

# The Southside Scene

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In the Livingston Health  
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*Welcome to our newsletter! We hope you will find the information it contains to be helpful, and encourage you to pass it along to friends or family members who might also benefit from it. Please feel free to suggest topics for further newsletters – call us or let us know at your next visit!*

## An Update on Sue's Charitable Efforts

Many of you commented on your interest in reading the article in our last newsletter about the charity events in which Sue was participating . Since that newsletter many of the events have come and gone. In light of this, we've decided to update you on these efforts.

- The Euchre tournament to benefit **Gilda's Club** was held on April 16<sup>th</sup> at the Moose Lodge in Henrietta. It was sponsored by the Rochester Amerks Booster Club. Sue and her husband Timm both played in the tournament. Although she didn't win the tournament as she'd planned (nor did Timm), Sue ended up with a raffle prize. It was a very large basket filled with kitchen appliances including an electric can opener, electric carving knives, mixers, and mixing bowls. What an incredible prize! It was later learned that this donated prize had been left over from the silent auction that Sue attended for the Cystic Fibrosis celebrity dinner in February—how ironic! Of course, Timm and Sue rode their bikes to the event (in preparation for the Tour de Cure), so carrying the prize home was impossible! Thankfully, a friend was willing to bring it to the house. In all, the tournament brought in over \$1,000 to be donated to the Gilda's Club. Unlike many charities, 100% of the money collected actually goes to the foundation!
- The next event was the **MS Walk** for multiple sclerosis on May 2nd. Sue chose to walk at the Greece location for a change in scenery. She teamed up with several members from the Rochester Amerks Booster Club again, and with her sister Debby this time, and walked a distance of 6 miles. Our small little group raised over \$200 for multiple sclerosis. It was a pleasant, though slightly chilly day. It was definitely a worthwhile event!
- The **Adirondack Mountain Club** held its annual Outdoor Expo at Mendon Ponds Park on Saturday, June 11<sup>th</sup>. This all-day event offered free trials of canoes and kayaks, with free workshops on anything from dehydrating food, to choosing camping tents, orienteering and butterfly hikes. The day was very warm and humid but that did not deter those outdoor people. The event was well attended. Sue participated by volunteering her time for a portion of the afternoon to help register people for the event.
- And the very next morning, Sue found herself back at the Mendon Ponds beach, checking in for the **Tour de Cure** to benefit diabetes. This was a bicycling event in which Sue's husband also participated. The two opted to ride the 40-mile route (a personal achievement for Sue). The day started hazy, some sun was seen for the first 20 miles; and then the last 20 miles was lots of rain, with thunder and lightning. Oddly enough, the rain was more welcome than a hindrance, since it kept people fairly cool. The route started at Mendon and we rode through Rush, Scottsville, Avon, Lima and Honeoye Falls, and returned to Mendon. You may have seen coverage of the event in the newspaper or on television. Unfortunately Sue's fundraising efforts were minimal. Next year, schedule permitting, Sue plans on riding again, but WILL put much effort into the fundraising. Diabetes is such a huge cause that afflicts so many people—young and old! ■





## Sue Says...

### The Difference Between Hearing and Listening

Just imagine what I could do if I had a nickel for every time I heard “he has *selective hearing*”, or “he hears what he wants to hear” (I say “he” because it is the more typical scenario, but not exclusive to males)! Now that’s facetious I know, but the reality is that there is a difference between hearing and listening. Hearing requires sufficient access to sound and listening requires attention to the sound that is heard with intention to comprehend and process it. One can be an exceptional listener with an incredible hearing loss, and another can be an extremely poor listener with absolutely normal hearing. However, the two are not exclusive of one another. Read on to learn more...

In the June 2005 issue of *The Hearing Journal*, there is a published Questions and Answers interview about the above topic. Robert Sweetow, Ph.D is interviewed about the difference between hearing and listening. Dr. Sweetow is a leading researcher in audiology and is Director of Audiology and Otolaryngology at the University of California in San Francisco. I have had the pleasure of having dinner with Dr. Sweetow in the past. Not only is he a brilliant man, but has a fabulous sense of humor!

Dr. Sweetow has been researching and developing a program that helps people learn how to listen, especially when they have hearing loss. In general, research has shown that hearing loss in the periphery (most hearing losses) can cause the brain to reorganize itself and become more sensitive to certain information while not using other information at all. It can be positive and negative. This is often seen in cases of absolute deprivation, and not just in hearing. It is also seen with vision and other senses. This should not be perceived as brain damage, but just the brain’s attempt to compensate for the “loss”. It is generally thought that this reorganization can occur for all ages. The restimulation of the unused portions of the brain can further reorganize the brain more closely to its original patterns. Unfortunately, this “reversal” occurs much more slowly as we age.

Dr. Sweetow sites many components that contribute to listening problems. One of the biggest contributions to the problem is the development of maladaptive compensatory strategies. What does that mean? It means that people with hearing loss often use poor strategies to compensate for the hearing loss, and yet don’t know they are poor and continue to use them. Such strategies include bluffing, dropping out of a conversation, monopolizing a conversation, becoming passive and letting things slide. Once a person has incorporated these poor listening skills, just giving access to sounds (as hearing aids do for hearing), does not automatically create a good listener. He or she will continue to use those poor strategies unless conscious efforts are made to change those strategies.

The development of good strategies is a behavioral modification that does not happen overnight. Dr. Sweetow has been finding that structured programs that focus on developing good communication strategies while having access to sound (hearing), alter poor behaviors and ultimately create good listeners. In turn, good listeners communicate more effectively and end up loving their hearing aids.

Sue has been exposed to Dr. Sweetow’s program, called LACE (Listening and Communication Enhancement.) At the time, it is still in development stages, but public access is getting close. The program itself is a home-based interactive computerized program that provides listening strategies, addresses changes within the maturing brain, and builds confidence in the hearing impaired user who is using hearing aids. The cost of this program is unknown at this point, but it is said to be “cost-effective.” The future distribution chain of the program is also unknown.

One thing is certain, however—no matter the cost of the program; no matter whether a structured program or informal exposure; no matter the best hearing aid; profound hearing loss or perfectly normal hearing—good communication is a result of multiple things, with a strong influence from good listening skills! ■



## Kathy's Korner

This is a new feature, which will include miscellaneous updates and information concerning insurance and other administrative matters. Let us know what you think!

If you have Empire Insurance and have purchased hearing aids using your insurance benefit, PLEASE be patient!! While the good news is that you have a benefit that is superior to most plans, the drawback is that Empire has a solid history of incorrectly processing claims for hearing aids in our experience. Most commonly, they will deny the claim in error or they will pay US rather than YOU. If the latter is the case, although it may not seem logical, we are required to return the check to Empire and have them reprocess the claim to pay to you, the patient. We do all that we can on our end to get the claims adjusted and processed properly, but it does result in certain frustration on both your end and ours! Please be assured that we won't rest until the claim is correctly processed! To help us out, we encourage you to contact Empire to complain if you are experiencing hearing aid claim issues.

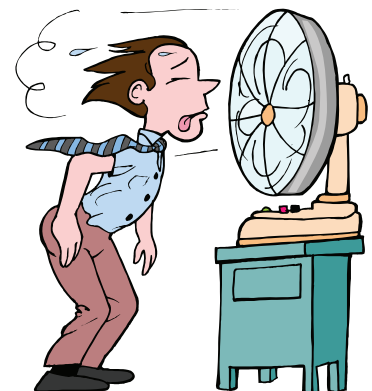
Some other insurances have begun to offer some assistance toward hearing aids. For instance, some Preferred Care Gold contracts and some Medicare + Choice contracts offer a \$600 benefit to use toward hearing aid purchase or repair, usually once every 3 years. If you are wondering if you have hearing aid coverage, call your insurance carrier!

As of January 1, 2005, Medicare Part B offers a new benefit. This benefit is for an **Initial Preventive Physical Examination** called the "Welcome to Medicare" exam. It is a one-time preventive physical exam within six months of enrollment into Medicare. The service must be provided by a physician or a "qualified non-physician provider" (i.e. physician assistant or nurse practitioner). This exam includes seven service elements including a screening for hearing impairment. Ask your physician about this service. If you feel the need to have a comprehensive evaluation, ask your physician for a referral to Southside Hearing Center for this evaluation.

Please note that, if Medicare IS your primary insurance carrier, then you will need a script from your primary physician EACH time you come to our office for a hearing evaluation. Medicare will generally only pay toward hearing evaluations if they are **MEDICALLY** necessary, and **NOT** for the sole purpose of obtaining hearing aids. This is why the script from your physician is important. Call our office if you have any questions about whether or not you need a script or referral from your physician.

Many insurance carriers are issuing new identification cards, so as to eliminate social security numbers from subscriber ID numbers. Please make sure to provide the updated card to us when you receive it. ■

*Enjoy your summer  
and **STAY COOL!!!***





## *Southside Hearing Center*

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*Discovering the Human Touch in Hearing  
Technology*

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**WE'RE ON THE WEB!**

[WWW.SOUTHSIDEHEARINGCENTER.COM](http://WWW.SOUTHSIDEHEARINGCENTER.COM)

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### **Our Mission Statement**

**Southside Hearing Center, its owner, audiologists and staff are committed to the advancements of hearing healthcare. The Center will provide the most ethical and comprehensive services in Audiology using the most state-of-the-art equipment, procedures and techniques. The Center will provide these services in a clean, healthy and comfortable environment.**

**Education is at the center of this facility. Southside Hearing Center is committed to educating the patient regarding hearing healthcare issues. Southside Hearing Center is committed to the profession of Audiology, and educating the public that the audiologist is the highest qualified professional in hearing care. Southside Hearing Center will ensure that its staff is equally committed to these causes.**

**Southside Hearing Center will provide appropriate business in compliance with state and federal laws. Fair business will be this Center's business.**

**Above all else, Southside Hearing Center will provide THE HUMAN TOUCH to the overwhelming world of hearing impairment.**