

H L A A T C

February 2011

February 19, 2011 – “Can-Do Canines” speakers

March 19, 2011 – Judi Swan, Being Your Own Advocate

April 13, 2011 – Steak Fry

April 16, 2011 – Marie Koehler DHHS

May 21, 2011—Rhoda Nelson, Blind and Deafblind services

June 16 – 19, 2011 – National Convention, Hyatt Regency in Crystal City, Washington, DC



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- × Officer's emails
- × **Carole Blowers** - president@hlaatc.org
- × **Hunter Sargent & Shannon Turley** - vicepresident@hlaatc.org
- × **Holly Sargent** - secretary@hlaatc.org
- × **Bob Knoll** - treasurer@hlaatc.org

Steak Fry tickets available at the January meeting from the treasurer. Steak Fry event is Wednesday, April 13, 2011.

Message from our President



Carole Blowers

BACK TO THE BASICS....Some Tips for Taking Care of Hearing Aids!

1. Keep hearing aids away from heat (i.e., stoves, radiators, heat lamps, hair dryers, or in direct sunlight).
2. Keep hearing aids away from moisture (i.e, saunas, steam baths, regular baths, vaporizers, showers, rain, or snow). Moisture in your hearing aid can reduce sensitivity, shorten battery life, and cause corrosion to its delicate internal electronics. If the hearing aid gets wet, let it dry naturally with the battery door left open or else in a special hearing aid dryer. Never dry a hearing aid with a hair dryer or put it in an oven of any kind.
3. Clean hearing aids as instructed. Hearing aids should be professional cleaned every three to six months.
4. Do not use hairspray or other hair care products while wearing hearing aids.
5. Turn off hearing aids when they are not in use.
6. Keep replacement batteries and small aids away from children and pets.
7. Wipe the outside of the hearing aid each day with a soft, dry cloth or tissue to remove earwax and any body oils.
8. The battery compartment should be left open at night to ensure that the hearing aid is off and to allow fresh air to enter the aid and dry it more completely.
9. Do not try to clean the aid by inserting pins or toothpicks into the openings, as it could damage the internal parts.
10. After long periods in the cold, batteries might lose power. Let the aid and battery return to room temperature and power should be restored.
11. Be careful to not drop the hearing aid or leave it someplace where it could be prone to falling.
12. Do not ever attempt to open the case of the hearing aid to repair it or adjust it—leave that to the experts!

Mary Hartnett presentation January 15th, 2011

Executive Director for the Minnesota Commission Serving Deaf, Deafblind and Hard of Hearing Minnesotans



By educating legislators about the barriers that are faced by individuals who are deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing, over 30 pieces of legislation have been successfully passed over the last ten years, and 45 over the last 25 years. Every year is important, but this year, "I am saying that we are fighting for everything that we have fought for over the last 25 years."

One success of 2010 was getting an exemption passed for Metro Deaf School so that their special education funds would not be cut. The state didn't pass an education bill last year. This was the only bill that got passed, and we got that exemption for Metro Deaf School.

The major bill we worked on in 2010 was called the usability and accessibility bill. State website and online videos that were not accessible to deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing people now must be accessible. All state website, software and hardware must be accessible and adopt web content guidelines 2.0.

Then we, the commission, got \$200,000 for two years to help implement the law and teach people about how to follow the law. So we created a course that's online called "Video Captioning Essentials". It teaches people how to caption online video.

We also got \$200,000 for online captioning of all the events that are going on at the Capitol.

We gave our staff person a year to make the Capitol fully accessible. They have assistive listening devices available 24/7. There are sign language interpreters available on request. CART is available on request.

We got a law passed that requires all candidates for elected office to caption their ads if they get campaign finance dollars.

Realtime captioning of live news broadcasts is now covered as a result of our advocacy efforts.

Next we got \$200,000 for the office of enterprise technology. They have integrated systems into the purchasing process so they have to check to make sure every single piece of equipment can allow for captioning or is accessible to people that are blind, and they have done a wonderful job.

We also created an online course called “Making Your Case”. This fully accessible course teaches you how to influence legislative action.

We also worked on the next generation 9-1-1 compatibility, making sure that signals are compatible with existing equipment.

The new legislature got in on a jobs-friendly environment and deficit reduction platform, so that’s the approach we’re going to take. Our message begins with the solid fact that only 22% of people with disabilities are employed, according to the U. S. Department of Labor. We argue that there are so many barriers and lack of accommodation that this is a big reason that they’re unemployed, and that any workforce efforts need to include people with disabilities. That means accommodations.

We will emphasize all pieces of legislation that we believe contribute to people being able to be independent and employed. This includes the services that are provided by the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Division through the TED program, and individual services that overcome barriers on a local level through the DHHS Regional Centers.

March 2nd will be our Lobby Day at the Capitol. We’re having an issues training and mini training in the morning. Then in the afternoon we will have a big rally. Awards will be given, and appointments set up so you can talk with your legislators.

We need a well-educated workforce, so we need kids that are getting early intervention

And we need you! I’ve said this before, we are not crying wolf at all. The people that will have the services remaining are the people that are there, that have individual relationships with their legislators and have a focused, consistent message. We will have simple messages. I encourage you to come because the show of force is powerful. There will be cuts. We can’t prevent them from happening. It’s a 6.2 billion dollar deficit, and especially with the new legislature saying that there will be no new taxes, we need to look at the draconian cuts we are facing.

I encourage people to go to our website www.mncdhh.org. You can sign up to be added to our email alert list. I encourage you to take our courses – “Making your case” is one -- it is really easy to take.

We also created a video in collaboration with Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services, Department of Health, Department of Education and Minnesota Hands and Voices (a parent advocacy group) that was on TPT. That is available on our website. It gives parents of babies newly identified with hearing loss information about the parents’ experience, why getting tested is important, early intervention, and follow-through.

Another issue we will focus on is the dramatic increase in veterans who have acquired hearing loss. We owe it to our returning vets to have these services available.

On a national level, the video accessibility act of 2010 was signed by President Obama. The ADA is going to clarify the requirements for captioning, and will set the bar high.

Summary of meeting January 15, 2011

President Carole Blowers welcomed everyone to our January meeting, and called on Rich Diedrichsen, Regional Manager for Minnesota Deaf and Hard of Hearing services, for an announcement regarding the 2011 State conference on Hearing Loss. Originally scheduled for March 25 and 26 of this year, it has been cancelled due to budgetary, staffing, time and scheduling constraints. It will be rescheduled for 2012.

An HLAA National representative for the Walk4Hearing fundraiser will be in the area in March, and will be at to attend our March chapter meeting. She will give us more information about our Minnesota Walk4Hearing event, which will be in the fall, on Saturday October 1.

Vice President Hunter Sargent said that he responded to the front-page news article about service cuts for people with disabilities last week. As Mary Hartnett said, please let's be as involved in this legislative session as possible, and even after, because it is crucial to retaining our services.

Hunter also represented us at the 25th anniversary celebration of the Commission Serving Deaf, Deafblind and Hard of Hearing Minnesotans. A National panel and a local panel of state leaders were present. The president of the National Association of the Deaf, the president of Gallaudet University, the Chair of the Board and CEO of NAD were all there, and the President of Minnesota Association of Deaf Citizens. Mary reports that Hunter did a very fine job of representing HLAA-TC.

In December, Hunter coordinated the reporting of our concerns that campaign ads not being captioned. Mary Andresen was also actively involved in that.

Our organization, HLAA-TC has committed to being a co-sponsor of the Lobby day at the Capitol, March 2nd. This means that we will promote it within our organization and encourage people to be involved.

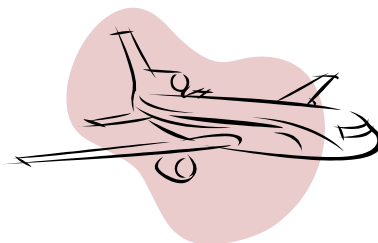
Bob Knoll, treasurer, reminded us that we have HLAA-TC business cards that we can all use to hand out to friends and associates. Steak fry tickets are available. Please see Bob for tickets. We can be selling these now, looking ahead to this major fundraiser in April.

ASL words for today are white, snow, soup, coffee, tea, hot chocolate, blanket, coat, hat, and boots -- all words we can practice using this month, no doubt!

Shannon Turley/Vicki Martin

Up, Up and Away!

By Sue Brabeck



Ah, air travel – the bane of the HOH people.

Ugh – the PA systems in cavernous airports, the gate agent mumbling into a microphone, and the pilot and flight-staff trying to speak to passengers over the hum of jet engines. I don't think I need to say anything more about these.

I've almost been run down from behind by those golf-cart people-carriers on the concourses. I can "hear" the sound they make, but I've no idea where it's coming from, or that it's some kind of warning. Thankfully some other traveler has pulled me out of the way in the nick of time.

Ooo, what about the in-flight movies? Forget it – no captioning, don't even ask. Nor any captioning available on the in-flight TV screens either. Sigh. I'm glad I bring books to read.

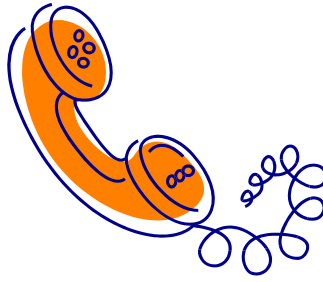
Fort Myers airport has a nice feature that I am sure was not meant for the HOH, but could be very helpful. At the gate, passengers flying stand-by are listed by priority on a large monitor, so you can watch your number come up. It's easy to know when it's your turn to go up to the gate and get a seat assignment. Wouldn't it be great if they could utilize this monitor for other gate announcements, like boarding instructions or delay explanations?

Delta's in-flight instructions at times are played on the monitors rather than being demo'd by the flight staff. I saw them captioned in both English and Spanish! YAY! The downside? The text is so small and it swooshed across the screens so quickly, that it was impossible to keep up with reading *and* watching the video itself.

I also had the "privilege" to experience one of our modern-day marvels – the full-body pat-down. I was asked to step aside after setting off the metal detector. I couldn't hear Mr. TSA over the din of the security area, so I understood only when he pointed me to another area. This area had nifty painted-on footprints on the floor, but I didn't catch *which* set of foot-prints on which they wanted me to step. I think I was losing points with Mr. TSA. The nice TSA-lady that came to do the pat-down stood right in front of me and explained very clearly exactly what she was going to do. Most of the procedure went fine, but once she got behind me, she continued to talk to me, and I couldn't understand a word. She kept nudging my ankles, and I finally figured out she wanted me to lift my feet.

I got to my destinations just fine, and my luggage wasn't lost, so I'm happy. I can't help but wonder about established plans for communicating emergency instructions to the deaf and HOH, both in the airport or on the flight? I guess for now it's up to me just to speak up and tell those that need to know of my situation. In the meantime, I'm going to be more careful and remove my cellphone from my pocket before trying to slip through the metal detector. I would be happy to never have another pat-down again.

The Medi – Gap!



It is 65 years minus three months since I was born. It is time to make arrangements for medicare and supplemental insurance. It is time to change from my employer-sponsored plan to a mandatory new approach.

It is time to make a phone call.

I prepared for weeks for this day. I practiced making calls with internet relay, and learned how to save my conversations for later review. I gathered together all the information I already had, and went on the internet for more. I visited the Social Security, Medicare, and insurance websites.

I called ahead to make special arrangements, since the standard (read: “only”) method of communicating with my insurance adviser was by voice over the telephone. I found an agent who would accept a relay call, set up a date and time, and got the nod to initiate the call at the specified time.

I made a list of all my questions, and then I made a list of all the questions that the answers to those questions might raise. I read everything that was mailed to me (and it was a lot, as anyone on the leading edge of the baby boom knows).

I spent the day before the phone call organizing my notes, making sure I had my numbers handy, and deciding what digital folders I would use to store the facts I was about to learn. I made a call to Medicare to check on my application and see if I had a number assigned.

At the appointed time I would call my agent using internet relay. My new computer should be clear and quick to respond. If I couldn’t remember all of the numbers and insurance recommendations, I would save the conversation to my folder so I could review it later.

I had practiced saving conversations. I had done it a day or two before. I made a test call to make sure it would work when I got to the real thing. Instead I found “there is currently no transcript of this conversation available. Suddenly, I couldn’t save. I called Sprintip for advice. A calm but unhelpful person told me, essentially, that it works. Unless it doesn’t. Clearly, I was on my own here. I tried allowing popups from AOL, popups from Sprintip, popups from everything on the internet, turning on animation, using a different browser. Yet always “there is currently no transcript available...”

I called Srintip again. “A technician will email you.” (I’m still waiting). I called myself. “Hello,” I said when I picked up the phone. “I am a deaf person answering this call to test saving my Sprintip conversation”. No transcript available. Tweak. Test. Tweak. Test. Tweak. Test. No transcript.

I had done all I could do, and I had reached a deadline. I had to get this done.

The relay operator called the number, selected the option I gave her, and entered the 5-digit extension that would take me right to my agent's desk. (click) Disconnected. Could we try again? Sure. (click) Disconnected. How about omitting the extension? System waits for an extension to be entered. (click). How about just using the 10-digit phone number without option 3 or the extension? (Holding...holding....."and we will return your call within one business day.") Well then, how about if I hang up and see if I can find another number?

I am not sure why, but there actually was another number for the organization I was trying to reach. It was not the number they told me to call, but luckily I found it in my pile of notes.

I called relay again. (Recording...holding...holding...transferring...ringing...recording...) "Thank you for calling..." I could finally explain my situation to a real person. But the real person could not reach my agent. "Oh" she added, "I see that no appointment was set up." I told her the name of the person who set up the appointment, the date she set it up, and the date and time of the appointment itself.

"I can have an agent call you back". I explained (again) why that would not work, and was transferred to her supervisor. From there, I was transferred to another agent who was available for The Conversation.

Finally, we were on! My reading was slowed down by phrases like "fi uc an g vieme eno secned" and "ia veh XX XX onteh leni to assist u forward". Decipherable, yes, but it takes a little time.

The call ended with "I will go over the co-pays with you. Hello. Hello Are you there?" And then, "This is Sprint, are you there? GA or SK. This is Sprintip Disconnected call due to no response SK". Actually, I was responding like crazy: "Yes yes yes. I am here. Don't go!" But my message was not being transmitted. We were disconnected before any of the questions on my list were answered. The day was pretty well shot, and I had gotten nowhere.

Much as I love my independence, I resolved to ask my husband Dennis to make my call for me. As always, he cheerfully agreed. A short time later, and without any further glitches, all was done.

Now all I have to do is make a decision, and then.... oh, no, no, not that again!

I have to give them a call.

coming in February: Can-Do Canines speakers

Graduate **Ron Wolff**, a resident of Forest Lake, is married to Barbara, is the father of 2 adult children and grandfather of 6. He graduated from Minnesota State University, Mankato in Business Administration. After 30 years in the automotive line he suddenly lost his hearing and worked in computer aided drafting and design. He and his dog Freckles certified as a team in early 2009 and enjoy speaking to groups. Ron was a featured speaker at last year's fund raising luncheon, Tails of Independence.

Staff Member **Laurie Carlson** has been with Can Do Canines for over 11 years. While always the Volunteer Coordinator during that time, she has also worked in many different areas of the organization, including one year as the Hearing Dog Coordinator - in charge of the placement and training of Hearing Assist Dogs with clients.

LOBBY DAY AT THE STATE CAPITOL on Wednesday, March 2, 2011!

Help Save State Funding for Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing Programs and Services!

Why Register? Both Democratic and Republican state legislators say that in order to balance Minnesota's \$6.2 billion dollar deficit this year, cuts will have to be made to all state programs and services.

The big question is how much the cuts will be for state programs and services that support deaf, deafblind, and hard of hearing Minnesotans.

How can we protect these programs and services? The best way is to tell state legislators your personal stories about why these programs and services benefit both you and Minnesota. The squeaky wheel gets the oil, and we all need to be "squeaky wheels" now!

How can you tell your story? Come to the Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing Lobby Day at the State Capitol on Wednesday, March 2, 2011! This is the best opportunity to meet with your legislators in person and help them understand why you need these programs and services.

See the Lobby Day event schedule below, and register for one or more events at <http://bit.ly/ePNJ7O>. Please come and show your support and share your story!

Lobby Day Event Schedule

1. Morning Information Session in the Capitol's Great Hall – 9:30 am to 11:30 am Come learn about the issues! This morning session will inform you about current legislation that affects deaf, deafblind, and hard of hearing Minnesotans. Due to space, this session is limited to 75 people. Register now to make sure that you have a seat.

2. Noon Rally in the Capitol's Rotunda – 12:00 pm to 1:00 pm Join the rally and show your support! Key legislators and community leaders will provide inspiration, and awards will be presented. This noon rally is a great opportunity to show the state legislators and other policymakers how many people benefit from programs and services that support deaf, deafblind, and hard of hearing Minnesotans.

3. Meet with Your Legislators During the Day – 9:00 am to 4:00 pm The state legislators want and need to hear from you about the programs and services that are important to you! You can choose to meet with your legislators in the morning or afternoon. We will arrange your meetings and provide assistive services. Experienced Team Leaders will also be available to help you find your legislators and introduce you to them.

Assistive Services: You must request assistive services by Wednesday, February 16, 2011 (we cannot guarantee services after this deadline). We can provide CART, sign language interpreters, deafblind interpreters, FM systems, ALDs, and written materials in large print and braille.

Learn How to Tell Your Story: Before Lobby Day on March 2, 2011, you can watch the free online course "Making Your Case" at www.mncdhh.org/makingyourcase/. This course will teach

you how to tell your story and how to convince your legislators to protect the programs and services that are important to you. It is offered in both ASL and English!

Volunteer to be a Team Leader: Do you also want to help others tell their stories to state legislators? Sign up to volunteer at <http://bit.ly/ePNJ7O>, and we will provide training. You will help train people on what to do before they meet with their legislators, and also help them find their meeting locations and introduce them to their legislators.

Sponsors

Lead sponsor: Commission of Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing Minnesotans (www.mnchedhh.org) Co-sponsors:

- Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) Minnesota chapters (Twin Cities – www.hlaatc.org – and St. Cloud)
- Minnesota Association of Deaf Citizens (MADC) (www.minndeaf.org)

Questions? Please contact Teika Pakalns at teika.pakalns@state.mn.us.

Walk4Hearing Coming to Minnesota!

My name is Rebecca Lander and I work at the national HLAA office in Bethesda, MD as the Walk4Hearing Program Assistant. As many of you know, the Walk4Hearing is a 5k (3.1 miles) walk that raises awareness about hearing loss, helps to eradicate the stigma associated with it and raises funds for programs and services for people with hearing loss at both the local and national level. Since the inception of the Walk in 2006, it has raised more than \$3.5 million and has become the largest walk for hearing in the country. This year the Walk will take place in 24 cities across the country – including Minneapolis!

Are you interested in getting involved in the 2011 Minneapolis Walk4Hearing? Then join us Saturday, March 19th at 12pm (after the Chapter meeting) in the Courage Center for a Walk Informational Meeting and learn more about the Walk and how you can get involved. We will outline our plans for the Walk, explain how you can help us successfully implement them, and get your ideas and recommendations on how we can make the Minneapolis Walk a huge success. HLAA cannot do that without the help and support of the local volunteers across the country. We need the support of people like you – so join us on Saturday, March 19 and step up for people with hearing loss!

In addition, we would also like to involve any and all local organizations dealing with hearing loss in the Minneapolis/Twin Cities area, so if you belong to, or have connections to, any other hearing loss related organizations, groups, schools, or businesses please invite them to join us on Saturday, March 19th. We are all in this together and we all share the same basic mission. LET'S WALK TOGETHER THIS FALL AS ONE TO RAISE BOTH FUNDS AND AWARENESS FOR HEARING LOSS!

What: Minneapolis Walk4Hearing Informational Meeting



When: Saturday, March 19th – 12pm to 2pm

Where: Courage Center

RSVP: Please email me at rlander@hearingloss.org by March 7, 2011.

Also, if you can't make the meeting but are interested in receiving more information about our plans for the Walk as they develop; please let me know at rlander@hearingloss.org.

I look forward to meeting everyone. One last reminder...food and refreshments will be served so come hungry not only for information but for food also!

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This month's editor is Vicki Martin

Meetings are held the 3rd 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)*. Please visit the chapter's web-site at www.hlaatc.org