

| President's Message

As many of you know by now the Minister of Health and Long Term Care, The Honorable David Caplan, sent a letter to the College of Opticians of Ontario asking them to stop taking registrations for Refracting Opticians starting July 16th 2009. In the letter the Minister says those who are already registered can continue to refract under the standards passed by the COO. No new registrations can be processed.



The positive we can take from this is the Minister doesn't see any risk of harm to the public in opticians refracting. If he did he wouldn't allow those who are already refracting to continue. Now we are told that the Eyecare issue will be covered in the next HPRAC report due to be released sometime between the fall 2009 and spring 2010. You can be assured your association will be working hard to ensure that Ontario opticians have a voice and are heard by both HPRAC and the Ministry of Health.

Don't get the impression this will be an easy task. It is not. We'll be faced by opposition from other eyecare professions who see opticians refracting as infringing on their turf as well as from other organizations within our profession who have their personal self serving agenda and who see opticians refracting as money out of their coffers. The OOA is committed to advancing our profession and we continue to ask Ontario opticians to improve their skills in their profession by educating themselves. Without education there is no moving forward and if we are not moving forward we are moving backwards. Nobody wants to move backwards.

The other issue that has been on the minds of Ontario opticians is the unauthorized practice issue and connected with that is the Great Glasses case. In June 2009 the country's highest court, the Supreme Court of Canada, dismissed both applications by Bruce Bergez to appeal a contempt ruling and more than \$46 million in fines that have been accumulating since November 2006. The door has slammed shut on Great Glasses yet they continue to operate. As an association we have been in contact with the Attorney General's office to get an explanation as to when and how the money will be collected. Also of great concern is the fact that the Great

Glasses dispensaries remain open and unlicensed. The Attorney General's department has made it clear this is a responsibility of the College of Opticians of Ontario and not of the AG's department. Your association will be in communication with the College regarding their actions in this direction. Further details on this matter appear elsewhere in this newsletter as reported by OOA Director Rachel Hill-Campbell.

In the last few years we have heard from opticians who are looking for more contact lens education and since we are an association for all opticians in the province we take all requests into consideration. **Sunday October 25th 2009** we will be holding our Contact lens Symposium at the Ajax Convention Center. Six contact lens presentations will be offered to those who feel contact lens education is vital to their profession as well as those who just need extra contact lens credits. Mark your calendar and register early as seating is very limited and this will be sold out in no time.

I am at this time announcing, with some regret that this will be my last President's Message. As you may know, I am very passionate about Opticians and have devoted considerable time to association business during my term of office. But I have found that the time spent, while rewarding has taken me away from my business and family too much. I will continue to support the OOA and its work and to be available when I can to assist in association projects.

The OOA would like to thank Ali for his outstanding contribution and dedication as President of the OOA President from April 2007 until September 2009. The OOA Board has appreciated the leadership and vision he has shared. Lorne Kashin, OOA Past President will be Interim President until the next OOA Annual General Meeting.

| Message from Lorne Kashin:

Ali Badreddine has been an enormous asset for the Ontario Opticians Association and Ontario Opticians. I am hopeful that Ali will continue to share his insights as a respected advisor during my tenure as Interim President.
Lorne Kashin, R.O.

| Letter to the Editor

I wish to go on record to hereby state my condemnation of the kind of unethical, unauthorized and illegal practice with which the operation known as "Great Glasses" has become associated.

The cornerstone of a just society must be a fundamental respect for, and compliance with, the laws of that society. It is remarkable that at every opportunity Mr. Bruce Bergez, the proprietor of Great Glasses, seems to have displayed his complete scorn of the laws of Ontario's legal system by utterly ignoring all judgements against him. In addition to not heeding the directions and requirements of the Courts, and months after losing his "final" appeal, Great Glasses continues to do business seemingly uninterrupted by the enforcement arm of our legal system.

I had expected that by now Mr. Bergez would have been required to cease and desist doing business in this contemptuous manner; and to pay in full his assessed fines. Barring alternate arrangements made in advance with the Court, after all appeals are exhausted and a judgment stands, I understood that fines are to be paid immediately, else jail time is assessed.

Furthermore, I expected the chain of Great Glasses to be completely dismantled since it has been built upon illegal proceeds. The demands of a just society cannot allow any person - or business organization - to realize profit from illegal activities.

As a law abiding professional and citizen of our society, I wonder how many other laws and institutions within our land have so few teeth when flouted in this way.

Geoffrey S. Briedé, RO
Director At Large, OOA
Bancroft, Ontario,
Canada.

| Great Glasses Loses But – What Now?

We all celebrated in June when the ruling came down that Great Glasses was denied their last appeal. But the question still remains – "what now?"

Here's where the situation lies. The Attorney General's office will collect the outstanding fine which continues to grow. The Ontario Opticians Association (OOA) has written the AG's office and has been told that while it is the AG's responsibility to collect the fines they have no authority to close the Great Glasses stores. That is up to the College of Opticians of Ontario. The AG's office also advises us

as follows, "...the timing for the actual collection of the fines will depend on whether there are funds or assets that can be readily seized or if additional steps are required to identify and realize on the fines." The OOA will be calling the AG's office for monthly updates. Watch our website and Facebook page for future information.

It is our understanding the standard searches for assets have been conducted. Assuming that is the case, the AG's office will send a notice of examination (to discover the debtor's assets and income) and book a judgment debtor examination. This examination is conducted by a judge and the debtor is under oath.

So that is where it stands. The OOA will update you with the changes. If you are a facebook member, sign in to the OOA facebook site for updates.

In the meantime we are still losing sales to Great Glasses. The reason is that patients still have a lack of knowledge about the illegality and the risk to vision health that exists.

As Opticians it is still our job to educate the patient to changes in our industry, like new technology of lenses or new fashion styles of frames. But also we need to inform them of such political issues & health issues to protect them.

We all have business connections and we all advertise in some way. If you present your argument properly, newspapers will print stories, radio stations will do interviews. News/talk radio stations have "call in for comments" programs and need new topics to discuss. Approach them and sit in on an interview. Not only are you getting the message across but you market your own business at the same time. Not everybody knows how to do media interviews but if this strategy appeals to you contact the OOA office and we can give you assistance in making sure your message is clear and unequivocal.

Some dispensaries have created information booklets in their offices or in their Optometrist offices next door. Others have created a wall with articles about the Great Glasses issue. Why would you have a customer read a magazine when they could be sitting there reading office information?

The OOA is also working on a poster for offices to create awareness that a professional works in the office. This will be presented shortly.

As Opticians we can't just sit and wait for someone else to make things happen. It is important for us to do our part individually. Please feel free to post more ideas about what you do in your office on our facebook site.

Rachel Hill-Campbell R.O.
Director-at-large
Ontario Opticians Association.

Government Relations Report | Howard Brown

Government Relations is a very important part of the activities of any health care group. Whether or not the profession has a current issue at stake is not important. What is essential is that the government becomes familiar with and feels confident in the profession. Then when there is an issue at stake the profession is heard.

How do we make opticians voices stronger? Get involved. With OOA's help, you can meet with your MPP. You can organize meetings with other local opticians to discuss ways to build on our relations with MPPs and other officials in the Ontario government. MPPs want to hear from their constituents. Your voice and your vote means more to them than any lobbying that the OOA can do on your behalf. Coordination of message is important. A shared strategy is essential. The following Ontario Opticians with support from the OOA have given of their time to make visitations to politicians.

- Three Oakville Opticians, Jennie Khalfan, Erin Walters and Taras Brongel, accompanied by Howard Brown met with Kevin Flynn MPP (Oakville), Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of the Environment.
- We're working on scheduling a meeting with Laurel Broten MPP (Etobicoke-Lakeshore). Optician Christine Beesley has offered to attend. Optician Cathy Beaulieu may also be available.

This is the kind of grassroots support our government relations program needs.

Note: Where there are fund raising events, every donor receives a tax credit of up to 75 per cent on the first \$400 contributed federally and provincially.

If you're interested in participating in the OOA's government relations program contact Karin Sheppard at the OOA office. She can provide you with the contact information for your local MPP and will assist you in developing material for a visit. Karin can also organize one of the OOA Board members to accompany you on this type of visit should you need some moral support.

Another way you can help your profession increase its profile with government is to participate in election campaigns. It doesn't matter what party you elect to support. Just roll up your sleeves and get involved. It sounds like the Feds are getting ready for a November election.

Internet Sales | Karin Sheppard

I talk to lots of Ontario Opticians in the course of a week and I know that one of the things on your mind is the problems you face due to the Internet Sale of Eyeglasses and Contact lenses. As if you didn't have enough to deal with now you have to face competition from a robot at the other end of an electronic communication system. You and I spend a lot of time venting with one another about our frustrations.

Why does this bother us so much? Cranky customers are one reason. Lost sales another – resentment that you have done all the fundamental work and now someone else is going to benefit financially from your work.

I thought it might be timely to take an objective look at this problem. The first thing I did was ask the question, "How many people actually purchase optical products on the Internet and why do they choose that over dealing with an Optician?" Before you read further, what do you think is the percentage of your potential customers who will decide to buy on the Internet? 2%? 5%? Less than 1%?

I recall reading a statistic from a national poll of consumers commissioned by the Opticians Association of Canada that indicated of those polled, 46% would purchase from an eye doctors office, 40% would purchase from an independent eyewear shop, 11% would prefer to purchase from a chain store and only 1% chose the Internet. But that's only a snapshot in time. As more and more people are exposed to the opportunity it is quite possible that that 1% will grow to 5%.

We have to draw a line in the sand right now. We have to figure out strategies for dispensing businesses that will minimize the impact of the Internet, keep our good customers from jumping ship and pull those deserters back to us.

Why would someone want to buy their glasses or contact lenses on the Internet? In that same OAC survey 68% said it was better prices and 41% said it was more convenient. 1% thought they got a better selection. The significant reasons are price and convenience. But this is perception – not necessarily reality. It tells us what people think the advantages are. It's our job to change their misperception.

I've had Opticians ask me why the Ontario Opticians Association or the College of Opticians of Ontario can't do something about Internet selling. It doesn't appear as if there's much chance of the courts or government supporting our case. As an example, on the issue of the sale of cosmetic contact lenses by unregulated persons such as jewelry stores and dollar stores three separate provincial governments including British Columbia have pretty much told Opticians that if people are silly enough to buy these things and use them with lack of caution...that's their sorry tale but it is not the business of the government to save them from their own foolishness.

The weight of legislation and regulation seems to be in the direction of more access to personal information by the consumer. It's my understanding that in some provinces some of the government agencies that pay for eyeglasses are proposing policies that would encourage the purchase of eyeglasses online. When Opticians groups try to discourage these policies it is clear that the overall impression of these agencies is that the price is so much lower and they know relatives who have purchase eyeglasses on line and quite like them...a lot.

Before we all have a cat fit, if you had a government official in front of you right now and that person asked you why they shouldn't recommend purchasing on the Internet – how would you answer?

What do you tell customers who ask you to measure a seg height or a PD or asks you to give him/her the specifications for the contact lenses you've already fit for them?

If we go back to the reasons consumers have said they would be tempted to purchase on the internet – price and convenience – is there anything Opticians can do to address these issues?

The Ontario Opticians Association invites you to be part of the solution. We want to create an ad hoc committee devoted to developing strategies that can be used by all Ontario Opticians for developing a business model that minimizes the impact of the Internet. If you are concerned about this consumer trend, even if you don't currently have any answers...you need to get involved in the OOA's Internet Committee.

Next time you have a customer come and ask you for his or her PD and you need a place to

vent...I'm here for you but...don't be surprised if I invite you to join this very important committee. I won't be surprised if you say, "Yes!"

On Continuing Education | G.S. Briedé, RO

When I was at Georgian College, taking the Ophthalmic Dispensing Course in the late 70's, one student in particular complained about all the anatomy and pathology information we were expected to learn. His argument was that since we were not doctors, and not medical practitioners were taking referrals from opticians, "what possible use is all this learning going to be to us?"

***"There's no such thing as wasted education."* - Anon**

I believe the notion of wasted education is an absurd idea. I see education, or learning, as an investment in oneself. My own experience is a good example. It was until years after graduating from Georgian, while working with an MD who had developed a considerable expertise in ophthalmology that I realize the benefit of poring over all those ocular pathology slides at Georgian. Using a combination of good slit lamp techniques and the knowledge gained from studying those slides enabled me to identify a subtle corneal condition present in a friend's eye. It had been missed by others. My friend was referred, the condition was reversible and within 14 months his problem was solved. To my way of thinking the education I received at Georgian was priceless. My friend would have told you I was priceless. Others might label me a 'priceless ass'.

***"Your Education is worth what you are worth."* - Anon.**

In other words, only you can make something of your education. If you apply your education, your education will be worth something. A broad and continuing education makes you able to better problem-solve for your clients. Opticians are well-practiced at finding solutions for patients' visual difficulties based only upon the current Rx, previous Rx and the presenting complaints. But, ***"If the only tool you have is a hammer, you tend to see every problem as a nail."* - Abraham Maslow, American psychologist.**

If your knowledge is limited to your scope of practice you will try to solve your client's problems with limited options instead of considering solutions that may even have to be offered by another provider.

I've heard a lot of my colleagues say they don't want to perform refractions anyway, so why

bother to learn? Why take refracting training when you can't put that knowledge and skill into practice upon graduating? Having spent about 10 years being our practice's problem-solving refractionist and having been delegated all of the cycloplegic and/or dilated refractions I can tell you the ability to solve storefront optical problems takes a quantum leap forward once an understanding of clinical ocular refraction is acquired.

Education costs money, but then so does ignorance. – [Baron] Claus A. Moser, KCB, CBE

You will never treat eye disease, but doesn't it make you a better Optician to understand eye disease and how it's treated? You may choose not to fit contact lenses, but doesn't it elevate your stature in the eyes of your patients if you can educate them about contact lenses and even identify situations when they would be better served by contact lenses? When you limit your understanding of the entire range of vision care services you miss out on opportunities for a more collaborative approach to caring for patients.

When the Ontario optician's scope of practice is increased to include refraction (as I believe it one day *must* be) no optician will be forced to do a refraction, any more than they are forced to fit contact lenses at the moment. But I firmly believe that understanding the clinical ocular refraction process, however uninterested an optician might be in actually performing one in clinic, makes an optician a better optician.

“Why should I bother to join the Association? You all seem to be fixating on this refraction issue and I don't want to refract, so I'm not joining.” An Ontario Optician.

Your Association believes that the future vitality of the profession of opticianry depends upon an increase in the optician's scope of practice to include stand-alone refraction. We are constantly seeking new and innovative ways to make this inclusion a reality in Ontario. Before this can happen though, opticians need to upgrade their skills to include the ability to refract. Like the OD's with TPAs, it wasn't until a majority of members were upgraded in their education that it was even considered by the legislative body governing Healthcare in Ontario. Their members spent their own money and time upgrading their skills; so must each and every optician.

“Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever.” – Gandhi, pre-eminent

political and spiritual leader of India during the Indian independence movement.

| Continuing Education Announcements

It's not always convenient for Opticians to attend live continuing education events. Sometimes this is due to challenges of geography, other times balancing family and career makes it impossible. The OOA is trying to develop educational opportunities for Ontario Opticians that will make it possible for them to participate in interactive learning outreach. Some of these learning formats will allow you to fulfill the new Portfolio requirement of the College of Opticians of Ontario.

Webinars

You can join a webinar from your home computer either by yourself or with a friend. To join in a webinar you don't need to have a webcam yourself but it is useful if you have a high speed Internet connection. A webinar connects you visually to a presenter's slides through your computer and audibly to the presenter through a toll free phone connection.

Study Groups

A study group consists of three or more people who wish to research a specific topic and develop a summary of information collected. This format opens up the possibility of picking themes that interest you rather than depending on what someone else thinks is valuable. The OOA will help you by posting theme ideas and resource tips on the website, in our newsletter and on our Facebook page, by helping you connect with others who have a similar interest and by assisting you in creating a structure for your study that can be presented for accreditation by the Quality Assurance Committee of the College of Opticians of Ontario.

We want to get the ball rolling so we're asking you at this time to help us out with a survey. This will be done via the Internet so if we have your e-mail address you can expect to receive an invitation to participate in the survey some time during the month of September. If you haven't given us your e-mail address and you would like to receive a survey invitation, contact Karin and the OOA office and she'll add you to the list.

Announcements

Members Professional Liability Insurance Renewal

Professional Liability Insurance renewal season is just around the corner. You should receive your renewal application and membership invoice in October. Both must be mailed or fax with your payment into the OOA office. Your insurance policy expires Dec. 31/2009.

Please be sure to renew by Dec. 18, 2009 before the Holidays so we can get your application processed by the deadline.

OOA Special Call to Meeting

The OOA Board has called a special meeting at lunch time on the day of the Contact Lens Symposium on Sunday October 25 at the Ajax Convention Centre. At this time the OOA will review 2008 Year End Financial Report, give an activities up-date and take questions from the floor. All members are welcome. If interested in attending this meeting but are not attending the Contact Lens Symposium please contact the OOA office to RSVP your attendance. 905-709-4141 or 877-709-4141.

Ride for Sight Up-date

The "Ride for Sight" took place on Saturday June 20, 2009. The riders traveled from Downsview Toronto to Collingwood, Ontario. Despite the weather the "Ride for Sight" actually surpassed last year's number for fundraising. In total Central Ontario raised \$309,477. 100 % of the all the donations go directly to the Foundation Fighting Blindness to help fund vital vision research. The OOA's team, "The Rolling RO's" ranked 13th in fund raising efforts with \$1,824.70. Thank you to everyone who support this cause. Well done Tim Schmidt and Eli Ovadia. If you are interested in joining next year's team please contact the OOA office. Here's to next year's ride with clear sunny skies.

Getting Your Professional Licence in Ontario:

The Experiences of International and Canadian Applicants

Are you interested in sharing your story about getting licensed? The Office of the Fairness Commissioner wants to hear from you. The office has commissioned a research firm to gather first-hand information—from the applicant's point of view—about registration and licensing in Ontario's regulated professions. This study includes focus groups and an online survey. You can help: Please complete the confidential survey at www.fairnesscommissioner.ca/survey.

You may complete the survey whether you were educated in Ontario, in another province or territory, or in another country. The study will provide solid research about a topic where existing information is often anecdotal," says Hon. Jean Augustine, PC, Fairness Commissioner.

Information About College of Opticians of Ontario District Elections

Two COO Districts are up for election in 2009:

District 2 (Eastern Ontario)
District 3 (Northern Ontario)

- Deadline for nominations: Sept 21, 2009.
- Ballot packages sent to eligible voters: October 2009
- Election Day: deadline for ballots to be received: Nov.25, 2009 (before 4:30 pm)

If you are interested in running in the upcoming election of members to Council you must meet the eligibility requirements as detailed in the COO bylaw and follow the nomination instructions to ensure the acceptance of your nomination. By participating in the election, either as a candidate or through voting, you are influencing the future of opticianry practice and regulation. By standing for election, members have the opportunity to directly foster the continued growth of the profession by bringing their knowledge, skills and ability to Council.

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Ontario Opticians Association

“The Official Voice of Ontario Opticians”

Contact Lens Symposium

Sunday, October 25, 2009
Ajax Convention Centre

550 Beck Crescent, Ajax, Ontario
Salem Rd. South Exit ,Just north of Hwy 401

*Includes :Morning Coffee Break, Buffet Lunch, Afternoon Coffee Break
Six Accredited Lectures
One OOA 2008 Financial Report & Update
One Take-Home Accredited Essay*

*8:00 am Registration, Kit Pick Up & Breakfast
8:30 am Lecture One
9:15 am Lecture Two
10:00 am Coffee Break
10:15 am Lecture Three
11:00 am Presentation One
12:00 pm Buffet Lunch
12:15 pm Working Lunch OOA Presentation
1:00 pm Lecture Four
1:45 pm Coffee Break
2:00 pm Lecture Five
3:00 pm Accredited Essay Hand-out*

Speakers & Topics TBA
Please see www.ontario-opticians.com
For Final Agenda

Early Bird Special - \$69.00 (plus GST)

After Sept. 25, 2009 - \$79.00(plus GST)

Please print clearly. Incomplete forms will be returned. A confirmation will be sent via fax or email

Fax your registration to 416-226-6879 or mail with payment to:
**Ontario Opticians Association, P.O. Box #23518 , Dexter P.O., 5899 Leslie Street,
Willowdale, Ontario M2H 3R9**

Name: _____ Lic. No. _____

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