



East Bay Chapter:Newsletter ❄ February 2024 ❄

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URGENT!

We are looking for a person to assist our Program Chair, Robin Miller, in finding and scheduling speakers for future meetings. The speaker at our programs is the main reason our meetings are so interesting and inciteful. The job is a collaboration between Robin and the candidate. If you are interested, please contact Robin Miller <robin@robinmillerlaw.com> right away!

Our February Meeting will be held Saturday, February 10. This will be a Hybrid (available in person and by Zoom) meeting event. For those who attend in person, refreshments will be served!

TOPIC: Cochlear Implant informational

Hearing technology is constantly evolving, and options are expanding. Join us to learn more about cochlear implants from Audrey Staley, Cochlear Implant Consumer Specialist from Advanced Bionics, one of the three companies authorized to sell cochlear implants in the United States. From hearing loss to cochlear implants, discussion will cover how hearing works, what a cochlear implant is, how it differs from hearing aids, who qualifies for them as well as where to go and what's involved.

For those joining the meeting in person, demos of the Advanced Bionics cochlear implant system and accessories will be available for viewing up close.

If you are already a CI recipient, feel free to come and share your experience during the Q&A.

Social time: 9:30 a.m. Meeting begins: 10 a.m.

Register for this free event [HERE](#). Or if you are getting a hard copy of the newsletter, go to: www.HearingLossEB.org and click on Monthly Meeting. After you register, you'll be sent the link to join the meeting.

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

2024 HLAA CONVENTION NEWS

Are you interested in attending the HLAA Convention 2024? If so, pay attention as Early Bird sign-ups have begun. This year's Convention will be June 26 - 29 in Phoenix, Arizona at the Sheraton Grand in Wild Horse Pass. Much more convenient for us West Coasters! (The last few Conventions have been in East Coast or Southeast Coast cities.)

Exciting News! Your HLAA-East Bay Chapter is providing stipends to those interested in attending! More information on the convention is at this link: [HLAA 2024 Convention - Hearing Loss Association of America](#). Go ahead and sign up early (get the best price). 2 stipends of \$500 each will be available this year on a reimbursement basis after attendance at the Convention is verified. These stipends are for HLAA-East Bay Chapter members ONLY. (Membership for one year is only \$15). The guidelines for participating and an application were sent out in January. Did you get it? If not, please e-mail me, Nancy Asmundson, at nasmundson@comcast.net. I will be happy to send you the guidelines and application. I went to the convention in Rochester, NY, in 2018 and had a wonderful experience. Questions? Contact me: nasmundson@comcast.net

Meeting Notes: "Lipreading Training Research Study Findings: "Can Lipreading Training Improve the Understanding of Noisy Speech by Listeners with Hearing Loss?"

At our January 13, 2024 HLAA-EB Chapter meeting, our guest speaker was Ed Auer, Ph.D. who revisited us 18 months after his first visit, to present the findings of a research study conducted on the benefits of lipreading training to persons with hearing loss (HL). As part of a 4-person research team in the Speech, Language and Hearing Department at George Washington University (GWU), Dr. Auer and his faculty-research team members have been conducting a National Institute of Health (NIH)-supported study on whether training in lipreading can improve the understanding of speech in noisy environments by listeners with hearing loss (HL). Initially, Dr. Auer set forth his agenda for today's presentation as follows:



- A brief overview of prior research on lipreading and how it may help when listening in noise.
- A review of their research study on lipreading training methods.
- Major findings of their research study on the effects of lipreading training on understanding of noisy speech by listeners with hearing loss.

Dr. Auer concluded by opening up for a Q & A session, while wrapping up with an invitation to visit their website or contact him at his email for further information and/or questions about their lipreading training research study.

The Research Question: "Can lipreading training improve understanding of noisy speech by listeners with hearing loss?"

Lipreading Defined: For purposes of this study, "Lipreading" was defined as the ability to understand speech by watching a person when they are talking, including their tongue, teeth, jaw, lips and cheek movements. Examples were shown to demonstrate the differences in making the following sounds: "B", "F", "S", "TH", "UH", "AY", and "DAH".

Lipreading Benefits: Although individual differences exist, prior research has shown that lipreading can improve accuracy of speech recognition in noise, no matter whether persons are deaf, have some

level of HL, or even have normal hearing. Persons with HL often rely on their hearing aids (HA's) or cochlear implants (CI's) to help with listening and hearing. As helpful as they may be, HA's and CI's, as well as other hearing devices, have certain limitations so listening with them does not generally equate to normal hearing, especially in noisy environments.

Nevertheless, it seems that lipreading can improve speech recognition, even in noise. When you see someone talking, what you can hear and see can combine to make speech much easier to understand. (1+1 + a lot more than 2). Of course, the size of the benefit of being able to lipread can vary for each individual. Furthermore, the noise suppression in hearing devices, such as HA's & CI's, is often less effective in reducing the effects of noise than being able to see the talker while listening in a noisy setting. In fact, the best digital noise reduction can improve the signal-to-noise by about 3-5 decibels. In comparison, being able to lipread while listening can have the same effect on recognizing speech as improving the signal-to-noise by 12-20 decibels.

Therefore, what has been learned generally about the benefits of lipreading can be summarized as follows:

- ✓ Lipreading contributes to distinguishing consonants and vowels in order to recognize spoken words.
- ✓ Lipreading can improve comprehension beyond using HA's and/or CI's.
- ✓ Context is important, but individuals need to have really good skills of lipreading words.
- ✓ Lipreading can greatly improve understanding speech in many noisy social settings.

Why Lipreading Training Is Needed: There are several reasons that lipreading training is important:

- Most people lipread to some extent, but without training, make common lipreading errors.
- Research shows that poor lipreaders get less benefit than good lipreaders in noisy speech.
- The better lipreader you are, the larger the benefit when you hear and see someone talking.

Lipreading Training in the 20th Century: Dr. Auer proceeded to describing the organization and structure of language from lowest to highest as follows: 1) Speech signals; 2) Consonants & vowels; 3) Words; 4) Sentences; 5) Conversations. Design of lipreading training approaches has been driven more by understanding of language structure than the effects of tasks used for training. Training approaches were often categorized as either analytic or synthetic.

Analytic training focuses on the learning of consonants and vowels, but may not be very helpful because it doesn't translate to listening and understanding of words and sentences. It makes you good at naming consonants and vowels in isolation, but no better at comprehending words alone or in sentences. It typically improves your lipreading of only the materials with which you trained.

Synthetic training focuses on sentences and conversations. It makes you learn to rely on guessing as your primary strategy. It may also over emphasize your reliance on context.

Unsuccessful vs. Successful Lipreading Training: Below is a comparison of lipreading training methods

What unsuccessful lipreading training does to you:

- You get good at naming consonants and vowels in isolation without comprehending words or sentences.
- It improves your lipreading of only the materials on which you trained.
- You learn to rely too much on guessing and context as your primary strategies.

What useful, successful lipreading training should do for you:

- It improves lipreading of words and sentences that are different from the training materials.
- It helps in correcting consonant and vowel errors through regular feedback.

- It improves audio-visual speech recognition in quiet and in noise.

An Updated View of Lipreading Training Methods: Based on prior lipreading training studies, Dr. Auer and his research team have come up with an updated view of lipreading training methods, as follows:

- Train with sentence-length stimuli.
- Focus on improving consonant perception in context.
- Design training tasks using principles from perceptual learning.

GWU's Lipreading Training Research: GWU's new speech recognition training research is described below:

- Their research is based on brain & perceptual learning science.
- The researchers' studies have been published in peer-reviewed scientific journals.
- They have developed web-based lipreading training methods.
- Their system uses sophisticated software to analyze lipreading errors to give adequate feedback.

GWU's Current Lipreading Training Study Model: GWU's new speech recognition training study was presented:

Dr. Auer and his team has relied on a standard research pre-test/post-test model with 10 training sessions between the pre-test and post-test. Their current lipreading training research study included 66 adults, aged 39 to 85, with age-related hearing loss which ranged from mild to moderately severe hearing loss. The following different types of training feedback condition methods were applied in order to determine if they are beneficial and if any emerged as the best: Consonant Feedback Condition; Word Feedback Condition; Sentence Feedback Condition. Dr. Auer included examples of each of these different feedback conditions.

An Overview of GWU's Lipreading Training Methods Study Outcomes: The outcomes of their current lipreading training study were identified by, Dr. Auer as follows:

- ✚ The consonant feedback results in learning with generalization to untrained materials and talkers, including a 10 percentage point improvement.
- ✚ Consonant feedback results in more learning than sentence feedback.
- ✚ Age did not significantly alter the training outcomes.
- ✚ Previous ability was important for learning

Wrap-Up: In wrapping up his excellent presentation, Dr. Ed Auer provided a recap of GWU's Lipreading Training Methods Research Study's conclusions drawn from their findings:

- ❖ Lipreading is important because it compensates for hearing difficulties in quiet and in noise.
- ❖ The better the lipreader you are, the more lipreading can benefit you, whether speech is in quiet or in noise.
- ❖ Training can improve lipreading, but not all methods work equally well.
- ❖ The training needs to give feedback to improve your perception of consonants and vowels in spoken words.
- ❖ The consonant feedback is currently the most beneficial.

Dr. Auer acknowledged, that challenges lie ahead for his GWU research team in translating their research study conclusions into practical lipreading training methods. Nonetheless, he wanted to share GWU's updated research findings and conclusions and extend an invitation to visit their website with

cited references, or send an email to him if anyone would like more information or has questions about lipreading training and practice opportunities.

For Further Information & Questions: Visit: <https://seehear.us> Email: eauer@gwu.edu

-- Kathy Fairbanks

Opportunity to participate in a Project with photos and text about what it's like to have hearing loss with Nancy Rubin

Nancy Rubin, taught in public high schools for 32 years. She began her teaching career as a specialist working with the visually impaired, but soon was called upon to teach a required nine-week course "*Social Living*". It was always a challenge to pack everything from birth to death into half of a semester. My experience teaching, and that of my students in *Social Living*, is the subject of a documentary "*Hi, I'm Nancy Rubin*". Her three passions are teaching, photography, and travel.

Her latest project is called *Sound Advice*. It will consist of photos and text about what it's like to have a hearing loss. The purpose of the project is to educate. If you would like to participate, review the following and send her an e-mail:

- Looking for a diverse group of people with a variety of hearing loss issues
- In your e-mail, answer the following questions:
 - What would you like hearing people to know about your hearing loss?
 - What is the most frustrating thing about not being able to hear?
 - Write about an embarrassing or funny incident.
 - Anything else you would like to share about your hearing loss.

The following links will give you an idea of her past projects/exhibits.

Link to FOREVER FIT: Exercising for Life: <https://www.nancyjrubin.com/foreverfit-exercisingforlife>

Link to her website: nancyjrubin.com Her e-mail address: nancyrubin17@gmail.com

JOKE CORNER

Q: What Asian stereo do you hear the most? A: Personally, I've got a Sony surround system.

Q: Did you hear about the drummer who gave all his daughters the same name?

A: Anna 1, Anna 2, Anna 3, Anna 4

Q: An elderly couple is in church. The wife says to the husband, "I've let out one of those silent farts. What should I do?"

A: The husband says, "Change the battery in your hearing aid."

Q: Did you hear about the guy who invented Lifesavers?

A: I heard he made a mint.

Q: Did you hear about the restaurant on the moon?

A: Great food, no atmosphere.

**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:

- **Zoom Assistant** - Assist GeorgeSr Chin to run Zoom, cameras, and PA/Audio Loop during in person/hybrid meetings.
- **Google Contacts Assistant**: Assist GeorgeSr Chin to maintain our Google Contacts based eMail distribution information. Basic level Excel skills helpful.
- **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.
- **Program Team**: Work with Robin Miller to contact potential speakers and arrange for them to speak at one of our meetings.
- **Just want to help?** All of our committees need helpers! All volunteers are welcome!

East Bay Leadership Team

The chapter is run by a Steering Committee, Acting Leader: Len Bridges
Outreach, National Chapter Coordinator/Liaison: Linda Gee, linda.gee4@gmail.com
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Programs: Robin Miller, robin@robinmillerlaw.com
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JOIN HEARING LOSS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA (HLAA) – THEY ADOCATATE 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.