



Heard in Fort Worth

Newsletter of the Hearing Loss Association of Fort Worth

December 2008

Hearing Loss and the Holiday Blues

For millions of Americans who are gradually losing their hearing - including almost half of the country's Baby Boomers - losing touch with others is often isolating and devastating. This sense of isolation can be particularly acute during the holidays, and lead to seasonal depression - otherwise known as "the holiday blues."

A survey by the EAR foundation and Clarity Products reveals that about one-fourth of Baby Boomers with hearing loss say that their hearing loss is affecting their success in the workplace, while 40% reported that their hearing loss affects their home life in many ways. Add this to the additional social activities during the holidays and the obligations that go along with the holidays, it is understandable that many with hearing loss feel overwhelmed.

"The feeling of frustration that many people with hearing loss experience at this time of year is very painful and very real," said Dr. David Haynes, Director of Otology and Neuro-Otology at Vanderbilt University Medical Center. "It is the season for family and friends to come together and enjoy one another's company, and they can feel excluded from that." Dr. Haynes and others recommend that those who may be subject to seasonal depression due to hearing loss alert their network of family and friends about their pain and anxiety. These family members and friends, he added, should respond by being sensitive and by seeking concrete solutions.

If you are feeling down due to hearing loss, experts suggest that you find time to relax, set realistic goals and expectations for the season, volunteer to help someone else, start new holiday traditions that are visually-oriented (such as visiting or creating holiday lighting displays), and spending time with supportive and caring people.

Stay focused on your needs when making holiday plans. For example, stay away from venues that are noisy in favor of more intimate settings. Avoid loud music at gatherings that can get in the way of conversation. And finally, check out the technology available such as pocket talkers, CAPTEL, or amplified telephones to help you stay connected through the holidays and help you beat the holiday blues. More tips can be found on page 6.

Adapted from <http://www.clarityproducts.com/clearlines/holidayblues.asp>

Only **Hearing Loss Association of America** provides a national advocacy presence, a website with reliable, organized, and archived answers to questions about hearing loss and assistive technology, the *Hearing Loss Magazine*, with credible, current information, over 200 local support chapters and 14 state organizations, discounts to annual national conventions and many regional conferences. For \$35 per year, less than 70 cents a week, we give you information and encouragement to be a vital person in our hearing world. We are here for you because you care enough to be a part of the national concern for hearing loss. We appreciate your membership. If you have not become a national member, information and instructions are available at www.hearingloss.org.



Joan's Journal

Happy Holidays to you all!! I hope everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving and are looking forward to the December holidays, Hanukkah, Christmas, Kwanzaa, New Year's celebrations. Our front-page article is about the real possibility that those with hearing loss can suffer from depression, or worse depression, during the holidays. Depression can be a serious condition that you may not realize that you have, but anyone can benefit from some of the ways to combat it. One way is to give back to others. There is nothing quite as eye opening as helping those who are in worse circumstances than we are. Volunteer at a soup kitchen or food pantry or homeless shelter. Visit families who are keeping vigil at the hospital. Volunteer to baby-sit for a young mother (or father) whose spouse is far away fighting for our country and our way of life. Contact your church or synagogue or temple for more ways to help. Another thing you can do is take some time every day for yourself. Take a brisk walk around the block. Instead of a quick shower, take a long bubble bath. Put a quarter in the massage chair at the mall and enjoy. Take some time to enjoy with friends and family. Our holiday party is December 13 at the Goodrich Center. It will be a great time to bond with family and friends over good food, good friends, and good times. We certainly look forward to seeing you there.

Joan O'Connor (huh_hoh_hum@yahoo.com)

Interested in purchasing a cell phone but don't understand what will work for you?

Here are a few places to start looking for explanations.

AT&T <http://www.wireless.att.com/about/disability-resources/hearing-aid-compatibility.jsp>

Verizon <http://aboutus.vzw.com/accessibility/products.html>

Motorola <http://www.motorola.com/accessibility>

For basic information and FAQs about hearing aid compatibility:

<http://direct.motorola.com/ens/accessibility/Hearingaid.html>

For information about the different Motorola models, including M/T ratings:

<http://direct.motorola.com/ens/accessibility/Hearingaid.html>

Don't forget to try before you buy—that's the only way to be really sure the product you buy will work for your particular needs.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

December 11: Live Webchat with Dr. Sam Trychin, 6 pm CST at www.hearingloss.org. Surviving the Holidays with Hearing Loss.

December 13: Annual Holiday Party at the Goodrich Center. Fun, food, and games for the whole family. Inexpensive gift exchange.

January 10, 2009: Monthly HLA Meeting . Refreshments at 9:30, program at 10 am. Dr. Helen Morrison from TCU Miller Hearing Center will discuss Communications New Year's Resolutions.

January 24, 2009: Next CI Support Group meeting. There will be no meeting in December due to the holidays.

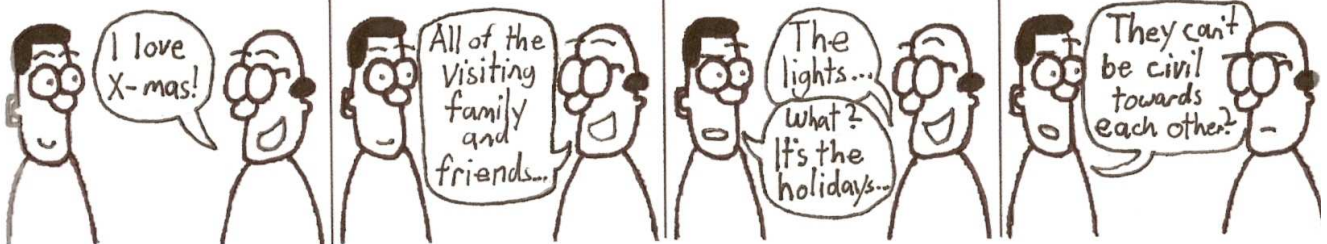
June 18-21, 2009: HLA National Convention, Nashville, TN. Early registration is now open. Register early and save. Go to www.hearingloss.org and click on "convention."



Annual dues:

Student	\$20
Individual	\$35
Family/Couple	\$45
Professional	\$60

HUH? By John O'Connor



Bits and Pieces

St. Vincent de Paul's Catholic Church in Arlington offers CART at the 10:45 am mass each Sunday except the first Sunday of the month.

If you are interested in what President-Elect Barack Obama has to say in his weekly radio and TV addresses, you can get them with captions on your computer, iPhone, or other devices. Go to <http://www.captionedmediaforobama.com/>, click on "Watch post-election media," then click on the X for the date and format you choose. If you are using a computer, select YouTube to hear and see the message with captions. Clicking on the screen image will enlarge it to full screen. Each word is highlighted as it is spoken.

Or go to <http://change.gov/page/s/economy> and click on the button the farthest right on the lower tool bar. You'll see a button "CC" click on that and turn the captions on. It takes a couple of seconds for the captions to get started. Turn them on and wait. They'll show up.

THANK YOU

Dear friends at HLA-FW,

My sincerest thanks for the beautiful autumn planter and sympathy card. Your expression of love and kindness toward my mother and me is truly appreciated.

Remembering always, Julie Scheibe

WEBSITES YOU CAN USE

Are you looking for information, social interaction, advocacy information, legislation information, but don't know where to look? Here are some websites to help you get started.

<http://groups.yahoo.com/subscribe/txhll> -- Texas Hearing Loss List, Tommie Wells' informational and social network. You can get good information and ask questions. Someone will have an answer or know where to find one. Tommie is a local member and national board member.

http://www.saywhatclub.com/swc_lists.html -- The Say What Club has several interactive discussion groups.

<http://www.hearingloss.org> -- The National HLAA website is always being updated with new features and information on hearing loss.

<http://hearinglossnation.ning.com/> -- HLAA's new social network for young adults.

<http://www.hearinglossweb.com> -- Center for Hearing Loss Help, a resource for news.

<http://www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/hearing/> -- National Institute on Deafness and other Communication Disorders -- one of the government's National Institutes of Health.

<http://www.alda.org> -- The Association of Late Deafened Adults. This website also has forum groups.

<http://www.theearsofyourheart.com/MemberList.htm> -- Wes Allen's website. Wes is one of our local members.

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/beyond-hearing/> -- Also an excellent site for information.

<http://www.betterhearing.org> -- Better Hearing Institute

RECIPE

Plan to be out shopping in the cold all day? Want something warm and hearty waiting when you get home? This is a quick and easy recipe that you put in the crockpot to cook all day, so it'll be waiting when you get home...

MEATY BAKED BEANS

Ingredients:

1 lb ground chuck (browned, drained, & crumbled)
½ lb bacon (diced)
1 onion (diced)
1 lb can kidney beans
1 lb can baked beans
1 lb can lima beans (drained) or great northern beans
¼ c white sugar
2 TB molasses
½ tsp dry mustard
¾ c ketchup

Directions: Mix together and cook in crockpot on low for 8 hours or bake at 350° for 1 ½ hours. Enjoy.

Advocacy Update

Expanded Health Insurance Coverage for Hearing Aids

For quite some time, Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) has been pushing for hearing aid coverage in federal health plans. Several of the Federal Employee Health Benefits (FEHB) insurance plans have recently announced expanded coverage that includes coverage of hearing aids for adults. With over 8 million federal employees, the Federal Government is the largest employer in the US. This may be good news for anyone who has employer subsidized health insurance, since the FEHB often serves as the model program for other insurers.

Below are examples of added coverage offered in the FEHB plans:

1. Blue Cross/Blue Shield is adding hearing aids for adults up to \$1,000 per year, every 3 years in both options.
2. APWU is adding a new benefit with one exam and testing every 2 years paid at 90 percent of PPO allowance or 70 percent of allowance for non-PPO. Hearing aids every three years limited to \$1,500 maximum.
3. Mail Handlers, which already provided benefits of \$200 per hearing aid per ear, is increasing the amount to \$500, with replacement available every five years.
4. GEHA is adding a new benefit with a maximum of \$500 per ear, every five years.
5. Panama Canal is adding a new benefit with a \$1,000 lifetime maximum.
6. Foreign Service is adding a new benefit of 100 percent coverage, up to a maximum of \$1,200 per aid per ear per person and hearing exam, once every five years.
7. Rural Carriers is adding a new benefit up to \$1,100 per hearing aid per ear once every five years.
8. The Association is changing their hearing benefit coinsurance from 10 percent to 0 percent and will cover up to a maximum of \$1,400 for one hearing aid per ear.
9. Samba is adding hearing benefits up to \$500 per lifetime for hearing aids.
10. NALC is providing a lifetime maximum of \$1,000 for hearing aids
11. Health Alliance is adding a new benefit at a maximum of \$500 for hearing aids/devices once every three years.

Ask your employer if they cover hearing aids in your plan now. If your employer doesn't provide similar coverage, show them what's happening with FEHB.

Excerpts from
<http://www.hearingloss.org/advocacy/insurance.asp#insurance>

We have our own website!

Just in case you haven't seen it,
the address is:

<http://www.hla-fw.net>

You can find lots of information and our current newsletter as well as archival copies of the old newsletters.



Happy Holidays

HOLIDAY HEARING TIPS

Seven Tips to Better Communication

1. Realize that large social groups, especially around a large dining room table, are one of the most difficult environments for a person with a hearing loss. Be kind to yourself. Focus on the positive things that you can do, and not on the negatives of what you have difficulty doing. Think the glass is half full, not half empty.

2. It's easier to talk with people one-on-one in a quiet environment than in a noisy living room. So:

- Find a favorite friend or relative, and move the conversation into a quiet room, or a quieter corner. Or play a game or read a story to a child, if that's an option.
- Help out in the kitchen where there are usually less people gathered. And if you help with some preparations, you'll be doing something besides trying to hear.

3. When sitting down to dinner, make sure you choose a seat that is best for you! Here are some seating suggestions:

- If you have a "better side," seat yourself so that most people are on that side.
- Seat yourself next to a person you usually have the least difficulty hearing or lip-reading (avoid those folks with bushy mustaches and beards!)
- Seat yourself next to someone who usually has the patience to clue you in on what the conversation is about, or the punch lines you'll miss.
- Try not to seat yourself facing a window because the glare could make it difficult to see people's faces.
- Ask your host to turn off any background music during dinner. And if a football game is blaring from a TV, turn it off or if that's not an option, set it on mute.
- Remember to be assertive about your needs! Pleasant and polite, but assertive!

4. Conversation tips:

- It is inevitable that you will not be able to hear the conversation with many people talking and laughing at once. Content yourself with speaking with the people on either side of you.
- If you start a conversation, then you'll know what the topic is, so it will be easier to follow.
- If you miss something, try to ask only for the part you missed, instead of just saying "what?"
- Expect that there will be jokes that you will not hear, so you will find yourself sitting at a table where everyone is laughing except you. Stay calm—you have a few options:
 - ask the person next to you to tell you what was so funny
 - ask the person next to you to remember what was so funny so they can tell you later.
 - say "excuse me" to everyone at the table, and ask for the joke to be repeated so you can get it too.

Remember that if you do this with a pleasant attitude, then people will usually want to help you.

5. After-dinner strategies:

- Volunteer to help out in the kitchen to get yourself away from that dining table with all the conversations and jokes you're having trouble following. Do not offer to wash the dishes! This will put your back to everyone in the kitchen and you won't be able to lip-read. Offer to dry the dishes or put food away. Or just keep everyone company.
- Offer to wash the dishes if you want to take time out from trying to hear everyone, and you still want to feel useful.

6. To drink or not to drink?

Some people's lip-reading skills tend to get worse when they drink. Some people's lip-reading skills tend to get better when they drink because they're more relaxed. And, of course, there are pros and cons of drinking that impact on mood. Be aware of what works best for you. And remember, if you do drink, do so responsibly and never drink and drive.

7. Assistive listening devices

There are assistive listening devices, such as personal amplifiers and auxiliary microphones that can help you hear in noisy environments. These can work either in conjunction with your hearing aid or cochlear implant, or directly into your ears. They have been particularly helpful for older relatives who are left out of the loop in large family gatherings. If you need more information about these devices, please ask us!

These tips are offered by Arlene Romoff, author of *Hear Again: Back to Life with a Cochlear Implant* and president of the HLA-New Jersey State Association and reprinted from the *Hearing Loss Magazine* Nov/Dec 2008 issue.

A great big THANK YOU to all of our sponsors, advertisers, program presenters, members, and anyone else who has made it possible to continue our advocacy, education, and support mission. You are truly appreciated!!

Need To Be Convinced to Attend Our Meetings?

Here are some photos of a few meetings from 2008.



Annual Picnic



Annual Picnic



Dr. Lisa Fell on Hearing Aid Selection



Karen Vass Deeds on service animals.

CONVENTION 2009

Early-bird registration is still underway for the 2009 HLAA convention in Nashville, TN. The Convention is June 18-21, 2009, and promises to be the best yet, as we band together to celebrate HLAA's 30th birthday. You can go to www.hearingloss.org and see all the information about the convention, as well as the link to the Gaylord Opryland hotel's reservation system where we will be staying. If you prefer to register by mail, you can download the registration form from the website and mail it in. HLAA members who sign up for the full-activity package by December 31 will be entered in a drawing for a Nintendo Wii™ and save \$40 for a single member or \$73 for a member couple. If you're not a National HLAA member, become one today, and take advantage of the member registration discount.

There are five educational tracks in 2009, with the addition of the Young Adult Issues track. Other tracks are Healthy Living and Working, Relationships and Communication, Hearing Technology, and Advocacy and Access. Come learn new things and rekindle old friendships. Register today!

PARTY INFO!!

Our Holiday Party is on December 13. We're having a potluck brunch/lunch and festivities.

FOOD: If you haven't already let me know what you plan to bring, use this as a guideline:

Last name starts A-J, bring a bread or hors d'oeuvre.

Last name starts K-P, bring a salad or vegetable.

Last name starts Q-Z, bring a dessert.

The chapter will provide the meat and paper goods.

FUN:

Bring a gift to exchange (less than \$10). Funny and unusual gifts are great!

Wes Allen will do his famous Night Before Christmas.

We'll be singing...come on, no one can hear you!

SERVICE: This year has hit a lot of families really hard, so if you can, bring a canned or boxed good that we can give to our local food pantry.

Hearing Loss Association - Fort Worth

Name: _____ Individual Couple/Family

Address: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____

Email address: _____

Annual Chapter Activity Fee -\$10 individual/\$15 couple or family \$ _____

Newsletter only - \$5 \$ _____

HLAA National Dues - \$35 individual/\$45 couple or family \$ _____

Donation – local chapter or National Office (circle one) \$ _____

TOTAL \$ _____

Surviving the Holidays with Hearing Loss

Live Webchat With Samuel Trychin, PhD

December 11, 2008 at 6 pm CST at www.myhearingloss.org

If you are a first time user of the webchat at hearingloss.org, you will need to register a user name and password. Questions can be submitted to Dr. Trychin ahead of time by going to www.hearingloss.org/Community/askExpert.asp.

Samuel Trychin, Ph.D. is currently a full-time faculty member in the Department of Psychology at Penn-State, The Behrend College in Erie, PA. He also provides psychological consulting services to Stairways Behavioral Health in Erie, PA. Previously, he was the Director of Training at the Mental Health Research and Training Center for Hard of Hearing and Late-Deafened Adults, California School of Professional Psychology, San Diego, California (1994-1997), and a Professor of Psychology and the Director of the Living With Hearing Loss Program at Gallaudet University, Washington, DC (1981-1995).

Dr. Trychin also has a private practice in which conducts on-line and self-study classes for people who have hearing loss and their families. He also continues to conduct national training programs, classes, and workshops for people who are hard of hearing, their family members, and professionals who provide services to them. His specialty is the application of psychological concepts, principles, and procedures to problems and issues related to hearing loss.

Dr. Trychin has written 15 books, authored several professional book chapters and journal articles, and produced a variety of videotapes related to coping with hearing loss. He has conducted hundreds of workshops and training programs across the United States and in Canada. He and his wife Janet, an audiologist, frequently conduct workshops together.

Dr. Trychin received his Ph.D. in Psychology from the George Washington University, Washington, DC. He is a member of the American Psychological Association, is listed in the National Register of Health Service Providers in Psychology, and is a licensed psychologist in Pennsylvania. He is currently the Mental Health and Rehabilitation Advisor to the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA). Previously, he was a member of the Advisory Committees for Persons who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Dr. Trychin is hard of hearing himself and was issued his first hearing aids while serving in the United States Air Force. He has been a hearing aid user since that time. Further information about Dr. Trychin's program for people who are hard of hearing, their family members, and professionals who provide services to them can be obtained at www.trychin.com.



Have a Holly, Jolly Christmas!!



WEB CAPTEL PROGRAM

The November Program, presented by Fannae Shields, was on the Web CapTel Service by Sprint Relay. Fannae presented information and a demonstration on the program. Did everyone get the chance to use the service this month?

Fannae Shields discusses Web Captel



Members listen to the program



Fannae demonstrates Web Captel



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HEARING LOSS NEWSLETTER

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Annual Holiday Party

December 13, 2008
Goodrich Center

Bring your specialty dish to share.
Small gift (under \$10) to exchange.

**We'll be collecting for a local food
pantry, so if you can bring a canned
or boxed food item.**

Refreshments at 9:30 am
Festivities from 10:00 to 11:30

Bring family and friends.
*We use listening devices and live captioning
for communication accessibility at our meetings.*

2500 Lipscomb Street Fort Worth, TX