

**Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) – Chapter Meeting
Sherman Oaks Library – Community Room
Sherman Oaks, CA
11/3/18**

MEETING COMMENCES AT 10:16 A.M.

JENNA NELSON: Good morning everyone.

Good morning, I'm sorry for all the technical difficulties.

The loop, the captions.

I don't know what's going on.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Is it still clicking?

JENNA NELSON: It's clicking? Is everybody --

SHARON: I'm good.

JENNA NELSON: So, you're not going to be able to see the presentation but we have captions.

So, welcome everybody.

So, I'm going to skip this just because ... I'm going to skip the Facebook stuff and all that, right?

TIM BROWNING: Yeah, we'll have it on the website.

JENNA NELSON: Yeah, I'm under the weather, I'm going to sit.

Can y'all see me?

So, the one thing we went through last time was we got a new Steering Committee.

And, I don't know if we introduced everybody and -- it's -- we don't have everybody here today.

But, before we get to that, I wanted to thank Terri and Gary because they were part of our Steering Committee and they are stepping down.

But, only in name -- they are still helping, thankfully and we appreciate it.

So, if everybody could give a round of applause.

(Applause)

JENNA NELSON: And then also -- where is she? Where's Heather?

Where's Heather?

Oh, there she is.

We're like where's Heather? So, Heather is also stepping down and I just wanted to say a few words about Heather because she's done so much for us in the last year and a half.

Can you hear us?

So, as you know Heather a couple months after becoming our president, got into a horrific accident and thank God she's still here and I actually visited her in the hospital.

And, she had just come out of surgery and -- when she went in for surgery, they told her they were going to be amputating her leg.

And so that's what she went into surgery for and they found whatever they need to do find, arteries, whatever, and she came out and still had her legs, thank God.

So, she has her legs, she has her life and she has been really a driving force for this chapter -- her enthusiasm has been, I would say unparalleled.

I have never seen somebody so excited to be part of the hearing loss community and we were sad when she said she was stepping down but she needs to do some physical things for her own -- to move forward.

But she's still going to be part of things, she's still going to be part of the scholarship committee.

But I just wanted everybody to give Heather a rousing round of applause because she's just been an incredible president.

(Applause)

JENNA NELSON: Did you want to say a few words?

HEATHER LEHR: Actually, Tim and Jen and Terri and Gary and everyone did all the work and I got the fun credit.

Really and there were so many times when I, like, was barely able to show up to the meeting and they did everything -- they did all the planning and I just stood up and stood up here.

So, I feel like the credit should go to them and I hope to be involved in the Steering Committee again sometime in the future and I hope all of you guys can step up to one day be part of the Steering Committee because it is a great experience and it's a great help to people.

Thank you.

(Applause)

JENNA NELSON: So, the new Steering Committee distortion Sandy Blake isn't here and we don't have a title for her yet and Sharon is also new to the Steering Committee and she doesn't have a title yet either.

(Applause)

JENNA NELSON: Diane's not here today, either and she is secretary?

I think?

TIM BROWNING: Yup.

JENNA NELSON: And Tim is the vice president and I'm president.

(Applause)

JENNA NELSON: Hopefully I can fill Heather's shoes appropriately.

All of us.

So, I'm going to sort of move through here since you can't really see the presentation.

So, we're talking about coping with the holidays.

So, we're going to just share some different situations and talk about it, make it sort of an open rap session.

I would encourage you not to hold back.

I think one thing that's not on here that I'm always the person to bring this up but the holidays can be really depressing for people in general.

Even people with normal hearing. And people with hearing loss, I think even more so because it's all about getting together with people, being in noisy situations, holiday parties, and it becomes so uncomfortable that you either get angry or you shut down or you don't show up at all, which is really what I hear most -- is that people just say I'm going to skip that because I'm not -- I can't be social, I can't hear people and so what's the point in showing up?

And I think it's really important to, even though that we know when we tell people we have hearing lots people look at us like a deer in headlights, they don't really understand what that means but it's important for us to educate people.

And I know you can't always do that but you can do it, it sometimes, and it's helpful.

So, we -- we're going to have skits but nobody gets together to practice and people can just show up.

So, we can just sort of make this an open session.

So, the first situation is ... somebody's whispering to you, right.

They're like oh yeah, by the way, blah, blah, blah, and you can't hear.

What they're saying because we don't hear people who are whispering.

So, the question is how do you tell somebody, nicely, that you can't hear what they're saying?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yeah that's happened to me quite a few times and what I basically would say to them is, first of all, I'm deaf, I lip read but then I got a lot of a little bit of hearing, I can't understand you.

Come into my office, take them outside where it's quiet, now you can talk to me.

Thank you.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I had that happen to me too at the office.

Even though everybody knows that I'm deaf and they have to look at me and make sure that I can see them.

And then there will be somebody that knows that I can't hear well and they want to tell me a little secret or something (laughing).

But that he will shout in my ear, they'll talk and they will go like this and it's so funny I'll go excuse me, I have to see you.

When you're going to say something to me.

But it's really funny because they think if they talk into my ear, I can hear.

But, no.

It happens, but they forget.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I have had the same thing happen where I mean it's like they come up -- like I pull back, I pull back so I can see -- their face is right here and -- (laughing).

It gets really awkward.

So, I -- so I just kind of go, especially if it's loud and we're at a party and so I just kind of go -- and they don't usually get it but, you know, for the tenth time you tell them.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I was in that situation just yesterday in a courtroom and my attorney is turning to me and whispering to me because he's trying to communicate.

And I just said I can't hear whispering and you could see -- I mean he knew about my hearing loss and I had captioners in the court proceedings but for my attorney to communicate with me, quietly in the courtroom, he couldn't do it.

But he finally pulled out -- he had a notebook, pulled it out, and write it down.

Stuff -- but they usually don't want to write down stuff like that.

But that's a real problem because it's important to be able to communicate -- I couldn't.

JENNA NELSON: Yeah, anyone else?

Oh.

Wendi.

WENDI: I don't have -- I guess a solution or whatever but I just -- that particular one that -- that scenario bothers me probably one of the -- more so than others because that's harder.

And then I find that people try to tell you, again, and, you know, they're still saying it in your ear, you're trying to look and then some of them will put their hand up and make it worse.

But, yet, you know -- and I find myself struggling because the fact this they want to tell you something that's, you know, secretive or whatever, I'm really interested in what that is as opposed to -- and it makes me feel bad because people never do get and inaner not going to keep repeating it so many times because it's something that they thought was just between the two of us already.

So, when you say that one, I wish I had a solution for that because that one, I really -- that one bothers me the most because at some point they just go oh that's all right.

You never know what that intimate conversation was.

JOEL: In some situations, certainly not all, there's a habit that you get when you're hard-of-hearing, and you say what? Or, I can't hear you.

Instead of repeating back part of what you did hear.

And, sometimes it's a big -- that's a big help, that way the person doesn't have to repeat everything.

And they also know that you're interested.

So, it's an encouraging way to continue the conversation.

SHARON: So, this is something I've been struggling with for a really long time and I find a lot of times people when they do whisper, they're in situations where it's hard for them to say, I can't, I can't hear you so it could be in a synagogue service or in a lecture or somewhere where it's not appropriate for me is to raise my voice.

And then a lot of times I feel badly that I can't hear because it's an -- you know, something intimate that someone's saying and I'm finally, after 30 some years of having hearing loss kind of surrendering to the fact this is my reality and what I found when I've told people in a quiet voice if I'm somewhere why I can't speak loudly is just, very quietly, I'm sorry, I can't hear.

A lot of times people nervously will then laugh.

And so, I used to sort of internalize that as that's that sort of stereotype where if you have hearing loss, you're dumb, you're stupid, you can't understand something.

And now I'm just sort of realizing it's their nervousness that they realize, they know you couldn't hear, they forgot in a moment -- I've been married to my husband for 27 years he just forgets, he comes from a place of love but it's forgetful.

So, I try not to take the laughter internally, and it's just taken me a really long time because I grew up wanting to be, to be able to know everything know everything and be on top of everything.

So, for me personally it's been somewhat of a vender and just saying I can't hear you if you whisper and people generally get if and I find if they really want me to know something, they'll tell me later, I hate when people say don't worry about it, forget it.

I think personally -- this is what it is and if somebody thinks they want to convey that to me hopefully they'll tell me later when I can hear them and the situation is conducive to them speaking in a loud her voice.

Anybody else?

KATE: Hi my name's Kate I'd had hearing loss for 40 years and I work with a lot of hearing people who have -- there's one person who knew I was deaf and she comes up and she forgot for a moment and, and whispers in my ear and I'm looking at her why are you whispering in my deaf ear?

So, she -- she and then she started classifying I said if you want to be secretive, let's do it this way.

(Room laughing)

KATE: And so, when people keep repeating themselves, I said please change the word is to something else.

So that I can understand and describe your meaning better for me to understand it.

So, you have to be proactive in training those hearing people out is there, it's the same time I'm learning how to work with the hearing world.

You have to.

Anybody else?

GARY JACOBSON: This is more of a comment.

I don't know how many of you grew up with a hearing impairment.

Okay.

Now, have you ever had a case especially your mother put her hand over and whisper and you can't see anything, and you're like what is it? Oh, never mind it's not important, forget it.

And then why are you doing it?

Never mind, I'll tell you about it later, forget it.

And of course, they never tell you anyway.

This is a pet peeve especially with kids.

You know, they can't communicate with their parents.

Okay.

And --

ANNA: I'm someone who grew up with a hearing loss and even though I'm not deaf I do experience similar things to what deaf people go through because my hearing loss is moderate, 65 to 60 percent so sometimes my mother will be like yesterday this happened.

She was in another room and she was whispering not in my ear but that's whispering -- about while putting something away and trying to tell me something.

I and I said mom I need to remind you if you are speaking and -- it's not my ear you look at it's right directly in my face and then we can have a conversation.

And I told the story today but I'm going to mention a quick short nutshell. So, I had an experience with when my dad picks up the wrong order and I'm telling my mom this is the first time in my life I felt like both of you, got a glimpse of when I go through.

Even today in this room even though I'm looking at you I'm really looking at the screen and reading because that's the best way I can get a better understanding of what everyone's saying and that's why I hope we can all for the holidays find some solution because I feel like every year it is a struggle.

Someone's going like this -- and I've whispered to people before and sometimes I do things and I forget that when I request someone not to, I probably should be looking at them too but I grew up in the hearing world, my mom never took classes or read up on things on how to assimilate into my world -- that's not us, we're not like this.

So that's why we have a --

That's why we advocate for all the hearing loss in the room.

STEVEN: So, mine's a little long.

So, I'm in high school I've been hearing impaired since I was born and, I'm in the middle of some class, and I lose all my hearing, 100 percent.

I sat in the front row because I read lips.

But when you can't associate certain words or sounds with the lips, you don't associate.

So, the teacher's got his back doing something on the blackboard and he turns around and I know he's talking to me and but I'm like oh my gosh what do I do? So, the whole class thinks I'm stupid, which is fine because I've had that since I was a little kid.

So, recently I go to court I'm supposed to testify.

They give me this little box that I don't even know what it is.

I put it in my ear it looks like a Walkman, I can hear the air conditioner, rustling papers, I can hear all kinds of stuff but I don't hear the judge.

So, he's looking at me like there's something wrong.

So, I say can I approach the bench? Absolutely not.

So, I'm looking at the DA I'm looking at the judge, it's like what am I supposed to do? And the judge is all flustered, he says c'mon up here.

So, I go up, why do you want me so I sit three feet away from me, I cannot hear him.

I hear the air conditioning I hear the rustling papers, I hear people in the backgrounds but I can't understand the judge. So, what I'm doing now is I'm educating everybody in this room that this judge continued the DA continued, the bailiff continued to let this happen so now snapped is the judge got flustered he got upset he's looking around the room, the whole loom's looking at each other because of me, they think something's wrong with me but the reality is there's nothing wrong with me.

At 69 years old I just learned I'm super smart. So, what's happening is when the judge said we're done, he says we're done, I stand up and I look at him and I said you sir have violated my protected Civil Rights under United States under color of law which is an A.D.A. violation so now the entire Los Angeles court system is going to be investigated by the Department of Justice.

So me, you, and an individual, can do this anywhere you want, you can go your employer, you can go to JC Pennies you can go to the theater you can go to that library, you can go anywhere you want and if they don't have accommodations for you, you go online to the Department of Justice, it's that simple.

There's a little form you fill out and they will respond.

And, if it's an employer, you don't get to find out -- or actually if it's a -- if it's a ... if it's a courtroom it's a sheriff's department, it's the DA's office, they will respond to you.

And they'll tell you what's going on.

And then you get to sit in a room where W with -- I'm going to get to sit in a room with the sheriff's department because they also did this to me in the station, multiple times.

And then the court did this and the DA's done this so I'm going to get to sit in a room with a federal mediator and a representative from those departments, individually, and tell them what I want.

Them to do.

And they can't deny me.

And then I get to tell them how much money I want to settle for.

So, yeah.

So, think about this.

Let's say it's just the courts.

Okay, how many thousands of people have been in this situation we're in that have been in that courtroom that can't hear a word that's going on? And they give you the stupid box that doesn't do anything.

Well yesterday Mitzy was in court they gave her captioning like this.

Well I can actually read the captioning over her shoulder that was cool but when she went up front, I couldn't hear anything, I'm sitting in a room full of people talking.

I might have to testify yesterday but I can't hear a thing.

Now back to this.

So, you're in a room with a federal mediator, whoever's representing the other people you tell them what you want and then you tell them how much money you want.

And if they don't settle then you get to take all the Department of Justice, facts, all the figures everything they found that proves that time L.A. County Sheriff's Department, the DA, or the court system wrong.

Or, the theater -- anybody, and you get to take that and sue them in civil court and once you sue in civil court, it becomes record, public record.

So, all of a sudden, 1,000 lawyers, 100,000 lawyers get a hold of this and they sue the court system.

Well, they'd rather settle with me and make an out of court settlement and fix the problem.

So, I get to tell them I want looping, I want captioning like this a big screen because we all know that most people don't hear every word no matter if they're good hearing people or not.

But if you had this in a courtroom, the jury, the jury can see it because the jury misses stuff.

And, so anyway, it's that simple, if you go online you fill out a little form, you put your name your number.

They will contact you and say yes, we're going go to look into your complaint but if it's the complaints that I have, they're actually going to talk to me, they're actually going to have me sit down in a room and talk to the court system, whoever's going to represent the courts.

So, with knowledge comes power, you now have a ton of knowledge and you have a ton of power.

It's just up to you how you want to use it.

(Applause)

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I know we're totally away from holidays but I did want is to counter that in Riverside County they're actually very good about courts.

I wasn't going through the system, I went as a juror I was called, I told them I was -- you know I have hearing loss and they provided me with a personal captionist, real-time CART, the whole time.

I got on a jury it was a criminal case it was a murder case.

And she -- well they because they changed but every single day and through arguing the case with the other jurors, I had a captionist right next to me the whole time.

And she met me the first day I showed up at the court, she was there and I had like zero issues.

So, somebody probably like you went in and made that happen and I had zero problems with it.

(Applause)

STEVEN: Actually, now's a good testimony to thank the gentleman doing this because seriously he's doing a wonderful job.

JENNA NELSON: Yeah, I think we can have an entire meeting on life and needing to advocated and asking for A.D.A. accommodations.

We just got something in the HLAA inbox, a woman who was panicking because she said that somebody came into her comedy club and complained and said they were going is to is to sue her because they didn't have accommodations for him.

And I said to her, I can't give you any legal advice about a lawyer, but you need to accommodate people with hearing loss.

So -- you can't see me? Anyway, so let's try to stay on topic because this is about the holidays -- oh, did you want to say something?

HEATHER LEHR: No, I have something to say about the holidays.

JENNA NELSON: Oh yeah, thank you.

HEATHER LEHR: Hi, okay.

So, talking about family, this is hard.

You get your whole family together, and one of the things that is the hardest for me about the holidays is -- I mean I love my family so much.

They've all known me since I've had hearing loss since I was a child so they all know about that.

But what happens, we always have a really big table and there's tons of kids and commotion and, you know, and every year I feel so lonely sitting at that table.

Because I have no idea what anyone is talking about.

And, because it's going fast, you know, they're switching and they're changing topics and you know sometimes I lean in and what are you guys talking about? What are you guys talking about? But after you've done that three or four times, you're just tired of it or you feel upset, I don't know what it is.

But what I end up doing is I end up just staring at my food, having my own thoughts and not being part of it.

So, it's -- to me that's the hardest part of the holidays.

I recently got my Cochlear implant in February.

And I'm flying up to my dad's farm for Thanksgiving so this will be my first time doing Thanksgiving with my Cochlear implant and I'm hoping that I'm going to be less lonely at the table.

(Applause)

WENDI: I think that is so common and that is the lament that we have here.

I would -- one thing that works for me -- and I don't host Thanksgiving but I go and since you're the host, this might work a little bit better. There's not going to be a complete sound solution but maybe if you have the space, rather than have one big table where everybody is there, maybe, you know, if you set it up as more smaller tables with little center pieces but, you know, and then maybe four at -- per table or something like that, then everybody's -- people will move around but at least for dinner, you'll be -- I think I could have a conversation with three other people closer than I could with a long table of ten.

And so, just as a possible solution you -- if you're hosting you get to set your environment.

And that might be -- it works out really well and I'm always happy is that that's what they do.

I don't know -- and I think I just I'm just a beneficiary of it I don't think they did that because of me but it works out better, you know, to have four at a table and lots of little tables and one big table.

JENNA NELSON: Yeah.

JOEL: This is a small thing really, lip-reading, speech-reading.

Only gives you about ten to 30 percent of what's being said. There are sounds that are made without the lips moving, sounds that are made in the throat, and in you get ten, 20 percent from visual, that's about as good as you're going to get.

The movie's where the FBI agent is looking for the -- translating the conversation, perfectly, is -- it doesn't exist.

But, it's a tool.

And, if you have -- if you had a tool in your tool chest, that did 10 to 30 percent of the jobs that you have to do, you wouldn't throw it away.

So, there are all kinds of places around the county and certainly in L.A., churches, et cetera, that offer speech reading classes and all they do for an hour or once a week or whatever is give you visual exercises that you can practice.

And what that does is it enhances your speed of focus -- how quickly you can visually focus, and your visual memory.

So, if you capitalize on those things, you can adequately use the tool and get you 10 to 30 percent.

It doesn't solve many, many problems, it doesn't negate what everybody's saying --

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I find my partner's from another country so I struggling -- he's from Croatia and we go to Thanksgiving there's people from Albania and Croatia and Bosnia, and everybody's trying to understand people what people are saying.

So, for Thanksgiving -- I go to the kids table and kids are fascinated with by my hearing aids just because they squeal what are those things hanging on your ears? And I played ageism with them where I said okay, five minutes, ten minutes, let's try and see if you can live in my world, nonverbal.

And I teach them like let's see if you can do it my way and you have to communicate without using words or whatever.

And see what it's like to not hear.

And just let them try and walk a little bit in my shoes I think it's important for kids to understand that but we turn it into a game just so they understand a little bit -- at least get me through the dinner without having conversation that I can't understand but I think it also helps kids understand.

So, if they encountered a kid with a hearing problem at school, they were saying their crazy aunt from Thanksgiving and maybe they'll be a little bit more compassionate.

(Applause)

SHARON: I already spoke but I realized I was off-topic a little bit the first time.

But I'm finding what works for me a little bit in large gatherings for me I can't get to three or four people I really can't get to one so I've made a conscious effort to position myself next to somebody that might want to talk to and really just focus on having a conversation with that person.

I find for me across the table's too difficult when there's eight, ten plus people.

So, I'm finding that's helping with my isolation a little bit to just try to target one person and also be more mindful, maybe in the middle of a meal it's a long meal to maybe move my seat and then go try to talk to another person.

So, I kind of feel or if Museum in a networking thing too I'm not going to meet ten people in a networking thing if I meet one or two people and if I do that and feel I'm having a -- satisfying and I'm comfortable with that.

KAT: With Wendi if you're the host you can kind of control things a little bit more easily so I'm hosting Thanksgiving this year for the first time.

And many of you know that I moved from the L.A. area up to the Santa Barbara area, so -- this is terrible but it's so good because only my siblings are coming to Thanksgiving.

Not my husband's family.

Except for maybe his son.

But I can't tell you the relief I'm feeling that I don't have to struggle to hear his family, who are all very nice, but they just -- they can't seem to get it, no matter what.

And they talk real fast and I'm just sitting there and I don't want them thinking she's a dummy she never talks she never contributes.

I'm thinking they're thinking this and they probably aren't but I can't help thinking it.

So, with my -- just my little circle of siblings, my three older siblings, it's going to be much more controlled.

And I'm actually going to give a little speech and they're all sitting down and remind them, even though I've had hearing loss for the last 25 years, I need to remind them my hearing loss, how I want things to happen.

And, I'll see how it goes.

But it's just so interesting my attitude towards Thanksgiving this year is so different from previous years because it was always about my husband's family who lives down in L.A. and it's just -- it's kind of sad but I'm still happy about it because I can really enjoy Thanksgiving this year.

And then one other thing, I was telling Sharon how wearing this button has helped me so much in the past, you know, couple months getting used to new people because I'm having to get new doctors, new, you know, hair stylists, new nail people because of my move.

And, I wear this everywhere and even at home (laughing) and it does help a lot.

And people ask about it.

And ask about hearing loss.

And I've actually found out that there's quite a few people in the health care professions that have a hearing loss and they don't -- they don't want to admit it to their coworkers and I've given out of these buttons and in fact I need to get some more.

JENNA NELSON: We'll order them.

KAT: If the new Steering Committee can somehow make that happen.

I need more.

So that's -- those are two of my solutions.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I'll make this short I think my attitude over the years has gotten better about dealing with -- that I -- with things that I can't control.

And, what I've noticed when it's a big table is, I make it a point and if they don't like it too bad.

I just talk to the two people around me or the people that I can't understand, kind of have that conversation and if they kind of fade out and talk to the big table I just figure I'm not going to get it.

But I do make an effort to stay involved, and when there's a chance to mingle like many other people were saying, I go to groups of one or two people and try to go around the room.

Now for instance when it's like Christmas and kids are opening exaggerates everybody's in the same room when they're all yelling and laughing whatever, I just give up, oh cute doll or whatever but I don't know what's going on.

But I have chosen to try to mind it as little as possible and kind of just get into the spirit that there's joy there and if I don't get every word, I have to let it go.

But I do think trying to grab one or two people, at least you'll feel successful, a part of the evening and maybe not so lonely.

PAT: I just wanted to say to Heather I totally relate to your feelings about that sadness around the family table, where there's a whether it's a holiday or just a Sunday dinner.

Because when you're really involved with your family and they really mean so much, you want to be part of that.

And there's that -- you're going to use all these tools and suggestions and trucks and microphones and everything that we come up with.

But it still goes down to the heart of us, that we're not able to do that.

And it's really to sink into a feeling of victimization in a way.

You know we end up feeling like well everybody else is having fun and poor me I'm sitting here totally out of it.

And, it seems like every year I alternate between being sadness or being angry -- I mean after all they know me, why aren't they making more effort to include me, at least, occasionally in the joke?

But it doesn't happen because the nature of a communal meal is that it's rapped-fire across the table back and forth and this person over here talks to that person over there.

And the cross-talk is no way we're ever going to do it and if we try to slow it down it does not work because that's just not how communication happens.

So, we have to kind of just allow ourself to have that grief but it's not -- if we ever heard typically or experience an easy conversation around a table it's not going to be that way and we have to just acknowledge that grief.

And then just try and take the good parts out of it and enjoy it -- the moment.

But, it's okay to feel that, you know.

And acknowledge it within ourselves and say it's sad.

I can't do this anymore but, you know, it's just the way it is.

But, you're not alone.

I experience that all the time and it's hard.

It's really hard.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Sometimes we go to my sister's house for Thanksgiving or Christmas and there's ten of us and we sit at the table.

And, because my family knows that I'm deaf.

Okay, that's a given.

But, when they're all talking at the same time, it's -- you can't keep up because two people are talking at the same time, or they're overlapping.

But the main thing is because my family knows me, they always put me -- my sister always makes sure that she sits next to me and my daughter is always across from me.

So, I always think that that's very considerate.

Also, other family members they listen to me do you know what we're talking about? Or we're talking about this or this.

So, I really appreciate that because they know that I -- I miss out.

But, at the same time, years ago I used to feel badly about it but now -- I mean it is what it is, we do the best we can, talk to the person next to you.

We can't make it better, there's no way that even my lip-reading skills it's just -- it is what it is.

So, enjoy your food, talk to a family member afterwards, for dinner or something - - that's my attitude about it.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I couple years ago I went to a Thanksgiving in New York and the hostess had this woman stay her best friend come and her best friend was deaf with a Cochlear implant and was fluent in sign language.

I didn't know this and I was upstairs in my room and everybody was getting ready and I really didn't feel like going downstairs, I was getting all depressed that everyone was going to be chattering and talking and feeling isolated, I could feel isolate in my room.

But someone came up to get me so I went down and I sat down, and Michelle looks at me, the sign language -- and she's got good lip-reading skills.

And she started signing when everyone said because they were telling us what they were thankful for and I was listless.

And she was signing it and I in understood it perfectly.

Wow, now this Thanksgiving, Michelle's not going to be there she's going to be in Chicago.

And, but Mitzy sold moo a pocket talker that works so great so I'm going to bring it with me, I'm going to put it the microphone on the table and say if you want is to talk to me you talk into that.

I'll see if it works.

And thank you Mitzy, that thing changed my life.

(Applause)

JOEL: Recently, the last seven, eight months, I've been healthy most of my life. Active, and the last seven eight months I've experienced debilitating physical problems that probably aren't going to go away at this point.

I'm 77 years old.

And, I'm independent but -- there's just a lot of things I can't do anymore.

Physical things.

And, it was really getting to me and you talked about isolation and I felt -- I felt that way.

Isolated, it was -- tired, it was just my mind was -- kept going about all the things I couldn't do -- sleeping is a problem.

Taking more pills than I've ever taken.

And I decided that I should go see a Kaiser mental health person to see if they had any suggestions on how I could maintain a positive attitude.

Those things are tricky because they don't know you, you don't know them.

And it takes a certain amount of energy just to -- just to get -- let them know what's happening with you.

It's, you know, anyway, I went to three sessions at the end of the third session which was the last one, he said to me ... you know, you still can do a lot of things.

There's just a lot of stuff you can still do.

Why don't you focus on that rather than focusing on what you can't do?

And, I thanked him and we both agreed that there was really nothing more that he could do for me.

And, actually, that's why I'm here.

This is something I can do.

Maybe (laughing).

(Applause)

WENDI: You can, and we're happy to have you here.

JENNA NELSON: She took the words right out of my mouth.

And I think that's really important.

We forget -- I'm I remember being able to hear normally and hear whispers so it gets frustrating because I have such early memories of being able to do that for a long time.

But I think focusing on -- well I think back to certain situations and most of what people say is really on not that important.

I mean they're just making some comment, that's the whisper or like nice dress or look at her hair. It's minutia, and so I think it's really important to just focus on what we can do because we can only do so much.

And I was going to say one of my little tips is that when I sit at any table, my husband sits on my bad side.

Because I don't need to hear him.

(Room laughing)

JENNA NELSON: I mean he knows, he can repeat things to me so anybody that I want to hear in terms of who's going to be new to the scene or whatever, somebody's probably going to try to talk to me, they go on my right side.

And that's what I've done and it's been really, really helpful for me because even when I sit on a plane, when I take Southwest I make sure I sit on the left because I know that whoever's in that middle seat I just flew back from Oakland last week and this woman was nonstop chatting with me but I knew whoever sat down next to me -- it was still divot plane but at least I could hear her.

So, there are things we can do and we'll have another meeting about technology, because I think that those are also things that can help us in noisy situations, they're coming up with a lot of different things for hearing aids, the gal who was here from AB was talking about the multi-mic where you put it in the middle of the table.

And then you can hear multiple speakers.

I went out to lunch with Diane many, many months ago and she actually brought her mic to set on the salt shaker thing.

And that helped her.

So, you know we just have to remember that technology can help us in these situations as well.

So, I'm going to move onto the next one even though it sort of doesn't really matter because we all have our stuff.

And it sort of bleeds into what -- what we were speaking about before.

So, what do we say to people when they are covering their mouths when they're chewing with food in their mouths? What do we say to them when we can't understand? I'll start because what I do is -- my husband is one of these days you'll meet him, he does exist and he's a former stand-up comedian and comedy is really important because you got to laugh or you're just going to fall, you know you're just going to cry.

And, I think that, you know, making fun of any situation -- so when somebody talks to me with their -- with food in their mouth, I put food in my mouth and I say something back and they go what? Exactly, I can't hear what you're saying.

And they go oh yes, sorry, sorry.

And if you just kind of make a funny situation -- make it into a funny moment people often are like I'm sorry, you're right, I can't hear myself.

And they turn it on themselves.

So, I think that's one way you can say to somebody, I can't hear you with your mouth -- I don't know how people hear with food in their mouth anyway but that seems to work every time.

So, does anybody have any other thoughts about how we can gently tell people I can't understand you even though you're looking right at me but you're covering your mouth?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: God has a really good sense of humor because what I do for a living is, I teach children to read so I'm listening all the time, although I'm deaf.

So, I don't know where that came from.

But what I do, I have a signal with my kids, I also have a signal with my husband and it's just simple -- I just point it my ear and I tap it.

And like that means you need to repeat or speak up because after a while you get kind of bothered saying what? I'm sorry can you say that again? And I think other people do too even though they know.

My husband has known I'm deaf for 25 years, but he still will forget and I'll just look right at him and then he'll get it.

But just some sort of a signal for me works.

Anybody else?

STEVEN: So, one thing that I learned a long time ago is when you can't always hear what your wife's saying you just get the last word every time.

And it's always yes dear.

(Room laughing)

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I know this is not the most assertive thing to do but my husband's kind of my hearing dog.

He knows, he knows when I'm not getting stuff, he knows me so well.

And, you know, he'll just gently help me.

Like, you know, I'll tell him I'm not getting this and you know kind of whisper it to him and he's talking about whatever.

My daughter is, you know, she's a bossy girl kind of thing.

And her friends sometimes twin girls they're kind of -- they scream and they talk over each other.

And, she'll literally grab them and go -- my mom's deaf, install you have to slow down because they have a tendency to talk, they're walking away and then whether say what? They're like rolling their eyes, thank you.

Anyway, so my family, my immediate family, knows my problems and they really help me out.

And I try as much as possible not to have Michael talk to me because I don't want to be Penn and Teller, I don't want to be the silent partner but it is helpful when someone will give you a hand.

ANNA: One thing that I was going to say because it ties in with people who chew with their mouths, don't understand us and the holiday.

So usually what I do is I wait until they're done with food like I'll keep myself busy at a holiday party when I eat or I'll say I'll make something for you so this way if somebody wants my attention, I ignore them and then I tell them this is exactly how I feel whether the person may be chewing their food or they're saying something and I can't hear them but I'll go to individual guests, if I'm -- somewhere else I kind of go around and get to know the person.

Like I hear hi my name is so-and-so, nice to meet you and how was your day how was your behind so I'd rather do small talks and talk to somebody so it's basically interactive than anything else because even -- I remember one weekend we were having a gathering and I was telling my husband there's a chance you might not take the baby to the they go party because he's going to cry with a bunch of people in the room because I was a first-time mom.

One of my girlfriends who has a two-year-old when her son was younger, they would have somebody designated to watch at home, like bring them over an hour and that person -- my parents offered to watch him.

Now my in-laws are going to come and say something but I explained to them because of my hearing loss I'd rather have an intimate family gathering not have to at the same time try to -- take care of my son who's Combining whining, because there's too many people in the room.

Well at the restaurant that's fine but I tell them this is how I'm like with my hearing loss.

If I'm in a gathering that's super noisy sometimes I have to step out and just take a break and this is what my baby needs.

So, I start out and just started to feel upset so that's why my advice is if you're feeling whatever you're feeling step out for a moment and let the person know, I'll be right there with you, I'm so sorry so -- so hopefully this will give you -- and, as everyone says to close my thought, don't someone said don't talk at the same time as you are chewing.

(Applause)

KATE: Speaking about chewing food and I can read lips at the same time, with someone -- I remember a number of years it repeatedly happens a boss was talking to

me at her desk and she's eating a banana and I'm looking at her while she's talking and I'm just staring at her and she said what's the matter? And I said why are you talking to me with food in your mouth I'm trying is to read your lips and there's nothing there but food!

She goes, oh yeah, okay.

If you don't tell them upfront, they're going to keep on chewing their food in front of you.

And you are not -- and then, you have a go-to restaurant, if I go to the with the family to a restaurant I literally ask for a corner, quiet, with lots of lights, no shadows, no low lights because otherwise I won't be able to see anybody's face.

You can are going to need to be active and forceful they you want them to meet your needs, that's basically it.

Anybody else?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: What Kate was just saying about choosing a restaurant, I just figured something, I'm flying to Colorado this week and I'm going to be visiting with friends and family.

And, we're making arrangements for dinner one night and someone suggested oh we can go to this folk place up here -- and I actually went on Yelp to look it up, and I saw the pictures, linoleum floors and wooden tables it just didn't look like it was a very conducive place to hear.

So, I wrote back and I asked if there's some place that's quieter with carpeted floors and she said you know what? I have trouble hearing too.

So, let me look.

And then she came back and, and said yeah there's this great Chinese restaurant that shouldn't be very crowded that night and it's, you know, more conducive.

So just -- assert -- it's important, I'm learning that too to assert myself and just say you know what? That location is not going to work for me, can we find a place that's going to be better, easier with the acoustics and I mean a room like this with kind of carpeting on the walls, is much better to hear than if it's, you know, uncarpeted floor and -- yeah.

Definitely.

And also, where you position yourself in a restaurant.

And I know my hearing aids -- I can turn off the back-microphones so I want to sit with my back to the noise so I can turn those off and face the people and have that -- have people in front of me instead of background noise it's not perfect but every little bit helps.

PAT: I just wanted to say something about the food in the mouth question -- isn't that considered rude?

(Room laughing)

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I mean if I'm fully hearing and functional, that's rude if you're talking to me with food in your mouth, visually I don't want to see that.

So, do we acknowledge bad behavior?

(Room laughing)

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Just sit there and watch -- you turn your head because somebody said I just choose not to acknowledge it.

Because, in any circle that's just disgusting (laughing).

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I just wanted to allude to something that -- a lot of times what I do is when I don't understand someone, it could be either in a market or store or - - anywhere.

I point to my hand and then they seem to get that for some reason.

Or I say I'm deaf.

And that really works, I mean if I -- good.

The other thing that I wanted to say was whenever I go to the restaurant, we always ask for a quiet corner.

That's a given.

Back, against the wall, or something away from the main area.

And it's so cute because when I go with my daughter, she says to me, Mom, is that table okay?

And I just think that's so sweet because, you know, I guess I Talk taught her that we need to be in a quiet corner.

So, you know, eventually the family member remembers.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yesterday I went to get some bread so I walk in the bakery and I go over to the lady and I said to her I want a corner aisle.

She looks in the back and she starts talking I don't know what she was saying because she's talking to the bread so I wave like this and I say excuse me, I'm deaf you need to look at me.

Oh, okay, and then she started talking and looking back.

What is the matter with these people?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I just wanted to say something you said about stepping out.

I might be -- when we're talking about families and holidays and hearing I think it's important that we also remember sometimes we do need to step out because even though you can't hear what's going on, there's a lot of oral stimulation I was thinking about you Heather with a Cochlear implant going to a family also there's a lot of new sound and stuff it's frustrated, the cognitive -- not trying -- trying to understand what's going on I find that I just get overwhelmed not hearing for hours.

And, sometimes I need to step out and take a breather because otherwise I -- my brother-in-law turns to me and starts blah blah with a mouthful of stuff, I say it don't spray it with your forehead. I just want -- so that's step out thing is important I think for us.

TIM BROWNING: Okay, so we need to give Ali a break here so we're going to take about a ten-15-minute break and then we'll get back into it.

Thanks everyone.

MEETING BREAKS AT 11:18 A.M.; MEETING RESUMES AT 11:36 A.M.

TIM BROWNING: All right everyone.

If you can help me on getting everybody back to their seats.

Ah that's how you turn down the lights.

Okay, all right everyone.

Can you hear me?

Yes?

Do you want to hear me?

(Room laughing)

TIM BROWNING: Turn off your T-coils if you don't want to hear me.

I'm kinds of boring.

So ... before we do the treasurer's report --

AUDIENCE MEMBER: You know what it's not coming through the T-coil.

TIM BROWNING: How about now?

Hey!

Hopefully it sounds better now than it did before.

Wait.

JENNA NELSON: Wait, wait.

TIM BROWNING: Jennifer is, hopefully --

AUDIENCE MEMBER: We're back up.

TIM BROWNING: I'm going to talk really fast before we lose it again.

Sorry Ali.

So first of all, we wanted to do a special presentation on behalf of the chapter.

The Sherman Oaks Library has graciously allowed us the opportunity to have our meetings here and we've been able to do it for free.

And, I think you can say these are very nice accommodations.

And, so on behalf of their generosity and so forth we wanted to offer -- what did we say? A donation on behalf of the chapter to the friends of the Sherman Oaks Library.

That they've just been so wonderful, very accommodating in trying to help us out and so forth. So, we have Alicia back here who would like to come up here and we'd like to present her with a check on behalf of the chapter.

And I don't know -- did you want to speak on that?

GARY JACOBSON: She can speak if she wanted. Thank you.

TIM BROWNING: Thank you very much.

(Applause)

TIM BROWNING: So, it's \$250, so we just wanted to thank you so much for what you've done for us, there's this beautiful room here and everything, and so, on behalf of the chapter thank you and we look forward to seeing you next year as well.

You have us on the calendar, right?

>>> Yes, that's all going through.

TIM BROWNING: So, thank you very much.

>>> You're welcome, thank you guys.

(Applause)

TIM BROWNING: Book the famous.

GARY JACOBSON: Gary not so famous Tim.

Anyway, we got our check for last June's walk 4 hearing.

The check amount was \$3,194.60.

(Applause)

GARY JACOBSON: Bound for the treasury, \$14,784.59 so 14,000 maybe some of us can take a trip around the country with the money, who knows.

Anyway, this is kitty time.

I forgot the kitty -- I was very tired this morning but because next month at Christmas, red.

So, I'm going to use this for this month and we're going to pass it around the room for the kitty.

Now the kitty jar helps us with, well, not necessarily the food but the meeting, the caption effort, and the holiday -- the scholarship fund -- there's so many things we need to use the kitty for.

If you do write a check, you can make it out to HLA Los Angeles and if you want it to go to the scholarship fund, write "scholarship fund" on the memo on the check.

And, we may send you a thank you note about the check, okay?

There you go.

Any questions from anybody?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: What is the scholarship snubbed.

GARY JACOBSON: She's still here -- oh there she is, Heather can plain better.

I couldn't find you.

HEATHER LEHR: Hi everybody, yes, I'm heading up the scholarship committee.

Sharon is also involved, Michael is involved and Gary is involved and -- the scholarship committee we've gotten the go ahead from LAUSD to get our scholarship promoted there.

And, we're working to interface with a couple other districts, in Los Angeles so we're hard at work with that.

I was going to do a report, once we got everything finalized, we're having a little meeting after this meeting today and give you a little report on how that's going.

As you know we voted months ago allocate \$1,000 for a scholarship this year.

And, and part of the things that we'll be doing in the future is actively recruiting people to donate money to that scholarship so that right now it's a separate item in our chapter.

So, does anybody have any questions or does anyone want to help because we can always use a little more help on it.

WENDI: So, the it's a college scholarship fund and so who are our potential recipients?

HEATHER LEHR: Right now, we have -- we're at the college -- can everyone hear me?

The college counselors at LAUSD it's for a high school student with hearing loss.

Who is going to applying to college, community college or university.

So, higher education.

So right now, it's for a high school student, I know some of the chapters do -- they have like offer two scholarships one for a high school student and one for a returning student.

Which would be a great thing to do.

But right now, we're starting small because this is our first year and it's going to be a high school student to help them pay for college.

WENDI: So, if we know someone, should we submit their name to you or how do we --

HEATHER LEHR: Well the criteria that we had originally voted on was they had to be in the City of Los Angeles.

Or if we wanted to open it up, I'm fine with that.

But yeah, I think that's a good idea, Wendi.

WENDI: Because I do know a deaf student who would benefit from it.

She has two Cochlear implants, has gone through school that way and so I just, you know, she's part of LAUSD and I don't know if she's even aware so I want to know how if we all know someone who fits the criteria, what do we do?

HEATHER LEHR: They haven't put it out to the college counselors yet, apparently, they really focus on helping people with their applications through November 30th and then the scholarship stuff starts coming out in December and then they really push it in January and February which is when most of the people are doing the financial, you know, scholarships and stuff.

So, do you understand the timing that of?

As soon as -- we have an application that we've written and we're getting a new draft and once we have the final draft of the application, we will hand it out to the membership so you can give it to people that you know.

WENDI: Okay.

HEATHER LEHR: Probably in January, January 1st.

TIM BROWNING: Hopefully we can put it on the website, Facebook, and so forth.

Also, one of -- just so you know really quick, for next year one of the things we want to do for the website is have the ability to make your donations online.

So, I think for now we're going to be looking at ideas to designate what your donation would be so it could be for scholarships, it could be for the chapter, it could be for me or whatever you want.

You're paying attention, good.

So that's something we wanted to look into.

Because I know sometimes spur of the moment you think of it and you would like the ability to just get online to the website and be able to, in a secure fashion, make a donation.

So, we're kind of going all over the place with the agenda here.

So, I think ... I think the next thing I wanted -- so Grace we will be trashing your house on December 8th.

(Applause)

TIM BROWNING: We're going to get did all night, and drinking and doing all sorts of wild things.

No, Grace has graciously, graciously given her house to us, she has a beautiful home in Pasadena, if you haven't been there.

So, if this is the first time, police please make sure you come it's going to be fantastic so we're having a holiday party on the eighth of December, and I think the time we're thinking 6:00, 6:30 probably around 6:30 or so we don't want to make it too late because I think last year, we started around 7:00 and it got a little bit late.

And we're going to have the White elephant festivities again, hopefully Danny can make it so Kat hopefully Danny can get there.

She's kind of nodding, so hopefully.

Make him come.

You know Danny's the perfect Santa Claus.

We are going to cater this party.

So, I wanted to make sure you guys know, it's always hard to bring all the food if we run out of should be something -- the Steering Committee is going to work on catering this event.

So, we'll figure out everything, we'll get it online, get that information to you.

I think people with still bring side dishes, drinks if you want but we just wanted to lessen the stress a little bit because sometimes it's really hard to plan everything and so forth.

So, we'll have further information coming.

ANNA: I just had one question about it.

One thing that I was going to mention, so the last one that we did at someone's house, I remembered not being able to get the address.

Maine on the -- do you someone that I can post it on HLAA like the cool thing I saw on the post it's in the library and -- I'm trying to figure out but if it's someone's house I know you want people to prioritize the event so do you know if they're going on send

an email out to us about the address? Just in case I'm a working woman and a mom and sometimes -- what time is this? Where's the address and location of it?

So, I just thought I'd point it out.

TIM BROWNING: I do know we're going to be reserving -- we want to make sure who's coming for the party so we can make sure we know about the catering so but when you reserve, we're going to make sure you get the address.

ANNA: When do we reserve?

TIM BROWNING: I think we're going to reserve on Yahoo group and Facebook, and also the -- I guess the sign-in sheet.

ANNA: Yeah see I did that one.

TIM BROWNING: Okay. We'll make sure the sign-in sheet we get an email to you because I have your email so we'll make sure -- if you're going to be joining the party that -- your email.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: If anyone did not sign up for that?

JENNA NELSON: I think it might be just better for people either we'll email them or do social media than trying to figure out everybody's stuff on here.

People might not even know if they're going to come --

AUDIENCE MEMBER: If nobody's signed in make sure they're signed in for the meeting.

JENNA NELSON: Oh, we have a new system, sorry.

GARY JACOBSON: Tim, who's readying the dessert for the party? Are we going to have a pot luck for dessert or is that going to be catered?

TIM BROWNING: I think we did let people bring desserts, especially the chocolate because you know I like chocolate but I think desserts we'll let people bring I think catering can be the more larger dishes, vegetarian -- vegetarian and things like that.

I know getting the address, to everyone, is very important so make sure one way or another we'll get that information to you.

JENNA NELSON: I'm just going to add if you are not on Yahoo and you are not on Facebook then we need to make sure that we have your email because in order for us to give out the address we need you to RSVP and we also need you to RSVP

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because we're having it catered and we need to know how many people are going to be attending.

So, if you plan, you know, spouses, partners, whatever are welcome but we need to know -- we'll try and send that stuff out as soon as possible.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: And if you are on Facebook, and would like to be part of the group, so you can be part of this conversation -- I just added you Jackie.

We can add -- or you can go to it's hlaa-la: Hearing Loss Association of America-los Angeles chapter.

That's the group.

It's closed.

Not public, the page is public so if you find our page on Facebook and the page links to the group but you need to join the group in order to be part of the discussion.

JENNA NELSON: I was going to say real quickly I know we're going to a tangent here.

From now on, the sign-in sheet is going to become simpler.

If you're a regular we're going to have your name and you're just going to check it so you don't have to sign in every time.

So that's just to let you -- to what you were saying.

Georgia.

GEORGIA: I just wanted to say something about my home address on the Internet I think that's not good on a map.

For the wrap session just to get a personal email my address on there --

JENNA NELSON: So, the page is closed.

Meaning, if we -- I mean technically we could put addresses on our Facebook page because only members are part of so nobody else can access it -- the group, correct.

So, just know that if that does happen, we -- everybody who wants to be part of our group -- so it's either people here or people we're looking to make sure they're not going to -- but I mean that's a good question.

I don't know how we're -- we'll figure it out but we either need to -- we still need people to RSVP because we need to know how many people are coming.

TIM BROWNING: By next year we'll have a better way to reserve it.

I know holiday party is important to everyone so trust us we'll get it all reserved for and you get everything out.

Just in case you are having problems reaching out, if you go to our website, contact us, send an email or submit on in a form that will go to the Steering Committee.

So, just go to our website, contact us, we check it all the time.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Repeat the URL of the website.

TIM BROWNING: The URL of the website is hlaa-la.org.

That's the website address, you go there, and contact us that will go directly to the Steering Committee.

So, if you have any questions, you're not sure about the party, just go ahead and use that.

And we'll have more communications on that in a couple weeks.

GARY JACOBSON: Tim we need to know who would like to set up or cleanup because this is our last meeting before the holiday party.

TIM BROWNING: That's true.

We're going to need, also, are we going -- we're going to need help for people setting up and cleaning up.

So, we do need volunteers.

The wonderful home of Grace and help with that I'm going to help with the loop set up, we are going to need volunteers to help us with setting up and cleaning up.

So, I guess as we reserve if you could let us know.

So, this should come a little early and help with that.

So, do we have any people right now that would like to volunteer?

We got one.

HEATHER LEHR: I'll help set up.

TIM BROWNING: If any of you know already that you would like to do that, please let us know before you do that and that will help us plan the party.

WENDI: I just had a quick question.

I just have one quick question about the website.

So, right now, if you go on the website, I know you said we would be able to make donations at some point.

But right now, can you, if you go to the website can you add like comments or say something or do you have to be a member to just say something on there like a little testimonial type thing? I think I suggested that to someone but I didn't even know if that was possible to do on our website where you could go on and say something.

Can we do that?

TIM BROWNING: That is done with our Facebook group's page so you go to Facebook --

WENDI: U to be part of the Facebook group.

But you can't go to the website to do it.

TIM BROWNING: No, the website's not set up to do that, the website is open to everyone and the Facebook group is just more controlled within our chapter.

If you go to the website, there is a Facebook link that will link you to our group's page but everything is done through Facebook.

WENDI: Okay.

TIM BROWNING: Okay.

All right.

By the way we did a reminder, how many people -- did you have a question?

Sorry.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: This is my first time here I just wanted to ask how do you become a member? Is there a way you generally -- how does it work?

JENNA NELSON: Maybe we should do our -- but, so, we didn't have -- normally we -- because the projector's not working so I can give you a sheet but there are different links so you can either join the Yahoo group or you can join the website.

In terms of joining HLAA, you can join National which is I believe 35 or 40 dollars a year.

ANNA: I think it's \$35 that's what I paid.

On the National.

JENNA NELSON: It's 35? Okay.

For this chapter, the meetings are free.

And, we generally you just saw we you know pass around a kitty just because you know if people want to donate a couple dollars it goes towards -- in terms of there's no actual membership for our chapter.

The meetings are free.

But if you do want to join National, then I believe it's just HLAA.org and you can join that.

If you want, and it shows you all the benefits you'll get.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Hearing loss.org.

JENNA NELSON: Is that what it is?

But anyway, to be a member here, it's free.

HEATHER LEHR: If you do choose to be a member of HLAA National which I highly recommend because not only do you get benefits but you're also helping to fund the advocacy.

I mean they have lawyers going and -- right now, the big fight is with the FCC and the telephone system.

The captioning system because right now you have a human being who is captioning but for your captioning, they want to get rid of human beings and just have it all done with what do you call it? Dragon caption? We're very worried about that.

So anyway, HLAA National fights some of our fights it's \$35 a year, we get a portion of that money.

If you are a member, they have -- it's called the UNC unified membership program so they take all of the members in the ZIP code that they define as Los Angeles ZIP code and we get a couple of dollars for every person who renews their membership every year.

And you get the magazine, yeah, that's really a great resource.

So, anyway I just wanted to make you understand that if you do join National some of that money is going to advocacy for you, and some of that money is actually coming back to the chapter.

Mitzy: I believe also to vote National elections here, you need to be a member of National.

TIM BROWNING: I beat you.

And I guess --

JENNA NELSON: So, should we do that?

TIM BROWNING: I think you are the only --

JENNA NELSON: No there's two.

TIM BROWNING: Who's the other one?

JENNA NELSON: Joel.

TIM BROWNING: I think I've seen you before.

Okay, I know we're short on time but we would love to -- we just would love to learn more about your hearing loss, you know, first time here I guess your journey and - and how you found us.

Just kind of brief.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: My name is Jackie I found this group on Facebook I believe and then I saw there's a meeting today and I thought wow I live really close I better go I haven't met other people like me.

And what else did you want to know?

JENNA NELSON: What's your hearing loss?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Well I was a nurse and I worked at an eye nose throat -- the head doctor asked oh we need you to come to our office.

Sure, I'll go for a free visit.

And they checked me in the booth and then I came back and I asked how did I do?

And she goes the doctor will talk to you.

Okay, something's really wrong here.

See I never knew anything was wrong with me at all.

I always stood in the front -- and, then I got checked and it turned out -- I had hearing loss but I never knew it, immediately when I hear a sound I'm like whatever the sound is because I can't did have -- I couldn't understand what everyone was saying actually but noise if I hear a noise and then I look, and oh my God somebody's talking and then I try to focus on.

GARY JACOBSON: What city are you living in?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I live in Los Angeles, about 2.2 milestones away.

TIM BROWNING: You're welcome.

(Applause)

TIM BROWNING: Sorry to put you on the spot.

JOEL: My name is Joel, I've been retired for 11 years.

And, I do not have a hearing loss.

My hearing is -- has been normal my entire life.

It still is.

I was an audiologist with the Veterans Administration in Sepulveda here in the Valley.

I retired with 30 years of service.

I taught an oral rehab class aural rehab class, 30-hour class, six weeks, twice a week, to veterans.

And their spouses or significant others.

I'm now at a point in my life where I'm trying to figure out ways to give back to be positive, to engage.

My -- I am not that social.

I don't -- it's difficult to go out.

And engage with people.

My engagement is mainly shopping.

You know my wife is not all that well and it works that I do the shopping.

So, everybody at Ralph's knows me.

And Vons.

And Whole Foods.

And Trader Joe's.

(Room laughing)

JOEL: And Costco.

TIM BROWNING: And Sprouts.

JOEL: No not Sprouts.

So, since I know a lot about hearing loss and I've listened to veterans with hearing loss and tried to give advice, and teach what I knew from being an audiologist, I thought this would be a way to give back.

And engage.

It's not easy for me.

And I don't have the hearing loss.

It's generally stressful for me to be engaging with people.

It's easier for me to be home.

It's just more comfortable, it's less stressful to not engage.

It's interesting that my reasons are different.

The dynamics are different.

But in many ways, it's like you guys, for your reasons.

Anyway, I need to work at stressing what I can do and not what I can't do.

So, this is my first attempt and I'm ... I'm sold.

You know. I know about this organization, I knew Rocky Stone well.

He was the guy that started this and when he first started it, I got really excited because there weren't many audiologists doing aural rehabilitation, engaging with people and listening to their problems.

Trying to give advice based on the knowledge that I knew.

And here was this guy that really knew how to whip up an organization.

He was sometimes quite confrontational, I think back then it had to be because, you know, to be heard you've got to stand up and be counted.

And he knew how to do that.

I went to several of their early national conferences and so I think this is a great organization.

And, I plan on coming back.

Thank you.

(Applause)

GEORGIA: I have a question for him. How did you find us?

JOEL: The lash.

On the computer, the library website has a --

WENDI: Our meetings are on the library website, that's good.

TIM BROWNING: Thank you Joel for coming and I think you have a lot of good stories to tell, especially about Rocky Stone.

So, I don't think there's really anything else.

We went a little bit over.

We do want to thank you Ali our captionist.

I know we had some difficulties this morning, so thank you all for your patience, hopefully this backup plan worked.

JENNA NELSON: The last thing I was going to say is thank you very much for sharing your stories, I wish we had more time and it always seems to go too quickly but we'll do some more rap sessions in the future.

If you're not coming to the holiday party then just remember we'll be back here January 26th.

It's the fourth Saturday of the month.

So, is there something you wanted to say?

GARY JACOBSON: I want to say Happy Thanksgiving to all of you.

Don't eat too much food.

JENNA NELSON: Thanks.

Oh, don't forget to see Wendi for giving your names.

WENDI: Yeah, toiletry and whatnot. Yeah.

JENNA NELSON: Thank you everyone and thank you for making all this wonderful food.

(Applause)

MEETING ADJOURNS AT 12:08 P.M.