

# The Ear Drum

Virginia Lions Hearing Foundation & Research Center, Inc.  
Box 800477 UVA Health System  
Charlottesville, VA 22908-0477  
434-296-5466

Summer 2010

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## Message from the President

Dear Fellow Lions:

I want to thank you for allowing me to serve as President of the Virginia Lions Hearing Foundation and Research Center. I have loved this Foundation since my first meeting as VDG when I was given a tour and information by our great doctors. Up to the week before that meeting, I had no idea the Lions of Virginia had a Hearing Foundation. When Lion Peggy Smith told me I was to be at the meeting that Saturday and I was on a committee, I said “ What Hearing Foundation?”

Let’s not keep this resource a secret any longer. District Governors, Hearing Chairs, any and all of you Lions who represent this great foundation, get the word out to our cabinets, our clubs, and our communities.

We are all a part of something great and wonderful. As Lions we have been a part of VLHF fund raising, education, testing for hearing loss from newborns to those who are *rich in age*. Testing in the schools and our communities, serving those less fortunate than we. Yes, we are all a part of this greatness and more.

Now we have another way of contributing and getting contributions, the Elbyrne G. Gill Fellowship, named for the Virginia Lion who was International President in 1943-1944. Everyone loves to get and give awards. Tell everyone to put this on top of their list. Remember the hard workers in your clubs and your cabinets; don’t forget you deserve this too for your hard work serving through Lionism.

The person receiving the Gill Award does not have to be a Lion. This award might even make them interested in joining your club after receiving the plaque for their service activities. The \$750 donation helps support all you have read about here and so much more.

The Hearing Foundation needs your donations. Please give and encourage others to give. Make Virginia Lions proud. Be a beacon of hope.

Yours in Service,

*Jessie*

Lion Jessie Garrett, PDG  
*President, VLHF*

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## Executive Director’s Message

A new Lions year is well underway. Virginia Lions are working to assist people and groups who need our help. We are truly serving as “Beacons of Hope” for those people who desperately need help.

Too often Lions activities seem to be carried out in secret ... from other Lions. This issue of ***The Ear Drum*** outlines basic information about the Hearing Foundation. We want all Virginia Lions to be familiar with our purposes and operations.

Lions who want to receive ***The Ear Drum*** electron-ically should email [vlhf@virginia.edu](mailto:vlhf@virginia.edu) with their re-quest. For hard copies, write to the address at the top of this page. Tell your fellow Lions about the Hearing Foundation. We are not a secret.

Yours in Lionism,

***Don***

Lion Don Colley, PCC  
*Executive Director, VLHF*

# Hearing Foundation History, Objectives, and Operation

Too many Virginia Lions know little about our Hearing Foundation. Who are we? Where did we come from? What do we do?

In June of 1978, Lions Clubs International introduced a program called “Hearing and Speech Action and Work with the Deaf.” In response to this initiative PDG Ken Hitch from District 24-A contacted Dr. Robert W. Cantrell, then Chairman of the Department of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery at the University of Virginia Health Sciences Center in Charlottesville, to explore the formation of a partnership between Otolaryngology and the Lions of Virginia dedicated to the support of research on hearing and deafness.

A committee formed to pursue the idea, consisting of one Lion from each of the six districts in Virginia and three University of Virginia medical personnel. The committee produced a resolution to create the Lions of Virginia Hearing Foundation and Temporal Bone Bank, which the Lions of Virginia approved unanimously at the 1979 state convention.

In August of 1989 the words “Temporal Bone Bank” were dropped from the foundation’s name because artificial ear bones were found to be safer transplant material than human bones, which could transmit diseases to the recipient. Also, by that time the Foundation had evolved into a research center rather than remaining a facility which acquired and stored temporal bones.

Since the establishment of the Hearing Foundation, the Lions of Virginia – clubs and individuals – have contributed nearly \$2,000,000.00 to further the Foundation’s objectives.

The principal objectives of the Virginia Lions Hearing Foundation and Research Center, Inc, are:

- To initiate and support research on deafness and hearing disorders in all age groups
- To support the cochlear implant program for the rehabilitation of profound deafness in children and adults
- To conduct diagnostic clinical examinations which may result in surgery or other rehabilitative procedures to restore hearing completely or partially to affected individuals
- To provide information to educate the public about hearing disorders and to encourage hearing protection
- To initiate education programs for practicing ear surgeons on the latest surgical techniques to better the care of hearing impaired individuals throughout Virginia and beyond.

The Hearing Foundation is governed by a 24-member board of directors. The six First Vice District Governors serve as director for one year. Two other Lions from each district and six members of the Department of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery serve terms of two years. After a director completes three consecutive two-year terms, he/she must step aside for at least one year before regaining eligibility to rejoin the board of directors.

Each year the board of directors elects a president, vice president, and secretary from its membership as well as a treasurer, who is not a director.

The board of directors also chooses members of the advisory board for three-year terms. Advisory board members attend all Hearing Foundation meetings and participate in discussions but cannot vote. Advisory Board members carry out the essential function of educating Virginia’s Lions about the purpose and activities of the Hearing Foundation.

The Hearing Foundation maintains a supply of booklets and flyers which warn people about the major causes of hearing loss and which outline Hearing Foundation research efforts. Lions Clubs may request these materials to support community-service projects related to hearing and deafness.

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## “What is That Ringing in my Ear?”

That ringing or buzzing sound in a person’s ears or head, which often annoys or distracts, is called tinnitus. Everyone experiences tinnitus, most of us more often than we realize. “Not so,” you say. Tightly cover your ears with your hands. That rumbling noise inside your ears similar to distant surf is tinnitus. Tinnitus is not a disease; it is rarely a precursor to deafness; most likely it is not the result of a brain tumor or ear infection.

Noise information travels to the brain constantly from internal and external sources. Yet we rarely hear the refrigerator motor operating or the fan blowing in the corner of the room or the light rain falling on the roof unless we consciously pay attention to these sounds. We do not notice them because of a mechanism called habituation, the process by which the nervous system reduces or inhibits responsiveness during repeated stimulation.

Habituation also allows us to live our lives without being constantly aware of and annoyed by the rings on our fingers, the shirt collar chafing our neck, the watch around our wrist, the shoes on our feet, and scores of similar everyday stimuli.

Why do some people have so much trouble with tinnitus? Fear or anxiety is a major factor. That is why we need to demystify the condition. When tinnitus lingers, we should visit an otologist for a checkup, especially when the noise is in one ear only and we are experiencing other symptoms such as hearing loss, pain in the ear, drainage from the ear, or dizziness.

Most often the cause of the tinnitus is one of five types of stress (CAPPE):

- Chemical Stress Overconsumption of coffee, cigarettes and other nicotine products, alcohol, or over-the-counter pain relievers; also a side effect of some medications we may be taking.
- Acoustic Stress Exposure to very loud or prolonged noise, including rock concerts, hunting or target shooting, factory work, operating workshop and lawn equipment, and the like.
- Pathological Stress Hearing loss, ear infections, other diseases of the ear, wax impaction. Removal of excess wax often relieves the tinnitus.
- Physical Stress Walk a mile briskly, split a half cord of wood, or dig up the stump of a dead tree. When you take a break from physical activities, you will likely hear blood rushing through your ear. An artery runs through the middle and inner ear, carrying oxygen-rich blood from the heart to the brain. People suffering from a fever during an illness often hear the pulsing blood while lying quietly in bed.
- Emotional Stress Anxiety and/or depression are common causes for noticeable tinnitus or for increased tinnitus in those who had previously experienced it intermittently. Stress reduction, relaxation techniques, maskers, and biofeedback are a few of the methods which have helped people with this type of tinnitus.

So – everyone has some head or ear noise, but it usually remains unnoticed unless something elevates it to the conscious level. Then it may become debilitating or disabling. Solving the problem involves understanding tinnitus and demystifying it and understanding the stress factors: CAPPE.

The situation is indeed mind over matter. Psychological help may be necessary for tinnitus habituation. Tinnitus retraining therapy, antidepressants, or anxiety medications may be necessary to return the silence in the ears.

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## Board of Directors Meeting Schedule

The board of directors of the Virginia Lions Hearing Foundation and Research Center, Inc., will hold its fall meeting on Saturday, October 23, 2010, in the Riggs Auditorium on the second floor of the West Complex of the

University of Virginia Health System.

The winter board of directors meeting will be on Saturday, January 15, 2011, in Riggs Auditorium. If that meeting has to be postponed because of inclement weather, it will be rescheduled for January 22.

The spring directors meeting will be on Saturday, April 16, 2011.

All meetings of the board of directors will begin at 11:00 a.m. unless otherwise specified in the meeting notice.

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## **Hearing Foundation Contribution Patches**

Every Virginia Lions Club which contributes to the Virginia Lions Hearing Foundation receives a patch for the club banner to recognize its financial support to the organization. In addition, those clubs which donate \$10.00 or more per member also get a “Gold Contributor” patch, and those clubs giving \$1,000 or more receive a “\$1,000 Club” patch.

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