



## First baby took time

Four expectant mothers waited four long days at the Fort St John General Hospital before the spell was broken and Lynda Fehr became the mother of the first baby of the New Year at 7:10 am on January 4, 1976.

The baby, a 7 lb 11 oz girl — Tracey-Lynn Fehr, became the winner of the Alaska Highway News First Baby of the Year Contest and will receive the numerous prizes offered by local merchants.

By the end of the day, the

prizes from local merchants. The parents will receive letters of introduction to these merchants and will present them to collect their prizes. The First Baby Contest has been conducted by the Alaska Highway News for over 15 years.

Prizes for the first baby include: a diaper bag from The Fort Pharmacy, a convertible crib-size comforter and sleeping bag from Central Department Store, cigars for Dad from the Frontier Inn Hotel, a musical cradle floral

FORT ST JOHN'S First Baby of the Year gives a lusty demonstration of what may develop into a fine singing voice in later years. Tracey-Lynn, Mrs Lynda Fehr's new daughter, was born January 4 at 7:10 am and became the winner of the city's first baby contest.

three other babies were born to fill the near-empty nursery.

Last year's first baby, Roger Jacobsen, son of Mr and Mrs Klaus Jacobsen arrived on the scene at 8:43 pm on January 2.

Closer to the actual New Year, was the birth of Chad Gordon London, 9 lb 3 oz son of Mr and Mrs Alec London who arrived at 2:02 pm on December 31. While missing out on the large array of prizes, Chad's parents did receive a consolation prize from one of the advertisers.

As parents of the First Baby, Mr and Mrs Wayne Fehr receive a number of valuable

arrangement from Friendly Gardens Florists and a \$20 voucher for baby supplies from Overwaitea.

They will also receive; a pair of baby boots from Gaye Shoes, a credit voucher for 30 quarts of milk Northern Alberta Dairy Pool, a steak dinner from Masciangelos Beefeaters, a one year subscription to the Alaska Highway News and a \$25 gift certificate from the Fort St John Co-op Association.

The Londons for their last baby of the year win a \$15 gift voucher from Mackenzie Drugs.

# Hospital WA

## name executive

JAN 28, 1976

At their first meeting in the New Year held Monday evening January 19, 1976, the Womens' Auxiliary elected their new officers for the year as follows:

President — Vi Woodward; 1st vice-president — Marlene Daneluk, in charge of Ways & Means; 2nd vice-present — Maureen Powell, in charge of Social Action; 3rd vice-president — Jeanne Gerein, in charge of Publicity; secretary — Dianne Knott; treasurer — Marianne Sodercrew.

Elected to head committees were: Marie Olfert, memberships; Doreen Fell, Hospital Booth; Faye Boyd, Hospital Cart; Diane Brooks, Memorial Fund; Marianne Sodercrew, Baby Photos; Mavis Forrest, Hairdressing for Patients, Vi Woodward, Candy Stripers; Marie Olfert, member to the Local Council of Women.

Outgoing President, Faye Boyd, thanked the past year's officers and committee members for their co-operation and assistance and expressed the hope that the Auxiliary members would attend the monthly meetings more faithfully and become more active in Auxiliary projects benefiting our local hospital in the care and treatment of patients.

The new president, Vi Woodward, welcomed the new officers and committee members. After a short discussion concerning the annual dinner meeting to be held in February, president Woodward advised that she would be calling a special executive meeting to finalize arrangements and the date and place of the dinner meeting to be held in February. Watch for paper and radio announcements in this regard.

A motion to donate the amount of \$300.00 to a fund for an Audiometry Room at the hospital was unanimously passed (see picture of presentation of the cheque elsewhere in today's paper) and

the proceeds from the sale of tickets on a lovely Afghan made by Mrs Rita Carriere. The Afghan is on display in the window at Rosebrook Flooring and tickets may be purchased from proprietor, Rose De Tonnancourt or any member of the Auxiliary. The draw for the lucky winner will take place at the Womens' Hospital Auxiliary Mayday Tea to be held the first Saturday in May in the Assembly Hall at the hospital between 2 and 5 pm. Plenty of time, members, to sell tickets galore for the benefit of this very important Audiometry Room.

FEB 4, 1976

## Slow gov't pay embarrasses board

Late payments by the provincial government for capital equipment is becoming a source of embarrassment for the Fort St John Hospital Board.

The completion of work on the third X-ray room was delayed till October for construction reasons and has been delayed since then because the government has not come up with the \$90,000 to pay for the equipment to go in it.

Hospital acquisition procedure is to order equipment for which budget approval has been received, and then to apply to the Regional Hospital Board and the Department of Health for the money to pay the bill. The board and the department share the bills on a 25-75 basis.

Administrator Wilson stated that the Regional Board paid up without demur. However, getting money out of the provincial government was

more difficult. He quoted the X-Ray equipment as an example, "It is currently scattered about in half a dozen warehouses in the city, and has been for the last six months. We can't pay for it until the government gives us the money. In the meantime we are just fortunate that the supplier is not charging us interest."

However neither is the supplier installing the units, George Broadhurst, chairman of the board said that it wasn't a fair practice to let suppliers go unpaid, and would in any case lead to future suppliers adding in six months' interest to the bill before even quoting.

## Guards for hospital

Security in the Hospital is causing headaches to the administration. The matter was discussed at the Board meeting of January 28, when the operating budget was brought

up. Administrator Rick Wilson was asked if there was any provision in the budget for security guards. The administration feels that two guards on a shift system are needed.

He replied, "There is a provision there, but the operating budget has not been approved yet. I have tried for the last three years to get security staff, but so far without success."

Main problem areas are in the Emergency Reception areas. The board feels that there is an unfair burden on the nurses and receptionists who sometimes have to handle drunk and abusive patients, and the people who bring them in.

"In fact," added Wilson, "we sometimes have more trouble

with their friends than with the patients."

The modernizations taking place at the hospital include a new emergency reception area, which incorporates a holding room for such people. However it needs to be backed by manpower.

The hospital has also had trouble with minor vandalism, and on one occasion they had a break in and a drug case was raided.

## Hospital building still on schedule

Construction at the Fort St John General Hospital is proceeding according to schedule, according to the Hospital Administrator Rick Wilson. Speaking at a Hospital Board meeting on Wednesday, he stated that he expected to have the new buildings ready for June 15.

Schmidt, the hospital's construction engineer was able to scotch a rumor that had been circulated among the board that completion would be delayed by two weeks.

The Hospital has used the construction management technique of building the extension, whereby the hospital itself co-ordinates the work, rather than just calling in a construction firm to handle the project from start to finish. They consider this to be a cheaper and more desirable method of getting what they want in the new building.

It does involve the Hospital Board in some trivia, however, such as the design and cost of

MAR 31, 1976  
the directional lights for the new entrance. This matter was brought up at the Wednesday meeting, when board member Doug Allan asked whether the plastic signs would be shatter-proof, and therefore vandal-proof at all temperatures. (Plastic shatters easily at lower temperatures.) He was informed by Schmidt that the plastic used in these lights was the kind that was used by NASA in American spacecraft.

"This plastic is the toughest we can find," said Engineer Schmidt. "It is one eighth of an inch thick, and in tests has survived the impact of a ten pound rock. It is highly unlikely that somebody will be able to damage it."

This was as well, the board decided, when they found out the price. Each unit, (there are seven of them), will cost over \$700. While that includes the plastic and the metal frame, it does not cover the heavy concrete base on which the lights will sit, or the wiring for them.

The lights are to be mounted low, so that they will be clearly visible from cars. At darkness, they will illuminate automatically.

In other departments, work is nearing completion. The new X-Ray room is set up and merely needs tidying now, according to Wilson. Work in the new laboratories is a few days behind he added, but three men were working there, and they expected to catch up. The air circulation had been brought in line eight weeks previously.

# Hospital deficit "not bad"

MAR 3, 1976

FEB 18, 1976

The Fort St John General Hospital recorded a deficit of \$13,000 for the year of 1975. Expressing satisfaction with the figure, Hospital Administrator Rick Wilson commented, "That's not bad in a \$1,980,000 budget."

The Hospital had requested a budget of \$2,980,000 from the Department of Health at the beginning of the year, but this had later been trimmed by the department to \$1,980,000. Despite this reduction, the Hospital administration had successfully kept the deficit to \$13,000.

Administrator Wilson gave these figures to the Hospital Board at a meeting on Wednesday. He explained that hospital finances were a difficult thing to predict as the basis for them was the payment to the Hospital for available beds made by the Department of Health.

"In theory," he stated, "the figure payable to us by them for an occupied bed is \$93.65 per day. For an unoccupied bed, the figure is set at \$85, in recognition of the fact that when a patient is discharged, hospital expenses do not cease. However, in practice that has tended to be a discretionary figure."

The government sometimes pays more than the \$85 a day figure, and sometimes rather less. "Either way, it makes it hard to guess the budget," said Wilson. "One year we ended up with \$12,000 over, this year we had a \$13,000 deficit."

The subject of hospital finance is evidently causing concern to the provincial government. A letter from the new Minister of Health, the Hon Bob McClelland calling for 'fiscal responsibility' on the part of hospitals was circulated to Board members before the meeting. The letter drew attention to the shortage of money in the provincial coffers and warned hospital boards to keep within their budgets.

While admitting that some hospitals did a good job, it

criticized others for accumulating deficits and added that the government might not vote them the funds to cover the deficits in future.

Board member Doug Allan criticized the minister's remarks. "Most hospitals are exercising fiscal responsibility. He should be sure of his facts before sending letters like that."

"In some ways the hospital finds itself in an anomalous position," continued Administrator Wilson. "The better we make our service, the more beds we have unoccupied, and the less money we get."

Chairman of the Board George Broadhurst had asked him why the hospital's occupancy rate (55 per cent for the month of January) con-

tinued to be low, and whether the low rate was because of the continued to be low, and whether the low rate was because of the construction work in progress. that the doctors were not keeping patients in as long as had been the case in the past. Wilson replied that this was so and represented good medical practice. They were treating as many patients as they had ever done. However, this increased efficiency meant that the occupancy rate was reduced and with it the hospital income.

Joanne Mucci, who is the Hospital Board representative on the Regional Hospital Board, reported that the Regional Board intended to take up the whole question of year-end deficits with Don Phillips MLA on a coming visit to Victoria.

## \$10,000 from Lion's

The Fort St John Lion's Club presented the Hospital with a cheque for \$10,000 at the Mackenzie Inn on Saturday night. The cheque was accepted on behalf of the hospital by Administrator Rick Wilson, who stated that the money was going to be used to buy furnishings for the new reception area at the hospital when the reconstruction is completed.

Wilson also brought a model of the new reception area to the presentation, which the Lion's Club tied in with their annual ball.

Much of the money had come from the proceeds of selling the city ambulance back to the provincial government. The Lion's club had originally purchased the vehicle for the city, but when the Barrett government took over ambulance services across the province they paid the city \$7,200 for it. The city handed the money back to the Lions who then presented it to the Hospital along with an additional \$2,800 that they had raised.



VIC WHEAT GETS information on the new hospital reception area from Hospital Administrator Rick Wilson (right). Wilson brought

the architect's model to the annual Lion's dance where he received a cheque for \$10,000 on behalf of the hospital from the Fort St John Lion's Club.

# Regional reps make contacts in Victoria

A delegation from the Peace River Liard Regional District saw a number of ministers in Victoria but obtained little in concrete action or assurances according to the information in a press release issued this week.

The delegation made up of chairman C E Framst, vice chairman Joanne Mucci and directors A M Simmons and C Lasser along with R Simpson representing the Fort Nelson Hospital and Mrs D Foster, administrator, were in Victoria from March 8 to 11.

They conferred with Grace McCarthy, minister of recreation, Ben Marr, deputy minister of environment, Tom Moore, department of municipal affairs, R M McLelland minister of health, Sturrock, deputy minister of highways and Donald Johansen of the BC Energy Commission.

Predator control in community pastures, dedication of the Monkman Park and funding under the Community Recreational Facilities Act

(Continued on page three)

MARCH 13, 1976



GEOFF AINSWORTH, medical director of the Speech and Hearing Fund receives a cheque of \$500 from Lydia Ostachek (right), honored Royal Lady of the Royal Purple while Ruby Mazey, associate Royal Lady looks on. The money was donated by the Royal Purple for the purpose of building a sound proof room at the hospital.

## Regional . . .

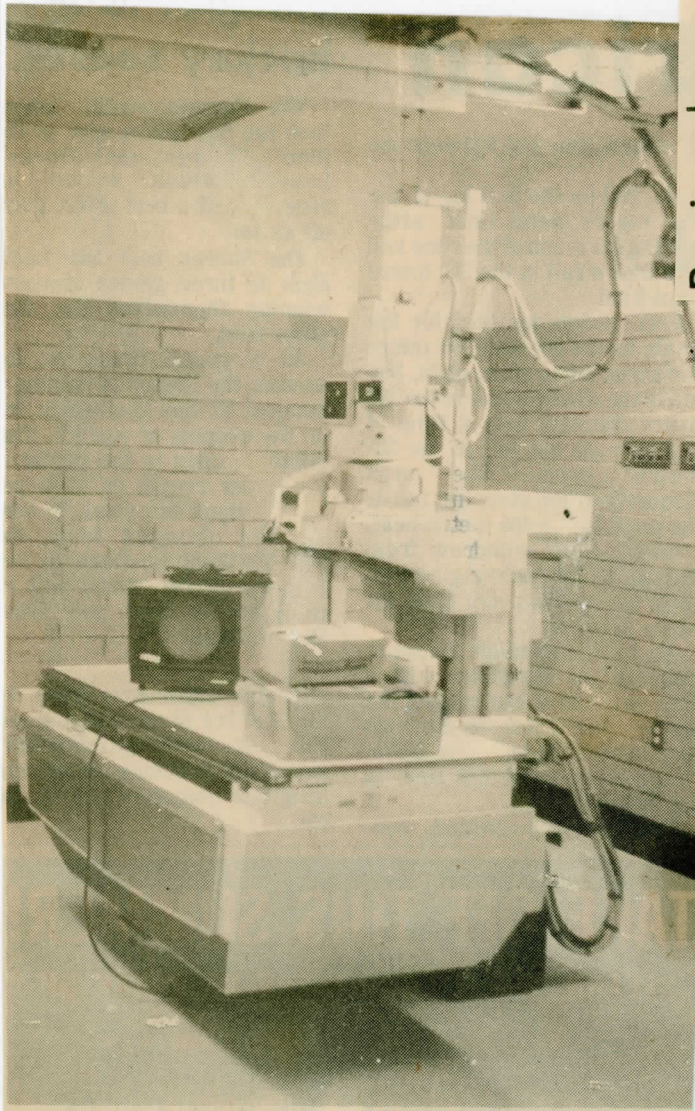
(Continued from page one) were discussed with Grace McCarthy. No commitments were made of any of these subjects.

Minor changes in the Land Commission Act administrative procedures were promised by Ben Marr to speed up the flow of applications and appeals.

Consideration of over-expenditures in operating expenses for hospitals in this area was assured by the minister of health but he also reminded the delegation that the provincial government will be scrutinizing these expenditures more closely than in the past.

The representative of the BC Energy Commission told the group that the study of the disparity in retail pricing of gasoline was now before the cabinet. He indicated that studies may also be taken on propane, gasoline and diesel fuel at a wholesale level.

The committee had reminded Johannessen that residents of Dawson Creek and Fort St John had to pay as much as 20 cents per gallon more than residents



THE HOSPITAL'S NEW X-RAY machine differs from the old model in that it can take movie pictures and allows the physician to inspect a patients' internal organs on the TV screen, as the patient lies on the slab.

# New x-ray room opens in hospital

APR 7, 1976

Curious passers-by have noticed that the new hospital extension is rapidly nearing completion and may be curious to know when it will be open for business. After all, it's been a long drawn out affair and the confusion without and within has created an inconvenience for medical staff and patients alike.

The end is in sight, though. Part of the new wing is already in operation, as the X-Ray Department was commissioned on Friday afternoon. The other new additions are also on the way, and the builders will be out by June 15, according to Hospital Administrator Ric Wilson.

The new X-Ray room is an impressive improvement to the existing facilities and has as its centrepiece a new machine that stands to the existing equip-

ment, as would an acrobat to a cripple.

Where the present equipment takes only still photographs, the new equipment, valued at \$98,000, takes movies. It is equipped with an image intensifier and a television camera. The patient lies on the slab and the movements of his internal organs can be studied and watched on a tv set as they work, or perhaps don't work.

It is clearly a powerful diagnostic tool, and as up to date as any equipment to be found outside a teaching hospital in the country.

Bob Bruce, a member of the Hospital Board, stated. "This hospital is one of the most modern hospitals in western Canada. You would find no better equipment if you were in New Westminster."

The new X-Ray machine works from a 1,000ma transformer, itself costing an additional \$20,000, which is twice as powerful as the present unit.

# Liberation for the lab workers

Progress is not just the advance of technology and the construction of ever more complex machines. It is also the steady improvement of conditions under which people work. The new laboratory complex at the Fort St John General Hospital is an excellent illustration of this.

While much of the equipment is new and of such advanced design that no better would be found in any other hospital in the province, the most notable improvement to the pre-existing facilities is in terms of employee convenience and accessibility.

The old laboratory was small. It was cramped and more than two people in the same aisle caused a traffic jam. Not only that, the clinical cleanliness of the white working surfaces caused a tiring glare under the fluorescent lights. To cap it all, there was no

administrative space. Said Erica Davies who is in charge of the laboratory at the hospital, "I have worked in the lab for 13 years and this is the first time I have had an office."

The new lab is much larger, over three times the floor area of the old one in fact. It occupies part of the top level of the new extension. As well as providing office space for the boss, it also includes a neat pathology section for Dr. Survis, the resident pathologist.

Apart from the sheer size of the new facility, which increases employee job satisfaction through having more elbow room, the most obvious difference to the layman is the refreshing color scheme. The working surfaces and furniture are covered with a dull plastic finish in shades of olive green, orange and yellow. This cuts out the 'glare' of the overhead lights.

No more apt comparison between the new lab and the old could be made than Hospital Administrator Wilson's comment. "I came in here yesterday and I thought nobody was working. Then I looked again and they were all there tucked away in corners."

Erica Davies expressed her

satisfaction with one new piece of equipment in particular, the new fridge. It replaces a couple of older and smaller units. She explained the advantages of a housewife trading in a scrubbing board for an automatic washer.

"It gives us better tem-

perature control but the principal advantage is that it makes inventory control much easier. Instead of having supplies spread out all over the lab, everything is here. I open a drawer, if we've got it, it's there if it's not we order it. Saves a lot of time."

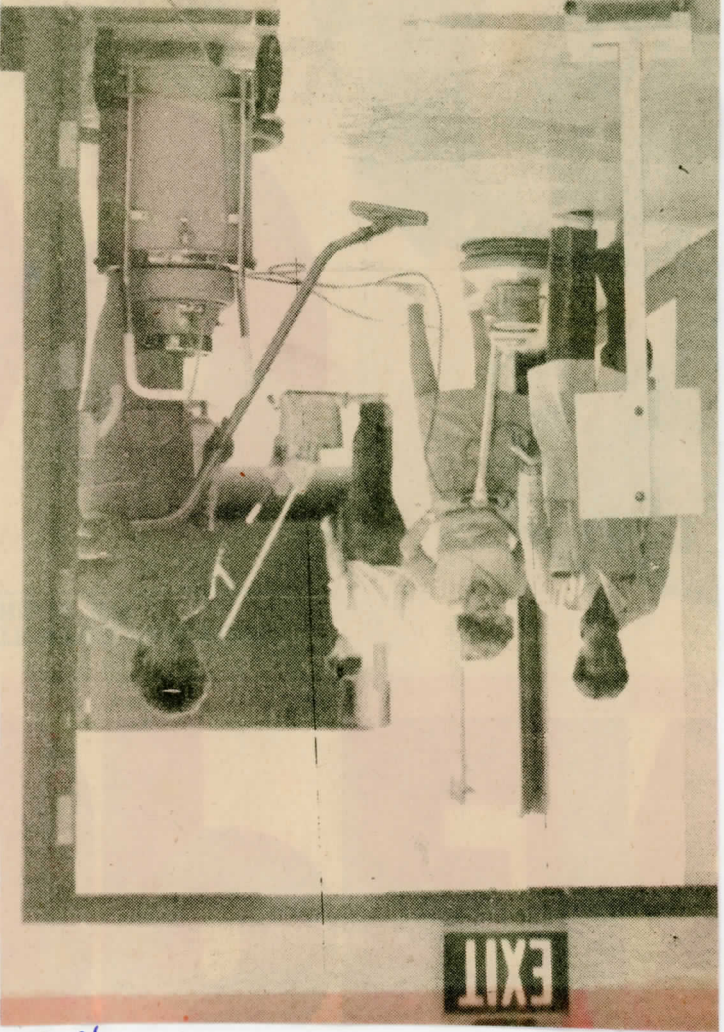
Along with the new fridge came a blood bank. Except for the test tubes of specimens it looks more like a pop dispenser, but somebody's life will depend

## Lab workers . . .

(Continued from page two)

on the contents one day. The lab includes all the usual diagnostic departments and equipment from an incubator to the two fume hoods that dominate the room. These allow lab technicians to work comfortably with noxious or acidic fumes while making tests. Said Erica Davies, "This is a

real step forward for everyone who works in this department. In one respect we're way ahead of even the big hospitals in Vancouver. Even in the biggest of them, I've never seen quite such a well laid out and designed lab facility. This is good."

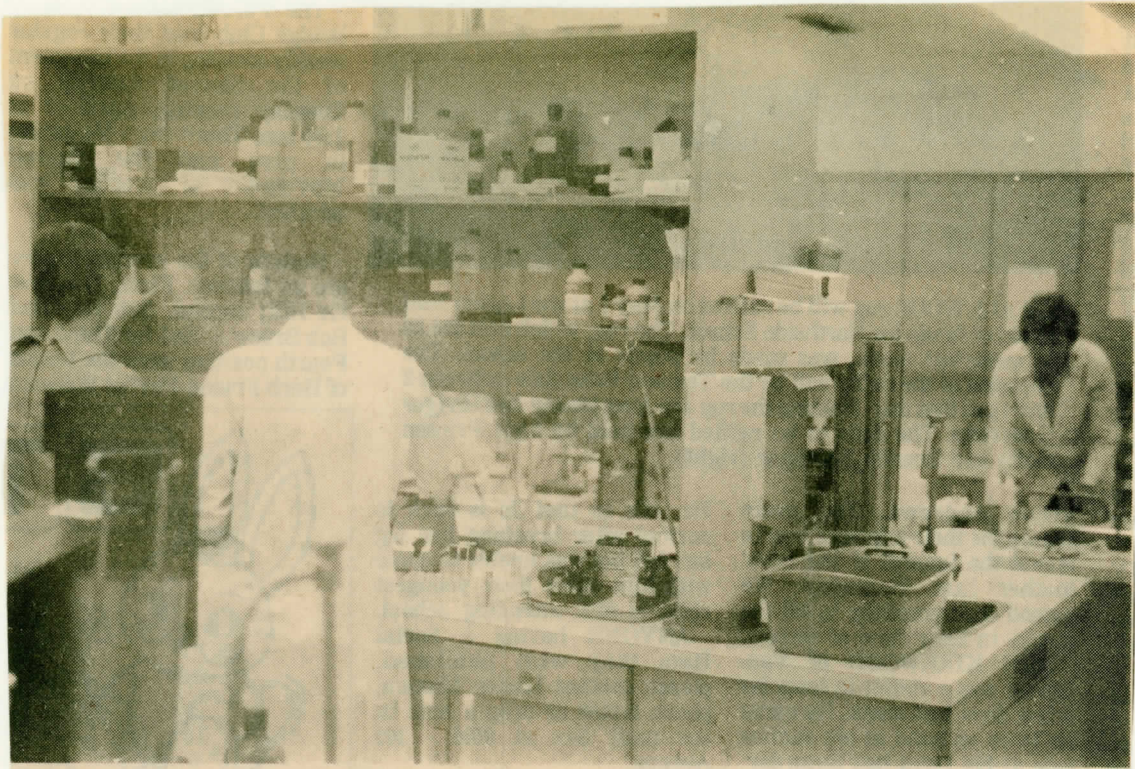


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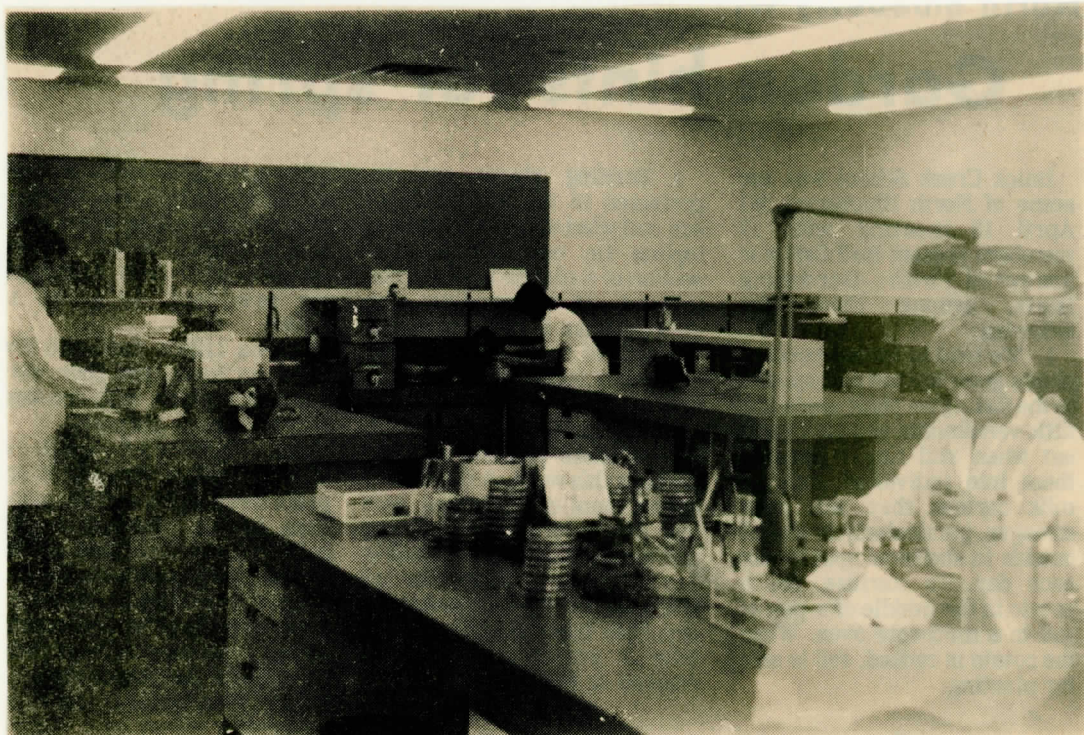
IT WAS BUSY BUSY on Friday morning as the hospital cleaning staff brushed up the place where the new X-Ray department was to open in the afternoon. The new department is one of the major projects in the hospital construction.

APR 14, 1976

APR 21, 1976

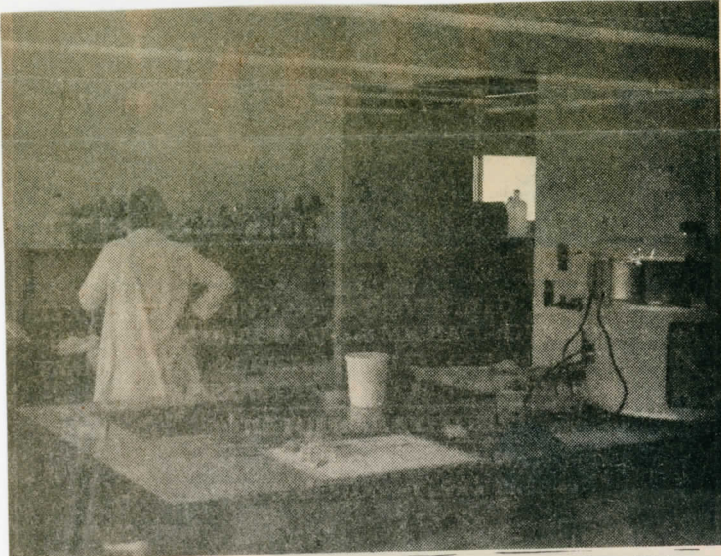


THE OLD LAB at the hospital was small and cramped. Technicians working on sophisticated diagnostic tests were working virtually elbow to elbow.

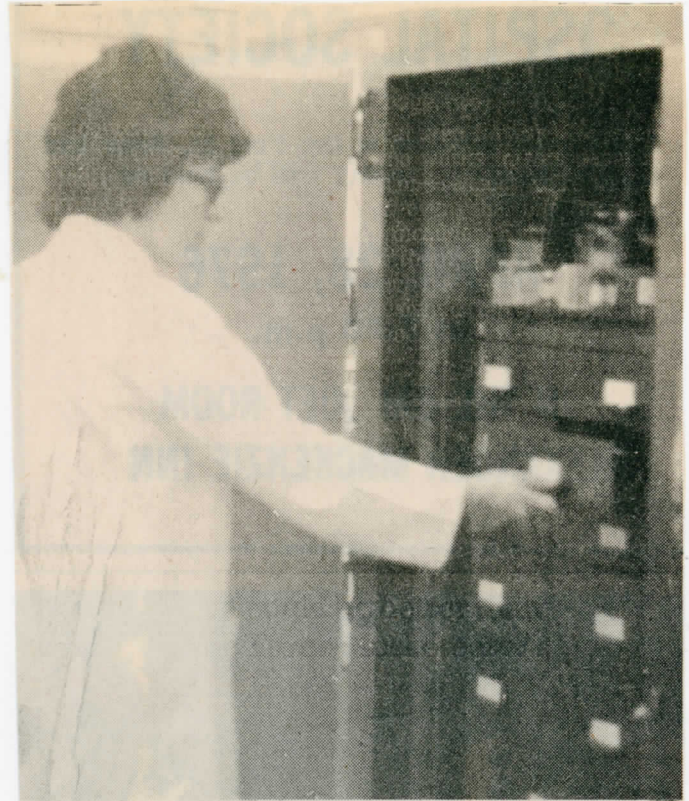


THE MOST important improvement to the old lab facilities in the new hospital laboratory is the vast amount of space for staff to work.





THE RESIDENT PATHOLOGIST, Dr James Survis, will be working at this table. Cadavers are cut up elsewhere, but individual organs are dissected on the slab in the foreground. The machine to the right encapsulates body tissues in wax to enable microscope slides to be prepared from them.



EVERY WOMAN'S IDEA of what a tidy fridge should look like became a reality in the new Hospital Laboratory. Erica Davies who is in charge of the laboratory reaches for supplies in one of the handy bins.



LAB WORKERS SPRAYED with dangerous fluids can use this emergency sprinkler in the new laboratory. Hospital Trustee Regina Schaerer said that safety had been a prime consideration in its design.

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FORT ST JOHN, BC, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 7, 1976



STAMP OUT TB IT says on the side. That's what Operation Doorstep is trying to do and their travelling X-ray unit will be on the Super-Valu parking lot from April 12 to April 15 inclusive.

## Chest x-rays in F S J

Operation Doorstep, the mobile chest x-ray unit operated by the Division of Tuberculosis Control of the provincial Department of Health, will be in Fort St John for four days, beginning April 12, to provide free chest x-rays to all adults in the Fort St John area.

The unit, a tractor trailer equipped with miniature chest x-ray equipment, will be parked in the Super-Valu parking lot, 10430 - 100 Street, Fort St John,

on April 12 through to April 15 inclusive. It will be open to the public from 1 to 4 pm and from 7 to 8 pm daily.

There is no charge for this service, and all x-rays are read by Department of Health chest physicians for signs of lung cancer, tuberculosis and heart abnormalities.

From Fort St John, Operation Doorstep will move to other Northern Interior Centres including Pouce Coupe, Dawson Creek and Chetwynd.

# Goodbye to the sisters

APR 21, 1976

Last Monday another chapter in the pioneer story of Fort St John came to an end with the departure of the remaining Roman Catholic Sisters of Providence for good.

The four sisters who have for the last three years been continuing a ministry in the hospital which began in 1929, were officially honored and bade farewell by the Catholic Women's League on behalf of the whole community at a tea held at the Immaculata School.

Sisters Alice, Philomena, Mary Patrick and Pauline will now be returning to Providence House in Edmonton which is their headquarters.

The long association the sisters have had with the Fort St John community began in 1929 they came to the village to open the district's first hospital, a ten bed facility, known as Providence Hospital.

Long-time resident Duncan Cran recalls some of the incidents which eventually prompted local residents to pitch in and establish a hospital for the North Peace.

"One man from Rose Prairie limped into the doctor's office having cut off or partly cut off some of his toes. The doctor managed to perform quite a difficult operation of stitching up the injury without any anaesthetic."

But such practices were primitive and more important, risky. A hospital was the only answer. So it was that C M Finch became the founding president of the hospital board with Father L Beuglet serving as secretary.

Finch donated a ten acre piece of land for the site and helped raise the initial \$300 needed to get the project off the ground while Father Beuglet

was given the task of approaching the Providence sisters working at Midnapore, just south of Calgary. At first he was turned away. The sisters told him there were 97 others ahead of him waiting for their help, but Father Beuglet persisted and managed to persuade one of the sisters to at least come up and give the area an inspection. The sisters obliged and in a short time the inspection became a commitment to establish a hospital.

Sister M Gilberts was sent to serve as Superior with Sister Gerard Majella as bursar, Sister Catherine de Bologne as the RN and Sister Agatha as the cook.

On September 2 of 1931 the hospital was opened. Dr H Brown served as the resident doctor and two more nurses had been added to the staff, Sister Alfred of the Cross and Miss

(Continued on page two)



remaining four sisters, (l-r) Sister Alice Dan- cause, Sister Philomena, Sister Mary Patrick and Sister Pauline Kruchten with a commemorative plate in appreciation for the work they have done through the years.

APR 21, 1976

A FOND FAREWELL is bid to the Sisters of Providence at a tea held at Immaculata School last Monday afternoon. It was over 40 years ago that the sisters came up to F.S.J to open the first hospital. Audrey Brummet, centre, presents the

## Sisters . . .

(Continued from page one)

Laura Murphy.

For most of its history the hospital was contained within the same 50 x 30' building although a third storey was added during the forties.

Finally in 1962 a totally new 100 bed hospital was opened, equipped with all the modern conveniences.

In 1973 the hospital was bought by the Regional District

and the Sisters of Providence were relieved of their administration duties. The name was changed to the Fort St John General Hospital.

Four sisters have continued to nurse in the hospital until this month, when they withdrew altogether and have gone on to continue their ministry to the sick in other areas.