

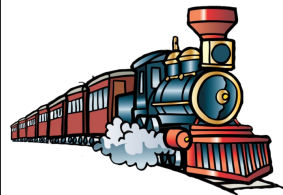


Happy New Year!
2023
Winter Edition
www.hlaawi.org

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Disclaimer: HLAA does not promote or recommend providers, products, or services. Our mission includes information sharing that may be helpful to people with hearing loss.



We hopped on the Train to Better Hearing in October

Everyone who attended the 2022 HLAA Wisconsin State Conference had a delightful learning experience, along with the opportunity to meet and socialize with HLAA folks from throughout the state.

Excellent presentations, exhibits and hard work by host chapter HLAA Madison put us on track to receive a very worthwhile experience. Thank you to everyone who spent a magnanimous amount of time and energy to make this event happen.

See more about the conference on page 4.

NOTE: Links included in this online newsletter were functional when it was published. Sometimes links expire. If that happens try googling the information that is missing.



Attendees at the 2022 HLAA Wisconsin State Conference

HLAAWI President's Message by Jim Rau



With the annual meeting and HLAAWI conference behind us (read about that elsewhere in this newsletter), my attention is now turned to 2023.

I'm looking forward to some degree of recovery from the setbacks that COVID gave us. I'm also looking forward to the Christmas holidays and visiting with friends and family. However, like most of you, I'll be dealing with the challenges of hearing and understanding conversations, especially children, in crowded and noisy environments.

The HLAA WI Board of Directors meeting was held on December 15th. This is the first time in my tenure that we have had a full board. Among the subjects of concern that brought to the board were: continuation of the HLAA Convention stipend, legislative initiatives or maybe better stated as gaining communication access accommodations, discussing possibilities of cooperation with HLAA Twin Cities (the only chapter in MN), finding ways to include more young people in our activities, fund raising techniques, chapter support, and consolidating websites. That is a pretty long list that indicates how far behind we have fallen in the last two years.

I sincerely hope you had a happy and blessed Christmas and send the same best wishes to those of you of a different faith. Let's hope for progress in the coming year. Don't hesitate to contact me with your concerns and ideas. This is OUR organization and YOU are a part of it. So let's hear it!

Jim

Jim Rau, HLAAWI President
Iron River, WI

E-mail - jimrau@cheqnet.net



Stipends Available from HLAAWI for HLAA National Convention

The HLAA Wisconsin Board has approved awarding two, \$500 stipends to help offset costs of attending the national HLAA convention in New Orleans. The convention dates are June 29 - July 1. If you plan to attend, or have already registered, these awards will help with your expenses. To apply, complete the form and submit it by Friday, May 6. Access the form by clicking on this [link](#).

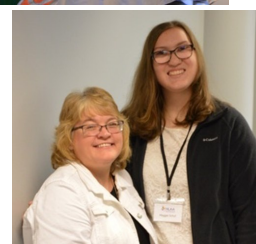
Applications will be judged and awarded by an HLAAWI board committee. Successful applicants will be required to submit a report on their convention experience either in the newsletter or at the annual meeting in October.

Note: Early bird registration deadline for the convention is March 31. A reduced registration for delegates, chapter and state officers is also available until March 31. After that date the rates for both reduced and regular registration increase. More information about the event & registration at this link: <https://www.hearingloss.org/programs-events/hlaa-2023-convention/hlaa-2023-convention-registration/>



Random Shots from the HLAAWI State Conference

Madison WI





Wisconsin's 2023 Walk4Hearing event will be held on Saturday, June 3rd in Milwaukee. It's not too soon to think about how you might participate!

Consider joining HLAAWI as a member of the HLAAWI Walk Team, the State Steppers! Or form a team for another non profit organization that has that has a mission that relates to hearing loss. You can form a 'family team' in honor of a family member who lives with hearing loss, and designate a non profit to benefit from funds raised. This event raises funds, for HLAA and for many other non profit groups.

The Milwaukee Walk has been going since 2005. It brings people together for a day of fun, exercise and fellowship. It tells the public that hearing loss is an issue for people of all ages, and that people care.

Last year, the HLAAWI team raised just over \$2071. Funds raised are used for scholarships, stipends, holding conferences and for other costs related to maintaining our successful non profit HLAAWI state association. Watch for more information to come.



**TEAMWORK
MAKES THE
DREAM WORK**

Phones Keep Getting Smarter & Smarter It's Wise to Keep Up!

A recent issue of the **HearingTracker** newsletter shares valuable information about choosing a smart phone that works well with your personal hearing technology. Read it at the link below



It pays to take the time to learn before you buy. The question is: Do you by the phone first, or the hearing tech first?

Whatever your smartphone preferences, if you have hearing aids we suggest consulting with your hearing care professional and/or looking carefully at the manufacturers' compatibility webpages prior to either purchasing a new phone or hearing aid.

[Best Smartphones for Hearing Loss and Hearing Aids \(hearingtracker.com\)](https://hearingtracker.com/best-smartphones-for-hearing-loss-and-hearing-aids)

Over the Counter Hearing Aids Are Here. What Do YOU Need to Know?

Last October, the FDA passed legislation that allows hearing aids to be sold without a prescription. This is a game changer for the hearing aid industry that should make it possible for more people with mild to moderate hearing loss get help. People tend to wait years before they seek help, even when they know they need it. Cost is a major issue. Hearing loss affects people of all ages. When more people seek hearing help and use technology to get it, the hesitancy to use these devices should dissipate. **It's important to know these OTC aids are not for children and are only for people with mild to moderate hearing loss.** Get tested by an audiologist, and have an audiogram in hand before you buy.

The links below provide excellent information.

<https://www.hearingloss.org/page/2/?s=OTC+Hearing+Aids>

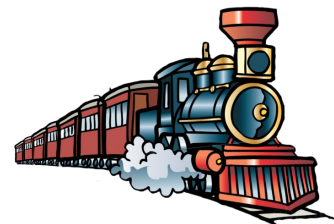
[Full List of OTC Hearing Aids \(hearingtracker.com\)](https://hearingtracker.com/full-list-of-otc-hearing-aids)

2022 HLAAWI State Conference Notes...

Report From Conference Chair, Jack Spear of HLAA Madison



Last October the State Conference was held in Madison at the headquarters of Ultratec, home of CAPTEL relay. In homage to long-time HLAA member and conference speaker Jerry Lapidakis, who found a second career working for a train company, the decorations included railroad crossing signs and (paper) tracks down the center of the hallway to the conference room. So we all hopped on the train to better hearing and went along for the ride!



The conference presented five speakers along with a variety of fund-raising activities which included raffle baskets, a silent auction, and a 50/50 raffle. A beautiful quilt made by Jim Rau's wife and her quilting friends was donated for the silent auction. When the bid did not reach the set minimum, Jim not only purchased the quilt but generously gave it to the HLAAWI scholarship winner who was an invited guest. Because of this incredibly generous act by Jim as well as the participation by conference attendees, the conference made a profit and was able to add to the HLAA State scholarship fund. We are grateful to the chapters and individuals who donated raffle baskets and auction items.

Five speakers covered a wide variety of topics which were unique, interesting, and well received. Juliëtte Sterkens started off with a brief review titled "How to find and Review Hearing Loops on Google Maps." Not only is it now possible to learn if a facility has a loop system installed, but everyone can help maintain the listing whenever a facility with a loop system is found that is not listed.

The keynote speaker, Jill Van Calster, President and CEO of HEAR Wisconsin in West Allis, talked about efforts to improve screening and referral efforts throughout the state that includes HEAR Wisconsin's remarkable Mobile Audiology Clinic. Nicknamed MAC, the mobile clinic is a first of its kind and has become a model nationwide.

Ruth Litovsky, a Professor at UW-Madison who holds a variety of positions including director of the Bilateral Hearing Research Center, presented a fascinating review of hearing research, changes in provision of audiology systems, and a review of audiology services across the life-span.

It was during Dr. Litovsky's presentation that a significant challenge presented itself...the power went out and the whole building went dark. We quickly learned that this was an area-wide outage. Fortunately the meeting room had two walls of windows, so we were all able to see each other, but there was no power for CART (captioning). Oddly enough, the building next door, which is physically connected, retained power - possibly because it was where CAPTEL relay is located and likely has generator back-up power. With the rapid response by our captioner, Margo Lucas, a series of extension cords were set up and power was restored for captioning and the meeting continued. Because we were suddenly behind schedule, everyone ate their box lunch during the rest of the presentations.

The next (and last) two speakers were both members of HLAA. Katherine Rybak spoke publicly for the first time about her writing which is soon to be published. The work focuses on a series of modules designed to teach and train Hard-of-Hearing individuals to be both knowledgeable about hearing loss from a variety of perspectives but also how to be effective self-advocates. This work is ground-breaking and has the potential to significantly and positively influence HLAA members.

Last, but not least, Jerry Lapidakis spoke of his experiences working on the train. After retiring from a career with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Jerry accepted a part-time job working as a steward in the executive cars of the Wisconsin Southern Railway. It was while he was working on the train that he began to lose his hearing. Jerry talked about his love of his train job and how his hearing loss affected both he and those he worked with, as he explained the difficulties he faced learning about and coping with his increasingly severe hearing loss.

The conference was clearly very well received and appreciated by those who attended. The speakers were excellent, the box lunch was nourishing. There were resource tables with much information to offer, and those who won the raffle baskets, silent auction items and 50/50 raffle were delighted.

The committee that planned and ran the conference worked well together despite the usual ups and downs of planning meetings. If there was a negative, it was attendance which was considerably below capacity. There was plenty of advertising about the conference, so HLAA members were aware. We can only speculate but COVID and its after-effects may have been a significant factor. Those who attended were well-rewarded. As Chair of the Conference Committee, I thank not only those who attended but give special thanks to the planning committee members.

Jack Spear

2022 HLAAWI Conference Chair

NOTE: If all goes well, plans are to hold the next state conference in Appleton in 2024. Stay tuned!

HLAA Wisconsin Board & Off Board Leaders



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Immediate Past President
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Stoughton
Madison Chapter
jlapidakis@gmail.com



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Kathy Johnson
Madison Chapter



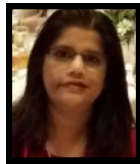
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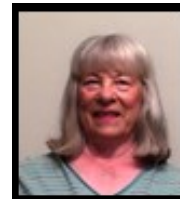
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You are welcome to submit information, suggestions, & articles for publication in our newsletter. Positive Stories about living well with hearing loss are encouraged.

(We reserve the right to edit submissions, and to reject articles that do not agree with our mission.)



Jim Rau, Katherine Rybak, Jerry Lapidakis, Jean Tyler, Pamela Martin, Michelle Frisbie, Juliette Sterkens, Jack Spear.
HLAA Wisconsin Board Members at State Conference
Missing from photo: Mike Mair, Kathy Johnson & Neethie Magar



Margo Lucas, CART Provider
We are grateful to Margo for providing live verbatim captioning at our events.



Now you can find hearing loop locations on Google Maps!

HOW YOU CAN HELP!

Help spread the word that hearing loops are now on Google Maps. Tell your friends, family and your local venues: [5 Actions to Promote Hearing Loops on Google Map](#)

Write a hearing loop review on a venue's Google Maps listing or use your review to request that a hearing loop be installed. When possible, include a photo of the hearing loop sign.



For more information on hearing loops, how to use them, and how to advocate for them, visit <http://hearingloss.org/GITHL>.

Help Us Loop Wisconsin!

The Wisconsin Hearing Loop Committee is seeking members.

Advocacy Advisor: Juliette Sterkens AuD

jsterkens@hearingloss.org

Technology Advisor: Mike Mair mike@myhearingloop.com

Committee Chair: Christine Klessig bommaklessig@gmail.com

Help Us Get the Word Out About Loops Locations!

Meet Our Newest HLAAWI Board Members...



Kathy Johnson, from Verona, is a member of the HLAA Madison Chapter. She recently retired as a Privacy Officer at the Wisconsin State Dept. of Health Services. She has had hearing loss since childhood, and is a bi-model with both a CI and a hearing aid. Her interest lies in advocacy and in creating awareness about how hearing loss affects lives.



Mike Mair, from Platteville, is a semi retired, self employed businessman who founded the HLAA Platteville chapter. His career has been in the commercial audio/video/acoustics/hearing loop business. Since 1987 his businesses have provided products to help people who live with hearing loss. Mike promotes and installs hearing loops. He serves on the HLAAWI Hearing Loop Committee.



Katherine Rybak, from Madison, has been hard of hearing since birth. She is the founder of "Hearing Out Loud", an organization with a mission to move people with hearing loss forward as strong self-advocates who celebrate their identity, embrace technology and use strategies to make meaningful connections within their communities. She is a teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in the Oregon WI school district, and has a master's degree in education.

Welcome to the HLAAWI Board of Trustees.

NO LIGHTS, NO POWER, NO PROBLEM! Submitted by Jerry Lapidakis



No lights, no power for captions or the projector? Yikes!! Suddenly, mid morning of the state conference the power went out! The loss of power was an inconvenience but only slightly delayed the meeting, thanks to quick thinking and fast action.

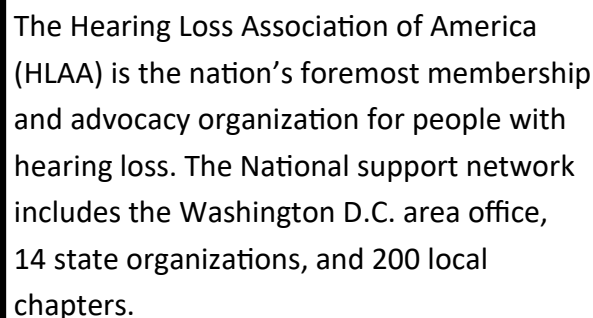
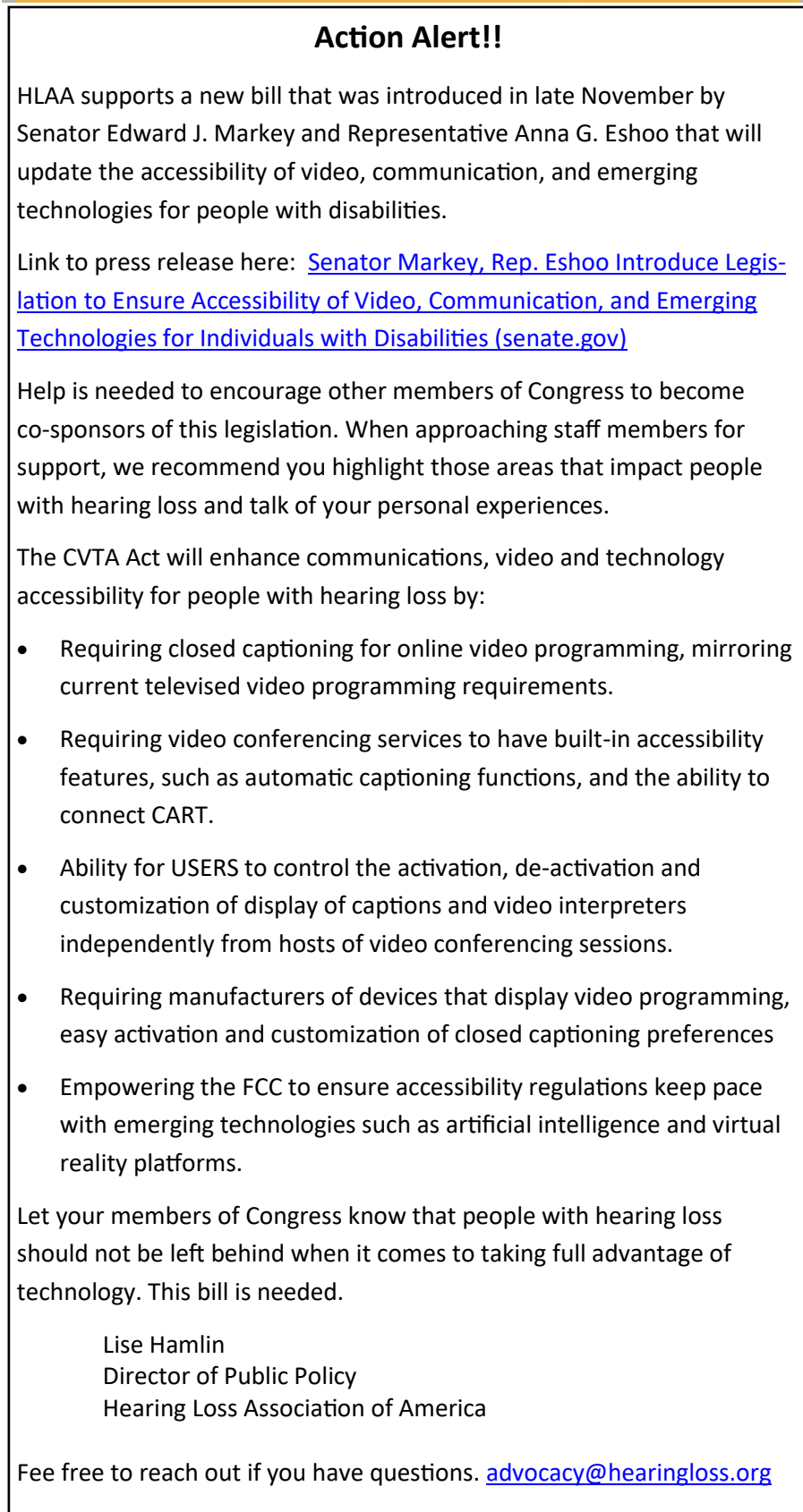
Folks with hearing loss are a resilient bunch. We are well versed with coping in adverse situations. While there was some ringing of hands, and maybe some gnashing of teeth, the anxiety didn't last very long.

Thanks to quick thinking and energy something that could have been a big problem was only a hiccup for the hosts and participants.

Conference chair, Jack Spear quickly made the decision to continue the meeting. After a brief pause that allowed everyone a timely stand-up break, and the opportunity to take some group photos for our newsletter, the agenda was shuffled just slightly. In the interim we drew raffle and door prizes and continued to sell silent auction tickets while we waited for the lights to come back on. Power was restored just before lunch. When the power was finally restored, lunches were distributed, and participants ate while the speaker's continued their presentations. Positive thinking and creative minds made it possible to get the conference agenda back on schedule. Thank you to everyone for your patience, and willingness to be flexible!

What could have been a serious problem was taken in stride and we continued to have an excellent meeting. A special thank you goes to our captioner, Margo Lucas for having the equipment and ingenuity to get us back on track!





When you become a member of HLAA you support a national movement to make hearing loss an issue of concern.

www.hearingloss.org/make-an-impact/

ODHH is hosting a series of informal meetings to share information, answer questions, and connect with our Deaf and Hard of Hearing community. Each meeting will have a general theme, and we encourage you to bring your questions and comments to share.

Email ODHH at dhsodhh@dhs.wisconsin.gov with your topic suggestions for future ODHH Community Connect meetings. We welcome your ideas!

We will have interpreters and live captioning for all of our meetings.



WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT
of HEALTH SERVICES

HLAA Madison Chapter

HLAA Madison Chapter recently had an in-person meeting, the first since August of 2020. In an effort to reach more people, chapter members are trying something new, and that is to have the chapter meetings in different locations.



In May the meeting was held in Black Earth to celebrate Better Hearing Month. Organized and managed by Leona Schaefer, the meeting welcomed current chapter members and 4 new people. Leona discussed several issues regarding assistive devices, hearing loops and telecoils, the TEPP and TAP programs, and other resources available to people with hearing loss. There was also considerable discussion by the attendees about advocating for oneself. Finally there was a most enjoyable series of Bingo games with prizes, made accessible by the presence of CART and the hearing loop.

Although undecided, future chapter plans include meetings in other localities of Dane County and may also include monthly breakfast gatherings depending on COVID precautions.

There are definite rewards to be had by becoming involved, and there are no requirements other than a desire to live and thrive despite having a hearing loss. Please say "Yes!" and respond to us at: information@hlaamadison.org

We look forward to hearing from you.



HLAA Fox Valley Chapter

The chapter meets on the 2nd Monday of the month at 6:30 PM. Except in January and August. We hold social events in July and December. Regular meetings are held at the Bordini Center in Appleton. where we have access to hybrid tech that allows us to include people via Zoom. It's challenging, but it's working! You're welcome to join us!

We publish a monthly newsletter/meeting notice 10 times a year. Join our distribution list at: hlaafoxvalley@gmail.com

No website, but we post at hlaawi.org/chapters

A Cochlear Implant Support Group meets on the 3rd Tuesday of odd months at 6 PM by Zoom only. We welcome people from outside our area to join our CI discussions.

The H.O.P.E. (Hear Other People's Experiences) discussion group meets prior to our in person chapter meetings just to talk, ask questions and share our experiences. In person only.

The newsletter has all the information you need to know to join us. It can be received online or in print. Let us know your preference. We'll add you to our distribution list.



Social time at the Appleton Yacht Club 12-2022

HLAA Metro Milwaukee

Meets the 2nd Thursday in March, May, July, September, November & December, in Wauwatosa. **Contact:**

BJ: BJEHLAAMKE@gmail.com Jim jgoddeyne@gmail.com



The SW Chapter began hosting in-person monthly meetings in March 2022 after being inactive during the pandemic. The Chapter meets at the Platteville Senior Center the last Wednesday of each month.

Everyone is welcome to attend meetings at: The Platteville Senior Center, located at 155 W. Lewis St. Meetings are scheduled from 10:00 – 11:30 AM on the last Wednesday. Coffee and baked goods are served at every meeting.

The recent May 25 featured guest presenter Kathy Kopp who spoke about her personal experiences dealing with her own hearing loss while working in her former position as Executive Director of the Platteville Regional Chamber and now as member of the Platteville Common Council and Grant County Board. Kathy and the eight people who attended the May meeting agreed that speaking up was important to alert people that we live with hearing loss. The group expressed their appreciation to Kathy for her own "speaking up" by sharing her story with us. Here is a link to a youtube video from Kathy Kopp https://youtu.be/GANhLeC_Xxc

For more information about the HLAA SW Chapter, call Jackie Mihelcic (608) 642-0008, or e-mail: hlaaswwi@gmail.com



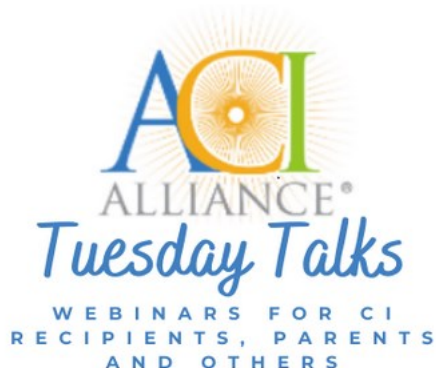
HLAA Door County—We have no current information about the Door County Chapter. Prior to the pandemic, they were holding meetings in Sturgeon Bay. Contact: Stan Whiteman: swwhiteman46@gmail.com Please connect with us if you have information.



University of Miami Study on Quality of Life in Children with Cochlear Implants and their Parents

The U of Miami invites parents of children with cochlear implants 12 years and under and children with cochlear implants 6—22 to take an online survey on quality of life. It can be completed on a smart phone or computer and takes about 15 minutes. Participants will receive a \$25 gift card to Target. The last day to participate is January 31, 2023.

Learn More Here: [QoL CI Validation \(nfg-dm-bee.s3.amazonaws.com\)](https://nfg-dm-bee.s3.amazonaws.com)



Tuesday Talks are a free, captioned webinar series hosted by the American Cochlear Implant Alliance (ACI), monthly at 12 Noon ET. The content is designed for adults, parents, and others seeking information on cochlear implantation and related topics. Members of the CI CAN consumer network play a pivotal role in each presentation by bringing their own experience with CI to the discussion. All sessions are free to attend and captioned. All talks are recorded and will be posted for free online.

Link to a flyer on upcoming topics [HERE](#)



Mayo Clinic CONNECT is an online community where people ask questions & share their experiences with a variety of health issues. Hearing loss is one of them. HLAA supports MCC. HLAA members often share information on MCC. Information can be shared anonymously. Might you have experiences to share, or questions to ask? <https://connect.mayoclinic.org/>

Bits & Pieces from Other Places...

Take time to read the article at link below. We see all kinds of people using headsets and ear buds. Why are people so hesitant to be seen wearing hearing aids? Let's decide to just be cool!

[Listen up: Headphones are getting really weird](#)

From CNN: More designs are on the way that may help bury hearing aid stigma, including a smartwatch with a face that flips open to reveal a pair of magnetic earbuds, and a headphone that doubles as an air purifier, blowing filtered air into your nose. Get ready for the brave new world of headphones.

A new 7-minute video by a Johns Hopkins University med student featuring Drs. Frank Lin and Molly Sheehan aims to get people talking about hearing health (see video embedded in article). [A JHU med student's documentary aims to get people talking about hearing health | Hub](#)



Find Dr. Cliff's YouTube Presentations [HERE](#)

Dr. Cliff Olson is a Board-Certified Audiologist, member of the Academy of Doctors of Audiology and a Fellow of the American Academy of Audiology.

He is also the creator of the Dr. Cliff AuD YouTube channel where he posts educational and entertaining videos about hearing loss and treatment options. Dr. Cliff's desire to help create better informed consumers led to the creation of the HearingUp Network. This Network was designed to help individuals with hearing loss find excellent hearing healthcare professionals who follow Best Practices no matter where they live. His videos cover a lot of topics and are

It always pays
to get good advice



Our enlightening advice column is managed by Diane Koosed, an HLAA member from Ashland WI. Diane says "We are 'Hard of Hearing Allies (HOHAs)' who can help others in a fun way by sharing our experiences. So let's help her do it!

Here is the latest communication from our advice columnist, she states:

Our HOHAs (Hard of Hearing Allies) help us solve problems.

The question in our summer newsletter was from a man whose wife habitually talked to him from another room, no matter how many times he asked that she not do that. (You can find the full question by going to the summer newsletter [HERE](#); scroll down to page 6.)

HOHA Jenni Tiziani offers good advice:

Tell your wife that you have something serious to discuss. Sit her down. Sit yourself facing her. Ask her not to interrupt until you're finished. Explain that you've developed a plan to help you understand what she says.

The Plan:

If she talks to you from another room, tell her you won't answer.

If she doesn't first say your name to get your attention when you're in the same room, tell her you won't answer.

Then, you must remember to follow the plan.

Thank you Jenni. We hope this will work!

Would you like problem-solving input from HOHAs? Tell Diane Koosed (koolake@gmail.com) what's bothering you, and she'll put the word out to our HOHAs.

Let's hear from YOU! We know that if you are a HOHA, you have something to share!

Hearing Tracker Shares Information About Air Travel with Hearing Loss

[Best Airlines and Airport Travel Accommodations for People with Hearing Loss](#)

STAY CONNECTED

Follow us on social media.



GET HLAA E-NEWS

Learn about current hearing loss issues and how HLAA is working for you.

[SIGN-UP](#) This is a free service from HLAA.

HLAA, at all levels, offers a variety of opportunities for people with hearing loss to come together to learn & discuss issues & concerns related to hearing loss. Check out opportunities on the national HLAA website. Regionally, on the hlaawi website.

COVID was difficult, but it also introduced us to videoconferencing that has given us the opportunity to bring in presenters and participants from out of our immediate region. Still, we plan to get back to in person events. Hopefully hybrid meetings where we can include Zoom.

Whether we meet in person or on Zoom, come learn with us. All of our events are captioned! Providing 'communication access' with technology is vital to our success.

We'd love to have you join us!

[Wwww.hearingloss.org](http://www.hearingloss.org) www.hlaawi.org

Several webinars that have been sponsored by HLAA at different levels are available on the HLAA website.

This [LINK](#) will take you to many interesting learning experiences.

Disclaimer: HLAA does not endorse products or providers. HLAA advocates, educates, shares information and provides peer support.