



# Heard in Fort Worth

Hearing Loss Association of America – Fort Worth Chapter  
April 2024

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## April 13 Program: Introduction to Lip Reading

Presented by Judy Oetting, M.S., Speech Pathologist

Judy Oetting returns for Part 2 of her excellent presentation from last month. She touched on lip reading (also known as speech reading) in that presentation, but for this month she will explore that topic in greater depth.

A complete summary of her March presentation is included in this issue of the newsletter. She offered a well-organized and informative overview of communication strategies for people with hearing loss.

A speech pathologist with an M.S. degree, Judy has taught lipreading classes occasionally over the last 40 years. She is one of our chapter's favorite speakers.

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March Meeting with Judy Oetting  
Attendance: 25



Chapter 34<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Cake  
“Let them eat cake!”



Judy and Joyce at  
St. Francis Village

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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.*

Find back issues of our newsletter on our chapter website: [hearinglossfortworth.com](http://hearinglossfortworth.com).

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# Joyce's Jargon



Happy Spring! It's a beautiful day as I write this.

Each year HLAA holds a national convention on the last weekend of June. This year the event is in Phoenix, Arizona. The conventions are so amazing. These are just three of the items highlighted for the weekend:

1. Discover the newest accessible technology.
2. Learn skills for living your best life with hearing loss.
3. Connect with hundreds of people with hearing loss from around the U.S.

Several of our members have gone in the past, and if you are a first-time attendee, there is a cost break and the chapter will help with the registration. Please let us know if you would be interested in attending and representing the Fort Worth chapter. For more information use this website: [convention@hearingloss.org](mailto:convention@hearingloss.org).

Please join us on Saturday, April 13<sup>th</sup> for our next chapter meeting.  
Joyfully,

Joyce Parlin  
Chapter President

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## Heard In Fort Worth

This newsletter is published by the  
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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.

# March 9 Meeting Summary

## Communication Strategies for People with Hearing Loss

Presented by Judy Oetting, speech pathologist

from the meeting transcript by  
Carrie Gibson, CSR, of Cauthen & Associates, Court Reporting & CART Service

Our March presenter, Judy Oetting, is a speech therapist, lip reading teacher, HLAA Fort Worth Chapter Librarian/Historian, and a chapter founder. Judy based her presentation on the work of hard of hearing psychologist Samuel Trychin, PhD. One of Dr. Trychin's specialties is psycho-social interventions for people who have hearing loss and their communication partners.

Judy dealt with three aspects - technology, environmental awareness, and communication strategies - that can make hearing in a difficult situation easier.

**Technology:** A *PockeTalker* is a portable personal amplifier. It is a little box with a microphone on it wired to an earbud for a hard of hearing person who does not wear a hearing aid. Many of us wear *hearing aids* or *cochlear implants*. Carrie Gibson, CSR, our CART (*Communication Access Realtime Translation*) writer, captions our monthly meetings. *Alerting devices* visually alert the hard-of-hearing to the smoke alarm, doorbell, or someone knocking at the door. *Crib monitors* notify Mom that the baby is crying. *Hearing loops* around the perimeter of a room feed into a person's hearing devices. Captioned *phones* have a built-in screen that displays real-time text captions.

**Environmental aspects:** A large room with high ceilings is a difficult listening situation. A *window with the sun coming in* behind a presenter makes lipreading difficult. Lighting is important. Some of the worst *background noise* is a group or crowd of people talking. The hard of hearing listener cannot separate out the voice of the person they are trying to talk to. When a hard of hearing person is talking to someone in a room, *other people walking* by can distract the hard of hearing person from the conversation. *In a home*, some background sounds interfere with communication: a fan, a dog barking, the television, and appliances. *Outside sounds* include dogs barking, lawn mowers, construction equipment, sirens, and traffic noise.

**Communication strategies:** A hard of hearing person may be unaware that communication has broken down. They may give the wrong answer or an inappropriate response without knowing it. Tell people you have a hearing loss. Tell them exactly what they need to do and why. No bluffing. When joining a group of talkers, try to get the general idea of the conversation. Ask the group what topic they are discussing. If you haven't quite heard, ask a speaker to repeat slowly and to give you a keyword. Be assertive, not aggressive. Explain why you can't hear. Perhaps their hand or an object is in front of their face. A presenter talks with their back to the audience while pointing to a screen.

Some ways of asking for clarification are gentler and sound better. Instead of always saying, "I can't hear you," try "I didn't catch that," or "I'm not sure I understood that." You may ask, "Are you discussing...?" Tell them what you think they are saying. Admit, "Um, I wasn't paying attention." Ask, "Could you please say that again?" "Did I understand you to say....?" "I understood until you started talking about..."

Thank people for accommodating you. Say, "Boy, that really helped." Tell them you appreciate their time and effort. Give them positive reinforcement.

Remember that conversations are two-way. As the person with hearing loss, don't monopolize the conversation because talking is easier than listening. Let your employer know that you have hearing loss. At work, take breaks occasionally to close your eyes and "veg" out. The brains of people with hearing loss work much harder just to understand than most people's. Coming home after work, or a day long class or seminar, ask your spouse for a quiet half hour to decompress.

Because lip reading takes an incredible amount of focus, it is tiring. To concentrate on what they're saying, you must be able to see people. Focus not only on their facial expressions, but also on their gestures and body language - the entire person. Lip reading every single word is not necessary so long as you get the general idea. Only 25% of English sounds are easy to see on the lips. Analyze the speech habits of the person you are talking

to. Some people are very deadpan. Some people barely move their lips. What do they do that makes them so hard to understand? You just can't lipread some people.

Judy described a few difficult listening scenarios. The audience had to determine which technology, environmental adjustments, and communication strategies would improve the situation.

One scenario depicted an appointment with a new medical specialist who has an accent. Audience members made several good suggestions. Tell the new doctor immediately that you are hearing impaired. Take a hearing person with you to the appointment. Write on a card that you do not hear well. Ask the specialist to speak slowly and to repeat if necessary. On an iPhone record the conversation with Voice Memos. Use Sound Record on an Android phone. For a written transcription, download an Apple app like Transcribe. Use Google Live Transcribe on an Android device.

Write out the questions you wish to ask the doctor. Leave some space for their answer. Write out what you think you heard and show it to the doctor. Ask, "Is this what you said?" Double check with the nurse. Ask the doctor to write out what they're telling you. Read the visit summary in your patient portal. If the doctor wears a mask, bring a face shield and ask them to wear it. Internal distractions like being tired, unwell, or anxious can make it harder to concentrate. During an MRI, wear earplugs. Tell the technician you are wearing them.

Set realistic goals. Don't set yourself up by thinking you are going to hear everything in a certain situation. If you set yourself up for frustration and failure, you will make yourself feel bad. Chapter member Dan White explained that hearing aids are not made for music. In the range of frequencies from bass to treble, speech is near the middle. Hearing aids are made for speech communication. Hearing aids specialized for music have a wider range but are more expensive. Don't expect to hear as clearly with hearing aids as before. Realize the limitations of hearing devices, including cochlear implants.

Successful communication is the cornerstone of relationships, and relationships are the cornerstone of happiness in our lives.

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## New Hearing Aid Coverage and Class Action Lawsuit in Washington State Could Spark Wider Changes

*Law mandating coverage rolls out with Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) help amid anti-discrimination settlement that could guide other states*

There's good news for residents of Washington state who wear hearing aids—a new law now requires some large group health plans to cover the cost of hearing aids and services. And some Kaiser Foundation Health Plan members may be eligible for reimbursement for their hearing aids under a recent class action lawsuit settlement if they act[ed] before April 4, 2024.

These recent efforts illustrate the importance of the **Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA)** and its community of local advocates to spur change across the nation.

### Grassroots Efforts Pay Off

The HLAA Washington State Association was instrumental in pushing for the expanded coverage for hearing aids and services that just went into effect January 1, 2024. House Bill 1222 now requires some large group health plans in the state, and those for public employees, to cover the cost of hearing aids, assessments, adjustment, fitting and training—up to \$3,000 per ear every three years. While this law exempts companies that are self-insured, it's an important precedent, and local advocates continue to push for broader coverage.

Also, claims are now being accepted in a class action settlement in Washington for people who bought hearing aids. The case argues that excluding hearing aids and services violates the Affordable Care Act's anti-discrimination provision. An opinion by the federal Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals agreed, calling the exclusion discriminatory.

This expanded coverage in Washington, together with the anti-discrimination settlement, is good news to millions of people with hearing loss across the U.S. who don't get the treatment they need because of cost. We fully expect that other states could use this as an example to follow. This is the kind of grassroots spark that HLAA can share with members and constituents throughout the country. . . .

## Next Steps and Wider Implications

HLAA Washington State Association (HLAA-WA) says more legislation could further broaden coverage for hearing aids and services in individual and small group health plans, too. Thanks to SB 5338, also passed last year, the Washington State Insurance Commissioner is seeking the addition of hearing aids to the state's Essential Health Benefits (EHB). The EHB spells out what every health insurance plan overseen by the state must offer. HLAA-WA hopes others follow suit, potentially influencing Congress to provide coverage to Medicare beneficiaries.

Since the Kaiser case [in the first paragraph] ended in a settlement between two parties, no court ordered a judgment. But the opinion could be repeated by bringing additional lawsuits in other states if health plans exclude hearing aid coverage based on disability.

## A Community Pushing for Nationwide Change

HLAA has more than 120 local chapters that help advocate for change in access to hearing loss care, treatment, and accessible communication across the nation. The organization is the leading voice of the growing number of people with—and at risk of—hearing loss in the U.S.

“Change often happens in local communities first, as we're seeing in Washington, and that's what HLAA is all about. We show people that they're not alone—there are 50 million Americans with hearing loss, who need to be empowered to get the care they need to stay healthy and connected to the world around them,” says HLAA Executive Director Barbara Kelley.

*HLAA in Washington state is getting the word out to people in the hearing loss community there who may be eligible for payouts and new coverage. Nationally, the organization is hoping similar challenges follow in other states.*

Source and complete article at:

[https://www.hearingloss.org/new-hearing-aid-coverage-and-class-action-lawsuit-in-washington-state/?utm\\_source=getresponse&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=webteam&utm\\_content=%5B%20Hearing%20Life%20e-News%5D%20Washington%20hearing%20aid%20coverage%20law%20may%20spark%20wider%20changes](https://www.hearingloss.org/new-hearing-aid-coverage-and-class-action-lawsuit-in-washington-state/?utm_source=getresponse&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=webteam&utm_content=%5B%20Hearing%20Life%20e-News%5D%20Washington%20hearing%20aid%20coverage%20law%20may%20spark%20wider%20changes)

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## Featured Articles in HLAA's *Hearing Life* Magazine:

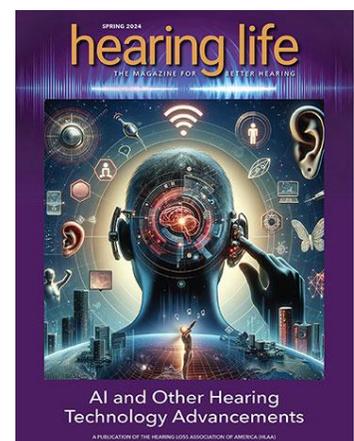
Go to: <https://www.hearingloss.org/magazines/spring-2024/>

- Artificial Intelligence and Other Hearing Technology Advancements
- The Future of Hearing Aid Technology
- Must-Have Workplace Tech for Hearing Loss
- Tech Tips from the Hearing Loss Community

## Other Items in the Magazine:

- Over-the-counter hearing aid Tip Sheet
- OTC Webinar Series

See also: <https://www.hearingloss.org/what-people-with-hearing-loss-can-learn-from-professional-musicians/>





# Join Us for the HLAA 2024 Convention

## Phoenix, AZ June 26-29, 2024



Register today for the annual HLAA Convention. This communication-accessible event is designed to support millions of people with hearing loss from all walks of life around the United States. It's the largest national gathering designed to empower individuals and families facing hearing loss. When you're not learning, discovering new technology or connecting with new and old friends, you can explore the rich indigenous culture of the Gila River Indian community, indulge yourself at the spa, play on two championship golf courses and dine on authentic Native American cuisine at the Sheraton Grand at Wild Horse Pass. Complimentary shuttles to Phoenix's Premiere Outlets and the Wild Horse Pass Casino will be available.

**+ Chapter Leader Workshop—Wednesday, June 26**  
 Topics include: Fundraising, Social Media and Marketing, ICAAT and Leadership Development

**+ Opening Session—Thursday, June 27**  
 Keynote Speaker—**Shanna Adamic**  
 Shanna Adamic is an inspirational keynote speaker and author empowering organizations with the competitive advantage of an audacious optimism mindset. In 2011, Shanna was diagnosed with a tumor compressing her brain stem. Given only a 4% chance of regaining basic functions, Shanna tapped into her optimism to defy the prognosis. After surgery left her deaf in one ear, she focused on gratitude for surviving. Shanna steadily relearned how to walk, talk, and ultimately thrive. Today, Shanna shares her message of audacious optimism and practical strategies for empowered thinking through her speaking.



**+ Research Symposium—Friday, June 28**  
 HLAA's 30th annual Research Symposium will focus on The Emotional Side of Hearing Loss. Often, hearing loss can lead to even more loss—most significantly, our easy connectedness with other people. This year's symposium features **Barbara Weinstein, Ph.D., Kathy Pichora-Fuller, Ph.D., Peter Dixon, M.D., Gael Hannan** and moderator **Ivette Cejas, Ph.D.**, discussing the powerful emotions of hearing loss, how they impact our behaviors and how we can harness them for a more successful hearing loss journey. **Research Symposium only access is \$20.**

**+ Workshops—Thursday, June 27—Saturday June 29**  
 27 education workshops on a variety of topics including:

- + Hearing Aids and Cochlear Implants Can Improve Your Quality of Life
- + Why Is It So Hard to Treat Sensorineural Hearing Loss?
- + Cybersecurity and Hearing Loss
- + Growing Up with Hearing Loss and Raising Kids with Hearing Loss
- + Finding Your Hearing Loss Community on Instagram

All workshops are fully accessible with hearing loops and CART.

**+ Hotel—Sheraton Grand at Wild Horse Pass**  
 A Resort-Style Adventure on Native Land—This year, we've traded the usual big-city experience for a beautiful southwest oasis. There's something for every member of the family to enjoy. Splash around in one of the four pools with waterfalls and a 111-foot waterslide. Discover horseback riding at the Koli Equestrian Center with lessons, trail rides, and outdoor events. For the younger guests, the Sheraton Adventure Club offers daily activities including exclusive Native American cultural programming. Or adventure by water and rent paddleboards, kayaks, and river boats to navigate the sprawling re-creation of the Gila River and view the gorgeous surrounding desert scenery. **Special rate of \$165/night plus tax for HLAA Convention attendees. Parking is free at the resort.**

**+ Exhibit Hall and Product Demonstration Room**  
 Come check out the latest technology and resources for people with hearing loss. **The Exhibit Hall is Free and Open to the Public!**

**+ FUN!**  
 It's not "all work and no play" at this convention with special events including the Welcome Back Bash and Celebrate! Awards Gala recognizing our Hearing Heroes.

**+ Parents of Children with Hearing Loss Resources**  
 Friday afternoon workshops designed specifically for parents of children with hearing loss including panel discussion with HLAA parents and pediatric audiologist **Dr. Michelle Hu** and Growing up with Hearing Loss and Raising Kids with Hearing Loss led by **Janna Rovniak Cowper.**

**+ Veteran's Luncheon—Saturday, June 29**  
 This luncheon celebrates our veterans and highlights resources available for veterans with hearing loss including the Veterans Across America Virtual Chapter (VAVC). **First-time convention attendees who are veterans can attend the HLAA 2024 Convention for free. Email [convention@hearingloss.org](mailto:convention@hearingloss.org) for details.**



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 & REGISTER**

or visit  
[hearingloss.org/convention](http://hearingloss.org/convention)

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*The list is updated monthly.*

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Hearing Loss Association of America - Fort Worth Chapter

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