



VOSH teams active throughout Nicaragua

by Zabelle D'Amico

VOSH teams have had a huge and varied presence throughout Nicaragua for a number of years. We're proud of their ongoing commitment to this struggling nation, the impact they've had and the affection they express for the many wonderful Nica people they've come to know.

Nicaragua is a country of just over 5 million people. After decades of political upheaval and despite huge natural disasters including earthquakes and floods, the country is presently enjoying a period of relative political and economic stability.

Things may be a lot better for the Nica people today than even five years ago, but Nicaragua and nearby Haiti remain the poorest countries in the western hemisphere. Eighty-two percent of the population still earns less than \$1 per day and the

illiteracy rate remains over 35%.

Areas where VOSH has served

A chance encounter on the soccer field in Jamestown, Rhode Island, nine years ago, brought together Carl Sakovits, OD, founder of VOSH-Northeast, and William Smith, a Jamestown resident whose wife is of Nicaraguan descent and has strong ties to her homeland.

Through William and his family in Nicaragua, Dr. Sakovits led a multi-disciplinary team to Niquinohomo in January, 1998. Since then, while team leadership may differ annually, VOSH-Northeast has continued to hold annual clinics in Masatepe, La Concha, Monimbo, Ticuantepe, Jinotepe, Nindiri and Catarina, all comarcas in or near the Masaya district of the country.

VOSH-Northeast teams have ranged



Chicago White Sox pitcher Jose Contreras happily pitched in during a VOSH-Northeast clinic near Masaya last year. The baseball star and the VOSHers met when both were staying at the same nearby hotel.

from 45 to 85 volunteers and include a number of optometry students, mostly from the State University of New York (SUNY) School of Optometry and the Hogeschool Van Utrecht School of Optometry (Netherlands). Services offered

Please turn to page 4



V/I Annual Meeting June 22, 23

Gaylord Texan Resort & Convention Center

See the pullout sheet (pages 5A, 5B) for details about the upcoming VOSH/INTERNATIONAL Annual Meeting 2005, to be held during the AOA meeting in Dallas.

This year, the meeting will take place in two half-day sessions. The humanitarian speakers forum on Wednesday afternoon is FREE and there's only a nominal \$25 fee for the Chapter business meeting the next morning. Breakfast is included. We have a stimulating program planned and we want you to attend so we're doing all we can to make it possible. Please join us!

V/I president-elect marks a first for women

It's another historic moment for VOSH/INTERNATIONAL.

When Ruth McAndrews, OD, assumes the helm of VOSH/INTERNATIONAL in June, she will have the distinction of being the first woman to serve as president of the organization since its inception in the mid-1970s.

A quiet, unassuming woman with a warm, can-do attitude, Dr. McAndrews grew up on a farm in southern Iowa. After receiving a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Iowa, she attended Illinois College of Optometry (ICO).

Following graduation from ICO, "Dr. Ruth," as she is more commonly known, returned to Iowa to open her own private practice in Durant, a small town west of Davenport. She has been active in the local Chamber of Commerce and the Tri-County Community Band.



Ruth McAndrews, OD

Dr. Ruth served six years on the Iowa Board of Optometry Examiners and was elected Young Optometrist of the Year in 1982. She is a past-president of VOSH-Iowa and has served on the V/I board since 2002.

It is interesting to note that Dr. Ruth's initial VOSH experience was to Haiti in 1979, a formative period in VOSH history. Since then, she has participated in over twenty VOSH missions.

Her most memorable pair of VOSH patients included a lady in her mid-70s who was an uncorrected aphakic. The remarkable event was that she had been brought to the clinic by her 23-diopter myopic daughter.

Dr. Ruth and her husband John reside in Davenport. She is an active member of Grace Lutheran Church. The couple enjoys traveling, hiking, bicycle riding, folk dancing, and ballroom dancing.

From the President's desk ...

Greetings VOSHers:

It seems like it was just yesterday when I started my tenure as president and now I am writing my last presidential message. What a two years it's been! We have expanded nationally and internationally and we have become associated with many like-minded organizations.

In November, your Executive Board met in Chicago for two productive days of discussion during which we laid the framework for the upcoming V/I Annual Meeting in Dallas, Texas, and made



Dale Cole, OD

plans to hold a strategic planning session with a facilitator in Alabama in April. The goal of the session will be to evaluate where we are headed as a humanitarian organization, to set goals and to chart a blueprint for how we aim to achieve them.

Also in Chicago, the VOSH Board met with two leaders of Lions Clubs International. As a followup to our discussions, a meeting was scheduled for February to discuss furthering a partnership. Board member Sandy Bury, OD, of Chicago represented V/I at that session and will report on it at our June meeting.

Kudos go out to Dr. Bury who made all arrangements with the Chicago Lighthouse for us to hold our meeting there and tour the facility. (See newsnotes, page 7.) Thanks also to the many VOSH-IL members who entertained us on Friday evening.

Annual Meeting in June in Dallas

Please join us in Dallas. As you can see from this newsletter, many connections and relationships evolve simply by being present at the Annual Meeting.

The Board has decided that the Wednesday afternoon speaker session will be free. Once again, the speakers are outstanding. Brief bios can be found on page 5B of this newsletter. We appreciate that all of them have volunteered to speak at no cost to V/I and we thank them in advance for their interest and concern.

The nominal \$25 fee for the Thursday morning Chapter business session includes

breakfast. We strongly encourage all VOSH members to attend both days. Many of last year's attendees felt that the education was superb and wished more members could have participated. Here's your chance! Then stay on for the AOA courses and visit the exhibits. Drop by the V/I booth in the exhibit hall and ask where we will gather for hors-d'oeuvres, drinks and fellowship after exhibit hours on Thursday.

During the past two years we have established bonds with S.E.E. (Surgical Eye Expeditions), TLERC (Texas Lions Eyeglass Recycling Center), Unite for Sight and our own AOA. These organizations will all be represented during the Wednesday speaker/education session.

At the Thursday business session of the V/I Annual Meeting, we anticipate presenting two US chapters and two International Chapters for approval.

The Executive Board has decided that International Chapters will be affiliated with Schools/Colleges of Optometry within that country or region.

We are excited about our continuing growth. It will enable us to serve many more countries, thus moving closer to the objective of eliminating preventable blindness by year 2020.

In March, Executive Director Harry Zeltzer, OD, and I traveled to Kumasi, Ghana (West Africa) with a VOSH team from Pacific University. We met with students of KNUST (Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology) and with representatives of Unite for Sight who were on a mission in the area. While

there, Dr. Zeltzer represented V/I as an invited speaker at the WCO (World Council of Optometry) Annual Meeting in Accra, Ghana. Details about these experiences will be discussed at the June Annual Meeting.

V/I board consultants appointed

In recent months V/I appointed four consultants to the Executive Board. Boston-based Leo Robinson was asked to serve as an Advisor in Organizational Advancement; Hare Patnaik was named Asia-Pacific Coordinator; Dr. Jerry Vincent of Thailand was appointed Public Health Advisor and Dr. Stuart Frank was appointed Coordinator of FVI (Fellow of VOSH/INTERNATIONAL).

Already Dr. Vincent is keeping us up to date on the eye care needs in the Tsunami region. It was heartening to see how many VOSHers were ready to volunteer right after the disaster.

Mark Cook, OD, president of VOSH-MI, spent a month in the tsunami region as a volunteer with Project Hope. Hare Patnaik and I have scheduled the first VOSH tsunami relief mission from October 7-21. For details, dcole@informatics.net. Check www.VOSH.org for updates. V/I will be e-mailing Chapter presidents any further news.

The future of VOSH/INTERNATIONAL is exciting. I am proud to be a part of it. Thanks to all of you for making VOSH/INTERNATIONAL a leader in the third-world eye care arena.

Yours in VOSH,

Dale K. Cole, OD

Memberships and donations

Your continued support of VOSH/INTERNATIONAL is vital to our ability to maintain our excellent website, to collaborate with other related organizations globally and to foster Chapter growth and development.

V/I is a 501(c)(3) corporation, making your contributions tax-deductible. VOSH Chapter members are now automatically members of VOSH/INTERNATIONAL. A voluntary suggested donation of \$10 per member is recommended from

each Chapter. Chapter dues are \$100 per year.

Contributions can be sent to: VOSH/INTERNATIONAL, c/o Charles Covington, Sec/Treasurer, 111 Linda Lane, Lake Mary, FL 32746.

For anyone collecting used eyeglasses for recycling, please refer to the "Recycling Centers" listing on our website www.VOSH.org for sorting centers nearest you.

VOSH-AL, VOSH-FL collaboration in Peru includes teaching

Initial contacts came about from V/I Annual Meeting last June

by Patti Fuhr, OD, VOSH-AL

VOSH Florida and VOSH Alabama combined efforts in a September 2004 mission to Peru, to provide both an eye care clinic and a formal teaching program. The teaching component may well represent another first for a VOSH team.

All of the events described below came about because of the VOSH/INTERNATIONAL annual meeting. Getting together just to share ideas and experiences is one of the most rewarding aspects of humanitarian work. If you have not participated in a V/I meeting, I urge you to come to Dallas in June. Listen, mingle and talk. The impact that V/I has simply cannot be measured.

Sr. Severo Sánchez Melgarejo, Presidente of the Instituto Superior Eurohispano in Lima, attended the V/I Annual Meeting in Orlando last June because of what he'd read about it on our website. He was interested in starting a VOSH chapter in Peru, as were Max Bruss and John Gehrig of VOSH-FL who introduced me to Severo.

When Severo learned that I was an educator, he extended an invitation to visit his optometry school and lecture at any opportunity.

Just a few weeks later, Max and John scheduled a VOSH mission to Peru to coincide with the First International Congress of Optometry in Lima. Severo again extended an invitation to lecture at the Congress.

I enlisted two additional U. of Alabama professors who are also VOSH-AL vice-presidents. Two Florida ODs recruited by Max and John also presented lectures at the Congress.

Optometry student education

Marcela Frazier, OD, (AL), conducted the first 8 hour workshop on Pediatric Optometry at one of three optometry schools in Lima, the Instituto Superior Eurohispano. The following day, Marsha Swanson, OD, (AL) and I presented lectures and hands-on experience in low vision rehabilitation. The workshops cov-



At a workshop on low vision rehabilitation presented by University of Alabama @ Birmingham professors and VOSHers Patti Fuhr, OD, and Marsha Swanson, OD, participants try out low-vision devices the women brought along. Classes and workshops were held at the Instituto Superior Eurohispano, one of three optometry schools in Lima, Peru.

ered primary causes of vision loss, types of vision loss, and low vision rehabilitative devices. Workshop participants (40-45) included optometrista from the community, ophthalmologists, teachers at the school and students from all three years of education at the Instituto Superior Eurohispano.

On the third day, Dr. Swanson and I presented a workshop on treatment of hemianopsia (field loss). A local neuro-ophthalmologist who teaches at the school presented case reports of his patients who had vision loss due to stroke, tumors, and trauma.

After presenting a lecture on treatment of hemianopsia using oblique prisms, Dr. Swanson and I treated the patients with the help of workshop participants. Two of the six patients were highly successful with prisms, two had some improvement in awareness of objects to the hemianopic side, and two had such profound visual field loss combined with visual acuity loss that prisms were not an option.

Continuing Education session

The fourth day of our visit to Lima coincided with the First Peruvian International Congress of Optometry and Optics. VOSH optometrist Marsha Swanson, OD, Marcela Frazier, OD, Robin Hamm-Lavalley, OD, (OH), Paul Anderson, OD, (FL), and I gave lectures on various optometric topics, including pediatrics, geriatrics, ocular disease, low vision, contact lenses, and anterior segment. The audience was comprised of optometrist and optometry students, ophthalmologists, technicians and opticians.

Dr. Frazier is bilingual so she was able to

present her lectures in Spanish. The rest of us prepared our slides in English. Nelson Rivera, OD, of Carrollton, Texas generously provided translations for those of us who don't speak Spanish. (I should mention that I first met Nelson at the same June V/I meeting.)

Eye care clinic

After the conclusion of the International Congress, we held clinics for four days and during that time saw 1,409 patients. Max Bruss and John Gehrig of VOSH-FL headed the clinic team. Nelson Rivera, OD, was instrumental in clinic setup and operation. We were accompanied by Senor Severo Sanchez, two of his instructors and five optometry students. New glasses were prescribed for each patient and were provided by the Rimac Rotary of Lima, in addition to the 300 readers provided by Lions of Indiana.

The connection continues

During the clinic we learned that one of our hosts had received a grant from Rotary International to help train persons with disabilities to use computers so that they may gain employment. We suggested they visit our program in Alabama to see what is available here as a model. As a result, three of the Rotary ladies spent two weeks in Alabama in November, learning all they could about services for the disabled. They told me they will use everything they learned; they are eternally grateful for the opportunities provided.

Contributing to the education of local professionals was rewarding. It may well be the best means of contributing to the ongoing eye care of the people of Peru.

Many VOSH teams active throughout Nicaragua

Continued from page 1

annually vary slightly, depending on volunteers, but usually include vision, medical, dental and mobility. The eye care portion of the clinic averages 2,000-2,500 patients annually, making that more than 20,000 eye exams over the years.

Six years ago Dr. Sakovits recruited Rhode Island ophthalmologist Steve Grimes, MD, to provide cataract surgery. Since then, Dr. Grimes has been collaborating with a local Nica ophthalmologist to perform 25-30 cataract surgeries at a hospital in Masaya during the four-day clinic.

This year the team brought along an audiologist, equipment, and 50 new hearing aids. In addition, VOSH-Northeast raised \$21,000 to send down 280 new wheelchairs made specifically for use in developing countries, then dispensed all of them during their four-days of clinic.

VOSH-Northeast has benefitted from the continued support of local Rotary Clubs (in the Masaya and Jamestown, US area), as well as the wife of the president of Nicaragua, Sra. Lila Teresa Abaunza de Bolanos. Other invaluable assistance has come from Miguel Silva, OD, and his wife Velia, Nicaraguan citizens who spent much of their lives in Seattle, Washington, then offered their services to VOSH-Northeast upon retiring to Nicaragua several years ago.

VOSH-NECO, VOSH-CT to San Juan del Sur

Joe D'Amico, OD, one of the founders of VOSH-NECO, led the first two teams that served in San Juan del Sur (SJS), a fishing community situated on a half-moon bay near the Costa Rican border. Initial contact was made through the Newton (MA) Sister City Project which carries out a number of projects here.

In 2000, Dr. D'Amico handed over leadership of this annual eye care clinic to team member Matt Blondin, OD, who later formed VOSH-CT. Matt and his wife Audrey continue to provide a four-day annual eye care clinic at the local high

school.

According to Audrey, mission size averages 30. Generally there are five to seven optometrists, ten to fifteen optometry students and two to four opticians among the group. Students come from different optometry schools, including California, New York and Missouri, as well as the Netherlands. Overall, more than 14,000 patients have been seen at this site to date.

The VOSH-CT team remains very involved with the community as a whole, providing educational scholarships and assisting with other community projects, notably the local library, one of the first lending libraries in Nicaragua.

A number of other volunteers from that first SJS mission were so impressed by the kindness and warmth of the Nica people they signed on to return. Dra. Rosa Elena Bello, Director of the SJS Free Clinic, has been the diligent in-country contact person working behind the scenes.

In subsequent years, Dra. Bello assisted Dr. D'Amico with a VOSH eye care clinic on the nearby island of Ometepe and

worked with him to establish a permanent one-lane clinic within the health clinic she runs in SJS. (The room is currently undergoing reconstruction.)

At least once a year, Jay Jordan, OD, of New

Hampshire, and Chris Fields, OD, of Vermont, have been trekking small teams via truck or horseback, to Sapoa, Cardenas, Ostional and La Libertad, rural comarcas outside SJS. They also see patients at the permanent clinic and they are actively raising money to build a full medical clinic in one of these outlying towns.

Bruce Moore, OD, another veteran of that initial VOSH-NECO team, has since led a group to work in an orphanage on Ometepe and in Quetzalaguaque, sister-city to the town of Brookline, MA where Dr. Moore resides. Most recently, in March, Dr. Moore returned to San Juan del Sur to work with Dra. Bello in the permanent

clinic.

Pilot project with trained undergraduates

Dr. Moore, a professor at the New England College of Optometry (NECO), has spent the past two years on a pilot eye care project in Bluefields, Puerto Cabezas and Wampum, villages on the Atlantic coast of the country where people are more isolated and life is even more difficult. Each of these clinics included a dozen or so Williams undergraduates who were taught basic refraction using flippers. Training took place before traveling and then again on-site. During the actual clinic students were paired with professionals. From the five such clinics that have taken place, over 10,000 individuals have been served. (See V/I newsletter, winter, 2003-2004.)

Training local brigadistas

Two years ago, Erik Weissberg, OD, also of that first SJS mission, along with NECO colleagues Bruce Moore, OD, and Nicole Quinn, OD, initiated a "grassroots optometrist clinical project" in Mozonte, Nuevo Segovia. Dr. Weissberg provided health care workers in Mozonte a full day of training for treating presbyopia using the protocol he and his colleagues developed, then compared the results clinically. The project is expected to take 3 years to complete. (See V/I newsletter, winter, 2004-2005.)

Dr. Weissberg feels that if local health care workers can be trained to effectively handle presbyopia at clinics held in underserved areas, the optometrist could better utilize his/her time in identifying and treating individuals with more complicated eye problems.

The archipelago of Solentiname

Two years ago a professor at the University of Massachusetts involved in projects in Solentiname, contacted Dr. D'Amico about offering an eye care clinic on the archipelago of 38 islands more commonly known as Solentiname. Dr. D'Amico led a small team there two years ago, then returned this year to the nearby towns of Almendro, Sabalos and San Carlos. He is already making plans for another clinic in this vicinity next year.



Treating a patient in San Juan del Sur.



▲ Triangles mark VOSH clinic sites

Patients seen in the San Carlos area number approximately 1,800 to date. Dr. D'Amico is recruiting ophthalmological assistance for referrals compiled this year.

VOSH-FL serves Matagalpa, teams up with VOSH-AL in Granada

Five years ago, VOSH-FL partnered with the Winter Park (FL) Presbyterian Church on an eye care clinic to Matagalpa. They have since returned to this area seven times, also serving in Leon, Esteli and Muy-Muy, where they've seen over 12,000 patients to date.

Two years ago, VOSH-FL started working with the Ministry of Justice in providing eye exams for the eight penitentiaries in Nicaragua. So far they've serviced two and plan to cover one annually. The team has also initiated a "Specs for Kids" pilot program designed to reach out to Nicaraguan children in public schools.

Dunia Mendoza, a Nica optometrist serves as in-country mission coordinator for a number of VOSH missions. With equipment lent to her for use during the duration of their collaboration, Dr. Mendoza is in the process of opening her own practice in Jinotepe and she has been invited to staff both the Decano Lions Clinic and the Alabama Granada Clinic two days per month.

VOSH-AL, VOSH-FL in Granada

Five years ago, Dr. Rudy Vargas an endocrinologist at the University of Alabama (UAB) founded Friends of Rudy (FOR) and enlisted support from those around him to provide medical and surgical

care for the people who live in and near his home town of Granada, Nicaragua. Most importantly, he has established the Alabama Granada Clinic, a healthcare facility where the poor can afford services and medications are provided free of charge.

In January, 2005, forty individuals, including volunteers from VOSH-AL and VOSH-FL, assisted Dr. Vargas at his Granada clinic. Patti Fuhr, OD, a colleague of Dr. Vargas at UAB, oversaw the examin-

ing area where 700 patients were seen, provided glasses if necessary and referred for further treatment as needed.

VOSH-OH in Esteli

VOSH-OH served in Esteli in 1992, then, in reaction to the devastation caused

by Hurricane Mitch, organized another team for 2000. The VOSHers saw 3,200 patients in a hospital in 4 1/2 days of clinic. Liz Davila, a native of Nicaragua with friends and family there, assisted with the project, as did the Esteli Lions Club.

While new, the hospital had no supplies or equipment. When they got home, the VOSH-OH team worked with an agency to fill containers to ship to this hospital. They continued to volunteer at the agency one day a month until this past winter.

SVOSH-NOVA to Rivas

At press time, NOVA Southeastern University School of Optometry (FL) student Juan Canizales was organizing a Student VOSH team to Rivas, a port town near San Juan del Sur, where Juan's family is from and where they still maintain a home.

For full text of individual trip reports, see file "VOSH in Nicaragua Trip Reports" at www.VOSH.org.

Permanent eye care clinic opportunities

San Juan del Sur, Nicaragua

Established by VOSH-NECO in 1999, the permanent eye care clinic within the Free Clinic in San Juan del Sur is presently undergoing major renovation. When operational, it includes a one-lane examining room with an adjacent library/dispensary of glasses. Equipment includes a chair, stand, phoropter, slit lamp and BIO. ODs are sought to serve at this site which affords an ideal opportunity for an individual or couple to serve, learn Spanish, enjoy the beach and the Nica community. Contact Jay Jordan, OD, jordanigro@metrocast.net

Christo Sano-LA clinic, Granada

In 2002, the Louisiana Optometric Association, under the leadership of Jim Sandefur, OD, set up an eye care clinic within the Christo Sano facility in Granada, Nicaragua. Medical and dental care is also available here.

The eye clinic includes two full examining lanes, slit lamps, a patternless edger, refractive tools and some frames. More ODs are needed. Dr. Sandefur urges optometrist who are interested in experi-

encing the people and sites of this Spanish colonial city while providing eye care services in a comfortable office-like setting, to contact him at optla@bellsouth.net

Alabama-Granada Clinic

www.fornicaraguanhealth.org
Healthcare facility established by Dr. Rudy Vargas of the U. of Alabama who is from Granada. (See above article.) email Patti Fuhr, pfuhr@mindspring.com.

Decano Lions Clinic, Granada

The Decano Lions Club of Granada recently built a permanent clinic with a reception area, an eye exam lane, a small optical dispensary and a medical lane. They have invited Dr. Dunia Mendoza to work in their facility two days per month and are seeking additional OD coverage.

Help in setting up this clinic came from InFOCUS, a non-profit organization formed by Drs. Ian Berger and Larry Spitzberg of the University of Houston College of Optometry.

Contact info@infocusonline.org

Karibu Tena

Karl Gingrich is an American who lived in Tanzania and now spends four months a year there. He was the in-country contact VOSH-OH worked with in planning this clinic. Following are excerpts from an email of appreciation he sent to the VOSH-OH team:

On behalf of all my friends in Tanzania, I want to thank you for all that you did for them while you were in Tanzania. I had a meeting at the US Embassy shortly after you all left and they had seen in the newspapers what you had done and were very impressed with the results and told me to let you all know that they also appreciated your work there.

It still rings in my ears, the story that Shanti told about the man in the first village that we worked at in Dar, who, when provided glasses - jumped up and began to dance and shout, "I can see - I can see" and continued dancing out the door singing, "I can see!" I wish that I had my camera to record that. What a statement on your work there.

I hope you all still have all the good memories remaining that I have of this VOSH trip. The heat; the thirst; the crowds; the hard work; the VIPs; the wonderful hospitality of the Dar Lions Clubs and their evening entertainment; the graciousness of the people we served; the lazy feeling on Zanzibar; of not finding the patient forms until the 2nd day; the church choir singing to us each evening as a way of thanking us; all those Tanzanians who came and jumped right in to help us from time to time; the long plane ride; the difference you all made in the lives of 4,000 Tanzanians.

As you might have learned while you were there and heard often, in Kiswahili we would say, "Karibu Tena," - "You are welcomed to come back again." Again, thank you on behalf of my Tanzanian friends.

Kwa heri ya kuonana (Goodbye until we see each other once again.)

Karl Gingrich.



LEFT: VOSHer Amy Hookway with a Tanzanian patient ABOVE: Instructor Dr. Valerian V. Lyimo (with sunglasses) and Tanzanian optometric students take a break.

Tanzanian optometry students work with VOSH-OH team in Dar es Salaam

by Bill Campbell, OD, and
Barbara Plaughter, RN, VOSH-OH

In January, 2005, thirty-five VOSH-OH volunteers traveled to Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. The VOSHers divided into two teams, the Dar group and the Tanga group. Both teams included seven optometrists.

The Dar group led by Bill Campbell, OD, worked in Mkuramga and Kigamboni. Two third-year Tanzanian optometry students and their instructor, introduced to VOSH-OH through V/I, worked with this team.

Prior to the mission VOSH-OH contacted the school. Arrangements were made for the Ohio VOSHers to sponsor these students by providing their transportation and lodging, about \$400 US, which was raised through a letter distributed to membership.

The instructor, Dr. Valerian V. Lyimo, a graduate of the Houston College of Optometry, teaches at the Tanzanian school of optometry (Tumaini University at the Kilimanjaro Christian Medical Center). He is the current president of the Tanzania Optometric Association.

The school has thirty students in three levels (10 in each); instruction takes place in a hospital clinic setting.

The students got a great deal of experience from working with us. Neither was really proficient with the hand instruments, but they were much better by the time the clinics were concluded.

At clinic's end, both students were given an ophthalmoscope and retinoscope of their own, courtesy of the ODs on the Dar team. VOSHers also donated some medical and optometry books to the school.

The second group of VOSH-OH volunteers headed for the villages of Korowga and Lushoto. In Korowga, they worked in a government hospital. Glasses and equipment had to be removed from the facility each day because security was not available. The Lushoto clinic was held in a community center.

Referrals went to Dr. Vincent Mhoro and Dr. Ngereza, local ophthalmologists who both worked at the clinic sites.

Three more American ODs donated their ophthalmoscopes to the Korowga hospital, along with medications. A trial lens set and glasses were left with the Tanga Lions Club.

VOSH-OH had great support from the eight Lions Clubs in the greater Dar area. About 4,000 patients were seen overall.

We saw many patients in this underserved country; patients were appreciative. It felt good for American optometry to be supporting a budding Tanzanian optometric profession. Whenever possible, VOSH should support optometry students in any country where we serve.

Visit www.VOSH.org
for updated trip listings,
Chapter news, the message board
and so much more.

VOSH newsnotes at a glance

IN MEMORIAM:

Ted Collister, VOSH-Northeast,
July 29, 1919 - Dec. 4, 2004

Ted Collister of Salina, Kansas, will be remembered for his nearly 30 years of dedicated service to VOSH. Both a real estate agent and an optician by profession, Ted made contact with Franklin Harms, OD, in nearby Hillsboro, just as the founder of VOSH was talking up his vision in the early 1970s.



With Dr. Harms' encouragement, Ted and his wife Ellen signed on to join a VOSH trip to Honduras. They drew dispensary duty, a natural assignment since the couple owned and operated an optical shop. Gratified by the experience, the Collisters continued to offer their services annually to poor communities throughout Central America and in Poland. Ted's outgoing personality and the innumerable whimsical gifts he brought along to share with patients earned him many lasting friends wherever the team served.

In the mid 1990s Ted ceased his VOSH activities but volunteered again a few years later when granddaughters Lisa and Shelley were finishing college. Ted decided they needed to experience the joy VOSH trips had given him and Ellen for so many years. So, in 1998, the Collisters once again served VOSH-Northeast, this time in Honduras.

Ted Collister fully retired from VOSH service shortly after that but his grandchildren have not missed a VOSH-Northeast trip ever since. Ted was quite proud to know that

servicing VOSH would remain a Collister tradition.

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IN MEMORIAM:

Sydney Perlman, OD, VOSH-IL

Dr. Sydney Perlman of Flossmoor, IL, passed away recently. A graduate of the Illinois College of Optometry, Dr. Perlman was a founding member of VOSH. During his many years of service he organized nearly 30 missions to developing countries around the globe including Poland, Swaziland and Colombia.

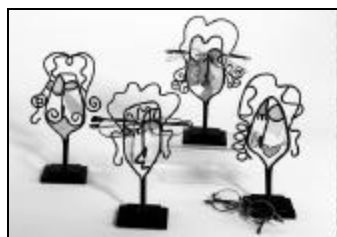
Through his affiliation with the Park Forest Lions Club, Dr. Perlman helped train inmates of women's correctional facilities in Indiana to read eyeglass prescriptions and otherwise prepare recycled eyeglasses for use on missions. In addition to his private practice in Rosedale, Dr. Perlman was one of the first optometrists to practice at the South Chicago Community Hospital.

Dr. Perlman's wife Inez, who passed away last July, also played an integral role in Dr. Perlman's VOSH activities and handled all travel arrangements.

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EYEGLOSS HOLDERS

DONATED: Prosperity Tree



International, of Torrence, CA has donated several thousand Cubist art style eyeglass holders to V/I for use in fundraising or as giveaways. Look for them at the V/I booth at the American

Optometric Association's Convention in Texas. Dale Cole, OD, is kindly storing them in his Salina office. For further information:

dcole@informatics.net

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IN APPRECIATION: THE CHICAGO LIGHTHOUSE

V/I leaders held a board meeting in Chicago in November. Newly-appointed vice-president Sandy Bury, OD, made arrangements for meetings to be hosted by The Chicago Lighthouse which generously donated the space, served refreshments and offered a tour of the facility. Everyone on the Board was astounded by the depth and breadth of this non-profit organization that truly is a beacon for blind or visually impaired individuals throughout the entire midwest.

The modern, well kept-facility houses classrooms, a kitchen, meeting areas and well-equipped consulting rooms for its many services. It also houses a Braille library covering 8,000 square feet of space and including more than 6,000 book titles, 20,000 volumes and a number of low-vision educational devices.

But that's not all. The Lighthouse facility also encompasses an entire clock manufacturing plant that employs 30 to 40 individuals who are blind or visually impaired. Profits from the business help underwrite the costs involved in running The Lighthouse.

The Chicago Lighthouse has contracts to supply clocks and related devices to veterans, clinics and retirement facilities throughout the country. The product line includes items such as white canes, talking watches and low vision lenses. Among

its biggest sellers is a line of wall clocks of all sizes, with large numbers on which a logo can be superimposed. Some are quite reasonable and would be excellent presentation items.

See: www.thechicagolighthouse.org

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PARTNERING WITH PRVAIL:

PRVAIL (*Partners in Restoring Vision and Improving Lives*) is a three-year-old, non-profit organization that provides reading glasses for missions at no charge as long as a qualified OD or MD is included on the mission. Several VOSH leaders have already made contact with this group.

Email: Mark Sachs,
info@restoringvision.org.

Upcoming VOSH Trips

For a complete listing of upcoming VOSH trips around the globe, visit

www.VOSH.org.

Be sure to check the trip listings frequently as updates are made daily. And, don't forget the message board where questions, interest in forming teams, and requests for teams are posted.

For the convenience of interested volunteers, trip leaders are asked to email updated trip information to harryzeltzer@comcast.net or to fill in the form located at the top of the Upcoming Trips page of our website as soon as they set their schedule.

GO VOSHers!



VOSH/INTERNATIONAL is a voluntary non-profit organization whose primary goal is to facilitate the provision of vision care worldwide to people who can neither afford nor obtain such care.

VOSH/INTERNATIONAL accomplishes this goal by service as a coordinating body for affiliated Chapters, by administratively supporting activities of Chapters and members, and by actively promoting the formation of new Chapters and new members.

VOSH/INTERNATIONAL is a non-sectarian and non-political organization. Currently there are 31 VOSH Chapters. In addition, there are 18 active student Chapters.

Visit ***www.VOSH.org***

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Please display newsletter in your office or otherwise circulate.

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We would like to acknowledge Baum Printing, a Moore Wallace Co., of Philadelphia, for its assistance in the printing and delivery of this newsletter.

V/I prepares for Annual Meeting in Dallas

Join us for two jam-packed, half-day sessions, June 22-23, 2005

Again this year VOSH/INTERNATIONAL has planned its Annual Meeting to coincide with the AOA Congress. Responding to your suggestions, we've scheduled activities for two half-days during the middle of the weeklong congress. All activities will take place at the Gaylord Texan Resort & Convention Center, a world-class hotel that's a destination in and of itself.

Beyond the hotel, Dallas beckons and it's a city that Style Magazine has named one of the nation's top cultural tourism destinations.

Initially, Executive Director Harry Zeltzer expressed concern about finding a group of speakers as outstanding as last year's. Not to worry. Harry has assembled another outstanding roster for our Wednesday afternoon Humanitarian Panel, starting at 1 PM. See reverse of this page for brief bios of some of the scheduled speakers. There will be no charge for this session.

The V/I Annual Chapter Business Meeting will take place the next morning from 7 AM to noon. There is a nominal \$25 charge (breakfast is included) for this session which will include election of officers, setting goals, approving new Chapters, discussion of collaborative efforts, breakout sessions, trip report highlights and other discussions.

Seating is limited so we ask you to sign up for both sessions before May 20.

We are proud of the growth and devel-

opment of our meetings and we want more of you to participate, to meet and hear firsthand what your fellow VOSHERs are doing, to learn what other organizations are doing, and to learn where we need to make improvements as we provide vision care to the needy worldwide. Most of all, we'd simply like to meet you in person, to put real faces behind the many wonderful trip reports you submit. Please make 2005 the year you attend a VOSH/INTERNATIONAL Annual Meeting. For your convenience, use the registration form below, or register online at www.VOSH.org.

Lodging options

Both the Gaylord Texan Resort & Convention Center and the Hyatt Regency DFW are official meeting sites for the week. Room rates at either of these two hotels average \$200 per night. The Gaylord Texan Resort and Convention Center is situated on 150 acres bordering Lake Grapevine. It includes over four acres of indoor gardens, an outdoor pool, six restaurants, a golf course, a spa, and even watersports on Lake Grapevine, as well as a variety of boutiques and stores.

The newly renovated Hyatt Regency includes seven restaurants, a pool and a nearby golf club. It is a short complimentary shuttle ride to and from the Gaylord Texan Resort.

Additional shopping and entertainment are nearby. The city of Dallas itself with



Atrium of the Gaylord Texan Resort & Convention Center

the largest urban arts district in the US and over 100 live performances nightly, is just 20 minutes away.

There are a number of other hotels within a short distance, including the Best Western Inn & Suites at DFW (avg. \$60), The Radisson Hotel DFW Airport (avg. \$90), Quality Inn & Suites at DFW Airport (avg. \$60). See www.hotels.com on the internet for other lodging options. Don't put it off too long as many are already booked or do not accept reservations for less than three days.

Contact V/I Secretary-Treasurer Charlie Covington at ccovington@cfl.rr.com if you have any further questions.

REGISTRATION FOR VOSH/INTERNATIONAL ANNUAL MEETING

Gaylord Texan Resort & Convention Center, Dallas, Texas, June 22, 23, 2005

Wednesday Afternoon

Humanitarian Panel

No Registration Fee

Thursday Morning

Chapter Business

\$25 Registration Fee

(includes breakfast; after May 20, registration fee: \$35)

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip/Country _____

e-mail: _____

Please check: Wednesday PM Thursday AM Seating is limited so please fill out this form and mail it as soon as possible, with registration fee, if any, to:

VOSH/INTERNATIONAL, Charles Covington, Sr., Secretary/Treasurer,

111 Linda Lane, Lake Mary, FL 32746-4208

You can also register by visiting our website: www.VOSH.org

Speakers at the V/I 2005 Annual Meeting , Wednesday, June 22, 1-5 PM

Robert Norman Bailey, OD

"Ethics of VOSH Eye Care Missions"

Robert Norman Bailey, OD, is a professor at the University of Houston School of Optometry. In addition to his OD degree, Dr. Bailey has an MPH, an MBA and an MA (Psychology).



Dr. Bailey has written and lectured extensively throughout the world on issues related to ethics. He serves as course master and lecturer in Public Health, Community Optometry and Ethics at the University of Houston. He is a member of the International Advisory Group on Optometric competencies for the World Council of Optometry. In 2003, the WCO awarded Dr. Bailey a fellowship to teach at the School of Optometry, Ramkhamhaeng University, in Bangkok, Thailand.

Howard "Skip" Charles

"REIMS, VOSH and expediting the distribution of recycled eyeglasses"

In 1997, then a semi-retired CFO, Skip began volunteering to assist on VOSH clinics in El Salvador. Assigned to the dispensary, the knowledgeable computer guru felt there could be a computer solution to assist untrained



dispensary volunteers select the best prescription. (Skip holds an MBA from Harvard and a BSEE from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.)

It didn't take long for him to collaborate on such a project with the late Phil Richmond, OD, a dedicated VOSH volunteer he met in El Salvador. The two combined their skills to create a computerized recycled eyeglass inventory management system for use on VOSH trips. In honor of his friend who passed away as the program neared completion, Skip named the program the Richmond Eye Inventory Matching System (REIMS).

Skip Charles and Dr. Phil Richmond (posthumously) have been selected to receive the V/I Humanitarian Award for 2005.



PDG Ike Fitzgerald

"TLERC and VOSH"

Octogenarian Ike Fitzgerald is a dedicated Texas Lion who has achieved a number of accolades for his accomplishments during his many

years of service.

None is more important than his efforts as the driving force behind the Texas Lions Club Eyeglass Recycling Center (TLERC). Located in Midland, Texas, the Center got underway in 1992 with Ike as its CEO. In recognition for his work, the building where over a half million pairs of glasses are processed annually, has been named the Ike Fitzgerald Center.

In addition to TLERC, the local Lions now have several satellite operations, along with recycling projects in three separate prisons.

Seeing where there were further needs, Ike has enlisted the aid of optometrist and others to develop an Optical Training Program. Volunteers come to the Recycling Center for training, then travel to developing nations to train locals to hold their own clinics.

Hare Krishna Patnaik

"VOSH in India"

Hare Patnaik was recently appointed by the V/I Board to serve as Asia Pacific Consultant.



Mr. Patnaik immigrated to the United States from India in 1976 to study bio medical engineering. He holds a BS in Electrical Engineering, an MS in Control Systems and an MS in Computer Engineering from the University of Detroit, Michigan, an MBA and PE from U of Detroit, Michigan and Ohio.

He is the president and founder of HP Microsystems Inc. For the last six years, he has been conducting eye health camps in tribal villages in the western part of Orissa, India. Mr. Patnaik was one of the organizers of the 2004 Vision 2020 workshop in Orissa. Following the workshop Mr. Patnaik assisted president Dale Cole, OD, at a nearby VOSH mission.

Jennifer Staple

"Unite for Sight and VOSH"

A young woman with indefatigable energy, Jennifer Staple is the founder, president and CEO of Unite for Sight, a nonprofit organization that partners with university students, health care projects and organizations worldwide to improve eye health and eliminate preventable blindness. She started the organization just five years ago as a sophomore at Yale University. Today the organization has 75 Chapters.



Among her projects for Unite for Sight, Ms. Staple has implemented internships and community programs in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe. She has created an online eye health course for volunteer certification. She has formed a lecture series to discuss preventive medicine and eye health and she has organized an Annual International Health Conference.

Ms. Staple graduated from Yale University in 2003 with dual majors in Anthropology and Biology. This fall she will enter Stanford University School of Medicine.

Satya Verma, OD

The AOA and VOSH: A Developing Relationship

Satya Verma, OD, is Director of Community Eye Care, External Clinics and of Resident Eye Services for the Pennsylvania College of Optometry.



As a member of the AOA Board, Dr. Verma is frequently called upon to represent the AOA at meetings throughout the world. Among his added duties, Dr. Verma has been assigned to serve as a liaison to VOSH/INTERNATIONAL. Since both organizations are growing and evolving, we'd like a more current understanding of our potential to work together.

An impressive speaker with a good sense of humor, Dr. Verma will tackle the topic with our members.

Jerry Vincent, OD

A Public Health Approach to Eye Care in Developing Countries

Jerry Vincent, OD, was recently appointed to serve as Public Health Consultant to the V/I Executive Board.

He is a graduate of the University of Houston, College of Optometry and earned a MPH at the University of Texas. Presently Dr. Vincent works for the International Rescue Committee to provide eye-related technical support as needed in the more than 20 countries where the organization has health programs.

Dr. Vincent, has spent 20 years working as a public health optometrist with a primary interest in international blindness prevention. Most of his work has been on behalf of the most vulnerable segments of society, including refugees, displaced and war-affected populations.

Formerly, Dr. Vincent served on the faculty at UHCO, UNIBEN in Nigeria and InterAmerican University in Puerto Rico.

