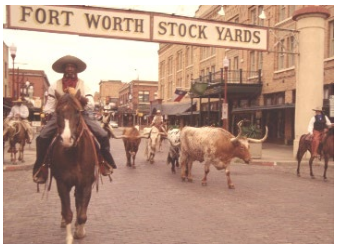

Heard in Fort Worth

Hearing Loss Association of America — Fort Worth Chapter
April 2026

April 11 Program

Fire Safety for People with Hearing Loss

Presented Elfidio Quinonez, Jr., Fort Worth firefighter and risk reduction officer
and by Greg Schmidt, FWFD firefighter and paramedic

Elfidio and Greg will discuss how the fire department can help the deaf and hard of hearing community in an emergency situation, what we can do to communicate with emergency personnel effectively, fire safety at home, and much more. They will also take questions from the audience.

Elfidio Quinonez Jr. has served as a firefighter with the Fort Worth Fire Department for over a decade. He now works in Fort Worth's Community Risk Reduction department, focusing on prevention and public safety education throughout the community. His responsibilities include installing smoke alarms, assisting with home safety inspections, teaching fire extinguisher training for businesses and schools, and providing CPR classes. He also participates in school show-and-tells, career days, and supports the Youth Firesetting Prevention Program to help reduce fire-related risks among young people. He will be joined by Greg Schmidt, FWFD firefighter and paramedic.

HLAA – Fort Worth meets on the Second Saturday of each month
in the fellowship hall of Central Christian Church, 3205 Hamilton Avenue, Fort Worth, TX 76107.
We have snacks and mingle at 9:30 a.m. and meet at 10:00. Please join us and bring a friend!
We offer real time captioning and assistive listening systems for communication accessibility.

FUTURE PROGRAMS

May 9 - Suzanne Asfar, Texas Hands and Voices, serving families with children who have hearing loss

June 13 - Elma Torres with Senior Assist and Stephanie Stone with STAR+PLUS

July 11 – HLAA National Convention Report by Chapter President Joyce Parlin and others

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The DALLAS Chapter of HLAA meets on the THIRD Saturday of each month
in room A120 (auditorium) at the Medical City Dallas Heart Hospital
at 11970 North Central Expressway, Dallas, TX 75243.

Photo Credit: *The photograph of The Fort Worth Herd on our* **Heard In Fort Worth** *banner is used by permission of The Fort Worth Herd and its sponsor, the City of Fort Worth Parks and Community Services Department.*

Joyce's Jargon

Good Day and Happy Sunshine,

This month I went back to my archived newsletter pieces and found this piece that I need to follow up on.

From an article in the Texas Highways February issue, "Peace and Quiet" by Jennifer Stewart: "As we all know, everything is bigger in Texas, and the author points out 'it seems like everything is louder, too.' Most Texans are exposed to way too much noise. Did you know that the urban and transportation planners are tasked with 'improving transportation, housing, and commercial infrastructure **to decrease noise** in communities?' I need to find those people in Fort Worth!"

Maybe our speakers for this month, Elfridio Quinonez and Greg Schmidt, can direct us to the right person. I love parks and walks especially at this time of year. Sometimes they are quiet and I can hear birds, waves, and the breeze. The author mentioned places in many Texas cities and in the state park system but didn't give a suggestion for Fort Worth. Last time I wrote, I mentioned the Botanic Gardens, but now even those gardens are surrounded by traffic noise.

Do you have a quiet place where you love to go? For those of us with devices, we can just take our devices off. Smile and enjoy the quiet!

Joyfully,
Joyce Parlin
Chapter President

2025 Chapter Board of Directors

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Heard In Fort Worth
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The Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) is the leading voice of the growing number of people with—and at risk of—hearing loss in the U.S. We advocate to increase access to care and treatment, break down stigmas through education and awareness, and empower people with hearing loss through a nationwide community of support.

Our work impacts millions, improving the lives of people with hearing loss, and elevating the importance of hearing health and accessible communication through national legislation and public policy and a network of chapters, state organizations, and grassroots efforts.

Summary of February 14 presentation

Assistive Listening Technology

Presented by Kevin Brown, owner, Southern Star Technologies

Summarized by Darlene Liesner from the meeting transcript by Carrie Gibson, CSR

Kevin Brown installs assistive listening systems. Kevin's mother's hearing loss inspired Kevin and his wife Callie to found Southern Star Technology (www.southernstartechnology.com) in 2014.

Assistive listening systems enhance sound clarity and improve communication for individuals with hearing loss. They all have an audio source, which could include a microphone, a PC, a music player, or other inputs. They have a transmitter which transmits the sound, and they have a receiver.

The receiver may be the telecoil or Auracast receiver in your hearing aids, cochlear implant, or bone conduction device or some sort of listener – an FM receiver, neck loop, or streamer that hangs around your neck. Older hearing aids had a telecoil button on the hearing aid. People with newer aids select the telecoil program via a smartphone app. The result is clear, direct sound to your ear.

At the March 14 meeting, Kevin described five assistive listening systems (Hearing Loops, RF systems, IR systems, Audio over WiFi, and Auracast (Bluetooth LE), with the pros and cons of each.

A **Hearing Loop** involves a sound source, an induction driver, and a wire loop in the floor. Your telecoil or listener (receiver) picks up the sound. Ask your audiologist to enable your telecoil. A telecoil may be in the hearing aid and just not enabled. No telecoil? Use a listener. Hearing Loops may be portable or permanent.

Loops can be installed at service counters, in public transportation, under a chair cushion, in a room in the home, in public venues, and outside. Look for an International Hearing Loop sign – an ear with a slash through it and a capital letter "T." If the sign has no "T," the facility probably has an RF or IR System. With Hearing Loops, there's no latency, that is no sound delay. Downsides include the telecoil picking up electromagnetic interference causing a buzzing sound.

Like Hearing Loops, **RF (Radio Frequency) Systems** use a sound transmitter and a receiver. With an RF or IR (Infrared) System, a headset or a neck loop plugs into the receiver. Turn on your telecoil. The neck loop sends the sound from the receiver to your hearing devices. RF systems are a relatively cheap way to meet ADA requirements. RF Systems can be used outdoors and have low latency. Receivers can get lost, or the batteries can die. RF Systems can conflict with other RF devices. There's no sound privacy. Conversations can be heard with a receiver from another room. RF systems are sometimes called FM Systems.

An **IR (InfaRed) System** transmitter receives sound from a sound source. The transmitter sends the signal to an area flooded with infrared light to a receiver worn by the individual. Use headsets or your telecoil and a neck loop connected to the receiver.

Advantages include access to multiple audio streams, relatively cheap installation, low latency, and multi-channel audio. Infared provides privacy because it does not transmit through walls. The limitations include the need for a direct "line of sight" between the transmitter and receiver. Because a darkened room is required, Infared is unsuitable for rooms with a lot of glass or glossy surfaces in sunlight and it cannot be used outdoors.

With **Audio Over Wifi**, the sound goes from the sound source through a sound system into an audio server tied to the local Wi-Fi. The user downloads a specific app to their smartphone. The sound travels over Wi-Fi and goes from your phone to your hearing devices. The audio server's multiple channels make Audio Over Wifi good in sports bars, fitness clubs, and places with multiple TVs. Significant latency (sound delay) from voice to ear is problematic.

With **Auracast (Bluetooth LE**, sound travels from a sound source through a microphone to a transmitter mounted in the ceiling or wall. Auracast receivers transmit the sound very clearly to the ear. Some hearing aids have a built-in Auracast receiver. Auracast or Bluetooth LE ear buds are on the market. Until more hearing aids are Auracast enabled, use a headset, receiver, or neck loop. Installation is cheaper than a Hearing Loop. The current Bluetooth Classic transmits data at a high rate from one device to another. The new Auracast (Bluetooth LE) transmitter transmits data in short bursts to many receivers. Still in its infancy, Auracast is the latest and greatest among assistive listening systems, but the systems are not yet widely available in facilities.

Kevin answered audience questions.

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We will acknowledge your donations in each issue of the newsletter.

The list is updated monthly, starting with the new year.

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All contributions are tax-deductible.

Hearing Loss Association of America - Fort Worth Chapter

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