of Black Health Perspectives*, which only ran for one year, in 1974, are here in their entirety, covered with post it notes and Dr Harper’s scrawling hand written notes.

Particularly interesting is the paper “Being black is detrimental to one’s mental health: Myth or Reality” by Canon and Locke. These are the findings from their NIMH funded grant (eventually published in 1977) in which the authors categorically state that mental health outcomes are worse for people of colour in the US, not because of any genetic differentiation, but purely as a result of racist health care practitioners who automatically assume that mental illness occurs differently in African American populations. Drawing on their work, Harper argued that the problem for black mental health was not race, but racism, both in the short term through racist diagnosis and treatment and also in the long term, as a direct result of the trauma of the lived experience of slavery and segregation, and the effects of living

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with oppression, hatred and violence.

The most disturbing part of Dr Harper's papers were the reports she wrote for White House Commissions and Conferences on Mental Health and Aging. Her reports for these conferences, occurring in 1977, 1995 and 1999, lay out in stark detail the different diagnosis patterns, the long term disease progressions and the lack of service provision in mental health for people from minority groups. The statistics do not improve, her report to President Clinton's mental health conference in 1999 and the report to President Carter's mental health commission in 1977 are eerily and distressingly similar, showing little to no improvement over time, with no real changes made to approaches for appropriate services, and little recognition of the long term effects of living with trauma.

All of this work was used by Dr Harper to articulate her concerns about the racist structures of American psychiatry, and its long term and exponential effect on minority mental health. These are concerns that have not still not been adequately addressed, and this research demonstrates the vital work that nurses have tried to do, and must continue to do, in mental health care today.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE – CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

and health care history knowledge to our members and beyond. Please let me know if you have interest in any of these new task forces – we need energetic and creative ideas to carry out these initiatives! The board met in Washington, DC on Saturday, April 29 where discussion occurred around these initiatives and to conduct the business of the association. If you have ideas to support the goings on, we welcome any and all feedback!

As we move the association forward to regain members and aim towards a balanced budget, we have added a way for members to financially support AAHN's general fund. On the website, you will find a "Donate Here" link on the home page where you can donate to support our day to day operations (general fund), our Research Endowment fund or our Eleanor Krohn Herrmann Memorial Lecture Fund. Please consider donating today! In fact, Jean's family requested donations in her name as a memorial.

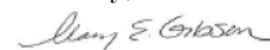
Looking ahead to September, our conference in Rochester, NY is coming together beautifully. We are so grateful to our Local Arrangements Committee led by John Kirchgessner and to all those at St. John Fisher's Wegmans School of Nursing and from the Rochester area who are helping to sponsor this meeting, and to Brigid Lusk, our AAHN Program Chair. They have planned a fabulous conference! The fun begins on Thursday with our preconference on successful historical writing, and in the afternoon you can choose to take tours to the Susan B. Anthony House and Mt. Hope Cemetery. We are excited to experience this city on the southern shore of Lake Ontario in the early fall, and come together with our

colleagues and friends for stimulating history presentations and posters. Topics range from pre-professional nursing to nature's role in healing and from nursing and midwifery "down under" to military, polio, and disaster nursing and nursing education (just to name a few). The full two-day conference will be bookended by two plenary sessions with speakers Dr. Karen Flynn delivering the Eleanor Krohn Herrmann Keynote titled "Can the Nurse and the Public Intellectual exist as one Person? Mapping Lillie Johnson's Journey" and Dr. Margaret Moss delivering the closing session titled "Why Historical Trauma Must Inform American Indian HealthCare Today." And of course, to crown the conference, we must ask, "Who will arrive at the auction this year?" Plan to join us **September 7-9, 2017** in Lillian Wald's home city and the site of the Erie Canal!

Finally, I leave you with a plea to invite (and twist the arms of) your historical-minded friends and colleagues to **join AAHN**. If each of us recruited just one member, our budget and organization would be in terrific shape! We need you and every member to **renew and recruit**. You are AAHN. We have student, retiree, regular and institutional memberships available, so there is something for everyone! And it only takes a minute or two to do it all online at www.aahn.org. Begin a new year with us!

Wishing you a wonderful and restful summer! See you in September in Rochester – and bring a friend (or two)! An educational and fun time is guaranteed!

Sincerely,



Mary E. Gibson



AAHN

*American Association for the
History of Nursing*



WEGMANS SCHOOL of NURSING
St. John Fisher College

34TH ANNUAL AAHN NURSING & HEALTHCARE HISTORY CONFERENCE

Co-sponsored by Wegmans School of Nursing, St. John Fisher College

September 7-9, 2017

Woodcliff Hotel & Spa Fairport, NY



Calling one and all

AAHN members – If you are going to a professional meeting or conference and are willing to distribute AAHN promotional materials, please email Andrew Van Wasshova, Executive Director of AAHN at our management company. His email is: avanwasshova@kellencompany.com.

Help us spread the word about the benefits of joining the AAHN!



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