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Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) – Chapter Meeting

Sherman Oaks Library – Community Room

Sherman Oaks, CA

6/23/18

(Meeting commenced at 10:00 a.m.)

>> DIANE GROSS: Do you need the lights dimmed?

>> GARY JACOBSON: The light is good.

>> SANDY: That's better.

>> MALIK: Thank you.

>> DIANE GROSS: I think I need the lights on a little bit so I could see everybody. And now we get a move on this point.

>> GARY JACOBSON: We can still see it. That's no problem.

>> DIANE GROSS: That's good. Okay. I'll wait for Malik.

I was going to take a video of the room to show the people in Minneapolis. Maybe I'll do that first.

There is Patty doing the captions. And look at our big crowd today. Everybody, wave and smile and say hello. Hello.

>> MALIK: So here's your microphone.

>> DIANE GROSS: I'm just going to get started with my little --

>> VIVIAN: They can't see the screen because of the podium. I can see it.

>> MALIK: So the podium needs to move.

>> GARY JACOBSON: That's okay.

>> SANDY: Thank you.

>> DIANE GROSS: Florence is signing. Does everybody have a T-coil on their hearing aid or implants?

Good morning. I'm going to come over and check. Vivian, do you have a T-coil on your hearing aid?

>> VIVIAN: I do.

>> DIANE GROSS: Is it working?

>> VIVIAN: I can never tell.

>> DIANE GROSS: If I'm talking like this without the microphone, if I'm talking without the microphone, it's going to sound different than when I'm talking with the microphone. Is the microphone on?

>> GARY JACOBSON: Yes, it is.

>> DIANE GROSS: Good morning. My name is Diane and I am substituting for the rest of the committee today because they are in Minneapolis at the national convention for hearing loss.

For those of you who have never been here we are a Los Angeles Chapter of the Hearing Loss of America which is an organization that started in 1980.

Our chapter was formed in September of 2004. Our mission is to provide information, advocacy, education and support for people with hearing loss, and in the case of this chapter, 99% of the time we have a fifth mission and that is food.

Because we're such a small group today we decided to forego trying to get everybody to bring food although I do see snacks over there. Thank you to whoever brought it.

Next month we will have our usual snacks thanks to a gift card we got from being the top fundraising team at the Walk4Hearing this month.

[Applause].

>> DIANE GROSS: I think we raised the last time I looked was around $7,500. Gary in the red shirt raised over, close to $3,200.

>> GARY JACOBSON: About 35 almost.

>> DIANE GROSS: What he raised because the chapter gets 40% of the funds. Gary brought in all the money for our chapter. Thank you, Gary.

[Applause].

>> DIANE GROSS: Coming up in July we have a food July 4th party at the home of Katherine and Danny in Montrose. They have a built-in grill, they have a swimming pool, and we're invited to spend Wednesday, July 4th, at their house.

So what I'm going to do is pass around a potluck signup sheet for anybody who is interested.

The chapter will provide hot dogs, burgers I think veggie burgers. We want to have an idea who is going to be there and what you are going to bring.

And then in at the end of July we are back to our regular chapter meeting where the topic will be the people from our chapter who are at the national convention, and I think there is about 8 or 10 of them.

They are going to talk/present what they saw and heard and did and ate at the convention. So they request from me to pretty much spread out trying to go to different workshops, cover different parts of the exhibit hall. So we'll get as much information as possible. So I think that's going to be a really good and entertaining meeting.

What we're going to do as far as today goes because it's a rap session we're going to talk about whatever we want to talk about.

I thought what we could do was go around the room introduce ourselves in maybe ten sentences or less and somewhere in there if you have anything you want to discuss or any information you want to share, bring it up there and we'll make note and then we'll come back after we've gone through the introduction.

One other introduction. Patty is doing our captioning. She's substituting for Jane who is visiting her daughter in Alaska.

I'm Diane. I've been part of HLAA since the very beginning. I found out about it right after the organization was formed in 1980. So I've been in different chapters, boards. Right now I do social media for this chapter: Facebook and e-mail and website updates.

And what I would like to talk about today is I'm kind of interested in how much our social media things affect all of you. You go to our website, is there anything you'd like to see us do or do differently? I'm going to start over here. Florence.

>> FLORENCE: Do I push something?

>> DIANE GROSS: Just pass it around.

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>> FLORENCE: Does something have to be pushed here? I'm Florence Baker. I'm a retired college professor and I discovered this group about last summer. Anyway, it's been really good to learn about the technology that's available. I wasn't aware that it was particular difficult working in a classroom and trying to navigate working with the (indiscernible). It's been wonderful.

>> MALIK: The microphone is only connected if you have a hearing aid or cochlear implant which means if you have the microphone -- don't let the microphone lull you into a sense that you are being projected. You are only being projected to people that have a T-coil.

>> FLORENCE: So we're going to my lecture voice.

>> MALIK: Okay. So then nobody has to push anymore buttons.

>> FLORENCE: Is it working? Okay. My name is Florence Baker and as I said I'm a retired college professor and I just discovered this organization last summer and not only has it been very educational learning about my own disability and how to hear about but also for the social aspect.

I knew nobody else with a hearing aid or hearing loss and if I can trust somebody who knew somebody who had hearing loss, I got all excited.

As far as the technology, the websites, Diane is doing a marvelous job keeping everything up-to-date and the articles that people put online are just very interesting. I wouldn't find them otherwise.

I did bring something to share and -- I did bring something to share when we were at the Walk4Hearing. There was a booth and I don't know if everybody is aware of this but so I filled out the application and e-mailed it in and within a week a technician came out and now I have a CapTel. It's a phone that uses captioning. Yeah.

And so I wanted to make sure everybody knew about this. It's sort of not free because you pay it with your telephone taxes for this program.

So I brought the brochure here and I'll leave it on the table. As far as what I want to talk about in this meeting I was thinking about that and, um, I thought maybe there are people might want to share sort of a good/bad experience that

they have had as travelers and what common situations we come across. I've had some wonderful experiences that I couldn't have had otherwise.

>> DIANE GROSS: Just one thing about the T-coil there are some spots where the sound doesn't get picked up. There is a blind spot within the loop. So if you have your T-coils on and if you find that you are not hearing very well, feel free to move because I'm getting sound here but not in my left ear. So feel free to move.

>> GARY BOND: Thank you, Diane. I was going to talk about the audiologist about one hearing aid. My name is Gary Bond. This is the third or fourth -- it's the third meeting that I've come to of the L. A. Chapter. I used to attend the Santa Monica Chapter.

>> MALIK: Would you point the microphone at your mouth. Just point the microphone at your mouth.

>> DIANE GROSS: You are only projecting to us but you have to hold the microphone very close.

>> GARY BOND: Very good. Well, that kind of sums it up.

[Laughter].

>> GARY JACOBSON: Okay. I'm the other Gary. My name is Gary Jacobson. Everybody is in Minneapolis.

>> DIANE GROSS: I'm here.

>> GARY JACOBSON: Okay. I am the treasurer for the chapter. I'm more like you anything that has to do with money, for example, the fundraising, to donate money and I'm still getting donations even though the walk was 2 or 3 weeks ago.

Now if you guys haven't donated, we're waiting for you.

Okay. Now with me... I was born deaf, well, hard of hearing and I lost more of my hearing when I became a teenager and everything. The... association way back in the 1960, 1970s and we got associated with Trader Show. The president had a deaf daughter. And to different associations that had the SHHH group and it became the hearing chapter of the Hearing Loss Association.

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My wife who is deaf and she's in it with me with the association, and I'm in tax preparation so that's why you don't see me the first 4, 5 months of the year. It's still pretty bad so don't worry about that.

I just want to make sure the chapter gets the money. So we're going to be talking about the chapter to raise more money because we would rather raise money ourselves instead of doing it through the national. So we're going to talk about that. So if you have any questions later, fire away.

>> SANDY: My name is Sandy Blake. This is my third or fourth meeting also. I lost my hearing last May. I immediately got a hearing aid, and then when things calmed down and I accepted what life had given me, I got a cochlear implant in January. So I've got a cochlear implant in my left ear and a ReSound. The cochlear has made a difference.

I'm a musician and singer and performer so music is off the table right now but I am participating in a study as USC thanks to this group.

Someone told me about a professor who has a cochlear implant who is looking for musicians to do a study with and I'm involved in it and it's bringing me back to life.

So if anybody wants to know anything about that and that has a cochlear implant and who is musical or is musical, have them get in touch with me.

>> ROZ: Hi, the name is Roz. My friend told me about this meeting. When I first got my hearing aid, I think your information, Sandy, is really exciting.

Regarding cochlear implants I got evaluated at the House Institute. I flunked my hearing. It's too good for a cochlear.

The Pocket Talker -- and I do have a Roger Pen that isn't working. I'm not sure if I'm not using it correctly. It just ain't working. I'm happy to be here.

>> VIVIAN: Hi, my name is Vivian. This is the first time I've been at this facility. I've attended a couple of meetings in Santa Monica. I was sad because I live in Culver City.

There are some things that bother me.

>> DIANE GROSS: Ooh. A list.

>> VIVIAN: I watch a lot of television. What else?

>> DIANE GROSS: A companion.

>> VIVIAN: And I have closed captioned all the time. The closed captioned doesn't keep time with the voice or the mouth and I have Spectrum and on the back of the Spectrum statement there are telephone numbers and addresses where you could write to somebody about the problem which I did.

I wrote a long e-mail, this was about 9 months ago. Of course, I never heard anything. This is a problem for me.

Another one is the closed captioned I like the Landmark Theater. It's difficult for me to go to any other theaters besides Landmark. They have things to put over your eyes which are not very satisfactory.

And the third thing I don't think anything can be done about it but I can hear volumes of whatever I go to and I can't understand the words and my hearing aid person says it's because my brain has problems processing it. So that's pretty much it of my current problems. I have more of it. Maybe people can relate to these. Thank you.

>> MALIK: I'm going to sit over here so I can see you. My name is Malik. I lost my hearing in 2004 which was a big deal for me. I kept Los Angeles as an actor so I can relate to the loss. I went to graduate school for acting.

I started my career in New York. I came to Los Angeles and started to lose my hearing a month after I got here so that changed my world, changed my life.

I had the fortune to meet a woman named Valerie and she's one of the founders of this chapter. I met her at Greater Los Angeles Agency on deafness because I was looking for resources to help me understand how to deal with this new reality, and Valerie gave me one of the most powerful talks around hearing loss which helped me, um, in my sense of self-validation that I was still worthy, and that I should connect with other people who were dealing with what I was dealing with so she sent me into this chapter.

She sent is me to a party of the chapter first. So I didn't go to a meeting. I went to a Halloween party and that was one of the best recruiting tools I ever had. So I came to the Halloween party and I stuck.

I was in the steering committee and then served as president in this chapter for two years and I also had a son during that time.

So this chapter really gave me a sense of community, it gave me a source for information to learn about what was available.

I started with hearing aids that were first small and got bigger and bigger as my hearing got worse and worse.

In 2010 I got the cochlear implant and that was a pretty big shift for me. In fact, not only did it improve my quality of life but it also led me to start a nonprofit theater focused on creating opportunities for women, people of color, and those with physical disabilities. So that's one of the other things I do now. I still have a cooperate job, but it's kind of my main passion right now.

So in terms of today, I really am kind of here to learn more about what's going on with you and maybe to provide support that I can within our conversation.

I also have -- oh, can you tell them who you are? You have to say it in the microphone.

>> CHILD: Masai (spelled phonetically).

>> MALIK: He's been coming with me to meetings since he was a few months old. I used to carry him and go up and talk in front of the meeting.

Believe it or not he was more quiet than he is now. He's been with us at the meetings for some time too. Thanks.

>> JENNIFER: Hi, my name is Jennifer. This is my first time here. Malik and I work together at the company. I never really knew about these types of associations. I was born hard of hearing. I was born and raised in Hawaii. I'm not sure if Hawaii has these types of associations or organizations. So thank you.

>> PETE: I'm sure they did. I'm Pete.

>> DIANE GROSS: I have a question for Pete. Are you still square dancing?

>> PETE: No. Sciatic nerve.

>> DIANE GROSS: Okay. I'm going to get the microphone. We have a lot of good stuff to talk about. I was thinking we'd take a few minutes with the things that Vivian mentioned about TV captions and Spectrum in particular.

I've had my own experiences with them and it's not their fault that the captions are lagging behind. It has to do with the technology and Patty probably has some more insight. It's how the captioners either live captions or computer captions are performing.

So for those of us who have been reading captions like Gary and me, you have to get used to and finding your own dealing because Spectrum can't change anything. I've dealt with them many, many times. My issue is how tiny the captions are. There is nothing I found that can be done.

And as for movie captions, again, there is many different types and it's a constant battle.

If you get the Hearing Life Magazine. There is a columnist who is John -- not the Hearing Life, the state newsletter. There was just an issue with Regal in Colorado where they were not required -- I apologize I'm getting my stories mixed up. This has to do with the Life Theater.

Have you tried AMC or any of the other theaters?

>> VIVIAN: I've tried Pacific Theaters and I can't remember if I've tried AMC, but I can't wear the ones that fit over this way (indicating). The only thing that works for me is the type they have at the Landmark Theater.

>> DIANE GROSS: Is that screen?

>> VIVIAN: No, like a goose neck kind of thing. It works perfectly. That's the one that works the best for me. And let me address what you said before. The size of the captions, I have a DVR, you can adjust the size of the captions. I've done it.

>> DIANE GROSS: For me it depends on the model of television and I can't do that on my television. I can do that if I have a streaming device where I get the Roku. Anybody else?

>> MALIK: I'm sorry, one was about captions. What was the other one?

>> DIANE GROSS: I wrote it down.

>> VIVIAN: Let's see. On television the closed captions.

>> MALIK: That's right. Okay. So with the movie theater I have a similar preference. I like the one that's a little screen and you put it on the cup holder.

>> VIVIAN: That's it.

>> MALIK: One of the other things to make sure -- so the places that offer what you like make sure that the management is aware that you are using it. Make sure that they are aware if it doesn't work because it's gotten better recently. I've gone to movies recently where the captions don't work and I go out and tell them to make sure that their staff is trained to use it.

The other thing is that they offer devices that you don't like. Make sure you let management know because ultimately they are involved when they replace the systems when they get too old.

The more the management has heard from you about what your preferences are and what works or doesn't work for you the better off all of us would be. So that's just around movie theaters and you can find out before which type of system they have at the movie theater. So if it's a system you don't like, you could choose not to go to that theater.

>> VIVIAN: That's what I've done. That's why I go to Landmark.

>> MALIK: You could also let them know that too. I like the theater but I don't like the captions so I'm going elsewhere.

And television, so you have hearing aids, you don't have an implant, right? Okay. So hearing aids have different technology. For people who have implants particularly if it's cochlear they actually have a device that streams the volume directly into your implant.

I still use captions to watch television but I also use a streaming device and it's way better for covering the distance from the television and my implant. It's like how you can talk on the television.

Some Bluetooth technology may be able to do a similar thing for hearing aids. I don't know the latest technology on that because I've been away for some time now but I know that when I was using hearing aids, I used Bluetooth for

making phone calls and that kind of thing. There may be something out there for television as well.

Okay. You know, the captions themselves and adjusting the size it sounds like you've had luck with that, I have too, it makes a differently and you could hear directly into your device. That's it as he said.

>> FLORENCE: I have something quickly. I just want to say if you want to be effective I've been a couple of times at movie theaters I just walked out and got my money back. But writing letters letting them know about captioning and it's worth it. And maybe before the end of the meeting, you can let us know about the Bluetooth hearing aid for the TV.

>> SANDY: Sure.

>> GARY JACOBSON: Boy, you are very popular today. Now about the captioning a lot of the movie theaters have one way or another way of captioning. All of the Regal Theaters use headphones. It's hard to read the screen, and number two it interferes with my cochlear implant because when you put the headphone on, it knocks the cochlear off. I've never liked that.

AMC all use the box and you can adjust it or whatever. I love it. That's why we have three AMC theaters near us. It's fantastic. And they have the nice reclining chair.

I don't know about -- I've never had to use their devices but I think -- anybody go to Regency? If you want to see open caption, that's what we all like because they have once a month, twice a month have open captioning nights at the movie theater. It's not during the weekend. It's only during the weekday.

It's nights because you could see the blockbuster captions. You don't need a device or anything.

Contact the Greater Los Angeles Agency on Deafness in L. A. and they will tell you where the shows will be. Here in the valley, they are in Granada hills at the Regency Theater I think the first or second Monday of each month. The price is $7.50 or $8. You will be able to associate with other hearing loss people and there may be a hundred or 150 people to see the movie. Okay.

>> ROZ: Could you define open captioning. That's a new expression to me.

>> GARY JACOBSON: When you look over here they are in the movie. It's right on the screen. Everybody sees that.

>> ROZ: Isn't that closed-captioning?

>> GARY JACOBSON: Closed-captioning is if you have a device. It's not on the screen.

>> ROZ: Watching TV and watching captioning what is that?

>> GARY JACOBSON: You could call it open captioning because you could turn it on or off because you see it on the screen.

>> VIVIAN: It's like that (pointing).

>> GARY JACOBSON: The problem with captioning don't go with Spectrum. They cannot change anything. Now there are channels that do not caption their show. You need to contact the channel. You can get the list on the website. Lifetime channel it will tell you where it is. They have phone number and e-mail, you contact them. If you get a lot of people, feedback they will start captioning their show. Almost everything is captioned.

Now a lot of the problem, sorry Patty, is the captioning itself. They may use a computer caption, it's horrible. We have to live with it.

Now you were complaining about it. Now you were complaining about living in Culver City. In two or three years from now, they are going to build the light rail going to here. So there is a lot of technology going on. Okay. There you go.

>> DIANE GROSS: Thank you, Gary. Also you mentioned having trouble processing. Excuse me. I'm sorry. I know you don't have a cochlear implant but the two of the three main companies that I know of that do cochlear implants, Cochlear America and Advanced Bionics, anyone can go to their websites and they have sections that are auditory rehabilitation and training where you can sign into those and you can practice listening and you get feedback on what you have heard.

There are probably other websites where you can do that look for Aural rehabilitation. You will be able to write from your own computer.

We covered captioning, TV movie captions. There were some questions about technology. Roz wanted to know about Pocket Talkers, Roger Pen. I have two cochlear implants. I used to use these devices a long time ago.

I'm sorry Terri is not here today. She used to work for a company called Serene Innovations where they used to have this technology.

Also, Mitzy, I'm not endorsing her but this is what she does. If you come to the meeting next month, she should be here and you can ask them about these devices. And there used to be a place in Santa Monica that I don't know if it's there, WCI.

>> JENNIFER: It's there.

>> GARY JACOBSON: They are still there.

>> DIANE GROSS: They are still there. Okay. Because you can go in there and try out the different devices. See if anything would work for you.

>> ROZ: I had just recently learned that the three different models of the Pocket Talker and that it's the latest one really the best? And just more information. But I'm aware it (inaudible). (Traffic noise).

>> DIANE GROSS: Let me see. Sandy. Florence was talking about travelling. Did you want to share any travel experiences?

>> FLORENCE: I'm an avid traveler and have had the opportunity to travel. Through the years with my hearing having getting worse and worse, I'm not able to travel alone. I do though and I have been more adventurous. There are a couple of problems I wanted to raise but I wanted to share a wonderful experience with you.

And the problems I don't know if people have the same problems. I've had a number of times at the airport where there has been a problem I usually sit where I could watch the board and I remember when my daughter was an infant we missed the plane because it wasn't on the board. I make sure I sit in the handicap area and let somebody know if anything changes to let me know.

Another type of problem I have come across is being in a new place and especially when I'm walking or travelling alone is not hearing what's behind me and people every day have that experience. It's been sometimes more dangerous.

A few years ago I was almost rundown in a back street and luckily somebody reached out and pushed me down and the same thing happened. I was crossing a bridge and I didn't know that the trams ran on the (indiscernible) and I hear a lot of ruckus. So I fell and had a bruise. So things like that make travelling scary.

One of the my unusual circumstances because of the hearing loss you process information a little more slowly, and sometimes I don't catch on. I'm not so savvy and anyway it was in Sri Lanka and my taxi driver had a side job as a gigolo. You like the beach? Would you like to see the sunset?

[Laughter].

So I guess a lot of things they lead into interesting problems. But I did bring something I wanted to show. I'll just pass it around and I have a couple of pictures. I was in Sri Lanka and...

>> DIANE GROSS: While you are doing that, Patty, do you need a break? When she's done, we'll take a short break.

>> FLORENCE: I was in Sri Lanka and they were getting over 30 years civil war and they were devastated by the tsunami. And people aren't used to seeing Americans and they come up and they couldn't place me and I said I'm from the United States, and they said, "Thank you. Thank you. Can I kiss you?" Because of all the relief that came in crates and said U.S.A. on it and it was just wonderful.

I got invited to a Hindu celebration. And it's an all night three days. Incredible.

I was travelling with a couple of educators, there were six of us that night and surprisingly don't have hearing loss but some of them knew sign language.

So we got into this place and just unbelievable celebration. You know not really able to communicate with everybody and we met a group of about two-dozen people with hearing loss that community indicated with sign language.

It was so exciting and so I just have a picture here. These are the people that were signing. And there are pictures of the group. So I just wanted to bring up some things. Maybe you have some suggestions but also to share. I think you had something to say?

>> DIANE GROSS: If you have a quick question, if not we want to give Patty a break for about ten minutes.

>> ROZ: Was that American Sign Language that you were able to use?

>> FLORENCE: You know, I forget offhand. I would I believe so. It's like a second language.

>> DIANE GROSS: Okay let's take about a ten-minute break so Patty can do this. Thank you.

(Break).

>> Do you want us to sit down?

>> DIANE GROSS: Okay. We're about ready.

Okay. We're about ready. I was just thinking I had to adjust -- this is a remote control that adjusts my cochlear implants and every time I pick it up I remember, um, about a year ago some of us from the chapter were invited to the Music Center to test their new assistive device and so we were invited to see a performance of an opera. Most of us hadn't been to the opera. And the first experience for me was getting to the seats because I also have vision loss.

I can't see very well in the dark, in any dim light, and we had to climb up these stairs and then downstairs to get to the seats. Once I got there, I was there for the evening.

And when the show started I had to make a slight adjustment to the volume to my implant. I didn't realize that as I do this it clicks, it makes this clicking sound. I thought at the time was only audible through my implant. Well, it turns out that people around me could hear it and there was a woman behind me and as I'm adjusting it somebody is shaking my right shoulder. I said wait a second.

I knew it was bright. So I'm sitting hunched over the remote and I'm adjusting it. She touched my shoulder and then she took both hands and shook both of my shoulders.

I told her I'm adjusting my hearing aids and you are assaulting me. If I could have, I would have gotten an usher because she should not have touched me like that. Does anybody else have anything else they want to point out? Gary wanted to talk about fundraising.

>> MALIK: So, Diane, Diane. Before we switch topics... I just wanted to offer a thought about the travel question. This affects travel but it could affect other areas, too. Those of us who have hearing loss should feel comfortable telling strangers that we're deaf. They treat you differently than when you say I have hearing loss or I'm hard of hearing. They don't understand hard of hearing.

This is something I learned at this meeting a few years ago. When I go to the airport, I go to the gate and say I'm deaf, I need to preboard and I also tell them I'm not going to hear the gate changes. I'm going to be sitting right here. I need somebody to tell me if there is a change. They don't always follow but they do it a lot better if I say I'm deaf, I need to preboard and they always let me do that. So that's just one way to help manage the airport.

It potentially could work in other areas too but at the airport the first time I heard it I've been doing it.

>> ROZ: I think that's an excellent suggestion. I love it. And not only in the airports but I find -- excuse me -- in communicating with different salespeople in stores saying I'm deaf, I can't hear you and sometimes I really can't hear them because of their tone of voice or whatever. And so saying I'm deaf really can make a difference. Thank you. I come away with good stuff.

>> DIANE GROSS: Also we learned I mentioned Mitzy before and she's been in the airport commission. We've had somebody speak who works on staff with people with disabilities. Because if you really are having an issue, if you could find that department at the airport to talk to them.

Also if you are going to be travelling, I found that when you buy your ticket, if you are buying it online you can checkoff X spot on your registration form that

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says you need assistance and what your disability is so that when you get to the airport it's in the computer and it says you have a vision loss or hearing loss. The first thing they may do is ask you if you want a wheelchair. Sometimes that can be a boon, too.

Gary went out.

>> SANDY: He's right here.

>> DIANE GROSS: Unless I'm moving my head around I can't tell when somebody is standing next to me.

>> GARY JACOBSON: Hi, there. About the travel thing, southwest is fantastic with that. We tell them. Now like she said about doing it online when you buy your tickets, you checkoff maybe 90% of the time when you go to TSA you go to the other line and you get right through the gates in about three minutes.

And with the other line you don't have to take off your shoes, belt, you can leave your computer in the bag, no problem. That's called a precheck. And I've experienced that with Southwest. It was great. Sometimes when you have a cochlear, they are going to pat you down. Some of their machines you cannot go through with the cochlear but some of the airports that have that resolving check when you put your hands up and everything, they are okay. So you could go right through.

But in most cases your precheck. So checkoff and it makes a difference.

Now with Southwest you get on the plane and you could choose whatever seat you want. That's your advantage.

Now with fundraising. I'm responsible for the kitty. Now the kitty every month I will have a different caption for the kitty. This time if you see the paper that kitty is licking his paw. She walks three-and-a-half miles. She's tired. She wants money to pay for her foot massage.

Now so many people have come up to me they don't want to put money for the kitty. But look at it this way, we don't charge admission. When you go to church, they don't charge admission but they do pass around the basket and you make donations. That's what the kitty is for. It helps pay for next month or

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maybe we'll have a fundraising. Those booths are expensive. We already found out about the booths, okay.

Now what we need to do is keep -- well, you can't say ear -- keep our eyes open about future fundraising or like for Sherman Oaks they have the party on Ventura Boulevard once or twice a year. We can have a booth there to talk about the Hearing Loss Association. But the booths are expensive that's why I'm advocating. So we need to do fundraising.

Now people say why do we need a fund-raiser? We need the Walk4Hearing. So Walk4Hearing is once a year. We only get 40% of the money. The national gets 60%.

Oops. My water fell.

Now any of you go to the walk this year? (Raise of hands). I'll probably have to talk about it next month because we feel there should be changes to the walk. For example, I was working at the raffle table. I made recommendations for next year especially for the raffle table to make it bigger. We wanted to move the walk to L.A., downtown L.A. because it's closer to everybody, plus, sponsors will give more money because it's in L.A. and not Long Beach.

But our problem is -- why L.A. is not safe for children. Now we need to change their mind because national is back east Philadelphia and Washington. They don't live here in L.A.

We have children all the time at Pershing Square. There is the museum center. We need to tell them and tell them why. Maybe they will change their mind. We have to talk about it every month, okay. Any questions? No? Diane, you are in trouble.

>> DIANE GROSS: I was thinking one thing, I was thinking when we were at the walk, the way the booths were setup is when you went to the registration table you had to check in. If you raised a certain amount of money, you got a ticket to get a t-shirt. If you raised more money, you got a power bank like to charge your tablet.

Okay. So you went to the registration table, then you went to the side of the registration table to get the power bank and then you went this way to get the

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t-shirt and then you had to walk back to the raffle table and there should have been a progression to how it was setup because it would have made people started registration, power bank, t-shirt. I don't know about downtown. That's something we have to talk about but some way that's visible and easy to get to also.

But, again, the story of Long Beach is a long story. I won't go into it because when the walk started, the chapters here in Southern California were organizing, the national took over.

One thing it took maybe 2 or 3 years for them to grasp was the size of California. They couldn't figure out why people from San Francisco just couldn't get in their car to drive down to Los Angeles or Long Beach for a walk. You are in New York you get people from Philadelphia, New Jersey because it's such a small area. There are all kinds of factors to consider.

>> GARY JACOBSON: You should takeover.

>> DIANE GROSS: Okay. What else can we talk about? Are there any devices? Any issues that anybody is having personally that anybody is dealing with because of their hearing loss? Any funny stories to tell? No? I have a bunch of stories.

My mom and I share an apartment. And we lived together for many years and what we have learned it's almost like a marriage and the number one thing we do is that if she has something to say to me she'll come into the room where I am and she'll find me so that I can hear her and vice versa. If I have something to say to her I'll go find her so I can hear her.

Hearing loss I kind of look at it as an evolution, you are constantly learning things about how to deal with it and how to get your friends to deal with it.

I have been told by my family that sometimes I talk too loud and partly because I've spent so many years that I have friends that have hearing loss and I have been projected my voice for them and I have to tone it down for my family.

I'm going to say this. When I found this organization, when it started in 1980i I was in my early 20s and I was very angry about my hearing loss, how it affected my work life. I had four jobs in 1980 and I lost three of them because I

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couldn't answer the telephones. How it affected my friendships and what this organization and this chapter have done with it giving me everything that that mission statement says. I've learned about dealing with hearing loss, about coping with hearing loss, I've gotten support, I've learned about all kinds of technology and over the years I have also learned most importantly how to live with the hearing loss so that I am calmer, I'm going to say centered person.

And since I've had two cochlear implants I think that has helped more than anything. That completely turned my life around because I went from hearing like 30% of speech to comprehending over 90% of speech and just being able to do that is also helped me deal with my vision loss which right now I'd say the harder thing to deal with.

I feel like I'm choking it's because my throat is dry.

So if you are looking for support, you are looking for information or you just want to come here and yell and scream and shout, this is what we're here for. So I'm going to leave it at that. Do you want to add anything?

>> MALIK: Sure.

>> DIANE GROSS: You are the other voice of reason.

>> MALIK: So I think that...

>> ROZ: You don't want to share your daddy?

>> GARY JACOBSON: He wants you.

>> MALIK: Can I speak?

>> DIANE GROSS: You are like a puppy. You need those cuddles.

>> MALIK: So I think that the chapter serving as a resource is an important thing. I learned about CapTel at these meetings. I learned about some of the different devices that are available. I think that could be very helpful. It helped me at work. Once I started to learn about technology, once I also learned how to advocate for myself, I found that, um, there were barriers and road blocks at work that I was not aware of. And I only learned that those road blocks existed because I got passed them.

I remember when I got my cochlear implant my director at work he was amazed at how things were different for me and he talked about his boss for

promoting and she was like, oh, the guy that can't hear? And I didn't know that that was part of the reason I wasn't getting the promotion I wanted. And I only found that out after I got past that obstacle which is very telling in terms of obstacles that we have that we are not aware of.

I think the value, one value of this meeting is just to learn and to have resources but for me the more important one was about being around people like you who are that way, people who understand because they are living it, people who know what it's like or, we used to have a pre-Christmas meeting because everyone knew that going home for the holidays or gathering with the family was a particular challenge with hearing loss so we all had particular -- so for me it was an emotional support that the group provides is why I still stay connected. It's something that helped me early on. And it made me committed to give back myself.

Everybody enters this journey differently. Some people grow up with hearing loss, some people -- I was in my late 20s when I started to lose my hearing which is a very particular unique time to go through a change like that.

There are others who were in high school which is a different kind of experience. The fact that we're both artists and the hearing loss hasn't just affected life but our pursuit, our profession. That's a very specific thing.

So to have access to other people who for the very reasons know what we're dealing with can make the difference in the world.

I just share to say a little bit more about what I value and also to let you know if you have a comment or a question it doesn't have to be about a piece of technology, it could be about my brother doesn't understand what it takes to talk to me which is real for me. So we have conflict. We've had conflict about other things but the hearing loss actually exacerbates our conflict. He's one person in the family who won't look at me to talk to me.

I put all kinds of stuff on that. I find family should be the most willing, the most understanding the most adaptive and it's not always the case, right?

So there are other things that come up for us that are outside of technology that have to do with relationships.

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We have sessions sometimes that talk about specifically relationships who one person is hearing and one has a hearing loss and what that does to us and for us. So I just wanted to offer there is other stuff out there too that we get in this meeting but that we can raise today.

We used to have informal rap sessions outside of these meetings. This happened at work this week or this happened with my friend last month. And then environment around other people who understand because we've gone through it or are going through it.

So I'll leave you with that. If anybody wants to offer something, to share something, um, feel free.

>> GARY JACOBSON: Okay. When I introduced myself to you I neglected to tell you that I have a cochlear implant. I've had it now maybe two-and-a-half years. I'm not sure. Now throughout my life my hearing got worse.

I was working for the government, the post office, okay. I got hired as an accounting clerk. So I had to make a lot of phone calls to people and I was hard of hearing. The comments were I thought you were Japanese because our voices change when you lose hearing. They thought I was from another country.

Now I got to the point where I could not use the phone anymore. So I relied on the CapTel. There were several different telephones but CapTel is the latest one at that I'm using.

When I started to have more problems with my business because I see over a thousand people a year, they are from everywhere. There are people from other countries that have accents.

Now I got the cochlear implant. Now I was told that I did not qualify for the cochlear implant because I had no speech recognition from anything but the doctor accepted me because my lip reading was 100% accurate. So he said you could have the cochlear implant.

I finally got it. It made a big difference because now I can talk on the phone. Now I can wait an hour, hour and a half to wait for the IRS to answer the phone.

Now a lot of people have noticed it because I could talk to them, I could understand them that they are from other countries.

I have a few clients that live in China and I talk to them in English, not Chinese, okay.

But the thing is when I walk away and my back is to them as they are talking to me I can understand them now.

The cochlear implant does make a difference. And if you have what outside of what you went through, if you have an audiologist that say you do not qualify for it, fight! Fight with them. I was not approved for cochlear implant because the Federal Government did not approve cochlear implant. Why? It was cosmetic.

So think about that. It's not cosmetic. So AB Bionics said she would take care of them. She called Washington, D.C. and fought with them. Three months later I get a call from Kaiser. You've got surgery. So you need to fight. Don't just take it at face value. Fight with them and you'll get what you want because it's your right.

Now another thing I have a problem with when I go shopping especially in restaurants, my pet peeve is people are bringing their dogs like Costco or the restaurant. They are not service dog.

My wife had a very bad experience at Costco one day. A woman was trying to pull her dog, they were walking around. Guess what the dog did? It pooped on her. And the woman ignored her. My wife called her. Oh, my dog didn't do that. But the point is dogs are not allowed in areas where there is food unless they are service dogs. And I've seen more and more people bringing their dog with fake service dog wrap around. So we have a problem now.

I love dogs but the thing is they need to be controlled. And we went to a restaurant earlier this month. The person put the dog right on the chair, right next to us while we were eating. So you need to bring this up. It is a pet peeve. I'm sorry. I love dogs but we need to think about that. Anybody else? Gary? No? Diane.

>> DIANE GROSS: I've seen that situation with dogs recently. If I go back to my Facebook page I could find an incident. I can't remember offhand. I remember an incident that you told at one of the rap sessions we had you were talking about your boss's boss the woman who has trouble with your hearing loss and we were talking about her attitude maybe something that could be done. We went all around the room and everybody had a different opinion, suggestions and I said maybe she's just ignoring you because she's a bitch. I hope that has improved.

So I think -- what time is it? I have run out of things to say.

>> VIVIAN: It's a wrap.

>> DIANE GROSS: Does anybody else have anything to say? If not I think it's going to take us a while to clean-up the room and put the things they were. We have a party July 4th. We have the meeting here July 28th where it's all about the National Convention and I think there are a couple of other things we need to talk about. Come back and hopefully there will be more people for you to talk to and interact with. Thank you all for coming today. It was nice being able to rap in a small group.

>> GARY JACOBSON: And thank, Patty.

>> DIANE GROSS: And thanks to Patty also for coming in on short notice.

>> GARY JACOBSON: Good.

>> PATTY: Thank you.

>> GARY JACOBSON: We're going to leave the chairs where they are because they are going to have a movie at 2 o'clock. So the chairs are perfect. We'll just leave it the way it is. I've talked to the library about it. Leave the screen down. And we should leave with the room clean. That's all. And we go out have lunch.

(Meeting adjourned at 12:42 p.m.)