



HLAA NYSA CONFERENCE
Hear Well. Live Well.
October 2-4, 2026

*Holiday Inn
Historic Saratoga Springs*



Hearing Loss Association of America
New York State Association

Discover SARATOGA

It is my great pleasure to welcome Hearing Loss Association of America to one of America's great small cities, Saratoga Springs. We are so pleased your group has chosen Saratoga Springs for your event. If you've been here before, you know what a wonderful place Saratoga Springs is, and you've hopefully been looking forward to coming back. If this is your first visit, we think you'll be astonished at the beauty, charm, welcoming nature, sophistication and remarkable wealth of attractions, restaurants, museums, retail shops and fine accommodations Saratoga has to offer.

Saratoga's award-winning, walkable, and vibrant downtown is a jewel among destination cities. Our springs are a treasure worth celebrating and you'll find several mineral springs with their unique waters flowing freely all around town. Horses are at the heart of Saratoga. When people talk "track" they only mean one thing – the Saratoga Racecourse -- a cultural icon and one of the world's top 10 sports venues, according to Sports Illustrated Magazine. Catch a performance at Saratoga Performing Arts Center, Café' Lena or any of the terrific live performance venues downtown. Or peruse any of the cool galleries and exhibit spaces in our Beekman St. Arts District, downtown or at Skidmore College.

If you're hungry, there's no place better to grab a bite. In fact, Saratoga boasts more restaurants & bars per capita than any other place in the country other than San Francisco, pretty good company I would say. And there are fun facts abound in Saratoga...the Potato Chip was first created here, as was the Club Sandwich and Pie à la Mode. Combine these with a bottle of Saratoga Water (or a beer from one of our breweries or glass of wine from our local wineries) and you have a great meal! Saratoga is also famous for the Battle of Saratoga, the turning point of the American Revolution and is also the spot where Standard Time was first recognized.

It's amazing that a city the size of Saratoga (approximately 30,000 yearround residents) can welcome millions of visitors each year, but our satisfied "customers" return again and again because Saratoga has always been someplace special. Health, History and Horses is a catchphrase that's almost too simple in summing up all that is Saratoga. It's much more than that, as you'll soon learn if you're a first-timer, and you'll quickly recall if you're returning to this wonderful "city in the country."

We hope you enjoy your visit to Saratoga.

Cheers,

Darryl Leggieri
President

Saratoga Convention & Tourism Bureau

60 Railroad Place, Suite 301, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866 | Toll Free: (855) 424-6073 | www.discoversaratoga.org



GREETINGS HLAA NEW YORK STATE MEMBERS & GUESTS:

We are delighted to welcome you to beautiful Saratoga Springs for the 2026 ***Hear Well – Be Well New York State Conference.***

It's hard to believe that it has been four years since our last state conference in Glens Falls. We hardly had a chance to stop and rest. For the past two plus years, our state association, its leadership and volunteers have been hard at work planning this event ... with nine separate committees meeting regularly via Zoom and twice on site in Saratoga. We covered everything including programing and speakers, entertainment, marketing and publicity, sponsorships and exhibitors, registration, technology, silent auction items, and the meeting venue itself, just to make sure that everything goes smoothly and without a hitch. That's on top of regular interaction with the hotel staff, *Discover Saratoga* – the local convention & visitors bureau – area museums, tourist spots and entertainers.

The result is a program we believe is the best ever – with a world-class group of presentations and speakers on timely and stimulating topics having to do with hearing loss, top entertainers, social events, exhibitors, and a vibrant Saratoga Springs scene.

Learn, socialize, have fun and enjoy.

We truly hope you treasure these three days in Saratoga Springs. And remember, we couldn't have done it without you!



Steve Wolfert
Conference Co-Chair

Susan Miller
Conference Co-Chair



Conference Schedule

Friday, October 2

2:00 PM - 5:00 PM

Registration Opens

5:00 PM

**Silent Auction Begins
Photo Booth Open**

5:00 PM - 6:30 PM

**Exhibit Hall Opens
Hors d'oeuvres
Cash Bar Open**

6:30 PM - 7:00 PM

Capital Land Chorus: *Award-winning A Capella singing group performs the National Anthem and other songs*

6:35 PM

**Governor's Proclamation
Presented by Chris Woodfill**
(After National Anthem)

7:00 PM - 7:30 PM

Greeting from the HLAA National Office: Barbara Kelley, Executive Director of HLAA

7:30 PM - 9:30 PM

Opening Night Entertainment:
Ice Cream Social, HLAA Horse Races, Line Dancing, Photo Booth

Saturday, October 3

7:45 A.M. - 8:45 AM

Registration Opens
Continental Breakfast

8:45 AM - 9:15 PM

Welcome & Keynote Speaker:

Dr. Gerard Buckley, *president emeritus, National Technical Institute of the Deaf (NTID)*

9:30 AM - 10:30 AM

Session One: “Tune in and Connect with the World Around You” -

Wynne Whyman, *assistive listening system expert; founding Director of Communications & Advocacy, Center for Hearing Access.*

Moderator: Dan Brooks, *HLAA Rochester*

10:30 AM - 11:00 AM

Break/Exhibit Hall Open

11:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Session Two: “Enhancing Your Well Being While Living with Hearing Loss” - Katherine Bouton, *author, blogger, educator*; **Shari Eberts**, *author, blogger*

Moderator: Dr. Megan Fox, *Clinical Psychologist*

12:00 PM - 1:30 PM

Box Lunch/Exhibit Hall Open

1:30 PM - 2:30 PM

Session Three: “The Future of Hearing Technology” - Dr. Jeffrey Shannon, *researcher, engineer, audiologist*

Dr. Ophir Handzel, *Professor of Otolaryngology, University of Rochester*

Moderator: Dr. Katrina Stidham, *Chief of Neurotology and Director of Cochlear Implant & Balance Center, Westchester Medical Center*

Saturday. October 3 (con't)

2:30 PM - 3:00 PM

Break/ Exhibit Hall Open

3:00 PM - 4:00 PM

Session Four: “Speak up and Improve Yourself through Self-Advocacy” - Dr. Tina Childress,

audiologist, late-deafened adult, Director of Accessibility, InnoCaption;

Toni Iacolucci, Co-Creator,
Healthcare with Hearing Loss; Member, Strategic Team - HLAA Communication Access in Healthcare; Member, Board of Directors, HLAA-NYC

Moderator: Jerry Bergman, HLAA NYSA Advocacy Chair

4:00 PM - 6:00 PM

Free Time: *Socializing, visiting Saratoga Springs, Mineral Springs, Shops, Casino, etc.*

6:00 PM

Cocktails

Cash Bar Opens

6:30 PM - 8:00 PM

Banquet

Cash Bar

HLAA New York State Association Awards

8:00 PM - 9:00 PM

Special Performance by Sherry

Anne, *award-winning singer, songwriter, author, motivational speaker, doctor*

9:00 PM - 11 PM

Silent Auction Ends

On your own: *Sherry Anne autographs CDs, Fire Pit, Casino, etc.*

Sunday, October 4

8:30 AM - 9:30 AM

Breakfast

Silent Auction Winners Posted

9:30 AM - 9:40 AM

State of HLAA-NYSA - Steve Wolfert, *President of HLAA NYSA*

9:45 AM - 10:30 AM

“In Conversation with David Owen,” *author of “Volume Control” and staff writer, The New Yorker*
Interviewer: Jerry Bergman, *HLAA Advocacy Chair*

10:30 AM -11:30 AM

All Authors’ Book Signing

12:00 PM - 1:30 PM

Optional Group Sightseeing - Saratoga Springs
National Museum of Horse Racing & Hall of Fame (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.

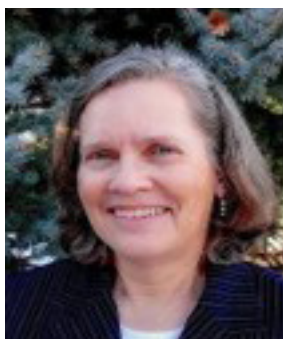
Keynote Speaker



Dr. Gerard Buckley, President Emeritus, National Technical Institute for the Deaf/Rochester Institute of Technology (NTID/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.

Our Speakers/Presentors

Session 1: Tune-in and Connect with the World Around You *Learn about assistive listening technology 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 Communications and Advocacy for the Center of 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 the 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.



Session 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 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 is a past member of the Board

Trustees of the Hearing Loss Association of America and is currently the president of HLAA New York City.

Shari Eberts is a passionate advocate for hearing loss 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 adult-onset genetic hearing loss and hopes that by sharing her story, she will help others to live more peacefully with their hearing loss.

Livingwithhearingloss.com



Dr. Megan 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 the deaf and hard of hearing population 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 post-graduate trainees. Dr. Fox is a proud hearing sibling of a Deaf adult (SODA).

Session 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 (AI), Auracast Broadcast Audio, Bluetooth, Telecoils, Gene Therapy and a new treatment for Tinnitus.*



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

Session 4: Speak Up and Improve Yourself Through Self-Advocacy

As an individual 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



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 healthcare 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 education providers and staff about 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, Deaf-Blind, and Hard of Hearing and HLAA's primary contact to the Deaf, Deaf-Blind, and Hard of Hearing Office in Albany, NY. As Advocacy Committee Chair of the State Association, he leads efforts to enhance services for the Hard of Hearing through state legislation and improve public policies.

Special Saturday Evening Performer



Sherry Anne, born partially deaf, achieved a doctorate degree and shares her life story of overcoming adversity and obstacles such as hearing loss, 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 HearStrong 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***, which Amazon named an 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 nothing is wrong". Owen argues 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.



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Dan Brooks

CEO & Owner



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Founder of Rogervoice



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FCC Certified by the FCC

*Highest average rating among FCC-certified captioned calling apps on the App Store and Google Play, US, August 2026.

FEDERAL LAW PROHIBITS ANYONE BUT REGISTERED USERS WITH HEARING LOSS FROM USING INTERNET PROTOCOL (IP) CAPTIONED TELEPHONES WITH THE CAPTIONS TURNED ON. There is a cost for each minute of captions generated, paid from a federally administered fund.

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New York Relay Service is funded by New York's Telecommunications Carriers.





Heartfelt appreciation to the HLAA North Shore Chapter for it's many years of caring support for people with hearing loss, especially founding members, Sal Sturiale and Charlie Kantor.



NOTES

BOOK SIGNING EVENT

MEET THE AUTHORS

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2026
10:30 AM - 11:30 AM
RECEPTION AREA

BOOKS AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE

*Payment accepted by cash, checks or Zelle



DAVID OWEN
"Volume Control"



KATHERINE BOUTON
"Shouting Won't Help"
"Smart Hearing"



SHARI EBERTS
"Hear & Beyond:
Live Skillfully with
Hearing Loss"

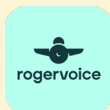


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HLAA Capital District
InnoCaption
NY Relay
NYS Office of the Deaf, Deaf-
Blind, & Hard of Hearing
WS Audiology

hearinglossnys.org



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Thank You!!

***Thank You for attending the 2026
HLAA-NYSA Conference!***