

# HEARSAY

Volume 2, No. 3 September 2003

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF ...



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

## in this issue ...

SHHH Excites Younger Adults PA-SHHH State Office	Page 2
Accomplishes Much in 2 Years CapTel Trials Come to Pennsylvania	Page 3
Air Transportation Hotline	Page 4
<i>HearSay</i> Helpers	Page 5
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 Marcia & Diana

Our state office was established just two years ago. With the help of our Advisory Council and many SHHH members throughout the state we have accomplished many things during this short period on behalf of hard of hearing Pennsylvanians (see the article on page 3).

In fact, we have grown so much over the past two years that the position of state director has become too much for one person to handle. So in June 2003 our national office appointed Diana as a second person to serve together with Marcia as PA-SHHH co-directors. Although we've come a long way since our founding, as the saying goes, 'we still have a long way to go' to assure accessibility to all people who have a hearing loss.

We are holding a leadership training conference this month in Grantville, PA during which we will train 15 Pennsylvanians from all areas of the state to advocate for the needs of hard of hearing people and work towards the goals of the state office. We look forward to working with many more of our readers in the future and sincerely appreciate all offers of help.

*Marcia Finisdore & Diana Bender,*  
PA-SHHH State Co-Directors



c/o Marcia Finisdore, State Co-Director  
8 Azalea Lane  
Media, PA 19063-2240

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

NONPROFIT  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
HARRISBURG PA  
PERMIT NO. 491



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

# SHHH Excites Younger Adults

## The 18<sup>th</sup> SHHH Convention Through the Eyes of the Younger Generation—Gen X

by *Neil Bauman*

Many people have the perception that SHHH is just a bunch of “old” hard-of-hearing people. As a result, younger people think there is nothing in SHHH for them. Nothing could be further from the truth! SHHH has something for all ages.

To help dispel this myth, let’s look in on a number of young adults from PA who attended the 18<sup>th</sup> SHHH National Convention in Atlanta, Georgia in June as they reveal their impressions of this Convention.

Boring? Not a chance. Mary Alloway enthused, “The Atlanta Convention was a first for my husband and me and we just had a blast!” For Alice Pakhtigian, the convention was “unforgettable” while Jennifer Katzman “had a wonderful time!” and Melissa Pardo was “glad I went.”

Exactly what was it that “turned on” these younger folk? Alice revealed, “The SHHH convention, to me, is more than just a learning experience, but really, a social experience I truly look forward to each year. I met with new and old friends from various states. Seeing friends is like seeing family again, because you know that they understand what you are going through, and you are able to speak more freely concerning different issues.”

Mary echoed much the same sentiments. She declared, “I had fun meeting new people who have the same experiences as I do and look forward to meeting them again at future conventions.”

Jennifer learned a lot in the different workshops she attended. However, she was especially interested in learning more about cochlear implants. Who better to learn from than the former Miss America 1995, Heather Whitestone McCallum? In addition, she “asked a lot of different people who had a cochlear implant, to tell me about their life with it and their experience about it.”

The Atlanta convention was Melissa’s first convention. She explained, “The convention allowed me to attend interesting workshops and to meet new people. Two of the workshops I had attended were both enlightening and useful.

The first workshop pertained to captioning in the performing arts. I enjoy the theater and movies, and it’s important that we get more captioning in those areas. The second workshop was about a study

---

**“The Atlanta Convention was a first for my husband and me and we just had a blast!”**

---

being done on hard-of-hearing people and their experiences in the workplace. The results are currently preliminary, but it shows there is a strong need for better vocational rehabilitation across the country.”

This convention was Ronnie Adler’s eighth one. Her purpose was somewhat different from the others. (Ronnie is the founder and driving force behind the Gen X group.) She wrote, “One of the reasons why I attended this convention was to make a presentation about how to start a

GENERATION X SHHH group of hard-of-hearing young adults (late teens to early 40s). We have been very fortunate to work with the Delaware County Intermediate Unit (I.U.) program and were able to get this group off the ground. A majority of our members were new in SHHH yet we had four young adults from our group attend the convention for the 1st time.”

“Besides going to the various educational and sometimes entertaining workshops” Alice wrote, “I enjoyed walking around the exhibit hall a couple of times, and trying out various cell phones, and meeting new vendors.”

The exhibit hall was packed with all kinds of hearing assistive technology. Even the hearing partners got involved. Mary told how her husband “had fun picking out a new toy for us to use. He got a pocket talker for us for when we travel in the car.”

The real highlight of the convention for the younger folk was the chance to get together and have a good time with other hard-of-hearing people like themselves.

For Melissa, “the best parts of the convention were the parties I attended and the people that I met.” She raved, “I’ve never had as much fun as I did at those parties!” She added, “I met people that I hope to keep in contact with and to cultivate a lifelong friendship with.”

Jennifer “had a wonderful time at the Theme Party, the Banquet and the room

(Continued on page 4)

### 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))

## PA-SHHH State Office Accomplishes Much in Two Years

by *Diana Bender*

The PA state office of SHHH is just celebrating its second birthday. It's hard to believe how much a small group of dedicated people have accomplished in such a short time. We are justifiably proud of our accomplishments and would like to share some of the highlights with you.

### Information

- Our award-winning **website** ([www.pa-shhh.org](http://www.pa-shhh.org)) contains up-to-date information of interest to hard-of-hearing people in Pennsylvania. This website also contains a complete resource directory of all agencies providing services to hard-of-hearing Pennsylvanians.
- Our **HearSay Newsletter** goes out to more than 1700 people and organizations each quarter. It is now also available on our web site in PDF format.
- State office **brochures** have been printed and widely distributed to both state and other appropriate agencies.
- We have worked with private corporations, health care agencies and state agencies to **train and educate** people concerning the needs of deaf and hard of hearing people in private employment and state funded programs.
- We have participated in **educational programs** funded by the Dept. of

### 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 October 15 and let her know how many copies of the December issue you could profitably use.

Health to educate hospitals, parents, and MDs about newborn infant screening.

- The PA-SHHH state office provides **information and referrals** in response to many requests.

### Advocacy

- PA-SHHH played a key role in bringing the **CapTel** phone trials to PA.
- We now have **15 representatives on state advisory boards**, including one member on the advisory board to the Public Utilities Commission (PUC).
- Our members have advocated both for and against pending **legislation in Harrisburg**, including providing testimony at a House hearing.
- The PA-SHHH state office has advocated successfully at two colleges in order to obtain **real-time captioning (CART)** for hard-of-hearing students.
- In the past two years, we have trained 20 people throughout PA as part of the Dept. of Public Welfare's **Train the Trainer Program**.

### Chapters and Outreach

- We have started new chapters (or revived former chapters) in Scranton, Center City Philadelphia, Bucks County, Hanover, and Erie to bring our total to **16 active chapters** in PA. We are in the process of restarting chapters in Lancaster and Reading.

Through our chapters, we have reached out to various communities. For example:

- **Philly I Chapter:** regularly makes presentations in area nursing homes and assisted care centers.

### 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 December issue of *HearSay* is October 15, 2003. Email your submissions to either:

- Neil Bauman, Editor ([editor@pa-shhh.org](mailto:editor@pa-shhh.org)) or,
- Gerry Rusher, Assistant Editor ([rusher@pa-shhh.org](mailto:rusher@pa-shhh.org)) or,
- Mail them to Neil Bauman, *HearSay* Editor, 49 Piston Court, Stewartstown, PA 17363.

- **Hearing Discovery Center** in Delaware County: staffed by SHHH volunteers from the **DelHOH Chapter**. This center provides information and loans of assistive devices, as well as off-site demonstrations.
- **Generation X Chapter:** works with the Delaware County Intermediate Unit to demonstrate assistive listening technology.
- **Pittsburgh and Montco Chapters:** conducted hearing screenings as part of the **National Day of Hearing Screening**.
- **Montco Chapter:** met with the **Archdiocese of Philadelphia** to request ALD's to be installed in area churches.

### Employment Conference

- On April 4, 2003 we held an extremely successful conference on **employment** in King of Prussia, PA. A total of 143 people registered for the conference. Evaluations of attendees and our state government partners were all extremely positive.

# CapTel Trials Come to Pennsylvania

by Neil Bauman

A number of hard-of-hearing people in Pennsylvania are currently taking part in the state-wide trial of Ultratec's new CapTel technology that was recently approved by the PA Public Utility Commission (PUC).

The trial began May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2003 and will run for nine months with the possibility of two three-month extensions.

The purpose of this trial is to evaluate a new telephone service designed specifically for hard-of-hearing and deaf people, especially those who have problems understanding speech clearly, even when the volume is loud enough for them to hear.

In the past, these hard-of-hearing people often fell through the cracks. The CapTel system now allows them to use the telephone effectively because they can both use any residual hearing they have and also see the incoming conversation captioned on the phone's text display—

## SHHH Excites Younger Adults

(Continued from page 2)

parties." Alice asserted, "Out of the entire events in the convention, I would say that my favorite parts were either the "My Big Fat Greek Party," with its delicious food, and wonderful Greek dancing, or the late night talks at the bar with various SHHH people, or the tour of Atlanta to see CNN and the Coca Cola factory!"

Would they go again? You betcha! Mary is already looking forward to "meeting up with my new friends in future conventions" while Jennifer "can't wait to go to the next convention."

### Mission of HearSay

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

almost in real time. Each CapTel phone has a volume control, tone control, and loud ringer control in addition to a text display screen.

The CapTel system is basically a greatly-streamlined version of the existing Voice Carry Over (VCO) service. It works much like having two-line VCO, (2LVCO) but without having to have two phone lines, 3-way calling and getting it all set up each time before the called party hangs up. Unlike VCO, CapTel only needs one phone line to simultaneously transmit both voice and text.

People using a CapTel phone do not first have to dial the relay operator and then give him/her the phone number they wish to reach. Instead, just like people using a non-relay phone, they can directly dial the number they wish to reach. The CapTel phone automatically dials the CapTel relay operator and the number being called is transmitted automatically.

This makes connecting the call very fast. The CapTel operator is completely transparent to the person being called. The recipient of a CapTel phone call never knows that a relay operator is participating in the call.

Here's how it all works. When the called party speaks, the CapTel operator carefully re-voices what is said into a microphone connected to the operator's computer. Fastran software automatically converts the operator's voice from speech to text. The text is automatically sent to the CapTel phone where the hard-of-hearing person reads it on their phone's text display. The captions lag a few seconds behind the voice—but the process is still

much faster than using TTY or VCO where the operator has to physically type the message.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) released a ruling on August 1, 2003 that gives "official" status to this kind of service. The ruling recognizes CapTel as an "enhanced voice carry over service" that meets the definition of "a telecommunications relay service (TRS)." The FCC further ruled that as such, the costs for providing CapTel services can be reimbursed from Interstate TRS funds (for state to state calls). It is up to the relay services in each state to decide whether they will actually provide in-state CapTel services.



SHHH played an important part in the FCC's decision. In the 19-page ruling, several references are made to SHHH position statements on various issues. This shows that the FCC is really listening to SHHH as it speaks for the needs of all hard-of-hearing people.

To call someone who has a CapTel phone, you first dial a toll-free access number. You are then prompted to enter the number of the person you want to call. Thus, for the person placing a call to a person with a CapTel phone, there is one extra step. They also have to know this access number. The FCC ruling gives a one-year waiver of the requirement that relay services be accessible by dialing 711. In the meantime, they permit the use of a toll-free number for CapTel service.

## 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 a bundle in postage. Thanks.

# Air Transportation Hotline

by *Neil Bauman*

A year ago the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) inaugurated a toll free hotline for air travelers with disabilities. Unfortunately, this hotline number seems to be a well-kept secret as not many hard-of-hearing people have been using it.

How can using this hotline help you? Glad you asked.

Hotline operators can provide you with on the spot general information about your rights as an air traveler with a disability under the Air Carrier Access Act and the DOT implementing regulations 14 CFR Part 382. Through the hotline, you can learn how to resolve a disability-related dispute with an air carrier and how to help you better plan your next trip by air.

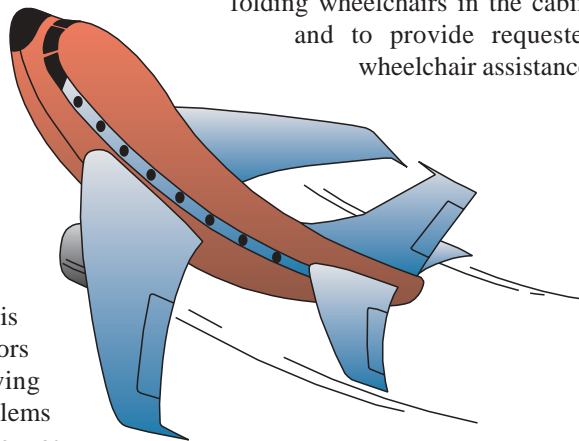
A nice feature of the hotline is that the trained hotline operators can assist you in resolving disability-related air travel problems in real time—that means right now as you speak.

You can use this hotline to obtain help in resolving, in real time, issues involving service animals, seating accommodations, boarding, deplaning, connecting assistance, stowing of personal equipment and other accommodations.

According to the Department of Transportation, “The purpose of ‘real-time’ assistance is to facilitate airline compliance with DOT’s rules by suggesting to the passenger and the airline

involved alternative customer-service solutions to the problem. The airline remains responsible for deciding what action it will take to resolve the issue in accordance with the ACAA and Part 382.”

Generally, if a caller has a real time problem or an upcoming issue with an air carrier, a Hotline Duty Officer will contact that air carrier and attempt to resolve the issue. For example, there have been a number of incidents in which Hotline Duty Officers have contacted air carriers and convinced them to accept service animals and electric wheelchairs on flights, to stow folding wheelchairs in the cabin, and to provide requested wheelchair assistance.



Air travelers who want DOT to investigate a complaint about a disability-related issue still must submit their complaint in writing via e-mail at [airconsumer@ost.dot.gov](mailto:airconsumer@ost.dot.gov) or by postal mail to:

Aviation Consumer Protection Division  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
400 7th Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20590

You can call the toll free hotline from 7 A.M. to 11 P.M. Eastern Time, seven days a week. The hotline numbers are:

**Voice: 1-800-778-4838**

**TTY: 1-800-455-9880**

## 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).

On a related issue, beginning January 1, 2004, U.S. and foreign air carriers serving the United States must record complaints they receive regarding their treatment of passengers with disabilities. They must report these complaints annually to the Department of Transportation.

This rule will require all air carriers operating aircraft with more than 60 seats to file with the Aviation Consumer Protection Division records of written complaints they receive regarding inadequate accessibility or discrimination on the basis of disability. This will supplement information currently being filed by passengers directly with the DOT.

Note the requirement—put your complaint in writing—if you want your complaint heard. Verbal complaints simply aren’t enough.

## 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** is edited and produced by:

Neil Bauman  
Phone: 717-993-8555  
Email: [neil@hearinglosshelp.com](mailto:neil@hearinglosshelp.com)

## 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  
8 Azalea Lane  
Media, PA 19063-2240



PA-SHHH is a totally volunteer organization. We rely upon the generosity of our supporters. Each issue of *HearSay* costs just under \$1,000 to produce and mail.

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

- A. Otto Amann
- Rosaria Crimaldi
- Paul & Jane Harris
- Norma Jenkins
- Madeline Kahn
- Val Schute
- 4 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 the State Director or the appropriate committee chairperson 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 Pakhtigian** [pakhtigian@pa-shhh.org](mailto:pakhtigian@pa-shhh.org)

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

*Development:* **Bill Pfeifer** [pfeifer@pa-shhh.org](mailto:pfeifer@pa-shhh.org)

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