

HEAR HERE



Hearing Loss
Association
of Whatcom County

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

Summer 2011



JOAN'S NOTES

As President, I've been gratified to see the growth and accomplishments of HLA Whatcom so far this year, and thankful for a great officer team. Every person attending monthly meetings is special, unique and contributes to the vitality of our organization, and volunteers are appreciated!. We are currently 69 members strong. Our recent website, www.hearingloss-whatcom.org, is another tool to help us grow. Program Chair, Charlene MacKenzie, has arranged monthly programs providing information and strategies to help us manage our hearing loss, as well as greater understanding of the impacts of hearing loss on personal relationships.

Food, fellowship and fun are on future meeting menus, so save these dates: July 16th and December 17th potlucks, August 20th Talent Show, and September 17th Silent Auction to celebrate our 8th Anniversary!

Every meeting is communication accessible for people with hearing loss (and those with normal hearing, too). Assistive listening devices, a surround sound FM system, plus dialogue transcription are used to enable better listening for people who do not hear well. HLA Whatcom is here to help open the world of communication to people with hearing loss! Thank you again for allowing me to serve as your President!

"The length of our life is less important than its depth."

- Mary David Fisher

COMING UP!

HLA SUMMER PROGRAMS

June 18 *"Gifts of Technology - Hearing Device Surprises!"* with Pam Spencer and Charlene MacKenzie.

July 16, *Annual Summer Potluck Luncheon*
11:30 AM - 2:00PM - *Feast and Fun* It's time once again for our annual summer pot luck. Bring your favorite potluck dish and enjoy good food and great company. This year we are pleased to have the Cochlear Implant Support Group joining us.

August 20 *Curtain Call Talent Show*
Showcasing the many talents of our members.

All meetings begin at 9:30 am, and are held at
Christ the Servant Lutheran Church
2600 Lakeway Drive
Bellingham, WA 98229.
Everyone is welcome!
For more information, phone 738-3756

BE A STAR!

Looking for talent for our August Curtain Call, "Adult Show and Tell". If you *have* a talent or hobby that *enriches* your life, why not share it. Our quality of life goes beyond our hearing loss and the things we do can inspire others to reach a little higher. If you'd like to star in this production, let Charlene know so she can put you in the line-up.

7383756

Your name here



**Save the Date: August 13,
8:00AM-5:00PM**

HLA-WA 2011 State Conference

While plans are on the drawing board, the purpose is clear: to help all of us with hearing loss to manage our lives more successfully, given such limitations.

The event will be fully hearing accessible, just as we are at our own HLA-Whatcom meetings. Ann Pope, past HLA Board president, will introduce our organization and how we try to support each other.

Other speakers will focus on the basics of hearing loss, a review of assistive listening technology, a look at the psychosocial affects of hearing loss, and how coping skills make such a significant difference.

Other topics include communication access and the law; and, "telling it like it is" from a panel who are wearing a variety of hearing devices.

In addition to a day of speakers and workshops, there will be an Exhibition Hall featuring services and products for people with hearing loss.

The location of the conference is the **Carlson Theater on the Bellevue College campus**. The cost of the conference is \$40.00 for the first person and \$20 for each additional family member. The cost also includes a box lunch. Due to the size of the theater, we will be limited to 300 attendees and will not be able to take registrations at the door.

Be looking for the registration form in the next issue of the *Sound Waves*, on the HLA-WA website, www.hearingloss-wa.org, or from Charlene Mackenzie. The deadline for registrations to be received is August 6, 2011, and will be "first come, first served," so get your registration in early! Any registrations that put us over the 300 person limit will be returned.

The day will be long(!) but the event will be extremely worthwhile. Given our strong and active HLA group membership, we can contribute from our experiences and knowledge as well as benefit from information and presenters, new to us.

Contact Char for further information and/or if you'd like to join her in a relevant HLA adventure!
(360) 738-3756 or charmackenzie@comcast.net

Charlene also has room in her car for three to attend the first ever HLA-WA State Conference which will take place on the Bellevue College campus. In fact she'll welcome your help to prepare the registration packets for that event! Charlene's carpool costs are by contribution only.

HLA-WA NEEDS VOLUNTEERS

to make this event a success. Volunteer opportunities include:

- working at the registration desk
- putting together conference materials
- assisting with the sessions
- assisting in the Exhibition Hall
- assisting with the signage
- distributing registration materials
- and more!

If you are interested in being a part of this great event, please let the volunteer coordinator, Mary Steinmeyer, know so we can keep in touch.

Her email is N22Mary@comcast.net

PROJECT HOMELESS CONNECT

On March 3, volunteers from our HLA-Whatcom organization participated in providing hearing and information services to the homeless through Project Homeless Connect in Bellingham. Our group had three tables in the building that provided health services. Pam Spencer, with the help of her team, BJ Sherwood, Charlene Mackenzie, and Robert Campbell, gave initial hearing screenings to a steady stream of people. Joyce Moseley-Sweeney gave out information about our organization and hearing loss to interested people with the help of Barbara Oliver. Bert Lederer and Matt Springer gave out information about DSHS telephones for the hard of hearing. Pam Spencer followed up with some people at her office giving more extensive hearing screenings. The Lions Club had a representative at our table to give further support in providing hearing aides to people who qualify. As a result of meeting and becoming acquainted with a representative from the Lions Club, Charlene Mackenzie has been invited to present a program at the Harborview Lions luncheon meeting on May 11 at the Willows. They will be learning about HLA of Whatcom County!

Our team felt like we were successful in helping provide a much needed service for the first time to the homeless population, and we hope to help out again next year.

TO DO

Get rack cards from Charlene to leave at places visited (Dr. office, audiologist, bulletin boards, etc.)

Regal, Cinemark Commit to Full Captioning

POSTED ON MAY 5, 2011 BY JOHN WALDO

[HTTP://WWW.HEARINGLOSSLAW.COM](http://www.hearinglosslaw.com)

Regal and Cinemark, the nation's first and third largest theater chains respectively, have reaffirmed their commitment to full movie captioning, and have stated that the capability will be in place by the end of 2012.

Regal's announcement came in the form of a corporate press release dated May 4. That release appears to clarify what had previously been mixed signals. While Regal officials filed a declaration in our Washington lawsuit saying that Regal planned full captioning, the official corporate position articulated in official filings with the federal Securities and Exchange Commission had been that Regal was "considering its options." Evidently, that consideration led to a formal decision to provide full accessibility for patrons with hearing loss.

The announcement appears to apply to all Regal theaters, including those that Regal operates under the Edwards or United Artist nameplates.

The press release also noted that Regal will partner with Captionfish (<http://www.captionfish.com/>), the website that lists captioned and subtitled movies around the country, and which is becoming the go-to site for captioning information.

Regal is going to employ closed captioning, in which the captions are visible only to individuals that obtain and use a personal viewing device. In Seattle, the first market where Regal has completed installation of captioning equipment, Regal is testing special eyewear - glasses that project the captions on the lens itself. Although somewhat ungainly looking, the glasses have received very positive reviews from Wash-CAP members who have used them.

The closed captioning will substitute for the open-caption showings that Regal has offered at a few locations, and which some users prefer. The trade-off, though, is that instead of only a few locations and a few often-inconvenient show-times, the closed captioning will be available every day for all showings of all movies for which captions have been prepared by the studios.

Cinemark has also committed to full closed captioning. While Cinemark had already equipped all of the auditoriums at its Federal Way and Olympia multiplexes in Washington to show closed-captioned movies, the nationwide commitment came in the form of a press release issued last week. The press release announced the amicable resolution of a lawsuit filed in California by the Association of Late Deafened Adults

and two individuals. I represented the plaintiffs in that action, in partnership with Disability Rights Advocates, a public-interest law firm in Berkeley, California.

The captioning capability will be introduced as part of Regal and Cinemark's conversion to digital projection, in which traditional film ceases to exist, and the movies are reduced to digital data, transmitted either over the internet or on computer discs to the individual theaters. Captions can be included in that digital package. The captions are transmitted wirelessly from the projector/servers in each auditorium to the viewing devices.

Among the major theater chains, the holdout now is AMC, which has not yet committed to any particular amount of captioning. We think that will be a difficult position to maintain, especially in light of the commitments made by Regal and Cinemark. The first test of the legal soundness of AMC's position will come later this month, when we have final arguments in the lawsuit Wash-CAP filed against the major corporate theater chains in Seattle.



COMMUNITY SHOPPING DAY ON AUGUST 20

Our HLA-Whatcom organization was one of twelve non-profit organizations selected this year by the Community Food Co-op to receive a grant. On our designated Food Co-op Community Shopping Day, August 20, we will receive 2% of the total sales for the day in the form of a cash donation. We will set up a bulletin board display in both Food Co-op locations for the month advertising our group. On our shopping day, we will also have a table at the front of both stores from 1-4 PM to pass out brochures and talk to people. We will have a signup sheet at our June and July meetings for people who want to sit at the tables that day or help set up the bulletin board displays. The more people who shop at the Co-op stores on those days, the more money we make for our organization. Please consider a shopping spree after our meeting in August to show your support and help us out. The proceeds will help pay for captioning.



MORE THAN PETS

Most of us have heard of Dogs For the Deaf in Oregon, but did you know that there are two places right here in Whatcom County that train dogs as helping companions for people with hearing loss? If you or someone you know could benefit from having one of these furry hearing aids why not contact one of them and see what they can do for you.

NEW LEASH ON LIFE

Service Dogs for People with Disabilities

New Leash on Life trains your dog or rescues a dog for you from a shelter for training as a Hearing Dog to alert deaf and hard of hearing people to a variety of common sounds and potential danger, Mobility Dog for bracing, retrieving and other tasks, or a Special Service Dog for tasks such as alerting to oncoming seizures, companionship for those with special needs, and assistance with other functions.

New Leash's owner and Chief Trainer, Cheryl Bowers, has been training Service Dogs since 1999. Cheryl is an American Kennel Club (AKC) Canine Good Citizenship Evaluator and member of the International Association of Assistance Dog Partners (IAADP).

Email leash_on_life@yahoo.com or call 360-457-5860

BRIGADOON YOUTH AND ADULT SERVICE DOGS

Brigadoon Youth & Service Dog Programs has three facets to our organization. The Youth Program, the Service Dog Program (which work closely together as the Youth help us to train our amazing dogs), and we now provide service dogs to the Veterans through our Canines and Heroes for Independence program. In all cases, our goal is to provide a level of independence that would not be achievable without the dogs.

Brigadoon Youth and Service Dog Programs
4759 Mission Road
Bellingham, WA 98226
Non-profit Registration#: 27-0100385
Phone: 360.733.5388
Email: info@brigadoondogs.org
Website: <http://www.brigadoondogs.org/Index.html>

BIG EVENT!

This September marks the 7th anniversary of the founding of the Hearing Loss Association of Whatcom County and to celebrate, we will be holding a silent auction. Last year our silent auction brought in over \$500 to help pay for the captioning we all appreciate so much at our meeting. We hope to do even better this year.

Some of the things donated last year were knit & crochet items, homemade bread, needlework, wood turning, artwork, dog eye exam, jewelry, artificial flower arrangements, gourmet meal, kitchen items, linens, unique sun catchers, telephones and other items for the hard of hearing.

We are making this announcement early so that there's plenty of time for everyone to get their hand crafted items ready or to go through their "never used" stuff to donate. Be creative!

When you have something to donate, give Kathy a call (303-0653) or email (mason.kathy@gmail.com) with details.

Help make our auction a success and provide funds for on-going expenses of making our chapter the very best!



*And I'm proud to be an American,
where at least I know I'm free.*

*And I won't forget the men who died,
who gave that right to me.*

-Lee Greenwood

Ferries add video screens to help hearing-impaired passengers

By Susan Gilmore
Seattle Times staff reporter
04/08/11

When John Waldo, who is hearing-impaired, lost his checkbook at Colman Dock a few years ago, he didn't hear the announcement that it had been found. Although he eventually got it back, Waldo saw the incident as another sign that the state ferry system wasn't doing enough to help its hearing-impaired passengers.

When his wife was returning from a trip, Waldo didn't hear the announcement that passengers were getting off the boat, so he wasn't there to help her with her heavy suitcase.

Waldo has a cochlear implant, but even with that he misses announcements because background noise from ferry boats is so loud.

"There's a lot of anxiety when you know something is being said and you don't know what it is," said Waldo, an attorney who filed a lawsuit against the state because it wasn't accommodating the hearing-impaired. "Once we filed the lawsuit, we got the attention of a lot of people. The ferry system makes a considerable number of announcements over public-address systems on its boats and at its terminals. Those announcements have often been inaccessible to riders with hearing loss." The lawsuit was settled when the state agreed to create a system to display the announcements on special screens installed on some of the boats and in terminals.

The state hired Four Winds Interactive to design the system, which the state hopes to expand to all ferries in the system. The pilot project costs about \$100,000.

The ferry system's Marta Coursey, who was the leader on the project, doesn't know how much money it would cost to expand the program to all the ferries in the system or whether the ferry system could afford it.

The system still has some kinks to work out, Coursey said. For instance, there's no way to display the message on the car deck, where about half of the ferry riders remain during the trip.

For the full article go to
http://seattletimes.nwsource.com/html/localnews/2014720592_ferrysigns09m.html

JOHN WALDO COMMENTS

"This case illustrated a situation in which litigation can be uniquely useful, namely, when you are dealing with a large government bureaucracy or a big corporation. A lawsuit always get the immediate attention of the people who have the power to say "yes."

In this situation, we couldn't get Washington State Ferries (WSF) to stop treating this as a public relations/communication issue and start treating it as an operational issue, and therefore, we couldn't move this past the platitude stage of "we value all of our customers and will investigate ways to improve their experience." But once we filed suit, the attorney general's office got involved, and likely advised WSF that yes, they did have to do this. From there on, things went very smoothly.

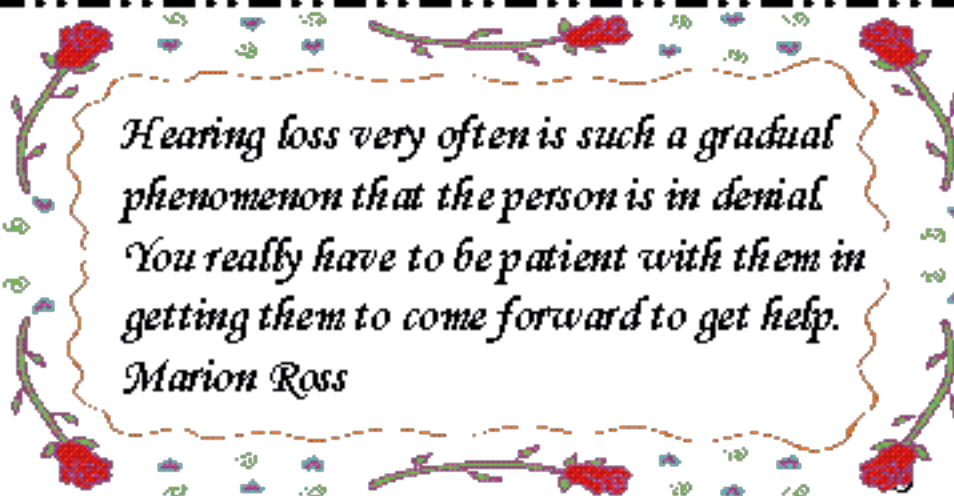
Sometimes, getting the attention of the people with the power to actually get something done is 90% of the battle. Lawsuits do that, every time.

John Waldo
Advocacy Director and Counsel
Washington State Communication Access Project --
Wash-CAP (<http://www.hearinglosslaw.com>)"

Share Your Experience with Health Care

The Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund (DREDF) has a grant to produce 10 to 12 short videos on the health care experiences of people with disabilities. The concept for this project is to use video storytelling as an advocacy tool by presenting unvarnished stories that illuminate the problems people with disabilities frequently experience when they seek health care.

If you or someone you know would like to share their stories contact Mary Lou Breslin, senior policy advisor for DREDF. mlbreslin@dredf.org



Hearing loss very often is such a gradual phenomenon that the person is in denial. You really have to be patient with them in getting them to come forward to get help.
Marion Ross

GUMC Researcher Says Tinnitus is Much More Than a 'Hearing Problem'

2/11/2011

The irritating phantom noises that tinnitus patients hear are a result of the brain trying, but failing, to repair itself.

Washington, DC – Tinnitus appears to be produced by an unfortunate confluence of structural and functional changes in the brain, say neuroscientists at Georgetown University Medical Center (GUMC).

The phantom ringing sounds heard by about 40 million people in the U.S. today are caused by brains that try, but fail to protect their human hosts against overwhelming auditory stimuli, the researchers say in the January 13th issue of *Neuron*. They add that the same process may be responsible for chronic pain and other perceptual disorders.

The researchers say that the absence of sound caused by hearing loss in certain frequencies, due to normal aging, loud-noise exposure, or to an accident, forces the brain to produce sounds to replace what is now missing. But when the brain's limbic system, which is involved in processing emotions and other functions, fails to stop these sounds from reaching conscious auditory processing, tinnitus results.

"We believe that a dysregulation of the limbic and auditory networks may be at the heart of chronic tinnitus," says the study's lead investigator, Josef P. Rauschecker, PhD, a neuroscientist. "A complete understanding and ultimate cure of tinnitus may depend on a detailed understanding of the nature and basis of this dysregulation."

Tinnitus isn't curable, although antidepressants appear to help some patients, as does the use of masking noise to diminish focus on the ringing sensations.

For full article go to <http://www.audiologyonline.com>
For more information on tinnitus visit the American Tinnitus Association at www.ata.org.

GOOD SAMARITAN ALERT!

Long time HLA-WC member, Sol Schneyer, is no longer able to drive and would like to continue attending meetings. He lives at the Leopold in downtown Bellingham and would really appreciate it if someone could get him to and from meetings. Anyone who would be willing to help can email Sol at solomonso1@hotmail.com to make arrangements. He does not hear well on the phone.

How To Select a Local Hearing Center

<http://www.healthyhearing.com>

Tuesday, February 22nd 2011

Selecting a hearing center or ear doctor can be confusing, and there are many things to consider. Your hearing is very important and contributes greatly to a better quality of life, and you should do everything you can to make sure you find the right hearing center for your needs.

Finding the right ear doctor or hearing center can be as easy as answering a few simple questions. If your answer to all of the following questions is "Yes," then you will be well on your way to finding the help you need for your hearing loss.

1. Is there a licensed, certified and experienced audiologist or hearing aid specialist on staff?
2. Is this professional willing to make a referral for a medical evaluation to rule out the need for medical or surgical treatment, if necessary?
3. Will the audiologist or hearing aid specialist communicate effectively with you about hearing aid choices and fitting options, if hearing aids are appropriate for your hearing loss?
4. In determining whether a hearing aid is appropriate, will the staff at the hearing center speak to you clearly about your hearing loss, lifestyle, manual dexterity, and budget?
5. Does the hearing center offer a wide range of hearing aid makes and models from various manufacturers?
6. Will you receive assistance and training regarding how to wear and care for your hearing aids, as well as how to adjust to wearing them?
7. Does the hearing center offer trial periods, warranties, and loss and damage protection?
8. Will they provide follow-up care following your hearing aid fitting, at least every six months?
9. Is the hearing center open at least five days a week, with an audiologist or hearing aid specialist on staff to provide emergency care, or loaner hearing aids if needed?
10. Will you always see the same audiologist or hearing aid specialist when you visit?

If you have answered "Yes" to all of these questions, you can rest assured that you have taken the right steps in finding a reputable hearing center. Of course, answering some of these questions may require more research than just exploring online. Call the hearing centers in your area to see how they answer your questions. Once you find one you are comfortable with, schedule an appointment for an initial consultation and hearing test.