

# **HLAA-NJ NEWS, VIEWS & DATES – APRIL 2016**

***Compiled by Joel Strasser, APR, Fellow PRSA, President,  
Hearing Loss Association of NJ (HLAA-NJ)***

## **Looping Pro or Looping Buddy, Are You Either or Neither?**

If you care about whether or not you or your friends or neighbors can hear or understand what's going on at your local meeting site or venue, then you are either a looping pro or a looping buddy. If you care about it avidly enough to encourage your friends to help get your facility looped so that you and they can hear better, then you are a Looping Pro, or looping proponent. You are right in the middle of New Jersey's looping effort. As a looping proponent, you've probably got as many as five friends or associates who are also waging a calling and letter writing campaign with yours and their favorite facilities to get them looped so that you and they can hear better. If you are contacting as many as five facilities to get them looped at the encouragement of your friend, then you are a Looping Buddy, and your friend is the Looping Pro. If you are either, then you are a good friend of the deaf and hard of hearing, but if you are neither, you are probably letting everyone down.

An induction hearing loop is a single piece of wire installed inside a meeting room that, when activated, allows meeting attendees and audience members to switch on the T-coils located inside their hearing aids and/or cochlear implants. With T-coils switched on, the audio content of the content or program of the meeting or assemblage can be clearly heard and understood by those with either hearing aids or cochlear implants. If your meeting room or facility is not looped, or does not provide any method for meeting attendees to access the meeting's business or content, then they are not compliant with either Federal (Americans with Disabilities Act -- ADA) or State laws and regulations requiring accessibility, as constitutionally guaranteed to all.

Like anything else in life, if you want something, you must ask for it. As a hearing-challenged person, if you need to hear it, you've got to understand it. You've got to insist. And, when insisting takes longer or doesn't work, you've got to persist. Some people will object, or just ignore you. Why? It's not their problem. Or, to them, maybe they see it as a distraction. Or, perhaps it's a cost factor. Whatever – if you need it, it's your constitutional right to have it, so you can understand -- just like everybody else. Don't be timid. It's the law.

HLAA-NJ will soon add a powerful collection of tools to our website designed to help New Jersey hearing loss advocates marshal resources to strongly increase looping and other forms of improved communications accessibility throughout the state. It will be up to our readers and others throughout the state to put these tools to active use.

When completed, the HLAA-NJ website will provide these features that looping and accessibility requesters can use:

- Backgrounder on Looping Explained: What and How?
- NJ looping installers listing or directory
- List of target facilities where complaints have been filed
- Facility-type eligibility categories, as compiled by Past President Arlene Romoff
- Sample/template complaint letters, for others to follow or emulate
- Names of committee members/activists who have expressed interest in helping
- Sample compliance certifications and graphic symbols
- NJ Accessibility directory (in progress)
- Looping USA directory

As suggested by Past President Arlene Romoff, the following are examples of public venues in New Jersey that should have looping or other assistive listening systems. If they don't, we encourage you to request them:

- Community rooms and auditoriums at senior centers and 55+ communities
- Library meeting rooms
- College and school auditoriums/theaters
- Public rooms at Ys
- Hospital public meeting rooms
- Council/legislative chambers/meetings at town, county and state levels
- Courtrooms (many currently have wide area ALDs that are largely ineffective, or individual ALD devices with dead batteries)
- Theaters, most generally have ALDs, but check if they work for **you**
- Town Hall meetings by the Governor
- Places of worship (not covered by law, but can handled by private requests)

The way we see it – it's a five-step process to get accessibility. How long it takes will vary, but these are the steps you **HAVE** to take. But, don't **YOU** be the one to delay the process.

**STEP ONE:** Call the facility and ask to speak to the manager. Explain to the manager that you are a regular visitor or patron of their facility, that you value and enjoy your relationship, but that you have a problem hearing the content of their programs or meetings. Explain to them that there are simple steps they can take to remedy the

situation, including placement of a simple wire induction loop system that would make it easier for you to hear when you activate the T-coil in your hearing aid. Tell them that as a person with a hearing disability you have the legal right and obligation to advise them that there are both State and Federal regulations that they should follow to insure that you and other customers, clients or patrons with hearing loss that require them to make reasonable accommodations for you to hear and understand the information or program content of what they have to offer. Ask them when they expect to be in compliance and tell them that you plan to remain in contact with them until the situation is rectified. Also, ask who is the overall person in charge of their facility. Keep a telephone log of whom and when you spoke to them, and offer to be back in touch with them within 30 days.

**STEP TWO:** At the same time as your initial telephone call, send both the manager you have spoken to as well as the overall person in charge of that facility written letters reiterating all or much of the above by US postal mail. Advise them that you are sharing your experiences with the Hearing Loss Association of New Jersey (HLAA-NJ), and that you expect to check with them again in 30 days to determine if their facility has made these needed changes and come into compliance with both State and Federal regulations as they relate to providing reasonable communications accessibility to persons with hearing disabilities. (Please note that sample letters of request and complaint will soon be posted on the HLAA-NJ website for readers to either copy or use as models.) Please forward one copy of each of your request/complaint letters, complete with recipient's postal mailing addresses, to [joel.strasser@hearingloss-nj.org](mailto:joel.strasser@hearingloss-nj.org).

**STEP THREE:** On receipt of your copy of your written request/complaint, HLAA-NJ will then forward a Looping/Accessibility Advisory to the same facility, advising them on how to comply and offering them the names of qualified installers whom they can contact to complete their looping installation. The advisory will also request that they advise us within 30 days on how they plan to accommodate the requestor's complaint.

**STEP FOUR:** If the facility either does not respond after 30 days, or provides an ambiguous delay, HLAA-NJ would then forward a Non-Compliance Advisory, indicating that if there is no anticipated plan for movement toward compliance within the next succeeding 30 days, we would then advise the requester to seek recourse through either or both the State or Federal governmental level, or with non-government legal counsel, depending on specific circumstances.

**STEP FIVE:** If the facility does comply, HLAA would then issue and provide an HLAA-NJ signed Notice of Compliance, a mountable plaque that can be posted at each such facility, which would essentially state that the facility has been equipped with either a looping system that meets the IEC 60118-4 international standard, or such other

accessibility tool that places the facility in full compliance with State and Federal regulations.

## **HLAA-NJ Assembling List of Looping Installers for New Jersey**

Looping installers in or near New Jersey who would like to be listed in an active directory to work on projects, facilities or venues inside the State of New Jersey are being asked to make contact with HLAA-NJ so that we can refer you for projects being planned or researched. Also, facility managers or owners who have used looping installers to satisfactorily complete projects within New Jersey are asked to recommend such installers by providing us with company names and contact information so that their services can be listed in a statewide directory now being compiled for use by HLAA-NJ and by state officials who seek to refer projects for subsequent installation.

To list installers in the New Jersey Looping Installers directory, please send information directly to: [joel.strasser@hearingloss-nj.org](mailto:joel.strasser@hearingloss-nj.org), or telephone 732-415-7556. Be sure to include company name, e-mail address and business telephone numbers, and the name of the company's principal contact or project manager for looping installations. In addition, please let us know if there is any cost involved for providing an estimate, and if you have any comments, good or bad, on the quality of the installer's workmanship and/or installation quality.

## **Last Call for H. S. Scholarship Applications, May 1 Application Deadline Fast Approaching**

In HLAA-NJ's "quest for the best" and on-going effort to reach more college scholarship applicants than ever before, Scholarship Chair Latisha Porter-Vaughn has announced that additional publicity about the annual grants will be expanded directly through flyers and mailings to both high school guidance counselors and audiologists offices throughout the state of New Jersey. With anticipated higher numbers of scholarship applications, the competition is expected to tighten resulting standards for each of the four HLAA-NJ scholarships to be awarded this high school year to students seeking to continue their education. With funding made possible in part by the successful Garden State Walk4Hearing in October, four scholarships of \$1,000 each are being offered to successful candidates.

HLAA-NJ's scholarship program is designed to encourage and support young students by publicly celebrating their successes and achievements with hearing loss. Aligned with the HLAA-NJ goal to bring awareness to life challenges of hearing loss, the application requires a thoughtful essay on how hearing loss has impacted the student's life, and how its challenges have been met.

Scholarship winners will be announced in May, and an award ceremony and celebration open to all will be held on Sunday, June 5th from 2 to 4 PM, at the East Brunswick Public Library.

With the official application posted online at [www.hearingloss-nj.org](http://www.hearingloss-nj.org), and limited to online submissions by the application deadline of May 1, 2016, time is of the essence. Application success has been shown to increase with early assembly of the required documentation, including drafting the required essay. Questions concerning the application or application process are welcome and may be addressed to Latisha Porter-Vaughn, HLA-NJ Scholarship Chair at [latisha.porter-vaughn@hearingloss-nj.org](mailto:latisha.porter-vaughn@hearingloss-nj.org)

## **Health Fair on April 9<sup>th</sup>; How They Help HLAA-NJ, Hearing Loss Folks Throughout the State**

Saturday, April 9<sup>th</sup> is the next local or statewide health fair that HLAA-NJ will participate in, so spread the word that the usual health fair amenities will be available on Saturday when the next statewide health fair opens at Neptune High School's Performing Arts Center on April 9<sup>th</sup> from 12 noon to 4 PM.

Health fairs are popular with New Jersey folks young and old because they are great places to pick up health-related literature, freebie gifts that exhibitors like to give out and also provide opportunities for early free screening tests for all kinds health issues from blood pressure checks to early hearing assessments. They are also places where HLAA chapters as well as the HLAA-NJ state association can provide membership literature for the organization, as well as provide their members with opportunities to interact with the general public to answer questions about hearing loss and the many technological solutions available to provide assistive listening help for people. For some, the hearing screening could provide a first indication of hearing loss.

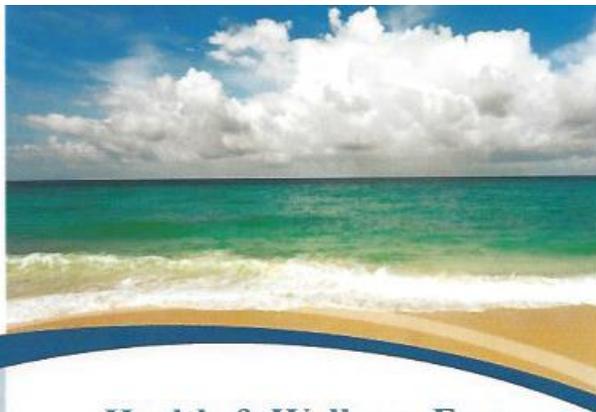
We encourage participation at these health fairs at every opportunity, and generally recommend at least three ways HLAA can help. First, offer to staff a table where a chapter member can pass out helpful printed information about hearing loss, and also answer questions. Frequently, a casual conversation with a health fair attendee can result in attracting new members to your monthly meetings.

In offering to assist at health fairs, HLAA members can also suggest audiologists who may be interested in participating by either staffing another table to sign up people for free hearing screenings at their nearby office location, or perhaps be provided with another small room or quiet space where actual on-site screenings can be conducted.

Many health fair visitors who may have never seen caption telephones may also be interested in seeing CapTel or similar telephone devices demonstrated onsite, and CapTel is usually available to provide such demonstrations. CapTel is usually a

sponsor of many HLAA events and activities, and as such can usually set up at any appropriate health fair in New Jersey. All they generally need would be one table, and access to a nearby electric outlet, to power their devices. The phone devices are usually provided without cost to applicants whose doctors can certify to their hearing loss.

For further help and information about participating in a community health fair, please write to [joel.strasser@hearingloss-nj.org](mailto:joel.strasser@hearingloss-nj.org), or call 732-415-7556.



## Health & Wellness Expo

For

Deaf, Deaf-Blind, Hard of Hearing and Late-Deafened  
Community Members, Families, and Friends

**Saturday, April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2016**

**12:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.**

**Neptune High School**

**Atrium and Performing Arts Center**

**55 Neptune Boulevard, Neptune, NJ 07753**

Free Health Screenings

Presentations on Health Topics

Information Booths

Community Resources

### Free Health Screenings:

- Blood Pressure
- Cholesterol
- Glucose
- BMI
- Stroke Risk Assessment

Presented by:

Meridian Health's  
Deaf/Hard of Hearing  
Community Advisory  
Committee

New Jersey Division of the Deaf  
and Hard of Hearing (NJDDHH)

Neptune School District

Organizations interested in  
participating, contact  
[jansbach@meridianhealth.com](mailto:jansbach@meridianhealth.com)

ASL Interpreters and CART provided

Other accommodations are available

Register in advance to be entered in  
a Door Prize Drawing

For more information or to register, call  
1-800-DOCTORS

## **Chapter News for April**

**HLAA-Morris County Chapter** has planned a luncheon social get-together for **Sunday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016** with details to follow as time and location become available. It's a nice time to get to know each other better. Come and enjoy our fellowship.

In addition, HLAA-Morris County seeks to attract 18 - 35 year olds so they can start their own group. Please pass this information on to anyone in that age group. Questions may be directed to [Pat.Dobbs@HLAA-NJ.Org](mailto:Pat.Dobbs@HLAA-NJ.Org).

**HLAA-Paterson Chapter** will hold its April chapter meeting and open house on **Saturday, April 16, 2016** from 1:30 to 3:30 PM at the Paterson Main Public Library, 250 Broadway, Paterson, NJ 07501. All subsequent meetings for 2016 will be held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of each month, with sessions now set as far as May 21<sup>st</sup>. The Hearing Loss Association of America is the nation's leading organization representing people with hearing loss. With 48 million (20 percent) of all Americans having some degree of hearing loss, making it the third major public health issue after heart disease and arthritis, attendance is encouraged by those with hearing loss or who have a family member with hearing loss, would like support from others in the hearing loss community or want questions answered about hearing loss. We also look forward to any suggestions, support and resources that can assist us in serving our local deaf and hard of hearing community."

**HLAA-Middlesex County Chapter**, which meets on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of every month, except for July and August, will hold its next meeting on **Tuesday, April 19<sup>th</sup>** at 7:30 PM at First Baptist Church of South Plainfield, 201 Hamilton Blvd. South Plainfield, NJ. January's and February's meetings had to be cancelled because of inclement weather conditions. If you would like to attend please contact Marie Nordling by e-mail: [manord63@yahoo.com](mailto:manord63@yahoo.com) and check for the program update.

**HLAA-Essex County Chapter** will meet **Saturday, April 2, 2016**, 10:30 AM to 1:00 PM, in the Auditorium of United Way of Montclair, 60 S. Fullerton Ave., Montclair, NJ, First Anniversary Celebration, Program: Guest Speaker, Mark C. Alexander, Professor of Law and Associate Dean for Academics, former senior advisor to President Barack Obama, speaking on: "Your Ability, You're the Only One That Can Use It." Light refreshments will be served.

**HLAA-South Jersey Shore Chapter** will meet **Thursday, April 21, 2016.** This group meets on the third Thursday of each month from 5:30 PM to 8 PM, with presentations starting at 6 PM, at Cape Regional Medical Center, Maruchi Room, 2 Stone Harbor Boulevard, Cape May Court House, NJ 08210. Interested participants are encouraged to make further contact with Carolyn Richards at [Carolyn.richards@hearingloss-nj.org](mailto:Carolyn.richards@hearingloss-nj.org)

**HLAA-Bergen County Chapter** plans no regular general membership meetings for the immediate future while the Chapter works to install a major looping system in its traditional meeting place, the Ethical Culture Society building in Teaneck, NJ. Until the looping project is complete, the Chapter welcomes participation from those interested in the local Bergen County looping effort, as well as contact from interested potential members and leaders, who are invited to contact Ken Keuhlen at [kbk1011@hotmail.com](mailto:kbk1011@hotmail.com)

## **CAPTIONED LIVE THEATER PERFORMANCES IN NJ**

*By Arlene Romoff*

Below is a listing of the Open Captioned performances at the five theaters in NJ that provide one open captioned performance per production, for the balance of this season. All of them provide discounted ticket prices. To order tickets, call the box office and request to be seated in view of the captioning - and be sure to request their discounted price.

### **Paper Mill Playhouse - Millburn, NJ – 973-376-4343**

<http://www.papermill.org/about-us/audience-info/accessibility-info.html>

Pump Boys and Dinettes - Sunday, May 1 at 7 PM

West Side Story - Sunday, June 26 at 7 PM

### **George Street Playhouse - New Brunswick, NJ – 732-246-7717**

<http://www.georgestreetplayhouse.org/accessibility.php>

Open-captioned performances for patrons with hearing impairments follow below:

*My Name is Asher Lev.* April 30; 2 PM

### **McCarter Theater - Princeton, NJ—609-258-2787**

[http://www.mccarter.org/VisitorInfo/VisitorDefault.aspx?page\\_id=32](http://www.mccarter.org/VisitorInfo/VisitorDefault.aspx?page_id=32)

Tickets are a discounted \$25 each

All the Days - Saturday, May 21 at 3 PM

### **Two River Theater - Red Bank, NJ—732-345-1400**

<http://www.tworivetheater.org/about/accessibility.php>

Tickets are a discounted \$25 each

Pericles, Saturday, May 7, at 3 PM	
I Remember Mama, Saturday, June 25, at 3 PM	

**State Street Theater – New Brunswick, NJ – 732-246-7469**

Write to: Jackie.neill@co.middlesex.nj.us  
 Reserved seat tickets are \$7.00 each

**For open captioned performances in NYC**, one must register with TDF at their website - [www.tdf.org](http://www.tdf.org) and click on Accessibility Programs and follow instructions. Tickets need to be ordered in advance and are mailed.  
<https://www.tdf.org/nyc/33/TDFAccessibilityPrograms>

**IMPORTANT DATES ON THE 2016  
 HLAA-NJ STATE CALENDAR**

Members and friends of HLAA-NJ are cordially invited to attend business meetings and other functions of HLAA-NJ as we meet at various times during the year to plan and finalize the activities of the state association. Help us further our collective mission to represent and provide New Jerseyans with hearing loss with information, education, support and advocacy outreach that allows them to function in mainstream society, and enhance their quality of life, while raising awareness of hearing health/hearing loss.

Our successful initiatives have included bringing captioned movies and open captioned live theater to NJ, improving patient care in hospitals/medical settings, an annual scholarship program for high school seniors with hearing loss, bringing captioned telephone and conference call services to NJ, ensuring full communications access at public events, and advocating for increased funding and staffing at agencies and organizations serving people with hearing loss.

**May – 2016**

Hearing Loss Association of New Jersey  
Board of Trustees Meeting  
Saturday, May 7, 2016  
1:00 PM to 5:00 PM  
East Brunswick Public Library  
2 Jean Walling Civic Center  
East Brunswick, NJ 08816-3529

**June – 2016**

[Hearing Loss Association of America](#)  
Annual Convention  
Thursday, June 23 to Sunday, June 26, 2016  
Washington Hilton  
1919 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20009 US

**August – 2016**

Hearing Loss Association of New Jersey  
Board of Trustees Meeting  
Saturday, August 6, 2016  
1:00 PM to 5:00 PM  
East Brunswick Public Library  
2 Jean Walling Civic Center  
East Brunswick, NJ 08816-3529

**October – 2016**

New Jersey Walk4Hearing  
Saturday, October 16, 2016  
10:00 AM to 1:00 PM  
Mercer County Park  
Hughes Drive  
West Windsor, NJ

**November – 2016**

Hearing Loss Association of New Jersey  
Board of Trustees Meeting  
Annual Meeting  
Saturday, November 19, 2016  
1:00 PM to 5:00 PM  
East Brunswick Public Library  
2 Jean Walling Civic Center

East Brunswick, NJ 08816-3529

**NEWS from HLAA-NATIONAL:**

Please note that all newsletters from HLAA-National will be sent separately to all members of this distribution list as they are issued by our national office.

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