

# April 14, 2011-Member Stories

Welcome to the Hearing Aid SIG-Nelda McQuary.

- Many regulars
- First time attendees were welcomed and introduced themselves

Our SIG Leader is Gary Shepard, out of state for a family funeral today.

- Gary is extremely knowledgeable about hearing loss, not only from his own experience but with his research and helping others.
- We owe him our constant thanks and encouragement for making our SIG possible and for our growth.

March 28<sup>th</sup> Cochlear Implant Seminar sponsored by the Hearing Aid SIG mentioned

- Thanks to those that helped Gary make that big event come to Sun City
- Asked who received free audiogram from Estes Audiology offered in conjunction with the seminar
- Get copy to Gary with survey form to expand the profile group created for sharing information.

Member stories about personal experiences and information discovered along the path to better hearing followed by Q&A.

## Jim Van Artsdalen – My Hearing Aid Experiences

**Introduction** -Aller anfang ist schwer; German Proverb – Every beginning is difficulty

Can't hear – don't understand

**Background** –1951 first diagnosed as having hearing loss-lip reading-difficulty understanding

**Aids** -- 1989 bought first hearing aid, Starkey analog-T-coil-initial experience; sounds not heard before; urinal flush, elevator, car; dinner meetings-volume control on aid easy to use-long term: did not help much in noisy situations, use decreased, but used even after got Phonak's

**1999 Oticon** ITE digital trial: not satisfied that it was for me

**2000 Seimens** ITE-VC digital trial: not satisfied that it was for me

**2003 Phonak Perseo** ITEdigital with WatchPilot2 remote controller & watch, 4 programs-initial: my best memory, could hear the birds in the woods-long term;decreased usage, repaired, did not help in some situations; on failed again

**2010 ReSound** trial with controller, phone adapter & TV controller-results; Resound aid very good-accessories not so good, never got the TV use satisfactory, phone marginal

overall system not what I wanted

**Based on this experience, I identified the following criteria** to help me understand (hear) better at (1) meetings such as the Computer Club Monday meeting (2) in quiet situations and watching TV (3) outside in noisy situations, restaurants, gatherings, automobile road noise (somewhat muted) (4) aids easy to control (5) affordable (6) with a workable system of aids-controller-cell phone adapter (6) TV unit-probably not

**2011 Bernafon Vérité** receiver-in-ear with Soundgate bluetooth controller from Costco, Nancy Innes

**I nitial findings** (remember “Aller anfang ist schwer”) – „All beginning is hard.“

Bernafon Vérité aid with dryer (recommend using at least once a week) uses replaceable tulip dome to secure speaker in ear canal-battery: 312 (life 9-10 days full time use)-replace domes when changing batteries, domes free-4 programs,

controlled by switch on aid (I do not use switch)-Soundgate; aid controller and wireless connection to other devices-hand held, clip or neck strap-change programs and volume-Blue Tooth: I use with a NexusOne cell phone-Internal rechargeable battery, comes with charger, charge every day

**Current status** : Very satisfied at this point-Soundgate unit is key to my use/rating

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**Carol Lehmkuhl** – (translated by gary shepard)

Carol purchased Phonak Eleva BTE aids in 2007 from HRI after trying out various BTE models for 6 months. The aids have automatic controls. All she does is change batteries. Ron Paul, the audiologist who fitted her aids appeared quite knowledgeable and while in the office the aids appeared to help. She assumed the little wires with the foam tips were positioned in the canal where they would help. However, when she would put the aids on her ears at home they didn't seem to fit correctly and didn't seem to work well. She was actually afraid to wear her aids outside fearing they would fall out and because she spends a lot of time outside she simply seldom wore the aids. A friend suggested the tubes (little wires) were not close enough to the ear drum and suggested she seek help. She visited the Sun City audiologist who shortened the tubes but that didn't seem to make much difference. She never felt her hearing was much different whether she wore the aids or not. Six months ago she called Ron and scheduled a hearing test with aids on. The test confirmed her suspicion that there was little difference in hearing. Dr. Paul's suggestion was to make molds to be attached on the tube tips to secure the tips closer to the ear drum. Now Carol feels she is finally getting help from her aids and is not afraid to wear them outdoors for fear they will fall out. She is pleased she did not simply give up. The vast majority of audiologists want you to hear better and will do everything possible to make it happen but they can't know we have issues unless we tell them.

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**Maxine Gromena** – I started my journey with hearing aids about 10 years ago. It has been frustrating and annoying. Part of it could be because along the way I was diagnosed with Meniere's disease which complicates things. I have had In-the-ear and Phonak (the latest model at the time) behind-the-ear models. Nothing has made much of a difference. I have been to store front audiologists and ENT's and felt they all gave me good service. Finally Dr. Franklintold me he couldn't help me anymore and sent me to Dr. Patrick Slater, MD Neuro-Otologist. We weren't successful at first but kept on trying until we agreed on the BAHA procedure. I thought that was definitely "IT". To my dismay it hasn't been the wonder cure I thought it would be. I am still working with the audiologist in hopes of making this work. This procedure has been way too expensive to dismiss it as just another mistake. I'll let you know of further developments.

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**Mike Martin** -- (translated by gary shepard)

## JOURNEY TO BETTER HEARING

Mark makes an important point:

To sustain our health and well being we routinely and without serious thought:

- have corrective eye glasses
- cataract removal
- teeth cleaning, repair and replacement
- hip and knee joint replacement
- consult medical doctor(s), take medications and undergo tests

Why do we not make the same investment in time and money in dealing with hearing loss for the safety and benefit of ourselves and those with whom we associate? The answer is there is no good logical reason except that it isn't painful.

Mark's journey to better hearing began 15 years with the purchase of my first aid single aid (Sonar) to improve hearing in his right ear. His left ear hearing was designated "dead". He later purchased a second single aid (Starkey).

He continued to cope with the disadvantages of "one sided" hearing until recently he discovered a relatively new technology known as a Tandem Bicos Hearing Solution. Mark recently purchase of two aids (Phonak Audio Mini IX C-

Link BTE) which had the capability for Bicos linking designed to pick up sound waves on the poor ear side and link them to the better ear side. A second microphone captures the sound waves on the good ear side at the same time with the effect of presenting sounds to the brain in a similar manner as a person uses both ears for hearing.

Aided testing before provided 100% word recognition at 55 dB for the right side and 0% for the left. Aided testing using the Bicos system provides an excellent 96% at 50 dB on the right side and 96% at 40 dB on the left side. A TRULY REMARKABLE AND EXCITING EXPERIENCE.

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Notice the different solutions we have each experienced today BECAUSE we have each had different needs and problems to begin with, so each of us may have a different solution. However, many will be traveling the same path and can certainly learn from each other.