



Hearing Loss Association of America Central Pennsylvania Chapter

Hearing Central

Volume 1, Number 2

State College, PA

June 2008

WE ARE!! . . . HLA-CENTRAL PA!!

How to Reach Us

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US Mail - 1546 Kennelworth Court, State College PA 16801

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President - Nancy Stanley Maso

Vice President – Ann Sidone

Secretary – Cheri Banks

Treasurer – Jeanie Ghaner

Board Members

Judith Albright, Jennifer Kane, Lucille Magnusson

With Appreciation To

Seth Forman/Sharon Rolley (ed.), Newsletter; Beth Krupa, CART; Larry Maso, Technical Support; Mary Thom, Refreshments; Janet Van Gilder, Legislative

Meetings

Unless otherwise noted, monthly chapter meetings are held September through June in the auditorium at Foxdale Village, 500 E. Marylyn Avenue, State College. See website for driving directions. The auditorium is equipped with an inductive loop system, and CART is provided.

ON THE LOCAL FRONT

In reviewing our chapter's successes, we have observed considerable changes among regular attendees of our meetings. Because of our programs, we think attendees have a better understanding of their hearing aids, have moved or are moving toward cochlear implants, and use the phone and other devices more successfully. We now have 160 contacts on our list, including professionals. We have a formalized board. The chapter is building community awareness of our access needs to public places and services. Thanks to grants from Centre County Community Foundation and Delta Zeta Sorority, we caption our meetings and soon hope to provide interpreting. This newsletter is our best new initiative. We offer our heartfelt thanks to all who have contributed their efforts and resources to our chapter this year. –Nancy Stanley Maso, president, HLA-Central PA

EDUCATING OURSELVES

Attendees at any one of HLAA-Central's February through May meetings left Foxdale Village auditorium that evening with a wealth of knowledge about how to manage hearing loss.

The February meeting, "Ask the Audiologists," featured local professionals Judy Albrecht, Janyce Mose, Susan Parr, Bill Turley, and Elise Uhring. The panel answered questions covering a wide range of subjects, from how to recycle your old batteries and hearing aids to an overview of the newest hearing aid technology--Epoq brand digitals that actually "talk" to each other bilaterally!

In March, Dr. Kim Mathos, a practicing psychiatrist from Pittsburgh and only one of a handful of medical doctors in the state who specialize in the emotional effects of hearing loss, was our guest speaker. Dr. Mathos emphasized that in coping with hearing loss, one should first realize that the process is painful and perhaps depression- and anxiety-ridden, and then gain as much support as possible. "If you are born hearing and then you lose your hearing," Dr. Mathos said, "it's a huge loss . . . you have to go through a grieving process almost . . . you have to stop and think about what's different in your life now or what situations you can't do anymore. How do you replace them with things that you could be more successful doing? Who is in your corner, who will support you, where can you turn, what supports can you use?" Dr. Mathos helped us realize that seeking out decent people who understand hearing loss is crucial to the adjustment process--and beyond.

April's meeting on emergency preparedness featured a panel consisting of Steve Abrams, Centre Region emergency planning coordinator; Jim Kerr, training center assistant, Centre LifeLink EMS; and Officer Greg Koehle of the State College Police Department. These gentlemen alerted us to Code Red emergency notification and gave common-sense advice on what to do in a medical emergency or when stopped by the police. One important aspect of the meeting was the exchange of information between the normal-hearing panel and the hearing-loss

audience, where (hopefully) we both benefited from the other's knowledge and experience.

May's meeting showcased Karen Swimley from Williamsport, assistive technology coordinator for the Pennsylvania Initiative on Assistive Technology (PIAT), who presented an overview of the assistive devices loan program. This program enables Pennsylvania residents to borrow and try out various personal listening systems, household/safety systems, and telecommunications devices before making a decision about purchase. The loan service is FREE to Pennsylvania residents, and there is no charge for delivery. If you are in the market for any assistive device, check out this program first and save yourself the grief of buying a device that does not fit your needs. Contact Karen at kswimley@cilncp.org; 570-327-9070//800-984-7492 (Voice), 570-327-5254//866-842-5426 (TTY); 210 Market Street, Suite A, Williamsport PA 17701; <http://www.cilncp.org>.

FUTURE MEETINGS

We welcome you, your family, and friends to our monthly meetings and other hearing loss-related events. *YOU DO NOT HAVE TO FACE HEARING LOSS ALONE.* There are many people and resources available to help you. Our chapter is one point of contact as you confront the physical, mental, technological, and social challenges of hearing loss.

Meeting topics under consideration include analog-to-digital TV conversion, cochlear implants, and workplace issues. Although there is no formal meeting in July or August, a social night out at the Boal Barn Playhouse is being planned. Watch your inbox for these announcements.

HLAA-CENTRAL IN THE COMMUNITY

Several local chapter members attended the PA Office for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing (ODHH) community forum at the Ramada Inn in State College on March 17. The forum, with Kenneth Puckett, regional representative, as moderator, was one of several information-

gathering sessions conducted throughout the state to help ascertain whether ODHH is meeting the needs of persons who are hard of hearing. If you missed the forum and would like to contribute, email ra-li-ovr-odhh@state.pa.us.

HLAA-Central's busy vice president, Ann Sidone, presented a workshop on workplace accommodation for employees who are deaf and hard of hearing at the Centre County Cooperative Extension Service in Bellefonte on April 7, an OLLI class on communicating with persons who are hard of hearing on April 14, and a program about hearing loss and HLAA to the Sunrise Rotary Club of State College on May 5.

Jeanie Ghaner, Jennifer Kane, Nancy Stanley Maso, and Sharon Rolley, with outside support from Albrecht Audiology, Officer Greg Koehle, Ann Sidone, State College Community Theatre, and UEC Theatres, worked the HLAA-Central PA booth at the Adult Lifestyle and Health Expo, held at the Nittany Mall on Thursday, May 15. The expo is a wonderful opportunity to spread the word about our chapter's presence in the community, offer one-on-one support and information to (mostly) older adults who stop by the booth, and interact with other service providers in attendance.

A new chapter brochure, created by Ann Sidone, is available for distribution. Beginning with the phrase, "Your decision to do something about your hearing loss begins here," the brochure outlines the chapter's activities and mission, gives membership information, and offers tips to make communication with hearing loss a little easier. Copies are available upon request from hlaa-centralpa@hotmail.com.

SHINING STAR

One of our own, Sue Kellerman, is among three local women featured in a March 2008 *Town&Gown* magazine article entitled "Successful (& Single)." Sue, who laughingly remarked, "Now everyone knows my age!" (she's 50), is Judith O. Sieg Chair for Preservation and head of the digitization and

preservation department of the University Libraries at Penn State. The article highlights Sue's stellar professional accomplishments; however, we would like to also acknowledge her role as Chapter Secretary Cheri Bank's supervisor and a person who consistently goes out of her way to accommodate employees in her department who are hard of hearing. Although not hard of hearing herself, Sue attends HLAA chapter meetings and conventions to keep informed of what is happening in the field and is always earnestly engaged in conversation about hearing loss with one of our members. Shine on, Sue.

KEEP ON KEEPING ON

Movie theater advocacy remains a top priority at both the local and state levels. Please email us at hlaa-centralpa@hotmail.com if you wish to help. There is also access news from the State College Area High School Thespians, Boal Barn Playhouse, and--along with a special offer--Penn State's Center for the Performing Arts.

Movie Theater Advocacy In response to an inquiry from our chapter about access, Mr. Van Troutman, executive vice president of Cinema Centers, which has a multiplex in development at the Fraser Street Complex in downtown State College, explained that, as in all of their theatres, the new facility in State College will be equipped with assistive listening devices which consist of wireless headphones that receive an infrared signal from the top of the screen. He added that at present there is no accommodation at Cinema Centers for a person who is totally deaf. Nancy Stanley Maso has asked Judy Albrecht to respond to Mr. Troutman on behalf of our chapter and advocate for inclusion of rear-window and/or open-captioning technology at the State College location.

On the state level, HLA-PA representatives recently met with Stephen Glassman of the Pennsylvania Human Relations Committee to discuss the initiatives underway to increase the amount of movie captioning in Pennsylvania, as well as how to

increase the availability of CART (real-time captioning) at public events.

State College Area High School

Thespians sponsored and, more importantly, publicly advertised an interpreted performance of "The Miracle Worker" at the SCAHS North Building auditorium on Thursday, April 3. Take a bow, Thespians!

Boal Barn Playhouse This summer-season playhouse, located in a converted barn on the grounds of the Boal Mansion, is equipped with an inductive loop system so those of us who are hard of hearing won't miss a word or musical note. Five shows are on tap, including "Bell, Book, & Candle," "West Side Story," and "The Full Monty." Summer box office hours/phone at the Barn are Mon-Sat 2-8pm/466-7141.

Center For the Performing Arts A new induction loop system will be in place soon at Schwab Auditorium on the Penn State University Park campus, as recently announced by Lisa Faust, CFPA audience services manager. The loop should be ready for a "test run" by chapter volunteers later this summer. If you wish to be among the first to use the new system at a performance, Lisa is graciously offering our members a limited number of complimentary tickets to the Orion String Quartet, to be held in Schwab on September 23 at 7:30 PM. Email lisaf@psu.edu or phone 865-4727 for details.

AROUND THE STATE

Couldn't make it to the June HLAA Reno convention because of high airfare/gas costs? Don't fret. You have another, less expensive opportunity for a similar experience right here in Pennsylvania at the 10th Annual Convention of the Say What Club, to be held at the Holiday Inn Historic District on July 9-12 in center city Philadelphia. All workshops, the banquet, and town meeting will have a loop system and CART, with sign language interpreters available if requested by June 8. For registration information, go to <http://www.saywhatclub.com/events/pacon> or email pacon@saywhatclub.com.

Nancy Kingsley, advocacy chair of HLA-PA, took the lead in preparing a document for hospital personnel explaining how to best communicate with people who have a hearing loss and communicate verbally. This document is intended to supplement the original information provided by the Department of Justice (see <http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/hospcombr.htm>), which focuses primarily on people who are deaf and communicate using ASL. The document is being reviewed by the Department of Health and will be sent to hospitals throughout the state.

The annual HLA-PA banquet, with Brenda Battat (see below) as speaker, will be held on November 2 at the Conshohocken Marriott just outside of Philadelphia. The winner of the Marcia Finisdore Award for Advocacy will be recognized at this event. Mark your calendar--more details forthcoming.

CHANGE IN LEADERSHIP

Brenda Battat, M.A., is now the new executive director of HLAA, taking over her duties at the national office in Bethesda, MD, on March 3 after having been unanimously chosen for the position by the Board of Trustees at their February 29-March 2 meeting. Brenda is not new to HLAA, having worked in the national office for 20 years in a variety of roles, including acting executive director three times and advocacy director.

Brenda, who is herself a user of a cochlear implant and hearing aid, said in a recent email to HLAA chapters that "this organization has never before been so needed. The number of people with hearing loss in this country is 31 million and now we are told there are 58,000 returning troops from Iraq and Afghanistan with hearing loss. But because there is still a stigma associated with hearing loss, only a small percentage of them are going to seek help. HLAA is committed to eradicating the stigma and changing perceptions about using hearing aids and other devices. But we cannot do it alone--the HLAA national office, chapters, and state organizations have to collaborate with our

fellow consumer groups, hearing health professionals, industry, and government like never before to bring the benefits of hearing technology to all those who need it.” HLAA-Central PA extends its support and very best wishes to Brenda as she steps into her new role.

News Flash! HLAA-Central’s new officers, elected at the June meeting, are: Ann Sidone, vice president (term expires ‘09); Dulci Hollabaugh, secretary (‘09); and Barbara Hudson, treasurer (‘10). They will assume their duties on July 1. Nancy Stanley Maso continues as president (‘09).

WEB CAP TEL® INAUGURATED

Both Sprint and Hamilton Relay recently announced the availability of a free web-based service for CapTel users. Previously available only through state relay programs and with a specialized CapTel phone, individuals nationwide now can make CapTel calls via the internet. This service works with any type of telephone and any type of internet access device. It requires no special equipment or special software. Along with a standard telephone or mobile phone, individuals can listen to the caller and read the written captions of everything the caller says on a computer screen. All that is required is an internet connection and a computer or laptop with a standard web browser. This free service is available at either www.sprintcaptel.com or www.hamiltoncaptel.com. ® CapTel and WebCapTel are registered trademarks of Ultratec, Inc. (press releases, Sprint 3/5/08 & Hamilton Relay via HLAA Enews 3/10/08)

FEEDBACK ON CC

As part of their CaptionsON campaign, VITAC Corporation, a provider of closed captioning and other accessible media services, recently began a precedent-setting initiative, the Viewer Relations Bureau. Housed in the CaptionsON website (<http://www.captionsON.com>), this feature enables viewers to submit feedback

regarding captioning directly to the appropriate network, local station/ affiliate, and cable or satellite provider. This initiative pioneers a simple and convenient way for closed captioning users to make their views known. (press release, VITAC 5/8/08)

BECOME A MEMBER

HLAA-Central PA July 1, 2008-June 30, 2009 dues (includes subscription to *Hearing Central Newsletter*)

___ \$6/year - Individual

___ \$10/year - Family

Tax-deductible contribution

___ \$10 ___ \$25 ___ \$50 ___ other

HLAA-Central PA is a 501(c)3 organization

Make checks payable to HLAA-Central PA and mail with this form to:

Nancy Stanley Maso
HLAA-Central PA Membership
1546 Kennelworth Court
State College PA 16801

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Please note that while membership in the national Hearing Loss Association of America organization is not required, we recommend that all who are able become members at the national level. Benefits include a subscription to *Hearing Loss Magazine* and discounts on merchandise from some vendors providing assistive technology. National membership dues support advocacy at the national, state, and local levels. To join HLAA at the national level, go to www.hearingloss.org.

Thank you for helping us, help you.

SUPPORT HAATC ACT

Make your voice heard! Write your legislator supporting the Hearing Aid Assistance Tax Credit Act, S.1410/H.R.2329

People who wear hearing aids know their value. What price can you put on the ability to hear a child's laughter--or your husband's bad joke? But there is a price. Purchasing a set of hearing aids is no small matter for most people who need those hearing aids. Find out more about what you can do.

Hearing Loss Association of America supports legislation that would provide some relief to people who purchase hearing aids for themselves and/or their family members. S.1410/H.R.2329 provides a tax credit of up to \$500 per hearing aid, available once every 5 years towards the purchase of such hearing aid, to 1) individuals age 55 and over, or 2) those purchasing a hearing aid for a dependent.

If you haven't already written to your legislator in support of this legislation, there's no better time than the present. The Better

Hearing Institute (BHI) and the Hearing Industries Association (HIA) has created a website to make it easy to write legislators. You simply enter your name and contact information, add your personal story to the sample letter, click to edit it, and up pops three letters automatically addressed to your representatives in Congress.

Visit the website www.hearingaidtaxcredit.org and send your letter in support of S.1410/H.R.2329 today. For more information about the Hearing Aid Assistance Tax Credit Act, go to <http://www.hearingloss.org/advocacy/indix.asp#contact>. (HLAA Enews 5/19/08)

NEXT ISSUE

The next issue of *Hearing Central* will be published in October. Please submit comments or items of interest by September 15 to Sharon Rolley, editor, at sar1@psu.edu or write to HLAA-Central PA Newsletter, 1546 Kennelworth Court, State College PA 16801.

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