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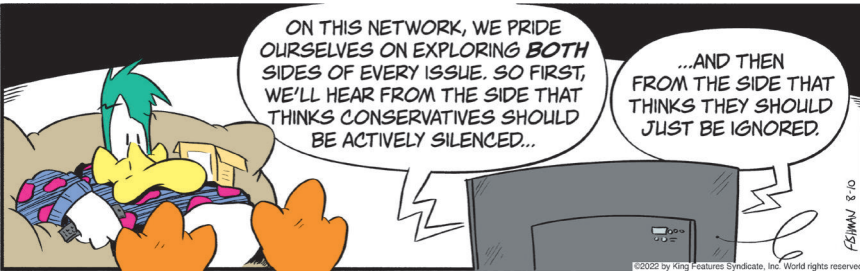
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By Loren Fishman



SUNDAY, LOCAL COMMENTARY | MONDAY, TUESDAY, THURSDAY & FRIDAY, POLITICAL OPINION | WEDNESDAY, HEALTH & WELLNESS ADVICE | SATURDAY, POSITIVE LIVING

A VIEW FROM VILLAGES HEALTH

For those living with tinnitus, it seems impossible to remember life without all the noise in your ears (or head). At first, this might not seem like a serious problem.



Al Turri

COMMENTARY

In fact, it may remind you of when you went to a concert and came home, and your ears would ring for a couple of days. Now you are getting older and that tinnitus is most certainly a sign that there is significant damage to your hearing system.

Diagnosing and treating tinnitus is a complex process and many people are told nothing can be done to treat it. As director of audiology, I and my team of audiologists at the Villages Health have helped reduce tinnitus suffering in nearly 80% of patients we work with.

Joseph C., a resident of The

Villages and one of my many patients, knows from personal experience the stress, anxiety and lack of sleep that came with his tinnitus.

Several years back, Joseph first noticed his tinnitus only at night, or when the house was really quiet. Over time, however, he started to notice it more and more, and eventually it would get in the way of his ability to hear others. He describes what finally brought him to our office: “I was sick of the ringing in my head, and I was becoming less tolerable to be around at home. I was so desperate, but nothing seemed to work.”

Joseph and his wife knew something had to change or things would only get worse. Once they made the decision for Joseph to seek treatment with The Villages Health Audiology Department, they instantly knew he was in good hands.

Joseph and his wife met with me for nearly an hour to talk about his experiences, how his tinnitus was impacting him and everybody around him. They also discussed Joseph’s goals for treatment.

Once Joseph got through all the testing, the diagnosis was clear. Joseph, like over 90% of people with tinnitus, had been suffering with damage to his hearing system and this was the root cause of his ringing. Damage to the ears can compromise the neural connections from ear to brain and cause a significant increase in neural activity in higher brain centers, which the person then perceives as tinnitus.

Joseph and his family were told that once he started treatment, it could take his brain anywhere from a few weeks to six months to adapt and notice relief from his tinnitus.

Some patients get a little anxious when they hear that timetable for recovery, but I believe it is important that patients have realistic expectations for treatment. Every patient is looking to live a ring-free life as quickly as possible and that is our goal with every patient, but the brain can take time to rewire and adapt before it can silence the tinnitus.

Once Joseph began his treatment, he instantly knew he was on the road to recovery. He knew treatment would not

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be an overnight success, so he went about his daily life as a retired computer programmer, husband and avid golfer.

Patience paid off for Joseph, and after his first 60 days of treatment, he is now living a tinnitus-free life, sleeping better, hearing better and is much more pleasant to be around at home.

I emphasize that cases like Joseph’s are all too common. With the right diagnosis and proper treatment program,

nearly 8 in 10 people with tinnitus can experience significant relief from the annoying sounds in their head.

In addition to Team Audiology that treats tinnitus directly, The Villages Health, psychologist, Dr. Lucy Rathier, utilizes treatments aimed at relieving the annoyance of tinnitus. If you are reading this article, likely you have been living with tinnitus for a long time. Family and friends may not understand your experience of tinnitus because “you look fine.”

According to Rathier, this may negatively affect your relationships and reduce your participation in social activities such as dining. Rathier offers a nine session Tinnitus Coping Skills-Program that incorporates relaxation, mindfulness and stress management strategies.

You do not need to be a patient of The Villages Health to seek treatment with me or to enroll in Rathier’s nine-session Tinnitus Coping Skills Program. For more information, call 352-674-1779.

Dr. Al Turri is director of audiology at The Villages Health.



Aviv Clinics
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August Panel
New Treatment Options for Traumatic Brain Injury and Concussion



Fore! Heads up! Take cover!

Accidents that cause a bump to the head can happen in many daily situations. The brain is one of the most delicate organs in the body and even a small blow to the head can result in brain injury. Join Aviv Clinics for an interactive panel discussion on the impacts of traumatic brain injuries and concussion. Find out how the Aviv Medical Program can improve long-term symptoms.

August 11
9:30-11A.M.
(Live & Virtual)

The Waterfront Inn

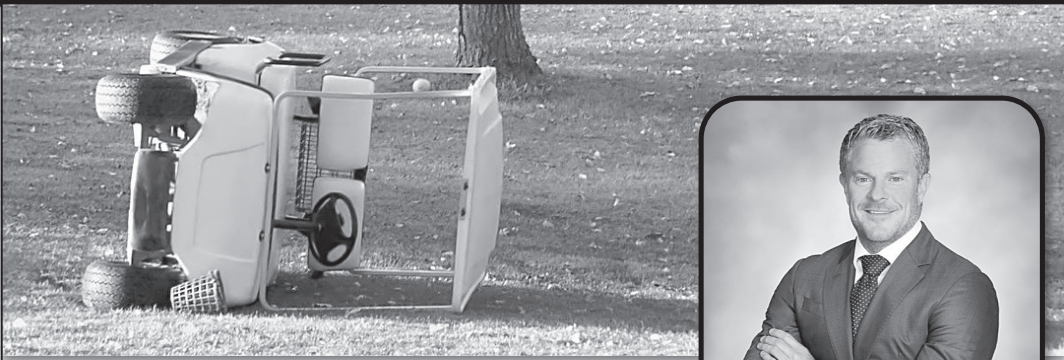
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These events will adhere to current CDC and The Villages® Community local guidelines.

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