Hear It Is! Oregon



Autumn 2011 Issue 47



First Ever Oregon Walk4Hearing a Big Success

What a rewarding time we had at the September 17th Walk4Hearing! Approximately 150 friends of the Hearing Loss Association made the First Ever Oregon Walk4Hearing a smashing success. Our goal for this first Walk was to raise awareness of hearing loss AND at least \$25,000. Donations are continuing to come in, but as of press time we have raised more than \$27,000!!

This money will be used to support Hearing Loss Association in a variety of ways including advocating for captioning of live theater productions, support for kids with hearing loss, outreach to veterans returning with hearing loss, educating people with hearing loss about coping strategies, hearing assistive technology, publishing our award winning state newsletter, and social networking for young adults.

We were pleased to have Governor Kitzhaber declare our Walk Day as Walk4Hearing Day in Oregon. He also encouraged all Oregonians to join in this observation.

Several prizes were given at the Walk including a \$200 Morton Steakhouse certificate to Mark Foster's first place team (Foster Footsers), a Nike Employee Store certificate to Cathy Sander's second place team (CatWalks), an Old Spaghetti Factory Certificate to Karen Swezey's third place team (Karen's Family & Friends), Dutch Brothers Coffee certificates, an IPod Touch from Clear Captions, and other fun prizes.

We thank our wonderful sponsors: **Platinum Sponsor** (\$5000) OHSU Department of Otolaryngology; **Silver Sponsor** (\$2500) Earcher Captioning, Portland General Electric; **Kickoff Event Sponsors** (\$1500) LNS Captioning, OTRS Sprint, ODS; **Supporting Sponsor** (\$500) Comcast; **Friends** (\$250) Wilson Ear Clinic & Portland Ear Testing Center, Amedisys Home Health Care; **Kilometer Markers** (\$100) Cathy Sanders, Peter LeBray.

A big THANK YOU goes to those who organized and conducted this very successful Walk. Cathy Sanders and Kathy Eckert-Mason dedicated many hours as co-Chairs. And thank you to the many volunteers who helped with registration, entertainment, the planning team and other areas to make the day extra special. And most of all, THANK YOU to everyone who helped raise money to help us reach our goal. Every dollar will be put to good use helping people with hearing loss.

Photo: W4H co-chair Cathy Sanders and David Viers go for a stroll. Other W4H photos will be posted to the HLA-OR website at http://www.hearinglossor.org/



From My Lips to Your Ears

Editorial by Chuck Vlcek

The much advertised and anticipated Walk4Hearing in Portland is now history, at least for 2011, and as noted on the front page article, we did quite well. The folks who worked so hard to put this together and the generous sponsors and individual donors were duly given well deserved thanks. Already the organizers are thinking of how to make the Walk even better in 2012. Stay tuned for further reports and developments. We hope that you will be a part of our next It's a great way to raise Walk4Hearing. public about the awareness causes. treatment and impact of hearing loss. Join us as we step up and make a difference for people with hearing loss!

The other major articles in this issue involve captioning. It is evident that we are making progress locally, regionally, and nationally. This is a good example of time, effort, and money being well spent, considering that captions can also help hearing people on occasion, especially those not yet comfortable with spoken English. But as noted in the editorial of the Summer 2011 issue of this newsletter, taking advantage of the new opportunities is the responsibility of each individual. Providing feedback is another, as caption services are not always perfect, a point made by Carol Studenmund in her article on TV captioning.

Board Election Notice

This year there will be several Board positions available with elections in March 2012 for those seats on the Board. If there is anyone out there with an interest in serving on the State Board please let us know. We meet each quarter (see schedule on page 4). There may also be committee meetings. We are a fun group with lots of Should you be interested or have work to do. questions, please contact Kathy Eckert-Mason, Nominating Committee Chair 2012, for kathryn.e.eckertk_eckertmason@yahoo.com or mason@state.or.us.

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Hear it is! #47, Autumn 2011. Published quarterly by the Hearing Loss Association of Oregon, 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.

For advertising information and rates, contact Karen Swezey at info@hearinglossOR.org.

Deadline for Winter 2012 edition: Dec. 31, 2011.

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For questions or comments, contact the OTRS Account Manager: damara.g.paris@sprint.com

Hear for the Holidays

"The holiday season can be very stressful for someone with a hearing loss. With large family groups gathering, laughing, and conversing, it's easy for someone with a hearing loss to feel left out, isolated, bewildered, and sad."

That is how author Arlene Romoff began an article that appeared in the December 2008 issue of the Hearing Loss magazine (page 46). Arlene continues on a more helpful note: "Hearing aids and cochlear implants have limitations in noisy environments like this, so here are a few tips to help make this holiday more enjoyable for everyone."

What follows are "Seven tips to better communication". Here is a condensed version of them.

- 1. Realize that a large group around a dining table is a difficult hearing environment, but think positive.
- 2. It's easier to talk with people one-on-one in a quiet place than a noisy living room, so find someone to talk to and steer the person there, or help out in the kitchen where it is a bit less crowded.
- 3. At the table find a "good" seat next to a helpful person, away from glare, and have distracting background sounds like the TV muted or turned down.
- 4. Be content with just speaking to those seated next to you. If you start the conversation you will know what the topic is.
- 5. After dinner, help out in the kitchen (to get away from the dining table), but don't do the dishes because everyone will be behind you.
- 6. Watch what you drink. A moderate amount of alcohol may or may not help your lipreading skills, but at some point your ability to hear, lipread, and comprehend will be impaired.
- 7. Use assistive listening devices if you have them. A directional mike can be very helpful.

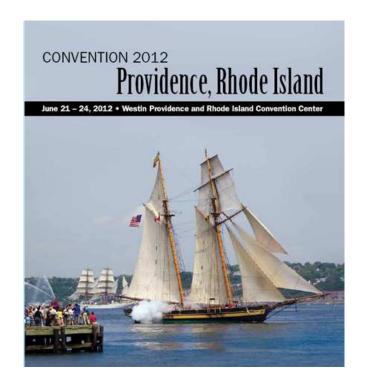
HLA-OR Quarterly Meeting Dates

The next meeting will be held on December 10, 2011 at Albany General Hospital

(Reimer Building). Future meetings will be announced in the next issue.

To confirm, contact President Bob Russell at bhrussell@frontier.com or call him at (503) 614-9730. Guests are invited to attend but should first contact President Bob Russell.

If you couldn't be with us in Portland on Walk Day, you can still support us through your donation. Mail your check to: Walk4Hearing, PO Box 22501 Eugene, OR 97402. For additional information, email: info@hearinglossOR.org or call (541)689-7242. Every penny will be used to benefit hard of hearing people.



HLAA Happenings

September 9, HLAA attended the Federal Communication Commission's (FCC) Emergency Access Advisory Committee (EAAC) meeting. The Twenty First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act (CVAA) required the FCC to establish the EAAC to prepare recommendations on ways to ensure that people with disabilities have access to Next Generation 911 emergency services.

Currently, the only people in America who can successfully send a text message to 9-1-1 answering centers, called PSAPs – Public Safety Answering Points, live in Sacramento, California, and Black Hawk County, Iowa. Efforts are underway to upgrade the 9-1-1 system across the country so that anyone can reach 9-1-1 via voice, text, email, or video, but it be awhile before that system is in place. The new system is called Next Generation 9-1-1

Come Sail with Us to New England

HLAA has announced Providence, Rhode Island as the host city for Convention 2012.

All workshops, plenary sessions, exhibit hall, and social events will take place at the Rhode Island Convention Center which is connected by skybridge to The Westin Providence. Located in the heart of downtown Providence, you'll find plenty of restaurants, shopping, and points of interest. It's not too early to start planning your trip to New England.

Check the HLAA Convention web page for updates:

http://www.hearingloss.org/content/convention

Discrimination by Wells Fargo & Co.

The U.S. Department of Justice has obtained a settlement with Wells Fargo under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The settlement addresses all violations of Title III of the ADA, including Wells Fargo's failure to communicate effectively with people with disabilities such as its past refusal to accept relay calls from people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have speech problems. A copy of the settlement is at www.ada.gov or can be obtained by e-mailing WFclaims@usdoj.gov or calling 1-800-514-0301 V or 1-800-513-0383 (TTY).

If you have experienced discrimination, you can get claim information by sending an e-mail with your name, address, and telephone number to WFclaims@usdoj.gov or visit the ADA home page at www.ada.gov or call the Disability Rights Section at 866-708-1273 (voice mail) or 866-544-5309 (TTY). All claims must be received by 1/29/2012.

Membership in HLAA is \$20 -- student, \$35 -- individual, \$45 -- couple/family, \$50 -- 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.

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Within Earshot: News You Need to Know

Closed Captioning Frustrations

Carol Studenmund, LNS Captioning

I am one of the owners of LNS Captioning in Portland. I manage the business and I also do closed captioning for live events. When I see garbled captions on my TV, I get frustrated. I know how to tell the difference between a captioner doing a sloppy job and when the captions are garbled in the distribution process.

Federal law requires captions to be preserved in the transmission process. For example, the Trail Blazers caption their games. The Blazers send that TV signal out over the air and over satellite and over cable to viewers all over the world. When a local cable company airs that game, the local cable company is required to maintain those captions so they are available for viewers who want or need to use them.

As caption viewers, we have four ways to make our frustrations heard about caption concerns. *First*, we can email the station directly. According to the Federal Communications Commission, every station must have an email contact on its website for caption inquiries from viewers.

The second way to make our frustrations heard is to contact our cable or satellite provider. My Comcast bill has an entire section dedicated to Closed Captioning Customers. Information is provided about where to go for assistance. I would expect satellite bills to include similar customer information.

Your cable or satellite bill should provide contact information for your provider and for your local cable TV regulatory organization.

Cable customers have a *third* option, which is to contact the local cable TV regulatory organization. Here in Portland, that group is the Mount Hood Cable Regulatory Commission, the MHCRC. Its website is www.mhcrc.org. If my local cable provider, Comcast, is not able to satisfy my concerns about captioning issues, I am free to turn to the government body with which Comcast has a contract, which is the MHCRC, and let that government body know about my concerns.

I have captioned Blazer games from my home studio that I have watched while I was captioning. I know my captions are going out in great shape. My colleagues at the Blazers can confirm my captions look fine leaving the Rose Garden as they head out to the world of TV distribution. Somewhere in the Comcast system, my captions sometimes get messed up. Letters are missing, words are chopped apart. I know I'm not writing that way. And the customer service people at Comcast are not effective at resolving my concerns. Since Comcast has a contract with the MHCRC, the MHCRC can get Comcast's attention in ways that I can not.

I do not know who has the regulatory authority that MHCRC has in Eugene or other parts of the state. Check your cable bill. The information should be there. If you have problems getting satisfaction from your cable company for caption quality issues, please contact your local regulatory authority.

The *final* resource we all have as caption viewers is to file an online complaint with the FCC at: http://esupport.fcc.gov/complaints.htm?sid=&id=d1e3. This is an informal complaint process, and since its inception in February 2010, TV stations have taken notice of the increase in caption complaints. This process is much easier to navigate than the previous process.

If you know who your local cable regulatory authority is, please share that information with Oregon HLA. I know in Portland, the MHCRC wants to know if viewers are having problems with Comcast or Frontier, another Portland-area cable provider. Comcast and Frontier's contracts with the MHCRC require they obey all FCC laws. Your input is needed to improve captioning for all viewers.

Here It Is! Oregon Autumn 2011 Newsletter

U of Oregon Moves the Bar for Athletic Facility Access

The University of Oregon announced that it is offering open captioning of the stadium announcements at its football stadium, and continues to investigate doing the same at its other athletic venues. UO will then become the national pace-setter in making college athletic facilities accessible to fans with hearing loss. The captions will be displayed on the scoreboards, visible to all attendees from any seat. A remote captioner working through a telephone or internet connection will convert the public-address announcements, penalty calls and intermission information into text form, accessible to anyone unable to hear what is being said. A photo of the captions on the DuckVision screen at Autzen stadium will soon be posted to the HLA-OR website at www.hearinglossor.org.

The announcement came after almost two years of ongoing advocacy efforts by individuals in the Eugene, Oregon area, and after a series of meetings between the university athletic department and representatives from the Oregon Communication Access Project (OR-CAP). The continuing cooperation between the university and the advocacy groups allowed this outcome to be reached without litigation or animosity.

The driving force behind the advocacy effort was the completion of the Matthew Knight Arena, the home of Oregon's basketball and volleyball teams. Several members of the Hearing Loss Association of Oregon contacted the athletic department, and joined an ongoing effort to design disability-friendly features for the new arena.

The university intially offered to provide captioning displayed on portable hand-held devices. After field-testing the devices, though, the advocates felt that they did not provide effective communication for a number of reasons that they enumerated in writing to the U of O. While these concerns were taken seriously, university officials were initially uncertain about how scoreboard captioning could actually be undertaken at the Knight Arena.

Technical advice was given by Carol Studenmund and Lisa Monfils from LNS Captioning in Portland. Carol demonstrated to U of O officials that the screens on the central Jumbotron scoreboards could be reconfigured to slightly reduce the vertical dimension of the replay screen, making room for two lines of captioned text below. This solution was acceptable to all parties in the negotiations.

After resolving the arena problem, the university turned its attention to its other athletic facilities. It was able to make scoreboard captioning a reality at its football facility in time for the home opener in September. It expects to provide captioning capability at the baseball park in time for the 2012 season, and at its track facility not only for the spring track season but for the Olympic Trials that will take place in Eugene next summer.

Stadium captioning has been an ongoing legal challenge. Facility managers have said that one does not need to hear the public-address announcements to enjoy a sports event. However, one court ruled that the announcements, etc., are all provided "for a reason," and therefore, if it's something that enhances the overall experience for the hearing fans, it's something that the deaf and hard of hearing fans are also entitled to enjoy.

The polite but persistent advocacy of the OR-CAP and HLA-OR members, the technical savvy from LNS and above all the good work and good will of Mike Duncan and the University of Oregon athletic and technical people have created a national model for accessible athletic venues.

The Oregon Communication Access Project (OR-CAP) is a non-profit membership corporation whose purpose is to enrich the lives of individuals with hearing loss by making public places accessible through means such as captioning. It is a sister organization of the Washington State Communication Access Project (Wash-CAP). John Waldo, an attorney with a significant hearing loss, is counsel to both groups.

This article was provided by John Waldo and was edited to fit this page.

Chapter Capers

<u>Douglas County chapter</u>: President Chuck Vlcek held a workshop for hearing impaired at the community center in the small town of Glide while member Robin Illers, who works with the vision impaired, held a similar workshop for those with vision concerns. Secretary Barb Stoner provided the captioning. Only a handful of people attended (including a 97 year old woman) but the session was quite lively.

Due to shrinking attendance and membership, the chapter will now meet only on evennumbered months.

<u>Portland Chapter:</u> Contact info has just been changed. Meetings are accessible by Tri-Met lines 15, 17 and 77 and the Portland Streetcar. All stop within two blocks. To further plan your trip, go to: http://www.trimet.org and see "Trip Planner" section

<u>Central Oregon Chapter:</u> This chapter has also updated its contact information. It should be noted that if there is a change in the meeting room, the hospital greeter will provide the information to attendees at the front door.

<u>HLA-Oregon:</u> The HLA-OR board will now meet in the conference room of the "Reimer Building" on the Albany General Hospital campus. It is a stand alone building recently remodeled for conference and training for AGH, located in the main parking lot. The original meeting location is being remodeled.

What is your chapter doing? Send your story to the editor at cvlcek@centurytel.net.

See pages 14-15 for contact information for these chapters and events.

CI Corner

The summer issue of this newsletter gave some general guidelines for candidacy for obtaining a cochlear implant. In a nutshell, if a nonfunctioning cochlea is the cause of the hearing loss, if the person would likely do better with an implant than with any hearing aid, and if there is no physical condition that would prevent a successful imiplant, then an implant would be recommended. In cases where the degree of hearing loss is borderline for qualifying for an implant, a progressive loss would argue for getting the implant sooner rather than later.

There are some other factors that determine how well a person does with an implant. The less time spent functionally deaf before getting an implant, the better. That is because the brain must learn or re-learn to process sound, especially speech. Thus pre-lingually deaf children are implanted at one year of age or ASAP afterwards. Those who lose hearing later should be implanted as soon as they qualify. Folks with more moderate hearing loss should use a good hearing aid and maintain as much hearing and speech proficiency as possible until they are ready for an implant.

There are three implant manufacturers: Cochlear Americas, Advanced Bionics, and Med-El. Choosing one is likely to be a lifetime commitment for the implanted ear. That is because implants are quite expensive and insurance is not likely to cover the cost of taking out one implant and putting in another brand just because you don't like the first one. All external equipment has to be from the same manufacturer that made the implant.

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Select "Survivor's Manual" from the menu

Update on Status of Movie Captioning

There are no court cases or settlements, other than the single settlement in New Jersey that require **open** captioning. To the contrary, both the Ninth Circuit Court in the *Harkins* case and a case in Washington State specifically say that open captioning is not required. Moreover, in its latest proposed rulemaking on movie captioning, the federal Department of Justice specifically stated that it was not proposing open captioning.

There is a growing recognition on the part of the courts and the agencies that **closed** captioning should be required. In the *Harkins* case, the court said that closed captioning is required unless the theaters can demonstrate that providing it would constitute an "undue burden," essentially meaning unless they can demonstrate that they can't afford it. That case is back before the district court in Arizona, with a trial coming up to determine what the Harkins group can afford to do.

In Washington State, there was a trial in May about what the various theater chains can afford to do. Three of the four chains operating in the Seattle area that have converted or will convert to digital projection agreed prior to trial that they would equip all of their auditoriums to show closed-captioned movies. One chain -- AMC -- held out but was ordered by the court to follow the lead of the others, including Regal and Cinemark, and equip all theaters to show closed captioned movies.

A lawsuit in California against Cinemark was settled when Cinemark agreed to equip all of its auditoriums nationwide to show closed-captioned movies. Regal did the same thing a little bit later. AMC has been approached for a similar agreement with them in California. If that is not forthcoming, a lawsuit will likely be filed against them in that state.

The Department of Justice originally proposed requiring theaters to show half of their movies with closed captions, and proposed phasing in that requirement over five years. Many of us objected vehemently to that 50% requirement, and argued that those theaters that can afford to do so need to show all available movies with captions. There is circumstantial reason for believing that DOJ will adopt that position.

Closed captioning is likely to become universal at those theaters that convert to digital projection. The good news is that all showings will be available with captions. The bad news is that we will likely have to put up with the hassle of checking out viewing equipment.

If we want to make movie captioning better, it is not enough to complain about what we don't want. We have to actually support what we do want. Now that the theaters have been ordered by the courts (and through settlements) to provide captioning, they have an incentive to make it work. We should cooperate with them to make it rewarding and productive for everyone.

For questions, comments or concerns regarding the contents of the Update, please write Clark Anderson at or.cap.comm@gmail.com.

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Thanks for Your Support!

We are grateful for your commitment to support Hearing Loss Association of Oregon. 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:

Hearing Loss Association of Oregon, PO Box 22501, Eugene, OR 97402

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

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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.

HLA of Central Oregon (HLACO) meets on the 2nd 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: Julie Schneider 60958 Zircon Drive Bend. OR 97702

e-mail: jesrentals@bendbroadband.com

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Applications are generally due mid-March each year.

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 e-mail: angora@comcast.net

(541) 345-9432 voice

PO Box 22501 OR Clark Anderson Eugene, OR 97402 e-mail:clarkoa@msn.com Group 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 (2nd floor) 2561 Center St. NE

Contact: Donald Ladd

e-mail: SHHHSalem@aol.com

(503) 394-3863

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HLA of Portland meets the 3rd Tuesday each month (except June, July and August) - 7 PM in the North-South 1st Floor Conference Room, Building #2 of Legacy Good Samaritan Medical Center, 1040 NW 22nd Ave., Portland 97210

Contact Anne McLaughlin (president)

e-mail: hlaportland@gmail.com

PO Box 2112

Portland, OR 97208-2112

www.hearinglossor.org/portland/

HLA of Douglas County meets the 2nd Monday of even-numbered months - 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 (541) 496-0060

(541) 496-4541 P.O. Box 175

Idleyld Park OR 97447

Hearing Loss Assoc. of Linn and Benton Counties meets the 3rd 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

541) 258-5818 2020 South 12th #111 Lebanon, OR 97355

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