

# HLAA TC

## MAY 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.

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

**June 8, 2013** - Lions' DeFeet  
Hearing Loss Walk

**June 15, 2013** - Brooklyn Park  
Tater Daze Parade with HLAA-TC presence!

**June 27-30, 2013** HLAA  
NATIONAL CONVENTION  
Portland, Oregon.

**August 3, 2013** HLAA  
Walk4Hearing Kickoff Luncheon

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

**September 28, 2013**  
HLAA Walk4Hearing. 5K walk.

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### Officers' emails

★ Judi Swan -	<a href="mailto:president@hlaatc.org">president@hlaatc.org</a>
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**HLAA TC Website - Minnesota**

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

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**HLAA National - Maryland**

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

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

Greetings everyone! Happy Spring (I think) and I hope that by the time this goes to press, we will be really sure spring is here and summer has to follow.

It has been a wonderful HLAA year, and as we head into our last meeting until fall, to me it seems surreal and like it passed so quickly.

The Presidency has been rewarding and fulfilling, as I get ready to move out of the position, it is with a little bittersweetness; but knowing that I will always be a part of something so wonderful, is comforting.

As we prepare for the May 18th meeting, think of the open vice president and secretary positions as it is our election meeting. We are also seeking an editor to help Vicki and Linda. If you feel competent and willing, you can talk to any Board member to find out what each involves. Serving on the Board is rewarding and educational, we have a lot of fun, but we work. We work because that is when things happen. This is totally evidenced by some major items, including hiring out graphic art help for our posters and flyers, all in full color; acquiring the services of a webmaster to rework and design our website; increased attendance at monthly meetings and the willingness of many to take an active part in the fall Walk4Hearing and other events.

Thanks to "Homecoming Queen" (my words) Monique Hammond. She has gone above and beyond what any vice president would ever be expected to provide. Honored at the Capitol for her 2 terms of representation in the

MDHHC, which gives us voice in the Legislature; was featured in the Hearing Loss Spring magazine with an article on Ototoxicity; will do a workshop at HLAA Conference, as well as a book signing of her self published book, "What Did You Say?" Many thanks also to her husband Ross, who has traveled many of the same roads along with Monique, serves as our meeting photographer, and sets up and tears down each meeting (with others). Thanks to Bob, our wonderful treasurer (and Go To Man) so busy, yet so dedicated to what he lays his hand to. You Rock Bob. Thanks to Candi, our secretary, for taking minutes at the Board meetings. Thank you's would not be complete without mentioning the wonderful and amazing staff of Paradigm for their expert service in captioning all our meetings in real-time; and for all who were featured speakers....a big THANK YOU!

Remember May is our Potluck Meeting, with the first half of the time being meeting and the second half, food and some open mike time. Who doesn't like a great Potluck, and we always have the best. Think of what your favorite thing is to make, if you aren't handy in the kitchen, then deli items are most welcome.

Summer has its preparation for the Walk in the fall, as well as other events which will be posted in this and in the June newsletter. Keep your eyes open for those, and please keep the efforts alive and well to promote our association at every opportunity. Carry flyers with you when possible, talk about HLAA, and you can always get more flyers during the summer by contacting the website.

To you, many thanks, for making my Presidency joyful and fun. It has been a great privilege to serve in this capacity. You are one great bunch of people, and I look forward to seeing you this summer at events that we are involved in.

Happy Summer!!!!



*May*



*Better Hearing and Speech month*

## HLAA TC Meeting April 20, 2013

Synopsis by Monique Hammond, VP

Our meeting was called to order at 10:00a.m by President Judi Swan. We had a big crowd of members and visitors, which made for a very dynamic atmosphere. Besides engineers who visited from Starkey Laboratories we also greeted retirees from Cargill, ASL students from teacher Debbie Lawrence's class and a student from the University of Minnesota, speech-language pathology.

We thank Carole Blowers who filled in for our greeter Mary Andresen. CART services were provided by Lori Morrow from Paradigm.

VP Monique Hammond offered the quote of the day: "Live so that when your children think of fairness, caring and integrity, they think of you."

*H. Jackson Brown Jr. – author of Life's Little Instruction Book.*

Secretary Candi Meinders introduced our speaker, Donna Savage, who reflected on her journey into the world of hearing loss – from a mild decrease to cochlear implants. As Donna mentioned – one of the most valuable things that we can do to heal one another is to listen to each other's stories.

Donna was first diagnosed with a mild hearing loss in her early 20s. At age 24, she was married and had 2 children. Her hearing loss was actually detected as she volunteered at a program screening kindergartners for hearing loss. Like many people she had not been aware of that initial decline and since it did not bother her too much, she let it go. Within two years though, things got worse and she had trouble following conversations. By now she had a moderate hearing loss and got her first hearing aids.

At the time she volunteered at an outdoor education lab teaching children when she noticed that she could not hear the birds. Knowing that her condition was getting worse, Donna began trying to do all those things that she wanted to experience before "it was too late!" As she stated, this was her first reaction to hearing loss, her denial of sorts.

She started college; sang in the choir; took voice lessons and lots of art classes. She wanted to learn, learn, learn. She wanted to get a degree in education because her dream was to teach. She began working on her 4-year degree at the University of Wisconsin. After a couple more years, she could not hear the children anymore. By now the hearing loss had progressed to moderately severe. More hearing aids!

As a future in education looked bleak, Donna knew that she would have limitations but decided to push the envelope. What could she do? She had to step out of the rut and search for different ways and truer answers. By now she had a severe hearing loss and needed to change hearing aids once again.

At the University of Wisconsin, she eventually met up with audiology students who wanted to work with her: she helped them understand hearing loss while she learned how to lipread better and how to strategize on communication and hearing. They helped each other. Donna is a big believer in the

fact that there always seem to be “little helpers” out there whenever we feel that we have reached our lowest point.

Donna ended up getting a divorce. She became a severely hearing-challenged single mother with an art major, yes, but without a job or prospects. She went for testing with the Vocational Rehabilitation Center and was found to have strong skills in teaching – no surprise there – and graphic arts. Back to school for a degree in graphic arts management with a specialty in computer graphics! Now the job market opened up.

Unisys hired her as a contract person and after two years made her a permanent employee. She worked there for close to 20 years thanks to some accommodation for her hearing challenges and thanks to those “little helpers” among her coworkers who eased her struggle. Meanwhile the hearing loss was classified as profound. Telephone conversations and following what was said in meetings became impossible. Eventually, Donna lost her job.

She went to the University of Minnesota and applied for a Cochlear Implant (CI) – and was turned down because of FDA rules. She was still too able to figure out what people were saying. However, two years later, as her life was imploding, she was accepted. She got her first CI in March 2004. Although it was not like natural hearing and she had to learn to understand speech with the prosthesis, it was wonderful to hear nature sounds again such as birds and her own footsteps.

Donna received a second CI with greatly improved technology in November 2011. This helps her hear much better in louder environments. Hearing is no more as tiring as it used to be with hearing aids turned up to the max. She admits that CIs might not work the same for everyone but they put her back into her “lovely” world with decreased background noise and clearer hearing.

\*\*\*\*

- During our second hour the visiting Starkey Laboratory specialists Tao, Yazih, Kamil and Mike answered audience questions related to hearing aids, hearing aid technology and design. We learned from them and in turn they got information from us to take back to their company.
- Editor Vicki Martin gave a brief report on the visit of HLAA TC members to the Mill City Flour Tower Museum in Minneapolis, which is now looped. This is an interesting place to see – a piece of our local history. And the loop works great!
- For captioned or otherwise accessible movies in your area, try [www.captionfish.com/theaters](http://www.captionfish.com/theaters)

Our next and last meeting of the season will be **May 18, 2013**. Join us for a potluck lunch. Bring a relative and/or a friend! Bring a dish to share. Let’s visit and get to know each other better. Hearing loss is so much easier knowing that one is not alone.

*Monique*





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By Vicki Martin

## Hijacked!

Ever wonder why it is that people who do not hear well are continually distracted? Other people seem to be able to focus on their task at hand, while we struggle to maintain any kind of focus at all. A voice, without distinct words, claims our attention. So do those footsteps outside your cubicle. A swish of the drapes, or the rustling of a sheet of paper does too, or the kids singing a song. A recording of an orchestral piece can do it, or someone rummaging in the next room.

For us, just reading and understanding a paragraph is an accomplishment. We may decide that all of the other sounds around us do not need our attention right now, but we're not able to turn them off, and pay attention to that paragraph instead. Are we as scatterbrained as our teachers thought we were?

The answer may be that we are, but it's not because we pay too little attention. It's because we pay too much. What's more, we have no choice in the matter. A recently published study speaks of sounds that "hijack the cognitive functions of bystanders." That's right. We can't help paying attention to all of those sounds that we only partly hear. Our brains are wired to find the meaning in it all.

The study, which focuses on cellphone usage in public, explains: "If you only hear one person speaking, you're constantly trying to place that part of the conversation in context." People do not find others' conversations distracting if both sides are audible. What makes them distracting is hearing *some* things and not others.

I think we can see what this implies for hard of hearing people. It's not just the half-conversations that force us to try to fill in the missing parts. For us it's every conversation. It's every sound that we can't quite identify.

There is no such thing as "background noise", or even "background music". A partly-heard symphony, like that half conversation, demands all of our attention. We can't *not* listen, any more than the stranger next to you can turn off your half of the phone talk. Unless you really want to listen, it is irritating. It is stressful. It is distracting.

There is a solution, of course, but it involves turning off the whole world, not just parts of it. If you turn your hearing aids off entirely, there won't be any half-sounds (if a tree falls in the woods...?). Not to be too Pollyanna-ish, but we do have that option. Pity the poor chap on the bus, who can't similarly turn off his ears!



## Sony Entertainment Access Glasses

by Brenda Brown

I have used the Sony Access Glasses available at Regal Theaters twice. I have also used the CaptiView system available at Marcus Theaters. I was thrilled to see my first movie with CaptiView. I honestly thought my movie-going days were over until I did some research and found that there are options for accessibility. The CaptiView was easy to use and easy to adjust to make the captions appear for me exactly where I wanted them in my line of vision. My husband glanced over from time to time and told me that as far as he could tell, it was very accurate. It was a great experience!

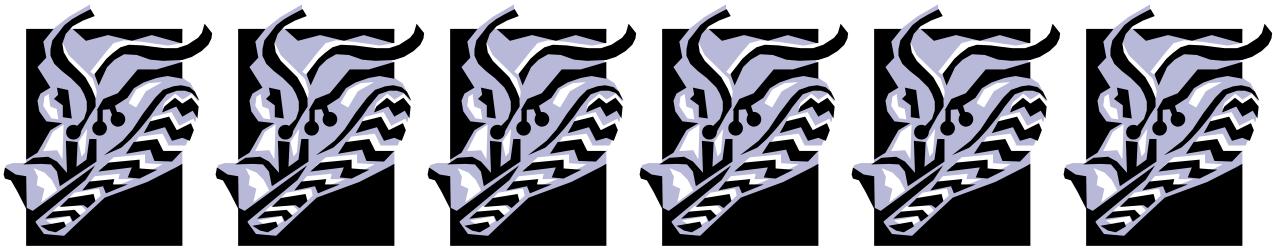
The next time I went to a movie, it was at a Regal Theater and they had recently installed the Sony Access Glasses in their theaters. You request them when you purchase your ticket (just like the CaptiView) and they are free of charge. There is a device that you wear around your neck, and a pair of glasses that they give you. When the movie starts, the captions appear in the glasses, so you are the only person that sees them. At first I loved it. I will say that for that movie the captions did have a few mistakes - similar to captions on television. They weren't a big deal, but I felt it was slightly less accurate than the CaptiView captions at the previous movie I saw.

During the course of the film, I also found that I didn't like the fact that the captions move whenever you move your head. In a way, it's nice because you can move them easily if they are blocking a part of the picture you want to see, but if you are used to them being in the same spot, it can be slightly annoying to have them tilting and moving every time you move your head. It is difficult to be still for an entire movie. Overall it was a great experience, but I left the first movie feeling like I might slightly prefer the CaptiView.

I saw a second film with the Sony glasses a few months later. I didn't know it until I was at the theater, but the movie we wanted to see was 3D. I really thought that would mean we would have to choose a different movie, but that was not the case. They added a film over the glasses and I was able to watch a 3D movie with captions! I loved it!! I have to say that the second time I used the glasses, I found that I actually liked being able to move the captions around by tilting my head. I didn't find it annoying. I left that day feeling like I now prefer the glasses over the CaptiView. I think I just needed to adjust to a new way of viewing captions. I had never seen them any way other than in a stable position mainly at the bottom of the screen. Once I adjusted to the idea (and knew what to expect the second time) I enjoyed having the flexibility to adjust however I wanted to.

The signs at the Regal Theater say that their system is compatible with neckloops. I did not have my neckloop with me, so I did not try that part of the system. If I understand it correctly, I believe you can also use it like other assistive listening devices and use a variety of accessories with it. I'm not sure, but I believe they also have some type of headphones that you can use if you don't need the captioning but need an assistive listening device. *(Editor's note: There is an audio input receptacle that can provide either the sound track or audio description. Unfortunately, the captions and the audio can not be used at the same time. You have to choose one or the other.)*

A website that I love and use frequently is [www.captionfish.com](http://www.captionfish.com). It lists all movies in your area that have captioning options (for those with hearing impairments) and descriptive video options (for those with visual impairments). I love finding great technology that makes these things accessible for most of us!



## WALK!

Several Walk events are coming up this summer and fall. Join us for as many as you can. It will do a body good, give you an enjoyable day out, and serve the cause of hearing loss awareness. Here are some of the details. You can also sign up, and ask further questions at the May HLAA-TC meeting.

### **Lions' Defeat Hearing Loss walk**

Date June 8  
Time Register 9:30, walk 10:30, noon lunch  
Place Minnesota Landscape Arboretum  
Cost to participant Our chapter donated \$1000 for 40 participants  
Freebies T-shirt, admission to walk and Landscape arboretum, lunch  
What we'll do Walk  
Sign up No need to pre-register if you are with HLAA. Just check in when you get there  
More info <https://secure.qgiv.com/hobnob/event/12911>

### **Brooklyn Park Tater Days Parade -- June 15**

Date June 15 LINE UP AT 11 A.M. (We do not have a line up # yet)  
Time 12 noon  
Place It will start near the festival site at Noble Sports Park on Regent Ave N just north of the Hwy 610 bridge, go north on Regent Ave N, turn west on 101st Ave N and end at Xenia Ave N (approximately 1 mile), Brooklyn Park  
Cost Free  
What we'll do Carry HLAA banner or hand out ear plugs and HLAA business cards to the crowd  
Sign up or join For HLAA TC: let Bob Knoll ([treasurer@hlaatc.org](mailto:treasurer@hlaatc.org)) or Carole Blowers ([carolejdoll@aol.com](mailto:carolejdoll@aol.com)) know if you are coming  
More info at: <http://www.brooklynpark.org/sitepages/pid91.php> click on "Parade" on left side

### **Walk for Hearing kickoff luncheon**

Date August 3  
Time 12 - 2  
Place Nicollet Island Inn, 95 Merriam Street, Minneapolis  
Cost to participant Free  
What we'll do Eat lunch, listen to pep talks  
How else to help Greet/welcome people  
Freebies Lunch  
Sign up or join Respond to Carole Blowers by July 26, 2013 - online;  
[http://hlaa.convio.net/site/TR?fr\\_id=2110&pg=entry](http://hlaa.convio.net/site/TR?fr_id=2110&pg=entry) or at [carolejdoll@aol.com](mailto:carolejdoll@aol.com)

# The Big One!

## Walk4Hearing

Date	September 28
Time	9 AM (walk begins at 10)
Place	Lake Calhoun South Beach
Cost to participant	Free
What we'll do	Sign up donors, walk with team or as independent
How else to help	8 AM set up tables, 9 AM volunteer at registration table, 12 noon take down tables (contact <a href="mailto:president@hlaatc.org">president@hlaatc.org</a> )
Freebies	Coffee, snacks, Walk T-shirt if you raise \$100 or more
Sign up or join	<a href="http://www.walk4hearing.org">www.walk4hearing.org</a> (start or join a team, register as an individual, or register in person on the day of the walk)
Sign up donors own walk page	After you register online, you can sign up donors on your own walk page

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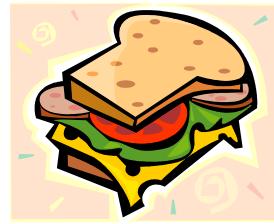
### Brief Listing of local captioned entertainment May 9 – June 13

#### **MAY:**

- May 9, 7:30 – St. Paul: Ordway Center: Anything Goes.
- May 11, 6:00 – Minneapolis: PACER Center Benefit at Convention Center: Jay Leno.
- May 17, 7:30 – Minneapolis: Guthrie Theater: Nice Fish.
- May 17, 7:30 – Minneapolis: Orpheum Theatre: Rock of Ages.
- May 18, 7:30 – St. Paul: Park Square Theatre: Stick Fly.
- May 19, 2:00 – St. Paul: Park Square Theatre: Stick Fly.
- May 22, 1:00 – Minneapolis: Guthrie Theater: Primrose Path.

#### **JUNE:**

- June 7, 7:30 – Minneapolis: Guthrie Theater: Primrose Path.
- June 13, 7:30 – Minneapolis: Orpheum Theatre: War Horse.
- June 13, 7:30 – St. Paul: Ordway Center: Buddy.



## Hold the Mayo!

For those of you who have inquired (and, OK, a few of you who haven't but may be interested too), I am offering you this update on my cochlear implant quest.

The first thing you want to know, of course, is: am I getting one? The short answer is ... well, there really isn't a short answer.

In November 2012, I was evaluated at Health Partners in St. Paul, and had all the usual tests: pure-tone audiometry, single-syllable word recognition, multi-syllable word recognition (including the "baseball...hot dog...ice cream" list which I have by now committed to memory). I was deemed a good candidate for a CI by the surgeon there. Then I decided to go to Mayo Clinic for a second opinion.

The surgeon at Mayo agreed that a CI would probably help. He would have been happy to do the surgery himself except for one glitch: he wasn't sure if Medicare would cover it, and said Medicare won't tell you ahead of time if they will or not.

I meet the standard insurance criteria for a cochlear implant, but the Medicare requirements are considerably stricter. I am "deaf enough" in any case, and score low on words from lists I have not been tested on repeatedly. But give me the structure, inflection and syllabic rhythm of a whole sentence, and I often think of something that fits. That is, I do well under conditions that don't often occur in real life (clear speech, absolute quiet, no distractions, and the ultimate in focus and concentration). It is this sentence recognition score that could disqualify me.

The Mayo surgeon suggested that I either come back in 3-6 months to be re-tested, or return to Health Partners and have it done there, since I had qualified under their testing, and they could submit their own data to Medicare.

When I got home, I waded through two big envelopes, thick with the pages of my medical records, until I found the corresponding test results from St. Paul. I was surprised to find that on the very test that could disqualify me (sentence recognition in quiet), my scores were identical at both locations.

I asked the Health Partners surgeon why she thought I would qualify. The answer is: it depends on the insurance. She offered to write a letter (to the insurance company, not Medicare) requesting pre-authorization. The reasons why they may do so are way too complicated for me, but she is willing to tackle it, and maybe they will approve. Or maybe not.

So... at this point I still don't know what the answer is, but I continue to seek guidance, both human and Divine. I will try to follow where I am led.

And yes, I know -- sometimes that means staying right where you are.

(Vicki Martin)



## *Carole + Bob*

*Bob Knoll and Carole Blowers got engaged on Sunday April 21st 2013 at the end of the afternoon presentation of Wild West Women at the Collings Fine Arts Theater in Brooklyn Park. Carole acted in the play and Bob was the sign-holder.*

*During the last chorus Bob, looking dapper in his Western get-up, stepped onto the stage and stopped the action. He asked a blushing Carole if she would marry him. When the answer was an enthusiastic "YES," he presented her with a lovely light-blue topaz and ruby ring, their birthstones.*

*The crowd went wild. What an afternoon! No wedding date has been set.*

*Congratulations to the happy pair!*

*(item submitted by Monique)*

### **Limited Basic Cable available**

When imperfect weather affects your television reception, you know what is the first thing to go: captioning -- the very thing that makes TV usable for many of us.

At long last, during this winter without end, I decided that it would be nice to be able to look forward to a good, reliable local broadcast TV, even when it thunders, rains, snows or blows.

In such a case, the cheapest cable option will do. You will not see it advertised, so you will have to request it, but the FCC does require that it be available. It is called "limited basic cable". Ask for it by name.

It is less than half the price of the lowest advertised package, and gives you the improved reception of cable on your local broadcast channels, plus a couple of dozen other (mostly community and government) channels.

Let it snow!

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This month's editor is Vicki Martin

**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)**