



Wake Chapter Newsletter August 2021

Websites: [Wake Chapter](#) [HLAA-NC](#) [HLAA National](#)

In This Newsletter

[NC HLAA Virtual Meetings Available to All](#)
[How to Attend these Virtual Meetings](#)
[Wendy Dembeck: Wake Walk4Hearing Team Leader](#)
[New Focus on HLAA Wake People Articles](#)
[Focus on HLAA Wake People: Steve Barber](#)
[Tech Focus: Introduction to Patch Cords](#)
[NC Walk4Hearing Local Sponsorships Available](#)
[HLAA Action Alert: Medicare Coverage for Hearing Aids](#)
[DSDHH Raleigh Regional Events](#)
[Wake Chapter Contacts](#)

NC HLAA Virtual Meetings Available to All

<p>HLAA-NC NC Walk4Hearing Virtual Kickoff Event Thursday Sep 2nd 7 p.m.</p>	<p>This virtual meeting will inspire you about the 2021 NC Walk4Hearing. Participants in this virtual kickoff meeting will be eligible for a raffle.</p> <p>Learn more about how you, your family and friends can participate in this fun event that brings attention to hearing health and raises funds for essential resources and educational programs for people with hearing loss. To join this meeting, click on the link below at or a little before the start time:</p> <p>https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81455469830?pwd=S3gzbxRjL04yUEExDS2s0bGJsQkx5dz09</p> <p>To learn how to join or support our HLAA Wake Chapter Team ... or just attend the Walk4Hearing, see this message from our Team Captain, Wendy Dembeck.</p>
<p>HLAA Charlotte Chapter Virtual Meeting Thursday Sep 9th 6:30 p.m.</p>	<p>You're welcome to join the HLAA Charlotte Chapter via Zoom (with CART captions and ASL and ASL Interpreters) to discuss topics of interest to people with hearing loss/hard of hearing in our community. Charlotte Eye Ear Nose and Throat audiologists are planned presenters.</p> <p>The Zoom meeting link is: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86178078863</p>
<p>HLAA Wake Chapter Virtual Meeting Thursday Nov 18th</p>	<p>Save the Date: Wake Chapter is planning a virtual meeting about assistive listening devices (ALDs). This meeting was originally planned as an in-person, but considering the current COVID third-wave trends, and for our members' safety, the board has decided we should continue with virtual meetings through this year.</p>

How to Attend These Virtual Meetings

- A couple of minutes before the meeting is scheduled to start, just click on the Zoom meeting link on any internet connected device with a video camera, speakers and a microphone. Some chapters provide the link:
 - In the meeting announcement like in the Charlotte meeting, above;
 - In an email a few days before the meeting;
 - Request in the announcement that you email them for the link.
- Make sure you've activated a microphone and speakers, and if you want captions, select them using the onscreen menu. [GO TO Page 1](#)

Wendy Dembeck: NC Walk4Hearing Wake Chapter Team Captain

Two years ago, as a new member of HLAA Wake Chapter, I volunteered to help at the Walk4Hearing, not really knowing what to expect. What happened was a real awakening! I met friendly people of all ages ready to walk to raise money to help all of us learn about hearing loss and what is available to make our lives better. So many people ready to have a great day getting their faces painted, having caricatures drawn, taking photos, enjoying a wonderful lunch, taking chances at a silent auction (I did very well) and just feeling good despite the iffy weather we faced. It was an absolutely joyful day of feeling and doing good all at the same time.

This year we're back out there in person, and it's going to be terrific. The fun may be the same or different, but you've got to be there to find out. Our Wake Chapter Team is forming right now, and I want you to become walker, or if you prefer, donate to support an existing walker. You can be part of the excitement, and experience what I've experienced. Be part of the fun.

There's one immutable fact. **We walk to raise money for HLAA**, and what we raise helps Wake Chapter continue to provide information, advocacy, and lifetime friendships with people who understand hearing loss. It enriches people and their families dealing with hearing loss.



Ron and Wendy Dembeck and Walk4Hearing Friend

At the [HLAA Wake Chapter Team Web Page](#), you can join our team by clicking on the green Join Team box. That will let you register as a new walker or log in as a returning walker. You'll be added to our Wake Chapter Team and people can donate to support you as a walker.

You don't have to be a walker. Instead, you can make a secure donation to support any existing walker on the team by clicking on their name. Either way, the funds raised will be used to support the important work of HLAA and Wake Chapter.

New Focus on Wake Chapter People Articles

Last month, the newsletter contained a new Focus on People article introducing Steve Latus, our new Chapter President. In the next few newsletters, I hope to include a similar article about each of our HLAA Wake Chapter Board members. They are drafting their articles as you read this, so look for them in each newsletter.

After all the board members, I hope to include similar articles by other members who volunteer to write an article about themselves and their hearing loss. So, if you're interested, start thinking about submitting your article to steve.barber@earthlink.net. Other articles about hearing loss are welcome anytime.

[GO TO Page 1](#)

Focus on People – Steve Barber, Wake Chapter Board Member

Steve grew up hearing, but started losing his hearing slowly in his 30s. Like most people, he delayed getting hearing aids for several years, but finally got two simple analog in-the-ear aids in his early 40s. A few years after moving to Cary in 1984, at about age 49, he noticed that his left ear was totally incapable of hearing anything at all ... even with his hearing aid.



A very good audiologist fit me with a new aid for my right ear, said it's pointless to get an aid for the left, advised me to get an MRI (to rule out an acoustic neuroma in the left ear), and suggested that I attend a Self Help for Hard of Hearing People (now HLAA) meeting. My wife had to make me attend that first meeting.

I found others at that meeting who understood a lot more about how to be good at hearing loss than I did. I found lifelong friends, willing to share what they knew about assistive listening technology and strategies that I would need to hear my best and continue my career.

The MRI, in 1990, was lifesaving. At least the benign tumor wouldn't kill me. But the MRI showed I not only had an acoustic neuroma on the left, I had another on the right that would eventually destroy that hearing too. Acoustic neuromas are benign but can be life threatening if allowed to grow too large. I was immediately scheduled for surgery to remove the left tumor, cutting that auditory nerve and ending all chance of hearing in that ear. The surgeon advised monitoring the right tumor as it destroyed my hearing before deciding how to remove or treat that. He said "start learning American Sign Language, because you're going to be totally deaf within five years."

With the help of HLAA, I was able to use my hearing aid, assistive listening devices, and strategies for another 15 years, before I got a ZERO on my last audiogram for word recognition. By then, a cochlear implant was my only option, and I agreed immediately. Because of what I'd learned from HLAA, and the help from some great audiologists and that same surgeon, I was able to retire from IBM, continue my career as a software tester, and retire after 15 years with SAS Institute.

I'm grateful for the volunteer opportunities that my hearing loss and HLAA opened up to me. I'd never been much of a volunteer, but HLAA presented such a wonderful opportunity to help myself and others, I couldn't refuse. Since the early 1990s I've been a board member, President, Co-President, and tech support for HLAA Wake Chapter. I volunteered at a local high school with the Deaf and Hard of Hearing program. I became a Trustee and Chair of the NC SHHH State Association. That led to eight years on the NC Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Council advising DSDHH. Because of all these wonderful opportunities, I've made so many good friends in the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community that my life has been enriched.

My cochlear implant has been amazing. After expecting to spend the last third of my life completely deaf, I'm now able to hear better than I had for years as my hearing declined. Technology is wonderful, but it's not perfect, and it's not enough. It takes information, strategies, advocacy, determination and friends to make a difference, too. That's what HLAA has given me, and can give you, too.

[GO TO Page 1](#)

Tech Focus: Introduction to Patch Cords

Patch cords are often needed to connect (or “patch”) an assistive listening device (ALD) to an audio source, typically via 3.5 mm diameter ports labeled “audio output” or “headphone.” These patch cords are cheap and widely available. Here are some things that can help you get the right one and know how to use it.

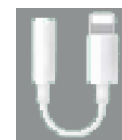
- 3.5 mm patch cords come in various lengths. Any length will do, as long as it’s long enough to connect your ALD with the desired audio source.
- Connectors at the ends of the patch cord can be “male” or “female.” The image at the right shows two ends of a patch cord (one male and one female). You can probably guess which is which.
- Male connectors are called “plugs,” and female connectors are called “jacks.” Of course, that seems counter-intuitive, but that makes the names easy to remember if you just think: It’s the opposite of Jack and Jill.
- Some connectors are mono, and some are stereo. The male plug that’s stereo will have three metal sections separated by two (usually) black insulator like the image at the right. That provides connections for a ground and two channels. Mono plugs only have two metal sections separated by a single (usually black) insulator ...like the image at the right. If you’re plugging into a stereo source and want stereo, you’ll need the stereo version, which MAY also work for mono sources, but not always.
- There are adaptors available to convert stereo jacks to mono jacks and adaptors to convert a mono jack to stereo (but these only merge channels and won’t create true (two-channel) stereo. Some FM receivers loaned by various venues require one or the other, so you may need one of these adaptors if your patch cord has a plug or jack that’s the wrong type.
- There are adaptors that link patch cords to make them longer, or convert plugs to jacks or vice-versa.
- If you’re streaming to a mono connector (like a neckloop) or if you, yourself, are mono, you can use a stereo-to-mono adaptor to merge the channels, or if you’re streaming music from a smartphone, you can use the source device settings to merge the two channels to mono.
- Many newer devices use a digital fiber optical cable and matching jacks like the one in the table below.
- Some TVs and stereos still use RCA cables with plugs that look like the two in the table below.
- TVs usually have two or three types of jacks for audio outputs shown left to right, below.
 - TOSLink (a digital optical fiber jack). This requires a TOSLink cable. The plugs on both ends have a tiny plastic cap over the fiber to protect it, so you must remove that before plugging in a TOSLink cable. Note that the jack is shaped like a “D,” so you have to make sure you align the plug accordingly, and it can be a tight fit, so be sure to push it in until you hear a satisfying click. Also,
 - 3.5 mm jack (usually called an audio output or headphone jack).
 - RCA jacks which require RCA cables. RCA jacks are also used for video and inputs, so be careful to choose audio output jacks if you use RCA jacks.



TOSLink Jack (Optical)	TOSLink Plug (Optical)	3.5 mm Jack	3.5 mm Plug	RCA Jacks	RCA Plugs

- Newer Apple smartphones and tablets don’t have a 3.5 mm jack. They use a “lightning” jack, so if you want to use a patch cord to connect a headphone, neckloop or FM transmitter to a smartphone with a lightning jack, you’ll need to buy a lightning to 3.5 mm adaptor like the one at the right.

[GO TO Page 1](#)



NC Walk4Hearing Local Sponsorships Available

We are seeking sponsors for our NC Walk4Hearing to be held on October 10. Do you have an audiologist or ENT doctor who may want to donate? The money we raise is shared by HLAA National and the NC Walk4Hearing.

We also welcome sponsors from businesses that are not related to hearing loss. Individuals are also encouraged to be sponsors. There are sponsorships to suit all levels of interest and each includes appropriate recognition. For sponsorship forms and questions about sponsorship, contact Janet McGettrick at jmcgettrick106@gmail.com.

HLAA National Action Alert: Medicare Coverage for Hearing Aids

Lise Hamlin, director of public policy at HLAA, has sent out an [Action Alert](#) about HLAA's efforts to encourage Congress to support expanding Medicare to include coverage of hearing aids. That linked Action Alert also includes information and links to help you notify your Senators and Representative that you support the expansion.

DSDHH Raleigh Regional Events

This [LINK](#) will take you to the Raleigh Regional Events web page. It includes opportunities to request a free box of clear masks, and to attend several virtual events that might be of interest. Most virtual events are signed, but many do include captions. Some Zoom meetings are captioned, others may be captioned on request, when you register. Events of particular interest to people with hearing loss include:

- Request free clear masks that allow you to see peoples' lips;
- Open captioned showing of Shang-Chi at Marbles IMAX;
- HLAA Chapter Development Workshop with Ida Institute;
- Several signed Zooms if you're interested in American Sign Language (ASL).

HLAA Wake Chapter Contacts

Steve Latus (President)

Steve Barber (Media)

Janet McGettrick (Member Outreach)

Susan Goldner (Treasurer)

slatus@comcast.net

steve.barber@earthlink.net

jmcgettrick106@gmail.com or 919-469-0924

goldaub1@aol.com

630 Upchurch St, Apt H
Apex NC 27502

[GO TO Page 1](#)