

# Hear Ye, Hear Ye

## Thank you, Danke, Grazie, Arigato, Gracias, Dziekuje, Merci, Makasih, Sagol, Mauruuru, Tacke

We send thanks in many ways to the Gainesville community for all its support of the Hearing Loss Association of Florida's Walk4Hearing. It would have been impossible to have a successful walkathon without the dedication and support from local businesses and individuals.

They came through with flying colors to help make hearing loss an issue of national concern in Florida. The national sponsors are T-Mobile, SIP Relay with VCO, and IBM.

Local and out-of-town sponsors stepped right up to let us know they were with us: Rousseau Enterprises, Inc. • Jim and Rosemary Tuite • Venture Realty, Inc. • Tom & Kathy Borzell • Mercantile Bank • Joel & Lynn Rousseau • CapTEL • Kiss 105.3 • Advocates for Better Hearing • Hearing Aid Sweat Band • CAI • Napolitano's • WCJB TV20 • Domino's Pizza • Hank Reidelburger • Gainesville Golf and Country Club • Vicky Y. Johnson, CART •

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Last, but certainly not least, we are grateful to all the family and friends from chapters and organizations throughout the state who supported us with soliciting funds and/or joining us on the day of the walk. We could not have done it with you!

--Lynn Rousseau, Gainesville

--Judy G. Martin, Jacksonville  
Co-Chairs, Florida Walk4Hearing

### FLAA and HLA-FL boards agree to collaborate

It was announced recently that the Florida Academy of Audiologists (FLAA) and the Hearing Loss Association of Florida (HLA-FL) boards have agreed they will join forces to reach out to members of both associations so that each can have a better understanding of the other.

To begin, some of HLA-FL board members will attend the FLAA annual convention in August at Palm Beach Gardens. Further, articles will be exchanged for their respective newsletters – the *Advocate* and *Hear Ye, Hear Ye*. Noel Crosby, president of the Academy, will be gathering information on how we view audiologists and what they can do to better



serve the needs of those with hearing loss. *This would be a good time for you, our readers and members, to express your opinions to us.* Some of our board members will be invited to speak at regional FLAA seminars discussing these very subjects. Conversely, FLAA plans to provide a speaker for one of our board meetings.

This collaboration had been a dream of board members Joan Haber and Kathy Borzell for some years. Now that it is happening, everyone is excited at the possibilities of this relationship.

--Judy Martin, President  
HLA-Florida



DeafCode, LLC. announces the launch of its first beta of Captionfish.com. It is the first website to integrate an Instant CC Film Finder(tm), which provides immediate and effortless custom results within 30 miles of a chosen location, refreshed on each visit to Captionfish.com. Results for up to 7 days in the future and 60 miles away are available at the click of a button. "The DeafCode Team was inspired to create Captionfish because of the need to find a comprehensive list of captioned movies in one place," said Chris Sano, DeafCode, LLC. Co-Founder. "We've received a tremendously positive response and feel Captionfish has the potential to become one of the most popular online destinations for the deaf and hard-of-hearing. We are adding more theaters every day and will continue to enhance the website's functionality with new features - many driven by our visitors' feedback."

Website: <http://www.captionfish.com>

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**of Florida**  
**www.hla-fl.com**

- President:  
**Judy G. Martin**, Jacksonville  
 judy40@bellsouth.net  
 904-778-2265
- State Coordinator  
**Larry Kavanaugh**, Winter Haven  
 willowyndk@gmail.com  
 863-325-9839
- Kathy Borzell**, Tampa  
 kborzell@verizon.net  
 828-743-2737
- Nancy Day**, Gainesville  
 dayjoy@cox.net  
 352-377-7883
- James Diaz**, Oviedo  
 James.Diaz@gdit.com  
 407-366-3024
- Joan Haber**, Sarasota  
 joan1@comcast.net  
 941-921-9197
- Richard Herring**, Sun City Center  
 rhmann@tampabay.rr.com  
 813-642-0558
- Flo Innes**, Sarasota  
 a4bh@msn.com  
 941-349-3057
- Lynn Rousseau**, Gainesville  
 HLAFlorida@aol.com  
 352-331-9808
- Don M. Shaffer**, Plant City  
 advocman4hi@yahoo.com  
 813-719-3074
- Katherine Shaffer**, Plant City  
 shafferm@msn.com  
 813-719-3074
- Melissa Trauthwein**, Jacksonville  
 melissat1977@bellsouth.net  
 904-230-4248
- • •
- Professional Advisors:  
**James Forstall**, Tallahassee  
 jforstall@ftri.org  
 888-292-1950 X230
- Dr. Patricia Kricos**, Gainesville  
 pkricos@csd.ufl.edu
- • •
- Accountant:  
**Don Powell**, Gainesville

- UPCOMING MEETINGS**  
 October 3, 2009 DelRay Beach  
 February 6, 2010 Tallahassee  
 (or by Teleconference)  
 June 5, 2010 Sarasota

**We are calling for YOU!**

The Hearing Loss Association of Florida (HLA-FL) is seeking qualified individuals to serve on the HLA-FL Board of Trustees for a three-year term beginning October 3, 2009.

**Who is Eligible?**

All members of Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) who are Florida residents are eligible. HLA-FL is committed to assembling a board comprised of individuals with a diversity of skills, backgrounds, hearing loss, and ages. Hearing applicants with sensitivity to the needs of people with hearing loss will be considered. Ability to work with others is essential. Positive thinkers with the desire to improve the quality of life for hard of hearing Florida residents are encouraged to apply. HLA-FL members can nominate themselves for board membership or nominate another Florida HLAA member (with permission).

**What is Required?**

The board meets at least three times a year in locations that vary to provide equitable geographic access. Members are encouraged to attend all meetings. Costs of travel are the

members' responsibility. Members are asked to take active roles on standing and ad hoc committees. Meetings are presently held on Saturdays to accommodate employed members. Major committee work occurs between board meetings and is most often transacted by e-mail or chat room, and thus, Board members are required to have e-mail access. Reimbursements of previously approved expenses on behalf of HLA-FL are available to trustees upon request.



**How to Apply for the HLA-FL Board:**

Application forms are available by contacting Richard Herring, Chair, Nominating Committee, 1317 Caloosa Lake Ct., Sun City Center, Florida 33573-4869 or by e-mail at: **rhmann@tampabay.rr.com**

Applications must be returned no later than August 14, 2009.

**Judy G. Martin, Editor**  
*Hear Ye, Hear Ye* is published every other month: Jan., Mar., May, Jul. Sept. & Nov. Deadline is approximately the 15th of the prior month.

**Advertising Rates**  
 Full Page \$800.00  
 Half Page \$450.00  
 Quarter Page \$225.00  
 Eighth Page \$115.00

**Our circulation is 2,500 mailed to 600 HLAA members in Florida, 850 audiologists, 950 hearing aid specialists, and 100 distributed.**

**Send news items, photos, ads or checks to:**  
**Judy40@bellsouth.net**  
 or 8019 Leafcrest Drive  
 Jacksonville, FL 32244  
 Make checks payable to: **Hearing Loss Association of Florida**  
*Your donations are tax deductible*  
*We are a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.*

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**A One-Year Membership to the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA)**

- ◆ **Includes: 6 issues of Hearing Loss Magazine**
- ◆ **6 Issues of Hear Ye, Hear Ye, state newsletter of HLA-Florida**
- ◆ **Network of chapters throughout the state.**
- ◆ **Assistance with education, advocacy, support services and referrals.**

For more information contact Joan Haber **joan1@comcast.net** or 904-921-9197

OR go to **www.hla-fl.com** for printable form

## Silence is Not Golden

Have you noticed the increase in numbers and sizes of ads for hearing aids in the newspapers? These businesses have read the reports and have seen the statistics that more than one out of ten Americans have a hearing loss. About 17 percent – 36 million people – report some degree of hearing loss and those numbers are growing. Three out of 1000 children are born with hearing loss; eight percent of American adults 18 to 44 years old; nineteen percent of baby boomers, ages 45 to 64; 30 percent of people over 65 have hearing loss. The majority – 65% – of people with hearing loss are below retirement age. It ranks with arthritis, high blood pressure and heart disease as one of the most common physical conditions. This number is growing with the cumulative effects of amplified music, sound systems at home and in the theaters and the growing use of personal listening devices which can blow your hearing away. According to the VA, an estimated 59,000 military members have returned with hearing loss due to noise exposure.

Hearing loss is one of the most commonly undressed health conditions in Americas today. It can and does impair speech, learning ability and affects social behavior. Studies have shown that hearing loss is the most devastating on a person's physiological well-being than the loss of any one of the other senses.



Merv Daniels

Those with hearing loss live within the hearing community. When a person loses their hearing they are forced to make adjustments to their lives which not only affects their self-esteem and physical health, it also affects relationships with spouses, children, close friends and co-workers who are also experiencing life-altering situations themselves in dealing with a hard of hearing person.

The first stage is often denial since many people find it difficult to accept that they have a hearing loss. There are no visual signs because it is an invisible disability. *It's the other person's fault because they don't speak up.* Unfortunately, it's not unusual for someone to wait five to seven years to seek help. Because of this, more than likely the person will become withdrawn and less willing to attend family or social get-togethers. Family members, friends and co-workers become impatient and tend to back away from talking or socializing because *it's just not worth the effort.* This can and will have an adverse effect on relationships, especially with

## \* Hear Better \*

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with husband and wife. The closer the relationship, the greater the effect.

What can be done to help the person with hearing loss recognize that they own the problem? What can be done with those associated to help *them* understand the related problems how to be more accommodating? What is out there to help the hearing impaired through this journey? What devices are out there that help? What is the newest technology available to help one cope? When hearing aids are no longer enough, where does one learn about cochlear implants which give hope?

There are national organizations such as the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) which have state and local chapters where people with hearing loss can share what works for them. They can also help answer all the above questions. In addition, there are other state organizations such as Deaf Service Centers and Centers for Independent Living.

There is the newborn screening that can detect hearing difficulties that opens the door for children as young 12 months to be fitted with cochlear implants. Children with hearing loss who are identified and receive early intervention prior to 6 months of age develop significantly better language ability than children identified after 6 months.

“Even a very slight hearing loss can have an impact on your daily life,” said Dr. Jerry Punch of the Dept of Communicative Sciences & Disorders at Michigan State University.

“Hearing loss is treatable, and there is no reason for anyone to miss all the important sounds of life.”

Why am I sharing this? Even though it seems to fall on deaf ears, and because I have been on the journey of facing and meeting the challenges of living with hearing loss for the past 46 years, I think it will help others.

--Merv Daniels

Winter Garden, FL.

[mmbdaniels@att.net](mailto:mmbdaniels@att.net)

## Seen through the eyes of a visitor . . .

Something very important thing every audiologist in our area should know and share with their patients, is the monthly meeting of the Hearing Loss Association of Clearwater at the Morton Plant Wellness Center. It is a great and perfect place for super information, great support, a forum to open up and complain, share, pour out your soul, vent your frustrations and to hear and learn about new information. It was packed with two hours of activity, information, support, excitement. When I left, I felt that not only was I having these problems, but others were too. The meeting had a CART reporter and I found it fantastic not to miss a word of the meeting.

The guest speaker, a speech pathologist, was fantastic. She talked about all kinds of support information including various kinds of therapies for people with hearing loss as well as some of the research currently being done. Everyone knew about Rear Window Captioning (RWC), open captioned movies, and the Deaf Service Centers with their free assistive devices and web sites. Everyone welcomed me with open arms and the leader was exceptional in her communication skills and getting everyone to open up and contribute to the meeting.

I also heard about the upcoming convention in Nashville which our president will attend. She will bring back all the most up-to-date information on products, legislature and hearing loss advocacy issues. I am thinking of maybe attending for one a day when I get a copy of agenda. I found a \$68.00 flight one way and am sorry I didn't know sooner when flights were \$49.00.

Last night my oldest daughter invited us to go see *Angels and Demons* at the Regal Theaters in Pinellas Park. The 7:30 p.m. feature was open captioned. I had not been to movie in 23 years because I cannot hear the dialogue even using infrared headphones. Well, tears rolled down my face when the movie started and the open captioning started. I was overwhelmed and couldn't believe how I was affected. I had stopped going to movies and instead rented them months after they came out, so I could watch them at home using the closed captioning. This is truly a beautiful thing to happen for people with hearing loss. I never once had to ask my wife what was said or felt frustrated by not understanding what was happening.

The spectrum of those with hearing loss is vast. I wish I had heard of this group sooner. I am surprised I never heard of it in my Nursing Career, journals, seminars, CEU programs or conferences. I learned about the Hearing Loss Association from a web site in Australia, of all places! It is hard trying to find something you are looking for but you don't know what it might be called or where it is located.

I am telling everyone I see or talk to about this fine and outstanding group.

--John, a new member of the Clearwater Chapter

## Central Florida Disability Chamber

Are you thinking of starting a business or are you currently running a business? You might want to contact the newly formed Central Florida Disability Chamber (CFDC) launched June 5 at the Kick Off breakfast in Orlando. The Center for Independent Living (CIL) in Central Florida ([www.cilorlando.org](http://www.cilorlando.org)) helped form the Central Florida Disability Chamber with the mission to:

- Help entrepreneurs with disabilities form and grow successful businesses;
- Communicate to persons involved with the disability community the benefits of self employment as a method of independence for persons with disabilities, as well as the programs available to maintain benefits while starting a business; and to
- Communicate to the general public the abilities and successes of entrepreneurs with disabilities.

As the name of the organization indicates, the Central Florida Disability Chamber is located in Central Florida, specifically at the Disney Entrepreneur Center ([www.disneyec.com](http://www.disneyec.com)) in downtown Orlando. The Chamber is an excellent start for those of you who are interested in starting a business or in making your business more successful. The Disney Entrepreneur Center offers many free services, including the free advice of the Small Business Development Center and SCORE, the Hispanic Business Initiative Fund, the African American Chamber of Commerce, and the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (and the great resources available for entrepreneurs/businesses at the Center). The Center also offers free use of resources, such as computers with business planning software, Microsoft Office, and Quickbooks.

While the the CFDC is focused on Central Florida, it would help individuals from anywhere.

They have have not settled on a definition of disability, but the plan is to help any entrepreneur. If the entrepreneur has a disability that results in benefit availability, we will work to help attempt to retain benefits. If the entrepreneur does not have a disability that affects the life of the entrepreneur, we may help best by introducing the entrepreneur to the other helpful service providers with the Disney Entrepreneur Center.

The CFDC is currently open and at this time, they are in the office on Tuesday and Thursday or you can make an appointment. It is hoped that significant funds will be received in a few months which will allow the hire one or more persons and increase office hours.

They are working with people around the country to grow their organization from a regionally-focused organization into a nationally-focused one. When the organization running successfully, they plan to expand to Tampa. They would like to work through the Tampa CIL and hop to be located in an entrepreneur center in Tampa t similar to the Disney Entrepreneur Center. This, however, is in the future.

The current website is [www.cilorlando.org/chamber](http://www.cilorlando.org/chamber) and you can see what the Disney Entrepreneur Center offers at [www.disneyec.com](http://www.disneyec.com).

For more information or to join the Central Florida Disability Chamber call Chamber President Rogue Gallart at 407-949-2907 or email: [rgallart@cilorlando.org](mailto:rgallart@cilorlando.org)

--James Diaz

**The convention is coming, the convention is coming**



**By the time** you read this, though, the 2009 convention will be just a memory. You’ll hear all about it in the September issue. Meanwhile, you can remember the way you were five years ago. Here’s the Florida contingent at the 2004 convention in Omaha. Back row, from left: Joan Kleinrock, unknown, Ted Simons, Dr. Pat Kricos, Gail Smith, Joan Haber, Kathy Borzell, Marion Roset, Molly Corum, Francis Beecher. Front row: Jim Diaz, Angie Nybert, Flo Innes, Lynn Rousseau

**Doubling the use of hearing aids**

The following are blog entries written by Dr. David Myers, a looping technology enthusiast. In the interest of full disclosure, Dr. Myers notes that he is a hard of hearing psychology professor, with no financial interest in any product or service. The blogs are located at [www.betterhearing.org](http://www.betterhearing.org) and are used with permission.

In the November 2007 *Hearing Journal*, Better Hearing Institute executive director Sergei Kochkin predicted that acceptance of hearing aids will grow with their increased functionality. His grand idea—putting “miniaturized internal wireless receivers in every hearing aid”—would double their usefulness. Hearing aids would serve a) as sophisticated microphone amplifiers, but also b) as wireless loudspeakers that deliver customized sound from PA systems, TVs, and telephones.



**Dr. David Myers**

As a person with hearing loss who routinely enjoys this dual utility of hearing aids I can tell you: Sergei Kochkin is spot on. And the result is that I *love* my hearing aids.

My ear-opening introduction to wireless, customized loudspeakers occurred a decade ago as my wife and I worshipped within the high stone walls of the ancient Iona Abbey, off Scotland’s west coast. The worship leader’s voice, though amplified by a PA system, was foggy after reverberating to my ears. My wife, noticing a hearing assistance symbol with a “T,” nudged me to activate the telecoils in my new aids.

Voila! Suddenly a clear voice was speaking from the center of my head. The secret, I learned, was the Abbey’s hearing loop—a wire surrounding the seating that used magnetic induction to transmit information to my hearing aids.

The sudden clarity was overwhelming, an experience that I have since had in countless other British venues,

*Continued on next page*

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from auditoriums to cathedrals to the back seats of London and Edinburgh taxis. Once, as I sat in a London airport unable to decipher the announcements about my delayed flight to Detroit, I activated my telecoil receptors and—how cool was this—found the announcements broadcast by my hearing aids. (As I sat there using wi-fi to answer e-mails, I thought: this hearing loop is to my hearing aids what the wi-fi is to my laptop!)



**HEARING LOOP INSTALLED**  
Switch hearing aid to T-coil

Wondering if this technology could work back home, I looped my TV room. To my delight, this enabled my hearing aids to serve as in-the-ear loudspeakers that deliver deliciously clear sound suited to my needs. Moreover, by using a mic + telecoil setting, I can also converse with my wife or hear the phone ring.

Thus began my efforts to support the spread of assistive listening that

effectively doubles hearing aid functionality. This effort has involved

- creating [www.hearingloop.org](http://www.hearingloop.org),
- promoting the installation of hearing loops in hundreds of west Michigan venues. See [Holland-Zeeland, Grand Rapids](#), and [Grand Haven-Muskegon](#). [www.hearingloop.org/loopedlist.htm](http://www.hearingloop.org/loopedlist.htm)
- authoring two dozen [articles](#). ([hearingloop.org/articles.htm](http://hearingloop.org/articles.htm))

Who knows what tomorrow's technology may bring? Exciting alternatives, I suspect. For the present, hearing loops (aka induction loop systems) harness low-cost, miniaturized receivers that can be accommodated in virtually all hearing aids. Small wonder that there is a growing consumer push (which I will describe in a later entry) for this user-friendly assistive listening that, as Sergei Kochkin urged, puts "miniaturized internal wireless receivers" into hearing aids.

...

It's not just hearing aid wearers that benefit from assistive listening via hearing loops, and it's not just the UK that has widely installed them. Writing from Denmark, the Rev. Jan Grønberg Eriksen, then president of "Churcheer, Denmark," noted that "Here we can just install a good loop system in a theater or a church building or any meeting room (and we do—our churches are almost 100 percent covered now), and ask hard of hearing attendees to switch to T-position."

A week ago, a woman with a cochlear implant e-mailed me excitedly:

*My husband and I are traveling in Norway. We were lucky enough to get tickets for Swan Lake at the new Oslo Opera*

*House. I noticed that it had been looped for T-coil. I flipped the switch on my processor, and the sound came in beautifully. This was stark contrast to a concert we went to at Avery Fisher Hall (Lincoln Center) in NYC the night before we left, where I borrowed an ALD which brought in mostly static. . . . When I get back, I'm going to bring this to the attention of the administration at Lincoln Center.*

Today (as I write), she sent a follow-up note:

*The induction loop is so common that there isn't always signage for it.*

*"All the churches have them," the organist at the Stavanger Cathedral told me yesterday. I haven't seen a sign in any church. I tested it out at the worship service this morning. Sure enough, when I switched on the T switch, the sound came in so clearly that I was sure I could have understood every word of the minister had she not been speaking Norwegian. . . . The sound quality was so good, I could get rhapsodic about it.*

Then, a few hours later – how I love these e-mails – a woman from suburban Chicago wrote saying that their church had just been looped and that

*I can certainly attest to the spread of the loop system in Michigan. Before we installed our system I telephoned a number of facilities listed by a loop vendor as having installed such a system. I was amazed to discover that not a single installed site had anything but vociferous praise for the product!!! One would expect at least one nay-sayer in a group that large (22). But there was not a single one!!!*

**E-mails quoted with permission.**

...

Looping beginning to spread the USA

I've mentioned the looping of hundreds of West Michigan venues, including 40 rooms in the city's new convention center and both concourses and all gate areas of Michigan's second largest airport in Grand Rapids. (This is so cool: having information about flight delays, boarding, etc. broadcast by my in-the-ear loudspeakers.)

But 21<sup>st</sup> century grass-roots initiatives also have spread to other parts of the USA. Here are links to some notable efforts (*Ed.—some of these links are for use if you are reading this online. If not online, then enter in the usual way.*)

- [Rochester, NY](#)  
[www.shhh-rochester-ny.org/worship\\_places.htm](http://www.shhh-rochester-ny.org/worship_places.htm)
- [Tucson](#) and the state of [Arizona](#)  
[www.alohaaz.org/lets\\_loop\\_tucson.html](http://www.alohaaz.org/lets_loop_tucson.html)  
[acdhh.org/resources/index.cfm?ID=98](http://acdhh.org/resources/index.cfm?ID=98)
- [New Mexico](#)  
[hlaabq.homestead.com/LoopNM.html](http://hlaabq.homestead.com/LoopNM.html)
- [Central Wisconsin](#)
- [Silicon Valley, Sonoma County](#), and [other California](#) locations

[hla-siliconvalley.org/hla\\_loop.shtml](http://hla-siliconvalley.org/hla_loop.shtml)

[www.hearinglossca.org/html/newsletter/winter2002.htm](http://www.hearinglossca.org/html/newsletter/winter2002.htm)

Adding to the momentum is the growing number of manufacturers, vendors, and installers of hearing loop equipment (see [here](#)) [www.hearingloop.org/vendors.htm](http://www.hearingloop.org/vendors.htm) with two new American manufacturers launching in 2009.

## President's Report

Since the Board meeting on February 7, I have traveled to Gainesville to participate in the Ilene Silverman Show, for the purpose of publicizing the Walk4Hearing, the Hearing Loss Association of Florida, and promoting awareness of hearing loss in general. My compatriots were Dr. Patrica Kricos and Kevin Still, AuD grad student, both with the University of Florida.

• Participated in the filming of a documentary in Gainesville to promote a new way of mapping cochlear implants. This new method was invented by Dr. Alice Holmes and Dr. Rahul Shrivastav of the University of Florida and Lee Krause, President of Audigence, Inc. and they appeared in the documentary. The next day the



*Getting ready for the Ilene Silverman Show: From left to right: Dr. Patricia Kricos, Judy Martin, Ilene Silverman, Vicki Johnson, CART provider, and Kevin Still.*

Ivanhoe News crew came to my home in Jacksonville to interview me and film me doing *non-CI* activities. The documentary has been sent to 200 subscribing television stations around the country. I will notify you when I receive my Emmy award.

- Co-Chaired the Walk4Hearing Luncheon and Event. Attended work sessions in Gainesville with Lynn Rousseau and exchanged hundreds of emails with her.
- Maintained the Florida Walk4Hearing website through April.
- Attended the Walk4Hearing.
- Prepared two newsletters, March and May.
- Chaired four meetings of HLA-Jacksonville.
- Attended the Celebration of Sound Breakfast for the Clarke Jacksonville Auditory/Oral Center for Children
- Took part in the Florida Coordinating Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (FCCDHH) two-day meet-

ing in Tallahassee.

- Took part in the FCCDHH two-day meeting in Orlando.
- Participated in a six-hour teleconference with the Bill Drafting Committee.
- Traveled to Tallahassee with two others to meet with Senator Steven Wise.
- Participated in four one-hour chat sessions with the Chapter-National Chat group which meets monthly for the purpose of proposing ideas to improve the relationship between National and local chapters.
- Continue to moderate the HLAA message board.
- Continue to co-moderate the HLAA Newsletter Editor Yahoo Group.

--Judy G. Martin

**A COMMON MYTH: *Your hearing loss cannot be helped.*** In the past, many people with hearing loss in one ear, with a high frequency hearing loss, or with nerve damage have all been told they cannot be helped, often by their family practice physician. This might have been true many years ago, but with modern advances in technology, nearly 95% of people with a sensorineural hearing loss *can* be helped with hearing aids

## Consumer Reports focus on hearing aids

Consumer Reports has a detailed article on hearing aids in their July issue! We worked for several weeks with their research team to fine tune the report. The approach they have taken is to not rank or rate hearing aids as they usually do with products – they said it is impossible. Rather they have put the emphasis on the evaluation and fitting process.

We reviewed a draft of their consumer check list for what to look for when purchasing hearing aids. They will post this check list on their website in support of their report. They incorporated many of the items from the HLAA consumer check list for purchasing hearing aids. HLAA is listed in the report as a resource. This is broad exposure for HLAA.

### And more . . .

HLAA presented oral and written comments at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System for Orthotics and Prosthetics public meeting in Baltimore, MD. The purpose was to request two new reimbursement codes for replacement of cochlear implant parts, the cable coil and processor controller. Currently the codes for these replacement parts are lumped into one category – “miscellaneous” - that under Medicare allows only \$70 to be reimbursed. People have to pay the balance because they cost a lot more - \$1,500 and \$250. Without the parts the cochlear implant does not work. Once the warranty has expired, the burden of replacement and ongoing maintenance should not fall unduly on Medicare beneficiaries.

--Brenda Battat, Executive Director  
Hearing Loss Association of America

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 HEARING LOSS ASSOCIATION OF FLORIDA

8019 LEAF CREST DRIVE

JACKSONVILLE, FL 32244

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## Hearing Aid Assistance Tax Credit Act

*The Hearing Aid Tax Credit has been reintroduced in BOTH the House of Representatives (H.R. 1646) and the Senate (S.1019)! It's now more critical than ever to write your Members of Congress and ask them to support this important legislation!*

### What would the Hearing Aid Assistance Tax Credit Act do? And, what are the differences in the House and Senate legislation?

- The bill in the House of Representatives (H.R. 1646) would provide a tax credit towards the purchase of each hearing aid of up to \$500 per hearing aid, available once every 5 years. It would be available to 1) individuals age 55 and over, or 2) those purchasing a hearing aid for a dependent. The House bill excludes coverage for those with incomes over \$200,000/year. The bill in the Senate (S. 1019) would provide the same \$500 credit but would cover all age groups.

### Why is this special tax treatment needed for hearing aids?

- Hearing aids are not covered under Medicare, or under the vast majority of state- mandated benefits. In fact, 71.4% of hearing aid purchases involve no third party payment, which places the entire burden of the purchase on the consumer.
- While 95% of individuals with hearing loss could benefit from hearing aids, only 23% (7.38 million Americans) currently use them, according to the most

recent 'MarkeTrak' report, the largest national consumer survey on hearing loss in America, conducted by the Better Hearing Institute.

- Thirty-six percent of individuals with hearing loss have incomes of less than \$30,000 per year, and household incomes of individuals with untreated hearing loss are usually much lower than those of non-hearing impaired counterparts.
- Two out of three adults with hearing loss cite financial constraints as a core reason they do not use hearing aids.
- The average cost for a hearing aid in 2004 was \$1,800, including fitting, evaluation, and post-fitting treatment. Seventy percent of individuals with hearing loss require two devices, increasing average out of pocket expenses to \$3,600.

**CONTACT YOUR SENATOR  
AND REPRESENTATIVE NOW  
TO ASK THEIR SUPPORT**  
[www.hearingaidtaxcredit.org/](http://www.hearingaidtaxcredit.org/)