

HLAA TC

February 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:

February 20, 2016

Yahoo and Skype for HOH
Speaker: Dennis Martin

Coming Soon:

March 19, 2016

The Esteem Hearing Implant
Speaker: Brent Lucas

April 16, 2016

Cochlear Implant Update Panel
(three CI companies represented)



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

President's Message



Christine Morgan

February 2016

As a month, February is a mixed bag. We have Ground Hog's Day (does anyone really believe it), Valentine's Day (ah romance), President's Day (it keeps moving, how did that happen?) and SNOW! Ugh! But Spring cannot be too far behind! Right?

We're excited to have Dennis Martin give us a technology lesson this month. I really want to learn about Skype and Yahoo. As you can tell, I'm just starting to catch up on technology all of you have probably been using for a long time. Or maybe not. Here's our chance!

I just got a smartphone upgrade because the one I had was unable to do "Visual Voicemail". What a godsend! Do you have difficulty understanding people when they leave a message on your phone? I find it almost impossible. I'm so thankful for my caption phone at home and now I can have my voice mail captioned on my smartphone.

We also have some great presentations throughout the months into May. Be sure to attend as many as you are able. Always feel free to bring your family and/or friends. Everyone is welcome.

It is amazing to me how many people I encounter with hearing loss almost every week and in some of the most unexpected places. Most have never heard of HLAA. With our limited budget, time and resources, it is hard to spread the word. Therefore, we are depending on you to help. Let's grow our chapter!

If I or any of the other Board members can help you in any way, please don't hesitate to ask. We need to hear from you. Especially, this month when we have a Board meeting following the meeting.

Have a wonderful month. Stay safe and live each and every day to the fullest.

Christine



HLAA-TC January 16, 2016 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 also announced the winning ticket for the LACE software program 847371 that has yet to be claimed. Lionel Locke Vice-President introduced our guest speaker Ms. Beth Fraser, Government Relations Director from the Commission of Deaf, Deaf-Blind and Hard of Hearing Minnesota.

Beth shared with our chapter the Commission's legislative agenda, the Federal Drug Administration comments on Hearing Loss, the closed captioning campaign and the Documentary "Hearing Loss Matters".

Starting with the legislative agenda, the first item is ensuring that parents have the choice of sending preschool children to the Metro Deaf School, an ASL based institution. Some school districts are currently objecting to paying for sending children there.

The second item is urging the Minnesota legislature to pass a resolution urging Congress to encourage Medicare to pay for hearing aids and hearing health care. This is a way to educate legislators and start a conversation about age-related hearing loss, laying the ground work for the future.

Age-related hearing loss was recently addressed by a task force across Minnesota and it was discovered that the Department of Health does not focus on Seniors in their agency. When you consider the aging of the population, we need to help start a process where it becomes a part of the Department of Human Services.

The third item on the legislative agenda including ongoing efforts from the last session, including requiring new building projects funded by state funds to think about good acoustics and installing hearing loops in certain meeting rooms.

Closed captioning was an issue that attracted much attention last year. The bill that was introduced last session that failed to get passed. It would have required all public TVs to have captioning on 100% of the time. A scaled back version this session would require captioning to be turned on in hospital waiting rooms and any state agency with a public TV. This is a small step in the right direction according to Beth, to build on for the future.

Our HLAA chapter is involved in a campaign with the Commission to get restaurants to voluntarily pledge to keep their captioning on in return for advertising their business as hearing loss friendly on the Commission

Website as well as our Website. That campaign is on-going and we have business cards for individual members to help participate in that as well.

The final bill on the legislative agenda has to do with relations with law enforcement, court systems for people with hearing loss, and deaf or deaf-blind. Currently the State provides interpreters in those situations. The new proposal would help people with hearing loss when they interact in those arenas. The commission wants to talk to people with hearing loss to determine our needs, and whether the state is meeting them currently? Beth stressed that our voices need to be heard.

The Hearing Loss Documentary, produced in conjunction with Twin Cities Public Television, will be shown during their March 2016 Pledge drive. This 26 minute documentary stars several HLAA members and we are excited about this showing. Beth also shared with us 6 public service announcements (PSAs) about hearing loss created by the Commission that will play on Public Television. They will also be located on websites for future viewing. Those in attendance were treated to seeing those PSAs during the meeting.

Beth concluded her presentation by addressing recent comments at the Federal Level concerning over-the-counter (OTC) hearing aids. The current comment period through the FDA lasts until May of 2016 and involves whether the benefits of OTC hearing aids would outweigh the risks of requiring a medical evaluation. The law currently allows you to waive the medical evaluation. The question is whether this is too strict or not.

President Christine Morgan thanked Beth for her presentation and then fielded questions from the audience concerning the following items, quantifying cost projections about preventing dementia as it relates to age related hearing loss, the effective use of over the counter amplification devices along with hearing aids, hearing loss as a major health issue, and addressing building codes to adapt to new technology in addressing hearing loss.

After our break, President Christine called on Vicki Martin for her monthly ASL presentation, then each Board member delivered their reports. Nearing the end of the meeting, the audience shared stories and anecdotes about dealing with hearing loss in everyday life. There being no further business, President Christine adjourned the meeting at Noon.

February Speaker:

Ms. Beth Fraser

Government Relations Director

*Commission of Deaf, Deaf-Blind and Hard of
Hearing Minnesota*



HLAA-TC Speaker for February 2016

“Live Computer Communications for People with Hearing Loss”



Dennis Martin

Dennis will talk about Skype and similar applications, with a focus on their hearing-loss-friendly features.

Dennis Martin is a member of HLAA-TC, and has been married to his hard of hearing wife Vicki for nearly 48 years. He has three grown children, all with hearing loss (one is deaf). Dennis leads online classes using Skype, and has used other group and individual communication applications.

The **hearing loss documentary, “Hearing Loss Matters”**, produced in conjunction with Twin Cities Public Television, will be shown during the MCDHH 2016 Pledge drive. This 26 minute documentary stars several HLAA members and we are excited about this showing. It is highlighted on page 9 of the February TPT magazine. See it on TPT MN (Comcast channel 243 locally) Sunday February 21 at 7 PM. It can also be viewed online at <http://video.tpt.org/video/2365591863/>

The **Adult Cochlear Implant Social Group** will meet Sunday February 21 at 1:30 – 3:30 PM at Wescott Library, 1340 Wescott Road Eagan, MN 55124-1029. It will be hosted by Joanna Bailey, and will be held in the Dakota 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.

Kristen Swan, psychologist at Regions Hospital, is mentoring a **support group for deaf and hard of hearing** people. She is seeking interested people to attend the sessions, which would be held at Regions. Time and place have not yet been decided, pending responses from potential attendees. The group will be informal. To indicate your interest, or get more information, please call 651-254-2742.

Restaurant reviews

By Adrienne Haugen

Dairy Queen, Young America/Norwood MN on US 212. They had captioning ON their TV! I inquired with the Manager and asked if the captioning was on because of some "law..."? She said, "No, but I just think it's a good idea to have it on! I took that upon myself to have it on." I told her about HLAA and how we are collecting establishments that have captioning on TVs and told her that I would pass the word on to the MN HLAA. I congratulated her for doing this wonderful and accessible option for the HoH and deaf customers. She said, "Oh my! That just made my day! Makes me feel so good!"

So, if anyone driving along US 212 through Young American / Norwood stops at the DQ, please let the manager know!

The Back Forty, Olivia MN.

At the only traffic lights in town.

Located in the NW corner of 9th St and Lincoln Ave (US 212).

open 10 am - 8 pm.

Menu has wild game and all completely made from scratch recipes. The chef, Shaun, is a very nice person and had two Twin Cities The Back Forty restaurants but has since sold them because he wanted to raised his small children in a rural community.

When traveling and want to stop for a break, say "Hi" to Shaun and thank him for supporting the need of having captioning on the TV for the deaf and hard of hearing patrons.

Product Review

Lumi-pad

By Christine Morgan



While I was looking for something to help my spouse converse with me in the dark and to avoid turning on the light in order to speech-read, I came across a couple of products. I ordered both and I actually found the less expensive one to be the most useful.

The Lumi Pad lights up as you draw on the screen using the enclosed marker. There are several lighting patterns to choose from. It takes 4 AAA batteries which are not included. The Pad can be put on a wall, stand on a table or lay flat. The Lumi Pad has a 7" screen. The Pad comes with a cloth to clean the screen (or facial tissues can be used).

You do not get a choice of colors. I have a blue one and a pink one. I ordered mine from E-Bay with free shipping for \$7.98. Even though it is distributed by Sababa Toys out of New York, it states that it is not a toy.

If you are interested in getting one and are not E-bay user and can't find another source to get one, just let me know. I can order one for you.

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

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."

Beginning Sign Language

March 15, 9:30-11:30

Learn basic signs & phrases, and become familiar with some of the characteristics of American Sign Language and glean an understanding of the importance of gestures, mimes and reading facial expressions and body language.

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

The Sound of Music

By Vicki Martin

..is simply weird. I've been listening to music all of my life, though with less and less of it getting through over time. It became less and less beautiful, and finally just plain boring as my hearing worsened, but still what I did hear was at least recognizable.

Music with a cochlear implant (CI) processor is different. In fact, it can be quite awful. CIs are generally not good for pitch – that is well known among CI users and those who work with us. But CIs can also give music the depths and heights that thrill -- overtones we never even knew were there take on a brilliance and dimension that we struggle to even describe.

Sometimes it is the weirdness that you notice.

I take turns with another congregant in playing hymns for our Sunday church service. I have played the right notes yet heard the wrong ones, and then tried to correct them, thus playing wrong ones after all. I have forgotten to turn on the "music" setting on my processor until I was ready to begin, and held everyone captive to a demonstration of remote-control buttons instead. They are patient, but I am not. I see them poised to sing forth praises while waiting expectantly for me to switch modes. Or I forget to use the music program at all, and play with ever-increasing loudness, while my scan program outpaces me, suppressing the very sounds I want to hear. If I do remember to use the music program, I can't understand the words, so if I forget to count the verses I keep right on playing after the hymn has ended. (I'm becoming fairly good at turning this little solo into a brief postlude before the prayer).

After yet another imperfect attempt to hear and play everything just right, I asked myself: given all this weirdness, how can music sometimes be so exquisitely beautiful? It's an honest question, because often when I am sitting in a concert hall it is the beauty, not the strangeness, that fills my head, and my heart.

Eventually the answer dawned on me. When I go to a concert, my brain isn't doing anything else. I usually have no other immediate concerns. I can simply sit there and let the music come to me. When I am playing, though, my brain is quite busy. It's busy making my fingers move, it's busy counting verses, it's busy watching the singers and speakers to make sure I haven't missed a cue. In short, it is busy doing other things, not processing music.

That I can experience both the weirdness and the sublimity of music (rarely at the same time), gives me hope. If music is glorious sometimes, I am confident it will be again. I don't know when. I don't have much control over that. Trying to relax won't do it. My brain may be up to all sorts of mischief that I'm not even aware of. But not to worry – it's probably wiser than I am about deciding what's important. And it's weird only when I stop and think about it. After more than two years of hearing with a CI, I am used to taking these odd cacophonic excursions. It's the new normal.

But it's still weird...and there I go, *thinking* about it again!



Magazine miscellany

From St. Paul Pioneer Press February 6, 2016

Bulletin Board

"We are daily recipients of noise (machinery, loud music, noisy restaurants). Every loud noise is an assault on our hearing, and once some hearing is lost, it doesn't come back. An employee at the grocery store told me she doesn't notice the shrieking overhead pages any more. That means that she's already had some hearing loss. I don't know anyone who enjoys using hearing aids. Please use ear protection when possible, and make your concerns known when in overly loud environments."

(Editor's comment: I know what she means, but...if you have hearing loss, you will enjoy using a hearing aid more than you will enjoy not using one!)

From Minneapolis Star/Tribune January 12, 2016

Ask Miss Manners

A woman woodworker writes that "when they [store employees] cut the plywood I plug my ears because the sound of the saw hurts my ears (I wear earmuffs when I use the saw at home). My problem is that the employees do NOT wear their earmuffs when they make the cuts. The safety gear is hanging right there, on a hook, unused...Watching others deliberately endanger their hearing is heart-rending to me. I don't know if I should speak up, what to say, and to whom."

Miss Manners replies "...raise the issue with the store owner, relating your own experience with hearing loss."

(Editor's note: It is heartening to see that people are expressing their concern over noise-induced hearing loss.)

From Arthritis Today, November/December 2015:

Published in the Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism (on line)

Data was compared on 10,660 patients with osteoporosis and 31,980 without osteoporosis. Study results: patients with osteoporosis have 1.76 times greater risk of developing sudden deafness (sensorineural hearing loss). The risk was even greater if the patient was older than 50 and in women. Researchers say more studies may help reveal the link.



The CI Personality

By Vicki Martin

I recently met up with Tom, whom I had not seen since the earliest of my cochlear implant days. We chatted for a bit, and he asked me how the CI was working for me. “Great,” I said. “Not perfect, but great.” He nodded. “It has changed your personality,” he added, with apparent approval. I agreed, noting that whenever I question if it is really doing much good, I just think about my behavior.

So what are some of the things I do now that I didn’t do before?

Initiate conversations
Talk to strangers
Spend time in cafeterias
Call people on the telephone
Go to noisy places and stay a while
Forget to put on my hearing aid
Automatically lift the phone to my CI ear, not my hearing aid ear
Forget to use assistive listening
Forget to look at the captions
Find music sublimely beautiful
I never don’t want it on!

But what things do I actually notice the most?

I can’t understand
I can understand, but only with a lot of effort
Music sounds terrible
I can’t use the telephone
All I hear is noise
It sounds like everything is being shouted into a barrel

Clearly, there is still a lot of variation in the way I perceive sound. In fact, I would qualify all of the above observations, good and bad, with “sometimes”.

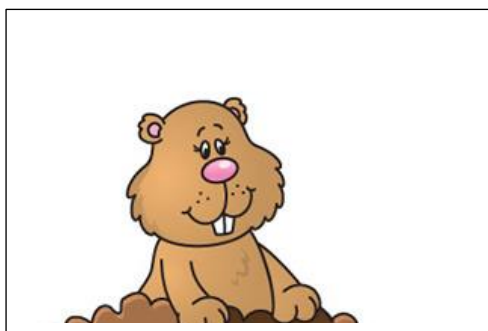
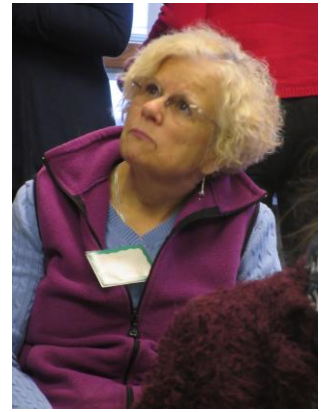
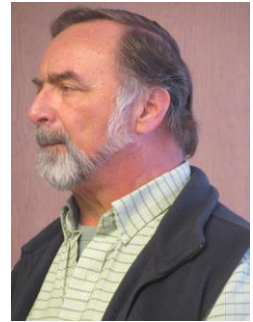
Overall though, life is a lot more fun! There is so much joy in connecting – or reconnecting – with people, and hearing their stories. And their jokes. And even their tales of woe, now that I can commiserate with them.

Even the little everyday exchanges make life much more interesting: less boredom, more zest.

But I didn’t suddenly become a person who wants to hear what others have to say. I think I have always wanted that. It is not my personality that has changed, but my behavior. Though come to think of it, they may be one and the same.



January 2016 Meeting



Punxatawny Phil



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of America

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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.