

# *Hear It Is!*

## *Oregon*



Hearing Loss  
Association  
of Oregon

Autumn 2009

Issue 39

## What's Your Story?

By Marc F. Zola, LPC MFT

Each of you has a story about who you are. You carry this story and on its basis make both significant and insignificant decisions. Sometimes these stories are right on. Sometimes they are based on neurotic worry about the future or depressive regrets about the past. These exaggerated, negative narratives are often the making of your worst self. Narrative therapists contend that these negative stories, depicting you as highly flawed or ineffectual, are not even of your own making. Rather, it seems there is a gremlin on your shoulder.

No one is born with negative thoughts about himself. They develop over time. They are taught to us by a combination of cultural, societal, parental and even traumatic influences (such as abuse or the onset of a chronic condition like hearing loss). The gremlin on your shoulder has one goal: to inflate and expand on negative storytelling so that it may get bigger and you smaller. The goal of the gremlin is to eventually engulf you and takeover your life. It does this by asking a simple question, "What if?"

The gremlin asks anxiety-provoking questions like, "What if my hearing loss gets worse?", "What if the restaurant is too noisy?", "What if my friends and family drop me like a hot potato?", "What if I can't hear traffic?", "What if these hearing aids don't work?", "What if I get passed over at work because of my hearing loss?" -- You get the picture. The gremlin asks these questions in an effort to hook you into a problem-saturated conversation. It is relentless in its efforts to get you to define yourself as lost, powerless and out of control. When you buy into its stinking thinking, you make it happy (and yourself miserable); you make it come alive (while you may want to crawl in a hole); you make it grow (while you shrink and wither).

If you've stuck with the gremlin metaphor so far you're probably wondering if there is any good news -- there is. The gremlin has a weakness as devastating as kryptonite. When you ignore the gremlin IT withers. When you choose to resist buying into its negativity YOU thrive. What the gremlin knows that you may at times forget is that listening to the gremlin is a choice. In a recent article I explained how sometimes feelings can deceive. This is even more true of thoughts, and the gremlin is nothing more than a negative thought factory. Resist it and eventually it weakens to the point of impotency.

Your mission then, should you chose to accept it, is to ask yourself if the story you tell yourself about hearing loss is accurate. Is it based on facts or is it based on worry and regret? Are you being bossed around by a gremlin on your shoulder feeding you inaccurate, negative thoughts? If so maybe it's time to try resisting its manipulation and boss it right back by saying, "Thanks but no thanks. I prefer to write my own story."

**Marc Zola, MEd, LMFT & LPC** is a Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist and Licensed Professional Counselor in private practice in Eugene Oregon. Much of Marc's practice is dedicated to helping clients manage the emotional impact of hearing loss. Marc may be reached via email at [marczola@yahoo.com](mailto:marczola@yahoo.com).

## From My Lips to Your Ears

Editorial by Chuck Vlcek

What happens to your “quiet time” when you have your house remodeled? It has been an interesting experience. As a bilateral cochlear implantee, I could turn the sound off totally, but that did not necessarily mean I was free of distractions.

After having plans drawn up for an addition to my house and a partial remodel of the existing part, I had a father-son team do the work. It turns out that the father has a granddaughter who was born deaf and will get cochlear implants if the MRI gives a go-ahead.

We had the option to communicate by phone or e-mail, but in practice most discussion was done at home. That part of it has not been a problem. I am not normally an early riser, and they came early, especially during the summer when afternoons were hot. I told them they didn't have to worry about waking me up – I wouldn't hear a thing, though I might feel a thump or two.

As it happens, the addition was being built adjacent to my bedroom, and one morning I was awakened by the mother of all bed shakers. They were drilling a new crawl entry in the old foundation directly below me. Even when they were not doing something I could feel, the bed lamp would go on and off, having been attached to a “clapper” device. I had to turn the main switch off.

The addition is now complete, and the remodel phase is underway. Karen Swezey calls it a “remuddle”, very apt. I have moved to my new bedroom, away from the bedlam, but now my “computer room” is in the midst of the chaos. It will be directly affected only when the new carpet gets put in.

I have had a heat pump put in, with a programmable thermostat. Raising the temperature in the morning is a very effective way of getting me up, though a bit imprecise. But since I'm retired, precision is not required.

### Hearing Loss Association of Oregon

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

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

Deadline for Winter 2010 edition: December 15, 2009.

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For questions or comments, contact  
the OTRS Account Manager:  
[damara.g.paris@sprint.com](mailto:damara.g.paris@sprint.com)



Go to [www.hearingloss.org](http://www.hearingloss.org) to register for the 2010 Convention in Milwaukee!

### HLA-OR Quarterly Meeting Dates

January 16, 2010

April 17, 2010

July 17, 2010

October 16, 2010

To confirm, contact President Bob Russell at [bhrussell@verizon.net](mailto:bhrussell@verizon.net) or call him at (503) 614-9730. Meetings will be held at Albany General Hospital. Guests are invited to attend but should first contact President Bob Russell.

### NOTICE TO AUDIOLOGISTS AND HEARING AID SPECIALISTS

Want to keep your clients happy? Want to make them feel special? Want to help them face the world? What better way than to provide a gift membership to the Hearing Loss Association of America? It's easy. Just go to <http://www.hearingloss.org/> and select Membership from the menu, then Gift Membership (or Benefits opposite Gift Membership) and follow instructions. Tis the season to be jolly!

## Need Help Paying Your Monthly Phone Bill?

### **OTAP**

Oregon Telephone Assistance Program (OTAP) may provide a reduction in the monthly telephone bill for Oregonians who receive qualifying benefits.

*E-MAIL: [puc.otap@state.or.us](mailto:puc.otap@state.or.us)*

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**(877) 567-1977 - Fax**

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**Monday - Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.**

## Having Trouble Or Unable To Communicate By Telephone?

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Download or Complete Applications at [www.rspf.org](http://www.rspf.org)

## WALK4HEARING: OFF TO A RUNNING START

At the October 17 meeting the HLA-OR board of directors reconfirmed plans for a Walk4Hearing in Oregon. It will be held at the Two World Trade Center Plaza in downtown Portland during the afternoon of September 25, 2010. Cathy Sanders and Kathy Eckhart are co-chairs of the Walk4Hearing committee.

Former Walk4Hearing chairman Mark Foster has secured a reservation for the site, and has also secured a sponsorship from PGE to cover the cost of the rental. It will provide a 5 km walk (3.1 miles) from the Salmon Springs fountain with views of the Willamette River and Portland.

Mark Foster will be the facilities liaison and Wayne Seely will be treasurer for this event.

Much work remains to be done, and readers are encouraged to join the planning committee or volunteer to serve in some capacity. The following is a list of personnel and things that need to be done. Although some items already have volunteers, it would still be good to have backup.

We need persons to serve on a steering committee which so far consists of Chuck Vlcek, Karen Swezey, Kathy Eckhart, Cathy Sanders, and Wayne Seely. Mary Fagan will be a team captain (cheerleader) but we can always use one more. We are looking for a Walkathon team nurse/doctor. Cathy Sanders and Karen Swezey are co-chairing Sponsorships, and Leone Miller is in charge of publicity.

We need people to take care of signs, including kilometer markers, a refreshment chairperson, greeters, registration sign-in, walkathon setup, and clean-up crew. We especially need celebrity walkers.

Our photographers are Chuck Vlcek, Karin Smith, Duane Bischoff, and Wayne Seely, but anyone with a decent camera and a good eye can contribute.

To volunteer to help with Walk4Hearing, you can contact Cathy Sanders at [catsindallas@q.com](mailto:catsindallas@q.com) or contact HLA-OR at [info@hearinglossOR.org](mailto:info@hearinglossOR.org).

### Important Notice about our Website and Electronic Newsletter

We are happy to welcome Dave Davis, who has joined the HLA-OR Team as Webmaster for our HearingLossOR.org website, which has been updated. Those who have opted to read the electronic version rather than have a printed copy mailed to them will once again receive an e-mail notifying them that a new issue has been posted on the website, along with a link to the specific web page. Those who have not yet made the change are encouraged to do so by e-mailing your request to [info@hearinglossOR.org](mailto:info@hearinglossOR.org)



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

### **New Treatment for Vertigo**

Turning the world upside down is an odd treatment for vertigo. Yet it appears to work. The patient is strapped into a chair that looks like one used to train astronauts, then is turned every which way but right side up. During that time the vertigo gradually clears up. For one patient, the procedure took twenty minutes.

This technique was described in an article in the Autumn 2009 issue of the *Oregon Quarterly*, page 44, entitled "Restoring Balance". It was developed by Dr. John Eply who has an office in Portland. The chair is called the Omniax and is computer driven with multiple axes. Dr. Eply reads the involuntary movements of his client's eyes to determine which way the chair should go.

The most common kind of vertigo, called BPPV, is caused by bits of small debris – broken hairs and the like – getting into the semicircular canals which control balance and interfering with the balance mechanism. The chair tilting maneuvers apparently moves the offending material out of the canals. Prior to this invention, standard treatment was provided by surgically cutting the vestibular nerve. While the surgery cured the vertigo, it left patients feeling "strange".

The Omniax has been tested at various centers around the nation and in Australia. One is located in Dr. Owen Black's office in Portland. According to the article, the procedure has a high rate of success when operated by a trained person.

### **Survivor's Manuals Available**

Do you have your own copy of Hearing Loss Association of Oregon's very popular booklet "**Facing the Challenge - A Survivor's Manual for Hard of Hearing People**". We have distributed more than 25,000 of these Manuals and the orders continue to roll in.

Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors, Audiologists, Hearing Aid Specialists and other professionals who work with hard of hearing and late deafened people find these books to be wonderful resources for themselves and their clients. Many people have ordered copies to share with family and friends.

You can see the current edition of the Survivor's Manual at our website [www.HearingLossOR.org](http://www.HearingLossOR.org).

To obtain your free book by mail, request our newsletter or make inquiries contact:

Hearing Loss Association of Oregon.  
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Eugene, OR 97402

or e-mail to

[info@HearingLossOR.org](mailto:info@HearingLossOR.org) (preferred)

or call (541)689-7242 V/TTY

**\*Correction:** Medicare Not Covering Bilateral Implants\*

We've learned that while Medicare Part A & B covers the cost of one cochlear implant and the batteries to run it, it does not (at this time) cover bilateral implants. Some other insurance companies do cover them. We are sorry for reporting this incorrectly in our last issue.

## Chapter Capers

Lane County chapter: Bonne Bandolas recently received the "Voice of the Community" Award from the Eugene Hearing and Speech Center (see photo below). Bonne has struggled with hearing loss and has overcome many challenges. She has served in many roles as an active member of Hearing loss Association of Oregon and the Lane County Chapter. She is an outstanding advocate and mentor to help and inspire others with hearing loss to do the same.

Congratulations Bonne, for this well deserved recognition.



Douglas County Chapter: The chapter was saddened by the passing of Lorene Russell in late July. Lorene had been active for many years and was the contact person for the chapter at the time of her death.

*What is your chapter doing? Send your story to the editor at [cvlcek@centurytel.net](mailto:cvlcek@centurytel.net) .*

## CI Corner

*By Chuck Vlcek*

In the summer issue it was reported that board member Bob Williams would be having his second ear implanted on August 28. That surgery has been postponed to take advantage of a new generation of implant by Cochlear Corp. called Nucleus 5. His story will be continued in the next issue.

That development brings up the theme of the day – product upgrades. They are a mixed blessing. Most of you who are into cameras and/or computers know that the hot new product you just bought is already obsolete or soon will be. Many will decide that what you have is good enough, but some may spend more money chasing after the next hot new product.

When that product is an implant processor, the decision gets tougher. They are expensive, and unlike the processor that comes with the original implant, they are generally not covered by insurance. The old processor has some trade-in value, but that still leaves some serious money to be spent, especially for a bilateral implantee.

The question is whether the product's new features justify the cost of upgrading. Are the bells and whistles "nice to have" or "must have"? Anything that actually improves speech comprehension by a significant amount is in the "must have" category or close to it for a lot of people. Music appreciation? For musicians, perhaps, but a new processor costs as much as a high quality home theater system. Remote control? Definitely nice to have and perhaps "must have" for arthritic old folks and parents of implanted young children. Automatic T-switch activation? A "must have" for people who answer the phone a lot, especially if a person's job (or life, in the case of 911) depends on it.

A bilaterally implanted child could almost buy a house with money spent chasing after every upgrade during his lifetime. Skip a generation? The old processors lose trade-in value and may require money spent for repairs and/or extended warranty contracts (covered by Medicare).

There is much to consider when pondering an upgrade. We would certainly like to see new developments and more R&D, but perhaps with a smaller price tag. One parting thought: you are "married" to the manufacturer of your implant. Only their processors and upgrades will work with it.

# Helping Others Understand

By Lesley Bergquist

Back in the 80's my hearing was getting worse and I was trying to decide if I really "needed" hearing aids enough to spend the money (which had been set aside for a family vacation). My husband Tim said, "If you need them you should get them." Of course I felt guilty just thinking about using the money for "me". An audiologist (who didn't sell hearing aids) suggested that my family wear ear plugs to see what it was like for me. We had a set of shop headphones (for using power tools) that cut about 30 dB (much less than my 60+ dB hearing loss at the time). Tim and the boys took turns wearing them one evening before and after dinner. When they realized how hard it was to talk to each other and how much they missed, they insisted I "needed" the aids and the vacation could wait a few years.

Our stereo had graphic equalizers. I dropped the treble, raised the bass, and lowered the volume [so that] it was closer to what I hear without my hearing aids. My teenagers were surprised at how "messed up" music was. They thought I just got lower volume. The other issue is how we hear *with* our hearing aids. They have gotten a lot better in the last 5 years with different compression ranges, etc., but they still increase some of the frequency sounds we don't need and cause distortion – especially louder sounds. I got a "Whisper Hear" (they have different brands/names now) that was about \$10 at the time and had the kids wear it at the lowest setting while I dropped the silverware into the drawer, clattered the dishes, ran water in the sink, and rattled a newspaper. They were shocked at how sharp some sounds are compared to others. After that they were more careful in the kitchen when I was around. ;-)

I've also told people that it is similar to the difference between hearing something "live" and hearing a recording. No one thinks they sound the same on a tape recorder. Everything that I hear has been "recorded and played back" from a sound quality perspective – in a mic, out a speaker.

Around the house I know I'm missing sounds that the cats respond to (sometimes I think they're just trying to freak me out). Tim tells me if he has heard something that I have missed completely – often high pitched sounds like the dryer beep or the fire alarm "low battery" chirp. It helps if you have a partner who has learned what sounds you are likely to be missing and is willing to fill in the blanks for you. This is also a reason to have someone else drive your car occasionally to be sure it doesn't have any "new" sounds that should be checked out.

We all "hear" sounds differently, but the hardest part for a "normal hearing" family is remembering that we don't hear well, especially if we are the only HOH person they have to deal with.

*Reprinted from "Sound News", HLA – Lane County, November 2009*

## Other ways to Help Others Understand

I remember a tape that depicted speech recognition with hearing loss. I thought it was great for giving friends and family an idea about what I and others had to contend with in order to make sense of conversation in the absence of noise. Just for fun, I googled "hearing loss simulation" and got a lot of hits. If you are interested, you might do the same or try a couple of them on family and friends. It is weird, isn't it though, because as someone with a severe-profound loss I am unable to evaluate these myself – when you can't hear, how do you know that the simulation is on target?

<http://www.hearingcenteronline.com/sound.shtml>

<http://www.phonak.com/consumer/hearing/hearinglossdemo.htm>

<http://www.betterhearing.org/sound/>

Provided by Clark Anderson, HLA-Lane County

***Do not judge a person until you have walked a mile in his moccasins***

"Commitment isn't something that happens to us. It's something that happens because of us, because of a decision we make. When we commit to a person, a task, and to God, we pledge to show up and do our part, no matter what. How will you demonstrate commitment today?" - Rev. Mary Manin Morrissey

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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).

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*Dr. Mehr has over 27 years experience working with individuals with hearing loss. He has served on the Oregon Speech and Hearing Association and Oregon Academy of Audiology Boards and as chairman of the Oregon Board of Examiners for Speech Pathology and Audiology.*

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

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HLA of Lane County			



## WE'RE HERE TO HELP YOU HEAR



The **Bionic Ear Association (BEA)**, by Advanced Bionics, is a FREE support network for cochlear implant recipients, candidates and their families. Our mission is to improve the quality of life of those impacted by hearing loss by providing valuable information and services related to cochlear implants, including:

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- Providing technical and personalized support throughout your hearing journey
- Publishing a free monthly BEA eNewsletter to keep you up to date and connected to community events

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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.

**Hearing Loss Association of Central Oregon (HLACO meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month (except August) – 6:00PM at the St. Charles Medical Center, 2500 NE Neff Road, Bend, in Conference Room A (by the front entrance).**

Contact: Lois Johnson  
64682 Cook Ave. Box 84  
Bend, OR 97701  
e-mail: [HLACO@kwc.net](mailto:HLACO@kwc.net)  
(541) 388-6869

**Central Oregon Coast Hearing Loss Assoc. Chapter is currently inactive. Interested people can contact Cindy Campbell for information and support as well as updates on meeting dates and times.**

Contacts:  
Cindy Campbell  
e-mail: [hgnw@charter.net](mailto:hgnw@charter.net)  
(503) 922-1961 or  
1 (877) 271-7620 toll free  
4202 NE 43<sup>rd</sup>  
Neotsu, OR 97364

**Hearing Loss Assoc. of Lane County meets 2nd Thursday each month - 7 PM at the Hilyard Community Center, 2580 Hilyard Street - Eugene.**

Contacts: Andrea Cabral OR Jeff Newton  
e-mail: [angora@comcast.net](mailto:angora@comcast.net) (541)-731-8135  
(541) 345-9432 voice  
PO Box 22501 OR Clark Anderson  
Eugene, OR 97402 e-mail: [clarkoa@msn.com](mailto:clarkoa@msn.com)

**Group of of Salem Hearing Loss Assoc. meets the 2nd Wednesday each month (except July and August) - 6:30 PM at the Salem Rehabilitation Hospital – Room 2A (2<sup>nd</sup> floor) 2561 Center St. NE**

Contact: Donald Ladd  
e-mail: [SHHHSalem@aol.com](mailto:SHHHSalem@aol.com)  
(503) 394-3863  
38427 Shelburn Dr.  
Scio, OR 97374

**Hearing Loss Assoc. of Portland & Clackamas County meets the 3rd Tuesday each month (except July and August) - 7 PM at the Good Samaritan Hospital in the Wistar-Morris Conference Room - NW 22nd & Marshall – Portland**

Contact: Mark Foster  
e-mail: [hlaportland@gmail.com](mailto:hlaportland@gmail.com)  
(503) 413-7348 - voice or TTY  
PO Box 2112  
Portland, OR 97208  
[www.hearinglossor.org/portland/](http://www.hearinglossor.org/portland/)

**Hearing Loss Assoc. of Douglas County meets the 2nd Monday each month - 7 PM at the Mercy Hospital Community Education Room - 2459 Stewart Parkway -Roseburg (between Parkway Pharmacy & OfficeMax)**

Contact: Chuck Vlcek OR Barb Stoner  
e-mail: [cvlcek@centurytel.net](mailto:cvlcek@centurytel.net) (541) 496-0060  
(541) 496-4541  
P.O. Box 175  
Idleyld Park OR 97447

**Hearing Loss Assoc. 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: Bob Williams  
e-mail: [robertiw@comcast.net](mailto:robertiw@comcast.net)  
541) 258-5818  
2020 South 12<sup>th</sup> #111  
Lebanon, OR 97355

Change will not come if we wait for  
some other person or some other time.  
We are the ones we've been waiting for.  
We are the change that we seek.

Barack Obama

***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  
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