



April 2022 Newsletter

Renew your membership in our local chapter for only \$15 a year! Ways to renew: pay at our website on the “Donate” button in the upper right-hand corner; mail your renewal with your name, address, phone number, and e-mail to: East Bay Chapter, HLAA, P.O. Box 12484, Oakland, CA 94604-2484. See the back page to sign up and support National HLAA.

Our April meeting will be on April 9, 2022, featuring Shira Mowlem who has a profound hearing loss and works as an attorney representing students with disabilities. She will talk about her experience being matched with a hearing dog from Canine Companions. Her hearing dog, Sparkle, is trained to alert her to important sounds in the environment including smoke detectors, intrusion alarms, doorbell, dropped objects, emergency alert sirens, her name and more. She will also talk about how having a hearing dog has given her a sense of security and awareness of environmental sounds. Canine Companions provides service dogs to adults, children and veterans with disabilities completely free of charge. Shira will talk about how Sparkle became a hearing dog, the application process and the training involved as well as volunteer opportunities with the organization. She will also do a demo with Sparkle and answer any questions that you may have. To learn more or get your own canine companion, visit canine.org. You can also follow Canine Companions on Instagram and Twitter @canineorg and on Facebook @caninecompanions.

Register for this free event [HERE](#). Or use this link if you are getting a hard copy of the newsletter: <https://www.hearinglosseb.org/monthly-meetings-1>. After you register, you'll be sent the link to join the meeting. Consider staying after the meeting for AfterWords – a chance to ask more in-depth questions, as well as discuss anything you want with fellow members!

HLAA-EB posts our newsletters to the California State Association webpage and a link on our website. VOLUNTEER! Contact us to let us know you are available! Check out our website at: <http://www.hearinglosseb.org/> Contact us at: info@hearinglosseb.org

Walk4Hearing Bay Area is coming June 4th, 2022, to be held in Alameda, CA at Robert Crown State Beach. Sign up at [2022 Bay Area Walk4Hearing - Hearing Loss Association of America](#) Walk4Hearing is the national Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) walk fundraiser. Of the funds raised, 60% goes to national to support their activities, and 40% supports our chapter. Last year our team raised over \$4000. Let's do better this year! Our team name is East Bay Hear-oh's. Please support our team by making a donation and joining our team for the walk on Saturday June 4 at Alameda's Crown Beach. Teams from Diablo Valley (Walnut Creek), North Bay (Santa Rosa), Peninsula (San Mateo) and others will descend on Alameda's Beach for this walk. This walk is in our backyard. We look forward to a large and boisterous contingent to represent our team. If you have questions, please contact Connie Gee at cbgee2014@outlook.com. See you there!

MEETING NOTES: *Living with Hearing Loss: Learning from Experience*

At our March 12, 2022 HLAA-EB Chapter meeting, our guest speaker was Arlene Romoff. She is the co-founder and past president of the HLAA-New Jersey State Association, as well as the recipient of many awards for her hearing loss (HL) work. In addition to numerous magazine & newsletter articles, Arlene is also the author of two books which document her decades-long journey of losing her hearing that began as a teenager and up through her later experiences once she got cochlear implants. Integrating excerpts from her books, Arlene proceeded to describe through humor and inspiring stories that which she has learned from experience about living life fully with hearing loss.



Degenerative Hearing Loss (DHL): It was around 1972 that Arlene began to experience degenerative hearing loss (DHL) where her hearing continued to deteriorate over the next decades. Arlene went on to explain the impact of DHL on her daily life. Quoting a briefing from her *Listening Closely* book, she described her experience as follows: “psychological torture”, “feeling beaten up”, “always needing to be on high alert with my ears, but it was never enough”. “A growing wall of isolation kept me from communicating freely with those around me.” “I was cut off from the mainstays of our culture—music, movies, and socialization”.

When to Get Cochlear Implants (CI's): During the early years when Arlene experienced hearing loss, she had no knowledge of cochlear implants (CI's) so she relied mainly on hearing aids (HA's) and a variety of assistive listening devices (ALD's). She was always searching for technology to help her cope with her hearing loss problems. Arlene then discovered Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) and began to explore all the opportunities for learning to live with hearing loss.

In the early 1990's, Arlene first learned about cochlear implants and what they can do for persons, especially if they are suffering from severe to profound hearing loss or deafness in one or both ears. A cochlear implant is a surgical intervention in which an electrode array is put right into the cochlea. Instead of hair cells responding to incoming sound, the implant creates an electrical impulse that goes directly to the auditory nerve and the brain, bypassing the hair cells. A CI patient must usually undergo extensive post-implant therapy to learn how to interpret these new signals and to get the most out of their CI's.

Arlene addressed a question that often comes up: When should someone start thinking about getting a CI? Her response was not a technical one, but based on experience. She suggested that a person might begin to look into getting a CI “. . . when HA's aren't enough or when you are ready”. A key question could be: Can you still use the phone? Arlene noted that people often wait too long before getting a CI because they are afraid of losing their residual hearing. In light of this dilemma, Arlene poised three possible options that someone might consider before making a decision about CI's:

- HA in one ear and a CI in the other ear.
- CI in the deaf ear and leave normal hearing in the other ear.
- Bilateral CI's with a CI in each ear (if someone qualifies for this).

Bilateral Cochlear Implants (BCI's): It was in 2008 after Arlene acquired two CI's) with one in each ear, that she fully realized the many benefits of bilateral hearing (BH):

- ✓ Being able to detect and locate the direction from which sound is coming on the “sound landscape”.
- ✓ Hearing from a distance, especially when your name is called.
- ✓ Improved safety by automatically recognizing and turning to sounds of danger.
- ✓ More socialization due to better hearing in group settings.
- ✓ People treat you differently when they know you can hear them.
- ✓ Happier feelings that may impact not only your emotions, but also your behavior toward others.

Advocacy: Arlene acknowledged that “advocacy can be a tough one”. This is true, particularly when it may seem so much easier to merely claim that “. . . somebody should . . .”. Nevertheless, Arlene urged us to become a strong advocate on behalf of those with hearing loss, as she did personally and also as a leader of the HLAA-NJ State Association. She then provided a number of examples of ways that she has advocated for more access to better services, such as captioning and hearing loops, to meet the needs of those with hearing loss in the workspace, movies, theaters, museums, and other public settings.

Self-Advocacy Tips: Arlene offered some tips we might use in becoming a HL self-advocate:

- Know that hearing loss is all-too-often misunderstood & underestimated as a serious disability.
- Do a reality check, and assume that many hearing people don’t have a clue about what it’s like to lose your hearing.
- Never get angry or offended (even if you are) when your request to repeat something said is met with a “never mind” or “forget it – it wasn’t important”.
- Stay calm & tell people what you need, why you need it, what happens if you do get what you need, and what happens if you do not get what you need.
- Take the opportunity to educate others about hearing loss, its impact, & what they can do to help you and others with hearing loss.
- Make it personal by putting a face on this invisible disability of hearing loss.
- Always express thanks or appreciation when your hearing loss needs are accommodated.

Choosing Activities for Yourself: Wrapping up, Arlene shared a few more HL insights gained from experience.

- ❖ Get tested regularly by your audiologist so you know your hearing loss needs & capabilities.
- ❖ Do your “homework” in researching the latest technology available in HA’s, CI’s, & ALD’s.
- ❖ Choose activities that don’t require accommodations or have HL accommodations you need.
- ❖ Go to places & events that offer captioning, hearing loops, AL Systems, & remote mics.
- ❖ If these places or events have no HL accommodations, advocate that they acquire them.
- ❖ Choose quiet restaurants & small group settings to optimize your communication success.
- ❖ Don’t use “bluffing” to avoid HL embarrassment, because others know, but just won’t tell you.
- ❖ Join in on the many inspiring activities & events offered by HLAA & other HL organizations that promote practical strategies for learning to live successfully with hearing loss.

Arlene Romoff’s Books: Please check on Google, Amazon, or other sources for availability of Arlene’s books:

Hear Again: Back to Life with a Cochlear Implant (2002).

Listen Closely: A Journey to Bilateral Hearing (2011).

For More Information or Questions: Please contact Arlene by email: ArleneRomoff@gmail.com.

~ Kathy Fairbanks

TIPS for How to Talk to Hearing Impaired People (you may want to give a copy of these tips to your friends and family). **Contributed by Yorkman Lowe**

- **Face the hearing impaired person directly**, on the same level and in good light whenever possible.
- **Do not talk from another room.** Not being able to see each other when talking is a common reason people have difficulty understanding what is said.
- **Speak clearly, slowly, distinctly, but naturally, without shouting or exaggerating mouth movements.** Shouting distorts the sound of speech and may make speech reading more difficult.
- **Say the person's name before beginning a conversation.** This gives the listener a chance to focus attention.
- **Avoid talking too rapidly or using sentences that are too complex.** Slow down a little, pause between sentences or phrases, and wait to make sure you have been understood before going on.
- **Keep your hands away from your face while talking.** If you are eating, chewing, smoking, etc. while talking, your speech will be more difficult to understand.
- If the hearing impaired listener hears better in one ear than the other, try to make a point of remembering which ear is better so **you will know where to position yourself.**
- **Be aware of possible distortion of sounds for the hearing impaired person.** They may hear your voice, but still may have difficulty understanding some words.
- Most hearing impaired people have greater difficulty understanding speech when there is background noise. **Try to minimize extraneous noise when talking.**
- Some people with hearing loss are very sensitive to loud sounds. **Avoid situations where there will be loud sounds when possible.**
- If the hearing impaired person has difficulty understanding a particular phrase or word, **try to find a different way of saying the same thing**, rather than repeating the original words over and over.
- **Acquaint the listener with the general topic of the conversation.** Avoid sudden changes in topic. If the subject is changed, tell the hearing impaired person what you are talking about now.
- If you are giving specific information, such as time, place, or phone numbers, to someone who is hearing impaired, **have them repeat the specifics back to you.**
- **Recognize that everyone, especially the hard-of-hearing, has a harder time hearing and understanding when ill or tired.**
- **Pay attention to the listener.** A puzzled look may indicate misunderstanding. Tactfully ask the hearing impaired person if they understood you.
- **Take turns speaking**, and avoid interrupting other speakers.

Credit goes to UCSF for this information.

Tech Talk

By (Ms.) Dale Davis
April, 2022



Tinnitus Masking Feature Now Included in BeHear ACCESS Hearing Amplification Headsets

Please Note:

These products and innovations are brought to you for informational purposes only and do not reflect any endorsement by the National Hearing Loss Association of America or the East Bay Chapter. You can follow the links in the column for more in-depth information on the topics presented.



HAIFA, ISRAEL – [Alango Technologies](http://www.alango.com) (www.alango.com) announced the release of a new, advanced version of its BeHear® ACCESS hearing amplifier featuring an option for basic sound personalization (without using an app), customizable tinnitus masking therapy, increased amplification without feedback, and easier pairing based on Bluetooth® 5.0.

[BeHear NOW](http://www.retirementliving.com/reviews/behear) (www.retirementliving.com/reviews/behear) is an assistive hearing product that combines the functionality of a:

- **Bluetooth stereo headset for wireless mobile phone calls and media playback**
- **Assistive hearing device enhancing all-around hearing and speech intelligibility**
- **Digital hearing aid for personalized sound amplification for varying frequencies**

BeHear utilizes voice processing technologies developed by Alango Technologies, such as:

- **ListenThrough™ passes through important ambient sounds during music playback**
- **EasyListen™ slows down speech rate during phone conversations**
- **Personal Sound Amplifier provides dynamic, compressed amplification of ambient sounds**

As with all hearing health device decisions, it is always best to consult with a professional Audiologist to find the best solution for your needs.

To contribute to this column, please contact: info@hearinglosseb.org



World Hearing Day

Theme: *To hear for life, listen with care!*

On World Hearing Day, March 3rd, 2022, WHO focused on the importance of safe listening as a means of maintaining good hearing across the life course. In 2021, WHO launched the *World report on hearing* that highlighted the increasing number of people living with and at risk of hearing loss. It highlighted noise control as one of the seven key H.E.A.R.I.N.G. interventions and stressed the importance of mitigating exposure to loud sounds.

The World Hearing Day 2022 with the theme “*To hear for life, listen with care*” focused on the importance and means of hearing loss prevention through safe listening, with the following **key messages**:

- **It is possible to have good hearing across the life course through ear and hearing care**
- **Many common causes of hearing loss can be prevented, including hearing loss caused by exposure to loud sounds**
- **‘Safe listening’ can mitigate the risk of hearing loss associated with recreational sound exposure**
- **WHO calls upon governments, industry partners and civil society to raise awareness of hearing loss and implement evidence-based standards that promote safe listening**

Target groups:

- Decision makers
- Venue managers, and owners of entertainment venues
- General public, especially young adults

The World Hearing Day marked the launch of the:

- [Global standard for safe listening venues and events](#)
- [mSafeListening handbook](#)
- Media toolkit for journalists

JOKE CORNER



PLANNING A VACATION THIS SUMMER? YOU'RE INVITED TO THE HLAA CONVENTION IN TAMPA FLORIDA, JUNE 23– 25! The [HLAA Convention](#) in Tampa is your summer vacation destination! Join our community for some fun in the sun AND enjoy a [discounted rate](#) at the brand new JW Marriott Tampa Water Street Hotel. Planning your time at the Convention? Visit the online [Schedule-at-a-Glance](#) to learn more about times for educational workshops, social events, the Exhibit Hall, a

research symposium on cochlear implants and more! **REGISTER AT:** [HLAA 2022 Convention Registration - Hearing Loss Association of America](#)

East Bay Leadership Team

The chapter is run by a Steering Committee, Leader Dale Davis, ddavis94605@gmail.com, who also oversees the Membership Database.

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JOIN HEARING LOSS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA (HLAA) – THEY ADVOCATE FOR YOU!

Go to this URL to join: <https://www.hearingloss.org/make-an-impact/become-a-memberrenew/>

OR, if you prefer to pay by check or card thru the mail, Nancy Asmundson has membership forms to send to you, or contact HLAA at 301-657-2248 or e-mail membership@hearingloss.org. Your membership form & payment go to HLAA, 6116 Executive Blvd., Suite 320, Rockville, MD 20852.

COSTS: Regular Membership/year (will receive *Hearing Life* magazine in print and digital format): Individual - \$45; Couple/Family - \$55; Professional - \$80; Nonprofit - \$80;

Veteran Membership: Complimentary 1-Year Regular Membership & Lifetime Online Membership.