



## Wake Chapter Newsletter June 2022

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

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### Upcoming Meetings and Events

**Charlotte Chapter:** You're welcome to attend HLAA Charlotte Chapter's Zoom meeting June 9, at 6:45 p.m. The guest presenter is Juliette Sterkens, a nationally known audiologist who advocates for hearing loops. She is well known in HLAA circles for her practical and lively presentations. For more information, [See the Flyer](#).



Click on the Zoom Meeting link to join this meeting when it starts: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85328031426>

**Wake Chapter:** Wake Chapter is planning a social with a potluck lunch scheduled for August 27<sup>th</sup> at the Fellowship Hall of the Kirk of Kildaire Presbyterian Church in Cary. See the next newsletter for details.

**HLAA 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. Visit the Convention page ([hearingloss.org/programs-events/convention](https://hearingloss.org/programs-events/convention)) for more information.



**NC Walk4Hearing:** Wake Chapter will have a 2022 NC Walk4Hearing team soon that you can join, and Wendy Dembeck has agreed to again serve as team captain. Donations to our team, which are shared with the HLAA National organization, are HLAA Wake Chapter's primary source of income. The NC Walk4Hearing is scheduled for October 9 in Cary.



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## Wake Chapter Supported the BEGINNINGS Gala

Our chapter made a donation to the annual fundraising gala for BEGINNINGS, called “A Night for BEGINNINGS,” which was held on April 28 at The Fairview, Raleigh. The event included dinner, drinks, live/silent auctions and dancing with all proceeds benefitting BEGINNINGS’ work with parents of children who are deaf or hard of hearing. To learn more about BEGINNINGS, click [HERE](#).



## Wake Chapter Supported the Cary Senior Center Health Fair

Deborah Stroud and Joyce Adler helped attendees learn about hearing loss and HLAA. The event was busy, and 14 new people signed up to get our newsletter ... welcome new members ... hope to see you at future virtual (or live) meetings. The picture at the right shows Joyce and Deborah explain hearing loss to Joyce’s husband, Steve. In the extreme right of the photo, you can see another HLAA Wake member, Kim Calabretta, staffing her table for CapTel.



## Wake Chapter Event at the NCMA

Thanks to Janet McGettrick for organizing Wake Chapter’s first social event since the 2020 arrival of the COVID-19 virus.

Several Chapter members met at the [North Carolina Museum of Art](#) to enjoy lunch and socializing before and after viewing the special exhibit titled “[Fault Lines: Art and the Environment](#).” The exhibit incorporated elements involving video, photography, sculpture and mixed-media works.



It was great to get together in person, and we actually got to meet several new members. If you have other ideas for future activities, let [Steve Barber](#) know.

## Bluetooth Market Update

We briefly covered what Bluetooth means to people with hearing loss in the [Wake Chapter’s February Newsletter’s](#) Tech Focus, but if you’re interested, the Bluetooth Special Interest Group (SIG) has just published a “2022 Market Update” highlighting the large number of Bluetooth devices that are currently being shipped and projecting the future to be very busy. Nearly 5 billion Bluetooth devices were shipped in 2020, and that’s expected to grow to 7 billion by 2026. You can see more details in the Bluetooth SIG’s “[2022 Market Update](#)” yourself.



The Market Update covers Bluetooth’s broader markets including Audio Streaming, Data Transfer, Location Services, and Device Networks, but you can jump right to the Audio Streaming section (of most interest to people with hearing loss) using the menu in the top left of the update or just scrolling down a few pages into the document.

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## 2022 Scholarship Recipients Announced

Four outstanding Wake County high school seniors with hearing loss are being recognized with college scholarships through the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) Wake Chapter Scholarship Program.

The program provides \$500 scholarships to select students residing in Wake County who plan to attend an accredited university, college or community college. In its third year, the program is made possible by the generous support of participants in the North Carolina Walk4Hearing, a hearing health awareness and fundraising event conducted by HLAA.

The 2022 scholarship recipients are:

- [Cierra Groves](#) of Holly Springs, Apex Friendship High School; Cierra is an accomplished student and active in dance programs; she will study political science at Florida State.
- [Sarah Hupp](#) of Wake Forest, Heritage High School; Sarah's interests are many, including cross country and theater; she will attend the University of North Carolina at Charlotte and may study psychology or elementary education.
- [Lauren McClure](#) of Raleigh, Raleigh Charter High School; Lauren is an exceptional student – math is her “thing,” but she's also excelled in Spanish; the University of South Carolina has accepted her into its honors college, where Lauren will be an international business finance major with a minor in Spanish.
- [Megan Ray](#) of Raleigh, Millbrook High School; Megan is very active in her church and has been accepted in the welding program at Wake Tech, but she also wants to take agricultural courses because she plans to manage her family's small farm.

Click the links above to learn more about each of our remarkable scholarship recipients.

## Hearing Loss Awareness Month in North Carolina

The state of North Carolina recognized May as “Hearing Loss Awareness Month.”

Governor Roy Cooper issued a [proclamation](#) that included an acknowledgement of the important work of the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) in the state:

“WHEREAS, the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, statewide consumer advocacy groups, Early Hearing Detection and Intervention, the Division of Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and the Hearing Loss Association of America and its North Carolina chapters all work to improve the lives of those with hearing loss...”

In promoting the month, the North Carolina Division of Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing created a [presentation](#) providing valuable hearing loss information, tips and resources. Here are some basic facts cited in the document:

- In North Carolina, 1.2 million people ages 18 and older have hearing loss.
- Research indicates untreated hearing loss increases the risk of falling and developing dementia.
- A few health comorbidities of hearing loss include diabetes, cardiovascular disease, kidney disease, and depression.
- People over the age of 50 and those with serious health conditions should have regular professional hearing evaluations.
- Excessive noise and certain medications can increase the risk of hearing loss.
- Hearing loss has been linked to loneliness and social isolation for adults of all ages.
- The use of telehealth and its increasing use continues to pose challenges for those with hearing loss.
- Hearing loss is the leading combat-related disability among military veterans.

Resources cited in the presentation include a link to an [HLAA website page](#) about hearing loss and COVID-19.

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## Tech Focus: Tinnitus

Most people with hearing loss are familiar with tinnitus (pronounced either *tinn I tus* or just *TIN itus*), but it can also be a problem for people without hearing loss. Tinnitus usually occurs as a **ringing or high pitched sizzle**, but it's also possible to sound like **roaring, sizzling, hissing, clicking, humming, buzzing, rumbling, pinging, people talking that you can't exactly understand, and even music**. It's even possible that tinnitus can sound like more than one of those things at a time, or like different things at different times. The intensity can range from a minor nuisance, to a continually annoying and uncomfortable sound. Tinnitus can be temporary, intermittent or continuous.

It's often assumed that tinnitus is caused by a problem with the ears or the cochlea, but it's easy to prove that tinnitus can also be generated by the brain. Some believe that, in some cases, the brain is struggling to hear frequencies, when it's not actually receiving them from the cochlea. That may be one explanation of why people with hearing loss are prone to having tinnitus. While, it's possible that the ear or cochlea are causing your tinnitus, people with no auditory nerve connecting the brain with the cochlea can still have tinnitus, so it's clear that the brain can cause tinnitus, all by itself. Tinnitus can be caused by such things as:

- Exposure to unusually loud sounds
- Poor blood flow to the inner ear
- Hearing loss
- Ototoxic drugs
- Injury to the ear

There are other possible causes, but not much is known about the causes of tinnitus.

You've probably seen claims of cures on TV or the internet. Be very suspicious about such claims. It's very unlikely those are effective cures or even ways to reduce your tinnitus. If those worked, your audiologist would certainly know about it and would suggest it to you. If your tinnitus is serious enough to trouble you, you're better off to talk with your doctor or audiologist. There are professional medical center web sites like the [Mayo Clinic](#) and [House Institute](#) that have good web sites on tinnitus, but you can google "tinnitus" and your local medical centers and may find good information, too. The main thing is don't just google "tinnitus" and have to wade through hundreds of seamier web sites selling magical, breakthrough cures ... chances are very good that their solutions are not very good.

It's worth discussing your tinnitus with your audiologist. There may be things that are worth exploring. First, your tinnitus may be a symptom of an actual problem that justifies a CT scan or MRI. It may be worth exploring some of the professional treatment options ... just don't expect any magical cures, but some treatments might result in a reduction in the impact on your life. A professional may recommend avoiding certain foods or medicines and using certain vitamins; these may help if your tinnitus is caused by poor blood circulation. Other treatment options include hearing aids that have a feature that can mask or take your mind off of the tinnitus. There are also hearing aid-like devices and treatments that generate masking sounds that can train your brain to not notice the tinnitus. Some doctors use [Tinnitus Retraining Therapy \(TRT\)](#) that is designed to train your brain to not notice tinnitus as much. But in many cases, there are no cures. There is one bright spot, though: If you have a hearing loss, just being able to hear better with a hearing aid or cochlear implant (even without any masking features) can often make tinnitus less noticeable.

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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 story 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.

## Bluffing as a Hearing Loss Strategy

If you're hard of hearing, you've probably bluffed your way through a conversation. We all say it's not a good idea, but most of us have done it. Here's a link to [Gael Hannan's recent article about bluffing](#). Gael is an author, speaker and performer (comedienne), who has often been featured in HLAA and other national conventions. Her article about bluffing, is funny and will hit home for people with hearing loss.

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