



The Sight-Loss Support Group of Central Pennsylvania, Inc.

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The OUTLOOK

SEPTEMBER 2013

**Official Newsletter of the Sight-Loss
Support Group of Central PA, Inc.**

THE LUNCH BUNCH

**The Lunch Bunch: Thursday, September 19, Mount
Nittany Residences**

**The Lunch Bunch always shares a simple lunch and
excellent conversation. All are welcome; just bring a
sandwich – drinks are “on the house.” Mount Nittany
Residences is located at 301 Rolling Ridge Drive
behind Hills Plaza.**

VIEW VIA HEADPHONES 14TH SEASON!

**SLSG's View Via Headphones inaugurates its 14th year
of audio described performances with the production
of Botanica, MOMIX, Thursday, September 12, 7:30
pm, in Eisenhower Auditorium.**

In its dance-theatre production *Botanica*, MOMIX revels in the animated world of nature and its evolving beauty. The internationally famous company of dancer-illusionists, last seen at Penn State in a 2009 performance of *Lunar Sea*, is a ninety-minute, family-friendly work featuring a slew of fast-moving, performance pieces. Nature, like the weather, is ever changing. *Botanica* follows the seasons beginning with winter. Performers explore the qualities of earth, light, darkness, and air with the help of fanciful costumes, multimedia projections, custom-made props, and clever puppetry created by Michael Curry, who co-designed the masks and puppets for Broadway's *The Lion King*. The eclectic score ranges from birdsongs to music by Vivaldi.

The audio describers, a veteran and dedicated group, invite SLSG clients and their friends and families to experience "the visual made verbal". The majority of audio described performances are free; tickets to audio described performances at Eisenhower are always free. Call the Sight-Loss Support Group office at 238-0132 for assistance in obtaining tickets or making arrangements for rides to Eisenhower Auditorium.

The Sight-Loss Support Group is proud that its audio description program was the first of its kind in the state of Pennsylvania. Regular users of audio description attest to its enhancement of their theatre-going experience. If you've never used audio description, start the fall season right. Take in MOMIX!

CATARIDE FARE INCREASE

The senior citizen fare for CATARIDE increased to \$3.00 on August 1st (formerly \$2.50). The senior fare

and the fare for an individual with a disability are now both \$3.00. Traditionally, the senior fare has been significantly lower than the disabled fare. CATA foresees the two fares remaining on par in the future. CATARIDE coupons are a great convenience, saving us from the mad search for \$1.00 bills (exact change is required). Call the CATA office at 238-2282 for details on how to purchase a book (or two) of coupons.

INFLAMMATION, "SEE FOOD" AND MACULAR DEGENERATION

Hippocrates, the ancient Greek physician traditionally considered the father of medicine, wisely said, "Let food be thy medicine and medicine thy food." Nearly 2,500 years later this sage advice still holds true whether one is concerned about heart disease, cancer, arthritis or macular degeneration. In recent years, two significant connections have taken root in the medical profession: the link between chronic inflammation and degenerative disease, and the connection between inflammation and what we eat. Hippocrates' wisdom is back in the spotlight. So let's take a closer look at the good doctor's prescription, food – one of life's great pleasures and temptations. But first we need to have a better understanding of inflammation, both the good and the bad.

Normal inflammation is a central aspect of healing and is necessary for the defense, maintenance and repair of the body. But chronic, abnormal inflammation spreads to areas of the body that have not experienced injury or attack, unleashing the immune system's sophisticated weaponry on normal cells and tissue. When inflammation is unchecked and just won't quit, it attacks normal cells and promotes disease rather than healing. The many factors that can

trigger inflammation include resistance to insulin, obesity, emotional stress, environmental stress, low antioxidant intake or increased exposure to free radicals.

The April 2013 issue of The Outlook explored the growing body of evidence that identifies systemic inflammation as a risk factor for age-related macular degeneration (AMD). Elevated levels of C-reactive protein (hsCRP) in the blood predict greater future risk of AMD, as well as other major chronic degenerative disease such as cardiovascular disease, some forms of cancer, and Alzheimer's disease.

Now back to Hippocrates. Many modern medical practitioners are in the wise doctor's camp, arguing that without question, diet influences inflammation. Dr. Andrew Weil, for one, believes that our food choices can determine whether we are in an anti-inflammatory state or a pro-inflammatory one. In his book *Healthy Aging* (2005), he devotes an entire chapter to the anti-inflammatory diet that delves into the nutritional components of a healthy lifestyle. He tells us ways of selecting and preparing foods based on scientific knowledge and how they can help our bodies resist and adapt to the changes that time brings. Please see Dr. Weil's book for an excellent discussion of this complex topic.

The Mediterranean diet is notable for its anti-inflammatory properties through the increased consumption of: healthy fats (monounsaturated fats found in nuts, seeds and olive oil) and omega-3 fatty acids; low-glycemic carbohydrate choices such as fiber-rich plant foods (fruits, vegetables, grains, legumes, raw nuts and seeds); and increasing our intake of micronutrients and antioxidants by eating more fruits and vegetables. The Mediterranean diet

promotes reducing the amount of animal protein in the diet thus lowering the consumption of saturated fat and cholesterol. In a nutshell, by following the nutritional guidelines of a Mediterranean diet you can shift your body from a pro-inflammatory state to an anti-inflammatory state, thus reducing the risks of abnormal inflammation and the diseases associated with it. So bring home the blueberries, kale, olive oil, salmon, walnuts and lentils and learn to love them. Your eyes and heart will thank you.

PAM'S CORNER

Pam Whittaker, retired BVS rehabilitation teacher, is a monthly contributor to The Outlook, sharing her latest finds that make our lives a little bit easier.

There are many visually impaired persons (VIPs) with hearing loss who are unable to effectively use talking watches. If you fall into this category, you may wish to consider the Meteor Vibrating Pocket Watch. This small, three-button, banana-shaped device allows one to independently tell time through vibrations. A quick press of the top button indicates the hours, the middle button indicates tens of minutes, and the bottom button is for minutes. A short vibration indicates 1 unit and a long vibration indicates 5 units. For hours the range is from 1-12, 0-5 for tens of minutes, and 0-9 for the minutes. For example:

- 3 short vibrations indicate 3 hours or 30 minutes or 3 minutes depending on the pressed button.**
- 1 long vibration indicates 5 hours or 50 minutes or 5 minutes depending on the pressed button.**
- 2 long vibrations followed by 2 short vibrations indicate 12 hours**

The buttons can be pressed in any order since there may be situations where one only wishes to know the minute reading.

Setting the time is easy. Press and hold the upper button to set the hour, the middle button sets the tens of minutes, and the bottom button sets the minutes. A long vibration indicates that you are in the setting mode. Each short vibration that follows counts for 1 unit. Release the hold when the desired number of vibrations are set.

The battery will last 2-5 years depending on use. Use only Energizer 357 batteries or the equivalent. The watch can be cleaned with a wet tissue, but should not be put into water. It is under warranty for 2 years. The Meteor Vibrating Pocket Watch is available from www.atguys.com/store product 23/37. Order by phone at (269) 216-4798. The cost of the Meteor Vibrating Pocket Watch is \$117.

Follow up information from the last article on the Pocket Hose: My first Pocket Hose was terrific, but after about 15 uses, it sprung a wild spraying leak in the center and that was the end of that. I bought another one and the same thing happened after only one use. I bought a third and the same thing happened after two uses. I suspect that I have very strong water pressure or Pocket Hoses are junk. I have packaged all three up and am sending them back to the distributor to see what they have to say.

AN EARLY PREDICTOR FOR GLAUCOMA?

The following is based on an article from the VisionAware website, February 27, 2013.

Researchers in Australia may have identified an early predictor of glaucoma. The Blue Mountains Eye Study found that patients who had abnormally narrow retinal arteries when the study began were also those who were most likely to have open-angle glaucoma at the study's 10-year end point. The Blue Mountain Eye Study (named after the Australian mountain range) is the first large population-based assessment of visual impairment and common eye diseases of a representative sample of older Australians. This longitudinal study followed the same individuals over a period of 10 years.

The findings of the new study, led by Paul Mitchell, M.D., PhD, supports the concept that abnormal narrowing of the retinal blood vessels is an important factor in the earliest stages of open-angle glaucoma (OAG). Tracking nearly 2,500 participants, the study found that the OAG risk at the 10-year mark was about four times higher in patients whose retinal arteries had been narrowest when the study began, compared with those who had had the widest arteries. Compared with the study group as a whole, the patients who were diagnosed with OAG by the 10-year mark were older, had had higher blood pressure or higher intraocular pressure (i.e., within the eye) at the study's baseline and were more likely to be female.

Results suggest that a computer-based imaging tool designed to detect narrowing of the retinal arteries could effectively identify those who are most at risk for OAG. Such a tool would also need to account for blood pressure and other factors that can contribute to blood vessel changes. Early detection would allow ophthalmologists to treat patients before optic nerve damage occurs and give doctor and patient the best chance of protecting vision. The study authors advise

caution when interpreting the results, however, stating that because glaucoma takes so long to develop, it remains unclear if these retinal blood vessel changes are part of the cause of the disease or



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part of its normal progression. Further studies are needed to fully understand the exact role of retinal blood vessel changes in the development and progression of glaucoma.

THANK YOU RITA WASSON!

Once again the Wasson picnic was a highlight of the summer – wonderful food and excellent company. Rita had her pool refurbished for the season and it was beautiful. So a heartfelt thank you to Rita and to the Lions and their families for hosting the annual picnic and giving everyone such an enjoyable afternoon.

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