

HLAA-NJ NEWS, VIEWS & DATES – MAY 2016

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

Hearing Aid(s) Could be Free, If You Meet NJ's Hearing Aid Project Requirements

Free refurbished hearing aids for eligible low-income seniors are available through a new, innovative initiative launched by the New Jersey Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DDHH), Montclair State University, and Sertoma/Hearing Charities of America.

Eligibility is currently limited to those individuals who are at least 65 years of age, are New Jersey residents, and have an income not exceeding 250% of the federal poverty level - \$26,575 if single; \$32,582 if married.

The project involves collecting used hearing aids, reconditioning the devices and dispensing to eligible New Jersey residents. When the hearing devices are no longer needed by project participants, they would be returned to the project and made available for another consumer.

Here is the website from which to download the appropriate forms to apply for free devices. There are separate forms for PAAD members, and for those who are not PAAD members: <http://www.nj.gov/humanservices/ddhh/home/hearingaidproject.html>

Open Captioning Provides Universal Access To Women's Networking Confabs in May

Open captioning is offered at two "Women for Women" networking conferences scheduled for two different sites during May, and for the benefit of those with hearing loss, there is generally no more universal access substitute for natural hearing, as both meetings are being provided with CART captioning from gavel to gavel. Open captioning provides on-screen captioning using words that every attendee can see without the need for any special requests.

Those interested in attending should mark their calendars for either **May 3, 2016** at 6 to 9 PM in Paramus, or **May 18, 2016**, from 6 to 9 PM, in Jersey City. The Paramus function will be held May 3 at The Terrace, at 299 Paramus Road, Paramus, and registration and sign-up details are available at <https://exposure.webconnex.com/w4wlive>. The second "Women for Women" event will be held May 18 at St. Peter's University in Jersey City from 6-9 PM, with registration details at <https://exposure.webconnex.com/w4wwaves>

Speakers and panelists at the meetings include: Amelia Duggan, editor of 201 Magazine, Larine Barratta, founder and owner of The Big Playhouse, Jacqueline Goldscheider, writer and columnist, Lisa Shamus, investor and entrepreneur, Shamus &

Company, Jennifer Sherman, head cycling instructor for Peliton Cycling, and Tracy Wolfson, sports broadcaster for CBS Sports.

Potential attendees should access the appropriate web address, above, for ticketing and other details. Registrants who are seniors should register with the discount code, Women4S.

Wanted: Computer Guru Volunteers HLAA-NJ Needs Your Website, Graphics Help

HLAA needs your help, if you are either a graphics or website guru to help our webmaster with our expanding computer needs for making improvements on both our website and our monthly newsletter. Or, if you can't volunteer long term, we are looking for one or a few good people who can assist us either on a one-time, consulting basis, or have the appropriate graphics software packages to help us finalize such elements as our looping logo, and occasional other individual online or individual offline projects. If you can assist, please contact either joel.strasser@hearingloss-nj.org, or our webmaster, bigbearnj@gmail.com, at your early convenience.

HLAA-NJ's Looping Action Center Goes Live on the Web, Just Click on www.hearingloss-nj.org , Follow the Steps

Have you had the experience of sitting in a meeting room or an auditorium and found that you could not understand what the speakers or entertainers were saying? Or, listening to a comedian and not understanding the joke or the punch line? Or, dealing with a store clerk, bank teller or information booth attendant and found that you could not understand their response to your question? It could be that the room, or information booth, or customer service desk needs to be looped. Perhaps you didn't realize that that's illegal, and if you don't do something about it, it will happen again, and again, and again. And, if you don't complain, it will never get fixed. If it's happened to you, it's time to join our statewide campaign to Loop New Jersey. What's a loop? Read on.

An induction hearing loop is 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.

Last week, our Looping New Jersey website went live and HLAA-NJ has now added 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.

Here are features you'll find when you log onto the site:

- * So You Can Hear Better; How to Use This Site
- * Best Practices in Hearing Loop Procurement; Looping explained, what and how?
- * Useful websites
- * New Jersey Looping Installers
- * Public Venues That Should Have Assistive Listening Systems
- * List of target facilities where complaints have been filed
- * Sample/Template Complaint Letters, for others to follow or emulate
- * Names of committee members / activists
- * Sample compliance certifications and graphic symbols
- * NJ Accessibility Directory
- * Documents to Explain and Clarify State and Federal Accessibility Laws
 - * New Jersey Law Summaries
 - * A Summary of Federal Disabilities Rights Laws
- * Looping America Directory
- * Looped NYC Venues for Visiting New Jerseyans
- * Looped Theaters Across the USA

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.

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, or telephone 732-475-7399. 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. Please indicate if the installer's work meets or exceeds the IEC 60118-4 international standard.

Scholarship Applications Now Being Reviewed, Winners to be Presented at June 5th Social

In HLAA-NJ's on-going effort to reach more college scholarship applicants than ever before, Scholarship Chair Latisha Porter-Vaughn has announced that as many as four HLAA-NJ scholarships will be awarded to high school students with hearing loss seeking to continue their education. With funding made possible in part by the successful Garden State Walk4Hearing in October, as many as four scholarships of \$1,000 each may be awarded 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 later this month, 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. More information about the event will be announced soon, and be sure to watch for next month's newsletter.

It's Better Hearing Month; How Health Fairs Help HLAA-NJ, Hearing Loss Folks Throughout NJ

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 of 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, or call 732-415-7556.

Chapter News for May

HLAA-Morris County Chapter will hold its next meeting on **Saturday, May 14, 2016**, from 10 AM to 12:30 PM, at the Summit Speech School, 705 Central Avenue, New Providence, NJ. Featured speaker will be Sherree Listwa, a speech pathologist for over 40 years, who received a Certificate of Clinical Competence from the American Speech/Language and Hearing Association. She is experienced with all types of communication problems. Her talk is based on living with a spouse's progressive hearing loss, and how they learned from their misunderstandings and celebrated their success.

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.

HLAA-Paterson Chapter will hold its May chapter meeting and open house on **Saturday, May 21, 2016** from 1:30 to 3:30 PM at the Paterson Main Public Library, 250 Broadway, Paterson, NJ 07501. All future meetings for 2016 will be held on the 3rd Saturday of each month. 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. For further information about

meetings or programs, please contact Sharrieff Bugg at 973-684-4608 or email Sharrieff.Bugg@hearingloss-nj.org

HLAA-Middlesex County Chapter, which meets on the 3rd Tuesday of every month, except for July and August, will hold its next meeting on **Tuesday, May 17th** at 7:30 PM at First Baptist Church of South Plainfield, 201 Hamilton Blvd. South Plainfield, NJ. If you would like program details or would like to attend please contact Marie Nordling by e-mail: manord63@yahoo.com or telephone 732-721-4183.

HLAA-Essex County Chapter will next meet **Saturday, June 4, 2016**, 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM, in the Nutley Public Library, 93 Booth Drive, Nutley. Speakers will include Captain Bruce Davis and Sergeant John L. Underwood . For questions or info about this chapter, contact Latisha Porter-Vaughn at Latisha.Porter-Vaughn@hearingloss-nj.org

HLAA-South Jersey Shore Chapter will meet **Thursday, May 19, 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

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

CAPTIONED LIVE THEATER PERFORMANCES IN NJ

By Arlene Romoff

Below is a listing of the Open Captioned performances at the 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, call the box office and ask 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 will be posted soon.

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

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.tworivertheater.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 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 & Special Looping Presentations
Annual Meeting & 20th Anniversary Celebration
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. Or, if you have not seen any recently, please go to the national HLAA site, www.hearingloss.org, and register for features and publications that you'd like to receive.

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