

# EYE NEWS

FALL 2011



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## A Note from Dr. Winthrop

Although 2011 has been yet another challenging year for our country, I feel there is a more positive spirit in our local community going forward. Among my patients, the prevailing viewpoint is an acknowledgement that the economy "is what it is" with a slow, prolonged recovery and people want to get on with their lives. The attitude of "let's wait and see" or sitting on the sidelines is being replaced with a sense that things aren't going to change much for a few years, we've made adjustments and can now start making our personal economic decisions once again. Many people I speak with have put their lives on hold for the past few years and now want to start doing the things they had delayed or put off.

For me personally, Betsy and I are now "empty nesters" and have little difficulty with the change. Sam graduated from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania in May. What a glorious week we had in Philadelphia! A high accomplishment for both parent and child. Sam was president of his fraternity and so there were many meals with his frat brothers and their families, culminating in the actual ceremony in historic Franklin Field. The celebration continued into June when Sam and I traveled to Tibet, Nepal, Cambodia and Thailand. We had a fabulous time and saw many wondrous things. Yet the highlight for me was just being able to travel with my son. On our return, Sam joined the workforce in the financial restructuring division of an investment bank in Los Angeles.

Mia had another great year at Dartmouth. She is firmly entrenched in her pre-med studies in the field of medical anthropology, and is working hard to keep her grades high. Dartmouth requires all sophomores to spend a summer on campus, so Betsy and I made the most of Mia's summer session by renting a house on Lake Sunapee for a week. It gave Mia and her friends a place to come and relax when not in class, and a good time was had by all. In September, Mia is off to Tanzania for three months. She is starting her fieldwork on what will become her senior honors' thesis concerning the effectiveness of health care delivery by non-profits in Africa.

Our beautiful "baby", 17-year-old Rachel, is attending boarding school in the big sky country of Montana, close to Glacier National Park. She has adapted well to the pace of Montana, its weather and natural wonders, but misses the beach. School is going well and Rachel is making many meaningful, and hopefully lasting friendships in

the boarding school environment. The love of her life continues to be her 6-pound multi-poo pup, Edward.

Professionally, it is too soon to know where cuts in Medicare and insurance reform will take us; the changes to date were unimaginable just a few years ago. It appears that the type of private practice that I have enjoyed, and that

has allowed me to provide the best medical care possible, is becoming obsolete. While it is unclear what medical care will look like in the future, I do worry about the continued delivery of high quality care overall. Notwithstanding this climate of change, I continue to have great love and enthusiasm for medicine, which I attribute to a combination of personality, my staff and you, my patients. My office staff is like a second family, and the structure of my week keeps things interesting. I am in the office Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, and I am in surgery on Tuesdays and Fridays. It is a nice balance.

My new LASIK technology, the Alcon Allegretto Wave Eye-Q excimer laser, has surpassed all my expectations. Having performed LASIK for 15 years and being familiar with all the available technologies, this phenomenal machine is the most accurate, safest, fastest and most reliable laser of its kind. Additionally, cataract surgery will always be a highlight that delivers tremendous satisfaction for both you and me, and there are now more options with the evolution of premium IOLs. Overall, it gives me a great sense of pride to provide my patients with the latest and best medical services possible in the field of ophthalmology. 🐾



## 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. 🐾

## **Advanced LASIK Technology**

I have now had my new excimer laser for more than 20 months; with the passage of time I am even more impressed with the Allegretto Wave Eye-Q's long term results. A good way to assess the results in LASIK is to look at your re-treatment rate at one year. A re-treatment is faster and easier than the original procedure and is performed to improve your vision. I use a national data base for my LASIK patients and over the years the national average for re-treatments with LASIK has been 8% with the available technologies. With the Allegretto Wave Eye-Q 400 hertz excimer, the re-treatment rate is down to 1%. That is astounding and a huge leap forward.

A significant difference between the Allegretto (my laser) and the other machines currently being used, is that the Allegretto is the only excimer laser built specifically for LASIK. Another major difference is speed. The Allegretto Wave Eye-Q is 7 times faster than Visx, the laser most commonly used by LASIK practitioners. Speed in LASIK is a good thing for several reasons: first, since the Allegretto procedure is amazingly fast the patient remains comfortable and experiences less if any anxiety. Second, the Allegretto is more accurate and precise since the faster speed of the laser allows no opportunity for tissue dehydration, which occurs with slower lasers and can affect the accuracy of the procedure. This is how my advertising slogan, "10 seconds to WOW" was born. The Allegretto will correct a highly nearsighted individual in 10 seconds. That same correction will take up to 2 minutes with the other available technologies. The Allegretto's eye tracker is also faster than any other machine available. Operating at 400 hertz, it moves at the same speed as the firing rate of the laser so that with each laser pulse the tracker mirrors the movement of your eye, assuring you that your procedure will be accurate and safe even if you move your eye. You simply do not have to worry about staying still.

Additionally, unlike other lasers which correct within a relatively small optical zone with an adjacent blend zone, the Allegretto produces a true, large optical zone that is free of blend zones. This means that my LASIK patients will not experience the nighttime glare and halos that some other LASIK patients may experience. Another significant reason the Allegretto Wave Eye-Q is superior is because it customizes every procedure for the specific patient being treated. It is the only machine that modifies the treatment pattern based on the shape of your cornea.

Finally, because of all these technological advances, the Allegretto can treat a wider range of astigmatism, nearsightedness and farsightedness than any other laser platform. This allows me to safely perform LASIK on individuals who were previously not candidates for LASIK or PRK. My staff and I are so excited about the Allegretto

Wave Eye-Q as we believe all our efforts add up to the kind of LASIK experience I want my patients to enjoy when they have this miraculous life-changing procedure. 🌟

## **Computers and Eye Strain**

A topic that is here to stay and plays an increasingly large role in everyday living is the computer and its effects on your eyes. I will outline some suggestions that are useful for computer use at home as well as in the office.

1. Use proper lighting. When using the computer, the ambient light should be half as bright as typically found in most offices.
2. Minimize glare. Be aware of the glare coming off of walls and finished surfaces in your work environments.
3. Adjust brightness and contrast. The brightness of the computer screen should be about the same as the work environment.
4. Adjust text size and color. The text size should be three times larger than the smallest text size you can read from your normal viewing position. Black text on a white background is the best color combination for your eyes.
5. Blink more often. This is a big one. People blink about five times less frequently while viewing a computer monitor. This occurs whenever one is doing a task that requires concentration and focus. The net effect is that your eyes dry out from a lack of tear film being spread out over your ocular surface. This irritation is not only bothersome but causes a decrease in your visual acuity and blurs vision. Adding insult to injury, many office environments are already dry from air conditioning and/or heating, so make sure there are no vents aimed directly at your face.
6. Exercise your eyes. Using the computer for extended periods results in focusing fatigue. Combat this fatigue by looking away from the computer at least every twenty minutes and gazing at an object roughly twenty feet away for at least twenty seconds. This is called "the 20-20-20 rule" and prevents accommodative spasm. The important thing here is that when you take a break you must look at a distant object and not simply another near object. This allows your eye muscles to relax and go into "neutral".
7. Take frequent breaks. This will reduce the risk of computer vision syndrome with neck, back and shoulder pain. In addition to the traditional morning and afternoon 15 minute break, I recommend 5 minute "mini-breaks" several more times during the day. Perhaps this could be accomplished by turning to some non-computer related work activity that could be interspersed with monitor viewing.
8. Modify your workstation. The computer screen should be 20" to 24" from your eyes and the center of the screen should be about 10 to 15 degrees below your eyes. If you are

referring to written material at your work station, make sure the material is well lit and the light is not shining on the monitor. Ergonomics for proper posture are also important so make sure your chair is the appropriate height.

9. Use proper eyewear. Separate computer glasses are often a good idea as we age. Typically, below the age of 40, no specific computer glasses are needed. Between ages 40 and 50, your low-powered, off the shelf, reading glasses or progressive/bifocal glasses will do the job for both reading and the computer. However, if you are over the age of 50, the physics of optics dictate that your eye now discerns three distinct distances: far, intermediate, and near. Intermediate vision is used for the computer, yet at the same time you may be using your near vision for reading material at your desk as well. So, if you are over 50 years of age and spend significant time using the computer, it may be helpful to have a separate pair of "computer glasses" that are a bifocal, with the top segment set to the intermediate distance of the computer monitor and the bottom segment set for the near distance of your reading material. 🌟



## Staff Notes

Each time a newsletter goes out to patients I get feedback about how much people enjoy catching up on what's going on in my life and the lives of my staff. We have all been together so long that we are a special kind of family. We are honored by your continuing confidence in us and delighted to share with you a little bit about our lives. Jeff, my Certified Ophthalmic Technician, and his wife Vicky are now sharing their home with a young student from Uganda, who is attending SBCC and will then return to his homeland better able to make a contribution there. This past spring, Jeff attended the technical program of the American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgeons. In his free time he continues to mountain bike and help maintain our local trails. Faviola, our part-time file clerk, has left us to concentrate full-time on her studies at UC Irvine. Luckily, her sister Natalie stepped into her job. Natalie is a native of Santa Barbara, a recent graduate of

Bishop Diego High School, and is also attending SBCC on a part-time basis. Jen ably handles our critically important job of scheduling and routing patients at the front desk. This year Jen and her husband enjoyed an exciting vacation in Ireland with their daughter Rene before she heads off to college next year. Claudia continues to play an important role managing records for my surgical practice. If you see Claudia with a big smile on her face, it is because her daughter Melissa has moved back to the West Coast after four years in the East. Her son, John, has just completed his personal trainer certification. Claudia continues to improve her golf game, with trips to Napa and Palm Desert. Linda, my extremely competent medical assistant, moved this year and is enjoying home ownership in her new community. She reports that all is well except for a pesky neighbor who wakes her up on Saturday mornings. Oops! She lives next to Jen! Truthfully, they are thrilled to be neighbors. Her daughter held the lead in her school's production of Hair Spray last spring and started a new Glee Club at La Cumbre Jr. High. Sandra is our "woman about the office" who can do whatever is needed, whether answering phones at the front desk, performing visual field tests, or keeping our records organized. Sandra and her husband Juan are proud to share that their younger son Jonathan, who is a junior at Dos Pueblos High School, is now playing for the varsity football team. They are equally proud of their older son George, who is attending SBCC and working in reception at the Best Western Hotel in Goleta. And last but not least, my bookkeeper Rindi is proud to share that she has completed her first cycling "Century", a bicycle trip of 100 miles, which in her case included 9,600 feet of climbing. Quite an achievement! Rindi, who also writes fiction in her free time, will be attending another writing workshop in December, this time in New Mexico. All in all, this is a pretty interesting group of people, with whom I truly enjoy working. 🌟

## Latisse for Lashes and Revale Skin Care

Knowing how much my wife loves Latisse, I cannot say that I am surprised by the overwhelming reception it has received now that I am selling it in the office. This stuff really works! It does a great job making your eyelashes longer, darker and thicker. Some of our patients and friends have even reported that they no longer bother with mascara.

It takes about 6 weeks to notice the increased length and then with continued use your eyelashes become darker and thicker. My wife uses (and reuses) a fine-tipped eyeliner brush instead of the brushes that come in the package because she has better control over placement of the liquid on her lashes and can easily avoid getting it on her lids. She puts two drops into the cap of the Latisse bottle and dips her brush into the cap. She uses it in the morning, first



applying one brush full to the base of her lashes on each eye and then uses whatever is left over on her eyebrows. Once dried, she goes about her normal eye makeup routine. I highly recommend using Latisse in exactly this manner and, again, using it in the morning is best. Please remember to keep your own brush clean or go ahead and use the sterile brushes provided with your Latisse.

Revale is the skin care line I personally use. I especially like the eye care lotion, which helps remove puffiness and pigmentation, and reduces the appearance of fine lines and dark shadows. It only takes seconds after getting out of the shower in the morning. Aside from the eye care lotion, there is a range of facial skin care products made by this company. This is an anti-aging skin care line formulated with powerful antioxidants derived from the fruit of the coffee plant. To find out more about it, take a look at the company information on my website: [seewinthrop.com](http://seewinthrop.com), under the tab marked "Complete Eye Care." 🐼

## Developments in Cataract Surgery

Cataract surgery continues to amaze not only patients, but also family members and hospital staff who witness the wonderful results we achieve. The surgery is performed under topical anesthesia, meaning no shots or needles, and is pain free. The incision size is less than one tenth of an inch, so I use no patch or shield at the end of surgery, not even at bedtime. This results in a greater level of comfort post-operatively, and you can return to normal activities, such as bending, lifting or playing golf the day following surgery.

Intraocular lenses (IOL) or lens implants are utilized in every cataract surgery. After your natural lens, which is clouded over by the cataract, is emulsified and extracted, the new lens is inserted in its place. In my last several newsletters I have discussed "premium" IOLs, the upgraded lens implants which continue to be a source of happiness for those patients who choose them.

The "Toric" IOL corrects astigmatism and provides better distance vision. As a brief review, astigmatism means that your cornea is out of round and is shaped more like the end of an egg instead of being spherical like a baseball. I use a machine called a keratometer to diagnose, and if present, measure astigmatism in every patient. This past year the range of powers for Toric IOLs was dramatically increased so now almost any level of astigmatism can be addressed. Wearing glasses is the conventional treatment for astigmatism, but if you choose the Toric IOL at the time of your cataract surgery I can internally correct your astigmatism via this premium lens implant at the same time that I am surgically treating your cataract.

The other premium IOL is a multifocal lens implant

which corrects for both reading and distance. These work best when both eyes have multifocal lens implants. Because these implants split light, it is important to have good light when reading. These lenses have a wavefront, aspheric design that more closely simulates the original human lens that it replaces, and have ultraviolet (UV) protection built into them to protect your eyes from the potential of sun-induced damage. 🐼

## 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! 🐼

## Check Us Out on Facebook

A new feature for our office is Facebook. We hope you will take the time to post a comment on our Facebook page. It is easy to do and is a great way to show the Santa Barbara community why our office is consistently voted "Best" by both the Santa Barbara Independent and the News-Press.

So go ahead and visit our page at [facebook.com/dr.winthrop](http://facebook.com/dr.winthrop) and "like" us. Another way to get there is to

### *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 worth while to pay out of pocket to see me.

visit our website at [www.seewinthrop.com](http://www.seewinthrop.com) and click on the big blue facebook icon in the left bottom corner of our homepage. If you aren't registered on facebook it is very simple to do so. You don't need your own page or profile or photo if you're not interested in really getting into it. Just give it a try for fun.

Facebook is like an online version of the testimonial book of letters that we keep in our office. Over the years, many patients have written to us to share stories about their restored vision, or how much they like their LASIK. By putting those comments onto our Facebook page instead, you can make a tremendous difference in other people's lives by sharing your positive experiences. There is nothing more reassuring when choosing a doctor than to hear from someone else about how much they like and trust their own doctor. We greatly appreciate your participation and support. 🐼

## Eye Didn't Know That!

- Your eyes are one of the body's most powerful tools, your windows to the world. These organs of sight are so powerful that the word “eye” has potent symbolic meaning in many cultures. Consider these eye-popping terms and phrases—Eye of God, evil eye, third eye, eye of the storm, bull's eye, to name a few.
- Here's a surprising factoid about your eyes. These amazing sensory organs contain the most active muscles in the entire body. The eyes are always moving, even when you sleep. In fact, the eyes have over 2 million working parts and the ability to process 35 bits of information every hour.
- Humans, apes, most old world monkeys, ground squirrels, and many species of fish, birds, and insects have

well-developed color vision. However, it's worth noting that 7 or 8 percent of human males are relatively or completely deficient in color vision, while only 0.3% of females suffer the same fate. It's felt that being colorblind can actually be beneficial in some circumstances; for instance, color blind humans are not thrown by camouflage. For this reason color blind pilots were often used in WWII to spot otherwise camouflaged objects on the ground. Maybe we should take a colorblind friend next time we hike around lions, tigers and bears! 🐼

## Have you seen our WEBSITE?

I hope everyone reading this, whether computer literate or not, has a chance to go on my new website. I am very proud of it because it gives the reader a good understanding of both the technical and philosophical approach I take to my medical and surgical practice. Not only that, the website gives me the chance to reach out to my patients on a personal level, sharing more about my training, background and experience, which is hard to do at the office when so many people are waiting to be seen.

For those of you who like to learn as much as you can about your medical condition or an anticipated treatment, this is a great place to start. And as I have repeated in many newsletters, I value your referral of family and friends and now the website is a natural link in this process. You can become familiar with my office, the registration forms, directions, office hours and technical services. The website is a great way to leisurely check us out and find out what is new and happening. As an added bonus, my new infomercial can now be seen on my website. 🐼



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## Santa Barbara's “Best” Eye Doctor

I am honored that for the third year in a row I was voted Best LASIK Surgeon by the Santa Barbara News-Press. (The News-Press changed the category this year and replaced “Best Eye Doctor” with “Best LASIK Surgeon.”) 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. 🐼



**Vitamins for Vision Health**

One of the most frequent questions I am asked concerns preventative eye care to avoid macular degeneration (“AMD”). So many of us have a parent, relative, or friend who has been affected by this disease. Significant progress has been made in its treatment and, as a by-product, new avenues into its prevention are being explored. In the laboratory, it has been shown that anti-oxidants and various trace minerals can have a beneficial effect in slowing the progress of AMD. However, it is difficult to do a double blind study for absolute confirmation of this conclusion. The AREDS study showed about a 25% reduction in the progression of the disease, and recommended vitamin supplements. Betsy and I both follow this recommendation, but I cannot tell you it will absolutely work. On the other hand, it will not hurt you either. The major suppliers for vision health vitamin formulations are Alcon (“I Caps”) and Bausch and Lomb (“OcuVite”). OcuVite can be found at Costco, and Trader Joe’s also has a similar product. There are also many online varieties. You need not buy the most expensive brand as they are all essentially the same and there are no special ingredients. These are over-the-

counter combination vitamins, not a prescription item, that supplement your normal vitamin regimen. Most importantly, if you are currently taking daily vitamins, you should check the ingredients to make sure you are not overdosing by adding a vision supplement. 🌟

**CATARACT SEMINAR**

We are hosting another cataract seminar in October. This year it 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! R.S.V.P. @ 730-9111.

**DATE & TIME:  
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