

HLAA TC

June 2015



Twin Cities Chapter

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

September 19, 2015

Barb Young

Fairview Rehab Services

Topic: balance and how it affects those with hearing loss

October 17, 2015

Laurie Carlson, Can-Do Canines

November 21, 2015

Mike Griffitt, Willams Sound



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Hearing Loss Association of America Twin Cities Chapter (HLAA TC) is held the 3rd Saturday of the month (September thru May). We gather at 9:30 to socialize, and begin our meeting at 10 AM at The Courage Center, 3915 Golden Valley Road, Golden Valley, MN 55442. The meeting adjourns at noon.

President's Message

June 2015



Christine Morgan

President's Message

June 2015

We had a great meeting with a larger than expected turnout in May. Mary Bauer helped us to understand how Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services can be of assistance to those of us with hearing loss. As always, Mary was informative, interesting and entertaining. The second half of the meeting was mostly spent socializing while we enjoyed the vast potluck offerings.

While we do not meet during the summer, there are a variety of activities going on. Be sure to check the events calendar on page 8. We hope to see you at one or more of the walks.

We start our new season on September 19 with Barbara Young, a physical therapist from the University of Minnesota presenting on balance

issues. Many people with hearing loss suffer one or more episodes of vertigo or balance issues. There is also a link between hearing loss and falls.

In October, we have a presentation by Can Do Canines. Hearing dogs can provide many services to people with hearing loss as well as companionship. This promises to be a fun presentation.

We have a great lineup of speakers for the 2015-2016 season. I hope that you will attend most if not all of the meetings. Bring a friend, neighbor, family member, etc. Everyone is welcome.

With 1 in 5 Minnesotans suffering some degree of hearing loss, we need to get the word out. Hearing loss often causes frustration and isolation. Many of our members tell us the relief and joy they feel when they find our chapter. They know they are not alone. They have peers with the same issues, fears and frustrations. They learn from the speakers and from the other members how to lead a richer, less frustrating life.

I hope that you will join us in September as we start our new year. If there are any subjects that you would like to see covered in our presentations, please don't hesitate to contact me or any of the Board members. We want your feedback. This is your organization.

Have a terrific but safe summer!

Christine T. Morgan





HLAA TC May Meeting Synopsis

by Lionel Locke
HLAA-TC VicePresident

President Christine Morgan called the meeting to order at 10 AM. She welcomed all those in attendance and introduced our speaker, Mary Bauer from the Department of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services. This department provides consultation, information, referral, technical assistance and training regarding issues in hearing loss. As part of the Minnesota Department of Human Services, Mary's department has done numerous workshops and presentations. Mary has a degree in both elementary education and deaf education and as a person with hearing loss herself, has worked with the deaf and hard of hearing since 1980.

Mary started her presentation by announcing that a John Hopkins survey showed 1 out of 5 people in the United States have a hearing loss. The previous numbers showed 1 out of 10 so there are many more with hearing loss than we thought. Mary then reviewed the History of the Deaf Services Division in Minnesota starting back in the early 1970's comparing the services offered then to the present. Technology advancements have played a major role in how the regional service centers deliver services to those with hearing loss.

The major role of the Division, according to Mary, is to promote equal access and opportunities for those in Minnesota who have a hearing loss. This is achieved through collaboration with counties, non-profit agencies, and directly to individuals. What the Department does not do is provide case dollars for people who qualify. That responsibility comes from the counties through their application process. Mary's role then is to refer people to the correct place sometimes with just a phone call but more often providing information and correctly communicating needs to the correct agency.

Mary will work directly with individuals who require information or just need a plan in place to succeed in getting the services they need. Mary mentioned her technology demonstration lab where people who have not been exposed to what is out there can review and test out what works best for them. A vendor list is also available to point people in the correct direction for assistive listening devices in the market.

Outreach programs are also one of the services Mary provides. A yearly training calendar is published by the department and this training reaches other state agencies, senior housing centers, mental health agencies, and any groups interested in learning about how to effectively deal with people who have a hearing loss. Mary also shared information about other state agencies who do case management and who get involved in helping with communication devices both through direct support and loan programs.

Mary ended her presentation by answering many questions from the group and outlining how many people her agency deals with directly, (many on a repeat basis); how many agency and individual referrals they receive, and how many people receive training. All in all a very heavy workload.

President Christine Morgan thanked Mary Bauer for her presentation and then announced the start of the potluck, our traditional end to the season. End of season announcements from the Board of Directors included the Lion's walk date of June 6th, next year's slate of speakers, (who speak without re-muneration), the HLAA Walk for Hearing September 26th, legislative updates from the current Minnesota session, next year's membership dues date of September 2015, a looping update from Loop Minnesota and finally the need for each member of HLAA to be an advocate for yourself, (note the letter from CNN to Ms. Marin) and meetings having a huge impact on those with hearing loss.

Here's the link to the Minnesota STAR Program mentioned by Mary Bauer in her May HLAA-TC talk: <http://mn.gov/STAR>.

In their device database <http://server.admin.state.mn.us/star/device.html> , they have 33 devices for people with a hearing loss (choose "hearing" in the "Device type" drop-down box).

Though HLAA-TC has a small exchange program (see "Freebies" in our newsletters), the STAR program is much bigger, and also has a redistribution function. Here is a summary of the STAR programs:

Device Demonstration

Device demonstrations allow consumers to compare features and benefits of a particular device or category of devices. Learn more or schedule a device demo here.

Device Loan

Device loans help users borrow a device for a time of need or to "try before they buy." Short-term and open-ended loans are available. To request a loan, start here.

Device Exchange

STAR maintains an online device exchange, allowing Minnesotans and others to donate, sell, and buy previously owned but still usable assistive technology.

Reutilization

STAR is committed to promoting the reuse of assistive technology. Reuse occurs whenever a device that is no longer needed is sold, donated, refurbished or passed along.

FREEBIES!

(Awesome equipment at no cost!)

HATIS Single-side silhouette

For use with T-coil

Contact: Vicki Martin at gimme88@aol.com

CI FILTERS

Set of filters for Cochlear Americas Nucleus 5

Contact: Vicki Martin at gimme88@aol.com

MICROPHONE

Unitron uMic with mini USB splitter. Requires UDIRECT 2 and Unitron Hearing Aids.

Contact: Christine Morgan at president@hlaatc.org or at the HLAA-TC meeting.

CAPTEL PHONE

Captel telephone complete, with handbook

contact: Judi Swan at swanjudi@yahoo.com

GOT NOISE? (Restaurant reviews)

Phil's Hideaway, Stillwater MN

The air was warm and the rain had stopped as we pulled up to a cozy log cabin above the St.Croix river.

This was Phil's Hideaway in Stillwater, a tiny restaurant with a perpetually crowded parking lot.

We were greeted inside by a tall, hyperactive host in a dark suit with a graphic tee under the jacket. He took care of everyone who came through the door, looked after the customers already seated, served plates and poured water, never neglecting anyone who needed something, nor leaving anyone waiting at the entrance. I wouldn't be surprised if he was also brandishing his culinary skills during those times when he darted briefly into the kitchen. We were seated in the exact center of the larger of two dining rooms. There were 17 tables in the room, with barely enough space to squeeze by between them. Except for the clothing people wore, it was all hard surfaces: no tablecloths, no curtains or drapes, no carpeting.

I had brought all of the equipment I could expect to use in a public place (except the one I apparently needed – a decibel meter). I turned my hearing aid down and set my cochlear implant processor to “scan”. Not good. I got out my remote, booted it up, and selected the “café” setting on my CI. This was even worse. So I turned both devices to T-coil and got out my pocket talker. I plugged in the loop, plugged in the microphone, adjusted the setting on the pocket talker, turned on the pocket talker microphone and gave it to Dennis, and placed the loop around my neck. All of this resulted in marginally better sound – as long as I didn't move my head. But since we would be eating and talking, that did not seem like a reasonable expectation.

I disconnected all of the pocket talker equipment and packed it away. I turned off the T-coil on both devices and left the CI on *scan*. I discovered that it helped a little if I turned the CI side of my head toward Dennis when he spoke, but since he was on my left and the CI is on my right, this was no easy task. To avoid the obvious contortions this would require, I suggested we switch places. Dennis, ever accommodating, agreed. That wasn't easy either, given the tight quarters in the restaurant, but we succeeded without any major mishaps.

At last! Dennis on my right, CI on *scan*, HA on low...it wasn't very good, but probably as good as it could get under the circumstances. As long as we yelled, we could actually converse.

We had entered the restaurant about 6:30, just when it was busiest. We did notice that when we left, about 8 PM, it wasn't quite as noisy. A later dinner reservation might help, as would placement by the edge of the room instead of in the center.

The food was wonderful, and the service cheerful and immediate. Dennis had the seared walleye and a glass of Greek kouros white. I had Greek fettucini and a glass of tempranillo. We even shared a dessert of boudino.

If you want a quiet, relaxing conversation, you may want to look for your own hideaway. But if you want to hone your listening skills over a plate of great food, we highly recommend Phil's Hideaway.

(Typical review on yelp: “*Forget conversation with your dining mates-unless you both know sign language - there will be little or no conversation...[but] - if you want to have dinner where the noise level exceeds OSHA standards so you can test your new hearing aids, this is the place.*”)

By Vicki Martin

Bar Louie, Ridgedale mall, Minnetonka MN

As people with hearing loss who enjoy eating out and socializing at the same time, I'm sure you have encountered the very loud background(?) music in restaurants and bars. We have mentioned this in previous newsletters and in some of our meetings.

Here is an example you might find interesting: I went to Bar Louie in Ridgedale for lunch with a friend. The music was overwhelming and we asked the hostess if it could please be turned down. If she did, it was not obvious to my ears, nor to those of my hearing friend.

We were seated and asked the waiter (who had to bend over to hear us) to turn it down when we gave him our order. Again no discernible difference. So we asked again with the same results.

We noticed people yelling to each other to be heard and, worse in my mind, quite a few young children under the age of 5. Adults can choose not to return but the children don't have that freedom or knowledge of what the noise is doing to them.

The food was excellent but we were very frustrated. I took the Manager's card and sent an e-mail to the address listed on the card. I politely explained my concerns (for both the customers and servers), observations, and complemented them on the delicious food.

That was on March 14. I still have not received the courtesy of a reply. So much for customer service. WARNING: visit at your own hearing risk! I know I won't be returning.

By Christine Morgan

Note: the opinions expressed in these reviews are those of the writers, and not a position of the organization, HLAA-TC



Snake Oil for hearing

by Vicki Martin



Are you ready to learn about a natural remedy for hearing loss? Shhh! It's a *secret!* Not much of one, though, because, well, just take a look on the internet!

You can learn about "a natural hearing loss remedy that's been used for centuries... and **can reverse your hearing loss in just three short weeks**, no matter if it was caused by loud noises, ear infections, accidents or simply because of ageing [sic]."

You can find someone who "will show you the strange method that got me my crystal clear hearing back, without having to pay the obscene price for a cochlear implant or even having to wear that ridiculous hearing aid ever again..."

You can learn about the "shameless scams that the multi-billion dollar Hearing Aid Industry uses to keep patients in the dark and actually KEEP them deaf" from a man who actually bought a hearing aid once "and wore it for a while". But he won't be needing it ever again "thanks to the ...miracle remedy that **reversed my hearing loss in just 17 days**".

He'll tell you about the "tens of thousands of people [who] have already followed this method and got crystal-clear hearing in less than three weeks."

Here's a sample of the messages he receives in his inbox every day:

"In 15 days my hearing got better..."

"I'm off the hearing aid, finally!"

"I thought I'd never hear this well..."

"I haven't been this happy for years!"

"I thought I'd never hear this well ever again"

"...my right ear was better than it's been for years"

"Wow, this is the most amazing video I have ever seen in my life."

"It's mindblowing how this thing works."

Just what is this secret miracle cure for hearing loss? Twenty-two pages of hype and testimonials won't tell you. You'll have to pay \$39 to find out. But don't worry – it will save you thousands over having to buy a "ridiculous" hearing aid or a silly CI!

Events calendar



June CI Social group Date: Sunday, June 28, 2015 1:30 – 3:30 PM

Faith United Methodist Church

2708 33rd Avenue N.E. St. Anthony, MN (West of Silver Lake Road on 33rd Avenue)

Host: Rosemary DePauw Brown and Family

If you have questions: 507-202-5172 or email toewsfam11@gmail.com

We will be meeting in the fellowship hall on the lower level. 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! Water will be provided. We are planning a bingo party. You are welcome to bring a white elephant prize if you would like, but there is no obligation to do that.

Walk4Hearing kickoff Kickoff Event

Saturday, August 01, 2015, 11:30a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Pizza Luce Downtown 119 N 4th Street Minneapolis, MN

RSVP to Ronnie Adler radler@hearingloss.org by Friday, July 24, 2015

HLAA-TC Meeting Saturday September 19, 2015 at the Courage Center 3915 Golden Valley Road, Golden Valley MN. We gather at 9:30 to socialize and the meeting starts at 10 AM

Walk4Hearing walk Saturday September 26, 2015 Lake Calhoun Thomas Beach (south end of lake), Minneapolis Registration 9 AM, walk 10 AM distance 5K (3.1 miles) chair Ronnie Adler (radler@hearingloss.org and www.walk4hearing.org)

Magazine miscellany

“How’s That Again?” (AARP Magazine April/May 2015)

Q: At restaurants, I often can’t hear my companions. What should I do?

A: Grab a corner table and sit with your back to the wall. The corner acts like a giant ear trumpet, helping to isolate your conversation. And if you live in a major city, check the “Quiet Conversation” guide at ZAGAT.com to find a restaurant.

(You must enter “quiet conversation” in the search bar and do a search. Searches seem to be woefully incomplete, but may be worth a try.)

Cause and effect, or common cause?

(www.aarp.org/health/brain-health/info-07-2013/hearing-loss-linked-to-dementia.html)

The AARP website gives us this disheartening information: “In a 2013 study, [the researcher] and his colleagues tracked the overall cognitive abilities (including concentration, memory and planning skills) of nearly 2,000 older adults whose average age was 77. After six years, those who began the study with hearing loss severe enough to interfere with conversation were 24 percent more likely than those with normal hearing to see their cognitive abilities diminish. Essentially, the researchers said, hearing loss seemed to speed up age-related cognitive decline.”

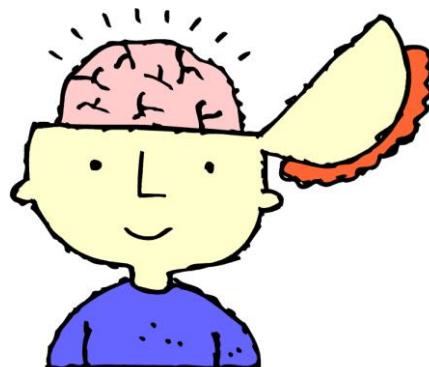
I am not a scientist – but could the article excerpted below (Scientific American May 2015, “Cellular Small Talk”) point to a common cause for hearing loss and other age-related disabilities, rather than hearing loss as a cause for them?

“Over the past 30 years scientists have discovered that defects in the assembly or activity of gap junctions contribute to a range of human diseases, including hearing loss, cataracts, skin conditions, neurological disorders, heart disease, and even certain cancers. A single mutation affecting a constituent protein of a gap junction in the inner ear accounts for hearing loss in up to 40 percent of individuals with inherited deafness.”

Cochlear implants may help more than your ears! (AARP Online Bulletin 3/26/2015)

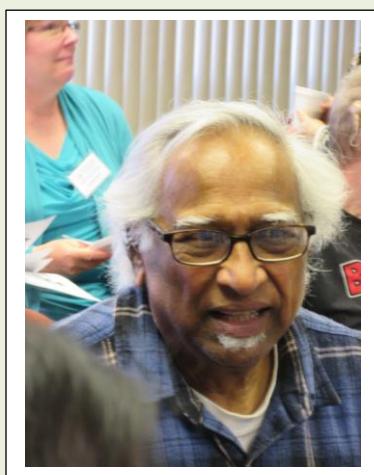
And then there is this: A study to examine the effect of cochlear implants on elderly patients, ages 65 to 85, with profound hearing loss, (published in the journal JAMA Otolaryngology-Head & Neck Surgery) found that cochlear implants resulted in cognitive improvement. Katherine Bouton writes (in the AARP online Bulletin 03/26/2015, “Cochlear Implants Shown to Reverse Cognitive Decline”)

“P. Murali Doraiswamy, M.D., a professor of psychiatry and medicine at Duke University and co-author of The Alzheimer’s Action Plan, calls the study ‘a definite wake-up call.’ Although he says the study had some shortcomings, ‘the improvement in cognition was huge — about double that seen with any of the current FDA drugs for treating Alzheimer’s.’ He adds that the findings about hearing loss affecting cognitive tests probably apply to other senses like vision, smell and touch. For example: ‘Studies have shown that uncorrected vision problems raise the risk for dementia,’ he says.



May Meeting: members and guests

Speaker Mary Bauer



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Our next meeting is September 19, 2015

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Photos – Vicki Martin

Newsletter Editor -
Vicki Martin, editor@hlaatc.org

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.