



HLAA-WI 2019 Winter/Spring Edition

In this Issue

Page 2 - President's Message
 Page 3 - HLAA Chapter Information
 Page 4 - More on HLAA Chapters
 Page 5 - "Hearing Less & Hearing Better"
 Page 6 - Advocacy + National Convention
 Page 7 - 2019 Walk4Hearing
 Page 8 - Who We Are
 Page 9 - Food for Thought + conference
 Page 10 - About HLAA

Thank you Jerry!



After serving as HLAAWI Board chair for 3 years, Jerry Lapidakis passed the gavel to Sr. Liza Segleau. We are all very grateful to Jerry for his service, his insight, and his willingness to work with others to make our organization effective & efficient. Fortunately, Jerry plans to remain involved. His advocacy work & project support is invaluable. Thanks Jerry!!!

Important Announcements

• HLAA-WI establishes College Scholarship.

HLAA-WI will offer a \$1500 post secondary scholarship to a hard of hearing student graduating from a Wisconsin high school in 2019. Applicants must be oral users of technology such as hearing aids, BAHA devices, or cochlear implants to be eligible. Instructions including guidelines for a required essay and deadlines for application can be found on the HLAA-WI website. <http://www.hlaawi.org/college-scholarship-2019.html>

• HLAA-WI Walk4Hearing Team is Registered for 2019

The 'State Steppers' team is up and running on the Walk4Hearing website: www.walk4hearing.org Join our team! The event will be held in Milwaukee on May 11. Physical participation helps erase outdated stigmas attached to hearing loss! Money raised is used to support HLAA projects & events. Join us by going to the web page, click on Milwaukee Walk and follow the directions to sign up. We encourage you to attend the event, but if that isn't possible, you can join the team and raise funds as a 'phantom walker'!. You'll be surprised how many will contribute when you ask for support. (See page 7)



Save This Date!
November 16, 2019
Don't be in the Dark



SHINING NEW LIGHT ON HEARING LOSS

If poor hearing upsets your life, don't miss this special event, sponsored by The Hearing Loss Assn. of America/ Fox Valley Chapter & HLAA Wisconsin. Hearing Loop & Real Time Captioning will provide communication access.

YOU ARE NOT ALONE!

HLAA shares Unbiased Information, Coping Strategies, Peer Support & More! HLAA, does not sell products. HLAA is your path to a better life! COME SHINE WITH US!

2019 State Conference

The conference will be held in Appleton on Saturday Nov. 16

The HLAAWI annual meeting & a social will be held on Friday evening, November 15th.

See page 7 of this newsletter for more information.

Information will be placed on the HLAAWI website as received.
www.hlaawi.org

Planning committee contact:
[HERE](#)

HLAA-WI President's Message... by Sr. Liza Segleau



Welcome everyone to a fresh new year of 2019. I am very new to my role as president. But I promise to do my best in being available and reaching out to as many of you as time permits.

Since my early days with hearing loss and not knowing where to turn, I had to find something or someone who could inspire and guide me. There was one person who stood out. Many of you know her story and have seen the film *The Miracle Worker*, her name, Helen Keller. There are many heroes out there, but Helen was an important model for me at the time I began my journey.

I can't even begin to imagine what it must have been like for Helen as a child to figure out the world around her being not only deaf but also blind. It must be deeply true for others around us to imagine and understand what it must be like for us to manage our daily lives with hearing loss. Do we share with others on "how we do it"? Do we reach out to others who might be struggling with their hearing loss? That is what saved me, others reaching out to me, showing me the way.

In my early days with hearing loss and struggling to keep my footing professionally, I had a client of mine in social work, with no hearing loss, he came to my office with no appointment, he just came and waited for me to get up to my office after my lunch break. He took the time to reach out and just said, "we know you can't hear us well any longer on the phone, let us help you". He offered three ways to help: to email me, drop off notes or come to see me in person if he or other members needed something. My hearing loss was still a very raw subject for me to talk about, but he was gentle and genuinely cared. He even made me promise I would never step down from social work due to my hearing loss. He stated "Liza, we need your smile, we need your support and we need your skills, don't walk away, we need you". I can't tell you how hard it was to fight back tears. But in the end I promised never to give up and to remain at my post as the social worker they needed.

Helen Keller's spirit and her words helped me stay strong and learn all I could through HLAA to be the best person I could be with hearing loss. The members of HLAA spurred me on to help others with hearing loss and be a beacon for those searching for answers and hope in their journey with hearing loss. I hope to remain true and strong for years to come.

"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much." Helen Keller

Introducing the new HLAAWI President... Liza Segleau has been a member of HLAA since 2004. She began with sudden hearing loss in 2003 and became completely deaf by 2006. As a person who has always been outgoing, has been a social worker for 16+ years, hearing loss was not on her list of things to slip into, but the loss arrived fast and furious. Liza's audiologist noting the distress she was in, referred her to an online chat on the national HLAA website. There she met others with hearing loss. Her journey began learning and receiving support. It was soon after this experience that Liza attended a state HLAA meeting up north in Wisconsin and met yet even more wonderful people who gave her support and guidance. Liza realized she was no longer alone, there was hope and many doors to walk through in this new path of hearing loss. Since those early years, 15 years into the journey, Liza has taken on many supportive roles in Wisconsin's HLAA organization. She has been in supportive roles in the Milwaukee Chapter, Walk4Hearing, she is the current HLAA state webmaster, an HLAA state board member and now since October of 2018, has taken on a new role as the president of the HLAA Board.

HLAA-WI Past President Receives Award...

The Wisconsin Speech and Hearing Association recently selected former President of HLAAWI, Dr. Stephanie Long AuD, to receive ASHA's Louis M. DiCarlo Clinical Achievement Award for her work with "*Hear in the Fox Cities*". The American Speech-Language-Hearing Foundation (ASHA Foundation) asks each state association to select one person from within the state to receive an award for demonstrated contributions in audiology or speech-language pathology.



At Stephanie's business, she has seen many people who decide to go without hearing aids because no matter how much they scrimp and save they cannot afford them. She didn't want this to happen to children. When your heart is in the right place, you can't go wrong so she co-founded, along with Colleen Van Rooy, *Hear in the Fox Cities*. The non profit group's mission is to assist children under the age of 21 in the Fox Cities to purchase hearing aids. They help families pay for hearing aids for their child(ren) when other funding sources are not available.

Hear in the Fox Cities has received support from their board of directors, donors, and other audiologists. They help make hearing a reality for children, devoting/donating their time doing hearing tests, hearing aid fittings and follow-ups. It's wonderful to see everyone come together to help with *Hear*'s mission. Since being founded in 2017, *Hear* has helped six children obtain hearing aids!

Congratulations Stephanie, on this wonderful and deserving honor!

HLAA has partnered with ResearchMatch to help find a cure for hearing loss!



[ResearchMatch](#) is a free online recruitment and education platform designed to promote the completion of clinical trials by matching people interested in research with researchers throughout the United States. Funded by the National Institutes of Health's National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences, ResearchMatch is disease-neutral and institution-neutral so that participants with and without health problems can be included and valued.

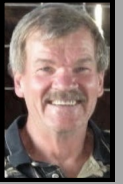
Trials Today

[Trials Today](#) on ResearchMatch is a quick and simplified way to search the thousands of studies available on ClinicalTrials.gov. Users only need to answer a few short questions to find a list of studies that may be of interest to them. Trials Today is a tool within [ResearchMatch.org](#) which is used to search for clinical trials, and is designed to help users figure out where to start in their research endeavors.

Several Wisconsin HLAA members were early subjects in Cochlear Implant research. Look how far we've come!



A priority of HLAA-WI is to assist emerging chapters. If starting a chapter in your area interests you, please e-mail Emil Quast smokemil@mac.com Emil is HLAA Wisconsin's Chapter Coordinator. He will work with you or your group to help develop a new chapter.



Fox Valley Regional Chapter, meets on the 2nd Monday evening of each month from March through December in Appleton. . Contacts: **Christine & Julie** : Phone contact: "T" 920-420-8462 E-mail: hlaafoxvalley@gmail.com Look for us on Facebook too!



The chapter's monthly newsletter, available on request via the link below, includes information about all meetings and events. It's available online or by regular mail. Tell us how to reach you.

Feel free to connect with us [HERE](#).

Put Newsletter Request in subject header.

HLAA Fox Valley has 2 discussion sub groups; **H**earing **O**ther **P**eople's **E**xperiences (HOPE) & "We Want to Hear!" (Exploring & Discussing Cochlear Implants.) Information on time & location is in the newsletter.

Chapter Happenings.....Fox Valley Chapter



Members of Fox Valley Chapter enjoyed their annual holiday social at the Appleton Yacht Club by learning about and partaking in the customs and traditions of High Tea with lots of good food, fun and fellowship and even a few door prizes. Santa was there too, and the bar was open.

You are invited to come enjoy our chapter. Attendees hail from the Fox Cities, Green Bay, Central & Northeastern Wisconsin.

Programs in 2019 will teach us more about aural rehabilitation, Meniere's Disease, Assistive technology that goes beyond hearing aids, Cochlear Implant candidacy and options, Hearing aid information including new resources, how to avoid scams & cons, along with full participation in the 2019 HLAA-WI state conference, which the chapter is planning and hosting.



Madison Chapter Basics

**Meets the 4th Tuesday at:
The Congregational Church in Madison
1609 University Ave. 6:00 PM**

Holds quarterly outreach meetings in different locations.

Join the e-mail list & check the website often.

**Contact: Lisa (608)838-6617
lzovar@hlaamadison.com
www.hlaamadison.com**



Milwaukee Metro Chapter Basics

Meets at HEAR Wisconsin, 10243 W National Ave. West Allis, on the 2nd Thursdays at 6:30 PM beginning in March. See information on our website as meetings may be subject to change.

**<http://metromilwaukeehlaa.weebly.com/>
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Metro-Milwaukee-HLAA-Chapter/109895659071085>**

**Contact: "BJ" at BJEHLAAMKE@gmail.com
or Marie at cochlearmarie@gmail.com**



BJ Ermenc, Shirley Sharp, Marie Elsner & Jim Goddeyne.
HLAA Metro Milwaukee Chapter Officers.

Chapter Happenings....

What's Up with the Madison Chapter? by Jack Spear, President

The State Newsletter is a great opportunity to catch others up on what is happening in different areas of the state.

Madison has had quite an eventful past six months. After years of hosting our meetings at the Ultratec Headquarters, we moved closer to downtown to the First Congregational Church. We meet in a newly renovated and lovely new room equipped with all the necessities including a loop, good lighting control, state of the art projecting capabilities and screen, and a small kitchen. Attendance has declined somewhat since we moved for reasons that are unclear to us, particularly since we are located more centrally in the city but we expect that to reverse as word gets around.

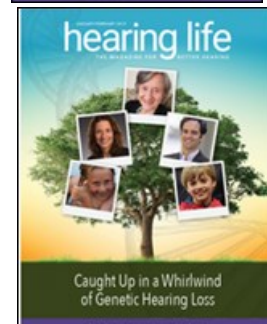
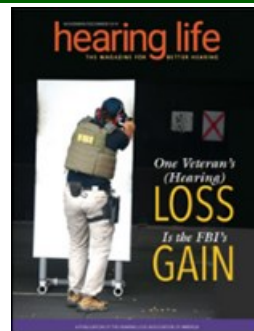
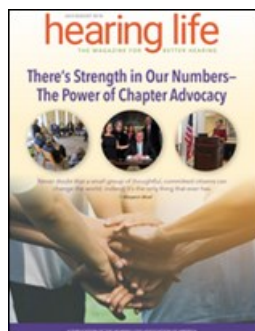
In September we had an election for new officers. John Kinstler stepped down after two terms and Peggy Troller and I were elected Vice-President and President. Kathy Johnson was re-elected Treasurer and Rae Ann Hamilton was re-elected to the Secretary position. Several committees were established or continued, and they include Programming (Peggy Troller), Membership and Hospitality (Linda Conlon), Technology and Website (Jack Spear/Kathy Johnson), Media (Lisa Zovar), Fundraising (Jerry Lapidakis), Resource Table (Emil Quast), and Webcasting and Walk For Hearing (Natalie Eberle).

The two most visible changes are Programming and Webcasting. We decided that we needed to engage in more outreach, rather than wait for others to come to us. Thus every fourth month we will be having a meeting at a different location throughout the city. The first two scheduled will be at two retirement centers, Attic Angels and Capital Lakes. Peggy Troller has been working hard to develop a program that will introduce people to HLAA, the fundamentals of hearing, assistive devices, rights, and available resources including TAP and TEPP. We hope to hold other meetings at locations such as VFW's and service club meetings. Webcasting, the other major change, is also an attempt to reach out to more individuals, particularly those in remote areas. We are still learning and experimenting and also discovering that we will need to invest in better equipment. There are also challenges with fitting the CART information into the video. Our new Fundraising effort will hopefully enable us to purchase some of the needed webcasting equipment as well as fund publication/brochure costs and hopefully some assisted listening devices which we can use for demonstration purposes.

Our chapter also has its own website. Our current site was relatively easy to set up and maintain, but also quite expensive. Thus we are starting to migrate to a different site for hosting. We had hoped that the Discussion Forums would prove to be effective, but they have actually been used relatively little. A forum had also been established for board and committee use to reduce the amount of unnecessary email volume, but this also did not prove popular, largely because it demanded extra steps to use. We are still looking for ways to manage email effectively and economically; any suggestions will be welcomed. Ultimately it is hoped that a unified web presence for all the HLAA Chapters in the state can be developed, an idea originally promoted by Emil Quast, the State Coordinator. Sharing resources as well as expenses would offer good benefit, but the challenge will be enabling each chapter to have a distinctive presence on the shared website.



4
Members of HLAA Metro Chapter gathered for a holiday social in December. They said they had so much fun they forgot to take more pictures! We look forward to seeing them all at the state conference!



Hearing Life Magazine is a benefit of membership in HLAA. Each issue is full of personal stories, information about new technology and much more. The magazine is also available in an online edition at:

www.hearingloss.org

National membership info on page 10

“Hearing Less Can Help You Hear Better?” by David Seligman



There are over 48 million Americans with some degree of a hearing loss in the United States. This number suggests that the approximately 277 million Americans live with healthy hearing. Imagine hearing water dripping, eavesdropping on the conversation at the next table, music blaring, vehicles screeching. I don't know the numbers, but I suspect there are a lot of Americans out there who would simply prefer to hear *fewer* sounds coming their way and who don't know where to turn for help.

I believe there is a role, actually a responsibility, for those of us who are hard of hearing, to step forward and help these people to hear less and paradoxically to hear better. There are millions of Americans who simply don't know how to “tune somebody out”. We of the Hearing Loss Association of American (HLAA) know how to focus our hearing through a variety of listening skills. We can reach out to our friends who are “tired of hearing” and help them lead more enjoyable and quieter lives

I am calling on those knowledgeable hard of hearing Americans to share their expertise and provide assistance to our noise saturated fellow Americans. Those with normal hearing need to shift their auditory radar and focus on one conversation with one speaker at a time. Doing that and ignoring all of the other ambient distractions will make for better and more meaningful conversations, less listener fatigue and a more enjoyable social interactions.

With a little practice and encouragement, it won't take you and your companion long to identify those ideas that will improve everyone's listening skills whether you are hard of hearing or whether you have healthy hearing.

Tips for Hearing Less and for Hearing Better

- In a restaurant, request a table at the perimeter of the room away from the noisy center area. A table near a wall helps to eliminate distracting noises.
- Although not always available, a round table is a better set up for following conversations. Position yourself opposite the person with whom you wish to converse.
- You might want to take the restaurant's decor into account when selecting a place to eat. Many restaurants like wood floors and high ceilings. These elements make for beautiful settings, however they are not conducive for carrying on a well-focused conversation.
- If you still want to eat at a popular dining place, you might want to consider selecting an “off-hour” to meet.
- A well-lit room helps as well. Even though you may not be a proficient at reading lips. The idea is that can focus not only on the lips but the body language and facial expressions to help you hear and understand the speaker more clearly.
- People who are chewing gum, putting their hands in front of their face or speaking with their heads turned away from you creates more obstacles to hearing them comfortably. You can simply explain these mannerisms to your friends.
- A rather obvious choice but not always followed is to turn off or turn down any TV, radio or background music. You would be surprised at how accommodating people can be in this regard in their homes.
- Anyone with hearing aids will tell you that carrying on a conversation in a crowded setting can be very frustrating and challenging. One simple strategy is to move your conversation to the periphery or outer ring of a crowd. This simple relocation will often make the conversation easier to follow.
- If you are having trouble following the conversation, you can try, at an appropriate interval, paraphrase or rephrase the speaker. Although this can be awkward to do, ultimately it will lead to a more “constructive” dialogue.

Those with normal hearing are expected to hear everything. However, for some people, “hearing everything” can be a real burden. You can help your friends with these tips to better focus their hearing radar and frankly help to promote more meaningful and enjoyable conversations with people. It is interesting to note that listening well with good habits is a lot of work and takes a lot of practice. Fortunately for all of us, there are plenty of opportunities to practice good listening skills. So go to it!

Editor's Note: This article, written by David Seligman, was published in a recent issue of 'Hear Life', the magazine that comes with membership in HLAA. It has been edited slightly by the author. We thought the larger readership or our newsletter would find it worth reading.

HEAR LIFE Magazine welcomes articles written by HLAA members. Instructions on submission are published in each issue.



HLAA is about PEOPLE. PEOPLE who believe the invisible disability of hearing loss receives far less attention than it deserves. PEOPLE, of all ages who have accepted the challenge of living *well* with hearing loss. We believe that by working together to erase age old stigmas and misconceptions, about hearing loss, we will make Wisconsin a better place for PEOPLE who do not hear well. Come join us! You will be amazed at how much we can learn from one another!

New Law Alerts Police of Drivers' Special Needs

As of January 1, drivers with hearing loss, can file a form that indicates they are hard of hearing, deaf, or have another disability. The purpose is to help law enforcement better understand their needs if they are stopped in a vehicle. The law, titled 2017 Wisconsin Act 344, was passed last year and is now operational.

Individuals can complete a form that enters their information in the Department of Motor Vehicles statewide data base. The information is then available to any law enforcement officer in the state. This information will inform the officers of hearing loss or other disability before the officer approaches the vehicle. With this knowledge, the officer can better interact with the driver, knowing of the any special considerations.

When officers run driver's licenses or plates, they see information about the person's vehicle, driving history and criminal record, but this bill gives them information about a person's physical or mental disabilities that help officers better communicate. The person can indicate various conditions on the form, in addition to hearing loss or deafness, that they want an officer to be aware of. An "invisible disability" (the language in the law), could be anything from chronic pain to autism to a sleep disorder.

Filing the form with DMV is completely voluntary. The form is available on the DMV website (<https://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/dmv/license-drvs/mdcl-cncrns/med-concerns.aspx>) as well as at local driver's license centers. It is form number MV2167.



Convention Scholarships Available...

If you are an HLAA member and have never attended an HLAA Convention before, you may apply for the Rocky & Ahme Stone Scholarship. Be sure to read the [Scholarship Criteria](#), complete the [Scholarship Application](#) and submit it to convention@hearingloss.org by **February 11**.

All applications will be considered for other scholarships as they become available. We strive to send all applicants to the Convention!



Milwaukee (Wisconsin) Walk4Hearing

Saturday, May 11, 2019

Greenfield Park (Area #3)

2028 S. 124th St. West Allis [Directions](#)



9 a.m. Registration/Check-in - 10 a.m. Walk starts (5K/3.1 miles)

Sign up at: www.walk4hearing.org Click on 'Find a Walk. Look for 'State Steppers' & register.

Register to participate! Donate to a specific walker! Form a team! All funds raised support HLAA and other non profit organizations with missions that relate to hearing loss.

The HLAA Walk4Hearing is a national program that reaches out to the more than 48 million people with hearing loss, their families, friends, and hearing health professionals to raise awareness about hearing loss, good hearing health, and communication access.

Since 2006, the Walk4Hearing has welcomed almost 100,000 walkers and 8,300 teams. Whether you have a hearing loss, know someone who does, or want to send a message to the public that people with hearing loss are helping themselves & others, this event is for you.

No one should be alone with hearing loss! You can do something about it!

"Shining New Light on Hearing Loss"

Being planned by members of HLAA Fox Valley

The 2019 HLAAWI Conference will be held in Appleton at Stone Arch Riverview Gardens on November 16, 2019. The annual meeting of the HLAA-WI Board, which is open to all HLAA members in Wisconsin, will be held on Friday evening, at the same location.

The cost of admission to this educational conference & meeting, will be: \$25/person, \$40/couple registering together, and \$10 for veterans with ID*. Veterans are also eligible for a complimentary one year membership in the national HLAA organization. An appetizer buffet on Friday evening, and a luncheon buffet on Saturday will be included with registration. (A cash bar will be open on Friday evening.)

The conference will feature nationally known speakers on several topics related to hearing loss, including tinnitus, noise induced hearing loss, remedial options with hearing aids, cochlear implants and other assistive technologies, advocacy, coping with hearing loss in healthcare settings, advocating for communication access, and more.

There will be exhibits and opportunities for social time during these two days. Further information regarding registration, hotel room block, and the names of presenters and exhibitors will be posted at: www.hlaawi.org when it is available.

You don't want to miss this event! Please save the dates and tell others about this opportunity to 'shine with us'!

If you are not
willing to learn,
no one can help you.
If you are
determined
to learn,
no one can
stop you.

The mission of HLAA is to open the world of communication to people with hearing loss through information sharing, education, advocacy and peer support. Our membership consists primarily of hard of hearing people who strive to remain in the hearing mainstream by using technology. We support medical research for a cure for this invisible, often misunderstood disability.

HLAA does not sell products, or endorse products or providers.

2018 HLAA-WI Board of Trustees



President
Sr. Elizabeth Segleau
Milwaukee
esegleau@gmail.com



Vice-President
David Seligman
Gov. Council
Madison
davidseligman@gmail.com



Treasurer
Tom O'Connor
Gov. Council
Fond du Lac
toconnor@hotmail.com



Secretary
Christine Wiedmeyer
AuD
Kimberly
chriswiedmeyer@yahoo.com



Juliette Sterkens AuD
Hearing Loop Advocate
Oshkosh
jsterkens@hearingloss.org



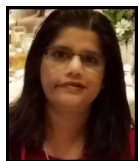
Emil Quast
Chapter Coordinator
Evansville
smokemil@mac.com



Pamela Martin
Milwaukee
mmmira-cle4me@aol.com



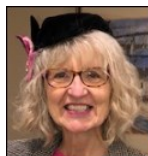
Jerry Lapidakis
Immediate Past
President
Stoughton
jlapidakis@gmail.com



Neethi Magar MD
Pardeeville
n.magar@frontier.com



Natalie Eberle
Madison
eberle.nat@gmail.com

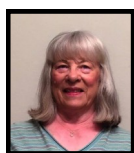


Christine Klessig
Amherst Junction
bommaklessig@gmail.com

Off-Board Appointees



Colleen



Julie



Lisa

Colleen VanRooy, Webmaster cvanrooy@yahoo.com
Julie Olson, Newsletter Editor, Nom Cmte julieo@athenet.net
Lisa Zovar, Circulation Manager lzovar@hlaamadison.com

If you think hearing loss is an issue that doesn't receive the attention it deserves; please become part of the movement to change that. Join HLAA.

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

A Message from Emil Quast; HLAA-WI Chapter Coordinator



Chapter development news:

The Ashland area support group is coming along nicely. The great travel distances in that area, up north, is a problem in getting members together. Start-up groups in Door County, Marshfield and LaCrosse have stalled for now. However, a new startup group in South Western Wisconsin is being formed and the folks involved are excited to get it rolling. The core group is formed and will begin meeting to organize itself shortly. If you live in southwestern Wisconsin, and are interested in this group, contact me and I will put you in touch.

Outreach news: Short videos is a way of grabbing people's attention especially on websites. People will watch a short video for information but tend not to read text. I've contacted a video production organization that produces professional videos for non-profit organizations like HLAA at no charge.

The non-profit video production company, "Big Dreamers", was put together by Lee Culver (executive director of Culver's charitable foundation) John Urban is the creative producer, the company has been producing videos for non-profits for a couple of years. John says Big Dreamers will "Help the helpers communicate", whether it's by making a video, shooting photos, telling stories, hosting and emceeing events or helping with social media. HLAA has been on the waiting list for a year. John recently called to let us know 2019 is looking good. Our members need to come up with ideas on how best to use Big Dreamers' services in promotions, on the HLAA websites, for recruiting members and especially educating HOH people and the public about hearing loss. Hopefully the videos and services will serve to peak interest in HLAA and what it has to offer. I'll ask our State Board to form a committee to oversee the process when the time comes. HLAA members will be used in the videos, photos and services, so start combing your hair!

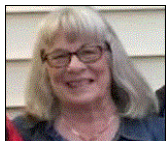
Resource Table: An HLAA State "resource table" has been established. It contains HLAA handouts, membership forms, flyers, brochures, photos, hearing loop info and other items used to educate HOH people and the general public about hearing loss. The table's most important resource are the HLAA members who "man" the table. It's been used at aging and health seminars, Audiologists conventions and will be used at the VFW convention in Appleton this June.

Talking points: The HLAA Madison Chapter is currently putting together a paper, in outline form, that has "talking points" about the HLAA Mission statements, hearing loss information, hearing health, membership, and just about everything you need to know about HLAA. Using this guideline will help standardize the information members put out. It's not meant to be memorized, rather to use as a reference when talking to others. Ask Madison's Vice President Peggy Troller if she needs any help with this project and you might end up with a copy.

At Your Service! Emil Quast, HLAA-WI Chapter Coordinator

Editor's Edifications....Considering Your First Hearing Aid?

By Julie Olson



We all know that hearing aids cost far more than we wish they did. We also know that cost often prevents people from getting the hearing help that hearing aids provide. Now that over-the-counter hearing aids, and those that can be ordered online as a 'one size fits all' solution have become a reality, let's take a reality check. Will these less expensive hearing aids that are not fitted by a trained professional help you? That depends. Chances are, if your hearing loss has progressed beyond the mild stage they won't. They will amplify sound...pretty much like the first hearing aids I was fitted with nearly 40 years ago!

HLAA supported the legislation that will allow over the counter products to be sold. Why? Because research done over the past three decades, consistently points out that millions of people do not get hearing help because they cannot afford to pay for it. HLAA hopes that 'entry level' products will ultimately lead people whose hearing loss deteriorates over time to more sophisticated products that do more. HLAA also hopes that an influx in the sale of manufactured products will ultimately lead to lower prices for all products. (Remember how much you paid for a hand held calculator back in the 70s? Today they cost about the same price as a cup of Starbucks coffee!)

Data from the National Institutes of Health tells us there are over 48 million people in the USA who have hearing loss, but that fewer than 20% of them use hearing aids. There is plenty of room for improvement. Research also shows that untreated hearing loss can lead to all kinds of other problems. This is a serious matter.

So why should anyone buy a \$2000 - \$5000 hearing aid, or a pair of them? You should understand that those high end devices are capable of doing a lot more than the low end devices. They will also be professionally fitted by a person who has received extensive training to adjust them to do the best possible job for the individual's unique hearing loss. Hearing loss rarely has a one size fits all resolution, especially if it is more than a mild loss.

Today's modern high functioning hearing aids include a wide range of features that can provide enhanced listening to the user in most situations. Streaming is an example of one of those features. Hearing aids with direct streaming capability provide solutions to challenges we often face when on the phone, when watching TV, when listening to music, and even when trying to participate in a setting with distracting background noise. The ability to stream from your smartphone or from a hand held wireless microphone receiver can transform your hearing aid into a device that goes light years beyond the basic hearing aid that merely amplifies sound. It helps you stay in touch with people.

You may be able to purchase a pair of hearing aids for far less than the higher functioning hearing aids cost. That's OK if they work for you. You are a consumer of these products, and you have a choice. But, be sure you know the trade-offs before you buy. And be sure wherever you purchase hearing aids that you get a trial period that will allow you to return them if they don't work. Seek out HLAA members. Find a chapter where you can meet them. Chapters are full of people who use hearing aids and hearing assistive technology that makes them even better. Most are willing to talk about it and share information.

To find good, clear, unbiased information about buying hearing aids or any products for that matter, it's always a good idea to ask questions of people who use the products successfully. Some people may tell you that hearing aids don't work. Don't listen to them without also listening to people who use them successfully. It may have something to do with what they chose to spend their money on. **Caveat Emptor!**

The following link will take you to a paper written for HLAAWI about buying hearing aids in Wisconsin. Scroll down to find it.

<http://www.hlaawi.org/hearing-aids-t-coils--more.html>

"Untreated hearing loss leads to higher hospitalization rates and health care costs, according to new research from Johns Hopkins University in collaboration with AARP. The study looked at health data of 150,000 people age 50 and over. It found that over a period of 10 years, individuals with untreated hearing loss had a 52 percent greater risk of dementia, a 41 percent higher risk of depression and an almost 30 percent greater risk of falls than those with no hearing loss."

AARP Bulletin, February, 2019, Vol. 60 #1

Advocacy in Wisconsin

A Legislative Committee made up of HLAA board members, Jerry Lapidakis, David Seligman and Juliette Sterkens has been working with Representative Brosthoff's office to draft legislation that was proposed at the 2018 Legislative Day. There are two items of interest: 1. A proposal to have hearing loops installed in state buildings. 2. A proposal to require all licensed professionals who fit and sell hearing aids to inform and demonstrate telecoils to their clients prior to the sell point.



At this time, the committee reports that Rep. Brosthoff's attorney drafted a bill, which the committee reviewed and provided feedback on. The committee is currently waiting to learn if the proposed revisions have been included in the bill.

The Legislative Committee has also proposed an alternative to the Legislative Day that was held in 2018. Instead, 2 representatives each from WAD*, WisRID**, and HLAA would meet with legislators or their staff at a designated time/place. This 'mini-legislative day' will be held at a time yet to be determined.

We will let HLAA members know the results of this effort when we know more. It is likely that once a bill is proposed, a letter writing campaign by those who are invested in the bill will be vital to its passing. Please stay tuned.

***WI Assn. for Deaf **WI Registry of Interpreters for Deaf**

NOTE: HLAA believes that the inclusion of telecoils is paramount to getting the most out of hearing aids. Yet, many are sold without activating them, or without them all together. Telecoils are the key to connecting to hearing loops and other assistive technology. We wonder if any of those hearing aids sold online or over-the-counter have telecoils, and would love to have feedback from anyone who has purchased hearing aids that way.





HLAA-WI, a 501c3 non profit organization, is an affiliate of the national HLAA organization. HLAA-WI does not have dues, and is dependent on tax deductible donations and small fund raisers.

Please consider HLAA-WI in your annual giving. Send to: HLAA-WI % Tom O'Connor, Treasurer, 1149 Wedgewood Lane, Fond du Lac WI 54935. You can also donate online at www.hlaawi.org 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 makes a difference!
Thank you in advance!**

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 & as an educator. Your support is appreciated.

About the Hearing Loss Association of America.... www.hearingloss.org

The Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA), founded in 1979, opens the world of communication to people with hearing loss through information, education, support and advocacy. HLAA holds annual [conventions](#), produces [Walk4Hearing](#) events in 20 cities, publishes the bimonthly HEAR LIFE [Magazine](#), [advocates](#) for the rights of people with hearing loss, and has an extensive [network of chapters and state organizations](#) across the country. The national headquarters is located at 7910 Woodmont Avenue, Suite 1200, Bethesda, MD 20814. Phone 301.657.2248 or visit www.hearingloss.org. To become a part of the national movement to make hearing loss an issue of concern go to: www.hearingloss.org/content/join Individual dues are \$35/year. Special rates for families and couples.

It costs less than a dime a day to support HLAA's mission through membership.

Membership numbers matter when it comes to advocacy and research. People who make decisions that are important to communication access, medical research for a cure for hearing loss, technology development and legislation are influenced by numbers and statistics. People who speak up are heard.

If hearing loss is a 'problem' for you, become involved in seeking solutions!

JOIN US!

