



Dr. Lee Ann Barrett ('85) Receives Optometrist of the Year Award

February 11, 2006, Dr. Lee Ann Barrett was awarded the Heart of America Contact Lens Society's Optometrist of the Year during the awards luncheon at the annual congress. Dr. Barrett is a 1985 graduate of the UMSL College of Optometry, and in 1999, she received the UM-St. Louis Distinguished Alumnus award. She served on the UMSL College of Optometry Advisory Board from 1993-2000. She has been extremely involved in leadership roles for optometry on state, regional and national levels. In 2000, she was elected Missouri Optometric Association president, and she has served as chairperson on various MOA

committees from 1994 to the present. In 2002, she was awarded the OD of the Year for the MOA.

From 1999-2004, Dr. Barrett served on the North Central States Optometric Council, and she was president in 2003. She now serves this organization on the Midwest Vision Congress & Expo Steering Committee.

Dr. Barrett is also very involved in optometry on a national level, as a member of various AOA committees from 2002 to the present. Dr. Barrett is currently campaigning for a position on the American Optometric Association Board of Trustees with the elections in June 2006.

Dr. Barrett practices in Columbia, Missouri.

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Some Things Just Don't Make Sense

President's Message

Thomas W. Hobbs, O.D., President



Some things just do not seem to make sense...but when examined more thoroughly they just may be the right thing to do. To most practitioners it makes little sense to fit their patients with 30 day extended wear contacts. However, when you examine the issue carefully you will start to see evidence that might change your mind.

Studies have shown that you have fewer cases of microbial keratitis with 30 day extended wear, than you do with conventional hydrogel contacts in either daily wear or extended wear. In addition, there are studies that show patients who wear monthly lenses are more compliant with changing their lenses, as recommended, than those who wear two week lenses. I could go on with more evidence to support the idea of moving patients into 30 day extended wear but that is not the goal of this article so I will stop there.

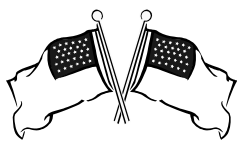
Giving to the MOA-PAC fund does not make sense to many. In fact it only seems to make sense to about 20% of our members. However, when you examine the reasons why we need to contribute it really seems to be the right thing to do. Whether you like it or not politics will be a part of our profession forever. In Jefferson City, where the even the smallest component of our profession is subject to change with a simple vote of the legislature, PAC's are extremely influential. PAC's are public information and you can be sure legislators, lobbyists, and any association who desires to know, is aware of what we have in our "war chest". Currently our PAC fund is rated the second from the bottom of the health related PACs (range \$1.1 million to \$31,000). Not impressive for an association that considers itself to be among the most active and influential in Jefferson City.

It is true that grass roots efforts are the most effective way to communicate with legislators. Early campaign contributions and local efforts to elect a legislator will always trump a massive PAC fund. However, today more than ever, it takes both a presence on a local level as well as a solid PAC fund to support candidates that support our position. The MOA has a very solid relationship with many of our legislators at the local level. However, we now need to make our PAC fund solid.

What needs to happen is for our membership to start contributing to the MOA-PAC on a regular basis. I am not talking major bucks per member but rather a substantial increase in the number who contribute at a small level. I am asking that each MOA member start giving just \$45 a month. For most of us that is about **1/2 of one** exam. A pittance when we consider it will help us keep our current scope of practice in tact as well as help us expand it in the future. If we can get just half of our membership to help in this small way it would generate \$135,000.00 per year!

A simple way to do this is to have that small amount charged to your credit card each month. After filling out the enrollment form (found in this magazine) and sending it to the Jefferson City office, you have nothing more to do. However, each month you will help ensure the strength of our profession so that we can continue to serve our patients in the manner they deserve. Please sign up today and reach out to encourage two of your colleges to contribute as well.

Of course we still need to grow and nurture those personal relations with our legislators no matter what the size of our PAC fund...so I'll see you at the capital.



Heart of America Update



Dr. Larry Davis, Dean UM-St. Louis College of Optometry, was elected to the Heart of America Contact Lens Society's Board of Directors. Dr. Davis will serve as Director of Arrangements.



Dr. Scott Tomasino, O'Fallon, MO, was elected to a second 2 year term as Director of Accreditations to the Heart of America Contact Lens Society at the Annual Awards Luncheon, February 11, 2006, in Kansas City, MO.

President Signs Legislation to Restore Medicare Payments

On February 8, President Bush signed into law the Deficit Reduction Act (S.1932). The new law overturns the 4.4 percent cut in Medicare physician payments that took effect January 1. The legislation that finally cleared Congress earlier this month eliminated the cut imposed by the flawed sustainable growth rate (SGR) formula and replaced it with a payment freeze. With the law now in place, Medicare physician claims will be paid at the 2005 level. A high-ranking CMS official informed us that the agency has already changed its claims processing software to eliminate the 4.4 percent reduction and allow services to be paid at the higher level.

The law has an effective date of January 1, 2006, so all claims submitted between January 1 and February 8 will be reprocessed and adjusted to the 2005 rate. CMS intends to reprocess these claims automatically and provide physicians with one bulk check to cover any adjusted claims. Optometrists will not be required to resubmit these claims. CMS reports that its contractors process approximately 20 million claims a week, so an estimated 100 million claims will be affected. Given the large number of claims that will require reprocessing, CMS reports that it may take a few months for optometrists to receive their reprocessed payment checks. CMS has said that the reprocessed payment checks will be linked to original claims information so patient accounts can be properly reconciled.

While elimination of the deep cut for 2006 is certainly good news for optometrists and other Medicare physicians, the flawed SGR formula is churning out more proposed cuts for 2007 and beyond. Early indications from CMS on future SGR calculations point toward a proposed cut of nearly 6 percent for payments beginning January 1, 2007.

The AOA has been a leading member in a coalition of physician organizations that has worked to stop past payment cuts. The SGR has been proposing cuts since 2001, so the AOA has been working on this issue for a number of years. Congress is facing severe budgetary constraints this year, so it is unlikely that the SGR will be scrapped in favor of a fairer method for calculating annual physician fee updates. Although a complete overhaul is needed desperately, it appears that the Medicare physician community will be forced to press for another stop-gap fix to prevent the proposed cuts from being implemented next year.

Special Olympics--Looking for Some Good Volunteers

The mission of the Special Olympics – Lions Club International Opening Eyes (SOLCIOE) is to improve the quality of life for the millions of individuals diagnosed with intellectual disabilities by optimizing their vision, eye health and visual skills through quality eye care. The SOLCIOE vision screening will be held on the first weekend in December in Joplin. The event is the state bowling tournament which will draw almost twice the number of athletes than the golf and basketball events. In anticipation of an increased number of athletes participating in the vision screening, we will work over a two day period. Tentatively we have scheduled the screening for Saturday and Sunday, December 2nd and 3rd. We will be at the Holiday Inn in Joplin.

We welcome optometrists, ophthalmologists, opticians, paraoptometric and anyone else interested in volunteering. Those of you that have participated in the last two screenings know that you will work hard, but it is the most rewarding work ever.

A generous grant from the Lions Club International Foundation will enable us to provide overnight accommodations for volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Dr. Lee Ann Barrett at lbarrettod@sbcglobal.net

Special Olympics Healthy Athletes Provider Directory

The Healthy Athletes Provider Directory is an online database of health care professionals who are able and willing to treat patients with intellectual disabilities. Health care providers can create and maintain a listing in the Provider Directory, which is currently open to health care providers in the United States, Mexico, Canada and the Caribbean.

Once the directory is populated with health care providers, the public will be able to search the directory to find a provider in their area who welcomes patients with intellectual disabilities.

Currently optometry is lagging behind some of the other professions listed on the directory which includes podiatry, physical therapy, dentistry and audiology. Please go to www.specialolympics.org/providerdirectory and sign up now.

Practice for Sale

Practice and building in Mid-Missouri town. Present owner established for thirty years. About 30% of building rented to a beauty salon. Private parking. Realistically priced. Will be flexible and make every attempt to make a smooth transition. For more detailed information please call (660)882-7634 or (660)537-0252.

Primary Care practice with branch office in Eastern MO Ozarks; TPA skills a must; full scope care. Be the only Eye Doctor in town. Over 35 years established. Appraised at \$300,000, will consider best offer. Call for more details. David Albert, O.D. (573) 438-3415

Doctors Pay Less for Licensure

The State Board of Optometry has published a rule to reduce the biennial renewal fee of O.D. Licenses from \$220 to \$150. The rule will automatically take effect after the comment period, unless there are comments opposing the matter. The State Board has also promulgated a rule that adds another continuing education provider, the National Optometric Association, as a group that can provide continuing education credit for licenses (COPE approved programs).

What's New in Paraoptometric Certification?

The American Optometric Association's Paraoptometric Certification Program, under the direction of the Commission on Paraoptometric Certification (CPC), celebrated its fifth anniversary this past June. When the certification program, nationally recognized and endorsed by the American Optometric Association, began in June 2000, there were just over 1,250 registered paraoptometric nationally. As of September 2005, more than 8,700 paraoptometric have satisfied the requirements to sit for an AOA Certified Paraoptometric Examination. However, there are still questions about what certification is, why certification should be considered, and what value of certification is to the optometrist, the paraoptometric, and patients.

Lynn Lawrence, CPOT has been a member of the CPC and has graciously shared this historical report on paraoptometric certification.

Why consider AOA certification?

Because of changes and growth in both population and the economics of health care, health service occupations are expected to grow.

Market trends supporting the growth predictions that have been identified include an increasing aging population, technological advances in medicine, increased use of support personnel who are cost effective providers of health care, and the heightened awareness of the population's values toward health care. Because of these trends, there are many opportunities for *qualified* individuals to provide a valuable service for this increasing population.

In fact, the Department of Labor indicates that "almost 2.3 million of the more that 20.9 million jobs added to the Nation's work force between 1986 and 1996 were in health occupations." And, according to the Department of Labor, over 2.1 million jobs in health occupation fields will be added between 1996 and 2006. Given these numbers, it only makes sense to take advantage of the education available through the AOA Paraoptometric Section.

Furthermore, to maintain certification, the paraoptometric is required to fulfill continuing education hours so that knowledge and skills will be upgraded on an ongoing basis. In addition, with the recognized status of this certification and the commensurate economic and personal satisfaction that staff could benefit from by this formal training, it seems that this is a positive and constructive way to avoid costly staff turnover. This program therefore, offers an experience to staff that also is beneficial to the continuity of a practice.

What is the value of paraoptometric certification to the optometrist, the paraoptometric, and the patients?

There are three levels of certification. The specific level of certification attained will help the optometrist know what level of formal knowledge a paraoptometric has achieved. Moreover, the "traditional training" that is a part of the hiring process can be enhanced by enrolling staff members in education toward certification.

By achieving certification at each of the three established levels, the paraoptometric shows a level of knowledge that should be of value when assisting the optometrist with patient care. Because this learning is ongoing it is a benefit that the optometrist and patients should appreciate, making patient care more seamless and efficient.

Society Reports

Central Optometric Society **Debbie Hettler-Arbeitman, O.D.**

The University of Missouri-Columbia and Allergan invited Central Optometric Society (COS) to Grand Cru for dinner January 24, 2006. Dean Hainsworth, MD spoke about diabetic macular edema, current and investigational treatment options, and a new clinical trial available to patients there. February 28, 2006 COS met at the Pasta House to visit with MOA president Tom Hobbs, O.D. and the new MOA Executive Director Cory T. Ridenhour, CAE.

Greater Ozark Optometric Society **Michael C. Frier, O.D., Trustee**

The GOOS society hosted the presidential visit on Feb 21, 2006 at Clary's restaurant. President Tom Hobbs, O.D. and Executive Director Cory Ridenhour, CAE gave an update on the legislative efforts. We selected Brad and Mitzi Lewis to attend Governor Matt Blunt's luncheon on Feb 25th. They represented Optometry well and were able to discuss Any Willing Provider and children's vision legislation. Our next meeting will be March 14th and our own Tom Byers will give a slide show on his experiences in Iraq. GOOS now has 7 doctors in the credit card enrollment for MoPAC we hope to increase to 10 by mid year.

Northeast Optometric Society **Duane Thompson, O.D.**

The Northeast Society met March 8, 2006 in Bevier MO at the Pear Tree restaurant. We were pleased to have MOA President Tom Hobbs, O.D. and Executive Director Cory Ridenhour, CAE present to share with our group about current and upcoming MOA activities. We extend our thanks to them for their travel on behalf of the MOA. Members and their spouses were in attendance for the occasion. The NEOS will next meet in April with OPTOS as our scheduled presenter.

Saint Louis Optometric Society **Jeffrey L. Weaver, OD; Thomas J. Cullinane, OD**

The St Louis Optometric Society met on February 21, 2006. Gregg Russell, O.D., spoke about meeting sponsor Alcon's new Opti-Free RepleniS, the multipurpose contact lens solution designed specifically for silicone hydrogel lenses. John Crane, O.D., Linda Marks, O.D., and Ed Jarka, O.D., PhD, all of the UMSL College of Optometry, then presented Grand Rounds. Dr. Crane presented the use of the Optical Coherence Tomography (OCT) technology to detect subtle retinal, vitreoretinal and optic nerve disorders. Dr. Marks discussed the implications of M and P cell pathways in learning related vision problems. Dr. Jarka spoke about the ocular symptoms of Avian Flu virus, as well as treatment options.

The annual joint meeting with the SouthWest Illinois Optometric Society (SWIOS) in Collinsville, IL on March 14 was again a success. The New Technology Symposium featured five rapid-fire presentations: Eric Polk, OD, from TLC, discussed the use of Intralase compared to a microkeratome in LASIK; Ms. Lisa Salmon from Vista Ophthalmics for Oasis Medical spoke about dry eye, including the use of punctal plugs; Carl Bassi, PhD, of UMSL and sponsored by ZeaVision, presented on the importance of the density of zeaxanthin and lutein in the macula; Mr. John Hawley of Heidelberg Engineering discussed the advancements of the HRT III tomograph; and Mr. Michael Touch of Touch Scientific presented discussed the Touch Microassay which measures proteins in the tear film, to help diagnose the etiology of conjunctivitis.

The April 11 meeting of SLOS will be sponsored by Bausch & Lomb, back at the usual meeting site of the Sheraton Clayton Plaza Hotel. SLOS members are looking forward to welcoming their MOA colleagues at the MOA co-sponsored AOA Aviation Vision Course at the Hyatt Regency St. Louis at Union Station on April 23.

Calendar of Upcoming Events

2006

May 1-3: AOA Congressional Congress
JW Marriott, Pennsylvania Ave. , Washington, DC

May 11-13: Midwest Vision
Chicago, IL

May 19-21 : MOA Leadership Retreat
Country Club Hotel & Spa
Lake Ozark, MO

June 21-25: AOA Congress
Las Vegas, NV

August 26-27: MOA Pre-Convention Board Meeting
Chase Park Plaza, St. Louis, MO

October 5-8: MOA Annual Convention
Lodge of the Four Seasons, Lake Ozark, MO

2007

January 7-8: MOA Legislative Conference
Jefferson City, MO

February 15-17: Heart of America

April 23-25: AOA Congressional Congress
JW Marriott, Pennsylvania Ave., Washington, DC

June 27-July 1: AOA Congress
Boston, Massachusetts

October 3-7: MOA Annual Convention
Ritz Carlton Hotel, St. Louis

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January 27-28: MOA Legislative Conference
Jefferson City, MO

February 14-16: Heart of America

June 25-29: AOA Congress
Seattle, Washington

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MOA Vision

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