



## East Bay Chapter Newsletter August 2023

**NO August general meeting! Have a great month!**

Stay tuned for the September newsletter when we announce our September speaker!

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](mailto:info@hearinglosseb.org)

As of July 15<sup>th</sup>, Dale Davis has resigned as our chapter leader. We wish to thank her for her wonderful contributions to our chapter. It is always a challenge to step up in the moment to take the reins and direct an organization such as ours. Dale's ability to communicate clearly and keep us on track with what needs to be done was stellar. We appreciate her innovativeness, technical knowledge, and ability to create databases to keep track of members as well as work with others to make the website better. Our hope is that she will continue in some capacity in the future. Thank you, Dale, for all you've done!

**We need your help! Can you volunteer? Contact us at:  
[info@hearinglosseb.org](mailto:info@hearinglosseb.org)**

Here is a list of volunteer positions we are seeking to fill:

- **Volunteer Coordinator**: Contact people who said they could volunteer and tell them about volunteer needs. Recruit for those positions.
- **National Chapter Coordinator/Liaison**: Coordinate with the national organization (HLAA). Go to online meetings.
- **Outreach Coordinator**: Organize a table for our chapter at various street fairs and other venues. Set up the table. Recruit volunteers to help with the events. Reach out to people who participate in our meetings. Let people know about our chapter.
- **Chapter Leader**: to lead our chapter and the Steering Committee
- **And more possibilities...**

**Would you like to be part of an easy 20 – 30 minute online study? Check out this announcement:**

Hello!

My name is Isaac Alter; I am a medical student in the department of Otolaryngology - Head & Neck Surgery (ear, nose, and throat surgery) at NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital (Columbia and Weill Cornell). I am also a Bay Area native and a former professional Broadway musician, with a lifelong passion for music and the effects that it can have on people.

I am conducting a study with Dr. Anil Lalwani and Dr. Alex Chern (who is a hearing aid user and HLAA member himself) examining the effect of hearing loss on music enjoyment. We are actively recruiting a) **individuals with bilateral hearing aids** (a hearing aid in each ear) and b) **individuals with at least one cochlear implant** to complete a **20-30 min online study**; if you have two hearing aids OR a cochlear implant, we would love to have you participate. The study involves listening to musical clips on your computer and answering questions about them. No headphones or other special equipment is required.

Please contact me directly at [ila2111@cumc.columbia.edu](mailto:ila2111@cumc.columbia.edu) if you are interested. Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Isaac L. Alter (he/him)  
M.D. Candidate, Class of 2026

Columbia University Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons

## Meeting Notes: *Aural Rehabilitation: Focus on Lipreading*

At the July 8, 2023 HLAA-EB meeting, our guest speaker was Laura Gaeta, Ph.D., F-AAA, who was making her 3<sup>rd</sup> visit to our East Bay Chapter to speak about aural rehabilitation (AR) for those with hearing loss, while focusing this time on lipreading. Dr. Gaeta is an Assistant Professor and Director of the Doctor of Audiology (Au.D.) Program at California State University, Sacramento. Dr. Gaeta is also a Fellow of the American Academy of Audiology (F-AAA), member of the Hearing Loss of Association of America (HLAA) California Board of Trustees, and member of the Accreditation Commission for Audiology Education's Board of Directors.

### ***Aural Rehabilitation for Persons with Hearing Loss***

Initially, Dr. Gaeta set out her presentation agenda and then proceeded to give us a brief overview of the highlights of aural rehabilitation (AR), including communication difficulties, technology (hearing aids, cochlear implants, & hearing assistive technology), counseling, environmental modifications, and training (communication strategies, lipreading/speechreading, & clear



*Laura Gaeta, Ph.D., F-AAA*

speech). In her presentation. Today. Dr. Gaeta put special focus on lipreading as an important strategy for reducing common communication problems. During the second part of her presentation, Dr. Gaeta offered several examples of particular sounds and words that are hard to decipher and useful lipreading training exercises which can be beneficial, especially if regularly practiced.

### ***Communication Difficulties***

Communication difficulties often occur in any of the four primary elements of the communication process.

#### **Talker**

- Mumbles
- Smiles too much
- Moves around as talking
- Shouts
- Has a high-pitched voice
- Chews gum/eats food
- Has an unusual accent
- Doesn't look at you when talking
- \* Has a speech disorder
- \* Uses long complicated sentences
- \* Uses obscure vocabulary words
- \* Has no facial expression
- \* Talks too quickly
- \* Wears dark glasses & mask
- \* Has a mustache and/or beard

#### **Listener**

- \* Hearing loss type & severity
- \* Stress & fatigue levels
- \* Lack of attention
- \* Anxiety
- \* Use of amplification
- \* Motivation to understand
- \* Language skills
- \* Uncorrected visual impairment

#### **Message**

- Length
- Complexity
- Frequency of word usage
- Context
- Shared homophones/visemes

#### **Environment**

- \* Distance
- \* Background noise
- \* Acoustics
- \* Angle
- \* Distractions

### ***Lipreading—Misconceptions & Myths***

According to Dr. Gaeta, lipreading is a communication strategy where a listener uses what he or she sees on a speaker's lips to help understand speech. Lipreading, sometimes compared to speechreading, means the listener watches the speaker's mouth for clues to what the speaker is saying. Prior to further describing lipreading, she encouraged us to participate in a little true/false quiz to discover how much we know about lipreading. Check it out & see how you do!

- ✓ "Most of what is said can be easily lip read?" (False – Only about a third of the speech sounds in the English language can be lip read).

- ✓ “When lipreading, we focus solely on lip movements?” False – Lipreading involves looking at the entire face).
- ✓ “Visual cues when lipreading are more important than context?” (False – Context can also help in lipreading).
- ✓ “Lipreading is an innate ability?” False – Lipreading can be learned with training and practice).
- ✓ “Only people with hearing loss can benefit from lipreading instruction?” False – Lipreading is a skill on which even persons with normal hearing can rely).
- ✓ “Lipreading instruction is not helpful?” (False – Training in lipreading can help you improve this skill).

### ***Lipreading Utilized with Other Visual Cues, Context, & Clear Speech***

Other important visual cues in a conversation may come from several sources, in addition to the lips. For example, watching also the jaw, tongue, and teeth movements of the speaker, as well as facial expressions, gestures, and postures, can assist in conveying a speaker’s meaning to the listener. Hence, telephone conversations and face coverings such as masks make it especially difficult for a hard-of-hearing person to “read” a talker’s lips or utilize other visual clues on the speaker’s face.

Some sounds are somewhat more visible, such as “p” vs. “k”. Nevertheless, only 30-40% of speech sounds can be identified in a visual only modality, even under ideal conditions. Therefore, context is particularly important for predicting and filling in the gaps with the appropriate missing word(s). Furthermore, the best environment for lipreading is one that is well-lit (no dim lighting or in the shadows).

Clear speech can also benefit anyone involved in a casual conversation, a formal presentation or any level of communication. Clear speech is a method of speaking in which the speaker makes a concerted effort to precisely and accurately express each word, sentence and idea. Clear speech is particularly helpful when used by communication partners of a person with hearing loss in assisting the listener to compensate for “filtered out” speech sounds. Here are some suggestions offered by Dr. Gaeta for how the talker may be able to speak more clearly:

- Avoid blending neighboring words and sounds together in a phrase or sentence.
- Articulate carefully and accurately.
- Speak more slowly.
- Slightly increase the volume of your speech, but don’t shout.
- Shorten long complicated sentences.
- Pause between phrases and thoughts.
- Practice, practice, practice to improve your speech clarity.

### ***Lipreading As A Learned Skill Through Training & Practice***

There are two formal approaches to learning lipreading: (1) Analytic approach, which focuses on one speech sound at a time, or small units of information; (2) Synthetic approach, which focuses on sentences, everyday conversations and situations. Here are some tips for learning how to effectively utilize lipreading:

- 🚦 Start with a few sounds & use situational cues to fill in the rest.
- 🚦 Make sure you are relaxed.

- ✚ Focus on the face of the speaker/talker.
- ✚ Eliminate other distractions & background noise.
- ✚ Don't be too hard on yourself as you learn a new skill.
- ✚ Use context from the rest of the sentence or conversation.
- ✚ Continue to practice, practice, practice your lipreading skills.

### ***Lipreading Training & Practice Exercises***

During the latter portion of her presentation, Dr. Gaeta shared with us some samples of training exercises that may be helpful in learning or improving one's lipreading skills. She cited a few examples of certain sounds that are especially difficult to distinguish, even when relying on lipreading, since the talker's mouth is shaped similarly in each case:

- ❖ P, M, B: Say the words "Pat", "Mat", & "Bat" aloud and then silently. Continue to practice them in lipreading.
  - P – Lips close together; small burst of air.
  - M – Lips close together; voiced air.
  - B – Lips close together; nasal sound
- ❖ F, V: Say the words "Fan" & "Van" aloud and then silently. Continue to practice them in lipreading.
  - F – Press the upper teeth against the lower lip; small burst of air.
  - V – Press the upper teeth against the lower lip; voiced air.
- ❖ F, V: Use context in lipreading sounds and words that are hard to distinguish.
  - F – The leaf on the plant is turning yellow
  - V – The musician played his violin in the orchestra.
- ❖ Th, Sh: Use context in lipreading sounds and words that are hard to distinguish.
  - Th – Three strikes and you are out.
  - Sh – The painter used a brush to touch-up the wall.

Due to time limitations of our meeting, Dr. Gaeta was unable to provide us with a full session of lipreading training and practice. Rather, her goal was to simply help us in gaining some insight into the benefits of acquiring some basic lipreading skills. In addition to the abbreviated examples above, Dr. Gaeta provided other training exercises as opportunities for developing and refining one's lipreading skills. In fact, lipreading can actually be fun, as demonstrated by Dr. Gaeta in sharing her modified game of Bingo entitled Practice Lipreading with Summer Sentences and Phrases.

***Wrap Up:*** As she wrapped up her very interesting presentation, Dr. Laura Gaeta reminded us that aural rehabilitation (AR) has multiple components that can help to minimize the communication difficulties often associated with hearing loss. Today's focus was directed primarily to lipreading as an important visual communication strategy – its misconceptions or myths, as well as its many benefits when utilized properly in conjunction with other visual cues, context and clear speech. She concluded by recommending that those individuals who wish to learn or improve their lipreading skills may need some personalized instruction and training in lipreading in order to effectively practice lipreading in their everyday lives.

***For More Information or Questions;*** Contact Dr. Laura Gaeta at: Email: [l.gaeta@csus.edu](mailto:l.gaeta@csus.edu);  
Call: 1-916-278-4701 ~ ***Kathy Fairbanks***

## JOKE CORNER

1. **Did you hear about the guy who invented Lifesavers?** I heard he made a mint.
2. **Did you hear the rumor about butter?** Well, I'm not going to spread it!
3. **Did you hear about the restaurant on the moon?** Great food, no atmosphere
4. **Want to hear a joke about construction?** Sorry, I'm still working on it.
5. **Did you hear about the Irishman who was impervious to bullets?** His name was Rick O'Shea
6. **What's the worst thing to hear during open heart surgery?** Anything
7. **Did you hear about what happened to the really offensive joke about cows?** [removed]
8. **Did you hear about the pessimist who hates sausage?** They say he fears the wurst



### East Bay Leadership Team

The chapter is run by a Steering Committee, Acting Leader: Len Bridges, [lenbridges3993-hlaa@outlook.com](mailto:lenbridges3993-hlaa@outlook.com)

Outreach, National Chapter Coordinator/Liaison: (need a volunteer)

Treasurer: Len Bridges, [lenbridges3993-hlaa@outlook.com](mailto:lenbridges3993-hlaa@outlook.com)

Programs: Robin Miller, [robin@robinmillerlaw.com](mailto:robin@robinmillerlaw.com)

Technology and AfterWords Small Group: George Chin, Sr., [georgechinsr@gmail.com](mailto:georgechinsr@gmail.com)

Membership: Connie Gee, [cbgee2014@yahoo.com](mailto:cbgee2014@yahoo.com); Marlene Muir, [muircmc@comcast.net](mailto:muircmc@comcast.net)

Volunteer Coordinator: (need a volunteer)

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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](mailto: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.