

HLAA TC

January 2014



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

January 18, 2014

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

February 15, 2014

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

March 15, 2014

HLAA TC meeting: Speaker Judi Swan, Hearing Loss and Relationships

April 19, 2014

HLAA TC meeting: Christine Pett (Med-El), Types of Hearing Loss, Hearing Aids, and Cochlear Implants

May 17, 2014

HLAA TC meeting: Mary Bauer, Clear Speech, Promotion and Practice.
Annual elections
Year-end pot luck

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Officers' emails

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- **Christine Morgan** - vicepresident@hlaatc.org
- **Bob Knoll** - treasurer@hlaatc.org
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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



Monique Hammond

Inspiration for the New Year: Channeling our Founder Rocky Stone.

In order to move forward and not to become complacent, it sometimes helps to reflect on the challenges of the trailblazers who went before us. Often we forget about the people who started a movement or an organization because it is so easy to take it all for granted – it has always been there!?

So, who was Howard E. “Rocky” Stone? Looking at his life and at his tenacity in the face of adversity, it becomes clear that the nickname “Rocky” totally fitted him. To this day he continues to be a source of motivation for those with hearing loss.

As a very young man Rocky suffered a severe bilateral hearing loss caused by the devastating effects of explosions during WWII military training. Yet, this did not deter him. After he left the service he earned a degree in International Affairs and graduated with honors from the University of Southern California. The fact that his hearing loss curtailed his advanced studies — when he was unable to take required oral exams — did not slow

him down.

Recruited by the government, Rocky worked for the CIA for 25 years. However, upon his retirement in 1975 he began the work that would become his legacy. Life with hearing loss taught him first-hand that there were no special services for those with a hearing disability, little or no public awareness, a lack of information on the topic and certainly no support. He meant to change that.

A big believer in self-help, Rocky Stone founded the non-profit group known as SHHH (Self-help for the Hard-of-Hearing) in 1979 — an organization for people with hearing loss run by those with hearing loss. He felt that relevant information would inspire people to learn and to make their own choices. The first head office was in the basement of his home. Rocky Stone died in 2004 of complications related to pneumonia. In 2007 SHHH became HLAA.

To this day we, the people with hearing loss, are the beneficiaries of Rocky’s courage and determination. Our investments in his message are team spirit and a solid belief in our mission of education, support and advocacy on behalf of those with hearing challenges.

Towards the end of his life, Rocky Stone also lost his eye sight to macular degeneration. He liked to say that he was losing his sight **not** his vision. And neither should we.

Our January speaker will be **Mary Hartnett**, the executive director of the MCDHH. Every year at the start of the new legislative session Mary informs us on matters in which we, the people with hearing loss, have a stake.

See you all on **January 18th** at the Courage Center in Golden Valley. We gather at 09:30 for coffee and social time. Come earlier (doors unlocked by 09:00a.m) if you want to help us set up. Everybody’s assistance is most welcome. The meeting starts at 10:00a.m. For more information, please go to www.hlaatc.org

Monique



HLAA TC Meeting December 21, 2013

Synopsis by Christine T. Morgan

Christine Morgan

President Hammond welcomed everyone to our December meeting and holiday party. She also welcomed and thanked Kristi Arntzen from Paradigm Company (CART) who will be transcribing today. We are having a cookie sale during today's meeting. Shannon and Tiffany Turley are putting cookies in separate containers for sale. The \$3.00 per container will partially cover coffee expenses for the year. President Hammond thanked everyone who brought cookies, making the fundraiser possible.

We reflected back on the year and those volunteers who have given above and beyond the call of duty. These people give their time, ideas, energy and sometimes even their money in order to keep the group going. She first recognized the Board, starting with the longest serving HLAA-TC Board member ever, our treasurer, Bob Knoll. She then thanked Christine Morgan, our Vice President and 2014 new President. Then President Hammond thanked our energetic and resourceful Secretary, Lionel Locke. She then thanked Judi Swan, immediate past president for all her leadership, dedication and services, both past and present.

Judi asked everyone to thank President Hammond. President Hammond also thanked those not on the Board but extremely important members of the Chapter. She thanked Vicki Martin and Linda McIntire, newsletter editors whose consistently high quality productions put HLAA-TC out to the public in a positive and professional light.

President Hammond also thanked Ross Hammond who takes pictures for the newsletter during the meetings. Ross and Bob partner by looping the room and facilitating meetings when there are questions and answers. She also thanked David Swan, our greeter and Dennis Martin who supports Vicki in her job and has put together (with Ross) pictures for a slide show shown during the Potluck Lunch. President Hammond thanked CART and presented Kristi with a Poinsettia plant in recognition of their professional and reliable services throughout the year.

President Hammond then thanked everyone present for their support and for keeping HLAA-TC alive. A group is only as strong and effective as its members. She then showed a PSA that was requested by the DHHS (Mankato office). Ross taped her and burned a CD which is captioned. The DHHS has already taken it "on the road". Ross is going to make copies which can be checked out at the January meeting to take to a club meeting, etc..

Bob stated that he has 264 tickets for the April 9, 2014 Steak Fry. The price is \$10 for this quality steak meal. We are also looking for volunteers to help with this fundraiser. The Lions actually do the cooking but help is needed serving, cleaning and setting up, etc. Bob also mentioned that the Walk 4 Hearing this Fall and the fact that very little of the proceeds stay with the Chapter.

Lionel stated that we are not having a door prize today because of the White Elephant exchange. Linda McIntire has agreed to M.C. the exchange. Vicki Martin first led us in an ASL interpretation of Silent Night. Judi then mentioned that she found out this week that Silent Night originally had 32 different versions of lyrics.

Christine thanked everyone for being at the meeting and spoke about meeting the needs of the group. She spoke about her first meeting and feeling embraced and the importance of meeting people with the same problems she had. She started the discussion by asking for speaker requests, subject matter requests, and why people came back each month. She also asked if there were any changes people felt the Board needed to make.

Members appreciated others telling how they handled a particularly difficult situation. These tips help us make our lives easier and/or more pleasant. The camaraderie of the HLAA group is important to members. There are so many different and effective ways to cope with hearing loss. Some members of the group gave examples of frustrating situations and how they are handling them. Hearing people don't seem to understand the difference between hearing and understanding words. Health care professionals are not immune from this.

Members also wanted to learn more about technology of both cochlear implants and hearing aids, Bluetooth, FMs, the benefits of IPHones, videophones, etc. Another member requested a presentation on crimes and safety, especially prevention for those who are hard of hearing. President Hammond asked members if they have connections or know speakers who might address these needs. One member of the audience suggested the Audiology Research Group at Starkey for speakers. Another suggestion was for a speaker to address those with hard-of-hearing partners to make them aware of the things they take for granted when it comes to communicating with their partners. Judi will be speaking about hearing loss and relationships at the March 2014 meeting.

President Hammond informed the group that Mary Hartnett, the Executive Director of the Commission for the Deaf, Deaf/Blind, and Heard of Hearing will be presenting in January. In February we will be having a speaker on hearing loss and nursing homes. In March, we have Judi and in April, a speaker from Med-El talking about the world of cochlear implants. In May, we have Mary Bauer from MN DHHS talking about "Clear Speech". Be sure to check our website and newsletters as there is always something going on and to learn.

Linda led us in our gift exchange with the assistance of Carole Blowers. There were 19 gifts so Linda (a prior school teacher) explained that a gift could only be "stolen" twice. Instead of numbers, people were given slips with the name of a reindeer or one of the gifts from the song "On the first day of Christmas....." As Carole named the reindeer (and later the "gifts") the person with that slip chose a present or stole one already opened. There was much laughter and lots of funny comments! Everyone had a great time.

President Hammond announced that the buffet was open and wished everyone happy and healthy holidays!

Silent Night

By Vicki Martin

Singing Silent Night (and singing it, if you are brave) has become a sort of tradition at our December HLAA-TC meeting. As your signing drill leader (I hesitate to say “teacher”), I have found songs, and especially this song, one of the most enjoyable ways to learn and practice signs. I love the signs – they are so graceful and evocative.

When I was asked to do it again in 2013, I was worried. I had difficulty last year following the music, but this year promised to be even more challenging, since a cochlear implant last summer deprived me (temporarily, I hope) of pitch perception.

I wanted to make my own instrumental recording of Silent Night – one with the simplicity and clarity that would allow me to hear it. I would play it back at the meeting, while we signed the words. But I have no recording device that is up to the task. So I collected all of the tapes and CDs in our home – at least a dozen – that feature some version of Silent Night. Some were jazzed up. Some were heavily orchestrated. Some were too complex. All were either unrecognizable (to me), or inappropriate for signing. I wanted to do these beautiful signs, but could not find a way out of this musical chaos. Not many days before our December meeting, Yvain came home to visit. He sat on the couch playing with his tapes and audio toys, while I attempted to read the Sunday paper. But my mind was elsewhere. Time was short. Where would I find a Silent Night recording simple enough for me to follow, and how would I play it? I put the paper down and went into the kitchen, where busy-work kept my thoughts from overwhelming me.

Soon, Yvain shuffled out there to find me and, amid the clatter of dishes, said simply “I want to sign.” Or did he? I was the one who wanted to sign. Was I just hearing my own thoughts? I stopped handling the noisy dishes. “What did you say?” I asked. “I want to sign something,” he repeated. Still unbelieving, I asked “Did you say you want to sign?” He nodded. “Okay,” I said, with a note of tenderness that I hoped was equal to his pensive mood. “What would you like to sign?” He didn’t say a word. He just pressed the “play” button on the Fisher-Price kiddie tape player he’d brought with him.

He is always asking me to listen to things on his tape player, but none of it makes much sense to me. It is all just noise. This time he didn’t ask me to listen. But I did listen. It was “Silent Night”, and it wasn’t just noise. I could hear it! “How did you ever find it?”, I asked him. No answer. “And how did you know I wanted it?” Still no answer. I hugged him. At the end of the song, he rewound part of the tape, and found the beginning of Silent Night again.

Yvain can’t see. Silent Night is somewhere in the middle of the tape. It is an unlabeled tape, so I would never have found it myself. Yvain didn’t even know I was looking for it. Yet here we were, poised perfectly at the starting point of a basic, simple version – one that I could, I believed – actually hear. “Shall we sign it?” I asked. He nodded again, still silent himself, and pressed “play”. Together we listened to the song and signed the words, our own silence broken by his sobs. Tears wet his face, and his breathing came in halting gasps, but we kept signing.

I hugged him, and he hugged me back, still weeping.

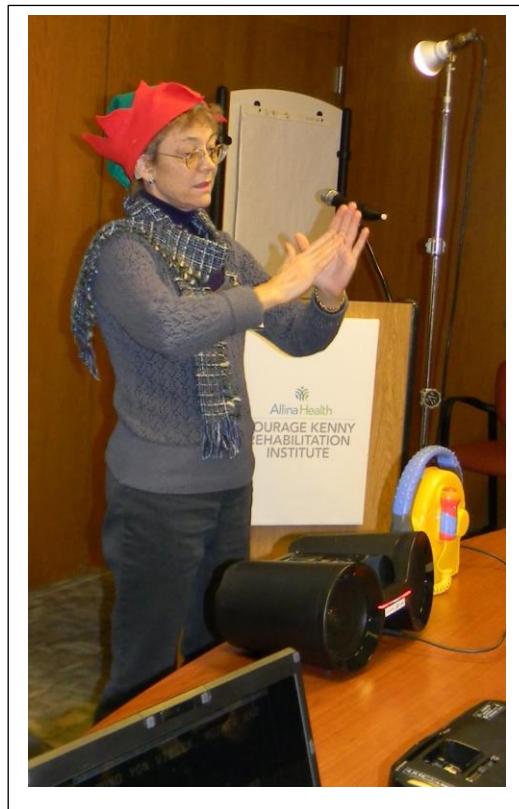
“Thank you so much,” I said. “I love that song.”

And I do. Even more than before.

Meeting Snapshots



Choosing the right gift!



Silent Night

A little humor from Bob

(More Meeting Snapshots)



MN? – Sure!

Now they know. Ordinary people now know what it is like to be on the phone for hours, much of that time spent on “hold”. They may not know what it is like to be hung up on after a long wait, but some of them do know the aggravation of being cut off after holding patiently (or with some other emotion). They know the frustration of not accomplishing what they called for, and not because of any mistake of their own.

Far be it from me to gloat (well, maybe not *very* far) but this sounds a lot like the TTY- and IP-relay experiences that many hard of hearing and deaf people have had.

Of course, I don’t wish this kind of aggravation on anyone. Yet part of me does want the 85% (those with normal hearing) to be aware of the kind of frustration that awaits many hearing-impaired phone users, even when not calling MNSure.

Oh, wait...this gets worse. What if the people calling MNSure are also using relay? Double trouble! I don’t think we even want to go there. But if we do, well, at least we now have company part of the way!



Homemade hearing aid

From the Huffington post: A man has made a “hearing aid” for his wife using materials from headphones and a Bluetooth shell because they could not afford to buy a hearing aid (in which they are surely not alone!). The hearing aid, of course, is not programmable.



You are invited!

These classes are **free and open to everyone**. People are welcome to attend as little as one class or all the classes. We do have a limited number of seats so we request people RSVP prior of the start of class. Please RSVP by calling **651-647-2451** or email audiology@healthpartners.com.

Make the most of your hearing Attend HealthPartners Audiology Aural Rehabilitation Classes

Do you sometimes struggle with your hearing? Ever wonder if you are doing all you can to help your hearing communication? These classes are designed to improve your listening skills and will contain helpful information for both hearing aid wearers and non-hearing aid wearers.

Classes will be held at HealthPartners Como clinic on **Monday afternoons from 3 to 4:30** starting on February 3, 2014.

HealthPartners Como Clinic

2500 Como Ave
Saint Paul, MN 55108

Aural Rehabilitation Class Schedule

Monday February 3: Introduction, Basics of Hearing, Hearing Aid Technologies.
David Geddes, AuD. & Eric McCabe, AuD.

Monday February 10: Care and Use of Hearing Aids
Eric McCabe, AuD. & Rebecca Widen, B.A.

Monday February 17: Psychosocial and Emotional Impact of Hearing Loss
Kristen Swan, L.P., M.A..

Monday February 24: Aural Rehabilitation Listening Strategies to Improve Communication. Part one of two. Vicki Anderson, AuD

Monday March 3: Aural Rehabilitation Listening Strategies to Improve Communication. Part two of two. Sara Oberg, B.M., M.A. CCC-SLP

Monday March 10: Assistive Listening devices and Community Resources
Mary Bauer, Rebecca Widen, B.A. & David Geddes, AuD.

.In-flight rules regarding electronic devices: (Washington Post) include:

“During the safety briefing, put down electronic devices, books and newspapers and listen to the crew member’s instructions.” (Um, right. Anyone with hearing loss actually able to do that?)

“In some instances of low visibility – about 1 percent of flights – some landing systems may not be proved PED (personal electronic devices) tolerant, so you may be asked to turn off your device. Immediately turn off your device if asked.” Let’s hope that they ask us by personally tapping us on the shoulder, looking directly at us, and stating clearly what they want us individually to do. No broadcast announcement, please. I want our plane to land safely!



Steak Fry is coming!

Mark your calendars for April 9 for the annual HLAA-TC fundraiser.

Volunteers are needed, and the rewards – appreciation – are great!

See Bob Knoll for tickets



Cochlear Implant Social Group

Meeting

Sunday January 19, 2014

1:30 – 3:30 PM

Dakota County Wentworth Library

199 East Wentworth Ave.

West St. Paul MN 55118

651-554-6800

RSVP Sara Oberg: mncisocialgroup@gmail.com

It will be held in the large meeting room. 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!

You might not be able to do everything at once, you can however do it all in one place.



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Our next meeting is January 18, 2014

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Vice President – Christine Morgan
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Secretary - Lionel Locke—secretary@hlaatc.org
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Photos – Ross Hammond

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Linda McIntire, cilinda97@yahoo.com

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.