

Paying My Dues...

I see what we get for our [HLAA National] dues a little differently.

I'm not paying dues in order to get a magazine for \$6.95 even though the magazine is very good. I am paying dues so that there is someone working on my behalf year round doing things that my chapter is in no position to do. For that I pay less than 70 cents a week, less than 10 cents a day. What can you buy for 70 cents anymore? I can't buy much that brings me any value – and certainly nothing that brings lasting value.

As important as our chapters are, we are in no position to influence anyone beyond our own area. And even having a strong local influence isn't always a possibility. Do you really think that we can influence the policy makers who write the legislation or issue the guidelines? Without a national office, we would never have been included in the ADA. Few, if any, of us would even have been aware that such legislation was under discussion. Yet, thanks to the work of the national office all those years ago, we benefit from it every single day. Standing up for our interests is what the national office has always done. Standing up for our interests is what the national office is doing still, and we will benefit from their efforts far into the future.

Today, they are working hard to see that hearing assistance is available at all price points, building persuasive cases to increase access and provide protection, working with manufacturers to ensure that our needs are built into new products, working with the health care community to ensure that our issues are on their agenda, and on dozens of other issues. I could go on and on.

To my mind, I am getting enormous value for those dues. I will continue to urge people to join HLAA until hearing loss is understood by all, and access is universal. We sure aren't there yet.

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