

The newsletter of the Hearing Loss Association of America, Albuquerque Chapter

# WIRED FOR SOUND

## Hearing Loss Resolutions

*Bobbi Rodriguez, Treasurer HLAA Abq*

At the beginning of the year, many of us make New Year's Resolutions, but do we think about what we need to change or make a goal regarding our hearing loss? We recently had a speaker, Gael Hannon, who challenged us to set hearing loss goals. What better time than now to do something about that situation where you feel left out because you do not hear! There is no guarantee that all situations can be made better, but they won't get better if an effort isn't made.

### 1. *Be more assertive.*

A. Be honest with your audiologist by letting him or her know in what situations you struggle to hear. There are many adjustments that can be made to your hearing devices that can help you hear better. Your audiologist can also check to see if there is something else wrong or give you possible solutions.

B. Let those around you know how they can help you when you are struggling to hear. They don't know you aren't following the conversation if you don't tell them. In restaurants, ask for a quiet location or for music to be turned down. Ask people to speak slowly and distinctly. Tell them you need to see their faces. These are just a few examples. Ask to be accommodated. The worst that can happen is they say they can't.

### 2. *Try to use new technology.*

A. Learn new apps or use current apps more. There are talk-to-text apps available (Live Captions, Ava, Big and others). If your hearing device has a smart phone app, check out the features it offers.



B. Take advantage of t-coil and bluetooth opportunities. Many theaters and other venues offer t-coil connection or an FM receiver that can send the sound directly to your hearing aids. Just look for the (usually blue) ear icon indicating assistive listening is available. (A "T" specifies t-coil.) The receivers can connect with wired earbuds or headphones or a neck loop. I carry my own neck loop just in case, so I can connect the loop with my t-coils.

C. See what assistive listening devices may help you. There is a lot of assistive hearing technology available. Some use t-coil, some bluetooth. Some have built-in mics, but others have a mic that can work from a distance. There are mics that pick up what is close to them, while some will pick up a group in a meeting.

D. Check out the New Mexico Commission for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing TDEP program for devices available. These include amplified phones, caption phones, iPads and iPhones preprogrammed for the deaf or hard of hearing, alarms and many other items. These are free for those who qualify. Details will be presented in our January program. (See page 3.)

### 3. *Use HLAA and your hard-of-hearing community.*

A. Talk to other hard-of-hearing people about situations you struggle with and see what solutions they may have found. You will be surprised with

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[Hearing Loss Association of America](http://hearinglossabq.org)  
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**18 Jan Meeting** 10:00 AM To Noon—on Zoom**NM Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program (TEDP)**

Our speaker for January is Sean Sinderholm, none other than the TEDP Coordinator for our State of New Mexico. As the Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program coordinator, Sean is prepared to share technology that we can use to enhance our ability to communicate with each other as well as with the hearing world.



From telephones, to tablets that serve as captioning devices, there will be many offerings we can be updated on.

Sean is originally from Southern California, and came to new Mexico in 2023. We will be able to welcome him to our wonderful state and help him take advantage of a strong bond between the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing populations here in our state.

**Smith's Community Rewards Shop** at Smith's with their Rewards card, and Smith's will make a donation to HLAA Albuquerque chapter. You get your usual rewards points.

1-800-444-8081, opt. 3 to sign up or re-enroll.

The HLAAAbq NPO number for Smith's is **NC419**.

The HLAA ABQ Chapter could use some help to resume hybrid meetings (for example, with hospitality), as well as some new blood. You already know our dedication to providing the best information, advocacy, education and support for people with hearing loss. You can ease your way into volunteering and learn how this works. Just email one of the board members (listed on the left). You may also use the chapter email: [HLAAbq@gmail.com](mailto:HLAAbq@gmail.com).

the creativity some have used to resolve a problem.

B. Attend your local HLAA meetings. Even if you think you know all about a topic, you sometimes hear something new that is useful.

C. Join HLAA National and your local Chapter and take advantage of the resources they have available. HLAA Albuquerque Chapter dues are only \$15 yearly per family. Our website is [HearingLossAbq.org](http://HearingLossAbq.org). National HLAA gives member-

ship with ANY donation. Their website is [HearingLoss.org](http://HearingLoss.org)<sup>1</sup>. The National website offers a variety of webinars and articles on different topics of interest.

D. Let your HLAA Chapter know what topics would help you in your hearing loss journey. Not only does it help you, it helps the Programs Director know what is important to our members.

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## Loop People, Loop Places

*Ginevra Ralph*

### Telecoils and Auracast™

We've been hearing a lot about the new Bluetooth technology called Auracast™ Broadcast audio that manufacturers are starting to add to new products for people with and without hearing loss. This technology will be found in earbuds and hearing aids, cochlear implant processors, TVs, etc.

Auracast™ Broadcast audio will be coming to market in essentially two different forms. One form will be similar to what you can already do, that is, streaming audio from TVs or your phone, plus the ability to share it with others.

The other intended use is to serve as an additional assistive listening system option for live events, such as at church, public announcements, or concerts. It is going to take some time for manufacturers to create and roll out all of the transmitting devices, but no site will be required to replace their existing system. It will take time for all hearing instruments themselves to be able to adequately receive this broadcast signal.

Meanwhile, the beauty of having a telecoil in your hearing aid or cochlear implant today is that you can access all the hearing loop, FM, and infrared assistive listening systems in places now. In the future, a telecoil can also be used with an Auracast™ Broadcast assistive listening system by using a neckloop if you don't have the new technology in your hearing instrument.

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*We are pleased to announce two new members have joined the Board of HLAA Albuquerque. Jim Twohig is known to most of you, having served as Hospitality Chair for many years before the pan-*

*demic. Bonnie Ratliff is totally new to our board. We asked her to introduce herself to the members.*

*Editor*

## Hello, Readers!

*Bonnie Ratliff, AuD, CCC-A*

My name is Dr. Bonnie Ratliff and I am pleased to introduce myself in this month's Wired for Sound as the newest member of the Board of HLAA's Albuquerque chapter. I am a new audiolo-

gist at Worth Hearing Center here in Albuquerque, and I am excited to contribute to our HLAA chapter in the coming years!

Yearly dues are \$15 per household.  
They are due in January.

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<sup>1</sup> Web sites are case-insensitive, but we capitalize some letters to make it easier to read and remember. You may ignore capitalization when you are typing the web address (or just click on the link).

I had the honor of completing my Doctor of Audiology degree at Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C. Gallaudet University is the only audiology program that requires its students to develop conversational and clinical ASL proficiency while simultaneously immersing oneself in the Deaf community. As a result, I'm proud to say that I am proficient in American Sign Language (ASL) and am particularly passionate about working with the culturally Deaf and Hard of Hearing (D/HH+) community. Prior to accepting my position at Worth Hearing Center, I had the pleasure of completing my clinical residency at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID) in Rochester, New York. As much as I loved my time in D.C. and New York, I am so excited to be here in Albuquerque.

Since beginning my journey with audiology, many people have asked: "why audiology?". As with most good things, my path to audiology was winding. Initially interested in pursuing career

paths in Deaf education and ASL interpreting, I found that there was just something missing for me. When I discovered audiology, I found that I was able to combine my passion for the D/HH+ community with my love of science and medicine. Plus, I'm a bit of nerd about ears. Like Cinderella's glass slipper, it was a perfect fit! Audiology also provides the opportunity to provide true language access to the D/HH+ community in a hearing healthcare setting, which is an uncommon practice I'm exceptionally proud to provide.

I have always appreciated the HLAA for its commitment to education, outreach and—most importantly—community. Hearing loss is an isolating experience for many and having a community that can share experiences and resources can be both encouraging and life-changing. I am excited to be part of this organization and to support our local community. I look forward to connecting with you all in our upcoming member meetings!

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Two friends, George and Clyde, businessmen from England, are winding up a summer-long visit to the United States. Clyde is HoH. They are sitting at a bar in New York City, and George strikes up a conversation with the man sitting next to him.

The man, recognizing the English accent, tells George he has just returned from a visit to London.

"What'd 'e say?" asks Clyde in a whisper.

"'e says 'e's just come back from London," replies George.

Turning to the man, George asks him what he'd enjoyed most about the city. The man says he particularly liked Piccadilly Circus, and that he supped at the famous Hare and Hound Pub, which he thought was outstanding.

Clyde whispers to George again, "What'd 'e say?"

"'e says 'e's been to Piccadilly, and—fancy this—'e visited our favorite pub, the Hare and Hound," George replies.

"And while I was at the bar," the man continues, "I was approached by a slim, good-looking red-haired woman who invited me to visit with her at her flat just around the corner from the pub. It seems her husband was away on vacation. Boy oh boy, what a visit that was!"

Clyde tugs at George's sleeve and says, "What'd 'e say?"

George pauses for a long moment, then says, "I believe 'e met your wife."



Please note our mailing address is  
P.O. Box 36792, Albuquerque, NM

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Adelaide Zabriskie

**Donation of portable loop**

Ginevra Ralph

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NM HLAA chapters are 501(c)3 nonprofits and all donations are tax deductible.

**Support the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA). Become a member TODAY!**

The Hearing Loss Association of America is a volunteer association of Hard of Hearing people, their relatives and friends. It is a non-profit, non-sectarian educational organization devoted to the welfare and interest of those who cannot hear well. **Membership in the national organization is automatic with any donation (separate from any Chapter dues). A \$45 or more donation to National HLAA provides a subscription to the bimonthly publication Hearing Life.**



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