

HLAA TC OCTOBER 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.

October 19, 2013

HLAA TC Chapter Meeting
Courage Center – Speaker Rick
Macpherson, Attorney, MN Disability
Law Center: Hearing Loss and the
ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act)

October 20, 2014

Adult Cochlear Implant Social – see
page 8 for details.

November 16, 2013

HLAA TC Chapter Meeting
Courage Center - Speaker: Kristin
Swan – Psychologist with Health
Partners – Hearing Loss Challenges
around the Holidays

December 21, 2013

HLAA TC Chapter Meeting
Courage Center – Group Discussion
and Holiday Party – Fun!!

January 18, 2014

HLAA TC Chapter Meeting
Courage Center

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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



President's Message Oct 2013

By Monique Hammond

Did you know that you can “loop” your car? Yes, *Hearing Loops and Telecoils* – the topic for the first meeting of our new HLAA TC season got us off to an energetic start. Questions, observations and suggestions kept our two speakers quite busy and we all learned a lot. Our minds were opened to the different ways that this assistive listening system can improve communication access and make life easier. As the push for looping America is finally gaining steam across the nation, it is in our best interest to jump on the bandwagon to make it a reality.

In Europe looping has been a priority for some time – because it works! “They loop everything,” a lady who returned from Great Britain told me. There were three situations when she did *not* use the telecoils in her hearing aids: in her hotel room; when walking outside and in restaurants. Now, wouldn't that be lovely?

As people with hearing loss we might be shy pushing the loop concept for fear of being obvious or for asking for special treatment. However, not only people with hearing loss can take advantage

of the loops but also those without hearing loss – as long as they have a device equipped with a telecoil, like the Comfort Duett that we got to try in our meeting. Once the general U.S. population catches on to how wonderful listening through a loop in a noisy place is, the tide will turn.

This is actually a good point that we should stress when we argue for a loop to be installed wherever we feel the need for clear access: *Everybody* will love it! Mention that by eliminating background noise, understanding speech will be easier for *all* during presentations, lectures or noise-confused church services. People will gladly abandon the amplified headphones for those connected to a telecoil set. Oh, let me dream! Pretty soon “looping” will be considered as moving with the times!

And so it goes: People with hearing loss may be spearheading the effort but later on the general public will feel that this is cool technology. Remember when those with physical disabilities had to fight for the automatic door openers that we now all use and love? One might predict the same future for the hearing loop.

Past president and Newsletter editor Vicki Martin put bunches of looping articles on the back table for our information. They will be there at the next meeting in case you missed picking some up. We should have at least a basic knowledge of the loop/telecoil system. For a quick refresher you might try www.minnesotahearingloops.com/

On October 19, 2013 our speaker will be **Rick Macpherson**, an attorney with the Mn Disability Law Center. Bring your questions regarding legal issues related to hearing loss, ADA, access etc. During the second hour **Mary Hartnett**, executive director of the MCDHH will briefly discuss the Commission's strategic plan with us. What are our priorities? This is the time to make our opinion count.

Enjoy the lovely fall colors. See you all again at our next HLAA TC meeting on October 19th.

Monique

Synopsis of September Meeting



*Christine Morgan,
Vice-President*

The first meeting of our HLAA-TC “year” was called to order by President Monique Hammond shortly after 10 a.m. We were delayed by traffic, traffic accidents and a problem putting our loop up. President Hammond welcomed everyone back to the Courage Center for the 2013-2014 Season. Paradigm CART services were provided by Angie and Merilee.

President Hammond presented the leading thought for the day from Maya Angelou, the African-American poet: “When you know better, you do better”. She also mentioned the connection to our mission statement of opening the world of communication to people with hearing loss through education, support and advocacy.

She also spoke about the importance of a loop in hearing more clearly and understanding speech in a noisy environment. We are learning the basics of how a loop works and how we can take advantage of a loop. We had two speakers. Steve Walsh is from Minnesota Hearing Loops. Steve has over 30 years’ experience as president of Advantage Computer Systems, Inc. In the fall of 2011 he decided he was going to devote his knowledge and experience to bringing loops to Minnesota. His company just finished his 13th loop. The last one is at St. Mark’s Cathedral in Minneapolis. Steve is licensed and certified in looping.

Our other speaker was Kim Fishman who is an audiologist and has been in practice for over 18 years. She is now in private practice in St. Louis Park at Cheers Audiology. Kim, of course, understands the challenges of hearing loss and is devoted to helping all people make the most of their hearing.

During the presentation, Steve offered headsets (loop listeners) to anyone who would like to try them. He also provided instructions on how to use the headsets. Kim stated that her objective here was to educate the audience on what a T-Loop is so that we can all work together and be advocates for them. Together, she and Steve are trying to loop Minnesota.

Kim explained how a loop works. An electrical wire (loop) runs around the room. When she talks into the microphone, the sound signal is transmitted wirelessly to an amplifier. Electrical current now starts to flow through the wire loop. As the electricity flows, an accompanying magnetic field forms. Activated, tuned T-coils of hearing aids or cochlear implants tap into that magnetic field. The instrument processors then translate the T-coil signal back into audible sound. Listening through a loop system brings the speaker’s voice right to the ears, without background noise. There is a direct, clear signal.

People often choose the small hearing aids not realizing that they don’t have telecoils in them. Kim and Steve are trying to make getting a T-Coil an industry standard where people have to be notified when their hearing aids don’t have them. Every audiologist knows what a T-Coil is. If yours is not activated, be sure to have your audiologist set it up.

Currently there are not a lot of induction loops in Minnesota. Kim and Steve are asking us, “where do you want them to help loop or put an induction loop in your environments?” These can be places of worship,

places of employment, restaurants, classrooms, etc. In Europe, loops are very common in colleges. Steve does informational meetings upon request without charge.

The American Disabilities Act recommends an infrared loop, an F.M. System, or an induction loop. Hearing loss is the number one disability in ADA. More people are coming forward and saying that they have hearing loss.

It was decided that instead of officer reports, Steve and Kim would answer questions and provide more information after break. President Hammond then introduced herself and the officers of the chapter.

After the break, President Hammond recapped the earlier presentation. HLAA and the American Academy of Audiology have started a program that is called “Get in the Hearing Loop”. If we get people to loop, they have to be certified. There are international standards set.

Vicki Martin brought handouts with articles including “Let’s Loop America’s Worship Centers”. She encouraged everyone to take them to their church boards. Then call Kim and Steve to come out and talk about this. She also brought another one about looping colleges. She also mentioned other handouts she brought. Vicki also brought cards to let management know you need a loop. Kim mentioned that she had a blog on looping.

Julie Leon had an announcement about a group she is with that has to deal with children. Julie was trained by Life Track Resources in St. Paul as a Hearing Impaired Mentor. In Minnesota, Hands and Voices work with families who have young children with hearing loss. Julie goes into homes with children with hearing impairments between the ages of 7 and 14 for six sessions to discuss various aspects of dealing with hearing loss. If you know of any families, neighbors, grandchildren or any young children with hearing impairments, please refer them to Life Track Resources in St. Paul. You could also call them if you would like to be trained as a Hearing Impaired Mentor.

President Hammond stated that next month, Rick McPherson will be here. He is a lawyer with the Minnesota Disability Law Center. He is going to provide a refresher on A.D.A. and hearing loss. Then Mary Hartnett, Executive Director of the Minnesota Commission for Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing People will come and ask for input during the second hour.

Steve and Kim asked for volunteers to be on a committee to meet with them once a month to talk about ideas and plans for recruiting people and advocating to loop Minnesota. Contact Kim via e-mail if interested. There was more discussion until time to adjourn. (Kim’s email is kim@chearsaudiology.com) Also see www.mnhearingloops.com.

Dave Swan reminded everyone about the Walk4Hearing the following week. Gathering and set up about 8 a.m. Registration at 9 a.m. and walk at 10 a.m. He also reminded everyone to please sign in so that we can make a list of attendees and members. We would also like to have e-mail addresses to send the newsletter electronically.

Christine and Lionel picked the door prize. Brenda Brown won.

President Hammond thanked everyone for coming and the meeting adjourned.

(See pictures on page 10.)

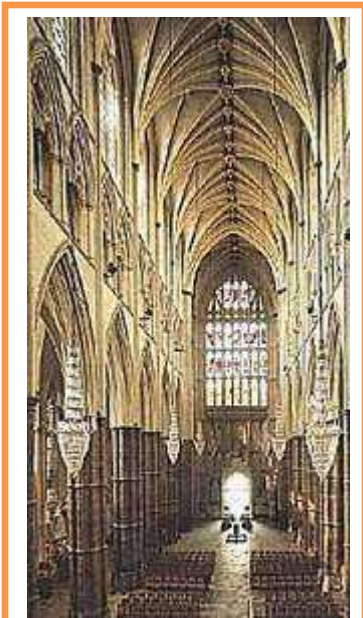
More about Looping



Signs like the ones shown here are typically posted at places that utilize a hearing loop system so that t-coil wearers can tune into the sound by switching their hearing aid to the t-coil setting.

What is a Telecoil (T-coil)?

It is a wireless antenna that links a hearing aid or cochlear implant or other device to a sound system and delivers the sound directly to the listener. A telecoil is a small copper coil that is optional in most hearing aids (except for the very small ones – no room) and is built into cochlear implant processors. Telecoils were originally used for landline telephones. Landline phones (and some cell phones) are designed to be used with a telecoil by law. The telecoil is activated by a t-switch.



Westminster Abbey is looped!!

A Few Paybacks:

For theaters, increased attendance at movies and plays by people with hearing loss (many of whom report no longer going, because of the challenges of hearing).

For courts, this means jurors who understand essential proceedings (and who can also be assisted in understanding jurors during deliberations).

For auditoriums this means making one's events optimally accessible to all attendees.

Our Supporters – Ross Hammond

We are so lucky to have such supportive spouses and friends in our HLAA group. They faithfully show up and perform the jobs that make our meetings and events go smoothly. Often they are the ones that need to do the communicating or at least clarify what is going to happen with people who have little experience communicating with the hearing impaired. They are setting up the loop system, running around with cameras and microphones, plugging in laptops and setting up screens. They are the first ones to arrive and the last ones to leave.

This month we would like to recognize **Ross Hammond**. Ross can be seen setting up, taking down, handing out the microphone, making sure everything is in working order. Pictures of Ross are rare as he is the guy behind the camera!



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Three cheers for Ross!!

Discounts

I. Some health insurance companies, including some of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield plans, offer a small annual hearing aid allowance. Be sure to ask your insurance provider if they have such an allowance. If you do not purchase hearing aids, you can use the allowance for batteries or repairs. If you plan to purchase hearing aids during the year, use the allowance for that purchase. Even though the allowance may only be a couple of hundred dollars (while hearing aids cost thousands), **the real payoff is that when an insurance provider is involved, the price is discounted to the insurer.** Therefore, if your insurance will pay \$300 towards the purchase of hearing aids that are going to cost you \$4000, the insurance provider may get them for a discounted \$3200, and then give you the \$300 allowance as well, making your cost only \$2900 – quite a savings for you!

II. HealthEast Passport, available to anyone 50 or over free of charge (you do not have to be a HealthEast client) gives 15% discount on hearing aids at Midwest Hearing Aid Systems (multiple locations) and Associated Hearing (393 Dunlap, St. Paul). Get your passport card by calling 651-232-2400 or email passport@healtheast.org, or go to www.healtheast.org for more information.

Vicki Martin

On Being an Advocate

Many times we hesitate to speak up for ourselves regarding our particular needs as a person with a hearing loss. This is understandable as most human beings just want to be like everyone else; we do not want to call special attention to ourselves (unless it is flattering of course!). We also have a fear that we may become a burden to our employers, fellow church members, schools and universities, theaters, medical facilities, and other institutions which we frequent. Of course we don't want to do that. We all like to feel welcome wherever we go.

However, if we do not make others aware of the hurdles that exist for people who do not hear well, nothing will change. Work accommodations will not be adapted and hearing impaired people will continue to be underemployed or unemployed. They will be undereducated if schools and universities do not have accommodation for them. They won't receive quality medical care if they cannot participate in the dialogue with the medical community. They'll stay home from churches, theaters, and public forums as they cannot participate. Someone has to advocate to spark change. Our entire society is poorer when a segment of it is not able to fully participate.

Accommodation can be expensive for the needs of a hearing impaired individual. Hearing aids, cochlear implants, loop systems, assistive listening systems, captioning – none of these things are cheap. Yet you know just how much better they can make the quality of life for an individual with a hearing loss. Who better to let it be known how these devices can improve the quality of life of others than you who has experienced the lack of them and are willing to share your experience? In helping yourself, you will also help others. Hearing people cannot possibly know what it is like to be without sound, but you do.

How can you be a good advocate? Good advocates have to be open about their hearing loss. They need to know what is needed for a hearing impaired person to fully participate, and they need to keep up with the latest technology. They need to know what their rights are under the law. They have to have confidence to ask for what they need. They need to know what resources are already available in their community that could be adapted.

Good advocates are persistent, patient, and polite. Finally, they express gratitude to everyone that helped.

In 1996 I decided I wanted a cochlear implant as I had been profoundly deaf for 25 years and knew people that had been helped by them. I worked for the State of MN and cochlear implants were not covered by our insurance. I spent six months writing to every senator and representative I could find; I enlisted my co-workers to send emails to their union representatives and congressmen and women. I researched bringing action with the EEOC. I enlisted the help of the CI companies. I bugged the state Human Resources Department daily. I think people rolled their eyes when they saw me coming because they knew what I was about! I did not make any new friends during that time and I tried the patience of my family as I was on a mission! In July of 1997 both cochlear implants and hearing aids were added to all of the State of MN Health Insurance policies. It is the hardest thing I have ever done. I am sure that it wasn't just me that caused the change, but I like to think I had a big part in it. Even now, when I think of it, I feel stressed! But it was so worth it, not just for me, but for every cochlear implant and hearing aid that I see on state employees. One person can make a difference.

Linda McIntire Senechal

In the News -

iTunes hearing education app:

An article in Family Circle magazine ("Yes, There's An App for That", FC September 2013) lists, describes and summarizes 21 free or very low cost educational apps available for iTunes. One that caught my attention is called "Sound Uncovered". A "hands-on" approach to the science of sound, it allows the user to play around with sound while learning how the brain interprets it. "Better yet," says the author, "the 'How Old are your Ears?' tool [which lets you experience how hearing changes with age] might persuade [your child] to dial down the volume on her headphones." It's worth a try!

Vicki Martin

September meeting commenters – thanks!



Adult Cochlear Implant Social Group!!!

Sunday, October 20, 2013

1:00-3:00 PM

The Timbers of Apple Valley
14018 Pennock Ave.

Apple Valley, MN, 55124

Hosts: Helen Hoke

Please send your RSVP to Sara Oberg

Email: mncisocialgroup@gmail.com

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!

From VSA Minnesota

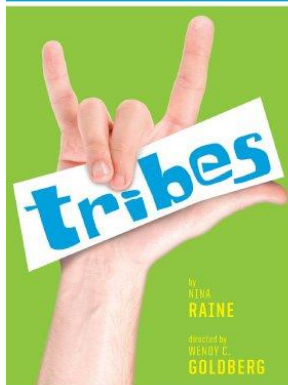
On the web, listings are found at <http://www.vsamn.org/calendar.html>, www.mrid.org, www.accesspress.org, or <http://c2net.org> (**c2: caption coalition, inc.**), which does most of the captioned shows in Minnesota and across the country.

On Facebook: Sign up to connect with ASL Interpreted and Captioned Performances across Minnesota (<http://www.facebook.com/pages/ASL-Interpreted-and-Captioned-Performances-Across-Minnesota/257263087700814>).

Tribes – a play about being deaf. Four open captioned performances.



DON'T MISS TRIBES!



"A smart, lively ... new play that asks us to hear how we hear, in silence as well as in speech."

– The New York Times

Billy is a young man born deaf and raised in a loud, opinionated family and yet his parents and siblings never bothered to learn sign language, requiring him to adapt to the hearing world. When he meets Sylvia, a young woman from a Deaf family who introduces him to Deaf culture, Billy suddenly feels confidence and a sense of belonging to a "tribe" he's never known before. Winner of the 2012 Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Play, *Tribes* is a biting yet poignant new drama about love, family and finding one's voice. *Tribes* contains strong adult language.



Tracey Maloney and John McGinty in rehearsal (Nadia Honary)

Featuring the Guthrie debut of John McGinty as Billy. Credits: *Pippin* at the Mark Taper Forum/DeafWest, *Handicapped People In Their Formal Attire* at Premiere Stages, *Robin Hood: Thieves of Hearts* at Cleveland Sign Stage, *Closed Caption*, *Conned*, *Love Signs*, "I Killed My BFF" and "Law and Order: Criminal Intent."

October 5 - November 10
McGuire Proscenium Stage
TICKETS ARE \$20

ASL & OPEN CAPTIONED PERFORMANCES

Wednesday, October 30 at 1 p.m.

Friday, November 1 at 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, November 6 at 7:30 p.m.

Thursday, November 7 at 7:30 p.m.

AUDIO DESCRIBED PERFORMANCES

Saturday, October 19 at 1 p.m.

Friday, November 8 at 7:30 p.m.

Interpreted by Erin and James Gardner
and described by Susan Howe

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Google Glass



When it comes to wearable internet devices, Google Glass (“a wearable computer with an optical head-mounted display”) is riding the wave. It has garnered a lot of publicity lately, though its price may keep people from jumping in with both feet. Although some critics doubt that it will ever become “essential technology”, they said the same thing about PCs not too many years ago.

But price isn’t the only objection that could be raised against this manifestly cutting-edge device. In a Pioneer Press article (“Here’s Looking at You”, Sunday, September 1, 2013) testers reportedly found the audio system to be less than adequate. A testing team of 10,000 people from all walks of life are trying out an early version before it hits the market. Those interviewed by Associated Press report that, while it may be sufficient for listening in a quiet room, it is difficult to hear in most normal environments. But Google Glass, by its very nature, is not destined for a quiet room. It is a way to keep internet access before your very eyes while you are out moving through crowds, leading tours, eating out, or shopping.

It is not adequate in public for people with normal hearing. For those with diminished hearing, it may not work anywhere. The article describes the audio system as “a bone conduction technology...which transmits sound through the skull”. The way Oticon (oticonmedical.com) describes bone conduction is, “the vibrations travel directly to your inner ear, bypassing any problems in your outer and/or middle ear.” That may work fine if the only problem you have is in your outer or middle ear.

Hearing aid users’ problems are in the inner ear. The cochlear hair cells are dead or damaged. The hearing aid selectively amplifies sound and transmits it through the middle ear to the cochlea, where the extra boost given the sound waves is, hopefully, enough to stimulate the damaged cells and register as sound. This is not going to happen if amplified sound waves are replaced by bone conduction. It would also leave cochlear implant and BAHA users without access to Google Glass sound.

ADA did not, and could not anticipate every technological innovation and address its impact on people with disabilities. The ADA.gov toolkit acknowledges this: “These changes may involve new and different access problems and solutions for people with disabilities”.

FCC rules are many, but an example of one that applies to cell phones is that “one third or ten of the handset models it offers to consumers, whichever is less” must meet the hearing accessibility standard. <http://www.fcc.gov/guides/hearing-aid-compatibility-wireless-telephones>. There should be a similar requirement for Google Glass and its technological offspring.

Heads-up for hearing aid compatible communication devices!

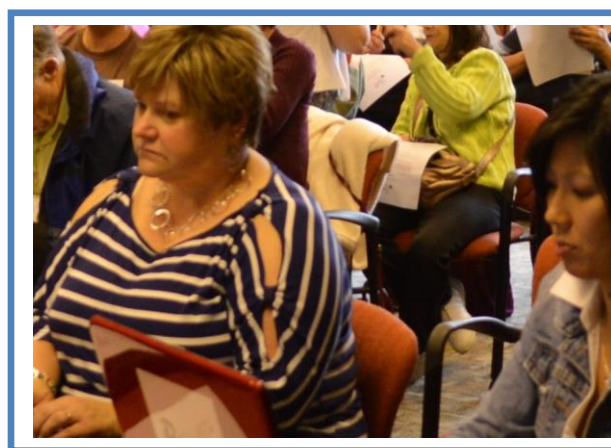
Vicki Martin



September 2013 Meeting



Kim & Steve



Captioners hard at work!

2013 Walk for Hearing

Although our Walk4Hearing day was dampened by rain, our enthusiasm was not. Thank you to those who came to lend a helping hand; who supported us by being there and to all of those who donated time and money. Thanks to the vendors whose unrelenting support keeps us going.

Monique Hammond, President, HLAA Twin Cities

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Our next meeting is October 19, 2013

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president@hlaatc.org

Vice President – Christine Morgan
vicepresident@hlaatc.org

Secretary - Lionel Locke–secretary@hlaatc.org
Treasurer – Bob Knoll, treasurer@hlaatc.org

Contact Information info@hlaatc.org

Photos – Ross Hammond

Newsletter Editors -
Vicki Martin gimme88@aol.com
Linda McIntire, cilinda97@yahoo.com

This month's editor is Linda McIntire

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