

October 2003

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Open House Is Huge Success

By Christie Walker

LAS VEGAS— If you couldn't break away from the show floor or the casinos at Vision Expo West to attend the OWA open house, then you missed two dynamic speakers and a wonderful opportunity to network with colleagues. Attended by over 75 women and men, the open house was alive with excitement as members and guests filled the meeting room just down the hall from the show floor.

Amanda Searancke of Fitovers, a participant in the OWA Star Network mentoring program, spoke on her experience with mentor David Friedfeld of ClearVision. Searancke attributes three factors to her success with mentor Friedfeld—focus, consistency and honesty. By planning their weekly phone calls, having an agenda, and being honest with each other, Searancke and Friedfeld have been able to create a valuable mentoring relationship.

"I would recommend this



Mentor David Friedfeld of ClearVision congratulates his mentee, Amanda Searancke of Fitovers, after her presentation at the OWA open house.

program to anyone at any stage in their career. It's like an investment in yourself," said Searancke. "The Star Network mentoring program allows me to benefit from the experience of others. It gave me access to someone with an opinion that was relevant to my business."

"You have to be able to take honest feedback from your mentor," added Searancke. "And be able to question them as well. David takes time for me without benefit to himself. I want to personally thank David for his commitment."

While Searancke spoke about her experiences as a

mentee, Valerie Manso spoke to the experience of mentoring as a whole and how it can change lives, both for the mentor and mentee.

"There are always those special people who care—whether it takes the shape of formal or informal caring—they take the time to offer correction, to say 'awesome job' or provide specific feedback. That's mentoring. It's really about being a productive human being and helping others to grow," said Manso.

"From the beginning, the goal of the OWA was to help others. This mentoring program is the only one of its kind in this industry. I'm asking you to look inside yourself and find a way to be part of this program," asked Manso of those attending the open house.

For more information on the Star Network mentoring program and how to become a mentor or apply for mentorship, please contact Shirley Platzer Stocks of SPS Associates at 760-753-8000.

(left) Enjoying the networking opportunities are (l to r) David Dean, LIVE Eyewear; Lorinda Fraboni, Walman Optical and OWA president; Jim Vitkus, VisionWeb; Barbara Wagner, Santinelli International; and Marge Axelrad, Jobson Publishing. (right) Tina Morales of FRAMES Data and Monica Tettamanzi of Jobson Publishing share a laugh.



Corrine McCormack Drives Membership

by Amy Spezio

When president-elect Corrine McCormack transitioned into the optical industry, she understood the critical need for working with a professional organization. Although now McCormack's namesake eyewear accessories firm is on solid feet, when she entered the market from a career in fashion accessories and fashion retail, she was looking for friends in the industry who wanted to socialize and share pointers for success.

Previously in her career, McCormack was a member of the "Fashion Group," an organization that started as a group for women in the fashion industry. Over the years, that group gained status, power, and influence, and became a coveted industry organization membership for men and women. The experience was so positive that upon entering the optical industry, she was on the

lookout for a similar group. In 1998, she found and joined the OWA.

McCormack's belief in the importance of the group was quickly cemented as she began to put the membership directory to good use. Going through the listings, she located various members who had experience dealing with the issues that were most troubling to her during her entry to optical. She says, "There is a tremendous amount of reaching out and helping each other. It is a place where women can grow and take and have a stronger voice in the industry."

McCormack looked for ways to deepen her participation in the OWA. She became involved in the Star Mentoring program. She has since joined the board of directors and headed up the membership committee. This year she became president-elect.

Getting the message out about the power of the OWA's work is one of McCormack's primary tasks as leader of the membership committee. The

group approaches companies seeking not sponsorship, but help with building the voice of women in the industry. The membership committee also encourages potential members, whether industry newcomers or veterans, to join the OWA. "We are looking for more members, people from all walks of optical life. This is an opportunity for people to get together and help each other."

In the effort to build the OWA, the membership committee could use a boost in membership itself. "We are looking for people who have the ability to help us target people to join the OWA. We want members to reach out to other people in the industry, to meet with their own company and suppliers. We want people who believe in the OWA and want to reach out in creative ways to get more members."

For information on joining the membership committee, contact Corinne at 212-868-7919.

Help Wanted!
Seeking
Membership
Committee
Members

Do not miss this **opportunity** to meet and partner with some of the most powerful people in the optical industry.

A wide variety of skills contribute to the success of this committee. Anyone interested in working with Corrine and the other members of the membership committee, please call Corrine at 212-868-7919.

Help Found! The Communications Committee

The *Women of Vision* newsletter is an important tool that keeps members current on the happenings of the OWA. As often seems to be the case with items of quality, it takes the effort of many to produce a positive result. In this issue, we meet three members of the communications committee whose regular contributions to *Women of Vision* make the OWA a stronger organization.

Profile: Amy Spezio, *Eyecare Business Magazine*

Amy is managing editor of *Eyecare Business* and has been an OWA member since joining the industry in 2001. She has been in the editorial field for 11 years, starting as a proofreader at Merck & Co., Inc., and continuing to a community newspaper, publications covering the travel and interior design industries, and most recently, at the now-defunct *Classic American Home* magazine. Her work with the OWA has made her feel right at home in the optical industry.

Profile: Tammy Deastlov, *Nanofilm*

Tammy is manager of sales and product support at Nanofilm and was introduced to the OWA by member Jodi Groh in 2001. Before entering the industry, Tammy served as an administrator at a high school for troubled students. When she asked how she could help the OWA, she was told that someone was needed to layout the newsletter. She dusted off some graphics design skills she picked up at a college job and has been tying all the pieces of the newsletter together ever since.

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The 50 Most Influential Women in Optical

Profile: Valerie Manso, Vice President, Optical Dynamics

by Amy Spezio

In this issue of the OWA newsletter, we begin taking a look at some of our members who have been named to the 50 Most Influential Women in Optical list. The first profile features Valerie Manso, vice president of retail operations at Optical Dynamics in Louisville, Kentucky, and 30-year veteran of the optical industry. Most recently, Manso entertained and inspired guests at the OWA meeting at International Vision Expo West in Las Vegas. Manso is more than an electrifying speaker--throughout her career she put her words into action to promote the success of women in the optical industry.

As one of the founding members of the OWA, Manso has made efforts to create a fellowship of women in the optical industry in what she says "was and still is a male-dominated industry."

Manso wants to help build an organization that is a resource for the unsung women in optical--the majority of client contact people and an increasing number of eyecare practitioners. She envisions the OWA as the place that answers the questions: "How

do these women find models of where they will progress? Where will they go to find help?"

Her own professional experience is a testament to successful mentoring. After completing her opticianry studies at Ryerson Polytechnic Institute in Toronto, Manso joined American Optical and developed a positive relationship that blossomed into a nearly decade long informal mentoring experience. "My mentor helped me grow significantly. She changed the status quo every 18 months."

In turn, as Manso went on to become director of U.S. operations at American Optical, and later director of field lens consultants for SOLA, then founder of Manso Management Resources, and in her current role at Optical Dynamics, she has helped nurture numerous careers. "That personal sense of satisfaction in helping another individual is phenomenal. That in itself is enough to be a mentor," she says.

Moving forward with that positive attitude, Manso said she will take a more active role in the OWA. She has put her name into the growing pool of mentors.

And what does Manso hope for the



Valerie Manso (left) and Optical Women's Association founder, Linda Little, greet each other with a big hug after Manso's presentation at the Vision West OWA open house.

future of the OWA? A larger organization that stretches to help educate, grow careers, and improve the industry. "In three to five years, I would expect the OWA to be at least four to five times the size it is today with expanding programs beyond networking and mentoring. Everywhere the OWA touches, there will be positive impact."

★ OWA Networking Social

All OWA Members and
Non-members Welcome.

Come meet old and new friends,
and make new business contacts.

Refreshments provided.

Friday, November 21, 2003
4:45PM-6:00PM

OLA Press Room (Conference Area)

Gathering place kindly provided by OLA.

To learn more about the OWA you can reach us at:

PO Box 11463

Minneapolis, MN 55411-0463

E-mail: owa@opticalwomen.com

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.

Member Christie Walker Publishes Novel

OWA member, Christie Walker, has had her first novel, *The Magical Man List: a romantic comedy about finding your soul mate*, published by iUniverse. Walker was one of the “founding mothers” of the OWA (see profile below). She has had several non-fiction titles for children published in the past, but this is her first venture into the world of fiction. In the works for over three years, Christie is thrilled that her book is now available to the public. The tale is based on the true-life story of how Christie found her soul mate and husband, Robbie. Christie created a wish list for the perfect man, planted it in a “sacred” place and waited for prince charming to show up. The first guy to arrive on the scene was Robbie—not at all what she had in mind. Yet within three months she had checked off 62 out of 65 items on her very own list. “The list doesn’t lie, so I married the guy, and have lived happily ever after, ever since,” said Christie, who works from her home in Big Bear Lake, California.



The fictional version is a fun, entertaining tale of two girlfriends who make up Man Lists, plant them and unexpectedly find love. The book is scheduled to be available on Amazon.com and BarnesandNoble.com on December 15th. It can be found now at http://www.iuniverse.com/bookstore/book_detail.asp?isbn=0595292399. Christie’s second novel, *Without Feeling*, can be previewed at the end of *The Magical Man List*, or at her web site at <http://mysite.verizon.net/res1737u>.

Congratulations, Christie!

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Profile: Christie Walker, Jobson Publishing

Writer, photographer, and editor Christie Walker works for Jobson Publishing as the editor of LabTalk magazine. She is also the editor for the Optical Laboratories Association's magazine *ClearVisions*, and VisionWeb's editorial content. She is a contributing editor to the consumer web site AllAboutVision.com. Christie also writes for consumer magazines for companies in the eyewear industry, such as Kaiser Permanente and 1st EyeCare. She is a regular contributor to the OWA newsletter and covers OWA events for *Vision Monday*. In her spare time, Christie writes fiction and non-fiction books.

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