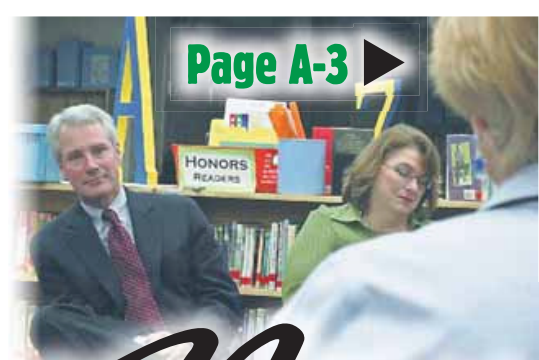


Bearden class sparks service

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3 T's dominate discussion



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# A magical season



Hearing Loss Association of Knoxville members (front) Rusty Cole, Maureen Hinds, Karen Spangler, Kathy Rees; (back) Mary Ann Davis, Mark Brogan, Seth Underwood, Mark Underwood, Jason Spangler and Laurie Pullins gather around the Christmas tree.

By Nick Frantz

For many members of the Hearing Loss Association of Knoxville, the fact that they can hear through cochlear implants and hearing aids is nothing short of magic.

Appropriately, when they gathered for their annual Christmas party on Thursday at Ebenezer United Methodist Church, they were entertained by local magician Kyle Copeland.

Copeland, a magician for more than 25 years, specializes in close-up magic and stage shows. He caught the bug as a kid at Sea World, when he was brought on stage for a magician's act. The magician showed him the trick afterward and he was hooked.

"My dad took me to the library and, within a year, I was performing shows around the neighborhood," he said. Copeland is also vice president of the local chapter of the International Brotherhood of Magicians.

"And, when I was teenager, I worked at summer camps for deaf and hearing impaired students," he said. "So I know firsthand the magic that can appear in their lives."

The HLA, recently re-established in Knoxville, is part of the national Hearing Loss Association of America. The group aims to be the voice for those people who struggle with varying degrees of hearing loss, including acting as a support and advocacy group.

"We have members who come in from as far away as Madisonville," said Laurie Pullins, the group's president. "All ages and types of hearing loss are represented. We love to see the whole family come out to the meetings."



Kathy Rees draws a caricature of magician Kyle Copeland during the Hearing Loss Association of Knoxville's Christmas party. Photos by Nick Frantz



Seth Underwood looks on in amazement as Kyle Copeland reveals the card Underwood picked out of a deck.

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## A magical season

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“And we always have a time for socializing and support.”

Members meet once a month at the church and hear speakers talk about various new products and services that benefit people who have trouble hearing. Recent guest speakers have talked about new auditory therapies, training dogs for use by those hard of hearing and a representative from the Knoxville-Knox County

Office on Aging.

Next month, the group will meet at 7 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 8. Guest speaker will be Mike Turner with GoAmerica, who has developed a mobile video phone that allows users to talk to as many as eight people at one time.

The group is also excited about the HLAA's national convention, to be held in June 2009 at the Gaylord Opryland Resort & Conven-

tion Center in Nashville. The event marks the 30th anniversary of the HLAA and includes a trip to the Grand Ole Opry and an opening session featuring Vint Cerf, a vice president of Google frequently described as “The Father of the Internet.”

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