

HEARSAY

The Official Newsletter of Hearing Loss Association of PA

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MESSAGE FROM DIANA

The end of the year brings with it the holiday season and the tradition of gift giving. This year many of us will have to cut back on our giving, due to the ever worsening economic conditions which have affected almost every one of our readers. We at HLA-PA send our newsletter out to almost 2500 recipients in the Commonwealth of PA four times a year, free of charge. Won't you please consider contributing just \$5 to help defray the production costs this year? HLA-PA is an all-volunteer organization and we would be very grateful to those readers who are able to contribute in this difficult year.

With best wishes for a happy holiday and the coming new year,
Diana Bender, HLA-PA State Director
Bender@hla-pa.org



Jennie Wolferson & Cindy Bryton celebrate winning the 50-50 at the HLA-PA Banquet

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YouTube gets Closed Captioning Support

In a move to make videos easier to understand without volume or for the hard of hearing, **YouTube** has given users the option of embedding closed captions that show up as semitransparent overlays. Caption files that have text dialogue synced up to the proper timestamps can be uploaded during the time of upload or afterwards, and YouTube has provided multiple language support to let viewers swap between different languages of a single video without having to leave playback. Videos with closed captioning have it as an option in the lower right-hand corner menu; a part of the user interface that also houses the toggle to turn video annotations on and off. Even with the inclusion of closed captions you can continue to keep annotations enabled, although the two may overlap if annotations have been ledged on the bottom of the screen. For now closed captions can only be seen on YouTube. Embeds do not yet have the option to have them toggled on, just like annotations are not yet available. Also, no news yet on if this feature will be making its way to mobile versions of the site, particularly the iPhone application which does not yet have support for YouTube's warp or on-screen annotation features. Considering that the iPod Touch does not have an external speaker built-in, having closed captions on the go could make for a much richer mobile experience. There's already a small handful of content providers including closed captioning in their videos, including CNET, MIT, and the BBC.

Posted by Josh Lowensohn Cnet news
http://news.cnet.com/8301-17939_109-10028095-2.htm

E d i t o r ' s E x p e r i e n c e :
I decided to go ahead and try this new feature and it is really easy to find the toggle

button to turn on the captioning. When you open up a video to watch, you go to the lower right hand corner of the screen where you will find a small square with an arrow pointing up. Clicking on the arrow brings up the cc option. I clicked on many videos some of which I had seen before that I had wanted to see captioned and none of them were captioned. When I clicked on the cc button it will inform me the "Captions are not available". This is because the person who submits the video needs to add the captioning. The following website explains how they can add captioning and/or subtitles to their videos: <http://www.youtube.com/blog?entry=mi8D3ntPgFQ>

There is also a very entertaining and easy to understand captioned video that explains how to add captioning to your videos that you submit: <http://help.youtube.com/support/youtube/bin/answer.py?answer=100079>

If you know anyone that submits videos on YouTube please tell them about this feature. Also, if there is a video that you would like to have captioned you can often write a comment about the video on You Tube and request that they add the closed captioned feature so that you and your friends can enjoy it. Go ahead and send them the above websites for easy reference.

In the meantime, while we wait for people to add captioning to their video, here are a few videos that you can watch captioned. This video is from Gonzodoga, which is a Japanese animated video that is subtitled in English. Please be aware that it is graphic and inappropriate for children: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lu3usSSQ_74

The following is a physics lecture from MIT that is captioned: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PmJV8CHlaFc>

Submitted by: Beth Ann Rejonis (rejonis@hla-pa.org)

Dr Sieminski Receives the 2008 Marcia Finisdore Advocacy Award

NOTE: On November 2, 2008, Dr. Louis Sieminski, an audiologist from Kingston, PA, received the HLA-PA Marcia Finisdore Award for Advocacy. Marcia Finisdore, State Director Emerita, did the honors as part of the 4th Annual Eastern Regional HLA-PA Banquet at the Conshohocken Marriott Hotel. Dr. Sieminski was nominated for the award by Linda Rusinko (see article below):

“When I first met Dr. Sieminski the first thing that I remember about him was how determined he was to help me with my hearing loss. He recommended to my parents that I wear two hearing aids instead of one. He explained that studies have shown that people communicate better with two hearing aids instead of one hearing aid. He also explained that two hearing aids would benefit me since I would be attending college. I must admit that I was at first hesitant to wear two hearing aids, but once I realized the benefits of wearing the two hearing aids, I quickly changed my mind. Now when I look back I wondered how I functioned with one hearing aid. I was so pleased with Dr. Sieminski’s recommendation that I decided to be his patient. That was about 25 years ago; and today he is still my audiologist because he



Donna Penman is also a winner at the HLA-PA Banquet.

still has that same determination in helping people with their hearing loss. And that is why I nominated him for the Marcia Finisdore Award for Advocacy.

Dr. Sieminski’s dedication in advocating for hard of hearing children began when he established his private practice in 1974 after he graduated with his BS Degree in Speech Audiology from West Virginia, and his Master’s and Ph. D. in Audiology Temple University. He helped to establish the first pre-school program for hearing impaired children and then expanded it to an itinerate hearing therapy program to help mainstream hearing impaired children. Today this program has evolved to provide specialized services to all hearing impaired children in the school districts of Northeastern Pennsylvania, and this project is presently considered a model program for the state.

As an advocate for hearing impaired children, Dr. Sieminski established the first infant hearing screening program and continues to volunteer his services to oversee this initiative. In 1995, Dr. Sieminski helped propose and eventually enact the Pennsylvania Senate Bill that mandates infant hearing screening and intervention for all children born in Pennsylvania. After helping the Pennsylvania Department of Health to establish pilot projects through Pennsylvania to study this process, the Pennsylvania Department of Health used this information to provide for a statewide initiative. In 2001, the Pennsylvania Senate Bill was enacted and provided for the screening of hearing loss in all newborns, as well as the early diagnosis and intervention of all those found to be hearing impaired. Dr. Sieminski continues not only to help people in his state, but also helps other states enact effective screening, diagnosis and intervention services for children with hearing loss.”

Submitted by: Linda Rusinko (rusinko@hla-pa.org)

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!!

Assist the HLA-PA State Director by serving on the Advisory Council or one of its committees. The Council meets periodically in Carlisle but committees conduct most of their business by e-mail and occasionally meet in various parts of the state. If you think you would like to serve on the council or any of its committees, please contact one of the state leaders listed here:

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Donna Penman

Linda Rusinko

Beth Ann Rejonis

Donna Schumacher

Advocacy:

Nancy Kingsley (kingsley@pa-hla-pa)

Stigma - an Issue for People with Hearing Loss

On Sunday November 2, 2008, there was a gathering of many people who wanted to learn what the National Office's new Executive Director had to say. Brenda Battat made some very good points – increase membership, help in any way you can, Go Green, advocate and learn about what is out there for all hard of hearing people.

Personally, I found STIGMA to be the most important message. As much as some of us do not want to believe it, there is still a great deal of stigma involved with having a hearing loss. Whether we are born with the hearing loss, whether we develop it because we did not take care of our hearing while we were teenagers – listening to loud music on headphones- or whether we lost it later in life for

unknown causes or because of an illness or old age - no matter when or what the cause of it - there is still a perception that hearing loss is difficult to deal with, unacceptable, weird. Bottom line is people still do not understand it.

Part of the reason why I think people are so distrustful of it is because there are so many different kinds of hearing loss and so many different ways that people cope with their particular kind of hearing loss. Just talking with people who have a hearing loss reveals a preference for certain kinds of assistive devices - some prefer the FM or loop system, some prefer CART, while others won't even admit to wearing hearing aids. Some people have a mild hearing loss, and others really need you to face them when you talk with them because they have a severe hearing loss and rely on lip reading for discrimination.

I remember when I was in college and a student got transferred in because he lost his sight due to diabetes. He had a seeing - eye dog; he had people lined up to read for him and take notes; he had a tape recorder to record the lectures. He was set from day one. While I had to fight with a professor to wear the FM listening system so I could hear him and take my own notes. One thing that really stood out for me was how quickly he made friends – people were sympathetic to him, and would offer to help him in any way – he always had a crowd of people sitting at his table during mealtimes. He was not known as the blind student, but rather the student who was blind. In contrast, I did not even let people know I had a hearing loss until after they had gotten to know me, since I did not want to be known as the hard of hearing person – as I had been for most of my life. I did not lose any friends when I finally told them, but there was always this little hurdle that I had to get over with them. I always had to be the one to make them feel comfortable about the fact that something was “wrong” with me. I had to go out of my way to use some humor about it so that they would feel comfortable enough to

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HLAA CONVENTION 2009

**GAYLORD OPRYLAND RESORT AND CONVENTION CENTER, NASHVILLE
JUNE 18-21, 2009**

Early Bird Registration Now Open!

Convention 2009 promises to be the best yet as we band together to celebrate HLAA's 30th birthday, learn new things related to hearing loss, and rekindle old friendships. HLAA members who register for the Full Activity Package by December 31, 2008 will have their names placed into a drawing for a Nintendo Wii™. Whether you'll like bowling, tennis, golf or boxing, the Nintendo Wii™ is the hottest product on the market and sure to bring the lucky winner hours of fun!

For more information and to register, visit www.hearingloss.org/convention/index.asp.

Zebra Fish Offer Hope for Our Hearing

Researchers from the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD), examined zebra fish DNA using genetic techniques, searching for clues as to what gives this little amphibian the ability to regenerate nerves and hearing follicles. The research team also examined certain medications known to be ototoxic to the human cochlear hair cells, screening more than 10,000 compounds. After all this testing, the results showed that two, similar chemicals are able to provide protection of cochlear hair cells from damage caused by neomycin, a common class of medicines.

According to a media release from the NIDCD, the authors of the study suggest that their research technique, which combines chemical screening with traditional genetic approaches, offers a fast and efficient way to identify personal drugs and drug targets that may one day provide therapies for people with hearing loss and balance disorders.

Further, tests may be developed to determine the susceptibility of an individual to the damaging effects of certain medications so alternative therapies can be employed by medical professionals.

To sum it up, researchers under laboratory conditions have isolated compounds that protect against hearing loss side effects of medications by examining the genetics of the

zebra fish. By discovering how this little fish is able to regenerate nerves along its lateral lines (hearing mechanism in fish), scientists offer hope that someday, regeneration of these cochlear hair cells will be possible in humans. In the meantime, tests will be developed to identify those humans most susceptible to hearing loss due to the use of certain medications.

Excerpted from *"Improved Hearing? The Answer May be in Your Aquarium"* by a Healthy Hearing Staff Writer (6/2/08).

Websites for more information:
www.healthyhearing.com; www.hearingreview.com

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ask me about what I needed them to do for me. Or I would just tell them what I needed. I felt I was always explaining my disability and what I needed and how I functioned, and I had to tell everyone from professors to the resident aids in the dorm to my roommate. This blind student was able to just continue with socializing and getting to know everyone and learning. I felt I was doing a lot of teaching.

I think we as an organization and as individuals, need to continue doing a great deal of teaching – about hearing loss in its many forms, about assistive listening devices and making things accessible in all walks of life so that it becomes "normal" to see someone with a microphone, a hearing dog, and a friend.

HearSay Subscription

If you would like to receive your own copy of *HearSay*, the official newsletter of HLA-PA, please fill in this form and mail it to the address below. A *HearSay* subscription is free; however, HLA-PA is a not-for-profit organization run exclusively by volunteers and we are grateful for any donations.

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Enclosed is my contribution of \$_____ to support HearSay.

Donations are tax deductible.

I would like to remain anonymous

I cannot contribute, but would like to receive HearSay.

Make donations payable to HLA-PA and mail to:

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Brenda Battat, Executive Director
of HLAA at HLA-PA Banquet.

About HLAA

Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA), formerly Self Help for Hard of Hearing People, Inc., which was founded in 1979, is a non-profit consumer self-help organization. HLAA opens the world of communication to people with hearing loss by providing information, education, support and advocacy.

The primary purpose of all HLAA members is to educate ourselves, our families, friends, co-workers, teachers, hearing health care providers, industry, government, and others about hearing loss.

HLAA has members and chapters in all 50 states. To find the chapter closest to you and to learn about membership benefits, contact the HLAA National Office:

Hearing Loss Association of America
7910 Woodmont Avenue, Suite 1200
Bethesda, MD 20814

Obituary - Joseph McCann

Joe McCann, a long time member of the Hearing Loss Association of America, passed away in August. Joe was an active member of the Pittsburgh Chapter, served on the Board of Trustees of the Hearing Loss Association of America, and actively supported the development of a state office in Pennsylvania. Joe's sense of humor was always welcome at meetings. Our organization was very important to Joe in his own quest to learn all he could about hearing loss. Condolences from all of us who worked with and knew Joe go out to his wife Emily and his family.