

Meetings held at the:

New York School for
the Deaf
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*Celebrating 35 years for
48 million people with hearing loss*

WESTCHESTER CHAPTER NEWS NOVEMBER 2014

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President's Message



Hello Everyone!

I hope you are all enjoying this delightful fall weather. The foliage is beautiful and the view driving north on the New York Thruway is awesome. This is my favorite time of year.

At the October 11th meeting, we had a great speaker, Alison Mendez. She is the Engagement Manager with Cochlear Americas. She gave a wonderful presentation on the wireless technology as to how this works with the cochlear implant. It was really fascinating. Many questions were asked by the audience and the program was well received.

In case you haven't heard - **HLAA's National 35th Anniversary** is this November. The Westchester Chapter will celebrate with special activities throughout the year - including adding this new slogan - *Celebrating 35 years for 48 million people with hearing loss*.

The next general meeting will be on Saturday, November 8th at the New York School for the Deaf at 1pm. We will have Dr. Jeff Shannon, Audiologist with the Hudson Valley Audiology Center in Rockland County and the Professional Advisor for the Westchester Chapter. He is an excellent speaker. His presentation will be on the connection between our hearing and our bodily processes. Research over the past several decades has shown that hearing health is closely related to many bodily processes, including memory, heart function, blood health and even stress and anxiety.

Save the date: The HLAA National Convention 2015 will be held in St. Louis, Missouri. The dates are June 25 - 28, 2015.

If you never attended the Hearing Loss Association National Convention and would be interested in going in 2015, the HLAA Westchester Chapter is offering a fixed amount grant to those members who are first time goers. The intent is to help cover the cost of registration/travel to attend the convention. In return, members receiving the grant are expected to bring back information they have learned so they can share with other chapter members.

For more information, please email Karen Ratner at klratner@aol.com for an application. Applications must be filled out and returned to her by November 30, 2014. There are a limited number of grants available, so please contact Karen as soon as possible.

Hope you can join us at the November meeting.

Wish all of you a wonderful Happy Thanksgiving holiday with family and friends.

Regards,

Debbie Dolgin Wolfe

CHAPTER NEWS

OFFICERS & COMMITTEE CHAIRS

PRESIDENT - *Debbie Dolgin Wolfe*
email - deborahdwolfe@gmail.com

VICE PRESIDENT - *Anita Goldwasser*
email - anitagoldwasser@aol.com

SECRETARY - *Lina Razzai*
email - linarazzCRM@gmail.com

TREASURER - *Phil Monteleone*
email - pmtaxes@aol.com

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT- *Roberta Seidner*
email - robertaseidner@aol.com

COMMITTEES:

BY-LAWS – *Karen Ratner*
email – kiratner@aol.com

GRANTS / SCHOLARSHIPS – *Karen Ratner*
email – kiratner@aol.com

HOSPITALITY – *Adrienne Stern*
email – adriannestern@yahoo.com

FUNDRAISING – *Lina Razzai*
email - linarazzCRM@gmail.com

MEMBERSHIP – *Roberta Seidner*
email – robertaseidner@aol.com

NEWSLETTER - *Anita Goldwasser*
email - anitagoldwasser@aol.com

PROGRAMMING/PUBLICITY - *Debbie Dolgin Wolfe*
email - deborahdwolfe@gmail.com

SOCIAL MEDIA - *Alicen Noselli*
email - alicen45@hotmail.com

WEBSITE - *Carolyn Tanen*
email - carolyn1002@aol.com

ALD TECHNICIAN - *Judy Ginsberg*
email - judybginsberg@gmail.com

HEARING LOOP TECHNICIAN - *Robert Wolfe*
email - robertmwolfe58@gmail.com

PROFESSIONAL ADVISOR - *Jeffrey Shannon, Au.D.*

HAPPY BIRTHDAYS TO THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS:

October: Arlene Esgar, Marvin Goldman, Anita Goldwasser, Sara Taddeo, Carolyn Tanen, Jean Marie Wilson

November: Linda Gasparri, Debbie Harz, Miriam Koryn, Barbara Mosner, Joan Reitzen, Juan Rocha, Kate Schwerin, Leslie Berg-Weiss

Belated wishes to Cassandra Horton who celebrated her birthday in August.

WE THANK THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS FOR THEIR DONATIONS:

Drina Tamburo
Hagen Von Burchard

Good luck and best wishes to Judy Ginsberg on her move to Norfolk, Virginia.

Upcoming Chapter Meetings & Events

Saturday, November 8, 2014 - Board & General Meeting, New York School for the Deaf, Jeff Shannon, Au.D.

Saturday, December 13, 2014 - Holiday Party, New York School for the Deaf

* Please note dates may be subject to change.

*“Autumn...the year's last,
loveliest smile.”*

- *William Cullen Bryant*
“Indian Summer”



MEDICARE SHOULD COVER HEARING AIDS

by Janice S. Lintz
CEO, Hearing Access & Innovations

Hearing loss is one of the most misunderstood disabilities, and because it is invisible, it is frequently overlooked, neglected and forgotten. Many assume it doesn't require any special attention or services even though it interferes with virtually every aspect of a person's life.

I think most people find it shocking when they learn hearing aids are not covered by Medicare or by most insurance policies.

This is particularly disturbing because of the huge number of people who suffer from hearing loss. A study by researchers at Johns Hopkins University suggests that 48 million Americans have some form of hearing loss. Many cannot afford to buy hearing aids.

The negative impact is significant.

Hearing aids help people to function better in all aspects of their lives. They allow you to get and keep a job. People with severe hearing loss who didn't have hearing aids had unemployment rates of 15.6 percent, or double that of the general population (7.8 percent), according to the Johns Hopkins study.

Hearing aids also prevent communication issues and isolation. A person who cannot hear has difficulty communicating and understanding what's going on. A growing body of research shows that untreated hearing loss in older adults can lead to cognitive decline, isolation, depression and possibly even dementia

Social situations are particularly difficult for many people with hearing loss. When they cannot hear well enough to understand a conversation, or listen to a TV show or other entertainment, they resort to bluffing and withdrawal.

Having access to hearing aids enables people with hearing loss to participate fully in life.

Despite these findings, only 25 percent of people who could benefit from hearing aids get them. It's true that many think there's a stigma associated with wearing hearing aids. But many more simply can't afford them.

A pair of hearing aids costs upwards of \$7,000. Hearing aids are absent from the Essential Health Benefits (EHB) outline in the Affordable Care Act (ACA), leaving coverage solely to the discretion of state health insurance plans. As a result, hearing aid coverage varies dramatically by state.

Some states, such as Arizona, cover hearing aids and others do not. New Jersey covers hearing aids for children up to age fifteen. Any insurance plan that is self-funded can opt out even if the state mandates hearing aid coverage. This would not be possible if hearing aids were mandated under the Affordable Care Act. All plans across the U.S. would need to uniformly offer the same coverage in every state.

The ACA requires the Secretary of Health and Human Services to take into account the health care needs of specific groups, including people with disabilities. But hearing aids fall by the wayside.

We need Congress to rectify this and ensure coverage of properly fitted hearing aids and aural rehabilitation services as part of the Essential Health Benefits under the Affordable Care Act.

Democratic Congressman Cartwright from Erie, Pennsylvania, introduced HR 3150 to cover hearing aids under Medicare. This bill will at least close the loophole for Medicare recipients. Please contact your Congress member and urge him or her to support this bill.

Source: www.consumermoj.com/medicare-should-cover-hearing-aids/

Cochlear Comic Hero



New York Eye and Ear Infirmary of Mount Sinai Hosts Children's Hearing Institute and Marvel Custom Solutions Unveiling of New Super Hero Dedicated to Children with Hearing Loss.

On October 18 the Ear Institute at the New York Eye and Ear Infirmary of Mount Sinai unveiled their solution, in partnership with Marvel Custom Solutions (Marvel Comics), to help educate children and parents about cochlear implants.

The new super hero "Sapheara" is also tasked with spreading the message that it is not acceptable to bully anyone who wears a hearing aid or cochlear implant.

"It is crucial parents and children understand the facts about hearing impairment and the many viable treatment options available for patients with all levels of hearing loss," said Ronald Hoffman, MD, Medical Director of the Ear Institute at NYEE. "Having Sapheara as a resource for entertainment and education could help many more patients receive the evaluations and care they need to lead active and engaged lives."

Sapheara will be joined by Iron Man and Blue Ear (a super hero with hearing aids) in a new dual comic book and teacher's guide entitled "Sound Effects." The super heroes will work to save New York City while addressing some very important issues such as: bullying, hearing loss awareness, and hearing loss prevention. The "Sound Effects" comic book and teachers guide is being distributed to New York City students.

"Research has shown today's new technology such as ear buds/iPods, and media gaming consoles has played a role in a degree of hearing loss in today's youth. Part of our message is to educate this population, in an exciting way, on the potential dangers of technological and environmental noises," says Simon Parisier, MD, Founder of CHI and a Faculty Emeritus at NYEE. "What's unique is that Marvel helps translate the impact of this message by using Iron Man along with these new super hero characters who have experienced hearing loss and use hearing aids and cochlear implants to hear."

Source: <http://www.hearinghq.com.au/news/news/206-cochlear-comic-hero>

Tips for Hard of Hearing People on Communicating with Hearing People

RULE: Communication is a two-way street. Hard of hearing people must make as much effort as hearing people.

SET YOUR STAGE

- Tell others how best to talk to you. Explain your hearing loss and tell them what to do.
- Pick your best spot (light, quiet, proximity). Choose where you want to sit or stand.
- Anticipate difficult situations, plan how to minimize them. Think ahead.

PROJECT YOUR COMMUNICATION

- Pay attention. Watch, listen and concentrate so you can follow the conversation.
- Concentrate on speaker. You cannot talk and watch the view at the same time.
- Look for visual clues. Watch for facial expressions, gestures and body language.
- Ask for written cues if needed. Always carry a note pad and pencil. Ask for key words.
- Don't interrupt. Let conversation flow to gain more meaning but admit if you are lost.

ESTABLISH EMPATHY WITH AUDIENCE

- React. Let speaker know how well he is doing. Show appreciation for efforts to help.
- Don't bluff. Admit it when you don't understand, to prevent serious trouble.
- Conversation is very tiring. If too tired to concentrate, ask for discussion later.

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RESEARCH & TECHNOLOGY IN THE NEWS

Google Glass Can Now Add Closed Captioning to the World as It Happens

Google finally opened up its “Explorer” program earlier this year, making Glass available to anyone with \$1,500 to spare, but chances are you’ve been seeing less of it than ever. In the year and a half since Glass’ debut, smart-watches have stolen most of the wearable hype, while Google still doesn’t seem to be much closer to a reasonably-priced consumer version of its banner wearable technology.

That said, Glass isn’t dead yet either. Airlines, police departments, and other organizations are continuing to test Glass out for a variety of more specialized uses. And one group of researchers has now produced what could genuinely be considered a killer app for some users: captions for the world as it happens.

Called Captioning on Glass, the app, developed by Georgia Tech’s Contextual Computing Group, provides real-time captions during in-person conversations.

To get around a key limitation of Glass—its built-in microphone—the team also developed a companion smart phone app that works in conjunction with the Glass app when the two are paired via Bluetooth. The idea is that you’ll simply hand your phone to the person you’re talking with for them to speak into, which the researchers say has the added side-effect of making people speak more clearly. They’re also able to see what’s being transcribed and correct mistakes as necessary.

The group that developed the app is a likely one. It’s led by wearable computing pioneer Thad Starner, who now splits his time between Georgia Tech and Google, where he serves as a technical lead on Glass.

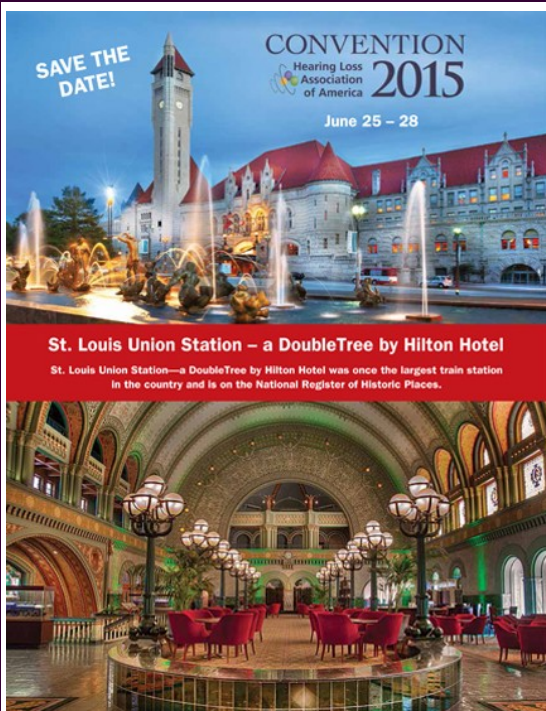
Not surprisingly, the group is also working on the next logical step after captioning: real-time translation. It will apparently rely on the same Glass/smart phone combo, which will let the person wearing Glass see what’s effectively real-time subtitles, while their end of the conversation is displayed on the phone for the other person.

In a news release, Starner admits the system is “not ideal for strangers,” but that they “designed the program to be used among friends, trusted acquaintances or while making purchases.”

As you might expect, though, they’re not the only ones working on such a system. A company founded by a group of Carnegie Mellon students is also busy working on a Glass translation system of its own. The Carnegie group has also produced a dramatic concept video showing how it could work (above).

While neither group is making any promises about when those apps will be available, Georgia Tech’s Captioning app can now be downloaded for free.

Source: <http://motherboard.vice.com/read/google-glass-is-now-capable-of-real-time-closed-captioning>, Press Release dated 10/4/14



ATTENTION CHAPTER MEMBERS!

If you have never attended a HLAA National Convention, you do not know what you are missing.

Great workshops, resource gallery, networking and more!

Convention Grant applications for first time attendees must be submitted to Karen Ratner at klratner@aol.com by November 30, 2014.

Please contact Karen Ratner for more information.



GOING GREEN!!!!

The Chapter is trying to do our part!! Please contact Newsletter Editor Anita Goldwasser if you would like to help by receiving the newsletter via email rather than paper. You'll not only save the Chapter postage but help the environment.

*Wishing everyone a very
HAPPY THANKSGIVING!*



**DIRECTIONS TO
THE NEW YORK SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF**

Via I-287 (Eastbound or Westbound) - Get off Exit 4 - New York School for the Deaf, Continue onto Route 100A North Knollwood Road, proceed approx. 1/8 mile. School is on your right, turn into driveway and go to gate on your left even though it says "DO NOT ENTER" and **REMAIN IN YOUR CAR** - pull up to the keypad and punch in access code. Make the first left turn and drive straight ahead, then make a right turn into the cafeteria building parking lot.

**DIRECTIONS TO
THE GREENBURGH PUBLIC LIBRARY**

Via I-287 (Eastbound or Westbound) - Get off Exit 4 - Continue south onto Route 100A also known as Knollwood Road, and cross over Route 119. This will be approximately 0.2 mile if you are coming from the east and .01 mile if you are coming from the west. Greenburgh Library is on your right and you will find the entrance to their driveway.

**WESTCHESTER CHAPTER
ANNUAL CHAPTER DUES**

- \$20 - Individual Membership Dues
- \$30 - Couple/Family Membership Dues

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HLAA - WESTCHESTER CHAPTER

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3419 Irwin Avenue, Apt #1709
Bronx, NY 10463**

Birthday: Month _____

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