

1989



Mother Colleen, and new son Erik

Erik, Krystallyn top baby honors

The New Year's baby derby in Fort St. John turned out to be a bit of a squeaker for 1989.

The first arrival was Erik Karl Pedersen, who was born at 1:26 p.m. on the first day of the year. Another newcomer was born just 15 minutes later.

Erik's parents are Colleen Reeder and Frank Pedersen; it's their first child. He weighed in at six pounds, 12 ounces.

Several Fort St. John merchants provided gifts for Erik.

The B.C. Medical Association

presented an infant car seat...it's part of their annual promotion related to infant safety.

There were honors also bestowed on the last baby born in 1988.

Krystallyn Davies was born at 1:20 p.m. Dec. 31 and weighed six pounds, five ounces. Her parents are Brian and Kerry Lee Davies.

The Fort St. John womens' institute presented Krystallyn with a certificate of registration, a spoon and gift certificate worth \$25.



Photo by Scott Crowson

JAN 4, 1989

Erik Karl Pedersen is Fort St. John's 1989 New Year's Baby. Erik, the son of Colleen Reeder and Frank Pedersen, was born at 1:26 p.m. on Jan. 1, weighing six pounds 12 ounces. As the first baby of 1989, he receives an infant car seat from the B.C. Medical Association.



Treasurer Dolores MacLean (left), nurse Fran Karpiak, W.A. president Winnona Davidson

At \$8,000 it's *SOME* blanket

Blanket coverage takes on a new meaning at Fort St. John General Hospital with the new temperature-control blanket now in use in the operating rooms.

Looking more like a deflated air mattress, the 'blanket' is used to either raise or lower a patient's body temperature. Water is heated to different temperatures in the control unit and then pumped through the veins of the blanket. The patient lies on top of the pad.

According to operating room nurse Fran Karpiak, the hospital "was desperate for it." It can be used in cases of frostbite, hypothermia, high fevers and also in the recovery room.

"We can set the temperature of the blanket to what we want, or we can put a temperature probe on the patient and adjust up or down to maintain a constant."

Karpiak explained that there are six blankets in use at the hospital, one for each of the operating room stretchers, plus four child-sized blankets. "Two can be plugged in at a time --- it's great!"

for some of the other items, they would just have to do without."

"We're desperate for volunteers," said Davidson. "We may have to cut some of our services if we don't get more help."

The Women's Auxiliary meets the third Monday of every month at the hospital, at 7:30 p.m. If you are interested in volunteering, please call Joan Blatt, volunteer co-ordinator, at 787-0696.

Winnona Davidson, president of the Women's Auxiliary, said that the \$8,182 raised for the blanket came from several activities carried out by that group. "We raised over \$4,000 at our raffle just before Christmas, and the rest of the money came from our ongoing activities - the Gift Shop, the TV service for patients and the goody cart."

Last year, the Women's Auxiliary paid for a fetal monitor which cost over \$17,000. "The hospital prioritizes the items it needs the most according to the budget it has. If we didn't provide

'The boat was above me, not below...'

Don Godberson was among the survivors of a boating accident off the coast of Cuba Dec. 29 which took the lives of two women -- one of them a close friend, Frances Benson of Fort St. John. This is his account of what happened.

In loving memory.

I have recently returned home from a holiday in Santiago De Cuba where I was involved in an unfortunate boating accident Dec. 29, 1988.

Unfortunate as the accident did take the lives of two very fine ladies, one of them a resident of Fort St. John and my companion for the past 17 months.

The national TV news covered the story of the accident. However, I do feel they were somewhat misinformed.

Dec. 29, 11 a.m. -- a 51-passenger coach loaded beyond capacity as we had for standees departed from the Hotel Balnerio De Sol.

We travelled to the wharf of Santiago de Cuba.

There we were to board a large boat with scuba divers to the front, fishermen to the rear.

The boat's captain informed us, no problem - no problem we will all board a small boat; we will go out to sea where we will meet another large boat.

There we will transfer, you will catch your big fish and the scuba divers will enjoy their experiences.

Myself included, like a flock of sheep we filed aboard a boat that would accommodate about 20 people.

On board with us came all the scuba diving equipment that had filled the three cargo bays of the coach.

Waters off the Santiago de Cuba inlet were smooth; sight-seeing was terrific. There was history of the oldest city in Cuba...a cruise worthwhile on its own.

We moved out on the open sea, six, seven, eight-foot swells and waves. We were asked: exciting? enjoyable?

We were terrified

My companion and I were not swimmers; we were not excited: we were terrified.

I asked for life jackets. No problem! No problem! There are three of them on board the ship.

They all belonged to the scuba divers. In Cuba you supply your own life jacket.

As the boat started taking on water, I saw Mr. Allan

I realized the boat was above me, not below me. Grabbing whatever I could I pulled myself to the rear of the boat.

There I surfaced, took a deep breath and crawled onto the hull of the boat that was covered with barnacles.

There, I hung on for dear life, for two hours.

Regardless of the barnacles cutting and scratching; regardless of the waves knocking you about you hang on for dear life; it is the most precious item you will ever have.

Off go the shoes, it does not matter if they are special shoes. I'll never need them if a do not make it.

As for the shorts and T-shirt, the barnacles tore them off.

Thoughts, prayers, all the beautiful memories of life go through your mind. Eventually there is a helicopter flying overhead.

Rafts are falling into the water.

Fellow passengers are leaving the hull, making their way to the rafts.

No strength left

I can't swim -- I have no strength left in my body.

A short prayer and off into the water. I am going down for the last time; it is oh, so peaceful.

Unconscious for some time I have no idea of what took place until riding in the rear of a jeep. A gentleman was pounding my chest, cracking a couple of ribs while getting salt water out of my lungs and stomach.

Again that peaceful feeling took over, only to regain consciousness in the military hospital where four soldiers held my limbs as the doctor stuck needles into me to remove salt water from stomach and bladder.

Although I gave up I am ever so thankful they were rough. They knew what they were doing. I am here to tell the story.

Back in the land of the living I asked where my companion could be contacted.

I was informed she was in the provincial hospital in much better condition than I.

The people remaining in the cabin of the boat had not been cut and scraped by the barnacles; they had not been slapped about by the waves.

Thank God for all mercy; off to sleep I went.

The following morning I was informed that I was



Frances Benson

Then, back to the land of the living with doctors, nurses, bottles, tubes and machines. A great hospital with wonderful doctors and nurses.

Time heals most things.

Seven days later I was back to Hotel Balnerio De Sol where an orchestra and two dozen people were there to welcome my return.

Friends that I shall never forget.

During the following two hours we had music, food and plenty of discussion about a yearly reunion in memory of two companions that were unable to join us.

Regardless, beautiful memories forever.

Early the following morning, a close friend, Isabel, arranged the taxi which took us to the mortuary of Santiago De Cuba.

There, Isabel asked for my companion's cosmetics. I was given a cup of lemon tea as Isabel disappeared momentarily.

Tea finished it was now time to go view the body.

Blakeney bailing water. I knew we were in trouble.

Again I questioned our guide. He said, no problem, no problem. This is the best boat the Cuban government owns.

When other boats are in trouble this is the boat we use for rescue.

As our guide finished telling me that story he invited the ladies to the rear of the boat into the cabin.

Within seconds two flares were fired.

As the gentleman with the flare gun was off balance, the flares went into the water, not into the air.

At that moment the boat was capsizing -- over we went -- under I went.

Now what?

Do not panic; hold your breath.

being transferred to the provincial hospital.

Good, now I can see and talk to my companion.

The joy was short while on the stretcher as I was moved out of the military hospital.

A very fine lady who was on the boat at the time of the accident, bent over and kissed me.

She told me I had to be strong.

She said, we love you.

Then came the sad news.

My companion and her friend from Glasgow did not make it.

They passed on together in the cabin of the boat.

Their bodies are here.

Again, life can be peaceful; movements that I know nothing about.

Remember the past

Be strong; remember the past; be prepared.

To my surprise, there was my companion as beautiful as ever, one little scar on the right cheek.

I felt most certain that if I gently shook her shoulder she would awaken.

No, that does not awaken her; maybe a kiss on the cheek. No, that does not awaken her. She's probably very tired. I shall let her sleep a while longer.

Fran, rest in peace; we all love you; we will answer your request and go back to Cuba.

Next time I shall pack our life jackets.

With time and a little luck I may some day repeat your words: "This is my fourth trip to Cuba and the best ever."

Till we meet again.

Nurses will do essential work only in event of strike

Daily News staff and Canadian Press

A strike by B.C.'s 17,500 nurses would curtail services at the Fort St. John General Hospital, but contingency plans would allow the facility to provide essential services, a hospital spokesman said today.

Nurses in British Columbia voted 94 per cent in favor of a strike earlier this week and on Thursday they served 72-hour strike notice at 144 hospitals and major health institutions.

However, patients won't be facing immediate picket lines.

A bargaining session scheduled to start next Tuesday will go ahead, said negotiations officer Judith Jenkins.

"We've got four days booked to bargain," she said.

The union said in a news release that more than 14,000 nurses cast ballots on Wednesday.

In Fort St. John, a strike would affect 60 nurses. Between 15 and 20 are usually on duty at any one time.

"The nurses have agreed to

provide essential service staff if a strike occurs," assistant hospital administrator Millie Asling told the Daily News. "In that situation, we would operate at a lower level than normal. It would curtail some services. The things that could wait would wait."

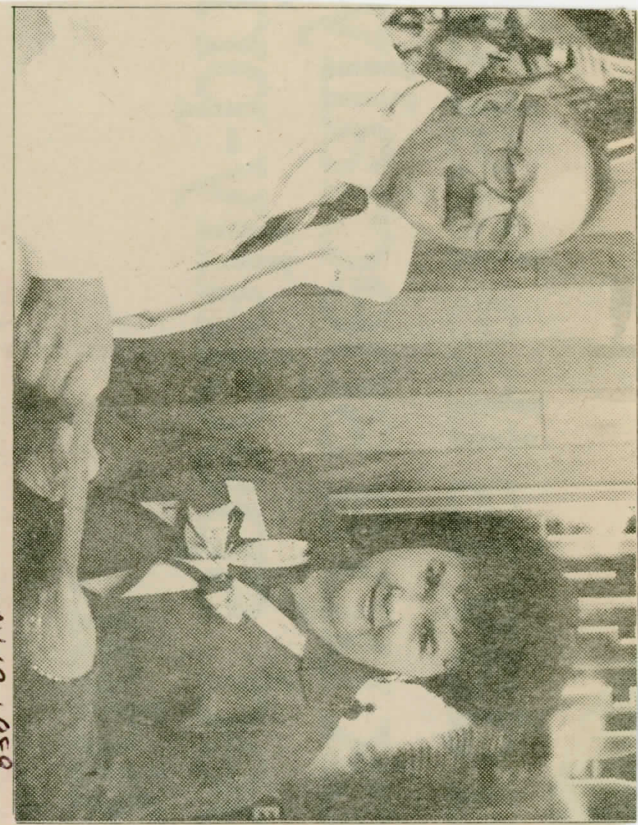
The B.C. nurses' contract expired March 31. Some negotiations have taken place since then, and the initial union package called for a 33-per-cent wage increase over one year and benefit improvements

MAY 14, 1989
totalling 43 per cent.

"The employers and the provincial government must stop ignoring the crisis nursing shortage," said union president Pat Savage. "We don't educate enough nurses to meet our needs."

Savage said B.C. hospitals can no longer depend on recruiting nurses from outside the province, and too many nurses are giving up their profession because of understaffing and poor morale.

George Mooljesky, owner of the Lido Theatre, presents Linda Gentiles from the hospital's board of directors with a cheque for \$137. The money came from a weekend showing of Born Free, with proceeds going to the children's ward of the hospital.



MAY 12, 1989

1989
MAY



Daily News staff

The Auxiliary to the Fort St. John Hospital has presented the facility with a \$8,182 cheque which will pay for the new thermal blanket unit already in use.

The cheque presentation was made Monday during a brief ceremony.

The machine can either warm or cool a patient and therefore is used in cases of frostbite, hypothermia, high fevers and in the recovery room after an operation. The blankets come in various sizes for children and adults, and up to two blankets can be hooked up to the machine at

one time.

The blankets aren't at all like the wooly electric versions you may have at home for your bed. These are made of a plastic material which is filled with water. The machine circulates and heats the water to the desired temperature, and it can be set to keep a patient's body temperature within a given range.

Another difference from the home model is that the hospital's thermal blankets are not pulled over top of the patient. Instead, they go underneath.

Winnona Davidson, president of the Auxiliary, says the organization is in desperate need of more

volunteers.

"If we don't get some more people, we may have to discontinue some of our volunteer services," she said.

The Auxiliary is responsible for providing baby pictures and bracelets for newborns, TV sets for patients and baby car seat rentals. They also run the Hospital Gift Shoppe and the goody cart service.

Through their fundraising efforts, they're able to donate much-needed equipment to the hospital.

Those interested in helping the auxiliary are asked to call Davidson at 785-3188.

MAY 8, 1989

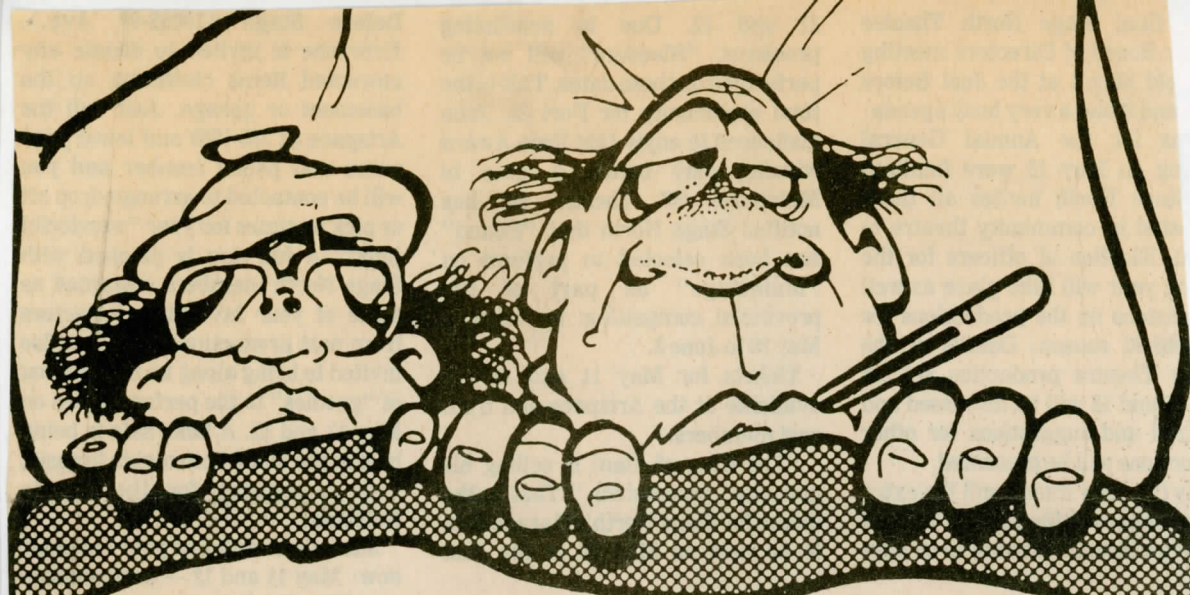
AUXILIARY DONATES

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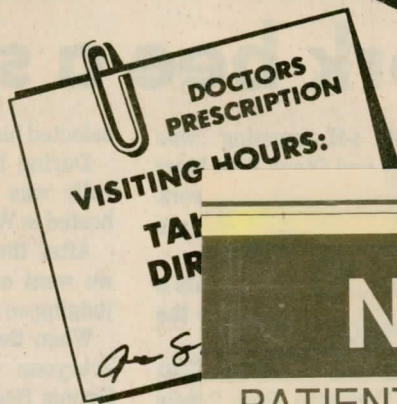
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**PRESCRIPTIONS ARE
ISSUED WITH THE
PATIENTS WELL
BEING IN MIND...
SO ARE THE
VISITING HOURS.**



Wednesday, May 3, 1989 The Northerner Page 3

PLEASE

**RESPECT THE FOLLOWING
PRE-SET HOURS WHEN VISITING
PATIENTS IN THE HOSPITAL.**

- PEDIATRICS** — 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
- MEDICAL & SURGICAL** — 2:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
- MATERNITY** — 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. GRANDPARENTS
7:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m. GENERAL VISITORS

NOTICE
PATIENTS ALL APPRECIATE VISITORS ... SO DO WE,
DURING THESE HOURS

- MEDICAL & SURGICAL WARD** ♦
2:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
- PEDIATRIC WARD** ♦
8:00 A.M. - 8 P.M.
- MATERNITY WARD** ♦
7:00 P.M. - 8:00 P.M.
3:00 P.M. - 4:00 P.M.
(Grandparents)

Thank you,
**Fort St. John
General Hospital**



9636 - 100 AVE.

785-6611

THANK YOU
FORT ST. JOHN GENERAL HOSPITAL

MAY 3, 1989

MAY 5, 1989

Local nurses take part in job action

1989
JUNE

Tension apparent with hospital sides

JUN 23, 1989

By Daily News staff and Canadian Press

A mediator was appointed Tuesday to try to break the contract deadlock between British Columbia nurses and the province's hospitals.

The 17,500-member B.C. Nurses' Union and the Health Labor Relations Association, which represents 144 hospitals and health-care facilities, agreed to call in John Kinzie, a private labor arbitrator and former chairman of the defunct Labor Relations Board of British Columbia.

Talks resumed Tuesday amid tension over the nurses' refusal to perform some jobs and the spectre of an all-out strike.

"The parties also agreed that so long as mediation continues, there would be no escalation of the nurses' job action and no lockout by the employer," said Miller.

Nurses in Fort St. John are participating in the job action by refusing to do any work not directly related to nursing care.

"We've been informed that our 60 nurses in Fort St. John are not performing any non-nursing duties like stripping beds, making up unoccupied beds and that sort of thing," said Millie Asling, assistant administrator at the hospital. "Administrative and non-contract staff are filling in during this period."

Because of the job action, major elective surgery has been cancelled in Fort St. John for the time being.

"Other than that, we're continuing on as normal. We're trying to keep all our usual services operating," Asling said.

The union is asking for a 33-percent wage increase over one year,

MAY 24, 1989
benefits totalling 43 per cent on negotiable timetable and more say for nurses in how they perform the jobs.

The hospitals have not tabled wage offer.

INCREASE TO \$20

The nurses proposal would increase starting wages to about \$20 an hour from \$15.07. The current maximum rate is \$17.43 an hour.

The kind of work being refused by the nurses includes housekeeping and cleaning, relieving on switchboards, sorting medical records, making unoccupied beds, washing equipment and instruments and serving food when no dietary staff is available.

In major hospitals, like Vancouver General, where much of that work is performed by workers in other unions, the ban was having little impact. At hospitals in smaller B.C. centres, like Fort St. John and Dawson Creek, the impact has been greater.

The last serious nurses' strike in British Columbia happened in 1980, when about 3,000 provincial government nurses, part of a different bargaining unit in the union, went on strike for two weeks.

Elsewhere, 5,750 Saskatchewan nurses went on strike for a week last October before settling for annual increases of about four per cent over a 39-month period.

Some 9,000 Alberta nurses staged a 19-day illegal strike in February 1988.

The union and its members paid more than \$450,000 in fines and court costs for ignoring back-to-work orders. Nurses in Alberta have been banned from striking since 1983.

By Linda White
Daily News special

With the nurses' strike escalating, tensions are mounting on both sides, and a number of complaints by doctors regarding actions taken by the nurses' union are emerging throughout the province.

Such is the case in Dawson Creek. Radiologist Dr. Reg Gojmerac says that some nurses on the picket line "have been giving patients who

come to the hospital for tests misleading information."

He says that on Thursday "some picketing nurses were intercepting people in the parking lot and asking them what they were coming for. In one case in particular, the people were advised that their tests were not necessary."

He says that when the people did not show up for these tests, they had to be contacted by the hospital at home and asked to come in.

"These were isolated incidents," Gojmerac says, "but it indicates some interference by the nurses, and was inappropriate advice to be giving."

He says the hospital administration in Dawson Creek filed a complaint with the HLRA to reprimand the act of these few individuals.

Dr. Gojmerac adds that this is not at all the problem at the Fort St. John hospital, where, he says, the "action by the nurses has been admirable." Gojmerac is a radiologist at both hospitals.

Nurses interviewed on the Fort St. John picket line say that they have been talking with and answering questions of those people who ask and they have been distributing literature on the picket line to inform passers-by about the wage demands they are making. The handout is printed by the BCNU.

While the picket lines may look intimidating, nurses here say that no patient is really hesitant to cross them, "although some of them apologize as they do." Technicians are also reporting for work at the hospital.

Neither the nurses nor the Fort St. John hospital have received complaints regarding the nurses' 24-hour picket lines.

Both the workers in the hospital and the striking nurses say that one big problem is the public misconceptions about the strike.

The complaint of doctors is that "the public does not understand that the hospitals are not shut down," Gojmerac says. "The public should be aware that facilities are operating as normal for tests and

examinations that are necessary or urgent, although they should expect to wait a while."

Nurses say their major complaint is that the public does not understand fully the details of their wage demands, and that is why they are distributing the handout.



Local nurses wait for call to strike

By Linda White
Daily News special

While nurses are now on strike at 30 hospitals across the province, the Fort St. John nurses have yet to walk out; however, Millie Asling, Assistant Administrator at the Fort St. John General Hospital thinks it is only a matter of time before they do.

Asling says that things are "operating normally" at the hospital, although there has been some slowing down. Admitting personnel have been informed to limit admissions to only the most urgent cases.

"We are assessing the situation daily," Asling says, "but at this point we do not know when the union is planning to strike here."

Claire Musselman, union steward for the local nurses' union, says "we are waiting for a phone call from

Vancouver to tell us when to go out." For now, she says, "we are just waiting to hear."

Musselman could not disclose how many nurses would walk out when the strike call is received, nor could she say which services would still be provided under the essential services agreement.

"Each hospital in the province has made up its own list of services it considers essential, but it would be inappropriate for me to reveal that list at this time," Musselman says. "Emergency care services would certainly be provided, though".

Musselman says that they have had meetings with the hospital administration, which she describes as "very friendly." The rotating strike will escalate, however, if the hospital does not settle with the nurses' union.

JUN 16, 1989

.....
The nurses also want to say that during the time they are behind the picket lines you may experience some delays and interruptions of hospital services. In order to help things run as smoothly as possible we would ask your co-operation in the following: if you are unwell, please make an appointment with your physician at his or her office where you will find good health care and an expert that will refer you to the hospital if necessary, and please try and limit the visitors to the patients in the hospital to immediate family as this will help to keep our hospital as clean and orderly as possible.

JUN 23, 1989

1989
JUNE



Judy Odendahl, incoming president of the Kinette Club, presents Alice Jardine with the diamond cluster dinner ring at Collier's Jewellery. Alice won the ring at Summerfest. Other winners in the Kinette Diamond Jewell Raffle were: Rod Fika, diamond earrings, and Cherie Hermans, diamond pendant. Proceeds of the raffle went to Fort St. John General Hospital.

JUN 23, 1989

JUN 26, 1989

Nurses serve patients

By Linda White

Special to the Express

Although the picket signs are now up at Fort St. John General Hospital, nurses of the local union are still providing a number of services for patients in their care.

A spokesperson from the union, who wished not to be identified, said under the essential services agreement, many of the normal duties in the hospital are still being performed by the nurses in addition

to the required emergency services.

The union has given its assurance to the Health Labour Relations Association that those patients who remain in hospital during the strike will receive an adequate level of care.

This means that staffing is still being provided at the hospital in the Emergency ward and in the general wards, with appropriate numbers of nurses for the number of patients in the wards, and with Operating

Room staff on call.

This also means for some nurses that part of their shift will be spent on the picket line, and part in the hospital.

"The staffing of a hospital is more complicated than that of a business," the union spokesperson said. "The number of nurses required to ensure the care of patients in the hospital will vary depending on the number of patients and the acuteness of care required."

Fort St. John among 63 striking hospitals

VANCOUVER (CP) — Here is a list of the 63 British Columbia hospitals and institutions behind nurses' picket lines Monday (bracketed is the approximate number of nurses employed at each hospital; x-denotes hospitals where strikes are scheduled for this morning; y-denotes hospitals where picket lines are to come down this morning):

- Ashcroft (15)
- x-Boundary, Grand Forks (30)
- Bulkley Valley, Smithers (45)
- Burnaby General (475)
- Campbell River (140)
- Canadian Red Cross Society, Vancouver (20)
- x-Cariboo Memorial, Williams Lake (100)
- Chemainus General (15)
- Chetwynd (15)
- y-Children's Hospital, Vancouver (675)
- Chilliwack (220)
- y-Columbia View Lodge, Trail (7)
- y-Cottonwoods, Kelowna (70)
- Cowichan Valley, Duncan (170)
- Coquihalla House, Merritt (9)
- Creston Valley (40)
- Cumberland Diagnostic and Treatment Centre (15)
- Cranbrook (100)
- x-Dawson Creek (60)
- Delta (100)
- x-Eagle Ridge, Coquitlam (170)
- Fernie (35)
- x-Fort St. John (65)
- G. F. Strong Rehabilitation Centre (80)
- x-G. R. Baker Memorial, Quesnel (75)
- y-Glacier View Lodge, Comox (10)
- Gorge Road, Victoria (100)

- Victoria (110)
- Kelowna (515)
- y-Kensington Private Hospital, Vancouver (15)
- Kimberley General (40)
- Kitimat General (40)
- x-Lady Minto, Ganges (25)
- Ladysmith (25)
- Langley Memorial (275)
- Lillooet (20)
- Lions Gate, North Vancouver (680)
- x-Louis Brier, Vancouver (25)
- x-M.S.A. General, Abbotsford (325)
- x-Mackenzie (15)
- Maple Ridge (200)
- Mills Memorial, Terrace (80)
- Mission (100)
- Mount St. Joseph, Vancouver (165)
- Nanaimo (320)
- Nicola Valley, Merritt (30)
- y-Noric House, Vernon (15)
- x-100 Mile General (30)
- y-Parkdale Place, Summerland (7)
- Peace Arch, White Rock (320)
- x-Penticton (240)
- x-Powell River (95)
- Prince George (440)
- Prince Rupert (85)
- x-Princeton (15)
- Queen Charlotte Islands (20)
- Richmond General (300)
- Royal Columbian, New Westminster (890)
- Royal Inland, Kamloops (520)
- Royal Jubilee, Victoria (860)
- St. George's, Albert Bay (10)
- St. Joseph's, Comox (175)
- St. Mary's, New Westminster (150)



CONNIE JOYCE of the Health Sciences Association nurses' picket line is seen here hit by a nurses strike.

Striking nurses still caring for patients

By Linda White

Daily News special

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This also means for some nurses that part of their shift will be spent on the picket line, and part in the hospital.

"The staffing of a hospital is more complicated than that of a business," the union spokesperson said. "The number of nurses required to ensure the care of patients in the hospital will vary depending on the number of patients and the acuteness of care required."

She added that "there is a constant monitoring of patients to make sure that staffing is adequate to

meet their needs."

While many expect the strike to continue for some time, the spokesperson said that the moral of the nurses at this time is "excellent."

"If the strike does go on for a great length of time, then their may be some hardships," she said, "but that depends on the individual." She added that right now "we have a keen group of dedicated nurses."

Two other unions have joined the nurses on the picket line: the Hospital Employees Union and the Health Sciences Association. Members of these unions have promised to honour the nurses' picket line, again with the understanding that essential services will be provided.

A spokesperson from the local HEU was unable to comment on the situation, except to say that they "stand in support of the strikers."

Search

An extended search for Dr. Garry Westover is planned for Saturday and Sunday. Interested volunteers are invited to attend a co-ordination meeting at the Royal Canadian Legion on Thursday, June 22 at 7 p.m. For further details, call 785-3186.

Photo by Kyle Storey

Picketing is in its second day at the Fort St. John Hospital as hospital nurses continue their first-ever strike. Connie Joyce of the Health Sciences Association joined B.C. Nurses Union members Claire

Musselman, Jo-Ann Scriba, Muriel Greer and Janice Blaskovits in the picket line yesterday. As well as the Health Sciences Association, the Hospital Employees' Union is also honoring the picket line and doing picket duty.

