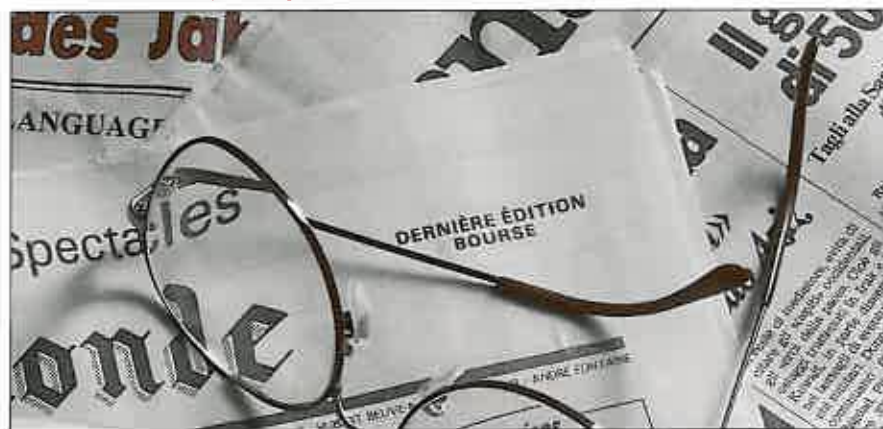


# BEHAVIORAL OPTOMETRY



## GOING INTERNATIONAL

■ Robert A. Williams, OEP Executive Director

**W**hile vision therapy can trace its antecedents to the practice of orthoptics in Europe in the late 19th century, the growth and development of behavioral optometry has been primarily an American phenomenon. The development of behavioral vision care has generally paralleled the growth and development of the OEP Foundation, founded in 1928 by Drs. E.B. Alexander and A.M. Skeffington. Over the past 20 years, the final phase in the growth and development of behavioral optometry has occurred: the world outside North America "discovered" behavioral optometry.

There was no conscious effort to "internationalize" OEP or behavioral optometry. Like the spread of many ideas and philosophies, the seeds were initially sown by chance.



Ugo Frescura

ing support, information and guidance, leaders of that organization wrote to

Ugo Frescura, President of the European Society of Optometry (SOE) and 22-year OEP Clinical Associate from Asti, Italy, tells an interesting story about the formative years of SOE. Seeking

several optometric organizations in the United States shortly after SOE was founded in 1967. OEP was one of those organizations selected, perhaps from a list provided by the American Optometric Association or appearing in the Blue Book of Optometrists.

It is possible, maybe even probable, that SOE had little or no idea of what OEP was or did. OEP was an American optometric organization and at the time this was reason enough to make a contact.

In 1967, OEP had little understanding and only passing interest in optometry outside of the United States and Canada. The OEP Reference Directory published in that year lists very few Clinical Associates outside of North America. A single Associate from Liberia is the total representation of Africa. A total of 18 Associates are listed from the various states in Australia. An unusually high number of Associates from Denmark are included. Of the 35 listed, 30 had been Associates for one or two years, probably the result of a recently held seminar and the efforts of the dedicated OEP National Director for Denmark, Jorgen Nielsen of Copenhagen. Only 19 other Associates are listed from the rest of the world. In all, 16 countries were represented, with a total of 73 international Associates.

The year 1967 can be seen as the beginning of international behavioral optometry. Homer Hendrickson, O.D., then

OEP Associate Executive Director and Secretary-Treasurer of the Board of Directors, was one of the few optometrists in the United States to respond to Frescura's request. Basic information on OEP and behavioral optometry was forwarded to Italy. The concepts were completely unknown, but intriguing, to the organization whose primary goal was to improve the professional status of optometry in Europe.

Encouraged by the information and promise of support from OEP, Frescura visited California, spending many hours with Dr. Hendrickson, Dr. Charles Margach and other OEP leaders and behavioral practitioners. The meetings produced a stack of books, OEP volumes by Skeffington, Greenstein, Macdonald and others, and many questions. The behavioral approach to vision care presented a whole new philosophy, as well as a whole new language, to the Europeans. The first round of interactions between OEP and SOE resulted in few answers to their many questions.

Faced with the overwhelming task of understanding a new philosophy and a new technical language, with all source materials published in a foreign tongue, SOE sought a teacher. Again, they were fortunate in being introduced to the right person at the right time. Frescura became aware of a French-Canadian named Bastien, who was teaching at the University

of Montreal School of Optometry. Armand Bastien, O.D., had been an OEP Clinical Associate for more than 25 years when he and Frescura first met in



Armand Bastien, O.D.

Montreal. Bastien was recruited to conduct a seminar on behavioral optometry in Europe for SOE.

The first introductory seminar on behavioral optometry, held in Italy in 1972, attracted some 30 attendees. The professional interpreter quit one hour into the two-day program, unable to handle the intricacies of translating French to Italian, as well as translating the "OEP language," which often had no corresponding terms in Italian. Frescura took over, serving as translator as well as seminar chairman.

The first seminar was accepted so readily that Bastien was invited back six months later to conduct a second. This one attracted 100. A third, less than one year after the first, registered more than 200. Behavioral optometry had been introduced to European vision care practitioners. It also became the educational focus of the European Society of Optometry. In all, Dr. Armand Bastien has conducted more than 30 seminars on behavioral optometry for SOE. In honor of his contributions to SOE and European optometry, Bastien was the recipient of the SOE Award in 1988.

A text, the *Cours de Montreal*, a 10-chapter, 1,400 page manual of optometry was prepared for SOE by several members of the faculty from the University of Montreal. It is available in six languages (Italian, French, German, Dutch, Spanish and English) and is distributed exclusively by the SOE. Numerous other works on behavioral optometry have been translated and published by SOE. Frequently these are translations of OEP *Curriculum II* monographs. Over the years the works of Skeffington, Streff, Margach, Emery, and others have appeared in as many as six languages. Other important works, including those by Griffin, Manas, Forrest and Spooner, dealing with the behavioral approach to vision care, have been released by SOE.

SOE sponsors Continuing Education

Courses in Optometry (CECO) which are held all over Europe. More frequently than not, these CECO programs feature courses in behavioral optometry. Lecturers for SOE CECO programs over the past several years have included OEP Clinical Associates Bob Sanet, Jerry Getman, Claude Valenti, Greg Gilman, Charlie Margach, Liane Rice, Nathan Flax, Rolf Duschner, Anna Pasini, John Streff and Gianni Rehak.

Rossana Bardini, an SOE member and OEP Clinical Associate who practices in Novara, Italy, has written two major texts on behavioral optometric care in Italian, published by SOE. "Functional Vision in Optometric Analysis" (1986) and "The Analysis and Training of Visual Problems" (1989) brought behavioral optometry to the Italian practitioner in his or her native language. For her dedication to SOE and behavioral vision care, Bardini was recognized with the SOE Award in 1989.

SOE was blessed several years ago when Elisabeth Antoine-Kremer became the Executive Secretary of the Society. Kremer's husband, Jacques, is an optometrist in Brussels and an OEP Clinical Associate since 1974. With her background in physical therapy, including a Ph.D. from the University of Leuven in Belgium, and the ability to speak five languages fluently, Dr. Kremer is a great asset to the SOE and behavioral optometry. The diversity of national, linguistic and historic barriers has always been a challenge in Europe. SOE has consciously worked toward breaking down those barriers and serving the professional and educational needs of all Europeans.

SOE held its first Scientific Congress in Brussels, Belgium in 1967. Annual SOE Congresses held through 1987 usually featured papers on topics related to behavioral vision care. At their 21st Congress held in 1987, also in Brussels, the SOE had visitors from OEP for the first time. Then Chairman of the International Affairs Committee, Dr. James Cox, and Executive Director Robert Williams attended the SOE Congress as guests of the Society. SOE honored OEP with the presentation of the SOE Award *Honoris Causa*, for the support given by OEP to the development of optometry in Europe over the previous two decades.

While SOE was developing in Europe, Keith Woodland was active on the other side of the world. In 1964, Dr. E. B.

Alexander, founder and President of OEP, presented a wealth of information on the President to Australian Optometrical Association (AOA), Mr. Harry Alexander (no relation). These materials were passed on to Mr. Joe Garvin, a local optometrist and AOA leader, with instructions to establish a study group to "translate" the concepts and language of behavioral optometry for Australian practitioners. After an aborted attempt to "crack the code," the study group soon became inactive.

New South Wales optometrist Keith Woodland had been a member of the original Garvin group and some of the theories and principles of nearpoint vision stayed with him. In 1968, a patient presented in Woodland's Sydney offices. The 14-year-old boy had been examined by Woodland for the two previous years. On this occasion he was referred by his school counselor. The youngster was characterized as a behavior problem with an apparent learning-related vision problem. This third evaluation showed the same refractive error as the previous two, namely a small amount of hyperopia. No prescription had been provided after previous evaluations. This time, however, Woodland corrected the hyperopia and addressed a fusional problem with vision therapy. Techniques developed by Dr. Robert Kraskin, Washington, D.C., and discussed at the Garvin Study Group were used.

The school counselor phoned Woodland a month later with the report of a dramatic, positive change in the boy's behavior and academic performance. Woodland phoned Joe Garvin with the recommendation that the Study Group be reactivated immediately.

Realizing that his knowledge of behavioral optometry was minimal and following months of correspondence with leading behavioral practitioners in America, Woodland organized a trip to the United States in 1969. He visited many offices all over the States; Swartwout in New York, Kraskin in Washington, McPherson and Emery in California, and, of course, the OEP offices in E. B. Alexander's home in Tarzana, California. Woodland carried reams of papers, forms, techniques, theories and monographs back to Australia. Most of all, he brought back enthusiasm for behavioral vision care and the commitment to introduce it in Australia.

After some challenging months of study on the basic concepts of behavioral vision care, the Australian Study Group asked OEP to send an "interpreter." With OEP and the Group sharing the expenses, Dr. Homer Hendrickson traveled to Sydney for a three-day introductory OEP seminar. Twenty-nine optometrists from Australia and New Zealand attended the meeting. From these humble beginnings, OEP Australia (OEPA) developed.

The Hendrickson seminar was followed by many others: Drs. Getman, Swartwout, Ludlam, Kraskin, Margach, Streff, Solan, Gilman, Maples, Cool and Wachs. OEPA also developed its own educational system. The Oven-Murray Forum for exchanging ideas and clinical techniques between behavioral practitioners has been held annually since 1974.

Perhaps Woodland's great contribution to optometry and OEP Australia was his ability to enthruse others. Among his associates was Chris Henderson. He joined Woodland in practice in 1965 after graduating from the University of New South Wales. At UNSW, Henderson had been introduced to the 21-point visual analysis, but took little meaning from the data collected through the Skeffington Analytical Sequence.

Woodland invited Henderson to join him at the early OEP Australia Study Group meetings. As Woodland's associate, Henderson was exposed to behavioral clinical procedures and evaluation techniques. Henderson grew up, optometrically, with the OEPA. He became the OEP National Director for Australia upon Keith Woodland's death in 1980 and is currently serving as the Secretary of the Australasian College of Behavioural Optometry (ACBO), the organizational successor to OEPA formed in 1988, as well as the Editor of the ACBO journal, *Behavioural Optometry*.

Starting from point zero in 1968, ACBO now has a membership of over 300 Australian optometrists, about 15% of all

practitioners in the country. Memberships also include optometrists from New Zealand, Hong Kong and other Pacific Rim nations.

The growth and development of ACBO is a product of long-range planning. Introductory seminars are presented in all population centers in Australia each year. The primary lecturers have been optometrists Chris Henderson, Graham Peachey and Ed Howell Study Camps, to prepare ACBO members for Fellowships, are organized on an annual basis. Advanced seminars are offered featuring speakers from outside Australia as well as College Fellows.

Interest in and the practice of behavioral vision care grew in other parts of the world. Because OEP publishes only in English, the practice of behavioral optometry has developed primarily in English-speaking countries or in countries where English is a common second language. OEP South Africa boasts substantial enrollment. A primary factor in the development of behavioral optometry in South Africa has been the activities of Professor Selwyn Super. Super attended the first Getman seminar presented in South Africa in 1971. Then in private practice, Super implemented the concepts of behavioral vision care. Several years later, he was appointed Chairman of the new Department of Optometry at Rand Afrikaans University in Johannesburg. One of the first orders placed by the RAU library after the Department was formed was for a complete set of OEP *Curriculum II* volumes.

Several key individuals have contributed to the acceptance of behavioral vision care in Northern Europe. In addition to the efforts of SOE, Bengt Nordberg, Guy Naegels, Jerry Chapel and many others have provided leadership and educational opportunities to their colleagues in Belgium, Netherlands and Sweden. Nordberg has had as many as five OEP study groups operating at the same time. He has lectured extensively on behavioral optometry to his Swedish colleagues. His associate, Gustav Carlsson of Trellebourg, Sweden, has translated many OEP publications into Swedish and submitted OEP materials for publication in Swedish optometric journals. Nagels formed a post-graduate school of behavioral optometry in Antwerp that enjoyed success until the political pressures

from medicine forced its closure. Chapel and his colleague, psychologist Raul DeGroot, have teamed up to open two clinics in the Netherlands exclusively devoted to developmental/behavioral vision care called Getman Stichting, to honor Dr. G.N. Getman's support of optometry in the Netherlands. Behavioral optometry has been introduced with some success in India and the Philippines in recent years.

In 1981, Dr. Greg Gilman, OEP Associate from California, made a decision that would have a lasting impact on him, his profession and the practice of behavioral optometry worldwide. He embarked on an around-the-world, 18-month-long lecture tour.



Greg Gilman, O.D.

By 1981, the number of OEP Associates outside the United States had grown to 219 in 25 countries. Many optometrists from Europe, Australia and South Africa had become OEP Associates. The influence and activities of OEP Australia, OEP South Africa and SOE was impressive.

Gilman outlined an ambitious itinerary. He would leave the United States in December, 1982 for South Africa and return, by way of the Philippines, in May, 1984. Using his long-time friend and mentor, Dr. Jerry Getman, as a counselor, Gilman wrote to many OEP leaders around the world. After a year of planning and mountains of correspondence, the 18-month tour was filled with 45 seminars and lectures, ranging from one hour to three days in length, in 22 countries, from the Republic of South Africa to Sweden and from Greece to Thailand. SOE hosted five seminars, one each in France, Italy, Germany, Spain and Portugal. OEP Australia hosted six seminars and 10 other meetings over a five-week period. In all, Gilman lectured to more than 2,400 vision care practitioners in Africa, Europe, India, the Far East and Australia and an unknown number of interested non-optometrists, including educators, psychologists and the general public.

The impact of this self-financed worldwide tour was significant and long

lasting. Behavioral vision care and near-point optometry was introduced in India, a nation of 600 million citizens. As a result of Gilman's efforts all schools of optometry in the Philippines teach the 21-point analytical examination. OEP Associates in Australia have doubled since Gilman's lecture tour. The practice of behavioral optometry in Europe has greatly increased. And, Dr. Gilman was the first to suggest an international meeting for behavioral optometry.

Following his return to the United States and the establishment of a new practice in Northern California, Gilman continued to encourage OEP and SOE to stage an international meeting. After five years of planning, the First International Congress of Behavioral Optometry was held in Monte Carlo, Monaco, in November, 1990. More than 400 optometrists from 22 countries attended the Congress, hosted by SOE and OEP and sponsored by American Optical Corporation. Fittingly, Gilman presented the first paper at the Congress, which was dedicated to Dr. G.N. Getman, who had passed away earlier that year.

Speakers from nine countries from around the world, including several prominent members of SOE and ACBO, presented papers at ICBO, including Guy Nagels, Belgium; Roger De Saint Andre, France; Anna Pasini, Rosanna Bardini and Joao DeCarvalho, Italy; Bengt Nordberg, Sweden; Wolfgang Cagnolati, Germany; Selwyn Super, Republic of South Africa; Armand Bastien, Canada; Beverley Roberts, Graham Peachey and Edwin Howell, Australia; and Beth Ballinger, Cliff Brown, Gilman, Robert Kraskin and Sidney Wittenburg, USA.

The Second International Congress of Behavioural Optometry will be held in Sydney, Australia in 1994.

As a result of the First ICBO, the OEP European Service Center opened in 1991. The Center, housed in the offices of and directed by OEP Clinical Associates Hans Tærstbøl and Steen Saust in Roskilde, Denmark, serves as a contact point for European optometrists interested in OEP and behavioral vision care and a distribution center for OEP publications and vision therapy equipment and materials. This is the third such OEP distribution center established outside of the United States. Other centers are located in Australia, directed by Bev Roberts and

ACBO, and in the Republic of South Africa, directed by OEP RSA National Director Mr. Artur Stehli. Each of these centers, along with their host organizations, conduct educational programs for local practitioners in addition to serving as a distribution center.

The impact of the behavioral approach to vision care on optometry worldwide is obvious from the number of organizations which have been formed with an emphasis on behavioral optometry. During the ICBO in Monte Carlo, OEP sponsored an organizational meeting of the Federation of Behavioral Optometry. For the first time in history the worldwide leaders of behavioral optometry met to form a network for the exchange of information related to behavioral vision care. Representatives from the College of Optometrists in Vision Development (COVD), the European Society of Optometry (SOE), the Australasian College of Behavioural Optometry (ACBO), the Institut de Visiologie De France (IVF) and OEP agreed to exchange publications and work together for the benefit of behavioral optometry, worldwide.

Currently, OEP Clinical Associates practice in 37 countries. International enrollment represents 15% of the total OEP enrollment, substantially increased from

the 2% among the 1967 enrollment. With the activities of SOE, ACBO, IVF, OEP-South Africa, OEP-Philippines and others, the number of international optometrists practicing behavioral optometry is sure to increase. As you can see from the Gilman's "Viewpoint" article (page 198) in this issue of *JBO*, international behavioral optometrists are making innovative contributions to the body of behavioral vision care knowledge. It is likely that these contributions have only just begun.

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