



East Bay Chapter:Newsletter ❄️ January 2025

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January 11, 2025 Meeting: *LEARN ABOUT DCARA*

Amy Gomme, Executive Director of DCARA (Deaf Counseling, Advocacy, and Referral Agency) in San Leandro will be our presenter. DCARA provides services, classes, programs, and support for Alameda County residents who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, such as peer counseling, community education that empowers, lip reading, and much more. Ms. Gomme will present information on the programs and services available for persons with hearing loss.

The meeting will be held in person and on Zoom. The in person meeting Event Details:

- Date: Saturday, January 11, 2025
- Time: 9:30 Social; 10:00 Meeting; and 11:30 Lunch
- Location: Oakland Kaiser Fabiola Building, 3801 Howe Street, Room G26
- Cost: Free

While this session is a hybrid meeting, we encourage you to attend in person for an engaging and informative experience. Enjoy our usual morning coffee and bagels, and stick around after the meeting for pizza lunch (**PIZZA!**). We're looking forward to seeing you there!

Questions? Info@HearingLossEB.org Please REGISTER for the meeting at: www.HearingLossEB.org

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

NEXT MONTH: FEBRUARY 8, 2025:

Matt Goncalves, Marketing Director for InnoCaption will present information concerning InnoCaption. He'll also speak of other Assistive Listening Devices. With Cell Phone InnoCaption you can easily keep track of your conversation by reading what the other person is saying, as well as your own speech. You can view past call transcripts and much more.

Happy Holidays!

MEETING NOTES: "Our 2024 HLAA-EB Chapter Holiday Party: Good Food, Socialization, and An Informal Discussion about Hearing Loss"

On Dec. 14th, 2024. the HLAA-East Bay (EB) Chapter held its annual Holiday Party to celebrate another exciting year of monthly hearing loss meetings. At this 2024 end-of-the year EB Chapter meeting, we did not schedule a guest speaker, but instead invited EB members, family and friends to join us for one more opportunity to socialize and participate in an informal discussion about hearing loss.



Introductions & Honors: As we got started with our Dec. 14th Holiday Party, our attendees, which included HLAA-EB members, family and friends, were welcomed by our EB Leader Len Bridges (see pix left) and invited to have some coffee and bagels while socializing for a bit with other attendees. Then, our Leader took the mic and urged attendees to grab some more drink and snacks while finding a seat at the table. He proceeded with introducing the other members of our hard-working EB Steering Committee (SC) Leadership Team and the specific title/role they voluntarily play in running our EB Chapter so effectively.

At that time, our Leader Len asked our tech wizard George Chin, Sr. to introduce one more volunteer, namely Audrey Spinka (see pix right). She has served as our online and in-person captioner for many years. In recognition of her important volunteer services that are so vital in helping us to understand and participate fully in our monthly meetings, we on the SC Team believed that honoring her at this Holiday Party with a Visa gift card and a flowering potted plant was well deserved.



A Quick Review of EB 2024 Hearing Loss Meetings: In 2024, we enjoyed quite an amazing line-up of interesting and knowledgeable guest speakers. Typically, our guest speakers were experts in their field, ranging from audiologists, medical doctors, lawyers, to individuals who use some type of hearing aids (HA's), cochlear implants (CI's), and/or other kind of assistive technology which has helped them with their hearing loss to live a better everyday life. Usually, our guest speakers stayed around after their presentation to participate in a follow-up Question & Answer session/discussion and offer their contact information and websites where interested parties can reach them for more information.

Good Food, Drink, & Socialization: In addition, our monthly hearing loss meetings have served as a wonderful opportunity to take a break from busy schedules, or in some cases, to draw individuals out of their hearing loss self-isolating situations to meet and share with other folks who are also experiencing some level of hearing loss.

An Informal Discussion about Hearing Loss: Although we did not have a formal guest presentation at our Holiday Party, our SC members facilitated an informal Q & A session and open-ended discussion about hearing loss topics. One of our SC members Peter Townsend distributed a list of some of the most recent presentation topics from this past year to audience members to remind them of some of the issues about which they might wish to comment or ask questions. He then took the mic around to audience members who indicated they had something to say. The unstructured discussion was very lively and upbeat about personal experiences in dealing with their hearing loss, as well as some of the strategies they were using while trying to get help from others. Some persons mentioned their own background, how they had discovered they were experiencing hearing loss, and what they were doing about it. Others described the type of hearing aids, cochlear implants, or assistive hearing devices on which they rely. One thread clearly running through the discussion was the great value found in participating in our monthly EB Chapter Hearing Loss Meetings.



desserts.

More Good Food, Drink, & Socialization:

Before wrapping up our Holiday Party, our attendee guests were encouraged to stick around and enjoy more friendly conversation while sharing a potluck luncheon that included yummy salads, mini-ham sandwiches, and a variety of delicious



Wrap-Up: As the Holiday Party was tuning down and attendees were exchanging Happy Holiday wishes, there were more positive comments about the success of the 2024 EB Chapter events: The value of being understood by associating with other individuals who are also dealing with hearing loss; the benefit of gaining so many fresh, practical ideas which they were applying to their lives: and perhaps most importantly, the inspiration and motivation to live their best life with hearing loss.

On that note, a well-deserved **BIG THANK YOU** must go to our fantastic all-volunteer EB Steering Committee Team Members who have so willingly shared their time, efforts, and special skills with our EB Chapter organization to make it the success that it is. We also wish to **THANK YOU** as a new or regular EB Chapter meeting participant for sharing your own hearing loss stories, as well as your comments of appreciation. We do hope that you will continue to join us either in-person or remotely online for our monthly HLAA-EB meetings. You may also want to consider volunteering to assist us with our EB Chapter activities.

Finally, the HLAA-EB Chapter Leadership Team wants to remind everyone that the policy of the Chapter is to not endorse any service, product or person mentioned during any of our

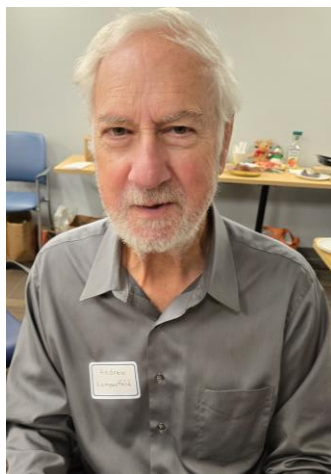
meetings, events, or discussions. As we wind down 2024, we send our warm wishes for a **Happy Holiday Season** and we look forward to seeing you at our upcoming January 11th EB Chapter meeting and each of our monthly meetings in 2025 and beyond.

For Information & Questions: Email: Info@HearingLossEB.org

Visit: www.HearingLossEB.org.

~ Kathy Fairbanks

MORE PICTURES FROM THE HOLIDAY PARTY:



LEGEND:

1. 1st Row: Leader Len and visitor
2. Sue G and friends
3. Marlene and visitor
4. On Second Row: Kathy
5. Amy, researcher from UCSF
6. Linda Gee
7. Peter and Suzanne
8. On 3rd Row: Connie Gee
9. Andrew
10. George Chin Sr. (Tech Wizard) and visitor

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.
- **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.
- **Just want to help?** All of our committees need helpers! All volunteers are welcome! Contact us and we'll help you figure out what would be a good fit for you.

HLAA SF/East Bay Leaders

Our Steering Committee, Leader: Len Bridges, lenbridges3993-hlaa@outlook.com
Outreach National Chapter Coordinator/Liaison: Linda Gee, lgee@hearinglosseb.org
Treasurer: Len Bridges, lenbridges3993-hlaa@outlook.com
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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.