

Hear it is!

Self Help for Hard of Hearing People of Oregon

SHHH

Summer 2005

Issue 23

FINDING YOUR VOICE

Speaking up for effective communication

(Many thanks to Lois Johnson for writing this summary of our March Workshop.)

The SHHH-OR Annual Workshop was held in late March at the Salem Hospital. The topic of "Finding Your Voice" was presented by two speakers from WOU, Annette Leonard and Cheryl Davis. This was a very informative discussion on effective communication in determining your needs and how to pursue solutions to them.

The Medical Model of Disability focuses on the impairment rather than the individual. The individual is considered "disabled" because of his/her limitations. Treatment and care are needed, and the power for change resides with the professionals/medical community.

The Social Model of Disability focuses on society's limitations, and changes that can be made in our environment, systems, and attitudes. Individuals are "disabled" because of society's structures and limitations, empowerment and education are needed, and the power for change resides within changing the environment, systems, and attitudes. This model is the more effective one in terms of achieving success for ourselves. This model locates the problem with society which is something that we can change and improve, versus trying to



Technology Update: Hearing Aid Compatibility

Since 1995, the hearing aid industry (HAI) has been collaborating with the mobile phone industry to develop standards which would allow hearing aids to work maximally with mobile phones. SHHH has been an active part of this collaboration as well. The ANSI C63.19 standard was the culmination of six years work between these organizations. The standard set the immunity and emissions requirements and test protocols, which both devices must adhere to, in order to achieve compatibility.

In July 2003, the FCC specifically ordered that three steps toward compatibility occur: 1) within 2 years, every major handset manufacturer and service provider must offer at least two mobile telephones that reduce radio frequency interference to a specific level (M3) as defined by an ANSI standard for hearing aid compatibility, 2) by 2006, phone manufacturers and carriers must offer at least two phones that can be used with hearing aid and cochlear implant telecoils, and 3) by February 18, 2008, half of all

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Oregon Telecommunications Relay Service (OTRS) Communication Assistants provide a vital link between the hearing people and those who are deaf, hard of hearing or speech disabled.

- Totally confidentiality
- Toll-free access, 24 hours a day, 365 days per year.
- Voice Carry Over (VCO) allows the deaf or hard of hearing to use their own voice
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All you have to do is dial...711 or

1-800-725-2900 (TTY)
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1-800-735-0644 (ASCII)

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mobile telephone handsets must have RF interference levels of M3 or less.

Currently, the hearing aid industry has improved its product “immunity to interference” by more than 30 dB. It is estimated that 60% of the hearing aids produced today meet this rating. The hearing aid industry products available in 2004 meet the level of immunity required to assure compatibility with the FCC mobile phone product requirement targeted for 2008.

HIA worked closely with the FCC and FDA to assure

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change a person’s disability as in the Medical Model. The Social Model is the most effective way to pursue our needs and meet with success.

As hearing impaired people it is our responsibility to know how to effectively advocate for ourselves. The self advocacy steps we need to follow are:

- Recognize or anticipate that there is a problem
- Identify what would improve it
- Decide if you want to make the request
- Figure out who the contact person is
- Make the request.

We must recognize that we may have some resistance, we need to know what our disability is, what our “stress style” is, and what approaches there are to effective advocacy. Don’t wait to act until you are “ready” or you will never get around to it. Don’t hope for change – make it your intention to change.

We need to be honest about the assumptions that others make about people who are hearing impaired, our assumptions our family makes about us and our hearing loss, assumptions we make of others who have a hearing loss, and how we feel about

ourselves and our hearing loss. We also need to understand our own hearing loss and be able to explain it to others, know our communication needs in various situations, know what accommodations are available, and know what works for us and why.

On our “stress style” we need to know our confidence level and how our behavior might be different if we knew we could handle whatever came up. Do we fight, run away from the problem, or freeze? Do we shut down, blow up, avoid the issue, be defensive, or bury ourselves with drug or alcohol overuse?

Communication and problem solving techniques include:

- Reflection and question – what are we trying to accomplish?
- Mental patterns – new ideas are out there if we can escape from the usual pattern sequence that experience has set up for us. Mental patterns make it difficult for us to change our perceptions, respond in a new way, think creatively, and question our assumptions. We need to change the way we see, think and feel. The power of

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perception will challenge us to do things differently.

- Problem solving model: gather info, generate options, select the best option, evaluate it; go back to gathering info if this does not satisfy the issue. Information gathered should include identifying our interests and identifying what is unknown. Our interests allow for discussion, provide creative/new solutions, and address the underlying need. Generating options allows us to brainstorm, consider lesser alternatives, and expand the pie of choices.

An example used at the workshop was: I need to communicate with my mom therefore she should get a TTY. The underlying issue is communication. There are any number of ways to communicate with another person and we need to find the way that works best for both parties. The solution ended up being the use of a fax machine rather than a TTY, and all parties were happy that they were able to communicate well with one another.

- The nature of conflict: it is natural, pervasive, needs-based, and provides opportunities. Conflict can be constructive because it opens up issues of importance, helps build cohesiveness, causes reassessment, and increases individual involvement.

Conflict styles: avoid, accommodate, force, collaborate, compromise. Conflict styles can be beneficial or detrimental, depending on the issue and your views. Remember that it is possible for you to control the outcome based on how you pursue the issue. There is no one "right" way to do the conflict; there are positive and negative outcomes for each style. Attitude, maintaining good communication, and getting your interests met are the primary forces that will steer you toward a particular style.

- Control: look at your situation where your needs are not being met and determine what is and is not under your control. Focus on what is under your control and work your situation from that direction.



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compatibility between hearing aids and mobile phones. SHHH represents consumers in this work.

This is all good news for hearing aid and cochlear implant wearers. It means it is possible NOW to have access to hearing aid compatible phones and that can make a tremendous difference in how well we hear on these phones.

It is important that you try the cell phones out before you sign a contract to buy a phone or for service from a provider. Often the service providers will know nothing about hearing aid compatibility. You can try them by switching on your hearing aid

or cochlear implant’s telephone switch and holding the phone up to your ear. If you hear interference, or if the voice you are listening to doesn’t come through clearly, that phone is not for you.

Keep trying until you find one that works well for you.

For additional information on FCC regulations and hearing aid compatibility, visit www.accesswireless.org or www.TelephonyOnline.com or www.hearingloss.org.

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Thanks! We Couldn't Do It Without You!!

The following organizations joined with SHHH Oregon as Sponsors for our recent workshop and annual meeting:

Western Region Outreach Center & Consortia at Western Oregon University
Med-El Corporation
Sprint Relay Services
Cochlear Americas

We are grateful to them - and to those organizations who provided information as exhibitors and contributors.

Welcome New SHHH-OR Board Members

We welcome Annette Leonard, Carrie Underdahl and Nancy Hammons, along with Bob Williams who was re-elected to the SHHH-OR Board. The SHHH-OR Board meets quarterly and you are welcome to attend any of the meetings. If you'd like to be added to the email list to receive notices about these meetings and other events please email David Viers, President of the Board (viers2001@juno.com).

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- Ways to engage: power-based, rights-based, and interest-based. Power and rights-based self advocacy are useful and effective in some situations, are possible because of the laws that protect our rights, use fear as a motivator, and can establish a dynamic of contention. Interest-based self advocacy is the most difficult, has the potential to be transformative, makes you most vulnerable, and is the primary mode of self advocacy that we do with our family.
- Communication and choice: we need to determine our communication habits and decide if we are assertive, aggressive, or passive in order to develop our communication style. We also need to think outside the box and realize there can be more than one solution and be able to consider other options.



By choosing to do something about your situation you have the potential to improve it and to demonstrate self worth and move closer to getting your needs met. Make promises you can keep, break down the steps involved in your particular situation, start low and stretch your comfort zone, and stop irrational thinking. Stay motivated! When things go wrong, don't use it as an excuse to stop trying. Evaluate the situation and determine what you could have done differently to

effect a different outcome that would satisfy your needs.

Use your support system! It is empowering to have the support of a strong, motivated, and inspirational group of people. Reach out to your friends, email avenues, SHHH, and ALDA.

Remember too that communication is hard work and the pace can be unrelenting. New behaviors can be uncomfortable for you but this is normal for everyone. The discomfort will decrease as your skills increase. Go for it!

You are an Inspiration

My father has been seriously ill, but holding his own to the best of his ability. A few weeks ago, I took him for a stroll near his home and at one point we stopped to rest and enjoy the sunset over the San Francisco Bay. I said to him, "You are doing great, dad. You should be very pleased with how well you are doing in light of all that you have experienced." He looked into my eyes as we stood in the cool evening air. "Thank you," he said. "I learned from you. I try hard to keep going and believe in my self that I'm okay and can do this life of mine just like you have all these years."

This was a great tribute to me to receive this comment from him. It made every single struggle in my life worth that one moment in time when I saw that my efforts had inspired another human being to keep on keeping on.

You too do this daily. You may not be told that you inspire others, but I assure you that it is so. We must bless our every effort to rise into a greater place in our lives. We are worth it.

(From an article by Justin DeMello in the Association of Late Deafened Adults (ALDA) newsletter).

Share Your Journal

Those of us we who are SHHH members receive the SHHH's wonderful "Hearing Loss Journal". It's full of really helpful information. What do you do with your copy of the Hearing Loss Journal after you have read through it?

I used to just throw them into the recycle bin. I have started covering my mailing label and then taking them to various waiting rooms around my neighborhood and leaving them. Maybe this is something you would do too. It would be an easy way to let others know about SHHH.

Thanks – We Can't Do It Without Your Help!

We need your support to continue this newsletter. Please note: This is different and separate from any local chapter fee you may pay.

WANTED: NEW NEWSLETTER EDITOR

After many years of doing this newsletter, the present editor needs a break. The plan is to recruit a new editor to work with the present editor for an issue and then the new editor to assume this responsibility. The newsletter comes out 4 times per year.

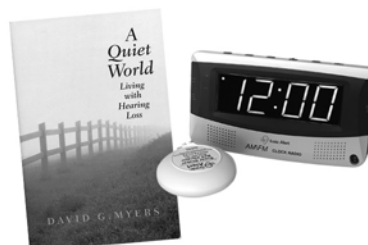
This is a great opportunity for the person who has, or would like to develop the skills necessary to do, a newsletter. A long term commitment is being sought of at least 3 year(s).

If you are interested, please contact Karen Swezey (kswezey@efn.org) for more details.

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Wanted! Working Assistive Devices

Sometimes we get calls about what to do with assistive listening devices (ALD's) when someone purchases new equipment or passes on. We gladly accept donations of used assistive devices in good working order, and we'll provide a letter of receipt for tax purposes. We use these devices for demonstration purposes and to help people in need. If you would like to donate for this purpose, contact Karen Swezey (kswezey@efn.org or (541)689-7242 V/TTY).

SHHH Advocates for Us

Social Security Disability Criteria

The Social Security Administration (SSA) is planning to update and revise the rules it uses to evaluate hearing impairments of adults and children who apply for, or receive, disability benefits.

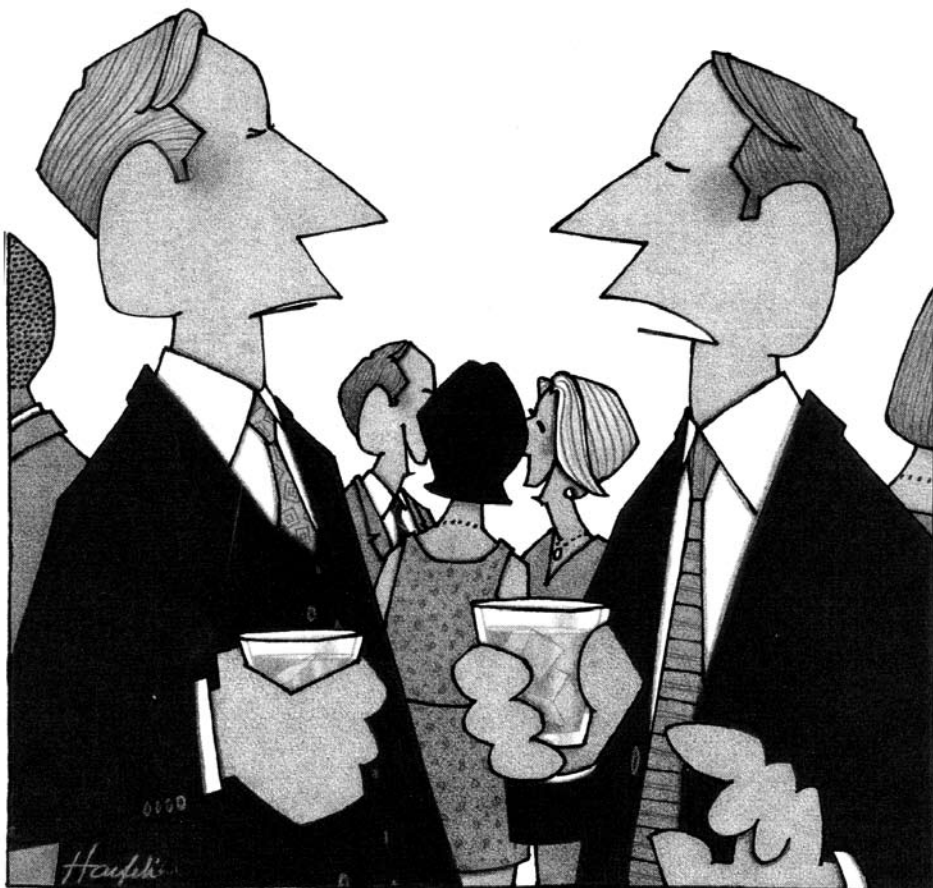
SHHH submitted comments today recommending that SSA criteria be less narrow to take into consideration the significant impact even a small amount of hearing loss can have on an individual's ability to function.

If you'd like to know more about SHHH's advocacy, you can contact Brenda Battat (Battat@hearingloss.org).

Thanks!

We thank the following folks who have sent donations since the last issue: Lane County SHHH, Marilyn Treiman in memory of Hal Hessing, Jo D'Antonio, Marsha Lovitt, Naoma Neyerlin, Barb Stoner, David Viers, Dianne Waltrip, Ann Cushman, Vicki Vandehey, A.P. & Muriel Meza, Willard Henney, Joan Booth, Marlene Robbins, Edith Campbell, Charlotte Lee, Clyde Sloan, Josephine Bateman, Victor Buenzle, Joni Rio, Carmela Bowns, Ed & Arlene Larson, Larry Pagter, James Isom, Donald Haney, Ruth Arndt, Mary Lou Bishop, Joan & Tom Dodge, David Hess and 6 Anonymous Donors.

Mail your tax-deductible gift to SHHHOR PO Box 22501, Eugene, OR 97402 using the form on the back of the newsletter.



"I understood each and every word you said but not the order in which they appeared."

When the hearing aid whistles.....

A whistling hearing aid can be very annoying and disturbing. The high-pitched sound is a feedback from the hearing aid, and you can almost always do something about it. Wax in the ear canal may prevent sound from traveling into the ear. The sound being forced back out of the ear results in the high-pitched whistle. The wax needs to be removed by an audiologist or physician.

Wearing hearing aids on full volume often creates feedback. Turn down the volume or have the hearing aids checked if you always need very high volume to hear properly.

An incorrectly fitted ear mold can cause the hearing aid to make the whistling sound and you need to see your hearing health care professional to get a new or modified ear mold or casing for your in the ear hearing aid.

The plastic tubing that joins some hearing aids to the ear mold can become hardened and shrink. This can cause it to pull on the ear mold so that it no longer sits correctly in the ear. This can cause the whistling sound and new tubing is needed. Tubing should be changed whenever it loses its flexibility.

Whenever you are told by the folks around you that your hearing aids are whistling, check to see if it could be one of the reasons above and get to your hearing health care to have whatever is causing the whistling taken care of. You don't have to "put up with" whistling hearing aids

It Works for Me!

Sometimes it's difficult to get "in the mood" when the lights go out and it's no longer possible to speech read what your partner is saying. Some people have found it helpful to leave their hearing aid or cochlear implant processor on at these times. I've placed a decorative lamp with a soft low wattage bulb on my side of the bed. When my spouse turns towards me to talk, the light shines softly on his face. I can read his lips and it actually adds to the ambiance. Another option for dealing with this lighting situation is to install dimmer switches in the bedroom.

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Need Help?

If you are receiving:

- Foodstamps or Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF).
- Or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) .
- Or are on a medical program that determines eligibility at or below 135% FPL.

Call 1-800 -648-3458 (TTY access only) or 1-800-848-4442 (Voice) for a \$13.50 a month reduction in your phone bill. You can also apply online by going to www.puc.state.or.us/consumer/rpsf.htm and click the online OTAP application.

The Oregon Telephone Assistance Program (OTAP) is administered by the Public Utility Commission.

Tools for the Job

Where I work, I sit with my back to the entryway. Every time someone comes into my cubicle, I would jump out of my skin, because I didn't hear the person coming up behind me.

I bought a rear view mirror and put it on the corner of my computer monitor. Now I can see movement in my mirror and know when someone is visiting me. It helps me be more aware of my surroundings.

(Adapted from an article by Dave Pearson printed in Sounds Waves.)



Veterans! When Disabilities Worsen, Increased Benefits May Be Available

Hearing loss help is included in the benefits that veterans may receive.

If you receive US Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) disability compensation or VA pension, it is important to remember that if your disabilities worsen, you may be eligible for a higher rate of benefit payments.

For veterans who receive compensation for service-connected disabilities, if the service-connected condition worsens, you can request a reevaluation of the disability by the VA. Depending up on the results of the reevaluation, your disability rating for that condition could be increased entitling you to increased VA benefit payments.

Veterans who receive a nonservice-connected pension maybe eligible for additional benefits if they become permanently housebound or require the regular aid and attendance of another person.

For more infomration about your eligibility for these benefits, please contact the Oregon Dept. of Veterans' Affairs at 1-800-296-9666 or your county veterans' service office. Obtain the benefits to which you are entitled - at the level to which we are entitled.

(This article first appeared in the Oregon Dept. of Veterans' Affairs newsletter.)

Oregon Health & Science University Department of Otolaryngology/ Head and Neck Surgery

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OTICON FOCUS ON PEOPLE AWARD HONORS BRENDA BATTAT OF BETHESDA, MD

National Award Spotlights Hard of Hearing People Who Defy Negative Stereotypes

Brenda Battat, Associate Executive Director of Self Help for Hard of Hearing People (SHHH), in Bethesda, is among 12 outstanding hard-of-hearing individuals honored by the Oticon Focus on People Awards, a national competition that recognizes individuals who are helping to break down stereotypes of what it means to have a hearing loss. Her selection as the first place winner in the Advocacy Category was announced at a special awards ceremony in San Diego, attended by over leading 200 audiologists from across the country.

Despite a hereditary hearing loss, Battat's most significant achievements have occurred in advocacy, a field requiring outstanding communication skills. Her efforts have directly and indirectly impacted legislation and regulations that govern such essential areas as telecommunications accessibility, community accessibility and healthcare coverage for life changing technology including hearing aids and cochlear implants. Battat has worked collaboratively with every major national group related to hearing loss and has brought together consumers, professionals and corporations to effect positive and far-reaching change for people with hearing loss.

Falling on Deaf Ears

A week before his birthday, Johnny was shouting out his bedtime prayers, which included requests for various presents,.

"Johnny, you don't need to pray so loudly. The Lord isn't deaf," said Johnny's mother.

"Maybe the Lord isn't," Johnny replied, "but Grandma is."



Who We Are

"Hear It Is! Oregon" is published quarterly. There is no subscription fee currently required, but we **depend** on your contributions and we request that you notify us annually if you wish to continue to receive this newsletter. We would like all hard of hearing people to receive it regardless of ability to pay. *If you wish to be added to the mailing list or continue to receive this newsletter, please fill out the coupon on the back page and return it to us. If you have responded in the last 12 months, you will continue to receive it and do not need to respond again.* We welcome your articles, notices about events, donations, and other items that will be of interest to hard of hearing people. Please send your items to:

*SHHH of Oregon
PO Box 22501
Eugene, OR 97402
Phone (541)689-7242
voice/TTY
FAX (541)461-8601
e-mail: kswzey@efn.org*

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Self-Help 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 SHHH 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.

Bend SHHH meets on the 2nd Wednesday of the month - 6 PM at the St. Charles Medical Center - Rehabilitation Conference Room.

Contact Cathy Sanders
e-mail: cathys@coril.org
(541)388-8103
CORIL
PO Box 9425, Bend, OR 97708

SHHH - Central Oregon Coast meets the 4th Tuesday each month - 1:30 PM at the Newport Chamber of Commerce, 555 SW Coast Highway, Newport

Contact Cindy Campbell e-mail: cicampbell@earthlink.net (541)998-8245 or (877)867-1896 4202 NE 43rd, Neotsu, OR 97364	Bob Hall bhpalx2@centurytel.net (541)765-3342 Box 1137, Depoe Bay, OR 97341
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Lane County SHHH meets 2nd Thursday each month - 7 PM at the Hilyard Community Center, 2580 Hilyard Street, Eugene.

Contact Leone Miller, e-mail: vngleone@msn.com (541)744-2994 PO Box 22501, Eugene, OR 97402	Andrea Cabral e-mail: angora@comcast.net (541) 345-9432 voice/TTY
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Lowestin (Lake Oswego/West Linn/Tualitan) SHHH meets 2nd Tuesday each month - 2PM at the Adult Comm. Center - 505 G St., Lake Oswego.

Contact Betty Gallucci
e-mail: bettylakegrove2002@yahoo.com
(503)636-6933 voice
5211 Madrona, Lake Oswego, OR 97035

Medford Area Chapter - New for You!

Contact: Jim & Marilyn Hamm
(503)664-0141
PO Box 5574, Central Point, OR 97502

Portland SHHH meets the 3rd Tuesday each month - 7 PM at the Good Samaritan Hospital, Wistar-Morris Conference Room - NW 22nd and Marslall, Portland

Contact: Mark Foster
e-mail: hey_foster@hotmail.com Web: www.shhhor.org/portland/
(503)413-7348 - voice/TTY
PO Box 2112, Portland, OR 97208

NEW!!! Redmond Area Chapter meets the 4th Tuesday of each month - 6:30 PM at the Redmond Library, 827 SW Deschutes Ave., Redmond

Contact: C.J. Bennett
e-mail: cben13@ixprwes.com

Roseburg SHHH meets the 2nd Monday each month - 7 PM at the Mercy Hospital Community Education Room - 2459 Stewart Parkway, Roseburg. (Between Parkway Pharmacy & Office Max)

Contact: Lorene Russell
e-mail: rlrussell@mcsi.net
(541)679-9655
732 Mulberry Ln.
Roseburg, OR 97470

Salem SHHH meets the 2nd Wednesday each month - 6:30 PM at the Salem Hospital Auditorium (in the basement) - 665 Winter Street SE, Salem.

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

If you are interested in being a part of a chapter in your area, contact:

Bonne Bandolas, Oregon

Chapter Coordinator

e-mail: oregonchapters@pcinw.com

For CapTel calls dial 1(877)243-2823 then (541)689-3701#

For TTY or FAX (541)689-3701

PO Box 22501, Eugene, OR 97402

or

Chapter Coordinator, SHHH National Office

e-mail: national@SHHH.org

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