

Prices, innovations make contacts popular

By Martha Murdock

New methods in making and caring for contact lenses and no major price increases in the past few years have allowed more people to wear contact lenses today, according to a Lincoln optometrist.

Dr. Richard Powell of International Contact Lens, 3201 O St., said, "Patients used to have to struggle and be determined to wear contact lenses. The break-in period could be weeks long. Today lens design has improved a lot. A patient can put on soft contacts for the first time and be comfortable right off the bat or in a few hours. Hard lenses can be adjusted to in three or four days."

The most recent innovation is a contact lens which has the rigidity of hard lenses yet, like soft lenses, breathes, Powell said. Soft lenses now come in eight to ten different types.

"Plus contacts"

Soft lenses known as "plus contacts" are for those who cannot see into the distance. At first, these were very strong and only for patients who had gone through cataract surgery, he said.

Aqualenses are fairly new and many companies manufacture them. Powell said they are for people with dry eyes who cannot wear regular lenses. The plastic substance the lenses are made of needs less moisture to keep the lens in the eye.

Dr. G. A. Gunderson of Duling Optical, 1324 O St., says that soft lenses for people with astigmatism are not on the market and are still in the experimental stage.

New Method

A new technique for soft lens care is the cold treatment, according to a Pearle Vision Center employee. No electrical outlet or distilled water is needed as a solution is used to sterilize the lenses.

Powell has been fitting lenses for 10 years and said he has seen very little change in prices.

He said, "it is different with our technology today. We can fit a patient's eye more accurately the first time. This way prices have remained fairly constant." Brandeis and Duling Optical said their prices have recently gone down.

Cindy Hugelman, an optician at Brandeis, said she tells customers the pros and

cons of contact lenses and lets them decide themselves if they want contacts.

A Pearle Vision Center employee said, "We recommend them to young people whose eyes need correction badly. Hard lenses can improve the problem with time."

Powell said he recommends lenses to his patients whose eyes are best suited for contacts.

Gunderson said, "some patients demand that I give them contacts. I have to tell them that their eyes aren't bad enough, that they're throwing away money. Contacts are for patients with severe vision problems."

Demand decline

People usually want contact lenses to improve their appearance, to get away from bulky eyeglass frames and thick lenses. However, with the popularity of designer fashion frames "fewer people come in asking for contact lenses," Hugelman said.

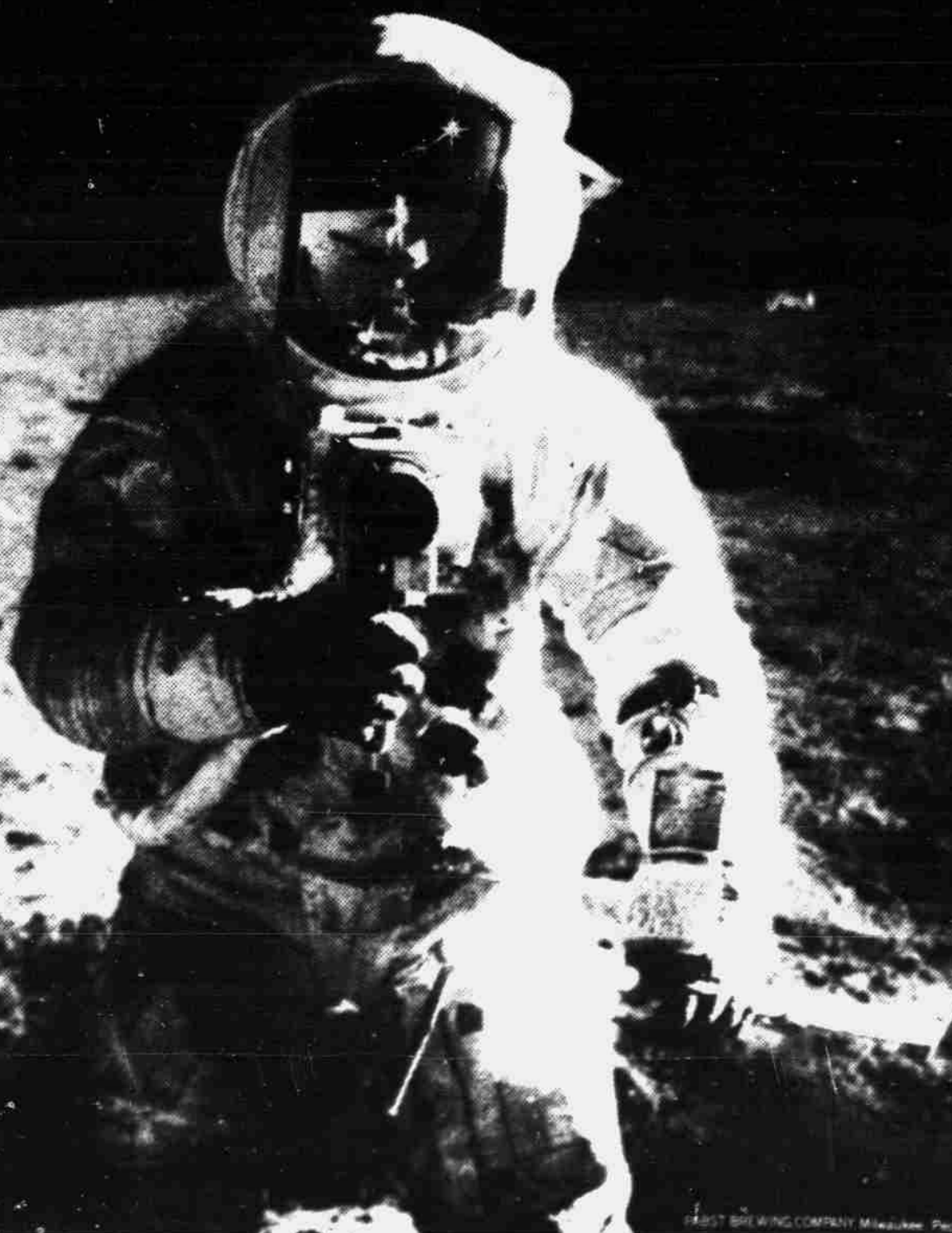
Powell and Gunderson agree that most patients have both glasses and contacts.



Photo by Mark Billingsley



"I've got Pabst Blue Ribbon on my mind."



calendar

- 1 p.m.—Muslim Student Association, room 202.
- 2 p.m.—Task Force on Nebraska Unions, room 216.
- 7 p.m.—Muslim Student Association, room 337.
- 8 p.m.—Clancy pre-nuptial dinner, rooms 242-243.

short stuff

The UNL chemistry department is sponsoring a lecture by Collis Geren, professor at the University of Arkansas, on "Molecular Basis of Venom Toxicity" at 3 p.m. today in Hamilton Hall.

Tune in to "Flipside" presented on KZUM, 89.5 at 3 p.m. today.

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