



East Bay Chapter:Newsletter August 2024



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REMINDER: NO MEETING IN August. Here is your newsletter informing you what is going on and there WILL BE a meeting/program in September.

August 10: **NO Program:** Summer Break! Hope you are enjoying your summer!

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. Someone from HLAA North Bay and HLAA Diablo Valley will also contribute to the meeting. 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 Convention Early Bird rates!

This Fall we have some great programs lined up!

In addition to our program in September we have lined up programs for October and November:

October: "All About Meniere's Disease." Member Gerry Niesar will give us background about this rather unpleasant condition that afflicts some people with hearing loss. Gerry, Peter Townshend and others will share experiences with Meniere's.

November: Dr. Susanna Storm, AuD from Blue Sky Hearing will present "Navigating the Soundscape: Innovations in Hearing Aid Technology and Beyond". Dr. Storm will explore the latest advancements in hearing aids and related technology, as well as other hearing technologies to improve the auditory experience.

Has this happened to you? One woman in Wisconsin is frustrated during a theater visit.

Written by Christine Klessig, HLAA Fox Valley, Wisconsin, newsletter

On June 23rd I attended a performance of the Broadway musical "Moulin Rouge" at the Fox Cities Performing Arts Center in Appleton. I was excited to have a seat in the third row of the Orchestra Section - smack dab in the center of the theater. Really looking forward to hearing every word due to the PAC's hearing loop and my close proximity to the stage.

My theater companion and I took our seats early. We wanted to have enough time to make sure that we could access the hearing loop. The PAC turns on the hearing loop with a musical track 30 minutes before the start of the show. They want to give folks sufficient time to connect with their hearing assistive technology. There were two patrons in the row in front of me doing the same thing.

Bummer - the loop wasn't working. All four of us were having problems connecting. We brought this to the attention of the usher. She consulted with the front stage manager who stated that the loop was definitely turned on. We were not able to rectify the problem before the show started. I enjoyed the performance - despite the absence of the loop. Of course, it would have been even better if the loop had worked.

I followed up with the PAC administration to advise them of the situation. They thanked me for contacting them. They need to hear from us if there is a problem with the induction hearing loop at the PAC. This is especially true now because they are assessing the loop for repair/maintenance. Steve Jahnke, patron services manager, revealed that the loop under the section of seats close to the stage has been compromised by water damage. This is the likely culprit to the loop malfunction in that area. He was appreciative of my input and asks that HLAA members advise him of any problems. So . . . don't be shy. **We need to speak up if/when we experience a problem.** That is true anyplace where hearing assistive technology is installed. Use it! If it isn't working right let management know. **Let's be part of the solution!**

Courtesy of HLAA Fox Valley

Let's Advocate for Ourselves and All Those with Hearing Loss

Ann Thomas, HLAA Diablo Valley, has done a fabulous job of documenting advocacy for HLAA. First, it's important to know that federal and state laws provide disability rights for people with hearing loss. Here are some of the laws:

- California Unruh Act, 1959
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), July 26, 1990

You can read more at the U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division's [ADA.gov](https://www.ada.gov) website.

The ADA's goal is to remove barriers for people with disabilities so they can participate equally in public life and employment. The ADA does not apply to private homes but it does apply to a wide range of facilities and situation. Some of these places are:

- workplace
- theaters for movies, plays, music venues, etc.
- museums
- schools: colleges, high schools, elementary schools, preschools
- tours
- seminars and webinars
- and more...

Some of the accommodations that could be provided:

- Communication Access Real-time Translation (CART) such as we receive from Audrey Spinka at our meetings.
- Assistive Listening Systems (ALS) there are three types of ALS listed in the ADA Hearing Loop, FM, and Infrared. Hearing loops provide direct access via telecoils* in hearing instruments (hearing aids, cochlear implants, and bone conductive devices). There is no need to check out additional equipment. FM and Infrared ALS require everyone to check out a receiver and connector. If you have a telecoil (t-coil) in your hearing instruments you will use a neckloop as a connector instead of headphones with FM and IR assistive listening systems.
- Sign Language Translation – translation of spoken English into sign language for Deaf or Deaf/blind. In the US we use American Sign Language (ASL). ASL can be either in person or via Video Remote Interpreting (VRI).

*Having a telecoil in a hearing instrument is mandatory to easily connect to any assistive listening system.

So, speak up! If you have difficulty understanding what is being said at work, during presentations and while attending events, ask for communication access. Remember, entities are required to provide communication access for people with hearing loss. By asking for the accommodations we need, we make it easier for us to participate in the world around us, help make hearing loss visible, and remind venues to publicize the availability of accommodations and keep them maintained! It's up to you!

Thank you to Ann Thomas for her excellent information on Advocacy!

HAVE YOU BEEN ENJOYING THE OLYMPICS? If so, here's an inspirational story from Paris!



One athlete and an example for those with hearing loss is Aaron Small. As a child, his hearing loss caused him to be bullied. He didn't like wearing his hearing aids so he could avoid the bullying. At age 11 he found Kayak racing. He also didn't wear his hearing aid while racing because he didn't want to get them wet! After starting kayak racing, he thrived, made lots of friends and excelled at the sport. Now, he has Phonak Audéo Lumity Life hearing aids, which are waterproof and rechargeable. They help him better understand others when he's training and competing. Aaron qualified to go to the Olympics in Paris fulfilling a lifelong dream. In competition, he secured a bronze medal in the Men's K2 500m sprint kayaking event. His achievement is not only a testament to his skill and determination but also an inspiration for athletes with

hearing loss around the world.

Why did you Join HLAA? Testimony from Nancy Asmundson, Newsletter Editor



My name is Nancy Asmundson and I serve as the Newsletter Editor for the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) SF/East Bay Chapter. I joined this Chapter in 2015 while I was living in San Leandro. San Leandro has a free newspaper that is delivered to all households in the city. I found the announcement about the HLAA meeting at the Fabiola building in Oakland and because my left ear is totally deaf I decided to see what HLAA was all about. At my first meeting, I was very inspired by the content presented and enjoyed meeting other friendly people with hearing loss. I wanted to join! The monthly meetings, educational resources, and extensive network within all HLAA chapters nationwide have given me a much broader outlook on hearing loss and the issues involved which I enjoy learning about even though not all topics affect me personally. Soon, I was asked to join

the Steering Committee and as the Newsletter Editor have been able to continue sharing the meeting content as well as other subjects with our members. In 2019, I was able to attend a HLAA Convention in Rochester, NY, and meet many people from across the U.S. The many workshops and meetings again furthered my understanding of hearing loss issues. Since 2020, I have retired and live in the Central Valley of California but am pleased that I can continue to participate by Zoom in the meetings as well as produce the newsletter with my terrific partner, Kathy Fairbanks. Feel free to contact me at any time if you have questions: nasmundson@comcast.net

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.