



# Sound Waves

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## The cellular quest

By Penny Allen, Port Orchard

Access to cellular technology has long been an issue for people with hearing loss, especially with the advent of digital transmission and the resulting interference with hearing aids and implants. In 2005 and 2006, the FCC helped us with some mandates (see sidebar page 2), making it considerably easier to find an accessible cell phone.

### How to buy a cell phone

Don't fall in love with a particular phone and then sign up with a cellular provider. Consider your calling area first. You will have more choices if you stick with Sprint or Verizon because of the type of digital transmission they use. Other providers seem to be hit and miss—mostly miss.

Don't buy a cell phone without having first tried it (in other words, don't ask for it for Christmas). Unless you know without a doubt it will work for you, bypass mail-order and cheap off-the-shelf phones (except for the *Jitterbug*, a mail-order phone which gets rave reviews). Getting your money back or cancelling a contract after the fact is a nightmare.

### Telecoils

Although cell phones have a volume control, you will usually do better using your telecoils if you have more than a mild hearing loss. Without telecoils, you don't have many options (and that's true for

using other devices too). Many of you have telecoils in your hearing aids and don't use them or they are not activated. If you don't have them, they can sometimes be retrofitted. Weak telecoils can be adjusted. You need to have a chat with your dispenser. If you are purchasing a Blackberry (which does e-mail and Internet too), be aware that there is a telecoil setting in the phone menu. Unless activated, you may not get enough volume.

### Going Hands-Free

There are numerous cell phone accessories to choose from and prices vary greatly. It will undoubtedly come as no surprise that most of the people selling cell phones have no idea where to direct you to buy these items. Products made for normal-hearing people are unsuitable (the idea is to *not* remove your hearing aids) and it is unlikely you will find something without contacting specialty stores whose focus is serving people with hearing loss.

The hands-free cell phone law took effect this year in our state (SB 5037 and RCW 46.61.667), but it exempts those of us wearing hearing aids (and cochlear implants, although this part is more or less an e-mailed assurance from a legislative aide). There are, however, good reasons to go hands free. Aside from the safety issue (which

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## ..... Moving on?

We have many newsletter returns because people have moved. Each return costs us \$1.00. Please help us keep our costs down by letting us know when you move. Send us an e-mail or fill out the form on the back of this newsletter.

## Professionals—consider a HLA membership

Your membership includes an opportunity to be listed in a searchable Hearing Health Care Directory on the HLA website – brand new! You'll also receive gift vouchers for copies of *Hearing Loss* for your clients. See online for more benefits and join today!

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from Page 1...Going cellular is debatable, depending on how well you multi-task in a moving car in rush hour), you will probably have better comprehension—especially using both ears (speakerphones are iffy in a car). Assuming you do have telecoils, you have two choices: you are either wired to your cell phone or you can connect wirelessly via Bluetooth.

### Wired

There are three wired accessory options—a neckloop, a silhouette, or direct audio input (DAI). You may already be familiar with these accessories, as we use them with FM systems, pocketalkers, and iPods. The accessory used with a cell phone contains a microphone and *usually* a volume control and on/off switch. One end of the device plugs into your cell phone.

A neckloop is a loop of wire that goes around your neck and sends the sound to your hearing aid/implant telecoils electromagnetically. The silhouette (you can also buy dual silhouettes) hooks over your ear between your hearing aid or processor and your head and transmits the sound in the same manner. Since the silhouette's signal is closer to your telecoil, it is a good option if you are always struggling with not enough volume.

DAI means one end of your accessory plugs directly into a behind-the-ear hearing aid or cochlear implant processor, while the other end plugs into your cell phone. I have found only one product, called a "Hear Buddy," that sells for about \$45. An added bonus—you won't pick up interference that sometimes plagues neckloops and silhouettes. DAI is effective for a very severe hearing loss.

If you are handy with electronics, you could easily make any of these by adapting them from products sold to the general public.

### Wireless

Bluetooth technology uses a short-range radio frequency to transmit voice and data. You will need a cell phone with Bluetooth capability, as well as a Bluetooth listening accessory. The accessory (neckloop, silhouette, or DAI), is worn on your person and it is set up to communicate with your nearby cell phone. When your phone rings, you use the device to answer, change volume (if you have that option), and hang up.

### What's new?

Starkey once made a DAI Bluetooth product for cell phones called ELI DIRX, and it has morphed into something more intriguing called Blu-Pal. It functions mostly as an FM system (helpful for meetings) but apparently also works with a Bluetooth cell phone. Phonak's Smartlink (surely not for the technologically challenged) is an FM system/remote control that has a Bluetooth link for a cell phone. Nokia has just announced a new "loopset" that is has some nice features, such as a vibrating alert—a bit pricey at \$300 plus. A cellular store should be able to order this.

Finally, if you are in the market for new hearing aids, think about going with a Bluetooth interface in the design. (The cost may make you blanch, however.) Oticon's Epoch hearing aids come with an optional add-on called a "streamer," which is similar in size and function to an iPod and can be wirelessly paired to various devices. Phonak is always ahead of the gadget curve if you crave all the bells and whistles and money is no object.

Bluetooth-imbedded chips in hearing aids, according to those in the know, are still at least a couple of years away because battery drain is substantial. Meanwhile, there are plenty of alternatives.

### Cellular resources

The FCC mandated cellular companies to make several cell phone models available that are hearing aid compatible and to rate their phones as to how much interference they cause with hearing aids. Phones are rated in the hearing aid microphone mode, as well as the telecoil mode. Ratings scale from 1-4. Only 3 and 4 are acceptable for hearing aid compatibility. Look for this symbol. For a detailed explanation, see [www.hearinglosshelp.com/articles/hacphones.htm](http://www.hearinglosshelp.com/articles/hacphones.htm)



#### Build your own Bluetooth:

[www.gfern.com/btha/btha.html](http://www.gfern.com/btha/btha.html)

#### Digital wireless telephones and hearing aids:

[www.audiologyonline.com/articles/pf\\_article\\_detail.asp?article\\_id=278](http://www.audiologyonline.com/articles/pf_article_detail.asp?article_id=278)

**Harc Mercantile:** good selection of hands-free devices  
[www.harcmercantile.com](http://www.harcmercantile.com)

**Harris:** good selection of hands-free devices  
[www.harriscomm.com](http://www.harriscomm.com)

**Hearing Loss Help:** great resource for cell phone information and hearing loss in general. Look for the *Hear Buddy* manual  
[www.hearinglosshelp.com](http://www.hearinglosshelp.com)

**Hearing, Speech and Deafness Center in Seattle:** probably the only place where you can try before you buy, but hands-free selection may be limited  
[www.hsdc.org](http://www.hsdc.org)

**Marilyn Electronics:** site includes a DAI option and has some interesting products  
[www.marilynelectronics.com](http://www.marilynelectronics.com)

**Nokia wireless loopset:**  
[www.nokiaaccessibility.com/hearing.html](http://www.nokiaaccessibility.com/hearing.html)

## AARP Driver Safety Program: you can make it hearing accessible

By Judi Carr, Everett

**Advocate (verb): to publicly support or suggest an idea, development or way of doing something**

Over 20,000 people age 50 and above take the AARP Driver Safety Program in Washington each year, and we know nearly half of them have some hearing loss. For over five years, HLA-WA Board members Bert Lederer and Charlene MacKenzie have been working with the AARP Driver Safety Program and advocating for hearing assistance. Not much has happened, even though the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Washington State Civil Rights Code state that we shouldn't be discriminated against because of our hearing loss.

The AARP Driver Safety Program brochure states, "Persons with disabilities are encouraged to request in advance any special arrangements they may need to participate in the AARP Driver Safety Program. Please contact the course instructor or the manager of the facility where the course is to be held at least *two to three weeks prior to the course.*" So there you are—the policy is clear.

I am suggesting that everyone who reads this article sign up for the AARP Driving Safety Program where you live and request hearing accommodations (amplification at the very least, which may not normally be used)—an assistive listening system (ALS) for

moderate to severe hearing loss or CART (Communication Access Realtime Translation) for more severe loss. Then report back to me with this information:

1. Course location, date, and instructor
2. How far in advance you registered and what accommodations you requested
3. The response you received to your request
4. Anything noteworthy about your class participation

After a few months of record-keeping, Bert and Charlene will review the reports and help us decide how to get our report to the appropriate AARP person, so hearing assistance will become the norm and not the exception. There are plenty of upcoming courses near each of us. A list of the classes can be found online at [www.aarp.org/drive](http://www.aarp.org/drive) (click on Classroom Course Locator) or call 888-AARP-NOW (227-7669). I found 15 courses held within 20 miles of my home in the next few months.

These life-protecting, life-saving lessons benefit all of us, and participants should be able to understand the material. So, with that in mind, think of the impact we will make when we advocate for hearing accommodations.

*Judi Carr is a member of the HLA-WA Board of Trustees Advocacy Committee. E-mail her at [judi.carr@comcast.net](mailto:judi.carr@comcast.net).*

### Telecommunications Equipment Distribution TED Program

If you live in WA State and have a hearing loss, you are eligible for an amplified phone, text phone (VCO or CapTel), or TTY, plus a telephone ring signaling device. A contract trainer will deliver the equipment and show you how to use it. Cost is based upon income. Contact Kelly Robison, Program Mgr: 1-800-422-7930 V/TTY; or write to TED, PO Box 45301, Olympia, 98504; or e-mail [robiskd@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:robiskd@dshs.wa.gov) or download an application: [www1.dshs.wa.gov/hrsa/odhh/ted.shtml](http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/hrsa/odhh/ted.shtml)

### Low-interest loans

Washington Assistive Technology Foundation (WATF) offers low-interest loans to WA residents for assistive technology (hearing aids, augmentative communication devices, computers with adaptive equipment, etc.). See ([www.watf.org](http://www.watf.org)) or call 206-328-5116/V or 800-214-8731/V or 1-888-808-8942/TTY. No income restrictions.

### Hearing aids for low income people

Lions Clubs work with fitter/dispensers and audiologists to provide free refurbished hearing aids to anyone who qualifies financially. Contact your local Lions Club or provider to apply. Lions AUDIENT program offers *new* low-cost hearing aids. See [www.audientalliance.org](http://www.audientalliance.org) or call 1-877-283-4368.

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# AUDIOLOGY SERVICES & HEARING AIDS

PAID ADVERTISING

HSDC is a nonprofit organization, known for our commitment to service. We take the time to get to know our clients, involving family whenever possible. Our holistic approach includes hearing loss education and rehabilitation, and all proceeds go back into the community, providing for individual and family services. No wonder HSDC has been a fixture in the Puget Sound community for over 70 years.

## We provide...

- :: Hearing Evaluations (child through adult)
- :: Licensed & Certified Audiologists
- :: Hearing Aids, FM Systems, and Hearing Enhancement Technology  
*State-of-the-art technologies tailored to meet our clients' individual needs*
- :: Walk-In Repair/Service (weekdays 1 to 1:30 pm)



## Hearing Instruments from HSDC include...

- :: 60-day Extended Trial Period
- :: Personal Recommendations  
*Based on lifestyle and communication needs*
- :: Two-year Warranty including Adjustments & Repair

## SPECIAL OFFER!

**Receive 10% off any product at [hxdcstore.com](http://hxdcstore.com)** through the end of 2008. Enter code WAHLA at checkout. HSDC Store carries a wide variety of Assistive Listening Devices including amplified phones and TV headsets.

***Give us a call for more info or to schedule your hearing evaluation.***

# HEARING, SPEECH & DEAFNESS CENTER

Seattle  
206.323.5770



[audiology@hxdc.org](mailto:audiology@hxdc.org)  
[hxdc.org](http://hxdc.org)

## Wash-CAP update

By John Waldo, Bainbridge Island

Over the summer, the Washington State Communication Access Project (Wash-CAP) has continued its successful efforts to make Washington's public places accessible to those of us with hearing loss.

When we wrote our last report, Paramount Theatre, in response to our communication and requests, was getting ready to present a captioned performance of *A Chorus Line*. The captions were prepared in advance, then an on-site operator displayed them in synch with the performance. The captions were displayed on an electronic reader-board placed on the floor at the right edge of the stage, and a bloc of seats was set aside in an area where the captions were visible.

Despite relatively short notice, which minimized publicity, over 60 caption-area tickets were sold for *A Chorus Line*. Reactions ranged from pleased to ecstatic—one attendee said this would be the first time in years he could go to the after-show dinner with his family and actually participate in the conversation about the play.

Paramount was also enthusiastic. It has committed to showing at least one captioned performance of each of its Broadway productions. *Phantom of the Opera* and *Spring Awakening* were presented with captioning in October, and *The Color Purple* will have its captioned performance December 28.

Progress was a little slower with Fifth Avenue Theatre. After the theater stated several times it believed captioning would be prohibitively expensive (even though it would have consumed less than one-tenth of one percent of the annual budget), Wash-CAP filed a

lawsuit. Almost immediately, Fifth Avenue changed its tune, and announced it would offer at least one captioned performance of each of its seven annual productions beginning in the 2009-10 season. We are working through the details, but are cautiously optimistic.

We have made contact and hope to open a dialogue with Intiman Theatre and Seattle Rep. Given our past positive experience with the Seattle Center venues, we hope for a positive and cooperative outcome with those facilities. We have also been in touch with Seattle Arts & Lectures, and they have assured us they will at least explore the options for captioning their series of lectures by some of the world's most prominent authors.

While Wash-CAP's initial plan was to focus this year on access to live theater, we also took on Washington State Ferries, asking WSF to caption public-address announcements on its vessels and terminals. After communication broke down, we filed court action against them.

As was the case with Fifth Avenue, filing legal action had the desired result. WSF got attorneys involved, and evidently the attorneys analyzed the law in somewhat the same way as we had done. WSF does not seem to be interested in arguing about *whether* it should caption those announcements, but instead, it has put together a working group to analyze *how* that should be done. We are in the process of negotiating a resolution of that action, and again, are optimistic that it will be completed in the relatively near future.

A major concern of ours is a case out of the federal court in Arizona

(Continued on page 6)

## Join the ODHH Advisory Committee!

The Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH) is recruiting additional members for its advisory committee. ODHH would like to receive applications from deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind and speech disabled citizens who would represent their communities. The Office of the Secretary, Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), will make the official appointment.

This advisory committee is an important way to share comments, make suggestions, provide feedback to ODHH about its programs and services. The committee has an opportunity to participate in discussions about ODHH updates, strategic plan, annual budget, and sometimes guest speakers. Your willingness to invest time to assist ODHH to improve its effectiveness would be very much appreciated.

Advisory committee members are requested to share information from the meetings with the community members they represent and report feedback at the next meeting.

The advisory committee usually meets in the Seattle area four times per year but may require travel to other regions of the state. ODHH pays per diem and travel expenses.

To request an application, contact:

Rena Patch, Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing,  
PO Box 45300, Olympia 98504-5300 or e-mail  
atchrr@dshs.wa.gov  
or phone 360-902-7564.

(Continued from page 5...Wash-CAP) concerning movie captioning. The Arizona Attorney General sued a theater chain, claiming that under the Americans with Disabilities Act, the theaters had to provide captioned movies for the hearing impaired and descriptions for the visually impaired. In what was a giant step backwards for people with sensory losses, the court ruled that captions and descriptions would change the essential nature of the service provided by the movie exhibitors, and was therefore not required by the ADA.

That case is presently on appeal to the Ninth Circuit Court, and is the first movie-captioning case to reach the appellate-court level. The case will essentially establish the national rule about movie captioning.

Because of the enormous importance of that case, Wash-CAP is one of a number of advocacy organizations that intends to file a friend-of-the-court brief explaining why the case is so significant for us, and why the Arizona court's decision was erroneous. HLA-WA and the Puget Sound chapter of the Association of Late Deafened Adults (ALDA) have agreed to join our brief, and the national HLAA has indicated it may join as well.

Wash-CAP is a nonprofit membership corporation dedicated to enriching the lives of people with hearing loss by ensuring that public places in Washington provide the aids and services required to make their businesses accessible to us. We accomplish that objective through communication, information and persuasion, and prefer to work cooperatively and positively. However, if those approaches are unsuccessful, we will not hesitate to take legal action.

Because Wash-CAP can act only on behalf of its members, our scope

and our effectiveness are directly proportionate to our membership strength. Membership is absolutely free for the asking – just send an email to [john@wash-cap.com](mailto:john@wash-cap.com) with the word “membership” in the subject line. By doing that, you can help us help you and all of us enjoy a richer life.

*Wash-CAP Advocacy Director and Counsel John Waldo is a Bainbridge Island attorney with a*

*significant hearing loss who wants to apply his legal knowledge and experience to benefit the hearing-loss population. While a number of individuals associated with HLA-WA are working with Waldo on Wash-CAP, there is no formal connection between the two organizations. He will be pleased to answer any questions on line or meet with any of your chapters to further discuss Wash-CAP.*

## We appreciate your support!

Your donations help us fund projects that benefit people with hearing loss. We are especially grateful for our newsletter advertising sponsors, **Washington Relay**, and the **Hearing, Speech & Deafness Center** for advertising in our newsletter and for **Washington Relay** for advertising on our website. The following contributions are for August through October 2008:

- C. Leon Hopper, Seattle
- Betty Ruble, Auburn
- Lilia Smith, Camano Island
- Trudy Wilson, Redmond

### Microsoft Match

- Mark and Susan Svancarek, Redmond

#### **Double your donation!**

Many employers will match their employees' donations to nonprofit organizations. If you are planning to make a donation to HLA-WA, please ask your employer if your company has a matching gifts program. We are a 501(c)(3) organization.

### Safeco Insurance Employee Giving

- Mulushewa Asgehedom, Kent

### United Way

Did you know you can make regular United Way contributions and help hard of hearing people in our state? These readers have supported this newsletter throughout the year through United Way:

- Erlene Little, Oak Harbor
- Timmie Mauck, Poulsbo
- Dean Olson, Seattle
- John C. Robbins, Renton
- Della Ramsden, Seattle
- George Ross, Seattle
- Lilia Smith, Camano Island
- Beverly Ziarko, Kent
- United Way Kitsap County, unknown donor

### Projector donations

If you wish to have your donations go to this fund, please designate this. We have purchased three projectors from this fund. Projectors are used for outreach presentations and for real-time captioning at meetings. Many captioners do not own projectors.



We are still looking for volunteer captioners for several chapters. Mileage is reimbursed.

## Important information for air travelers

By Rich Diedrichsen, HLAA-St. Cloud, MN

Permission has been granted to publish these two e-mails from the HLAA Leaders

I wanted to send some general information on air travel that I have learned since joining the Northwest/KLM advisory panel.

First, someone mentioned the Continental Airlines consumer panel. This was modeled after the NWA panel, and in-fact they visited our meeting last fall in Detroit. I am happy more airlines are starting committees, but so many of these committees tend to focus on wheelchair access because that is BY FAR the number-one complaint that comes in to airlines and the DOT (Department of Transportation). Over the past almost five years on the panel, I have seen very few complaints related to access for people with hearing loss. This is why most of our issues are on the back burner.

One of you commented on the response you received from the DOT that in effect said if they get more complaints they will look into it more. Well, let's complain. Complain to the airline, but know that you can also complain to the DOT. Do it! The squeaky wheel gets the grease. Look what happened in San Francisco when the Deaf Community made a case out of access.

If you have a complaint, every airline has Complaint Resolutions Officers (CROs) on call 24/7. Tell them your complaint (if your plane is pulling out, then tell them you want so see a CRO at your next stop). Typically, they will listen to your concern and can offer you free travel miles, meal tickets, or other rewards to satisfy your inconvenience. Nice, but do not let that be the end of it. Do fill out a complaint to the airline (mention what the CRO did for you if you like) and

also send a complaint to the DOT (some complaints are forwarded but many are not). When the DOT and/or the airline sees the scope of the problem, compared to other concerns like wheelchair access, then action will be taken. In the case of NWA, their consumer panel was created because the DOT/FAA got so many complaints they told NWA to fix the problem.

I know sometimes people hate to complain. Sometimes when something happens and you do not get access, your blood boils; but later when you calm down, you forget about things. Sometimes when you complain and you get the "Thanks, that's too bad..." letter from the

airline or DOT, you say "Why bother?" when it happens again.

A friend of mine has a saying, "Plant a tree whose shade you may never sit in." Even if what you do with your complaint does not change things for you, it can help to change things for others.

*Editor—To file a complaint, see <http://www.hearingloss.org/advocacy/complaints.asp> or write to Aviation Consumer Protection Division, C-75, US DOT, 1200 New Jersey Ave, S.E. Washington, D.C. 20590 or call 24 hours a day at 202-366-2220 (TTY 202-366-0511) to record your complaint. Calls are returned Monday through Friday.*

### Airport announcements

The national office recognizes that air travel is a hot-button issue for people with hearing loss. At a minimum, it's stressful—and can be frustrating or downright inaccessible at its worst. We have posted information on the HLAA home page on how to complain and how to keep track of your complaints.

We encourage you to file complaints with the US Department of Transportation (DOT) and the airline industry. Neither will understand just how difficult and stressful it is for flyers with hearing loss, unless they hear from us. It's clear airlines do not comply with the rules as they are now, which put a lot of responsibility on the airline staff to notify each person who self-identifies regarding all audible announcements. That's difficult during their normally busy routine. In an emergency, I have trouble envisioning staff re-

membering to find that person with a hearing loss to let them know what's going on. On the other hand, if there were visual displays of all audible announcements, many of the hearing passengers would benefit as much as the people with hearing loss.

That's why the HLAA position has been, and will continue to be, that airlines should provide visual information whenever audible announcements are provided. If it's important enough for everyone else to hear, it's important enough for us to know about. We will continue to work with DOT and the airline industry to make that a reality.

Thanks again for all you do!

*Lise Hamlin  
Director of Public Policy &  
State Development, Hearing Loss  
Association of America  
[LHamlin@hearingloss.org](mailto:LHamlin@hearingloss.org)*

## Implant corner For cochlear implant wearers and those who seek more information about this technology

*Edited by Mary Steinmeyer, Fife*

### Not me, thank you!

*Told by Bert Lederer, Bellingham*

"Cochlear implant? Not me, thank you! I'll never have brain surgery," he thought to himself and sometimes told his family. "I don't want them messing around in my head. Furthermore, you go deaf in the implanted ear and the thing might not work. Why take a chance? Besides, I hear just fine with my pricey high-tech hearing aids. I sure wouldn't want that funny-looking thing stuck on my head."

Well, that seems pretty narrow and prejudiced, particularly coming from a guy who is well educated, had a successful career in human resources management, was a part-time college professor, and has spent several years in leadership roles and advocacy efforts in the Hearing Loss Association. Surprise! That guy is me.

My illusions of auditory grandeur were shattered on April 25, 2008. My audiologist gave me some standard speech discrimination tests with my bilateral pricey, high-tech hearing aids and also with a 92 dB gain without them. The shocking results: only 32% speech discrimination in my right ear and 0% in my left. She urged me to engage in a reality check: difficulties communicating with family and friends, reliance on speech reading, reliance on captioning, and an inability to hear effectively in a variety of volunteer activities in which I have leadership roles. I found this depressing—and yet refreshing at the same time. I readily agreed to a referral for CI assessment.

The new challenge was to research this CI business, just like I used to in preparing a lecture for one of my

classes. I talked with CI recipients and went to several web sites. Basically, I found that a cochlear implant is an electrode array surgically inserted into the cochlea (inner ear). This bypasses damaged hair cells, directly stimulates the hearing nerve, and provides a sense of sound. External components include a microphone, speech processor and an RF transmitter with a piece of magnet. An RF receiver with a piece of magnet is implanted beneath the skull's skin. The magnets attach to each other when the transmitter is placed against the skull. The receiver transmits signals to the implanted electrodes in the cochlea. The speech processor allows an individual to adjust the sound level of sensitivity.

I visited websites of clinics where CIs are performed and the three CI manufacturers—Cochlear, Advanced Bionics, and MedEl—knowing soon I might need to make a choice. At the HLAA convention in Reno last June, I spent considerable time with manufacturers' representatives, impartial CI recipients, and attended related workshops and panel sessions.

Each manufacturer shipped me materials and I spent many hours reading technical information and watching testimonials on DVDs. My primary concern was that it almost seemed too positive. So I talked to some recipients who were definitely not pleased with their CIs. Overall, the positives far outweighed the negatives, and I realized poor CI performance is usually the result of physiological problems

### HSDC South Sound CI support group

HSDC South Sound has started a CI Support group. It is providing staff for organizing, publicizing and running the meetings, as well as CART (Communication Access Realtime Translation) and ALDs (assistive listening devices).

Meetings will be held on the 4th Saturday every other month (no December meeting) from 10:00 am-12:00 pm, at HSDC South Sound, 3516 S. 47th St., Suite 200, Tacoma. Meetings are open to everyone. We hope to allow some time at the end of each meeting for open questions and answers on any topic related to cochlear implants.

Any questions, please contact Christine Seymour, Communication Advocate for the Hearing, Speech and Deafness Center, Tacoma; Phone 253-475-0782; TTY/VP 253-474-1748. E-mail:



and/or lack of motivation during the aural rehabilitation process.

My anxiety level was quite high on July 15 when I arrived at UW Medical Center for my assessment with audiologist Tina Worman. My first round of testing resulted in a finding that I was a borderline case. Apparently, I guessed very well at words and sentences. I was totally devastated and she agreed to retest me immediately. So after three-and-a-half hours in the booth, I was definitely a candidate for a CI. Then, along with wife Claydene and hearing dog Warren, I went to meet the implant team.

Dr. Rubenstein said he would like to implant my right ear because it

*(Continued on page 9)*



(Continued from page 8...Not me, thank you!)



L-R: Dr. Jay Rubinstein, Bert Lederer, Drs. Stephanie Misono, and Puangmali (Lily) Praweswararat, a visiting physician from Thailand.

is better to have some speech discrimination in the implanted ear. I had a bad reaction to that because I have considerable residual hearing in the right. If something goes wrong, I would have no hearing at all! He said he would reconsider if I could produce an audiogram showing I had word discrimination in my left ear sometime in the past. The next day I went to every audiologist in Bellingham where I had been tested during the past fifteen years. I found an audiogram from 1996 that showed 76% speech discrimination in my left ear and 92% in the right with new in-the-ear hearing aids—depressing, when I realized my discrimination had dropped so radically. I e-mailed the audiogram to Dr. Rubenstein that evening at 5:28 pm and at 5:37 pm he e-mailed back that he would implant my left ear. I was impressed with his immediate response! Shortly thereafter, my surgery was scheduled for September 8, and I actually looked forward to the adventure.

Aside from some ill effects from the anesthesia, the implantation was routine and uneventful. September 29 was the big day—activation of my CI processor and initial programming, referred to as “mapping.” My anxiety level on the trip to Seattle was off the chart.

Would I be able to hear anything? Would the hardware work? Etc., etc., etc. Then came the blessing.

When the processor was turned on, I immediately heard tones clearly at the comfort level in each of the 22 frequencies. I could understand Tina fairly well, along with some speech reading. Tears of joy flowed freely. By the end of the first day I could understand Claydene about 70%-90% in an ideal environment, again with some speech reading. I thought, “Lots of work ahead but a fun challenge.”

Wearing both my CI and my hearing aid, I had better balance and really great understanding. I heard birds for the first time in probably 60 years and many other sounds I didn't even know existed. Warren, my hearing dog makes lots of noise when he eats or drinks and his collar tags jingle when he walks!



Observing activation of electrode array with Audiologist Tina Worman

My aural rehabilitation program includes watching captioned DVD movies without my hearing aid and carefully listening to the word sounds in my CI, reading aloud, not using the hearing aid for periods of time while conversing with family, and practice word and sentence exercises that Tina gave me. This is a wonderful journey, as I notice my hearing improving noticeably week to week.

At my one-month mapping, using a CI and hearing aid, I showed a comprehension increase from

8% to 46% in words and from 39% to 63% in phonemes (a phoneme refers to the smallest units of sound in a word. Example: the word “dog” has three phonemes /d/ /o/ /g/). Sentence comprehension increased from 57% to 80% and with CI only from 0% to 60%! My ability to hear tones has phenomenally increased, particularly in the higher frequencies. I can now hear sounds up to 6,000 Hz where the birds are.

My friends and family are somewhat awed at how well I am hearing. One of my grandsons remarked that he has to be careful what he says now because I can understand him from the next room. This is fun, too, because I feel like a burden has been lifted. We have lots of humorous moments in our family. Here's a scenario at the dinner table: Me: What's that noise? C: Stomach growling. Me: Whose stomach? C: *Your* stomach!

There have been serious times, too. One day while walking on a trail, I heard a voice behind me say, “Coming on your right!” and the mechanical sounds of the bicycles and the rubber on the road! I moved over with a sigh of relief, as I remembered the day long past when I did not hear the bicyclist and he crashed to avoid hitting me.

I still have a long way to go with aural rehabilitation, but at this point I enjoy hearing again—even socializing and going to restaurants without relying on my personal FM system. But barring anatomical problems, the key to success with a CI is motivation to do the hard work (and some fun, too) in the aural rehabilitation process which essentially is training the brain.

*Editor: Contact Bert at bertleder@msn.com or phone 360-319-4540 (V)*

# Chapters in Washington

## Information, Education, advocacy, and support

Meeting times and days sometimes change, and most chapters take a summer break. See our website for more information on our chapters.

**BELLEVUE**—2nd Sat. 1:00 pm; Lake Sammamish Four Square Church, Rm. 104, 14434 NE 8<sup>th</sup> St., Bellevue; amplification, FM. Prudence Clem: 425-746-1074 or e-mail Mary Carter, greymare25@aol.com.

**BOTHELL**—4th Mon. 1:30 pm; Northshore Senior Center, 2nd floor conference room 202, 10201 E. Riverside Dr., Bothell. Karen Utter: 206-817-3213 or klutter@verizon.net.

**EAST JEFFERSON CO.**—4th Mon. 1:00 pm; Port Townsend Community Center 620 Tyler Street, Port Townsend; amplification, FM. Emily Mandelbaum: mandelbaum@olympus.net or 360-531-2247; or Sandy MacNair: 360-385-1347 or smacnair@cablespeed.com.

**KITSAP**—3rd Sat. 1:00 pm; Iris Room (lower level) at Silverdale Harrison Medical Ctr., 1800 N.W. Myhre Rd. amplification, FM. John Allen: 360-871-0997 or jcallen@hearingloss-wa.org.

**RENTON**—2nd Fri. 12:30 pm; Renton Senior Ctr., 211 Burnett Ave. N., Renton; FM, real-time captioning. Glenda Philio: philiofam@juno.com or Karen Utter: 206-817-3213.

**SKAGIT**—2nd Tues. 1:00 pm; Fidalgo

Center, 1701- 22nd St., Anacortes; amplification, FM. Jerry Olmstead: JOlmst623@aol.com or 360-299-3848; Danny Beatty 360-293 2793 or jdbeatty@wavecable.com

**SNOHOMISH CO.**—3rd Sat. 11:00 am; Providence Medical Center, Pacific Campus, 916 Pacific Ave., Everett (Main Level meeting room); amplification, FM, real-time captioning. Steve Pettijohn: spettijohn@msn.com or Dusty Hansen 425-353-7515.

**SPOKANE**—2nd Sat. 9:30 am; Eastern WA Center for the Deaf and HOH, 1206 N. Howard, Spokane; amplification, FM. Margaret Mortz: mmortz@gmail.com or 509-893-1472 or hlaspokane@gmail.com.

**TACOMA**—2nd Sat. 10:00 am; TACID, 6315 S. 19th St., Tacoma; amplification, FM, real-time captioning. Lona Jennings: lonaj@hearingloss-wa.org or Melinda Wagner 253-851-6183.

**WHATCOM**—3rd Sat. 10:00 am; Christ the Servant Lutheran Church, 2600 Lakeway Dr., Bellingham; amplification, FM. Charlene MacKenzie: charlenemackenzie@hearingloss-wa.org or 360-738-3756 or Bert Lederer 360-319-4540 or bertleder@msn.com.

### ..... Milestones

*It is with much sadness that we report the recent passing of two HLAA members and dear friends.*

**Bill Nemerever, Port Townsend**  
Bill started the East Jefferson County chapter along with Emily Mandelbaum. The two worked together to plan meetings and then initiated hearing access training at the Jefferson Co. Hospital where their chapter met. For many years Bill also volunteered for SHIBA (Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors HelpLine). Emily said, "I loved working with Bill

because of his wisdom, sense of humor and honesty. I miss him."

**Doug Gray, Des Moines**  
Doug facilitated the Des Moines Chapter and prior to that the West Seattle chapter. He was active in our organization from its onset, both in the local and state organizations, serving in various leadership roles. Ironically, Doug did not have a hearing loss until the last few years. His passion to get involved started as a way of helping his wife, Beth, who has a profound hearing loss and survives him.

## HLA-WA Board Officers:

- President: Lona Jennings, Federal Way; lonaj@hearingloss-wa.org
- VP: Judi Carr, Everett jcarr@hearingloss-wa.org
- Secretary: Penny Allen, Port Orchard (*Sound Waves* Editor), PAllen@hearingloss-wa.org or 360-871-0997
- Treasurer: John Allen, Port Orchard JCallen@hearingloss-wa.org
- Chapter Coordinator: Karen Utter, Edmonds; 425-742-3228 V/TTY or klutter@verizon.net

## Trustees:

- Michael Bower, Auburn MABower@hearingloss-wa.org
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- Don Pickens, Redmond DPickens@hearingloss-wa.org
- Lilia Smith, Camano Island liliasmith@hearingloss-wa.org
- Beverly Ziarko, Kent Bevziarko@hearingloss-wa.org or 253-631-3141 (Database mgr.)

*Note: a new board and officers will be installed at the general meeting in November (after this newsletter goes to print).*





# Hearing Loss Association of Washington

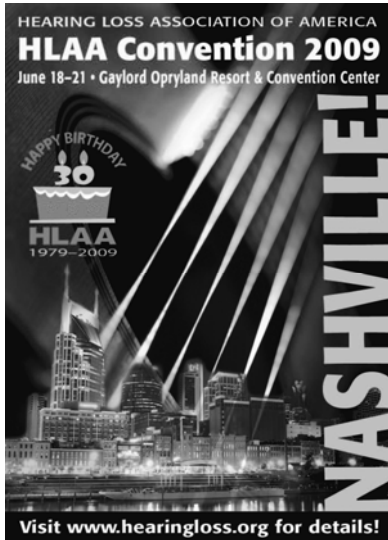
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**To open the world of communication to people with hearing loss by providing information, education, support and advocacy.**

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