

# GUEST EDITORIAL

## A WORLD WIDE WEB OF BEHAVIORAL OPTOMETRY

Robert A. Williams, OEP Executive Director

**T**he card told us that he would be attending the 4<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Behavioral Optometry (ICBO) meeting in Versailles, probably his final trip to Europe. Canadian optometrist, Armand Bastien is a legend throughout Europe. I'm excited at having the opportunity to see him again, share a glass of wine, reminisce about our day together in Montreal several years ago, but the thought of Armand Bastien's *final* visit to his beloved Europe is quite sad.

I have served on the staff of the Optometric Extension Program Foundation (OEP) for over 20 years. My wife Leslie has accompanied me on many of my business visits within and outside the U.S. We have had many conversations over the years about how blessed we have been, how many friends we have around the world, and the people who have invited us into their homes and those who have stayed in ours.

Versailles 2002 will be one more gathering of so many friends, and we anxiously look forward to those few days. My 'brother' from Mexico, Jesus Espinosa Galaviz, will be on the program. "Chuy" will give a paper in English on vision and learning disabilities and the role optometrists in Mexico play in solving these problems. He is nervous [how would you feel giving a speech in Greek to 300 people that you don't know?]. But he will provide interesting and valuable information. Most of all, his courage in stepping forward

will give a boost to the growing movement in behavioral vision care in Mexico.

Our dear friend Sue Larter from Penant Hills, NSW, Australia will also present a paper on vision and learning. She initially asked to be put on the Workshop program. However, we decided to put her on the main stage. When we later asked her to relinquish that venue a few weeks ago to solve a problem, she declined. "I have something important to say," she said. And she does!

Bob Sanet and I go back the Southern California College of Optometry days, too long ago to remember. His wife Linda will be at his side, as she was in Mexico at the Consejo Mexicano de Optometria Funcional Congress a few years ago and many other times around the world. They will join several others on the platform presenting new information on the focal and ambient systems, or as Eric Hussey has dubbed it, Parvo and Magno systems for his paper. By the way, if you don't know Eric, yet, you should. Rarely does such an intelligent professional have such a pointed sense of humor! Humor can bridge many a language barrier, we have found.

And, we have several of the 'big' names, all friends, all colleagues, all contributors. How can we thank Wid Bleything, Greg Kitchener, Joel Zaba or Ed Howell enough? My dear friend and mentor J. Baxter Swartwout will be there along with long time friend, therapist

and now Baxter's blushing bride, Katie Ring Swartwout. Bax is presenting a paper on the Analytical, as important today as it was in 1928. Then we will have some time with our good European friends. Ugo Frescura convinced me years ago to think in terms of Europe, not Italy, Spain, England or Denmark. The program will include many of the best and brightest: Guy Naegels, Rob Gevers, Vittorio Roncagli, Pilar Vergara and Kurt Dollinger.

And, talk about your dynamic wife/husband duo! Stefan Collier and Sonja Vanhimbeek from Antwerpen, Belgium will be on the program, twice. Is this symbolic, or what? 'Collier', I believe, is a French name; 'Vanhimbeek' is obviously Flemish. If you know Belgium, you know that there are two official languages: French and Flemish. Every street sign in Bruxelles/Brussel is in both languages. These two have obviously blended the best of both into a marriage and a profession. Their professional contributions are many and varied. Stefan lectures, and tells jokes! I must get him and Eric together! Sonja writes; two books, so far, both published by OEP. Both are dear friends that we look forward to seeing again.

Round out the program with Paul Harris, WC Maples, Harry Wachs, Ray Gottlieb, Joe Sullivan, Curt Baxstrom and Steve Ingersoll, from the US, Australia's Paul Croucher, Francois Rateau [French? must be going home!], Julius

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Liubinas [maybe Lithuanian?], David Evian and Nick Hansen and Europeans Cordula Stocker, Christian Vanlierde, Geoff Shayler, Keith Holland, and you have not only a substantial education program, but a group of people who are dedicated behavioral optometrists. Through OEP many of them have openly shared their knowledge, their expertise, and their passion for service to patients with thousands of colleagues around the world.

Which brings me to the point of this editorial. Every editorial must have a point, n'est pas? It's the *people* who make the difference. Here I have mentioned many of those who will offer education and information. They are willing not only to share with their colleagues but also to open their ideas and insights to questions, criticism, and close inspection. These people, these friends, these colleagues are the heart and soul of the OEP Foundation. They are the spirit of Skeffington, Alexander, Hendrickson, Kraskin, Getman and Lyons and so many others who on whose shoulder they stand. There are thousands of others, all of you who are reading this issue of the Journal of Behavioral Optometry, who also make important contributions on a daily basis to your communities and your patients. We thank you and we recognize your dedication.

It really doesn't matter that we will be gathering in Versailles. In many ways, it would be just as exciting in Fresno! [That's a little city in California of about 200,000 surrounded by grapes!] What matters is: *people giving to people*. You giving the best possible care to your patients; your colleagues sharing new ideas and new techniques with you, not for a fee or royalty, but openly and freely, so that you can provide optimal optometric care to your patients.

That is what OEP is: a network for sharing. It is also a network for caring. We were very sorry to hear that Toni Bastien passed away last year. We are aware that she and Armand had spent 50+ years together, and all she meant to her family and her personal contributions to the profession. Consequently we are greatly saddened. This makes the 4<sup>th</sup>

ICBO all the more meaningful. Seeing, sharing, crying with the *People*. As our distinguished President Glen T. Steele would say in his best Southern accent, "All y'all make the difference." And, we greatly appreciate your friendship and your continuing contributions to OEP and the visual welfare of all mankind.

If you cannot join us in France in November, put April 24 to 27, 2006 on your calendar right now. We will be in Australia again. It will be one more progress report on the growth of international behavioral vision care. G'day!