

HLAA TC

DECEMBER 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.

December 21, 2013

HLAA TC Chapter Meeting: group discussion and Holiday Party. Don't miss it! (See details on page 4).

January 18, 2014

HLAA TC Chapter Meeting: Speaker Mary Hartnett, MCDHH Legislative update and overview

February 15, 2014

HLAA TC meeting: Marty Barnum: Nursing Homes and Hearing Loss Issues



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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 November 2013

By Monique Hammond

As we discussed during our last meeting with psychologist Kristen Swan, the Holiday Season can be rough for those with hearing loss. Yes, we want to be included in workplace and family events. Yet, we also have to know our limits and cut ourselves some slack. Too much noise, too much communicating and conversation can put the Bah! Humbug quickly into our Holiday spirit.

The major issue with hearing loss is understanding speech in background noise. Here, of course, parties are the ultimate test. Before we know it, we come down with an acute case of "listening fatigue." We spend a lot of effort and energy observing the speaker, concentrating on hearing and listening as the brain tries to sort out the spaghetti bowl of confused sounds - all at different frequencies and volumes. Now add to that the

often looming emotional burden of family get-togethers!

Although parties can be hard for us to handle, lucky are those who have strings of friends and work colleagues who invite them to celebrate. One person mentioned to me during our break: "I do not have these problems. We are a small family scattered across the country, and I have few friends left."

This is yet another reason why we have a yearly Holiday party at HLAA TC: 'Tis the Season for Everybody to be Jolly! We are among friends – without unnecessary noise – ready to share a few good laughs. We have our White Elephant gift exchange for those who want to participate and we sell cookies – home-baked or store-bought – as a fund raiser. Most of all, we share a potluck meal against the backdrop of a slide presentation featuring meeting highlights. No stress, no emotional load; no listening effort or fatigue. We are together, happy and lucky to have each other in a place where we are understood and included: Everybody celebrates!

So, join us on **December 21st** at the Courage Center as we spend time together and support each other in the spirit of the Season.

Monique

HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO ALL!





HLAA TC Meeting November 16, 2013

Synopsis by Christine T. Morgan

Kristen Swan

President Hammond called the meeting to order and welcomed the members, visitors, guests and the large group of representatives from Starkey. She also welcomed and thanked Jayne Carriker from CART today.

President Hammond introduced Kristen Swan who works with HealthPartners. She is a licensed psychologist educated at the University of Minnesota. Kristen is fluent in ASL and specializes in treating people with hearing loss.

Kristen will be focusing on difficulties with the holidays and hearing loss. She brings ideas from audiologist webinars, information from other psychologists, and Dr. Samuel Trychin. She will be signing as she talks.

We want to be included in workplace and family events. Yet, we also have to know our limits and cut ourselves some slack. Too much noise, too much communicating and conversation can put the Bah! Humbug quickly into our Holiday spirit.

The major issue with hearing loss is understanding speech in background noise. Here, of course, parties are the ultimate test. Before we know it, we come down with an acute case of "listening fatigue." We spend a lot of effort and energy observing the speaker, concentrating on hearing and listening as the brain tries to sort out the spaghetti bowl of confused sounds - all at different frequencies and volumes. Now add to that the often looming emotional burden of family get-togethers!

Holidays are important because we get together with people we haven't seen for a while. They often involve family traditions. We tend to have happy expectations and higher financial expectations. You also may have a smaller space, more people, and lots of extraneous noise which makes it difficult to hear and understand what is going on.

You struggle to listen. People with hyperacusis complain that noise actually hurts. In addition, during the holidays we may have to drive long distances which is exhausting. Your anxiety may also cause sleep disturbances which affects your ability to pay attention, to hear and to understand.

In impromptu social situations, you often don't know what the agenda or topic of conversation is. Some voices are unfamiliar, and little children often have higher pitched voices which are difficult to understand. All this causes you to feel left out and want to just go home.

What is a hard-of-hearing person to do? Be honest, accept and understand yourself and know what works or doesn't work for you. Don't ignore your own needs and don't bluff, if possible. Let people know you don't understand but do it politely. Tell them how to help you. If you feel comfortable, you might even share your story. You may also have to accept that some parts of the holidays are not going to be accessible to you.

Prepare: Before you go to a social gathering, tune up your devices, make sure they're clean, have new

batteries, etc. You could also use a hearing helper to fill you in periodically. You may want to call ahead and arrive early to scout out the area where you would hear and understand the best. You may need to take a break every so often.

Several suggestions from the audience were to speak with children by getting down to their level (stoop or sit down), playing games that work for you, help out in the kitchen or by setting the table, etc. At restaurants, look for a quiet place, quiet time of day, or ask the management to either turn the music down or off.

Ask people to slow down so that you can catch up, finish processing what they said and get ready for the next thought coming at you. Sometimes we may just need to just take out our hearing aids and enjoy some "down" time. Hearing is hard work!

The Starkey representatives felt that they learned a lot of useful reminders from this session. They also found that hearing peoples "stories" really helped them understand the challenges of hearing loss better. Kristen reminded everyone with hearing loss that it is important to share your stories and experiences so that people without hearing loss understand more and can help you as well.

President Hammond announced that the December 21 meeting is going to be a social event. There will be a white elephant gift exchange, a cookie sale, and a potluck. There is a sign-up sheet for the potluck. There will also be time for an open discussion and feedback.

Bob talked about the April 9 steak fry. He will have tickets at the next meeting. Bob also had a few extra hardcopies of last month's newsletter.

Christine thanked everyone for coming and asked people to take brochures and posters in order to get the word out about HLAA-TC. New name tags will be available soon, with clips and with the chapter logo and your printed name.

President Hammond adjourned the meeting a few minutes after noon.



HLAA-TC Meeting December 21

(Coffee at 9:30, meeting at 10)

Featuring:

Open discussion

Cookie sale

You are invited to donate cookies for this mini-fundraiser. The sale will help fund our coffee breaks for the coming year. Volunteers are needed to pack the cookie boxes and collect the "dough" (money). And remember to buy some to bring home for the holidays too!

White elephant gift exchange

If you'd like to participate in this fun event, bring an inexpensive gift or "white elephant", wrapped so the lucky recipient can't see it ahead of time! We'll draw numbers, pick presents, and have fun snatching them from others (or having ours snatched away!)

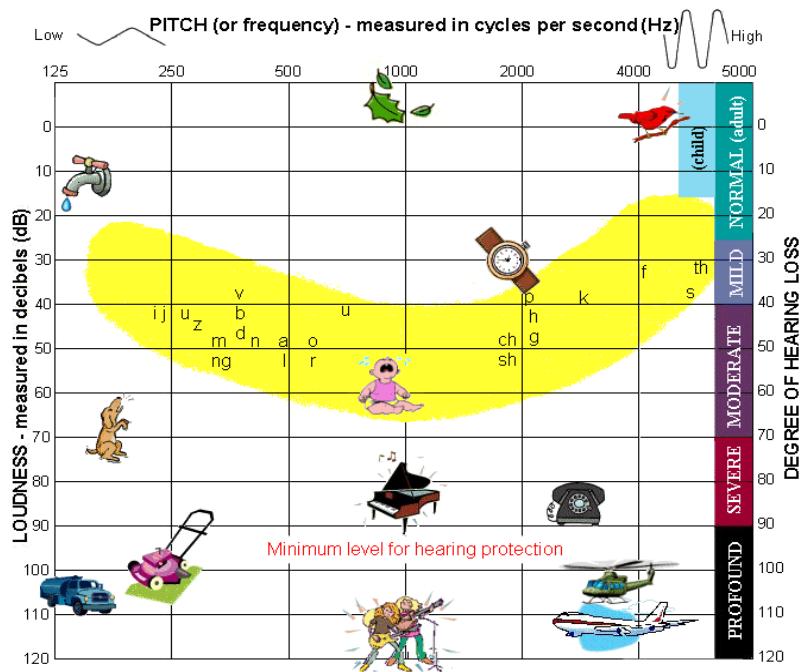
Pot luck lunch

If you didn't sign up for a specific dish, then just bring whatever seems good to you. There is no refrigeration available in the meeting room, so plan accordingly. Hot, cold, or room temperature, we always have an abundance and a variety .



THE SPEECH ... PINEAPPLE?

By Vicki Martin



The Speech Banana

You know about the “speech banana”, right? (You don’t? Then see illustration above). The speech banana is the outline on a graph that shows the frequencies and typical amplitudes of the sounds in the speech spectrum.

You’ll notice that about two-thirds of the speech sounds illustrated are found below 2000 Hz, and should be audible (if barely) by the unaided ear with up to a 40 dB loss. Even if you hear nothing above 1000 Hz, and have a hearing loss of 80 to 90 dB, you can, with a hearing aid, still hear more than half of the speech sounds.

And if that sounds too good to be true, well, maybe it is. Look again at the speech banana. All of the sounds below 1000 Hz have a vocalized component. This is the part you may be able to hear. But you do not hear the non-vocalized part because it is at a higher frequency, where you have no hearing. Thus, if you cannot hear ‘p’, you also cannot hear ‘b’. You may hear a vocal grunt of some sort, but that is not really the sound of a ‘b’.

Continue on: If you can’t hear ‘f’, you can’t hear ‘v’ either.
If you can’t hear ‘t’, you can’t hear ‘d’.
If you can’t hear ‘ch’, you can’t hear ‘j’.
If you can’t hear ‘s’, you can’t hear ‘z’.
If you can’t hear ‘sh’, you can’t hear ‘zh’.
If you can’t hear ‘k’, you can’t hear ‘g’.

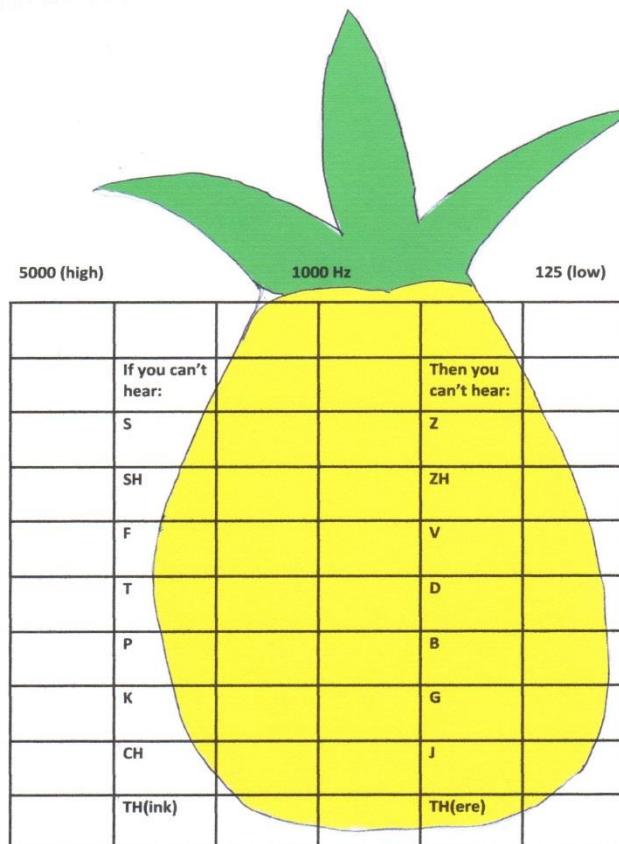
This is not looking very good, is it? But now you know why you can't tell the difference between 'bog', 'dog', 'jog', 'gog', 'vog' and 'zog' (OK, I made up those last two), even though the chart says you can "hear" all of those sounds.

This all comes back to the way in which we define "hear". It can mean "hear at least one component of a sound", or it can mean "hear the actual, complete sound" – in which case you would also be able to identify it.

When does it matter which definition we use? If someone shouts orders to you, and you turn to look at him, it is obvious that you have "heard" him. What may not be obvious is that you haven't heard him. The consequences of this discrepancy may range from the annoying to the tragic, depending on how critical the orders were.

People tend, quite naturally, to think that you hear the same as they do, and that if you hear anything at all, you understand what it was. The "speech banana" doesn't do quite enough to clarify the reality of hearing loss. Dishing up a serving of the speech pineapple might help, just a little.

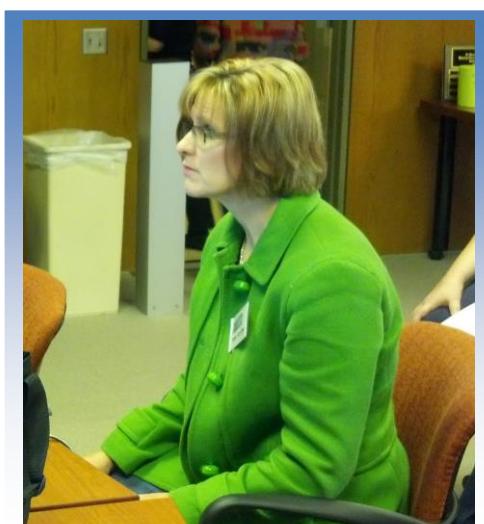
Fruit salad, anyone?



The Speech Pineapple



Meeting Snapshots



Have your say!



We want every reader, whoever you are, (membership not required) to help us with the HLAA-TC newsletter. There are several ways you can do this.

- ➔ Call our attention to hearing-related articles or information you have found
- ➔ Send us your “feedback” (aka: letters to the editor) on a hearing-related topic, or something you have read in a prior HLAA-TC newsletter
- ➔ Write an article (500-1000 words) on a hearing-related topic of your choice
- ➔ Send us small, “filler”-type items that we could use to fill in short pages (includes humor!)

If we get more than we can use (OK, it's never happened – but we can hope!), we will save it in a file for another issue.

Your contributions will help keep our newsletter relevant, well-rounded, and varied. We look forward to hearing from you!

“Sharpen your hearing”

Woman's Day October 2013 suggests these strategies (note: editor does not vouch for the truth of these statements) to keep your hearing sharp:

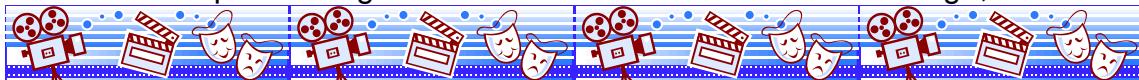
Reduce the noise. One idea is to use headphones instead of earbuds, thus keeping the sound further from the eardrums.

Limit OTC medicines: risk of hearing loss 13% higher for women who took ibuprofen 2-3 days per week, and 24% higher if they used it 6-7 days, as compared to those who used it less than one day per week. Similar results have been found for acetaminophen. (Aspirin has also been implicated – ed.)

Eat fish and fats. 2 or more servings of fish per week reduced risk of age-related hearing loss 42%. Adding monounsaturated fats, and cutting sugars and processed carbohydrates is also wise.



From time to time, HLAA-TC News lists samples of captioned and ASL-interpreted entertainment available in the Twin Cities area. These include music, dance, plays and movies. We do not have space to present the entire calendar, but if you would like to receive a more complete listing of accessible entertainment free of charge, here's how:



Accessible Performance Calendar

Compiled by VSA Minnesota

Performances and Arts Events Presented with Captioning

The calendar includes:

1. A chronological Index of the date, time, city, arts venue and show, under **Captioning (OC)** categories, including a number of discounts.
2. After the next two months' listings, updates from cinemas that offer captioned films. If you know of more cinemas that offer captioning, PLEASE LET US KNOW.
3. A list of venues that offer accommodations on request and their schedules.

Tips for using the Accessible Arts Calendar:

Find out which shows offer discounts by looking under **TIX: DISCOUNT**.

Skip from one show listing to the next by searching for three asterisks (***)�.

In making reservations or inquiring about accommodations, be sure to confirm details with a box office that the service you need is offered, along with the correct date, time and price. If you hear of a show you would like to attend but the accessible service you need is not offered, contact the performing company as far in advance as possible to request the service.

If Captioning is useful for you, tell organizations that they can borrow a captioning display unit from VSA Minnesota for FREE!

To join the Access to Performing Arts email list, be removed, update your email address or add a friend, please email access@vsamn.org or call VSA Minnesota, 612-332-3888 or statewide 800-801-3883 (voice/TTY).

Phone listings are updated weekly at 612-332-3888 or 800-801-3883.

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>).

Recently observed: Happy to report that captioning (or at least Captiview captioning) is compatible with 3D movies. Moreover, at the Captiview-equipped theater previously reported on, the device now bears the message "your captioning device is working", *before* the feature begins. Previously, it remained dark until the first captioned words were spoken, necessitating several trips to the front desk to try to determine why it wasn't on.

Weather Alerts! (and more)



HLAA-TC has a phone:

763-447-9672

You can call this number to:

- 1) leave a message for a return call
- 2) check on meeting changes
- 3) check for bad weather cancellation

Cancellation has never occurred before, but it is a possibility. If there is a cancellation, a message will be posted on the phone no later than 10 PM the night before the meeting. If you call the number, you should hear the updated message.



It is with great sadness that we share that in late November the wife of fellow HLAA TC member and friend **Ned Kronberg** responded to a higher calling and passed on to a better world.

We are reminded of the words of poet Emily Dickinson: " Unable are the loved to die. For love is immortality. "

Know that we stand with you, Ned, in these challenging times.

(submitted by Monique Hammond)

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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 or visit us on Facebook: groups/HLAA-TC.