

## **MARCH 2013 HEARING SOLUTIONS MEETING**

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS & MEMBER CONTRIBUTIONS:**

- FORUM
  - The Computer Club will be changing to a new forum configured with a format more conducive to computer mentoring and user self help.
  - The SIG section containing posts/threads will be transferred from the old forum to the new forum.
  - The live date will be May 1, 2013 at which time the old forum will be removed.
  - Computer Club emails will go out to all paid up Computer Club members with email addresses on file providing a link to the new forum site, an initial user ID (resident number (no dash) and a password for access.
  - Classes will be available for access and navigation of the new forum site.
  - The Computer Club Monday meeting on March 18<sup>th</sup> will be on this subject and everyone was encouraged to attend.
  
- SHOPPING FOR PROVIDERS/PRICING/AIDS
  - A member provided a very interesting narrative of his experience from a medical exam to ENT to Audiologist who performed an audiogram and gave a hearing aid sales pitch to shopping other providers, using various hearing aids, features and accessories on a trial basis to make comparisons of providers and hearing aids and discovering price variations of up to \$1,500 for exact or similar aids. (SEE FORUM FOR DETAILS)
  - A member commented on how satisfied he was with his Costco brand of hearing aids after having paid \$2,000 (both aids) that have t-coils and a remote. This member is in the special Profile Group so information and rating of his aids, fitter, and his degree of loss is shared with others in that special group. Those not in this special group were encouraged to join it.
  
- VA PHONAK AIDS WITH ACCESSORY PACKAGE
  - A member did a demonstration of the TV LinkS; PilotOne Remote and MyPilot with came with his recently VA dispensed Phonak premium aids.

### **HEARING AID TECHNOLOGY AND SMART/ANDROID PHONES**

Would you like to be able to adjust the volume on your hearing aids from your phone?

Would you like to be able to switch preset hearing aid programs from your phone?

Would you like to turn off your hearing aid microphones from your phone while listening audio streaming through your aids?

Would you like to create a new hearing aid program remotely 24/7 and on the spot from your phone?

Would you like to instantly turn your hearing aid microphones on/off while in the t-coil mode to hear an unamplified question from the audience at a public meeting?

The technology is a “no brainer”, it has been available for some time and the idea is wildly popular, so why isn’t it being widely used?

- Audiologists are strongly opposed to any concept that makes hearing aid users less dependent on them for their retail sale of hearing aids business.
- Major hearing aid manufacturers are committed to a distribution system and marketing strategy in which they control the hearing aid market.
- Healthcare advocates and Government agencies are committed to controlling potential abuses before they are proven to exist and inherently oppose the concept of self regulation.

These and other obstacles are very slowly eroding over time but it is a very slow and tiring process before consumers are in the drivers seat. In the meantime incremental and isolated breakthroughs will slowly continue to occur as a result of competitive initiatives.

Some advancement in technology and smart phones are:

- **Cell Phones and T-Coils**
  - FCC requires cell phone manufactures to test and rate their phones for hearing aid compatibility using American National Standards Institute C63.19 standard. These ratings give an indication of the likelihood that a cell phone may interfere with hearing aids; the higher the rating, the less likely the cell phone-hearing aid combination will experience undesired interference. Phones are rated with hearing aids set in microphone (M) mode as M3 “good” and M4 “excellent” for use. Phones are also rated with hearing aids or cochlear implants that have T-coils as T3 “good” and T4 “excellent”.
  - Hearing aid manufacturers use a similar rating system.
  - Hearing aid ratings and the cell phone ratings can be combined to identify combinations. A hearing aid rated M2 and cell phone rated M3 or a combined rating of 5 would likely be “normal”. A rating

combination of 6 would likely be “excellent performance”. Every hearing aid brand has unique technology and settings so ratings do not guarantee performance. Thus you have to “try before you buy” if possible which means prior examination of the phone return policy and/or the hearing aid purchase contract’s early termination provisions if possible.

(GROUP DISCUSSION)

- **Captioning Phones and T-Coils (see Meeting Notes and Forum Posts/Product Review)**
  - Both the CapTel and CaptionCall phones that provide live captions have T-Coil jacks. The CaptionCall phone also has a self programmable application in which the listener’s audiogram settings can be duplicated.
  
- **Assistive Listening Devices (ALD’s) “Bites Around The Edges” for those with hearing loss that do not go the hearing aid route.**
  - SoundAMP-A very primitive \$5 I-Tunes device.
  - EarTrumpet-Amplifies personally selected pitches where hearing loss is present similar to an equalizer.
  - Pocket Talker-(see Meeting Notes and Forum Posts/Product Review)
  - Hear Clear Audium 2-Amplifies each ear individually (low-medium-high frequency bands)-overall balance adjustment-overall volume control-earphone jack for telephone-TV-radio-stereo-jack for charging battery.
  
- **Audiotoniq (See Meeting Notes and Forum Posts)**
  - A manufacturer start up that took the nation by storm when introduced at a HLAA national convention and viscously attacked by Audiologists. (See Forum for additional information). Audiotoniq was followed by a number of our members after drawing a record attendance at our July, 2011 monthly meeting until the company went on “pause” for lack of capital.

(GROUP DISCUSSION)

- **ReSound (iPhone Accessory & App)**
  - Just introduced App to enhance ReSound’s Unite Phone Clip+ that can be used with certain Resound hearing aids.
  - The App can be downloaded on App StoreTM.
  - Users can control their hearing aids, phone conversations and wireless streaming accessories from their iPhone screen instead of toggling

programs from the aids and eliminates having to carry the phone plus a remote.

- The next step will make the App available for Android™ smartphones.
- There is a microphone mute button to turn the hearing aid microphones off while completing phone conversations
- Full functionality with the newest ReSound Verso wireless aids with 2.4GHz technology for audio streaming.
- <http://justaudiologystuff.com/index.php/gn-resound-introduces-first-made-for-iphone-accessory-accompanying-app/>

(GROUP DISCUSSION)