

HLAAATC

March 2012

March 17, 2012— Speaker from AARP on “Fraud and Scams”

Sunday, March 18, 2012

- Adult Cochlear Implant Social Group in Burnsville

April 11, 2012— Steak Fry, Crystal

April 21, 2012— Marlene Martinek, Lions 5M Hearing Foundation

May 19, 2012— Elections/Pot Luck, Linda Miller on Sam Trychin’s “How to talk (and not talk) to Hard of Hearing People”

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

September 15, 2012— Fall kick off meeting at Courage Center

September 16, 2012— Cochlear Implant Picnic at Brookview Park in Golden Valley

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www.hlaatc.org
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- **MN Contact Information**
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**Hearing Loss Association of America –
Twin Cities Chapter**



Carole Blowers



Dr. Teika Pakalns

Synopsis of February 18, 2012, HLAA-TC meeting

Submitted by Carole Blowers

President Carole Blowers welcomed everyone and introduced our first speaker of the day **Dr. Teika Pakalns** from MCDHH (Commission for Deaf, Deafblind, and Hard of Hearing Minnesotans). Teika has graciously agreed to speak to us today in place of Mary Hartnett, who is unable to be here today.

Carole stated that Teika has her PhD in Science. She is deaf. Over the last few years, she has helped the commission above and beyond the call of duty in tough times when staff ran short while the workload was growing. Her work and competence has been recognized, and Teika is now employed by the Commission where she is now the Senior Project Manager, a position she has held for over a year. Congratulations were given to Teika on her new assignment, and members were asked to welcome her.

Dr. Pakalns thanked Carole for the introduction, and stated yes she is deaf, she was born deaf. The **first** item discussed was legislation (HF2253/SF186) regarding out-of-state inpatient mental health treatment for children who are deaf, deafblind, or hard of hearing. This would mean a change to Minnesota Statutes 245.4482, Section 5 and include medical assistance coverage for this classification of children. The **second** item Dr. Pakalns discussed was suggestions for changes to 3525.1331, Deaf and Hard of Hearing criteria and other items.

The **third** item was about a collaborative plan for children who are deaf and hard of hearing. Dr. Pakalns explained that many deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind students are graduating unprepared to succeed in the world. This is a community directive, and a steering committee involved six agencies to develop a plan under the direction of Dr. Cheryl Johnson, consultant and facilitator. Between July and November of 2011, 25 agency representatives developed a plan for advancement and accountability. The commission is asking for endorsements from several associations such as MN Hands and Voices, DeafBlind Technical Assistance Project MN Association of Deaf Citizens, PACER, DDHJM, MN State Academy of the Deaf, Northern Voices, Metro Deaf school, VECTOR-transition, U of MN, DHS, MN Department of Education, Voc Rehab service, MN Department of Health, NE Metro D/HH, and St. Paul Public Schools.

The collaborative plan looks at the whole system to leverage resources, engage a cross-sector of diverse leadership, and is data-driven. The plan is aligned with national agenda goals, state performance plan

indicators, and policies and metrics of state agencies and nonprofits. A list of resource center board advisory members who participated was provided. There are three primary goals/outcomes:

Goal #1. All families will receive the support they need to help their children develop and learn. All young children who have hearing loss will maximum their communication and learning potential and begin kindergarten with communication, social, and early literacy skills at developmental levels.

Goal #2. Children and youth who are deaf, deaf blind, and hard of hearing will be prepared to live as independent adults.

Goal #3. Children and youth who are deaf, hard of hearing or deafblind will maximize their potential in the areas of education, employment, and independent living in order to become productive citizens.

Dr. Pakalns asked for support from HLAA-TC—to review this proposal and support it, and follow through with Mary Hartnett. There will be a meeting for the task force in February at the downtown St. Paul office. If an officer or someone from HLAA-TC could attend, let Mary Hartnett know.

The **fourth** item Dr. Pakalns talked about was regarding employment of Minnesotans who are deaf or hard of hearing and how to double it by 2015. Items related to this subject include:

- improving transportation services available to deaf or hard of hearing employees
- expanding the pool of employment service providers who have expertise in deafBlindness
- eliminating having a driver's license as a job requirement when driving is not an essential requirement of the job and accommodations could be provided
- empowering individuals who are DeafBlind with access to funds to purchase the assistive technology they need to obtain and retain employment through a consolidated accommodations fund
- exploring customized employment as an alternative to traditional job placement approaches to address the many obstacles encountered job seekers who are DeafBlind.

The **fifth** and last item was about new MNCDHH online resources regarding the following areas: Capitol Accessibility (video tour) and Information Technology. Coming soon will be health care communications access for Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing People in Minnesota and the History of Advocacy in the Community (a new video library) in which Rich Diedrichsen is featured. In closing Dr. Pakalns stated the commission values what we do. Carole thanked Dr. Pakalns for her great presentation and encouraged members to speak with her during the break if they had other questions. Handouts on all items discussed by Dr. Pakalns were available at the meeting.



Carole then introduced Rich Diedrichsen (St. Cloud HLAA) & Paul Tuveson who spoke to members about room looping. Discussion on the program “Let’s Loop America” which was started 10-15 years ago was held, and that there is still much more to be done in public places (i.e., theaters, churches, etc.). It’s much easier to turn your T-coil feature on your hearing aids on to hear in these places than to request an assistive hearing device, where you have to work with a person with working at the business and operable batteries to hear. And it should NOT cost extra to have the T-coil feature on your aids. Rich encouraged us to keep advocating for this, especially in new buildings that should be looped. Talk to building inspectors in our cities. We need to complain, when necessary, and let the commission know when there are problems or needs. Paul talked about education and using TV captioning. The following handouts were provided: “Putting Hearing Loops in Public Spaces”, “Why Are Loop Systems the Preferred Assistive Listening System?”, and “A Baker’s Dozen Frequently Asked Questions About Hearing Loops”. Carole thanked Rich and Paul for their information.

A brief break was then taken and refreshments offered. After the break, Carole thanked Angie from CART for being there today. Carole announced the following important dates: March 2-Legislation Day; March 17- speaker from AARP on “Fraud and Scams”; March 24-Rebecca Lander from the national office will be here regarding upcoming fall Walk4Hearing to be held here in Minneapolis on September 29th at Lake Calhoun; April 11-steak fry; April 21-Marlene Martinek from the Lions Hearing Foundation; May 19-Linda Miller on Sam Trychin’s “How to Talk (and Not Talk) to Hard of Hearing People”, elections/pot luck too. The HLAA national convention will be June 21-24 in Providence, Rhode Island, for anyone interested in attending.

Mary Andresen gave two quotes of the month. Vicki Martin gave a brief ASL lesson on “Berlitz Blitz, a.k.a. travel words”, which was very entertaining. Tiffany Turley was our member spotlight, and she talked about her journey of hearing loss, her cochlear implant, and support from HLAA-TC. The door prize was won by Lori Snyder (a cookbook). Carole welcomed Sheri, a guest at today’s meeting, and thanked everyone for coming.

Bob Knoll, HLAA-TC Treasurer stated that his wife’s name, Merrilee, has been added to our plaque of people who have been influential in our chapter who have passed on. Bob stated that he plans to donate a check (\$1,000) to the Lion’s Hearing Foundation at the April meeting in memory of Merrilee to help those who “have fallen through the cracks”. Our chapter is doing well financially, since we have received our proceeds from the Walk4Hearing last fall. Steak fry tickets for the event on April 11th are available from him, and Bob needs to know the number of tickets you have sold by April 8th. Bob also mentioned the Lion’s Club will be celebrating their 50th anniversary in July, and that the public will be invited to several events at Lion’s Park.

Carole mentioned that in the February newsletter, Monique Hammond wrote a beautiful article about Merrilee Knoll, her life, her contributions to HLAA-TC and hearing impaired people, as well as her achievements relating to diabetes. We all miss her and are thankful for her service, and we want Bob to know that we are his support group and thank him for everything he does for our chapter, and has done.



Pictures from the February Meeting





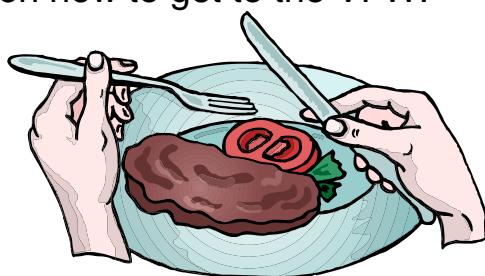
*Merrilee Knoll HLAA-TC
Leader, mentor, friend
1948 - 2011
and
Always in our Hearts*

Steak Fry

The Steak Fry, which benefits HLAA Twin Cities, is coming up on April 11 at the Crystal VFW, 5222 Bass Lake Road in Crystal.

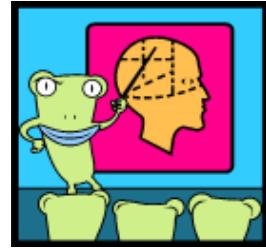
More HLAA volunteers to work at this event would be appreciated. Merrilee did a lot of work on this in past years, and more volunteers are needed to fill her shoes this year. Volunteers should be at the VFW by 4:30 on the 11th. Please let Bob know if you are able to come and work.

Also, Bob will need the count of tickets sold no later than April 6th so food can be ordered. Please call him at home (763-537-7558) with the number of tickets you have sold or give him the number at the March HLAA meeting. Money for the sold tickets can be brought to the VFW the night of the steak fry. There is a little map on the back of each ticket on how to get to the VFW.



Brain Training! (Part 3) “Decision Point”

By Vicki Martin



If you are eagerly waiting to learn my decision, well...keep waiting. On the one hand, the prospect of understanding more speech is very exciting! I keep imagining the conversations I might be able to have if I only knew what people were saying. On the other hand, after talking with a number of cochlear implant recipients, I wonder if I may already do as well as many of them – without even having the implant.

Maybe if I set out the pros and cons of my choosing a CI, the answer will become clearer.

Pros:

- Potential for much better hearing in the speech range
- Ability to converse and socialize
- No feedback noise
- Less stress, due to greater certainty about what I am hearing
- Would learn much more when listening to a speaker
- Might actually “get” the jokes

Cons:

- Medical risks: loss of taste, loss of facial muscle tone, vertigo, meningitis
- Loss of residual hearing in implanted ear
- Distortion of musical sounds
- Does not work for everyone
- Significant time, effort and monetary commitment

Countering some of the “cons” are these facts:

- The worst medical incidents are very rare, and the others usually temporary
- Residual hearing in my right ear is not something I have relied on anyway
- Music perception might be okay since I would preserve the natural hearing in the better ear
- “Brain training” results suggest a good probability of success
- Commitment is by choice, not chance

So, am I a good CI candidate? Audiologically, there is no question about that. A standard hearing threshold (average hearing loss in the speech range) is 70 db for CI candidacy. My own loss, in both ears, is well beyond that. I did manage a fairly decent score at sentence recognition, but single-syllable word recognition is another story. And I need to focus so intensely that merely wiggling my finger may distract me enough to cause me to fail. One may be able to concentrate that hard for ten minutes, but an hour is exhausting, and all day next to impossible.

But do I want it? Maybe my reluctance is due less to logical reasons than to the phenomenon of loss aversion -- the tendency of humans to strongly prefer avoiding loss to acquiring gains. Or, to put it more colloquially, “better the devil you know than the devil you don’t”. The devil I know, I have learned to cope with. The one I don’t know will come with a learning curve.

I won’t ask you to “stay tuned”, because I don’t know if or when I will make this decision. What would it take to propel me to decide? I’m not sure, but I would certainly like to find a few CI recipients whose implants are recent, whose hearing status and history is similar to mine, and who were implanted in the worse ear. Over the next months or year, I hope to find a few such people.

The frontier beckons – but I don’t want to be the pioneer!



Bits and Pieces, March, 2012

Adult Cochlear Implant Social Group

Sunday, March 18, 2012, 1:30 - 4:30 PM

Place: Burnhaven Library, 1101 W County Road 42, Burnsville, MN 55306 (952-891-0300)

Host: Cathy Foncha You are welcome to bring a spouse, partner, friend, family member, and/or significant other to this event. If you would like to bring a refreshment to share that would be wonderful! This monthly social group is for anyone interested in learning more about cochlear implants and talking with people who have them.



CaptionCall phones free!

If you are hearing impaired, have a landline, and have internet, CaptionCall will install a free captioned phone for you at no charge. Send your name, address & phone number to Paul Tuveson at ptuveson@captioncall.com and he will arrange for installation. CaptionCall is an excellent phone with a 40db receiver. It is easy to use, has great captions on both outgoing and incoming calls – and it looks cool! All this, and it won't cost you a cent!



Aloha!

What is Aloha? A group of Twin Cities area people of all ages who have a hearing impairment. They have been getting together to socialize on the second Saturday of each month at someone's home or a public location for several years. Usually a dinner is involved, and cards and games are played afterwards. Newcomers are always welcome as are spouses and friends. Send the editors an email and we will send you the contact information.



Jan. 12, 2012 – Houston, TX: First FDA-Approved Study of **Stem Cells to Treat Hearing Loss** - Children's Memorial Hermann Hospital and Cord Blood Registry® (CBR) are launching the first FDA-approved, Phase I safety study on the use of cord blood stem cells to treat children with sensorineural hearing loss. Read more at [www.cordblood.org](#)

http://www.hearingloss.org/sites/default/files/docs/HearingLossTrialLaunch_cordblood.pdf



From the HLAA National Website

Twelve Reasons Why Self-help Groups are Good for You

- Provide a community of people with hearing loss who understand and are empathic to your unique problems
- Help you deal with the issues of hearing loss stigma
- Will help you understand your legal rights as a person with a hearing disability
- Will teach you coping and communication strategies
- Will help you to adjust and communicate your needs in a "hearing" workplace
- Will share technologies beyond your hearing aids that will enhance your ability to function in the world
- Will educate you on technologies and strategies for ensuring your safety
- Will show you how to stay tuned into family conversations
- Will suggest strategies for communicating in noisy situations
- Will show you how to accommodate your hearing loss while traveling
- Will empower you through exchange of knowledge, encouragement and the sharing of experiences
- Will alleviate the despair and isolation of hearing loss through their support

TV CC? Si!

By Sue Brabeck

My daughter has been persistent lately, trying to get me to ditch my big old clunky TVs and get into the millennium, with new flat-screen TVs. Prices are much more reasonable now, so I decided to look into it.

The problem that I was having with my old TVs was that now that so many shows are broadcast in "HD", some of the picture was being lopped off on each side. This was especially annoying during the news, when I couldn't see all of the weather being displayed. Also, the CC on one of my TVs didn't persist – every time I turned on the TV, I'd have to re-activate the CC.

Soooooooo, off to the big-box store I went! Choosing was simple – pretty much I could look at was the size, the brand, and the price. There's no option of looking at any other features on the TV or even looking at the remote.

I brought my first one home, and set it up. The setup sure is a lot different than in the old days, when you just plugged it into the wall and put in the cable hookup in the back. On this TV, I had to go through quite a lengthy setup process, but patience got me through it. Then I activated the CC – and got a big surprise!

On this TV, the CC isn't just plain old CC – I found all kinds of unexpected and delightful choices! I could choose the font, the font size, and the font color! I could choose the background type and the background color! Plus, the CC persisted when I turned the TV off and back on again. COOL! But one drawback is that the TV remote doesn't have a dedicated CC button, which means that turning off the CC requires me to go quite deep into a messy menu. I don't turn the CC off very often, so I decided this wasn't a big deal.

Then I decided to replace the second TV in my house. I purchased a different brand name, for no other reason than the price. The setup for this one was much easier, and the remote for this TV does have a dedicated CC button. But this TV doesn't have all of the neato CC options as my TV above, such as font, color, background. Just plain old CC, which is fine.

So, while my TV buying experience turned out to be a positive one, I'm frustrated that a shopper can't examine all of the CC options on a TV or the remote itself when looking to buy. Clearly my experience shows there are big variances in the CC capabilities for an individual TV, so a shopper that needs CC can't make a fully informed buying decision. While basic CC function on a TV is required by law and has been for many years, there's no legislation to force a manufacturer to display on the box or a tag the various CC functions of that unit.

I guess for now I'll be happy with what I have, and enjoy my modernized my TVs. Now I just need that HD cable . . . and some popcorn.

*Lori & Sue at
the February
meeting*





Three Cheers for Marcus Theatres "CaptiView" *Judi Swan*

Several months ago, I spoke to the HLAA/TC group about correspondence I had going with the Marcus Family of Theatres regarding showing captioned movies. I was told at that time, plans were on schedule to have their movie places with this feature about March 2012. This week, upon checking the movie listings, I see that it has come to fruition, with most movies featuring CaptiView.

The CaptiView method involves a base which fits into the cup holder, connected to a rectangular narrow unit (which is the viewing area), with a gooseneck lamp type flexible material. This allows the user to position to their comfort level without disturbing visibility of neighboring viewers. The units, which are free, are available at the box office, in quantities to meet the needs of many, if not most of the seats. To me, this is a "feather-in-the-hat" for those of us who have requested, waited, and will utilize this wonderful feature.

Please join with myself and Dave, and ask for these units when you go to the movies, (or restart going once again). Enjoy the wonder of the cinema, but also remember this. While we are always encouraged to ask-ask-ask for what we need, when those needs are being addressed and met, we also need to use thanks-thanks-thanks to the theatre employees/management. So, its time for me to go and select a movie to see this week, and try out "CaptiView."

"Courageous" Movie/Closed-Captioned Showing March 25

The movie, "Courageous", which ran in theatres recently, will be shown on March 25th at Redeemer Baptist Church In Oakdale, MN. The doors will open at four pm, with the movie starting at five pm. Child care and refreshments will be provided.

The film, which is G rated, centers on the lives of four police officers and their families; their families, careers and working with society offers up cheers, action and insight, appropriate for all audiences.

There is no charge for this event. It is in conjunction with Elsie's Wish Advocacy, to find out if hard-of-hearing/deaf persons will attend this type of event.

Like all movies, it has sound. If it is deemed an in-demand feature, the church may consider future showings, at no charge, of other closed-captioned movies.

Church is located at 2479 Geneva Ave-N (aka Century Ave), Oakdale, MN; questions may be phoned to Church Office 651-777-2552, or Judi Swan 651-578-8397.

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Our next meeting is March 17, 2012

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*Como Park Garden Photo on this page by deaf
photographer Donna Savage of St. Paul*

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Linda Senechal, cilinda97@yahoo.com

This month's editor is Linda Senechal

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