

H L A A T C

OCTOBER 2012



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

October 16, 2012 – DHHS workshops in St. Paul (page 9)

October 20, 2012 - HLAA TWIN CITIES CHAPTER meeting – speaker is Cami Lawless of Associated Hearing (page 5)

October 21, 2012 – Cochlear Implant support group meets in Apple Valley (page 5)

November 17, 2012 - HLAA TWIN CITIES CHAPTER meeting – speaker is Taylor Joseph from the Starkey Hearing Foundation

December 15, 2012 - HLAA TWIN CITIES CHAPTER meeting – Annual Holiday party

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Officers' emails

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Hearing Loss Association of America **Twin Cities** Chapter (HLAA TC) is held the 3rd Saturday of the month (except June, July and August). We meet at The Courage Center, 3915 Golden Valley Road, Golden Valley, MN 55442

President's Message



Hard of hearing people helping other hard of hearing people is the foundation of HLAA/TC.

Facing the prospect of life without hearing normally can be difficult, but those of us, who have made it through the early days, have found a life worth living, and learned better ways to achieve that.

Your board serves humbly, without expectation of reward. We enjoy what we do, but we cannot do it alone.

We must remember that we have experienced a better way of handling hearing loss, because others put this program into action (thank you Rocky).

Volunteers are the bridges to success in any organization. We are all joined for a common purpose, to develop a life that is most easily attained by using resources and each others' experiences as well as leaning on each other at times. Currently we have a need for a third editor, who would do the newsletter three times a year.

The responsibility for success of HLAA depends on all of us; it means we tell others about how much we have learned, and that there is indeed a support group for hearing impaired individuals. It means speaking out when we have an opportunity to our communities and our governing systems. It means telling others of our existence; telling them that we have enjoyable meetings and events.

It means a commitment to attend meetings as often as possible, for thereby we build community among us. It means helping when you can, where you can.

It means bringing your ideas and your questions to meetings, and avail yourself of the Open Mike opportunities. Tell your Board of Directors (officers) if you have a need or question and we will try our best to help.

It means introducing yourself to a newcomer who may feel an outsider at first. Welcome them and encourage them to return.

I feel our HLAA/TC group is the "best kept secret" in the metro area.

Help our group to grow. Take brochures, flyers, and give them out. Word of mouth has been, and will always be, the very best advertising.

Shall we move forward?

Shall we outgrow our Courage center space?

Shall we become more of a household name among the hearing impaired community, hearing care providers, schools? The field is huge and it is uncultivated.

No organization can grow without new ideas, new people, interesting meetings, and collective efforts.

Will you join my Dream?

Joyfully serving,

Judi Anne Swan

Reserve the 3rd Saturday of each month from Sept. through May for the HLAA –TC meeting. Your officers are working hard to make the meetings interesting and informative for you.

HLAA TC Meeting: Saturday, September 15, 2012

Synopsis by Monique Hammond, VP



At 10am, vice president Monique Hammond called the first meeting of our new season to order. She welcomed all members and guests. President Judi Swan was unable to attend as she was at her daughter's wedding and Treasurer Bob Knoll was out-of-state at his 50th high school reunion. Monique read president Judi's greeting message to the group.

From PARADIGM, Lori Morrow "heard" for all of us as she provided our CART services for which we are always tremendously grateful.

Past president Carole Blowers did the honors and introduced our speaker Howard Malone from Costco. Although Mr. Malone has been active in the hearing aid field for a long time, he has worked for Costco as a Hearing Instrument Dispenser (HID) since 2007.

Mr. Malone talked about some of the *major causes* of hearing loss, such as genetics, head injuries, ear-toxic substances, infections and, of course, excess noise. Noise is all around us – at our workplaces as well as at social venues and leisure activities. If we need to yell over background noise in order to be heard, it is too loud. A sign that ears might have suffered irreversible damage is that noise levels that used to bother us no longer do so.

Loud sound causes acoustic trauma that damages the hair cells of the inner-ear hearing organ, the cochlea. Gradually the cells become less responsive and pretty soon the person registers a hearing loss. Sudden loud noise, like a gunshot, can cause immediate harm or even deafness. One of the defenses against noise-induced hearing loss is the use of *ear protection*. Yet, people are often tempted to skip such protection because the exposure will be brief, such as "sawing just one board." However, we must be warned that noise injuries are cumulative and that the high frequencies are the first to suffer.

Mr. Malone also made the point that hearing protection must be used correctly. Earplugs should be inserted so that they actually keep noise out of the ear canals, and earmuffs or headphones need a snug fit and must cover the whole ear. Sound leakage around plugs or headphones decreases their effectiveness and even reduces the benefit of noise-cancelling equipment.

Hearing aids are becoming ever more complicated and offer a wide range of options. However, dealing with background noise remains one of the pesky issues that challenge manufacturers. Although various tuning techniques and the use of directional microphones improve the conversation environment, it is virtually impossible to get rid of all background din, wind whistling effects etc.

Conventional hearing aids are often not effective for people who have a severe or profound loss on some frequencies but not on others. For these types of hearing loss instruments would have to be turned up too

loud, which could lead to more damage. In such cases a technique called “frequency transposition” may help: those frequencies that are no longer heard are transposed into frequency areas where the patient still does hear. The hearing aid specialist can help with the selection of instruments that provide this feature. Although the resulting sound has been described as synthetic or hollow, some people do very well with this and often improve their speech test scores significantly.

Mr. Malone acknowledged that manufacturers are under pressure to produce instruments that are increasingly more versatile yet smaller and unnoticeable. Some designs have come and gone, such as the instrument where the unit holding the microphone was tucked into the upper fold of the external ear (helix). In order to guard against moisture, the number-one enemy of any hearing aid, devices are now routinely covered by special coatings, such as nano-particle coatings, to protect them from corrosion.

Mr. Malone succeeded in fitting a lot of interesting and practical information into the presentation – while fielding an array of questions from the audience. We thank him for sharing his time and expertise and for getting our first meeting of the season off to a good start.

From the business portion of the meeting:

- Carole Blowers reminded us that membership dues are now payable. We keep the dues at \$10 as we did last year. Treasurer Bob Knoll will follow through in October.
- The major focus was on the Walk4Hearing – coming up on September 29th, 2012 – and our need for volunteers. Registration is at 9am and the walk around Lake Calhoun starts at 10am. It is still time to join a team, to pledge either online or the conventional paper-and pencil way. However, money pledges are not necessary for joining the walk.
- Secretary Candace Meinders asked us to update our contact information, such as address or email changes.
- Rich Diedrichsen from HLAA St. Cloud has approached HLAA TC about co-organizing a hearing loss convention in St. Cloud in 2013. Secretary Candace invited us to think about topics that we would like potential speakers to address. So, let's think and bring the suggestions to the next meeting.

NEXT MEETING: October 20th, 2012 at the Courage Center.

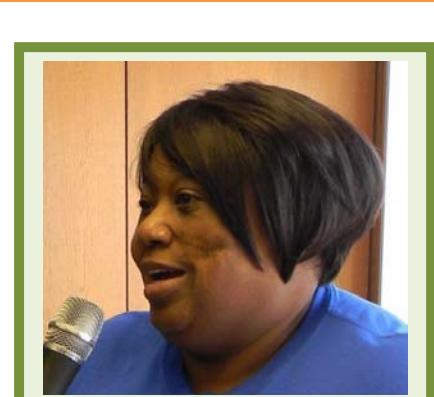
Monique Hammond, VP



Howard Malone



Frank helping set up the loop



Guest Debbie

October 20 Upcoming Meeting

Cami will focus more on technology - not brand specific, and realistic expectations related to speech discrimination scores. She wants to stress the importance of having the "piece of plastic" properly adjusted and good follow up care-especially in the initial phase of a new fitting.



Cochlear Implant Support Group

Date: Sunday, October 21, 2012

Time: 1:30 – 4:00 pm

Location: The Timbers of Apple Valley, 14018 Pennock Ave., Apple Valley, MN 55124

Please send your RSVP to Sara Oberg

Email: soberg3@fairview.org

Good news! The **Mill City Museum Flour Tower** in Minneapolis is now looped for audio. HLAA TC was contacted as some volunteers with T-coils are needed to test the system and provide feedback of their experience to management. Those who are interested can email the Museum Director Laura Salveson at

laura.salveson@mnhs.org to set up an appointment.

The Museum is located at 704 South 2nd St., Mpls, MN 55401.

WORKSHOP

October 12th – Voting & Your Legal Rights Workshop

(<http://www.mncdhh.org/take-action/>)

What:

This is a FREE hands-on workshop that will encourage eligible voters to get registered, get informed, and go vote. In addition to talking about voting, we will cover other ways to get involved in the elections process and discuss your legal rights. Presenters include:

- Claire Wilson from the Office of the MN Secretary of State
- Pamela Hoopes from the MN Disability Law Center.

Come ready to ask your questions about voting & enjoy some refreshments!

When:

Friday, October 12, 2012, 7:00-9:00 pm
(Doors open at 6:30 pm)

Where:

Bread of Life Deaf Lutheran Church, 2901 38th Ave. S, Minneapolis, MN 55406

Accommodations:

ASL interpreting & captioning will be provided.

Sponsored By:

Minnesota Association of Deaf Citizens
Commission of Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing Minnesotans
Office of the Minnesota Secretary of

Check our Facebook page for updates and bulletins!!

Safe and NO SOUND

By Sue Brabeck



We HOH have many situations where we feel unsafe. Even more so when we remove our hearing aid(s). I'm sharing some of my experiences now, but I don't have a good solution for all of these. Sometimes it's fun just to write about things, just because.

I've been in the hospital a few times since my hearing loss, and I try to sleep with my HA out. Nurses and aides come and go in the night, and I really doubt that they have a good grasp on how HOH I really am. All the reminders in the world with signs and buttons haven't helped. Theoretically they *should*, but that's not the reality. So I get nervous during the night, as staff comes in and wakes me and talks to me, and maybe giving me instructions or something in a night-time whisper. I have no idea that they are even talking to me. Solution? So I try sleep to with my HA in and "on", which of course means I get rotten sleep.

Swimming in a hotel pool should be fun, right? Being in the water without my HA makes me feel very vulnerable, there are always other people around. Perhaps there's a lot of frivolity by kids and adults jumping and diving in, and general normal water-frolicking. I feel unsafe in that I'm afraid someone will jump on me or try to get me out of the way ("Watch me do a *cannonball, Mom!!*") and of course I've no idea that I may be in the way. I think it's dangerous. Solution? Relax pool-side in a deck-chair and sip a delicious Mojito. Colorful paper cocktail-umbrella optional.

Getting caught driving when my HA battery goes belly-up is never a good thing. If I can't hear the traffic around me I feel unsafe. Solution? You'd think the easiest one is to just pull over and switch out batteries (duh!). But that isn't always possible in freeway conditions, stuck in traffic and so forth. Sometimes I just have to wait until I park at my destination.

Sleeping at home in the quiet is a bonus, but I worry that there will be "something" in the night that I need to hear. Perhaps a firetruck, someone pounding on my door, the telephone, a big storm outside, or an incident inside my house. I don't like the shake-awake phones because they are too "violent" in their vibrations, so I bought a phone where lights 'n sirens go off (it seems so, anyway). But even this doesn't always wake me. Solution? I could get a dog, but I am NOT a dog-person (ick!). My daughters know to text me if they urgently need me, and I set my cellphone to gently vibrate and keep it under my pillow at night. The storm-alert situation was solved by buying a weather-radio from Cub, which goes off REALLY LOUD and has blue flashing lights, and I can turn on the TV to find out more details of the weather-situation.

What's good for the goose is not always good for the gander, and we need to determine solutions individually. What I'm figuring out right now, though, is that my Mojito is getting a bit low and needs refreshing. I think I'll refresh the paper cocktail umbrella too - I'm in the mood for a pink one.

A Dog Called Jackson

Judi Swan

In October of 2001, I lost my husband of 31 years after a sudden illness. Living alone in a large house, for the first time, was not an easy adjustment for me. At the end of the month, a call came from my daughter that her new baby and her dog were not doing well in the same household. Jackson, a black and white springer spaniel, was rescued by her from an abusive household, and his aggressiveness was not safe. So Jackson arrived. With this move, house rules needed to be put in place.

First off, Jackson, this is a Christian house, and we act like that. You will have a trainer to help you, and I will love you and you will love me. I spent hours talking with/to him, as if he were a little person. He showered me with love, but he did not respond well to the trainers 5 weeks of visits to work on his habits. I continued to sit and pray with him often and at bedtime.

It soon became apparent that this was a very special dog. The first week I had him, I was sleeping in the night, with my "ears" out. He was sleeping at the foot of the bed. (okay so I said he would sleep on the floor, some rules are made to be broken). Suddenly, I felt him tugging at my blankets and pillow. I sat up in bed, and he walked to the door, much like Lassie did in the old tv shows.

I followed, and he went to the kitchen window and sat there with his nose pointing upward. I looked out the window, and there was a man standing in the driveway in the very dark night. I turned on the lights, and the person quickly went up the road. I bent down and hugged Jackson and praised him and talked often about my hearing loss.

I spent hours with him, laying in the grass, rubbing his tummy, looking into his sparkly, chocolate-brown eyes. I knew he knew. He responded in kind. He helped me in so many ways, but most of them were of warning gestures.

The neighborhood fell in love with him. He had an uncanny way of knowing who was safe to let into the yard and who was not. When Jackson barked, people listened, because he was so alert to all sounds and movement. My nearest neighbor fed him some breakfast each morning, and he would sit and wait by the fence for that treat.

In 2004, I remarried a fine man, but not before bringing him home for Jacksons "approval". We bonded incredibly as a family.

One morning, in October 2011, he did not go to the fence for his breakfast. I was at a doctor appointment, and came home finding him laying by his feeding dish and house. He had crossed the Rainbow Bridge. Sadly missed, fondly remembered, and loved forever!

Timely Reminder: Dues are due

Pictures from the Walk4Hearing



MN Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Offers Classes

Metro Office (DHHS), a program of the Minnesota Department of Human Services, has designed an eclectic series of **FREE** interactive classes that address trends and resources related to hearing loss. By attending one or more of the training seminars, you will glean valuable information that you can apply to your work or personal lives. Register for one or more of these exciting classes on their website:

http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/groups/disabilities/documents/pub/dhs16_171052.pdf

email to: dhhs.metro@state.mn.us, voice phone at 651/431-5940, TTY at 1-888-206-6513

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Metro, 85 East 7th Place, Suite 105, St. Paul

Mailing address: 444 Lafayette Road N., St. Paul, MN 55155-3814

A class is offered each month through June, 2013. Here are the next two.

» **Tuesday, October 16 – 9am – noon: Deaf Culture:** Learn more about the vibrant Deaf Community – its history, values, norms, traditions and the impact of deafness in everyday life. Helpful communication tips, factsheets and current community resources will be shared during this training. Panel members who are deaf will join a *portion* of this training to talk about their personal experiences as a deaf person and to answer questions from participants.

1 – 4 pm: The Impact of Hearing Loss If you know someone who is hard of hearing or late deafened, this workshop will provide a keen awareness of what it is like to live with an acquired hearing loss. Partake in a simulated hearing loss and speechreading exercises and learn successful communication strategies.

» **Thursday, November 8 – 9am – noon: Mental Health Needs of People Who are Late Deafened**
1 – 4 pm: Working with Persons with Combined Hearing and Vision Loss

You do need to register. Accommodations must be requested at least two weeks in advance. Assistive listening devices are always available.

Provide the following information when registering: Name, Employer and Job Title (if for work), E-mail address, Name of Training, Phone Number, Date and Time of the Training

E-mail: dhhs.metro@state.mn.us

Phone: 651/431-5940 (Voice or use your preferred relay provider)



A Primer on High Frequency Hearing Loss

One of the first symptoms of high frequency hearing loss is when you can hear and understand people in a quiet environment, but you cannot hear the same people in noise.

Most of the **volume** of speech is produced by the low-frequency vowels (ay, ah, ee, eh, eye, ih, oh, ou, u, etc.)

Most of the **discrimination** of speech is produced by the high-frequency consonants (p, k, t, b, d, f, etc.)

With high frequency loss, you can hear the low frequency sounds well, but you cannot understand what people are saying because the consonants are missing. Many people with high frequency loss will say that people sound like they are mumbling or not enunciating clearly.

What can you do?

- Get close to the speaker so you can catch the high frequency sounds. Move to a quiet spot, and turn off background noise.
- Wear hearing aids that will boost the volume of the higher frequencies. Today's hearing aids are programmable to amplify only the sounds you need.
- Use assistive devices that put the microphone close to the speaker to better capture the high-frequency sounds.

Linda Senechal

Captioned Venues

Guthrie Theatre, 8118 2nd St. S. Minneapolis. Tickets are \$25 for captioning

*** **Tales from Hollywood** Friday, Oct. 19, 7:30 PM. **Website:** www.guthrietheater.org.

*** **Appomattox** Performed Friday, Nov. 2, 7:30 PM; Wednesday, Nov. 7, 7:30 PM.

And What a Deal!!

*** **Next to Normal** Performed by: Mixed Blood Theatre, Alan Page Auditorium.

Every performance of Next to Normal Oct. 5 thru Nov. 11 will be captioned.

Tix: Choose between first-come, first-served, no-cost admission under Mixed Blood's Radical Hospitality program, or guarantee admission (\$20). **ACCESS DISCOUNTS & FREE TRANSPORTATION:** Any patron that self-identifies as having a disability is eligible for a no-cost advance guaranteed reservation and for a free cab ride to and from the theatre. Call the Box Office for more information and to reserve these services. Phone: 612-338-6131.

Email: boxoffice@mixedblood.com.

Web: www.mixedblood.com .

Pretty hard to beat that deal!!

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Our next meeting is October 20, 2012

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This month's editor is Linda McIntire

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 12