

trouble in 1994. For some time, the former star of "Saturday Night Live" has had a problem with painkillers, which he says he first took for back injuries caused by pratfalls.

State narcotics officials spent almost a year compiling prescription records on Chase, whom they suspected of illegally obtaining the potent painkillers Percocet and Percodan from numerous doctors. His Pacific Palisades home was searched, as were several physicians' offices.

Agents believed the evidence showed that Chase had engaged in unlawful doctor-shopping and recommended that charges be filed by the Los Angeles County district attorney's office. But that's as far as it went; prosecutors considered the case unwinnable.

Explaining his decision not to file charges against Chase, Deputy Dist. Atty. John Lynch said not only was the doctor-shopping law vague, but it was unclear whether Chase had committed any fraud as defined by the statute.

Los Angeles attorney Zia F. Modabber, a spokesman for Chase, declined to comment because of pending litigation brought against the comedian by a former chauffeur. The driver contends that he has been unable to get work since he was caught by police in 1994 while allegedly ferrying painkillers into Canada for Chase. The judge has restricted public discussion of that case, which is nearing trial.

"I think it would be inappropriate to discuss the issues," Modabber said, "not because we have anything to hide, but out of respect for the justice system."

#### A SLAP ON THE WRIST

Disciplinary records from state pharmacy and medical boards also raise questions about the resolve of regulatory agencies to get tough with those who violate criminal and professional codes.

From 1990 to 1995, the state medical board disciplined about 120 physicians for drug-related matters, 44 of whom were convicted of drug crimes. The pharmacy board disciplined about 160 people. The dental board disciplined 20.

One in four pharmacists or pharmacy owners, one in four dentists, and one in nine physicians lost their licenses after charges were sustained. Some of the cases included minor offenses for which license revocations would seem inappropriate.

But even when physicians were found guilty of criminal offenses, including felonies, three out of four kept their licenses. One of them was Dr. Jovencio L. Ranases, formerly of Anaheim Hills.

In 1990, Ranases agreed to plead guilty to one felony count of illegally prescribing controlled substances. He was sentenced to one day in jail and three years probation. Four felony counts were dismissed.

Case records show that Ranases issued thousands of fraudulent prescriptions for Dilaudid through a bogus treatment program for back pain. Authorities estimated that the scheme netted a minimum of \$400,000 from January 1988 to April 1989.

Despite the scale of the operation, the state medical board decided in December 1993 to suspend Ranases' license for two months and place him on eight years professional probation.

Back in 1984, the board first warned Ranases about his prescribing practices and ordered him to take medical courses. Court records show that he never took the classes, and the state never checked to see if he did.

Such examples have prompted allegations over the years that the medical board, as well as other regulatory agencies, have done little to rid their professions of the worst offenders.

Medical and pharmacy board officials acknowledge that there have been some problems with professional discipline, but say that reforms have been made since the early 1990s when the criticisms were at their height.

Records show that more complaints are being investigated and more people disciplined because of streamlined procedures.

Laws now require the automatic suspensions of medical, dental and pharmacy licenses for someone convicted of a felony. In addition, investigators say, they are seeking more court orders to suspend medical licenses after a person is arrested.

"There have been some improvements," said John Lancara, chief of enforcement for the state medical board, who was hired in the early 1990s to help overhaul the disciplinary system. "Our goal is to vigorously enforce the Medical Practices Act."

Meanwhile, at the pharmacy board, backlogs of cases—some of which had lingered for 10 years—have been eliminated. More records are being computerized, and fines that went unpaid for years are being collected.

Board member Bauer argues, however, that there is plenty of room for improvement. She compares the public attitude toward prescription drug abuse to that surrounding drunk driving before a grass-roots movement resulted in stronger laws.

"No one really sees this as a crime," she said. "To me, what is this if not a crime? We need to change people's attitudes. There is a need to say, 'This is a problem.'"

#### TRIBUTE TO THE REMSENBERG COMMUNITY CHURCH

HON. MICHAEL P. FORBES

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, September 11, 1996*

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the Remsenberg Community Church, and to celebrate the 100th anniversary of this glorious house of worship, serving this pastoral south shore Long Island, NY, hamlet.

On September 15, 1896, the Remsenberg Community Church building was dedicated by the congregation. For the ensuing 100 years, the "Red Brick Church" has served the spiritual needs of its congregants, strengthening the entire community through countless acts of charity and fellowship.

Both the church and the hamlet owe their appellation to Dr. Charles Remsen, the man who generously provided the funds to build this community its own house of worship. To show Dr. Remsen their appreciation, his neighbors moved to rename this hamlet in the southeastern corner of Southampton Town. On July 27, 1895, this former section of Speonk was formally founded as Remsenberg.

Though settlers pre-date the Revolutionary War, the organized founding of the Presbyterian Church dates back to July 3, 1853. Before Dr. Remsen's beneficent gesture, congregants gathered in schools and homes to worship, while ministers from neighboring towns were hired to preach God's word. The first frame church was dedicated in 1854 on Elijah Phillips's land, and the charter members include some of Suffolk County's prominent founding families: Selah Raynor, Merinda Halsey, Mrs. Nancy Tuthill, and Sophia Rogers.

The cornerstone of the current church building was laid on April 18, 1896, by the pastor,

Rev. Minot Morgan, on land donated by John and Elizabeth Dayton. The Suffolk County News reported that a "handsome new brick church in Remsenberg, presented to the Presbyterian Society of that village by Dr. Charles Remsen, was dedicated on September 15."

Today, the community church has an active membership of 36, with another 30 friends who attend services regularly; the Sunday school instructs about 15 students. Operated by the board of trustees, the church benefits from the enthusiasm and hard work of its own Ladies Aid Society and the Chapelettes.

On Sunday, September 15, at 10 a.m., Remsenberg Community Church members will hold a special service of thanksgiving. Today, more than ever, our Nation relies on the spiritual sustenance and communal support that our churches and temples provide. That is why I ask my colleagues to join me in saluting the Remsenberg Community Church. This bastion of community faith and fellowship has strengthened the fibers that bind this community and have made Eastern Long Island a better place to live.

#### A TRIBUTE TO TRINITY SCHOOL AT RIVER RIDGE BLUE RIBBON SCHOOL AWARD WINNER

HON. JIM RAMSTAD

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, September 11, 1996*

Mr. RAMSTAD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to praise Trinity School at River Ridge, located in my district in Bloomington, MN, for being named winner of the U.S. Department of Education's prestigious Blue Ribbon Award.

The Department of Education could not have selected a more deserving school for this highly coveted honor. When it comes to a comprehensive and successful approach to excellence in teaching, student achievement, leadership, and parental involvement, Trinity School at River Ridge has, in just 10 short years since its opening, set a lofty standard.

Mr. Speaker, this high distinction was well earned. Everyone at Trinity played a role in achieving this extraordinary level of educational excellence. Trinity was the only private school in Minnesota to receive the Blue Ribbon designation, and 1 of only 50 private schools selected nationwide.

Under the visionary leadership of a most remarkable man, Headmaster William Wacker, Trinity School has flourished. Always there for each and every student, William Wacker provides at all hours of the day a willing ear, an understanding shoulder, and a marvelous source of advice and encouragement.

The board of trustees, under the leadership of Louis Grams and full of caring and committed individuals, has selflessly devoted the time, talent, and energy necessary to make Trinity School at River Ridge one of the best in all of America.

Trinity School at River Ridge's special mission and educational approach are perhaps best described in the words of John Buri, a psychology professor at a private college in our area and member of the school's board of trustees: "In a national educational system where acquisition of job skills is of primary importance, it is good to see recognition of an institution where truly human qualities are valued and where there is an effort to educate