



Frederick Banting and the Group of Seven

In 1925, fame rested heavily on the shoulders of Sir Frederick Banting, whose name had become closely associated with the discovery of insulin 3 years earlier. A reticent man, Banting found public speaking difficult and the hounding of the press unbearable. He found relief from the rigours of professional life through his passion for water colours and sketching.



London Regional Art & Historical Museums

Near Ste Irénée (1931) by Frederick Banting, from *Banting & Jackson: An Artistic Brotherhood*, by the Canadian Medical Hall of Fame and London Regional Art & Historical Museums (1997)

This interest led him to membership in Toronto’s Arts and Letters Club, the meeting place for some of Canada’s best-known artists, including the Group of Seven. Banting became friends with the group’s founding member and one of Canada’s leading landscape artists, A.Y. Jackson.

At first glance the scientist and artist might appear to have little in common, but there were many common threads. Both men served on the Western Front during WW I, and both had been wounded and convalesced in England. Both had an interest in military art and a passion for the outdoors and landscape painting.

Over the next 16 years, Jackson invited Banting to accompany him on a number of his sketching trips — some lasting as long as 2 months. They sketched from the Georgian Bay area to wintertime rural Quebec; there, they billeted with local farm families. They also travelled to the Eastern Arctic, where they became the first artists to sketch Hudson Bay trading posts.

For Banting, these trips meant a break from the pressures of his medical research. Jackson was a mentor and teacher, often looking over Banting’s work and making suggestions for improving it.

At the time of his death in 1941, Banting was one of Canada’s best-known amateur painters. It was reported that Banting’s death in a plane crash hit Jackson just as hard as the death of another good friend and sketching partner, Tom Thomson, a quarter of a century earlier. — *Peter Wilton*, Toronto

MDs should pay more attention to young women’s sexual health: report

Physicians have much to learn about helping young women achieve sexual health, a report from Dalhousie University’s Department of Community Health and Epidemiology states. It says that even though Canadian data indicate that most young people are sexually active by the time they are in their final year of high school, medicine appears to be lagging behind this reality.

Dr. Donald Langille, one of the principal researchers for the report, *Lessons for Helping Young Women Achieve Sexual Health*, says the authors wanted to learn more about the obstacles young people face in accessing sex education and sexual health services.

The participants were 28 young women aged 15 to 18 who live in the small Nova Scotia town of Amherst. According to Langille, their responses provided strong evidence that, for many, an effective relationship be-

tween themselves and their physician, which is considered crucial to sexual education and health, doesn’t exist.

The report also showed that many doctors don’t take sexual histories from young people or ask about sexual orientation and practices. Many of the students interviewed by the Dalhousie researchers did not realize that they had a right to confidentiality and mistakenly believed that physicians require parental consent to prescribe oral contraceptives to women younger than 18.

Langille acknowledges that many physicians do an excellent job dealing with these patients, but he hopes the report will be a resource that doctors can use to develop strategies that will make their practices more “youth” friendly. More information is available from Langille, donald.langille@dal.ca — *Dorothy Grant*, Hammonds Plains, NS