

Heard in Fort Worth

Hearing Loss Association of America — Fort Worth Chapter
November 2026



November 14 Program:

Legislation and Advocacy for Texas Seniors

Presented by Charles Scoma, Silver Haired Legislature

Charles Scoma is the President Pro Tem of the Texas Silver Haired Legislature. The Silver-Haired Legislature strives to promote good government for all Texans by directly involving senior citizens in the legislative process. It was authorized by the Texas Legislature in 1985 to advise on senior issues as the voice of older Texans.

Mr. Scoma has worked in management positions for more than 60 years, including national management, before founding his own companies. He has a master's degree in international business and international economics. He has been involved in community service from 1988 to 2002, including as a City Councilman and Mayor of North Richland Hills.

Mr. Scoma wants to know how the Silver Haired Legislature can assist with our concerns in the next legislative session. This is our opportunity to advocate for our needs and interests.

Bring your questions and input and learn how to become an advocate.

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.

OFFICER ELECTION NEXT MONTH

Our chapter bylaws call for an annual election of officers. Since no one else has been nominated or volunteered to serve, the current officers have agreed to continue in their positions for 2027. We have a vacancy for Program Chair, so that position remains open for nominations or volunteers. Voting on officers will take place at our December meeting.

December 12: Holiday Brunch at 10:00 a.m. with entertainment.

Look for details in the December newsletter.

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

Greetings,

Everything is kicking in for fall and the holidays already. Didn't summer just end? It's no exception for HLAA. We will have an interesting presentation for November. The President Pro Tem of the Silver Haired Legislature will share the purpose of their group and how it can help us with disability challenges and for (some of us) seniors.

Just today, I experienced something that needs to be addressed. I was walking on one of the paved Trinity Trails, and bicyclists rode by with no warning. Proper trail etiquette asks those passing to say, "On your left." Often that doesn't happen. I could not hear them approaching, and that could have been dangerous.

I think that should be considered as mandatory posting on public trails throughout the state. On City of Arlington trails, there is great signage for those passing.

What other thoughts do you have that could be brought to our speaker's attention for consideration in the state legislative sessions in 2027? It's our opportunity to speak up for our hearing disability.

See you soon. Information about our holiday party will be given at the November meeting. Stay tuned!

Joyfully,

Joyce Parlin
Chapter President

2025 Chapter Board of Directors

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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) 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.

Hearing Loss Association of America, 1750 Tysons Blvd., Suite 1500, McLean, VA 22102. 301-657-2248

How to File a Complaint About Television Closed Captions



Closed captions display the audio portion of a television program as text on the screen, including dialogue and important sounds. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) requires these closed captions to be:

Accurate: The words displayed in the captions must match what is being said. They must also provide text to represent other sounds important to the context of the scene.

Synchronous: Close captions should appear at the same time as the corresponding words and sounds.

Complete: The entire program must include closed captions.

Properly placed: The captions should not block important visual information on the screen.

Sometimes, captions don't meet these standards. If you experience problems such as missing or inaccurate captions, captions that are out of sync or captions that block important information, you should report the problem to the programming distributor. You may also file a complaint with the FCC.

We know that filing a report may not feel very exciting or important. But in the same way that a pothole won't be fixed until someone reports it, accessibility services can't improve unless problems are documented. It's a small but important step in helping everyone contribute to better results.

- **File an accessibility complaint with the FCC: Accessibility Complaint Filing Categories**
- **Learn more about FCC accessibility rules and resources: fcc.gov/accessibility**

Source: https://www.hearingloss.org/how-to-file-tv-captions-complaint

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Help Advance Research on Music and Hearing

A University of Pennsylvania research team led by Dr. Alexander Chern (Dept. of Otorhinolaryngology) is studying hearing-related factors that affect music enjoyment.

Who can participate? Anyone! People of all hearing backgrounds are welcome.

What you'll do: Brief ~15 min. surveys and **optional ~45 min. interviews** about your background and musical experience.

If interested: Fill out the interest form below! We'll reach out to you.**Questions?**

Email ChernLab@pennmedicine.upenn.edu

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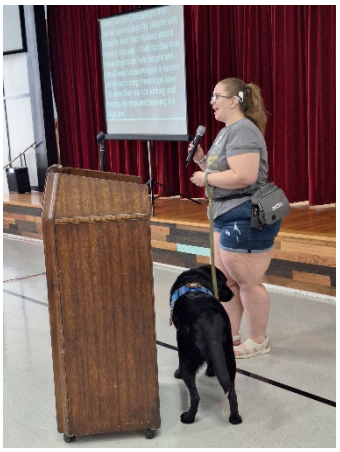
Summary of October 10 Presentation

A Hearing Dog for a Pharmacy Student

Presented by Elizabeth Brownen

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



Elizabeth Brownen is a fourth-year pharmacy student at University of North Texas Health at Fort Worth. She has bilateral hearing loss and cochlear implants. At the October meeting, Elizabeth talked about her hearing loss journey, her dog Rock, and Canine Companions. She also demonstrated what Rock does for her and took questions.

At age thirteen, Elizabeth got her first hearing aids. In college, she lost all her hearing in her right ear. In 2020, she received her first cochlear implant.

She applied to Canine Companions for a hearing dog. After interviews by phone, Zoom, and in-person, she was put on a wait list. She waited for one and one half years. She flew to Oceanside, CA, where she met Rock and attended a two-week hearing dog class with him. She has had Rock for four and one half years. Rock has had two years of training.

When Elizabeth's phone rings, he takes her to it. When her alarm rings, he jumps up on the bed and nudges her. He notifies her when the elevator reaches her floor. He leads her to the microwave and to the toaster. He lets her know when she drops something. She has trained him to nudge her if she is scratching too much. For sirens or fire alarms, he lies down to alert her to danger. When someone calls her name, he takes her to them. When there's a knock or when the doorbell rings, he takes her to the door. Rock is a "bombshell" dog. He is not afraid of noise and keeps on working.

According to the A.D.A, service dogs may go anywhere that is not a sterile environment. At UNT Health, Rock goes with Elizabeth to the flu shot clinic and drug compounding lab. In the lab, Rock wears protective clothing so he does not shed. He wears booties to protect his feet from needles and other harmful objects. He wears goggles. He is trained not to eat food or anything off the floor.

Besides hearing needs, Canine Companions raises and trains dogs for people with mobility problems, children with disabilities, and veterans with PTSD. Headquartered in Santa Rosa, CA, they breed Labrador Retrievers, Golden Retrievers, and mixes. Rock is a mix. Prior to hearing training, the puppies/dogs are raised and socialized by volunteer puppy raisers. If a dog does not fit any of the things Canine Companions trains for, the dog may go to another service dog organization.

Canine Companions requires the owner to keep the dog well-groomed, and they monitor the dog's health maintenance. Most service dogs cost thirty to sixty thousand dollars, including time, effort, training, food, vet bills, etc. Canine Companions does not charge for their dogs. Elizabeth only pays for Rock's upkeep. Canine Companions South Central Training Center is in Irving, TX. (Contacts: https://canine.org/locations/south-centrals/ and 214-259-4700.)



Canine Companions (canine.org) is a national 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization. It is donor funded. Founded in 1975, Canine Companions is the largest and oldest service dog organization. It is an accredited member of Assistance Dogs International (ADI), a worldwide coalition of nonprofit organizations that train and place assistance dogs. If you want a service dog not trained by Canine Companions, search assistancedogsinternational.org.

Support your Fort Worth chapter

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

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

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***Bronze** = $50 to $99; **Friend** = Up to $49*

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

Hearing Loss Association of America - Fort Worth Chapter

2026 CHAPTER DONATION FORM

Make checks payable to: **HLAA - Fort Worth Chapter**

Bring donations to the monthly meeting or mail to:

HLAA - Fort Worth, PO Box 1310, Euless TX 76039.

Please take special notice of our mailing address.

DO NOT SEND MAIL TO OUR MEETING LOCATION.

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