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DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA

Detecting 'Built-In Dirty Windshields'

Glare Test May Become Licensing Routine

By David Williamson

Writer James Thurber, whose vision began to fail him in later life, had first-hand experience with the difficulties older people sometimes face driving after dark.

"A peril of the night road is that flecks of dust and shreds of bug blood on the windshield look to me often like old admirals in uniform or crippled apple women, or the front end of barges, and I whirl out of their way, thus going into ditches and

fields and up on front lawns," he wrote after one trip.

Mass Screening

In an effort to help the North Carolina Division of Motor Vehicles identify drivers like Thurber who are at a disadvantage after dark and during poor weather conditions, and thereby reduce the highway accident toll, a medical center scientist has developed a mass-screening device to test for glare sensitivity.

Dr. Myron Wolbarsht, professor of

ophthalmology and biomedical engineering, also has improved an existing peripheral vision tester to make it suitable for widespread use at licensing stations.

Bureau of Highway Safety employes conducted successful field trials of the devices in 32 North Carolina cities last year. Fifteen hundred driver applicants participated in the trials.

Standard Vision Exams

Wolbarsht said both the glare sensitivity and peripheral vision testers may become part of the standard vision examinations for license applicants within the next two years, after current studies and refinements have been completed.

Many drivers with increased glare sensitivity have otherwise normal daytime vision and are currently indistinguishable from those who have no special problems with glare, he explained. At night or under adverse conditions, these drivers'

eyes "scatter" light internally, much as dust particles do on a dirty windshield.

"People with light scattering within the eye can be considered to have a built-in dirty windshield," Wolbarsht said. "They can pass a visual acuity test for licensing and still present a hazard to themselves and others at night.

Wolbarsht said abnormal glare sensitivity is sometimes, but not always, a symptom of other eye problems such as cataracts. His studies and those done by other researchers indicate that glare sensitivity is greater in older drivers.

Night Driving Hazard

Decreased visibility due to glare may rank behind alcohol abuse and poor judgment as one of the chief causes of automobile accidents at night and during rain or fog, he said. But exactly how great a toll glare

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REDUCING HIGHWAY ACCIDENTS—That's the goal of mass-screening tests Dr. Myron Wolbarsht is using to check this woman's glare sensitivity and peripheral vision. Within the next two years both tests Wolbarsht devised may become part of the standard vision examinations for North Carolina driver's license applicants. (Photo by Ina Fried)

Union Apparently Rejected In Large Voter Turnout

Eighty per cent of the 2,024 eligible voters in the medical center participated in the Nov. 16 union election which apparently rejected representation by Local 77 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME).

Of the 1,616 ballots cast, 743 were against the labor organization, 684 were in favor and 189 were challenged.

"All employees voting are to be congratulated for their participation," said Richard L. Jackson, assistant vice president and director of personnel for the university.

Intercom has delayed reporting the election vote, pending an official certification of the tally by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). However, Jackson said official certification could be months off because of the 189 challenged ballots.

In spite of the challenges, Jackson said, it is unlikely that the outcome of the election will be changed. Jackson explained the challenged ballots this way:

Duke challenged 21 voters as irregular part-time employees; AFSCME challenged 39 voters as business office clericals and/or supervisors; and the NLRB issued the balance of the challengers to voters whose names were not on the voting eligibility list.

Even if the NLRB decides in favor of the union, Jackson pointed out, it probably would gain only 21 votes (those challenged by Duke), not enough for a majority.

Both Duke and AFSCME have filed objections regarding the conduct of the election.

The NLRB will conduct hearings in the next few months to determine the validity of the objections and challenges.

Eminent Guest to Attend Hospital Party

NORTH POLE, Arctic Circle — Sources close to Santa Claus, renowned distributor of good cheer, have announced that Claus will visit the medical center on Dec. 15.

He will give informal lectures and demonstrations of his work in the courtyard cafeteria between 2-4 p.m. and 10 p.m.-midnight.

The topic will be "The Interrelation Between Candy Canes and Ho-Ho-Hoing in the Christmas Spirit Phenomenon: A First-hand Appraisal."

The gatherings also will feature abundant refreshments and entertainment by local talent. At least 25 large turkeys will be given away as door prizes.

All employees are encouraged to participate.

