

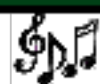
HEAR HERE



Hearing Loss
Association
of Whatcom County

HLA Whatcom is affiliated with Hearing Loss Association of America, and Hearing Loss Association of Washington

Fall 2011



JOAN'S NOTES

Autumn is here! As I reflect on the outreach activities of the past 9 months, I am gratified to be a part of this wonderful group of people who care about each other, and about others in our community who are coping with hearing loss. Being a part of Project Homeless Connect in March enabled many individuals to have hearing screening free of charge. HLA WC involvement with the Community Food Coop rewarded us with community exposure, and a generous donation which will take us into 2012 with a financial cushion to pay for captioning of our meetings.

Each of our members contributed in their own way to our outreach this year, by talking to family and friends about hearing loss and spreading the information and education received through our chapter.

Being your President this year has been, and continues to be, an educational and rewarding experience. No volunteer organization can survive year after year (7 so far!) without everyone who contributes financially and their time, energy, and otherwise to keep HLA WC going strong. Thank you to members who have kept your volunteer commitments as your talents are needed and appreciated!

Keep up the good work! We're not done with this year yet! Terrific meetings are coming up, plus our annual Christmas Gala Potluck Luncheon on December 17th is the highlight of the final gathering this year.

I am stepping down as President next year, but I will take on other volunteer roles. Our chapter leadership may change in 2012, but member commitment to a viable organization does not. We can look forward to another year of educational and informative programs, guest speakers, and social networking. Every HLA WC member is important to our growth and vitality! Thank you all for allowing me to serve you during 2011.

HLA WC Fall Programs

- October 15 -** "Good News from the Front Line-How We ALL Can be Part of It!"
John Waldo, Attorney at Law
(Joint meeting HLA/CI Group)
- November 19 -** "Pet Peeves – (Newspaper Ads Included) – How to be My Own Best Champion (What Would John Waldo Have Us Do?!)"
Charlene MacKenzie, Bert Lederer, and You!
- December 17 -** Annual Christmas Potluck Luncheon, 11:00 am until 2:00 pm. Cochlear Implant Support Group North Sound joins HLA WC

All meetings begin at 9:30 am, and are held at
Christ the Servant Lutheran Church
2600 Lakeway Drive
Bellingham, WA 98229.

CSD FUND RAISER A SUCCESS

The Community Shopping Day (CSD) was a tremendous success. Our organization earned \$1335.52 which will help pay for captioning next year. We were one of twelve non-profit groups chosen by the Community Food Co-op to receive a grant in the form of 2% of the profits on our designated CSD which was Saturday, August 20.

To advertise for our benefit we put up bulletin boards in both Co-op stores during the month of August. The Co-op featured a full page interview about hearing loss and our organization in their monthly newsletter. On our CSD, teams of HLA members sat at tables at each Co-op to disseminate information and answer questions. We were able to talk to many people about hearing loss and invite them to our meetings.

In July, some of our members also sat at a table in the non-profit area during the Co-op's Summer Party at Boulevard Park. We feel that the *Community Shopping Day* has been a tremendous support to our organization, providing much needed captioning funds as well as advertising and giving information about hearing loss.

Our huge thanks goes not only to the Community Food Co-op, BJ and Joyce, who headed up the CSD committee, and all the members who helped out at the various events, but also to those of you who took the time to shop on our special day of benefit.

Why I Volunteer

Kathy Mason

I had the pleasure of talking with a number of people at the Co-Op on the HLA-WC Community Shopping Day. There was the 50-something man who was in a band, most of the members of which had a hearing loss. He, and especially his wife, were very interested in HLA and what we had to offer. We encouraged him to talk with the other band members about scheduling hearing tests and not only getting hearing aids as needed, but also ordering custom musician's earplugs.

There was also a woman who was interested in getting the Bellingham Senior Center into compliance with the ADA requirements for public facilities. It is hoped that Joel Bergsbaken of the Hearing Speech and Deafness Center will be able to help us in educating them about and assisting them with compliance efforts.

The most memorable person I met that day was Ellen Murphy. She had a wonderfully inspiring story to tell that points out how important our efforts are and the value of working with other community organizations and services. She was gracious enough to send me her story in an email so that I could share it with all of you.

A Memory From the San Diego Self-Help Clearinghouse

Ellen Murphy

In the early 1980's, I ran a non-profit community service in San Diego, whose purpose was to help people find mutual aid self-help groups, and also to help people start new groups. With no media publication about self-help meetings, and no internet, it was a needed and valuable service. It was called The San Diego Self-Help Clearinghouse, and it dealt only with free, grass roots organizations.

Everyone had heard of large, established groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous, the grand daddy of self help, but who had ever heard of Emotions Anonymous, Military Families Reach Out, Cult Awareness, or SHHH. SHHH? Yes, SHHH (Self Help for Hard of Hearing) was the grandmother of local groups such as Whatcom County 's Hearing Loss Association.

I trained volunteers to answer our referral phone with accurate, compassionately given, information. One day when I answered the referral line, the small voice of a woman said, "Are you the person who referred me, about a year ago, to SHHH?" I said, "Why, yes, I am. I remember you. Did you find the meeting I told you about?" She said, "Yes, I did, and I wanted to thank you. You see, on that day, the day I called, I had just about given up. I had lost hope. I had decided to commit suicide if this last call had nothing to offer. Thank you for sending me to SHHH. Thank you for my life."

As you might imagine, we choked up a bit together, and I told her how happy I was to know she had found new hope and new happiness in her life, and that we had been a part of that. I managed for a few years to fund the office, the phone line and the booklet we published, but I never managed to fund my job, and eventually I "gave" the Clearinghouse to the Mental Health Association, which still keeps it going. But to say I wasn't paid would be untrue. I was paid in gold.



"Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they just have the heart."

- Elizabeth Andrew

NOTICE! A HOSPITAL KIT IS A FRIEND IN NEED

Ready-made hearing support is ours for the asking whenever we find ourselves in a health care facility – possibly the hospital, a surgery or rehabilitation center, or a nursing home. It's so important that those who care for us understand our hearing needs, especially if we are receiving health care. They need us, too. Our being able to respond to questions, follow directions, understand medical procedures and medication directions – all are critical. Even more so is the help we might need with our hearing devices: changing batteries, hearing aids cochlear implant processors, etc.

The **Hospital Kit** is a solution. In this see-thru, zippered, plastic bag is a treasure of support:

- + **So You and Your Hearing Loss are Going to the Hospital** brochure. (To be read before any planned hospitalization.)
- + **International Symbol Placard**: Place on wall over bed (one side for the hard of hearing, the other for the deaf); two removable poster strips (no damage to walls.)
- + **International Symbol of Hearing Loss** stickers to be used for hospital charts.
- + **FACE ME** badge: Pin on gown or pillow.
- + **Communication Tip Cards**: Give to physician and staff.
- + **Special Needs Cards**: Give one at patient check-in; extras for later, if needed.
- + **Small Plastic Bag**: To hold hearing aid(s) and/or cochlear implant processor(s), batteries.
- + **Note Pad and Pen**: Keep handy for communicating and verifying important information.

Contact Charlene MacKenzie (charmackenzie@comcast.net or 360 738-3756 if you are planning to enter a hospital, surgery center, or some other health care facility in order to secure this helpful hearing help kit. Contact her anyway if you have an emergency and she will get one to you. In addition, be sure that someone close to you knows how to handle, insert, and work your hearing devices as well as replace batteries; you may need that kind of support. Plan ahead!

The Whatcom Hearing Loss Association (Whatcom HLA) has purchased a supply of these **Hospital Kits** from the Washington State Hearing Loss Association (HLA-WVA) for \$10 each. Check them out on our resource table at monthly meetings. We provide them to you at no cost (but we'll never turn down a donation!)



CONGRATULATIONS!

The speaker at our October meeting, John Waldo, was presented the Distinguished Service Award by the Washington State Bar Association Civil Rights Law Section at their Annual Event on July 29.

"I think the award is important as a recognition that what we are doing is very much a part of the ongoing struggle for equality faced by a number of "outside" groups in our society." John commented by email.

HLA-WC would like to extend our congratulations, appreciation and thanks for all John has done to improve the quality of life for those of us with hearing loss by fighting for our civil rights.

John Waldo is an attorney whose practice focuses on the unique legal needs of the Hard-of-Hearing and Deaf. He works on access and advocacy issues through the Washington Communication Access Project (Wash-CAP), and represents individuals on issues involving job discrimination, workers' compensation, education and private insurance matters. He is also counsel to the Oregon Communication Access Project (OR-CAP).

What is the best place to buy hearing aid batteries?

There are several ways you can purchase hearing aid batteries. Often, drug stores or grocery stores will carry a small selection of hearing aid batteries. There are also options available for purchasing batteries online. Many people choose to purchase their hearing aid batteries from their local hearing center or audiology clinic. The benefit to purchasing them there is that you can be assured the batteries are fresh, as most hearing aid clinics rotate through their battery stock frequently. Also, if you forget what type you need, the professional staff can help you choose the right battery size. Ask your local clinic if they offer a battery club or other discount program, which can provide significant savings. They may also offer options for conveniently shipping the batteries directly to your home.

Source: <http://www.healthyhearing.com>

Get More From Hearing Loops With Hearing Aids or Cochlear Implants With Telecoils

Even with the most up-to-date technology, hearing aids and cochlear implants cannot completely separate important sounds from background noises; nor do they pick up all sounds from a distance such as those in a performance hall, or places of worship. Increasing the volume on your hearing aid or cochlear implant won't necessarily increase the clarity of what you hear. Hearing loops combined with a telecoil can improve your understanding of dialog at work, in a meeting, in the classroom, theaters, places of worship, tour buses, and other places. Some people use telecoils at home with the TV while keeping the TV volume low for the comfort of others.

A hearing loop is a wire connected to an electronic sound source that transmits that sound electromagnetically. The electromagnetic signal is then picked up by the telecoil in the hearing aid or cochlear implant. A hearing loop can discreetly surround a room, a chair in your home, or even be worn around the neck. Hearing loops can be connected to a public address system, a living room TV, a telephone (land line and cellular), or any source that produces sound electronically. To use a hearing loop, one easily flips the telecoil-switch on the hearing aid or cochlear implant. No additional receiver or equipment is needed. Using a telecoil and hearing loop together is seamless, cost-effective, unobtrusive, and you don't have to seek out and obtain special equipment. A hearing aid or cochlear implant equipped with a manually controlled telecoil-switch is needed to hear in a hearing loop. Many public places are equipped with hearing assistive technology. With the implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, hearing assistive technology, including hearing loops is increasingly available in public places, such as:

- Theaters and performing arts centers
- Places of worship
- High school and college auditoriums
- Court rooms and government chambers
- Board rooms and large meeting rooms
- Banquet and sports facilities
- Ticket counters and information booths
- Doctors' offices and pharmacy counters
- Drive thru and pick up windows
- Elevators, trains and buses
- Museum exhibits

The presence of a hearing loop is often indicated by this symbol:



A telecoil, also called t-coil, can expand the functionality of your hearing aid or cochlear implant. It functions as a wireless antenna that links into a sound system and delivers customized sound to the listener. The telecoil receives the signal from the loop and turns it back into sound in the hearing device, often eliminating much of the background noise. The listener then hears only the sounds they desire; whether it is speech from a pulpit, a stage, a telephone conversation, or the television. Telecoils can be also used with neckloops.

A neckloop is similar to a hearing loop, except that it is worn around the neck and can be plugged into other audio devices (such as an MP3 player, computer, or FM or infrared receivers) to transmit the audio signal directly to the hearing aid telecoil, bypassing the need for headphones.

Ask your audiologist to include a telecoil in the next hearing aid you buy and make sure to ask for advice on how to use it. A telecoil may add a small amount to the cost of your hearing aid but the benefits far outweigh the cost. Many models and styles of hearing aids and all cochlear implants can be fitted with telecoils. Telecoils can sometimes be added to your current hearing aid but it will cost less if you include it in your original purchase. Note: Automatic telecoils are available but work only with telephones, not hearing loops, so ask your audiologist to include a manually-operated telecoil in your hearing aid and ask for advice on how to use it.

Using the telecoil in conjunction with a hearing loop is a cost-effective way to improve the usability of your hearing aid or cochlear implant. The telecoil can also be used in conjunction with a variety of wireless or hand held hearing assistive listening devices.

Almost any room or facility can be looped. To learn more about loops or how to advocate for loops in your own community, visit www.HowsYourHearing.org.

Useful Links

www.HowsYourHearing.org American Academy of Audiology

www.HearingLoss.org Hearing Loss Association of America

www.HearingLoop.org Nonprofit informational Web site on hearing loops

This fact sheet was produced as part of "Get in the Hearing Loop," a national educational campaign to increase awareness about assistive listening technologies, especially hearing loops and telecoils, that are available to people with hearing loss. The project is a collaborative public awareness campaign developed by the American Academy of Audiology.

This program is supported by the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA).

GARDENS OF SILENCE
Joyce Moseley-Sweeney

I amble through my garden gazing on
Papery pink Hollyhocks stretching skyward,
Golden Sunflowers nodding toward the sun,
Scarlet sweet peas twining over a willow trellis,
Orange Nasturtiums trailing along the ground.

The garden path stretches before me
Lined with bleached sea shells.
Dotted with smooth shells,
Sprinkled with polished sea glass,
Treasures from sun drenched beaches.

Smelling flower essences, I touch soft grasses
Surrounded by silence;
Deaf to insects buzzing,
Deaf to breezes stirring through leaves,
Deaf to twittering birds high in the apple tree.

I think of my mother's garden in a distant desert land
Wild with scarlet Hollyhocks growing helter- skelter,
Prickly with cactus penetrating baked soil,
Littered with pottery shards found in desert ruins,
Strewn with rocks found on desert walks.

Remembering the smell of dry dust in her garden,
Surrounded by silence;
Deaf to the lizard's scramble,
Deaf to the hot wind's rustle,
Deaf to the mourning dove's coo.

Once I sat beside my mother's grave,
A mound of red desert earth covering her worn out body;
Surrounded by Hollyhocks and prickly cactus,
Littered with pottery shards and desert rocks,
Strewn with sea shells, smooth stones and polished sea glass.

Lying on the warm blanket of her earthen grave,
I thanked my mothers of earth and flesh
Who sowed seeds of empathy,
Whispered words of comfort
For a daughter who's hearing faded away.

Mothers, family, friends helped
Plant acceptance of my hearing loss,
Weed out my self pity,
Nurture with understanding,
Harvest hope where hopelessness dwelled.

I am strong enough now to plant, weed, nurture, harvest
Creativity, laughter, hope
In my inner gardens of silence.

