



CHAPTER CALENDAR

**Chapter and Board meetings held at:
Weingart Senior Center, 5220 Oliva Ave, Lakewood 90712**

Every Monday - **Resumes January 13** - Lip reading practice: 10 a.m. to 12 noon – Craft Room

Every Wednesday - **Resumes January 15** - Lip reading class: 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. – Craft Room

January 6, 2014 - HAT Committee meeting, 12:30 p.m. at Coco's restaurant

January 9 - Chapter meeting: 6:30 p.m. "When the Blind Meet the Deaf" presented by Anthony Candela, Chief of the Blind and Deaf Rehabilitation Center Long Beach Healthcare System, Long Beach Veterans Affairs.

Refreshments provided by Stephen Fisher, Gordon Langsam, Barbara Bostwick, and Linda Deguire – THANK YOU!

January 17 - Rocky Stone hearing device exhibit: 10 a.m. to noon (by HAT Committee)

January 22 - Chapter Board meeting, 12:30 p.m.

Chapter Contact:

Bill Busch, 310-540-6322
billbusch@ieee.org

Chapter: www.HLALongBeachLakewood.org
California: www.hearinglossCA.org
National: www.hearingloss.org

**Some Shocking Truths
About Hearing Loss**

By Gael Hannan

Hearing loss is one of those gifts that keeps on giving. Once you have it, your hearing loss presents itself to you, every day, in different ways. You never know what you'll be treated to – an uncaptioned TV show, a sales clerk whose lips point to her computer, a conversation with friends that spins out of control into incomprehension.

Regardless of when hearing loss occurs, experiencing one of its *truths* for the first time can be shocking in its unexpectedness, its permanence, and its raw repercussions. We are bewildered at how such a thing could happen to us.

Becoming comfortable in the skin of hearing loss can take time, and through the years I've had some shocking moments. I've long since accepted them, but at some point all of these 'truths' have hit me in

the face, hard. And some of them keep coming at you, as if you were a punching bag, over and over again. These may not seem startling to *you*, but if you are hard of hearing or deaf, you may have had your own moments: "WHY did no one tell me about this? Can living with hearing loss get any worse? Could I pick a different disability, please God?"

(A note to 'hearing people': many of us with communication challenges have a tendency to be somewhat dramatic. That's life, and we need to vent once in a while.)

These were some – just some – of my shocking revelations: **Your hearing loss will never go away.** You will always have it. Always, forever and ever, amen. And if you don't like it, that's too bad, because it's yours to keep and you can't re-gift it. I was small when I first learned this, but it didn't really hit me until I was a teenager, trying to communicate with mumbling, hormonal boys. Then I realized, "This hard of hearing thing is not going to be easy."

Hearing aids do not last forever. Just when you become used to them, attached to them, or even adoring of them, they die. At 20, I was thrilled, over the moon, to get my first hearing aid. It cost \$475 and was my first adult purchase. Some people buy cars or furniture – I invested in a hearing aid, the first of many. It lived for perhaps six or seven years, which I now know is an incredibly long time, but I was expecting much *longer*, 10 or 20 years maybe? I felt betrayed when I had to replace it – because the new one cost a lot more than \$500. It's like your teeth; did *your* parents tell you that around age 50 or so, your childhood cavity fillings would start falling out and you'd have to replace them *on your own dime*? Once should be enough.

Hearing aids and dental work are both outrageously expensive. Just saying.

Learning to live well with hearing loss can take a long time. The aural rehabilitation process seems to be on a continual loop, like a movie played over and over. You wonder if the communication success touted by your hearing care professional is just an illusion, because just when you think you've nailed it, a bad hearing day knocks you flat on your butt. It's like golf – hit a brilliant shot in one game, lose 10 balls in the next. But there's good news: in my experience, the *bad* hearing days become fewer – and easier to recover from – when we learn how to kick down those communication barriers.

Every time you get a new hearing aid, it's like the first time. And I don't mean the sweet and wonderful stuff, like falling in love; I mean the extremely loud and annoying stuff. You can hear yourself *breathing* – you can hear people on the other side of the *world* breathing, for heaven's sakes! I had a shock with my most recent set of hearing aids – I *heard* my own tummy rumbling! *OMG, you mean other people have been hearing me do that, all these years?* Having never heard anyone *else's* tummy growling, I didn't realize it was so loud!

And then, after a few weeks of breaking in the hearing aids (when sometimes you want to break it in pieces) you realize the sounds are no longer as loud or grating. That's when you panic, convinced that you've become *deaf*, thanks to those damn-loud hearing aids! This happens, they say, because our brain has become used to the signals it receives but ... you know ... part of me is not 100% convinced.

Your loved ones forget or ignore the new rules of communication. And often. When your spouse-child-mom-dad-sister-best friend-boss-from-hell takes the introductory (and emotionally-delivered) course on "How to Communicate with a Person Who Has Hearing Loss", he or she may *still* not remember to communicate in an inclusive way. And here's the *real* shocker – neither will you. Let's admit it – who among us hasn't called their partner from another room – who then has the outrageous gall to *answer* you from the other side of the wall!

Hearing loss can turn you into a self-pitying whiner who looks under rocks for evidence of discrimination and bad behavior. I've been there and done that, at some point. The trick is being able to turn self-pity into acceptance, whining into advocacy and realizing that, while discrimination most definitely exists, what's usually under those rocks is simply the barrier of *ignorance* about hearing loss, which is when we put our self-advocacy into play.

Absorbing the shocks of hearing loss takes time and supports – from our hearing care professional, family, other people with hearing loss and consumer organizations. We just have to reach out for them. Life with hearing loss will be better when we do.

Note: The following was received by Dr. Bill Busch – it was written by the author of a book on Deaf-Blind.

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

I'm writing to let you know about this book which was featured as book of the month in RNID's (Royal Institute for Deaf People) *One in Seven* magazine. Now available on CD for large print or use with screen reading software, as well as in regular print. Of "*Words in My Hands, A Teacher, A Deaf-Blind Man, An Unforgettable Journey*", reviewer Michael Simmons says:

"in sheer humanity...this book, a true story, is told with almost palpable joy--and tears--at all the ups and downs involved...this is straight American-talk about relations between a deaf-blind client and his teachers, and Helen Keller understandably, is evoked."

With my degree in Therapeutic Recreation, I am also a certified sign language interpreter in Colorado, and the author of this book about an elderly deaf-blind man who played classical piano. Before he lost his sight and hearing to Usher Syndrome Bert Riedel was a dentist in Lombard, Illinois. I met him when he was eighty-six-years old when I was hired to be his teacher. I taught him how to read tactile sign language.

While the story illustrates psychosocial factors that complicate the disabilities of deafness and deaf-blindness, it carries an inspirational

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BIOGRAPHY

Editor's note: This biography was published in August 2008; written by Elfriede and Ron MacIver.

Ron and Elfriede Present: *Our August VIP* Stephen Fisher

Our interview with Stephen Fisher revealed another member with very special interests and talents whom you will enjoy meeting. He was born in San Pedro, California. Although his roots are Norwegian, his parents wanted their two sons and daughter to speak the language of the country, English. In 1997, forty Norwegian relatives arrived for a family reunion. A memorable event!

Stephen's working career was spent at Douglas Aircraft (now Boeing) where he worked for thirty-five years. He had a hearing loss for twenty-five of those years and has worn hearing aids for twenty years.

Stephen spent two years in the Army. During a month's leave, he traveled to Norway. From there, he made his way to Boda in the Arctic by train to do a bit of salmon fishing in one of the fjords. There he met a couple also enjoying the fishing while on vacation and the three enjoyed a very fresh fish dinner together.

Stephen next took a cruise south to Bergen, where he spent several days with relatives. He enjoyed his stay in Europe so much that he remained another six months after being discharged from the Army.

The chaplain was leading a tour to Rome and Stephen joined the group. He next traveled on his own through southern Germany, Switzerland, France and Austria. He became fascinated with the town of Oberammergau where they perform the Passion Play every ten years. Stephen has returned to Germany twice to see the play.

His major activities today are reading, surfing the web, some fishing and photography. There is one more rather unique activity our VIP is involved with, and that is public speaking at the Toastmasters Club in Long Beach. He became involved after a discussion with a college professor about parliamentary procedure each week. He now also teaches anyone who wants to learn how to communicate more effectively. That may be why our chat was so pleasant and easy-going. You may want to check on that for yourself.

Update: In addition to all his other interests, Stephen has been leading the Monday (practice) lip reading classes at the Weingart Senior Center for the past three years.

With more induction loops becoming available, the following information will be of interest

Automatic vs. Manual T-coils

A factor of which you should be aware is the difference between automatic and manual t-coils.

With automatic t-coils, your hearing aids automatically switch to t-coil mode whenever you hold a phone receiver close to your ear. This makes hearing on the phone a breeze. When you take the phone receiver away from your ear, your hearing aid switches back to microphone mode. This is great if you use the phone a lot.

However, **automatic t-coils at present do not detect a room loop or neck loop signal so your t-coils are useless in such situations.** When using loop systems, **you need manual t-coils.**

Manual t-coils are the same as automatic t-coils - it's just that you turn them on manually.

Setting the Strength of Telecoils Correctly

One more thing. Many t-coils are not set properly. You want your audiologist or hearing aid dispenser to set the volume on your t-coils so that the sound output from them appears to be the same as the volume you hear via the microphones on your hearing aids. That way, when switching to t-coil mode from microphone mode the volume appears to be the same, and you don't have to swiftly turn the volume down before you blast your ears, or turn the volume up so you can hear something.

The way to do this is to have them set the volume of the t-coil such that the volume you hear via your t-coils is the same as a 70 dB signal you'd hear via the microphones on your hearing aids.

Excerpts from Dr. Neil Bauman, Ph.D., Hearing Loss Help

DECEMBER MEETING VISITORS

We welcomed the following guests: Kate Bascomb, Betty Shoemake, Cyndi Streinman, and Betty Oshiro, who returned after a long absence. Please come again! We look forward to seeing you at our meetings. Current members: bring a guest to our next meeting.

CHRISTMAS VACATION FOR HAT

The HAT Committee is going on Christmas Vacation and would like to wish everyone a very HAPPY HOLIDAY and Happy New Year!

Remember to keep HEARING WELL THROUGH THE HOLIDAYS as best you can and enjoy the company of friends and family.

Until next year and our next HAT DEMO on January 17th, enjoy the season and all it has to offer.

Best regards to all,

Herb Balkind



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dr. Bill Busch

National Convention in Austin Texas

This year the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) National Convention will be at the Renaissance Austin Hotel, June 26-29. If you have never been to one of these conventions and are serious about doing something about your hearing loss, you should seriously consider this. It is an incredible learning experience and fun as well. There are 3 days of educational workshops on four tracks: Advocacy, Assistive & Other Technologies, Hearing Aids & Cochlear Implants, and Relationships & Communications. All meetings and workshops are captioned, looped and have FM systems with headphones available for anyone who needs to borrow one so you won't miss a thing even if your hearing loss is severe - makes it very enjoyable for HOH.people.

There is also much to learn in the Exhibit Hall which is packed with information on the latest technology and services for people with hearing loss including many hearing aid and cochlear implant makers explaining the intricacies of their devices. Many of the exhibitors have users of their devices available to answer questions. It is a great place to get your questions answered about countless devices and services. When I was considering a cochlear implant, I found the exhibit halls very helpful.

Various social events including breakfasts and lunches are also good times to meet other HLAA members with hearing loss and get their opinions. I asked attendees countless questions and they were all happy to talk about their experiences. These people were not trying to sell anything so I felt I could trust their opinions.

Cost of a full activity convention package for HLAA members is \$299 which includes a banquet, all the workshops, access to the exhibit hall and a final day breakfast with awards ceremony. There are various discounts for first timers, couples and chapter delegates. See www.hearingloss.org for details. We are allowed to have one chapter delegate who gets a substantial discount on the convention package before 1/31/14. If you are interested in being a chapter delegate contact me ASAP.

It may seem like it's a long way off, but reservations at the convention hotel are limited, so it is best to make them as soon as possible. Discounted room rates at the Renaissance Austin are \$154 per night. There are numerous other hotels close by, but nothing beats the convenience of staying in the convention hotel.

As of my writing, there are nonstop round trip flights available on Southwest Airlines for less than \$200 but that could change by the time you read this.

Take a big step to improve your hearing. Besides, it's fun!

The following is reprinted from the January 2004 Informer. The writer is Carol Waechter who was our Professional Advisor and speechreading teacher extraordinaire for many years.

Coping with Carol

It is that time of year again. Have you made your New Year's resolutions? Well, perhaps you haven't thought about resolutions for a long time and are wondering why you should consider doing such a thing. Random House dictionary defines a resolution as "a resolve or determination, *to make a firm resolution to do something*". Why are resolutions important? They are important because they give us the opportunity to evaluate our lives and consider whether there are areas where we can improve ourselves and our relationships with others.

So, what are some viable resolutions that might be considered? Here are some possibilities.

Be patient with yourself. Adjusting to hearing loss is not instantaneous. It takes time, experience and lots of understanding. It also has its ups and downs. Some days all will be going well and the next day frustration sets in. Be patient and the downs will not feel so overwhelming.

Be patient with others. Not everyone has known someone with a hearing loss and therefore may not react positively. Understanding this will help you in dealing with the public in general.

READ! Learn! Ask questions. Get as much information as you can so you can deal with hearing loss intelligently. The more you know, the better able you will be to make decisions concerning your hearing loss.

Get together with other people who have experienced hearing loss and can support you in your struggles. (HLAA is a great resource, of course.)

Be aware of the feelings of others. Have your antennae out so you know when others are confused, embarrassed or frustrated because of a misunderstanding. Be open and relaxed with them and always try to clear up the situation before moving on.

Teach another person how to cope with his hearing loss. Helping others can make your own problems less a concern and can improve the life of someone still struggling with his loss.

Teach someone how to communicate with a hard of hearing individual. This sometimes takes a lot of patience but in the end, other hearing impaired people will benefit from your time and effort.

Be open to the many possibilities of life with hearing loss. It is so easy to funnel our thoughts to what cannot be done but focusing on the negative can be quite depressing. Life can still be fulfilling and purposeful.

Spend more time in the present. We can't change the past so don't look back. Enjoy life as it is now and the future will look much brighter.

Happy New Year!

Continued from page 2.

message as well. This book is a resource for educators, rehabilitation counselors, and other professionals who work or interact with the deaf, blind, elderly, or disabled. It is for families who deal with a member's hearing loss, vision loss, or other disability. This book shows how miracles can happen where there are dedicated professionals and caregivers.

Words in My Hands has received:

- An award from The National League of American Pen Women
- Praise from acclaimed author, Joanne Greenberg, from Patricia Clark, researcher of ASL at Rochester Institute of Technology, and B.J. LeJeune, Director of Deaf-Blind Programs at Mississippi State University.

I have included reviews and a book announcement in the email attachments. I hope you will share them with professionals and associates of children and adults with special needs. For more information or to order books, please contact me or go to <http://www.ellexpress.com>. Books are also available through Barnes & Noble on-line, and at Harris Communications.

Sincerely, Diane Chambers, Author



Lip Reading Class – Christmas 2013

The lip reading classes enjoyed a Christmas celebration together. Here you will see the teachers and leaders Linda DeGuire, Stephen Fisher, and Sonja Webb, as well as many of the students.

HELEN KELLER

"I am only one, but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something; and because I cannot do every-thing, I will not refuse to do something that I can do."

Helen Keller

This Month at HLAA Headquarters November 2013

HLAA is committed to forging stronger ties with all of you. The attached news brief contains the most recent information about what is happening at the national headquarters.

We hope that you will share the information with the people in your organizations through your newsletters, websites, etc. so that they, too, know how their involvement helps fulfill the HLAA mission all of us share: to open the world of communication to people with hearing loss by providing information, education, support and advocacy. We are stronger together!

ADVOCACY

- Filed Comments with consumer groups with the FCC on issues related to captioning equipment under CVAA
- Sent letters of support to members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in support of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)
- Posted on FB and *HLAA e-News* a poll for Regal Cinema regarding how people with hearing loss prefer to hear the sound-track at movies in the theater: just the dialog or enhanced dialog with some background music, sound effects
- Senate Hearing Champions reintroduced the Hearing Aid Tax Credit. Senators Tom Harkin (D-IA) and Dean Heller (R-NV) reintroduced the Hearing Aid Tax Credit on November 13 and they plan to work to ensure that the legislation is considered when Congress addresses tax reform. The bi-partisan bill is nearly identical to legislation introduced in the past and it is similar to H.R.1317 that was introduced in the House of Representatives in February by Representatives Tom Latham (R-IA) and Carolyn McCarthy (D-NY). Both bills would provide a tax credit of \$500 per device to people of all ages who need a hearing aid. HLAA will continue its support of the bill.
- The Access Board's Rail Vehicles Access Advisory (RVAA) Committee's first day of meeting on November 13 included a vote to approve new members who applied for membership on the Committee. Seven organizations and companies applied, including HLAA. HLAA was voted onto the RVAA Committee as well as the NY MTA and NJ Transit, pending appointment by the chairperson of the Access Board. The Advisory Committee will review current regulations and provide the Access Board with suggestions on a range of accessibility issues, including updating the regulations to ensure that people with hearing loss have access to information provided aurally, such as announcements and audible emergency alerts, which are provided in rail cars.
- Here's something to celebrate. <http://www.runwaygirlnetwork.com/2013/11/21/southwest-airlines-to-offer-closed-captioning-on-wireless-inflight-entertainment-in-early-2014/>. Member John Waldo says, "We may be getting close to the tipping point where people start to understand the importance of captioning. I've said for some time that 50 years ago, nobody thought about wheelchair ramps, it just didn't happen. Now, nobody thinks about wheelchair ramps, it happens automatically. We are at the stage where people are thinking about captioning. Now we have to get to the point where nobody thinks about it anymore, but just does it."

WALK4HEARING

- Staff met for a strategic planning meeting for the 2014 Walks. This is the first of several meetings.
- The walks have passed the \$1.3K mark on the on the Walk4Hearing website. This is REMARKABLE! Thank you all for your amazing support and dedication. Walk4Hearing Director Ronnie Adler says, "Each year, the Walk4Hearing program gets better and better." In 2012, we had a total of 9,000 walkers who participated in the Walk across the country. In 2013, there were 11,000 walkers.

HLAA CONVENTION 2014, AUSTIN, TX, JUNE 26-29

Early-bird registration closes on January 31, 2014.

State organization and chapter leaders and chapter coordinators received a special, "delegate" registration form that entitles them to get an Education Package registration for \$125 (until January 31, 2014 when the rate rises to \$150.)

HLAA - Long Beach / Lakewood Board Chapter Officers

President - Bill Busch

Vice - President - Herb Balkind

Treasurer - Walt Lowrie

Recording Secretary - Craig Bowlby

Corresponding Secretary - Ken Saw

Programs - Gail Morrison

Ways and Means - Stephen Fisher

Professional Adviser - Dr. David DeKriek

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Educating Parents - Maxine Barton-Bauman

Hearing Assistive Technology - Herb Balkind / Bill Busch

Refreshments - Joan Schlegel

Lip Reading - Linda DeGuire

Looping - Ram Kakkar

Membership - Flo McDavid

HLA Websites

Long Beach/Lakewood: www.HLALongBeachLakewood.org

California: www.hearinglossCA.org

National: www.hearingloss.org

HLAA

To join send \$35/\$45 for individual / family membership to:

Hearing Loss Association of America

7910 Woodman Avenue, Suite 1200,

Bethesda, MD 20814.

phone: (301) 657-2248 Voice;

(301) 657-2249 TTY

Membership brochures are available at our chapter meetings.

CTAP California Telephone Access Program

Information, Repair & Exchange

English Voice 1-800-806-1191 **Spanish Voice** 1-800-949-5650

Hearing Loss Association
Long Beach/Lakewood Chapter
c/o Louise Allen
3033 Chatwin Avenue
Long Beach CA 90808-3704

**REMINDER –
Donate Your Old Hearing Aids**

Bring your old hearing aids to Chapter meeting, and they will be put to good use helping young families to obtain new ones for their little ones. We will give them to the John Tracy Clinic who will receive money to buy new hearing aids for those who cannot afford them for their little children.



SCOREBOARD

	Members	Guests	Total
December	38	3	41
November	30	5	35
October	32	2	34
September	34	6	40
August	33	10	43
July	30	5	35

“Practice” or “Teaching,” These Lip Reading Classes are Free”

Free and Fun! The Long Beach/Lakewood Chapter of Hearing Loss Association of America is offering two free lip reading classes at the Weingart Center, 5220 Oliva Avenue, Lakewood, CA.

“Practice” classes are held every Monday from 10:00 a.m. to 12 Noon. (Just show up for this class). “

Teaching” classes are held on Wednesday resuming on January 15, 2014 from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. Linda DeGuire, Ph.D. teaches the Wednesday class. Please arrive 15 minutes early for the Wednesday class for registration.

These are the only lip reading classes offered in the area since Long Beach City College cut the Lip Reading classes three years ago.

DUES COLLECTION

As A result of a change in our by-laws, we began collecting membership dues of \$1.00 per year, per member, last November, with a deadline of January 31, 2014.

At the same time, we are polling members as to their preference in receiving our newsletter, The Informer. Do you want to receive it via e-mail (environmentally friendly), or do you prefer having a hard copy mailed to you?

If you want a hard copy mailed to you, you will be asked to donate \$10 for the calendar year to assist in defraying those costs.