Youthful Vanity Is A Disease From Which We Usually Recover.
Sometimes the eagerness to cash in on cosmetic dollars drives physicians to goofy extremes. You already know of hardware piercing the nose, the ear lobe and cartilage, the lip, the cheek, the tongue, the elbow, the nipple, the umbilicus, the eyebrow, and even the ______ (fill in the blank); and now you can see your friendly eye surgeon and get the “jewel eye.” Yes, the Maloney Vision Institute based in Los Angeles is offering the “jewel eye.” The office procedure involves an incision made in the conjunctiva, and a platinum star, half-moon, or heart is placed against the sclera. Never mind the chronic eye irritation, redness, infection or possible foreign body rejection, it’s a great payday, and it beats hours in the operating room, doing complicated surgery for much less money. Fees run $3,900 and up, depending upon the value of the jewel implanted. And ophthalmology, once the king of specialties, looks more like a painted streetwalker.

There Is No One So Stupid As An Educated Man.
The recent annual banquet of the Hawaii Medical Association was honored by the presence of Governor Linda Lingle and American Medical Association President-elect Edward Hill. Dr. Hill gave an excellent review of recent activities by the AMA, and outlined directions for the future. Special emphasis was placed on tort reform, and AMA plans for helping the uninsured. Governor Lingle gave a smashing speech with special discussion about the recent ghastly optometry bill where the Democrats overrode her veto despite the cries of alarm from the Dean of John A. Burns School of Medicine, the chief of ophthalmology at JBSOM, and the chair of the Board of Medical Examiners. It was a pure power play to embarrass Governor Lingle, and public safety be damned! Her message was a simple one - to paraphrase; you doctors are stupid. You spend your energy, your money, and your time supporting, testifying and trying to educate people who do not listen to you, who resent you, invariably ignore you, and vote for some vested interest. “Put your support and your money to work for a change in the Legislature.” Thank you, Governor, for telling it like it is.

Radical Solution For The Visually Challenged.
There is a small bloc of severely myopic people who are beyond lasik or any correction except very, very thick glass lenses. Their myopia extends far out of reach of standard correction, with negative 10s on up to 20 or more, and often they cannot tolerate contact lenses. Now they can be offered the intra-ocular implant. The Food and Drug Administration is planning to approve this option with two lenses under consideration, the Verisyse lens offered by AMO Inc. and the Visian Lens made by Starr Surgical Inc. The Visian lens is a rigid lens attached to the iris (called the “Worst” claw -- I could think of a better name). The Starr lens is foldable and sits behind the iris. The Verisyse lens has been used in Europe for a decade, has been implanted in about 100,000 eyes, and will probably be the first one approved. Some of us ancient dudes remember IOLs attached to the iris back in the 1970s - some did well, some did not. The put down was, “The iris is a curtain, not a curtain rod.” What goes around, comes around.

You Shouldn’t Rob Peter To Pay Pauline.
Politicians are so creative about taxes. In New Jersey, the legislature has imposed a 3.5% tax on ambulatory surgery centers, and 6% tax on cosmetic surgical procedures. The income generated from the added tax is to be directed to hospitals to help them meet expenses generated by unfunded care. (No mention is made of the physician who supplies the care. Only the hospital gets rewarded.) The idea of taxing medical care is not new, of course, since Hawaii’s physicians and medical facilities have been paying 4.17% since mammals crawled out of primordial ooze. And in Hawaii, the added tax does not go to subsidize any medical care, but goes into the “general fund” for our Democratic legislature to play with. Still, the New Jersey action is alarming because other states are certain to look at their plan and consider how it might be applied to help with their medical expenditures.

You Rarely See A Shot Glass Filled With Coffee.
For a really, really expensive cup of coffee, order a Kopi Luwak. The beans go for $1,000 a pound and are only grown in Indonesia. But wait, don’t grind them right away; first, they must be fed to a civet cat. After the beans have passed, so to speak, they are harvested from the civet drop-ings and then roasted. The partial digestion by the cat serves to break down and remove bitter proteins leaving a flavor described as “earthy, with chocolate undertones.” Right! As might be expected, production is limited to a few hundred pounds a year. Apparently, the line to apply for work as a cat-poop-picker is limited.

Tomorrow We Have To Get Busy On This Problem.
Britain’s Environment Agency is concerned regarding the use of the popular anti-depression drug Prozac. The medication is being used in such large quantities that traces are found not just in wastewater, but even in rivers and wells being used for drinking water. Dr. Andy Croxford, spokesman for the agency, stated, “We need to determine the effects of the low-level, almost continuous discharge.” Not surprisingly, when informed of the contamination, affected residents didn’t seem to care very much.

Wealthy People Ride To The Hounds. Poor People Go To The Dogs.
In Pensacola, Florida, Jerry Bradford, age 37, had seven mixed breed shepherd puppies he couldn’t get rid of. He decided to shoot them in the head (at the Humane Society they say “euthanize” which has a nicer ring to it). After doing in three of the pups, Bradford was holding one in his hand and one in his arms. The puppy in his hand placed a paw on the trigger of the 38 caliber revolver, and shot Bradford in the wrist, which curtailed the slaughter for the day. Bradford went to the hospital and was subsequently charged with felony animal cruelty. The surviving four puppies were in good health, and placed at the animal shelter for adoption. The Florida NRA chapter is considering running the pup for lieutenant governor.

The Higher A Man Feels In The Evening, The Lower He Is In The Morning.
Three products are on the market for that chronic illness, the hangover. Those difficulties with loss of appetite, headache, nausea, fatigue, shakiness, and sometimes diarrhea and vomiting, claim to be alleviated by Chaser, or Hangover Magic, or Rebound. They purport to act on the metabolism of alcohol and prevent the toxic components from building up in the body. But, do they really work? Researchers in alcohol use don’t really know what causes hangover, and many believe that it is the result of the brain reacting to the withdrawal of alcohol. The real way to deal with hangovers is to drink coffee instead of booze the night before.

Dad’s Really Gonna Hit The Roof Over This!
A family in southwest Washington state wanted to scatter the remains of their patriarch over the countryside. Only problem was that when the urn was held out the aircraft window, the holder lost the grip and it crashed through the roof of a home in Forest Grove, Oregon. The occupants were shocked at the thunder on their roof, but no one was injured. The lady of the house said that some of old dad would probably remain in the attic. Of course, as is well known, scattering ashes from an aircraft should not be done by holding an urn in the slipstream.

ADDENDA
- A 22year old woman developed a brain abscess (strept viridans) four weeks after a tongue piercing which caused oral infection.
- The Canadian Embassy in Mexico said that women planning to enter Canada as strippers must provide naked pictures of themselves in order to qualify for a visa.
- In Enid, Oklahoma, a 27 year old man was arrested after he tried to rob a bank. He claimed that he was going to use the money to help pay the national debt.
- According to the Associated Press, a construction worker in Turkey poured milk into his hand, snorted it up his nose, and blew it 9,223 feet out his left naso- lacrimal duct. He was hoping to establish a world’s record.
- A line of people waiting to buy raw fish is called a sushi queue.

Aloha and keep the faith — RTs

Contents of this column do not necessarily reflect the opinion or position of the Hawaii Ophthalmological Society and the Hawaii Medical Association. Editorial comment is strictly that of the writer.