

# Sound News

December 2103

Volume 26 No 12

## Cambridge researchers discover how to 'rub out' background noise on hearing aids

*ELEANOR DICKINSON*

Researchers at Cambridge University's engineering department are developing a device which could rid hearing aid wearers of annoying background noise.

Led by Dr Richard Turner, the research could forever remove sounds such as wind, traffic and talking, which affect people's aids. Dr Turner said: "The poor performance of current hearing devices in noise is a major reason why six million people in the UK who would benefit from a hearing aid do not use them."

"Many interfering noises are immediately recognizable. Raindrops patter on a surface, a fire crackles, talkers babble at a party and the wind howls. But what makes these so-called auditory textures sound the way they do? "No two rain sounds are identical because the precise arrangement of falling water droplets is never repeated. Nonetheless, there must be a statistical similarity in the sounds compared with, say, the crackle of a fire."

Using this statistical similarity, the team have developed a mathematical system capable of being trained to recognize sound. It is hoped different devices could be made in the future to work in different settings and environments, including public transport and loud outdoor environments.

"If these preliminary tests go well, then we'll be looking to work with hearing device companies to try to adapt their processing to incorporate these machine learning techniques. If all goes well, we would hope that this technology will be available in consumer devices within 10 years."

**Cochlear implants** help deaf people perceive sound; they convert sound waves into electrical signals that are sent directly to the brain. But for those with the implants ( 188,000 people worldwide) -- the sound can be muffled, dampened and far from perfect. Researchers are creating a better cochlear implant that can improve the sound quality for those who can't hear without them. Their implant's thin-film electrode array is up to 3 times more sensitive than traditional wire electrodes, without adding bulk. They hope their design will improve the signal between the array and the nervous system, which as a result, will lead to better quality of sound for users.

*Miles O'Brien reports for Science Nation*

## Medicare & HLAA

The number one call for help that HLAA receives is financial assistance for the purchase of hearing aids. We believe that seniors with hearing loss should not have to scrimp and save, or go without basic needs, to just be able to hear. Seniors on fixed incomes, seniors who depend on Social Security and Medicare, seniors who don't qualify for Medicaid or who live in states that don't provide hearing aids through Medicaid, should not have to choose between hearing and their other basic needs. HLAA is supporting the **Help Extend Auditory Relief Act of 2013, HR 3150, the HEAR Act**, introduced in the US House of Representatives. This legislation would:• amend the Social Security Act to include Medicare coverage for hearing rehabilitation, including a comprehensive audiology assessment to determine if a hearing aid is appropriate, a threshold test to determine audio acuity, and various services associated with fitting, adjusting, and using hearing aids. And extend Medicare coverage to hearing aids, defining them as any wearable instrument or device for compensating for hearing loss.

The cost of treatment for hearing loss can be prohibitively high. But the cost of doing nothing can be higher. People with hearing loss need basic access to hearing aids, regardless of their financial situation. We understand that asking Congress to approve Medicare coverage of hearing aids is not an easy task: it may take years. We are in this for the long haul. We're supporting this legislation not because it's the easy thing to do, but because it's the right thing to do.

## Leone's Line



The real winners in life are the people who look at every situation with an expectation that they can make it work or make it better.

*Barbara Pletcher,*

I just found this quote and I think is if so true.

***When I think about hearing loss, I don't think of quiet or silent, I think of muffled...Garbled...Inaudible ...Incomprehensible. Vague...Inarticulate.***

Isn't that true? You still hear but not well or easily and a struggle ensues as you meet the challenges each day brings.

**Face the challenge!!**

## Quality of life among those members of the elderly who have a very profound hearing loss is greatly improved after cochlear implantation

The increase in the number of elderly people has led to escalating numbers of age-related hearing loss. Some of these have a very profound hearing loss. This part of the population is an important group to treat with cochlear implants (CI). The benefits of a cochlear implant (CI) include improvement of speech perception, word comprehension and other auditory abilities.

A cochlear implant (CI) is an electronic hearing device, which is surgically implanted into the inner ear (the cochlea). The implant restores the function of the damaged ear by converting sound signals into electrical signals which are transmitted into the hearing nerve.

The lives of the elderly may be significantly improved by a cochlear implant (CI) as an implementation could provide them with richer opportunities for oral communication.

After undergoing a successful cochlear implementation, for instance, the elderly become capable of holding a conversation on the phone, illustrating how cochlear implants may help restore social interaction. Elderly people who undergo cochlear implant surgery usually do not experience any surgical complications. As a result, cochlear implantation is considered to be a completely safe procedure.

A cochlear implant (CI) may also help the elderly feel safer and more comfortable in social environments that often include loud and noisy sounds, which also may enhance the life quality.

*Source: Audiology Infos*

Did you Know that Eugene Hearing and Speech sponsors closed captioning at Duck football games? **Good for them!**

Members: if you have changed your e-mail address please notify Karin Smith of the change [karinsm@efn.org](mailto:karinsm@efn.org)

Hearing Loss Assoc.-Lane County, Oregon Information calls are taken by Linda Diaz 790-1290

HLA A is published monthly for members of Hearing Loss Association of Lane County.

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### Article Deadline: Second Thursday each month

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#### Place an ad

**Karen Swezey** [kswezey@efn.org](mailto:kswezey@efn.org)

**National website:** [www.hearingloss.org](http://www.hearingloss.org)

**Oregon website:** [www.hearinglossOR.org](http://www.hearinglossOR.org)



## Out & About

Karin Smith, Karen Swezey . Clark Anderson and Leone Miller attended the state HLAOR meeting in Albany.

## The Survivor's Manual Makes a Difference with YOUR Help

A Man was searching for his keys under a street light.  
A friend asked, "**Where did you drop you keys?**"  
His answer: "**In my house.**"  
Friend: "**Then why are you looking out here?**"  
Answer: "**Because the light is better out here.**"

### **YOU'LL NEVER FIND WHAT YOU NEED IF YOU DON'T LOOK** **IN THE RIGHT PLACE!!** **Where is the right place?**

### **Our Book - Facing the Challenge a Survivor's Manual for** **Hard of Hearing people.**

How about helping other look in the right place? Someone helped you at one time. It's your turn to help others. Provide copies to your doctor, your beautician, your church, your pharmacy, your audiologist. Get these books to people. It's your privilege and responsibility.

Check with your HLA chapter or with Karen Swezey about getting books. They are packaged 100 to a box. Your chapter should always have books available.

**OF COURSE THE OTHER RIGHT PLACE IS YOUR CHAPTER MEETINGS. INVITE OTHERS TO COME AND LEARN. GIVE OUT MANUALS THERE TOO.**

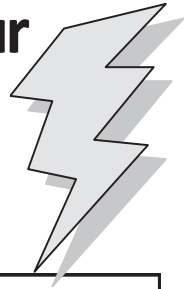
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According to Eugene Hearing and Speech, Autzen is one of the loudest stadiums in college football with the noise level reaching 127 decibels. 120 is the threshold for discomfort. Anything beyond that could be dangerous and painful.

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**The Lane County chapter has an  
active website,  
[www.hearinglosslane.org](http://www.hearinglosslane.org), Now  
you can find answers to all the  
Chapter questions.**

## Keeping Your Batteries Charged



### *Information You Can Use*

**OR-CAP ADVOCACY SUCCEEDS!**  
Oregon Communication Access Project (OR-CAP) works to improve communication access for people throughout Oregon with hearing loss . OR-CAP is currently working throughout the state to provide captioning at their events and have had a number of successes.

The Portland Trailblazers basketball games are now being captioned on an overhead display, visible to all spectators. This also means that other events in the same space, the arena in the Moda Center, can now be similarly captioned. In past discussions, team management had been leaning toward using hand-held captioning devices, which OR-CAP opposed, so their eventual choice of overhead captioning is an additional benefit!

More than 360 million people worldwide have a hearing loss. About half of these cases could easily be avoided, UN reports show. With an aging global population, WHO (World Health Org) estimates that one-in-three above the age of 65 — which is around 165 million people — live with hearing loss.

**Remember, you are not only the salt of the earth, but the sugar!**

HLAA has been successful in our efforts to help people live successfully with hearing loss and change the hearing health care landscape. What is HLAA doing?

- **Fighting for more *affordable hearing aids, low-cost options and consumer choice* in the marketplace**
- **Supporting *Medicare Coverage of Hearing Aids for seniors* – no one should have to choose between hearing and basic human needs such as food and medicine**
- **Working with *private and public venues on looping facilities to make them user-friendly*, including movie theaters, transportation systems (airports, subways, cabs, trains), cultural, religious and educational facilities**
- **Seeking *transparency in pricing of devices, dispensing services and rehabilitation***
- **Working to *ensure software and cell phone apps help consumers get more benefits* from coupling hearing devices and cell phones – including better sound quality**
- **Ending *employment discrimination* for consumers with hearing loss**
- **Raising *public awareness and removing the stigma* of hearing loss**
- **Getting *ALL movies captioned* on the Internet, cell phone and other handheld devices**
- **Providing *peer-to-peer support through robust HLAA Chapters* in communities across the country**
- **And so much more!**

## Need Help Paying Your Monthly Phone Bill? OTAP

Oregon Telephone Assistance Program (OTAP) may provide a reduction in the monthly telephone bill for Oregonians who receive qualifying benefits.

E-MAIL: [puc.otap@state.or.us](mailto:puc.otap@state.or.us)

### PHONE:

**(800) 848-4442 - Voice**

**(800) 648-3458 - TTY**

**(877) 567-1977 - Fax**

**(971) 239-5845 - Videophone**

**Monday - Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.**

## Having Trouble Or Unable To Communicate By Telephone? TDAP

Telecommunication Devices Access Program (TDAP) loans adaptive telephone equipment at no cost and with no income restrictions to eligible Oregonians who are hearing, cognitive, vision, speech or mobility impaired.

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Membership in HLAA is \$20 student, \$35 individuals, \$45 for couple/family, \$60 professional. It includes the award-winning bi-monthly magazine, *Hearing Loss*. Write HLAA, 7910 Woodmont Ave., Ste. 1200, Bethesda, MD 20814; 301-657-2248 (Voice); 301-657-224 (TTY); 301-913-9413 (Fax) or [www.hearingloss.org](http://www.hearingloss.org). Get the latest e-news: <http://www.hearingloss.org/membership/> Sen.asp.

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and Katherine Swem, Au.D*

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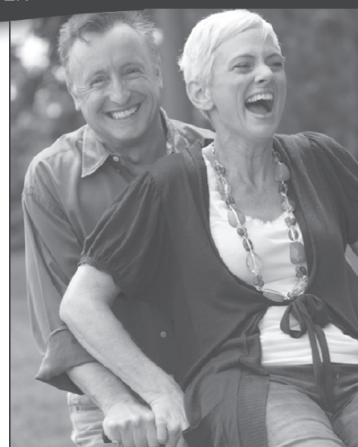
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Please fill out this form /survey & mail to HLA - Lane Co., PO Box 22501, Eugene, OR 97402.

I have enclosed: Chapter fees \_\_\_\_\_ \$10.00 Chapter Donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
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What most interests/puzzles you about hearing or hearing devices?

Are you interested in volunteering? What would you like to do?

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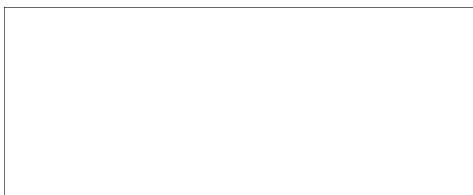


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Lane County Oregon Chapter  
Hilyard Community Center, 2580 Hilyard St.,  
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December 12, 2013  
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## Calendar

Board Meeting Dec. 3  
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2580 Hilyard St  
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Thursday of the month. They are accessible  
for all degrees of hearing loss by

- Amplification — Loop assistive listening system
- Real-time captioning by Debby Bonds