Vision Quest: Low Vision Options

The Prevention of Blindness Society of Metropolitan Washington invites you to attend its assistive devices fair. You will have the opportunity to learn about the latest in low vision technology, equipment and resources from more than 15 exhibitors.

Light refreshments will be available. Participants are encouraged to bring a bag lunch or call Hollin Hall Senior Center for more information on local dining and directions at (703) 765-4574, TTY 711. There will be free parking.

Assistive Devices Fair
Monday, May 12, 2008
10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Hollin Hall Senior Center
1500 Shenandoah Road
Alexandria, VA 22308

Co-sponsored with Access Services, Fairfax County Public Library System and Hollin Hall

In This Issue:

Calendar of Events............2
Eyes on the News............4
Around Town
Shakespeare Theatre.......6
• Thursday, May 1, 2008
Stargardt’s Network, 6:15 p.m.
Baja Fresh, Dupont Circle
1333 New Hampshire Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C.

• Wednesday, May 7, 2008
“Maximizing Your Independence,” 10 a.m.
Janet Morrison, POB director of Macular Degeneration Network
Asbury Methodist Village
Conley Hall, Trott Building
401 Russell Avenue
Gaithersburg, MD

• Saturday, May 10, 2008
Macular Degeneration Network, “Make Your House a Home for a Lifetime: Home Safety and Efficiency,”
10:30 a.m. - 12 p.m.
Joan Pease, founder of Partners in Planning
First Connection Share Group, 9:30 a.m.
Sibley Memorial Hospital, Ernst Auditorium
5255 Loughboro Road, NW
Washington, D.C.

• Monday, May 12, 2008
Assistive Devices Fair, “Vision Quest: Low Vision Options,” 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Hollin Hall Senior Center
1500 Shenandoah Road
Alexandria, VA
Calendar of Events

• Tuesday, May 20, 2008
Friendship Heights Vision Support Group, “Update on Video Magnification,” 12:30 - 1:30 p.m.
Scott Holden, Vision Support Systems
Friendship Heights Village Center
4433 Southpark Avenue
Chevy Chase, MD
(301) 656-2797
Bring a bag lunch, refreshments provided.

• Wednesday, May 21, 2008
Share Group, 10:30 a.m.
Vinson Hall
6251 Old Dominion Drive
McLean, VA

• Tuesday, May 27, 2008
Low Vision Support Group, 11 a.m.
Roundtable Discussion
Washington Hospital Center
110 Irving Street, NW
Washington, D.C.
Lunch provided, call (202) 877-6081 to reserve lunch.

• Wednesday, May 28, 2008
Share Group, 10:30 a.m.
Classic Residence by Hyatt
8100 Connecticut Avenue
Chevy Chase, MD

For more information on these events, please call POB at (202) 234-1010
Avastin vs. Lucentis

Study to keep eye on cost, effectiveness of therapies

A federally funded study by the National Eye Institute will seek an optimal treatment for age-related macular degeneration. The study will look at two therapeutic agents, Avastin and Lucentis, to determine which is better at halting progress of AMD and how much treatment is needed to be effective.

Lucentis has been shown to work and has been approved by the Food and Drug Administration to treat wet macular degeneration. Avastin has been approved to treat cancers of the colon and rectum, but many ophthalmologists also use it for some macular degeneration patients as an off-label therapy.

Avastin and Lucentis are both made by Genentech Inc., the San Francisco-based biotechnology company. They work by interfering with proteins needed for growth of new blood vessels. But Lucentis costs about $2,000 per dose for macular degeneration treatment in comparison to Avastin which costs less than $100.

Continued...
Genentech developed Lucentis specifically for use in the eye, but before it hit the market many physicians began using Avastin and found it also worked, said Dr. David Orth, ophthalmology professor at Rush University Medical Center and director of the retinal center at Ingalls Memorial Hospital in Harvey, Illinois.

Besides determining whether Avastin is as good as Lucentis or better, the study aims to determine how much therapy a patient requires. Orth said physicians prescribing the medications suspect patients may benefit just as much from far less therapy.

Most patients with macular degeneration are covered by Medicare, so the federal government is also interested in any findings that may reduce the cost of therapy.

A spokeswoman for Genentech said the company continues to believe that Lucentis is the optimal treatment for macular degeneration. Genetech also said that is provides financial assistance for patients who need the treatment but do not have insurance or the funds to pay.

Economics was the motivator among physicians who believe that treating macular degeneration with Lucentis is needlessly expensive, but the social impact on the patients was also a major consideration.

- Chicago Tribune, March 31, 2008
The Shakespeare Theatre Company offers two audio-described performances for each production throughout the year. Upcoming audio-described performances are:

**Antony and Cleopatra**
Saturday, June 14, 2008 at 2 p.m.
Thursday, June 26, 2008 at 8 p.m.
Sidney Harman Hall, 601 F Street, NW, Washington, D.C.

**Julius Caesar**
Thursday, June 19, 2008 at 8 p.m.
Saturday, June 21, 2008 at 2 p.m.
Sidney Harman Hall, 601 F Street, NW, Washington, D.C.

**The Imaginary Invalid**
Saturday, July 5, 2008 at 2 p.m.
Thursday, July 10, 2008 at 8 p.m.
Lansburgh Theatre, 450 7th Street, NW, Washington, D.C.

Large print and Braille program notes, and an infrared audio enhancement system are also available at all performances at the coat check on a first-come basis at Sidney Harman Hall and Lansburgh Theatre.
“Make Your House a Home for a Lifetime: Home Safety and Efficiency”

Joan Pease, founder of Partners in Planning, will discuss making your home safe for aging at the Macular Degeneration Network meeting on Saturday, May 10, 2008 at Sibley Memorial Hospital at 10:30 a.m. She will also talk about the practical guide to enhancing independent living entitled “Make Your House a Home for a Lifetime.”

The guide provides ideas and products that will help you continue daily chores as well as help you improve the safety of your home. It includes resources on reading, performing household chores, hearing, enhancing lighting and color perception, preventing household injuries, mobility and balance, strength and dexterity, and fire safety.

The free guide also includes a list of suppliers and a home checklist to get you on your way to making your house a home for a lifetime.
Save the Date

June 12: Stargardt’s Network, 6:15 p.m.

June 14: Macular Degeneration Network, “Adjusting to Vision Loss,” Sibley Memorial Hospital, 10:30 a.m.


June 24: Low Vision Support Group, “Getting Up and Moving On,” Washington Hospital Center, 11 a.m.

To receive E-mail reminders about upcoming events, please send an E-mail to jheilman@youreyes.org.