

HLAA TC

January 2025

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.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

January 18, 2025

Darlene Zangara, executive director

Alicia Lane, Government Relations

Director

Minnesota Commission of the Deaf,
DeafBlind & Hard of Hearing

Making your Voice Heard: Lobbying
at the State Legislature

February 15, 2025

Kim Fishman

HearsToU

Equipment, accessories and products
to help us hear better and
take care of our ears



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President's email

Robin Coninx – president@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

The December Hearing Loss Association of America Twin Cities Chapter meeting
(HLAA TC) will be held on January 18, 2025

See page 11 for further details

HAPPY NEW YEAR!



2025 is Here! As President, I am looking forward to the year to come.

First and foremost, growing our agency in membership and professional engagement is so important. These are not just words but tasks that we should all embrace. Those who know about and are members of HLAATC should be passing on HLAATC information to all those who have hearing loss and professionals that service individuals with hearing loss. People with hearing loss who use technology to integrate into their communities also need to connect with others with hearing loss regularly. I guarantee that over time we all need support and to be with others that have the same 'hearing' experiences.

Please make sure that you are signed up for our newsletter or go to our website to view the monthly HLAATC newsletter AND come on the 3rd Saturday of months September through May for a time of socializing, topic presentation and member information. Social time starts at 9:30 AM. Presentation/subject of the meeting is from 10:00 AM – 12:00 noon.

All members are also invited to our monthly HLAATC Board Meetings. Meetings are on Zoom from 10:30 AM – 12:00 noon, and in 2025 will be held Jan 8, Feb 5, Mar 5, April 2, May 7, June 4, August 6, Sept 3, Oct 1, Nov 5, and Dec 3.

If you would like to attend monthly HLAATC Board meetings, please email: president@hlaatc.org

Let's do this!



December Meeting Summary

Accessibility Options at the Guthrie Theater

Christy Myers

Thank you to Robyn DeCourcy, Accessibility Coordinator for the Guthrie Theater, who spoke at our December Chapter meeting on the topic of accessibility options at the Guthrie Theater.

After discussing the Guthrie's proactive approach to accessibility and listing various types of accessibility options offered by the Guthrie, Robyn then focused primarily on accessibility for people with hearing loss.

The Guthrie offers two different assistive listening systems. One is an FM system that offers ear buds, headphones and neck loops (which can connect directly to the hearing aids or cochlear implant processors of users with t-coils). The other system uses blue tooth to send sound to the user's hearing aids. That system is operated via an app that can be downloaded to a user's personal phone.

The Guthrie offers some captioned and ASL performances for every play in each of their stages. Captions are also available at Relaxed Performances, which are offered for some plays. The Guthrie offers deeply discounted tickets for the captioned performances if you tell the box office you want to be in the section for captions. Additionally, if you are unable to attend a scheduled captioned or ASL performance but really want to see a play, you can contact Robyn to request captioning or ASL for the performance you can attend. She will try to secure, but cannot guarantee, captioning and/or ASL for you. Please give her as much advance warning as possible- at least two weeks.

Most ticketing questions should be directed to the Guthrie Box Office at 612/377-2224. However if you need to request a captioned or ASL performance that is not on their schedule, contact Robyn directly at 612/225-6131. The Guthrie Theater website is www.guthrietheater.org



View the December Guthrie Presentation on YouTube (and other links)

By Laura Hagemann

Thank you to Robyn DeCourcy from the [Guthrie Theater](#) who presented about Accessibility Offerings at The Guthrie Theater (Minneapolis, MN) for our December HLAA-TC Chapter meeting.

A recording of the presentation is now on our YouTube Channel: <https://youtu.be/-dfo9OutVOM>

Here are the links that were mentioned to find out more about accessibility at The Guthrie Theater:

- Guthrie Accessibility: <https://www.guthrietheater.org/plan-your-visit/accessibility-offerings/>
- Wi-Fi Listening SetUp: [Setup Instructions](#)
- If you have specific questions or need an accommodation not listed, please contact us at [612.225.6390](tel:612.225.6390) or accessibility@guthrietheater.org.
- Directions/Parking: <https://www.guthrietheater.org/plan-your-visit/directions-parking/>
- Performance Calendar: <https://www.guthrietheater.org/shows-and-tickets/performance-calendar/>

Accessibility at The Guthrie
Theater
By Robyn DeCourcy,
Guthrie Theater

**MONTHLY
CHAPTER
MEETING**
December 2024

www.hlaatc.org



January 18 Chapter Meeting

Making Your Voice Heard - Lobbying at the State Legislature

Our January Chapter meeting speakers will be Darlene Zangara, Executive Director and Alicia Lane, Government Relations Director from the Minnesota Commission of the Deaf, Deafblind and Hard of Hearing. Darlene and Alicia will be presenting the Commission's legislative agenda for this year and sharing ideas on how you can become involved in lobbying at the legislature for laws that will benefit the hard of hearing, deaf and deaf blind people of Minnesota.

Come to learn what the Commission is already planning and to give Darlene and Alicia your own ideas on changes that could be made in Minnesota. This will be a good time to also discuss with other Chapter members about whether we should put together a group to meet our representatives and lobby at the legislature on Lobby Day in March.

Join us for the Chapter meeting on Saturday, January 18, at the Courage Kenney Institute for Rehabilitation, 3915 Golden Valley Road in Golden Valley. Meetings are in the Board Room on the second floor. Social time begins at 9:30 and our speakers will present at about 10. See you there!

Remember, our meeting room is looped and CART is provided.

Six behaviors that can hurt your hearing (AARP website)

1. Delaying a doctor's visit

Notice a change in your hearing? Don't put off a trip to the doctor's office.

2. Smoking

Here's yet another reason to [stop smoking](#): It often comes with hearing difficulties, too.

3. Taking ototoxic medications

More than 100 classes of drugs can hurt your hearing — and sometimes the loss can be permanent. ACE inhibitors

4. Using an ear mold kit

That's the job for an audiologist — don't do this at home.

5. Not keeping your ears clear

It's important to take your headphones off and give your ears a break

6. Denial and embarrassment

Only about 30 percent of people 70 and older with hearing loss wear a hearing aid, even though it could improve their quality of life.

<https://www.aarp.org/health/conditions-treatments/info-2022/causes-of-hearing-loss.html>

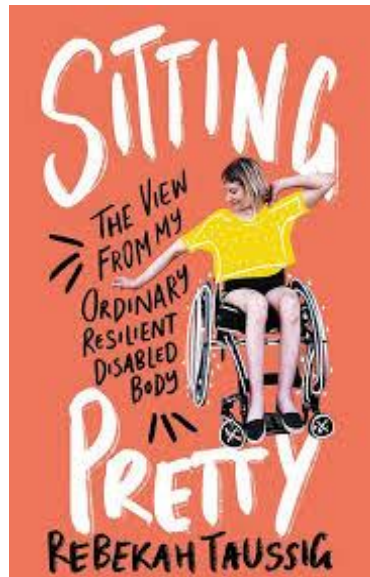
Information about January 2025 Book Club
By Laura Hagemann

HLAA-TC Book Club was on break for December 2024 and we are resuming meetings starting on Tuesday, January 28th at 7:00 pm. We are meeting to talk about the memoir “[Sitting pretty: the view from my ordinary, resilient, disabled body](#)” by Rebekah Taussig (nonfiction), BARD: DB 101063. Tuesday, January 28th, 7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. Central Time [[ZOOM-Register Here](#)]. [Amazon Book Summary](#): A memoir-in-essays from disability advocate and creator of the Instagram account [@sitting_pretty](#) Rebekah Taussig, processing a lifetime of memories to paint a beautiful, nuanced portrait of a body that looks and moves differently than most. Growing up as a paralyzed girl during the 90s and early 2000s, Rebekah Taussig only saw disability depicted as something monstrous (The Hunchback of Notre Dame), inspirational (Helen Keller), or angelic (Forrest Gump). None of this felt right; and as she got older...

HLAA-TC Book Club often reads books about hearing loss or deafness and we also frequently read books about other disabilities, January’s book is one such book in that there isn’t a discussion of hearing loss or deafness. However, the themes that Rebekah covers certainly are universal for all disabilities, including hearing loss: shame, isolation, social anxiety, etc. We look forward to meeting to discuss this book. [Please Register To Receive The Zoom Link](#).

Book Club hasn’t announced the 2025 books yet, but you can see a schedule of when we meet and books we’ve read in the past and guests we’ve had previously on our webpage: <https://www.hlaatc.org/book-club/>

Our Book Club and several other HLAA Book Clubs were featured in the Fall/Winter 2024 issue of *Hearing Life* magazine (the HLAA magazine). Read that article [here](#).



Welcome! – in 35 languages

By Vicki Martin

As co-ordinator of a Welcome Corps team acting as a resettlement agency for “people you know”, I was recently required to attend an online orientation meeting to help prepare us for the arrival of our refugee family. There were perhaps 40 people present on zoom for this meeting, and the first thing I noticed was the apparently great ethnic diversity among team leaders.

I shouldn’t have been surprised. Those who have sought refuge in the USA in the past are very likely to have left behind many “people you know”. Those already on American soil are very motivated to help family members and friends find safety too.

The presentation had scarcely begun when one of the participants asked – in English, with a foreign accent – if a translator was available. The moderator apologetically replied that they did not have translators on board. At that point, I offered a tip I had learned as a hard of hearing person who has attended many online meetings: “Foreign language speakers sometimes find it helpful to turn on captioning,” I suggested, knowing that seeing the words as well as hearing them can often clarify what was spoken.

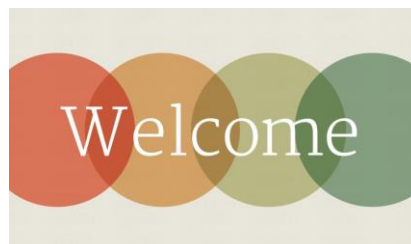
The participant said he would try that, and the presentation resumed. I assumed that the ESL participant would be seeing English captions, and would thus be able to both hear and see the words being spoken in English.

A short while later, the captioning on my screen suddenly changed from English to Spanish. This was interesting. I’m not sure how language translation works in the caption applications, but I had always assumed (if I assumed anything) that the zoom program installed on each computer had a translation component. If I need to select anything, I always select English - so speech is not being translated for me, only captioned.

I clicked on the CC icon and re-selected English. So far so good. Some time later, it abruptly switched to Spanish again. What was going on? Again, I switched to English. But then it dawned on me: only one language can be selected for the entire group of users. We can’t each see in our own language, and I was pretty sure that the other user was struggling more than I was to understand all the words. I switched it back to Spanish for the remainder of the meeting, and turned my own captions off.

So, in addition to learning how to prepare for receiving our refugee family, I also learned something about ZOOM meetings: all participants using captioning must be using the same language. Next step in the technology, perhaps: a program that allows each individual user to select the language of his choice.

Yokoso – Japanese
Salut – Quebec
French
Karibu – Swahili
Tervetuloa – Finnish
Marhaba – Arabic



Välkommen – Swedish
Labá diena – Lithuanian
Bienvenue – Swiss
French
Bienvenue – Walloon
Saluton – Esperanto

White noise for tinnitus – good or bad?

As early as the 1920s, white noise generators have been used as masking devices for tinnitus. The research goes on today.

Mayo clinic lists the following as possible treatments for tinnitus:

- **White noise machines.** These devices...are often an effective treatment for tinnitus. You may want to try a white noise machine with pillow speakers to help you sleep...
- **Masking devices.** Worn in the ear and similar to hearing aids, these devices produce a continuous, low-level white noise that suppresses tinnitus symptoms.

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/tinnitus/diagnosis-treatment/drc-20350162>

Other research suggests that white noise may not be the panacea tinnitus sufferers have hoped:

“Increasing evidence shows that the brain rewires in a negative manner when it is fed random information...

“In a new review article, ...researchers from the University of California San Francisco suggest that the background buzz of white noise ... could actually be harmful to our central auditory system.

“A rapidly growing body of literature, largely conducted in animal models within the last decade, has now established that long-term exposure to nontraumatic noise...is capable of inducing maladaptive ... reorganization of the central auditory nervous system [similar to that believed to] underlie tinnitus in humans...

“While there isn’t significant evidence in humans..., [the team] cites animal studies that suggest prolonged exposure in animals does affect their brains.

“It’s far too early to conclude that the unstructured sound of white noise ... is having the same effects of people.

“But nonetheless, given sound therapy with white noise is already being used to ostensibly help patients manage the symptoms of their tinnitus, the researchers say we should at least be open to the hypothetical possibility of the potentially harmful effects seen in animal studies.”

The findings are reported in JAMA Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery

Read the whole article here: [JAMA Otolaryngology – Head & Neck Surgery](#).

Diabetes and Hearing Loss

(excerpt from blog by audiologist Amy Sarow)

...As an audiologist, I have worked with patients who have both hearing loss and diabetes (a chronic condition that affects millions of Americans), among other health concerns and issues...

While the relationship between hearing loss and diabetes is not widely known, research suggests a connection between the two.

Here's what two insightful studies had to say on the diabetes audiogram (hearing test chart) connection:

A recent study found that people with diabetes experience hearing loss at the [highest frequencies on the audiogram](#), meaning that they can struggle to hear whispers and high-pitched sounds.

Another study found that 50% of [individuals with diabetes had a flat hearing loss](#) configuration, meaning that their audiograms looked like a straight line across the audiogram...

However, other audiometric tests [the auditory brain stem response, for example] also show changes...

These results suggest that not only the audiograms of these patients may be affected, but also how sound is transmitted to the auditory nerve and nervous system is impacted.

Read the full blog here: [Diabetes and Hearing Loss](#)

Key Takeaways:

Research suggests a relationship between diabetes and hearing loss - individuals with diabetes are twice as likely to develop hearing loss as their peers.

- Diabetes may affect how sound is transmitted to the auditory nerve and nervous system.
- Regular check-ups with your physician can help manage diabetes, and monitoring hearing with regular audiograms is recommended to watch for changes in hearing.

Driving for Uber – with hearing loss

Did you know that thousands of deaf or hard of hearing people drive with Uber?

“Alicia Johnson has been driving for Uber for almost a year, first in California and now in her new home of Washington DC, but because she was deaf it was never an easy task. Johnson, 25, would often miss ride notifications that came through her phone via text because she couldn't hear the ding, or find herself forced to awkwardly inform riders that she couldn't hear what they were trying to tell her. So when Uber recently rolled out some new features on its app just for deaf drivers, she was relieved.”

<https://leader.pubs.asha.org/doi/10.1044/leader.NIB2.21072016.10>

“To attract more drivers who are deaf and hard of hearing, Uber is adding new features to the software its drivers use on the job.

The ride-service company is testing in the app in Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Washington, D.C. Drivers with hearing impairment can use these new app features:

- Flashing-light notification of trip requests (in addition to the standard audio notification).
- Text-only communication between riders and the driver.
- An extra prompt for riders to enter their destination, with notification that the driver has hearing impairment.

To spread the word about its hearing-impairment-friendly efforts, the company is teaming with the nonprofit Communication Service for the Deaf (CSD) to recruit employees through online Uber video guides in American Sign Language and job fairs in places with large numbers of people with hearing impairment. New drivers receive help getting started from the nonprofit's ASL-based customer experience team.”

**Question of interest I was unable to ask: What about drivers who are hard of hearing but do not know ASL? Are all of the non-ASL recruiting and training materials captioned?



-- editor

The Minnesota Access Alliance (MNA)

provides an Accessible Arts & Culture Calendar for patrons who use accessibility accommodations. <https://calendar.mnaccess.org/calendar/>

Here are some of the captioned events:

Thursday, January 23, 7:30 PM — “Parade” at the Orpheum Theatre, Minneapolis — https://calendar.mnaccess.org/events/parade-oc/?mc_id=11132.

Saturday, February 8, 7:30 PM — “The Snowy Day” by the Minnesota Opera at the Ordway, St. Paul — https://calendar.mnaccess.org/events/the-snowy-day-ad-oc/?mc_id=11465.

Thursday, February 13, 7:30 PM — “Hadestown” at the Orpheum Theatre, Minneapolis — https://calendar.mnaccess.org/events/hadestown-oc/?mc_id=11150.

Sunday, February 16, 1:00 PM — “Hadestown” at the Orpheum Theatre, Minneapolis — https://calendar.mnaccess.org/events/hadestown-asl-oc/?mc_id=11151. (GalaPro)

Sunday, February 16, 6:30 PM — “Hadestown” at the Orpheum Theatre, Minneapolis — https://calendar.mnaccess.org/events/hadestown-4/?mc_id=11152. (GalaPro)

Friday, February 28, 7:30 PM — “School Pictures” by Theater Latte Da at the Ritz Theater, Minneapolis — https://calendar.mnaccess.org/events/school-pictures-oc/?mc_id=11361.

Meeting information

The next meeting of the Hearing Loss Association of America Twin Cities Chapter (HLAA-TC) will be held on January 18, 2025.

Location: Courage Kenny, 3915 Golden Valley Road, Golden Valley, MN 55422

Registration: The meeting will be in-person only – no registration is necessary.

Meeting time: Meeting begins at 10 AM (social time at 9:30).

Accommodations: All meetings are realtime captioned by Captioners from Veritext/Paradigm (www.captioning-paradigm.com).

The meeting room is also looped for enhanced hearing directly to your hearing aids or Cochlear implant using T-coil.

HLAA TC
PO Box 26021
Minneapolis, MN 55426



Next meeting: January 18, 2025

First Class

Membership Form HLAA Twin Cities Chapter

Name.....

Address.....

City.....

State.....Zip.....

Phone.(area code).....

E-Mail.....

Newsletter via email included in all memberships

_____ Individual \$25 (includes digital newsletter)

_____ Professional \$50

_____ Donation _____

_____ Printed Newsletter (optional) \$15

**Mail to: HLAA Twin Cities Chapter
PO Box 26021
Minneapolis, MN 55426**



Welcomes You!

Interim President – Robin Coninx president@hlaatc.org

Directors at Large:

**Christy Myers
Karla Sand
Mark Daly
Michael Smith**

Contact Info. - info@hlaatc.org

Social Media - Laura Hagemann social@hlaatc.org

**Newsletter Photographers: Dennis Martin, Christy Myers,
Vicki Martin**

Newsletter Editor: Vicki Martin editor@hlaatc.org