



## August 2020

Renew your membership to our local chapter for only \$15 a year! 3 ways to renew: send your renewal with your name, address, phone number, and e-mail to: East Bay Chapter, HLAA, P.O. Box 12484, Oakland, CA 94604-12484. See back page to sign up and support National HLAA.

**August 8, 2020 Meeting by Zoom! Zoom in and see your friends from HLAA-EBC. Our speaker will be Anish Thakkar.** audiologist at the "Hearing Zone" in Oakland and Alameda, where he provides hearing tests, dispenses hearing aids, ALDS (assistive listening devices), customizes musician's earplugs, and does balance and tinnitus evaluations. He earned his Au.D. at UC San Diego. Dr. Thakkar has practiced in other countries and speaks five different languages. He is noted for his pleasant disposition and good humor.

**Our August 8 meeting will be a Zoom meeting:**

**Everyone needs to register up front at our website:** <http://www.hearinglosseb.org/>

**After you register, you'll be sent information about how to join the meeting.**

**HLAA-EB will post to the California State Association webpage and our website.**

**Check out our website:** <http://www.hearinglosseb.org/> **Contact us:** [info@hearinglosseb.org](mailto:info@hearinglosseb.org)

### **MEETING NOTES:** *Communication in the Time of Corona Virus - Apps Can Help*

At our July 11<sup>th</sup>, 2020 meeting, our guest speaker was Ann Thomas, a dynamic and award-winning hearing loss advocate. She discovered in 1997 that she was losing her hearing at age 48. She became a member of HLAA in 2008 and joined the leadership team of the HLAA Diablo Valley Chapter in 2009. Since that time, she has been directing her efforts to making HLAA a household name for those having a hearing loss (HL). She is an HLAA Hearing Assistive Technology Specialist, HLAA Brand Ambassador, HLAA Get in the Hearing Loop Committee member, and the current President of the HLAA Diablo Valley Chapter. Ann has a BS in Organizational Behavior/Development from the University of San Francisco, as well as considerable nonprofit training from the esteemed CompassPoint Nonprofit Services in San Francisco, and the California State Board of Equalization Workshops. Her experience ranges from working with several nonprofits to conducting many leadership workshops at local, state and national HLAA events, including HLAA National Conventions.



**Smart Technology:** Ann started off her presentation by admitting that she “. . . absolutely loves technology.” She also stated that her foremost concern as we are learning to go about our daily lives during this time of corona virus, has been how those of us who have a hearing loss are going to be able to communicate with other people. Assuming that other individuals with a hearing loss may be

experiencing similar problems, she described how she was having quite a difficult time hearing and understanding what other people were saying when they are speaking to her while wearing a face mask and social distancing. Nevertheless, Ann reminded us of how fortunate we all are to be living now at a time when smart technology is available since “. . . it is an absolute boon to us to be able to engage in the world around us.”

Ann had created five poll questions to which she asked all 54 Zoom meeting participants to respond so she could focus her presentation properly. The poll questions and results are presented below:

Q 1. Do you have a smartphone? A 1. Yes – 41%.

Q 2. What kind of a smartphone do you have? A 2. iPhone/iOS – 63%; Android -- 38%; Don't know – 2%.

Q 3. Do you know how to download an app? A 3. Yes -- 90%; No – 10%.

Q 4. Do you use a captioning app? Yes – 44%; No – 57%.

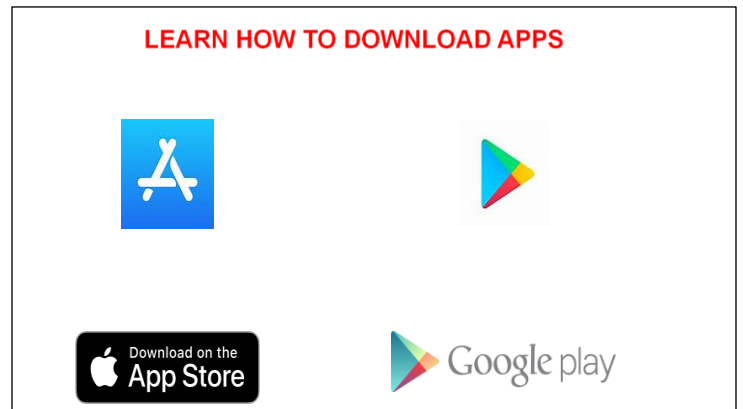
Q 5. Which captioning app do you use? Ava – 52%; Live Transcribe – 10%; Live Caption – 8%; Otter 32%.

**Smartphone Apps:** If you have a smartphone available, you then have the opportunity to download and use apps on your smart device. An app is a type of software program or application which runs inside the operating system of your device once you open it until you close it, which allows you to perform many specific useful tasks or functions, such as captioning.

### **How to Download Apps to Your Smartphone:**

Some apps do come pre-installed on your device, but most are not pre-installed, which means you must download any new apps to your device before you will be able to use them. Ann explained that although the procedures are probably similar for downloading an app to either an iPhone/iOS or an Android phone, she has an iPhone and therefore, was more familiar with the iPhone. If you have an iPhone, you should look for and click on the Apple App Store icon. If you have an Android phone, you look for and click on the Google Play Store icon. If

you have not already created an account on your device, you must do so now so you can then download and install new apps on your device. Some apps are free, but others charge a fee that is stated when you click on a particular app. You can click on “Search” and click into the window on that for which you are searching. You should also turn on “Notifications” on your phone so you will receive a pop-up window if you get a text message when you're not paying attention. Be sure to check your iPhone or Android phone manual for specific directions on downloading apps or changing phone settings



**What Smartphone Apps Can Do for You:** Apps can provide much assistance to those with hearing loss:

- **Caption Conversations:** These are common apps for captioning conversations, most working on both phones.
  - ✓ *Ava* – One of first apps to exist; most robust with high accuracy; use it on a cellphone or iPad.
  - ✓ *Live Transcribe* – Free or nominal fee, real-time speech-to-text transcription; only works on Android.
  - ✓ *Live Caption* – Low-cost, simple app for captioning only one person in real time; works on both phones.

- ✓ *Otter* – Invented for business people as a note-taker to turn speech to text during a presentation.
- ✓ *EyeHear* – Simplest app to use; uses speech recognition to provide captioning in big letters.
- Caption Smartphone Calls: Real-time phone captioning apps are now available.
  - ✓ *InnoCaption* is a free mobile app service providing direct live captioning of cellphone calls.
- Emergency: Use your smartphone in an emergency to provide first responders with necessary information.
  - ✓ *Smart 911* is a service that augments critical information available to people who need to call 911.
- Text Message: This is an easy, convenient way to communicate, especially for individuals with hearing loss.
  - ✓ Set your smartphone so it flashes rather than rings, & you won't miss an incoming text message.
- Alerts: Your smartphone can be used as a medical alerting device in an emergency.
  - ✓ *SmartWatch* can serve as a medical alert for either an emergency SOS or fall detection.
  - ✓ *Be Warned* is an app that can detect & alert you to sounds of possible danger around you.

**Tips for Using Your Equipment:** Here are a few more ideas for how to use your equipment effectively.

- Microphones: Rotate your smartphone so the microphone is on top and closer to the speaker.
- iRig Lav: Try using a Vent Mount & iRig Lavalier microphone to piggyback multiple mics in a car.
- TV: Use your TV to project captions from your captioning app for family events or group meetings.

**One Step at a Time:** Ann concluded with some encouraging words for moving forward during the pandemic.

- ❖ If you don't have a smartphone, your first step might be to go get a smartphone.
- ❖ For those who have a smartphone, you might pick one new captioning app and try it out.
- ❖ Then try out other apps to see which one suits your personal taste and level of technology.
- ❖ If you have a smartphone but haven't used text messaging, learn how to text as your next step.
- ❖ Take due care to not become overwhelmed with all of the possible great tech options available.
- ❖ With the help of apps, you can successfully move forward . . . one step at a time . . . you can do it!

**For More Information & Questions:** Email [athomas@hearinglossdv.org](mailto:athomas@hearinglossdv.org); call (925) 588-6515.

~ Kathy Fairbanks

Look at All the Great Programs You Can Stream From Recordings From The National Hearing Loss Association of America website! Each of these links will take you to an informative webinar that you can watch on YouTube:

<https://www.hearingloss.org/webinars/advocacy-during-pandemic/>

<https://www.hearingloss.org/webinars/automatic-speech-recognition-asr/>

<https://www.hearingloss.org/webinars/face-masks-hearing-loss-tips/>

<https://www.hearingloss.org/webinars/starkey-hearing-better-living-better/>

<https://www.hearingloss.org/webinars/audiological-care/>

## **30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the ADA**

### **30 Years of Progress: Access, Opportunity and Inclusion**

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This year marks the 30th anniversary of President George H.W. Bush signing the [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#) into law. Throughout this 30th anniversary year, the Civil Rights Division is recognizing the many ways in which the ADA has transformed American society and enabled a generation of Americans with disabilities to thrive. At the same time, we recognize that many barriers to equal opportunity still remain. We recommit to our work of making the promise of the ADA a reality, enabling all Americans with disabilities to achieve their dreams and reach their full potential.

Since the passage of the ADA, the Civil Rights Division has been at the forefront of enforcing its protections and vindicating the rights of people with disabilities across the country. The Division works day in and day out to further the goals of the ADA — through mediation, technical assistance, outreach, and enforcement. At the core of many of our resolutions, however, is an individual or individuals with disabilities who brought a matter to our attention or participated in an investigation.

**HEARING AID BATTERIES!** Only 17 cents apiece at Costco.

HLAA members can join the hearOclub to have batteries delivered to your home! Use the coupon code **HLAAmember** online at [hearclub.com](http://hearclub.com) or by calling 833.LISTEN-2 (833.547.8362).

**DONATE USED HEARING AIDS and/or HEARING EQUIPMENT!** See Dale Davis at a meeting or [ddavis94605@gmail.com](mailto:ddavis94605@gmail.com).

#### **East Bay Leadership Team**

The chapter is run by a Steering Committee, Leader Dale Davis, [ddavis94605@gmail.com](mailto:ddavis94605@gmail.com) who also oversees the Membership Database.

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#### **JOIN THE NATIONAL HEARING LOSS ASSOCIATION!**

Only \$45 for an individual or \$55 for a couple. This includes the Hearing Loss magazine in print and digital for one year.

For digital magazine copy only, an individual membership costs only \$35/year. Students are \$25/year.

Go to this URL to join today: <https://www.hearingloss.org/make-an-impact/become-a-memberrenew/>