

Happy 25th Anniversary!

Join us as we celebrate 25 years of service to the Mt. Diablo communities.

DIABLO VALLEY CHAPTER MEETINGS

The Hearing Loss Association of America-Diablo Valley Chapter holds its monthly meetings on the 1st Wednesday of the month (except July and August). Meetings are held at the:

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

The meeting room and parking are in 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.

OUR NEXT MEETING IS March 4, 2009 at 7:00 pm

Lonnie Tanenberg from CSDVRS will give a half hour PowerPoint presentation on Voice Carry-Over (VCO) technology and will introduce the new videophone, the Z-340, as well as talk about the new Z-150. A hands-on demonstration is included.

CSDVRS offers a new generation of relay service. The caller can **view** on the TV, PC or videophone a video interpreter. Viewing the interpreter provides added support for people who are hard of hearing because they can lipread the response. This service is also available as a Voice Carry Over (VCO).

For more information visit www.csdvrs.com.

Please note: this meeting will not be captioned.

June Picnic

We are looking for new ideas and suggestions about our annual June picnic. So far we have received the following suggestions: bocce ball and the Lafayette Reservoir.

Please send us your ideas!

Money, Money, Money

*By Ann Thomas
Vice President Membership*

Membership dues: After much confusion the Hearing Loss Association of America has authorized local chapters to collect membership dues. In the past we could collect a newsletter fee or a donation, but not call it membership dues. The Board of Trustees voted at our last board meeting to charge \$10 per year for membership dues. If you haven't already done so, I'm asking all of you to please send in your dues. We will also gladly accept any additional donations you would like to give. Please use the form on the last page of this newsletter.

For those of you who joined HLAA in January and also gave a donation we have designated \$10 of your donation to go to local membership dues. If anyone is unhappy with this designation please let me know.

In the last newsletter I told you about our chapter's goals for 2009. Unfortunately it takes money to run our chapter and our outreach programs to the community.

We have finally finished the redesign of our brochure and tip cards and we need to get them printed. I have researched getting them printed from an online company, but it is still expensive. In the first phase of our outreach program we are looking to originally print 1000 of them. Once we have them printed we will need your help distributing them to libraries, ENT offices and audiologists.

Please donate and volunteer!



President's Message

By Don Senger



Some time ago, when I was still young and adventurous, I had a group discussion with my co-workers at the office and explained some of the details of my hearing loss. One thing I explained was how I came to have a hearing loss and how it affected me and my work performance.

One of my co-workers later thanked me for explaining the circumstances of my hearing loss. She said she had often wondered about it but was too embarrassed to ask.

This brought to mind similar responses and comments made by others, both by those interested in my hearing loss as well as by some people who had a *mild* hearing loss. Hearing loss was an *embarrassment* and they were reluctant to talk about it. They felt uncomfortable discussing such a very personal and sensitive subject.

That is unfortunate. Noise is increasingly becoming a major source of hearing loss for people of all ages. It is particularly important that hearing loss be talked about. Only by creating an awareness of hearing loss and the things that cause it can we help prevent or reduce the decline of our population's hearing capabilities. We cannot afford to be, nor should we be, embarrassed about having a hearing loss. It is an ill-fated disability that we must all learn to adjust to and go on with our lives. Trying to hide it or denying it doesn't help, even for those lucky enough to get away with it now and then. Somewhere down the line they will stumble, and then that will indeed be an embarrassment!

What we must do is step forward whenever the opportunity arises, admit we have a hearing loss and explain the problems we face. We must show that we are concerned about the causes of this so-called *embarrassing* disease so that others will take notice and help us in seeking ways to prevent and cure hearing loss. We must show we are interested in, want, and will use the many different types of assistive listening systems

available for use in the workplace, places of worship, theaters, hotels, courtrooms, airports and other locations. If we fail to speak up and make use of the assistive listening systems we have long sought and argued for, then we will fail to achieve one of our main goals, to make more and more places accessible to hard of hearing people.

We can't fail. We each have a responsibility to make our needs known and practice what we preach. Only then will we help bring an end to this *embarrassment* and make hearing loss an issue of national concern.

HAT

By AnnThomas

HAT isn't something women wear to church on Sunday. It is an acronym for Hearing Assisted Technology. Hearing Loss Association of America set up a program funded with a grant from the US Department of Education, National Institute on Disabilities and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR), through Gallaudet University to train local HLA members in hearing assistive technology. Debbie Sharp and I applied and were accepted to take the training February 6-9, 2009 at San Diego State University. There were sixteen participants, five of which were from Northern California. The training began at 1:45 on Friday and went through noon on Sunday.

The days were long and jam packed with information. The areas that interested me the most were alerting systems, fire, carbon monoxide, doorbell, telephone; FM systems and a new product designed to make conversations in restaurants easier for people who wear hearing aids. This product is called *Companion Mics*, multi talker noise reduction system and you can get information about it on the following web page:

<http://www.etymotic.com/ephp/compmic.aspx>.



HAT Training, San Diego, CA, February 2009

In the next few months Debbie and I will be giving our chapter a presentation about HAT. We will be sending you a survey about what technologies interest you so we can tailor our presentation to our chapter members needs.

If you have any immediate questions please e-mail Debbie Sharp, DSharp@hearinglossdv.org
Ann Thomas, AThomas@hearinglossdv.org.

Meet A New Board Member What Did You Say?

By Debbie Sharp, Secretary

Hello! This past year has been filled with surprises. I had no idea that I would become the Secretary of HLAA-DV when I started taking an American Sign Language (ASL) class last summer.

One of my class assignments was to attend a community event for deaf or hard-of-hearing persons and write a paper about my experience.

In July 2008, I found out about the Kickoff Party for the **Walk4Hearing** fundraiser and decided to go. Although I have been hard of hearing since birth, this was my first time meeting many hard-of-hearing people in one place.

Leaders from national, state and our own chapter each gave enthusiastic speeches about the walk and HLAA. It seemed that I was in the right place at the right time and before leaving, I asked how to volunteer for the **Walk4Hearing** planning committee. It was through this committee that I met Don Ray and he suggested I come to a meeting of the Diablo Valley Chapter.

In addition to meeting many new and wonderful friends, I have learned so much in a short time about our hard of hearing community members and our need for increased advocacy and training. Earlier this month, I participated in the HAT (Hearing Assistive Technology) training program in San Diego. In the next couple of months, along with Ann Thomas, we will be speaking about HAT at a monthly meeting.

I love volunteering for causes for which I care deeply about. For eight years, I was an active member of the Junior League of Oakland-East Bay, Inc. and participated on the Graphics & Publications Committee and Special Event Committee. In addition to being the League Webmaster for one year, I also chaired both of these committees and served on the Board of Directors, representing the MARCOM Committee.

Last year, I became a Sustainer (retired) and I continue to support the League through my annual dues and by attending various fundraising events.

I currently volunteer at the Bay Area Crisis Nursery (BACN) in Concord, in the following areas: childcare provider for children, newborn to five years of age; website designer; fall Gala committee member and I produced the catalogue for the November 2008 fundraising event at the Diablo Country Club.

My goals for 2009 include creating a chapter website, outreach and training in HAT, and advocating for improved communications in theaters and other public places for the hearing-impaired community. If you have any questions or suggestions, please feel free to contact me at DSharp@hearinglossdv.org.

February Meeting

By Debbie Sharp, Secretary

Seventeen members attended our February meeting. Steven Noroian, gave an enlightening and informative presentation about *Investing During Troubling Times*.

His serious topic was highlighted by humorous jokes, "Did you know that Donald Duck comics were banned from Finland because he doesn't wear pants?" and "I think there's a correlation between hearing loss and the stock market."

Seriously, Steve's presentation included the history of the stock market through our current economic situation; bargain hunting in the stock market; the current recession and the role of the SEC.

The meeting ended with a celebration of the 25th Anniversary of the founding of Diablo Valley Chapter, complete with cake and cider.

If you wish to view the full captioned text of the meeting, please contact Debbie Sharp.



Diabetes and Hearing Loss

By Leigh Kjeldsen, Au.D.

This year the National Institutes of Health published the results of a study showing a link between diabetes and hearing loss. The connection has long been suspected but this is the first study to prove it.

Patients with diabetes are more than twice as likely as those without the disease to have hearing loss, according to a recent National Institutes of Health study. More than 40% of people with diabetes in the study had some degree of hearing loss.

For years, physicians who treat people with diabetes have referred their patients for vision check ups and now it appears that should include hearing check ups. A hearing check can identify people with hearing loss earlier and can ensure they receive the treatment they need.

The study was published in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* in June 2008. The NIH analyzed data from over 5,000 hearing tests from 1999 to 2004. Not only did people with diabetes have a higher incidence of hearing loss, but people with pre-diabetes (whose glucose is higher than normal but not high enough for a diagnosis of diabetes) have a 30% higher chance of having hearing loss as compared to people with blood sugar in the normal range.

The NIH says that diabetes may lead to hearing loss by damaging the nerves and blood vessels of the inner ear and autopsies of people with diabetes seem to support this conclusion.

Studies show that people with untreated hearing loss have a lower quality of life and even earn less than people with normal hearing or people who have treated their hearing loss by using hearing aids.

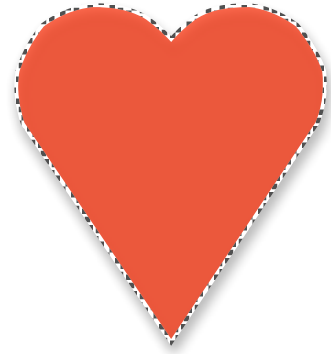
21 million people in the United States have diabetes and approximately 54 million have pre-diabetes. If your friends or family members have diabetes, have them talk about hearing loss with their doctor or encourage them to see their audiologist for a hearing test.

For more information about NIH studies, go to www.nih.gov.

Reprinted with permission from
Leigh Kjeldsen, Au.D.,
Valley Audiology News, Winter 2009.

Donors

We would like to thank the following people for donations in February:
Don Senger
Susan Koester



TV Digital Transition A Different Story

By Don Senger

Without a doubt everyone by now has heard about the TV digital broadcast transition and the need to get a converter box if you receive your TV signal from a rooftop antenna or rabbit ears. If you have digital cable or satellite TV you don't have to do anything.

New information: If you use Comcast cable, you may soon need a different digital converter box for your analog TV set. Why? Comcast has decided to convert their cable system with new wiring that will result in digital transmission of all their broadcasts. Consequently, if you are still using an analog TV you will need a Comcast Digital HD converter box or a Comcast *Digital Transport Adapter* in order to view broadcasts transmitted by Comcast. You can get up to three adapters free of charge.

There is no set date for this special digital rewiring conversion, as cities around the Bay Area are being rewired and converted a few at a time over the next year or two. At this writing, two cities on the San Francisco Peninsula and one in the North Bay are being converted. In Contra Costa, work on conversion has begun in Martinez. Other cities will soon follow.

As each city is converted, notices will be mailed to each Comcast subscriber advising them of the change and what they need to do. You can also call Comcast at 1-800-COMCAST for information on when the conversion will affect the area that you live in. You can also place an advance order for the digital transport adapter if you wish.

CONVENTION 2009

June 18- 21

Nashville, Tennessee



Mark your calendar and come celebrate HLAA's 30th birthday! We'll be shaking things up at the Gaylord Opryland Resort and Convention Center, Nashville, Tennessee.

Bring your fancy boots and cowboy hat and join your fellow HLAA members for a fun time. Yee haw!

For more information about the convention's workshop schedule, registration, individual tickets, and more, visit <http://www.hearingloss.org/convention>

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www.betterhearing.com

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3685 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Suite 35, Lafayette, CA 94549

Tel: (925) 299-2000 – Fax: (925) 299-2002

Valley Audiology

Diagnostic Audiology and Hearing Aids

Leigh Kjeldsen, Au.D.,

Julie O. Fulford, Au.D.

Joanna Chan, Au.D.

2415 High School Ave., Suite 300, Concord, CA

94520

1220 Rossmoor Parkway, Walnut Creek, CA 94595

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\$20 Student

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Diablo Valley Chapter Membership

Does not include National Membership.

\$10 Please send the newsletter by:

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None

Chapter Donations: Please donate! We need your help. We receive no financial support from HLAA.

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

Donate American Airline Frequent Flyer Miles

HLAA Convention 2009, Nashville, TN

We would like to send a representative of our board to the convention. Does anyone have frequent flyer miles to donate?

Please contact Ann Thomas, AThomas@hearinglossdv.org



**Hearing Loss
Association**
of America
Diablo Valley Chapter

P. O. Box 5495
Walnut Creek, CA 94596-9998

Please send all correspondence to our P.O. Box.

CHAPTER OFFICERS

President: Don Senger

E-mail: DSenger@hearinglossdv.org

Vice President Programs: Richard Procnier

E-mail: procnier@aol.com

Vice President Membership: Ann Thomas

E-mail: AThomas@hearinglossdv.org

Secretary: Debbie Sharp

E-mail: DSharp@hearinglossdv.org

Treasurer: Jim Montgomery

E-mail: SHHHPEST@sbcglobal.net

Past President, Hearing Systems Specialist:

Bob Zastrow

E-mail: shhhbob@sbcglobal.net

Newsletter Editors:

Debbie Sharp & Ann Thomas

HLAA-DV Message Center: 925.264.1199

Info: HLAADV@hearinglossdv.org

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. HLAA opens the world of communication to people with hearing loss through information, education, support and advocacy. The National support network includes the Washington D.C. area office, 14 state organizations, and 200 local chapters. Our clear, straightforward message has changed the lives of thousands of people. 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

HLAA-CALIFORNIA: www.hearinglossca.org

Captioned movies by zip code: www.fomdi.com

California Telephone Access Program, free amplified telephones and the California Relay Service: www.ddtp.com