



Contact Lens Manufacturers Association

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2003 CLMA Winter Board Meeting Summary

Immediately following our Annual Meeting this past October in Denver your CLMA Board of Directors met to discuss issues raised during the Town Hall meeting as well as other matters pertaining to our Association. At that meeting it was decided to survey the membership regarding the direction our members desire our association to move in the coming months and years. One of the issues that were prevalent was the concern over our dues structure. Many felt uncomfortable reporting financial information relating to their company and paying dues based on a percentage of sales. Therefore, an Ad-Hoc Committee on Dues Structure was formed to evaluate our current dues and make recommendations to the Board of Directors pertaining to possible improvements of the dues structure. The Committee, chaired by Dave Rusch, was comprised by Chris Pantle, Jan Daniel, Kathy Shafer, and Kevin Hing.

Another item of concern brought to our attention in Denver was the manner with which funds are allocated within the budget. An Ad-Hoc Committee on Budget Allocation was formed with Jan Daniel as Chairman and Janis Schramm, Kevin Hing, David Bland, Kathy Schafer, and Jo Svochak serving on the Committee. Both Ad-Hoc Committees were asked to complete their work before the January meeting in Orlando. They worked hard, met their goals and deadline.

During the time between the Annual meeting in October and the Winter meeting in January the GP Committee, Chaired by Jo Svochak and comprised by a representative from each member button manufacturer and every Board member worked feverishly. There were numerous emails and phone calls between members of this Committee. The excitement was contagious and invited participation from many non-committee members as well. Many excellent ideas were discussed and several will develop into fruition.

We chose the CLES meeting in Orlando as the site for our Winter meeting since many of the Board Members would be at that meeting anyway, which saves the participants money and time. On Super Bowl Sunday your Board of Directors was hard at work. Most Board members pay their own expense when attending meetings, whether they were attending a different function or not. Your Board puts in many hours of their time and quite a bit of their own money to conduct the business of our association. It is an honor to work with so many dedicated individuals.

A synopsis of the membership survey was compiled and presented at the Orlando meeting. You may obtain a copy of it by contacting either Janis Marshall or me. Trends emerged from the survey that were acted upon at the meeting. We asked what you thought, you told us, we listened and we are taking action.

Chris Pantle made the presentation for the Ad-Hoc Committee on Dues Structure. To summarize the findings of the Committee, it is believed members have an aversion to reporting their sales and paying membership dues based on sales. Some members do not perceive enough value derived from their dues and there is too much disparity between the amount of dues paid by different members. This lack of perceived value has caused some labs to decline membership in recent years. A recommendation was made by the Committee and adopted by the board. Effective January 1, 2003 Annual Dues for Regular Members are only \$250.00 per year. This is for every Regular Member, regardless of their sales. This change in dues is designed to attract more members into our Association. The value in membership in the CLMA today far surpasses any association membership I am aware of. In our Budget for 2003 we have a line item which contributes \$30,000 to reserves. The shortfall in expected revenue will be absorbed through this contribution to reserves as well as significantly increasing the number of Regular Member Labs.

Another issue brought to the Board by Chris Pantle as Chairman of the Associates Committee is the concern among many Associate members of their value to our Association since they do not have a vote on important matters such as the budget or bylaws. After much discussion your Board voted to change our By-Laws to allow Associate Members to have equal voting rights with Regular Members. They will still have two seats on the Board of Directors and continue to be recognized as Associate Members but, if you approve, they will now have voting rights on every matter brought to the membership for a vote. This change in our By-Laws requires acceptance by our membership; therefore a mail ballot for this change will arrive in your office in the very near future. Please consider this proposal and return your vote by the requested date. It is time to strengthen our Association among all members.

It was also decided at the Orlando meeting that non-members, regardless of where they live, will pay a higher registration fee to attend the annual meeting than members. International members attending our annual meeting will continue to pay the same registration fee as Regular Members in the United States. This action was taken to encourage greater participation and interaction among our friends globally.

Dan Bell, Chairman of the Government Affairs Committee provided a sample contract for HIPPA compliance. He has also recently sent, through Janis Marshall, a governmental request for input on the User Fees legislation just passed by the Federal Government.

Jan Daniel, Chairman of the Ad-Hoc Committee on Budget Allocation presented her Committee's results of the extensive analysis they did that addressed where our funds come from and where they are spent. It is found that 85% of our revenue is derived from

the member button manufacturers and that 83% of our expenses are allocated to the GP Committee, which includes the RGPLI. In essence, your Board is doing a pretty good job of allocating assets in the direction or revenue origin.

Quido Capelli, Chairman of the Technical Affairs Committee explained the minor delay in completing the Seal of Excellence testing. This program has made a tremendous improvement in the quality of our products. I guess the old adage that “People Respect what you Inspect, NOT what you Expect” is true. Better products equate to greater acceptance in the market place. Our Seal of Excellence Award has been an overlooked source of pride. We will do more to promote this prestigious award to the eye care community for our members.

Dr. Ed Bennett gave us an update on the activities of the RGPLI. Dr. Bennett is one of the most respected educators of our time. We are fortunate to have him as the Director of the RGPLI. We are now in almost every Optometric Teaching institution in the United States and we are pursuing opportunities in MD and Optician programs. Dr. Bennett’s passion for GP Lenses is contagious. We need more like him.

Jo Svochak, Chairman of the GP Committee completed the report on other activity within her committee. A Practitioner Educational Seminar is in the planning stages so we can get in front of practicing contact lens fitters to spread the good news of custom contact lenses. A consumer awareness campaign was presented to the Board but was determined to be cost prohibitive at this time. We will continue to research ways to reach the consumer that will be within our means.

Jo took an interesting perspective on the value of membership in the CLMA. Every fulfillment item that is sent to Contact Lens Practitioners from the CLMA now has a listing of Member Labs with their phone number. We expect to send 9,600 fulfillment packages out this year. We will distribute 35,000 Product Directories, which will have Member Labs product listing as well as the Labs name and phone number. The Product Database on our website received 1,716 user sessions last year and is expected to increase substantially this year. The Lab Directory page and the Materials page received 1,020 user sessions. The combination of the above yields 47,336 exposures of our member’s name and phone number to Eye Care Professionals. If a member lab were to consider their dues in the CLMA as nothing more than an advertising expense and evaluate this expense based on cost per exposure a Regular Member paying maximum dues last year (\$3,500) would have a cost per exposure of only 7 cents. With the new reduction of dues implemented by your Board of Directors, a straight \$250.00, your advertising cost per exposure through membership in the CLMA will be about one half of one cent per exposure. $250/47,336=0.005$ This is just one benefit of membership in the CLMA but is certainly a point worth making.

Charley Creighton, Chairman of the Soft Lens Manufacturing and Distribution Committee reaffirmed the mission of this Committee to represent and promote the

interest of all member companies who manufacture and/or distribute custom soft contact lenses. In Europe the majority of our counterparts manufacture both rigid and soft custom contact lenses. Charley's Committee will help labs interested in soft lens manufacturing get prepared for the new venture. This Committee will also be a resource for labs that do not manufacture soft lenses but are interested in distributing other members' products. Charley brings a great deal of expertise and technology to this exciting new committee.

Being the technical guy Charlie is, he is also helping us develop a bulletin board system so committees and members can communicate more efficiently and at our own individual schedule. This form of communication will open new opportunity with members across our great continent as well as globally.

Renata Hoffman, Chairman of the Public and Professional Relations Committee is working to give CLMA members greater visibility through professional trade publications, news releases, and other media. Renata has extensive experience with marketing so she will be able to gain greater awareness of items such as CLMA Member labs earning Seal of Excellence, News releases of CLMA activity and calendar of events, *etc.*

Keith Parker, Chairman of the Convention Committee will be coordinating our needs with the convention site for our 2003 Annual Meeting held early this year from September 4-6, 2003 at the Bal Harbour Beach Resort in Bal Harbour, FL.

Janice Schramm, Chairman of the Program Committee is hard at work outlining an informative and useful program for this year's annual meeting.

One of the suggestions coming from our membership was to have our Annual meeting combined with one of the major educational meetings. We agreed to begin the process of incorporating with a group such as CLES. Due to binding commitments for 2003 we will not deviate from our planned meeting this year. Keith will be in contact with some of the key meetings and we will pursue this change of venue with much vigor.

The CLMA is YOUR trade association. It belongs to you. Get Active, get involved, take ownership and be a part of the decision making process.

Lee Dickerson

Lee Dickerson, President

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