

HEARSAY

The Official Newsletter of Hearing Loss Association of PA

Volume 9, Issue 3
December 2010

Message from Diana

In June 2003 I began serving as the HLA-PA State Co-Director, sharing responsibilities with our founding State Director, Marcia Finisdore, for one year. Since June of 2004 I have been honored to serve as the HLA-PA State Director. I am happy to announce that in September of this year HLAA appointed Nancy Kingsley to serve with me as our State Co-Director for one year. Nancy will take over as the State Director of HLA-PA in September 2011. Nancy is a long time member of HLAA

and worked for many years as an advocate for people with hearing loss in New Jersey before moving to PA. She has served on the HLA-PA Advisory Council for the past 3 ½ years and is the Chairperson of our Advocacy Committee. I'm looking forward to working closely with Nancy in the months ahead.

Wishing you a happy and healthy holiday season,

Diana Bender,
HLA-PA State Director
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State Office Happenings

The winter chill is back but we at HLA-PA are “red hot” with lots of activities on the agenda. If you see some area of interest, please join us. The time for you is now! You “are” HLA-PA! Please notify Diana Bender Bender@hla-pa.org

September 16: Diana Bender and Carolyn Meyer finalize October 29 HLA-PA Employment Conference plans with the Event Manger at the Radisson Hotel, King of Prussia. All succeeding meetings were conducted online.

September 30: Marcia Finisdore and Diana Bender gave a presentation, Hearing Loss 101, for the residents of White Horse Village and 55+ community in Gradyville, PA. Marcia just completed her 5th semester of teaching Hearing Loss 101 to students at the Osher Life Long Learning Institute at Widner University at their Exton Campus.

Important News: Outreach Incentives in the works for Parents with Children with Hearing loss: Please check out the WIKI website, www.kidsandhearingloss.org, created for the HLAA for parents of children with hearing loss. It has a lot of useful information for parents dealing with the issues related to early intervention, education, hearing aids, assistive technology, etc. We hope in the near future we can develop a program for parents that chapters can offer to parents in their area.

September and December Meetings bring Exciting News about “Independence Starts Here”: HLA-PA continues to support this exciting program (launched in October 2009) in the cultural arts for those with sensory disabilities. Marianne Lock, Carolyn Meyer, Alan Kutner, and Marcia Finisdore have attended meetings to give valuable input to evaluate this project. This is what’s happening: **Art-Reach and the Theatre Alliance Introduce Access Certificates. What are they and how do you get them?** If someone you know loves going to the theatre but has a visual or hearing impairment that prevents them

from fully enjoying the performance, Art-Reach and the Theatre Alliance of Greater Philadelphia have created the perfect gift for you: **Access Certificates**. These unique gift certificates allow audiences with sensory impairments to attend a wide range of theatre performances across the region that offer accessibility features like open captioning (OC) for audiences who are deaf or hard-of-hearing, audio description (AD) for audiences who are blind or low-vision, and American Sign Language interpretation (ASL) for audiences who are Deaf. Here’s how it works: go to www.theatrealliance.org/access and purchase **Access Certificates** in \$10 or \$20 increments. Give them to a friend or family member who would benefit from OC, AD or ASL. They can then redeem them for tickets to an accessible performance at any one of a dozen participating theatres, including the Arden Theatre Company, the People’s Light & Theatre Company and the Wilma Theater, among others. A complete list of participating theatres and the specific dates of accessible performances can be found at www.theatrealliance.org/access. The “Independence Starts Here” initiative is co-led by Art-Reach (www.art-reach.org) and VSA Pennsylvania (www.vsapa.org).

January 8 through January 15, 2011: HLA-PA goes to the Farm Show! Once again HLA-PA will sponsor an information booth. We will make every effort to staff the booth with two people in four or five-hour shifts from 8 AM to 9 PM each day. For those of you who helped last year, you know what a fulfilling outreach experience it is. For those who have never visited the Farm Show, this is a wonderful opportunity to come to Harrisburg, staff the booth for a four or five-hour shift, and spend the remainder of the day visiting the various commercial and farm exhibits as well as large and small animal displays. Enjoy breakfast, lunch or dinner at the food courts with farm-fresh products throughout the complex. For more information, check out www.farmshow.state.pa.us. This year our booth

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will be in the Main Hall, very centrally located and close to Hamilton Relay (including the CapTel 800i phone). "The synergy and referral possibilities will be wonderful," says Steve Schultz. Steve is once again scheduling volunteer shifts so please contact him at bfschultz@aol.com or call 717-761-3632. Thanks Steve, for all your hard work on this!

Submitted by Carolyn Meyer: meyer@hla-pa.org

MANAGING YOUR PERSISTENT FEARS AND ANXIETIES WHEN DEALING WITH A HEARING LOSS

Everybody deals with anxiety and depression; however, some people who deal with a hearing loss may have a difficult time in managing these issues. As a result, here is a brief list of techniques that a person with a hearing loss can use to help manage their fears and everyday anxieties.

When facing a current or upcoming task that feels overwhelming, the first thing you can do is to divide the task into a series of smaller steps. Completing these smaller tasks one at a time will make the stress more manageable and increases your chances of success.

Sometimes we get stressed out when everything happens all at once. When this happens, a person could take a deep breath and try to find something to do for a few minutes to get their mind off of the problem. A person could get some fresh air, listen to some music, or do an activity that will give them a fresh perspective on things.

A person can visualize a red stop sign in their mind when they encounter a fear provoking thought. When the negative thought comes, a person could think of a red stop sign that serves as a reminder to stop focusing on that thought and to think of something else. A person can then try to think of something positive to replace the negative thought.

Another technique that is very helpful is to have a small notebook of positive statements

that makes you feel good. Whenever you come across an affirmation that makes you feel good, write it down in a small notebook that you can carry around with you in your pocket. Whenever you feel depressed or frustrated, open up your small notebook and read those statements. This will help to manage your negative thinking.

Learn to take things one day at a time. Instead of worrying about how you will get through the rest of the week, try to focus on today. Each day can provide us with different opportunities to learn new things, and that includes learning how to deal with your problems. You never know when the answers you are looking for will come to your doorstep. We may be ninety-nine percent correct in predicting the future, but all it takes is for that one percent to make a world of difference.

Take advantage of the help that is available around you. If possible, talk to a professional who can help you manage your depression and anxieties. They will be able to provide you with additional advice and insights on how to deal with your current problem. By talking to a professional, a person will be helping themselves in the long run because they will become better able to deal with their problems in the future. Remember that it never hurts to ask for help.

Dealing with persistent fears when you have a hearing loss is not easy. Remember that all you can do is to do your best each day, hope for the best, and take things in stride. Patience, persistence, education, and being committed in trying to solve your problem will go a long way in fixing your problems.

Stan Popovich is the author of "A Layman's Guide to Managing Fear Using Psychology, Christianity and Non Resistant Methods" - an easy to read book that presents a general overview of techniques that are effective in managing persistent fears and anxieties. For additional information go to: <http://www.managingfear.com/>

Hyperacusis?

Imagine being at a movie where the sound track is turned to the highest volume. Actors' voices are screaming at you. After five minutes, you leave holding your ears and cursing the theater for its poor judgment. Turning newspaper pages, running water in the kitchen sink, your child placing dishes and silverware on the table - all are intolerable to your ears. A baby cries or a truck screeches its brakes to a halt and the sound is excruciating. What has happened to my ears?

The person who has hyperacusis can't simply get up and walk away from noise. Instead, the volume on the whole world seems stuck on high. Hyperacusis is defined as a collapsed tolerance to normal environmental sounds.

Hyperacusis makes living in this noisy world difficult and dramatically changes the pattern of life. Moving about, traveling, and communicating with others is challenging. Ear protection must be worn in areas that seem too loud. This includes earplugs, industrial earmuffs or both if necessary.

What Causes Hyperacusis? Some first develop hyperacusis in one ear, but in most cases both ears ultimately become affected. Hyperacusis can come on slowly or suddenly. Some patients say they developed hypersensitivity to sound over a period of time. Others may come down with hyperacusis suddenly by attending a rock concert, firing a gun, air bag deployment in their car, fireworks or any extremely loud sound.

Other causes include job related noise exposure, drugs, Lyme's disease, Meniere's, TMJ, head injury or postoperative surgery.

Where To Find Help Because no test will confirm hyperacusis, it is misunderstood by all - like an invisible disability. One feels isolated and helpless even in the company of those who love them. The Hyperacusis Network consists of individuals who have a common goal to share information and offer support to one another

knowing full well that our condition at this time is incurable.

Credit to: The Hyperacusis Network; www.hyperacusis.net

Pennsylvania State Office Sponsors Conference for Employers and Hard of Hearing Employees and Job Seekers

"Working Together: One-Day Conference for Employers and Hard of Hearing Employees/Job Seekers" was held on October 29, 2010 at the Radisson Hotel Valley Forge in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania.

Workshops covered such topics as assistive technology, hearing aids, communication strategies, legal rights of employees and employers, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) services for hard of hearing clients, and coping with hearing loss when seeking employment and on the job. Exhibitors included Pennsylvania Captioned Relay Service (Hamilton Relay), Sprint CapTel, Pennsylvania's Telecommunication Device Distribution Program (TDDP), Pennsylvania's Office for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH), the United States Department of Labor, CareerLink (Pennsylvania's one-stop service for job seekers), the Pennsylvania OVR, the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, the Center on Hearing and Deafness (CHAD) in West Chester, and the Deaf-Hearing Communication Centre (DHCC) in Swarthmore. Assistive listening systems, CART realtime captioning, and ASL interpreters were provided for all sessions, and the site was wheelchair accessible.

The program opened with a plenary session on "The Impact of Hearing Loss on Work and Life" by Marcia Finisdore, the HLA-PA state director emerita and a former president of the HLAA board. Two morning workshops followed: "Challenges in the Workplace" by Diana Bender, HLA-PA state director; and

"OVR/Team PA CareerLink Resources," presented by Mike Wakefield, OVR district administrator of the Norristown office, Wayne Trout, assistant district administrator of the Philadelphia office, and Pattie Drummond, Site Manager of Pennsylvania CareerLink in Montgomery County.

Brenda Battat, HLAA's executive director, delivered the keynote address at the buffet lunch on "Workplace Barriers 20 Years after the ADA." The two afternoon workshops were "An Overview of the ADA" by Amy McAndrew, an attorney with Pepper Hamilton, LLP; and "How Earnings Affect Social Security Benefits" by Larree Beilharz, community work incentive coordinator for the Disability Rights Network of Pennsylvania's DRN Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) program.

The day ended with a plenary session panel on "Working with a Hearing Loss," which was moderated by Diana Bender. Panelists included hard of hearing employees Beth Ann Rejonis (Marcia Finisdore's daughter) and her employer, Kate Opher; Pam Reiher and her employer, Mike Ford; Marianne Lock; and Melissa Pardo. Among the keys to success cited by the hard of hearing panelists were getting a good education, finding jobs that didn't require the phone, and using assistive listening devices when necessary.

Diana Bender, Marcia Finisdore, Alan Kutner, Marianne Lock, Carolyn Meyer, and Donna Penman served on the HLA-PA planning committee for the conference, and other HLA-PA volunteers also assisted at the event.

Submitted by Nancy Kingsley: kingsley@hla-pa.org

Penn Museum Multimedia Tours for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Penn Museum, the University of Pennsylvania's Museum of Archeology and Anthropol-

ogy, is developing Multimedia Tours for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing due for release in late 2010. The Museum has partnered with SignWorld TV, an all-deaf production company, to produce the Highlights of the Galleries Tour in American Sign Language (ASL). The video tour will feature actor and comedian CJ Jones signing in the galleries. Deaf and hearing audiences alike will benefit from watching and listening to the tour as CJ Jones' animated interpretation of the objects brings new expression to the people and cultures who created them. The tours will be available to the public on iPods as well as downloadable files on the web. Other educational programming for the deaf community will be planned to celebrate this new step towards universal accessibility at the Penn Museum.

HLAA's Bucks County chapter will be attending a tour (currently filled) in December. At that time they will report back about their experience. Look for their feedback in the next Hearsay!

<http://penn.museum/news-and-announcements/797-multimedia-tours-for-the-deaf.html>

Submitted by Marianne Lock: lock@hla-pa.org

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A special thanks to those who help make it possible.

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**Marcia Finisdore
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2010 Marcia Finisdore Award Honoree

Angela Lundy of Philadelphia has been selected to receive the 2010 Marcia Finisdore Award for Advocacy. Ms Lundy has lived with a hearing loss since 1995 and has worked tirelessly to open doors for people with all disabilities, including sensory disabilities. Among her many accomplishments was the development of the "Widow's Mite" program, in which rehabilitation items are collected and recycled to people in need. She also works with Temple University to provide donated equipment such as VCO telephones, listening devices and alerting devices to people who have a hearing loss. The award will be presented on May 1 at the HLA-PA Eastern PA Regional Banquet; the banquet which will take place at the Radisson Valley Forge Hotel in King of Prussia, PA. Information on banquet registration will appear in the March 2011 issue of HearSay.

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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