

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

# WIRED FOR SOUND

We did not have meetings in October through December, due mostly to difficulties scheduling speakers. This winter issue announces on page 2 that we resume member meetings in January with an in-person option!

*Editor*

## 8 Tips for Holiday Air Travel With Hearing Loss

*Neil Snyder, director of public policy, HLAA*

Air travel this time of year is always challenging, especially for passengers with hearing loss. Check out our helpful strategies, advocate for your rights and learn a new way to file complaints with the Department of Transportation.

### Flying for the Holidays?

Following these eight practical strategies can ease your travels and ensure smoother, safer flights.

#### 1. Book Early for Audio-Friendly Seating

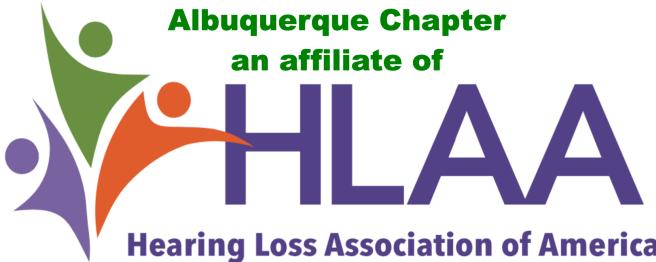
Book tickets far in advance so you can select seats near the front, where it's easier to hear flight attendants.

#### 2. Self-Identify at Every Stage

Indicate your hearing loss while buying your ticket, at security, at the gate and on the plane, to ensure staff can provide the support you need. Tell gate agents you'll need boarding updates in writing or visually, and remind them if necessary.

#### 3. Use Airline Apps and Text Alerts

Winter storms and heavy traffic often mean delays. Most airlines send push notifications about gate



changes or cancellations through their apps. Install the app on your mobile device for updates.

#### 4. Pack Smart for Your Devices

Bring chargers, power banks and extra batteries for hearing aids and cochlear implants. A speech-to-text app or remote microphone may help with conversations in noisy terminals.

#### 5. Arrive Early and Request Pre-boarding

The holidays mean fuller flights and more chaos, so plan an early arrival to get through security without pressure. Pre-boarding your plane lets you settle in and ensure that you hear or read crew instructions clearly.

#### 6. Know Your Options Onboard

Many U.S. airlines offer closed-captioned safety videos and in-flight entertainment, printed safety instructions and front-of-cabin or adjacent seating to accommodate interpreters or companions. Use them each as needed.

#### 7. Use the Airport's Hearing Assistance Resources

Some airports now feature [hearing loops](#) or visual paging systems. Research ahead of time to learn where the tools are located. Many airports also participate in the Sunflower Lanyard program, which allows passengers to silently signal a hidden disability like hearing loss. You can typically request a lanyard at airport information centers.

#### 8. Fly Off-Peak with a Companion

Try to plan your flights to avoid high-demand travel dates and times. If possible, traveling with a

*Continued on page 3*

## 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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17 Jan Meeting 10:00 AM - Noon. **Map on Back Page**

## Ask the Doctor

Join us in person or on Zoom for what promises to be an enticing discussion about our ears & hearing, medical scenarios when a hearing aid doesn't help, and what kind of surgeries are done: tubes in the ears of little ones suffering from recurrent ear infections, cochlear implants, etc.

Jacob Kahane is an Otolaryngologist in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Dr. Kahane is an expert in adult and pediatric hearing loss. His top clinical interests are in implantable hearing devices, chronic ear infections, and tumors affecting the hearing and balance system.



Dr. Kahane is interested in our questions, and he's ready to share some hearing basics and answer our questions. Don't miss it! Zoom or in person!

**Milestone:** The Albuquerque chapter of HLAA is pleased that in January 2026 we are ready to return to in-person meetings! We have been meeting via Zoom since the pandemic. The Deaf Culture Center is, by charter, serving both the deaf and the hard of hearing populations in this area. They have an event room with all the bells and whistles, full Zoom connectivity, screens to display non-local program speakers who will use Zoom and a loop for us to hear the program fully.

The location is on the ground floor of the PAH! Highland Plaza apartment building. Parking is on the street, and there is plenty of space there. If the street fills up, there is an abandoned Auto Zone across the way, and we can use that space as well. The address is at 5000 Central Ave SE, Albuquerque, NM 87108 (map on back page).

We still need help in setup, handling the meeting and tear-down. We also want some new blood. 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: [HLAAAbq@gmail.com](mailto:HLAAAbq@gmail.com).

hearing friend or family member can reduce stress and anxiety.

Holiday travel can test anyone's patience, but if you prepare and self-advocate, it doesn't have to be overwhelming. With these tips, you'll spend less time worrying about airport hassles and more time enjoying the holidays with family and friends.

## Know Your Rights as a Passenger

Knowing your rights before you travel helps avoid miscommunications at the busiest time of year for airports. All U.S. airlines must follow the Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA), which protects passengers with disabilities, including hearing loss. This milestone legislation was established in 1986 and ensures that air travel is accessible and non-discriminatory for people with disabilities, by requiring air carriers to accommodate their needs.

In 2022, the Department of Transportation (DOT) introduced the [Airline Passengers with Disabilities Bill of Rights](#)<sup>1</sup>, which was supported by the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) and other advocacy organizations. It includes provisions for accessible flight and safety information, pre-boarding and seating accommodations and the right to be treated with dignity and respect.

Congress recently passed the Federal Aviation Administration [FAA Reauthorization Act of 2024](#)<sup>2</sup>, requiring enhanced accommodations by September 2028, including fully accessible announcements, in-flight entertainment captioning and enhanced digital accessibility on airline websites and kiosks.

## If Things Go Wrong, File a Complaint

Even with preparation, you may run into challenges during your travels. If you face accessibility issues, communication barriers or discrimination, you have options.

- Start with the airline's complaint resolution official (CRO). Every airline must provide a CRO trained in disability rights. Ask to speak with them before leaving the airport.
- File a complaint through ACERS. In August 2025, the DOT modernized its Aviation Consumer Complaint and Enforcement Reporting System (ACERS), making it easier to submit accessibility complaints online. Gather details about your flight, the issue and any supporting documents in advance. Once submitted, your complaint is sent to the airline and DOT. A response from the airline is usually required within 30 days, and DOT monitors the results to enforce compliance.

### *Why file?*

Filing a complaint ensures your voice is heard. Your feedback can help companies and the government spot systemic issues, and the resulting improvements would benefit everyone with hearing loss.



*This article was written by Neil Snyder, director of public policy, [Hearing Loss Association of America \(HLAA\)](#). He can be reached with questions at [advocacy@hearingloss.org](mailto:advocacy@hearingloss.org).*

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.transportation.gov/airconsumer/disabilitybillofrights>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.hearingloss.org/flying-with-hearing-loss-could-soon-get-easier/>

## Loop People, Loop Places

Ginevra Ralph

### ***I Have a Loud Voice! I Don't Need This Microphone.***

And next, of course, this “professional” presenter thoughtfully says, “Can everybody hear me?” If you have read his lips and have self-confidence, you loudly say “No. Please use the microphone.” He gives you a dirty look, begrudgingly grabs the mic, and within seconds is holding it down around his belt, where at best it picks up gurgling stomach sounds.

### **Better Together: Auracast™ and Hearing Loops—Understanding the Future of Assistive Listening**

*HearingU webinar, Dec 3, 2025*

This informative panel discussion was presented by the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) with our Hear for Life partner Ampetronic/Listen Technologies.

### **Navigating the Transition to Auracast**

*Excerpts from Hearing Loss Magazine*

Auracast lets a venue broadcast sound to anyone nearby with compatible devices. Traditional Bluetooth connects just one-to-one.

People in range can select to listen to a particular broadcast through their compatible hearing aid, cochlear implant processor earbuds, headphone or other receiver.

It supports multiple channels at once, such as foreign language translation or audio

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

The organizers also didn’t think to provide a 2nd mic for the audience, so when it comes to audience questions and answers, you can’t hear them either. Correct microphone usage and placement near the sound source is critical for any effective sound or assistive listening system. You have the right to hear in these situations. Give them feedback, and teach them to use the equipment correctly!

**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**.

The captioned recording and slides are now available to view online:

[https://www.hearingloss.org/resources/better-together-auracast-and-hearing-loops/?utm\\_campaign=Hearing Loss Association of America&utm\\_content=Recording available: "Better Together: Auracast and Hearing Loops"&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=getresponse&utm\\_term=](https://www.hearingloss.org/resources/better-together-auracast-and-hearing-loops/?utm_campaign=Hearing Loss Association of America&utm_content=Recording available: )

[Scroll to the bottom to see the video of the entire one-hour webinar, including Q&A.]



description. It uses a new audio format that delivers clearer sound with less delay than traditional Bluetooth.

It’s not just for people with hearing loss. Anyone with Auracast-enabled earbuds or headphones can use it. Therefore, it is more likely to be installed, maintained and understood.

If your hearing device does not support Auracast, values may provide Auracast receivers that connect to headphones or a neckloop for telecoils.

*[See the full article in the Fall/Winter issue of Hearing Life.]*

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.hearingloss.org/resources/hearing-life-magazine-fall-winter-2025/>

## Thanks to those listed below for their generous donations.

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### Special: Smith's Community Rewards

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 automatic with any donation (separate from any Chapter dues).** A \$45 or more donation to National HLAA provides a subscription to the bimonthly publication Hearing Life.



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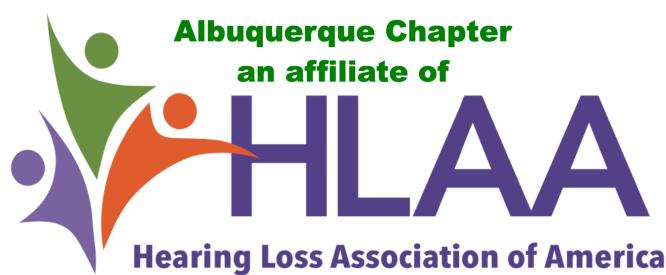
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**Dues:** \$15 per household per calendar year (Includes newsletter subscription)

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

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