

**Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) – Chapter Meeting  
Sherman Oaks Library – Community Room  
Sherman Oaks, CA  
11/2/19**

**MEETING COMMENCES AT 10:03 A.M.**

**SHARON SWERDLOW:** Hi everybody.

Could everybody get seated.

We want to get started.

We have air very, very full schedule today, we want to be able to have a lot of time to celebrate.

So, welcome everybody, I'm Sharon Swerdlow, and this is my second year at Steering Committee. We had a recent committee that recently formed and I wanted to font out all my fellow members.

Tim Browning.

Georgia, raise your hand, Georgia -- Wendi.

Wendi Wash.

And -- and Sandy Blake.

And Gary Jacobson always our long-term for forever and a day our treasurer who handles all the money and makes sure we have what we need.

Anyways we're so happy to be here to have an old-timers and new-time exercise able to celebrate our 15th year anniversary of HLAA in Los Angeles and we also have a coping with the holidays panel we're going to do to help give us all tips to deal with the upcoming inevitable very difficult situations.

So first I'd like to find out do we have any newcomers here and if so, can you stand up and just say your name and --

**JEN:** My name's Jen I'm here with my husband and Arlene, we're here just supporting him.

Yeah.

**ERIC:** I'm Eric, I've been here before it's just been a few years.

This is my grandmother, like she said we're supporting her.

**SHARON SWERDLOW:** We're very, very happy to have you because family members supporting the member with hearing loss are so crucial to making life manageable for the person.

Is there nab else here for the first time? No.

Just to remember, we wanted if you want to find us, we are at hlaa-la.org we also have a Facebook group if you are not already part of it.

Please sign in and we'll have to accept you and then bring you in as – it's a private group and that I say good forum for meeting reminders and also for people posting and sharing information and tips.

And, we have a Yahoo group that we are hoping to phase out at the end of the year.

So that everybody will be on Facebook, but there are some people that are still on Yahoo and if you are only on Yahoo now, I highly encourage you to sign up soon for the Facebook group because come January, that's going to be the one way to contact us and if you need to reach us we're at info@hlaa-la.org.

And the next thing I wanted to do is if you have a T-coil in your hearing aid or Cochlear implant, to please turn it on that will help immensely we also have Ali and we have captions for you as well and anyways if you have any questions about that come see me at the break.

And, with that I will turn it over to Sandy who will begin our "coping with the holidays" panel.

**SANDI BLAKE:** Thank you Sharon.

Wow, it's great to see everybody this morning.

Great to see old faces and one new face, two new faces.

So, this traditionally, and you all know, much better than me, is the meeting where we talk about the upcoming challenges of the holidays.

So, we are going to throw out a question and if anybody has some yesterdays about how they cope how they manage, I'll come around with the microphone and we'll share about that.

**TIM BROWNING:** Those are all the questions there for you.

**SANDI BLAKE:** Much easier, knew now I need my glasses but -- question No. 1 you have to attend a loud and noisy company party.

What can you do?

Oh.

Anybody have any strategy for attending a loud and noisy company party?

And how do you get by?

**ALICIA:** Oh, you want me to go in I was thinking -- usually at work you have one or two best friends and I would get one or two -- to help me out -- it.

**GARY JACOBSON:** It's not on.

**ALICIA:** But they could maybe give you cues if there's a conversation going, they can tell you what the conversation was about and help you out.

So, I would try to find one or two buddies to help you.

**SANDI BLAKE:** Okay, we're hearing back here that they're not hearing what's coming through the microphone.

**NANCY:** It's okay now.

**GARY JACOBSON:** It's very soft.

**SANDI BLAKE:** So that was good.

Get close with your one or two friends who you can really -- who understand and know what the challenges are.

Anybody else have anything? For that?

Okay, yeah.

One of our original members.

**PAT WIDMAN:** Hi, I haven't been to a company party in years and years but, one of the things that has come up in past years when talking about this is to try and find a corner, a quieter place and just sort of let people come to you one-on-one or if people are trying to talk to you and you can't understand what they're saying, then

maybe ask them to step outside or step into a quieter place, let them know that you're having trouble hearing.

Don't try to bluff your way through it, so it's being proactive more than anything else because -- as opposed to reactive to it.

**SANDI BLAKE:** Sounds good.

Sounds good.

Okay.

Let's move onto the next -- oh, somebody else?

**WENDI WASH:** And then, in the past we decided that if all else fails just drink all the wine and eat all the food, have a good time and then go home.

(Room laughing)

**SANDI BLAKE:** Always the practical side.

**TIM BROWNING:** I have a suggestion too that we have party preholiday my company and it's not always a holiday party, sometimes it's just a function, a social function so, I try to really make sure that the party's coming I'm trying to get into the mindset I will try to get enough sleep I'll try to make sure I'm rested before the meeting.

I'll try it make sure I'm aware of how I'm feeling and check in and make sure that if I'm struggling, step out, get some -- a few breaths in, get some fresh air, re-strategize how you're going to attack the meeting and there's people that you can really connect with and find a place and sit as you guys were saying.

I did that a few weeks ago, had a great meeting and so forth but I had to kind of think ahead about it, a day ahead of time so I got extra sleep, ate well tried to get myself mentally ready because it's mentally taxing to go it a very loud meeting but you've got to be focused and if you're not rested and mentally ready for it, it's not going to happen.

And keep in mind in about a month we're going to have a great holiday party so you're going to be able to practice all these strategies.

**SANDI BLAKE:** Okay.

Very good.

I think we're going to move onto the next question.

So, there's an empty table at a family gathering.

Where should I sit?

There's an empty table at a family -- at a family gathering, where should I sit?  
Should I sit at this empty table?

Hold on -- all by myself? Jacqui says yes, she would like that.

Does that push any buttons or trigger anything for -- trigger anything for anyone?

Yes.

Diane.

**DIANE GROSS:** Hi, it doesn't matter to me, at our house there's just one empty table where everybody's eventually going to wind up but I try to sit in the center of one of the long sides so that I have somebody on either side of me and I just have a clear view of the entire table.

**SANDI BLAKE:** Okay.

Sounds good.

Sounds good.

Anybody else? Empty table, table for one table for two -- Wendi.

**WENDI WASH:** I think in the past we talked about just also just scanning the room so if you do sit at the table that's near a window or something and you think there might be some glare or -- because we know that our hearing is related to our seeing.

And the light, the glare, whatever may happen.

So, we also kind of want to sit where there's more light or if you notice that the speaker or somebody's playing music is on this side, you want to sit opposite that so it's the table and kind of everything around you, you know.

But I like Diane's idea.

**SANDI BLAKE:** Heather.

Welcome.

**HEATHER LEHR:** Okay, well, I don't know about you guys I'm going to admit this, I pretty much make sure I sit next to person she wants to talk to.

People I don't want to hear from like my really crazy aunt I just sit far away and I'm like I can't hear you.

**SANDI BLAKE:** Getting real, we're keeping it real here.

**TIM BROWNING:** Continuing on from what I said before, when we have our function we have kind of a long table kind of like what you guys have here so I usually

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try to sit toward the middle and if there's a wall, or you know nothing behind me I try to sit there as well.

I think you have more success if you have a wall behind you rather than being right out in the open where everyone is.

But if you're in the middle then you have a better advantage point seeing people loud, their facial expression, if the lighting is good then you can could see everything better.

If you're at the end of the table, then good luck hearing anyone at the other end. I feel like I have a fighting chance if I'm in the middle.

**TERI:** I'm kind of the opposite of Tim as far as sitting with my back to the wall because some hearing aids have a setting where you can turn up the rear microphone and kind of deaden whatever the sound is coming from behind you.

So, I like to sit with the noisiest people behind me in a restaurant or something and put it on that setting, otherwise if I'm sitting against the wall then it's going to amplify everything coming at me.

**SANDI BLAKE:** I found that very helpful also, I have a setting on my Cochlear implant called "forward focus" and it just cuts out everything from the back so you can really, really, hopefully, get the full view of all the options of people in front of you.

Okay.

Let's go onto the next.

I'm starting to feel overwhelmed and tired trying to focus and understand in a loud party environment.

What can I do?

What can I do?

**FLORENCE:** I have this problem; I was traveling with a group from Central Asia and there was 12 of us.

And we were sometimes stranded and staying in -- it was like a -- so every meal was with all of these people with all of this noise and I -- it was -- I just got to explain to people that I'm hard-of-hearing, of course, and how that takes a toll on my energy.

And so, they just -- I probably wasn't aware that of until recently how that takes a toll on your energy.

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So, what I just let people know, somebody I got to go out, it's getting too noisy in here and traveling in small bands of people -- I would just have to say I have to change my band because you guys are kind of noisy that's my problem.

So, I think in a party problem -- and just say my hearing loss -- so I disappear for five, ten minutes or whatever.

And they understand, that kind of works well.

**SANDI BLAKE:** Yeah, sometimes we group and five or ten minutes can take all the difference.

Teri.

**TERI:** Yes, it's happened a lot especially if I'm in a house party and in that case, I will make a bee line for the nearest pet, find a dog or a cat to hang out with for a few minutes.

And take my mind off of trying to focus on conversations or just go out to the backyard or the front porch and just punch out, take a break.

Georgia.

**PAT WIDMAN:** I used to spend a lot of time going to the bathroom.

People thought I had a very weak bladder because when it gets too much you just find a place to exit and wherever's available, just go and sometimes I even switched off my device just to get a break.

**GEORGIA FLEISCHER:** In alluding to what ... I don't know what happened to her, you -- I was on a vacation last year with a group of people and 18 people, and the first night -- dinner together.

And my friend and I was the only deaf people in the group and she didn't say anything but when it came to me, I got up and said we are deaf.

And so, we wanted you all to know about it.

And so, if you could please look at us when you speak to us, we didn't know these people.

And they were great during the whole two weeks, you know they made sure that we were okay and you know we heard everything.

And it was just -- it just kind of worked out for us.

Which I thought was really special.

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So, you could do that same thing with your family gathering or holiday get-together.

I mean if it's family they already know but if there's a couple new people, whatever, or maybe just as a reminder to the family please make sure that they have your attention when they're persuading to you but in a group that's really tricky.

You can't really have a family member to keep you in the mood as to what everybody's talking about so maybe you can sit back with someone that you know and maybe they can help you.

**SANDI BLAKE:** Thank you Georgia.

**DIANE GROSS:** Just one thing, over the many years of having a hearing loss, I've learned that I can pick and choose what I want to do and where I want to go.

And I've learned that between my hearing and my vision, loud large parties just don't work for me.

So, I tend not to get myself into that type of situation.

I'm much better in smaller groups where there's a little more control, is the word, over the environment.

And, when I'm with my family, for example, there's just nine of us and they've learned that I'm going to go off and spend some time by myself when we're together, partly because there's talking, there's T.V., there's game boys, my brother-in-law and his guitar.

So, you know you just have to say I need a break, I can't deal with all this noise right now.

So, give me a few minutes to go hide.

**SANDI BLAKE:** Sounds very good.

I'll have to keep that in mind.

**WENDI WASH:** And I just want to say, too, that I think the break is really important but as Pat mentioned, too, sometimes we don't have to go hide.

If I turn my hearing aids off, I'm good.

I can't hear nothing, I can see everybody and that's just the type -- I don't have to really go anywhere if I don't want to I can just flip a switch and all of a sudden noise is

gone and I can still eat and drink -- don't forget eating and drinking and still see what's happening.

So maybe you don't have to leave just flip it off and let people know I'm off for a while.

You know, so you won't have to go to the bathroom as much.

**ALICIA:** I just wanted to mention the psychological component to hearing loss.

I've been deaf for a long time now, so up, you know, I'm whole and most of the time can handle myself fine but especially with my journey started I had a tendency to think I'm missing everything, no one's looking at me they're doing this on purpose and I feel left out, and the thing is you have to -- depending on where you are, just handling your expectations.

And realize if you're in a big group, try to go up to one or two people and talk to them.

Realize you're not going to get everything, you're no longer -- it's hard to let go of wanting to be a hearing person and be like everyone else but that doesn't mean you can't enjoy it.

It's just that you have to understand your own limitations and not get paranoid about it because I had a lot of trouble with anger and depression, initially.

And, if you can overcome that part and just realize, enjoy what you can, make the most out of that and a lot of people have miserable times at parties (laughing).

Not just people with hearing loss, there's a lot of introverts there's a lot of insecure people so just realize everybody's got issues, yours are just more obvious to you.

But, don't let it rule your life.

You can still have a good life.

**DIANE GROSS:** Can I add onto that?

**MITZY:** Expand a little bit on what Georgia said, keep telling people I can't hear you; I can't hear a noise, I usually say I can't hear sh\*t in here.

And you just -- you have to -- they look at you as normal, they don't see anything wrong with you so they revert to their speech patterns and everything.

And, don't be afraid to ask them to repeat it, say I didn't get that.

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I mean put something if you actually care what they're talking about and just keep doing it, get in there.

And they actually understand after a while and if you get tired, I was at the WEHO, the West Hollywood Halloween street party on Thursday night, and we actually were eating in a restaurant, right on the main stage with everything throbbing in the background and at one point I said you know what? It's getting to me.

Just listening with background noise, perfectly fine.

We left.

But you have to let them know.

Don't assume that they're going to remember and take care of you unless you keep telling them.

**SANDI BLAKE:** Great.

You don't have your name tag on.

**JANET:** So, I am deaf at a lot of big events for work, parties, events, weddings, Bar Mitzvahs what have you so the first thing I do is if it's possible I ask if they can turn down their music and by the way if you do it in restaurants, people seem to be okay with that if you tell them.

So that really helps.

The other thing is If I know the people, I find the person that I will call my translator for the evening they sit in my bad ear and they tell me what did they say?

What did they say?

And you can say it to them 20 times and they're okay with that.

Or I look for the person that may be more similar to me, have the same situation where we can sit on each other's good ear and say what is going on?

What were they saying?

So, that's how I get through it because, I don't have a choice, there's 200 people and the music is blaring and you just -- and people are having conversations with you and like you said, it doesn't matter how many times you say to them I have a hearing problem, I can't hear I.

They say, okay, and then they talk exactly the same to me, you just -- ten times, you still don't hear the words they're saying.

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So -- do the best you can.

And I have a great time at parties by the way I love them.

I just wish I could hear.

**SANDI BLAKE:** I notice that Miss Chloe just slipped in the last five minutes and Chloe when you get a chance, get a name tag and a raffle ticketed and nice to see you.

I think we're going to move onto the next question.

And that is what can we do if the host has loud and blaring music playing in the background?

Loud and blaring music.

Pat.

**PAT WIDMAN:** First of all I think you have to kind of take into consideration of what the event is, you know, sometimes it's just indigenous to the type of events like a wedding reception or something and they're doing all these silly dances and stuff you're just going to have to suck it up.

But if it's like at a family or friend close friend party you can ask if they would turn it down.

I have this problem with my family.

They seem to always have, you know, background music that just overrides everything for me.

So, I ask -- and sometimes they give me a dirty look and sometimes they turn it down.

So, always ask, all we can say is no we're not doing that right now.

**SANDI BLAKE:** But at least you've spoken up for yourself.

And yeah, you've done something.

Is and it helps rather than just feeling like a victim.

Okay.

I think we'll go onto the next question.

Someone is talking to you with their mouth full and covering their mouth with their hand.

What are some things you can do to better understand them?

Cog their mouth with their hand.

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And their mouth is full.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** I get too with people with heavy beards, you can't see their mouths and there's just nothing you can do except say I read lips.

Take your hand away from your mouth.

And with the beard you can't do anything, you talk to someone else.

But, again, you have to advocate for yourself.

I just wanted to mention something while I have the mic here and some of you probably got caught in traffic this morning.

And I don't know if -- you're all aware but between Atwood and Glendale there's a recycling operation and it caught on fire and -- so there's smoke and by the time you leave here it's probably going to be over Sherman Oaks and that's what's going on.

I don't think it's something that's spreading but it's spreading a lot of chemicals into the air and I had -- took me 20 minutes to find a way to get on the freeway here because everything coming north end -- was closed this morning.

From the Glendale and Burbank area.

So, that's -- you also coming off Woodman there's a -- just be prepared for that.

The billowing black smoke they asked people not to go outside because it's dangerous chemicals and to keep your windows closed so I just want you to know what's going on.

Oh, and just one more thing related to what I'm talking about, in restaurants and all -- and I tried first time Thursday you had my back and I just set it on crowd setting, it worked great.

But, I -- I have a campaign I'm starting which I went to a really, really nice French restaurant last night and I had the waiters come and tell me the daily specials, you never get that they're so elaborate in these types of places I asked my husband --

Anyway, I'm going to start writing to the restaurants and just send them a little note and ask that maybe they could have the waiter can bring a -- offer it to the table while he describes it, it so some of you guys might have the same issue.

**FLORENCE:** I would tell this person who's talking with their mouth full, were they raised in a barn? C'mon (laughing).

**SANDI BLAKE:** Okay.

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I think we'll move on.

We have until 10:45 for in?

**TIM BROWNING:** 10:40, 10:45 so Gary can do the treasurer's report.

**SANDI BLAKE:** So, someone is trying to talk to you from across the room or another room.

What are some things you can do to help understand them?

Another room they're talking to you from another room and they know you and they know you can't hear them.

**MITZY:** Ignore them.

**KATE JACOBSON:** Okay, I have near sightedness so -- so contacts so if I don't have my contacts on someone's talking to me across the room, I don't say I can't hear you.

I say I can't see you.

Or, somebody's talking to you from another room, you still cannot say I can't hear you because that's -- that defeats the purpose.

You tell the person, I can't see you, so, make sure you let the other person know that you can't hear but you can see them.

**SANDI BLAKE:** Okay.

**WENDI WASH:** Thank you for that Kate I think that's a good idea, I can't see you.

You know that makes the world of difference.

I don't have that too much but I remember I think it was Anna, she seemed to have that problem with her mom or somebody would be talking from the kitchen or whatever but you can also whisper your answer so they can't hear you either (laughing).

And then -- so then they'll know what it feels like (laughing).

And maybe they'll come to you because you're going -- and then what? Anyway, that's if you're feeling really, yourself, that day.

**SANDI BLAKE:** Spunky.

**MARILYN:** I always say communication is a two-way street and if somebody's trying to talk to me from another room I've learned to ignore them (pointing at husband)

and eventually they get the idea because if they're waiting for me to answer and I haven't, then maybe it's a reminder that I'm deaf.

But I do think that as hard-of-hearing and deaf people we also have to remind our, you know, folks that are -- that we're talking to that it really has to be a two-way thing.

It's just because we're deaf, doesn't mean that we have to go the extra mile. It's a -- you know, if they really want to talk to you, they'll accommodate you.

**SANDI BLAKE:** Wow that's smooth, no names mentioned.

Very anonymous.

**JON:** Yes, it's a work in progress.

**SHARON SWERDLOW:** I just wanted to thank everybody who answered that question.

I realize how frustrating that is and I generally get very angry.

And that does me no good.

I loved Kate's answer, I can't see you, I think that is brilliant and I also think it's brilliant to just ignore it.

And, and, not have to always be ashamed or have to overcompensate by you know I'm sorry, it's my fault.

Because it's not our fault, you're right it's not our fault, it is what it is.

And our loved ones love us and they forget I've been married to the same man 25 years and he still more than occasionally talks to me in from another room he just forgets.

So anyway, I thank all the responses, I find that very helpful.

**SANDI BLAKE:** Okay.

Diane.

**DIANE GROSS:** My first thought to that question is if somebody's talking to us from another room, how do we know?

(Room laughing)

**DIANE GROSS:** I mean, half the time, you know, my mom is on the other side of the apartment and she's -- she knows not to talk to me but if she is, I'm not go hear her so (laughing).

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It's a moot point.

**SANDI BLAKE:** Part that of two-way street.

**FLORENCE:** I have issues with my husband too and it's really -- I realize that it's a matter of not forgetting, he wants me to get up and go into the room that he's in.

And, you know I say okay -- but at the same time it gets annoying and then I just say well the house is burning down I'm sure he'll get off the couch and come tell me so that's the only thing that I have to worry about.

**DIANE GROSS:** One more.

One more and then we'll move on.

The rule in our house is if I have something to say to mom, I go find her and vice-versa.

Neither of us is going to yell at the other one because we just learned a long time ago, it doesn't work.

Although we do know with my Cochlear implants, I can hear further, I just can't understand a lot.

So, if you can work at a system where it's, okay, you want to talk to me you come find me, that's pretty good.

**SANDI BLAKE:** Okay.

Yes.

Anonymous Jon.

I mean Jon.

**JON:** So, first off, anybody live here in Santa Clarita because Marilyn needs a ride home.

(Room laughing)

**JON:** Pat you going that way?

Um, so, listen, I think there's two parts here.

First is someone talking to you from across the room.

And I think Diane hit it on the head and it's something that I think most hearing folks struggle with – so the difference between hearing and understanding.

You may see that person across the way, and you may actually hear something coming out of their voice, but you have no chance of understanding it.

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And I think that's one of the bigger things that hearing people need to get educated on and they -- I mean it's one of those things that is tough.

So, I agree, ignore them.

If they're trying to talk to you from across the way, you just give them this, you have no responsibility to go meet them.

You have none.

Unless you really want to hear what, they have to say.

But you really don't and it's ... people if they want to be in your lives, there's some accommodations that have to be made and it should be from us folks.

So, I just wanted you guys to know that.

**SANDI BLAKE:** Thank you and the sign-up sheet for Marilyn will be available after the meeting.

I think the last question Tim we've already covered.

So, we kind of -- we went into detail about feeling stressed about an upcoming party and we had some good tips.

So, with that, I'm going to turn the movie -- turn the movie, turn the meeting over to Teri who has a financial -- Gary.

Oh, Gary.

(Room laughing)

**GARY JACOBSON:** Well it's been a while since Teri's been here, everybody forgot who she is.

Anyway, I'm supposed to do my treasury report.

And, all of you know about the Walk4Hearing, you know how much we raised but you don't know how much money we got for the walk.

Okay, I just received a check two weeks ago from the Walk we got \$4,898.80.

(Applause)

**GARY JACOBSON:** So now, in our treasury we now have \$16,886.

We just spent the money -- we should spend the money now, there you go.

Our next talk is about the kitty.

We have not been getting very much money in the kitty.

People think it's for people who don't bring food or something like that.

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It doesn't work that way.

How many of you are Catholic?

Okay.

You know when you go to church and they give you that envelope and you put in your offering?

It's the same idea.

You're trying to help the organization, like the church and HLAA, HLAA even though we have the 16,000, we do need money to keep operating.

Because part that of 16,000 is supposed to go for the scholarship fund.

So, we need money every month.

And, we have a separate sheet for the scholarship.

You can write a check and you should put scholarship fund and you get a tax write-off for it because you have proof that you made the donation.

Does that make sense?

Any questions about that?

Yes.

**GARY BOND:** It's not really a question, it's a statement.

I found out that with regards to religious organizations it can be -- it can be applied toward any other organization, you supported that which supports you.

You can support with your treasurer, you can support with your time, you can support with your talent.

Bottom line is you support that which supports you.

It returns to you multiplied abundantly.

**GARY JACOBSON:** Anybody else?

(Applause)

**GARY JACOBSON:** I'm getting the wristbands for the Rose Parade for January 1st which is on a Wednesday.

And, you know the seating is free.

You should bring your own chair.

If you are interested in going, send me an email, tell me your address, how many tickets you want and I will send them to you.

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Remember, it's first come-first serve and I have 150 wristbands available.

So, if you want to have fun that morning, don't worry about the cold weather, it's the people that you're seeing.

Okay?

Now the mic goes back to Sharon.

(Applause)

**SHARON SWERDLOW:** Okay.

I think it's time for -- we'll take a short break and ... 10-15 minutes and then we will start the party so please everybody have some snacks and coffee and we'll reconvene at 11:00.

### **MEETING BREAKS AT 10:43 A.M.; CLASS RESUMES AT 10:57 A.M.**

**GARY JACOBSON:** Okay, everybody, it's time to get started again.

Okay, are you guys ready?

In case some of you don't know -- we want to thank some of the members for the check for the scholarship fund.

So, you can write a check and put it in that can over there.

Now the kitty we're going to pass it around --

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** Oh, thank you.

**GARY JACOBSON:** And try to be generous, okay?

Thank you.

If you can pass it around.

**WENDI WASH:** Okay.

Well good morning and welcome to our 15th anniversary celebration.

(Applause)

**WENDI WASH:** Okay.

So, I'm really happy to be here for this particular occasion, the group has meant so much to me.

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So, I'm just really happy to be here for this 15th anniversary celebration.

And we are very fortunate that some of our founding members are here.

And so, we'll be meeting them shortly but you know I think the way to kick off a party is with some raffle tickets and some prizes!

(Applause)

**WENDI WASH:** If you did not get a raffle ticket and it is not in this bag, please put it in here now because the time is now.

Does everybody have a raffle ticket?

Okay.

No raffle ticket Jacqui? Let's go you've got to get one quickly.

**JAQUI:** Where do you get one?

**WENDI WASH:** If you didn't get a raffle ticket from Georgia, please get one so we can kick this off.

I know everyone's anxious to win this new Mercedes.

Okay.

So, we're going to have our very trusted captionist Ali to pick a ticket.

So, the last two digits or the last three text messages are 008.

Who is the winner?

Is that you Teri?

Yay.

(Applause)

**WENDI WASH:** Okay.

Awesome.

Sandi is giving out the keys to the Mercedes.

Okay.

**SANDI BLAKE:** Two more customers.

**WENDI WASH:** Well while you're here just pick one Sandi, while you're here.

**SANDI BLAKE:** Okay it is -- oh the last four are 8021.

The --

**TIM BROWNING:** Hey that's me.

**WENDI WASH:** Yay Tim!

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(Applause)

**SANDI BLAKE:** Enjoy.

**WENDI WASH:** Okay we'll go back to Sandi.

**SANDI BLAKE:** And you have 8034.

**DANNY TUBBS:** Bingo!

(Applause)

**DANNY TUBBS:** Thank you.

**SANDI BLAKE:** You're welcome.

**WENDI WASH:** So, I think that was -- now we're going to meet our founding members.

So, I'm going to have them come up and then we'll laud and applaud them and we will meet them.

So, if our founding members would please come up, I'll introduce you and you will see --

(Applause)

**WENDI WASH:** So, our founding members were actually seven strong but we have four of them here today.

And so, our first founding member is Pat Widman.

(Applause)

**WENDI WASH:** Our second founding member is Alicia Fernandez.

And then we have Dan the man.

He also went by the name of First Dude when his wife was the president.

And last but certainly not least we have Catherine.

(Applause)

**WENDI WASH:** So, I would like them to, you know, share a little bit of their experience, inside wisdom, et cetera, with you as the founding members of this chapter that is 15 years strong.

Pat Widman.

**PAT WIDMAN:** When I think back, 15 years have just flown by, I can't believe how fast it's gone but I looked up a couple things that happened 15 years ago and one

of the things that really amazed me is we started this chapter about the same time that Facebook started.

And we didn't have the social media that we have today, connecting with people.

We relied on email and that's why that originally the Yahoo group started that's now getting ready to be phased out.

So much time has passed.

But things just keep getting better for those of us with hearing loss.

We were communicating by pagers and we didn't have captioned movies or captioned phones, there was -- there have been so many changes for the positive.

And I'd like to think that we in this room and those that have joined us over the last 15 years have been part of that.

Moving things forward, advocating for ourselves, normalizing it, if you will, hoping to -- helping to get rid of the stigma.

And in the end, it's the friendships we've made, the connections we've made, the family that we've become.

You know, I think one of the things we've benefited from in the early days when there was just seven of us, we were trying it figure out how do we do this, is that we were passionate about it.

We were invested in it.

And if you are now part of the Steering Committee or have been at one time you keep pushing the ball forward.

And, it makes you feel a sense of ownership to this group.

You know, you don't join the Steering Committee or become a president because you want to just show up once a month -- it's because you really believe in what's being done here.

So, I encourage you all to keep investing yourself in this group and keep it moving because five years is going to go by in a hurry and we'll be here doing 20th celebration.

(Applause)

**ALICIA:** I brought the first three newsletters that we printed.

When we started the group, the organization was SHHHLA.

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Anyway, we've always been that and my -- the people who aren't here are Valerie and Willie Stern and my husband Michael.

And Michael and I started putting out the news letters for the first couple of years.

And this will show you I'm passing them around, this is the way we were when we first started Valerie Stern was the first president, she was pregnant and her baby shower was in here.

We did a lot of social kind of activities, we felt people needed a home a place they felt comfortable having hearing loss.

Kathy and Danny weren't married mediate and since then we've moved a ton of times, we had one child and I have two and -- life happened.

And, anyway you could look through there.

The first one is -- this is our first newsletter.

The second one is this is our first year as a group.

And the third one is this is our first election as a group.

So, that gives you an idea of the way we were and I know that you're thanking us for launching this group but we are thanking all of you because the biggest thing we need to do make sure of when we started was that as much as we were into it and we were all friends and we were all gung-ho, the only way the group would last would be beyond us.

We knew that life being what it is, we wouldn't be here forever.

And so, we wanted to thank you all for keeping it going.

We come as often as we can, a couple of us really live far away and I'm just so proud of all of you and this group because it made everything we ever did worthwhile and as you go forward, just think whatever you got out of it you're doing passing it forward to somebody else who needs the help.

So, thank all of you.

(Applause)

**DANNY TUBBS:** Wow we get to come here and speak to this group.

As a founding member, that sounds so old.

(Room laughing)

**DANNY TUBBS:** A founding member, fourscore and 15 years ago, we brought forth to Los Angeles the hearing loss organization.

Actually, we were in our mid-40s when we started and one of our catch phrases was hearing loss is just not for the elderly anymore.

But now I am, I mean --

(Room laughing)

**DANNY TUBBS:** But back then, that's what it was.

So, we were in a group called -- what is that for --

**DIANE GROSS:** Late deafness.

**DANNY TUBBS:** Thank you and after that we got together and Grace was pretty instrumental in guiding us -- to I guess she'd a meeting there for years but they weren't meeting for a while.

And that's when we started, we got together I think it was at Black Angus and we all got together and talked about starting the group.

And then early on, also, Chloe's here.

She was at some of the planning meetings so even though she's not officially a founding member like the rest of us, she certainly was instrumental so why don't you come up here, too.

C'mon Chloe.

(Applause)

**DANNY TUBBS:** C'mon.

**CHLOE:** I don't deserve that honor.

**PAT WIDMAN:** You did our first website, so you're definitely part of the group.

**DANNY TUBBS:** Another special thank you to Diane.

She was there at the beginning and helped us out a lot as well.

So, thank you for being here today and celebrating us.

No, I'm celebrating you.

(Applause)

**KAT BURNS:** Hello everyone I'm Kat I was one of the founding members and president after Pat, Val, Pat, me and Monique and on and on.

And when I first got into the group, I was just there kind of for the fun and I had met such great people at the elder meetings and they were like such good friends I just wanted to be with friends, wanted to have parties, wanted to do social activities.

But then we needed a president so I thought I better learn what I'm doing and I must say that Pat and Val and Alicia and Michael and everybody they really helped me kind of guide how do you do an organization right --

**DANNY TUBBS:** And me too.

**KAT BURNS:** Oh yeah how can I forget and I really learned a lot in my first two years in the organization and as president, and I'm grateful for that because otherwise I would have just been throwing parties and bowling outings which is good too.

Our group became known as the party animal group of the world.

It seems like.

One thing that I did that I'm pretty proud of is the very first Walk4Hearing, in conjunction we worked with the Orange County chapter kind of did it all on our own and didn't know what we were doing.

And since then we've, you know, this chapter has raised quite a bit of money and you know the various team Captains, Diane and Wednesday Wendi and I did it for a few years and we did a good job.

It was really good.

And we made a name for ourselves.

So, I think we can all be proud of that.

And, I'm just so excited to see so many people here of different ages and backgrounds and how you're here to help your families and it's just so -- just enlightening for me and I felt so, in my heart that this is going to be such a success and continue to be a success.

You know even the hard work and the burn-out you just have to, see where it goes.

And, hope for the best and I just wish you all very well.

(Applause)

**KAT BURNS:** Pat Widman when we started everybody worked hard but Pat actually got in the seed money, she donated money for us to start and I don't think we

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could have gotten going without her because we got captioning and everything else so thank you Pat.

(Applause)

**WENDI WASH:** Okay, so we would like to just, again, thank the founding members for all of their hard work, their investment and everything that they did to bring this chapter to where it is, even today they're still involved, they offer insight, wisdom, they show up, they just do everything.

So, we would like to just thank you with a very small token.

Sharon is going to give everybody a card and if you notice it's for one of our organizations if you use it please make sure to sign up.

So thank you again and for those people who don't know, very quickly, Ralph's is one of our partner groups, if you will and if you sign up and you shop at Ralph's we get a small donation from Ralph's quarterly or something like that and so they all have Ralph's cards.

And again, thank you so much.

Thank you so very, very much.

(Applause)

**WENDI WASH:** So, before we go on, I would like to just formally --

**GARY JACOBSON:** Don't forget Amazon.

**WENDI WASH:** Okay, Amazon -- oh yes, my Amazon, yes so, another way that you can support our organization is through Amazon Smile.

So many people use Amazon but Smile is the charitable portion and if you sign up you can tell Amazon, you know, which company do you want to support.

And you just go to the Smile Amazon page, it looks exactly like the regular Amazon page and a small donation goes to the organization of your choice.

Smile.Amazon.com.

Okay and they just contribute money.

Okay.

Here it is here.

So, any organization can do it.

Apparently, the library is already in the loop and so, the only problem is I don't know if you can do more than one group.

But that shouldn't be a problem because we're No. 1 so that --

But, yes.

**MITZY:** You also have to sign up every year for Ralph's.

**WENDI WASH:** Okay, yes so once you sign up you have to remember to go back and sign up for something, I don't know if they send out any notification or anything like that --

**MITZY:** They don't.

**WENDI WASH:** So even after you've signed up, after a year you have to go back in and let them know that that's what you want, otherwise I think it just expires.

**FLORENCE:** I just want to let people know who have existing Amazon accounts that when you sign up with Smile, nothing changes, you have the same account, you always do, only when you sign in if you do Amazon it will direct you right to the Smile.com and when I access it, it says up there where the -- I'm signed up HLAA.

I haven't had to renew it every year --

**MITZY:** Amazon stays.

**FLORENCE:** It won't mess up your accounts, your ongoing credits and things like that.

**WENDI WASH:** I think it's just Ralph's that you have to renew every year.

**TIM BROWNING:** I know you guys are checking the monthly email newsletter, right? If you are then all the information you need for Amazon and Ralph's is right there, just click link it will take you to the article step-by-step so now you have no excuses to look at our newsletter.

(Applause)

**WENDI WASH:** At this time --

**NANCY:** How do you get the newsletter?

**WENDI WASH:** The newsletter is on the website.

It's on the website --

**TIM BROWNING:** It's emailed every month.

**WENDI WASH:** And email.

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**TIM BROWNING:** If you're not getting it, let me know.

**WENDI WASH:** And if you're not getting it, Tim said to see him.

**NANCY:** Neither of us is getting it.

**WENDI WASH:** So, Tim will help you out.

I would just like to, at this time, introduce our new president so the Los Angeles chapter, that's this one, had elections last month.

And, our outgoing president Jenna she's not here today but you'll see her probably at the Christmas party but our new president is Sharon. So, Sharon will you just come up here --

(Applause)

**WENDI WASH:** Her last name -- this is Sharon and she has graciously volunteered to take on the responsibilities of president of our chapter.

And so, we're happy and proud and thankful to her.

**SHARON SWERDLOW:** Thank you Wendi and I'm very bravely and honored to be taking on this role this year.

A little intimidated by the big shoes that I have to fill and -- I'm really, really grateful for what you have established and what I have had the privilege of walking into a couple of years ago when I first stepped foot in these rooms and instantly felt welcomed like I was at home and how did I not know about this for the last 30 years?

So, this is just a great place to be.

We have a wonderful team as I introduced before a Steering Committee but we encourage everybody to jump in, feet first, give us ideas, tell us what you want to see, what you don't want to see because, really, this is for all of us to benefit to support each other, to advocate, to educate and really just to -- and to have a good time.

So hopefully we will be able to continue the party, the party group that you guys started for us.

And I'm really looking forward to the next year.

Thank you.

(Applause)

**WENDI WASH:** Thank you Sharon.

For those people who have directed their attention over here, you will note that we are starting a slide show.

In the interest of time we're going to do two things at once so you can see the slide show -- win raffle tickets we're also going to be playing a game.

And so, let's start with that.

The game will be I have lots of names in here.

We're going to pick a name and if your name is called that means you get to answer some questions.

If you answer the questions correctly, and I also have some Snickers in here -- okay, George Georgia and if you answer the questions correctly sandy will be able to give you a prize.

If you don't answer the corrections correctly you can just sit down and listen for the next correct answer.

So, what we're going to do is have you stand up if your name is called and you take a shot at answering the question.

Okay?

I'm just going to mix them up, Sandy is going to pick a name or Georgia do you want to pick a name? C'mon up.

**SANDI BLAKE:** I'll just pick the Snickers bar.

**WENDI WASH:** Sandy is just going to pick the Snickers.

Okay, there's nothing on this piece of paper.

Okay, pick another one.

**GEORGIA FLEISCHER:** I think it's two pieces stuck together.

**WENDI WASH:** Okay.

Nancy Gray.

Nancy, Nancy Nancy.

Okay, Nancy.

Put your hand in, pick a question.

And that will be yours.

Let's see.

**NANCY:** Where does Nancy Gray live? Easy question.

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**WENDI WASH:** Okay quick question is how much money did the L.A. stars raise for the 2019 Walk4Hearing, approximately?

**NANCY:** 4,692.

Out of percent more of that.

**WENDI WASH:** How much money did the L.A. stars raise this year?

Georgia pick another name.

You can just read it off.

**GEORGIA FLEISCHER:** Jen.

Okay.

**WENDI WASH:** Okay, I wish we had more than one microphone right now but let me see.

So -- okay Jen.

Pick a question that you will know.

And the question is where was the first HLAA chapter meeting held?

**JEN:** Can I phone in a friend?

(Room laughing)

**WENDI WASH:** She wants to phone a friend.

She's --

**JEN:** Mount something.

I'm not sure.

I have no idea.

**WENDI WASH:** She says she has no idea.

Oh, my goodness.

Georgia let's see what we can do here.

**DANNY TUBBS:** Give her a Snickers bar.

**WENDI WASH:** Arlene she wants to phone a friend, Arlene could you tell her where the first HLAA chapter meeting was held?

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** The (inaudible) Center in Pasadena.

**WENDI WASH:** Okay, Georgia who's the next person? Say the name.

**GEORGIA FLEISCHER:** Marilyn.

**WENDI WASH:** Marilyn.

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**MARILYN:** I want an easy one.

**WENDI WASH:** Who was the editor of our award-winning newsletter?

**MARILYN:** Wasn't that Grace?

**WENDI WASH:** It was not.

The editor, it was not Grace.

**MARILYN:** Lisa.

**WENDI WASH:** Absolutely.

Our very own Lisa was -- received an award for our newsletter.

**DIANE GROSS:** That's a trick question pause Grace also got awards for the state newsletter.

I'm just say that's a trick question.

**WENDI WASH:** Okay, all right.

**GEORGIA FLEISCHER:** Rae.

Rae.

**WENDI WASH:** All right.

Okay she's being asked to name two Cochlear implant manufacturers.

**RAE:** Cochlear America.

**WENDI WASH:** Yes.

**RAE:** Advanced Bionics.

(Applause)

**GEORGIA FLEISCHER:** Pat Widman.

**WENDI WASH:** Pat Widman.

**DANNY TUBBS:** Pat knows everything.

**PAT WIDMAN:** Who serves as our award-winning advocacy chairman?

Gee, Georgia.

(Applause)

**GEORGIA FLEISCHER:** Sam.

**SAM:** I'm not even good at my own quizzes in school.

Name two hearing aid manufacturers.

**SAM:** Sarkey, Oticon.

**WENDI WASH:** Okay, I would also add Phonak, Resound and as Mitzy said Oticon.

**GEORGIA FLEISCHER:** Okay, Kat.

**DANNY TUBBS:** She knows everything.

**KAT BURNS:** Show me something with HLAA on it.

**WENDI WASH:** No buttons, no hats no cups no nothing?

She's going to show me something with HLAA on it.

Let's see what she has here.

(Applause)

**WENDI WASH:** I'm going to show them this button.

So, this is the button that she's showing and it says please face me I'm hard-of-hearing.

Our chapter kind of decided to sponsor that, these buttons so if you don't have them or want one, I don't know if we have some here today but we do have some and we'll be happy to give you some buttons to wear.

And those have HLAA so give her a prize!

(Applause)

**WENDI WASH:** I wasn't aware but now we will be all aware that Danny donated the buttons to the chapter.

So, thank you Danny.

(Applause)

**WENDI WASH:** Okay, so thank you for all the participants of our thousand questions.

And, you all congratulations to everyone who got a number or got a prize.

Right now, I just want to say that I have some hearing aid batteries, I don't know if anybody needs or uses the 312 battery, anybody use these orange batteries? Anybody?

Okay.

So, I would like to hand these out to anybody who uses these orange batteries.

Who would like -- a pack of unused fresh new batteries?

Okay, orange batteries.

---

There you go.

Was that you?

**GARY JACOBSON:** What number?

**WENDI WASH:** These are 312.

I think it's 312.

I'm donating these so is there anybody else? Orange batteries I think the number's 312.

Mine are brown.

313 -- orange --

**JAQUI:** I think it's P13.

(Overlapping speakers)

**TERI:** Are they 13?

**WENDI WASH:** Orange tab.

Oh yeah size 13.

I'm confusing my old ones my new ones.

Whatever.

Anyone else size 13 orange tab?

Okay.

So, we're ready to pick some raffle tickets and please check out our looping slide show, you might have seen Derrick he's one of our new members and Rae and this was an excellent presentation.

**GEORGIA FLEISCHER:** Okay for our next raffle ticket the last four numbers are 8019.

8019.

It's Jon.

**JON:** Thank you.

**GEORGIA FLEISCHER:** We have got 8009.

Glenda.

Yay.

**SHARON SWERDLOW:** Our next coffee against tea-leaf 8004.

It's 8004.

---

**WENDI WASH:** Nobody saying anything.

**SHARON SWERDLOW:** Oh.

**WENDI WASH:** Hey!

(Applause)

**GEORGIA FLEISCHER:** And here we go.

So, 8022.

It's 8022.

Janet.

Okay.

Right there.

Janet.

Raise your hand again.

**JANET:** Thank you.

I appreciate this.

Georgia.

**SANDI BLAKE:** Okay so 8030.

A lucky number.

Okay.

Nanci.

All right.

And we've got 8029.

8029.

**WENDI WASH:** Pete, yay.

(Applause)

**SANDI BLAKE:** And our last lucky winner ... it's 8013.

It's 8013.

Oh, there are two of them here.

I just read the -- 8013.

**WENDI WASH:** That's me.

**SANDI BLAKE:** You? All right!

It certainly is.

---

Georgia, Georgia --

**GEORGIA FLEISCHER:** Oh.

**SANDI BLAKE:** And you should all know Wendi did so much to put this entire party together.

You know.

(Applause)

**SANDI BLAKE:** It's always a group effort, but, there's usually one person who goes I've got some new ideas, what do you think about this? And that was Wendi.

**WENDI WASH:** Thank you so much, actually lots of people worked hard.

But for this occasion, it was just so compelling and I just am happy to see everybody still here, large group today.

People came out and it's just been a really great -- great time.

I thought we would need the whole time so this is kind of good because at least we've gotten our founders lauded and applauded, giving out prizes, playing games, we still have cake to eat.

But we can continue our talking because I know people like to talk and if there's anything else that, you know, you want to talk about as it relates to coping or anything like that, for the holidays, you can also continue to check out our looping slide show.

But, again, thank you to everyone and Georgia was able to get this lovely cake and Sandy did the shopping and Tim is just the everything-guy.

So, I'm just happy to be working with them because they rock.

So, thank you for coming.

I'm going to give this over to Sharon.

To Tim.

(Applause)

**TIM BROWNING:** All right, I'm going to keep the slide show going we just have a few chapter notes to pass along to you guys.

I've already had some people ask me questions.

So, the first one is, our holiday party.

We're going to have our holiday party, December 14th at the lovely lady over there, Heather Lehr's house.

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So, if any of you have gone to Heather's for a party it's not to be missed.

**HEATHER LEHR:** I will spike the punch.

**TIM BROWNING:** She'll spike the punch you will not remember anything about the party so we'll have more information coming to you guys but it will be on Saturday December 14th so we hope you guys can make it.

It will be a great time so thank you again Heather for donate your beautiful home.

I can't guarantee how it's going to look after the party but -- we'll have plenty of people cleaning up I'm sure.

So --

And as we alluded to before or, we do have new Steering Committee members.

We're grateful to have Wendi and Georgia joining us, we also have Sandy, Sharon and myself returning and so we'll be needing -- meeting I think next weekend to iron out a few details.

The logistics of the party, the 2020 programming for the coming year, we have a lot of ideas, we have exciting meetings and rap sessions for you guys, social events.

And also, we do have a pretty important discussion item, that is the new location.

And as we alluded to before, in the last meeting, the library is going to be requiring us to pay a monthly for every meeting and we're not going to be able to reserve this room in advance more than three months so it's a very unstable, unknown situation.

So we are, I believe, set through March of 2020.

So, we're not panicking to find a place but as many of you know we've already been looking for some ideas so we have a Facebook announcement, we'll do another one, we've taken all your ideas, we'll be discussing it next weekend.

But please, if you have ideas, share it with us today, email us at [info@hlaa-la.org](mailto:info@hlaa-la.org) we take all of your ideas.

We have some ideas now, some possibilities but, you may know people locations, opportunities to help us.

So -- it's sort of a collective effort with all of you guys to help us.

So that would be something we're going to discuss.

Please let me know if you're not getting the monthly newsletter by email because we will be summarizing quite a bit of this information in the email, and Facebook.

So, it's very important that you guys are on one of those social channels.

The Yahoo groups I think you also need to be aware by the end of the year it's going to be shut down so there's not going to be any more ways to communicate through that.

I think they're going to decide for us that Yahoo groups will not continue so it's very important, email, monthly newsletter, and Facebook to connect with us.

So, I think that summarizes everything we had, Ali for doing a doing a great job.

And, Rae raising her hand reality high it's almost coming out of her shoulder so I'm going to walk over here.

**RAE:** I don't want to be a party pooper I just want to say one thing with the fires, I don't know if you guys remember Rick Pope coming and talking to us about emergency preparedness.

I just wanted to say if you haven't signed up for Notify L.A., please do it.

I can't tell how much it helped -- I got notifications, I had to be evacuated.

I don't know -- I got notification warnings and text and as emails it made such a difference.

People around me that weren't signed up, it's such a big thing.

If you're not signed up, please go do it, it's so huge for us.

Not knowing and not being able to hear, it was life-changing in my neighborhood for me having been in a fire area.

And never having had that before, it was huge.

I got vibrating things, three hours before the evacuations became mandatory.

And I just wanted to tell everybody, like, I wouldn't have known to do that.

Except for the meeting that we had and Rick coming and telling us to do that and I just wanted to tell all of you like, I wouldn't have known except for this meeting and for learning here.

And I know sometimes we learn something in the meeting and we're like yes, I'll do that when I get home and we don't do it.

Do it, do it now.

---

**TIM BROWNING:** Thank you for sharing that, that was very -- you know, I think in 2020 we're going to be trying to have more meetings like that.

So please, we do it for the benefit of all and we have great information with that and we don't want to ignore it.

But if you ever forget or you weren't at the meeting, we have plenty of people that were and make sure you reach out to us because we always want it make sure we can help each other.

I don't have much of anything else.

We tried to end this meeting a little early because a lot of people haven't seen each other for a long time so we want to make sure we get plenty of time to catch up and all these great photos so we'll keep it going for you.

Hopefully I'm not in too many of them.

Anyway, I think that -- does anyone else have --

**SHARON SWERDLOW:** I think Diane.

Diane want to say something?

**JANET:** Just a simple question, do you know if the holiday party is a day or evening party?

**TIM BROWNING:** It's typically late afternoon to early evening.

Okay, so -- let's -- I think Heather is -- just so you guys know we are still getting logistics figured out with that.

So, nothing is finalized right now.

So, I will be in contact with Heather to make sure everything works out AOK with her and everything but we'll keep you updated.

Diane.

**DIANE GROSS:** There's something that I wanted to say about the organization as a whole, I'll try to be brief.

I've been part of this organization since the San Fernando Valley chapter started in 1980 so we kind of have grown up and sideways together.

And, what I have found in the years that I've been involved with chapters on state level and the national level is you can come to the meetings, you can leave the meetings, you come and you get information.

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You can step out for a while.

But what sustains you no matter where you are, is the friendships that you form from this group.

I've met my closest friend here, 30-some years ago, there are people who I've been in contact with daily, and this past year has been really difficult for me in a number of ways.

And it's been the people who have been from this group who have kept me going the most.

So, if you're fairly new to this group, what you're going to find is a lot of friendships, a lot of sustainability, a support, that's what the organization is about.

So, I just wanted to thank all of you for all of your contributions and for being part of this organization and know that if you're here or if you have to go away for a while you can always come back.

So, thank you all for that.

(Applause)

**TIM BROWNING:** Thank you Diane.

I've known Diane for quite a while and she has a wealth of information that goes way back, great advice, great knowledge so if you ever have any questions and just want to know how things were many, many years ago, she's the one --

**DIANE GROSS:** I'm not that old.

**TIM BROWNING:** Tim I know you're not that old but you have a lot of great knowledge and I find what you have to say fascinating so she's just been a great part of the chapter and I'm grateful for her friendship and continued friendship.

Yes, ma'am.

**SHARON SWERDLOW:** I just wanted to clarify something -- if anybody does have any information about a potential location, just let us know.

We'll do the work but if you have any contacts or a contact of a contact, let us know, we're happy to do the work.

But it's a long process, and we need, obviously, the carpeting and we can put the loop in and the projector and the space and to have stacks E snacks so there's a lot of

criteria that need to be met but we're happy to do the work we have the team and we're ready to do so.

And I also Rae I wanted to comment on what you said just how important this group is and these meetings are is to have somebody like a Rick Pope come and tell us, teach us what he did.

You can't get that anywhere else and you know it's life-affirming, it's life-saving so some of what we're cognition supporting each other is really helping us survive with our issues and to be able to be notified of things we need to know.

And the last thing I want to say is -- we had planned to do a passing of the torch; Jen Nelson is in school.

She couldn't be here today because she has studies, we would like to honor her next month at the party.

She has done an amazing job she's the one that is responsible for us being in this facility and has worked tirelessly to help find speakers and really just bring us up to the next level.

But I also, we have the privilege of having Heather with us today and I personally want to thank Heather because I have such big shoes to fill when I started you were the president and it was fun and you made it bubbly and made it welcoming so I'm hoping that you know the goal of this is to have a good time, for us to be together and to support each other but to do it in a fun and loving way.

So that's all I want to say and I think now we will cut the cake and go party.

(Applause)

**WENDI WASH:** Sharon she wants to say something.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** Hi, I just wanted to echo what Diane's saying my name is I just wanted to -- this is really a after -- born with a hearing loss, this is I'm not toot my own horn but I wanted to tell you as a psychologist when people come to me this is the first place I send them to.

I think that HLAA for those of you who -- is so incredibly important because it's the group support that we all need.

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So, I just wanted to congratulate everybody and I wanted to really thank everybody who's been past president, president, et cetera et cetera because you're doing the work, I wish I could do.

So, thank you all.

(Applause)

**SHARON SWERDLOW:** Let's eat.

**TIM BROWNING:** Does anyone else have anything to add before we eat cake?

Okay, let's cut the cake, it's over there, guys.

**MEETING ADJOURNS AT 11:51 A.M.**