

# HLAA Twin Cities

Hearing Loss Association of America Twin Cities Chapter September 2009



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

## HLAA Twin Cities Calendar of Events 2009 - 2010

### 2009

September 19, 2009 - Jacqueline Hoppenrath, Audiologist from SoundPoint speaking on Tinnitus

September 27, 2009 - CI Picnic Brookview Park in Golden Valley 11AM - 3:00 PM (see details in Bits and Pieces)

October 17, 2009 - Donna Fowler, Health East-how to talk to people in the medical field

November 21, 2009 - Patty Cowell, Home Safety tips for the Hard of Hearing

December 19, 2009 - Open Mike and Potluck, Holiday Party

### 2010

January 16, 2010 - Mary Hartnett

February 20, 2010 - Rich Diedrichsen, technology for the HOH person, including cell phones, text messaging, communication devices Bring along your communication devices to the meeting for Rich to look over.

● HLAA TC Website  
[www.hlaatc.org](http://www.hlaatc.org)

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

● MN Contact Information  
[info@hlaatc.org](mailto:info@hlaatc.org)

### In this issue~

- Checklist for buying a hearing aid Page 4
- Cochlear Implant Picnic Page 10
- Entertainment Page 9
- From National Page 6
- Getting the word out Page 3
- Learning to use a hearing aid Page 7
- Officers & Editors Page 12
- President's Message Page 3
- Sponsors Page 10-11
- Wedding Bells Page 2

### NOTE:



*September is the time to renew your membership for HLAA Twin Cities. See page 12 for membership rates. Please continue to support this organization so we can continue to support Twin City folks with hearing loss.*

## *News from our Past President*



**Vicki Martin (aka Mother of the Bride)**

### **Accessible Wedding**

“Deaf usually marry deaf”, said the disability expert at a PTA meeting I attended, explaining the one exception to the norm. At the time, I didn’t think much about this pronouncement, except to silently add my own corollary: “and hard of hearing people are lucky even to get a date!” I did not yet think of our 7-year-old daughter Amber as deaf, nor could I imagine her as a grown up, married woman.

Today, Amber is both. The wedding of Amber and Paul in August 2009 was a “mixed marriage” of sorts, since the bride is deaf and the groom is hearing.

At this wedding, there were many deaf, many hearing, and many hard of hearing guests. Two sign language interpreters made sure that deaf guests and members of the wedding party knew exactly what was going on. Many of our hearing friends’ eyes were also drawn to the interpreters, for the sheer beauty of watching the words cascade from their hands.

For others, there was CART (computer assisted realtime translation). Since even a light breeze through Como Lakeside Pavilion would have toppled a large screen, several laptop computers were positioned for those who needed captioning.

FM Assistive listening devices (ALDs) were available too, with receivers and a selection of four different types of headsets, including neckloops. As mother of the bride, I was delighted to use both FM and CART. A friend also noted, “you can’t watch the bride and groom when you have your eyes on CART”. The ALD allowed me to take in glimpses of the couple, knowing I could fall back on CART whenever I needed to.

One guest using the FM commented “I could hear everything!”. Another said “I absolutely loved it!”, also noting that lip reading is next to impossible even if you are close enough, since only the pastor is facing the audience.

Several people commented on the superb job that the captioner did (the over-used “awesome” gets another workout here), and virtually everyone relying on it made mention of how much it enhanced the whole wedding experience for them.

Sign, voice and text – all three – were in use at all times during the ceremony. The bride and groom both signed and spoke. So did the pastor. The reader spoke (and was interpreted). A bridesmaid signed (and was interpreted). All showed up on the CART screens.

At the Science Museum of Minnesota where the reception was held, a large screen was provided for the captioning. Seating was arranged so those who needed CART could see it most easily, but even people with normal hearing commented on how much it helped them understand. The ALD had been sent home, since it does not readily adapt to noisy social environments. The two interpreters were kept busy not only interpreting announcements and toasts, but being available for communication between any deaf and hearing parties who wished to “talk”.

*Continued on next page....*

Continued from page 2....

So how did these two people come to know one another, since Amber could not hear and Paul could not sign? Like many of us, Amber knew what it was like to exhaust herself trying to communicate in the hearing world. But somehow with Paul, it didn't seem so much like work. And Paul, seeing a way to share the load, began learning sign language.

For three months he "crammed", learning as much as he could before asking her out on a date. Of course, he could have asked her anyway, and let her do all of the work. But that isn't his way. Both pitched right in, each accommodating the other, each bearing his/her share of the effort.

In the end, what matters is not so much whether the wedding is accessible, but whether the marriage is accommodating. And in this case, I'm delighted to say, there's not much question that it is.



**Congratulations Amber and Paul!**

## **From the Prez....**

### **Getting the word out**

Dear friends, as I fondly remember my first meeting with the HLAATC group, I am reminded of how blessed I felt and the first time knowing I wasn't alone with my hearing loss. What a comfort that was and continues to be to this day.

This summer as I was shopping at Target and standing in the check out lane, another shopper behind me commented on my hearing aids. She told me she too had a hearing loss and thus our conversation continued. What an honor to share with her about our group as I told her about our many speakers, one of which was to talk at our next meeting on Tinnitus. This was something that she extremely suffered from. As her eyes welled up with tears, I could tell that she was in need of support from others that could truly say "I know what you are going through." I handed her our business card, told her to check out our website and welcomed her to attend our meetings.

I know many of us have had the opportunity to introduce others to our group by word of mouth and that others have found us through the web. I want to thank all of you for your hard work and dedication to OUR organization as we once again look forward to a year of gifted speakers who volunteer their time and to CART, our newsletter editors and all of our officers and members who help to set-up our meetings and clean up. None of this would be possible without you.

As our past president, Vicki Martin reminded us, "you don't know it yet – but you could be someones lifeline." So let's get the word out!!

*Linda Miller*

# Purchasing a Hearing Aid

## TESTING

YES/NO

### Were you given a hearing screening<sup>1</sup> or a full hearing exam<sup>2</sup>?

- Were you given a copy of the audiogram and any other test results?
- Were you given a full explanation of all tests?
- Were you charged for the examination?

### Were you told what type of hearing loss you have?

- What your audiogram means
- Why you sometimes can “hear” but not “understand”
- What a hearing aid can do for you and what it can’t do for you

### Were you asked about the effect of your hearing loss on your daily life at home, at work, in school, while using the phone, etc?

Did a “significant other” have an opportunity to express the effect of your hearing loss on them?

## DISPENSING

YES/NO

### Do you know why a particular type of hearing aid was recommended?

- Behind-the-ear, in-the-ear, in-the-canal, completely-in-the-canal, open fitting
- Were your personal preferences considered regarding style, cost, or remote control?

### Were hearing aid features explained to you?

- Directional microphones, number of microphones, self-adjusting volume control, etc.
- Information about the telecoil<sup>3</sup> and its uses

### Do the aids fit comfortably?

Were you able to insert the hearing aids in your ears by yourself?

### Was the following information concerning batteries explained to you?

- How to put batteries in the hearing aid—can you put them in by yourself?
- Where you can buy batteries, how much they cost, keeping spare batteries handy

### Were all the controls explained to you?

- Can you operate all the programs yourself?
- Do you have the dexterity to operate the controls for your hearing aid?
- Do you have the vision to operate the controls and put in batteries?

### Was the following information regarding the care of the hearing aids and earmolds explained to you?

- How to keep earwax out of the sound bore of the hearing aid
- Using a dehumidifier box for night storage
- How often to return for regular checkups and cleaning

*Checklist continued on next page*

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## **DISPENSING**

**YES/NO**

**Did you receive written material on the information you received?**

**Was the following covered at the time of your first follow up visit?**

- Your listening experiences with hearing aids (in noise, feelings of loudness, discomfort, etc.)
- Fit of earmolds (comfort, “whistling” noises)
- How to troubleshoot problems
- “Real-ear”<sup>4</sup> hearing aid measures rechecked (Never heard of ‘real-ear’? See footnote on the other side of this checklist and visit HLAA website for more information about real-ear and other testing.)

**Were you asked to evaluate any improvement on the effect of hearing loss on your life, at home, at work, at school, when going out, etc.**

**Did you receive information about using telephones and assistive listening and alerting devices with your hearing aids?**

- M/T Ratings for hearing aids, cell phones; labeling for cordless phones
- Assistive listening devices using telecoils with audio loops, FM and Infrared systems
- Devices that alert for fire and safety, phones and doorbells

**Were group hearing aid orientation sessions provided?**

- Did you attend?

**Did you receive information about helpful resources such as speechreading classes and support groups such as the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA)?**

## **FULL DISCLOSURE**

**YES/NO**

**Did you receive a written contract detailing the services to be provided?**

- Cost of the hearing aid
- Cost of the dispenser’s services and number of follow-up visits included in the cost
- Date and place of sale

**Did your dispenser check your insurance status?**

- Call the insurer to verify benefits
- Explain the coverage to you
- Explain insurance coverage provided by state law, if applicable
- Explain any tax credits, if applicable

**Did the dispenser provide information about the hearing aid manufacturers he or she works with?**

- Disclose how many and which manufacturers s/he works with
- Recommend models in different price ranges

**Did the dispenser provide written information on any warranties provided by the manufacturer?**

**Did the dispenser provide written information about the trial period and refund policy?**

- Trial period, return time limits by state law, and by office practice
- Fees charged if the hearing aid is returned within the trial period
- Whether the trial period is suspended if the aid malfunctions during the trial period and needs to be returned for repairs

For more information, visit [www.hearingloss.org](http://www.hearingloss.org).

## From National

### From the Executive Director – Hearing Loss Association of America

36 million Americans have some form of hearing loss, yet only 20 percent receive the technology and services they need.

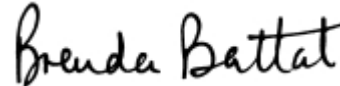
There are millions of people who need help managing their hearing loss - baby boomers dealing with hearing loss for the first time from noise exposure or other causes, veterans of two wars returning with hearing loss in record numbers, and people living longer and acquiring age-related hearing loss.

Everyday people with hearing loss are forced into early retirement, children with hearing loss are held back in school because they do not receive the support services they need, and people withdraw from life simply because they cannot afford a hearing aid. These injustices won't stop until hearing loss and its impact is taken seriously by the general public, policy makers and the media.

President Obama and his administration committed to improving health care delivery. Now is the time for us to speak up and ask them to improve the quality and availability of hearing health care and the economic opportunity for people with hearing loss.

Join us by asking for change for Americans with hearing loss.

Sincerely,



Brenda Battat  
Executive Director, HAAA

### About National Membership ...

*Why renew your membership?* No question about it – for the great advocacy we do and for the support we provide people and their families as they adjust to living with hearing loss.

Hearing Loss Association of America fights for the rights of people with hearing loss. Currently we are fighting to pass a tax credit for hearing aids; end discrimination in the workplace; mandate captioned telephones in all states; pass legislation for captioning of video on the Internet; install visual display systems at airline gates.

*Why do we need you?* To show we have strong support for the work we do enriching your lives and the lives of others who have hearing loss. The more members we have the more influence we have as we push for your rights. **Renew with us today!**

#### Easy Way to Renew!

Save trees, stamps, and your time – renew securely online!

**[www.hearingloss.org](http://www.hearingloss.org)**

Just \$35 per year, \$.70 cents a week. National will only be there as long as you and I care enough to be a part of the national concern for hearing loss.

## Pick yourself up, dust yourself off, and start all over again!

By Sue Brabeck

I was seven years old when I learned to ride a 2-wheel bicycle. What a wonderful day it was when my parents took me to the Schwinn store. I chose a nifty blue bike, with fat pudgy tires. While I was allowed the luxury of adding a wire basket to the front, training wheels were not an option. No, Dad said that I was going to learn to ride a bike the right way, right from the very beginning.

Our driveway at the time was dirt, and so was the road. Learning to ride is hard enough, but I had rocks and ruts and general unevenness to add to my challenge.

After failing to be able to ride more than a few feet in the driveway, Dad took me out on the road, where we continued to try and try and try. Dad held on tight to the back fender, trotting along behind me, while I would ride a few yards and fall. He'd pick me up, I'd get back on the bike, and we'd try again. And again. I was in tears, and I could tell that his patience was wearing thin.

Then there was the magical moment when I was wobbling along, I looked back, and there was Dad, yards and yards behind me standing at the end of the driveway, waving at me. I was so shocked that of course I immediately toppled over. From that moment on, riding was easy.

What does this have to do with hearing? Well, I've found that learning to use a hearing aid (or two!) is sort of like learning to ride a bike. It's just doggone hard! We all have different challenges, so one person's solution does not work for another. But there are some things we all must have in order to make the hearing aid a measure of success.

First, you need to have to WANT to do learn, and then you have to have the conviction that you CAN learn. Then, you have to have the right equipment (hearing aids don't come with training wheels, do they?). You need a good teacher in the form of an audiologist, one who has a lot of patience. The final ingredient is persistence, for both the wearer and the audiologist. A hearing aid is an expensive, delicate, and complicated device, and the human ear is complicated as well. To get the best balance of equipment and settings requires much trial and error and repeat visits. Even then, regular follow-up visits are necessary to keep the equipment in optimal condition, and to make adjustments as hearing changes over the years.

I still struggle a lot with my hearing aid, trying to get the right balance of volume and comprehension. I have picked myself up and brushed myself off more times than I can count. I'll never get to the point of clear sailing. But I'm grateful that learning to wear a hearing aid is a no-impact exercise, without the need for Band-Aids, ice packs, or Neosporine.



# ALOHA

For those of you that may not know, Aloha is a group of deaf and hard of hearing adults in the Twin City area that think they are still under the age of 40. A few of them actually are. It is a very fun group of active adults that meets once a month for dinner, either at a restaurant or at someone's home. It is usually followed up by a game or cards or both, depending on the whims of the attendees. They usually meet the second Saturday of the month, but that may change depending on the host.

The coordinator of this group is Ellen Thibodo, [ThibodoD@aol.com](mailto:ThibodoD@aol.com). Right now she is wildly celebrating the return of her children to school, but she should be back to normal soon. Please contact her if you would like to be put on the email list to learn about future events.

Ellen also shared the following bit of interesting news:

I thought I would share this very interesting piece of news about a bone anchored cochlear implant device that features an MP3 player for music!!! For those of us with nerve damage, this particular device wouldn't work, but it's still a pretty interesting concept!

## Aussie to Receive Bone-Anchored, MP3-Playing Bionic Ear

by Warren Riddle Aug 11th 2009

Numerous studies have demonstrated that various gadgets, including cell phones and iPods, can result in significant hearing loss, but a 2008 survey of teens revealed an alarming lack of concern over the issue. Perhaps adults don't give kids enough credit, though. Because that nonchalance could be

attributable to (instead of youthful naivete and feelings of invulnerability) faith that technology will provide a timely solution.



Scientists have been developing cochlear implants, or surgically-implanted hearing aids, for decades; several are currently approved by the FDA. Bone-anchored implants, which surgeons actually affix to the bone in order to promote bone conduction, are still relatively new, though. According to the Sydney Morning Herald, Colin Hughes, who was born with narrow Eustachian tubes (basically making traditional hearing aids ineffective), is set to become one of the first Australians to receive a bone-anchored cochlear implant.

The pair of bionic ears costs about \$12,000, so it's still not marketable to the mass public. It does, though, feature an MP3 player attachment (seriously) so that teens can simultaneously damage and amplify their hearing abilities. Once developers create a more widely available and less expensive model, the next logical step would obviously be the addition of a universal-language-translator function. The babel fish of 'The Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy' fame doesn't seem so far-fetched now.

[From: The Sydney Morning Herald Via: Engadget]





## Accessible Entertainment

### Kerasotes Block E Stadium 15 – Mpls.

Captioned movies in Twin Cities  
612-338-1466 [www.kerasotes.com](http://www.kerasotes.com)

### MNOCFILMES

Open/closed captioned movies in Twin Cities  
<http://www.mnocfilms.org/index.html>

For MoPix-equipped Rear Window  
Captioned Films go to  
<http://ncam.wgbh.org/mopix/nowshowing.html#mn>.

## ***Upcoming Live Performances with Open Captioning***

**Reduced prices** are offered by the theatres themselves or by the Access to Performing Arts Project to encourage broader participation in live arts events by people who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind or of low vision. It is a joint project of VSA arts of Minnesota, the Minnesota Association of Community Theatres and the Guthrie Theater.

Mixed Blood Theatre

**Ruined** by Lynn Nottage.

**Performed by:** Mixed Blood Theatre.

**Location:** Alan Page Auditorium, 1501 South 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Minneapolis 55454.

**Captioning:** Thursday, October 29, 7:30 PM.

**Tix:** Reduced to \$16 access rate phone: 612-338-6131.

**Web:** [www.mixedblood.com](http://www.mixedblood.com)

## **At the Guthrie Theater:**

**Northern Lights/Southern Cross:** Tales from the Other Side of the World

**Location:** Guthrie Theater, 818 2nd St. S., Minneapolis.

**Captioning:** Thursday, November 5, 7:30 PM;  
Saturday, November 7, 7:30 PM

**Website:** [www.guthrietheater.org/accessibility](http://www.guthrietheater.org/accessibility)

### **The Importance of Being Earnest**

by Oscar Wilde, directed by Joe Dowling.

**Captioning:** Friday, November 6, 7:30 PM

**A Christmas Carol** by Charles Dickens, adapted by Barbara Field, directed by Gary Gisselman.

**Captioning** Saturday, December 5, 1:00 PM

**.Faith Healer** by Brian Friel, directed by Joe Dowling. **Captioning:** Saturday, December 5, 7:30 PM

**All Guthrie Tix:** Reduced to \$25 for captioning users (\$20 subscribers) phone: 612-377-2224, TTY 612-377-6626

**IT'S ACCESSIBLE: GO BECAUSE YOU CAN!!**

### **Science Museum of Minnesota Omnitheater –**

Films shown at the Omnitheater often offer accessible features (CC: Closed Rear View Captioning; AD: Audio Description; or Spanish translation). **Titanica** is a 45-minute film (playing through January 3, 2010).

## Deaf Lady Off in Search of Adventure..

I love to travel. There's no place too remote for me. My favorite trip to date has been one to the Cook Islands and Fiji. In the Fijian Islands, my travel buddy and I took a small plane to a remote island about 100 miles south of the main islands. From the small airstrip, we rode with two complete strangers in an open 18 foot boat for two hours until we reached our resort. It was dark by the time we got there, and the boat got hung up on the coral reefs a few times. We were worried? Nope. It's strange how trusting we can be when far away from home! Also, my travel buddy could hear and take care of sticky situations, a real comfort for me.

I am leaving again for Southeast Asia for the month of November. This time I am going with a small group. We will be traveling through beautiful countries and strange terrain. It is a trip to see the countryside and meet the people that live there. This time I confess I am a bit nervous. I don't know anyone in the group that I will be going with. I won't have a roommate this time, so I need to figure out how I am going to wake up in the morning and not get left behind. I wear a cochlear implant, and when that is off, a passing freight train would go unnoticed. We will be spending some nights without electricity. That might be a concern as my cochlear implant batteries are rechargeable. I am hoping I will have enough to last between charges. Most of all, I confess to a nagging worry at how my fellow travelers will accept a deaf person in their group. Will I find someone to eat dinner with each evening, or will I find myself dining alone? I don't know why this silly notion persists.... In all my travels, people everywhere are the same – generally very nice. While picnicking on that remote island in Fiji with two Fijian girls in their early 20s, the topic of conversation was whether a certain boy in the village liked one of them more than the other. Talk about universal concerns!

I'll keep you posted on my trip....Let's hear about your travels...

*Linda Senechal*

## Cochlear Implant Picnic

The annual Cochlear Implant picnic will be held on Sunday, September 27 from 11:00 until 3:00 at Brookview Park in Golden Valley. This event is for adults and children with cochlear implants, prospective recipients, and anyone curious about cochlear implants. Last year we had about 200 attendees, so you will find lots of people available to talk about cochlear implants. The Teddy Bear Band will present a show at 1:30, so don't forget to bring your favorite teddy bear.

Brookview Park has a covered pavilion, so come rain or shine. Bob Nemeth, chair of the Lion's Hearing Foundation, will once again provide and grill hamburgers and hot dogs. Pop and water, coffee, tablecloths, plates, napkins and plastic ware will also be provided.

You should bring a dish to share. Please RSVP by September 16 with the number of people in your party and what you plan to bring. Call (612) 273-9679 or email [mferrel1@fairview.org](mailto:mferrel1@fairview.org).

*Directions to the park:*

*Highway 100 north or south to west Hwy 55 to Winnetka Ave South. Go south on Winnetka one block, and then west on Brookview Pkwy to the parking area.*

*If you are further west than Highway 169, go north or south on Highway 169 to Hwy 55. Go east on Hwy 55 to Winnetka and turn right for one block, then west on Brookview Pkwy to the parking area.*



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This month's editor Linda Senechal

**Meetings are held the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of the month September through May at the Courage Center in Golden Valley, MN. We gather at 9:30 to socialize and the meeting starts at 10 AM. All meetings are real time captioned by Lisa Richardson and her staff of *Paradigm Captioning (www.paradigmreporting.com)*. Please visit the chapter's web-site at [www.hlaatc.org](http://www.hlaatc.org)**