

Past *Forward*

PROVIDENCE ARCHIVES NEWSLETTER

Sisters of Providence, Mother Joseph Province • Providence Health System • Providence Services

A Calendar to Mark the SP's 150th Year



Calendar cover showing liturgy at St. Joseph Church in Yakima during the 75th anniversary of St. Joseph Academy, 1950 (Image 54.D2.8)

When five weary Sisters of Providence from Montreal arrived at the mouth of the Columbia River in 1856, they could not have imagined the impact and influence their mission to the frontier would make 150 years later. As Mother Joseph Province prepares to celebrate the sesquicentennial of their arrival in 2006, one of the projects in the final stages of production is a spiral-bound, 13-month wall calendar presenting archival photographs of the religious community in diverse, historical settings and circumstances.

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Medford's "New" Window

Providence Medford Medical Center in mid-August installed an art glass window (also known as stained-glass window) given to the facility by Mother Joseph Province. Overlooking the lobby of a new emergency department, it depicts Jesus Christ reaching out to heal a sick child. The 80-year old window was originally part of the chapel at the former Providence Seattle Medical Center, now a branch campus of Swedish Medical Center. The chapel's windows were removed in 2002. Providence Archives coordinated their *continued on p. 2*



Light streaming in through the antique art window radiates warmth and calm into a lobby at Providence Medford. The glass was made by Kokomo Opalescent Glass Co. in Indiana, the world's oldest factory of opalescent glass, with painting and firing done by Fuller Glass and Paint studio of Seattle.

Courtesy of Lauren Van Sickle

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Archivist Group

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Anniversary for Local Archivists



About 30 archivists gathered at Providence Archives in West Seattle on June 23 to celebrate the 20th anniversary of Seattle Area Archivists. The professional association was founded in 1985 by a group that included Sister Rita Bergamini (far right), now retired, and Loretta Greene (right), currently head of the department. They hosted the first meeting that year. Stories of the early years were related by the charter members. The meeting was also an opportunity to give a group tour of the remodeled repository (above right) and to display notable items in the archives such as the 1858 chronicles from St. Joseph Hospital, Vancouver, held by visual resources archivist Peter Schmid (above).—N.D.



verbatim

Intolerance is never an index of strength. It is always an indication of inferiority.

—Sister John Gabriel Ryan,
Provincial Councilor and
Directress of
Hospitals,
1926

Medford window continued from p. 1

transfer and storage. The religious community eventually gave two windows to the southern Oregon facility. The future location of the other window, representing Christ's ascension into heaven, has yet to be determined.

In the Seattle chapel the window stood 12 feet high and seven feet wide with eight separate glass panes framing a central piece. The three bottom panes were not installed at the Medford lobby to make the window fit the wall. The color paints, which

are unique and not commonly used today due to toxicity during application, were in very good condition. Restoration involved glass cleaning and replacement of lead caming, the metal framework that supports the panes.

The Medford facility joins other Providence institutions such as the University of Great Falls in Montana and Bernard Morin Province in Chile (see *Past Forward* spring 2004 issue) as recipients of the sisters' patrimony of religious art.—N.D.

PICTURING PROVIDENCE

by Peter F. Schmid, C.A., Visual Resources Archivist

A column highlighting archival photographs and other resources that provide visual documentation of the Sisters of Providence. Peter selects notable materials from the collection of over 50,000 photographs and relates or interprets the stories behind them. He can be reached at 206-923-4012 or peter.schmid@providence.org.

Serious Work



EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION: Annual employee commendations are the norm at Providence facilities. Sister Georgette Jean, administrator at St. Elizabeth Hospital in Yakima, Washington, poses with Employees of the Year, c. 1968. (Image 80.B3.21)



STRIKE AVERTED: The celebration of Labor Day and the recent Boeing strike remind us that employer-labor relations are not always comfortable. When registered nurses were about to go on strike at St. Vincent Hospital, Portland, on March 21, 1980, the local sisters prayed to St. Vincent for intercession. A strike was avoided. Shown here adorned with flowers, the garden statue was dubbed "St. Vincent of the Strike." (Image 53.D27.8)

To order 150th anniversary calendars, contact **Carol Stephan**, at 509-474-2300 or carol.stephan@providence.org. Price: \$5.00 each.



Calendar

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From the thousands of photographs held in Providence Archives, over 50 were carefully selected that portray the women religious in ministry and wearing traditional habits. They date from the late 19th century to the early 1960s. Examples of these are scenes of sisters instructing students, extending health care, relating with native peoples, and enjoying leisure and convent life. Memorable quotes by sisters mark each month of the year. Connecting the past with the present, the front

and back spreads show contemporary photos of sisters and lay persons committed to the mission of Providence.

The calendar is one of several projects planned for the anniversary that includes liturgies and celebrations, publication of a history book, and development of exhibits. The team responsible for creating the calendar consists of sesquicentennial committee chair Joan Gallagher, S.P., provincial communications director Jennifer Roseman, and archivists Loretta Greene, Peter Schmid and Norman Dizon.—N.D.



FROM THE ARCHIVIST
by Loretta Z. Greene, M.A., C.A.

City in Peril, Archives at Risk

One week before Hurricane Katrina, Peter Schmid and I attended the annual conference of Society of American Archivists in New Orleans. Places we've seen and set foot on would be unrecognizable to us now in their utter devastation. I can't help but think about the numerous gracious people who showed us true southern hospitality. We will never know how they are faring individually; our prayers and thoughts go with them.

The archival and museum communities were also impacted by the hurricane.

Web site message boards enable us to learn the whereabouts of colleagues and the state of historical collections—documents, photographs, artifacts and historical buildings. Disaster recovery companies are assessing individual repositories. In the Northwest, a list of archivist volunteers is being compiled in the event recovery manpower is requested. The potential loss to the historical record on such a broad scale is unimaginable. It is ironic to think that in some cases digital records meant as preservation tools may now be the only permanent record.

At the conference I assumed a two-year term as chair of the association's Archivists of Religious Collections Section (ARCS). This professional interest section serves as a network for archivists engaged in documenting the American and Canadian religious experience. ARCS membership ranges from large, well-staffed institutions to small part-time "lone arranger" repositories representing churches, religious institutions, synagogues and other agencies. With such a cross section of members there is a variety of needs to meet. Programs are planned to inspire and facilitate our work. As I begin my tenure I look forward to the years ahead to serve the archivists of our religious collections.

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Providence Archives
4800 37th Ave SW
Seattle WA 98126-2793

Archivist
Loretta Greene, M.A., C.A.

Visual Resources Archivist
Peter Schmid, C.A.

Assistant Archivist
J. Norman Dizon

Telephone: 206-937-4600

Fax: 206-923-4001

E-mail:
archives@providence.org

Internet:
www.providence.org/phs/
archives

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