
Vol. 2, No. 1

Spring 2019

President's Corner...

by Tony Ferack

This column is dedicated to the 40th anniversary of HLAA. If you are a member of HLAA, our national organization, you receive a printed copy of *Hearing Life* magazine six times a year. It will include articles throughout the year that touch on HLAA history. If you are not a member, please join. The HLAA office works diligently on our behalf.

All of us have a story to tell. Some lost hearing at birth for various reasons. Maybe it was genetic. Maybe it was as a result of problems during pregnancy or as a result of viral infection or the drugs used to help a more serious condition. Others may have long-term noise exposure either from a job or from military service. Still others may have hearing loss from the normal aging process.

Regardless of how you became a person with hearing loss, I encourage you to submit your personal hearing loss story. I also extend an invitation to those who support a person with hearing loss. Your story presents another perspective. All submissions will be considered for the newsletter. Stories should be 300 to 600 words in length. Please send them to our editor at pbecker@umich.edu.

My personal story will appear in this and the following newsletter. In part 1, I talk about my early life, growing up with a hearing loss. In

part 2, I will share where I've been since becoming involved in HLAA.

Annual Meeting Update

by Linda Hess

As we look forward to spring, the HLAA-MI annual meeting is approaching. The **April 13** event will be held at the beautiful **State of Michigan Historical Museum and Library in Lansing**. This is the sixth year for this very successful event, which spreads awareness of hearing loss through tips and technology.



Audience at the 2018 HLAA-MI Annual Meeting, including Board members Barb Quart (red jacket) and Richard Atwell (two rows higher).

Opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the person authoring the article, and not necessarily those of HLAA-MI. Mention of goods or services does not mean endorsement by HLAA-MI, nor should exclusion suggest disapproval.

There is **no charge** to attend the annual meeting. It is an opportunity to meet with hearing loss experts and mingle with friends. The meeting will provide information from exhibitors, a box lunch for those who register by March 31, a special captioned presentation, and the opportunity to attend the HLAA-MI board of trustees meeting.

This year's informative presentation is "Successful Listening –Tools and Tips for Listening Practice to Get the Most Out of Your Hearing Technology," presented by Julie Steele, M.A., LSLS. Cert.AVED.

The 2019 event is **Saturday, April 13**. The schedule for the day is:

- 10:00 - 10:45 Registration and exhibits
- 10:45 - 11:45 Presentation: Julie Steele
- 11:45 - 1:00 Lunch and exhibits
- 1:00 - 3:00 Exhibits continued
- 1:00 - 3:30 HLAA-MI Board meeting
(non-members welcome to observe)

Plan on attending to expand your knowledge of hearing technology, which can benefit you or someone close to you. Learn about programs and resources for hard-of-hearing people, and visit with technology and service exhibitors.

Free admission, free parking, door prizes, CART (real time captioning), and a free boxed lunch as long as you register by March 31.

RSVP to Marilyn Knol at marilynknol8@gmail.com or 616-366-2152.

HLAA-MI Chapter News

by Liz Kobylak

Happy 2019, Everyone! As Hearing Loss Association of America, Michigan State Association (HLAA-MI) begins a new year, we also celebrate a very special anniversary for the HLAA-MI Macomb Chapter, which began its 15th year of activities in January!

The current Macomb chapter leader is Lynn



Pictured, left to right: Lynn Huff, Jerry Huff, Cindy Landino

Huff, who is assisted by her husband, Jerry. The chapter was founded by Thelma Czubak in 2004. Pat Sandstrom has also served as the Macomb chapter leader.

Macomb chapter meetings are held September through June. CART is provided for the first hour. Like most chapters, Macomb does not hold official meetings during the summer but the members do keep in touch by gathering for a social outing during the summer months to try out various local dairy bars. ☺

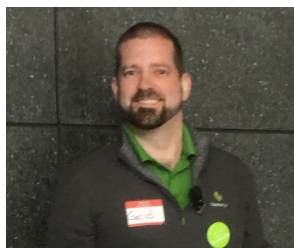
Though the years, a wide variety of topics have been the focus of Macomb chapter meetings, including: HLAA Conventions, Walk4Hearing, Assistive Listening Devices (ALD's), Aural Rehabilitation, Traveling with Hearing Loss, Hospital Policies for People with Hearing Loss, Captioning in Movie Theaters, Advocacy, Dizziness and Balance, Tinnitus... and many, many more. One fun activity that chapter members enjoy on a regular basis is, "Speech Reading Bingo". Lynn and Jerry include a speech reading activity for just about every meeting!

This chapter takes Community Outreach seriously! On Friday, October 26, 2018, the Macomb Chapter participated as an exhibitor at the first "City of Warren Disability Resource Fair". Pictured are Macomb Chapter members who were on hand to answer questions and hand out informational materials about HLAA

on the local, state and national levels.

Congratulations, Macomb Chapter, and thank you for all you do to help people who are living with hearing loss!!!

News Flash - it is very exciting to share the good news that the Grand Rapids area, once again, has an active HLAA chapter. They've named themselves the **OAK Chapter**, referencing the 3 counties (Ottawa, Allegan, Kent) on which outreach and membership is focused. Please remember, though, that everyone is always welcome at any chapter meeting.



*OAK Chapter Leader
Gerid Adams*

The OAK Chapter leadership team, led by Gerid Adams, has done a fantastic job, especially in securing CART for the meetings from the get-go and lining up terrific presentations.

The chapter meeting room also has a permanent induction loop installed, providing another form of communication access. Information about all HLAA chapters in Michigan is available on the HLAA-MI website at: www.hearingloss-mi.org.

Happy spring, everyone! ☺

My Hearing Loss Journey: Part 1

by Tony Ferack

Hearing loss runs in my family, on my father's side. Both my sister Diane and I were born with mild bilateral symmetric progressive hearing loss. My younger brother has normal hearing. Even though my dad had hearing loss, he did not wear hearing aids while I was young. Times were different back then.

Diane and I were screened in elementary school. My hearing was worse, so I got my first hearing aid in 2nd or 3rd grade. I have to imagine that some type of insurance paid for my first hearing aid. I did not like it and my parents did not force me to wear it. I was the only kid in my school who had a hearing aid. I did not want to

be different. I was introverted and a hearing aid would have given me attention I did not want.

Despite a mild loss, I had an interest in a foreign language, Spanish. Maybe my hearing loss was the reason that another language was appealing? It wasn't until my third year of Spanish that I realized that there would most likely be no career choices for me in that field. I decided to drop out of the Spanish class.

Electronics was another field that interested me so I was able to get into an electronics class. Little did I know at the time that this was the start of my career. I have to admit that I did not try very hard in high school. Academically, I was only an average student even though I was capable of doing much better. Since the loss was only mild, I made it through the public-school system without hearing assistive technology (HAT).

After high school, I enrolled in a 2-year technical school, RETS Electronics, in Detroit. My hearing was getting worse, but I had developed skills to help me along. I would sit in the front of my class, usually in the center, closest to the center of the blackboard. This may not be optimal for a lipreader, but I did not lipread, and this position put me closest to the instructor. I always prepared for the next day's classes by reading the material that would be covered. I had to do twice the work as someone with normal hearing. I did the homework ahead of time. I also had any questions related to the material ready before the next class. This turned out to be an excellent way to study since I had one of the highest GPA's in my class.

My first job interview after tech school did not go well. It was with a gentleman from Burroughs Corporation, a major computer manufacturer. He had a low, gruff voice. I would guess that I only understood about half of what he said. I must have nodded my head correctly. At the time, I had no intention of disclosing a hearing loss, fearing that it would lessen any chance of getting hired. I know today that such logic is flawed. My hearing was not a factor in

my ability to do the job.

They made me a job offer! It was then, that I realized that I would have to get a hearing aid if I were ever going to be able to work with that guy. So, I got my “first” hearing aid at the age of 20, while working as a technician for Burroughs. The job was fantastic! I learned the insides of computers and traveled to install and repair terminals throughout southeast Michigan. That position ended up drying up since the customer decided to handle the application with mainframe computers which they already controlled.

I was transferred to the location where the mainframes existed. Talk about a noisy work environment! Computers do not make noise but they are useless without peripheral equipment. These are the displays, magnetic tape drives, disk drives, and especially the card readers, card punches, and printers. They made noise but it was the air conditioning that would send the decibel meter skyrocketing. And, it was constant! All the equipment needed to be cooled.

I worked in this environment for about two years but knew that I would lose my residual hearing much faster than normal if I were to stay with this job. I decided that an engineering career would be best. This meant that I would have to go back to school and start from scratch since the RETS credits did not transfer. I ended up quitting a job I loved to protect my hearing.

Still Undecided About Attending the Annual Meeting? Read This!

From HLAA-MI member Carol Rose – who lives all the way up in Grand Marais in the Upper Peninsula:

“I must tell you that attending last year’s meeting with my daughter cemented the fact that it was indeed time for me to seriously consider taking the needed steps to see if I qualified for the [cochlear] implant. I received the implant on January 10, and had the Cochlear Nucleus 7 activated on February 18.

“While I am still on the early stages of understanding the spoken word, last night I heard my cat purr - I’ve had cats for over 20 years and have never heard one purr. I’ve felt the vibrations of the purr - but actually hearing the sound was such an awesome experience!

“Thank you for all you do to make these gatherings available and for everything else you do during the year for the Hard of Hearing population.”

Gone to the Movies Lately?

HLAA-MI Board Member and Royal Oak Chapter Co-Leader, Mathias Bahnmueller, went to the movies over the end-of-year holidays. He had the following to report:

“[At the AMC] the “Assistive Moviegoing” experience was fantastic. They offer assistive listening devices – over ear as well as in ear - where you can adjust volume setting.

“In addition, they offer the Closed Captioning device, which I always call the swan neck, based on its design. The product fits into the cup holder and provides you with a screen, which only you can read and thus does not distract any other movie going patrons around you.

“Another option is use of wireless audio systems/FM receivers, which work with an intermediate accessory (such as for Resound and Cochlear users) – Mini Mic or Mini Mic 2. This allows direct streaming of audio to your hearing aid or Cochlear processor. Lastly, they offer audio description as well. They may offer a neck loop as a support device too – their brochure indicates so, but I have not been able to confirm this. It is wonderful to see such an array of assistive options, which make the movie going experience so much more pleasant and enjoyable.

“As a side note, I personally prefer always direct streaming of audio, if it is available. With this technology, the FM receiver connects directly to my Mini Mic.

We all have different hearing loss profiles

and preferences, and therefore you may prefer any of the other options available – try them all out and see what works best for you.”

Upcoming Events

Annual Meeting. April 13

State of Michigan Library
702 W. Kalamazoo, Lansing

Michigan Walk4Hearing May 18

Kensington Park, Milford
http://hlaa.convio.net/site/TR?fr_id=2551&pg=entry

HLAA National Convention. . June 20-23

Rochester, NY
www.hearingloss.org/programs-events/convention/

About HLAA-MI

HLAA-MI is the all-volunteer state organization of the Hearing Loss Association of America, the nation’s foremost membership and advocacy organization for people with hearing loss.

If you’re not already a member, you can join at the following link: <https://www.hearingloss.org/make-an-impact/become-a-memberrenew>. Membership in the national organization automatically connects you to HLAA-MI.

Donations to support HLAA-MI are appreciated. We are a 501(c)3 charitable organization, and your donation is deductible within the limits of the law.

Please make your check payable to HLAA-MI and mail it to:

HLAA-MI
PO Box 4808
Troy, MI 48099-4808

Keep up with the latest HLAA-MI news by visiting our website at www.hearingloss-mi.org.

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