Solving the Shortage:
How can we keep nurses from disappearing?
Lori Bowermaster, Erin Heximer, and Raina Crawford joined their peers from the accelerated class of 2008 at a Pinning Ceremony on May 30. The pins, which are purchased for all graduating classes by the Johns Hopkins Nurses’ Alumni Association, commemorate the students’ entry into the field of nursing after 13.5 months of nursing education. The accelerated program is designed to train nurses quickly, helping to alleviate the national nursing shortage.

Photo by Joe Kemp
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Cover illustration by Jon Krause
Over the years, childbirth (including one Cesarean), knee surgery, and an emergency appendectomy personally introduced **Stephanie Shapiro** to the kindness of nurses. After speaking with two dozen nurses about the challenges they confront, her gratitude has expanded to encompass the entire field. Stephanie, who recently left the *Baltimore Sun* after 23 years as a features reporter, happily notes that she can now speak a few words of nursing language and offers thanks to her tireless “instructors.”

In early 2008, **Robby McBain** left the Office of Marketing and Communications to pursue a career in education. Fortunately for our readers, Robby continues to write for *Johns Hopkins Nursing*, interviewing the students he befriended while wandering the corridors of the School. This summer, Robby is traveling to Korea to write about our students conducting research abroad. He will then begin graduate studies this fall at St. John’s College in Annapolis.

Early in her professional career as a science policy lobbyist, **Teddi Fine** was labeled as a “policy wonk who writes fast and writes well.” It’s a label that stuck and has defined three decades of her life’s work. Today, she translates science into English for the rest of us, performing editorial alchemy, gilding manuscripts in need of sparkle. She’s in awe of the dedication and commitment of the faculty and students who place their patients’ health before self-advancement—what Teddi calls the “trademark of Hopkins nursing.”

**Contributors**

Editor **Kelly Brooks-Staub** (l) has worked on *Johns Hopkins Nursing* since 2004 and has been responsible for the editorial direction of the magazine since December of last year. Art director **Pam Li** (r) has been the magazine’s designer for three years, while also contributing to *Johns Hopkins Magazine* and the university’s Arts & Sciences magazine. They hope their admiration and respect for nurses shows in each and every issue of this publication and that you, the readers, will e-mail editor@son.jhmi.edu to share your thoughts about *Johns Hopkins Nursing*.

**Managing Editor**
Lynn Schultz-Writsel

**Editor**
Kelly Brooks-Staub

**Art Director**
Pam Li

**Editorial Staff**
Jacquelin Gray
Vigilando Editorial Assistant
Mfonobong Umana
Online Editor

**Advisory Board**
Terry Bennett
Director of Nurse Recruitment
Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center
JoAnn Coleman
Postmaster’s, CRNP ’95
Deborah Dang
Director of Nursing Practice, Education, and Research
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**Send correspondence to:**
Editor
Johns Hopkins University
School of Nursing
525 N. Wolfe Street
Baltimore, MD 21205
410.614.4695
Fax: 410.614.9704
editor@son.jhmi.edu
Every day I receive updates, inquiries, requests, and simple hellos from around the world. These messages arrive instantly and constantly via e-mail. Many are sent from remote locations; all bring news of nursing; some ask for help.

From sub-Saharan Africa, alumni request nursing books, medications, medical equipment, and volunteers. From Tanzania, a recent PhD graduate offers feedback on how her experiences as a student here will help her bring health care resources to East Africa. The fellows in our Minority Global Health Disparities Research Training Program send reports about their work in Sweden, Australia, Korea, and South Africa. Alumni and other colleagues write from international postings with the U.S. government and NGOs. Nurses from other countries request visits, want to take courses, and ask for consultations. Others seek to join the graduate and doctoral students and post-graduate fellows from Lebanon, China, and South Africa who now study at the School.

By practicing nursing in distant locations, all of these nurses are in a vanguard reversing the nursing brain drain from developing countries. These global nurses are bringing best practices to populations throughout the world. Now and in the future they will significantly impact—one nurse at a time—the unrelenting worldwide nursing crisis. As practicing nurses, educators, researchers, mentors, and preceptors, they are helping to stem the exodus of professional and prospective nurses in developing countries. They bring the resources, training, and guidance that struggling educators and practicing nurses need to teach students, treat patients, shape health care policy, and lead their institutions.

Nursing’s global responsibility—and opportunity—is recognized by our incoming students. When asked “Why Nursing?” and “Why Hopkins?” their altruism and global perspectives are evident: “After serving in the Peace Corps in Togo, I realized how desperate my village was for adequate health care. I want the knowledge and skills to provide that care;” “Nursing is transportable, essential health care. I want to share my skills around the world;” or simply, “Because it’s all about people!” They explain their choice of Hopkins as: “It’s a world-renowned University with a presence around the globe;” “…the opportunities with Hopkins to work in community health, here and overseas are limitless—as is the ability to make an impact here and everywhere;” and “…the incredible Hopkins international network.”

They are a global generation that is attracted to and informed by other cultures, and they want their nursing education to be internationally applicable. Their hopes and dreams for future global nursing careers are not those of naïve dreamers or novices. When describing interesting aspects of their lives, the Accelerated ’09 class tells us of their previous international experiences; they cite their work and volunteerism in Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Barbados, Poland, Russia, Paris, Copenhagen, Senegal, Mexico, Mali and elsewhere. They’ve been there, and they want to go back.

Our students are eager to reverse the brain drain and to share their nursing knowledge throughout the world. They anticipate working to enhance nursing education and improve nursing practice. They want to be among those who craft policy changes, influence decision makers, and ensure qualified nurses have the opportunities and resources to thrive in their own countries. They will be among the future leaders who address—and resolve—the nursing shortage both here and abroad.

We must nurture and preserve their passion to make a difference globally. Each year at Hopkins, we offer a select number of baccalaureate and graduate students international experiences that not only whet their appetites for global nursing, but also nourish their aspirations to undertake a career of international nursing leadership. Although limited, these experiences are proving to be effective in launching a new generation of global nurses.

But we need to do more. With more resources, many more students will have the opportunity to engage in our work to address the international nursing crisis and to reverse the drain of nurses.

I urge you to join me in making this happen. E-mail me at globalnursing@son.jhmi.edu and tell me how you might help.

Martha N. Hill, PhD, RN, FAAN, ’64
Dean
Professor of Nursing, Medicine and Public Health
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Allison Smith, PhD
Psychology, University of Michigan.
Our question this issue:
What are the biggest challenges to overcoming the nursing shortage?

H. Nurse training and education: getting more students through the pipeline quickly and the related issue of lack of nursing faculty
A. Professional image of nursing

G. Inadequate salary and overall compensation
B. Poor relations with physicians

F. Lack of advocacy and marketing to attract the next generation of nurses
C. Lack of funding for nursing positions

E. Inaccurate media coverage of nursing
D. Lack of institutional recognition of the need for additional nurses

The list of choices included issues I don’t associate with nursing now, such as image problems, physician issues. Now the issue seems more to be realities of the work vs. other alternatives, like how physically demanding the profession is and the fact that for many it means 12 hours shifts and day/night rotations. Those can be stumbling blocks, especially for older people considering the profession.

Marian Grant, MSN ‘05, BSN ‘00, CRNP
Senior Research Coordinator
Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing

I believe the biggest challenges to overcoming the nursing shortage are “inaccurate media coverage of nursing,” along with the “professional image of nursing.” I have been a nurse for almost 40 years and have not seen much of an improvement in our image. We nurses know that we’re multi-talented, well educated, and involved in all aspects of health care, but I do not believe the general public is as aware.

One example—some years ago, there was a widely-watched television documentary about The Johns Hopkins Hospital. I was excited, thinking that surely much of the focus would be on the talented nurses who are the mainstay of the health care rendered there. Much to my dismay, and that of my friends, the role of the Hopkins nurse was ignored. Now I understand there is another documentary in the works focused on the making of a Hopkins doctor! It is past time for a similar show regarding the many roles of the modern nurse. At the very least, I hope the new documentary includes some acknowledgement of the Hopkins nurse.

Carol Heinlein, MS, RN

Editor’s Note: ABC’s new six-episode documentary series “Hopkins,” a sequel to the 2000 documentary “Hopkins 24/7,” focuses on the hospital’s medical residents. The show began airing in late June, on Thursday nights at 10 p.m. (after “Grey’s Anatomy”).

This issue’s second opinion missed the boat. If I was forced to pick one I would select H. For example, I would love to run a nursing lab or intro to nursing class at my local community college and feel I would be well qualified, but they require a master’s degree.

However, for me and many nurses the real problem with staying in the hospital is the lack of flexibility in employment. I and many friends and colleagues have left the hospital not because of the reasons you offered, but because we have been fortunate. We have families that are our first priority. Childcare is very expensive and often not available traditional shift hours, and very few hospitals offer on-site childcare.

Additionally, weekend, evening, and night work is not family-friendly.

Hospitals will spend thousands of dollars recruiting foreign nurses but refuse to think “outside the box” in attracting nurses in their own town. There is a large population of nonworking nurses due to family obligations. These are nurses who have experience, are invested in the community, and most often, keep up with journals and research. Many mothers with school age children would love to work 8 am - 2 pm. Many nurses would like a two day a week schedule with no weekends. These nurses are willing to take a lower pay to avoid working weekends and holidays. These are nurses who would love to “cover” for lunches when their children are in school. These are nurses who could be mentors for new nurses coming in. Hospitals could save money by utilizing part-time employees and lower “shift” wages. However, hospitals will say they are unable to offer creative scheduling due to unions. Unions say they are unable to sway the hospitals to offer creative scheduling. So we find positions outside the hospital, but are often underemployed.

Hospitals that are able to tap this resource of well educated, experienced nurses will be the hospitals that deliver the best patient care most efficiently with a happy workforce. These are the hospitals who will be least impacted by the nursing shortage.

Barbara (Blanchard) Spielberg, BSN ‘95
For 2008 Graduates, Knowledge Alone is “Simply Not Enough”

On May 22nd, 124 undergraduate and 74 graduate Hopkins nursing students filled the Lyric Opera House for the 2008 commencement ceremony, ready to embark on their new journey as tomorrow’s nursing leaders. An additional 129 students from the accelerated class received their Bachelor of Science degrees in July.

A majority of the graduate students, 54, received a Master of Science in Nursing (MSN), while 13 received a joint MSN and Master of Public Health (MPH), two received a joint MSN and Master of Business Administration (MBA), and five were awarded a PhD.

The day prior to the commencement ceremony, the Nu Beta Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society inducted 109 new members—80 baccalaureate students, 27 master’s students, and two doctoral students—who demonstrate excellence in nursing scholarship.

Jhpiego president and CEO Lisa Mancuso, PhD, RN, FAAN, this year’s keynote speaker, encouraged graduates to use their knowledge to improve health worldwide. “Nurses are a critical factor in improving global health,” remarked Mancuso, who was named by The Daily Record as one of Maryland’s Top 100 Women for 2008. “We must push to be leaders and create real change. To ‘know’ is simply not enough.”

—Jonathan Eichberger
Nonstop

By Jeane Garcia ’08

Spoken word performance at 2008 Commencement ceremony

We read it sometime back in shiny recruitment materials,
Then they reminded us again on “Accepted Students’ Day”—
They said something about stopping to take two years for a
Traditional BS degree in Nursing.
So we stopped and took a risk on ourselves to become—nurses.

They announced it again in P and A lab that morning—sometime
after Diane’s ducks waded past the faces pain scale and our trusting
supine British Sim-man. Then again before that quivering subQ
shot we practiced on an Ace bandage and that jumbling first time
Foley cath on plastic drainage pipes…
They stopped to remind us that tradition translated into
teamwork, compassion and care,
Helping each other hands-on in clinical rotations between the
heparin and insulin—
We learned a little something about what nursing and taking risks really meant—
Thanks to Janice Hoffman’s serial ABGs and contagious enthusiasm for critical care,
We stopped now to see that we didn’t need a monitor to assess that we’re rapidly —
becoming—nurses.

Between the stop signs in East Baltimore and Durban, Haiti and the Homewood campus,
Broadway Street and the UAE,—We could not, would not be stopped—
Sometime between high fives at Headstart, to seeing that first decel on the fetal monitor,
To reassuring that uninsured mother… Between every ambubag and chest compression,
To stopping to be that nurse to change that patient’s five-day old ulcer dressing,
Suctioning trach collars and checking chest tubes, To caring for families and children living
with CP,
To holding the hands of strangers struggling with newfound TB or HIV—We stopped and saw it
in each other’s faces and skillful hands, and in what our patients weren’t always saying to us.

From the ED to L and D, shock/trauma and MICU, and soon to a hospital near you’s Cardiac
SICU—
Between every SBAR, V-fib, then reading together about PEPFAR,
From the BBC and DRC, to EKGs and every 14 Gauge IV saying, “just a little stick”…

We stopped and taught ourselves—that this was possible.
That “traditional” translated into tenacity and innovation,
That “taking risks” meant quality care, perseverance, leadership, listening, and—that we could
stop—and take a risk on ourselves… Bouncing from day care before dawn, to work study or a
tech shift—From lack of sleep to bottomless lattes, late calls home, to racing for the shuttle;
rushing to make tuition payments, to O2 sats on EMT ambulance rides—we were non-stop.

They taught, we learned—We taught, they learned—
And at the end of every culturally competent H&P, midterm exam, nurse’s note, and
plan of care,
we learned that—Yes, we are nurses,
And yes—while still un-licensed for just a few more weeks that
Yes,—We had become an un-pharmaceutical product of our patients,
of our passions, of each other—
and that we—are—so critically—
un-traditionally—
Unstoppable…
Florence Nightingale was a pioneer of modern nursing…but did you know?

- In 1860, she was the first woman to be elected a fellow of the Statistic Society;
- Over her career, Nightingale published more than 200 books, reports, and pamphlets;
- Her most famous book, Notes on Nursing, has been translated into eleven foreign languages and is still in print;
- The Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing (JHUSON) has a collection of her original letters, books, and wheelchair.

JHUSON was founded “under the influence of a Nightingale-type education,” says Maryann Fralic, DrPH, RN, FAAN. “That’s the real legacy for nurses here, in that we continue to prepare leaders who have a wonderful heritage… in a real way, in that there are parts of her life here.”

The Florence Nightingale wheelchair was donated to the School by Howard Kelly, a prominent Hopkins physician. Kelly purchased the chair in 1921 and presented it to the School, writing in a letter, “If an inanimate object can convey a lesson and transmit an inspiration, may this chair suggest the spiritual presence of your great apostle of nursing and prove a blessing to the nursing school.” The chair can be found on the fourth floor of the School of Nursing Anne M. Pinkard Building.

Another rare gift donated by Kelly in 1917, included a collection of original Nightingale letters, which he had bound in a handmade book for the School. He also donated a number of books and other materials that were both directly and indirectly related to Florence Nightingale, now housed at the Welch Library archives.

A bridal bouquet was sent by Florence Nightingale to Isabel Hampton on the occasion of her wedding to Hunter Robb in 1894. A friend of Nightingale’s, Isabel Hampton was the first superintendent of the Johns Hopkins training school for nurses, and was also in charge of the nursing service for the entire hospital. The reconstructed bouquet now rests under a glass dome on the first floor in the Admissions Office.

—Diana Schulin
A photo collage honoring Professor Victoria Mock, PhD, RN, FAAN, is now on display in the Center for Nursing Research and Sponsored Projects at the Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing. Prior to her death late last year, Mock served the School as professor, Chair of the Department of Health Systems and Outcomes, and Director of the Center for Collaborative Intervention Research. She also directed nursing research at the Kimmel Cancer Center. The collage serves as a memorial to the dedication and inspiration she provided to the School and to the field of nursing.

Maureen Maguire—Teacher of All SON Classes—To Rest On Laurels

SON Assistant Professor Maureen Maguire, MSN, RN, PNP, who joined the SON faculty just as the second baccalaureate class entered the SON, has announced her retirement. According to Maguire, “It’s been an amazing ride and I’m surprised to realize that 23 years have gone by!” Throughout those years, Maguire has seen the School grow and change direction. She found each stage to be “a fascinating experience where you could learn and grow as a faculty member.” She added, “I liked it every day, but the most special times were those ‘Oh! I get that!’ moments with the students.”

—Lynn Schultz-Writsel

Excellent Teachers, “Ultimate Mentors”

Faculty members Sharon Olsen and Elizabeth (Ibby) Tanner were named the 2008 recipients of the Johns Hopkins University Alumni Association Excellence in Teaching Awards at the School of Nursing commencement ceremony in May. The awards, which have been given annually since 1992, honor faculty members who—according to their students—stand out in their role as both a teacher and a mentor.

Ibby Tanner, PhD, MS, RN, received the Baccalaureate Excellence in Teaching Award. According to students who nominated her, Tanner is a “great inspiration” and a “wonderful teacher, mentor, and advocate.” As the faculty mentor for the School’s Geriatric Interest Group, she shares her skill and passion with her students and “take[s] time to advocate for patients as a skilled geriatrician and RN.” Says one nominator: “Dr. Ibby Tanner is the kind of professor that I hoped to find” at Johns Hopkins.

Sharon Olsen, MS, RN, AOCN, received the Graduate Excellence in Teaching Award. Described as “the ultimate mentor,” Olsen is known throughout the School for encouraging professional development among the graduate students. Nominating students say that Olsen encourages students to “be advocates for themselves, their specialty area, and their patients.” An “exceptional role model for all clinical nurse specialists,” Olsen is said to “exemplify what it means to be a nurse leader.”

Dean Martha N. Hill, PhD, RN, FAAN presented the awards, noting that the award winners demonstrate “extraordinary qualities—excellent teaching, mentoring, respectfulness, and encouragement. The School of Nursing is proud to have them as part of our faculty.”
New Orleans Nursing: It’s High Time for Help in the Lower Ninth Ward

Hard labor, health screenings, and dormitory-style bunk beds—not the usual trappings of a college student’s spring break. But for one dozen nursing students from Johns Hopkins University, traveling to New Orleans to help victims of Hurricane Katrina was just how they wanted to spend their holiday. Team NOLA helped with construction and renovation of homes in the Lower Ninth Ward through the organization Lowernine.org and volunteered at the Lower Ninth Ward Health Clinic, St. Anna’s Medical Mission, and Touro Infirmary Emergency Department. For four days, they went from door to door throughout the Holy Cross neighborhood to conduct health screenings. View more photos at www.son.jhmi.edu/nola.

—Kelly Brooks-Staub and Diana Schulin
A community health nurse is not made by classroom learning alone. Textbooks, lectures, and written tests help prepare students for working with patients, but there is no substitute for hands-on experience. At the Johns Hopkins School of Nursing (JHUSON), students are sharing their knowledge with Baltimore residents—and learning valuable lessons at the same time.

**Stress Management for the Homeless**
In March, Community Public Health nursing students received funds from the Johns Hopkins Nurses’ Alumni Association (JHNAA) to host a stress management workshop at the Hannah More Shelter, a transitional housing facility.

Students provided hand massages and manicures, talked to the residents about types of stress and coping strategies, and presented evidence-based examples of stress relievers including relaxing music, yoga, and guided meditation. The residents received prizes such as journals, stress balls, and small bottles of lotion.

Katharine Taylor ’08 recalls a touching moment in which one woman acknowledged that “after getting to know her fellow residents, she felt closer to them and more supported by them than she had ever felt in her own family. Several of the women began tearing up at this point and a box of tissues was passed around.”

**Spa Day for the Elderly**
In April the Geriatric Interest Group, comprised of Hopkins students from the schools of Nursing, Medicine, and Public Health, collaborated with the Isaiah Wellness Center at the Apostolic Towers, a housing complex for low-income older adults, to host a Spa Day for its residents. The event featured seated massages, nail manicures, an exercise session (tai-chi and stretching), and a healthy lunch for all who attended.

According to Callie Hermann ’09, Spa Day “provided opportunities for relationships that are beneficial for students and the residents at Apostolic Towers.” The benefit to students? Lessons that can’t be covered in the classroom: “Listening to people share their simple (yet often overlooked) expressions of gratitude put my life’s ‘problems’ and ‘stresses’ into perspective,” she adds.

**Heart Health Education for Amish Children**
Also using a JHNAA grant, nursing students purchased a human heart model to teach area Amish school children about heart health in May. Because older Amish people have a high risk of heart disease due to their diet, the nursing students spent time teaching Amish children about the heart’s role in the human body and the warning signs for heart attack and stroke.

“The best thing about teaching children is seeing that ‘ah-ha!’ moment in their eyes,” said student Kristine Lee, accelerated ’09. “I remember kneeling down next to the first boy who was probably no more than six years old. I asked him to point to his heart. Then I put the ear pieces of the stethoscope in his ears and asked, ‘Can you hear your heart?’ His eyes widened with a smile, he nodded yes.”

—Jonathan Eichberger