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Letters From The People

To The Editor Of The Bee



Reaction To The Problems Facing Nurses Today

Congratulations to Sigrid Bathen and to The Bee for the compelling series on the dilemma of modern nursing.

The nursing profession is changing — too fast for some, not fast enough for others. Nurses, physicians, administrators and the public all view the field from different observation points. These perspectives often have little in common and thus the obvious clash of opinions.

Indeed, physicians and nurses need to seek areas of mutual agreement and approach each other with heightened respect and less suspicion. Mandated Joint Practice Committees may achieve this goal though voluntary efforts surely would be more rewarding for all concerned.

Administrators and nurses need to enhance their commonalities and minimize their differences. Nurses occupying executive positions should receive the same considerations as other health care administrators, as the rule, and not the exception. Advisory and governing boards of health care facilities would do

well to seat qualified nurses (and there are many) on such boards and committees generated by the boards.

The public needs to be made aware of the function and scope of practice of today's nurse. When was the last time a family nurse practitioner addressed the weekly Rotary luncheon, or a surgical nurse spoke before the BPW, a school nurse before the PTA, or a nurse educator before the Soroptomist Organization? Nurses are too often viewed as soap opera heroines or as starched and capped shadows of the physician. Neither image is flattering or realistic.

However, the major responsibility for changing the image of nursing rests with nurses themselves. Too long has divisiveness "within the ranks" prevented the direction of energy and enthusiasm toward a common goal of professional identification. Too long have nurses continued to consider themselves "unworthy" despite inroads made by "consciousness-raising" activities. Too long has the "poor me" syndrome persisted despite significant (though often not

sufficient) monetary gains and considerable improvement in Nurse Practice Acts in many states over the past decade.

It is time nurses from every practice setting assume collective responsibility for the enhancement of their unique and excellent profession. Surely, it is worth the effort.

LYNNE M. BAKER, R.N.
Sacramento.

Congratulations on your insightful, informative, eye opening, albeit two dimensional, series on nursing.

SUSAN CORCORAN,
M.P.H.
Sacramento.

Your recent five-part article written by Bee Staff Writer Sigrid Bathen about the current status of nursing in California really hit the nail on the head.

We recently had the California Nurse Practice Act expanded to include a broader scope of nursing care. Nurses are now more capable of really reaching pa-

tients directly. However, as your article so aptly pointed out, we have many obstacles to overcome before we can fully appreciate our scope of practice.

We nurses need to take nursing by the bootstraps and stand united for a common purpose — to make nursing the profession it so rightfully should be.

As a nurse educator, I intend to use your article in my dealings with students as part of a reality orientation to what nursing really is in Northern California.

A very timely article, indeed and one every nurse should read.

SHARON BRIGGS, R.N.
Westwood.

I was in the news business a long time — 51 years — and during that half-century I never saw any reportorial work to compare with The Bee's "Harassed Nurses" series by Sigrid Bathen. A Pulitzer Prize nomination certainly is in order.

A.E. LYONS.
Sacramento.