

HISTORY OF THE NEENAH-MENASHA VISITING NURSE ASSOCIATION

THE Neenah-Menasha Visiting Nurse Association was founded in 1908, and its original purposes still apply today. As stated in its present constitution, those purposes are:

1. To promote health: individual, family and community.
2. To prevent disease by teaching the principles of health, hygiene and sanitation.
3. To provide skilled nursing care for the sick in their homes on a part-time basis.

Charter members of the organization were: Mrs. A. M. Gilbert, Mrs. J. C. Kimberly, Mrs. C. B. Clark, Mrs. John Shiells, Mrs. Lyle Pinkerton, Mrs. Louis Jourdain, Miss Ann Pleasants, Mrs. George Banta, Sr., Mrs. John Bergstrom, Mrs. G. W. Dodge, Mrs. Jacob Hanson, Miss Mary Hamilton, Mrs. W. H. Strange, Mrs. Fred Elwers, Mrs. J. R. Barnett, and Miss Mary Robertson. Mrs. A. M. Gilbert was the first President.

The first recorded budget was for \$800; the 1958 budget is \$33,870. The nursing staff was then all-inclusive in Miss Ida Heinicke, a practical nurse, at a salary of \$50 per month. She walked to the 116 visits per month she made. In 1929 the first trained graduate public health nurse was employed, Miss Laura Chase. Today the staff numbers five registered nurses and two trained practical nurses, and the case load averages 1,050 visits per month. Originally the Association had an annual fund-raising drive. No fee was set for patients who could pay, but they were asked to pay anything they could, which ranged from 5 cents to a maximum of 50 cents. Today free and part-pay service is given whenever the patient is unable to pay the full fee of \$2.50. The VNA is affiliated with the Community Chest, and \$24,170 of the 1958 budget will be from that source.

The Visiting Nurses were the pioneers of public health nursing in



The Two Homes of the VNA. In 1940 the Visiting Nurse Association acquired the former home of I. W. Hunt (above) on East Forest Avenue for a headquarters. The first meeting of the VNA in their new quarters was on October 8 of that year. By the mid-50's this space had become inadequate. Following the death of Mrs. Helen K. Stuart in 1956, Mr. J. C. Kimberly, acting for the Kimberly family, gave the present property at 406 East Wisconsin Avenue, formerly the home of Mrs. Stuart, to the VNA (below).

this community. They preceded school, city and industrial nurses. Through the years other services have been added to the all-important bedside care: Child Health Centers, Mothers' Classes, Fathers' Classes, Dental Clinics, Loan Closet and Industrial Nursing. The VNA Auxiliary is closely associated.

History records that in the first fund-raising drive a butcher gave soup bones to make broth in the homes of the ill!

Miss Heinicke had a horse and buggy at one time—the horse couldn't take the cold; Miss Heinicke did! Mrs. J. C. Kimberly later donated the first car.

In 1956, following the death of Mrs. Helen K. Stuart, Mr. J. C. Kimberly offered to the VNA, Mrs. Stuart's former home at 403 East Wisconsin Avenue, backed by an endowment of \$100,000 to guarantee proper maintenance and upkeep. With acquiescence of the city authorities, this generous offer was accepted in August, 1956, and this valuable property became the headquarters of the VNA.

Officers of the Association in 1957 are:

President—Mrs. R. L. Johnson
 1st Vice President—Mrs. Fred Hollenbeck
 2nd Vice President—Mrs. W. B. Bellack
 Secretary—Mrs. Gilbert Bayley
 Treasurer—Mr. Clark Harris

Compiled by Mrs. R. M. Eiss



Visiting Nurse Association Auxiliary

IN 1933, when it became obvious that members of VNA were unable to carry on all the work of driving for dental clinics and keeping the nurses' supplies complete, the Junior Auxiliary was brought into being.

The first meeting was held in January, 1933, and dues of \$1.00 per person were decided upon. Mrs. John Pinkerton was Chairman of the group and Mes. John Wilterding, Stuart Thompson, R. H. Kuehsted, R. McMillen, S. N. Pickard, K. Lawson, T. Gilbert, Miss Pauline DeWolf and Miss Dorothy Brown comprised the original committee.

On February 20, 1933, the second meeting was held and a constitution was drawn. Mrs. Kuehmsted was elected Vice-Chairman and Mrs. Ted Gilbert, Secretary and Treasurer. Monthly meetings were held in the homes of members. By 1934 there were twelve active members. In April of that year, two auxiliary members were appointed to attend the monthly meetings of the VNA Board in order to establish a closer working arrangement between the two groups. Dues, plus proceeds of food sales, provided a small amount for the treasury.

In later years, an annual dance has been held to raise money for the work.

Presently one VNA Auxiliary member is elected to serve on the VNA Board, and two members are invited to attend the monthly meetings of the VNA Board.

VNA Auxiliary members continued to drive for dental clinics until that work was recently absorbed by the Community Chest. This group makes all necessary sewing repairs for VNA nurses, and supplies the kits used in their daily calls.

Compiled by Mrs. W. B. Bellack

