

The meeting began promptly at 3pm with 21 in attendance including several new attendees. Membership currently numbers 149 and continues to grow.

A nice door prize courtesy of Nelda McQuary was won by Leon Buck.

The meeting presentation was given by Gary Shepard and consisted of opening remarks about ALD's and their use with and without aids-a show and tell of the PockeTalker and accessories-a personal review of PockeTalker of which as summary follows.

ASSISTIVE LISTENING DEVICES (ALD's)

Used as an alternative form of hearing aids

- Used with hearing aids or cochlear implants to expand hearing aid functionality
- Help separate sounds you want to hear from background noise
- Used with neck loops, room loops and Bluetooth technology
- Consists of:
 - microphone (collects sound)
 - transmitter (sends sound signal)
 - receiver (intercepts sound signal)

Several ALD's were featured in the December 2009 and can be viewed in the Hearing Solutions Web Portal-Meeting Notes

POCKETALKER ULTRA

Personal Amplifier

Assistive Listening Device (ALD)

Not Hearing Aid-Not Regulated

Made in USA by Williams Sound www.williamsound.com

Sold by many ALD suppliers.

Purchased from TecEar www.tecear.com 248-867-2759

\$157 with no tax or shipping

Contents: Controller, two microphones, 12' cord, 2 TV clips, 1 lapel clip, lanyard, inductive neck loop, 3' cord

REVIEW SUMMARY

The Pocketalker can be used without hearing aids and with hearing aids. In some cases it works better without aids and other cases it works better with aids. My preference will be noted in each category by (HA) to indicate best used with hearing aids or (WHA) to indicate best used without hearing aids.

Telephones (including Captel) (WHA)

Pocketalker provides little value with Captel or other phones

A \$12 telephone headset with Boom Mike and line volume control works fine for wired hands-free use with all phones with a 2.5mm headset receptical

- **Television (WHA)**

The Pocketalker is very useful for TV viewing

I prefer it over hearing aids and my wireless cuff headset because

Separate volume and tone controls on the controller allow for easy adjustment to different TV sounds

- Another person can adjust TV volume to suit them and the volume can be easily adjusted on the controller
- Sound (by design) only comes in one ear leaving the other ear open to pick up conversation and other sounds in the room. The sound can be easily switched to the other ear.
- The TV sound must be on (not off or muted) but can be set so low that it can't be heard without aids.
- No annoying occlusion that I normally experience is present with TV sounds
- Requires use of the provided 12 foot cord and mike affixed to TV and inserted in the controller

MP3 Players and FM Radios (WHA)

Pocketalker provides little value

I just plug the ear buds directly into the MP3 or FM radio and don't use the Pocketalker and receive binaural stereo sound

Neck Loop with hearing aids with T-coil switched on (HA)

Advantages of Pocketalker with neck loop over hearing aids:

Separate additional volume and tone controls on the controller.

Minimize unwanted noise and speech (conversation at other tables-a/c-fans-kitchen-TV-music) when in large area or groups by using the Pocketalker volume and tone controls and managing location of the mike.

The neck loop is placed around the neck and connected to the 3.5mm earphone jack. It can be placed under the shirt so it will not get in the way.

Directionality (WHA-HA):

Poses a minor inconvenience. When sound originates from behind you look around to find the source

Outdoor and indoor sports activities (HA):

Pocketalker using hearing aids and neck loop works well without difficulty.

Placing the neck loop cord under your shirt to be out of the way.

Clip Pocketalker on belt or pocket on side like a cell phone and mike plugged into the controller mike 3.5mm mike jack or to outside of purse or with lanyard around neck.

Restaurants and meetings (HA):

The closer the microphone (receiver) is to the sound source the better.

Pocketalker using hearing aids and neck loop can be effective in conversations with other individuals in noisy surroundings (see Neck Loop above).

Additional advantages are created by:

By placing the Pocketalker with mike near the person (table at restaurant) with whom you are conversing.

If one person has a weak voice or difficult frequency move the Pocketalker closer to them and adjust the tone and/or volume.

Automobile (HA):

Clip the mike to the lapel of the passenger for conversation.

Using the neck loop in combination with either the 3 foot cord or 12 foot cord with mike taped near automobile speaker and plugged into the mike jack on Pocketalker. This worked well to eliminate most of the road noise and allowed use of the tone and volume controls on the Pocketalker for individual listening preferences while other occupants enjoy setting the audio at their preference.

SUPREME TEST—HIGHWAY 195 IN A RACING PROTOTYPE AUTOMOBILE WITH LOUD MUFFLERS, WIDE TIRES, OPEN TRUNK AREA AND REDUCED INSULATION. Pocketalker was able to eliminate most of the road noise but had some electrical interference from high power lines along the roadside and some minor audio static.

Hospital Patient Visit: Use the 3 foot cord with mike (provided) and attach the mike using the lapel clip (provided) to the bed sheet near the patient's head.

Lanyard neck-loop:

A useful tool (provided) when using the belt clip is not handy.

Energy supply:

Pocketalker uses two AAA batteries whose life is yet to be determined as after three weeks I am still using the original batteries.

Overall opinion:

Product quality seems good.

A person with a profound hearing loss could get along with the Pocketalker as an alternative to hearing aids by passing on the hearing aids bells and whistles at significant savings over the cost of hearing aids. In addition you would not have to bother with servicing expense, appoints, fittings, hearing aid battery costs. Pocketalker has a five year warranty compared to the 2-3 years on hearing aids. Does the Pocketalker work as good or better than hearing aids—No, but the Pocketalker doesn't cost \$4,000 and become obsolete in two or three years either.

A person with aids could have a versatile remote controller with extras at substantial savings over remotes and other ADL's offered by hearing aid providers usually at costs of \$400+.

Pocketalker will likely still be functioning after two sets of hearing aids and can be used with both sets.

Bluetooth capability (instead of the wires) would make Pocketalker better but pricier. The wires do not pose any special problems for me but might for others.