

# HEARSAY

Volume 3, No. 2 June 2004

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF ...



SHHH opens the world of communication to people with hearing loss.

## in this issue ...

|  |        |
|--|--------|
| Harrisburg Employment Conference a Success!    | Page 2 |
| Spread the Word!                               | Page 3 |
| SHHH Chapters in Pennsylvania                  | Page 3 |
| Pennsylvania Banquet Far Exceeds Expectations! | Page 4 |
| Newborn Hearing Screening State Report Card    | Page 5 |
| Changes in PA-SHHH                             | Page 5 |
| <i>HearSay</i> Helpers                         | Page 6 |
| About SHHH & PA-SHHH To Receive <i>HearSay</i> | Page 6 |

Keep up-to-date. [www.pa-shhh.org](http://www.pa-shhh.org)

## A Message from Diana

For most of us, June signals the start of the summer vacation season. Vacations usually mean sleeping in unfamiliar beds in unfamiliar locations. Fortunately for people with a hearing loss, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires that hotels and motels make our accommodations accessible. This means providing such things as strobe light evacuation alarms, volume control knobs on telephones and flashing light door knockers. When traveling alone, I always request these accommodations. After all, they are not just nice to have, but a critical need in case of an emergency.

But when traveling with my hearing spouse, I often don't bother to request accommodations. There are several reasons I can think of why this is a mistake. First, and most importantly, I am not together with my spouse every minute of every day. So an occasion could arise where I would be in a hotel room alone and would not hear a fire alarm, no matter how loud it is. Secondly, hotels don't pay attention to equipment that is never requested. If the hotel only receives an accommodation request every five years, the equipment is not likely to be in good order. Finally,

(Continued on page 2)



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Look for this International Symbol of Access for Persons with Hearing Loss

# Harrisburg Employment Conference a Success!

by *Patricia R. Brockley*

“Working Together” was the theme of the one-day employment conference held May 6, 2004 at the Wildwood Conference Center in Harrisburg. A total of 69 people listened, learned and networked their way through the conference.

Kicking off the conference was the plenary session “The Impact of Hearing Loss on Work and Life” presented by PA-SHHH State Co-Director Marcia Finisdore.

Following a break were two concurrent sessions, “OVR and PA CareerLink Resources” headed by OVR District Manager Joseph Delellis, and “Challenges in the Workplace” presented by Diana Bender, PA-SHHH State Co-Director.

Brenda Battat, Public Policy Director of SHHH, gave the after-lunch keynote address “From the Other Side of the Desk.”

The afternoon sessions included “Legal Issues Related to Hearing Loss” by Margaret McKenna, Staff Attorney, Center for Disability Law and Policy, and “Employment Pathways Through Apprenticeship” by Judith Rich, Apprenticeship Training Representative, U. S. Department of Labor.

The plenary session panel “Working

with a Hearing Loss” moderated by Judith Rich concluded the conference. The audience asked the panel members a number of questions. Attendees remarked about the important things they learned and were especially appreciative of learning strategies to benefit them in the work place.

This conference was designed to be “hearing friendly” and modeled good hearing accessibility for all degrees of hearing loss. Accommodations were of four types. 1. Sessions were amplified by the excellent public address system. 2. Infrared receivers with integrated neckloops were available for those with telecoil-equipped hearing aids, while hard of hearing people without hearing aids could use these same infrared receivers with headsets. 3. Real time captioning (CART) was provided so everyone could read the speaker’s words on the big screen at the front. 4. There were interpreters for the signing deaf.

These accessibility accommodations paid off. One attendee remarked, “For the **first time** I ‘heard’ everything.” This is the goal of proper hearing accommodations.

After realizing how well these accommodations worked, another attendee remarked, “I will look into the possibility of acquiring ALDs” while yet another one declared, “I will look into getting CART at my workplace.”

For some employees and potential employees, attending this conference crystallized their thinking as to their needs. Some people realized they had “to be more assertive.” Others remarked about “knowing what my needs are” and having the will now to go after them.

Not only was this conference useful to hard of

hearing people and employers, but it also clicked with employment counselors. One remarked, “After hearing about the challenges that hard of hearing people face and some of the strategies suggested to solve them, in the future I will suggest these strategies to employees and people who are hard of hearing.”

One outcome of this conference was the need for SHHH to become better known throughout the Commonwealth. One person questioned, “Why haven’t I been told sooner of SHHH?” As members of SHHH in PA, we need to continue to work to get the word out that SHHH is here to help you hear.

Several attendees expressed an interest in “next year’s conference.” This indicates just how real the need is for conferences aimed at meeting the needs of hard of hearing people in PA.

Working together with the PA-SHHH state office to put on this conference were the Center for Independent Living of Central PA, the PA Business Leadership Network, the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) and other hard of hearing professionals.

*Patricia Brockley is an Independent Living Specialist and works at the Center for Independent Living of Central PA. She was also chair of the conference organizing committee. You can reach her at [ilspecialist2@cilcp.org](mailto:ilspecialist2@cilcp.org)*

## Message from Diana

(Continued from page 1)

people with a hearing loss already rely on hearing friends and relatives for so very much in their lives. A simple request for a phone with a volume control would enable me to make my own phone call while my spouse gets a chance for some down time in front of the TV. So remember to ask for accommodations when you travel. Have a great summer!

**Diana Bender**

*PA-SHHH State Co-Director*



## Spread the Word!

by *Diana Bender*

Have you noticed billboards, radio and transit ads across the state asking you to “Spread the Word” about the telecommunications relay service? These ads are the first signs of a campaign which seeks to raise awareness about the relay service among the hearing public.

The relay service allows people with a hearing loss so severe that they cannot understand speech on the phone to use special equipment and a special operator to relay the call to those with normal hearing. Relay also makes phone calls possible for people with speech disabilities. Christy Smith, a deaf woman who appeared on the CBS TV program “Survivor: The Amazon,” is the campaign spokesperson.

The campaign was initiated by the Public Utility Commission (PUC), together with AT&T, the relay provider in PA, in response to a request from the PA Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS) Advisory Board.

Consumer members of the advisory board had long recognized that the lack of understanding of what relay is presented a major impediment for people with a hearing loss who use the relay service. As a result, hearing recipients of a relay call frequently hang up, thinking it is a telemarketing or prank call.

A research study conducted in 2003 showed that only 9 percent of Pennsylvanians were either aware of or

### Bulk Copies of *HearSay* for Distribution

In the future, if you would like to receive bulk copies of *HearSay* to distribute in hospitals, audiologists offices, seniors homes, etc., please email Marcia ([finisdore@pa-shhh.org](mailto:finisdore@pa-shhh.org)) by July 15 and let her know how many copies of the September issue you could profitably use.

## SHHH Chapters in Pennsylvania

There are 16 SHHH chapters scattered throughout PA. If you live near one, we’d be delighted if you would attend our meetings. All chapter meetings are open to the public. You are welcome!

Below is a listing of the chapters, general location and contact information. For more complete information, go to [www.pa-shhh.org](http://www.pa-shhh.org).

had ever used the relay service. And while most people know what 911 and 411 are used for, less than 9 percent of those polled could identify what 711 is used for.

A two-year campaign which hopes to change this low awareness was launched on April 1, 2004 with a public relations event at the Whitaker Center for Science and the Arts in Harrisburg.

PUC Commissioners Glen Thomas, Kim Pizzingrilli, and Wendell Holland spoke to reporters about the importance of understanding the relay service for both the hearing and non-hearing public. As part of the launch event, a demonstration was conducted to show how a relay call is made.

Over the coming summer, a traveling exhibit explaining the relay service will be circulating at state fairs and other public events. Also, beginning in the fall, education aimed a school-aged children will be conducted in local schools.

The goal of the campaign is to educate all Pennsylvanians about how to make and accept calls using the relay system and how to dial and use 711.

You can learn more at the website, [www.PARelay.net](http://www.PARelay.net) or by calling the toll-free number, 1-800-682-8706. So please help us Spread the Word: tell people about 711 and the relay service.

*Diana Bender is the Chairperson of the PA TRS Advisory Board*

### Adams/Hanover

Meets at: Brethren Home Community, New Oxford  
Contact: Neil Bauman Ph. 717-993-8555,  
Email: [neil@hearinglosshelp.com](mailto:neil@hearinglosshelp.com)

### Bucks County

Meets at: Bensalem Library, Bensalem  
Contact: Marianne Lock Email:  
[Mcg0312@aol.com](mailto:Mcg0312@aol.com)

### Chester County (ChesCo)

Meets at: Center for Hearing & Deafness, West Chester  
Contact: Bill Pfeifer Ph. 610-444-4454,  
Email: [Pfeifer@kennett.net](mailto:Pfeifer@kennett.net)

### Delaware County (DelHOH)

Meets at: Silberman Center of the Crozer-Chester Medical Center, Upland  
Contact: Gerry Rusher Ph. 610-284-4807, Email [gerlhoh@snip.net](mailto:gerlhoh@snip.net)

### Erie SHHHoreline

Meets at: Edinboro United Methodist Church, Edinboro  
Contact: Cindy Swearingen Ph. 814-734-8703, Email [LaShinkter@aol.com](mailto:LaShinkter@aol.com)

### Generation X (GenX)

Meets at: Deaf-Hearing Communication Center, Swarthmore  
Contact: Ronnie Adler Ph. 610-644-3154, Email [RArmell8214@aol.com](mailto:RArmell8214@aol.com)

(Continued on page 5)

### Telephone Contacts

To talk to someone about SHHH activities, or for further information, feel free to phone:

- Wayne Benson, Western PA 412-661-4724
- Neil Bauman, Central PA 717-993-8555
- Marianne Lock, Eastern PA 215-357-3702
- Ronnie Adler, Eastern PA 610-644-3154

## Pennsylvania Banquet Far Exceeds Expectations!

The first PA-SHHH banquet attracted SHHH members from all over the Commonwealth. The 106 people who gathered April 24, 2004 from noon to 3:00 P.M. at the Scanticon Hotel & Conference Center in King of Prussia, PA came from 9 of the 16 SHHH chapters in PA. In addition, there were also representatives from two NY SHHH chapters.

The Montco Chapter (Montgomery County) with their 17-member delegation had the most members attending. In addition, 16 people came that did not belong to any specific chapter.

Carolyn Myer, the head of the organizing committee, did a thoroughly professional job. The great turnout delighted the members of the planning committee as it far exceeded their expectations.

The banquet gave attendees a chance to learn what other chapters were doing. Each chapter president brought greetings from their respective chapters and briefly explained their programs and initiatives.

Anne Pope, a member of the SHHH Board of Trustees, delivered the keynote address. In it, she explained some of the exciting new developments taking place within SHHH such as the establishment of the National Center for Hearing Assistive Technology in Bethesda and the American

Academy of Hearing Loss Support Specialists.

In addition, SHHH now has an interactive web site that could become **the** place to discuss hard of hearing problems.

Anne stressed that SHHH needs more members. "When we go before a government agency and say that we represent 8,000 people that's not good enough. It's a drop in the bucket compared to the 28 million hard of hearing people in America."

The banquet helped members connect with the national office and inspired members to become more active in spreading the word that SHHH is **the** voice of hard of hearing people!

### Deadline for Submissions

We are always interested in receiving any news, articles or information of interest to hard-of-hearing people in PA. The deadline for submissions for the September issue of *HearSay* is July 15, 2004. Email your submissions to:

- Gerry Rusher, Assistant Editor ([rusher@pa-shhh.org](mailto:rusher@pa-shhh.org)) or,
- Mail them to HearSay, PA-SHHH, 4 State Road, #109, Media, PA 19063.

everyone had a hearing loss. Since everyone is in the same boat, people are more relaxed because they aren't embarrassed by their hearing losses. In fact, in this setting, hearing loss became a non-issue. One lady remarked, "It's nice to see that other hard of hearing people are leading normal, productive lives in spite of their hearing losses."

Will this banquet become an annual event? PA-SHHH would certainly like to repeat it next year, but it's too soon to say whether this will

become a reality. The ideal would be to make this an annual event in more than one area of the state

*Kathy Harral and Alice Dungan, Montco Chapter members, contributed to this article.*

### Full or Half Day Workshops

available through PA-SHHH include:

- Employment
- Coping Strategies
- Public Policy
- Accessibility/ADA
- Speechreading
- Hearing Loss 101

Contact: Marcia Finisdore ([finisdore@pa-shhh.org](mailto:finisdore@pa-shhh.org)) or Diana Bender ([bender@pa-shhh.org](mailto:bender@pa-shhh.org))

A variety of prizes were raffled off, including some hand made items. Ronnie Adler modeled some of these items, like a scarf or a hat, which brought a lot of laughs and added interest to the luncheon.

One of the highlights for many people was the chance to meet with other SHHH members from around the Commonwealth. Most people wished they could have stayed longer and everyone enjoyed the chance to socialize. One member lamented, "I didn't get enough time to talk with everyone."

Another attendee commented how nice it was to be in a social setting where

### Away? Let Us Know

With each issue of *HearSay*, a number of copies are returned because people are temporarily away. Please let Marcia ([finisdore@pa-shhh.org](mailto:finisdore@pa-shhh.org)) know if you are going to be away for an extended period. This will save us postage. Thanks.

### Mission of HearSay

The mission of *HearSay* is to educate and inform people about activities and issues concerning hearing loss in Pennsylvania.

## Newborn Hearing Screening State Report Card

How well does Pennsylvania compare with other states regarding newborn hearing screening? According to a report card released by the Deafness Research Foundation (DRF) and the World Council on Hearing Health (WCHH), based on May 2004 data, Pennsylvania ranks 27<sup>th</sup> among the states with 95.7% of newborns screened for hearing loss. This is up sharply from 86.0% in May 2003.

The national average is 89.8%. Indiana leads the pack with 99.9% screened while Ohio trails far in the rear at 33.0%. Currently 35 states have a 95.0% or better screening rate.

Even though PA is well above the national average, it still has a ways to go. Of the 142,850 babies born in PA each year, approximately 6,140 are still not screened for hearing loss. Since about 1 in 300 babies are born with a hearing loss, it is likely that approximately 20 babies are born in PA each year with hearing loss that needlessly goes undetected because these babies are not screened.

You can read the full report at [http://www.wchh.com/programs/docs/2004\\_state\\_report\\_card.pdf](http://www.wchh.com/programs/docs/2004_state_report_card.pdf).

### SHHH Chapters

(Continued from page 3)

#### Grove City

Meets at: Episcopal Church, Grove City  
Contact: Dale/Ruth Smock, 724-458-9714, Email [dsmock@zoominternet.net](mailto:dsmock@zoominternet.net)

#### Harrisburg Area

Meets at: Holy Spirit Hospital Education Bldg., Camp Hill  
Contact: Barbara Beard Ph. 717-534-0820, Email [BB Beard@pocketmail.com](mailto:BB Beard@pocketmail.com)

#### LebHOH

Meets at: Cornwall Manor, Cornwall  
Contact: Curtis Troutman Ph. 717-273-5596

#### Luzerne County

Meets at: Perkin Family Restaurant, Pittston  
Contact: Linda Rusinko Ph. 570-455-5361, Email [lrusin7@ptd.net](mailto:lrusin7@ptd.net)

#### Montgomery County (MontCo)

Meets at: Jeanes' Library, Lafayette Hill

**HearSay** is edited and produced by:

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Website: [www.hearinglosshelp.com](http://www.hearinglosshelp.com)

Contact: Alice Dungan Ph. 215-482-7829, Email [alice.dungan@phila.gov](mailto:alice.dungan@phila.gov)

#### Philadelphia #1

Meets at: Elkins Park Hospital, Philadelphia

Contact: Allan Weinberg Ph. 215-632-1127, Email [Avram7@aol.com](mailto:Avram7@aol.com)

#### Philadelphia Center City

Meets at: TBA

Contact: Ph. 215-448-6129, Email [Ricardo.bensafed@verizon.net](mailto:Ricardo.bensafed@verizon.net)

#### Pittsburgh #1

Meets at: Union Trust Building, Pittsburgh

Contact: Erich Kost Ph. 412-207-7678, Email [ErichWolfe@comcast.net](mailto:ErichWolfe@comcast.net)

#### Reading

Meets at: GPU Building, Reading  
Contact: Donna Reibsane Email [dreibsan@ptd.net](mailto:dreibsan@ptd.net)

#### Westmoreland

Meets at: Frick Community Hospital, Mt. Pleasant

Contact: Thomas Padden Ph. 724-836-8326, Email [tpadden@westol.com](mailto:tpadden@westol.com)

If you don't see a chapter listed in your area please contact our Membership Committee Co-Chairs: Marianne Lock ([lock@pa-shhh.org](mailto:lock@pa-shhh.org)) or Ronnie Adler ([adler@pa-shhh.org](mailto:adler@pa-shhh.org)).

### For Rent

Hard of hearing accessibility needs for meetings—large or small. Assistive Listening Devices available include:

- FM systems
- Infrared systems
- Audio-induction loops

Contact Walt Jensen:

[jensen@pa-shhh.org](mailto:jensen@pa-shhh.org)

### Changes in PA-SHHH

Change is a fact of life. As spring gives way to summer, there are also some changes taking place here in PA-SHHH.

PA-SHHH State Co-Director, Marica Finisdore, is stepping down after many years of faithful service to SHHH. Thanks for a job well done Marcia!

State Co-Director, Diana Bender, is stepping up and assuming full duties as the new PA-SHHH State Director. You will do a great job Diana!

Also, it is with regret that this issue will be my last as editor of *HearSay*. I've had a great time producing *HearSay* each quarter. However, I need more time to focus on my writing and speaking, so I'm having to give up some things, one of which is the editorship of *HearSay*.

I will continue to be involved with SHHH in various capacities so you will still see me around. Have a great summer everyone!

**Neil Bauman**

*Editor, HearSay*

### Support SHHH

One way you can make a difference to hard-of-hearing people is to remember SHHH in your will. That way your money will continue to help hard-of-hearing people long after you are gone.

## HearSay Subscription

If you would like to receive your own copy of *HearSay*, the official newsletter of PA-SHHH, please fill in this form and mail it to the address below. A *HearSay* subscription is free; however, PA-SHHH is a not-for-profit organization and we are grateful for any donations.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

- Enclosed is my contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to support *HearSay*. Donations are tax deductible and will be acknowledged in the newsletter and on the website.
- If you wish to remain anonymous, please check here.
- I cannot contribute, but I would like to receive the *HearSay*.

Make donations payable to PA-SHHH and send this form to:

**Marcia Finisdore**, State Co-Director  
PA-SHHH  
4 State Road, #109  
Media, PA 19063



PA-SHHH is a totally volunteer organization. We rely upon the generosity of our supporters. Each issue of *HearSay* costs just under \$800 to produce and mail.

**A special thanks to those of you who help make it possible.**

Tom Chaplik  
Grove City Area SHHH  
Lucille Magnusson  
Betty Lou Malmud  
Levona Martin  
Phildadelphia Chapter 1  
Rosanna Suppa  
Ernest Wood  
Harold and Florence Yates  
2 anonymous donors

We apologize if we have missed someone. Please contact Marcia Finisdore for such corrections.

## About SHHH

Self Help for Hard of Hearing People, Inc., founded in 1979, is a non-profit consumer self-help organization. SHHH opens the world of communication to people with hearing loss by providing information, education, support and advocacy.

The primary purpose of all SHHH members is to educate ourselves, our families, friends, co-workers, teachers, hearing health care providers, industry, government, and others about hearing loss.

SHHH has members and chapters in all 50 states. To find the chapter closest to you, contact a member of the PA-SHHH state committee if you are in PA, or contact the SHHH National Office.

**Self-Help for Hard of Hearing People**  
7910 Woodmont Avenue, Suite 1200  
Bethesda, MD 20814

Phone: (301) 657-2248 (Voice)  
(301) 657-2249 (TTY)  
(301) 913-9413 (FAX)

Email: [info@hearingloss.org](mailto:info@hearingloss.org)  
Website: [www.hearingloss.org](http://www.hearingloss.org)

## PA-SHHH Needs You



SHHH volunteers from all over the Commonwealth assist the PA-SHHH State Director by serving on the PA-SHHH Advisory Council or one of its committees. The PA-SHHH Advisory Council meets periodically in Carlisle. Committees conduct most of their business by email but meet periodically in various parts of the state as needed. We would be delighted to have you join us. If you would like to serve on either the Advisory Council, or one of its committees, please contact one of the state leaders listed below.

*State Co-Directors:* **Marcia Finisdore** [finisdore@pa-shhh.org](mailto:finisdore@pa-shhh.org)  
**Diana Bender** [bender@pa-shhh.org](mailto:bender@pa-shhh.org)

*Membership:* **Ronnie Adler** [adler@pa-shhh.org](mailto:adler@pa-shhh.org)  
**Marianne Lock** [lock@pa-shhh.org](mailto:lock@pa-shhh.org)

*Communication:* **Neil Bauman** [bauman@pa-shhh.org](mailto:bauman@pa-shhh.org)  
**Alice Pakhtgian** [pakhtgian@pa-shhh.org](mailto:pakhtgian@pa-shhh.org)

*Government Affairs:* **Diana Bender** [bender@pa-shhh.org](mailto:bender@pa-shhh.org)

*Development:* Open—will you volunteer?

**“Come and join us. You will be welcome!”**