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Good Week for Weeks

By Christie Walker

NEW YORK— Friends, family, industry leaders and coworkers gathered at the Marchon showroom on the Friday evening of Vision Expo East to honor the fifth recipient of the Optical Women's Association's Pleiades award, Dana Weeks of Optical Services International (OSI). OWA board member Rene Soltis presented the award—a certificate for a star named in honor of Weeks—after highlighting Weeks' accomplishments including: president of OSI since 1990; active member of the OWA; and an acknowledgment as one of "Vision Monday's 50 Most Influential Women in Optical".

"Dana Weeks is truly a



Pleiades Award winner Dana Weeks and her father, Duane Reese

person of great character, class, knowledge, spirit and an excellent role model for the optical industry," said Soltis, in front of a crowd of more than 100 people.

"Somewhere in each of our lives, we have had someone who encourages us, teaches us and who helps us to take advantage of the opportunities that lie ahead. In other words, we all have had mentors. For me, that person is my father, Duane Reese," said Weeks, as her

father stood proudly with his wife, Etabel in the front of the crowd.

Duane Reese founded Optical Services International. Weeks joined him in 1988. Since then, OSI has become the largest independent wholesale laboratory association in the United States. As president, Weeks directs the group's activities including pursuing new business, developing and implementing marketing and educational programs, and working with OSI's vendors.

"It was my father who freely taught me not only the ins and outs of the industry, but how to manage effectively and to always remember that I had a duty to fulfill our obligations to our members and our employees," Weeks explained.

Weeks recalled that her first few months at OSI were a bit

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Staying on the Leading Edge of Change

By Dana Weeks, OSI, 2004 Pleiades award winner.

The landscape of our industry has changed dramatically over the last 10 years bringing massive advances in lens and frame materials, processing equipment, robotics and automation. In addition, consolidation of our industry has forced many changes in the way we view our future. Through it all, we are being taught to think and view opportunities in a new way. With ever-increasing competition, we must continually reach new levels of excellence. Opportunities are still there, but they are only for those who stay on the leading edge of change.

- Opportunities are there for those who are looking ahead, and not dwelling on the "what has happened."
- Opportunities are there for those who consistently produce a superior product.
- Opportunities are there for those who fulfill all of their commitments to their customers, every day.
- Opportunities will always be there for those who constantly sustain a powerful commitment to professionalism and service.

I am convinced that regardless of how consolidated our industry becomes or how technology continues to evolve, there will always be terrific opportunities for both men and women with vision, professionalism and energy.

A String of Pearls...wisdom from industry experts

For this issue, Jeanine Solomon, Regional Sales Manager for Silhouette Optical LTD interviewed Barbara Wagner, Director of Marketing for Santinelli International on a topic suggested by OWA members: finding balance between different roles in one's life.

A Balanced Life for "Today's Woman"

By Jeanine Solomon

Barbara Wagner typifies "today's woman." She works to make a happy home for her husband and two lovely children. She is the Director of Marketing for Santinelli International. She also recharges herself by taking time for personal fitness. Developing and fine-tuning what she does on a daily basis goes a long way toward keeping her free of the tension that comes with her many responsibilities. In this issue of "Pearls of Wisdom", Barbara shares some of her strategies for finding balance in life.

Family Life

Barbara makes a concerted effort to keep her family life balanced. Her "very understanding" husband is credited for helping to make this happen. She has also put a few rules in place to save time for family. Travel is limited to 2-3 days per month. Weekends are dedicated to quality private time. This is her time to focus on her children and husband. Family time has to be scheduled first, and everything else has to be scheduled around it.

Time Management

Barbara has developed some personal habits to make the most of every hour she is given. She's in the office 30-60 minutes early. This is quiet time with no interruptions. She takes the time to analyze the goals she has set for the day. Lunch takes place in her office and serves as another opportunity to find a few quiet moments in which to reevaluate the priorities for the rest of the day. How does she find the time to be able to do this? She works to keep meetings short and to the point. Email is her choice of communication when working on projects as they keep everyone informed without eating up valuable time in meetings.

Organization

While she admits that having an assistant as reliable and helpful as hers gives her an advantage over most professionals, Barbara's proactive attitude toward staying on top of her responsibilities keeps her balanced in all areas of her life. She uses Microsoft Outlook to keep task lists, calendars, and emails that help keep her and the projects she leads on schedule. All tasks, whether part of a daily responsibility or an annual goal,

are tracked and prioritized in one place for her reference. A sense of accomplishment is achieved as each item is marked off of the "to do" list.

Time for Yourself

Stress is an area that we all deal with in our careers. Barbara is no different. Carving enough time for herself is a challenge. She finds that spending time at her health club is wonderfully relaxing both physically and mentally. It raises her energy level while providing an opportunity for her to contemplate what she's accomplished and motivate herself for the future.

This personal time combined with the time she shares with her family gives her what she needs to get through another busy week in the business world.

A balanced life is a gift we give to our families, our companies, and ourselves. By sharing her strategies for achieving this equilibrium, the balanced life of Barbara Wagner has also been a gift to the women of the optical community by providing an exemplary model of harmoniously blending the many roles of "today's woman".



Do you want to meet new people? Expand your network? Share ideas and broaden your horizons? We have just the thing for you...

VOLUNTEER!

Become an OWA insider by joining a committee.

There is a place for you on these committees -

Membership
Communications
Star Mentoring
Web Site

Membership Directory

*Catch the spirit of volunteerism -
it will pay big dividends!*

Email owa@opticalwomen.com to learn more!

Learn more about the OWA by reaching 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 the 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.

Marge Axelrad: The Write Stuff

By Amy Spiezio

When Marge Axelrad was presented with the UJA Federation of New York-Optical Division's 2004 Ben Robinson Lifetime Achievement Award, it acknowledged her 16-plus years in optical as an editor and volunteer for groups including UJA and the OWA.

Axelrad joined Jobson in 1988 as editor-in-chief of Vision Monday and is currently a regular columnist in VM and 20/20 publications. She is also a frequent speaker at major industry events, meetings and programs. Recently, Axelrad took a moment to share reflections on her involvement in optical with OWA members.

Q. Who were your mentors?

A. I've had many mentors in my career. Besides my father, who shared advice based on his years in sales and in retailing, there have been generous bosses and colleagues. Treasured friends have acted as 'sounding boards' and provided wisdom and pointers along the way. No one achieves anything solo- it's not possible!

Q. What were some of your reasons for helping to found the OWA?

A. When Linda Little, at the time, a long-term lens/equipment executive and a friend, suggested founding an organization like the OWA, it was like a light went on. Of course! I had belonged to similar organizations when I was active in the home furnishings industry and had benefited so much by meeting women in other parts of that industry. It was an invaluable resource. Most people in our marketplace only see a view of their own companies. They could really benefit from the perspective of other companies.

Q. Who would you encourage to join the OWA?

A. I'd encourage any woman with professional aspirations who wants to help raise the bar for women throughout the industry to join OWA. Women face unique communications and work/life balance issues and can benefit from programs, like mentoring, to help them deal with that. The optical industry needs to continue to develop its best professionals and weave together the threads of talent out there.



Marge Axelrad

Q. What is your hope for the future of the OWA?

A. I hope the OWA continues to build its membership among influential women and among women who are starting out and want to grow their careers in serving the goals of all aspects of this industry. After just a few years, there's still a lot more OWA can do to improve the dialogue among decision-makers, raise the profile of women in all aspects of the optical field, in creative services and product design, sales, marketing, retailing, buying, education, and eye care.

Googling for a Balanced Life

by Amy Spiezio

While you probably don't have time to read every self-help book or watch every advice program on television, a quick visit to the internet can provide you with advice and tools for coping with the demands you face as a woman trying to juggle family and work. The following are just a few of the helpful sites out there.

www.pbs.org/workfamily

"Juggling Work and Family with Hedrick Smith" offers tips for blending a career and child rearing, ranging from selecting a child care provider to presenting a plan for alternative working hours to your employer.

health.yahoo.com/health/centers/work_life
This site provides articles about stress on the job, marriage, kids and stress, gender issues and more.

www.canoe.ca/LifewiseWorkLife00/home.html
Inspirational stories about women entrepreneurs who balance work and family successfully, as well as a great collection of "Sanity Savers".

www.parentsplace.com
A section of ivillage.com, this resource provides advice such as seven coping strategies for juggling work and family and finding a balance.

www.oprah.com
While you may be too busy to catch her show, this good-living guru's site provides plenty of gems for finding personal happiness while achieving your goals.

Good Week for Weeks

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overwhelming. When she first started, she didn't know the difference between a glass and plastic lens. It was then that she met Shirley Platzer-Stocks, the then vice president of marketing for Signet Armormite.

"There are many people who inspire us, even when they are not aware that they are doing so, and Shirley is one of those people," Weeks told the crowd. "I was so impressed when she conducted the meeting so eloquently, so knowledgeably and with such confidence—I knew I wanted to be just like Shirley!"

Weeks felt that her mentors helped her take advantage of opportunities. She now offers words of advice to other OWA members.

A Letter from Our Incoming President

Dear OWA Members,

I am very excited about the opportunities for OWA. As this is my first President's letter, I thought about why I joined the OWA back in 1997. When I received my first announcement on the Optical Women's organization, I felt compelled to become a member. As a woman in the optical industry and a woman business owner, I needed to join. I was hoping that it would give me an opportunity to meet other like-minded individuals in the optical world.

For me, this organization is about women and for women. We have an incredible Board of Directors and dedicated committee members who work to ensure that we have a voice in the industry. I am so pleased to have met these women and am impressed by their accomplishments. I have also loved meeting members at our functions and want to meet more women, so I can hear from you what you want from this organization.

Recently, I read about a sister organization in the cosmetics industry called Cosmetic Executive Women (CEW), celebrating their 50th anniversary. It was a huge affair with every major player in the industry out to celebrate women and their accomplishments. I found it interesting that 50 years ago, the founding members were in secretarial positions. They met monthly to network and support each other and to build their careers. In time the organization grew, as did the responsibilities of these women. Today, women lead many of the major cosmetic companies and CEW raises money for important causes and is very influential in the business world.

I was inspired by the CEW and see some correlations with the OWA. While the OWA is only a few years old, our membership does have incredible women with great careers. We just need more time and the commitment of women at all levels of the optical industry to work with us on key issues. For that I only ask that each of you try to find the time to communicate and let us know what you want and need from the OWA. It is our commitment that all women in this industry realize the OWA is here for them. We want to acknowledge accomplishments and inspire to reach ever higher in careers. Members have expressed interest in supporting and mentoring women in the industry. It is amazing what can be accomplished with the support of friends and peers. That is what the OWA is about and we welcome everyone to be involved.

Corrine McCormack

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