



2026 HLA A New York State Conference Program Schedule

Friday, October 2

2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.	Registration Opens – Reception Area
5:00 p.m.	Ballroom: Photo Booth Open Silent Auction Begins
5:00 – 6:30 p.m.	Exhibit Hall Opens Hors d'oeuvres; Cash Bar Open
6:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.	Capital Land Chorus , award-winning A Capella singing group performing the National Anthem, other classics
6:35 p.m.	Governor's Proclamation Presented by Chris Woodfill
7:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.	Greetings from the HLA A National Office: Barbara Kelley , <i>executive director, HLA A</i>
7:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.	Opening Night Entertainment: Ice Cream Social, HLA A Horse Races, Line Dancing, Photo Booth Open

Saturday, October 3

7:45 – 8:45 a.m.	Registration Opens – Reception Area Ballroom: Continental Breakfast
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8:45 – 9:15 a.m.	Welcome and Keynote Speaker: Dr. Gerard Buckley, <i>president emeritus, National Technical Institute of the Deaf</i>
9:30 – 10:30 a.m.	Main Meeting Room: Session One: “Tune-In and Connect with the World Around You” – Wynne Whyman, <i>assistive listening system expert; founding Director of Communication & Advocacy, Center for Hearing Access.</i> Moderator: Dan Brooks, <i>HLAA Rochester</i>
10:30 – 11:00 a.m.	Ballroom: Break; Exhibit Hall Open
11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	Main Meeting Room: Session Two: “Enhancing Your Well Being While Living with Hearing Loss” – Katherine Bouton, <i>author, blogger, educator;</i> Shari Eberts, <i>author, blogger.</i> Moderator: Dr. Meghan Fox, <i>clinical psychologist</i>
12:00 – 1:30 p.m.	Ballroom: Box Lunch; Exhibit Hall Open
1:30 – 2:30 p.m.	Main Meeting Room: Session Three: “The Future of Hearing Technology” – Dr. Jeffrey Shannon, <i>researcher, engineer, audiologist</i> Dr. Ophir Handzel, <i>Professor of Otolaryngology, University of Rochester.</i> Moderator: Dr. Katrina Stidham, <i>Chief of Neurotology and Director of Cochlear Implant & Balance Center, Westchester Medical Center</i>
2:30 – 3:00 p.m.	Ballroom: Break; Exhibit Hall Open
3:00 – 4:00 p.m.	Main Meeting Room: Session Four: “Speak Up and Improve Yourself through Self-Advocacy” – Dr. Tina Childress, <i>audiologist, late deafened adult, Director of Accessibility, InnoCaption;</i> Toni Iacolucci, <i>Co-Creator, Healthcare with Hearing Loss; Member, Strategic Team - HLAA Communication Access in Health Care; Member, Board of Directors, HLAA-NYC.</i> Moderator: Jerry Bergman, <i>HLAA Advocacy Chair</i>

4:00 – 6:00 p.m.	Free Time: Socializing, visiting Saratoga Springs Mineral Springs, Shops, Casino, etc.
6:00 p.m.	Ballroom: Cocktails (cash bar)
6:30 – 8:00 p.m.	Banquet (cash bar remains open) HLAA New York State Association Awards
8:00 – 9:00 p.m.	Special Performance by Sherry Anne , <i>award-winning Singer, songwriter, author, motivational speaker, doctor</i>
9:00 – ???	On your own: Sherry Anne autographs CDs, Fire Pit, Casino

Sunday, October 4

8:30 – 9:30 a.m.	Ballroom: Buffet Breakfast; Silent Auction Winners Posted
9:30 – 9:45 a.m.	State of HLAA New York State – Steve Wolfert
9:45 – 10:30 a.m.	“In Conversation with David Owen,” <i>author of “Volume Control” and staff writer, The New Yorker.</i> Interviewer: Jerry Bergman , <i>HLAA Advocacy Chair</i>
10:30 – 11:30 a.m.	All Authors’ Book Signing – Reception Area
12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.	Optional Group Sightseeing – Saratoga Springs <i>National Museum of Horse Racing & Hall of Fame</i> (advance purchase only – 20-person maximum)

Welcome Night Speaker



Barbara Kelley. Since 2016, Barbara has served as HLAA Executive Director, responsible for overseeing administration, fundraising, programs and the overall strategic plan. Hired by founder Rocky Stone in 1988, Barbara is tremendously passionate about everything that has to do with hearing loss.

Keynote Speaker



Dr. Gerard Buckley, President Emeritus, National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID)/Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT). Dr. Buckley has more than 30 years of experience in higher education, including more than 20 years at NTID. He was the first alumnus to lead NTID when he first became president in 2011.

Distinguished Workshop Series

Workshop #1: Tune-In And Connect With The World Around You

Learn about assistive listening technologies that will help you enjoy going to public venues such as movie cinemas, theaters, concert halls, houses of worship, transportation centers and medical facilities.



Wynne Whyman is Director of Communication and Advocacy for the Center for Hearing Access in Eugene, Oregon. The center educates users, facilities, hearing instrument specialists, and audiologists about ADA-compliant assistive listening systems and other strategies to increase access to theaters, libraries, conferences, government offices, healthcare facilities, courtrooms, places of worship, and other public and private spaces.



Dan Brooks (Moderator) is technology advisor for HLAA Rochester, past president of the chapter, past president of HLAA New York State Association, and co-chair of the 2022 New York State conference.

Workshop #2: Enhancing Your Well Being While Living With Hearing Loss

Three renowned experts in living with hearing loss discuss their real life experiences and how they can help you to live a richer, more satisfying life.



Katherine Bouton is an advocate and educator for the deaf and hard of hearing and an award-winning writer. At age 30, she suffered sudden hearing loss, which progressed over the next three decades to profound deafness. Katherine serves on the Board of Trustees of the Hearing Loss Association of America and is current president of HLAA New York City.



Shari Eberts is a passionate advocate for hearing health and internationally recognized author and speaker on hearing loss issues. She is the founder of [Living with Hearing Loss](#), a popular blog for people with hearing loss, and executive producer of [We Hear You](#), an award-winning documentary about the hearing loss experience. Her co-authored book, [Hear & Beyond: Live Skillfully with Hearing Loss](#), is the ultimate survival guide to living well with hearing loss. Shari has an adult-onset genetic hearing loss and hopes that by sharing her story, she will help others to live more peacefully with their hearing issues.

LivingWithHearingLoss.com



Dr. Meghan Fox (Moderator) is a licensed clinical psychologist in Rochester, NY. She specializes in neuropsychological testing and psychotherapy. She is fluent in American Sign Language and has expertise in working with deaf and hard-of-hearing people and their families. Dr. Fox has also served as a consultant and expert in administrative, civil, and criminal forensic cases. Her editorial and journal contributions include serving as a reviewer and editorial board member as well as contributing academic articles and book chapters.

Dr. Fox enjoys clinical supervision with undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate trainees. Dr. Fox is a proud hearing sibling of a Deaf adult (SODA)."

Workshop #3: The Future of Hearing Technology

Explore what lies ahead in the ever-changing world of hearing aids, cochlear implants, assistive listening devices and biotechnology – including Artificial Intelligence, Auracast Broadcast Audio, Bluetooth, Telecoils, Gene Therapy and new treatments for Tinnitus.



Dr. Jeffrey Shannon is Owner/Director of Hudson Valley Audiology in Rockland County. After receiving an Electrical Engineering degree, he worked as an engineer and math and science instructor for several years before receiving a Doctorate of Audiology.



Dr. Ophir Handzel is a board-certified otolaryngologist who specializes in otology and neurotology. With 17 years of experience, he focuses on treating conditions affecting the ears, hearing and lateral skull base. Dr. Handzel has published numerous research reports with a focus on ear histology, and will also discuss gene therapies for hearing loss.



Dr. Katrina Stidham (moderator) is Chief of Neurotology and Director of the Balance Center and Cochlear Implant Program at Westchester Medical Center in Valhalla, NY. Dr. Stidham is a neurotologist and surgeon and an associate professor at New York Medical College. She has more than 30 years of experience in the medical field working with infants, children and adults.

Workshop #4: Speak Up and Improve Yourself through Self-Advocacy

As a person with hearing loss, you have legal rights to accommodations and services. Learn what these rights are, how to seek out and obtain them, and how to help foster their availability for yourself and others like you.



Dr. Tina Childress is an audiologist, advocate, and Director of Accessibility for InnoCaption who bridges audiology, accessibility and lived experiences. A late-deafened adult with bilateral cochlear implants and fluent in ASL, she offers a rare dual perspective across Deaf/Hard of Hearing and Hearing communities.



Toni Iacolucci is well known to the HLAA community in New York City and nationally. She is a communication access advocate focused on effective communication in health care settings and serves on the strategic committee of HLAA's Communication Access in Health Care program. Toni has helped bring communication aids and services to hospitals and educated providers and staff about the special needs of people with hearing loss. She has also been instrumental in bringing communication access to various cultural venues and municipal agencies.



Jerry Bergman (Moderator) is an appointee to the Governor's Interagency Council for Services to the Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing and HLAA's primary contact to the Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing Office in Albany. As Advocacy Committee Chair of the State Association, he leads efforts to enhance services for the Hard of Hearing through state legislation and improved public policies.

Special Saturday Evening Performer: Sherry Anne



Born partially deaf, **Sherry Anne** achieved a doctorate degree and shares her life story of overcoming adversity and obstacles with a powerful singing voice and a message of hope for anyone facing life's challenges. She is a national recording artist, author, speaker and Songwriter Search Grand Prize winner. Her first live DVD debuted at #5 on the Billboard Music Video Chart. Sherry Anne was named a Hear Strong Champion in 2020 and was featured in HLAA's *Hearing Life* magazine in 2021.

Sunday Morning Presentation: In Conversation with David Owen



Jerry Bergman will interview **David Owen**, *New Yorker* staff writer since 1991 and author of more than a dozen books, including *Volume Control*, an Amazon "Editor's Pick" in 2019, and wrote: "Millions of Americans suffer from hearing loss. Faced with the cost and stigma of hearing aids, the natural human tendency is to do nothing and hope for the best, usually while pretending that nothing is wrong. Owen argues this inaction comes with a huge social cost. He demystifies the science of hearing while encouraging readers to get the treatment they need for hearing loss and protect the hearing they still have."

**Schedule subject to change without notice*

