

Local stutterers share tough experiences

Group members met with graduate students Tuesday for International Stuttering Awareness Day

Brook Reinhard
News Editor

Lo Caudle is not a fast talker. She does not rush her words. Sometimes it takes minutes for her to speak a full sentence.

Caudle stutters. She's stumbled over her words for 54 years.

But her tricks of the tongue have become an old friend for her.

"As a kid I was a really shy girl," said Caudle, as she struggled to get out the words. "Now I can't shut up."

The 57-year-old Eugene woman has dealt with her own special way of speaking since she was 3 years old. Now a buyer for the Museum of Natural History and chapter leader of Eugene's local National Stuttering Association, Caudle has found ways to get by, and is helping other stutterers to do the same.

One of Caudle's most difficult ordeals is tolerating people who aren't patient with her.

"People act as if you were hard of hearing," she said. "They'll go, 'HELLO?' and enunciate, 'MAY I HELP YOU?' and I'm going, 'Will you stop screaming?'"

"I just feel that people who stutter are so creative and so bright. And the listener responds as if we're dumb."

On Tuesday — which was International Stuttering Awareness Day — Caudle and two others in the support group met with a group of graduate students in the speech and language pathology program at the University to talk about life as a stutterer.

"For years, I tried to hide the fact that I stuttered," said an Albany man who only gave his first name, Dick. "That ruled out a lot of career choices."

Dick, who's now retired, said he often would take jobs that had little human contact so he wouldn't have to speak very much.

"I thought then that (speaking) would have a negative impact on what I was doing," he said in a slow, measured voice. "But I've accepted the fact that I'm never going to be completely fluent — it's just part of who I am."

Stutterers deal with their speech problems in different ways. Some, like Caudle, embrace their quirks and make it part of their personality. Others, like Dick, hide their disability as much as possible. They use breathing techniques such as easy onset, which train stutterers to keep air passages open to create

whole words without cutting off any sound.

And then there's Eric Sprado. A giant of a man with a huge white beard and stretched suspenders, Sprado has no problem being upfront about his stuttering.

"A little kid will ask, 'Why do you talk funny?'" he said. "Moms will grab their kids and freak out, but I'll tell them, 'I've talked like this since I was 18 months old.' They'll say, 'Oh, OK,' and it will be fine, and then it will never worry them. It's just like asking someone if you have black shoes. Then you know."

One time Sprado, a real estate broker, had a customer who wanted to know about farmland.

"Pretty soon he said, 'Isn't there anyone in your office who can TALK?'" he said. "I told him, 'Well, that kind of falls under the tough shit category.'"

Laura Deer, a speech and language pathology graduate student who was attending the group Tuesday, said it's her goal to focus on the stutterers who want to improve their speech.

"Some people will want to work on their issue and be more fluent and some others will continue stuttering," she said.

Caudle said people are most respectful of stutterers by



Danielle Hickey Emerald

Jessica Fanning, a doctoral student in communication disorders, hosted a support group on Tuesday night for International Stuttering Awareness Day.

being attentive.

"Keep eye contact," she said. "Be patient. Don't say it for us."

The local chapter of the National Stuttering Association meets the first and third Tuesday of every month in the lounge of

the Clinical Services Building. Meetings are open to everyone.

E-mail Lo Caudle at loie@efn.org or visit www.nsstutter.org for more information.

Contact the news editor at brookreinhard@dailyemerald.com.

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Homeless

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if something falls from the tree, it could be dangerous."

Gummer said he thinks there is a high concentration of homeless people in the West University neighborhood, but added he does not think it is an unsafe place to live.

"I don't think homeless people cause harm — they are mostly harmless," he said.

University senior Marie Malpass said she thinks homelessness is simply common in today's society.

"There are rich people, and there are poor people," she said. "I don't know how to stop it, but they are going to be everywhere, and people

just have to get used to it."

Weinman said he has not heard complaints about the West University neighborhood, but that doesn't mean there are not homeless people in the area. He said the neighborhood does have low income housing, and many homeless people go to the area to receive help from organizations like the White Bird Clinic.

Weinman said the community has a lot of programs to help people living in poverty, but it is not enough. He said the local and state governments do not have the money to solve the problem.

"The state government doesn't seem to be interested in the problem," he said. "So it just goes on."

Gummer said Eugene moved out

because the real estate company discovered they had an extra tenant living there.

"It was the middle of winter at the time, so we paid whatever fines the real estate company gave us, and as soon as he found a place to go, he moved out of our shed," Gummer said.

Gummer said he was glad to have had the opportunity to meet Eugene.

"He's a genius," Gummer said. "It amazes me the stuff he did. He even built his own bicycle with miscellaneous parts. It was all different colors, but it was working."

Contact the reporter at daniellegillespie@dailyemerald.com.

ASUO

ASUO (associated students of the University Of Oregon) kick off tonight Oct 25th at 7pm in the Ben Linder Rm. Come find out how to become involved with student government.

Today's crossword solution

ROAN	SNUFF	RAIN
ONCE	CARLO	EDGE
BUDGERIGAR	CROW	
ESCAROLE	SHOERS	
TEDS	THORN	
TONICS	TEASDALE	
SNOOT	CREME	LAS
ATTN	WHINE	PINS
RAT	SHOPS	DUNCE
SPITTERS	SATEEN	
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BRAT	ELLEN	EPEE
SUMS	REAMS	DEED

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