

Sound News

August 2014

Volume 27 number 8

Living with Hearing Loss

by Terri Goldstein

Imagine yourself in a country where nobody speaks your language. It becomes a necessity to rely on your other senses and hone your powers of observation. You welcome the times when you can "fill in the blanks" and get the gist of a conversation. Each situation is stressful: Will you be a participant or an observer? This is the life of a hearing-impaired person. We are not deaf, and, therefore, most of us do not read lips, sign or wear hearing devices 100% of the time. We try to preserve whatever hearing we have left. We walk softly on the fine line between the hearing and deaf communities. Even our friends are selected carefully. We cultivate friendships based on who is sensitive to our needs. They are the people who are willing to speak a little louder and more distinctly. They are the people who are willing to repeat themselves if they see from your expression that you didn't hear all that was said. They don't wait for you to apologize or "phase out" of a difficult-to-hear conversation. They make sure that you never feel ashamed because of your disability.

Each day is a series of plans — how to seat yourself and others so that you have the best hearing advantage, where to go for business meetings and social events to avoid loud, busy places, etc. However, sometimes it is difficult to control the situation. Envision going to the theater or movies only to find the audience laughing with delight when you have no idea why. Maybe you smile or chuckle to camouflage your discomfort, hoping that this will not recur throughout the movie. These facilities usually offer headsets, which enable you to amplify the volume. Unfortunately, many are not well maintained and cause a static-like sound. It is always a pleasure — and a surprise — when we can enjoy a movie without struggling.

We sometimes avoid talking on the phone, knowing that we may need you to repeat yourself several times. You can understand why some of us choose to communicate by email or text! We arrive at speaker functions and seminars at least 30 minutes early, so that we can get a much needed front-row seat.

Even in the health club, we wear our hearing aids to help follow the class routines. We certainly don't want to be caught doing push-ups when the rest of the group is doing sit-ups. In spite of our disability, many of us continue to be social and take part in group activities. There is always the fear of asking a question that has already been asked and answered. We understand that you may find it funny, but please know that it is mortifying to us. On occasion, we may try to monopolize the conversation in order to control what is being said. Even with all the accommodations we give ourselves, all too often we mix up or miss words. We go home feeling embarrassed and wonder why we subject ourselves to group functions.

This is not meant to be a sad commentary. Please do not pity us and certainly don't avoid us. We are very functional and grateful for the hearing ability we still have. We simply need "a little help from our friends."

**YOUR VALUE DOESN'T DECREASE BASED ON SOMEONE'S
INABILITY TO SEE YOUR WORTH.**

Leone's Line



I am only one,
But still I am one.
I cannot do everything,
But still I can do something;
And because I cannot do
everything
I will not refuse to do the
something that I can do

~Edward Everett~

VOLUNTEER!!

What do we live for,
if it is not to make life
less difficult for each other?
-George Eliot

Your job is not to judge.
Your job is not to figure out
if someone deserves something.
Your job is to lift the fallen,
to restore the broken,
and to heal the hurting.

Hearing Aid Purchase Help

AUDIENT ALLIANCE

An affiliate of the Northwest Lions Foundation for Sight & Hearing
EPIC Hearing Healthcare 17870 Castleton St. Suite #320 City of Industry, CA 91748
626-435-0188 Fax 1-866-956-5400
E-mail: info@audientalliance.org Website: <http://www.audientalliance.org>

BETTER HEARING INSTITUTE

Financial Assistance Guide 1444 I Street, NW, Suite 700 Washington, DC 20005
(202) 449-1100 Voice (202) 216-9646 Fax 1-800-EAR-WELL
Website: <http://betterhearing.org/publications/eGuides/index.cfm>

FOUNDATION FOR SIGHT & SOUND

The Foundation for Sight & Sound has partnered with EarQ Group to provide hearing
aids to individuals with limited financial resources.
P.O. Box 1245 Smithtown, NY 11787 (631) 366-3461
E-mail: info@foundationforsightandsound.org
Website: <http://www.foundationforsightandsound.org/projects.html>

HEAR NOW

Provides recycled and used hearing aids to low-income persons.
6700 Washington Avenue South Eden Prairie, MN 55344 1-800-648-4327 V/TTY
Website: <http://www.starkeyhearingfoundation.org/hear-now.php>

HEARINGHEALTH4U

Helping low income people break the barrier of the high cost of hearing aids - by
providing quality new and used hearing aids at a very affordable price. Financial
assistance available. 33 E Idaho Ave #200 Meridian, ID 83642 208) 571-1934
Website: <http://www.hearinghealth4u.com>

LIONS CLUB INTERNATIONAL

Assists low income individuals with purchasing hearing aids.
300 West 22nd Street Oak Brook, IL 60523-8842
E-mail: programs@lionsclubs.org Website: <http://www.lionsclubs.org> (Go to page 4)

Members: if you have changed your e-mail address please notify Karin Smith of the change 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.

Annual chapter fee of \$10.00 can be mailed to HLA-LCO Inc. PO Box 22501, Eugene, OR 97402

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Article Deadline: Second Thursday each month
Newsletter Editor Leone Miller vngleone@comcast.net
Typesetting & Design Leone Miller 744-2994
Place an ad Karen Swezey kswezey@efn.org

National website: www.hearingloss.org
Oregon website: www.hearinglossOR.org



Out & About

Thanks to **Pat Reilly** for his donations to our chapter. **Andréa Cabral** presented at the Older Americans Day at the Mennonite Village in Albany.

Don't settle for a PSAP when you need a hearing Aid

gleaned: Mandy Mroz

With nearly 20% of Americans suffering from hearing loss it's no surprise that many people with hearing impairment are searching for hearing loss solutions online information about hearing loss, hearing aids and other sound amplification options.

Consumers are tempted to purchase less expensive over-the-counter devices, called personal sound amplification products (PSAPs), rather than see a hearing care professional for hearing aids. Although hearing aids are custom-fitted devices that provide the best solution for most individuals with hearing loss, they carry the stigma of "making you look old" and having a price tag that's "too expensive". It also takes time to get hearing aids fit appropriately by a hearing care professional, including follow-up visits for adjustments and maintenance as time goes by.

A personal sound amplification product, or PSAP, is a one-size-fits-all electronic device that amplifies soft sounds. The FDA advises that these devices are not intended to be used by individuals with a decreased capacity to hear. They are intended for use by people with normal hearing ability who want to heighten their ability to hear for certain recreational activities, such as hunting or bird watching.

How is a PSAP different from a hearing aid? Unlike PSAPs, hearing aids are FDA-approved medical devices that are prescribed and fitted by licensed hearing healthcare professionals. The technical capability and programming of a hearing aid goes far beyond simple amplification of sound. Current hearing aid circuitry includes features for reducing background noise, using multiple microphone arrays to provide directional enhancement and improve localization, wireless connectivity for accessing other personal devices and multiple programs to improve hearing ability according to the environment. Many of these features can be automated.

So while a PSAP takes all sounds and increases the volume of them, a hearing aid uses sophisticated algorithms to precisely divide sounds according to volume and pitch. It then makes volume increases according to the individual's hearing ability across all pitches. What's wrong with increasing all sounds? Nothing, if you're bird-watching. But for having conversation, this can create problems. Most hearing losses are not the same across all frequencies. This means for most people with hearing loss, a PSAP may increase the volume of sounds that the person does not actually need amplified. This can lead to lots of difficulty understanding speech.

Why do hearing aids cost more than PSAPs? Hearing aids are sophisticated FDA-approved medical devices designed specifically to treat hearing loss and are manufactured to rigorous standards. Hearing aid manufacturers employ highly-educated audiologists, engineers and scientists who conduct ongoing research to continuously improve sound processing algorithms and hearing aid design. Hearing aids are fitted and programmed by educated individuals who are tested and licensed by their state. These hearing care professionals are required to undergo continuous training and professional development. By comparison, PSAPs are relatively simple electronic devices that are purchased "over the counter" and aren't designed for people with hearing loss.

Keeping Your Batteries Charged



Information You Can Use

Hard of Hearing folks would love to attend special events such as plays and musicals but are often disappointed and frustrated when the evening turns out to be an emotional let down. They feel frustrated and wish they had just stayed home. Depending on the loss, some can hear fine with their hearing aid and the mike but many others find that just isn't enough-the sound is murky, the words not understandable. A facility with a loop system often helps to hear better than just the mike but it often isn't enough either. The best solution to be able to understand and get the most enjoyment from the event is to be able to read what is happening along with whatever amount of sound they can hear. That combination works together magically to promote excitement and satisfaction and a desire to do it again. What a gift! What a joy!

It's very easy for hard of hearing people to decide to stay home rather than put out the effort to attend some events. The result is feeling left out and negative. We would all be thrilled to be able to be "part " of the world. Captioning gives that gift.

The purchase price of a hearing aid is generally anywhere from \$800 - \$4000 per ear so the total for two hearing aids, would be from \$1600 to \$8000. The price typically includes the cost of the hearing exam. the device consultation and fitting time (including post-fitting adjustments), follow-up appointments, cleanings and a device warranty of 1-3 years. It often covers all repairs and includes a one-time replacement policy if you lose the hearing aid during the first year & includes a year's worth of UDIENT ALLIANCE.

CONTINUED FROM P2

SERTOMA

Assists low-income persons with purchasing hearing aids.
1912 East Meyer Boulevard Kansas City, MO 64132-9990
(816) 333-8300 Voice (816) 333-4320
Fax Website: <http://www.sertoma.org/>

STARKEY HEARING FOUNDATION

Assistance for low-income individuals permanently residing in the U.S. with no other resources to acquire hearing aids. 6700 Washington Avenue South Eden Prairie, MN 55344 800-328-8602 (voice-ask for Hear Now) (952) 947-4997 Fax Website: <http://www.sotheworldmayhear.org>

Loud Sounds

While many people can tune out the sounds of daily life most of the time, others can have strong emotional and physical reactions to sounds. This is known as sound sensitivity and can take several forms including conditions such as tinnitus, hyperacusis, misophonia, noise annoyance, and phonophobia.

The University of Melbourne, Australia is researching this. They hope to learn more about sound sensitivity conditions and put this knowledge towards understanding and helping people who suffer from a sensitivity to sounds.

Hearing loss is a serious public health issue. Nearly one-third of all 64-year-old adults have significant age-related hearing loss and that number almost doubles to 64% after the age of 85. In relation, noise-induced hearing loss is one of the most common self-reported occupational injuries.

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.

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(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.

E-MAIL: puc.tdap@state.or.us



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Membership in HLLA is \$20 student, \$35 individuals, \$45 for couple/family, \$60 professional. It includes the award-winning bi-monthly magazine, *Hearing Loss*. Write HLLA, 7910 Woodmont Ave., Ste. 1200, Bethesda, MD 20814; 301-657-2248 (Voice); 301-657-224 (TTY); 301-913-9413 (Fax) or 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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Sandi L.B. Ybarra, Au.D.
Doctor of Audiology
dr.ybarra@hearingassociates.net

Brad Smith, Au.D.
Doctor of Audiology
dr.smith@hearingassociates.net

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**Can't Hear With
Background
Noise?**

Or do you have difficulty understanding words on TV or having a telephone conversation? 30 million Americans have this type of hearing problem. Hearing aids help very little when there is noise present and make it worse in loud noise. They work best in low noise, "living room" situations. Background noise (especially speech) and long distances to the sound source, make you unable to distinguish words.

I know because I struggled with this problem for over 10 years as my hearing got worse until I discovered the existence of Assistive Listening Devices (ALDs). These devices bring the sound source closer while at the same time increasing the high frequencies that make words crisp. This improves your understanding dramatically in noisy backgrounds. Personal amplifiers, like the **Audable Personal Listener (\$79.99 - w/ headphones & earphones)**, are used in restaurants, automobiles, and small groups to enable you to UNDERSTAND what is being said. **45-day price refund.**

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www.oregonrelay.com
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Hearing Loss Assoc. of Lane County Chapter Fee and National Membership Form

Please fill out this form /survey and turn in at the general meeting or mail to HLA - Lane Co., PO Box 22501, Eugene, OR 97402.

I have enclosed: Chapter fees _____ \$10.00 Chapter Donation of \$ _____
National dues _____ \$35.00 (regular) \$70 _____ (professional)*

Name: _____ E-mail: _____

Preferred phone: _____

Address: _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Occupation (*former occupation if retired*) : _____

Why are you joining us?

What most interests/puzzles you about hearing or hearing devices?

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

How did you learn about us _____?

Would you like to be on our email news list: _____ Yes _____ No

*Donations to either the national organization or our local chapter are always welcome and are tax deductible. (We do not share our information lists with anyone else. Receipts will gladly be provided.)

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free-
please feel free
to take it.

If the month & year on your mailing label have already passed, it's time to renew your membership! Please use the form on page 6 to pay your dues

**There will be
NO GENERAL MEETING IN AUGUST THIS
YEAR, WHICH ALSO MEANS NO
POTLUCK/PICNIC DUE TO LACK OF
INTEREST FROM MEMBERS WHO WERE
CONTACTED**

We hope to see all of you in September.

**The board wishes to Thank Ken
Riverneider for his time and energy in
conducting the survey for the
potluck/picnic.**

Calendar

Board Meeting Aug 5
3:30 to 5 pm Members Welcome
Hilyard Community Ctr.
2580 Hilyard St
Eugene

Membership meetings are the 2nd
Thursday of the month. They are
accessible for all degrees of hearing
loss by amplification—loop assistive
listening systems.
Real time captioning by CC Reporting
(Debby, Chris, ad Jan)