

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

WIRED FOR SOUND

Patty

Rita Miskimen,,(mother of Mary Clark)

This story was written around 1953. Patty grew up, graduated from college and, in general, made her way in the hearing world. With the advent of newer hearing aids, most who meet her are surprised to learn that she has a hearing problem.

Her older sister (Mary) also has a hearing loss, but one which did not interfere with her learning to speak.

I stood in the soundproof room and listened. The doctor at the opposite end of the room began to whisper.

"Dog...baby...doll...mama...daddy..." More loudly he repeated the words. Still no response from the three-year-old beside me. "She doesn't know she's supposed to repeat them," I thought. Then, as he came closer, speaking her name quite loudly, and still she did not turn, I knew.

We came again into the examining room with its strange black box, which I was soon to learn was an audiometer; with the silvery tuning forks whose sole function I had believed to be in Physics laboratories. Patty's big blue eyes looked bewildered; she held tightly to my hand. I knew what was coming and I braced myself. The doctor's words were matter-of-fact.

Your daughter has a severe hearing loss. It is, so far as we know, incurable. We would recommend a special school."

I heard, but could not comprehend. I smiled automatically, "Thank you, Doctor." This could not be happening to me, to my beautiful child who had been so well cared for. "This is the sort of thing that happens to other people, I thought. I refuse to let it happen to me or mine."



How little we are in the hands of fate! I was now one of those "other people" whether I liked it or not. I, the perfectionist, was confronted with imperfection. I could not cast it off, for it was part of me. I could not love my child less, for this was not of her doing. There, in that bare office, I started on the long road of acceptance, which, although I did not know it then, was to lead me to a richer concept of life. I took my daughter by the hand and we went home. She bounced along beside me happily, looking like any other three-year-old.

I admit, with shame, that I felt sorry for myself. The day after the doctor's verdict I awoke with a terrible, dead feeling of something wrong; then, heart pounding, brain aching, realization came. This was to be my awakening for many days to come. Daily, I asked myself, "Why?" Had I done some terrible wrong for which I was being punished?" Sometimes I prayed for a miracle, a cure.

In spite of those moments of black despair, certain things had to be done. We found there was a local day school for the deaf. Patty, at age 3, was old enough to enroll. How, though, could I explain to her why I would leave her in that huge red building? It was something utterly beyond her experience. First, we visited the school. The sight of tots of 3 or 4 wearing hearing aids and straining to speak a word was almost more than I could bear. Actually, this room was a cheerful place, full of toys, tricycles, wagons, books and blocks, even a slide. To Patty it must have seemed like heaven.

WIRED FOR SOUND

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people with hearing loss

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Hearing Loss Association of America
– Albuquerque chapter



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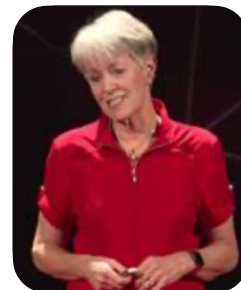


HLAA
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16 Mar Meeting 10:00 AM To Noon—on Zoom**What you don't know about hearing aids**

For most of us, it is not a matter of if but when we will lose some of our hearing. Yet, we do not give hearing loss or hearing aids much thought until it happens to us or someone we live or work with. It is then that we find out that hearing aids are incapable of restoring hearing to normal, especially in acoustically challenging situations. The good news is that modern technology continues to bring us new, sometimes hidden, and often unknown features that can help those with hearing loss overcome more of their hearing challenges.

Juliëtte Sterkens, AuD, is an audiologist with forty years of experience in hearing rehabilitation turned consumer advocate with the Hearing Loss Association of America. She has published numerous articles and lectured internationally to consumers, audiologists, hearing instrument specialists, and venue operators. Her work has led to hundreds of hearing loop installations in Wisconsin. She has received numerous awards for her efforts, including the American Academy of Audiology Presidential Award. She serves on the board of HEAR in the Fox Cities, a non-profit that helps pay for hearing aids for children in North-East Wisconsin.



This talk was given at a TEDx event using the TED conference format but independently organized by a local community. Learn more at <https://www.ted.com/tedx>



We will view the recording, and Ginevra Ralph will moderate a discussion among ourselves. Ginevra is Director of Community & Cultural Services at the John G. Shedd Institute for the Arts in Eugene, OR, but you know her from her "Loop People, Loop Places" regular column.

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.

On our second visit she enrolled herself, gesturing for me to put on my coat and leave. This was the day hope began. Already my baby was teaching me. It was almost as if she knew she had a mighty job to do and must be about it.

Shortly before her fourth birthday, Patty was fitted with a hearing aid. I hated the sight of the thing. To me hearing aids were for old people who had to be shouted at. Patty, though, was eager for it; she was proud to have the bump of the microphone under her dress. She didn't even know what it was for, but some instinct or wisdom in that pony-tailed doll was at work. In about six weeks she began to respond to normal sound and began to learn words. My selfish pride which hated the visible sign of her handicap changed to pride in her accomplishments; the hearing aid became a part of her.

Progress was rapid after that. Fortunately, Patty has enough hearing that the pitch of her voice is normal. And she was a worker! Certain sounds and phrases were to be practiced at home: "Jump, bow, turn around" and the longer ones such as "brush your teeth," "comb your hair." Patty practiced over and over and over. Long after her father and I were tired she kept it up. In the face of this childish perseverance I learned to lengthen my own attention span.

By the time she was five she could speak short sentences. Her active curiosity and alert mind had noted things through all of her speechless years. As

the words came, these observations stumbled, then tumbled out. She never asked for pity and we did not offer it.

During that summer we moved. I was sick with worry that new playmates would shun or ridicule her. How foolish I was! Our daughter was equal to such situations and full of common sense. When childish questions came, she calmly showed them her hearing aid and explained that she couldn't hear without it. Instead of the ridicule I had feared, she was the envy of her playmates. Several of the youngsters developed sudden cases of deafness. They explained to their mothers that they really needed a little radio like Patty's. Another hurdle was behind us: a five-year-old's common sense overcoming her mother's foolish fears.

Patty is growing up now. She attends a regular school and stands near the top of her class. Her faith in herself is not conceit, only a sure knowledge that she is equal to any situation that can be mastered by hard work. She is a diligent child. Can I be less so? She does not feel at all sorry for herself so how could I dare? She is happy and loving, alert and intelligent; our home is enriched because of her.

I look toward the future with a new wisdom, great hope, deeper understanding of others and their sorrows and problems, and a truer faith in God who saw fit to send us this child who has taught us in her simple way some of the greatest lessons there are to learn.

Loop People, Loop Places

Ginevra Ralph

Your telecoil is a crucial tool!

I have had the pleasure for over three years now of submitting these short "true stories" about the power hearing loops have in our communities and the resulting advocacy and self-empowerment that being knowledgeable about them brings to you as

an individual with hearing loss. Three years means that many of you are probably ready to get new hearing aids. Yesterday I was discouraged to hear someone "in power" state that "telecoils are a user-preference selection." If you don't have one, how can you know what you prefer? Demand a telecoil in your new aids, along with Bluetooth of course. Telecoils work for you today, tomorrow, next year—all around the world to access ADA-compliant assistive listening systems now.

Santa Fe Chapter

Catherine Worth, Capital Hearing Care, will present on "Over the Counter Hearing Aids – Are They for Me?"

Saturday, March 23, 10 am

Santa Fe Association of Realtors,

510 N. Guadalupe St.

(just up from Ninja Bistro north of DeVargas Mall)



We have ASL interpreters as well as a hearing loop.

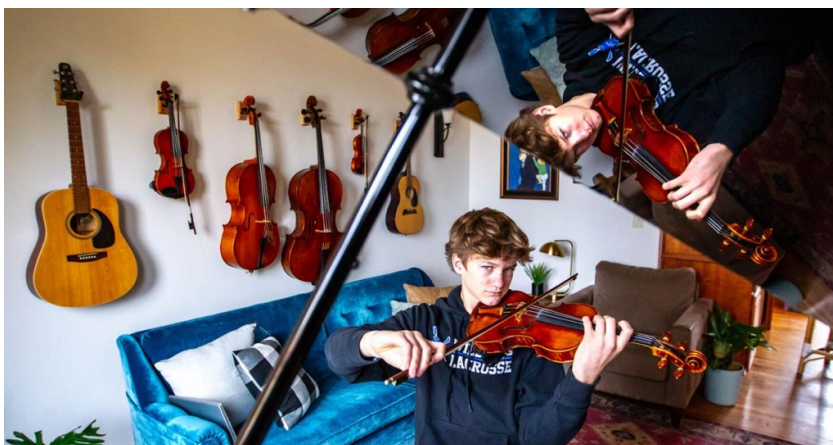
All meetings are free and no reservations are needed.

More information: John Hooper,
johnhooper.ref@gmail.com,
505-603-2994

Do you want another inspiring story?

Check out the Grand Junction Sentinel "'One of a kind': Teen violinist hears, plays uniquely with cochlear implants"

https://www.gjsentinel.com/news/western_colorado/one-of-a-kind-teen-violinist-hears-plays-uniquely-with-cochlear-implants/article_8c5ce7f2-b4ce-11ee-92af-c7c81be03c5a.html



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**.

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

OTC 101

HOW CAN OVER-THE-COUNTER HEARING AIDS HELP?

ALL-NEW EXPERT PANEL TAKES YOUR QUESTIONS

OTC 101: Ask the Experts

(February 20) The webinar recording is now available as a YouTube video. Just click on the graphic.

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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 bimonthly publication Hearing Life.



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