

HEAR OREGON

IT IS!



SUMMER 2020

ISSUE 82

VITAL ROLE NEEDS VOLUNTEER LEADER

Hear It Is! needs a Business Editor. Please read the following job description to see if it might be the right place for you on our team:

Primary Responsibilities:

Recruit sponsors for the newsletter.

Maintain bulk two mailing lists and email distribution list for newsletter distribution.

Communicate all correspondence and updates with the Editor.

I. Recruit sponsors for the Newsletter. There is both an annual recruitment for renewal of ads with current sponsors every spring and ongoing recruitment during the year. Tasks involved: a) send invitation to potential or current sponsor; b) send reminders for renewal or new sponsorship in 3-4 weeks and continue until getting a final decision; c) identify new businesses or agencies that serve the hearing loss population to initiate recruitment; d) maintain spreadsheet to track communication, responses, when invoices are sent, when payments for ad are made; e) send all new ad information to the Editor. Follow up with the sponsor on

Continued on page 8

Sounds reveal brain's remarkable abilities

- from HLAA *Note: Content may be edited for style and length.*

Our brains have the ability to pick out one voice from among many. Now, a team of Columbia University neuroengineers has uncovered the steps that take place in the brain to make this feat possible.

[This] discovery helps to solve a long-standing scientific question as to how the auditory cortex, the brain's listening center, can decode and amplify one voice over others — at lightning-fast speeds. This new-found knowledge also stands to spur development of hearing-aid technologies and brain-computer interfaces that more closely resemble the brain.

These findings were reported Oct. 2019 in *Neuron*.

"Our capacity to focus in on the person next to us at a cocktail party while eschewing the surrounding noise is extraordinary, but we understood so little about how it all works," said Nima Mesgarani, PhD, the paper's senior author and a principal investigator at Columbia's Mortimer B. Zuckerman Mind Brain Behavior Institute. "Today's study brings that much needed understanding, which will prove critical to scientists and innovators working to improve speech and hearing technologies."

The auditory cortex is the brain's listening hub. The inner ear sends this brain region electrical signals that represent a jumble of sound waves from the external world. The auditory cortex must then pick out meaningful sounds from that jumble.

"Studying how the auditory cortex sorts out different sounds is like trying to figure out what is happening on a large lake — in which every boat, swimmer, and fish is moving, and how quickly — by only having the patterns of ripples in the water as a guide," said Dr. Mesgarani.

[The] paper builds on the team's 2012 study showing that the human brain is selective about the sounds it hears. That study revealed that when a person listens to someone talking, their brain waves change to pick out features of the speaker's voice and tune out other voices. The researchers wanted to understand how that happens within the anatomy of the auditory cortex.

"We've long known that areas of auditory cortex are arranged in a hierarchy, with increasingly complex decoding occurring at each stage, but we haven't observed how the voice of a particular speaker is processed along this path," said James O'Sullivan, PhD, the paper's first author who completed this work while a postdoctoral researcher in the



PHOTO, SAMUELE GIGLIO
ON UNSPLASH

NEWS INSIDE

- Business editor — page 1
- Sound and the Brain — page 1
- Board members — page 2
- Inclusion — page 4
- Localization — page 9
- Shari Eberts — page 12

WWW.HLAA-OR.ORG/

Continued on page 3

I'M ALL EARS ...

Editorial by Jeanne Fenimore Levy



Jeanne is a Hillsboro, Ore., resident who lost a significant portion of her hearing in the 1970s and despaired for her future. Hearing aids helped, though, and eventually she realized that coping with hearing loss was possible and, in fact, the only way to go.

Aaaaand ... the virus and its spikes continue to rule our life. Most places that reopened in Oregon are still open, but every day we tune into television and radio to check the current number of infections and the deaths. My condolences to you if your family has suffered a loss.

There has been one concern for those who are hard of hearing during this time of masks and that is the hidden lips of speakers. We all use the visual cues of the face (and “read” lips) to comprehend speech.

Abigayle Callender, Clinic Director & Staff Audiologist at Pacific Ear Clinic, has suggested a couple of wearable items to make life a little easier.

The ClearMask shown at right is one way to help those with profound hearing loss read lips. Another product Callender uses in the clinic is Ear Savers (available on Amazon). Instead of looping around the ears, the mask fastens at the back of

the head. Very helpful to those who wear both behind-the-ear aids and eye glasses.

Please be sure to use a mask and social distance. These days, we need to ignore our pride and alert others to our hearing loss. There is



only so much social isolation we human beings can take, so reach out and admit you need contact with others.

Are you keeping a Covid Diary? I have several friends

doing that — and some are illustrating their entries. Judy Wise (judywise.blogspot.com) grew frustrated since hairdressers couldn't connect with



their customers and she decided to cut her own hair. She documented it with this great cartoon.

We may still have quarantine time ahead of us. You can document your own time and thoughts.

Contact me by emailing femminismo@gmail.com. Let me know what sort of articles you would like to see in our newsletter. ■

HAAA, Oregon State Association OFFICERS & BOARD MEMBERS

- President - John Hood-Fysh
- Vice President - Kathryn Eckert-Mason
- Past President - Clark Anderson — Oregon state coordinator- south
- Secretary - Vince Portulano
- Treasurer - Cathy Sanders
- Newsletter Editor - Jeanne Fenimore Levy
- Board members: David Baldridge, Karen Brockett, Mark Knecht, Richard Little, and Eileen Marma

HEAR IT IS! #82

Published quarterly by the HAAA, Oregon State Association, Inc., P.O. Box 22501, Eugene, OR 97402.

Jeanne Levy, editor; and Eileen Marma, business editor.

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 Fall 2020, Sept. 8; Winter 2020, Dec. 8.

Website: <https://www.hlaa-or.org/>. ■

Sounds & the brain, continued from page 1

Mesgarani lab. “To understand this process, we needed to record the neural activity from the brain directly.”

The researchers were particularly interested in two parts of the auditory cortex’s hierarchy: Heschl’s gyrus (HG) and the superior temporal gyrus (STG). Information from the ear reaches HG first, passing through it and arriving at STG later.

To understand these brain regions, the researchers teamed up with neurosurgeons Ashesh Mehta, MD, PhD; Guy McKhann, MD; and Sameer Sheth, MD, PhD; along with neurologist Catherine Schevon, MD, PhD, as well as fellow co-authors Jose Herrero, PhD, and Elliot Smith, PhD.

Based at Columbia University Irving Medical Center and Northwell Health, these doctors treat epilepsy patients, some of whom must undergo regular brain surgeries. For this study, patients volunteered to listen to recordings of people speaking while Mesgarani and O’Sullivan monitored their brain waves via electrodes implanted in the patients’ HG or STG regions.

The electrodes allowed the team to identify a clear distinction between the two brain areas’ roles in interpreting sounds. The data showed that HG creates a rich and multi-dimensional representation of the sound mixture, whereby each speaker is separated by differences in frequency. This region showed no preference for one voice or another. However, the data gathered from STG told a different story.

“We found that it’s possible to amplify one speaker’s voice or the other by correctly ‘weighting’ the output signal coming from HG. Based on our recordings, it’s plausible the STG region performs that weighting,” said O’Sullivan.

Taken together, these findings reveal a clear division of duties between these two areas of auditory cortex: HG represents, while STG

selects. It all happens in around 150 milliseconds, which seems instantaneous to a listener.

The researchers also found an additional role for STG. After selection, STG formed an auditory object, a representation of the sound that is analogous to our mental representations of the objects we see with our eyes. This demonstrates that even when a voice is obscured by another speaker — such as when two people talk over each other — STG can still represent the desired speaker as a unified whole — unaffected by the volume of the competing voice.

The information gleaned here could be used as the basis for algorithms that replicate this biological process artificially, such as in hearing aids. Earlier this year Dr. Mesgarani and his team announced the development of a brain-controlled hearing aid, which utilizes one such algorithm to amplify the sounds of one speaker over another.

“Our end goal is to better understand how the brain enables us to hear so well, as well as create technologies that help people — whether it’s so stroke survivors can speak to their loved ones, or so the hearing impaired can converse



PHOTO BY HEADWAY ON UNSPLASH

Upcoming HLA board meetings

The next 2020 quarterly HLA-OR board meeting will be held Sat., Oct. 10. The meeting will be held on Zoom. In 2021, likely also on Zoom, the dates will be: Sat., Jan 9, Sat., April 10, Sat., July 10.

All meetings are from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. If you would like to attend remotely, send an email to John Hood-Fysh, jhood-fysh@wwmore.com and he will send you the link.

more easily in a crowded party” said Dr. Mesgarani. “And today’s study is a critical way point along that path.”

This research was supported by the National Institutes of Health, The Pew Charitable Trusts, and Pew Biomedical Scholars Program.

Story Source: Materials provided by The Zuckerman Institute at Columbia University.

Free masks at hearingloss.org

Volunteer crafters (mobilized through the Cricut Millions of Masks initiative) are making masks for people with hearing loss. They have donated the masks to HLA and other organizations.

Find out more at hearingloss.org. The masks have plastic inserts to make lip reading possible. They are free; however, shipping costs will be charged by Ironmark to complete your order.

Take care and be safe.



HLAA is one organization – national office, state offices and associations, and HLAA chapters – all working to open the world of communication to people with hearing loss through information, education, support and advocacy.

Membership dues are: individual, \$45 per year (online, \$35); and a couple/family is \$55. Professionals and nonprofits pay \$80. Membership includes the award-winning bimonthly magazine, *Hearing Life*.

Write to HLAA, 7910 Woodmont Ave., Ste. 1200, Bethesda, MD 20814. Or you may call 301/657-2248 (voice), 301/913-9413 (fax) or online at www.hearingloss.org. Join and become a hearing advocate.

Hello!

Are you still reading?

If you are, send a letter or postcard with your name, address, and telephone number to P.O. Box 22501, Eugene, OR 97402. We will hold a drawing on Sept. 1 and out of all the names entered, one lucky person will win a \$100 gift card of their choice or a \$100 check from HLAA-OR.

The winner will be notified soon after the drawing. One entry per reader, please.

Hearing loss inclusion extends to films, captions, everyday life

Disney put out a call in June, saying it was casting for a Deaf actress for an upcoming Disney+ television series.

In a casting call that was shared on social media, Sarah Finn Casting reported looking for an actress with American Sign Language knowledge to play the lead role of “Malia,” an independent, athletic and bright character in her 20s. Other desired attributes include — female, 20s, Deaf, Native American, First Nations, Indigenous, and/or Latinx. Independent, athletic & bright. Lead.



© DISNEY CORP.

If you have a child or newborn with hearing loss, you may be inspired by a lifestyle blogger and Facebooker from Northumberland, UK. My Bionic Boys is the diary of a mother to two profoundly deaf boys. It gives insight into the raw reality of diagnosis and the challenges that follow. <https://www.mybionicboys.co.uk/>. The two parents also produce skins for hearing aids and cochlear implants at <https://www.hearoes.co.uk/>.



The skins affix to the implants and aids to give them a “cool,” fun look. What a great way to fit in and make something “odd” look exciting.

At left, Baye and Flynn, right, play together between tests at James Cook University Hospital.

Photo courtesy of Carly Duffield & Marc Murray

From Gael Hannan: “Many of us with hearing loss are a bit anxious around small children, especially the ones with high or soft voices and whose words are

semi-uttered because they’re just learning how to say them. As I struggle to understand what they’re saying, either they give up on this dummy big person, or I end up doing all the talking. ‘How are you today sweetie? Fine? That’s great! What’s the name of your dolly? Oh, that’s a nice name!’ All little sweetie had to do was make sounds.”

And we are all saying, “Why didn’t I think of this?!” Gael is a writer, speaker, and advocate on hearing loss.

Netflix (and other streaming services with Closed Captioning) has been criticized recently for censoring and/or doing a very poor job of captioning.

Most of us would like to make our own decisions about what we see and hear, and if we don’t like what we see (or can’t hear, but read) we can decide whether to watch a certain film or not. When the captions don’t jive with the words it’s quite distracting. A lack of access to the same content means disabled people can’t participate in the world the same way nondisabled people do.

Netflix has vowed to do a better job of captioning. If you are watching online, be ready to give feedback if you see lapses. This way you’ll make a difference rather than just being disgruntled.

Oregon Relay . . .

Everyone deserves to
communicate by telephone
Just dial 7-1-1



Oregon Relay is a free service that allows individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind, or who has a speech disability to place and receive calls through specially trained relay operators. There are several forms of Oregon Relay services, depending on the needs of the individual and the telephone equipment that they use.

For more information:

- www.oregonrelay.com
- SprintTRSCustServ@sprint.com (Email)
- 800-676-3777 (TTY / Voice)
- 877-877-3291 (Fax)
- 877-787-1989 (Speech-disabled)
- 866-931-9027 (Voice Carry-Over)
- 800-676-4290 (español)



July 20, 2020: Bone disease medications may reverse hearing loss

JULY 20, 2020 — Preliminary findings from Harvard Medical School researchers at Massachusetts Eye and Ear may pave the way for trials to test bone density medications for hearing loss.

Hearing loss caused by damaged nerves, whether from sound exposure or aging, is irreversible. There are currently no medications approved by the Food and Drug Administration to treat and reverse the most common type of hearing loss, called sensorineural hearing loss. But a new animal study hopes to pave the way for future trials to see whether this type of treatment can be used in people.

New research led by Konstantina Stankovic, HMS associate professor of otolaryngology head and neck surgery, and Albert Edge, the Eaton-Peabody Professor of Otolaryngology Head and Neck Surgery — both at Mass. Eye and Ear — have found medications called bisphosphonates (commonly used to prevent bone density

loss) were able to regrow damaged nerve connections in the inner ear in mice with SNHL. While the findings require further studying in animal models, the research team hopes it could be a promising target for conducting clinical trials in people with SNHL.

“This is a significant finding because it opens the possibility for repurposing bisphosphonates, which typically treat severe osteoporosis and metastatic bone disease, for the treatment of sensorineural hearing loss,” said Stankovic. “We hope this pilot study can lead to clinical trials within the next several years.”

Damaged nerves

Disabling hearing loss affects 466 million people worldwide and 56 million in the United States — numbers that are expected to more than double over the next two decades.

Hearing loss can take a toll on health and well-being, and untreated hearing loss costs more

than \$750 billion in health care spending each year worldwide, due to more hospital stays and greater need for emergency rooms and clinical visits.

In typical hearing, sound waves travel through the ear canal before reaching the eardrum and the tiny bones of the middle ear. They are then converted into electrical signals in the inner ear and transmitted to the brain via the auditory nerve.

Conductive hearing loss occurs when sound transmission from the ear canal to the inner ear is impaired (such as by a middle ear infection, fluid, or impaired vibration of middle ear bones), leading to a reduction in sound levels reaching the inner ear and an inability to hear soft sounds.

Sensorineural hearing loss, on the other hand, occurs in the inner ear. The most common causes of hearing loss are noise exposure

Continued on page 14

DID YOU KNOW?



people over the age of 60 have hearing loss

HEARING LOSS IS ABOUT

2X

AS COMMON
IN ADULTS
with diabetes



A recent study suggests that for every 10 DB LOSS in your hearing, your risk of Alzheimer's increases by 20%

HAVE YOU HAD YOUR HEARING CHECKED RECENTLY?

Schedule your appointment today with the hearing experts at Pacific EarClinic

(503) 352-2692



PACIFIC earCLINIC

Tuality 7th Avenue Medical Plaza
333 SE 7th Avenue, Suite 4150
Hillsboro, OR 97123
PacificEarClinic.org

* Hearing Loss Statistic: American Academy of Audiology. Alzheimer Statistic: John Hopkins University National Institute on Aging Study Arch Neurol. 2011 Feb, 68(2):214. Diabetes Statistic: American Diabetes Association

IP CTS program can now be private, safe, without delays

CaptionMate is free to download and use.

If you use an Internet Protocol Captioned Telephone Service you can now make a call in total privacy without the need for a relay operator, Captioning Assistant or transcriptionist.

Clarity Products LLC, the leading manufacturer of amplified telephones and notification devices for the past 50 years, has released its CaptionMate app.

CaptionMate is an IP CTS app specifically designed for smart phones. Consumers with hearing loss who struggle to communicate on the telephone now have a choice of an IP CTS provider.

The Captionmate app allows the user to speak for themselves and then read in real time what the other party is saying.

CaptionMate is free to download from Captionmate.com, Google

Play Store, or iTunes, and free to use as long as the individual self-certifies as having a hearing loss.

CaptionMate uses Automatic Speech Recognition — the only technology with Artificial Intelligence — to bring real time captions and true privacy to the marketplace.

For example: Consumers who needed to use IP CTS had to have a third-party operator, captioning assistant or transcriptionist on their call which caused privacy concerns and delays in the conversation. Can you imagine having to talk to your bank to provide the last four digits of your social security number or even make a purchase with your credit card knowing there is someone else on the line listening to your

conversation?

This is exactly what consumers have been forced to deal with. Now, with Captionmate, consumers are able to have the same functioning abilities as millions of other Americans.

CaptionMate removes the human element and the annoying delays. That, coupled with the ability to caption in over 100 languages, caption both sides of the conversation, and be a viable workplace solution (no special equipment needed), CaptionMate has finally brought IP CTS into the 21st century.

For more information visit www.captionmate.com or email support@captionmate.com.



LNS Captioning

Thanks to Our Friends in the Hearing Loss Association of Oregon for Your Support!



www.LNSCaptioning.com



Business editor, continued from page 1

any delayed or missing ad information; f) proofread newsletter edition for correct ad information.

II. Maintain bulk mailing lists and email distribution list.

After each quarterly newsletter has been printed and mailed, the printer sends to the business editor an updated list, called NCOA, regarding bad addresses (cannot be forwarded) and change of addresses.

Two bulk mailing lists are updated and saved for the next newsletter printing. Changes in addresses come from the NCOA, from returned copies of newsletter indicating bad address or from the recipient who requests a change in address or deletion. Updating can be ongoing as these sources are received.

The two different mailing lists are titled: Public Postal and Professional, totaling 1412 contacts. The email distribution list, total

161, combines the general public and professional contacts.

The Lane County HLAA list for bulk mailing is maintained by Clark Anderson.

At the time of a new printing for the newsletter edition, all three bulk mailing lists must be sent to the printer. Keep Clark informed of the anticipated time for sending.

III. Communicate all correspondence and updates with the Editor.

Business Editor will forward all ad changes/updates from the sponsors to Editor.

Both Business Editor and Editor will build a file to store these ad changes for easy access at time of newsletter development. (Consider a shared file, such as Box).

Any other correspondence from sponsors or readers that needs Editor's attention (but was sent to the Business Editor first) will be shared. These messages will

also be stored on our separate computers for easy access, as needed.

Ask editor for anticipated newsletter completion. Follow the HLAA account with the Eugene post office to ensure adequate funds for the next mailing. It can cause delays if the funds are low in the account. Ask the treasurer to send a check to the Eugene Post Office, if needed.

Inform Clark for sending the Lane County bulk mailing list, on same date that the newsletter will be sent to the printer.

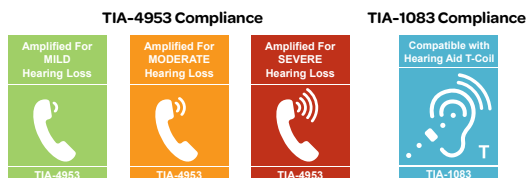
Assist in locating potential articles for the newsletter. Write draft articles as needed.

If you are interested in serving in this position, please address a query to Eileen — by mail: P.O. Box 22501, Eugene, OR, 97402; by phone: 1-800-413-0691 voice; or by email: info@HearingLossOR.org



CaptionCall is the Gold Standard

CaptionCall is the first and only captioning phone to meet the Telecommunications Industry Association standards for mild, moderate and severe hearing loss amplification and hearing aid compatibility.*



Want to learn more about CaptionCall?
Sign up today at www.captioncall.com or call 1-877-557-2227. Use promo code **MN1136**.

*67T and 67TB models. Learn more about TIA at tiaonline.org.

LOCALIZATION

— AN IMPORTANT PART OF HEARING

Localization is one of the most important aspects of our hearing. Its importance isn't just that we know where sounds are coming from. Much more important than that, it is the basis for our being able to hear while other noise is around us.

There are two main factors that allow you to determine where a sound is coming from. First, your outer ear, or pinna, is shaped somewhat like a cup and facing forward. That helps you hear things in front of you better than things in back of you. So it's a crude form of localization.

Second, and much more effective, is that you have two ears on opposite sides of your head. Because sounds around you sound slightly different in those two ears, your brain, which is "listening" to both ears, can "triangulate" and determine where various sounds are coming from.

But, how does that help us hear in noise? The details are pretty amazing. There are two primary differences in how a given sound is heard by each ear.

If the sound is coming from the side, then the ear closer to the sound's source will hear it a little louder than the ear that is farther away. The difference may be tiny, but your brain can use that tiny difference to help determine where the sound is coming from.

The other difference in how a sound is heard by both ears is based on the fact that sound travels in waves. Because your ears are several inches apart, the compression part of each wave from a single sound source arrives at a slightly later time at the second ear than at the first (assuming the sound isn't directly in front of you or behind you). This time difference yields a phase shift in the waves as perceived by the two ears. Again, it's a tiny difference, but your brain uses that phase shift to

tremendous advantage.

Sound waves are not really like the "up and down" waves the

ocean; they are more like the waves of compression and rarification you might see in a Slinky. These compression fronts arriving at your ears are what vibrate your ear drum and start the amazing process of hearing.

Sound waves travel at about 750 miles per hour in air, so we're talking about timing differences between the two ears of only about 1 millisecond. That's not nearly enough time difference for you to detect it yourself, but the brain is an amazing thing. It not only detects the volume and phase shift from the two ears, but it then communicates with both of your cochleas to get them to be more (or less) sensitive to certain types of sounds or sounds from certain directions. The net result is that you can focus in on what someone is saying even though background noise might otherwise completely overwhelm your ability to understand their words.

You may think that your hearing nerve just transports sounds from your ear to the brain. In fact, there are more nerve fibers going DOWN to the cochleas than UP to the brain. All those nerve fibers going DOWN are the communication channel for your brain to work with the cochleas on focusing in on just what you want to hear and



PHOTO BY TIMOTHY BARLIN ON UNSPLASH

suppressing the background noise that would otherwise prevent you from hearing what you want to hear.

The amazing thing is that it all happens without your even thinking about it. You don't have to consciously focus, it just happens.

Unfortunately, if you have a hearing loss, your loss often not only damages your ability to hear, but it can damage your ability to localize sound and know where it's coming from. That means that the worse your hearing is, the less you can suppress background noise. It's a double whammy!

It's also one of the reasons that hearing aids don't help as much in noise. Hearing aids do a wonderful job of amplifying sounds so you can hear them better, but they can't do as well as good ears in noise. They have some tricks up their sleeve, though:

For a long time, hearing aids have used compression to keep sounds from getting too loud, but that only helps a little with noise that's interfering with something you want to hear.

Some newer aids (with directional microphones) do an amazingly good job of suppressing background noise, but they are doing that alone.

Normal ears can do a much better job of noise suppression because they are working with the brain and using the subtle differences in volume and phase from two ears. If you have trouble hearing in noise (who doesn't) and you're considering hearing aids, then you should be sure to consider directional microphones. They don't work as well as normal ears, but they are dramatically better at noise management than regular hearing aids. ■

From the North Carolina HLAA newsletter



Having trouble hearing on the phone?

Specialized telephone equipment or tablets are available at no cost to Oregon residents who have a loss in:

**Hearing • Mobility
Cognition • Vision
Speech**

Let us help select the technology that will work best for you. Call (800) 848-4442

Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.



Info/application:
www.tdap.oregon.gov

Link your Fred Meyer card, Amazon account to help HLAA-Oregon

by Eileen Marma

Here is an easy way to support HLAA-Oregon. If you have a Fred Meyer Rewards card, you may select HLAA-OR as the recipient for a portion of your purchase. To link your Rewards card to HLAA-OR, just log in to your online account.

Whenever you use your Rewards card when shopping at Freddy's, you'll be helping the nonprofit linked to your card earn a donation from Fred Meyer. At the end of each quarter, Fred Meyer will make a donation to participating nonprofits based on the accumulated spending of the Rewards customers linked to each nonprofit.

The minimum quarterly payout is \$25 per organization. If an organization earns less than \$25 in a quarter, the amount will be held until the donation exceeds \$25 or the end of the year, whichever is first.

When you begin your Amazon shopping, if you start at smile.amazon.com you can choose from a list of nonprofits.

Tell others about this easy way to donate. It certainly makes sense to use these companies' offer of donations if your budget won't allow for that.

Thank you for considering this contribution to the HLAA-Oregon!



Archer Captioning

Elizabeth Archer | Captioner

ArcherCaptioning@gmail.com
www.ArcherCaptioning.com
503-319-0122

Chapters in Oregon

Local chapter meetings are open to all. Check ahead of time, due to Covid 19. Family, friends, and professionals are encouraged to attend and become involved.

Through chapter meetings and newsletters you'll find:

- Insights into effectively living with hearing loss
- Support/Referrals/Information
- Information about the latest technology
- Coping strategies & tips
- An opportunity to make a difference
- Diminished feelings of isolation and aloneness
- Opportunities to share concerns; 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.

Below are some of the current chapters and contact people in Oregon. ■

Please Note:

HLAA-Portland has suspended meetings due to the pandemic. To be on our email list for notification of future events, please email President Mark Foster at hlaportland@gmail.com, or write to him at HLAA-Portland, P.O. Box 2112, Portland OR 97208-2112; website: www.hlaa-or.org/portland-chapter.html.

HLAA of Lane County meets quarterly: second Thursday in March, June, Sept., and Dec., at 7 p.m. at the Hilyard Community Center, 2580 Hilyard St., Eugene. Right now all meetings are postponed due to Covid 19. Contacts: Andrea Cabral; email: angora@comcast.net; 541/345-9432, voice. Mail: P.O. Box 22501, Eugene, OR 97402. Clark Anderson; email: clarkoa@msn.com

HLAA of Linn and Benton counties meets the last Wednesday each month. Please follow this link: https://www.hlaa-or.org/linnbenton_meetings.html
You may contact John Hood-Fysh, email: jhood-fysh@wwmore.com; 541/220-8541 (cell – call or text), 818 Broadalbin St. SW, Albany, OR 97321.

Note: HLAA of Douglas County no longer meets the requirements for a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. Reinstatement may occur, but right now this group meets as a support group. Contacts: Vincent Portulano, president, email: HLAADC@outlook.com; or Ann Havens, secretary, 541/673-3119. Check with them for location for meetings and time.

HelpAmericaHear.org

Help America Hear, Inc., was incorporated in 2004 to help raise awareness and provide financial assistance to those with visual and/or auditory impairments (their families and their significant others). This is primarily accomplished by raising funds and providing donations to other charities and organizations that conducted research and/or provided assistance to such individuals.

Recently, HAH has begun to help those individuals with auditory impairments more

directly by providing hearing aids and introducing the Help America Hear scholarship to help fund the educational opportunities of those with auditory impairments.

At the beginning of 2019, the organization changed its name from Foundation for Sight and Sound to Help America Hear, Inc., and focused the scope of its corporate mission on the provision of hearing aids and the Help America Hear scholarship.*

*Message from the founder on page 14 ■

WILL COVID-19 INSPIRE POSITIVE CHANGE FOR PEOPLE WITH HEARING LOSS?

- by Shari Eberts

<https://livingwithhearingloss.com/2020/06/30/will-covid-19-inspire-positive-change-for-people-with-hearing-loss/>



Winston Churchill said, “Never waste a good crisis,” and people with hearing loss have taken his advice with Covid-19. Times have been very hard for many of us with hearing loss during the pandemic — increased levels of isolation, difficulties communicating because of masks and the lack of captioning on many video conferencing platforms — but the community has come together to advocate for change and to build awareness.

It feels like our efforts are having impact. More consideration is being given to the communication needs of people with hearing loss in a variety of settings, including in hospitals. Technology companies are rolling out new options to aid with communication. Media coverage of clear face masks is on the rise. This is all good news.

Many Video Conferencing Platforms Now Offer Free Auto Captioning

Both Google Meet and Microsoft Teams now offer free auto-captions on all video calls made on their platforms. Webex just announced it is trialing auto captions as well. High quality auto captions not only make smart business sense — almost everyone finds captions helpful amid the new norm of perpetual video conference calls — it is also the right thing to do because it makes these calls more inclusive.

This is true not just for people with hearing loss, but also for non-native English speakers, people with auditory and sensory processing issues, and many others. Zoom lags behind but is starting to include people with hearing loss in its beta test of integrated auto captions. To show Zoom how important free auto captions are to your ability to communicate on

their platform, sign and share the petition Provide Free Captions for People with Hearing Loss on Video Conferencing Platforms.

Interest in Clear Masks is Growing

While clear masks remain difficult to find — the only FDA approved clear mask has been sold out for months — clear masks have become part of the conversation. This is a big step forward. In the United Kingdom, several hearing loss related charities teamed up to write a letter to the National Health Service urging them to review the commissioning and availability of protective face masks and visors/shields for use in health settings. The letter states:

Clear face masks would certainly help, by allowing deaf people to lip-read and to access more visual cues. Clear face visors/shields, making it possible to see the whole face, would make it easier still. Research indicates that visors/shields also help to reduce anxiety among patients.

In the United States, media coverage has helped build awareness about the importance of clear mask by sharing the challenges people with hearing loss face while communicating with masks. The media are also sharing feel-good stories about crafters fashioning home-made clear masks to help. These narratives raise awareness about the challenges of living with hearing loss and may help accelerate the usage of clear masks or similar solutions across a variety of settings.

New Apps with Accessibility Features are Rolling Out Fast

Technology companies have been racing to get new products to market driven by increased demand for apps that make remote communication easier. Necessity,

as they say, is the mother of invention. One app that stands out is Chatable, which along with Ear Machine and Google’s Sound Amplifier, provides sound amplification via headphones attached to your smartphone.

I recently tried Chatable while stopped in my car due to road work up ahead. I could not understand the spoken instructions of the masked man directing traffic until I turned on the app. Each of the sound amplifier apps can prove helpful when conversing with masks. Ear Machine and Sound Amplifier are free. Chatable has a free version, but for full functionality, including its highest levels of background noise reduction, the cost is \$12.99 per month. Apple recently announced its new AirPods can be used as sound amplifiers as well.

It is exciting to see the hearing loss community come together during this time of crisis to share information, guidance and support and to advocate for our needs. Our collective work is having impact. Let’s continue to use this crisis to help society build a new and higher standard for accessible communication that lasts well into the future.

Readers, what silver linings have you found for people with hearing loss during this crisis?



Shari is an active hearing health advocate and writes frequently on related topics on her blog and elsewhere. She also serves on the Board of Trustees of Hearing Loss Association of America.

You can share your comments and suggestions with her on her blog or reach her at shari@livingwithhearingloss.com.



NEED HELP FINANCING HEARING AIDS?

Northwest Access Fund  **CONTACT NORTHWEST ACCESS FUND**
nwaccessfund.org | 1 (877)428-5116

DISCLAIMER

Opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the individual author and are not necessarily those of HLAA-OR. Mention of products and services does not mean endorsement, nor should any exclusion actually indicate disapproval. Personal experiences and diverse opinions related to hearing loss are welcome for publication and should be mailed to HLAA Oregon at the address listed below. Unless otherwise noted, readers interested in duplicating or distributing any or all material found in Hear It Is! have our permission to do so. Please credit the source when using such material. HLAA, Oregon State Association, P.O. Box 22501, Eugene, OR 97402 e-mail: info@hearinglossOR.org.

BUY YOUR AD HERE!

Quarterly or Annually / Sizes:

Business Card

\$175 - \$625 3.5" X 2.000"

Quarter Page

\$250 - \$850 3.5" X 4.375"

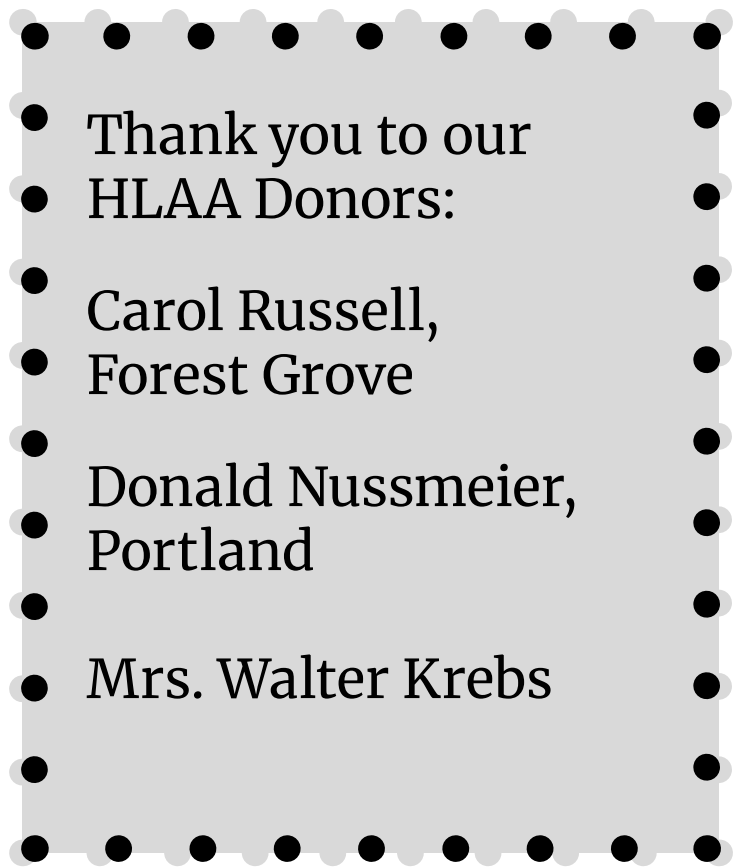
Half Page

\$400 - \$1300 7.5" X 4.375"

Full Page

\$700 - \$2000 7.5" X 9.250"

Contact Eileen Marma at info@hearinglossOR.org.



Thank you to our
HLAA Donors:

Carol Russell,
Forest Grove

Donald Nussmeier,
Portland

Mrs. Walter Krebs

FORWARD ... ONE STEP AT A TIME

It's hard to imagine a world without hearing, yet it can happen to anyone at any time due to traumatic or genetic circumstances. It is life altering and does not discriminate.

I know firsthand, as I live life with Usher Syndrome, the leading cause of deaf-blindness. I have worn hearing aids for 50 years and now have two cochlear implants. My vision loss is at a point where I do not see objects, colors, and cannot read.

From conversations with others across the country, I learned many give up living life to the best of their abilities. I was unable to imagine the impact of its absence ... the countless ways in which hearing loss was able to change my independence and enjoyment of life.

Being blind and deaf is not life threatening. It certainly is, however, life altering. As the population ages, many more people may be forced to live without one or more senses. One of the most important things I have learned through my personal experience is that there is only one way to move — forward. One step at a time.

This is the approach we follow at Help America Hear. We know we cannot cure the many causes of medical adversities, nor are we capable of removing all obstacles. What we are capable of doing is providing men, women & children the ability to hear.

Our signature program, Help America Hear, provides the tools necessary for inclusion, rather than

isolation in society, opening the doors to those who have been shut-out for far too long.

In many ways, I have been incredibly fortunate. Through my work with our previous Foundation For Sight & Sound, and now Help America Hear, Inc., I have the opportunity to work with some incredibly dedicated and awesome people. We formed an organization that envisions a world without limitations and I am proud of what has been accomplished so far — but our journey has just begun!

Mitchel Shapiro
Founder, Help America Hear ■



HEARPEERS
OPEN HOUSE
MED-EL Portland, OR 2020 Meetings

Reserve a 30 minute time slot with your MED-EL Representative.

Sign up for a timeslot on www.medelevants.com. Once you register, you will be offered a platform: Facetime, Teams or Go to Meeting.

OHSU - Otolaryngology Clinic
3181 SW Sam Jackson Park Rd.
Suite 250
Portland, OR 97239

There is no charge for this event; however, an RSVP is requested to reserve your spot. RSVP to Lyra Repplinger at lyra.repplinger@medel.com or 919-402-6935.

Bone medication, *continued from page 6*

and aging, which results in loss of connections, called synapses, between nerve cells and sensory hair cells in the inner ear. This type of SNHL is referred to as cochlear synaptopathy.

Research hopes

Previous research by Stankovic's lab looked to identify potential pathways to treat SNHL. They found that osteoprotegerin, a substance secreted by bone cells to inhibit bone remodeling, is highly produced by cochlear neurons and promotes their survival. In previous studies, doctors have observed people with SNHL due to severe otosclerosis who take bisphosphonates have the ability to significantly improve their hearing loss and understand speech.

Word recognition is a sensitive measure of cochlear nerve function. That revelation, along with the previous results from the influence of the drug on the rapid increase and survival of cochlear stem cells, prompted the researchers' new study to determine

Continued on page 15

HLAA 2020 (AND 2021) CONVENTION

The coronavirus stopped the gathering of attendees, guests, and speakers at the HLAA2020 Convention in June.

The convention became a virtual two-day event and you will soon be able to watch the webinar recordings at HLAA.org very soon.

Upcoming conventions, after the 2021 gathering in San Diego (right) will be — 2022: Tampa, Florida, June 23-25, JW Marriott; and 2023: New Orleans, June 27-July 2, New Orleans Marriott.

This national website is a goldmine of information on many subjects: hearing loss basics, technology, financial assistance, and community resources.

Learn more about Accessible Remote Work Meetings for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Employees on the website's news page. ■



Get information on the Walk-4Hearing fundraiser at HLAA.org and step up for people with hearing loss.

Make a donation to a scheduled walk or register to hold your own walk. Outdoors and masked, this could be a fun event before the summer is over!

Where is HR 1518, Medicare Hearing Aid Coverage Act of 2019?

It has been over a year since the House of Representatives voted to expand Medicare to cover hearing aids and related hearing health care services.

This House vote is a milestone achievement on an issue that has been an HLAA top priority for many years. HLAA was among the earliest and most vocal supporters of Medicare coverage for aids, and worked closely with key members of Congress to include the language in the prescription drug negotiation bill.

As the issue moves forward, HLAA staff will continue working with Congress, Medicare experts, and other hearing health care organizations.

When Congress created Medicare in 1965, it expressly excluded hearing aids. More than 50 years later, HLAA is setting the stage to correct that oversight. ■

Contact your Oregon representatives to ask about this legislation:

Sen. Ron Wyden, 221 Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, DC 20510; 202-224-5244.

Sen. Jeff Merkley, 313 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, DC 20510; 202-224-3753.

Dist. 1 – **Suzanne Bonamici**, 439 Cannon House Office Building, Washington DC 20515; 202-225-0855.

Dist. 2 – **Greg Walden**, 2185 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington DC 20515; 202-225-6730.

Dist. 3 – **Earl Blumenauer**, 1111 Longworth House Office Building, Washington DC 20515; 202-225-4811.

Dist. 4 – **Peter A. DeFazio**, 2134 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington DC 20515; 202-225-6416.

Dist. 5 – **Kurt Schrader**, 2431 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington DC 20515; 202-225-5711. ■

Bone medication, continued from page 14

the effects of bisphosphonates on cochlear synaptopathy.

The scientists administered bisphosphonates to mice 24 hours after noise exposure. They found that the medication had a dramatic effect at regenerating the synapses between inner hair cells and spiral ganglion neurons found in the ear, and restoring cochlear function.

Further, their finding provides possible mechanisms that could explain why some patients in the clinic improved their ability to recognize speech after bisphosphonate treatment. They suggest bisphosphonates are worth considering to reverse the loss of nerve connections to treat human SNHL.

Stankovic cautioned the research is still in its early phases. More research and animal testing is needed to determine its efficacy. ■



P.O. BOX 22501
EUGENE, OR 97402

NONPROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
EUGENE OR
PERMIT NO. 471

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

I am Hard of Hearing



I cannot lip read
through your mask

Hear it! Oregon Spring 2020 newsletter

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

Name _____

Email _____ [] please send my newsletter via email

Phone _____

Organization Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

- [] 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. (The newsletter will be sent via email, due to mailing costs. Please be sure to include your email address in the form above.)
- [] 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 page 4 for fee schedule). You can also sign up online at www.hlaa-or.org. Click "membership," then "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, P.O. Box 22501, Eugene, OR 97402.