



Winter 2009



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JOYCE'S VOICE

I am honored to be the 2009 president of HLA-Whatcom County. This is an exciting year to be president as we have many interesting programs scheduled for our chapter. It is also wonderful to have our meetings Captioned or Typewelled so that more people can understand what is being said.

Kudos to all the volunteers who work behind the scenes because they help make our meetings run smoothly and guarantee that no one is overburdened. I am also thankful for our dedicated team of officers and the executive committee. They are mentoring and helping every step of the way to make our HLA chapter strong and relevant. A special thanks goes to Charlene Mackenzie and Bert Lederer, our past presidents and co-founders of our chapter for their ceaseless work, dedication and mentoring.

All of our members and visitors are always welcome and appreciated. Your intelligence and talent, warm welcome and acceptance never cease to amaze me. Together we will open the world of communication to people with hearing loss and inform, educate, support and advocate for ourselves and others just like our mission states.

Spring Programs

April 18 - From "Oh No, Not Me to "How Good Can This Be

Living with a Cochlear Implant – Six Months of Brain Training

Bonus Presentation – Live Demonstration of Sprint Internet Captioned Telephoning by Bert Lederer, President, Washington State Communications Access Project (Wash-CAP) Don't Miss the Luncheon! Immediately following the meeting, we will gather at the Five Columns Restaurant at noon for another no host luncheon. Last year we had an overwhelming response; 35 members and guests enjoyed wonderful socialization and a superb meal! Please R.S.V.P. to Charlene Mackenzie, (360-738-3756) by April 16th so we can give the restaurant an accurate count. See you there!

May 16 - North Cascades National Park - A Hearing Friendly Place

Charles Beall, Chief of Education and Interpretation will be bringing us news and information about hearing accessibility in North Cascades National Park.

June 20 - Getting the Hang of Speech Reading

Dr. Rieko Darling, PhD, WWU brings us valuable information on a communication technique that's vital to all of us with hearing loss.

Winter Wonder



What a winter this has been! Snow, ice, wind, flooding, and welcome but bitterly cold sunshine. But inside HLA-WC it's been warm and cozy.

In **November** Dean Olsen gave us information on making the holidays and holiday travel more enjoyable

Our **December** pot luck was a huge success with the addition of the Bellingham High School Jazz Band.

At our **January** meeting, Joel Bergsbaken led us in discussing how we can get the most out of our meetings. It was also the first of our captioned meetings.

Through your donations we will have captioning available for all our upcoming meetings.

February brought Joel Bergsbaken back to lead us in sharing our wishes, supportive information and experience, and "tricks of the trade" useful for better hearing.

Assistive listening devices are like binoculars for the ears."

Dr. Cynthia Compton Connelly

Membership & Donations

HLA-WC has made a few changes to our membership and donation policies. We are now collecting membership dues at the beginning of each year instead of trying to keep track of who's membership expires each month. We've also defined levels of participation:

Member: Has paid \$12 annual dues

Doner: Has contributed money other than dues or provided services

Associate: Attends meetings but chooses not to be a member

Members and Doners will automatically receive the newsletter. Associates can subscribe to the newsletter for \$10 annually or \$1 for individual copies.

We will no longer be collecting and sending in dues to the State and National organizations, but will make their enrollment forms available to you. You can also visit their websites to join:

<http://www.hearingloss.org>

<http://www.hearingloss-wa.org>

HLAA has also made a change to their dues:

Student Annual Dues - \$20

Individual Annual Dues - \$35

Family/Couple Annual Dues - \$45

Professional Annual Dues - \$60

Thanks to Charlene MacKenzie and her team of elves, letters went out to everyone on the mailing list. And thanks to all who have renewed their membership or joined for the first time.

If you have not yet joined, just see Charlene MacKenzie or Robert Campbell.

Volunteers - The Heart of HLA

There's a great deal of work involved in bringing you timely and informative programs, providing captioning, producing the newsletter and all the other little things that go on behind the scenes. At our February meeting our 2008 volunteers were each presented with a Dedicated Service Award:

Corky Pytel: Program Reminder

Nat Vogt: Program Reminder

Dorothy Morrow: Program Reminder

Ruth Miller: Program Reminder, Sunshine Cards

Mike Sweeney: Program Reminder

Bert Lederer: Agenda Preparation, Potluck Host, Patriarch, Past President

Char MacKenzie: Matriarch, President

Claydene Lederer: Fund Raiser, Potluck Hostess, and more

Cheryl Bowers: Fund Raiser

Jean Richardson: Sunshine Cards

BJ Sherwood: Hospitality, Greeter, Newcomer Packets

Rita Pilkey: Refreshment Coordinator

Charlie Pilkey: Clean-up Coordinator

Matt Springer: Assistive Listening System, Multi-media

Mark Springer: NameTag Distributor, Raffle Promoter

George and Maureen Nelson: King and Queen of Set-up and Clean-up

Kathy Mason: Roster, Membership, Name Tags, Newspaper Publicity, Financial Resource Binder, Program Presenter, Newsletter Editor & Producer, Vice President

Joyce Mosely-Sweeney: Treasurer, Acting Secretary

Warren, Ku'a, and Lola: Service Dog Mascots

Special thanks to **Pam Spencer** for providing the beautiful sign to announce our meetings to passers-by. **A HUGE**

THANKS to all our volunteers. You make it all happen!

2009 Officers

This year we have new officers working to bring us better-than-ever programs and events.

President: Joyce Mosley-Sweeney

Vice President: Mike Sweeney

Treasurer: Robert Campbell

Acting Secretary: Charlene MacKenzie

Let's give them all our support!

Executive Board

This year also brings us new executive board made up of the current officers plus Bert Lederer and Joel Bergsbaken of the Hearing, Speech and Deafness Center.

Kudos

First to Charlene Mackenzie and Bert Lederer for their successful and courageous steps toward better hearing. Both now have cochlear implants and enjoying improved connections and communication.

Freebies

Energizer is giving away free hearing aid batteries. Hurry before they're gone!

<http://offers.energizer.com/perfpack/>

HUH?

Found on the internet:

Helen and I laughed when John, a neighbor, told us how his hearing aid occasionally emits a high-pitched squeal that can be heard by anyone near him. His granddaughter was sitting on his lap one day when the device started to beep.

Surprised, little Lorraine looked up at him and said, "Oh, Grampa, you've got e-mail!"

Wash-Cap

No, this is not about scrubbing your baseball hat in the dishwasher! It's about a relatively new organization that has made phenomenal strides in gaining accessibility to public places for significantly hard of hearing people. It's about The Washington State Communications Access Project. The acronym is Wash-Cap.

Just one year ago, John Waldo, an attorney located on Bainbridge Island, met individually and then collectively with a handful of people who have extensive experience in helping people with hearing loss and advocating for their civil rights. This core group formed and incorporated Wash-Cap and became its Board of Trustees. Mr. Waldo was appointed as its Counsel and Advocacy Director.

The mission of Wash-CAP is to enrich the lives of people with hearing loss by seeking broad compliance with laws requiring that aural communication in Washington's public places be understandable by all individuals. Those of us with hearing loss know full well that despite legal mandates, most public places do not have accessible and understandable communication of services and programs for significantly hard of hearing people. Such exclusion in public venues violates those mandates.

Until now, people with hearing loss have been unrepresented and virtually unable to effectively end the discrimination caused by not being able to understand speech in public places. Wash-CAP was founded to provide that representation. And has it ever!

In a few short months, Wash-Cap, through its Counsel, filed a lawsuit against the Washington State Ferry System which was amicably settled and will result in open captioning of announcements at terminals and on-board vessels.

Wash-Cap negotiated with the Paramount Theater in Seattle resulting in open-captioning of at least one performance of each major production, and subsequently filed suit against the Fifth Avenue Theater resulting in a settlement to do the same.

In early March, Wash-Cap filed suit against the multiplex theater owners in King County (greater Seattle), asking for meaningful increases in the number and variety of captioned movies. Attempted settlement is pending.

Wash-Cap does not rush to the courthouse steps. Before filing lawsuits, every effort is made to achieve voluntary compliance with the Washington State Civil Rights Laws and the Americans with Disabilities Act. The Paramount success story is an example of voluntary compliance without litigation.

And this is for sports fans – Wash-Cap requested and has been assured by Qwest Field and the Seahawks that the audio portion of professional football in Seattle is going to become accessible to fans with hearing loss. Requesting fans will be issued a hand-held unit that displays captions of announcements from the referees, public address announcements, and the audio portion of the in-stadium entertainment, including song lyrics.

There's a lot more coming! So be sure to mark your calendar for October 17th when John Waldo will be in Bellingham to tell the Wash-Cap story and give us an update on its accomplishments. Meanwhile, you can visit www.wash-cap.com for the latest updates.

Bank On It

Our new treasurer, Robert Campbell reports that At the end of February there was \$1235.11 in savings and \$421.53 in checking for a total of \$1656.64, of which \$361 is reserved for captioning.



"I am just as deaf as I am blind. The problems of deafness are deeper and more complex, if not more important than those of blindness. Deafness is a much worse misfortune. For it means the loss of the most vital stimulus-- the sound of the voice that brings language, sets thoughts astir, and keeps us in the intellectual company of man. "