



**Crestview resident Kathy Ferris believes the mystery noise she is hearing is coming from a stereo in her neighborhood.**

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## Noise disturbing woman's peace

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CRESTVIEW—For the last six months, Kathy Ferris hasn't been able to get rid of a nearly constant thumping in her house.

Just about every day, she has heard what sounds like a loud booming stereo, but she can't find where it is coming from. In addition, not everyone can hear what Ferris hears.

Ferris has searched her neighborhood. The problem, she said, is that the noise is subsonic and only a small percentage of the population can hear the problem.

"I feel it smacking me in the chest all the time," she said. "My personality has changed. I can't stand to live here. People shouldn't have to live like this."

Several of her neighbors have heard the sound.

"I can hear it when I'm out at night," said neighbor Melanie Cisco. "You can hear and you can feel it, and you don't know where it's coming from.... My kids have heard it in their rooms."

Jackie Baumgardner has heard it in her daughter's closet.

But Cisco said her ears aren't as sensitive as Ferris', and that she can't hear the sound when she's inside her house and the television, air conditioning and radio are all on.

Ferris has called the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office many times about the issue, but none of the deputies has been able to hear the suspect sound.

"The big problem we've got is that none of us can hear it," said Maj. Larry Donaldson. "I've been out there. I can't hear it. Without being able to hear it, I don't know what you do."

Donaldson said he is sympathetic to Ferris' plight but added that the police are hamstrung until they can determine if someone is breaking the law by causing too much noise.

Ferris has enlisted the help of NoiseOFF, which bills itself as "the citizens coalition against noise pollution." The organization, formed in 2004, has sent a letter to the Sheriff's Office prodding him to investigate.

The letter notes that "people who are not particularly sensitive to low frequency noise may not fully appreciate the suffering it causes." The letter goes on to state that women seem to be more susceptible to the sounds.

Ferris said she has never experienced anything quite what's happened to her the last six months. She's lived in her house for about 10 years and also lived around the country with her husband, who is in the Air Force.

"I've been around bombs, airplanes and helicopters without something happening," Ferris said.

Ferris has seen an audiologist. She said she's been diagnosed with hyperacusis, which means she hears things at a higher volume than most people. The noise has bothered her so much that she sometimes has to take sleeping pills to fall asleep and has considered moving.

NoiseOFF says noise pollution affects more than 16 million people in the country.

Donaldson said noise issues would become more of a factor as Crestview expands into a metro area.

"In the north county area, as the population grows people are going to experience things that were not experienced in the past," Donaldson said.

But Ferris said she wants to stay in her home and have someone find the suspect sound and make it go away.

"I'd like to stay here," Ferris said. "I just want a little help to turn that stereo off."

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