

Turning down the volume on the tv

## Group aiding deaf

United Press International

NEW YORK — Just about everyone knows someone — maybe a usually considerate and loving parent or grandparent — who sits down in front of a television set and turns the volume up so loud the rest of the family runs for cover.

Howard Stone, president of Self Help for Hard of Hearing People Inc. (SHHH), tells a story about Walter Ridder, national editor of Knight-Ridder Newspapers, who told him his family deserted him every time he tried to watch television. The volume was driving them crazy.

Stone's non-profit organization, based in Bethesda, Maryland, told Ridder how to use an audio loop, a device that enabled him to turn the television volume down so low, his family had to start turning it up to listen.

"They're all watching TV together again," Stone said.

The exact figure is almost impossible to determine, but federal agencies estimate there are 20 million hearing impaired people in America.

Of that number, some 17 million — those that are not totally deaf — can be helped by several hearing improvement systems now on the market.

One of the newest systems that works for people suffering moderate to severe hearing loss is the infrared system.

It has been sold in this country for several years by two overseas companies, Sennheiser of West German and Oticon of Denmark, and it now also is being manufactured by an American firm, Controlonics Corp. of Westford, Massachusetts.

John Vecchione, director of marketing for Controlonics, said his company's home-use system takes two minutes to install.

"It plugs into normal wiring, a small mike is placed on the television set and wired into a transmitter," he said.

The transmitter uses invisible light waves to send audio to a receiver that comes in two models — a stethoscope-type headset or a light-weight strap that is worn around the neck.

"The strap is more comfortable and convenient, but the stethoscope receives more decibels, making it better for those who are more seriously deaf," Vecchione said.

Vecchione said the entire home system costs \$199-\$225 and can be installed by the customer.

The home receivers also can be taken to one of more than 100 theaters and cultural centers in the country — including Washington's National Theater and New York's Lincoln Center — that now are equipped with sound improvement systems.

Stone said Sennheiser first developed the infrared system in 1979 for theater-goers in Europe who were bothered by rustling paper, children

and coughers. Then the company started making the home-use system.

Controlonics has been manufacturing the home-use system about a year and it began marketing a wide-area system a few months ago that can serve up to 4,000 square feet in theaters, hotels and nursing homes.

Vecchione said there still is a problem in marketing the device because many people don't admit to having a hearing problem because they don't want to mark them as handicapped.

"There is a big denial problem," said Stone, who is almost totally deaf. "There seems to be a stigma attached to hearing loss. People get away with ridiculing an impaired hearing-impaired person."

Stone said that on the average, a person experiences hearing difficulties for seven years before admitting there's a problem.

He called the devices that enable hearing impaired people to tune down the television set a significant contribution to family life, especially now.

"When an older person turns down the volume in a house, it can result in violence to the younger person. And now we have an increase in three-generation families because of the economy and a housing shortage. You can imagine the strain a family is under when an older member wants to hear TV

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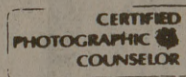
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## Thousands of East Germans emigrating West to freedom

United Press International

This year, East Germany has allowed nearly 30,000 of its subjects, an unprecedentedly high number and more than twice the total for the whole of 1983, to emigrate to the West. Several thousand more are expected to leave before the end of the year.

East Germany also dismantled some of the automatically denoted anti-personnel mines along its frontier, extended the time limit for cross border visits and reduced border fees.

For its part, West Germany granted East Germany a \$330 million credit last month on top of a similar amount in 1983. It has promoted major industrial cooperation deals and permitted companies such as Volkswagen and Siemens to build jointly owned factories. Many in West Germany have criticized the government for giving away too much in return for too little.

Burdened with hard currency debt and obliged to meet sharp price increases for Soviet oil and gas, East Germany needs all the East-West trade it can get. Contracts with West Germany accounted for 40 percent of its foreign trade last year, and gave East Germany access to the huge market of the European Economic Community.

Moscow accused Bonn of using economic leverage to subvert the communist system, betraying an apparent fear that the lure of money might tempt the East Germans to stray from the communist orbit.

Before President Konstantin

Chernenko began clamping down on East-West contacts, the Soviets had appeared to tolerate a certain amount of flirtation between the countries in the hope that this would block the NATO missile deployment, encourage the West German peace movement and perhaps eventually woo Bonn away from the Atlantic Alliance.

Those hopes evaporated after the West German parliament ratified the deployment decision and Chancellor Kohl repeatedly reiterated his country's determination to remain a loyal member of the alliance.

On the Western side, the relationship between Bonn and East Berlin also has created concern about the possible rise of German national utopianism. This is particularly so in France, where newspapers, concerned about the strength of the peace and ecology movement in the Federal Republic, refer disparagingly to "the German disease," and the "emergence of national pacifism."

Although the nuclear-armed French are not members of NATO's military command, they regard West Germany as a vital buffer between them and the Soviet bloc.

President Francois Mitterrand's government has been pushing hard for reactivation of the Western European Union, the long-dormant forerunner of NATO, as a vehicle for closer Franco-German military cooperation. WEU foreign and defense ministers will meet in Rome in October to discuss building a European defense pillar that would stand

alongside the United States NATO.

The Soviet Union declared WEU's decision earlier this year lift remaining restrictions on German weapons production, allow the Bonn government to develop missiles and bomber aircraft wishes.

"Mitterrand is convinced that NATO commitment is not credit enough to the new generation Germans in particular and Europeans in general," a WEU official said.

"Either the Germans have strong say in Western defense or will eventually see a united Germany under the dictate of the Soviet Union, and then God help us," said.

West German officials stress the Bonn government's prime commitment is to Western democratic values, expressed through membership in the European Community.

But there is bound to be an emotional tie with neighbors, and sometimes fellow family members, speak the same language, watch the same television programs and share many of the same concerns about culture and the environment despite the barbed-wire division of the country.

"I believe that while we try to organize our part of Europe, we must keep a higher vision of Europe as a whole," Brandt said, "a Europe that eventually would be less dependent on the superpowers and on the interrelationship between the superpowers."

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