

DIABLO VALLEY NEWS

Happy Valentines Day!

DIABLO VALLEY CHAPTER MEETINGS

1st Wednesday of the month at 7:00 p.m.
Except June, July, August and December

Walnut Creek United Methodist Church
1543 Sunnyvale Avenue
Wesley Room of the Education Building
Walnut Creek, CA 94597

The meeting room and parking are
at the back of the church.

Our meetings are open to the public. Donations are
accepted. We have an assisted listening system so
you can use your t-coil and most of our meetings
are captioned.

CHAPTER MEETINGS

February 2, 2011

Hamilton Web CapTel

Will give a presentation about the variety of
services Hamilton offers to people who are hard of
hearing.

March 2, 2011

Dr. Mimi Salamat, Ph.D., CCC-A, FAAA

Clinical Audiologist & Tinnitus Specialist

Real Ear Measurement

April 6, 2011

Randy Wright
Rossmoor

Induction Loops

Everything you wanted to know, how does it
work, how to set one up and can I have one at
home or in my car?



UPCOMING HLAA WEBINARS

February 24, 2011

The Masks of Hearing Loss, **Bluffing 101**

March 24, 2011

Cochlear Implants for Children and Adults

Transcripts available

Details available at: www.hearingloss.org

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Ann Thomas

The HLA A Board of Trustees needs your help. We need 2 new BOT members, a Secretary and a Vice President. Our new Vice President Jody Smith graciously volunteered for the position, but had to resign because of previous obligations.

Anyone interested in forming a special event committee for our June and December meeting please contact Ann Thomas:
AThomas@hearinglossdv.org.

Please remember to renew your HLA A membership through our chapter.



2 events at the same time

Come on the 16th & stay through the 20th.

HLA A Convention 2011

June 16-19, 2011

Hyatt Regency Crystal City

2nd International Hearing Loop Conference

June 18-20, 2011

HLA A & American Academy of Audiology.

Hyatt Regency Crystal City

Crystal City is a suburb of Washington D.C

www.hearingloss.org/convention

CAPTION KERFUFFLE

By Dr. Leslie

Canadian word, meaning chaotic confusion, is what I have been going through. Last week, I realized I probably should put the closed caption thing on my TV so I would not have to make up what I thought they were saying. Duh! So I looked at the two remotes I use, one to get the TV on and control the volume and one to change channels. I could see no clue as to how to take this big electronic step. So I called my cable carrier. Well, first I googled the question, Are TV carriers required to provide captioning for the hearing impaired? The answer is yes.

So my carrier, after I went through the phone tree, shuttled me off to a technical support guy in India. He told me exactly what to do and I did it with him on the line. It did not work. So 20 minutes later, after trying every known combination of pressing things on the remote, he told me to go in person to the cable office, which was nearby. I took the remotes with me.

They had no trouble at all enabling the caption capability on their bank of TV's. I have a DVR box, but they said that should not make any difference.

I always wince when they say, *should not* because I know it will make a difference. So they gave me a new remote and sent me home to try again. I felt like an idiot.

So, of course, nothing worked. Again I called and was shuttled again to India. This time I prayed I would get someone I could understand and who would understand I have a hearing loss. Another twenty minutes, they are very patient. Finally the guy says, "Sounds like your DVR does not have hi-def caption capability. So take the DVR into the store and ask for a hi-def DVR with captioning capability". So I did.

So the store did, no hesitation and no additional charge. Of course, I had unplugged the old DVR and left the wires in place, carefully marked so I'd know where to attach them on the new DVR. At the store, I was told to call a certain number and get a signal to the new box. I replugged, turned it

on and called the number. Off to India again.

This time, the guy told me the reason I could not get a signal was that I needed a *cluster* cable to the hi-def box. He said he could send a Tech person the very next day and get me all fixed up. So I caved and asked him to do that.

Somebody must have alerted somebody because they sent the nicest most helpful guy who quickly put in the correct wiring, showed me how to do it and undo it and put everything on one remote.

O happy day. End of kerfuffle.

How to Buy a Cell Phone when You Have a Hearing Loss

By Janice Schacter

Purchasing a cell phone when you have a hearing loss can be a daunting task. How do consumers know which cell phones will work for their hearing needs? Why do some cell phones work for some people with a hearing loss but not others?

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) fact sheet on *Hearing Aid Compatibility for Wireless Telephones* provides an excellent overview of this topic and can be accessed at www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/hac_wireless.html.

ATIS Hearing Aid Compatibility Incubator and CTIA-The Wireless Association also developed a terrific brochure on *Hearing Aid Compatibility for Wireless Telephones and Services*, which can be viewed at www.accesswireless.org/files/pdf/HACBrochure.pdf.

Notwithstanding these brochures, consumers are still confused by the process of buying a cell phone. Our family found the choices overwhelming and the terminology baffling when we went to purchase a cell phone for our daughter who has a hearing loss. During our family's quest, I developed the following decision tree.

1. What do the ratings mean?

Effective September 16, 2006, the FCC mandated that cell phone providers must offer at least two handset models that have a minimum M3/T3 rating.

The M rating (M3 or 4) represents microphone interference potential to a hearing aid from the cell phone and the T rating (T3 or 4) represents the telecoil coupling capability of the cell phone. The higher the rating, the more likely the cell phone will be compatible with a hearing aid.

The minimum number of compliant handset models will soon be increasing. Service providers will have to meet an M3 rating for 50 percent of their models or 8 models per air interface, whichever is less, and a T3 rating for 33 percent of their models or 3 models per air interface, whichever is less.

An M4/T4 rating is available only for cell phones using CDMA technology and carried by Sprint and Verizon. M4/ T4 ratings are not available in phones using GSM technology and carried by AT&T and T-Mobile. Phones using GSM technology can only achieve M3/T3 as their highest rating.

2. What is my hearing aid's Radio Frequency (RF) immunity level to the interference caused by cell phones?

Immunity refers to how well your hearing aid is protected from the interference that may be caused by cell phones. Your audiologist can provide this information and it is important to know prior to purchasing a cell phone.

The M ratings of the hearing aid and the cell phone need to be added together to have a sum of 5 or more, or an M5 rating. The higher the sum of the two ratings, the more likely the cell phone will not interfere with your hearing aid when it is used on its main program. Therefore, a hearing aid should have a minimum immunity rating of at least M2 since compatible cell phones will be rated either M3 or M4. Most current hearing aids have a rating of M2 or better. The hearing aid immunity rating varies by company and product. A higher M rating is likely to perform better than one with a lower M rating. A higher phone rating is needed if the hearing aids have a lower M rating, such as for older hearing aids.

Ratings for a hearing aid's telecoil immunity to interference are not currently offered. This rating will, hopefully, be available from the hearing aid industry in the near future. For now, T ratings do not provide much insight.

3. What type of hearing aid do I have?

In-the-ear-canal (ITE) hearing aids may provide less interference than behind-the-ear (BTE) hearing aids. ITE hearing aids have a greater distance between the microphone on the hearing aid and the antenna on the cell phone, which can lessen interference for the user.

Switching hearing aid styles may allow the user to purchase a cell phone with a lower M rating that may not have previously been an option.

My daughter was able to purchase a Blackberry with a lower M rating in a GSM transmission technology because she switched from a BTE to an ITE hearing aid. She was previously unable to use this phone in the GSM transmission technology when she wore a BTE hearing aid. Not all hearing aid styles are appropriate for all levels of hearing loss, but a switch is worth investigating. Keep in mind that sometimes repositioning the cell phone over the ear or hearing aid can also help lessen interference, especially for those who are unable to switch hearing aids

4. What type of cell phone coverage do I need?

It is important to determine whether domestic or international coverage is needed. There are four transmission technologies worldwide. In the United States, there are essentially two transmission technologies, CDMA and GSM, with four tier one carriers that provide coverage across the U.S. – Sprint, Verizon, AT&T and T-Mobile. Different transmission technologies provide different coverage. In addition, the dominance of GSM and CDMA technologies differs internationally. Some phones can now operate using either CDMA or GSM technology. The following Web sites provide coverage maps for the CDMA and GSM transmission technologies: www.cdg.org/worldwide/index.asp and www.gsmworld.com/index.shtml.

Cell phones operating in the CDMA transmission technology are rated either M3 or M4, but cell phones in the GSM transmission technology are only rated M3. Weighing GSM coverage versus an M4 rating is a personal decision.

5. What is the cell phone rated?

Researching different cell phones prior to entering the store will save you a tremendous amount of time and frustration. Look on the carrier's Web site prior to visiting the store. The Websites for the four major carriers are:

AT &T - www.wireless.att.com/about/disability-resources/hearing-aidcompatibility.jsp

Sprint - www2.sprint.com/mr/gp_dtl.do?article=341

T-Mobile - www.t-mobile.com/Company/Community.aspx?tp=Abt_Tab_Safety&tsp=Abt_Sub_TTYPolicy

Verizon - <http://aboutus.vzw.com/accessibility/products.html>

Another Web site that provides third party information and user reviews on most of the cell phones is www.phonescoop.com/phones/finder.php. Every cell phone store should provide documentation for cell phones rated as hearing aid compatible. The information should be on the placard by the cell phones and on the box. Sometimes the information on the placard is really tiny so look carefully.

6. Can I do an in-store cell phone test?

Only carrier stores are required to allow consumers to test the phones rated as hearing aid compatible prior to purchase. It is important to test the phone in a noisy as well as a quiet setting. Make sure there is room to adjust the volume control of the phone when testing the phone in a noisy setting.

7. Am I able to test the cell phone at home?

Every vendor has a different return policy, so read it carefully and ask if there are any early termination fees. Save all the packaging. Stores will not take back merchandise without all the packaging and a receipt.

8. Is there too much magnetic noise in the background when the volume is adjusted?

The backlight typically turns on every time the volume control is adjusted. Manufacturers are not required to test the interference potential of the backlighting on the phone, but it can create interference for consumers who use their telecoil for listening. Telecoil users should assess whether they can hear interference when the backlight is on when testing a cell phone.

In conclusion, technology is constantly changing so

keep this in mind when selecting a contract length, especially if you have a fluctuating or diminishing hearing loss. A carrier may not allow early termination of a contract if your hearing loss changes. There is no perfect phone for every person with hearing loss. It is a matter of trial and error. Answering the above questions can assist in narrowing your options when buying a cell phone.

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RECYCLE UNUSED HEARING AIDS

Mail them to the address below:

The Hearing Foundation, Ear of the Lion
850 San Jose Avenue, Suite 115
Clovis, CA 93612

Contact:
Terry Brooks
800.327.8077
hearfoundation@aol.com

CALLING ALL WRITERS!

We are seeking YOUR stories about YOUR life. Have you had an eye-opening experience relating to hearing loss or tried a new technology lately? Tell us about it!

All articles will be edited for availability of space, accuracy and style. Articles should be 350 words or less and **single**-spaced after periods.

Submit via email by the **5th** of the month to:
HLAADV@hearinglossdv.org

HLAA-DV MONTHLY BOARD OF TRUSTEE MEETINGS

HLAA-DV BOT meets the 2nd Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m. in the Bride's Room at the Walnut Creek United Methodist Church. Chapter members are encouraged to attend.

Join Us!

Date

Name

Address

City, State, Zip

Telephone

E-mail

Membership includes national, state and local Diablo Valley Chapter memberships, *Hearing Loss Magazine*, *The Hearing Loss Californian* and *Diablo Valley Chapter* newsletters. For international and corporate rates, please visit www.hearingloss.org.

- \$20 Student \$35 Individual
 \$45 Couple \$60 Professional

Please send the Diablo Valley Chapter newsletter by:

- E-mail US mail None

Chapter Donations: Please donate! We need your help. Your donation can help us better serve our community.

- 100 \$75 \$50 \$25 \$10

Other _____ no amount too small

Total enclosed \$ _____

Make checks payable to
HLAA-DV
P.O. Box 5495
Walnut Creek, CA 94596-1495

We are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. Your dues and donations may be tax deductible.

HearingLossNation

The social network for young and hard of hearing

HearingLossNation is a nonprofit online community designed specifically for hard of hearing (HOH) individuals between the ages of 18 and 35.

<http://hearinglossnation.ning.com>
<http://hearinglossnation.ning.com/video>



Hearing Loss Association of America

Diablo Valley Chapter

P. O. Box 5495

Walnut Creek, CA 94596-1495

Please send all correspondence to our P.O. Box

**Our next Chapter meeting is
February 2, 2010**

We have an HLAА-DV Information Booth at the WC Farmers' Market. Contact Ann if you are interested in participating.

CHAPTER OFFICERS

President: Ann Thomas
AThomas@hearinglossdv.org

Vice President: Open

Secretary: Open

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DDaniels@hearinglossdv.org

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HLAA-DV MESSAGE CENTER:
925.264.1199
info@hearinglossdv.org

HLAA-DV WEBSITE: www.hearinglossdv.org
Check our website for up-to-date information about chapter meetings, local advocacy, assistive technology and resources.

HEARING LOSS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

The Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) is the nation's foremost membership and advocacy organization for people with hearing loss. The National support network includes the Washington D.C. area office, 14 state organizations, and 200 local chapters. Hearing loss is a daily challenge you can overcome. You do not have to hide your hearing loss. You do not have to face hearing loss alone.

RESOURCES

HLAA: www.hearingloss.org

HLAC: www.hearinglossca.org

HLAA-DV: www.hearinglossdv.org

Captioned movies:
www.captionfish.com
www.fomdi.com

California Telephone Access Program and the California Relay Service: www.ddtp.com

Q & A in the workplace: www.eeeoc.gov/facts/deafness