

Meeting Notes, January 13, 2011-Q&A-Gary Shepard

- **LEADER-SECRETARY** NEED VOLUNTEERS FOR BOTH POSITIONS-SECRETARY WILL TAKE AND TRANSCRIBE MEETING NOTES FOR PUBLISHING ON THE HEARING AID GROUP WEB SITE.
- **FEBRUARY MEETING** JIM WOOLL WILL BRING NANCY INNES FROM COSTCO TO INFORM US ABOUT “THE SIGNALS THAT IT IS TIME TO REPLACE YOUR HEARING AIDS”.
- **MEMBER SURVEY** WILL BE CIRCULATING A SURVEY TO GET INFORMATION NEEDED TO DEFINE THE GROUP COMPOSITE AND TO PROVIDE MAXIMUM BENEFIT TO THE MEMBERSHIP.
- **DATA BASE** TOGETHER WITH THE SURVEY ED QUILLEN WILL BE COMPLETING AN IMPRESSIVE MEMBERSHIP DATA BASE TO MAXIMIZE HELP AND SHARING OF INFORMATION TAYLORED TO INDIVIDUAL NEEDS.
- **MARCH SEMINAR FOR THE SUN CITY COMMUNITY** FEATURING A PANEL OF AUDIOLOGY AND MEDICAL DOCTORS ADDRESSING THE HOW, WHEN, WHY AND WHO IS A CANDATE FOR COCHLEAR IMPLANTS.
- **PROFILE GROUP** NEEDS TO BE EXPANDED TO ACHIEVE ENHANSED VALUE. TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS SPECIAL GROUP YOU MUST BE WILLING TO SHARE INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR HEARING IMPAIRMENT WITH OTHERS IN THE PROFILE GROUP. TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT GETTING INVOLVED CONTACT gdshepard@suddenlink.net 512/686-1416.
- **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:** THE FOLLOWING EXCELLENT QUESTIONS WERE SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS OF OUR GROUP FOR DISCUSSION AT THIS MEETING. THE QUESTIONS ARE PERFECT FOR THE HEARING AID GROUP FORUM WHERE THEY CAN BE EXPOSED TO A

WIDER VIEWING AUDIENCE WITH LARGER AND MORE DIVERSE RESPONSES. ALL MEMBERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO POST QUESTIONS SUCH AS THESE IN THE FORUM:

I bought 'behind the ear' Resound hearing aids just before Christmas. I have worn CIC (Completely in the Canal) hearing aids for 6 or 7 years. Twice while dining in restaurants during Christmas, I totally misunderstood waiters. It was embarrassing. Is it better not to wear hearing aids in such an environment?
Jimmie Coleman

WEAR THEM! JUST DON'T EXPECT PERFECT RESULTS.

THIS SITUATION IS QUITE COMMON AND NOT RESTRICTED TO RESTAURANTS. IT APPLIES TO EVERY SITUATION IN WHICH THERE ARE COMPETING SOUNDS SUCH AS PARTIES, MEETINGS, AND PUBLIC GATHERINGS. IT HAS LITTLE TO DO WITH THE STYLE OF AIDS. IT IS OFTEN A PROBLEM TO A LESSER EXTENT EVEN FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH NORMAL HEARING.

HEARING AIDS PRESENT A CHALLENGE TO THE BRAIN THAT WORKS DILLIGENTLY TO ADAPT TO HEARING IMPAIRMENT AND CERTAINLY TO AIDS IN GENERAL OR NEW AIDS IN PARTICULAR THAT OFFER A NEW CHALLENGE FOR THE BRAIN TO WORK WITH IN TRANSLATING DIGITAL SOUND WAVES INTO SOMETHING UNDERSTANDABLE. THE LONGER THE BRAIN IS EXPOSED TO A NEW CHANGE THE BETTER IT GETS AT ACHIEVING THE GOAL. THIS IS WHY AUDIOLOGISTS RECOMMEND NOT USING AIDS ONLY FOR SPECIFIC THINGS.

WHEN I AM IN A RESTAURANT AND THE WAITRESS SAYS SOMETHING I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHICH IS MOST OF THE TIME I HAVE FOR YEARS LOOKED AT MY WIFE WHO HAS AN ENERGETIC VOICE WITH A PITCH THAT IS A BETTER ONE FOR ME AND MY LOOK SIGNALS HER TO SIMPLY REPEAT WHAT WAS SAID OR KNOWING MY TASTES, MAKES THE APPROPRIATE RESONSE ON MY BEHALF TO THE WAITRESS.

HEARING AIDS AMPLIFY SOUND (ALL SOUND) WHICH COMPETES WITH SPEECH. WHILE THE WAITRESS IS TAKING YOUR ORDER, YOUR AIDS AMPLIFY THE TELEPHONE THAT IS RINGING AT THE RESERVATION COUNTER, KITCHEN SOUNDS AND CONVERSATIONS ALL OVER THE DINING AREA. WHAT MAKES IT WORSE IS ALL THE SOUNDS ARE AT THE SAME LEVEL YOU EVEN THOUGH THEY VARY IN DISTANCE.

IN RECENT YEARS HEARING AID MANUFACTURES HAVE ATTEMPTED TO DEAL WITH THIS SITUATION WITH PROGRAMMING THAT ATTEMPTS TO DIFFERENTIATE SPEECH SOUNDS FROM OTHER TYPE SOUNDS AND “COMPRESSING” THE NON-SPEECH SOUNDS. SOMETIMES SUCCESSFUL- SOMETIMES NOT. THEY ALSO HAVE DEVELOPED THE TECHNIQUE OF USING SEVERAL SPEAKERS IN EACH AID PLACING SO THAT THEY TEND TO PICK UP SOUNDS COMING FROM WHERE THE WEARERS HEAD IS POINTED. ONE MANUFACTURE THAT I KNOW OF WITH THESE DIRECTIONAL SPEAKERS HAS INCORPORATED PROGRAMS SO THAT IF YOU ARE DRIVING AND WANT TO HEAR A CONVERSATION IN THE BACK SEAT YOU PUSH A BUTTON ON THE AID THAT TURNS OFF ALL SPEAKERS EXCEPT THE ONE FACING THE REAR OR IF YOU HAVE A FRONT SEAT PASSENGER YOU CHOOSE ANOTHER BUTTON THAT TURNS ALL SPEAKERS OFF EXCEPT FOR THE RIGHT EAR. THESE FEATURES WILL BE IN THE HIGH END PRICE RANGE FOR OBVIOUS REASONS.

I HAVE DEM'D AIDS WITH DIRECTIONAL SPEAKERS AND OBSERVED SOME BENEFIT BUT NOT ENOUGH IN MY OPINION TO JUSTIFY THE PRICE AND AFTER A WHILE I GOT LASY AND WOULDN'T TOGGLE BETWEEN PROGRAMS.

I HAVE AIDS WITH A “SPEECH IN SOUND” PROGRAM AND HAVE OBSERVED IT PERFORMING ITS FUNCTION AND ALTHOUGH IT PROVIDES SOME BENEFIT IT DOES NOT EVEN COME CLOSE TO SOLVING THE PROBLEM. MOST AUDIOLOGISTS WILL TELL POTENTIAL PATIENTS THAT AIDS WILL HELP SOME INDIVIDUALS MORE THAN OTHERS FOR MANY REASONS AND AVOID LEADNG CLIENTS TO BELIEVE ANY HEARING AID CAN TOTALLY ELIMINATE THIS PROBLEM.

THE MAIN THING TO ME IS YOU SHOULD NEVER BE EMBARRASSED TO TELL ANYONE YOU HAVE HEARING DIFFICULTIES AND DON'T ASSUME YOUR AUDIOLOGIST KNOWS WHAT YOU ARE HAVING DIFFICULTY WITH. MY SECOND AUDIOLOGIST HAD A PROFOUND HEARING IMPAIRMENT AND EVEN THOUGH HE OBVIOUSLY HAD AN ADVANTAGE OVER AUDIOLOGISTS WITH PERFECT HEARING HE ADMITTED THAT THERE WERE DIFFERENCES DEPENDING ON THE DEGREE OF LOSS. DON'T ASSUME YOUR AUDIOLOGIST KNOWS WHAT YOU ARE EXPERIENCING. IF YOU DON'T TELL THEM THEY CAN ONLY ASSUME YOUR HEARING IS LIKE THEIRS. FINALLY, JUST DON'T EXPECT MIRACLES.

ONE MEMBER INDICATED THAT CONTINUED USE FOR A LONGER PERIOD OF TIME WOULD PROBABLY ALLOW THE BRAIN, WHICH IS ALWAYS STRIVING TO CONVERT SOUNDS TO MEANINGFUL INFORMATION WHICH WOULD EVENTUALLY RESULT IN BETTER RESULTS.

ANOTHER MEMBER SUGGESTED THAT THE "TRAIN YOUR BRAIN" CD BY NEURO TONE, INC. DEVELOPED BY AUDIOLOGISTS AS A TOOL TO ENHANCED LISTENING MIGHT BE A USEFUL TOOL.

How can we truly ascertain what our hearing loss is and how well does the proposed aid answer those losses under the various hearing conditions. Neil Williams

FIRST STEP-CONSULT A MEDICAL DOCTOR THAT SPECIALIZES IN THE EAR WHO CAN EXAMINE YOU FROM A MEDICAL PROSPECTIVE. IF THE MEDICAL SPECIALIST DETERMINES THE IMPAIRMENT IS NOT TREATABLE MEDICALLY THE DOCTOR SHOULD REFER YOU TO A DOCTOR OF AUDIOLOGY TRAINED AND EDUCATED IN THE USE OF TESTS AND TECHNIQUES TO DETERMINE THE DEGREE OF IMPAIRMENT AND CAN RECOMMEND A COMBINATION OF AID TYPES, STYLES AND DOMES TO BEST DEAL WITH THE IMPAIRMENT. A SECOND OPINION CAN BE USEFUL TO CONFIRM THE TEST RESULTS AND DIAGNOSIS. JUST AS THE MEDICAL PROFESSION IS NOT PERFECT, NEITHER IS THE AUDIOLOGIST. THEY ARE ALL "PRACTICING".

Because the in the ear or behind the ear devices have not been of effective benefit to me, I would appreciate that at some appropriate time a frank in depth presentation by a recognized authoritative provider of the surgical implant procedures. Thank you for your continued efforts on behalf of those of us who are hearing impaired.

Robert A. Rugeley (captainrandy@gmail.com) Tel: 868-2512

I SHARE YOUR INTEREST, BUT I COME MORE FROM THE STANDPOINT OF GAINING KNOWLEDGE IN THE "HOW, WHEN, WHY, WHO AND THE EFFECTIVENESS OF IMPLANTS. I AM WORKING ON GETTING A PANEL OF MEDICAL EXPERTS TO ADDRESS THAT SUBJECT WITH SUN CITY RESIDENTS SOMETIME IN MARCH.

Is there a person, group or company that is highly recommended for repair of hearing aids bought elsewhere?

Are there specific hearing aid brands that are better suited for the different ranges of hearing loss?

Judy Kunkle

QUESTION 1: MY SUGGESTION IS TO FIND AN AUDIOLOGIST THAT HANDLES THE SAME BRAND (MANUFACTURER) WHO WILL BE MORE FAMILIAR WITH THE AIDS TO CONFIRM WHETHER OR NOT THE ISSUE IS FUNCTIONALITY THAT CAN BE CORRECTED BY THE AUDIOLOGIST FOR A REASONABLY SMALL FEE. IF THE AUDIOLOGIST DETERMINES THE AID(S) ARE NOT PERFORMING TO MANUFACTURER STANDARDS THEY CAN SEND THE AIDS TO THE MANUFACTURER FOR RECONDITIONING. THIS WILL LIKELY COST AROUND \$200 PER AID AND THEY WILL COME BACK IN LIKE NEW WORKING ORDER AND PROGRAMMED AS THEY WERE WHEN RECEIVED. THEY WILL ALSO HAVE A WARRANTY. TWO THINGS I DISCOVERED:

1) EVEN THOUGH THE PROGRAM WAS REINSTALLED, MY AUDIOLOGIST SUGGESTED THE PROGRAM MAY NEED "TWEAKING" AND SCHEDULED A FOLLOW-UP VISIT AT NO COST IN CASE I DISCOVERED SOMETHING THAT DIDN'T SEEM

RIGHT. I DID GO BACK AND THE AUDIOLOGIST MADE ADJUSTMENTS THAT SOLVED THE ISSUE.

2) IF YOUR AIDS ARE VERY OLD THE MANUFACTURER MAY HAVE DISCONTINUED SERVICE AND IF THEY ARE THAT OLD YOU MIGHT BE A CANDIDATE FOR NEW AIDS WITH CURRENT TECHNOLOGY.

QUESTION 2: YES AND NO. HEARING AID COMPONENTS THEMSELVES ARE VERY SIMPLE AND INEXPENSIVE. SPEAKERS, RECEIVERS, TRANSMITTERS, AMPLIFIERS, BATTERIES AND MICRO COMPUTER CHIPS AND ARE IN ALL BUT THE CHEAPEST HEARING DEVICES. I HAVE COMPUTER SPEAKERS THAT I PURCHASED FOR \$5. A NEIGHBOR HAS A STEREO SOUND SYSTEM THAT COST OVER \$2,000. THE BASIC COMPONENTS ARE THE SAME BUT CAN A PERSON TELL THE DIFFERENCE. YOU BET.

IN MY OPINION MAJOR MANUFACTURERS ALL OFFER PRODUCTS VERY SIMILAR TO OTHERS BUT ARE CONTINUALLY DOING RESEARCH AND TESTING TO BUILD A BETTER "MOUSETRAP". ONE WILL ACHIEVE AN EDGE AND WILL "MAKE HAY WHILE THE SUN SHINES" WHILE THE OTHERS FIGURE OUT HOW TO CATCH UP AND GET AHEAD. THOSE THAT LOSE GROUND TEMPORARILY USUALLY LOWER PRICES TO MAINTAIN SALES.

ALL MANUFACTURES HAVE PRETTY MUCH EVOLVED INTO OFFERING THREE PRICE TIERS:

1) LOW RANGE WITH LIMITED BANDWIDTH AND FEATURES USUALLY SUITED TO MILD HEARING IMPAIRMENT AND USE IN LESS CHALLENGING ENVIRONMENTS

2) MID RANGE WITH MORE BANDWIDTH AND SOME FEATURES AND

3) HIGH END WITH A FULL RANGE OF BANDWIDTH FOR A LITTLE MORE FULL BODIED SOUND AND ALL THE BELLS AND WHISTLES.

AFTER SALE SERVICING, EXCEPT FOR WARRANTIES, IS BUILT INTO THE PRICE OF MOST AIDS BUT THE VALUE OF THE SERVICING IS DEPENDENT ON THE EXPERIENCE, KNOWLEDGE AND REPUTATION OF THE AUDIOLOGIST.

IN MY OPINION THE DECISION IS NOT WHAT MANUFACTURE MAKES THE BEST PRODUCT. I WOULD PURCHASE WHATEVER BRAND THE AUDIOLOGIST I CHOSE RECOMMENDED. I WOULD BE VERY CAREFUL IN CHOOSING THE AUDIOLOGIST AND MAKE SURE I FELT COMFORTABLE WITH THEM. PUT A LITTLE WORK IN SELECTING THE AUDIOLOGIST AND CHECK THEIR EDUCATION, REPUTATION, AND HOW LONG THEY HAVE BEEN IN BUSINESS. SOME MOVE AROUND A LOT. COMPARE PRICES OF AIDS TO MAKE SURE THE QUOTED PRICE IS "IN THE BALLPARK" BUT DON'T EXPECT A GOOD RELIABLE AUDIOLOGIST TO BE THE "CHEAPEST KID ON THE BLOCK".

The most repeated problem I hear from hearing aid users is "I can't hear well when in crowds". If anyone has a hearing aid that addresses that concern, I would like them to share with us. Ron Wolchik

ME TO! THE ONLY EXCEPTION I KNOW IS A PERSON WITH A MILD HEARING LOSS. MY AIDS HAVE A PROGRAM FEATURE CALLED "SPEECH IN SOUND" THAT ATTEMPTS TO DIFFERENTIATE SPEECH SOUNDS FROM OTHER SOUNDS AND COMPRESS THE OTHER SOUNDS TO LET SPEECH STAND OUT. WHILE I CAN TELL SOME DIFFERENCE IT IS A LONG WAY FROM SOLVING A PROBLEM THAT I EXPECT WILL BE WITH US FOR A LONG TIME.

Does anyone know about using rechargeable batteries? Is it only certain hearing aids that can use them? Are they significantly less expensive?

How often should one have a hearing aid assessment?

Are extended warranties worth having after the manufacturer's warranty expires? Carol Cuddih

RECHARGABLE BATTERIES: I KNOW THEY ARE AVAILABLE BUT PRICY. NOT ONLY ARE THE BATTERIES EXPENSIVE BUT AS I

UNDERSTAND IT YOU HAVE TO PAY A LOT FOR THE RECHARGING UNIT. SOME CONCERNS MIGHT BE HOW MANY CHARGES YOU CAN GET FROM A BATTERY, AWFULLY EXPENSIVE TO LOSE A BATTERY WHICH I DO FROM TIME TO TIME. MY BATTERIES ARE FREE FOR LIFE FROM MY AUDIOLOGIST SO I WOULD BE HARD PRESSED TO SWITCH. SEE FORUM POSTS ON BEST PRICES FOR NON-RECHARGABLE BATTERIES.

A MEMBER POINTED OUT THAT KIRKLAND AIDS PURCHASED FROM COSCO CAME WITH RECHARGABLE BATTERIES OR AIDS AND SUGGESTED THAT WHEN NANCY INNES COMES TO SPEAK TO OUR GROUP SHE COULD EXPLAIN MORE ABOUT THEM. NO ONE PRESENT AT THE MEETING USED RECHARGABLE BATTERIES.

HEARING AID TEST FREQUENCY: AUDIOLOGISTS CLAIM ONE SHOULD HAVE A TEST EVERY YEAR CLAIMING IMPAIRMENT CAN CHANGE. MY HEARING LOSS HAS REMAINED THE SAME FOR A DECADE ALTHOUGH I HAVE PERIODICALLY (NOT ANNUALLY) HAD TESTING DONE WHEN IT WAS CONVENIENT AND FREE. MY LAST TEST WAS AFTER A YEAR BUT WAS TO DETERMINE WORD DEFINITION WITH AIDS.

EXTENDED WARRANTIES; I WOULD SAY THIS DEPENDS ON WHETHER YOU WOULD USE IT. I NEVER EXTENDED A WARRANTY BUT I HAD, ON TWO OCCASSIONS THOUGHT I HAD LOST AN AID RIGHT AFTER THE ORIGINAL WARRANTY EXPIRED. I REGRETTED NOT HAVING EXTENDED THE WARRANTY IN BOTH INSTANCES UNTIL I FOUND THE LOST AID. MY LAST SET OF HEARING AIDS HAD MAXED OUT ON VOLUME SO AN EXTENDED WARRANTY WOULD HAVE BEEN OF NO VALUE.

ONE MEMBER MENTIONED THAT HE EXTENDED HIS WARRANTY ONCE AND DECIDED AFTER THAT TO GO WITHOUT.

I'd like to hear any info about captel phones and other devices for hearing impaired.
Jean Anderson

THE FOLLOWING RESPONSE IS FROM JENNY BURSON, A CHARTER MEMBER OF OUR GROUP:

CapTel (Captioned telephones) phones are regular phones that have an LCD readout of the conversation as it goes on. It is a computer generated readout but very accurate. The visual clues assist the listener so that the conversation proceeds normally. People who call you dial the service first, then enter your phone number so that you can see captions during their call. CapTel 800i uses your *telephone service* and *high-speed Internet connection* to provide both voice and captions during a call. See <http://www.weitbrecht.com/captel.html?gclid=CKK9ypDns6YCFUpJ2goddH8Ylw> for more information.

A new variation (at least to me) is **Phone Captioning System** which allows you to See Live Captioned Text Right on your Phone, Computer (Mac or PC), and BlackBerry. Check out the website at <http://www.phonecaption.com/> for more information.

Web Captel: <https://www.sprintcaptel.com/?ECID=SEM:Google:A:Sprint:Relay> This web-based service allows individuals who have difficulty hearing, to read word-for-word captions on their computer screen or mobile device. All you need is a phone (any kind of phone will do) and a computer with internet connectivity. I use this to read my cell phone voice mail (because people talk so fast on voice mail). Another friend uses it as a running chronology for doctor's appointments and other conversations where she needs precise data.

Other devices:

Silent Call Signature Series - A device which offers signaling solutions that provide the utmost in usability and reliability for deaf and hard of hearing users. These signaling solutions are designed to notify you of common events occurring in your home, such as the doorbell, fire detection, etc. <http://www.harriscomm.com/index.php/equipment/e/sc-ss.html>

[Sonic Shaker SBP100 Vibrating Travel Alarm Clock](#) (I have one and I love it).

Web Captel is free but everything else cost something which varies with the device. I went to the state for a new telephone about a year ago and at that time they were not giving vouches for Captel phones.

I wonder if other people have had good or bad experience with the free hearing aid phones given out by the state. I had one, for a short while, and then it stopped working. Apparently no help in repair. Since I didn't really need it, I didn't pursue the issue.

Carol Lehmkuhl

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS THAT COME TO MIND ARE:

- CHECK THE MANUAL THAT CAME WITH THE PHONE AND GO OVER THE OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS AND TROUBLESHOOTING TIPS.
- TRY THE PHONE AND ADAPTER USING A DIFFERENT OR PROVEN LIVE ELECTRICAL OUTLET AND DIFFERENT OR PROVEN TELEPHONE JACK.
- CHECK THE BATTERY TO MAKE SURE IT IS NOT "DEAD".
- OBTAIN THE CUSTOMER SERVICE INFORMATION THAT SHOULD BE IN THE MANUAL OR ON THE PHONE AND CALL THEM.
- MANY PROVIDERS OFFER A FIVE YEAR WARRANTY. IF YOU ARE IN THE FIVE YEAR PERIOD CONTACT THE PROVIDER FROM WHOM YOU SECURED YOUR PHONE FOR ADVICE.
- GOOGLE THE MAKE/MODEL OF THE PHONE FOR POSSIBLE SITES SUCH AS FORUMS, RATING REVIEWS, AND OTHER SUPPLIER/SERVICE INFORMATION SOURCES.
- CONTACT OLIVIA BILLS OF TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF ASSISTIVE AND REHAB SERVICES DARS-DRS AT 512/407-3250.
- AS A LAST RESOURCE GIVE YOUR INSTRUMENT TO GOODWILL.

WAIT 5 YEARS FROM THE DATE YOU ACQUIRED THE PHONE VIA THE STAP VOUCHER PROGRAM AND ORDER ANOTHER FREE PHONE.