

June Chapter Meeting



EMERGENCY!

How to get help when you can't hear!

What if you're in an accident or have a medical emergency, and can't use your hearing aids. How can others help you?

Katie Wright and Miryam Fernandez will show us, step-by-step, how to set up the emergency screen on your smartphone so that any emergency personnel or Good Samaritan can help you. There will be other safety tips too.

Thursday June 9, 6:30 at Weingart Center

**YES!
We're Meeting
in PERSON!**

Or you can watch the meeting on Zoom:

[Register in advance to watch on Zoom](#)

Chapter Calendar

June 9 at 6:30 - in person at Weingart and on Zoom: Monthly chapter meeting: Emergency! How to get help when you can't hear

Lip reading: Wednesdays, 9:00-11:30 a.m. at Weingart Center.

No Board meeting in June or July. Next Board meeting: noon on Aug. 24

No Chapter meeting in July or August Next Chapter meeting: 6:30 on Sep. 8

We'll see you again in fall!

I may look interested... but I have no idea what you're saying

How to be your best bluffer

Gael Hannan, *Hearing Health Matters*, May 24, 2022

People with hearing loss bluff. We can't help it; it's part of the hard of hearing package. We give the impression of understanding what's being said and being actively engaged in a conversation. In reality, we're just putting on a show.

Sometimes we bluff unintentionally and other times we are fully aware of it. We just don't want the other person or people to know that we've lost the thread, can't understand everything, and therefore we've simply given up.

Now, none of us want to bluff. We'd love to be fully engaged with what other people are saying, in the exact moment they're saying it. Unfortunately, all the communication ducks have to be lined up, in a perfect row:

- Good visuals of the speakers—all of them
- One person speaks at a time—and clearly
- A low-noise, well-lit environment—this is non-negotiable
- We know what the topic is—even when it changes
- We have enough energy for the conversation—we need a lot!
- We know how to ask for what we need, and we do it. *(Not always easy but doable.)*

Although I'm an excellent bluffer, I wish I weren't. It's dishonest to other people and counter-productive to my personal well-being. Yet, when those communication ducks aren't all swimming in the same direction, I fall into the bluffing trap. It's a survival tactic, although there are many better ways to communicate.

But I'm good at it because I've had lots of practice. My dad always told me that if something is worth doing, it's worth doing well—although I'm sure he didn't mean being dishonest in my conversational communications. But if you're going to bluff, at least do it well, because it's no fun being caught in the act. It's embarrassing for you and uncomfortable for everyone.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

from **Gail Morrison**

We're back—in person!

Hello! We hope that you are well and have been safe during the COVID Pandemic! We have some very good news for you and hope that you can join us!

We will meet at Weingart Center on Thursday, June 9, 2022 at 6:30 p.m.! Weingart has lifted the mask mandate and all who have been vaccinated don't need to wear a mask. Weingart is following state requirements at this time. You may wear a mask if you feel more comfortable. We hope to see you there!

Our program will center around Emergency Preparation! Our member, Ram Kakkar, was attacked at El Dorado Park in Long Beach recently and was knocked unconscious. He woke up without his hearing aid and cochlear implant functioning and could not hear. He was surrounded by the police, fire department and a bevy of people! What to do? What do you need to have on your person if you are in an accident? This program will give you tips for Emergency Preparation! Katie Wright and Miryam Fernandez will present this program prepared specifically for you!

Throughout the Pandemic our Board has met faithfully, and our Chapter meetings have continued via Zoom—we saw many of you joining us for some wonderful programs. Until we can regularly meet at Weingart, our Board members have agreed to continue in our current positions with a few exceptions: Craig Bowlby resigned to be caretaker for his wife Joyce Bowlby; Ram Kakkar stepped up to become Treasurer; and Linda DeGuire moved up to Vice President. Here are your current Board and committee members:

Board members

President: Gail Morrison

Vice President: Linda DeGuire

Treasurer: Ram Kakkar

Recording Secretary: Miryam Fernandez

Corresponding Secretary: Van VonBurg

Committee leaders

Lip Reading: Linda DeGuire

Membership: Ellen Mathis

HAT Committee, Informer Editor (and President of HLAA-California): Katie Wright

Refreshments: Adela Praderas

Programs and Publicity: Gail Morrison

Professional Advisor: Dr. David DeKriek Au.D.

We hope to see you on Thursday, June 9 at 6:30 p.m. at Weingart Center! Don't miss this important and vital program!



**Please support
Maxine's Marchers!**



Remember, 40% of what we collect comes back to our chapter.

There's still time to send a check.

Write a check to *Long Beach Walk4Hearing* and mail it to Katie Wright, 7802 Kingbee St., Downey CA 90242.

Or donate online at:

[Maxine's Marchers Walk4Hearing](#)

Barbie has hearing aids!

Shari Eberts, *Hearing Health Matters*

Like most women my age, I grew up playing with Barbie dolls. My childhood afternoons were spent brushing Barbie's hair, dressing her up in the latest fashions and taking her on a variety of adventures in my mind. All my friends did the same. Truth be told, we not only played with Barbie—we wanted to be Barbie. We coveted her long straight blond hair, her flashy convertible car, and her handsome boyfriend Ken.

When our looks differed from hers—maybe our hair was brown or curly or short—we felt less beautiful. We felt like we didn't have a place. Like we weren't included in the definition of perfection that Barbie represented. I'm sure my friends and I were not alone in feeling this way.



Representation matters

So, when it came time to introduce my own young daughter to Barbie, I hesitated. My adult-self wondered why Barbie's long blond hair was her primary personality trait? Why was she usually the nurse and rarely the

doctor? Was this the type of toy I wanted for my daughter?

Thankfully, Mattel has taken steps over the years to bring Barbie into the modern era. Early this month, it took another important one—introducing a Barbie with hearing aids. Imagine the joy young hearing aid wearers must feel (and probably their parents too). They can finally look at their favorite toy and see themselves.

Thank you to Barbie for joining American Girl Doll in helping to reduce stigma about wearing hearing devices. Unlike popular culture for adults where hearing aids are still sometimes treated as the punchline of the joke (And Just Like

That..., anyone?) pop culture for the younger set is increasingly embracing diversity and differences of all types.

This is good news for younger generations of hearing aid wearers who may not grow up internalizing the negative societal stigma about hearing devices in the same way that earlier generations did. At a minimum, they will see there is another way to handle hearing aids—loudly and proudly, rather than hidden in a curtain of shame.

Hearing aids as fashion statement

Barbie's behind-the-ear hearing aids are not invisible. They don't try to match her skin tone or attempt to disappear into her flesh. Instead, they are bright pink, matching the jaunty color of her stylish boots. Rather than wearing her hair down to hide her hearing aids, she wears a high ponytail, so they are visible. Barbie's hearing aids are meant to be seen and celebrated as if they were a fashion accessory.

I hope the future manufacturers of over-the-counter (OTC) hearing aids are taking notes.

Rather than discreet and invisible, the future of hearing devices may be bold! Fun colors and interesting form factors could increase their appeal—and at easier-on-the-pocket-book prices, owning more than one pair may be possible for some. Could OTC hearing aids evolve into a fashion accessory, like glasses have?

Children's hearing aids already include a fashion element. They come in bright colors and with fun patterns that entice children to embrace them with pleasure. But once these children hit adulthood, the options narrow to a handful of discreet choices. Silver. Black. Beige. Yawn.

Fun and fashion might be a better way to go. If it's good enough for Barbie, maybe it is good enough for the rest of us too.

<https://hearinghealthmatters.org/findhearing/barbie-has-hearing-aids/>

For more information about our chapter, visit hlaa-lb-lakewood.org

Questions? Contact us by email at info@hlaa-lb-lakewood.org or phone Katie Wright (323) 205-6794

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best bluffer

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Bluffing Tips:

Never use a blank face. The zombie face with no light behind the eyes doesn't work. Any engaged person has some life in their face—facial features have to move occasionally. Try a little animation with the head, eyes and mouth.

Copy other people. Keep a discreet lookout for how other people are reacting to the conversation. Are they serious, laughing, bored? Of course, not everyone reacts the same way to a speaker, but keeping a shifty eye on other people while appearing to be listening to the speaker is a good bluffing skill to perfect.

Make listening noises. When someone is talking, throw in some sounds that give the impression you're following them: hmm, wow, ohhh, etc. Don't overdo it, or you'll just come across as an odd person who makes weird noises.

Use interesting facial expressions. This twins well with the listening noises. You need to show reactions to what's being said. Raised eyebrows, smiles or frowns, an understanding nod, or that little *pfft* sound made by blowing air out your lips is an effective gesture.

Talk all the time. That way you don't have to listen to or understand what anyone else is saying.

Interject and repeat words. Because we do hear many of the words being said, although not enough of them, or in the right order to make sense of the discussion, repeating words or phrases you *do* hear is a neat trick. Someone might say (and this is all you understand), "Let's...really fast...but...on

Thursday." You repeat, "On Thursday." And the other person goes, "Yeah, Thursday, can you believe it?" You're good for at least another minute of bluffing before you get caught.

And, at some point, you are going to get caught. Even if you make it through the 'conversation', you have no real idea of what just went down. But if you're prepared to take that risk, if you really want to be a bluffing pro—then by all means add these methods to your arsenal of tricks.

Or—and here's an idea—you could be honest. Explain (or remind) others about your hearing loss and create a communication environment that works for everyone, including you! We have the choice of learning to become a better bluffer or a better communicator. It's a work in progress—trust me, I know.

<https://hearinghealthmatters.org/betterhearingconsumer/2022/how-to-be-your-best-bluffer/>



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