

RCH NURSES ALUMNAE ASSOCIATION **NEWS UPDATE**

GRADUATES OF THE ROYAL COLUMBIAN HOSPITAL SCHOOL OF NURSING

Some NEWS at last! It has been a long time coming. We can finally report on the RCH rebuild preparation.

ARCHIVES

Anne Kern - Archives Chair, reports 24 boxes of wrapped grad photos, 41 boxes of Archives, and the 2 cupboards are ready for storage off site. There will be 7 boxes of display items kept on site. Mrs. Chase, the wooden wheelchair and the residence dedication plaque were saved.

GRAD CLASS PHOTOS:

a) IN THE CORRIDOR

Kathy Corbeil our liaison with RCH, surprised us by offering to take photo of individual alums with their class picture while it was still on the wall. Time was short. We had to concentrate on getting the message out to members most likely able to attend. Eileen Brown and Carol Schmidt assisted Kathy in two Covid correct sessions.- September 16th and 18th, twenty five alums participated.

b) FRAMED PHOTOS DIGITALIZED

Jason Vanderhill, a long time photography enthusiast with a deep interest in local history, digitalized 40 framed grad class photos on September 24th. He also retouched a few photos that had faded. The options are now endless, Jason has many ideas and could help make a book?, a video?, website? - display? Or.....?

c) WRAPPING AND STORING

A crew of volunteers gathered in the Sherbrooke gym on September 25th to wrap and box the originals for storage. A special thanks to Nancy Dinsmore 78B, Elaine Olson 70B, Sandy Thiessen 73A, Patty Utley 78B and once again Eileen Brown 78B and Carol Schmidt 78B.

A HOME FOR THE PIANO

After many months of uncertainty, we were informed October 5th, that RCH will be able to find a place for the piano after all. This piano has a story many alums may not know!

Life was not easy for student nurses with few improvements over the first 70 years of the last century. They were the main workforce at RCH. Students outnumbered graduate nurses 6 to one. (It was good for the hospital's bottom line!)

In the 1930's nurses worked 12 hour shifts and were expected to attend classes during sleep time even if they had worked 7pm to 7am the night before. They were supposed to have 1/2 day off a week but it didn't always happen. They received a stipend of \$6.00 per month. They lived in the Nurses' Residence on the hospital grounds. Radios were rare at the time and of course no TV. Imagine their joy when they received a very special gift!

A doctor's wife had donated a dinner set to the RCH Ladies Auxiliary. These volunteers worked hard selling raffle tickets on that dinner set for over two years, to raise money to purchase the Mason & Risch baby grand piano for the student nurses in 1936. Money was scarce in the Great Depression. Built in 1927, it is possible the original purchaser had to sell the piano for needed cash.

The piano was available for nurses to enjoy in their free time and was important to all special occasions at the residence for the next 42 years until the School of Nursing closed. The residence was repurposed but the piano remained in the lounge.

After being advised there would be no place for the piano in the redeveloped hospital, we began the search for a new home where it would mean as much to others as it had to us as student nurses.

Happily, now there will be a place in the 'new' RCH for our treasured piano. A hospital is a stressful place for everyone - patients, doctors, nurses, all staff and visitors. Music therapy is important for everyone in stress. Thank you RCH - miracles do happen!

STAINED GLASS ART PIECE: No confirmation yet.

STUDENT RECORDS

RCH has passed the School of Nursing student records into the care of New Westminster Museum and Archives.

GLEE CLUB AROUND THE PIANO in 1964 Annual



BACK ROW: L. Fedor, J. Langlands, H. MacNeil, I. Funk, C. Schroeder, R. Shannon, G. Kirby, P. Krenzel; M. Ward, L. Wagner, J. Mulder, N. Robertshaw, F. Stowe. *FRONT ROW:* C. Martin, L. Wilms, J. McMillan, E. Rorison, M. Fairgrieves, E. Rowledge, C. Skinner. *PIANO:* R. MacBurnie. *LEADER:* C. Wiley.

TIME CAPSULE

There are a number of rumours about a time capsule. Thanks to clues from New Westminster Librarians, Pat Bingham 52B, Jack McDougall (retired groundskeeper), Archie and Dale Miller (A Sense of History), we have learned the facts. There were two capsules. The first from the 1912 wing was opened in 1972. The granite from that capsule is located in the Health Care Centre near the woodcarvings.

RCH contributed artifacts to the capsule honouring Canada's 100th anniversary in 1967. It is an 8 foot vacuum sealed plastic tube buried at Confederation Square opposite the Parliament Building in Victoria, to be opened in 2067.

A HEART FULL OF THANKS

- To Kathy Corbeil for all you do as our liaison to RCH.
- Dan Silverwood of Silverwood Pianos, Gordon Walkenshaw piano tuner (coincidentally the son of Anne (Stepanik) Walkenshaw class 45A) and to Music Box Delivery, piano mover: you were a great help when we thought we had to find a home for our piano.
- To Jason Vanderhill for your enthusiasm and skill in preserving our photos.
- To Archie and Dale Miller of A Sense of History Research Services, for sharing your vast knowledge of local history.

BULLETIN BOARD

- * All upcoming gatherings are CANCELLED until Covid safe
- * ZOOM executive meetings will continue thanks to Carol Schmidt.
- * Under consideration: an early Spring newsletter devoted to the Sherbrooke Centre.

*Christmas will be different this year.
We are all thinking of you and
sending best wishes for a happy
Christmas in your small bubble and
good health in 2021. Keep safe!*



From all of us on the Executive

A Message From the President

ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT things I've learned in life: when making personal decisions it is helpful to think of your life 10 years hence. For example in 10 years I will be pushing 93. I want to remain in my home, I may need help. I want to remodel my upstairs as a private space for a live in care giver.

When I leave this life I want to make it easier for those who deal with the stuff I leave behind. I have to get rid of stuff.

I must devote more time to reach this goal. I must resign as president. December 2020 Vice President Eileen will move up to president. The executive will appoint a replacement until the next AGM.

Bernice

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