

# Happy Holidays!

## December Chapter Meeting It's a holiday party and you're invited!

Our Dec. 14 Chapter Meeting will be a festive combination of fun and food, with a bit of chapter business mixed in.

Please bring a dessert to share and a wrapped white elephant gift.

Katie will talk briefly about how to survive the holidays with a hearing loss. We'll discuss the pros and cons of moving Chapter meetings to Saturday mornings (read more on page 2, President's Message) and then we'll have fun with our "white elephant gift exchange."

## Time to pay your dues!

Only \$1.00 for the entire year of 2018! Pay your dues at the Welcome Table or to Treasurer Craig. Cash only!



## Changing my life with hearing loss

*I love reading the stories of people who have changed their stories. People who face adversity—health challenges, economic restrictions, social prejudices. Or who are simply bored or dissatisfied with their life direction and want to change their stars. Here, Matthew Wren of Cambridge, Ontario talks about the direction his passions and hearing loss have taken him, including pursuing a dream of becoming a Hearing Instrument Specialist.*

— Gael Hannan, November 2017

### By Matthew Wren

At the age of 13 months, I was diagnosed with a bilateral sensorineural hearing loss and received my first pair of hearing aids. At the time, my mom was unfamiliar with deafness and asked the audiologist, "How long will he have to wear them?"

30 years later, I'm still wearing them (and will for the rest of my life) and have had both good and bad hearing loss experiences. When someone asks, "I have good news and bad news, which do you want first?", I opt for the bad news to get it out of the way. I recall many "bad" incidents when people commented on my hearing aids or deafness. It's frustrating when people feel overly sympathetic simply because I am deaf. Once, I was studying for mid-terms in a university café, and a girl I'd never met before sat down opposite me. She asked what I was reading and I told her I was preparing for

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## CHAPTER CALENDAR

All events are held at the at Weingart Center, 5220 Oliva Ave, Lakewood 90712 unless otherwise noted

**Dec 13** Board Meeting, 12:00-2:00, Weingart craft room

**Dec 14** Chapter Meeting, 6:30: Katie Wright: Getting through the holidays and PARTY

**Dec 16** HAT demo, 10:30-12:30, Weingart craft room

We offer 2 different lip reading classes: Mondays 10:00–noon and Wednesdays 9:30–11:30 am.



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

from **Katie Wright**



### Time for a change?

Our Chapter Board of Directors needs your help making a decision. We are considering moving our monthly meetings to Saturday mornings. Attendance at our monthly Thursday night meetings has been slowly dwindling. Our average attendance has gone from 51 in 2010 to just 26 this year. Don't get me wrong—26 is still a good number but if the trend continues ...

Here are some of the considerations we have discussed:

- Many of our long-time, loyal members are finding it difficult, if not impossible, to drive at night.
- It's difficult to come to a night meeting after working all day, which doesn't allow us serve a group of people who could greatly benefit by what we have to share.

- The two other Chapters in SoCal meet on Saturday mornings; their numbers include working adults.
- Social time—which is an important aspect of our group—is limited because people are anxious to get home at night.
- We've been encouraged by the new faces—and some younger ones—that have been coming to our HAT demos that are now on Saturdays.
- The Weingart Senior Center is available to us on Saturday mornings until 1:00

At our December meeting, we want to take some time and talk about this possibility—all the pros and the cons. In the meantime, will you please take some time and think about it and bring your ideas to the meeting? You can also [email me](#) or drop me a line with your opinion. My email and address are elsewhere in this newsletter.

This change—if it happens—wouldn't take place until September 2018 at the earliest. We have time to make a considered decision.

## news from HAT Hearing Assistive Technology

by **Katie Wright**, N-CHATT Committee

### HAT demo at OLLI

The HAT Committee and friends had a great outreach experience on November 4th. One of our members, Carl Curtis, arranged for us to give a presentation on hearing loss and demonstrate various hearing assistive devices at the [Osher Lifelong Learning Institute](#) at Cal State Long

Beach. We had 40 attendees on a Saturday afternoon. After Katie Wright gave the presentation on why hearing aids and cochlear implants aren't always enough, Ilga Dravnieks, Maxine Barton-Bauman, Van Von Burg, and Gail Morrison each had a table of devices ready for demonstration. All of them, along with Peg Heglund and Joyce and Craig Bowlby, spent 3 days during the summer learning to use the devices getting ready for this event.



The attendees chose which category of HAT they were interested in exploring. The categories were face-to-face communication, alerting, telephones, and TV/Computers. We were fortunate to also have representatives from CapTel and Clear Captions there to demonstrate their captioned phones. The audience had a chance to ask questions, get advice and “test drive” devices designed to help them cope in a hearing world. All-in-all, we walked away knowing we had spread the word about the good things that assistive technology can do for our community.

It was truly a great afternoon.

## 5 Critical facts about hearing protections

Laura Friedman, , Hearing Loss Resources, October 2017

October was National Protect Your Hearing Month. How many of these facts from Hearing Health Foundation (HHF) do you know?

**Fact #1:** Noise-induced hearing loss (NIHL) is acquired from excessive noise

- ~30 million U.S. workers are exposed to hazardous noise levels on the job
- Nearly 1 in 5 American teenagers are expected to acquire hearing loss largely due to overexposure of loud sounds
- 25% of Americans age 65-74 and nearly 50% of those 75+ have disabling hearing loss
- Approximately two-thirds of service members and veterans have NIHL or tinnitus, or both
- Many veterans also have processing disorders as a result of blast or high noise exposure

**Fact #2:** NIHL is preventable. The measures needed to prevent NIHL are simple: “Walk, Block, and Turn. Walk away from the sound source, block your ears using ear plugs, and turn down the volume,” advises Nadine Dehgan, HHF’s CEO.

**Fact #3:** Musicians are 57% more likely to experience tinnitus and are almost four times more likely to develop NIHL than the general public. Sound onstage can reach up to 110 decibels (dB), the equivalent of a jackhammer. Prolonged exposure to loud noise causes hair cells of the inner ear to be damaged, leading to permanent hearing loss.

**Fact #4:** A portable listening device at maximum volume (105 dB) is louder than heavy city traffic, drills, noisy subway platform and equal to a table saw. Blasting the volume in earbuds hurts hearing. It is estimated that 20% of teenagers, an age group that frequently uses portable listening devices, will suffer from hearing loss from overexposure to noise.

**Fact #5:** Steps to identify and prevent hearing loss should begin at birth. In 1993, only 5% of newborns were tested for hearing loss at birth. Thanks to HHF’s instrumental role in passing Universal Newborn Hearing Screening legislation, today that number is 97%. Early detection and intervention helps diminish or even eliminate negative impacts of undetected hearing loss on social, academic and emotional development in children with hearing loss.

<https://hearinghealthfoundation.org/blogs/5-critical-facts-about-hearing-protection>

## How to care for your hearing aids at home

Here is a checklist of things you can do to properly clean and care for your hearing aids between your clean & check visits:

- Brush dry earwax off domes or custom molds daily
- Store away from humid locations
- Use your dry-aid container
- Visually check for any damage on the hearing aid shell and/or tubing
- Keep away from pets and children
- Change batteries as needed
- Store batteries near your hearing aids
- Keep regular (3-6 month) clean and check visits with your hearing care professional

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You shop. Amazon gives.

Shopping at [www.smile.amazon.com](http://www.smile.amazon.com) is just like shopping on Amazon—except .5% of all your purchases go to an organization of your choice.

Visit <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/33-0164362> to have **Hearing Loss Association of America - Long Beach** benefit from your Amazon purchases.



## Changing my life with hearing loss

(continued from page 1)

an upcoming test. After a few minutes of small talk, she looked at my hearing aids and abruptly asked “So, what happened?” Her question was unexpected and intrusive, and when I told her I’d been born with hearing loss, she gave me a sympathetic “awww”. This doesn’t happen often, but I find it offensive. But, confident in myself and my hearing loss, I politely stated I had to go back to my reading, took out my hearing aids and proceeded to read in my silent world.

But if there are bad incidents, there are also good ones where my hearing loss and wearing hearing aids have proved beneficial. For example, I have been able to use my hearing loss as an ice breaker to meet new people. One of my favorite things is that when people complain that something is too loud, I jokingly point to my hearing aids and say “You have nothing on me.” I live for moments like these because it’s always fun to see how people react and almost all the time, people laugh along. I can tell that a part of them feels guilty for laughing so I assure them that it’s okay to laugh and we laugh even more. When I was at Niagara College for Culinary Management, my group of friends did not treat me any differently because of my hearing loss. And because I was relaxed with them, I often used it as a punch line.

With two PhDs and a successful high school teacher in my nuclear family, education is a very important value and aspect in my life. After obtaining diplomas in Culinary Management from Niagara College and Pastry and Baking Art Management from George Brown College, I continued my education and obtained my Bachelor of Commerce Degree in Hotel and Food Administration from the University of Guelph. After 16 years of working in kitchens as a chef, I realized I wasn’t where I wanted to be and decided to make a career change, one that offered a quieter work environment and where I could interact with clients.

I decided to trade my chef’s knife for an otoscope. I am currently studying to be a Hearing Instrument Specialist at Conestoga

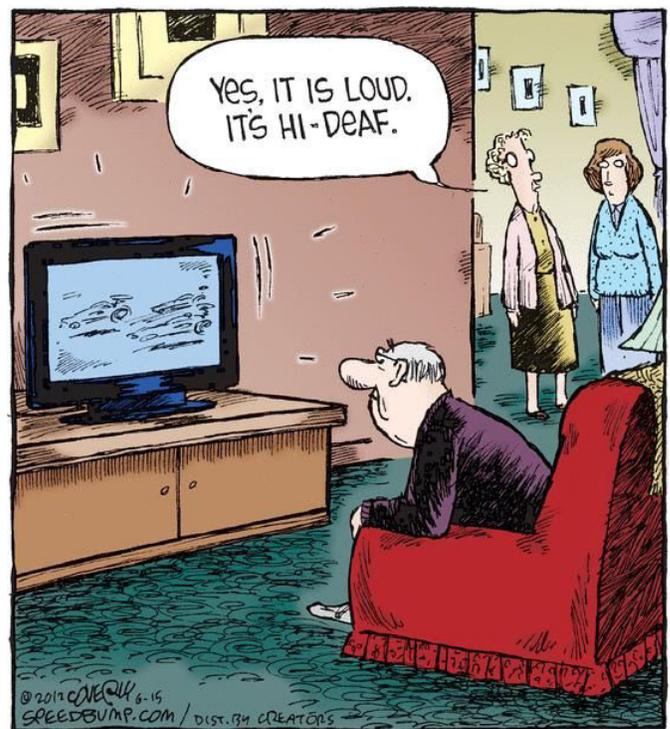
College in Kitchener, Ontario. Becoming a hearing loss professional will allow me to relate to clients because of our similar experiences, and one day I want to open a hearing clinic of my own. I love to help people and a clinical setting would allow me to fulfill this dream.

One of my hobbies is photography and I love capturing special moments with a camera. I’ve started a mini-business and already achieved one of my life goals by selling some of my photos. It was a pleasure to be able to donate the proceedings to VOICE for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children, an organization that raises awareness about youth and hearing loss.

Living with a hearing loss will always be a challenge but as I mature and reflect, I realize that while my hearing loss has helped shape the person I am today, it doesn’t define who I am as a person. I’m happy to be celebrating two years of marriage and pursuing my photography and a new career.

I live every day by this motto:  
“Hear only the things you should hear—  
be deaf to others.”

—Ford Frick



## Learn <sup>How To</sup> Lipread



**Free & Fun!**

**2 classes  
weekly—  
Join anytime!**

Lipreading can help anyone better understand what someone is saying. This skill is especially helpful to the hard-of-hearing, and when used in combination with hearing aids. Classes meet in the craft room of the Weingart Senior Center.

### **Mondays**

**10:00 a.m. to noon**

Led by Elfriede Maclver



### **Wednesdays**

**9:30 - 11:30 a.m.**

Led by Linda DeGuire



## Hearing Assistive Technology **HAT demonstrations on Saturday mornings!**

**Dec. 16, Jan. 20, Feb. 17  
10:30–12:30**

Weingart Senior Center

Invite your friends and relatives with hearing loss to come and try out a large variety of devices that can improve their ability to hear better in difficult situations. These devices can be very helpful to people with or without hearing aids and are a lot less expensive.

In addition to our large selection of devices for you to try, Sam Moghadam, Hearing Instrument Specialist from Ascent Hearing Center, will also be present to answer questions about hearing aids.

*HAT does not sell hearing aids or hearing assistive devices, but provides information on where to purchase items demonstrated.*

## **Informer print subscriptions**

Receive paper copies of our terrific newsletter, the Informer. A subscription for 12 monthly issues delivered by US mail is only \$10 per year.

### **HLAA, Long Beach/Lakewood Chapter**

#### **Officers**

**President** Katie Wright

**Vice-President** Gail Morrison

**Treasurer** Craig Bowlby

**Recording Secretary** Joyce Bowlby

**Corresponding Secretary** Van VonBurg

#### **Committees**

**Hearing Assistive Technology**

Ilga Dravnieks, Craig Bowlby

**Lip Reading** Linda DeGuire

**Looping** - Ram Kakkar

**Membership** Flo McDavid (on leave)/Katie Wright

**Programs/Publicity** Gail Morrison

**Refreshments** Adela Praderas, Joyce Bowlby

**Ways and Means** *need volunteer!*

#### **Professional Advisor**

Dr. David DeKriek, Au.D.

#### **Newsletter**

**Editor** Katie Wright

**Layout** Ilga Dravnieks

#### **For more information about our chapter:**

[hialongbeachlakewood.org](http://hialongbeachlakewood.org)

**Katie Wright** (323) 205-6794

[katie.hearingloss@gmail.com](mailto:katie.hearingloss@gmail.com)

## **HLAA Hearing Loss Association of America**

Join HLAA to receive *Hearing Loss Magazine* and to become part of the one organization that represents the interests of 48 million people with hearing loss in the U.S.

Send \$35 for individual or \$45 for family membership to:

Hearing Loss Association of America

7910 Woodman Avenue, Suite 1200

Bethesda, MD 20814

Or join online: [www.hearingloss.org/content/join](http://www.hearingloss.org/content/join)

For more information:

(301) 657-2248 or email [inquiry@hearingloss.org](mailto:inquiry@hearingloss.org).

Membership brochures are available at chapter meetings.

## **CTAP California Telephone Access Program**

For information, repair or exchange:

English Voice 1-800-806-1191

Spanish Voice 1-800-949-5650

[www.californiaphones.org/about-us](http://www.californiaphones.org/about-us)

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Long Beach/Lakewood Chapter

Hearing Loss Association of America,  
Long Beach/Lakewood Chapter  
c/o Katie Wright  
7802 Kingbee Street  
Downey, CA 90242

## First Class

Address Service Requested

### Upcoming Programs

- Dec 14** Holiday party, Katie Wright: Surviving holidays with hearing loss
- Jan 11** Dr. David DeKriek, Au.D.: Incremental Improvement in Hearing Aid Technology Leads to Increase in Features and Sound Quality
- Feb 8** Roberta Smith, California Phones program
- Mar 8** Alison Eier, Advanced Bionics: Auditory Training to improve listening skills

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HLAA Long Beach/Lakewood Chapter Meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month, 6:30-8:00 pm, at the Weingart Center, 5220 Oliva Ave, Lakewood 90712

### If you don't like meetings because you can't hear well, our meetings are different!

- We have a high quality sound system
- You can borrow an assistive listening device
- If you have hearing aids with telecoils, we have a hearing induction loop
- If none of these help, we project captions on the wall for you to read.

We provide all these options free so you can understand what is said.



### Hearing Loss Association of America

HLAA opens the world of communication to people with hearing loss through information, education, support and advocacy.

The national support network includes the national office in Washington D.C., state organizations and local HLAA Chapters.

Join HLAA now at [www.hearingloss.org/content/join](http://www.hearingloss.org/content/join) to receive *Hearing Loss Magazine* and become part of the one organization that represents the interests of 48 million people with hearing loss in the United States.