

H L A A T C

March 2011

March 19, 2011 – Judi Swan, Being Your Own Advocate and Rebecca Lander from national to speak on Walk4Hearing.

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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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

HEARING LOSS IN CHILDREN

We all probably know a child who has some degree of hearing loss. This article will discuss top causes of hearing loss in children, some signs of hearing loss in children, types of hearing loss, and what to do if you suspect hearing loss in a child.

SOME SIGNS THAT THERE IS A HEARING LOSS IN A CHILD

1. The child often says “huh” or “what” often when somebody is speaking to them
2. The child responds inconsistently to sound
3. The child has a history of ear infections
4. The child watches the speaker’s face carefully or the child always turns their head so one ear is facing the direction of the sound source
5. The child complains that their ears hurt
6. The child often turns the radio or TV up
7. The child does not always come or look when called
8. The child confuses sounds that are alike
9. The child often asks for things to be repeated
10. The child often answers a question with an unrelated answer
11. The child has a short attention span; daydreams
12. The child’s speech may be poorer than you would expect from a child of their age

TYPES OF HEARING LOSS IN CHILDREN

There are two types of hearing loss in young children: conductive hearing loss and sensori-neural hearing loss.

Conductive hearing loss occurs when sound vibrations cannot get from the surrounding air to the fluids in the inner ear. This could be caused by infection, blockage, damage to the eardrum or ossicles, or faulty development.

These types of impairments cause a loss of loudness, but never a total hearing loss. Most of these impairments can be treated by medicines or by surgery. Hearing aids can help restore the “loudness”. Repeated ear infections may cause a more permanent hearing loss called a sensori-neural hearing loss.

Sensori-neural hearing loss occurs when the inner ear nerves fail to respond to sound or the hearing nerve fails to carry information to the brain. This can be caused by:

- faulty development of the inner ear
- inherited damage to the inner ear
- damage to the inner ear and/or the hearing nerve from illness, drugs, or oxygen deprivation
- damage to the ear from loud noises
- acoustics neuromas

There are many degrees of severity in this kind of impairment

- Sometimes the loss is total or there is a loss of loudness or clarity.
- Hearing aids can help restore the missing “loudness”, but not the missing “clarity”
- Children with this type of loss have difficulty learning speech and language and should receive special educational treatment.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU SUSPECT A CHILD HAS A HEARING LOSS

- Refer the child to his/her pediatrician or family doctor for a complete examination.
- Refer the child for an otologic examination by a doctor specializing in ear problems.
- Refer the child for an audiological evaluation by a certified audiologist at a speech and hearing center.

The earlier the loss is discovered, the earlier professionals can help!

Source:

Hearing, Speech & Deafness Center

(http://www.hfdc.org/audiology/hearing_loss_children.php)

About.com--Deafness

<http://deafness.about.com/od/medical/causes/tp/topcauses.htm>

Summary of meeting January 15, 2011

Walk4Hearing

Immediately following our March 2011 meeting, from about noon to 2 PM, there will be a Walk4Hearing meeting led by Rebecca Lander from the HLAA National office. Lunch will be served for those who sign up (email rlander@hearingloss.org) by March 7. Our local Walk4Hearing fundraiser will take place October 1, 2011 at Lake Calhoun in Minneapolis.

State Convention on Hearing Loss

In part because we will be busy with the Walk4Hearing in October, HLAA-TC members feel that next March would be a better time than next fall for the State Convention on Hearing Loss. Carole will apprise Rich of that preference.

Lobby Day

The March 2 Lobby Day at the Capitol was re-emphasized, and members encouraged to attend.

Steak Fry

Bob reminded us about the steak fry on April 13. He needs a count of tickets sold, and the money you have collected at the March meeting. Volunteers would be welcome too. This is a big event, and a great fund-raiser.

DHHS Advisory Board

Sue Brabeck is on the DHHS Advisory Board, led by Marie Koehler. They are looking for more people to join the board. Most members are deaf, so the hard-of-hearing contingent is not well represented. In fact, Sue is the only hard of hearing member of the board! The two-hour meetings are held once per quarter in downtown St. Paul at the Golden Rule building. Meetings are captioned. Right now a big topic of discussion is the T. E. D. program, and other services which may be seeing budget cuts.



HLAA Twin Cities: www.hlaatc.org

Can-Do Canines presentation February 19th, 2011



From left, Ron Wolff, Freckles, and staff member Laurie Carlson

Can-Do Canines began as a Hearing-assist dog program, but now trains dogs for several types of service: hearing, mobility, diabetic, autism and seizure response. Last year we certified 30 dogs. Our goal this year is 40.

Hearing assist dogs are trained to help people who are deaf or hard of hearing, by letting them know about sounds in their environment: alarm clocks, someone at the door, intruders, smoke alarm, telephone, microwave, name call, baby cry.

Most of our dogs come from shelters and rescues. Usually small-to-medium dogs are used, but the main characteristic we look for is a curiosity about sounds. They also need to be unfazed by crowds and noise.

Our selected dogs first go to a foster home, where we can evaluate them for any issues that may pose a problem. Then they come to our facility to get started on their training, and from there they are placed in the home where they are to work as a team with their owner. Their training is completed there.

Some of the training may be done in our prison program, a win-win situation for all concerned. It benefits the prisoners who work with them, and shortens the training time so we can train more dogs.

Ron Wolff, hearing assist dog owner, and dog Freckles:

Ron has a profound hearing loss, which occurred very suddenly over night. After about six months of evaluation, a brain virus was blamed for Ron's sudden hearing loss. He has no hearing in one ear, and only about 5-7% in the other. His automotive quality control job depended on hearing, so Ron was unable to keep his job. State of Minnesota gave Ron some re-training in computer-aided drafting and design. The job has been good, but since Ron's wife travels quite a lot, Ron's inability to hear the alarm clock and telephone was a concern. Ron's wife then happened to meet a board member of HSD Minnesota (precursor of Can-Do Canines), who encouraged them to look into getting a hearing dog.

Freckles now goes everywhere with Ron. She used to go to work with him. Now Ron is retired, but Freckles still travels a lot. She alerts Ron to telephone, fire alarm, intruders, door knocks – most of the things hearing dogs usually do.

Elementary!



By Vicki Martin

A NOVA program on television (February 9) highlighted the potential of a new approach to programming, called “machine learning”. An IBM computer, named Watson after the company’s founder, was the focus of all the excitement.

Watson, groomed by three veteran programmers for participation in a televised game of “Jeopardy!”, was about to show his stuff. Computers excel at factual knowledge, a key element of any quiz show. But to compete successfully on “Jeopardy!” requires much more than factual knowledge. One must be able to understand ideas put forth in mutable natural language. Even straightforward denotative language is far from precise. And further, it may -- especially on “Jeopardy!” -- be convoluted, idiomatic, and filled with puns and double-entendres. Even the categories are sometimes metaphorical (“out of sight”, “six feet under”, “in the dark”).

The week after his introduction on NOVA, Watson appeared three times on “Jeopardy!” against two human competitors. The tension ran high. He (“he”? yeah, whatever) was quick. He was smart. In the end, he clearly triumphed over the human competition.

Yet he made embarrassing mistakes. After another contestant incorrectly said that the 1920s was the decade in which Oreo cookies were introduced, Watson followed with his answer: “What is the 1920s?” Human sniggers, titters, and head-shaking followed his “stupid” mistake. But Watson wasn’t guilty of any failure of knowledge or logic. He has a shortcoming that we know all too well:

Watson can’t hear.

New 9-1-1 option for Ramsey County

If you are deaf, deafblind or hard of hearing, live in Ramsey County and experience an emergency that requires you to call 9-1-1 for an emergency responder (first-responder), you may prefer that the first responder knew about your hearing loss without you having to communicate that during an emergency situation. A new system now allows you to inform the 9-1-1 center of your hearing loss *before* an emergency occurs. Click here for details.

<http://www.startribune.com/local/east/116013824.html>

If you are interested in signing-up for this service, click here

<http://www.co.ramsey.mn.us/NR/rdonlyres/0FBDE1A7-8318-48F6-A7C2-BCED14294935/22483/ResidentailEmergencyInfoForm0211.pdf>

HLAA-TC member Sue Brabeck offers this discovery for our perusal:

(As if we didn't have enough to worry about!)

NOT!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Online health article shows a link between hearing loss and dementia:

<http://www.cnn.com/2011/HEALTH/02/14/hearing.loss.dementia.health/index.html?hpt=T2>

"Just thought I'd share - it's interesting, but scary for ALL of us! I guess they do have some good points, but this is going to frighten a lot of people, isn't it?"

Other comments on this:

"Good find!"

"Ya, that was some read, all right!",

and (editor's favorite)

"Then again, scaring the dickens out of 15% + of the general population might well draw the attention to hearing loss in general."

DO YOU BELIEVE IN MIRACLES---I SURE DO!

This past Monday afternoon, after I returned to work from lunch, I realized I was missing one hearing aid. Trying not to panic, I went out to my car, where I last had it, but could not find it anywhere. Well, I searched in my car three times yesterday to no avail. I even looked in the garbage with our compassionate custodian, as I had thrown my lunch bag into the garbage when I returned from my lunchtime, and it wasn't there either. I had people looking for it all over at the senior high rise that I had visited during my lunchtime, but it was not to be found. I searched that high rise parking lot with a flashlight after work, but there was just too much snow and slush. Sadly, I returned home without it.

But, today I kept hearing a voice telling me "you need to go back to the parking lot at the senior high rise", where I was at 2 p.m. yesterday. It had been sunny all day, and all the snow and slush should be gone. So, after work, I went there, about 5:30 p.m., and lo and behold, the hearing aid was laying there in the parking lot, next to where I had parked--not run over, not broken, not even touched (by some miracle). People have been driving in and out of this parking lot for the past 30 hours, and it was never harmed! It is drying out right now, and tomorrow I shall try it when I know it's completely dried out. I believe in miracles--do you?

- Carole Blowers

Bits and Pieces

(courtesy Merrilee Knoll)

Bad weather cancellations; In case of bad weather use your best judgment of call one of the officers. A decision will be made by 8 AM meeting day, call an officer before 8 AM as some people come REALLY early.

Netflix (online viewing) of over 664 captioned movies. See how to install the program and then the list of movies available, 1 month free trial

<http://ncmacasl.blogspot.com/2010/10/netflix-instantwatch-titles-with.html>

Suggestion Box - a request of sugar alongside the coffee pot was brought up. Answer - because of the small space in the kitchen, the sugar was placed in back of the coffee pot. We will try moving the coffee pot and goodies together on the table. Thank you for the suggestion.

Harris Catalogs - are now in two separate "magazines" one is called the equipment and the other is called the books/media/novelties - pick up your new catalogs at the March meeting.

Visual paging at **Mpls./ St Paul International Airport**. Services for the hard of hearing; on the screen where the delays, weather etc. show up, current pages will show up. The scrolling continues for several minutes. For more information see <http://tinyurl.com/4zbgxmd>

A rainbow of HLAA-TC SHIRTS!



Break-time chat



Family Ties

By Merrilee Knoll

If you are hard of hearing, Deaf, deaf, deafblind, late-deafened, etc., and you happen to hear lets say the doorbell when you are standing right next to it, and your mate says, “you heard that?” How are you supposed to justify that? “Well, I felt the vibes in my feet from the buzzer.”

Actually, different sounds come to us in different ways, and like diabetes Type 1,2,1.5, 1.3, pregestational and pre diabetes, no two HOH individuals are the same, or have the same intensity of hearing loss.

Isn’t it frustrating when your hearing spouse, who you’ve been married to for over 30 years and you’ve had a hearing loss for 30 years still needs to be reminded to keep his hands away from his mouth, not chew food and talk, face me when speaking, not talk to me from the other room, and remember that no, I can not hear the door bell while I am in the laundry room with the washer running. Strange isn’t it?

Some may say you have selective hearing, meaning you hear only what you want to hear. But when you live with someone day in and day out, you may “forget” that they have a hearing loss, because you always face them, speak slowly and distinctly and don’t think that repeats are anything out of the norm. If hearing, you’ve probably been told by many other hearies that you have an excellent speaking voice, which came about because of your “training” with your HOH other.

So where am I going with this blip? I’m getting on my soapbox and thanking my spouse and relatives for being so accommodating to me. For taking the time to use the special phone to call me. For the amplification of the TV with my infrared, and your mad dash to the charger to get a charged battery before I miss too much of the story. For using the pocket talker in the car, flashing the lights when you come up behind me, turning off the coffee pot that buzzed: “it’s ready to drink now.” Thank you for telling me the parts of the news that I missed because it was not captioned, or was done in the field. Kudos also for the run-downs on the streamed videos on the computer that have no captions.

Working so well together may be a downfall. Why? Well, outsiders may see how well you and your relatives’ converse that they do not realize you have a hearing loss. If you lip read a little and can fill in some blanks from your mate’s sentences, everything they are telling you makes perfect sense. Trying to do the same with a casual friend is next to impossible.

I guess what I am saying is.....thank you.

Have you thanked your friends and family for accommodating you lately?

The Future of...

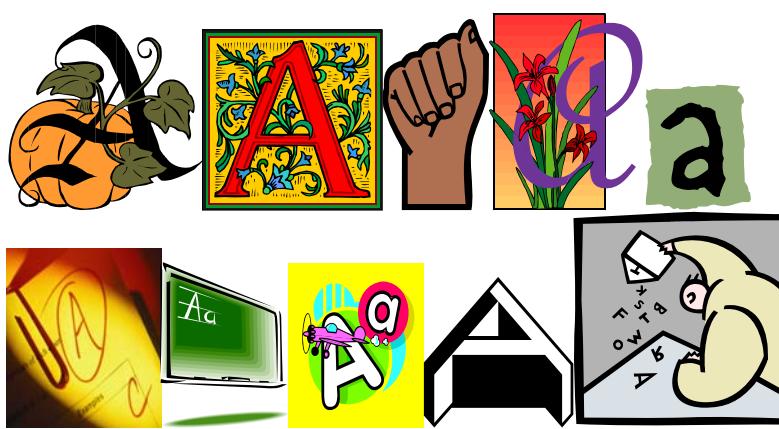
The success of IBM's Watson against the best human competition "Jeopardy!" has to offer draws our attention to a type of learning at which humans excel, and often take for granted: pattern recognition.

As an example, the seemingly simple task of recognizing the letter 'A' is fraught with difficulty. A computer can be programmed to recognize a finite number of variations of the letter 'A', say upper and lower case in hundreds of different printer fonts. But when humans write the letter 'A', the variations are endless. Each person has his own handwriting style. In fact, no two of my own 'A's are exactly alike.

But through a process called "machine learning", a computer can discover patterns in all of this variety. It does so by viewing millions of A's of all different types. It compares each instance of the letter to every other instance in its experience to come up with its own definition of the letter 'A'. This definition is continually refined by further experience.

The challenges of voice recognition are similar to those of letter recognition. No two voices are alike. Voice pitch, quality and speed varies. There are different accents. People slur their speech, or contract it. We have dialects. We use jargon. With machine learning, there is hope that patterns can be discovered in all varieties of speech. This could have profound consequences for the future of voice recognition – and thus, for live captioning.

- Editor



Carole Blowers to star at Collings Theater

Collings Theater of Fine Arts, 7441 Newton Ave. N. in Brooklyn Park, will be presenting a melodrama on April 2, 8, 9, 15, 16 at 7:30 pm, and April 17 at 4 p.m.

Carole Blowers, current HLAA-TC President, will play "Beulah" in this community theater production.

Reserve tickets by calling Barabara at (763) 561-4037.

Accessibility is under consideration. Contact Carole if you'd like to know about a captioned performance.

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Let us help you with that.

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Our next meeting is March 19, 2011

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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