

HLAA TC

January 2016



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:

January 16, 2016

January 16, 2016

Legislative Update by office of Mary Hartnett

Coming Soon!

February 20, 2016

Yahoo and Skype for HOH by Dennis Martin

March 19, 2016

The Esteem Hearing Implant
Brent Lucas

April 16, 2016

Cochlear Implant Update Panel
(three CI companies represented)



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Officers' emails

- Christine Morgan - president@hlaatc.org
- Lionel Locke - vicepresident@hlaatc.org
- Lisa Richardson - secretary@hlaatc.org
- Marie Saliterman - treasurer@hlaatc.org

HLAA TC Website - Minnesota

www.hlaatc.org

HLAA TC telephone 763-447-9672

Contact Information - Minnesota

info@hlaatc.org

HLAA National - Maryland

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

January 2016

Ok – so at the risk of sounding like the baby-boomer that I am – “2016 – you’re kidding me! What happened to 2015? Wasn’t it just 2000?”

My BFF and I were taking a stroll down memory lane recently during my recovery from surgery. We started talking about the progress and changes since we were teenagers. If you are old enough, do you remember?

First blow dryers (no one told us we needed a brush and we ended up looking like the bride of Frankenstein). Worse was sleeping in those terrible brush rollers and hairnets.

First cell phones – we thought they were cool even though the very first ones had a box that looked like it was made for a pair of shoes.

Beatle hair – we thought it was sooo long. Teasing our hair and Aqua Net to hold it in place
Easter hats

Picky crinoline slips

The first Bell bottoms – like we didn’t know they’d be back over and over again

Pegged pants – hello Skinny jeans!

And the list goes on and on. Even you “younger” people have lists of your own. Things our grandchildren (and even our children) have never

experienced.

So here we are at 2016! Smaller and more powerful hearing aids. Smaller and more powerful implants. Hearing assistive technology. I now am the proud(?) owner of an alert system with flashing lights that blink, ring and flash when my cell phone or home phone rings, the alarm rings and flashes (complete with bedshaker) lights flash when someone rings the doorbell and a seemingly endless list of things to alert me when I don’t have my implants on. I am good with a computer, fair with a cell phone and no “techy” by any means.

We with hearing loss are fortunate to experience and benefit from all these technological advances. The way things are going, future generations will benefit even more as technology continues making its huge leaps and bounds into the future. A cure for hearing loss? Possibly!

So I will get off my soapbox now and thank all of you for making HLAA-TC a great place for those of us with hearing loss. I hear at least weekly from people with hearing loss who are trying to cope and don’t know where to turn. Please help us to get the word out to them. I know most of you have suffered through the denial, embarrassment, depression and isolation that seems to go hand-in-hand with the loss of our hearing.

We are only successful when we reach out to each other and those who need our help. Please let me or any of the other officers know how we can help HLAA-TC better meet your needs.

We have a great line-up of speakers for the remainder of this season. I would also like to spend at least 15 minutes towards the end of every meeting talking about some ideas, concerns, tips, etc. to improve our quality of lives as people with hearing loss.

Have a healthy, peaceful new year.

Christine

HLAA-TC December 19, 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 and shared the agenda including the potluck, the cookie fundraiser sale, extra copies of the Hearing Loss Matters documentary for distribution and the white elephant gift exchange. Christine then introduced VP Lionel Locke who introduced our guest speaker Mr. Jon Skaalen, of VSA Minnesota.

VSA Minnesota is a state agency whose role is to make sure that the ARTS are accessible to people with any disability. If you need an accommodation, VSA will help you get it. The program was made possible by the voters of Minnesota through the Legacy Amendment that provided access improvement grants to the State ARTS Board, the Metro Regional Arts council and finally to VSA Minnesota. Just in the past 6 years, over \$100 million dollars have been distributed in grants to make ARTS organizations more accessible including buttons on entry doors, ramps into theaters, accessible seating in theaters, assistive listening systems and opening captioning.

After learning about the permanent looping arrangement that HLAA has in the Courage Center meeting room, Jon is looking forward to finding a place to provide their first loop grant. One of Jon's projects is the online Accessible ARTS calendar located at VSAMN.org which lists all of the shows in Minnesota that have some accommodation for people with disabilities. It may include for example audio description for people who are blind; shows that have ASL interpreters, and a list of shows that have open captioning.

The main places that captioning happens is the Guthrie theatre, the Ordway that captions touring musicals, the Hennepin Theatre Trust running the State theatre, the Orpheum theatre, the Pantages Theatre, the New Century Theatre, the Mixed Blood Theatre and of course in St. Paul, the History theatre and the Park Square Theatre. Jon explained that VSA Minnesota has a digital captioning unit that is available for any ARTS organization in Minnesota. There is a fund available that pays for shipping back and forth including free software to use.

Jon stressed that it is our job and his to try and get the word out to all those who need accommodation so they can enjoy the ARTS. We are the customers who need the accommodation but if we do not ask, we may not be provided the service. Therefore a strong advocacy position is what we need to continue to do. Let's all enjoy the ARTS; they are too important to give up.

Jon explained that the State of Minnesota is the only state in the Union with a pool of funds coming from the sales tax earmarked to increase access to the ARTS. We need to continue to make use of this important resource. Jon thanked the audience for all the questions and comments about captioning experiences that were shared by the audience and closed his presentation by explaining reasonable access and the desire to have consistency in those decisions.

President Christine thanked Jon for presenting the Accessible ARTS calendar and his role to our group and then adjourned the meeting so we could enjoy the holiday party festivities.



Guest speaker Jon Skaalen



Book Review

The Way I Hear It

By Gael Hannan

Review by Christine T. Morgan

My first introduction to Gael Hannan came at the 2015 HLAA Convention in St. Louis, where she presented one of the breakout sessions. Gael's presentation had us rolling with laughter. Her stories were informative, humbling and humorous. I immediately went to her book signing and bought *The Way I Hear It*. Harris Communication describes it as "part memoir, part survival guide".

Gael was born with bilateral sensorineural hearing loss and relied on speechreading. She did not receive her first hearing aid until she was 20. Fast forward into her venture into hearing loss advocacy at age 40 and her current membership in HLAA, CHHA, and other organizations. She has performed, blogged, created a DVD ... the list goes on.

Her book *The Way I Hear It* is practical, entertaining and insightful. Gael uses humor and the experiences of real life with hearing loss. Her book covers a variety of issues such as raising children, pillow talk relationships, technology and many more things that we do and like to do every day.

Gael's book does not get bogged down with technical jargon that puts one to sleep. It is also not preachy or too basic. *The Way I Hear It* is a book you will read and perhaps lend to a friend, family member, or loved one.

The Way I Hear It is available through Harris Communication for \$17.99. It is a terrific book. I highly recommend it.

Oto-clips

(Product review by Vicki Martin)



Have you ever accidentally lost a hearing aid or a CI? If you have the behind-the-ear variety, there may be a solution.

Oto-clips is a product by Westone (Phonak and other marketers may have something similar) that attaches to one or both devices, and clips on to the back of your collar. Yes, a little like those mitten clips you wore when you were little. In the event that your hearing aid or CI comes loose, it will dangle down your back, not languish on the pavement or lawn where you lost it.

They work a little like eyeglass holders, but are shorter, and clip to your clothes. Although marketed for BTE hearing aids, I see no reason it couldn't work with BTE CIs as well. On the hearing aid, it attaches to the aid where the tube meets the earmold. On a CI, it would need to be attached where the coil cable meets the processor.

They come in a variety of colors in monaural or binaural styles. There is even a style designed for use with eyeglasses. It has a much shorter cord, and the hearing aid is tethered to the eyeglass frames instead of being clipped to the collar.

These would be great for active kids wearing hearing aids. But most of us are grown up, right? Wait, though -- do you ever play active sports, or even just walk through the woods where your things may become entangled in low tree branches? Or do you (or a family member) use oxygen tubes, which must share the same behind-the-ear resting place as your hearing aids? Removing those tubes can inadvertently remove the hearing aids too (I personally know of a person who has lost three hearing aids that way). Don't forget all of those headstands and handstands that you do, either. And what about that ride on the Mad Mouse, where centrifugal force pulled it right off my head, and I would have lost it had I not caught and held it for the rest of the ride. Oh, right...well, so much for being grown up.

Anyway, for about \$4 to \$10 an oto-clip could help prevent loss. It could well be worth it.



New Appointment

Christine Morgan has been appointed to the Advisory Committee for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services - Metro Office by David Rosenthal, Director of DHHS Minnesota.

Christine's term runs from January 1, 2016 through December 31, 2018.

Your attention, please!

FREE CAPTIONING

Jon Skaalen, December's HLAA-TC guest speaker, informed us that VSA Minnesota has a digital captioning unit that is available for any ARTS organization in Minnesota. There is a fund available that pays for shipping back and forth including free software to use.

GRANT FOR HEARING LOOPS

After learning about the permanent looping arrangement that HLAA has in the Courage Center meeting room, Jon is looking forward to finding a place to provide their first loop grant. There are currently grants available for the installation of assistive listening loops for arts organizations serving Minnesota.

To apply, or for more information, contact:

Jon Skaalen
VSA Minnesota Access Programs Coordinator
612-332-3888 or 612-305-0132, ext. 2
Toll-free in MN: 800-801-3883
jon@vsamn.org or access@vsamn.org
Website: www.vsamn.org

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (DHHS) Free DIVERSITY Trainings

Dispelling the Myths: Deaf and Hard of Hearing Trends

January 13, 9:30-11:30

Did you know that 1 out of 5 Americans has a hearing loss? There is great diversity found among people with a hearing loss. Learn more about people who are Culturally Deaf, "little d" deaf, late-deafened, DeafBlind, and hard of hearing

Deaf Panel: Personal Stories & Triumphs

Feb. 18, 1:30-3:30

Deaf panelists will share their "life stories" as individuals with a hearing loss, and their personal philosophies on hearing loss related issues. Learn about the difference between "Big D" and "little d" deaf and what it means to be "culturally deaf" vs. "late-deafened."

Registration Information

Phone: (651) 431-5940 (or use your preferred Telecommunications Relay Service)

Email: dhhs.metro@state.mn.us

If you need a sign language interpreter, CART Services, assistive listening device (ALD) or other accommodation, you must notify DHHS at least two weeks prior to the training session

Restaurant review – sound and taste

Hy-Vee Market Grille, Oakdale MN December 9, 2015

After driving home from a late-afternoon meeting around 6:00 PM, Dennis and I decided to have dinner at the new Hy-Vee Market Grille near our home in Oakdale. As usual, we asked for a booth rather than a table. The booth walls sometimes help block the noise, and they are also usually located away from the center of the restaurant. At Hy-Vee, this was not quite the case, since there are additional restaurant sections beyond each row of booths.

I ordered an Asian combination, with a crab Rangoon appetizer, hot and sour soup, Mongolian Beef, and fried rice. Dennis had baked Cavatappi, a pasta dish with sausage and cheese. It came with a nice green salad on the side. We were also served rolls, which were a step beyond the ordinary brown-n-serve variety, but would have been even better if they were hot.

Dennis rates his meal on a par with Olive Garden's Italian entrees, and it was moderately priced. The Asian meal (offering several choices in each category, from appetizer to rice) was also economical, at \$10. All of the Asian foods were served lukewarm, and when I sent my entrée back to be reheated, it was still only lukewarm. (The Cavatappi was hot, however. Is lukewarm an Asian thing?).

The restaurant was full at the time we were there – meaning nearly all seats were taken. But it was not crowded. The seating areas give the impression of spaciousness even when fully occupied. Tables are set far enough away from each other that you are not likely to overhear others' conversations, nor even be very aware that they are talking.

The service was superb, and we took the time to speak to the manager (or her stand-in) about our excellent experience. Despite ten TVs circled around the restaurant, none of them were making noise – and all had captions ON. There was no music either. We also noticed the interesting ceiling, and asked if it was designed with acoustic tile. The manager confirmed that it was indeed acoustic tile, and added that without it, the noise level would most likely be significantly higher.

We had an enjoyable meal. Dennis and I sat across from each other in a large booth, and I did not use any extra equipment for listening enhancement – just my hearing aid and cochlear implant processor, on their usual settings. I could even relax against the padded seat back and still hear him quite well across the table.

I could get used to this!

Highly recommended for its ambience, service, and conversation-friendly environment

Vicki



Magazine miscellany

Saint Paul Pioneer Press December 26, 2015 Q&A "To Your Good Health" column

The reader writes that her hearing aid dispenser told her she needed a hearing aid, and that her hearing would rapidly get worse if she didn't get one. She asks if that is true. Dr. Keith Roach replies:

"I doubt it. And even if it were true, I'm not sure how they would know...The consistent advice ...is to be patient, get adjustments as needed, be prepared to spend money, and get an audiologist certified by the American Speech, Language and Hearing Association. **I recommend finding a local chapter of the Hearing Loss Association of America (hearingloss.org)...** " (emphasis added by HLAA-TC News)

Minneapolis Star Tribune December 13, 2015 "On Your Health" column

Exercise may aid brains 'rewiring': "Moderate levels of exercise may increase the brain's flexibility and improve learning, a study suggests. [Claudia Lunghi, University of Pisa, conducted the study on the visual cortex. The results suggest] that exercise somehow increases the brain's plasticity."

Question: if the same results apply to the part of the brain that processes hearing, would this indicate that exercise might also help us get better results from our cochlear implants? -- editor



Minneapolis Star Tribune November 15, 2015 article "Tracing preemie deafness mystery"

"Doctors have struggled to prevent hearing loss that is common among premature babies placed in protective incubators to grow and on artificial ventilators to breathe...Until now, efforts have focused on preemies' exposure to noisy, hissing ventilators...'It hasn't done a bit of good,' said Children's Dr. James Sidman...Trouble is, these solutions focused on the form of hearing that is most commonly understood: sound waves traveling through the ear canal...Sidman said they ignore a secondary form of hearing known as bone conduction...[noise from the tubing resting on babies' gums] could pepper the skull with vibrations and tax preemies' ears from the inside. So he used decibel meters to measure noise produced at the juncture of the ventilator tubing that would normally rest near the gums. The results were alarming...'[from the outside] is where we thought the problem was coming from', he said. 'Nobody thought about the skull vibration part of it.'"



Opportunity Knocks!

From the board:

We are now putting together our speakers for the next session (2016-2017). If you have topic ideas or speakers you would like to hear, please let any of the officers know. We hear you!

From the editor:

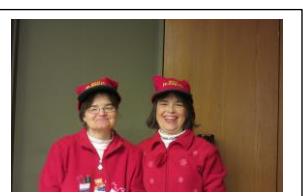
We welcome your article submissions for our newsletter. Just send them to editor Vicki at editor@hlaatc.org. You may submit anything from a few lines to a feature article. (See “writer’s guidelines” at www.hlaatc.org). Consider writing a book review, or a product review. Or you may comment on someone else’s article, or add your own perspective – just send a letter to the editor (our “Feedback” column). How about “Tech Tips” – suggestions on using technology to hear better, or maybe a personal experience story. And don’t forget our “Freebies” column, if you have hearing-related equipment to give away.

Volunteer Opportunity:

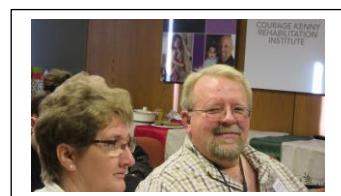
A friend of HLAA-TC who lives in Forest Lake MN needs transportation to our meetings. If anyone is able to provide this, please let one of the board members know. They will see that you can contact each other to make arrangements.



December 2015 Meeting



Happy New Year!



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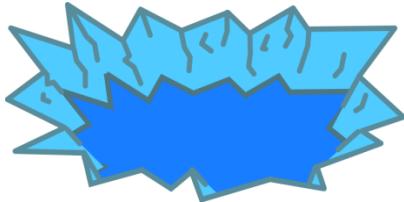
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Secretary – Lisa Richardson secretary@hlaatc.org

Treasurer – Marie Saliterman treasurer@hlaatc.org

Contact Info. - info@hlaatc.org

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 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.