

50 YEARS ON - BC PERIOPERATIVE NURSING ORGANIZATION ATTAINS A MILESTONE

IF WE WANT TO KNOW WHERE WE ARE GOING WE NEED TO KNOW WHERE WE CAME FROM.

Author: Susan Knoll, MSN, Historian Perioperative Registered Nurses Association of BC, Vancouver, BC.

ABSTRACT:

Just last year the BC Operating Room Nurses Group (BCORNG), now the Perioperative Registered Nurses Association of BC (PRNABC), celebrated 50 years of promoting perioperative nursing education and practice since its inception in 1966. Almost since the beginning, BCORNG/PRNABC has advocated for a close relationship with the National Perioperative Nursing Organization, and has actively participated in the formation and growth of the Operating Room Nurses Association of Canada (ORNAC). This article includes some highlights from the last five decades of

BCORNG/PRNABC with a focus on connections and experiences with ORNAC.

INTRODUCTION

The spring of 2016 marked the 50th anniversary of the formation of the BC Operating Room Nurses Group (BCORNG) now the Perioperative Registered Nurses Association of BC (PRNABC). As a part of the celebrations of this milestone, members of the association prepared an updated history of the organization in both online and print documents. Eleven of the association's Past-Presidents were also hosted and recognised at the 25th Biennial conference, held in Kelowna June 24 – 27, 2016.

What follows are some highlights from the last five decades including the connections and experiences with the Operating Room Nurses Association of Canada (ORNAC).

Since the initial months of this group's existence, the organization has continued to develop and evolve. It was during the decade of 1960-1970 that a provincial group of operating room (OR) nurses was first envisaged and discussed. The idea for such an organization was considered during a seminar for OR nurses from many areas

BCORNG/PRNABC Archival Photographs



*BCORNG/PRNABC Past Presidents hosted and recognized at 25th Biennial Conference.
L to R: Loraine Best, Rupinder Khotar, Marlene Weeks, Donna Gramigna,
Marcy McKay, Lorna Murphy, Susan Knoll, Kathleen Raisbeck, Jean Kerr, and
Gloria Stephens [not shown Bonnie McLeod].*

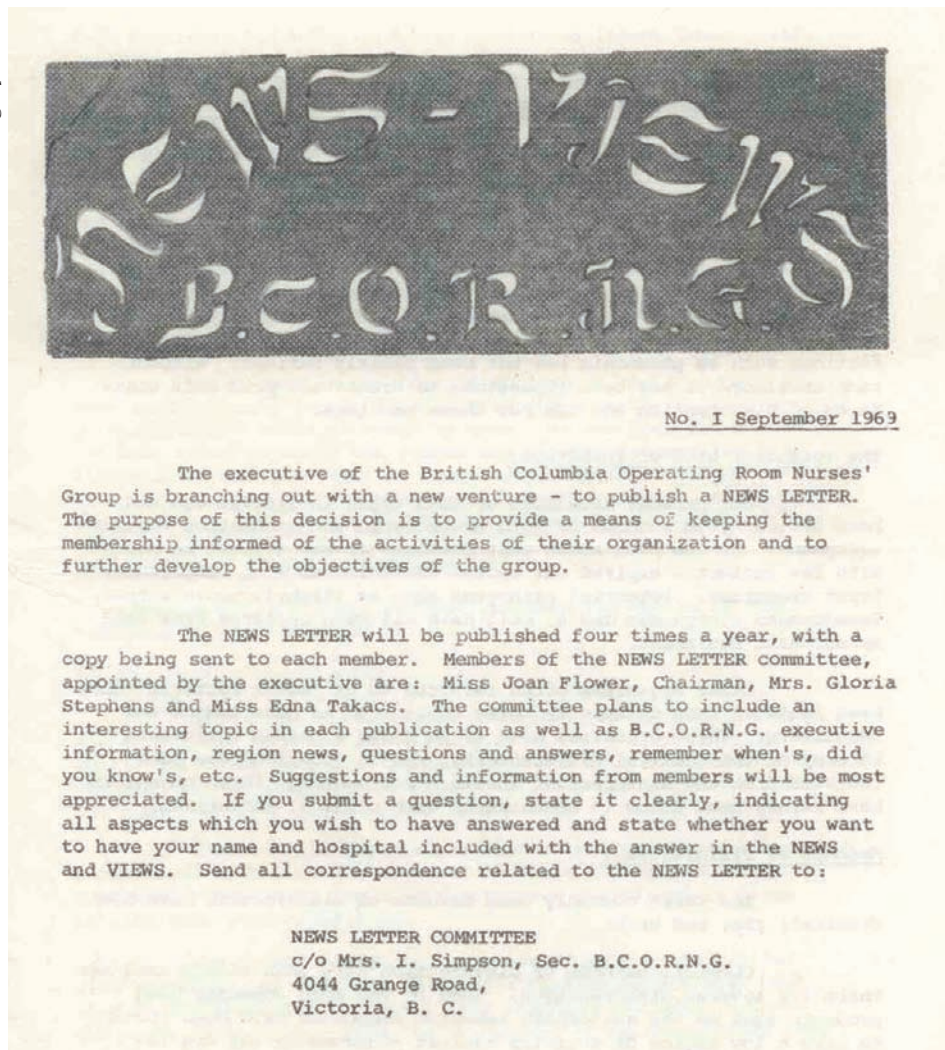
of BC held, at Vancouver General Hospital (VGH), on May 5, 1966.¹ This seminar was followed by the first executive meeting, held May 12, at St. Paul's Hospital (SPH). Thus BCORNG became the second special interest group of the Registered Nurses Association of BC (RNABC) to organize, with a treasury of \$39.20.¹ At the end of this decade, in September, 1969, the first issue of the quarterly newsletter, *News and Views*, to circulate information, as well as clinical data, from the Provincial Executive to the membership.

The 1970s saw the gradual growth of BCORNG as an organization, with biennial institutes held in Vancouver. One particularly notable event was the 4th National Conference (BCORNG's 5th Institute) in 1976. Delegates from across

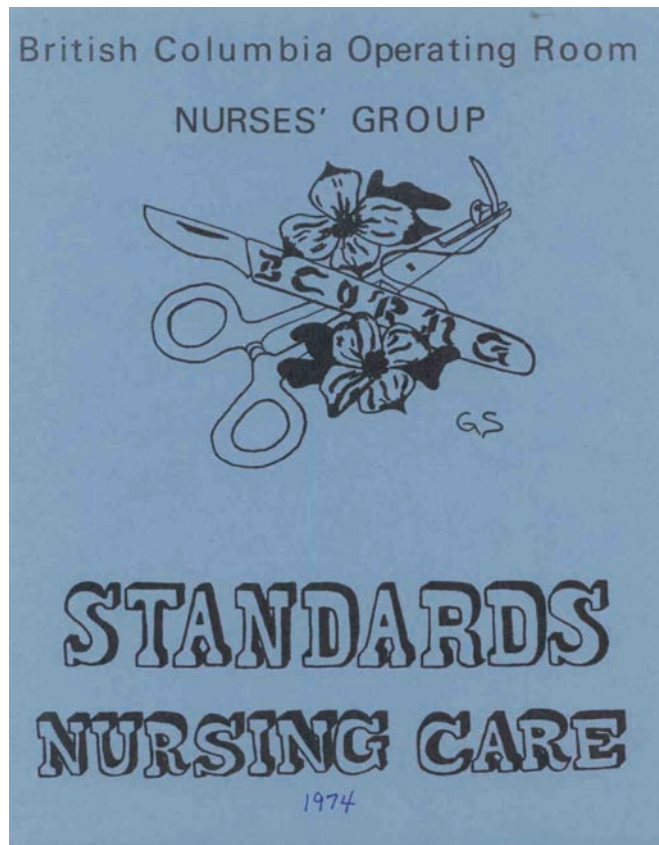
Canada attended this meeting with the theme "Unite for Excellence". A number of documents were also produced by members of the organization during this time, including the first Standards of OR Nursing, published in 1974.¹ Parts of this document were reviewed during the development of the first edition of the ORNAC standards published in 1986. (Gloria Stephens, personal communication, 2014).

The 1980s were a time of expansion and achievement. After the inauguration, in 1983, of ORNAC, the BCORNG executive, along with other OR nursing organizations from across the country, provided two representatives to the ORNAC board. BCORNG celebrated its 20th anniversary in 1986 and the first documented history, 1966-1986: *The First 20 years* was published to highlight the accomplishments of the organization.¹ The biennial institutes, or conferences, continued as a focus for BCORNG and provided lots of enjoyment despite all the volunteer hours of work involved. In 1988 BCORNG hosted the 10th National Conference in conjunction with the biennial meeting. This event was held at the brand new Vancouver Trade and Convention Centre and Pan Pacific Hotel. The opening ceremonies included a song written and dedicated to perioperative nurses (a conference first). This song, *Because You Care*, was later adopted as ORNAC's official song. (Gloria Stephens, personal communication, 2014).

The 1990s saw BCORNG, in collaboration with ORNAC, "actively pursuing the expanded roles for perioperative nurses"² such as the Perioperative Nurse Anaesthesia (PNA) and the Perioperative Nurse Surgery (PNS). The PNS designation was soon changed to Registered Nurse First Assistant (RNFA) position. BCORNG identified a need for and interest in the development of an RNFA educational program that would be offered in BC and available nationally. The BCORNG Executive sought a credible educational partner to assist them in reaching this goal. The British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT) was seen to be such a



First issue of the quarterly newsletter News & Views.



BCORNG first Standards Nursing Care.

partner and seed money of \$15,000 was provided by BCORNG. This money, in addition to a grant for \$35,000 obtained by Marnie Simon, a BCORNG Past President, was used, in part, to develop the program that was offered for a few years. Once perioperative nursing was recognised as a specialty by CNA, perioperative nurses from across Canada met at the CNA headquarters to collaborate on writing the certification exam. Participants from BC included Marnie Simon, Gloria Stephens, and Lorraine Varner.² Others have followed these original BCORNG representatives to CNA and since the first certification exam was offered in 1995, numerous BCORNG members have attained certification in perioperative nursing.³ In 1995, BCORNG, in partnership with ORNAC, once again hosted a National Conference – the 14th hosted in Vancouver. The following year BCORNG celebrated its 30th anniversary, at a provincial conference in Victoria, during which founding and past Executive members participated in the opening ceremonies and were presented with a 30-year pin.

Not long after the new millennium began BCORNG moved to develop and use new technologies to communicate with the membership. As Marcy McKay explained:

“In 2000, ORNAC decided to update its website and I took on that role. At the time I was President-Elect of BCORNG and attended ORNAC meetings with the President. As I revamped the ORNAC site I thought it would be a great opportunity for the province to have its own site and so I built the website for BC at that time. Our address was www.ornac.ca/bcorng.htm. Many other provinces also got on board, at that time, and I do believe for the first couple of years, there was no charge to the province for the website.” (personal communication, 2014)

The June, 2001, issue of News & Views was the first e-mail edition offered to the membership, and, as of the summer of 2008, the newsletter became accessible only through the website. During this decade, BCORNG provincial conferences were held in a variety of regions around the province and were, in part, facilitated by the use of new technology for communication amongst the planning committee and membership. In 2006 BCORNG celebrated its 40th anniversary at the conference at Harrison Hot Springs and a number of special events were included. During the final years of this decade I can only use the word ‘transformation’ as the term most appropriate in relation to BCORNG. The dissolution of RNABC and the formation of the College of RNs of BC (CRNBC), both in 2005, led to BCORNG making the change to become a society under the provincial Society Act and registering as PRNABC in 2009. Simultaneously, a decision was made to put the BCORNG records into safe keeping and, in 2007, the BCORNG Historian, with the assistance of the BC History of Nursing Group (BCHNG) archival committee, transferred the records of BCORNG to the BCHNG archives at UBC School of Nursing.

2010 on... In 2010, PRNABC implemented on-line membership applications and renewals. Additionally,

BCORNG/PRNABC Archival Photographs



BCORNG 30-year pin presented to founding and past executive members.

Without the dedication of so many perioperative nurses, who have advocated for perioperative patients and perioperative nursing practice throughout the province and across Canada, our history would be negligible.

for the 2010 provincial conference held in Penticton, the planning committee utilized a professional conference planner for the first time... a successful practice that is continued today. Several of the recent changes that occurred at ORNAC also have significance for PRNABC. In the fall of 2014 PRNABC's membership application and renewal process took place through on-line registration via ORNAC. For reasons not fully understood, PRNABC now finds itself with a membership of only 189⁴ – a significant decrease from the number of 669 reported in the June 2008 issue of News & Views.⁵ This decline in membership is of concern and PRNABC is exploring possible reasons and ways to increase membership.

Many of the membership have shared their stories to update and expand the history of this dynamic organization. Without the dedication of so many perioperative nurses, who have advocated for perioperative patients and perioperative nursing practice throughout the province and across Canada, our history would be negligible. As Alice Moszczyński noted when writing about her experience with BCORNG:

“Another moment, or several moments, that particularly stand out for me, is that four of BC's perioperative nurses have been elected to the position of ORNAC President. And with Gloria Stephens, Bonnie McLeod, Marcy McKay, and Rupinder Khotar

speaking for perioperative nursing at the national level, I am confident that BC nurses have a strong voice and are well represented.” (personal communication, 2014).

For any further information and to view the complete online history, please visit www.prnabc.ca and/or contact Susan Knoll, PRNABC Historian, via email historian@prnabc.ca.

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