

Outreach & Community Relations

Week long ADA Celebration, July 21-26 2015

I accepted an invitation to give a 2 minute personal narrative for the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the ADA at Westlake Center in Seattle. The event was organized by several disability organizations via steering committee, including the NW ADA Center, the Independent Living Center, and Alliance for People with Disabilities, and ARC of Washington.



The event was attended by Councilmember Tom Rasmussen and the city of Seattle's deputy mayor.

We promoted attendance via social media, email, and web. Several HLAA-WA members and others from the hearing loss community attended including Victor Harris, Bob Branigan, Lee Fitchett, Jenni Mechem (City of Bellevue). Several staff members of HSDC and ODHH were there and some spoke as well.

The request for and the HLAA offer of sponsorship for CART had fallen through the cracks, but we were able to secure it at the last minute. While the transcriptionist was skilled, the screens were not placed for optimum viewing.

HLAA provided these signs as a reminder that hearing access comes in many forms---and we wanted to stress that in fact, disability access itself goes beyond noticeable physical barriers.



I also attended a city of Seattle Lunch & Learn dedicated to disability discussions. Maude Steyaert, Director of Disability Services of North Seattle College delivered a fantastic speech. Hearing access was not so great and I had to hunt down a receiver

To view the Lunch & Learn: <http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos?videoid=x57223> No captions; hopefully the speech will be available.

Bellevue City Council Chambers Pre-Loop Install Testing - On July 30th, Diana Thompson working with Jenni Mechem, and Spencer Norby, organized a "loop testing" for Bellevue City Council chambers to demonstrate how the system would work. Funding for was project was allocated through the city's lengthy budgeting process; culminating a 2 year project. The testing demo was hastily organized and done mainly to "test" that the loop installation would meet IEC 601-18-4 standards when installed. We've been working closely working closely with Jenni Mechem, new ADA/Title VI Civil Rights Program Administrator, on hearing access in Bellevue municipal buildings. She is receptive to loops but not committed to them.

Hastily organized, the testing demo was offered as an “open house” drop by process. This optimized flex time so all that could drop by, could. Yet, the rotation of people in and out challenged the demonstration/testing program. It was very difficult to manage the multiple dialogue and inquiries; with both a demo and a testing going on simultaneously. A set time for a collaborative demo and testing, with all attendees participating jointly offer the best results.



At 10:00, Spencer Norby laid the phased array loop in the center of the gallery, which covered much of the audience area. Readings were taken, adjustments were made, and the loop was ready when Bob Beers arrived at 11:30. Mr. Norby used the microphone from the P Loop 200 to demo the loop. Christine Seymour handed out loop testers / headsets for attendees to listen as she explained to city attendees how the hearing loop

worked. We all worked collaboratively to both test the loop, demo the loop and to educate others. Sandy Bunning and Diana talked with attendees and answered questions. When the facilities rep arrived, the city’s PA system was integrated with the loop and an additional demo/testing ensued.

Testers utilizing their personal technology included: Christine, bimodal CI. Sandy, CI and H/A. Bob, single sided H/A, Diana, bimodal H/A single Telecoil program, Cheri Bimodal H/A, multiple telecoil programs, Jenni single sided H/A (I believe her aid is analog, yet not old.) Spencer, single sided, H/A (doesn’t count; he is a vendor and is using personal experience plus professional testing criteria including readings generated on the testing meter) Christine, Diana, Sandy, Bob and Cheri are all experienced loop users. Jenni’s is familiar with assistive technology, but does not use a loop regularly. Jenni has severe/ profound HL.

Cheri: The loop worked well. I could clearly understand the speech from the verbal program from an I Pod. I could clearly understand speech delivered from the P 200 microphone; both Spencer and Sandy took turns speaking while I was testing. I did not hear any interference from any of my 3 T coil programs. Normally if there’s interference, I will notice; my T coils seem to be sensitive to interference. Bob, Christine, Diana and Sandy all reported favorable results from the loop with both the I Pod and the P200 microphone. Not all testers were available when the PA system was integrated. Christine and Cheri could hear and understand clearly once the Council’s PA system was integrated. Jenni immediately responded favorably once the council’s sound system was integrated. Due to the chaos of the integrated system demo / testing, Diana is unclear if she had her telecoil in position during that specific test.

City attendees testing with the loop receiver seemed to be impressed with the clarity of the enhanced sound and to have a good grasp of the benefits of the assistive technology system, the procurement. We promoted the testing through social media, web, and email, encouraging people to join us.

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