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HLAA-WI President's Message...

By Jerry Lapidakis



Advocacy is a big topic these days in the hearing loss community. HLAA is focusing on it as a priority. And we all should be, both personally for our own benefit and to improve hearing conditions for others. We can do a lot as individuals to help ourselves and others by informing them of available resources.

As part of my personal advocacy program I wore my "I read lips. Please face me" button when I attended the national convention in Washington. I have been a little hesitant to wear it, but what a difference it made when traveling. Lisa Zovar gave it to me after she got her very successful cochlear implants in April, saying, with a little smirk, "I don't need it anymore".

People noticed the button right away but didn't usually say anything. But their actions toward me were very different. They looked directly at me, announced and spoke a little louder. I did much better talking with and understanding ticket agents, teenagers with high pitched voices at fast food restaurants, waiters, train and airplane attendants, or when asking directions on the street.

Something else happened on my way home on the train. (I like taking the train. It is quieter, roomy, more relaxing and it gives me quiet time to think.) I flew to DC and took the train back. The button was a real conversation starter on the train. In the dining car they seat you with random people to fill the limited tables. This forces conversation, something you don't get on airplanes. Usually this is a somewhat painful experience for me since I have a hard time understanding, especially with all the surrounding noises. And the people you are trying to talk to don't speak loudly or clearly enough to be understandable.

While I was waiting to be seated a man with a five-year-old son noticed my button and struck up a conversation. He told me his son was deaf from birth with damage to his auditory system. The boy now has a brain stem transplant and is doing very well. He went on about what a change that was making in the boy's learning and language ability. We had a very good conversation and they were appreciative to learn about resources in HLAA and also Alexander Graham Bell Assn., a group that focuses on children's hearing issues.

Then, at the table, I was seated with a couple who just returned from the UK, her original home. Turns out he is a musician and has hearing loss and she is totally deaf in one ear. We had a long talk after breakfast over coffee about hearing loss, music and politics. That was rare for me to be able to take part. And they were very interested in HLAA and other sources of information that I mentioned.

In both of these situations they were unfamiliar with many of the resources available to them. And my button made them realize they needed to speak clearly and audibly to me. So, I was helped because I could understand and take part in the conversation and they learned about some great support for their hearing situations.

We can be advocates, both for ourselves and for those we meet. We can spread the word about all the help that is available for those with hearing loss, and encourage others to get help for their friends and family members. There are many types of advocacy such as working to change laws and regulations, access to technology, communication and sharing information. There are also the one-on-one contacts that inform people and provide help. That is something we can all do. We can also tell them about HLAA! It's amazing how many people have never heard of us.




HLAA-WI Annual Meeting
Friday November 4th
7—9 PM
Comfort Suites—
Milwaukee Airport
6362 South 13th St.
Oak Creek 414-570-1111

All HLAA members are invited to attend; vote on proposals, establish priorities, plans, & elect your state leaders.

Program: Juliette Sterkens

There is a special room rate at the hotel for those who plan to stay overnight and attend the Loop EXPO. More information:

hlaawi.org/conventions.html

Deadline:
October 5th.

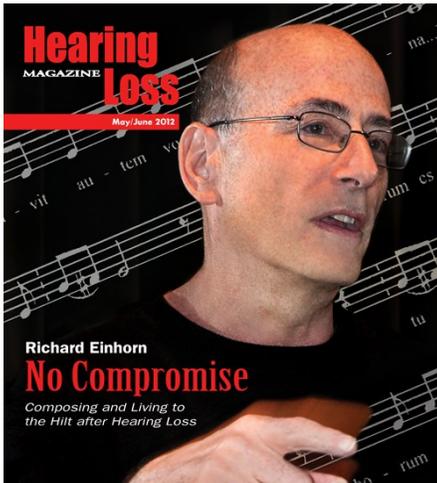


Hearing Loop & Accessibility

EXPO



Saturday Nov. 5, 2016 ■ 9-3PM ■ Milw Area Technical College ■ Oak Creek Campus



Keynote Speaker: **Richard Einhorn**

Recently featured in the NY Times and on MSNBC

Hearing Loops: What They Have Done for Me What They Can Do for *You*

Richard, a world renowned composer, experienced a sudden hearing loss. He has since become a nationally known advocate for hearing loss issues, including hearing loops and improved public listening assistance. You will not want to miss his compelling personal story.

What is the EXPO about?

Participants will learn to **get more out of hearing aids and cochlear implants**, about accessibility with hearing loops at home, worship, work or recreation, what's involved with proper loop installation, how to self-install a TV loop, how to advocate for loops, and how to obtain funding & create publicity once a loop is installed. There will be presentations by national and local experts, a panel discussion and vendors available to answer questions about the latest services and hearing loop products.

Hosted by -HLAA Metro Milwaukee Chapter and the Wisconsin State Association of the Hearing Loss Association of America



Cost: \$25 includes Lunch and Handouts

This event made possible thanks to the generosity of: Contacta ■ ListenTech ■ DRS Sound ■ Metro Sound & Video ■ Hear Here Hearing Loops ■ GN ReSound ■ Oticon ■ Unitron ■ Signia/Siemens ■ Phonak Starkey ■ Hear Wisconsin ■ WI Office Deaf & Hard of Hearing ■ CapTel ■ Med-EI ■ Cochlear Americas ■ Independence First ■ ClearSounds ■ CaptionCall ■ Herb Kohl Philanthropies ■ Milwaukee County Zoo ■ And Friends of HLAA-Wisconsin

**Live with Hearing Loss?
Use Hearing Aids?
Use Cochlear Implants?
Want to Get More Out of Them?**

People who live with hearing loss, hearing aid & cochlear implant users, librarians, ministers, veterans, hearing aid providers, aging care facility managers, educators, and anyone interested in learning more about communication access for people with hearing loss, is encouraged to attend.

Event Information:

WHEN: Saturday November 5, 2016
TIME: 9-3PM (registration 8.30 AM)
WHERE: MATC — Oak Creek Campus
RSVP BY: October 21, 2016
CONTACT: elbise6376@gmail.com

We're on Facebook under "[Hearing Loop EXPO](#)"

Registration: hlaawi.org/conventions.html

Got A Beef?

Editor's Edifications

Listen to people complain: "Hearing aids cost too much". "Insurance doesn't cover their cost because they are not classified as 'medical devices' that are 'medically necessary'." Good grief!! In some descriptions they have been classified as 'cosmetic'! Then there's Medicare; a program designed to cover medical expenses for people of retirement age when hearing loss is more prevalent, that simply excludes hearing aids. What on earth is going on, and will this ever change? Probably not, unless.....**People with Hearing Loss Unite and Start Making Noise about Their Exasperation!**

HLAA represents all of us whether we 'join' or not. However, HLAA could be far more effective if the membership numbers grew exponentially to the problems that are identified every time we share our frustrations about how hearing loss affects our lives.

HLAA needs greater numbers to back up the advocacy work it does. This is important not just at the national level, but at the state and chapter level as well.



So what can you do? First, get on the bandwagon and become a part of the movement to make hearing loss a true issue of concern in the United States. Help HLAA meet its mission.

JOIN HLAA. Hey, it will cost you less than 68 cents a week to be an official member. Then be proactive. Speak up. Speak out. Come out of hiding and stop being afraid to talk about or do something about hearing loss, whether it's yours or someone else's. [\[JOIN HERE\]](#) **Here are a few ideas for you, right here in Wisconsin.**

1. Consumers with hearing loss can and should be on state advisory boards to represent the needs of people who are hard of hearing and improve services across the state. In Wisconsin we have a *Governor's Council for Deaf & Hard of Hearing*. **There are 3 slots on that Council for hard of hearing people; only one is currently filled.** Expenses to cover costs to participate are covered. It's a small time commitment. At least one more HLAA member is badly needed on this Council.
2. Wisconsin has a *Governor's Council for People with Disabilities* that has been very effective in implementing the Americans with Disabilities Act in our state. **There are no hard of hearing people on that Council. We have been told there should be.**
3. **There are 4 active HLAA Chapters in Wisconsin. All of them are continuously seeking participants who are willing to share time as leaders.** Too few people are doing the lion's share of the work in chapters.
4. **HLAA-WI has 3 openings on its Board and no applicants.** Too few people are trying to do too much. HLAA -WI needs more trustees, and would also benefit from off-board members who are willing to serve on committees.
5. **HLAA in Wisconsin is without a State Chapter Coordinator** at this time. It would strengthen chapters and build chapters in areas where there is none, to have someone in this position. A stipend from national HLAA is available for the person who serves in this role.
6. **It has been 18 years since Wisconsin had a representative on the national board of HLAA.** Two Wisconsin members, Julie Olson and Karen Lindberg both served for several years. It would benefit Wisconsin to once again have representation at the national level.

Learn More About Federal Laws Providing Rights to Individuals with Hearing Loss

The cited statutes may be accessed in the following document. [\[View PDF\]](#)

While there are laws at both federal and state levels that are there to protect people with disabilities, they do not enforce themselves. *The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990*, in fact, clearly states that we must ask for what we need before it must be provided. How can you do that if you don't know what *communication* access is? Surprise! For most of us it is NOT sign language....it is technology. Yet, sign language is often what is offered. Less than 2% of the hearing impaired population signs.



We will change things if we work together. But we cannot do that when we refuse to disclose or discuss our invisible disability. Start by attending the Loop EXPO!



Wisconsin State Association

www.hlaawi.org

Wisconsin needs more HLAA Chapters! The national membership list for Wisconsin shows a concentration of members in the Eau Claire area, and also in the Green Bay area. (Many Green Bay folks do attend meetings of HLAA Fox Valley Chapter in Appleton.)

A priority of HLAA-WI is to assist emerging chapters. If starting a chapter in your area interests you, please connect with one of the HLAA-WI officers. Hearing loss matters, but those who are affected by it are the most logical persons to make things happen. Please think about it.

Fox Valley Regional Chapter, meets at 6:30 PM on the 2nd Monday evening of each month from March through December (except in August.), in Appleton. The meeting room has a hearing loop and receivers for those without telecoils. CART is provided for all meetings. Contact **Colleen**: or **Rhonda**: Phone contacts: "T" 920-420-8462 or **Lorna**: 920-725-2579. Chapter members hail from all over the northeastern and central part of the state. The chapter has a monthly newsletter and a FaceBook page.



Each regular FV chapter meeting is preceded by a discussion group. H.O.P.E. is all about Hearing Other People's Experiences. HOPE discussions begin at 5:30.

Our cochlear implant support group meets quarterly. Anyone who has a CI or who is interested in learning about them is welcome. Contact Rhonda: [HERE](#)

The chapter's monthly newsletter, which is available on request via the link below, includes information about all meetings and events. It may be received online or by regular mail. We just need to know how to reach you. Let us know [HERE](#). Feel free to connect with us. **Put Newsletter Request in subject header.**

Lake Country Chapter (Wales)



This Chapter meets the 2nd Thursday of each month, except January, February, July & August, at The Wales Community Center, 216 W. South St. in Wales. Contact: [James Goddeyne](#) Phone: 414-460-4461. Contact us for specifics on time & meeting programs.

Madison Chapter

This chapter meets every other month (January, March, May, July, September, and November) in the Cap-Tel offices located in the UltraTec Building, 450 Science Drive, Madison. On alternating months the chapter hosts an informal social event such as a movie or a live play at a looped or captioned theater, or just an informal discussion at a coffee shop. Contact [Lisa](#) or [John](#): The chapter has a Facebook page and website(www.hlaamadison.com) or find them on Facebook . Meeting notice is posted on the chapter's website.



Milwaukee Metro Chapter - This chapter meets at **HEAR Wisconsin**, formerly the Center for Communication, Hearing & Deafness (CCHD), 10243 W. National Ave., West Allis, on the 3rd Monday of the month at 6:30 PM. Contact persons are: Eloise: eloise6376@gmail.com , Liza: esegleau@gmail.com , & Jean: szaboshhh@yahoo.com Please check with one of the contacts to verify dates and programs.

Chapter Start-up Program

A new, accelerated way to start a new HLAA chapter was announced at the 2015 national HLAA convention. This program provides a lot more HLAA support, including a series of training sessions for the new chapter leaders to help them better understand how to deliver the HLAA education, support & advocacy mission and meet the needs of members. Several applications are pending at the national office at this time. If a chapter in your part of the state interests you, this is an excellent time to get the ball rolling. vstafford-mallis@hearingloss.org

To: Wisconsin HLAA Chapter Leaders,

Please keep your chapter contacts and meeting information up to date.

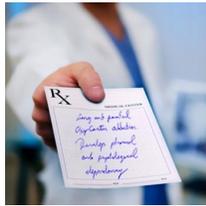
This is your newsletter! Please share photos, articles, chapter information & suggestions to the [HLAA-WI Newsletter Editor](#). Let us know what your chapter is doing. Help us reach hard of hearing people of all ages in Wisconsin. **Share our newsletter with others. Copy it, forward it, whatever works!**

It is also posted at: www.hlaawi.org

HLAA-WI reserves the right to not publish material that is contrary to the HLAA mission.

Be Aware of Medicines That Can Cause Hearing Loss

Medicines that damage the ear and cause hearing loss are known as ototoxic medicines. They are a common cause of hearing loss, especially in people who have to take medicine on a regular basis. In most cases, hearing loss occurs because the medicine damages the cochlea in the inner ear .



Hearing loss caused by an ototoxic medicine tends to develop quickly. The first symptoms usually are [ringing in the ears \(tinnitus\)](#) and [vertigo](#). Hearing usually returns to normal after you stop taking the medicine. But some medicines can cause permanent damage to the inner ear, resulting in permanent hearing loss even if you stop taking the medicine.

Commonly used medicines that may cause hearing loss include: Aspirin, when large doses (8 to 12 pills a day) are taken and Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), such as ibuprofen and naproxen taken in large doses.

Certain antibiotics, especially aminoglycosides (such as gentamicin, streptomycin, and neomycin) are ototoxic. Hearing-related side effects from these antibiotics are most common in people who have kidney disease or [who already have hearing problems](#).

Loop diuretics used to treat high blood pressure and heart failure, such as furosemide (Lasix) or bumetanide.

Medicines used to treat cancer, including cyclophosphamide, cisplatin, and bleomycin.

According to WebMD, hearing-related side effects are more likely when you take two or more of these medicines at the same time. If you notice any hearing issues, it is important to report those issues to your doctor.



HLAA recommends that people with hearing loss discuss ototoxicity with your doctors when you receive prescriptions of any kind. There may be better alternatives in some situations.

A list of ototoxic medications, along with more about this issue can be found at: <http://vestibular.org/ototoxicity>

America's Most Common Workplace Injury is Hearing Loss 09/02/2016

An article in USA Today brings attention to the high risk of hearing loss in the workplace caused by loud noise. In fact, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), hearing loss is the most common work-related injury, with 22 million workers exposed annually to hazardous levels of occupational noise.

[Read the full article](#).



Disclaimer—HLAA does not endorse products or services. Mention of such is intended to provide readers & those who attend meetings with information on products or services that might be of interest, & is not a recommendation or endorsement.

Try NTID's Hearing Test and Give Feedback 08/12/2016

Rochester Institute of Technology's National Technical Institute for the Deaf is making available a patent-pending hearing test that makes it possible for anyone to screen their hearing from the comfort of their home. To take the test you'll need to provide an email address. Your email address will NOT be used for future communications. The email address simply allows you to access your data on subsequent test administrations, or simply to view the results of a previous test administration. The test utilizes sentences like those heard in everyday listening situations. [Take the hearing test](#).

Ava Launches Smartphone App 08-30-16

The Ava team has announced that their app will become available for anyone to download on August 30th, 2016. You will be able to directly download it from the App and Play store and use it as much as you like, without any charge. For those of you unfamiliar with this technology, the app pairs smartphones in a room and processes the conversation to show real time, color coded transcript of the discussion. In other words, one obtains real time captioning on your smartphone.

If you are interested in signing up you can do this by doing the following: 1. Open your internet browser 2. Type in <http://www.ava.me> . Leave your e-mail address in the assigned box. The Ava team will provide more information about how to download the app. For further questions, please send inquiries to team@ava.me.

The state of Delaware recently passed a 'Hearing Loop Education Bill', and is the third state to have enacted a law in this regard. HLAA members worked to advocate and educate on the value of telecoils in hearing aids and cochlear implants in their efforts to get this bill written, introduced, passed and signed. The central component of the law is the requirement that people who sell hearing aids are required to explain telecoils to their clients AND demonstrate how they work so the buyer can make an informed decision when purchasing a product.

**How about it Wisconsin?
Can we get this done?**

Telecommunications for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Inc. Issues Letter of Concern to Toyota Motor Corporation

Telecommunications for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Inc. (TDI) has issued a Letter of Concern to Toyota Motor Corporation about carbon monoxide poisoning incidents affecting the deaf and those with hearing loss. More than a dozen deaths have been reported due to cars with keyless ignitions not being shut off when the occupant leaves the vehicle. The obvious issue for those with hearing loss is that they can't hear the car's engine if it is left running. [\[Read more\]](#)





Hearing Loss Magazine is published bimonthly and is delivered as part of membership in Hearing Loss Association of America.

Readers look to *Hearing Loss Magazine* to provide them with the latest information on products, services, research, and technology in the hearing health care field. They also look for personal stories of hard of hearing people to find encouragement, and give them the feeling that they're not alone in living with a hearing loss. Many *Hearing Loss Magazine* readers say they view the magazine as a "lifeline" to help them help themselves live well with hearing loss.

Hearing Loss Magazine is available online. Current issues are available to HLAA Members by logging into the [HLAA Online Portal](#). To receive the magazine, [join Hearing Loss Association of America](#).

FCC Hosts Technology Transitions Info Session

The Federal Communications Commission's (FCC's) Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau will host a Technology Transitions Info Session on Monday, September 26, 2016. The purpose of this Session is to provide consumers with information about "technology transitions" in the telecommunications marketplace.

Providers around the country are upgrading technology that delivers their services to homes. Existing copper-based networks, originally built for voice-only services, are being replaced with alternative platforms capable of providing a variety of services such as higher-speed broadband, video, voice, and interactive features. FCC subject matter experts will share information about how the progress of technology transitions are impacting the consumer experience, including but not limited to, service implications, backup power issues, and accessibility concerns.

The event will be held from 1 p.m. – 2 p.m. at the FCC headquarters, located at 445 12th Street, SW, Washington, D.C. 20554. It is open to the public.

Those interested in watching the Info Session live can do so by visiting fcc.gov/general/live. Online participants are invited to submit questions during the question and answer period by emailing them to livequestions@fcc.gov. You can find more information on the FCC website.

HLAA's National Public Policy and Advocacy Agenda

HLAA advocates for equal access for millions Americans with hearing loss. We work with industry & government to expand access to mainstream & assistive technologies, enforce existing disability laws, regulations & standards that impact lives. HLAA promotes self-advocacy & empowerment of people with hearing loss to ensure equal opportunity in telecommunications, employment, health care, education & community life. Full statement [HERE](#).

ADVOCACY

HLAA Director of Public Policy Lise Hamlin provided the keynote address at the [Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program Association](#) (TEDPA) Conference on September 8 in Annapolis, Maryland. TEDPA is made up of state equipment distribution programs who gather to exchange information about issues facing the states and to assist one another with the administration of specialized telecommunications equipment distribution programs for persons with disabilities. Approximately 100 state representatives, sponsors and exhibitors attended the conference. Many of the representatives have already connected with local HLAA chapters to provide information about their individual state programs. Many of those that do not have a local chapter noted that they would like to see HLAA grow in their state.

OUTREACH

HLAA Executive Director Barbara Kelley attended the [CTIA Super Mobility 2016 Expo](#), which was held September 7-9 in Las Vegas. She was a presenter on the CTIA Accessibility Outreach Forum's "Roundtable Policy Discussion". Current Policy and Regulations that Impact Accessibility." Barbara spoke on hearing aid compatibility (HAC) with cell phones and HLAA's experience on the Federal Communications Commission's Disability Advisory Committee. [Read more about this important issue](#)

FCC Adopts Landmark Agreement to Improve Access to Hearing Aid Compatible Cell Phones and Wireless Devices 8/10/2016

In August, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) adopted new rules to ensure people with hearing loss have full access to wireless devices. As the FCC noted, the action taken "will modernize existing hearing aid compatibility (HAC) rules while maintaining the balance between fostering accessibility and promoting innovation and investment." [\[Read more\]](#)

Hearing Tracker and HLAA: Partnering for Best Practices in Hearing Care A 'Must Read' for anyone with hearing loss.

By Cynthia Compton-Conley for *Hearing Loss Magazine*
Best practices and patient-centered care are the latest buzzwords in the hearing health care industry—and for good reason. [Read the whole article](#) here.

2016 HLA A Convention Memories by Tom O'Connor, HLA A-WI Treasurer

I had the privilege to attend HLA A's national convention in Washington D. C. along with our state president, Jerry Lapidakis, in June. Together, we covered as many workshops and events as possible so we could bring information back to Wisconsin.

I attended the *All-Leader's Chapter Building Workshop* that was facilitated by Valerie Stafford-Mallis, the National Director of Chapter Development. On the agenda was a new membership rebate program that allows dues sharing between national and chapters. The program allows national HLA A to return \$10 per national dues paying member back to a chapter in the region where that member resides. This program rebates all memberships, whether new or renewals. This is a win/win for HLA A at all levels. It should encourage national membership from the grassroots level up. Chapters are encouraged to initiate this project immediately. Instructions were sent to chapter presidents and are available on the national website under chapters.

Stafford-Mallis stressed the importance of promoting information in our regions that lets the public know we exist, while promoting the value of membership. Chapters should use social media, newsletters, Twitter and other methods of linking people to HLA A. While many older members do not use Twitter or social media, younger people do. Chapter leaders were encouraged to make an effort to interest young people in HLA A. We were also encouraged to approach service organization and veterans groups for support. People who sell hearing aids should also be asked to promote HLA A to their clients.

At the *State Organization Workshop* it was pointed out that states benefit from having a State Chapter Coordinator (SCC). While Wisconsin is one of only 13 state associations, it is without a SCC. We are encouraged to find a person to serve as SCC. The SCC's job is to support existing chapters and encourage the development of new chapters. He or she represents national HLA A, and helps identify future chapter leaders while keeping existing chapter leaders informed about National HLA A activities and positions on issues. The SCC is a liaison between all levels who would sit on the HLA A-WI Board, while reporting to the national Director of Chapter Development. The SCC serves as a 'builder and coordinator', and is not responsible for advocacy in their state. Advocacy is the responsibility of the state association.

The second day of the convention included presentations by *The National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine (The Academies)* and *The President's Council of Advisors on Science & Technology (PCAST)*. The Academies report was explained their recommendations to improve quality, access and affordability of hearing technologies. PCAST is an advisory group that directly advises the president. PCAST has and is addressing the issue that 30+ million Americans over age 60 have age related hearing loss, but are not seeking treatment due to access and affordability issues. HLA A has been represented in both groups and is actively involved in establishing protocol.

I attended a variety of sessions in the afternoon that addressed too many topics to discuss in the space allowed here. The Symposium on Friday was titled: "*Novel Approaches toward Addressing Hearing Loss; Ideas on the Cutting Edge*". A panel of experts shared information about topics on hearing loss prevention, stem cell therapies with potential to cure hearing loss, interventional audiology and ways to improve access to hearing healthcare, particularly in rural areas. We learned about a program called 'HEARS', which is about community-delivered affordable and accessible hearing care. There were many questions and comments by HLA A members during these presentations. A variety of workshops were available to attendees each day of the convention. A workshop on 'looping', which was presented by Wisconsin's own Juliette Sterkens, was extremely popular and had standing room only.

Adding to this was the outstanding exhibit hall that always goes with every HLA A conventions. Often called, 'the world's largest tradeshow for hearing healthcare products', it was not a disappointment.

The Awards Breakfast, which is always held on Sunday morning, had no Wisconsin award recipients. Perhaps our chapters and state association will make some nominations for 2017. We have many in Wisconsin who deserve recognition.

This year's convention had over 1500 attendees from all over the world, as it was held in tandem with the International Federation of Hard of Hearing People (IFHOH).

I want to take this opportunity to thank the HLA A-WI Board for sponsoring me and supporting me with a stipend to attend the convention. It was a wonderful experience!

Tom O'Connor, HLA A-WI Treasurer



What A Convention! By Chris Prust of HLA A Fox Valley Chapter

What is a convention? According to Webster it is "a large meeting of people who come to a place for several days to talk about their shared work or other interests..." What was HLA A Convention 2016? A whole lot more!

Every year we encourage people to attend the HLA A National Convention. If you have never been to one, please consider going next year. It will be held in Salt Lake City, Utah!!!!

HLA A conventions are a lot more than just a bunch of people getting together. They are hundreds of people with one thing in common: hearing loss. Whether you are hard of hearing, deaf or have a family member who is, this is the place to be. You not only interact with people who have the same interests, but with people who are there to help you hear better. That includes vendors from all kinds of businesses related to hearing loss; technology experts who want to tell you about available devices and what is coming in the future; cochlear implant companies whose reps you can ask whatever it is you want to know about their product, etc. It is a great opportunity to "compare" manufacturers of products so you can make an informed decision; it is about high quality workshops where you can learn what other chapters are doing, healthcare advocacy programs, music appreciation with hearing aids, TV and video access with hearing aids, and so much more. My favorite topic was well represented too – hearing loops along with assistive listening devices that work well with t-coils.

HLA A conventions are about meeting people who understand what you live with every day. It is about networking with people who may have great suggestions on what may help you have better quality of life and stay connected with your family and friends. It is about YOU! There is no other place you can go where you will feel more "at home" or more "welcome." You will smile from the time you register at the desk until you checkout. In between there will be laughter, fun, and maybe even a few shared tears of frustration, but with someone who "gets" what you are living with every single day.

If you are an active HLA A member there are opportunities to receive financial assistance from chapters, from HLA A-WI and also from the national HLA A organization. I hope you will think about it.

Chris Prust



Our award winning newsletter is now published twice a year rather than quarterly. Sign up to receive it by e-mail or access it on the HLAA-WI website. Instructions for sign up are below in the gray area. :)

Sign up to receive this newsletter online at: HLAAMadison@yahoo.com

Make sure your spam filters don't block e-mail from the Madison address. The Madison HLAA chapter distributes our newsletter via Mail Chimp. We are grateful to HLAA Madison for providing this service.

HLAA-WI is the Wisconsin state affiliate of the national organization; The Hearing Loss Association of America, Inc. HLAA-WI has no paid staff, and is run by volunteers. The organization is dependent on donations & projects like the Walk4Hearing for funds to pursue its mission. We have no physical office in Wisconsin.

HLAA, at all levels, is a non profit organization. The national office is located at 7910 Woodmont Ave., Suite 1200, Bethesda MD 20814. Phone 301-657-2248. Email: info@hearingloss.org Membership information can be found at www.hearingloss.org

When you become an HLAA member, you become part of a movement to make hearing loss an issue of concern. If you think it's time this invisible disability stopped being put aside as insignificant, please add your voice to the HLAA constituency. It is a major health issue for 48 million Americans and their families. [JOIN NOW](#) Help HLAA work for you! Your voice is important.

FEEL FREE TO PRINT, FORWARD & SHARE THIS NEWSLETTER.

Our goal is to reach hard of hearing people of all ages to let them know there is a consumer based organization that is working for them as an advocate and as an educator. Your support is appreciated.



 **Hearing Loss Association of America**
Wisconsin State Association

Interested in getting involved in HLAA-WI? There are 3 board & committee positions open this fall. The HLAA-WI website has a link to the board application. www.hlaawi.org

This volunteer organization needs people who believe in it to keep going. Can YOU help us?

PS: There is never a 'right time' to get involved. Just do it!

www.hlaawi.org

Wisconsin has an opening for a State HLAA Chapter Coordinator.

This is a volunteer position supported by a stipend from national HLAA. Responsibilities include visiting existing chapters, helping develop new chapters, and attending HLAA events such as the national convention, and state board meetings.

State Chapter Coordinators must be national members of HLAA who are hard of hearing.

If this role interests you please contact immediate past state president, [Stephanie Long](#).

HLAA-WI is a 501c3 non profit organization. Your gifts are tax deductible.

Please consider HLAA-WI in your annual giving. Send to: HLAA-WI % Tom O'Connor, Treasurer, 1149 Wedgewood Lane, Fond du Lac WI 54935. Thank you.

NOTE: HLAA-WI uses your donations to help defray the costs associated with our website, newsletter, captioning for meetings, and other projects. When possible, HLAA-WI provides stipends or scholarships to active members who wish to attend educational events related to hearing loss.

Board members of HLAA-WI are all volunteers who serve at their own expense because they know the HLAA mission makes a positive difference for people with hearing loss.

Your tax deductible gift to HLAA-WI matters! Thank you for your consideration.



Step Up for People with Hearing Loss and Communication Access #CommAccess

Call to Action

There are infinite ways people with hearing loss can improve their access to communication. Below are some suggestions to help you get started – show confidence when asking for what you need. These actions on your part help create awareness and reduce the stigma about hearing loss. Don't forget to post a picture of yourself taking action on Facebook or Twitter @walk4hearing using #CommAccess.

◆ Work

- ◆ Ask your boss for a captioned telephone
- ◆ Request remote captioning for meetings or teleconferences at work
- ◆ Inform your co-workers and teammates of your hearing loss
- ◆ Ask your co-workers to face you and slow down their speech
- ◆ Share HLAA's Communication Tips Card with your co-workers

◆ School

- ◆ Inform your teachers of your hearing loss on the first day of school
- ◆ Ask the teacher if you can talk to the students about your communication needs
- ◆ Ask the teacher not to face the blackboard when he or she talks
- ◆ Ask the teacher to repeat students' questions and comments
- ◆ Request captioning in all of your classes
- ◆ Ask if you and your peers can eat lunch in a separate location due to excess noise in the cafeteria
- ◆ Ask your teachers and your peers to face you and slow down their speech
- ◆ Share HLAA's Communication Tips Card with your teachers and classmates

◆ Medical

- ◆ Ask your audiologist to make sure you have a telecoil in your hearing aid or cochlear implant, and it is activated
- ◆ Ask your audiologist and doctor to loop their exam room
- ◆ Ask the pharmacy to loop their counter
- ◆ Ask medical personnel to face you and slow down their speech or write notes
- ◆ Share HLAA's Communication Tips Card with your doctors

◆ Home

- ◆ Use the captions on your TV
- ◆ Get an alerting device for your doorbell
- ◆ Get an alerting device for your smoke and/or carbon monoxide detector
- ◆ Get an alerting device for your alarm clock
- ◆ Get a captioned telephone for your home
- ◆ Let 9-1-1 know that there is a person with hearing loss in your home

◆ Social

- ◆ Request captioned glasses, or a captioning device at the movie theater
- ◆ Request an assistive listening device (ALD) at a live theater performance
- ◆ Ask to activate the captioning on the TV in a restaurant
- ◆ Tell people how to best communicate with you
- ◆ Share your hearing loss story with others
- ◆ Ask hotel management to loop their front desk
- ◆ Ask for an "ADA Kit" when checking into a hotel
- ◆ When a guest in a hotel, alert personnel there is a person with hearing loss staying in your room
- ◆ Ask your place of worship to loop the main room of the facility
- ◆ Inform all extracurricular activities directors or coaches of your hearing loss
- ◆ If stopped by a police officer tell them you have a hearing loss
Ask them to face you and speak slowly and clearly
- ◆ Share HLAA's Communication Tips Card with your friends

**Learn more about
Self Advocacy
&
"Communication Access"
At the
HEARING LOOP EXPO**

**In Milwaukee
On November 5th**

(Details on Page 2)

Is it Time for a Hearing Aid? Don't Forget the Telecoils! 05/01/16



By Julie Metternich Olson MS

You live in Wisconsin where it's cool a good share of the year. Would you buy a new car without air conditioning because it was smaller and cost \$40 less than one with AC? Probably not.

You ask, "What does that have to do with hearing loss and hearing aids?" Consider the choices we make when we purchase consumer products. Most of us do research on what we want and need before we buy high cost items. We ask questions and expect to get answers. We all want the most we can get for the money we spend. A single modern digital hearing aid costs between \$1,500 and \$3,500. Most people need two. Do the math! You will want to be sure what you buy has every option that will help you hear better in all situations. Be aware that after a mandatory 30-day trial period, these devices are rarely returnable.

While hearing aids are prescribed and programmed by experts in the field, they are rarely covered by insurance, and are specifically excluded by Medicare. They are marketed to potential customers like consumer products. Today's hearing aids are worth their price, but it pays to do some homework before you buy, and it helps immensely to talk to other people who use hearing aids to find out about their experiences.

A hearing aid without a tiny internal component called a telecoil, is like that car without air conditioning. While you won't use it all the time, you will be glad it's there when you need it.

Seventy percent of hearing aids today have built-in telecoils. However, they must be computer activated and programmed. Don't assume your provider will automatically do that, or that they will explain or even recommend it. Proactivity matters. Ask for it. If the dispensing professional tells you this is "old technology" or that you don't need it, go elsewhere. Telecoils were originally developed for use with hardwired landline phones. However, they also connect with newer technologies and are the key to connecting hearing aids to the Hearing Assistive Technologies (HAT) that are mandated by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

To use a telecoil, the hearing aid user simply pushes a button on the aid to turn off the external microphone and focus on sound coming directly from a specific source. When programmed correctly, you will hear that sound with increased clarity, and no background noise.

Telecoils connect to sound systems in large venues where hearing clarity is necessary for participation and enjoyment. HAT can improve your understanding of dialogue at work, in meetings, in theaters, at performing arts centers, at church and in other places where clear hearing is needed to participate. Often people use telecoils at home to listen to television while keeping the volume down for the comfort of others. Face it, when you cannot hear well in these familiar settings, it is a very lonely world.

In all instances, the best configuration involves a hearing loop system of some kind. With FM and infrared systems that are installed in some places, it means connecting a personal neckloop to a receiver that is compatible with the transmitter being used.

On the other hand, if a room sized hearing loop is installed in a venue, one only has to push the telecoil buttons on their hearing aids to clearly hear what is coming through the sound system. Since the desired sound passes directly from microphones to the hearing aids, it bypasses all the ambient noise and reverberation that makes hearing in a large room difficult. It's like having binoculars for your ears!

Wisconsin is a frontrunner in the installation of Hearing Loop Systems. A list of looped venues can be found at: www.loopwisconsin.com.

You can learn much more from members of Fox Valley Chapter of The Hearing Loss Association of America. Meetings and discussion groups are looped. Meetings are open to anyone interested in learning. Let's talk about it! HLAA's mission is to open the world of communication to people with hearing loss, through education, information sharing, and by providing peer support. Education is the key to living well with hearing loss. For more information: hlaafoxvalley@gmail.com.

This article was published in *Nature's Pathways Magazine* May 2016 edition, as part of an experimental outreach program initiated by HLAA Fox Valley Chapter. The chapter is grateful to HLAA-WI for financial support towards an accompanying advertisement. The article was posted on the national HLAA website and on several Facebook pages. It has been effective in creating interest for Fox Valley Chapter. Please feel free to share it.



The telecoil component in hearing aids and cochlear implant processors is the KEY to connecting to Hearing Loops and other hearing assistive technologies. If this is new to you, plan to attend the *Hearing Loop Expo* so you can learn how to get twice the value from your hearing devices. If it is 'old' to you, attend so you find out how to advocate for and install hearing loops. Don't miss this opportunity! (see page 2.)



Report on the 2016 Milwaukee Walk4Hearing

HLAA Walk4Hearing events take place in cities around the country in the Spring and in the Fall. Wisconsin's Walk4Hearing is held in Spring.



Walk4Hearing is HLAA's signature fundraising and awareness event that benefits both the national organization, chapters and other organizations whose missions relate to hearing loss.

The Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) **Walk4Hearing** is the largest walk for hearing loss awareness in the country. Thousands of walkers - children and their families, young adults, young at heart, and everyone in between - form teams and walk in these events to increase public awareness about hearing loss, help eradicate the stigma associated with it and raise funds for programs and services. HLAA depends on generous volunteers to raise funds, generate enthusiasm and awareness at each of the Walk4Hearing sites.

The 2016 Milwaukee Walk4Hearing, 'Wisconsin's Walk', was held last May. Thanks to the generosity and participation of hundreds of people from many different organizations, besides HLAA affiliates, who participated, this event raised over \$46,600. 50% of that total goes to national HLAA to support programs. The remainder is returned to the alliances that have teams participating in the event, while 10% goes to pay costs related to holding the event.

We are grateful to everyone who participate or donated to the success of our state's 6th annual Walk4Hearing, and look forward to another successful walk in 2017, date yet to be announced.



See YOU at
the 2017
Walk!

Hearing Loss Can Creep Up on You Stealthily

A [Washington Post article](#) published on August 14, 2016 brings awareness to a range of issues faced by those with hearing loss. While it focuses mainly on age-related, gradual-onset hearing loss, it discusses topics such as the social, psychological and physical implications of hearing loss, hearing aid cost, Medicare coverage, and the stigma associated with it. In addition, it also highlights the recent reports by the [President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology](#) and by the [National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine](#). [Read the article](#)

The July/August issue of *Hearing Loss Magazine* featured the very successful HOPE program that was initiated by Wisconsin's own Fox Valley Chapter. HOPE stands for "Hearing Other People's Experiences". This project takes the chapter back to the original grassroots level discussion format where people can come talk about their feelings and experiences. It has generated a lot of interest, along with new national memberships. It's heartwarming for new people to learn there is an organization that stands behind our population. HOPE doesn't take the place of chapter meetings, but meets for an hour before each regular meeting so people can attend both. Everyone is welcome.



Nancy Gilbertson facilitates HOPE

HLAA thanks all of our veterans for their service and sacrifices by offering a complimentary membership in the organization.

Hearing issues are the most common service related disabilities among American veterans. Over 2.3 million veterans receive either disability compensation for service related hearing disabilities or are in treatment for hearing related issues.

Veterans may enroll for a complimentary one year membership at: www.hearingloss.org/content/veterans

***Hearing Loss Magazine* will be delivered, complimentary for one year, renewable at regular dues rates thereafter. All benefits of HLAA membership are included.**



We are grateful to our veterans for their service and sacrifices. **Please share this information with all the veterans you know.**

Thank you,
Veterans!

Editor's Note: There are links in this newsletter that will take you directly to more information on a topic. If they are dysfunctional, it is because the connected information has been removed from the original source. We apologize for the inconvenience if this occurs.

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**LIKE our
Facebook
Pages. Please!**



If you are a member of Facebook, check out the HLAA pages. Lots of good information is posted regularly. Join in a conversation! Share information with others. It's a great way to connect.

Fox Valley, Madison & Milwaukee-Metro Chapters, along with HLAA-WI, & National HLAA, all have FB pages. When you "LIKE" us, it increases visibility for HLAA. Please do!



Several members of HLAA have experience providing inservice trainings and/or presentations on hearing loss from a consumer/personal perspective. Contact us if your business or organization is interested. We are volunteers, and are not in business to sell products.

HLAA presentations can be designed for: Hospital Staff, Churches, Schools, Human Service Agencies, Employers, Conventions, Conferences, etc.

Presentations focus on: Living WELL with hearing loss, Integrating an employee with hearing loss, Understanding the unique needs of hard of hearing people, How to provide appropriate 'Communication Access', Exploring Hearing Assistive Technologies that go beyond hearing aids & More.

Have HLAA provide an exhibit for your conference or convention.

Request further information [HERE](#)

HLAA is a volunteer organization. Our facilitators receive no compensation from HLAA. Financial support towards travel costs from groups who request programs or trainings is greatly appreciated, but not necessary. We will do our best to accommodate your needs. 15% of the population of the United States has some degree of hearing loss. While the topic may seem dull, it is pertinent and



Thank you to Eloise Schwarz, HLAA Milwaukee Chapter President, for her commitment to chairing & planning the upcoming Hearing Loop EXPO.

Your hard work is appreciated.

See you on November 5th!



HLAA Members At the Spring HLAA-WI Board Meeting

L to R: Julie Olson, Jerry Lapidakis, John Kinstler, Tom O'Connor, Liza Segleau, Lisa Zovar, Eloise Schwarz, Christine Klessig, Pamela Martin, Colleen Van Rooy