



# Heard in Fort Worth

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Hearing Loss Association of America – Fort Worth Chapter  
October 2023

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## TRIPLE FEATURE THIS SATURDAY

We will have a main presentation, a brief secondary presentation, and emerge from the meeting into the odd twilight of a nearly full eclipse of the sun.

**October 14 Program**

### **Specialized Telecommunications Assistance Program (STAP)**

**Featured Speaker: Elma Torrez, with Senior Assist Texas**

STAP allows every qualifying Texas resident to obtain a FREE telecommunication device. Qualification has nothing to do with age, income, or insurance. To qualify, one needs to have at least ONE of the following disabilities: 1) Hearing Loss, 2) Vision Loss, 3) Upper Mobility Impairment, or 4) Speech Impairment. The most popular devices are a tablet, iPad, or smartphone. One can receive a device every five years.

Elma Torrez is employed with Senior Assist Texas, an authorized vendor of the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) and its program called Specialized Telecommunications Assistance Program (STAP). Elma has been serving the community in this capacity for over 15 years, mainly in the DFW area, but also in other cities in Texas.

**Also speaking: Stephanie Stone, with Maximus**

STAR+PLUS is a Texas Medicaid managed care program for people 21 and older who have disabilities or are age 65 or older. People in STAR+PLUS get Medicaid healthcare and long-term services and support through a medical plan that they choose. It is the job of the outreach staff to help recipients and community agencies learn about Texas Health Steps and help the Medicaid clients join in the STAR, STAR Kids, STAR+PLUS or Dental program.

Stephanie Stone has been an outreach counselor with Maximus for over five years. She is serving in the community as a Community Health Worker. She also has over 20 years' experience working in social services.

**November 11 Presenter: Addison Wilson, Au.D., audiologist with Carson Hearing Care Program: "Where do hearing loss and tinnitus happen, and why does it matter?"**

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**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.**

**Snacks and mingle at 9:30 a.m. and meeting at 10:00. Please join us, and bring a friend!**

*We offer realtime captioning and assistive listening systems for communication accessibility.*

*Captioning is provided courtesy of Cauthen & Associates Court Reporting and CART Services.*

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**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

Happy fall, Ya'll,

Even though it's sometimes still in the 80's, it feels like fall. Cool mornings and evenings and maybe some rain this week. I can also tell it's fall by the number of events the HLAA is participating in. Thank you to Cindy Ward and Sharon Huber (who encountered terrible traffic on her way but didn't turn around!) for their assistance with the Empowering Seniors event at the Hurst Convention center. And to Dan White for setting up the booth the day before.

Again, many contacts were made for and about the chapter. We encouraged people to get tested, wear their HA's and participate in the support that HLAA provides. Two more events - Arlington Aging Well, Oct. 17<sup>th</sup> and the Walk to End Alzheimer's, Oct. 28<sup>th</sup> - will complete the fall schedule.

The November meeting will include the election of the 2024 officers for the chapter. If you have an interest in becoming more involved, let one of the board members know. We need people who are excited about the benefits of the Fort Worth Chapter of HLAA and want to serve. Give it some thought. The board would be delighted to have new members. Major duties are listed below.

See you, Saturday Oct. 14th,  
Joyce Parlin  
Chapter President



## 2023 Chapter Board of Directors

**President:** Joyce Parlin (kjparlin@hotmail.com)  
**Vice-President:** Kevin Medlin (mysilentpew@gmail.com)  
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## Heard In Fort Worth

This newsletter is published by the  
**Fort Worth Chapter of the  
Hearing Loss Association of America**  
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The Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA), founded in 1979 by Howard E. "Rocky" Stone, is the nation's leading organization representing consumers with hearing loss. The mission of HLAA is to open the world of communication to people with hearing loss by providing information, education, support, and advocacy.



Hearing Loss Association of America  
6116 Executive Blvd., Suite 320  
Rockville, MD 20852. 301-657-2248.

*Membership has its benefits. Please join or renew. Go to [www.hearingloss.org](http://www.hearingloss.org) and click on "Membership" to join.*

# Major Duties of Chapter Officers

Chapter Bylaws call for officer election at the November meeting. Our current officers are willing to serve for another year, but other candidates would be welcome to allow us to “pass the torch.” Jill DeMoss is stepping down as Hospitality Chair, and Janice and Delton Parker have volunteered to take the Hospitality position.

**Here are the principal duties of chapter officers and committee chairs.** Please consider how you can serve.

The **President** leads the chapter and presides at chapter and board meetings.

The **Vice President** acts in the absence of the president and leads projects and initiatives as assigned by the president and/or the board.

The **Treasurer** handles the chapter funds, pays the bills, keeps records, and makes reports.

The **Secretary** records and keeps minutes of meetings and performs the other usual functions of a secretary.

The **Librarian/Historian** maintains chapter books, papers, records, etc. for lending and for chapter archives.

The **Editor** is responsible for the production and distribution of the chapter newsletter.

**Committee chairs** are **Hospitality** (greetings, refreshments, and social activities), **Program** (planning for monthly educational presentations), and other chairs as committees may be formed to meet other needs.

## “They Also Serve...”

**Darlene Liesner** volunteers as editorial assistant for the newsletter. She edits the monthly meeting transcript into a summary report which is printed in the next month’s issue. She also submits other items and ideas for publication. In addition, Darlene gathers up and helps pack our welcome table ideas and some of our equipment and gathers our outdoor signs for storage.

**Sharon Huber** volunteers as greeter for our meeting members and guests and at events where we have a display table or booth. She is effective at reaching out to passers-by.

**Loretta Barry, Mary Alice Harry, Cindy Ward,** and chapter officers also assist at various events.

We could not function without these and others who volunteer their services.

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## Support Aging Well Expo in Arlington

Tuesday, October 17, from 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM at  
Esports Stadium Arlington & Expo Center, 1200 Ballpark Way, 76011

The Aging Well Expo for the 50+ adult is an in-person, free, fun, and an informational one-day event that brings businesses and the community together. It’s a chance to interact with over 100 health professionals and attend a variety of interesting presentations on wellness. There will be fitness demonstrations, entertainment, speakers, and health screenings. It aims to engage and encourage adults to leave motivated to live healthier lives.

HLAA - Fort Worth will have booth there. We need volunteers to help staff the booth. Contact Chapter President Joyce Parlin for details and registration. This is our best opportunity to reach out to Arlington residents who need information and resources for hearing loss.

## September 9 Chapter Meeting Summary

# Who Moved My Cheese? A Report on HLAA in Texas

By Carolyn MacMahon, Texas State HLAA Chapter Coordinator



*Program summary edited by Darlene Liesner from a transcript by caption writer Carrie Gibson, CSR, of Cauthen & Associates, Court Reporting & CART Service*

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Carolyn McMahon is the State Chapter Coordinator with the HLAA Texas State Office and Vice President of the Houston Chapter. State Chapter Coordinator is a volunteer position. Carolyn has had a lifelong hearing loss and is a certified trainer for the Network of Consumer Hearing Assistive Technology. She was a Technology Specialist with Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services and has given hundreds of presentations on hearing loss.

Carolyn titled her presentation “Who Moved My Cheese?” based on the 1998 Spencer Johnson bestseller about managing change.

In 1979, Rocky Stone founded Self Help for Hard of Hearing People (SHHH), now called the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA). In 1989, the Texas State HLAA office began as an auditory/oral action committee, part of a five-state pilot program.

More history: The San Antonio chapter advocated for early hearing screening for babies. The Austin group lobbied for more funding for hearing loss programs. They also proposed changing the name of the Texas Commission for the Deaf to the Texas Commission for the Deaf *and Hard of Hearing*.

Texas HLAA chapters partnered with the Texas Association of the Deaf to get the college tuition waiver. For the deaf and hard of hearing, tuition is waived at any Texas public college, up to and including studying for a Ph.D. In addition, HLAA Texas advocated for the standard of a 55 dB level of deafness to include those with mild, moderate, and severe hearing loss in the tuition waiver.

During COVID, getting people to attend HLAA meetings on Zoom, Google Meet, or Teams was difficult. However, because of COVID, all the online meeting platforms now have captioning. HLAA lost members, meetings, leaders, and meeting places. For the hearing impaired, masks made hearing nearly impossible.

HLAA’s mission is to open the world to people with hearing loss through education, information, support, and advocacy. HLAA is a network of over 100 chapters and groups around the country. Carla Beyer-Smolin is the National HLAA Chapter and Membership Coordinator. Lois Johnson is the Texas HLAA State Director. Her primary duties are advocating, representing Texas at the national level, and publishing a quarterly newsletter.

Our very own Kevin Medlin is now a Texas State Chapter Coordinator along with Carolyn. They help develop new chapters, strengthen existing chapters, are liaisons to national HLAA for chapters, and facilitate statewide leader trainings and meetings. Texas currently has only two active chapters - Houston and Fort Worth.

National HLAA wants new chapters to start out as support groups (as we did). Becoming a chapter is rather complicated. Groups need to groom and mentor leaders. A dynamic, sophisticated presenter each month is not required. An occasional meeting where group members share their experience and hope can be fun and informative.

Carolyn offered valuable public information and professional outreach suggestions, including having health fair booths, library displays, and brochures in hearing professionals' offices.

Texas State Director Lois Johnson has money for helping chapters, but chapters are supposed to be self-sustaining. Carolyn recommended seeking in-kind donations. HLAA is a 501c3 nonprofit. Carolyn had some good fund-raising ideas. The HLAA Texas State Office helped fund the printing of our Fort Worth chapter's bi-fold brochure.

Carolyn answered audience questions and listened to audience complaints and suggestions. She left her business cards and encouraged everyone to send their suggestions to the HLAA Texas State Office.

The handouts Carolyn brought included: "Do You Need a Hearing Test Questionnaire," "Over the Counter Hearing Aids Tip Sheet," "Hard of Hearing/Hearing Communication Tip Sheet," "Get in the Hearing Loop," "How to Use My Manual Telecoil Program" for audiologists/hearing instrument specialists, "Hearing Loop Recommendations for Venues," "Recommending HLAA" for audiologists/hearing instrument specialists, and Texas Workforce Solutions' new statewide hearing program.

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## What Does HLAA Do for Us?

At our September meeting a few questions were raised about what benefits our chapter gains from our affiliation with the national Hearing Loss Association of America. Here are some of those benefits.

First, HLAA allows our chapter and our members to be a part of *SOMETHING BIG*. HLAA is a well-known active and effective *national* organization working on behalf of people with hearing challenges everywhere in the USA. HLAA has name recognition in government and with other hearing-related organizations. Our connection with HLAA is an asset for our outreach at local events, ENT and audiologists' offices, and publicity.

We are also joined with the statewide HLAA and its outreach and services. Our Kevin Medlin is now working for us at the state level to help build and strengthen new chapters to assist more people with hearing loss. "The mission of HLAA is to open the world of communication to people with hearing loss by providing information, education, support, and advocacy." It's our chapter's mission too.

HLAA is at the forefront of legislation to improve our quality of life. These include the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990, laws for newborn infant hearing screening, TV captioning standards, telephone and hearing aid compatibility standards, captioned telephone legislation, Internet access standards, and campaigns for hearing aid affordability, insurance coverage, and tax credits.

HLAA staff and board members serve or have served on the FCC's Disability Advisory Committee, with the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD), and many other agencies, representing hearing loss consumers' needs and interests and influencing outcomes.

HLAA provides us with access to a vast array of resources, through its website and in print, on all aspects of hearing loss, news and information, and chapter development assistance. Helpful materials are emailed to chapter leaders and others by request or can be looked up on the website. Webinars for members and leaders are offered, usually monthly.

Membership also includes the quarterly *Hearing Life* magazine, access to the annual convention and Walk4Hearing fundraising events, and discounts on numerous products and services. Go to [www.hearingloss.org](http://www.hearingloss.org) for further information.

In short, we gain, or have access to, a huge range of benefits if only we choose to take advantage of them.

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## Kevin Medlin's Unsung Hero

Our chapter vice-president Kevin Medlin has published another of his insightful "Reflections" on his blog, "My Silent Pew." It's about a young man who saved nine other people's lives and whose gifts continue to make a difference and to inspire others. Read all about how he did it at <https://mysilentpew.com/reflections-from-my-silent-pew/>. It's called "The Legacy Team," and it's well worth reading.

## Why you should consider joining a hearing loss support group

*Attendees say they provide a safe space to share experiences and foster new friendships.*

As someone with progressive, bilateral hearing loss, Teri Breier of Los Angeles, Calif., knows what it's like to feel isolated.

"Growing up, I didn't know anyone else my age who wore hearing aids and I spent decades hiding the fact that I had a disability," Breier admits.

In 2016, Breier attended her first Hearing Loss of America Association (HLAA) chapter meeting in Los Angeles and was pleasantly surprised to meet many people with hearing loss who ranged in age from 20 to 70+.

*Hearing loss support groups can help reduce isolation and boost confidence.*

"It's been so gratifying to "meet my tribe" of people who understand the struggles I experience communicating with others every day," she says.

As Breier knows, navigating hearing loss can be challenging and the shared experience of meeting others with like experiences in a support group can be invaluable.

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After joining the HLAA Los Angeles chapter, Breier stopped hiding her hearing loss, took on leadership roles within the group, and became a more vocal self-advocate. Like many people who start by attending a support group, Breier became involved in some of HLAA's other events and fundraisers.

"I've learned so much through HLAA about assistive technology and available resources, which have helped me to continue my education and even land a rewarding new remote job with the national HLAA organization," Breier says.

*The focus is on helping each other – not complaining.*

For many people, such as Breier, a support group is often the first time a person with hearing loss has met others who can relate to their daily challenges.

"It can be hard to make sense of a hearing world when you have limited hearing abilities," Breier says. "In a support group, you can relax, take advantage of technology like live captioning, and socialize in an accepting, non-judgmental environment."

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## ALDAcon Comes to Texas

ALDAcon is the annual convention of the Association of Late-Deafened Adults (ALDA). It is held in various cities around the country, generally rotating from the east coast to the west, including the central part of the country. This year, ALDAcon will be held in Austin from October 30 through November 1.

The mission of the Association of Late-Deafened Adults (ALDA) is to support the empowerment of deafened people. Late-Deafened Adults are people who have lost the ability to understand speech with or without hearing aids after acquiring spoken language. ALDA is committed to providing a support network and a sense of belonging by sharing our unique experiences, challenges and coping strategies, helping one another find practical solutions and emotional support, and working together with other organizations and service providers for our common good. Some of our chapter members are also members of ALDA.

ALDAcon provides an opportunity to learn about issues late-deafened individuals face, and the strategies that they have developed to overcome everyday challenges. ALDAcon is a place to make new friends, renew old friendships, to learn and share, and to simply HAVE FUN! ALDA welcomes everyone of all hearing levels.

Here is the link for information and registration: <https://alda.org/aldacon-2023/aldacon-2>.

## Advocate and Activist John F. Waldo Dies in Houston

John Frazier Waldo, longtime advocate for hard of hearing and deaf disability rights, died in Houston on September 17. He was best known for fighting for open captions in theaters, sports arenas and stadiums, and other public venues, particularly in Washington and Oregon.

Hard of hearing since he was a small child, John found his life's purpose by combining his lived experience with his legal training. He became a disability rights attorney and crusader, advocate, mentor, and friend to the hearing loss and deaf community.

In 2008 he founded and served as counsel to the Washington State Communications Access Project (Wash-CAP), and as counsel to its sister organization, Oregon Communications Project (Or-CAP.) He was a champion for the enforcement of federal and state disability laws for deaf and hard of hearing individuals. As a result of John's work, many venues in our nation have become more accessible, including movie theaters, live theaters, sports venues, ferries, hospitals, and online education.

John's last success, the week before he was diagnosed with glioblastoma, was an agreement with insurance to cover the cost of hearing aids, a landmark agreement that will reverberate throughout the country.

For the last several years John lived in Houston in order to be with other family members. His friend and our Fort Worth chapter former member Dean Olson collaborated with John on many accessibility projects. Dean encourages us to campaign for open captions at Dallas Cowboys and Texas Rangers games.

John Waldo's memorial service is to be held at twelve o'clock noon on Saturday, the 14th of October, at Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church, 6221 Main Street in Houston. The service will provide open live captioning and sign language interpreters. It will also be live streamed through [www.Palmerchurch.org](http://www.Palmerchurch.org), with captions available.

*Sources: John's wife Eve Leonard, Dean Olson, and Geo. H. Lewis & Sons Funeral Directors in Houston*

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## Dianne Feinstein and Two Dan Whites

*This is simply a personal recollection by Editor Dan White. It has nothing to do with hearing loss.*

The remarkable Dianne Feinstein, America's longest serving woman senator, died September 29 at age 90. I had a brief but interesting encounter with her shortly after she became mayor of San Francisco in 1978. Another Dan White will be longer remembered though. It was his actions that propelled her into the role of mayor.

At the time, I was employed as director of social services for the St. Vincent de Paul Society. SVDP operated a range of services for homeless men and street alcoholics. I supervised the managers of two "reception centers," an overnight shelter, a non-medical detox center, and a halfway house, writing grant and contract proposals and administering their implementation.

The other Dan White in this story was a member of the city and county board of supervisors who had resigned his position out of personal frustration with the direction of the city. His major supporters in the city's police and fire departments protested his resignation and pressured him to rescind it. White appealed to then-mayor George Moscone to be reinstated, but the mayor refused. Subsequently White returned to city hall and assassinated Mayor Moscone and Harvey Milk, the city's first openly gay supervisor on November 27, 1978. The assassination thrust Supervisor Dianne Feinstein into the office of mayor.

A few months later, in 1979, I was called to attend a City Hall meeting for the approval of a contract. SVDP, the Salvation Army, and the Guerrero Street Detox Center, upon the request of the city, had been collaborating to develop a "continuum of care" plan for the city's many street alcoholics, or "public inebriates" in the jargon of the health and police departments.

The plan and the contracts with these social service agencies had to be approved by the board of supervisors and the mayor, and we were required to appear before them. When it came my turn to introduce myself and my agency, I didn't want to cause any consternation or discomfort by saying "I'm Dan White" in front of Mayor Feinstein. I decided that the solution was to use my full name. "I'm Lloyd Daniel White from the St. Vincent de Paul Society," I said. The contracts were approved and implemented. By the end of the year, though, I was in a new position - as pastor of Kalihi Baptist Church, a multi-ethnic congregation in Honolulu. The other Dan White went to prison and later committed suicide.

Life takes many twists and turns, and certainly mine has.

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# Support your Fort Worth chapter

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

*The list is updated monthly.*

**Platinum** = \$400+; **Gold** = \$200 to \$399; **Silver** = \$100 to \$199;  
**Bronze** = \$50 to \$99; **Friends** = Up to \$49

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**GIFTS IN MEMORY OF WILLIAM HETREED,  
Husband of Dr. Shirley Molenich,**

Given by Stephen J. and Joan S. Boyle, Judith Fitzgerald, Dan White

**The Fort Worth Chapter is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization.  
All contributions are tax-deductible.**



Hearing Loss Association of America - Fort Worth Chapter

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Bring to the monthly meeting or mail to: HLAA - Fort Worth, PO Box 1310, Euless TX 76039.

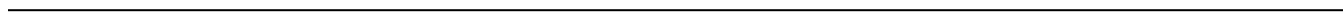
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