

# Hearing Your Best

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INFORMATION FROM  
Associated Audiologists, Inc. "Hearing Your Best for Life"

## Honor Flights Take Veterans to New Heights

More than 16 million Americans fought and served in World War II, but less than 700,000 are alive today; approximately 6,500 are in Kansas, and 14,000 in Missouri, according to the National World War II Memorial.



▲ Steve Brown, left, and Dr. Baldwin, right, are both involved with Heartland Honor Flight.

John Haas, center, an Associated Audiologists patient and WWII veteran, enjoyed the most recent Heartland Honor Flight.

That's why Heartland Honor Flight, established in 2008 by Gary Swanson and Dr. Mark Martin to honor veterans for service to their country, is focused on finding World War II veterans. Twice each year, the non-profit organization takes approximately 100 veterans and their guardians on a one-day trip to Washington D.C. to reflect at the national memorials.

"Every veteran deserves to be honored for their sacrifice," Swanson says. "Honor Flight is all about the veterans and taking care of the guys who took care of us."

Several Associated Audiologists patients have been guests on these flights, including 94-year-old John Haas. A veteran pilot of World War II who flew 50 missions during his service, John participated in the May 2016 Honor Flight, traveling to Washington D.C. to visit the monuments for the first time since returning from World War II.

"This was the greatest honor I have ever received in my life," John says. "It was an awesome experience and

one I encourage other veterans to go on. No words can express how I felt or how much I appreciate the people who made this possible. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you!"

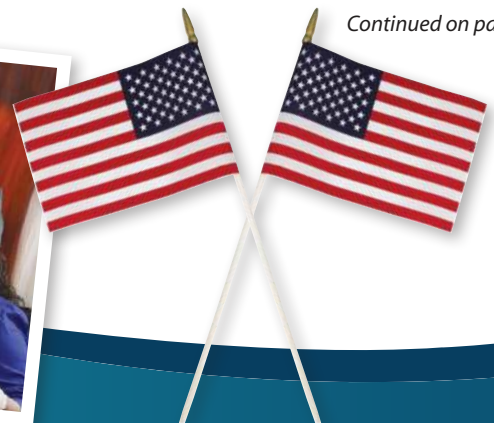
One of the individuals assisting with Honor Flight is Stacey Baldwin, Au.D., FAAA, Senior Audiologist and Clinical Resources Manager. Dr. Baldwin has served as a guardian, assisting veterans with their needs for the day.

"When the veterans arrive in the Washington D.C. airport, they are greeted by a long line of people thanking them for their service," Dr. Baldwin says. "It's an incredibly moving moment."

Dr. Baldwin's father, Steve Brown, served in the U.S. Air Force and is a captain for Honor Flight. He helped establish the Heart of America Patriot Foundation, which provides financial support for veterans and their families. The Foundation is also an Honor Flight sponsor.

Associated Audiologists also will be sponsoring a veteran for Heartland Honor Flight's next trip to

*Continued on page 2*



# Hearing Your Best



## Hear Here...

By Tim Steele, Ph.D., FAAA, President, Associated Audiologists, Inc.

As we began preparing our summer newsletter, a theme of freedom emerged, a theme that is especially appropriate with recent Independence Day celebrations top of mind. Our story about John Haas and the Honor Flight gives pause to consider the sacrifices so many veterans and their families have made.

We are truly indebted to those before us, with us, and yet to come who serve our country and defend our ideals, including the newest member of the Associated Audiologists team, David Paul, Au.D. With all the current divisiveness in our nation, it seems the one thing we can agree on is the love of country and the ideals upon which it was established, freedom and democracy.

As I prepared to write this, one definition of freedom from Merriam-Webster.com stood out. It describes the noun as the absence of necessity, coercion, or constraint in choice or action. As patients of Associated Audiologists, Inc., you certainly have many choices as consumers. We recognize that through freedom of choice there comes responsibility, and we must be diligent in providing the quality care and service you expect. If not, we realize you have other options.

Sometimes the many choices available are confusing or even paralyzing, and some of the marketing techniques

utilized today can be misleading. For this reason, our organization follows a mission, philosophy and set of values that guide our work. We revisited these core principles approximately one year ago as we prepared for our 30-year anniversary.

Our practice philosophy states: *Associated Audiologists will act in accordance with the highest standards of ethics, accountability, efficiency, and openness. We approach our activities with a deep sense of purpose and responsibility. Our patients can be assured of a balanced and sensible approach to their audiology care.* I trust that if we hold true to these core beliefs, the public will notice and continue to choose our practice.

As a small business owner, I cherish the freedoms of choice we are afforded as Americans, and I'm especially grateful for the sacrifices of people like Dr. Paul and John Haas. Without their service and dedication to this great nation, I would not be able to serve the many loyal patients who choose Associated Audiologists, Inc., and so kindly refer others to our business.

Thanks to Dr. Paul, John, and all the veterans who have helped to protect the freedoms we hold so dear, and thanks to our loyal patients for supporting the work we do.

### Honor Flights *continued from page 1*



Heartland Honor Flight veterans in Washington D.C.

Washington D.C. in September. "This seems like a small token of thanks to those who have served our country," says Tim Steele, Ph.D., FAAA, President, Associated Audiologists.

Swanson encourages all veterans to apply for Honor Flight, especially World War II veterans who can make the trip. "Don't let age or mobility deter you from going," Swanson says. "Each veteran has a guardian who is either a volunteer or a family member. We want every World War II

veteran to have the opportunity to enjoy the day." Medical personnel and wheelchairs also are available for veterans who need special assistance.

If you are a veteran or you know someone who is, visit [www.heartlandhonorflight.org](http://www.heartlandhonorflight.org). There, you can select and submit the appropriate application. Due to their advancing age, veterans of World War II will receive priority. Korean, Vietnam and other veterans also may apply, and will be taken as space becomes available.

**For more information, call Gary Swanson at 913-744-8282, or visit [www.heartlandhonorflight.org](http://www.heartlandhonorflight.org).**

# Practice Welcomes Dr. Paul

David Paul, Au.D., the newest member of the Associated Audiologists team, is part of a family with a tradition of military service, a tradition he continues to this day. "My grandfather, father, brother and myself have all served in the military," Dr. Paul says. "It's a legacy I grew up with."



In fact, when Dr. Paul started college at the University of Kansas, he was active in ROTC, and following graduation with a bachelor's degree in psychology, he commissioned as an officer in the Kansas National Guard.

In 2008, his military service took him to Iraq for 13 months for Operation Iraqi Freedom. There, he served in an administrative capacity in medical operations.

That's where he became interested in hearing conservation and the importance of audiology. "The military is all about hearing," Dr. Paul says. "You have to be able to hear well to do your job."

When he returned to the United States, Dr. Paul was accepted into the University of Kansas School of Health Professions Audiology Program.

During his training, he worked at the Kansas City VA Medical Center Audiology and Speech Department, assisting with testing, fitting and programming hearing aids. "I thoroughly enjoyed my time working with our veterans," Dr. Paul said. "It was a great experience."

In the final year of his doctorate, Dr. Paul performed an externship with Associated Audiologists, refining his skills diagnosing hearing loss and fitting/programming hearing aids. He also learned more about dizziness and balance disorders.

Following graduation in May 2016, Dr. Paul joined the practice, and he is now seeing patients at the Overland Park and Leavenworth Clinics. He is a member of the American Academy of Audiology, the American Speech-

Language-Hearing Association, and the Kansas Speech and Hearing Association.

"What I enjoy about Associated Audiologists is the diversity of patients we take care of, and the wide range of services we offer," he says. "I continue to train with Dr. Bittel, learning more about vestibular audiology." Dr. Paul also has a special interest in diagnosing concussions. He recently attended a highly specialized workshop on concussions this summer.

With 16 years of military service under his belt, Dr. Paul is now a captain in the Kansas National Guard. He resides in Lawrence with his wife, Courtney, and their 2-year-old daughter, Madeline. He enjoys spending time with his family, as well as gardening.

**To schedule an appointment with Dr. Paul, call our Overland Park Clinic at 913-498-2827; or our Leavenworth Clinic at 913-682-1870.**

## Protect Your Hearing Aids from Humidity



As residents of the Midwest, we're no strangers to heat and humidity during the summer months. And while the added moisture can be uncomfortable for many of us, it can be downright harmful for your hearing aids.

"Hearing aids work best and last longer when kept in a dry environment," explained Tim Steele, Au.D., FAAA, President, Associated Audiologists. To remove humidity from hearing aids, most hearing aid wearers should use a drying device every night, especially during the summer.

Moisture gets inside the hearing aid through condensation, caused by changes in temperature when you enter an air-conditioned room after being in the warm outside air, for example. Ear wax and perspiration also can contribute to moisture-related problems.

Most dry-aid kits reduce relative humidity through "physical" removal of moisture from the air using a desiccant. Associated Audiologists also has more sophisticated electronic devices available to dry and store your hearing aids.

### SUMMER OFFER

#### Keep Your Hearing Aids Dry

The Dry Caddy is a passive drying system available at an affordable price. It uses an aggressive molecular desiccant and includes six specially designed discs. Each one is a single-use product capable of drying your hearing aids for two months, extending total drying time for the Dry Caddy to one year.

**Special summer pricing  
\$20 per Dry Caddy.**

*To take advantage of this discounted rate, bring this coupon to the office where we see you.*

**More sophisticated drying options also are available. Ask your audiologist for more information.**



## Degrees of Hearing Loss Vary Widely

Have you ever wondered why the hearing aid your spouse or neighbor wears doesn't work for you too? It's because hearing loss differs with each individual.

It can appear anywhere on a spectrum from mild to severe, and doesn't always affect both ears or have the same consequences. In short, there's no one way to experience hearing loss – and there are many effective hearing aids that can help.

Generally, when one of our doctoral-level audiologists determines the severity of your hearing loss, he or she looks at the levels of sound you can hear. An audiogram charts the results of your hearing test, showing the level your hearing registers.

### Degrees of hearing loss

There are six degrees of hearing loss: slight, mild, moderate, moderately severe, severe and profound. Each of these levels is measured in decibels (dB HL). Someone who exhibits mild hearing loss, for example, will not hear sounds that measure –10 to 15 dB HL, while someone with profound hearing loss will not hear sounds at 91 dB HL and above.

As a reference point, an average person with normal hearing can hear sounds at about 0 dB HL and up to about 140 dB HL. Someone with slight or mild hearing loss might not hear the sound of a leaf falling or hushed whispering. Someone with severe or profound hearing loss might not hear a vacuum cleaner, a truck, siren, or a helicopter circling above.

### Types of hearing loss

In addition to the degree of hearing loss, there also are other descriptions of hearing loss:

► **Bilateral vs. unilateral** – If your audiologist says you have bilateral

hearing loss, that means you're experiencing hearing loss in both ears. Unilateral hearing loss occurs in only one ear. This type of hearing loss usually ranges from mild to very severe, and can occur in both adults and children.

The causes of this type of hearing loss are broad. Those who suffer from either bilateral or unilateral hearing loss may be subject to genetic or hereditary hearing loss; have an outer, inner or middle ear abnormality; have been exposed to significant loud noise, or a variety of other causes.

► **Symmetrical vs. asymmetrical** – Symmetrical hearing loss means your level and type of hearing loss is identical in both ears. If hearing loss is asymmetrical, you're exhibiting different levels of hearing loss in each ear; one ear may be able to hear more sounds at different levels than the other. This makes it difficult to hear in backgrounds of noise.

► **Progressive vs. sudden hearing loss** – It's likely that you know someone with hearing loss whose hearing has continued to deteriorate over time. This is called progressive hearing loss. Sudden hearing loss, on the other hand, can affect anyone at any time. It can also occur when patients have been subjected to sudden and unexpected noises at dangerous volumes.

► **Fluctuating vs. stable hearing loss** – Sometimes hearing loss changes over time, getting worse or, occasionally, getting better, which is referred to as fluctuating. Stable



hearing loss means that your level of hearing loss hasn't changed.

Whatever your level and shape of hearing loss, rest assured that your audiologist can properly diagnose and provide the right guidance and treatment.

**Talk with your audiologist about your degree of hearing loss, and the best way to manage it.**

# What's that Ringing in Your Ears, and Why Should You Pay Attention to It?

According to the American Tinnitus Association (ATA), tinnitus affects approximately 50 million Americans to some degree, usually as a sound that only you can hear. People often describe their tinnitus as buzzing, ringing, white noise, crickets chirping and/or a roaring sound.

**A**lthough these descriptions are typical, each individual's experience can be different, and is an important clue that you need to pay attention to your hearing.

In fact, according to research published in the American Journal of Medicine, 90 percent of individuals with tinnitus also have hearing loss. Many times, the tinnitus and hearing loss are caused by damage to the nerve cells within the inner ear. This damage can occur from a number of sources, including exposure to excessively loud sounds, health conditions like diabetes, and medications that damage the ear. Tinnitus also can be caused by impacted ear wax. In very rare cases, underlying medical conditions may cause tinnitus.

"Many times, a comprehensive hearing evaluation reveals the individual has a hearing loss, and tinnitus is one of their first symptoms," Dr. Steele added. In some cases, a hearing aid may be the most effective treatment, improving the patient's hearing, and helping the tinnitus. "We have a number of great hearing aid options," he said. "Some

even have built-in tinnitus treatment options that can be very successful."

Unfortunately, 2 million people have tinnitus so severe they cannot function "normally" on a day-to-day basis. For individuals with severe tinnitus, Associated Audiologists has several specialists with advanced

"Your ears aren't  
supposed to ring.  
If they do, your body  
is trying to tell you something,  
and you should listen to it."

— Tim Steele, Ph.D., FAAA  
President, Associated Audiologists

training and expertise in this field, including Laura Flowers, Au.D., FAAA, Tinnitus and Sound Sensitivity manager.

"If you don't have a hearing loss or a hearing aid doesn't provide sufficient relief, we have other sound therapy options available," Dr. Flowers said. "But probably most important, you don't have to live with tinnitus.

If you feel like you need help, you probably do."

Dr. Steele added, "I would encourage anyone who has ringing in their ears to schedule a comprehensive hearing evaluation with a doctoral-level audiologist. This the first step in identifying tinnitus and treating the problem."



**If your ears are ringing, schedule an appointment with your audiologist.**



# Hearing Your Best

## STAFF NEWS

### **Congratulations Dr. Jacobson!**

**Dana Jacobson, Au.D., FAAA**, our Overland Park Clinic manager, was honored recently by the Overland Park South Rotary Club as a Paul Harris Fellow. The award is given to a member of the club that has significantly contributed to achieving the club's goals through the selfless giving of their time, talent and/or treasure. Past recipients from Associated Audiologists have included our president, Tim Steele, Ph.D., FAAA, and retired founder, Jim Wise.



### **Retiree Update**

**Larry Ruder** retired from Associated Audiologists approximately two years ago, but he is staying busier than ever! Larry and his wife, Ginny, are enjoying traveling, recently returning from a cruise to England. They also spend time with their grandchildren at sporting activities. Larry serves as a volunteer marshal at the Overland Park Golf Course where he also plays, and Ginny enjoys playing bridge.



### **Audiologists Attend Tinnitus Practitioners Workshop**

**Sam Gillespie, Au.D., FAAA**, Manhattan Senior Audiologist, and **Susan Smittkamp, Au.D., Ph.D., FAAA**, Tinnitus



Dr. Gillespie



Dr. Smittkamp

and Sound Sensitivity Specialist, recently attended a workshop with the Tinnitus Practitioners Association to learn more about the diagnostic tools and treatment techniques available to assist our patients diagnosed with tinnitus and sound sensitivity.

### **Audiologists Expand Coverage**

**Danielle Dorner, Au.D., FAAA**, Vestibular Audiologist, is now seeing patients two days a week at our Northland Clinic, and **David Paul, Au.D.**, is seeing patients once a week at our Leavenworth Clinic. Dr. Dorner also sees pediatric vestibular patients.



Dr. Dorner



Dr. Paul

### **Happy Anniversary Dr. Nissen!**

Happy anniversary to **Dave Nissen, Au.D., FAAA**, our Prairie Village Clinic manager. Dr. Nissen is celebrating 18 years with Associated Audiologists this summer and is an invaluable member of our staff whose work has been critical to the success of our practice. Be sure to say "congratulations" the next time you are in our Prairie Village Clinic.



Dr. Nissen

## New Technology

If your hearing aids are four to five years old or older, talk with your audiologist about how the latest hearing aid technology could improve your quality of life! There have been tremendous improvements in technology in the past two to three years that can afford noticeable benefits to many patients. In addition, most hearing aid technology costs less today than four to five years ago. There are also more affordable hearing aid options than ever before for anyone with a limited budget.



## Leave Early, Arrive on Time

Please be sure to allow extra time to travel to your appointment as significant road construction is affecting many of our clinics.

If you are unable to make your scheduled appointment, please let us know so that we can help another patient.



## CLINIC CORNER

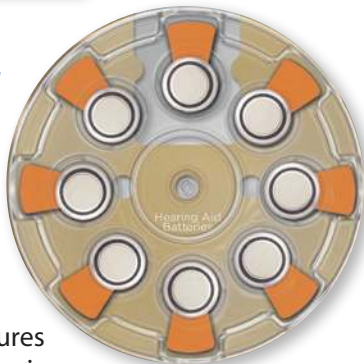
### Question:

*How can I make my hearing aid batteries last longer?*

### Answer:

Battery life varies greatly depending on the battery manufacturer's quality, size of batteries and the hearing aid features you use. Hearing aids, especially devices with more sophisticated features, do require more power, and often patients find themselves replacing their batteries more often. In addition, if your hearing aids use smaller batteries, the battery life may be shorter.

Other factors that can affect battery life include how much you wear your hearing aids, the settings you use when wearing them (wireless/Bluetooth features and tinnitus sound generators use more power, for example), and the conditions you use them in, such as humidity, heat and altitude.



## POWER UP!

If you're reading this newsletter, you can purchase batteries for your hearing aids **50 percent off!**

At Associated Audiologists, we sell a professional line of batteries that are less costly than most over-the-counter batteries purchased in retail stores. Talk with your audiologist or a member of our staff today about our Power One and Ray-o-Vac Proline professional batteries.

## Hearing Aid Battery Do's and Don'ts

- ▶ Do purchase a professional-grade, high-quality battery. There are true differences that can affect the performance of your hearing aids. Associated Audiologists only carries professional batteries.
- ▶ Do remove the sticker and expose them to the air for at least 60 seconds before putting them in your hearing aid. This charges the battery and can help you get 25 to 30 percent longer life from your batteries.
- ▶ Do turn your hearing aids off at night, and when not in use.
- ▶ Do open the battery door completely to allow contacts to stay dry.
- ▶ Do store batteries at room temperature.
- ▶ Do purchase an inexpensive battery tester. This is a good way to check your hearing aid battery's function.
- ▶ Do keep spare batteries with you!
- ▶ Don't store batteries in the refrigerator.
- ▶ Don't store batteries in direct sunlight or heat.
- ▶ Don't store your batteries near magnets. The magnetic field can drain the battery power.



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about hearing  
and balance  
health from your  
audiologist.

## Hearing Your Best

### Associated Audiologists Sponsors 2016 Orchestra on the Oregon Trail!

Associated Audiologists is proud to sponsor the 2016 Orchestra on the Oregon Trail, an all-day experience with music and events for all ages **Sunday, Sept. 4** at Alcove Spring Historic Park, located six miles south of Marysville, Kan.

Alcove Spring was the stopping place for many wagon trains that traveled the trail. The Topeka Symphony Orchestra and the natural wonder of Alcove Spring will combine as a tribute to a wilderness traversed by the pioneers.

As part of their 71st season, the Topeka Symphony Orchestra will perform songs focused on a "Symphony of the Land." Gates open at 1 p.m., and the orchestra will perform on the main stage at 6 p.m.

**For more information, visit <https://ooot.org> or call 785-562-3101.**



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