

The newsletter of the Hearing Loss Association of America, Albuquerque Chapter

WIRED FOR SOUND

Adam Savage: Hearing Aids "Freaking Changed my Life"

David Copithorn, Content Director, HearingTracker.com¹

If you've watched Adam Savage blow things up on his **MythBusters**² TV show or put things together on his **Tested**³ YouTube channel, you may have heard him mention he wears **hearing aids**⁴. In fact, one of the biggest myths he has tried to bust is the idea that hearing aids make you feel old. Instead, he'll tell you that hearing aids "freaking changed my life."

Savage, a well-known Hollywood special effects creator and TV host, has worn hearing aids for more than a decade. His **most recent video**⁵ is a review of his new Widex hearing aids. He says he **upgrades** every four or five years, and he can barely believe the improvement this time around.

"The difference between the new state of the art and what I had before is like a **sea change**," he says. "These are not only much clearer, but they give me a much wider sonic range. Music sounds better. They also talk to my phone, and they'll talk to yours, too."



Closed captions are available on this video.



Savage goes on to say that "hearing loss can **sequester you** away from the world," but that hearing aids will improve your relationships. And they even allow you to venture back into "sonically toxic environments" like bars and restaurants.

"If you think you might have hearing loss, you very likely do," he says. "**Get tested**. Get some hearing aids. And enjoy a new life where you can actually hear people talking."

¹ https://www.hearingtracker.com/news/mythbuster-adam-savage-says-hearing-aids-freaking-changed-my-life?utm_source=Hearing+Tracker+Updates&utm_campaign=d7a7f37753-EMAIL_CAM-PAIGN_2019_12_30_04_19&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_790a5b8263-d7a7f37753-277542373

² <https://go.discovery.com/tv-shows/mythbusters/>

³ <https://www.youtube.com/user/testedcom>

⁴ <https://www.hearingtracker.com/hearing-aids>

⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AdzGJO7LzTc>

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P. O. Box 36792,
Albuquerque, NM 87176
(505)219-1962

HLAAAbq@gmail.com

Home page: hearinglossabq.org

 **Hearing Loss Association of
America – Albuquerque
chapter**

Mention of goods or services in articles or
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Mary@mandgclark.com

Treasurer: Bobbi Rodríguez
TreasurerHLAAAbq@gmail.com

Editor: A. E. "Rod" Rodríguez
EditorHLAAAbq@gmail.com

Membership & Web Master: Jim Dillow
catch.Jimmy@comcast.net

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Mary Clark, acting

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Peder.JJ@gmail.com

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The Albuquerque HLAA Chapter is
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**Hearing Loss
Association
of America**

www.hearingloss.org
7910 Woodmont Ave, Suite 1200
Bethesda, MD 20814
phone: (301)657-2248

18 Jan Meeting 9:30 Am - Noon; Details on Back Page**ADA and hearing loss**

Have you ever wondered how the ADA affects those of us with hearing loss? The Americans with Disabilities Act is normally associated with wheelchair ramps, but what about invisible disabilities like hearing loss? Heather Cowan is the Interim ADA Coordinator for the City of Albuquerque with a background in Civil Rights and compliance to federal rights legislation. An experienced public speaker, we are excited to have Heather join us to share how Albuquerque accommodates people with disabilities, but especially those with hearing loss.



Don't forget that dues are due in January.
Please consider volunteering to help out.

Upcoming programs:

- February: Panel of Cochlear Implant users
 - March (planned): How meditation can help coping skills when dealing with hearing loss and/or tinnitus
 - May: Dr. Mudd to talk about Meniere's Disease What is it? Why should we care? What are the symptoms and treatments?
- Other topics in the works:
- A workshop on Speech to Text Apps. Bring your smart phone, and we'll work together to share ones we've all tried,
 - A live video session to hear from a speaker knowledgeable about the FDA's new regulations on Over the Counter (OTC) Hearing Aids
 - Going to the movies – the different captioning devices, and the where and how to borrow them, and the status of open captioning for movies in the Albuquerque area.

Santa Fe Chapter meeting: Saturday, Jan. 18, 10 am, at the Santa Fe Association of Realtors, 510 N. Guadalupe St. (just up from Jinja Bistro north of DeVargas Mall).\

“Hearing Aids 101: Everything You Ever Wanted to Know But Were Afraid To Ask,” presented by Kathleen Romero, AuD
All meetings offer a loop, loudspeakers and ASL interpreters

Captions Captured

*Stephen O. Frazier, Hearing Loss
Support Specialist*



The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires that public venues that have TV sets turned on for the entertainment or convenience of their patrons must, if asked, turn on the captions if they are not already activated. That's great in theory, but it doesn't work in the real world. Ask for captions and you're likely to be told, "I'm not allowed to change the TV " or "I don't know how to do that." You may be told, "I can't find the remote" or at times, "No, people complain when they're on."

As this picture demonstrates, the caption could be critical information.



Well, here in Albuquerque, like Seattle, San Francisco and some other progressive cities, that problem has been addressed with a brand new city ordinance that captures the captions for you. The new ordinance requires that the captions always be turned on if the TV is turned on and viewable by the public during regular business hours. Whether at the doctor's office, a noisy sports bar or restaurant—even in a shop selling TVs—there must now also be captions. This ordinance is the work of the Committee for Communication Access in NM (CCAnm), a group of advocates for the needs of those with hearing disabilities. It includes representation from HLAA chapters in the state. It was sponsored in the Albuquerque City Council by Councilor Cynthia D. Borrego and the Council President, Klarissa J. Peña. The ordinance was en-

acted on November 18 and was signed by Mayor Keller in early December. The ordinance became effective five days after publication as a legal notice in the Albuquerque Journal.

Now, if you find yourself at a business that is not in compliance with the new ordinance, you are encouraged to ask that they turn on the captions, and if they don't, you should file a complaint with the City of Albuquerque Office of Civil Rights by calling (505)768-4595 or sending an email to civil-rights@cabq.gov. The violator faces a \$250 fine for the first offense and \$500 for any thereafter.

Telecoil Counseling Now Required

The CCAnm was also the group that got a state law passed last year that now requires audiologists and hearing aid dispensers to counsel clients in telecoil/hearing loop technology prior to fitting them with hearing aids, so that the client can make an informed decision as to whether or not to have telecoils included when purchasing hearing aids. The counseling requirement bill was passed last January, but it was not until the fall that the licensing board drafted and approved a rule to comply with the requirements of the bill and then notified practitioners of the new rule.

Having telecoils frees the user from having to borrow a receiver and earphones at HLAA meetings, at performances at most "live" theaters in Albuquerque, many places of worship, at city council or county commission meetings and elsewhere. To wirelessly connect to the assistive listening system, users just need to turn on their telecoils.

For places like movie theaters, many places of worship, the Journal Theater and other venues with FM or Infrared assistive listen systems, users have to borrow a receiver, but instead of earphones, they can borrow a neckloop and activate their telecoils. This allows them to keep their hearing aids in place, not remove and possibly damage or lose them, and still connect to the sound system. In the future, if you (or someone you know) is not told

about telecoils following a hearing test where hearing aids are recommended, that hearing care provider is violating the rules and should be reported to the NM Speech-Language Pathology and Hearing Aid Dispensing Practices Board by downloading a complaint form at <http://www.rld.s->

[tate.nm.us/uploads/FileLinks/5d71ac5d6de54bd882e3146f83b65c76/BCD_Complaint_Form_Revised_03_2017.pdf](http://www.rld.s-tate.nm.us/uploads/FileLinks/5d71ac5d6de54bd882e3146f83b65c76/BCD_Complaint_Form_Revised_03_2017.pdf) . You can also just Google “hearing aid licensing New Mexico” and a link will come up to take you to the site.

Meet a Board Member

“Rod” Rodríguez, Wired For Sound Editor

I got involved in the Hearing Loss Association of America because my wife is hard of hearing. She’s been hard of hearing since childhood. One of the things that impressed me when we were dating is that she had learned to play piano despite her impaired hearing. You see, I’m an amateur musician and sound engineer. I volunteer to run sound at my church, and I’m a home recording enthusiast. Because of my experience, I serve as an ad hoc consultant to the HLAA Albuquerque chapter on audio needs.

I have a son, who lives in Chicago with his wife, three older boys, a younger girl and a new baby boy. I’m a deacon at our church, involved in prison ministry, hospital visitation, choir and audio, and occasionally leading music with small groups.

My education is actually in physics. Music and audio are more like serious hobbies. My advanced

degree is from the Air Force Institute of Technology in Dayton, Ohio. I served in the Air Force for 12 years. Through work experience, I became what’s called a “computational physicist,” which means I use computers to model complex physics. I’ve worked at or around Kirtland AFB for many years, and I’m currently an independent contractor at Sandia National Labs.

I taught communication skills for a few years “in my youth” at a university undergraduate level. That background led me to volunteer to edit the chapter newsletter. I’m a stickler for good grammar, but my focus then and now is on communicating as clearly as possible. My goal for each issue of the newsletter is to provide information that will help the readers deal with the challenges of hearing loss—their own or that of a loved one.

I’m always open to suggestions for improvement. If you have any, or if you’d like to try writing a short article, please contact me at Editorhlaabq@gmail.com.

Tips

Mary Clark, President, Albuquerque Chapter

When you go to the movies, you’d think you can hear the movie, since the sound is often so loud. We know, of course, that making everything louder is not the solution when dealing with hearing loss. Captions make movie-going a more equal experience for those of us with hearing loss. What kinds of captioning are available in the Albuquerque area?

- 1) Open captioned movies display the captions on the screen for all patrons to see. No special devices are needed to see the captions. While they are commonly available from the movie distributors, they need to be requested for showing at local theaters. The only theater I am aware of in NM that routinely shows open captioned movies is the Violet Crown in Santa Fe in the Railyards district.
- 2) SONY glasses are used at some theaters here in Albuquerque. These work to fit over your own

glasses, and are lightweight and adjustable. The captions are displayed on the lens of the glasses (typically near the top of the lens) allowing the user to see the captions for themselves, without being in the field of vision for any other patrons.

- 3) CaptiView devices fit into the cupholders and include a gooseneck with a small screen attached to the top. The gooseneck allows users to position the screen to suit their own needs and in their field of vision.
- 4) There are a few theaters with FM devices which require borrowing a receiver and using either headphones or a neckloop to listen using the receiver.

While the ADA requires equal access to movies that are open to the public, the typical complaint centers on the assumption that other patrons don't like to have the captions on the screen, or seeing the devices that others are using.

Smith's Community Rewards Shop at Smith's with their Rewards card, and Smith's will make a donation to HLAA Albuquerque chapter. You get your usual rewards points.

Call 1-866-4141 to sign up or re-enroll.
The HLAAbq NPO number for Smith's is 14881.

What can you do? When you check out a captioning device, make sure you arrive early enough to make sure it is set correctly. This means making sure the device is displaying the captions for the movie you are watching. (Who wants to watch Frozen II Captions, while you are watching Little Women?) Also, most need to be fully charged to work for the duration of the movie. For the ones that use a gooseneck, those need to be maintained, and if you find you get one that doesn't stay in place and sags, you need to speak to the manager of the theater.

If you have a good experience, please take the time to thank the manager so they get the positive feedback that ensures they will continue with the employee training and equipment maintenance.

Amazon Smile You can donate to the Albuquerque Chapter of the Hearing Loss Association of America every time you make a purchase of most of the products from Amazon.

Go to <http://www.hlaabq.com/amazonsmile.html> for more information and detailed instructions on how to designate HLAA-ABQ Chapter as your charity of choice when you make amazon.com purchases.

Once you have set it up, always log into smile.amazon.com to purchase from amazon. 0.5% of the purchase price is automatically donated to HLAA Albuquerque Chapter—at no cost to you.

HLAA2020 Convention in New Orleans!

You can learn more at <https://www.hearingloss.org/programs-events/convention/> Educational workshops and a broad mix of innovative, informative HLAA2020 exhibitors await you. The host hotel is the New Orleans Marriott.

Event Photography Notice

Photos taken during the HLAA2020 Convention may be used for future marketing materials. If you do not wish to appear in the published photos,



please let them know by emailing them at convention@hearingloss.org.

Communication Access

Hearing loops and CART/Captioning will be in all workshops and plenary sessions; Sign Language Interpretation for all plenary sessions. You may request interpreters for specific workshops by emailing convention@hearingloss.org.

Live Caption on Google's Android Q Is a Killer App

David Copithorn, Content Director, HearingTracker.com

Google just announced that its new **Android Q OS** will come with a **Live Caption** application and other accessibility features.

Live Caption creates instant, real-time transcriptions for videos, podcasts, and audio messages for **any app** running on Android Q. **As soon as speech is detected, captions appear**, even if the app has no native built-in support for captioning. It even captions video and audio recorded by the user.

If Live Caption works anywhere near as well as the demonstration yesterday at the **annual Google I/O developer conference**, it might just be the kind of killer app that will entice diehard iPhone users like me to consider making the switch.

Captions Wherever and Whenever You Need Them

With my two cochlear implants, I do very well in live conversations and, for the most part, on the phone. But I still have a lot of **trouble understanding speech on TV**. And audio recordings and web videos played on the computer and phone can be even more problematic. I enable closed-captions regularly when watching TV, but for other kinds of media, there's often no adequate solution.

Live Caption, along with other applications enabled by Google's new **Live Transcribe** technology, promises to change all that with captions wherever and whenever you need them.

Breakthroughs in Machine Learning Enable Live Caption and Live Relay

Live Caption converts speech to text in real-time. Utilizing **breakthroughs in machine learning**, it provides **immediate transcriptions** of live or recorder audio & video. All processing takes place on the user's Android phone.

Live Caption works in the background without interrupting other apps. And because it doesn't

need to send data anywhere for processing, it **eliminates delays** from spotty wireless connections.

For regular phone calls, there is also a new **Live Relay** feature. It's a lifesaver for people who are deaf or have severe hearing loss, and for those who have trouble being understood on the phone.

Live Relay allows the phone to listen and speak for users while they type. Because the responses are instant and provide real-time writing suggestions, **users can type fast enough to conduct a normal phone call**.

Live Transcribe: Technology for Multiple Applications

Live Caption and Live Relay are practical applications that utilize the **Live Transcribe** technology Google announced in February.

Live Transcribe is an **artificial-intelligence-based technology that uses machine learning** to constantly improve speech to text conversion. It's being integrated into apps for personal computers and mobile phones.

Our awesome Board of Directors for your HLAA ABQ Chapter has openings for several roles. We are looking for those interested in special projects, those who would like to help us out for a few months, as well as anyone interested in a longer-term commitment. Check out the possibilities to "try us out" for a month or two, and we will provide orientation for working on a nonprofit board, share our chapters mission and goals, and share which topics we can use your help with. If you are interested, contact Mary Clark, the current president of the board, for more details at mary@mandgclark.com, or the chapter email (which gets checked less often) hlaabq@gmail.com, or Mary's phone at 505 553-2638.

Thanks to those listed below for their generous donations.

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Support the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA). Become a member TODAY!

The Hearing Loss Association of America is a volunteer association of Hard of Hearing people, their relatives and friends. It is a non-profit, non-sectarian educational organization devoted to the welfare and interest of those who cannot hear well. Membership in the national organization is by annual dues, which are separate from the annual Chapter fee paid to your local chapter. National membership includes a subscription to the bimonthly publication Hearing Life.

For more information: www.HearingLoss.org (301)657-2248 voice.



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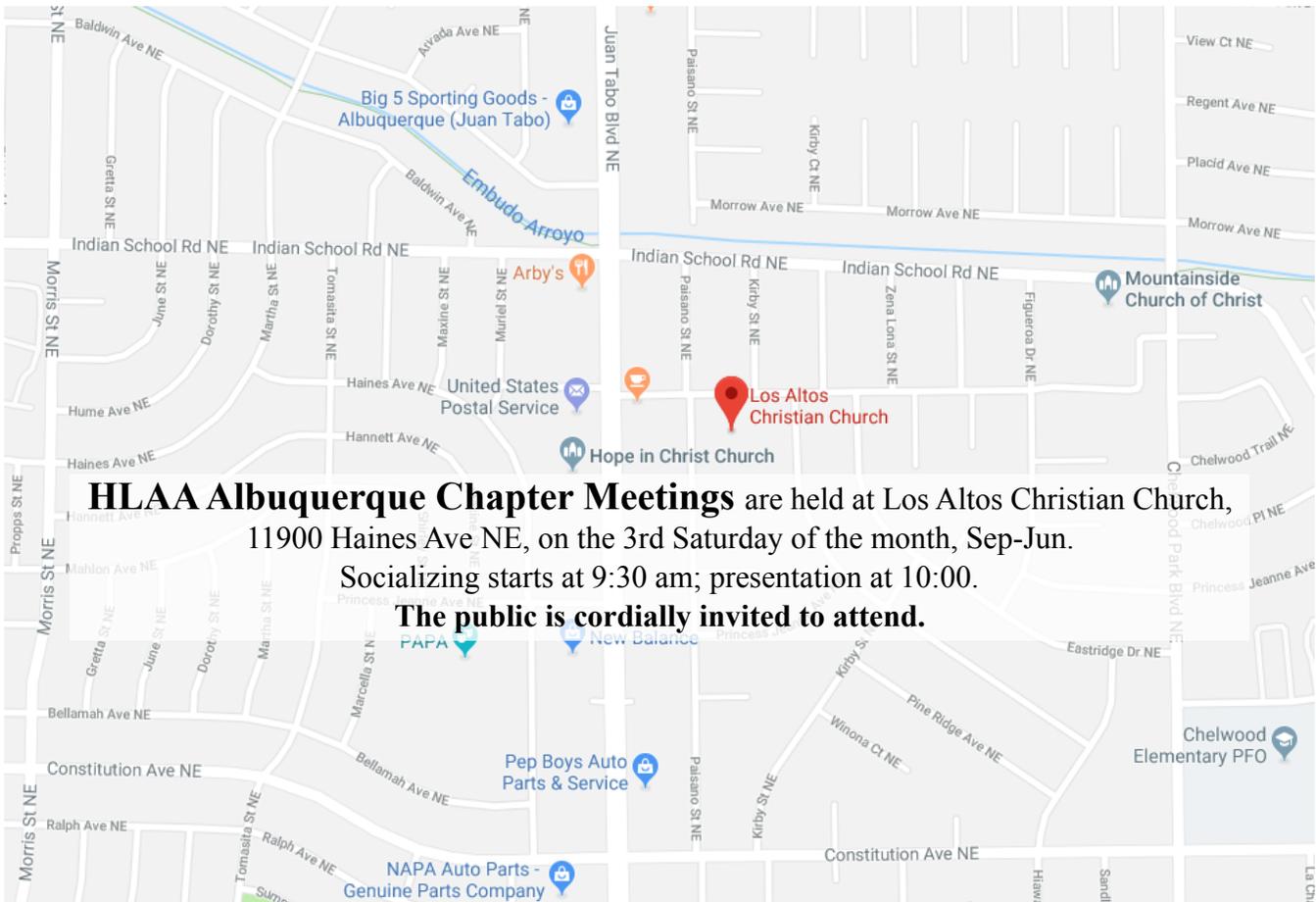
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HLAA Albuquerque Chapter Meetings are held at Los Altos Christian Church, 11900 Haines Ave NE, on the 3rd Saturday of the month, Sep-Jun. Socializing starts at 9:30 am; presentation at 10:00. **The public is cordially invited to attend.**