



### In this Issue

Page 2 - Legislative Day is April 19th  
Page 3 - Education & Advocacy  
Page 4 - Why join HLAA?  
Page 5 - Hearing Loss & Mental Health  
Page 6 - HLAA, General Information  
Page 7 - Milwaukee Walk4Hearing  
Page 8 - Hearing Loop EXPO Review  
Page 9 - Help for People w Hearing Loss  
Page 10 - Who We are HLAAWI Board  
Page 11 - HLAA Chapter News & Projects  
Page 12 - Chapter Information

### **Legislative Day Wednesday, April 19, 2017**

**For deaf, hard of hearing, deaf/blind**

Co-sponsored by HLAA-WI,  
WI Association for the Deaf, and WisRid

**Wisconsin State Capitol  
2 East Main Street  
Madison, WI 53703  
[View Map](#)**

### **Plan for the Day**

9 – 11 a.m. Legislative training.  
Learn about our state priorities and how to  
advocate for them.  
11 – 12 Lunch  
1 – 3 p.m. Meet with your legislators

When you register, and provide your  
information, you will automatically be  
scheduled to meet with your representa-  
tives.

Registration Link [HERE](#)



## **HLAA-WI President's Message...**

**By Jerry Lapidakis**



### **Let Your Voice Be Heard**

#### **Let Your Voice Be Heard**

The legislative day we are co-sponsoring with the Wisconsin Association of the Deaf (WAD) is a huge opportunity for all people with hearing loss to be heard and seen. I don't believe that HLAA Wisconsin has ever participated in such an event before. It is both an opportunity and a risk. We are appreciative of the opportunity to partner with WAD in this event. They have been very receptive in including us, and have included Tom O'Connor, HLAA-WI Board Treasurer and myself on their planning committee. **For this event to be a success for us, we must show up at the Capitol in Madison on April 19. Sign up to attend at: <http://www.hlaawi.org/>.**

The risk if we don't show up, is that our point of view on issues will not be heard. The Deaf community is much more vocal, and visible, than the hard of hearing population is. While we are in agreement on several concepts and issues, our unique needs are different and must be voiced. Otherwise the decision makers assume we are all the same.

HLAA has about 300 members in Wisconsin. That is a very small proportion of the state's population with hearing loss, which is estimated to be close to 40,000. Still, HLAA represents all those people with hearing loss, even though they aren't members. Hard of hearing people, those with partial deafness, outnumber the Deaf population 30:1. However, the much smaller Deaf community is strong, active, vocal and very visible. Hard of hearing people must step forward if they wish to be counted.

HLAA-WI is supporting draft legislation, proposed by WAD, that would strengthen mental health services for all people with hearing loss across the spectrum, including those who are deaf/blind. This is an important issue that we can work on together with our legislators. It is the major issue that we should stress on April 19<sup>th</sup>. Think of all the frustration, anguish, isolation, lack of social interaction that you and I suffer every day and how it takes a toll on our lives. Consider the everyday stress and frustration we have communicating at work, with family and friends and socially. Add to that the stress of those additional, emotional trauma of health or family issues. And think about the lack of professional services available to address these problems whether in our work places, homes, hospitals, nursing homes, and just about every other place in all of our communities. How often do we not go somewhere or not do something because our hearing loss creates barriers? It is easy to understand why depression and other mental health issues are common in people with communication disorders.

Besides the need for more mental health specialists who understand the ramifications of hearing loss, and services in the state, there are other pertinent issues to bring forward such as:

- Legislation or administrative rule that requires audiologists, and hearing aid dispensers to inform patients about all possible options including telecoils and assistive listening devices.
- Adequate funding for the Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing for increased staff specialists, that include hard of hearing specialists.
- Improved communication access in government meeting rooms, public venues, churches and schools including CART, magnetic hearing loops and closed captioning.

**So, be heard. Register to attend the Legislative Day on April 19<sup>th</sup>. It is free and meetings with your local legislators or their staffs are scheduled for you.**

See you there!,  
**Jerry Lapidakis**

**Legislative Day** For deaf, hard of hearing, deaf/blind and allies Co-sponsored by HLAA Wisconsin, WAD and WisRid  
**April 19, 2017 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.**

- Tour the Capitol in Madison
- Meet with your local Representatives & Senators
- Hand out educational information
- Learn firsthand how laws are made



“This legislative day is a first for HLAA Wisconsin. It is an opportunity to meet with our legislators and express our goals and ideas to improve the lives of the hard of hearing, deaf, Deaf and deaf/blind. It is an opportunity to also learn how laws are made. We are co-sponsoring with The Wisconsin Association of the Deaf and the Wisconsin Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf. It is an opportunity for us to work together to pursue our common interests. It is very important that we have a good showing of hard of hearing people. We need a strong representation from our chapters to make the event successful and have our voices heard. Plan to attend and encourage others who would benefit.” *Jerry Lapidakis*, HLAA-WI President

**For more information and to register go to: [www.hlaawi.org](http://www.hlaawi.org) and click on the green Register button.**

**Plan for the Day**

- 9 – 11 Legislative training. Learn about our state priorities and how to advocate for them.
- 11 – 12 Lunch
- 1 – 3 p.m. Meet with your legislators

(When you register, and provide your information, you will automatically be scheduled to meet with your representatives.)

**Recommended Main Talking Point for Meetings with Legislators:** HLAA-WI supports draft legislation, proposed by WAD, that would strengthen mental health services for all people with hearing loss across the spectrum. This is an important issue we can advocate on together. HLAA-WI suggests this be the major issue to stress on April 19<sup>th</sup>. Stress created by communication breakdown can lead to health problems; both both mental and physical. While most healthcare professionals understand the effects of stress, few understand how hearing loss can lead to the stressful conditions of isolation and depression.

**We want legislators to know and understand:**

- That hearing is critical to healthy living and that hearing loss impacts all aspects of life.
- The difference between HH, Deaf, deaf, and the deaf/blind and the similarities and unique differences of each.
- All persons with hearing loss regardless of whether they are hard of hearing, deaf, or Deaf have a right to communication access in a manner that meets their needs.
- Public and private venues, including all types of public transportation are communication accessible through technology such as hearing loops, FM, infrared, captioning and other technologies.
- All education and entertainment media (television, Internet video programming, and movies) meet the highest quality captioning and audio quality standards that ensure equal access, full understanding and enjoyment by consumers.
- Consumers have comprehensive choice and access to captioned and hearing-aid-compatible (HAC), high-fidelity, landline phones and mobile devices.
- Emergency preparedness communication systems are accessible for people with hearing loss and first responders are knowledgeable about the needs of persons with hearing loss.
- Workplaces are communication accessible and welcoming to people with hearing loss. The needs of HH, Deaf, deaf overlap in some ways (captioning on TV) but their unique needs are often different.

**HLAA believes that all people with hearing loss, across the spectrum, have a right to use whichever form of communication access works best for them. Modes of communication access include: CART (computer assisted real-time transliteration), captioning, hearing assistive technology, and manual communication.**

- ♦ HLAA supports legislation or administrative rules that require those who sell hearing aids to inform patients about all possible options including telecoils, assistive listening devices and cochlear implants.
- ♦ HLAA supports continuation of Medicaid, Badgercare to cover hearing aids, cochlear implants and other assistive technology and to provide adequate compensation to hearing health professionals.
- ♦ HLAA supports adequate funding for the Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing. We would like that office strengthened to staff both hard of hearing specialists and Deaf specialists, and to provide programs that suit the needs of all constituents within the Deaf, hard of hearing and deaf/blind populations.
- ♦ HLAA supports the provision of communication access in state and local facilities including CART, assistive listening devices such as magnetic hearing loops and captioning. Places of public accommodation, such as state meeting rooms, churches and schools that are required to meet federal ADA standards should not fail to meet those standards under state law.

## FTC to Hold Hearing Aid Workshop

On April 18th the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) will host a workshop in Washington, DC. The purpose of the workshop is to examine several of the issues surrounding the current marketplace for hearing aids, including competition, innovation, and consumer protection.

As per a January 4th press release, the FTC's workshop, "[Now Hear This: Competition, Innovation, and Consumer Protection Issues in Hearing Health Care](#)," will bring together researchers, health care providers, industry representatives, consumer representatives, policymakers, and others to examine ways in which enhanced competition and innovation might increase the availability and adoption of hearing aids by those consumers who need them. The workshop will examine how to balance consumer health and safety issues with consumer interests in greater competition and innovation and ensure consumers have access to truthful and non-misleading information about hearing health products and services.

### Hearing Aid Workshop

According to the FTC's press release, the workshop agenda will include the following:

- Consumer Information and Search Costs
- Innovation in Hearing Technology and Treatment
- Innovation in Hearing Health Care Delivery
- The Benefits and Costs of Regulation

The workshop, which is free and open to the public, will be at the Constitution Center, 400 7th St., SW, Washington, DC. A detailed agenda will be published at a later date. **A live webcast of the workshop will be available on the day of the event. For more information on this workshop please see [this link](#).**

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) is a bipartisan federal agency with a dual mission to protect consumers and promote competition among businesses. The FTC develops policy and research tools through hearings, workshops, and conferences.

## Speak Up! It Matters!!!

### It's a Call to Action! Join HLAA in Supporting the Over-the-Counter Hearing Aid Act of 2017

On March 21, U.S. Senators Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.), Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa), Maggie Hassan (D-N.H.), and Johnny Isakson (R-Ga.), [reintroduced legislation](#) (S. 670) to make hearing aids for those with mild to moderate hearing loss available over the counter (OTC). A companion bill (HR 1652) led by Representatives Joe Kennedy III (D-Mass.) and Marsha Blackburn (R-Tenn.) was also introduced in the House.

The Over-the-Counter Hearing Aid Act of 2017 would make certain types of hearing aids available over the counter and remove unnecessary and burdensome requirements that currently create barriers for consumers who could benefit from hearing aids.

HLAA is issuing a **Call to Action** to ask for your help in sending Congress a message that passage of this bill would be life-changing for the millions of Americans who don't seek help for their hearing loss simply because they can't afford to. You – *we* – now have the opportunity to influence Congress to change that. We have created a [new section of the HLAA website](#) entirely devoted to over-the-counter hearing aids. It includes information on what exactly an over-the-counter device is, what all this means to people with hearing loss, the NAS report, information on the [Call to Action](#) – what you can do to help, useful links and much more.

### EDUCATION AND INFORMATION

As you are probably aware, bringing up the topic of hearing loss with a friend or loved one can be very difficult. In partnership with HLAA and the [National Alliance for Caregiving](#), [CaptionCall](#) has developed a new **Hearing Loss Conversation Kit** to help people learn how to approach the subject with loved ones and where to start treatment. The kit can be downloaded [here](#).



### HLAA Supports Increased Funding for NIH...

The National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) has been at the forefront of research since its authorization in 1988. As NIDCD Director James F. Battey, Jr., M.D., Ph.D., has said, "NIDCD-supported scientists have made astonishing advances in the NIDCD's mission areas of hearing, balance, taste, smell, voice, speech, and language. Numerous discoveries have expanded our knowledge base and led to improved diagnosis, treatment, and technology for people with communication disorders."

HLAA recently submitted written testimony to the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies to support increased funding for the NIH. In our testimony we spoke of the strong role of the NIDCD in advancing research on hearing health care. We also noted that NIH funding for fiscal year 2017 has not yet been finalized. We urged Congress to act to finalize the funding for 2017 and move forward with an increased budget for fiscal year 2018.

Those of us who have experienced the miracle of cochlear implants are beneficiaries of the remarkable advances in research in the hearing healthcare field. There is even hope, today, of ultimately finding a cure for many hearing disorders, something unheard of even a decade ago. If you believe NIH and NIDCD within should be adequately funded, please let your legislators know.







**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](#).

## Why Belong to HLAA ; “The Nation’s Voice for People with Hearing Loss”?

The Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA), is the nation's leading membership and advocacy organization for people with hearing loss. Becoming a member of HLAA is a great first step in doing something about your hearing loss. As a member of HLAA you become part of an organization with a mission to provide information, support and advocacy to and for people with hearing loss. Through HLAA's advocacy work at the federal level, the organization represents 48 million Americans with hearing loss. Your name is needed on the HLAA roll! As a member of HLAA, you will receive:

- [Hearing Loss Magazine](#) – the bimonthly magazine full of information about the latest technology, products and information about how to live well with hearing loss. Read stories from people who have hearing loss as well as articles from leading professionals in the field. HLAA members have access to the digital, online version of *Hearing Loss Magazine* before it arrives in the mail. Users can adjust browsers to suit individual needs, especially for people with low vision who need online access. Members can view *Hearing Loss Magazine* online through the [HLAA Online Portal](#).
- Discounted rate to the annual Hearing Loss Association of America [Convention](#) held in various cities across the country.
- Discounts on hearing aids (See HLAA website [www.hearingloss.org/content/join](http://www.hearingloss.org/content/join) )
- Educational opportunities such as Leadership Training and the Hearing Loss Support Specialist Training
- The support found in our large [chapter network](#).
- The tangible results of our work with laws and policies that impact people with hearing loss.
- Online activities such as [HLAA Webinars](#) (captioned), forums, groups for [young adults](#), [parents](#), surveys, [HLAA e-News](#).
- The knowledge that you are an active participant in a highly-respected organization that is a force for change working on behalf of people with hearing loss!

## San Francisco Light Rail System to Install Hearing Loops 03/24/2017

Bay Area Rail Transportation (BART) will install hearing loops in all of their light rail cars. BART operates a public transportation system serving the San Francisco Bay Area and connects San Francisco with cities in the East Bay and suburbs in northern San Mateo County. Hearing loop communication systems will be installed in 775 train cars.

Individual Membership	\$35
Couple/Family Membership	\$45
Student Membership	\$20
Professional, Library & Corporate Memberships	<a href="#">(HERE)</a>

**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.

## 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](#).

## 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.

Below is some 'food for thought' on mental health issues and hearing loss. Katherine Bouton is a member of the HLAA National Board of Trustees, and is a former editor with the New York Times. This article is from a blog Katherine writes for the Psychology Today publication. Think on what she says, and take it to Legislative Day.

## Hearing Loss Won't Kill You, or Will It? 03/18/2017 by Katherine Bouton, author "Shouting Won't Help"



I lost much of my hearing gradually, over 30 years. And then, eight years ago, I lost almost all of the rest of it in a single day. Eventually I got a better hearing aid and a cochlear implant, but I never heard well again. I was forced to leave a job I loved. Caring for my elderly **parents** was almost impossible because I couldn't hear them, I couldn't hear their **health-care** providers, and I couldn't call 911 in an emergency. I flew there often, mostly for crises, because the only way I could begin to function was in person, reading lips, asking for written notes. The **stress** was overwhelming.

My **marriage** was disintegrating because of the **depression** and **anger** my hearing loss caused. My young-adult children were unable to comprehend how their mother had turned so difficult. I quit my book club. I avoided going out with friends. On election night 2008, the night of Obama's election, I declined a friend's invitation to watch together and stayed home alone with a bottle of wine and a box of Kleenex. I drank myself to **sleep** before the winner was declared.

Most nights I slept no more than two hours at a time, often dissolving into crying jags in the middle of the night. I lost 15 pounds. I thought about ways I might kill myself, assuring myself I wouldn't actually do it. But I thought it about it too much. Fortunately I found help. A psychotherapist provided [medication](#) and talked me through those dark months. When I developed vertigo, she worked with my ENT to help find the right drug combination to keep it under control. Hearing loss is not a lifestyle problem, it's not just a normal part of **aging**. It is a deeply disruptive loss that changes everything about the way a person lives. Isolation and depression are common responses. It contributes to [cognitive](#) decline. Society dismisses it, and this makes it even harder to cope with.

I survived my hearing loss and became an advocate for **education** and accessibility for the deaf and hard of hearing. I am a board member of the [Hearing Loss Association of America](#). I wrote a memoir of my struggles with hearing loss, [Shouting Won't Help](#), and included my email address so people could contact me. And they do. Sometimes the emails are heartbreaking. Yesterday morning I got one from someone I had never corresponded with.

The subject line was: "Rage, Anger, Depression, Abusing Alcohol." I responded, and as more email came in over the day, I realized the writer was in serious trouble. She was essentially alone in a distant state. After consulting with psychotherapist friends I urged her to contact a mental health professional immediately. I wish I had been able to provide a reference for her. This person had been on medication for depression and anxiety. Her hearing loss was not new, although it was newly worse. Whoever prescribed the medication seems not to have recognized the severity of the impact of her loss, or not to have successfully dealt with it.

There's nothing more I can do for this person, but I urge therapists to take hearing loss seriously. Acknowledge the significance of the loss. Understand that hearing aids and cochlear implants don't always work very well. Try to understand what it's like to lose your means of communication with others. Try to imagine what it's like to doubt everything you think you hear. Imagine the **embarrassment** of repeatedly asking for clarification a third or fourth time. Many people just give up. They isolate themselves, they get depressed, they decline cognitively. Sometimes they even think about **suicide**. Sometimes, they even carry it out.

When I was writing my book, I included the experiences of many people who worked in jobs where hearing well is important. I interviewed psychotherapists, musicians, nurses. I wanted a teacher and finally found a high-school teacher who had been forced to leave his job because he could no longer hear his students. I heard he was depressed and **drinking**. Before I was able to interview him he was killed in a single-car accident. The cause was never discovered.

**On March 21, 2017**, New York City Mayor, Bill de Blasio, signed a bill believed to make New York the nation's first major municipality to require hearing loops in places of public assembly. The new law applies to construction and renovation projects funded by the City at a cost of \$950,000 or more. Council Member Helen Rosenthal of Manhattan, lead sponsor of the bill, estimates that, under the City's current capital plans, loops will be installed in close to 300 new projects throughout the five boroughs. HLAA members in New York City have been educating and advocating for this. Congratulations on a job well done!!!!



## Call for Nominations....

There will be 2-3 vacancies on the HLAA-WI Board at the end of 2017. HLAA-WI seeks board members who will help with educational projects, advocacy, and serve on various committees, and commissions. If the opportunity to meet and work with people who are effecting positive change for people with hearing loss in Wisconsin appeals to you, indicate your interest at: <http://www.hlaawi.org/opportunities-to-serve.html>

**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](mailto: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](mailto:info@hearingloss.org) Membership information can be found at [www.hearingloss.org](http://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](http://www.hlaawi.org)

It's easy to complain that hearing loss doesn't get the attention it deserves. Change happens when people with a common issue organize & advocate.

PS: There is never a 'right time' to get involved.

**[www.hlaawi.org](http://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.**





**Saturday, May 13, 2017**

## Location

Greenfield Park  
2028 S. 124th Street  
West Allis, WI 53227

## Walk Chairs

Caroline Ludka  
carolineludka@gmail.com  
Becki Jump  
msjump77@aol.com

Visit [walk4hearing.org](http://walk4hearing.org)  
for more information



**Step Up  
for  
Hearing  
Loss**

Registration 9:00 a.m.  
Walk Starts 10:00 a.m.

## The Milwaukee Walk4Hearing is Wisconsin's Walk!

You can help erase the stigmas that surround hearing loss by coming out to show the world that people with hearing loss are just like everyone else, and that hearing loss matters!

Come out and Walk 4 Hearing! Show others that people with hearing loss are willing to step out and step up to help make hearing loss an issue of concern. Your support matters!

Ask your friends, family members, employers and fellow employees to sponsor or join you on May 13th.

Join an existing team or form one of your own. Learn how at [www.walk4hearing.org](http://www.walk4hearing.org)

Of course if you can't join the fun, you can still donate to someone who is a participant.

## Here are the HLAA Chapter Teams

HLAA Madison = Mad City Walkers  
HLAA Fox Valley = Fox Trotters  
HLAA Milwaukee = Metro Milers  
HLAA-Wisconsin= State Steppers

The key to raising money via the Walk format, is to get many people on a team who will ask others to sponsor them with a donation. It's an easy way to put HLAA and hearing loss in general, in the spotlight while raising money for a worthwhile cause.

You may be surprised to find out how willing others are to support you.

Thank You!

## Alliance Q&A

Team up with us & raise funds for your organization

## Pledge Sheet

Track your offline donations (cash/checks)

## Walk Flyer

Share with your community



Some Foxy Ladies at the 2016 Milwaukee Walk4Hearing

# Metro Milwaukee HLAA Chapter Holds Hearing Loop Expo!

By Eloise Schwarz, President HLAA Metro Milwaukee Chapter & Chair of Wisconsin's 2016 Loop EXPO



It was the perfect day and setting. The end result of a lot of planning and hard work was another successful Hearing Loop Conference in Wisconsin. This time the event was held in the metropolitan Milwaukee area where few loops have been installed, even though the local chapter has tried hard to promote them.

The task to plan and hold this conference fell to the small Metro Milwaukee Chapter with support from HLAA-Wisconsin, HLAA members who had been involved in planning the first successful Wisconsin loop conference in 2011, and HLAA members who had more recently discovered the wonder of hearing loops. The 2011 conference led to the installation of many hearing loop installations in the northeastern and central part of the state. Our goal and hope was to have the same results in the southeastern part of our state.

When HLAA-WI suggested that the Metro Milwaukee Chapter plan and hold a loop conference, the first question was 'Where do we start?' The seed was planted. Getting it to grow was the challenge. It is true that the hardest part of a job is getting started! Few in the Milwaukee area knew about hearing loops. However, some of us had attended that 2011 loop conference, chaired by Julie Olson of HLAA Fox Valley Chapter. It was there, that they experienced the typical 'ah ha' moment that often happens when a hard of hearing person tries a hearing loop for the first time. For me, that experience was a beautiful thing! The ability to hear well at a conference was life changing! When I left, I cried and I knew that I wanted to hear well *everywhere* and not just in that one place. When I expressed my interest in planning an event in my area of the state, Julie offered to provide support, including the files, templates and ideas that emerged from that initial conference. HLAA-WI, and national hearing loop advocate, Dr. Juliette Sterkens, also offered to provide support.

I still wondered how on earth I was going to make this all happen. With a dream in my pocket and a determination in my heart, I attended the 2015 National HLAA Convention in St Louis where I gathered information for championing a conference. Meeting and talking to other HLAA members and leaders, gave me encouragement and support to firmly set the goal of hosting a day-long event in Milwaukee. Like most journeys, this one began one step at a time, as I started thinking about potential speakers and for a location to hold the event.

Even though I had participated in this type of event in my professional nursing career, I had never been the key person responsible for an event of this magnitude. Having Dr. Sterkens, composer Richard Einhorn; a member of the HLAA National Board and strong loop advocate, along with Richard McKinley, a well-known national loop manufacturer on board early was a blessing. These group of advocates, and others with loop experience shared invaluable information to those attending our Expo.

Everything did not always go as quickly as I had hoped, or as smoothly, but the support received from EXPO Committee members Christine Klessig, Laurie Flores and Angelia Meyers, a local Librarian gave me a community of committed helpers. Everything fell into place within the timeline we had established. This included mailings with requests for sponsorships to cover the cost of the event, along with mailings to advertise it.

## *"If we work together, we can move mountains"*

The EXPO was a dream come true. Over 110 people came. The vendors provided sufficient funding to cover our costs, including handouts and treats for everyone. The exhibits were well received. The EXPO was held at the Milwaukee Area Technical College, which proved to be a good location. Even the weather cooperated!

Evaluations came back with positive responses that reflected a day well spent. One question asked often was – when will the next Loop event be held? That will be up for discussion with HLAA-WI and other chapters. In the Milwaukee area, we have follow up work to do to promote loop installations. We hope to increase awareness not only about loops, but about HLAA. There is much to do.

Our day-long Loop EXPO was packed with enthusiasm. Attendees were impressed with our Keynote Speaker: Richard Einhorn, and everyone else who presented or performed; including Dr. Sterkens, Tricia Chirillo, HLAA Members Chris Prust, Christine Klessig and Pamela Martin; vocalist, Deaf minister, Rev. John Reinke, and Mr. McKinley of Contacta Hearing Loops.

When the event was over a collective sigh of relief could be heard by those who held their breath throughout the day, not to mention several months. It was a success with few interruptions and complaints. The goal of educating the attendees about the benefits of hearing loop technology and how to foster their installations had been given with great enthusiasm. We all were pleased with the outcome. Now that we know how to plan an event like this, perhaps we can do it again some time. Perhaps we can assist other chapters to plan and hold a Loop EXPO. I also have high hopes that the success of the EXPO will give new life and ideas worth exploring to our small chapter. 2017 has great potential. Already, we have received requests for follow up support. I am looking forward to what it has in store for us!

Eloise Schwarz is the Leader of the Metro Milwaukee Chapter. She can be reached at [eloise6376@gmail.com](mailto:eloise6376@gmail.com)



Thank you to Eloise Schwarz, HLAA Milwaukee Chapter President, for her commitment to chairing & planning the Hearing Loop EXPO, which was a huge success! Thank you to everyone else who was involved too.





## Hearing Loss Worker's Compensation?

Have you ever browsed the Internet searching for information about hearing loss? Perhaps that's how you discovered HLAA ([www.hearingloss.org](http://www.hearingloss.org)) or your local chapter. Recently, I was browsing the World Wide Web and came upon Johnson Law Offices ([www.johnsonlawoffices.net](http://www.johnsonlawoffices.net)) (JLO).

JLO is located in Edgerton WI, and specializes in hearing loss workers compensation. JLO is a family business that has spent 30 years assisting Wisconsin workers to claim benefits for their hearing loss and get hearing aids.

I had the pleasure of meeting Attorney Douglas Johnson and Audiologist Ann Raabe on March 17th to learn more about them and their work through JLO. Both are strong hearing loss advocates and travel throughout the state providing informational workshops on hearing loss related worker's compensation. They mentioned that 30 million US workers are exposed to workplace noise that often leads to hearing loss. Did you know that the benefits are tax-free and do not affect Social Security? Did you know that there is no statute of limitations to claim benefits?

**Johnson Law Offices will present a workshop at the June 28th chapter meeting of HLAA-Madison.** It is open to anyone interested. You are encouraged to bring your latest audiogram along with questions you may have about hearing loss workers compensation. (See page 12 for specifics on time & location of HLAA Madison meetings.)

Also, I'm happy to share that Johnson Law Offices are new sponsors to the Milwaukee Walk4Hearing with a gift of \$500. Thank you JLO! *Submitted by Natalie Eberle, Madison Chapter*

*Disclaimer: HLAA-Madison Chapter does not endorse products or services. Mention of such products or services is intended to provide information that might be of interest and is not a recommendation or endorsement.*



## Special Hospital Kits Available for Patients with Hearing Loss

If you have ever gone for a medical procedure where you've had to remove your personal hearing devices, you know how difficult it is to communicate with the medical staff. HLAA-WI has assembled special "Hospital Kits" that can be helpful in these situations. The kits include information that helps staff know how to communicate with you.

Kits include a variety of materials that will identify your unique needs. There's an ID card, stickers that can be placed on your ID bracelets and charts, information on your rights as a patient with a hearing loss/disability, and much more. Hearing aids can easily be lost in a hospital setting when they are not being worn. The kits also include a bag to hold your hearing personal devices when you are not using them. A pad of paper and a pen are included along with other materials that will assist with non-verbal communication, if necessary.

Having a hospital kit to use when/if needed will give you peace of mind. They sell for \$5 apiece, and are well worth having. Get one now; don't wait until you need it!

Kits are available at HLAA meetings and events, or can be ordered by contacting Chris Prust. [Chrisp625@yahoo.com](mailto:Chrisp625@yahoo.com)



**01/19/2017** - The Hard-of-Hearing Heroes Project is a new initiative launched by the National Court Reporters Foundation (NCRF). The aim is to preserve the experiences of veterans with hearing loss for the Library of Congress Veterans History Project. Veterans with hearing loss will be interviewed for the project using CART (communication access realtime translation) captioning. NCRF and HLAA have partnered to interview multiple veterans with profound hearing loss at the HLAA headquarters on **February 18, and at the HLAA2017 Convention in Salt Lake City, UT.** Please sign up by contacting April Weiner, NCRF Manager, at [aweiner@ncra.org](mailto:aweiner@ncra.org).



[View the Veterans History Project Information Guide.](#)

### Veterans and Caregivers (Free Registration for 1st Timers)

Complimentary registration is available for U.S. veterans with hearing loss and their caregiver who are attending the Convention for the first time. Please download and complete the [Veterans Registration Form](#) and mail, email or fax it to us.

*"A word of encouragement can mean the difference between giving up and going on." Guideposts Magazine*



## 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](http://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.**



**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.

## HLAA-WI BOARD

### PRESIDENT

Jerry Lapidakis (Madison)  
[jlapidakis@gmail.com](mailto:jlapidakis@gmail.com)

### VICE PRESIDENT

Liza Segleau (Milwaukee)  
[esegleau@gmail.com](mailto:esegleau@gmail.com)

### TREASURER

Tom O'Connor (Fond du Lac)  
[toconnor@hotmail.com](mailto:toconnor@hotmail.com)

### SECRETARY

Lisa Zovar (Madison)  
[lzovar@HLAAmadison.com](mailto:lzovar@HLAAmadison.com)

### IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

Stephanie Long (Appleton)  
[slabcaudiology@gmail.com](mailto:slabcaudiology@gmail.com)

### MEMBERS AT LARGE

Christine Klessig  
(Amherst Junction)  
[bommaklessig@gmail.com](mailto:bommaklessig@gmail.com)

Juliette Sterkens (Oshkosh)  
[jsterkens@hearingloss.org](mailto:jsterkens@hearingloss.org)

Pamela Martin (Milwaukee)  
[mmmiracle4me@aol.com](mailto:mmmiracle4me@aol.com)

Natalie Eberle (Madison)  
[cincinatalie@hotmail.com](mailto:cincinatalie@hotmail.com)

Christine Wiedmeyer (Kimberly)  
[chriswiedmeyer@yahoo.com](mailto:chriswiedmeyer@yahoo.com)

Kimberly Fager (Lancaster)  
[kmfager@gmail.com](mailto:kmfager@gmail.com)

### Off Board Participants

#### *Newsletter Editor*

Julie Olson (Neenah)  
[JulieO@athenet.net](mailto:JulieO@athenet.net)

#### *Webmaster & TEPP Chair*

Colleen Van Rooy (Appleton)  
[cvanrooy@yahoo.com](mailto:cvanrooy@yahoo.com)

## **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

**The Spring Board Meeting for HLAA-WI** will be held at the Neenah Public Library on Saturday, April 22nd from 9:30– 12:30.

\*\*\*

**The Annual Meeting** will be held prior to a Leadership Training event on Saturday, October 29th at Ultratech in Madison. Erin Mirante, National HLAA Chapter Coordinator, will conduct the training which will be open to all HLAA leaders in the Midwest region. Registration fee of \$25 will include lunch and handouts. (Note, this event is in the planning stage. More information to follow. Please be sure we have your e-mail address, and check [www.hlaawi.org](http://www.hlaawi.org) for updates.

Board Meetings are open to dues paying members of national HLAA.



## **HLAA Board—Fall 2017**

**L to R Front:** Eloise Schwarz, Jerry Lapidakis, Liza Segleau, Christine Wiedmeyer, Tom O'Connor **Back:** Natalie Eberle, Stephanie Long, Christine Klessig, Lisa Zovar, Juliette Sterkens. Missing: Kim Fager & Pamela Martin.



## CHAPTERS

### HLAA-WI Plans a Chapter Building Workshop for October 2017

HLAA Chapter Building Workshops are an all-day program designed to give state and chapter leaders ideas for attracting new members, recruiting volunteers, raising funds, attracting younger members, and connecting the chapters to their local communities. The workshops are facilitated by HLAA National staff.

Events like these workshops are fundamental to communication between the national office and chapter and state affiliates. Each group is unique, with varying needs and requirements, and workshops like these provide an opportunity to help leaders understand how HLAA can best provide support. The workshops always prove to be extremely helpful for chapter and state leaders and HLAA staff alike.

Erin Mirante will take over the national staff position from Valerie Stafford-Mallis this spring. HLAA members in Wisconsin look forward to meeting Erin and to participating in this special program. Meanwhile, staff at HLAA says that letting them hear your cares, concerns, successes, and more is encouraged. Chapters can reach out to Erin at [chapters@hearingloss.org](mailto:chapters@hearingloss.org).

## Chapter Happenings.....

### From HLAA Madison:

Last December our chapter had a Potluck and H.O.P.E. (Hearing Other People's Experiences) Meeting and it was a fun time! Everyone brought in their favorite dishes to share, we all chatted, laughed while dined and then we gathered around to talk about our experiences with hearing loss. It was a great opportunity for those with hearing loss, their family members, spouses and friends to talk, listen, laugh and learn from each other. Some came seeking solutions and others came to connect with others with hearing loss. It's nice to be among others with hearing loss (and spouses of those who have hearing loss) and have a sense of "belonging" and realize that we are not alone. I strongly encourage these types of meetings in every chapter! *John Kinstler, Chapter President*



### From HLAA Fox Valley: Chapter PRIDE in a BIG WAY!!!

This HLAA chapter has many dedicated people within! Congratulations are in order to Nancy & Dave Gilbertson for their effort to develop the **HOPE Discussion Group project**. HOPE was started because we realized that HLAA meetings had moved away from the 'self help' format, to a more educational format. New people, especially, were not getting their personal questions answered, and wanted to participate in a format that allowed time for discussion. Nancy identified this the first time she came to a meeting! Most important, she offered to help establish a discussion group where people could Hear Other People's Experiences! Dave has been by her side from day one! "HOPE" was featured in a recent HLAA Magazine, and several other chapters in the country are working to develop HOPE groups! We are proud to announce that Nancy & Dave have been honored with a national "**Spirit of HLAA Award**", and, Nancy has been awarded the much coveted **Rocky & Ahme Stone Endowment Scholarship** for the 2017 national convention. **Congratulations & Thanks to Nancy & Dave Gilbertson!**

**And There's More ....** Because of the success of HOPE, and other chapter projects, including the CI group, excellent programs, a great newsletter, chapter growth with increased national membership and more, **Fox Valley Chapter will receive the "Chapter on a Mission Award" from National HLAA.** Awards will be presented at the 2017 National HLAA Convention in Salt Lake City in June.



*From Fox Valley Chapter News April 2017 Issue*

### From HLAA Metro Milwaukee....



As a leader of a small HLAA Chapter, I have a unique position when speaking with organizations and special people who are providing our organization with gifts. This has happened twice recently. I want to share this: Right before Christmas, I received a check from the *Dorothy Inbusch Foundation, Inc* for \$1,500.00, for our Chapter for Operating/Project costs. I had written a grant for our Hearing Loop EXPO and they responded in kind with this funding. Last week, I received an email from the family of Karen Jorgensen, now deceased, of whom had left us \$500.00 to our HLAA (SHHH) Chapter in her Last Will and Testament. I met with her son, Jack Jorgensen, to complete the transaction on her behalf.

Of note, these wonderful gifts are stepping stones to help pave the way for us to make inroads for the next generation, to understand how living well with hearing loss is what we are all about. Our EXPO was the starting point for this region. Karen Jorgensen saw that years ago, when she first helped start a hearing loss group in the Waukesha area in the late 1980s/early 1990's. I have thanked these gracious contributors for their gifts to our Metro Chapter. I look forward to collaborating with the HLAA Board of Trustees, and our Chapter members for a successful year in 2017 and beyond.

*Eloise Schwarz, Leader Emeritus /Metro Milw Chapter*



**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.

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 contact: "T" 920-420-8462 Chapter members hail from all over the northeastern and central part of the state. The chapter has a monthly newsletter and a FaceBook page. Chapter's E-mail: [hlaafoxvalley@gmail.com](mailto:hlaafoxvalley@gmail.com)



Regular chapter meetings are preceded by a discussion group. H.O.P.E. is all about Hearing Other People's Experiences with hearing loss. 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](#) for specifics on time & meeting programs.

#### Madison Chapter

The Madison chapter meets at 6PM on the fourth Wednesday of the month at Ultratec, located at [4450 Science 50 Science Drive, Madison WI](#). Meetings include speakers, presentations, discussions and offsite social events. For more information or to sign up for our email list, go to [www.hlaamadison.com](http://www.hlaamadison.com). For information Contact: John, 608- 695-3170, [jkinstler@me.com](mailto:jkinstler@me.com). Or Lisa (608)838-6617 [lzovar@hlaamadison.com](mailto:lzovar@hlaamadison.com)



**"Like" HLAA-Madison chapter on Facebook!**

**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 person is [Eloise Schwarz](#)  
Please check with her to verify dates and programs.

**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. The only way we can reach hard of hearing people of all ages in Wisconsin is through you! **Share our newsletter with others. Copy it, forward it, whatever works! It is also posted at: [www.hlaawi.org](http://www.hlaawi.org)**

We reserve the right to not publish material that is contrary to the HLAA mission to open the world of communication to people with hearing loss through education, information sharing, advocacy and peer support.

#### *Fifteen Feet to the Microphone....*



David Seligman, a member of HLAA Madison has a life long fascination with finding humor in daily life. After wearing two hearing aids for almost 40 years, David's interest is now in helping others adjust to their hearing loss. His life experiences, combined with his sense of humor bring a unique perspective in helping others understand and appreciate the challenges of living with a hearing loss in today's world. David hopes that those with hearing

loss and those with normal hearing alike, can look at and communicate with each other with a lighter and gentler touch. David is retired from the Wisconsin state government and currently works part-time as a special education assistant at a local elementary school in Madison. An article written by David, "Fifteen Feet to the Microphone" was published in the March/April 2017 issue of HLAA's *Hearing Loss Magazine*.