

# THE IPRN NEWS

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*The Utah School on Alcoholism*

*Memorial Service*

*Paul Pancoast*

*Janet Ralstin*

*June 25, 2007  
5:00 p.m.  
at the  
Post Chapel*

## SALT LAKE CITY

This issue is a special issue from Salt Lake City, Utah. I decided to write the newsletter as a kind of journal of my experience at the Utah School on Alcoholism and Drug Dependencies. The journey began yesterday as I flew to Utah. In the Minneapolis airport I already began meeting others who were on their way. Carl, Gordy, Don and Mary from Minnesota were on the same flight. I arrived at the school at the same time as some other Minnesotans, Jim and Barb Alexander. It's always amazing how without planning a trip begins just like it is supposed to! Charlie Broussard was here already along with Keith Marciniak from the APhA. They are the section co-leaders. Charlie has the website [www.usaprn.org](http://www.usaprn.org) and has been a great friend of the PRN programs. He had already befriended one of the students and bought him lunch!

As friends began to arrive there were hugs and laughter. I am very excited for the week to come. The pharmacy section is once again the largest at the school and is expecting around 300 participants. Iowa will have 2 students from the U of I and 5 students from Drake, myself and another pharmacist.

Approximately 30 people attended the Pre-School Annual Workshop for State Pharmacy Recovery Program Administrators and State Boards of Pharmacy Members/Employees. It is where we talk about what works in each of our state PRN programs. We talked about whether there could be a fellowship or residency in addiction pharmacy. We discussed the DEA Waiver, EtG testing and monitoring the pharmacist with chronic pain or ADD. There was a lot of discussion about funding PRN programs. We decided to have 2 Yahoo discussion groups, one for program administrators and one for everyone. I felt there was a lot accomplished.

The school began with a Pizza reception and an overview of the program. Jeff Harnsberger did a great job explaining the 12 steps. I chose to be a mentor for the Iowa student pharmacists. We have a great bunch here! I think the beginning is a bit overwhelming and we made plans to get together again. This was followed by an open Alcoholics Anonymous meeting. For many of the attendees this was their first encounter with AA and Jim did a great job of giving the history of AA. We were all shuttled back to the dorm for a good nights sleep.

***IPRN has maintained a 24-hour, toll-free hotline. Calls made to the hotline included individuals needing help and concerned others.***

***The toll free number is: (877) 890-IPRN***

***Mark your calendars:***

***The 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Heartland PRN Conference will be held September 28-20, 2007 in Holland, Michigan at Camp Geneva on the shore of Lake Michigan.***

**Monday - The morning began with a lecture on the Pathophysiology of Addiction by Brian Fingerson and Patrick Sammon. It was interesting to see the advances that have been made on the study of the brain.**

**Most of the groups arrived today this year. We gathered with all of the sections for the introductions and welcome with Stephen Sheppard, Ph.D. who also presented Bernard Flynn, the "Swinyard Award" to recognize his outstanding contribution and service to the field of substance abuse education, treatment and prevention. Father Flynn always presents to the pharmacy section on spirituality.**

**The opening address was outstanding! Kevin McCauley, Ph.D. is a dynamic speaker and his talk was titled "Beyond the Disease Model of Addiction". He is so passionate about this topic that it would be impossible not to be motivated by his enthusiasm. He spoke about societies views of addiction and whether punishment works to get people to recover. It was thought provoking and interesting.**

**After more pathophysiology, we heard about street drugs from Anthony Tommasello, R.Ph., Ph.D. I think it is important for pharmacists to know what is out there, what it is called and what is being abused. He showed us the reality of where drug abuse brings people and the heartbreaking stories that go with that. He showed us many slides of street drugs and drug abusers.**

**Once again, I was able to meet with the students. They were given so much information that it was hard to know what to talk about. I am so excited to see the impact they will have on their PRN programs at Drake and the University. They were about to go out and climb the mountain and I was on my way to the memorial for Paul and Janet. I hope to have more about the climb up the mountain in the reflections from our students.**

**Janet Ralstin and Paul Pancoast were both alumni of the Utah School on Alcoholism and Drug Dependencies who passed away this year. We held their memorial at the Post Chapel. Both were 56 years old. They were far too young. The memorial was attended by many of the long time attendees of the school who knew them personally. It was a moving service that was very sad but they were also remembered for the joy and friendship they brought all of us, for their contributions to the PRN programs and for their participation in all of our recoveries.**

**At 8 pm, we held a meeting of the committee for IPA (International Pharmacists Anonymous). Jean Sheffield is spear-heading a fundraiser to have a plaque at APhA in remembrance of Ron Williams, a close friend of our PRN groups. We chose to contribute \$1000 to this fund. We discussed getting our list updated and our plans for a newsletter. We also discussed whether to continue to have 2 meetings at the APhA conference and at the later meeting decided just to keep the meeting on Friday night.**

**At 9 pm, we held the International Pharmacists Anonymous meeting. There was a nice gathering after a completely filled day. The topic was HOPE!**

*Please feel free to call IPRN if you need assistance, need information or need help with an intervention.*

*We can help!*

*We share with newly recovering pharmacists who feel isolated, unique, unworthy and hopeless that there is hope.*

**Tuesday - A recovering pharmacist told his story this morning. It was one of the most moving talks I had ever heard. There was complete silence in the room as he told where his addiction had taken him. One of the things he talked about was the shame he felt for what he had done. He shared the dark road that he had taken. And then he talked about meeting other pharmacists and how in recovery he was able to put his life back together. I realized that this is what it is all about. Here is a young pharmacist, an asset to our profession, who was willing to be completely honest and share his story so that others could understand addiction.**

**Next we had a session where a dentist told his story and found out that their stories are very similar to pharmacists. James Tracy and Curtis Vixie spoke on Chemical Dependency and Diversion Among Healthcare Professionals.**

**There was a APhA Addiction Practitioner Interest Group (PInG) meeting over the lunch hour hosted by Jeff Harnsberger, R.Ph. which I hope to detail in future issues.**

**When we returned John and Pat O'Neill shared on intervention strategies for health care professionals. This was followed by a role playing on family dynamics. It was great to see the student pharmacists participating. After a break we had a mock intervention. It is amazing how this session always brings out the emotions of the audience. At the end the Pat and John O'Neill shared that this would be their last time at the Utah School as they are retiring. This brought many to tears. We are so grateful for what they have shared with us for so many years.**

**The Iowans got together for the school picnic. We were treated to great food! As we talked, it was amazing to see the changes on the faces of the student pharmacists as we are going through this experience together. It was different than when they first arrived. They were energized by what went on today. They seemed more comfortable. We talked about things that can be done to educate student pharmacists on impairment.**

**We were again treated to Red Hawk Nino Reyos and the Spirit Eagle Dancers. Nino is a Native American, master flute player, and international lecturer on Native topics. He is a former U.S. Marine with a master's degree in social work where he contributes his talents in the substance abuse profession and healing people through Native workshops. He has reached the top of two very different worlds by living in two different worlds. The haunting sounds of an American Indian flute never had been heard before by most in the international television audience watching February's Opening Ceremony of the 2002 Winter Games. His interest in the flute was piqued when he was given one as part of a dance-circle initiation. "Playing the flute comes from the inside," Nino says. "I start to play and the music comes from where I am, what I am thinking about." Nino dedicates his talent and time to elevate the native culture through his music.**

**The day ended with an Al-Anon meeting.**

***The Iowa Pharmacy Recovery Network is always in need of caring volunteers throughout the State of Iowa. The profession needs you to make a difference!***

***First do no harm, then comfort always and cure sometimes.***

**Wednesday - The day started with a lecture on Pain Management in the Recovering Addict by Ted Parran, Jr., M.D., FACP. This has been discussed throughout the PRN groups and is one of the most challenging issues facing the recovering addict.**

**There are several factors to consider when prescribing or filling an opioid for a recovering addict in acute pain. Where is the person in their recovery? Is the addiction in remission or in relapse? Have opioids ever been a drug of choice for the recovery addict?**

**In chronic pain there were 5 questions for possible use of an opioid:**

- 1. Is there a clear diagnosis?**
- 2. Is there documentation of an adequate work-up?**
- 3. Is there impairment of function?**
- 4. Has non-opioid multi model therapy failed?**
- 5. Are there contradictions to opioid therapy ruled out?**

**There are some drugs to always avoid. Avoid meperidine, propoxyphene and butalbital due to side effects. Avoid secobarbital, pentobarbital, meprobamate and ethchlorvynol due to narrow toxic/therapeutic window. And avoid carisoprodol (Soma) and propoxyphene due to the lack of efficacy.**

**With clear documentation, pill counts, multi discipline approach we can achieve pain management in the recovering addict by balancing the indications and contraindications. First do no harm, then comfort always and cure sometimes.**

**We then had a panel discussion by Ted Parran, Jr., M.D., FACP, Carl Baumann, R.Ph., Brian Fingerson, R.Ph. and Ed Schneider, R.Ph. who highlighted how this information can be used in our PRN programs and talked about what their PRN programs are doing.**

**Michael Moné, R.Ph., J.D. presented on Pharmacy Ethics and Law. The objectives were to stimulate discussion, challenge assumptions and serve as a guide to the world of ethics. Of course, it was prefaced by disclaimers! One of the most important lessons I learned from this thought provoking session was that whatever actions I take, I am affecting every other pharmacist who practices in the profession. Law informs you of what you must do and results in a correct decision and ethics informs you of what you should do and results in a right decision!**

**George Obermeier, M.S., presented on Addiction Interaction Disorders which in general terms means trading one addiction for another. Multiple addictions can reinforce, support or counteract each other. People can switch addictions and fly under the radar of detection. He also stated that tolerance in one addiction can transfer to another addiction. If such interactions are not identified and incorporated in the treatment planning, relapse may be inevitable. It appears there will be more studies to back this up.**

**The evening ended with a Narcotics Anonymous Open Meeting.**

*It was encouraging to see the hope and support within the group as they worked through their individual issues.*

*Contact the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs to insure that education about addiction is included.*

**Thursday - One of the most moving session at the Utah School is the Group Therapy Experience by Stephen Sheppard, Ph.D. and the recovery group from The Haven, a residential treatment center in Salt Lake City. The chairs are set up in a circle around the center circle where the Haven holds a group therapy session. It is an absolutely moving experience to see them share as if we weren't there. Members of the audience are moved to tears by their stories. The audience is part of the experience.**

**The Haven's mission is to provide effective affordable treatment based upon the clients' motivation rather than their ability to pay for treatment.**

**The Haven is an inpatient drug and alcohol treatment program established in 1969 as an alternative to costly hospital based programs. Treatment at The Haven requires a minimum stay of 60 days and an average successful completion of 82 days. The program is Twelve Step oriented and the focus of treatment is on residents acquiring personal responsibility to maintain staying clean and sober. The residents are responsible for the upkeep of the house and have assigned chores. The program provides educational classes; group and individual therapy, to facilitate clients' developing needed life skills. The residents are referred to state agencies for education and vocational training.**

**It was encouraging to see the hope and support within the group as they worked through their individual issues.**

**Anthony C. Tommasello, R.Ph., Ph.D. and Jeff Baldwin, Pharm. D. spoke on How to Apply What You Learned in Utah to Your Job, Your School and Life. Student pharmacists were encouraged to look at what their colleges had in their curriculum, to gather information and to work with the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs to insure that education about addiction is included. They were asked to enlist others in their colleges to further these goals. Everyone there was encouraged to join their state and national organizations.**

**The student pharmacists were also informed on how to assist those with drug dependencies. The objective was to apply appropriate pharmacological counseling and support to clients and colleagues recovering from drug dependencies. They were encouraged to apply 12 step principles to their own life experiences to provide a more meaningful and fulfilling life experience and enhance their job effectiveness. And once again, to justify increased pharmacist and student pharmacist addiction education.**

**Last on the agenda was Humor and Laughter: A Prescription for Well Being by George Obermeier, M.S. This is a presentation that has been included in the Utah School for many years. The objective is to develop a sense of humor as a professional communication tool to reduce stress, increase rapport with clients and colleagues, build strong relationships and be appropriate.**

**Over 100 people attended the last 12 step meeting for all addictions and Al-Anon which could be called an Any "A" meeting.**

*If you know anyone who would like to receive this newsletter just email and we will add them to the mailing list. Otherwise, feel free to pass the news along.*

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**Friday - The week has flown by! Waking up in Utah for the last day of this session of the Utah School on Alcoholism and Drug Dependencies there was no sadness about leaving because I know the work that has to be done and feel ready to embark. I am confident that the student pharmacists we sent will impact our PRN programs at both of our colleges. They have been given all of the tools they need to begin.**

**This morning Chuck Jackson, Ed.D. treated us to “Developing Positive Personal Power” which helped to describe how the pharmacy professional can improve professional effectiveness by maintaining physical and mental wellness. He hails from Oklahoma. One of the funny things he said was that our profession tends to “circle the wagons” but we’re the only ones that shoot to the inside. He never fails to thoroughly entertain us, direct us and inspire us.**

**Charlie and Keith tied up all of the loose ends and good-byes with the pharmacy section closing. We all appreciate the work that they and others put into having such a great school in Utah. Thanks so much from all of us!**

**And once again, Chuck Jackson was the final lecturer for the closing session called “Breaking Camp”. It was again such an inspiration to have Chuck end the week. We broke camp, we packed up and we said our good-byes for another year.**

**It has never been possible for one person to put “The Utah Experience” in words. I have asked the Iowa Student Pharmacists to write reflections on their experiences for use in future newsletters. I would love to hear about climbing the mountain in Utah, the PInG meeting and anything else you would like to write about. Anyone who would like to contribute is welcome. And remember to stop at [www.usaprn.org](http://www.usaprn.org) for pictures and information on the PRN programs.**

**Thanks everyone and Good-night.**

**Utah**

**In the mountains of Utah, a special place  
Where lost ones gather at a humble pace.**

**In the sunshine of day and moon at night  
Stories are told to set things right.**

**God’s presence is found in another’s face  
In smiles and laughter and tears we trace.**

**There is nothing like it in this world  
All of us sharing the dreams we hold.**

**Goodbye, good luck, God speed, my friend  
Until up on the mountain, we meet again.**

**Emily Dykstra**