

# *EyePower* Fall 2005

*News and Information from the Low Vision Center*

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## **EyeView**

*by Bill Rolle, Executive Director  
Low Vision Center*

We've come across some useful statistics that accurately portray the size of the US low vision population. This is important to use when we seek support for change in the way organizations deal with people who have low vision. It's also helpful to us when we seek financial support. Organizations respond more positively when we can make an argument based on accurate numbers. You'll notice the low vision population numbers referred to in a couple of this issue's articles. We also report on the fact that more businesses are becoming aware of the low vision market and are developing products to respond to it.



## **By Appointment**

Don't forget that we are a small operation and can see clients only by appointment. Please call us at 301-951-4444 and we'll make every effort to set up your appointment as quickly as possible.

## **We Hear You**

Retired Ambassador Harvey F. Nelson, Jr. wrote in response to our appeal "Let's Hear From You" to say that he has been dealing with "low vision stuff" for about ten years. He says that he greatly appreciates lighting that provides sharp contrast and stairs with edges that are clearly marked. However, he says that it's the people who make the difference. He has traveled the world and found that even the self-reliant need to give in to asking for assistance from time to time. He reports that there are all kinds of people all over the globe ready and anxious to help. He found that an injection of humor did wonders in seeking assistance. He made a further plea for a simple cell phone used for telephoning only. "Simplicity" he said is the key. Unfortunately, the cell phone manufacturers perceive the low vision or no vision market to be unprofitably small. They fail to recognize that there 16.5 million people in the U.S. more than age 45 who report having vision loss. They account for more than 50 percent of all household discretionary income, totaling \$756 billion. Those numbers with low vision will grow to 20 million by 2010.



## Need Your Help

Most likely you're aware that the Low Vision Center exists entirely on the generosity of our clients. Most of those who can afford to donate do so. Another way to help is to **buy a ticket** to the **National Philharmonic's** presentation of **Mozart's Magic Flute** at the Music Center at Strathmore on Saturday, November 5, 2005. Former WGMS Radio announcer Dennis Owens will be the guest announcer for the performance. The new Center is located on Rockville Pike in North Bethesda. The National Philharmonic will donate to the Low Vision Center ten percent of each single ticket sale for that evening's performance. Ticket prices range from \$25, \$35, \$45, \$60 & \$80. Please call **301-493-9283, ext 111 to purchase your ticket.**



## Large Print Forms

We hear everyday from our clients that they continue to be frustrated by the lack of large print intake forms in their respective health-care providers' offices. In some cases the type size is six point, impossible for even the healthy sighted to read. Next time you encounter a form with type too small to read, please ask to have the form enlarged and suggest that the facility management have a larger sized form prepared for those who have low vision. It's a violation of your privacy to have to verbally respond to the questions on the form while standing at the front desk in the waiting room. If they cannot produce a larger form, ask if you can take the form home or have the form sent to you prior to the appointment so that you can complete the required information in private. This lack of larger forms can happen anywhere, not just in your healthcare provider's office.

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## Our Volunteers Are Essential

The Low Vision Center could not operate without the generous gift of time by our loyal, hardworking volunteers. They include:

**Joe Navarro** comes in each week for half a day to assist with office chores and conduct client interviews.

**Tony Dwyer** works on our Web site from his home office and keeps it up-to-date.

**Jerry Gallo** of Graphics by Gallo works on our newsletter and other Center materials.

**Mary Kay Kadow** brings in a crew of friends to assist with our newsletter mailings. **Bartholomew House Assisted Living Residents** are the main force behind getting our newsletter mailings out on a timely basis.

We are eternally grateful to them for their continued service.

## Cell Phone Simplified

Recent Wall Street Journal article reported that Vodafone has simplified one of its cell phone products to address the growing, aging market that includes many with low vision. The new product is called Vodafone Simply and comes with a stand to store as well as charge it. The manufacturer claims, "it's easy to use". However, the product is not yet available in the US. Only nine countries carry it. They are U.K., Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Sweden, Spain, Portugal, Greece and New Zealand. Designing products to fit the aging population appears to be a trend, according to the Wall Street Journal. They also mention Ford Motor Company and Phillips Electronics NV, as manufacturers currently working on user-friendly products for low vision.



## Low Vision Market

The President of the American Foundation for the Blind in New York has encouraged business people to "discover" the low vision market. He has been quoted as saying, "As baby boomers age, the number of people with some form of low vision impairment, even while wearing glasses or contact lens, is expected to increase significantly. These consumers are going to want to maintain their independence, whether reading, living, working, cooking or doing other everyday activities." "Companies from every industry need to start creating products now that all of us can use—no matter what our level of vision is," he added.

## Tips

Call 202-962-1100 to get a free copy of Metro's brochure "Tips for Riding Metro for People with Disabilities".

Call 1-866-484-3774 to enlarge your favorite book from 16 to 44 font, based on your needs. Huge Print Press was founded to serve the low vision community.

Call Hadley School for the Blind at 1-800-526-9909 for information on the school's new distance education course on Macular Degeneration.

Triton, a leading manufacturer of automated teller machines (ATMs) has developed an ATM equipped with audio-guided transaction support.

NFB-Newsline offers a free automatic talking newspaper service. You may select from more than 160 national and regional publications. Call Mollyne Honor at 410-230-2456 for the service.

The Low Vision Center currently has five used CCTVs for sale. Please call us at 301-951-4444 if you are interested in purchasing one of these lower priced video readers in an as is condition.



## Volunteer Training

Terry Eason, Low Vision Center Assistant Director, will start a training program this October for Center volunteers. She will offer a step-by-step program to those who have an interest in working directly with our clients. It's a worthwhile endeavor and emotionally rewarding. The more, trained volunteers we have the better able we'll be to meet our growing demand for client visits. Please call Terry at 301-951-4444 to discuss your interest and availability.

## Large Print Prescription Instructions

Walgreens now offers large print prescription instructions free of charge at all its stores across the country. Pharmacy patients can request the large print option when they drop off or call in their prescriptions. The pharmacist will provide instructions printed in large type on 8-1/2 X 11 paper. All prescription instructions are available in both English and Spanish.

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**LOW VISION  
CENTER**

*Winning Ideas for  
Failing Sight*

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Free Matter for  
the Blind  
Handle as First  
Class Mail