



# Northern Sights

Vol. 17, No. 12

December 2005

**North Dakota  
Optometric Association**  
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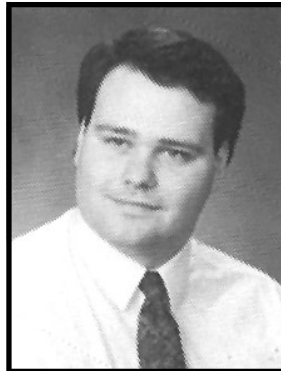
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## ~ Incoming President's Message ~ Dr. James Connelly



**IT'S HARD TO** believe, but another year has come and gone with a new year soon approaching. It is customary at this time of year to reflect on the

activities of the previous year and to look forward to the challenges of the next year. I want to thank Tom Samson for his service as President of the association and look forward to his counsel as Past President. I also wish to welcome Kristin Engstrom to the board as Secretary Treasurer. Her experience, talents and energy will serve us well.

### **THIS LAST YEAR WAS ONE OF**

incremental progress. We saw implementation of the InfantSEE program and continued activity by the "We Care About Children's Vision" task force in addressing children's vision concerns and paving the way for future initiatives regarding the visual welfare of children in our state. We saw progress in third party insurance advocacy with the adoption of reimbursement for

scanning laser testing by BCBS of ND. The association continues to be in good fiscal condition with adequate reserves and a good membership base.

**THE GOALS FOR NEXT YEAR WILL BE** to build on the progress of last years achievements and to tackle some persistent issues. We will continue to promote InfantSEE and other children's vision initiatives. Priority will be given to creating a streamlined and efficient committee structure that will better serve the needs of the association. Once this structure has been created and approved we will be recruiting members to fill

*Continued on Page 3*

### **Inside This Issue**

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- NDOA New Members
- National Provider Identifier
- New Third Party Newsletter
- Scanning Laser Technology for Glaucoma
- Plano Contact Lens Law
- NDOA—PAC



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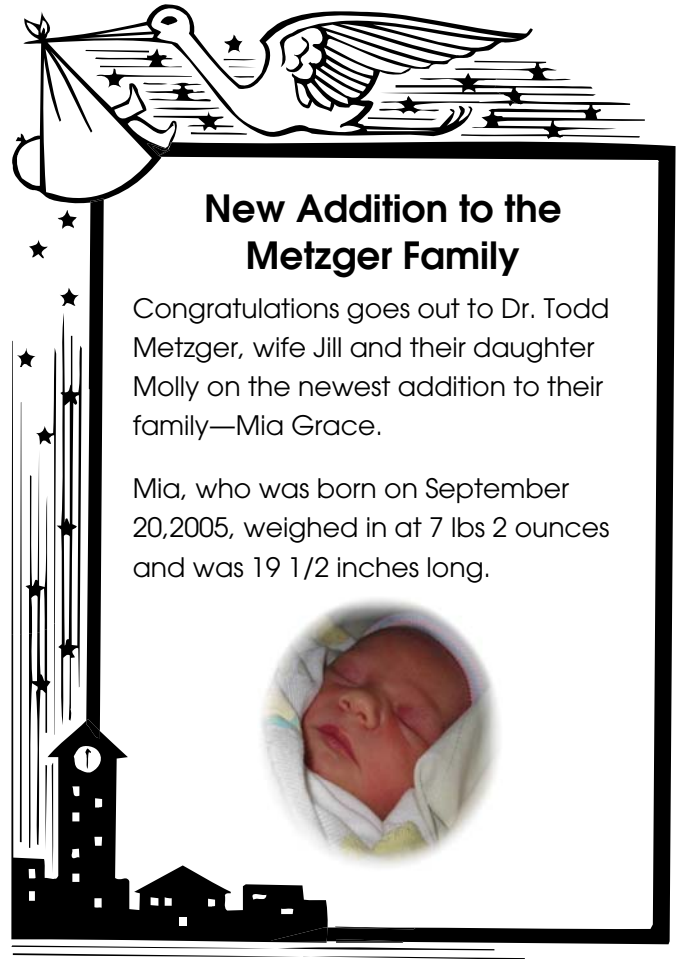
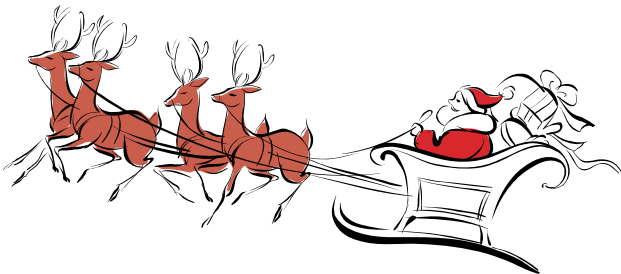
**E Q U I P M E N T**

*Who is  
J.O.E.?*

## President's Message Continued .

the committee positions. Please consider serving on a committee, the health of our association depends on members contributing their time and talents. In addition, we will attempt to aggressively promote optometry as North Dakota's primary eyecare providers in as many ways as we can. Optometry's scope of practice positions optometrists as the most available, cost effective and efficient means of providing comprehensive eyecare in North Dakota and I think we need to let everyone know about it. In conclusion, I want to wish everyone a good holiday season and a good and productive new year.

Respectfully Submitted,  
James Connelly



### **New Addition to the Metzger Family**

Congratulations goes out to Dr. Todd Metzger, wife Jill and their daughter Molly on the newest addition to their family—Mia Grace.

Mia, who was born on September 20, 2005, weighed in at 7 lbs 2 ounces and was 19 1/2 inches long.



## **NDOA Welcomes Its Newest Member**

A warm welcome goes out to NDOA's newest members Dr. Melissa McCulley and Stephanie Hesse.



**Dr. Melissa McCulley** received her undergraduate degree in Spanish at Boston College. While attending SCO she was active in SVOSH, was a student ambassador and was a member of the Beta Sigma Kappa Honor Society. She earned her O.D. degree in 2001.

**Dr. McCulley's hobbies** include golf and travel. She is self employed in Fargo and can be contacted at:

**Melissa McCulley, O.D., P.C.**

**2553 Kirsten Lane**

**Fargo, ND 58104**

**Phone: 701-373-2020**

**E-mail: [drmcculley@yahoo.com](mailto:drmcculley@yahoo.com)**



**Dr. Stephanie Hesse** received her undergraduate degree in Natural Science from UND and graduated from Pacific in 1995.

Dr. Hesse was prompted to become an OD was her first pair of glasses being prescribed to her when she was a junior in high school—a time when she was thinking about college and careers.

**Dr. Hesse is employed** at Kristin Engstrom, O.D. & Associates in Fargo and can be contacted at:

**Kristin Engstrom, O.D. & Associates**

**4731 13th Ave. South**

**Fargo, ND 58103**

**Phone: 701-281-2746**

**Fax: 701-281-2747**

## How To Apply For Your National Provider Identifier (NPI)

### THE CENTERS FOR MEDICARE AND MEDICAID

Services (CMS) will begin accepting National Provider Identifiers (NPI) in January 2006.

**FROM JANUARY 3, 2006 THROUGH OCTOBER 1, 2006, CMS** systems will accept an existing legacy Medicare number or an NPI as long as it is accompanied by an existing legacy Medicare number. Beginning October 2, 2006 through May 22, 2007, CMS systems will accept an existing legacy Medicare number and/or an NPI. This will allow for 6-7 months of provider testing before only an NPI will be accepted. Beginning May 23, 2007, CMS systems will only accept an NPI. **TO APPLY FOR YOUR NPI ONLINE, VISIT:** <https://nppes.cms.hhs.gov>. You can also request a paper application by calling 800-465-3203.

### Reminder: New Third Party Newsletter Available to NDOA Members

#### DR. CHARLES BROWNLOW, WELL KNOWN SPEAKER AND

author on issues related to medical record keeping, coding and other third party issues, has created a new online newsletter called ForeSight 2015. The newsletter will come to you via e-mail, with links to a website containing articles on current issues challenging America's doctors of optometry.

#### TO GIVE YOU AN IDEA OF HOW VALUABLE THIS RESOURCE

is, the following are topics discussed and Q & A's from previous issues:

- How should I code an office visit when the patient has no medical complaint and no medical diagnosis?
- Are prompt pay discounts legal?
- How should I code the annual eye exam for a person with systemic diabetes and no ocular manifestations? What if the primary care doc won't request a consultation?
- Are there any reference materials for keeping good records and choosing codes to report my services.
- Hey, how about those crazy S-Codes?
- Can I charge an office visit on the same day as a minor surgical procedure?
- How do we bill for an office visit that includes refractive and medical diagnoses and procedures

#### THE NEWSLETTER WILL BE AVAILABLE AT NO CHARGE UNTIL

June 2006, to members of the NDOA who sign up. Subscribers joining after June 1 will receive the newsletter for 180.00 per year. All you need to do to subscribe is send

an e-mail to the NDOA office at [ndoa@btinet.net](mailto:ndoa@btinet.net) or contact the office with you interest in signing up. Your address will be used only for the newsletter e-mails and will not be shared or sold in any form to anyone. If you have any questions, please call Nancy Kopp at 701-258-6766.

## Scanning Laser Technology for Glaucoma

*Effective Date: January 1, 2006*

### BLUE CROSS/BLUE SHIELD OF NORTH DAKOTA BENEFITS ARE

available for scanning laser technologies such as retinal nerve fiber layer analysis, optic nerve topography, scanning laser polarimetry, confocal laser scanning topography, or optical coherence tomography for:

- Monitoring patients with a diagnosis of glaucoma (ICD-9-CM 365.10-365.9)
- Evaluating patients with diabetes with ophthalmic manifestations (ICD-9-CM 250.50-250.53)
- Evaluating patients who are a glaucoma suspect (ICD-9CM 365.00-365.04)
  - Intraocular pressure of greater than or equal to 22mm of mercury
  - Cup to disc ratio of greater than or equal to .04 with family history of glaucoma or risk of low tension glaucoma
  - Documented increase of cup to disc ratio greater than or equal to 0.2
  - Cup to disc ratio greater than or equal to 0.5
  - Asymmetry of cup to disc ratio greater than or equal to 0.2 difference between eyes
  - Focal notch with rim/disc greater than or equal to 0.2
  - Disc hemorrhage
  - Optic disc abnormality
  - Visual field defect

**Non Covered Procedures:** The use of scanning laser technologies to screen for glaucoma is considered investigational. Fundus photography with interpretation and report (CPT 92250) is not covered when performed with CPT 92135.

**Coding/Billing Information:** CPT 92135 Scanning computerized ophthalmic diagnostic imaging (e.g. scanning laser) with interpretation and report, unilateral HCPCS G0117 and G0118 are non specific codes for glaucoma screening for high risk patients. These codes should not be used to identify scanning laser technologies.

#### REIMBURSEMENT AMOUNT FOR 92135 WAS UNAVAILABLE AT

the time of printing. This information should be included in the BXBS 2006 fee schedule which should be sent to all providers 12/15/05. If you have any questions contact Nancy Kopp at 701-258-6766.

## From The Desk Of Your Executive Director ~ Nancy Kopp



### “Diabetes Awareness”

**AS YOU KNOW, NOVEMBER** was National Diabetes Month. As optometry has come a long way in expanding their scope of practice, other health professions are starting to take notice.

**HOW MANY PATIENTS WITH DIABETES** do you see in your office on a daily basis? This is a perfect opportunity for you to find out what your patients know about their disease and then educate them further when necessary.

**DILATION OF THE PUPIL IS A NECESSARY** part of the comprehensive eye examination and incidentally is the standard of care . . . You need to ensure that your patients understand the implication of poor blood sugar control in regard to their eyes, as well as what can be done when changes in their vision occur. Studies show, that virtually all patients with diabetes over 20 years will have some evidence of diabetic retinopathy.

**CARING FOR DIABETICS CAN BE** difficult and emotional, having to be the one to talk about potential vision loss from diabetes. Taking time with these patients is critical. As you know, they are facing a profound loss that will permanently affect how they see and function. Caring won't restore their sight, but it will help them in coping.



### *Thank You!*

NDOA Members:

Thank you so much for the honor of being voted the “NDOA Employee of the Year.” It was such a surprise!!

The plaque has a “special place in my room. When the patients become difficult to handle—this plaque will remind me that it is all worth the extra time and effort that we some times need to exert. Eyecare is a rewarding career—at all levels.

Thank you again!  
Joanne Stokes.

**AS REPORTED IN EARLIER ISSUES,** I have been involved in the North Dakota Diabetes Coalition. I'm in the process of working with other groups in developing or refining a program that will educate/inform diabetics of the importance of annual dilated eye examinations. Blue Cross/Blue Shield has reported that only 58% are actually receiving their annual eye exam. This information is retrieved from BXBS claims processed. In January, we should have more information available on billing, coding and reimbursement for diabetic eye examinations, as well as compiling the continuance of care.

**IN CLOSING, I REALIZE THAT FOR SOME,** Christmas is work and more of a trial, than joy. For me, Christmas has always been a joyous time of year! I commit the whole month of December to doing good deeds for my family, that are not necessarily common practice during other months of the year . . . I bake goodies, I decorate my home (very stylishly I might add) and I go shopping!

### MY SINCERE WISHES FOR A

“VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS” & A “WONDERFUL 2006!”

## Impact of Public Law 109-96

### (“Plano Contact Lens Law”)

**ON NOVEMBER 9, 2005, PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH** signed into law Public Law 109-96 (S. 172 – the bill that reclassified plano contact lenses as medical devices rather than cosmetics). This new law definitively classifies all contact lenses as medical devices under the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (FDA Act).

### **WHAT THIS RECLASSIFICATION AS A MEDICAL**

**DEVICE** means is that all contact lenses, even plano or zero refraction lenses, come under certain specified protections afforded medical devices and cannot be dispensed without a prescription, as well as other requirements. Details of the new law can be found on the NDOA website [ndeyecare.info](http://ndeyecare.info).

# NDOA ~ PAC

The effectiveness of NDOA's legislative planning, is the result of an integrated program which includes many equal parts; legislative representation, legal counsel, active grassroots network and political action in the form of NDOA - PAC; the only political action committee that represents you, the Doctor of Optometry.

Our team of volunteers on the NDOA - PAC Committee analyze political races across the state to determine where their funds can be best spent to elect pro-optometry candidates. Listed below are the 2005-2006 NDOA-PAC contributors. Thank you all for supporting your profession. If you have not yet contributed to NDOA-PAC, please do so as soon as possible. No donation is too small, but remember if you donate only \$100 you will receive a sporty Columbia fleece vest with the NDOA logo for FREE! Personal checks made out to NDOA-PAC or credit card information can be sent to the NDOA office.

## 2005-2006 NDOA-PAC Contributors

<b>Mark Andre</b>	<b>Kristin Engstrom</b>	<b>Kyle Krein</b>	<b>Mark Moen</b>	<b>Keith Schindler</b>
<b>Craig Bratvold</b>	<b>Amy Fleck</b>	<b>Shila Lampl</b>	<b>Larry Motacek</b>	<b>Joe Thorman</b>
<b>Dori Carlson</b>	<b>Mike Hammerschmidt</b>	<b>Steve Looyen</b>	<b>Doug Nordby</b>	<b>Kari Torkelson</b>
<b>Jim Connelly</b>	<b>Mark Helgeson</b>	<b>Tamara Mathison</b>	<b>Robert Nordstrom</b>	<b>William Welder</b>
<b>Paul Dunderland</b>	<b>James Helmers</b>	<b>Kevin Melicher</b>	<b>Geoffrey Rath</b>	<b>Jim Woodmansee</b>
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<b>Mike Emmerich</b>	<b>Avery Jones</b>	<b>Todd Metzger</b>	<b>Lori Scheel</b>	<b>Blaine Zieman</b>

Key victories are made possible only  
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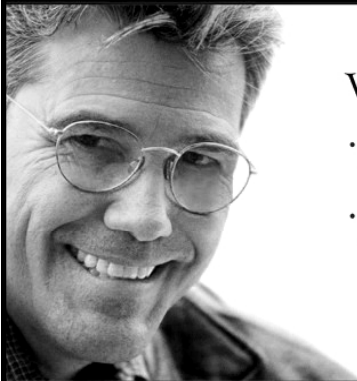


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## DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Dr. Wayne Aberle	4
Dr. Craig Bratvold	5
Dr. Ted Becker	6
Dr. David Rach	12
Dr. Richard Eklof	13
Dr. Greg Otto	13
Dr. Wyman Jorgenson	16
Dr. Daniel Levin	20
Dr. Jason Bradley	20
Dr. Joel Springan	21
Dr. Terra Boettcher	22
Dr. Don Gunhus	26

### **Mark Your Calendar Now!**

**NDOA CE Conference  
With the UND Fighting Sioux!**

**March 3-4, 2006  
Ramada Inn—Grand Forks**

### **Job Seekers**

**Drs. Anthony Prusinski & Sara Prusinski**

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