



East Bay Chapter:Newsletter

July 2024

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PLEASE NOTE: NO MEETINGS IN July & August. There will be newsletters informing you what is going on and there will be a meeting/program in September.

July 13: NO Program: Summer Break!

August 10: NO Program: Summer Break!

September 14: Learn about the Breadth of HLAA: Report On the 2024 Annual Convention. Connie Gee, Linda Gee and Verna Dow attended the HLAA Annual Convention held in Phoenix, Arizona, June 26 – 29, 2024. They will report about their experiences and what they learned. See below for more information,

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- June 26 – 29, 2024



Our chapter representatives are back from the fabulous 2024 HLAA Convention held June 26 - 29 in Phoenix, Arizona at the Sheraton Grand in Wild Horse Pass. Connie Gee, Linda Gee, and Verna Dow report they had a wonderful time soaking in the meetings and new information about hearing loss as well as making connections to other participants from all over the country. **Left, picture of Linda and Connie at Convention.**

Please mark your calendar for Saturday, September 14, 2024, when the women mentioned above will report on their experiences and what they learned at the Convention. Plan to come to the Kaiser

Fabiola Building at 3801 Howe Street, Oakland. Once in the building, take the elevator to the basement. Getting off the elevator take a right down the hall to G26 to sign in. FREE parking is available across the street! We look forward to seeing you there! In September we will have snacks before the meeting and pizza after the meeting so you can hang around and have lunch and talk with other members.

This meeting will be a great opportunity to whet your inspiration to attend a HLAA Convention yourself! Linda Gee and Verna Dow got a stipend to attend this year's Convention! Think about attending next year. Stipend applications will be available in February so always good to get yours in early as well as take advantage of the Early Bird rates!

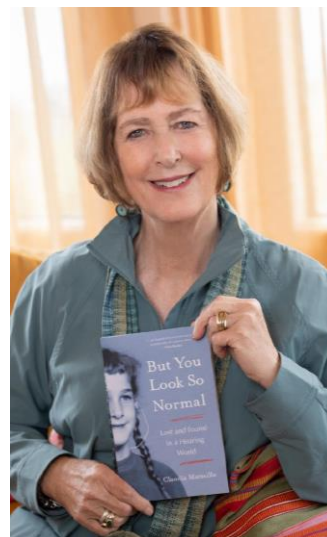
MEETING NOTES: *Claudia Marseille's Memoir: "But You Look So Normal; Lost and Found in a Hearing World"*

At our June 8, 2024, HLAA-EB Chapter meeting, our guest speaker Claudia Marseille teamed up with her colleague and friend Jill Ellis for a fascinating interview/discussion/conversation about Claudia's recently published memoir entitled "*But You Look So Normal: Lost and found in a Hearing World*". Initially, both of our guests, Claudia and Jill, were introduced.

➤ **Introduction of Speakers:**

✓ **Claudia Marseille:**

Believe it or not, Claudia Marseille is one of our very own East Bay Chapter HLAA members who was born and raised in Berkeley, now living in Oakland with her husband with whom she shares an adult daughter. Claudia attended public schools and attained her undergraduate degree at the University of California Berkeley. She then went on to gain Master's Degrees in archaeology, public policy, and finally, a Master's Degree in fine arts, which served as a basis for her career in photography and painting – careers compatible with hearing loss. She ran a fine arts portrait studio for 15 years, and is now enjoying life as a full-time painter with her paintings viewable in the Seager Gray Art Gallery in Marin and on her website. She still finds time to spend time with friends, enjoy concerts, exhibits, plays and classical piano.



✓ **Jill Ellis:**

Our other guest speaker was Jill Ellis who noted that she has not personally experienced a hearing loss, but would be conducting a discussion/conversation with Claudia about her memoir. Jill is the founder and First Executive Director of the Center for Early Intervention on Deafness (CEID), which has been running in the Bay Area since 1980. CEID provides special therapies and uses a total communication approach in the classroom. Jill retired in 2016 as CEID Director with Cindy Dickenson serving now as the current CEID Director (She was our EB Chapter speaker in May 2022). Jill has continued to work with CEID since 1976 with parents of babies and young children who have been recently diagnosed with various levels of hearing loss. Some of the children have been first-time cochlear implant recipients. She has also established training programs to educate pediatric residents about deafness and hearing loss, as well as built a comprehensive hospital-based children screening program that was mandated in California in 2002. Currently, Jill is serving as a private consultant for charter schools where she has worked directly with students who are deaf or hard of hearing or have auditory processing challenges. Additionally, she provides training and consultation for teaching staff and administrators of Middle School and High School Program students. In her spare time, she enjoys visiting with grandchildren, travels and plays golf with her husband.



➤ **Claudia Marseille's Story:**

We are so fortunate to have had Claudia in person at our June 8th EB Chapter meeting to share her own story about hearing loss and how she learned to effectively live with it. As

a lead-in to her presentation, Claudia distributed a 2-page copy of the prologue to her memoir and took a few moments to read selected lines of her prologue. Claudia then proceeded to offer some of the details of being born with a severe hearing impairment and moving through her hearing loss journey to become a successful author, painter and leader in the hearing loss community.

As described by Claudia, it was noticed by her parents that she had hardly uttered any words by age four. Finally, her parents decided to have her hearing tested and discovered that Claudia had a severe hearing loss. In the hopes of providing her with a “normal” childhood, her parents had her mainstreamed at school and fitted with a primitive hearing aid. Without special help for her hearing loss, Claudia simply worked hard to learn to hear, lipread, and speak. Meanwhile, Claudia tried to cover up her hearing disability so she could fit in and escape bullying by other kids. Still, Claudia was often misunderstood, lonely and isolated from social activities in both the hearing and deaf world. As described by Claudia, she also continued to grapple with her relationships at home – that is, “. . . a disturbed psychoanalyst father obsessed over various harebrained projects and moneymaking schemes and a Jewish mother who had survived the Holocaust”. Additionally, Claudia struggled with her own personal identity and self-worth.

➤ ***Claudia Marseille’s Successes:***

In spite of having a severe hearing loss since birth and throughout her childhood and adulthood, Claudia has clearly experienced many successes:

- ❖ She has emerged from loneliness & isolation to now participate in many social activities;
- ❖ She has gone on to explore her Jewish background & identity;
- ❖ She has discovered & built a thriving career that includes photography, art & writing;
- ❖ She has developed a growing self-identity, self-worth, & self-confidence;
- ❖ She is now serving as a role model of how others with HL can experience success.

➤ ***Some Key Takeaways from Today’s Presentation & Discussion about Hearing Loss***

Several insights were shared today about how each of us can continue to live a full life with hearing loss.

- ✚ Have your own & family members’ hearing tested regularly for any changes in hearing.
- ✚ Don’t be reluctant to tell others about your hearing loss & ask politely for their support.
- ✚ Avoid a sense of loneliness & isolation by getting involved with family, friends & social activities.
- ✚ See your audiologist & do online research about the technological improvements in HA’s & CI’s.
- ✚ Seek out any legislation affecting your HL benefits under the DR’s Act, Medicare or insurance.
- ✚ Join & attend HLAA meetings for on-going information & support from others experiencing HL.
- ✚ Become a volunteer in sharing about HL & positive ways for helping others to deal with their HL.
- ✚ Congratulate yourself as you take up opportunities to improve your hearing & live your best life.

➤ **Wrap-Up:**

Before wrapping up today's presentation/discussion about Claudia's memoir, Claudia and Jill provided an open-ended Q & A session as an opportunity for audience members to ask relevant questions and share their own personal experience with hearing loss and how they have dealt with it.

Our EB Chapter leadership then thanked both of our excellent speakers/discussants Claudia Marseille and Jill Ellis for the poignant presentation and discussion on hearing loss to which so many of us can definitely relate -- no matter the level of hearing loss ranging from mild, moderate, severe, profound to even deafness. It was clearly apparent that audience members enjoyed and appreciated today's wonderful presentation/conversation as truly inspiring and encouraging to become confident and live life to the fullest with one's hearing loss.

Finally, Claudia reminded us that we can visit her website for more details about her memoir. She also invited us to see copies of her book on the back table which were available for purchase for \$20 and signing by Claudia. Copies of her book may also be purchased at bookstores and on Amazon for \$20.

➤ **For More Information and/or Questions:** **visit: www.claudiamarseille.com**

~ **Kathy Fairbanks**



Why did you Join HLAA? Testimony from Linda Gee

My name is Linda Gee and I serve as the Outreach Liaison for the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) East Bay Chapter. Joining this Chapter last year marked a significant turning point in my life. Experiencing profound sudden hearing loss in one ear in my early 40s, followed by mild to moderate hearing loss in the other ear three years later, was a challenge I never expected. Feeling frustrated and self-conscious, I struggled to cope with my hearing impairment alone, as no one in my circle experienced similar issues. However, discovering the supportive community of the HLAA East Bay Chapter changed everything. Through their monthly meetings, educational resources, and extensive network within all HLAA chapters nationwide, I found a profound sense of belonging and camaraderie within the community. HLAA empowered me with the courage to face my challenges head-on, to advocate for myself proactively, and to embrace life to the fullest despite my hearing loss.

**Enjoy your July
and the hot
days of
summer!**



**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 George Chin, Sr. to run Zoom, cameras, and PA/Audio Loop during in person/hybrid meetings.
- **Google Contacts Assistant**: Assist George Chin, Sr. to maintain our Google Contacts based email distribution information. Basic level Excel skills helpful.
- **Camera Operator** - use a remote control to operate our 2 cameras for in-person Zoom meetings.
- **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!

HLAA SF/East Bay Leaders

The chapter is run by a Steering Committee, Leader: Len Bridges
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: George Chin, Sr., georgechinsr@gmail.com
Membership: Connie Gee, cbgee2014@yahoo.com, Marlene Muir, muircmc@comcast.net
Volunteer Coordinator: (Open)
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
Website updates: George Chin, Sr., georgechinsr@gmail.com. Peter G. Townsend, peterg.townsend@gmail.com
Consulting Legal Counsel: Gerald Niesar, gniesar@nvlawllp.com
Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) services: Audrey Spinka, captionit@gmail.com

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

hearingloss.org Membership is now open to all of our valued supporters who help fuel our mission and change the lives of people with hearing loss. **Everyone who gives is now an HLAA member, helping to amplify our HLAA voice, and fulfill our important mission— together!**

COST OF MEMBERSHIP: The HLAA national office had consolidated the donation and membership processes. Presently, anyone who donates as little as \$1 would become a member of the national HLAA. Additionally, with a donation of \$45 annually, individuals have the option to receive a hard copy of the Hearing Life magazine from the national office.