

Hear Ye, Hear Ye

Dr. Charles Berlin speaks to Board members

Charles Berlin, Ph.D, was the guest speaker at the Hearing Loss Association of Florida Board of Trustees in Sarasota. Dr. Berlin is often called the teacher's teacher. He retired on September 1, 2002 as Professor of Otolaryngology, Head and Neck Surgery, and Physiology, and is Director of the world-renowned Kresge Hearing Research Laboratory at LSU Medical School in New Orleans. By special invitation, this world-renown scientist is now teaching at the University of South Florida

Those who attended in the afternoon session with Dr. Berlin were privileged to have the opportunity to listen to a highly educational and often very amusing presentation. Each had the chance to ask him any question at all about hearing loss. He took his time and answered every query put before him. He shared information about healthful living and how diet can affect hearing. Genetics was also a topic of discussion and a visual presentation of how we hear was shown. Everyone was impressed to be listening and interacting with such a preeminent and respected professor of hearing research.

For a special and outstanding finish, Dr. Berlin, an accomplished musician, entertained guests as he played the piano in a way to ensure that deaf/hard of hearing people can hear. Rocky Stone (SHHH-HLAA Founder), had verbally named Charles Berlin as official pianist for the hearing impaired. Lynn Rousseau, president of HLA-FL, confirmed this by presenting Dr. Berlin with a certificate of award acknowledging him as *Official Pianist for The Hearing Loss Association of Florida*.

Flo Innes of Sarasota hosted this June meeting and welcomed all HLA-FL board members to the Village Walk Community Clubhouse conference room. The locale

was beautiful and refreshments were plentiful. She is to be thanked for completing an extraordinary task.

It was a successful meeting of the many board and committee members who traveled from far and near. It verified their ongoing commitment and devotion to making a more educated and supportive society for all of Florida's individuals with hearing loss. Tess Crowder provided CART services and once again, CSDVRS, through Chris Wagner, Vice President of Marketing Communications, donated towards the cost of CART.

Discussions ranged from the usual order of business to reaching out to public venues to efficiently accommodate the hearing impaired and sharing of information most of us do not have. One important piece of information was the fact the Sun Pass devices run on batteries and emit a beep when the battery is low (which most of us cannot hear). Therefore, we wish to share this info with all of you so that when you drive through a toll booth, you will not receive a ticket because of the low battery not allowing the signal to be picked up. Check your batteries on your Sun Pass device just as you check your hearing aid batteries.

Dr. Patricia Kricos, Ph.D., Professor of Audiology and Director of the Center for Gerontological Studies at the University of Florida was welcomed as a Professional Advisor to the Board. Her expertise in the field will be a great asset to guide us in our goals of supporting, educating and advocating.

Other guests were introduced:

Steve Hanrahan, Sebring, a new member of the Public Awareness/Advocacy Committee, talked about his



Dr. Charles Berlin

—photo by Tom Martin

work setting up a listing of entertainment venues which accommodate the deaf and hard of hearing. This will be placed on the website.

Valerie Stafford-Mallis, Bradenton, new Outreach Coordinator for FCCDHH, discussed her recent attendance at the Governor's Commission on Disabilities and her remarks made during the Public Comment period. During that time, she made specific requests of the Commission to insert language regarding the needs of deaf, hard of hearing and deaf/blind persons in its Report to the Governor. Carol Christopherson is a voting member of the Governor's Commission on Disabilities and has been making requests as well.

Paul McDannel, Largo, is starting a looping technology business. He will be available to loop rooms, churches, community centers, private homes and other types of venues.

—Lynn Rousseau & Judy Martin

Audiologists and Hearing Aid Specialists, please place this newsletter in your waiting room.

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MEETINGS

Oct 4, 2008 Port St. Lucie

Feb. 7, 2009 Jacksonville

June 6, 2009 - TBA



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Attention Hearing Loss Professionals

Join the Hearing Loss Association of America. Annual dues are \$60 and here are your professional benefits:

- Opportunity to be listed in a searchable Hearing Health Care Directory on the HLA website – **brand new!**
- Opportunity to earn AAA CEUs at the annual HLA convention
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- Free Gift Vouchers for copies of *Hearing Loss Magazine* to give to your clients
- Chance to participate in HLA message boards and be a featured guest
- Partner with HLA in local, state and national advocacy efforts

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SunPass Users: Check your battery

If you are a SunPass user, you cannot ignore the battery inside your SunPass transponder. If the battery is weak, the transponder on the front window of your car will emit three low tones when you drive through a tollbooth and its green light will not flash. Those signs could mean a problem has developed with your SunPass account and, if ignored, you could be labeled as a toll violator even though you have hearing loss and cannot hear the three low warning tones.

It is incumbent on those who have SunPass accounts to be sure the battery inside their transponders show the word "good" instead of "replace" on a battery tester.

After being alerted by my friend and HLA-FL colleague, Don Shaffer, I removed my transponder from the front window of my car, brought it to ACE Hardware in the Sun City Center Plaza and had the battery tested by an ACE employee. Because the word "REPLACE" showed up on the battery tester needle, the employee installed a new 3V - DL2032 Duracell round battery inside the transponder. There was a nominal charge for the new battery but *no charge at all for testing and replacing the old battery for a new one.*

If you would like to read more rules of the road for SunPass users, one of the sites you may visit is: www.sunpass.com The other option is to contact SunPass at 1-888-865-5352.

–Richard Herring
 HLA-SCC & HLA-FL

Why Bother Getting a T-Coil?

—by Paul McDannel

Whether you are buying your first hearing aid or upgrading due to continued increase in loss, one of the considerations you should make will be regarding the telephone switch (t-coil). With the exception of the completely-in-canal (CIC) aids, the t-coil is available in most all hearing aids. The additional cost, when there is one, ranges from \$50 - \$100.

What the t-coil switch does is to let you hear what the caller is saying without the additional noise that is present at your end of the phone. This allows greater clarity and less background noise that is so bothersome in other circumstances. Telephone calls will go from being obnoxious (“can you hear me now?”) to delightful (“Hi, Daddy or Grandma!”).

Of course there is a second use for the t-coil switch (and it’s been available for about ten years or more). The t-coil will connect you to a loop system that can be installed in your church, or religious setting, in the movie theaters, in auditoriums, in meeting rooms, etc. Now you can hear what is going into the microphone(s) or sound system without the annoying background noise of coughing and the shuffling of feet that is taking place in the audience.

Would you enjoy your religious service more this way, than the way you are now? How about a symphony or concert? How about not being confused in meetings or having to continually saying “what?” Your audiologist or hearing aid specialist will be more than

HLAA Central Florida

The HLAA of Central Florida in The Villages, Lady Lake, FL, has been meeting monthly in a new location. Our meetings are on the first Tuesday of each month from 1:00 to 2:30 p.m., in Room 2 on the 2nd floor of the Clinical Lab. Bldg., 1501 Hwy. #441/#27, Lady Lake, FL across from The Villages Regional Medical Center.

Although we are a small group, we are committed to having a speaker on the agenda each month. We have had the Deaf and Hearing Service of Lake & Sumter Counties in Leesburg come to tell of their services to the hearing impaired in the community; the following month we had the Marion County Center for Independent Living present to tell of their services. This chapter covers three counties: Lake, Sumter and Marion, so it was felt that it would be a good idea to introduce these two services. An audiologist is scheduled for the month of June. AAA also has talked to the chapter about hearing loss and travel. We hope to have Embarq come to show the various phones they have for the hearing impaired for use to assist them.

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happy to include the t-coil in your hearing aid. Don’t you think it would be worth it?

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Any questions can be directed to Jan Sharp at 352-751-4532 or you can email to: Muriel Raine: murhlaacntrfl@aol.com

WebCapTel

Sprint began offering WebCapTel on March 5. WebCapTel is a web-based service that allows a person who can speak but has difficulty hearing over the phone to read word-for-word captions of their call on a web browser during the call, while at the same time hearing the other person using any telephone. A specialized telephone is not required. Users must register at www.sprintcaptel.com to set up a profile and use the service.

A user would make or receive calls while logged into the above website and hear the person on the other line using their own cell phone, desk phone, cordless phone, or even an amplified phone. The user (if they have any residual hearing) hears the person speaking through any telephone, not through the internet or web browser. During the call, captions appear on the user’s web browser.

For more information, check out FAQs at www.sprintcaptel.com

—Kathy Borzell

President's Report

Growing Together - The Hearing Loss Association of Florida is Better than Ever!

As the president of the Hearing Loss Association of Florida, it is my pleasure to share information about how members and chapters are working together to raise awareness of this organization as well as work with others about concerns of hard of hearing individuals.

It was formerly known as FLASHHH, *Florida's Self Help for Hard of Hearing People*. Though the name was changed to *The Hearing Loss Association of Florida*, we still practice the self help theory. We are a volunteer, non-profit group of people of all ages. Members may have various degrees of hearing loss, others may be their family members or friends. Other members include people who are in the field of audiology, speech pathology, psychology, social work and/or teachers. Our parent organization is based out of Bethesda, Maryland and it is appropriately named *The Hearing Loss Association of America*.

Chapters Growing and Growing - Better than Ever!

At the present time, there are 17 chapters in Florida from Tallahassee to Naples, from Ft. Lauderdale to Jacksonville and all others in-between. Chapters are one of the most significant part of the organization. The larger the number of members, the more impact one can have on society.

We work hard at promoting the self-help concept. Self-help means saying: *If others can do it, so can I*. It means learning to recognize hearing loss, being in charge of ourselves and our lives. Chapters can meet for lunch, coffee chat groups, enjoy movies together and/or plan meetings in a group setting to discuss current issues that deal with hearing loss.

Though we cannot predict certain events in our lives, we can master a certain attitude towards it. Local chapter meetings offer a positive environment where people share ways of looking at a problem situation. We also cherish the funny moments, the humor in some situations in which we find ourselves. I can certainly share some funny stories and embarrassing ones too.

Growing Together as a State Organization and getting better than ever!

Movie theaters all over are showing open captioned or rear window captioned films more than ever.

From Ft. Lauderdale to Tampa and Sarasota, live stage performances such as Phantom of the Opera have been captioned. Can you imagine the thrill of knowing what is being said?

We now have captioning of Florida TV news weather bulletins, especially during our summer hurricane months. Everyone has the right to know when to seek safe shelter.

The Turnpike Authority has authorized that all service plazas have at least one TV with captioning for those who travel Florida's main highway.

Our newest achievements are the plans for effective communication access in Florida Airports. Video Relay, TTY's and Captioned alerts at boarding gates are now being discussed and ideas implemented.

New technology and laws to help the hard of hearing to have equal access to communication, education and job skills have come about because the devotion of the national organization, the Hearing Loss Association of America.

Working together - reaching out better than ever!

HLA-Florida is blessed with devoted members who serve on the Board of Directors. These members deserve applause for representing all of us on the Telecommunications Board (TASA); The Florida Coordinating Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (FCCDHH); The CAP-TEL Focus Group; and The Commission on Disabilities. We've been presented with an award of appreciation by Sprint for our time and contribution to the Florida Relay Service and Deaf and Hard of Hearing citizens of Florida. As we work together, we learn more and are rewarded with support in many ways.

Effective Communication - Better than Ever!

Florida has talented people who manage the award-winning website and publish our award-winning newsletter. We have a state chapter coordinator who is always available to help you with chapter information and ideas. Members are available day and night via e-mail to answer questions and respond to concerns.

Raising Awareness on a State-National Level, Better than Ever!

How can we begin to top the amazing achievement of our very first Walk4Hearing event? It may be a hard task in the future, but I feel that Florida members will show loyal support year after year.

Congratulations to our long-time board member, Kathy Borzell, who has been awarded with the distinguished Hearing Loss Association of America's Keystone Award, the tops.

More than ever, we need you to continue to be better than ever!

My enthusiasm for helping others with hearing loss will continue for my lifetime. For too long I kept silent about my concerns and to remain silent is to accept the situation.

I share this because I knew *nothing* about new technology that could have helped me throughout the years until I was introduced to HLA. It is my turn to give back for all the empowerment offered to me through education, new technology and moral support.

Florida's chapter leaders and members who give of their time to reach out make such a positive difference, even if it is just one person at a time. One may not get thanks but the rewards will come in other ways.

I would like to end my president's report with the fact that while chapters throughout Florida have meetings monthly and have websites to share information, the HLA-FL Board of Trustees still needs input and support from you to continue our effort to reach out and make a difference. Your time and sharing of ideas is always welcomed to help us all get better and better.

The Hearing Loss Association of Florida (and America) has opened up a whole new world for me in communication, accessibility, travel and blessed me with many new friendships from all over.

Along with many others, I've been blessed to be growing *better than ever*, with you!

--Lynn Rousseau

Knowledge is Best Tool in Managing and Treating Hearing Loss

Across the country, approximately 28 million Americans are living with some sort of hearing loss or impairment. Ten million Americans have suffered irreversible noise-induced hearing loss, and 30 million more are exposed to dangerous noise levels each day that may cause hearing loss eventually. Hearing loss is the most common birth defect, affecting 12,000 children born in the United States each year.

There are two types of hearing loss: conductive and sensorineural. Hearing loss that occurs as a result of disease or damage to the ear canal, eardrum or middle ear is conductive. Depending upon the cause, conductive hearing losses are usually treated medically or surgically. Hearing loss that occurs in the cochlea is called sensorineural. This type of hearing loss is often referred to as nerve deafness. There are a variety of causes for sensorineural hearing loss such as exposure to loud noise, infection, as well as deafness genes.

The usual treatment for sensorineural hearing loss has been external hearing aids. For many people, a hearing aid restricts motion and activities because it has to be removed before participation. It can prevent one from swimming and aerobics, or playing active sports, such as basketball or tennis, and can interfere with sleeping and showering due to perspiration. In short, a hearing aid can make the simple, enjoyable things in life more difficult.

An aging, yet physically active, population is looking for alternatives. Fortunately, an investigational, fully implantable hearing device is now being evaluated in a new clinical research study. Unlike traditional hearing aids, this device is implanted under the skin. Nothing is worn in the ear canal and no part of the device is visible externally. Because the Otologics Fully Implantable Hearing Device is completely concealed, the wearer is able to participate in activities without worrying about the device being damaged or getting in the way.

Like many other health conditions, knowledge is the best tool with which to manage and treat hearing loss. Knowing the treatment options available is the key to managing this common impairment, thus ensuring a healthy and productive life. To learn more, visit www.thehearingstudy.com

Dr. Jim Atkins is a board-certified neurotologist, one of only 240 nationwide, with offices in Celebration.

Dr. Lawrence Grobman is board certified in otolaryngology and neurotology with offices in Miami.

Dr. Jack Wazen is an otolaryngologist with offices in Sarasota.

Call 1-866-394-7320 for more information about the clinical research study for this investigational, fully implantable device.

*Standing Ovation to
the Florida Walk
Committee
& Hearing Loss
Association of Florida
Board of Trustees*

Molly C. Corum



My abilities are not defined by my lack of hearing. My willingness to learn and share knowledge, my insatiable curiosity about the world around us, my compassion for others, my sense of humor, and my perseverance in the face of great difficulties are the attributes by which others should judge me. Those people who fixate on my lack of hearing rather than seeing all that I am and all that I have accomplished have more of a disability than I will ever have. They deserve my condolences and my pity; they do not deserve my time or my effort.

*-Richard Herring
HLA-FL Board of Trustees*

Communication Strategies for Eating Out

– Dr. Patricia Krikos

You can . . . temper the effects of challenging listening conditions by using effective communication strategies. Think about the last time you went to a restaurant and found yourself bombarded by noise: other people's conversation, mood music in the background, clanging dishes and cutlery, noise from the kitchen, etc. Now think about what strategies you could use to minimize the difficulties you have the next time you dine out. You may find these suggestions helpful:



1. Plan ahead by picking a quieter restaurant. For example, unless you're content to read the captioning on the televisions, avoid sports bars. Try to find carpeted restaurants that have chairs with rollers on the legs (thus preventing an annoying scraping sound when they are moved), plants, and sound absorbent materials on the tables and walls.
2. Make reservations ahead of time, and ask for accommodations.
3. Go to your favorite restaurants, so you already know their specialties and options, such as choices of salad dressings or side dishes.
4. Pick the best day and time (not Friday nights!) to dine out.
5. Look on the restaurant's website to preview the menu.
6. Choose to dine with a smaller number of dining partners.
7. Pick a table in the least noisy part of the restaurant (e.g., away from the kitchen, bar, wait service stations, etc.).
8. Ask for seating in a well-lit area.
9. Remember that even people with normal hearing experience greater difficulty in a noisy listening environment than they do in a quiet listening environment. So, don't expect to do as well with your hearing aids in the noisy restaurant as you do in the quiet of your home.
10. Sit with your back to the window, so that lighting is on the speaker's face,

- not in your eyes.
11. Request that staff turn down background music (you are probably not the only patron bothered by the volume of the music).
12. Tell the host/hostess and waiter/waitress, as well as your dining companions, that you have a hearing loss and that it will help you if they slow down a bit, speak a little bit louder, and face you directly.
13. When possible, indicate choices before you're asked. Examples: "I'd like a salad with Italian dressing" or "I would like a burger, no fries."
14. Ask the waiter/waitress for a printed list of the specials of the day.
15. Use directional microphones and/or an FM system. If your hearing aids are set to directional, be sure to sit with your back to the main noise source.
16. Don't bluff!
17. If restaurant dining is for business, request another place to meet.
18. Relax/breathe and enjoy the fine food and the company, even if you don't catch every word.

The above was taken from a much longer article written for the Better Hearing Institute (www.betterhearing.org). It is used with permission from both the Institute and Dr. Krikos.



Members of the audience listen raptly to Dr. Charles Berlin at the HLA-Florida board meeting.

–photo by Lynn Rousseau



Treasure Coast Chapter of the HLAA

The Treasure Coast Chapter of the HLAA held its daytime meeting on Tuesday, April 8 at 11 a.m, in the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Office in Port St. Lucie. Featured as guest speaker and talking about treatment for tinnitus, was Dr. Stuart S. Shipe, D.O. M., P.A. Dr. Shipe is a licensed Acupuncture Physician, board certified Chinese Herbalist and a Consultant Pharmacist and certified also in Western Botanical Medicine.

For more info, contact: noisegone@treasurecoastflhlaa.com

-Photos and story by C. Nolte



FCCDHH Members and Staff in Sarasota in May Seated, from left: Tanya Ward English, Lois Maroney, Joan Haber, Lisa Schaefermeyer, Dawn Saunders. Standing, from left: Valerie Stafford-Mallis, Christopher Wagner, Rick Kottler, Melvin Herring, Eloise Williams, John Jackson, Julie Church, Randy Ellsworth, Joe Naulty and Dr. Karen Anderson

Important FCCDHH quarterly meeting coming up in Miami on August 7

Joan Haber, Chair of the Florida Coordinating Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (FCCDHH), would like to invite all Florida Hearing Loss Association (HLA-FL) members to an important meeting in Miami on August 7.

The purpose of this meeting is to meet the new FCCDHH members appointed by the Governor in July and to help with the strategic planning work that the current Council members are doing. The FCCDHH is YOUR Council – there are two HLA-FL seats on the Council and it is important to make sure those two representatives are aware of what HLA members want and need in the way of services for people with hearing loss. It is possible that you could serve on a committee or participate in advocacy efforts during legislative session each year or become more aware of all the organi-

zations in Florida that serve people who are deaf and hard of hearing.

It is important for all these various organizations to become unified in order to achieve ONE goal – to improve services for people with hearing loss. In order for legislators in Tallahassee to take us seriously, we need to band together to reach solutions that benefit us all. The meeting will be held at the Embassy Suites at the Miami Airport – 3974 NW South River Drive on Thursday, Aug . 7 from 12 to 6 p.m. If you cannot personally attend, please consider sending in your written comments which will be read into the record at the public hearing. Visit the website at www.fccdhh.org to submit an online comment or email Joan Haber at joan1@comcast.net or by phone at 941-323-1418 with any questions.

**Audiologists and Hearing Aid Specialists,
please place this newsletter in your waiting room.**

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