



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

WIRED FOR SOUND

To Hear When Traveling, Educate Your Smartphone

Part 2: Other Uses of your phone

Stephen O. Frazier, Hearing Loss Support Specialist

Watching TV

Long layovers can stretch a traveler's patience even if there's a nearby TV providing entertainment. Often the captions are not turned on and ambient noise makes it nearly impossible to understand the dialog. Well, the **Tunity** app can sometimes solve the problem. Tunity allows users to hear live audio even from distant or muted TVs. It identifies a live video stream and its exact timing, syncing the audio with the user's smartphone. Use it at bars, gyms, restaurants, waiting rooms, airports and even at home. Hear with your smartphone connected to hearing aids via Bluetooth or a neckloop/t-coil option. Point your smartphone's camera at the TV screen and Tunity will do the rest. I didn't believe it could really work until I tried it. It took a little practice but then it somehow determined exactly where I was located, what program I was watching and, unbelievably, it provided the actual sound for that program. For us lip-readers it even lets us sync the sound to the lips of the speaker if they are not already in sync. Available for Android or iPhone devices, some users have reported problems with it, but I found it has worked fine for me. After downloading the app, users are allowed to use it free for a short time and then there is a charge to use it.

Safety Alerts

Safety alert apps could be especially wel-



come when you're traveling. **Sound Alert**, available for both iOS and Android smartphone operating systems, hears the smoke alarm going off in another room when you don't. It will alert you via notifications, vibrations and flashing lights on your smartphone or tablet when any preprogrammed sound goes off in the house or hotel, such as a smoke alarm, a doorbell or a ringing phone. Smoke and carbon monoxide sounds are installed in the app. For a doorbell, a ringing phone or other sounds, you record the specific sounds in your environment, and it recognizes them. There's a free Android or iPhone version of this app that's not terribly highly rated, or there's a "full" version that's \$36.99 for the iPhone and \$54.99 for the Android version. At those prices, one would hope it works well, but there were no user reviews posted for these versions and I have not tested it.

SOSAlert is another free emergency app that helps you out whenever your safety is at risk by reaching out to your emergency contacts and providing them with your current location. It has no ads, a user-friendly interface and the widget for sending SOS Alerts works with just one tap. Why would you want this when you can use that same cellphone to call for help? OK, you're hiking in the mountains in New Mexico and realize you're lost, or you've strayed from your friends on a visit to Paris (and you



continued on page 3

WIRED FOR SOUND

is published by the
HEARING LOSS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA
ALBUQUERQUE CHAPTER
Providing support and advocacy for
people with hearing loss

P. O. Box 36792,
Albuquerque, NM 87176
HLAAbq@gmail.com

Home page: hearinglossabq.org

[Hearing Loss Association of America
– Albuquerque chapter](#)



Mention of goods or services in articles or advertisements or meetings does not mean endorsement by Hearing Loss Association of America, Albuquerque Chapter, nor does exclusion suggest disapproval.

ABQ Chapter Board:

President:
VACANT

Treasurer: Bobbi Rodríguez
TreasurerHLAAbq@gmail.com

Editor: A. E. "Rod" Rodríguez
EditorHLAAbq@gmail.com

Membership & Web Master: Jim Dillow
catchJimmy@comcast.net

VP Programs: Olivia Fadul
OFadul@unm.edu

Publicity Chair:
VACANT

Hospitality Chair:
VACANT

Professional Advisor: Dr. Carol Clifford
CClifford@abqhearing.com

Past Pres./Advisor: Mary Clark
Mary@mandgclark.com

Past Pres./Advisor: Dr. Norm Dawson
DrNorm@gmail.com

The Albuquerque HLAA Chapter is
affiliated with the



www.hearingloss.org
6116 Executive Blvd., Suite 320
Rockville, MD 20852
phone: (301)657-2248

18 Nov Meeting 10:00 AM To Noon—**on Zoom****Elder Law – Including an Introduction To Estate Planning, Wills and Trusts**

Please join us for what promises to be the most accessible talk we will likely ever have on the topic of wills, trusts and elder law. We are pleased to have Johanna Pickel join us to share her expertise from her Estate Planning and Elder Law Firm. Before beginning her law firm, Johanna was in the Air Force and served as an assistant Judge Advocate General (JAG). In addition to working with military families with elder law, she has experience in special education and she is a member of the SNA or Special Needs Alliance. She is uniquely suited to share with our members about the ins and out of wills and trusts for people with hearing loss. Since our meetings always provide ASL interpreters, and captioning, what better way to learn this important information firsthand, instead of sitting in a lawyers office and coming away wondering just what exactly was said. We'll see you on Saturday November 18th.

Johanna Pickel has her Masters in Law (LL.M.) in Estate Planning and Elder Law from the Western New England University School of Law. She attended the University of New Mexico School of Law (UNMSOL) for her Juris Doctorate (J.D.), graduating in 2004. After graduating from the University of New Mexico Law School, Mrs.



Pickel joined the United States Air Force as an assistant Judge Advocate General (JAG), serving in Florida, Japan, and Colorado. She is a veteran of the Iraq conflict, deploying with the Law and Order Task Force (LAOTF) in 2008.

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.

don't speak French). In the case of an emergency like that, a link of your current location on Google Maps is sent as part of your SOS to your emergency contacts so that they can locate you accurately. The emergency contacts and the SOS message are stored on your device, so only you and your listed contacts have access to it. You can edit what the SOS message says and add other useful information regarding your emergency.

For iPhone users, **My SoS Family**, too, connects to a "first responder" family and friends list you create which keeps them informed in an emergency. Contacts are alerted instantly via the app, not your phone. It calls and texts your emergency contacts using Apple's Find My Device feature.

WiFi Audio Streaming

WiFi-based audio streaming is becoming more prevalent in places of worship, sports bars and gyms in this country. It uses a venue's WiFi system to silently transmit sound directly to your smartphone **if** you have the right app installed. That app can vary from one venue to another, and you might have to download it on the spot to access their system, but there's one free version that may interest the hearing as well as those with hearing loss. It's usually found in gyms, but could be used elsewhere. By having the app installed on your phone, if you get into such a setting and can't hear what the speaker is saying, what's on the TV or whatever, turn it on and see. It may be available on WiFi that matches your download of **MYE Fitness Entertainment** that's been integrated into leading health club mobile apps. It may also be the app used in sports bars to hear the TV. To hear the audio, you can use Bluetooth or a neckloop connected to your smartphone. I'm hoping my gym will be using this app when I end my COVID-19 sabbatical and return to my cardio rehab routine there.

Language Translation

Foreign language translation was already mentioned as a feature of the iPhone Speechy app.

There's a plethora of such apps available for Android phones. My pick is Google's **Translate**. It and other such apps enable travelers, students, business professionals, employers and medical staff to read, write and speak in more than 100 languages, anywhere in the world. Just start speaking and Translate recognizes your voice and translates to your desired language. I recently used it to communicate with an elderly Chinese gentleman in a local oriental supermarket when I found he did not speak English. It turned out I was in the Japanese aisle and the hoisin sauce was in the Chinese aisle. Next time I'm in Paris I won't need to seek out an English speaker when I get lost in the subway. French is one of the many languages my smartphone speaks almost like a native.

Quiet Places

Last, but not least, on my list of "must have" apps is **SoundPrint**—an app that helps you find a quiet place to relax and talk with your traveling companion about the new sights and sounds you experienced that day. This app has not been around for a long time, so I was surprised by its length and variety when I did a search for quiet restaurants in my hometown of Albuquerque the first time and found a list of more than 40 quiet to very loud eateries posted. SoundPrint is a free app available at Google Play and the App Store. It gives users access to the huge and only public database of sound levels taken at more than 100,000 venues worldwide. Easy to use, the app is a valuable tool for finding a quiet restaurant, bar or cafe wherever you are, based on the ambient sound level experienced by others. It also allows you to rate and review places based on their service, in addition to the sound levels you experienced on your visit there. Because SoundPrint's engineers have found that, unlike iPhones, not all Android smartphone microphones are up to the standards necessary to take really accurate sound level readings; the built-in sound meter in the app currently works only with certain Android phones. If that's the case and

it won't work on your phone, you can still submit a rating for the place you want to add to the SoundPrint database by offering a subjective rating for the sound level such as quiet, moderate, loud or very loud. If that doesn't suit you, you can, as I've done, download one of the many sound level meter apps available to take an objective reading you can use in submitting your evaluation of the venue or location.

As made clear by the creators of SoundPrint, the quality and ability of smartphone mics varies as does the available volume from the phone, so performance will vary from one phone to another with these apps.

Some of the apps reviewed here are free, some are not. Some of those free ones have an advanced version for which there are charges. Especially for each of the free ones, you've got nothing to lose and a lot to gain, so, as Mikey said to his brother in the long-running Life cereal commercials, "Try it, you'll like it."

The ancient Chinese philosopher and writer Lao Tzu said, "A journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step." That single step can be the decision not to let hearing loss deprive you of the opportunity to explore the tremendous variety in people, places and practices that travel can afford those brave enough to take that step. Travel offers the reward of being able to experience everyday things as if for the first time, where very little is familiar, and much is waiting to be explored.

Tried and New Travel Tips

Over the years I copied, pasted and saved travel tips that I would come across on the internet or through my reading that were intended to help people with hearing loss. Some are just good common sense, but others have information that was new to me and may very well be new to others. So, in addition to educating their smart-phone, readers might want to review the old or possibly, to them, new ideas in these travel tips.

If you are a person living with hearing loss, obviously the first thing you need to do is acknowledge that fact and adjust your behavior to compensate for your inability to sometimes hear well enough. Few people will recognize that you have a hearing loss unless you alert them and let them know what accommodations you require to communicate with them. After that, consider these tried-and-true strategies that will make travel and the subsequent exploration of strange and exciting new places and experiences more meaningful.

In Preparation

- If you are experienced with a computer, book hotel and other travel reservations and your ticket online. You won't have to struggle to hear and understand a fast talking or accented agent, and you'll receive email confirmations that gives you a written record of just what arrangement you've made.
- If you have a smartphone, download a speech-to-text app described earlier to help communicating with ticket agents and others during travel when hearing them is difficult.
- If you have telecoil-equipped hearing aids, have a neck-loop to take along and download the Sound Amplifier app at Google Play or a similar Apple app. It will turn your smartphone into a pocket-talker for added flexibility in communicating with others.
- Sign up to have flight delays or gate changes sent to you as text messages instead of phone calls or emails.
- Download a captioned phone app so you will have captioned access during your trip for placing and receiving calls.
- Batteries may be hard to find after you arrive at your destination, and your many devices need power to work, so be sure to pack fresh batteries for each of them. Check also that all your chargers are working well, and bring an extra if available.
- Should you have one, pack an extra set of hearing aids for the trip.

- If your hearing aids are rechargeable, be sure to take the charger and put it in your carry-on in case your checked luggage doesn't arrive with you. There are small, almost credit card sized portable chargers available for those rechargeable hearing aids with removable batteries from PowerOneBatteries.com.
- Take a pen and notepad with you to communicate with ticket/gate agents if needed.
- Download the SoundPrint app (soundprint.com) for its quiet list that identifies restaurants and bars in cities that are less noisy and more conducive to conversation.
- Print your ticket and boarding pass at home or send it to your smartphone.
- Apply for a Transportation Security Administration (TSA) Notification Card about your hearing condition. Get one at tsa.gov.
- If you're traveling by train or bus, instead of or in addition to air, most transportation companies offer their own apps that will give you access to timetables and provide alerts for gate changes or delays. Familiarize yourself with these and any other apps in advance so you don't have to learn their operation under pressure.

***Disclaimer:** HLAA and the author of this article do not endorse any specific product or app. This article does not include all the apps available to people with hearing loss.*

*For the full article, see *Hearing Life*, Spring 2022, HearingLoss.org, 23*

My Story

Clint Stimpson, Albuquerque resident

I was born in a farming community in the Magic Valley area of Idaho, being the third child out of nine. The scent of various crops and sagebrush, dusty dirt roads, horses, cold winters, and busy summers fills my memories. I had a severe to profound hearing loss since birth and have an older brother with the same hearing loss. My parents had discovered my brother's hearing loss, started becoming familiar it and later tested mine as best as any parent could. Apparently, I fooled them, and it wasn't until I was about 3 years old that they discovered I indeed had a hearing loss.

I started attending a pre-school with others who were deaf and hard of hearing, learned sign language, learned to read lips, and wore hearing aids. While in elementary school, my parents decided to move from Idaho to Colorado, the main reason being that my brother and I could hopefully get a better education there. While in Colorado, I stopped using sign language, and integrated as best I could with others around me.

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**.

I developed a love for science and math in school, participated in track and field, and competed at state level competitions on the topics of math, technology and track. Outside of the school environment, I also participated in my church and in the boy scouts organization. I had decided I wanted to become a mechanical engineer, and a couple years later I started college at Brigham Young University, getting started right away in their engineering department.

After a year of college, I decided to go on a mission for my church and was also willing to re-learn sign language. I ended up serving in the Houston and Los Angeles areas. This was the beginning of my exposure to a new world of deaf people, which seemed so different from the world of hard of hearing or from the world of the hearing. I worked on my sign language to the point where I could communicate fluently and comfortably and

had many opportunities to meet deaf people in schools and in the community.

When returning home, and back to BYU, I was again at another point of making choices of where to go with my life. I had decided to drop track and field and no longer try to balance that with college engineering courses. I almost didn't continue my association with the deaf community, but friends helped convince me to continue that connection. Shortly after, I met my future wife from the deaf community, and we married and started a family. I graduated from BYU and started a new career working at a small startup business in Utah doing computer modeling for engineering analysis and simulations. I spent most of that work time on a contract with Sandia National Labs. While going forward with family life and work, I would also include myself in the scouting and education communities volunteering my time. I transitioned to work for Sandia Labs continuing my work in simulation modeling, and I am now at the point where some of my five children are now starting new lives on their own.

It is neat to see the advances in technology with listening devices, transcription and video calling, and I think much of that technology has made living with a hearing loss easier. Hearing aids have made it easier to interact in the hearing world. I've worn them constantly since I was little and have upgraded to newer models. The new digital hearing aids with Bluetooth capabilities make it so much easier to call people from a smartphone and actually understand more of the conversation. Additionally, the new smart phones have automatic transcription capabilities which help me have the confidence to call basically anyone instead of keeping most of my calls limited to family members whose voices I have gotten used to.

Similar technological advancements have happened in the workplace which allow me to participate more fully in meetings and discussions and act more independently and advocate for myself. An instance where I would struggle in the past is where some meetings would be over a speaker phone and I would be almost completely out of the loop. To have a voice in these types of work conditions, I would resort to one-on-one or small group discussions to voice my thoughts or to hear other people's thoughts. Thankfully, I had supportive coworkers in those situations where I was unable to be more independent. I have also used video phones where ASL interpreters would be available on demand to translate in a phone call. The hearing person on the other end would not need to be aware of or need to make accommodations to help the phone call succeed.

My hearing loss has slowly progressed over the years, and that has given me an increased sense of disconnecting from those around me. During my childhood or teen years, I could understand much of what was going on around me and hear reasonably well on the phone, but as an adult, the same level of engagement has become harder.

The technological advances happening in this modern time have helped close that growing gap. Participating in the deaf community where sign language is the primary means of communication has given me additional social circles, which I have enjoyed. In these circles, there is less reliance on technology, and communication still happens with relative ease.

Having a hearing loss has been a challenge in some situations, yes, but it is comforting to know that there are others out there who are in similar situations, and having a hearing loss does not need to prevent one from being able to achieve goals.

I have found that in my dreams I seem to have perfectly normal hearing.
Now my wife wonders why I spend so much time napping.



Thanks to those listed below for their generous donations.

Platinum \$400+

Adelaide Zabriskie

Gold \$200 - \$399

Rosalin Cohen

Michael Lieberman

John Simmons

Ginevra Ralph

Silver \$100 - \$199

Barbara Armstrong

Gloria Inlow

Mike Langner

Bronze \$50 - \$99

Carol Emerson

Barbara Fix
 Kim Granzow
 Linnea Hendrickson
 Bette Jean Ingui
 Don Johnson
 James & Sharen Koch
 Fran Neil
 Rod & Roberta Rodríguez
 Marge Weitzel

Friends - up to \$49

Gail S. Anastasio
 Geraldine Boden
 Margie Collins
 Norm Dawson
 Don Degasperi

Judy Elder
 Elisabeth Endean
 Shirley Furen
 Andrew “Bo” Gamboa
 Rita D. García
 Patricia Gonzáles
 Roy & Helen Johnson
 Richard Johnson
 Ralph & Barbara Kaplan
 Barbara Kerr
 Richard & Pushpa Knottenbelt
 Dirk & Arlene Knowles
 Victoria L. Magown

Deanna & Bob McMain
 Barbara Pierce
 Mary J. Rajé
 Lindasue Romero
 Mara Saubers
 Carol Sliney
 Harriet S. Smith
 Steve Smith
 Tan Va
 Tim Taylor
 Richard Tuschhoff

**Special
 Smith’s
 Community
 Rewards
 Frontstream**

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 by annual dues, which are separate from the annual Chapter fee paid to your local chapter. National membership includes a subscription to the bi-monthly publication Hearing Life.



Albuquerque Chapter Membership

- New
- Renew

Name: Date:

Address: Please mail Newsletter rather than email.

City: State: Zip:

Email: Phone(s):
 voice? text? VP? caption?

Mail to: HLAAAbq Treasurer, P. O. Box36792, Albuquerque, NM 87176

Payment: Membership amount: \$..... Donation: \$..... Total: \$.....

Dues: \$15 per household per calendar year (Includes newsletter subscription)

Online: <https://www.hearinglossabq.org/electronic-pay>

Wired For Sound



P.O.Box 36792, Albuquerque, NM 87176

