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**NEWS FROM THE HLAA NATIONAL OFFICE**

**Bethesda, MD**

[**www.hearingloss.org**](http://www.hearingloss.org)

**March 1, 2014**

**HLAA NATIONAL BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING**

Your national Board met February 28 and March 1, 2014, in Bethesda, Maryland, for their first Board meeting of 2014. The Board meets three times a year – first weekend in March, at the HLAA Convention, and in November. For a complete description of how the Board works and what it does, read Chairperson [Diana Bender’s column](http://www.hearingloss.org/membership/hearing-loss-magazine/current-issue) in the March/April 2014 *Hearing Loss Magazine* (page 10). The Board meetings are open to all members. If you are ever in the area and are interested in attending one of the meetings, email Nancy Macklin, director of marketing and events, so she can reserve you a seat. If you will attend HLAA Convention 2014 in Austin, TX, the Board of Trustees and Annual Business Meeting is on Thursday, June 26, 8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Please just show up and have a seat.

HLAA is always seeking people interested in Board service. Follow in the steps of many before you who have served. If you are interested in being a member of the HLAA national Board of Trustees, please visit the “[Become a Board Member](http://www.hearingloss.org/content/become-board-member)” on [www.hearingloss.org](http://www.hearingloss.org). (It is located in the “About Us” tab.)

**HEARING LOSS MAGAZINE, MARCH/APRIL 2014 ISSUE**

The March/April [Hearing Loss Magazine](http://www.hearingloss.org/membership/hearing-loss-magazine/current-issue) is in the mail and should reach HLAA members by mid-March. HLAA members can also preview the [issue online here](http://www.nxtbook.com/ygsreprints/HLAA/g40226_hlaa_marapril2014/) on [www.hearingloss.org](file:///E%3A%5C_-ChapterCommunications%5Cwww.hearingloss.org). Those who aren’t members can preview a sample and see if they might like to receive the magazine on a regular basis. When you [join HLAA](http://www.hearingloss.org/content/join), you not only join the leading organization for people with hearing loss who advocates on your behalf, you get a subscription to *Hearing Loss Magazine.*

**In the March/April *Hearing Loss Magazine*:**

* **HLAA Convention 2014** information and registration materials
* **Tinnitus is Big Business** by Katherine Bouton
* **Grandma Doesn’t Know What We’re Talking About** by Joyce Hagerman (A personal story.)
* **Be the Messenger by Lise Perhacs** (An audiologist gives tips for encouraging your loved ones to get their hearing checked.)
* **I Might Not Hear Everything, but I’m Still Listening** by S.R. Archer (After thinking hearing loss was only for seniors, an attorney deals with her gradual hearing loss.)
* **Hearing Lost, Inspiration Found** by John Threlfal (The author writes about acoustic guitarist Randy Rutherford who says he would have never found his success if it hadn’t been for his hearing loss.)
* **And more**

**HLAA IS WORKING FOR YOU – ADVOCACY AND PUBLIC POLICY**

Your national office, located in the metro Washington, D.C., area, is geographically positioned to advocate on behalf of the rights and interests of people with hearing loss. Lise Hamlin, HLAA director of public policy, spends a lot of time on Capitol Hill working on issues of the day. In fact, she spends so much time at the FCC on captioning, phone, and other communication concerns of people with hearing loss that the staff in the HLAA office suggested she get a cot in a storeroom at the FCC. All kidding aside, if it weren’t for Lise and HLAA, people with hearing loss who use their residual hearing and technology, would not be represented in discussions about policy and laws that affect you. You can email Lise Hamlin for more information.

**HLAA Joins FCC Panel Discussion on Improved IP-Based Relay Services**

HLAA is invited to contribute to a panel discussing the future of IP-based Relay Services, by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). The workshop was convened to gather information on the kinds of research that is needed to improve TRS. The FCC is partnering with the National Institute on Aging for this grant.

HLAA’s director of public policy, Lise Hamlin, was joined by Andrew Phillips of National Association of the Deaf, Dr. Christian Vogler of Gallaudet University’s RERC on Telecommunications Access, and Dr. Karen Cruickshanks, professor at the University of Wisconsin.

The FCC characterized this workshop as the beginning of their process to develop an open platform for the delivery of IP-based relay services to consumers. Having Relay services that could provide video, audio, and text that could be changed by all the participants in the call were discussed. The FCC emphasized that consumer input would be integral to the process. We look forward to working with the FCC to see greater access through IP-based relay services.

**HLAA Applauds FCC Chairman Wheeler, Commissioners and FCC Staff for Moving to Upgrade Closed Captioning Quality**

Almost 10 years after consumer groups filed a petition with the FCC requesting standards for caption quality, the FCC has acted. On February 20, in Washington, D.C., at their Open Meeting the FCC voted unanimously to upgrade TV closed captioning quality.

HLAA, along with other consumer groups, have provided input at every stage of the process. We applaud Chairman Tom Wheeler for setting his sight on the goal of inclusion for people with disabilities as among his first priorities after taking the helm November 4, 2013. We also thank the Commissioners and staff at the FCC who put in endless hours of work on this item.

HLAA members, as well as many others with hearing loss, packed the Commission meeting room to show their support for caption quality standards. Claude Stout, executive director of TDI, provided comments at the meeting, as did 14 year old Tai Jensen, who was born in China and credits captioned television to helping her not only learn English, but fit in with other schoolmates who want to chat all about her favorite teen program, *Lab Rats*.

The Order adopts quality standards for accuracy, synchronicity (timing), program completeness, and placement of closed captions. The Order distinguishes between pre-recorded, live and near live programming. Best practices for video programmers and captioning vendors are included in the Order.

The Commission also adopted measures to ensure that greater access will be provided in local communities by requiring broadcasters who are permitted to convert teleprompter script to captions to pre-script more of their news programming, including sports, weather and breaking news.

In addition to the Report and Order, the FCC issued a Declaratory Ruling clarifying existing rules and defining requirements for “on demand” programming and other issues.  The Commission also included a Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking that seeks comment on reapportioning some of the captioning responsibilities

HLAA looks forward to working with the Commission and with the television industry to see truly good quality captions become a reality.

**HLAA Filed Comments with the FDA Regarding their 2013 Draft Guidance on PSAPs**

On February 5, 2014,HLAA filed comments with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regarding their draft guidance titled: "Regulatory Requirements for Hearing Aid Devices and Personal Sound Amplification Products.''

This draft guidance is intended to clarify the distinction between hearing aids and personal sound amplification products (PSAPs), as well as the regulatory controls that apply to each. This draft guidance is not final nor is it in effect at this time.

In our comments, HLAA raises concerns with the draft guidance, and urged the FDA to seek input from a broad range of stakeholders to work together to craft a document that is helpful to industry, providers and consumers alike as well as provide for greater education of consumers.

**Deaf and Hard of Hearing Alliance (DHHA)**

HLAA is part of a coalition of organizations all working on issues concerning people with hearing loss. The February 2014 meeting was held at the HLAA office in Bethesda, chaired by Lise Hamlin, HLAA director of public policy. Action items for the year include working on legislation related to the IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) and EHDI (Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Act). Another important task is supporting legislation to fund programs to train more captioners and work on regulatory issues regarding captioning quality and relay services. For more information about the DHHA, go here <http://www.dhhainfo.com/>.

**HLAA CONVENTION 2014**

**Austin, TX, June 26-29**

***To stay up to date on Convention and other HLAA news, be sure to:***

* [Sign-up for the biweekly *HLAA e-News*](https://17291.thankyou4caring.org/sslpage.aspx?pid=291&tab=1)
* “Like” our [Facebook page](http://www.facebook.com/HearingLossAssociation)
* Follow @HLAA and @nmacklin on Twitter (Nancy Macklin, director of events and marketing, uses #HLAA2014 for Convention-related tweets)
* Check [www.hearingloss.org](file:///E%3A%5C_-ChapterCommunications%5Cwww.hearingloss.org) for updates; the workshop schedule is posted.

**Southwest Airlines®—Our Convention Airline**

HLAA Convention 2014 attendees will receive a discount off airfares from Southwest Airlines through our SWABIZ**®** account. Southwest Airlines is offering a **10% discount off Anytime and Business Select® fares** and a **5% discount off select Wanna Get Away® fares** for travel to and from the Convention in Austin, Texas. Book your travel between February 15 and June 8, 2014 to take advantage of the discounted rates and receive a 25% bonus Rapid Reward points. Discounts are available for travel June 22 through July 3. See the [Hotel/Travel page](http://hearingloss.org/events/convention/hotel-and-travel) for more details.

**Renaissance Austin -**There is a new link to the reservation system at the Renaissance Austin our convention hotel – <http://bit.ly/2014CONV>

**KATHERINE PAWLOWSKI (AGE 8) NAMED AS NATIONAL WALK4HEARING AMBASSDOR**

The HLAA Walk4Hearing kicks off its 2014 season with eight-year-old Katherine Pawlowski as the ambassador sending her message across the country about why she walks. She will be featured on [www.Walk4Hearing](http://www.Walk4Hearing) in a video and will attend some kick-off and Walks. The Walk4Hearing is in 21 cities this year and, with thousands of walkers, raises awareness about hearing loss and raises money for programs to benefit people with hearing loss. If there is a Walk4Hearing near you, consider getting involved or seeing if someone you know is walking.

Find a Walk at [www.walk4hearing.org](http://www.walk4hearing.org). It’s a fun website – full of color, photos and more user friendly than in years past.

**Coloring Book for Kids**

This year a new coloring book for kids debuts with the theme of “Why I Walk in the Walk4Hearing.” HLAA had a contest for children to submit their drawings to be featured in the book. Look for more information about the book and the children’s drawings on [www.walk4hearing.org](http://www.walk4hearing.org).

**HLAA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PARTICIPATES IN INSTITUTE OF MEDICINE**

The Hearing Loss Association of America was one of the sponsors of the Institute of Medicine’s (IOM) workshop, "[Hearing Loss and Healthy Aging](http://www.iom.edu/Activities/PublicHealth/HearingLossAging/2014-JAN-13/Day%201/Welcome%20and%20Opening%20Remarks/1-Welcome-Video.aspx),” held January 13-14, 2014, in Washington, D.C. The IOM is an independent, nonprofit organization that works outside of government to provide unbiased and authoritative advice to decision maker and the public. There will be a report from the Forum in fall 2014.

On February 27, 2014, HLAA Executive Director Anna Gilmore Hall attended IOM’s Forum on Aging, Disability and Independence meeting at the National Academy of Sciences Building in Washington, D.C. Gilmore Hall and Frank Lin, Ph.D., M.D., Johns Hopkins University Medicine, presented their reflections of the January 13-13 “Hearing Loss and Healthy Aging Workshop.” An overall theme of the meeting was that technology is a key tool to help people with disabilities live well. The idea was summed up in a recurring phrase: “moving from a policy of disability to enabling people to perform.”

**DO YOU WANT MORE NEWS FROM YOUR NATIONAL ORGANIZATION?**

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