

HLAA TC

March 2018



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:

March 17, 2018

Peggy Nelson, Center for Applied Translational Sensory Science
CATSS research update

April 21, 2018

Cochlear Implant Panel

May 19, 2018

Elections, Pot Luck, Auction



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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

*President's Message
HLAATC March 2018*

***We truly have March madness in Minnesota!
Tournaments, flip-flopping weather, wearing of
the Green, moving our clocks ahead, etc.***

If you missed the February meeting, you missed an excellent presentation by Dr. Sam Levine. We almost didn't let the man out of the door after his talk. This month we welcome CATSS from the U of M. This is another not-to-be missed presentation for sure.

I would like to remind everyone that Board elections are coming up quickly. Nominate yourself or someone you think would make a great officer. After four amazing years as President and one as VP, I am stepping down. Marie (our Treasurer) is also stepping down. It is always good to have fresh ideas and new blood.

We NEED at least one or two members to agree to be greeters asap. It is almost impossible for the Board members to greet people, sign them in, get their name tags and answer questions. The only qualifications you need are a working knowledge of the alphabet and a smiling, welcoming face and manner.

You have no idea the time and effort it takes to

have the room set up by 9:30 a.m. Lionel is always here around 8 a.m. and, when their personal lives (we do have them folks!) allow, Board members are here around 8:30 a.m. A special thanks to Ned, Shannon and Tiffany who consistently arrive early to help us set up. Additional help is always appreciated.

April will be our CI company panel with updates from the cochlear implant world. May will be our year-end party with our potluck and silent auction. We'd love to collect a wide array of prizes for the auction. Lionel can provide you with a letter containing all the information a company or person may need for their tax deductible donation.

"May the road rise up to meet you.....

Christine





Kathleen Marin, Vice-President

Meeting Summary February 17, 2018

President Christine Morgan opened the meeting at 10 am, and the Board and other members presented first. Christine remarked that a recent study showed that 75% of Medicare beneficiaries who needed hearing aids did not have them and the number of people of Medicare age keeps growing. Vice President Kathleen Marin reminded people that a group of hard of hearing individuals from Japan will be in town for the HLAA Convention and want to meet with us to exchange info and stories about life with hearing loss. She also invited anyone who wants to try advocacy to join her when she meets with officials at the Ordway and other venues to discuss accommodations for people with hearing loss. Please contact her at vicepresident@hlaatc.org.

Our member, Bob talked about the possibility of doing a steak fry again this year as a fundraiser. He believes that we should each try to sell 3 tickets to make it worthwhile. The tickets are \$11 each and it will take place on Wednesday May 9 at the Crystal VFW. Please contact any board member if you are interested. Another member presented on hearing alert service dogs. She stated that her dog is from Can Do Canines, an organization that provides dogs for free to people who qualify. It is an extensive application process followed by training at the facility and at home before the dog is confirmed to be yours. Her dog alerts her to the phone, doorbell, smoke alarm and to when she drops something, among other tasks. Ross Hammond and Christine reminded the group that the HLAA National Convention will be in Minneapolis at the Hyatt From June 21-24. We can obtain discounted registration by volunteering a 3-hour block of time. Contact Lionel for volunteer options.

Our guest speaker was Dr. Samuel Levine, Professor of Otolaryngology and Neurology at the University of Minnesota, who presented on tinnitus. Tinnitus is a perception of sound that has no apparent physical basis. It is common; about 3 million people in the US are disabled by their tinnitus. Roughly 1 in 10 people have some degree of tinnitus. The number 1 disability vets return from war with is tinnitus, followed by hearing loss. Most people who have hearing loss also have tinnitus. Moreover, many people with hearing loss also have abnormal loudness growth, or recruitment, which means that they cannot tolerate loud sounds.

(February meeting summary, cont.)

The tinnitus that most of us experience is subjective (meaning that no one else can hear it) and bilateral. The pitch roughly corresponds to the pitch of the hearing loss. Tinnitus often fluctuates and can be affected by other noises. Pink noise, or masking tones around a specific frequency, often block tinnitus, at least for a while.

In the normal functioning of the ear, there are both afferent (or stimulatory) fibers going toward the brain and inhibitory fibers that stop the signal from progressing from the brainstem further up into the brain. When the normal function of the inner ear fails, tinnitus is essentially released or liberated to flow up the brainstem.

There are a variety of possible treatments for tinnitus. All forms of treatment that improve hearing will almost always improve tinnitus. The most common way is a hearing aid. Blocking the tinnitus with a radio, fan or other noise making device is helpful and common and something we can do around our home. The drug Xanax, or alprazolam, has been shown to block tinnitus, but it is mildly habit forming. People have used Melatonin, an over the counter hormone that aids in resetting the biological clock. It has been helpful, but it is unclear if the help is due to sleeping better or actually minimizing the tinnitus.

Another effective option is tinnitus retraining therapy, devised by Jastreboff, which consists of exposing the person to sounds similar to tinnitus while also going through a psychotherapeutic treatment. This program is long, expensive and not covered by insurance. The newest direction for treating tinnitus is to electrically stimulate the nerve and thereby block tinnitus. Dr. Levine then took many questions from the group.

Christine closed the meeting at noon.

Deaf Culture Training

Tuesday, April 17, 2018, 9:30am – 11:30 am

A **FREE** two-hour **diversity training** that will allow participants to learn more about the vibrant Deaf Community, its history, values, norms and traditions.

Survival Sign Language Training

Wednesday, May 9, 2018, 9:30 a.m. – 12 noon

A **FREE** two and a half (2.5) hours **diversity training** that will allow participants to learn basic survival signs used on the job and become familiar with some of the characteristics of American Sign Language/ASL.

Offered by **Metro Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services**

Golden Rule Building, Suite 105, 85 E. 7th Place, St. Paul, MN 55101

Registration: Email: dhhs.metro@state.mn.us

Phone: 651-431-5940 voice (or use your preferred relay service)

Please provide the following information when registering:

Name, email address, phone number, employer and job title, name of training class, date and time of training class, how you heard about this training.

Introducing our March Speaker



Peggy Nelson

Center for Applied Translational Sensory Science, University of Minnesota

CATSS research – current status

I am working to find ways of making hearing devices that are both successful and accessible for people with hearing loss.

That is, they must work in challenging environments like restaurants and music venues. Not only that, but they must in the end make a difference in a person's life.

The challenges are daunting, but we believe we are making progress toward developing solutions that will allow people with hearing loss to maintain active, engaged, and purposeful lives.

Observation on captioning:

The evening news on February 21 contained the captions “where 3M illegally dumped perfluorochemicals...”. Having followed this news story on other media, I knew that the chemicals had been “legally” (not “illegally”) dumped. There are many mistakes in the news captioning, and most of them are rectified the next time around. But the next night, on the same news program, the updated story again stated that the chemicals had been “illegally dumped.”

It is the very sort of mistake we ourselves make, often with even more damaging results – we hear “is” for “isn’t”, or “can” for “can’t”, thus changing the entire meaning of the statement.

This is therefore a warning: if something doesn’t sound right, maybe it isn’t! If in doubt, check it out.

Ripples in a Pond

Kathleen Marin



I read once that every time we advocate for ourselves, we advocate for everyone else with a hearing loss as well. It's a motto I live by. But what does this mean on a day to day basis? Basically, it means that I am always on the lookout for ways I can make a difference, however small, in helping people with normal hearing understand what we with a hearing loss experience, need or would benefit from.

For instance, when I attend a movie or live event, I ask for captioning or assistive listening devices with neck loops. If they don't have these, I find a person in charge and explain why they are important. If a place offers captioning and/or ALDs but doesn't advertise that they are available, I ask them to make a sign and put it in a prominent place. I have requested that organizations add this type of information to their websites. When videos in museums aren't captioned, I have brought that to the attention of staff.

Most places have responded well to my suggestions and have been grateful to learn how they can be inclusive. On those rare occasions when I've been met with unnecessary obstacles being put in my way, I've resorted to going up the chain of command, all the way to corporate headquarters once. I've also called in reinforcements, such as VSA to help me. When I've found a place that is especially accommodating, I've thanked them profusely, again explaining why what they did was so helpful.

So why am I writing about this? To ask you to get involved as well. Basically, this is advocacy made easy, or advocacy 101. I want you to be an activist in your daily life. If you are in a hospital waiting room, check to see if the tv has captions. If not, ask to have them turned on. Go to the movies and ask for captioning. If the captions work well, thank them. If not, let them know. If you are not comfortable speaking with a manager, fill out a comment card. I've had great success with comment cards.

When you visit your medical clinic, let them know that you can't hear when they are looking at their computers or walking ahead of you. It often leads to an interesting discussion, and, at the very least, helps educate people in the medical profession. Do you need to register for something or buy tickets? Check to see if it can be done on-line. The same holds true for getting more information about an activity. In other words, consider each place you spend time in your life and assess how well it accommodates people with hearing loss. Then, either request an accommodation or thank them for being inclusive. You can do this in person, on the phone, on-line or with a comment card -- whatever you are comfortable with.

Each time we educate someone, request and receive an accommodation, or even just talk about life with a hearing loss, it is like making a ripple in a pond. When all of us are doing this, we can make a wave that will bring about change that will benefit everyone with a hearing loss.

Don't Forget!



Early-bird Convention registration is OPEN until March 31!

Register Online or Offline

Online – fill out the [Online Registration](#) and registration will be a breeze; you will receive a confirmation letter by email.
Offline – download and complete the [Registration Form](#) and mail, fax or email the form to us.

convention@hearingloss.org.

Open Captioning Tips (courtesy VSA Minnesota)

You can find listings of captioned (and other accessible) performances on
<http://vsamn.org/community/calendar>

Example: [The Pirates of Penzance](#) is coming to St. Paul: Park Square Theatre
Dates captioned: Fri.-Sat. March 23-24, 7:30, March 25, 2:00

TIPS:

Making Reservations: confirm with the box office that the service you need is offered, along with the correct date, time and price/discount.

Requesting Accommodations: If you learn about a show you would like to attend (for instance at <http://vsamn.org/community/resources-community> or elsewhere) but the accessible service you need is not offered, contact the performing company as far in advance as possible to request the service. VSA Minnesota can refer them to qualified describers, interpreters or captioners.

Hi, Jack!



In Kathleen Marin's article last month, "Hope for Inclusiveness", she says "If you have your own loop, I suggest bringing it in case they run out of ALDs with neck loops. That is what I did the first few times I attended. It doesn't work perfectly, but is better than not having an ALD." Kathleen noted that she would get sound if her loop was partially plugged in, but it was hard to maintain the connection.

Since then, we have had some discussions about why plugging one's own neckloop into their ALD device would not work as well as using the neckloops they provide. A little treasure-hunting on the internet, as well as some experimentation at home resulted in some generalizations that may be of use to the less technically inclined among us (myself included). Your jack must, of course, be the right diameter (3.5mm for most ALDs I have used).

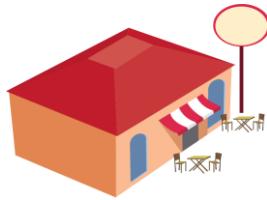
Look at the jack on your neckloop (or other headset). It will have one, two or three rings near the tip. Here's what that tells you:

The black band (ring) separates the contacts from one another
One contact: monaural
Two contacts: stereo
Three contacts: stereo with microphone.

A monaural device will need a 1-ring jack. If the device is stereo, you will probably have good results using either a 2-ring or a 3-ring jack. To avoid confusion it is best to connect mono to mono and stereo to stereo. An ALD will most likely not be expecting microphone input.

If you are using the right kind of jack, and your headset still works only when part-way plugged in, most online advice givers say it is probably a broken wire that you can't see. Some say you can have it fixed if the headphones are very expensive, or fix it yourself if you are technically inclined. Otherwise, most agree, get a new headset.

--- Vicki Martin



Restaurant Review

Vicki Martin



Portillo's

Radio Drive just south of I-94 in Woodbury MN

(Second Minnesota location now open in Maple Grove)

If you've ever had a longing for a real Chicago Hot Dog, or authentic Italian Beef and Peppers, Portillo's just might be the place for you. Or maybe not. It is one of the noisiest places around, and is nearly always very busy.

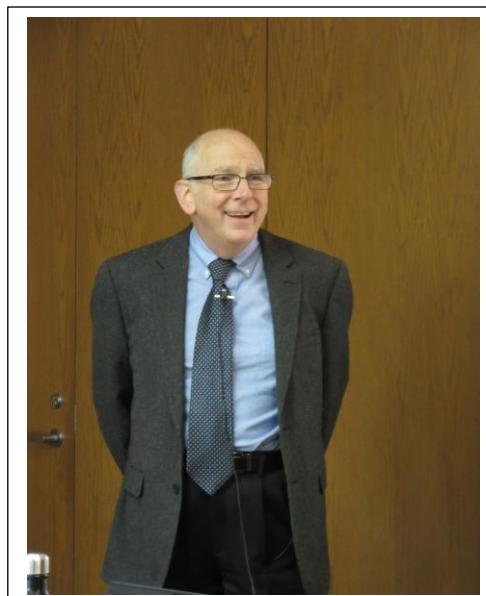
On with the menu, though: Besides their signature grill items, there are also several tasty main-dish salads, a genuine chocolate malt just like the one you had on your first date, and a good selection of fattening desserts. It may take you a while to decide what you would like to order, but whatever it is, it will taste good.

Unfortunately, you are not finished yet. You have to wait with the crowd until your order is ready, and then bolt up to the counter to get it when they call your number. That's right – they actually call out your number in the midst of all the mayhem, and expect you to hear it and come forward. Many people actually do so, but just between you and me – that's not going to be us.

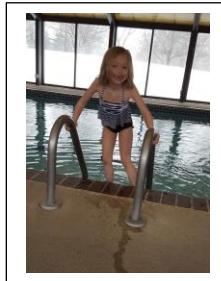
My recommendation: bring a hearing friend. This is admittedly a temporary solution, because that friend may not always be available when you want to go. But there is more you can do! Talk to the manager. Use his office, and close the door if you want him to hear you. Ask for accommodations. (It's what we do!). If you are not able to corral the manager in person, send her an email explaining the problem, and maybe add a couple of your own clever ideas for communicating that the order is ready. (Text message on your phone? A big sign with your name on it? A waiter who will deliver it to you in person?) You get the idea.

It may take a little persistence. If there are no changes over a reasonable period of time, I suggest we organize a big HLAA lunch right about noon on a Friday or Saturday. Let's say we have fifty hard of hearing customers each placing an order. Don't yell. Challenge them with your normal speaking voice. Then we'll make our way to the pickup counter where we'll congregate, fifty of us all smiling and nodding while we wait to **hear** our numbers called...

February Meeting 2018 Photos



The Madness of March!





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Jerri McMahon, BC-HIS
Sr. Hearing Instrument Specialist

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Our next meeting is: March 17, 2018

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Photos – Vicki Martin

Newsletter Editor -
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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. Accommodations: All meetings are real time captioned by Lisa Richardson and her staff of *Paradigm Captioning* (www.paradigmreporting.com). The meeting room is also looped for T-coil or receiver.

Please visit the chapter's web-site at www.hlaatc.org or visit us on Facebook: groups/HLAA-TC.