

# Optimum VA



The Official Newsletter of the  
National Association of Veterans Affairs Optometrists

**November 2007**

## NAVAO Officers

President

**Gay Tokamaru**

Vice President

**Brian Kawasaki**

Secretary

**David Storer**

Treasurer

**Weon Jun**

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Seasons greetings to all fellow NAVAO members:

NAVAO celebrated its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary and a wonderful time was had by all at the 30<sup>th</sup> annual NAVAO banquet, held in conjunction with the American Academy of Optometry meeting Oct 25<sup>th</sup> at the Tampa Marriott in Tampa, Florida.

We also held elections for officers, and I would like to welcome back Dr. Brian Kawasaki as Vice-President, as well as welcome the newest officers. Dr. Weon Jun of the Portland VAMC will be serving as the new Treasurer, and Dr. David Storer of the Adam Benjamin Jr. VA OPC in Crown Point, IN is our new Secretary. I would also like to welcome on board Dr. Dawn N. Tomasini of the VA Hudson Valley Healthcare System, who will be our new Newsletter Editor. Thank you to all of you who previously held these positions and for your hard work over the years – we certainly appreciate it!

If you did not attend the NAVAO dinner this year, you definitely missed a not-to-be-forgotten evening! This year we celebrated the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of NAVAO, and invited all original founding members of NAVAO who were at the original meeting. There does appear to be some confusion about who was actually at the first meeting amongst those who were there, but that's what happens after millions of e-mails and memoranda, thousands of patient exams, hundreds of hours of mandatory continuing education, ---and 30 yrs of (repressed) memories spent in the VA....

Nevertheless, we were grateful to those who attended and shared their memories of the first years of NAVAO and Optometry in the VA. To protect the innocent, no names will be given, and I will not---not even if threatened with waterboarding---ever repeat the stories I heard. Suffice it to say that activities akin to dumpster diving, the jerry-rigging of exam equipment, and the purloining of charts from the clinic would put you in the right neighborhood...

And that's all I have to say on that.

With the New Year starting, please remember to pay your NAVAO dues, and take a few minutes to encourage a nonmember to join. NAVAO is **the** organization for optometrists within the VA, and we have a wonderful 30 years of heritage to build upon.

Current NAVAO members as well as new members interested in joining may do so on the NAVAO website (<http://www.navao.org/>).

Safe and Happy Holidays to all, and I hope to see you in 2008!

## ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS

**American Academy of  
Optometry Meeting in  
Tampa, FL**

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**Congratulations to the following VA Optometrists who attained Fellowship in the American Academy of Optometry in 2007!**

1. Teresa Aris – Battle Creek VAMC
2. Jenette Cantrell – Bay Pines VAHCS
3. Elaine Chung – Palo Alto VAMC
4. Jennifer Elam – Lexington VAMC
5. Lila Goodwin – Greenville, SC OPC
6. Dennis Light – Dayton VAMC
7. Heidi Mayer – Erie VAMCPA
8. William McGill – Columbia, SC VA
9. Angela Musik – Salem VAMC
10. Jessica Potter – Manchester VAMC
11. Amy Quan – Baltimore VAMC
12. Dana Rasmussen – Los Angeles VAMC
13. Philip Roels – Salisbury VAMC
14. Makisha Sink – Hampton VAMC
15. Gary Vanderzee – Sioux Falls VAMC
16. Angela Zurowski – Cleveland VAMC

**Congratulations to the following VA Optometrist who lectured at the American Academy of Optometry Annual Meeting in Tampa 2007**

1. Rex Ballinger - Glaucoma Imposters: Case Studies of Conditions
2. Anthony Cavallerano - AMD from A to Z
3. Kelliann Dignam - Selective Laser Trabeculoplasty; A Cold Approach To Glaucoma Management
4. Bernard Dolan: Treatment of Exudative Age-related Macular Degeneration (AMD)
5. Robert Dunphy - Digital Retinal Imaging: Overview and Clinical Applications in Primary Eye Care and Case Studies in Diagnostic Imaging of the Glaucomatous Optic Nerve Head
6. Steven Ferrucci - Beyond AREDS: New Thinking in the Prevention of ARMD and Contemporary Treatment Options for Wet and Dry ARMD
7. Murray Fingeret - My Most Commonly Asked Questions Related to Glaucoma
8. Michael Fischer and William O'Connell - Video and Adaptive Technology In Vision Rehabilitation and Computer Based Technology in Vision Rehabilitation
9. Richard Frick - Carotid Artery Disease
10. Amy Grimes - How to Catch a Malingerer—Tricks of the Trade
11. Barnie Lim - The Newest Therapies in the Management of Retinal Vein Occlusions
12. Anthony Litwak and John Spalding - Controversies in Glaucoma
13. Michael Sullivan Mee - A New Look at Intraocular Pressure
14. Andrew Mick - The Dilemma of Early Glaucoma Diagnosis and Transient Ischemic Attack
15. Amy Quan and Nancy Wong - Retinal Vascular Disease: When Blood Vessels Go Bad!
16. Stuart Richer - Integrative Medicine & Nutritional Genomics
17. Alyon Wasik - Hepatitis C Interferon & the Eye: What's the Connection?
18. David Yang - Anterior and Endothelial Keratoplasty and Advances and Controversies in Thyroid Associated Orbitopathy

# VA Reorganizes Vision Rehabilitation

The Department of Veterans Affairs has allocated \$40 million dollars over the next three years to the reorganization of vision rehabilitation services. Under the plan, each of the 21 VISNs will receive an intermediate low vision clinic, an advanced low vision clinic and a blind rehabilitation center. These new low vision clinics are in addition to the existing programs which include the VISOR program in Lebanon, PA, the 4 VICTORS programs in New York, Chicago, Florida and Missouri and the 10 Blind Rehabilitation Centers located throughout the country.

Visual Impairment Services Outpatient Rehabilitation (VISOR) program is located in Lebanon, PA. It is a nine day outpatient rehabilitation program which offers skills training, orientation and mobility, and low vision therapy. It is staffed by a blind rehabilitation specialist (BROS) and a Visual Impairment Service Team (VIST) Coordinator which could be either a social worker or a certified low vision therapist. Overnight accommodations are available for those requiring temporary lodging in order to access these services but the patient must be able to independently perform the activities of daily living.

Visual Impairment Center to Optimize Remaining Sight (VICTORS) is an interdisciplinary outpatient program which incorporates optometry, ophthalmology, social work, psychology and low vision therapists. It was designed to provide rehabilitation services to veterans with low vision but did not meet the legal blindness classification. Visual evaluations and training in the use of low vision aids are provided in conjunction with psychology, social work and audiology.

Blind Rehabilitation Centers provide a comprehensive residential inpatient program for legally blinded veterans. The skill courses offered are designed to help the blinded veteran achieve a realistic level of independence. These skill areas include orientation and mobility, communication skills, activities of daily living, manual skills, visual skills, computer access training and social/recreational activities. The veteran is also assisted in making an emotional and behavioral adjustment to blindness through individual counseling sessions and group therapy meetings. The length of the program varies depending on the severity of vision loss, emotional condition and learning ability, but is usually between four and eight weeks.

The following table outlines the additional low vision clinics being added to the existing VICTORS and Blind Rehabilitation Programs:

Key: VICTORS = Visual Impairment Center To Optimize Remaining Sight program (Existing)  
 VISOR = Visual Impairment Services Outpatient Rehabilitation program (Existing)  
 BRC = Blind Rehabilitation Center (Existing) (Proposed)

VISN	Intermediate Low Vision Clinic	Advanced Low Vision Clinic/ VICTORS	VISOR/Blind Rehabilitation Center
1	White River, VT	Boston, MA-Jamaica Plain	West Haven, CT
2	Albany, NY	Syracuse, NY	Buffalo, NY
3	Hudson Valley, NY	Brooklyn, NY Northport, NY	East Orange, NJ
4	Pittsburgh, PA	Philadelphia, PA	Lebanon, PA
5	Martinsburg, WVA	Baltimore, MD	Washington DC
6	Hampton, VA	Salisbury, NC	Richmond, VA
7	Columbia, SC	Atlanta, GA – Decatur	Augusta, GA Birmingham, AL
8	Ocala, FL	Tampa, FL Lake City, FL	West Palm Beach, FL San Juan, PR
9	Memphis, TN	Nashville, TN	Lexington, KY
10	Cincinnati, OH	Dayton, OH	Cleveland, OH
11	Detroit, MI	Saginaw, MI	Battle Creek, MI
12	Madison, WI	Milwaukee, WI Chicago, IL – Westside	Chicago, IL - Hines
15	St. Louis, MO	Wichita, KS Kansas City, MO	Kansas City, MO
16	Oklahoma City, OK	Little Rock, AR	Houston, TX Biloxi, MS – 2009?
17	Temple, TX	Dallas, TX	Waco, TX
18	Albuquerque, NM	Phoenix, AZ	Tucson, AZ
19	Fort Harrison, MT	Salt Lake City, UT	Denver, CO
20	Spokane, WA	Portland, OR	American Lake, WA
21	Utiah CBOC, CA	Martinez, CA	Palo Alto, CA
22	Loma Linda, CA Las Vegas, NV	W Los Angeles, CA San Diego, CA	Long Beach, CA – 2009?
23	Sioux Falls, SD	Des Moines, IA	Minneapolis, MN

## Veterans Affairs/Department of Defense Conference on Visual Consequences of Traumatic Brain Injury

The first of its kind, a joint conference between the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense held in San Antonio, Texas from December 4-7, 2007 was a HUGE success! It included optometrists, ophthalmologists, blind rehabilitation specialists, neuropsychologists, neurologists, occupational and physical therapists, audiologists and social workers. After four years of difficult planning, the dream of West Haven VA optometrist, Kara Gagnon had finally come to light. The conference emphasized the multidisciplinary approach to the care required for the special population of soldiers returning from Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). The important role that optometrists must play in the polytrauma team could not be more evident. With years of wisdom and experience, Dr. Allen Cohen, retired chief of optometry from Northport VA, gave us the tools with which to diagnose and treat this population. Dr. Ken Ciuffreda showed how invaluable oculomotility training is with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) patients. Neuro-optometrist Dr. Penelope Suter demonstrated the importance of visual rehabilitation in the active recovery stages of traumatic brain injury. With inspiring words from General Gale Pollack who challenged us to improve the lives of our veterans as well as from Steven Scott, part of the Polytrauma Team at the Tampa VA, it is apparent that optometry should rise to the occasion of this special needs population.

There are currently four VA polytrauma rehabilitation centers located in Richmond, VA, Tampa, FL, Minneapolis, MN and Palo Alto, CA. In addition, there are seventeen Polytrauma Network Sites located in:

Boston, MA	Hines, IL
Syracuse, NY	St. Louis, MO
Bronx, NY	Houston, TX
Philadelphia, PA	Dallas, TX
Washington D.C.	Tuscon, AZ
Augusta, GA	Denver, CO
Lexington, KY	Seattle, WA
Cleveland, OH	West Los Angeles, CA
Indianapolis, IN	

Members of the Palo Alto Polytrauma Rehabilitation Team presented data on the types of injuries they have typically seen in the TBI patients treated at their facility. Because of the multiple injuries incurred by these patients, a multidisciplinary approach is necessary for their care. The panel included an audiologist, optometrist, ophthalmologist, low vision therapist and included information from occupational and physical therapists. Specialty care includes specialty testing with a consensus that traditional neuroimaging studies may not be adequate for TBI patients.

### Visual Symptoms of patients with Traumatic Brain Injury

1. headaches
2. blurred vision at near
3. vague reading complaints
4. photosensitivity
5. diplopia
6. imbalance due to visual defects in space perception
7. intolerance of visually crowded spaces

### Ocular Findings in patients with Traumatic Brain Injury

1. visual field defects – 45%
2. decreased contrast sensitivity – 40%
3. oculomotor dysfunction -40%
4. angle recession – 32%
5. corneal injuries – 20%
6. cataracts – 28%
7. retinal injuries – 22%

### Optometric Management of Patients with Traumatic Brain Injury

1. full spectacle correction – even with small amounts of hyperopia or astigmatism
2. accessory lens correction – prism, tints, anti-reflective coatings, selective occlusion
3. visual field testing
4. oculomotor training – saccades and pursuits
5. binocular training – vergence ranges, near point of convergence, visual-motor training
6. visual perceptual training

With the overwhelming occurrence of visual impairments in TBI patients, it is crucial that optometry take an active role in the multidisciplinary care of this special needs population. Optometric referrals should be mandatory for all TBI patients, but as of now they are not. We need to take a pro-active stance in assuring that these returning soldiers are getting the best care that we know how to give.

## NAVAO Business Meeting

Thursday, October 25, 2007

6:00 PM

The Meeting was called to order by Gay Tokumaru, O.D., President, NAVAQ. Dr. Tokumaru mentioned that this was the 30<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the NAVAQ.

Minutes of the last meeting were unanimously approved with no corrections. Copies of the minutes will be distributed to NAVAQ members.

Brian Kawasaki, presented the financial report for NAVAQ Treasurer, Michael Huang, who was not able to make the meeting. Dr. Kawasaki stated that NAVAQ had an income \$22,511 and expenses of \$20,104 thus leaving no deficit for this calendar year.

Dr. Kawasaki announced the results of the election of new NAVAQ officers. The officers for the coming two years are as follows:

President: Gay Tokumaru

Vice-President: Brian Kawasaki

Secretary: David Storer

Treasurer: Weon Jun

Newsletter/ Optimum VA Editor – Dawn Tomasini

The Eagle Award was presented to Rebecca Diller and Kelly Thompson by Steven Ferrucci for their Article titled “Visual Loss Secondary . . . . .?”

Certificates of appreciation for service were presented by Dr. Tokumaru to the following people:

Brian Kawasaki – Vice-President

Michael Huang – Treasurer (outgoing)

Michael White – Secretary, (outgoing)

James Williamson – Editor, Optimum VA (outgoing)

Sangita Vadapalli – for work on membership project

Minna Huang – Events Coordinator

Anthony Ficarra – NAVAIO website webmaster

Matthew Cordes – NAVAIO website webmaster

Discussion was held regarding the NAVAIO banquet in light of ethics concerns. Comments were taken from NAVAIO members.

New member certificates are available to be picked up at the meeting.

Alyon Wasik spoke about the AFOS mid-year meeting that was held earlier this week prior to the academy meetings. Breakout sessions were held for the different services that make up AFOS. Approximately 40 VA optometrists attended the VA break-out session which is a significant increase from previous AFOS meetings. AFOS is looking into electronic payments for future dues remittance. AFOS is also looking at possibly sponsoring regional CE. Dr. Wasik also encouraged optometrists to volunteer to serve on AFOS committees. There is a goal to have a member from each of the AFOS represented services on the committees.

It is John Townsend's (Chief, Optometry Service, Central Office) birthday today!

Tom Stelmack mentioned that there is a Resident's Day grand rounds program on Friday. There were around 50 to 100 residents that submitted presentations for the program of which 24 were chosen to present. The program is COPE approved. He encouraged attendance by NAVAIO members. Dr. Stelmack stated that the Resident's Day program is good, but he recommends seeing if it is possible to split resident presentations into the Resident's Day program as well as a poster session. He also recommended the consideration of possible student involvement in the posters and grand rounds program to assist with future recruitment.

The meeting ended at 6:40 PM



## Web Links

### Associations, Institutes, Organizations, Societies

[All About Vision](#)  
[Alliance for Aging Research](#)  
[American Academy of Ophthalmology](#)  
[American Academy of Optometry](#)  
[American Academy of Pediatrics](#)  
[American Optometric Association](#)  
[American Optometric Foundation](#)  
[Association of Regulatory Boards of Optometry \(ARBO\)](#)  
[Council for Refractive Surgery Quality Assurance](#)  
[Eye Advisory](#)  
[Eye Surgery Education Council](#)  
[Glaucoma Research Foundation](#)  
[Healthy Vision 2010](#)  
[International Glaucoma Association](#)  
[NASA Vision Group](#)  
[National Eye Research Foundation](#)  
[National Keratoconus Foundation](#)  
[National Optometric Association](#)  
[NBEO](#)  
[Optometric Extension Program](#)  
[Optometric Refractive Surgery Society](#)  
[Optometrists.org](#)  
[ORMS](#)  
[Parents Active for Vision Education](#)  
[RGP Institute](#)  
[Schepens Eye Research Institute](#)  
[Vision Council of America](#)  
[World Council of Optometry](#)

## **Conventions and Meetings**

[Great Western Council of Optometry](#)  
[Heart of America Contact Lens Society](#)  
[Midwest Vision Congress & Expo](#)  
[OptoEast](#)  
[OptoWest](#)  
[Southern Council of Optometrists](#)  
[Vision Expo East](#)  
[Vision Expo West](#)

## **Government Health**

[Armed Forces Optometric Society](#)  
[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)  
[ClinicalTrials.gov](#)  
[Federal Registry](#)  
[NAVAO](#)  
[VA Optometry](#)

## **Journals**

[American Journal of Ophthalmology](#)  
[American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery](#)  
[Archives of Ophthalmology](#)  
[British Journal of Ophthalmology](#)  
[Digital Journal of Ophthalmology](#)  
[Eyeworld](#)  
[Ocular Surgery News](#)  
[Ophthalmology Times](#)  
[Ophthalmology](#)  
[Primary Care Optometry News](#)  
[Primary Eye Care News](#)  
[Review of Ophthalmology](#)  
[Review of Optometry](#)

## **Low Vision and Vision Therapy**

[American Foundation for the Blind](#)  
[Canadian National Institute for the Blind](#)  
[Eschenbach Optical](#)  
[Foundation for Fighting Blindness](#)  
[Lighthouse International](#)  
[Low Vision Gateway](#)  
[NORA - Neuro-Optometric Rehabilitation Association](#)  
[Ocutech](#)  
[Prevent Blindness America](#)  
[State License Renewal Requirements](#)  
[Vision and Computers](#)

## **Ocular Disease**

[AMD Alliance International](#)  
[American Macular Degeneration Foundation](#)  
[Lutein Information](#)  
[Macular Degeneration Foundation](#)  
[Macular Degeneration International](#)  
[Macular Degeneration Network](#)  
[Macular Degeneration Partnership](#)  
[Macular Disease Society](#)  
[MAXIVISION](#)  
[Center for Keratoconus](#)  
[Chua Eye Page](#)  
[Collaborative Longitudinal Evaluation of Keratoconus Study \(CLEK\)](#)  
[EyeCancer Network](#)  
[Ophthoguide](#)  
[Ophtholinx](#)  
[Trials Summary](#)

## **Systemic Disease**

[American Diabetes Association](#)  
[AskPhysicians.com](#)  
[National Headache Foundation](#)  
[Sjögrens Syndrome Foundation](#)

## **Ophthalmic Equipment and Medications**

[Alcon Laboratories](#)  
[Allergan](#)  
[BOTOX®](#)  
[Carl Zeiss Meditec](#)  
[Hilco](#)  
[Lombart Instruments](#)  
[Medtronic Solan](#)  
[Merck](#)  
[Novartis Ophthalmics](#)  
[Novartis](#)  
[Reichert Ophthalmic Instruments](#)  
[Reliance Medical Products](#)  
[Topcon](#)  
[Wilson Ophthalmic](#)

## **Optometry Schools**

[Illinois College Of Optometry](#)  
[Indiana University](#)  
[Michigan College of Optometry at Ferris State University](#)  
[New England College of Optometry](#)  
[Northeastern State University](#)  
[NSU College of Optometry](#)  
[Ohio State University](#)  
[Pacific University](#)  
[Pennsylvania College of Optometry](#)  
[Southern California College of Optometry](#)  
[Southern College of Optometry](#)  
[SUNY State College of Optometry](#)  
[UAB School of Optometry](#)  
[University of California - Berkeley](#)  
[University of Houston](#)  
[University of Missouri - St. Louis](#)

## **State Optometry Associations**

[Alabama](#)

[Alaska](#)  
[Arizona](#)  
[Arkansas](#)  
[California](#)  
[Colorado](#)  
[Connecticut](#)  
[Florida](#)  
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