

HLAA Twin Cities

Hearing Loss Association of America Twin Cities Chapter March 2010

Next meeting is March 20th

Where Do We Meet?

Courage Center - 3915 Golden Valley Road
Golden Valley, MN 55422

When: September through May

Time: 9:30 AM – Noon

3rd Saturday of each month

(No meetings - June, July and August)

2010

March 20, 2010 – Light Rail Safety

April 14, 2010 – **Steak Fry**

April 17, 2010 – Pharmacist **Monique Hammond** speaks on Ototoxic Drugs

May 15, 2010 – Open Mic and Pot Luck

June 17 – 20, 2010 – **National Convention** in Milwaukee, WI at the Hilton Milwaukee City Center



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

- HLAA TC Website
www.hlaatc.org
- HLAA National
www.hearingloss.org
- MN Contact Information
info@hlaatc.org

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- **Steak Fry tickets available at the March meeting.**

Steak Fry – Where: Crystal VFW Post 494
Address: 5222 Bass Lake Road
Date: April 14, 2010
Time: 5 PM to 7 PM
Dinner includes: Steak, baked potato, cole slaw, garlic bread, toast, coffee
Cost: \$10

FROM THE PRESIDENT



Linda Miller

OUR MISSION

When we receive our monthly copy of our HLAA Twin Cities newsletter, I am always reminded of why our organization exists. On most front pages, our Mission Statement is printed. We are here to **OPEN THE WORLD OF COMMUNICATION TO PEOPLE**. Provide information, education, support and advocacy. I believe we do all the above and more. Sometimes we think we have learned it all and as a speaker is introduced, we are given more informative lessons and not just from our speakers, but to each other.

The month of February was exciting for me as we were introduced to many new faces. As we spent time introducing ourselves and allowing people to share why they had come to us, it is again an opportunity to learn from old and new faces. It is from each other that we gain comfort and support as we travel each day in a world that doesn't always understand our struggles with communicating. One of the pleasures I gain from our gatherings, is the opportunity to share with others who come to us the first time. I also get to pass on the information that I have learned. I hope that all of the people felt comfortable and welcomed and will decide to come back and be a part of this wonderful group.

Another exciting moment for me is what we call, "Open Mic Time." This is another time for us to talk openly about what we maybe struggling with and gain information from each other. I also enjoy the "getting to know you" or what we call "member spotlight." This time allows us to get to know each other better on a personal level. If I approach you and ask if you would like to share, I hope you will feel comfortable to do so and if you don't want to talk at the podium, we will certainly let you talk from where you are seated. Again this is **OUR ORGANIZATION** and if any member wants to contribute a story or article to the newsletter or expand your horizons in a leadership capacity, please let the officers know as we will be having officer elections again before we break for the summer.

Hope everyone is doing well and see you at our next meeting

Rich Diedrichsen, February Speaker

Rich Diedrichsen, Regional Manager for the MN Department of Human Services, Deaf/Hard of Hearing Services (E-W Central) was our guest speaker on February 20, 2010. Rich is the author of several articles, and has over 25 years of work experience and has served on several local and state councils. Rich himself has severe to profound bilateral hearing loss, and he uses a cochlear implant. He also uses American Sign Language to communicate.

Rich brought several devices with him to show and advise us how to use them. Items such as Captel phones, assisted listening devices, cell phones, neck loops, silhouettes, and bluetooths. There are now Captel phones with a mono jack, which you can request an update from your present phone if it does not have one. Rich stressed that phones are not universal. By law, all cell phones have to have a T3M3 rating—where the radio frequency interference is nil.

Rich advised there is a new Captel phone which has the larger screen. If you have your phone with VOIP (voice over Internet protocol) where your Internet and computer and all coming through one cable, you can have benefits of two-line Captel. You pay for two lines and when you call in, that call goes to the Caption Center and they automatically identify the number that's been dialed and they call me back and it hooks us up. The captioning can show up on your computer screen.



Submitted by Carole Blowers, Vice President

The new Captels have two ports in them—one works for a hand set, so you can put a neck loop in it which would take the sound to your hearing aids, your cochlear implant, or your T-coil. You can also plug in an audio output which you can have a speaker hooked into that. You still talk through the hand set for the other person to hear you or plug in a silhouette in the separate port. There are lots of options.

Today, Rich set up a RED CAT SYSTEM in the room--a portable PA type system, a new technology. You can feed a computer into that and auxiliary speakers or even run an FM system off of it. There are other systems like this out there, so if you are having trouble hearing on the loop or if you want to take the loop receiver off and plug in your hearing aid, go ahead and try that.

Rich advised if something is working for you, stay with it! If it's not working, get ideas of new things to try. For example, using a cheap DVD player with a headphone jack and neck loop or silhouette may work great for you. Extensions for loop cords can be purchased to make them easier to use.

The average age of a hearing aid is five years. If you hear lots of ringing/buzzing, there may be too much pressure in your ears. Rechargeable batteries can only be recharged so many times. There are different types of bluetooths, and you can actually buy hearing aids with Bluetooth technology in them.

Rich suggested going to Mary Bauer's office to try various assisted technology devices. Harris Communications and Radio Shack have many devices and accessories available.

Captioning on a DVD was discussed. He suggested getting DVD's with SUBTITLES on them. Rich also talked about LeapPads, a children's learning device, and the use of a splitter jack to plug into it and then wearing a headphone to play with a child without it being too loud for everyone else.

(continued on page 8)

Technology Wars

by Sue Brabeck

Last Friday, I rented a movie (*The Invention of Lying*). I'd had a really difficult week at work, and I was looking forward to sitting in my recliner and relaxing. I changed into my PJs, gathered up the kitty-cats, and made a bowl of popcorn. Went to slide the CD into my DVD player. Drat! The little door that slides out to let me insert a CD no longer functioned. Dead in the water. Now what was I going to do?

Ah-HAH! I remembered Rich's talk at the February HLA meeting. Rich had talked briefly about watching DVDs on a portable DVD player. I don't have one of those, but I have a laptop. So, I inserted the movie CD into the laptop, and crossed my fingers. Very soon, my Windows Media Player popped up, and the CD started to play all on its own. I plugged my headphones in to the laptop, and I was partially in business. But I need either captions or subtitles – audio, even through headphones, isn't nearly sufficient.

I had no idea how to enable the CC/subtitles using the laptop – what was I going to do about that? Rich had mentioned in the meeting that at times we could get subtitles if the CD carried them. But of course, I had no instructions for how to enable them, so while the movie played, I started playing around with the various options at the top of the window. Lo and behold, I found a selection for "Captions and Subtitles"! I clicked "Captions" and held my breath – nothin'. So, I selected "Subtitles", and there they were! I was in business, and the movie played nicely through with the subtitles.

Later, I examined the CD jacket for that movie, and "CC" was not listed. So, the next day I went to the library and checked out a movie that listed both "Subtitles" and "CC" on the jacket. I went home, tried another experiment. This time, when I selected the

"Captioning" option on the software, they came up! I could enable both subtitles *and* CC on this second movie. YAY!

How was my experience of watching a movie with captions (or subtitles) on the laptop vs. the TV? The text on the laptop was actually easier for me to read, as the ratio of font to the screen size was much larger, and I didn't have to squint across the room to read the captioning. I think I may almost prefer watching on the laptop because of this.

To most people this is a pretty minor triumph. But to me, this is pretty significant, because now I have more options. I will have a choice of watching a DVD on the TV, but also now I can sit with a laptop and have captioning and/or subtitles! Experimentation was key to my success, and I'm glad that I pursued it.

Now, I'm going to find Sunday's newspaper and look for a good deal on a new DVD player!

You Tube Again!

Member Judi Swan called my attention to a short article in the business section of the March 5 Pioneer Press. Entitled "You Tube to Caption Videos", it calls our attention to the enormous scale of this undertaking, as well as the huge impact it could potentially have. It states that "given the 20 hours of video content that YouTube uploads every minute...this is the largest effort ever tried on the internet to harness evolving speech recognition technology."

Speech recognition may be the key not only to video captioning, but to live TV captioning and telephone communications. Imagine what it would be like if our Captel phones truly gave us accurate speech content in real time.

We know we aren't there yet. But if there is a buck to be made, it is probably in the entertainment industry, and we can count on that industry to lead the way. The fallout will be better communication for us.

-- Vicki Martin

Caption Law and the Federal Court

Showdowns Scheduled in Movie Captioning Cases
(Hearinglosslaw.com - January 8, 2010)

By John Waldo

Next week in San Francisco, on Jan. 13, a federal appeals court will hear oral arguments in a case out of Arizona that may determine once and for all whether movie theaters may be required to show captioned movies to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Then two months later, on March 12, a superior court judge in Seattle will hear arguments over whether movie captioning may be required by the Washington state Law against Discrimination.

The Arizona Attorney General's Office brought an action against that state's Harkins theater chain contending that under ADA, theaters must show movies that are captioned for people with hearing loss, and that contain audio descriptions for people with vision loss. The AG's office didn't say that the theaters had to create the captions or descriptions -- those are contained on a computer disc that comes with many, although not all, first-run movies. The AG's office was simply stating that Harkins must equip at least some of its theaters to actually display those captions and provide the audio descriptions.

Harkins argued that it had no such obligation. It said that ADA does not regulate the content of goods sold or services offered, and argued that the "goods" or "services" it offers are non-captioned movies. The federal judge in Arizona agreed, and the case is now on appeal.

A number of other lawsuits have been filed requesting movie captioning, with mixed results. But the Harkins case is the watershed event for a couple of reasons.

First, the federal courts of appeal are the second-highest courts in the land, right below the U.S. Supreme Court. This will be the first movie-captioning case to reach the appeals-court

level. The decision will be legally binding only in the Ninth Circuit states of Arizona, Nevada, California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Hawaii and Alaska. But as a practical matter, most federal courts will generally follow the first appellate-court decision to address a particular issue. So the case could essentially establish a national rule.

Second, if the decision is upheld, we can anticipate all sorts of other businesses arguing that by the same logic, they should not have to provide captions. If a movie theater's "product" is non-captioned movies, then surely, live theaters can argue that their "product" is non-captioned drama, and universities can argue that their "product" is non-captioned lectures.

Needless to say, we think the trial-court decision is profoundly wrong. Wash-CAP filed a friend-of-the-court brief in the Arizona case, and we've been in contact with the Arizona attorneys about the oral arguments. I'll be in San Francisco Wednesday listening to the arguments, and will file a blog entry about them. It generally takes an appellate court from six months to two years or more to announce a decision after oral argument, but sometimes -- not always, but sometimes -- the questions the judges ask at oral argument can give one an idea of what they are thinking.

The arguments will begin at about 11 a.m. Wednesday at the Browning Courthouse, 95 7th Street in San Francisco. We've worked with the court to have the proceedings captioned, and would encourage anyone in the area who is interested to attend.

While the Arizona case will likely establish what ADA requires, it won't directly impact the case Wash-CAP filed in King County Superior Court under our state law, which in many ways is far superior to the ADA, particularly for people with hearing loss. Our complaint claims that under state law, theaters must take those steps "reasonably possible in the circumstances" to make their movie soundtracks understandable. As

with the Arizona case, the theaters deny having any such obligation.

We've worked cooperatively with the attorneys for the King County movie theaters to develop a set of stipulated facts. They will then file a motion claiming that they have no obligation, and we will file a cross-motion claiming that they do. Our case is scheduled for oral argument before Judge Regina Cahan in the King County main courthouse, 516 3d Avenue, at 10:00 a.m. on Friday, March 12.

Save the Date

Rich Diedrichsen has reserved the Holiday Inn in St. Cloud the 2011 State Hard of Hearing Conference, Friday and Saturday March 25-26, 2011.

Think about topics you would like to have addressed at the conference, and if you have suggestions, make sure Rich hears about them!

Good Question

Several of our members noticed a letter to the editor published in the Pioneer Press on March 9, titled "Why so High?", which asks the very reasonable question, Why are hearing aid prices so high? The writer notes that sophisticated electronic devices that can pinpoint where our golf ball has landed cost under \$400. Intelligent devices that can tell us how to drive to any location in the country are for sale for under \$200. And I-pods that can store and play 50,000 songs sell for under \$100. So why do hearing aids, which have been around much longer than these other technologies, cost upwards of \$3000 each? The price has increased 15-fold since I bought my first hearing aid, while the price of other electronics has fallen dramatically.

Why?

Apple Jumps on HoH Bandwagon

by Judi Swan

We recently got an Apple OS-X v10.6 Desktop Computer. I have not had the time to thoroughly test this unit for its claimed capabilities, but it is exciting to share the way Apple is addressing the needs of the hearing impaired/deaf community. "Snow Leopard", the standard operating system for this unit includes a variety of features that can make using the Mac easier us.

Mac OS- includes support for playing back open and closed captioning in dynamic content such as movies, videos, and podcasts, using QuickTime, Front Row, and dvd player.

Closed captions appear in a high-contrast white sans serif font against a black background, similar to line 21 style television captions. You can also buy and rent captioned movies from the i-tunes store and find captioned podcasts in i-tunes U. Also, you can add captioning to your own content using industry-standard SCC files with apples Final Cut Studio (available separately).

Downloaded content from the i-tune store plays back with captions on i-phone, i-pod classi, i-pod Nano (4-5th generation), i-pod Touch, and Apple tv, in Quicktime Player (for mac and windows); and in i-tunes (for mac and windows).

I am sure this sounds deep and maybe even intimidating; and right now it does to me also, but with each of us being at different levels of computer skills, we will all understand this in different degrees.

There are also tutorials which are captioned so that one can learn how to use the computer to its fullest capacity for our hearing losses. I am personally, not at all familiar with Apple, so I will be using them big time.

Dave and I will be trying these features out in the coming months and will update on our progress in the spring.



Vowel fouls --- and Constant Consonants

(continued from January issue)

So, why do we get it right?

It's been said that speechreading only works if you already know what the other party is going to say. We use many clues to figure out what the other party is going to say: body language (is the person tense, standoffish, relaxed, comfortable?), facial expression (anger, sadness, joy, compassion?), even knowledge of the language – what sounds occur with greatest frequency – can help. Most of all, we use context. What is the context of our immediate conversation? Where are we? What time is it? What kinds of things has the person talked about in the past? What is her attitude toward you, and toward the physical, political or emotional environment you are in? What is his sense of humor like?

The more you know, it seems, the better you can read lips. But are there limits to how much that can help you? Can our brains become like the internet to us – so filled with words and facts that it increases our confusion by increasing our choices? Maybe there is an optimum degree of knowledge that will serve us best.

There's no denying that some people are just better at this than others. What makes them so – besides practice – is a question we have yet to answer. What we do know is that there are many factors that contribute to our ability to “read” what people are saying.

What we already know, the way our brains process information, and maybe even an innate talent that can be developed as one might develop a musical or artistic talent – all

contribute to our skill in communicating, whatever our level of hearing loss. The interconnectedness of all of our senses and abilities truly integrates us into the web of human experience.

By Vicki Martin

Captioning Complaints Procedure

New Policy for Filing Closed Captioning Complaints
Now in Effect

In November 2009, the FCC adopted new rules for consumers to report problems with closed captioning, and in February 2010 these rules were instituted. Consumers may contact program distributors (local cable provider, broadcaster, etc.) directly to correct the problem immediately, or they may contact the FCC, who will then forward the complaint to the program distributor. Consumers must send in complaints within 30 days of the captioning problem, and program distributors will be required to respond within 30 days of receiving the complaint.

<http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/closedcaption.html>

Submitted by Lisa Richardson

Captioning in Bars

This article is about closed captioning in bars in Maryland. Maybe some day it will be everywhere. Here's the link.

http://www.fredericknewspost.com/sections/news/reports_notebooks_display.htm?StoryID=100375

Submitted by Lisa Richardson

If you would like to advertise in this Newsletter, contact Merrilee Knoll at Rknoll5200@aol.com

(Diedrichsen, cont. from page 3)

T-coils and linear elevation was discussed. Many have a ski slope type hearing with little sound on the bottom end (low tones), and at the higher end, you can't hear much. Rich believes a telecoil or a neck loop or a silhouette always gives him better ability to hear in any kind of situation.

Rich strongly suggested ear protection when doing jobs where your ears should be protected (i.e., working around lawn mowers, loud engines or machines, etc.) We need the same protection as anyone that hears well. Sounds can damage our cochlea as well, even though we may not be able to hear all the loud sounds. The air wave pressure of the sound may be enough to vibrate off of your eardrum and cause the fluid motion to continue to damage your cochlea. Rich advised we should have a protection program built into our hearing aids so when a sound exceeds a certain level, it drops it down so it doesn't damage your hearing more. Rich also advised we should all give our hearing a short break time during lunch. We expend 20 times more energy than a person with normal hearing trying to get through a day!

We should all be advocates for universal design of equipment and accessories. This means when a product comes out, it should be usable by people with normal hearing and non-normal hearing.

The Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services provide direct services and oversee the TED (telephone equipment distribution) program.

Bits and Pieces.....

Courage Center has asked us to please refrain from dragging tables or chairs on the hard wood floors as it destroys the finish.

Baby Boomers are not losing their hearing as much

as their parents says the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel in WI. The study used data from 5, 275 people from years 1902 thru 1962.

Taking a Flight to Nowhere, 25 puppies in training as service dogs on Jan. 13th were welcomed at the MSP airport. Delta Air Lines offered the pups actual training aboard their "flight" to get plane experience.

A successful businessman attended an **HLAA** meeting (not ours) and used his t-coil for the first time after wearing hearing aids for 30 years. He did not know he had them or what they were, no one had told him. After hearing the meeting for the first time using them, he got up and said, "If I had withheld important information like this from my clients, I would have been sued. And, the last 20 years of my life would have been so much better."

Study in UK casts doubt on **caffeine** link to **tinnitus**.

http://www.hearingreview.com/insider/2010-01-21_08.asp

IRS/Tax information with captions and ASL

<http://www.youtube.com/user/IRSvideosASL>

Emergency Information in ASL, Written, Braille, Large Print to download or just view.

<http://www.accessibleemergencyinfo.com>

Deaf Learn to Fly? Yes, Greg Lawrence, 61 of FL has been deaf since birth. He has passed the written test and now has to take the practical test, when done, he intends to teach flying to other deaf adults who know ASL. Email deafhawk_2000@yahoo.com to contact him

If you have a **Cochlear Corporation** implant you can now get a remote to go with it. If you have two CC implants the remote will function for both.


Hearing Care Professionals

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Performances Presented with Open Captioning through April 2010

To receive this list by email each month, call VSA arts or send an email to jon@vsaartsmn.org. Please specify if you want to receive the Captioned shows, Audio Described shows, ASL-Interpreted shows, or the combined list.

Schedules are posted on the Web at: www.vsaartsmn.org/theater.html, www.accesspress.org and elsewhere.

Guthrie Theater

Macbeth

by Shakespeare, directed by Joe Dowling.

Performed by: the Guthrie Theater.

Location: Guthrie Theater's Wurtele Thrust Stage, 818 2nd St. S., Minneapolis.

Captioning: Saturday, March 27, 7:30 PM (by c2 inc.).

Tix: Reduced to \$25 for Captioning patrons; phone: 612-377-2224, TTY 612-377-6626.

Website: www.Guthrietheater.org.

Description: With action that moves at the rapid pace of a thriller as the mystery of *Macbeth* unfolds, this tragedy reveals Shakespeare at his storytelling best.

Run: January 30 – April 3, 2010.

Brief Encounter

by Noël Coward.

Performed by: Kneehigh Theatre, presented by the Guthrie Theater.

Location: Guthrie Theater's McGuire Proscenium Stage, 818 2nd St. S., Minneapolis.

Captioning: Sunday, March 28, 7:00 PM (by c2 inc.).

Tix: Reduced to \$25 for Captioning (regular \$15-40); phone: 612-377-2224, TTY 612-377-6626.

Website: www.Guthrietheater.org.

Description: *Brief Encounter* will play the Guthrie as one of just three exclusive stops in the U.S. following its critically acclaimed run in London where it was hailed by critics as "brilliantly done and superbly acted" and "a first class return to romance."

Run: February 11 – April 3, 2010.

Mixed Blood Theater

The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity.

by Kristoffer Diaz.

Performed by: Mixed Blood Theatre.

Location: Alan Page Auditorium at Mixed Blood Theatre, 1501 South 4th Street, Minneapolis 55454.

Captioning: Thursday, April 22, 7:30 PM.

Captioner: Scott Artley.

Tix: Reduced to \$16 access rate (regular \$22, \$18 student/senior, \$14 group); phone: 612-338-6131.

Web: www.mixedblood.com.

Description: Fueled by urban language and told through the perspective of an unlikely underdog, Macedonia Guerra (a Puerto Rican career wrestler), Chad Deity tells the tale of an African American pitted against a trash-talking Indian athlete from the streets. Racial politics and wrestling make odd bedfellows of everyone on Mixed Blood's stage!

Run: April 9 – May 2, 2010.

Movies

Kerasotes Block E Stadium 15, AMC Eden Prairie Mall 18 Theatres, AMC Rosedale 14 Theatres, Oakdale Ultrascreen Cinemas (Marcus Theatres), and Lakes 10 Theatre offer captioned shows. See www.moviewatcher.com/index.html

For MoPix-equipped Rear Window Captioned Films, go to <http://ncam.wgbh.org/mopix/nowshowing.html#m>.

Pix from the February Meeting.....



Angie



Bob & Sue



Colleen-Jeannette



Linda-Rich-Carole



Rich and his toys



Richard-Mike-Ade



Rich - Linda

March 2010

Our meeting room may be moved to 2nd floor. Please check the walls when you come in for the direction signs that will tell you where we are meeting.



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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