



East Bay Chapter Newsletter



March 2026

Chapter E-mail: Info@HearingLossEB.org
Chapter Address: PO Box 2266,
Alameda, CA 94501

Happy St. Patrick's Day this Month!

May your troubles be less and your blessings be more!

NOTE!! NEW LOCATION: KAISER HOSPITAL, 275 MACARTHUR BLVD., OAKLAND, ROOM LLB

**Hearing Loss Association East Bay Educational Meeting
Saturday March 14, 2026**

Insight on Rehabilitation in Music Perception After Cochlear Implant Surgery

Welcome to the third meeting of our 40th anniversary series. Please join us for a presentation that builds on our recent discussion of music perception and cochlear implants following Brooke Barry's talk at our January meeting. In this presentation, University of California, San Francisco medical student Lourdes Kaufman will discuss how cochlear implant recipients perceive complex sounds and how these abilities change after surgery, with a focus on implications for rehabilitation. She will present patient outcomes from a longitudinal, prospective cohort study conducted in the laboratory of Dr. Karen Barrett, PhD and Dr. Nicole Jiam, MD at UCSF.

Lourdes Kaufman is a fourth-year medical student at the University of California, San Francisco, planning a career in Otolaryngology–Head and Neck Surgery. She is particularly interested in caring for populations affected by hearing loss and in improving access to sound and meaningful everyday experiences for deaf and hard-of-hearing patients.

Schedule:

- **9:30 AM: Social and Refreshments**
- **10:00 AM: Presentation (Zoomers can join at 10 AM)**
- **11:30 AM: Complimentary Pizza**

NEW LOCATION: Kaiser Permanente Oakland Medical Center, [3600 Broadway](#), Lower Level Conference Room LL-B, Oakland CA 94611

Parking Option 1: Free parking across the street from the Kaiser Fabiola Building at the [3780 Howe St. Parking Garage](#). Walk half a block to the North Entrance of the Oakland Medical Center at [275 West MacArthur Blvd.](#) (See more information on the next page)

Parking Option 2: The first two hours are free at the Kaiser Oakland Medical Center, [3510 Broadway Parking Garage](#); each additional 30 minutes costs \$1, with a maximum daily charge of \$18 after five hours.

Please register at: www.HearingLossEB.org

RSVP by: Friday, March 13, 2026, 5:00 p.m..

Direction: Once inside the Oakland Medical Center, take any elevator to the Lower Level. Follow the signs to the Lower Level (LL) Conference Rooms. Our meeting will be held in Conference Room LL-B.

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

Questions? Info@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

Coming Soon:

We are lucky to have Robin Miller and Vera Dow organizing our speakers and they have them planned through the end of the year!!

- **April 11, 2026: Jane Nielsen, speaking about Stigma: making the invisible, visible.**
- **May, 2026: Walk4Hearing at Robert W. Crown Memorial Beach in Alameda, CA**
- **June 13, 2026: Peter Townsend & Len Bridges will lead a discussion concerning hearing issues.**
- **July/August: Summer Break, No general meetings**
- **September 12, 2026: Dr. Childress, a late-deafened audiologist**
- **October 10, 2026: Ann Thomas, Assertive Listening System presentation**
- **November 14, 2026: Pamela Durkin, Caine Companions**
- **December 12, 2026: Christine Lim, Visiting an ENT.**

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.

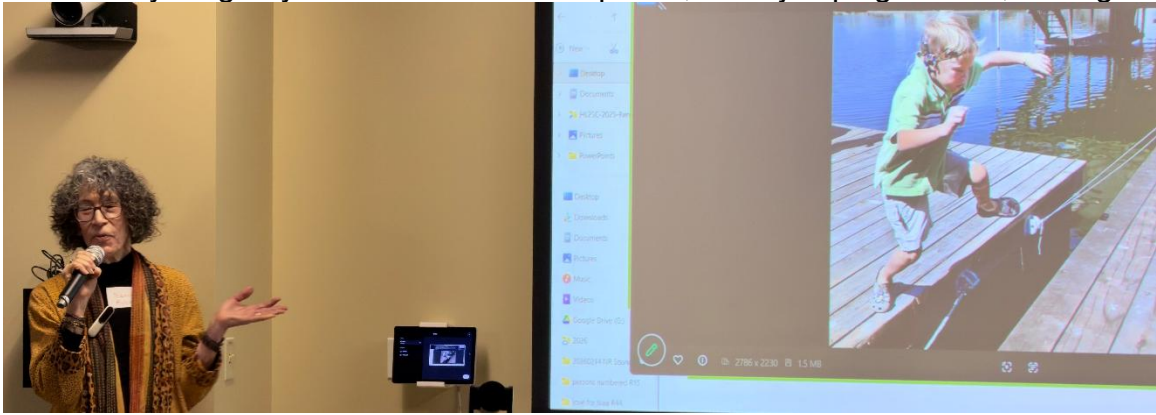
MEETING NOTES: “*Nancy Rubin & Project Sound Advice: Personal Experiences of People with Hearing Loss*”

At our Feb. 14, 2026 HLAA-East Bay Chapter meeting, our guest speaker was Nancy Rubin, who gave a delightful presentation about her Project Sound Advice. Through her presentation, Nancy was able to combine her wide interests in photography and travel with personal narratives of persons with hearing loss and the many different ways of how they handle a number of social issues. Following up on meetings with these individuals who ranged in age from 6 to 95, Nancy shared with us the unique hearing challenges of each one and insights gained from this diverse group of people as they told their stories of how they had learned to live fully with hearing loss.



- **Our Speaker’s Background:** The introduction of Nancy Rubin was turned over to Linda Gee who is our EB Ch. Board of Trustees Secretary and also a participant in Project Sound Advice. Linda proceeded in introducing Nancy as “. . . . a woman whose life’s work beautifully weaves together her passion for teaching, photography and travel.” Linda went on to cite some of Nancy’s many accomplishments and awards:
 - ✓ Graduated from UC Berkeley in 1967 with a B.S. in sociology.
 - ✓ Taught for 32 years in public high schools with an emphasis on curriculum and connection.
 - ✓ Initiated a remarkable project in her Social Living Class where she had her students write letters to their future self where they talked about their hopes, fears and dreams for 10, 20, or 40 years later. Nancy kept her promise of returning the letters to each student on their chosen date, even 4 decades later, personally mailing more than 15,000 letters to her former students.
 - ✓ Reached out to national audiences through her documentary called “Hi, I’m Nancy Rubin”, streaming on HBO Max and Discovery Plus.
 - ✓ Authored a book “Ask Me If I Care, Voices from an American High School”, still available online & many libraries.
 - ✓ Built an impressive body of photographs of people and places around the world, reframing various social issues such as parenthood, aging, and more recently hearing loss through her Project Sound Advice.
 - ✓ Won many awards for her striking photographs, as well as her efforts to bring meaningful attention to important social issues.
- **Some Sample Personal Narratives:** Initially, Nancy explained how she decided to take on her Project Sound Advice. She said she was simply following one of the best known pieces of advice: “Write what you know” and she took that advice to heart because she knows photography, and because she also has hearing loss. Nancy was quite excited about sharing pictures and personal stories of a dozen or so persons she interviewed ranging in age 6 to 95 and how they were dealing with their hearing loss.

- ✓ **Owen:** A young boy who has cochlear implants, seen jumping around, having lots of fun



playing.

- ✓ **Rowan:** Another young child who also has cochlear implants, but continues to use lip reading and ASI.
- ✓ **Ana Lee:** A young girl born with hearing loss, now progressing, who wears bilateral hearing aids & is ASI fluent.
- ✓ **Avery:** An adorable young girl who loves dancing with confidence, but can suddenly go deaf overnight, for two weeks, or even months at a time, due to head trauma.
- ✓ **Sophie:** A 11-year old girl who is quite proactive hearing loss, does not like the term 'hearing impaired', but thinks of herself as 'hearing empowered', announcing "My hearing loss is my superpower".
- ✓ **DeAngelo:** A 17-year old high school senior with bilateral hearing loss, now a strong academic college student, musician & volleyball player who is quite charming & confident.
- ✓ **Ramadan:** Born with normal hearing, but lost his hearing due to a high fever, now living with sensorineural hearing loss while working for 11 years as a deaf Lyft driver.
- ✓ **Christopher:** A 52-year old man who lost his hearing at age 4 due to a high fever, avid cyclist, who speaks so well that people don't often realize he is hard-of-hearing.
- ✓ **Rachel:** A former student of our speaker Nancy, went deaf suddenly at age 10, yet became a successful teacher and author, saying it opened the doors to one of the most interesting positive aspects of her life.
- ✓ **Michael:** Another former student with hearing aids for his moderate to severe hearing loss, attributed to playing electric music, loud music, working in carpentry & construction for 20+ years & a family with hearing loss.
- ✓ **John:** A former national squash champion who got a cochlear implant upon losing his hearing and balance as a result of cancer and a stroke, but still maintains a positive attitude as he zips around Berkeley.

- ✓ **Claudia:** Born with severe hearing loss due to medication her pregnant mother took, but not diagnosed until age 4 when she wasn't speaking, yet became a painter, professional photographer, author & avid traveler.
- ✓ **Felix:** Says he can't hear without his glasses because he relies on them for lip reading, often asking others to look at him when talking, and always looking for helpful hearing accessories.
- ✓ **Evelyn:** At age 95, the oldest of those interviewed, took up yoga at age 87, continues to deal with her hearing loss and her macular degeneration eye issues, loves to talk about her 30 years of flying to Berlin.

➤ **Linda Gee's Experience at Project Sound Advice:** We were also quite fortunate to have one of our very own HLA A-East Bay Chapter leaders, Linda Gee, join in the presentation.



Wishing to describe her personal experience at Project Sound Advice, she broke it into 3 stages: Before the Project; During

the Project; and After the Project.

- ✓ **Before the Project:** Linda started off by saying that before the Project, she didn't know about Nancy Rubin at all. In fact, she was very skeptical, concerned she might sell her email or phone # for money. So Linda went to Nancy's website where she was 'wowed' with all of Nancy's projects.
- ✓ **During the Project:** So Linda decided to give Nancy's project a try and see where it led. It turned out to be quite a fun experience. Nancy gave each participant a list of 5 questions where each person could pick 3 of the 5 questions to answer. Then Linda had a photo session of 2 photos with 1 profile picture & 1 picture of Linda doing something she loves. Doing her write-up of her 3 chosen questions first, Linda said she found them to be hard, thoughtful questions where she had to think deeply about her past feelings on being a hearing-impaired person. Linda said she had experienced a sudden hearing loss, noticing the difference right away. Examining her past feelings about her hearing loss, she realizes now that she went through the grieving process by herself for 7 long years – denial, anger, bargaining back and forth about her hearing loss.
- ✓ **After the Project:** One day Linda saw a flyer about the Walk4Hearing in Alameda and decided to go do it although none of her peers had hearing loss or any connection to the Walk. So Linda went ahead by herself to the Walk4Hearing in Alameda. Linda said that she was amazed at all the people there where she found everyone so very accepting, supportive in talking about hearing loss, making it easy to connect with others who were also experiencing hearing loss. She described how she quickly connected with those from the HLA A-East Bay Chapter, finally reaching the acceptance stage of her hearing loss,

and in her own words “I felt like I was home”. Linda explained that she wanted to share her story to help others realize that they too may go through several stages before reaching the acceptance stage for their hearing loss. Since then Linda has read the stories of many other Project Sound Advice participants, feeling honored to participate in such a wonderful hearing loss project advocating for individuals with hearing loss. Furthermore, Linda went on to join our East Bay Chapter of HLAA, quickly becoming an active volunteer and using her strong leadership skills to advocate for those of us with hearing loss. More recently, Linda began serving as Secretary on our East Bay Chapter Board of Trustees.

➤ **Insights Nancy Rubin and Audience Members Have Gained:** Nancy and several audience members wanted to share some of the important insights about hearing loss they have gained over the years:

- ✓ Speak up, & let others know you have hearing loss.
- ✓ It's OK to ask people to repeat & to speak louder & slower.
- ✓ If dismissed with “Oh, Never Mind”, politely tell them that you want to hear what they have to say.
- ✓ Hearing loss can lead to deadly falls, but hearing aids may help to cut the risk.
- ✓ In advance, request captioning at public meetings.
- ✓ Remember that hearing loss is “your own personal superpower”.
- ✓ Reach out & find a hearing loss community to enjoy understanding, support & fun in living with hearing loss.

➤ **Wrap-Up:** In wrapping up her fascinating presentation, our speaker Nancy Rubin suggested that audience members contact her for more information or questions at her email or follow the link below to view her Sound Advice exhibit.

Finally, Nancy Rubin noted that she did not intend to endorse any hearing loss treatment or product in her presentation. The HLAA-EB Chapter leadership also reminded everyone that the policy of the Chapter is to not endorse any service, product or person mentioned or discussed during the current presentation, discussion or follow-up Q & A session.

For Information/Questions: Email: nancyrubin17@gmail.com Call: 510-418-0353
Link to exhibit: <https://www.nancyrubin.com/sound-advice> ~ Kathy Fairbanks

Time to renew your membership to our chapter! Only \$25.
Bring a check to the next meeting or go to
hearinglosseb.org/join

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. Currently 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

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Secretary: Linda Gee

Treasurer: Len Bridges

Co-Director of Technology: George Chin, Sr.

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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.