

Happy 25th Anniversary!

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

DIABLO VALLEY CHAPTER MEETINGS

1st Wednesday of the month at 7:00 p.m.
(except July and August).

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.

OUR NEXT MEETING

May 6, 2009 at 7:00 p.m.

Hearing Assistive Technology



Debbie Sharp & Ann Thomas

will give a presentation about hearing assistive
technology (HAT) including a hands on
demonstration of devices.

SIGN UP FOR HLAA ENews

<http://www.hearingloss.org/membership/Sen.asp>

Transcripts from Previous Webchats

<http://www.hearingloss.org/Community/transcripts.asp>

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Don Senger



<http://www.asha.org/bhsm/>

May is a time for all of us to think about what is
happening to our hearing, what is being done to
prevent hearing loss, and what is being done to help
those millions of people who suffer from some
degree of hearing impairment.

What's happening to our hearing? More and more
people are discovering that they can no longer hear
as well as they used to. Half a century ago, it was
estimated that 16 million Americans were hearing
impaired. Today, that figure has doubled to almost
30 million people. While age plays a major factor,
the most common cause of this alarming increase in
hearing loss is simply *noise*.

Look around you and try to compare in your mind
what you see and hear with the conditions of 50
years or so ago. Turn on the radio or attend a rock
concert. Listen to the music and listen to the singers
scream their lungs out while the band tries to outdo
them with the banging of the drums and the blasting
of high decibel notes. Watch the audience dance and
scream in delight. Pity them, as they soon discover
that their hearing is beginning to fade. Look at the
musicians and notice the number of them wearing
earplugs or other forms of hearing protection for
their ears. Think back 50 years or even less. Music

then was gentle on the ears, even though rock and roll was just starting to take off. Jog your memory and recall those frequent times you were warned by your parents to turn down the radio, stereo or your Walkman because the music was way too loud. Music today is played even louder. You can bet tomorrow's music will reach even higher marks on the decibel scale.

Go to the airport. Watch and listen to the jets take off. Observe the ground crew hustle about. Note the sound protectors they wear over their ears. Fifty years ago the jet age was still an infant. You could still fly on a commercial plane that had propellers or turbo-props. Noise was loud then too. But it was nothing compared to the modern jet age.

Get out your lawn mower and cut the front lawn. Observe your neighbors also mowing their lawns. It was more than likely that 50 years ago you and your neighbors, or their parents, were using your own muscle power, pushing a lawnmower. Gas-powered mowers? They were for the rich or for those with huge lawns. Electric mowers? Unheard of. Today, gas and electric lawnmowers are as common as two cars in every garage and a chicken in every pot. Do you and your neighbors know that operating a power lawnmower for more than half an hour at a time can cause hearing loss?

Progress. That's what they call it. To make our lives easier and safer. Yet, for many of us, *progress* must be further defined to mean *progressive deafness*, for which there is no cure. Noise is not progress, it is damaging. Damaging to your nerves, your peace of mind, and your hearing.

We can't stop progress. So what is being done for those who suffer the pains of isolation and rejection because, thanks to *progress*, they no longer hear well? In the past, not much. But today, quite a bit.

Although hearing aids have been around for a long time, today's digital hearing aids are much more sophisticated than those of half a century ago.

While they still cannot correct hearing loss in the same manner as eyeglasses correct vision problems, modern hearing aids have vastly improved sound quality, more power, and smaller size. Powerhouse hearing aids of 50 years ago were usually box-style *body aids*, which most people avoided like the plague, regardless of the help they provided. For those with severe-profound hearing loss, cochlear implants have given remarkable results in improving and regaining one's hearing. And around the corner is research on hair cell regeneration that may some day restore one's hearing.

Today's hard of hearing population, unlike that of 50 years ago, no longer is concerned about appearances. They want to hear, understand and communicate, regardless of what it takes to do it. Unheard of 50 years ago, assistive listening devices (ALD's) now provide that help. Captioned TV, personal telephone typewriters, text messaging on cell phones and computers, infrared and FM listening systems, direct audio input hearing aids? Forget it. Buck Rogers stuff. That's what they said 50 years ago.

Today, Buck Rogers is here and it's our gain. Now, thanks to closed captioning, a hard of hearing person can watch a non-action program on TV and understand what the story is all about, bringing the joy of being able to laugh, cry and enjoy with the rest of the family. They can attend a play or hear a sermon in church using an FM or infrared listening system and understand almost every word that is said. They can talk for hours using a TTY telephone, voice-carryover or text messaging over the computer. Or communicate with others in a noisy restaurant using a personal FM communicator or other assistive listening device. And have the alarm clock flash a lamp or rock the bed to wake them up for work. There are many ALD devices now available to make life for a hard of hearing person easier and more enjoyable.

Fifty years ago, many hard of hearing people felt their only choice was to withdraw and isolate themselves from others. Today, many still do because they are uninformed. The month of May should not only be proclaimed national *Better Hearing and Speech Month*, but also *Fight*



The month of May should not only be proclaimed national *Better Hearing and Speech Month*, but also *Fight the Withdrawal Syndrome Month*.

the Withdrawal Syndrome Month.

Hard of hearing people must learn to fight withdrawal symptoms and instead stand in the light and show the world that relegating the hard of hearing people to isolation is a thing of the past. Hard of hearing people have feelings, wants, ambitions and capabilities just like those who have normal hearing. All that is needed is a little patience and understanding both by the hard of hearing person and with those with whom they associate, whether it is their immediate families, friends, or the general public.

So if you are hard of hearing or know someone who is, remember that isolation and withdrawal is a thing of the past. Today is the time to be yourself -- to communicate, assert yourself, and enjoy the interaction and company of others. Support *Better Hearing and Speech Month* and help fight the withdrawal syndrome.

OUR NEWSLETTER NEEDS A NAME!

ONLY A FEW PEOPLE HAVE MADE SUGGESTIONS OR VOTED

PLEASE SEND IN YOUR SUGGESTIONS

Contact your newsletter editors no later than May 1st.
info@hearinglossdv.org

WHEN DID IT HAPPEN

By Dr. Leslie Harrold
new member

I pulled up to a signal light, and from two lanes over came this incredible hip-hop beat. I looked over and there was a kid in a car with the windows rolled up, head bobbing in time to the beat. I felt the beat in my sternum, I wanted to run over, jerk the door open and scream at him, "Don't you know what you are doing?" Probably not, and maybe doesn't care. It would not be cool and besides, I'd get arrested for violating his civil rights, or something.

But, I wondered, when and how is he going to find out he has a hearing loss? I found out late in life. So, I turned to my daughter Cindra, who is a Science teacher in an elementary school in Orange County. Cindra was voted the top Elementary School

Science Teacher in California. So I asked her how the school system detects hearing loss in children. She said the school system does an excellent job of testing early in the child's schooling. Audio, visual and other factors are scheduled for testing regularly in Kindergarten through third grade. Then, if the child is OK, they are not tested routinely, but passed along and it is up to the teacher or parent to detect problems. Then testing is available right in the school. Testers come to the individual schools. One serious problem is that a child may test OK, as far as hearing goes, but has a problem in processing sounds. It's called Auditory Processing Disability. Their brain simply does not translate sounds into meaningful information. Teachers catch this problem when they realize that they have to repeat instructions two or three times. But with as many as 36 kids in the classroom, the teacher is spread pretty thin.

So as parents and grandparents, we can be very observant of the children in our lives and detect problems as early as we can. The sooner the treatment the better the outcome.

AUDIOLOGY REPORT

By Leigh Kjeldsen, Au.D.

New Hope for Reducing the Incidence of Noise Induced Hearing Loss

One of the most common causes of hearing loss is exposure to loud noise and, in theory, it should be avoidable. However, some people are routinely exposed to loud noise on the job. Even with the use of hearing protection, they can experience hearing loss over time. Two recently published studies show there may be another solution.



Two studies showed that using vitamin supplements on laboratory animals lessened the incidence of hearing loss after exposure to loud noises. In the first study, researchers gave guinea pigs a dose of the vitamins before exposing them to 110 decibels for four hours. The post exposure hearing test showed no change in hearing. The second study showed that mice exposed to a single very loud sound were protected from

permanent hearing loss after taking the vitamin supplement.

Usually people have many temporary changes in their hearing following repeated exposures to loud noise. After many such exposures, the hearing loss becomes permanent. What isn't known is if the vitamin supplements will eliminate the permanent hearing loss that comes after long term exposure to loud noise.

OtoMedicine is a company involved in funding these studies and they have patented a vitamin supplement that they hope to market as hearing protection. They are now working on National Institutes of Health funded human clinical trials with various groups including college students, factory workers and military personnel.

If the supplement proves to work in humans, then there may be an easy to use pill that can be taken before the exposure to loud noise. Audiologists and other hearing experts will always recommend using earplugs and/or earmuffs as the first line of defense. The supplements may prove to be a hearing saver for those people with repeated exposure to noise or for those who cannot or will not wear hearing protection. Keep an eye on the news for further developments.



SCAMP

By Judy O'Brien
new member

It was a dark and stormy night in February 2008. My husband was out of town and I was alone with our new 8-month-old puppy, Scamp. I had gotten into my PJs and was ready to hunker down for the evening. We were upstairs in the computer room. I wanted to do some computer work before going to bed. Scamp was snoozing on the daybed next to the computer. I took my hearing aids out to finally give my ears a rest after a long day, and placed them at the edge of the computer table. As I glanced over a few minutes later I noticed that they were no longer there, and neither was Scamp on the daybed. I immediately got down on all fours to look for them. I found one, but Scamp must have already taken off with the other one. I rushed down the stairs after him, and found him in the living room looking innocently at me with those big, brown eyes. I pried his mouth open then scoured the

entire house looking for it, but to no avail. So as a last resort, got dressed, put on my rain poncho and boots; grabbed a flashlight and started hunting outside. I'm not sure what I was thinking, since the door had been locked and Scamp hadn't been outside in a while. But by now I was in tears, tired, and desperate. Of course my search outside was also unsuccessful.

The next morning I called my kids and asked them to come over and help me continue my search. The six of us, kids and grandkids continued the search, but we found no trace of the hearing aid. That afternoon as I performed my pooper-scooper duty, lo and behold I found the sad, shiny, mangled and broken remains of my hearing aid in one of Scamp's *gift packages*. I didn't know whether to laugh or cry.

The following day I called my audiologist's office and told the office manager that my dog ate my hearing aid. "Yeah right, now I've heard them all," she must have been thinking. In keeping with Murphy's Law the one-year warranty had just expired the previous month. However, the office manager was very cooperative and empathetic. She contacted the manufacturer and was able to get an extended warranty for one year. I got a new replacement aid for only \$200! I was very fortunate to not have had to pay \$2,700.

Scamp is now a big 2-year-old boy, and continues to live up to his name. He still tries to grab anything, socks, washcloths and tissues, whatever. I on the other hand, have learned my lesson the hard way and now guard my hearing aids with my life. As soon as I take them out they go into their pouch, then into the nightstand drawer!



CALLING ALL WRITERS!

We are seeking YOUR stories about YOUR life, traveling, locally or abroad; making a decision that affects daily life, family life or yourself personally. Have you had an eye-opening experience relating to hearing loss that you would like to share, or tried a new technology lately? Tell us about it!

Articles should be no more than 350 words and sent in by the 12th of the month to info@hearinglossdv.org.

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 in Nashville, Tennessee.

For more information about the convention's workshop schedule, registration, individual tickets, and more, visit

<http://www.hearingloss.org/convention>

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HearingLossNation

The social network for young and hard of hearing

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

<http://hearinglossnation.ning.com>

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**Hearing Loss
Association**
of America

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

HLAA-DV WEBSITE

Diablo Valley Chapter has its own website!
You can read about local advocacy, meetings,
resources and assistive technology at
<http://www.hearinglossdv.org>

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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.

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HLAA-DV: www.hearinglossdv.org

Captioned movies by zip code: www.fomdi.com

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