

Eye to Eye

Summer 1997

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Living With Glaucoma

Edited by Annette Golia

About 30 years ago, I lost the sight in my left eye after I underwent an operation to treat glaucoma. I was still able to see well with my right eye, so I was not hindered by my vision loss. I continued to run a small catering business and, I am proud to say, I put my two children through college. A few years into my retirement, however, I had more trouble with glaucoma, and a cataract had developed in my right eye. After surgery, I was left legally blind.

I had always been a very busy and independent person, and I wanted to remain active and be responsible for myself. I asked my doctor if I could get glasses that would enable me to read, watch television and do some everyday tasks. My doctor did not have any information about vision aids for legally blind people.

Encouraged by my daughter who insisted that there must be glasses that could help me, I pursued my quest. After much searching, I contacted a government agency in my state (Connecticut) and found out that I was entitled to certain services because of my vision loss. Once my eye doctor forwarded my medical report to this agency, staff members visited my home and referred me to a low vision specialist. He provided me with glasses for distance, magnifying glasses, and a "talking" watch. I was then sent to a nonprofit organization which provided me with additional vision aids and lent me a typewriter that typed large letters.

Through my experience, I was dismayed to find out that many legally blind people miss out on activities because they do not know that there is help for them. I also discovered that, under my state's laws, eye doctors are required to report legally blind people to the appropriate government agencies so that they can receive services from low vision centers and low vision specialists throughout the state. All the doctor has to do is provide a patient's recent vision report. They are then eligible to receive vision aids and other assistance that can enable them to be active and independent. Unfortunately for many people, these laws are seldom publicized or enforced.

I decided that I would take on the task of informing people that help is available. I started to get the word out immediately. First, I arranged for a low vision specialist to attend a meeting at my Senior Center, and I discussed services that are available for vision-impaired people. One day, I received a letter from a state agency that was undertaking a new endeavor to help the blind. They asked me to collect and save labels from certain grocery store products. These labels could be used to buy adaptive equipment for the blind so that they could go to school, make a living or just do everyday tasks.

I placed an article in a local publication, and I received many labels for this worthwhile cause. The next job I took on was collecting discarded eyeglasses that could be recycled for people who needed them. My Senior Center graciously allowed me to place a box on its premises for the collection of both the labels and the eyeglasses.

Then, one day, I read about a nationwide contest called "Make a Difference Day." The winners would receive \$2,000 for their favorite charity. I entered, hoping to win so that I could contribute a large magnifying glass to the Senior Center. I set up a table in a local grocery store where I collected labels and told people about help for low vision sufferers. I was one of four winners of the contest from my area. I was so pleased because all the notoriety helped increase the number of labels and eyeglasses I received. When a local insurance company heard about what I was doing, they interviewed me and wrote an article about my work in their quarterly newsletter. Due to the publicity, I collected 6,500 labels and 2,000 pairs of eyeglasses in just five months.

My efforts attracted the attention of many people across my state. In 1996, I was chosen Volunteer of the Year and, at a ceremony in my honor, I was given a beautiful plaque and a proclamation naming June 9th my day! The nonprofit organization I worked with gave me a plaque as well, because of my help in collecting eyeglasses for them.

I told my eye doctor about my many activities, and he was very enthusiastic and supportive. In fact, he took some of the eyeglasses to Laos last summer and distributed them to people who needed them. He also called some of the consulates and had them pick up eyeglasses for distribution in their countries. As a result, my son was invited to the Brazilian Consulate to present 500 pairs of glasses to the President's wife in the name of my doctor and me.

As you can tell from my story, the work I do gives me a great deal of pleasure and a real sense of accomplishment. My days are filled with the joy of helping others! At the age of 78, my life is productive and fulfilling, and my work enables me to meet a lot of interesting people. I continue to receive encouragement from my son and daughter, as well. My son says that my doing things for others has a very positive effect on me. As long as I'm happy and healthy, I have no intention of stopping anytime soon.

In the last issue of Eye to Eye, the patient's story in "Living with Glaucoma" mentioned the usefulness of massage therapy in lowering intraocular pressure. Since we received many calls about massage therapy in response to this column, this therapy and its application in limited circumstances will be discussed in the next issue of our newsletter.

Doctor, I Have a Question

David Greenfield, M.D.
Clinical Assistant
Professor of Ophthalmology & Neurology
New York Eye and Ear Infirmary

Robert Ritch, M.D.
Medical Director,
The Glaucoma Foundation
Professor of Clinical
Ophthalmology and
Chief of Glaucoma Service
The New York Eye and Ear Infirmary

Q: My wife has had progressive glaucoma for over 10 years. We've been to a retinologist, a glaucoma specialist, a neuro-ophthalmologist, and lastly to the Bascom Palmer Eye Institute. The last doctor said he sees about one glaucoma patient a month for whom he cannot do anything. Her pressure is controlled to between 10 and 12 and he felt surgery to lower the pressure is too risky. If the pressure were to be lowered and reach as low as 5, she would lose all vision. She is taking Timoptic, Phospholine, Iopidine, and Trusopt for her eye. She also takes Capoten, Norvasc, Provaschol and baby aspirin, although she has never had a heart attack. Repeated visual field tests have shown progressive deterioration. The optic nerve is damaged. The opinion is that something more than glaucoma is at work. Perhaps lack of circulation to the brain and optic nerve. She has also been diagnosed with Alzheimer's, which also has progressed since its start about 4 years ago. Are there any suggestions or hope you can give us?

A: As the numerous ocular subspecialists you have seen in the past have probably told you, we know that there are two general types of glaucoma: pressure dependent and pressure independent (associated with a vascular, neurodegenerative, or ill-defined mechanism). Your wife sounds like she has a pressure independent glaucoma and may not benefit from any further reduction in intraocular pressure. I would, however, recommend that she be seen by her internist to exclude the possibility that she is overmedicated with systemic antihypertensive medications. This can produce systemic hypotension and reduce blood flow to the brain and optic nerve, particularly at night. In addition, reproducible and progressive visual field defects have been described in patients with Alzheimer's disease which may be a confounding factor. New developments in glaucoma research are focused on "neuroprotective agents" and we hope one day to be able to offer our patients medications which do more than simply control intraocular pressure.

Q: In a past issue of Eye to Eye, "Doctor I have a question" column, the doctor said that sometimes your eye pressure can be low but you could have optic nerve damage which would require a different treatment. I wonder what else could be done for the damage other

than controlling the eye pressure. Also could you tell me how often your doctor should check your optic nerve when he is treating you for glaucoma. Also is the only way he can check this by dilating the eye? Thank you.

A: We are only in the early stages of being able to treat risk factors besides intraocular pressure. The latest area of interest is in neuroprotectants, which are drugs which can make the optic nerve cells more resistant to the effects of pressure and to survive longer. The frequency for checking the optic nerve depends on the severity of the glaucoma; the more severe the glaucoma, the more often it should be checked. Whether or not the eyes are dilated depends on what the doctor is checking for during the examination.

Q: My husband has glaucoma in both eyes. He is 68 years old, does not have cardiovascular disease and had a central retinal vein occlusion in his left eye last July. He is now totally blind in that eye. We want to make sure he can keep the glaucoma in the right eye under control. In your estimation how often should my husband's optic nerve be checked to make sure we keep the glaucoma under control? How is the optic nerve being checked, by photography or can the ophthalmologist do this visually? Thank you very much.

A: The frequency of checking the optic nerve depends on how severe the glaucoma is, how much damage has been done to the optic nerve so far, and what the intraocular pressure is. Periodic photography is the best method for checking the optic nerve in this kind of case.

Please send your Questions to:
Doctor, I Have a Question
c/o The Glaucoma Foundation
33 Maiden Lane
New York New York 10038
1-800-GLAUCOMA
fax: 212-504-1933

E-Mail: glaucomafdn@mindspring.com

From the Desk of the Executive Director
UNCLE SAM WEIGHS IN

For the first time, the United States Government will lend its hand, and voice, to the annual efforts undertaken by dozens of organizations throughout the nation to focus public attention on the fact that glaucoma, the world's leading cause of preventable blindness, has no symptoms, and thus regular eye exams are the only protection against unnecessary blindness. In more than 9 out of 10 cases, early detection and treatment preserves eyesight that otherwise would have been lost.

This coming January, the effort to encourage everyone, everywhere to have regular eye exams will reach a new level. National Glaucoma Awareness Week, celebrated during January in past years, has been broadened to become National Glaucoma Awareness Month. This expansion has been initiated by the National Eye Institute (NEI), a part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

The umbrella for the 1998 initiative is to be provided by the NEI's National Eye Health Education Program (NEHEP), which has assembled a partnership of more than 20 organizations to work collaboratively to disseminate information about glaucoma, both in local communities and through the mass media. Each of the partners, including The Glaucoma Foundation, will conduct its own activities designed to heighten public awareness about glaucoma. The Glaucoma Foundation's plans will include screenings, literature distribution, and national press initiatives.

In addition, each partner will be distributing materials prepared, produced and disseminated by NEHEP. By bringing to bear the additional resources, and visibility, of the federal government, NEHEP will be helping to further spread the word. And the word is, as always: Get Tested!

The Glaucoma Foundation welcomes this year's expanded role of the federal agency in charge of the government's campaign to eradicate blindness from glaucoma. As a member of the NEHEP Partnership, we will do everything we can to encourage early detection and treatment, so that we can finally put an end to blindness from the "silent thief of sight."

Health Expo '97

A health fair offering a unique blend of education and entertainment, hit New York City September 13 -21. With numerous corporate and non-profit sponsors and exhibits, The New York Coliseum was filled with people of all ages as they laughed and learned simultaneously - the direct result of the "edutainment" theme-which promotes interaction between the exhibits and the audience.

Involving various target populations and promoting health awareness among children before it is "too late" was a main focus of Health Expo. Different days were targeted to specific groups of individuals, creating a thematic approach. During the week of September 15, Health Expo promoted a day each for: college students, retired persons, men, women, mentors, and primary care providers.

The Glaucoma Foundation sponsored Don Ritter's Intersection, an interactive, sound-based exhibit in the Sensory Center. Our audience became active participants as they walked through a dark, secluded area and experienced what it would be like to cross a busy intersection without the gift of sight. This simulation of blindness was created through the use of infrared sensors and feedback technologies which react to the movement of the participant traveling across the room. As the traveler hesitated or stopped walking, the noise of cars speeding by was heard. If one stopped short as a result of these noises, he or she had a few seconds to continue on the path before a screech was heard, representing a car that had to brake suddenly in order to avoid hitting the pedestrian. The impact of the Intersection exhibit was powerful and written all over the faces of the participants as they exited the booth.

If you will, imagine the process yourself:

Ask someone else to read you the following steps, as you become an active participant in the description of Intersection.

1. Close your eyes and count to ten. Once this is done, try to create an image of an intersection during rush-hour traffic. (Keep your eyes shut until this exercise is completed.)
2. Once this image is firm in your mind, picture yourself on the side of the road. You are alone and blind.
3. You hear the noise of traffic whirling by and then it stops. You attempt to begin crossing the street.
4. You walk 7 or 8 steps and then hear a car screech to a halt a few feet away.

Do you stop where you are?

Do you step back a few steps?

Do you keep walking?

Many who experienced Intersection felt out of control and scared. One young woman said the experience was "eye-opening"; another claimed the blindness simulation was

"absolutely frightening, horrifying." A majority of those who walked through Intersection exited with a fear they will never forget, a fear that will serve as a reminder for them to seek regular, comprehensive eye exams.

As people entered Intersection, they were greeted by employees of The Glaucoma Foundation and offered free literature. The Foundation also distributed free give-aways with printed statements on them reminding everyone to "Get Your Eyes Checked" and to call 1-800-GLAUCOMA with questions. The give-aways alternated daily between post-it pads and key chains with small flashlights attached. At the exit of the exhibit, staff was also available to answer questions about glaucoma and treatments to prevent related blindness.

More than 2,000 people experienced what it was like to be blind as they walked through the virtual reality of Intersection.

The Glaucoma Foundation was also successful in educating people about glaucoma through Health Expo's Speakers' Corner. Dr. Gregory Harmon, Chief of Glaucoma at New York Hospital-Cornell Medical Center, and a member of our Board of Directors, held a roundtable discussion on Monday, September 15. Edith Marks and Rita Montauderes, authors of the newly published book *Coping with Glaucoma* (see page 3), were present to discuss glaucoma and to sign books at the Barnes & Noble Bookstore Exhibit on September 14.

Readers' Note: The next Health Expo fair is scheduled for September 23-27, 1998, in Dallas, Texas.

New Book on Glaucoma
Coping with Glaucoma: A Guide to Living with Glaucoma for You and Your Family

By Edith Marks, with Rita Montauredes

The Glaucoma Foundation is pleased to announce that Edith Marks' newly published book *Coping with Glaucoma: A Guide to Living with Glaucoma for You and Your Family*, is now available in bookstores around the country. With the help of co-author Rita Montauredes, Ms. Marks' work is the first of its kind, providing plain English, non-medical descriptions of what glaucoma can do to the eyes and souls of its victims. *Coping with Glaucoma* can also be used as a quick reference guide to medical procedures or surgeries, medical and homeopathic treatments, and ways in which to cope with the disease on a daily basis. John W. Corwin, Executive Director of The Glaucoma Foundation, was honored to write the Foreword to this work, which he cites as the "first comprehensive treatment of the subject of glaucoma written for the general public."

Let's Get Acquainted with the Medical Support Network

From time to time The Glaucoma Foundation profiles the background and career of those physicians and scientists who provide valuable assistance in directing The Foundation's research program. This quarter we are pleased to profile Dr. Ramesh C. Tripathi, who serves as a member of the Scientific Advisory Board of The Foundation. On the following page you will find further information about the role of the Scientific Advisory Board in The Foundation's research grant program, and an update on the growth of our Glaucoma Screening Honor Roll of Eye Doctors.

Ramesh C. Tripathi, M.D., Ph.D., F.A.C.S., F.R.C. Ophth.
*Professor and Chairman,
Department of Ophthalmology
University of South Carolina*

Ramesh Tripathi began his distinguished career by completing his medical training at the University of Agra (M.D.) and Lucknow University (M.S., Ophthalmology) in India. He then received his Diploma in Ophthalmology from the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons and his Ph.D. from the Institute of Ophthalmology of the University of London. Dr. Tripathi is a fellow of the Royal College of Ophthalmologists, the Royal College of Pathologists, the American College of Surgeons, and the International College of Surgeons. He is a life fellow of the National Academy of Sciences, India.

For several years, Dr. Tripathi served as senior lecturer and attending ophthalmologist at the Institute of Ophthalmology, University of London, and Moorfields Eye Hospital, London. In 1977, Dr. Tripathi joined the University of Chicago as Tenured Professor of Ophthalmology and Visual Science, where he continued his illustrious career over the next sixteen years. He was recruited by the University of South Carolina School of Medicine in 1993 where he is currently Professor and Chairman of the Department of Ophthalmology, and Director of The South Carolina Eye Institute and of Residency Education at University of South Carolina and Richland Memorial Hospital in Columbia, South Carolina.

His research contributions include pathophysiology and management of various ocular disorders, especially glaucoma and aqueous humor dynamics. Dr. Tripathi has authored and co-authored over 300 scientific articles as well as 30 book chapters, and has edited five books. He has delivered numerous lectures pertaining to pathophysiology and medical and surgical management of glaucoma, anterior segment diseases, contact lenses, and cataract and retinal disorders at national and international meetings, and has been visiting professor to some 40 academic institutions.

Currently, Dr. Tripathi is the Chair for the Basic and Clinical Science Course, Fundamentals and Principles of Ophthalmology, for the American Academy of Ophthalmology. He serves on the editorial board of several journals and is currently executive and section editor of *Experimental Eye Research*.

Dr. Tripathi is married to Dr. Brenda J. Tripathi, who is a tenured Professor at the University of South Carolina School of Medicine and an accomplished investigator in the field of Ophthalmology and Visual Science.

The Third Annual Glaucoma Golf Classic Tees-Off at Nassau Country Club

The sun was shining and the temperature was moderate as 130 golfers teed-off at The Third Annual Glaucoma Golf Classic on Monday, August 11th. This was the first time The Classic has been held at Nassau Country Club, the site of one of the oldest golf courses in America, and all participants applauded the location and organization of the club staff for its excellence. Attendance was nearly 40% higher than last year. The net income, to be used for The Glaucoma Foundation's many programs, reached a record high of \$15,000. The success of this year's tournament can be attributed to the interest of new golfing supporters and to the attraction of the new location. Also contributing to the success of the tournament was the extra effort made by The Classic Underwriters, Sponsors and Committee Members to ensure that everyone enjoyed the day.

The Winners Corner!!

Individual Low Net Score

Richard Tubb with a score of 59

Individual Low Gross

Donald Scanlon with a score of 73

Low Net Foursome Team

Bob Cerasia, Peter DaPuzzo, David Quilin and Donald Scanlon with a score of 53

Nearest to the Pin (5th hole)

Tom MacManus (3 feet, 7 inches)

Nearest to the Pin (10th hole)

Dana Meyer (14 feet, 2 inches)

Nearest to the Pin (16th hole)

Rich Wood (5 feet, 10 inches)

Men's Longest Drive

Ed Kantor

Women's Longest Drive

Jenny Horne

Most Accurate Drive

Scott Goldberg

Most Honest Player

Linda Izzo-Ashe

50/50 Tournament Winners

William Woods, Joseph Scuderi, Selwyn Poser and Chester Eng
Congratulations to Rich Peteka for winning the First Prize in the Tournament Raffle.
The Classic Underwriters

The Glaucoma Foundation is grateful to the following individuals and corporations for underwriting contributions for The Third Annual Glaucoma Golf Classic:

Continental Airlines,
the official airline of the glaucoma golf classic

Plaza Construction
golf carts

Mr. & Mrs. Neal Romanoff
tournament prizes

Security Delivery Services player gifts
The Waldorf=Astoria
caddies

In addition, we are pleased to acknowledge the support of

Air Jamaica
Dav-el Limousines
Disney Productions
Jack Finz
The Half Moon Golf, Tennis & Beach Club
Hertz Corporation
Hilton Hotels
The Hotel InterContinental
Linda Izzo-Ashe
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph M. La Motta
Marriott Eastside
The Millenium Hilton
New York Knicks
PGA Charities
Random House
Bill Reed & Competitive
Edge Golf
P.C. Richard & Son
The Ritz-Carlton
Running Press Book Publishers
Victor M. Silverman

The Villas of Grand Cypress
Daphne Warner Associates
The Hotel Westbury, NY

And a special thank you to

Joe Collins and Collins Building Services for assistance in obtaining the use of Nassau Country Club, and to the Nassau Country Club staff for their invaluable help: Frank Keefe, Eric Grady, Chef Ralph, Masoud Joudi, Nora and the dining room crew.

The Tournament Committee

George F. Aquila
Leonard N. Bernardo
Bruce Boillotat
Garrett R. Bowden
Michele M. Burnett
Art Byrum
Joseph K. Collins
Robert P. Colombo
John W. Corwin
Arthur J. Cramés
Mary Jane DaPuzzo
Peter DaPuzzo
Bebe G. Doyle
Gregory K. Harmon, M.D.
Allen Kavanaght
Fred Klinghoffer
George Long
Ralph Mancini
Jolene P. Mirena
Dana Meyer
Susan A. Murphy
Angel Pabon
Sheldon M. Siegel
Richard Silverman
Victor M. Silverman
Paul Stevens
Daphne Warner

Mark your calendar: 4th Annual Glaucoma Classic will be making a return visit to Nassau Country Club on Monday, August 10, 1998.

Glaucoma Screening Honor Roll

The Glaucoma Foundation continues to build the membership of the Glaucoma Screening Honor Roll, consisting of eye doctors who donate two days per year to our screening program. More than 50 doctors have signed on. The Foundation welcomes the following new members to the Honor Roll:

Nancy Beil, O.D.

Jack Greenberg, M.D.

Daniel LaRoche, M.D.

Val Pierotti, M.D.

Amy Poran, O.D.

Harvey Rosenblum, M.D.

Liviu-Bruno Saimovici, M.D.

Cabrini Scott, M.D.

Barrie Soloway, M.D.

Arnold D. Yagoda, M.D.

Emily Zimmerman, M.D.

The Glaucoma Foundation's Research Grants Program

As regular readers of Eye to Eye are aware, The Glaucoma Foundation awards research grants to scientists who demonstrate a capability to carry out projects which show promising potential to advance the search for cures for glaucoma. Our grants are awarded twice annually, in June and December. Grant applications are considered by our Scientific Advisory Board, a distinguished panel of 24 leading scientists from around the United States, as well as Canada, Israel and Japan. The recommendations of this panel are presented to The Foundation's Board of Directors, which has the final authority to award the grants. The next issue of Eye to Eye will feature the grants to be awarded at the November 1997 meeting of the Board of Directors.

Making Progress Toward A World Without Blindness

by Michele M. Burnett
Director of Development,
The Glaucoma Foundation

As the Fall season begins, we begin to review our past successes and plan the final push for the end of the year. In recent months, The Foundation has been particularly blessed by the overwhelming support of our donors through the initial direct mail campaign and The Third Annual Glaucoma Golf Classic (see story on page 12). The direct mail campaign introduced more than 800 new donors to The Foundation's family of friends. The growing interest in The Golf Classic has also exceeded our expectations for the newest of The Foundation's special events. Plans for the end-of-year fundraising efforts, including the 11th Annual Black & White Ball, are now underway, and we believe these efforts will be met with the same enthusiasm as our previous endeavors. These achievements and our future successes are possible only because of the interest and commitment of our friends. ***THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT.*** Please call us if you have questions about our programs or about how you can further help The Foundation.

A Thank You to Our Donors

(gifts received June 12 through September 5, 1997)

The Glaucoma Foundation is pleased to acknowledge the following individuals and corporations who have made substantial contributions to support our many programs. We appreciate the support of all of our donors and will continue to acknowledge their support in each issue of *Eye to Eye*.

Allergan Pharmaceuticals

Mr. and Mrs. Stephen D. Barkin

Bear Stearns

Mr. Martin R. Lewis

The Legacy Society

The Glaucoma Foundation gratefully acknowledges the newest members of The Legacy Society, whose foresight in planning is providing support for The Foundation's future.

Estate of Walter J. Riley

Estate of Marjorie E. Rothenberg

Estate of Babette W. West.

Tribute Gift Program

The Glaucoma Foundation is pleased to acknowledge the following Tribute Gifts, which provide valuable financial support for The Foundation's many projects, and, more importantly, recognize the special individuals in the lives of our donors.

Gifts Honoring Special Occasions

Dr. & Mrs. Burt Eschen on the occasion of their 25th anniversary from Mr. & Mrs. Leon Leidner

Gifts Received in Memory of Those Who Have Passed Away

Mildred Bransfield from Mr. & Mrs. Scott R. Hawthorn

Lillian Martin from Jerome L. Martin and Mr. & Mrs. Anthony N. Mastas

To receive a Contribution Package or Tribute Gift Program Package or to make a donation by phone, please call The Foundation's Development Office at (212) 504-1902.

The Readers' Corner

Dear Glaucoma Foundation,

Thank you for sending me the "Glaucoma Foundation" information. I am very happy to get it. I shall tell other friends about your Foundation.

Yours truly,
Miss Venice Frank
Santa Clara, CA

We invite all of our readers to comment, respond or state their views about glaucoma, the newsletter, or The Glaucoma Foundation in "The Readers' Corner." Letters can be published anonymously if desired. We are eager to hear what you think about what we are doing and hope to hear from you soon!