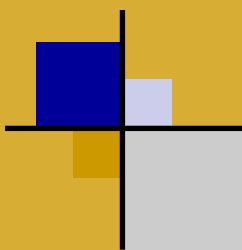


SPECIAL
POINTS OF
INTEREST:

- 2009 ARA Institute
- Reimbursement
- Oyer Research Award Winner
- Dr. John O'Neill



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President's Message



The 2009 fall ARA Institute is just around the corner. As a graduate of the University of Iowa, I can assure you that fall in Iowa is very special. But even more special than this wonderful, relaxed location, is the fact that two of the great pioneers of AR, Mark Ross and Sam Trychin are our keynote speakers. These two individuals have been among the most consistent and insistent voices advocating comprehensive rehabilitation for our patients. We are fortunate to have these icons gracing our meeting and I personally look forward to obtaining their perspective on how AR has changed over the years, and what additional changes need to be made in order to make AR a centerpiece of care not only for ARA members, but for all clinical audiologists.

As lucky as we are to have Mark and Sam joining us, it was with great sadness that we note the passing of another AR icon, John O'Neill. Dr. O'Neill was one of the co-founders and President of the ARA in 1966. In this newsletter you will find a tribute to John from ARA Board member Jan Moore. John would be proud to note that ARA is now in its 43rd year of existence, and its core of over 170 members remain dedicated to the principles he expounded for so many years.

In preparing the agenda for the Board meeting that precedes the ARA Institute each year, I reviewed some past ARA Pinnacles and found results from a membership survey that was conducted two years ago. President Gaby Sanders reported the results

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2009 Hearing Loss Association of America

By Jill Preminger

I had the pleasure of attending the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) convention in Nashville in June. While I have had the opportunity to attend our local chapter meetings, this was my first time at their national conference. I was amazed to see the large number of individuals attending the sessions and the

wide age range. According to Nancy Macklin, the Director of Events and Operations at HLAA, over 1000 people attended this year's meeting; this was up from 660 last year. Considering that we are in the middle of a recession, these increased numbers are quite impressive. HLAA is actively reaching out to younger

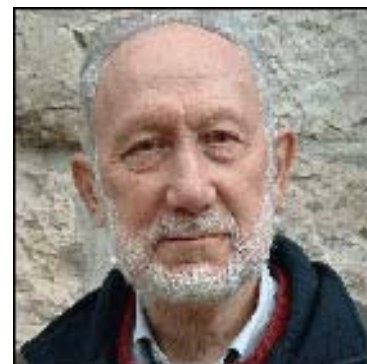
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2009 ARA Institute

The 2009 ARA Institute is just around the corner, starting on September 10 and 11 at The Lodge in Bettendorf, Iowa. Our 2009 Keynote Speakers are Mark Ross and Sam Trychin. There will be a post-conference seminar offered by Audiology Consultants, which will take place on Saturday, September 12, at the Lodge Hotel. Todd Ricketts will be the post-conference speaker.



Sam Trychin



Mark Ross

Visit the ARA Website for the Conference Program

<http://www.audrehab.org/ACADEMY%20OF%20REHABILITATIVE%20AUDIOLOGY%202009%20Program%20072809.pdf>

An Update on the HCEC

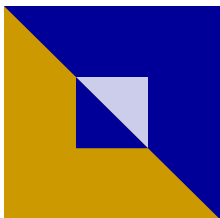
By Karen Mispagel

I continue to represent ARA during the monthly audiology group conference calls which are hosted by ASHA's Healthcare Economic Committee (HCEC). We have discussed and debated many challenges pertaining to the billing and reimbursement for audiological services over the last few months. At the beginning of each call, information from the most recent American Medical Association's Relative Value Update Committee (RUC) and/or CPT meeting is disseminated to the participating organizations. This often includes information on new audiology codes or proposed changes to existing audiology CPT codes. In addition, questions or comments posed by CPT or RUC committee to the HCEC representative can be discussed. This allows time for the various representatives to voice concerns regarding coding changes and discuss future opportunities to improve the valuation of existing codes.

In addition, the HCEC audiology group continues to focus on means of educating audiologists in our membership regarding billing for audiological services. Currently, a subcommittee within the audiology group is working on compiling a frequently asked questions guide to assist audiologists who are Medicare providers. As many of the representatives of the participat-

ing organizations field questions from their members regarding how to bill Medicare for provided services or for clarification of Medicare policies, it is hopeful that this guide will answer the most often raised questions. Once completed, the guide will be distributed to all participating organizations, including ARA.

Of particular interest recently to the audiology phone conference group is the publication of the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule (MPFS) 2010 by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. This was published in early July 2009. CMS projects a negative update of -21.5% for the 2010 MPFS as compared to 2009. The impact on specialties, including audiology is a function of the proposed changes to the practice expense (PE) and malpractice (MP) components of the RVU. Audiology is projected to see a reduction of about 10% from decreases in the practice expense and malpractice components of the total RVU. As these decreases in payment from CMS are disappointing to all audiologists who are Medicare providers, the group continues to brainstorm ideas which focus on ensuring the valuation of audiology codes reflect the time and complexity of the provided service.



President's Message *Continued*

of this survey and indicated that our members prefer to maintain annual Institutes as opposed to having meetings every other year. We will continue this tradition, while at the same time continuing to pursue one of President Pat Kricos' initiatives to look into the possibility of partnering with other Audiology organizations. One of my goals as current President is to fortify our alliances with these larger organizations so that we can utilize the "strength in numbers" they possess in order to reinforce and advance the ARA's mission to "promote excellence in hearing care through the provision of comprehensive rehabilitative and habilitative services". We have begun discussions with a number of organizations regarding shared goals. Between now and the September meeting, I welcome any thoughts and feedback you have on areas to pursue, as well as your feelings of "piggy-backing" our Institute at the beginning or end of other Audiology conventions such as AudiologyNOW, ASHA, or ADA. We certainly want to continue the trend of increased membership and it is possible that we can attract new members who routinely attend these other meetings rather than the ARA Institute. Also, given the financial reality of the world, it may be advantageous for both the ARA and for our members to be able to attend two professional meetings on one trip. At the same time, we want to maintain our independence so that we can our focus our attention, and hopefully redirect the political muscle of the larger organizations on the importance of comprehensive rehabilitation.

Lastly, let me make two further requests. First, please remind your fellow professionals who erroneously believe that they are providing rehabilitation services merely by presenting instructions to accompany hearing aid fittings, that comprehensive services include more than merely addressing audibility. Hearing aids, even when properly fit, merely provide access to acoustic information but do not provide the patient with additional communication skills requiring better listening, cognition, and strategies. Second, please take the time to ask a fellow audiologist to join the ARA. If each of us were to recruit one of our colleagues, then the ARA membership would double in size affording us greater resources to fight for what we know is right.



ARA Remembers John O'Neill By Jan A. Moore

Dr. John J. O'Neill, one of the co-founders and presidents of ARA passed away at the age of 88 on June 29, 2009. Dr. O'Neill was the founding head of the Department of Speech and Hearing Science at The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. He was a faculty member there since 1959. Like several of the "fathers" of Audiology, Dr. O'Neill was a true rehabilitative audiologist with interest in serving veterans who served in WWII.

Dr. O'Neill was a WWII Army veteran himself and participated in the Normandy D-Day invasion at Omaha Beach with the 83rd Infantry Division. His unit marched across Europe, reaching the outskirts of Berlin at the end of the war, and was credited with liberating 21,000 prisoners at Langenstein, a subcamp of the Buchenwald complex. He received a Purple Heart, a Bronze Star with Oak Leaf Cluster, and the Jubilee of Liberty medal, given by France to the veterans of the Normandy campaign.

His academic life included degrees from The Ohio State University in Clinical Psychology and Speech Science. After appointments at The US Naval School of Aviation Medicine and The Ohio State University, he came to The University of Illinois in 1959. He was key in the transition of the program from a division of

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HLAA Continued...

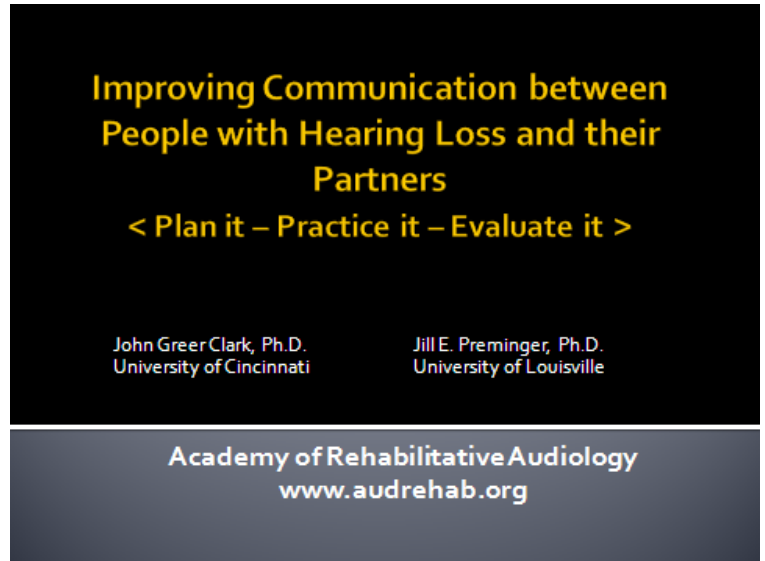
by Jill Preminger

members as they had a call for presentations in the “Young Adult Issues” track. This appears to be working as I noticed quite a few young adults and even some teens attending sessions.

I was able to attend a day of sessions and focused on most of the session in the “Relationships & Communication” track. This was a wonderful opportunity for me to learn from master presenters. First I attended “Hearing Loss, Stress, and Coping – It’s a Family Affair” given by ARA member (and AAA president-elect) Kris English. Even at 8:30 in the morning the session was packed and the audience was actively engaged; they asked questions, they shared comments, they told stories. Next it was “Bridge Over Muddy Waters: An Interactive Workshop to Help Navigate Your Way to Successful Relationships” presented by ARA member Donna Wayner along with two members of Donna’s local HLAA group. This presentation addressed the needs of both people with hearing loss and their significant others. As this is a current area of research for me, I particularly enjoyed this workshop. Next, I was able to have a preview of our upcoming ARA meeting, when I attended Sam Trychin’s talk: “Living with Hearing Loss”. This session was standing room only and the audience was enthralled.

Finally I had the honor of presenting with ARA president-elect, John Greer Clark: “Improving Communication Between People with Hearing Loss and Their Partners: Plan It – Practice It – Evaluate It.” We were hoping to get audience involvement during the session and this group was happy to oblige. We invited couples to come up and “spin the wheel” and to propose solutions to deal with common communication problems. The game participants and the audience members shared practical, useful and innovative solutions.

Attending the HLAA meeting was certainly a worthwhile experience. It demonstrated to me that the audiologic rehabilitation services that we provide, and the audiologic rehabilitation research that we conduct, are greatly appreciated.



Title slide of presentation by Greer Clark and Preminger at the 2009 HLAA conference.



Preminger (left) and Greer Clark (right) hold the communication problem wheel used during the audience participation portion of their 2009 HLAA presentation.

2009 Herbert J. Oyer Student Research Award Winner Ariane Laplante-Lévesque



Originally from Canada, Ariane Laplante-Lévesque completed master degrees in both clinical and research audiology under the supervision of Professors Jean-Pierre Gagné and Kathy Pichora-Fuller. She worked as a clinical audiologist for Australian Hearing, the national network of public audiology clinics, for two years before joining the University of Queensland in Brisbane, Australia, where she pursues her PhD studies within the Communication Disability Centre under the supervision of Professors Louise Hickson and Linda Worrall. Ariane receives full funding from the Australian government through an Endeavour International Postgraduate Research Scholarship. Her current research investigates the application of shared decision making in rehabilitative audiology.

Ariane also teaches in the Master of Audiology Studies program and is a member of the University of Queensland

Medical Ethics Research Committee. In her spare time, Ariane rows, swims, and spends too much time in front of her computer.

This year, the Oyer Award Committee had more applications than in previous years, all of which were of high quality and by bright, talented students. The future of AR research is in good hands with these budding researchers. After a critical review process, however, Ariane Laplante-Lévesque was chosen as the Herbert J. Oyer Student Research Award winner. As the awardee, Ariane will present her research at the 2009 ARA Institute and have an opportunity to submit her work to JARA for publication. The ARA leadership would like to express congratulations to Ariane. We look forward to her presentation at the ARA Institute and to following her research in the years to come. Find Ariane's research abstract below.

Shared Decision Making in Rehabilitative Audiology

This study examined rehabilitative audiology clients' experiences with shared decision making. Over 135 adults with acquired hearing impairment and with no previous experience of rehabilitative audiology were recruited for a shared decision making clinical trial. A sample of 22 participants completed an in-depth interview which was transcribed and analyzed using content analysis. The results were organized into an evidence-based model of rehabilitative audiology shared decision making. Subjects described rehabilitative audiology decision making by its actors, processes, and dimensions. The importance of the client's story and of trust highlights the value of a client-centered and ethical approach to shared decision making in rehabilitative audiology.



2010 Issue JARA: Call for Papers

The Journal of the Academy of Rehabilitative Audiology (JARA) is now accepting submissions for its 2010 issue. JARA is a peer-reviewed journal published annually. JARA publishes original manuscripts from authors who work with adults and children in a variety of settings. The primary purpose of the Journal is to provide a forum to share research and clinical expertise that supports the Academy's mission to promote excellence in hearing care through the provision of rehabilitative and habilitative services. We invite authors from early intervention programs, educational settings, medical centers and private practice. JARA is the only multidisciplinary journal dedicated to rehabilitative and habilitative services for individuals with hearing loss.

Contributed manuscripts may take the following form:

- Article: a report of scholarly research or study
- Tutorial: an in-depth article on a specific topic
- Clinical Report: a description of practices in aural rehabilitation, such as models of service delivery, therapy techniques or case studies.
- Client's perspective: personal accounts from individual with hearing loss

Authors should submit manuscripts in APA format. JARA institutes a blind review process. Manuscripts are reviewed by three members of the JARA Editorial Board. For manuscripts accepted for publication, authors have the opportunity to do a final proofing after the typesetter has completed preparation of the galley. Manuscripts should be submitted electronically to the Editor, Kathleen M. Cienkowski, at

cienkowski@uconn.edu

Announcements, classifieds, other news, and articles you would like to submit for consideration in the next *Pinnacle* issue can be sent to Sherri Smith at:

sherri.smith@va.gov

To get involved with the ARA website design and maintenance please contact Gaby Saunders at

gabrielle.saunders@va.gov

www.audrehab.org

Dr. O'Neill Remembered *Continued*

speech communication to an independent department. He was also instrumental in the planning and obtaining funding for the current Speech and Hearing Science Building at The University of Illinois. Among his many awards was the Distinguished Alumni Award from The Ohio State University, Honors of the American Speech Language Hearing Association (ASHA) in 1979. He also served as ASHA President in 1969. Dr. O'Neill was one of the charter members of the Council on Academic Programs in Communication Sciences and Disorders. At The University of Illinois, The O'Neill Lecture Series was established in his honor to bring distinguished speakers to the campus. Over his career Dr. O'Neill authored or co-authored four textbooks and wrote over 80 articles and technical reports that appeared in academic and professional journals. Following his retirement in 1991, he stayed involved with the department until his death.

His students remember his kindness, encouragement, and sense of humor. He had the knack of prompting students to think and actively engage in learning. I had the pleasure of meeting Dr. O'Neill in the early years of my Ph.D. program. While other faculty labeled me a "kiddie AR person," Dr. O'Neill was always there to lend support to all the students and help us navigate the sometimes-turbulent waters of the Ph.D. program. After his retirement, his large corner office was assigned to 4 doctoral students including myself. He stopped in periodically to see how we were doing and was amused by our careful maze-like arrangement of cabinets and files to shield ourselves from the prying eyes of the senior faculty members. Most importantly, he encouraged me to follow my passion for pediatric AR and for that I am grateful. I am certain that many students and colleagues share that same gratitude.



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