

HLAA TC

December 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.

This month:

December 19, 2015

Jon Skaalen, VSA
(Accessible Arts)

White Elephant swap

Pot Luck lunch

Raffle

Cookie Sale

(Details on page 4)

Coming Soon!

January 16, 2016

Legislative Update by office of Mary Hartnett

February 20, 2016

Yahoo and Skype for HOH by Dennis Martin



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www.hearingloss.org

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 Kenny Rehabilitation Institute, 3915 Golden Valley Road, Golden Valley, MN 55442. The meeting adjourns at noon.

President's Message



Christine Morgan

President's Message December 2015

The Holidays!

Holidays evoke so many different feelings in everyone. Some find them pure joy. Some find them torture. Some isolate themselves. Some of us are ambivalent.

Holidays are especially hard for those with hearing loss. Family gatherings are happy (or sometimes not so happy) occasions. Everyone talking at once and forgetting the "one at a time" rule. Talking with food in their mouths, telling funny stories, etc. Children laughing, talking or arguing in their cute high-pitched voices. A real challenge for someone with hearing loss.

Did I mention the loud background (?) Christmas music playing no matter where we go? Can we even talk or hear above it? I often will remove my processor or hearing aid when it gets too overwhelming.

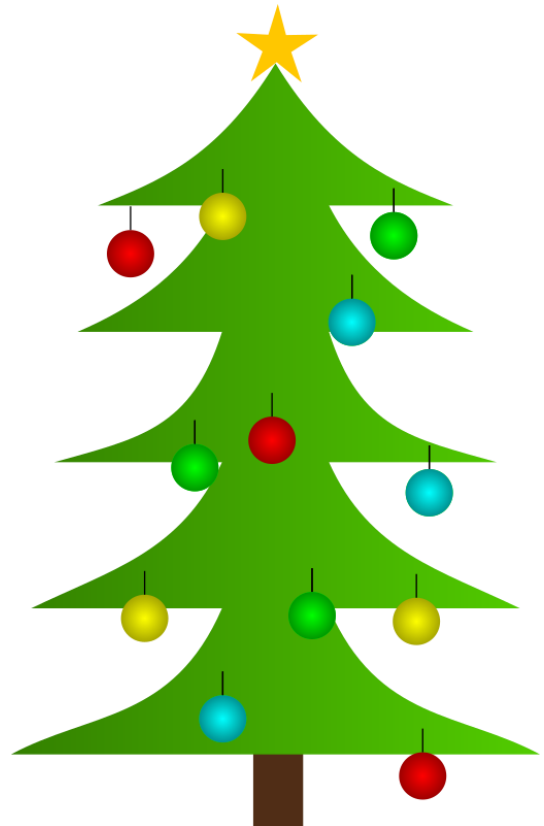
I don't mean to be a Scrooge. I have always loved Christmas. I always found it to be a joyful time of year. However, trying to hear or should I say understand in loud, busy places is exhausting. Be sure to give yourself some quiet time. Walk away

into a quiet area if you can.

I wish you all the happiest of holidays however or whatever you celebrate. May you be surrounded by love and peace.

Christine

PS – Speaking of celebrations! Don't miss our holiday party this month. A raffle, pot luck, cookie sale (your choice to participate or not or to bake or buy if you choose to participate), and white elephant gift exchange. Feel free to bring your family and/or friends.



HLAA-TC November 21, 2015 Meeting Synopsis

BY LIONEL LOCKE, VICE-PRESIDENT



Lionel Locke

President Christine Morgan called the meeting to order at 10 AM. She welcomed all those in attendance, thanked the Board and our volunteers for all that they do and then called on Vice President Lionel Locke to introduce our guest speaker; Mr. Mike Griffit, US Technical Training Manager from Williams Sound.

Mike has been doing audio-visual engineering for over 35 years and his presentation consisted of assistive listening and loop systems and other technologies allowed by the American Disability Act put into law in 1990 and changed in 2010 to be in compliance with the International Building Code.

Mike began the presentation by asking the group whether to Loop or not to Loop. Obviously the meeting room we have at the Courage Center has been looped by the HLAA Chapter so the question is designed to contrast and compare other technologies that are allowed. Those include FM Systems and Infrared (IR). The comparisons will center on one major task; installation and the difficulties in getting the systems to function efficiently.

According to recent statistics in the US shared by Mike, a conservative view shows 17% of all people having a hearing loss. The number jumps to 47% if you are 65 or older. These numbers are critical when an audiovisual company is asked to install an audio system in various venues. Not only does the company need to be concerned about delivering a sound system, but they need to be concerned about speech discrimination and word recognition. Increasing the volume alone will not solve the problem.

Mike explained through various slides how sound travels and that assistive listening devices need to deliver 24 decibels louder than general conversation and above the room's ambient noise in order to reach the 90% speech recognition score needed for understanding. The installation professionals, when installing systems, need to understand the difference between loudness and increasing intelligibility.

After several examples of what a person with hearing loss actually hears versus what is said, Mike explained the differences between Induction Loops, Infrared and FM systems. Other factors influencing these choices included materials used in the construction of buildings, uses of rooms connected to each other, number of receivers available at each location, and seating capacity.

Mike introduced Tony Strong, a Williams Sound team member, who showed the group examples of different receivers for individual use. The presentation concluded with Mike summarizing his presentation concerning inductive loops systems, IR systems and FM Systems and concluding that the best system for assistive technology depends on the audience. Mike thanked us for our attention and answered many questions.

President Christine Morgan thanked Williams Sound for their presentation, and announced the December agenda

including the holiday party, our potluck, gift exchange, cookie sale, our next speaker Jon Skaalen speaking on Accessibility ARTS. VP Lionel briefly mentioned the activities of the Board including TV close-captioning in public areas, and working with the State Commission on upcoming legislation including changes in driver's license fields showing hearing loss similar to donor fields.

Treasurer Marie thanked all the members for paying annual dues and invited everyone to bring their families and friends as guests. President Christine thanked all those in attendance, asked any guests in attendance to complete a short survey, thanked our Secretary Lisa Richardson for providing the CART services, announced that a Tai Chi studio would do a complimentary class for those with Hearing Loss and then adjourned the meeting at Noon.



November Speakers Mike Griffit and Tony Strong

Come to the HLAA-TC Holiday Party!

Jon Skaalen, VSA (Accessible Arts)



December 19 (9:30 coffee, 10 AM meeting)
Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute, Golden Valley MN

Optional: bring a dish to share and stay for pot luck, bring and/or buy cookies at the cookie sale, bring an inexpensive gift for the white elephant swap, enter the LACE raffle

Pot Luck lunch



Raffle



Cookie Sale



White Elephant swap



December Speaker, Accessible Arts

Jon Skaalen, VSA Minnesota Access Programs Coordinator

Jon Skaalen is Access and Grants Coordinator at VSA Minnesota, located at the Cowles Center for Dance in Minneapolis. He publicizes an Accessible Arts Calendar which features arts events that offer accommodations needed by people with visual, hearing or other disabilities. He provides arts organizations and artists with disabilities assistance with accessibility questions and with funding, including Emerging Artist grants, funded by the Jerome Foundation, and ADA Access Improvement Grants for nonprofit arts organizations, funded by Legacy dollars through the Metro Regional Arts Council. With a background as a newspaper editor and a community theatre administrator, he is a playwright whose plays generally feature artists with disabilities.

jon@vsamn.org or access@vsamn.org

Website: www.vsamn.org

Accessible Arts Calendar: <http://vsamn.org/community/calendar/>



Jon Skaalen

- [Jacob Marley's Christmas Carol](#)

Thursday, December 10, 2015 - 7:30 pm / Park Square Theatre - Andy Boss Thrust Stage / St. Paul

- Scripted Captioning
- Assisted Listening Devices

Park Square Theatre
Dec. 9-20, 2015

- [Twice the Cheer This Year: The Best Christmas Pageant Ever and A Charlie Brown Christmas](#)

Thursday, December 10, 2015 - 7:30 pm / Paradise Center for the Arts / Faribault

- Audio Description
- ASL Interpretation

Paradise Community Theater
Dec. 4-5, 10-12, 7:30; Dec. 6, 13, 2:00; 2015

- [Edgar Allan Poe's Nutcracker \(the un-ballet\)](#)

Friday, December 11, 2015 - 7:00 pm – 8:15 pm / Interact Center for Visual & Performing Arts / St. Paul

- ASL Interpretation

- Large Print Playbill

Interact Center for the Visual and Performing Arts
Nov. 21 – Dec. 19, 2015; Wed.-Thurs.-Fri.-Sat. 7:00 PM, Sat. also 3:00 PM.

This is just a small sample of the accessibility information you will find on the Accessible Arts Calendar (website shown above)

LACE Using LACE (Listening and Communication Enhancement)

At our holiday party, we will draw 3 names to win LACE. LACE is a form of auditory rehabilitation. The computer program is home-based and self-paced.

The LACE program includes speech in noise, rapid speech, memory challenges, and also provides some very helpful communication hints and strategies.

I recently completed the program and can definitely see my improvement particularly in rapid speech. According to customer service, the participant can see the most improvement in the first 11 sessions. It is suggested that you do at least 3 sessions (or more) each week. The program lasts 20 sessions. Each session is about 20 minutes.

You also have the ability to continue using the program after the first 20 sessions. I intend to start doing this.

Do I think it is a useful program? Definitely. Worth the cost? Definitely.

I have also used the free program "angel sounds" but liked the pace and sessions of LACE better. I could see the progress. You could also have your results and progress sent to your hearing health professional. I chose not to do this.

Tickets for the drawing are \$2 each or 3 for \$5. Tickets can be purchased at the December meeting prior to the drawing during the potluck. You could also send a check to Marie, our Treasurer.

You do NOT have to be present at the meeting to win. Just keep your ticket stub. Numbers will be published in the January newsletter. ~ Christine



Gerald Landby Appointed

On October 9th, Gerald Landby, HLAA-TC member from Winona MN, received a letter from David Rosenthal, Director of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Division of the MN Department of Human Services. Gerald was appointed to serve a three year term on the Advisory Committee of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services; South Region (Mankato). The Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Division assists children and adults who are deaf, deafblind or hard of hearing and their families to gain access to the services they need to live independently in their communities. More than 330,000 Minnesotans have a hearing loss and rely on visual or tactile forms of language or assistive listening devices to communicate.

Hearing Loss in the Workplace FREE WORKSHOP

Dec. 17, 1:30-3:30, Golden Rule Bldg., Suite 105 85 East 7th Place, St. Paul

There are nearly 29 million people with a hearing loss in the U.S. work force or educational setting! This workshop will identify effective communication strategies, helpful assistive technology, and valuable resources to help hearing and hard of hearing co-workers.

To register Phone: (651) 431-5940 (or use your preferred Telecommunications Relay Service)
Email: dhhs.metro@state.mn.us

LUGS!

Is your hearing aid boring beige? Are you hiding your cochlear implant processor behind a mane of hair? It doesn't have to be this way! Children have discovered what fun it can be to accessorize the very equipment some of us older folks have been known to hide.

10-year-old Zizi shows you on her website (<http://zizisears.blogspot.co.uk/>) how to decorate your hearing aids. Little Freddie Invermee's parents came up with the decors (called "Lugs") for his cochlear implants. If you don't want to make your own, you can order some from their website (www.mylugs.co.uk). Check them out. Cool, huh?

Embarrassed to admit how much you really want one of these? Don't worry -- just pretend you are getting them for your kids!

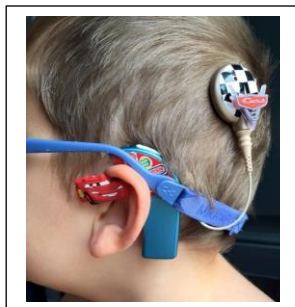
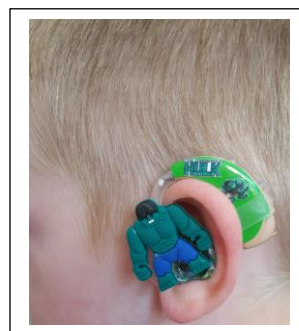
(full disclosure: I have a few home-made flowery little thingies of my own, and yes they are fun to wear -- though you probably won't find me sporting Minions any time soon).

Here are a few examples of Lugs and Zizi's creations. See more on their websites (given above).

Row 1: personalized Superman on MedEl and Phonak, Flowers on Phonak, Hulk on Phonak

Row 2: Lightning McQueen on Advanced Bionics, Zizi's hearing aids, and some of the charms she uses

~ Vicki



Magazine miscellany

Chemical and Engineering News October 2015

“Decibel Therapeutics, a Boston-based biotech developing drugs for hearing loss, has launched with \$52 million in its first round of funding. Third Rock Ventures led the Series A financing, with SR One, the venture arm of GlaxoSmithKline, contributing. Although approximately 50 million Americans experience some form of hearing loss, treatments are few. Decibel will target disorders including hearing loss stemming from antibiotic use, noise-induced hearing loss, age-related hearing loss, and tinnitus.”

Ask Marilyn, by Marilyn Vos Savant. Parade Magazine

“Question: ‘We know that the right brain performs certain functions, and the left brain specializes in other tasks. But we also know that the right brain controls the left side of the body, and the left brain regulates the right side. So, what about our ears? Are they exactly the same? Or do they hear things differently?’

Answer: ‘Scientists had long assumed that our ears were the same and the decoding sound took place entirely in the brain, with signals relayed to the appropriate side. But we now know that auditory processing starts at the ear. For example, the right ear is geared more toward speech, and the left ear is attuned more toward music [children with right-ear hearing impairment have more trouble in school than those with left-ear loss]. So if you’re listening to music with a single earphone, you might want to put it in your left ear. But for learning a language, it might help to keep the earphone in your right ear.’”

From AOL news on internet: Nov 25

“The cochlear implant was one of the most important discoveries in medical science, restoring hearing to a huge number of people over the last half-century. But for people who have more profound deafness, new methods are needed. Scientists at Colorado State University have come up with a unique way to restore the sense of hearing – through the tongue. A special mouthpiece translates signals from a Bluetooth earpiece into electrical signals that get transmitted to nerves on the tongue. Those signals can then be re-assembled in the brain as auditory data. The team picked the tongue because it has thousands of sensitive nerves with a short path to the brain. Training yourself to use the device can take months, but the science is proven and the team is now working on reducing the size of the unit.”

[note: If you saw **David Eagleman’s** last program in the TPT series on the brain, you are also aware of a “hearing” vest that transmits somatic impulses (vibrations) to the brain. As with a CI, the brain eventually learns to interpret these signals as words].

Time Magazine, November 30 2015 “If you are stuck somewhere with unbearable noise, you essentially have two options: plug your ears, or leave. But what if you could isolate the most grating sound and mute it? Or just lower the volume [sic, ‘it’s volume’, - ed.], much as you would on a TV? That’s the promise of the Here Active listening system, a groundbreaking set of earbuds from New York-based Doppler Labs. Unlike hearing aids, which amplify or decrease all noises at once, Here’s processor syncs with a smartphone app, so users can handpick which frequencies they want to filter...”

(Magazine Miscellany, cont)

The editor wishes to comment on this very prevalent error in understanding how effective hearing and listening systems work. How many times have you heard or read that “hearing aids amplify everything the same...” I must have heard this 10 times in the last year, and it is simply not true. While it is true that hearing aids cannot help you hear sounds in a frequency range where you have no hearing, that is a very different thing than amplifying everything the same. Every reputable hearing aid these days has at the very least a way of customizing the amplification profile to best match your auditory needs. (If you have a device that simply makes everything louder – it is NOT a hearing aid, it’s an amplifier). In addition, there are now sophisticated programs that scan the environment and suppress sounds you may not want to hear – the “noise” that the Here Active earbud system is also trying to suppress for its normal-hearing users.

As always, there is room for improvement. But let’s give credit where credit is due. Hearing aids are much more than the shirt-pocket amplifiers they were 75 years ago. Maybe Doppler Labs is just catching up.



Adult Cochlear Implant Social Group 5 Year Celebration!

Sunday, December 13, 2015
1:30 – 3:30 PM



Dakota County Wentworth Library
199 East Wentworth Ave.
West St. Paul, MN 55118
651-554-6800



Host: Sara Oberg

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!



November Meeting



group



captioner Lisa



treasurer Marie



co-speaker Tony Strong



Anonymous guest

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Our next meeting is December 19, 2015

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**Hearing Loss
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of America**

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Photos – Dennis Martin

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Vicki Martin, editor@hlaatc.org

Meetings are held the 3rd Saturday of the month September through May at the Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute 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.