

SPECIAL
POINTS OF
INTEREST:

- Meet the New ARA Executive Board throughout this Issue
- ARA Remembers Dr. Margo Skinner
- ARA Institute in Portland, OR
- Herbert Oyer Student Research Award
- The Pinnacle Gets a New Look

INSIDE THIS
ISSUE:

Upcoming ARA Institute	2
Meet Pat Kricos, ARA President	2
It's a Dynamic World	4
Speakers Bureau	7
ARA's Website	7
Herbert Oyer Award	7
Pinnacle Update	9

This issue was sponsored by Phonak Hearing Systems

Pinnacle

THE ARA QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2008

President's Message



Greetings AR Enthusiasts,

I hope the first quarter of the New Year has been good for all of you, and that most, if not all, of your New Year's resolutions have been accomplished and even surpassed. I felt great excitement and a certain amount of "yikes, can I really do this?" when I took over the ARA reins from Gaby Saunders, a hard act to follow! I am excited to

do what I can to take the Academy of Rehabilitative Audiology to its next level of greatness. Given the dedicated, passionate ARA members and Executive Board, I am confident we will accomplish much this year to make our ARA forefathers (and mothers) proud of the Academy they started 44 years ago.

Those of us who are "old-timers" (no names mentioned here!) recall the ebb and wane of AR over the years. Part of the reason that AR seemed to become passé in the minds of many of our audiology brethren was probably due to the phenomenal advances in hearing aid technology, as

well as the lack of third-party reimbursement for AR services provided by audiologists. Even though AR seemed to fade from the audiology scene, those of us in the Academy tenaciously hung on to the conviction that AR was important, in fact, essential, for adults and children with hearing impairment. And now it is thrilling, isn't it, to see the recent resurgence in the audiology profession's attention to the value of AR? This weekend, as I prepared to write this message to you, I was curious as to whether the number of articles published on AR had increased in the past 10 years, so I compared
—Continued on Page 3—

Tribute to Margo Skinner

Margaret "Margo" Walker Skinner, Ph.D., Professor of Otolaryngology and Director of the Cochlear Implant and Hearing Rehabilitation Program, died Jan. 11, 2008 after a long illness. She was 72. Dr. Skinner was born in Wash-

ington, DC on February 13, 1935. She earned a degree in chemistry at Wellesley College in 1956 and a master's degree in audiology from Case Western Reserve University in 1960.

—Continued on Page 5—



Upcoming ARA Institute 2008

ARA Institute 2008 is coming up on September 11th to 12th of this year. It'll be taking place in Portland, Oregon – in the Great Northwest. The meeting will be preceded by a workshop at Frye Electronics in Tigard, Oregon (about 10 miles from downtown Portland) on Sept. 10th, and will be followed by a Tinnitus Treatment workshop at the NCRAR, taught by Jim Henry, Ph.D. and Tara Zaugg, Au.D. on Sept. 13th.

We hope to dedicate half a day of the Institute to presentations on the topic of auditory training to enhance rehabilitation, to align with Robert Sweetow's keynote address on Communication Needs Assessment. Robert Sweetow, Ph.D. is Director of Audiology at University of California at San Francisco. He and Jennifer Sabes Ph.D. developed the Learning and Communication Enhancement (LACE™) program. If we obtain sufficient sponsorship, or have enough early registrants, we will invite another scientist whose research is in the field of neural plasticity and auditory rehabilitation to speak.



Portland, OR

—Continued on Page 8—

Meet Pat Kricos



Dr. Patricia Kricos is Professor of Audiology at the University of Florida. She received her bachelor's degree from the University of Texas at El Paso, and her master's and Ph.D. degrees from the Ohio State University (1973). She has taught in the audiology program at the University of Florida since 1981. Her major clinical and research interests are in audiologic rehabilitation with older adults. Dr. Kricos has published a number of articles and chapters on audiologic rehabilitation with older adults. She co-edited a book with Sharon Lesner, entitled *Audiologic Rehabilitation of Older Adults: A Practical Approach*. Dr.

Kricos is currently President of the Academy of Rehabilitative Audiology and serves on the Board of Directors of the American Academy of Audiology. She also serves on the Advisory Council of the Better Hearing Institute.

Meet Jill Preminger

Dr. Preminger has been involved in audiologic rehabilitation since 1982 when she received her master's degree in audiology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and began her career as an audiologist at the New York League for the Hard of Hearing. After dispensing many hearing aids and leading numerous AR groups, she returned to school. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota in 1993, and since that time her research has focused on adult audiologic rehabilitation. Dr. Preminger is currently an Associate Professor in the Au.D. Program at the University of Louisville where she is training future audiologists. Her current research interests include the efficacy of group audiologic rehabilitation programs, the involvement of significant others in the audiologic rehabilitation process, and the adaptation of audiologic rehabilitation services for adults with mild cognitive impairment.

Dr. Preminger is involved with several organizations that serve audiologists. She is an associate editor for the *Journal of Speech, Language and Hearing Research*. She is a member of the publications committee for the American Academy of Audiology and she serves as assistant editor for the *Journal of the American Academy of Audiology*. Currently, Dr. Preminger is developing the Academy of Rehabilitative Audiology Speakers Bureau.



President's Message Continued

three journals that I had on hand in my home office (Seminars in Hearing, Trends in Amplification, and Journal of Speech-Language-Hearing Research) for the number of AR articles in 1997 compared to 2007 (defined for this purpose as "traditional" AR treatments such as auditory training, patient/parent education and counseling, speechreading, etc., but not hearing assistive technology). I found 13 articles in 2007, and only one in 1997. Not the most comprehensive estimate of the numbers of AR articles published in these two years, but certainly evidence that at least in these three major journals, AR is definitely showing up more often in the professional literature.

The ARA Board has been busy during the first quarter of 2008. Jill Preminger set up a Speakers Bureau to encourage members who are presenting at state and national venues to get out the word about ARA. She made slides for speakers to use in their presentations to help them sing the praises of the ARA. I used these slides for a presentation I recently made at the Kentucky Speech and Hearing Association, and folks seemed quite interested. Gaby Saunders, John Greer Clark, and I will be presenting a fun and informative talk on behalf of the ARA, titled the Wheel of (Mis) Communication, at the 2008 national convention of the Hearing Loss Association of America in Reno, NV this summer. And lastly, the Board is revamping the ARA website so that it has a Member's Only section where we can share AR material with each other, as well as a way to join or renew membership, register for the ARA Institute, etc. Once the new site is up and running, we hope you will forward your ideas to make the website even better.

Some of us refer to AR as audiologic rehabilitation, some as aural rehabilitation, and some as auditory rehabilitation. Regardless of what it's called, AR is on a roll, and what better organization than the Academy of Rehabilitative Audiology to take the reins to make sure that AR continues to be promulgated? So.....while we're on a roll, your ARA leaders

are hoping you will fasten your seat belts and join us in advancing AR even further! I think the greatest challenge we have as an organization is to revitalize our mission, presence, and role in ensuring that people with hearing loss receive the highest quality of services when they seek assistance with their hearing problems. With a little moxie and a lot of vision for the future of AR, we can play a major role in helping the profession do the right thing: not only diagnose hearing loss, but also provide treatment and help for problems secondary to hearing impairment. Another important initiative for the ARA to undertake is to advocate for audiologists to be able to bill and receive Medicare and other third-party reimbursement for AR treatment.

How can you help? Tell your colleagues about ARA. Give them a copy of our brochure. If you work with students, tell them about the ARA; after all, they are the future of ARA! Volunteer for an ARA Committee. And above all, send us your ideas on how to make the ARA even better. As Jim Collins, the great organizational strategy guru, once said, "If your company went out of business tomorrow, who would miss you and why?" Think about why ARA is indispensable to the people we serve. Then for a moment, ponder why ARA membership is important to you and send us your ideas on how we can make it essential to others who provide help to individuals with hearing loss. How can we help the Academy of Rehabilitative Audiology be an even greater place for members to connect and communicate with each other?

Looking forward to hearing from you!

Meet Carol Cokely

Dr. Carol Cokely earned a M.A. degree from Northwestern University and a Ph.D. from Indiana University. Her chief interests lie in aural rehabilitation and clinical education methods and evaluation. She joined the

Doctor of Audiology (Au.D.) Program within the School of Behavior and Brain Sciences in 2001 as the Coordinator of Clinical Teaching. She teaches courses in adult aural rehabilitation and co-directs UTD's annual Summer Intensive Auditory

Rehabilitation Conference (SIARC). Carol Cokely serves as ARA's Publication Manager.



It's a dynamic world!

Part 3 of a 3 part series on FM technology

Prepared by: Jay P. Sheehan, Ph.D., Wireless Technology Specialist, Phonak Hearing Systems

When instructing the new FM user how to operate the system, we need to spend a considerable amount of time discussing microphone modes. In a quiet environment, a user can benefit from using their system in the 'FM+M' mode. This mode allows for perception of the main presenter at the remote FM microphone while maintaining audibility of nearby peers through the hearing aid microphone(s). Typically, FM systems are set to a +10 dB FM advantage. The ASHA Ad Hoc Committee established guidelines for fitting and monitoring FM systems (ASHA, 2002) and considered this guideline a reasonable compromise in balancing the FM and hearing aid inputs. This approach is effective when the user wishes to overcome the effects of distance or reverberation. However, this approach is not effective in noise because the hearing aid microphones are contaminated and the FM advantage is lost. To recapture the advantage, the user must select the 'FM only' mode. The FM signal is the only sound source in this mode. As outlined in Part 2 of this series, the best possible FM advantage in noisy situations occurs when the user is in 'FM only' mode and the remote microphone is positioned near the mouth of the speaker of interest. Advances in FM technology have made it easier

to facilitate active microphone modes between 'FM+M' to 'FM only' and positioning of the remote microphone near the mouth of the speaker. Dynamic FM is a new benchmark in FM technology that allows a user to stay in the FM+M program in noisy environments.

The microphone positioned on the lapel measures the ambient noise level and communicates to the dynamic FM receiver to add/subtract gain as the noise level increases/decreases. This occurs between 57 and 73 dB SPL. So, when the noise level is 57 db SPL, a user is still listening to the FM signal at the default +10 dB FM advantage, but a noise level of 73 dB SPL will provide a +25 dB FM advantage. In essence, the system is shifting between FM+M and FM only modes in real time. For those who would prefer the manual control, FM only remains an option. This feature will greatly facilitate counseling of the new FM user because it removes a layer of complexity; knowing when to switch modes between active microphones. The professional can place a greater emphasis on other important aspects of usage such as proper placement of the microphone.

—Continued on page 6—

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Margo's Tribute Continued

Early in her career, Dr. Skinner worked as an audiologist at a speech and hearing center, a medical school and a school for the deaf. This diverse clinical experience contributed valuable insights to her Ph.D. research conducted at Washington University on the effect of compensation for high frequency hearing loss on speech recognition across sound intensity levels. Her 1988 book, *Hearing Aid Evaluation*, combined research by others with her clinical and research work to create a comprehensive text on fitting hearing aids.

Dr. Skinner began her academic career at Washington University as a Lecturer in the Department of Speech and Hearing in 1977. She became an Assistant Professor in 1979 in the Department of Otolaryngology-Head & Neck Surgery, an Associate Professor in 1992, and Professor in 1997. She has been the Director of the Cochlear Implant and Hearing Rehabilitation Program in the Department of Otolaryngology-Head & Neck Surgery from 1984 to the present.

Her keen observations of how patients hear and communicate led to new research ideas related to evolving technology. In 1989, she began her continuously funded NIH grant, "Strategies to optimize benefit with a cochlear implant," which has resulted in more than 35 papers on how speech reception is influenced by choices made during clinical fitting. Her most recent work focused on understanding the basis of speech reception variability across individual patients by combining radiographic imaging and objective measures to guide clinical fitting.

Dr. Skinner contributed to many professional societies including the Academy of Rehabilitative Audiology. She was a strong believer in rehabilitation for individuals with hearing loss, and founded the clinical rehabilitative program at Washington University for cochlear implant patients. Every implant recipient receives 16 weeks of aural rehabilitation that is individualized for the unique needs of each patient. Using weekly results of auditory training exercises, cochlear implant fitting decisions are modified to optimize speech recognition for new implantees.

Dr. Skinner received many awards and honors including the Pioneer in Hearing Aid Research Award and the Jerger Career Award in Hearing from the American Academy of Audiology, the Carhart Memorial Lecturer from the American Auditory Society, the Academic Women's Pioneer Award from Washington University, and the keynote lectureship at the 11th International Symposium on Cochlear Implants in 2007. Although the recipient of these honors, her greatest professional joy was every patient who was brought back into the world of sound with a cochlear implant.

Meet Linda Thibodeau



Dr. Linda Thibodeau started in speech and hearing with a master's in 1977 from the University of Texas at Austin and a Ph.D. from The University of Minnesota in 1986. She currently is a Professor at the University of Texas at Dallas since 1996

where she is director of the Au.D. program and the Pediatric Aural Habilitation Training Specialist Project. Prior to that she worked at The University of Texas at Austin, at the University of Texas Speech and Hearing Institute, in otolaryngology clinics, and in the public schools. She teaches in

the areas of Amplification and Pediatric Aural Habilitation. Her research at the Advanced Hearing Research Center of the Callier Center for Communication Disorders involves evaluation of the speech perception of listeners with hearing loss and auditory processing problems as well as evaluation of amplification systems and hearing assistance technology to help those persons. Her research has been supported NIH, Deafness Research Foundation, National

Organization of Hearing Research, and the Office of Special Education. Her professional interests include serving as the co-chair of the ANSI committee to develop a standard for the Electroacoustic Evaluation of ALDs; member of the AAA Task Force on Guidelines for fitting Remote Microphone Technology; and serving as Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of the Academy of Rehabilitative Audiology, and Associate Editor for the American Journal of Audiology.

FM technology continued

To take advantage of dynamic FM, an individual must have a dynamic FM transmitter and a dynamic FM receiver. The Phonak Inspiro is currently the only FM transmitter with dynamic capability. A lapel or boom microphone may be used. Currently, Phonak FM receivers with model numbers that contain “i” designation are the only receivers on the market with dynamic capability.

Another remarkable advance in FM technology is the ability to use a number of remote microphones simultaneously. As you may know, it is not possible to have two FM signals transmitted on the same channel at the same time. But, a new strategy called Multi-talker Network uses a sub-audio data link between two or more (up to 10) microphone transmitters. This approach ensures that only one voice is transmitted at a time. This alleviates concern for listener confusion between competing voices. It also reduces microphone noise that is inherent in having multiple microphone lines open. To maintain order in an environment, one microphone transmitter in the network is set as the initiator microphone. When this individual talks through the initiator, none of the other voices on the network will be transmitted. The same concept applies for the additional microphones but the initiator will always have priority.

To take advantage of Multi-talker Network, an individual does not need a dynamic FM receiver. Because basic FM functions are forward and

backward compatible with Phonak products, any traditional FM Microlink may be used (e.g. MyLink, microMLxs, etc.). Many working professionals have a need to hear simultaneous voices (e.g. surgeons, attorneys, teachers). This feature gives them additional auditory access they need to succeed on the job. In the social setting, Multi-talker network can also be used in the commonly reported ‘noisy restaurant’ situation. If passing a single microphone impedes the natural flow of communication and the user is reluctant to use their FM with the pass around technique, each of the talkers can be connected into the network so conversation can continue naturally.

Both Dynamic FM and Multi-talker Network are among the many features of the new Phonak FM platform. Another wireless device from Phonak is called iCom. This neck-worn device is a multimedia accessory to hearing aids that serves as a Bluetooth interface for new Phonak hearing aids. It is unique in that it processes audio in true stereo, has directional microphones for improved talk-back sound quality, and a Europlug jack for direct FM compatibility. Because you only need one FM receiver on the iCom device, using an FM system has now become more affordable and cosmetically appealing. Because of this device, it is expected that FM usage among adults will continue to be on the rise. What a great time to have a hearing loss!

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (2002). *Guidelines for Fitting and Monitoring FM Systems* [Guidelines]. Available from www.asha.org/policy.

Meet Laura Wilber

Laura Ann Wilber is professor-emeritus of Communication Sciences and Disorders at Northwestern University.

Professor Wilber earned her bachelor's degree from the University of Southern Mississippi (in Speech Correction), her master's degree from Gallaudet University (in deaf education) and her Ph.D. from Northwestern in audiology. She has served as president of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, the Academy of Rehabilitative Audiology, the American Auditory Society and she was a founding member of the American

Academy of Audiology. She is licensed as an audiologist in three states. Before coming to Northwestern in 1978, Professor Wilber was on the research faculty at UCLA, and later director of hearing and speech services at Albert Einstein College of Medicine (of Yeshiva University). She has been active in various working groups with ANSI and ISO for over 25 years. She officially retired from Northwestern in 2003 – but has continued to teach, lecture, and work with Au.D. students on various research projects.



ARA Speakers Bureau



In January of 2008 we launched the ARA Speakers Bureau. The purpose of the Bureau is threefold: 1. to provide expert continuing professional education in audiologic rehabilitation; 2. to promote the importance of audiologic rehabilitation, and 3. to increase membership and participation in the Academy

of Rehabilitative Audiology. As of today we have 10 speakers in our bureau, some speakers and topics include:

- Dr. Patricia Kricos speaking about “Psychosocial correlates of hearing aid adjustment”
- Dr. Gabrielle Saunders speaking about “Hearing Conservation”
- Dr. Donna Wayner speaking about “A Suggested AR Protocol

for Adult Users of a Cochlear Implant”

- Dr. John Clark speaking about “Bringing active patient counseling into hearing loss management”
- Dr. Theresa Hanth Chisolm speaking about “Evidence Based Practice”
- Dr. Robert Sweetow speaking about “Transitioning from a Hearing Aid Evaluation to a Communication Needs Assessment”

The role of the Speakers Bureau is to provide a list of expert speakers who are willing to speak on a variety of topics. The role of the Speakers within the Bureau are to provide education and to offer the Academy of Rehabilitation Audiology as a professional resource within their talks.

The ARA website is undergoing a face-lift.....

We are in the process of overhauling the ARA website to gain new functionality such as the capacity for online payment, online submission of forms (membership, abstracts, registration etc.), and a password-protected ‘Member’s Only’ section from which you’ll be able to download all JARA publications and other useful

rehab tools. We are planning a Student Section in which there will be postings specifically pertinent to the student members of ARA, and we are designing some “For Consumers” pages.

Many thanks to Perry Hanavan who has maintained the website for so many years while holding various other

ARA offices.

If you have items you’d like to see posted, ideas for website content, or if you’d like to get involved with website design and maintenance please contact Gaby Saunders at

Gabrielle.saunders@va.gov

JARA

You are invited to submit manuscripts for publication in the *Journal of the Academy of Rehabilitative Audiology*. Manuscripts and cover letters should be submitted to the editor in electronic format for the peer-review process at:

cienkowski@uconn.edu



Oyer Award

Please encourage your students to submit an application of their audiologic rehabilitation-related research for consideration for the Herbert J. Oyer Student Research Award and their chance to present their research at the upcoming ARA Institute. See the ARA website for more information or contact. Dr. Jill Preminger.

jill.preminger@louisville.edu



Dr. Oyer

Upcoming ARA Institute Continued



**Mount
Hood at
Dawn**

On that note (finances), we're are going to hold a silent auction during the Institute to raise money for the ARA. We ask that you each bring (or buy while in Portland) a small item to auction – it could be a piece of art you've made or purchased, a bottle of wine, or something you've had around in that 'gifts to go' drawer for a while. We will also request donations from hearing instrument manufacturers and local vendors. Hopefully, we'll have fun, get to

buy something we didn't expect and raise some money for the ARA.

Portland is an immensely fun and interesting place to visit – funky neighborhoods, a clean and easily accessible downtown, lots of locally-owned cafes and restaurants, and the gorgeous Columbia River Gorge about 30 minutes away. On any clear day you can see Mt. Hood, Mt. St. Helens, and Mt. Adams.

The Institute will be held at the ACE Hotel. I chose it for its location and because it typifies Portland: the ACE Hotel is a funky place! The building, built in 1912, is located on the edge of Portland's Pearl District, a few blocks from the Powell's Bookstore, unique galleries,

artisan bakeries and local restaurants.

The conference space which adjoins the hotel, is known as 'The Cleaners' – named after the business that previously occupied the space! The space is airy and open, with hardwood floors and enormous windows.

For photos and more information about the hotel and meeting space see <http://www.acehotel.com/portland/>

I hope this has whet your appetite for a few days in Portland at the ARA Institute. We'll be posting a call for papers and online registration on the new website soon. For now, save the dates Sept 10th through 13th for a visit to Portland Oregon.



Freezing fog in Portland, OR.

Meet Gaby Saunders



Gabrielle Saunders is an Investigator and Deputy Director for Education, Outreach and Dissemination for the National Center for Rehabilitative Auditory Research (NCRAR), and Assistant Professor, Department of Otolaryngology, Oregon Health and Science University, both in Portland, Oregon. Last year she was President of the ARA.

She is responsible for the research program in Aural Rehabilitation and Hearing Aid Research at the NCRAR. Her primary interests are in the field of aural

rehabilitation and outcome measurements, but she is also collaborating on studies of dual sensory impairment with Dr. Echt, and is developing a multimedia Hearing Loss Prevention Program for Adults with Ms. Griest, and Drs. Fausti, Leek and Folmer. She currently has one funded merit review grant to examine the impact of directional microphones on sound localization. She is chairing the ARA Institute in September 2008 and the NCRAR Conference in October 2009.



Karen Dannheim

Karen has served as ARA Administrator since August 2005. She is also Office Manager for an audiology private practice. She and her husband live in Cedar Hill, Texas and they have two children. Their daughter graduated from Rice University last spring and their son is a senior in high school. When Karen is not

working she enjoys reading and going to youth sporting events. Many hours have been spent at soccer fields, speed skating meets and Special Olympic events!

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Pinnacle Gets a New Look

In 2008, John Greer Clark and Diana Derry passed on their roles as editors of the Pinnacle to Sherri Smith. In celebration of this change, the look of the Pinnacle also was updated. The Executive Board thanks John and Diana for their contributions and support to the Pinnacle.

Meet Sherri Smith

Sherri is a research audiologist at the VA Medical Center in Mountain Home, Tennessee. She received her B.A. (1997), M.A. (1999), Au.D. (2001), and Ph.D. (2003) from the University of Florida. Pat Kricos served as her Ph.D.

advisor. Since 2005, she has been funded by the VA Rehabilitation Research and Development (RR&D) Service with a Research Career Development award. Her clinical and research interests involve outcome measures; the role of self-efficacy in hearing aid outcomes of older adults;



Sherri rock climbing at Table Rock in the Linville Gorge, North Carolina.

and more recently, the auditory and cognitive factors influencing speech perception abilities. Sherri also is an assistant professor at East Tennessee State University (Johnson City) where she teaches *Adult Audiologic Rehabilitation and Amplification Systems III* (implantable devices) in the Au.D. program. In her spare time, Sherri enjoys the outdoors of the Upper East Tennessee area.

Please send announcements or information for upcoming Pinnacle issues to sherri.smith@va.gov