

HLAA TC

APRIL 2013



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

April 10, 2013 Steak Fry

April 14, 2013 Cochlear Implant Support Group – Lino Lakes YMCA

April 20, 2013 - HLAA TWIN CITIES CHAPTER meeting
Donna Savage, Cochlear Implant binaural user

May 18, 2013 - HLAA TWIN CITIES CHAPTER meeting
Pot luck lunch and election of officers

June 27-30 HLAA NATIONAL CONVENTION Portland, Oregon.

September 22, 2013
Cochlear implant picnic
Brookview Park, Golden Valley

September 28, 2013
HLAA Walk4Hearing. 5K walk.
Lake Calhoun (Thomas Beach)

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Officers' emails

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HLAA TC Website - Minnesota
www.hlaatc.org

HLAA National - Maryland
www.hearingloss.org

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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



By Judi Ann Swan

Wow! How could the March meeting outdo the February one? Well, it did pretty well. I am in awe as I see all the happenings and changes taking place in our Chapter of HLAA. There are so many things I could mention, but I am sure that my page won't hold it all.

In an unexpected, and wondrous, change of schedule, I was not the scheduled speaker as planned for March. A few days before the meeting, I received an email from Harvey Abrams of Starkey Labs. He is a researcher and expressed an interest in coming to our meeting. This resulted in a back and forth email tourney of sorts which brought him to our group, replacing me as speaker. So awesome the fact, that we didn't plan that in the agenda, it just happened. And sometimes that's the way it has to happen, go with the flow.

Harvey was interested in finding out what hearing impaired persons need and want, what they find problematic, and any other concerns. I was elated that the horse was being put back in front of the cart. Most commonly, users of hearing devices have to take what is on the market but Starkeys' Research Board wanted to know what we need.

After introducing Harvey, (his credentials are L-O-N-G), he told a little about Starkey and why he was there, and then the open mike. Oh boy! Don't we all just love those times??? The flow had to be interrupted for break time, and then it took no prodding to get it rolling again.

I received an email from Harvey that very evening, "Thank you for your kind words, Judi. I thoroughly enjoyed the experience. The questions and comments were right on the mark and reflect the experiences (both positive and negative) of many hearing aid users. I can see why you are so excited about the Twin Cities Chapter of HLAA. You'll be seeing more Starkey researchers at future meetings and I look forward to visiting again in the near future."

We had six people who were first-time attendees, and it was so wonderful to have a roomful.

Monique Hammond was very excited to receive the Congratulatory Cake in honor of serving two terms on the MCDHH Commission, for which she was honored at the Capitol the week before (see page 6). We are so proud and fortunate to have such a dedicated woman on our team to further our causes. She works beyond what most can imagine, and is instrumental in some of our new "reaching the cities" with new printed information and a website. Husband Ross has been outstanding in all his efforts and works so selflessly side- by- side with Monique. Thank you both!!!

A little reminder that our coffee table always is glad to see treats - homemade or bakery (we aren't fussy eaters).

The May meeting will be the annual election of officers for the 2013-14 year which begins in September after a summer hiatus. Please be thinking of how you can help, or if you know someone who seems interested, please do encourage them. We need to fill the vice-president and the secretary vacancies.

Looking forward to our upcoming meeting, Donna Savage, a cochlear implant user will speak on her experiences and give more information from a personal perspective. Hope to see you at Courage Center April 20th.

To you, a Happy Spring.

HLAA TC Meeting March 16, 2013

By Monique Hammond, VP

President Judi Swan called our meeting to order promptly at 10:00a.m. Dave Swan filled in once more for our greeter Mary Andresen who had been out nursing some injuries incurred earlier this winter. To our great surprise, Mary was in attendance, not yet on official duty, but back and looking good. Welcome back, Mary!

Substituting for Mary, Monique offered the quote of the day: *We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give. Sir Winston Churchill.*

Our CART virtuoso was Lisa Richardson. Lisa also helped us out after the meeting with setting up a CART-facilitated teleconference call with HLAA National in Bethesda, Maryland. Thank you so much, Lisa. What would we all do without our CART experts?

After President Swan had welcomed our members and guests she surprised VP Monique with an exquisite cake decorated in the HLAA colors of purple, green and yellow. It was meant to be shared with the whole group in recognition of Monique's "Citizen Advocate Award." She received the award from the Commission for Deaf, Deafblind and Hard-of-Hearing Minnesotans (MCDHH) on March 6th, Lobby Day, in the rotunda of the State Capitol. VP Monique wants to go on record thanking President Judi and HLAA TC for all their support over time. Thank you, all. Thank you, Judi, for the treat and for your kind words!

We had a change in speakers. Originally, Judi Swan was going to talk about "Hearing Loss and Relationships," a presentation that she will give at a later date. Instead, we had two special guests from Starkey Hearing Technologies: Harvey Abrams, Director of Audiology Research and engineer Dominic Perz.



The purpose for meeting with us was to get input on how our needs are met or not met by the audiology community and by current technology. What gaps have to be filled; what improvements should be considered as research advances? The conversation was pretty lively right from the start.

One of the questions pertained to assistive listening devices. Will any other professionally designed devices be produced by manufacturers besides hearing aids?

There are many companies out there that put assistive devices of all types onto the market. Specially designed devices from the hearing aid industry would mostly apply to people with severe to profound losses for whom hearing aids are of limited use. They represent about 1% of the hearing loss population. Those with a profound loss will more than likely get a cochlear implant. So, there is not much enticement for hearing aid producers to enter this very limited yet specific market.

Hearing aid manufacturers are particularly concerned with improving the listening experience and expanding the usefulness of hearing aids by connecting them wirelessly to sound sources such as phone, computer, TV. Bluetooth capabilities come to mind. Mr. Abrams mentioned the Starkey

SurfLink, which can act as a remote microphone in noisy environments as it streams conversation directly to the hearing aids. Overall, hearing aids from various manufacturers have similar technology. The main difference is in the specialty features.

Some people felt that such added technology can be difficult to understand and operate. Devices might be deemed unhelpful because vendors often are not knowledgeable enough themselves and therefore fail to inform clients of the existence of such appliances and of their use and care. Even standard ALDs like FM systems are usually not mentioned or demonstrated during consults with hearing specialists although they can be tremendously helpful. An industry-knowledgeable member in the audience pointed out that there is no financial incentive for hearing aid stores to carry assistive devices or to spend a lot of time on them, which is an unfortunate reality.

The fact that looping, older but inexpensive technology was enjoying increasing popularity also came up. Here again, the issue was raised that all too often hearing specialists do not inform customers of the advantages of T-coils. No T-coil – no signal from a loop!

Why is it not possible to hear better in louder environments and to be able to get decent sound for music?

This question summarizes about 90% of the concerns that people have regarding their hearing aids. Signal-processing demands for music go way beyond the demands of processing for speech. However, just about every manufacturer is working on changes to their technology and fitting algorithm to improve the music-listening outcome, but a lot more needs to be done.

Although hearing aids have come a long way there are limitations to imitating Mother Nature. This becomes increasingly difficult with a more severe and complex loss. Hearing aids are designed to respond to the rather narrow spectrum of speech frequencies and are most effective for those with a mild to moderate hearing loss. They work pretty well in quiet environments where there is little or no background noise competition.

Although progress has been made in separating out speech and noise dynamics, the more severe the hearing loss the more difficult this becomes. Besides, as we age the brain does not process information as fast and as efficiently as it once used to, which adds to the issues of hearing and understanding in noisy situations. People with a more severe loss can actually be helped quite a bit by the addition of assistive listening devices, although then one runs into issues of cosmetics and convenience.



To improve hearing in noisy places, directional microphones can help. They focus on the speech cone in front of us. They do best if the noise is behind the hearing aid user. However, in places where there is reverberation – noise bouncing around from ceilings and walls like in restaurants and bars – they also lose effectiveness.

As hearing aids work best when they are adjusted to the patient's individual needs, Starkey offers SoundPoint - a feature that allows people to adjust some hearing aid parameters to their liking in the office – not yet at home. They simply move their finger over a screen on a computer or an iPad marking their preferred settings.

The failure of hearing aids to provide satisfactory results may often not lie with the technology but with the inexperience and lack of skills of those who set the instruments or recommend treatment. Specialists must keep up with the latest developments in hearing aid and supplemental technologies and should also be familiar with assistive listening technology.

We also briefly discussed hearing aid prices. Is it preferable to "bundle" the expenses of the device and the costs of all of the ancillary services, such as tests, tuning, trouble shooting – which is currently done – or is it better to pay for everything separately? The room was divided on the vote although we all agreed that we need some kind of financial relief.

Meanwhile, research continues and some unlikely players are becoming interested in hearing technology. Apple announced an iPhone-type appliance for hearing aids. Once they enter the business and partner with the industry we can expect potentially dramatic changes in hearing

Our next meeting will be **April 20, 2013**. Speaker Donna Savage will talk about cochlear implants. See you then.

Monique



Editor's Note: Thanks, Monique, for the newsy and thorough review!



Lisa →



Introducing Donna Savage – April Speaker for HLAA TC

My hearing loss was first detected in my early 20s. It was a progressive loss. I received my first implant in March of 2004 at the University of Minnesota, Dr. Levine performed the surgery. I had a profound hearing loss in both ears and choose to have my best ear done. It was amazing to hear more clearly again. In 2011 I decided to have the second ear implanted and had surgery on November 15, 2011 at the University of Minnesota with Dr. Levine as the surgeon. I am very grateful to have both of my implants.



Editor's Note: Donna has been volunteering for several years at the University of Minnesota Hearing Center, meeting with prospective cochlear implant recipients at the monthly "Coffee and Chat". She also helps with the annual Cochlear Implant Picnic each September. She has been a leader in getting the latest Cochlear Implant Support group going as well. This group is now over two years old! (See next item) Thanks for all you do, Donna! Donna is a photographer and a gardener extraordinaire - that's her photo and her garden on page 12.



Adult Cochlear Implant Social Group!!!

When: Sunday, April 14, 2013 1:00- 4:00 PM

Where: Lino Lakes YMCA, 7690 Village Drive, Lino Lakes, MN 55014

Hosts: Judy and Pete; Please send your RSVP to Judy and Pete

Email: kitchenparty@comcast.net

You are welcome to bring a spouse, partner, friend, family member, and/or significant other to any of these events! If you would like to bring a refreshment to share that would be wonderful!

Save the dates!

Annual CI Picnic at Brookview Park in Golden Valley, Sunday, September 22, 2013 11:00 - 3:00

June 27-30 HLAA NATIONAL CONVENTION Portland, Oregon. For more information, see www.hearingloss.org/content/convention

September 28, 2013 HLAA Walk4Hearing. 5K walk. Lake Calhoun (Thomas Beach), Minneapolis, MN Registration at 9a.m.; Walk at 10a.m. See www.walk4hearing.org



Helpful Movie Notes from Vicki Martin

A few weeks ago, after seeing that over half of the movies at Marcus Oakdale Theater were listed in the newspaper as having "open captions", Dennis and I dashed out and went to one. Shortly after this, I noticed that all caption designations had disappeared from the newspaper ads. There was no longer any indication that movies at Marcus were captioned.

Is this a step backward for accessibility? I wanted to find out.

I met with Marcus Oakdale Theater manager Mike. Mike is enthusiastic about providing accessibility at his theater. Although he was aware that shows would no longer be advertised as "open captioned", he was surprised to find that no alternative designation was present. "Open caption" was removed from ads because it was misleading. The plan, he said, was to substitute "CC" or "closed captioned". Although this is not technically correct either, it at least would still let us know that some sort of captioning is available. If nothing is indicated about captioning, we assume that none is available.

Unfortunately, you may now have to call (use your captioned phone!), or go to the website (boot up, log on, "google" a theater, try all the menus, find info) to find out if captioning is available. When you do find that something is "captioned", you will want to know if it is open, closed, or "captiview". There are pros and cons to each. Closed captioned is the most accessible, but Captiview is available for all showings, not just selected ones.

If you need specific information, such as the type of captioning and whether it is available at all showings, or you need to reserve five or more captiview devices for your group, call the box office (not the information line listed in the paper). You will get a real person who can help you plan your visit.

For Marcus Oakdale, you can find out if movies are captioned by checking the website <http://www.marcustheatres.com/Theatre/TheatreDetail/170/>, or calling the theater number (651-770-4994). The message about movies and showtimes includes captioning info. If you need to speak to a real person, call the box office (651-770-4992). Afterward, give them a pat on the back! Send a thank-you to let them know this effort is appreciated. Email: Oakdale@MarcusTheatres.com

In summary then, for Marcus Oakdale:

Captioning is available at the theater, even if the newspaper ad does not say so. You must call or go to the website to find out if a movie is captioned (most are). "Captioned" means "Captiview". Captiview is available for all showings of the movies that have it.

If Oakdale is not within your driving distance for an evening at the movies, be aware that similar information may be available at other theaters. Check them out, and let us know what you find. With Captiview, you can pick your time, and go!

Williams Sound Induction Loops

Williams Sound, well-known to HLAA members for their high quality assistive listening products, has established a partnership with European assistive listening system manufacturer Humanteknik to introduce audio induction loop systems into their U.S. product lineup.

“Williams Sound offered induction loop products many years ago, but the U.S. market gravitated towards FM and infrared technology solutions, and hearing aids trended away from models offering telecoils that could be used with loop systems. With the resurgence of hearing aids fitted with telecoils and the joint efforts of the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) and the American Academy of Audiology (AAA) to promote loop technology, we feel the U.S. marketplace is once again receptive to induction loop products,” states Paul Ingebrigtsen, President of Williams Sound.

It is heartening to see that loop technology is catching on in the U. S. Those of us who have experienced induction loop assistive technology are impressed. “Loop systems enable hearing aid wearers to pick up the signals directly in their telecoil-equipped hearing aids, free from annoying background noise, echo or reverberation. Receivers are available for listeners who do not have a hearing aid.”

“With the introduction of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the new 2010 ADA requirements, public facilities are looking for reliable solutions to accommodate the hard-of-hearing public.”

The hard part is finding someone to install the loop systems. In response to my inquiry, Williams Sound’s technical project manager Mark says: “We have reentered the loop market and are starting to offer more products... we... do not provide installation on any of our products... I have been compiling a list of loop installers, however I haven’t yet found a qualified installer in the Twin Cities. Home loops can usually be installed by the end user.”

I’m afraid that leaves this potential home user out of the picture. However, Mark does suggest checking with Harris Communications to see if they have any installers on call, since they have been selling loop products for several years. Also encouraging: Mark says “I’m hoping later this year to find qualified installers in Minnesota.”

We applaud the direction that looping is taking in the U. S. and look forward to finding local installers for both home and business applications. HLAA stands as a reference point for many who are looking for information on accommodations. Although we do not make recommendations, we are eager to let inquirers know what (and who) is available!

(quotes are from Williams Sound press release, 2012, and correspondence)

Vicki

Did you know.....? The first meeting of your chapter was in November, 1982. This chapter has been meeting for over 30 years!

My first job – the Woolworth’s lunch counter. Editor→



Mill City Museum

On Saturday April 6, a group of us from HLAA-TC were welcomed at Mill City Museum to check out the hearing loop in their signature attraction, the Flour Tower. There were five of us there to evaluate the loop: three with hearing aids, one with a cochlear implant, and one using the receiver. It was a good representation of our chapter.

It is exciting to have this kind of accommodation available to us! The loop in the Flour tower worked just as it should. Even for those with a severe-to-profound hearing loss who cannot understand speech, it was obvious that the sounds coming through the loop were much clearer than what is heard without using the loop. Many of those with mild-to-moderate hearing loss would be able to understand clearly.

The loop is simple to use, and provides good sound without interference. It should get a lot of use, once people know about it.

Other hearing accommodations are in place too. There are captions (or subtitles) on the “Recipe Box” videos, as well as on the other video screens throughout the museum. The captions are either “on”, or can be turned on at the push of an easily visible, “CC” labeled button. The theater show, “Minneapolis in 19 Minutes” is shown with captions - no need to go and find someone to turn them on. It is a terrific movie - entertaining, and very informative. Without the captions, it would be neither (for us). Thanks to Mill City Museum for letting us in on the fun!

Signage is somewhat lacking, however. People need to know that it is accessible. Signs at the ticket counter and wherever accommodations are in place would let visitors know what is available, and ensure optimal use.

Many thanks to Mill City Museum for making it accessible to visitors with hearing loss. Please spread the word!





Open Captioned at the Guthrie Theatre

May 1 and 17: “Nice Fish”

May 22 and June 7: “The Primrose Path”

July 3 and 19: “Clybourne Park”

August 16 and 21: “Pride and Prejudice”

Tickets for open captioned seating are just \$25.

Self Advocacy

Do you need to be a better self-advocate for your hearing loss? Too often, people with hearing loss find it very difficult to advocate for their own needs. You need a good strategy for letting people know that you are hard of hearing and that they need to change their communication mode in order for you to understand them.

Start by saying, “I am hard of hearing.” Then say, “There are a couple of things that would make my life a lot easier. Would you be willing to help me?” Then wait for a response. Don’t say a word. (Yes, it can get quiet, but you need to give them time to take in what you just said.)

Usually, they respond with, “I am so sorry, how can I help?”

You say, “Nothing to be sorry about! This is what you can do.” Then give them two or three specific things they can do. (Slow down, face me, etc.) These must be short and simple tips—nothing too long—for it is human nature for people to forget.

Do it on the phone too. It works the same way. Get them on your side.



Judi & Monique

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This month's editor is Linda

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