



Wake Chapter Newsletter July 2026

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Caption Glasses Making Impact

In the HLAA Wake Chapter May 28 program meeting, Tom Pritsky, the co-founder and chief executive officer of [Captify](#), a leading player in the fast-evolving caption glasses field, explained how his company's products are making a positive impact on people with hearing loss and their families.

Pritsky spoke with chapter members via Zoom from California, where Captify is based. He made a brief presentation and then responded to more than a half hour of questions from program participants.



Caption glasses are generating significant excitement because they offer a real-time and hands-free way for deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals to engage in conversations. By using speech recognition technology powered by artificial intelligence, these augmented reality devices project captions that seem to display directly onto lenses, allowing users to "see" what people are saying. Pictured above are a pair of Captify glasses.

As someone with moderate-to-severe bilateral hearing loss who has been using hearing aids since early childhood, Pritsky knows the challenges of functioning in noisy environments.

"I can hear everything in a noisy environment," he says. "I just can't understand it. Frequently with the captions provided by caption glasses, you can bring back that understanding."

This assertion was supported by chapter member Wendy Dembeck, who tried out a pair of Captify glasses for a few weeks in advance of the program meeting. Dembeck used the glasses in restaurants on a handful of occasions, most successfully on Easter Sunday.

"The restaurant was crowded and there was music," she says. "There were four of us in a booth and I had no problem at all, which was amazing."

Interested in learning more? Excerpts from the program Q&A session are found on [Page 2](#).

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Answers to Questions About Caption Glasses

As part of the Wake Chapter's May 28 program on caption glasses, participants were able to ask questions to Tom Pritsky, the leader of Captify, a major player in the caption glasses field. Questions and answers have been edited for length and clarity. See [Page 1](#) for more details on the program.



What is the cost for the glasses?

Pritsky: We have two models today. We have a pro model that's \$699, and then we have a base model that's \$500. The pros have significantly better microphones. They are slightly lighter and they look and feel nicer. They're essentially our newest generation product. There is also an optional subscription service that's \$15 a month. We currently offer it for free for the first three months of usage. You get to try it out for free, see if you like it or not, and then decide if you want to use it or not. The service has a lot of features beyond captioning. In addition to the highest accuracy captions, it will also give you more languages for translation, it will give you AI summaries of any conversation you have, and it will do speaker labeling – determine which speaker is saying what, and things like that. The other thing we offer is prescriptions. We offer virtually every prescription out there, from single vision to progressive lenses, bifocals, prisms. We offer low and high index, which just means thinner or thicker glass.

How do customers provide their prescriptions to Captify?

Pritsky: We offer several options. When you buy our product either through us or an audiologist, you can upload the prescription that you got from an optometrist onto our website, and then we'll fill it. We can provide you with inserts that snap into your frames, or we can actually bind the prescription to your glasses, so the lenses are not removable. That makes the glasses a little lighter and sleeker. However, if your prescription is changing constantly, you'd have to get new glasses. We offer both options, depending on what you want. There is a third option that doesn't include Captify in the loop. Every Captify box comes with a dummy insert. You can take the insert to your optometrist and say, "Hey, can you fit my prescription into this frame?" And if they do, you'll just pop the optometrist's lenses into your frames.

Can these glasses be used in a movie theater?

Pritsky: Movie theaters are a particularly good case because you have, essentially, really loud audio with no background noise. So, the glasses will work well in a movie theater. They will not be 100% accurate, though. The glasses are particularly good at captioning spoken speech, but if you have speech that's sung, they're not going to be particularly good at giving you the lyrics for a song. They do have a mode that shows you non-speech sounds. In addition to the captions, we can detect over 500 sounds that are not speech, like a baby crying, a fire alarm, or an explosion. All of that can be detected and displayed.

Are the captions projected on the glasses themselves?

Pritsky: The text is actually projected at a distance in front of you. So, it's like looking at captions floating under the person you're talking to. So that's the experience you'd be having. And that's partly what the technology enables today that wasn't possible in the past.

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Positive Experiences Shared at Summer Social

Thanks to all attendees and volunteers participating in the HLAA Wake Chapter 2026 summer social held at the J.C. Raulston Arboretum in Raleigh on June 28.

Before dining, the 21 attendees reflected on a positive element of their hearing loss experiences. Responses ranged from humorous to poignant and set an upbeat tone for the lunch and conversation that followed.



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Chapter Member Shares HLAA 2026 Convention Highlights

*The Hearing Loss Association of America 2026 Convention took place June 9-12 in Louisville. It brought together hundreds of people with hearing loss from around the United States to learn, discover and connect. Wake Chapter board member **Wendy Cheng** (second from left in group photo on the right) numbered among the attendees, and she provided the following convention summary.*

HLAA chapter leaders met on June 9, the day before the actual start of the convention. The presentations for the chapter leaders training were very well thought out. I really enjoyed the presentation by Daniel Reiner, HLAA's director of communications and marketing, on how HLAA planned to help smaller chapters to create microsites that could be under HLAA's parent website with a similar look and feel. I also love the idea of HLAA implementing a customer relationship management tool that could help direct people new to HLAA to information about local chapters and help the local chapters find new members.



Among the Wake Chapter members attending the convention were (l-r) Steve Latus, Wendy Cheng, Sharron Bradshaw, Julia Freifeld and Jon Flescher.

I attended several workshops that focused on cochlear implants or technology. One workshop that focused on maximizing use of your cochlear implant mentioned a website that was manufacturer-agnostic and had several troubleshooting tips. You can also create an account and track the maintenance schedule of your cochlear implant(s) there. The site address is <https://clarity-sound-path.base44.app>

Another workshop focused on assistive technology and communication access in the digital age. Jason Taylor from the Dallas HLAA chapter talked about what to expect regarding current and future technology trends related to communication access. He observed that accessibility features for hearing devices are moving from being "special equipment" to built-in features. By 2030, he said, accessibility features will feel less like special equipment and more like default features.

Captioning was provided at all the convention sessions, and the conference rooms were equipped with hearing loops and Bluetooth Auracast broadcast audio. I enjoyed trying out the Auracast receivers with over-the-ear headsets that were available. I discovered that while the audio coming through the Auracast receiver was pretty good, I could have plugged the receiver into my Roger On wireless microphone rather than the provided headset. That would have been more comfortable and probably would have sounded better. I will remember to bring the right connecting cable to the next HLAA convention!

In the exhibit hall there were only about 24 exhibitors, but some products really stood out to me. One is called Rylo (formerly Nagish). Most people use Rylo as a captioned phone app, but I was impressed with its ability to do live transcription. (For example, think about trying to understand a dental assistant while she is wearing a mask when you are at an in-person appointment.) I especially liked the fact you could change the font size and color if needed. I thought this was a big plus since seniors who have hearing loss also may have vision issues as well. This app can be found on both the iOS Apple App Store and the Android/Google Play App Store.

Another device called Caption Companion (<https://captioncompanion.com/>) was interesting. This was a small 8-inch tablet that you just turn on to use for face-to-face encounters, and it transcribes speech to text off-line. There is no need to sign up for an account or download an app. It can become very valuable for people who are not technologically savvy, and it will also transcribe in multiple languages. [GO TO Page 1](#)

I also got to try a few caption glasses.

The location of the convention — next to the Ohio River waterfront — was amazing. Overall, I liked the convention's meeting facilities, but I was a bit concerned about how much walking was required between the exhibit hall and the workshop rooms. The distances would have been challenging for someone with mobility challenges who could only walk short distances.

I look forward to using some of the resources I've learned at the convention over the next several months!

Additional convention photos (clockwise from top left): The Galt House Hotel hosted the convention; the General Session featured leading hearing aid manufacturers discussing product innovations; the Research Symposium focused on the AI revolution in hearing health; the Exhibit Hall provided opportunities to learn about various products and services.



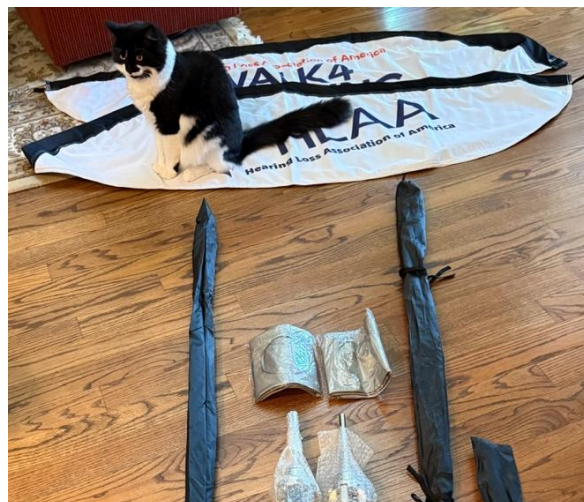
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Volunteer for 2026 North Carolina Walk4Hearing

Preparations are well underway for the 2026 North Carolina Walk4Hearing, which takes place Sunday, November 8, at WakeMed Soccer Park in Cary.

If you'd like to join the team organizing the walk, please contact Steve Latus (slatus@comcast.net). Assistance is sought for recruiting volunteers, securing sponsorships, organizing walk day activities and many other tasks.

As you can see on the right, Ampersand, one of the family cats, has already volunteered to assist Steve as early shipments of walk supplies are sorted in the living room.



Take Healthcare Communication Challenges Survey

You can take an online survey targeted at people with hearing loss in which participants share their experiences and perspectives on communication challenges encountered during primary healthcare appointments.

The survey was developed as part of the doctoral project of Kemeny Ridley, a second-year Doctor of Audiology student at Central Michigan University.

“While hearing healthcare is often discussed within audiology,” she says, “we know that communication during medical appointments outside of our field is just as important.”

More details on the [survey](#), which takes about 15 minutes to complete, are included in the graphic on the right.

LOOKING FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS!

- Topic**
Understanding Experiences With Communication Barriers Faced by d/Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Patients in Primary Healthcare Settings
- Requirments to Participate**
 - Identify as d/Deaf or hard of hearing
 - Be 18 years or older
 - Have used non-audiology healthcare services in the past 12–24 months
 - Includes: physician, physician's assistant, or nurse practitioner
 - Reside in the United States
- What You Will Do**
Double-click on the link box or scan the QR code to complete a 15–20-minute online survey sharing your experiences and perspectives on communication challenges encountered during primary healthcare appointments.
- Click the Link**
<https://bit.ly/3QFfCMZ>
- Questions, Concerns, Thoughts?**
Stacey R. Lim, AuD, PhD, CCC-A, Lim3s@cmich.edu
Ridley N. Kemeny, B.S, Berth1kn@cmich.edu

Qualtrics Survey | Qualtrics Experience Management
The most powerful, simple and trusted way to gather experience data. Start your journey to experience management and try a free account today.
qualtrics.com

The Central Michigan University Institutional Review Board has approved this study

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Tech Focus: Auracast Status Update

Auracast continues to look like the future of audio streaming.

Over the next few years Auracast can gradually improve the availability of audio streaming options by:



- 1) Standardizing streaming technology
- 2) Providing broadcast capability (not just 1 to 1, like earlier Bluetooth, but 1 to many)
- 3) Cheaper deployment of transmitters for more venues
- 4) Lowering costs for TV streamers and remote microphones
- 5) Longer range
- 6) Improved fidelity
- 7) “Universal Design” for streaming audio (not just for hearing loss anymore)

Hearing aid and CI developers are committing. A few hearing aid companies (including ReSound, Jabra and Oticon) already have released models that are Auracast capable. Some hearing aid companies (Signia and Starkey) have released selected models that are Auracast “ready” and plan to release firmware updates to make them fully capable. Cochlear Corporation has also released selected Auracast ready models with firmware to be released soon. It appears that some models will support Auracast and continue to support current streaming technology. Other major developers are planning their support for Auracast.

Legacy streaming protocols need to be supported. Made For iPhone (MFi) and Audio Streaming for Hearing Aids (ASHA) are the two main streaming protocols used by different hearing aids and CIs. It’s expected that as Auracast emerges, those legacy protocols will still support existing streaming along with Auracast on most hearing devices.

Other audio developers are committing. There are a few TVs, computers, headphones and earbuds that already support Auracast, and many adaptors are becoming available that can be patched to audio sources and transmit Auracast audio even from TVs, computers or other audio sources.

Many companies are starting to offer installation of Auracast transmitters. While there are not many currently installed Auracast transmitters in public venues (at least in the Raleigh area), companies specializing in installing Auracast in public venues are installing Auracast transmitters in some venues and in audiology offices in a few larger cities around the world like New York, London and Paris.

It will still take years, but the promise is great. The international standards for Auracast are still being finalized but are expected to be completed by the end of next year. It’s not too early to start planning for it.

What does all this mean to you? As you think about your next upgrade of your hearing aids, or if you’re planning to get a hearing aid or a cochlear implant, you might want to consider choosing at least “ready for Auracast” or “Auracast capable” models. Venues like movie theaters, live theaters and churches will probably wait until enough customers with hearing loss have upgraded their hearing aids and CIs (and people without hearing loss have upgraded their ear buds) to be Auracast capable before installing Auracast transmitters. That’s an advocacy opportunity for us. If we grow the demand and advocate for venues to be ready to support Auracast we can make the transition happen faster. If we can convince venues to install Auracast transmitters, we can then enjoy movies, plays, church services and other audio-rich venues (classrooms, museums, airports, trains, taxis, etc.) ... without having to borrow receivers or worry that their batteries won’t work.

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