

Who is ATA?



Why is our work so important?

What do we create?

How do we use our resources?

**American Tinnitus Association:**

The Connection to A Cure

2009-2010 ANNUAL REPORT



Where do we reach out to others?

How do we approach our work?

# WHO is the American Tinnitus Association?

A collection of people who care deeply about a tinnitus cure and support its inevitability. A tireless force, including ATA's Board of Directors, Scientific Advisory Committee, dedicated staff, health professionals, members, donors and scientists around the world.

Thank you for your interest in the American Tinnitus Association's annual report for fiscal year July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010.

ATA's mission, first and foremost, is finding a cure for tinnitus. During this past year we have continued our progress toward that goal. Our own research grant program funded five inspiring projects, each fitting into one or more areas on ATA's *Roadmap to a Cure*. Our steadfast advocacy efforts have led to the continuation of increased federal funding for tinnitus research and the introduction of targeted tinnitus legislation into Congress.

ATA remains the "go-to place" for millions of people wanting to learn more about tinnitus and/or who are looking for commonality with others grappling with this condition. ATA provides a wide range of resources on tinnitus and available treatments; a list of health



professionals who specialize in treating the condition; interactivity for patients on our social networking sites; and locations of tinnitus support groups around the country. Through *Tinnitus Today*, our very informative magazine, and our redesigned and continually updated website, [www.ata.org](http://www.ata.org), we report on research activity from around the world and publish research funding opportunities for investigators.

I'd like to thank our Board of Directors, Scientific Advisory Committee, the ATA staff and our devoted membership for continuing their first-rate work. They keep ATA's engine running as they hold dear the vision of a quieter future. I look forward to sharing our progress over the coming years, as we continue this journey toward a world without tinnitus.

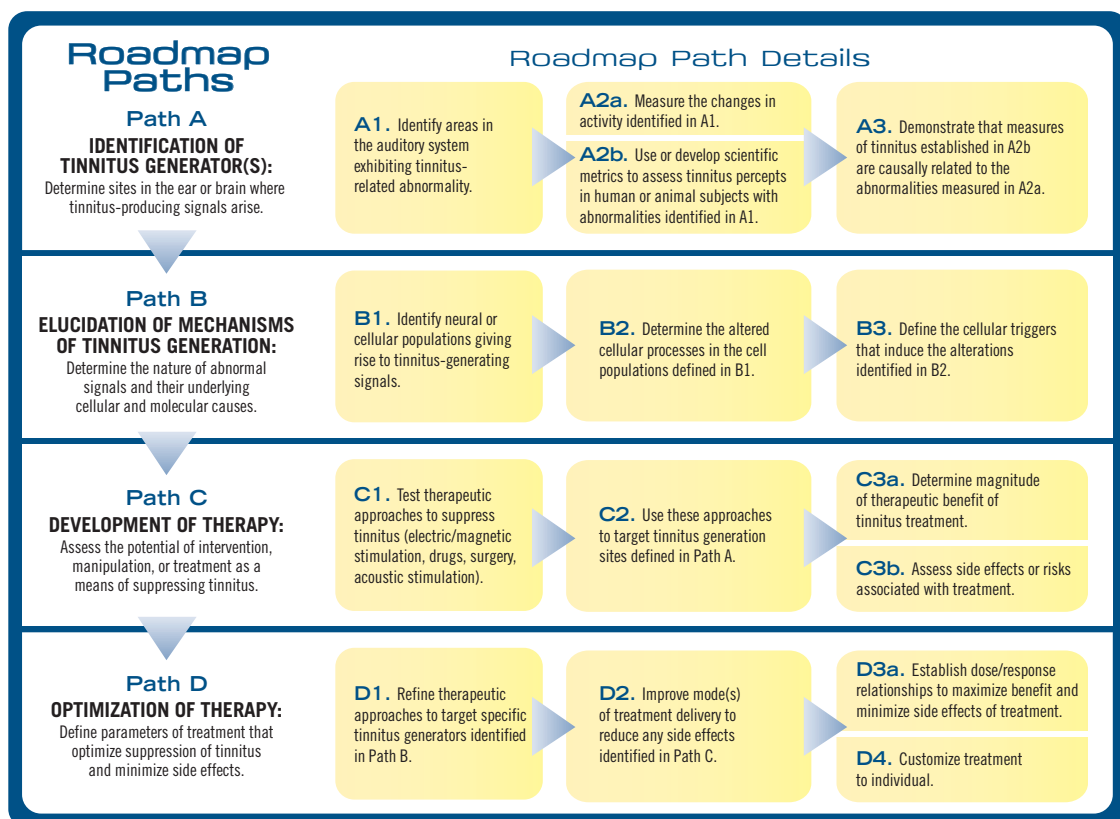
**Michael Malusevic**  
ATA Executive Director

"Tinnitus has been a long-misunderstood condition and it's our responsibility as public officials and as American citizens to help address this growing problem for America's veterans and all who suffer from the disabling effects of tinnitus."

**Rep. Tom Cole (R-OK-4)**  
2009 ATA Congressional Champion

"ATA's *Roadmap to a Cure* is a vehicle that provides the necessary structure to attain the goals of identifying where and how tinnitus starts and in determining the effectiveness and optimization of a variety of therapies (behavior, pharmacologic, acoustic, electric, magnetic and more)."

**Anthony T. Cacace, Ph.D.**  
Chair, ATA's Scientific Advisory Committee



## Our Mission

The American Tinnitus Association exists to cure tinnitus through the development of resources that advance tinnitus research.

## Our Standout Identity

**Supporting Research** — Founded in 1971, ATA is the only member-based, nonprofit organization in the United States that gives individuals a stake in curing tinnitus. We are long-standing trailblazers in the field of tinnitus research. ATA's research grants make it possible for scientists to test their theories and conduct first-rate investigations.

**Ensuring public dollars** — Our advocacy program enjoys ongoing success in educating lawmakers about the need for public tinnitus research dollars. By expressing our vision and demonstrating our leadership, ATA encourages agencies, committees and lawmakers to roll those funds into federal budgets.

**Providing in-depth information** — ATA is a constantly-updated clearing house of information. Through our website, phone line, social media pages, member communication and our magazine, *Tinnitus Today*, we provide information that will help people understand and manage their tinnitus. For so many, we provide the vision of a quieter, more positive future.

## ATA's Board of Directors

**Gary P. Reul, Ed.D.**, Chair, retired secondary and college teacher, counselor, district curriculum director and administrator for the Washington State Department of Education; ATA CEO, 2008-2009, Issaquah, Wash.

**Mark K. Johnson, J.D.**, Vice Chair, general counsel, Chugach Electric Association, Inc., former commissioner of the Regulatory Commission of Alaska, Anchorage, Alaska.

**Barbara Kennedy**, Secretary, retired middle/high school Spanish teacher, Mays Landing, N.J.

**J. Scott Simons**, Treasurer, Pharmaceutical Sales, Pfizer, Retired, Sioux Falls, S.D.

**James Chinnis, Ph.D.**, Senior Principal Analyst, Innovative Decisions, Inc., Warrenton, Va.

**Anthony T. Cacace, Ph.D.**, Professor, Communication Sciences & Disorders, Wayne State University, Detroit, Mich.

**Neil Cherian, M.D.**, Director, Cleveland Clinic Center for Performance Medicine, Cleveland Heights, Ohio.

**Michelle DaPolito**, Head of Marketing, FX Solutions, LLC, Tuxedo, N.Y.

**Marsha Johnson, Au.D.**, audiologist, Oregon Tinnitus & Hyperacusis Treatment Clinic, Portland, Ore.

**Thomas Lobl, Ph.D.**, Vice President, Research and Development, NeuroSystec Corp., a company developing drugs and devices to treat tinnitus, Valencia, Calif.

**Scott C. Mitchell, J.D., C.P.A.**, attorney, ATA board chair, 2006 – 2009, Houston, Texas.

**Michael J. O'Rourke**, Assistant Director, Veterans Health Policy, National Veterans Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, Arlington, Va.

**Michael J. A. Robb, M.D.**, private practice in neurology, oto-neurology & medical neuro-otology, Robb Oto-Neurology Clinic, Phoenix, Ariz.

**Joseph Trevisani, M.I.A.**, Chief Market Analyst, FX Solutions, LLC, New York, N.Y.

**William Shatner**, Los Angeles, Calif.

**Jack A. Vernon, Ph.D.**, Portland, Ore.

## Honorary Directors

**Peter (dec.) & Joan Graves**, Beverly Hills, Calif.

**Mark O. Hatfield**, U.S. Senate-Retired, Lake Oswego, Ore.

## Associations and Affiliations

We work with other like-minded organizations and individuals invested in common goals: advance the scientific understanding of tinnitus, eradicate the disorder and best serve vulnerable populations.

- Tinnitus Research Initiative
- National Institutes of Health
- Department of Defense
- Department of Veterans Affairs
- Veterans of Foreign Wars
- Disabled American Veterans
- Coalition for Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans

“ATA is the premier organization for tinnitus research and information dissemination. As private practice audiologists, we rely on current research and data to meet the needs of our tinnitus patients. ATA provides us with those essential tools. We appreciate all the hard work and dedication of everyone involved.”

**Amit Gosalia, Au.D., FAAA**  
*Board Certified  
Doctor of Audiology*

“Noise in the ears and head has been the scourge of many millions. By the first century, Pliny the Elder had coined the term ‘tinnitus.’ Each day, through the efforts of ATA – advocacy expertise, research programs and the generosity and tenacity of our membership – we take a step closer to finding that elusive cure.”

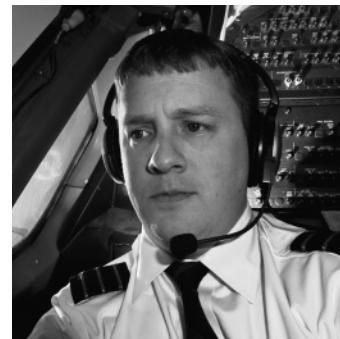


**Gary P. Reul, Ed.D.**  
*Chair, ATA Board of Directors*

“ATA is great! I joined when I first got tinnitus about a year ago and found the information you presented on finding a cure very hopeful. Keep up the good work.”

**Blair Cox**

ATA member and Facebook fan



## WHY is ATA's Work so Important?

We live in a very noisy world. ATA's efforts give relief to people who feel desperate and alone with the seriousness of their tinnitus. We make it possible for tinnitus research to flourish and create a quieter future for millions.

ATA sets the standard for tinnitus information available to the public; our depth of knowledge and supportive nature generate, for many, a sense that a quieter life is possible.

### People are Suffering

People all over the globe live with tinnitus, some with devastating disability. According to one study, approximately 50 million adults in the United States experience tinnitus, and 16 million of them reported having frequent tinnitus in the past year. Add to that the one in five teens who suffer hearing loss and who are at high risk for tinnitus.

### Military Personnel Get an Unfair Share

Tinnitus is the most common service-connected disability for military personnel returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. For some, this distressing noise in their ears will continue far into the future. Disability for tinnitus paid to veterans of all periods of service is growing from \$1.1 billion in 2009 to an estimated \$2.26 billion annually or more by 2014.

### Our Efforts Plant Seeds

The research grants that ATA funds often lead to larger studies funded by organizations such as the National Institutes of Health. By planting seeds with initial investigations, we set research on its determined way to a cure.

### ATA's Contribution to Global Public Health

Tinnitus research is an international endeavor that includes information sharing across borders and research venues. ATA is proud to fund and jump start innovative, progressive studies on curing tinnitus and maximizing management efficacy. We also share our treasure trove of valuable resources with the global tinnitus community by answering thousands of calls and e-mails monthly, maintaining [www.ata.org](http://www.ata.org) and developing social media connections.

# WHAT Does ATA Create?

We help establish forward motion toward a cure and encourage a growing personal and collective optimism.

## Creating Movement Toward a Cure

During the last 10 years, scientists have made tremendous strides in figuring out what causes tinnitus and how to treat it.

## Illuminating Further Possibilities

This year, ATA remained central to this advancement of knowledge by investing over \$200,000 in promising research projects recommended by our esteemed 15-member Scientific Advisory Committee and approved by our Board of Directors. We are pleased to play such an important role in supporting some of the most relevant projects that will one day cure what some call the malady of the 21st century.

## Raising the Funds

We use a variety of approaches to raise as much money as possible to support research by meeting with potential individual and corporate supporters and implementing a variety of fundraising efforts. This year, for example, we held the successful **Jack Vernon Walk to Silence Tinnitus** and four direct mail campaigns that together raised \$275,000. We worked with Major League Baseball's Oakland Athletics on a silent auction to benefit ATA; established an ATA-branded credit card, which directly benefits our organization; and began planning and gathering for our own exciting auction for late 2010.

## Partnering for Progress

Our country spent \$10 million dollars last year on advancing the science underlying tinnitus, up from about \$1.5 million in 2005. Due to ATA's steadfast advocacy efforts, the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders doubled their spending on tinnitus research in a single year and the Department of Defense continues to fund tinnitus investigators through its Peer Reviewed Medical Research Program. ATA broadcasts grant application particulars to clinical and basic science researchers to ensure that as many potential researchers as possible know about and apply for these available funds.

## Creating Optimism

ATA fosters hope for a quieter future by tracking and reporting on the latest developments in tinnitus research and science in order to keep the public fully informed.

## ATA Online

Visitors flock to our website, [www.ata.org](http://www.ata.org). With 30,000 hits every month, viewers find a sophisticated spread to choose from: FAQs, management tools, researcher and patient resources, media coverage of tinnitus, ATA's Support Network and links to online social communities. We also explain how to join ATA, donate and become engaged in our advocacy efforts, all of which contribute to our fight for a cure.

## The Online ATA Store

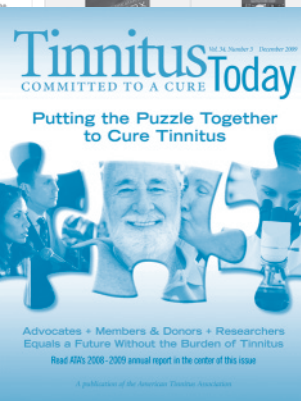
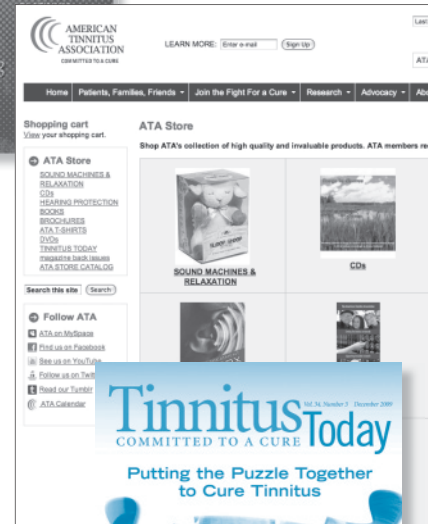
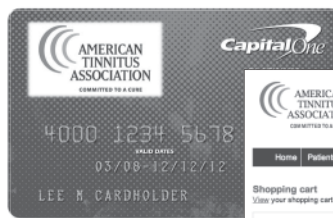
Our store is an oasis of products that help create a sense of personal empowerment – nature sound CDs, informative DVDss, books, sound machines and other tools to manage tinnitus and protect hearing. Through careful planning, product review and an increase in product variety, the ATA Store has doubled its revenue since 2007.

## Our Well-Respected Magazine

*Tinnitus Today* shares with members and donors reports on ATA- and internationally-funded research; articles by health professionals who treat tinnitus; a Q&A column by tinnitus health professionals; a spotlight on our advocacy efforts; stories about families courageously dealing with tinnitus; and much more.

## People Who Care and Share

People need to feel heard; they also need validation, empathy and information about their personal struggles. ATA's Support Network provides just that with 36 tinnitus support groups across the U.S. that provide a group environment for sharing and understanding. In addition, 156 invaluable help network volunteers provide one-on-one individualized support to people suffering with tinnitus.



"The value of support groups cannot be overstated. The need for ground level, in-the-trenches feedback and support is invaluable! We need to continue to communicate with each other about this overwhelming daily problem – the constant racket in our entire being!"

**Lisa Kennedy**

*Facilitator, Long Island Tinnitus Support Group*

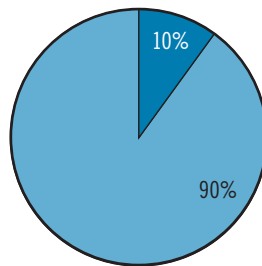


# HOW Does ATA Use Its Resources?

All roads lead to research and the unwavering pursuit of a cure.

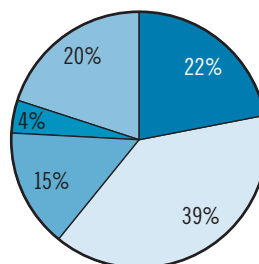
## The Financials

### Revenue and Support



90% Individuals  
10% Foundations

### Expenses



22% Advocacy 4% Management  
39% Research 20% Fundraising  
15% Support

### Statement of Activities

Revenue and Support	\$ 877,273
Total Program Services	\$ 811,366
Total Supporting Services	\$ 263,302
Beginning Year Net Assets	\$ 774,182
Change in Net Assets	\$ (197,395)
End of Year Net Assets	\$ 576,787

“The American Tinnitus Association is committed to curing tinnitus. Their effective advocacy efforts in Washington, D.C., help maintain a strong national voice to enhance research funding from institutions like the National Institutes of Health and the Department of Defense. Moreover, their own grant mechanisms, supported by well-orchestrated fundraising endeavors, help support groundbreaking work that will lead to larger grants and eventually a cure. The Board of Directors, Scientific Advisory Committee, executive director and staff work diligently to ensure the success of this mission.”



**Anthony T. Cacace, Ph.D.**

Chair, ATA's Scientific Advisory Committee

**The American Tinnitus Association** has 501(c)(3) status as a nonprofit organization; all contributions are tax-deductible as allowed by law.

ATA is a member agency of the Health Medical Research Charities of America Federation for the Combined Federal Campaign. We appreciate those donors who choose the CFC to make direct contributions to ATA by indicating #11030 on their work place giving form, or when necessary, simply writing in, “American Tinnitus Association.”

## ATA's Scientific Advisory Committee

Anthony T. Cacace, Ph.D.,  
Chair, Detroit, Mich.

Paul J. Abbas, Ph.D.,  
Iowa City, Iowa

Thomas J. Brozoski, Ph.D.,  
Springfield, Ill.

Donald Caspary, Ph.D.,  
Springfield, Ill.

Craig Formby, Ph.D.,  
Tuscaloosa, Ala.

Donald Godfrey, Ph.D.,  
Portland, Ore.

James (Jay) Hall, Ph.D.,  
FAAA, Gainesville, Fla.

James Henry, Ph.D.,  
Portland, Ore.

Paul R. Kileny, Ph.D.,  
Ann Arbor, Mich.

Robert A. Levine, M.D.,  
Boston, Mass.

Jay Piccirillo, M.D., FACS,  
St. Louis, Mo.

Michael J. A. Robb, M.D.,  
Phoenix, Ariz.

Jay T. Rubinstein, M.D.,  
Ph.D., Seattle, Wash.

Susan Shore, Ph.D.,  
Ann Arbor, Mich.

Hinrich Staecker, M.D.,  
Ph.D., Kansas City, Kan.

“ATA is important to research as it provides the financial means to help advance knowledge in the field of tinnitus. ATA grants assist prominent research that otherwise might not have the support necessary to reach valuable conclusions.”

### Rebecca Haas

East Tennessee State University  
2009 ATA student research grant recipient

## ATA Awards \$200,500 in Research Grants During FY 2009-2010

**Paul Finlayson, Ph.D.**, Wayne State University, Detroit, Mich. PROJECT: Noise-Induced Tinnitus and Biophysical Changes in Rat Dorsal Cochlear Nucleus Fusiform Cells. Grant renewal; \$45,000 for year two of a two-year project (\$94,954 total). *Roadmap* Path B. SCOPE: An effective tinnitus treatment may depend on the cellular changes affecting brain cell hyperactivity in the dorsal cochlear nucleus that produce tinnitus.

**Rebecca Haas**, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City. STUDENT PROJECT: The Effect of Tinnitus on Gap Detection. One-year grant; \$5,500. *Roadmap* Path B. SCOPE: The investigator's hypothesis is that neural activity in tinnitus patients might result in higher gap detection threshold when compared to those in non-tinnitus subjects.

**Avril Genene Holt, Ph.D.**, Wayne State University, Detroit, Mich. PROJECT: Role of Dopamine in Susceptibility to Central Tinnitus. One-year grant; \$50,000. *Roadmap* Paths A and B. SCOPE: The long-term goal is to identify and understand molecular mechanisms involved in tinnitus-related brain plasticity (changes) and modulate dopamine levels to attenuate tinnitus symptoms.

**Pim Van Dijk, Ph.D.**, University of Groningen, the Netherlands. PROJECT: Response of the Central Auditory System in Tinnitus and Hearing Loss, an fMRI Study. Grant renewal; \$50,000 for year two of a two-year project (\$149,100 total). *Roadmap* Path A. SCOPE: Use functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) to compare brain patterns to determine why some hearing impaired patients have tinnitus while others do not.

**Fan-Gang Zeng, Ph.D.**, University of California, Irvine. PROJECT: Tinnitus Suppression. Grant renewal; \$50,000 for year two of a two-year project (\$138,006 total). *Roadmap* Paths C and D. SCOPE: Acoustic and electrical stimulation, with a particular focus on searching for external sounds that can effectively suppress tinnitus.



## WHERE Does ATA Reach Out to Others?

ATA engages those committed to finding a cure – members, donors, corporate sponsors, lawmakers, tinnitus investigators and individuals who gather to discuss tinnitus.

### Important Decision Makers

In addition to advocating for public funds for tinnitus research, our advocacy program brings voices together to explore the future. This fiscal year, Congress set a Sept. 22, 2010 date for a hearing on tinnitus, before the Invisible Wounds Caucus.

### Tinnitus Today

Our members and donors enjoy our robust and attractive magazine, but its impact doesn't stop there. Each issue is passed from one hand to another, from a mailbox delivery to an audiologist's waiting room. This allows *Tinnitus Today* to share information and reach out to potential ATA members and participants in our Professional Membership and Corporate Membership programs.

### www.ata.org

Our website's continually updated information provides visitors with timely, accurate, compelling facts, data and resources. On Dec. 1, 2009, we launched an exciting, more interactive and visually appealing redesign, including an ATA calendar, advocacy toolkit, top 10 FAQs page, updated Members Section, information archive, information on clinical trial opportunities, new media and video sections and more.

### Social Media

We have embraced a future of ever-increasing digital connections by establishing and monitoring six social media venues. This allows us to reach people who may not have heard of ATA and give them up-to-the-minute information on tinnitus treatments and research. Our social media hot spots include Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, Tumblr and YouTube; all are becoming influential and expansive online communities.

### Interesting Website and Social Networking Facts

- Nearly 1,000 people visit [www.ata.org](http://www.ata.org) every day.
- We have over 3,000 fans on our Facebook page.
- Our profile on MySpace has been viewed over 4,500 times.



### YouTube

Our nine videos on YouTube have been viewed over 143,000 times. Our popular videos include statements and interviews with professionals like William Hal Martin, Ph.D., Oregon Health and Sciences University; veterans like former staff sergeant Jean-Claude Wicks of the U.S. Air Force; and celebrity spokespeople such as actor William Shatner and tennis legend Jennifer Capriati and her family.

# HOW do we Approach our Work?

ATA is constantly mindful of the needs of the tinnitus community. We judiciously use the support of our members and donors to keep ATA on a healthy, research-oriented path, aligned with our dreams of a world without tinnitus.

**Vision** As an organization and as individuals, ATA approaches its work with a singular focus: How does this task get us closer to a cure for tinnitus? By integrating this awareness into everything we do, we make sure that ATA remains focused and continues its mission to find a cure.

**Michael Malusevic**  
Executive Director

**Research** Since 1980, ATA has supported 98 research studies in an effort to cure one of the most complicated health conditions to ever affect modern society. Each investigation has embraced ATA's commitment to curing tinnitus. ATA keeps firmly in mind the millions struggling worldwide with this invisible condition, as we step closer to restoring and embracing quiet.

**Daniel Born**  
Director of Research & Special Projects

**Advocacy** We employ efficient and effective strategies when meeting with congressional leaders in Washington, D.C.; we target those who sit on the most influential committees for our cause. This year, the House Armed Services Committee introduced the "Tinnitus Research for Military Health Improvement Act" (H.R. 5203) – \$10 million per year over the next five years for tinnitus research. This historic moment in ATA advocacy demands consistent hard work to ensure this bill passes.

**Jennifer Born**  
Director of Public Affairs

**Research Dollars** Our drive to support as much research as possible informs our approach to fundraising. We creatively engage the tinnitus community and work closely with our major donors and corporate sponsors. This year generated attention and commitment to ATA through fundraising efforts, such as the **Jack Vernon Walk to Silence Tinnitus**, and compelling direct mail and public awareness campaigns.

**Wes Breazeale**  
Development Director

**A Special Publication** *Tinnitus Today* reflects ATA's knowledge that people want community, understanding, information, hope and the voices of those who share this common condition. Through publishing research findings; new concepts, ideas and tools; and letters and suggestions from other members, we bring into focus for our readers the progress being made to enhance tinnitus management tools and discover cures.

**Nina Rogozen**  
Editor, *Tinnitus Today*

**Compassion and Action** As a resource for tinnitus support groups and help network volunteers, we demonstrate our concern for the many who seek the reassurance of others with tinnitus or who need one-on-one support to get through their worst tinnitus days. We appreciate and recognize our members and donors on our website, [www.ata.org](http://www.ata.org), and in *Tinnitus Today*, for making this work possible.

**Katie Fuller**  
Manager of Member & Support Relations

**Tools** The products in our online ATA Store have the potential to improve people's lives and give them more control over the intrusive role tinnitus plays. We offer information for personal growth and learning, tinnitus relief and hearing protection. We stock our inventory with products reviewed and determined to be some of the best available and we fulfill our orders as quickly as possible.

**Dan Burbach**  
Fulfillment Coordinator

**Light** We recognize that people who reach out to ATA by phone and e-mail are often desperate for help, reassurance and a light at the end of their long, noisy tunnel. Our caring, expressed through information, ideas, resources and respect, helps them begin easing out of a life that sometimes seems hopeless and bleak.

**Sarah McCarthy**  
Receptionist



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