

# 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



We are happy to report that our Zoom meetings will reconvene starting January 16!

(email [president@hlaatc.org](mailto:president@hlaatc.org) for invite)

Speaker: Dr. Matthew Winn,  
*University of Minnesota*

Topic: Q and A based on  
his article to appear in the  
January Newsletter

Meanwhile, this list of other HLAA virtual chapter meetings may tide you over through December. Link below:

<https://www.hlaatc.org/a-list-of-virtual-hlaa-chapter-meetings-by-state/>

## Contents

■ Virtual Meetings	Page 1
■ President's Message	Page 2
■ Board highlights	Page 3
■ Meeting Schedule	Page 4
■ Holidays by Kristen Swan	Page 5
■ Video link/Music Study	Page 7
■ Tinnitus	Page 8
■ Traveling?	Page 9
■ Hospital Kit	Page 10
■ Thanks/misc.	Page 11

### Officers' emails

- **Christine Morgan** – [president@hlaatc.org](mailto:president@hlaatc.org)
- **Dwight Maxa** - [vicepresident@hlaatc.org](mailto:vicepresident@hlaatc.org)
- **Lionel Locke** - [treasurer@hlaatc.org](mailto:treasurer@hlaatc.org)  
[secretary@hlaatc.org](mailto:secretary@hlaatc.org)
- **Christy Meyers** – [director@hlaatc.org](mailto:director@hlaatc.org)

**HLAA TC Website - Minnesota**  
[www.hlaatc.org](http://www.hlaatc.org)

HLAA TC telephone 763-447-9672  
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[info@hlaatc.org](mailto:info@hlaatc.org)

HLAA National - Maryland  
[www.hearingloss.org](http://www.hearingloss.org)

Meetings of the Hearing Loss Association of America Twin Cities Chapter (HLAA TC) will be held on Zoom until further notice.

# President's Message



## *HLAA-TC President's Message December 2020*

I don't think many people are going to be unhappy to see 2020 end! I don't intend to rehash what we all know! However, how I wish we were able to have our fun holiday party! We so enjoyed the White Elephant Gift Exchange and the potluck. Will be thinking of you and missing you.

As you probably know, we are going to resume Zoom meetings in January on the 16th. It will be great to see everyone again. Dr. Matthew Winn from the University of Minnesota will be writing an article for the January newsletter. He will then be joining us for our January Zoom meeting to answer any questions or concerns you may have. We thought this would be a great way to give you time to read and absorb the information before the meeting.

Kristen Swan from HealthPartners wrote an article for this newsletter. We also have lots of articles and lots of links to some excellent information in this newsletter. Be sure to take a look.

The elves have been very busy behind the scenes: Laura has been busy working on our social media. Glenice on our website. Vicki preparing this newsletter. The Board met to discuss future directions, strategic planning, and so forth. See some details in this newsletter.

Effective immediately, Dwight Maxa will be serving as Vice President, Christy Meyers as Director at Large, Lionel will cover both the

Secretary and Treasurer positions and I will remain as President until our general election in September 2021. We are still looking for members willing to serve on a committee or to be involved in some capacity. In order to keep our Chapter growing and vibrant, we do need more help. Whatever your talents might be, we'd love to have you join us.

With the pandemic, it's too easy to become isolated. Please reach out to us (the Board), your family or friends, and even other members. Isolation is not healthy.

Even though we won't be meeting via Zoom in December, you and HLAA-TC are definitely on our minds (and in our hearts). Let's all pray for a better, healthier, and safer 2021.

With warmest regards,

*Christine*

## Board Members

**Christine Morgan**  
*president*

**Dwight Maxa**  
*Vice President*

**Lionel Locke**  
*Secretary/Treasurer*

**Christy Meyers**  
*Director at Large*

HLAA-TC Newsletter Editor Vicki Martin  
Social Media Specialist Laura Hagemann

## **HLAA-TC BOARD OF DIRECTORS HIGHLIGHTS 2020**

In normal times, our general membership meetings include officer reports with shared information about organization activities. The year 2020 however, is not normal. With COVID-19 and ensuing shut-down orders impacting everyone, HLAA-TC has had to regroup and revise what we do. How we deliver our message of information, support, education, and advocacy to each of you is an ongoing challenge.

Here is a short synopsis of these past few months that highlight what we have experienced.

Due to extreme weather conditions, our January membership meeting was cancelled. Our only in person general membership meeting in 2020 was in February where our speaker talked about vestibular rehabilitation. The March meeting was cancelled due to the Covid-19 outbreak. It was readily apparent that April and May meetings would also be cancelled.

The Board after deliberation decided to cancel the October Hearing Conference and rescheduled it to October 16, 2021. Further, the Board compiled research on remote platforms in place of in person meetings and decided that ZOOM or GOTO Meeting would make sense for future use.

With drastic change all around us, the Board experienced two officer resignations, a loss of our Post Office Box as the US Post Office in Minneapolis was burned during the summer riots, and the cancellation of our Annual meeting and election.

During the summer recess, the Board conducted a membership survey, had discussions on where to possibly hold in person meetings with COVID guidelines, and discussed how to keep our membership informed using social media including our Facebook page and our Website.

All this time, the Board and our newsletter continued to function (thank you Vicki Martin, editor, for your work in keeping us on task during difficult times). The fall approached with our September Meeting, a ZOOM meeting that allowed our membership to get used to the remote access platform. That proved successful, so the Board agreed to have the October meeting with a speaker. Dr Tina Huang spoke on tinnitus.

*(Board of Directors, cont.)*

The Board continued to work on the following items: a 2021 strategic plan, a Communication Access Plan (CAP) for Hospital Safety for people with Hearing Loss, and planning for viewing the proposed rules from the FDA on over-the-counter hearing devices. As of November 30<sup>th</sup>, the proposed rules have not been issued by the FDA for public comment.

The Board decided to postpone the November and December general membership meetings with the need to regroup and refocus in 2021. As always, we welcome feedback from the general membership. The Board can be reached by the HLAA-TC phone or email.

On behalf of the Board, we wish you a Joyous Holiday. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

*Lionel Locke, Secretary/Treasurer*

## **HLAA-TC 2021 MEETING SCHEDULE**

General Membership meetings will resume on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of each month starting with January of 2021 through May 2021. Those dates are January 16<sup>th</sup>, February 20<sup>th</sup>, March 20<sup>th</sup> April 17<sup>th</sup>, and May 15<sup>th</sup>. The time remains the same with a 9:30 AM gathering time and the meeting start time of 10:00 AM until Noon.

The Board of Directors will also meet on a regular basis normally on Friday mornings two weeks after the membership meetings. Those proposed dates are January 29<sup>th</sup>, March 5<sup>th</sup>, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, April 30<sup>th</sup>, and May 28<sup>th</sup>. The Board normally meets for 2 hours with a start time of 9:30 AM. All the meetings will be using ZOOM, a **web-based video conferencing tool with a local, desktop client and a mobile app** that allows users to meet online, with or without video.

All our general membership meetings are open to the public. Members and non-members alike are encouraged to request an invitation to join the meeting (email Christine at [president@hlaatc.org](mailto:president@hlaatc.org) ).

The Board of Directors meetings have always been open to our membership. Please request an invitation if you desire to attend).

On behalf of the Board of Directors

*Lionel Locke, Secretary/Treasurer*



## MANAGING THE HOLIDAYS

Kristen L. Swan, MA, LP

Regions Hospital Health and Wellness Program Serving Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard-of-Hearing

In our culture, holidays are important for a number of reasons. They provide a break from daily routines, allow us time to reconnect with people and enjoy our family, cultural, and religious traditions.

However, holidays are often difficult and challenging for people in general, as well as for people with hearing loss. Some find themselves alone on the holidays due to changes in the family situations, high emotional and financial expectations and the bombardment of commercialism.

This year as we navigate the Covid-19 pandemic our family holiday gatherings will become even more unusual and difficult especially with masking and how difficult that makes it to understand speech. With some of the recommendations and restrictions imposed this year, many of us may not even be seeing family in person. Indeed, if you are planning to see family through “Zoom”, “Google Meet” or other video platforms you might actually have an easier time understanding or controlling the communication.

For people with hearing loss, the holidays are especially challenging and exhausting.

- There is often POOR SIGNAL-TO-NOISE RATIO which is the measure of the desired signal against the noise level. At any busy gathering of people, it is true that everyone has to work harder but...**YOU WILL ALWAYS WORK HARDER** to participate because....
- You have greater COGNITIVE LOAD (Listening Effort). Much more brain power is required to discern what is important and what it is not. There is the ever-present need to guess at words and information, which leads to the emotional concerns of getting things wrong and feeling left out.
- The person with hearing loss may feel a LOSS OF CONTROL within the situation. One may be in someone else's home, the lighting and arrangement of the rooms may be challenging, traveling may cause fatigue, sleep issues and anxiety, you may be seeing people you rarely see and thus are not used to their speech patterns, or topics of conversation may shift rapidly. ***So what's a Hard of Hearing person to DO?***

### SOME SUGGESTIONS for Improving or Taking charge of your Holiday Experience

- Be HONEST:
  - Disclose your hearing loss – without shame
  - Avoid BLUFFING whenever possible
  - Don't be afraid to directly say what you need (e.g. a quieter space, speak more slowly)
  - Pick your battles and be direct about it (“I am not really following things– I appreciate your efforts but carry on. Please don't be offended if I just take a break and sit quietly.”)

- Show **ACCEPTANCE** and **UNDERSTANDING** – of yourself and others
  - don't waste mental and emotional energy complaining; Accept your limitations
  - humor helps ( eg: "I've lost my hearing, not my mind (yet)")
  - remember: loved ones love us and do want to be connected – they just need reminders
  - Remember that since hearing loss is invisible, it is easy for others to forget
  - encourage people to REPHRASE not just repeat.
  - Balance is key- remember it's the HEARING LOSS not YOU!
- **EDUCATE** – Yourself and Others
  - Know what works and what doesn't work for you
  - Remember: others learn from you - so practice what you preach!
  - Assert yourself with some family members and point out the need to meet you half way.
  - Explain the difference between "hearing" and "understanding" and suggest ways to help them speak with more clarity.
  - Encourage a conversation but don't lecture.
  - Stay connected with others in support settings, chat rooms, list servs, etc.
- **Be PREPARED!**
  - Get details about the plans, special events, worship plans, guests ('who, what, where, how')
  - Email the family members that you want to make sure you have a chance to talk with and do some preliminary catch up (helps with the context)
  - Arrive early to scope things out and to determine the layout of where it is best for you to sit.
  - Get a "tune up", make sure your aids are clean, functioning well, mapped and programmed correctly and be sure you bring extra batteries
  - Identify "hearing helpers" who might be willing to inform you as to what is going on (but don't overuse them to the point of fatiguing them)
  - Whenever possible utilize various applications on your phone such as "speech-to-text", captioning apps, or other ALD's (assistive listening devices) or portable "loop" device
- **GIVE helpful FEEDBACK**
  - Acknowledge when people make efforts to help you hear
  - Offer support to others who you notice might be struggling (elderly relatives)
- **Focus on HAPPINESS:**
  - Decide to count the many people you have met along the 'hearing loss way'
  - Count the blessings that have come despite the difficulties
  - Try to be happy "in the present moment" knowing it is the only moment we have
  - Focus on the meaning of the Holiday season and see the 'bigger picture'
  - Take in the joy of those around you – especially the children
  - Resist projecting worst-case scenarios ("what-ifs")

**REMEMBER** the ever applicable **SERENITY PRAYER:** "God grant me the serenity to Accept the things I cannot change, the Courage to change the things I can, And the Wisdom to know the difference.

**ENJOY YOUR HOLIDAYS – SAFELY!**

*(With thanks to webinars by **Samuel Trychin, Brad Ingrao, Michael Harvey and Shanna Groves**)*

# On Camera!



HLAA-TC President Christine Morgan was interviewed by University of Minnesota Journalism student Ashley Clemens. Morgan spoke about how the global health crisis of COVID-19 is affecting the hearing loss community. You can view this interview in a video Clemens has made available online and agreed to let us share. [Watch the video here.](#)

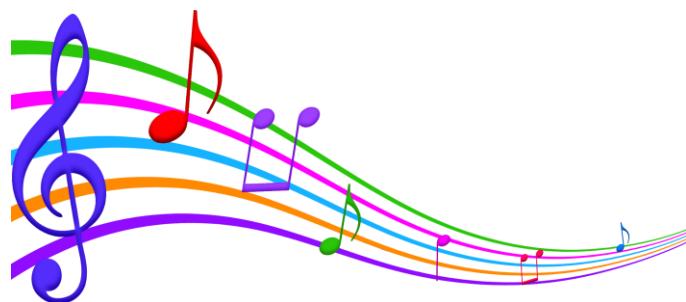
## Music Study



**Alex Chern, resident physician in otolaryngology head & neck surgery (ear, nose, and throat surgery) at NewYork-Presbyterian (Columbia and Weill Cornell) is also a violinist with hearing loss treated with hearing aids, and a fellow HLAA member.**

**Dr. Chern is conducting a study with Dr. Anil Lalwani examining the effect of hearing loss on music enjoyment. They are actively recruiting individuals with bilateral hearing aids (a hearing aid in each ear) to complete a 20-30 min online study. The study involves listening to music on your computer and answering questions about them. No headphones or other special equipment is required.**

**Please contact [alc9230@nyp.org](mailto:alc9230@nyp.org) if you are interested. Thank you very much.**



## Plain Language Summary: Tinnitus

(condensed version by Laura Hagemann)

*The following is a condensation of the article Dr. Huang shared with us in her presentation on Tinnitus in the October Zoom meeting.*

### **What is Tinnitus?**

- Tinnitus affects 10-15% of adults in the United States.
- Tinnitus can occur in one or both sides of the head and can appear as if the sounds are occurring within or outside the head.
- Tinnitus sounds can be: ringing, roaring, buzzing, whooshing, whistling, humming, or other noises.
- Tinnitus can be perceived at all times or only in certain situations.
- Patients can experience symptoms differently and in different severity.
- Patients' quality of life can be affected in varying degrees.
- Patients often have difficulty sleeping, difficulty understanding others' speech, depression, problems focusing.

### **What causes Tinnitus?**

- The two kinds of Tinnitus are **Primary** and **Secondary**.
- **Primary Tinnitus** has an unknown cause and can be linked to hearing loss.
- **Secondary Tinnitus** has a known cause such as pressure behind the eardrum, impacted ear wax, etc. This type can also be related to Meniere's disease or other conditions.
- Tinnitus presents at any age, gender, or ethnic group. Tinnitus more often occurs in people who are overweight, obese, or have high blood pressure.
- Tinnitus is seen at a higher rate among military veterans.
- Exposure to noise like firearms and loud music are also risk factors.
- Tinnitus can be upsetting. Tell your doctor if you experience a strong emotional response to your Tinnitus.

### **Diagnosis and treatment**

- Tinnitus is diagnosed by a doctor performing a physical exam and reviewing the patient's history. The doctor may physically look in the ear to determine if there is a treatable condition
- Tinnitus can occur in people with hearing loss so a hearing test is common.
- Sometimes Tinnitus can improve on its own if it has lasted less than 6 months.
- Sometimes hearing aids can help make Tinnitus less noticeable.
- Tinnitus is a symptom not a disease. There are various options for help and your doctor can provide information brochures and suggest self-help books. Counseling and therapy can also be recommended by your doctor. Doctors can also explain how medication can manage the problem.

## Plain Language Summary: Tinnitus

Tunkel DE, Bauer CA, Sun GH, et al. Clinical Practice Guideline: Tinnitus. *Otolaryngol Head Neck Surg.* 2014;151(S2):S1-S40

Read the full article here: <https://www.entnet.org/sites/default/files/TinnitusGuidelinePLS.pdf>

# Traveling? Maybe not! But if you are, take note:

## See-through Masks Added to MSP accessibility services



*(excerpted from Metropolitan Airports Commission Press Release December 2020)*

Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (MSP) is expanding its programs to assist travelers and visitors with disabilities, adding a growing global lanyard initiative and new see-through masks for Travelers Assistance volunteers.

MSP is among the first U.S airports to join the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower program, which allows a person to self-identify as someone with a hidden disability who may require additional assistance.

MSP is now offering the sunflower lanyards for free at pre-security Travelers' Assistance booths. There is no prerequisite to ask for or to wear them.

The program was endorsed by the MSP Travelers with Disabilities Advisory Committee.

MSP's Travelers with Disabilities Advisory Committee (TDAC) also endorsed a new program for all Travelers Assistance volunteers to be equipped with see-through face coverings. See through masks help people who are deaf or hard of hearing rely on seeing a speaker's lips and facial expressions to understand conversation.

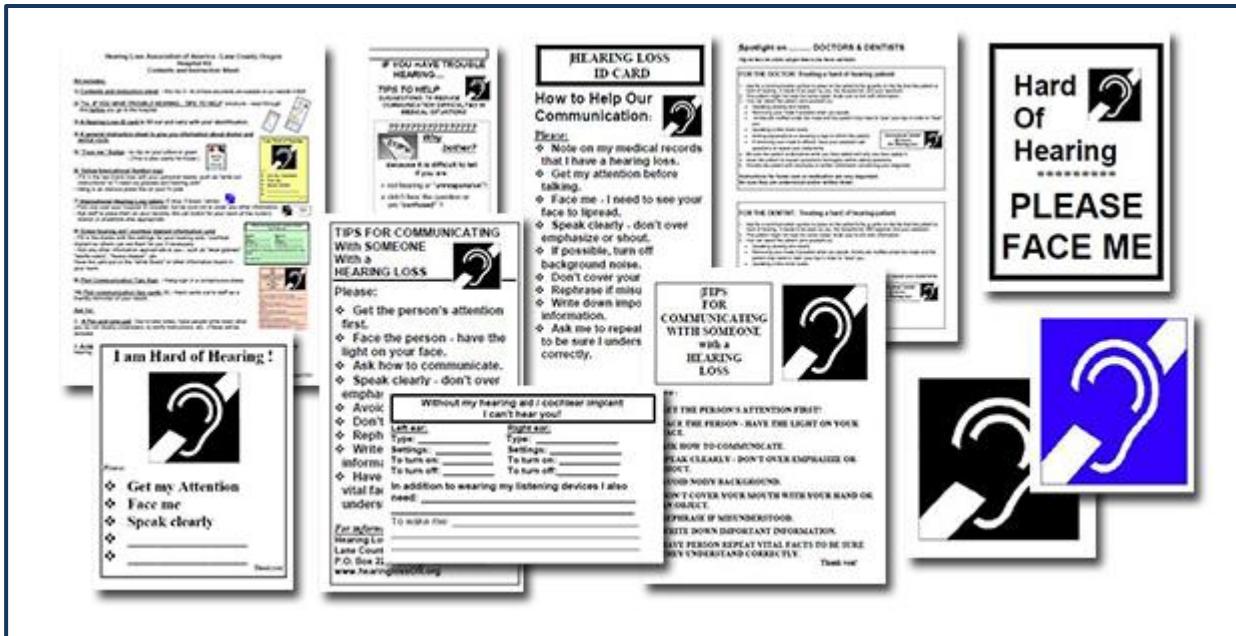
"We want to thank all members of the Travelers Disabilities Advisory Committee for their on-going work to help ensure all travelers have a great experience at MSP," said Brian Ryks, CEO of the Metropolitan Airports Commission, which operates MSP.

Other accessibility services available at MSP which may benefit deaf/hard of hearing travelers include:

- Video Relay Interpreting (VRI) - allows hard of hearing people with enhanced communication with Traveler's Assistance staff
- TTY – a telecommunication device for deaf, hard of hearing or speech-impaired
- Videophones- additional telecommunication for deaf, hard of hearing or speech-impaired
- Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) with access to American Sign Language (ASL) interpreting
- Service Animal Relief Areas (SARA)
- Visual paging and emergency alerts
- Aira- a service that connects blind and low-vision people to remote agents for navigation or other assistance

For more information, visit <https://www.mspairport.com/airport/accessibility>.

# Lane County, Oregon HLAA chapter offers FREE printables for hospital/communication kit



**Thank you, Lane County chapter!**

**Make your communication cards or hospital kit with signs and handouts you can download and print on your own computer!**

**Documents You Can Download:** Choose from the following documents to make your own kits.

- 1 – [Kit Contents and Instruction Sheet](#): Contents and instruction sheet
- 2 – [Patient Brochure](#): Tips to help if you have trouble hearing. Our tri-fold, double-sided brochure.
- 3 – [Medical ID Settings](#): The first page is for your personal settings, the 2nd page is tips to help in medical settings. Printed back to back they will match and make 6 per page
- 4 – [Doctor/Dentist Tips](#): These are brief articles on what your doctor and dentist can do to improve you care.
- 5 – ["Face Me" Badge](#): There are 8 badges on each sheet. Using regular paper, it is easier to print the pages separately (not double-sided). Cut out along outside edges. They are designed to fit in a vertical badge holder. These are also very helpful when traveling.
- 6 – [International Symbol Sign](#): Print out on bright yellow paper. Fill in the two blank lines with your personal needs; such as "write out instructions" or "I need my glasses and hearing aids." Hang in an obvious place on your IV pole. Some people have suggested placing 2 copies back to back so they can be seen from both sides.
- 7 – [HOH Label in Black | HOH Label in Blue](#): International Hearing Loss labels. These fit on standard Avery address labels #8160 with 30 per sheet. 1-inch blue stickers are available from [www.hearingloss.org](http://www.hearingloss.org). Chapters often buy a large roll and sell smaller quantities to individuals. You can also print the pdf in blue and cut off the logo, but this will not give you the glossy quality of the web site stickers.
- 8 – [HA-Cl info cards](#): Hearing aid/cochlear implant information card. There are 2 per sheet. Print on green paper for visibility. Fill out the information so someone else can put your devices on you if you are not able to.
- 9 – [Tips Sign](#): 8 1/2" sign of tips to help with communication. Print on pink paper.
- 10 – [Tips Cards](#): There are 6 tip cards per page. Print on pink paper and cut apart. Hand out as a friendly reminder to those that you need to communicate with.

A BIG

# THANK YOU!



To the  
advertisers  
who have  
supported our  
newsletter

## How to Report Captioning Issues to Your Local News, TV Provider, and the FCC

Congress requires video programming distributors for TV to make their context accessible by providing captioning for their content shared on TV. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) established rules for those TV providers to adhere by. Smaller stations may be subject to different rules for live programming.

The FCC has quality standards that must be met when captioning context for mass distribution through TV, including accuracy, completeness, placement, and synchronization.

Click (ctrl+click) on the heading above to find out how and to whom to make a complaint regarding television captioning.

**West Valley Arizona HLAA chapter invites us to join their December meeting**

Date and Time: December 12, 2020 10 – 11:30 AM

Tina Childress, audiologist and bilateral cochlear implant user presents:

**“Amplify your Audiology Appointment: Pandemic Edition”**

Email [info@hlaawestvalleyAZ.org](mailto:info@hlaawestvalleyAZ.org) for invitation

Meeting will be held on Zoom

All meetings are captioned

**If you would like to subscribe to our free monthly newsletter, send an email to [editor@hlaatc.org](mailto:editor@hlaatc.org) requesting to subscribe to the newsletter.**

**To submit an article for the newsletter, please review the submission guidelines on our website [here](#).**

HLAA TC

PO Box 26021

Minneapolis, MN 55426



**Next meeting: Zoom on January 16**

## First Class

### HLAA Twin Cities Chapter

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**Minneapolis, MN 55426**



Welcomes You!

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**Photos** - Vicki Martin  
Social Media - Laura Hagemann

The next meeting of the Hearing Loss Association of America Twin Cities Chapter (HLAA TC) will be held on Zoom on January 16, 2021. Open to socialize at 9:30 AM, formal meeting 10 AM.

Please visit the chapter's web-site at [www.hlaatc.org](http://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](http://www.paradigmreporting.com)).