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2016 Walk4Hearing Update

Meet Jerry Lapidakis, President of the HLAA-WI Board of Trustees



We take this opportunity to introduce the newly elected president of the HLAA-WI Board of Trustees; Jerry Lapidakis. Jerry is looking forward to working with the board and chapter leaders in Wisconsin. He believes that HLAA has much to offer, and looks forward to being a part of growing the organization in our state.

Jerry retired from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Forest Management Division in 1997, then began working for the Seno Woodland Education Center near Burlington WI, developing the facilities and outdoor education programs for landowners, educators and students. He also worked part time for the Wisconsin Southern Railroad as chief car steward on their private business cars. Jerry's hobbies include community theater, (acting and as a board member), traveling (mostly by train), caring for his two acres of woods and yard, and volunteering at the county humane society and at the Whiskey River Railroad. His civic experience includes 15 years on the Stoughton school board, and on the town planning commission.

Jerry and his wife, Karen have two married daughters and four grandchildren. He and Karen live in Stoughton, which is just south of Madison.

Jerry has profound hearing loss in one ear, and severe loss in the other. He acquired his first hearing aid in 1999 and graduated to binaural hearing aids shortly thereafter, until he lost most of his hearing in the more profound ear in 2012. He is currently using a bi-cross hearing system to benefit from sound coming from both directions.

Jerry became interested in HLAA when his audiologist suggested he attend a meeting of the Madison HLAA Chapter. He found the meetings beneficial, and joined the national HLAA organization. In 2013 he was elected to the HLAA-WI board, and was elected secretary in 2014. After attending the 2015 national HLAA convention in St. Louis, and gaining greater insight into all that HLAA offers, he agreed to accept nomination to the presidency of HLAA-WI.

A special interest of Jerry's is advocating for hearing loops. Through a grant, he was able to get a hearing loop installed in Stoughton's community theater. Currently, that is the only looped theater in Dane County. They are using that looped facility as an example to others to convince them to install the technology in other venues.

Jerry says his goals as president of HLAA-WI are to provide better communication with HLAA Chapters and members in Wisconsin, to promote programs and activities statewide through HLAA, and to raise public awareness of hearing loss by promoting communication access. We all look forward to working with Jerry, and are grateful he has accepted the presidency of HLAA-WI.

HLAA is a national membership organization. Annual dues of \$35 are paid to the national organization. When you join HLAA you become a part of a movement to eradicate the stigmas attached to hearing loss & much more. Please add your voice to our cause! www.hearingloss.org/join

Editor's Note: There are links in this newsletter that will take you to more detailed information. If they do not work, it means that the original source has removed the information from the internet. We apologize for the inconvenience.

O'Connor Appointed to Governor's Council for Deaf & Hard of Hearing

We are pleased to announce that Tom O'Connor, a member of the HLAA-WI Board of Trustees has received a gubernatorial appointment to the Wisconsin Governor's Council for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing & Deaf Blind. Tom, from Fond du lac, has been an active member of HLAA for many years.

Congratulations on this appointment Tom. We look forward to receiving your reports from the Council and from the Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and to collaboration between ODDH and HLAA.

How to Help a Person with Hearing Loss Cope at Holiday Gatherings...

Keeping the people you care about in the conversation and part of the celebration is one of the most meaningful things you can do this holiday season. Even when surrounded by loved ones, a friend or family member's difficulty hearing can make them feel cut off. Too often, people with hearing loss withdraw socially and experience sadness—even symptoms of depression—during the holidays.

Even people who use hearing technology can experience these feelings because the noise that is prevalent in group gatherings renders their hearing devices virtually useless. Don't assume that because someone has hearing aids their hearing problems are over.



So, how can you be supportive?

1. You can be attentive: If you see that someone is quiet at a holiday dinner or party, try to bring them back into the conversation. People tend to withdraw when they cannot understand the conversation. Tell them 'who' or 'what' you are talking about.
2. Turn down the volume: Loud background music or TV interferes with the intelligibility of speech. If conversation is the goal of the gathering, turn other audio sources down or off.
3. Keep the room well lit: Hearing difficulty is multiplied many times over when a person with hearing loss cannot clearly see the speaker. A 'lights off romantic setting' just plain doesn't work.
4. Speak clearly: Do your best to speak slowly and at a comfortable volume without mumbling or slurring your words. Project your voice, but don't shout. It's best not to chew, smoke, or put your hands to your face while speaking.
5. Face the person: Facing the person you are speaking with makes it easier for them to understand the words because they can see your facial expressions. People with hearing loss depend on facial expressions (speech reading) more than people realize. It's also a good idea to get their attention before speaking by saying their name or gently touching their hand, arm, or shoulder.
6. Rephrase: If someone needs you to repeat something you said; please do. If that doesn't work, try rephrasing. Do not say "Never mind; it wasn't important". That phrase tells the person they are not important. That is why people with hearing loss withdraw.
7. Stay close: Try to stay close to those with hearing loss when speaking to them. It is difficult to hear someone from across the room and, of course it's also more difficult to see the speaker.
8. Seek them out: Sometimes the best thing you can do for someone who is having difficulty hearing is to seek them out and enjoy a one-on-one conversation in a quiet corner, a quiet room, or during a quiet walk.
9. Seat them next to someone who will be a patient advocate: Some people are just good at being aware of others' needs and empathizing. If someone you love is struggling with hearing loss, try to pair them at the dinner table with someone who will be helpful. Not surprisingly, a round table where everyone can see everyone else is the best possible table setting for a hard of hearing person.

10. It's a two way street: The person with hearing loss also has a responsibility to do the best they can to hear. That means being able to admit to needing help and to use all possible means to hear as best they can. Add-on technology that goes beyond hearing aids can make a huge difference in noisy settings.

As a last resort, it helps to understand there are times when it's best to step away without anger and bitterness.



Annual HLAA-WI Meeting Notes

October 10, 2005

Held at "Hear Wisconsin" in West Allis

Officers elected: President, Jerry Lapidakis; Vice President, Liza Segleau; Treasurer, Tom O'Connor; Secretary, Lisa Zovar

Trustees elected: Juliette Sterkens as a member at large; Lisa Zovar for a new term. Retired from board; Angela Eggebrecht & Jackie Lewis

Decision was made to cut the HLAA-WI newsletter publication from 4 issues a year to 2 issues a year. Julie Olson will continue as editor. The website will be revamped with Sr. Liza Segleau serving as webmaster. www.hlaa-wi.org

A SKYPE training presented by Edward Ogiba, national HLAA staff member generated discussion on: 1. The need for someone to serve as State Chapter Coordinator in Wisconsin. 2. A request for all HLAA members to review and understand the HLAA Public Policy Agenda paper. (NOTE: **There is a link to this paper on the bottom of page 8 of this newsletter.**) 3. The need for more outreach about HLAA. Suggestions: Have business cards printed and distributed to active members to hand out; Redistribute HLAA magazines in places like medical and dental offices, beauty salons, fitness clubs, etc. Perhaps placing a sticker with chapter information on the cover. People will pick these up. 4. Find ways to grow and support existing chapters and encourage new chapters to develop in areas that need them. 5. Reach out to veterans. (They are eligible for a years free membership in HLAA.)

The Milwaukee Metro Chapter presented their plans to hold an Educational Hearing Loop Conference in the fall of 2016. The conference will run in tandem with the HLAA-WI Annual Meeting in the fall of 2016. (See announcement on page 9.)

Trustees agreed to reach out to veterans, who are eligible for a year's free membership and free national 'first time' convention registration.

Tom O'Connor strongly recommended more HH applicants apply to the Governor's Council. There are openings for hard of hearing people.

Can Attending a National HLAA Convention Inspire You to do

More? By Jerry Lapidakis, HLAA-WI Board President

Someone recently asked me, "Did going to the National HLAA Convention inspire you to become more involved in HLAA-WI?" The answer to that is a definite "Yes". I had agreed to be secretary to the state board the previous year as I just wanted a little more involvement and a chance to learn about the organization. I really had little knowledge of the state or national organization. I thought being secretary was a good way to learn more.

I was becoming more involved with the local Madison chapter when the opportunity came up to go to National. I was interested and the local chapter offered me a stipend to attend. Well, the experience of going to National opened my eyes to everything that is HLAA. I had no idea of the myriad programs, initiatives and support they offered.

So, I was definitely inspired with so many ideas and thoughts about what we could do here in our chapters and the state.



My goals are to make the state board an effective leadership group that supports the local chapters and is a source for local and statewide project information. We want to support chapters as they advocate for better awareness of hearing loss in all areas of life. Specifically, as a Board, we want to improve communications with the chapters through the website and newsletter, fill the all-important position of state chapter coordinator, promote hearing loop initiatives, increase support involvement and support for the Walk4Hearing, as well as several other initiatives.

So, yes, the national convention helped inspire me to become more involved in HLAA-WI. With your help and inspiration we can make HLAA stronger in our communities and in Wisconsin.

Financial Support Available to Attend National HLAA Convention

HLAA-WI has funds to provide two \$500 stipends for the national convention in Washington D.C. in 2016. The stipends will be awarded to applicants who are actively involved in the state organization or in a Wisconsin chapter.

To apply, request an application from Tom O'Connor, treasurer of HLAA-WI at: tocon-nor@hotmail.com

National HLAA also offers several scholarships to first time convention attendees. Application information is available on the HLAA national website: www.hearingloss.org

HLAA-Fox Valley and HLAA-Madison also have offered stipends or scholarships for this purpose. Funding is generated through the annual Walk4Hearing and from generous donations from HLAA members.

CONVENTION

Hearing Loss Association of America

2016

**June 23 - 26 Washington Hilton
1919 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20009**

Early-bird Registration is Open NOW!

Discounted registration rates are good through January 31, 2016.

Register by the deadline to be entered in a drawing for an iLuv **Smartshaker**, a wireless alarm controlled by your smartphone (iOS and Android). Smartshakers will be awarded to 15 lucky early-birds!

Early-bird registrants of the Full-activity package will be eligible to select their table at the *Capital* banquet starting in February (the next opportunity will be in April).

Information about hotels, registration, and more is available at: www.hearingloss.org/content/convention

Microsoft's Jenny Lay-Flurrie Keynote Speaker at National HLAA Convention



HLAA is delighted to introduce you to our keynote speaker, Jenny Lay-Flurrie, Senior Director at Microsoft leading the Trusted Experiences Team (TExT). The Trusted Experiences Team which focuses on accessibility, privacy and online safety, is at the forefront of creating positive experiences that apply technology to make a difference in the world and the lives of individuals.

Jenny has a passion to see people of all abilities reach their full potential. In mid-October, Jenny was honored by the White House as a Disability Employment *Champion of Change*.

Read more about the dynamic Jenny Lay-Flurrie at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2014/10/20/disability-my-strength> and <http://www.microsoft.com/en-us/news/stories/people/jenny-lay-flurrie.html>. Jenny will deliver her keynote address during the Opening Session on **Thursday, June 23, 2016.**

More Convention Experiences....



Sr. Liza Segleau, Julie Olson, Tom O'Connor, Christine Klessig, Eloise Schwarz, Chris Prust & Lisa Zovar share a light moment at the HLA A convention.

From Tom O'Connor...

As a long term HLA A member, I attended the St. Louis Convention in St. Louis this year and had a great time learning and interacting with both the vendors and with other HOH (Hard of Hearing) people.

The last convention I attended was held in Iowa in the early 90s. I am sorry I have not attended any since then. This year, it was Déjà vu, I had forgotten how much I had learned from others and at the workshops. It was fun to see some familiar faces from the past too. I had a great time at the convention, and I will definitely attend the 2016 Convention, I can't wait!

The exhibits and vendors were fantastic. They impressed me with their knowledge and also with their patience in answering my questions and hearing my concerns.

The workshops were varied and interesting. When you go to a HLA A Convention, you have to make difficult choices about which workshops you want to attend as there are 4 tracks running simultaneously, along with other special workshops for HLA A Chapters and state associations. I tried to fit in as much as I could.

I learned a lot about cell phones, and how to select one that will work with my personal hearing devices, including ways that Smartphones can be used as assistive listening devices. One hearing aid manufacturers held a workshop titled "What You Should Demand from your Audiologist" that encouraged us to be proactive consumers. Hearing loss in the work place was the focus of a longer symposium. Of special interest were the exhibits and workshops on implantable hearing devices for those with profound sensorineural hearing loss. Things are developing quickly.

The convention experience is not without social time and humor. Comedian, Gael Hannan's humorous presentation, "A HOH on the Road", shared her 'traveling with hearing loss' experiences. The 'Get Acquainted Party' held in the grand hall of the beautiful hotel the convention was held and was enjoyed by all, as was the Farewell Banquet.

Just being in an environment where everyone understands hearing loss is fun.

I encourage you to consider attending the 2016 convention. I look forward to seeing you there!

Tom O'Connor, HLA A-WI Board Treasurer

PS: If you have any questions or want a more personal response, shoot me an e-mail with your questions or concerns.

From Christine Klessig...

"WISH YOU WERE HERE"

That's what your postcard from the HLA A Convention in St. Louis would have said. I was a first time attendee in June and enjoyed every moment. Here are some of the highlights.

The majestic Grand Hall of Union Station Hotel reminded me of the Sistine Chapel. Every evening there was a laser light show on the cavernous ceiling along with beautiful music. Talk about atmosphere! A brief history of this elegantly restored building was given in one of the meeting sessions. The onsite museum was interesting as well.

The Newcomers Orientation really helped me plan my time to get the most out of the convention. Along with the Get Acquainted Party, held later that day, I met folks from around the country who are also coping with hearing loss. Everyone at the convention "gets it." I'm sure that, like me, they went back home with new knowledge and energy.

The Exhibit Hall housed over 50 booths featuring every conceivable type of hearing assistive technology. The adjacent Demonstration Rooms offered the chance to try out devices firsthand. All under one roof. The vendors were knowledgeable and friendly. There was no pressure to buy anything. (I purchased a wristband alarm clock which will come in handy when travelling. And no shipping fees!)

The Workshop selection was amazing. It was hard to choose which one to attend. Each time slot had a choice of four different workshop tracks. Something for everyone.

Cardinals vs Cubs at Busch Stadium. It was a perfect night for a baseball game; balmy with a light breeze, a hotdog with all the fixings, and a cold beer. Tickets and transportation to the game were subsidized by one of the convention sponsors. The Cardinals won.

In addition to the baseball game, convention sponsors generously provided **tasty treats** throughout our stay. Starbucks coffee every morning, a buffet lunch on the exhibit hall floor, ice cream cones during the workshop break – to name a few.

Inspiring speakers at the workshops, opening session, symposium, banquet, and breakfast. Because all sessions were equipped with assistive listening systems (hearing loop and/or infrared) plus CART, I could hear every word they said. Enough said.

Vera Bradley Outlet Store. Word on the street was that a nearby mall included a 50% off store for these beautiful accessories. I am pleased to report that I now own a botanical print weekend bag with a sleeve that slides over my suitcase handle.

I definitely plan to attend next year's convention in Washington DC. Although no longer eligible for the "first timer" discount, I now understand that there is much more that I can do to live well with my hearing loss. I appreciate the financial support provided by the Fox Valley HLA A chapter. Hope to see you all at next year's convention.

Christine Klessig,

Fox Valley Chapter Delegate
Member of the HLA A-WI Board of Trustees



New Chapter Start-up Program

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

Fox Valley Regional Chapter, meets at 6:30 PM on the 2nd Monday of each month from March through December at the Unitarian Fellowship in Appleton. The meeting room has a hearing loop and an FM system. CART is provided for all meetings. Contact Colleen: cvanrooy@yahoo.com or Rhonda: rclancey@hotmail.com Phone contacts: "T" 920-420-8462 or Lorna: 920-725-2579. Chapter members hail from all over the northeastern and central part of the state. The chapter has a monthly newsletter and a FaceBook page. **Add your name & address to the newsletter list [HERE](#).**



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

Our cochlear implant support group meets quarterly. Anyone who has a CI or who is interested in learning about them is welcome.

The chapter's monthly newsletter, which is available on request via the link above, 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.

Lake Country Chapter (Wales) meets the 2nd Thursday of each month at The Wales Community Center, 216 W. South St. in Wales. Contact: James Goddeyne
jgoddeyne@gmail.com

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



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

NOTICE: We regret to report that chapters that were located in Western Wisconsin (Menomonie) and Northern Wisconsin (Minocqua) are no longer holding meetings. There remains a need for chapters in both of those areas of Wisconsin. New leadership must be found before they can develop or rebuild. A priority of HLAA-WI is to assist emerging chapters. Please call on your state officers if you need support. Hearing loss does matter, but those who are affected by it are the most logical persons to get involved. Please think about it.

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](#). Help us reach hard of hearing people of all ages in Wisconsin. **Share our newsletter with others. Copy it, forward it, whatever works! It is also posted at: www.hlaa-wi.org**

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

Editor's Edifications: Mondegreens and Hearing Loss ... Been There; Done That! Bet You Have Too.

Our brains are amazing. Even when we don't hear well, they still try to make sense out of what we hear. When we miss something, which we often do, they try to fill in the gaps with something that seems to make sense, even if it doesn't really make sense--if that makes sense!

Think of what happens when we listen to a song on the radio and don't quite get the song's words. Our faulty hearing turns some phrases to gibberish, but our brains still work hard to try to figure it out. Often we come up with something totally different than what's really in the song. The results may be totally off the wall, but make sense to us in a "funny" kind of way. This happens to hearing people too of course, but it is much more common among hard of hearing people. Amazingly, there is a term for this phenomenon when it relates to song lyrics. These confusions are called "mondegreens".

The origin of the term mondegreen is fascinating. It was coined when American writer Sylvia Wright (1917-1981) explained, "When I was a child, my mother used to read poetry aloud to me. One of my favorite poems was the 17th century Scottish ballad, 'The Bonnie Earl o' Moray'. She said, 'As I remember, the first stanza began': 'Ye Highlands and ye Lowlands, Oh, where hae ye been? They hae slain the Earl o' Moray, And Lady Mondegreen'". (Look it up in Wikipedia.)

In an essay "The Death of Lady Mondegreen", published in Harper's magazine in November 1954, Wright described "the bonny Earl holding the beautiful Lady Mondegreen's hand, both bleeding profusely but faithful unto the death". Imagine her surprise when she learned that Lady Mondegreen existed only in her imagination. The correct words for the last two lines of the stanza were: "They hae slain the Earl o' Moray, And laid him on the green". She had misheard the last line, and her brain came up with, "And Lady Mondegreen"!

Since the year 2000, the non-existent "Lady Mondegreen's" name has been immortalized in English dictionaries and on Wikipedia, and is used to describe mishearings. Mondegreen is defined as a "misunderstood or misinterpreted word or phrase resulting from a mishearing of the lyrics of a song". Another definition is a "mishearing or misinterpretation of a phrase, in a way that gives it a new meaning". In plain English, this means our brains sometimes fill in missing words with other words that sound much the same; make sense to us, but change the meaning completely.

Most everyone with partial deafness has stories of 'mondegreen experiences'. One of my most embarrassing was misunderstanding the word 'wake' for 'lake'. Responding to a new friend who said he had come to my party from his neighbor's wake, by saying "It was such a nice day; I'll bet you had fun on the water" did little to help raise our friendship level. The expression on his face did not relate to the 'nice day' I imagined, and I had no clue why he walked away from me in confusion until hours later when someone told me his friend had died.

I also recall finding humor in a preschool child's drawing of 'round John virgin' in a picture of the Nativity he had drawn in Sunday school. All the proper characters were there, and 'round John' was with them. Whether we have hearing loss or not, our brains work to make sense of what our ears hear.

How about you? Everyone probably has 'mondegreens' in their personal story books, but I'm betting that those of us with hearing loss have more of them. Quite often, whether we like it or not, our best guesses are wrong. Consequently, we sometimes end up 'knowing' some things that are not right. It's frightening to think of how much we misunderstand that we don't realize we misunderstood. It's no wonder a sense of humor is necessary if we truly want to live WELL with hearing loss!

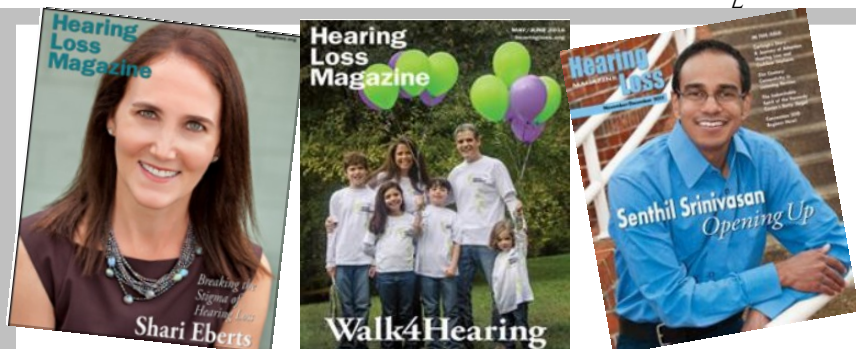
Try explaining this to your friends and significant others! And don't forget to smile.

Written by Julie Olson, HLAA-WI Newsletter Editor, with credits to Neil Bauman Ph.D., and Wikipedia.

PS: Send me your 'mondegreens'. We'll share them in a future article.

Julie Olson, Editor HLAA-WI Newsletter julieo@athenet.net



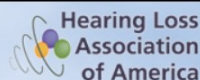


Hearing Loss Magazine is published bimonthly and is delivered as part of membership in Hearing Loss Association of America.

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](#).



HLAA in ACTION

Making Our Consumer Voice Heard

ADVOCACY UPDATES 12-2-2015

[TSA Spotlights the International Day of People with Disabilities](#)

The Disability Branch of TSA (Transportation Security Administration) has issued a paper, "What to Expect." TSA's Disability Branch distributes these papers each month as part of their Awareness series where they spotlight dos and don'ts for screening passengers with a particular disability or medical condition.

[Sprint Drops Wireless CapTel App](#)

Sprint has decided to decommission its Wireless CapTel by Sprint app service by December 7, 2015. Sprint provided formal notice to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) on November 6, 2015. [\[Read more\]](#)

[FCC Issues Rulemaking on HAC Wireless Phones](#)

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has issued their Report and Order and Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) on Hearing Aid Compatible Wireless Phones. Posted with the Order are comments from the Commissioners. [\[Read more\]](#)

Veterans Eligible for a Complimentary HLAA Membership



HLAA is honored to offer two types of membership for United States veterans (both include all other [benefits of Individual membership](#)):

- Digital Membership – this complimentary membership includes our award-winning *Hearing Loss Magazine* in digital format; or
- Non-Digital Membership – *Hearing Loss Magazine* will be delivered right to your mail box; complimentary for one year, renewal at \$35/year.

[Hearing Loss Magazine](#), a helpful resource on the latest in technology, medical issues, legislation, personal stories, and more. If you are a veteran and are interested in joining HLAA [please complete this form](#) and mail it, fax it or email it in.

Complimentary HLAA 1st Time Convention Registration for Veterans Also

HLAA would like to show its support of veterans attending by offering a convention registration at no charge. For more information about registering for HLAA's annual convention, contact the [Director of Events and Marketing](#).

It has been well documented that service personnel returning from combat zones experience a high incidence of noise induced sensorineural hearing loss. Please reach out to the veterans you know and encourage them to experience HLAA.



Important Report: Buying Hearing Aids Should Be Easier, Cheaper 10/27/2015



A report from the President's Commission on Science and Technology (PCAST) strongly supports shifting some of the power and decision-making away from the hearing aid industry and dispensing professionals. The report, which was sent to President Obama, specifically addresses the needs of older adults with age-related hearing loss, who too often do without hearing aids because hearing aids are expensive, and access to hearing care is complex and difficult.

The report notes that the average price of one hearing aid is more than \$2,300 and that most consumers need two, causing "high costs to be a major barrier for people," especially since Medicare and most insurance plans do not cover the devices.

Age-related hearing loss is by far the largest single category of hearing loss, affecting 1 out of 4 adults between the ages of 60 and 69, more than half between 70 and 79, and 80 percent of those older than 80, according to the report. Failure to treat hearing loss can result in isolation and depression, an increased risk of cognitive decline and an increased risk of falls. The report calls for three basic areas of change to reduce the cost of hearing health care, increase the number of people using hearing technology, and stimulate more innovation and technology:

- **A change in the process to one similar to buying eyeglasses or contact lenses.** The Federal Trade Commission suggests that audiogram results be given to the consumer, who then can use it to shop around, without being locked into the cost of a particular device or service.
- **A new, cheaper category of hearing aid.** The commission recommends that the FDA create a new category of "basic" hearing aids and associated hearing tests. Such hearing aids, for mild to moderate age-related loss, could be sold at retail outlets for significantly less. The report notes, "this would allow entrepreneurs and innovators to enter the market and open a space for creative solutions."
- **Relaxing of restrictions on personal sound amplification products (PSAPs).** These devices resemble hearing aids but cost far less. The commission recommends that the FDA recall its previous draft guidance on PSAPs and allow the devices to advertise themselves as devices to correct hearing.

The report's findings were hailed by consumer advocate groups. Anna Gilmore Hall, executive director of the Hearing Loss Association of America, said that "HLAA fully endorses all efforts to lower the cost and improve the clearly inadequate hearing healthcare system, which only reaches 30 percent of those who need help."

Charlotte Yeh, M.D., AARP's chief medical officer and a member of PCAST's advisory council, said it was "exciting to think that accessibility and affordability of hearing solutions could be possible."

Response from hearing professionals was varied. The American Academy of Audiology (AAA) issued a statement expressing concern "about the potential impact of these recommendations on patients, audiologists, and audiology practices." While the Academy of Doctors of Audiology (ADA), applauded the PCAST report. The Hearing Industries Association, (HIA) which represents the hearing aid industry, said it was "disappointed with the PCAST report", and expressed concern for patients, especially those whose "hearing loss is caused by conditions which cannot be self-diagnosed."

The report's authors acknowledged that "these changes would likely disrupt the current business practices of hearing aid manufacturers and dispensers."

Many consumer advocates agree that the changes are sorely needed — that when the vast majority of people who need care are not getting it, something is wrong with the system.

[PCAST: New Report on Aging and Hearing Loss](#) 10/27/2015

[Academy of Doctors of Audiology Applaud PCAST Report on OTC Hearing Aids](#) 11/17/2015

[Hearing Tracker Survey: Over-the-Counter Hearing Aids](#) 11/17/2015

This is a fascinating and controversial topic. Please take time to read the report. You are encouraged to express your thoughts by participating in the Hearing Tracker Survey. More at: www.hearingloss.org

HLAA's National Public Policy and Advocacy Agenda

The Hearing Loss Association of America advocates for equal access for approximately 48 million Americans with hearing loss. We work with industry and government to expand access to mainstream and assistive technologies, enforce existing disability laws, regulations and standards that impact the lives of people with hearing loss. HLAA promotes self-advocacy and empowerment of people with hearing loss to ensure equal opportunity in the areas of telecommunications, employment, health care, education and community life. Full statement [HERE](#).

**Anyone can sign up to receive our
award winning HLAA-WI
Newsletter.**

HLAA-WI News is produced periodically by The Hearing Loss Association of America—Wisconsin, Inc. (HLAA-WI). It is available only by electronic mail. Each edition is also linked to the HLAA-WI website, along with past archived issues that share the rich history of HLAA-WI www.hlaa-wi.org

We send each edition by electronic mail to those for whom we have e-mail addresses. Sign up at the HLAA Madison address below, & PLEASE be sure your spam filters don't block e-mail from: HLAAMadison@yahoo.com We are grateful to HLAA Madison for sending the publication via Mail-Chimp.

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

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

When you join HLAA, 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!

**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 Matters!
We are not Invisible! 09/2015**



In August 2015, when the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued the results of a survey that asked questions for the first time about disabilities, we were stunned to find that people with hearing loss were entirely left out.

HLAA sent letters to the CDC and to the White House, issued a media release, and an action alert asking consumers to express their thinking of CDC's survey. Many of you sent emails with compelling stories, making it clear we should have been counted from the start.

As a result, CDC contacted HLAA. We learned that CDC has been working for years with states to collect health care data under the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) survey. In 2013, for the first time, CDC included questions regarding disability in BRFSS. *They tell us that they excluded people with hearing loss because the survey is done via telephone; they were concerned that the population with hearing loss would be undercounted as a result of their collection method.*

We find this unacceptable. Clearly, people with hearing loss have access to telephones: hearing-aid-compatible cell phones, phones with volume control, captioned phones, Video Relay Service, and even the old TTYs. In addition, had they been truly concerned that people with hearing loss do not own phones, they could have changed the data collection method. Instead of underrepresenting us, they chose not to count us at all, rendering us invisible once again.

In our talks with CDC, we were asked to write a letter of support for inclusion of a question on hearing loss in upcoming surveys, which we provided. We have since learned that there will be a question seeking to find people with hearing loss in the 2016 survey. It is a start.

However, the question that was approved by the CDC, "Are you deaf or do you have a significant hearing difficulty?" does not go nearly far enough. If you are a public health official trying to tease out information about the health of your community, one would think it would make sense to make the most of the opportunity. It just makes sense to learn whether health care needs of residents who are deaf are different than those who have significant hearing difficulty. We have asked that this question be reconsidered and revised.

HLAA also asked that the CDC's marketing materials for this survey makes it clear that until 2016, they have only a piece of the picture of health in the disability community. HLAA also asked to be part of a cross-disability advisory council to ensure that mistakes like this never happen again. It has been said before, and truly is applicable in this case, "nothing about us without us." This would never have happened had we been there when decisions were being made.

We will continue to work with the CDC. They have been open to our suggestions and we feel while not all issues have been resolved, we are making a good start. We have you to thank for that. Your voices were heard.

Anna Gilmore-Hall, Executive Director HLAA

Ear Bud Headphones More Likely to Damage Hearing than Over-the-Ear Headphones

Ear bud headphones, even at low volumes, may be causing permanent damage to your hearing.



Researchers at Harvard Medical School's Eaton Peabody Laboratory in the US have found that you can lose up to 90% of your cochlear nerve fibres without losing the ability to detect a tone in quiet environments. But once background noise is introduced, hearing ability drops dramatically. Therefore, the hair cells in the inner ear may be completely intact but hearing is still lost if the nerve synapses are damaged.

For decades, scientists have looked, almost exclusively, at the loss of hair cells as an indicator of hearing loss. A study released by the Acoustical Society of America however reports a "hidden hearing loss," shedding new light on hearing protection.

The sound waves travel through the middle ear into the cochlea of the inner ear, where they stimulate hair cells. The organ of Corti, inside the cochlea, then transforms the physical motion of the hair cells into electronic pulses for the brain. It's here the discovery has been made.

Ear bud headphones deliver stronger, more damaging waves straight to the cochlea — even at lower volumes. Without a known treatment for cochlear nerve damage, researchers strongly recommend exercising caution.

"Nerve fibres will never reconnect," said Charles Liberman, director of the Eaton Peabody Lab, in the study. "They no longer respond to sound, and, within a few months or years, the rest of the neuron will disappear."

To help slow hearing impairment, it is recommended using over-the-ear headphones instead. They provide a more natural delivery of sound, softening the blow to the inner ear.

Source: www.nydailynews.com and www.sciencedaily.com

HLAA DEVELOPMENT

When doing your holiday shopping, don't forget to think about how your shopping can support HLAA. Here are three ways that a portion of your purchases could be donated to HLAA.

Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible [Amazon Smile](https://www.amazon.com/smile) purchases to HLAA whenever you shop on Amazon Smile.

Shop using [iGive](https://www.give.com/) and up to 26% of your purchase is donated to HLAA. Shop online at more than 900 great stores —**its free**— it's simple. Save money with thousands of coupons and promo codes to use at checkout.

With [GoodSearch](https://www.goodsearch.com/) find coupons and free shipping offers at your favorite stores and a percentage of your purchase goes to HLAA at no cost to you.

HLAA ADVOCACY

Historic Changes Coming for Access to Hearing Aid Compatible Wireless Phones

HLAA, in collaboration with the wireless industry and other consumer groups, has submitted a consensus letter to the FCC outlining a plan to make all wireless phones hearing aid compatible (HAC) within eight years. This proposal means greater choice in wireless phone selection for those with hearing aids or cochlear implants than what is currently available. [Read the whole story here.](#)

Playing an Instrument May Improve Hearing 11/09/2015

If you have a hearing loss and play an instrument, you may be better at detecting sounds against noisy backgrounds, processing sound and at remembering what you have heard than those who do not play an instrument.



A study carried out by professor Nina Kraus of neurobiology, physiology and otolaryngology at Northwestern University, Illinois, has found that among people with hearing loss, musicians were better at detecting, processing and remembering sounds.

"Part of what you are doing as a musician is listening for meaning, harmonies and the sound of your instrument. Musicians outperform non-musicians in remembering what they've heard, and this skill is needed to hear in noisy environments", Nina Kraus said. "The nerves in the brains of musicians responded more clearly and precisely than non-musicians. By learning to play an instrument a person can develop auditory skills that improve the ability to hear sound and speech", she said.

Professor Nina Kraus' study consisted of 18 musicians and 19 non-musicians, aged 45 to 65, all with hearing loss. She tested their hearing in noisy environments by monitoring electrical activity from nerves in the brain in response to sounds.

Even though the study focused on those who had played an instrument since childhood, professor Kraus believes hearing could also improve if adults start learning to play an instrument.

The study was published in the Journal Hearing Research.

Extend the Life of Batteries!

An eighth-grade student from Minnesota who uses hearing aids wanted to know how to make batteries last longer. By experimenting, he discovered that batteries will last longer if you let the battery sit for five minutes, positive side up, after removing the sticker and before putting it in the hearing aid. (The positive side is the completely flat side; same side as the sticker.) This allows the battery to fully activate to give the longest possible lifespan per battery—up to 85 percent longer! This is significant when considering how often batteries need to be changed.

If you buy batteries in bulk, be sure to check the expiration date on the package. Shelf life is approximately three years. Humidity, dryness and extreme temperatures also affect battery life. It pays to store batteries in a safe, dry location at room temperature.



Disclaimer: The mission of HLAA includes information sharing. Mention of goods or services in this newsletter does not mean HLAA-WI or HLAA at any level endorses same, nor should exclusion suggest disapproval.



Interested in getting involved in HLAA-WI? Committee members & future Board members are needed. Contact: lzovar@hlaamadison.com

Happy Holidays!

Check the HLAA-WI Website Often.
WWW.HLAA-WI.ORG

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 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 gift to HLAA-WI matters.

Save the Date...



**Educational
Hearing Loop Conference
November 4 & 5, 2016
Milwaukee**

This conference will be held in tandem with the 2016 Annual Meeting of HLAA-WI. Further information regarding location, cost, exhibitors, speakers and more will be published in the next HLAA-WI newsletter.

This event is being planned by HLAA Milwaukee Metro Chapter and HLAA-WI.

Might your organization find a program or training on hearing loss worthwhile?

HLAA presentations can be designed for:

- * Inservice Trainings
- * Hospital Staff
- * Service Organizations
- * Churches & Schools
- * Human Service Agencies
- * Employers
- * Conventions, Conferences, Etc.

Presentations can focus on:

- * Living WELL with hearing loss
- * Integrating an employee with hearing loss
- * Understanding the unique needs of hard of hearing people
- * Hearing Assistive Technologies

Consider having an HLAA Exhibit at your next conference or convention.

Request further information [HERE](#)

(HLAA presents from a consumer perspective and is not in business to sell services or products.)

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.



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LIKE our Facebook Pages. Please!

If you are a member of Facebook, check out the HLAA pages.

Lots of good information is posted regularly. Join in a conversation! Share information with others. It's a great way to connect.

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



Mark Your Calendars & Start Organizing!

It's time to 'think spring' although winter has hardly begun! Spring means it's time for Wisconsin's Walk4Hearing event; also known as 'The Milwaukee Walk4Hearing'.



The 2016 event is scheduled for Saturday, May 21st at a new location. The event will be held at Greenfield Park. Organizations whose missions relate to hearing loss are eligible to form 'Alliance Teams' and raise funds for their organization, while participating in the event.

Information about forming teams and raising funds will be posted on the national HLAA website in mid to late January. The sooner teams are active, the sooner we can watch the 'donation thermometer' start rising! Last year's event raised just over \$50,000! 90% of that amount goes to support HLAA and the participating organizations. Money raised supports programs, captioning, scholarships, assistive technology, peer support and more.

Keep your eye on the Walk4Hearing website for updates.
www.walk4hearing.org Click on the Milwaukee Walk.

Important Walk4Hearing Dates & Events

Planning Meeting-Saturday, January 30th

Noon to 2:00 PM at Hear Wisconsin (formerly CCHD)
10243 W. National Ave. West Allis WI

Please come if you'd like to help. RSVP to carolineludka@gmail.com (for headcount)

Kick Off Event-Saturday, April 9th

Noon-2PM at GUS Mexican Restaurant
6514 S. Lovers Lane Rd (HWY 100) Franklin WI

Walk4Hearing-Saturday, May 21st

9:00 AM - Registration

10:00 AM - Walk Begins



**Greenfield Park
Area 3A
2028 S. 124th St.
West Allis
(New Location)**