

HEAR OREGON

IT IS!



SPRING 2021

ISSUE 85

Audiobooks can sharpen your hearing

— Contributed by Temma Ehrenfeld
May 10, 2021

When Thomas Edison invented the phonograph, he imagined recordings of entire novels. Today, there are more than 400,000 audiobooks you can download onto your phone, tablet or other device.

I never considered audiobooks because I think of hearing as my weakness — why do something hard for fun? I was born with hearing loss and muddled along without hearing aids until my 30s — the written word was my friend. I avoided depending on my ears. But practice is better than avoidance.

Auditory training programs offer exercises designed to improve your hearing skills. You may be a candidate for auditory training if you're getting a hearing aid for the first time or have trouble understanding speech despite normal hearing, a condition called "hidden hearing loss." Specialized programs and smartphone apps have been designed with the feel of a video game. But if you like stories and dramatic voices, consider audiobooks as well. They are a unique way to enjoy literature and you can sharpen your hearing comprehension at the same time.

Continued on page 3

Eugene Airport upgrades experience for passengers with hearing loss

The Eugene Airport now offers Hearing Loop technology in order to improve communication for our passengers.

During COVID-19 those with hearing loss experienced additional obstacles due to physical distancing, masks, and plexiglass barricades.

A hearing aid's limit of effectiveness is 6 feet. For people with hearing loss, this has had a greater negative effect in places such as terminals and gate areas. With so much background noise, along with the inability to read lips due to mask requirements, those with a hearing loss are doubly affected.

What is a hearing loop?

A hearing loop — sometimes called an audio induction loop — is a special type of sound system designed for people with hearing aids. The hearing loop provides a magnetic, wireless signal that is picked up by the hearing aid

when it is set to "T" (Telecoil) setting.

If your hearing aid does not have an obvious "T" setting, you may need to ask your audiologist



what program setting your hearing aid has.

The hearing loop consists of a microphone to pick up the spoken word; an amplifier which processes the signal which is then sent through the final piece; the loop cable — a wire placed around the perimeter of a specific area (i.e. a meeting room, a church, a service counter etc.) to act as an antenna that radiates the magnetic signal to the hearing aid.

Take a look at this video to see how Hearing Loop technology works. <https://vimeo.com/62162392>

Eugene Airport holds a ribbon cutting marking its Hearing Loop installation. All ticket and rental car counters have hearing loops. At right, Alan Attila explains loops to Mayor Lucy Vinis. Radio station KEZI was also present to share the news.



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WWW.HLAA-OR.ORG/

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.

So happy to be here writing this little “love letter” to you. I am savoring every moment of life during this gorgeous spring thanks to a wonderful article written by John Pavlovitz.

“If only we could know when we were experiencing the last occasions and the last moments with people ..., so that we could give them the gratitude and reverence and joy they deserve.”

You can read the entire article here: <https://bit.ly/2Qpce9B>. See if it doesn't give you a new outlook on life.

THIS is our first digital newsletter. You should have read about this move to save money in our last two issues. If you do not have Internet access you can request the newsletter in printed format, but you have to let us know. You can do that at our website: <https://www.hlaa-or.org/>

NOW that the CDC has lifted the mandate on wearing masks for vaccinated folks, it has been a

little confusing. News articles and commentators ask: How much do we trust others? Businesses don't want to be the ones to make people show vaccination cards and decide who can enter and who must be turned away.

We will have to hold on a little bit longer and follow individual businesses' guidelines for masks. Remember that it's your decision to make and there is no law you can't wear a mask if you want.

If you haven't gotten your “jab” yet, what are you waiting for?

AT the beginning of May I volunteered to help with an art project at a local art gallery. Children and adults made gyotaku prints from rubber fish. This traditional Japanese art form began over 100 years ago as a way for fishermen to keep a record of fish they caught. With sumi ink applied to one side of a freshly caught fish, they then covered the fish with rice paper and rubbed to create an exact image of the fish.

One youngster I helped wore hearing aids in both ears. The ear pieces were purple with gold glitter embedded in the plastic. I complimented her and pointed to my own, which, I admitted, were nowhere near as nice.

She was so young to be on this journey. However, she was obviously off to a good start with the help she needed. We are so fortunate to live in a time when there is more acceptance and help for those of us with disabilities.

This year marks the 30th anniversary of President George H.W. Bush signing the Americans with Disabilities Act into law — something everyone can celebrate.

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HEAR IT IS! #85

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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 Summer 2021, June 8; Fall 2021, Sept. 8.

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

Audiobooks,

continued from page 1

Hearing isn't just about recognizing sounds; we need to interpret them. Audiobooks can help us exercise "those linguistic areas of your brain that are crucial for comprehension" explains Nancy Tye-Murray, PhD, and professor at Washington University School of Medicine.

Download books free from your local library and listen on your phone while you're walking, driving, taking public transportation, or doing chores at home. Depending on the technology level of your hearing aid, you can even stream them directly into your hearing aids via Bluetooth.

If you have a cochlear implant and are working with a rehab audiologist or speech therapist, ask about training with audiobooks. There are ways to approach this for people at all listening levels.

How to get started

Even when I didn't consider audiobooks, I liked listening to popular songs and following the lyrics by reading them online at the same time. I'm also a fan of subtitles while watching television or movies. If you're the same way, you might get an audiobook of a paper book you've read before and own. See how it feels to read and listen simultaneously.

It's best to start in a quiet room with a book narrated by a male voice, says Tye-Murray, who has created an online auditory training program called Amptify. Lower pitches are usually easier to hear. An accomplished actor is your best bet. Find a voice you enjoy — you have lots of options!

Play your first audiobook at a slower than normal speed, if that helps you, while following the text. Over time you can change the speed to the normal setting.

Next, she advises, try listening without reading along at the slower speed "until you're comfortable with changing to normal speed."

"Start really paying attention to how much you comprehend," she said. "After you finish listening to a



PHOTO BY HEADWAY ON UNSPLASH

Upcoming HCAA board meetings

The next 2021 quarterly HCAA-OR board meeting will be held July 10, 10 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. The meeting will be held online at Zoom. If you would like to attend remotely, send an email to John Hood-Fysh, jhoodfysh@gmail.com and he will send you a link.

chapter, you might jot down a few sentences that capture the essence of the chapter. For example, 'Janey Smith caught the bus and ended up sitting next to a tall, dark stranger.' This will reinforce your brain's comprehension muscles."

For your second book, you might choose one narrated by a woman and repeat the steps above.

You might want to listen only for 20 minutes to a half hour at first. Listening can be tiring. Also, remember that if you lose your place you can always rewind. I tend to fall asleep when I read in the evening, and for me, audiobooks are a good way to stay awake.

Top audiobooks for auditory rehab

For beginners, Lynn A. Wood, an audiologist in Wheaton, Illinois recommends the children's book, "Oh the Places You'll Go," by Dr. Seuss, read by actor John Lithgow.

For a step-up in difficulty, try a young-adult story about a girl and her beloved dog, "Because of Winn-Dixie" by Kate DiCamillo, read by Cherry Jones

Eventually you'll be ready to practice listening to people with different accents. Try a British novel read by Juliet Stevenson, like "Little Dorrit," from her Dickens collection. For a recent book with a bit of a meta-fiction twist, try

"Sweet Tooth" by Ian McEwan.

New audiobooks draw top talent. If you are feeling really ambitious, try George Saunders' "Lincoln in the Bardo" with 166 narrators. Another book with multiple narrators is "The Only Plane in The Sky," Garrett Graff's oral history of 9/11. You'll hear raw audio footage from that day and some of the real people who describe their experiences.

A few books have special effects. "The Lost Words," a collection of poems about words that have disappeared from dictionaries, includes a soundtrack drawn from the British countryside beneath each poem. Poetry should always be read out loud, though I need a written version in front of me as well.

Make this project a way to enjoy books you've had on your list but didn't get to, books that feel like guilty pleasures, and books that pleurably stretch your listening skills.

Reprinted with permission from Healthy Hearing. Please visit their site for the original article: <https://bit.ly/3ym9IYf>



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.

If you still receive a printed copy of this newsletter, please share it with a friend.

Smoke detectors for people with hearing loss – Contributed by Madeleine Burry - May 3, 2021

Find the full article online: <https://bit.ly/3tVt1im>

Having a smoke detector in place is a simple, hugely effective strategy to prevent yourself from harm: Your risk of dying in a fire in your home falls by 55 percent when there's a working smoke alarm present, per the National Fire Protection Association.

For many people, the blare of a fire alarm is all you need. If you have impaired hearing, though, the din of these life-saving devices may not be an effective alert to the presence of smoke, fire or carbon monoxide.

Alarms with flashing lights, as well as special vibrating alarms designed to wake someone who's sleeping, are available for people who are deaf or have a hearing impairment.

"Today more than ever, it's important for residents to have the earliest possible notification of an emergency," says Sharon Cooksey, a fire safety educator at Kidde, an alarm manufacturer.

That's because escape time is lower now than previously needed — just two to three minutes — due to more fast-burning synthetic materials in homes, she notes. "This makes a quick evacuation a top priority."

People at the highest risk of being harmed or dying in a fire include children, people who are under the influence of drugs/alcohol, and people with hearing loss, statistics show.

Choose a smoke alarm that's suitable for your hearing loss

If you have high-frequency sensorineural hearing loss due to either age or noise exposure, an ordinary alarm may not give you the alert you need, says audiologist Rich Panelli of Nevada ENT.

"The risk of a normal alarm is that some produce only a high-frequency sound, and some do not produce an alarm loud enough for [people with] a severe to profound hearing loss to pick up," Panelli says.

This is particularly significant at night, when people are likely to remove their hearing aids.

"NFPA advises that older adults or other people who are hard of hearing (those with mild to severe hearing loss) can use a device that emits a mixed, low-pitched sound," Cooksey says.

Strobe lights: Instead of relying simply on sound, the flash from strobe alarms gives a visual cue about dangers. If you're counting on a strobe alarm for nighttime, when you might be asleep, look for one that has an intensity high enough to wake someone up, advises the NFPA. And be aware that older adults may be less responsive to strobe alarms, Cooksey points out.

Vibration: Sleeping is a particularly high-risk time when it comes to fires. Fires during sleeping hours, between 11 p.m. and 7 a.m. account for 47 percent of fatal fires in residences, according to FEMA. Alarms that make the pillow or bed vibrate (often referred to as "bed shakers") help wake people up.

Interconnected alarms: "Alarms that cater to someone with severe to profound hearing loss include a combination of alerting devices, usually in one system," Panelli says. With this system, when one alarm goes off, all of them do—the bed shakes, lights flash, sounds blare, and so on.

Here's what else to keep in mind when it comes to fire alarms:

You need more than one. If you have several floors, you'll need an alarm in each level (except for the attic), Cooksey says. Make sure to have one in every bedroom, she says.

You'll need to test them regularly. Cooksey recommends a weekly test.

Make sure the alarm is reputable. "Always look for alarms that have the label of a recognized testing laboratory, such as UL," Cooksey recommends. You'll find alarms that meet the UL standards for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. ■

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- 800-676-4290 (español)



<https://www.oregonrelay.com>



Breaking Out of Our Hearing Loss Bad Habits

<https://livingwithhearingloss.com/2021/05/11/breaking-out-of-our-hearing-loss-bad-habits/>

May 11, 2021 — by Shari Eberts

Do you ever feel like you get stuck in a destructive pattern with your hearing loss? It is easy to do. Maybe you worry you won't be able to hear your friend over the loud background noise of the coffee shop so you make up an excuse and stay home. And then it is easier to do the same thing next time you are invited. You've created a "hearing loss bad habit."

Or you find yourself answering every conceivable question when the masked checkout person at the grocery store asks "paper or plastic," because you have no idea which of the likely questions they actually asked.

Before long, you are avoiding casual conversations with strangers for fear you won't understand what is said.

It's hard to break this pattern of self-isolation and bluffing, but it's an important step on the road to hearing loss acceptance and self-advocacy.

As communication challenges arose with the pandemic it became easier to fall into avoidance here, isolation there. It became the new normal. But as we approach reopening we will need to retrain ourselves.

We must break the negative patterns we have developed as coping mechanisms. Muster up the courage and join a conversation, meet a friend for coffee, or attend a lecture or theater performance once it is safe to do so.

The mental preparation begins now. Whenever I find myself falling into a negative behavior pattern, I search out one of my favorite poems. It reminds me that I am in control of my choices. That there is always another opportunity to make a better one — to meet that friend for coffee or ask the cashier for a repeat. I have the power to take a different path — to make the brave choice and engage once again despite the challenges of hearing loss.

Autobiography in Five Short Chapters
— by Portia Nelson

Chapter I

I walk down the street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I fall in. I am lost ... I am helpless.
It isn't my fault.
It takes me forever to find a way out.

Chapter II

I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I pretend I don't see it.
I fall in again.
I can't believe I am in the same place.
But it isn't my fault.
It still takes a long time to get out.

Chapter III

I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I see it is there.
I still fall in. It's a habit.
My eyes are open.
I know where I am.
It is my fault. I get out immediately.

Chapter IV

I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I walk around it.

Chapter V

I walk down another street. ■

DID YOU KNOW?



people over the age of 60 have hearing loss

HEARING LOSS IS ABOUT

2X

AS COMMON
IN ADULTS
with diabetes



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<https://www.pacificu.edu/>

* 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

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Governor signs House bill No. 2498 for HOH

by Chad A. Ludwig, *Deaf Legislative Advocate*

On May 7 the governor signed HB 2498 into law.

This bill provides that the registered owner may request that registration cards issued for the vehicle include that the owner, or person operating the vehicle, may be deaf or hard of hearing.

This includes registration card, registered owner, drivers license, and state issued license. This data will be available in Oregon state law enforcement data system (LEDS) and this is a plus.

Today, I emailed ODOT's legislative director to learn if they would want to invite members from the community to navigate with them to implement rules, procedures, etc. — when this information becomes available then I'd share it with the rest of you to decide if this

is something that interests you to work with them. I'm not sure if this is something they will do and I will keep you posted.

I believe this marks Oregon as a third state to make this into a law, after Kentucky and North Carolina. Great news for all of us Oregonians!

Oregon Association of the Deaf is planning to produce a video (captioned and ASL access) to communicate with the general public later this coming week. Please communicate and share this exciting news with everyone within your network!

Source: <https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2021R1/Measures/Overview/HB2498>

SECTION 1. ORS 803.370 is amended to read:

803.370. This section establishes requirements for an application for vehicle registration in this state. If an applicant fails to comply with requirements under this section, the Department of Transportation may refuse to register or reregister a vehicle until the applicant complies with the requirements. An application shall contain all of the following:

- Amended to include No. 10:
(10) An option to include information on the registration card that the registered owner, or a person who may operate the vehicle, is deaf or hard of hearing. ■



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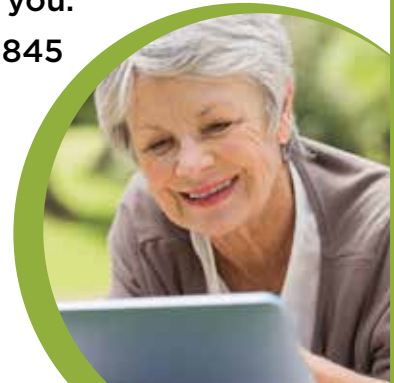
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Info/application:

www.tdap.oregon.gov
puc.rspf@state.or.us



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. ■

HLAA of Portland meets the third Saturday each month (except June, July, and August) 10 am, in the Wistar Morris Conference Room in the Main Hospital Building on the Legacy Good Samaritan Campus, 1015 NW 22nd Ave. (at Marshall), Portland 97210. Contact Mark Foster, president; email: hlaportland@gmail.com. Write P.O. Box 2112, Portland, OR 97208-2112; 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 we are scheduled to meet in person June 10 unless Covid 19 infections mandate otherwise.
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 (except June, July, & Dec.) at 6:30 p.m. at the Reimar Building, next to Albany General Hospital, 1085 6th Ave. SW, Albany, OR 97321. Contact: John Hood-Fysh, email: jhoodfysh@gmail.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.



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Contact Eileen Marma at info@hearinglossOR.org.

Thank you to our recent HLAA Donors:

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Community is essence of Walk4Hearing Incentive prizes to be offered

Walk4Hearing is the only nationwide event bringing attention to hearing loss and promoting the importance of hearing health.

Participating in Walk4Hearing means joining thousands of people across the country, and right in our neighborhoods, who understand what it's like to live with hearing loss. It's about sharing an experience, learning from each other, and taking the first step toward better hearing health.

Our spring Walks will team up for one spectacular Walk4Hearing Weekend that will bring greater awareness to hearing health. This format allows us to support one another, see the impact of our work in other cities, listen to participants share their hearing journeys, and make new friends across the country.

Spring Season's event is Saturday, June 12, Walk4Hearing, 9 a.m. Pacific Time.

Participants will log on to a video platform to support one another from multiple cities.

They will share stories and offer support and encouragement to people of all ages living with hearing loss.

After the online celebration, participants will raise awareness in their community by walking in



The online celebration kept me more connected to my community than ever. It's incredibly motivating to hear stories from people not just in my area, but from across the entire country. - Kiera Sumer, San Diego

their neighborhoods with teammates, friends, and family members.

As a reward for your commitment, registered walkers who raise \$100 will receive an official Walk4Hearing T-shirt. Reach \$350 and you'll earn a Walk4Hearing hat to wear and show your support.

The fall season dates in several locations will be announced, as well as times.

If there is no walk in your area — and we don't see one for Oregon here — you can register for your own walk. See http://hlaa.convio.net/site/PageServer?pagename=walk_home_page

2021 HLAA Virtual Convention, June 24-26

Join us online, June 24-26, to learn the latest about hearing health, communication access and the technologies and strategies that help people with hearing loss live well.

This three-day event includes a research symposium on Hearing Care for All, and robust workshops on advances in hearing aids, accessibility through mobile devices, hearing access in the workplace and more.

Workshops include — *Wireless Accessibility: Finding Mobile Devices and Features that Work for You*, Thursday, June 24, 3:30 – 4:30 p.m.; *Hearing Aids: Over-the-counter (OTC), Direct-to-consumer (DTC), and Connectivity*, Friday, June 25, 3 – 4 p.m.; *The Latest in Digital Inclusion Technologies*, Friday, June 25, 5:45 – 6:45 p.m.; *Communication Access in Health Care*, Saturday, June 26, 3:15 – 4:15 p.m.; *The Promise of Next-Generation Bluetooth LE Audio Connectivity*, Saturday, June 26, 4:30 – 5:30 p.m. Please note: all times are Eastern Time.

Register today for best rates for the HLAA Virtual Convention 2021. Early-bird registration will be \$35 through June 15. Beginning June 16, registration will be \$45. Check out: <https://bit.ly/3hEfjy1>

Not your grandpa's hearing aid

Hearing aid technology has improved a lot over the past few decades, but at their core, hearing aids have always been designed with four basic parts: a microphone, a processor, a receiver and a power source.

The microphone picks up the sounds in your environment and passes it to the processor. The processor enhances the signal and delivers it to the receiver which delivers the amplified signal to the

ear canal. The power source, or battery, drives the system.

Hearing aid technology can be considered either advanced or basic, based on the sophistication of the processor. Even today's basic digital hearing aids offer far more benefit than the best hearing aids of previous generations.

Most of today's advanced hearing aids come with smartphone apps, allowing the user to make adjustments, contact their hear-

ing care provider, and monitor battery life.

Most importantly, some of them work like assistive listening devices, by routing phone calls or other sources of sounds directly to a user's hearing aids. Some also can convert speech into text, and translate different languages.

Medicare and some insurance plans cover part of the cost of aids. Check on this today; don't wait.



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[] 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).

Or you can sign up online at www.hlaa-or.org. Click "membership," then "application."

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