

HLAA TC May 2020



The mission of HLAA TC is to open the world of communication to people with hearing loss by providing information, education, support and advocacy.

Future Speakers:



Newsletter Schedule

During the COVID-19 shutdown, newsletters will continue to be published on our regular schedule (September thru June) with the exception of the June 2020 issue, which will be moved to July.

Contributions are welcome!
(send to editor@hlaatc.org)

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Officers' emails

- Christine Morgan - president@hlaatc.org
- Mike Higgins vicepresident@hlaatc.org
- Lionel Locke - treasurer@hlaatc.org
- Dwight Maxa – director@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



President's Message HLAATC
May 2020
Christine Morgan

I hope this newsletter finds you safe and healthy!

This pandemic is hard on everyone. The number of deaths is extremely distressing and the fear of catching this, sometimes deadly, virus is very real. Our lives have been disrupted in so many ways. We are social animals and were not meant to isolate. Isolation can bring out the worst in people or go the other direction and lead to depression. But this is what we need to be safe and to keep our families and each other safe.

Adults have it bad but what about our children and grandchildren who are too young to understand? So very sad! I could go on and on about those affected by this horrible disease but I'm sure all of you get bombarded with an overload of information, usually adding to stress.

I guess by now everyone knows that our May meeting is cancelled. That doesn't mean that we don't want to reach out to you and know how you are doing. If you want to call the HLAATC phone and talk to one of us, please do. Feel free to email any of the officers as well. We truly care about you and want to know how you are.

Because we did not have meetings, we did not have an election of officers. See my article in this newsletter explaining how we plan to handle elections.

Obviously, no one was prepared for what we are dealing with. I wanted to share with you my experiences, since the stay-at-home order, with virtual visits with healthcare providers. See my article in this newsletter. Maybe your experience has been different than mine. If so, or if you experienced something similar, drop me a line and let me know.

We, the Board, will do everything we can to keep you updated regarding our Chapter and the future meetings, just as soon as we reasonably can.

Be safe, stay healthy, and stay informed!

Christine



**The May 2020 meeting is
canceled**

HLAA-TC ANNUAL ELECTIONS POSTPONED

NOTICE TO MEMBERS AND GUESTS OF THE TWIN CITIES CHAPTER:

As you all realize, our last general membership meeting was in February. Since that time, out of necessity, the Board of Directors has cancelled the March, April and May meetings due to the COVID-19 virus pandemic. These cancellations included the Nominating Committee report due at the April meeting and the annual meeting and election of officers scheduled for May.

Several options were considered by the Board of Directors: virtual meetings, mail in ballots for the election, and large room meeting facilities within social distancing guidelines. Considering that our membership contains many vulnerable adults, the Board is being very cautious as we plan how to come together as a group. Unfortunately, none of these options reviewed are workable or acceptable in our current environment.

The Board, therefore, decided to extend the terms of the current Officers, until such time that the General Membership can safely meet. While we do not know when that will be, the Board will continue to monitor the State guidelines and schedule our next meeting when and where feasible.

The Board also serves as a nominating committee and we welcome any member who has an interest, in serving the organization, either by participating in one of our committees and/or who is willing to consider a Board position. The nominating committee has placed in nomination the following three (3) candidates, with their respective positions for a two-year term.

President: Christine Morgan

Vice President: Mike Higgins

Treasurer: Lionel Locke

Secretary: Vacant, accepting nominations

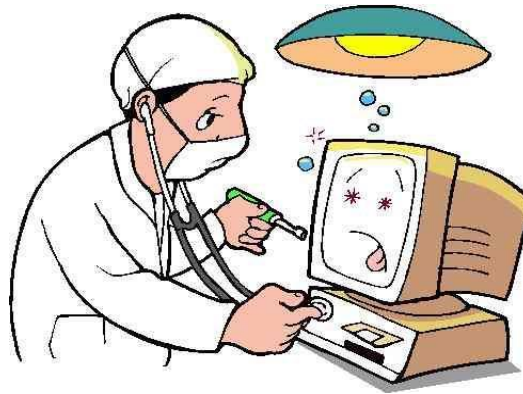
Director at Large: Dwight Maxa (term expires in May 2021)

Please contact any of the officers listed in our newsletter by email or by calling the HLAA-TC phone number 763-447-9672. If you receive a voicemail, please leave a message, and we will get back to you, usually within 24 hours.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, please stay safe and keep healthy in these trying times.

Christine T. Morgan, President

Virtual Visits with Hearing Loss



What happens when you have hearing loss and can't see your healthcare provider face-to-face? Have you had the "virtual visit" experience? Has it been satisfactory for you? Let me give you four of my personal examples.

- Routine follow-up visit with physician. Physician uses "doxy", my computer evidently doesn't like doxy and my camera won't work to allow physician to see me. Physician calls me on home phone and captioning is spotty and doesn't start right away. Not a great experience!
- Planned visit that has to go virtual. Healthcare provider can't see me (what in the heck is wrong with my camera? It works with Skype.) I watch providers face and mostly understand what she is saying but no captioning. I need things repeated.
- Minor skin problem. Emailed physician's office. Informed me that I needed to put their app on my cell phone. Once I did, had a virtual visit. We could see each other (yeah!) but no captioning. Physician not very adept at holding still and I got different views of her face, legs, jeans, etc. during the call. Amusing, but.....
- Another routine follow-up visit (different doctor). Physician practice also uses "doxy". My camera would not function (big surprise, right?). Remember, my camera has this aversion to doxy. She then called my cell phone where I could see her but had a lot of trouble hearing and understanding her as she moved around and was pulling up my chart on her computer. See later notes!

So when we got the information from national about people with hearing loss and telehealth, I decided to reach out to the four practices. Their websites did not help at all. Calling did not help me find the right person. Frustrating, you ask?

I did the next best thing: sent an email through their version of MyChart as a "general question" and telling them about my experience and the 20% of the population with hearing loss that need to understand their medical provider. I did say how much I liked and trusted the provider at their practice. I also sent the link letting them know that they were out of compliance with the communication access section of ADA.

Twenty minutes later, I got a personal call from the 4th doctor on this list (see above). She was very upset that I hadn't understood all she said on the cell phone (with camera working). I explained the needs of those of us with hearing loss and that I was trying to reach administration or IT to let them know what a serious problem this is. Who could help provide the needed captioning? She stated she would pass it on.

Five minutes later, she sent a link to my cell phone. Both her camera and mine worked this time and she apologized that it didn't provide captioning. She made it a point to look directly into the camera and ensure that I was understanding. She also said she does deal with a lot of people with hearing loss and realizes what a problem that could be for them. She will bring it up to the "powers that be".

Though, she will pass the information on, she wasn't very confident that accommodations could be made quickly. No surprise there. What I was surprised about were the personal calls from her, not her nurse or assistant. Pretty impressive even though it lacked captioning.

I hope your experience has (or will be) different, should you need a virtual visit. I'm attaching the link to the article to pass on (if you are able).

https://www.hearingloss.org/covid-19-healthcare-providers-guidelines-telehealth-accessibility/#.Xqw2_2bde24.email

And, did I mention, after about 12-15 minutes on my captioned landline phone call, the captioning cuts off, and the phone hangs up? That was my experience while I was doing a research project regarding COVID-19 and people with hearing loss. The captioning stopped and the phone hung up 3 times. Like we don't have enough stress at this time!

I would love to hear about your experiences with virtual visits! Send them to president@hlaatc.org. We may even publish them without your name, if you would like to share with us.

We'd love to hear from you!

-- Christine Morgan

Tylenol and Advil (being used for coronavirus fever and pain) and hearing loss

You already knew that acetyl salicylate (aspirin) can cause or exacerbate hearing loss, right? That's been common knowledge since I can remember. But did you know that acetaminophen (Tylenol) and ibuprofen (Advil) can too?

This link between painkillers and hearing loss was announced by Consumer Reports in their health publication On Health (though Ibuprofen has been on Dr. Elaine Suss' intermediate list of ototoxic drugs since at least 1994).

Several studies have found that people who use these drugs frequently (twice a week or more) "are up to 24 percent more likely to develop hearing loss" than those who do not take them, or do so less frequently. This type of hearing loss tends to be reversible up to a point, but continued use at high dose can result in hearing loss or tinnitus.

--- editor

Virtual Travel Allows for Safe Exploration of the World
(published on our blog on April 15, 2020)
By Laura Hagemann

As Minnesotans, we're used to spending time at home dreaming of the vacations we'll take. However, the dreams usually involve dreaming of warmer climates when we're knee-deep in snow. With the current global health pandemic of COVID-19 keeping us homebound, our dreams of travel no longer just involve getting away from Minnesota weather. Now our dreams of travel harkens back to a time when we *could* travel. Well, travel will happen again, but in the meantime, we can virtually travel practically anywhere! Because we live in the age of the computer and the Internet even though our physical movements are limited by restrictions to stop the spread of COVID-19, computers and the Internet make it possible for us to "travel" just about anywhere. In this atypical COVID-19 News Update, we're taking a look at the websites and webcams that make it possible for you to travel *virtually* anywhere.



Websites/Webcams of Great Travel Destinations Perfect For Virtual Travel

- [12 Virtual Vacations](#) to take right now without leaving home. This includes the Grand Canyon, Machu Picchu, the White House, and the Sistine Chapel.
- Become a virtual egyptologist and explore the pyramids of Egypt online: [Pyramids of Giza](#).
- Take a trip across the pond and enjoy a [virtual tour of Buckingham Palace](#) and here's a [360-degree tour](#) if you are viewing it on a tablet or smartphone.
- [48 Hours Around the World](#) (from home). This is another compilation list from the TripSavvy website. It's a virtual road map and itinerary for traveling the world in 48 hours. Starting with a breakfast of crumpets (recipe included) in London and ending with the sounds of the Native American flute in the United States.

What do you usually see on trips to other parts of the world? Museums. They offer a way for us to explore the cultures of times gone by and summarize the uniqueness of the new location

where we are vacationing. Have no fear, homebound travelers, because there are plenty of museums and cultural institutions that offer virtual tours.



- Virtual Museum Tours: [A list of 12 museums with virtual tours.](#)
- [A list of 30](#) museums, zoos, and theme parks with virtual tours.
- A virtual tour of [The Vatican.](#)
- We'll always have Paris... virtually. Tour [The Louvre Museum](#) in Paris, France.
- The Smithsonian may be closed now because of COVID-19, but you can tour it [online.](#)
- [Five National Parks to visit virtually.](#)

Once you start exploring the world virtually the possibilities of what you can see is pretty endless. Just a simple web browser search using the search term “virtual tour” results in many possibilities. So, until we can actually start traveling in person, virtual travel is an excellent resource.

And if you have access to cable TV the Travel Channel and HGTV also offer great means of escape in the form of travel shows and “House Hunters International” (HGTV). PBS also offers many travel shows and once you start exploring the world this way you'll be a true virtual explorer.



Social Distancing has Magnified Problems for People with Severe Hearing Loss



Standing 6 feet or more from the person you are trying to communicate with isn't easy for many of us. I ended up with a very strange pizza the other day because of what I thought I heard when ordering from the drive-thru at the approved distance.

Older people with severe hearing loss are also among those with the highest risk of serious illness from COVID-19 and should be the most vigilant about social distancing and yet they are at the most risk of social isolation and loneliness. That raises the question of how to stay *connected and centered* as we practice social distancing. Being a person that likes plans and check lists, here are some ideas, new and old that may help:

1. Develop a plan stay to in regular touch with friends, family and neighbors. The plan should also confirm ways to communicate and how to get help if you need medical supplies, food or other items.
2. Remain socially connected through regular phone calls, video calls, texting, email and talk to your family and friends about how you are feeling.
3. Offer help to a neighbor or someone who you know is alone and who you think may eventually need help.
4. Make a list of community organizations that can help with socialization and information.
5. Take a break from TV media news and read something that is not online.
6. Get one or two good laughs in every day.
7. Spend a good deal of time outside every day and get your heart rate up while you're at it. It's the best thing you can do for your mental health.
8. Do one thing daily just because you want to. Do one thing you'll be glad you did later.
9. Practice being mindful in a spiritual, sensory, visual and auditory way at least once a day.
10. Tend to something that is growing. Your hair doesn't count!

COVID-19 is testing the bonds that connect us all. Reaching out to friends, family and others can help protect us from this virus, as well as social isolation and loneliness.

--- Dwight Maxa

Masks during COVID-19 for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

By Laura Hagemann



As COVID-19 has changed a lot of daily activities for everyone, surgical and cloth face masks are becoming more commonly used by the average person. Those who are deaf or hard of hearing know, a mask that covers the wearer's mouth makes speech reading an impossible task. With the CDC recommending the wear of face masks, more people are making patterns and resources available for making face masks with clear panels to accommodate speech reading. In this article, I mention (and link) to several mask resources (both with and without clear speech reading panels).

The CDC recommends wearing face masks where social distancing practices are hard to maintain (grocery stores, etc.). The CDC also has sewing and non-sewing patterns available on their [website](#) for masks and instructions for proper cloth mask sterilization. However, these patterns don't allow for a clear panel to accommodate speech reading. A college student in Kentucky designed masks with clear speech reading panels. Read more about her mask designs in this [article](#). After reading about these homemade clear panel masks I searched online for more resources regarding similar masks.

More people have made tutorials and patterns available online for making masks with clear speech reading panels. [Here is a video walkthrough](#) by Emily Jones on how to make such a mask. Jones was prompted to make the speech reading masks because she is hard of hearing and had a personal need for masks that allowed for speech reading during the COVID-19 pandemic. Jones also offers [a free pattern for her mask available on Google Docs](#).

Before the COVID-19 pandemic made surgical masks a prescient topic, HLAA-TC under the direction of HLAA-TC President Christine Morgan had purchased a number of surgical masks called "The Communicator" and made them available to chapter members to hand out to their medical or dental professionals. The mask has a clear panel that allows for easier speech reading. It was developed by Ann McIntosh, Ph.D. and received FDA approval in 2016. The clear panel on the mask is positioned to provide a clear view of the wearer's lips and mouth. In light of recent events related to COVID-19, the HLAA-TC board has donated its stock of ["The Communicator" masks](#) to local hospitals.

Hospitals, clinics, and other essential services are always looking for mask donations. So if you are so inclined to make a mask (especially one with a clear speech reading panel) please check with area hospitals, clinics, and other essential services to see if they would want your donation.



“We’re all in this together”

This is certainly true but each of us are experiencing different levels of stress. The challenge is how to deal with this stress. The article [“How to Stop Feeling So Helpless During Quarantine”](#) from the UC Berkley Science Center provides some advice on reducing stress, depression, and anxiety associated with our current situation. The study referenced in the article focused on college students, but the advice is universal. Patricia Frazier, Ph.D., Associate Chair of the Stress and Trauma Lab at the University of Minnesota contributed to this article.

Article Themes

We don’t know what we don’t know
How long is this going to last?

Helplessness and Control

Wisdom in knowing the difference.

Letting go what we can’t control, without just giving up.
How to find a few ounces of control.

The article [“Being Lazy? That’s Good! The Rationale for Doing Nothing”](#) by Bija Bennett in the [Ageist online magazine](#) is about workplace stress. I found many of this author’s observations also pertinent when “we’re all in this together”. “Are we lazy and wasting time when you’re simply just being there? Burnout, anxiety disorders and stress-related diseases are on the rise.”

Article Themes

Burnout is everywhere
Instead, the solution is clear. We need to do nothing.

Creativity Comes from a Mind at Rest

When our attention is at rest and flows during bouts of laziness, our minds can wander to fascinating places. Creative insights strike.

The Lost Art of Doing Nothing

Being lazy, choosing to truly do nothing — is a lost art.

Let’s Reframe Being Lazy

If you embrace the mind’s meanderings a little bit every day, the possibilities for responding to your life broadens immensely.

-- Mike Higgins



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Mail to: **HLAA Twin Cities Chapter**

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The logo for the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) Twin Cities Chapter. It features a stylized graphic of three people in green, orange, and blue, followed by the text "HLAA" in large blue letters, and "Hearing Loss Association of America" and "Twin Cities Chapter" in smaller text below.

Welcomes You!

President - Christine Morgan -

president@hlaatc.org

Vice President – Mike Higgins

vicepresident@hlaatc.org

Lionel Locke

treasurer@hlaatc.org

Director at Large -- Dwight Maxa

director@hlaatc.org

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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 (3915 Golden Valley Road), 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.

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