



# AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF THE HISTORY OF PHARMACY

## ANNUAL REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (November 2020)

Greetings from the American Institute of the History of Pharmacy! As I complete my second year as the Institute's Executive Director, I have come to enjoy preparing this annual review of AIHP's status as an opportunity to reflect on our work and achievements. A lot has happened since our last annual meeting in November 2019.

**1. The COVID-19 Pandemic.** The pandemic has affected the operations of the Institute, just as it has affected organizations and individuals around the world. Institute staff have been working remotely since mid-March, and we will almost certainly continue to do so well into 2021. We miss the in-person collegiality that we once took for granted, and our lack of easy access to the office has impeded work related to our historical collections that, by its nature, needs to be done onsite. The pandemic also forced us to turn the New Social History of Pharmacy and Pharmaceuticals Festival – originally planned as an in-person conference – into a virtual/online event. Overall, however, we've been pleasantly surprised with how little working remotely has affected our publications and programming.

**2. Publications.** During 2020, the Institute published two issues of *Pharmacy in History* (Vol. 61, No. 3 & 4 and Vol. 62, No. 1 & 2). Work on Vol. 62, No. 3 & 4 is well-underway. During the year, the journal's Editorial Board was expanded with four new appointments.

Without question, the single most significant development at the Institute in 2020 has been our work to plan the future direction of *Pharmacy in History*. Deciding upon a new name for the publication took a surprising amount of time and effort, as did planning our new partnership arrangement with the University of Wisconsin Press. All of us, however, are very excited about the coming changes, and we believe they will produce an even better journal that will significantly advance the work of the Institute.

Our e-newsletter, *e-Scripts*, also made advances in 2020. For the first time, we produced four quarterly issues during the year, each with approximately eight-to-ten articles describing Institute activities and developments and matters of interest to our members. We also posted almost 40 articles on the Institute's website to keep our members apprised of activities and developments.

During 2020, traffic on AIHP's Twitter account grew significantly. Thanks largely to the volunteer efforts of our Social Media Coordinator, Naomi Rendina, PhD, our following over the past 18 months has grown from less than 100 to more than 1,200. Our Twitter account is becoming an increasingly important means by which we not only communicate with our members and followers but also advance discussion on topics related to the history of pharmacy and pharmaceuticals.

**3. Programming.** Historical Director Lucas Richert, PhD, with support from Institute staff, organized several successful programs at the Institute during 2020. In September,

AIHP and the UW-Madison School of Pharmacy sponsored the New Social History of Pharmacy and Pharmaceuticals Festival, a five-day online event. The Festival's 21 events drew a total of 1,150 participants from 29 different countries across six continents.

In May and June, AIHP and the UW-Madison School of Pharmacy sponsored the inaugural Edward Kremers Seminar in the History of Pharmacy & Drugs, a series of five online weekly lectures on topics related to the history of pharmacy and pharmaceuticals. Dubbed the "Kreminars," the series drew approximately 80 participants for each lecture. We expect to repeat this highly successful event in 2021.

An important part of the Institute's programming is our awards program. During 2020, the Institute awarded the AIHP Glenn Sonnedecker Prize to AIHP member Michael Flannery for his article, "Government as Apothecary: Civil War Pharmacy and the Common Good." We also awarded five Certificates of Commendation to recognize meritorious contributions to the history of pharmacy and pharmaceuticals. Special thanks to the AIHP members who served on our Awards Committee: Patricia Keinle, Henri Manasse, John Swan, and Arthur Daemmrich.

During 2020, the Institute also undertook a comprehensive review of its awards program. The review produced a series of recommendations, approved in June by the Institute's Board of Directors, that will change protocols for awarding the George Urdang Medal, the Edward Kremers Award, and the AIHP Glenn Sonnedecker Prize. We believe the changes, which take effect in 2021, will enhance the prestige of the awards and better advance the mission of the Institute. Special thanks to AIHP members Mary Schaeffer Conroy, Rima Apple, John Parascandola and Arthur Daemmrich who devoted many hours to this project.

AIHP awarded two \$2,000 PhD Dissertation Support Grants in 2020.

Finally, in 2020, the Institute initiated the AIHP COVID-19 Pandemic Pharmacy Historical Documentation Project. The project seeks to document and preserve pharmacy stories and experiences during the ongoing historic pandemic for the benefit of future historians and scholars.

**4. Historical Collections.** During 2020, Institute staff devoted significant time and attention to planning for the long-term modernization and expansion of AIHP's unique collection of historical documents and artifacts. An important part of the effort was the staff's development of a comprehensive Collection Management Policy that will govern the Institute's management of the collection. The Institute's Board of Directors approved the Policy at its meeting in June.

Another important element of our modernization plan is selecting and implementing a software system that will allow us to better manage our historical collection and will provide researchers with better access to the collection. We expect to finalize selection of our new software system before year-end.

In July, the UW-Madison School of Pharmacy and the Institute applied for a \$340,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities which, if funded, would provide funds to (among other things) develop a comprehensive online inventory of our collection.

In 2020, AIHP and the UW School of Pharmacy received a small but welcomed grant to expand our Pharmaceutical Trade Catalog Collection, a rare and unique collection of more than 400 historical pharmaceutical trade catalogs published between 1829 and the 2000s. We also entered into an agreement with the University of Wisconsin Digital Collections Center (UWDCC) to digitize parts of the Trade Catalog Collection and the AIHP *Drug Topics* Photograph Collection (a collection of approximately 17,000 pharmacy-related photographs). The project, to be implemented over the next several years, marks the Institute's first major step toward digitizing its historical collection.

During 2020, the Institute received several small donations of documents, artifacts, and archival/manuscript collections.

**5. Finance and Administration.** To help us deal with the financial repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Institute in April applied for and received a “forgivable” loan through the federal government’s Paycheck Protection Program. We recently received notice from the U.S. Small Business Administration that our loan had been forgiven.

During 2020, Institute staff took several steps to modernize our management of the Institute’s endowed funds. New accounting practices will allow us to better track each fund’s earnings and distributions. The Board of Directors has also approved a new distribution policy that will regulate our use of the funds’ earnings.

During the year, Institute staff, working with members Bill Zellmer and John Grabenstein, undertook a review of the organization’s bylaws. The proposed revisions will be discussed at the Annual Business Meeting.

For the first time, this year’s Board of Directors election was conducted electronically using an online voting system. (Paper ballots were mailed to members without email.) The online system worked smoothly and member participation in the election increased.

During 2020, Institute staff continued efforts to better utilize features of the membership management software system we acquired in 2019 to increase office productivity. We recently implemented a system to acknowledge new member enrollments, membership renewals, and gifts and donation through auto-generated email communications. We are currently working on enhancements to our website that will fully automate online membership signups and renewals with our membership and financial software systems. We hope these enhancements can be implemented before year-end.

**Conclusion.** It’s been a busy year! The progress we have made is a reflection, I believe, of the constructive working relationship and shared vision for the Institute that Historical Director Lucas Richert and I have developed over the past two years. Our progress also reflects the dedication, diligence and commitment of our wonderful staff – Assistant Director/Senior Editor/Chief Archivist Gregory Bond, PhD; Curator and Program Manager Beth Fisher; Fischelis Scholar Greg Higby, PhD; and Administrative Coordinator Kristen Huset. They are a terrific group and we are fortunate to have them. They join me in thanking you, the members of the Institute, for your continued support.

Dennis Birke  
Executive Director