



The Sight-Loss Support Group of Central Pennsylvania, Inc.

Turning Darkness into Light Since 1982

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**SAVE THE DATE! Joint Meeting of SLSG and HLAA of
Central PA: May 9, Foxdale Village, 7:00 pm.**

SPRING IS IN THE AIR

Hi Everyone,

'Spring is in the air.' We've all heard that phrase before. To me, it feels as though spring has been an on-again off-again affair all winter. But the groundhog was right when he said, "Fear not, spring will come and I'm going back to bed for six more weeks."

We at the SLSG will be coming out of our winter den at a joint meeting with the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) of Central PA on Monday, May 9, at 7:00 pm at the Foxdale Village Meeting Room. Dr. Tracy Carpenter Sepich, O.D., MS., of Restore Eye Care, and Dr. Elise North Urhing, AuD., of Uhring's Hearing and Balance have graciously volunteered to give us a presentation and discussion on the vision and hearing issues that impact children's and adults' functioning in their day-to-day lives. Please join us for this relevant topic for all ages.

So spread the word and have a lovely spring!

Bill Muzzy

President

**JOINT MEETING OF SLSG AND HLAA OF CENTRAL PA
May 9, Foxdale Village, 7:00 pm**

**CONNECT THE DOTS.....
Integrating Vision, Hearing and the Brain**

Our May meeting is a special, joint meeting of the Sight-Loss Support Group of Central PA and the Hearing Loss Association of America Central PA. The meeting will connect the dots between our two primary sensory systems, vision and hearing, and the brain. Understanding what we see and what we hear happens mostly in the brain. If we see and hear with our brains, what happens when the brain has trouble processing the images and auditory signals the eyes and ears send to the brain?

Dr. Elise Uhring, an audiologist, and Dr. Tracy Sepich, an optometrist, will present their work with Connect the Dots, a multidisciplinary program that helps people with learning challenges rooted in sensory processing difficulties. Their work is a nexus of three disciplines – vision, hearing and cognition – and approaches patient care in an integrative and creative way. The practitioners in Connect the Dots work collaboratively to help people who have difficulty with reading, memory, attention span, logic and reasoning, and other learning challenges. Weak cognitive skills are identified and strategies for rewiring the brain are developed.

Dr. Elise Uhring is an audiologist with Uhring's Hearing and Balance. Dr. Tracy Sepich is an optometrist with Restore Eye Care. There are two other practitioners in Connect the Dots: Dr. Christine Zlupko, an optometrist also with Restore Eye Care, and Suzanne Wolfe, a reading and cognitive therapist.

LIONS' JOURNEY FOR SIGHT WALK

The Lions' Journey for Sight is an annual rite of spring. This year the walk will be held Sunday, June 5th at the Pennsylvania Military Museum in Boalsburg. Each year Lions and Lionesses from the 12 Lions Clubs of Centre County and their supporters rendezvous at the Pennsylvania Military Museum, 28th Division Shrine in Boalsburg. The Lions use the money raised from the walk to help individuals with sight loss and to fund other humanitarian projects in Centre County.

Registration for the walk is at 1:30 pm and the walk begins at 2:00 pm. Enjoy a free lunch for all walk participants. All donations pledged to each walker must be handed in at registration. So join the Lions' Journey for Sight and support the important work of the largest service organization in the world. Please check our website (www.slsg.org) for any scheduling changes.

SPRING 2016 AUDIO DESCRIBED EVENTS

by Eileen Rivoir

Spring is bursting out all over! In addition to three performances at the Centre for the Performing Arts at Eisenhower Auditorium, View Via Headphones will also be audio-describing the shows of three local troupes this spring: the State College Community Theater's Blythe Spirit, Nittany Theater at the Boal Barn's Company, and, our ever popular State High Thespians will be performing Fiddler on the Roof. If you have never tried the audio-description service, now is your chance! With options of ballet, children's theater, musicals, performance art, and comedy, there is something for everyone this spring. Please arrive half an hour before curtain time to check out the audio description equipment, and to listen to in-depth, pre-show

notes. Tickets must be purchased for most shows this spring. A limited number of complimentary tickets are available for Eisenhower shows for patrons with sight-loss and a guest; phone the Eisenhower Auditorium, 814-865-5011, and ask for Shannon Bishop.

THE BFG (BIG FRIENDLY GIANT): Friday, April 8, 2016, 7:30 pm, Eisenhower Auditorium.

The Dallas Children's Theater presents this cheeky stage adaptation of Roald Dahl's wacky tale of two misfits on an unforgettable odyssey. Puppets and actors show that heroes do indeed come in all sizes.

CHICAGO: Tuesday, April 12, 2016, 7:30 pm, Eisenhower Auditorium.

The Center for the Performing Arts presents Chicago, the musical that has everything that makes Broadway great: a universal tale of fame, fortune, and all that jazz. Note: Audio-description is available at the Tuesday performance only.

FIDDLER ON THE ROOF: Sunday, April 17, 2016, 2:00 pm, State College Area High School North Building Auditorium.

The State High Thespians bring us the Tony Award winning musical, Fiddler on the Roof, a heart-warming tale of Tevye the milkman and his daughters as they struggle with war, love, and tradition. To reserve tickets, call the SCAHS box office, 231- 4188. The SCASD thespians' spring musical is very popular so it is advisable to get your tickets soon.

Just in! A few complimentary tickets for have been generously donated by the Thespians for SLSG members! Contact the SLSG office (814-238-0132/office@slsg.org) to reserve these "first-come, first-served" tickets to 'Fiddler.'

COMPAGNIA FINZI PASCA'S LA VERITA: Thursday, April 21, 2016, 7:30 pm, Eisenhower Auditorium.

The Center for the Performing Arts brings us La Verita, a theatrical homage to Dali which juxtaposes acrobatics, theater, dance and music. A succession of images leading us through surrealism, a love story, and a reflection about the truth are the colors of this new creation by Finzi Pasca.

COMPANY: Monday, May 9, 2016, 7:30 pm, Boal Barn Playhouse.

The Nittany Theatre's presentation of the musical Company revolves around a single man unable to commit to a steady relationship much less marriage, the five married couples who are his best friends, and his three girlfriends. With music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim, this 1970 concept musical comedy was among the first musicals to deal with adult themes and relationships. The Nittany Theatre is generously allowing audio-description at the final dress rehearsal of Company for those with sight-loss at no cost. No ticket is necessary, but please contact Eileen Rivoir at 814-238-5763 for reservations and to verify the 7:30 pm curtain time.

BLITHE SPIRIT: Sunday, May 22, 2016, 2:00 pm, Penn State Downtown Theater.

The State College Community Theater brings us Blithe Spirit, a comic play by Noel Coward. A socialite/novelist invites an eccentric clairvoyant to his house to conduct a seance, hoping to gather material for his next book. The scheme backfires when he is haunted by the ghost of his annoying and temperamental first wife. Check our website, www.slsq.org, for updated ticketed information.

AFB-SPONSORED FREE TELECONFERENCE: AGING AND VISION LOSS

Thursday, May 5, 2016, 2:30 pm

The American Foundation for the Blind will be hosting a teleconference call to broaden input from across our field to reach consensus around the key goals of a 21st Century National Agenda on Aging and Vision Loss and to begin to organize our work together. You are invited to join us on May 5, 2016, from 2:30 pm to 4:30 pm, Eastern. There is no cost to join the conversation. Please come with your ideas and your commitment to work collaboratively with us as we chart a future course for this critical initiative. We will explore organizing our work together around four principal goals:

- Funding for services;**
- Public awareness;**
- Ensuring availability and quality of professional services;**
- Collaboration/coordination across service delivery systems to maximize resources for tackling critical needs (transportation, employment, etc).**

To RSVP, send an email to Sarah Malaier, AFB's Programs and Policy Coordinator, at SMalaier@afb.net. Simply indicate in your message that you would like to participate in the May 5 teleconference call. Instructions for dialing into the conference call will be sent well in advance of the May 5 teleconference to all those who RSVP. Even if you are unable to participate in the May 5 discussion, please email Sarah Malaier (smalaier@afb.net) if you would like to actively participate in future activities.

Read the complete edition of DirectConnect online at <http://www.afb.org/info/programs-and-services/public-policy-center/directconnect-newsletter/afb-to-host-a-national-conversation-on-aging-and-vision-loss/1235>

SEEING BEYOND VISION LOSS: eSIGHT EYEWEAR

by Josie Kantner Smith

If someone has difficulty hearing, they can use a hearing aid to boost the level of sounds reaching their ear. But someone with low vision has never had a comparable device, an electronic “seeing aid” – until eSight.

eSight eyewear, designed specifically for people with low vision, consists of high-tech, electronic glasses that enhance whatever the user is looking at. Although eSight cannot fully restore sight, the device maximizes the effectiveness of your remaining vision. It can improve remaining sight and have a life-changing impact for many people with low vision. Some people recapture activities and experiences they haven’t had access to for decades: shopping independently; recognizing a friend in a crowd from a distance; watching their kids play soccer; attending concerts, plays and other live events; and reading the daily newspaper.

The actual eyewear looks like a pair of futuristic sunglasses. The frame houses the user’s prescription lenses, over top of which lies a headset containing an HD video camera and two LED screens that are connected to a small controller unit. The camera captures whatever is in front of the user and sends the live footage to the controller. The video image is then enhanced to compensate for the user’s particular vision problem. The altered video is sent back to the headset and displayed on the two screens (one in front of either eye) in real time. The user can tweak the video for contrast, focus, and brightness using the controller. In situations where the video feature isn’t wanted, the headset can be flipped up, out of the line of sight. eSight can autofocus on short, medium and long range objects, instantly adapting to a book 12 inches away, a TV screen 12 feet away, or the rain falling outside a window.

eSight glasses were developed by eSight Corporation, a Canadian company based near Ottawa, Ontario. The company's website states that eSight "can work for people who have low vision, which includes those who are legally blind. This group represents the vast majority (86% to be exact) of the world's 300 million people who are considered visually impaired or blind. eSight works for people with many different eye conditions: macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, Stargardt's disease, optic nerve hypoplasia, optic atrophy, Leber's Hereditary Optic Neuropathy, nystagmus, retinopathy of prematurity, and some forms of glaucoma and retinitis pigmentosa. On average, eSight restores sight for three of every four people with low vision who try it."

Conrad Lewis, a Canadian electrical engineer, founded eSight Corporation in 2007 with the help of US and Canadian angel investors, and foundation and government grants. Conrad's two sisters were both diagnosed in their 20's with Stargardt disease, an early onset form of macular degeneration. For nearly 30 years Lewis kept abreast of the latest assistive technologies for the visually impaired. Around 2005, he was excited by the growing convergence of mobile processing power and lightweight, high-resolution video displays. He gathered a team of engineers and set about developing a workable product that would enable his sisters to use their limited eyesight more effectively. After five years of writing and optimizing software, testing and customizing components and building two generations of prototypes, a pre-production model was ready in mid-2012. In October 2013, the first eSight glasses were offered for sale in the US and Canada.

An initial study overseen by CNIB (Canadian National Institute for the Blind) demonstrated that eSight offers a statistically significant improvement in visual acuity and

contrast sensitivity for users. A major new clinical trial on eSight involving many of North America's leading eye research institutions is currently underway. The study is expected to be published towards the end of 2016.

eSight comes with the hefty price tag of \$15,000. The eSight Corporation recognizes that not everyone has deep pockets and is committed to ensuring that people with low vision have access to their product. The company helps connect individuals with funding sources including insurance reimbursements, government programs, employer disability programs, corporate sponsorships, service club donations, charitable foundation contributions, crowd-sourcing and other fund-raising efforts.

North Central Sight Services has purchased two eSight devices and a demonstration can be arranged at the main headquarters in Williamsport (570-323-9401) or at North Central's new Low Vision Store in Bellefonte (814-424-7183) located at 221 W. High Street.

For more information on eSight check the CNIB website (www.cnib.ca) or the eSight Corporation website (www.esighteyewear.com). A free, personalized demonstration of eSight can be arranged at select low vision clinics in the US and Canada.

NEED A MAGNIFIER?

Two Screen Magnifier Systems (X50) have been donated to the Sight-Loss-Support Group. These are available to be loaned at no cost to a visually-impaired individual. One is an Optelec System about the size of a microwave oven, the other is a Video Eye Sidekick System mounted on a small table. If you are interested in using one of these systems in your home, please contact the office (814-238-0132 or office@slsg.org).



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A Proud
Member
Agency of:

**Centre County
United Way**



**Remember to check our website (www.slsg.org) for
announcements, updates and further information.**

**THE OUTLOOK
Spring 2016**