

New year brings new joy

It was a very happy new year for Steve and Katie Troyer, of Mile 95, when Katie gave birth to their first child, daughter Katelyn Mae Troyer, at 12:57 a.m. on Jan. 1, 1996. Katelyn was the first baby born in the new year at Fort St. John General Hospital. At birth, she weighed six pounds, 12 ounces and was 19" long. Mom and daughter are both doing well, and received gifts from various merchants around town. Dad said the trip to the hospital went smoothly.

JAN 3, 1996



1996
JANUARY



GREAT DONATION —

On behalf of the Fort St. John General Hospital, Lorna Quinn, left, accepts this wooden toy box filled with Discovery Toys from Karen Kelly and son Brent. The Christmas donation to the Pediatrics Ward was made by the Zeta Kappa Chapter of Beta Sigma Phi.

contributed photo

FEB 5, 1996



The Pediatrics ward at Fort St. John General Hospital received a great donation of toys recently.

See Page 12

FEB 5, 1996



HARD WORK —

contributed photo

Fort St. John General Hospital Auxiliary donated over \$40,000 worth of equipment to the hospital during 1995. This equipment included an emergency cart for maternity, three foot stools with hand rails for x-ray, three geriatric chairs for 2nd north, isolate for maternity, a warming cabinet, a radiochromatoscaner for nuclear medicine and three infusion pumps. These funds come from the many activities of the auxiliary including raffles, car seat rentals, baby pictures, gift shop and memorial fund. Anyone interested in joining the auxiliary may call 785-4712. Meetings are held on the third Monday of each month.



MAR 4, 1996

Tania Wilson photo

The North Peace SPCA was at the Fort St. John General Hospital's annual garage sale in the Immaculata Hall Saturday. Marg Miller and Shelley Ostergaard sold sweatshirts, t-shirts, hats and memberships to the public during the sale.

1996
MARCH



Monique Francoeur photo

Only half of the group attending the first meeting were able to come to this group picture. From top left: Kenisha, Cody, and Alisha Campbell, Cody Johnson (brother Dylan missing) In the second row are: Daniel and Cody Hetman, Staci and Amber Busche. Third row: Amy, Caitlyn, and Breanna Lapointe. In the car seats are Derek and Braden Donis, Amanda and Cassandra Hepp.

MARCH 13, 1996

Twins present double trouble and joy for North Peace parents

MONIQUE FRANCOEUR
Alaska Highway News

Fort St. John

Being a mother of a young child is a lot of work, and it's twice as much for Melanie Hepp.

Hepp is the mother of four children, Kyla age three, Brittany one year old, and Amanda and Cassandra four months old. Melanie and her family came from Wainwright, Alberta, and have lived in Fort St. John for one year only.

Everything started when Melanie put an ad in the paper looking for a Nanny, and someone else with twins called her.

This person was also interested in starting a support group. Melanie was so happy to hear from someone with twins. "It was just luck that she saw this ad in the paper," she said.

Nadine Donis had a set of twins a week after Melanie, and she wanted to join Melanie in starting a support group.

When they started making plans, the babies were only two months old, so they

decided to wait until their lives were a little more organized before getting involved.

January was their first meeting. It was only advertised for three weeks and 12 mothers came to the meeting.

All of them had other children in addition to twins or triplets. The twins ages ranged from three months old to 11 years old. "Our first meeting was two hours of discussion and sharing. Everybody had a story to tell about pregnancy, birth, and caring for the babies. There was advice and support for everyone," said Melanie Hepp.

The group meets every fourth Tuesday in the basement of the Shared Church. During the summer, the group is planning to meet in the evening in order to accommodate everyone and the working people.

They would like to hear from adults who are twins. "We would like to hear from adults, what it was like to grow up as a twin.

Talking with parents with older twins, helps new parents to realize the importance of

giving to the children their own identity. One of the ways of doing it is to choose different names, and make an effort to address them with their proper names," she said.

"The purpose of the group is to offer support. Feeding, changing, and getting up night after night, is a lot different with two babies than it is with one. It helps to talk to someone who is going through the same thing, and to learn how to deal with the older children in the family as they adapt to the new babies," said Melanie.

Some more interesting information was added to this subject by an adult twin.

The twins were dressed the same way until grade 8. In grade 9, they were in separate classrooms, so both girls started dressing differently.

One of them said, "With twins, you always have an introvert and an extrovert. The characteristics changed when we got married. We used to be able to read each other's mind by closing our eyes and concentrating, "O.K., what is she thinking now?" It was very useful during exams."

Strike strategy being developed at FSJ Hospital

DAVE WILLIAMS
Staff Writer

Fort St. John

Emergency and essential services will be provided, but little else, under a strategy to deal with a possible strike at the Fort St. John hospital, says its chief operating officer.

Chris Wenzel said the hospital has received essential services designation, which requires about 20-24 per cent of the unionized staff to remain on the job to ensure emergency and other critical services are still provided in the event of a strike.

"We would lose the majority of housekeeping, dietary, laundry services. All services throughout the hospital would be reduced by about 75 per cent," he said.

"Operations will be done on an emergency, on-call basis. If their is ever and emergency or an urgent patient, they will get treatment - absolutely no question about that."

Four unions at the Fort St. John General Hospital - representing 210 people and 150 full-time equivalent positions, including nurses, support staff and technicians - saw their collective contract expire March 31. Province-wide bargaining is currently underway.

Wenzel said the unions have the option - after a strike vote - of going on a full-fledged strike or instituting random work slowdowns should negotiations falter. The last such strike in 1992 saw random work stoppages,

which also hit Fort St. John.

"The Ministry of Health has advised us through our employer association agency to be ready for a strike," Wenzel said.

"Sometimes a full strike is easier to deal with from an operational perspective because you know what numbers of staff you're going to have and services you're going to have for sure. If you go on a work to rule, sometimes it's more disruptive because half way during the day, they can stop working."

Wenzel said he's optimistic a strike can be avoided if the unions recognize the increasingly financial limitations being placed on the health care system.

One potential sticking point, he said, is the question of whether the health labor accord will be renewed. The accord, which expired March 31, protected health care employees from being laid off.

"That accord definitely has a price tag to it. All governments - not only ours - are saying we've got to, as much as possible, contain increasing costs," Wenzel said.

Wenzel said the Fort St. John hospital has received the same \$10.5 million in funding each year since 1991, which given inflation and other costs, actually means much less money to work with. He said the inability to lay off staff - 29 employees have not been replaced over the last six years - restricts the ways in which the funding crunch can be handled.

Hospital workers strike vote results will be known Friday.

FORT ST. JOHN (Staff) — Whether the Fort St. John hospital is in strike mode or its business as usual should be known this week, says its chief operating officer.

Chris Wenzel said the Hospital Employees' Union (HEU) is expected soon to announce the results of strike votes held across the province. The union stated the results will be out on Thursday or Friday.

"If they decide to go on strike, they will then have to give the hospital 72 hours notice," he said. "My sense of it is they're making progress at the bargaining table. Nobody wants a strike."

Wenzel said should a majority of the province's HEU members back a strike, it may not mean a full-blown walkout. "Probably what they'll do is some work-

to-rule or work slowdowns to put some pressure on the negotiating teams," he said.

The hospital has already received essential services designation which requires minimum staffing levels in the event of a strike.

Wenzel said the HEU is the only one of four unions currently in negotiations to have called a strike vote.

"If HEU goes on strike, no other unions cross the line so it's rather academic to say one or the other will go on strike. If one goes on strike, they will all honor the picket lines," he said.

"We won't know what we will do until we see, if it's a work to rule or a full-fledged strike. Even under a full-fledged strike situation, all of our services will be operating, it'll just be at minimal levels."

1996
APRIL

1996
MAY

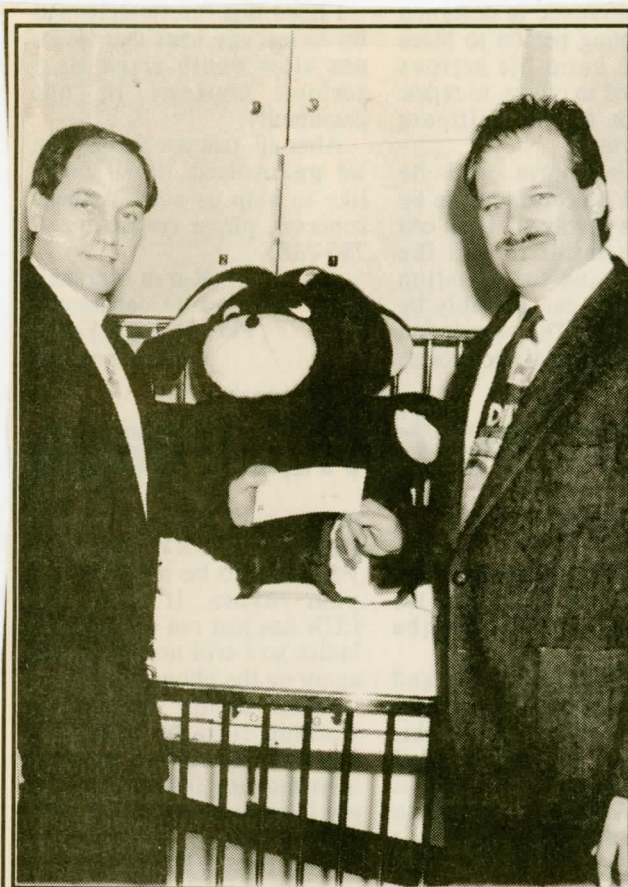


Tania Wilson photo

LIFETIME AWARD —

A Lifetime Membership Award was given to Rosalynn Baron in recognition of her 25 years of dedicated work with the Hospital Auxiliary. The Auxiliary, in addition to operating the gift shop in the hospital and providing services to patients such as the candy cart and televisions, has raised funds for equipment needed by the hospital over the years.

MAY 29, 1996



Tania Wilson photo

NICE DONATION —

MAY 1, 1996

Chris Wenzel, Chief Operating Officer of Fort St. John General Hospital accepted a \$1,000 cheque from Brad Small (right) of Sears for the Pediatrics ward at the hospital. The money, which was raised from the sale of Yeti dolls in Sears Christmas Wish Book, will be used to purchase items such as toys for the children, or for equipment specifically designed for the needs of children. The donation will go to directly benefit the children at the hospital.

NOTICE OF MEETING

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

of the

FORT ST. JOHN and DISTRICT HOSPITAL SOCIETY

will be held on

MONDAY, JUNE 10, 1996

1930 HOURS (7:30 P.M.)

ASSEMBLY HALL FORT ST. JOHN

GENERAL HOSPITAL

at which time

A SPECIAL RESOLUTION amalgamating the Fort St. John and District Hospital Society with the Fort St. John and Area Community Health Council will be presented. Society members can obtain copies of the proposed resolution by contacting the Hospital Administration Office.

Membership:

CURRENT MEMBERS

- in good standing can renew their memberships at any time prior to the commencement of the Annual Meeting.

NEW MEMBERS

- or former members who wish to join the Society, must be members of for at least one month prior to the Annual Meeting to be eligible to vote.

Memberships can be obtained at the Fort St. John General Hospital Information Desk, daily between 0800 hours and 2000 hours (8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.), for a membership fee of \$5.00

MAY 8, 1996

The Fort St. John and District Hospital Foundation will hold their annual election for four directors on May 29, 1996 at 7:30 p.m. in the Hospital Assembly Hall. 1996 membership renewal must be paid by May 29. Membership applications can be obtained from the admitting desk at the Fort St. John General Hospital.

MAY 21, 1996