

Bluetooth Cells: Hands-Free Headset

by Russell A. Gall

It's amazing to me to see how technology has taken off in recent years. You cannot drive down the highway without seeing, or being run off the road, by someone on their cell phone. Although annoying, it leaves me not only in the ditch, but in awe at the technology.

One fairly new aspect of cell phones is the Bluetooth capability. This cool technology, available on many cell phones, allows for wireless voice and data communications between a vast array of devices. It's done using

low power, short-range radio frequency. It is secure and also very universal, allowing for connection between devices that previously spoke in different languages.

Because cell phones with Bluetooth can send data to and fro, a connection can be made to your computer to do a variety of things. Things like updating calendar info, installing a kooky ringer, uploading your favorite song or even sending your electronic ID card to another cell phone. Although it sounds difficult, advances have rendered it easier than ever.

But one of the best uses for Bluetooth technology is a hands-free wireless headset. It's that blue flashing thing-a-ma-bobber we've all seen hanging on one's ear like a Christmas ornament. This headset allows you make or receive calls or check voice mail with voice commands. You can even talk to your annoying sister-in-law and run other drivers off the road, all while keeping both hands on the wheel. Setup is extremely easy with just a few steps to "pair" your devices. If you have techno-phobia, you can also go to your local cell phone store where they will happily sell and setup a new headset for a nominal fee.

Lastly, if you are one of those people who are ready to tackle the advanced aspects of Bluetooth with cell phones, look into these Web sites for free software downloads that can help you connect your cell phone with your computer. Good luck. (www.bitpim.org, www.bluesoleil.com, www.howardforums.com)

Gall is the member services advisor at Charles Mix Electric Association in Lake Andes, S.D. If you have a question for this column, send it to Tech Tips, c/o Member Services, at the address found on Page 3.

Portable Heater Safety

The Electrical Safety Foundation International offers the following safety tips and precautions regarding space heaters, baseboard, and in-wall heaters as you head into cooler weather:

- Electric in-wall fan heaters should be cleaned a minimum of twice per year.
- Keep all furniture, draperies and other household objects at least three feet from the in-wall fan heaters and 12 inches from baseboard heaters. Keep portable space heaters at least three feet away from all flammable materials, such as furniture and draperies.
- Plug portable space heaters directly into the outlet; do not use an extension cord.
- If an in-wall or baseboard heater is shut off at the circuit breaker, be sure to lock or tag the circuit breaker to prevent someone from inadvertently turning it back on.
- If installing a new heater, read all information labels, follow all safety precautions and verify the electrical supply wires are rated high enough for the electrical demand of the heater.
- Some portable space heaters, electric in-wall fan heaters and baseboard heaters have been subject to product recalls. Check your brand and model number and visit www.cpsc.gov for possible information on your heater.

Kids' Corner Safety Poster

"Don't pull the cord; it's a price you can't afford."



Paige Fromm, 11 years old, Hartford, S.D.

Kids, send your drawing with an electrical safety tip to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). If your poster is published, you'll receive a prize. All entries must include your name, age, mailing address and the names of your parents.

Souper Supper

Bacon Cheeseburger Chowder

- 4 cups diced potatoes
- 1 cup sliced carrots
- 1 cup sliced celery
- 1/2 cup diced onion
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1/4 tsp. pepper
- 2 cans cream-style corn
- 1/2 lb. diced bacon
- 1 lb. ground beef
- 1/2 cup butter
- 4 cups half & half or milk
- 2 cups Velveeta cheese cubes
- 1/2 cup flour

Place first 6 ingredients in kettle. Just cover with water and cook until vegetables are tender. Add cream-style corn. While vegetables are cooking, brown bacon; drain. Brown ground beef; drain. In microwave, make a white sauce of butter, half & half, cheese and flour. Pour over vegetables, stirring often so it thickens evenly. Add bacon and ground beef. Stir to mix and serve. Slivered almonds and wild rice may also be added to enhance the flavor of the soup.

Pam Hofer, Carpenter
Cooperative Connections

Creamy Pumpkin Soup

- 1/4 cup butter
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, chopped
- 2 tsp. brown sugar
- 1 (14.5 oz.) can chicken broth
- 1/2 cup water
- 1 (15 oz.) can pumpkin
- 1 (12 oz.) can evaporated milk
- 1/4 tsp. cinnamon
- Croutons

Melt butter in large saucepan. Add onion, garlic and brown sugar; cook 2 minutes. Add broth and water; bring to a boil. Reduce heat and cook 15 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add pumpkin, evaporated milk and cinnamon; cook 5 minutes. Transfer to blender and process until smooth. Serve with croutons on top.

Sheryl Fromm, Hartford
Cooperative Connections

Ham and Cabbage Stew

- 1 T. plus 1 tsp. margarine
- 1/2 cup diced onion
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 8 oz. cooked, cubed ham
- 1/2 cup sliced mushrooms
- 4 cups shredded cabbage
- 2 cups sliced carrots
- 1 bay leaf
- 1/4 tsp. caraway seed
- 1/4 tsp. pepper
- 2 cups water
- 2 tsp. beef broth and seasoning or bouillon

Saute onion and garlic in margarine until onion is soft. Add ham and mushrooms; sauté 2 minutes. Add cabbage, carrots, bay leaf, caraway seed and pepper; sauté 5 minutes. Stir in water and broth; bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover and let simmer, stirring occasionally, for 30 minutes. If desired, 1 T. cornstarch dissolved can be used for thickening.

Lavonne Smith, Kennebec
Cooperative Connections

Nacho Cheese Soup

- 1 (5 oz.) pkg. dry au gratin potatoes
- 1 (15 oz.) can whole kernel corn, undrained
- 1 cup salsa
- 2 cups water
- 2 cups milk
- 1-1/2 cups shredded taco-flavored cheese
- 1 (2 oz.) can sliced black olives, drained
- Tortilla chips, optional

Combine potatoes, dry au gratin mix, corn with liquid, salsa and water in large saucepan. Heat to a boil; reduce heat. Cover and simmer 25 minutes or until potatoes are tender, stirring occasionally. Add milk, cheese and olives. Cook until cheese is melted and soup is heated through, stirring occasionally. Garnish with tortilla chips.

Pictured, Cooperative Connections

Crockpot Potato Soup

- 5 cups water
- 4 chicken bouillon cubes
- 1 T. parsley flakes
- 1 T. salt
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1/4 cup butter
- 3 cups diced potatoes
- 3 cups diced carrots
- 3 cups diced celery
- 1 can evaporated milk

Cook all except milk in crockpot until vegetables are tender. One hour before serving, add milk. May add soup dumplings before serving.

Theola Stetson, Rapid City
Cooperative Connections

Wild Rice Soup

- 2/3 cup oat and wild rice blend
- 1-1/3 cups water
- 1/2 lb. bacon
- 1 onion, chopped
- 4 cups milk
- 2 cans cream of potato soup
- 12 oz. shredded American cheese

In saucepan, stir oat and rice blend into water. Bring to a boil; reduce heat and simmer 40 to 45 minutes. Fry bacon and onion; drain. In large pan, combine all ingredients and heat until cheese melts. Do not boil.

Rowena Wipf, Doland
Cooperative Connections



Please send your favorite favorite bread and breakfast and seafood recipes to your local electric cooperative (address found on page 3). Each recipe printed will be entered into a drawing for a prize in July 2008. All entries must include your name, mailing address, telephone number and cooperative name.