

HLA-NJ News and Views

A Monthly Column from The Hearing Loss Association of N.J.

By Peter Yerkes, Trustee, HLA-NJ

On-Line News with a Deaf and Hard-Of-Hearing Focus

The **Monthly Communicator** is a valuable resource, so why not take the information flow a step further? Sign up for e-mails from the Hearing Loss Association of New Jersey, delivered as often as the news warrants. Sign-up is easy. Send your name and e-mail address to info@hearingloss-nj.org. And it's free.

The HLA-NJ e-mails provide an on-line news service for people with hearing loss. HLA-NJ President Arlene Romoff, a published author whose hearing loss led to a commitment to advocacy and support for the people with hearing loss, sends out informational updates several times a week. A typical e-mail might involve advocacy...such as an alert about government policy that might call for a letter of support or complaint...or coping strategies, such as how to handle the stress of noisy holiday gatherings.

Other e-mails might cover entertainment options, such as schedules for captioned theater, movies or conferences...and updates on technology to help you get the most out of the fast-changing world of telephones and relay services, assistive listening devices and other aids for people with hearing loss. Plus, you can stay current on HLA-NJ chapter meetings and programs as well as national programs and meetings sponsored by the Hearing Loss Association of America. Who will benefit from these e-mails? People with hearing loss – and their friends and family, social service professionals and government officials.

Follow HLA-NJ on Facebook. Go to www.facebook.com, and search for “Hearing Loss Association of New Jersey.” You can find news about hearing loss issues, and you can connect – or reconnect -- with friends and acquaintances. Facebook is more and more a part of our lives. Whether you are a newcomer or a Facebook veteran, it's easy to find us.

Help Us With Feedback. Please contact us at info@hearingloss-nj.org with possible topics for future columns, personal issues or problems or any other aspect of hearing loss. We're glad to hear that people like our columns, but we need feedback to help us do even better.

Get Involved. A great way to get involved is by attending chapter meetings. Information is available from info@hearingloss-nj.org, or at our website, www.hearingloss-nj.org. We have three chapters, serving Bergen, Middlesex and Ocean/Monmouth counties.

In 2011, Resolve to Join the HLA of NJ

Many people start the new year with a list of resolutions. This year, why not resolve to join with the Hearing Loss Association of New Jersey (HLA of NJ) in working on behalf of people who are deaf or hard-of-hearing? Below you will find descriptions of some of our programs/activities. Further information is available from the Hearing Loss Association of New Jersey, at info@hearingloss-nj.org, or www.hearingloss-nj.org.

Join In Walk4hearing 2011 - This year's Walk4Hearing, held on a beautiful autumn day in Mercer County Park, raised more than \$40,000 for projects to benefit people with hearing loss, ranging from college scholarships to advocacy initiatives on the state and national levels. Why not resolve to be part of Walk 2011?

Help with Action Alerts - HLA-NJ President Arlene Romoff monitors state and federal regulations affecting people with hearing loss. One recent example: the Department of Justice has proposed changing the important ADA mandates pertaining to captioned movies. They contend that only 50 percent of movies in the theaters should be captioned, a reduction which would relegate people with hearing loss to second-class status. The Alert referred readers to the Hearing Loss Association of America's website, www.hearingloss.org, for information on how to submit a letter to make your voice heard. You can take part in advocating on this and other issues, and stay in the loop. E-mail Arlene at info@hearingloss-nj.org and ask her to add your e-mail address to the HLA-NJ e-mail contact list for action alerts and other information affecting people with hearing loss.

Bring the Arts to People with Hearing Loss – Throughout 2010, HLA-NJ kept up a steady flow of news about captioned movies and live theater performances throughout New Jersey and New York. Support our efforts by treating yourself to captioned performances – many at discounted prices. And make sure the theater managers know you value these performances, and would like more.

College Scholarships – HLA-NJ awarded \$1,000 college scholarships to three outstanding high school seniors with hearing loss. They are Amanda Hamlin, 18, of Paramus, freshman at the College of New Jersey; Lauren Payne, 18, of Basking Ridge, a freshman at Susquehanna University; and Max Mandel, 18, of Spotswood, a freshman at Middlesex County

College. If you know young people who might qualify, suggest they or their parents contact HLA-NJ.

Information and Referral – We continued to provide free, expert assistance via info@hearingloss-nj.org, or phone numbers available at our website, www.hearingloss-nj.org. Contacts during 2010 ranged from a mother worried about her young child's hearing loss, to a man in his late 60s, who was in danger of losing his job because his hearing was declining. Do you know someone who needs help with hearing loss? Suggest contacting HLA-NJ.

New Book on Hearing Loss – HLA-NJ President Romoff has a new book due in March: *Listening Closely: A Journey to Bilateral Hearing*. It is available from Charlesbridge publishing (www.charlesbridge.com), www.amazon.com and bookstores. Her previous work, *Hear Again—Back to Life with a Cochlear Implant* is available from **Amazon.com**. Make sure your friends with hearing loss know about these important resources.

For HLA-NJ, one of the highlights of 2010 was the chance to join the Monthly Communicator community with this regular monthly column. Many thanks to Dr. David Alexander and to Alan Champion! This column has helped us link up with people with hearing loss across New Jersey. We look forward to getting to know even more Monthly Communicator readers in 2011; and hope you will continue to contact us with questions, concerns or comments, to join our mailing list or just to say hello.

To all Monthly Communicator readers, best wishes for the New Year.