

HLAA TC

April 2017



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.

Next Speaker:

April 15, 2017

Mary Bauer

DHHS

Hearing Loss in the Workplace

May 20, 2017

Tony Strong

Williams Sound

Assistive Listening Devices

Annual pot luck

Board elections



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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
April 2017

Happy Spring!

When we scheduled our meetings, as we always do, on the third Saturday of the month, I did not realize it would fall on the day before Easter. I hope that most of you will be able to attend Mary Bauer's presentation. She is a terrific speaker and the subject matter is very timely and important.

We are winding down our year before taking a summer break. Time does fly when you are having fun. We hope you have enjoyed the meetings.

So much going on with hearing loss right now. We are seeing articles in the newspaper (at least in the Tribune) about once a month. People are finally talking about hearing loss. We had a great turnout on lobby day and our legislators listened and were quite interested in our issues. The Commission continues to fight to improve life for the Deaf, Deaf/Blind and Hard of Hearing in Minnesota.

But we can't sit back and expect everyone else to fight our fight. We need to be verbal and advocate for ourselves and those who can't advocate for themselves. We need to be **heard!**

Lionel and I are excited about attending the 2017 National Hearing Loss Association Convention. This will be our third convention. I cannot find the

words to express what an amazing experience it is. There is always so much to learn.

I am almost finished putting together the roster of speakers for next season. If there is a subject that you would like to hear about, please let me (or Lionel) know as soon as possible. The Board always wants to hear your feedback, comments, and suggestions.

Enjoy the journey!

Christine



Don't forget the **HLAA 2017 Convention** in Salt Lake City, Utah, June 22-25, 2017

Here's a sample of the varied things to look for:

Familiar names: Mormon Tabernacle Choir, Dr. Colin Driscoll (Mayo Clinic), comedienne Gael Hannan

Topics: what's next in CI technology, CIs and cognition, access to hearing technology

Workshops: genealogy, and hearing loops

To register, go to convention@hearingloss.org

Notice

Med EI will hold another Hands On Workshop after our regular meeting (12:30 p.m. to 2 p.m.) on April 15

April Speaker

MARY BAUER

Minnesota Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (DHHS)
Hearing Loss in the Workplace



Many aspects of the workplace are a challenge if you have hearing loss. A presentation by Mary Bauer, Deaf/Hard of Hearing Specialist at Minnesota Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (DHHS), addresses these issues. Come with your questions and learn what can be done to improve accessibility and communication where you work.

Assistive listening and real-time captioning (aka: CART) will be provided, as always.

Mary Bauer is a Deaf/Hard of Hearing Specialist at Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (DHHS), a division of the Minnesota Department of Human Services. She has been at DHHS since 1996. She provides consultation, information & referral, technical assistance, and training regarding issues related to hearing loss.

Mary is well-known for her presentations and she brings several aspects to her trainings – including her own experiences as a person who is hard of hearing. She graduated from Augustana College in Sioux Falls with a double major in Elementary Education and Deaf Education and has worked with deaf and hard of hearing persons and their families since 1980.

DHHS request – this means you!

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Division (DHHSD), oversees a grant contract with Twin Cities PBS (TPT) to provide real-time captioning services for their Almanac and Almanac at the Capitol show.

Once a year, during an Almanac program, viewers are asked to **provide feedback regarding the real-time captioning**. This year, Twin Cities PBS will make that announcement during their Friday, April 7 show, which airs on the TPT2 channel from 7:00 – 8:00 p.m.

This program will re-air on:

Friday, April 7 at 10:00 PM on TPT's Minnesota Channel

Saturday, April 8 at 1:00 AM on TPT 2

Saturday, April 8 at 6:00 AM, Noon and 6:00 PM on the Minnesota Channel

Sunday, April 9 at 9:30 AM on TPT2

March Meeting Summary



Kathleen Marin, HLAATC Vice-President

Summary of the March 18, 2017 Meeting

President Christine Morgan opened the meeting at 10am, reminded everyone about our lending library and table of “freebies,” and introduced our guest speaker, Sara Oberg, an audiologist who spoke on improving listening comprehension with hearing loss. Sara stated that listening is the primary means by which ideas and information are taken in. It’s not just a matter of hearing sounds, but of understanding them, and involves many aspects of the brain actively working together. Untreated hearing loss is associated with dementia, falls, impaired memory, depression, social isolation and brain tissue loss. Moreover, treating hearing loss is proving effective in combatting each of these problems. Sara also recommended using ear plugs to prevent hearing loss in the first place.

Sara briefly described aural rehabilitation, or retraining your brain to hear and comprehend sounds after a hearing loss. The 4 steps are: detection, discrimination, identification and comprehension of sounds.

Sara provided lots of tips on how to improve communication. For listeners, she recommended: be educated about your hearing loss and willing to explain it to others; pick a well lit, quiet environment; pay attention to the speaker and give them feedback; do not bluff; look for visual cues; gently remind the speaker of what you need; use humor; and be assertive. For speakers, Sara suggested: getting the person’s attention; speaking face to face; using a moderate pace and volume; rephrasing when not understood; eliminating background noise; giving clues about changing the subject; keeping objects away from your face; moving your lips and not mumbling; maintaining a positive attitude; and being patient. Sara then focused on the environment. We need to be aware of our own situation: type of hearing loss, vision, use of glasses and hearing aids or cochlear implants, and level of attention, focus and sleep. She recommended smaller rooms with carpeting and drapes; sitting at a round table; being nearer the speaker; sitting by a wall or corner; and focusing on one person at a time. Lastly, Sara provided some strategies we can use at home to improve our listening skills. These include listening to audiobooks, listening to talk radio, and listening to familiar songs while reading the lyrics. She also provided a list of websites to practice listening skills.

After the break, editor Vicki Martin provided an ASL lesson with the theme of a visit to the dentist’s office as a reminder that there are medical and dental masks available called “the Communicator” that have a plastic insert and allow us to see the speaker’s mouth when they are wearing the mask and thus understand them better. Christine Morgan described a visit she made with vice-president Kathleen Marin to the Children’s Theater to discuss accommodations there. Kathleen described advocating in a low key, subdued and warm manner, one that is not intimidating or difficult for us to do. We then moved into a great discussion of how to get more active, get more people aware of the needs of people with hearing loss. Some ideas were to invite legislators to our meeting, get more active on Facebook (which we

(Summary of the March 8, 2017 Meeting. Cont.)

are already doing), look at each interaction as an opportunity to teach other people and engage them in caring about us, go as a group to speak to our legislators, and work with the medical community to better meet our needs. Secretary Lionel Locke presented a legislative update. He described HLAA National's support of a bill for over-the-counter hearing aids; a document available from the ADA website that talks about effective communication and a document from National that provides facts and statistics that we can share with businesses and our legislators; a state bill that would require staff at assisted living facilities to have training in hearing loss and that Kathleen testified for; and a bill that would require good acoustics and looping in all buildings that have state funding. Treasurer Marie Saliterman thanked people for getting tickets to the steak dinner and reminded us to sell more. Both Kathleen and Lionel want ideas about how to have our association get stronger in getting the word out about hearing loss and getting our needs met. Please email us with any ideas you have. Christine adjourned the meeting at noon.

How to Talk to Your Legislator

By Kathleen Marin

I talked to both my Senator and Representative on Lobby Day, an activity I had originally thought would be intimidating, but actually turned out to be fun and satisfying. Thanks to a training session provided by the Commission for Deaf, Deaf-Blind and Hard of Hearing Minnesotans, I felt quite prepared to meet my legislators and present my case.

But, if we are not doing this on Lobby Day, how do we find out who our legislators are? And how do we make an appointment? I simply Googled "how to find my state legislator" and then clicked on www.leg.state.mn.us. There are lots of websites to choose from, but this one seemed the most "official." Then, under Who Represents Me?, I clicked on district finder, typed in my address, and voila! There were my legislators. I clicked twice on their picture and got their work address, phone number, email, and assistant's information. It's easy to arrange an appointment via phone or email.

The Commission laid out a format for meeting with our legislators, which I followed and found that it worked well. First, introduce yourself by name, identify yourself as a constituent (I also let them know if I voted for them) and thank them for meeting with you. Then explain why you are there, which usually means asking for their support on one or two particular bills regarding hearing loss. A list of these bills, along with an explanation, is available on the Commission's website. It is helpful to bring the formal name and ID number of the bill to leave with your legislators. Next, tell your personal story as it relates to the bill, including how the bill will affect you and people you know. The goal is to help the legislators understand the real, personal, and emotional consequences of this bill. After that, ask if there are any questions and if the legislators will support the bill. If they say yes, thank them. If they say maybe, ask what other information they need to make a decision. If they say no, say that you hope we can convince them to support the bill in the future. Finally thank them for their time and ask them to encourage other legislators to support this bill and others that help people with hearing loss. All of this will only take a few minutes. You can easily meet with both your Senator and Representative on the same day, depending on their schedules.

The single most powerful thing we can do to influence legislation that affects us is to meet with our senators and representatives. Writing letters, signing petitions and calling are helpful, but nothing is more impactful than a face to face meeting. Can I persuade you to make a commitment to meet with your legislator just once a year to support a bill you care about? Imagine the progress we could make in developing a society that supports people with hearing loss!

Testifying During Lobby Day

By Kathleen Marin

The Commission for Deaf, Deaf-Blind and Hard of Hearing Minnesotans asked me to testify on behalf of one of their bills, one that would require training in recognizing and accommodating hearing loss for all staff who work in long term care facilities, like nursing homes and assisted living facilities. I testified before 2 different House committees and a Senate committee. Two of these took place on Lobby Day.

For those of you who don't know (like me, before I started this process), bills have to be introduced in committees, debated, and then sent on to another committee or to several other committees, each of which has a stake in the outcome. This is done in both the Senate and House. If the committees approve the bill, it is moved to the floor, where it will be voted on by all the members of the legislature. It is a perilous journey, and the bill can be denied or changed at each step. Thus it is vital that the bill be presented well each time, and this is where testifiers can make a huge difference.

When I testify, the Commission recommends certain talking points they want emphasized, a time limit (usually 2-5 minutes), and that I tell a personal story that will make an emotional impact so the legislators will truly understand the effect this bill will have. That's a lot to accomplish in very little time, so I write and rewrite what I want to say, and practice several times so I can present the information without reading a script. Every mistake, pause or extra "um" adds seconds to my speech and makes me rush to say all my material in the allotted time.

Although each of my speeches was different, my goal was to provide several real-life examples where I had seen the staff at well-respected facilities say or do things that caused problems for hard of hearing residents, all done out of ignorance about what hearing loss is really like. Since my mom has been in an assisted living, memory care and nursing home, I had lots of anecdotes to draw on. For instance, aides help the residents gather together to watch old TV shows like Lawrence Welk, but there are no captions or ALDs; the movie theater in another facility has popcorn but no captions or ALDs; aides chat with the residents while looking into the closet or chest of drawers, with the result that the residents can't understand them; nurses check on the residents from the door to their apartment rather than going in and talking to them face to face; meals are announced on a PA system, so hard of hearing people are late or miss meals altogether; and so on. I also talked about my own experiences, like not being able to hear my tablemates in noisy dining halls, or watching my friend fade away because it was just too much work to overcome the obstacles caused by her hearing loss and also by the staff's lack of awareness of how to communicate with her. What is particularly sad is that the aides and nurses really care and want to do a good job, and they would be distressed to learn that they were not helpful with their hard of hearing patients.

I am happy to say that these bills passed out of their respective committees. Unfortunately, the wording had to be changed from "requiring" to "recommending" training in hearing loss, which took away much of the power of the bill. Nonetheless, it is a first step in providing better care for our vulnerable hard of hearing older adults. And I remain grateful and humbled that the Commission keeps asking me to testify. It is very satisfying to be able to play a role in improving the lives of those of us with hearing loss.

Notice – Hot off the Press!

There will be NO Minnesota Walk4Hearing this year
(For reasons to be explained by board)



Magazine Miscellany

Pioneer Press March 9, 2017:

“Dear Abby: I’m a 13-year-old girl who is blessed to have both sets of grandparents alive and healthy. Recently, my Dad’s mother has become very quiet and reserved at social events...she wouldn’t involve herself in a long conversation with anyone...it was obvious she would rather not talk...other family members have noticed her behavior, and we are unsure of what may be causing it.

Dear Silent: Your grandmother may be upset about something, and her refusal to talk could be her way of expressing her displeasure, or she may be having a personal problem she’s not ready to discuss...”

We hope they also ask: Can she hear? --- editor

Pioneer Press March 19, 2017:

Worse than we thought

“Matt Garlock has trouble making out what his friends say in loud bars, but when he got a hearing test, the result was normal...[this is called] ‘hidden hearing loss’...loud noise...damages our hearing in a previously unsuspected way...it does not show up in standard hearing tests. But over time...it can rob our ability to understand conversation in a noisy setting...the bottom line: ‘Noise is more dangerous than we thought’....work...suggests loud noise damages the delicate connections between hair cells and the nerves that carry the hearing signal to the brain...The connections between hair cells are called synapses, and a given hair cell has many of them...you could lose more than half of your synapses without any effect on how you score on an audiogram...the work lends a new urgency to the standard advice about protecting the ears in loud places.”

CPR and Hearing Loss – Not a Great Mix

Christine T. Morgan

I have been teaching Tai Chi for over 13 years on a part-time basis. Now two of the places where I teach are insisting I have CPR certification. I was certified years ago but let it lapse when I retired from medical group administration.

Well, how hard could it be and, of course, I had done the certification many times in the past. Plus, it is a good idea to be certified because things are always changing and you may just have the chance to save someone’s life. So, sign me up.

I got to class and realized I did not bring my assistive listening device. Oh well, it wouldn’t be the first time. I explained to the teacher about my hearing loss and sat in front of him in the classroom part. Did he stand still? Of course not! However, the short films were captioned! Yay! That helped a lot.

When all the students (about 50 I’m guessing) went into the carpeted hallway to practice our technique on the adult dummy (we used to call her Annie), the noise level rose as everyone was talking at the same time and of course, the instructor was quite a distance from me. I relied on my two partners. Compressions and breathing were no problem (although she has an extremely hard chest). However, when it my turn to use the Automatic External Defibrillator (AED), I did not understand the “commands” with all the noise and AEDs going off. I had to look at my partners to interpret what it said. Very frustrating!

Doing CPR on the baby dummy was done on a table instead of the floor and much easier on my body. My partners this time were fitness instructors as well and were very understanding and helpful.

All and all, I did pass and now certified. If I ever need to use what I learned and am alone I won’t need to worry about an AED. If I am with someone and we are going to use an AED, I hope I have a hearing partner! I wonder if they have AEDs for people with hearing loss?

Reading While Listening – sort of

By Vicki Martin

‘Reduced hearing is a recognized symptom of anxiety’ says Gael Hannan (The Way I Hear It, p. 170). While I have certainly known this at some level for a long time, seeing it stated so bluntly took me by surprise.

What actually happens is that our *perception* level plummets. If you are listening, you can’t hear what is being said. If you are reading at the same time, you can’t understand what is written.

Having experienced the depression/anxiety syndrome since the Mesolithic era (relatively speaking), I am painfully aware that one symptom of the illness is the inability to comprehend even a simple written paragraph after reading it, say, ten times in a row – just like I do now when I try to read, if there is anyone talking, just finished talking, about to talk, or possibly going to talk within the next five minutes. This is the case even in the absence of depression.

It is not the case, however, if you can contrive to be deaf. Just turn off all of your hearing equipment! Provided that no gnawing anxiety is compelling you to be hyper-alert to all sensory input, you will be able to read and understand like any normal person. Except, of course, that you will hear nothing -- which isn’t always ideal either.

You worry that someone may try to talk to you, and become angry when you don’t answer. Or you may believe someone is calling plaintively for your assistance and you feel bad because you have abandoned everyone.

But there is a solution that works pretty well: choose a block of time -- 45 minutes to read the newspaper, for instance – and announce to whoever may care that you will be off the air that long. Pause for any final comments or requests, and then do as you have said: turn off your hearing aids, cochlear implant processors or other hearing devices. For 45 minutes you will be able to read – and understand what you read!

At the end of that time you have to turn them back on. It’s OK though – because you aren’t trying to read any more. Just cross your fingers and hope that no one asks you about the details of the education funding plan, or the NAFTA overhaul.



Adult Cochlear Implant Social Group

Sunday, April 23, 2017, 1:00- 3:00 PM

**Como Park Zoo and Conservatory
1225 Estabrook Drive St. Paul, MN 55103
Host: Joanna Bailey, 651-487-8201**

We will be meeting in the Zobota Café in the Conservatory. We are planning on sitting at one of the tables near the main doors from 1:00-1:30 and then we can walk around and enjoy the beautiful conservatory and zoo. You are welcome to bring a spouse, partner, friend, family member, and/or significant other to any of these events. Please check this website for parking and other helpful information:

<http://www.comozooconservatory.org/plan/#/visitor-guide>

Community Education offerings

Christine, Lionel and Kathleen are helping the world find out about hearing loss. Numerous sessions are scheduled at various locations. Those scheduled for April and May 2017 are listed below:

Help! My Partner has Hearing Loss

South Washington County at Cottage Grove Middle School 651-425-6600 www.cecool.com

May 4, 2017 6-7:30 PM

Hopkins Community Education - Eisenhower Community Center 952-988-4070 www.lHopkinsCommunityEd.org

May 3, 2017 6-7:30 PM

May 12, 2017 10-11:30 AM

I've Been Diagnosed With Hearing Loss!

South Washington County at Cottage Grove Middle School 651-425-6600 www.cecool.com

April 7, 2017 10 - 11:30 AM

April 20, 6 - 7:30 PM

Rosemount /Apple Valley/Eagan Community Education 651-423-7925 www.district196.org/ce

April 19, 2017 10-11:30 AM

Communication Strategies when Dealing with Hearing Loss

Hopkins Community Education - Eisenhower Community Center 952-988-4070 www.lHopkinsCommunityEd.org

April 6, 2017 6-7:30 PM

April 28, 2017 10-11:30 AM

Identifying and Coping with Hearing Loss

Hopkins Community Education - Eisenhower Community Center 952-988-4070 www.lHopkinsCommunityEd.org

May 3, 2017 6 - 7:30 PM

Registration is required. Fees apply



Steak Fry

When: May 10, 2017 - 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Where: Crystal Lions VFW, 5222 Bass Lake Rd

Meal: Steak, Baked Potato, Toast, Cole Slaw & Coffee

Cost: \$11.00 / Ticket

Sign up to volunteer and to sell tickets! Also – plan to come and enjoy a steak dinner!

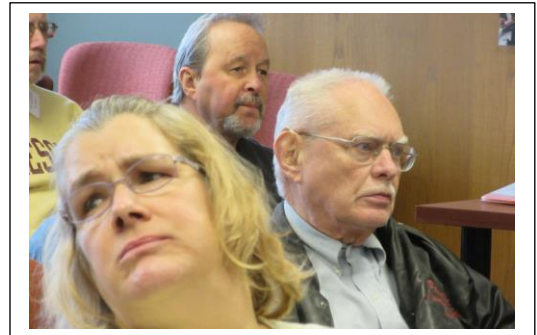
Brave New Workshop Comedy Theatre offers half price tickets to theater-goers with hearing loss!

BNW, 824 Hennepin Avenue, Minneapolis, MN 55403, is proud to present an ASL-Interpreted Performance of "Booty And The Beast: A Cinderella Story" on May 5th at 8pm.

Use the discount code ASL to get tickets for just \$17 (regular price \$34)! Hearing loss patrons who do not sign are also welcome to **use the code HLAA for the same discount on May 5th.** Assistive listening is available.

For more information, or assistance with reserving ASL seats, please call 612-332-6620 or email info@bravenewworkshop.com

Photos from March meeting



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Our next meeting is April 15, 2017

First Class

HLAA Twin Cities Chapter

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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 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.