Chairman's Corner: Charles Bouchard, MD

As we start the New Year, I am happy to report that the Department has never been stronger. We currently have 33 faculty (4 research, 16 Full time and 13 part time) and see a combined 65,000 patient visits per year at Loyola and Hines. We now have at least 2 faculty for all subspecialty services including Uveitis. The Burr Ridge Outpatient Center which has been open for almost 1 year continues to grow. We plan this year to offer a Diagnostic Testing Service (DTS) to all community physicians and optometrists who do not have the equipment for the following: anterior and posterior segment OCT, topography, fluorescein angiography, specular microscopy, A-Scans, fundus photography and visual field testing. The diagnostic reports will be generated and communicated electronically. Anu Khanna, MD is also spearheading our tele-retinal program which will utilize a non mydriatic fundus camera to screen diabetic patients at a busy primary care site where we currently do not see patients.

Thanks to a generous grant from the Perritt Charitable Foundation, all full time faculty and residents now have iPads. Our education goal is to pioneer state of the art electronic educational programs through faculty and resident collaboration. Anu Khanna also received support from the Perritt Foundation this year to continue her ophthalmic 3D imaging program for research and education. We also appreciate the Alumni support for resident education and training programs which totaled $12,000 last year.

Our research enterprise continues to be strong. We recently recruited Cynthia Von Zee, PhD who will work with Evan Stubbs, PhD at Hines with her focus being on the pathophysiology of glaucoma. Collaborative efforts with Jawed Fareed, PhD from the department of Pathology have been instrumental in our work on the molecular mechanisms responsible for Steven's Johnson Syndrome. Department research productivity continues to be excellent with 13 ARVO submissions and $19,000 of ISPB funding in 2011. Marie Brenner, a 4th year SSOM student, also received the St Albert's Day Award for best student research for her work with Shuchi Patel, MD and Peter Russo, OD, on the effects of contact lens wear on retinal nerve fiber layer measurements.

With the financial support of the Thomas Stamm Endowment (2010), our foreign mission program is planning to increase its focus on partnerships with other internationally active Loyola Alumni. This may include John Clements (2010), Ahsan Khan (2005), Steve Slezak (2001), and Jeff Zimm (1990). Trips are planned in February and October of 2012 to Guatemala. Please join us for our Annual Mission Day on June 15th.

Staff Corner: Carol Braxton, BS, MS, Practice Director

The watchword for Loyola Ophthalmology should be onward and upward! We constantly look to improve and expand our clinical programs and have done so with our recent addition of Dr. Nikkii Saraiya and Dr. Shivan Tekwani. Dr. Saraiya is a uveitis specialist and Dr. Tekwani sees retina patients at our Burr Ridge office. We have also added to our support staff with two new technicians, Ms. Patrycja Grudzinska and Ms. Anna Herdus. These women have added a lot of energy to our floor and we appreciate their efforts.

We have new babies, born just a few weeks apart from three of our Technician staff. Mrs. Anna Zajac had a beautiful baby girl, Natalia, born August 3, 2011. Mrs. Cecilia Meni has a handsome new son, Alessandro, born August 23, 2011. Mrs. Harriet Cichorz had a lovely baby girl, Julia, born December 9, 2011. The babies are so cute! Their moms have shared pictures and new baby stories with us.

Our staff just continues to pour in the MAGIS awards for their care and concern of our patients. The patients and visitors commend our group for their “extra mile” efforts. The most recent recipients are Drs. Belsare and Gable, Ernest Rolland (Service Representative) and Carrie Craddock, (PCT/Service Representative) — all in September 2011. Mr. William Bonk – Photographer – has moved on to Florida to take photos for a different group. In his place is Mr. Gian Franco Ventura. Gian served as a Technician for us and moved up to the photographer spot.

Meanwhile, after many months of planning, we are excited over our new Ophthalmic Imaging system (OIS) that should be implemented in February. This system will link all of our current diagnostic equipment to EPIC, our EMR. Our staff will be trained one half by one half as we will not close down during this process. The physicians will also have a training session. This will be hectic while on-going, but super when completed. Our physicians and support staff should have greater ease in viewing patient information and will allow for the state of the art diagnosis and management of our patients. We will continue to update equipment as we strive to remain current in this ever-changing field. Without good staff, this effort would be impossible. I thank them one and all.
Dry eye is one of the most common diagnoses encountered in an ophthalmic practice. It is now widely thought to be an inflammatory disorder, not simply a lack of moisture in the eye. Debilitating dry eye is one aspect of several inflammatory systemic diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis, graft-vs.-host disease and Stevens-Johnson syndrome. Severe discomfort and irritation are major symptoms of dry eye. Disruption of the ocular surface also impairs the refraction of light causing significant blurred vision that cannot be improved with conventional glasses.

Supplemental lubrication drops are a mainstay of therapy, however, severely affected patients need to instill drops every hour or more for relief. A new therapy brings hope to these patients. Scleral contact lenses rest on the white portion of the eye and vault over the entire corneal surface bathing the tissue continuously with non-preserved saline throughout the wearing cycle. This constant fluid bath provides significant improvement in comfort. The crisp optics of the gas permeable contact lens restores useful vision.

Susan Padovich has suffered with severe dry eye from Stevens-Johnson syndrome since 2008. “My eyes felt terrible. I was in so much pain. They always burned and felt like there was sand in them. I could not keep my eyes open and only felt relief when they were shut. My vision was always blurry. Glasses were no help and I could not read.” Her best-corrected vision with glasses was 20/100 right eye, 20/50 left eye. She found herself instilling lubricating eye drops every half hour. Susan was recently fit with scleral contact lenses in both eyes. “I find instant relief when the lenses are in. They have made all the difference in the world. My eyes are almost like they used to be. There is no sandy feeling, I am not light sensitive, and my vision is so much better – I can read again.” Her vision improved to 20/30 right eye, 20/25 left eye and she only uses lubricating drops every few hours as she wears the lenses for at least 12 hours a day. “Before I was fit with scleral lenses, I did not feel I could go on; they have just changed my life. I got my life back!”

Earlier this year, along with Charles Bouchard and Ping Bu, I was fortunate to receive a $5,000 research grant from the ASCRS Foundation. We proposed a study to explore the use of cells from the omentum to aid in healing the ocular surface after a corneal alkali burn injury in a rat model. We were among only 10 other recipients of this grant nationally.

What was the background for this research topic? Some very compelling research performed by colleagues in the Research and Cell Biology departments here at Loyola has shown that cells from the omentum (the abdominal fat pad) express adult stem cell and pluripotent embryonic cell markers in culture. Furthermore, they migrate to injured kidney, liver, and subcutaneous sites after systemic or local injection and aid in repair of these tissues! Dr. Bouchard first heard about this and grew interested in exploring the applicability of these cells to ocular surface injury.

In our model, we culture omental cells derived from donor rats. A group of recipient rats have a corneal alkali burn injury, then receive an injection of the donor cells both subconjunctivally and intraperitoneally. We use an established grading system of corneal opacification and corneal neovascularization to grade the corneas of both the control rats with corneal alkali injury as well as the experimental group with the omental cells. Our preliminary data suggests that omental stromal cells may have a beneficial role in corneal healing after alkali burn injury. In particular, there seems to be an inhibitory effect upon the degree of corneal neovascularization in omental cell recipient rat corneas, suggesting that omental stromal cells may perhaps support limbal stem cell survival.

We plan to present this data at ARVO this spring and to present our data with a larger sample size and histologic studies at the national ASCRS meeting in 2013. In light of Loyola being a regional burn center with a significant number of patients with ocular burn injury, this research has been particularly gratifying. Hopefully our continued efforts through this translational research will lead us to develop improved treatment of complex patients with severe ocular surface disease.

This year’s AAO meeting was attended by a record number of residents and faculty. Shuchi Patel, our new glaucoma faculty member presented “Are Glaucoma Treatment Paradigms Changing?”. She was also spotlighted on Medscape Ophthalmology News.

This year’s AAO alumni reception was held at BB King’s in Orlando. It was an evening of light fare, laughs and healing beverages. Resident, alumni and former faculty dropped by to catch up, meet new faculty and current residents. We are already planning a special alumni event for next year’s AAO meeting in Chicago. Be sure to drop in for what is sure to be a great evening at the Loyola University Museum of Art (LUMA), Saturday, November 10, 2012.
Featured Alumni

Alan Chow, MD (class of 1983), www.alanchowmd.com

Dr. Chow is an Assistant Professor of Ophthalmology at Rush University Medical College. He sees patients in his Glen Ellyn and Sycamore offices. He and Dr. Vincent Chow are inventors of the Artificial Silicon Retina (ASR) and co-founders of Optobionics Corp. (www.optobionics.com). Dr. Chow has received honors and awards including the Tibbets award at the White House, awards from NASA, NIH and the National Science Foundation. He was selected as a Technology Pioneer by the World Economic Forum, a member of the Scientific American 50, and is the recipient of the world Technology Network Award in Health and Medicine. His specialty is strabismus and the research of treatments for degenerative retinal diseases.

Hobbies and Interests: Astronomy (he and philanthropist Wayne Rosing donated a telescope to McDonald Observatory in Western Texas which is remote controlled and used by the University of Texas, Austin). He also enjoys snow skiing, scuba diving (does underwater photography and video) and is a pilot.

One of his favorite Loyola memories was enjoying the great sessions discussing patients, going to lectures and even the down time discussions with the former chairman, James McDonald, MD. Another fond memory was going to Nigeria with Dr. James McDonald, and Dr. Kevin Flaherty (’88).

Career advice for current residents: You have your whole life to get into practice and make money to pay off school loans, don’t be in a hurry. Your career depends on what you put into it. Research has been the most rewarding for him.

Kevin Flaherty, MD (class of 1988), www.eyeclinicwi.com/dr-kevin-flaherty.html

Dr. Flaherty is currently practicing with 11 other ophthalmologists at the Eye Center of Wisconsin. Their main location is Wausau Wisconsin which is a recently built 75,000 square foot facility with an ASC expansion in progress. They have satellite offices in Rhinelander, Antigo, Medford, Stevens Point and Merrill Wisconsin. Half of his team graduated from Mayo Clinic. Two of his colleagues are alumni from Loyola Stritch School of Medicine, Chris Kucharski (’04) and Peter Youssef (’02).

Currently he is doing DSEK, PKs, oculoplastics and lots of cataracts. There was an article written about a girl from Iraq that Dr. Flaherty did corneal transplant on both of her eyes. http://lionsclubs.org/EN/our-impact/lions-in-action/zahraas-journey-for-sight.php. He recently received the Knight of Sight award from the International Lions Club.

Favorite memories revolve around former chairman, James McDonald. McDonald was always referred to as “the chief”, and if you walked into a lecture or meeting (even 5 minutes) late, no matter what time of day, he would say “good evening doctor”, even if it was 7 am. Another great memory was the trip to Nigeria with Drs. James McDonald, Alan Chow and Marilyn Miller. He also enjoyed the ocular pathology presentations by Dr. Nick Mamalis.

Interests and hobbies: Collecting antique toys and cast iron banks. He enjoys pyrotechnics and is a member of the Wisconsin Pyrotechnic Arts Guild (WPAG) and Pyrotechnics Guild International (PGI). Dr. Flaherty manufactures and puts on fireworks displays, always careful to practice and promote eye safety.

Career advise: Choose a practice with good people who challenge you intellectually. They become your family, keep life interesting, and help keep you striving. Also become involved with organized medicine, you will get much out of it.

Alumni Dinner Series— Michael Cassidy, MD

Richard Gieser, MD and Charles Bouchard, MD have continued to pair up to organize a series of Alumni dinners with James McDonald, MD at Winberie’s restaurant in Oak Park. A November dinner included John Galasso, MD (’06), updating the group on his retinal practice in the northwestern suburbs. A December dinner, (see photo), included Charles Mullensix, MD (’77), discussing his north suburban oculoplastics practice and Rukhsana Mirza, MD (’05) discussing her academic interests at Northwestern, including writing a recent book chapter.

We plan to continue this tradition with small groups of alumni from the last 20 years. Please contact Michael Cassidy (mcassidy9@aol.com) for further information or if you would like to join one of the dinner meetings.
Department of Ophthalmology Winter Holiday Party

Charles and Anne Bouchard hosted the Loyola Department of Ophthalmology faculty, residents and staff at their home for a festive holiday party. Anne prepared delicious appetizers and desserts and had beautiful decorations for the festivities! A good time was had by all.

Keenan Cutsforth—Development Update

Thanks to the generosity of our resident-alumni, the Department has received significant contributions toward resident research and education initiatives. For this fiscal year to date, $3,800 has been donated in support of the Department. Thank you to all of our generous donors. Grateful patients may also support the department.

However, we are behind last year’s to date results and our residents need several important items to enhance their training and education. Needed teaching tools include:

- Teaching head for slit lamps
- Video indirect ophthalmoscopes
- Digital cameras for consultations and on-call analysis

Please consider making a gift to the Department’s Resident Research and Education Fund to help provide these important items for our residents. Your support will greatly enrich our residents’ training and their ability to provide first-rate care for our patients.

To make your gift, please visit: www.stritch.luc.edu/ophthalmology-giving or contact Keenan Cutsforth, Assistant Director of Advancement, Loyola University Chicago Health Sciences Division, at (708) 216-5075.

Upcoming Conferences and Events

Research
March 14, 2012

Chicago Subspecialty Guest Lecture Series:
Micro RNAs in Retina and Retinal Disease
Shunbin Xu, MD,

Glaucome
May 16, 2012

Chicago Subspecialty Guest Lecture Series
Richard Quinones, MD,

Alumni/Missions Day
June 15, 2012

Ophthalmology Resident Alumni/Mission Day Conference
James E. McDonald, MD, Lecturer: Wendy Lee, MD, University of Miami

Richard G. Gieser, MD, World Service Lecturer: Robert A. Rice, MD
Rashid, Rice & Flynn Eye Associates, San Antonio, TX

Glaucome & Cataract
September 15, 2012

5th Annual Fall Glaucoma/Cataract Symposium: Innovations in Cataract Surgery and Glaucoma Management
The John J. Skowron Lecturer in Cataract: Anthony Aldave, MD, Jules Stein Eye Institute, UCLA

The Arthur Light Lecturer in Glaucoma: Gary Condon, MD, Drexel University, College of Medicine, Pittsburgh, PA

Alumni
November 10, 2012
6:30pm—8:30pm

AAO Meeting – Alumni Reception at The Loyola University Museum of Art (LUMA), 820 N. Michigan Ave, Chicago, IL

For additional information regarding these events, please contact Danette Gotch at 708/216-8643 or dgotch@lumc.edu

Please visit our Web site at: www.stritch.luc.edu/ophthalmology