

# Convention Attendees Hit the Jackpot!

The IHS 56<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention was an industry extravaganza. Reno's dazzling sights and sounds set a perfect stage for the exciting lineup of events that made it a sensational success.

Hundreds of hearing health practitioners, manufacturers, and service providers joined forces in Reno, Nevada for the four-day jam-packed hearing healthcare convention and expo.

Exhibit hall festivities, awards ceremonies, social functions, educational sessions, and lots of business meetings all celebrated the hearing health industry and paid tribute to the dedication of industry professionals on a global scale.

IHS Executive Director Cindy Helms said, "IHS has come a long way and you can bet we're going to keep getting bigger and better. The wild success of this convention certainly demonstrates our commitment to listening to the needs of the members and suppliers and constructing a program that ensures an excellent outcome for all.

Many thanks to everyone involved."

## Taking Care of Business

Over the course of the convention week several high-powered business meetings were convened. Following are highlights from two of them.

### ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The annual membership meeting is the official forum for addressing issues of critical importance to the Society. The following summarizes the business discussed.

President James Ogurek, BC-HIS, opened the meeting with introductions of the IHS leadership and staff. He then delivered his presidential report, with highlights including 420 new IHS members to date this year; IHS's extensive

advocacy efforts; relationship building with allied associations; and the announcement that the spring Board of Governors meeting will be held in Washington, DC to provide the opportunity for lobbying, Hill visits, and meeting with allied groups.

Additional presentations included approval of the 2006 annual meeting minutes facilitated by Secretary Larry Farris, BC-HIS, ACA; the treasurer's report by Treasurer Bruce Sharp, BC-HIS, ACA; an overview of IHS's federal advocacy efforts over the last 30 years by Washington Counsel Tim Waters; the Hearing Industries Association by HIA Executive Director Carole Rogin; a report from the National Board for Certification in Hearing Instrument Sciences by NBC-HIS



*IHS was pleased to welcome new member Sammi Falconbury-Grello who decided to join the Society while attending the convention. She and her husband were given a standing ovation at the closing night banquet when it was announced that he would be leaving soon for a second tour in Iraq.*



*The Japan delegation met with the IHS leadership to discuss ideas for improving the regulation of the hearing healthcare industry in their country.*



*Pat Connelly, PhD, CCCA, ABA, (right) awarded Tricia Baker, BC-HIS, ACA, with a certificate for successfully completing the American Conference of Audioprosthology program.*

Chair Greg Nedelec, BC-HIS, and Wayne Jacobson, BC-HIS; and an education report from the International Institute for Hearing Instruments Studies (IIHIS) by Chair Pat Connelly, PhD, CCCA, ABA.



Attendees listened attentively to the IHS business at hand.

In other business a bylaws revision was passed that moved the state of Minnesota from the Northwest Territory to the Central Territory.

President Ogurek discussed the importance of the IHS Advocacy Alliance and asked for pledges from those in attendance. This effort raised approximately \$16,000 to keep the Alliance growing strong.

#### CHAPTER LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

The annual chapter leadership conference is designed for the leaders of the Society and its affiliate chapters to broaden their awareness of industry issues, open communication channels, and exchange views. This year's conference theme was partnership and open communication.

President Ogurek opened the meeting by giving an update from the IHS Board of Governors. He encouraged chapter leaders to utilize the resources available from IHS.

NBC-HIS Chair Greg Nedelec presented an update on the national competency examination and the new online process.

IHS Governor and Federal Advocacy Committee Chair J. Scott George, BC-HIS, announced an initiative to assess hearing healthcare access by veterans. Chapter leaders were encouraged to distribute forms among members in their chapter to obtain testimonials.

A panel of regulatory experts was assembled to provide an update on hearing health initiatives and answer specific questions on regulatory issues. The panel was moderated by IHS Government Relations Manager Susan Stewart and consisted of IHS Washington, DC Counsel Karen Sealander; IHS General Counsel John Hessburg; Hearing Industries Association Director of Regulatory Affairs Andy Bopp; and American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery State Legislative Affairs Manager Alissa Parady.

*"The education sessions were excellent. I am always pleased where there is something to learn that is new, or even review with a fresh perspective. Great job this year!"*

Connie Johnson, BC-HIS

Chapter leaders met with their IHS territorial governor and fellow leaders in their area to discuss specific areas of interest and to share triumphs and challenges in their respective associations.

## Honoring Professional Excellence

The awards luncheon on Saturday was both memorable and moving as the industry honored some of its best. The following is a summary of the awards.

#### ALL-STARS

All-Stars are individuals who have helped keep the Society moving forward with their longevity of membership. Every year IHS pays tribute to those on their five-year anniversary of membership. This year's honorees in attendance were:

#### 20 years

Larry Farris, BC-HIS, ACA  
Jan Parker, BC-HIS  
Peggy Stephens, BC-HIS  
Bertha Whitney, BC-HIS  
Therese Wolf, BC-HIS, ACA

#### 25 years

Sherry Appleby, BC-HIS  
Dean Brethower, BC-HIS  
Anthony Hagedorn, BC-HIS  
Molly Justus, AuD, BC-HIS  
William Logsdon, BC-HIS  
Greg Nedelec, BC-HIS  
Michael Shields, BC-HIS  
Montgomery Shugart, III, BC-HIS, ACA  
Stuart Spencer, BC-HIS  
Patricia Stark, BC-HIS  
Jack Townsend, BC-HIS  
Wayne Whitney, BC-HIS  
G. Charles Young, BC-HIS

#### 30 years

Ronald Scheurer, BC-HIS  
Shirley Wood, BC-HIS

#### 35 years

Philip Boone, BC-HIS  
Pat Manhart, BC-HIS

#### 40 years

Duane Noon, BC-HIS

#### 55 years

Herbert Knapp, BC-HIS

#### IHS MEMBER-OF-THE-YEAR AWARD

IHS Member-of-the-Year was a brand new award this year created to recognize individuals who have distinguished themselves in unique and special ways as members of the Society. Herb Knapp, BC-HIS, had the distinction of being the first recipient.

Knapp was singled out for his incredibly strong and unwavering commitment to IHS for well over five decades.



*Jim Ogurek (right) presented Herb Knapp with the IHS Member-of-the-Year Award.*

Not only has he hit the 55-year mark for membership, but he's actually attended every convention IHS has ever had.

Knapp's passion for the profession is evident in his massive collection of IHS documents dating back to when the Society was founded. He has become IHS's unofficial historian and generously shares his treasures with other members.

Knapp's accomplishments include service on the Board of the Hearing Aid Dealers Association of Michigan, during which he was instrumental in getting the state's licensure bill passed. In the early 90's he secured a patent on a solar-powered hearing aid charger that was featured in *Business Week* magazine.

"This award tops all the others I've ever received. I'm so honored to be the first-ever recipient of the IHS Member-of-the-Year Award. I will treasure this forever," said Knapp.

### IHS SERVICE AWARDS

The following individuals were recognized for distinguished service on the IHS Board of Governors: Harlan Cato, BC-HIS, president 2004–2006; James Ogurek, BC-HIS, president-elect 2006; and Neil Waingrow, BC-HIS, governor 2002–2006.

### IHS ADVOCACY AWARD

IHS General Counsel John Hessburg was this year's recipient of the IHS James Lovell Advocacy Award. This award is given in recognition of extraordinary achievement in advocating for the benefit of the hearing impaired.

Hessburg was chosen for his exemplary standards of professional integrity, legal brilliance, and steadfast dedication to helping the Society achieve its mission and goals. His advocacy efforts have led to many victories for IHS and the profession, among them the successful defense of the audioprosthology title.

Hessburg became IHS's general counsel in 1994. He serves as senior principal at the Kitch, Drutchas, Wagner, Valituttie, and Sherbrook Firm and is a member of the firm's Executive Committee.

"IHS has been a client of Dick Kitch's since its inception. When he asked me to join him in the representation of IHS, I was honored. At the time, it was impossible for me to know what a genuine privilege it was going to be to work with IHS. I have since had the opportunity to work with some great IHS leaders over the years. While these individuals have come from very diverse backgrounds, they have all had a common goal—to help the hearing impaired. IHS's unwavering and singular focus on improving the quality of life for the hearing impaired has made it a privilege and an honor to advocate on their behalf," said Hessburg.



*John Hessburg (right) received the Advocacy Award from Jim Ogurek.*

### THE HEARING JOURNAL'S EDUCATION AWARD

Larry Farris, BC-HIS, ACA, was awarded *The Hearing Journal's* Joel S. Wernick Excellence in Education Award. With this annual award, the *Journal* honors an individual who has advocated for excellence in dispenser education.

In presenting the award, Publisher Jerry Laux, said, "Larry's been a dispenser for 27 years, and is vice president of A & B Hearing Aid and Audiology Centers. The practice, which his parents founded and where they still work, is now one of the largest hearing aid centers in South Texas."

Upon describing his feelings for having received this award, Farris said, "Everybody needs an older person because getting older is like climbing a mountain. Each year the older you get, the higher you are, the further you see. It's the older people that warn us, so that we don't run up against things. I have been fortunate enough to know and learn from people like Ray Rich, Jay McSpaden, Floyd Loupot, Jim Lovell, Jerry Goldstein, Mike Stone, my parents, and many others. Take the time to engage the people who have climbed the mountain before us."



*Larry Farris (left) accepted the Joel S. Wernick Education Award from Jerry Laux.*

*"I wanted to see the manufacturers' vision as to what the business is these days, along with keeping up with any new developments."*

Michael Andreozzi, BC-HIS

### THE HEARING REVIEW'S LEADERSHIP AWARD

For outstanding leadership in the hearing healthcare field and dedication to assisting individuals with hearing loss, *The Hearing Review* honored Denson Dingler, II, BC-HIS, ACA, with its Professional Leadership Award.

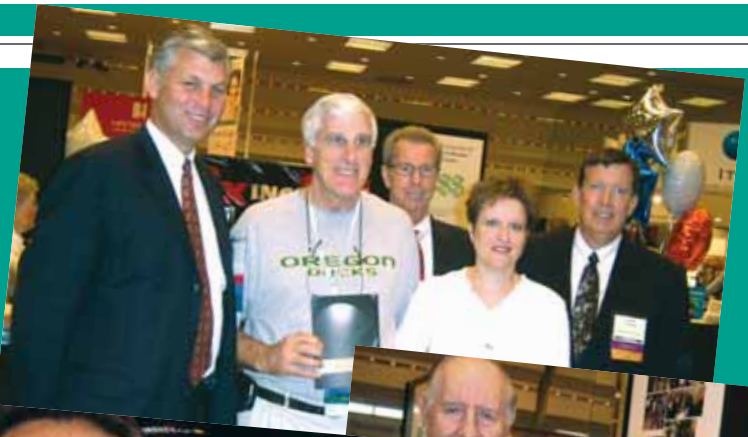
Presenting the award, Editor in Chief Karl Strom, said, "Denny Dingler started in the dispensing business in 1993, became board certified by the National Board for Certification in Hearing Instrument Sciences in 1986, and then pursued his current title of Audioprosthologist, which he completed in 1997."

Dingler has served on various state and national committees in the hearing healthcare field, and has served on the IHS Committee since 1998. He also served as chair of the International Licensing Exam Committee from 1999–2002.



*Denny Dingler (left) accepted the Leadership Award from Karl Strom.*

ANNUAL CONVENTION AND EXPO





“To have been chosen into such a field which is inhabited by so many of my heroes, I simply have a hard time wrapping my mind around even being nominated, much less actually receiving the honor of being the recipient. The funny thing of the whole surprise, and was it ever a surprise, was that someone finally figured out how to make this Baptist preacher speechless,” said Dingler.

### CHAPTER-OF-THE-YEAR AWARD

Each year, interested chapters are invited to submit applications to the Awards Committee for selection of Chapter-of-the-Year. This year’s winner was the Hearing Healthcare Providers of Arizona (HHPA). HHPA President Joel Cmiel, BC-HIS, accepted a \$300 check and an inscribed plaque on behalf of the chapter.

Highlights of HHPA’s achievements include:

- excelled in membership growth and government relations.
- 50% membership increase since 2006.
- urged their employer members to in turn encourage their dispensing employees to join, as well as a direct mail campaign to potential members stressing the importance of joining to strengthen legislative influence.
- improved organizational development through better communications with members.
- hired a highly-respected lobbyist who has been successful in upgrading the chapter’s image within the dispensing and legislative communities.
- sponsored a bill that increased the state’s required CEU’s from 8 to 12 to encourage dispensers to attend their annual conference and to become board certified.

“Aside from the overall surprise, we believe that the award will show our current members that their membership and participation really matter and that the chapter, as we always have, works very hard for them. We also believe that non-members will see the value of membership and want to be a part of an organization that really does accomplish things,” said Cmiel.

## Superior Seminars for Professional Development

Continuing education is a hallmark of the hearing instrument dispensing field, and the convention offered many seminars designed to build skill levels and professional achievement. Continuing education credit was awarded to participants in each educational program, starting with the popular pre-convention seminar on fitting protocols. The regular seminars, taught by renowned experts, provided quality information on topics and trends of critical importance in today’s industry.

One of the highlights of the seminar sessions was the Friday morning technology breakfast seminar sponsored

by Starkey Laboratories. It featured clinical grand rounds that included the entire IHHIS Committee.



*The exhibit hall was always booming with activity.*

## Exhibit Hall Excitement

The high-tech look of the exhibit hall was a fitting backdrop for showcasing the industry’s premier products and services. Exhibitors from around the world demonstrated the absolute best that today’s and tomorrow’s technology is making available to hearing health professionals. Eager attendees paraded through the exhibit hall for a first-hand look at a new world of opportunities, not only in instruments and equipment, but also in education and career advancement.

Attendees were treated to lots of good food and loads of loot—from exhibitor giveaways to valuable prizes. Philip Boone, BC-HIS; Don Cloutier, BC-HIS, ACA; and Martha Kocer, BC-HIS, ACA won 2008 IHS convention packages. Tammy Clark, Victor Lopez, and Hank Vibbard won digital cameras. Tracey Demmon, Adele Wiegers, BC-HIS; and Gerald DuBrino, BC-HIS won \$100 cash. Don Cloutier, BC-HIS, ACA won the grand prize—a laptop computer. (Beltone sponsored the cameras and laptop computer. IHS donated the cash and convention packages.)

## Silent Auction Shouts Success

For a “silent auction” it sure generated lots of noise as enthusiastic bidders competed for that winning spot on the bid sheets. There were plenty of great deals for the savvy shopper, thanks to exceptional donations from manufacturers and other generous contributors.

This year’s auction raised nearly \$33,000. All funds received help grow the Advocacy Alliance, a fund to support our advocacy activities at the national, state, province, and local levels. (A total of \$48,700 was raised for the Alliance over the span of the convention!)

## Fun Stuff

IHS conventions are known for their festive social events. This year’s convention offered an array of dynamite activities.

### WELCOME RECEPTION

The convention opened with a welcome reception sponsored by Hansaton Hearing Systems, where attendees had the chance to greet and network with friends, both old and new. Everyone enjoyed good music and dancing, learning how to gamble like a pro, and a strolling magician whose card tricks left attendees guessing.



*Representatives from the Arizona chapter accepted the Chapter-of-the-Year Award from Jim Ogurek.*

**MOTOWN PARTY**

NBC-HIS sponsored a Motown-themed party Thursday night. Attendees enjoyed a delicious buffet dinner followed by a live band, lots of dancing, and fun photo opportunities next to life-size cutouts of famous Motown celebrities.

**PRESIDENT'S RECEPTION**

IHS threw an early evening bash in the exhibit hall to get people warmed up for their Friday night parties. It was a great way to encourage interaction between attendees and exhibitors.

**BEATLEMANIA**

The IHS grand finale included an exquisite banquet and a spectacular performance by When We Were Fab, a world-famous tribute to the Beatles. We took a rocking trip down memory lane and reminisced over several decades of fabulous tunes. By the end of the show the audience was on their feet and dancing to the sounds of yesteryear.



*Imagine all the people...*

*"I not only enjoy attending the convention, but I rely on it to keep me updated on technology trends, practice management, and networking with my peers (although most of them are much younger than I now). This convention is vital to my practice...but also lots of fun! I'm enriched every year I attend and I always bring back something I will use in my practice."*

Deborah Twisdale, BC-HIS

**Looking Ahead...**

In 2008, the IHS convention travels to Savannah, Georgia for our 57<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention and Expo. You can count on an explosion of creative concepts, innovative programming, practice-building opportunities, and, well, a ton of fun. Reach for your calendar today and save the date September 24-28! *THP*

**Many Thanks to Our Silent Auction Donors**

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## Sponsors



## Exhibitors

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