



# Wake Chapter Newsletter April 2022

Websites: [Wake Chapter](#) [HLAA-NC](#) [HLAA National](#)

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## Upcoming Meetings and Events

<p><b>Wake Chapter Live Event Saturday Apr 30<sup>th</sup> 1 p.m.</b></p>	<p>Join us for an afternoon at the North Carolina Museum of Art (NCMA). This will be our first in-person social event since the pandemic. We plan to meet at the North Carolina Museum of Art for the special exhibit titled "<a href="#">Fault Lines: Art and the Environment</a>." Part of the event is indoors; part is outdoors, and if you let Janet McGettrick know, she will attempt to schedule restaurant seating for us outdoors. If you're interested in attending, please see the details of our planned event <a href="#">HERE</a>. Note that you'll need to buy your tickets early; they are selling fast.</p>
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## HLAA 2022 National Convention

The HLAA 2022 Convention is June 23-25 in Tampa, Florida! HLAA is very excited to be hosting an in-person Convention again. This year the exhibit hall, workshops, demo presentations, plenary sessions, social events and Research Symposium will all be held under one roof at the brand new JW Marriott Tampa Water Street ... Start planning your trip now! Convention registration is now open. Visit the Convention page ([hearingloss.org/programs-events/convention](http://hearingloss.org/programs-events/convention)) for more information. **Great News!** The Convention early bird registration discount has been extended to Friday, April 1.



## If You Missed the February Wake Meeting

Steve Barber covered what to look for as the future of Bluetooth Low Energy rolls out. Many people with hearing loss are already benefitting from the first 20 or so years of Bluetooth technology. Early Bluetooth streaming from smartphones needed intermediary devices to get the sounds (phone calls, music, podcasts etc.) into our hearing aids and cochlear implants, but recent developments have added direct streaming and in some cases audio sharing to our hearing devices. But Bluetooth Low Energy continues to add new features that may further reduce energy requirements, improve fidelity and maybe even provide broadcast capabilities that could provide streaming of movies, plays, church services, and more. That may take many years to flow into audio providers, hearing aids, cochlear implants and assistive technology, but the future is bright. See the [slide presentation](#) from the February Wake meeting. [GO TO Top of Page](#)



## HLAA Wake Chapter Event at the NCMA

On Saturday, April 30, the Wake Chapter will offer its first social event since the 2020 arrival of the COVID-19 virus.

Chapter members (the fact that you're reading this newsletter makes you a chapter member!) along with their spouse or another friend are invited to join us to experience the [North Carolina Museum of Art](#) special exhibit titled "[Fault Lines: Art and the Environment](#)."



The exhibit incorporates indoor and outdoor elements involving video, photography, sculpture and mixed-media works.

[Purchase tickets online](#) for the 1 p.m. section. The chapter will reserve outdoor seating for those interested in buying lunch at the museum café prior to the exhibition time. Participants will gather as a group to view the outdoor portion of the exhibit and then proceed through the indoor exhibit at their own pace. A ticket, which includes access to both portions of the exhibit, costs \$23.60. Special prices are offered for seniors (65 and older), military, college students, youth and museum members.

**Tickets are limited, so purchase them as soon as you can and then send an email to Janet McGettrick ([jmcgettrick106@gmail.com](mailto:jmcgettrick106@gmail.com)).** For planning purposes, she needs to know how many tickets you've purchased and whether you plan to eat lunch at the museum prior to our exhibition time.

In April we will share additional details and provide information on any COVID-19 safety precautions in place at the museum.

Don't miss this opportunity to meet or reconnect with chapter friends!

## Cary Senior Center Health Fair

Volunteers from Wake Chapter will staff a table at the Cary Senior Center Annual Health Fair to help people learn about hearing loss and HLAA. For more information see: [Annual Health Fair | Calendar | Town of Cary](#).

- **Date:** Friday, April 1, 9:30 - 11:30 a.m.
- **Location:** Cary Senior Center  
120 Maury Odell Place  
Cary, North Carolina 27513

## Jacob's Ride for Hearing

HLAA Wake Chapter is donating again to Jacob's Ride for Hearing (JRFH). Jacob Landis is a young man with cochlear implants who has ridden his bike over 11,000 miles to all 30 major league ballparks to raise awareness and funds for those who could benefit from a cochlear implant but cannot afford one. So far, JRFH has funded 20 cochlear implant surgeries.



JRFH has no employees and is a volunteer-only organization. JRFH is a tax-exempt, charitable organization and is eligible to receive tax-deductible donations under IRS Code 501(c)(3); EIN # 85-0932630. [Learn more about Jacob's Ride for Hearing](#).

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## Last Call for 2022 Chapter Scholarship Applications

The deadline for submitting applications for the 2022 Wake Chapter scholarship for county high school seniors with hearing loss is Thursday, March 31.

Applicants must reside in Wake County and be seeking acceptance at an accredited university, college or community college. They also must have a moderate hearing loss or more and wear a hearing aid or cochlear implant. Financial need is not a consideration. The \$500 scholarship is a one-time award and will be sent to the recipient when s/he begins classes. The chapter will announce up to two scholarship recipients in May.

This is the third year for the program, which is made possible by the generous support of participants in the North Carolina Walk4Hearing, a hearing health awareness and fundraising event conducted by the Hearing Loss Association of America.

Application materials are available on the [HLAA Wake Chapter Web Site](http://www.nchearingloss.org/wake.htm) at [www.nchearingloss.org/wake.htm](http://www.nchearingloss.org/wake.htm) or by clicking these links:

- [Scholarship Application Form](#)
- [Scholarship Reference Letter Form](#)

## Speechreading Research

Speechreading (sometimes called “lipreading”), is one technique that everyone uses ... even hearing people ... but it’s an especially useful skill for people with hearing loss. The trouble is, as we lose more and more hearing it gets harder, since it’s estimated only about 30% of speech is understandable simply from speechreading without help from hearing ... the rest has to be assumed from context and visual cues. It’s even debated whether you can learn to speechread. Here’s a link to an interesting article about researchers from the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences (CCAS) Department of Speech, Language and Hearing Science who have a new approach to speechreading training they believe can help adults with hearing loss. [Innovative new approach to lipreading for people with hearing loss \(medicalxpress.com\)](http://medicalxpress.com)

## New Therapy Clinical Trial Opportunity

You may be aware that several studies are being pursued attempting to restore hearing using drugs injected into the middle ear. One company, Frequency Therapeutics, has conducted trials that show some early promise ... first using mice with hearing loss where measurements showed some regrowth of hair cells in the cochlea ... and then initial trials in human volunteers with sensorineural hearing loss that showed some improvement in word recognition 90 days after a single injection. Now, a new phase of the trial, started last fall, is underway. The trial will enroll 124 people; half will get the drug and half will get a placebo. Some are already enrolled. It’s not clear when enrollment will reach its goal of 124 volunteers. The current trial is limited to people with sensorineural hearing loss who are between age 10 and 65. Future trials may expand that age range. Here’s a link to a YouTube copy of the HLAA [webinar](#) where the Frequency Therapeutics researchers explain the results of past trials, and their hopes for the current trial. The webinar was done in January 2022. If you’re interested in hair cell restoration research, even if you’re not a potential volunteer, you might enjoy watching this webinar. (Note: You may need to click through a “browse YouTube” and wait for a brief advertisement, but the webinar will start after that.)

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## Focus on Wake People: Joyce Adler

I am trying to think back many years ago when I really started to notice losing my hearing. That was late eighties and early nineties. The company I worked for, at my request, added a volume control to my phone. About the same time, I had my hearing tested and sure enough they recommended a hearing aid. Because I was so vain, I purchased an in the ear HA. I could only afford one and it was \$750 and not visible. It was great but the right ear wasn't keeping up either.

I had a couple of severe ear infections and was given antibiotics and I am certain they added to my continued loss of hearing. In 2003 I had severely impacted sinuses and was given antibiotics and steroids for several months. I had read some literature about CI's and asked my doctor at the time about them. He told me I wasn't "deaf enough" and dismissed me and the idea. I believe that's the term he used. My mother-in-law was my interpreter at the appointments and was appalled with his bedside manner.



Life goes on and I coped the best I could, but social situations were stressful and terrifying. I finally got a job that I was really excited about in a lawyer's office close by my home. I was up front about my hearing (or lack of) but he said we will work with it. He only worked with it 4 days. Called me and said he didn't believe it would work out. He paid me for 2 weeks anyway...That was when I had no clue or self-confidence to advocate for myself.

I was devastated. I cried and was so mad at myself and my hearing loss. This was summer of 2005. That's when I woke up the next morning with the loud horn but could not hear a thing. My doctor could not explain it and tried a couple things to try to get some hearing back, but it didn't work. I had heard about the hearing loss association and I knew I had to get help some way. I sent an email to get some information and was told about a meeting coming up. I went and was greeted with open arms. I cried a lot at the meeting because I had found people like me. They taught me a lot and helped me gain my confidence back and how to advocate for myself. That helped me be confident enough to talk Dr. McElveen in to evaluating me to get a CI. After the evaluation, the audiologist suggested I speak with someone that has been successfully implanted. That person was Deborah Stroud. We met at the next HLAA Wake chapter meeting, and she became my lifeboat and mentor before and after getting my CI.

So, with scheduling evaluation, scheduling surgery and choosing the manufacturer, I was finally implanted with my first CI summer 2007 and activated August 2007. I could hear my audiologist the first time she spoke. I'll never forget the first words I heard: "1, 2, 3, A, B, C." YES, it sounded like Mickey Mouse but I didn't care ... I could hear! The Mickey Mouse sound got more normal soon thereafter, but I was also happy to hear road noise, frogs, and crickets.

I chose Advance Bionics and the CI's have been wonderful. AB as a company has been very good to me also. I went to their offices several times to help with research related to ClearVoice, surround sound and several other topics, including music. In 2009, I was implanted on my right side. Activation day the sound was deeper, like Darth Vader. But that went away soon too. But having both sides implanted made things so much more balanced.

I truly value HLAA, Wake chapter and of course my CI's. All these things put together have opened my world of communication to all people with and without hearing loss through information, education, support and making of very good friends.

Since 2009 the Wake Chapter has been involved in the Walk4Hearing. This has been a great adventure and fund raiser for our chapter and I've enjoyed participating all these years and will continue to do so.

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## Focus on Wake People: Share Your Story?

For the last several newsletters, we've included personal stories about HLAA Wake board members and their hearing loss. These stories are inspirational and give readers information about how others are successfully dealing with hearing loss and its challenges. We have a few more months of stories from board members that will be included in future newsletters. Later this year, after we've finished the board member stories, other Wake Chapter members (if you receive this newsletter, you're a "member"), are encouraged to submit your stories about your hearing loss and how you're dealing with it.

If you are thinking about sharing your story for a future Wake Chapter newsletter, start drafting it now. When you're ready, submit it to the Wake Newsletter Editor, [Steve Barber](#), via email as a text or Word document plus a photo. Your story can be a paragraph or two ... or a couple of pages ... it's up to you.

## New Manager for the Raleigh Regional Center

Hola, My name is Ruben Leon. I am excited to announce that I am the new manager for the Raleigh Regional Center. However, I am not new to the Division of Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. I was with the Greensboro Regional Center for 14 years as a Deaf Services Specialist and the last 5 years as a manager.



I am looking forward to new challenges and experiences while learning about Raleigh and the surrounding catchment areas. I would love to meet you all at our upcoming open house and community appreciation events.

During my management experiences at the Greensboro Regional Center, I have become a strong believer in providing excellent consumer services and collaborating with other service providers to best serve our community. I am transparent with my work and with anyone who contacts my office. Please feel free to call me or send me an email. I will be thrilled to meet you in person. For more information about DSDHH's regional centers, see: [NC DHHS: Regional Centers for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing](#)

## Donate or Sell Your Assistive Technology Devices

Do you have an audio streaming device gathering dust in a dresser drawer because you've updated your hearing aids and no longer use it?

The [North Carolina Assistive Technology Program \(NCATP\)](#) can help you find a new home for that streamer and other assistive technology items and durable medical equipment.

NCATP distributes a monthly email listing of items for donation or sale. To list an item or to check out what's available, email Frank Harden at [frank.harden@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:frank.harden@dhhs.nc.gov).

Services available through the NCATP were a topic of the HLAA Wake Chapter virtual meeting in November 2021. The meeting [slide presentation](#) is available online.

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## Tech Focus: Hearing in Noise

One of the biggest problems of having a hearing loss is the difficulty of hearing in noise. In this article, we'll try to cover why that is, and what things you can do to hear better despite the noise. The majority of cases of hearing loss are caused by sensorineural loss. Most sensorineural loss is caused by damage to (or death of) the hair cells that line the cochleas. The brain uses slight differences from two ears to provide instructions to tell the cochleas how to adjust to focus on what you want to hear (think of it like the way your eyes are instructed by the brain to react to light). That explains why hearing in noise is a big problem ... if you're monaural or if your hearing loss is the more common sensorineural type of loss.

Even though your cochleas may not be able to manage noise well on their own, there are several things you can do that can help.

- 1) Many hearing aids (HAs) and cochlear implants (CIs) have a feature called “**directional microphones.**” The microphones can focus on sounds coming from in front of you, and somewhat suppress sounds coming from the sides and back. Some even try to determine which direction to focus on, based on where speech is coming from. The directional microphone feature is named differently by different manufacturers, so look for a program named “Noise” or “Café” or perhaps “Forward Focus.”
- 2) Some hearing aids (particularly those with a smartphone app that lets you control lots of things) allow you to control the **microphone sensitivity**. Your audiologist may explain that as creating a “bubble” around you that limits the distance you can hear, so that you can hear someone nearby without hearing more distant sources of noise. That's not exactly how it works, but it can help in noise. What it really does is tell your HA's or CI's microphones to ignore very quiet sounds, when they arrive at the microphones. So, if you lower the microphone sensitivity setting a little, then louder sounds near you won't have to compete with background noise, which are usually quieter because it's travelled a long distance before getting to your microphones. This works pretty well ... especially indoors where there are lots of reflected sounds (reverberation) that have travelled even further. Just be careful to not reduce the microphone sensitivity too much, because it ignores ALL quiet sounds no matter how far they have travelled. Also, don't forget to return the setting to normal when it's not needed.
- 3) The final technical solution to hearing in extreme noise is to use a **remote microphone** placed as close to the person you want to hear as possible. Many HAs now have compatible remote (usually Bluetooth) microphones. Some HAs may still use microphones that use assistive listening transmitter/receivers to send the audio to you. Many HAs have built in receivers. But others can use receivers with a neckloop that sends the audio magnetically to a telecoil in your HA or CI. There are personal amplifiers that are wired and stream what they hear to your HA or CI via neckloop or headphones to your telecoils. Whenever you are streaming using such assistive technology, the other thing you can do is to turn off your HA's or CI's own microphones so they don't hear the noise, and you only hear the sounds from the remote microphone. That will give you a much better signal to noise ratio, because the microphone is close to what you want to hear.

## HAA Wake Chapter Supports the Beginnings Gala

The annual fundraising gala for BEGINNINGS, called “A Night for Beginnings,” will be held on Thursday, April 28, 2022 at The Fairview, Raleigh. There will be dinner, drinks, live/silent auctions and dancing to the music of DJ Bunn; all proceeds will benefit BEGINNINGS' work with parents of children who are deaf or hard of hearing. You can learn more, support or buy tickets to the Gala by clicking [HERE](#).



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