

Hear It Is!

Oregon



Spring 2018

Issue 73

College and Hearing Loss: Updates

By Tashiko Weinstein-Polson

For the last couple of issues I have been telling you about my experience as a college student with hearing loss, so I want to give you some updates. Each paragraph is a different story about my college experience.

For the last few weeks, I have been taking communication class with another hard of hearing individual who has cochlear implants and speaks American Sign Language (ASL). Every Tuesday and Thursday we have ASL interpreters coming to class. The hard of hearing person has two friends that are always with him and I am kind of jealous. This just goes to show the difference in hard of hearing between each individual and stereotypes. Often times, studies will say that people with hearing loss are isolated and have difficulties making friends. While this is true with me it is clearly not true with my classmate. He seems to have close friends that are always with him, something that I wish I had. One thing my classmate does play into is the stereotypes of ASL. Often people ask me if I know ASL when I tell them I have hearing loss and it is really annoying, but at the same time it just shows how vital it is.

ATI stands for Access Technology Incorporated. Its office is only 2 miles away from my college and many of you may know that in the fall term my FM receiver that was loaned from the school [Chemeketa] was stolen. In the winter term I had to commute back and forth from Oregon City to Salem just to go school. It was at Clackamas Community College where I discovered ATI. I have been using them since Spring Term and they are much better than my school's tech [devices] and much nicer! I really wish I had known about them earlier.

If anyone has ever taken any classes with hearing loss you know it can be challenging and difficult. Luckily I have my hearing aids and assistive technology to help me out, but even with that hearing can be hard. People think that with the hearing aids I am cured and teachers think that they don't need to wear [transmitting] devices, but they do because I need them in order to hear.

I know this article is different from what you're used to, but I thought to mix things up a bit by giving a few different stories of my school life because I don't want to keep on doing the same thing over again. That would be boring and I want to entertain my readers with new stuff. I felt that a series of thoughts of different experiences in school would be a good idea. I will try to write something different the next time that isn't about school, but for now school stories are all I have. I am almost done with Chemeketa Community College, but after Chemeketa I still have Oregon State University (finger cross) that I get in and one day graduate. Who knows when that will be, maybe 2021 or 2022. If I do graduate college in 2022 that will mean I will have been in school for 13 YEARS! -- just to get my B.A or B.S. Most students take 4 to 6 years, not 13. I know it will be expensive, but I am definitely going get a class ring to remember just how long it took and all the work involved in getting my degree as well as all the people I met along the way.

From My Lips to Your Ears

Editorial by Chuck Vlcek

Tashiko Weinstein-Polson is offering more glimpses of life in school with hearing loss (front page) and tips on living with others who have normal hearing (page 7). Although college students constitute a relatively small number of persons with hearing loss, many of these experiences are applicable to persons of any age who are taking courses, job-related training sessions, or simply attending lectures. As for her tips on living with others who have normal hearing, it should be noted that in most cases a person acquires a hearing loss while already living with others. That requires a crash course on the ramifications of hearing loss, for the person suffering the loss as well as those living with that person.

The other major article (page 11) describes a significant court ruling favoring consumers with hearing loss. Yes, theater captioning is back in the news. This is the first actual court decision that spells out what ADA compliance requires (and does not require) from theaters with regard to captioning. The specific case involved a live theater but at least parts of the

ruling could apply to movie theaters as well. 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.

For advertising information and rates, contact Eileen Marma at info@hearinglossOR.org.

Deadline for Summer 2018 edition: July 31, 2018.

The next HLAA-OR board meeting has been canceled.

Business will be conducted by e-mail during July, 2018.

The following board meeting will be held on October 20.

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

Board Election Results

Elections were held during the April 7, 2018 meeting. John Hood-Fysh decided not to continue as board member, but he will still maintain HLAA-OR's web site. All of the other candidates were approved by unanimous vote of board members attending (Kathy Eckert-Mason had an excused absence). These candidates were Mark Knecht, David Baldrige, Richard Little, Kathy Eckert-Mason, and Eileen Marma. President Clark Anderson, Secretary Chuck Vlcek, and Treasurer Cathy Sanders were re-elected by unanimous vote of the board members present. Eileen Marma decided not to run for re-election as V.P. Kathy Eckert-Mason later agreed to accept a nomination for this position and was elected by e-mail vote. Richard Little withdrew as one of the two state chapter coordinators, leaving Vincent Portulano as the sole chapter coordinator for the state of Oregon.

HLAA Convention Research Symposium

Listening in Noise: Hearing and listening in noise is often identified as the number one difficulty for people with hearing loss. A great deal of research has been done on this topic by hearing aid manufacturers, audiologists, psychologists, neurobiologists, audio engineers, and others. This symposium, presented by top professionals in the field, will focus on noise reduction/cancellation circuitry in hearing aids and cochlear implants. The speakers will discuss the current and future direction of solving the issue of hearing in noise.



Next HLAA Convention: Join us in Minneapolis, Minnesota June 21 - 24, 2018, home of the 2018 Super Bowl LII! With its urban edginess and cultural authenticity, the city of lakes guarantees visitors a fabulous time. Stay tuned for more details to be posted soon: <http://www.hearingloss.org/content/convention>

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Within Earshot: News You Need to Know

CC Speaks at Hearing Loss Class

Vincent Portulano, who is HLAA's Chapter Coordinator for chapters in Oregon, was one of three guest speakers at a class at Southern Oregon University in Ashland called "Psychosocial Aspects of Adult-Onset Hearing Loss." The other speakers were Chuck Vlcek, secretary of HLAA-OR's board of directors and newsletter editor, and Charles Hulings, a Medford resident who is interested in starting a chapter in that area.

The instructor was Elisa Friedlander, who had recently moved to Ashland from California where she had presented workshops to HLAA. Her class was presented through the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI). Instructors are volunteers and the classes are informal. About 9 students were in attendance at the weekly class held on April 25.

The speakers described their own life experiences coping with hearing loss (Vincent and Chuck were born with a hearing loss). This was followed by a lively question and answer session and general discussion of issues related to hearing loss. The speakers also distributed materials relating to HLAA.

In a moment of serendipity, Charles Hulings recognized one of the students as a friend he had not seen for at least a decade. That reunion added a bit more spark to the class.

Try googling OLLI to find pertinent websites with additional information.

ADA Birthday Celebration July 26

The Americans with Disabilities Act was signed into life 28 years ago. To celebrate, the Oregon Disabilities Commission (ODC) is hosting an event at the Human Services Building on Thursday, July 26 between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. The building is located at 500 Summer St. NE, Salem, OR 97301. There will be presentations, display booths, and other learning opportunities. HLAA-OR President Clark Anderson notes that this would be an opportunity to make hearing loss more visible and support those with other disabilities. He suggested that HLAA-OR should have a booth and is currently looking for volunteers. Even if you can't volunteer, be sure to drop by!

Screening for Hearing Loss

The Lions clubs have provided free hearing screenings to the public and at schools. However, there is a simple informal screen – the TV – to indicate whether an appointment with an audiologist might be warranted. Most TV sets display a numeric indicator on the screen when the volume is being adjusted. If the numbers actually refer to decibels, so much the better. Have each person sit at the same location and listen to something that has been recorded, and adjust the volume to the most comfortable level. Persons requiring a significantly higher level than "normal" persons – a difference of about 20 or more – to hear and understand speech are likely to have a hearing loss that warrants attention. Adjusting the treble and bass might possibly reveal a high-frequency loss.

Hearing Loss Scenario: Moving In

By Tashiko Weinstein-Polson

You decide to move in with your friends, family or partner/spouse. They know you have hearing loss and don't seem to care, it has never bothered them. So what now? Tips:

1. **If they didn't know much about hearing loss before**, make sure they know before you all decide to make that leap, because as we all know communication is key and your hard of hearing communication can get a little fuzzy.
2. **Expect to wear your hearing aids more than you like.** In fact you may have to wear them when leaving the bedroom. It sucks and you may feel like a prisoner, but it makes everyone else's life easier.
3. **Attention getters:** part of being hard of hearing is not being able to hear well so having attention getters can be a good idea. However, know your limits and your likes and dislikes. For example, flicking of the lights can be helpful, but some find it annoying. Make sure the persons you're living with use more than one attention getter or the attention getter will start to become a hassle and could be dangerous in the future.
4. **Hand signs and leaving notes:** hand signs whether they are ASL or made up are useful in a multi-person household. If there are signs that you like and they seem to work, try using them. It can make communication a little easier. Leaving notes do work but make sure it doesn't become your only way of communication.
5. **Loud Volume:** as a hard of hearing person you are going to turn up the volume with and without hearing aids so make sure you all talk about when speakers can be turned up and when they need to be turned down because it can get you into trouble later on.
6. **Treatment and Respect:** just because you are hard of hearing does not mean you deserve to be treated less than human being and you deserve to be respected. Make sure that your roommates know that your hearing loss doesn't mean disrespect; it just means try a little harder and let's work at it because we are roommates and we all deserve respect.

Do you have an experience, plausible scenario, and/or tips you would like to share? If so, please e-mail info@hearinglossOR.org with "Hearing Loss Scenario" in the subject line, or write to HLAA-OR, P.O. Box 22501, Eugene, OR 97402.

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Do you have difficulty hearing when someone speaks in a whisper?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Chapter Capers

Lane County Chapter: The chapter sponsored an event on March 8 featuring a presentation made by Hearing Aid Specialist Arnie Goodman, 'The World of Wireless Microphones & Hearing Aids: How They Can Help You Understand Speech'. They will have a panel dealing with Tinnitus at their June 14 meeting.

Douglas County Chapter: There is no meeting scheduled for May (holiday) or July (picnic to be held on August 11). The picnic will be held at the residence of Ann Havens and her daughter Tasha. The chapter is interested in having Arnie Goodman make a presentation (see Lane County above) at a future meeting and will be looking at possible locations. They will also consider buying a portable audio loop system. Allison Portulano has been posting meeting information on Facebook and is developing a web page for the chapter.

Portland Chapter: The April 16 meeting featured Carol Studenmund of LNS Captioning in Portland. She discussed captioning of public events. The annual election for board members will be held on May 21. There will also be a speaker from NW Access Fund, which provides low-interest loans for hearing aids and other assistive devices. No meetings will be held this summer. Check out the chapter's website at <http://www.hlaa-or.org/portland-chapter.html> for more information and many useful links.

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

CI Corner

There is a Cochlear Implant Lab at OHSU that engages in research on how patients respond to cochlear implants and hearing aids. See <http://www.ohsu.edu/xd/health/services/ent/research/cochlear-implant-lab/> . Click on "current research" to learn what is going on. Excerpts from this page are summarized below.

Its overview states that "The research in our lab focuses on improving patient outcomes with hearing devices, whether they are cochlear implants and/or hearing aids. We take a unique view of the brain as an active rather than passive participant in the brain-device interface. Our research focuses on how brain plasticity accommodates the limitations of hearing devices, and how experience with certain hearing device settings may lead to abnormal and thus impaired central auditory processing. We also study ways to improve hearing device programming and surgical outcomes to improve performance."

This is followed by a summary of research in four general areas: pitch plasticity, binaural spectral integration, speech perception with a CI and hearing aid (bimodal), and improving hearing preservation with Hybrid Electro-Acoustic Stimulation (EAS) Cochlear Implants.

Some CI users eventually match the pitch they hear with the CI to the pitch they hear with a hearing aid in the opposite ear. Others do not adapt, while an unfortunate few have negative adaptation, resulting in a worsening pitch mismatch and consequently reduced benefit from the CI. Also, normal-hearing listeners can tell very easily if two sounds differ much in pitch between ears, for very small pitch differences. In contrast, many deaf individuals who wear CIs and/or HAs fuse sounds that differ by as much as 3-4 octaves in pitch between ears. This fusion also leads to an effect called pitch averaging, in which two sounds of different pitch that are fused across ears lead to a new binaural pitch that is an average of the two original pitches. New studies are underway to model how this process, called binaural spectral integration, affects speech perception when two hearing devices are combined across ears.



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Favorable Court Ruling in Theater Caption Case

In the first case to consider the obligations that a live theater owes to deaf and hard-of-hearing patrons, a federal judge in St. Louis has ordered a theater there to provide captioning for every performance of every stage production when a request is made in advance. After the lawsuit was filed, the theater began providing captioning at a single performance of some of its productions on a date that the theater selected, and argued that it was therefore doing enough. But the court ruled that limited accessibility did not satisfy the Americans with Disabilities Act requirement that people with disabilities receive an equal opportunity to enjoy the services a business provides.

The plaintiffs in the case were two individuals -- Tina Childress, from Champaign, Illinois, Mary Stodden from suburban St. Louis -- and two organizations -- the Association of Late Deafened Adults (ALDA) and the Hearing Loss Association of America, Greater St. Louis chapter (HLAA-GSt.L). The defendant theater was the Fabulous Fox, a 4,500-seat theater that does not produce its own theatrical works, but offer touring Broadway shows. John Waldo represented the plaintiffs.

In the spring of 2016, when Childress sent an email to Fox asking about captioning for the musical "Rent," which was scheduled at Fox a year later, in May of 2017. Fox responded that it had no plans to provide captioning. Thus a lawsuit was filed in federal court in June of 2016. Fox then began offering a single captioned performance of each production provided that a request was made two weeks in advance, and it hired a local court-reporting service to prepare the captions and transmit them to tablet-type individual viewing devices. The ADA requires businesses to provide "effective communication" through auxiliary aids and services like captioning, but privately owned businesses like Fox are entitled under ADA to elect the *type* of accommodation to offer. Thus the plaintiffs conceded that the theater had the option of selecting its own method. They also agreed that because a live operator is required for each performance, an advance request would be appropriate.

The plaintiffs contended that Fox should be able to offer captioning for **any** performance for which a request was made, rather than for only a single, pre-selected performance. The court agreed, and required Fox to offer captioning whenever requested. It also ordered Fox to provide notice of the availability of captions, and to provide everyone an equal opportunity to purchase single-event or multi-event tickets through some means other than a telephone query.

Fox offered individual viewing tablets, but those either had to be put on the patrons' lap, requiring the user to look down at the captions then back at the stage, or to hold the tablet at or near eye level, which is uncomfortable for the duration of a performance. The plaintiffs suggested some kind of clamp or stand that could support the tablets and allow for hands-free viewing, but the St. Louis fire inspector vetoed that, saying such devices could impede an emergency evacuation. Fox then said it would provide a floor stand to support the viewing devices from the wheelchair seats, and would allow users to purchase those seats. The judge interpreted a part of the federal regulations dealing with "accessible seats" to indicate that people with other disability-related needs could also use those seats. She therefore ordered Fox to provide the support stands for people who buy tickets for wheelchair seats, and to provide hand-held viewing devices for other seats. A better solution will likely appear as technology evolves.

The case was concluded on April 18, 2018. Fox has until May 18 to file an appeal. *Ed. Note: this article was originally written by John Waldo and condensed to fit into one page.*

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No donations have been received since the last issue.

Contributors' names will appear here – you may choose to be anonymous.

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- *Opportunities to share concerns and hear from others*



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 4th 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
(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
(541) 345-9432 voice
PO Box 22501
Eugene, OR 97402

Clark Anderson
e-mail: clarkoa@msn.com

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

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

HLAA of Douglas County meets the 4th 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

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 6th Ave. SW, Albany, OR 97321.

Contact: John Hood-Fysh
e-mail: 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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