

# ***Hear It Is!***

Oregon



Spring 2015

Issue 61

## **Hearing and Cognition**

Many of us take hearing for granted, but humans are unique in the way we interpret noises from our environment: we are able to utilize cognitive processes (knowledge, memory and intelligence) with the sensory input we receive.

This allows us to communicate, learn and share thoughts and ideas. When treating hearing loss, audiologists' understanding of the interaction between hearing and cognition plays a crucial role in providing patients with a reliable and effective solution.

Our peripheral and central nervous systems extract and interpret information from multiple, competing sounds in our listening environment, assigning meaning to what might otherwise be considered background clutter. When you suffer from hearing loss, your ability to gauge the meaning of a sound that has been separated from its physical source is compromised, leading to confusion and frustration - proof of the strong correlation between hearing and cognition.

Studies show that patients with poor hearing rely on acquired knowledge in order to fill in the missing blanks. This allows those who wear hearing devices to utilize cognitive reserves in order to fill in the blanks when auditory signals are at a minimum. When hearing is compromised, our cognitive system works harder to interpret sensory input data, increasing attention, boosting short-term memory and applying previously acquired knowledge to help make sense of the world around us.

Aural rehabilitation can help by training the brain to improve cognition. Simply put, providing the best sound quality delivered at the best possible signal-to-noise ratio eases the cognitive burden, improving the ability to hear while reducing the effects of cognitive decline such as dementia. Amplification features, including directionality, binaural amplification, FM systems and wireless connectivity all translate to improved sound quality and a lower cognitive burden. In short, the easier it is to listen, the better our ability to hear.

*Reprinted with permission from the "Hearing Solutions" newsletter published by the Portland Ear Testing Center.*

*The future depends on what we do in the present - Mahatma Gandhi*

## From My Lips to Your Ears

Editorial by Chuck Vlcek

Spring is that good time of year between flu season and fire season. If summer comes, can the HLAA convention be far behind? Perhaps not, but it is fairly far away, in St. Louis. Even so, it appears that at least one Oregonian will be going. Perhaps there will be a report for the summer issue.

Technology is wonderful but caring and sharing is cheaper and can make sizeable contributions to helping a person cope with hearing loss. All approaches are valid and examples can be found in articles in this issue and in the Survivor's Manuals being distributed around the state and beyond.

Some of us old folks who have lived with hearing loss since childhood can remember tinny, boxy hearing aids that were quite expensive. They whistled and squealed. Cords connecting the body aid to the earpiece curled up behind the neck or accidentally detached from the earpiece. Clothing rustled across the body aid's microphone. Nowadays hearing aids are still expensive, but are over the ear or in the ear and deliver sound with digital clarity. Feedback is squelched. They can be combined with other assistive listening

devices to further enhance our listening experience. Cochlear implants bring excellent sound to many who could not benefit from any hearing aid.

On the social side we went from stigmatized isolation to having the availability of support groups and greater acceptance in the mainstreamed world. It is still not a perfect world but there is real hope for continued improvement.

### HLAA, Oregon State Association

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*Hear it is!* #61, Spring 2015. Published quarterly by the HLAA, Oregon State Association, Inc., PO Box 22501, Eugene, OR 97402. Chuck Vlcek, Editor; and Karen Swezey, 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](mailto:info@hearinglossOR.org).

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

Deadline for Summer 2015 edition: June 30, 2015.



## Encourage and Be Encouraged

A group of frogs were traveling through the wood, and two of them fell into a deep pit. When the other frogs saw how deep the pit was, they told the two frogs that they were as good as gone. The two frogs ignored the comments and tried to jump out of the pit with all their might. The other frogs kept telling them to stop, that they were as good as gone. Finally, one of the frogs took heed to what the other frogs were saying. He fell down and gave up.

The other frog continued to jump as hard as he could. Once again, the crowd of frogs yelled at him to stop the pain and just give up. He jumped even harder and finally made it out. When he got out, the other frogs said, "Did you not hear us?" The frog explained to them that he was deaf. He thought they were encouraging him the whole time.

Moral: there is power in the tongue. An encouraging word to someone who is down can lift him up and help him make it through the day. However, a destructive word can keep him down.

Be careful of what you say. Speak life to those who cross your path. The power of words – it is sometimes hard to understand that an encouraging word can go such a long way. Anyone can speak words that tend to rob another of the spirit to continue in difficult times. Special is the individual who will take the time to encourage another.

## HLA-OR Quarterly Meeting Dates

The next meeting will be held June 6, 2015 at Albany General Hospital

(Room 1AB, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor). Other meetings in 2015 will be Sept. 12 and Dec. 5.

To confirm, contact President Clark Anderson at [clarkoa@msn.com](mailto:clarkoa@msn.com) or leave a message at (541) 736-4804. Guests are invited to attend but should first contact President Clark Anderson.

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# CONVENTION



Hearing Loss  
Association  
of America  
Oregon State Association

# 2015

June 25 - 28  
St. Louis Union Station Hotel  
St. Louis, Missouri

Check out the main convention page on <http://www.hearingloss.org/events/convention>

**Convention 2015 Registration is Open:** The advanced registration deadline is May 31, but we will gladly accept your registration on-site.

Two of HLAA's top awards will be presented during the Opening Session on Thursday, June 25, 5 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. We are honored to welcome **Senator Tom Harkin**, Iowa, who will receive the HLAA Advocacy Hall of Fame Award. Along with Senator Bob Dole and others, Senator Harkin authored the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, landmark legislation that provided the framework for other legislation benefitting people with disabilities.

**Randy Smith**, senior vice president of **Regal Entertainment Group**, will be present at the Opening Session to receive the HLAA National Access Award for their work in making movies accessible for people with hearing loss.

**Charles A. Laszlo, Ph.D.**, the founding president of the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association, will deliver his keynote speech, ***Advances, Obstacles and Solutions in a Changing World*** at the Opening Session on Thursday, June 25, 2015 (5 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.).

**Individual Membership in HLAA is \$35 for 1 year, \$95 for 3 years, or \$140 for 5 years.**

**One-year membership in HLAA is \$20 for student, \$45 for couple/family, \$50 for professional.**

Membership includes the award-winning bi-monthly magazine, *Hearing Loss*. Write to HLAA, 7910 Woodmont Ave., Ste. 1200, Bethesda, MD 20814; 301-657-2248 (Voice); 301-657-224 (TTY); 301-913-9413 (Fax) or [www.hearingloss.org](http://www.hearingloss.org).

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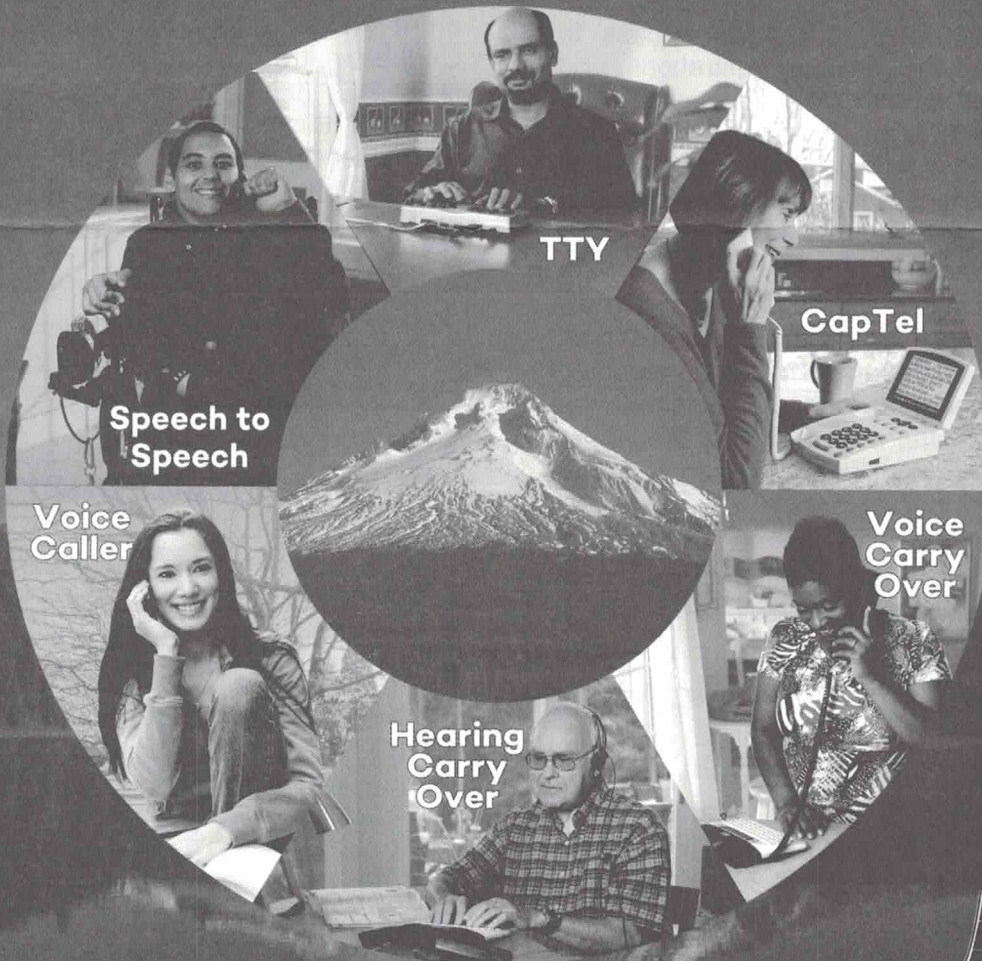
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## ***Within Earshot: News You Need to Know***

### **Say What?**

If you are experiencing hearing loss, SayWhatClub (SWC) is the place to connect with others who have similar experiences and can relate to what you are going through. SayWhatClub is a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization run by volunteers, and subscription is free. See their website at [www.saywhatclub.com](http://www.saywhatclub.com).

Their on-line communities provide access to people who know the feelings, frustrations, and yes, even the humor you are likely to encounter. This is a great place to share and support each other without having to strain to hear a conversation. A friend who understands is only as far away as your computer.

They host several groups for friendly conversation where you can ask questions, compare notes, contribute to our understanding of coping with hearing loss or just shoot the breeze and share the events of your life. After all, each of us is definitely more than a pair of broken ears!

The SayWhatClub has just held their annual convention in San Antonio on May 13-15.

### **Cruise with HLAA-Florida**

Lynn Rousseau from HLAA-Florida is inviting HLAA members (and non-members) to join a cruise out of Florida in November that has amenities for persons with hearing loss.

She writes that it takes time and much educating those in the travel industry to see and hear how they can accommodate those of us

with mobility, vision and hearing loss. Hearing loss is the hardest so far because it is an invisible condition. Along with implementing ways to assist us, we all have to advocate for ourselves, so these people know we are there!!

“Therefore, I've been working with RCCL (Royal Caribbean Cruise Line) to help make the cruise more pleasant and fun for the hard of hearing traveler. The Deaf can have interpreters (more visible than the rest of us who take things in stride).

This will be the third group cruise out of Florida on a RCCL ship. This time to the Eastern Caribbean, a week long cruise on THE ALLURE! [It is] a huge, innovative ship with all kinds of things to see and do. It is also a fundraiser for Florida...with \$50 per cabin going to the State organization. (And \$50 per cabin credit to you!).”

HLAA members from several other states have already signed up for this cruise. Lynn can be contacted at [Lynnrousseau50@gmail.com](mailto:Lynnrousseau50@gmail.com) or [HLAFlorida@aol.com](mailto:HLAFlorida@aol.com) for further information.

### **Survivor's Manual Update**

Eleven boxes of manuals were distributed at a district convention of Lions clubs in Canyonville, and additional requests after the event resulted in a total of 2800 manuals being distributed overall. A total of \$2200 in donations was received from various Lions clubs to help defray the cost of printing these manuals.

Other distributions have been made around the state, and a grand total of 16,000 of the first printing of the latest edition of these manuals are now in the hands of readers who can benefit from them. Since 25,000 were printed, that leaves 9,000 to go.



## Reshaping Antibiotics to Prevent Hearing Loss

Anthony Ricci, Ph.D. and Alan G. Cheng, M.D.

**Dr. Ricci** is moving toward more applied research and **Dr. Cheng** is seeking to solve the problem of aminoglycoside antibiotic ototoxicity. In 2011, Drs. Cheng and Ricci published an initial paper in PLOS ONE, which showed that AGs enter the inner ear sensory cells via a mechanically-gated ion channel, novel to the sensory hair cells, which is responsible for converting sound waves into electrical signals. This and present work opposed previous theories suggesting that AGs entered sensory cells via a transport molecule. In their most recent collaborative paper they showed that they were able to temporarily disrupt the tip-links in cultured hair cells, and therefore protect them from damage by aminoglycosides. This is important work toward understanding and creating safer drugs which maintain their efficiency. They have also developed their first series of new compounds and are testing ototoxicity and antimicrobial activity. The goal is to provide a modified class of antibiotics that will no longer lead to hearing loss.

**Summary:** Aminoglycoside antibiotics are the most commonly used antibiotic worldwide due to their proven effectiveness and low cost. They are often used in newborns suspected to have infection, and also in adults with sepsis and pneumonia. However, up to 60% of patients treated with these drugs experience some degree of hearing loss. This hearing loss is a result of the drug entering and damaging the inner ear hair cells, which do not regenerate and are essential to the hearing process.

During an April 15 Webinar hosted by HLAA, Drs. Cheng and Ricci discussed their research to create a safer version of this lifesaving drug, which would retain its effectiveness without causing permanent damage to the hearing mechanism. The webinars are recorded for playback at the HLAA website.

## The Unintended Consequences of Cotton Swabs

The purpose of a cotton swab is to remove makeup, clean dirt from hard-to-reach areas of your home and other hygienic functions. What then is the improper way most of us use them? Cleaning earwax. Ear doctors often tell patients that sticking a cotton swab in your ear is a recipe for trouble. Serious eardrum injury can occur when using a cotton swab in the ear, including ear infections and eardrum damage.

Most earwax is actually beneficial to the ear. It is a normal, natural protective coating for the sensitive skin of the ear canal. A canal coated with earwax will repel water and help prevent external ear infections. When the earwax is removed with a cotton swab it leaves the ear vulnerable.

In addition, regularly using cotton swabs to clear earwax may push wax further back into your ear than it is intended. While cotton swabs are useful in many varied applications, avoid the temptation to use them to clean the sensitive ear canal.

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## Chapter Capers

Douglas County Chapter: Two members were unable to attend the April meeting due to scheduling conflicts and a third was recovering from a dislocated toe. However, those that did attend had a good chat with a new couple from the Medford area.

Portland Chapter: The chapter's meeting location has been moved to the Wilcox Building, Room ACR 102 which is on the Legacy Good Samaritan Campus, on the west side of NW 22<sup>nd</sup> Avenue at Marshall Street. See contact information on page 15 to obtain more detailed information on the location and parking.

The chapter met on April 20, when Eric Frederick, AuD spoke about how various aspects of our health affect our hearing loss. Their speaker for the May 18 meeting was Connie Bonner of Access Technologies, Inc. (ATI) in Salem. She demonstrated a variety of assistive listening devices, or ALDs. ATI has an ALD lending library where, for a nominal fee, you can borrow a device and see how it works for you. Elections were also held at this meeting. No meetings are scheduled during the summer months, although a potluck is possible.

Oregon State Association: See top of the next page for election results. Work continues on organizing a workshop on Chapter Development (box at bottom of the next page).

**What is your chapter doing? Send 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

### New FM System designed for CI Use

For many individuals with hearing loss, even though hearing aids and cochlear implants improve speech understanding in quiet environments, background noise continues to be an area of concern. Phonak, a hearing aid manufacturer, has released the Roger Pen, an FM system designed for adult use. An FM system is composed of two parts: a receiver and a transmitter. The receiver is a device that can plug into a hearing aid or speech processor, or it can be worn around the user's neck. The transmitter is a microphone that is worn by the person that you are trying to listen to in a noisy situation. The main purpose for an FM system is to increase the volume of the speech signal, while reducing background noise that makes speech understanding difficult.

Traditionally, FM systems have been used in the classroom, with a student wearing a receiver and the teacher wearing the transmitter. However, Phonak designed the Roger Pen for adults with hearing loss. The receiver options, which may also be referred to as a "boot" or neckloop, will vary based on your hearing aid or sound processor. Your hearing healthcare provider can assist you with the benefits and limitations of the various receiver options. The Roger Pen, which looks like a large ink pen, serves as the transmitter. It has a microphone on one end which picks up the speech signal. The Roger Pen can be worn by a speaker, placed on a table to pick up voices in small groups, or it can be pointed towards the person that you're listening to. The Roger Pen is also able to connect to media devices that have Bluetooth, such as a cellular phone or tablet, and can stream the media through your hearing aid or sound processor. The Roger EasyPen does not have the Bluetooth capabilities, but still has the microphone options available. The Roger Pen is a wireless device which is charged prior to its use.

For more information regarding the Phonak Roger Pen, please refer to Phonak's website at [www.phonak.com](http://www.phonak.com), or consult your hearing healthcare provider.

- OHSU Cochlear Implant Team (see ad on page 12)

## HLAA Oregon State Association Election Results

HLAA-Oregon State Association held its Annual Meeting on Saturday, March 7, 2015 in Albany. The results of the statewide election of new board members were announced and the new Board elected officers.

The officers elected for the coming year are: Clark Anderson (Fall Creek), returning as President; Karen Brockett (Albany), elected as Vice President; Chuck Vlcek (Idleld Park), returning as Secretary and Newsletter Editor; and Cathy Sanders (Dallas), returning as Treasurer. The Chapter Coordinator position has not yet been filled, but a committee is working with those who are interested in the position.

New board members included Eileen Marma (Corvallis) and Richard Little (Sweet Home). John Hood-Fysh (Albany) and Kathy Eckert-Mason (Corvallis) were re-elected to new three-year terms.

Former president Bob Russell, former V.P. Vicki March, and Karin Smith were thanked for their years of service to the board as they move on to other projects.

## Chapter Development Workshop Planned

Many HLAA chapters in Oregon and nationally are struggling to attract and keep new members, especially active members. HLAA-OR and HLAA-WA are holding a Chapter Development workshop that is designed to increase community and chapter involvement. This all-day workshop will explore how successful chapters are building greater: attendance at meetings, memberships, effective education and support offerings, outreach and overall awareness and interest in the community, effective volunteers and leaders, and funds to support these activities.

The workshop is planned for Saturday, October 24 in Portland (location to be announced). Each chapter is encouraged to send 2-3 chapter leaders or future leaders to attend this all-day workshop. The workshop will be run by Ed Ogiba, HLAA Director for Chapter Development.

Please let us know as soon as possible if, after checking with your board, you will represent your chapter. RSVP: [clarkoa@msn.com](mailto:clarkoa@msn.com) or [catsindallas@q.com](mailto:catsindallas@q.com) .



# Help Us Support SB449

SB 449 establishes hard of hearing and deaf service centers in Oregon (see <http://gov.oregonlive.com/bill/2015/SB449/> ). There was a Legislative Day at the State capitol on April 27<sup>th</sup> that was deemed to be successful.

HAAA-OR President Clark Anderson has written this letter to Oregon State Rep. Haden:

“Representative Haden, I encourage you to support SB 449 which creates an Office for Deaf, Deaf-Blind and Hard of Hearing Services in Department of Human Services. At this stage of the bill’s progress you can do so by advocating that it be voted out of Ways and Means and, as I understand it, back to the Senate for second reading.

As a person who is a constituent, hard of hearing and president of two hard of hearing advocacy groups, we recognize the need to fill-in the service gaps for hard of hearing, D/deaf and Deaf-blind Oregonians. For many of the thousands of hard of hearing persons, equipped with hearing aids, cochlear implants or other primary hearing technology, further technology is needed to understand speech in normal conversation, at work, and in public venues. Without assistance in obtaining necessary accommodations we may, for example, fail to obtain or retain employment or withdraw from many activities with a number of cognitive and emotional including dementia and depression. The Service Centers that are specified by SB 449, with properly trained staff, can serve those of us with hearing disabilities by educating, informing, and perhaps trying personal hearing assistive technology, advocate for public accommodations as well as acting as advisors to workers and employers for accommodations in the workplace.

Primary and assistive technology is very expensive and we are not generally informed by audiologists or physicians of their value or use. Having a central place to gain the necessary knowledge will prove to be invaluable.

I urge you to support SB 449 with the Ways and Means Committee and beyond.”

You should call, write, or e-mail your State Senator and your State Representative and encourage them to support passing SB 449 out of the Ways and Means Committee to move it back to the Senate for a second reading, or to advance it from there if this action has already been taken.

To find your State legislators (and their telephone number and e-mail address) enter your address on <https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/FindYourLegislator/leg-districts.html> . To see if your legislator is on the Ways and Means Committee, try <http://gov.oregonlive.com/committee/Joint/Ways-and-Means/>

Work for a cause, not for applause.



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Marco Jurado, AuD, FAAA

[Cochlear@ohsu.edu](mailto:Cochlear@ohsu.edu)

[www.ohsu.edu/ent](http://www.ohsu.edu/ent)

## We ask for Your Support!

Please, if you can, support HLAA, Oregon State Association and this newsletter through your donations. With your help, we can continue to reach out and educate Oregonians about hearing loss and the many ways to cope with it. *Knowledge is power.* We love sharing helpful information.

If you have not contributed in the last 12 months and are able to do so, please use the form on the back of the newsletter, and mail your tax-deductible gift to:

**HLAA, Oregon State Association, PO Box 22501, Eugene, OR 97402**

We thank the following folks who have sent donations since the last issue:

Josephine Bateman

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# Chapters in Oregon

Local chapter meetings are open to all. 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 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 Central Oregon (HLAACO) meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month from 6 to 8 PM at the St. Charles Medical Center, 2500 NE Neff Road, Bend, in Conference Room A (by the front entrance).**

Contact: Cliff Tepper  
1664 NE Redrose Court  
Bend, OR 97701  
(541) 390-2174

**HLAA of Lane County meets 2nd Thursday each month - 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 OR Clark Anderson  
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The Regional Resource Center on Deafness offers degree programs to prepare professionals to meet the unique communication, rehabilitation, and education needs of individuals who are hard of hearing, deaf, late-deafened, and deaf blind.

Please visit our Web site: [www.wou.edu/rrcd](http://www.wou.edu/rrcd) or contact us at 503-838-8444 or e-mail: [RRCD@wou.edu](mailto:RRCD@wou.edu).

*Applications are generally due mid-March each year.*

**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 Portland meets the 3rd Monday each month (except June, July and August) 6:30 PM in the Wilcox Building, Room ACR 102, on the Legacy Good Samaritan Campus, 1015 NW 22<sup>nd</sup> Ave., Portland 97210**

Contact Anne McLaughlin (president)  
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 pm. Location is Mercy Hospital Community Education Room (2<sup>nd</sup> floor), 2459 Stewart Parkway, Roseburg (adjacent to Office Max).**

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

Robin Illers, Secretary (541) 580-7180

**HLAA of Linn and Benton Counties meets the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of each month (except July and August) – 6:30 PM at the Senior Center – 65 “B” Academy Square – Lebanon**

Contact: John Hood-Fysh  
e-mail: [jhood-fysh@wwmore.com](mailto:jhood-fysh@wwmore.com)  
(541) 791-3725 (H) (541)-220-8541 (cell)  
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***If you are interested in starting a chapter in your area, contact:***

Cathy Sanders  
Oregon Chapter Coordinator  
e-mail: [catsindallas@q.com](mailto:catsindallas@q.com)  
(503) 881-1642 (cell) or  
(503) 623-4662 (home)  
1131 SW Marietta Lane  
Dallas, OR 97338

~~For~~  
Chapter Coordinator  
Hearing Loss Assoc. of America  
(the National Office)  
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Here It Is! Oregon Spring 2015 Newsletter

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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 page4 for fee schedule).

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

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