

# HLAA TC

# December 2021

## Twin Cities and Greater Minnesota



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

Zoom meetings continue through the end of the 2021-22 season:  
(email [treasurer@hlaatc.org](mailto:treasurer@hlaatc.org) for invite)

**December 18, 2021**  
**Innocaption**

“Improving Telephone Communication with Innocaption app”

**January 15, 2022**

Report from the Minnesota Commission of the Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing (MNCDHH)



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### Officers' emails

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[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 2021 *Christine Morgan*

I know I say this every year (part of getting older, I guess) but where has the year gone? It's been such a challenging year for each and every one of us. I won't bother to list the myriad of difficulties we have had to deal with and are still dealing with. I don't want to "sing to the choir".

Our meeting is December 18. At 9:30 am, Laura, our Social Media Specialist, will be giving a short presentation about our Facebook Page...how to access it and/or how to post to it. Here's your chance to learn more about our social media.

For our December meeting (because we can't meet in person to do all the fun things we have in the past) we'd like you to wear your Christmas sweater, hat, jewelry, etc. We will be having a fun "contest" with three small gift cards as prizes. See Christy's article in this newsletter for further information.

Our December presentation will be given by two representatives of InnoCaption discussing their application to caption your cell phone calls. There are many different apps out there and we hope to provide you with more information regarding them in the future.

January's presentation traditionally is a report from the Commission. Other 2022 presentations to be listed soon. I'd love to

hear your ideas about presentations you would like to hear/see.

The Board is working with a leadership transition consultant with a focus on rebuilding and thriving in the future. That doesn't mean we don't need or want your help. Without help, this Chapter will go the way of the other Minnesota chapters and cease to exist!

During the upcoming holiday season, I wish you three things: Peace, Happiness and Loving Kindness!

*Christine*



## Board Members

**Christine Morgan**  
*president*

*Vice President*

**Lionel Locke**  
*Secretary/Treasurer*

**Christy Myers**  
*Director at Large*

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

## December Speakers

### InnoCaption



**Matt Goncalves**  
Marketing Director

**Cristina Duarte**  
Director of Regulatory Affairs  
and In-House Counsel

**Matt Goncalves** has served as the Marketing Director since InnoCaption launched its app in 2016. Matt's key responsibilities include creating and directing marketing campaigns, developing the InnoCaption website, and designing marketing materials. Matt pursued a double-major from George Mason University and currently resides with his wife, Cristina Duarte, in the Northern Virginia area.

**Cristina Duarte** has served as the Director of Regulatory Affairs and In-House Counsel for InnoCaption for over five years. Cristina's work spans the wide variety of regulatory, compliance, and advocacy issues that currently face providers of accessibility technologies. Ms. Duarte received her J.D. from American University Washington College of Law and her B.A. from Hood College. She also serves on the Board of Directors for the Northern Virginia Resource Center for Deaf & Hard of Hearing Persons and regularly volunteers through the Northern Virginia Pro Bono Law Center.

## Things the audience will learn:

What the InnoCaption app is and how to register for, download, and activate it on your cell phone.

Why InnoCaption is different from other captioning services and how we provide users with different choices when it comes to their accessibility needs.

The differences in technological capabilities between our brand new Automatic Speech Recognition (ASR) engine and our CART captioning.

The many features of InnoCaption – in-call caption mode switch, spam filter, call forwarding, captioned voicemail, saved call transcripts, DeskView, and many more!

We will also do a live demo (if time allows) where we will show how an outgoing call works so viewers can experience our captions in real time.



## In Praise of Audiologists



Audiologists take note! You are appreciated, even if we don't always remember to tell you so. These comments from a new hearing aid user may represent the unspoken thoughts of the rest of us as well:

"I am so thankful for this blessing ... now I will be able to hear what my granddaughters are saying when they whisper to me. I can hardly wait to see them at the end of December. I was very surprised to discover how much is involved in setting up hearing aids. It is much more complex than getting glasses. Apart from the initial testing, there is the selection of the type of aid that will be most effective for the individual. Then the fitting and retesting to ensure it is working properly. Then the instructions on how to put them into one's ears and what to do if something goes wrong. I was very impressed with the care and expertise needed to help patients hear."

## November Meeting Summary

*Barb Schneider*

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 by our treasurer, Lionel Locke who noted that our president, his wife Christine Morgan, was ill and that we all wish her well.

After introducing various Board members and our highly skilled CART captioner, Lisa, Lionel introduced today's speaker, Sara Oberg, MA, CCC-SPL. Sara has been an aural rehab therapist for 14 years and practices at Regions Hospital; this is her third time speaking to our group.

Sara's goal is to help clients communicate effectively. Her grandparents became deaf as children, so she has been in that community for her whole life and is proficient in sign language. Listening is the primary means by which incoming ideas and information are taken in, and is the most frequently used language skill of the four language skills. Listening comprehension is a complex process that encompasses many parts of the brain working together. Age-related untreated hearing loss is associated with a myriad of health and social conditions, including dementia, isolation, loss of independence, and safety issues. Communication is the basis of all relationships, so keeping the brain engaged through hearing assistance is key to avoiding these problems. Baseline audiograms are important for everyone as we age. Sara recommends talking with your audiologist about getting musician's earplugs for concerts and using regular earplugs for other environmental noise; this can lower decibels by 9-15 points.

Aural rehab educates on the auditory developmental process, listening and talking; it includes auditory, speech, articulation, social and communication skills, language, and sometimes sign language. The process takes as much time as needed, and can involve medical and educational coordination. Homework is given for practice - she wants clients to get the most from their hearing appliances with realistic expectations.

Using various aids, Sara is able to detect what speech or environment sounds are problematic for her clients. She recommends listening to audiobooks, and having someone read aloud to her clients. Challenging ourselves to listen critically is important to improving comprehension. Many factors determine the success of aural rehab but even stroke and dementia clients can improve communication. Special attention to cochlear implant issues is important to client success. Direct communication with the speaker to let them know how you need them to talk to you is critical and can take courage. Be aware of the other person's needs, and don't bluff that you're understanding what is said. Trouble can result when we've agreed to something unknown. Take breaks when you need them to avoid fatigue. We must educate others about our condition.

Recommended resources: [betterhearing.org](http://betterhearing.org); book: [Living Well with Hearing Loss](#)

(November Meeting Summary, cont.)

Social media specialist Laura Hagemann thanked everyone who donated on Give to the Max day, which will help fund our Zoom mtgs/updates. Book Club meets online Dec. 6<sup>th</sup> at 7pm. Lionel reports that the Board has contracted for a non-profit consultant to help with best practices to keep our chapter viable considering the global situation. Many chapters have closed. Both Lionel and Christine are stepping down after many years of stellar service to this important chapter. Thus, our Board will have critical leadership openings next year. We need chapter members to seriously consider their role in our future presence in Minnesota. There are no other similar groups in the state, and an excellent foundation exists to continue this work. Lionel and Christine will be available to assist incoming officers, and mentoring is available. This is an excellent opportunity for self-development, networking, and using gifts you didn't know you had.

## Holiday Cheer Contest!

Saturday December 18th Chapter Meeting



Though we can't gather in person for our annual holiday party, that doesn't mean we can't have a little fun anyway. The HLAA-TC Board is offering GIFT CERTIFICATES to the top three winners of our HOLIDAY CHEER CONTEST.

Use your imagination to spice up our December meeting. Dress up in your favorite holiday sweater, hat, jewelry, outfit - even decorate your background. Members will vote for their favorite and the top three vote getters will win a gift certificate for \$25, \$15 or \$10!

So on Saturday, December 18th, at 9:45AM, grab your favorite beverage, don your holiday togs and join us on Zoom.

# Hearing Tips

Source: Hearing Loss Association of America (national website)

## Tips For People With Hearing Loss When Communicating With People Who Are Fully Hearing

### Rule:

- Communication is a two-way street.
- People with hearing loss must make as much effort as people who hear well.

### Set Your Stage

- Tell others how best to talk to you.
- Pick your best spot (light, quiet, proximity).
- Anticipate difficult situations; plan how to minimize them.
- Have an assistive listening device ready.

### Be an Active Listener

- Pay attention
- Concentrate on speaker.
- Look for visual clues.
- Ask for written clues if needed
- Ask questions.
- Ask the speaker to indicate changes in topic.
- Don't interrupt speaker.
- Ask speaker to rephrase when needed.

### Establish Empathy with the Speaker

- React.
- Let speakers know how well they are doing.
- Don't bluff.
- Admit it when you don't understand.

These tips are available as a PDF for printing a two-sided card. Follow the link below:

<https://www.hearingloss.org/news-media/brochure-downloads/>

cntrl/click on the link to get to downloads, scroll to the last download PDF, "Communication Tips Card". You can download and print from here.

## Tips for People Who are Hearing When Communicating With People Who Have Hearing Loss

### Rule:

- When audio is poor, emphasize the visual.

### Set Your Stage

- Get listener's attention first.
- Face the listener directly.
- Spotlight your face (no backlighting).
- Avoid noisy backgrounds.
- Ask how to best facilitate communication.

### Project Your Communication

- Do not shout.
- Speak clearly, at a moderate pace.
- Do not cover your mouth, chew food, gum or smoke while talking.
- Rephrase if you are not understood.
- Use facial expressions and gestures.
- Give clues when changing subject.

### Establish Empathy

- Be patient.
- Stay positive and relaxed.
- Talk to the person, not about him or her.
- Show respect to help build confidence.

### Use Assistive Listening Devices

- Offer to use available assistive listening devices
- Be positive and responsive; make adjustments as needed.

**All movies, at all times at a Minneapolis movie theater are  
Open Captioned!**

*By Laura Hagemann*



In a wonderful new development for disability rights, **Minnesota is now the first state in the country to have a movie theater with 100% open captioning ALL THE TIME!** [St. Anthony Main Theaters in Minneapolis, MN](#) now offers open captioning all day, every movie, every showtime, every day. Having open captions on every movie every day is truly unique. Usually the theaters that do offer open captions only offer them on certain days, at certain times, on certain movies. St. Anthony Main is a small neighborhood theater located on 115 SE Main Street in Minneapolis, MN across the Mississippi River from downtown Minneapolis.

For those unfamiliar, open captions are when the captioning appears on the screen visible to all viewing the movie. At movies without open captions someone who needs access to captions is required to use a device (different theaters have different accessibility features and captioning devices). For many who use captioning devices at movie theaters the devices

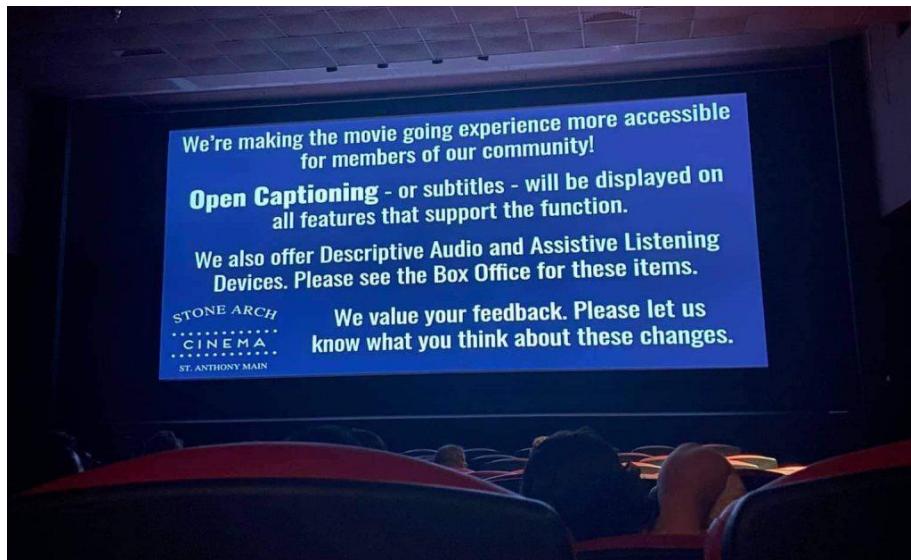
(Open Captioning, cont.)

can be cumbersome to use, don't always work and technical issues can arise during the movie, interrupting the viewing experience. Viewing open captions on screen at a movie theater is similar to using closed captions on a TV. The viewer is able to pay better attention to the movie because they are not required to watch the captions on a separate device.

Open captions can make the movie-going experience more accessible for a wide variety of people, not just those with hearing loss or deafness. "This is a huge step in accessibility for hearing audiences and disabled movie goers. This significantly benefits multiple populations, including the deaf and hard of hearing, children learning to read, adults learning English as a second language, movie-goers with dyslexia, autism, Down syndrome, ADD/ADHD, auditory processing disorders, and learning disabilities" says Keenan Gao, a Minneapolis resident who negotiated the enhanced accessibility with support from Dr. Darlene Zangara, Executive Director of the Minnesota Commission of the Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing (MNCDHH).

Having a local movie theater that provides open captions on all movies at all times, every day, is a huge step forward in accessibility and moves us closer to full and equal access. Please spread the news about open captions at St. Anthony Main.

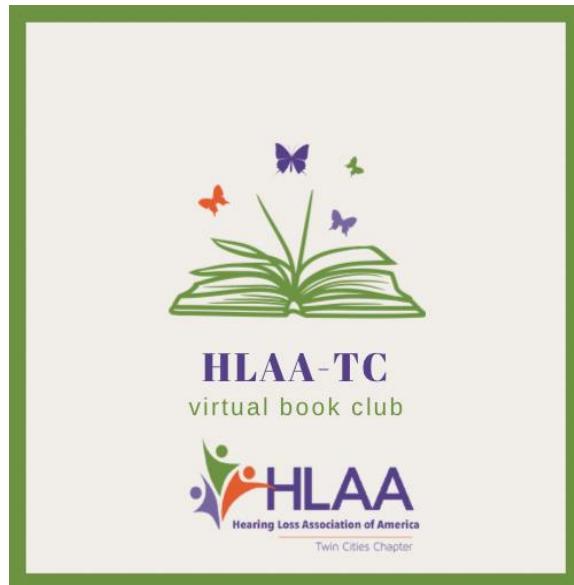
Keenan Gao and Lilly Steinbruckner organized an ASL Night Out event for community members to attend a showing of the movie "House of Gucci" on December 4th. The event was held to show appreciation for St. Anthony Main and their incredible decision to have all movies have open captions. St. Anthony Main is a small theater that has been struggling with revenue (like many businesses) after the pandemic, so receiving support from the hearing loss and deaf communities could make a huge difference.



Open Caption Disclaimer screen at St. Anthony Main. (Photo provided by Keenan Gao).

# Book Club Announcements

*By Laura Hagemann*



HLAA-Twin Cities Virtual Book Club met on Zoom on Monday, December 6th to discuss the novel “The Art of Hearing Heartbeats” by Jan-Philipp Sendker. We are alternating between discussing nonfiction and fiction books. In November we discussed a memoir and December was a novel, so January will be a nonfiction selection.

We have not selected a January nonfiction book yet. When we do select the book we choose a date a month out from when the book was selected for the book club meeting. Meetings are happening on Zoom, are free and open to all, and live captioned. We usually meet on a weekday evening for roughly an hour and a half.

If you would like to be involved in future book clubs and help us choose our book selections, please email book club coordinator Laura Hagemann [social@hlaatc.org](mailto:social@hlaatc.org)

When the next book is selected and a meeting time is chosen, Laura will update our social media and blog.

# Hearing News Update

By Laura Hagemann



We haven't had a regular "Hearing News Update" in a while and we just wanted to post about some various points of interest related to hearing loss. Check out the links below:

## **HLAA National News:**

[HLAA Webinar and Virtual Meetings Recordings \(HLAA website\)](#)

[Hearing Life eNews Sign-up \(the twice per month HLAA e-news\)](#)

[U.S. House of Representatives Expands Medicare to Cover Hearing Aids \(HLAA blog post\)](#)

## **HLAA-TC News:**

Our November speaker Sara Oberg shared some resources:

[betterhearing.org \(A website run by Hearing Industries Association with plenty of resources on hearing\).](#)

["Learning to hear again with a cochlear implant, communication strategies" by Donna S. Wayner, PhD and Judy E. Abrahamson, MA \(article found on www.audiologyonline.com\)](#)

Give To The Max Day was on November 18th and HLAA-TC participated for the third year. We raised money towards our goal of being able to continue to provide resources for those living with hearing loss in Minnesota. [Our GiveMN page is still live and accepting donations.](#)

## **Upcoming Meetings:**

Next HLAA-TC Zoom Chapter Meeting: December 18, 2021: "Using InnoCaption to Add Captioning to Your Cell Phone" A Representative from InnoCaption. (*Zoom Meeting*). [email [treasurer@hlaatc.org](mailto:treasurer@hlaatc.org) for the chapter meeting link].

HLAA TC  
PO Box 26021  
Minneapolis, MN 55426



**Next meeting: Zoom on December 18**

## First Class

### HLAA Twin Cities Chapter

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Welcomes You!

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The next meeting of the Hearing Loss Association of America Twin Cities Chapter (HLAA TC) will be held on Zoom on December 18, 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)).