Nothing Has Changed- Except Everything
BY JOHN BRUENING

It might seem that OAO is always talking about the changes we are making, and that is true. In an effort to keep current with the changes in our laws, the products we use, the delivery of our education, and better ways to help you maintain your records, we are constantly adapting.

In past articles, I have mentioned that we are working on many of the items I just spoke of, and this year, you will be able to see the fruits of our labors. Our education, membership, social media, and branding committees, under the direction of Shirley Earley, Bob Alexander, and myself, have been meeting monthly, and sometimes more often than that, to brainstorm, identify issues, determine solutions, and work tirelessly to solve them.

The next live OAO event you attend will be different in many ways. Of course, besides the new and necessary safety precautions, the OAO will be utilizing state of the art technology to make the experience much more streamlined and efficient. If everything goes as planned, there will be no more long registration lines at the door, no more filling our forms at a table, and no more CE slips to lose. The days of yelling, “Can you please repeat the course code again?” from the back of a conference room should be a thing of the past. And this is just the tip of the iceberg.

Yes, we have been working diligently to make positive changes, and it is going to take some work on your part as well. If you don’t have a cell phone, now is the time to get one. Learn how to use it, and learn how to download apps. Yes, you may be asked to download apps, scan QR codes*, and perform some basic technology tasks. For many of you, this will be second nature. For the rest of us, like all changes, we will be learning new and useful way to utilize tools we may not have accessed prior to this year. It may be fun, it may be frustrating, but know that we will be patient and have OAO board volunteers on hand to assist you. This will be new for all of us, so let’s make the best of it, and help each other out!

Another giant leap we are taking is in alternate modes of delivering live education to you. We have always believed, and still do, that live education surpasses that of online learning in both knowledge gained, and the quality of the experience.

(Continued on next page)
Starting with our Annual Conference and Education event this November, we will be simulcasting via Zoom. While many of us have often used Zoom in meetings, being able present a live event to hundreds of people presents a myriad of issues. Bob Alexander has spearheaded this effort. Working with tech folks and educators from across the country, he has come up with a way that will allow those who cannot make it to the event in person, to participate remotely. Again, this is new technology, so we expect to have issues along the way, so we’ll need your patience as we work through the glitches.

In closing, I would like to thank Shirley and Bob for their continued dedication to the OAO, as well as the dedication of Wanda Balogh and Cesar Rodriguez; Membership Committee Co-Chairs, The Education Committee, Melissa Powers; Branding Chair, Angelique Richardson; Social Media Chair and to Chip Lothes; OAO Nominating Committee for helping to bring more great members on board. Most importantly, I want to thank the hundreds of OAO members who recognize the valuable resource and advocate the Opticians Association of Ohio is for all opticians.

*New to QR Codes? Here’s a quick guide to using them: https://www.youtube.com/
2021 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EVENTS

NORTHEAST REGION:
JANUARY 23-24, 2021

SOUTHWEST REGION:
FEBRUARY 27-28, 2021

NORTHWEST REGION:
APRIL 10-11, 2021

CENTRAL REGION:
TBD

THE ROARING TWENTIES
As November approaches us, more than just the leaves on the trees are changing. As John noted, we are making many changes to the overall experience at Opticians Association of Ohio (OAO) professional development events. We are hoping that everything goes smoothly: however, as with most new ventures, we expect a few bumps in the road. We are preparing for those and appreciate your patience.

Something you may be wondering about is the reason for the changes. To be honest, we have been working on these updates to the OAO for some time. We were planning on implementing them in a gradual manner, then along came a pandemic that caused us to change our approach and fast track our plans. If there is one thing that a global pandemic has taught us as an organization is that we need to be much nimbler than we once were.

Filling out paper CE slips and manual sign in sheets does not reflect an organization that is moving into the future. Not only are they time consuming and create unneeded work, manual forms leave a large room for human error. With electronic forms, we will decrease the amount of clerical time required to record the information and leave nearly no room for error. Simply put, this change will increase efficiency, decrease error and help us social distance during events.

What about adding Zoom to our meeting? Why are we doing that? We’ve received requests for virtual options for quite some time. Really! Members want to experience our top-rated speakers but couldn’t make the drive, could only attend one day of the event due to family or work obligations, felt uncomfortable driving due to bad weather, and the list goes on and on. Now with COVID-19, we have members that would like to attend live, but feel uncomfortable doing so. By having a way for our members to attend events when they can’t be with us, or simply don’t feel comfortable, we have greatly expanded the opportunity for opticians in Ohio to take part in world class education.

The mission statement for the OAO is “To enhance the quality and growth of opticianry.” In order to do that in Ohio, our board feels we must continually look at ways to improve experiences and efficiency. We believe these changes will do just that. We are excited to embark on these changes and we’re glad to have you along for the ride!
New License Cards
BY MARLENE ANIELSKI

Emailing of Licenses
Your 2021 LICENSE AND CARD WILL BE EMAILED DIRECTLY TO YOU AS A PDF ATTACHMENT. Therefore, you can print your license card and display, accordingly. It is crucial that your email address, name and address are ACCURATE in your eLicense account.

Continuing Education (CE)
To assist with the accuracy of assigning the proper credit of continuing education courses from the different CE providers, please enter your Ohio license number in your personal record for your specific provider. The proper license entry format, in BOLD, is:

- **OP.0#####-S** (i.e.) OP012345-S (spectacle license)
- **OP.0#####-C** (i.e.) OP012345-C (contacts license)
- **OP.0#####-SC** (i.e.) OP012345-SC (spectacle/contact combination license)

When uploading CE certificates in our eLicense system, the documents must be readable, legible and accurate. Test results or a receipt of payment are NOT acceptable as proof of completing CE requirements. Electronically submit FULL PAGE PDF's of the original certificate or a full scan of the same format received from the CE provider. The VBP audits 100% of your CE's. CE's should be completed January 1st through December 31st of the prior year (2020) for an upcoming license renewal year (2021). Renewals submitted after December 31st, 2020 will be automatically charged a $75 late fee. We encourage you to submit your renewal by December 15th to avoid any mistakes that could result in the late fee assessment.

Check our website www.Vision.Ohio.gov for news updates and information. Look forward to participating in the upcoming Opticians Association of Ohio’s (OAO) Annual Conference!

Warm Regards,
Marlene Anielski, Executive Director
Hello Ohio Opticians!

Did you know you may already be a member of the Opticians Association of America??

How? If you are member of the OAO, then you are automatically a member of OAA! How great is that!

So what does OAA do? We:

- Advocate and Represent Opticians to the Optical Community
- Teach the Consumer Who We Are and What We Do
- Train Leaders to Lead our Profession
- Watchdog Legislation that Negatively Effects our Profession
- Communicate to Opticians and State Leaders Nationally
- Create One Big Voice for Opticians

That is why Opticians Association of Ohio is a member of Opticians Association of America!

Want to know more? Sign up for our newsletter at https://oaa.org/contact

Look Forward To Hearing From You!

Dibby Bartlett
President
Opticians Association of America

Dick Powell Presents the 2020 Bud Thomas Optician of the Year Award
OHIO LICENSED OPTICIAN

The OAO Bud Thoma Award is the highest honor of the Association bestowed on a Ohio Licensed Opticia. It is intended to recognize an individual who has provided superior service to the Opticians Association of Ohio and the opticianry profession in Ohio over many years.

Congratulations Diana Powell for the significant contributions you have made to opticianry!
We are Opticians
BY CESAR RODRIGUEZ, MEMBERSHIP

We are Opticians. WHAT we do and HOW we do it is often taken for granted, by society and unfortunately ourselves. We get caught up on the day to day process and often just go through the motions. Society has picked up on this, hence the increase in online sales. What we do is a much bigger deal than we all realize. We help people see. This sounds so simple right? It’s not. Think about how your first pair of glasses made you feel. It probably wasn’t the best feeling was it? You see we, as Opticians, have a direct emotional impact on each and every person we help.

Why do you show up for work every day? What is your cause for continuing to be a Licensed Optician? I personally feel like we, collectively, have such a profound impact on society, if we can take a step back and start with WHY you became an Optician.

Simon Sinek “codified” a simple idea and called it The Golden Circle. It explains why some organizations or leaders are able to inspire and some aren’t. The inspired organizations, no matter the size ALL think, act and communicate from the inside out. When we communicate from the OUTSIDE IN, we can understand a lot of information like features and benefits and facts and figures. It just doesn’t drive behavior. When we communicate from the inside out we are talking directly to the part of the brain that controls behavior. Our goal is to reach more people who believe what we believe and want to advance OUR cause. If we talk about what we believe we will attract those who believe what we believe. It’s important to attract more “believers” because we want Opticianry in Ohio to be the talk of the industry because our membership base is strong and more importantly inspiring.

Tammy Hagemeyer is the one person who inspired me to GET INVOLVED with the Opticians Association of Ohio. She touched on this very topic. I had just started getting into Simon Sinek and had recently seen his TED talk on YouTube. She gave her lecture and that lecture inspired me to get involved. There are leaders and those who lead. Leaders hold a position of authority or power. Those who lead INSPIRE us. We follow those who lead not because we have to but because we want to. Those who start with why are who have the ability to inspire those around them or find others who inspire them. Marci Nash is the one person I credit for continuing in Opticianry. She was such an influential leader for me. She had the courage to sit me down and have an honest conversation with me about what I was potentially giving up. I was working retail and was looking for more hours and better pay. I was about to give up on Opticianry. I was so excited to be getting more hours and a little more money, or so I thought. I had to look beyond the current situation and how this decision would affect my career and my life. I am extremely grateful she was a true leader. It was after that conversation that I FULLY committed to Opticianry. I have not looked back since. Had she not had that difficult discussion with me, who knows where I would be. She set the standard for me of what a leader SHOULD be. I am eternally grateful for Marci’s leadership and impact on my life professionally and personally.

What is a just cause? A just cause is a specific vision of a future state that does not yet exist; a future state so appealing that people are willing to make sacrifices in order to help advance toward that vision. A Just Cause is not the same as our WHY. WHY comes from the past. It is an origin story. Think of the WHY like the foundation of a house, it is the starting point. A Just Cause is about the future. It defines where we are going. Everyone has their own WHY. But we do not have to have our own Just Cause, we can choose to join someone else’s. Our Just Cause is the ideal vision of the house we hope to build. We can work a lifetime to build it and still we will not be finished. However, the results of our work help give it form. As it moves from our imagination to reality it inspires others to join the Cause and continue the work…. FOREVER.

A Just Cause must be:
For Something --- affirmative and optimistic
Inclusive --- open to all those who would like to contribute
Service oriented --- for the primary benefit of others
Resilient --- able to endure political, technological and cultural change
Idealistic --- big, bold and ultimately unachievable

We know a Just Cause when we commit to it with the confidence that others will carry on our legacy.
I sat down today to write an article about branding ourselves as Opticians — but when I started to write, I realized a simple branding article doesn’t begin to capture how excited I am about our industry. Last night, I invited my team (the staff of my optical, including administration) to my house to dissect eyeballs. Cow eyeballs, to be specific.

When my employees showed up for work earlier that day, they punched the clock, put in their hours, and went about their daily routines. By the time they left my home that evening though, they were FASCINATED by what we do. Their minds were blown with a physical view of how the light enters the cornea, passes through aqueous humor, the crystalline lens, the vitreous humor, and finds its way right to the Fovea. Then we add glasses into the equation and suddenly we’re bending light, altering reality, and saving someone’s day. We have the coolest profession there is! We’re out here working magic!

I say all of this to make the following point: if we don’t get excited about what we do, we stand to lose that magic. Have you given much thought to what our career looks like if we lose our licensure? By educating your patients on what the title ‘Optician’ really means, we will increase the name recognition of Opticianry; when a patient doesn’t understand your title, they think they can order their specs online and get the same results. They don’t understand that we’ve designed a product specifically for their eye to redirect light onto their unique Macula. We need to be the ones to tell them that!

We vaguely tell those around us what we do, but we need to take it a step further- we need to brand ourselves as Opticians. Branding Opticianry is about more than just wearing a pin or a shirt (although that helps). It’s about beginning an open-ended conversation with your clients, your friends, and that talkative lady hovering by the front desk.

Brand yourself with the Opticians logo: put it on a bumper sticker, wear it on your shirt, post PSA videos on your social media accounts, use your reading cards that explain the importance of our industry as a skilled profession - there are endless steps that you can take. I invite you to join me in restoring our field to its former glory, before every person with an internet connection decided buying glasses online was just as good at seeing an optician. There has never been a more important time to wield your license with dignity, pride, and maybe even a little bit of flair.
Discover our best performance ever on Transitions® Signature® lenses style colors.

Available in 4 vibrant colors

Sapphire
Amethyst
Amber
Emerald

TransitionsPRO.com/Freestyle

Transitions and Transitions Signature are registered trademarks and the Transitions logo is a trademark of Transitions Optical, Inc., used under license by Transitions Optical Limited. GEN 8 is a trademark of Transitions Optical Limited. ©2020 Transitions Optical Ltd. Photochromic performance is influenced by temperature, UV exposure and the material.
Who would have thought a restaurant salad girl, yes, we were called salad girls in the Seventies, making a $1.60 an hour minimum wage would eventually become a Licensed Optician with a master’s degree in business management!

I was a struggling single mother, working in a Fairborn Ohio restaurant, making a minimum wage of $1.60 an hour. My car broke down and I could no longer commute from Dayton to Fairborn. Following my uncle’s advice, I applied for a labor’s job at the City of Dayton, Ohio. I was told that there were no women labors, but they had just hired two women water meter readers. Would you like to take the test for that job? Even though I knew nothing about water meters or what a water meter was, I took the test, passed it, and eventually got the job.

From there I met and started dating Margaret Austin also employed by the City of Dayton. While working for the city, I earned my associate of business science degree from Sinclair Community College and my masters degree from Antioch University McGregor. With these two degrees under my belt, I was able to promote from blue collar to management positions such as meter reader supervisor, and water engineering customer representative. In water engineering I worked in areas such as backflow prevention, building blueprint, water taps, and water meter set approvals, to name a few.

In or around 2004 I started my second career as an apprentice optician. Again, who would have thought that I would go from salad girl to licensed optician! In 2005 I retired from the City of Dayton, 2006 I became a Licensed Optician, and in 2007 I opened my Watchful Eye Optical LLC shop. And I am the sole owner of Watchful Eye, however I plan to one day take it public!

Some struggles that I had with my optical shop included health crisis, street closings, and office space. In 2010 three years after we opened, I knew we were successful. Everything was finally running smoothly. In March of that year, the City of Kettering closed the intersection of Dorothy Lane and Sudbury Drive. My customers could no longer get to my shop. A week after the intersection was opened to traffic, I discovered that I had stage 2B breast cancer. But I keep right on moving forward. Always moving forward!

Three self-help tools that got me through this period were the Opticians Association of Ohio, Horace Mann and Theodore Roosevelt quotes. Becoming a member of the Opticians Association of Ohio is one of the best things that I could have done. When I call, they are there to assist. Whether I have a question about continuing education, membership dues or license renewals, being a member of this team has been an incredibly positive experience. They have gone out of their way to make my journey successful. I was amazed and pleased to be asked to share my story in the newsletter.

The first president of Antioch College was Horace Mann. One of his quotes is “Be ashamed to die until you have won some victory for humanity.” Therefore, I try to give back to communities and the world. That is also why I sell affordable eyewear. President Theodore Roosevelt said: “Do what you can with what you have where you are.” These three things helped a lot.

Margaret Austin is a former Apprentice Optician and Office Manager at Watchful Eye Optical. The WE in Watchful Eye means WE all are a team: opticians, employees, vendors, customers, and organizations. I could not have done all these things without the support of my team.
Margaret and I were married in Santa Ana, California in 2014, because same-sex marriages were still illegal in Dayton Ohio. We have been married six years, and we have been partners for 33 years.

Pop quiz, how many people do you know who have been together for 33 years?

Margaret and I are also equal partners in BrenMar Ventures, a real estate and educational investment company. BrenMar was started in 2010 before the beginning complications of that year. I closed my optical shop location in September 2019, mostly due to maintenance issues with the building. We had leaks in the outside wall that were not being fixed, and due to safety factors, I could not plug my machines into a possibly wet wall socket. For the future, we plan to put together another good, positive team; buy a building for BrenMar Ventures; and have Watchful Eye Optical rent from BrenMar. We also intend to provide educational seminars from this location. Being in another health crisis from Cancer to Covid-19, we are mostly staying home and constantly preparing for that next opportunity we cannot refuse.

STAY HEALTHY AND SAFE!

A New World
BY GILBERT BLAZEK, EDUCATION

First and Foremost, I am hoping that you and families have stayed safe and healthy during this COVID-19 pandemic. Things sure have changed in our profession, a new normal. However some things will always stay the same. Making your patient the top priority has always been our focus; now we just have to make sure that our patients’ health and safety is at the top of the list while still focusing on our own health and the health of our staff. With all the continuous cleaning, disinfecting, and the new protocols tensions can be elevated for us and our patients.

I just stay positive every single day, for my own mentality, and to keep my patients in good spirits. If it wasn’t for our patients coming to visit us we would not be here today. We need patience right now more than ever. Continue to take one day, one patient at a time. I keep telling myself that we will all get through this together, and come out stronger than ever. Let your patients know that you care for their safety and what you are doing to keep them safe. It will be appreciated more than you know.
Professional Development Event “Spring Break”
“Oh what fun was had!”