

# Hear & Now

September 2010

## Living Well with Hearing Loss Workshops:

Two free workshops in  
Tucson and Green Valley

Green Valley: Friday,  
October 29th, 1:00 to  
4:30 pm at La Posada.

Tucson: Saturday, October  
30th, at UA Hearing Clinic  
10:00 am to 1:30 pm.

## **TITLE:** “Beyond Hearing Aids”

Presenters will talk about  
assistive devices, looping,  
Arizona Relay, phones,  
Cap-Tel...in other words it  
will mainly be about tech-  
nology that can help you  
understand better in diffi-  
cult listening situations.

**You need to contact  
ALOHA to make a  
reservation.  
795-9887  
Info&alohaaz.org**

*Funded by Arizona  
Community Foundation.*



## **ALOHA/SERTOMA GOLF TOURNAMENT FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 24TH, 7:30 A.M. ARIZONA NATIONAL GOLF COURSE**

Time is running out to register for or sponsor  
this event! Many letters/brochures were  
sent to area businesses who serve people  
with hearing loss & receive our newsletter.

## **Please support ALOHA's effort to help hard of hearing people!**

### Sponsorships include:

Food: \$500  
Beverage: \$500  
Hole: \$100  
Donated prizes for raffle welcome!

Price per golfer: \$99

All Pro Package: Foursome of golf and two  
hole signs: \$596 (savings \$100)

**Members: Please play if you golf, or get  
the word out to people you know!**

**CLASSES, ETC.**  
Beginning & Intermediate  
Sign Language Classes and  
Speech Reading Class:

\$50 Member  
\$75 non-Member

**Taking Requests  
795-9887**

**Assistive Device Demos:  
by appointment  
only.** Listening and  
signaling devices  
demonstrated. None for sale,  
but a vendor list is available.  
Also, loop demos.

**Peer Support Meetings:**  
Weekly, on Tuesdays, 1 to 2  
PM. Loop amplification.  
Friendly discussions and info  
shared about hearing aids,  
assistive devices, inductive  
looping, etc.

**NEW! Inductive Loop  
Class:** Free. Taking names.  
Learn how to Loop your  
home!

**Office Hours: 10 a.m. to 5  
p.m. Tue, Wed & Thur**

**Changed your  
Email?**

Please let us know.

# MEETINGS

## Desert Cochlear Connections Group

At ALOHA 4001 E. Fort Lowell

**September 18, (Saturday) 11:00 am to 1:00**

Lalita Doughman from Advanced Bionics will be the presenter, and Sue Vardon continues as facilitator.

Contact ALOHA: info@alohaaz.org. or phone 795-9887. You can also leave your contact information to be notified about meetings.

**Future CI Meetings: October 16th and November 20th. None for December.**

*NOTE:* This group needs the CART transcription because of their very severe hearing loss and they need accuracy to gather information about the surgery. **We hope hearing professionals will make donations for this service. Cost: \$150 per meeting.**



## Visit our Tuesday Support Group

You are invited to come to a peer support meeting . The meetings are open to the public **every Tuesday at 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. Free!**

**You will be surprised how much you learn at these meetings—and have fun at the same time.**

Amplification via inductive loop.

**Note:** Need volunteer typist for the meetings—call ALOHA 795-9887 to volunteer.

## Hearing Aid Bank Needs Donations

The Hearing Aid Bank provides refurbished hearing aids to low-income people with income less than \$712 per month. Used hearing aids can be donated at ALOHA, or by calling U of A Speech and Hearing Clinic at 621-7070

## GREEN VALLEY ALOHA SUPPORT GROUP:

Contact Mary Simmie 648-1266 or Ben Cleveland 399-2219 if you need help with hearing issues in Green Valley area. The meetings are held at La Posada.

### Green Valley Meeting Dates 10 am

**October 4th, 10:00 am— John Cobb,** Au.D. (doctor of audiology) will speak on early identification of hearing loss, treatment, and how to maintain healthy hearing.

**November 1st, 10:00 am— Jon C. Richins,** audiologist at Tucson Ear, Nose & Throat will talk about “acoustics”. He will offer suggestions that should help people hear better in various situations.

**December 6th—Christmas Potluck and White Elephant gift exchange.**



## University of Arizona “Living with Hearing Loss Groups” Fall Schedule:

**Class: 3 sessions: October 8th, 15th and 22nd. Fridays, 9:00—11:00 a.m.**

**Class: 3 sessions: November 5th, 12th and 19th.**

**Fee:** \$75/3-week block, (includes attendance for one participant with hearing loss and a communication partner, materials and parking)

To schedule, contact 520-621-7070.

Sessions held at UA Hearing Clinic, 1131 E. 2nd Street.

After completion, of classes, each group will meet at ALOHA.

**Cynthia Amerman's Story**  
**May 5, 2010**

When I first noticed hearing loss in my mid-twenties, doctors kept telling me I wasn't getting deaf. Finally, five years later, a visit to an audiologist proved there was a huge loss in the high frequency range. That meant I wasn't hearing many of the consonant sounds; I could hear, but not understand. Right away I got a hearing aid—my concern was to hear better, and it wasn't embarrassing—there was no magic spell anyone could cast that would change what had already occurred. Because I speak well, however, many people had unrealistic expectations of what I could hear. Sometimes they got impatient—why couldn't I just try a little harder. Surely if I just concentrated...The kids learned to face me and speak clearly if they wanted to communicate.

The hearing loss appeared to come out of nowhere. Later, I learned that my father and my grandmother had both experienced a complete loss in one ear by the time they were in their forties. But they each had one good ear. In doing some research on my own, I discovered that viruses and ototoxic medications could also cause hearing loss. I had pneumonia right before discovering my deafness, and also had taken anti-malarial quinine several times for periods of eight weeks when in Central and South America. Then, one morning in my early forties, I woke up to find that the remaining hearing in my left ear had disappeared overnight. It was terrifying. What if the same thing happened to my right ear? But, luckily, the right ear continued to decline over a long period of time and I used increasingly stronger hearing aids.

My work as a teacher of Spanish, English and Creative Writing became more difficult as time passed, as did singing with Masterwork Chorus. I began to swim, eventually competing on a National Master's Team in New Jersey. English and Spanish fell by the wayside, but language teaching skills transferred to American Sign Language (ASL) at Sussex County College, where I had taught Spanish.

Vocations and avocations had been affected by my hearing loss, and so had friendships. People encouraged me to get to know others with hearing loss. I joined SHHH, now called Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA). During the time I was learning ASL, my assignments took me into the Deaf Community, where I felt welcomed by Northwest Jersey Association of the Deaf, and I also learned of people who were a lot like me—the Association of Late-Deafened Adults (ALDA, Inc.). Six of us who had become deaf started ALDA-Garden State. Governor Whitman appointed me to the Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Advisory Council (DDHH-AC) to represent ALDA. As a member of the DDHH Speakers' Bureau, I spoke to doctors and nurses at hospitals around my state. Despite the growing distance from "hearing society", there were opportunities for personal growth. Advocacy for people with hearing loss became a large part of my life.

Anywhere in the world, a person with hearing loss can find friends. After moving to Tucson, I joined ALOHA (Adult Loss of Hearing Association). What a fine group of people come to the weekly peer support group! Not only did I find people like me in Tucson, but also they helped me get to know the area during our discussions. As a member of ALDA's International Committee I talk online almost daily with people in countries such as England, Finland, Pakistan, and Vietnam as well as with ALDAnS in many states—California, Washington, Illinois, DC and Georgia among them. When studying for a Master of Social Work at Gallaudet University, one of my internships took place at a school for deaf and hard of hearing children in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala. That resulted in my setting up some internships and study programs for Gallaudet, helping to link hearing loss communities in Guatemala and the US.

*Continued on page 4...*

*Continued from page 3...Cynthia Amerman story*

At the ALDA convention in Boston in 1992, I became convinced that I could do anything except hear. A more recent life-changing event was receiving a cochlear implant in 2006. My left ear that had been totally deaf for over twenty years learned to hear again, with amazing results. My ability to communicate with other people increased dramatically. The confidence that I had lost as friends, workplaces and beloved pastimes gradually slipped away now continues to gather momentum. I'm serving on the Boards of both ALOHA and ALDA. This summer I will travel to Stockholm, Helsinki and Liverpool to attend meetings of the International Federation of the Hard of Hearing, the World Federation of the Deaf and the National Association of Deafened People.

Since getting my implant, I relish the sound of my granddaughter's words: "Gram, pretend you are a baby buffalo and I am a teenage Bengal tiger named Annelies," Reading that last sentence, you might wonder about the veracity of my newfound hearing. But Sofia's imagination at age six creates her own reality. I heard every unlikely word, and was able to avoid getting eaten by the tiger. It wouldn't have been as easy to understand if the imaginary river in our scenario were really roaring by. Background noise can still make hearing challenging, but I remember when it made it impossible to talk with even the person next to me.

It's been a long journey from hearing to deafness and back. As you can see from the above "adventures", from my twenties forward life took a different shape than it might have. Some positives arose along with the negatives, but many times it was a difficulty journey, and one that was difficult for people around me as well. It was so frustrating for all of us not to be able to communicate the way we had. When friends welcomed me back into the hearing world after my implant, I felt as if I had lived many years in a foreign land, and returned to find life in "the old country" still moving along. The ability to communicate with friends and family has improved the quality of my life immeasurably, but so have the learning experiences and the many friendships and relationships discovered along the way.

**Editor:** *We will on occasion print personal stories told by our members...they can be inspiring to us who struggle with hearing loss in our daily lives.*

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**New Mercury-Free Hearing Aid Batteries:** In an item from [hear-it.org](http://hear-it.org) it is found that the new mercury-free batteries have lower capacity. The problems are not caused by any fault in the hearing aids, as such, but are caused by a low battery voltage that in many cases results from the mercury-free battery technology. The user will often experience lower battery capacity. Such problems occur in particular in hearing aids having high current draw from the battery, such as power aids and hearing aids with wireless connectivity. If you have the problems as described, you can try a different type of battery. Your hearing aid supplier may be able to advise you on which types cause the least problems. Hearing aid manufacturers and battery manufacturers are confident the problems will be solved in the near future.

**Helpful Websites:** Member, Doug Cain, shares these websites: [www.betterhearing.org](http://www.betterhearing.org), [www.hearingloss.org](http://www.hearingloss.org), [www.audiology.org/pages/default.aspx](http://www.audiology.org/pages/default.aspx), [www.mcdhh.mo.gov/resources/StateCommissions.htm](http://www.mcdhh.mo.gov/resources/StateCommissions.htm) ALOHA's website also has links: [www.alohaaz.org](http://www.alohaaz.org)



*Our sincere condolences go out to member Cary Birenbaum and family on the passing of his mother Marcella, in August.*

Adult Loss Of Hearing Association  
(ALOHA)  
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Tucson, AZ 85712-1011

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- Sally Hart
- Joy Newman
- Cynthia Amerman

- Loretta Butler, Office Director

**Office Hours: 10 AM to 5 PM, Tues. - Thurs.**

**Please call in advance to confirm hours.  
Thanks!**

*Combined Fed. Campaign #68532*

**You can reach us at:**

Telephone (Voice) - (520) 795-9887

TTY - (520) 795-9585

FAX - (520) 795-9585

E-Mail - [info@alohaaz.org](mailto:info@alohaaz.org)

ALOHA's Internet Site: <http://www.alohaaz.org>

**Non-profit Tax ID# 86-0554154**

ALOHA's Office Location:

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Tucson, AZ 85712-1011



**Let's Loop Tucson & Arizona!**