

HLAA Twin Cities

Hearing Loss Association of America Twin Cities Chapter April 2007

Formerly SHHH Minnesota Chapter #1

www.hlaatc.org

Calendar of Coming Events

April 21, 2007 - Deaf/Safe Speaker Alina Schroeder

May 19, 2007 - Elections & Pot Luck

June 21 – June 24, 2007 – HLAA National Convention in Oklahoma City

September, 2007: Michelle Kimmer (MN Employment Center)- job coaching for deaf and HOH

October, 2007: Rick McPhearson - attorney with the MN Disability Law Center

November, 2007: Hearing dogs

December, 2007: OSHA - Brian Alexander : NOISE - regulations and hearing issues

[View Hearing Loss Magazine free online](http://www.hearingloss.org)

www.hearingloss.org

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

Hearing Loss Association of America Convention 2007

Register now for the annual time of your life. Join us in Oklahoma City this June for workshops, exhibits, friends, and more.

National Website:

www.hearingloss.org

Minnesota Website:

www.hlaatc.org

MN Contact Information:

info@hlaatc.org

HLAA Twin Cities Chapter meetings are held at the
Courage Center
3915 Golden Valley Road, Golden Valley, MN 55422 on the 3rd Saturday of each month (except June, July and August). Meetings start at 9:30 and last until Noon. Everyone is welcome!

April 2007

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Sue - Steak Fry, April 11, 2007





President's Message



Hello Family of HLAA TC,

As time passes and many new things have happened to our organization; new members (Bev, Hunter, Elisabeth, Laurence, Li, Dorothy, Bill, Linda) our name changed (thank you Bob for all the work involved with the IRS, State, Post Office and bank) new brochures (thank you Ross and Dave) new web site (thank you Dave). We placed an "ad" in the Access Press (thank you Vicki) the Delano paper (thank you Mike) and the senior center in Delano (thanks again to Mike). We are a fortunate group to have so many willing people to help the cause, when it seems that other organizations are not doing so well. Why is this happening? Is it because so many people are afflicted now by hearing loss more than ever before, or do we feel this is a group that has true value in its existence?

In the Feb. newsletter I stressed that everyone should join up with the Captioned Media Program which was free, and then the next month it was no longer. This is a sad event to the HOH, as all 4000 + tapes and DVD's were captioned. They provided a good service but got hit by the money crusher.

May will be our final meeting until

September. We take June, July and August off as many people go on vacation at that time. May will be election time and pot luck, which we all enjoy. Our speaker in Sept. will be Michelle Kimmer from the MN Employment Center with job coaching tips for people with hearing loss.

April 21st is our next meeting, lets hope there is no snow storm, but being hearty Minnesotans we can expect just about any weather change from -20 to 100 degrees.

Take care Merrilee



By the Numbers...

28 million: Number of Americans with a hearing impairment

17 in 1,000: Proportion of children under 18 with hearing loss

2 to 3 out of 1,000: Proportion of children in the United States born deaf or hard of hearing

59,000: Number of people worldwide who have received cochlear implants

13,000: Number of adults in the U.S. who have cochlear implants

10,000: Number of children in the U.S. who have cochlear implants

Source: National Institute on Deafness

Feed My Starving Children-has been an event HLAA TC has participated in for the last 2 years. See our scrapbooks for pictures of members who have volunteered. The little red tube that sits at the sign in table holds enough quarters to feed 93 children. These children will not be eating whoppers or peanut butter sandwiches, but rather a bland broth like soup with vitamins and other nutrients that their sensitive tummies can handle. I am proud to say we have filled 3 of those tubes already, can you help to make it four with one quarter?

HLAA TC Meeting 3/17/07

By Monique Hammond VP



Monique helping at the Steak Fry – Note that great lookin' HLAA shirt!

Yes, we had our March session on Saint Patrick's Day! 32 members and guests attended. **Angie Sundell** from Paradigm provided our much appreciated CART service.

President Merrilee called the meeting to order promptly at 10AM. She explained that **Dora Weber** was absent due to some issues with her cochlear implant. We join Merrilee in wishing Dora all the best.

Merrilee announced that the new HLAA shirts are available for pick-up.

She also told us with regret that the Captioned Media program is discontinued. They offered all sorts of captioned materials – videos and DVDs – free of charge. Reason for closing down this valuable service? Lack of funds, of course!

From the lips of St. Patrick himself? - **Mike Day** offered some wise, guiding words: May you live as long as you want, but never want as long as you live.

Alfred Tsang won the door prize: a tool kit!

Linda Senechal brought some Hospital Kits which help deaf and hard of hearing people identify themselves to health care workers. You can get a kit in exchange for a donation.

We welcomed **Hunter Sargent** warmly as a new HLAA TC member.

Our speaker was **Jon Skaalen** from VSA (Vision, Strength, Access) arts of Minnesota. Jon -who is also an HLAA TC member- voiced the concerns of the cultural and arts communities about making events accessible

and welcoming for people with disabilities. He asked for feedback on our experiences with hearing accessibility to events such as movies, plays, museums etc. He got great cooperation and many valuable suggestions, spiced with real-life examples both good and bad. Jon also inquired if anyone wants to serve on a panel during the upcoming LEAD (Leadership Exchange in Arts and Education) Conference that will be held in August here in Minneapolis? Among others, access to cultural events for disabled people will be discussed. Anyone interested in the Conference or anyone who has more tips for Jon on how to improve arts accessibility for the deaf and hard of hearing can contact him at jon.vsarts@bcmn.com.

Jerry Pouliot from MN Relay made a brief announcement about some new technology: Telephone captioning projected onto our computer screens?! WOW!

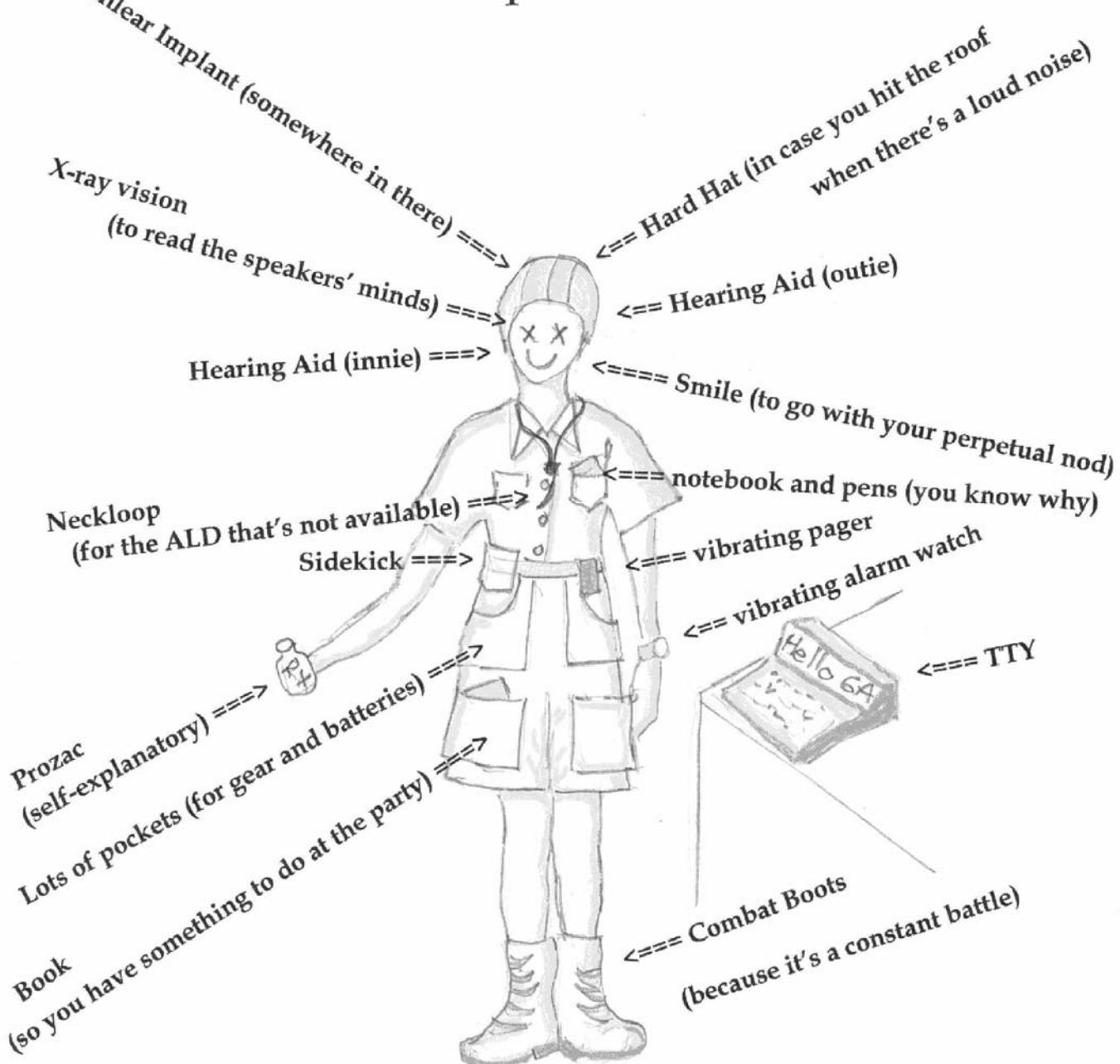
During the second hour **President Merrilee** led us in an open forum. We discussed all sorts of personal experiences that relate to our hearing disabilities. TV's Dr. Phil keeps saying that we actually train people on how to treat us. From our exchanges it became clear that there is something to this. We can educate those around us on our disability, what our needs and limits are and why we count on their patience and understanding at times. Given some explanations, people in general do like to help. This is true for family as well as for coworkers.

Great meeting! Thanks to all!!!



Angie Sundell from Paradigm

The Compleat Listener



*The Compleat
Listener*

; >

Vicki Martin

BITS AND PIECES



Visit the **Tech Expo** on Saturday, May 5, 2007, from 9:30 AM - Noon at the Elmer L. Anderson Bldg. 540 Cedar St. in St. Paul. Free parking, admission, refreshments. See the latest gadgets that make life easier and cooler for kids 0-18+ who are deaf or hard of hearing. Bring your gear along to test compatibility. For more info. call DHHS at 651-297-1316 (V) or 888-206-6513 (TTY).

Hearing Loss Association of Florida invites all to join on a wk long **cruise Sept. 30, 2007** on The Royal Caribbean Cruise ship, Mariner of the Seas. The ship sails out of Port Canaveral, FL. Deposits are due by 4/25/07. See more info. under cal. of events on Nationals website or contact Lynn at HLAFlorida@aol.com or barbaram@contus.com. This is a cruise especially for the HOH.

Gil Eastman, graduate of Gallaudet in 57, actor, writer, educator, stage manager, director of more than 50 plays who passed away recently will have his name Gilbert C. Eastman Studio Theater replacing the auditoriums Back Box Theater name.

Retraction for Statements in Press Release re: **TDI** wishes to issue an apology concerning some statements made in its press release dated March 5, 2007. Several statements in that press release could be interpreted to mean that Video Relay Service (VRS) is the relay of choice for all deaf and hard of hearing people, and that the native language of all individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing is American Sign Language. TDI regrets that in our eagerness to emphasize the importance of VRS for people who rely on sign language for communication, we inadvertently made a couple of overly broad generalizations. We want to thank a few consumer advocates for bringing to our attention the misleading language that was used, and allowing us this opportunity to clarify the situation.

Hospital Kits - anyone who would like a hospital kit is welcome to make a donation and pick one up. These were put together by Linda Senechal. Great idea if you are ever in the hospital.

MN Caption Bloopers: Governor Paul Letty.....
s/b....Gov. Pawlenty

News from MCDHH regarding legislative progress - go to: www.mncdhh.org for the latest update.

<http://tinyurl.com/3879qv>

The life of **Helen Keller**, short one page.

Read the story of Melissa Regas who wants to change **ASL into PSL** (People's Sign Language). How does this sit with the signing community? How do you feel about it?

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5iShwg2m4o8>

Then read what author, former editor and owner of TS Writing Services, Trudy Suggs says about it.

<http://www.i711.com/my711.php?tab=2&cat=culture>

Deaf people and WWII - National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID), recently launched this site to preserve the history and experiences of WWII in relation to the Deaf and HOH. www.rit.edu/deafww2

http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/dro/tips_on_filing_cc_complaint.html

Captioning complaints? No caps during an emergency, storms, bad cap? Contact the above web site. The more people who say their captioning is inferior the more likely FCC will respond to it.

The **Bush administration** has notified insurance companies in the Federal Employees Benefits Program that it has set out new policy goals for 2008. The program, administered by the Office of Personnel Management, provides coverage to government employees and retirees and their families -- about 8 million Americans. In a letter to the companies, OPM asked for proposals that would **increase coverage of hearing benefits for newborns and children**, noting that hearing loss is one of the most common congenital birth defects.

OPM asked the companies to review their benefits to ensure they provide children with screenings, testing, diagnostic evaluations and treatment by professionals, including audiologists. "We are encouraging proposals that include benefits for both professional services as well as hearing aids," the letter said. The request for proposals on hearing benefits for children grew out of the 2004 congressional debate on the creation of a new dental-vision program for federal employees. Some members of Congress expressed interest in improving coverage for people with hearing loss.

New Exciting Hearing Research!! The difference between birds and humans! By Monique Hammond, VP

During the last meeting, Bob Copus gave me an article on some new research regarding hearing loss. He wondered if I could do a brief summary for our members so that we all can share in these exciting yet highly technical developments. To find the whole article, go to www.newscientist.com. It appeared 10 March 2007. It is titled "hear tomorrow" by Michael Tennesen. Now let me try to put 3 pages into a few words!

We all know by now that one of the leading causes of hearing loss is the damage and sometimes the death of specialized hair cells located in the cochlea, the hearing structure of the inner ear. Once the hair cells stop functioning or die, they do NOT regenerate or recover. That is at least the case for mammals which includes us humans.

However, birds, chickens, bony fish, amphibians and other vertebrates DO regenerate these important auditory cells throughout their lives. Birds can regrow damaged or dead hair cells in about 3 weeks! This is very intriguing to researchers who try to unlock the mystery why our inner ears can no longer do this.

In these non-mammals, are there **genes** that are responsible for switching the hair cell regeneration process on and off? Yes, there are! There are also other **biochemicals** that contribute to the process. Experiments are still only done in complex laboratory tests, either in test tubes or on animals such as mice.

So far, it has been found that in mammals the capability to regenerate cochlear hair cells is lost shortly after birth. Research has also shown that the possibility still exists for switching the hair cell regrowth system back on, to awaken it in some way. If we succeed in doing all of this, will we get quality hearing back? That is another huge question for which there is not yet an answer. Scientists speculate that this new approach could lead to complementing other hearing assistive

treatments such as cochlear implants.

Human testing is way off in the future from the looks of it. Yet, research has often been unexpectedly advanced by decades simply because of some lucky breaks. That's what we all hope for now. It is refreshing to see that even though hair cell regeneration has been talked about for some time, there seem to be enough new discoveries to urge the scientists forward. At least we are going in the right direction.



More Pictures of our volunteers at the Steak Fry!



How cochlear implants can influence speech interpretation

Quiet environments provide a good setting for the human brain when it needs to interpret speech. But noisy environments, say researchers at University College London and Imperial College London, prove taxing on the brain because the speech it must make sense of seems incomprehensible. In their latest study, funded by the Wellcome Trust and the Medical Research Council, researchers aimed to simulate the everyday experience of people who need cochlear implants and to assess how these experiences with the devices can be improved. Their findings were published in the February issue of the *Journal of Neuroscience*.

People who are either deaf or who have serious hearing problems use cochlear implants, but these surgically implanted electronic devices can make speech garbled and have a high level of background noise. While it will not restore a person's hearing, the device should provide useful sensations of sounds.

"In a noisy environment, when we hear speech that appears to be predictable, it seems that more regions of the brain are engaged," Dr Jonas Obleser, who conducted the research at the UCL's Institute of Cognitive Neuroscience. "We believe this is because the brain stores the sentence in short-term memory. Here it juggles the different interpretations of what it has heard until the result fits in with the context of the conversation."

The clarity of a person's speech and the level of background noise will influence how well the left and right temporal lobes of the brain interpret speech. If background noise does in fact impair a person's hearing, other regions of the brain jump into action, like the angular gyrus, which is involved in several language- and cognition-related processes. In this study, the researchers identified the key role the angular gyrus plays by using MRI scans of the brain. Working out how the brain interprets

distorted speech will help the researchers to make the experience of people with cochlear implants better.

"The idea behind the study was to stimulate the experience of having a cochlear implant, where speech can sound like a very distorted, harsh whisper," explained Professor Sophie Scott, a Wellcome Trust Senior Research Fellow at ICN. "Further down the line, we hope to study variation in the hearing of people with implants. Why is it that some people do better at understanding speech than others? We hope that this will help inform speech and hearing therapy in the future."

WHAT'S NEW? New Cochlear Implant

We all know that the Nucleus is from Cochlear Corporation of Australia, Med-El is produced in Austria, and the Clarion is made by Advanced Bionics in California (a part of the U.S. ruled by somebody from Austria). <Grin>

There's another one though, albeit not to be found beyond Europe, the Digisonic SP Cochlear Implant System from France... of all places! The Digisonic® SP Multi-Array implant is a special version of the cochlear implant used in cases where the cochlea has become ossified. Tres bien!

Curious? Learn more at their website:
http://www.neurelec.com/en/produits/digisonic_multi_array.html



WHAT'S NEW?

New Surgical Drill

The world's first truly smart robotic micro-drill has been used in a surgical operation in Birmingham, the United Kingdom. The surgical drilling robot, developed by Peter Brett from the School of Engineering & Applied Science at Aston University, does not have to be programmed or made to work from a computer operated by a human. It is smart, just knows where to go and what to do, science news website Alpha Galileo reported on Thursday.

The drill has been tested on patients needing cochlear implants by David Proops, Ear, Nose and Throat Consultant Surgeon at University Hospital Birmingham NHS (National Health Service) Foundation Trust.

The drill, applied to the cochlea, the inner ear hearing organ, is aligned to the correct place and then drills a hole less than a millimeter in diameter to enable the cochlear implant to be inserted. This has never happened in medicine before. It has been tested on three human patients - all with successful outcomes. It drills a perfect hole, the perfect size, in the perfect place and to a perfect depth.

When working with a traditional surgical drill under the microscope the drill tip will naturally perforate the surface through the inner flexible boney tissue interface of the cochlea with the inner membrane and protrude into the space.

Using the robotic micro-drill, the device is able to detect the approach of the drill tip as it approaches this tissue interface. It is then able to avoid penetrating the membrane, so avoiding drilling and other debris dropping into the ear.

It is expected that this more precise means of drilling will lead to improved hearing for the patient following implantation.

The drill is currently only being used for cochlear implants, but the potentials for wider surgery applications in the future are extensive. It will revolutionize this type of micro-surgery.



Over 300 people attended Deaf, Hard of Hearing and DeafBlind Legislative Day

Speaker of the House, Representative Margaret Anderson-Kelliher welcomed us with open arms to the capitol. Senator David Senjem spoke of Legislature's support of Deaf, Hard of Hearing and DeafBlind issues. Mark Ritchie, Secretary of State, then spoke of how "democracy shouldn't be a spectator sport" and how the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and DeafBlind Community has the potential for being one of the largest bodies of voter influence in the state of Minnesota. And lastly, Senator John Marty, like Speaker of the House Anderson-Kelliher, spoke on the significance of Early Hearing Detection and Intervention. Senator James Metzen also stopped by to show his support for our community and issues.

MN HOUSE AND SENATE TV GUIDE

Programming is broadcast and cablecast to Minnesota residents weekdays from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m., with extended coverage available on select days and over select cable systems.

Twin Cities: tpt17(broadcast and cable)
<http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/htv/liveweb.htm>

Please stay alert to what is happening in the MN House and Senate, and let your representatives know what you support!

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!!

The Prez serving up the steaks!



Top Reasons Hard of Hearing/Late-Deafened Seek Help

*Kristin Swan, MA, LP, Regions Hospital
Kristin spoke at our February meeting. We all appreciated the understanding and empathy that she communicated to us.*

- 1. Grief and loss** – extreme sadness – rejection of the hearing loss – this searching for the “cure” or the “reason” may delay learning coping strategies – increased dependence on others – disruption of established life pattern and routine
- 2. Depression** - Persistent low mood, sense of helplessness, hopelessness, emptiness and worthlessness – crying – withdrawal – social isolation – loss of interest in activities – avoidance – low energy
- 3. Cognitive Difficulties** - Difficulty thinking, concentrating or attending – negative thoughts – guilt and embarrassment lower self esteem – not wanting to be a burden to other people – feel like you are going crazy
- 4. Anxiety** - feel there is a threat to one’s competency, losing sense of acceptability by others, sense of control or influence over the environment, hyper-vigilance, constant scanning to be aware of what is going on – restlessness, fear, worry and apprehension, avoidance, paranoid thoughts (they are talking about me). Chronic anxiety leads to fatigue which in turn interferes with the ability to pay attention which leads to failure to understand and communication difficulty which leads back to anxiety. It can be a vicious cycle.

5. Sleep issues

6. Cognitive Difficulties –

Barriers and misunderstandings – anger and blame – others become defensive – either the person becomes less communicative or dominates the conversation. This constant talking pushes people away.

HOH person may blame everything on the hearing loss and not face the real issue.

- 7. Lack of community**, loss of friends, change of leisure activities, personality changes, lack of intimacy. Not knowing where you fit in – friends change, community changes. The HOH person feels like they are fading out of the family.
- 8. Vocation problems** – career crisis, unable to do one’s job, lack of camaraderie with coworkers, can’t take classes and learn new things

With each life cycle that you go through, you get hit with the grief cycle again.

Strategies and Guidelines for HOH People

Remember that changing communication behavior is difficult for people.

Make requests, not demands.

Inform others about your hearing loss – provide them a reason why they should do what is asked of them – it gives them a chance to be helpful.

Show confidence in how to reduce communication problems

Keep it simple, light-hearted and matter-of-fact – not too much information unless asked.

Watch your body language when you inform others.

Avoid being apologetic, putting yourself down, expressing anger, being impolite, blaming, being defensive.

Be specific when making requests.

Gently remind people when they forget – it is human to forget.

Model the communication behavior desired.

Reinforce people’s effective efforts – thank them.

Give yourself “kudos” for being responsible for practicing effective communication.



Entertainment

Mixed Blood Theatre

Captioned theater in Minnesota – YES! The Mixed Blood Theatre's next Access Night is Friday, April 27 at 7:30 p.m. The play is “**Messy Utopia**” and will be performed in the Alan Page Auditorium at Mixed Blood's firehouse. Log on to www.mixedblood.com or call them at (612) 338-6131 for directions to the theatre. Tickets are \$24.

“Messy Utopia” is about biracial or multi-racial people. Over 5% of Americans self-identify with this group, and they include Tiger Woods, Barack Obama, Halle Berry, Jimmy Smits, Cameron Diaz, Derek Jeter, and Paula Abdul.

Science Museum of MN Access Services for HOH

- TTY phone number 651-221-4585.
- Amplified Audio Units and written scripts are available for the Omnitheater and 3D Cinema.
- Rear Projection Captioning or Rear Window® Captioning is available for most Omnitheater films. Please inquire at the box office or call 651-221-9444.
- Sign language interpreters can be arranged with 72 hours notice. Call 651-221-9406 to schedule an interpreter.
- Many of the exhibits have open or closed captioning.

Rear Window® Captioning

was developed to make theaters accessible to audiences with disabilities the day and date films debut, and during regular showtimes.

Rear Window Captioning enables movie fans with hearing loss to enjoy a film via reflected captions that appear on a plexiglas panel at the seat. Patrons sitting in the surrounding seats cannot see the captions. There is no additional charge to use the systems.

This unique access technology is installed in the following Twin City theaters:

AMC Eden Prairie Mall 18, Eden Prairie

AMC Rosedale 14, Roseville

Crown Theatres Block E 15 (2 auditoriums equipped), 600 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis

Science Museum of Minnesota, St. Paul

Visit the Minnesota Travel Guide for People with Disabilities to plan your spring and summer outings!
<http://www.accessminnesota.org/>

To check opened captioned movies in March and April, 2007

<http://www.mnocfilms.org/ocaptions.html>

Closed captioned movies:

<http://www.mnocfilms.org/ccaptions.html>

To find a movie theater near you that has captions, simply type in your zip code at this Web site www.Fomdi.com





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This month's editor is Linda Senechal

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