

Hear Ye, Hear Ye

New Board Begins New Year with Annual Meeting in Jacksonville



Clockwise from left, Wayne Cook, The Villages; Melissa Trauthwein, Jacksonville; Kathy Borzell, Tampa; Flo Innes, Sarasota; Judy Martin and Carol Christopherson, Jacksonville. In lower right photo, Judy, Carol, Jim Diaz, Oviedo; Joan Haber, Sarasota. Also attending were James Forstall, Tallahassee, HLA-FL Professional Advisor, Paige Taylor, HLA-Jax member and Theresea, CART provider. Absent were Lynn Rousseau, Gainesville, and Barbara Bavido, Orlando. -Photos by Tom Martin

A Message from the Immediate Past President

The time has come for new talent and skills to serve you in new ways. Please welcome Lynn Rousseau as our new state association president.

Looking back, we have had an exciting journey. The State Association has worked on a variety of advocacy projects, hosted the national annual convention twice and has worked on setting up a state agency for hard of hearing and deaf people. We have led outreach efforts in the state of Florida, both to agencies and to individuals, far more effectively than would be possible from the national office. In the words of Terry Portis, HLAA Executive Director, our "Florida state association is a model in the way it endeavors to work closely with chapters in Florida and the representation that it has on key advisory committees." I wish to take this moment to thank the many fine board members who have dedicated their time, energy and resources to make our organization a success.

I look forward to continue serving on the HLA-FL board with great anticipation of an exciting future.

Jim Diaz,
Immediate Past President

The annual meeting was held October 7 at West Regional Library in Jacksonville. It was opened by President, Jim Diaz.

The first order of business was the approval of the agenda followed by the report of the Nominating Committee from Joan Haber, Chair. The list of potential board members had been published in the HLAA magazine and HLA-FL September newsletter. She offered the slate of officers and since there were no nominations from the floor, members of the board voted unanimously to approve the slate as presented. New officers are President, Lynn Rousseau; Vice-President, Judy Martin; Secretary, Wayne Cook, Jr.; and Treasurer, Flo Innes. Jim Diaz is the Immediate Past President.

Past board members were acknowledged and thanked *in absentia*. They are: Francis Beecher, Alan Brown, Frank Corica, Merv Daniels, Jane Motrinec, Kerry Payne and Andrea Wilson. New members Wayne Cook, Jr. and Melissa Trauthwein were welcomed. The transfer of



James Forstall from board member to Professional Advisor was acknowledged with thanks.

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HEARING LOSS
ASSOCIATION
OF FLORIDA**

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Correction

The Fireworks and Desert Party at the HLAA Convention in Orlando was sponsored by Advanced Bionics. *Hear Ye, Hear Ye* regrets the error in the September issue.

**Naples Chapter,
Hearing Loss Association
of America**

We had our first meeting of the "season" November 17, but Jim and I weren't there. Our son decided this summer that it would be great to have Dad come north for deer season at his expense. I was invited too as we didn't think he'd go without me. As we were making plans, Jim had a heart attack October 5 and double bypass surgery October 9. We still made the trip and Jim got his deer! Our son got the meat. It was a great nine days.

Joan McLean, Outreach Specialist from Center for Independent Living, was the speaker for November. We felt bad that we had to miss it but our son made the reservations. During the summer Joan, Jim and I visited our local CBS affiliate primarily to discuss closed captioning. We had hoped to have better CC but at times we know that is not the case.

Our December meeting was a Christmas party. Sixteen signed up for potluck but it ended up with only nine members attending. Regardless of the number a great time was had by all. Our meetings usually met at the Collier County Branch Library, 650 Central Avenue, Naples. Rand Bass, Outreach Services for the library, was a guest at the party. He presented his plans for a Hearing and Vision Fair to be at that branch of the library on January 10. That is short notice for doing something new but we will be ready and are looking forward to it.

Our January meeting is on the 12 and we look forward to Flo Innes, Advocates for Better Hearing, and the products she will demonstrate and have available. We hope to have a good response from the Hearing and Vision Fair! February 9, Tara O'Neill, Cochlear Americas, will present the BAHA procedure. When we scheduled the date, she said she hoped to bring a surgeon along with her. We hope so. March 16 Nancy Shuster a HLAA/Naples Chapter member will be our speaker. Nancy

has written a book entitled *Hearing Loss and Winning Solutions*. Nancy had a cochlear implant this summer and is thrilled with the results. Now we expect a new book, Nancy. April 13 we are planning to have a representative from Advanced Bionics. We understand that Advanced Bionics is the only cochlear implant made in the United States of America.

That sums up our activities here in Naples.

Jim and Lois Smith
Naples Chapter, HLAA,

Annual Meeting

Continued from page 1

Kathy Borzell presented Wayne Cook with a plaque from his previous SHHH colleagues in Rhode Island, his former home state, expressing their gratitude for his endeavors for the hard of hearing.

In the absence of the newly-elected President, Vice-President Judy Martin re-convened the meeting. The treasurer's report was heard. A form was passed around for the purpose of enlisting volunteers to different committees. Reports were presented by Joan Haber, representative from FCCDHH, and Kathy Borzell representing TASA and HLAA. Judy Martin reported on the status of the newsletter and its expenses. For now, it was agreed that *Hear Ye, Hear Ye* would be published three times per year, one month prior to each meeting.

Members of the Bylaws Committee were asked to report on proposed amendments at the February meeting. The Finance Committee was asked to report on the official name change with reference to bank accounts, credit cards, and incorporation papers.

The 2007 meetings were scheduled for February 3, June 2, and October 6. The February meeting will be held in Tampa.



Hearing Assistive Training (HAT) held in Gainesville

-Christopher Sutton, Education & Marketing Coordinator, HLAA

HAT participants were in Florida, October 27-29, 2006, for the annual Hearing Assistive Training at the University of Florida Gainesville campus.

The Hearing Loss Association of America, Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders University of Florida, and Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center (RERC) on Hearing Enhancement held its annual Hearing Assistive Technology (HAT) training in Gainesville, Florida.

Trainees were 10 Hearing Loss Association members from Florida, Georgia, Tennessee, and one from Illinois. They ranged in experience with non-profit community outreach programs for hard of hearing and deaf people, vocational rehabilitation, health care, and school board.

Presenters from the hearing health and educational fields covered psychological issue, hearing aids, consumer issues; cochlear implants, assistive technology and advances in technology, alerting devices, telephone technology, and other signaling devices

Trained HAT participants will connect via a list serv to

allow discussions as they outreach to their community and teach other Hearing Loss Association chapters, state organizations, and community organizations about HAT, and meet with other members of the community to assist them in HAT issues.

Participants are required to keep in contact with HLAA for a period of one year to monitor their training and outcomes. Trainees will be provided support from Hearing Loss Association headquarters and the Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center (RERC) on Hearing Enhancement.

Thanks to a grant from the Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center (RERC) on Hearing Enhancement, another training will be held in May. For more information contact Christopher Sutton at csutton@hearingloss.org.

Participants were: Dr. Scott Bally, Dr. Matt Bakke,

Dr. Pat Kricos, Dr. Mark Ross, Flo Innes, Angela Nibert, Mary Frisk, Janis Ward, Lynn Rousseau, Mary Stearn, Deborah Stamm, Richard Twitchell, Nancy Day, Pete Trimmer, Tess Crowder, Christopher Sutton, Elyse Dmytrow, Andrew John, Suzanne E. Schilli, Louise Zelski



Did anyone bother to give this 'gator an assistive listening device?

CapTel to the Rescue!

My husband, Jim, had a heart attack on October 5 and surgery on the ninth. Phone calls were made and received. Our son, Wayne, also hard of hearing, and I would have been *lost* if it weren't for CapTel. I have one in our bedroom, where it is quiet, for making phone calls.

Wayne had turned in his volume control phone and recently received his CapTel. That came out of the box and was put next to the answering machine. Oh, what a blessing that was. Getting our messages was so important. Jim is our *phone-and-answering-machine man*, but now, we can do it too!

Jim came home on October 14.

Lois Smith, Naples

Do You Know CEPIN?

The Community Emergency Preparedness Information Network (CEPIN) launched its new website.

The goal for the website is to promote the objectives of the CEPIN project. It seeks to encourage awareness and networking among emergency responders and deaf and hard of hearing people.

"This reflects TDI and CEPIN's commitment to making emergency preparedness information accessible at all times," said Neil McDevitt, CEPIN National Coordinator. "Consumers and emergency responders can find a wealth of information to help them prepare and respond to emergencies in an effective manner."

The new website includes information on disability laws and emergency response, programs that have been created in local communities that strengthen communication between deaf and hard of hearing people and emergency responders, details about the CEPIN course and much more. A text version can also be found on the website.

Read December's newsletter from CEPIN; <http://www.cepintdi.org/pdf/atip1206.pdf>

Find open-captioned movies in your area: www.insightcinema.org to see what's playing.

Delray/Boynton Chapter, HLA

The Delray/Boynton Chapter is in full swing this season with a line-up of programs that includes audiologists, physicians, otolaryngology surgeons, assistive listening device vendors, emergency service personnel such as fire-rescue (911 people) and police talking about communication problems with those services that can arise when dealing with the hearing impaired; we also have therapists and motivational counselors scheduled to talk to us about coping problems.



An important feature at our meetings this year is a pre-meeting visual presentation – video or PowerPoint – that highlights a current topical item such as a new device or procedure that is of common interest to our members.

At the January meeting, our President, who has recently undergone a BAHA implant procedure, will present a PowerPoint and video presentation he has prepared that illustrates what implants are, and that highlights the similarities and differences between a Cochlear and a BAHA implant.

Aside from regular meetings, we have scheduled seminars at several public libraries and a number of community meeting halls where we introduce our organization to folk who suffer loss of hearing. We use PowerPoint and videos with a projector and sound system as well as speakers, to describe the many benefits of membership in HLA. These seminars have proven effective as a recruiting tool. Our membership has doubled as a result.

Because our typical members are seniors citizens, are meetings are held in the morning – 10 a.m. to noon, on the third Friday of each month, September through May.

Free bagels and coffee at each meeting - paid for by a Chuck-a-buck raffle.

–Oscar Segal, President

(See Oscar's opinion column on page 11)

Hearing Loss Association of Jacksonville

At the end of our first year, HLA-Jax has become a cohesive group. We enjoy our meetings and the support and encouragement we share with each other. We want to say a special THANK YOU to our wonderful founder and leader, Judy Martin!



She has worked tirelessly to provide the continuity of our meetings and to keep us all informed of current advances and needs in the area of accommodations. She also makes concerted efforts to include individual members in the leadership of activities.

Thank you, Judy!

We also want to extend our heartfelt gratitude to our volunteer CART provider, Theresa, who works at all of our meetings to provide us with excellent real time caption-

ing. Some of us never experienced this blessing, and it has opened up a whole new world in which we can fully participate in the group process. Thank you, Theresa!

At our October meeting, we were privileged to have Mr. Mario Rivera, the Advisor to the Board of Directors of the Stenotype Institute of Jacksonville as our presenter. Mr. Rivera is a passionate advocate for people with hearing loss. He believes that people with hearing loss have the same **right** to access to the educational, cultural and social services as those with normal hearing. He educated us on the need for more certified CART providers, giving us statistics on the needs of the various subgroups. For instance, a recent Gallaudet study states that less than 1% of children with hearing loss are able to get CART providers because of the shortage. He informed us that for Fiscal Year (FY) 2007 *Initiative for Government Directed Funds* have already been allocated, but he will be going to Congress in February 2007 to lobby for FY 2008 funds to be used toward the training of additional CART providers at his school. He is seeking letters of support to take with him to personalize and highlight the need for additional CART providers. If anyone is interested in writing a letter of support, you can contact Mr. Rivera at: mccaueylus@yahoo.com. He has offered to give assistance to word our letters if we would like to have it.

On December 9, in lieu of our November and December monthly meetings, we met at the Jacksonville Museum of Science and History (MOSH). We enjoyed spending the time together and perusing the various exhibits. We saw that there were some exhibits we could not fully appreciate because of the lack of accommodations. For instance, in the Planetarium, there was a narrative with the program, but no assistive listening devices. At the individual exhibits, you could push a button and a voice would narrate about the exhibit over a speaker, which we couldn't understand. We will suggest to them that they could provide a typed-out script for those exhibits. One of our members, Susan Scheibe, is planning to write a letter to MOSH to inform them of the need for accommodations and to make suggestions to them. Judy then had the idea for us, as a group, to visit other public venues in Jacksonville, and find ways to advocate for accommodations so that we can assist these organizations in providing individuals with hearing loss the opportunity to participate fully in them. We encourage other chapters throughout the state of Florida to join us in this effort.

We wish all members of HLA-FL a **Happy and Prosperous 2007** as we continue our quest to enrich our lives!

–Melissa Trauthwein



Welcome to New Board Member Nancy Day

Nancy was appointed to the Hearing Loss Association of Florida Board of Trustees in November by President Lynn Rousseau. She will serve until October at which time she may run for election. Nancy lives in Gainesville with her husband, Kim, and their two children, daughter Chloe, 16, and son, Joshua, 12. She works for the Alachua County Health Department as a Pediatric Nurse Practitioner and has worked for the state for about 22 years.



Nancy grew up with a deaf aunt and uncle so had some exposure to the Deaf Culture and the challenges of hearing loss. Nevertheless, she was very surprised when she discovered, while in graduate school, that she had developed a hearing loss. Over the last 25 years that loss has progressed from mild to moderate to severe. She recently has gone from in-the- canal (ITC) hearing aids to the more powerful behind-the-ear (BTE) aids.

Attending the July 2006 Hearing Loss Association of America convention in Orlando, Nancy found so much support and acceptance and learned so much about assistive listening devices that she became motivated to become more involved in reaching out to help others. She just recently attended the HAT training in Gainesville which has just made her even more excited about outreach to others that are hard of hearing.

All of these reasons are why Nancy is so enthusiastic about being part of the Board of Trustees so that she can be involved at the state level as well as locally. She notes that she is most grateful to have Lynn Rousseau as a resource and mentor in her home city of Gainesville! Finally, she looks forward to meeting everyone at the February Board meeting.

We look forward to meeting Nancy and we warmly welcome her.

Barbara Bavido appointed State Coordinator

Barbara has been approved as State Coordinator for Florida by the Hearing Loss Association of America. Please e-mail her to introduce yourselves. She may be reached at bbavido2@cfl.rr.com

Building Our E-mailing List

Some members of Florida chapters are not members of the Hearing Loss Association of America. In that case, they are not receiving the newsletter by postal mail. If you or someone you know would like to receive *Hear Ye, Hear Ye* by e-mail, send your address to judy40@bellsouth.net Adobe Reader is required to open the PDFs.

A Message from the President

—Lynn Rousseau

I am pleased to have been elected president of the Hearing Loss Association of Florida.

My hopes for this organization are to follow the great footsteps of the previous leaders and also bring new ideas of reaching out to the citizens of Florida.

Acknowledging hearing loss is the first step for many, thus making our job of educating these people to the various new technology available much easier. I hope to continue to support self advocacy and work together with FTRI, Sprint, FAD, and the Florida Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in all that they do. Together we will have a stronger voice and be heard!

Reaching out to the various areas of advocacy in our communities—hoping to gain support for our mission—will help us all help each other. Reaching out to the government to our needs, such as captions and telephones that work for the hard of hearing are not just life's pleasures but a necessity. To hear what is going on is the first step in effective communication wherever you are.

My goal as president is to bring to light the prevalence, myths, and symptoms of hearing loss; the coping strategies that are used by people with hearing loss, their families and friends, then the technology that is available to help bridge the gap will open a new world of sound and communication to many.

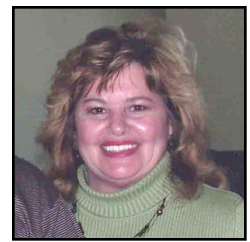
Sharing real stories of members who have managed to overcome or deal with their hearing loss is often good way to connect better than to cold hard facts. So, I wish to encourage all to share your stories so that others can have hope and encouragement.

Let's make our organization one that does not "sell" hearing aids but rather aid those who strive to adapt to the hearing world through the use of technology and self help.

I would expect our newer and former members to work together to make the Hearing Loss Association of Florida a source of valuable information all the while enjoying each other's company while we get stronger and viable. The Board of Trustees can do wonders as we have a collection of excellent and talented people.

So, I ask that we work *together* for the common goal to raising awareness in our communities, so that we may also raise needed funds to keep this mission alive.

To open the world of communication to people with hearing loss by providing information, education, support and advocacy will always be our foremost goal/mission of the organization.



Presentation by Carlos Monserrate

(An illuminating article on disability access was written by Theresa Davis for the Florida Bar News in November with Carlos being quoted extensively. Below is his presentation to the Supreme Court's Standing Committee on Fairness and Diversity in October sharing his concerns. Some of his ideas should be useful to our readers. -Editor)

First of all, let me thank you very much, Honorable Judge Freeman and distinguished members of the Standing Committee for this opportunity to present my case before you. I also appreciate the availability of Communication Access Real-Time Translation or CART for short as provided by Ms. Sandy Nargiz.



Twenty-five years ago, I was summoned by the Eighteenth Judicial Circuit to appear as a juror. I was very excited about serving out my civic duty. Unfortunately, the lawyers and the judge took one look at my hearing aids and decided not to call on me. Instead of proudly doing my civic duty I walked out of the courthouse somewhat embarrassed to carry a card that had the word REJECT on it.

Now twenty-five years later, I received another summons to appear as a juror for the Second Judicial Circuit. As you can see, it is so rare that I get summoned. I followed the instructions on the summons card and called the courthouse about getting an assistive listening device or ALD for short. The clerk who answered my call told me to pick it up when I register. Unfortunately, there was a misunderstanding as to what an "assistive listening device" is. The device provided by the clerk is not sufficient for a person with a significant hearing loss. This device sold by Radio Shack is also not designed to be used by one who wears hearing aids.

It was suggested to the clerk handling the ADA requests, that it would be best to ask the requestor for more details on the kind of accommodation requested. The Radio Shack device, perhaps, is useful for one who does not wear a hearing aid and has a mild hearing loss. Anything more will require either a note taker, ALD, CART, or interpreting. Maybe it would be best for the clerk to always offer CART as the Second Court has six in-house CART reporters. At the time I called, it did not occur to me to ask for CART as I am so used to requesting ALDs.

I know that the Second Judicial Circuit has infrared assistive listening systems that can be set up in about an hour. Since there is a constant influx of jurors about to be paneled by computer, why not set up a radio waves based assistive listening system in those courtrooms where the juror selection is being processed? I know that there is less security with radio waves than there is with infrared, but I am guessing that the juror selection process and swearing in is not as sensitive a matter as a court proceeding is. Then there is the challenge of following the person requesting the device going from one courtroom to another. My position on this is that every courtroom should be made accessible. Not only can you have the possibility of a juror with a hearing loss, you can also have a bailiff, courtroom audience participant, lawyer, assistant, prosecutor, defendant and even a judge with a hearing loss.

In conclusion, the Florida State Court System has made progress in twenty-five years in breaking down accessibility barriers. The Second Judicial Circuit should be proud of its newly built accessible courtroom. However, the main difficulty you have is not so much the lack of accessibility in the court room for the trial proceedings themselves, but rather for the juror selection process itself especially if the prospective juror has a hearing loss.

As I said earlier, it is not often that I get randomly summoned as a prospective juror, so I was looking forward to exercising my civic duty. However, I hope that my experience can be used as a model for breaking down any programmatic barriers in the court system for persons with hearing loss.

Knowledge is Power

-by Angela Nibert

When I first met Flo Innes, I was amazed how she understood what obstacles I have to deal with in my everyday life with a hearing loss. I did not have to explain to her as I do to so many others that even though my hearing aids were wonderful, I still have difficulty with understanding the spoken word in certain situations, I could go on and on with examples, but to those of you with a hearing loss, know what I am talking about. Flo, having a profound hearing loss since birth, explained my hearing loss and my hearing aids to me as no other person or specialist ever had. Here is a little of what Flo told me upon our second meeting:

"As with anything we purchase for use in our daily lives, we need to educate ourselves before we make the final decision to buy a product. An example of this would be the purchase of a new vehicle. There are many questions you will want answered before purchasing the one that is going to best suit your individual needs. Such as: make, model, miles per gallon and even color will play a role in the purchase. Now, you have made your choice and you have what you want, but wait, do you want it to be a standard or automatic. Will you want to comfort of air conditioning, power windows & doors, what about a FM/AM radio with a CD player? We know that the vehicle will work fine without all these extras but we want them so our driving experience will be more comfortable. *RIGHT?*

The same is true with the purchase of hearing aids. Sure, you can hear better when you wear them, but there are Assistive Listening Devices (ALDs) available that will give you more Clarity with Amplification and Tone Control which means better understanding of what you are hearing on the telephone, in restaurants, on television, in the car, and at social events.

There is a lot to learn about hearing loss and Advocates for Better Hearing, Inc. would like to share with other hard of hearing individuals the knowledge we have found in our many hours of research and testing of Assistive Listening Devices.

"As with anything we purchase for use in our daily lives, we need to educate ourselves before we make the final decision to buy a product." --Flo Innes

(Angela Nibert is the Associate Director of Advocates for Better Hearing in Sarasota, Florida. She is a National Member of HLAA.)



Spotlight on Tom D'Angelo

Hello! As your Account Manager with Sprint/Florida Relay Service, I am your go-to guy for any questions or comments about CapTel—which is used primarily by people who are hard of hearing, including members of the Hearing Loss Association of America.

ferent telecommunications-related products and services with Communication Service for the Deaf (CSD). I make my home with my wife, Cindy, and 3 adorable young children. Thumbs-up to you for reading this!

Tom D'Angelo
Florida Account Manager

TASA Advisory Committee

The TASA (Telecommunications Access Systems Act) Advisory Committee met in Tallahassee, FL on October 6, 2006. Here are a couple of highlights from the meeting.

Sprint reported that results from focus groups revealed that when the terms “deaf or hard of hearing” are included in the explanation provided by the relay operator to the hearing party, the number of times the relay service had to be explained to the listening party dropped from 26% to 12% thus reducing the incidence of call hang-ups. The Florida Relay Service contract with Sprint Communications prohibits the relay operator from disclosing to the telephone user that the caller is hearing or speech disabled with the users’ permission. After some discussion the TASA committee recommended to the Public Service Commission that the contract be amended to allow for the operator to announce the call was from a deaf or hard of hearing caller. On November 21, 2006 the PSC voted to approve such an amendment to the contract.

James Forstall reported that FTRI has been working closely with the Florida Department of Education to finalize the Florida Relay Education Kit, which is currently being tested in 40 schools throughout the state. Once FTRI obtains feedback from the schools, the curriculum will be modified and prepared for dissemination in August of 2007. The kit includes a video and is geared toward educating third-, fourth-, and fifth-graders about the relay service and how people who are deaf and hard of hearing make telephone calls. A survey was conducted in some elementary schools in Leon County, Tallahassee and indicated third-, fourth-, and fifth-graders gave the video a high rating. The video was produced by the state of Maryland a few years back and modified for use in the state of Florida. This is a significant step towards educating our children about hearing loss and deafness.

--Kathy Borzell



To briefly review, a CapTel phone allows you to speak for yourself and listen to the other person—while reading text of that person’s words on a display screen. Some people prefer to supplement what they hear with what they read on their screen. Other people prefer to depend entirely on the text that appears on their screen. Behind the scenes, voice-recognition software translates the other party’s spoken words into text with a professionally-trained operator monitoring for, and fixing, any translation. Everything remains confidential—no records of the calls’ content are ever kept. For more information, please visit www.ftri.org

You may have heard that, earlier this year, the Federal Communications Commission issued a ruling requiring that CapTel users pay for long distance calls. CapTel users—please take a moment to register your telephone number with CapTel Customer Service, to ensure that long distance calls are billed to your long distance carrier of choice. People who call you frequently through CapTel should register as well. To register, please call CapTel Customer Service at 888/269-7477. The CapTel service itself remains free of charge.

Again, my job is to ensure that you all receive the highest levels of service with CapTel. Please do not hesitate to call (800/791-2658) or email me (Tom.W.Dangelo@Sprint.com) with any questions, suggestions, or feedback about CapTel. I am here to serve you!

Oh, and I should not end this without telling you a bit about myself. I hail from Pennsylvania, but have always had Florida in my heart. Before coming to Jacksonville to work for Sprint, I directed a youth camp, and was involved in marketing and public relations for several dif-

Donations

Thank you to the following for donations to *Hear Ye, Hear Ye*. Your financial support is deeply appreciated.

Barbara Bavido • Molly Corum
Hearing Loss Association
of Gainesville



Pirates of the Caribbean? Nope, just good friends sailing over the bounding main of the Tampa Buccaneers Stadium. From left, Kathy Borzell, Judy Martin, Lynn Rousseau, Joan Haber, Flo Innes, Barb Bavido, Eric Bolves.

—photo by Tom Martin

Sprint Appreciation Awards

On November 15, an Award of Appreciation was presented by Sprint to the Hearing Loss Association of Florida for its outstanding support of the Florida Relay Service and of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Citizens of Florida.

Other organizations honored were Florida Association of the Deaf (TAD); Florida Telecommunication Relay, Inc. (FTRI) Florida School for the Deaf and Blind (FSDB); Deaf Service Center Association (DSCA); and Florida Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (FCCDHH).

Many board members of the Hearing Loss Association of Florida attended the special event in Tampa at the Raymond James Buccaneers stadium.

Filled with *high spirits*, guests were given a tour of the stadium. For many, who were used to being there only when it was filled with upwards of 65,000 people, seeing the arena in its vast emptiness was a thrill. Visiting the empty locker rooms and sky boxes was of great interest to everyone.

Another highlight was the \$3 million 103-foot replica of a nineteenth century pirate ship in the north end zone. During games, the ship shoots blank cannon rounds whenever the team scores.

The evening concluded with the awards ceremony emceed by Tom D'Angelo, Sprint's Florida Account Manager. Lynn Rousseau, HLA-FL president; Joan Haber, FCCDHH Chair and James Forstall, FTRI Executive Director (all are HLAA members), were on hand to accept awards on behalf of their organizations.



HLA-FL Immediate Past President Jim Diaz and President Lynn Rousseau enjoy a light moment at the Sprint Appreciation Night in Tampa.



Joan Haber (center), Chair of the Florida Coordinating Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (FCDHH) accepted the award for that group. Making the presentation was Tom D'Angelo, Account Manager with Sprint/Florida Relay Service. *—photos by Tom Martin*



Lynn and Vice-President Judy Martin express pride in the Award of Appreciation given to HLA-FL.

Don't forget. If you have a change of address or if you want to make changes for others, please contact the Hearing Loss Association of America's office at 7910 Woodmont Avenue, Suite 1200, Bethesda, MD 20814 or e-mail them at info@hearingloss.org Hear Ye, Hear Ye does not have the capacity to make permanent address changes.

The Comfort Duett

The Comfort Duett is made in Sweden. It is a small, multi-purpose personal listener with a first-class sound. It is stylish and weighs only 1-3/4 ounces including the battery. Size: 3 3/8" x 1 1/2" x 1 1/8".



No need to change the battery often. The Comfort Duett is stored and recharged when in placed in the base unit. A fully charged battery will last 15-20 hours, depending on volume output. Battery lifetime is 3-5 years.

This is the only personal amplifier that has a switch for an inductive loop. (Hearing Aids must be equipped with a T-Coil.) It also has a 30' extension cord with a microphone which can be used for the TV.

The cost is only \$169.00 (extension cord extra)

**Advocates for Better Hearing, Inc.
941-373-0084**

Why does the Hearing Loss Association keep asking for money?

Dear Chapter Leaders,

My name is Raegene Castle and I am co-president of the Peninsula Chapter in Redwood City, CA..

I just became a member of the Development and Marketing committee under the Board of Trustees in Bethesda. A few of my friends that are presidents and members of chapters had a few questions for me to ask when I went back to Bethesda.

I thought maybe you might have questions you would like answered also. This email is not to take the place of the Chapter Leaders List. That is for all of us to talk among ourselves and help each other. This is for any questions you would like to be answered by someone at the National office so our communication can go both ways. The main question I am hearing is why National keeps asking for money. I asked Anne Pope, the chair of the Board of Trustees and she suggested she write a letter explaining our organization's situation. I think Anne did a really good job explaining why, so if any of you have any questions after reading this letter, please let me know. Anne and the board really want our communications open. My husband was telling me that all the organizations like ours that he know about are mainly supported by their chapters if they want anything done on a National level.

Here is Anne's letter:

Dear Chapter Leaders

When I heard Raegene's question—why does the Hearing Loss Association keep asking for money—I thought that there might be two questions there. One is why does national office ask us for money? And the other is why does the national office **keep** asking?

To answer the first, the Hearing Loss Association asks for money because like all not-for-profit organizations, we couldn't exist without the support of our members and friends. Over two-thirds of our annual revenue comes from our generous contributors. Corporations, foundations, and govern-

ment grants provide only about one-third. And, unlike some organizations, we do not have a large endowment to provide a steady income. So you see, without the thousands of generous people who believe in our mission, the Hearing Loss Association would simply cease to exist. Can you imagine our lives without the work of our organization? To me, that would be unthinkable.

Without the Hearing Loss Association, who would reach out to others who are seeking information about hearing loss for themselves or their families? Who would teach those of us with hearing loss the many strategies to manage our lives or provide us with support? Who would educate people without hearing loss about our challenges and needs? Who would keep an eye on emerging products and technologies to ensure that our needs are met? Who would work to increase accessibility throughout the country? And who would remind governmental agencies and legislators of the challenges we face as they write regulations and enact laws? To keep our vital programs and services going, we **must** ask for money.

As for the second question— why do we **keep** asking for money? Twice a year, the national office sends letters asking for our support through the Annual Appeal—once in the spring and again in the fall. Current and former board members as well as non-board development committee members also take turns manning the Annual Appeal table at the convention. Each November, in honor of Founder's Day, chapters are asked to donate money specifically designated for chapter development. Last year, we started the Walk4Hearing, and now members and supporters give and raise money through the walkathon as well. If you are a member of the Hearing Loss Association of America and participate in a chapter, and work on the walkathon, you hear a lot about raising and giving money.

We appreciate the contribution of every single donor. Do we expect our donors to give more than once? Of course not—although we certainly appreciate it when they do. Would we prefer not to ask those who have already given? Yes, we would. But removing names from our mailing list before another appeal goes out is a time consuming task. Even more important, it is not a good use of the money we raise. Wouldn't you rather have your donation

spent on helping people with hearing loss? I certainly would.

So if you get a letter asking for a contribution and you have already been one of our wonderful supporters, please don't be annoyed. Just know that we are spending as little as possible to raise the money we need so we can spend as much as possible to improve the lives of people with hearing loss. And if you hear people saying that they are getting too many requests for money, please explain why this is happening. Our donors are very important to us. We certainly don't want to annoy or offend a single one.

Many thanks for your understanding and support and for all of your hard work.

—Anne Pope, President
HLAA

*Raegene can be reached at
Raegeneandjack@aol.com*

Do You Know About the FCCDHH Council?

—Joan Haber, Chair

In case you haven't heard about the FCCDHH, here is a brief overview of a very important organization that works diligently to represent persons with hearing loss in Florida. FCCDHH is an acronym, which stands for the Florida Coordinating Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. The FCCDHH Council was established by Florida State Legislative Statute §413.271 in 2004. The Council is administratively housed within the FL Department of Health.

The FCCDHH is composed of 17 members, appointed by the Governor, and those members serve in a volunteer capacity. Thirteen of the 17 members represent the following organizations and stakeholders: The Hearing Loss Association of Florida (HLA-FL), the Florida Association of the Deaf (FAD), the Association of Late-Deafened Adults (ALDA), the Florida Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, the Florida Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (FRID), the Deaf Service Center Association (DSCA), a Certified Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) provider, a licensed audiologist, a licensed hearing aid specialist, an indi-

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vidual who is deaf and blind, and a parent of an individual who is deaf. Of those organizations and individuals, HLA-FL and FAD hold 2 seats each on the FCCDHH Council and all others named hold one seat each. The other 4 seats are named by the Governor to the FCCDHH Council to represent the Department of Children and Family Services, the Department of Health, the Department of Education and the Department of Elderly Affairs.

The role of the FCCDHH Council is: to serve as an advisory and coordinating body in the state which recommends policies that address the needs of deaf, hard of hearing and late-deafened persons and which recommends methods that improve the coordination of services among the public and private entities that provide services pertaining to interpreter services, CART providers, and assistive listening devices, excluding hearing aids. The Council is authorized to provide technical assistance, advocacy, and education.

The Council maintains an office in Tallahassee and employs one Administrative Assistant, Mary Grace Tavel. She is responsible for organizing the activities of the Council and provides information to the public. She can be reached toll free at 866-602-3275 (V) or 866-602-3276 (TTY) or by email at Mary_GraceTavel@doh.state.fl.us The FCCDHH also maintains a website located at www.fccdhh.org

The FCCDHH conducts quarterly meetings held throughout the state of Florida. Thus far, ten quarterly meetings have been held and over 200 individuals attended providing valuable input, which the Council uses to guide their agenda and efforts. Some topics of concern include the following: licensure of sign language interpreters, lack of captioning of TV programs (including news and weather), lack of equal access to emergency information, improvement of medical accessibility for persons with hearing loss, lack of trained CART providers in Florida, misunderstandings regarding the rights of persons who use service animals, equal access to information in airports and other public transportation venues, quality of the CapTel captioned tele-

phone service, and lack of employment opportunities.

The next FCCDHH quarterly meeting will be held February 22 and 23, 2007 in Tallahassee. Contact MaryGrace Tavel for complete details. The public hearing portion of the meeting will take place on Thursday Feb 22nd from 4-6 pm. The entire meeting is open to the public and CART, ASL and assistive listening devices are provided to those needing accommodations to participate.

If you cannot attend the meeting in Tallahassee in February but would like to voice a concern you have to the Council, please contact the Chair of the Council, Joan Haber, at 941-921-9197 or by email at joan1@comcast.net. Joan Haber represents the Hearing Loss Association of Florida on the FCCDHH Council.

I'd rather be golfing

(or why I can't do it as often as I'd like)

When friends ask me to join them to play golf, many times my answer is "I'd love to, but ..."

Don't misunderstand—I would play every day if I could, but I have an obligation; a moral obligation. At least for me it's that and more.

I owe my time to SHHH—excuse me—to HLAA. Because, quite literally, HLAA saved my life. Here's why, in a nutshell:

Like so many others, hearing loss struck early in life. In grade school, they thought I was either stupid or retarded. My attention span was a lot like that of a goldfish—about 60 seconds. Of course it was (probably—I was not as lovable as I am today) because I could not understand everything that was going on. No one bothered to ask why; it was just accepted.

Somewhere about the fourth or fifth grade the school instituted hearing tests. Guess what—they concluded that maybe I really wasn't retarded; it could be because I couldn't hear. No hearing aid back then, but they talked louder and made facial expressions for emphasis.

Then a massive mastoid infection in the left ear led to surgery, which

led to physical damage to the inner ear mechanism.

Fifteen years later a mastoid operation in the right damaged that one.

Through middle age, I wore special eye glasses that had bone conduction ear pieces. That helped, but was never 100 percent. Loss was progressive.

I managed to work in the corporate world by being up front with my hearing loss. At meetings where I was the principal, I announced at the start that my associate will relay any questions that I could not hear.

By this time I was wearing aids in both ears, but talking on the phone became near impossible.

After retirement, I became involved in South Florida's largest Computer Club – the Boca Raton Computer society. As president, I watched it grow to near 1000 members. I opened every monthly meeting with an opening speech and mentored several classroom style Special interest groups. Always, it was "What did you say; can you repeat that; I didn't hear you."

In short, I was busy, but struggling to manage it all.

Then one night I went to bed and woke up to find there was no hearing in the right ear – nothing – nada. The left ear by this time had only about 5 percent. The hearing aid in the right ear was useless. The left side had minimal amplification.

I was out of it. Movies? Forget it. Going out to dinner with friends? I sat there like a dummy – couldn't make out what was said. TV was just a lot of low volume noise. I gave up on life. I became a Couch Potato.

Then someone said go to a SHHH meeting (it was still SHHH then). I went, reluctantly.

What I learned at those meetings, led me to find the help I needed to get me back into the mainstream of life.

Today, I am back better than ever.

This organization saved my life. For me, it has become a moral obligation to bring HLAA to as many hearing loss sufferers as possible. I don't mind missing a few games of golf when it means working for a cause that is so worthwhile.

*Oscar Segal/President,
Delray/Boynton Chapter, HLAA*

Sprint/FTRI Forum in Jax



Members of the Jacksonville community listen as James Forstall (at right), Executive Director of Florida Telecommunications Relay, Inc. (FTRI), explains the use of CapTel, the telephone that displays written, word-for-word captions of every thing the caller says.

James explained how the telephone works, gave statistics on users and instructions on how to apply for one. FTRI is based in Tallahassee, but they contract with nonprofit agencies throughout the state to work with them to distribute the equipment, to provide the training and to do outreach. He also stated that before applying at a local Regional Distribution Center (RDC), it is important to have your application certified by your audiologist. The criteria for receiving the CapTel phone at no cost is that you must be a resident of Florida, must be three years or older and you must meet the eligibility of a hearing loss or speech impediment. It is

also wise to “test-drive” a phone at the center to see if it meets your needs.

Of particular interest to Jacksonville residents is that a Sprint Relay Center is located on the west side. Some members had attended an open house and were impressed with the employees and the logistics of the business (see Tom D’Angelo’s column on page 7).

Members of the audience responded enthusiastically with detailed questions and comments. All agreed that the Forum was a worthwhile and educational experience for a Saturday morning. The next Forum will be held on February 3 in Tampa. Please contact any Board Member for information.

The meeting was followed by a delicious catered luncheon. Our appreciation is extended to James Forstall for this informative and helpful presentation.

Hearing Loss Association of Florida
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