

HLAA TC

November 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.

VIRTUAL MEETINGS

Virtual Chapter Meetings (by state)

By Laura Hagemann



We hope that this list of HLAA virtual chapter meetings is helpful while our chapter puts a pause on Zoom meetings.

These are the chapters doing virtual meetings at this time. States are listed alphabetically. Link below:

<https://www.hlaatc.org/a-list-of-virtual-hlaa-chapter-meetings-by-state/>
(cntl + click or copy/paste into browser)

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All meetings of the Hearing Loss Association of America Twin Cities Chapter (HLAA TC) -- Zoom and otherwise -- are postponed until further notice.

President's Message



HLAA-TC President's Message November 2020

It's been a long, hard year with lots of stress and upheaval. Not everyone is going to be happy with the results of the Presidential election. It's a time to reflect on and let go of some of our grief and anger. It's not always easy to remember that we have a lot to be thankful for. When we focus on gratitude, we start to heal and move forward!

It was a very difficult decision for the Board to take a short break from our Zoom meetings. Our hope is to come back early in 2021 with some fresh ideas, new projects, and new energy. We want to become more inclusive and to tap into the talents and skills present in our membership. We encourage you to get involved and will ensure that your commitment time is manageable. No long-term contracts required! Unless, of course, that is your desire. So think about how you can contribute some of your talents to help grow our organization.

There are so many people with hearing loss in Minnesota who do not sign, and who don't know about us and who, unfortunately, have to navigate the hearing loss journey alone. Because we are called the Twin Cities Chapter, they think we are exclusive. One of our goals is to reach further out in our state and to bring HLAA-TC to them.

2021 will be an exciting time of growth and expansion. We hope you will hop aboard!

Our newsletters will continue to come out monthly. We hope to pack them with helpful articles and resources. Let us know if you would like to add something or if you have any suggestions! We welcome article contributions as well!

Have a very safe, healthy and "thankful" Thanksgiving!

Christine

Happy Birthday, HLAA!



Message from Barbara Kelley, HLAA Executive Director:

This November 27, 2020, marks our organization's founding in 1979. Founder Rocky Stone began our organization as Self Help for Hard of Hearing People...

The philosophy envisioned back then is still alive today – gather all the information you can to make your own decisions about your hearing health ("self-help"), then turn around and help others...

This November, not too many of our chapters are having in-person meetings let alone social events. We are in difficult times and we hope you're all healthy and, if possible, holding virtual meetings, or staying connected some other way.

October Meeting Roundup

By Laura Hagemann

HLAA-TC met virtually on Zoom on October 17, 2020. Dr. Tina Huang presented on Tinnitus and afterwards participants continued talking and sharing their experiences. Below is a visual summary of the meeting.



**OCTOBER
MEETING ROUNDUP**



www.hlaatc.org

- 1 ALL HLAA-TC MEETINGS (PHYSICAL AND VIRTUAL) ARE POSTPONED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE. THE BOARD DECIDED THIS WAS A NECESSARY STEP TO TAKE RIGHT NOW.
- 2 DR. TINA HUANG SPOKE ABOUT TINNITUS. SHE TALKED ABOUT WHAT IT IS, TECHNIQUES USED IN MANAGING IT, AND THAT IT IS CAUSED BY THE BRAIN AND NOT THE EARS.
- 3 WE WILL ALSO HAVE ARTICLES IN THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER BY THE PRESENTERS WHO WERE SCHEDULED TO SPEAK (DR. MATTHEW WINN AND KRISTIN SWAN WILL WRITE ARTICLES IN FUTURE NEWSLETTERS).
- 4 MONTHLY NEWSLETTERS WILL STILL BE PUBLISHED, SOCIAL MEDIA WILL STILL BE MANAGED AND BLOGS WILL STILL BE WRITTEN DURING THIS TIME OF NO MEETINGS.
- 5 DURING THE SHORT BREAK FROM ZOOM MEETINGS, THE BOARD WILL BE WORKING ON REORGANIZING, DETERMINING THE NEEDS OF OUR CHAPTER DURING AND AFTER THE PANDEMIC, AND PURSUING PLANS TO BETTER MEET OUR MISSION. IF ANYONE IS INTERESTED IN WORKING WITH THE BOARD ON SOME BRAINSTORMING SESSIONS, PLEASE CONTACT ONE OF THE BOARD MEMBERS.

(C) 2020 HLAA-TC

HLAA-TC VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM
OCTOBER 17, 2020
SYNOPSIS

During this fall, many of us have heard the term “New Normal”. Why this is important, you might ask? Our Hearing Loss Association typically meets at the Courage Kenny Board Room from September to May where we enjoy each other’s company, have a cup of coffee, a few breakfast treats, and listen to a guest speaker.

However, this is the fall of 2020. We are living during a pandemic that changes how and what we do. Our face to face meetings have all been cancelled, and we may not have those gatherings until well in 2021.

So, what is the next option for us? ZOOM is the answer. In September, just last month we had our first General Membership meeting using the ZOOM application format. Over 25 people attended this meeting to get adjusted to using this technology. It was a good meeting where we saw familiar faces and shared stories about how we cope with massive change in our lives.

Because that worked so well, the October meeting was given the green light, and Dr. Tina Huang from the University of Minnesota tailored her presentation to the ZOOM format. President Christine Morgan called the meeting to order, welcoming our guests along with 40 other people who had signed into the ZOOM broadcast. She then provided the membership with a short summary of end of year plans.

That end of the year plan includes stepping back from our published schedule and postponing the November and December virtual meetings. The Board of Directors will continue to meet and consider alternatives to how we deliver our mission of education, advocacy, and support for our members.

Dr Huang was introduced and delivered her presentation on tinnitus. Dr. Huang, a neurotologist, defined tinnitus as the “perception of sound without an external source, so you are the only person who gets to hear that noise”.

Tinnitus comes in two types. The primary type is called idiopathic, meaning its source is unknown. The other type has a known cause. Idiopathic tinnitus is by far the largest type of tinnitus.

Dr. Huang spoke at length about primary types and said that over 50 million people have tinnitus and that the incidence of this condition increases with age. Only 10-20% of people find tinnitus so bothersome that it interferes with their quality of life.

In the second portion of the presentation, Dr. Huang addressed where tinnitus comes from. Studies show that that it is a brain-generated noise. Some patients are reassured by that, while others are concerned that it may lead to something worse. But many people have learned to live with the condition.

Dr. Huang concluded her presentation by listing several possible recommendations for tinnitus, cautioning the audience that medication is not one of them. Questions were then taken from the audience including possible connections between Meniere’s and tinnitus.

(October meeting synopsis, cont.)

President Christine then led the membership discussion on postponement of future meetings to regroup and refocus the chapter, particularly within the confines of the existing pandemic. After a call for volunteers to serve in temporary roles and completion of specific tasks, discussion centered on board vacancies.

We discussed a recommendation for a steering committee that would convene to look at what the Chapter is doing and how to get more people involved in the Chapter.

Monique Hammond, a member of HLAA-TC, led a discussion on Loop Minnesota, a local nonprofit advocacy group with a focus on hearing loops. After more questions from the audience on loops and various success stories from individual members, including guests from the Arizona HLAA chapter, President Christine Morgan adjourned the meeting.

Lionel Locke, Treasurer and Secretary

Give To The Max Day is November 19, 2020

By Laura Hagemann

HLAA-TC will be participating in the annual initiative to help raise money for charities and nonprofits called "Give to the Max Day." It's on November 19th this year. It's a day when participating charities and nonprofits have a chance to receive extra money through GiveMN. We participated last year and are hoping to continue to raise money that we will use to support the development of additional HLAA chapters in Minnesota.

Please plan to donate to us. You can find us on the official GTMD website:

<https://www.givemn.org/organization/Hlaatcmn/>

Thank you in advance for your help and support!



Minneapolis/St. Paul Airport to Become a Sunflower Airport.



(picture courtesy of rnib.org.uk) RNIB is the Royal National Institute of Blind People.

The sunflower as emblem for hidden disabilities

Launched in 2016 at Gatwick airport in the United Kingdom, the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower is gaining popularity across the globe. The idea was to find a way for those with hidden disabilities and conditions to identify themselves discreetly to airport staff.

Eventually, a dark green lanyard dotted with sunflowers became the subtle messenger for this purpose. Since that time, increasing numbers of airports have adopted the Sunflower Lanyard Program.

Locally, the Minneapolis/St. Paul International airport is set to join the Sunflower effort. The roll-out is scheduled for November 2020. Information will become available in the *Accessibility Section* on the airport website. Also, some time in November, a *Press Release* will introduce the general public to the program and provide participation information.

What qualifies as a hidden disability?

Any issues that can affect people's safety and health while not being immediately obvious qualify as a hidden disability. This can be anxiety or panic disorder, PTSD, hearing loss, low vision, asthma, epilepsy, ADHD, autism, memory issues, diabetes etc.

(hidden disabilities, cont.)

The sunflower tips staff off to the fact that a person might need more time, extra assistance or even medical attention. It will also warn against separating caregivers and families from those identified by the logo.

Is there a requirement to identify a disability when traveling?

Absolutely not. No disclosure or “proof” of a disability is needed. No questions are asked. This a voluntary program meant to make travel safer, less burdensome or intimidating for those who deal with hidden concerns and for their families.

People decide whether they want to wear a lanyard or not. It is also up to the individual to disclose the nature of the invisible issue.

Not a pass for special favors

The lanyard is not a way to fast track security or immigration, for example. Paperwork and procedures will be the same. Yet, attentive staff might send a “sunflower” traveler to a shorter TSA line, help with directions or allow him/her to preboard the plane.

Author note:

I represent HLAA TC and with that the interests of those with hearing loss on the Travelers’ with Disabilities Advisory Committee (TDAC). For any questions regarding airport communication access, please let me know. Our feedback is very important to those who are making important decisions that can affect us in many ways.

The *Hearing Loop* project at the airport is ongoing. The floor-installed loops are done and will be tested shortly. Looping information desks is underway. As I get more details, I will pass them along.

You can contact me at monique.hearing@gmail.com

Visit my website at hearing-loss-talk.com. I write blogs about all sorts of issues concerning hearing loss.

Until we meet again, stay Safe and Healthy.

Monique Hammond

Member and Past President HLAA TC

Member TDAC (Travelers’ with Disabilities Advisory Committee)

VP loopminnesota.org

Over the top! by Vicki Martin

The layered look may not be “in” this year, but sometimes it is a necessity. Start with your hearing equipment. Maybe a hearing aid with a tube leading to an earmold that is snuggled away inside your ear. Maybe a CI processor that hangs on your ear, with a wire leading to the magnet further up on your head. If these don’t always stay put for you, you may also have a “snugfit” or similar apparatus attached to the devices, with wires snaking around behind your ears and under your earlobe to help keep you from losing equipment that cost thousands.

That’s just for starters. Some of you also wear glasses. Their bows rest snugly on top of your ears, or in some cases, may curve around behind your ears. And if you struggle to keep your “covid hair” in place, you might also use a headband of fabric or springy plastic.

Finally, your mask, with earloops usually made of elastic string, but sometimes of knotted shoelaces, or maybe even a stretchy extension of the mask itself.

Oops, did I say “finally”? Not so fast! Winter is coming, and this is Minnesota. You need a hat. This goes on over all the rest, for a truly over-the-top costume. Now, when you want to remove your mask, you get to play catch-and-release with all the rest of your ear gear.



There is a way out. Since it is those pesky earloops that cause most of the entanglements, what you need to do is separate the mask and its appendages from everything else. Your hat is the barrier, and what makes it work is buttons – on the outside. A close-fitting half-brim fleece hat works well, but there are many styles that would cooperate in this arrangement.

Now you are ready to face the weather and the world!

Tidbits:

Wondering why your health care provider has a MASK on, when he/she is conversing with you online???

Dr. Tina Huang answered this question during our October Q&A: All personnel are required to wear masks in the clinic, whether conversing in person, online, or on the telephone. But you can ask them to type to you on wordpad or other text app, and share the screen.

Meeting captions disappearing before you finish reading them? Lisa Richardson offers this advice: you can capture the rolling text during Zoom meetings by selecting “cc” at the bottom of the screen, then selecting “view full transcript” to see it in the location of the chat screen. This will allow you more time to read the captions, which otherwise appear and disappear quite suddenly and only show 2 lines at a time.

Research Opportunity

Dr. Raeda Anderson, research scientist at the V. Crawford Research Institute at Shepherd Center in Atlanta, Georgia, is working with the Accessibility User Research Collective to do research at Microsoft for usability of products like Xbox, LinkedIn, and PowerPoint. To date, the technology research has conducted studies for Microsoft for three years and over 75 studies.

Given that HLAA Twin Cities Chapter has strong connections to people with disabilities, Raeda is reaching out to us about passing along the AURC to people whom may be interested in being part of paid research to improve accessibility with Microsoft technology.

The AURC is open to all people who have disabilities who are 18 and older living in the United States. The process to join the AURC is simple: people with disabilities complete a screener and they reach out to people who meet the qualifications for studies. The studies are typically a survey or interview and have a \$50 per hour stipend for participation.

Link to the AURC: <https://accessibilityuserresearchcollective.org/>

Link to the AURC Member Form: <https://redcap.link/AURCMemberForm>

Voter survey

Attention Minnesotans! If you are deaf, deafblind, hard of hearing, or person with a hearing loss, AND if you voted in the 2020 General Election, MNCDHH would like your feedback. <https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/5980403/Voting-Access-Survey-2020>

Anne Sittner Anderson
Director of Communications
Minnesota Commission of the Deaf, DeafBlind & Hard of Hearing



Harris Communications update:

The walk-in store of Harris Communications is now permanently closed. But rest assured – they are still there for us! All orders should now be placed online (<https://www.harriscomm.com/>) or by phone (800-825-6758 or 952-906-1180).

A new catalog will be available by late January 2021 at the latest. You can get your copy by calling customer service at 800-825-6758.

A discount is available (on regular-priced merchandise only) to HLAA members. If ordering by phone, simply ask for it. If ordering online, put in the code “hlaadisc” when you check out (use the comments area, if needed).

Ground shipping is free within the continental US.

Same-day curbside pickup is also available.

Here is just one of the many available HLAA meetings you can attend!
(See newsletter page 1 for additional choices)



HLAA VIRTUAL MEETING

Surviving the Holidays with Hearing Loss

presented by



LINK to register: : <https://mailchi.mp/hearinglossca/surviving-the-holidays-with-hearing-loss>
(then click on “register for the meeting” button)

Date: Saturday, November 14

Time: 4 p.m. ET, 3 p.m. CT, 2 p.m. MT, 1 p.m. PT

Join our next virtual meeting to learn some tips and strategies on how to deal with hearing loss during the holidays ahead. Speaker Alison Freeman, Ph.D., is a clinical psychologist who works part-time at California State University at Northridge (CSUN) with both hearing and hard of hearing/deaf/Deaf students. She also has a private practice and is doing teletherapy during the pandemic. She has had a severe hearing loss since early childhood, was orally trained, and is a long-time member of HLAA (she knew Founder Rocky Stone!).



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All further meetings of the Hearing Loss Association of America Twin Cities Chapter (HLAA TC) -- Zoom and otherwise -- are postponed until further notice.

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

Accommodations: All meetings are real time captioned by Lisa Richardson and her staff of *Paradigm Captioning* (www.paradigmreporting.com).