

**President's Message**  
**Spring 2K9**  
**Thomas Blair, Jr., LDO, ABOM**

**“Hope is not a plan!”**

**As many, if not most, of you should be aware the past year has been an active one for OAG on the legislative and regulatory front. In July of 2K8, HB-241, the OAG sponsored Optician apprentice/trainee MBE and Registration bill went into effect. Later in that same year OAG established a productive dialogue with the GSBDO (Georgia State Bd. of Dispensing Opticians) thru the expert assistance of our attorney/lobbyist Kirkland McGhee, to negotiate a reasonable compromise on the utilization of online continuing education to meet Georgia license renewal requirements. As a result licensees have an option of obtaining a maximum of 5 hours of continuing education online. There is still a 5 hour onsite or live c.e. requirement for a total of 10 hours required for license renewal. (All courses must be ABO approved for the state of Georgia to recognize them.) Earlier this spring again with Mr. McGhee's assistance, OAG Past President and current Treasurer Thomas L. Schulz and I successfully negotiated vital language modification to SB -195 - a blanket bill - which was poised to potentially redirect the state of Georgia's priorities on administering licensure examinations. With the advent of the next legislative cycle which begins in January 2K10 a reasonable expectation exists – in likely part due to gubernatorial candidate posturing – “sunset” legislation will emerge as a political issue. Essentially sunset legislation addresses, at predetermined intervals, whether a licensing board is viable to the state's ongoing interests and the public.**

**What all of this activity tells us, is that “if we - OAG - aren't at the table, we might be on the menu”! Which brings me to the point of the headline i.e., *hope is not a plan*. In the course of the days and weeks, I routinely speak with opticians and others who often comment that OAG's efforts are “appreciated”. Interestingly and often a corollary comment is “somebody should do something” about potential issues that bedevil opticianry. My question is: Who is somebody? The answer is**

somebody is me, it's you. We all have priorities and challenges in our lives. Your family and career is no more important to you than mine is to me. Yet the point is, we must take time to address the professional issues that can potentially affect your ability to pursue your chosen field of endeavor, and on a more basic level is the means by which you put food on the table. Rest assured opposing political forces are counting on indifference and apathy, on opticians' part, to move their agenda(s) along. Where we can make a difference, is to get our heads in the game and stop hoping things will work out. Hope is not a plan! Things work out when they are *worked out*. Do not assume there is nothing you can do. You can make a difference among other things, when so advised, by contacting your legislators and letting them know how or where you stand on an issue that's relevant to opticianry. Pass along information to OAG leadership if and when you hear contrary or questionable information to us at: [oag@oagonline.org](mailto:oag@oagonline.org) or call 770 666 -5489. The time is never greater or more urgent than now for opticians to see things for what they are, as opposed to how they are presented. The future - legislatively and otherwise - belongs to those prepared for it. Hope is not a plan!

Cordially,

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