

# *Hear It Is!*

Oregon



Summer 2018

Issue 74

## HLAA Convention Notes

*By Chuck Vlcek*

The recent HLAA convention at Minneapolis was the third one I have attended over several years, and it has grown noticeably. At Reno a few years ago, there were just a few sessions and workshops which repeated at different times so that if there were two interesting sessions at the same time, I could attend one and then attend the other one later. Not this time – there was a plethora of categories, sessions, and workshops, shown only once. I had to pick and choose. Fortunately, the HLAA website has – or will have – summaries, transcripts, and/or power point files of some of them.

I was not the only Oregonian to attend. Eileen Marma was able to attend on the last day and took good notes of a session on hearing loss in a hospital setting (which I also attended). These notes are on page 7. Mark Knecht, a veteran, attended on a scholarship. His account appears on page 3.

I started with the Chapter Leadership section, which I had attended exclusively at Salt Lake City last year, but some of the sessions were similar to last year and there were some pretty compelling sessions in other sections (or tracks, as HLAA calls it). The leadership session I did attend was called “Leading with Passion” by Karen Putz. One definition of passion that was given was “being willing to suffer for what you love (to do).” Attendees were instructed to write down what their passions were in life, and later to order them to identify what they were most passionate about. Ideally this should help a person take on tasks he is best suited for, and when leading, take a direction where his passion inspires others to follow. It also helps delay or avoid burnout.

I also attended one session on coping with hearing loss while traveling, a topic that has appeared in this newsletter recently and is being revisited in an article by Jody King on page 11. I was glad that this topic is being discussed at the national level. I already mentioned hearing loss in a hospital setting, but there was a whole “track” devoted to hearing loss and health care, the first time HLAA has done this. Given the potential consequences of misunderstandings, etc., this is an extremely important topic. The hospital “scenario” presented in previous issues of this newsletter focused on self-advocacy, but at the convention there was much discussion on how to encourage health-care providers to address the issue. It is not easy, since there is considerable inertia. Health care providers are busy and reluctant to change.

Finally, there was a symposium on hearing loss in noisy situations, especially cocktail parties where the “noise” is from other people talking and much more difficult to differentiate from the person you want to listen to. One group of researchers developed software that could “learn” to identify up to six different speakers and isolate one, but not something that would soon appear in a hearing aid or CI processor. This is a very complicated problem but at least people are working on it and we should eventually see some additional improvement in noise reduction software.

## From My Lips to Your Ears

Editorial by Chuck Vlcek

Traveling with a hearing loss has been in the news lately, and I have done some recent traveling. The first was a trip to Israel. I avoided the pitfalls by traveling with a group. All I had to do was follow the herd and avoid getting separated. Even that was a bit of a challenge at times when I was concentrating on taking video of various scenes. One side note is that there appears to be a better selection of captioned movies on international flights (United). I had sixteen to choose from and watched two. The second trip was the one to the HLAA convention. I drove, thus avoiding any possible issues with airports and airlines. Issues can arise while driving, of course, but I was fortunate not to have any, at least not related to hearing loss. Not this time anyway.

Captioning still gets our attention and the articles on page 6 (Within Earshot) were extracted from the July-August issue of HLAA's magazine Hearing Life. Reading captions is easier than listening but it is a good cure for insomnia. Trust me.

Most theaters have already complied, more or less voluntarily, usually as a result of negotiation. However, an important element of the ruling is that captioning must be made available for any performance when requested in advance.

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*Hear it is!* will regularly print your hearing loss-related stories – personal experiences, coping strategies, and evaluations of technology are welcomed. Maximum word count is 500 words. Article contributions should be made to the editor at [info@hearinglossOR.org](mailto:info@hearinglossOR.org).

For advertising information and rates, contact Eileen Marma at [info@hearinglossOR.org](mailto:info@hearinglossOR.org).

Deadline for Autumn 2018 edition: October 31, 2018.

**The next HLAA-OR board meeting will be held Oct. 20 at 10 a.m.,  
at Albany General Hospital.**

**Meeting dates in 2019 will be announced later.**

Guests and persons wishing to confirm should contact President Clark Anderson at [clarkoa@msn.com](mailto:clarkoa@msn.com) or leave a message at (541) 736-4804.

## **Oregon Veteran Attends HLAA Convention**

By Mark Knecht

It was my pleasure to attend the HLAA convention in Minneapolis MN on June 21-24, 2018. There were lots of good work shops, good speakers, and good exhibits in the hall on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June. The convention provided attendees with tickets to the Guthrie Theater to see West Side Story. We also had a chance to look around the theater. They have a deck overlooking the Mississippi River and the city. I made lots of new friends. It took four bus loads to get all from the hotel to the theater and back.

I want to thank the people at our national headquarters for working so hard to get me a scholarship so that I could attend. It is an experience I will never forget. Chuck Vlcek and I attended from the Oregon State Association of HLAA (HLAA-OR). The awards breakfast was good. One of the highlights was that we formed a veteran's caucus. I just found out that in 2014, 33,900 veterans were compensated for hearing loss. I am also a member of the Fraternal Order of Eagles. We do a lot of charity work in the community and Doernbecher Children's Hospital. I found out that the Eagles had a deaf camp. I got some things from the Department of Human Services like indicators that I can't hear you, so if I get stopped by the police I can deal with it appropriately.

I had a good flight and got to see my cousin and a friend of mine. I also got to see the Hubert H. Humphrey Metrodome in Minneapolis that was named after the late Senator Humphrey. I also bought some books and had them autographed. All in all it was a good trip and experience. If veterans are interested in joining HLAA they waive the first year's dues.

I came back with some good ideas for our church, loop systems, hearing aid system, and Chemeketa Community College classrooms.



**Next HLAA Convention:** Join us in Rochester, New York June 20 - 23, 2019. Details will be posted later on: <http://www.hearingloss.org/content/convention>

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## ***Within Earshot: News You Need to Know***

### **Open-Captioned Movies**

With all the recent news about closed captioning of digital movies at various theaters, it should be noted that a few theaters are offering open-captioned movies. The offerings are limited but it does have the advantage of not requiring special equipment (transmitters and viewing devices) that need to be maintained. The key to future availability appears to be the number of patrons – with or without hearing loss – who are willing to watch them. Most hearing persons attending open-captioned movies are likely to be friends and family members of a person with hearing loss, but there may be some that simply do not mind. Open captioning becomes an alternative when the number of patrons with hearing loss exceed the number of closed caption receivers available.

Erik Nordlof, a member the District of Columbia Chapter, started a group called DC Deaf Moviegoers to advocate and share information about open caption screenings in the Washington, D.C. area. He noted that open caption movies are already being produced by the major studios and some smaller distributors but it is up to the individual movie theaters to turn them on. His group is willing to request open captioned screenings on behalf of several local organizations.

It should also be noted that in 2016, Hawaii became the first state in the nation to require open captioned screenings statewide. Movie theaters there must offer two open captioned screenings per week for each movie.

### **Captioning on the Internet**

Nearly all TV programs and most digital movies now have closed captioning available, but video viewed on the internet is a mixed bag. So far the only requirement for captioning on the internet is content that was originally shown with captions on TV in the U.S. and is being shown in its entirety by the original producer rather than a third party. However, much content on the internet is captioned voluntarily. Surveys have shown that most people view the internet without sound, so the message a producer wants to get across gets lost instead. Thus it is in the producer's self-interest to caption the video to make his message heard and gain a wider audience.

That said, individuals uploading "cat video" on U-tube are not likely to caption it, nor is captioning needed or desired for most of that type of video. Even when home producers put out something that might benefit from captioning, the producer may not be aware that he has the tools to do so.

A network's website is the best place to watch captioned shows. The next best are streaming sites such as Netflix and Hulu. Most of them require content creators to deliver their videos with captions. Reasons vary, including fear of litigation, but one is that English captions make a great source from which multi-language subtitles can be created. So watch and enjoy. One caveat, though: some sites such as U-tube produce captions using voice-recognition software, and the resulting captions can be a bit funky.

## “Hospitals and Hearing Loss: How Can They Change Their Ways?”

*Notes from a session at the HLAA Convention in Minneapolis, taken by Eileen Marma.*

Anticipating needs and providing accommodations for people with hearing loss (PWHL) is typically not a priority in U.S. hospitals. Kevin Franck, administrator at Massachusetts General Hospital and Jan Blustein, MD, Ph. D described their efforts working with large complex medical centers to promote attention to hearing loss. They described barriers and made some recommendations to change the common hospital staff and administrators perspectives.

Hospitals are very busy places. It's difficult to gain acceptance of ideas that require an increase in tasks or add to the problem-solving dimensions for nurses with already big case loads. These recommendations are presented from the administrators' and nurses' perspectives of cost and time saving interventions. If the patient's hearing/understanding is not improved, this increases the nurses' workload.

- I. **Prevent or Reduce Delirium.** Delirium is short-term confusion due to drugs or anesthesia. This condition in the patient lengthens the hospital stay. When a PWHL experiences a decrease in what one hears and understands, especially in a stressful, noisy, “high stakes” environment (think emergency room or hospital ward), this is a big risk in causing delirium”.
- II. **Increase Patient Safety.** If a PWHL does not understand instructions for treatment or how to take the medication properly, there may be serious complications.

Strategies to give the PWHL better care and lead to better outcomes:

- 1) *Ask each new patient if they have any trouble hearing.* This single question asking for a personal report is the only criteria for deciding to implement the general plan for patients with hearing loss.
- 2) *Provide a non-custom amplifier for the patient.* The assertive listening device, Sonic Ear or formerly known as Pocket Talker, is given to the patient. Each staff member or provider uses the microphone when speaking to the patient.
- 3) *Signs are posted at the patient's bed with instructions* for the staff/provider to take when talking with the patient. Instructions include: Face me. Remove your mask. Speak slowly and clearly. If misunderstood, rephrase the statement.

## Deaf and Hard of Hearing Forum in Southern Oregon

So-Health E is sponsoring a Deaf and Hard of Hearing Forum in Jackson and Josephine County. This is an event to help the medical provider overcome communication barriers which present with Deaf patients. Presenters will explain Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing needs, impacts of misdiagnosis and language deprivation, Deaf culture and communication etiquette, legal duties, pitfalls, and how to avoid the latter.

The event will be held in Medford at 7:45 am, September 27th at the Smullin's center 2825 E Barnett Rd. Then in Grants Pass at 7:45 am, September 28th at AllCare Health's main building, 1701 NE 7th St. To register please go to [www.surveymonkey.com/r/Deaf\\_Forum](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Deaf_Forum)



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| Do you have difficulty hearing when someone speaks in a whisper?               | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Does a hearing problem cause you to have arguments with family members?        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Does a hearing problem cause you difficulty when listening to TV or radio?     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do you feel a hearing problem limits or hampers your personal or social life?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

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## Chapter Capers

Douglas County Chapter: Meetings were held on June 26 and July 23. A picnic was scheduled to be held on August 11 at the residence of Ann Havens and her daughter Tasha. President Vincent Portulano has joined the local Disability Services Advisory Council and described it at the July meeting. It is new and its goal is to provide an opportunity for local partners to meet and discuss how we can help one another and bridge the gap of services that may be lacking in our community.

Portland Chapter: The chapter did not have a regular meeting scheduled for the summer months, but an informal meeting was held on July 23 to get input from members and discuss how the chapter could better serve persons with hearing loss in the Portland area. The next regular meeting will be on September 17, but no program has been set.

Oregon State Association: President Clark Anderson and Eileen Marma represented HLAA-OR at ADA's birthday celebration at Salem on July 26. This event was described in the "Within Earshot" section of the spring issue. Business for the summer board meeting is being conducted online due to scheduling conflicts.

**What is your chapter doing? Please submit your story to the editor at [cvlcek@centurytel.net](mailto:cvlcek@centurytel.net) See pages 14-15 for contact information for these chapters and events.**

## CI Corner

Significant progress is being made in research on optical stimulation of the cochlea. A recent article in Physicsworld by Tami Freeman described experiments on gerbils which were genetically modified to respond to optical stimuli. The gerbils were trained to jump over an obstacle upon hearing an auditory cue. The research team then injected a virus that carries a gene encoding for a light-sensitive ion channel into the gerbils' cochlea, allowing their cochlear neurons to be activated by light. They then implanted optical fibres in the cochlea to deliver light signals. When the optical cue (blue light) to the cochlea was substituted, the gerbils jumped over the obstacle. Even after they were deafened, they jumped over the obstacle when presented with the optical cue.

The research was done by a team from University Medical Center Gottingen, led by Christian Wrobel. The study provided a proof-of-concept that combining optical stimulation with genetic manipulation can successfully restore sound perception, and could lead to a new generation of more accurate cochlear implants.

Traditional cochlear implants can partially restore the ability to hear in many deaf patients by stimulating ear cells with electrical signals. In such devices, however, the generated current tends to spread around each point of contact, activating a large population of neurons and limiting the resolution and clarity of sound signals. Optical stimulation promises spatially confined activation of neurons in the auditory nerve, potentially yielding spatially precise ear cell stimulation with limited spreading.

Look up <https://physicsworld.com/a/optical-cochlear-implants-restore-hearing-in-deaf-gerbils/> for details.

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# Traveling for the Hearing Impaired

By Jody King

Near the age of twenty five, I started to slowly lose my hearing. Fast forward thirty five years, thousands of teeny batteries, and countless hearing exams and tests and I'm now profoundly deaf in my left ear and moderately severe in my right. Word recognition is at 36% and I'm just shy of being eligible for a cochlear implant.

Loss of hearing affects every avenue of our lives. I recently took a trip to the Hawaiian Islands. I absolutely love to travel, although this trip caused a bit of apprehension. Having traveled many times as a couple, I hadn't realized how much I leaned on my spouse to hear for both of us.

Airports and planes are filled with continuous background noises and announcements that I hear as a jumbled mess. At the airport terminal I sat next to the ticket agent at the gate so I wouldn't miss a thing, even do some lip reading; however, the speaking device covered their mouth and all I heard was "Blah blah, rows, blah, line blah blah". I adapted quickly by praying for courage and melting into lines.

What an adventure. I became accustomed to telling waiters, grocery checkers, boat Captains, and Luau personnel that I has hearing impaired. I'm sure I missed out on the extra helping of pupu's (appetizers). But, being optimistic I made the best of it and had the time of my life. I've not let my disability hold me back from traveling. Whether for business or vacation, traveling can be as stressful as it is enjoyable, and for more than 30 million or more people like us in the U.S. with hearing loss, travel can be especially difficult. Here are a few tips that may make your next adventure a little easier.

- Travel information and reservation services are available on the internet. I print copies of confirmation numbers, reservations, and maps and keep easily available.
- I arrive early at the airport, bus terminal, or train station and I tell the agent at the boarding gate that I'm hearing-impaired and will need to be notified in person when it's boarding time.
- Check the display board while waiting to confirm the flight destination and departure time and watch for delays and departure gate changes. Always confirm flight or train number and destination before boarding.
- Inform the flight attendant, bus driver and train personnel that you're hearing-impaired and request that any announcements be communicated directly.
- Don't be afraid to ask for help from fellow travelers—most are more than willing to offer assistance and some will share their own personal stories.

I'll never let my handicap interfere and keep me from enjoying the wonders of traveling and discovering what this planet has to offer.



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**The following persons have contributed since the last issue:**


**George Van Hoomissen      Holly Thau      Walter Krebs**

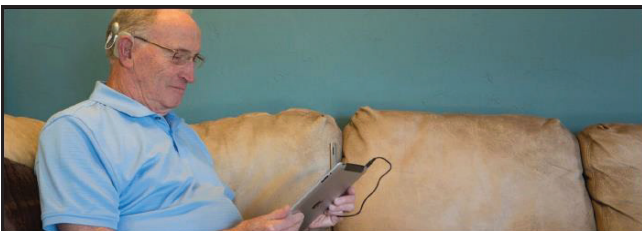




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# Chapters in Oregon

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- *Insights into effectively living with hearing loss*
- *Support/Referrals/Information*
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We believe in education - for those who hear well and those who cannot - so that both may understand the causes, challenges and possible remedies for hearing loss. At our meetings, you'll find a comfortable place where hearing loss is accepted and not a problem. Many people report that being a part of a Hearing Loss Assoc. group has made a major difference in their lives. Your participation benefits not only you, but others who attend as well. Following is a list of the current chapters and contact people in Oregon.

**HLAA of Salem meets the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday each month (except July and August) - 6:00 PM at the Salem Hospital Community Health and Education (Building D), Creekside Overflow Room, 939 Oak Street SE, Salem, OR.**

Contact: Mary Fagan  
e-mail: [hlasalem@live.com](mailto:hlasalem@live.com)  
(503) 409-5491  
3253 Dallas Hwy NW Salem, OR 97304-4222

**HLAA of Lane County meets quarterly: 2nd Thursday in March, June, Sept., and Dec., at 7 PM at the Hilyard Community Center, 2580 Hilyard Street - Eugene.**

Contacts: Andrea Cabral  
e-mail: [angora@comcast.net](mailto:angora@comcast.net)  
(541) 345-9432 voice  
PO Box 22501  
Eugene, OR 97402

Clark Anderson  
e-mail: [clarkoa@msn.com](mailto:clarkoa@msn.com)

**DID YOU KNOW**

**That of the 114 veterans enrolled in the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HVRP) under Easter Seals Oregon in 2018, about 50% have some kind of hearing issue?**

HLAA of Portland meets the 3rd Monday each month (except June, July and August) 6:30 PM in "Building 2", 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, on the Legacy Good Samaritan Campus, 1040 NW 22<sup>nd</sup> Ave. (at Marshall), Portland 97210

Contact Anne McLaughlin  
e-mail: [hlaportland@gmail.com](mailto:hlaportland@gmail.com)  
PO Box 2112  
Portland, OR 97208-2112  
[www.hearinglossor.org/portland/](http://www.hearinglossor.org/portland/)

HLAA of Douglas County meets the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at Westside Christian Church, 2712 West Harvard Avenue, Roseburg, Oregon.

Contacts: Vincent Portulano, President:  
email: [HLAADC@outlook.com](mailto:HLAADC@outlook.com)

Ann Havens, Secretary (541) 673-3119

HLAA of Linn and Benton Counties meets the last Wednesday of each month (except July and Dec.) – 6:30 PM at the Reimar Building, next to Albany General Hospital, 1085 6<sup>th</sup> Ave. SW, Albany, OR 97321.

Contact: John Hood-Fysh  
e-mail: [jhood-fysh@wwmore.com](mailto:jhood-fysh@wwmore.com)  
(541)-220-8541 (cell – call or text)  
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## **Chapter coordinator contacts:**

**Oregon: Vincent Portulano**  
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15491 Highway 99, Oakland, OR 97462

**HLAA:**  
e-mail: [chapters@hearingloss.org](mailto:chapters@hearingloss.org)  
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Here It Is! Oregon Summer 2018 Newsletter

*I would like to receive (or continue to receive) this newsletter.*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Organization Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_  Please send my newsletter via e-mail

I learned about the newsletter from: \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is my contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to support the **Hearing Loss Association** outreach programs in Oregon. Contributions will be acknowledged in the next issue.

I wish to remain anonymous.

I cannot contribute but would like to receive the newsletter.

I want to join **Hearing Loss Association of America**, the National Organization. Please enroll me as a member. I'm including my membership fee (see bottom of page 4 for fee schedule).

Or you can sign up online at [www.hearinglossOR.org](http://www.hearinglossOR.org) (click membership, then click application)

**\*Hearing Loss Association of America, Oregon State Association, Inc.\*** is a 501(c)(3) charity and depends on donations and grants. All personnel are volunteers. Please send your donation to support our efforts to **\*HLAA, Oregon State Association\*** PO Box 22501, Eugene, Oregon 97402.