



East Bay Chapter:Newsletter **DECEMBER 2025**

Chapter E-mail: Info@HearingLossEB.org

Chapter Address: PO Box 2266,
Alameda, CA 94501

December Meeting: *Holiday Party: Saturday, December 13th -- Free Hybrid Meeting Featuring Dr. Susanna Storm*

Topic: Take Control of Your Hearing Journey!

Please join us for our final meeting of the year, which will include our annual chapter meeting where members will ratify the board-elected directors for the coming year.

Our featured speaker will be Dr. Susanna Storm, Doctor of Audiology and president/CEO of Blue Sky Hearing & Audiology, Inc., located in Berkeley. Drawing on the common questions she's encountered from patients, friends, and family over her 18-year career—such as “*How do I choose where to go?*” and “*Am I making the most of my hearing devices?*”—she will share expert tips and actionable advice to help you achieve the best possible hearing outcomes. Don't miss this valuable opportunity to gain practical insights and take control of your hearing journey!

Lastly, you are welcome to bring an optional potluck dish to share after the presentation as we celebrate the close of a busy and successful year.

- 9:30 a.m.: Social and Refreshments
- 10:00 a.m.: Presentation (Zoomers can join at 10 am)
- 11:30 a.m.: Complimentary Pizza and any potluck items

**Location: Kaiser Permanente, Fabiola Building,
3801 Howe St, Basement Room G-26,
Oakland, CA.**

FREE PARKING is available across the street at the Kaiser parking structure.

Please come to the in-person meeting to meet the speaker, meet others who have hearing loss and enjoy complementary refreshments.

The meeting is available both In-Person and Virtual (Zoom).

Please register at: www.HearingLossEB.org by 5 PM, Friday, Dec. 12, 2025.

Questions? Info@HearingLossEB.org

HCAA-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

Coming Soon:

- January, 2026: Brooke Barry, @ UCSF, Spotify research group — Sound and music perception

NOTE: If you have old hearing aids you no longer use, you may donate them. Drop them off at a meeting and we will make sure your hearing aids get new life for someone else. Also, bring any hearing assistive technology items you no longer use that you may have (such as a Roger Pen or??) to a meeting to see if anyone at the meeting can use them.

MEETING NOTES: *Meet Our HCAA-East Bay Chapter Board of Directors"*

At our Nov. 8, 2025 HCAA-EB Chapter meeting, our speakers were several of our members who currently serve on our HCAA-EB Board of Directors (formerly called the Steering Committee). Each of the Directors who were at the in-person meeting, introduced themselves and identified their role on the Board of Directors. Each Director then took a few minutes to tell us about their own hearing loss journey and how they have handled it. The Directors who were absent or attended the meeting virtually were introduced by our Board Leader.

- *Introduction of our Board of Directors:* Take a moment to meet our volunteer Board of Directors and learn about the key roles that each one plays in supporting our HCAA-East Bay Chapter:
 - ✓ *Len Bridges:* President/Treasurer. Serves in the dual roles of President and Treasurer. Chairs and leads both the monthly General Meetings and the monthly Board of Directors meetings. Prepares and sends out the monthly meeting agendas and budgets to the Board of Directors (BoD). Prepares all appropriate monetary reports and sends to the proper agencies.
 - ✓ *Peter Townsend:* Vice President. Assists the President in conducting the monthly General Meetings. Helps to set up hearing loops and other hearing equipment at meetings. Monitors EB-Ch. phone message system and the HCAA-CA Newsletter posting.

- ✓ *Linda Gee*: Secretary. Prepares the Minutes from the monthly Board of Directors (BoD) meetings, makes revisions as necessary. and submits them for approval by the BoD. Monitors and coordinates several EB-Ch. administrative matters and reports back to the BoD.
- ✓ *Robin Miller*: Co-Director of Programs. Identifies hearing loss program topics and speakers for our EB-Ch. monthly General Meetings. Coordinates communication with speakers and related administrative matters, such as announcements, timing, powerpoint slides and videos. Robin recently stepped back from her BoD role, moving to Program Advisor status and leaving the Co-Director of Programs role currently OPEN.
- ✓ *Verna Dow* Co-Director of Programs. Assists the Co-Director of Programs. Helps with communicating with upcoming program speakers and making administrative arrangements for program speakers at monthly General Meetings. Will work with other team members to handle any programming needs while a new Co-Director of Programs candidate is sought, and the position is filled.
- ✓ *Nancy Asmundson*: Co-Director of Newsletters. Serves as co-editor of our monthly EB-Ch. Newsletter. Prepares the initial draft of each month's edition of the Newsletter so it includes the appropriate announcements of upcoming events, webinars, and pictures. Works closely with her co-editor to conduct editing of each monthly Newsletter. Coordinates with other Directors to expedite online and paper publication and mailing of our monthly EB-Ch. Newsletter.
- ✓ *Kathy Fairbanks*: Co-Director of Newsletters. Serves as co-editor of our monthly EB-Ch. Newsletter. Writes the "Meeting Notes" article about the previous monthly speaker's presentation by summarizing the major highlights and follow-up research and resources from the speaker's presentation. Coordinates closely with her co-editor in conducting final editing of each edition of our monthly EB-Ch. Newsletter before online and paper publication and distribution by our team.
- ✓ *Connie Gee*: Director of Membership. Maintains EB-Ch. membership records and member renewals. Works with other Directors in developing and implementing membership and renewal plans for increasing EB-Ch. membership.

- ✓ *Katie Laws*: Director of Outreach. Newest EB-Ch. Director. Will work with the Director of Membership to follow up in contacting persons who have indicated interest or questions about EB-Ch. membership and events. Develops and maintains Facebook publicity.
 - ✓ *George Chin, Sr.*: Director of Technology. Serves as our long-term “wizard” Director who skillfully directs and manages our technology needs so the technology functions properly at our hybrid online and in-person General Meetings and Board of Directors Meetings. Trains and assists his new Co-Director of Technology in setting up and handling technology during his temporary in-person absence.
 - ✓ *Jay Mumford*: Co-Director of Technology. Although Jay has not experienced a hearing loss, his wife does have a hearing loss, and he started attending our EB-Ch. General Meetings with her. Earlier this year, he offered to assist at the General Meetings, and soon thereafter was invited to join the BoD as Director At-Large. More recently, his Board role was changed to Co-Director of Technology in order to help manage the technology needs in George’s absence. Continues to work with other members on the BoD to develop EB-Ch. projects, such as sponsorships and 40-Year branding.
 - ✓ *Marlene Muir* Director of Publicity. Works with other Directors in planning and developing announcements and other forms of publicity about our EB-Ch. Meetings, special events and useful resources. Regularly sends out EB-Ch. publicity to NextDoor, various social media, and local newspapers.
 - ✓ *Gerry Niesar*: Consulting Legal Counsel. Makes himself available to consult with Board of Directors about legal questions and issues concerning the EB-Ch. Sends out paper mailing of our monthly EB-Ch. Newsletter. Recently moved to Legal Advisor status.
 - ✓ *Audrey Spinka*: Captioner. Provides Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) services at all monthly EB-Ch. General Meetings. Makes General Meeting transcripts available to Directors as needed or requested.
- *Common Themes & Tips from the Board of Directors*: As each Director told their story about their own hearing loss journey, some common themes became apparent, while tips were offered for living life fully with hearing loss.

- ✓ *Symptoms of Hearing Loss:* Most of the Directors had over the years noticed gradual changes in their hearing ability, such as difficulty understanding a speaker's words or sentences during conversations, meetings, and other group events. Yet, oftentimes they just assumed it was the speaker's low volume, accent, lack of speech clarity, or noisy background.
 - *Tip:* Don't bluff or act embarrassed if you are having trouble hearing adequately. Rather, speak up and let the speaker know that you are having a hearing problem and may need their help by speaking louder, slower, more clearly and perhaps repeating at times. Request captioning if it's not being provided.

- ✓ *Hearing Testing:* Although many of the Directors had experienced symptoms of hearing loss, they were still surprised at the diagnosis of hearing loss by their audiologist, especially if it had been quite some time since they had their hearing tested. Hearing loss can be so gradual as we age that it may go undetected and untreated for a long time.
 - *Tip:* Ask your healthcare provider at your annual physical exam for a referral to the Audiology Dept. for a hearing test. Continue to have your hearing tested annually by your audiologist or more often if you notice sudden changes in your hearing.

- ✓ *Treatment of Hearing Loss:* After receiving a report of the results of their hearing test, each Director was told by their audiologist about treatment options available. The Directors shared their individual hearing loss diagnosis, which ranged from mild to moderate to severe or profound hearing loss to deafness in one or both ears. In each case their hearing loss treatment options varied, ranging from Hearing Aids (HA's) to Cochlear Implants (CI's) to Assistive Listening Devices (ALD's). All Directors seemed quite pleased with their hearing improvement with application of up-graded hearing technology, such as the new HA's now on the market.
 - *Tip:* Discuss with your audiologist the various hearing loss treatment options that match up best with your current degree of hearing loss, including new or updated hearing equipment that may be needed to replace outdated hearing technology. Keep your hearing equipment clean and damage-free so it works properly. Wear your hearing devices regularly to avoid further hearing loss.

- ✓ *Hearing Loss Events, Services, and Resources:* Each Director described how they had initially become involved in hearing loss events and eventually became a member of our EB-Ch. The Directors also described the benefits they had gained by becoming a member of our EB-Ch. and regularly participating in monthly General Meetings and other EB-Ch. events and services. Several Directors mentioned how much they had learned from the monthly General Meeting presentations on a range of important hearing loss topics and good practices that they could apply to their own lives. They also noted how helpful and enjoyable it was to meet and socialize with other individuals who have experienced and understand what it's like to have hearing loss.
 - *Tip:* Become a new member or renew your membership in our EB-Ch. organization and regularly attend monthly EB-Ch. General Meetings so you can continue to acquire useful information and strategies for living your best life with hearing loss.

- ✓ *Hearing Loss Volunteer Opportunities:* All of the Board of Directors seemed to demonstrate much pride and pleasure in volunteering their specialized skills, their time and their personal efforts in carrying out our non-profit HLAA-East Bay Chapter mission of hearing loss education and advocacy. Working together as a team, the Board of Directors share responsibilities and tasks in assuring the success of the EB-Ch. in conducting our monthly General Meetings, producing our monthly EB-Ch. Newsletter, and getting out timely announcements and publicity about useful hearing loss events, services and resources.
 - *Tip:* Contact us to let us know about your interest and skills that you would like to offer in support of our EB-Ch. activities. Consider the possibility of joining us as a volunteer on our HLAA EB-Ch. Board of Directors.

- *Wrap-Up:* Before wrapping up, audience members were invited to tell us about their own hearing loss journey and treatment, as well as ask questions of the Directors. Everyone was then thanked for their participation in this monthly meeting and sharing their hearing loss journey with us. Overall, the meeting was remarkably upbeat, encouraging and quite a success!

- Anyone who wants further information or has more questions or comments may reach out to us at our contact information provided below. Lastly, the HLAA-EB Chapter Leadership wishes to remind everyone that the policy of

our East Bay Chapter is to not endorse any service, product or person that may have been mentioned or discussed during the current presentation, discussion or follow-up Q & A session.

- *For More Information/Questions: Visit Our Website: www.hearinglosseb.org
Email: info@hearinglosseb.org*

~ Kathy Fairbanks



A couple of pictures from last year's program by Doctor Susanna Storm. As you can see, she is a popular speaker!

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 Recruiter**: Contact people who said they could volunteer and tell them about volunteer needs. Recruit for those positions.
- **YouTube Channel Creator**: Establish a chapter YouTube channel for meeting recordings.
- **Webmaster**: Maintain and improve the chapter website. Current developed using the Wix platform.
- **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

The Board of Directors:

Contact us at: info@hearinglosseb.org

President: Len Bridges

Vice President: Peter Townsend

Secretary: Linda Gee

Treasurer: Len Bridges

Director of Technology: George Chin, Sr.

Director of Membership: Connie Gee

Co-Director of Programs: Robin Miller

Co-Director of Programs: Verna Dow

Director of Outreach: Kate Laws

Co-Director of Newsletters: Nancy Asmundson

Co-Director of Newsletters: Kathy Fairbanks

Director of Publicity: Marlene Muir

Director at Large: Jay Mumford

Consulting Legal Counsel: Gerald Niesar

Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) services: Audrey Spinka

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.