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**Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) – Chapter Meeting  
Sherman Oaks Library – Community Room  
Sherman Oaks, CA  
1/26/19**

**MEETING COMMENCES AT 10:11 A.M.**

**JENNA NELSON:** Can everyone hear me? For those who don't know, who have telecoil or hearing aid, please turn it to telecoil. If you don't know what that is ...

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** I know what it is.

**JENNA NELSON:** If you have hearing aids and you don't know what telecoil is, ask an audiologist to activate it and put that program in. And that way, what I'm saying goes right into your device.

Welcome everybody. Happy new year. I know it's almost February. It doesn't feel like a new year. Happy new year to everybody.

So we're phasing out Yahoo! groups. Okay? It's old and archaic and needs to go bye-bye. The way you can keep in touch with us, the website or Facebook. And if you don't do either of those, we have your email and we're going to start emailing you about the meetings. So you get one email, possibly two emails to let you know of events.

Please try and switch over to Facebook and we have a closed group and we can speak to one another. Sharon is donating her time to keep the page live. Anybody can post in this group, so check out the Facebook page, and that's where we'll do the majority of the communication.

I should introduce myself. I'm Jennifer/Jenna. I am the President. Tim is the Vice President. And Sharon. And where's Sandy? That's our steering committee. So any suggestions or concerns, always feel free to email us or see us and we're here for you.

We got a late start. So we'll launch right into the seminar which is gadgets, gadgets. We know how frustrating it is to have hearing loss but there's things we can do to help ourselves to hear better. And there's a lot of devices out there. Today it will be the fabulous Katie Wright and she's going to be mainly do emergency gadgets but you can ask her about --

**KATIE:** Alerting devices.

**JENNA NELSON:** I'm going to let you introduce yourself and give your bio. Give her a warm welcome. Katie Wright.

[Applause]

**KATIE:** Hi everybody. Can you hear me? I can't hear myself. Hang on. This is such a pain. Hearing loss is such a pain.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** It sucks.

**KATIE:** First of all, I'm a fast talker. So if I start going too fast, you need to wave your hand. Tell me to slow down. Tell me to slow down.

[Laughter]

**KATIE:** Let me just tell you what we'll be doing and tell you that my husband passed away almost four years ago and one of my first fears, I slept on the couch in the living room with a hearing aid for three months. I was, you know, I lost my nighttime ears. He was my nighttime ears for years. And I was really, really worried. So one of the first things I did was I put an alarm system in my house. I couldn't afford to do all the windows but I did the doors and a motion detector.

If someone was going to come into my house, one of these is the -- I would know if someone was coming into my house and I don't know what I would do if they did. But let me tell you about the alarm guy. He installed it and I said I'm not going to be able to hear that. I had to take my hearing aids out and I stood there like this while he set off the alarm. He ended up putting a buzzer or something in my bedroom so it will blast a loud sound that I can hear. So if you have an alarm system and you can't hear, there's things you can do. A flashing light would wake me up, but I didn't know that four years ago.

My other big fear was fire. When my smoke alarm goes off would I be able to hear that? Would I know if the fireman was pounding on my door in the middle of the

night? During the day, my hearing aid is okay. At night, you take the hearing aid out, and nothing. Nothing.

So, cool. My grandsons would spend the night with me. They're now 11 and 10 and 5, so I would sleep with a hearing aid at night because I had to know if they were wandering around the house. It was scary. Now they're old enough that they know to shake "Emma." So "she knows we're up."

And I drive. I know I'm retired, and you're thinking why do you have to have an alarm clock? I had to be here today and I also drive my grandsons to school in the morning, so I have to wake up.

You know, big bang theory. I wouldn't know if someone is knocking on my door. Right? I have learned there are gadgets for that.

And my phone, I realize Woody there is talking on his phone but without my hearing aids at night, unless I have an obnoxious ring, I'm not going to hear it.

I found something that works for that.

Okay. So our hearing loss journey is one of frustration but I think with some of the stuff I'll show you today we can break through some of those barriers. I took out the slide that talks about myself. I'll do that in a minute.

I'm a part of HLAA's N-CHAT program, Network of Consumer Hearing Assistive Technology Trainers [reading] [on board]. And I have to say nothing I show you here am I endorsing. I'm only showing you there's devices that you can look for that are similar. So you know there's something you can use for your door to hear your phone. I haven't included anything. I'm not saying it isn't good.

Got the disclaimer. Done.

I am a member of the Long Beach/Lakewood Chapter and we have an hearing assistive technology demonstration once a month. These are alerting devices that we have. We have personal amplification devices and devices to help you hear the TV better. I forget one of the categories.

Anyway, we have like over 50 devices. And I know it's a drive because I made the drive today but if you want to see all of the stuff we have, we're open to the public and we're free and we don't sell anything. We just show you what we have. I went through the whole spiel.

And we have a website, really nice website now. Thanks to Tim --

[Applause]

**KATIE:** Thanks to Tim, I am now a webmaster. I learned so much. So you can go to our Long Beach/Lakewood Chapter, the website, and find out about our demos.

I'm a retired teacher. I have hearing loss, a genetic loss. I've been wearing hearing aids 20 years. My loss is a reverse slope. Usually for most people, it goes this way [on board]. Mine goes this way [demonstrating] so I don't hear low tones, and there was a long time no hearing aids would work. Technology has changed.

I have a grandson who inherited my hearing loss. My daughter is almost 40 but she's in the denial stage. How many of you went through a denial stage? But my grandson, four and a half years, hearing loss, he's now wearing his hearing aid. He's now ten.

We know there's so many different reasons for hearing loss, and because there's so many different reasons, not everything works for everybody. Your hearing aids may not work for, in some situations. I want to know if hearing aids could only fix hearing, wouldn't it be nice? You probably know people saying "why can't you understand me with the hearing aid?" It's not like putting on glasses. It is not, and people that haven't been on our journey or lived with us long enough don't know that. They don't get that.

So yeah. I spent thousands on hearing aids and I still have to use assistive technology. "What?"

So why we need it: I want everybody to fist bump the person next to you or behind you. Do it right now. I want to see the fist bump. Cochlear implants and hearing aids, this is how they work. Six- to eight-foot. Once you get beyond that, things fall apart. And it can't be a fist bump backwards. It's got to be a -- sometimes it can a fist bump sideways but then you're looking at the person like this the whole time.

Helping me today, Liz, stand up. Liz. Back there. Liz back there, she's a member of your chapter. She is an N-CHATT trainer in training. She'll help me when you guys get to touch the devices and see what works for you. You should be smiling at that.

When I went to my chapter, I'm the youngest probably in my chapter except for Teri. And when I had a bunch of devices out the first time I did this, they didn't want to touch anything. You guys are going to touch these. You're going to experiment with them.

Here we go. [on board] Do you know about reverberation? What is it? Raise your hand if you know what reverberation is? Big rooms, we can't handle. This is a very good room for you guys. Acoustical ceiling and carpeted floor and acoustically sound wall. When you go into newfangled restaurants, cement floor, it's horrible.

Background noise, we know about background noise. We can't handle it.

And the distance from the source. I'm going to go quickly through this because you don't need this. [on board] You want to do this [on board]. Any of those situations look familiar to you? Remember I have grandsons? And my kindergarten grandson still talks softly and he hasn't learned to talk loud enough. My two older ones know how but the other one is like "what?" Can't do it.

Restaurants. I hate going to restaurants. I'd rather go to someone's house than a restaurant. It's impossible.

When I got my new hearing aids I couldn't believe how noisy my car was, when it picks up sounds.

TV, real problem. There's no way. I can't use my phone up to my ear in a room like this even. No way.

So this is reverberation. [on board] this is what happens to sound. You look at this. Would you go into this place [on screen]? Would you try to have dinner with or have a conversation with someone here? No.

I don't know if you know about signal-to-noise ratio but the reason your telecoils work for you is because there's no distance between the sound and your ears. The signal-to-noise ratio is nothing. And that's why they work, and that's what's signal to noise -- that's why you use headphones, why you use Bluetooth. It reduces the signal-to-noise.

And remember this one [on board]? You're reducing the signal-to-noise ratio. Telecoils, Dale here has a remote mic. Do you use a roger [phonetic] link? A remote mic.

I can't tell you how many people in my chapter told me they stopped going to church because they can't hear anything. And we know there's such a simple solution if the church would loop or provide some kind of listening device but that means whoever is speaking needs to use a microphone. It's sad.

And this restaurant, I'm sure they hung these panels up there to help. They're not going to help me.

Alerting devices. That's why you're here. We need them to vibrate. We need them to be really, really loud. Or we need them to light up. Without that, the alerting devices don't alert us to anything.

There's smoke alerting devices. I have these two for you to look at. It goes to the whole house system.

Anybody have an alarm clock that has one of these bed shakers on it? Anybody use that? I love my bed shaker. And I have up here this alarm clock, you can look at it but a bed shaker attaches to it. It's really loud although I don't bother to use it but you can plug a lamp into it so when the alarm goes off, the light flashes and the bed shakes.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** Before I go to work and there's a light flashing, it's amazing.

**KATIE:** She is amazed how the light flashing -- you have this one?

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** Yeah, I have that. Yes.

**KATIE:** And this will also, we have an example of this up here. This also is a whole house system where you can use remote transmitters to tell you when your phone is ringing or doorbell is ringing or smoke alarm goes off. And I have a whole slide on how many different whole house systems there are.

Doorbells. Anybody have a ring? Anybody have a ring? My Facebook page for my city is posting "this guy stole my package" and they got it on the ring video. The police don't use that. Why do you bother? But the good thing about it is it alerts you if somebody is at your door.

This one we have here, you'll be able to see it later [pointing]. Watch what it does. [ringing]

It lights up. Did you see that?

And it plays a different, you can change the sound. You can take this anywhere you want. You probably have to experiment with it but you can, if you're in your kitchen, you can take it into your kitchen and you know if somebody is knocking at your door. You can take it into the bathroom and know if somebody is at your door.

And I just use this. I use one of the command strips and stick it outside the door. And the nice thing about this is: Home Depot, 30 bucks. Home Depot. If something happens to this, you can get replacements. You don't have to buy the whole thing over.

**JENNA NELSON:** What is a command strip?

**KATIE:** It's a Velcro and a Velcro, goes on the wall.

Uh, I have an example of this. It's a door knocker. I'm going to put my microphone down. Stop [demonstrating]. Somebody knocks on your door. The light flashes. knock on your door, the light flashes. Stop. [demonstrating]

When you -- you guys know Toni. She came to talk to you a couple of months ago. She's bugging me about "so when you got to the hotel, did you get the ADA Kits?" Well, so a pipe broke underneath my house on Thanksgiving and I had to stay in the Embassy Suites. I asked them for the ADA Kit, and I texted Toni about the ADA Kit. She was proud of me.

But they had one of these. I opened up the boxes for the first time. All of the devices there had never been touched. I opened up the door knocker and hung it on the door and I had my son come and knock on the door. Nothing. The door was too thick.

The door was too thick and heavy and too tall. So the door is up here and I had it like this to hang it on there, and if you're knocking on here, the vibrations weren't enough. But at home, the doors aren't that heavy, it would work at home.

And those are more doorbells.

Alarm clocks. I have this one [on board]. And the same one here, it plugs into my light next to my bed, so not only does the bed shaker -- in the middle of a dream, I wonder what is going on with my alarm and then the light flashes. And this is what the bed shaker looks like.

Sonic: if you don't need something fancy. Teens like this one. One of my Facebook pages, parents of children with hearing aids said "how can I get my teen up on his own?" So they use that.

This is a travel alarm and I have a travel alarm here. You can look at this. It has a clip on it and it clips to the bed sheet or clips to the pillowcase. Just don't forget it there.

There are phone ringers. Now, this, how many of you use -- who has an iPhone? Who has an iPhone? Do you know about the LED light setting that when you're alarm goes off or you get a message or, you can -- the LED light will flash. I had to get a new case. My case for my iPhone is clear and I discovered when the LED light goes off, the whole case lights up. I was thrilled. You'll love it.

This looks really interesting to me [on board]. I just happened to see it when I was looking in the Harris catalog. It obviously attaches, sticks on the front of your phone and maybe the vibrations sets off one of these. I'll look into it. I thought it was fascinating.

**KATIE:** Some of the phone ringers they have are old-fashioned. Anybody still use a landline? Just a few people. I still have a landline and I use it with my caption phone. I don't use the captions often. Otherwise, I check online to see if I have voicemail.

This one, I have [on board]. It's here somewhere [pointing]. It's right here. This works on the vibration of the phone. I know it works because I had it at home for a while. You put your phone on there and it operates based on the vibration of your phone. Let me do a test. It comes with a bed shaker and it flashes. It's going to make a lot of noise. [phone ringing]

**KATIE:** Can you hear that?

So depending what surface you have the bed shaker on, you can turn the sound off and unplug the bed shaker. So you can leave this with your phone in the kitchen and you would know if your phone is ringing because the light would flash.

It also has a USB charger so you can charge your phone while your phone is sitting on this at night. You don't have to do it separately. I like this thing.



Signalers: This is, it shows you that -- I know there's some camera systems, I think you can get one at Costco that you have all these cameras around your house and it sends you an alert, alert to your phone that somebody is in your yard.

There's that ring again [on board].

I just discovered this. In fact, I was at the HLAA conference and doing this for one of the workshops. This is a mat. I wish I had this when my grandsons were little. It's called transmatter, not transmitter. Transmatter. And it goes by a bed or it can go by a door and the woman that was thrilled by this said "oh, my mother is living with me and I never know if she's gotten out of bed." So she puts this next to her bed. My grandson steps on this, it connects to a system and it sets off an alert if somebody steps on the doorway. I thought that was great. I hadn't seen that before last July.

Baby monitors -- yes?

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** Wouldn't a motion sensor work?

**KATIE:** It's just pressure, not motion.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** But they would have to step on the mat?

**KATIE:** Yeah, and kids are going to learn to step over it, yeah. You put it under a rug and maybe they would never know. I don't know.

[Laughter]

**KATIE:** Baby monitors. If you know somebody that is hard of hearing and worried about being able to hear their baby cry, in my family with it being a genetic loss, my father had an identical twin, and his daughter, we share half our DNA. She has my exact same hearing loss. Only hers is not as bad as mine but she has the reverse slope thing.

Her daughter who wears hearing aids had a baby three months ago and she's still sleeping with that baby next to her in bed. Her husband is in Dubai. She's afraid she won't hear the baby cry. I keep telling her there's something you can use. "You're going to care when that baby is a year old and she's still in your bed."

And universal sound signaler. I love this thing, love it. Again I was worried about being able to hear my smoke alarm. Smoke alarms can have strobes in them but they have to be hard-wired. You can't get a battery-operated one with strobes. And I didn't want to go through the expense of hardwiring all of my smoke alarms. So I was

searching for an answer and I found this, universal sound signaler, which means it will -- baby cry monitors only pick up the frequency of baby cries. Doorbell signalers will pick up common doorbell frequencies.

This is a universal sound signaler, so it picks up everything. And what happens with it, I just brought it for transport reasons. I just have a nightlight on here. You can plug it into a lamp.

Turn off. Turn off. And when you make -- [sounds]. Thank you. Technology.

This connects. It's made by the same company that makes this [pointing]. It transmits to this, sets off this. I'm going to take this off. When the sound is loud, it will go off -- oh, it did it. You can see. You can see that the light will flash.

It works. Believe me.

[Laughter]

**KATIE:** And it's funny. I had to have my house repiped. "Your pipes are in really bad shape." Yeah, they're galvanized.

This thing is clicking at me.

Anyway, they were working in my bathroom, which is attached to my bedroom and I have this attached to my light beside my bed. So while they were working, the light was going off and they couldn't figure out. They had the machines in there. When I vacuum in the bedroom, this goes on. If I don't remember to turn -- did that just flash? You can reduce the sensitivity.

And by having -- sorry, it's bugging me. I can hear the clicking.

I had my grandson stand on a ladder and set off the smoke alarm and I had this in my bedroom and this heard the sound from probably 30 feet away and did its thing, so I knew if a smoke alarm was going off in another part of my house, I would still know. So this works for hearing other sounds that you want to be alerted to.

Whole house systems. I wish I was an expert on these. But there are these five. And when you get [on board] one of these five, you have to get a receiver. You buy a receiver. That's the big thing. And you buy all these transmitters that go with it. Doorbell, baby cry, whatever, baby cry, whatever the receiver might be, they're accessories. And this, you keep in a central place. And you have these wireless transmitters. You have them all over the house, and this goes off by your bed.

If you want to take a -- we tend to order from Harris because they have a very good return policy, 30 days, you can get your money back. And sometimes we have to do that because all of our hearing loss is different. So we don't always know if it will work. Return policy, 30 days.

The other thing about Harris if, for an HLAA member, it's a 20 percent discount which pays for shipping, basically.

When you look here you can see these.

I was going to -- what are the three reasons we have trouble hearing things? What's one of them?

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** Background noise.

**KATIE:** Reverberation. The one that bugs you the most?

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** Background noise.

**KATIE:** And the other one? Signal-to-noise, distance. So we have all those things. And then what do I want you to remember that you do with your fist? That's where you need to hear, where you need to be.

And what are the three things we need alerting devices to do?

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** Wake us up.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** To be very loud.

**KATIE:** To be very loud.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** Flash.

**KATIE:** Yes. Vibrate. Those are the things. Sometimes these don't work for everybody.

And this almost always works.

So now for the fun part.

What I remember, you're young and technologically savvy and not afraid to touch things that have batteries, you're not afraid to touch things you have to plug in.

I have somebody in my chapter that is on my HAT Committee. Without her, I could not do this and she is in charge of the alerting devices. She wanted to see what an HLAA chapter is like. She'll be up here to help Liz who will come up here. And what we can do also is the captioner will take a break. And Tim, do you want them to go back and sit down after?

**TIM BROWNING:** Yes.

**KATIE:** We'll take a break, and come on up. And the three of us will answer questions. And you can see what you want to do. Anybody have questions about alerting devices? Georgia.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** You have just one pamphlet? You just have one brochure?

**KATIE:** I brought like 20 and you can always call or email Harris and they will send you -- I asked them and they sent me 70. They sent me 70 catalogs.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** If we see something we like, can we buy it today?

**KATIE:** I don't sell anything. So you can take a catalog. And you can also do Amazon. In fact, I think I bought mine from Amazon. The only problem with Amazon is you don't always know what you're getting. But check the reviews. Always check the reviews. And you don't get the great customer service. You can call Harris with any kind of question and they have the answers. If you're interested in the system they can answer your questions. Yes, Teri?

**TERI:** The other thing about Amazon, I used to work for Serene Innovations. And there are those that have a knockoff products on there and they would try to get them fixed at Serene. And we didn't make this product. So you have to be careful on Amazon. I would make sure it's an authorized product.

**KATIE:** I suppose you could order it from Harris and get your questions answered and send it back to Harris and then order on Amazon. But Amazon isn't always cheaper. Sometimes it's not worth it. If you're going to save five bucks, is it really worth it?

Any other questions before we get started? I'm going to move this table down a little bit so we have room. Come to the back of the tables and see. I didn't tell you, Liz will show you this one. I didn't tell you about the pager. The pager is really cool. If you're out in the backyard or far away from the house and you want to get somebody's attention and/or they want your attention, somebody presses the pager. Gary, hold that.

So I'm going to page Gary.

First of all, we have to turn it on.

[Laughter]

**KATIE:** I did that on purpose.

[Laughter]

**KATIE:** You believe me, right?

Did you get it?

[sounds]

Now I'm going to page Gary. Hold it up. [sounding] Does he have it? Press the button. Let's try this again. Let's page him.

**GARY:** It's flashing.

**KATIE:** And when he presses the button, this goes off and it tells me he got the signal.

**GARY:** It vibrates there.

**KATIE:** I think they're both transmitters and receivers. I wish I knew every single answer.

So he presses the button, and it tells him that I got the signal. [sounding]

And this will go off until I press the button. And it tells him I got it.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** Why would somebody use this as opposed to a cell phone?

**KATIE:** If you're in your background -- I take my cell phone outside. Because I live alone, I take my phone when I go outside in case something happens to me. That's not an issue for you. Or let's say you have a two-story house. Or you're taking care of somebody who has to be in bed for a while. Where's Heather? Heather just had surgery and she, rather than calling one of her kids or her husband, she can use the pager, and they'll know "I paged you" and they will come to it. I can really see this if you're using it for somebody older who isn't going to be using a cell phone. I could see that happening.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** Do you need Bluetooth or ... ?

**KATIE:** No, this is not Bluetooth. None of these things are Bluetooth.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** Or WiFi?

**KATIE:** No. None of them are WiFi. I don't know how the whole house systems -- they must use a radio frequency to talk with each other. That must be what that is.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** Okay.

**KATIE:** Yes.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** What is the furthest distance that can be used?

**KATIE:** I don't know. I'll bet it says in the directions. You're welcome to read the directions. I'm not really sure.

She asked what is the distance this can be used.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** Is that pager, is it voice as well as printout?

**KATIE:** No. He asked if it's voice as well. No.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** Does it work for the people that have vision deficits?

**KATIE:** It would work for vision because it flashes but that's about it.

Anything else?

I'm done? Jennifer.

**JENNIFER NELSON:** Two things. I have the bed shaker and I started to feel really bad for my husband. It's powerful. I mean it shakes the entire bed and I have the sound on until it's crazy. It's not for everybody. If I live alone it wouldn't be an issue.

So just something for the techy people, if you have a Fitbit or something like this, that's what I use now. You can set an alarm and it vibrates and that's how I got up this morning and every morning.

**KATIE:** My watch does too.

**JENNA NELSON:** Yeah. So those are the kinds of things that I think are cool that are, getting technology.

The other thing I was going to say, we're going to combine the break with people coming up and trying the devices. So I would say maybe about a quarter after or so. Is that going to be enough time? So a quarter -- so you can try the devices and there's coffee and food that you can have and then we'll pick up after the break. Yes?

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** One more question for you --

**KATIE:** Let me also say Serene Innovations came up with one that doesn't do time but it does the same thing. It vibrates.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** Do you see an advantage of the iPhone over Android, alerting or whatever?

**KATIE:** Are there advantages between iPhone and Android with alerting devices? I don't know. I don't have Android. Who has an Android? That might be something that you can do.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** I have Android.

**KATIE:** Do you have a specific question? I might be able to -- I don't know.  
Liz.

**LIZ:** Many of us who have iPhones really like them because they can be paired with our hearing aids. Android phones figured out that technology and some hearing aids will now pair with Android phones. So your audiologist will have a list. There's a place on the website. This is something we covered in our class. So things are getting more broadly available but there is still, as our good friend Ken pointed out many times, there are no standards. So there's nothing that makes everything conform to a single standard.

**KATIE:** The other problem with Android is there's so many different Androids. That's one reason why Android phones haven't been able to do what the iPhone does.

You're on break. Come up and see what you want to look at.

[Applause]

#### **MEETING BREAKS AT 10:58 A.M.; MEETING RESUMES AT 11:22 A.M.**

**JENNA NELSON:** Okay, people. We need to start the second half.

All right. So I just wanted to formally thank Katie who goes to Oakland with me, so we're up about --

**KATIE:** I can't hear you talking about me.

I can hear you now.

**JENNA NELSON:** What time do you wake up for Oakland?

**KATIE:** 4:00.

**JENNA NELSON:** We sit on a committee which is called Telecommunications Access for the Deaf and Disabled Administrative Committee, and we go to Oakland once a month, and in order to do that we get up at 4:00 in the morning.

And then -- [machine sound].

**KATIE:** Who set this?

**JENNA NELSON:** It's still beeping.

**KATIE:** Oh, wait. "Off." Someone set that alarm.

**JENNA NELSON:** Anyway so I'm tired but Katie, Katie came from Long Beach, so we doubly appreciate you coming here because I know this back-to-back is crazy. So can we give a round of applause.

[Applause]

**KATIE:** Thank you very much. Coffee.

**JENNA NELSON:** So the next order of business is I see people have contributed and we appreciate it. So as you know, we don't charge for this. We want this to be free for anybody who wants to come. We want this to be a resource for technology and advocacy and support.

If you feel this is beneficial for you, we welcome donations. Even \$2 is appreciated. You can always give more. There's two jars in the corner [pointing]. If you feel you want to give money for the scholarship, you can give money to that kitty jar. It pays for the chapter and coffee and for us to be here every month. So we greatly appreciate that.

Who's new this month? Who are our new people? You. Is that it? There's two guys left actually.

Is anybody else new?

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** Carolyn. I think she left too.

**KATIE:** I'm Carolyn.

[Laughter]

Fist bump. Yes. And I'm here for someone else in the family.

**JENNA NELSON:** I was going to say please stand up and introduce yourself, name and hearing loss, how you heard about us.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** I am here for another person in the family who is very frustrated with his hearing loss but won't come to the meeting. And so I'm here to learn as much as I can and I have with me my son who has to deal with his father and my great-grandson who is here and working with his computer skills. That's what it is.



So I very much appreciate everything that I have heard and learned about. I went to the Santa Barbara chapter last month and learned a lot of things and it brought me here for your meeting. So thanks to everyone.

[Applause]

**JENNA NELSON:** Would your father consider coming to a meeting?

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** No.

**JENNA NELSON:** Okay.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** I'm Diane and I'm a teacher of the deaf. I work with students that have mild to profound hearing loss. Some kids I work with use sign language and an interpreter, and other students develop their listening and spoken language skills through their devices. So I learned about this meeting online and I'm appreciative to be here and learn more about these devices to provide information to them.

[Applause]

>> What grade level are you teaching?

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** I work with the zero to 21 population, all ages.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** I want to talk to you about our scholarship. We have a thousand dollars scholarship for graduating high school students every year and I would love to talk to you about outreach, to the group, because it's hard to recruit people to apply for the scholarship.

>> That would be awesome.

[Applause]

**JENNA NELSON:** Thank you both for being here. I think education is the best thing. People don't understand hearing loss. And so the more we can do, it will help frustration levels and what have you. So thank you both for being here.

Oh, do you want to talk about the convention?

**TIM BROWNING:** So this year -- I'll try and get out of the way [on board]. The convention this year is in Rochester, New York and it will be from June 20 to 23, East Coast-based. And I hope people here will make the trip out there. I've been looking to come out there. Word of caution, it's a bit of work to get there. I don't think there's direct flights to Rochester. So take a connecting flight. If you look on the

hearingloss.org website, under the Convention page, you'll see a lot of information about it. There will be a lot of good topics. I didn't have a chance to digest it all but we'll have more information in the coming months.

March 1st is the early bird discount rate. So if you're thinking about going, consider doing that before -- or by March 1st because it's a pretty good discount, I think. We'll have more information. I just wanted you to be aware of it.

Next slide is the [on board] [reading] Walk 4 Hearing. That is our primary way of making money for chapters, primary fundraising effort. Although it's in June and now it's January, one of the hardest things to do with it is have it be May and now you're scrambling to get people involved to help participate or maybe help you with fundraising for your efforts. So we're trying to get people aware of this effort earlier in the game.

One thing we're trying to do is get someone to be captain for the L.A. Stars. One of the groups for the Walk 4 Hearing in Long Beach. It will be in Long Beach. We look for someone who might be interested in being captain. One thing is we document everything that we have to do. So it's not like "I don't know what to do." You get plenty of help and plenty of people who have done this in the past. So you'll have plenty of help.

There's one thing, there's a lot -- there's actually I think an introductory or some sort of meeting you go to, to get introduced to what's going to happen.

We'll need volunteers as well, as you know, volunteers to put the walk signs up and everything. Just something to think about because nothing is worse than having it be April or May and then we're scrambling to get people to help set up.

There's more information on the website about this. If you wouldn't mind, we appreciate if you volunteer or if you're curious about being a captain for the famous L.A. Stars. Come help and you'll become famous. That's everything you need to know in order to help with this. So keep that in mind. Any questions, please see one of us about that.

Okay. All right. And there is a California association for HLAA is having their annual board of trustees meeting. I wanted to bring that to your attention. From my understanding, it's open to all HLAA members. So if you're a member, a paying member of HLAA, you're more than welcome to join in that.

The only downside is it's same day as our chapter meeting. Why they planned it that way, I don't know.

**KATIE:** We didn't know.

>> We didn't know.

**KATIE:** It won't happen next year.

**TIM BROWNING:** I will be going and helping set up to make sure we're set up here. I think it's even okay [phonetic] to go after the chapter meeting. What better way to, join us here and go to the board of directors meeting. So you can have a double dose of fun but we wanted you to be aware of it because it's an annual meeting and there's lot of interesting topics that you didn't know about. It is in Long Beach, so keep in mind it is a drive. So I don't know. You may want to carpool.

If you have any questions or anything, check it out. It is on the "hearingloss.org" site as well. There's information there as well.

And our February meeting, we'll have our famous and popular relationships meeting. This kind of used to be in honor of Valentine's Day in the month of February. I think we broadened it more to a relationship panel because it's not always about spouses or girlfriend, boyfriend. It's also about if you're single and trying the dating scene or you have a family member you're struggling with. So we call it more of relationship. That's what I call it anyway.

Panel. I think now we have Teri, she will be our single panel member to talk about the wild and crazy life and challenges of dating and other things.

I think Sandy, you and your husband will participate and Sandy will also moderate. So this should be interesting.

>> I have to strengthen my relationship with myself.

[Laughter]

**TIM BROWNING:** You'll have your husband with you, and then you'll be doing this yourself. Can't wait to see how that will turn out.

But I think we're looking for one more. A father-daughter, mother-daughter/son, parent-sibling relationship. We want to get that angle. We're looking for the family member relationships. So if there's anyone here who would like to join us, it's quite an event. We'll all be looking at you and asking some really fun questions. It's a

very engaging conversation, like a rap session. Ask questions of the panel but at the same time you talk about your experiences, so we find it to be a fun experience. Depending if there's enough people interested, we may try again later this year to have a follow-up panel rap session.

Is there anyone here right now that has a sibling or family member that might be interested to maybe participate in this, that may be there?

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** Possibly.

**TIM BROWNING:** That's your husband.

[Laughter]

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** I said possibly. I will talk to him.

**TIM BROWNING:** Sometimes we do need someone as a backup. But we are looking for a sibling/father-son relationship. So if anyone --

**KATIE:** My daughter and ten-year-old grandson. Do you want it to be older? Think about it and let me know. Maybe I'll talk them into it.

**TIM BROWNING:** Give them a Starbucks gift card. Maybe that will work.

[Laughter]

**KATIE:** She would use it.

**TIM BROWNING:** Anyone else that might be interested? Or we'll ask around, but think about it please. Reach out to us. You can go to the website to reach us, or reach us on the contact form at our first name at "hlaa-la.org." It is a lot of fun. If you think you have anyone that you can talk into coming here, it's worth it and please let us know. We'll tell you more in the coming weeks.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** What's the date of it?

**TIM BROWNING:** February 23. Exactly 4 weeks from now.

**JENNA NELSON:** Do you want to reiterate we meet every fourth Saturday.

**TIM BROWNING:** We meet on the fourth Saturday of every month. If you go to the HLA website, hlaa-la.org, up in the corner there's the calendar of upcoming three or four meetings. You can print it out. But generally, every fourth Saturday of the month is our meeting here. So make sure you come. There's your answer right there.  
[on board]

So we have relationship panel and emergency preparedness [reading] March 23. And the 27th will be probably a rap session, April 27 [on board], a popular session that people like. It's a chance to have a rap session [on board]. Sometimes it's topic-based. So if there's a topic or theme that you like to follow for the rap session, sometimes we do that, but we found it's very popular. So we're trying to do a few more those.

In May, to be determined. [reading] [on board] And so forth. We'll have the annual Memorial Day party. So we'll figure where that will be at. Danny no longer does [indistinct] those, we have to think of something else.

Anything else?

**JENNA NELSON:** So in light of all the fires, we actually got statistics yesterday about how many people died in the fire who are hard of hearing or deaf.

**KATIE:** A thousand people died and 140 of them were deaf or hard of hearing. So that's scary.

**JENNA NELSON:** That's scary because if you don't watch TV, the question arises how do we find out if an emergency is happening, even at night when we take our devices out. And that's something I am actually trying to work on with the City of L.A., but that's another story.

But the point is we need better resources and we need better preparation in case these kinds of things happen in the future.

So Rick Pope, he is with the Department on Disability and he is going to come to our meeting in March and give us some tips and resources and be our speaker for emergency preparedness because I think it's a really important topic and we need it. We can't hear the things that, you know, the sirens go off and all those types of things. And again, you don't have a cell phone, then that's one thing I would like to say. I know some people are technophobes but for people who have hearing loss, the alerts come on your cell phone. Whether it's a fire or flood or tornado, anything like that, the hurricane warnings are text-based and come through your cell phone. So if you put your cell phone on vibrate and stick it under your pillow, it will wake you up in case of emergency. Or any of these lovely devices that Katie brought in.

So in any event, I'm not a specialist but Rick Pope is, and he will speak to us in March. So I encourage you to come to that meeting. I think it will be exciting.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** Thank you. Another person to be aware of is Richard Ray. He works for the City.

The second thing is I used to sleep with my phone under my pillow until I read it's not good to have it within arm's length. I like the idea of recording the alerting devices instead. Just a thought.

Well, it still hasn't been proven yet but they're considering brain cancer and tumor are related to the proximity of the phones right next to the head.

**JENNA NELSON:** You can't be on your phone anyway.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** But the waves come underneath. They did an interesting study in Denmark about having cell phones next to plants in one room where they have them right next to the plants, and in another room they're not, and the one that has the cell phone, the plant died more quickly than the ones that didn't.

I can't remember which company. There was an experiment by high school students and a major company, a hearing foundation. And they're doing research on that now. Anyway, I stopped putting my phone right next to my pillow. For what it's worth.

**JENNA NELSON:** I actually heard that but I still think if you're living alone, it is one way people are communicating when there's a major disaster. Weigh your options, obviously. But I think if I were living alone, I would keep a cell phone nearby because in case they have a flash flood warning. There's no way for me otherwise to know. Right now we don't have a lot of options. We need better options.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** I was wondering when you said the people can get the emergency alert. Have they used an app for that?

**JENNA NELSON:** I would look into that. Because I even get the Amber alerts.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** I get that too.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** I don't get any other ones.

**JENNA NELSON:** Does anybody know?

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** You have to set it up in Settings, in Alerts and it will say "do you want Amber alerts?" Yes or no? Do you want warnings?" It's in the settings.

**JENNA NELSON:** I never set mine, so I think mine just defaults to that. Maybe the new ones, you have to actually go into it.

Happy to help anyone.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** Just quickly, there's a site called Nixle]. I don't believe it's an app but check "nixle.com." And you can sign up and put in your phone number and it will give you, within a geographic range, timely information.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** Also I wanted to remind people, if you haven't already done it, I have a neighbor who -- we go to each other's houses. And both sides, I have a hearing loss. And once my hearing aid is out, I don't hear anything. So I have two neighbors that have keys to my house. So if there's, we live in an area that can be subject to fires, so it's important. So they will come and wake me up. But also too, I let them know when my husband is out of town, anytime I'm in the house alone for a period of time. So have somebody nearby with a key to your house.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** One thing I wanted to mention. I think Tim, you were there last week when it was raining, there was alert that says flash flood in your area, evacuations. It comes to your phone and vibrates. I set it up. It's called Nixle if you Google.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** One thing I wanted to mention, I think Tim, you were there that year. Before we started going to Danny's [phonetic] for Memorial Day, we would sometimes go to the beach for Memorial Day. I know John's family helped with it and there was a, I brought it up on Yahoo! or Facebook recently and people in HLAA were saying we should do that again because it was so much fun going to the beach as an HLAA group.

**JENNA NELSON:** Yeah.

**TIM BROWNING:** So we got our second mic working. We welcome any and all ideas.

I should probably mention the rap session for April, we want to celebrate Grace. That will be your birthday?

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** 4th of April, birthday.

**TIM BROWNING:** One of our famous members will be triple digits. 100 years. Triple digits.

I wanted to make sure we thank Patty for captioning and everything. We had a little trouble getting everything set up. So she's done a great job of catching up and everything, so we thank you for your help.

We still have a few minutes.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** I just wanted to speak to you Carolyn. We're like a party chapter. And so maybe you can bring your father? To our Memorial Day celebration, have fun and lots of food.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** Is there vodka?

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** Yes, we had it last time. So that's just a thought to, you know, encourage him, you know. I mean, you know. He might have a good time.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** Thank you.

**JENNA NELSON:** Anybody else?

Yeah, I think the one thing I would like to stress is that people with hearing loss become very depressed and isolated. They don't understand. They don't -- nobody understands what hearing loss is. And even adults, they look at me like a deer in the headlights, and it becomes frustrating for the family members. So it becomes a defeating cycle. And there have been lots of studies about dementia linked to hearing loss, that withdrawal is a big thing. The great thing about this chapter and HLAA is your dad and the rest of you, you're not alone. There's 48 million people with hearing loss. 48 million. And by the way, I think that number is really low because that's all the people that took the steps to get hearing aids, and we have all these people walking around saying "what? I don't want to wear a hearing aid."

And the best thing we can do is educate people. We welcome people and say "you know what, a lot of us have hearing loss and it's okay." And the only way to break through that stigma is to walk around and shout out "I have a hearing loss. I have a good brain and I can understand what you're saying but you may need to repeat yourself."



So I would encourage people to let them know your dad and everybody else is not alone.

On that note, I want to say our goal this year is to grow this chapter. There's half a million people in Los Angeles with hearing loss. So why is there only 30 people here? We're the only chapter in the city of Los Angeles, which is crazy.

So please if you feel like you have a friend or family member, neighbor who might be interested in coming to these groups, we're fine. We are the party chapter. We have parties and people understand. We have rap sessions and we're very supportive. We're here for you. If you know somebody, please tell them we meet the fourth Saturday of every month and we'll welcome them into our family.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** Hi. For those of you who don't know me, I'm a therapist/psychologist and I've been dealing with HLAA for many years and I started when I was younger, when I started in California. What I want to say is I refer all my clients who are hard of hearing to HLAA because I believe this is as valuable as counseling because of the things you talked about. With my own hearing loss -- I wish I had this when I was younger. I want to support everybody here. And what's ironic about all this is my father was my biggest advocate. And when he started with dementia he refused to wear hearing aids. So denial is very strong. But it's a party chapter here. It's a great chapter. Even though I don't come often, there's a lot of new faces. This is the best setup.

**JENNA NELSON:** Thank you for that testimonial.

[Applause]

**JENNA NELSON:** She's a great resource too. She's the person to go to if you need emotional help.

If nobody else has questions -- again, father-son, mother-daughter, let us know about the panel, but next month is the panel and it will be interactive. We'll have a panel but people will be speaking. It's a panel/rap session.

Thank you, everybody.

**TIM BROWNING:** Don't forget the kitty jar [pointing] on the way out. The kitty jar.

**JENNA NELSON:** I already brought up the kitty jar.

**TIM BROWNING:** Okay.

**JENNA NELSON:** But yes, as a reminder even though I brought it up, the kitty jar is sitting on the counter if you would like to donate to our chapter.

Thank you, everyone. Have a wonderful weekend.

[Applause]

**MEETING ADJOURNS AT 11:57 A.M.**