

To Your Health

Eye Banks Supply Part Of Cornea

By DR. JOSEPH G. MOLNER

Dear Doctor Molner: Will you please give me some information about an "eye bank"? Or is there any such thing?

I think blood banks are wonderful so people can have transfusions at once when they need them. I have heard that surgeons can transplant the human eye and prevent blindness.

I told our family physician that if I knew for certain that "willing my eyes" would keep someone from going blind, I believe I would be willing to do so.—Mrs. L. C.

Yes, there are such things as eye banks. They aren't exactly like blood banks, bone banks or other such banks, but they do, indeed, prevent a great deal of blindness. Or, more correctly, they restore lost sight to people with a certain type of defect.

If you visited an "eye bank" you would probably be disappointed, because there isn't much to see. We can't store eyes in large quantities as we do blood and some other items. However, you most certainly would NOT be disappointed to see a patient who has had sight restored because of an eye bank.

The eye is not "transplanted" in the sense of exchanging the entire organ. That is not yet possible. Rather, a portion of the cornea, or outer covering of the eyeball, the window, is used.

Many a person has become blind because the cornea either is cloudy, or because it has been burned or badly scarred, although leaving the parts of the eye behind it intact.

It is possible to remove the old cornea and apply a new one. But the only source of a cornea is from another eye.

Unlike cases requiring blood transfusions, these operations need not be done on an emergency basis, immediately. They can be done next week or next month, or even next year. The patient can wait—and often has to wait until another eye is available.

This "eye bank" really consists mainly of a list of people who need corneas, and a list of people who are willing that their eyes be used for this generous purpose.

The more quickly a cornea can be used, the better. Therefore eyes that are given to the "bank" are removed promptly, and carefully kept refrigerated until actually used. The eyes don't stay in the "bank" more than a day or two. Sometimes it is a matter of only hours. But in this way people regain the precious gift of sight.

Arrangements to leave eyes for this purpose must be made beforehand. An eye surgeon or the eye department of a hospital will be glad to tell you how to fill out a simple form that is required. (There may be minor differences in some states.)

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That's Nature

Let Hawks, Owls Alone

By PRINCE E. HELFRICH Northwest Conservationist

A fast-moving hawk swooped low over the trees. The hunter aimed and fired and a puff of feathers indicated that a direct hit was made. With a smug smile of satisfaction the hunter continued on his way content that he had saved his quota of game birds that day. All too often this happens along the coastal and mountain flyways of North America.

Hunters in the field for upland birds try their skill on a moving target, justifying the kill in supposition that the hawk or owl is competing in their bird hunting. Some farmers shoot hawks or owls on sight. A hawk setting on top of a tall tree is an inviting target to any gunner.

Unless some real protection is forthcoming the hawks and owls will soon follow the trail of the passenger pigeon or the whooping crane. Each year their ranks grow thinner. Their habitat is fast disappearing and more and more people are encroaching on their wilderness territory. Even the bald eagle population showed a decline last year.

In the past, attempts have been made to classify hawks and owls into beneficial or destructive groups. The Coopers, sharp-shinned and goshawks were supposed to be the bad actors of their species. All other hawks were considered beneficial to the farmers. Likewise the great horned owl was condemned as being too destructive to wildlife while the rest of the owl family was considered helpful. Now opinions are changing and all the hawks and owls are considered of some use. Their predatory qualities are more than offset by their good deeds in controlling rodent population. We must concede that in some instances hawks or owls must be destroyed when they start raiding a chicken house or decimating the easily caught songbirds.

As Nature produced a given species of

bird or animal, Nature also provided a check on this species in the form of some predators. Most all fish, birds, or animals can reproduce far beyond the carrying capacity of their habitat. Some must die every year so that others may carry on. Predators perform the job of weeding out the weak, the sick, the unadaptable and leave a healthy stock to carry on. In this way predators are necessary to all species. And the predator performs the duties of keeping a species in check with far less cruelty and more skill than natural controls which would be starvation and disease.

Predators have a great tendency to collect where the prey is most abundant. If favorable conditions have built up a surplus population of rabbits or mice, predators move in to reduce the population to the normal carrying capacity. Note what happened in Klamath and Lake counties when coyotes and bobcats were almost eliminated by poisoning. The rabbit and mouse population literally exploded; whole fields of grass and grain were destroyed in a short time. Then the owls and hawks moved in. In some fields I noted hundreds of owls catching mice. Hawks were perched everywhere getting their share. In a few months the mice were reduced to normal numbers.

This same condition could exist in the songbird population. Although we hate to see any songbird destroyed, it might become necessary in an over-populated area. Thus hawks and owls have been placed here for some purpose and it is not up to man to destroy them. The next time you see a hawk or owl perched in the top of a tree refrain from taking a shot at him. Sit down and watch him soar high in the sky or listen to his shrill warning scream and realize that he has a right to live—a place in Nature's plan.

Ask Andy

Moon's Face Ever Same

Andy sends a complete, 20-volume set of the World Book Encyclopedia to Lois Atalick, age 12, of St. Catharines, Ont., for her question:

Why can't we see the other side of the moon?

The earth rotates on its axis and spins around once every 24 hours. As this happens, first one side of the globe and then another faces the moon. This is why the moon rises, climbs over the sky and sets out of sight. If we stood on the moon, we could watch our world spin all the way around once every 24 hours.

The moon, too, we are told, rotates on its axis. But we cannot watch it spin around, showing first one side, then another. The moon faces us with the same side all the time, but, nevertheless, it rotates. You can solve this mystery if you have ever danced a hoedown.

At one point in the merry dance, you are told to swing your partner. So the two of you stretch out your arms and hold hands and around you go. You are both spinning around just as the moon rotates on its

axis. But you keep your faces turned toward each other. This is just half the explanation of why we never see the other side of the moon.

Now, suppose a pair of hoedown partners drops hands and does a different twirl. The girl stays on the same spot and spins around and around on her toes. The boy swings around his partner keeping his face turned toward her. This happy hoedown is just like the motions of the earth and the orbiting moon.

As the boy spins around his partner, he rotates on his axis. With each spin he faces north, south, east and west. The moon also rotates on its axis as it orbits the earth. Each lunar rotation is equal to the time it takes to make one lunar orbit. In fancy language, we see the same side of the moon because its rotation is equal to its revolution. It takes our busy moon 27 1/4 days to make one rotation and one revolution. However, it wobbles a little as it dances around. Sometimes we see a little more on one side and sometimes a little more on the other side. Altogether, we get

to see about 59 per cent of the surface of the moon.

Andy sends a Hammond's International World Globe to Vince Casney, age 10, of Spokane, Wash., for his question: Where did the totem poles originate?

The gaudy totem pole was invented by the Indians who lived along the northwestern shores of Canada and Alaska. The impressive posts were also made by various tribes that lived on the nearby islands. Experts now think that the idea did not originate until about 200 years ago. For a long time, most people thought that totem poles played some part in the religions of these tribes.

But we now suspect that this was not so. A chief or perhaps a brave would have a totem pole carved to impress his neighbors with his own importance. The carvings, one above another, were to explain the noteworthy events in his life and his own likeness appeared at the top of the totem pole. The tall, gaily painted tree trunk was a sort of diary.

