



Hearing Loss Association of America–New York State is an educational and advocacy organization of people working together across the State to promote issues of importance to New Yorkers who have a hearing loss.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It has been said by some that time passes swiftly when one is kept busy, and the past year flew by very quickly. It was a specially busy year for a few dedicated, hard working members of the HLAA–NYS Board. They put their hearts and souls into planning the All 4 To Hear Regional Conference which was held last October, at the Hilton Harrisburg Hotel in Pennsylvania. It was the first time that representatives from four neighboring states of New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware joined together to initiate and plan such a venture. The conference co-chairs were Ed McGibbon, New York; Bill Pfeifer, Pennsylvania; Judy Ginsberg, New Jersey; and Linda Heller, Delaware. Diana Bender, Director of HLA-PA State Office was the conference coordinator.

I thank the New York State members who came to the conference for their support. Several others also volunteered and helped to make things run smoothly. A special "Thank You" to Ed McGibbon for his tireless dedication, drive and perseverance in making this regional conference a super success!

Would you believe, in a few more months both the Westchester/Mid-Hudson and Upstate areas will be participating in the annual Walk4Hearing? The 2007 Walks were successful and half of all the monies raised in New York State went to Hearing Loss Association of America; proceeds after expenses were distributed to the participating chapters with five percent going to HLAA-NYS. Please help support your area Walk4Hearing by talking to everyone about this event and raising awareness about hearing loss and walking side-by-side with your family, friends and supporters.

The annual HLAA Convention will be held June 12-15, in Reno, Nevada, at the Grand Sierra Resort and Casino. You can obtain more information and register for the convention online at www.hearingloss.org. To make your hotel reservation, you can do so online at: www.hearingloss.org/convention/2008hotel.asp or call the hotel at: 800.501.2651.

On December 31, 2007, Marcia Dugan and David Branfield's terms expired as members of the HLAA-NYS Board of Directors. They took their responsibilities and duties seriously and served the hearing loss community wholeheartedly and with much persistence. Ed McGibbon

resigned as a board member to move on to other areas of hearing loss disabilities. I remember attending my first HLAA-NYS board meeting when Ed was president. His sense of humor and fairness impressed me. I consider Ed my mentor and a good friend. Marcia, David and Ed are dedicated advocates and will continue to work in other areas to promote the ongoing needs of all those with hearing loss. I thank each one and wish them well, and much success in the future.

The HLAA Board of Trustees has voted to increase its annual membership dues to \$35.00 as of March 1, 2008 to help defray operating costs. I urge everyone to continue to pay their dues and help to keep Hearing Loss Association of America alive to keep working for all of us.

A Healthy, Happy New Year to one and all.

Karen Ratner

* * *

ALL 4 TO HEAR CONFERENCE REPORT

After two years of many meetings in New Brunswick, New Jersey with state co-chairs and volunteers from Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey and Delaware and bringing many ideas to plan this great weekend event, it was gratifying to see a large turnout of 220 attendees. The kickoff was a boat ride on the Susquehanna River; many registrants arrived early just to make this offsite trip and take the opportunity to meet old, and make new, friends from around the four regional states.

The Harrisburg Hilton Hotel was splendid. The Friday night opening session began with Donna Sorkin sharing her experience with hearing loss. The Mayor of Harrisburg, Stephen Reed, welcomed All 4 to Hear participants and wished us all a good time. Harrisburg is the capital of Pennsylvania with many historical sites; some people did stay on an extra day for off-site tours. Mayor Reed praised our hard work in spreading an awareness of hearing loss. Then the welcoming buffet was open for us to socialize. On Saturday, Anne Pope, President of the HLAA Board of Trustees, shared information about the national office and its future planning activities. The first all-morning workshop was a presentation by Lise Hamlin on emergency preparedness. The afternoon workshops offered choices of a hearing aid panel, cochlear implant panel, Dr. David M. Goldberg's *Coping with Hearing Loss*, Kristin Law talking about assistance dogs, Dr. Joe Montano's talk on the *World Health Organization's International Classification of*

... continued on page 2

ALL 4 TO HEAR ... continued from page 1

Function and Hearing Loss, and finally, Bonnie Berk's *Yoga: Core Conditioning*. The day ended with a wonderful banquet which included award presentations, announcement of raffle winners, and musical entertainment. Sunday morning began with speaker Dr. Anil Lalwani, Chairman of the Dept. of Otolaryngology from New York University School of Medicine. His topic was research on hair cell regeneration, and left many of us with hope that new research will find techniques to help this and the next generation with hearing loss. It was good to see a number of deaf individuals at this conference, who asked Dr. Lalwani questions. It certainly was very educational to learn their concerns about hair cell regeneration.

Finally, many thanks to Andrew Finlayson, Melanie Brand and Karen Ratner, who produced, organized and edited the conference journal and other conference materials.

Ed McGibbon
NYS Co-Chair, Regional Conference

* * *

HLAA-NYS ELECTION RESULTS

At the October 2007 board meeting, members of the board elected the following officers:

President	Karen Ratner
Vice-President	Pam Foody
Secretary	Mary Chizuk
Treasurer	Sue Miller

At the annual meeting of HLAA-NYS, those present elected the following directors:

Class of 2010

Melanie Brand, New Rochelle; Pam Foody, Circleville; Sue Miller, Victor; Pat Mirza, Niskayuna.

Directors with *unexpired terms* are:

Class of 2008

Florence Butler, Gardiner; Andrew Finlayson, Tuxedo; Mary Fredericks, New York City; Suzanne Jeffery, Corning; Barb Law, Fairport.

Class of 2009

Mary Chizuk, Ontario; Pete Fackler, Rochester; Dan Farfaglia, Albany; Jeannette Kanter, Canandaigua; Bob McPartland, Buffalo; Karen Ratner, Staten Island.

Additionally, Pat Mirza was appointed by the president to serve as corresponding secretary.

* * *

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Best Wishes to the Hearing Loss Association of America—New York State for continued success in 2008

NEW ROLES

Pam Foody, an HLAA member since 1991, is the newly-elected vice president of the HLAA-NYS Board of Directors. A resident of Orange County, NY, Pam has been a member of the board since 2005, and served as secretary in 2006 and 2007. For the last 10 years, she has been treasurer of the Mid-Hudson Chapter. She is currently co-chair of the Westchester/Mid-Hudson 2008 Walk4Hearing.

Pam has not allowed her hearing loss, caused by mumps at age 4, to impede her education or career, although it has increased from mild to profound. After working for 31 years as a Registered Nurse, she completed her BSN Degree with the help of an FM system. Pam received a cochlear implant in 1994 and credits HLAA with supplying her with essential information about the assistive technology that got her through college; the ADA to defend her against workplace discrimination; and the cochlear implant which has restored her independence. HLAA has given Pam so much support that she wants to work with the organization to help others to accept and surmount their hearing loss.

Mary C. Chizuk, recording secretary, is a Registered Nurse, with a Master's Degree in Community Health Education, and employed as a school nurse. Mary is an active volunteer on behalf of deaf and hard of hearing people at national, state and local levels. She serves on committees at the National Center for Deaf Health Research (NCDHR), a CDC funded Research Prevention Center at the University of Rochester Medical School. Mary is a past president, and is currently chairperson of the Board of Directors of the HLAA Rochester Chapter, where she is a member of the Steering Committee, and the Strategic Planning Committee, as well as serving on the Walk4Hearing Committee since 2006. Mary is also an applicant for the Interagency Council Panel.

Pat Mirza hails from the Capital District of NYS and is a new HLAA-NYS board member. She is corresponding secretary and on the nominating committee. She has had a severe to profound hearing loss her entire life and now uses both a hearing aid and a cochlear implant.

Pat has a Bachelor's Degree in English from SUNY at Albany and is employed by the Federal Government at the Department of the Treasury. She volunteers at HLAA-Albany Chapter, her church's Mexican Sister Parish committee, and with Robin's Nest Rescued Cats, which rehabilitates strays and feral kittens and finds them real homes. Pat is grateful to all her friends and co-members at HLAA Albany Chapter for all their support and advice.

* * *

HLAA-NYS MEMBERS RECEIVE AWARDS

JOSEPH GORDON

At the Regional Conference in October 2007, Joseph Gordon received the NYS award. The presentation made by Marcia Dugan follows:

“New York State is proud to present its State award to Joseph Gordon.

“Joe’s involvement with Hearing Loss Association of America–New York State can be described with three Cs: Chapters, Captioning, and Caring ... however, each of those Cs deserves an A ... actually an A plus.

“Joe has been a member of Hearing Loss Association of America–New York State since its inception and serves on the New York State Board as Chapter Coordinator. He has done a yeoman job of keeping the chapters in New York State focused on and involved in the work of the national and state associations.

“An inveterate advocate, he served on the FCC’s 1995 Hearing Aid Compatibility committee whose work resulted in the fact that all coin phones in the United States are currently amplified and hearing aid compatible.

“He was instrumental in implementing an agreement among the New York State Attorney General’s Office and eight National Movie Chains to expand movie screenings in New York State for people with hearing loss.

“His key role as a member of the Disability Access Committee at Staten Island University Hospital resulted in the hospital providing accessibility for patients with hearing loss.

“A former member of the FCC Consumer Advisory Committee, he currently serves on the NYS Relay Advisory Board, the AOL Accessibility Advisory Committee, the Manhattan Borough President’s Disability Task Force, and chairs the Telecommunications Committee for the League for the Hard of Hearing’s Advocates for Better Communication.

“As I stated before, Joe deserves an A plus as an Advocate, Advisor, and All-Around excellent Hearing Loss Association member.

“Joe... New York is proud to present you with this award.”



Joe Gordon and Marcia Dugan.

JOE DAMICO

Joe Damico was presented with the Service to New York State Award at the September 11 HLAA–Rochester Chapter meeting.



The award recognized Damico’s dedicated service to HLAA-NYS as chair of the Legislative Committee and his leadership efforts for legislation of benefit to people with hearing loss.

Damico has chaired the Rochester Legislative Committee and the New York State Legislative Committee since their inception. In that role, he has provided guidance in contacting, communicating, educating and influencing the members of the New York State Legislature.

He has fought tirelessly for several pieces of legislation that would benefit people with hearing loss.

His latest effort was the Interagency Bill that established a council to provide services to persons who are deaf, hard of hearing or deaf-blind. The bill was signed into law by Governor Spitzer in July.

Senator Joseph Robach and Assemblyman Joseph Morelle, sponsors of the bill, were also honored and thanked at the meeting at which they discussed pending legislation of interest to people with hearing loss.



Marcia Dugan presenting award to Joe Damico.



L-R: Senator Joseph Robach and Assemblyman Joseph Morelle.

* * *

MARCIA DUGAN

Marcia Dugan was recognized at the All 4 To Hear Regional Conference for her many years of exemplary service to HLAA-NYS. She was presented with a special award by Karen Ratner on behalf of the board.

She will remain in contact as a Professional Advisor to the state board for 2008-2009.



Karen Ratner and Marcia Dugan.

* * *

WALK4HEARING IN NEW YORK STATE



It's once again Walk4Hearing time! Get your walking shoes on and join us!

The Westchester/Mid-Hudson teams (as well as members from the Albany area) will be participating in this year's walk on May 3, 2008, at FDR Park in Yorktown Heights, NY.

This event will mark the third year of the walk at this beautiful park. It is a perfect site, especially since they allow animals, so hearing dogs are welcome without any hassles. Bring your family, friends, and pets too.

For further information, or to find out how to participate as a sponsor, team captain or walker, send email to Roberta Seidner at: robertaseidner@aol.com or to Pam Foody at: pjfoody@yahoo.com.

Roberta Seidner and Pam Foody, Co-chairs

...

The Rochester Chapter 5K Walk4Hearing event will take place on Sunday, May 4, at 9:00 a.m. For the third year, walkers will travel the scenic path along the historic Erie Canal, surrounded by "blue skies and sunshine!"

Our goal this year is to include other area chapters so that Upstate New York is well represented. Two other goals are to have 300 people present and to raise \$40,000 ... very ambitious, but chapter members are enthusiastic about achieving all these goals! Please email Sue Miller at: SusanLeeMiller39@cs.com if you would like to participate in this exciting event.

Sue Miller, Chair

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NEW EDITOR FOR REPORTER

Vivien Maisey is an Englishwoman who emigrated to the USA in 1979. She has now spent half her life in America! Her hearing loss was first detected at age 22, when she was teaching French, German and English in a London high school. Since then it has run the course from mild to profound, and she wears two hearing aids. Her constant companion is Duncan, her service dog.

Vivien has a Bachelor's degree in Modern Languages, a Master's in Education and a Master's in Library Science. She works fulltime as a librarian in a large public library in Rockland County. Her previous volunteer work includes the church and PTA.

She is a member of the Westchester Chapter where she serves as assistant editor of its monthly chapter newsletter, will be on the nominating committee for next year's officers, is chair of the ByLaws committee, and is on this year's Westchester/Mid-Hudson Walk4Hearing committee. She attended the NYS Conference in White Plains, NY in 2004, the HLAA conventions in Cherry Hill, NJ in 2001, Washington, DC in 2005 and Orlando, FL in 2006, and most recently, the All 4 To Hear regional conference in Harrisburg, PA. HLAA has been an invaluable source of support, information and good fellowship; Vivien looks forward to becoming more active in the organization, and to sharing ideas and ways of becoming a more effective ambassador for all of us with hearing loss.

THEATRES WITH CAPTIONED FILMS

For a listing of movie theatres showing captioned films in your area, visit: www.fomdi.com then enter your zip code.

SCIENTISTS DEVELOP NEW METHOD FOR HEARING LOSS TEST

A Purdue University researcher is working on a new technique to diagnose hearing loss in a way that more accurately reflects real-world situations.

“The traditional way to assess speech understanding in people with hearing loss is to put them in a quiet room and ask them to repeat words produced by one person they can’t see,” said Karen Iler Kirk, a professor of speech, language and hearing sciences.

“The goal of our research is to develop new tests that reflect more natural listening situations with visual cues, different background noises, voice quality, dialects and speaking rates. This is a more accurate way to predict how people perceive speech in the real world and, therefore, can help us determine appropriate therapy and interventions, such as cochlear implants,” Kirk explains.

“The better the diagnostic tool we have to make such decisions, the better we can serve our patients.”

Kirk received a \$2.8 million grant from the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders for the five-year project to develop two new audiovisual and multi-talker sentence tests that expand upon the traditional spoken word recognition format that has been used since the 1950’s. One test is for adults and the other for children. More than 1,000 people ages 4-65 will participate in the study.

“The traditional spoken word recognition format has been used to determine the need for some sensory aids, such as hearing aids, which are used to amplify sound,” Kirk said. “However, it is not the best method for assessing the benefits of other sensory aids, such as the more expensive cochlear implants.”

“A cochlear implant is an electronic device that can provide a sense of sound to someone who is deaf or severely hard of hearing. The device, which is surgically implanted, picks up and processes sound that is converted into electric impulses that are sent to the auditory nerve. More than 100,000 people worldwide have received cochlear implants, and more health insurance companies are paying for the surgery and therapy,” Kirk said.

This project also is expanding word lists from the traditional monosyllabic words to a greater range of words based on how often they are used and lexical density - the number of words phonetically similar to the target. For example, the word “cat” has a number of lexical neighbors such as “bat,” “cap,” “cut” and “scat.” A word like “banana” may be used frequently but has few words that sound similar.

The 10 diverse speakers, who are recording more than 6,000 sentences combined, will not be producing perfectly articulated speech.

“It’s important to use sentence materials that are produced by different speakers because in the real world, we do not listen to just one person,” Kirk said.

In addition to the auditory component, the materials

will be presented in a visual format so listeners can see and hear the phrase.

“This is really important because hearing-impaired people often have great difficulty understanding speech if they are just listening. Seeing the face and following lip reading cues can help someone understand the intended message,” she said.

Participants will be tested in auditory-only, visual-only or auditory plus visual modalities. At the end of the project, DVDs containing the test, as well as instruction booklets, data-gathering forms and a manual for data interpretation, will be available to professionals.

Another benefit from this study will be the raw data generated.

“Just collecting information from 1,000 individuals and measuring how well they perform on these tests gives us tremendous information that is not available elsewhere,” Kirk said.

Source: Purdue University

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We take this opportunity to recognize donations we received since the Fall 2007 issue of *Reporter* and thank the following donors for their support:

Rachel Esserman | Mary Mazeau | Adrienne Mennis

Donations are instrumental in allowing HLAA-NYS to further its programs in providing education, support and advocacy to people with hearing loss in and around New York State. *Your dollars are at work for all who cannot hear well.*

See page 7 for more information... Thank you!

* * *

... continued next column

LEGISLATIVE ISSUES - UPDATE

Below are the bills we are concerned with at this time. The bill numbers are last year's numbers and are subject to change.

- Hearing Aid Insurance for all New Yorkers: (A04731 / Assembly, Morelle; S00171 / Senate, Alesi.)

These bills will require insurance companies to pay \$1,000 for up to two hearing aids every three years. There is a feeling of optimism regarding the insurance bills this year in the Assembly. Assemblyman Joe Morelle, who is the original sponsor of the bill, is now chairman of the Insurance Committee.

I've been told that the way to get the hearing aid bills going is to write to the chairmen of the Insurance Committees. That is where the bills are stuck.

So, I am asking everyone to write to the following legislators to push these bills along.

Assembly/Bill A04731: Assemblyman Joseph Morelle, Room 716, LOB, Albany, NY, 12248

Senate/Bill S00171: Senator James L. Seward Room 307, LOB, Albany, NY, 12247

A sample letter can be found on the Rochester website: www.HLAA-rochester-ny.org.

- Telecommunication Access for all New Yorkers: (A07102 / Assembly, Titus.) Directs establishment and administration of a state wide program for telephone access for all New Yorkers, including the hearing and visually impaired. Includes TTYs and assistive listening devices. This bill passed in the assembly in 2007, but needs to be voted on again this year.

Senator Joe Robach is sponsoring this bill (S02164) in the Senate. The funds for this bill will come from a surcharge to all telephone users.

- Hearing Aid Tax Credit: (HR2329 / Federal) sponsored by Congressman McCarthy. This allows \$500 per hearing aid every five years. This bill has a possibility of passing because the insurance companies are not involved; therefore no lobbying. S1410 Senator Coleman. Senator Clinton is a co-sponsor but Senator Schumer is not. Please write to Senator Schumer urging him to co-sponsor this bill.

Joe Damico
Chair, Legislative Committee

* * *

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REAR WINDOW CAPTIONING

I recently experienced an alternative method of viewing movies on the big screen called "rear window captioning" at an AMC Loews Theater in the Schenectady/Rotterdam area. As far as I know this is the only theater offering films in this format in the Capital Region.

When I purchased my ticket, I said that I was attending the closed captioned feature and needed a transparent acrylic panel. It didn't fit properly into the cup holder, so I asked for another one, hoping it would fit better, but unfortunately that wasn't the case. I was able to adjust it enough to see the captions, by rearranging the way I was sitting (which was uncomfortable).

The captions are displayed backwards on the back wall under the projection window, so that the deaf/hard-of-hearing person can view them the regular way on the plexiglass panel which is in front of them. The problem that I had was that the panel was below the screen, and my head got tired of going up and down to see the film and read the subtitles. There was also a 2-3 second delay between what was being said in the movie and the captions being displayed.

When the showing was over, I asked to talk to a manager about some possible improvements, but was told to go to the national company website for feedback. I did just that and couldn't find any links for public comment from a movie customer. So that's how that ended.

I frequently attend the open captioned showings at Crossgates Mall in Albany, where it is much easier because you don't need any objects to view the subtitles. The captions are already part of the picture, and there is no delay. That is a much more enjoyable movie-going experience for someone with a hearing loss.

I encourage everyone to check this out for themselves because you may have a different experience than I did.

For theater locations in New York State which offer rear window captioning services, go to:
<http://ncam.wgbh.org/mopix/locations.html#ny>.

For theaters that offer Open Captioned films, go to:
www.insightcinema.org/films_statesN-R.html.

Dan Faraglia
HLAA-NYS Board Member

* * *

Hearing Loss Association of America is the nation's foremost membership and advocacy organization for people with hearing loss. HLAA opens the world of communication to people with hearing loss through information, education, support and advocacy.

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Winter 2008

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UPCOMING EVENTS

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May 2008

Walk4Hearing
3: Westchester/Mid-Hudson
FDR Park
Yorktown Heights, NY
4: Rochester
Perinton Town Park
Fairport, NY

June 12-15, 2008

23rd HLAA Convention
Grand Sierra Resort & Casino
Reno, NV

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