

Summer tips for (Hard of Hearing) dipsticks

Gael Hannan, July 2017

I ask you. Who in their right minds would neglect their exquisitely high tech and internally delicate (not to mention expensive) hearing devices by exposing them to seawater, sticky sand and sloppy storage?

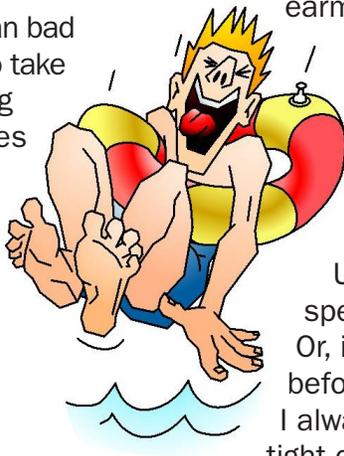
The dictionary says that dipstick is “a stupid or inept person”, but I think that’s a bit harsh for what we’re talking about. Like other humans, hard of hearing people (HoHs) sometimes make mistakes or don’t think things through. Also, accidents happen.

Summer weather and activities can mean bad news for hearing technology; we need to take a little extra care. As any self-respecting HoH knows, there are some basic rules to maintain healthy hearing aids, cochlear implant sound processors and other technical doo-dads:

- Keep ‘em clean.
- Keep ‘em dry.
- Make sure they fit properly.
- Know where they should be and where they are at all times.

The clean thing:

Don’t get sunscreen on your hearing aids. Clean your hands after slapping it on your skin, because technology doesn’t like slimy SPF50 getting in its microphones, or gritty sand getting in anywhere.



After a day in the summer sun, pamper your precious equipment by wiping off its surfaces, removing the batteries and letting it all get a good night’s desiccation in a drying aid.

Remember to change the wax guards more frequently than you probably do. (Or maybe it’s just me who only remembers about once a month.)

The dry thing:

Keep your hearing devices free of moisture. They don’t like baths, even sponge baths. Sweaty heads and hair can send moisture seeping into aids and processors. My first behind-the-ear hearing aids had thick (by today’s standards) tubing connecting the device to the earmold. Sometimes, I could see water bubbles in the tubes! I’d unscrew the tubing and suck out the moisture... gahh! Hearing aid breakdowns are often due to a buildup of moisture and crud inside, so be religious about protecting them.

Use sweatbands or products specifically designed for wet activities. Or, if it’s practical, remove your technology before a wet or sweat-producing sport. I always carry a portable dry aid or other tight container with me wherever I go, just in case I have an unexpected urge to jump in a river. After showering, my hearing aid doesn’t go back in until my ear canal is dry, and my sound processor waits a bit longer until my hair is dry. And every night, like the good HoH that I am,

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CHAPTER CALENDAR

Unless noted, all events and meetings are held at the at Weingart Center, 5220 Oliva Ave, Lakewood 90712

No chapter meeting in August!

- Aug 23** Board Meeting, 12:00-1:30, Weingart craft room
- Sep 14** Chapter Meeting, 6:30: Audiologist Dr. Brad Ingrao, “Redefining your Relationship with Music after Hearing Loss”
- Sep 17** HLAA-CA Tech Expo 2017 at Ken Miller Recreation Center, Torrance Cultural Arts Center, 3330 Civic Center Drive Torrance, CA 90503
- Sep 23** HAT Demo, 10:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m., Weingart craft room

Summer tips for dipsticks

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I put my techno-stuff into my big electric drying aid. (Some nights I even remember to turn it on!)

I swim deaf. Cochlear gave me a kit so I could swim and hear at the same time; I'm sure it works like a charm, but I've been too nervous to try it. Actually, I don't swim much, and when I do, I don't talk much. Friends and family understand my basic sign language such as, "you swim on without me, I'm happy paddling in the shallows", or "the water's freezing, I'm going in." Then I just sit on the dock with a cool drink, technology in place, trailing my feet in the water. The only problem is that I'm usually one glass of wine ahead of my friends at happy hour.

The protection thing:

When your aids and processors aren't in your ears, make sure you know where they are, secure and safe from all the evils that threaten them. Do NOT just stuff them, naked and unprotected, into your purse or beach bag. If I did that, I'd be a nervous wreck, checking them every two minutes, the way a traveler keeps touching their passport to make sure it's still there.

Protecting your head from sunburn and injury is important but my new sound processor has caused some problems. I jammed my favorite little Italian straw hat on my head and it knocked off my Kanso sound processor (thank goodness for the hair clip attaching it to my hair), so I'm looking for a new hat. My bike helmet didn't like my processor either. Since concussions are nasty things, I left the processor at home and my right-side hearing aid pulls double-hearing-duty, supplemented with a bike mirror, super-vigilance and a Hearing Husband.

I'm sure every HoH has hearing horror stories about their technology and outdoor activities. My friend Brian went snorkeling with his brand new, teeny-weeny hearing aids, one of which became fish food. He managed to save the second. The rest of us HoH dipsticks wouldn't be that lucky.

If you've got some cool or hot summer tips for people with hearing loss, I'd love to hear them. In the meantime – enjoy a summer of safe hearing!



Passing of member Barbara Bostwick

We received word that long-time member Barbara Bostwick passed away on July 7th. She was an active volunteer with our Chapter, working at the Welcome Table and helping to fold and mail the Informer.

Barbara was born in Plummer, Idaho. During WWII, Barbara had the privilege of serving in Patton's Third Army Nurse Corps. After her military service years, she went to work in Florida. Like so many Californians, she was invited to visit California and somehow never returned to the place she left! Instead, she became a student at Cal State Long Beach and earned a Bachelor of Science. This led to a thirty-year career as a public school nurse in several school districts. She noticed the onset of her hearing loss just before she retired.

Volunteering and helping others was an important part of who she was. She was active in her Presbyterian Church as a member of the Outreach Committee, as an Elder, as a member and officer of Ebell, the Senior Center of Long Beach City College, The Mary Thoits Foundation and the American Association of University Women.

A memorial service for Barbara is scheduled for Tuesday, September 26 at 2 p.m. at Grace First Presbyterian Church, 3955 N. Studebaker Rd., Long Beach CA 90808.

Many thanks to Elfriede and Ron Maclver and Ellen Mathis for assisting with this article.

Mayor visits lip reading class

On May 15, Lakewood Mayor Diane DuBois visited the Weingart Senior Center and stopped by the Monday Lip Reading Class.



*From left:
Helen Bologna,
Diane DuBois,
Sabrina Junkin,
Van VonBurg,
Elfriede Maclver*



Beach Buddies raise over \$3000

This year's Walk4Hearing was great fun! A good group of people from the Chapter turned out for the event. Connor's Beach Buddies raised \$3120; Connor was the #4 fund-raiser! The Long Beach Walk4Hearing total was \$55,525.



Above

Standing, from left: Maxine Barton-Bauman, Craig Bowlby, Sean Waterman, Katie Wright, Connor Waterman. Seated, from left: Gail Morrison, Ellen Mathis, Peg Heglund



At right

From left: Ronnie Adler (National W4H Coordinator), Connor Waterman, Marla Peoples (Long Beach W4H chair)

Hearing Assistive Technology
HAT demonstrations moving to Saturdays in fall!

Saturday, Sep. 23
10:30–12:30

Weingart Senior Center

*New day
and time!*

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Receive paper copies of our terrific newsletter, the Informer. A subscription for 12 monthly issues delivered by US mail is only \$10 per year.

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Ways and Means need volunteer!

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HLAA Hearing Loss Association of America

Join HLAA to receive *Hearing Loss Magazine* and to become part of the one organization that represents the interests of 48 million people with hearing loss in the U.S.

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Membership brochures are available at chapter meetings.

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Long Beach/Lakewood Chapter

Hearing Loss Association of America,
Long Beach/Lakewood Chapter
c/o Katie Wright
7802 Kingbee Street
Downey, CA 90242

First Class

Address Service Requested

Upcoming Programs

No chapter meeting in August - summer break!

Sep 14 Audiologist Dr. Brad Ingrao: "Redefining your Relationship with Music after Hearing Loss"

Oct 12 Sam Moghadam, Ascent Hearing Center

HLAA Long Beach/Lakewood Chapter Meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month, 6:30-8:00 pm, at the Weingart Center, 5220 Oliva Ave, Lakewood 90712

If you don't like meetings because you can't hear well, our meetings are different!

- We have a high quality sound system
- You can borrow an assistive listening device
- If you have hearing aids with telecoils, we have a hearing induction loop
- If none of these help, we project captions on the wall for you to read.

We provide all these options free so you can understand what is said.



Hearing Loss Association of America

HLAA opens the world of communication to people with hearing loss through information, education, support and advocacy.

The national support network includes the national office in Washington D.C., state organizations and local HLAA Chapters.

Join HLAA now at www.hearingloss.org/content/join to receive *Hearing Loss Magazine* and become part of the one organization that represents the interests of 48 million people with hearing loss in the United States.