

Cigar Box Bulletin

VOLUME 23 ISSUE 4

APRIL 2019

Ranked Choice Voting

Prof. Ellen Perry,

Classics Dept. of College of the Holy Cross

Reporter: Jim Bright



Ellen is a member of Voter Choice Massachusetts, an organization dedicated to promoting a modification of our voting process in the Commonwealth. Her talk described the problem they are seeking to address, the proposed solution, and some exam-

ples.

The Problem

The issues that Ranked Choice voting seeks to address are that our current system enables "spoiler" candidates, yields a winner who gets only a minority of the votes cast, discourages candidates from running, and limits our choice at the voting booth. A classic example of the problem is the 2000 Presidential vote in Florida. George W. Bush and Al Gore each got about 48.4% of the popular vote, with Bush receiving 537 more votes than Gore. A third candidate, Ralph Nader, received 1.4% of the vote. Based on his slim lead, Bush was awarded the election. However, exit polls indicated that 43,000 of the Nader voters would have preferred Gore, while only 26,000 would have preferred Bush. So a majority of the electorate actually preferred the candidate who lost.

[While the spoiler benefited a Republican in the above example, the opposite occurred in the 1992 election

between George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton. In that case Ross Perot played the role of spoiler and benefited the Democrat. – Ed.]

Ellen went on to describe several other examples. In the Third Congressional Democratic Primary, for instance, Laurie Trahan and Dan Koh each got about 21.7% of the vote, with just 127 votes separating the two candidates. Trahan was awarded the election, despite winning less than a quarter of the votes. In fact, studies show that candidates with a minority of the votes frequently win elections. About 60% of the races for Governor were won by non-majority candidates. For other positions, the percentage of non-majority winners ranged from 11% to 86%.

Another problem with our current system is that it tends to put pressure on third party candidates to drop out, or to leave voters with the dilemma of wanting to vote for a third party candidate but knowing their vote may then throw the election to some other candidate with whom they strongly disagree.

Proposed Solution

Ranked Choice Voting attempts to solve these problems by allowing each voter to rank multiple candidates in the order that he or she prefers them. The ballot would list each candidate and allow the voter to indicate which is their most preferred, their

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April Meeting Minutes Ship's Bell Rang at 10:00 AM

Reporter: Bill Beebee

Chris Hammer called the meeting to order and requested that cell phones be silenced.

Chris led members in The Pledge of Allegiance, followed by the singing of "The Star Spangled Banner" - accompanied by **Ken Watson** on the piano.

New Members:

Paul Sturgis introduced the new members **Seth Kaplan** and **Frank DiPace**.

Visitors:

Paul then announced **Jim Metcalf**, who introduced his visitor, **Eb Praeger** (a Raytheon alum).

Continued on Page 5

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Friday, May 10

Friday, June 14

No July Meeting

Speaker — Continued

second preference, their third, and so on. (The voter could rate every candidate on the ballot, or only a few, at his or her discretion.) The candidate receiving the fewest votes is then eliminated from consideration, and the votes that were cast for that candidate would then be allocated to the second preference of each voter. This process would continue until one candidate wins a majority of the votes.

A sample ballot might look like this:

City Council						
Rank up to 6 candidates.	First choice	Second choice	Third choice	Fourth choice	Fifth choice	Sixth choice
Mark no more than 1 oval in each column.	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th
Valerie Altman Orange Party	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
George Hovis Yellow Party	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Althea Sharp Purple Party	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mary Tawa Lime Party	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Joe Li Tan Party	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Phil Wilkie Independent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

An example will help clarify.

Situation 1: Imagine 4 candidates win the following percentages of the vote -

Candidate 1 19%	Candidate 2 20%
Candidate 3 53%	Candidate 4 8%

In this case, Candidate 3 has a majority of the vote and would win the election, just as we do today.

Situation 2: Now imagine a different scenario, in which no one wins a majority -

Candidate 1 27%	Candidate 2 28%
Candidate 3 34%	Candidate 4 11%

In this case, Candidate 4 has the fewest votes. He or she would therefore be eliminated from consideration and the votes cast for that person would be allocated to the remaining candidates according to the second preference indicated on those ballots.

That might result in a vote distribution that looks like this:

Candidate 1 29%	Candidate 2 33%
Candidate 3 38%	

Notice that Candidate 1 gained 2%, Candidate 2 gained 5%, and Candidate 3 gained 4%, based on the second preference of Candidate 4 voters. There is still no candidate with a majority, so again the candidate with the lowest number of votes (Candidate 1) would be eliminated. The ballots that were cast for Candidate 1 would then be allocated to the remaining candidates according to the preference indicated by those voters. If, for example, most of Candidate 1 voters indicated that Candidate 2 was their next highest preference, their votes would be added to the 33% already committed to Candidate 2 and would be sufficient to give that candidate more than 50% and to win the election. For a fuller description of the process, applied to the situation of multiple offices being filled, see the example provided by the Voter Choice Massachusetts website: https://www.fairvote.org/multi_winner_rcv_example. Experience

Ranked choice voting is already in use in a number of places. It has been used for over 100 years in Australia and was recently adopted by Ireland. The voters of Maine just approved this method of voting at the state level. It is used at the local level by a number of towns and cities in our country. In fact, Ellen presented a graph showing that this method is now used by over 4 million people in the U.S.

Objections

Several questions about the feasibility of Ranked Choice Voting were raised by the audience (or have been raised in other forums).

Is this biased in favor of one party?

No, Ranked Choice Voting has no bias in favor of one party or another. While it is sometimes perceived as benefiting Democrats, it would have been quite helpful to the Republican Party in 2016 in sorting through their 17 Presidential primary candidates. The strongly Republican state of Utah recently adopted a provision to allow all of their local elections, and it was signed into law by their Republican governor. The Republican legislature of Alaska recently endorsed a similar provision.

Won't voters be confused by the ballots?

Experience has shown that they handle this change easily. The concept of voting for one's first, second, third choice and so on is a familiar one to most people. In addition, Voter Choice Massachusetts has been holding house parties to introduce people to the concept and has found little confusion.

What are the typical objections to Ranked Choice Voting?

One objection seems to be simple lack of familiarity. This is a change that takes a while to absorb. There also seems to be some resistance from incumbent politicians, who may prefer the system in which they won.

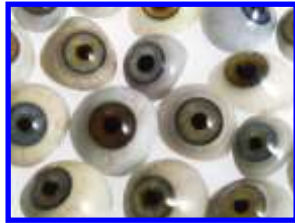
Doesn't this violate the principle of "One person, one vote"?

No, each person only votes once, and their vote only counts once – in whatever preference they indicated.

An Eye-Popping Story—By Bob Mainer

On the way to his evening commute, Henry stopped for a quick drink. He found a seat at the crowded bar. Looking in the mirror, he saw seated next to him a woman staring glumly into her drink. He decided to try to cheer her up.

She responded favorably to his attention. After a few minutes, she was smiling. He gave his name. She reciprocated with “Melinda.” Henry decided to share a joke he had heard that day. Melinda laughed heartily – so much so that a glass eye popped out of its socket and bounced on the bar.



Henry stopped the orb’s progress, picked it up with a napkin and returned it to her. Melinda restored the eye to its proper place, then asked the bartender to pour Henry another drink and put it on her tab.

Henry asked Melinda how she had lost her eye. Melinda offered a complicated explanation centered on a college sports injury. Glancing at his watch, Henry saw that he would miss his train if he continued the conversation.

After Henry departed, the bartender took a moment to speak to Melinda. “Hey Melinda. How’s my girl? Looked to me like you found that guy kinda interesting.” Melinda downed the remainder of her drink. “Yeah. He caught my eye.”



The Cigar Box Bulletin

P. O. Box 261

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Let's Get Acquainted—Bill Cooper



Bill was born 6-24-1941 in Salisbury, Maryland. His family moved around until coming to Weymouth, MA where he went through the first three years of grammar school. Then the family moved to Leominster, MA where he finished grammar school. He then took a test for a scholarship to Lawrence Academy in Groton, MA. He won the competition and received a full four year scholarship to the academy. Upon graduation from Lawrence Academy he went to MIT and graduated in 1963 as a chemical engineer. He continued on at MIT to get Masters and Doctor of Science in Chemical Engineering degrees by 1967.

Upon graduation with his BS in 1963 he married his wife, Martha, on June 22nd 1963. Over the next few years he and Martha had four daughters. They are all married and they have seven grandchildren, five boys and two girls.

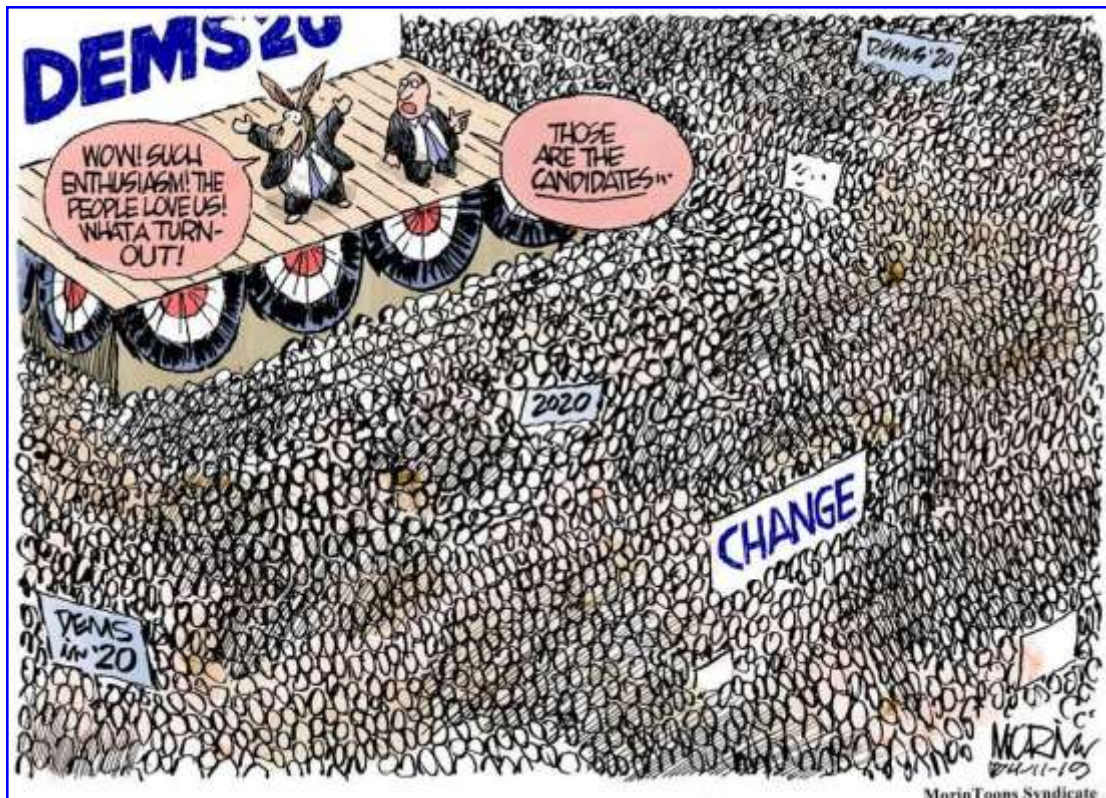
The two eldest are now about to graduate from college, one from Brandeis and one from U Mass Amherst.

Bill started his career in 1967 with Abcor, Inc. founded by his college advisor. Abcor Inc. was subsequently acquired by Koch

Industries and later formed as Koch Membrane Systems. He started out in R & D and manufacturing of semi-permeable membranes. He became Vice President and operations manager of the division. He invented and got a patent for an artificial kidney. Later he became responsible for sales of the corporation in the Asia Pacific region. He retired in 1998.

He and Martha have done a lot of traveling all over the world, much of which has been on river cruises.

They have lived in Sudbury since 1967 and Bill served on the Board of Health for nine years. He also has served as a Trustee of the United Methodist Church in Sudbury. They have a summer home on Bustin's Island Freeport, Maine. He has been on the Board of Overseers, the Planning Board, and Board of appeals for Bustin's Island. An interesting fact is that Bustin's Island is really on its own in that they pay taxes to Freeport, but the Village Corporation for the island gets 50% of it back to take care of the expenses of the island such as fire protection and infrastructure repair.



Minutes—Continued

Travelers:

Paul Murphy introduced the following RMA travelers, who told their stories -

Gerry Brody spent 6 weeks in Puerto Rico, joined by a daughter and granddaughter. About half of the Island needs rebuilding, but the area that he saw was in reasonable condition, with golf courses open, at least.

Don Sherman stayed at Ogunquit, ME, at the off-season condo rate of only \$200 for the week.

Paul Sturgis had a long vacation, broken into four pieces. First was a week in South Beach, FL, where he saw "no hands" beach volleyball (using feet and heads, only). Then, he went to Key West for a week. He next went to San Diego for two weeks, seeing the *Battleship Midway* and (with grandchildren), Lego Land and the famous San Diego Zoo. He finished with the final month in Bonita Springs, FL.

Chris thanked the following members who helped with the arrangements for the meeting:

Coffee - Sandy Grace

Donuts from Stop n Shop - John Iberg (who recently thanked Jack Shepherd, the S n S baker, for sending many tasty treats over the years to the RMA)

Badges - Richard Smith

Facilities - Mike Sheff, Jim Latimer, Fred Jungalwala

Reporting on the Minutes - Bill Beebee

Reporting on the Speaker - Jim Bright

Bulletin - Bob Diefenbacher, Koby Kobayashi, Stan Wulf

Sound Equipment - Larry Vifquain

Slide Show - Don Sherman

Website - Ken Mattes, Richard B. Smith, John McKinney, Bill Thompson, Bob Diefenbacher, Al Persson

Photographer - Art Phipps

Members Support Help Line - Al Persson

Announcements (today, all made by **Chris Hammer**):

We need someone to take the mobile mike around the room when there are questions for our Speakers. (Today, **Paul Sturgis** helped **Chris** to do that job.)

Make sure that you see **Art Phipps** to get your picture taken, if it is not already on file.

Save the date of Wed, Oct. 16, for the *Annual Dinner Dance*. Price is \$50 per person, with (cash) cocktails at 5 and supper at 6. Entertainment will be from **Bill Ladoulis** and **Ken Watson**. Location will be, nominally, at the Marlborough CC, although that may be changed.

The next lunchtime *RMA Discussion Group* will meet at Conrad's, on the left on Rt. 20 about a mile east of the Landham Rd. intersection. It will be at noon on Wed., April 17, and the topic will be College Tuition.

Event:

Chris announced that the Annual PawSox game has been changed to Friday, July 12. We will meet at 4:00 PM to travel to the game. More details will be coming in the future. This will be the last time for the game to be in Pawtucket, since the team is moving to Worcester.

Vital Statistics:

Jim Latimer gave the RMA birthdays and wedding anniversaries for April. The oldest birthday belongs to **Dave Marshall**, born on April 28, 1933. The oldest anniversary belongs to **Dave** and Elizabeth **Stallard**, married on April 24, 1954.

**Note that there will be NO RMA meeting in July 2019
due to a church camp using all the facilities at that time.**

Minutes—Continued

Health of Members:

Chris Hammer noted that **Bruce Porter** had back surgery. It was successful and he is now at home. **Chris** also said that **Merrill Mack** was in a hospital for medication adjustments but he has returned home.

Humor:

Harold Wilkinson gave his usual light touch to the Meeting. He said that a grandfather once advised: "For any effort, always give everything you've got, unless it is blood."

Harold also noted that a doctor was visiting a woman patient from his church who was suffering from exhaustion. The doctor asked the woman if she was working too hard for the church. She asked how he knew that, and he an-

swered "I dropped my stethoscope on the floor and, reaching down to pick it up, I saw the Pastor under your bed."

Musical Vignette:

Ken Watson and **Bill Ladoulis** entertained us with some 1940s songs. First was "April Showers", a wistful song about rain in April followed by flowers in May. It was made popular by Al Jolson and became a morale booster in the dark early days of WW II. The other offering, a happier song, was "It Might as Well be Spring"; it was a different morale booster, this time celebrating the end of WW II. The song appeared in the 1945 Rogers and Hammerstein musical *State Fair* and was sung by Margaret Whiting.

ROMEO Lunch:

Bob Malnati announced today's lunch to be at the Bella Costa Ristorante at 147 Cochituate Road in Framingham.

Is Debt Consolidation a Good Idea?

Debt is enough to cause anyone sleepless nights and stressful mornings when the mailman arrives with the latest bills that have to be paid. Money worries can affect family life and take a heavy toll on individual health – particularly if alcohol is consumed to avoid having to confront the mountain of debt many of us find ourselves in.

You may have considered debt consolidation as the answer to your problems as it rolls up all the credit card and store card debt you have accumulated, gets the creditors off your back and could lower your monthly outgoing payments. For some people who are usually very good with money and have got in to debt through no direct fault of their own – maybe the health bills racked up or there was a period of unemployment – then debt consolidation may be the answer to managing your debt and reducing your monthly expenditure.

However, if you got in to debt because you were using cheap credit to fuel your lifestyle then debt consolidation may actually be a bad idea because you are exchanging unsecured debt for secured debt and if you continue living how you have been then your home may be in real danger. In this case it may be worthwhile contacting your creditors to explain your situation and take a hit on your credit score rather than risk becoming homeless. A credit score can always be repaired, losing your home is catastrophic.

Before applying for a debt consolidation loan there are some factors you need to consider. The first is that you may be charged a fee to process the loan, the second is that even though the interest rate is lower and fixed the duration is much longer which means that in the long term you end up spending more on interest than if you simply paid off your credit cards. Finally there may be no option for early repayment or they may charge high fees to pay the loan off early, whereas a credit card company will gladly accept a lump sum payment with no fees if you are paying off your debt.

There is just one question to ask yourself if you are considering getting a consolidated loan which is: are you changing your lifestyle to get out of debt or will you continue to need credit cards to survive? If the answer is that you will need to keep using credit cards then debt consolidation is definitely not the right option for you. If you are committed to cutting up all your credit cards and sticking to a strict budget then consolidating your debt may be the way to help you become debt free within 5 years.

By Randy DeHetre, the owner of britespot.info which provides a wealth of information about debt consolidation.

Anniversaries in April

Member		Spouse	Anniv.	Yrs.
Kenneth	Watson	Frances	04/29/1972	47
John	Niggl	Dicie	04/11/1971	48
Robert	Hyotte	Candy	04/24/1971	48
John	Iberg	Lynne	04/17/1970	49
Eric S.	Lind	Jean	04/15/1967	52
Ulrich	Becker	Gerda	04/29/1966	53
David	Stallard	Elizabeth	04/24/1954	65

Average Years Married—52



Birthdays in April

Member		Birthday	Age
Bruce	Porter	04/24/1951	68
Paul	Sturgis	04/16/1949	70
Daniel	Miller	04/29/1948	71
Howard	Kendall	04/13/1947	72
Richard G.	Smith	04/15/1947	72
Thomas	Travers	04/02/1947	72
William	Miniscalco	04/28/1946	73
Joseph	Kerr	04/01/1942	77
Charles	Pross	04/11/1941	78
Adi	Guzdar	04/15/1936	83
Michael	Patterson	04/04/1936	83
Manfred B.	Schulz	04/24/1934	85
David	Marshall	04/28/1933	86

Average Age— 76



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Adults & Kids Write Funny Stuff

1. 'I demand a salary commiserate with my extensive experience.'
 2. 'I have lurnt Word for Widows, computer operations and spreadsheet progroms.'
 3. 'I received a plague for Salesperson of the Year.'
 4. 'Wholly responsible for two (2) failed financial institutions.'
 5. 'Reason for leaving last job: maturity leave.'
 6. 'Failed bar exam with relatively high grades.'
 7. 'It's best for employers that I not work with people.'
 8. 'Let's meet , so you can 'ooh' and 'aah' over my experience.'
 9. 'You will want me to be Head Honcho in no time.'
 10. 'Am a perfectionist and rarely if if ever forget details.'
 11. 'I was working for my mom until she decided to move.'
 12. 'Marital status: single. Unmarried. Unengaged. Uninvolved. No commitments.'
 13. 'I have an excellent track record, although I am not a horse.'
 14. 'I am loyal to my employer at all costs....Please feel free to respond to my résumé on my office voice mail.'
 15. 'I have become completely paranoid, trusting completely no one and absolutely nothing.'
 16. 'My goal is to be a meteorologist. But since I possess no training in meteorology, I suppose I should try stock brokerage.'
-
- A number of primary schools were doing a project on 'The Sea.' Children were asked to draw pictures or write about their experiences. Teachers got together to compare the results and put together some of the 'better' ones—*
1. Some fish are dangerous. Jellyfish can sting. Electric eels can give you a shock. They have to live in caves under the sea because I think they have to plug themselves in to chargers. (Christopher age 7)
 2. This is a picture of an octopus. It has eight testicles. (Kelly age 6)
 3. Oysters' balls are called pearls. (James age 6)
 4. If you are surrounded by sea you are an Island. If you don't have sea all around you, you are incontinent. (Wayne age 7)
 5. I think sharks are ugly and mean, and have big teeth, just like Emily Richardson. She's not my friend no more. (Kyle age 6)
 6. A dolphin breathes through an asshole on the top of its head. (Billy age 8)
 7. When ships had sails, they used to use the trade winds to cross the ocean. Sometimes, when the wind didn't blow the sailors would whistle to make the wind come. My brother said they would be better off eating beans. (William age 7)
 8. I like mermaids. They are beautiful, and I like their shiny tails. How do mermaids get pregnant? (Helen age 6)

RMA Bulletin Board

Date Change: The PawSox baseball game schedule is changed to Friday, July 12. The bus leaves the church at 4:00 pm

This will be the last time RMA members will go to the game in Pawtucket, since the team is moving to Worcester.



Reminder that there will be **No July Meeting** as the church is running a camp that month.

A Members Support Help Line. This is intended to help members or their spouses who are in need of assistance. This could include rides to meetings or helping members in other ways as needed. Contact Al Persson at 781-235-6910.



Save the Date!

The RMA Annual Dinner is Wednesday, October 16, 2019. Liquid libations at 5:00 pm, followed by a delicious dinner at 6:00 pm. Musical entertainment, dancing, and a good time is promised by chair Bob Malnati

Cornea Transplant



The cornea is the crystal clear part at the front of the eye. It is crystal clear so as not to interfere with light as it enters the eye and goes to the retina at the back of the eye. The retina is made of thousands of nerves and changes the light into the images we “see”.

The cornea contains no blood vessels as these would interfere with the passage of light as it goes through the cornea. The cornea is fed the necessary nutrients to sustain life by the tears. Damaged can be done to the cornea by the use of bright lights such as welding. The result is blindness.

Premature babies often have trouble breathing. In the past, they were put in a high Oxygen environment. The corneas of some of these babies scared over. The result was blindness. Today these babies are put in a lower concentration of Oxygen and the incidence of cornea scarring in premature babies is very small.

There are still hundreds of people who are blind because of corneal opacity. The rest of their eye is normal but light cannot get to the retina because their cornea is opaque.

Part II

During my internship, I was the low man on a team helping to take care of a relatively young man who had been admitted with a severe heart attack. No one, including the patient, expected him to survive. (In those days the in-hospital mortality was 50%)

I was in the room, alone with the patient, when he asked me to come closer. He told me his much younger brother had been blind from birth. If he died he wanted me to remove his eyes and have them put in his brother. I thought he was crazy.

I spoke to the attending physician and he told me about corneal transplants. I learned that they remove the eyes from a person who had died. They then removed the damaged cornea from a blind person and sutured a donor cornea in place. The person who has been blind until then could now see.

Putting the donor cornea in the recipient's eye is a very delicate exacting procedure done by just a few Ophthalmologists. The first half of the procedure is having someone donate their eyes and getting someone to remove them. On talking to the family I learned that the brother had been born prematurely (3.5 pounds) and the oxygen had scared his eyes and he had been blind from birth.

The family was aware of the very new procedure of transplantations but they knew very little about it. I talked around and learned that there was an ophthalmologist at the medical center who had done several with good results. I talked to all concerned and it was agreed that if the patient with the heart attack did not make it, as was expected, then his cornea would be transplanted into his brother.

The patient died and things were set in motion. Everyone was set to go but I had forgotten one thing and no one had foreseen my error. No one was assigned to harvest the eyes from the donor. I was given a quick verbal lesson and went and harvested the eyes.

During the rest of my internship, I became the person they called when someone had donated their eyes so someone else could see. I probably harvested the eyes from 10 donors that year.

About a month after that first transplant was performed I was called down to the Chief Physician's office. I was very nervous as I made my way to his office. What had I done wrong? When I entered his office there was the wife of the man who had the heart attack and her daughter. The older lady had come to thank me.

She told me her younger son was now able to see. She wondered why they had only transplanted one eye. I explained that only one transplanted cornea was given to a patient. Therefore two people were now seeing the world through her husband's eyes.

She also told me transplanting her husband eyes was the only good thing that had come out of his death.

The tears flowed and there were hugs all around.

By Al Persson



R.M.A.
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First Class Mail

Next Meeting
Friday, May 10
Web site RMenA.org
E-mail info@RmenA.org



RMA Meeting: Friday, May 10, 10:00 am

Darkness in Distress

J. Kelly Beatty
Senior Editor, *Sky & Telescope*



Light pollution, simply put, is any unnecessary or excessive outdoor illumination. Sadly, it's become a pervasive and ugly consequence of modern 24/7 society. Light pollution robs us of the night sky's beauty, negatively affects the ecosystem, and creates an in-your-face waste of energy. But a new mindset and new technology are poised to slow — and perhaps reverse — this bane of modern life.

Kelly Beatty has been explaining the science and wonder of astronomy to the public since 1974. An award-winning writer and communicator, he specializes in planetary science and space exploration as Senior Editor for *Sky & Telescope* magazine. Beatty enjoys sharing his passion for astronomy with a wide spectrum of audiences, from children to professional astronomers, and you'll occasionally hear his interviews and guest commentaries on National Public Radio and The Weather Channel. He served for a decade on the Board of Directors for the International Dark-Sky Association.

Bring a Guest to this Meeting! Use the "Be My Guest Card"