



# infocus

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FOCUS EYE CENTRE NEWSLETTER — SUMMER 2005

## Priority Care

Those in high-pressure jobs are demanding the best possible vision.

By JoAnn Napier

The police. The Canadian Forces. Firefighters. Olympic athletes. The impact of laser vision correction (LVC) on Canada's workforce is dramatic, particularly among "high-performance" professionals whose work demands high-performance results.

Jeff Grace, 30, has been a firefighter with the City of Ottawa for a year now. Previously, Grace was full-time with the Canadian Forces Reserve and always "on the move."

He enjoyed an active life, but the glasses he'd worn for 17 years were a constant problem: "I was always breaking, losing, smashing, crushing, or cleaning them," Grace says.

Fitting a gasmask — or finding someone camouflaged in the woods — is hard enough. Try getting a gasmask in place, fast, with glasses on. Or finding the enemy, in the woods, through the lenses of dirty glasses.

Grace's job as an Ottawa area firefighter means "never a dull moment". Situations at work change quickly — "from bad to good and good to bad" — and demand speedy responses; firefighters have to be prepared to enter "smoked-



out places" and work in areas where people can be trapped and debris can fly.

Again, glasses posed a problem: a firefighter whose glasses fall off, may find his vision and response time compromised. Wearing glasses "was just something I did not want to have to worry about," explains Grace who had tried contact lenses and "hated them." So, last year Grace had a Wavefront PRK procedure.

The freedom was immediate and impressive. "Relying on glasses was difficult," he says. "Now, I don't have that problem."

Natural vision is 20/20. Improving your vision to 20/10 means you could see at a distance of 20 feet what a person with normal, healthy vision could see at 10 feet.

Studies show that Wavefront-guided diagnostic technology — the latest scientific leap in LVC's evolution — reliably raises to 85 the percentage of having 20/16 best-corrected vision six months after surgery.

U.S. military doctors were among the first to keep close tabs on LVC surgery's impact among high-performance professionals (see *Wavefront on the Frontlines*, page 4). And the "superior" visual out-

comes afforded by Wavefront technology has heightened that interest.

Dr. William Madigan, several years ago, started interviewing police officers and firefighters in a bid to assess LVC surgery's potential for practical application in the U.S. military. In an interview with American Forces Press Service, the Washington-based Army ophthalmologist said those interviews indicated police officers and firefighters who'd had LVC surgery found themselves in "better condition to do their jobs".

Firefighters like Grace recounted how losing their glasses in burning building

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### OPEN LETTER



Wendy Daniels

## 'The greatest gift of my life'

Ottawa radio host, Wendy Daniels, writes about her LVC experience.

I have just celebrated my first anniversary of being free from the hassles of glasses and contact lenses, and I am thrilled to be able to share with you my amazing experience with Focus Eye Centre.

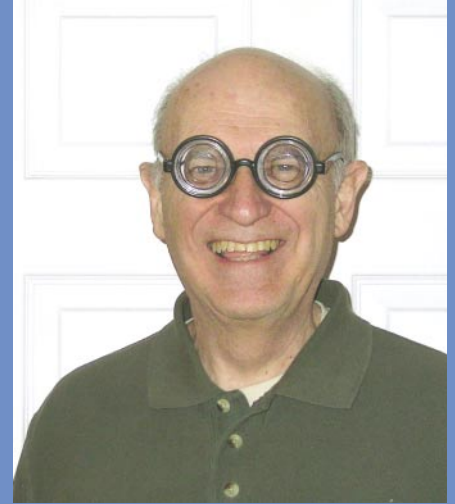
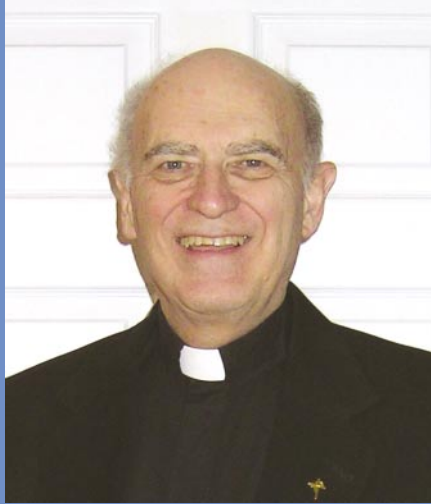
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# Seeing the Light

The latest in a long line of family members to have LVC, Father Quentin Johnson says his procedure lets him enjoy the sunsets.



Father Quentin Johnson: only wears glasses for fun these days!

He was the last holdout. “Uncle Q”, as Father Quentin Johnson is affectionately referred to by his relatives, says his “whole family” had undergone LVC procedures. Meanwhile, he couldn’t see across the street without glasses.

Despite the nuisance of cataracts and poor vision, this Basilian Father wasn’t ready yet to make the LVC leap. To make matters worse, he couldn’t ignore the evidence.

After all, he was a biology teacher — a scientist — and the facts were really piling up. Specifically, they were coming in the form of phone calls and first-hand LVC testimonials from people he loved. People like his niece, Jennifer Kearns.

Jennifer is a Registered Nurse and Manager at Focus Eye Centre in Ottawa. She and her cousin Kevin Wade, a resident of Bermuda, both had LVC performed by Dr. Edmison a few years earlier. The results were great so Jennifer’s mom, Vicky Johnson, was next in the LVC lineup. Like Jennifer and Kevin, Vicky put herself in Dr. Edmison’s surgically-sound hands. Again, the results were great.

Next up: Jennifer’s husband, Charles Kearns, followed the family tradition and, after Charles, Jennifer’s sister Patti Johnson underwent Wavefront LVC.

“One after the another, they were telling me how they didn’t need to use glasses to read, how much better their vision is, how they could see so much better see at distances.”

Why was he such a holdout? “We’re a teaching order,” explains Fr. Johnson. Teaching biology requires a lot of “close-up work... I needed my eyes to mark, and for class. And I was worried about getting them damaged, so I held off. I wasn’t going to take any chances with my eyes.”

At retirement, the family ‘holdout’ was finally ready for LVC.

“I didn’t know about [clear lens extraction] until my niece told me. A couple of people in my house had already had laser vision surgery, but I was the first guy to have it done for CLE.”

And, how did it go?

“At first, things were blurry in a.m.” he says. “But Jennifer told me that will change – that you can’t judge this for another month or so. So I was patient.”

After a while, he could see “just as sharp, in the morning, as I could during the day. Then I became amazed at my vision.” It’s been three months since the procedure and both eyes, he says, “are great now.”

*“I wasn’t going to take any chances with my eyes.”*

“I remember after they did my first eye, I was sitting in my brother’s living room, and saw the sunset. I never saw one so colorful. I got out my old glasses, looked at the sunset with the other eye. Same old lousy colors.”

“But with the eye with the new lens, I was getting the purples and the pinks. The hues I never

saw before. I didn’t think it was a possibility until then.”

Father Johnson’s just as thrilled with having regained his distance vision.

“I have better distance vision than I can remember. I can identify boats across the river, by their colors, now — I could never see them as detailed as I see them now. Our residence in Windsor is at the edge of the University of Windsor campus and about two blocks away from the river. That bridge is a good two or three blocks from my residence, but I’ll tell you, if the rivets were painted a different colour than the bridge, I am sure I could see them.”

So, now, the family ‘holdout’ is the one making the phone calls. “I called Jennifer,” he says with a laugh, “to tell her I was lying on my bed, looking at the Ambassador Bridge and counting those rivets!” ■

— Staff

## Priority Care *(continued from page 1)*

could sometimes create a life-or-death situation. Law enforcement personnel spoke of how losing their glasses in a scuffle could leave them at a serious disadvantage.



The same rules apply to the bespectacled soldier: “He’s out there scrambling to get under cover from enemy fire, he drops his glasses — and can’t see more than five feet in front of him,” said Madigan. “Now he’s no longer an asset to his unit because he can’t see and needs somebody to help him get to safety.”

In those interviews, Gulf War veterans shared the difficulties they had with eyeglasses in the desert. Many had LVC surgery in the years following the Gulf War, and were subsequently deployed to Afghanistan.

Having laser eye surgery, they said, was the best thing the Army ever did to prepare them for combat missions. And many deemed LVC surgery as “the single best thing the Army ever did for them” — noting the contrast between being in Desert Storm with glasses, to being

in Afghanistan after laser eye surgery, “was like night and day.”



The Army’s first LVC clinic opened in May 2000 at Fort Bragg, N.C. Since then, thousands of soldiers have been treated — with outstanding results. Today, the U.S. Army offers LVC surgery to soldiers, the U.S. Air Force offers it to airmen, and the U.S. Navy offers it to sailors, Marines and Coast Guardsmen.

“Our results are even better than civilian studies have quoted,” said Madigan, admitting that, “I think that’s because of how careful we are in our patient selection. We can just pick the patients we think it’s going to be most helpful for.”

Line commanders in the Army, Navy and Air Force prioritize the LVC surgery waiting list of infantrymen, artillerymen, armor, special operations and Special Forces. Not surprisingly, anyone expected to be at the line of battle — or behind the enemy’s line of battle — is considered “first priority.” ■

# Focus in Cyberia

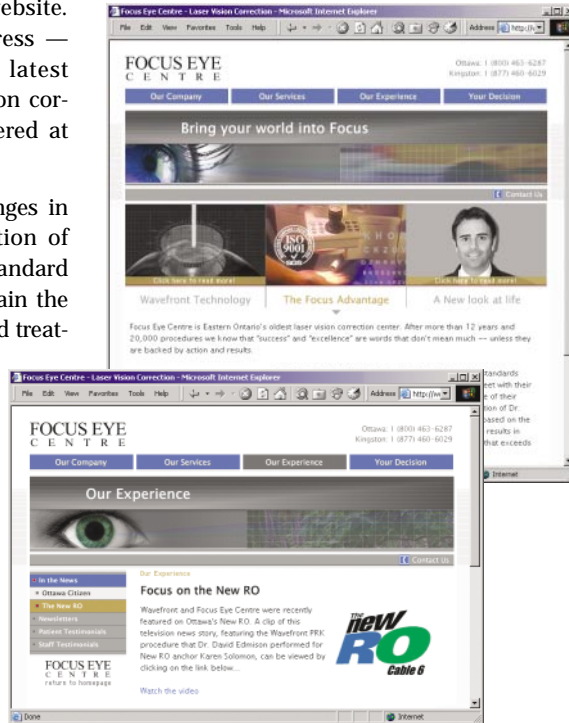
## New website offers latest news, easy access

(Ottawa) — Focus Eye has a new website. The site, located at the existing address — [www.focuseye.com](http://www.focuseye.com) — contains the latest news and information about laser vision correction (LVC) and the procedures offered at our clinics in Ottawa and Kingston.

The site was revamped to reflect changes in LVC, including the widespread adoption of Wavefront, which has become the standard of care at Focus. In order to fully explain the advantages of a Wavefront diagnosis and treatment visitors can read the latest articles, watch a news story that appeared on the New RO and consult what our surgeons and optometrists have to say.

“We address everything from our Lifetime Commitment to Financing to the decision-making process that most patients go through,” says Focus Manager, Trish Liddle. “It’s progress in the truest sense of that word.”

The website allows for easy contact with Focus staff and past patients who are part of the Mentorship Program. The English site will be translated into French in the near future. ■



[www.focuseye.com](http://www.focuseye.com)

# Alumni News

*In Focus* checks in with past patients to see how they are doing these days...

“I had the laser surgery November 21st, 2001 and... have been very happy and very satisfied with my decision to go ahead with the surgery, my decision to use Focus Eye Centre, the treatment I received, and the results I experienced. Thank you once again.”

— Barbara Rotar

“In 1997 I had laser eye surgery. The friendly, relaxed atmosphere at Focus Eye Centre is very calming and... the staff, and in particular Dr. Edmison, are extremely professional. I would not hesitate to recommend Focus to anyone who is suited for this process. In fact my daughter will soon be having laser eye surgery at Focus.”

— Gary Coolen

“I had my eyes [treated] at Focus almost 10 years ago. I have never had any problems since then and am thoroughly happy with the results. I would recommend Focus Eye Centre to anyone.”

— Paul Mooney

## The Greatest Gift of my Life *(continued from page 1)*

For those of you who are hesitant about getting the procedure, I understand. I asked everyone and anyone who had laser vision correction about their experiences: I did not meet a single person who had regrets about their new vision.

I talked to my family doctor and my ophthalmologist about the risks; my eye doctor personally recommends Focus Eye Centre and *only* Focus Eye Centre.

From my very first consultation, I felt confident in the care and expertise of the wonderful staff at Focus. Once the date for my surgery was set, I started to count down the days. (To say I was excited is an understatement! After surgery I was planning on running over my glasses with my car. I didn't though... I donated them to charity.)

I had worn glass since the age of 10. I eventually went to wearing contact lenses but

was frustrated with how they would dry out before I was worn out. Usually I'd have to switch over to glasses in the middle of a TV show, live show or visit with friends. That wasn't always convenient, so often I'd have to suffer through sticky, cloudy lenses which are distracting at the least.

After the surgery, I'll never forget peeking at a gas station sign while being driven home: I could read it!

Then I peeked at a road sign, something I'd never been able to read without assistance, and I blurted out “Carling Avenue!”

The change was nothing short of miraculous. And the great part is that my vision continued to improve over the next couple of months. Glasses or contact lenses never gave me the crisp vision that I now enjoy.

I had a Wavefront procedure and chose the Monovision correction so that I could avoid

reading glasses for many years to come. So while most of my friends are getting their first pair of glasses or reading glasses, because their eyes have aged to that point, I feel like my eyes are younger than ever.

My surgery was brief and after a weekend of rest and recovery, I was back to an active life but with crystal clear vision.

Dr. Edmison is the best in the business. He is a pioneer of laser vision correction who has been at it since 1992. I encourage you to trust him as I did. I can honestly say that Dr. Edmison has given me the greatest gift of my life... with the exception of my daughter! Give him five minutes with your eyes and you'll be a fan of his, too.

My only regret is not meeting him, and having Wavefront LVC surgery, sooner.

Sincerely,  
Wendy Daniels



Focus Eye's 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Wavefront Update

## Optometrists Given Update, Thanks

Focus welcomes over 60 local docs to '2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Wavefront Update'

**(Ottawa)** — In late May, Focus Eye Centre held another of its regular and lively meetings with local optometrists (ODs) who take part in Focus's Co-Management Program. Billed as the "2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Wave-front Update", the educational seminar was designed to keep ODs who routinely refer patients to Focus up-to-date on patient outcomes, generally, and advancements, specifically, in laser vision correction technology.

More than 60 attendees heard from three speakers, including Focus Medical Director, Dr. David Edmison who delivered a pair of talks. In the first address, he highlighted Wavefront results and noted that 97% of Focus patients who had low myopia and underwent a Wavefront PRK procedure to correct their vision have ended up with a best corrected visual acuity of either 20/20 or 20/15. "It can take a couple of months to get to 20/20 after a Wavefront treatment, but most do," said Dr. Edmison. "After that, many people continue getting better and better."

In his second talk, Dr. Edmison reviewed the findings of his peers at the U.S. Naval Medical Center in San Diego. "While noting that a patient group made up of predominantly healthy young men has a better-than-average chance of a good collective outcome, Dr. Edmison noted that the Navy's stats are strikingly similar to those being achieved by Focus and its diverse patient population.

Dr. Claude Menard, surgeon and corneal specialist with Focus, took to the mike and delved into the technology driving the outstanding results most Focus patients are seeing. The third speaker of the night was the evening's moderator, staff optometrist Dr. Thomas Noel, who summarized the findings of a survey in which Focus-affiliated optometrists reported anonymous, anecdotal experiences from some Wavefront patients they are following.

The evening concluded with a Question & Answer session, news that Focus would be taking over additional office space at its existing location on Carling Avenue in Ottawa, and a heartfelt thank you for the men and women who often deal closely with patients after a laser eye procedure. ■

— Mark Thompson

## Wavefront on the Front Lines

ASCRS attendees hear how Navy SEALs benefit from 'superior' LVC.

**(Washington, DC)** — Wavefront LVC produces superior visual outcomes, compared to traditional LVC surgeries. That conclusion was reported recently at the 31st Annual Symposium of American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery (ASCRS)

It was supported by data presented by the U.S. Navy Refractive Surgery program, which was based on collaborative U.S. Army, Navy and Air Force studies.

"With Wavefront-guided procedures, we're getting better quality of vision, better clarity, better night vision, and better contrast sensitivity than we did with conventional laser eye surgeries," said Captain Steve Schallhorn, MD.

The Navy started studying the effects of laser eye surgery in 1993. Back then, Captain Schallhorn — then Navy Cmdr. Schallhorn — started a refractive surgery program at Naval Medical Center San Diego.



U.S. Navy SEALs swing into action

He was doing preliminary studies on the Navy's special operations SEAL teams using PRK. Schallhorn found that after PRK, SEALs no longer had to worry about losing their glasses or having a contact lens float or fly away when they were in water or parachuting from an aircraft.

They could wear protective masks without a special refractive insert that limits their peripheral vision.

Schallhorn, now the Director of refractive surgery at San Diego's Naval Medical Center, San Diego, told symposium delegates that the solid results from Wavefront-related surgery over the last several years have had a significant impact: "While conventional laser correction procedures are good, Wavefront-guided vision correction is ratcheting up our expectations," he added, cautioning his medical peers that patients "now have higher expectations" due to the new technology.

*"Wavefront is helping bring our men home"*

According to the leader of Regimental Combat Team 1 which spearheaded a recent movement against the Iraqi insurgent stronghold of Fallujah, the impact of Wavefront has moved beyond high expectations: "It's helping bring our men home, because of the advantages it gives us to operate quickly and more effectively in a combat environment," says Marine Col. Mike Schupp.

Commenting on the Navy's Refractive Surgery Program, Col. Schupp added, "It makes us better marksman and better day and night fighters."

The U.S. Navy, Army, and Air Force refractive surgery programs are involved in joint evaluations of Wavefront-guided laser vision correction.

Wavefront-guided LVC was recently approved by the Air Force for pilots of certain types of aircraft (transports, tankers, etc.) because of its superior quality in terms of ability to see contrasts and clearer night vision, delegates to the ASCRS meeting were told. ■

— JoAnn Napier



Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to:

**Ottawa:** 1565 Carling Avenue, Suite 100, Ottawa, ON K1Z 8R1  
 telephone: 1-800-IN-FOCUS (1-800-463-6287) or

**Kingston:** Hotel Dieu Hospital, 166 Brock Street, Suite 325, Kingston, ON K7L 5G2  
 telephone: 1-877-460-6029 or (613) 542-5000

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