

# Alchemy

College magazine issue 10, winter 2006

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## 125 years

### Celebrating the past, building our future



# Investing in our future – the 125th appeal

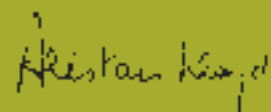
The 125th anniversary of the college is a wonderful milestone. It is also an opportunity to reflect on our past strengths and look to the future.

To celebrate the anniversary, the Victorian College of Pharmacy Foundation is launching a special appeal. This appeal is an opportunity for college alumni to make certain that future graduates have access to the best teaching and facilities and to ensure that we continue to lead new drug research and safe usage of medicines.

All gifts to the 125th anniversary appeal are tax deductible and will go towards building the college's endowment fund.

Over \$120,000 was donated to the endowment in 2005 and, on behalf of the directors of the Foundation, I wish to thank every donor who has contributed, particularly those who have undertaken to make annual donations.

We are also grateful to those pharmacists who have advised us that they are making arrangements to leave a bequest to the Foundation in their wills. If their generosity and willingness to help is now matched by all pharmacists, we will quickly create a substantial endowment that will ensure the college will become one of the best schools of pharmacy in the world. To those who have not already supported the Foundation, I now strongly encourage your favourable consideration.



Alistair Lloyd AO RFD ED (1956)  
Chair, Victorian College of Pharmacy Foundation

**To find out more about the Victorian College of Pharmacy Foundation or to make a donation, visit [www.vcp.monash.edu.au/foundation](http://www.vcp.monash.edu.au/foundation)**

The following have generously donated to the Foundation from 2001 to the present. Their gifts range from \$25 to \$50,000. Annual pledges, marked with a \*, range from two to five years.

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In memorium:  
Mrs Malike Gabriel in memory of Dr Manuch Gabriel  
Mrs Val Constable in memory of Mr Bob Constable

# From the dean

2006 is an important year for the Victorian College of Pharmacy, as we celebrate 125 years of teaching and research excellence.

The college has evolved considerably during its history – from a colonial male student and staff population into a multicultural community comprising greater female representation, and from offering an apprenticeship to being a faculty of one of the top 40 universities in the world offering degrees in formulation science, medicinal chemistry, pharmacy and wound care.

Throughout the years, the college has made a difference to the working lives of community and hospital pharmacists by offering research into pharmacy practice, medication use and safety, engaging with the community and the profession, and providing opportunities for continuing education.

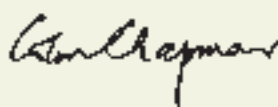
One of our new initiatives, the Student Ambassador program, is yet another way that the college is assisting students to be confident, assertive graduates. This program also contains a mentoring component and I would encourage alumni to consider participating in this very worthwhile activity. You can read more about the Student Ambassador program on page 18.

In terms of our campus, construction of the fourth building at 399 Royal Parade is well underway and due for completion in late 2006. The building will accommodate pharmaceutical science research and innovation that will greatly enhance the world-class standing of the college's research into drug discovery and development.

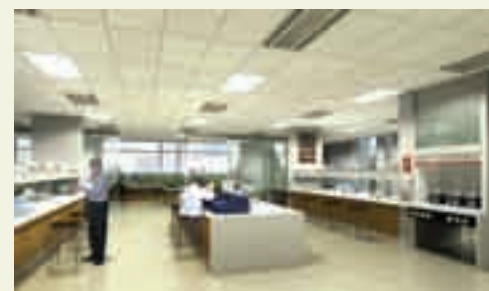
Internationally, the college continues to forge strong links. In 2008, we plan to commence the Bachelor of Pharmacy at Monash's Malaysian campus. In this edition of *Alchemy*, you will also read about our students and academic staff who continue to represent the college across the globe.

The 125th anniversary is an excellent opportunity for the college's alumni, students, staff and friends to get involved and celebrate a great many years of teaching and research excellence. There are many activities planned, and a full calendar of events is included on the back page of this edition of *Alchemy*.

I warmly encourage you to join with us to celebrate our past and our future.



Professor Colin Chapman (1970)



Architects' impression of 399 Royal Parade



## Swanston Street plaque unveiling

As part of the college's 125th anniversary celebrations, a plaque will be laid to commemorate the site of the old college.

The plaque will be unveiled by John Coppock (1955), chairman of Pharmaceutical Defence Ltd, at 10am on 6 June at the Oxford Scholar, 427 Swanston Street, a favourite watering hole of many past students. Alistair Lloyd will speak at the gathering and friendships will be renewed as graduates reminisce about the old days at Swanston Street.

Graduates and staff from the college, especially those who worked and studied at the site, are most welcome to attend.

To view images from the plaque unveiling, visit [www.vcp.monash.edu.au/125](http://www.vcp.monash.edu.au/125) after the event.

**For further information and invitations contact Elizabeth Welch, tel: +613 9903 9086 or email [elizabeth.welch@vcp.monash.edu.au](mailto:elizabeth.welch@vcp.monash.edu.au)**

# Making a difference in Timor

Jana Dostal, recipient of the 2005 Mathew Peck Scholarship, travelled to East Timor in February to work with the Pharmacy Department of the Ministry of Health.

The scholarship is named in memory of Mathew Peck, a Bachelor of Pharmacy student who passed away tragically in an accident while travelling in South America in January 2003. It was established to honour Mathew's life and to continue his commitment to international health issues.

"It's difficult to know how to begin describing my six weeks in East Timor (known as Timor Leste to the locals). Before anything, I want to express my most sincere thanks and appreciation to every person who made this happen. I feel extremely fortunate and for most of the time I was in Timor Leste, I was amazed at where I was and what I was doing! The experience taught me a lot about working in developing settings, public health, national health systems, foreign aid and countless other things.

In a few words, my experience was overwhelming, eye-opening, confronting and inspiring. So much happened, and I was exposed to so many fascinating things that I still find myself organising it all in my mind. Some days I was learning so much that I felt like my head would explode! I felt particularly privileged to be working in the Pharmacy Department of the Ministry of Health.

One of the first things that stood out was that Timor Leste will, for many years to come, remain strongly affected by its difficult and turbulent past. However, the country has so much to offer. Dili, the capital city, sits on a flat plane on the north coast. All around it mountains rise dramatically, up to 2000m or higher. The majority of Timor Leste's land is mountainous due to the country's geographical positioning near the junction of two tectonic plates. This makes the scenery breathtaking, with the highest mountain just under 3000m, far higher than any of Australia's peaks. It also has stunning coral reefs and marine life, making for fantastic snorkelling and scuba diving.

Timor Leste is only 400km north of the Australian landmass and Dili is only a 1.5 hour flight from Darwin. It's scary to think that one of the world's poorest nations is on our doorstep. It's chilling to think that what happened in 1999 happened so close to our waterfront. And it's startling to realise that we can completely detach ourselves from

"The manner and time frame in which I ultimately completed my project was far from what was planned. There was one obstacle after another and challenges that I had never anticipated or experienced."



Jana interviewing at a pharmacy in Dili

these issues and close our eyes to the suffering of hundreds of thousands of people every day. Timor Leste's history is heart-wrenching, but the struggles of inadequate health care, food, water supply, sanitation, education and employment continue today.

I ventured to Timor Leste with the understanding that I would be working in the Pharmacy Department of the Ministry of Health, coordinating and participating in a small project concerning private pharmacies in Dili. I would be undertaking a situation analysis, collecting data on certain unsafe over-the-counter and prescription medicines that are widely sold in community pharmacies. I arrived wide-eyed and keen to start my project, but I had little understanding of how I would logistically go about it and no expectation of the challenges ahead of me.

It took a lot of time and work to gain an adequate understanding of the situation in Timor Leste – the national health system, the state of pharmacy services, the recent progress, the current difficulties, the culture and the history. All of these factors were important in maintaining a clear mind about what I was doing – and only having six weeks really put the pressure on.

The manner and time frame in which I ultimately completed my project was far from what was planned. There was one obstacle after another and challenges that I had never anticipated or experienced. Working through these was truly a test. For example, when I arrived, I found that the two local counterparts who were supposed to



SAMES, the Central Medical Store of East Timor



Jana and local pharmacy assistants

“My project was tiny in comparison to the mammoth work that many people are doing in Timor Leste.”



The lush green hills of East Timor

accompany me on my pharmacy visits were no longer employed. The plan had been that they would help me with my project and also translate for me. The solution to this was that the chief of the Pharmacy Department would accompany me instead; however, I would soon find out that he was quite busy and not always available. On some of the days he was available, we could not visit pharmacies because there was no driver or vehicle available. Because I had limited skills in Tetum, the local language, I couldn't trek out on my own to collect masses of data, and I certainly couldn't push them to try harder. This approach would be counterproductive and insensitive, and would work against the trust that I was slowly building.

As a result, my project progressed very slowly. I learned that development in general is a slow process. It happens step by step, often shuffle by shuffle. There is progress, then there are setbacks, and then lessons are learned and there is progress again. And the manner in which foreigners work in developing settings must be compatible with the culture and working style of the local people. If building skills and capacity in a developing setting is the ultimate goal, then it must be done slowly, patiently and painstakingly. It must also be at a sustainable pace that local people are comfortable with.

My project was tiny in comparison to the mammoth work that many people are doing in Timor Leste. Nonetheless, I am happy that I could contribute my little bit. The data I collected will be useful in advising the Ministry of Health on

future actions to take to ensure that only safe and effective medicines are sold in private pharmacies. In a meeting with the Health Minister the day before I left, he thanked me for the work I had done for his country, and said he was keen to be personally sent a copy of our report and final recommendations on ways to improve his country's private pharmaceutical sector. Then he invited me to return to Timor Leste whenever I could, to look into other areas that I thought needed improvement. Sometime in the future, when I have more time, knowledge and experience to share, I won't hesitate to accept such an exciting offer!

Timor Leste enriched my life in so many ways. It opened my eyes to an entire world of work opportunities and global issues, and taught me countless lessons about setting goals, achieving objectives and overcoming challenges.

Leaving at the end of my six weeks was difficult. I had grown very fond of the people, and I could see there were so many more areas I would love to have been involved in. But I also knew that it was not my time to stay, and that I still had a lot to learn about pharmacy back at home, and even more to learn about development and public health. When I first arrived, I had been excited to meet local and foreign aid staff working in all fields of development, and I quickly learned that the web of foreign aid in East Timor (and probably other developing settings) was complex and broad. How people chose to contribute was only limited by the ideas of the individual.



A pharmacy in Dili



Jana and the Maubara locals

In my short time I was able to meet many fascinating, inspiring and intelligent people, all who had travelled to East Timor to share their knowledge and skills. What stood out for me was that these were everyday people. They were not superhuman or untouchable, but people like us who had chosen to dedicate their work to underdeveloped areas of the world, and were making a difference to the lives of thousands of people. If we are willing to step outside our comfort zones and push ourselves, we can do the same. We can do anything we choose, if only we have the passion, drive and discipline.

For me it is also important to remember that we can do a lot for the world while at home. Each of us chooses how we think and act in each moment, whether we will make someone's day better or worse, whether we will help or hinder. We have that empowering ability to decide. Each present moment creates our future, and each moment we can decide if we will act to help the world or to hinder its progress. Every little bit counts – step by step, or even shuffle by shuffle.”

– Jana Dostal

For more information about the Mathew Peck scholarship, visit [www.vcp.monash.edu.au/students/mpeckscholar/](http://www.vcp.monash.edu.au/students/mpeckscholar/)

# New development in prostate research

Prostate conditions affect a huge proportion of ageing males, with benign prostatic hyperplasia affecting more than 50% of men over 50.

College researcher Dr Betty Exintaris is examining how the prostate works, and specifically, how it changes with age. She hopes that her research will lead to the development of alternative drugs with fewer side effects than current treatments. Dr Exintaris, from the college's Department of Pharmaceutical Biology, is an expert in prostate research and was recently invited to speak at the International Society for Autonomic Neuroscience Symposium in France.

Together with Dr Sab Ventura, Dr Exintaris was awarded a National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) grant to investigate the role of pacemaker cells in the generation of slow wave activity in the prostate gland. The project, led by Dr Exintaris, is supported by other researchers and PhD students at the college's Prostate Research Cooperative.

The prostate gland commonly enlarges in ageing males, resulting in a poorly understood condition known as benign prostatic hyperplasia. Due to the strategic position of the prostate, its enlargement physically

compresses the segment of the urinary system passing through it and pushes up on the bladder, causing inconvenient and distressing symptoms such as difficulty and hesitancy in urination, which often require surgical or medical intervention. Patients diagnosed with benign prostatic hyperplasia are often treated with pharmacological agents that reduce the size of the prostate or relax the prostate and the bladder, relieving some of the symptoms.

However, the precise cellular mechanisms by which many of these drugs mediate their effects have not

been confirmed. Although previous studies of the prostate gland have clearly established many of the basic properties of the tissue, there is currently a lack of information regarding the prostate gland at a cellular level. Dr Exintaris and her team have identified a specialised group of 'interstitial cells' in the prostate gland that resemble the well-described 'interstitial cells of Cajal' in the gut. These cells (in the gut) perform a wide variety of functions, including the initiation of contractile activity. Interstitial cells are also thought to play a role in diseases of the bowel.

"This project will investigate the role of the interstitial cells in the functioning of the prostate gland and I hope it will lead to a better understanding of conditions such as benign prostatic hyperplasia," said Dr Exintaris.

"I'm interested in identifying nerve-released substances that may affect the activity of these cells," she added. "This may help us identify alternative targets for the treatment of benign prostatic hyperplasia."

**For more information, email [betty.exintaris@vcp.monash.edu.au](mailto:betty.exintaris@vcp.monash.edu.au) or attend our free public lecture 'Pacemaker cells in the prostate gland', on Tuesday 3 October at 6.30pm. The lectures are free but registrations are essential. To register, visit [www.vcp.monash.edu.au/125/public-lectures.html](http://www.vcp.monash.edu.au/125/public-lectures.html)**



## Graduate researches cancer treatments

Anthony Agnew, a 2003 Bachelor of Formulation Science (Honours) graduate, is working in the Injectables Development Formulation Group at Mayne Pharma.

"I am currently working on an injectable drug solution formulation for the treatment of metastatic testicular, ovarian and advanced bladder cancer. The main challenge in this project was to identify the factors that cause the formation

of an impurity compound that is a degradation product of the active pharmaceutical ingredient, which could reduce the efficacy and shelf life of the formulation.

After an extensive literature search, several factors contributing to the formation of this impurity were identified, for example the type of light used during formulation process, use of nitrogen flushing, pH of the diluent, choice of excipient and choice of container closure.

Based on these factors, a matrix of formulations and processes was manufactured and put onto an accelerated stability program. From the data collected, each factor could be clearly evaluated and the best formulation and process chosen for formal stability studies. The nominated formulation, as well as all the research data and reports, will be submitted to the regulatory authorities. On approval, commercial manufacturing and distribution of this product will occur."



## Research and teaching awards

The college's commitment to excellence was further demonstrated in late 2005, when three staff members were recognised for outstanding contributions to teaching and research.



**Associate Professor Susan Charman**, a highly respected international pharmaceutical scientist, was the recipient of the excellence in research award. She is co-director of the Centre for Drug Candidate Optimisation and her research encompasses several of the faculty's key research areas: lead optimisation, drug delivery, pharmaceutical biotechnology and pharmacokinetics/pharmacodynamics. Susan's work has been widely published and she has attracted significant research funding.



**Dr Ben Boyd** received the faculty's early career research award. His research focus is liquid crystalline materials and their use in drug delivery, as well as broader formulation science applications. Ben supervises both honours and PhD students and recently gained an Australian Research Council discovery grant in collaboration with CSIRO for the project 'Determining the nano-structure of ordered amphiphile self-assembly materials with positron annihilation lifetime spectroscopy'.



**Associate Professor Chris Porter**, recipient of the award for excellence in teaching, has consistently received very positive feedback from students. Chris has demonstrated that teaching is more than lecture material; delivery of content, technology, planning and evaluation are important factors for successful learning. His innovative teaching practice and passion for lecture topics have resulted in many students commenting favourably on his excellent teaching methodologies.

# Cannabis compound may reduce psychosis

Schizophrenia is a devastating mental disorder that affects 1% of the population. Its causes are not yet well understood, but genetic and environmental factors are thought to contribute to its development.

Leonora Long, a PhD researcher in the college's Department of Pharmaceutical Biology, said consumption of cannabis had been associated with an increased risk of developing psychosis because of the effects of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), which creates the 'high' observed in humans.

Consumption of cannabis has been associated with an increased risk of developing schizophrenia. Cannabis contains over 60 different chemicals, called cannabinoids, which act on cannabinoid receptors in the brain to produce their effects. Substances in the brain that contribute to abnormal behaviour may be altered by the action of cannabinoids. The brain also has its own system of cannabinoid-like chemicals and receptors that behave like cannabinoids to regulate functions such as thinking, memory and movement.

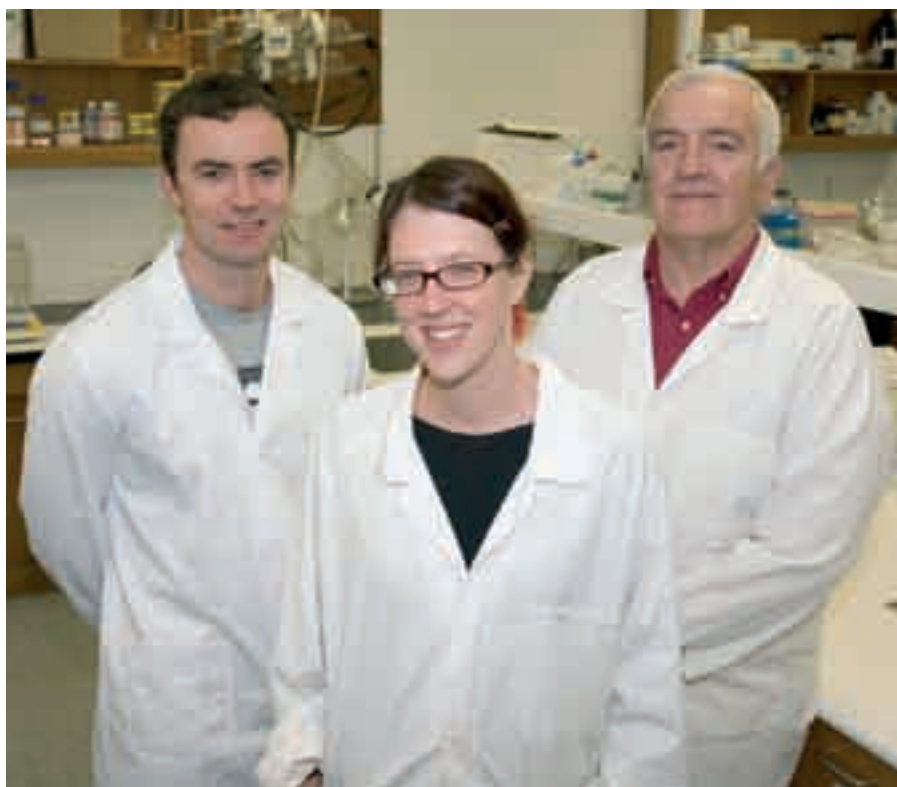
Leonora, in conjunction with Dr David Taylor and Dr Dan Malone, has been investigating the effects of cannabinoids on animal models associated with psychotic disorders like schizophrenia in order to find out how the drug works. D9-THC, the main psychoactive component of cannabis that is responsible for the feeling of being 'stoned', induces behavioural disruptions in animals that mimic

symptoms of psychosis such as hallucinations and thought disorder. However, there is another compound in the plant called cannabidiol that displays more therapeutic effects.

The researchers have shown that cannabidiol reverses behavioural disturbances in mice that are associated with psychotic symptoms. This means that cannabidiol could be a potential treatment for psychotic disorders in humans. Further research will investigate the mechanism of this potentially beneficial effect. The team also plans to look at how cannabidiol and D9-THC interact in the behavioural models of psychotic symptoms, which will model the situation that occurs when people consume cannabis plant preparations.

"The interesting thing is that there are two compounds in the cannabis plant that produce opposing effects – one may produce psychotic symptoms, while the other might be protective against psychosis," said Leonora. "Cannabidiol may also help alleviate the symptoms of epilepsy and pain associated with inflammatory disorders such as multiple sclerosis."

The cannabidiol findings have been published in *Neuropsychopharmacology*, 31(4), 795-803.



## Targeting multidrug-resistant ‘superbugs’

Antibiotics, one of the greatest developments of modern medicine, are rapidly losing their ability to successfully treat potentially fatal infections.

**A novel antibacterial strategy that reverses antibiotic resistance is being investigated at the college by Dr Jian Li and Professor Roger Nation of the Facility for Anti-infective Drug Development and Innovation (FADDI). They anticipate their work will lead to a breakthrough in the treatment of multidrug-resistant bacteria and a more rational use of antibiotics in patients.**

The researchers plan to develop a method to therapeutically target ‘superbugs’ – bacteria that are multidrug-resistant. Dr Craig Rayner (1995), now working in England, and Professor John Turnidge from the Women’s and Children’s Hospital (Adelaide) are collaborating on the project.

The group, already established world research leaders in colistin pharmacology and therapeutics, is exploring further uses of this old drug. The researchers have identified a novel strategy to reverse the resistance that some bacteria show to colistin, and they plan to investigate its potential to reverse the resistance of other problem bacteria. The group has received funding from the NHMRC.

Bacteria such as *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* infect patients, then generate pathogenic factors and form a biofilm (an adherent matrix containing colonies of bacteria). These pathogenic factors and biofilm combine to make the bacteria more likely to evade the patient’s immune system, and any administered antibiotics will have decreased efficacy. The inflammatory response of the infected patient leads to tissue destruction at the infection site.

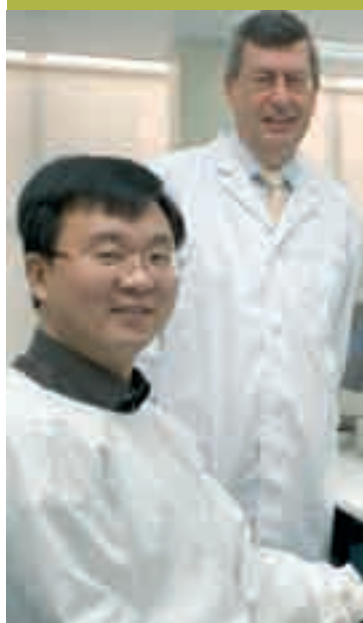
Although colistin was discovered decades ago, it has had limited use in the last 50 years. However, it remains the last line of treatment for gram-negative multidrug-resistant bacteria such as *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* and *Acinetobacter baumannii*. In many cases, it is the only available antibiotic that is active against these bacteria. Unfortunately, the emergence of colistin resistance is increasing at an alarming rate worldwide, raising the prospect of untreatable bacterial infections.

“If colistin resistance increases further, infectious disease physicians and their patients will be in a more precarious position than they are currently,” said Professor Nation. “Therefore, it is essential to provide new antibiotic options.”

Fighting these multidrug-resistant bacteria has become a major challenge in compromised patients, such as people in intensive care units and those with cystic fibrosis. At times, people with seemingly trivial infections may also have difficulty fighting the bacteria.

“In an era of diminishing therapeutic options and a drug development pipeline that is dry, we must pursue novel therapeutic strategies to win the battle against superbugs,” said Dr Li, senior research scientist at FADDI. “The work is crucial to address this urgent global health issue.”

**For more information, email [roger.nation@vcp.monash.edu.au](mailto:roger.nation@vcp.monash.edu.au)**



## Grant for greener medicinal chemistry

Professor Peter Scammells from the college’s Department of Medicinal Chemistry has been awarded a \$330,000 grant from Pfizer for his project ‘New biodegradable, non-toxic ionic liquids for pharmaceutical synthesis’. The project will be overseen by Professor Scammells, Professor Rob Singer from St Mary’s University in Canada and Dr Michael Pollastri from Pfizer.

‘Green chemistry’ is aimed at reducing or eliminating hazardous substances in the design, manufacture and application of chemical products. The advent of room temperature ionic liquids (ILs) in synthesis has made a significant contribution towards these goals. This project aims to develop non-toxic biodegradable ILs and evaluate their viability in pharmaceutical synthesis.



Dr Johnson George and his PhD supervisor, Dr Kay Stewart

## 2005 Mollie Holman Doctoral Medal

The 2005 Mollie Holman Doctoral Medal for excellence in a doctoral thesis has been awarded to Dr Johnson George for his thesis titled ‘Adherence to disease management programs by patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease’ (COPD).

Johnson’s study investigated both qualitative and quantitative aspects of adherence to various disease state management programs in patients with COPD. An analysis of in-depth interviews with patients identified factors influencing adherence to COPD medications, smoking cessation programs and pulmonary rehabilitation programs, and a theoretical model for predicting adherence developed that incorporates patient, disease, management and health care provider related factors.

Johnson now holds a post-doctoral research position in the School of Pharmacy at the Robert Gordon University in Aberdeen, Scotland.

# Improving wound care in China



A resident of the leprosy village, whose wound was caused by an ill-fitting prosthesis

“Helping people to become aware of simple, local resources is so important – things like using honey to clean and care for wounds.”

Jan Rice, manager of the college's Wound Foundation, recently travelled to Kunming in south-west China as guest of Professor Terrence Ryan, Chairman of the International Foundation of Dermatologists. She travelled and worked with Project Grace, a not-for-profit non-government organisation involved in caring for people who have suffered from leprosy.

Since her trip to Banda Aceh after the tsunami, Jan has been interested in aid work in developing countries. On this trip she aimed to learn as much as possible from other health professionals and to offer hands-on assistance in remote villages.

There is a high incidence of leprosy in China. Before 1980, lepers were sent to remote camps, as they were highly contagious. In such harsh conditions good health care is rare and many people who receive appropriate medications still need assistance with basic health practices and wound care. With an interpreter close at hand, Jan travelled on very rudimentary roads to treat people who were in great need.

“I talked to people about simple things like using charcoal to take away smells,” she said. “This knowledge is very useful to them.”

Jan also lectured at the No 2 Kunming Hospital to 80 guests, including doctors, nurses, physiotherapists and a traditional healer. Back home, she is keen to develop a manual for minimally trained people to access in rural and remote areas, with an emphasis on clear and simple pictorial and

diagram-based learning. She would also like to develop an online manual for aid workers in third world countries.

“Education is the key,” Jan said. “Helping people to become aware of simple, local resources is so important – things like using honey to clean and care for wounds.”

Kunming is called the town of perpetual spring, as its temperature only varies nine degrees over the seasons. It is a very poor region, with scant treatment options available.

“The terrain in the area is rugged, and I experienced it first hand,” Jan added. “At one stage I had to carry a mattress on my back up a hill to get to a patient with very bad pressure sores.”

Jan now wants to use her experience to develop a module for the college's Graduate Certificate in Wound Care. She believes that it would be a great resource for volunteers and people becoming involved in aid work in developing countries.



Jean Watson, physiotherapist with Project Grace, a resident of the leprosy village and Jan Rice

# Pharmacy takes on a global perspective

Over the summer break, 10 pharmacy students had the opportunity to experience pharmacy in another part of the world.

The Pharmacy Abroad program encourages students to see first-hand how their role as a pharmacist can make a difference, not only in Australia but internationally. Competition for places is very strong, with only 10 students selected each year. This summer, the students travelled to the USA, Asia and Europe as part of the program.

## Who went where?

### **Drake University, USA**

Chris Wu and Victor Au Yeung

### **University of Kansas, USA**

Namita Warrior and Alex Chen

### **University of Nottingham, UK**

Daphne Chong and Charini Jayasinghe

### **King's College London, UK**

Amy Chen and Ming Chu Sze

### **National University of Singapore**

Sharlina Lingam, Michael Sun and Kate Khanh Nguyen



**“This experience has been the highlight of my life to date.”**

## Amy Chen

In January 2006, I spent three weeks working in a community pharmacy in central London. Pharmacy in London came as a big shock to me despite the apparent similarities between our health care systems. Generic prescribing, dispensing from bulk packs and slightly antiquated computer systems instilled a longing for the much more familiar system here. Yet as I grew accustomed to the system and more proficient at my work, I found myself focusing on the positive differences. There is so much that we can learn from each other and by the time my three weeks were up, I didn't want to leave.

My preceptor was a pharmacist who I greatly admired. Her involvement with the community and patient relationships inspired me and I'm grateful that I was able to work with her. This program also gave me other opportunities, including sitting in on a pharmacy practice class at King's College, attending a wound clinic and visiting the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain. Of course, my experience was not all work and no play. London has many beautiful attractions and I saw most of them.

My experience abroad far exceeded my expectations. Not only did I get a good idea of how pharmacy works in the UK, but I came back a more mature person with a greater appreciation for my family, friends and the Australian health care system. This experience has been the highlight of my life to date.



**“Pharmacy Abroad really helped me to grow professionally and personally.”**

## Victor Au Yeung

As a pharmacy student in Des Moines, Iowa (USA) I was exposed to the dying breed of small community pharmacies and corporate chain pharmacies. The small pharmacies survive by creating a very strong pharmacist-patient care loyalty base. And I began to question whether a chain pharmacy is truly the great evil that Australian pharmacists fear. Pharmacists working at chain pharmacies can still meet ethical obligations to patients when counselling, through the use of a patient care centre (a consultation room managed by a pharmacist adjoining the dispensary, where a patient can receive extra support such as medication reviews and blood pressure readings). However, they are under a lot more pressure to meet profit margins and to increase script volumes.

The health care system in the USA definitely made me appreciate the socialised health care system that our government provides. In my experience, the USA is a country where proper health care is virtually only available to the wealthy. To be able to see a doctor and afford medication, people need private health insurance. Government sponsored health care is essentially only available to the very poor, disabled or elderly, leaving a large gap of citizens unable to afford insurance and health care. I quickly realised how lucky I am to be in a country where our government subsidises medication and provides medical treatment for all our citizens, regardless of their financial situation.

Pharmacy Abroad really helped me to grow professionally and personally.



**“It was interesting to compare the Singapore health care system with ours. I truly enjoyed the opportunity.”**

**“It made me believe in the value of the years I have spent studying pharmacy.”**

**“I enjoyed the whole experience.”**

## Sharlina Lingam

I undertook my Pharmacy Abroad placement at Alexander Hospital in Singapore. One of the smaller hospitals in the country, it contains approximately 150-200 beds, specialises in geriatric care and has one main and three smaller pharmacies.

The first thing I noticed on entering the main pharmacy was the swarm of patients waiting outside. This pharmacy focuses on dispensing and counselling to outpatients and patients leaving the admission and emergency department. In Singapore, the trend is to visit doctors in hospitals; many patients place more trust in these doctors than in their local GPs. As a result, there are generally 10-12 staff, including two or three pharmacists in the main pharmacy who are entering scripts, individually packing blisters of medications and counselling patients.

Pharmacy technicians play a huge role in hospitals. They dispense almost all prescriptions and also counsel the more ‘simple’ medications. After hours, they can dispense some medications without pharmacist supervision.

At Alexander, pharmacists play a key role in INR monitoring at diabetic, hypertensive and anticoagulation clinics. Blood is drawn by the nurse, and then the pharmacist discusses and prescribes the next dose of warfarin. This is recorded in the patients’ records and on the electronic prescription, and later electronically signed by the doctor – a role that I have not yet seen pharmacists play here.

It was interesting to compare the Singapore health care system with ours, and to learn to assimilate into the work environment of another culture. I truly enjoyed the opportunity.

## Namita Warrior

I was once told that a pharmacy degree would take me places – I just didn’t realise how far! As part of the Pharmacy Abroad program, I recently found myself on a plane to the heartland of the USA, Kansas City.

Airsickness aside, my strongest memories are of socialising and of course the placement itself: working on a psychiatry rotation with an amazing preceptor, the histories and stories of the psychiatry patients, and the people – friendly, fun colleagues who took us out to dinner almost every weekend.

My view of pharmacy gained a global perspective. I had opportunities that I might never have had in Australia: nuclear medicine, watching how the technicians prepared radioactive nuggets for body scans at 3am, operating the machine that filled IV nutrition bags for every order with a few buttons punched, watching the robot that dispensed scripts. Seeing surgeries and electro-convulsive therapies performed, interviewing psychiatry patients, contributing to rounds, and days spent in lipid and warfarin clinics where pharmacists often worked alone, changing doses and using their knowledge to better patient outcomes.

Pharmacy Abroad provided me with more than just great memories and improved clinical and communication skills. It made me believe in the value of the years I have spent studying pharmacy.

## Alex Chen

My Pharmacy Abroad placement at Kansas University Medical Center was excellent. I was exposed to the American health care system and managed to gain an understanding of how very different it is to the Australian system.

In Kansas, I was able to check out the nuclear and surgery pharmacies and participate in discussions on ward rounds with the psychiatric team. I went on off-site visits to a community pharmacy, an anticoagulation clinic, an infectious diseases clinic and a lipid clinic, where I watched pharmacists writing prescriptions for patients under protocol.

On the social side, I visited many places in Kansas such as the Liberty Memorial, Nelson-Atkins Art Museum, Union Station, Science City, Snow Creek (where I went snowboarding) and Kansas University in Lawrence.

This placement gave me the opportunity to meet lots of people and make new friends. While I was there, I managed to go to Las Vegas and Los Angeles as well. I enjoyed the whole experience – there was so much to do and so many things to explore.

# 125th anniversary dinner 8 April 2006



Big Band B Sharp



Professor Val Stella



Professor Colin Chapman



Helen Noonan delighted the crowd



The magnificent Grand Hyatt Savoy Ballroom



John and Julia Hurley



Vice Chancellor, Professor  
Richard Larkins AO



A stunning installation of pharmacy memorabilia



The old college blazer



Helen Noonan  
(1969)

Guests at the college's 125th anniversary dinner were treated to an outstanding performance by singer and pharmacist Helen Noonan.

Helen enrolled in the Bachelor of Pharmacy course at the college to please her parents, graduating in 1969 before working in pharmacy and pursuing a performing arts career. Her first job was with Ross Hutchins in Camberwell, where she continued part time for 10 years.

"I love now what I loved then, the contact with people and the ability to make a difference," said Helen. "Pharmacy and singing have something in common – they both require an eye for detail and an appreciation of the importance of precision."

Starting out as a folk singer, Helen soon discovered a talent for opera. She has performed in just about every facet of the performing arts, including music theatre, plays, TV dramas and soaps. She completed a Bachelor of Arts at Monash in 1984 and also trained at the National Theatre Drama School.

An accomplished singer and actor, Helen has created her own work and collaborated with many composers in Australia and overseas. She sang for the troops in Vietnam during the war, travelling with the ABC Show Band. She was married in the 1970s and spent three years living on the Riviera near Genoa.

Helen's performing career has seen her work with Seduction Opera, the Victoria State Opera, Opera Australia and the Playbox Theatre. She has performed the role of Carlotta, the diva in *Phantom of the Opera*, over 1400 times and has appeared in a production of *Sweeney Todd* for the Melbourne Theatre Company. Her portrayal of Diva in *Recital* with Chamber Made Opera has won her international acclaim, touring extensively around the world, and a tour of the USA is planned for January 2007. She has also recorded two CDs – *Woman's Song* and *A Classic Case of Love*.

In 2003, Helen was awarded a Churchill Fellowship to travel to London, Italy and the USA, and in 2004 she received an Australia Council Project Fellowship Grant to present *Shakespeare Sung*, a work that sets four Shakespeare scenes to music.

Helen retrained in pharmacy in 2004 and was re-registered in 2005. She is currently working 24 hours a week at the Cheltenham Friendly Society pharmacy.

"The new drugs that are available, as well as the current emphasis on counselling, have made my journey back to pharmacy really exciting," Helen added. "Developments in computer software for dispensing is a spectacular change and very welcome."



Tony Lamb OAM and Daniel Andrews MP



Bill and Helen Scott



Friends catching up



Master of Ceremonies, Alistair Lloyd AO



Students enjoying the celebrations



Divesh Sanghvi and Cassandra Dunne

# (Edith) Miriel Witt

11 October 1905 – 19 November 2005

Victoria's first female pharmacy academic

Miriel Witt was the first female pharmacist to become a pharmacy academic in Victoria.

In 1943, the middle of World War II, she was asked by the dean of the college if she would be prepared to join the staff of the college as a senior demonstrator. With male pharmacists away at war or their employment controlled by the wartime 'manpower' requirements, the dean was having great difficulty in recruiting suitable male teachers. At the time there were only a few women pharmacists and academic appointments had not been available to them. The college was also dealing with many more female students than had been the case before the war.

The Council of the college was initially reluctant to offer a teaching position to a female pharmacist, but Miriel had excellent qualifications, having graduated from the college in 1926 as a Gold Medallist (top student) and being an exemplary practising pharmacist.

Her work at the college involved demonstrating in pharmaceuticals, chemistry and biology, and later lecturing in pharmacognosy, as well as research work and solving dispensing problems. She was always ready to respond to requests for information

and advice and her numerous other jobs were carried out with dedication and meticulous care.

Miriel was also active in the Women Pharmacists' Association – a group of women who strove for equality in all matters professional. She and her colleagues eventually achieved what they set out to do and the Association disbanded. However, she remained a member of a small group of past Association members who still meet socially.

She was well respected by generations of pharmacists whom she encouraged and supported as they passed through the college, from the end of the war until she retired in 1965, aged 60, then the compulsory retirement age for women. She was later elected to Life Membership of the Pharmaceutical Societies of Victoria and of Australia.

Miriel was born in Morwell, the first daughter of Arthur Wellesley Witt, a National Bank manager, and his wife Constance. Her primary education began at Morwell in 1919 and her secondary education was at Daylesford High School and completed at Essendon High School in 1922.



Then she embarked on a pharmacy course that required her to be apprenticed while studying at the college. Her work involved making batches of pills, infusions, 'gallons of cough mixtures', emulsions such as mutton-bird oil and quantities of lotions and creams. She was an outstanding student at a time when there were not many women studying pharmacy or working as pharmacists.

After registering in 1927 as a qualified pharmacist, she worked as an assistant, and later as manager, in suburban and country pharmacies. In 1934 Miriel joined the eminent firm, Henry Francis and Co, then established in the Myer store in Bourke Street. She left reluctantly to join the college staff and returned there for a few years after her retirement.

In retirement she lived independently in her home in Glen Iris until she was 95. She enjoyed gardening, reading and staying in contact with friends from her professional life, including past students from around Australia, America, India, Singapore and the UK. She also enjoyed her membership of the Lyceum Club, the club in the city for professional women, entertaining many of her friends there.

Miriel's interest in people and pharmacy, and her active mind and wonderful memory, contributed to her long and very useful life. She died shortly after celebrating her 100th birthday, and is survived by her nieces and nephews and their families.

## Val Stella wins prestigious University of Kansas award

Val Stella (1967), distinguished professor of pharmaceutical chemistry and inventor of drugs to treat epilepsy and AIDS, is the first recipient of the University of Kansas Technology Transfer Leadership award.

After graduating from the college, Val completed a doctorate in analytical pharmaceutical chemistry at the University of Kansas, where he studied under Takeru Higuchi and where he currently works. Along with Higuchi, Val co-authored *Prodrugs as Novel Drug Delivery Systems*, a

book that triggered a resurgence of interest in this area of research.

During his tenure as director of the University of Kansas Center for Drug Delivery Research (1989-99), Val spun off three companies, obtained seven patents and developed a series of modified cyclodextrins that are the basis of several pharmaceutical products.

This award was presented to Val in recognition of his 'dedication to the commercialisation and dissemination of technology for the benefit of society'.

The college was pleased to host two public lectures by Val earlier this year. In February, he presented on 'Sulfobutyl ether, alkyl ether cyclodextrins: the next generation' and he returned to the college in April to present 'Deciphering the chemical degradation profile of drug substances'. It was also great to see Val make the trip from Kansas to attend our 125th anniversary dinner.



# Where are they now?

What are you doing now? We'd love hear your story. If you'd like to be included in this column, email [alumni@vcp.monash.edu.au](mailto:alumni@vcp.monash.edu.au) with your name and a short description of what you've done since graduating.

## 50s

**Franz Fisher (1957)** Franz owns and runs a community pharmacy in Tel Aviv. He will be travelling to Australia in July and August, and has fond memories of his time at the college.

## 60s

**Harold Dennis (1964)** Harold retired from his Wodonga pharmacy in 2001 and now breeds Angus cattle on his farm *Esold Park* in Staghorn Flat. Harold and wife Esther are enjoying their nine grandchildren and Harold has taken up wood turning in his spare time.

**Mary Hemming (1965)** Mary is the CEO of Therapeutic Guidelines Ltd. She was a key member of the team responsible for the concept and evolution of *Therapeutic Guidelines* and has guided the enterprise for many years, transforming it from a government-funded venture into an independent self-sustaining not-for-profit organisation that is both nationally and internationally recognised. Mary was also a member of the original PHARM Committee that developed the first drafts of the National Medicines Policy.

## 70s

**Bill Scott (1970)** In September 2005, Bill stepped down from his position as President of the Pharmacy Guild (Victorian branch), succeeded by Dipak Sanghvi. But life hasn't quietened down for Bill – he is Chairman of Healthlinks and is working on the electronic Consumer Medicines Information for pharmacists. He is also the Guild's representative on the Chamber of Commerce and Industry as well as a board member of the Victorian College of Pharmacy Foundation. Bill also spends time working in his pharmacies at Whittlesea and Mill Park.

**Joe Demarte (1973)** Joe has retired from his post as President of the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (Victorian branch). Joe served a two year term and has now handed the reins over to John Jackson (1974).

## 80s

**Fiona Landgren (1981)** Fiona chose an unusual career path, pursuing interests in preventative health care and health communications. She currently runs a consulting business, Communicating for Health, which specialises in health promotion as well as writing and communications for health professionals and consumers. Fiona enjoys getting people together and hopes to see a big crowd at the 25 year reunion in June.

**Peter Ryan (1981)** Peter moved to South Australia, then Broken Hill before embarking on a 'sea change' to the Gold Coast (after a working holiday in Oxford) to seek a bit of balance and sunshine. Peter lives in Main Beach with his wife Annette and is a keen traveller. He has an avid interest in photography and is putting together the photo extravaganza for the class of 1981's 25 year reunion in June.

## 90s

**Dr Tim Morgan (1992)** In July 2005 Tim left Acrux Limited, the ASX-listed company he co-founded in 1998 at the college. His new venture, Lachesis Biosciences, is currently developing a preventive health care service. Tim continues as Treasurer for the RACI Pharmaceutical Science Group (Victorian branch) and has recently been challenged by the 100km Oxfam Trail Walk that raises money for the Oxfam charity.

**Dr Craig Rayner (1995)** In August 2005, Craig stepped down as co-director of FADDI and senior lecturer at the college to take a position as Clinical Pharmacologist with Roche in the UK. Craig is responsible for new development initiatives for Tamiflu (anti-influenza drug that is considered the first line treatment of bird-flu) as well as supporting another early development program. Craig and wife Michelle look forward to using his air miles for an exotic vacation somewhere.

## 00s

**Max Boyarovsky (2002)** For the past year, Max has been working part time in an Irish pharmacy. He hopes to spend next year travelling around Europe before returning to Australia.

# Pre-registrants go rural

Jamiee Anderson has chosen to spend the next 12 months completing her pre-registrant year at the Findlay and Weymouth Pharmacy in Bairnsdale. She is just one of 18 students studying in Monash's Pre-registration program who have elected to do their pre-registration training in rural areas.



"I grew up in Katherine in the Northern Territory, which is pretty remote compared to rural Victoria – the population of the entire Northern Territory is about one-eighth of the population of Melbourne!" said Jamiee. "I knew I didn't want to live in the city any more, but at the same time didn't want to move to a place where I knew absolutely no one.

"Some friends I grew up with had relatives in East Gippsland, and having visited on a number of occasions, I was quite taken with the region," she added. "In 20 minutes I can be at the beach, heading up into the hills or relaxing in a winery. Sounds like the good life to me! So when the opportunity arose to work here, I took it."

Jamiee is testament to the college's commitment to rural pharmacy. She is following an established trend of people raised in rural areas returning to work in rural areas, and she was also offered her pre-registrant position as a result of her compulsory rural Advanced Practical Experience (APE) placement.

"The pharmacy where I did my rural placement was one of five pharmacies in a small group, and I broached the idea of doing my traineeship in one of them," Jamiee explained.

"The Bairnsdale pharmacy was able to take on a trainee, so at the end of my three weeks in Sale I introduced myself to the Bairnsdale owner and was offered a job – it was so easy.

"That was in April, and I went back to Bairnsdale in July to finalise everything, then moved in November."

A great advocate for country living, Jamiee is enjoying getting back to a rural way of life.

"I really do enjoy the country town environment. Having lived in a rural area all my life, moving to the city was a big shock. It was fun for a while and a great experience, but I couldn't wait to get back to the life I knew," she said. "Now, after three months of working back in the country, I'm loving it. The customers are getting to know me, people are mostly nice and interested when you talk to them, and best of all there's no peak hour traffic!"

## Rural APE placements: a career broadening experience

Six Bachelor of Pharmacy students worked and lived in Broken Hill for three weeks in February as part of the APE program.

During their stay, Rachael Millard, Amy Fitzgerald, Beth Kline, Melissa Yong, Adeline Thavarajah and Maja Bajraktarvic learnt about rural life and had plenty of fun.

"Despite the fact that Broken Hill is a desert mining town, it wasn't as remote as I thought," said Melissa. "Rural living wasn't as different to city life as I had expected."

Amy explained that the students enjoyed everything the town had to offer, including the gym and local tourist attractions.

"Between us, we went to the Mulga Pub and the local RSL, saw some Aboriginal paintings, toured a mine, went bushwalking in Mutawitjhi National Park and visited Lake Mendiindee."

In addition, there was plenty of work to be done at their individual placements. APE placements involve self-directed learning. Students are expected to develop specific skills in

clinical pharmacy, problem solving, medication history taking, patient counselling and therapeutic planning.

Rural APE placements also provide a variety of experiences outside the community or hospital pharmacy, giving students a greater insight into the issues that affect rural pharmacies and their communities.

"We visited the Flying Doctor Service to learn about how medication is distributed to really remote properties and spent a day with an Indigenous person, who explained some of the cultural differences that pharmacists should be aware of when treating Indigenous Australians," explained Amy. "We also visited a local vet and learnt about the threat that lead poisoning poses to the community."

The APE program is a vital component of the Bachelor of Pharmacy degree and a key way in which the college is working to increase the number of pharmacists in rural areas. All students are required to undertake one rural APE placement during their third or fourth year. For most students, this is the first time they have experienced life in a rural community.

"Many students indicate that, prior to their placement, they had not even thought of rural practice as an option," said Professor Roger Nation, head of the Department of Pharmacy Practice. "After the placement, many are definitely keen to consider it."

Four of the Broken Hill APE placement students indicated that they are considering doing a stint in the bush after the placements provided such a positive experience.

"Our APE placements really highlighted for us how desperately pharmacists are needed in rural areas," said Rachael. "In the pharmacy where I did my placement, they've had a different locum every week for 12 months. There are certainly a lot of positions available in some great places."

Fourth year students visit the sights of Broken Hill during their rural placement





## 2006 Rural Health Seminar

Pharmacists, staff and colleagues joined 65 students at the college's 2006 Rural Health Seminar, which was held on 2 March.

The event was a huge success, strengthening existing relationships between the college and rural pharmacists and generating new interest in and awareness of rural pharmacy among students.

Presentations covered community pharmacy, hospital pharmacy, rural placement experiences, WILDFIRE club membership, transition tips from current rural students and pharmacy in relation to Indigenous cultures. The college was honoured to have state branch Pharmacy Guild Committee member Bruce Robertson give a presentation. Bruce, a 1976 graduate of the college, is a strong advocate for rural pharmacy and is a member of the Pharmacy Guild's Rural Professional Pharmacy Services Committee.

The event also served as an important welcome to the college's 2006 rural students and an opportunity to congratulate Rural Scholarship recipients Elise Kearns, Gemma Lay and Eleanor Van Dyk.

The Rural Scholarship program is one of several measures designed to address the shortage of pharmacists in rural Australia. Awarded to high ranking rural pharmacy applicants, the scholarship offers \$6000 per year for four years.

Eleanor Van Dyk is from Horsham, which is about three and a half hours north-west of Melbourne.

"I've lived in Horsham my whole life and, while it is sometimes good to get away for a while, I still love my home town," said Eleanor. "I chose to study at the college because of its location and because I heard that the small campus would be good for making new friends and meeting people."

Gemma Lay, from the small town of Creswick, 15 minutes from Ballarat, explained her decision to study at the college.

"The college has a strong emphasis on rural pharmacy and offering rural scholarships encourages students

like me to study pharmacy," said Gemma. "I also wanted to study at the college because I knew of its reputation. Most of the pharmacists I work with studied there and I only ever heard positive things."

Another of the college's strategies to attract rural students to pharmacy is the Rural Entry Scheme.

"There is no pressure on students to work in rural areas once they have graduated," said Professor Colin Chapman, dean of the college. "But we know from our research that rural students are much more likely to take up positions in rural areas on graduation."

## Pharmacy student named top citizen



Josie Ibrahim, a fourth year pharmacy student, was presented with a Young Citizen of the Year award by La Trobe City Council on Australia Day.

Josie was rewarded for her community work as well as her academic achievement. In 2002, she started work with La Trobe Regional Hospital on a weekly basis while completing her VCE. After finishing Year 12, Josie began her Bachelor of Pharmacy at La Trobe University with the help of a Federation Health Bright Futures Scholarship.

Josie moved to the college in 2004 and soon helped to establish a Parkville campus branch of WILDFIRE (Working In Leading Development For Indigenous and Rural Education), a club that raises awareness of rural and remote health issues. WILDFIRE is for both city and rural students who would like to understand more about rural and Indigenous health, and the role of a health care provider in those settings.

"I'm strongly committed to WILDFIRE because it has so much potential to actively engage and promote rural pharmacy," said Josie. "It gives us the opportunity to learn about these important issues and take some action that could really make a difference."

## Student Ambassador program

The college's new volunteer Student Ambassador program will build skills and offer a range of personal development opportunities for students.

The students will be ambassadors for the college at a variety of prospective student, current student and alumni events during the year.

The program offers many opportunities to participants. Ambassadors take part in Monash University's Future Leaders program, complete public speaking and employability skills workshops, and go team sailing.

The Student Ambassador program also represents an excellent opportunity to build strong links between college graduates and the current student body. Each ambassador is matched with an industry representative, preferably a college graduate, who provides guidance and valuable industry knowledge to the student.

"The Student Ambassador program will develop leadership and an increased awareness among its participants of the college's role in education, research and community service," said Professor Colin Chapman, dean of the college. "We all look forward to seeing our ambassadors develop as community and professional leaders over the coming years."

The college's Student Ambassadors are:

**Andrew Lee**

Third year pharmacy

**Carol Gee**

Third year formulation science

**Edmund Leung**

Third year pharmacy

**John Nguyen**

Fourth year pharmacy

**Judy Chantal De Silva**

Third year pharmacy

**Julia Gilmartin**

Second year pharmacy

**Mary Poon**

Third year pharmacy

**Mathew Loft**

Second year pharmacy

**Ming Chu Sze**

Fourth year pharmacy

**Paul Bui**

Third year pharmacy

**Rachelle Downie**

Fourth year pharmacy

**Ranelle Anderson**

Second year formulation science

**Sarah Kouw**

Second year pharmacy

**Tracey Williams**

First year pharmacy



Julia Gilmartin



Paul Bui

## Mentors required – can you help?

An integral part of the Student Ambassador program is linking ambassadors with alumni. Alumni can offer these ambitious students an insight into working life and give the students tips and hints to help them achieve their career objectives. Alumni mentors will be encouraged to meet approximately four times over the ambassadors' 12-month term.

Alumni mentors are required in the following fields:

### Formulation Science

Pharmaceutical industry  
Personal care  
Cosmetics

### Pharmacy

Hospital pharmacy  
Hospital-based pharmacy practice with a focus on autoimmune diseases and oncology  
Community pharmacy  
Clinical trials and development of new drugs  
Pharmacists who work internationally  
Pharmaceutical industry  
Clinical pharmacy

**For more information about becoming a mentor contact**

**Jessica Dobbie, tel:**

**+613 9903 9119 or email**

**jessica.dobbie@vcp.monash.edu.au**

## Student community spirit applauded

The class of 2005 was recognised for outstanding community spirit through the inaugural Student Community Achievement Awards.

The college introduced these awards to recognise students who have made an extraordinary contribution to student life during their undergraduate studies.

Pharmacy student Alana Meaklim won the top award for Outstanding Contribution to the University Community for her involvement in re-establishing the Victorian Pharmacy Students Association, assisting on university committees, organising events and working with the National Association of Pharmacy Students. Alana is currently undertaking her pre-registration year at the Austin Hospital.

Medicinal chemistry student Jo Pinson and pharmacy students Erin Mitchell, Megan Arnold and Dhineli Perera were recognised for their contributions to a wide range of activities, including editing a student magazine, organising student clubs, running events and mentoring younger students.

The awards were announced at Swish 05. Swish, held each November, is the official graduation farewell for students and is proudly supported by Quality Pharmacy Services.

Alana Meaklim



## Lecturer of the Year



The Monash Parkville Students Association (MPSA) surveyed college students and recently announced the Lecturer of the Year award.

The award was introduced to recognise the work that lecturers put into the education of students. Best lecture notes and exam preparation were instrumental in deciding the winner.

Once all the votes were counted, the 2005 Lecturer of the Year was awarded to a very deserving Dr Elizabeth Yuriev. Dr Yuriev was presented her trophy and flowers in front of her first year Pharmaceutical Chemistry lecture by MPSA President Quang Huynh-Dai and dean of the college, Professor Colin Chapman.

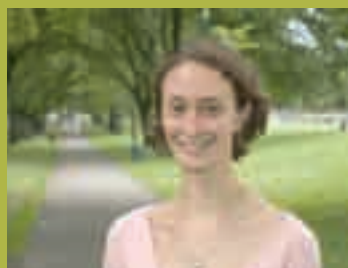
Students' appreciation towards the energy she had put into her teaching was shown through long applause and numerous shouts of 'We love you, Elizabeth!' across the lecture room.

# 2005 academic prize winners

On 26 April, the college celebrated the success of its 2005 academic prize winners. Prize winners, sponsors, lecturers, friends and families came together for a cocktail reception. The college is grateful to all the companies and organisations that sponsored the 2005 academic prizes.

Prize	Recipient	Donor
<b>Bachelor of Pharmacy</b>		
First year exhibition	Julia Gilmartin	Pharmaceutical Defence Ltd
Second year exhibition	Loo Yee Cheah	Pharmacy Guild of Australia
Third year exhibition	Amy Chen	Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (Victorian branch)
Fourth year exhibition	Kar Eng Tan	Guild Insurance Co Ltd
<b>Bachelor of Formulation Science</b>		
First year exhibition	Vina	CSL Ltd
Second year exhibition	Wye Khay Fong	Australian Society of Cosmetic Chemists
Third year exhibition	Kelly Lee Tet	Mayne Pharma
<b>Bachelor of Medicinal Chemistry</b>		
First year exhibition	David McIlwraith	GlaxoSmithKline
Second year exhibition	Caillan Welton	Biota Holdings Ltd
Third year exhibition	Victoria Oliver	AMGEN Australia Pty Ltd
<b>Overall excellence</b>		
Faculty honours prize	Stephanie Wallace	Symbion Pharmacy Services
Monash Pharmacy Pre-registration course	Christine Kwan	Pharmaceutical Defence Ltd
Pharmacy Management program	Sarah Herd	Pharmacy Guild of Australia
Bachelor of Pharmacy Gold Medal and the Neil Naismith award	Berenice Sheridan	Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (Victorian branch) and Therapeutic Guidelines
Bachelor of Formulation Science Gold Medal	Kelly Lee Tet	ACCORD
Bachelor of Medicinal Chemistry Gold Medal	Corrine Kluvers	Starpharma

## Gold Medallists



**Corrine Kluvers, Medicinal Chemistry Gold Medallist**



**Kelly Lee Tet, Formulation Science Gold Medallist**

### **Corrine Kluvers** Medicinal Chemistry

During her undergraduate degree, Corrine undertook two summer school research scholarships with the college. Corrine is doing her honours year at Monash and has recently been recognised with a Vice-Chancellor's Undergraduate Research scholarship. Corrine's research project is entitled 'Antisense therapies employing PNAs.' The project will look at Motor Neuron Diseases under the guidance of Professor Steven Langford.

"Next year I hope to start a PhD and continue my current work on transporters for PNAs to treat these diseases," says Corrine.

### **Berenice Sheridan** Pharmacy

Berenice became interested in pharmacy while working part time at My Chemist Frankston, and she is continuing to work there part time during her pre-registrant year at Monash Medical Centre.

"Soon after beginning the Bachelor of Pharmacy, I realised that pharmacy was the occupation for me," said Berenice. "Although this is hard work, I really enjoy working in both community and hospital pharmacy – each has its own rewards and challenges, but both have the common objective of providing the best outcome for the patient."

### **Kelly Lee Tet** Formulation Science

Kelly has an outstanding academic record, having won the second year exhibition in 2004 and a Monash University Pharmacy Scholarship in 2003 for academic excellence in her first year.

Kelly has also been awarded a Vice-Chancellor's Undergraduate Research scholarship and is completing her honours year under the guidance of the Dr Ian Larson from the college. Kelly completed a Bachelor of Applied Sciences in medical radiations in nuclear medicine at RMIT before beginning the Bachelor of Formulation Science. The two degrees are now being utilised in Kelly's honours project, entitled 'Investigation of nanoparticle stabilisation'.

# Alumni profile: Tony Lamb

Antony Lamb (1959) was awarded an OAM in the Australia Day honours list 2006 for services to pharmacy, the Australian Parliament and the community. Tony's varied and successful career has included pharmacy, government, teaching, management and writing.

Born in Horsham and orphaned during the war, Tony studied at Box Hill High School before taking up a scholarship at Scotch College and then enrolling at the college.

Apprenticed to Guild National President Eric Scott, Tony finished his studies in 1959. While apprenticed, he observed Eric's talent for lobbying and using committees, which stayed with him in later life. He absorbed all he could at the college while at the same time participating in the Young Labor Association, playing competitive basketball and later being part of the New Theatre group.

Tony then went on to work for Ronda and Barry Hall in South Croydon and manage the Camberwell night dispensary. In 1966, he took on the management of the Martin and Pleasance Pharmacy at Northland Shopping Centre in Preston. He studied again, this time at Melbourne University, graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in 1971 and completing a Dip Ed at Monash University in 1979.

Following a long-term interest, Tony began his political career by winning the seat of Latrobe (Vic) in 1972. In 1973, he set up the parliamentary group of Amnesty International. He served two terms under Gough Whitlam and held the position of Secretary of Caucus and Chairman of the Environment Committee of the House of Representatives.

After a nine-year break, he went on to serve another two terms under Bob Hawke and was member for Streeton (Vic) from 1984 to 1990. During this time, he was Deputy Government Whip (1987 to 1990) and Chair of the Caucus Social Justice Committee, and he

established the Parliamentarians for East Timor group in 1986.

After working with Barry Jones in his Canberra office, Tony became National Director of the Institute of Pharmacy Management. In 1996 he purchased a pharmacy in Hughes with Graham Watson, which sadly burnt down and took five months to rebuild. In this time they were greatly helped and supported by local pharmacists.

Tony married in 1973 and has four children. He now spends his time as a locum pharmacist, studying, writing and serving on the Canberra Jazz Club Committee. He is a life member of the ALP.

Continuing his life of service to the community, on committees and in pursuit of a lifelong ethic to 'never forget the little people', Tony is currently doing his PhD at the Institute of Social Research at Swinburne University. His work will look at the working arrangements between the Labor and Country Parties in the Dunstan era through a biography of his father, George Hamilton Lamb, Country Party MP for Lowan (Vic) 1935-43, 'an idealist who paved the way for the practitioners to follow'. He died tragically on the notorious Burma Railway in 1943, the only serving Australian Member of Parliament to die in service in World War II.

According to Tony, good communication and a preparedness 'to do the really menial jobs in a pharmacy', combined with a belief in the importance of feedback, have been the cornerstones of his successful career.



Tony Lamb OAM (right) with Professor Colin Chapman

## Considering postgraduate study?

Come and hear about the postgraduate courses offered at the college.

- Clinical Pharmacy (Masters)
- Wound Care (Graduate Certificate, Diploma and Masters)
- Pharmacy Management (Graduate Certificate and Diploma)
- Pharmaceutical Sales (Graduate Certificate)
- Pharmacy Practice (Graduate Certificate)

Monday 25 September, 7.00pm at the Victorian College of Pharmacy, 381 Royal Parade, Parkville.

To register your attendance, email [postgrad@vcp.monash.edu.au](mailto:postgrad@vcp.monash.edu.au)

## Rural Pharmacists' Forum

The college's annual Rural Pharmacists' Forum will be held in Warrnambool during September 2006 (date and venue are to be confirmed).

The Rural Pharmacists' Forum will look at the rural component of the APE program and seek feedback on its progress from preceptors and potential preceptors. The college is conscious of the particular needs and concerns of pharmacists living in rural and regional areas and would like to gather information to integrate into the curriculum.

This forum is also a great opportunity to find out what the college can offer graduates, and to hear first hand about new developments at the college.

For further details contact Elizabeth Welch, tel: +613 9903 9087 or email [elizabeth.welch@vcp.monash.edu.au](mailto:elizabeth.welch@vcp.monash.edu.au)

## Welcoming Mauritius to Melbourne

Geoff Sussman from the Department of Pharmacy Practice was appointed Games Attaché to the Mauritius delegation for the Melbourne Commonwealth Games 2006.

"This was a once in a lifetime opportunity, and I was honoured to have been a part of Melbourne 2006," Geoff said. "The Mauritian athletes and officials were wonderful people and experienced a warm welcome in Melbourne."



Geoff Sussman with the Mauritius Commonwealth Games team

Jan Rice and Geoff Sussman are two of the first individuals to be made Fellows of the Australian Wound Management Association, a recognition of their outstanding commitment to wound care both in Australia and internationally.

## IPSF in Jakarta, Indonesia

The International Pharmaceutical Students' Federation (IPSF) recently met in Jakarta to collaborate with the International Federation Medical Students' Association at their 4th Asia-Pacific conference.

Over 120 students from the region participated in hands-on projects and workshops that involved all national presidents and committees.

IPSF representatives were invited to exchange ideas for collaboration in aspects of public health campaigns, organisational committee structure, by-law regulations development and forward planning.

Successful meetings resulted in a Memorandum of Understanding being signed and another joint meeting planned for Japan in 2007.



John Nguyen (Secretary General IPSF Asia-Pacific) with other IPSF representatives

## NAPSA Congress 2006



During January, almost 200 pharmacy students from across Australia spent a week focused on the theme 'Where is your career taking you?' at the 2006 National Association of Pharmacy Students Australia (NAPSA) Congress, hosted by the University of Tasmania.

The program included information on the pharmacy profession, career options and current issues, as well

Celebrating Australia Day the NAPSA way

as discussion forums where students could voice their opinions about pharmacy. Social events included a Gala Ball and trips to the Cadbury factory, Meadowbank Estate winery and Salamanca Market.

The next NAPSA Congress will be held in Melbourne in January 2007.

## Victoria regains the shield after defeating NSW at Camden

NSW won the toss and were eventually all out for a modest 148. Victorian openers Manny Chessari (1976) and Bernie Borg (1987) took the score to 42, and Jeff Facey (1997) played a great innings before going out for 47. Brad Marmuff, Divesh Sanghvi (2002) and Paul Wickham (1997) took the score to 4 for 149 and Victoria won comfortably by six wickets, retaining the Chemists' Interstate Challenge Cricket Shield. Jeff Facey was named 'Man of the Match' for the second year running.

The match was followed by a gala dinner at the Camden Valley Inn, where guests of honour Brian Booth and Peter Philpott spoke about experiences in their international and domestic cricket careers.

The next Pharmacy Cricket Carnival will be held in January 2007 in Queensland.

**Victorian pharmacists (and students) interested in participating should contact Steve White, tel: 0417 117 910 or email [stevekat@bigpond.net.au](mailto:stevekat@bigpond.net.au)**

## Reunions in 2006

### 1981

The class of 1981 will celebrate its 25 year anniversary on Saturday 3 June at 8pm. Fiona Landgren is organising the event, which will be held at the college in the newly-renovated Snake Pit. Fiona can be contacted at [fibecray@iprimus.com.au](mailto:fibecray@iprimus.com.au)

### 1976

David Nolte is organising a 30 year reunion for the class of 1976. The date and time will be confirmed in September. David can be contacted at [david@nolte.com.au](mailto:david@nolte.com.au)

### 1956

The Golden Reunion of 1956 graduates is a very special occasion, and a luncheon will be held at the MCG Hamilton Room on Wednesday 4 October to celebrate. Jim Mitchell and Janice Lumsden are organising this event.

**For more information on these reunions contact Elizabeth Welch, tel: +613 9903 9087 or email [elizabeth.welch@vcp.monash.edu.au](mailto:elizabeth.welch@vcp.monash.edu.au)**



# Update your details

Stay in touch with the college community and don't miss out on the next issue of *Alchemy*.

Fill in the update form, tear it off and send it to:

*Alchemy*  
Victorian College of Pharmacy  
381 Royal Parade  
Parkville, Victoria 3052  
Australia  
Or fax to: +613 9903 9058  
(confidential fax).

**WIN!**



Everyone who returns a completed update form will go in the draw to win a dozen bottles of our 125th anniversary commemorative wine.

## Personal details

Title (Miss/Ms/Mrs/Mr/Dr)

First name

Middle name

Surname

Date of birth

Postnominals (ie any government awards such as OBE, OAM etc)

Home address

State

Postcode

Country

Telephone

Fax

Mobile

Email

## Business details

Position

Business name

Business address

State

Postcode

Country

Telephone

Fax

Mobile

Email

Your preferred postal address:

☐ business

☐ home

## Study details

Year that you completed your course

Year of your graduation ceremony

Degree/s studied

Name held while studying (ie Maiden name)

Monash student number (if known)

If you studied pharmacy:

Year of registration

Registration number

## Other details

You are a:

- ☐ graduate
- ☐ current student
- ☐ parent of a current student
- ☐ staff member
- ☐ former staff member
- ☐ colleague

Do you have news you would like to share with the college community?

Let us know if you would like further information on:

- ☐ organising a reunion
- ☐ going on a tour of the college
- ☐ upcoming events
- ☐ making a donation to the college
- ☐ making a bequest to the college

### Privacy collection statement

The information on this form is collected for the primary purpose of updating your contact details in the college's Advance database. You have a right to access personal information that Monash University holds about you, subject to any exceptions in relevant legislation. If you wish to seek access to your personal information or inquire about the handling of your personal information contact the University Privacy Officer, email [privacyofficer@adm.monash.edu.au](mailto:privacyofficer@adm.monash.edu.au)

## Victorian College of Pharmacy 125th anniversary partners

### Principal partners



### Supporting partners



### General partners



## Free public lecture series

Researchers at the Victorian College of Pharmacy work towards providing insights into diseases in the hope of one day finding cures.

Come and hear how our research makes a difference to the community.

Tuesday 3 October  
**Pacemaker cells in the prostate gland**

Tuesday 10 October  
**Medicines – friend or foe?**

Tuesday 17 October  
**Tackling pandemic influenza – new solutions to an age-old problem**

Tuesday 24 October  
**Public/private partnerships – a new drug discovery model for malaria and other neglected diseases**

Tuesday 31 October  
**Medicines of the future – what's around the corner?**

All public lectures will be held at the college, 381 Royal Parade, Parkville, from 6.30pm to 8.00pm. The public lectures are free, but registration is essential.

Register online at [www.vcp.monash.edu.au/125/public-lectures.html](http://www.vcp.monash.edu.au/125/public-lectures.html)

*Alchemy*, the alumni magazine of the Victorian College of Pharmacy, a faculty of Monash University, is published twice a year. The next issue is due for publication in November 2006.

The magazine is published for the Victorian College of Pharmacy community, which includes alumni (both pre and post the Monash amalgamation), current and former staff, students and their families, friends and colleagues of the college.

To contact *Alchemy*: tel: +613 9903 9504, email [alumni@vcp.monash.edu.au](mailto:alumni@vcp.monash.edu.au) or write to *Alchemy*, Victorian College of Pharmacy, 381 Royal Parade, Parkville, Victoria 3052, Australia.

# 125th anniversary celebrations

Alumni and friends of the college are warmly invited to attend the college's 125th anniversary celebrations.

<b>May</b>	<b>Monday, 1:</b> Commemorative postmark launched by Australia Post (see below)
<b>June</b>	<b>Saturday, 3:</b> Class of 1981 reunion <b>Tuesday, 6:</b> Plaque unveiling to commemorate Swanston Street campus
<b>August</b>	<b>Saturday, 5:</b> College Open Day
<b>September</b>	<b>Tuesday, 26:</b> 'Gearing for Success' breakfast Class of 1976 reunion (date to be confirmed)
<b>October</b>	<b>Tuesday, 3:</b> Public lecture, 'Pacemaker cells in the prostate gland' <b>Wednesday, 4:</b> Class of 1956 reunion <b>Tuesday, 10:</b> Public lecture, 'Medicines – friend or foe?' <b>Tuesday, 17:</b> Public lecture, 'Tackling pandemic influenza – new solutions to an age-old problem' <b>Tuesday, 24:</b> Public lecture, 'Public/private partnerships – a new drug discovery model for malaria and other neglected diseases' <b>Tuesday, 31:</b> Public lecture, 'Medicines of the future – what's around the corner?'
<b>November</b>	Launch of the college's history book (date to be confirmed)
<b>December</b>	Laying of the Foundation Stone at the college's new building, 399 Royal Parade (date to be confirmed)
<b>All year</b>	Commemorative wine for sale

**If you are interested in attending any of these events contact Elizabeth Welch, tel: +613 9903 9086 or email [elizabeth.welch@vcp.monash.edu.au](mailto:elizabeth.welch@vcp.monash.edu.au)**

Visit [www.vcp.monash.edu.au/125](http://www.vcp.monash.edu.au/125) to find out more about:

- the 125 stories for 125 years project
- the Victorian College of Pharmacy commemorative wine
- all the 125th anniversary events.

To join our mailing list, email your details to [125years@vcp.monash.edu.au](mailto:125years@vcp.monash.edu.au)

**[www.vcp.monash.edu.au/125](http://www.vcp.monash.edu.au/125)**

## Commemorative wine

To mark the 125th anniversary, the Victorian College of Pharmacy has bottles of commemorative wine available for sale. To order, visit [www.vcp.monash.edu.au/125/wine.html](http://www.vcp.monash.edu.au/125/wine.html)



## 125th anniversary postmark

Australia Post has designed a postmark to mark the college's 125th anniversary. The postmark will be in operation for six weeks at the Melbourne GPO, commencing 1 May.



## Royal Parade horse trough

Do you have a photo of the old Royal Parade horse trough? The trough was located on the corner of Royal Parade and Walker Street and the college is keen to hear from graduates who may have a photograph of it. If you can help, contact Elizabeth Welch, tel: +613 9903 9086 or email [elizabeth.welch@vcp.monash.edu.au](mailto:elizabeth.welch@vcp.monash.edu.au)