

**Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) – Chapter Meeting  
Sherman Oaks Library – Community Room  
Sherman Oaks, CA  
7/27/19**

**MEETING COMMENCES AT 10:01 A.M.**

**JENNA NELSON:** I had a feeling this was going to be a small meeting.

July and August are teeny tiny meetings but it just means it's going to be that much better.

So good morning everyone.

Okay.

**GARY:** Good morning.

**JENNA NELSON, Moderator:** Okay.

Good morning everyone, welcome to HLAA, I'm Jenna and I'm your president of the L.A. chapter.

Real quickly, so I know some of you -- can you hear me okay?

Okay so I'm sure we are missing Tim today; Tim is gone and if you don't know his father passed away.

So, we -- my lovely Steering Committee plus Mitzy (laughing) helped us set up and Gary too and I really appreciate that.

I did get Tim a card.

And so, if you feel like you want to sign it, I'll pass it around and then I'll mail it to him.

He'll be back next month but he's in Arizona now.

And then Wend was supposed to talk to us about the walk because we've been waiting to hear about the walk but she sprained her ankle so she's not here.

So, we'll have Liz Lesan talk about the HLAA convention I think you're the only one who went in this group it was in a remote region this year in a galaxy far, far away so we will let Liz talk about that.

The one thing that I wanted to do before I get you up Liz is just -- we don't have a PowerPoint because we went bare bones without having our IT guy here so we would like for the new people to stand up, give us your name, and your -- what kind of hearing loss you have and what you think you want to get out of this chapter.

So, I know you're one of our --

**CHRIS:** Okay my name is Chris.

**JENNA NELSON, Moderator:** Sorry I was going to say real quickly, if you're new so we loop this room and if you have Telecoil your Cochlear implant or your hearing aid then the way it works is we wire the room and the sound goes right into your hearing aid or your implant.

And so, I know you're saying -- ask him about Telecoil because he should turn that on for you so you could hear us, ask Jeff Grama.

**CHRIS:** Oh, okay, thank you I'll have to ask him my audiologist about that.

So, my name is Chris, I've been to one of these meetings about three years ago in Pasadena and that's how I -- I went because I heard an audiologist was speaking and I liked the promotional material and then I liked what he had to say.

So that was Jeff Grama and I got fitted for the hearing aids and I haven't been the best patient wearing it all the time because I get your brain needs to learn all the sounds that you didn't hear and now you're hearing so you can learn how to ignore them.

(Room laughing)

**CHRIS:** So that you can hear speech because we want to hear speech like in the car there's the humming of the car and then the other cars and then there's the radio and I want to hear the radio I don't want to hear like the air conditioning so basically the more I wear it the more he says I learn to do that.

So, I've got to be better.

And then -- yeah, I guess I hope to get practical information out of this meeting and meet people who deal with the frustrations of having a difficult time hearing and how to best make use of our technology.

So, thank you for being here.

(Applause)

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**JENNA NELSON, Moderator:** You're welcome.

New people?

**JANET:** Oh, she must be talking to me.

Hi everybody I'm Janet this is my first meeting I'm so excited to be in a room full of people why where I don't have to explain myself.

Everybody gets that I need to read your lips so this -- I'm wearing hearing aids this ear is almost gone this ear is not so good, I've been wearing them for over 20 years and it just really exciting to be with people without having to say oh I'm adjusting my hearing or oh can you take your hand away from your mouth.

So, I'm happy to be here and meet you all.

(Applause)

**JENNA NELSON, Moderator:** You haven't been here in a while.

**HILARY:** I'm Hilary this is my second meeting yeah, I wasn't able to make it Saturdays are challenging sometimes when you have a baby with many birthday parties to go to.

But, I have -- I don't even know how to explain it but I have hearing loss in both ears, the higher-pitched kind of falls off so I've had it for about five years is how long I've had the actual hearing aids but I don't know how long it's been kind of going on.

So, looking to connect and talk about resources and restoration, et cetera.

(Applause)

**JENNA NELSON, Moderator:** Glad to see you back and like I said if you are new, and you don't know about Telecoil, go talk to your audiologist because it really is a beautiful thing having the sound streamed right into your device it's like a whole other level.

So, without further ado I think we're just going to go right into Liz.

Liz is going to give us highlights of the HLAA convention this year, I'm sorry that I missed it and I know most of us did too.

But Liz is going to fill us in.

Look at you, you look like you're -- wow.

A true convention-goer.

**LIZ LESAN:** Hi I'm Liz Lesan, and yes, I'm the only person from this chapter who made it to convention.

There were very few Californians, counting the professional staff of one of the companies in Exhibit Hall there were fewer than 30 people from California but we met in Rochester, New York in June.

The weather was fabulous but we were indoors also the entire time, kept really, really busy so didn't get out to see the beautiful town very much.

Some of you may know that the very, very first convention when the organization was SHHH, was they had been going for five or six years by then and it was in Rochester so we returned to our roots.

I understand this was because a facility that they had hoped to go to out here on the West Coast didn't work.

Yes Kate.

**KATE JACOBSON:** I'm sorry could you turn it off.

**JENNA NELSON, Moderator:** It's making people busy.

**GEORGIA:** Can you speak up a little bit.

**LIZ LESAN:** Got it turn off my room, I can't stand the feedback.

Well, I'm speaking Spot mic and that's the best I can do, you'll have to read the captions.

We were in Rochester because it was the celebration of 40 years of HLAA and so we went back to our roots.

The chapter in Rochester has been wildly active for 40 years and in fact we were even met at the airport, they had a table right at the airport.

Let me unpack my goodies.

I snatched this off the hotel as I left, they didn't care.

All right.

For the first time, instead of having tote bags, they gave us a lunch bag.

It's insulated, it was lovely but it was a little hard to stuff everything into it.

However, it was useful, I've actually used this since I've got home.

All right.

So, we started out, our keynote speaker I'm not going to present this in exactly the order it happened.

Our keynote speaker was a woman named Rebecca Alexander and she has something called Escher Hirt Syndrome type 3 which is a condition that causes her, over time, to go completely blind and completely deaf.

So, she told us about her journey, she's in her 40s now.

She still does have a small amount of vision, and she does have a small amount of hearing.

But she does extreme sports, she's a personality, she's written a book.

She's very motivating, very inspiring, so we enjoyed her presentation for our keynote.

The research symposium this year was all about genetics.

What role genetics played in hearing loss.

**JENNA NELSON, Moderator:** It's on.

**LIZ LESAN:** I was going to say do I need to turn the volume up? All right, so what role do genetics play in hearing loss.

There were several speakers, one person wound up in another city and couldn't get out because of some kind of weather situation so we had a remote speaker which was kind of different.

And, the symposium was moved to Friday morning which many of you know that it had been an afternoon event and they moved it to the morning which means people who didn't show up until Friday for the weekend missed the entire research symposium.

There were five workshops this year and those you may know that advocacy is usually one of them.

Lifestyle has been on the program for a few years.

State and chapter development, one of the things that was really prominent is that the get in the hearing loop campaign has been relaunched and ... they passed out ears to everyone.

They passed out wristbands to everyone, Heather this one is yours.

**HEATHER LEHR:** Thank you, yay.

**LIZ LESAN:** Get in the hearing loop is a -- now a coordinated national opportunity to encourage venues to add hearing loops.

There is a packet, a tract that had been developed, there are some parts of the toolkit that are professional brochures that can be ordered through hearing.org online and there are many that have been specially formatted locally.

You can take them to your printer or Staples or whatever and have them printed so you can use them in their, it -- they're formatted properly.

The plan was to seek a donor to sponsor sending a copy of the toolkit to every chapter president.

And that was something they were putting in place right after convention, I don't know where it stands but you can get all of the pieces online.

There are ways that you can tell venues what the requirements, what the laws are, you can tell providers what, you know, how they have to wire the room and how they have to test the room.

So, there are quite a number of things in this toolkit including some post-cards something you can take it to your audiologist about looping and turning on your Telecoil.

So, this toolkit was highly pushed and very, very exciting.

There was a genetics tract this year so that there were many people who complimented the research symposium talking about different aspects of hearing loss and genetics.

And then the last one was hearing-assisted technology or AT.

You had -- make a couple of presentations on HAT for this chapter but there are quite a number of new technologies, HAT is everything from apps your phone to pieces of hardware, to programs for example, online to help you with speech recognition, that kind of thing.

So, anything that involves technology is called HAT.

The exhibit hall was huge of course, those of you who have been to convention know that there are displays, the big companies like Cochlear and net -- have great big booths and then there are small ones there were a number of vendors who had small new technologies and they -- it turns out that there were coordinated efforts to present

many of these technologies in the demo room so there's a separate demo room and the various vendors have presentations in there.

You get a schedule ahead of time.

The most exciting one for me was Microsoft Translate, because that program which was originally intended to be -- once Microsoft acquired Skype, they wanted to be able to facilitate conversations between people in different parts of the world.

And when they ramped it up and got it going, there was -- wait a minute, this is captions in a language.

Why don't you do it for my language, like English so two people speaking English with each other don't need a translator, they need a way to understand what's being said.

So, Microsoft Translate not only works on something like Skype but it also works on all of Microsoft Office applications including PowerPoint.

Now, I don't want Ali to feel offended but, I went to a presentation where he had we had a live captioner and the person presenting was the Microsoft person and he had the captions turned on in PowerPoint.

And I want you to know that the captions were more accurate in PowerPoint than they were in the translator because I'm sure that the woman that was translating was not familiar with the terminology but the program was actually faster too.

So, it has a lot of application and one of the things I found out from a booth in the exhibit hall is that there is a huge shortage of court reporters and captioners so this might help to bridge some of that shortage.

The get acquainted part, you know, there's usually a huge party and it's usually deafening, nobody can hear anything.

It was the same way this year but it was fun for a little bit and they had really great food so you go in you eat a little bit and then you and a couple of people you want to talk to leave so you can have a conversation because it's so noisy there was no way that you could hear what anybody was saying.

The awards events were split in two, but they had been that way for several years but this time instead of being in the early morning, the state and chapter awards were done the night before the main convention started.

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They were done on Wednesday night.

And so, I brought you a little something to show with a special thanks to the leadership of this chapter for my nomination.

(Applause)

**LIZ LESAN:** Won the newsletter award this year so I brought it and I wanted Grace to see it.

**GEORGIA:** Awesome, beautiful.

**LIZ LESAN:** Now I did find out something very interesting, when I went to go home.

I packed my little box in the bottom of my suit case and I got to the airport and I discovered that a slab of glass is read by the T.S.A. equipment, the same way certain types of explosives are read.

(Room laughing)

**LIZ LESAN:** So, when the guy told me I've got to open my suit case and unpack the whole suit case, I said I will do this but only if you make sure that everything that comes out goes back in because I had a real hard time packing this.

So, I had at a take everything out and he said, he thought beforehand that it was probably something that was glass but you had he had to make sure. So, if you're ever presented with something that is a slab of glass do not put it at the bottom of your suit case, you will be sorry.

And then the national awards were at the party, everything that was done this year was cheers to 40 years, the celebration of 40 years and that was the big party.

Despite the fact that I really respect all of the award winners, I can't stand that noise so I did not go to that event.

The last -- well there are two more things that I want to tell you about.

The Rochester, New York is also the home of the George Eastman who was the Eastman Kodak fellow and his home is the museum so the outing was a night at the museum we spent a really beautiful evening at the Eastman house and it was amazing the most noteworthy thing but house if you've never been there you walk in the front door and you're in this massive hall.

There's a pipe organ with way up high, the hall is two stories high.

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But apparently, he built the house originally and the hall was square.

And someone coming through his home later said, you know, the acoustics are always better in a rectangular space.

This man spent more than three times what he spent to build the house to saw it in half and move one end nine feet and then put it back together so he could have a rectangular entrance hall.

That is what too much money will do.

Rochester is also associated with Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglas so I think the Frederick Douglas house is there we did not have time to go it, it and they're going to hope a memorial museum to Harriet Tubman next year.

And the last thing I did because I finished my inChat training we had a special series of stuff for the inChat -- including this Microsoft presentation and what was lovely is we were welcomed everywhere in the exhibit hall we got a special tutorial from someone in the exhibit hall about equipment, we had a meeting.

And, for those of you who have been around a while, the other person in my class who you'll know was Lisa Yuan, so I got to spend some time with her finally.

So, it was a fabulous convention.

If you have never been to convention, I strongly encourage you to go because you find out so much about technology and services and all kinds of legal stuff that can support you.

Next year it's in New Orleans so you'll have a really good reason to go.

And if you've never been to convention, there is some scholarship help you can apply for some assistance to go as a first-timer.

If you happen to be a military veteran there's help and for those who have been in the military, if you know someone or you might have been in, there's a veteran's online chapter that was started up last year that say quite active.

So, it was a fabulous convention and the reason I went to my first one is because Ken -- well in Pasadena right in HLAA meeting said what a great way it was to find out about hearing stuff.

So that's why I started going.

And I'm so happy I did.

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**JENNA NELSON, Moderator:** Does anybody have questions?

**JANET:** When is the next convention?

**LIZ LESAN:** They're always in June and it will be on the hearing loss website.

One thing I should have mentioned is if you are a -- No. 1 to go to convention you need to be a paid member of HLAA.

And also, if you're a paid member, the company called Harris Technologies gives you a discounted on all hearing technology.

So, you can get a percentage off and they have really great people if you need help picking out a device you've got two L two or three candidates that all seem to do the same thing -- they'll talk you how to -- other questions?

**GEORGIA:** Microphone?

That was a great presentation, I've been to some conventions.

A couple of things, first of all, we did have one member come from this chapter, but she went all by herself and she said she saw nobody from California (laughing).

**LIZ LESAN:** Who?

**GEORGIA:** I don't think you know her name is Rae and she's real tall she has Monday hair she's been coming but you've been not coming for a while? And, so maybe you didn't cross each other's path and I don't think she knew you because you've been away, I think and she's not here today but she'd an awesome time but she felt badly because, other people were saying where are the people from California?

And like ...

**LIZ LESAN:** It was embarrassing.

**GEORGIA:** Anyway, so we did have one other person from Southern California there, the second thing they wanted to say was I also won award like yours, about three or four years ago.

And it's very heavy and I carried it home.

I didn't put it in my suit case.

And, so, so I didn't get caught.

So, I just wanted to let you know about that.

**JENNA NELSON, Moderator:** Anyone else?

**LIZ LESAN:** I don't think the situation will come up for me again and I did get a complete list for everybody who registered for convention and she wasn't on that list so she went, if she went, she must have been a really late register.

Ann: I learn hearing aids companies that came that were not Cochlear.

At these conventions that they do every year for the HLAA chapter I other than Cochlear do they have hearing companies that come? Like see Siemens all that because I know when they did the walk for Long Beach none of them from there, I didn't see -- I didn't see any of those big companies that would want to presented their hearing products.

**LIZ LESAN:** The Cochlear implant companies like Advanced Bionics No. 1 is always at the -- but the big metal and Advanced Bionics, Phonak was there this year because most of the hearing aid companies are based out of the country, they're not American companies, they don't often spend the money to come.

But you can usually look at the convention catalog which lists all of the exhibitors and presenters before convention and it will tell you who's going to be there.

Mitzy was next.

**MITZY:** Actually, most of the hearing aids company used to come but because the national chapters support over-the-counter less expensive hearing devices, they sort of boycotting it.

What I wanted to ask you is about genetic research was there -- was there anything interesting that came up in this time symposium on genetic research?

**LIZ LESAN:** The kinds of things they're trying to address I mean they talked a lot about how to modify genetic modification and that kind of thing but it's Alice all down the line.

Most of the discussion at the research symposium is what they learned about how things combine to create the kinds of problems that people experience.

If you have one thing wrong, it's a condition and if you have two things that are seen together in more than -- you know, in several people I guess, it's called a syndrome.

So, they're trying to determine how one thing affects the other.

It did not appear that anything was on the horizon to do any great change.

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They did talk a lot about legal aspects in a completely different area you may have read that there is a gene modification in African-Americans that cause sickle cell anemia but that same gene modification protects them from one of the viruses in -- that is everywhere in Africa.

**MITZY:** Malaria.

**LIZ LESAN:** So, if you fix one thing you may create other problems and they did refer to that several times that if you tinker with stuff it may cause unintended consequences that you didn't anticipate.

So, there is no law in place about the limits of research.

And they're not at a place where they're going to be doing trials right away.

But one of the workshops was a family where they had different branches of the family in two parts of the country and hearing loss hit members of the family around their teenage years on both -- in both families and they had representatives of both, they're distant cousins like second or third cousins that came and spoke about their experiences.

But I mean it's the urinal thing.

You're a teenager, you're embarrassed, you know people -- you won't hear your hearing aids mostly they all have the same story finally at some point when they grew up and got smart they realized they're not being able to hear anything was a pretty tough it way to live their lives.

So, they said okay, I'm going to accept what's wrong.

That's -- I mean those anecdotal things I think were more of the tract but ... but the kinds of research that -- they're redoing the Rochester Institute of technology has huge hearing research so the representative from their paper did a really excellent workshop and she was one of the research symposium -- they're at the research stage they're not at the we can fix everything.

We can adjust it.

Was there somebody who hadn't asked a question? Did you have another one Georgia?

**GEORGIA:** I didn't have a question, I just wanted to ... I'm not sure if I understood what Anna said.

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There was three Cochlear implant men actually at the walk.

**ANNA:** But not --

**GEORGIA:** I think Mitzy, I'm not sure if there were any hearing aid companies there.

**ANNA:** No, I wonder --

**GEORGIA:** Okay, I misunderstood you.

**ANNA:** Sometimes they may not go to those smaller conventions because the majority of the people who usually are for -- it's the -- for Cochlear implants but people like myself have a permanent connective hearing loss that requires regular powerful hearing aids whether they be small or behind the ear.

A lot of the times even if they're made in the U.S. though might look at the bigger conventions to go to because then they'll attract everybody.

Yeah, they're starting to phase out a little bit of Siemens because it's a German-based company that's what I used to wear but now (inaudible) is trying to take over dorks d to me they're similar in the way they provide power for anybody else in the room -- I have Autobell previously, I wear Siemens for all my --

**LIZ LESAN:** Did you have a question.

**HILARY:** I was just going to say to the Microsoft technology Google also has live captioning on its applications such as Google slides so like if you're presenting you can turn it on it's a PowerPoint equivalent so if you're in a meeting right now and you have your computer and you turned on a blank slide and turned on closed captioning it would provide live captioning and it has -- Hangouts which is their version of Skype.

But I would say the accuracy depends on how clearly people are speaking and how close they are to you or the microphone so while the accuracy, the voice recognition is technically good it's still just a machine and so it can't pick up context or -- it's better than nothing.

So, I would encourage people to try it, it's free.

**LIZ LESAN:** Okay live caption from Google is an app that you can download to Android phones and live caption does a very good job of picking up sound from conversations from people distant.

The Microsoft translator requires a microphone but it's pretty -- it's pretty far-reaching we were able to -- we could use the microphone and speak; we could text in questions that were answered.

I was impressed with the way it was plus, I mean people who are in business use Microsoft Office in so many different ways.

I would also like to mention as far as Siemens, Siemens has not been in the hearing aid business for several years, they sold their hearing aid business it's called Insignia but I agree with Mitzy that the situation is since over-the-counter hearing aids makes sense for a whole lot of people and HLAA supported that, obviously the people who make proprietary hearing aids aren't going to be able to sell them for outrageous amounts of money and have a captive audience so naturally they're going to be aggravated but it is expensive to come from Europe to do our conventions.

Yes Heather.

**HEATHER LEHR:** Maybe you guys all know this I just wanted to clarify this about caption so there's something called live transcribe and live transcribe was created by this guy at Google and actually it's an open app it only works on Android phones and it is brilliant.

It really, really works it's super accurate.

The owning thing is your phone has to be very close to the person who's speaking so you can't like you know have it on your table and get someone who's talking over there, that person has to be sitting right across from you.

So that is amazing.

Google Hangout, I'm a Google trusted tester I'm a person who tests applications before they get out to make sure they're working and so is Jen that's why I'm trying to clarify this.

Like YouTube and like Google Hangout generally they use something called Dragon caption and it's lousy I mean I'm sorry sometimes just garbage comes out it really is not a good captioning platform it's very cheap and it's very easy for them -- they put it on like a certain line of the video and it just inserts itself really quickly that's the way the program works so a lot of female say oh I'm canceling my webcast or my online class they just use Dragon captioning and it's horrible.

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So, some of us at the Google trusted testing group have been trying to pressure Google to say you have this wonderful product, you have this live transcribe thing and why isn't it on things like Google Hangout?

**HILARY:** It's only available on Android and not iPhones? Why?

**HEATHER LEHR:** She said why is about only available on Android it's because of the technology the way the sim cards work or something can and they haven't wanted to spend the money to figure out how to make it work on the iPhone and iPhone people are very proprietary.

They don't want to have a lot of stuff being able to go back and forth, they want you to buy iPhone products so it's kind of this little tiff between the two platforms.

So, actually, I had this very good friend who because live transcribe is so good, I mean it literally it was created by this guy at Google for his own purpose.

And now it's become this sort of huge thing.

She went and bought a really, really cheap LG phone --

**LIZ LESAN:** It's in the newsletter that was in the last newsletter -- it was in the newsletter (laughing).

**HEATHER LEHR:** I need it give credit to Liz for her fabulous stories in the newsletter and you're right it was there was a story but she bought a cheap phone an Android phone so -- did you do that too?

**SHARON:** Yeah I was in Poland a few months ago and I was on an organized trip and I was concerned that I would not be able to hear the different curators at museums and we were outdoors a lot and anyways I had an entire band of accessories and microphones to and for 50 bucks at Best Buy you can get a chapter Android phone, it's called live transcribe it's free and I agree with Heather it works really, really well but you have to be close to the speaker, even this distance, it's sacrifices with every foot of distance there's a big change in reliability.

But close up it's perfect.

**LIZ LESAN:** Okay so I think that we probably need to finish this section, right?

**JENNA NELSON, Moderator:** Whatever people want.

Make it quick.

And then we'll take --

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**LIZ LESAN:** Okay another thing is if you're traveling and you have a Telecoil, get a neck loop, with a cable and you can plug it into the whisper device that every single tour guide is using plug it in and instead of the ear phones that they give you it and it will go into your Telecoil, easy.

**JANET:** Just a simple question, how do you get the newsletter?

**LIZ LESAN:** Ah, well, hearinglossca.org is our website for the State of California.

To go the tab at the top that says newsletter and there's a way you can sign up for the electronic version.

Hearingloss.org.

If you want paper copies of the newsletter you have two options you can either join HLAA, the national organization and we will send you a paper copy.

Or you can pay ten bucks and you'll get it for year you have to pay ten bucks in January.

Well if you join the national organization you also get hearing live magazine.

**JANET:** This is my first meeting.

**LIZ LESAN:** So, hearing live is another benefit of joining the national organization.

Did you have another question?

**ANNA:** No I was going to say something real quick for those of you know me or don't know me I'm Anna, I have used iPhone when they came out, and then the phone that I found the best to work with most hearing aids including mine is the Samsung Android phone that's why I always get them because the captioning works great on it.

Like you said the Google whatever it is, live transcribe yeah.

iPhones they give you feedback on the ears they don't pick up they don't work as well that's what I found personally.

**LIZ LESAN:** Yes, but that's not what I found, the thing about hearing is that we're all different so we need to find what works for us.

And that sometimes takes a number of false steps.

So, you may have a reason to fry one thing and if it doesn't do the job you want it to do, if it's a phone you can try a different type of phone.

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If it's a technology, that's where the Harris people at Harris Communications are very good at giving you other options for technologies.

So, there are lots of choices but one thing does not work for everyone, that's why we all are here to represent what -- my hearing issue is not the same as yours or yours or yours, we're all unique.

And now I'm done.

And I have another commitment so I'm going to pick up my goods and go home.

**JENNA NELSON, Moderator:** Thank you.

(Applause)

**JENNA NELSON, Moderator:** The convention is I would encourage you to go. I think getting to New Orleans is easier than getting to Rochester so I really would encourage you to go it's definitely worth going once and there's just tons of stuff.

I'm like Mitzy I go to all the genetic and, you know, where are we going in terms of curing hearing loss? That's my -- that's my interest and they have a lot of stuff.

They had a great symposium last year, actually.

But anyway.

And also, just to your point, if you want to join HLAA National I believe it's 35 or \$40?

**LIZ LESAN:** It just went up.

**JENNA NELSON, Moderator:** It went to --

**SANDY BLAKE:** Forty-five.

**JENNA NELSON, Moderator:** Okay, 45 bucks a year, and you get lots of fun gadgets and what have you so I would go to that website and see what you get.

There's definitely a worthwhile investment.

You can also go to [HLAA-la.org](http://HLAA-la.org) that's our website.

So, anything that's pertinent to cower chapter and what's going on whether it's meetings -- I don't know do we have the newsletter on your website? So, you can go to our website and get all that information as well.

So, we only have 15 minutes before we need to take a break but let's --

**SANDY BLAKE:** Why don't we break now and then come back and start the round?

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**JENNA NELSON, Moderator:** It's up to you guys what do you think now? You want it break now? Okay so let's break now for 15 minutes and then when we come back, we will start the wrap session.

Oh, real quickly this is the card for Tim.

So, if you want to sign it, please sign it and pass it on or you don't have to sign it.

## **MEETING BREAKS AT 10:45 A.M.; MEETING RESUMES AT 11:03 A.M.**

**JENNA NELSON, Moderator:** Ladies.

Hello!

Hey chicks in the corner.

Hello!

We're going to start the wrap session now.

And I'm going to that happened over to the fabulous Sandy who is our resident person who does all these things because she's so good at it.

**SANDY BLAKE:** Because nobody else wants to do them.

**JENNA NELSON, Moderator:** No that's not true.

**SANDY BLAKE:** Well, here we go.

I never know where to stand.

Should I stand over here?

So that you can all see the screen but then you have to look back and forth or should I stand over here?

Is that better?

That's better.

Okay.

So, this is all about what the heck do we do in the summer when we sweat and, and we swim and we go to the beach and we want to go on a boat or we want to fly somewhere.

And as if we don't already have enough to adjust to, we've got to think about our devices, we've got to think about things.

So, does anyone -- I've got a couple of questions here.

Like, does anyone have maybe a checklist of supplies that you need to take with when you travel or whatever?

**JENNA NELSON, Moderator:** Sharon.

Sorry, we'll put on the website.

**SHARON:** Okay.

**SANDY BLAKE:** You brought a list and you forgot it?

**JENNA NELSON, Moderator:** Yeah.

**SANDY BLAKE:** Sharon has a list but she forgot it (laughing).

It will be on the website.

It will be on the website.

That's great.

That works, that works for me.

Okay so anybody plan to fly in summer or has anyone flown recently?

Okay, so do you have any words of wisdom that you want to share for how to make it easier at the airport or -- yes.

**ANNA:** Hi my name is Anna for those of you that are new, I have what's called connective hearing loss.

So, this is what I do when I travel.

I never obviously travel alone not because I'm married but it's convenient to have my partner next to me to help me out rather than trying to access these -- it's very high-priced for the ones that I have to get it.

So usually whenever there's an announcement, I remind my husband ahead of time if there's something on the PA or on the airplane please kindly look at me and retell it to me and if you're reading timed captioning -- which is very helpful plus we fly with Delta usually because in the back of their seats there's a screen and there's captioning already there for me to read and connect with the image what they're talking about, things like that.

What I usually do is I have I have a VOX device that I carry with me, most of your what do they call it, your wherever you get your hearing aids provided this round tube thing, it's where you can put your hearing aids in and -- you woke up sweaty it attacks away all the moisture.

So, I always put my hearing aids in there and I let my entire crew know, my family, we're -- they're in a safe place not to lose them, please look at me if you need to speak with me, I bring extra batteries.

Now, for those of you if you have an extra spare -- (inaudible) please bring them I advise you because I have traveled one year where one hearing aid went out, luckily the right one was still working great but if they both go out now what? This is my basic go-to tips on how to travel.

Now for those of you who are a little bit more on the deaf side, make sure the airports you go to have loops, you can always accommodate by asking the airline anything.

Sometimes if my husband didn't pick up something or I needed something, I'll kindly let the people know sorry I'm hard-of-hearing, would you mind kindly repeating it to me, wherever I went.

So --

**SANDY BLAKE:** Okay, thank you.

You have a lot of experience.

Anybody else have anything they want to share?

Yes.

**JANET:** I usually travel alone.

And I basically have to ask the stranger sitting next to the me on the plane to let me know if the flight attendant says anything important like you know we're going to crash or something like that because really I have no -- because I've flown before I know about the oxygen and everything but really I can't ever hear a word they're saying.

So, I basically depend -- and the airport when they make announcements or we have to know where the shuttle is, and basically, I have to ask the people next to me, do you know you know which button I push? Because sometimes they have a phone and you call a phone and it -- for your particular hotel and they send the shuttle but I can't

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hear what they're saying on that phone so I basically depend on strange exercise knock on wood I've actually met really nice people that way.

I could meet an ax murderer I don't know, open for ideas.

**SANDY BLAKE:** Thank you Janet.

She depends on the kindness of strangers.

**JENNA NELSON, Moderator:** I was just going to say that if you -- I don't know if you know this but we have very few benefits as being hard-of-hearing people but one of the benefits is being able to preboard.

So, you go up to the counter and you say I'm deaf, it's the easiest thing you can say I'm hard-of-hearing, they don't care, you say I'm deaf and I need a preboard.

They give I a preboard, that's what I do I travel monthly.

And I go up to the -- I don't know what they call it the air -- when you get on the flight -- the flight attendant.

I go up to them and basically say that if we're going to down in the Pacific Ocean I need to know.

So I tell them, this is a seat I'm in, I'm hard-of-hearing I can't hear -- now that I have my implant I actually can hear pretty well, but I still just say I can't hear and if anything is happening, any kind of emergency situation you need to come and tell me.

So, it's just good to know and of course if you fly Southwest and you end up in the C section you can actually say I need a preboard and you get to go on first.

So, I highly recommend that and it is helpful to let people know.

**CHRIS:** I'm worried that they'll say you're deaf you can hear me what's going on?

**JENNA NELSON, Moderator:** So on in a note, they're not allowed to question you.

But you can always pull out your thing, they've never questioned me, the one thing they say which makes me a crazy person, which doesn't take much, is they'll say to me, oh you don't sound deaf.

I get that probably if not from the actual gate person when I tell the flight attendant, they say oh okay, but you don't sound deaf.

People don't get it.

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So, just take that with a grain of salt but they can't refuse you.

But you can always pull out your if they say something but nobody has ever said something to me, they just say okay and they do it.

**HILARY:** But that goes for your whole family or just like only the deaf person?

**JENNA NELSON, Moderator:** Oh, you can go on with your family because I always go on with my husband, I still say we need it and then we both go on.

Yeah.

**GARY JACOBSON:** Okay, about her saying they say you're not deaf, all you have to do is take out your hearing aids, talk again, your voice changes, you're deaf.

It's that simple.

**HEATHER LEHR:** Okay, I want to share with you a coping strategy because I can't hear well -- when I get on the plane and there's that plane noise, I'm sorry, I am so -- even with my CI, you know which normally makes me very able to understand people, I am so deaf on a plane.

And then, the person next to me starts talking to me and I'm like, I don't know what they're saying and I'm just nodding my head and then the stewardess comes and starts talking to me about whatever.

And so, when I started -- what I started doing is even though I don't need them because I can strain right through my seat I put these big headphones on I got really cheap ones at Target that look like those cool Dr. Gray things and I have these headphones on and I go on there and I just -- and nobody talks to me (laughing).

Because they think you're like into your music or whatever.

And they just really leave you alone and I know, I mean I guess I should, you know, represent and tell people I'm hard-of-hearing and like -- but I just don't want to deal with it so I put on a big set of headphones.

**SHARON:** So, I was also going to say Jenna -- I'm glad that it works for you because next flight I'm going to do that.

And very justified actually for us to do that.

With regards to headphones one thing that for whatever reason didn't come into my consciousness until recently is how damaging the actual sound of jet planes can be for those of us that still have hearing.

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And, so, the solution could be very inexpensive, noise cancellation headphones or if they're not that expensive there are ear plugs that are not very expensive if you get custody ones by a company called Westone.

They have different filters to filter out different decibels, you get 20-40-60 and also a just discovered a company called ear piece, and they sell very inexpensive ear plugs.

My kids have always been adverse to them and I just gave my son a pair to wear they were actually comfortable and they come in a small little cylinder that you can store them in and they can attach to your key chain so they come in different colors but they're 15 or 20 bucks on Amazon and also take away some of the sound.

So, because I feel that over the years, I've probably lost some hearing just from being on airplanes because of the loudness of the jets.

So --

**CHRIS:** I asked a couple of people about this during the breaks break did and it has to do with loss insurance -- not the insurance that you use to purchase the hearing aid but Jeff Grama my audiologist there's been a couple of times where I almost lost my hearing aids and I'm surprised in three years I still have not lost it.

I told him that.

So, I asked him and he said that State Farm home insurance which I haven't called this yet has something called a rider he says it's like \$40 a year so that's not much to insure 5 or \$7,000 hearing aids.

My company AAA said they will cover it but only if it's burned or there's damage to it from an earthquake or whatever but not lost.

So, I'm wondering if anyone has any experience with loss insurance, or they know anything about that.

**HEATHER LEHR:** There's two companies that ensure hearing aids, Cochlear implants for loss, specifically they insure it for other things for me when my puppy ate my hearing aid but they are the most economical for damage and loss.

One of them is called ESSO I think it is out of Wisconsin or some place and they have a website you can -- I actually mine cost close to \$120 a year.

I have very expensive hearing aids and I wanted that loss because I always had an issue where they kept falling out and I was worried where they would fall out and somebody would roll over it with a car tire or something.

And there's also a company called Midwest Hearing Industries, it's out of Minnesota I think and they also will insure your hearing aids.

You have to have the original date of purchase, your -- the what do you call it, the serial numbers and if you have, the receipt from like your audiologist.

And I didn't have, it they lost mine and I asked them and they gave me a new one.

**JENNA NELSON, Moderator:** Do they do they insure Cochlear implants?

**HEATHER LEHR:** Yes, Cochlear implants and hearing aids I've used both ESSO and Midwest Hearing Industries.

**SANDY BLAKE:** That's good to know, good information, thank you.

So let's move onto, unless somebody has something to share, let's move onto -- by the way when you book your flight there's usually a place for disabilities, and then if you click on that it is deaf and I just click "deaf" and it shows up usually on my boarding pass.

If it doesn't, you're right, talk to the gate agent and they say no problem.

If they say you're not deaf, you go I read lips.

**JANET:** Good answer.

**SANDY BLAKE:** Exactly.

Okay, does anybody have coping strategies for swimming? Swimming? Like does anybody have issues or does anybody -- or do you just take your devices out and off and just you get a break?

Okay.

So, I don't know, that didn't appeal to me exactly.

And that's one of the reasons why I went with a Cochlear company because they have this little, it feels like I'm doing a commercial but I'm not because I just fell so in love with this device it's called AquaPlus and it's a little silicone processor for my and a waterproof coil that connects right into my sound processor.



And I'm telling you, I can put this on, and swim, of course I don't use my hearing aid but I get to hear the water I get to hear if somebody's in my backyard, if someone's coming whatever.

Anyway, that is just a device, it's one of the accessories that is available and an extra with a Cochlear implant, by Cochlear.

Anyway, what about -- let's see does anybody have any tips for when traveling like do you have any apps or devices to like if you want to watch T.V. and you're at somebody's house and you don't have your T.V. streamer?

Do you guys use a mini mic or do you use some app maybe? Jen.

**JENNA NELSON, Moderator:** I was going to say two things, one is if you have AB, Advanced Bionics we also have two options, one is called an aqua case why your implant it's in a case and you can clip it on your bathing suit so you don't have anything -- you don't have the processor your head and then also do you remember I forgot there's an actual whole -- not implant but the processor for being in the water.

It's like 1,000 bucks or something but it's actually an entire thing and people love it.

It's 100 percent waterproof you can go deep-water diving and you can hear in the water -- do you have one?

**HEATHER LEHR:** I want one but it's too expensive.

**JENNA NELSON, Moderator:** Yeah I know it's 1,000 bucks but to your point I was going to say again I don't know how many people wear a loop or ComPilot for their hearing aids but if you are travel on an airplane you can take your ComPilot and connect it to the video screen or your laptop or whatever you bring.

And you can stream movies, you can stream anything that's coming through and it's also great for hearing the Captain because everything comes through on that.

So, if you wear a loop or a streamer you can plug it right into the -- you know where you normally plug your headphones in.

And it's a great way to hear on an airplane, it takes out all the background noise and it's fabulous I know people who do long car rides and they put it into their iPads and just stream right into their implant or into their hearing aids.

So, I would say if you don't have a loop or a ComPilot or whatever comes with Cochlear, invest in it it's super cheap and it's a great way to travel and be able to hear and stream movies on airplanes.

Yeah.

**SANDY BLAKE:** Is that what Liz Lesan was talking about she says make sure you have a loop with a cord --

**JENNA NELSON, Moderator:** Yeah.

**SANDY BLAKE:** Same thing.

I recently purchased a phone clip for my Cochlear implant, it's wireless.

And I think it's going to do the same thing.

**JENNA NELSON, Moderator:** Yeah.

**SANDY BLAKE:** We'll see I'm still playing with it.

Thank god for technology.

**CHRIS:** This is new to me so the loop was explained to me that we have a loop in here but now the way you're describing it on an airplane, like I guess they might have a loop in an airplane but the way you just described it makes it sound like you have your own personal loop.

**JENNA NELSON, Moderator:** You wear it and it goes around your neck.

**CHRIS:** And in a allows you to connect to the video streaming on the airplane.

**HEATHER LEHR:** It's Bluetooth.

Yeah.

**SANDY BLAKE:** Does that connect your hearing aid?

**ALEX:** Yes, so it has my hearing aids have loops, and my understanding is if you have hearing aids and you're getting fitted for them do you have to make sure you tell your audiologist you want hearing aids with looping technology in it, yes Telecoil.

So my first pair of hearing aids didn't have that and I insisted that my second did and it's been a life-saver for me in these meetings and airplanes so what it does this is a streamer you activate the loop through your streamer and what this is is this is the -- I don't know the technology that well.

But this helps pick up and so that way it streams kind of directly into my hearing aids.

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And there's a plug at the bottom I can plug this in I haven't tried it yet because typically I only use this in these meetings -- because I don't know --

**JENNA NELSON, Moderator:** Why do you have Telecoil, so the room is looped.

So why -- you don't need that?

**ALEX:** The way it works is I have to wear this, it's kind of a weird situation it won't work unless this is close by.

So, I don't know if it's just a crappy pair of hearing aids that I have.

Maybe I'll get better ones but that's how this works but it's very helpful.

**CHRIS:** I've got a quick question about that.

If I don't have the Telecoil ... if I do not have the Telecoil in my hearing aid, I don't know if I do, does anyone know --

**SHARON:** You do.

If you have new Oticons you do.

**CHRIS:** I have Oticons from three years ago. I received inputs from different people -- but you sound very confident.

**SHARON:** I'm very confident.

**SANDY BLAKE:** However, you do have to make sure that your audiologist has activated the Telecoil.

**SHARON:** I so I just wanted to say especially fellow your point they're different loops so the loop that we're talking about that is activated by Telecoil is actually a wire that if you see the blue duct tape around the perimeter of the room we're going to pull out after the meeting and that creates the electromagnetic field that will allow people with devices with -- the Telecoil will pick up the signal which streams into the ear.

I think what Jen is talking about is a neck loop and not like this kind of neck loop.

There are neck loops that you can buy over-the-counter, I bought mine from (inaudible) technologies that will sort of substitute for a loop so if you get a neck loop and then plug that into the jack on the airplane, that would then allow you to stream in an area where there isn't Telecoil so it basically kind of creates a loop-type environment to where you can then stream and hear directly into your ears without the backgrounds noise.

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Is that right?

**GEORGIA:** I would suggest that you call Jeff Grama because I went to him for 30 years before I got my new Cochlear implants.

So, I know him.

I would ask him if hearing aids have Telecoil because some hearing aids don't come with it.

And some do but he has to activate it.

And he has to tell you how to use it.

Do you have a remote or something? Do you have a remote?

**CHRIS:** Well I have the Oticon app, I don't have a remote.

**GEORGIA:** I would suggest that you go talk to him and you know just to get that

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**CHRIS:** I will, that's the input I'm getting and I already got an email sent to him.

Thank you.

Thank you.

**SANDY BLAKE:** Okay.

Hilary.

**HILARY:** This doesn't deal with traveling at all but the coil conversation reminds me just I don't know how many of you are working currently or like in the working world but I feel like there's specific challenges with meetings and conference rooms and conference spaces that are very difficult if you have hearing issues.

And so recently at my job they did loop one of the conference rooms because it was requested by someone who had a hearing loss issue and he requested it.

But the way that my particular office place of business works is there's hundreds of conference rooms and all the meetings are in different conference rooms so there's only one that's looped and thousands that are not.

Just wondering if anyone has any experience while working, strategies for dealing with spaces or meetings that are not conducive to people that have hearing loss and how to go about requesting what you need how to figure out what you need, how to figure out what you're entitled to or what's reasonable for the workplace to be accessible to people with hearing loss?

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**KATE JACOBSON:** Okay, I've been working for the bank for 40 years and last ten years my boss is very helpful with -- if there's a meeting downstairs and it's a telephone meeting from Texas, and California, at the same time, they have phone number and what time of the meeting.

And I have a contact I will contact real-time captioning in Colorado, and they will listen in and type on your computer.

Everything they hear on the telephone conference call, is in writing.

So, if you want information, I can give you that.

**ANNA:** I have a question, Sharon brought up, you brought up about two companies that cover hearing aids.

Okay so I don't know if anybody's familiar with Sonus or Serendipity, for some reason my insurance company they'll cover -- I used to have ESSO is when your hearing aids go out of warranty you can pay a certain amount a year and they cover your hearing aid.

But Sonus company for some reason that was bought out by Serendipity, so the ESSO you were mentioning and the other one -- are they independent?

Like I have to apply for it to get high hearing aid covered?

Sn I don't have to go through my company, right?

**HEATHER LEHR:** You just have to contact ESSO or Midwest Hearing Industries directly you don't have to go through your hearing aid company at all.

The ESSO or Midwest Hearing Industries just wants to have all the serial number and the receipt that -- so they know how old your hearing aid, they have a record of how old your hearing aid is and what --

**ANNA:** And then you have to send out for repairs through them?

**HEATHER LEHR:** Yeah if you're going to have them pay for it, one time I had to have a repair and by the time they paid for it, it wasn't -- it wasn't worth it.

But when my dog ate my hearing aid and it was completely fixable then it was worth it to go through the insurance company.

**ANNA:** I'll give them a call and see what they say.

That's good to know because the one that you're offering -- I paid for this one a year 300, and 300, so I just need something that -- thanks so much.

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**JANET:** Thank you.

I'm sorry, I don't know -- so, I have a similar problem.

I go to meetings a lot, I'm a realtor I have people in my car, they always are sitting on my bad side because I'm driving, I have to explain to them and it's not easy.

But the meetings are brutal, because I have no control, they're in a big building, the office is huge, they couldn't make the ceiling any higher, we're almost on the moon so what happens is I always try to sit close to the speaker.

But the problem is other people can have input and honestly, I don't even know if they're speaking let alone what they're saying.

So, what I have when I go to meetings in big ballrooms or conventions is I always I'm the first one there.

And I get in the door first and I look for the best speaker.

And that's where I sit.

It's not ideal, but it's all I can come up with because sometimes when I want to go to a convention I told people ahead of time I want to sit in the front but they can only do so much because the room is only, they're in a hotel, they look booked it and they only have so much control.

So, I mean I would love to hear other ideas like this group is great because everybody gets it but when you go to a meeting with this many people in a room, it's really awful because you can't -- you don't hear.

And then you feel bad it's like being in school if you weren't paying attention and then the teacher calls on you because really you have no idea what anybody's talking about and people start talking to you and you know I don't even know what time conversation's about so I'd love to have more input if anybody has ideas to answer her questions.

**CHRIS:** Yeah this is regarding your situation -- I mean just thinking organizationally, the thousand meetings that you can go on on one big campus or is it all over the city?

**HILARY:** One big campus, literally.

**CHRIS:** So my thought was they requested to this individual so now it's in one space, who requested a loop, maybe there's another room that's on the other side of the

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campus so -- so could you request of your whoever organizations the meetings since you have this hearing deficit that you and be placed in one of maybe you get a second loop room in one of these two meetings and maybe you'll get placed in 50 percent of the time so 50 percent of the meetings will be better.

That say have just a brainstorm.

**HILARY:** That's not a bad suggestion, the problem is I'm so low on the totem pole whatever conference room is available get booked and people are fighting for conference rooms type of thing.

So half of the time you don't know what the room is until you look at the your calendar and oh going to the whatever floor just like the movie bras many and you just show up and this room sucks and some of them are circular so if you're sitting mind someone then you're really screwed because you can't even see their face and the sound is facing away from you.

So, you're like -- a little dance.

**SANDY BLAKE:** Wow, Georgia.

**GEORGIA:** Okay, for the new bees here we have what they call live captioning service it's called CART, it's a service that provides live captioning.

Live at the Hollywood Bowl, I was able to get it set up there for live captions.

And we have EART, now what you have to do is and I can help you through this with whatever I'm just trying to give you a brief overview.

I used to work for the City of Los Angeles, I just retired.

But if we had a staff meeting or a meeting, I would be R would request through my supervisor for them to contact the office of disabilities to request CART.

They would contact a company that provides this service, so many companies.

What they would do is they would come to your place of work, conference room, but you have to set this up, a month in advance it's a big deal, they come with their equipment they come with their computers and the lady she's typing a lot and you can sit next to her or whatever.

And then that was a wonderful service.

Now who pays for it? It's not that expensive, it's like \$200 an hour or something like that.

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And it's an -- if you're really interested you can contact me personally and I will give you more information about it, it's a great service or some companies will say to you do you know American sign language, they can provide you with a sign language interpreter.

I'm sorry, I don't know sign language.

**CHRIS:** Is this what we're getting here.

**GEORGIA:** Exactly, what he's doing, what Ali is doing for us today is what you can request at your workplace.

And for you --

**JANET:** Not my workplace not my work community they're impromptu, I can't really do that, I really appreciate it, I appreciate it at the Pole and the movies but I can't do that when I end up in a meeting and I'm with 10 people or 50 people or I'm in a convention -- and they're in different rooms you know in a convention.

I couldn't do that.

But I really appreciate it.

The suggestion I wish I could.

**GARY JACOBSON:** Okay, one question, maybe somebody can answer.

What about NO captioning.

**JENNA NELSON, Moderator:** No, it's only on the phone.

And I have --

**HEATHER LEHR:** I think Jen was going to talk about, remember what was that technology that the AV person -- I can't remember the name of it.

**JENNA NELSON, Moderator:** Wasn't it like the allegro, or something --

**HEATHER LEHR:** Yes.

Actually I've used this three times and it -- there's Advanced Bionics has this system and it has this little pod and the pod has all right microphones that go around this circle and you put the pod in the middle of the table, this is for like when you're in a conference room which to me because I know exactly when you're going through.

It was brutal when I had to go into a conference room, I did not know what was happening.



So, this pod has eight directional microphones and it picks up any time somebody's speaking it switches the microphone and then that streams directly into your hearing aid or Cochlear implant.

It goes via Bluetooth so you have to have some kind of Bluetooth connect, either a looping thing that helps you with Bluetooth but I'm telling you I use it three times and it was out of this world.

**JANET:** What is the name of it?

**JENNA NELSON, Moderator:** I think it was like the allegro or something but I'm not sure.

**HEATHER LEHR:** It was an Advanced Bionics it was an -- was it Phonak? Remember she came and demonstrated it. Sharon it's the same company.

It's AB, Advanced Bionics, it didn't have a super long range so one time I was in a conference and it was kind of a rounder table and it was excellent, I got everybody.

The next time I did it, it was in an oblong table and the people at the end -- it was picking them up better than nothing but it wasn't like super clear.

But everyone who was like within a range of this microphone -- and is it F moves really fast you know like how people start talking over each other? For some reason it was still able to kind of get me that back and forth which I always missed before.

**JANET:** That sounds great do you think it would also work at weddings and Bar Mitzvahs; you know when you sit at the --

**HEATHER LEHR:** It is really great the only thing is again it's like \$1,000 it was expensive.

But, I mean if I were working full-time, I'm only working part-time now, but if I were working full-time I would invest the money because it's the difference between me sitting there and having no idea and -- I couldn't say anything, I couldn't interact and people always say oh God she's not paying any attention.

So -- do you know what it is?

**SHARON:** No, I just wanted to say something.

First of all, I just wanted to just ask because I remember when we learned about it that it's open architecture, in other words do you need an Advanced Bionics or phone app.

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**HEATHER LEHR:** No it's Bluetooth the ComPilot will pick up Bluetooth signals I don't have Bluetooth in my hearing aids but would I hear a ComPilot, pair the ComPilot to the Bluetooth in the pod and then it was kind of straight coming straight in so I had to have the ComPilot but some people have Bluetooth in their hearing aids already I know a lot of hearing aids have Bluetooth, mine don't.

**SHARON:** The other thing that I was going to say depending on your hearing aid manufacturers there are microphones that are really powerful I have a Oticon a resound they have very powerful -- it's significantly powerful in a conference room to tick is it I can it in the able at a to I've had situations both combination conference calls and people in a conference room which is close to torture that would could ask for but I would generally put the microphone close to the phone which is usually in the center of the room and then it would stream directly into my ear on so for me that's been a good reasonably inexpensive resolution another thing to do is if you have one of those and there's one main speaker or even if there's a couple they can just clip it onto their shirt or very simple neck loops they can put around.

You know it's somewhat discreet and if there are going to be a couple of speakers you might find them in advance would you mind wearing this and then hand it off to the next person.

But it's less invasive than having the CART but for me it's helped a lot.

**SANDY BLAKE:** In this month's HLAA newsletter there's an article by Catherine Balmer and she talks about the mini mic and giving the mini mic to her Pilates teacher she says she can actually understand and follow the Pilates through the streaming right into her hearing aids what a miracle.

**JENNA NELSON, Moderator:** Yeah, I was just going to say a couple quick things, first of all, I mean you have rights, right?

And that's what the A.D.A. is for.

And, you can go your human resources and -- do you have a human resources where you work?

**HILARY:** Yes, kind of (laughing).

**JENNA NELSON, Moderator:** Either your human resources your boss wherever you work you have rights and you can say I'm hard-of-hearing and I need CART.

And those of you who know Lisa Yuan who is our former president here, she works she moved to DC and any meeting she has she has CART and somebody just sits next to her on a little laptop so it's not like broadcasting to everybody, that person is just sitting there typing everything for her.

And she said it's a life-saver because she said some of her meetings have 25 people in them and they're sitting behind her.

Because of the A.D.A. you have that right and your boss has to accommodate you for that.

And, I'm glad Heather brought that up.

And the third thing that I was going to say is for all of these devices, streamers, microphones, you can actually get those on e-Bay and they come in bubble wrap, they are brand new and for my Cochlear implant to get the remote mic, the ComPilot, the T.V. thing -- each one was like 450 bucks it was like \$1,000 I ordered it off of e-Bay they sent all three for 99 bucks, and it came in bubble wrap it came like it was new so any of these technologies I would highly recommend looking at e-Bay.

I have a certain seller that I know is like I can give that information, he -- he's just a recommended seller and a lot of hard-of-hearing people use him.

And so I tried him and everything came.

And I actually thought -- because it's used so like this is going to come looking like crap but it was brand new it was in bubble wrap everything was brand new and 99 bucks you can't beat it.

**CHRIS:** So, Amazon sold --

**ALEX:** So, I think Hilary had some questions about rights in a workplace and I'm going through this right now at work I came last month when Rich Ray was talking about accommodations for those with hearing loss so after that I started the process at work.

So, I'm going to through that now and it's called the interactive process.

And it's one of those things where it's like for me personally, you have what your rights are and what you're entitled to.

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But then the flip side to that is the political environment in which you work.

And we all know that we're under different kind of politics and social kind of difficulties so, for me it's kind of like walking a fine line.

So, I was very nervous about kind of starting that process because my hesitancy was, I don't want them to perceive me as someone who can't.

I do my job very well, I have 13 years of outstanding evaluations, you know the last thing I want to do is have that come back and bite me.

But I was fortunate this that in my job I have a union, I have the union president and I've been active in the union.

So I reached out to her first and I talked to her about the process first and then went to the meeting with ripped Ray I got my note from my audiologist and it was a little too detailed so I had to have her revise it because they don't need to know the specifics about high hearing loss.

All it needs to say is I have a hearing loss and that recommend some accommodations and one of the things that I've been fighting for is just a quieter office and I need that for my job and now I'm going to get it.

But it can me using a veiled threat with one of my administrators and I'm lucky in that I have tenure in my job so it's not easy to get rid of me so I have some protection, other people don't.

But it's still nonetheless very nerve-wracking but if you have somebody at work that you can connect with or other people here, I'm still not done with my interactive process but I would encourage you to look into that because you are protected.

And for me all I want is amplification, I don't necessarily need CART for all meetings I just want them to use a microphone and I think that's more than reasonable and I think that that's the accommodation you want to start with, go for it (if).

So, if you want, we can keep in touch and I can kind of let you know how my own process is doing because it's new to me and I am nervous about it, that's the reality, it's not easy.

**SANDY BLAKE:** Alex remind me what your line of work is.

**ALEX:** I'm a school psychologist at a high school so I have to do a lot of testing a lot of test are short-term memory where I'm not allowed to repeat things and students are not allowed to repeat answers back to me so me hearing on a first-time is critical.

And if they can committee me just by giving me a quieter room, they're absolutely obligated to and it took me threatening that and then coming back to this chapter which I've been gone from for a few years to work my nerve up to actually do it.

But I need it -- so.

**SANDY BLAKE:** Great that's what support is all about.

Yes, Mitzy.

**MITZY:** This was a paid work situation my environmental justice work but we were meeting with AEG when they wanted to build this new football station in downtown L.A. and of course there were environmental groups it was an adversarial situation, and hard to hearing conference room and this was before it was -- one time we went into the meeting and I just was very open, look, I can't hear good.

If you're speaking you need it speak one at a time and speak to me and speak a little slower and clearer.

And, all the trepidation that goes with that well turns out we're meeting with a bunch of older White men, most of them have hearing loss.

And they were all covering, so accommodating me helped every one of them including the -- and after a situation he came and talked to me about hearing loss, because I've been this group and -- it changed the whole atmosphere of the room too.

So sometimes, it those come out because there are far more people with hearing loss than you can imagine and they're not all my age, they're a lot younger too.

**SANDY BLAKE:** That's great.

That's a great sharing.

Thank you.

**JANET:** I don't really have any I don't have an administrator or tenure or anything, that's a great story and I do that.

But I have an office manager who when they redid the office, he made sure through my suggestion I the quietest spot in the office but like I said I'm an independent contractor and nobody has to do anything for me.

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I'm just talking about when I meet clients and their relatives come and we're going to sit in the conference room or when some of my colleagues speed need some advice we just need to go sit down and do it or we have a big meeting or sometimes I go to a meeting where there's 200 or 500 people.

There isn't any way ahead of time, there isn't a way to say look I have rights and we're going to do this for me.

I just sit there and do the best I can.

Everybody knows I have a hearing problem because I tell everyone.

Because I don't want them to think I'm rude or I'm ignoring them when they speak it me but I can't do some of the things you're saying even though I really appreciate it.

It's just it's an impromptu thing the one with the speaker that goes around, that's a really great idea and like I was saying it isn't always just a work situation, sometimes you're at a wedding reception or at a party.

And, of course, everybody in the room is talking at the same time, all 100 people and you have someone sitting five feet across from you trying to have a conversation with you and you have absolutely no idea what they're talking about.

And it's also professionally it's horrible when you're in a meeting and you don't know what the people are saying because -- like the other lady was saying it looks like you're not paying attention or you're stupid or you don't care.

And then the worst thing is when you answer the wrong way like someone says to me, you know, we don't want a pool.

And I say okay you want a pool?

You know what I'm saying? Like because it sounds like you don't care so I have to open with everyone I do business with telling them I don't hear well.

But, like I said, sometimes you have a meeting they're impromptu there's lots of people and I have no control of them.

I just try to sit near a speaker that's the best I can do.

And I have a microphone too and it's great but I also for me maybe the microphones have gotten better but they're really treat when you go with one person to dinner and that person wears it on a lapel and it works great.

But it doesn't seem to work with four people because you put it on the table but it is still able to pick up the background noise which is really hard and the dishes and other people at other tables and that's what's really hard.

And the music, there's always music playing.

While you're talking.

So those are things that I don't know how to get around but it's really nice to be with you that have all these great ideas and I really appreciate them.

**SANDY BLAKE:** Okay.

I mean unless anybody has anything else to share, I think maybe we'll close out this meeting do you --

**JENNA NELSON, Moderator:** Yeah, I just had a couple things.

Thank you to Sandy she was a great moderator.

(Applause)

**JENNA NELSON, Moderator:** You did a great job.

I just want to say a couple quick things, one is if you enjoyed this meeting, I don't know where Gary went but anyway we have our kitty over there that pays for captioning it pays for marketing it pays for there's a scholarship fund if you want to contribute to that.

So if you feel like this meeting was worth even like \$2 and you've got something out of it, these meetings are free but they do cost us for money and what have you so if you feel like donating, Gary, you want to show him the kitty?

Yeah, thank you.

You can just -- and then the next meeting is the fourth Saturday in August, I think it's the 24th.

And we're going to have Pat Widman who is you have our former Presidents her son is I don't know if he's L.A.P.D. or Glendale P.D. but he's a police officer he's going to talk to us about how to deal with law enforcement when we get pulled over or anything like that because we're hard-of-hearing.

He spoke to us two years ago and it -- gave a fabulous seminar so that's going to be in August and I don't think there's -- oh.

If anybody didn't get the card to sign for Tim, please do so.

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Otherwise, I would say thank you so much for coming.

Thank you, Sandy, and -- thank you Ali, who will never replace no matter what Microsoft does.

Thank you everyone.

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