

WESTCHESTER CHAPTER NEWS

May 2011

www.hlaawestchester.org

e-mail: hlaawestchester@gmail.com

Hearing Loss Association of America is the Nation's largest organization for people with hearing loss. HLA opens the world of communication to people with hearing loss by providing information, education, support and advocacy.



President's Column

Hi Everyone ~

**REMINDER: MAY IS BETTER
HEARING AND SPEECH MONTH**

Do you realize that individuals coming to a chapter meeting experience for the first time, an environment that is hearing loss friendly. Our Chapter, at all our meetings, sets up assistive listening devices (ALDs), and a hearing loop system because they are easy to install, portable and not too costly. New members will learn how to operate their telecoil, either on their hearing aids or on their implants, turning them into a wireless receiver. Most often, they are amazed at how much easier it is to listen through the hearing loop system. Westchester Chapter is fortunate to have captioning (CART) to ensure that everyone can participate fully, including those who cannot use ALDs. So please come to all our meetings.... don't be shy.... you will be glad you did!!

For those who did not attend our April 2nd meeting you missed a really great speaker. Jody Gill, Director of Language, Cultural and Disability Services at NYU Langone Medical Center spoke about "Effective Communication: How to Ask and What to Ask For, in Healthcare Situations". We had a wonderful crowd with lots of audience participation and it was just a delightful afternoon.

Our next meeting will take place on **Saturday, May 7th at 2:00 pm**. Our speaker for the afternoon is Jeff Wax, Director of Emotional Wellness who is from the Center for Hearing and Communication. He will speak on "Hearing Loss and Your Feelings: You Can Live with Them". This sounds like a great topic, so please try and be there!!

(Continued on Page 3)

COME TO OUR NEXT MEETING

SATURDAY – May 7th

Time: 2:00 pm

In the Cafeteria building

Jeff Wax

**Director of Emotional Wellness
Center for Hearing and Communication**

**Hearing Loss and Your Feelings:
You Can Live With Them**



Assistive listening devices are always available
as well as live **CART** captioning

Refreshments will be served

► Upcoming Chapter Meeting ◀

June meeting is the 2nd Saturday

Saturday, June 11, 2011 – The Blair and Anita Mazin Scholarship Awards presentation. The time will be announced.



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Going Green

How would you like to help the environment by receiving the HLAA Westchester Newsletter via email instead of a mailed version? Not only are you helping the environment, but helping the Chapter save money. Please notify Anita Goldwasser, Editor at anitagoldwasser@aol.com if you would like to make this change.

EDITOR'S CORRECTION

The correct date of the Westchester Chapter Walk4Hearing is Sunday, September 18, 2011, not Saturday as printed in previous Newsletters - Anita

The mention of suppliers, devices or providers within this newsletter does not signify endorsement or recommendation by HLAA Westchester.

CHAPTER NEWS

HAPPY "MAY" BIRTHDAY TO:

Laura Berger, Carolyn Bogdan, Melanie Brand, LuAnn Oakley, Sandy Spekman and Adrienne Stern

WE WISH TO THANK:

Gene Epstein for his donation to our chapter

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS:

Rita Damiano, Gene Epstein, Drina Tamburo, and Nancy Tenure

► Upcoming Events ◀

California Pizza Kitchen

Wednesday, May 11, 2011 - Fundraiser to benefit the Blair & Anita Mazin Scholarship Fund

Fire Safety Training

Sunday, May 22 Riverdale Temple, Riverdale NY.
For more information, contact Karen Ratner, kkratner@aol.com

Scholarship Awards Presentation

Saturday, June 11 For details, or to apply for a scholarship, contact Karen Ratner, kkratner@aol.com

2011 HLAA Annual Convention

June 16 - 19 Hyatt Regency Crystal City, Washington, DC – Registration info now on the HLAA national website www.hearingloss.org.

Annual Chapter Picnic

Sat., July 16 Kingsland Point Park, Sleepy Hollow, NY

Walk 4 Hearing

Sunday, August 14, 2011 – Kickoff event at Mercy College in Dobbs Ferry.

Sunday, September 18, 2011- Westchester Walk4Hearing, Mercy College in Dobbs Ferry

Contact Roberta Seidner, robertaseidner@aol.com or Steve Wolfert, swolfert@optonline.net.



Congratulations to our Chapter's Newest US Citizen



Congratulations to our own Vivien Maisey who, on April 1, 2011 took the Oath of Allegiance to the United States as a naturalized United States citizen. The Naturalization Ceremony took place at the Rockland County Court House in New City, NY.

Chapter Meeting Recap

What You Missed at Our April Meeting



Jody Gill

Did you know that the ADA requires hospitals to provide effective means of communication for patients, family members, and hospital visitors who are deaf or hard of hearing? Did you know about the Joint Commission? It accredits and certifies more than 18,000 healthcare organizations in the US and is the place to go when your health care fails to meet the standards.

As we are all aware, effective communication is particularly critical in health care settings, where miscommunication may lead to misdiagnosis and improper or delayed medical treatment.

At the NYU Langone Medical Center, Jody Gill's mission is to teach medical professionals how to comply with the ADA, and thus to insure the best possible outcome. Jody gave us some examples of ineffective communication from her experience, which struck a chord with many of us, and led to members of her audience telling their own horror stories.

Jody pointed out that communication is a two-way process. Patients should be well informed about their rights and about the most useful accommodations for their particular needs. This may be simply asking someone to face you while speaking, or to reduce the background noise – or it may be requesting an assistive listening device or an interpreter.

People considering, or undergoing, medical treatment are not in the best condition to absorb important information on which to make decisions. In spite of this, the patient is the best expert on his own disability and should insist on the means of communication and treatment which he needs. Using a friend or family member can be useful backup, but patients should insist that medical personnel must find a way to communicate with the patient directly. Hospitals must have at least one patient advocate on staff and an interpreter must be provided within a certain time frame. Any interpreter must transmit the entire verbal exchange, without comment or summarization.

Many of us have been too accepting of ineffective communication, and/or have apologized for asking for accommodations to which we are actually entitled. Jody's talk empowered us to educate ourselves on our rights and what should be available to us, and to insist on effective communication. We learned how to explain our needs clearly. We learned to make sure that we are in the best position to understand what is happening, and what the options are for our treatment. Jody showed us how to take charge, in order to make the best and most informed decision in any medical situation.

Vivien Maisey
HLAA-Westchester Vice President & Program
Coordinator

Facts about the Month of May

According to the early Roman calendar, May was the third month. Later, the ancient Romans used January 1 for the beginning of their year, and May became the fifth month. May has always had 31 days.

Several stories are passed around to show how the month of May was named. The most widely accepted explanation is that it was named for Maia, the Roman goddess of spring and growth. Her name related to a Latin word that means *increase* or *growth*.

Mothers Day was first observed in 1908. It was designated by Presidential proclamation, and was recognized officially by Congress and the President in 1914. It is celebrated in honor of Mothers on the second Sunday of May.

The Kentucky Derby takes place on the first Saturday in May at Churchill Downs, Louisville, Kentucky. It is the most famous horse race in the United States.

Source: www.entourages.com/barbs/may.htm

President's Message, Continued from Page 1

Coming up on **Sunday, May 22** - Westchester Chapter is sponsoring a FDNY Fire Safety Presentation for Deaf and Hard of Hearing people. It will be held at the Riverdale Temple, West 246th Street & Independence Ave., in Riverdale (Bronx) from **11:00 am to 2:00 pm**. CART and Hearing Loop will be provided. This will be a very informative event and our speaker will be Laura Squassoni, who is from the Fire Department, City of New York. She is Administrative Chief Inspector. At this time distribution of smoke alarm devices designed for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing will be given out to those who attend.

Our last California Pizza Kitchen fund raiser event will take place on **Wednesday, May 11th**. This event has been very successful the past several months and we are hoping that this final dinner for the Blair and Anita Mazin Scholarship Fund will be a "biggie"! Remember, it's an all day event, eat in or take out. Bring your family and friends and enjoy delicious food and at the same time you are helping to raise money for our Scholarship fund. Please remember to bring the enclosed flyer.

On Saturday, April 9, Westchester Chapter hosted a most successful AAA Defensive Driving Class. Our instructor, Jessica Randall did a fantastic job and we all passed and have now received our "diploma's"!

Please note that our June meeting will be the 2nd Saturday of the month – June 11.

Roberta Seidner

Restaurant Strategies for Hard of Hearing Individuals

Editors Note: This is the second part of a two part series on Restaurant Strategies for Hard of Hearing individuals

Tip 5: Set the Stage with Your Arrival

Look for written notices of daily specials when you arrive.

Ask for a quiet table with good lighting that is a good distance from the kitchen, the restaurant entrance, a party in progress, or where there is music or live entertainment.

Choose an upholstered booth if possible. High backs on the booth with padding can make a big difference. If there are no booths, ask for a table in a quiet corner or along the side of the room. The middle of the room is usually the worst place for someone who is hard of hearing because it provides "surround sound".

Make sure that any sunlight or bright light is behind or above you so you can best see faces to speechread and not risk tiring quickly by looking into the glare. Also consider sitting where you can't see a TV screen; the movement on the screen can be distracting.

If needed, ask that the lights be turned up. Some restaurants turn them down for ambience. It's unlikely that the staff or other diners will complain if you explain why better lighting is needed. Some restaurants have controls for lighting in individual areas.

Feel free to ask that music be turned down as well. It is also used for mood or to give the impression the place is full of happy customers, but music drowns out the sound of conversation. If the restaurant is resistant to turning down the music to meet your needs due to its atmosphere or popularity, consider going to another restaurant to eat – and please make sure the restaurant knows why it has lost a customer.

Select a table that will help you follow conversation. A round table is great for speechreading, but can be hard to find. Next best is a square table or oval one. Hearing well across a long, narrow table is difficult.

Pick your seat before anyone else sits down. Friends and family will learn to wait until you find the spot that gives you the best chance to participate in conversations. Sitting with your back to the wall can help, and if you have one hearing aid, you might do best sitting where the side on which its worn is facing the quietest side of the table. If you wear two hearing aids, you will have to decide what strategy works best for you. Move any centerpieces or items on the table that block your view.

Tip 6: Make Ordering Easy

If daily specials are not posted or are not printed in the menu, ask your waiter for a written list. It will be quicker and easier for both you and the waiter. Don't

try to bluff your way through a long recitation of specials. This is your meal and your money. You don't want surprises when your food arrives, or the disappointment of missing out on something you love because you didn't know it was available.

Take your time reading the menu and don't let yourself be rushed. This will help you be prepared for questions about what you prefer. You'll know the choice of breads for sandwiches, the kinds of salad dressing or vegetables to choose from, and the beverages available.

If you have trouble understanding the waiter, explain why. It's better to give a reason than have the person taking your order come up with an opinion about why you are being "difficult."

If all else fails, write notes to your waiter to avoid confusion and mistakes. Thank your waiter for any special consideration.

Tip 7: Try Different Conversation Strategies

No matter how well you plan and prepare, it may still be hard to hear the conversation. If all else fails, there's always that old standby of writing notes. But don't overlook other strategies.

A personal listening system can cut down on the background noise in the restaurant. You can try placing the microphone in the middle of the table to see if it picks up the voices of those sitting around the table. If this doesn't work, try passing the microphone around the table to whoever is speaking.

Consider joining friends you dine with regularly to learn some basic sign language and fingerspelling. Restaurants are great places to practice your sign language. If people sign while they are talking, you get two chances to understand what they are saying. It's amazing how much fingerspelling or a few signs can help when you are stuck over a name or key phrase.

If you rely on speechreading to understand conversations, then you know you can only understand one person at a time. In a group situation it's impossible to monitor all the conversations. Try giving the benefit of your undivided attention to each person in turn. Your companions will appreciate the effort you make to be part of the conversation.

Tip 8: Practice Makes Perfect

After a while all of your strategies will become automatic. Your friends will wait while you pick the right table and seat yourself. If you are a regular customer, waiters will remember your needs and preferences. Eating out will become a comfortable and enjoyable experience. Bon appetit!

Source: Northern Virginia Resource Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Persons, May 2008.

**DIRECTIONS TO
THE NEW YORK SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF**

Via I-287 (Eastbound or Westbound)
Get off Exit 4 - New York School for the Deaf
Continue onto Route 100A North Knollwood Road, proceed approx. 1/8 mile
School is on your right, turn into driveway and go to gate on your left even though it says "DO NOT ENTER" and
REMAIN IN YOUR CAR - pull up to the keypad and punch in 4 digit access code. Make the first left turn and drive
straight ahead, then make a right turn into the cafeteria building parking lot.

RENEW YOUR CHAPTER DUES FOR 2011

WESTCHESTER CHAPTER
ANNUAL CHAPTER DUES

- \$20 - Individual Membership Dues
- \$30 - Couple/Family Membership Dues
- Renewal Membership
- New Membership

Donation \$ _____

Total \$ _____

Name _____

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Please make checks payable to:
HCAA - WESTCHESTER CHAPTER

Mail completed application to our Membership chair:

Karen Rogers
22 Kerri Lane
Lincoln Park, NJ 07035

Birthday: Month _____

Hearing Loss Association of America
is a 501(c)3 organization

If you have not joined or renewed your membership to our national organization, we encourage you to do so. The causes supported by National are critical to the hearing loss community and your membership helps to support important advocacy work and programs.

HEARING LOSS
ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP DUES

I wish to join National HCAA and receive the Hearing Loss Magazine:

- \$35 - Annual Dues

Donation \$ _____

Total \$ _____

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Convention 2011 is coming to the
Nation's Capital!

June 16-19 at the
Hyatt Regency Hotel in Crystal City
Arlington, Virginia

You can register now for the Convention and the
2nd International Hearing Loop Conference

Go to www.hearingloss.org for more info

Hearing Aid Assistance Tax Credit Introduced Again

WASHINGTON, DC – Iowa Congressman Tom Latham has teamed up with Democrat Congresswoman Carolyn McCarthy to launch a comprehensive bipartisan effort to help hearing impaired seniors and families with hearing impaired children with the often prohibitive costs of hearing aids.

The lawmakers introduced the Hearing Aid Assistance Tax Credit Act, HR 1479. The legislation provides a \$500 tax credit for the purchase of hearing aids to qualified individuals age 55 and older and for children and other dependents.

“Most insurance plans don’t cover hearing aids, and the high costs of treatment prevent a majority of hearing impaired Americans from buying this important medical device that improves the quality of life of those individuals” Congressman Latham said. “This legislation addresses a serious problem for millions of Americans across the country in an affordable and measured way that has attracted widespread bipartisan support.”

"Hearing loss is an impairment that threatens the health and safety of millions of Americans of all ages every day," Congresswoman McCarthy said.

"I've fought for years to combat this problem and am proud to work with my colleagues across the aisle to help make sure more of us can hear clearly."

A story published in USA Today in late March reported that 36 million Americans have some degree of hearing loss, and that number will continue to grow as Baby Boomers continue to age.

The average cost for a hearing aid is more than \$1,675 per ear, and nearly 80 percent of people require two devices, according to the Better Hearing Institute. The institute estimates that 95 percent of people with hearing loss could be successfully treated with hearing aids, but only about 25 percent of people with hearing loss seek the treatment. Most health insurance plans, including Medicare, exclude coverage for hearing aid purchases.

Source: NVRC News 4/13/11, Northern Virginia Resource Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Persons