

The Official Newsletter of HLAA-PA

Support and Advocacy since 2001 for Pennsylvanians with Hearing Loss

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HearSay Articles

HLAA-PA welcomes articles of interest to the hearing loss community for publication in HearSay, as well as suggestions for topics. Send e-mail to editor@hlaa-pa.org

DISCLAIMER

Opinions expressed in HearSay are those of the authors. Mention of goods and services in articles and advertisements does not mean HLAA-PA endorsement, nor does absence suggest disapproval. To reach readers of HearSay, contact Dale Long

Sponsor Coordinator
(long@hlaa-pa.org)
for information

Nancy's Message

. By Nancy Kingsley, HLAA-PA State Director

Until now, there have been just three kinds of large-area assistive listening systems--FM, infrared, and induction loop. I recently had the opportunity to use a new type called Wi-Fi. With this system, sound from an audio source is converted to a digital stream and sent over a local area network (LAN) to a Wi-Fi wireless access point (WAP or AP), after which it is streamed to an app on a personal device such as a smartphone, where the signal is decoded (users plug headphones or a neckloop into the device). Wi-Fi allows for multichannel use--the receiver I was provided offered a choice between audio description (for blind people) and assistive listening. One concern with Wi-Fi is a slight delay in the signal transmission (latency), which may create difficulties with speechreading. (The show I attended, at the Fulton Theatre in Lancaster, also provided open captioning.)

While Wi-Fi systems can be set up for use with people's own smartphones, the systems are only ADA-compliant if the venue provides Wi-Fi receivers, since not everyone has a smartphone. The system I used worked well, without the problem of lost signals that I had experienced with the previously used FM system. Listen Technologies and Williams Sound both carry Wi-Fi systems.

CORRECTON

The previous issue of HearSay had an error about OTC hearing aid return policies. The FDA didn't set a specified return period, only requiring that the return policy be given on the packaging. (In contrast, the FDA requires prescription hearing aids to have a minimum 30-day return policy.)

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State Happenings

by Carolyn Meyer, Outreach Coordinator

Do you see the daffodils sprouting to welcome spring? We welcome spring as we see the outburst of chapter and state events right in our own counties in the state. We hope you will join members and friends on the dates listed here today.

ENTERTAINMENT: MOVIES

The ChesCo chapter has been emailing us dates of movie theaters that are now including "open captioned" movies. We are used to "closed captioned" movies but they require hardware that many theaters may not want to maintain. So check your local movie theaters to see if that is an option there. Some theaters listed are Regal Brandywine Town Center, Bryn Mawr Film Institute, Movie Tavern Exton, AMC Philadelphia Mills14, AMC Neshaminy, AMC Plymouth Meeting Mall 12. Special thanks to Judy and Steve Shugarts (ChesCo president) for sending us these helpful emails. Not all AMC theaters offer this so please do call. We assume if many with hearing loss support this trend, it might become more prevalent. Closed captioning is still available at other theaters.

CHAPTERS IN THE NEWS

The MontCo chapter has resumed in-person meetings and the March 7 meeting featured an archived recent webinar from our national website on "Over the Counter Hearing Aids." The webinar is from November this past year. The presenter was Dr. Thomas Power who is a professor and expert audiology industry consultant. The topic is one that we all may not totally understand so this is something your chapter may want to consult for your own meetings. The archives on the national website are a great resource on many topics and can be useful in planning a meeting. MontCo meetings are at the Jeanes Library from 5:30-7:30 pm and meetings have a loop system in place.

The March 16 meeting of ChesCo features Dr. Tom Goyne, Au.D. The meeting will be on Zoom, and the presenter will be speaking on "Central Auditory Processing": what the brain does with what the ears send to it and how that can affect understanding in various situations. On May 11, Part 2 he will speak on "Balance and Dizziness." Dr Goyne is an adjunct professor, visiting lecturer, and clinical preceptor with Salus University. Meetings begin at 5:30 pm. Preregistration is required. Reminder: All chapters welcome guests to meetings.

STATE EVENTS NOT TO MISS: SAVE THE DATES AND JOIN US

APRIL 29 : HLA A SOUTHEASTERN PA ONE DAY CONFERENCE

This will take place in Wayne, PA from 9:30-3:00 PM on Saturday April 29. Please refer to the complete article below describing the program and location for the conference. We are most appreciative of the grant from the Louis N. Cassett Foundation and donations from our local chapters for their support for this event.

MAY 7: HLA A-PA LUNCH AND LEARN

This will take place at the Penn Harris Hotel in Camp Hill, PA from 11:00-3:00 PM on Sunday May 7. Please refer to the complete article below for details.

*Just a note: These regional conferences are becoming more prevalent so that guests and members from all parts of the state have a chance to participate if the events are located closer to where they reside. We hope you will all take advantage of

these opportunities as both events have been well planned for a long time.

HCAA 2023 CONVENTION: JUNE 29-JULY 1 NEW ORLEANS,LA

Come join us at the Marriott New Orleans on Canal Street in the French Quarter. Never visited "The Big Easy", well now is your chance. In addition to participating in all the workshops and educational events, stroll through the city you will be right there. So feel the "beat" and join fellow members and guests to experience everything the city and our HCAA have to offer. All events are fully accessible so you won't miss a word. A perfect chance to meet other chapter members and professionals from across the country. Check out the Exhibit Hall as well. Please go to www.hearingloss.org for details and instructions to register today.

DO YOU HAVE NEWS YOU WANT TO SHARE FROM YOUR CHAPTER? PLEASE EMAIL ME meyer@hcaa-pa.org I will be happy to hear from you!

DEAFinitely Magic

Sam Sandler is an illusionist, inspirational speaker, and magician. He is also profoundly deaf. Sam and his wife, Corrie, share a back-stage view into the man behind the magic.

Sam's hearing began to "vanish" when he was 37. While he was able to benefit from hearing aids until age 39, his hearing loss progressed to a profound degree, negatively affecting his work.

Sam: As a full-time magician, I found that things quickly degraded for me. I was taking my answering machine to my neighbor to listen to my messages and then had another friend call the clients and book the shows. Sadly, I began to struggle a lot with my shows, missing cues in the music and not being able to understand what the volunteer was saying. After about a year and a half, I wasn't performing many shows anymore. I was unable to pay my bills and began selling furniture to feed my daughter, who was just 10 years old. I was a single dad, couldn't make ends meet, and ended up losing my house to foreclosure. This was the moment I realized that I am a deaf person.

I had the wrong attitude and had allowed that bad attitude to keep me from success. I learned sign language and embraced my deafness. I reinvented myself, creating a new show called DEAFinitely Magic. I began to do speaking events in addition to my magic shows. Afterwards, I hated not being able to mingle with everyone and answer questions. I hated not being able to have that special moment to encourage someone. I love inspiring people, especially kids in schools. I was unhappy about not being able to be "part" of conversations. I hated family dinners and get-togethers because most people made no attempt to communicate with me.

Corrie: Sam had a tendency to withdraw when out with friends when the conversation wasn't directly pertaining to him. I even saw it at the family dinner table when we had extended family members and friends over, as his difficulty in following the conversation between several people at one time was too hard for him to follow and understand.

Sam transitioned to a cochlear implant. While continuing to use hearing aids, I

recognized that they only provided me with sound awareness. I understood nothing that was spoken and for 15 years I made that work. I think the turning point for my considering a cochlear occurred after four years of marriage. I felt I was cheating my wife (who is hearing) out of "normal" moments. I longed to lay on the hammock, have her head rest on my chest, and be able to simply chat with her. I wanted to have the ability to talk in the dark during an early morning or late night drive. When I combined that with the lack of connecting with my audiences, I felt it was time to pursue a CI.

Life changed for Sam both personally and professionally after implantation. I don't think words can describe how getting a CI has changed things in a positive way. I am falling in love with music all over again. Here in my office I am listening to music. It is unexplainable how wonderful this moment is! My CI has given me what I once had and lost. Every morning I put on my CI and the "magic" happens - I understand sounds! I love how it has opened the door to new things and to more intense conversations with my wife, including being able to just walk and hold hands and not have to stop and stare at her lips or only sign to each other.

Corrie: Sam and I have been able to experience "normal" couple things like talking from different rooms, watching and understanding TV together, finally being able to listen and enjoy music together, and being able to have conversations in the dark, especially while we are driving in the car at night. The level of our verbal communication has skyrocketed.

Sam: Professionally, it's just another chapter in my book, another page in this journey called life. It has allowed me to have better in-person meetings, to be more off-the-cuff in my shows, and to interact with my volunteers on stage as I used to do before I lost my hearing. I just recently performed an old routine of mine last weekend that I have not performed in 15 years due to being deaf. You have to hear and understand the words in order to make the routine work. The routine is so funny and fun and it's back in my show! I cried! The CI allowed that magic to happen. I have already inspired over half a million students in 45 states with my motivational show DEAFinitely Magic. Having the CI has allowed me to interact with the students more and to expand my talk on the technology available for those of us who are deaf.

Corrie: I've also loved seeing him be able to respond and react in the moment. For so long, he had to fake understanding with generic comments. With the CI, he now understands what is said and can respond right away, usually with a quick-witted funny comment, which helps to enhance his shows and makes them that much more enjoyable for his audience.

Cochlear implants can be controversial, yet Sam walks within both the hearing and Deaf communities. Prior to surgery, I was part of the Deaf community, and I will always consider myself part of that community. While having a CI allows me to understand so much more than hearing aids ever could, the reality is that I am still deaf, using technology to help me understand. I will continue to be an advocate for the Deaf community and to sign. If I am not wearing my CI, there is NO sound. The Deaf community still loves me, LOL. I still love them, too! The Deaf community understands that this is my story, my journey. They see that I still sign and can communicate with them. I think that is what keeps me accepted into their community, as it has been mine

for over 15 years.

Sam has a daughter who is deaf. My daughter Tessa lost her hearing about a year after I and wears two BTE aids. She went to the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID) at Rochester Institute of Technology, where her teachers signed. At work, she wore a pin that says "I sign," as there is a large Deaf community in Rochester. She has been immersed in the Deaf community even more than I have. Signing was part of everyday life since she was 10 years old and remains so to date. Tessa is so excited for me and proud that I took this step to get a CI. We FaceTime almost weekly and mostly sign to each other during the chats.

Life comes at us. We need to find a way to make it work. We all have the ability to succeed. When I lost my hearing, I was scared, lost, confused, and angry. At first, I was unaware of what was out there to help me. Learning sign language was and is the best thing I did at the time. Life presented many challenges, since I had been hearing all my life and then quickly became deaf. Now that I have a CI, I can't wait to share with others how this technology renewed my life and welcomed me back to the world of sound.

Please follow Sam at www.deafinitelymagic.com and at www.samsandler.com
Photo owned by and courtesy of Sam Sandler

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Regional Conference

The HLAA chapters in Southeastern PA will be holding a one-day conference covering various hearing loss related topics on Saturday, April 29, 2023 at St. David's Episcopal Church, 763 South Valley Forge Rd., Wayne, PA. The conference will be from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p. m. and will include breakfast and lunch. The cost to attend is \$35. The church has a hearing loop, and there will be CART captioning and ASL interpreting for all presentations. The speakers will be Gael Hannan and Linda Kozma-Spytek.

Gael is a renowned author, humorist, and speaker on hearing loss issues. As a leading international advocate, she sees her mission as helping people better understand life with hearing loss. She writes regularly for hearing-related publications, including Hearing Health & Technology Matters and Canadian Audiologist. Both of her critically acclaimed books, *The Way I Hear It: A Life with Hearing Loss*, written as part memoir and part survival guide, and *Hear & Beyond: Live Skillfully With Hearing Loss* (co-authored with Shari Eberts, an HLAA Board member), have helped readers around the world to successfully embrace their own hearing challenges. Gael will do a book signing of the latter book and will speak on several topics, including her favorite – bluffing. You can learn more about Gael at her webpage, www.gaelhannan.com.

Linda is a consultant and professional adviser to HLAA on technology. She currently co-leads the Industry Consumer Alliance for Accessible Technology (ICAAT) project under the auspices of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing Technology Rehabilitation Engineering

Research Center (DHH Tech RERC) at Gallaudet University. Before coming to HLAA, she was a senior research audiologist at Gallaudet University, where she co-directed the DHH Tech RERC for seven years and co-led the Network of Consumer Hearing Assistive Technology Trainers (N-CHATT) project in cooperation with HLAA. She also does work in the areas of hearing aid compatibility and Bluetooth wireless connectivity for hearing devices. Her presentation will cover the latest exciting updates to Bluetooth technology and what it means to those with hearing loss.

If you wish to register or have any questions, contact Mike Miles at mikemiles_19087@yahoo.com. You can find the registration form at hlaa-pa.org/docs/AprilConf2.pdf. Registrants do not need to be HLAA members. Anyone with an interest in hearing loss is welcome, so please spread the word. We look forward to seeing old and new faces at the conference.

Lunch and Learn

HLAA-PA will host Lunch and Learn on Saturday, May 7 at the Penn Harris Hotel, 1150 Camp Hill Bypass, Camp Hill, PA from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. The cost to attend is \$20 and includes a delicious buffet luncheon. Assistive listening devices will be provided, along with CART captioning and ASL interpreting for the presentations.

A panel with representatives from Phonak and Starkey will discuss the latest hearing aid technology, with Lori Leiman, Au.D., serving as the moderator. Lori has been an audiologist for 34 years, is a member of the Pennsylvania Advisory Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ACDHH), and serves as the professional advisor for HLAA's Capital Region Chapter.

Wendy Harkins Davis, the outreach director for the Pennsylvania Assistive Technology Foundation (PATF), will give a presentation on PATF services, including its free and low-cost loans for purchasing hearing aids and other assistive technology. Wendy's responsibilities include managing PATF's smart home technology projects and educating professionals and Pennsylvanians about PATF's programs and services. Her children's and husband's hearing loss led her into advocacy, and she serves as the entertainment chair for the HLAA-PA Walk4Hearing.

If you want to register or need additional information, contact Nancy Kingsley at kingsley@hlaa-pa.org. You can download a registration form at hlaa-pa.org/docs/LunchandLearnRegistration2023.pdf. Attendees do not need to be HLAA members.

About HLAA and its State Office, HLAA-PA

The Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA), founded in 1979, 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 by providing information, education, support and advocacy. The national support network includes the Washington, DC area office, 14 state organizations, and 200 local chapters. HLAA is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.

Hearing Loss Association of America
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HLAA-PA is the all-volunteer state office of Hearing Loss Association of America. We were established *in 2001 to carry out the mission of HLAA for Pennsylvanians with hearing loss, their families and friends.*

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!!

Assist the HLAA-PA State Director by serving on the Advisory Council or one of its committees. The Council meets periodically at locations convenient to its membership. 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:

- State Director: Nancy Kingsley (kingsley@hlaa-pa.org)
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Link to online version: tiny.cc/HearSay20231

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