News Briefs
Membership numbers on the rise
Sigma Theta Tau provided service to more than 134,000 members worldwide last year. What's contributed to this increase? "During the past year, we have introduced some exciting new products and services," explains Nancy Dickinson-Hazard, Sigma Theta Tau Executive Officer. "More importantly, we have expanded our online communication options, improved responsiveness to member requests and enhanced record keeping."

Largest gift in Sigma Theta Tau history
Philanthropist Ruth Lilly has given a $2 million contribution to expand Sigma Theta Tau International's electronic library. Ms. Lilly's gift, the largest single gift in the 78-year history of Sigma Theta Tau, will help nurses worldwide get the information they need to conduct research, serve patients and control health care costs.

Past...Pass It On!
Nurses who missed the opportunity to join as students are able to accept the honor of membership as community leaders. Nominate your nursing colleagues with bachelor's degrees to your local chapter or encourage them to contact headquarters by calling 1.888.634.7575 (U.S. and Canada) or +44 207 973.7571 (International).

The art of nursing
Encouraging prospective students to pursue a nursing career is more important than ever. To promote the opportunities nursing provides, Sigma Theta Tau International offers the "Art of Nursing" brochure. Call 1.888.634.7575 for copies.

Nursing: An international student's perspective
By Larry L. M. Kim
When I entered the 4th year in my Bachelor of Science in Nursing program in South Korea, I was proud of my three years of experience with medical/surgical, pediatric and women's health care. To further my nursing education, I applied to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to study more in the United States. I have learned about American and Korean nursing. As a graduate student, I am eager to experience nursing in the United States. Meeting people from various cultures and learning about their experiences will broaden my perspective on nursing and enhance my nursing skill.

"I found that nursing in this country is often what distinguishes hospitals from one another." I believe, when I am able to take advantage of opportunities within the United States, I will improve my nursing skills. When I return to South Korea, I can provide the best nursing care for my patients.

Nurses and the 'net
The Internet resource for clinicians
By Cheryl Hall Harris
The Internet often brings to mind e-mail, shopping and news. But what about nursing? Placed within the context of your clinical practice, the World Wide Web is a phenomenal resource for nurses.

The Internet provides an almost infinite variety and scope of health data, from simple advice about wellness to the most obscure information about extremely rare diseases. Web sites abound that address mental, spiritual and physical dimensions of health, multicultural aspects of nursing practice and clinical ethics. There are several techniques for finding the specific information you require.

The Power of Search Engines
Because the Internet is vast, making efficient use of your time locating information requires skill and some extremely powerful search tools. If you have spent time "surfing the net," you're probably already aware of search engines such as Yahoo!, Excite! and Lycos for generating search results. To increase your ability to find relevant sites, the following search techniques will improve your probability of finding the specific information you seek.

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By helping patients set attainable goals, rehabilitation nurses encourage patients' independence.

Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing

EXCELLENCE in Clinical Practice

Fourth Quarter 2000 Volume 1, Number 4

Rehabilitation nursing
Another increasing shortage
By Marlene Ruiz
When analyzing where the nursing shortage is most critical, rehabilitation nursing rises to the top. Kathy Dunn, RN, MS, CRNR-A, a twenty-five-year veteran in this field of practice, explains that like operating room nursing, rehabilitation nursing is an area to which few nursing students are exposed during clinical experience in their educational programs. Without this experience, students and new graduates often have little experience with or serious misconceptions of rehabilitation nursing.

It's true that rehabilitation nursing requires a lot of the individual. It is often physically challenging and demands specialized training. Nurses in the field have special education in patho-physicsiology, body and behavioral deficits, differentiation of brain and spinal cord injuries, psychosocial aspects, skin care, bowel and bladder training, sexuality, activities of daily living, assistive devices, body mechanics, and transfers. Rehabilitation nurses also must have excellent skills assessing their clients, since most patients are not able to verbalize their symptoms.

While rehabilitation nursing is demanding, it is also rewarding. "I learned more about nursing clinically in my first week at Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) than I did in three semesters of clinical through school," said Kate Schreiber, RN, BSN, a new graduate. "The rehab nurses were accustomed to teaching and made me feel an important and integral part of the team."

One of her first clients was a 60-year-old man. While visiting his wife in the intensive care unit, an abdominal aeurysm ruptured. He was rushed to the operating room but lost use below the T8 level. The man was placed next to his wife in the ICU, but she died shortly after his transfer before he had an opportunity to speak with her. When he awoke, he experienced the trauma of having lost both his wife and his legs. Despite the overwhelming loss and persistent depression, he recovered. He now is able to accomplish all his

SIGMA THETA TAU INTERNATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY OF NURSING
Forensic nurses merge nursing practice and the law

By Rita Colella

Historically, nurses always have had the ability to recognize needs and to take on leadership roles in enhancing the quality of life. The specialty of forensic nursing is no exception. Found in correctional facilities, courts and clinical settings, forensic nurses specialize in nursing practice and the law. Often forensic nurses work with domestic violence and rape victims and testify in court.

A SANEx Program for Victims
Although nurses have been working with victims and the law for more than 20 years, the American Nurses Association (ANA) recognized forensic nursing as a specialty only as recently as 1995. Currently, the largest sub-specialty of forensic nursing is Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE). SANEs are trained in forensic evidence collection techniques, which include the identification of trauma utilizing a colposcope, alternative light sources, photography and other sophisticated documentation methods. As nurses, SANEs are in a unique position to skillfully perform the forensic examination, as well as to provide the victim with the emotional support needed to ease the victim during the healing process. The potential for further trauma is decreased with the SANE’s technical skill and ability to interact empathetically with victims. Having a qualified SANE on staff allows evidence to be collected in a sensitive, effective and technologically advanced method.

The goals of SANE intervention are uniform across the country. Key aspects of the forensic examination include:

- assessment of trauma;
- objective documentation of health history, victim’s statement and history of the crime;
- assessment of biological, psychological and social risk of medical sequelae;

Specializing in nursing practice and the law, forensic nurses often work with domestic violence and rape victims and testify in court.

- collection and preservation of forensic data;
- facilitation of victim control over assault issues.

As patient advocates, SANEs fulfill an ethical obligation to ensure that the victim has the opportunity to make an informed decision about treatment choices. This ensures that basic human rights to dignity and privacy are protected.

Becoming a SANE
To practice as a SANE, one must be a registered nurse with documented continuing education in the forensic nursing evaluation of victims of sexual assault (SANEx Standards, 1996). Most states have developed additional requirements specific to their state and counties. For instance, in 1998 the New Jersey attorney general published “The Standards for Providing Services to Survivors of Sexual Assault.” These guidelines set forth a framework for SANEs to practice within a Sexual Assault Response Team (SART). The team is typically made up of a SANE, a rape crisis counselor and a member of law enforcement.

There are approximately 300 SANEx SART programs in operation across the United States. Since SANExs’ education,
Name: Teresa Nimmer Vogel, RN, BSN
Title: Staff RN
Employer: Elmbrook Memorial Hospital, Covenant Healthcare Systems

Years in Nursing: 19

Three favorite aspects of job:
- Direct patient contact
- Positively influencing patients' health outcomes
- Educating patients and their families

Three challenging aspects of job:
- Having enough energy and time
- Securing adequate resources
- Keeping current with research and technology via conferences and seminars

Job description:
Medical telemetry, cardiopulmonary, oncology and general medical-surgical responsibilities.

Teresa Nimmer Vogel

Nurses and the Net
Maintained by the American Nurses Association at www.nna.org, offers hypertext links to a variety of nursing publications.

There are other functional sites that provide direction. The University of Iowa site HardinMetaDictionary (HardinMD) at NK http://www.lib.uiowa.edu/hardin/md/index.html serves as an excellent springboard for information on a huge array of health topics. Their "Class Bill of Health" feature sorts through some of the credibility issues.

Explore Other Sources
Print articles such as this one provide another means of finding valuable Web sites. There are some Web sites that cover specialized topics such as rare diseases, spirituality in health care or bioethics.

Rehabilitation Nursing
Critical daily tasks independently and remains an inspiration to Kate.

"Like rehab nursing because it allows me to visualize the tremendous strength and tenacity of the patient. Dealing with and surviving something as daunting as a spinal cord injury and the overwhelming life changes it brings is a truly miraculous test of human will. It restores my faith in human beings. When I first started working at SCI, I thought that it would be depressing and sad. I was happy to discover it is usually exactly opposite," stated Kate.

Rehab nursing is practiced in a variety of settings. The most common are acute and subacute units. Other areas that allow a lot of autonomy are case management, insurance company management of catastrophic injury clients, workers' compensation companies, legal nurse consulting, Paralyzed Veterans Association and the Multiple Sclerosis Foundation.

Once nurses have at least two years of rehab practitioner experience, two levels of national certification are available. "Our challenge is to get them interested in this area of practice," says Kathy. "If they stay a few years, they will stay forever."

For more information about rehabilitation nursing, please e-mail marlene.s.ruiz@kp.org.

Teresa Nimmer Vogel, RN, BSN

Career profiles in clinical practice

Education:
- Nursing Diploma, 1981, Columbia College of Nursing
- BSN, 1991, Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wis.

Sigma Theta Tau Chapter:
- Delta Gamma Chapter

Best advice:
"Become vital and active members of your nursing organizations at the hospital, clinic and community at local, state or national levels. Make a difference for nursing."

How Sigma Theta Tau has shaped her career:
"Sigma Theta Tau International has been influential in shaping my leadership abilities. It has given me the knowledge, skills and confidence to chair performance improvement and quality assurance activities at a major teaching center; to become a mentor/preceptor to nursing students and new employees; and to participate as a board member in the local chapter. Through Sigma Theta Tau conferences, I have gained the knowledge and skills to actively pursue a career change within nursing. Sigma Theta Tau has also provided great exposure to other nurses from across the United States and around the world."

Teresa Nimmer Vogel is one member whose career is profiled on our Web site, Career Profiles in Nursing, at www.nursingsociety.org/career. Visit the site today to ask these nurses questions through e-mail and explore the world of nursing. If you are interested in being featured on this site, please visit www.nursingsociety.org for an application. Submission deadline is October 50.

Nursing humor
The Internet is an extraordinary resource for nurses in all practice settings. Building your comfort level in maneuvering through the vastness of cyberspace will benefit you, your patients and every aspect of your clinical practice.

As you view the online version of this article at www.nursingsociety.org, click on the links listed throughout the article to access the sites directly.

Caryl Hall Harris', RN, BSN, experience includes twenty years in newborn intensive care, five years providing ethics education primarily to nurses and more than thirty years writing for publication. She currently works full time as a freelance writer.
same diagnostic; they are viewed as unique, individualized, and diversified human beings. Certainly, this can most effectively be accomplished when nurses care for a smaller number of patients. I was also impressed by the well-organized hospital and its support of effective nursing care. For example, nurses in the United States may check vital signs with an automatic machine every 15 to 30 minutes. In Korea, that equipment is only available in the special care unit, making it impossible to check vital signs so frequently. Even small medical devices such as syringes and IV cannula are designed to support nursing care of the patient. Without that equipment, even simple procedures become involved and time consuming. I even discovered that patients may choose their own menus and desserts; nurses then fix it to dietary!

Recognizing the best: Regional awards to be presented

Nursing coalition expands membership

Nurses for a Healthier Tomorrow (NHT), a coalition of leading nursing and health care organizations including the Honor Society of Nursing, has added its nineteenth member—the National Association of School Nurses (NASN). With more than 10,000 members, the NASN will help strengthen the coalition’s commitment to attract people to nursing, as well as promote public understanding of nursing’s contributions.

"School nurses can have a significant impact on recruitment to the profession," said Judith Robinson, RN, PhD, executive director of NASN. "We look forward to helping NHT distribute information to middle and high school students and encourage students to consider nursing." NHT has also received a donation of $250,000 in research and creative services from JWT Specialized Communications and a $100,000 grant, plus an additional $100,000 contingent pledge for 2001, from the Helen Fuld Health Trust. These contributions will help create and place a national advertising campaign designed to recruit new nurses and convince existing ones to remain in the profession. With Laci Bates Johnson and Elizabeth Dole serving as honorary chairs, NHT was formed in response to the shortage of nurses in the United States. Rather than wait until the problem is severe and patients are at risk, NHT is working now to increase awareness about the shortage and the excellent opportunities for those who seek a nursing career.

More information about NHT and a list of members can be found at http://www.nursesource.org.