

## HOW SCHOOLS CAN AID IN PUBLICITY WORK.\*

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One of the outstanding weaknesses in pharmacy is the lack of the right kind of publicity—the kind that inculcates the public mind with a true and thorough understanding of the profession, not as depicted by our garrulous, unsophisticated and imaginative newspaper reporters, but as practiced by the rank and file of our profession, from the humble and ethical corner druggist, principled and trained in ways and means of serving mankind, to the college teacher, whose main duty and object is the emancipation of pharmacy from the degradation of a distorted public opinion.

It cannot be disputed that pharmacy has received the proverbial "black-eye" by the constant misuse of the term "drugs" for narcotics. It has received a deep flesh wound by the more recent application of the title of "retail liquor dealer" to liquor dispensing pharmacists. Newspaper accounts alluding to either or both of these subjects are daily occurrences, so numerous, in fact, that the reader may well question whether the majority of druggists are not engaged in "drug traffic" and "bootlegging." It is public opinion, not the true conditions prevailing in pharmacy, which counts most when the reputation of our profession is at stake. A definite plan for pharmaceutical publicity has long been an urgent necessity and it is most gratifying to know that druggists in the northwest territory have taken the initial step toward creating a receptive public mind for pharmaceutical propaganda.

## THE PART OF THE SCHOOLS.

What part can schools of pharmacy play in a definite publicity scheme? They can furnish unlimited material for publicity work, but, first of all, let us determine a definite publicity plan, so that we may ascribe to our schools specific material and a specific place in our plan.

Naturally our first effort should be directed toward the elimination of the evil and malicious practice of the national press in the treatment of pharmaceutical news material. Unquestionably much of the malicious matter results from lack of knowledge.

Second, we should furnish news material of the human interest type that tends to counteract adverse publicity that may creep into our national press.

Third, prominent display and publicity should be given to the administration of pharmaceutical affairs, local, state, and national.

Fourth, we should provide our newspapers with articles partaking of human interest and informative material, which will tend to create a sympathetic public mind toward the profession and a better understanding of pharmaceutical activities in general. The latter class of publicity endeavor is the field in which schools of pharmacy can lend their best efforts.

You may have a vague conception of what is meant by "human interest and informative material," consequently it shall be my purpose in the remainder of

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this paper to analyze and explain the fourth part of the publicity plan insofar as schools of pharmacy can cooperate.

#### HUMAN INTEREST APPEAL.

"Human interest" material can be defined better by illustration. A newspaper man might define it as that type of news matter which may be fashioned to appeal to the interest of a large number of readers through satisfaction of curiosity, or by way of associating past experiences with facts contained in the article. The story of horsemint (Monardo), which might be titled "From Weed to Mouth Wash," may be used to illustrate this point. Here we have the association of an every-day act, use of mouth wash, with that of pharmaceutical research, the isolation of thymol from horsemint. Naturally, however, the article would necessarily be written, not from a technical point of view, but from the point of view of the interested reader. News material of this type can be provided by our schools of pharmacy.

Research material on digitalis could be treated in a similar fashion. Local color, also, could be instilled by comparison of the English variety with that of the Wisconsin or Minnesota digitalis. Likewise, belladonna lends itself admirably for an interesting human interest article. Newspapers are willing to extend financial remuneration for stories of this kind when accompanied by photographs. The larger newspapers use them in their Sunday magazine sections. Research problems in chemo-therapy, provided they can be translated into human interest articles, afford material for pharmaceutical publicity.

#### STORIES THAT APPEAL.

Aside from research problems, schools of pharmacy provide another class of news material. It is a type which requires little or no surgical treatment to render it palatable and interesting to the human intellect. Several years ago the writer sent an article on the pioneer drug store in the State Historical Museum to one of the larger state dailies. It was used with illustrations and no doubt proved interesting to a large number of readers. It is this type which I allude to as informative material.

The Wisconsin Pharmaceutical Experiment Station could be used for an interesting article. The information contained would appeal to the pride of Wisconsin people and to the interest of readers in other states. At the same time readers would find a fund of facts which would perhaps change their opinion of the profession of pharmacy.

Statistics of its graduates could be woven into an interesting story by the school of pharmacy, as well as historical matter pertaining to the practice of pharmacy. These articles could be local or of state-wide interest.

All possible subjects have by no means been named, but those that have been given indicate how the schools of pharmacy can aid in publicity work providing the news material. Besides providing the actual news material, schools can supply useful information to be used by publicity bureaus. The extent of this information would probably be limited only by the bureau's wants and needs and the ability of the school to cooperate in time and effort. Unquestionably the cooperation of publicity bureau and school is highly desirable, even urgent, and would result in tremendous value to the profession.