

Chili Magazine

*More Power
More Understanding
More Reliability
More Life!*

**Meet courageous people
whose stories will move and
inspire you!**

Get Connected

**Wirelessly
to Modern Life**



oticon
PEOPLE FIRST

Contents

03 Editor's note

04 On the Road to a Fun-Filled Life

"Biker Girl" refuses to let hearing loss put the brakes on her on-the-go lifestyle

05 Need for Speed, Need to Achieve...

Fast cars and fast-track to success drive a determined guy to make a difference

07 Sharing Life's Challenges and Joys

A little ingenuity and a lot of love provide the inspiration for a life-long partnership



09 The Other Side

Sharing life's challenges and joys with a partner with severe hearing loss

11 Oticon Chili

Oticon's newest super power instrument is strong on power and reliability

13 Oticon ConnectLine

Get connected to modern life - wirelessly!



Søren Nielsen
President, Oticon



Editor's note

At Oticon, we know that people with severe to profound hearing loss need dedicated, powerful solutions that address their special need for power and reliability. We continually look for newer, better and more innovative solutions that will increase the ability of people with extreme hearing loss to hear and understand, to communicate and participate in whatever life brings their way. Our starting point is always People First. And that is where we began in developing our newest super power instrument - by immersing ourselves in the everyday world of people with severe to profound hearing loss.

Thanks to a group of generous individuals who opened their homes to us, we had an unprecedented opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of people with severe to profound hearing loss and the family and friends who make up their social networks. Again and again, we heard the concerns, the pressures and the frustrations of living with extreme hearing loss. *"I miss out on a lot", "I am always the last to know!", "I don't know anyone in the same situation as me", "I avoid the phone and that cuts me off from family and friends"* are just some examples.

However, we have also met their courage and determination to live life to the fullest in spite of their hearing loss. In this publication, you will meet people who have found ways to accomplish, to succeed and to contribute to their families, their communities and their co-workers.

The results of this close cooperation gave us the knowledge and insight needed to develop a hearing solution that offers more power, more performance and more peace of mind than any other solution in the super power category.

In this magazine, we invite you to meet our newest innovation, Oticon Chili, and to hear the stories of Doreen, Kenneth, Eric and Judy who so willingly shared their everyday challenges and joys with us. We believe you will be as inspired by their stories as we are.

Enjoy the reading,



***“Deal with it, get on with it
- figure out a different way”***

On the Road to a Fun-Filled Life!



Doreen Koffman

I'm not your typical "biker chick" but I love to motor-bike with my boyfriend, Larry. We travel all over the country, driving for long weekends up the East Coast to New England and Canada and for longer trips out west to beautiful scenic areas where the road stretches out for miles. I wear hearing aids. So when I gear up for my trips, I wrap a scarf around my hearing aids to hold them in place before I pull on my helmet. Then we're off!

I was diagnosed with severe hearing loss at age three. I'm 37 now and I'm never without my hearing aids. I rely on them to keep me connected to my active life. I have a pool at home and love when friends come over. I don't want to miss a word of the conversation. Of course, I can't jump in the pool with everyone unless I take off my hearing aids. I would love to swim, especially on warm, sunny days but since I have to choose, I'm happy to stay on the deck and socialise.

I've always been taught that you don't wear your hearing aids in situations where you might sweat or get moisture on them. I was reluctant to join a gym because without my hearing aids, I wouldn't be able to hear anything that was said. Luckily, I've found a solution - a Wii system that lets me get the exercise I need at home with games like Ski Jump and Golf.

When I finally sit down to watch TV at the end of the day, I absolutely love THE FIRST 48, a television show that follows real life detectives as they race against time to find the suspect. It's fast-paced and exciting -

just the kind of relaxation you'd expect for someone like me who always likes to be on the go.

I have a BA degree in Communications and I put that to good use in my work as a licensing administrator. My day is spent talking to people on the phone and in person. If I don't have hearing aids that do what I need them to do, I can't answer the phone, I can't talk to people, I can't hear anybody - I'm deaf. Reliability is extremely important to me.

I never thought I would end up in a "desk job" but I actually find my days are busy, productive and just right for a high energy person like me. And I work with a great group of people. We enjoy getting together after work at a local club. It's usually crowded and everyone is yelling to be heard over the music and the noise. Most of the time my friends remember that they need to look at me when they're speaking and make an extra effort to get my attention. Even so, I sometimes miss things. But never enough to make me miss out on a good time!

I don't know if I'm a very positive person or if after so many years, I'm just used to having a hearing loss. I know I can't change my situation. I tell myself, "Deal with it, get on with it - figure out a different way." Even if I try very hard, I can't think of a time that I haven't been able to find a way to keep my life active, engaged and filled with friends.

Need for Speed, Need to Achieve...



Kenneth Cassidy

The Corvette has always been my dream car. When I was growing up my father told me, "Work hard and your dreams will come true." And I have. I am 37 years old and I've already owned three Corvettes and participate in motor sports racing. The desire to stretch myself, to test my limits and to go as far as I can go is a gift from my parents. I've applied the advice my father gave me to every dream I've ever had.

I was born with a severe hearing loss. School was difficult for me. I always seemed to be missing out on things. I was always the last to know. I got used to it, but I didn't like it. I would sit in the front row so I could see my teachers and read their lips. But they would walk around the classroom and I'd miss part of the lesson. I couldn't hear the announcements on the school's public address system. Some mornings, when schedules changed, I'd go to my first class and I'd be in the wrong classroom. I didn't date in high school. I was afraid of the phone. I knew I wouldn't be able to call a girl and ask for a date.

I didn't feel sorry for myself. I excelled in sports and that gave me a lot of confidence. As part of an all-state wrestling team, I set a record by pinning my opponent in 7 seconds, a record I still hold today. I also set a record for weight lifting. I loved the gym. It was a place where I could focus on my sport or my body building and not worry about the challenges of communicating.

Today, communication is still challenging for me. I need people to acknowledge that I have a disability and make accommodations for my hearing loss.

They need to look at me when they are talking so I can read their lips. When I go out to dinner with my partner, Ellen, and other couples, I miss a lot of the conversation. People turn their heads and I hear nothing. Ellen needs to "de-brief" me on the news when we get home. When Ellen and I are driving, I try to squeeze in a few seconds of conversation while we are waiting at a stop light. As soon as the light turns green, I have to turn my attention back to the road and the conversation ends - even if I haven't completed my sentence. That can be pretty frustrating.

I attended Rochester Institute of Technology, the world's largest technological college for deaf and hard-of-hearing students. The education and training I received at RIT opened many doors for me. I became a top-notch production machinist, making intricate medical devices, such as titanium discs for spinal column surgery.

As a kid, I loved action movies where the hero overcame enormous challenges and saved the world.

Action heroes like James Bond, Rambo and Rocky became my role models. I wanted to be a role model for other people who struggle with their own challenges. I finally had that opportunity at my job. I would often oversee the work of unskilled production line workers, many of whom are immigrants. My boss told me to just monitor them on the specific task they had to perform and not to try to teach them anything more. It would be a waste of time. It made me think back to attitudes I'm sure people had about me. "How can a deaf guy do all these things?" I watch and I learn. I knew others could do the same thing if they were given a chance. In the end, I proved to my boss that he was wrong - the unskilled workers became skilled. It gave me a great feeling of satisfaction to know I had helped them to achieve more than they - or anyone else - thought they could. I realise that that's the way my parents probably feel about me. I am the person I am today because of their unconditional love and support.



"They need to look at me when they are talking so I can read their lips"

Sharing Life's Challenges and Joys



"My biggest ally has been my wife, Judy"

Eric Mayer

I want to enjoy my family, my friends, my grandchildren and much, much more. I decided many years ago that I was not going to let my severe hearing loss keep me from living the kind of life I wanted. And it hasn't. For more than 40 years, my biggest ally has been my wife, Judy. I couldn't have done as much as I have in my life without her and I've done a lot.

I lost my hearing as a young adult. I knew early on that I had to take control of my situation to survive in my job and to live the kind of life I wanted. I am a licensed electrician and a licensed water treatment plant operator. For many years, I was the superintendent of the largest water treatment facility in the state. It was a job with a lot of responsibility. I had 73 people reporting to me and the work we did ensured that the 4.5 million people in our district had clean drinking water.

I adapted my work environment to accommodate my

needs. I wired my office so I could talk easily on the phone. With some inspiration from Judy, I rigged a device that illuminated a light on my desk that signalled when someone was standing in the doorway of my office so I wouldn't be startled.

I like technology. I was never afraid to try the newest hearing aids or assistive devices. Today, I use two different types of neck loops. They let me listen to my MP3 player, tune in to the TV audio and talk on the phone. I enjoy music a lot. I set up my basement with my own high fidelity stereo system. I can turn up the volume as loud as I want and rock and roll without bothering anybody. I joke that I'm almost afraid the cabinets will rattle and the glasses vibrate. Of course, I'm much too conscious of my hearing health to really blast my music that much!

We enjoy going out, especially to dinner. Our favourite

places are the quieter restaurants but we'll go anywhere if it means getting together with our good friends. Judy always requests a table in the corner or away from small children and that makes it easier for me. But the truth is, sometimes I get so exhausted trying to decipher conversation that I can't wait to leave. It gets to the point that by the end of dinner I've had it.

I also have difficulty communicating with my two granddaughters, Nicole and Emily. They speak with very soft, high-pitched voices. On the phone I can hear them say "Happy Birthday, Grandpa!" but not much more. They live a few hours away so I keep in touch with them and my daughter using Skype on my computer. I can hear them better and can see them too. It's fun because we tend to have more meaningful conversations and they can show me school projects or model new dresses.

Despite all of the challenges, Judy and I manage to have good times together. We enjoy walking by the ocean and listening to the sea gulls and the surf. There are times that I get so emotional with the beauty of it, I have to stop and listen intently for a few minutes. Those are very good times.

I'm a person who can't wait for change. If my audiologist says she has a new hearing instrument or a new device that might work for me, I say, "Me try something? Absolutely!" I'm optimistic that something will come along that will improve my ability to do what I want to do in life in spite of my hearing loss. I'm not only optimistic, I have hope. And while I'm waiting for that next new technological breakthrough, Judy and I are having a wonderful life.



The Other Side



*“Even simple introductions
can be awkward”*

Judy Mayer

I don't think anyone can really understand what it is like not to be able to have a normal conversation with a partner unless they have experienced it. People know that Eric has a severe hearing loss and they are careful when speaking with him for the time they are with us. But they can't fully understand the extent to which hearing loss impacts our communication and our life.

There is a sense of loneliness and isolation that someone in my situation feels. After 25 years, more than

half of our married life, I still miss spontaneous conversation, especially personal and intimate conversation. I could never have a personal conversation with Eric in a restaurant, for example. I can't speak quietly to share a private thought because he won't be able to understand me. I would have wanted that. It isn't that I can't accept this. But there is a feeling of sadness – a sense of loss – for part of my relationship with my husband and for my daughter who has also been impacted by the hearing loss. Phone conversations with her father have, at times, been difficult.

I have normal hearing. I don't like to deal with long periods of silence. For Eric, background noise can be annoying and tiring. But the long silences make me feel cut off and locked in a silent world as well.

It seems that I always need to clarify things. My concern is that Eric will misunderstand instructions. If the doctor is talking about medication, Eric may not hear what to take or how to take it.

He also tends to miss parts of conversation and I fill in the gaps. If we are in a group of friends or a family celebration, it is almost impossible for Eric to be part of the conversation. I always look to read his expression and then repeat what he missed. Many times I look over and see him smiling and nodding and I know that he can't understand or follow the conversation. He is just being polite. I also have to take phone calls and repeat the information to be sure Eric understands. This can be hard for me, especially if the call has to do with a house project or problem that I'm unfamiliar with.

I think this constant vigilance, this feeling that I need to be his ears, has taken some joy out of social situations for me. Even simple introductions can be awkward. I can't completely relax and enjoy myself. There are places we don't go, occasions we pass on because they would be more problematic than the enjoyment we might get from attending. It seems unfair to put Eric in that type of situation.

Eric's well being is another concern. I feel the need to protect him from situations where he needs to hear to

be safe. In many areas, Eric functions very well. He's very self-sufficient. He enjoys his computers, electronic projects, games and music. But once when I was at a conference, there was a gas leak and the police evacuated the neighbourhood. Eric didn't hear the warning. Thankfully, a neighbour insisted that the police go back and try to reach him one more time. Those are the kinds of situations that worry me.

My greatest fear is that Eric will lose his hearing to the degree that nothing will help him. We won't be able to communicate at all. That's an anxiety we both share.

When this journey began, we didn't have anyone to turn to for advice or encouragement. There was no one to say, "It's ok, people get through this." Perhaps by sharing our story we can give hope and support to other people.

In some ways, the difficulties that we have gone through have also been opportunities for more closeness. Each one makes you a little stronger. You come to rely on each other a little more. Eric always says, "I never could have done it without you" and I feel the same about him. This challenge has drawn us closer. We rely on simple ways to communicate – a touch, a gesture, a look of understanding or holding hands to let him know I am there.

Eric means everything to me. If I could give him my ears I would. Nothing would make me happier than to see him hear.

Oticon Chili - based on insights, designed for everyday challenges



To build the next generation of super power instruments, we called upon Oticon's considerable experience developing innovative solutions for power users and the extensive resources of the world-renowned Eriksholm Research Centre.

We recognised early on that helping power users to hear speech better was not enough. Our goal was an ambitious one: To empower people with severe to profound hearing loss to live active, vital lives. To achieve this goal we needed to understand the challenges power users face every day.

The result is new Oticon Chili, an innovation in super power instruments that combines groundbreaking new approaches in audiology, connectivity and reliability. Chili is much more than super-powered. It is a new way forward in meeting the particular needs of people with greater hearing loss. Chili's advanced capabilities will empower you to interact more naturally and participate more actively in all that life has in store for you.

A new way to solve a well known challenge

The ability to understand speech is essential for a super power user. In our research, a power user told us: "When I hear a full sentence I 'cut and paste' the words I understand to try to figure out the full meaning of what was said." Helping you to not just hear but to make sense of the sounds you hear - clear, undistorted speech - is the challenge we addressed with Oticon Chili's new Speech Guard.

"Speech Guard" is a unique amplification technique that helps you maximise audibility and speech recognition without the jumble and distortion you might encounter with even the most advanced hearing aids available today. Speech Guard provides a clear and natural signal, reducing the distortion and increasing the ability to follow conversations, even in more complex environments where noise or more voices are competing for your attention.

Until today super power instruments have had to prioritise between the ability to provide comfortable loud-enough amplification versus secure to protect the user from sounds that are too loud or too soft.

With Oticon Chili it is not a matter of choosing one or the other. The new amplification can do both. Oticon Chili can focus on making the speech you hear as comfortable and clear as possible - thereby utilising the hearing you have in the most optimal way.

Understanding speech in noisy surroundings such as in a restaurant is a challenge. Oticon Chili addresses this challenge with a noise reduction system that automatically maximises speech understanding by turning up speech on the side where speech needs to be louder while attenuating competing noise on the opposite side. This gives you the help you need to listen successfully in a variety of noisy environments.

Quality and reliability you can count on

For super power users, reliability is much more than a practical issue. You depend on your hearing instruments to connect you to the life you want to live, to enable you to "dare to do the things I like!" With Chili, you can rely on your hearing instruments to stand up to the physical challenges of everyday life.

Chili is designed inside and out with double protection against damage from moisture, sweat, dirt and shocks. Every aspect of reliability has been rigorously tested and proven.

The unique shock-absorbing construction of Chili's electronic components prevents breakage should your hearing instruments be dropped or fall off the ear. The high-tech water repellent coating keeps out moisture and dirt and the battery door is secured against water and sweat that might trickle down the instrument. Inside, Chili's electronic parts are permanently sealed with a deep coating that repels water, moisture and dirt.

Ideal for active lifestyles, Chili is designed for any power user who demands 24/7 reliability!



Simple, effortless connection to the sounds of modern life



"When the phone rings, I pick it up and hand it to my wife to talk - I can't hear a thing."

"There is no such thing as a 'private' conversation on the phone for me. I have to talk on a speaker phone or I can't hear anything that the caller is saying."

"I can never follow the plot line on TV shows. I just can't follow the jokes or fast chatter of most TV programs."

People with severe to profound hearing loss will be the first to agree that some situations - such as watching TV and talking on landline or mobile phones - can be a challenge even with the most advanced hearing instruments.

Understanding the difficulties

Enjoying TV can be especially problematic for people who wear hearing instruments. The TV audio must travel across the room to them and as the sound travels, it is interrupted by other noises in the room. To compensate, people with hearing loss often turn the

volume up. This is fine when watching TV alone, but when others are in the room, the loud volume can become a recurring source of frustration for many families. Staying connected by phone is another challenge that people with extreme hearing loss encounter on a daily basis. Some resort to removing their hearing aids which can be a complicated process for people who use super power hearing instruments. Others try to hold the phone at awkward angles from their ears to minimise whistling and feedback. Still others talk only on speaker phones which limits phone use in the office or other public situations.



Wireless connectivity opens a world of possibilities

Oticon created ConnectLine, a new wireless system, to remove the technical barriers and poor sound quality experienced in these difficult situations by sending audio from TVs and phones directly to the user's hearing instruments. With just the push of a button on the Streamer companion device, the ConnectLine system connects wirelessly and seamlessly to the TV or a mobile or landline phone. Transitions between phone or TV functions are equally easy with just a touch of a button. ConnectLine allows you to get the most out of your hearing instruments with the ease and comfort you are looking for. With ConnectLine, you will experience better connections in your life - with people, information and entertainment.

ConnectLine TV Adaptor: Tuning in to clear audio

You can enjoy high quality sound with new freedom. Relax and hear the score, get the news and never miss a punch line. Using the Streamer as a remote control, you simply adjust the volume to your preferred listening level and let your family listen at theirs. The ConnectLine TV Adaptor connects easily to the audio output of any TV. There are no additional gadgets or loop installations required, just excellent, echo-free sound directly in both ears at the push of a button.

ConnectLine Phone Adaptor: Answering your need

The ConnectLine Phone adaptor turns your landline phone into a wireless phone. The small adaptor connects easily to your existing phone and does not interfere with the ability of other household members to use the landline phone as usual. There is no need to run for the phone or worry about feedback and whistling because you can answer your phone hands-free with just a touch of a button on your Oticon Streamer. The Streamer device also connects wirelessly to

mobile phones. With just the touch of a button on the Streamer, your hearing instruments become a hands-free headset. A microphone on the Streamer picks up your voice so you don't even have to reach for your mobile phone to complete the call.

A system that works for you and your life

One of the greatest benefits of the ConnectLine system is the fact that it is a complete system. From just one intuitive device you are in control of all your communication and entertainment. Rather than juggle an assortment of different assistive devices that may not be compatible, the ConnectLine components interact seamlessly and effortlessly. For example, when you are watching TV and a call comes in, the ConnectLine system lets you know immediately. You will hear the phone ringing in your hearing instruments, and see the Phone button flash on your Streamer. When you push the button to take the call, the system automatically mutes the TV. When you press the button to end the call, the TV sound automatically comes back.



People First

People First is our promise
to empower people
to communicate freely,
interact naturally and
participate actively