

# HLAA Twin Cities

Hearing Loss Association of America Twin Cities Chapter April 2008

## April 2008

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THE **NEXT MEETING** IS  
April 19<sup>TH</sup> AT 9:30 AM  
AT THE COURAGE CENTER  
Courage Center  
3915 Golden Valley Road  
Golden Valley, MN 55422-4249

HLAA TC Website  
[www.hlaatc.org](http://www.hlaatc.org)  
contains map to our location,  
resources, officers, upcoming  
events and newsletters.

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

MN Contact Information:  
[info@hlaatc.org](mailto:info@hlaatc.org)



Hearing Loss  
Association  
of America

## Calendar of Events

**April 19, 2008** – Dr. Kristen Swan – Region's Hospital – returning psychotherapist

**May 17, 2008** – FCC speaker re: digital TV changeover and captioning (to be confirmed), elections and potluck

**June, July, August** – NO MEETINGS

**June 12 –15, 2008** – HLAA **National** Convention in Reno, Nevada

**Sep 20, 2008** Mary Clark, president, Orange County CA HLAA group: Emergency Preparedness for hard of hearing people

**Oct 18, 2008** Mary Bauer, DHHS - Equipment Lending Program

**Mailing Newsletter Editor:** Did you know that postage rates are going up on May 12, 2008 by 1 cent? Did you know the newsletter has been cut months back both top and bottom to avoid additional cost of mailing at the upcoming 59¢ rate for 2 ozs.? We work hard to make the \$'s stretch. Would you consider trying it electronically for awhile? Also, would you consider picking up the newsletter at the meetings instead of having it mailed? Some people get it electronically and then pick up a hard copy at the meetings. If you would consider any changes in your mailings let Merrilee know. Thank you!

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

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



**Monique Hammond, President**

### **The “ Little Hulk” inside all of us!**

**Mr. Lou Ferrigno** - whom many remember from “**The Incredible Hulk**” T.V. show - lost up to 80% of his hearing at around age 3 due to multiple serious ear infections. He never has been able to conquer the accompanying speech difficulties. How was he ever going to overcome these overwhelming odds?

Amazingly, he states that his hearing loss forced him to *maximize his potential*. He believes that there is a “*Little Hulk*” inside all of us who can make us do extraordinary things.

**Mr. Ferrigno** has spoken out on the challenges of hearing loss for a quarter of a century and has become for many people an icon of “ real strength and motivation” rather than just a cartoon figure come- to- life.

I do not advertise that we all should take up bodybuilding - Oh my, it would kill me - but how about finding *our* personal “*Little Hulks*” that can push us to maximize *our* potentials?

During the March HLAA TC meeting, our speaker demonstrated how seemingly ordinary people with extraordinary commitment can make huge differences in people’s lives.

Unfortunately **Lion Dwight Maxa** could not be with us. In his place **Lion Kirsten Coverstone**, a pediatric audiologist, introduced us to the *Lions Hearing Aid Loaner Bank* and the *Lions*

*Infant Hearing Screening Program*. Never a dull day, I would say!

Without her internal *Little Hulk* that keeps her motivated, it would be a tough call for Kirsten to pursue her multiple assignments with endless hope and oomph!

At this point, I want to take the opportunity to thank **our very own** Lions – **Treasurer Bob Knoll** and **Past President Joe O’Brien** - for representing the **HLAA TC** interests locally at **The Crystal Lions Club**. Over the years **The Crystal Lions** certainly have helped our Chapter massively by providing a venue and hands-on assistance for our fundraisers. We can count on their support year after year. Now that is extraordinary, and we thank them all officially for their efforts!

Just by being active within our own families, work places and social groups we can influence the attitudes of our peers and friends towards hearing challenged people. We can take on the issue of noise pollution, contact our elected officials once we are notified of legislation that will affect us. We can raise awareness and speak out on this topic dear to our hearts, namely hearing loss. We all know a thing or two about it!

In this my second-to-last President’s message, I invite all of us to *listen* for that penned-up *Little Hulk* within us. What makes it tick? How about letting it out of its cage and following its lead? We will soon find that the opportunities to maximize our potentials in our own personal worlds are almost endless.

Monique



**Lisa** Captioned in February – THANKS!



# HLAA Meeting March 15, 2008

*Vice President Vicki Martin*

## Meeting Summary



**Guest Speaker Kirsten Coverstone**

Kirsten is an audiologist (standing in for Lion Dwight Maxa)

Topic: Lions' Hearing Foundation

The Lions' Hearing Foundation is over 30 years old, having been established in 1978. The Lions are often associated with vision support, but also have a significant history of hearing support.

The foundation operates in partnership with the University of Minnesota department of otolaryngology. Over the years, the Lions have contributed over \$6 million for hearing education, research, and clinical services. In 1999 they also contributed over half a million dollars to support the Universal and Newborn Hearing Screening program (UNHS), and the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention program (EDHI).

Of the common conditions screened for at birth, hearing loss is by far the most common. The purpose of the programs is to enable children with hearing loss to engage in language learning (whether speech or sign) at the optimum age as infants, thus giving them the same education

opportunity at the same age as hearing children.

In general the programs follow the 1-3-6 goals: screening by one month of age, diagnosis by three months of age, and intervention by six months of age.

There are a wide variety of services, including equipment, police education and development, training and educational materials, and the statewide hearing instrument loaner bank for children. The Lions have used their experience to help persuade legislators to make EHDI and the hearing instrument loaner bank mandatory state-funded programs. ("Mandatory" means that it must be offered to all. Parents can opt out at any time).

Kirsten explained some of the ways that infant hearing can be tested. Babies are not expected to "raise their hand at the tone" as we adults are used to doing.

UNHS and EDHI are now administered by the Minnesota Department of Health, leaving the Lions to pursue their next goal of raising over \$900,000 to raise the standard of care at the Lions' Children's Hearing Center (located in the Philip Wangenstein building, University of Minnesota Audiology Center).

## **Business Meeting**

**President's Message from Monique:** Monique brought to our attention a study being done at the University of Minnesota regarding why hearing aids don't deliver what we need (such as the ability to hear in noise). Sheryl Erenberg is looking for participants for testing. Parking and minimal compensation will be provided. A sign-up sheet is available at HLAA meetings.

Monique reminded us that Kristin Swan will be back by popular demand at our next (April)

meeting. Rich Diedrichsen will also be present, and we are looking for ideas and comments regarding next year's State Convention on Hearing Loss.

**Vice President Vicki's messages:** Vicki reviewed the AARP Safe Driving class from the perspective of a student with hearing loss. All of the AARP videos are captioned, and the captions were displayed in class. Assistive listening was not provided. However, the instructor wore the equipment Vicki brought in, and remembered to repeat any questions or comments from the audience. All in all a good experience, though some others who have taken the course did not find it so accommodating. The class is available to people age 50 and over, and you get a reduction of 10% on your car insurance if you take the class. For more information, go to [www.aarp.org/drive](http://www.aarp.org/drive).

ASL words for the month are

Vacation	Fly	Plane
Train	Trip	Travel
Sightseeing	Relax	Family
Relatives	Europe	Bon voyage

Bon voyage to our very own Ross and Monique – have a wonderful trip!

**Treasurer Bob:** Reminded us of the upcoming steak fry April 9 from 5 to 7 PM at the Crystal VFW. Volunteers have been lined up, and tickets are selling well.

**Past President Merrilee:** Remember took look at the HLAA scrap books on the tables at our meetings. They are updated frequently. "Kids, Cops and Firefighters", a fun and educational program for children, will be held May 8. Flyers available at the HLAA meeting.

**Member Spotlight, Linda Miller:** Linda joined HLAA-TC about a year ago, and has found our speakers and members helpful and informative. Much more than that – it is a place where she doesn't feel alone. Care is taken to

make sure everyone can hear, see, and participate. Linda has been in the dental profession for 27 years, first as a technician and now as an office manager. Working in the noisy dental lab may have contributed to Linda's hearing loss. She can now use the telephone only with difficulty, if at all. Kirsten Swan's talk at HLAA last year, and the HLAA environment in general has been empowering to Linda, who now finds herself more assertive in advocating for her needs.

**Linda Senechal (board member, Northern Voices school):** Linda is seeking volunteer donations for their fundraiser silent auction coming up this summer. Proceeds go to Northern Voices oral school for children with hearing loss. Details and contact information are available from Linda, or at the HLAA meetings.

**Vicki**

In Baltimore, MD a bill pushed by the **National Federation for the Blind** is up for examination by Congress to make **hybrid cars** noisier, as they are impossible for the blind to hear when at a cross stop.

So in making cars environmentally friendly they have caused another problem; being too quiet. Then if they get noisier they are like all other cars, too noisy and defeating one of their main purposes.

This bill would ask for a two year study to be complete before making changes in the cars.

Many blind use service dogs, but not all, so this is definitely a new problem. Just when we thought we were getting somewhere with quiet cars and helping Al Gore to save the earth, we realize we have a long way to go yet.

## *Digital TV on Its Way – Prepare for the Switch to Get the Picture*



Big changes are coming in television broadcasting. On February 17, 2009, all full power television stations are required to stop broadcasting in analog and continue broadcasting in digital only. This is known as the DTV transition.

Some consumers are asking why they need to switch. First, all-digital broadcasting will give needed communications channels to police, fire and emergency rescue personnel. It will also allow for new wireless services for consumers. In addition, since digital is more efficient than analog, it allows stations to broadcast several programs at the same time, instead of just one program with analog. This means broadcasters can offer consumers more choices. Digital also allows broadcasters to offer improved picture and sound quality, including high definition (HDTV) programming.

It is also important to know that the end of analog broadcasting does not mean that consumers must purchase new TVs, and you certainly don't need an HDTV to watch digital broadcasts. If you currently receive over-the-air programming on an analog television using a broadcast antenna, either through "rabbit ears" on your set or an antenna on your roof, you will only need a digital-to-analog converter box to continue watching broadcast television on that set after February 17, 2009. These boxes will cost approximately \$40 to \$70, and will be available in stores beginning in early 2008.

To help defray the cost of digital-to-analog converter boxes, each U.S. household can request up to two coupons, worth \$40 each, to be used toward the purchase of eligible boxes. This coupon program is being administered by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA). For more information on the coupon program, visit [www.dtv2009.gov](http://www.dtv2009.gov) or call 1-888-DTV-2009.

If you watch over-the-air programming on a DTV (a TV with a built-in digital tuner), you will not need a digital-to-analog converter box. Also, an antenna you use to receive analog broadcasts should work for receiving digital broadcasts, both on a DTV and on an analog TV connected to a digital-to-analog converter box.

If you subscribe to a paid television service such as cable or satellite TV, you will not need a digital-to-analog converter box, and the TVs connected to your paid service will continue to receive local broadcast programming. However, consumers are advised to check with their providers to see if they will need any additional equipment in the future.

For more information, call the FCC at 1-888-225-5322 (TTY: 1-888-835-5322) or visit their DTV Web site at [www.dtv.gov](http://www.dtv.gov).

# Bits and Pieces

**William Austin**, founder and chief executive of Starkey Laboratories in Eden Prairie, has long been known as the Santa Claus of Hearing. Now he's being honored as member of the Horatio Alger Association of Distinguished Americans. The Horatio Alger award honors those who have defied adversity with hard work, courage and determination to achieve the American dream of wealth and success.

Austin, 66, developed the first in-the-ear hearing aid, licensed the technology and became the world's largest provider of such hearing aids by 1973. Starkey Laboratories generates \$420 million in annual sales and employs more than 3,700 people in 26 countries. Through the Starkey Hearing Foundation, Austin goes on more than 30 mission trips a year to provide children with hearing aids.

Children are "the future of the world," Austin said after receiving the award. "We truly live through what we give -- we live on into the future through our gifts back into your community and to humanity."

Y Y Y Y Y

For the link to the AARP driving course information, go to [WWW.AARP.ORG/drive](http://WWW.AARP.ORG/drive). Drivers 50 and over are eligible to take the class.

Y Y Y Y Y

**Deaf President Now (DPN)** held its 20th year celebration at Gallaudet in remembrance of its very first deaf president, but I King Jordan the man who took that honor was not invited. After a round of debating and school closings when he suggested strongly Dr. Jane Fernandes replace him when he retired, there were strong feelings of resentment that hold to this day.

Y Y Y Y Y Y

Our switch to DTV will be Feb. 17, 2008 but **Canada's** won't be until 2011.

Y Y Y Y Y Y

The **FCC glossary**:  
<http://www.fcc.gov/connectglobe/glossary.html>  
Book by-Michael Chorost, "**Rebuilt: How**

## **Becoming Part Computer Made Me More**

**Human,**" a best-selling book about an oral deaf man who received a cochlear implant.

<http://www.michaelchorost.com/blog/2008/03/26/we-all-sleep-in-silence/>

Y Y Y Y Y

**Ellen** interviews **Marlee Matlin** and her dance partner Fabian Sanchez from "Dancing With the Stars." Captioned

<http://www.overstream.net/view.php?oid=nhs5u1srtenk>

Y Y Y Y Y

**Hearing loss and living alone** - see National website...<http://myhearingloss.org/> 1) topic of the month 2) living alone The National website also has items of interest about the upcoming **Digital TV changes in 2009**. Joe Gordon will be moderating this section. Feel free to direct your questions to him.

Y Y Y Y Y

"**Hear and Now**" the story of filmmaker Irene Taylor Brodsky's 65 yr. old Deaf parents who undergo a cochlear implant after being Deaf their entire life. For more on the film including a trailer: <http://www.vermilionpictures.com/hearandnow/index.html> For the HBO schedule: <http://www.hbo.com/apps/schedule/ScheduleServlet>

Y Y Y Y Y Y

**Hennepin Technical College** will host a College Preview Night on Tues. April 15, at 6:30 PM in Brooklyn Park and Eden Prairie Campus. Everyone is welcome. Deaf and HOH are encouraged to attend this cutting edge technology they are using to make learning accessible. Contact Sherelyn Chellin at 763-488-2595

Y Y Y Y Y Y

**Colleen Kaldun's** husband (who is Julie Kaldun's Dad), Mark, is entering Hospice Care. He has end stage MS. Mark and Colleen will be married for 35 years on May 5th. They would like to have an Open House on May 3 to celebrate this special milestone. The following day is the MS walk, and if you would like to support that cause, you can send a check to Colleen by the 1st of May. Contact Ellen Thibodo to obtain the email address for details on the Open House or the MS walk.

## **Better Hearing Institute Publishes Legal Rights Guide for Individuals with Hearing Loss**

Washington, DC, March 1, 2008: People with hearing loss have significant legal rights under various federal and state laws, according to a new Guide published by The Better Hearing Institute (BHI) and posted on its web site, [http://www.betterhearing.org/hearing\\_solution/legal\\_rights.cfm](http://www.betterhearing.org/hearing_solution/legal_rights.cfm)

"Hearing Solutions - Legal Rights Guide for Individuals with Hearing Loss" was written by Minnesota attorney Sam Diehl, an expert on employment law. The Guide summarizes the rights available to people with hearing loss and provides links to references and other resources.

"With the availability of today's technologically-advanced hearing devices, most people with hearing loss do not need to resort to disability considerations under the law," said BHI Executive Director Sergei Kochkin. "However, this Guide will prove invaluable for those with hearing impairments who qualify for protection under the law."

The Guide summarizes the numerous state and federal laws that seek to minimize the effects of disability bias and give people with disabilities equal opportunities. Under these laws, people with hearing loss have the right to be free from discrimination in employment, public accommodations, transportation, education, and communication.

Specifically, the Guide explains under what circumstances a hearing loss is considered a disability under either federal or state law, and if so, the legal rights to which people with hearing loss are entitled. It reviews the following laws:

- **The Americans with Disabilities Act**
- **Federal Communications Commission**
- **Telecommunications Act**

- **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)**

- **Fair Housing Act**

- **Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act of 1984**

"Untreated or untreatable hearing loss continues to take a significant toll on millions of Americans," said Dr. Kochkin, citing a recent BHI survey ([http://www.betterhearing.org/press/news/pr\\_incomeloss.cfm](http://www.betterhearing.org/press/news/pr_incomeloss.cfm)) showing that it negatively affects annual household income, on-average by up to \$23,000 depending on degree of hearing loss. The use of hearing aids mitigated the effects of hearing loss on income by about 50 percent, according to the study findings.

### **Converter Box Buyer**

Merrilee Knoll

Bob MacPherson, owner of the Beyond Hearing website is one of the first that I know of who has purchased a converter box, and has used his \$40 coupon issued from the gov.

He ordered his coupon in Jan. 2008, and just received it, coupons were not mailed until Feb. 18. Some say you can get two coupons, but I've also heard one per household.

Bob chose Artec T3-A Pro <http://tinyurl.com/33bmqe> as he felt they had the best prices. Manufacturer's page: <http://www.artec.com.tw/ehm/products/t3a.htm>

He like many of us feel a little lost in the transition as he said, "It's like the wild, wild West now, with almost 70 models of CECB (Coupon Eligible Converter Box) to choose from, available from online retailers as well as brick and mortar outlets across the land."

Have you purchased a CB yet? Tell the editors your story.

## **Accessible Entertainment**

**Note:** Due to space limitations in this newsletter, we are usually not able to list all entertainment events every month which are accessible to hard of hearing people. If you are interested in receiving a complete list every month, please ask that your name be added to the email directory from VSA Arts Minnesota. To receive this list by email each month, send an email to [jon@vsaartsmn.org](mailto:jon@vsaartsmn.org). Please specify if you want to receive the Captioned shows, Audio Described shows, ASL-Interpreted shows, or the combined list.

### **Performances Presented with Open Captioning through June 2008**

The following performances will be Open Captioned. Selected performances offer **reduced admission prices** for the patron and one companion. When you call a Box Office, confirm the Captioning service, date, time, ticket price and anything else you need to know. If you attend a show, please share your feedback with the performing organization, captioner and VSA arts of Minnesota.

Schedules are posted on the Web at:  
[www.vsaartsmn.org/theater.html](http://www.vsaartsmn.org/theater.html), [www.mact.net](http://www.mact.net),  
[www.accesspress.org](http://www.accesspress.org).

### **CAPTIONING AT THE GUTHRIE:**

Open captioning can be seen by anyone via a 4-foot-wide screen placed adjacent to the stage that displays dialogue from the show in real-time.

The Guthrie's Open captioning system expands its menu of access services.

**Look for reduced-price tickets** at many Guthrie events available to patrons using these services.

Guthrie access website:

[www.guthrietheater.org/visit/the\\_building/access\\_services](http://www.guthrietheater.org/visit/the_building/access_services)

### **Rusalka** by Antonín Dvořák

Sung in Czech with English captions projected above the stage.

A new Minnesota Opera Company production

Run: April 12, 15, 17, 19, 20, 2008

Tix: 612-333-6669; TTY 612-729-6023

Location: **Ordway** Center for Performing Arts, 345 Washington St., St. Paul website:

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

Description: Be careful what you wish for. This is The Little Mermaid without the Disney ending. Rusalka, a water nymph, bargains with the sea witch to

become human so she can win the love of the Prince. But the deal is deadly.

**Esperando La Carroza** (Waiting for the Hearse) by Jacobo Langsner

Performed by: **Mixed Blood Theatre**

Captioning: Thursday, April 24, 7:30 PM

Captioner: Gretchen Page

Tix: Access tickets \$12, 612-338-6131 or

[boxoffice@mixedblood.com](mailto:boxoffice@mixedblood.com)

Location: SteppingStone Theatre, 55 No. Victoria St., St. Paul

Website: [www.mixedblood.com](http://www.mixedblood.com)

Description: This class system family satire finds everything about the

human condition laughable. A needy octogenarian with three adoring married sons becomes increasingly burdensome to her three daughters-in-law – one poor, one middle-class and one affluent. English supertitles will translate the Spanish dialogue for all to understand.

Run: April 18-27, 2008

### **A Midsummer Night's Dream**

by Shakespeare

Performed by: **Guthrie Theater**

Captioning: Saturday, June 21, 1:00 PM by c2 inc.

Tix: (reg. \$24-69); captioning users **\*\*\*half-off\*\*\***; 612-377-2224, TTY

612-377-6626

Location: Guthrie Theater, Wurtele Thrust Stage, 818 2nd St. S., Mpls.

Description: Joe Dowling's landmark production of Shakespeare's beloved comedy makes a triumphant debut in the Guthrie's new home on the river.

Weaving three stories of love, magic and perception in a moonlit forest on a midsummer night, Shakespeare's fantastical play remains an audience favorite across generations.

### **The Secret Fall of Constance Wilde**

by Thomas Kilroy

Location: Guthrie Theater, McGuire Proscenium, 818 2nd St. S., Mpls.

Captioning: Sunday, June 22, 1:00 PM

Tix: (reg. \$24-69); captioning users **\*\*\*half-off\*\*\***; 612-377-2224, TTY

612-377-6626

Description: The private life between Oscar Wilde and his wife Constance. Set in a magical world that shifts in time, place, and perspective, this revealing play brings to light the wife few knew existed, bringing humanity to a woman searching for honor, truth and the peace that closure brings.

**Reduced prices** are offered by the theatres themselves or by the Access to Performing Arts Project to encourage broader participation in live arts events by people who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind or of low vision. It is a joint project of VSA arts of Minnesota, the Minnesota Association of Community Theatres and the Guthrie Theater.

**ACCESSIBLE MOVIES:** For Minnesota Open Captioned Films go to [www.mnocfilms.org](http://www.mnocfilms.org). For MoPix-equipped Rear Window Captioned Films go to

<http://ncam.wgbh.org/mopix/nowshowing.html#mn>.

The cinemas are: **Kerasotes Block E Stadium 15**, 600 Hennepin Ave., third floor, Minneapolis 55403; 612-338-1466, [bloc@kerasotes.com](mailto:bloc@kerasotes.com).

<http://www.kerasotes.com/Showtimes.aspx?OptionTheater=Go&TheaterSearch=8630>

(Scroll down the lower right-hand column every Friday morning to see what two films will have rear view captioning or DVS that week at Block E.)

**AMC Eden Prairie Mall 18 Theatres**, Eden Prairie Shopping Center, Hwy 212 & 494, movie listings: 952-229-4262. Park in upper level lot between Sears & Kohl's. Accessible films in Auditorium 4.

[www.amctheatres.com](http://www.amctheatres.com) or

[www.moviewatcher.com/index.html](http://www.moviewatcher.com/index.html) or

[www.moviewatcher.com/jsp/amg.jsp](http://www.moviewatcher.com/jsp/amg.jsp). Email [0650@amctheatres.com](mailto:0650@amctheatres.com)

**AMC Rosedale 14 Theatres**, 850 Rosedale Center, Roseville 55113 (Rosedale Center, Hwy 36 & Snelling Ave.), 651-604-9347. Accessible films in Auditorium 14. [www.amctheatres.com](http://www.amctheatres.com) or

[www.moviewatcher.com/index.html](http://www.moviewatcher.com/index.html) or

[www.moviewatcher.com/jsp/amg.jsp](http://www.moviewatcher.com/jsp/amg.jsp). Email [0651@amctheatres.com](mailto:0651@amctheatres.com).

**Oakdale Ultrascreen Cinemas**, I-694 & Hwy 36 next to Fleet Farm; 651-770-4994; This cinema uses DTS® (Digital Theatre Systems, Inc.) to superimpose open-captions over the bottom of select movies. Subscribe to an Open Caption weekly e-mailer at

[www.marcustheatres.com/theater.cfm?theater\\_id=2506](http://www.marcustheatres.com/theater.cfm?theater_id=2506).

**Science Museum of Minnesota** Omnitheater Open Monday-Wednesday 9:30-5:00, Thursday-Saturday 9:30-9:00, Sunday 12:00-5:00. Contact info: 651-221-9444, option 1 for film times, reservations or questions; TTY 651-221-4585; [info@smm.org](mailto:info@smm.org)

## WebCapTel

March 5, 2008 - Sprint today released Sprint WebCapTel(r), a new free web-based service that allows a person who can speak but has challenges hearing over the phone, to read word-for-word captions of their calls on a web browser. This new service is expected to help an estimated 23 million Americans with hearing loss who may face challenges hearing over the telephone.

With Sprint WebCapTel(r), users can make and receive calls on their own telephone, cell phone, land-line, or even an amplified phone. During the call, if they have difficulty hearing what is being said, they can log into [www.sprintcaptel.com](http://www.sprintcaptel.com) and read written captions of everything their caller speaks. Captions appear virtually at the same time as the person speaks, allowing users to enjoy a natural telephone conversation.

With this new service, CapTel(r) is available almost anywhere with a phone and internet access on a computer. Using any phone, even amplified phones, Sprint WebCapTel(r) will capture the audio of the person speaking to the user and change the spoken sounds into words to read. When displayed on a web browser, the user can change the font size, color, and even background. When a call is completed, the user can save the captioned conversation for later review, allowing the user to concentrate on being involved in the conversation.

This free service is available for Sprint customers anywhere in the United States and within US Territories. Calls to or from international locations are not available. To learn more about this free service, visit [www.sprintcaptel.com](http://www.sprintcaptel.com).

**Ellen Thibodo** has tried it and says:

I can tell you that I've used this and I just LOVE it!!! It's better than the CapTel phone as far as I'm concerned because 1. you don't need 2 phone lines 2. you don't even need the CapTel phone, taking up more room. It's all done over the computer along with your regular telephone handset. 3. the part I love most because I use it alot, is long distance calls are free!!! They do not make international calls at this time.

**March 3, 2008, Bethesda, Maryland:** Brenda Battat, M.A., of Bethesda, Maryland, has been named executive director of the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA), the nation's largest organization for people with hearing loss. She officially assumed the title and duties on March 3, 2008, having been unanimously chosen for the position by the HLAA Board of Trustees at their February 29-March 2 meeting in Bethesda. Ms. Battat brings a wealth of experience to the position having joined the HLAA national staff in 1989. She has been deputy executive director and served as acting executive director on three interim occasions. She brings this experience to the position as well as her personal exposure to hearing loss as a user of a cochlear implant and a hearing aid.

### **A Letter From Our Executive Director** **Brenda Battat:**

Dear Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) Chapter Members:

I want to introduce myself. I am the new executive director of HLAA. I am not, however, new to HLAA. I have worked in the national office for twenty years in a variety of roles including acting executive director three times and advocacy director.

Leading this organization in times of economic downturn, shifting hearing loss demographics, emerging technologies, and corporate mergers is going to be a challenge but I am ready and with your help believe we can achieve our mission.

I want to take this opportunity to spell out my vision for HLAA. I will work to:

- Reach all people with hearing loss who seek to improve their ability to communicate
- Advocate for a society increasingly accessible to people with hearing loss
- Increase the general public's awareness of HLAA as the "go to" consumer organization to assist people with hearing loss and their families with information on technology, legal rights, and communication help in

dealing with hearing loss

- Eradicate the stigma of using hearing aids and other assistive technology
- Empower HLAA chapters and state organizations to expand their peer mentoring, outreach and advocacy for people with hearing loss
- Develop sufficient financial resources to support the HLAA mission and program activities
- Recruit a strong BOT and staff with knowledge, skills and abilities necessary for the future health of the organization

This organization has never been so needed. The number of people with hearing loss in this country is 31 million and now we are told there are 58,000 returning troops from Iraq and Afghanistan with hearing loss. But because there is still a stigma associated with hearing loss only a small percentage of them are going to seek help. HLAA is committed to eradicating the stigma and changing perceptions about using hearing aids and other devices. But we cannot do it alone – the HLAA national office, chapters and state organizations have to collaborate with our fellow consumer groups, hearing health professionals, industry and government like never before to bring the benefits of hearing technology to all those who need it.

I know that you, through your chapter, are doing some creative and important outreach and advocacy projects in your community and we are highlighting them in the HLAA bimonthly magazine *Hearing Loss*. Be sure to send information about your achievements to Barbara Kelley, the editor, at [bkelley@hearingloss.org](mailto:bkelley@hearingloss.org). That way other chapters can learn from you and HLAA members who currently don't participate in chapters might be enticed to join you.

I would like to keep you up-to-date with what we are doing on the national level. So stay tuned to hear from me from time to time.

With very best regards,  
**Brenda Battat**  
Executive Director

*Sonus*

Hearing Care Professionals  
Audiology & Hearing Aid Services

**Jerri McMahon, HIS**

Manager

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## First Class



**Next meeting: Saturday, April 19, 2008**

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This month's editor is Linda Senechal

**Meetings are held the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of the month September through May at the Courage Center in Golden Valley, MN. We gather at 9:30 to socialize and the meeting starts at 10 AM. All meetings are real time captioned by Lisa Richardson and her staff of *Paradigm Captioning* ([www.paradigmreporting.com](http://www.paradigmreporting.com)). Please visit the chapter's web-site at [www.hlaatc.org](http://www.hlaatc.org)**