

My (hearing) wake-up call

By Heather Rivera, Ph.D for Hearing Health and Technology Matters, July 3, 2018

Many people have experienced a “wake-up call”— a defining moment when something in their life has to change. For some, it’s a dramatic event and for others, a seemingly mundane event, but for most people, the moment is life changing. My wake-up call was no exception.

For years I struggled with hearing loss. As time went on my world got smaller and smaller. Easy conversations with friends and family became a thing of the past. At work, as a Registered Nurse, because I was having difficulty hearing, I moved myself into positions that not only took me away from direct patient care but was very much “behind the scenes.” I relied on my husband to step in and translate for me when we ran errands. I even relied on my husband to order for me at restaurants. I was losing my independence.

Hearing aids were no longer providing me enough sound to enjoy life fully. I was resistant at first when my audiologist suggested that I get evaluated for a cochlear implant. I wasn’t one to jump into having a surgical procedure. As time went on though, it became increasingly difficult to hear. One of my favorite joys, music, was slipping away from me too.



Please do something about your hearing loss!

One year “Phantom of the Opera” came back to Los Angeles. I very much wanted to see it because I thought it may be my last time to hear it before my hearing declined even more. I purchased a ticket in the fourth row, center, so I would have the best chance of hearing the production. As soon as the musical began my heart sank. I couldn’t make out one line of dialogue or any of the lyrics. Tears dribbled down my cheeks as I watched a performance I couldn’t hear.

After the show, I walked down the street to my car in a daze. There was no denying it anymore. I could not pretend that all was okay. I was going deaf. This was my wake-up call.

When I arrived home, I got serious and took a good look at cochlear implants for a hearing solution. After months of research and contemplation I decided on Cochlear Americas. I had my first implant surgery and was activated with the Cochlear Nucleus 6 early in 2016. At activation, I understood speech immediately.

My husband and I went out to dinner to celebrate that night and I used the Mini Microphone 2+. For the first time in a very long time I ordered for myself and understood the server. For weeks, I laughed and cried at all the sounds I was getting back.

(continued on page 2)

CHAPTER CALENDAR

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

- Aug 22** Board Meeting, 12:00-2:00, Weingart craft room
- Sep 13** Chapter meeting, 6:30: CaptionCall telephones
- Sep 15** HAT demo, 10:30-12:00

No chapter meeting in August!

Lip Reading classes resume September 5: Mondays 10:00–noon and Wednesdays 9:30–11:30 am



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

from **Gail Morrison**

We are well into Summer and yet another week of scorching weather! Van is back from 6 weeks in D.C. and Craig and Joyce are in Virginia assisting their daughter on the arrival of their second granddaughter!

Summertime is a great time for touching bases with family and friends. On Saturday, July 28, my mother's family will hold their 138th consecutive reunion in Michigan. One year they almost didn't hold it. The men were gone off to war and that left the women alone. But then one brave woman asserted that *they* needed it! Hence the continuity! Our common ancestor, Joseph Boulet, was born in the Alsace Lorraine area in France, fought in one of the Napoleonic wars and was given the St. Helena Medal by Napoleon! We still have the little medal, which it must be noted that Napoleon paid for himself, out of his own funds.

By now, those of you who are members of our National Hearing Loss Association of America have received the current issue (July/August) of our national magazine *Hearing Life*. I'd like to call your attention to a poem on the back page (p.42) written by Alyssa Blackmer. She's a

shirttail relative of mine and is currently a second-year student in the Central Michigan University Doctorate in Audiology degree program. My mother and three of her siblings went to Central Michigan University in Mt. Pleasant, MI, not far from where I grew up in Alma, Michigan. Here is her poem:

Beauty in the Sound

By Alyssa Blackmer

*There is beauty in the sound
of a crying baby, giving relief to its worried mother,
of laughter coming from one's lips.
There is beauty in the sound
in the pages of a turning book, adventure awaits
In the knocking on a door, for company has arrived.
There is beauty in the sound
of a siren, indicating that help is coming,
of shouting commands in the fight for life.
There is beauty in the sound
of rain on the rooftop, an end to the drought
of the wind, whispering through the trees.
There is beauty in the sound
of lyrics, held tight and so true,
instruments of never-ending harmony.
There is beauty in the sound
of things unheard for so long,
Learning to hear what has always been,
for damage may have been done,
but help draws near,
For there is beauty in the sound.*

She gets it!

wake-up call

(continued from page 1)

Later in the year I had my second implant surgery done. Thankfully, I had remarkable results again. Being bilateral made a huge difference in my life. I no longer had to lean in with my implanted side to hear people and I could discern the direction of sound much easier. Shortly after my second surgery an off the ear processor called Kanso came out. I love having a discreet processor as an option.

My implants gave me back my independence. Because of them, I was able to go back to patient care nursing and communicate well with the

patients. I loved the look of surprise on my patient's face when I listened to their lung and heart sounds with my special stethoscope that streamed sound directly into my Kanso processors. The patients thought it was magical.

I'm also a writer and now I can speak publicly about the writing process again. Music is coming back to me too. I play my CD of "Phantom of the Opera" and sing along with my favorite show tunes.

I'm glad that I paid attention to my wake-up call.

Heather Rivera, R.N., J.D., Ph.D., lives in Hawaii with her husband. She is the author of eight books. Her superpower is bionic hearing. Heatherrivera.com

Four diseases that contribute to hearing loss

By Joe Fleming for Hearing Health and technology Matters, July 3, 2018

Approximately 15 percent of American adults over the age of 18 experience some level of hearing loss today and nearly three-quarters of those adults could benefit from using hearing aids.

While it's easy to blame issues like chronic noise exposure for the number of people experiencing hearing loss, it's important to understand that there are a number of other things that can bring about hearing impairment as well. For example, there are a number of diseases—many of which seemingly have nothing to do with the ears themselves—that contribute to hearing loss.

Read on to learn about four diseases that can increase your risk of developing hearing loss.

Chronic kidney disease

Chronic kidney disease involves a gradual loss of kidney function. Approximately 14 percent of the general population suffers from kidney disease. One study found that those who have kidney disease have a 43 percent greater risk of experiencing hearing loss.

Researchers believe that the link between kidney disease and hearing loss has to do with an accumulation of toxins that end up damaging the nerves throughout the body, including those associated with proper hearing function. When the kidneys don't function properly, toxins cannot be eliminated efficiently and can build up in the bloodstream.

Because of the strong connection between these two conditions, it's important for people who know they suffer from chronic kidney disease to take steps to protect and preserve their hearing. This means getting hearing assessments earlier and more regularly.

Diabetes

Hearing loss is twice as common among people with diabetes as it is among those who don't have the disease. The rate of hearing loss is also 30 percent higher among adults who are

pre-diabetic. It's not clear exactly what the connection is between diabetes and hearing loss.

However, many researchers believe that chronically elevated blood sugar is the culprit. Their hypothesis is that high blood sugar levels contribute to nerve damage and hinders the function of the nerves and small blood vessels in the inner ear (similar to the way kidney damage can contribute to hearing loss).

People with diabetes should take the same precautions as people with chronic kidney disease to protect and preserve their hearing—get regular exams and get fitted for hearing aids early.

High blood pressure

High blood pressure, also known as hypertension, is another common disease, affecting nearly 75 million American adults) that can contribute to hearing loss. To understand how blood pressure affects hearing, it's important to understand what blood pressure actually is.

Blood pressure is a measurement of the force of blood against the veins and arteries. It consists of two numbers. The first number, your systolic pressure, indicates the pressure exerted when your heart pushes blood out, and the second number, your diastolic pressure, indicates the pressure when the heart is relaxed and not pumping blood.

If your systolic pressure is greater than 120 and your diastolic is greater than 80, you are considered to have high blood pressure. High blood pressure can cause damage to the lining of your arteries. Over time, fatty plaque can build up in these damaged areas and diminish or completely halt blood flow.

How are high blood pressure and hearing loss related? High blood pressure leads to damage to the blood vessels and arteries in all parts of the body, including the ears. Research has found that when blood pressure increases, hearing ability goes down.

Mumps

Mumps is a viral infection that causes inflammation of the salivary glands. Mumps is a relatively rare illness these days, thanks to

(continued on page 4)

Four diseases

(continued from page 3)

the vaccination that children are required to get before they attend public school. But, it can still happen in unvaccinated individuals, and one of the side effects is hearing loss.

The mumps virus has been shown to cause damage to the tiny sensory hair cells found in the inner ear. Once damaged hair cells cannot be repaired, or restored, which results in permanent hearing loss.

DOJ rules for movie theater captioning and audio description take effect

July 15, 2018

As of June 2, movie theaters showing digital movies must provide a means for delivering closed captioning and audio description per rules issued under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) by the Department of Justice (DOJ).

The [final rules](#) were issued in November 2016 and supplement provisions in DOJ's ADA regulations on provision of auxiliary aids and services. Movie theaters that show digital movies equipped with closed captions and audio description must acquire and maintain equipment for displaying captions and transmitting audio description.

Closed captions are displayed individually to patrons with hearing impairments at their seats. Open captioning displayed on the movie screen is not required. Audio description provides additional narration of a movie's visual elements to patrons with vision impairments and is typically transmitted by infrared or FM systems to wireless headsets. The rule specifies the minimum number of closed captioning and audio description devices that must be provided based on the number of auditoriums in a theater. The rule does not apply to theaters showing analog movies only, nor does it require such theaters to convert to digital projection systems. For further information, visit [DOJ website](#) or contact its ADA hotline at 800.514.0301 (voice) or 800.514.3083 (TTY).

New PBS video sheds light on Meniere's disease

Hearing Health and Technology Matters, July 20, 2018

ELMHURST, ILLINOIS—The American Hearing Research Foundation (AHRF) announced that it has partnered with PBS to sponsor a 5-minute video, "Spotlight on Hearing and Balance". The purpose of the video is to educate the public on Meniere's disease.

Meniere's disease affects an estimated 615,000 people in the US, and approximately 5 million worldwide. The debilitating condition—with symptoms of vertigo, ear pressure, hearing loss and tinnitus—is typically managed, with varying degrees of success, through dietary changes, diuretics and steroids.

Currently, there are no FDA-approved drugs or treatment for the condition.

"Until someone suffers themselves from Meniere's disease, or is close to a friend or loved one with the condition, it's difficult to imagine the impact that it can have on everyday life. Most of us take our hearing and especially our balance for granted. But when a condition like Meniere's disease strikes, entire lives change. At AHRF, we're committed to investing in research to better understand Meniere's disease and other hearing and balance disorders of the inner ear so we can identify treatments that will make a difference."

— Alan Micco, MD, President of AHRF

The video, Spotlight on Hearing and Balance, helps highlight the connection between hearing and balance and features people who live with Meniere's disease. People like Jesse Lee Jones, a Nashville country singer, and Kim Mayer, a Wisconsin-based physical therapist, who share their stories in order to allow viewers to better understand the reality of living with Meniere's disease.

The video can be viewed at <http://hearinghealth-matters.org/hearingnewswatch/2018/pbs-video-menieres-disease/>



by **Katie Wright**, HAT Chair

The 2018 National Hearing Loss Association of America Convention is in the books. I had a great time. I was hoping it would serve to rejuvenate my enthusiasm for my work with the Chapter—and it did. The Convention workshops are categorized and I chose ones from the State/Chapter Development and Hearing Assistive Technology tracks. I learned about new developments in wireless technology and mobile phone applications, how to counteract “Chapter Droop” with the three “R’s”—Revitalize, Reignite and Rejuvenate, and much more.

Along with three other N-CHATT people from my “class,” I led a workshop on hearing assistive devices that was very successful—despite the fact that we were scheduled during the Ice Cream Social at the very end of the day. We had close to 30 devices out for demonstration; attendees chose which category they wanted to experience. I live for the reaction of someone’s face “lighting up” when they discover what a device can do for them! It warms my soul. Two of my co-presenters work for State agencies that deal with devices so I was able to experience new-to-me technology also!

All-in-all, it was a great week. Being able to hear ALL the time was phenomenal. Every workshop, meeting and assembly room was looped; even the hotel desk was looped just for us. All I had to do was flip my t-coil switch and hearing was perfect. It was actually a shock to come back to the real world to my everyday struggles. Such is reality, right?

Hearing Assistive Technology
HAT demonstration

Saturday, September 15
10:30–12:00

Weingart Senior Center in Lakewood

Try out a large variety of devices that can improve your 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.

HAT does not sell hearing aids or hearing assistive devices. We DO provide information on where to purchase items we demonstrate.

HAT is on
break until
September

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 Gail Morrison
Vice-President Joyce Bowlby
Treasurer Craig Bowlby
Recording Secretary Katie Wright
Corresponding Secretary Van VonBurg

Committees

Hearing Assistive Technology Katie Wright
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:

hlaa-lb-lakewood.org
email: info@hlaa-lb-lakewood.org

Katie Wright (323) 205-6794
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

For more information:
(301) 657-2248 or email 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

DISCLAIMER: We believe the information contained in this publication has been compiled from reliable sources. However none of the contributors, sponsors, or anyone else connected with the Informer in any way whatsoever can be responsible for the appearance of any inaccurate or libelous information or for your use of the information contained in or linked from these pages. If you need specific advice, for example, for your particular hearing concerns, please seek a professional who is licensed or knowledgeable in that area. We further do not recommend or endorse any product or professional but supply such information as a public service.



First Class

Address Service Requested

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

Upcoming Programs

No Chapter meeting in July or August

Sep 14 CaptionCall telephones

Oct 11 Speaker and topic TBD

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 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.