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Getting Inspired, Getting Involved!



These 12 women are among the OWA members named to Jobson's "50 Most Influential Women in Optical" list for 2004.

By Christie Walker

NEW YORK— With an eye on new and current members, the Optical Women's Association sponsored a reception during Vision Expo West in Las Vegas with the theme, "Get Inspired, Get Involved". Gifts were provided by the sponsors and raffled during the event. Donna Gindy of REM won the prize for the current member, and Debora DeLong of Safilo, won the prize for the new member. Even though she didn't win the raffle prize, new member Gina Montello of Nanofilm said, "I'm a winner because I joined the OWA." The room was packed with both new and potential members

and by the end of the evening the OWA enlisted 30 new members. All guests left with a beautiful pair of Coach sunglasses donated by Marchon. A very special Thanks to Shamir Insight, Essilor, and Marchon for sponsoring the event. To encourage more participation by members, Grady Culbreth and Rene Soltis gave a presentation on the seven committees and how and why members could participate. Here's a rundown of the seven committees and how you can *Get Involved*.

Star Mentoring provides an objective forum for career decisions, professional dilemmas and enhances career potential.

You will work with mentors and mentees to create mutually rewarding relationships. You should *Get Involved* because you will be amazed by how much people are willing to share.

Membership Directory is a "yellow pages" resource for all OWA members. This committee creates and updates the annual resource guide, solicits ads and support from key optical companies. You should *Get Involved* because you never know when you may need to phone a friend.

Program Committee provides opportunities for professional growth and networking. This committee creates compelling events to support the needs of the women in the optical industry. You should *Get Involved* because we need help in creating new programs as we continue to grow.

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Fantastic prizes drew "oohs and aahs" from the crowd at Vision Expo West. Shirley Platzer-Stocks (right in each photo) accompanies winners Debora DeLong of Safilo (left photo) and Donna Gindy of REM (right photo).

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Look inside for more pictures from Vision Expo West 2004!



Clockwise, beginning with above. (l to r) Corinne McCormick, OWA president, Raanan Naftalovic, Shamir (event sponsor), Pam Benson, Pech Optical, and Carman Renschler, Shamir; Jodi Groh, Gina Montello, and Tammy Deastlov, all of Nanofilm; Debbie Kelly, Ed Jankowski, and Jaimie Lafrano, all of Safilo; Victoria Hallberg and Lisa Etchebarren, both of Marchon (event sponsor).

Getting Inspired, Getting Involved!

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Membership Committee's goal is to attract new members and retain current members. You will be contacting key optical companies to solicit support and add more members. *Get Involved* because you will have the opportunity to meet a variety of people across the industry.

Web Site provides a medium to stay connected and deliver support and usable information in a dynamic forum. You should *Get Involved* to keep this up-to-date and dynamic.

Communication/Marketing Committee is a busy and dynamic team that is responsible for the newsletter, OWA marketing materials and press releases. You'll *Be Inspired* by the knowledge and talent within the OWA.

Nominating Committee determines and interviews potential board members and officers and solicits nominations for the Pleiades Award. You'll *Be Inspired* when you help put the right people in leadership roles.



Left- Ronda Pekar and Debora DeLong of Safilo, right- Keasha Behrman, Vision Star; Elaine Kennedy, VCA; Eve Zartman-Ball and Robin Cassidy, Vision Star; below- Sherry Martone and new member Stefanie Calloway from Neostyle





above- Michele Sef, UAB School of Optometry; Beverly Mix, Shamir, Sue Francoeur, Shamir, Judy Ekhouse, Shamir, and Ealit Cimerman, Eyal Optical. right- Laurie Badone, Seiko, and Valerie Manso, Optical Dynamics



Learn more about the OWA by reaching us at:

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Visit our website at www.opticalwomen.com

To join, contact any Board Member for an application or mail a check to Optical Women's Association for \$125 along with your name, company name, address, e-mail address, and phone and fax numbers.

Note: if more than one person in your company joins, membership is only \$95 per person.

Getting to Know...Lorinda Fraboni

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Who were your mentors?

Bob Morrow (recently deceased) and Ed Reindl were mentors. And Jim Grootegoed challenged me to go back to school and get my degree. It took 13 years with a full time job and two babies, but I did it. I can always depend on Dan Torgerson for honest feedback. He is a sounding board for new ideas and helps me champion change in the company. Marty Bassett helps me see the unemotional side of things and lets me talk to him about my perspective and takes it all into consideration before making a decision.

Who continues to inspire you today?

My major influences are the powerful women I have met through the OWA, especially OWA founder Linda Little, Marge Axelrad, Christie Walker, Shirley Platzer-Stocks, Rene Soltis and Corinne McCormack. It was a surprise to me that there were women owning and running companies, and they have been wonderful role models. I would consider my fellow OWA members as my main mentors today. Dan Torgersen and Marty Bassett also continue to be mentors.

What were your reasons for becoming actively involved in the OWA?

As I grew into my role as a manager at Walman Optical, I tried to be a coach/informal mentor. One of our managers showed me an article about the forming of the OWA and it seemed right down my alley. Our then president, Pat Patterson, said he thought I should not only go to the meeting, but I should try to get on the board. And I did.

How has being a member of the organization helped you personally/professionally?

Working to build the OWA has helped me develop professional skills, going from a person who attended meetings to one who ran them. I have met powerful women from whom I learn every time we gather. And I've learned how much I have to share with others.

Who would you encourage to join the OWA?

I want to encourage any woman in the optical industry to join the OWA and use our mentoring program to help them secure their future. The more they are involved, the more they will get from the OWA.

What is your hope for the future of the OWA?

My dream is for the OWA's resources to be open to women of all levels in the optical world: manufacturing, vendors, opticians, optometry, and ophthalmology. We all have many of the same struggles in business. I hope we can expand the benefits of our organization so we have options available, like online education or networking for those who cannot attend the events.

What is your hope for the future of the optical industry?

My hope for the optical industry is that it will continue to grow and evolve and there will be many opportunities for women to increase their earning power and hold executive positions. I envision a future where more companies are owned and run by women.

Getting to Know...

Lorinda Fraboni, Walman Optical

By Amy Spezio

As part of our ongoing series on optical women who embody the theme "Get Inspired, Get Involved", past president and current board member Lorinda Fraboni from Walman Optical shared her history in the industry and her hopes for the future.

Tell us about yourself. How did you get your start in the optical industry?

I've been in the business for 30 years. While I was going to Anoka Technical Institute, I started to work for Walman in the contact lens department. Soon after, Ed Reindl asked me to come over to the Glass Rx Lab. Then I moved out to the front office and started talking to customers, handling lens and frame inventory and invoicing Rx's and stock jobs. After two years, I was promoted to assistant manager, the first woman in Walman to reach this level. In 1974, Walman management asked me to work with someone from IBM to write our first billing and lens calculations system. For a while, I was the computer department. We started adding people and now I have a department of 10. I still run the day-to-day operations of the computer department, which deals strictly with ophthalmic branch programs and the data warehouse for all of the Walman divisions.

Who were your major influences within the industry?

Until recently, the major influences in my life for work ethic, education and relationships have all men, except my mother. My father always had great advice, such as: "Never turn down the opportunity to learn or do something new." He encouraged me to work harder than anyone else. My mother would say, "Treat people like you want to be treated, not necessarily how they treat you." She also said, "Do the right thing so you can always look yourself in the mirror."

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