

# Pacific Hearing Service News

Autumn 2012

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## Frequency Lowering

People who lose their high frequency hearing typically complain that others are mumbling. (Sound familiar?) For most people with high frequency hearing loss, hearing aids that focus the amplification on the affected tones will improve clarity of speech considerably.

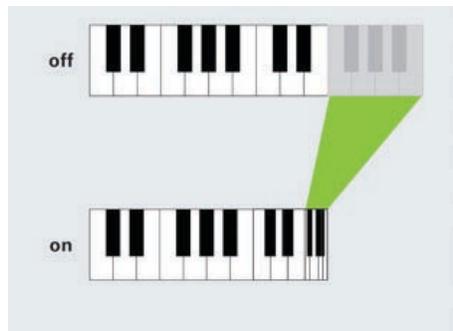
But what if your high frequency regions of hearing are so severely impaired that amplification won't help? Enter frequency lowering technology.

Frequency lowering technology has been around for years, but it has recently made a comeback with greater promise. It is a solution for high frequency or high "tone" hearing loss that is offered by three major manufacturers: Widex, Phonak and Starkey.

Each manufacturer takes a slightly different approach, but they essentially take those high frequency sounds and transpose them in some way to a lower frequency. Therefore, a high frequency consonant such as

"s", which the impaired ear might not hear, is modified so that it is heard at a lower frequency range. This means someone who does not have certain high frequencies available is able to detect sounds like birds and bells.

We finally have a tool available to make high frequency sounds audible to people who are otherwise unable to detect them! If you have been told you have a severe high frequency hearing loss, this technology may be appropriate for you.



*This picture illustrates one way frequency lowering works. Notice how the "high notes" on the keyboard are compressed to fit into some "lower notes." This allows someone who has hair cells that don't work in the high note area to hear them, but at a different pitch.*

## We Think This is Very Cool!



When the people at Marvel Comics heard from the distressed mom of 4-year-old Anthony, who was born with a

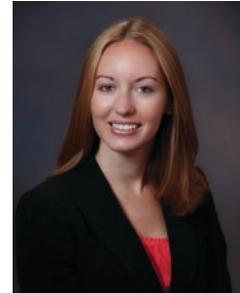
hearing loss, they sprang into action. Anthony's family had come to call his hearing aid "blue ear." When he announced he no longer wanted to wear his hearing aid because "superheroes don't wear blue ears," his quick-thinking mom wrote to

Marvel Comics and asked if there was anything they could do to help.

Several members of the Marvel Comics team created a new superhero just for Anthony called... you guessed it... Blue Ear! This superhero has a special listening device that gives him supersonic hearing. He can "hear an ant hiccup on the other side of the country" with this device.

Hmmm...maybe Marvel comics should team up with some of our hearing aid manufacturers!

## Welcome Dr. Harrigan!



Pacific Hearing Service, Los Altos welcomes Dr. Erin Harrigan to our team. Erin recently completed her clinical

fellowship training at Shands Hospital at the University of Florida. She earned her Bachelor's degree from Syracuse University and her doctorate in audiology at Gallaudet University. Gallaudet is the world's only university with programs and services specifically designed to accommodate deaf and hard of hearing students. It was established in 1865 by an Act of Congress and its charter was signed by Abraham Lincoln. Studying in this unique environment allowed Erin to be immersed in deaf culture. She comes to us with a wealth of experience and insights that can only be attained from working within the deaf community. In her training, she focused on teaching speech reading courses and conducted research to study the use of assistive listening technologies. She is particularly passionate about helping people adapt to hearing aids and identifying other devices that help enhance hearing aid use.

In her spare time, Erin enjoys baking and spending time outdoors. Her favorite activities include kayaking and hiking with her husband and their Australian Shepherd, Buster.

## What our patients say...

"I drive 110 miles each way to continue my entirely satisfactory experience of twenty-five years with Pacific Hearing Service. Thorough diagnosis, detailed and accurate prescription and programming. Great service. Personal attention and care. I could not be more pleased."

– Mr. E.

*Psychotherapist and retired school principal*

Visit our website at [www.pacifichearingsservice.com](http://www.pacifichearingsservice.com)

## Test Your Hearing Knowledge



Hearing loss is an invisible handicap. You can't look at a person and

know whether they have hearing loss. Maybe that is why there are so many "myths" about hearing loss. Test your knowledge...do you know the facts?

**Myth:** My hearing loss is mild. I don't need hearing aids.

**Fact:** We see lots of "mild" hearing loss in baby boomers. These are usually people who are still working and leading active lifestyles. Even a mild hearing loss can impact how well you hear in a busy work environment, at a board meeting or at a dinner party. Mild hearing loss can increase your "listening effort." This means you are working harder to follow a conversation which leads to fatigue. Many hearing aids are designed for just this type of problem, so don't let mild hearing loss keep you from reaching your full potential.

**Myth:** Hearing loss is most common in "old people."

**Fact:** The majority (65%) of people with hearing loss are under 65!

**Myth:** If you get hearing aids too early, you become "dependent" on them.

**Fact:** Research warns us against "auditory deprivation." Evidence suggests that if you wait too long to get hearing aids, certain auditory areas of the brain get "lazy" due to a lack of stimulation. If you don't use it, you lose it!

## Please join Dr. Peg Lisi for a complimentary workshop on Music Enjoyment for the Hearing Impaired.



Dr. Lisi has over 20 years of experience singing opera and classical music throughout the country.

Now settled in the Bay Area, Peg enjoys her work as an audiologist during the day while performing professionally with the San Francisco Symphony Chorus and other local opera companies in the evenings. She invites you to this educational workshop and hopes that you will leave it with a better understanding of how hearing loss and hearing aids impact music enjoyment.

Topics of discussion will include:

- How the physical and perceptual characteristics of music differ from speech

- Factors that influence music perception for the hard-of-hearing
- Basic overview of how hearing aids are designed for speech versus music
- Tips for better music enjoyment for those with hearing loss

**Seating is limited, so call today to reserve your space.**

Menlo Park:  
Tuesday,  
Nov. 6. 4:00 – 5:30  
(650) 854-1980

Los Altos:  
Wednesday,  
Nov 7. 5:00 – 6:30  
(650) 941-0664

## CaptionCall® Life is calling



CaptionCall® is a revolutionary new telephone for anyone

who has trouble hearing on the phone. Similar to captioned television, CaptionCall uses voice recognition technology and a fast transcription service to quickly provide written captions of what callers say on a large, easy-to-read screen. The phone is paid for by a federal government program so there is no cost to you! To learn more, or to schedule a demonstration in our office, call us at 650-854-1980 (Menlo Park) or 650-941-0664 (Los Altos).

## Have you been told your ear is too small for the Lyric?



If so, that might not be the case anymore.

Phonak is introducing an updated Lyric device that fits more ears than the original. If you are interested in Lyric, the completely invisible, extended wear hearing device, but had comfort problems or were told it just won't fit, give us a call. You might be a candidate now!



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**PACIFIC HEARING SERVICE**