

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

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

## **The Year Ahead for New Jersey's Hearing Loss Community**

Good morning and Happy New Year to all our readers. As we celebrate and embark on HLAA-NJ's 20<sup>th</sup> year of active operation as NJ's state association representing a sizable portion of our state's hearing loss community, I'd like to welcome all to help become a part of the fabric of this year's active and ambitious program.

As noted below in our 2016 annual calendar of statewide HLAA-NJ events and activities, we cordially invite more of our general members to join us at our quarterly board of trustee meetings. So that we know how many to prepare for, we would ask that you RSVP back to our corresponding secretary two weeks in advance of each meeting you'd like to attend. We are especially interested in welcoming new people who would like to serve as committee chairs or co-chairs for any of our various activities or functions, and are especially interested in seeking and welcoming talented volunteers. Please feel free to contact me directly at [joel.strasser@hearingloss-nj.org](mailto:joel.strasser@hearingloss-nj.org), or by telephone at 732-415-7556.

Most recently, we've noted increased interest in helping NJ residents and members improve their efforts to achieve accessibility improvements in the various public and community venues they regularly visit and patronize. From libraries and museums, to theaters, auditoriums and public and community meeting rooms, our Constitution as well as both State and Federal regulations contain lawful guarantees that insure that all people, including those with hearing loss, have equal access to the program and legal content of all meetings and events held in these public and group locations. Most recently, we have been approached directly by New Jersey's State director of civil rights with his offer to cooperate with us as a state association to help mount an aggressive campaign to provide improved accessibility through such efforts as looping, captioning and other assistive listening techniques and technologies to bring this about.

So, in support of improved looping and accessibility efforts throughout the State, we plan to meet with State representatives sometime in January to scope out a plan to make this happen. We should also note that Dr. David Alexander and the State's DDHH has advised us of their active support of this effort. Needless to say, we will probably need the cooperation of all and others in the organization, and advise you to stand by so that we can ask for your active

help and cooperation in this important effort. In addition to communicating with each of these facilities to ask for their compliance, we'll be developing an HLAA-NJ compliance certification emblem that they will want to display onsite, as well as an accessibility directory that they will want to be listed in. We'll also want to hear from members and friends who may be interesting in helping us develop some of these tools of compliance, so please don't be shy in contacting us to tell us of your interest.

During this year, we'd also like to expand our advocacy outreach efforts. At minimum, we'd like to ask that each chapter plan to partner with at least one other organization of their choosing to participate in holding a community health fair somewhere in their own community. If you want to do more than one, that's fine. A good time would be in the month of May, which is Better Hearing & Speech Month, but any time during the year would be great. Participation should include an audiologist to conduct hearing screenings, an HLAA-NJ table to hand out membership literature and answer questions, and from my personal experience, it should not be hard to interest one or more companies to show and demonstrate their lines of caption telephones.

Within the past year, we increased our scholarship levels to \$1,500 per student beneficiary and raised our total number of scholarships granted to four per year. It will be our intent this year to maintain this expanded scholarship effort, and also to create a Scholarship Alumni Association to help attract younger and more varied talent to our organization and for our Board of Trustees.

I am personally thankful to my predecessor past presidents Linda Schaab and Arlene Romoff, for their personal advice and mentorship, and like them, I'm most interested in adding more chapters where we can be of service, and would ask any and all potential chapter leaders to please contact me personally if they are interested in starting a new chapter for communities we don't currently serve. I'm generally reachable at [jjas888@aol.com](mailto:jjas888@aol.com), or by telephone at 732-415-7556.

Since our existing methods of raising funds for the state association have not proved timely for our projected budgeting needs as a state association, we will be devoting some of our efforts into exploring other fund-raising alternatives that are more timely and transparent.

Finally, since it is our 20<sup>th</sup> year of successful operation as a state association, we'd like to explore our options and come up with a suitable activity to promote and celebrate HLAA-NJ's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a state association. Again, we welcome additional suggestions and volunteers as we seek the talent, venues and ideas to help plan and carry this out.

Most sincerely,

Joel

Joel Strasser,

HLAA-NJ State President

## **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.

### **February – 2016**

Hearing Loss Association of New Jersey  
Board of Trustees Meeting  
Saturday, February 20, 2016  
1:00 PM to 5:00 PM  
East Brunswick Public Library  
2 Jean Walling Civic Center  
East Brunswick, NJ 08816-3529

### **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

## **Chapter News for January**

**HLAA-Morris County Chapter's** January meeting will be held **Saturday, January 9th**  
at Summit Speech School, 705 Central Avenue, New Providence, NJ. Coffee and

conversation is 10:00 to 10:30 AM, and the presentation is from at 10:30 AM to 12:30 PM. The topic is "**Hearing beyond the ear....more goes on than you think!**," or Listening - the receiving and processing of auditory information, the breakdowns that can occur and strategies to be able to hear better, presented by two well-known local audiologists, Karen Kushla and Craig Barth.

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 January chapter meeting and open house on **Saturday, January 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 for February 20<sup>th</sup>, March 19<sup>th</sup>, April 16<sup>th</sup> and 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. As President of the chapter, Sharieff Bugg says that "the journey to our upcoming Open House was filled with many bumps in the road, but we did it. We worked hard to plan, train, and develop the structure of our chapter, and look forward to introducing our wonderful leadership team to the community and sharing our platform for the 2016 calendar year. 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, January 19<sup>th</sup>** at 7:30 PM at First Baptist Church of South Plainfield, 201 Hamilton Blvd. South Plainfield, NJ. 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, February 6, 2016**, 11 AM to 1:00 PM, at the South Orange Public Library, 65 Scotland Road, South Orange, NJ. Program: Janice S. Lintz, Hearing Access Consultant, Consumer Advocate, Journalist and Traveler, will speak on "Hearing Access & Innovations" and Motivating Teens That They Can. Light refreshments will be served.

**HLAA-South Jersey Shore Chapter** puts meetings on hold during the winter months, and will pick up in the Spring. They continue doing advocacy and online support and personal meetups. 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>

A Bronx Tale - Sunday, March 6 at 7 PM

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:

*Nureyev's Eyes*: February 20; 2 PM

*Sex With Strangers*: March 26; 2 PM

*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

A Piano Lesson - Saturday, January 30 at 3 PM

The Mousetrap - Saturday, March 19 at 3 PM

All the Days - Saturday, May 21 at 3 PM

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

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

Tickets are a discounted \$25 each

<i>Lives of Reason</i>	Saturday, February 6 at 3pm
<i>Ropes</i>	Saturday, March 19 at 3pm
<i>Pericles</i>	Saturday, May 7 at 3pm
<i>I Remember Mama</i>	Saturday, June 25 at 3pm

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

Write to: [Jackie.neill@co.middlesex.nj.us](mailto: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>

**NEWS from HLAA-NATIONAL:**

**ADVOCACY**

**FCC Passed New Hearing Aid Compatibility Rules**

The new Hearing Aid Compatibility (HAC) rules are meant to drive innovation for wireless voice technologies by requiring all future voice communications technologies to be HAC compliant, making developers consider this early in the design processes. Additionally, the HAC rules now cover traditional wireless service (i.e., cellular) and IP-based communications services like Wi-Fi Calling and Voice-over-LTE. Further, all wireless handsets are now required to be accessible by people using hearing aids and cochlear implants. This is meant to give people who use hearing assistance technologies the same range of device choices observed by consumers without hearing loss.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION *FCC News***

**FCC Aims to Improve Wireless Emergency Alerts**

In efforts to strengthen emergency communications, the FCC released a *Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) In the Matter of Improving Wireless Emergency Alerts and Community Initiated Alerting* [PS Docket No. 15-91]. Some of the main issues the NPRM is seeking stakeholder input on include:

- Increasing the maximum WEA characters length from 90 characters to 360 characters;
- Adding a fourth message type, "Emergency Governmental Information" which would allow for alerting authorities to send out information concerning shelter locations, boil water advisories and other pertinent life and property saving information that comes in the wake of an initial emergency message;
- The technical feasibility of the provision of multilingual WEA messages; and
- Revising the rules to require the geotargeting of WEA messages to be more precise.

Once the NPRM is published in the Federal Register, stakeholders (e.g., the public, mobile phone manufacturers and service providers, organizations representing the interests of people with disabilities, academics, emergency managers, etc.) will have 30 days to submit comments and 60 days to submit reply comments. HLAA will be responding.

### **HLAA Passes 9,000 Facebook Likes This Week**

Facebook and Twitter are two excellent ways to increase the visibility of HLAA, Walk4Hearing and our Chapters! Please encourage your friends and colleagues to "like" the HLAA and Walk4Hearing pages.

<https://www.facebook.com/HearingLossAssociation>

[Twitter.com/hlaa](https://twitter.com/hlaa)

### **HLAA to Exhibit at NBC4 Health & Fitness Expo**

Come visit us at **Booth 1640** at the NBC4 Health & Fitness Expo, January 9 and 10 at the Washington Convention Center. See more at the official website.

## **ADVOCACY**

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) has announced that it is exploring the feasibility of conducting a negotiated rulemaking that would ensure captioning of in-flight entertainment and videos, better-defined service animals, as well as carrier reporting of disability service requests, among other issues. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) does not apply to airplanes in flight, which are governed by the Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA). While there is some split of authority, the prevailing rule is that private individuals may not bring suit under the ACAA, so the disability access issues can only be brought to the attention of the DOT. To learn more and submit your comments no later than January 6, 2016, check the HLAA National website.

## **PUBLIC AWARENESS**

### **Survey on Banking for People with Hearing Loss**

The World Institute on Disability (WID) and the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) are conducting a brief 10- to 15-minute survey about access to and use of banking and financial institutions for people with hearing loss.

Results from this survey will be used to inform the financial and banking industry as to best practices to make information and services more accessible to people with hearing loss. No individual identifying data or characteristics will be provided to any outside agency, organization or business. All responses will be combined and no individual responses will be made available. After the completion of the study, all contact information will be destroyed. Check the HLAA National website for further details.

## WEBINARS

December 16, 8 p.m.-9 p.m., Christine Cassel, M.D., president and CEO of National Quality Forum, will present *Aging America and Hearing Loss: The PCAST Report Explained*. See the Schedule page for more information. Webinar times are Eastern Standard Time. All webinars are free, captioned, and recorded. The recordings are posted on the Webinar Replay page of the National HLAA website.

## CONVENTION 2016/IFHOH CONGRESS

### **ATTENTION STATE AND CHAPTER LEADERS**

HLAA State and Chapter Leaders, please plan to attend special sessions in the afternoon on Wednesday, June 22. Additional information about the Convention and leader workshops will be posted on our website at [hearingloss.org/content/chapter-news](http://hearingloss.org/content/chapter-news). The leader registration guidelines and form are also posted on that page.

Also of note, the HLAA Board of Trustees meeting has been moved to Wednesday evening to make way for two plenary sessions on Thursday morning

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