

# The Spectacle



A publication of the

***Lions Sight Program***

at the

**University of Minnesota**

**Minnesota Lions Eye Bank**

**Lions Children's Eye Clinic**

**Lions-Funded Research**

**The MAC**



*Fall 2009*

## Share Your Vision Stories as Eye Bank Turns 50

50

In celebration of the Minnesota Lions Eye Bank's 50th anniversary in 2010, the eye bank is collecting stories of eye donation and renewed sight experiences and memories of your involvement with the eye bank.

Do you or does someone in your community have a memory to share? A story about a family member who was an eye donor? A story of how sight was saved by a cornea transplant or other eye surgery? Maybe a story of how you support eye donation or an account of how you help the eye bank on a local level?

If so, please send your stories or story ideas to:

**Lion Jodi Altenhofen, Community Services Liaison  
Minnesota Lions Eye Bank**

**1000 Westgate Drive Suite 260**

**Saint Paul, MN 55114**

**[magnu007@umn.edu](mailto:magnu007@umn.edu)**

**Fax: 612-625-4295**

Include your name, e-mail address, mailing address, and phone number. Photos are warmly welcomed. Stories may be featured in Minnesota Lions Eye Bank print, broadcast, or online communications.

Thank you for 50 years of success and support!

## Eye Bank Association of America Accreditation Renewed

**M**innesota Lions Eye Bank again earned the Eye Bank Association of America (EBAA)'s three-year accreditation after undergoing a routine site inspection in August.

The EBAA is the nationally-recognized accrediting body for eye banks and sets the medical standards for eye banking. These medical standards are endorsed by the American Academy of Ophthalmology, and they ensure that member banks maintain the highest proficiency in eye tissue procurement, preservation, storage, and distribution. Eye bank professionals

conduct site inspections of eye banks to evaluate adherence to EBAA medical standards and procedures before granting or renewing accreditation.

The EBAA is the oldest transplant organization in the United States. 98 member eye banks, located across the country and in Puerto Rico, Canada, England, Italy, Japan, and Saudi Arabia, make possible more than 50,000 sight-restoring transplants annually. The Minnesota Lions Eye Bank is a charter member of the 48-year-old EBAA and has consistently earned a three-year accreditation, the highest the EBAA offers.

## Floods no match for Fargo Recovery Team

**I**n March and April of this year, a portion of the Minnesota Lions Eye Bank coverage area was hit by flooding. Fargo, North Dakota, experienced record flood conditions when the Red River crested at nearly 41 feet on March 28, breaking a record that has stood since 1897. Non-essential business closed, but eye bank recovery technicians continued to work.

"I am very happy to report that, during the period of major flooding in the north-west region, seven cases were recovered. We did not miss a single eligible donor," said

RaChelle Gruba, hospital liaison and lead procurement technician for Minnesota Lions Eye Bank. "We recovered eye tissue from Staples, Bemidji, Thief River Falls, and Fargo during flood time although the area was under water and the roads were a mess. I really commend our technicians for their extra efforts."

MeritCare Hospital in Fargo, North Country Health Services in Bemidji, Lakewood Health System in Staples, and MeritCare Northwest Medical Center in Thief River Falls all helped honor the donation wishes of patients and their families during the flooding and have the gratitude of the Minnesota Lions Eye Bank.



*Flood Team Fargo: Michael Womack, Traci Nichols, Sasha Kean, Kim Clausen, Marie Bormann, Emily Albrecht, Nick Bjore, Nichole Jonason, and Delwin Rogers. Not pictured: Lee Kiedrowski, Crystal Carter, and RaChelle Gruba.*

## Cornea Donor Study Results In

**A** five-year Cornea Donor Study (CDS), funded by the National Eye Institute (NEI), published results demonstrating that cornea graft failure **was not** significantly associated with the method of tissue retrieval (whole eye versus cornea only), processing factors, timing of use

of the cornea, or characteristics (including age) of the donor or the donor cornea. The study had previously found that corneal transplants using tissue from older donors have similar rates of success to those using tissue from younger donors.

The purpose of the recently-

concluded study was to assess the relationship between donor factors and 5-year cornea graft survival. 1,101 participants were enrolled by 105 surgeons at 80 sites across the United States. Donor corneas were provided by 43 participating eye banks, including the Minnesota Lions Eye Bank.

## Used Eyeglass Collection Program Still Going Strong

Tireless workers and generous volunteers from Multiple District 5M have now given more than 7 million pairs of eyeglasses to the world's needy through the eyeglass recycling center in Rosholt, Wisconsin! 2009 launched a new campaign to collect 200,000 pair. Results exceeded expectations. By late July, 225,000 pairs of eyeglasses had already been collected and delivered to Wisconsin.



Used eyeglass collection efforts received a nice bump during the Lions International Convention in Minneapolis when visiting Lions donated 61,463 pairs of specs! Japan, Peru, Norway, Brazil, Finland, Italy, and Barbados were just some of the contributing countries. Many donations came from the host Lions of MD5M as well.

Well done, Lions!

## Fun and Education at the Minnesota State Fair

Minnesota Lions Eye Bank Inc. board members and MD5M Hearing Foundation trustees joined forces to staff a booth in the Education Building at the Minnesota State Fair.

During the 12 days of Minnesota's great get-together, booth volunteers distributed earplugs and children's sunglasses while promoting Lionism to fair goers. Trustees and directors also worked to raise awareness of the Lions and their work on behalf of sight and hearing.

Just down Dan Patch Avenue, eye bankers and their volunteers also staffed a booth: "Partners in Donation." This booth, located in the HealthFair 11 Building, was in partnership with LifeSource organ and tissue donation. Volunteers handed out pencils and quizzed visitors about organ, tissue, and eye donation and transplantation. At the same time, guests were educated about Minnesota's online donation registry [www.DonateLifeMN.org](http://www.DonateLifeMN.org).

*Minnesota State Fair volunteer, Gabby, takes time off from the "Partners in Donation" booth to learn about the effects of electricity. Gabby is the granddaughter of Lions Sue and Dusty of the Champlin Lions Club.*



## Eye Bank Board of Directors Undertake Strategy Planning

On Friday, October 2, and Saturday, October 3, the Minnesota Lions Eye Bank Inc. Board of Directors held a strategic and long-range planning meeting at Michael's Restaurant in Saint Cloud, Minnesota. The purpose was to examine the board's purpose, set priorities and objectives, determine areas of focus for allocation of funds, and train directors in making sound strategic decisions. Prior to the plan-

ning session, the board sent questionnaires to Lions throughout the state to solicit feedback on performance and focus areas.

Strategic planning is a process of determining where an organization is going, what it should be doing, and how it will accomplish goals. Strategic planning is an ongoing process for any healthy, productive organization such as Minnesota Lions Eye Bank, Inc.

# Spotlight on Volunteers

Minnesota Lions Eye Bank accomplishes its mission with the help of both staff members and generous volunteers. From recovering donor eyes to transporting eye tissue to helping out in the office, many volunteers contribute to the sight-saving work of the eye bank. If you or someone you know is interested in volunteering, especially on an on-going basis, please contact Lion Jodi Altenhofen, community services liaison, at 612-624-0446 (toll-free 1-866-887-4448) or at [magnu007@umn.edu](mailto:magnu007@umn.edu). As Helen Keller said, "Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much!"

## Volunteer of 25 Years Honored: Betty Jane Walen Remarkable Woman, Phenomenal Volunteer

For a quarter century, Betty Walen has volunteered her time and talents to the Minnesota Lions Eye Bank and the Department of Ophthalmology at the University of Minnesota.



*Betty at work in the eye bank.*

Over the years, her contributions have benefited the University, the eye bank, Lions, cornea recipients, eye donor families, and her grateful co-workers.

### How it all began

A cornea recipient herself, Betty's volunteer services started shortly after cornea transplants saved her sight. Volunteering was a way to show her gratitude. Volunteering presented her with an opportunity to serve and be a part of something meaningful. So, in 1984, Betty approached the executive director of the Minnesota Lions Eye Bank, Dr. Charlotte Hill and offered to share her time and talents with the eye bank. Dr. Hill eagerly accepted the offer, and Betty soon became an integral part of eye bank operations, inspir-

ing everyone with her dedication, energy, efficiency, and charm.

### Betty's Contributions

For many years, Betty was a warm, familiar presence in the eye bank every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. Whether in her blue smock or dressed to the nines, she could be found sharing treats with young eye patients or helping their parents understand cornea disease and the available treatments. She was always available to counsel other cornea recipients and share her own cornea transplant experience.



*Betty and cornea recipient Christina at the 2008 District Governors-Elect banquet. Christina was just a few weeks of age when Betty first met her.*



*Betty at the 2004 Minnesota Funeral Directors Association Annual Meeting.*

Betty has been with the Minnesota Lions Eye Bank longer than any volunteer or paid employee, and her many duties over the years include:

- Corresponding with donor families and corneal transplant recipients;
- Managing the eye bank's accounts receivables;
- Serving as eye bank historian;
- Organizing tours for Lions of the eye bank, ophthalmology, otolaryngology; and
- Being an ambassador for eye donation, the eye bank, and the University of Minnesota.

**Betty Jane** continued from page 4

### **Much deserved accolades**

Betty's talents and contributions are acknowledged by many. The Ophthalmology Department honored her with their Visionary Award. The Eye Bank Association of America presented her with the Gift of Sight Award. Betty earned the Vision Foundation's Out-



*Betty at the University of Minnesota's Department of Ophthalmology in familiar blue smock.*

standing Service Award and has been honored no less than four times with a Helen Keller Award.

Since 1985, Betty has enthusiastically volunteered at the eye bank and promoted eye donation. Her

volunteer hours now exceed 19,000! At age 90, Betty still comes into the eye bank once a week, motivating everyone to work harder and always remember what a precious gift eye donation is. She is a living legacy of the gift of sight.

### **Betty Jane Volunteer Award established**

Because Betty Jane Walen is like no other volunteer, the Minnesota Lions Eye Bank established the "Betty Walen Volunteer Award" in her honor. On October 31, at the Minnesota Lions Eye Bank's annual *Thanksgiving for Vision* celebration, Betty became the first recipient of this award.

Betty's friends, relatives, co-workers, and many Lions were on hand to see eye bank executive director, Lion Jackie Malling, and eye bank medical director, Lion Donald Doughman, M.D., present Betty with the eponymous award.

The award presentation was also notable because a portrait of Betty was unveiled at this time. The portrait, painted by a local artist who volunteered her time, will be framed and hung in the Minnesota Lions Eye Bank in Saint Paul.



*Portrait of Betty Jane Walen, recipient of the "Betty Walen Volunteer Award" in 2009.*

### **Betty's Awards**

#### **Visionary Award**

1988

*University of Minnesota  
Department of Ophthalmology*

#### **Gift of Sight Award**

1994

*Eye Bank Association of America*

#### **Outstanding Service Award**

2001

*Minnesota Medical Foundation'  
Vision Foundation*

#### **Progressive Helen Keller Award**

1994 and following

*Minnesota Lions Eye Bank Inc.*

#### **Betty Walen Volunteer Award**

2009

*Minnesota Lions Eye Bank*



*Betty and her cornea surgeon, Lion Donald Doughman, M.D., at Minnesota Lions Eye Bank's 2009 Thanksgiving for Vision Celebration. A University of Minnesota Physician, Dr. Doughman is also medical director for the Minnesota Lions Eye Bank.*

# Ophthalmology Chair Receives Award

On October 23, Lion Jay H. Krachmer, M.D., chair of the University of Minnesota Department of Ophthalmology, received the Claes H. Dohlman Award for Excellence in Teaching and Education. The award presentation took place at joint Fall Education Symposium of the Eye Bank Association of America and the Cornea Society.

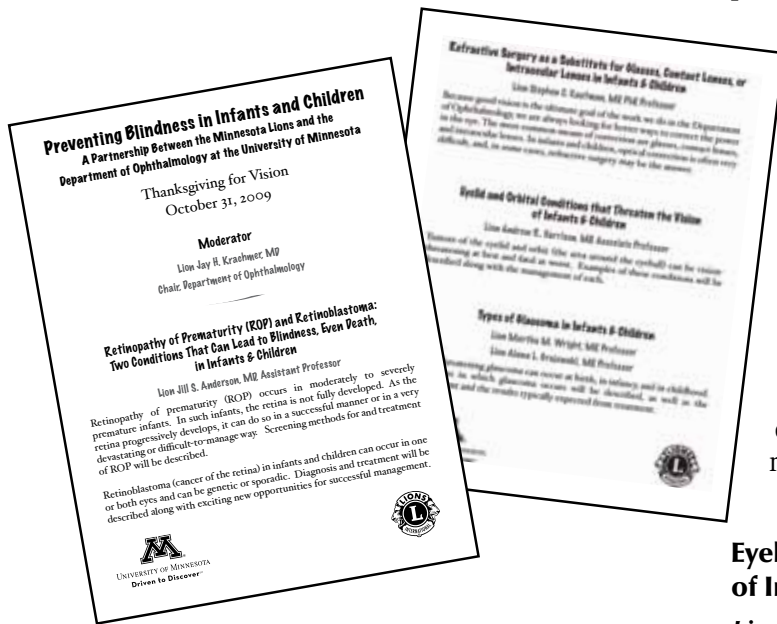
The award is named for Claes Dohlman, M.D., in honor of Dr. Dohlman's long dedication to teaching other physicians. Dr. Dohlman, one-time Harvard Medical School ophthalmology chair and chief of ophthalmology at Massachusetts Eye And Ear Infirmary, and Mark J. Mannis, M.D., president of the Cornea Society, presented the award to Dr. Krachmer, a teacher for 35 years. 275 meeting attendees were present to honor him.

# Thanksgiving for Vision Symposium

Ophthalmology faculty from the University of Minnesota presented at the 23rd annual *Thanksgiving for Vision* celebration on October 31, 2009. The doctors generously shared their knowledge and expertise with Lions and other guests at the 2-hour pre-lunch symposium. Department chair, Lion Jay Krachmer, M.D., moderated the event.

devastating or difficult-to-manage way. Retinoblastoma (cancer of the retina) in infants and children can occur in one or both eyes and can be genetic or sporadic.

Screening methods, diagnosis, and treatment of these conditions, along with exciting new opportunities for successful management, were featured in Lion Jill's presentation.



By 9:30, every one of the 350 seats was filled, and more guests stood in the back of the room to take in the symposium. Pediatric ophthalmology was this year's symposium focus. Faculty presented the following talks:

## Retinopathy of Prematurity (ROP) and Retinoblastoma: Two Conditions That Can Lead to Blindness, Even Death, in Infants & Children

*Lion Jill S. Anderson, M.D., Assistant Professor*

Retinopathy of prematurity (ROP) occurs in moderately to severely premature infants. In such infants, the retina is not fully developed. As the retina progressively develops, it can do so in a successful manner or in a very

## Refractive Surgery as a Substitute for Glasses, Contact Lenses, or Intraocular Lenses in Infants & Children

*Lion Stephen C. Kaufman, M.D., Ph.D., Professor*

Because good vision is the ultimate goal of the work of the Department of Ophthalmology, doctors are always looking for better ways to correct the power in the eye. The most common means of vision correction are glasses, contact lenses, and intraocular lenses. In infants and children, optical correction is often very difficult, and, in some cases, refractive surgery may be the answer.

## Eyelid and Orbital Conditions that Threaten the Vision of Infants & Children

*Lion Andrew R. Harrison, M.D., Associate Professor*

The oculoplastics service treats diseases of the eyelids, orbit, and lacrimal system. Tumors of the eyelid and orbit (the area around the eyeball) can be vision-threatening at best and fatal at worst. Examples of these conditions, along with the management of each, were provided.

## Types of Glaucoma in Infants & Children

*Lion Martha M. Wright, M.D., Professor*  
*Lion Alana L. Grajewski, M.D., Professor*

Vision-threatening glaucoma can occur at birth, in infancy, and in childhood. Conditions in which glaucoma occurs were described, as well as the management and the results typically expected from treatment.

## New Bioscience Facility Opens Near Lions Research Building

On December 1, 2009, the University of Minnesota enhanced the biotech future of Minnesota when it opened a new research center, the Medical Biosciences Building. The building is an expansion of the existing University Research Precinct, which includes the Lions Research Building, the McGuire Translational Research Facility, and the Center for Magnetic Resonance Research.

The new 115,000-square-foot Medical Biosciences facility provides research laboratories and offices for principal investigators in the areas of Alzheimer's disease, immune system disorders, and brain science. It also houses the Center for Memory Research and Care, the Neurodegenerative Research Group, and the Neuromuscular Research Group.

The Medical Biosciences Building is located just north of the new TCF Bank Stadium. It is part of a Biomedical Discovery District that is under construction with the help of \$292 million in state funding. Eventually, the entire district



*The University's new Medical Biosciences Building located on the East Bank of the Minneapolis campus. The building is on 6th Street a block east of the Lions Research Building.*

will be home to more than 1,200 researchers working in 400,000 square feet of lab and office space.

## Grants Help the Ophthalmology Department's Work

Minnesota Lions, through the Minnesota Lions Eye Bank Inc., regularly help the eye bank and the University of Minnesota's Ophthalmology Department with financial grants. These grants are immensely helpful toward carrying out the mission of the University of Minnesota. Two grants that were awarded this year are:

### **Zeiss Slit Lamp Observation Tubes**

The Department of Ophthalmology at the University of Minnesota is Minnesota's major resource for the training of future ophthalmologists and vision scientists. It is committed to providing clinical and didactic training for medical students, resident physicians, and post-residency fellows in ophthalmology. Using slit lamp observation tubes on teaching microscopes allows residents and students to observe how faculty diagnose and treat retina diseases such as macular degeneration.

### **Department of Ophthalmology Research Fund: Support for Clinical Trial to Improve Vision in Albinism**

University physician Lion Gail Summers, M.D., is beginning a randomized, double-masked, placebo-controlled clinical trial designed to determine if the drug, levodopa/carbidopa, will improve vision in individuals with albinism. Due to the large number of children seen at the International Albinism Center at the University of Minnesota, the center is in a unique position to study the effect of this drug.

Albinism is an inherited disorder affecting production of melanin, a natural substance that gives color (pigment) to hair, skin, and the iris of the eye. People with albinism always have problems with vision (not correctable with eyeglasses) and many have low vision.

### **Missions and Visions**

The **University of Minnesota** is founded in the belief that all people are enriched by understanding and is dedicated to the advancement of learning and the search for truth. The University seeks to benefit the people of the state, the nation, and the world through its threefold mission of **Research and Discovery, Teaching and Learning, and Outreach and Public Service.**

The vision of the **Department of Ophthalmology** is to provide an environment for excellence in clinical care of eye diseases and a foundation of basic research to support that endeavor.

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## 2010 Calendar

**The Spectacle** newsletter is a publication of the Minnesota Lions Eye Bank sent to Minnesota Lions club presidents and other Lions leaders. Contact the editor with your questions and comments.

Articles are available in alternate formats and may be copied with attribution to the Minnesota Lions Eye Bank.

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*Saturday, January 23*  
Minnesota Lions Eye Bank Inc. Board Meeting - Saint Cloud

*Wednesday, March 17*  
District Governor-Elects Tour of Eye Bank - Saint Paul

*Saturday, March 27*  
Minnesota Lions Eye Bank Inc. Board Meeting - Saint Cloud

*Saturday, April 10*  
Lions Tours of the University - Minneapolis

*Sunday, April 18*  
Donor & Family Recognition Service - Saint Paul

*Friday and Saturday, June 25 and 26*  
Lions All-Star Baseball Tournament - Chaska

*Saturday, October 9*  
Lions Tours of the University - Minneapolis

*Saturday, October 30*  
Thanksgiving for Vision - Brooklyn Center