Sound Waves


Hearing access twenty years later
What the heck happened?
By Karen Utter, HLA-WA President

Recently, I found a 1992 issue of the Puget Sound Business Journal telling of the issues that businesses must consider in implementing the then “new ADA Law.” Twenty years ago, hearing loss was definitely part of the planning process. An accompanying advertisement from a local signage company had the hearing access ear with a slash sign prominently displayed equally along with the wheelchair symbol for mobility access. These universal access symbols were to be visible images of the law that now demanded public access for all people with disabilities.

As we begin a new year, I can’t help but think of the wonderful changes we’ve seen in the last few years, thanks to our advocacy work. Almost all movie theaters in the country soon will be more accessible to people who cannot understand audibly. Live theaters in Seattle now offer captioned performances for hard of hearing people, just as they’ve offered ASL performances for the Deaf for many years. However, there’s still one remaining problem. Over time, that signage for hearing loss, set up for businesses and government bodies to indicate publicly that they provide additional access for our communication needs, has virtually disappeared! Why is that? The reason is simple...most people with hearing loss don’t ask for what they need, don’t know what they need and even if they do know, they remain silent. To remain silent when dealing with a disability is akin to “wishing it away.” If we don’t see it, don’t talk about it, pretend a bit more, and bluff while in public, we’re hoping people will think our hearing loss isn’t a problem. Advertisers perpetuate this scenario with their “discreet and invisible” hearing devices so nobody will know.” Now, twenty years after the Americans with Disabilities Act was legally enforceable, the problem is that we’ve hidden our disability so well that others have no knowledge of our special communication needs. As Pogo once stated, “We have met the enemy and he is us.”

In 2012, let’s make a plan to do better as we go forward with a strong organization and launch locally our new national Get in the Hearing Loop program for hearing access in public places. We need to recognize that there are laws on our side and we have a right to request accommodations. But more importantly, it is only through doing this that we will become visible and remove the stigma of hearing loss.

Let’s further the goal of our HLAA founder “to help make hearing loss an issue of national concern.” Together we can make a difference!

Let’s Loop Seattle!
WHAT: Kickoff event to make Seattle a hearing accessible city for everyone! Presentation by David Myers, “Father” of Let’s Loop America movement.
WHEN: Friday, April 20, 5:30 pm - 7:30 pm
WHERE: Virginia Mason’s newly-looped Volney Richmond Auditorium, Lindeman Pavilion, 1201 Terry Ave., Seattle 98101
RSVP required by Friday April 6. Limited seating. Email loopseattle@gmail.com.
CART (Communication Access Realtime Translation) for added hearing access. Enjoy complimentary appetizers and learn how a hearing loop system benefits those with hearing loss, business owners and operators of public venues. Question and answer session to follow.
I’ve been hard of hearing nearly my entire life. After becoming sick during a measles epidemic, my second-grade teacher noticed my mild hearing loss. Throughout middle and high school, I had to sit in the front row of the classroom, away from my friends, in order to hear my teachers. Thirty-five years ago, as a sophomore in college, I began wearing hearing aids. This was my first step in a seemingly endless search to find the technology that would allow me to hear clearly once again. After more than thirty years, my search has finally come to an end.

When I visited the United Kingdom in 2006, I navigated my travels as I always had—with the understanding that I could not hear clearly in a noisy environment. Train stations, airports, and public transportation stops had always been problematic for me, but I had learned to adapt over time. Imagine my surprise when, at the train station in Dublin, I was able to clearly hear the thick Irish brogue of the ticket clerk. The station’s ticket counter was looped and the telecoils in my hearing aids allowed me to hear his announcements. The system was so effective that I was able to hear him even better than my younger normal-hearing travel companions.

Throughout my trip, I discovered I could hear perfectly with just my telecoil equipped hearing aids. I was able to hear not only in the train stations, but also in museums, the metro, tour buses, churches and at the airport! The looping systems made it so my hearing aids also operated as an assistive listening device (ALD).

For the first time since childhood, I was able to take in a play, visit museums, and ride tour buses without missing out on important sounds like dialogue, music, and tour information. It was an experience I will never forget.

But even with all the joy of these new hearing experiences, I couldn’t help but ask myself, “Why don’t we have this in the States?”

Since then, I have followed the debut of the hearing loop to service counters, theaters, and meeting halls in America. Last summer I attended the second annual International Loop Conference held in conjunction with the National HLAA conference in Washington D.C. I met with like-minded individuals who have been instrumental in bringing hearing loops to town halls, theaters, churches, subways, stadiums and airports in their communities.

I made my pledge to state leaders that I’d work to bring hearing loops to Washington. However, this is not something I can do on my own. In order to bring this much-needed technology to our state, I need your help.

In conjunction with HLA-WA, I’ve launched Let’s Loop Seattle. We aim to bring hearing loop technology to Seattle and the State of Washington. Please join our special event on April 20 and learn more about how you can help loop Seattle and the State of Washington.

Our informational website (www.loopseattle.org) provides an overview of our mission, has general information about hearing loops, and gives you the opportunity to join the cause. Visit our site today!

Learn. Find out all you can about your hearing aids, about telecoils, and about hearing (induction) loops.

Visit www.loopseattle.com and join in the conversations on Facebook so you can keep up-to-date on our campaign.

Start the conversation. Talk to your family, friends, co-workers and neighbors about hearing loops. Tell them your story, express why this matters to you, and increase awareness.

Talk to your audiologist. Ask about hearing loop technology, the telecoil in your hearing aids, and tell him or her about “Let’s Loop Seattle.” Look around the office—does your audiologist display HLAA materials about telecoils, induction loops and ALDs? Is the office looped? If so, spread the word. We want to build a coalition of everyone working to bring hearing loops to our communities.

Connect with your community. In order to “LOOP” Washington successfully and efficiently, we need community-wide participation and broad support. From city officials and community leaders, to business executives and facility directors, to educators and advocates, each of you has important connections. Tell us about your community, contacts, resources, and ideas!

Loop Seattle needs YOU! E-mail loopseattle@gmail.com today and join our campaign!
Spokane church gets looped

Due to the diligent advocacy of a member of its congregation (who is also a member of the HLA Spokane Chapter) and a generous monetary donation from another, the Unitarian Universalist Church of Spokane (UUCS) is now the first church in Spokane to be equipped with an induction loop (AKA hearing loop). Both the Sanctuary and the Friendship Hall have been looped. This system enables audio signals to be directly transmitted to hearing aids or implant processors containing telecoils. It not only amplifies and clarifies the audio signal being transmitted, but is designed to eliminate background noise—transforming a person’s hearing aid into a direct receiver.

To hear for yourself how this system works, you are invited to attend a service at either 9:00 am or 11:00 am on any Sunday. For a map and information about the UUCS, go to www.uuspokane.org.

Financing hearing aids and other assistive technologies

The Washington Access Fund provides low-interest (5%) loans and matched savings accounts (you save up to $4000 and receive an equal amount in match) to Washington residents for any type of assistive technology including, for example, hearing aids, cochlear implants, ALDs, alerts, computers, Tablet PCs and cell phones with apps for hearing loss. The Fund also offers low-interest loans and matched savings accounts for business equipment needed for employment or self employment. Apply online: www.washingtonaccessfund.org or call 206-328-5116/V or 1-877-428-5116 or 1-888-494-4775 TTY.

Recycle your batteries

The zinc in zinc-air batteries is a hazardous component. So is the mercury or mercuric oxide if the battery contains mercury. The danger in throwing used batteries into the garbage is that they get dumped at a landfill. Over time, the breakdown of the batteries could release harmful chemicals into the environment.

Here is one way to recycle hearing aid batteries. Sandra Bunning of Renton made a welcome sign with them!
Ringing in the Ears: Facts About Tinnitus
By Michael Mallahan, AuD. The Hearing & Balance Lab, PC

Do you hear a ringing, roaring, clicking, or hissing sound in your ears? Do you hear this sound often or all the time? Does the sound bother you a lot? If you answer yes to these questions, you may have tinnitus (tin-NY-tus).

Tinnitus is a symptom associated with many forms of hearing loss. It can also be a symptom of other health problems. Roughly 25 million Americans have experienced tinnitus. Some cases are so severe that it interferes with their daily activities. People with severe cases of tinnitus may find it difficult to hear, work, or even sleep.

What causes tinnitus?

Hearing loss—Most people who have tinnitus also have some kind of hearing loss.

Loud noise—Exposure to loud noise can cause permanent hearing loss and tinnitus. Continued exposure can make the tinnitus and hearing loss get worse.

Medicine—More than 200 medicines, including aspirin, can cause tinnitus. If you have tinnitus and you take medicine, ask your doctor or pharmacist whether your medicine could be involved.

Other potential causes—Allergies, tumors, problems in the heart and blood vessels, jaws, and neck can cause tinnitus.

What should I do if I have tinnitus?
The first step is to see an audiologist for an evaluation. A careful history and audiometric testing will lead to the most likely causes and best treatment for your tinnitus. You may be referred to an ear, nose and throat specialist for examination to complete the diagnosis.

How will hearing experts treat my tinnitus?
Although there is no cure for tinnitus, audiologists, scientists and doctors have discovered several treatments that may give you some relief. Not every treatment works for everyone, so you may need to try several to find the ones that help.

Treatments can include:

Hearing aids—Most people with tinnitus have some degree of hearing loss. Hearing aids create a dual benefit of enhancing hearing and masking or covering up the tinnitus. The majority of patients with tinnitus receive partial or complete relief from their tinnitus with the use of hearing aids.

Maskers—Tinnitus maskers are small electronic devices that look like hearing aids and are tuned to generate sound that masks or covers up the tinnitus. Like hearing aids, they may provide relief from the tinnitus, but will not enhance hearing and may interfere with understanding speech.

Many types of devices, such as fans, radios and sound generators can be used as tinnitus maskers to help tinnitus sufferers to fall sleep or get back to sleep.

Medicine or drug therapy—Some tinnitus sufferers develop anxiety and other strong emotional responses to their tinnitus. Certain medicines may provide relief from these emotional reactions and provide some relief from the tinnitus.

Other medicines and nutritional supplements have provided relief to some patients.

Neuromonics Tinnitus Therapy—This treatment uses a combination of testing, counseling and specialized masking to help you to effectively manage and gradually reduce your response to tinnitus. This treatment can take six months or more to complete but has the highest rate of success.

Counseling—People with tinnitus may experience anxiety, depression and other psychiatric problems. You may be referred to a psychiatrist or counselor as needed.

Relaxing—Learning how to relax is very helpful if the noise in your ears frustrates you. Stress makes tinnitus seem worse. By relaxing, you have a chance to rest and better deal with the sound.

How can I help myself?
Think about things that will help you cope. Many people find listening to music very helpful. Focusing on music might help you forget about your tinnitus for a while. It can also help to mask the sound. Other people like to listen to recorded nature sounds, like ocean waves, the wind, or even crickets.

Avoid anything that can make your tinnitus worse, such as smoking, alcohol and loud noise. If you are a construction worker, an airport worker, or a hunter, or if you are regularly exposed to loud noise at home or at work, wear ear plugs or special earmuffs to protect your hearing and keep your tinnitus from getting worse.

If it is hard for you to hear over your tinnitus, ask your friends and family to face you when they talk so you can see their faces. Seeing their expressions may help you understand them better. Ask people to speak louder, but not shout. Also, tell them they do not have to talk slowly, just more clearly.

What is the next step?
Schedule an appointment with an audiologist to evaluate and discuss your tinnitus.
We appreciate your support!

The following contributions are for November 2011 through January 2012:

- Dale Becker, West Richland
- Robert Branigin, Seattle
- Wes Brosman, Cosmopolis
- Suellen Campbell, Seattle
- George Cooper, College Place
- Rick Faunt, Auburn
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- David Kietzke, Seattle
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- Phil Rodgers, University Place
- Charles Stampley, Blaine
- Wynona Tyson, Seattle
- Edward Watton, Redmond

University of Washington Speech and Hearing; Listen for Life Center at Virginia Mason; and Washington Relay. Paid advertising helps us provide outreach newsletters to clinics, and hospitals, and to be distributed at health fairs.

Did you know you can make regular United Way contributions to HLA-WA because we are a 501(c)(3) organization? Check to see if your employer has a matching gifts program and double your donation!

Moving on? Each newsletter return costs us $1.08. 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.

HearingLossNation—a social network

HearingLossNation is a non-profit online community designed specifically for hard-of-hearing individuals between the ages of 18 and 35. See www.hearinglossnation.org.

Webinars—mini seminars that feature the nation’s leading experts in hearing loss. Join it live or access the archives: www.myhearingloss.org.

Your donations help us fund projects that benefit people with hearing loss. We are especially grateful for our newsletter advertisers in this issue: Cherri Hoyden, Au.D, CCC-A; Cochlear Americas;
Valentine’s Day
By Susan M. Vincent, SeaTac

“Say boy...say duck...say man”—or was that math? The test continues for what seems like a long time. “You are doing very well on the vowels,” I’m told tactfully. It’s Valentine’s Day, the day of my cochlear implant evaluation. Perhaps it’s a good omen.

Next, I listen to a series of sentences I must repeat. But mostly I can’t. I feel like a contestant on a game show. I am supposed to repeat only what I hear, but sometimes my mind fills in the missing words automatically (although I really don’t hear every word).

After my last set of hearing aids, I was still having significant problems understanding conversation. In January of 2011, I had a captioned phone installed. That helped a lot. My husband and I started attending HLAA chapter meetings. We learned about the Americans with Disabilities Act and requesting accommodations for my work and at meetings. I learned about assistive devices and coping skills. We also met people who had cochlear implants.

I was excited to hear about a hybrid cochlear implant trial. It is for people like me who have a high frequency hearing loss, and I discovered I qualified for the evaluation. Lucky me. I had an appointment with two people: Tina, a highly skilled implant audiologist, and Dr. Rubinstein, the renowned surgeon who had been conducting the clinical trials. Tina explained to my husband and me how the tests would proceed. It wasn’t much different than the tests they do at the hearing aid audiologist’s office, except they are much longer. Test without hearing aids, with single words and with sentences. Test with hearing aids on, with single words and with sentences. With men’s voices and with women’s voices. Short sentences and long. You name it, they have a test for it.

The testing took over two hours. When it was finished, my husband joined me to hear the results. “I feel like I’m the bearer of a lot of bad news today,” was how Tina started off. She said the hybrid trial had closed just about a month earlier and they have to wait for the FDA approval before resuming hybrid implants. I scored 65 percent bilaterally on the word recognition test with hearing aids. To qualify for a hybrid implant, I would need a score of 60 percent or less bilaterally. It is one of those rare instances in life where a low score is actually a good thing. If I wait until I am 65 and on Medicare, I will need a score of 40 percent or less to qualify. So if I were to wait for the hybrid surgery to be approved, I will probably not qualify because I turn 65 this fall. My hearing loss is very complicated, I’m told.

A friend of mine phoned. When I told her the results, she said she was going to pray for my hearing to either improve dramatically or get just a little worse! I’ll have a re-evaluation on the third of July. I think I’m on a roll! They do evaluations on Tuesdays, so that’s as close to another national holiday as I can get. I’m thinking this will be like the movie Ground Hog Day—the guy had to relive Ground Hog Day until he got it right. I’ll just keep doing evaluations on national holidays until I get it.

Auditory training is crucial for CI recipients. “Books on tape” are helpful if you follow along with the unabridged version of the book. This can all be done for free at your local public library. Buy a CD player or use your computer and a listening accessory that comes with your processor (or try a neckloop).

Listening sites: Here is a partial resource list:
*www.medel.com
*www.advancedbionics.com

Telephone practice: developed by Cochlear Americas but can be used with any implant brand. To listen, call 1-800-458-4999 and follow the prompts. If you want to verify what you hear is correct, you’ll have to go online for the printed version: http://hope.cochlearamericas.com/listening-tools/telephone-training.
Times have changed
By Sandra Bunning, Renton

Since receiving my cochlear implant a couple years ago, I have been able to hear the coffee perking in the kitchen while I’m in the bathroom with the door shut...how wonderful can that be? And the lady who wrote about “tinkling” in Sound Waves awhile back...well I now “tinkle” too. And the list goes on. Hearing is so much better now, but I can also remember how I cherished people who were patient with my hearing loss, talking to me so I could see their faces and rephrasing if necessary until I understood. Well, times have changed.

I find myself having to be patient now. The fellow I have lived with for over half a century asked me to stop mumbling. I don’t mumble. He asked me not to talk to him from another room too—and when I raised my voice to say the same thing, he said it was worse.

I know he has selective hearing, but now I suspect something a little different when his favorite expression seems to be “huh?” The hard part for me is patience. I have to bite my tongue to keep from saying, “It’s not important, forget it. Oh, never mind!”
Wash-CAP update: Landmark and AMC commit to captioned movies

By John Waldo, Portland, Attorney at Law

In a significant expansion of movie access, Landmark and AMC theater chains have agreed to add closed-captioning capacity to most, if not all, of their theaters in conjunction with conversion to digital projection.

Landmark's commitment came in a personal meeting with the chain's Chief Executive Officer, Ted Mundorff. He said the cost-sharing formula the movie studios have offered to major theater chains like Regal and AMC does not work with Landmark's emphasis on independent and art films—which means digital conversion may take longer and may not include all of Landmark's theaters. He said Landmark anticipates having conversion plans finalized by the middle of 2012; and when conversions are undertaken, Landmark will add closed-captioning capabilities.

Although Landmark operates far fewer theaters than Regal, AMC or Cinemark, its commitment to captioning may be more significant than the commitments of those larger chains. Landmark focuses on showing movies that appeal to an adult audience in the best sense of the word, and that audience includes the older population groups that have the greatest prevalence of hearing loss. Thankfully, Mundorff agreed that making films accessible to people with hearing loss may benefit Landmark significantly more than it would benefit the typical suburban multiplexes that cater more to younger movie-goers.

Landmark plans to use Sony projector/servers in those theaters that it converts to digital projection. It will experiment with caption-display devices. It has installed the CaptiView modules at its theaters in Los Angeles and Baltimore, but is having some difficulty working the bugs out of the equipment that supposedly makes CaptiView compatible with Sony servers. Mundorff said Landmark is very interested in obtaining and testing the Sony eyewear that Regal is testing in Seattle. As to those theaters that Landmark will not convert to digital projection, Mundorff said he would investigate the feasibility of installing Rear Windows Captioning.

He also acknowledged Landmark may be in a position to encourage more of the independent and arthouse film-makers to include captioning as part of their package, and he committed to asking for captioning. Captions are done under contract with the studios by an operational arm of WGBH public television, and are furnished to theaters without charge. According to WGBH, a one-time cost of captioning a movie is less than $2,000.

In Washington, Landmark owns the Egyptian, Harvard Exit, Guild 45th, Metro, Varsity and Crest theaters, (all in Seattle).

AMC's formal announcement of a nationwide commitment to captioning came in the form of a corporate press release dated December 20. That was anticlimactic, since AMC orally made that commitment in an August 10 meeting involving representatives of the Association of Late Deafened Adults (ALDA), myself, and attorneys from the public-interest firm of Disability Rights Advocates in Berkeley. The meeting with AMC was follow-up to the resolution of a lawsuit ALDA filed against Cinemark in California. In an amicable resolution of that action, Cinemark, America's third-largest movie-theater owner, committed to closed-captioning of all its first-run theaters in California upon conversion to digital projection, then made a national commitment.

Regal, America's largest theater owner, made a similar commitment.

(Continued on page 9)

National Center for Accessible Media (NCAM)

http://main.wgbh.org/wgbh/access/

NCAM is an extension of public broadcasting’s ground-breaking work in media access that began in 1972 with the establishment of The Caption Center at WGBH and its development of captioning for television viewers who are deaf and hard-of-hearing. In 1990, WGBH's access mission resulted in the development of video description for television audiences who are blind and visually impaired. NCAM and its sister organizations, The Caption Center and Descriptive Video Service® (DVS®), make up the Media Access Group at WGBH. NCAM's ongoing activities include:

• development of technologies that create access to public mass media
• development of public media policies
• research into how existing access technologies may benefit other populations
• outreach to various communities and industries to educate people about media access issues
• support of the public broadcasting community in extending access to new and emerging programming and information.

NCAM's mission is to ensure that the 40 million Americans with little or no access to media's sights and sounds will not be left out of the Information Age.
AMC initially resisted any commitment to full captioning. In July, though, the King County Superior Court ruled in a lawsuit brought by the Washington State Communication Access Project (Wash-CAP) that AMC can afford to provide the necessary equipment to show all caption-equipped movies in captioned form, and ordered AMC to do so within 90 days of conversion to digital projection. Although it is appealing that order, AMC made a verbal commitment to full captioning shortly after that decision.

Although it has been a long time coming, I believe we are now moving towards a time when those of us with significant hearing loss will be able to enjoy any movie, any time, with our friends and families.

(Wash-CAP...continued from page 8)

Come Sail with Us to New England

Hearing Loss Association of America Convention 2012 is just around the Corner!
June 21—June 24, Providence, RI

Take time to make plans to attend the largest educational program and trade show for people with hearing loss. Workshops, plenary sessions, exhibit hall, and social events will take place at the Rhode Island Convention Center which is connected by sky bridge to The Westin Providence, and located in the heart of downtown Providence.

Keynote speaker: Howard Weinstein, who implemented the startup company Godisa Technologies by hiring people with hearing loss and producing three new products: a solar energy powered hearing aid, an analog solar charger, and a rechargeable battery. Godisa won an International Design Award for the Best Product in Africa in 2005. After that, on to Brazil, where he replicated his business.

Research Symposium: How the Brain Makes Sense of the World of Sound will be presented by medical professionals and researchers of Johns Hopkins University.

Read more about it and a list of workshops and exhibitors online. To find out more or to register, see www.hearingloss-org or write: HLAA
7910 Woodmont Ave., Ste. 1200
Bethesda, MD 20814
Or Phone: 301.657.2248
Or Fax: 301.913.9413
About us—The Hearing Loss Association of Washington (HLA-WA) is affiliated with the national organization, The Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA), and is the nation’s leading organization representing people with hearing loss. We provide resources for people with hearing loss and their families to learn how to adjust to living with hearing loss. We provide resources for people with hearing loss and their families to learn how to adjust to living with hearing loss. HLAA impacts on communication access, public policy, research, public awareness, and service delivery related to hearing loss. See www.hearingloss.org or write HLAA, 7910 Woodmont Ave., Ste. 1200, Bethesda, MD 20814.

Tune in—E-News is the primary e-newsletter of HLAA: www.hearingloss.org/membership/Sen.asp. To keep abreast of our state issues, e-mail info@hearingloss-wa.org and ask to be added to the e-mail list. E-mail addresses are confidential and all group messages are blind-copied.

Seeking new Board members
Each year the general membership elects a Board to represent you. They are elected for three-year terms and must be members of HLAA. Please consider joining us. We need you and your skills! E-mail info@hearingloss-wa.org for more information.
Chapters in Washington
Information, Education, Advocacy, and Support

Meeting times may change, and most chapters take a summer break. Visitors are welcome. If none of these locations are convenient to your home, contact info@hearingloss-wa.org about starting a new group. Note: chapters may request contributions to cover local expenses. See www.hearingloss-wa.org for more information.

BELLEVUE—2nd Sat. 1:00 pm; Lake Sammamish Foursquare Church, Rm 104, 14434 NE 8th St., Bellevue. Hearing assistance: amplification, FM, induction loop, real-time captioning. Bev: zbev@msn.com or 253-631-3141.

EAST JEFFERSON CO.—4th Mon. 1:00 pm; Port Townsend Community Center 620 Tyler Street, Port Townsend. Hearing assistance: amplification, FM. Emily: 360-531-2247, mandelbaum@olympus.net.

RENTON—2nd Fri. 12:30 pm; Renton Senior Ctr., 211 Burnett Ave. N., Renton. Hearing assistance: amplification. Glenda: philiofam@juno.com or 253-631-2345 (evenings).

SKAGIT CO.—2nd Tues. 1:00 pm; Fidalgo Center, 1701-22nd St., Anacortes. Hearing assistance: amplification, FM, Loop. Jerry: 360-299-3848 JOlmst623@aol.com or Donna 360-299-2035 or 2oldies@verizon.net.

SNOHOMISH CO.—3rd Sat. 11:00 am; Providence Regional Med. Ctr. Colby Campus, Medical Office Bldg., 14th & Rockefeller Ave, Everett (Rainier Conference Rm., Level G). Hearing assistance: amplification, FM, real-time captioning. Glerry: (253) 686-1816 or Penny pallen@hearingloss-wa.org.

WHATCOM CO.—3rd Sat. 9:30 am; Christ The Servant Lutheran Church, 2600 Lakeway Dr., Bellingham. Hearing assistance: amplification, FM, and captioning at selected meetings. Don: 360-647-6728 or dongischer@comcast.net. See www.hearingloss-whatcom.org.


TACOMA—2nd Sat. 9:30 am, TACID, 6315 S. 19th St., Tacoma. Hearing assistance: amplification, FM, real-time captioning. Gerry: (253) 686-1816 or Penny pallen@hearingloss-wa.org.

Looking for a chapter?
We are now forming chapter planning groups in both Olympia and the UW/North Seattle area. Please let us know if you are interested in attending a chapter in these areas, and we can add your name to the list. Email: chapters@hearingloss-wa.org or phone 425-238-3636.

It’s a fact of life
By Karen Utter, President

Following our last newsletter, a reader ordered a hospital alert kit to have for herself. She then went on to write that it would be well used and that perhaps we might consider adding a “husband kit”!

She, the hard-of-hearing one, was looking for reminders that could be posted around their home saying, “I can’t hear you from the other room.” Or “I don’t understand you when the water’s running.” Does that sound familiar to anyone?

It’s a fact of life that if one of us doesn’t hear well, then the others in the household are going to experience “issues” too. They may even have their own set of problems to deal with. Hearing loss can render life-long communication habits totally unworkable. Things we used to say casually—even simple communication—isn’t so easy if we have to keep repeating! Having a hard-of-hearing family member can make it rough on everyone. This is why we always like to see people attend our meetings with regular or long-time communication partners. We know from experience that the hearing spouse often needs as much support as the hard-of-hearing person. He or she may also need to learn more about hearing loss to better understand the “why” of all this new and seemingly strange behavior—why the person with hearing loss no longer wants to join in the fun when going to events or social outings, why noise can be a particular problem, and maybe why the grandkids are impossible to understand!

If any of this “rings a bell” in your household, then do plan to visit one of our local HLA chapters to learn more about what each of us can do to be a better communication partner. Hearing loss begins to change family dynamics sometimes before we realize it. Chapter meetings can help each of us learn what to do about it all.
CONVENTION 2012
Providence, Rhode Island
June 21 – 24, 2012 • Westin Providence and Rhode Island Convention Center

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

Subscription/membership

This newsletter is published quarterly and is free online. To be notified when it is posted, send an e-mail to info@hearingloss-wa.org. If you would like it mailed to your address, there is a $10.00 subscription fee to cover our costs. Subscription renewal is January and includes issues through December. If you subscribe during the year, we will provide back issues if you request them.

Membership in the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) is $20 student, $35 single, $45 family, $60 professional. Membership includes the award-winning bi-monthly magazine Hearing Loss, special convention rates, and discounts on a variety of products. Join/renew here (or online at www.hearingloss.org).

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_____________________________Total enclosed (no cash, please). The Hearing Loss Association of Washington (HLA-WA) is a 501(c)(3) organization and relies on your support to fund outreach to people with hearing loss. Please make checks payable to HLA-WA and mail this completed form to HLA-WA, 4820 156th Pl. SW, Edmonds, WA 98026-4846. Names and addresses are strictly confidential. We do not sell or distribute this information.