

**Happy 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

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

**HLAA-DV Information Booth at the Walnut Creek Farmers' Market**

**DIABLO VALLEY CHAPTER  
MEETINGS**

**1<sup>st</sup> 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 IS**

**September 2, 2009 at 7:00 p.m.**

*Debbie Sharp  
&  
Ann Thomas*

Will give highlights of the  
June HLAA  
Convention 2009  
Nashville, TN.



We won 2 awards:  
Outreach, Newsletter and  
received recognition for our  
Founder's Day contribution.

**FARMERS' MARKET: HERE WE  
COME!**

*By Debbie Sharp*

Stop by and say *Hello* on Sunday, September 20,  
2009 as Ann Thomas and I launch HLAA-DV's  
first **Information Booth** at the Walnut Creek  
Farmers' Market. Look for us under the purple  
canopy near the marketplace center along north  
Locust Street, just south of Target.

We need volunteers for these dates and times:  
October 4 and November 1 from 8 a.m.-1 p.m. and  
December 6 from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Bring your friendly  
smiles and unbridled enthusiasm to hand out  
brochures to interested people and invite them to  
our monthly chapter meetings.

Your involvement will help make this opportunity a  
success and increase our visibility in the  
community. Please send volunteer dates and  
inquiries to [dsharp@hearinglossdv.org](mailto:dsharp@hearinglossdv.org)

Last but not least...Congratulations to Ann, for  
getting an in-kind donation for the canopy!



The Grand Ole Opry  
was captioned for  
the first time.



# PICNIC

By Jim Montgomery



Our picnic was a great success. Twenty-nine people came to Jim Montgomery's house on Bethel Island. There was a parade and car show on main street. Don Senger conducted boat rides around the island, while Jim was in charge of the BBQ and heated up the beans. Everyone brought something for the potluck, so no one was stuck with all of the work.

We even had long time members Connie and Maurice Nelson attend. It was nice seeing them again.



We invited members of the defunct East Bay ALDA organization and six of their members were there. We hope they decide to become members of our chapter and come to our meetings.

Those of you not able to attend missed a good time!

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### Nerve Deafness

By Don Senger

Summer is about over and time to get back to work. We hope all our chapter members had a nice vacation and are ready to once again join us at our monthly meetings; to learn and share the difficulties of hearing loss and what can be done about it.

Recently a lady told me that her doctor told her she had nerve deafness and she was worried she was going to become deaf. *Nerve deafness* are two words that can send a chill down the spine of those entering the new world of hearing loss.

What does it mean? Does it mean that you are going deaf? No, not really. You will have difficulty hearing sounds due to declining hearing capacity. Some sounds you may not hear well without amplification. Other sounds in certain frequencies may be lost forever. But you still have some residual hearing left that will help you cope in a world of verbal communication. This puts you in the category of being *hard of hearing* rather than *deaf*.

What caused it? There's no flat answer to that. It could be age, since many of us find our hearing gets worse as we grow older. It could have been an illness or an ear infection. It might even be from hearing too much noise or loud music, or a combination of these. But whatever caused it, the problem remains and you are now among the more than 32 million Americans having a hearing impairment that is going to remain with you for the rest of your life. Until medical science makes some tremendous breakthroughs, such as nerve cell regeneration that is currently under study, there is nothing you can do to have nerve deafness cured or medically corrected and bring back normal hearing.

When your doctor tells you that you have nerve deafness, he doesn't always mean that the nerve itself is damaged or dead. The tiny cells inside your internal ear that transform sound into electric impulses may be the area that is damaged. These cells are located in the cochlea, a snail-shaped structure in your inner ear.

Damage to the cochlea, the nerve that transmits these electrical impulses, is called nerve deafness or sensorineural hearing loss.

With limited nerve deafness, a hearing aid can be of great help. However, if the hearing loss progresses, the amount of amplification required to provide hearing capacity may be so great that a hearing aid may prove useless. That is why a hearing evaluation is very important before you buy a hearing aid. A hearing evaluation done by a professional audiologist can point out what hearing aid may work best for you, or, if a hearing aid will not help, if you may be a candidate for a cochlear implant.

If the nerve is damaged you cannot correct it with surgery. However, for many people with a severe-profound hearing loss, a cochlear implant can be a tremendous help. A cochlear implant is a mechanical-electrical device surgically implanted behind the ear to transform sound waves into electrical impulses that can be picked up by the hearing nerve. It helps replace the function of the cochlea. Results vary from person to person, with some people getting as high as an 80 to 90 percent speech recognition score on their hearing evaluation test.

Hearing is only part of total communication. If your hearing loss is greater than what would be categorized as *mild or moderate loss*, you should consider other communication aids besides what you can hear with a hearing aid. **Speechreading** or **lipreading** can help you learn to read other people's lips, as well as provide some insight in other visual clues that can help in understanding verbal communication. **Cued speech** and **sign language** are further means of visual communication. **Assistive listening devices (ALDs)**, such as a **personal amplifier with neckloop**, an **audio loop system** such as used at our chapter meetings, and special **FM** and **infrared systems** can also help bring the source of the sound closer to you, making listening and understanding much easier for you. Coping strategies, training and educational programs such as those provided at our chapter meetings also help.

In short, nerve deafness is a common hearing disability; you are not alone. Many things can be done to help improve your hearing capabilities through use

of hearing aids, ALDs, cochlear implants, and training. But it is up to you to make that effort to overcome your hearing problem. Until you make that first move nothing can be done. Your hearing is not going to clear up overnight. You, and you alone, are the person who will decide how you will cope with hearing loss. If you fail to act, you may find yourself withdrawing from life because you cannot understand what is going on around you and you will feel left out. So make that first move now -- you won't regret it.

## 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 12<sup>th</sup> of the month to [info@hearinglossdv.org](mailto:info@hearinglossdv.org)

## DON'T FIGHT IT!

*By Dr. Leslie Harrold*

What a time I have had with a set of new hearing aids that the Veterans Administration gave me. I guess that I have been operating with the same idea I had when I first got hearing aids a long time ago. Then I just stuck them in my ears and thought, "Well this is going to take care of it."

Having hearing aids took some adjustment. But the devices themselves were pretty straight forward and simple. I think they had to be taken in and reset, if you needed to adjust the volume.

So from time to time as I got new ones, I treated them pretty much the same. I changed batteries, kept them clean and tried to stay out of the shower with them on. Then I got this present set, incorporating new

technologies. I have been fighting the good fight ever since.

I've lived in a world of feedback. I tinkered with repositioning them in my ears. I discovered that, if I pulled down sharply on my ear lobes, it would help--temporarily. So finally, I dug out the users manual.

Wow! Totally incomprehensible. I did learn that the things had a volume wheel, and that, if you adjusted one, the other reset itself. It also has a three position push button, which did what, I could not discern.

It dawned on me that these things were a high tech electronic device and the instruction I received from the provider was quick and basic, at best. So I called the VA and asked to sit down with a technician and slowly and carefully, starting from square one, step-by-step, go over the whole relationship with a high tech device. They of course said yes and an appointment has been set up.

The point is, I am from the BE (Before Electronics) generation. I need to be taken by the hand and guided gently through the relationship with this new fangled thing. My hearing aids want to serve me, that's built in to them. So if I don't get it, I am going to get help from someone who does. DUH!



**Long Beach, CA**  
**Sunday November 8, 2009**

- Start a Team
- Join a Team
- Walk as an Individual
- Find a Walker or Team

Information and updates at:  
[http://hlaa.convio.net/site/TR?fr\\_id=1600&pg=entry](http://hlaa.convio.net/site/TR?fr_id=1600&pg=entry)

## **AUDIOLOGY REPORT**

### **Battery Ingestion is No Laughing Matter**

*By Leigh Kjeldsen, Au.D.*

When a patient is buying a new hearing aid we have them sign a purchase contract. On the contract there is a list of warnings - one of which says that batteries are poisonous if swallowed. I always laugh a bit when I say this because it sounds ridiculous. Besides, several people a year come in telling me that their dogs have eaten their hearing aids and the dogs never seem the worse for wear....

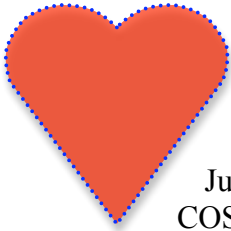
Recently I read an article about how serious swallowing a battery really can be so I wanted to pass on the news. Button cell batteries (the kind that power hearing aids) can become lodged in a person's gastrointestinal tract where the electrical current of the battery causes a chemical burn. Even more dangerous is if the battery is lodged in the esophagus where it can burn through the tissue requiring surgery to fix and a long time of impaired eating.

Doctors can get batteries out of the gastrointestinal tract without major surgery. An x-ray shows where the battery is and the doctor uses an endoscope to find and remove the object. However, quick action is required before the battery causes damage.

Poison control centers get over 3000 calls a year about battery ingestion. Here are some suggestions to avoid becoming a statistic.

- Store your hearing aids and batteries in a place where young children cannot reach them.
- If you drop a battery, find it so that a child does not pick it up and swallow it. Change batteries over a soft surface where they will not bounce and roll away if dropped.
- Do not store your hearing aids or batteries on a table where you regularly eat or drink.
- If you carry batteries in your purse, do not store them with pills.
- Finally, if you or someone you know swallows a battery call the National Battery Ingestion Hotline at 202-625-3333.

**Free subscription** to Deafness Research Foundation *Hearing Health* magazine  
www.drf.org/magazine+signup



## DONORS

We would like to thank the following people and companies for donations in July: Beverley Hawley, Safeway COSTCO.

## ADVERTISERS

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**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](http://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 94596-9998**

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 94596-9998

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  
[www.hearinglossdv.org](http://www.hearinglossdv.org)

**HLAA-DV Information Booth at the Walnut Creek Farmers' Market**

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

HLACA: [www.hearinglossca.org](http://www.hearinglossca.org)

HLAA-DV: [www.hearinglossdv.org](http://www.hearinglossdv.org)

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