



Wake Chapter Newsletter Jul 2024

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[Join Us for a Colorful Summer Social](#)

All HLAA Wake Chapter members are invited to a summer social on Sunday, August 25, at the JC Raulston Arboretum in Raleigh.

We've reserved Room 109 in the arboretum's air-conditioned education center, and the chapter will provide a light lunch from 1:30 p.m. to 3 p.m. You are welcome to bring family and friends. It's a chance to meet and socialize with others while enjoying a sandwich, salad, chips, desserts and a beverage.

Please RSVP to Steve Latus (slatus@comcast.net) by August 18 or earlier Total attendance is limited to 35 because of the room size.



Participants will have the option of checking out the arboretum's splendid gardens before or after lunch.

You also are welcome to bring unused hearing aids that the chapter will donate to the [Hearing Aid Project](#).

Arboretum admission and parking are free. The arboretum is in west Raleigh near the N.C. State Fairgrounds. The address is 4415 Beryl Road. The parking lot has limited slots, but you can also park in designated areas on Beryl Road.

The mission of the arboretum "is to diversify the landscape by sharing our passion, our plants and our knowledge to plan – and plant for a better world." The arboretum collects, evaluates and selects for introduction landscape plants for their most beneficial economic, ecological and aesthetic value. Its gardens are a living laboratory that reside in and complement the curricula of North Carolina State University.

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Support the HLAA Wake Chapter NC Walk4Hearing Team

Please join or donate to support our [HLAA Wake Chapter team](#) for the 2024 NC Walk4Hearing. Once you've registered or selected "Donate," you'll be able to search for "Wake Chapter." You can join our team or donate to support any individual walker on our team.

Walk details are provided below. Funds raised by the team are shared between our chapter and the HLAA national organization. The walk is the chapter's primary fundraising effort and supports our continued operation, outreach activities and scholarships for worthy local high school graduates with hearing loss. Be a part of our team!



Together, we're bringing hope to hearing loss.

Hearing Loss Association of America
WALK4 HEARING

North Carolina Walk4Hearing

Sunday October 13, 2024

WakeMed Soccer Park
201 Soccer Park Drive
Cary, NC 27606

10:30 am - Registration
12:00 pm - Stage presentation
12:15 pm - Walk begins



**Scan to Register today
or visit walk4hearing.org**

Walk Manager: Ronnie Adler radler@hearingloss.org

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Phoenix Delivers Positive National Conference

Upbeat.

That's the one word that best describes the Hearing Loss Association of America 2024 national convention.



The late-June event was the first HLAA national convention conducted at a resort – the Sheraton Grand Resort at Wild Horse Pass in Phoenix – rather than in the heart of a big city. Organizers termed it “a smashing success,” attracting more than 500 participants from across the United States and beyond.

The half-day training session for chapter and state leaders (photo left) that opened the convention drew twice as many participants as the previous year. HLAA staff encouraged attendees to be patient as the organization starts to rebound from chapter losses experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic.

An open board of directors session later on the event's first day highlighted how HLAA is leading “a hearing health movement.” A clear leadership indicator is the growth of media reliance on HLAA as a go-to source on hearing-related issues. In neatly summing up HLAA's aspirations, Board Chair Mike Meyer said, “We all want to grow our audience and do more good.”

The general session keynote was delivered by Shanna Adamic (right), an inspirational speaker, corporate executive and author who champions the power of “Audacious Optimism” to navigate life's disruptions and achieve success. She shared her personal journey of overcoming adversity, including a life-threatening acoustic neuroma that caused hearing loss in her left ear.



More than 30 educational workshops were offered on a wide range of topics, and an exhibit hall showcased cutting-edge technology and leading hearing health companies.



The annual research symposium featured a panel of mental health and psychology experts discussing the powerful emotions of hearing loss, how they impact our behaviors and how we can harness them for a more successful hearing loss journey. Bringing those emotions to life with a series of vignettes was hearing advocate, humorist and author Gael Hannan (left).

Look for additional convention highlights and photos on <https://www.hearingloss.org/programs-events/hlaa-2024-convention/>.

Indianapolis will host the next HLAA national convention from June 12-14, 2025.

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Wake Chapter Observations from Desert Convention

Two members of the Wake Chapter who attended the Hearing Loss Association of America 2024 national convention in Phoenix in June shared some of their observations. Steve Latus is the HLAA Wake Chapter president and lives in Wake Forest; Sharron Bradshaw lives in Durham and, with a friend, she drove to the convention, a distance of more than 2,000 miles.



Steve Latus made sure he brought back proof that he spent time exploring the desert during the convention.

Why did you drive to the convention?!

Sharon: I love to drive, to check out different states, cities and towns. I will fly again but not right now.

Steve: I flew to Phoenix, arriving the afternoon before the convention. Because my body was still on Eastern time, I awoke very early the next morning and took advantage of the relatively mild temperatures to walk the desert trail that ran through the resort property.

What was your favorite workshop and why?

Sharon: “Why Best Practices Matter MORE than the Best Hearing Aids,” presented by audiologist Clifford Olson. It doesn’t matter if you have the best hearing aids if your audiologist doesn’t carefully listen to you when you tell them what is going in with your hearing.

Steve: I’m intrigued by Auracast, the emerging Bluetooth technology that has the potential to deliver high-quality audio to hearing aid and cochlear implant users in far more situations than currently served by hearing loops and telecoils. Thomas Kaufmann, the founder of a company that has installed more than 1,000 hearing loops across the United States, characterized Auracast as “the holy grail of hearing technology” during a workshop in which he suggested that full adoption of Auracast will take many years due to several factors. I remain enthusiastic about the future of Auracast, but I now understand why we need to continue encouraging installation and use of hearing loops as a step leading to Auracast adoption.

What did you learn at the convention that will help you live with your hearing loss?

Sharon: Don’t hide from your hearing loss. Make the best of it by living your best life with your hearing aids or cochlear implants. No more letting your hair down so no one will notice. Show no shame, let the world know you are in this ballgame to win, and help others who have a hearing loss.

Steve: What helped me the most wasn’t so much one thing that I learned.

It was something that was strongly reinforced: Advocate for yourself and find ways to advocate for others.



After driving from North Carolina to Arizona, Sharron Bradshaw (back right) let others do the driving during a free moment with friends during the convention.

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Janet McGettrick Retires from Wake Chapter Board

Janet McGettrick has retired from the HLAA Wake Chapter Board. And she certainly will be missed.

Janet has been active in the chapter for more than 30 years and has served in board leadership roles for most of those years.

She most recently served as our Membership Outreach Coordinator. In that role, she devoted significant effort to welcoming new chapter members and encouraging their involvement in our group.

It's her fervent hope that someone will volunteer to take on her former role and build upon her accomplishments.

Janet has retired from the board due to her desire to become active in the Glenaire community in Cary where she and her husband John have just moved.

Janet has assured us that she's not saying farewell. She plans to remain an active member of the HLAA Wake Chapter.



Donate Hearing Aids to a Good Cause

Many of us with hearing loss have no longer used hearing aids gathering dust in a dresser drawer. They were once our "main" hearing aids and then, perhaps, our "back-ups." Or we "inherited" hearing aids from a deceased relative.

These devices can be donated to the [Hearing Aid Project](#). This effort, driven by the missions of organizations like [Sertoma](#) and [Hearing Charities of America](#), is making hearing aids available to those who might otherwise go without.

You can bring your unused hearing aids, batteries, cleaning tools and hearing aid accessories to the Wake Chapter summer social on August 25 ([see Page 1](#)) and the chapter will forward them to the Hearing Aid Project. Alternately, you can mail your donation to the following address:

Hearing Aid Project
720 Main Street, FL 1
Kansas City, MO 64105



Donated hearing aids are evaluated and tracked by staff and students in the Department of Speech-Language-Hearing: Sciences & Disorders at the University of Kansas. They determine if an aid is current enough to be reconditioned and redistributed. Aids that don't pass this initial screen are cannibalized for parts or sold for their salvage value. Reconditioned and purchased aids are distributed to U.S. residents who cannot afford them.

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HLAA “Empowering Millions to Thrive”

The Hearing Loss Association of America has published its 2023 annual report, and you can access it on the [HLAA website](#).

The report explains how HLAA is:

- Broadening its reach.
- Shaking up the conversation around hearing health, technology and communication access.
- Growing advocacy efforts nationally and locally.
- Helping more people make meaningful connections.

“Guided by an aspiration to create a world where every person with hearing loss can thrive,” said HLAA Executive Director Barbara Kelley in announcing publication of the report, “we are taking big steps to grow our impact.”

The report highlights the importance of chapters such as ours in building a community of support among the 50 million people with hearing loss across the nation.

HLAA’s vision is “to create a world where hearing health is a priority for all and every person with hearing loss can thrive.”

The organization is committed “to grow our community of support to reach, engage and empower more people, across all backgrounds, ages and stages.”

Why You Might Need Hearing Aids

If you’ve ever considered skydiving, make sure your hearing aids are the best you can afford:

INSTRUCTOR: pull your chute!

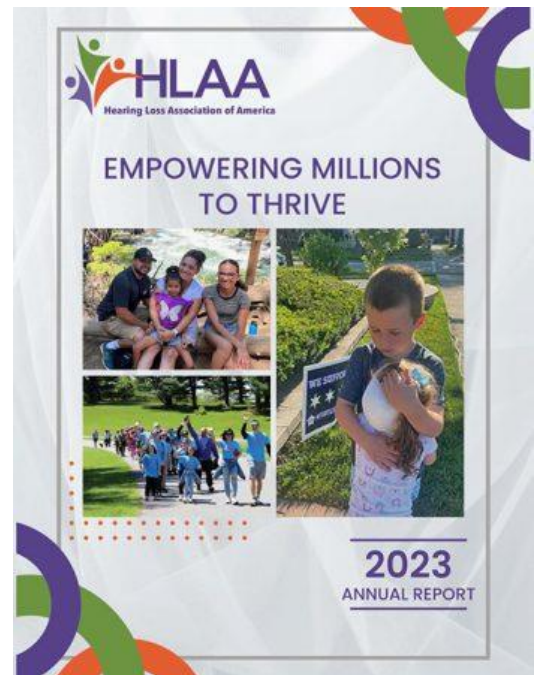
ME: my shoe?

INSTRUCTOR: your parachute!

ME: my pair of shoes?

[later]

CORONER: where's his shoes?



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Tech Focus: Hearing Rehabilitation

When you lose hearing at various frequencies, your brain gradually tries ... as best it can ... to perceive sounds like it did when you could hear better. But as we all know, that only works so well. Likewise, when the auditory signals to your brain are significantly improved by a hearing aid or cochlear implant, the brain must gradually relearn how to perceive these new and better sounds correctly. That can take some time. It doesn't matter if it's an improved signal from your first hearing device(s), from new hearing device(s) or from changes in the "fitting" of your current devices, you can still notice that it's not always an immediate improvement and may take some rehabilitation (rehab) time for your brain to make the most of the improvement.

Why Rehab: The most common form of hearing loss is a high frequency loss, where you don't hear the high frequencies as well (or at all). Less common are losses of low frequencies or mid-range frequencies, but the brain attempts to compensate just the same. When that compensation occurs, it's a gradual process of the brain improving the neural paths that it uses to perceive sound as you remember it. When your audiogram is not flat, but sloped or dipped, and that's corrected with hearing device(s), the volume across the frequency range can change dramatically from what your brain is used to.

The need for rehab is most obvious with first-time hearing aids or cochlear implants (CI), which can provide frequencies your ears have not heard at all for years, but the same thing can happen to a lesser degree when you upgrade to new hearing devices.

What to Expect: So, what does this rehab mean in actual practice? What can you expect to hear when your hearing is improved? How the new frequencies are perceived by your brain depends on how long your brain has had to deal with your loss. In the case of a typical high frequency loss, speech may sound like you're hearing too much of the highs that you hadn't heard for some time. People often say that when they can finally hear those high frequencies again that speech sounds much like the cartoon chipmunks Alvin and Simon. If the loss that's been improved is at a low or mid frequency loss, people might think speech sounds robotic. Music may be surprisingly different because frequencies you hadn't heard well before are suddenly overwhelming your brain's regular processing. In situations where the improvement is substantial, both speech and music can be temporarily unpleasant or even unrecognizable. This is sometimes the case after long-term deafness is supplemented with a CI. At first, a few new CI users say everything sounds like "bells and whistles." The brain is very adaptable and will relearn in time how to perceive speech more like it should sound to you.

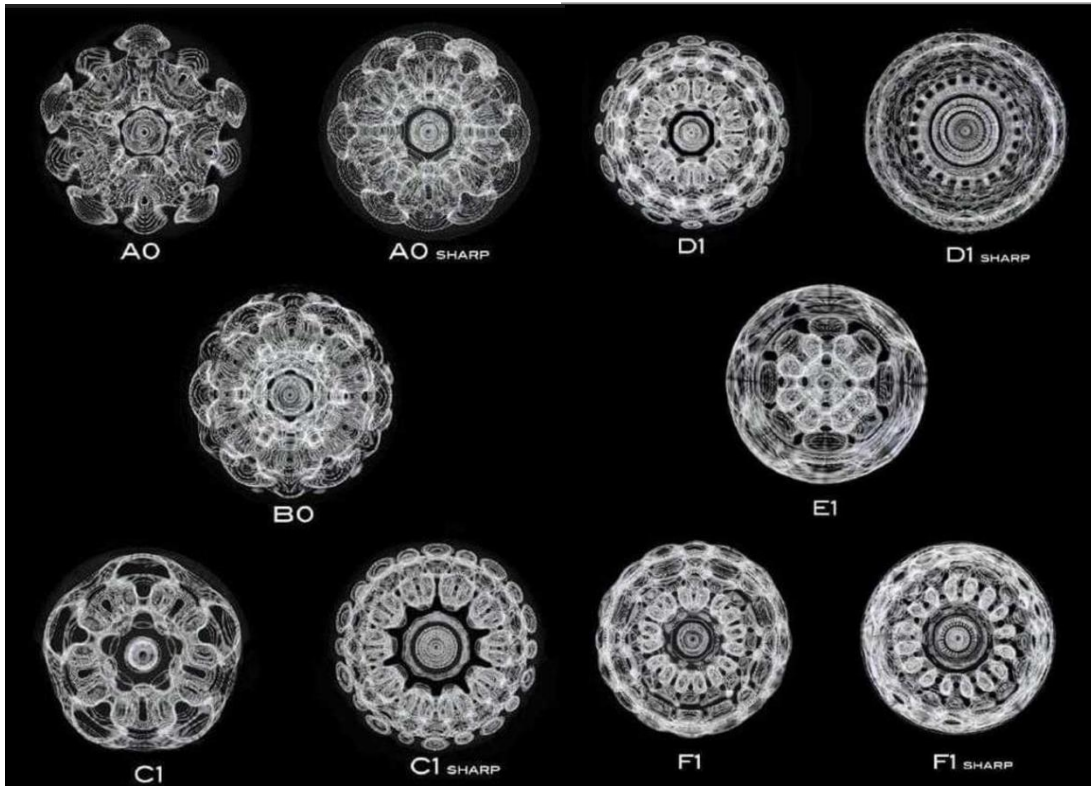
What Can You Do: If the improvements are not substantial, the change may just take a little time for your brain to appreciate the changes. But the first time you venture into hearing aids or CIs, the changes can be great, and it can take more time and active help for your brain to relearn how to best perceive the new hearing signals. Whenever you hear things and can associate those sounds with what they should sound like, your brain will learn a little more about how to process the sound correctly. If the sound you perceive with new devices doesn't represent an improvement, talk with your audiologist, but keep in mind that your brain may just need some time to adapt. Here are some examples of active help you can pursue:

- **Rehab Apps:** There are several rehab apps that are available to download. These apps provide exercises that are simple and help your brain recognize how to perceive various sounds. *Hearoes* and *Angel Sounds* are two examples.
- **Streaming Audio Books:** Audio books are available that you can read along with, which helps the brain establish the connection between a word and the sound of the word. If you need a lot of rehab, a good starting point may be to stream children's books that have a CD and matching simple text.
- **Captions:** Just watching TV with captions can help. It's best to choose programs that have recorded (rather than live) captions since the captions are better synchronized with the audio.
- **Music:** Many people find listening to familiar songs can be a big help, especially if you remember how a song or its lyrics should sound.

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Sound Patterns on Water

Don't confuse this with what sound waves really look like, but these images provide an interesting look at the patterns that various musical notes can have on water in a bowl. Actual sound waves are spherically concentric waves of compression and rarefaction of air molecules. They expand outward from their source, but then bounce off from anything they encounter, causing the same wave to arrive at your ear multiple times depending on how many times it's bounced around the room. The farther they travel (including the extended travel due to bounces), the less energy the wave has ... and, of course, the later the reverberant waves arrive at your ears. So, while these water patterns don't represent sound waves, you can be sure that the spherically concentric patterns could produce some interesting wave patterns as they encounter all the reflected waves. That's exactly why it's difficult to hear in noisy situations.



Wake Chapter Contacts

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Member Outreach

Open; seeking volunteer for this vital role

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