

HLAA TC

JANUARY 2012



2012

January 21, 2012 - Rhoda Nelson, "Hearing Lips & Seeing Voices" Part 2

February 18, 2012 - (tentative) Rich Diedrichsen, Paul Tuveson, Mary Hartnett

March 2, 2012 - Legislation Day

March 17, 2012 - (tentative) Costco, Howard Malone and Kate McGuire

April 11, 2012 - Steak Fry in Crystal

April 21, 2012 - (tentative) Marlene Martinek, Lions MD5M Hearing Foundation

May 19, 2012 - Elections/Pot Luck, Linda Miller with Sam Trychin tape on coping (tentative)

June 21 - 24, 2012 - HLAA (National Convention) Providence, Rhode Island

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Officers' emails

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★ Judi Swan -	vicepresident@hlaatc.org
★ Bob Knoll -	treasurer@hlaatc.org

HLAA TC Website - Minnesota

www.hlaatc.org

HLAA National - Maryland

www.hearingloss.org

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

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



January 2012

President 's Message -- Carole Blowers

Deaf and Hearing Impaired Athletes - PART I

I was recently approached by a co-worker who knows I am hearing impaired. She relayed to me that her nephew, who is a football and wrestling athlete, is also hearing impaired and how he got “invisible” hearing aids so he can stay involved with his sports activities.

I would have to admit that I really hadn't thought much about hearing impaired athletes until this conversation with a co-worker. This is a huge subject! As an avid soccer, basketball, and football fan, it really got me thinking about this subject. I'm fully aware of the challenges I face at my workplace being hearing impaired. But what about these athletes? My research on this topic has been most interesting and abundant, so I will make this a two part article, finishing it next month. This month, I will talk about the challenges of being a deaf or hard of hearing athlete, and the products and ideas that can assist you. Next month, I will talk about famous deaf or hard of hearing athletes, and the various associations that are available to promote deaf or hard of hearing athletes.

For people who can hear, it's nearly impossible to understand the complexities and challenges of being a deaf or hard-of-hearing athlete. Most have to learn to “play with their eyes” and face challenges posed to their hearing aids. Hearing aids can be damaged by sweat. Waterproof hearing aids are a pricey option. An inexpensive tactic is to use plastic sleeves that fit over the devices and reduce moisture. Hearing aids for athletes are prone to falling out, getting lost and being damaged. They can fall on hard surfaces and get stepped on, but athletes can wear headbands designed to keep hearing aids in place.

The headbands also can act as sweatbands. Another issue is for athletes who must wear helmets, as this can cause feedback.

In talking further with my co-worker, I learned her nephew is using the Lyric® hearing aids--the first and only extended wear hearing device that is 100% invisible. This hearing aid is comfortably placed in the ear canal and can be worn 24 hours a day, seven days a week, for months at a time.. No surgery or anesthesia is required. It uses your ear's natural anatomy to provide exceptional sound quality and alleviate hearing problems. This hearing aid can be used during your daily activities, such as exercising, showering, talking on the phone, and sleeping. There are no batteries to change, no maintenance is needed, and no daily insertion or removal is required. Since this aid is placed in the ear canal, it directs sound into the ear canal naturally, resulting in improved directionality and localization, reduced feedback, and improved high frequency gain. I learned you can talk on the phone normally because nothing is outside the ear to interfere with a phone or headset. I am not advocating this product, just simply advising you what I have learned. Please go to their website to learn more about this product.

I learned a booklet, "Time Out! I Didn't Hear You" (Sports Support Syndicate, Pittsburgh) recommends strategies for athletes for each sport. In baseball, for example, a player could modify a batters' helmet so that it only covers one ear. The hearing aid is worn in the opposite ear. For football, a hole can be drilled in the top of the helmet. A BTE hearing aid is secured at the top with the microphone in the hole. A piece of plastic tubing connects the earhook of the BTE to the earmold in the ear. Some players may choose to go without hearing aids for various reasons, and team members tap them on shoulders to give directions or use sign language.

Depending on the price limits faced by a family or individual, custom-designed helmets that contain FM systems are available. However, the Time Out booklet considers a built-in FM system an unfair advantage for teams because it allows a coach to speak directly to players. It recommends such devices be worn only during tryouts and practice. With an FM, student athletes would be more likely to hear the coach going over plays on the sidelines or during time-outs.

Some athletes want to wear their hearing devices only during a game, but they should also be worn during practice so the hearing impaired athlete learns what to listen for during the actual game—footsteps, a dribbling ball approaching, opposing student conversation, team mate signals, and so on.

Students who have cochlear implants require accommodations to play sports, such as wearing sweatbands with hooks to keep the band & CI together; wearing a cap made from a nylon knee-high to keep the processor on and keeps dirt and dust out; sewing a pocket in a sports bra to hold the processor; and taping the cable to the athlete's neck using easy off surgical tape.

I also found an article about a teenager who invented something useful for deaf and hard of hearing athletes. A Texas teen (Celia Beron) has persistence, and a great idea that is bound to take off. After attending soccer camp with another camper with hearing loss, she noticed how the child continued to play even after the referee blew the whistle. She had an idea and created **Ref for the Deaf**, a vibrating bracelet that works with transmitters. When the starter gun or whistle goes off to signal the start or end of play, the bracelet vibrates and alerts the wearer. With the help of two graduate students from

University of Texas at Dallas (UTD), her invention has a business model and won the top prize of \$10,000 in a UTD new business idea contest. Celia's father plans to start a business with graduate students and market it.

I was overwhelmed at how much information is available on this topic. I hope you've learned something from this information—I sure did! Look for Part II on this subject next month.

Submitted by Carole Blowers

***Merrilee Knoll 1948 – 2011
President, HLAA-TC***

It is with great sadness that we announce the death on December 30, 2011 of our friend and tireless worker on behalf of HLAA-TC, our president Merrilee Knoll. Merrilee's absence will be noticed on many levels and at many times as we go through the year without her.

A Celebration of Life is planned on what would have been Merrilee's 64th birthday.

CELEBRATION OF LIFE

MERRILEE KNOLL

JANUARY 23, 2012

5 – 8 PM

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Vice President Judi Swan

Synopsis of December Meeting

Merrilee opened the meeting albeit wasn't a quick task for her. Everyone was excited about the annual Christmas Potluck and White Elephant Gift Exchange.

Chatter filled the room. To quote her, "Is there anybody here that wants to get the meeting going? Nobody? Two people. Okay. What do you want to do then? Do you want to eat? Forget the meeting and lets just eat."

Proceeding, she presented a poinsettia plant to Lori (our CART lady), and one for Lisa (also a CART lady) who wasn't feeling well. Many thanks to CART who gifted us the December services.

Merrilee then called Holly, Hunter, Shannon, Carole, Tiffany, Judi and Mary up where each received a number. Linda Miller was called, but not present.

In turn, each chose a wreath (made by Merrilee) and was given a handmade card.

She commented, "These are people that have helped us tremendously through the last year, and as many of you know, all the officers got new nametags. The first time they have been done professionally, they look durable, they look like they'll last a long time, they're very nice, and the person we owe our thanks to is our incoming President in September, Judi Swan.

Stating there was no guest speaker, or a Spotlight Speaker, she invited anyone to volunteer. Dave Swan offered.

Vicki, our ASL teacher, did birthday words--"happy, birthday, present, cake, ice cream, candle, celebrate, party, Happy Hanukkah, Merry Christmas, Happy New Year. So happy New Year to all of you!"

Merilees comment, "Wow, that was great Vicki. Thank you very much."

Mary's quote of the month, "Yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery, and today is a gift. That's why they call it the present."

Candy presented our "What Is It?" feature with two items... one, a bed vibrator/alarm clock, also a telephone volume booster. She offered these to anyone free.

Dave Swan, "Spotlight Speaker" volunteer was next.

He stated being a significant other of a person with severe hearing loss, while he has a mild loss. He spoke of the adult childrens' being tired at times dealing with hearing loss. His life with a hearing disabled person involves learning tolerance, and at times challenging; at times raising his voice and causing strife by just not understanding hearing loss. He said it is a tough one for the hearing person, one that he works on and out of love hopes to do better in 2012.

While preparations were made to start the White Elephant, Judi gave her VP comments, stating that our year is almost half over. She thanked her fellow officers and noted that when everyone leaves after a meeting, the board members stay to do the business part of running HLAA/TC. Speakers, problems, events, brainstorming are discussed and usually 1-2 hours is spent. She thanked everyone for making her start as an officer so joyful and fulfilling.

Treasurer Bob stated that the Steak Fry (April) tickets are ready, saying that the budget is still "doing pretty good," since membership fees dropped from 25 dollars to 10 dollars in September.

On with the White Elephant, numbers were distributed, and the laughter and fun began. An oddity in one package-- a white elephant teapot, drew laughs and a new home. Such variety..clock-picture frames-facial spa-bird food-throw-body talc-tree book-bird book-platypus and many fine treasures. Hunter got the bird book and tried to pawn it endlessly -- while Sue got a little red wagon with coal (chocolate) lamenting "I was a good girl--apparently I was naughty." So many laughs, more memories, much joy in that room. A hungry group hit the potluck table, while the fundraising Cookie Sale began.

Merrilee closed the meeting with, "Be sure to return your nametags. You have a tremendous holiday. We'll see you next year."

Judi Swan

HLAA-TC Officers, January 2012

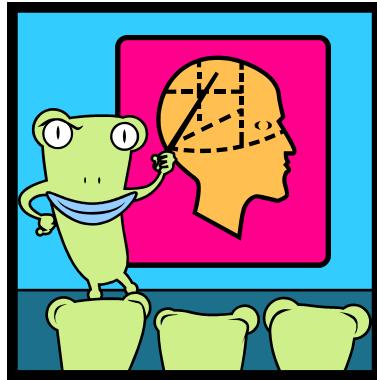
Co-Presidents: Carole Blowers, Linda Miller
Vice President: Judi Swan
Treasurer: Bob Knoll

Rhoda's Coming Back!!!!

Our January meeting on Saturday the 21st will begin with coffee at nine thirty, and the start of the meeting ten am, at Courage Center.

This month, we are fortunate to have as our speaker, Rhoda Nelson. Many of you may recall that she spoke last May to our group. With her wonderful sense of humor, and her gift of presentation, we welcome her back for part two of the talk which time did not allow her to finish. Her title, "Seeing Voices and Hearing Lips-Part 2".

Rhoda deals with sight and hearing limitations, but it does not stop her zest for living and sharing as only she can do. Don't miss it!!



Brain Training! (Part 1)

By Vicki Martin

As a member of HLAA-TC, I've heard a lot about cochlear implants. I've met people who use them, read articles about them, and checked out the professional perspective. Though I did not think it would apply to me, I've filed all this CI information in the back of my mind, just in case: in case the implant technology gets better; in case I lose the rest of my hearing; in case I lose my vision; in case, well, maybe just in case I want to hear like other people do.

Okay, we all know that last one is just a pipe dream. Still, we keep dreaming. Even the ever-sensible audiologist, Dr. Mark Ross, couldn't keep himself from hoping that the outcome for him would be better than any he had ever encountered in real life (*Hearing Loss Magazine*, 2007 Mar/Apr and Jul/Aug)

So when my ENT asked me if I had ever considered a CI, I told her yes. I had thought about it for my worse ear, the right. Audiologically, it is only a little worse than my left, but it has never been "wired" to my brain. She shook her head. "They would want to do your 'good' ear", she said. The sound that reaches my good ear, though minimal, is nevertheless very useful to me, and I would not consider risking it, even for something potentially much better. Even as I said as much to my ENT, I was hatching an idea: what if I could train my brain to process the sound from my right ear? Could that make the "bad" ear a candidate for a CI? That could spare my usable natural hearing, while still giving me the benefit of electronic hearing in the other ear. She nodded tentatively, and we agreed it was worth a try.

Soon after, I had an earmold made for the right ear, and attached a spare hearing aid (my "backup") to it. Not good. Everything sounded like a snare drum. I couldn't distinguish voices from machines. I could not tell if musical sounds were going up or down. In fact, I couldn't even tell they were musical. On top of that, the sound was annoyingly occluded – that echoing sense that you are talking under water. And all the noise coming into the right ear only made it harder for my left to do its already difficult job. Nevertheless, I was determined to try it.

About the same time, a friend of mine loaned me her book, *The Mind and the Brain: Neuroplasticity and the power of mental force*, by Jeffrey Schwartz. The timing was appropriate. Although my decision to do aural training had been somewhat tentative, reading Schwartz' book

clinched it. Schwartz lays out clear and documented proof that it is possible to change the neural pathways of the brain, and teach it to respond to new sensory input, even when it has never had that input before.

This was exactly what I hoped was true. I set up my own training program to teach my brain to recognize what came through the right ear.

I listened to the Bible on CD, trying to follow it with a printed copy. I played notes on the piano, trying to hear the “G” sound, or the “B” sound. I played uncomplicated music CDs to see if I could recognize songs. I tried to identify letters of the alphabet by sound alone. I listened to environmental sounds.

After about a month or two of this, I felt that I needed some professional guidance in order to track and document any progress I might make. I stopped the home exercises, so that we’d have a better baseline for comparison. A few inquiries turned up an auditory rehabilitation specialist at the University, and I began the process for a referral.

At last I was set for a real adventure! Just before Labor Day, I began to work with Sarah.

(next month: *Brain Training* part 2, “Progress ‘Plus’”)

January Captioned Shows
(information courtesy VSA Minnesota, access@vsamn.org)

Lion King

Performed by: Touring Company

Location: Historic Orpheum Theatre, 910 Hennepin Ave. S., Minneapolis

ASL: Sunday, January 15, 1:00 PM.

Captioning: Thursday, January 19, 7:30 PM. Captioning by c2.

Tix: \$30-134. Limited seats are available at the lowest price level to patrons using ASL interpreting or Captioning services. To order, email Nichole.Cassavant@BroadwayAcrossAmerica.com or accessible@broadwayacrossamerica.com; phone: 612-339-7007 or 612-373-5639; hotline 612-373-5650.

Website: <http://www.hennepintheatretrust.org/accessible>

Cat on a Hot Tin Roof

by Tennessee Williams, directed by Lisa Peterson.

Performed by: Guthrie Theater.

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

Captioning: Wed., Jan. 25, 1:00 PM; Fri., Feb. 24, 7:30 PM by c2 inc.

ASL: Fri., Feb. 17, 7:30 PM; Thurs., Feb. 23, 7:30 PM.

Tix: Reduced to \$20 for ASL, \$25 for Captioning (regular \$24-68); phone: 612-377-2224, TTY 612-377-6626.

Website: <http://www.guthrietheater.org>

El Pasado es un Animal Grotesco (The Past Is a Grotesque Animal)

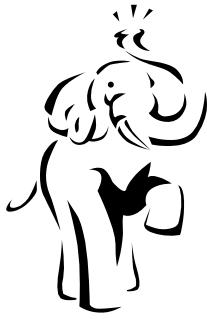
By: Mariano Pensotti.

Location: Walker Art Center, 1750 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis.

Captioning: Thursday-Friday-Saturday, Jan. 26-27-28, 8:00 PM.

Tix: Thursday \$18 (\$15 Walker member); Fri.-Sat. \$22 (\$18 Walker member) phone: 612-375-7600; email: access@walkerart.org.

Website: <http://www.walkerart.org>



THE TALE OF THE WHITE ELEPHANT

By Judi Swan

Once upon a time, there was a white elephant porcelain teapot.

Cared for wisely, without blemish or chip, it found its home in an antique shop.

A lady just awandering around the shop one day saw this elephant and had an "aha" moment. She purchased this treasure and took it home, thinking of the HLAA Holiday Potluck Gift Exchange.

She brought that elephant, so cute and so carefully cuddled in its wrapper, to the White Elephant Gift Exchange at the December meeting.

As games go, this was a wild, wild time, and many laughs were heard or felt or seen.

A guy I know really well named Dave got the teapot and was hoping that no one else loved teapots as much as he. For him to add this to his collection seemed a good idea. Could it be?

He ended up with his coveted item, took it home and enjoyed showing it to visitors, no one had ever actually gotten a white elephant at a white elephant exchange among the people we know.

Pondering, recently, I sat down to write a little piece for the Jan. newsletter to seek out the identity of the person who brought that item.

Then, just 5 days before the end of 2011, we had friends over for tea and goodies. I mentioned this.

As we looked at the teapot (currently on display on the kitchen counter-its owner likes looking at it), I said, "I sure would like to find out the former owner of this teapot." All silent, then a smile broke out on the face of our guests, our dear HLAA friends, Vicki and Dennis Martin. She said, "It's me." I was awestruck, and happy at the same time.

I stated, "what are the chances of our dearest neighbors and friends bringing an item that Dave likes so much, and he ending up with it?" And the cute white tag she affixed, "Unofficial HLAA White Elephant," was a finishing special touch.

So now.... the White HLAA Elephant as it is now known.... has a forever home with the Swans.... the mystery is over.... and you can be sure that the HLAA group will never see this elephant at the exchange again.

Ah, tea never tasted THIS good!!!!



WonderStruck

Book Review: Wonderstruck by Brian Selznick

Reviewed by Vicki Martin

If you've heard about Hugo, you've heard about Brian Selznick. His novel, The Invention of Hugo Cabret, is novel indeed, with its illustrations conveying part of the story. It has gotten a lot of press lately, having been made into a movie (Hugo) that is currently playing in 3-D. 3-D movies, by the way, are not captioned.

In Wonderstruck, Selznick takes his visual storytelling a step further. His characters are two children, one of whom is born deaf. The other is partly deaf, losing his remaining hearing at the age of 12. "Sign language is a language you watch", says Selznick, "which became a key to how Wonderstruck would be illustrated".

The story of the child born deaf is told in pictures, that of the child who was raised hearing in text. The two stories intertwine beautifully, ultimately ending in a single strand comprised of both text and pictures.

Deaf people have praised Wonderstruck for its portrayal of how deaf people experience the world. It's amazing how much you can learn about the characters – whether wolf or human – just by looking.

I encourage you to read Wonderstruck. Don't be daunted by the long waiting list at the library. It's a quick read – though you may find yourself turning back to look at things again.

A cinema theme features strongly in the deaf child's story. The blog at schoollibrary.com reports that "Selznick was fascinated to learn how sound, introduced to movies in 1927, affected deaf viewers: 'Movies, for the first time, excluded the deaf,'" Selznick said. "'I had never thought about that'".

Will Wonderstruck become a movie? Most likely. Will it be 3-D, and therefore not captioned? We are living in a time when captioning is technologically feasible for any length video, but taking movie technology to the next (3-D) level may mean that 'Movies, for the *second* time, exclude the deaf'.

Let's hope that doesn't happen.

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This month's editor is Vicki Martin

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