

1949

CLASS HISTORY

During the last three years the seniors of 1949 have tried to keep the cat in the bag, but have found that it was quite impossible. So now the cat reveals a few of the exciting adventurous, daring episodes of their days in nurses training.

On September 15, 1946 a warm sunny autumn day fifteen young women arrived in Des Moines, the first class to start training in the new nurses home. They were Kathleen Baldus, Story City, who had previously been working as a bookkeeper in a Montgomery Store in Ames, Hilda Besch, West Bend, who had just graduated from West Bend High School; Margies Cherry, Adel, who had been loafing and enjoying her leisure hours in California; Dolores Gallagher, who had experience in the Mercy Hospital in Cedar Rapids; Velma Gibbens, Murray, who was a country school teacher; Dolores Harrigan, Fort Dodge, who spent her vacation enjoying country living on her father's farm; Trudy Herbers, Halbur, who had experience as a clerk, bookkeeper and small town news reporter; Norma Jehns, Des Moines, who married six months after entering training; Patsy Kahe, Jefferson, who in one night decided the nursing career not for her; Mary Kersey, Des Moines, who married a farmer in her senior year; Madalaine Magin, Des Moines, who was an employee in the x-ray department; Geraldine Payer, Pechentass, who was a waitress in the well known Pechentass Cafe; Verlaine Pearson, Boone, who after two years married Johnny; Agnes Powers, Fort Dodge, who quit of poor health; Shirley Younggreen, California, who married Mac the x-ray technician.

Their classes they thought were too heavy; their teachers very smart, but expecting them to know too much in so short a time and the superintendent of nurses too strict with house regulations and not lenient enough with late leaves, but they struggled through the years and they will someday appreciate the efforts of their superiors.

I can remember seeing them on their first assignments of floor duty---that of serving trays. What a terrible time they had balancing the trays on one hand as they were taught in the classroom. And then their bewilderment as to which was bed one, two or three in a ward room. One little probie misidentified an artificial flower to be a potted plant and so watered it. Oh, what the poor floor supervisors had to put up with! But as the days and weeks rolled on, they finally passed the pre-clinical examinations and on February 2, 1947 the class was capped in the new nurses lounge. It was an important day for all of them, for they knew from this day on the doctors, floor, nurses and hospital personnel would demand more of them.

But a few days later you would never have recognized these girls as those dignified young women who had just received their caps. What happened? Let me tell you I had a good ring-side seat and saw it all. It was on a Sunday night Feb. 9, 1949. Sister Mary Helen, director of nurses, Sister Mary Sebastian, assistant director and Mrs. Meggs their house mother had all left for the evening. Trudy Herbers and Shirley Younggreen had gone out on dates. But the others up until 11:30 were not letting dust settle under their feet either, let me tell you. First they started the game "Hide and Go Seek" using the whole fourth floor and then later started to move mattresses into room 408. They all worked fast enough to get the lights off and be still as a mouse. Then something happened that sounded like this;; Screech--- the door opens slowly so as not to awaken anyone. Someone makes an effort to walk softly to turn on a table light but trips over something and hears a meek hollow "ouch" and a lot of snickering. What was it? She fell over Baldus and landed on Gallagher and Besch.

On March 11, 1947 the Senior B class started. Quite an active group, a variety of personalities and tentiveness for mischief. They were: Tersa Hunt, and Donita Henricks of Jefferson, who were clerks in a dress shop; Anna Marie Hamm, Des Moines, who had been keeping house for her parents, Betty Henry, Des Moines, who had been a laboratory technician in Des Moines General, Romona Connelly, Lindsey, Nebraska, and Juanita Shelker, Dawson, nurse aids, Shirley Welte, Richmond, a typist in a callender factory; Alyce Lindsay, Omaha, a college student and Mary Nichollette, a wave.

Out of nine only five are graduating. Mary Nichollette made the remark "Why should I spend the best years of my life here" Alyce Lindsay found the life too dull but discovered it could be more duller still. Anna Marie Hamm was asked to leave for various reasons and Donita Henricks became Mrs. Fatland in her Junior year.

They also thought the pre-clinical period a pretty stiff course, but they too made the grade and received their caps on August 4, 1947.

Life ran quite smoothly for awhile until one night in April. About eleven-thirty someone spied a prowler in the home. The authorities were informed, the news spread rapidly and by twelve every one was awake except Welt who sleeps through anything. The whole building was welllighted and detective men searching in every room hoping to find the prowler. However, no one ever found out how he entered, how he left, or who he was. The Senior B class had an additional problem on their hands. "Big Hamm" and "Little Lindsay" roommates, had been out that night and by twelve were still feeling like celebrating. They tried their best to keep Hamm from roaming in the hall wearing her flimsy black gown. Miss Henry kept Lindsay in bed by sitting on her.

Summer brought picnics and new romances. Yes, picnics brought Dick and Baldus together. Also Scotty and Harrigan. And I don't think I'll ever forget the roar of the motorcycles when Bob, Paul and Conney came over to take Cherry, Shelker and Connelly out.

At one picnic the seniors hunted all over Union Park in the dark trying to find a fireplace for roasting weiners. Unsuccessful in discovering any, they used a garbage can and nearly had to pay for a new one when the custodians caught them in the act. But since they were Mercy Students the matter was dropped.

By the end of the Junior year the class was beginning the three months in surgery and I think then the majority formed their opinions about the doctors. Even though the surgery took concentration and a great deal of work, it also had its moments of enlightenment. One hot summer afternoon Dr. Griffin gave the surgical crew a watermelon. They sent the watermelon seeds down to the lab. in a specimen basin with a specimen slip filled out---Name--Wm. Seed Time--2:30 P.M. Specimen-- Vesicle Calculi Dr. Dr. Griffin and labeled Stat.

After surgery followed the affiliation with St. Bernard Mental Institution at Council Bluffs. They found psychiatric nursing definitely different in comparison with general duty nursing. There were psychoneurotics of every type, schizophrenias and alcoholics. The Alibi and the "17 Club" will always be associated with their stay in C. B. What a time Baldus had trying to keep from Magin, her roommate any trailing evidence that she had a drink of wine with a group of nurses at the Alibi. She went home to bed, burying her head under a pillow. For most of the classes C.B.

seemed to bring about engagements and marriages. But not this class except for a local casket maker and Betty Henry. Engagements between Carlos and Payer and Bob and Cherry were broken.

Harrigan on her last day became dreadfully ill and on her arrival back to Des Moines by Rocket was hospitalized and went to surgery for an appendectomy. The two gold-fish she got while a patient were named C. B. and B. C. C.B. for Council Bluffs and B.C. for Dr. B.C. Barnes who did the surger. Romona Connely was injured when the horse she was riding became frightened and wedged itself between a pole and a truck. So she came back and spent a week in the hospital.

And now I'll creep back in my back with still many of the secrets of the class unrevealed.