



**Volume 41 Number 7
September 2019**

**JOIN US AT THE COLONIE LIBRARY!
Tuesday, September 24, 2019, 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.
Colonie Library, 629 Albany Shaker Road,
Loudonville, New York**

Are you or someone you care about facing challenges in dealing with hearing loss? Are you experiencing feelings of frustration over missed conversations or misunderstandings? This informal discussion, facilitated by Audiologist Dr. Donna Wayner, the organization's founder and professional advisor, will cover a variety of tools including:

- hearing aids
- cochlear implants
- communication strategies for the home and workplace
- assistive listening devices
- sign language
- speech reading
- ADA issues

Interested in Sign Language?

Beginner Level Sign Language Class

Classes start 9/24/19 at South Colonie High School.

Tuesday nights from 7:00-8:30pm for 8 weeks (Tues 9/24/19- 11/19/19, no class Election Day 11/5)

New and returning students are welcome. We will be covering different themes each week.

Cost- \$46 payable to South Colonie Central School District (check or money order), plus \$5 materials fee payable to instructor at first class (cash or check)

New!- you may now register on-line at southcolonieschools.org (click on Continuing Education tab) or mail checks to: Coordinator of Continuing Education South Colonie District Office 102 Loralee Drive Albany, New York 12205. For registration info- www.southcolonieschools.org or call 869-3576 x2443 (M-F 9-12 and 1-3) or email sccontinuinged@gmail.com

Conversational Sign Language Class

Wednesday nights 9/25/19-11/13/19 (8 weeks) 7:00-8:30pm at Lisha's Kill Reformed Church 2131 Central Ave, Schenectady, NY 12304 (on the Albany-Schenectady border, across from Lia Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram) *Please use the back entrance. It will be a relaxed, fun way to practice signing with others and to build on your conversational vocabulary. Cost- \$55 (cash or check) payable to Kim Dergosits, 2618 Fourth Ave, Schenectady, NY 12303. To register or for questions- kdergosits@nycap.rr.com

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HELP THE EDITOR!!!!

Would you like to proofread the newsletter once a month? Send me a note: mkohome@gmail.com

Have something to say? Tell me! Send me an article! A book review! An essay!

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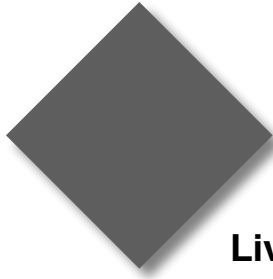
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MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

- **Tuesday September 24th 5:30 pm at the Colonie Library Communications & Hearing Loss**
- **Tuesday October 15th Business Meeting at 5:30 pm Executive Park, IN THE REAR BEHIND Entrance C, Stuyvesant Plaza**
- **November - Date TBD Stress Management**
- **December 14th: Holiday Party!**



TECH CORNER

Live Transcribe by Don Porter

In May I read a Blog post by Katherine Bouton (a respected expert on Hearing Loss, who spoke to our Albany HLAA Chapter in June 2017). She is enthusiastic about Google's Live Transcribe (LT), "a voice to text app that is potentially game-changing for those of us with severe hearing loss". The LT app is available for Android smartphones, not for iPhones (the Android operating system is a Google product also). Ever since I heard about it in February, I had felt unable to take advantage of LT, as I am a confirmed iPhone user. However, Katherine is also an iPhone user, and yet she discovered that she could purchase a basic Android smartphone without any cellphone subscription for a modest \$60. She was very convincing that it was worth the price and the trouble; there is no monthly subscription fee for the smartphone, and the LT app is free. So, I followed her example: I found an ASUS Zenfone online for \$54. I have used Live Transcribe, downloaded from the Google Android Play Store, on the Zenfone extensively since May. I find the results are often extremely helpful, in situations ranging from small groups up to lecture presentations.

Live Transcribe is an artificial-intelligence-based technology that uses machine learning to improve speech to text conversion. A team led by Dimitri Kanevsky, a deaf Google researcher, collaborated with deaf students and faculty at Gaulladet University to develop the new real-time voice-to-text transcription technology. As with any technology, there are limits to its usefulness. Under good conditions – with a group of 6 or 8 people around a conference table with no background noise – it can provide correct captions almost all the time. When there is noise, or accented speech, or when the speaker is far away, of course the accuracy suffers. I find that I often benefit some from the captions even when they misinterpret some words. I've tried to use LT in some situations (a performance of a rap musical at Park Playhouse) where it was no help at all: it judges rap speech as "vocal music" and just gives up. But I also have had great success using it at a lecture series. Best of all, in a meeting, LT helped me understand the speech of a rapid-speaking person with a high-pitched voice that I have never been able to understand before. It is necessary for the Android smartphone to have a wifi internet connection in order for LT to operate. When there is no wifi available, I can use the Personal HotSpot connection from my iPhone.

There are other speech-to-text apps available as well. I use AVA regularly in my church, where the sound system is connected via internet to a cloud-based transcription engine. It is very successful in that situation. A podium microphone receives a much clearer speech signal from inches away than a smartphone microphone 20 or 30 feet away from the speaker. In fact, that is also the advantage that makes induction hearing loops so effective. Other caption apps with license fees include Dragon Anywhere (\$15, for Android and iPhones) and MyEar (\$10, for iPhones). I tried MyEar and found that it was no match for Live Transcribe; with my iPhone (MyEar) and my Zenfone (LT) side by side, I tried to caption a Ted Talk: LT got almost everything, MyEar got almost nothing. Live Transcribe can handle over 70 different languages.

HEAR NEWS is a monthly newsletter of Hearing Loss Association of America Albany Chapter (HLAA) We are a not-for-profit self-help group for individuals that are deaf, have hearing loss and/or impairments. Any mention of opinions, services or products does not mean endorsement, nor does lack of mention mean lack of endorsement.

Address all correspondence to:
HEAR News,
c/o HLAA P.O. Box 9445
Schenectady, NY 12309
or
Email us at
HEARHLAA@yahoo.com

(518) 488-8268

Website: <https://hearinglossalbany.wordpress.com>

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We welcome your input! Please send articles, inquiries and letters to the editor to the addresses listed above.

Please become a member of HLAA Albany Chapter, or at least give us a try – see the form on the last page.

Go NATIONAL! Join the Hearing Loss Association of America HLAA
7910 Woodmont Avenue
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It was a Picnic to Remember~

A group of more than 60 picnickers of all ages converged on the South Pavilion at The Crossings Park in Colonie on August 3rd to enjoy one another's company and wonderful picnic fare, including delicious hotdogs grilled by Don Porter. Thanks, HLA A and Hands and Voices and to all



involved who made it happen, for a delightful summer afternoon!! Thunder made for interesting background noise, but the rain held off till all were safely on their way.

For a special Remembrance, think of our Tribute Fund! Tribute donations are a thoughtful way to honor a birthday, an anniversary or any special event, or to memorialize the death of a loved one. You may also make undesignated contributions. The money from the Tribute Fund is used to make our meetings accessible to everyone. Just mail the form below with your check (payable to HLA A, Albany Chapter), to:
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IN MEMORIAM SY BLUM

Obituary from the Times Union (August 24, 2019) abridged:

POMPANO BEACH, Fla. — Seymour Blum died peacefully at home in Pompano Beach on August 9, 2019. He was one week short of his 102nd birthday. He is survived by his beloved wife of 47 years, Bernice (Fader) Blum; his two daughters, and three stepsons, grandchildren, and step-grandchildren.

Despite his lifelong severe hearing deficit, he lived a happy, healthy and highly productive life. For many years, Mr. Blum was an active member of hearing-impaired groups in both Albany and Deerfield Beach, Fla. Retired from Clarity Publishing in Albany in 1987, he wrote a monthly column for more than 25 years for the Deerfield Beach Century Village Reporter where he was an associate editor. An avid swimmer for most of his life, Mr. Blum also enjoyed watching professional hockey and baseball and discussing current events. Funeral services will be private. In lieu of flowers, remembrances may be sent to the Hearing Loss Association of America - Albany Chapter, P.O. Box 9445, Schenectady, NY, 12309-0445; email hearhlaa@yahoo.com To leave a condolence message for the family, please visit levinememorialchapel.com

* To read the full obituary, please visit: <https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/timesunion-albany/obituary.aspx?n=seymour-blum&pid=193721525>

Seymour (Sy) Blum was a 'one-of-a-kind' gentleman. He was a loyal and long time member of first Hearing Endeavor for the Albany Region (HEAR) and then Hearing Loss Association of America-Albany Chapter (HLAA) for the past 30 years. Over the years he wrote numerous articles and editorials on a regular basis for our HEAR NEWS in which he shared his experiences living with a hearing impairment. Sy was a people person who liked to talk even though he was challenged by his hearing loss. He was admired for his indomitable spirit, kindness and vigor, his boldness. He liked a good laugh and never failed to express his pain and disappointment regarding the travails of hearing loss.



In 2001, Sy was one of the participants in a project that resulted in the publication of a book entitled: "Voices From A Quieter Land: Insights into the Impact of Hearing Impairment" assembled by Donna Wayner and Ellen Rupert. A short segment of his writing that was included in the book about his '*Glory Story in Spite of his difficulty hearing*' that was written in response to the question "What achievements are you most proud of in your life?" follows:

Being able to retire comfortably after a long and pleasurable working career. I am also proud of the fact that I made (the) right choices regarding my career. I seldom backed off from a challenge because of my impairment. I was a part-time reporter, shop steward for my union, here and in New York City, and am now a regular columnist and member of the editorial board for the #1 condominium newsletter in Florida. I keep physically active and swim mile every chance I get.

A long time hearing aid user and an early cochlear implant recipient, he worked diligently to connect and communicate. He set an example for others with hearing loss to emulate. Sy and Bernice came regularly to meetings, lectures, parties and picnics with our group. They were a handsome pair who complemented each other perfectly.

Our thanks to Sy for all he shared. He will be dearly missed.

INFORMATION YOU CAN USE

(Note: See www.hearinglossalbany.wordpress.com for more details)

- **Hearing Loss Association of America** — www.hearingloss.org
- **Hands and Voices** — www.handsandvoices.org
- **Hearing Like Me** — www.hearinglikeme.com
- **Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center** — www.gallaudet.edu
- **National Deaf Center on Postsecondary Outcomes** — nationaldeafcenter.org
- **Albany Law School Civil Rights & Disabilities Law Clinic** — www.albanylaw.edu
- **Office of the NYS Attorney General, Civil Rights Division** — www.ag.ny.gov
- **Young Adults** - www.hearingloss.org/content/young-adults-and-hearing-loss
- **American Tinnitus Association** — www.ata.org
- **Career & College Advice for Deaf & Hard of Hearing Students** — www.affordablecollegesonline.org/college-resource-center/deaf-student-college-career-advice

Lion's Hearing Devices Loan-Out Centers — try out devices before you buy them!

- Madison Hearing Center, 14 Columbia Circle Drive, Suite 202, **Albany**, NY 12203 (518) 690-2060
- Madison & Saratoga Hearing Ctr, 414 Maple Ave, Suite 800, **Saratoga Springs**, NY 12866 (518) 584-0578
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- Resource Center for Independent Living, 347 W. Main St., **Amsterdam**, NY 12010 (518) 842-3561
- Center for Better Hearing, 318 Ridge Street, **Glens Falls**, NY 12801 (518) 798-4800
- Resource Center for Independent Living, 401 East German St., **Herkimer**, NY 13350 (315) 866-7245
- HearUSA, 2200 Burdett Avenue, **Troy**, NY 12180 (518) 272-7323

Patronize These Accessible Venues!

And...if you know of other venues, please share them with us!

- **AMC Loews** (amctheatres.com) — Rotterdam — Captioning
- **Bowtie Cinemas** (bowtiecinemas.com) — Schenectady, Saratoga, Wilton — “cup holder” Captioning
- **Regal Cinemas** (regmovies.com) — Clifton Park, Crossgates, Colonie Center, East Greenbush, Wilton Mall and Aviation Mail — Captioned Glasses
- **Capital Repertory Theatre** (capitalrep.org) — Loop
- **Delmar Reformed Church** (drchurch.org) — Loop
- **Unitarian Universalist Society of Schenectady** (uuschenectady.org) — Loop
- **St. Mary's Crescent Catholic Church Clifton Park** (www.stmaryscrescent.com) — FM System
- **Our Lady, Queen of Peace Catholic Church**, Princetown Road, Schenectady, NY (www.olgprotterdam.org) — Loop
- **Christ Our Light Catholic Church**, (christourlightchurch.org) Loudonville, NY — FM System
- **First Presbyterian Church** (firstpresalbany.org) 362 State Street, Albany
- **Barrington Stage** (Barringtonstage.org) 1st six rows of Main Stage are looped
- **Spectrum 8** (landmarktheatres.com) — Infrared and CCR-100 Captioning
- **Loudonville Community Church** (www.lcc.org) - FM Receivers
- **Good Shepherd Lutheran Church**, (www.gslcl.org) 510 Albany Shaker Road, Loudonville, NY 12211

Hearing Loss Association of Albany Membership Registration

- **Hearing Loss Association of Albany operates on a calendar year basis, and chapter registration fees are due on January 1 of each year.**
- Persons who would like to 'try us out' can opt to receive a trial newsletter for three months by checking "Trial Registration" on the form below.
- Registration fees collected are used for operating expenses, including this newsletter, and Professional Associates are cited in each newsletter issue.
- We thank you for supporting Hearing Loss Association of Albany, and we hope you will be able to participate.

Hearing Loss Association of Albany Membership Registration Form

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