



East Bay Chapter Newsletter April 2023

On April 8 our topic will be: All About Cochlear Implants

Cochlear Implant Basics founder and producer, **Richard Pocker** received bilateral cochlear implants in 2016, 35 years after becoming deaf at age 30. With rehabilitation he has gone from zero speech recognition to 85%. Richard has made it his mission to spread information about cochlear implants with particular hopes that education will help others who can benefit from implants.

The FAQs on his website, <https://cochlearimplantbasics.com/> cover basics of how cochlear implants work, and how to access personal services and support. The website also affords access to interviews Richard conducted with cochlear implant recipients and professionals on a wide variety of needs and experiences, many of which are transcribed in his book which is available through the website as well.

Register for this FREE event [HERE](https://www.hearinglosseb.org/monthly-meetings-1). Or use this link if you are getting a hard copy of the newsletter: <https://www.hearinglosseb.org/monthly-meetings-1>. After you register, you'll be sent the link to join the meeting. Consider staying after the meeting for AfterWords – a chance to ask more in-depth questions, as well as discuss anything you want with fellow members!

HLAA-EB posts our newsletters to the California State Association webpage and a link on our website. VOLUNTEER! Contact us to let us know you are available! Check out our website at: <http://www.hearinglosseb.org/> Contact us at: info@hearinglosseb.org

Time to Renew your membership in our local chapter for only \$15 a year! Ways to renew: pay at our website on the “Donate” button in the upper right-hand corner; mail your renewal with your name, address, phone number, and e-mail to: **East Bay Chapter, HLAA, P.O. Box 12484, Oakland, CA 94604-2484. See the back page to sign up and support National HLAA.**



2023
CONVENTION
New Orleans, LA
June 29 - July 1, 2023

HLAA2023 Convention will be in New Orleans, Louisiana!!! Meet other members from around the country and hear the latest info! Get all the information and register below. Check out this flyer that describes the various events at the Convention: [HLAA 2023 Convention \(hearingloss.org\)](https://www.hearinglosseb.org/2023-convention) Use Ctrl Left click to access.

MEETING NOTES: *CAPTIONS - TV, Landline, Smartphone, Apps and Live*

At our March 11th, 2023 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. 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.



Initially, Ann set forth her agenda for this presentation on “Captions” as follows:

- Features of different technology and captioning apps available.
- Best practices and tips for taking advantage of technology and captions.
- Recommendations for how individuals with hearing loss should pursue their rights under the law.

Captions Are Everywhere: Here are some examples of how captions are currently being used.

- ✓ **TV Decoder Circuitry Act:** On July 1, 1993, this federal law was enacted, requiring all TVs 13” or larger to have captioning available. You can also use your TV to project captions from your captioning apps for family events and group meetings.
- ✓ **California Connect (previously CTAP):** Everyone is entitled to a free captioned phone through California Connect (which was formerly called CTAP). However, these free captioned phones are not internet-based so they may need to be connected by a splitter.
- ✓ **Internet Captioned Landline Phones:** There are presently 3 different internet-based captioned phones available, including CapTel (original one), CaptionCall (which Ann likes best), and Clear Captions. You can get any one of these phones or even all 3 phones free of charge.
- ✓ **Smartphone Captioning Apps:** If you have a smartphone available, you then have the opportunity to download and use captioning 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. An app 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 many 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 also 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.

- **Smartphone Apps for Captioning Phone Calls:** Many real-time phone captioning apps are now available.
 - *InnoCaption* -- A free mobile app service providing direct live captioning of cellphone calls.
 - *Olilo* – Only one that provides a transcript of both sides of a conversation.
 - *Nagish* – New company from Israel.
 - *Rogervoice* – French company that provides international service.
- **Smartphone Apps for Captioning Conversations:** Most of these apps work on both phones.
 - *Ava* – One of the 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; 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.
- ✓ **Communication Access Real-Time Transcription (CART) Apps:** CART is the gold standard for captioning by a real person where the captioning may be projected to a large screen for the audience. CART may be provided in different ways, including:
 - ❖ Real person captioner who attends a group meeting & projects captioning to a large screen.
 - ❖ Remote captioner where a real person remotely provides captioning to a group meeting.
 - ❖ *CA Relay Service Remote Conference Captioning (RCC)* is a new free remote captioning service available if these requirements are met: 1. Resident of CA; 2. Must be 3 or more people at the meeting.
- ✓ **Automatic Speech Recognition (ASR) Apps:** There are lots of ASR captioning apps available.
 - ❖ Examples of ASR captioning apps include *Ava*, *Live Transcribe*, *Live Caption*, & *Otter* (described above).
 - ❖ Use ASR caption apps in the car, on TV, in a grocery store, restaurant, doctor’s office, or pharmacy.

Tips for Using Your Technology & Apps: Ann admitted that “. . . she absolutely loves technology”, and therefore wanted to share a few more practical tips for using your equipment and apps most effectively. However, she also wished to caution us to take it one step at a time to avoid becoming overwhelmed when exploring and learning how to use the amazing technology options and captioning apps now available and expanding each day.

- ✚ Use your smartphone to research & try out the many captioning apps now available.

- ✚ Rotate your smartphone so the microphone is on top and closer to the speaker.
- ✚ Try using a Vent Mount & iRig Lavalier microphone to piggyback multiple mics in a car.
- ✚ If you have a smartphone but haven't used text messaging, learn how to text.
- ✚ Use your smartphone to call *Smart911* for emergencies and to provide critical info to 1st responders.
- ✚ Set *Alerts* on your smartphone so it can be used as a medical alerting device in an emergency.
- ✚ *Get a SmartWatch* that can serve as a medical alert for either an emergency SOS or fall detection.
- ✚ *Put BeWarned* on your device so it can detect & alert you to sounds of possible danger around you.

Wrap-Up: In wrapping up her outstanding presentation, Ann reminded us that she is a strong disability rights advocate. and that hearing loss is a disability under the *Americans with a Disability Act (ADA)*, which was passed as a federal law in 1990 (33 years ago as of July 26, 2023). This important law requires equality to all of us in attaining communication access in public places. Hence, those of us who are experiencing some level of hearing loss or other disability should know & ask for our legal rights under the ADA and not hesitate to request supportive accommodations for our hearing loss, including captioning. Ann further emphasized that we should make the request for accommodations in writing and in a timely fashion before discovering you need them. If you are not provided with the necessary accommodations or an acceptable alternative, then you should consider formally complaining to the appropriate authorities.

Finally, Ann followed up with a Q & A session where she responded to audience members' questions and also encouraged individuals to communicate with her directly with further questions about captioning and other related topics by emailing or calling her at the contact information stated below.

For More Information/Questions: Email: athomas@hearinglossdv.org; Call: (925) 588-6515

~ **Kathy Fairbanks**

****Help us decide about In-Person/Hybrid meetings by taking this survey [HERE](#).** For those of you who only receive a hard copy, go to www.surveymonkey.com/r/VYNPYDC to take this survey.**

We need your help! Can you volunteer? Contact us at: info@hearinglosseb.org

Here is a list of volunteer positions we are seeking to fill:

- **Volunteer Coordinator**: Contact people who said they could volunteer and tell them about volunteer needs. Recruit for those positions.
- **National Chapter Coordinator/Liaison**: Coordinate with the national organization (HLAA). Go to online meetings.
- **Outreach Coordinator**: Organize a table for our chapter at various street fairs and other venues. Set up the table. Recruit volunteers to help with the events. Reach out to people who participate in our meetings. Let people know about our chapter.
- There may be more possibilities.

Walk4Hearing is coming up!

HLAA [Walk4Hearing](#) is a nationwide campaign which brings hope to people with hearing loss in 20 cities, meeting them in their communities to raise awareness and show support. Teams of family and friends join with local HLAA Chapters and nonprofit and business partners to raise funds for local programs and promote hearing health. Walk4Hearing is HLAA's community of support in action, breaking down barriers to hearing health and empowering people with hearing loss across the U.S.

Last year's Bay Area Walk4Hearing was a lot of fun! Our chapter had a table so we got to meet and greet a lot of people. The Alameda High School cheer leaders were there with rousing cheers and demos for all. Giant's mascot, Lou Seal was there also!

The Bay Area Walk4Hearing is scheduled for June 3, 2023!

To be held at Robert W. Crown State Beach, 8th & Otis Drive, Alameda, CA

Registrations are OPEN

Register here to join our East Bay Chapter team:

[2023 Bay Area Walk4Hearing - Hearing Loss Association of America](#)

OR register to be a team captain and bring your own team (your family or friends)!

E-mail Connie Gee to volunteer to help at our table at the event.

Cbgee2014@outlook.com



HLAA-East Bay booth at the 2022 Walk4Hearing

Lou Seal, S.F. Giant's Mascot

Alameda High School Cheer Leaders

Come see who shows up this year! YOU and ???



JOKE CORNER

When you have hard of hearing and the doorbell don't work
It's a hard knock life for him

What language do pigs speak?
Swine language

My deaf sister asked me if I wanted to hear a joke.
I said, "Yes"
She said, "Me too"

What language do billboards speak?
SIGN language!

What did the drill sergeant say to the audiologist?
I can't hear you!

What does Elvis say when he loses his hearing aids?
Ahuh, huh, huh

East Bay Leadership Team

The chapter is run by a Steering Committee, Leader Dale Davis, ddavis94605@gmail.com

Outreach, National Chapter Coordinator/Liaison: (need a volunteer)

Treasurer: Len Bridges, lenbridges3993-hlaa@outlook.com

Programs: Robin Miller, robin@robinmillerlaw.com

Technology and AfterWords Small Group: George Chin, Sr., georgechinsr@gmail.com

Membership: Connie Gee, cbgee2014@yahoo.com; Marlene Muir, muircmc@comcast.net

Volunteer Coordinator: (need a volunteer)

Newsletter Editors: Nancy Asmundson, nasmundson@comcast.net; Kathy Fairbanks, mkathyfairbanks@att.net

Publicity: Andrea Doehrman, andreadoehrman@gmail.com; George Chin, Sr., georgechinsr@gmail.com

Technical/Audio Loop: Peter G. Townsend, peterg.townsend@gmail.com

JOIN HEARING LOSS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA (HLAA) – THEY ADVOCATE FOR YOU!

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

OR, if you prefer to pay by check or card thru the mail, Nancy Asmundson has membership forms to send to you, or contact HLAA at 301-657-2248 or e-mail membership@hearingloss.org. Your membership form & payment go to HLAA, 6116 Executive Blvd., Suite 320, Rockville, MD 20852.

COSTS: Regular Membership/year (will receive *Hearing Life* magazine in print and digital format):

Individual - \$45; Couple/Family - \$55; Professional - \$80; Nonprofit - \$80;

Veteran Membership: Complimentary 1-Year Regular Membership & Lifetime Online Membership.