

HLAA-NJ NEWS, VIEWS & DATES – SUMMER 2016
Joel Strasser, APR, Fellow PRSA, President,

Compiled by

Hearing Loss Association of NJ (HLAA-NJ)

Here are the Important Walk4Hearing and KickOff dates, Walk Details and How to Contribute

Walk Kickoff Saturday, September 10, 2016 (12:00 pm to 2:00 pm)

Vidalia Restaurant

21 Phillips Avenue

Lawrenceville, NJ 08648

RSVP by September 2, 2016 to Ann Marie Olsen,

Newjerseywalk4hearing@hotmail.com or 201-724-3285

Sunday, October 16, 2016

NJ Walk4Hearing:

Mercer County Park

Hughes Drive

West Windsor and Hamilton, NJ

10 AM, Registration and Check-In

11 AM, Walk begins

Walk4Hearing events are fundraising 5K (3.1 miles) walks held across the United States. Since its formation in 2006, Walk4Hearing has raised over \$9 million dollars for programs and services for people with hearing loss, and has grown into the largest awareness and fundraising event for the [Hearing Loss Association of America® \(HLAA\)](#). Collaborating with local HLAA Chapters, Walk4Hearing educates the general public about hearing loss while easing the associated stigma. Striving to make hearing loss a public health issue, thousands of people of all ages, races, and backgrounds have come together to display their compassion for the cause and to make hearing loss an issue of national concern.

The [Walk4Hearing Call to Action](#) is catching on like wildfire! Step up for People with Hearing Loss and Communication Access is about each one of us talking personal responsibility to ask for what we need and educate others in the process. Use #CommAccess when you Tweet your ideas and photos.

This Just In: Report from HLAA Conference Floor

By Ann Marie Picard,VP
Morris County Chapter

As a first-time attendee, I was privileged to participate as a delegate at this year's HLAA convention in Washington, DC. HLAA also hosted the International Federation of Hard of Hearing People (IFHOH Congress) which provided an opportunity to meet people from different countries.

The presentations were well done and very educational. The topics included Such things as an update from the FCC on accessible communications, the Wireless industry and how mobile devices are improving, assistive technology, Various chapter presentations on chapter building and leadership, cochlear Implant advances and user experiences, hearing loop initiatives and many others. Since there were various presentations going on at the same time the hardest part was deciding which ones to attend.

Wednesday evening, the Adult Musicians with Hearing Loss (AAMLHL) had an open mike night. Our own Pat Dobbs was one of the performers. It was wonderful to hear musicians that continue to pursue their love of music despite their challenges.

One of the highlights of the convention for me was the keynote speaker Jenny Lay-Flurrie, Chair of the Disability Employee Resource Group and Chief Accessibility Officer at Microsoft. The story of her progressive hearing loss and how Microsoft worked with her to provide the accommodations she needed to grow and be successful was awesome.

There were many exhibitors including CI and hearing aid manufacturers, caption phone companies and various assistive technology. Many awards were presented at the opening session, the banquet on Saturday evening and the awards breakfast on Sunday morning.

Questions for HOH Folks to Raise Before Being Hospitalized

[As adapted from NJ Monthly Communicator by Janice S. Lintz](#)

Being a patient with a hearing loss does not have to be frightening but preparation is needed. It is important to contact the hospital as far in advance as possible to discuss and request aids or services that may be needed. Hospitals should have a designated person/office to whom such

requests should be made and to whom patients can contact in the event the hospital fails to provide the requested accommodations.

The following are recommended questions to ask your doctor and hospital prior to your stay:

1. Can your hearing aids/cochlear implant processors stay in/on during surgery or until you fall asleep?

If not, can they be placed in your ears/reattached immediately after surgery or as you leave the operating room? Bring a small container labeled with your name for storing your devices during surgery to avoid losing them.

2. Can staff wear clear surgical masks or remove them when they speak with you?

Let everyone know prior to entering the operating room if you rely on lip reading and therefore need to see people's faces. Wearing clear surgical masks or removing them when they speak with you allows you to see their lips. The entire surgery process should be discussed and reviewed with you prior to entering the operating room including, but not limited, to the IV will cause a burning sensation or the sticky tabs will be placed on your chest to monitor your heart.

3. Is a portable FM or amplifier such as a PockeTalker available?

This can improve communication even if you do not have a hearing aid and may be helpful when communicating critical medical information.

4. Is your doctor aware that your otolaryngologist or audiologist should be contacted if there is any perceived change in hearing?

Anesthesia can sometimes cause a decrease in hearing loss. Hospital personnel may need to compare or review your most recent hearing tests. You may want to bring a copy with you to the hospital.

5. How will hospital personnel be notified about your hearing loss?

All staff including nurses, doctors, anesthesiologists and recovery room staff should be aware that you have a hearing loss and how you communicate. You may have difficulty hearing when emerging from anesthesia. Hospital personnel may think you appear non-responsive or are not responding appropriately if they are not notified about your hearing loss.

6. Can a sign noting your hearing loss be posted above your bed?

This is especially important at night when your hearing aids or devices are removed and the night staff may be unaware of your hearing loss. Some hospitals may be reluctant to offer this without your requesting it because of patient privacy rights. The benefits outweigh the privacy issues. Healthcare providers tend to speak before checking your chart so the sign is important even if your chart is noted with your hearing loss.

7. Are the nurses aware that you may not be able to hear over the intercom?

The hospital should place a sticker on the intercom at the nurse's station indicating that you are hard of hearing or deaf. This will alert the staff not to use the intercom if you are unable to hear it. The staff will need to come into your room so the hospital may want to place you in a room near the nurses' station.

8. Did you pack a pad and pen for your hospital room?

A pad and pen will allow you and the staff to write down critical information and medical terms to ensure you hear them properly.

9. Are any of the medicines that will be used ototoxic and have hearing loss as a side effect?

If yes, can these be avoided? This information should be provided to your doctor even if they do not anticipate that you will receive medication. The situation may change and the consequences are serious.

10. What visual alerts does the hospital offer for emergencies and to alert you someone is at the door?

There are a variety of devices that can alert individuals with hearing loss to emergencies, to the phone ringing and/or to someone knocking at the door. Find out what the hospital has available and what is recommended based on your procedure.

11. Are assistive listening devices and/or captioning available for the television?

The remote control should have an easy to access closed captioning button. A portable DVD player or laptop with DVDs is an alternative.

Your hospital stay will be a less stressful experience if you do some advance preparation and inform the hospital about your hearing loss. Communicating your needs and limitations, and the services you require, will ensure that you and the hospital are prepared.

Portions of this article were previously published in New Jersey's Department of Human Services Monthly Communicator, March 2009.

Four HLAA-NJ Scholarship Winners Announced

This year's 2015 HLAA-NJ College Scholarship winners of our \$1,000 individual awards were presented at a special Scholarship Social event in East Brunswick, NJ, on June 5, 2016. This year's winners include:

- Kelsey Sargent, senior at Haddon Heights High School, who plans to attend Adelphi University in Garden City, NY.
- Dante Washington, senior at Hackensack High School, who plans to attend Gallaudet University, Washington, DC.
- Alphonse Napolitano, senior at Parsippany Troy Hills High School, Morris Plains, NJ, who plans to attend Montclair State University, Montclair, NJ.
- Nabeela Shollenberger, senior at Governor Livingston High School, Berkeley Heights, NJ, who plans to attend County College of Morris, Randolph, NJ.

2016 Scholarship Winners



Winners left to right, Kelsey Sargent, Alfonse Napolitano, Nabeela Shollenberger and Dante Washington

For information about this year's winners or next year's competition, please contact our Scholarship chair, Latisha Porter-Vaughn at Latisha.Porter-Vaughn@hearingloss-nj.org to offer your assistance.

Hospital Accessibility Projects in Place At Hunterdon Health, Hackensack Facilities

Efforts appear to be in place for HLAA-NJ to co-sponsor accessibility projects at both Hunterdon Health and at Hackensack University Medical Center to introduce hearing loss friendly tools and measures thanks to the efforts of Catherine O'Shea and Maryann McInerney. More details about these projects will follow in future issues of this newsletter.

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 month, 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 Jerseys](#)
- * [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 the overall person in charge of their facility is. 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 are 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](tel: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.

More on Looping from HLAA Convention Floor

By Steve Frazier HLAA New Mexico

If you were not at the convention or were one of the many who were not able to get a thumb drive and pocket folder with the GITHL Tool Kit material in them, I had promised to send you the material by email. Unfortunately, Google has changed the size of attachments they will allow for listserv emails and I've found that the material in question is simply too large to send to you using that means. Consequently, I've been attempting to reduce the size of the files but so far they still exceed allowed limits

So that you can have this material now to use in organizing or running a local looping campaign, I have temporarily posted it on a special page of the Loop New Mexico web site. You can access it by going to:

www.LoopNM.com/GITHL.html

I have posted the material that was on the thumb drive as a zipped file minus the GITHL slide presentation. The material that was in hard copy form in the pocket folder plus the slide presentation has been posted as separate files that you can download. Also posted is the current official GITHL logo that you can mount to your web site and other material used in your local looping campaign.

If you have questions on the above or on the material posted at the LNM web site, please feel free to ask them via this listserv and I'll try to answer them for you.

Best regards,

Stephen O. Frazier, Hearing Loss Support Specialist
Chair - Loop New Mexico Committee - www.LoopNM.com
hlaanm@juno.com - (505) 401-4195

Chapter News for July-August

HAAA-Morris County Chapter will hold its annual summer indoor house party on **Saturday, July 16, 2016**, from 4 to 8 PM at the home of Mary Ellen Marmo, 300 Main Street, Apt. 811, in Little Falls, NJ. Hostess will provide wine and cheese; attendees are invited to bring themselves and any food/drinks they would like to bring. Please RSVP by July 8th to either Mary Ellen at memteach@aol.com, or Pat at Pat.Dobbs@hearingloss-nj.org

In addition, HAAA-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@HAAA-NJ.Org.

HAAA-Paterson Chapter will not meet during July or August. Otherwise, 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](tel:973-684-4608) or email Sharrieff.Bugg@hearingloss-nj.org

HAAA-Middlesex County Chapter will not meet during July or August. For later program details or if you would like to attend future meetings, please contact Marie Nordling by e-mail: manord63@yahoo.com or telephone [732-721-4183](tel:732-721-4183).

HAAA-Essex County Chapter will not meet during July or August. For questions or info about this chapter, contact Latisha Porter-Vaughn at Latisha.Porter-Vaughn@hearingloss-nj.org

HLAA-South Jersey Shore Chapter will not meet during July or August.

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 a potential meeting place. 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

Non-Affiliated Group of Mutual Interest

Ocean-Monmouth Hearing Loss Support Group will meet **Sunday, September 11, 2016, from 1:30 to 3 PM**, at the Manalapan Public Library, 125 Symmes Drive, Manalapan. Program and speaker to be announced. All are invited and there is no charge to attend. Projected CART captioning will be provided to aid hearing-challenged attendees.

[Travels with Hearing Loss: Japan](#)

June 29, 2016 by Pat Dobbs



Roger and his daughter Sena

Recently, I took a three-week trip to Japan to visit my nephew, his Japanese wife and their two children. I figured this trip would offer another set of hearing-loss adventures, like the ones I experienced during my trip to Alaska in the summer of 2015, when I camped out in the wilderness accompanied only by my dog. (See blog on my trip [here](#) and [here](#) and [here](#).)



This time around I knew my hearing-loss adventures would be different than Alaska. After all, Tokyo speaks Japanese and is a major urban center with a population nearly twice the size of New York City while Alaska speaks English and is very thinly populated. As would be expected, Japan presented a completely different set of hearing-loss adventures, and a whole raft of unexpected, and delightful experiences.

Sensoji Buddhist temple in Asakusa area of Tokyo

Let's start with the transit system. I'm used to what I considered the complex subway system of New York City but Tokyo's system is another order of magnitude altogether. It's enormous; it has several completely separate systems that connect in confusing ways. It's so complex that you'll see locals consulting Google Maps to figure out how to get where they're going including the arrival and departure times (trains are always on time!).

It was in the transit system that I experienced my first Japanese hearing-loss adventure. It had almost nothing to do with hearing loss and everything to do with the consideration and thoughtfulness displayed by the Japanese. If you couldn't figure out the system, someone would always be willing to help, whether you spoke the language or not. And if they couldn't make you understand their suggestions, you would find yourself with a personal escort to your desired location and always with great courtesy.

Now let's tackle the language issue. Unless you're some kind of language-learning genius, you simply will not learn Japanese during a three-week vacation, regardless of your level of hearing. You might pick up a few words here or there, the standard "hello-goodbye-thankyou-whereisthebathroom" stuff, but basically, you'll need a translator. Anyway I sure did. And if you haven't learned how to read written Japanese (they have 3 different character sets), you can't figure it out by context, like you can when deciphering other languages that use the English alphabet.

But nonetheless, I had a great time interacting with the Japanese. I learned a (very) few words of Japanese so always needed translators. And if neither my Japanese nor their English worked, we used sign language, miming, and facial expressions (and laughter) to communicate. And

sometimes as much as we tried, our communications simply broke down. I wonder how many times I completely misunderstood what they said!

If you have a hearing impairment yourself, you probably know it can be more difficult to understand people who speak your language with an accent. So although people were kind enough to speak English with me, I often found it impossible to understand what they were saying as they spoke English with an accent. I had to fall back on smiling and saying thank you, without an inkling of what they said. But hey, it's hard for people with perfect hearing to understand accented English too.

I've written a lot about fake hearing – hearing part of what someone is saying and filling in the blanks as best we can. It's a common coping strategy for people with hearing loss. Faking your hearing is a crap shoot: sometimes you get it right and sometimes you're out in left field. In Tokyo, I often heard *"To get to the train go mmmbbbllrrmdn."* There are only so many times you can ask a stranger to repeat, repeat, repeat the directions. Eventually I would just go where their body language seemed to direct me and hoped for the best. Fortunately, nothing irretrievable ever happened.

Sometimes I thought I heard what someone was saying and only discovered my error by chance. Once I was supposed to meet a new Japanese friend and thought I was supposed to turn "right" at the corner. Through trial and error, I discovered my instructions were to turn "left" at the corner. Sure, this sort of thing can happen when you have a hearing loss. But guess what – Anyone who *doesn't* speak Japanese faces the same challenges as someone with hearing loss!

Here's the big lesson of my travels with hearing loss in Japan. When you don't speak the language in the first place, you'll experience something like living with a hearing impairment. You *won't* understand everything that's being said. You *will* rely on fake hearing. You *will* rely on the kindness of strangers, on signs and miming and laughing and making a fool of yourself. Yet most of us who have travelled to distant lands know how easily we can get the message across. We can have fun. We can eat great food, even if we don't know what it's called. We can make friends, even if we don't know how to talk to one another. We can live our lives as deeply and enjoyably as anyone. What a blessing.

Oh, and I can't forget, I got to renew my bond with my dear nephew and his family, the original reason I flew umpteen zillion miles! I remember when he was born and now he's not only

married but a father too. And of course it was wonderful to meet his wife and two sweet children.

Watch for Pat's upcoming book, [The Hearing Loss Revolution: How I Lost My Hearing and Learned a New Way of Living](#), due out November 2016. If you'd like us to let you know the minute it's available, just click [here](#).