Sound Waves

Hearing Loss Association of America
Washington State Association

Aural Rehab at the UW EAR

By Ed Belcher and Warren Weissman, HLAA-WA Members

HLAA-WA members Ed Belcher, Maridee Garvey, Cheri Perazzoli and Warren Weissman attended the 2014 University of Washington Experience Aural Rehabilitation (UW EAR) workshop September 15-17 in Seattle. The annual workshop for 15-20 participants was created in 2012 by Dr. Jessica Sullivan, an assistant professor and research laboratory director in the Department of Speech and Hearing Sciences (SPHSC) at UW. The workshop introduced participants to the latest

Student Erin Stewart with Ed Belcher. Photo by Emily Bates.

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Kimberly M. Parker's Lost in Sound

Sound Waves Meets the Author and Performer

Kimberly M. Parker will perform ***"Lost in Sound: A One Woman Play,"*** which she wrote and produces, on January 23, 2015, at Town Hall Seattle.

Kimberly, elected an HLAA-WA Trustee in 2014, was born with bilateral, progressive hearing loss, began wearing hearing aids at age 30, and was deaf by age 40. She received a cochlear implant in January of 2012, and says that before the CI she had come to rarely perform. "I have a BA in Theatre, but I had

Kimberly M. Parker

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Town Hall Gets People in the Loop

By Cheri Perazzoli, HLAA-WA Director of Advocacy

Imagine attending a civic or cultural event, confident you are going to understand what you hear, without first making a request for accommodation. Instead of arriving early to check out an assistive listening device, you mingle with friends, have a drink, and find a seat just like everyone else. When the program starts, you can hear and understand simply by pressing a button on your hearing aid or cochlear implant processor, changing the program to telecoil, and benefitting from an induction loop that provides immediate hearing assistance.

Mike James and Katherine Bouton at Town Hall. Photo by Miguel Edwards.

Inspired by the March 2013 reading and discussion by Katherine Bouton of her book "***Shouting Won't Help***," an exploration of her hearing loss, Town Hall Seattle has made a commitment to ensuring that patrons with hearing loss are able to hear far more easily when attending events. In mid-2014, Town Hall installed induction loops in both its Great Hall and Downstairs venues. Now, at one of Seattle's major forums for civic discourse, culture, and community engagement, guests will experience a hearing loop, perhaps for the first time. Each year, Town Hall attracts over 100,000 visitors to its highly-visible and centrally-located venues. Town Hall also is

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Moving on?

Each returned newsletter costs us **$1.19**. Help keep our costs down by letting us know when you change your mailing address.

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Look for this symbol to find assistive listening systems for people with hearing loss…

….. or for this symbol, indicating that an induction loop is available.

Why Joining HLAA Makes So Much Sense

By Greg Bawden, HLAA-WA President

Many of us enjoy being involved with the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA). We attend local chapter meetings and benefit from the knowledge provided by guest speakers, and from the support and wisdom of others who live with hearing loss and overcome its challenges daily.

But I want to tell you about the benefits of becoming a *member* of HLAA. Your membership will make HLAA a stronger, more visible advocate for the hearing loss community, while also providing you with information *and* money-saving benefits.

It's easy to join HLAA. The annual cost is just $20 for students, $35 for individuals and $45 for couple or family. A membership form is in this newsletter, or you can go to *www.hearingloss.org/membership/index.asp*.

If you join the national organization (HLAA), you automatically become a member of the Washington state association, HLAA-WA. That means you can vote for state association Board members, serve as a Board member, and contribute as part of HLAA-WA committees.

HLAA focuses on education, support, and advocacy for us--people with hearing loss. The more members we have in HLAA, the more effective HLAA will be in working on our behalf. One person's dues may not seem like much; but gaining membership from just a small additional fraction of the 48 million people in the U.S. who experience hearing loss will mean many new members. Membership dues fund the fight for captions on streaming video, emergency alert systems appropriate for people with hearing loss, and cell phones that are telecoil-equipped—among many other issues HLAA is pursuing in its national, state and local advocacy efforts.

But more important than the *dues* members pay, increasing membership numbers will give HLAA greater *visibility* to promote new initiatives or to recruit sponsors to help pay for the annual HLAA national convention. (I wrote about my great experience at the 2014 convention in the last issue of Sound Waves.) A larger HLAA membership helps immeasurably when talking to the Federal Communications Commission about captions and cell phone access, when talking to members of Congress about hearing aid coverage under Medicare, or when talking to state and local officials about hearing loops. Sponsors, regulators, researchers, and law makers will sit up and take notice when we can say, "We represent all these people!"

Another great membership benefit is receiving ***Hearing Loss Magazine*** six times per year. When I first picked up ***Hearing Loss Magazine***, I quickly focused on the ads: what were all these phones, caption services, amplifiers, and other products? My audiologist at the time hadn't told me about ANY

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Why Joining HLAA Makes So Much Sense *cont. from page 2*

of them! Members in Washington also benefit from our quarterly state newsletter, ***Sound Waves***, which provides updates and insights on topics particularly relevant to us.

HLAA has also teamed up with many partners to provide discounts and other benefits to our members. A complete list is at: *www.hearingloss.org/content/member-benefits*

Thanks for your time and interest in HLAA! Please join us as both a member of HLAA and as a participant at the next HLAA national convention, to be held in St. Louis, Missouri, in June. (See this newsletter's back cover!)

Seen and Heard

Several HLAA members, including Board President Greg Bawden and Chapter Coordinator Karen Utter, attended the Washington Access Fund's Ten-Year Anniversary Celebration and Benefit at Town Hall Seattle on November 11. The Access Fund celebrated having made over $2 million in microloans to people with disabilities in Washington state. It makes loans for the purchase of assistive technology devices, including hearing aids and assistive listening devices (hearing-related items represent some 40% of the Access Fund's loans). The Access Fund's Individual Development Account program matches the savings of low-income households dollar-for-dollar, allowing them to save for the purchase of assistive devices. The event featured John Hockenberry of National Public Radio speaking on assistive technology and disability rights. Accessibility for those with hearing loss was ensured via Town Hall Seattle's recently-installed induction loops, as well as CART (captioning) and ASL interpretation.

New Seattle chapter member **Mary O'Neil** attended the Bob Dylan concert at Seattle's Paramount Theatre on October 19. After reading a comment in the Fall issue of ***Sound Waves***, she was alerted to the possibility of requesting a neck loop and infrared receiver from the theatre, and she describes her musical experience as remarkably good. Mary has been attending Bob Dylan concerts and listening to his music for over 50 years. She had not expected the infrared technology to make the quality of the *live* performance so good. Her last live Dylan concert was in a very large arena which provided no assistive devices. Her experience at the Paramount was much more inclusive and a lot more fun.

Dr. Jay Rubinstein, Director of the Virginia Merrill Bloedel Hearing Research Center at the University of Washington, spoke at the October meeting of HLAA's Bellevue chapter. He shared information on the Bloedel Center's current research on hearing loss and balance disorders, and on the application of these findings toward diagnostic methods and therapies. Dr. Rubinstein commented on:

- Research by Dr. Jenny Stone demonstrating that regeneration of mammalian hair cells (the sound receptors of the inner ear) can occur, but not yet to a degree sufficient to restore function. Unlike in birds and other vertebrates, once hair cells in mammals die there is no replacement, and most hearing loss in adults results from the death of hair cells.
- Dr. Edwin Rubel and his colleagues have discovered a new class of drugs which appear to protect the ears from antibiotic-induced hearing loss. They hope this research will be ready for a clinical trial in the near future.
- The Bloedel Center contributed extensively to the clinical trial of the "hybrid cochlear implant," approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in March 2014. The hybrid implant seeks to preserve residual hearing. It is designed to assist individuals who hear low frequencies well (minimal or no loss to 1000 hertz), but have severe or profound high-frequency hearing loss. The hybrid implant improves or restores the ability to hear consonants, while preserving the existing ability to hear vowels and melody.
- The Bloedel Center has been researching the use of vestibular implants, which are somewhat similar to cochlear implants, to treat balance dysfunction. Based upon findings from the first clinical trial on four persons, the researchers have made design changes and hope to receive FDA approval for a second trial.

More information on the Bloedel Center is available at *http://depts.washington.edu/hearing/*

— Diana Thompson, Bellevue Chapter Co-Chair

Local HLAA Chapters and Support Groups

Information, Education, Advocacy, and Support

Meeting times may change. Visitors, friends, family members and healthcare professionals are always welcome at any of our meetings. We suggest sending an email to be sure the group is meeting when you plan to visit. See *www.hearingloss-wa.org* for more information.

BELLEVUE— 2nd Saturday 1:00 pm
Lake Sammamish Foursquare Church,
Rm. 104, 14434 NE 8th St., Bellevue
Hearing assistance: amplification, FM system, induction loop, CART (real-time captioning).
info@hearingloss-wa.org or Karen: 206-817-3213

EAST JEFFERSON CO.— 4th Monday 1:00 pm
Port Townsend Community Center,
620 Tyler St., Port Townsend
Hearing assistance: amplification, FM system.
Emily: 360-531-2247, *mandelbaum@olympus.net*.
Meetings are held Sept—Oct and Jan—May

RENTON— 2nd Friday 12:30 pm
Renton Senior Activity Center,
211 Burnett Ave. N., Renton
Hearing assistance: amplification, FM system.
Glenda: *philiofam@gmail.com* or
253-631-2345 (evenings).

SEATTLE— 2nd Tuesday 6:45 pm
Aljoya Conference Room
450 NE 100th St., Seattle
Hearing assistance: amplification, induction loop, CART (real-time captioning).
Karen: 206-817-3213 or *SeattleHLA@gmail.com*.

SPOKANE— 2nd Saturday 9:30 am
Spokane Nexus Center
1206 N. Howard, Spokane
Hearing assistance: amplification, induction loop, captioning.
Margaret 509-893-1472 or *hlaspokane@gmail.com*.

TACOMA— 2nd Saturday 9:30 am
(alternates with CI Support Group)
HLAA CHAPTER meets in Sept, Nov, Dec, Feb, Apr and Jun.
TACID, 6315 S. 19th St., Tacoma
Hearing assistance: amplification, FM system, CART (real-time captioning).
Jerry: 253-686-1816 or
Penny: *pennyallen@q.com*

SOUTH SOUND COCHLEAR IMPLANT SUPPORT GROUP—
2nd Saturday, 9:30 am — Meets Oct, Jan, Mar, May, Jul.
TACID, 6315 S. 19th St. Tacoma
Hearing assistance: amplification, FM system, CART (real-time captioning).
Christine: *Christine@cs-dhhrs.com* or 253-256-4690.

VANCOUVER— Newly forming Chapter—
1st Monday at 6:00 pm (Except Jun, Jul, Aug)
SW Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (SWCDHH)
301 SE Hearthwood Blvd, Vancouver, WA
Hearing Assistance: amplification, FM system.
Christine: *chearfulsounds@gmail.com*

WHATCOM CO.— 3rd Saturday 9:30 am
Christ the Servant Lutheran Church,
2600 Lakeway Dr., Bellingham
Hearing assistance: amplification, induction loop and CART (real-time captioning).
Charlene: 360-738-3756 or *charmackenzie@comcast.net*
www.hearingloss-whatcom.org.

Looking for a chapter?
Please contact us directly if you are interested in attending or if you'd like to start a chapter in your area. Karen, *SeattleHLA@gmail.com* or *info@hearingloss-wa.org*

Online Resources to Keep Informed

Bookmark the HLAA-WA website at *hearingloss-wa.org* for resources and information.

Like our HLAA-WA Facebook page at *www.facebook.com/HLAofWA*

Like the HLAA Facebook page at *www.facebook.com/HearingLossAssociation*

Find out which venues are looped for your entertainment at *www.loopseattle.org*

Hearing Loss Magazine is available online at *www.hearingloss.org/membership/hearing-loss-magazine/current-issue*

Sign up for the HLAA monthly eNewsletter at *www.hearingloss.org/content/e-news-sign*

Lost in Sound *cont. from page 1*

stopped acting because I couldn't hear cues from other actors or my director's notes. Occasionally, I would sing a solo in church, but my accompanist noticed I wasn't singing consonants because I could no longer hear them. I recall rehearsing '*O Holy Night*' and I sang 'His gospel is pee,' instead of 'peace.' My confidence was shot."

Getting a CI and beginning to hear sounds and understand speech reopened her world. "I never lost my lifelong love and passion for performing," says Kimberly, "and it feels wonderful to be back on the stage. Listening to music with electronic hearing is difficult, so I sing a cappella now."

Kimberly says that while pursuing studies to become a Peer Mentor at Gallaudet University in Washington D.C., she realized she wanted to advocate for hard of hearing people. Kimberly dreamed of using her talent as a writer, actress and singer to engage an audience, to challenge them to think and to inspire them to take action. She says, "I know that live theater can be cathartic and has the power to transform, so I wrote "*Lost in Sound*" in 2013. I have performed two staged readings to sold-out houses, and the testimonials received from hearing and hard of hearing people alike affirm that I'm accomplishing what I set out to do."

Parker says that the first draft of "*Lost in Sound*" was told from her perspective only, but she has since worked with Tanya Taylor Rubinstein, a professional Solo Performance Coach, to revise the play. The current version also includes the perspectives of her husband, son, mother and others, and facts on hearing loss she learned at Gallaudet.

A 2015 tour of "*Lost in Sound*" is intended, with performances at playhouses, conferences, universities, and places of worship. Kimberly says she "dreams of sharing her experience, strength and hope with thousands of people to raise awareness of hearing loss, the invisible condition." She will provide a list of resources at the performances, so people will learn how they can help themselves.

Information and tickets to the January Town Hall performance are at *http://lostinsound.brownpapertickets.com/*. In addition to accessibility through Town Hall's induction loops, HLAA-WA will sponsor CART (captioning) for the performance.

DO YOU WANT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

JOIN THE COMMUNICATION STUDIES PARTICIPANT POOL

If your hearing is improved by a **hearing aid or cochlear implant**, research has made a difference in your life. **You** can make a difference in the lives of others by taking part in communication research studies at the University of Washington.

Our researchers conduct ongoing studies about hearing, hearing aids and cochlear implants. **You can help us help others** — and maybe even yourself — by joining our Participant Pool as a possible research subject.

We need large numbers of participants to make our studies effective: **We need you.**

To learn more about becoming part of our Participant Pool, **call 206.616.9082 or email partpool@uw.edu.**

TOGETHER, WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

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Advocacy and Outreach

HLAA-WA Director of Advocacy Cheri Perazzoli and HLAA members Devin Myers, Jerry Paulukonis and Warren Weissman attended the Seattle City Council's public budget hearing on October 23 and spoke in support of Councilmember Tom Rasmussen's proposal that funds be included in the 2015 Seattle budget for looping the City Council chambers. Cheri subsequently was advised by City Council Budget Committee Chair Nick Licata that the Council unanimously approved $75,000 for upgrading the assistive listening system in the Council chambers, although it remains unclear if these funds will suffice for looping the Council chambers. Heartfelt thanks from Cheri Perazzoli to all who wrote letters of support!

HLAA-WA member Diana Thompson inquired if an all-day meeting convened by the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to discuss development of a state plan to address Alzheimer's disease would be held in a looped meeting room. In response, Tabitha Jacques, Communications Technology Manager of the Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH) of DSHS, trained a DSHS staff member on setting up a portable hearing loop system for the meeting. Work group attendees, including Bill Moss, DSHS Assistant Secretary for Aging and Long-Term Support, adhered to the discipline of speaking into a microphone that was passed to each speaker.

Seeking that hearing loss be included as a significant consideration in the Alzheimer's state plan, **HLAA-WA members Diana Thompson, Karen Utter, Michael Bower and Christine Seymour** prepared and submitted documents about the relationship between hearing loss and Alzheimer's disease to the organizers of the working group.

HLAA-WA member Bruce Rafford has been visiting local courts, including those in Wenatchee and Douglass counties. He's found most courts claim to have an assistive listening system, but few truly have systems that are operating properly and in full compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines. Per the ADA, each courtroom is required to have a working assistive listening system; transferring systems between courtrooms does not meet the ADA guidelines.

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Need Assistance Processing Phone Calls?

The **Washington Relay Service** can help you make a convenient connection. Washington Relay is a free service provided by the Washington State Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH) ensuring equal communication access to the telephone service for people who are deaf, deaf-blind, hard-of-hearing and speech-disabled.

For more information:
Call **800-422-7930** (Voice/TTY)
Visit **www.washingtonrelay.com**

Advocating for Change *By Wes Brosman, HLAA-WA Board Member*

Many of us encounter situations where our hearing loss puts us at a disadvantage, yet we do nothing about it. I am as guilty as the next person. Although I make the effort to get involved from time to time, I often feel I could do more to cause things to change for the better. I'm currently working on six different advocacy cases, but had I taken up every challenge I encountered, there would be a good many more.

What I do to make life easier for others with hearing loss is read announcements of events to see if there is a statement offering accommodations for persons with disabilities. If the event organizers do offer accommodations, as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), I call to ask if assistive listening devices (ALDs) are going to be available. If needed, I explain the ADA requirements and give them the number for ADA information: 800-949-4232. (It works anywhere in the USA.) Usually, I follow up by attending the event to actually use the ALD.

Sometimes there is no statement offering accommodations, or there is resistance to my request for an ALD. When my requests fail to achieve compliance, I visit the venue. The ADA requires that each state and local government post, at each facility, a notice explaining to the public their rights and the public entity's responsibilities under the ADA. Posting of grievance procedures related to the ADA is also required.

If the required ADA notices are not posted, I contact the venue owner (usually a local government) and let them know what they are supposed to post and show them an example. If by a month later the notices are still not posted, I go the U.S. Department of Justice ADA website and file an online complaint, sending a copy to the offending parties.

If there still is no sign of an effort to comply with the ADA, I go to the office of the entity involved and fill out a Freedom of Information Request for all current and proposed grants. Even small cities often have a dozen or so of these. I tell the person giving me the paperwork what I intend to do with the information: I plan to notify each of the grantors that there is an unresolved ADA complaint that might make it illegal to release funds to the offending entity. I show them a copy of the generic letter I will send. This usually results in a change of heart and there is soon an attempt to address the ADA complaint.

I have had some success advocating this way. Many readers may be reluctant to act so aggressively, but we do have dedicated activists in our membership who will take up the cause if notified. Bruce Rafford (*bruceretirednosendit@msn.com*) in Spokane advocates for access in eastern Washington. If he can't find time for your case, he can tell you how to handle it and provide valuable paperwork for the process. Cheri Perazzoli (*cheripz@gmail.com*) works the King County area and I cover as much of the southwest portion of the state as I can (*wesbro@techline.com*). Let's all find some new doors to open for people with hearing loss.

Advocacy and Outreach *cont. from page 6*

HLAA members **Wes Brosman, Dean Olson, Christine Seymour and Warren Weissman** joined a working group to assist ODHH in updating the curriculum it uses to train DSHS employees to effectively interact with and assist people with hearing loss. Tabitha Jacques convened the first meeting of the working group on October 30 and further meetings will occur as the curriculum update process proceeds. A portable hearing loop system allowed all the HLAA members to hear via the telecoils in their hearing aids and cochlear implants, while Tabitha relied on an ASL interpreter during the meeting.

Several HLAA-WA members attended the Senior Lobby Fall Conference organized by the Washington State Association of Senior Centers in Tacoma in October. The conference was a great opportunity to meet with state officials including Bill Moss of DSHS and Eric Raff, Director of ODHH, as well as with many other people involved in the fight for disability rights.

HLAA Board member Karen Utter requested a hearing-accessible room at Tacoma's Murano Hotel when attending the Senior Lobby Fall Conference. Upon entering the room, she found an unopened suitcase containing a TTY telephone and strobe alert. Karen commented, "If I needed a ramp, would they have delivered a bag of cement and a shovel?"

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Aural Rehab at the UW EAR *cont. from page 1*

developments in hearing aids and assistive listening devices, and taught strategies for people with hearing loss to better communicate. SPHSC graduate students, most in the Doctor of Audiology (Au.D.) program, were paired with participants for the entire workshop. Significant others (communication partners) of participants joined the event, which included lectures by UW faculty and other experts, discussions, and tours of SPHSC laboratories. Hearing aid and assistive device trials were offered, including Starkey's iPhone-linked Halo hearing aid and Phonak's Roger Pen wireless microphone. Lunches, dinners, and an outing to "*The Chorus Line*" at the 5th Avenue Theatre were tailored to teach participants how to better understand and communicate in difficult hearing environments.

"I loved talking with others who share the same communication struggles," said Cheri Perazzoli about UW EAR. She added that "Patients *and their partners* will be happier when they can connect with others who understand and are empathetic to their unique problems."

Sound Waves subsequently talked about UW EAR with Dr. Sullivan, who is happy with the very positive reception that UW EAR has had among workshop participants as well as SPHSC faculty and students. She noted that the event continues to evolve. In 2013, it was a four-day event and this year it was shortened to three days. The 2015 version, scheduled for September 21-24, will revert to four days, based on feedback from all sides. Dr. Sullivan commented that the 2014 workshop also saw a greater and useful focus on communication partners, and that each annual event has been interestingly different in terms of the hearing loss issues, participant ages and participant personalities.

Emily Bates, a third-year Au.D. student, led the supporter strategies segments (oriented to communications partners) of the workshop. Emily, working on her second UW EAR, found the new segments to be a significant positive addition. Erin Stewart, a second-year Au.D. student, was paired with two workshop participants. Both students described the event as a great opportunity for SPHSC students to bond

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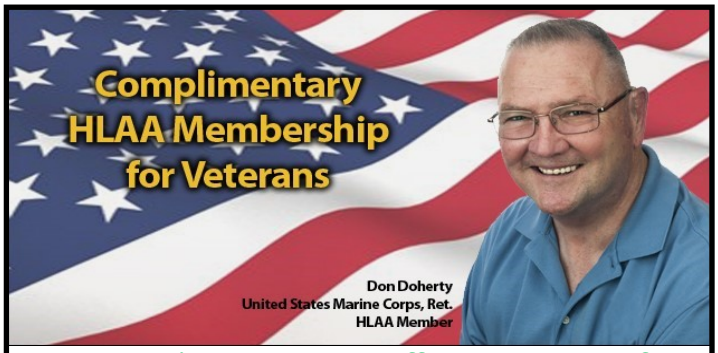
Aural Rehab at the UW EAR *cont. from page 8*

with patients in a way that goes well beyond the time limitations of the typical audiology consultation. They stressed the importance of gathering the emotional information to help patients manage hearing loss with communications strategies, in addition to technology. They welcomed that UW EAR enables learning through in-depth exploration of relevant topics.

Erin said "I left UW EAR really invigorated about the empowerment that audiology can provide to a person with hearing loss." Cheri Perazzoli provided a participant's perspective, saying that "Getting hearing aids is just the first step; adjusting to new sounds and learning communication strategies takes time, and the workshop enabled participants to learn from each other in a hearing-friendly environment. Technology is not enough--to truly serve patients, clinicians must understand hearing loss outside the clinical setting."

Participant feedback at the wrap-up session was overwhelmingly positive. Last to comment was Vicki Sproat, who provided CART (captioning) during the workshop. When asked about the workshop, Vicki wrote that she was very happy to assist participants. She added that as a student learning real-time translation, she had captioned meetings of the Auburn HLAA chapter. She wrote that she recalled having been very nervous about getting all the words correctly during the Auburn meetings. A UW EAR participant quickly said, "That's OK. We would always rather have something than nothing---even with a few mistakes." Vicki then typed "Crying," and someone handed her a tissue.



HLAA is honored to offer two types of membership for United States veterans

www.hearingloss.org/sites/default/files/docs/VeteranComplimentaryMembership.pdf

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VirginiaMason.org/listen

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Seattle, WA 98101
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TTY: (206) 223-6362

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Center for Hearing & Skull Base Surgery
Swedish Neuroscience Institute
500 17th Ave., Suite 520
Seattle, WA 98122
T 206-215-4327

Swedish Otolaryngology-Audiology

Seattle
600 Broadway
Suite 230
Seattle, WA 98122
T 206-215-1770

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751 N.E Blakely Dr.
Suite 5010
Issaquah, WA 98029
T 425-313-7089

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Bellevue, WA 98004
T 425-462-1132

SWEDISH

www.swedish.org/audiology

Town Hall's New Loops *cont. from page 1*

home to the fundraising and educational events of numerous non-profit organizations, many of which face funding difficulties in providing hearing access to attendees. Those organizations will now be able to offer their guests the benefits of Town Hall's loops.

Bouton, a former New York Times editor and also a member of HLAA's Board of Trustees, returned to Seattle on September 15 to celebrate Town Hall's new loops. She spoke about her experiences with accessibility and growing advocacy on behalf of those with hearing loss, and was interviewed on stage by veteran Seattle news anchor Mike James.

In planning for Bouton's talk, Town Hall staff discovered how effective and practical hearing loops can be: for the event, the audience was to include many people with hearing loss. If all those attendees needed an assistive device... well, the beauty of the induction loops became obvious!

The induction loops are a temporary installation over the carpeting. While a renovation of the venues in the next two years will allow the installation of permanent loops, Town Hall quickly understood that the best way to immediately serve the community was by installing temporary loops now. Town Hall's Executive Director, Wier Harman, explains, "I realized accessibility means that as many people as possible feel welcome and included. It's not enough to shout it out over a loud speaker if the audience can't hear you. Or worse, isn't even in the room."

HLAA-WA heavily promoted the Katherine Bouton event, and arranged CART captioning and ASL interpreters to complement the loops and make the event fully accessible. A packed house, including many people with hearing loss who would not have come to the event without availability of hearing assistance, sent a clear signal as to the value of universal hearing access.

Looping Town Hall was accomplished through the vision of 4Culture, the King County cultural services agency. 4Culture has made hearing and visual accessibility to the arts a priority, and approached Town Hall about becoming a pilot

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Town Hall's New Loops *cont. from page 10*

project for hearing accessibility. The agency provided major funding support for Town Hall's loops, and gifts supporting the installation were also made by David and Catherine Eaton Skinner and several other Town Hall supporters. 4Culture's Executive Director Jim Kelly said, "This is an important project—not only at Town Hall, but in venues across King County. We hope that as a result of supporting this pilot project, people can see the benefits of this technology and install it everywhere."

Katherine Bouton shared her personal perspective and deeply emotional experience with hearing loss. She explained that she went to work every day pretending to be normal, an exhausting proposition. Thirty years of denying her progressive hearing loss had taken a visible toll on her mental and physical health, even though her hearing loss was seemingly invisible. Katherine advises, "We need to stop thinking of hearing loss as something to be hidden; we have to stop talking about invisible hearing aids. We need to celebrate the technology that is keeping people in the workplace and engaged in the community. I learned, at great cost to myself, that honesty is liberating. Speak out about your hearing loss; you won't believe the freedom it brings."

Mike James added, "I come to Town Hall all the time; but when I came last week to hear a couple of talks, it was like magic, really. I didn't have to struggle to hear, I didn't have to find the little FM earphones. I just sat down, hit the telecoil—bang. It was just clear as a bell. This is terrific for Seattle."

For more information about hearing loops, hearing assistive technology, or to how you can bring hearing loops to your King County arts venue, visit *www.loopseattle.org* or contact Cheri Perazzoli at *cheripz@gmail.com*.

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We serve as an extension of HLAA in an effort to make hearing loss an issue of concern within our state by promoting the HLAA philosophy of self-help while specifically addressing the issues of awareness, education, access and employment among our citizens who are hard of hearing. We welcome newly-elected Trustees, denoted with a ☼ below.

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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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