

# HLAA TC

## May 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.

### May 17, 2014

HLAA TC meeting: Mary Bauer, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Specialist, MN DHHS, "Clear Speech, Promotion and Practice", Annual elections and Year-end pot luck

### September 20, 2014

HLAA TC meeting: Jason Galster, Ph. D., Starkey, "Wireless Technology"

### October 18, 2014

HLAA TC meeting: Vicki Martin, HLAA-TC member, "Cochlear Implant Year One – Predictably Unpredictable!"



### Contents

President's Message	Page 2
Meeting Synopsis	Page 3-4
Looking Back	Page 5
Photos	Page 6-7
What is Clear Speech?	Page 8-9
Losing our Appetite for Noise	Page 10

### Officers' emails

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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

May 2014



*Monique Hammond*

## President Message May 2014

It only seems like yesterday that we had our first HLAA TC meeting marking the 2013-2014 season. And here I am, nine months later, writing my last President message before handing over the reins to our incoming new leader, Christine Morgan. We had a busy and productive year and will continue to do so in the future.

### The wisdom of the wolves

Last year the volunteer department of a local grade school contacted me wondering if I might meet with a class of children with hearing loss. They recruited people with hearing loss from all walks of life for such outreach sessions. The goal was to show the students that it is possible to function effectively in life, to have a career or job or to get a good education in spite of hearing loss. For me, it was a most eye-opening experience and the students all quickly turned into my personal heroes. They had dealt with hearing loss since birth but that did not dampen their

enthusiasm for what the world and their future would hold for them. It also did not spoil their sense of humor and we actually shared some real good laughs.

A few weeks later I got a thank you card and a small box with "a token of their gratitude" from the volunteers. In the box was a stone embossed with an animal print and a short message, which stated: "Not a worry stone, but a wish stone! A wolf track wish stone. Keep it as a reminder of the wisdom of wolves. Wolves and our volunteers share many parallels. Above all, an attitude based on doing what is best for the pack!"

This message of caring, team spirit, loyalty, family and doing the right thing really struck a cord with me, simply because it also applies to us at HLAA TC. We are a volunteer organization that has worked tirelessly for what is best for those with hearing loss. We are there for each other, respect one another and do not shy back from any efforts that benefit those with hearing loss. Everybody is important in our "pack" because, in so many ways, we are family.

As I step back from the presidency and look over our accomplishments, I can say that we have done well indeed – which reminds me of a Frank Sinatra song: "It was a very good year..."

I thank you all so very much for your support and encouragement and wish the very best to you and to those who are important in your lives. Enjoy your summer and see you all back in Fall.

*Monique*





*Ade Haugen*

## HLAA TC Meeting April 19, 2014

*Synopsis by Christine T. Morgan*



President Hammond welcomed members, guests and Merilee Johnson of CART (Paradigm Company). Quote of the Day is from Mother Theresa: "I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters and create many ripples". As individuals, we do have power.

Adrienne (Ade) Haugen was introduced by VP Christine. Ade is the West Central (St. Cloud) DHHS Regional Representative. Her bio appears in last month's newsletter.

Ade was born with Usher Syndrome. Type 1 are profoundly deaf and generally use sign language. Ade is type 2, which is mild to profound hearing loss. She was mainstreamed in learning how to speak and lipread. She started to lose her vision and was about 26 when she was told she was going to become blind from retinitis pigmentosa. There was finally a name for the syndrome: Usher Syndrome. It is a genetic disorder. Both parents were carriers but she was the only child to get it.

Ade started advocating for a friend with hearing loss and macular degeneration who was in a nursing home. After a couple of incidents, she decided to develop her own in-service for nursing home staff.

When doing a presentation, introduce yourself and tell what your particular disability is. Before your hearing loss demo, tell them you are doing this for the sake of the residents and the "hearing world needs to hear the message."

Ade had the group listen to her tape-recorded sounds at different frequencies and pitch. She obtained the tape from the DHHS in St, Cloud. You can go on-line and check out what is available. You could then develop your own program. You can e-mail Christine or Monique for Ade's e-mail address. She will get you copies of her program put onto a CD.

Many of the elderly also have lost some form of vision. Ade passed around some examples of what different kinds of vision loss look like. She also has a sign language chart that she uses. She encourages staff members to try to come up with an agreeable signal for their residents so that they can communicate with them.

Ade demonstrated hearing loss and vision loss for the group with her husband, Richard. She suggests standing in front of the person and putting your hand on them so that they know you are there. Many nursing homes also have low lighting and background music with televisions on. Most of the residents are not wearing hearing aids and the staff is shouting in their ears.

Ade contacts nursing homes in her area directly. Contacting the administrators seems to be the best approach. Tell them what your agenda is. It helps if you have a friend or relative in that nursing home.

Many audiologists and hearing aid dealers do not explain to their clients that they have t-coils and how to use them. Nursing homes and assistive living facilities usually don't have any type of alert systems such as bed shakers, alerts that the phone is ringing, etc. for those with hearing loss.

Ade introduced her guide dog Scotty. Guide dogs are generally used to assist with direction. Ade also worked with her own town to get auditory and tactile signals at traffic lights.

After the break, President Hammond mentioned recent newspaper articles found on Facebook page having to do with noisy restaurants. As patrons, we can leave. Staff must file a complaint with OSHA and they will come out and look at the decibel levels in a restaurant. There is a smart phone app which will give you a quick, rough reading.

President Hammond also mentioned a scam alert from the Department of Hearing Services. These are texts or e-mails from a company called Awareness Company, Lottery for the Hearing Impaired. They tell you that you or a friend have won money. Do not open or forward the message.

Christine talked to the group about getting more involved with HLAA-TC. Both Monique and Bob are going to be stepping down so we will be looking for a Vice President and a Treasurer.

Bob also thanked everyone who helped with the steak fry on April 9. Our bills are paid including \$3,000 for the permanent loop.

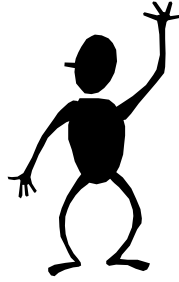
Lionel (the secretary) stated that Colleen Johnson donated the door prize which was won by Tiffany.

President Hammond reminded everyone that May's meeting is the last of the current season. We will have a potluck and our speaker will be Mary Bauer talking on Clear Speech.

John Lilly spoke about an article having to do with captioning that was in last month's Hearing Loss Magazine. "On August 26<sup>th</sup>, 2013, the FCC, which is the Federal Communications Commission, adopted rules regarding the use of internet-based captions telephone service, which is the IPCTS and the software applications that provide captioned phone calls on smart phones. Included in the rules was the requirement that captioned telephones and apps would be available only if they were purchased for a minimum of \$75 each. They also ruled that the phones must be setup so that captions would not be active until the consumer turns them on." John agrees with the HLAA to eliminate the \$75 fee and to keep the captions on. John feels that the system is open to abuse by non-disabled people. He also feels that you should not have to activate the captioning each time. Ade mentioned that she has also heard about the abuse in the deafblind community. The article is available in the Hearing Loss Magazine. Liz Hamline's e-mail is [LHAMLIN@HEARINGLOSS.ORG](mailto:LHAMLIN@HEARINGLOSS.ORG). This is for people who may want to join John, get more information or have their say.

Marie mentioned a friend with a Halo Hearing Aid from Starkey which streams from her phone. Monique said there was a big rush to find ways of connecting the Halo to Apple products. Other companies are also doing wireless links with their hearing aids, such as the Linx. Med-El makes the wireless Rhondo for cochlear implant patients. Technology is constantly changing.

Discussion also involved leadership of HLAA-TC, willingness of people to serve as officers and size of membership. The vice president and treasurer positions will be open. Monique also took this opportunity to thank her husband, Ross, for his help and support throughout the years. She reminded everyone about next month's meeting and then adjourned the meeting.



## Looking Back: A Brief Summary of HLAA TC Activities

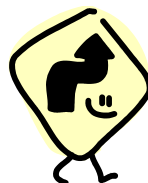
by Monique Hammond

Besides setting up and organizing meetings, what other projects have we worked on at HLAA TC over the last five years? As we near the end of our 2013-2014 season, I would like to spend a few moments contemplating that question:

- We kept pace with **technology upgrades** to make meetings accessible: wireless microphones, amplifiers, CART, assistive listening devices and, last but not most importantly, the installation of a **permanent hearing loop** in our meeting room
- We worked with a design intern to **upgrade our brochures**, produce **flyers** and **ads** that ran in suburban newspapers and got us mentions in front-page stories.
- We increased **chapter visibility** by placing information materials in audiologist and doctor offices as well as at churches and other organizations. Flyers were posted on bulletin boards in area Park and Community Centers. Members of HLAA-TC promoted the chapter during presentations on hearing loss for a variety of service groups and at expos and conventions.
- The HLAA TC **website** was upgraded & redesigned.
- We added a group **Facebook** page.
- Our monthly high-quality **Newsletter** is now also available electronically – besides the print edition
- We participated in three **Walk4Hearing** events, made the local arrangements, unloaded and reloaded equipment, tables and chairs used for the Walk.
- We supported the **Lions D-Foot** Hearing Loss Walks
- Every year we have refreshed our table-waiting skills by hosting our **Steak Fry** fundraiser.
- Besides all of this, we have recruited **top speakers** for our meetings

Important improvements have indeed been made over the last few years. Some of the activities have been more labor intensive and time consuming than others. Some are an ongoing effort – like keeping the name of HLAA TC relevant in our communities and keeping the website and Facebook page updated. There is never a slow day in the world of hearing loss.

One thing that becomes immediately clear is that running the chapter is a team effort. Nobody can do the job alone. Presently, we are a strong and motivated group. We have managed our funds wisely and are positioned for a future that looks bright ahead.



*Don't forget our annual pot luck immediately following the May meeting!*



## Meeting Snapshots (Thanks to Ross!)



Ade shares her knowledge



Capturing Captions



Monique



Drawing for the prize!

(More Meeting Snapshots)



Demo with Rich and  
Scottie



Ade continues



Bob



Lionel



Christine

## What is “Clear Speech”?



It's more than your Mom saying “don't mumble”, or Uncle Joe reminding you to “talk plain”.

“The Clear Speech method is a simple way of speaking. It teaches you how to pronounce every word and sentence in a precise and accurate way – without dropping word endings.”

(website: [therubins.com](http://therubins.com))

Before I even set foot in the Mayo Clinic, I had read something about a method called ‘Clear Speech’. It sounded good, and I filed that idea away to be followed up at a later date.

Only a couple of months later, I had started the cochlear implant evaluation process, and was making trips and phone calls to Mayo. I noticed early on how easy it was to communicate with people in the clinic, whether in person or by telephone. During one phone call, I understood so well I actually began to question whether I needed a CI!

Out of curiosity, I made a point of asking my Mayo audiologist next time I saw him in person, if perchance people in Mayo's audiology clinic knew and used ‘Clear Speech’. He laughed.

“Well, we try,” he said.

As it turned out, there was indeed an effort being made to have Mayo's audiology clinic personnel practice ‘Clear Speech’.

So that was it! ‘Clear Speech’ was what made such a big difference in my speech comprehension, even before any technological upgrade.



“Studies have shown that clear speech is very easy to learn and to use. We also know that when a hearing impaired person listens to someone using clear speech they find it easier to understand, even in noisy situations.” (website: [therubins.com](http://therubins.com))

More information on the practice and benefits of Clear Speech can be found on the Oticon website ([www.Oticon.com](http://www.Oticon.com)).

Some research projects “clearly demonstrate the effectiveness [of Clear Speech] for hard of hearing people...In one of the MIT studies, they found that in some situations ‘Clear Speech’ produced about as much improvement in a listener’s comprehension as did hearing aids” Another study has shown that learning-disabled children, who have poorer overall sentence-in-noise recognition scores (but presumably normal hearing) obtain a benefit from ‘Clear Speech’ that brings their listening performance within the range of the control group.

Here is a known way to improve the comprehension of both those with hearing loss and those with other deficits that make listening difficult.

This is a powerful concept – but will anyone believe that something so simple, easy to learn – and free!—could possibly make so much difference?

Come to our HLAA-TC meeting on May 17 and find out more, as Mary Bauer (Deaf and Hard of Hearing Specialist, MN DHHS) explains how to use Clear Speech!

[www.Oticon.com](http://www.Oticon.com)

[www.therubins.com](http://www.therubins.com) (a website for Senior Citizens)

## **May is Better Hearing and Speech Month!**

*Celebrate the month with a presentation about both speaking and hearing!*

*Come and learn about “Clear Speech” from Mary Bauer*

**Deaf and Hard of Hearing Specialist, MN DHHS**



## LOSING OUR APPETITE FOR NOISE!

By Carole Blowers

The article of May 3, 2014, in the Star Tribune called "Losing our Appetite for Noise" really caught my eye. This was especially true since we have been talking about restaurant noise at chapter meetings lately!

The article, written by Bill Ward, talked about how loud restaurants can kill conversation but taste and other senses can be affected too. The article stated a Zagat nationwide survey found noise the second most common complaint behind lousy service at a restaurant.

Some restaurants are taking steps to reduce the noise by installing acoustic tiles on the ceilings and under chairs, installing wood floors, and using a more sophisticated sound system. Others are including sound barriers in their new construction. Sometimes measures like this work; other times it does not help.

Other restaurants are keeping the noise at full blast because it's essential to their atmosphere of a particular restaurant and the crowd that visits them. Not every restaurant caters to conversation. However, the bottom line is that loud noise can not only affect our hearing, but also our sight and our taste, and the effects can linger for more than a day according to this article.

The thing to remember for us, those who are hard-of-hearing or deaf is that it is our choice to patronize a particular business. If it's too loud for us, we can go elsewhere. There ARE restaurants who do cater to conversation--thank goodness!



*Member suggestions: Kathryn Bakke suggests these times and places for a (relatively) quiet lunch:*

“About restaurants -- I usually have lunch early - like 11:30 or even earlier. There is a restaurant in Taste of Scandinavia (in the Festival Supermarket 98th and Bryant) that has a lovely quiet corner, usually allowing a good conversation.

Also, First Wok in Bloomington, on the south frontage road of 494, between Portland and Nicollet, that also has a nice corner they always take me to, which is often.”

*When you patronize a quiet eatery, remember to let the management know you appreciate its muted sound level as well as the food...*

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**Our next meeting is May 17, 2014**

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**Photos – Ross Hammond**

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