

# HLAA TC

# November 2014



Twin Cities Chapter

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

## November 15, 2014

HLAA TC meeting: Wendy DeVore, Career Ventures exec  
Former MPLS Police Officer,  
Founder of DeafSafe program,  
"Hearing Loss and Law Enforcement"

## December 20, 2014

HLAA TC meeting: Rhoda Nelson,  
Deafblind consultant, "Boomerang Joy"

Christmas party and pot luck lunch!

## January 17, 2015

HLAA TC meeting: Mary Hartnett,  
executive director, MCDHH,  
"Legislative Update and Overview"

## February 21, 2015

Barbara Friedman, "Making the Most of  
Your Hearing Aids, Implants and  
accessories"



## Contents

President's Message	Page 2
Meeting Synopsis	Page 3
HB HLAA!	Page 4
Flu Vaccine	Page 5
All in a Day's Words	Page 6
Navigation	Page 7
Dear Abby	Page 8
Photos	Page 10

## Officers' emails

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## HLAA TC Website - Minnesota

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## HLAA National - Maryland

[www.hearingloss.org](http://www.hearingloss.org)

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 Center, 3915 Golden Valley Road, Golden Valley, MN 55442. The meeting adjourns at noon.

# President's Message

October 2014



*Christine Morgan*

## **President's Message**

I love fall! The brilliant colors, the crisp weather. However, it seems so short before it is replaced with bitter cold, icy roads, etc.

HLAA's 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary is in November. At our November meeting we will celebrate the anniversary of HLAA and talk about our founder, Rocky Stone. We'll also have celebration cake!

In 2014, there are 48 million people in the United States with hearing loss. Approximately 2% belong to the Deaf Community. Unlike the Deaf Community, the majority of people with hearing loss do not embrace nor openly admit their hearing loss. Most deny and/or try to hide it.

Unlike the Deaf Community, our primary mode of communication is auditory. Many government agencies and organizations do not realize there is a difference between Deaf and people with a hearing loss (I personally dislike the terms hearing-impaired or hard-of-hearing and HLAA agrees) and

that our communication needs are different. They believe they are "accommodating" when they provide an ASL interpreter. Again, not understanding that the large majority of people with a hearing loss do not "sign".

HLAA endeavors to educate the "public and government" while reaching out and providing information and support to those with hearing loss. We need everyone's help to get the word out.

During our meetings, we hear stories about isolation, embarrassment, frustration and depression. Those of us with hearing loss have our own stories, whether or not we chose to share them with the group. With HLAA, we understand that we are not alone.

So let's spread the word. We are an organization of individuals who educate, understand, and empathize. We can help! We just need to get them in the door.

*"Do not fear if the path is unclear. Have faith in your journey." (author unknown)*

*Christine*



## HLAA TC October Meeting Synopsis



by *Lionel Locke, HLAA-TC VicePresident*

President Christine Morgan welcomed all those in attendance and then introduced our guest speaker, Vicki Martin. Vicki is a current member of our HLAA-TC Chapter who has served as past president, and is currently our newsletter editor. Vicki's presentation is a review of the first year as a cochlear implant recipient.

Vicki has had hearing loss since birth and joined HLAA in 2003 to learn more about hearing loss and accommodations in the workplace. In 2011, her ENT doctor suggested consideration of a cochlear implant so Vicki began extensive research on the subject including reading the book "Mind and the Brain". The purpose was to determine whether her brain could be trained to do new things. Vicki's journey and her experience in researching implants concluded with her decision to go ahead with the implant surgery in 2013.

Cochlear implant surgery is considered outpatient surgery so Vicki spent the entire day at the hospital in Rochester, MN beginning at 7 AM and leaving at 8:30 PM. She shared with us her experience with the side effects of this surgery, and her experience dealing with learning to hear. After a 4 week healing process, the processor was activated. Vicki presented a video of the initial activation. You can also view that on the HLAA-TC Facebook page.

Vicki shared with us the experience of hearing birds, a beautiful sound that an implant user would find remarkable. Throughout the presentation, the audience was treated to Vicki's descriptions of sounds like dogs, crickets, people's conversations, telephone usage, and waves on an ocean beach.

More importantly, Vicki shared with us how she now communicates with people in conversation. She attends music concerts, and can often hear the words and recognize the melody. On a good evening, she can now attend functions without the struggle of not hearing what is being said. Very powerful!! Vicki closed her presentation by talking about the amazing difference between before and after. She is eager to begin the next chapter in her life.

Several people in the audience shared similar stories about their Cochlear implant experiences during the Question and Answer session.

After break, President Christine Morgan presented her inspirational person segment; how composer Ludwig Beethoven struggled with hearing loss, not admitting it, yet managing to compose such beautiful music.

Other items on the agenda include the upcoming celebration of the 35 year anniversary of HLAA, the results of the Walk 4 Hearing, door prize (won by Robert Knoll), treasurer's report, next year's steak fry announcement, next month's speaker announcement, and Vicki's ASL segment.

The meeting ended with our OPEN Forum segment with many excellent suggestions about dealing with hearing loss while out in public. President Christine Morgan adjourned the meeting promptly at Noon.

## Reminder from the Treasurer

If you receive our newsletters via US Mail, but have capabilities to receive via email, please give me your email address so we can reduce publication costs. Please contact me at either [treasurer@hlaatc.org](mailto:treasurer@hlaatc.org) or my home email [mgellerman@comcast.net](mailto:mgellerman@comcast.net)

Thank you!

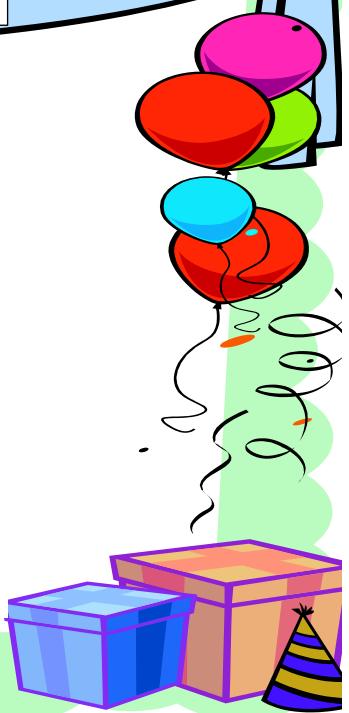


Saturday November 15, 2014

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY HLAA!**

35 years and counting

Come for the meeting - stay for  
the cake!



## Flu vaccine

It's time to get your flu shot! It's a good idea to be immunized, but you may want to stick with the injectable version.

When you arrive to get your flu vaccine, you will be given a questionnaire asking if you have allergies to (among other things) the drug gentamicin. Share your answers with the person administering the vaccine.

Regardless of your allergy status, you should be aware that gentamicin is one of the most ototoxic drugs in common use. According to When the Hearing Gets Hard (Elaine Suss), gentamicin can harm the auditory nerve. If this is correct, it could cause hearing loss for cochlear implant users as well as those hearing through their natural cochlea. Suss also quotes ototoxicity expert Leo Parmer: "It is important to note that a very serious problem exists with the drug gentamicin...[and] gentamicin is not found in the *Drug Interactions and Side Effects Index*."

Since the book was published nearly 20 years ago, it is possible that gentamicin is now recognized in the Index. However, it remains hazardous to your hearing.

After I insisted on a lookup, the nurse in my clinic assured me that although gentamicin is present in the nasal spray flu vaccine, it is not in the injectable.

- Vicki Martin

**HLAA member and pharmacist Monique Hammond adds these comments:**

*"...the tiny residue amounts (left from the manufacturing process) maybe an allergy issue but not an ototoxic issue. The trace amounts dissipate within the muscle/system and do not reach any worrisome levels.*

*"I always stick with the shot, the major reason for which is that the shot is made with inactivated virus; the spray with live attenuated virus. Although the spray virus is chemically stunned - for lack of a better expression - there is no way that I will blast virus in any form into my nose and wherever it travels from there throughout the mucosae. Add to that trace amounts of gentamicin and now I have another reason to say No to the mist.*

*"I had asked my ENT MD what to do. His answer was to get vaccinated but to stay with the shot. That is what I have done but **everyone must consult with their own doctor ...**"*

And perhaps most importantly,

***"Getting the flu [shot] by far outweighs the risk of a negligible amount of gentamicin..."***



## All In a Days Words...

While getting ready for worship on a recent Sunday, Dave mentioned to me that he got an email from our daughter-in-law. He went on to say that her aunt had died. I replied I was sorry to hear that.

Then I proceeded to ask if I had ever met her, and if he had an address to send a card.

Perplexed, he didn't know what I was talking about. (Not to say I don't perplex him often enough).

I went on to say that we should send a card if her aunt died. His response was, "her CAT died."

Oops, my ears again. And I thought of how many times a day this happens with myself and others. I wondered how much stuff I thought I heard was incorrect and I didn't pursue the matter further.

As I am in the process of obtaining a Cochlear Implant at the U of M, I am excited to find out just how much I have missed. It is wonderful to talk to anyone who has had a CI. I tell myself every day that I can't miss what I don't know exists in the first place.

Maybe the next year will hold many more new sounds, and someone to identify them with me. The journey is long, but I expect the rewards to be out of this world.

- Judi Swan



## Loop Minnesota

This is the YEAR of the LOOP!  
Make it happen!

Mark your Calender! **Loop Minnesota** meets on the *second Friday of the month* in the St. Louis Park City Hall Council Chambers located at 5005 Minnetonka Blvd. St. Louis Park. The meetings run from 11:30am to 1:00pm. The Chambers are "looped."

Everybody is invited to join our group and discussions as we set out to Loop Minnesota. First-time guests are treated to pizza. Your ideas and input are both needed and welcome. Visit us at [loopminnesota.org](http://loopminnesota.org) and let us know if you plan to attend.

### Upcoming Meeting Dates for 2014

Nov 14 2014 - Friday 11:30 am – 1pm

Dec 12 2014 - Friday 11:30 am – 1pm

Even when I know where I am going, it's nice to have my "GiPS Gal" beside me in the car. She can tell me to "bear left", or how far it is to the next turnoff, and then remind me again when I get there.

The cool thing about this is, I can *hear* "her". I have never liked machines that talk to me, but GiPS is the exception. Let's see if I can explain why.

The newer navigation systems have excellent sound, and they practice, if you will, "clear speech." (Thanks, Mary Bauer! It sounds like she's been under your tutelage.) She has a repertoire of, say, 100 phrases that fit every traffic situation – including "traffic jam ahead". From such a limited list, it is easy to find the closest match. Of course, there are thousands of street names she may want to recite, and these are not so easy.

But there is redundancy built into the system. It has a large screen in the dashboard. Although it's not a good idea for one to scrutinize the map while driving, it can give you some general information at a glance. And just behind the steering wheel, in easy view of the driver, there is a second screen. This small viewing panel shows you at a glance which way you will need to turn, how sharp the turn is, and how far before you need to make the turn. It also gives the street name in text that you can glimpse without taking your eyes off the road.

With all of this information at hand in visual format, you needn't worry if you sometimes miss what "GiPS Gal" says. You'll see it in plenty of time.

This, apparently, is the "love" part of my love/hate relationship with technology. Tune in again sometime for the other half.



### ADA Celebrates 25 years!

From Marie Koehler:

Enter the ADA 25th anniversary poster and video contest! Open to all ages.



See:

<http://www.disability.state.mn.us/ada/25th-anniversary-ada-poster-and-video-contests/>

The Minnesota State Council on Disability must receive all entries by December 15, 2014.

## DEAR ABBY (September 30)

*DEAR ABBY: I'm a 29-year-old single man who is hard of hearing. I have a steady job and plans for a good future, but I'm having trouble in the dating world.*

*I would love to have a special someone in my life, but I'm shy. I have a hard time talking with the girls who live in my area. I can hear people pretty well unless they mumble or talk quietly, or face away from me when they speak.*

*I have asked people to repeat what they say (I try not to do it often) if I missed something. They get frustrated and so do I, and then they say, "Never mind!"*

*I try so hard to hear people. But it seems the harder I try, the less it seems worth it to find a relationship. Any tips on dealing with impatient and non-understanding people? -- FRUSTRATED IN WISCONSIN*

*HAS THIS EVER HAPPENED TO YOU? I THOUGHT SO! (- EDITOR)*

*DEAR FRUSTRATED: As people age, many of them encounter the problem you are trying to cope with now at your young age. Hearing loss is difficult because it is often subtle and can be extremely isolating for the person who has it.*

*My first tip would be to avoid noisy places for meeting women, if you can. My second would be to be upfront about your hearing loss right off the bat. If a woman finds you attractive, she will find ways to accommodate the problem. And if she doesn't, then she wasn't the right candidate for a relationship in the first place.*

*WHAT DO YOU THINK OF ABBY'S REPLY? AS A HARD OF HEARING PERSON WITH SIMILAR EXPERIENCES, IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU WISH SHE HAD ADVISED HIM TO DO? WHAT WOULD YOU ADD? (- EDITOR)*



## DHHS training sessions -- Free sessions!

From Marie Koehler  
DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING SERVICES ~ Metro Office

651-431-5964 (Voice), 651-964-1514 (VP), 888-206-6513 (TTY), 651-431-7587 (FAX), [www.dhhsd.org](http://www.dhhsd.org)

The following two sessions are still open in 2014:

**Hearing Loss: National Health Alert!**  
**Dec. 11, 1:30-3:30 p.m.**  
**444 Lafayette Road, N. St. Paul, MN Room 3146**

Hearing loss is a growing public health issue. During this workshop you will gain an awareness of the impact of hearing loss and some strategies to use when working or living with a person who is hard of hearing or late-deafened.

**Beginning Sign Language**  
**Jan. 15, 9:30-11:30**  
**Elmer L. Anderson Building – 540 Cedar, Room 2370 St. St. Paul Room 2370**

Learn basic signs and become familiar with some of the characteristics of American Sign Language. Gain an understanding of the importance of gestures, mimes, and reading facial expressions and body language.

To register, call 651-431-5940 (voice or relay), or email [dhhs.metro@state.mn.us](mailto:dhhs.metro@state.mn.us)

Call or email for location of each class.

If you need hearing or other accommodations, request at least 2 weeks before session  
Provide your name, phone #, email address, title and date of session, employer and job title

**Cochlear Implant Social Group**  
**Sunday, November 16, 2014**  
**1:00 –2:45 PM**

Augsburg Park Library  
7100 Nicollet Ave.  
Richfield, MN 55423  
Ph: (612) 543-6200  
Host: Joe Sehl

You are welcome to bring a spouse, partner, friend, family member, and/or significant other to any of these events! If you would like to bring a refreshment to share that would be wonderful!

We hope to see you there!

Also, please mark your calendars for our **4-year celebration on Sunday, December 7th** from 1:30-3:30 PM at the Wentworth Library in West St. Paul!

## OCTOBER HLAA-TC MEETING



GROUPS



FEARLESS  
LEADER

ASL



SPEAKER  
VICKI

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**Our next meeting is November 15, 2014**

## First Class

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Meetings are held the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of the month September through May at the Courage Center 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.