

# EYE NEWS

FALL 2013



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## A Note from Dr. Winthrop

I feel as though I should have numbered the newsletters when I began writing them so I could easily recall when I started the process. In the earlier years I would ask my staff to write some of the articles, but over time I've taken on the task to write the entire newsletter (except Staff Notes) myself as I greatly enjoy the experience. I get fabulous positive feedback from all of you. As I've said before, the wonderful aspect of a tenured practice is the relationships you form with the individuals, families, and generations. With my daughter Mia planning a career in medicine, I have given much thought to the many facets of medical practice that bring me happiness and satisfaction. The ability to help people in such a powerful, meaningful way through improved eyesight is a life changer. I feel blessed to be able to provide this care. Whether through LASIK, cataract or transplant surgery, or diagnosing and curing a medical condition, I usually know what is at the end of the tunnel; it is joyful to share with you, the patient, the sometimes sudden but often gradual experience of regaining or significantly improving your vision and your quality of life. As well, I know the devastation and loss of independence when one loses his or her sight; I fight hard to prevent that from happening.

Although we now have 2 children out of college, Betsy and I still feel we have a ways to go. As many of you know and many of you remind me, they are always your children and the responsibilities of being a parent are always with us. Sam is in his third year in the world of finance. He has enjoyed working at the same investment bank for all three years and appears to be settled there. He enjoys living in Los Angeles and has an ever-widening circle of friends.

Mia graduated from Dartmouth College in June. Our whole family was in attendance in Hanover for the celebration. It really is an accomplishment and we are so proud of her. She is taking a "gap" year working at the Dartmouth Medical Center (so we didn't have to pack her up and move her out), and is

using the coming year to apply to medical school. I hope to have good news to report in next year's newsletter! Evan, her "significant other" of three years, served as captain of the Dartmouth Ski Team in his senior year and is now working for "Teach for America" in Boston.



Rachel has had an amazing 2013. After her high school graduation in Montana in December, she went on a three month National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) course in Baja Mexico. She backpacked across the peninsula from the Pacific Ocean carrying 60 pounds, getting re-provisioned every 7 to 10 days, and spending the last 2 months kayaking and sailing in the Sea of Cortez. She returned home in time for a college tour with her mom and her sister's graduation before leaving for Africa for 2 months. I was lucky enough to go with her for the first two weeks for safaris in Southern Africa before she started a six-week school sojourn in Rwanda. Now she is a freshman at Roger Williams University in Bristol, Rhode Island Wow!

As for Betsy, a few years ago, with our children largely grown and out on their own, she decided to start her own business operating vacation rentals. Many travelers prefer private homes to hotels and find

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## Free Screening for LASIK

Are you still not sure if you are ready for LASIK? In our experience family members wait to see who will "go first". Call us to schedule a complimentary screening at 730-9111 for you or your loved one. 📞

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accommodations through VRBO.com or HomeAway.com. She manages two rentals at the beach and is busy at work renovating a third. She's working hard and loving it.

Professionally, this year has been marked by continued improvement in surgical outcomes. Experience and technology are wonderful when they go hand in hand. I am happy to report that at the Santa Barbara Surgical Center I had the lowest incidence of complications of all ophthalmologists, and I was voted "Best LASIK Surgeon" for the fifth year in a row by The Santa Barbara News-Press readers' survey. I feel very confident that I can deliver outstanding surgical care. Technology continues to improve (as I will discuss in other sections of this newsletter) but technology can only take you so far. It is the judgment and experience of your physician/surgeon that is most important in obtaining good outcomes.

On the LASIK side, my enthusiasm for LASIK remains unparalleled. For those of you contemplating this procedure, the outcomes are really terrific. The procedure is safe, fast and comfortable, and done in the convenience of my in-office LASIK suite. My Allegretto Wave Eye-Q excimer laser is the Ferrari of excimer lasers!

On the cataract side, the options and outcomes are better than ever. Cataract surgery is the most successful major operation performed in the United States. The surgery is done under topical anesthesia with no injections or needles. The downtime for post-operative recovery is just the day of surgery; you may bend over and lift objects after the first 24 hours and the eye is not patched.

Finally, as we enter the holiday season, I want to wish everyone a joyous, happy and healthy holidays. It is a privilege to provide your eye care and I am honored by the trust you place in me. I remain deeply committed to maintaining the highest level of service for you, both on my own behalf and for my staff. We deeply appreciate your continuing confidence in the care we provide. 🐾

## **New Technology for Glaucoma**

Glaucoma is defined as an increase in intra-ocular pressure (IOP), with evidence of damage to the

optic nerve. The normal IOP is between 10-21 mm of mercury. If the IOP is above 21 and the optic nerve is disease free, then we refer to the process as ocular hypertension (OHT). In ophthalmology, the distinction between glaucoma and OHT can be very difficult to make. In the past we relied on direct observation of optic nerve cupping or excavation. This was relatively imprecise as there are many factors other than glaucoma that can affect optic nerve cupping, such as family history and refractive status.

Diagnostics improved with the advent of optical coherence tomography (OCT), a process similar to ultrasound in that it shows us things that cannot be seen. Coupled with a computer, OCT can analyze data and compare your results to a normal, standardized data base. This year I acquired the Cirrus OCT by Zeiss. It is the third such machine I have had and represents a tremendous advancement in this technology. It allows me to much more accurately analyze your optic nerve for glaucoma or, if you already have glaucoma, evaluate whether it is stable or there has been any progression of the disease. The OCT is typically performed once a year.

The OCT technology is also used in the management of retinal diseases, especially age-related macular degeneration (AMD) and other macular diseases. It displays retinal thickness in microns and shows the sub-retinal structures that I cannot visualize. It is extraordinarily helpful in following pathology and recognizing pathology before it is visible on normal examination.

Visual field testing (VF) is the previous gold standard in glaucoma management and is still a valuable tool. Here again, technology has taken giant leaps forward. My present machine has artificial intelligence and is a threshold tester that frames the exam based on your individual responses. And, it does all this in under 5 minutes per eye. Quite an improvement. This test is also performed once a year. 🐾

## **ORA**

When performing cataract surgery, I always use an intra-ocular lens (IOL) to replace the crystalline lens that is removed. We measure the power of the IOL preoperatively, a test you do with Jeff in the office, by

means of an A-scan. This machine is an ultrasound and I use an "IOL Master," the current gold standard. However, there are cases when the IOL Master is not as accurate as I would like; particularly in dense cataracts or patients who have had prior refractive surgery (Radial Keratotomy (RK), PRK, or LASIK).

There is now new technology which has been added to the operating room microscope at the Santa Barbara Surgical Center called ORA. ORA allows me to double check the IOL power during cataract surgery. Once the cataract has been removed (aphakia), ORA can measure the eye in its aphakic state and predict the needed IOL power. I have used ORA for months now and I am happy with the results. It has allowed me to obtain even more precise outcomes. 🐼

### Staff Notes

I am so proud of my staff! This highly professional team works together seamlessly to keep me on time and to ensure that our patients' needs are addressed quickly and thoroughly. We do adjust our schedule daily to make room for emergencies or unanticipated diagnoses, and on the random occasions when the waiting room gets a little jammed up, my staff stays calm and collected and they just make it work for everybody.

Jessica is the most recent addition to the office, and fills in where needed with filing, reception, and testing. A native Santa Barbaran, she has a 6-year-old son who fills up her personal time with AYSO soccer and bike rides. The rest of the crew should be well known to all, as they have been working with me for many years. Charlotte, who assists with both office duties and patient testing, now has three serious flamenco dancers at home (ages 14, 8 and 6) so she spends lots of her time coordinating practice, costume fittings and performances. Sandra also provides office support, and on Fridays she is the caring "hand-holder" who helps make LASIK such a positive experience for our patients. Claudia, our long-time surgical coordinator and LASIK "show-runner", recently conspired with her three sisters to celebrate their mother's 91st birthday in high style at the Pechanga Casino. Mom loves those dollar slots and she always wins!

Our lovely Linda multi-tasks at the front desk: she takes calls and also ushers patients into exam rooms, where she preps them for their appointment. Since our last newsletter, Linda has had refractive surgery and, for the first time since elementary school, no longer needs contacts or glasses! If you are thinking of taking the plunge, ask her about it. She will give you a glowing testimonial and then turn you over to Jeff, our Certified Ophthalmic Technician, who will provide a clear explanation of what to expect in a no-pressure, friendly (and free!) consultation. Jeff recently attended a conference for ophthalmic techs where he learned about the latest developments in LASIK and cataract surgery.

On the management side, Rindi is my indispensable bookkeeper, insurance coordinator and general "go-to" source for the complex challenges confronting all of us who work in the health care field. In her free time, she is a serious writer and cyclist. Rindi recently completed the Mammoth High Sierra Metric Century bike ride. What an inspiration she is! And finally, Jen is the engine that makes our office run, gracefully assisting patients both at the front desk and on the phone lines. She and her husband recently enjoyed an Alaskan cruise and are now getting used to an empty nest with daughter Rene off to college.

My heartfelt thanks to all of these wonderful people! 🐼





## Latisse for Lashes

Latisse remains the most effective product available for growing thicker, longer eyelashes. While there are more products on the market that claim to enhance both lash and brow, none of these products contain the active ingredient found in Latisse. For those of you new to this product, it involves a bit of a time commitment and leap of faith before you start seeing results; but after about 6 weeks, your lashes will be longer and with continued use, they will become thicker and darker. Please be sure to apply your drops with care, avoiding the skin of your eyelid. Do not use the Latisse on your lower lashes. If you start to notice some redness on your upper lid just above your lashes, or on the rim of your lower lid, discontinue use. If you are one of the rare users who experiences redness, it will go away when you stop using the product. And remember it is best to use Latisse in the morning. 🌸

## Preservative Free Drops

In my last newsletter I spoke about generic drugs. In this newsletter I would like to discuss “preservative free” drops. Historically, all eye medications needed to be “preserved” with chemicals to prevent bacterial contamination. The problem was that with chronic use many people developed allergies not to the actual medication but to the chemical preservative. In my career this was first evident with soft contact lenses. The solutions used to clean and disinfect the SCL would, often over time, lead to an intolerance to the use of the SCL. With this understanding, much research was devoted to this area and the eye industry developed products that were much less antigenic.

This research then “leap-frogged” to the arena of dry eyes. There are now many artificial tear preparations that are preservative free. These products are packaged for single use in individual vials; you twist off the top to use the drops and the top cannot be put back in place. Typically, there is more product in each vial than one would use at one time. I think it is fine to use that vial over the course of the day but not for a second day. I would keep the vial upright and not in contact with anything else. My advice is that if you need to use artificial tears more than four (4) times a day, you should consider going preservative free. If you fall in to this category, the next time you are in the office,

also ask me about “gel” for nighttime use and punctal plugs.

In the past year, the biggest advance has been the introduction of glaucoma medications that are preservative free. The common factor with both dry eyes and glaucoma is that both are used on a daily basis and thus can lead to an allergic or toxic reaction, usually seen as chronic red eyes. There are now three (3) separate medications for glaucoma that are preservative free. These are the same glaucoma meds that have been used for years, but packaged as single use, preservative free preparations. 🌸

## LASIK after Cataract Surgery

Over the past year, several of my patients who had cataract surgery prior to the introduction of premium intra-ocular lenses (IOLs) have asked me if I could improve their vision without glasses. The answer is a resounding YES! I have performed LASIK on post-cataract patients with great results; these very happy people no longer need to wear glasses. In the earlier days of cataract surgery, when incisions were larger and the machines to calculate the IOL power were not as accurate, many people were left dependent on their glasses because of residual astigmatism and refractive error. Now, with the advances of LASIK and the Allegretto excimer laser, I can eliminate any left over nearsightedness, farsightedness, or astigmatism with great accuracy. The reason being that once you have had cataract surgery with an IOL, your eye refraction is stable and does not change over time. LASIK is done in my office and is a safer, faster and easier procedure than cataract surgery. And, there is no age limit; I have performed LASIK on patients in their 90's. Something to think about! 🌸

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### *Thank You For Your Referrals*

*Each year we definitely want to recognize and thank you for your referrals. Dr. Winthrop continues to see new patients in his practice of comprehensive Ophthalmology. It is our pledge to give your family and friends the same care you enjoy, whether they are seeking a routine eye exam, surgical treatment, or a second opinion.*



### I Welcome New Patients

Because I advertise my LASIK practice but not my medical practice (routine eye care, glaucoma, cataract and transplant surgery), patients sometimes think that my practice is only open to surgical patients. This is not true. I welcome all new patients and your kind referrals for their comprehensive ophthalmology needs. I do not limit my practice only to LASIK or surgical ophthalmology. I love my LASIK practice because patients are so pleased with their outcome, but the heart and soul of my medical practice will always be taking care of patients with medical problems of the eye, and routine "well-patient" care to prevent those problems in the first place. I am on most insurance plans except HMO's, although I see a fair number of HMO patients who are unhappy with their care and feel it is worthwhile to pay out of pocket to see me. 🐼

### Readers

As many of you know, I have never dispensed prescription glasses and have absolutely no plans to do so. I've always seen that as a conflict of interest; the last thing I want to do is tell you that you need glasses and then escort you down the hallway to buy them. I'm always happy to provide you with your current prescription which you may fill wherever you prefer.

However, as my wife Betsy and I have entered our presbyopic years, readers have come into sharper focus. Betsy has been the point person in now providing my office with cute, stylish over-the-counter reading glasses which have better optics than you can typically buy at the drugstore. They are displayed in the waiting room, come in the usual range of powers (+1.00 to +3.00), and cost between \$25.00 to \$50.00.

Betsy did a great job selecting the styles, shapes and colors. With these, you will be much more upset when they get lost or misplaced! My thinking is that between my LASIK and cataract patients, often readers are all that is needed following surgery and selling them from the office would be an added convenience for you. 🐼

### We Invite You to Visit Our WEBSITE

I urge you to take a look at my website: [seewinthrop.com](http://seewinthrop.com). There, you will find answers to many of your questions about general eye anatomy, diseases of the eye, or a surgical procedure you may be contemplating. You can also check out my academic and training history, download registration forms, get directions or determine our office hours. We have also recently updated our infomercial, which can be viewed on our website. 🐼



[www.seewinthrop.com](http://www.seewinthrop.com)

### WiFi

I'm happy to report that in our ever expanding digital age, my office now has WiFi for your use. I would hope that your wait would never be long enough to go online but it sometimes happens. This past year I updated and upgraded my server, computers and internet capabilities and there is a secure firewall to protect your privileged information. Enjoy using your iPads, smart phones and laptops in the office 🐼

### Santa Barbara's "Best" Eye Doctor

I am honored that for the fifth year in a row I was voted Best LASIK Surgeon by the Santa Barbara News-Press. I know it can be a little tedious and time consuming to fill in the ballot so it is especially meaningful to have won knowing the effort that was involved. Thank you. I will continue to endeavor to do my best for each and every one of you. 🐼



**Soft Contact Lens (SCL) Bifocal**

There is a new SCL bifocal that works much better than anything else available in the past. Previously, the only contact lens that had a decent bifocal was a rigid gas permeable (RGP) or hard contact. The RGP's are not as comfortable as SCLs and must be worn on a regimented, daily basis whereas SCLs can be worn on an irregular schedule. I tried the original bifocal SCL and found that although you could see distance and near, both seemed slightly out of focus. Only about 20% of those patients who tried them stayed with them. The new bifocal SCL is much improved with better vision and much higher patient acceptance. Give Jeff a call if you would like more information or to give them a try. 🐼

**CATARACT SEMINARS**

We are hosting two cataract seminars this Fall. They will be held at our office at 515 E. Micheltorena Street. This will be a good time to gather more information about premium lens implants. If you elect to use a "premium" lens at the time of your cataract surgery, you can correct astigmatism or near, far and intermediate vision at the same time your cataract is removed. In most cases, your dependence on eyeglasses is significantly reduced. Come and listen as Dr. Winthrop explains how quick and easy cataract surgery can be. Light refreshments will be served. Hope you will join us! There is limited seating please R.S.V.P. @ 730-9111.

**DATES & TIMES:**

**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 29, 5:00 PM**

**WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 5:00 PM**

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