

Eyes Only *Spring 2017*

The membership newsletter of the
ASSOCIATION FOR MACULAR DISEASES

Moving Forward with Technology

This Eyes Only Special issue is devoted to exciting new advances in vision technologies. It is entirely written by Association Board Member, Dorrie Rush, a recognized expert in Accessibility.

ACCESSIBILITY SUPPORT PHONE LINES YOU SHOULD KNOW

The Association for Macular Diseases has been publishing the Eyes Only Newsletter for more than 30 years. Over the course of time we have developed a large audience of subscribers and supporters.

In the next few months we will launch a new website at OphthalmicEdge.org.

Ophthalmic Edge is a globally recognized educational resource for Physicians, and now for Patients as well. We are pleased with this opportunity to partner with Ophthalmic Edge, it will enable us to extend our reach to many, many more people in the United States and around the world.

Here you'll find more frequently posted articles on topics that include: Making Adjustments, Managing the Medical, and Accessibility & Technology. Look up terminology in our Encyclopedia, and get answers to your questions in our Q&A section.

All content will be available online when you want it. New information will be added frequently. No need to wait for your next newsletter delivery.

The site is designed with your accessibility needs as our highest priority. You will be able to set the visual experience to your liking. You'll find accessibility settings available at the top right corner of every webpage.

We also look forward to hearing from you more often as the web offers many ways to share your thoughts. You will be able to connect with us directly through social media (FaceBook, Twitter), by email, or by phone. Let us know what you would like to see more of, or send us a question and we'll answer it on our Q&A page. ■

VENTURE WITH US TO THE WEB

Technology has a special way of reminding us that change can be a pain. On the flip side, it also reminds us of the incredible rewards these changes can bring.

The news that our publication is expanding online — may not feel good to everyone, initially. Rest assured, we are leaving no one behind. You will have the option to continue receiving the printed Eyes Only Newsletter by mail.

Our website is designed to provide a friendly user experience, and to make it easy on your eyes. Our webpage layout is uncluttered, and our font styles are clean and easy to read. Colors are selected for the best contrast. Images are crisp, clear, and always labeled.

You can further enhance your viewing experience by choosing accessibility settings for Large Text, Text Only, Increased Contrast, or Speech.

When you do choose to step onto the web with us, you'll be able to access our website on a computer, or a mobile device. You will find us at OphthalmicEdge.org by clicking on the Patient side of the homepage, or at Macula.org.

We'll be in touch again, by mail, to invite you to opt-in for email updates, and to let you know when our new website is launched. ■

TALKING GUIDE FOR YOUR TV

A common question asked by people with impaired vision is, "How can I see the TV screen better?" The response, "Get closer to it."

Making adjustments along the way can be beneficial. Bigger is usually better, and today means screens as large as 60, 70, or even 80 inches. Repositioning furniture may put you at a better angle to the screen. Blocking external light may eliminate glare bouncing off the screen.

Having tried all those things, the most satisfying TV viewing is at eye level, and just a few feet from the screen. Getting up close certainly does improve the picture but it doesn't resolve issues navigating menus or reading program guides. Now there is a solution for this issue as well.

As of late December 2016 the FCC implemented the Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act of 2010 (CVAA) rules that mandate the accessibility of user interfaces on digital apparatus and navigation devices used to view video programming.

What this means is your cable provider now offers a voice enabled or talking on screen TV guide. There is also a requirement to install it and provide instruction on its use.

Contact your cable company for details about getting these features for your TV. Tell them you need "visual accessibility"

or “voice-enable programming and menus.” An online search for **Visual Accessibility** at Fios, Optimum, DISH, Spectrum and Comcast confirmed all have talking guides available now.

If you happen to be a Comcast customer — you may already have these features working for you. The Comcast Accessibility Lab was first to implement the highest standards for accessibility — long before it was required. Get the benefit of their talking program guide, and voice commands which allow you to search for programming with your voice.

They also have a dedicated Comcast Accessibility Center for customer service and technical support. ■

ACCESSIBILITY SUPPORT PHONE LINES YOU SHOULD KNOW

With a welcomed emphasis on Accessibility, technology companies and service providers are now focusing to help customers with vision loss, hearing loss, physical and cognitive issues. This is a development we applaud and appreciate and we look forward to the growth of this important trend.

Below is the essential list of tech support phone lines with specialists trained in the accessibility features and settings that can make a night-and-day difference for you.

Call them and get the help you need whenever you need it. Don't be shy. They are there to help you get the most out of their technology.

Apple Accessibility Support Line

877.204.3930

For users of Apple's, iPhone, iPad, iPod Touch, Apple Watch, or a Mac – this is a gift. It is a special support line reserved for customers with vision, hearing, motor, and learning impairments. Senior AppleCare specialists are available 24/7 to help you get your Accessibility Settings right, answer your questions, and resolve your technical issues.

Comcast Accessibility Support Center

866.668.6703

Direct line to a dedicated team, specially trained to support customers who rely on accessibility services including voice guidance and video description.

Microsoft Disability Answer Desk

800.936.5900

All the features you need to make your PC 'vision friendly' are built right into Windows – unfortunately many people don't know that. Microsoft recognized this as a significant problem and they put in place a support team specialized in accessibility. So dial them up and get your computer set up to work

for you (not against you). And, to make it even easier on yourself – allow them remote access to your PC and they can make the adjustments.

AT&T National Center for Citizens with Disabilities (NCCD)

866.241.6568

Customers with vision loss get free 411 and recommendations for mobile phones providing voice control.

Verizon Center for Customers with Disabilities

800.974.6006

Free 411 for your home phone and for your mobile phone. Get your bills in the format of

your choice...large print or digital. They can help you with anything else pertaining to your home phone service.

Verizon Wireless National Accessibility Center

888.262.1999

It can sometimes be challenging to get information about accessibility features that make your mobile phone, or tablet, work for you. Questions about enlarging text, using voice commands effectively, or using the screen reader, often remain unanswered when posed to your store representative. That should be the case no more – now there is a customer service and technical support center

dedicated to helping people maximize the accessibility features built into all of Verizon's mobile devices. Let them help you get your device set just right for you, from 8am - 9pm EST, Monday - Friday.

We will be adding Accessibility Support services as we discover them.

Please let us know if you know of any before we do, and we'll share by posting to this list. ■

EYES ONLY Editor-In-Chief: Bernard Landou

ASSOCIATION FOR MACULAR DISEASES

210 East 64th Street, New York NY 10065

212.605.3719

Visit www.Macula.org