



East Bay Chapter Newsletter November 2023

Our November Meeting is will be held Saturday, Nov. 11, via Zoom! Please register for this meeting [here](#).

TOPIC: Locating Sound and Neural Plasticity. How are sounds located in the environment? Dr. Liz McCullagh will talk about her past and current research on brainstem level sound processing in a genetic form of autism, FXS. Additionally, she will talk about new work in her lab using a comparative approach to understand hearing with two ears.

The auditory system is one of the first sensory systems to fully develop in many animals and is critical for many types of interactions such as avoiding predators, finding mates, social communication, and basic survival. The process of locating a sound starts by integrating acoustic cues received by both ears which are then compared in the auditory brainstem of mammals. The auditory brainstem circuit has classically been treated as hardware that rarely gets updated or altered due to its essential task of locating sounds. However, work by Dr. McCullagh and others have shown that there is ongoing modulation of this circuit throughout life as well as variability in how the circuit has evolved based on an animal's social needs, environment, life stage, and genetic status among other things. Specifically, the auditory brainstem can be used as a model circuit to study different factors that alter basic neural computations in the brain that lead to neural plasticity.

Dr. Liz McCullagh, Ph.D., is an assistant professor in the Integrative Biology department at Oklahoma State University where her research is focused on auditory processing specifically the sound localization circuit in the brain. She is funded by both the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and National Science Foundation which provide support for her research and her mentees.

Presented Via Zoom, Greetings 9:30 a.m.; presentation 10:00 a.m.

Register for this FREE event [HERE](#). Or use this link if you are getting a hard copy of the newsletter: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZlqcOurpjstG9wdjhCVnrpj5xVNDqoiEWnQ>. 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!

Mark your calendar now for our December 9 get together and Party IN PERSON! December 9 at the Kaiser Fabiola Building, 3801 Howe Street, Oakland, in the basement. Take elevator down to basement, turn right down the hall to the end. FREE PARKING is available at the parking structure across the street!

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

Meeting Notes: All about Hearing Assistive Technology

At the Oct. 14, 2023, HLAA-EB meeting, our guest speaker was Kay Tyberg, a very active member of HLAA who has experienced lifelong hearing loss. She is President and co-founder of her home Blair County Pennsylvania chapter in Altoona, and previously founded and led at least two other HLAA chapters in Pennsylvania. She has also volunteered in many other capacities serving deaf and hard-of-hearing people in and outside of HLAA, including as Chairperson of the Telecommunications Relay Service of the Pennsylvania Public Utilities Commission. Notably, Kay was the recipient of the HLAA National Outstanding Award in 2001, and since 2013 has been a National Consumer Hearing Assistive Technology Trainer (N-CHATT).



During October's program, Kay described the broad landscape of Hearing Assistive Technology (HAT) available to use in the home, as well as various public settings such as the theater, church, traveling, emergency situations, and beyond. She proceeded to discuss practical tools, devices and apps, where to find them, and how to go about advocating for HATs that may be particularly helpful to persons with hearing loss.

Kay's Hearing Loss Journey

In introducing herself, Kay described how her own journey of hearing loss goes way back to when she began her life with a birth defect in her cochlea. Although her sensorineural hearing loss was detected late in her childhood, Kay was wearing hearing aids (HA's) by 4th grade and learned sign language when she went to college. Then suddenly in 2008, Kay lost all of her residual hearing. In 2011, Kay got a cochlear implant and currently relies on it.

N-CHATT & Disclaimer

As noted above, Kay has served the deaf and hard-of-hearing community in several capacities over many years. One important role she has held over the past decade is that of Consumer Trainer with N-CHATT. Kay proceeded to explain that N-CHATT is HLAA's technology educational program. As such, N-CHATT focuses on bringing attention to the latest hearing loss technology in the 21st Century.

In describing their work, Kay identified the who, why, when, where and how of N-CHATT. Certified trainers like Kay provide guidance and support to people experiencing various levels of hearing loss in identifying, finding and utilizing one or more HAT devices that are available any time and any place. The trainers are able and willing to demonstrate specific equipment to those in the hearing loss community, businesses, and organizations through presentations, virtual platforms, in-person meetings and other means.

N-CHATT extends their outreach services to not only HLAA chapters and other hearing loss organizations, but also to senior centers and expos, long-term care and medical facilities, businesses, as well as educational programs and workshops.

Kay did make it clear that: "N-CHATT does not endorse or sell goods or services."

Consumer Assessment

While helping consumers assess their individual need for HATs, trainers identify a list of possible factors that they should perhaps consider:

- Type of hearing loss an individual is experiencing
- The person's daily routines
- Their personal lifestyle
- What the individual mostly misses
- Any hearing test results
- Hearing loss devices currently being used
- Age of onset of hearing loss
- Current needs not being met
- Other physical, visual, or mobility disabilities
- Possible future needs

Hearing Assistive Technology (HAT)

In the past, some assistive, adaptive, and rehabilitative devices for people with disabilities and the elderly have been available for those who may have difficulty performing activities of daily living (ADLs) independently or even with assistance. Kay provided an updated organized overview of the various types of Hearing Assistive Technology (HATs) that are now being offered.

- HAT – 1: Variety of Hearing Aids (HA's): Range of traditional & new types of HA's; OTC HA's.
- HAT – 2: Cochlear Implants (CI's): All-in-1 unit available; harmony sound processor.
- HAT – 3: FM System: Shake & awake; alarm clock; cell/mobile phone.
- HAT – 4: Captioned Telephones: Different kinds; some available at no cost to persons with HL.
- HAT – 5: Emergency Devices: Fires, explosions, bomb threats, violence, medical & walking.
- HAT – 6: Movies & Theaters: Expanded access to open captions; file a complaint if not available.
- HAT – 7: Inductive Loop Systems: Symbols now posted in public settings.

Getting Rid of Hearing Loss Sigma

Kay acknowledged that there is often too much social stigma attached to individuals who have hearing loss or wear hearing aids. This stigma can make people fearful of losing a job, family or friends, being labelled as "disabled/handicapped", or becoming isolated and lonely. Due to the stigma over hearing loss, individuals may attempt to bluff their way through social situations or make a joke to try to cover up their hearing loss.

Instead of falling prey to the fear and anxiety of dealing with one's hearing loss, our speaker Kay urged us to look further into the many types of HATs currently available. Kay suggested that individuals might ask these key questions in choosing among the many HAT options identified above.

- ✓ What do you miss most?
- ✓ How do you feel when not hearing something or asking other people to repeat?
- ✓ What is it like engaging with people?
- ✓ What is your goal or desire?
- ✓ What is it worth to you?

Wrap-Up

Finally, in wrapping up her informative presentation, Kay reminded us that many types of Hearing Assistive Technology (HATs) can be quite effective in bridging the gap between you and the sound source by reducing or even eliminating the effects of distance, background noise, and reverberations which can be not only annoying, but also hinder one's hearing clarity and speech discrimination. With that said, Kay encouraged us to move forward in exploring the many amazing HATs out there which may dramatically improve our hearing and the overall quality of our lives.

For More Information or Questions; Contact Kay Tyberg at her email: aktyberg@gmail.com
You may also call Kay at: 1-814-687-1009 (VP/VRS), or send her a text message at: 1-570-494-6419.

~ Kathy Fairbanks

We are grateful for you, our HLAA-SF/East Bay Chapter members! November is the month to remind us to be thankful for the many positive things happening in our lives. We wish you a wonderful Thanksgiving this month!



**We need your help! Can you volunteer? Contact us at:
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.
- **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.
- **Publicity Coordinator**: Advertise our monthly meetings to newspapers, NextDoor, and other venues to ensure the community knows about our chapter and meetings.
- **Just want to help?** Join one of our committees to be in the loop! All volunteers are welcome!

East Bay Leadership Team

The chapter is run by a Steering Committee, Leader: Len Bridges (Acting Leader)
Outreach, National Chapter Coordinator/Liaison: Linda Gee, linda.gee4@gmail.com
Treasurer: Len Bridges, lenbridges3993-hlaa@outlook.com
Programs: Robin Miller, robin@robinmillerlaw.com
Technology and AfterWords Small Group: George Chin, Sr., georgechinsr@gmail.com
Membership: Connie Gee, cbgee2014@yahoo.com; Marlene Muir, muircmc@comcast.net
Volunteer Coordinator: (need a volunteer)
Newsletter Editors: Nancy Asmundson nasmundson@comcast.net Kathy Fairbanks, mkathyfairbanks@att.net
Publicity: Marlene Muir, muircmc@comcast.net; George Chin, Sr., georgechinsr@gmail.com
Technical/Audio Loop: Peter G. Townsend, peterg.townsend@gmail.com

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

NEW on hearingloss.org: Your decision to do something about your hearing loss begins with understanding what is happening. The Hearing Loss Association of America contracted with Knowlera Media to produce a series of seven, four-minute, captioned videos on hearing loss. Information you need to be adequately briefed on the topic is all in one place in an easy-to-access format. If you think you have a hearing loss or know someone who does, please point them to the videos where hearing health care professionals and people with hearing loss talk about what you can do about it.

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.