

# HLAA TC March 2017



The mission of HLAA TC is to open the world of communication to people with hearing loss by providing information, education, support and advocacy.

## Next Speaker:

March 18, 2017

Sara Oberg  
Health Partners Audiology  
*Improving Communication with  
hearing loss*

April 15, 2017

Mary Bauer  
DHHS  
*Hearing Loss in the Workplace*

May 20, 2017

Tony Strong  
Williams Sound  
*Assistive Listening Devices*



## Contents

President's Message	Page 2
March Speaker	Page 3
Meeting Summary	Page 4-5
Safe N Clear/Library	Page 6
Magazine Miscellany	Page 7
The Doctor Disconnect	Page 8
Calendar Items	Page 9
Photos	Page 10

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Hearing Loss Association of America Twin Cities Chapter (HLAA TC) is held the 3rd Saturday of the month (September thru May). We gather at 9:30 to socialize, and begin our meeting at 10 AM at The Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute, 3915 Golden Valley Road, Golden Valley, MN 55442. The meeting adjourns at noon.

## President's Message



*Christine Morgan*  
**March 2017**

Happy March!

This is a busy month for sports fans and the Irish (whether by birth or by spirit). Not to mention the undecided weather which gives us Spring one day and snow the next.

We have a lot going on right now behind the scenes of our Chapter as we work on our upcoming Walk4Hearing and prepare for Lobby Day at the Capital on March 8.

I've been working on our schedule for the next session starting in the Fall. We have some excellent speakers and subject matter. Your suggestions are always welcome. We want to "hear" what you are interested in learning more about. Feedback from our members is what keeps us on the right track.

This month, we have Sarah Oberg as our speaker (see her bio in this newsletter). Sara not only works with

people with hearing loss on improving their communication and listening skills, she also started the Cochlear Implant Support Group which meets socially each month around the metro. She is a busy woman with a great deal of experience (and a great singing voice).

Next month, Mary Bauer (whom many of you know) will speak on Hearing Loss in the Workplace. Then we wind up the year (can you believe it?) the next month with a representative from Williams Sound presenting on a variety of assistive listening devices.

Wow! Only three more months of meetings before we take our summer break. Don't forget the National Convention in June in Salt Lake City, Utah. If you've never been to one (or even if you have), I would encourage you to attend. The offerings are impressive and it is hard to choose which sessions to go to. A truly wonderful experience.

I look forward to seeing you on March 18!

Christine



## March Speaker

### SARA OBERG

Health Partners Health Partners Audiology  
*Improving Communication with hearing loss*



**Sara Oberg** is a certified speech-language pathologist at Regions Hospital, and for over nine years at the University of Minnesota Medical Center Fairview. She received her bachelor's degrees in Vocal Performance and Music Education (grades K-12) and master's degree in Speech-Language-Hearing Sciences from the University of Minnesota. Sara has also earned certificates in Vocology and Vocal Pedagogy.

The majority of her time is spent providing aural rehabilitation and speech-language therapy to children and adults who are deaf or hard of hearing and have hearing aids and/or cochlear implants.

Sara also helps people with voice and breathing disorders, providing evaluations, laryngeal exams and therapy. She previously conducted evaluations and provided therapy for individuals who have had traumatic brain injuries, strokes, and dysphagia.

She has evaluated children to see if they were cochlear implant candidates for the Lions Children's Hearing Center.

In 2011, Sara started and continues to lead as a volunteer an Adult Cochlear Implant Social Group, which provides a way for individuals with cochlear implants/hearing loss to connect with others and share information.

Sara has personally been involved with the Deaf community since she was born, because her grandparents had accidents and lost their hearing at ages 5 and 14. She considers herself proficient, but not fluent in American Sign Language. Sara has been immersed in the Deaf culture her entire life and is very passionate about this community and making a positive difference in helping all of them reach their full potential.

# February Meeting Summary



*Kathleen Marin, HLAATC Vice-President*

## Summary of the February 18, 2017 Meeting

Christine Morgan called the meeting to order at 10 am and introduced our guest speaker, psychologist Kristen Swan, who spoke about the impact of hearing loss on relationships.

Kristen started by stating that all of us have basic needs, like a sense of belonging, a positive perception of ourselves, an ability to communicate, a purpose in life, independence, and so on. Hearing loss impacts and can diminish those aspects of our life. It can create a crisis, especially if the loss is sudden or over a short period of time, leaving us with unanswerable questions, like “why me?” or “what next?” Our ability to bounce back, and the time it takes, varies. The same is true for our families and friends. We need to be patient with them, as they are also affected by our hearing loss and may be at different stages of acceptance.

To move beyond the grief, anger and crisis, we need to reframe the hearing loss. One way to do this is to look at it as an opportunity. Another is to alter negative thinking. For instance, we need to address the ideas that people will think we are stupid, not want to be our friends, or we are the only ones suffering, because these will tend to isolate us, which will only make us feel worse.

Communication is harder with hearing loss, for both the person with hearing loss (PHL) and the communication partner (CP). We have to watch our attitude and keep it realistic, be aware that listening is tiring, choose when to disengage but not all the time, try not to dominate the conversation, and practice good communication. We need to remember that our CPs care about us, but may just forget to use good communication skills. A couple of pet peeves: never say “never mind” or “I’ll tell you later.”

What follows is a list of issues for the PHL and CP and how to address them.

- Environmental stress, visual and volume overload, the need for captions. CPs just have to get used to the captioning.
- Embarrassment regarding misunderstandings. Use humor. It makes everyone comfortable.
- The CP feels protective, wants to take care of the PHL. PHL needs to be more assertive.
- Community changes, feel marginal, don’t fit in like before. Hard on both CP and PHL. PHL often makes him/herself marginal by not participating. Need to find what is still good in life.
- Unwillingness to try new things. PHL can become more anxious, worried they won’t succeed.
- Being accused of selective hearing. PHL would love to hear everything.

*(Summary of the February 18, 2017 Meeting. Cont.)*

- CPs don't know what we need. PHLs need to tell them.
- Communication is dumbed down. PHL want depth of communication, even though it takes more work. Plus, it keeps the relationship healthy.
- CP serves as the messenger for or talks for PHL. This keeps PHL dependent and unable to resolve things on his/her own.

Kristen suggested that CPs try to understand what hearing loss is like by wearing ear plugs for a day, see how hard it is, learn what they are missing, become more empathetic.

Self-care is another factor. We need enough sleep, to know our limits, to address any mental health concerns like depression or anxiety that may arise. We need to be flexible and creative, listen with our heart, talk about our feelings openly, take time to play and be silly with each other, remember what we like about the other person, and respect them.

After the break, Christine Morgan reminded the group that HLAA-TC does not endorse any company or their services and that we ask our speakers to strictly talk about the subject matter having to do with hearing loss, not their product. If you have any concerns, please contact any of the board members. Vicki Martin then gave us an ASL lesson with the theme of positive and negative. Vice-president Kathleen Marin gave an example of how to counter objections when you are asking for what you need, and how advocating for yourself is actually advocating for all of us. Other people also gave examples of what they had asked for and the responses, mostly positive. Treasurer Marie Saliterman reminded us of the steak fry coming up in May and asked us to sell tickets and/or to work at it. Secretary Lionel Locke reminded us that the closed captioning campaign is still going on, and that we would like restaurants to sign the pledge that they will use closed captioning. The date for the next Walk4Hearing is Saturday September 9 and it will take place at the Louisiana Oaks Park in St. Louis Park. He also reminded us that HLAA-TC is a 503c tax exempt organization and that if any of us belong to an organization that is looking to donate, to consider us. Christine ended the meeting at noon.

## Reminders:

### Steak Fry

When: May 10, 2017 - 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Where: Crystal Lions VFW, 5222 Bass Lake Rd

Meal: Steak, Baked Potato, Toast, Cole Slaw & Coffee

Cost: \$11.00 / Ticket

Sign up to volunteer and to sell tickets! Also – plan to come and enjoy a steak dinner!

2017 WALK 4 HEARING  
SEPTEMBER 9, 2017  
NEW LOCATION  
LOUISIANA OAKS PARK  
3520 Louisiana Avenue South  
St. Louis Park, MN 55416

## Safe N Clear Medical/Dental face masks “The Communicator”

By Christine Morgan

Now this is exciting news!

According to Neil Bauman, PhD (a leading authority on hearing loss as well as an audiologist with hearing loss), Dr. Anne McIntosh, Ph.D. has received FDA approval at the end of 2016 for her new, clear surgical face mask. It is manufactured in the US and is called “The Communicator”.

The Communicator combines the best of fabric and clear face masks. This enables you to easily see the wearer’s mouth without any fogging and will allow you to speechread with ease. It is not only useful for doctors, dentists, etc. but also for surgical nurses who have hearing loss to be able to speechread others in the surgical suite.

Best of all, it is available to anyone. The introductory price: \$1.50 each, a box of 40 for \$60, or a case for \$500. For further information, e-mail Dr. Anne at [info@safenclear.com](mailto:info@safenclear.com) or order at <http://www.safenclear.com>.

No more muffled dentist or doctor talk! Let’s spread the word!

Note: at our **March meeting, free samples will be available!** Please take one or two and **have your dentist/dental assistant use them** at your next appointment.



Be sure to visit HLAA-TC’s lending library. The books etc. are in the tub on the information table. Each item has its own page in the sign-out book, which is also on the information table.

Please be sure to sign out your book, CD or DVD. We would appreciate it if could possibly return it for the next meeting. If you do need to keep it for 2 months, you may do so. Items borrowed in May will be due at the September meeting.

If you have a book(s) you would like to donate to the library, please see Christine before placing it in the tub.

Enjoy and learn from our selections!

Here is a sample of library items →

<u>Title</u>	<u>Author</u>
Deaf Proverbs	Ken Glickman
I Can Hear You Whisper	Lydia Denworth
I Danced	Dora Weber
Living Better with Hearing Loss	Katherine Bouton
Living with Hearing Loss	Sam Trychin
Making Music with Hearing Loss	Assoc. of adult musicians....
Mayo Clinic on Hearing	Wayne Olson
The Way I Hear It	Gael Hannan
What Did You Say	Monique Hammond

## Magazine Miscellany

### **AARP Magazine , January 2017**

“Most rock-concert-related hearing loss stems from damage to the hair cells in the cochlea...

Safeguard what you have left by wearing ear protection...

[when] the auditory system in your brain is not stimulated...the brain stops recognizing sound.

You can teach your brain to hear again though, by regularly wearing hearing aids.”

**Consumer Reports, March 2017** quotes Helen Keller: “‘Blindness separates people from things. Deafness separates people from people.’” Lise Hamlin, director of public policy for the nonprofit Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) echoes that sentiment: ‘We’re social creatures. When you shut down the ability to talk and interact with people, that isolation affects your health’” CR reports that the National Academy of Sciences calls “untreated hearing loss a significant national health concern.” CR evaluates some hearing aids and personal amplification devices, informs readers about the usefulness of telecoils and suggests strategies for shopping for hearing help.

*Lionel Locke calls our attention to an article by Anne Schuchat, Acting Director for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Acting Administrator for the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry Rear Admiral, U.S. Public Health Service.*

*Here are some excerpts:*

My father served in the U.S. Navy during World War II and the Korean War... Like many others from the Greatest Generation, Dad’s military service included extensive exposure to loud noise ....

Unfortunately, his story is not unique. Hearing loss is the third most common chronic health condition in the U.S., surpassing diabetes and cancer...

As CDC’s latest Vital Signs report reveals, exposure to noises at an early age... can have serious consequences to people as they age... According to our findings, an estimated 40 million adults – or 1 in 4 – have hearing loss as a result of too much noise. ...

Dad benefited from hearing aids provided by the Veterans Administration, was part of a lip-reading group, and was surrounded by a loving supportive family. Nevertheless he found profound hearing loss to be isolating and frustrating...

Exposure to noise can cause stress, anxiety, depression, and high blood pressure, as well as longer term effects on hearing. And once hearing loss occurs, it is lost forever.

The good news is that the federal government – including the U.S. military – and other sectors, such as industry, have taken steps to reduce exposure to loud noise in the workplace. But noise exposure at home and in the community still needs attention. That’s why it’s so important to protect your hearing while you still have it – don’t wait until it’s too late.

### ***Warning!***

Keep your valuables safe and out of sight. During a recent HLAA-TC meeting, a car belonging to one of our guests was broken into, a window smashed, and some belongings taken. Unfortunately, this can happen anywhere. So to help safeguard your things, carry them with you or place them where they are not visible.



## The Doctor Disconnect

*By Kathleen Marin*

A visit to the doctor's office this week got me thinking about just how challenging it is to access healthcare when we have a hearing loss. The difficulties started at the check-in desk, where the receptionist talked softly, facing away from me into her computer. I was able to guess at many of the questions she posed, but finally had to tell her about my hearing loss and ask her to face me. I then asked which door the nurse would come out of, so I could sit near it to hear my name. The nurse called me, then started talking to me as she walked in front of me. Of course, I could not hear or understand her. I again explained about my hearing loss and how I needed her to face me when she was speaking to me. Her response was to stop speaking altogether and just point at what she needed me to do! Once again, I explained what I needed, and we were able to work things out. I then had a blood draw. The phlebotomist was chatty and friendly. However, I understood only about 50% of what he said. Fortunately, he wasn't giving me medical advice, just passing the time while he took what seemed like a pint of blood. My doctor did a good job of looking at me most of the time; we've known each other for several years, so he knows of my hearing loss. As I was leaving, I asked for help with my patient portal, which wasn't working. I was told I needed to contact tech support. When I said that I couldn't hear well on the phone and would like someone to help me while I was there, I still got the same answer. I would have to call. All in all, a rather unsatisfactory day.

That got me thinking about other encounters with the medical establishment. One time I was unable to schedule an appointment because the call center agent was speaking so softly and was unwilling to speak louder or adjust her microphone. Another time, my doctor started practically yelling at me, thinking that was helpful. During a recent hospitalization, I put a sign over my bed describing my hearing loss and how best to communicate with me, wore a button asking people to face me, and put the international symbol for hearing loss on my wristband. Amazingly, none of the staff who entered my room even noticed. I told every single person on my care team about my hearing loss and asked them to somehow put it in my chart. Eventually, people began to remember. Another problem was understanding people with accents. It was downright scary to be making medical decisions when I wasn't sure what the person was saying. I could go on and on, but you get the picture. And I'm sure you have your own stories, enough to fill a book.

So what should we do? It's clear to me that medical personnel need to be trained in how to interact with persons with hearing loss. I think it would be reasonable to write to the appropriate associations (accrediting organizations, ombudsman offices, Commission for Deaf, Deaf-Blind and Hard of Hearing Minnesotans, etc.) and request such training. Can you imagine how impactful it would be if all of us wrote? I bet we would get action. Until then, however, we need to advocate for ourselves. Some ideas: let all medical personnel know of your hearing loss; ask that it be noted in your chart; have a relative or friend go with you to appointments; ask for a written summary of the visit, especially for medical instructions; use an assistive listening device; use the patient portal to schedule appointments and to review results or ask questions; write your questions or concerns down before the appointment and take the list with you; have your communication partner write down the answers so you can focus on listening; educate the staff in the best way to communicate with you; and remind them and remind them, even if it is 10 times during the office visit, to look at you and speak clearly. It is our right to receive good medical care. And most of the people who work in the medical field want to help us; they just don't know how until we explain it to them.

### **PARTICIPANTS STILL NEEDED for research study**

Participants are still needed for the deaf/hard of hearing research study summarized in the February Newsletter.

Participants must be employed, deaf or hard of hearing, and at least 18 years of age.

To participate, access the survey here: <http://workplaceexperiences.questionpro.com>



## Community Education offerings

Christine, Lionel and Kathleen are helping the world find out about hearing loss. Numerous sessions are scheduled at various locations. Those scheduled for February and March 2017 are listed below:

### **Help! My Partner has Hearing Loss**

South Washington County at Cottage Grove Middle School 651-425-6600 [www.cecool.com](http://www.cecool.com)

May 4, 2017 6-7:30 PM

Hopkins Community Education - Eisenhower Community Center 952-988-4070 [www.lHopkinsCommunityEd.org](http://www.lHopkinsCommunityEd.org)

May 3, 2017 6-7:30 PM

May 12, 2017 10-11:30 AM

### **I've Been Diagnosed With Hearing Loss!**

South Washington County at Cottage Grove Middle School 651-425-6600 [www.cecool.com](http://www.cecool.com)

March 15, 2017 6-7:30 PM

April 7, 2017 10 - 11:30 AM

April 20, 6 - 7:30 PM

Rosemount /Apple Valley/Eagan Community Education 651-423-7925 [www.district196.org/ce](http://www.district196.org/ce)

April 19, 2017 10-11:30 AM

### **Communication Strategies when Dealing with Hearing Loss**

Hopkins Community Education - Eisenhower Community Center 952-988-4070 [www.lHopkinsCommunityEd.org](http://www.lHopkinsCommunityEd.org)

April 6, 2017 6-7:30 PM

April 28, 2017 10-11:30 AM

### **Identifying and Coping with Hearing Loss**

Hopkins Community Education - Eisenhower Community Center 952-988-4070 [www.lHopkinsCommunityEd.org](http://www.lHopkinsCommunityEd.org)

May 3, 2017 6 - 7:30 PM

Registration is required. Fees apply



Please join us for:  
**Adult Cochlear Implant Social Group**  
**Sunday, March 19, 2017**  
**1:00 – 3:00 PM**  
**Northgate Brewing Taproom**  
**783 Harding St. NE**  
**Minneapolis, MN**

**Host: David Galitz**



**They do have water, soda, and ice tea as non-alcoholic options (and you're welcome to bring your own non-alcoholic beverage of choice).**

**There usually isn't a food truck on Sunday afternoon, but Heggie's frozen pizza is available, and of course, you can bring your own food.**

**Sundays are dog friendly. If you want to bring your (well-behaved) pup to the meeting you can!**

**Cochlear Community Chapter Event** – Twin Cities, MN – Cochlear implant and Baha information sharing

Date: Wednesday, April 5, 2017 Time: 6:00 PM-8:00 PM Central Time Location: New Brighton Community Center

Address: 400 10th St. NW Room 220, Minnesota 55112 Cart services will be provided.

## Photos from February meeting



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**Our next meeting is March 18, 2017**

### First Class

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**Hearing Loss  
Association  
of America**

**Twin Cities Chapter Welcomes You!**

**President - Christine Morgan -**  
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**Secretary – Lionel Locke**  
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**Meetings are held the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of the month September through May at the Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute in Golden Valley, MN. We gather at 9:30 to socialize and the meeting starts at 10 AM. All meetings are real time captioned by Lisa Richardson and her staff of *Paradigm Captioning* ([www.paradigmreporting.com](http://www.paradigmreporting.com)).**

**Please visit the chapter's web-site at [www.hlaatc.org](http://www.hlaatc.org) or visit us on Facebook: groups/HLAA-TC.**