



September  
2013

ALBERTA PHARMACY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER



**And let the new school year begin...**

# Welcome!

by Allison Mejilla & Karen Hagen

We want to extend a warm welcome to the class of 2017! We hope that you will feel at home in your classes and with your classmates.

Welcome back to the classes of 2016, 2015 and 2014! We hope you had a great summer and that you are re-energized for the academic year.

This is the first Pharmacy Quarterly issue of the 2013-2014 academic year.. For those of you that may not know, Pharmacy Quarterly (PQ) is APSA's official newsletter. We hope to provide you with some useful information, as well as highlight some of the great events we have planned.

In addition to our regular features, we have introduced a few new features this year:

- ❖ A Day in the Life: a practicing pharmacist describes what their "typical" day is like
- ❖ Contest Time: Solve our question and have the chance to win a \$25 Starbucks gift card
- ❖ Art Scene: Reviews of the latest albums, books, and movies
- ❖ What you did last summer: students describe their summer experiences, from work to road trips and beyond.

Have a great Fall!

From your friendly neighbourhood  
PQ editors ----->

Allison M



... & Karen H



*Ok I kid, that's not really me (but a good approximation though)...*



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# President's message

By Laura Coleman

Hello Pharmacy Students – new and old!

Welcome back to the new semester, or for the Class of 2017, your new program of study for the next 4 years! For those of you who may not know me, my name is Laura Coleman and I am your APSA President. I am now 10 months into my Presidency and I have a few more to go. I am hoping to make the most of it with all of you over the Fall semester, and I hope all of you get to know our current President-Elect Brad during this time as well.

APSA as an organization focuses on four main pillars: Advocacy, Presence, Student Services, and Academic Excellence. We are here to serve you as students and to ensure that you are provided with all the opportunities, experiences, and socializing that you need to be successful in and to enjoy your undergraduate pharmacy degree. APSA is heavily connected with the student body and also maintains working relationships with our regulatory body, the Alberta College of Pharmacists (ACP), our advocating body, the Alberta Pharmacists Association (RxA), the Canadian Association of Pharmacy Students and Interns (CAPSI), the Faculty of Pharmacy, and many more important pharmacy organizations.

APSA strives to inspire students to take ownership of their profession and to get involved! Pharmacy as a profession has so much to offer, and the time to start establishing ourselves as leaders, movers, and shakers of the profession is right now at the beginning of our career – while we are students. APSA believes that every student has the potential to grow the profession and give back in a way that will benefit both the health care system and patients. I encourage all of you to find something that you enjoy doing that allows you to contribute to the growth and success of our profession. APSA also seeks to build unity in the student body and to create an atmosphere that brings us together in a supportive community.

I encourage all of you to get involved in some way this year! Attend APSA events, join a committee, take on a volunteer position, or be your class' IT tech for those projectors that just don't seem to want to work! Take a chance and get to know another student that you have never met before! Take the opportunity to grow as much as possible in this program and you will surely succeed as a health care professional in the future. Stay tuned for APSA events coming your way this September, come to the first day of class with a positive attitude, and get ready to have a great year!



If you have any questions or would like more information about APSA, please do not hesitate to contact me or get to know me in the hallways!

Sincerely,  
Laura Coleman  
President – lcc@ualberta.ca  
The Alberta Pharmacy Students' Association

#### FAST FACT: APSA PRESIDENT AND PRESIDENT ELECT

APSA holds elections in the spring of each year. A president elect is chosen at that time. The president elect's job is to support and learn from the president during the next ~ 9 months until the "changeover" in December, when the president elect becomes the president and the outgoing present becomes the "past president".

## Class of 2014's "Top apps for clinical pharmacy practice"

App	Price/registration info	Device operating systems
CPS essentials (eCPS and Drug Choices)	\$25 student pricing through CPhA	iOS and Android
Lexicomp	Free subscription while in school	iOS, Android and others
Medscape	Free subscription after registration with <a href="http://www.medscape.com">www.medscape.com</a>	iOS, Android and KindleFire
Bugs and Drugs	Free after registration	iOS
Canadian Cardiovascular society collection – Lipids, Afib, Drive+Fly, Antiplatelets	Free	iOS (and Android for Antiplatelets)
CHEP hypertension guidelines	Free	iOS and Android
Canrisk Diabetes screening	Free	iOS
FRAX fracture risk assessment	\$5.99	iOS

# Orientation 2013!

by Karen Hagen & Allison Mejilla

ORIENTATION FOR THE CLASS OF 2017



We welcomed the class of 2017 to the Faculty on Tuesday September 3<sup>rd</sup>! Many thanks to Cassandra Voit, the APSA council and the numerous volunteers who worked to make this a memorable day. The group leaders used their interpersonal skills and talents to make giant nasal sprays and blister packs, to name a few. And we cannot forget our tireless and talented chefs (Brad, Taryn, and Bryan) who cooked over 150 burgers. As well, we would like to thank Scotiabank for sponsoring our barbeque. The first year's students' knowledge and dexterity was challenged in the "drug scramble" scavenger hunt and the obstacle course. And they all got to know each other a little better with some fun rounds of speed dating – pharmacy style!



*Photo credit to the Yearbook photographers*

# Upcoming – Run for the Cure and related events

by Karen Hagen & Laura Coleman

Each year the faculty of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences participates in the CIBC Run for the Cure. This is one of the events that the student body, professors, support staff and faculty promote and participate in. In addition to the run itself, several related presentations and events have already been organized.

## Breast Cancer Survivor Presentation

We were privileged to host a Survivor Talk from our very own Professor Marlene Gukert! She is a breast cancer survivor spoke about her experiences and her journey to recovery, and how it has affected her life. Many thanks to Prof. Gukert for her willingness to speak to us and share her insight.

## The Run for the Cure event

We are still looking for many students and faculty to join us for the run and beat our record of just over \$10,000 from last year. On top of that, we want to beat all of the other 9 Canadian pharmacy schools at fundraising. Here are the details for the run and I hope you can join our team as soon as possible and start raising money!

This is your chance to get involved right away starting this Fall! There is also an opportunity to win a scholarship for the Post-Secondary Challenge worth \$2500 if you fundraise your heart out!!! For more information about the PSC awards, check out: [http://www.runfortheure.com/site/PageServer?pagename=2013\\_Teams\\_Challenge](http://www.runfortheure.com/site/PageServer?pagename=2013_Teams_Challenge)

All your fundraising efforts go towards a great cause and fundraising, volunteering, and joining the team is a great way to give back to the community and support the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation. So what are you waiting for? Sign up today



through the following link:  
<http://goo.gl/s3a7q>

**Date: Sunday October 6, 2013**  
**Time: 8:00am – 11:00am**  
**Location: Sir Winston Churchill Square (downtown Edmonton)**  
**Run or Walk – 5km or 1km**



*Photos from the 2011 and 2012 Run for the Cure events*

*Photo credit to yearbook photographers*

# What is the RxA?

by Eliezer Chin & Douglas Owoo

As the semester begins to ramp up here is a brief update from RxA. To the new Class of 2017, a warm welcome and a quick preamble as to who and what the RxA is. The Alberta Pharmacists' Association (condensed to RxA) is an organization that strives to be the voice of a unified, innovative and inspired profession. The role of the association is to advocate and advance the pharmacy profession. For example, some of the services offered to members include offering professional development events (as practicing pharmacists to maintain licensure there are requirements for obtaining a certain number of continuing education credits annually), and aiding members in obtaining their Advanced Prescribing Authority (APA). Furthermore, RxA has a role in advocating for appropriate recognition and compensation for pharmacists' contributions to healthcare.

Of late, the pharmacy profession has been evolving – most recently with the introduction of the March 2013 Alberta Provincial Budget's decrease in generic drug prices. These changes will undoubtedly impact the practice of pharmacy. Prior to these changes, in July 2012 a new Pharmacy Services Framework (PSF) was introduced adding a number of services that pharmacists are able to perform and receive compensation for such as the Comprehensive Annual Care Plan (CACP) and delivering drugs by injection to name a couple. In the creation of the PSF, the RxA was the organization involved in gathering pharmacist inputs and perspectives. The RxA, Alberta Health and Alberta Blue Cross has been meeting diligently to refresh the Alberta Blue Cross Pharmacy Agreement (an outline of the services which pharmacies provide to patients and receive remuneration for). On May 10<sup>th</sup> Health Minister

Horne indicated that he intends to have the ABC Pharmacy Agreement in place for October 1, 2013.

As pharmacy students, staying informed as to the progression and evolution of pharmacy will allow us to hit the ground running, so to speak, when we don our white coats, shiny name-tags, and utilize our knowledge to provide patient centered care. For RxA Student Members, there will be several RxA Speaker Series to provide knowledge, and skills from various leaders and mentors in the pharmacy profession. The series will, as in previous years take place as lunch-and-learn sessions with a launch date of Oct 7, 2013.

## Summer Events

On August 29, Jimmy Mathews and Kit Poon were elected to serve as Board Members for three-year terms beginning in October. RxA will be hosting its Annual General Meeting (AGA) where the new Board Members will be inducted and the Trusted Partners in Health Professional Development Event. The respective dates for the AGA and Professional Development event are Oct 4 and Oct 5, both occurring at the Sheraton Cavalier in Calgary. The various sessions available this year include integrating pre-travel medications into practice, dealing with chemotherapy symptoms, diabetes, and senior fall prevention. As students – many of the topics are pertinent to our past, present or future courses. For details visit the RxA website or feel free to contact me at [Eliezer@ualberta.ca](mailto:Eliezer@ualberta.ca)

Kind regards,



**Eliezer Chin**

Incoming RxA Representative  
[eliezer@ualberta.ca](mailto:eliezer@ualberta.ca)



**Douglas Owoo**

Outgoing RxA Representative  
[dowoo@ualberta.ca](mailto:dowoo@ualberta.ca)



# Sono una studentessa di farmacia - IN ITALIANO!

by Jessica Pyrch

So, of course I thought taking a class in Italy was a great excuse for a European vacation and an excellent way to get one of my fourth year classes out of the way, but my experience was SO much more than I expected.

Forio, where Pharmacy 453: Intercultural Exploration of Pharmacy and Health took place, is a quaint town on the island of Ischia off the coast of Naples in Italy, and it was our home for 3 weeks. There is no better way to learn Italian than to live in a town where many of the locals don't speak English. Moreover, there is no better way to truly understand the Italian culture and Mediterranean diet than to eat and live it

every day. Who knew that all the stores close from 1:30-4:30 for siesta and that dinner is normally eaten at 9:30pm or later?

The course itself challenged us to approach health and diet from a new, global perspective. From visiting local markets, to learning to cook from local farmers/restaurant owners, to visiting pharmacies and universities, to taking a field trip to a health spa, it was clear that Italian concepts of health and nutrition are very different than ours. Where does our food come from? How far does it have to travel to get to our plates? What ingredients are involved? How are those ingredients grown and what policies control their production? This course was an introduction to global food policy by the amazing Dr. Lynette

Shultz, which inspired me to learn more about the food I eat on a daily basis. The concepts of food and nutrition taught by Dr. Shultz were then thrown into a healthcare and pharmacy perspective by our own Faculty members Marlene Gukert and Dr. Bradley Mitchelmore in a way that forced us to reflect upon the way we learn and approach food and health!

Not only did I get to explore the beautiful country of Italy, taste the delicious Italian cuisine, and learn about the Italian culture, I learned a lot about my values and myself. I highly recommend taking this course if your bank account and schedules permit!



***Class of 2014 looking great in Italy!***

*Photo credit to Jessica Pyrch*



***Photo credit to Florence Tsang***

# Students from the West meet the Paris of the East

by Julia Hui

Cross-cultural communication. Complementary alternative medicine. Interdisciplinary teamwork. Health systems in a global context. Shanghai, China. What am I getting at? Well, let's just say that I got to explore all of the above and more this summer, and you can too!

This past summer, the Faculty of Pharmacy got to launch, for the very first time, a international, interdisciplinary course like no other before for its students: INT D 457. This three week course takes place in July and can be taken by third-year pharmacy students for credit! Not only do you get to work closely with our own faculty members, but you get to pick the brains of students and faculty from from U of A's Department of Medicine and the students and faculty from Shanghai's Fudan University medical campus too! If you aren't already experiencing a brain-gasm just thinking about all the learning you'll do, just think of starting your day with a nice cold milk tea and green onion cake from a street vendor! Or how about a Chinese-style breakfast burrito? Or fresh steamed buns? Followed by yummy xiaolongbao (小笼包) for lunch and maybe hot pot for dinner with your new friends? And did I mention that they really know how to do karaoke in Asia?

Food and entertainment aside, we really did have a lot of fun in Shanghai learning too. A typical day would start with a guest lecture on campus, followed by a class discussion. Other days, we would be busy all day getting some field experience, touring the most state-of-the-art care facilities in Shanghai, where Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) is viewed not so much as alternative, but definitely complementary, to conventional Western medicine. After all that learning, of course, we have to consolidate our newfound knowledge, and what better way to do that than to work with your fellow students from different backgrounds? Medical students, pharmacy students, public health students, nutrition students - from Alberta and from China. Each week, we presented to our classmates on the topics we had learned about that week. In the first week, we took a look at the UN's

Millennium Development Goals, which was a great look at how far we still have a to go collectively to achieve good quality of life. The second week brought us in a little closer as we examined some of the similarities and differences in risk factors for chronic disease in China and Canada. And we capped it off in our last week by taking a small step back again to compare the health systems of China and Canada.

Overall, it was a great way to reinforce some of the skills and knowledge I had crashed through in the last three years. It was really enlightening to hear some of the personal viewpoints from the Chinese students, because there are so many ways in which culture influences our behaviour, both collectively and individually, to impact our health care needs! One example that comes to mind is how smoking is a behaviour practiced mostly by men, and one student said that the intervention that is correlated with the highest smoking cessation rate is marriage! Imagine that. Little gems like that throughout the course made the learning involved and fun. For me, personally, as a student of Chinese descent, it was also a great trip for me to get in touch with my roots and gain some cultural insight, language skills, and knowledge about traditional medicine that would allow me to better serve my Chinese-speaking patients in the future. A serious win on all fronts.

Whatever your motivation for taking this course, I can vouch that this course is worth the time and money. I hope the faculty continues offering and expanding this course, because it is quite unique and a great opportunity for all students involved. It is challenging, fun, different -- and most of all, it is one of those courses that encourages us to think critically about our role as health care professionals while giving adequate thinking space (in the absence of the stress of a normal timetable and obligations) to really drive home a deeper appreciation for the work that we do and the improvements that we still need to strive for. And that's a lesson you don't get from just any course!

## They feed us too!

Social dinner organized by Fudan University (pictured: students from Fudan, U of A Medicine students, U of A Pharmacy students, U of A Faculty)



## U of A Pharmacy students on Welcome Gala night

Left to right: Miranda, Julia, Cathy, Josh, Molly



## Succulent xiaolongbao! (小笼包)



Photo credit to Julia Hui

APSA is proud to begin offering you another opportunity at professional



# APSA Journal Club

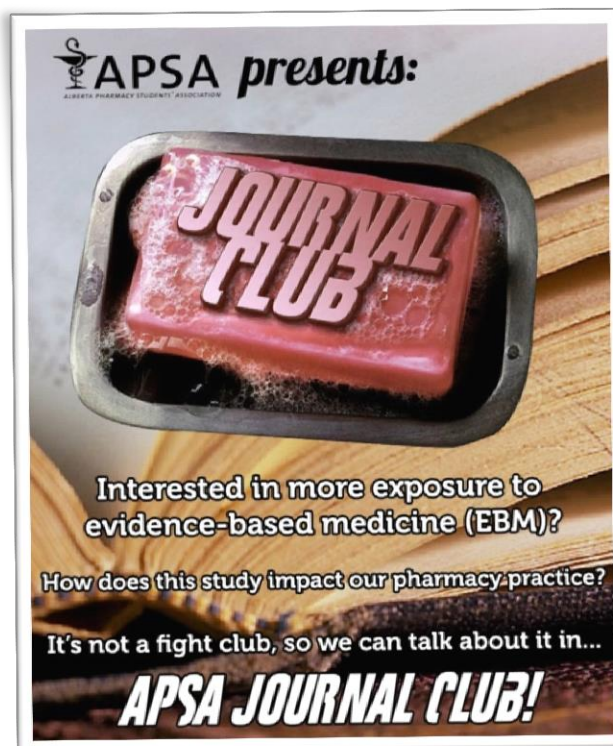
by Peter Yang

development through our Journal Club. The Journal Club is a group of students that meets monthly to discuss a recently published, therapeutics-focused clinical trial. Each group member is invited to read the article and come prepared to discuss and debate with their colleagues the validity of the trial.

This year, we are introducing a new junior branch, which is open to all years, to the existing journal club for the 2nd years and up. This branch will focus its discussion on the evidence associated with the efficacy and safety of various popular Over-the-Counter products

For more information, please visit the Member Services section under [myapsa.ca](http://myapsa.ca) or feel free to contact your VP Academic Humirah. Keep an eye out for journal club sign-ups in your weekly APSA emails!

This year, we would like to introduce the



# PQ Column Club

**Do you like to write? Want to be more involved? Join the PQ Column Club!**

**PQ Column Club.** As a member of the PQ Column Club, you have the opportunity to write about your choice of topics or you can choose from our topic bank.

There are many benefits that accompany being part of the Column Club. For one, you get to have your name published in PQ! In addition, we can offer to write you a reference letter or be one of your referees (as long as you show us that you are a committed member). Plus, at the end of each semester, we'll have a draw where one lucky writer can win a gift certificate!

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact the PQ editors, Allison ([allison.mejilla@ualberta.ca](mailto:allison.mejilla@ualberta.ca)) or Karen ([kehagen@ualberta.ca](mailto:kehagen@ualberta.ca)).

Or feel free to stop us in the halls!



# PharmESPN

by Allison Mejilla

## NHL:

With the 2013-14 season fast approaching, training camp is finally underway with pre-season games being played around the league. Quite a bit has happened in the NHL over the summer, with player movement happening left, right, and centre. Here a few things that happened to the Canadian teams:

My beloved Oilers (yes, I realize I am supposed to be unbiased, but I'm letting my allegiance be known. So what?) kept Ales Hemsky and traded their captain, Shawn Horcoff. Somehow, Roberto Luongo is still a Canuck and Cory Schneider is only worth a 9<sup>th</sup> overall pick... Miikka Kiprusoff retired and the Flames are rebuilding. The Jets' superstar Evander Kane was fined for parking tickets. Ottawa named Jason Spezza as their new captain after Daniel Alfredsson left for the Detroit Red Wings. After holding out for a contract last season, Canadien PK Subban won the Norris for the league's best defenseman. Last but not least, the Leafs managed to land one of the summer's biggest free agents, David Clarkson.

With the new league alignment, we should look forward to some new rivalries and the revival of some old ones. Pretty soon, it'll be October 1 and we can all procrastinate with some hockey (and wings!).

## NFL:

The 2013-14 NFL season commenced September 5 and even though the season is still young, so much has already happened. Along with all of the coaching changes and player transactions that occurred over the summer, the NFL made headlines across the world with their \$765 million settlement of the infamous Concussion Lawsuit. 4500 players and family were involved in this suit. Along with this lawsuit, more headlines were made when the New England Patriots released Aaron Hernandez for you know what...

On a lighter note, the season that is underway has shown to be exciting. RG3 missed the entire pre-season due to a torn ACL, but is finally back for the regular season, where it really matters. In week 1, Peyton Manning tied an NFL record by throwing 7 touchdowns against the Ravens. Just like a typical pharmacy student, he did

not want to accept credit for the feat, but instead thanked his team for the win. Not to be outdone by Manning's record day, Aaron Rodgers had a career day and tied a Packer record with 480 passing yards. And let's not forget New Orleans head coach, Sean Payton, is finally back from his one-year suspension for Bountygate. Now let's see if the Saints can perform for him.

Given how eventful the season has been thus far, I cannot wait to see what the rest of the season has in store.

## NBA:

While the start of the 2013-14 regular season seems so far away (it is set to start October 29), we can look forward to the October 5<sup>th</sup> preseason start. The NBA is going to go global with preseason stops in Istanbul, Beijing, Shanghai, Bilbao, Manila, Manchester, Rio de Janeiro, and Taipei. I don't know about you, but I might stay up to watch one of these games.

Will the Heat be able to hold on to the Larry O'Brien or will they lose it to some other whippersnappers? I guess we'll just have to wait and see!

## Formula One:

With only 7 races left in the 2013 season, it looks like it is going to be a race for second. As per usual, Sebastien Vettel is dominating the points race with a lead of 53 points. Because of this, Ferrari is only giving Alonso 2 more races to show that he can give Vettel a run for his money before they shift all of their focus to the 2014 car. In addition to the added pressure, Ferrari has announced that longtime Ferrari driver – Massa – is being replaced by Kimi Raikkonen. This should lead to an epic battle for next season's number one Ferrari driver.

Considering the season isn't actually over, let's see if someone can challenge Vettel and pull a Raikkonen à la 2007 World Championships. Or will Red Bull Racing and Vettel continue to show how awesome they are?

## Tennis:

Seeing as the US Open is the last Grand Slam of the year, I think that it is safe to say that

Rafa Nadal is on the top of his game. Though Djokovic is still the number 1 men's player, he even admits that Rafa seems to be unstoppable. And speaking of unstoppable, Milos Raonic has made huge strides for Canadian tennis. Though he was in the top 10 for only a week, he made history by being the first Canadian in the Rogers Cup final in 50 years. They can only get better from here. I'm looking forward to next season's Australian Open!

→ Did you think that I should have discussed a sport that wasn't mentioned? Would you like to submit your own article for PharmESPN? Or do you just want to talk sports with someone? Send me an e-mail at [allison.mejilla@ualberta.ca](mailto:allison.mejilla@ualberta.ca)

## Now for a word from our Sports Reps:

This year is off to a great start! This fall, we have Pharmacy intramural teams in ice hockey, ball hockey, volleyball, basketball, ultimate frisbee, dodgeball, and soccer. Many teams have already begun playing and from the sounds of it, are having a blast! There are Pharmacy intramural t-shirts available for purchase until the end of September. They feature the minions from the movie *Despicable Me*. These t-shirts are on sale at the APSA office, during APSA office hours, until September 27, 2013.

Stay tuned for information about further events!

Your Pharmacy Sports Reps,

Hannah ([schieck@ualberta.ca](mailto:schieck@ualberta.ca)) and Clinton ([cfliu@ualberta.ca](mailto:cfliu@ualberta.ca))

# Summer Redux: What did you do this summer?

## Summer experiences from your fellow pharmers

Unlike so many of my classmates (and those lucky 2014ers) who travelled the world, my entire summer was spent in Edmonton... working.

As a summer student for AHS Drug Information North, my summer was spent answering drug info questions – from fellow classmates, other pharmacists, physicians, and other HCPs – and working on various different projects. These projects ranged from simple drug compatibility charts to more complicated allergy algorithms. I will admit that at times, I was extremely frustrated with my inability to find the information that I needed. However, I loved that sense of reward that I got once I tracked that info down.

Overall, I had a great time working at the hospital and really recommend that you apply for an AHS summer student position next summer. From working in the dispensary to having a clinical role, you'll have a nice introduction to institutional pharmacy. And hey, they may just keep you on for the school year, just like me!

### Allison Mejilla, PQ Editor/3<sup>rd</sup> Year

Going on two trips this summer definitely made my break both insanely fun and relaxing. My first trip was to Las Vegas with my girlfriends where I got to see some of my favorite DJs at pool parties. Words of advice: do not underestimate how far apart the hotels on the strip are. One day, we decided to walk to one hotel and it took us two hours! All the buildings are humungous on the strip, so they look close. In August, I went on a road trip with my family to Victoria, Vancouver, and Seattle. I loved biking in Victoria, visiting the university campus, the night market in Vancouver, and shopping in Seattle. Getting away this summer made me ready for this new school year ☺

### Jenny Carbon, IPSF Rep/3<sup>rd</sup> Year

My summer 2013 consisted of making capsules, loading creams onto the unguator, flavouring disgusting oral suspensions, counselling... just kidding. Well sort of kidding... Although I did have to go to work almost every day and my duties consisted of

what is listed above, I did get to do more than just pharmacy related stuff, I got to enjoy LIFE. I did not do anything crazy and I did not travel anywhere farther than Vancouver, but I got to relax. When you're in pharmacy school, one of the best things a pharmacy student can get is a day of peace and relaxation.

### Annie Lo, 3<sup>rd</sup> Year

My summer started out like most recent summers have: getting into a car and getting as far away from the U of A as humanly possible. And when you head out of town with a full tank of gas and no particular destination in mind, there's no telling where you mind end up. As we tore down the QEII, we figured Colorado or Utah wouldn't be too shabby, but one thing led to another, and before we knew it, we were pulling up the driveway of the ol' Rosswood Plantation, somewhere in the bluffs of western Mississippi. A little off track one might say, but to those who know me (apparently) not entirely surprising. As I sat on the porch swing, sipping sweet tea as a calm breeze rustled the Magnolia trees whilst looking out at distant cotton fields, something just felt right. I belonged down here. These were my people. And if Alberta's pharmacy cuts eventually force me out of a job, well, apparently Mississippi's still looking for a few good pharmacists too.

The fact that Ms. Peggy, the housekeeper, made the best cheese omelettes and baked peaches I'd ever tasted, didn't hurt either. The rest of the trip was enjoyable too of course. The sights of Atlanta, the Jack Daniels distillery, and the Grand Ol' Opry (I met the "Love and Theft" band members, apparently they're famous??) are all fond memories, but nothing touches Mississippi. As a place too often noted for her hurricanes, obesity, and segregated proms, Mississippi often gets a bad rap. Yet behind this veil also lies the friendliest, happiest, and most genuine place I've ever been. Today, as I write this after 9 hours of slavery and a 120km round trip commute (thank you Pharm 425), I miss her more than ever. The south will rise again!

### Robert Hayashi, 4<sup>th</sup> year

After previous summer jobs that fit the schedule of small children (i.e. 8-4PM) and being located close enough to go home for lunch, I finally "got myself a real pharmacy job" this past summer. I was fortunate enough to work at an independent pharmacy which gave me a very unique and formative experience. Unlike many classmates I had never had the chance to work in a community pharmacy in any context, so the first month was mostly learning the brand names of drugs (what is Mogadon? What's the brand name of metoprolol anyway?), recognizing the pills on sight and trying not to mess up insurance claims too badly. I was very fortunate to be involved in a strong application of the new services framework and averaged a medication review (CACP or SMMA) every other day (not to mention follow ups), which is way more than I expected I would ever get. It took a lot of remembering my lecture material, learning to use clinical skills, making mistakes, clearing everything with the pharmacist in charge and sometimes research. I found it gave me the chance to link the classroom theory to real cases and cemented that information, so to speak.

A cross section of situations I dealt with include a patient who went "yellow" while taking clozaril, assessing chest pain, assessing high blood pressure (and telling the difference between a hypertensive urgency and an emergency), referring a patient to an urgent care clinic (who never went to his appointments in the end), dealing with a complex patient with atrial fibrillation, aortic stenosis, heart failure and COPD, interviewing a schizophrenic patient who has an extensive history of hospitalization for that condition, and informing a patient of a positive STD test result, not to mention dispensing plan B. I also dispensed an HP-PAC for someone with an *H. pylori* related ulcer and managed to get a patient who self-adjusted his warfarin dose blister packed to keep his INR in range, and helped a patient who had such severe sciatica that he was only able to kneel on the ground when he first visited the doctor's office next door. When I signed up for pharmacy school, I never expected it to be this interesting!

### Karen Hagen, PQ Editor/4<sup>th</sup> year

# Art Scene

by Karen Hagen

A new album that stands out this year is "Héritage" by the Montreal singer/songwriter Maia Davies (Maïa), so much that I felt the need to dedicate an entire page to it. Perhaps that's because this album got me through finals week at the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> year when I had only 1 to 1.5 days to study for each exam and very little sleep (not recommended).

Regardless ... what draws me to listen to the album is a combination of her eclectic mix of songs, including pop, acoustic, francophone-country music to name a few. She skillfully sings in both French and English, and even if your knowledge of French is rudimentary her enunciation is clear and slow enough that most listeners can get the meaning easily. Some songs also feature singers Michael Boguski from Blue Rodeo and Patrick Krief of The Dears, but Maia's voice is the true gem in this album.

"Radio" conjures images of sunny summer evenings, dragonflies, iced sweet tea and freshly cut grass. "Singers in Love" is the catchiest song. (I thought it was "Sinners in Love" at first, which was rather awkward.) It is an all-round well performed original song that you will find yourself singing aloud later on.

"Pierre qui Roule" (translation: rolling stone) describes small town life so well that it makes me want to move to small town Québec and listen to "belle musique" in a bar above the local garage each Saturday night like the characters in her song. And yes, you will be singing "Pierre qui roule, pierre qui tombe" in your head as well.

"El Fuego" is an absolutely amazing cover of a Leonard Cohen song. Indulge me on a tangent for a second ... there are two kinds of people in the world: those who like Leonard Cohen and those who don't. I count myself among the latter, but even I was awestruck by her version of this song. So, don't worry ...

even if you dislike Leonard Cohen's music you'll love this one. I think it's mostly her vocal talent and the piano/percussion accompaniment that makes it work so well.

My other favourite song (you *can* have two, right?) is "New Man in Town" – the lyrics, tempo, instruments and vocals all fit together perfectly; the vintage organ and the country twang go perfectly together.

In my opinion, the weakest song of the album is "All the Best Roses" which is a narrative about a woman returning to New York where her ex lives. Musically the song is rich and the guitar is excellent; I felt that at times the spoken words didn't quite match up with the timing of the song as well as I would have liked.

The last song on the album is "Éteingez-moi" (translation: Extinguish me), featuring some dissonant electronic acoustics and definitely has a darker tone than the rest of the album, yet does not end things on a completely depressing note (like Leonard Cohen would, for example, ahem).

Maia is also a member of the female band "Ladies of the Canyon", who I recommend you also check out if you enjoy listening to great music performed by highly talented musicians. Plus their album covers and publicity shots rock.

## Your turn:

Have you read a book, watched a movie, or listened to some music that inspires? Send your review to [kehagen@ualberta.ca](mailto:kehagen@ualberta.ca) and you might see it in PQ!

## MAIA - HERITAGE

### Maïa's solo album "Heritage"



### Ladies of the Canyon



### Leonard Cohen?

Featuring a Cohen song that even Cohen haters will like



# A Day in the Life

by Susan Lavoie, Community Pharmacist in Camrose, Alberta



OR

I am chronically early and I always have been. So, as the early riser, it has become part of my role at the community pharmacy where I work to open everything up before the rest of the staff arrive. I get the cash, disarm the alarm, check the fridge temps, turn on the computers, open up the lock and leaves and so on and so forth. It is a quiet time of the day...most days, and it is often a chance for me to collect my thoughts and prepare for whatever the day may hold. At our pharmacy we have two departments, our front store dispensary and our continuing care department and to say the very least, it is busy, busy, busy. More often than not, it is a virtual hive of activity from open to close. In the scope of our business we do it all, from AADL to Zostavax we've got it covered. Thankfully we have a very bright, talented and dedicated team that is committed to providing great patient care. Sometimes this means

doing a lot of 'babysitting': "Sorry, no you can't have another refill because you just filled 100 yesterday." Or "Dear Doctor, Jane was taking Lomotil 1QID, did you intend to increase her to 4QID?" Or "I'm sorry that you took your last pill today and that you didn't know you were out of refills. Let me renew it for you until you can see your doctor." It is all part of the job.

As one of the continuing care pharmacists my days are filled with a different kind of busy. Our time frames for task completion tend to be a little longer but the tasks themselves are a little bit larger. For example, on one day we may batch fill 900 prescriptions which are then sent to be packaged before coming back to us to be checked a couple days later, pouch by individual pouch. The major tasks in our days are completed on a relatively unchanging schedule. I.e. Monday – Swap Out, Process Refill Orders from Sites; Tuesday – Rounds, Send batch; Wednesday – More Swap Outs, More Rounds, Print Checking Mars; Thursday – Check Batch; Friday – Finish Checking Batch; and then repeat.

However, sometimes the schedule is thrown for a loop and we find ourselves scrambling to meet the urgent needs of new admissions, residents discharged from hospital, patients requiring palliative care, family conferences or life happens and one of our staff calls in sick.

When I walk into the pharmacy in the morning, I have no idea what lays ahead. All that I can be certain of is that there are patients, families, colleagues and coworkers that I will interact with and that regardless of how busy it is, I have to make those interactions a priority. After all, what good is a correctly filled prescription if it isn't correctly administered or worse, if it just isn't right for the patient. So, every morning, I enjoy the early peace and then I wait to see what the day ahead will bring.



Photo credit to Susan Lavoie

# The low-down on drug rebates (part 1)

by Kit Poon

Rebates (or "PDF" Professional Development Funds) is a term we hear about a lot in the pharmacy world. For many years, the term was a taboo subject, mainly because third party insurances forbid it, and owners were reluctant to speak of it as a result. But to better understand the industry that you will be involved in, let's understand how rebates actually work.

Most pharmacists believe that the entirety of a pharmacy's profit is generated from dispensing fees. For example:

Drug X costs \$100 for a bottle of 100 tablets

Filling a prescription of Drug X for 100 tabs would generate a markup of \$2.00 and a dispensing fee of \$15.53, for a total of \$17.53.

But what most pharmacists don't know is that there is a transaction that occurs in the background that gives money back to the pharmacy, negotiated between the pharmacy owner and generic drug manufacturers. This is known as the rebate/pdf. Specific rebate percentages are closely guarded secrets, and depend on how well the owner has negotiated or which buying group (a group of pharmacies that join together to improve their negotiating power) is dealing on behalf of the owner. Percentages ranging up to as high as 80% were seen in the past. Let's go back to the above example:

Drug X costs \$100 for a bottle of 100 tablets

You have a markup of \$2.00, as well as a dispensing fee of \$15.53, making the total cost to be \$117.53 for this prescription. You take this bottle to your patient, provide the counseling befitting of a top notch pharmacist, and charge your happy patient \$117.53. If your rebate percentage is 80% for drug x, then once your rebate/pdf comes to you in the form of a cheque in the mail, then you have made a profit of

Drug X prescription = \$117.53  
 What you paid to get Drug X = (-\$100.00)  
 Rebate/pdf from Drug X = (+\$80.00)  
 Total profit = \$97.53....for one prescription!

Before we run off thinking that pharmacies are a ridiculous cash cow, we have to remember that these rebate dollars have subsidized the free services that pharmacists have provided to the public for a large number of years.

... to be continued in the next PQ edition. Stay tuned to find out the thrilling conclusion to the drug rebate story!



# Pharmacy Horoscopes

by Allison Mejilla

## Libra (Sep 23 - Oct 22):

By September 30, your bank account is going to take a pretty big hit. Don't fret. What you lose in spending power, you gain in knowledge power!

## Scorpio (Oct 23 - Nov 21):

You will be losing some sleep over your upcoming midterm. However, due to the position of Mars, you will be riding that curve to success.

## Sagittarius (Nov 22 - Dec 21):

With Mercury rotating the way that it is, that project that you were worried about will be a success. High-five!

## Capricorn (Dec 22 - Jan 19):

Your hands may display some of the cardinal signs of inflammation from all of that inevitable clapping that pharmacy students do. Try not to clap so loud. (Bonus mark for listing the cardinal signs.)

## Aquarius (Jan 20 - Feb 18):

You will remember to click "upload file" on e-class when submitting an assignment. Self-five for submitting assignments!

## Pisces (Feb 19 - Mar 19):

Your reflection will out-reflect everyone else's reflection. (What? So what? Now what?!)

## Aries (Mar 20 - Apr 19):

You will attend this month's TGIF and somehow meet Kiefer Sutherland in the process (that man is everywhere!).

## Taurus (Apr 20 - May 20):

Due to Jupiter's movement, you will remember to ask for the patient's agenda during lab. Yay for free marks!

## Gemini (May 21 - Jun 20):

As the Crescent Moon and Saturn put on a spectacular show, you remember to wear your name tag in lab so as to dazzle the marker. Full marks for dressing professionally!

## Cancer (Jun 21 - Jul 22):

Mmm... Coffee.

## Leo (Jul 23 - Aug 22):

Because Venus and Saturn are in the same binocular field, you will be inspired to make a SMART goal. With some hard work, you will achieve that goal. Congrats!

## Virgo (Aug 23 - Sep 22):

With the Moon and Mars being paired, MS 231 and MS 227 projectors will not crash on the poor unsuspecting professor. Yay for uninterrupted classes!

# Contest Time: Drug Scramble Style

by Allison Mejilla & Alex Teha

Pharmacy Quarterly would like to present one of our newest features, **Contest Time**. Contest Time gives PQ readers the opportunity to win \_\_\_\_\_ if they can answer our "Raffle Time" pharmacy-related question at the end of every edition.

To answer this edition's Raffle Time question, you must solve several drug name scrambles. Once you've solved drug scrambles 1 through 10, use the boxed letters from your solutions to answer the Raffle Time question. (Don't forget to unscramble the boxed letters too!)

1. P A N I R F I M                      \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
2. T A P I N O R E                    \_ \_  \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
3. U V A S T A L F N I T              \_ \_ \_ \_ \_  \_ \_ \_
4. X A B I I N M I L F                \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
5. F L I N T E X E O U                \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
6. B U S A T M A L L O               \_ \_  \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
7. B R A N I S R A T E               \_ \_ \_ \_ \_  \_ \_ \_ \_
8. C L O S E T O L A B               \_ \_ \_ \_  \_ \_ \_ \_
9. F I R E N O P U B                 \_ \_ \_ \_  \_ \_ \_ \_
10. O N I C E R A P                  \_ \_ \_ \_  \_ \_ \_ \_

**Contest Time Question:** Which growth factor inhibitor can be used for the treatment of colorectal cancer?

**E**

Once you have your answer, e-mail it to Allison ([allison.mejilla@ualberta.ca](mailto:allison.mejilla@ualberta.ca)) with the subject line "PQ – Contest" by October 31, 2013 and you have the chance to win a \$25 Starbucks gift card. Happy drug unscrambling and good luck!!