



# Canadian Hard of Hearing Association

## North Shore Branch

Published four times a year on the 15th of March, June, September and December by CHHA – North Shore Branch, 600 West Queens Road, North Vancouver, B.C. V7N 2L3.  
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Editor: Hugh Hetherington      Issue 62 September 2008

## Mountain Ear

### President's Message

#### There is Much More to Hearing Loss Than Meets the Ears.



*"After living with a severe hearing loss for 36 years, what more could I possibly need to know about how to manage with this disability? I'm coping just fine".*

Those were my thoughts when my husband showed me an ad for the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association's upcoming meeting in North Vancouver. Reluctantly I attended

the meeting, thinking I'd make my husband happy by going once.

That was ten years ago, and now, as president of the North Shore Branch, I am still learning! From that first meeting, where I heard the speaker through my T-switch for the first time, to recent encounters with others who have had a cochlear implant, I am continually learning about coping with hearing loss. It has been a great pleasure to pass on these valuable strategies to others in our community.

Hearing loss is a disability that often needs much more than simply putting on a hearing aid. The North Shore Branch of the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association is our community's resource for that "much more" component of hearing loss. What do

you need to do to access this "much more" component? Our North Shore Branch offers a number of opportunities to learn about your hearing loss, coping skills and what the latest developments are in the hearing aid and assistive device market.

Commencing again in September we have our popular "Sound Advice" drop-in workshop on the 1<sup>st</sup> Friday of each month taking place at the West Vancouver Seniors' Activity Centre from 10:00 AM until noon.

On September 22<sup>nd</sup> at 7:00 PM our Branch is hold-

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### CHHA – North Shore Branch Annual General Meeting

**Monday, September 22, 2008 Time: 7:00 PM**

Place: The Summerhill  
135 West 15<sup>th</sup> Street  
North Vancouver

**Guest Speaker: Ben Fernee, Audiologist  
Sonus Hearing Clinic**

**Topic:  
Current Developments in Hearing Aid  
Technology**

Meetings are Hearing and Wheelchair Accessible

Refreshments will be served

Members of the public welcome

No Admission Charge



ing its Annual General Meeting. At this meeting our guest speaker will be Ben Fernee, Audiologist from Sonus, Inc. who will be speaking on the latest Hearing aid products on the market.

In addition, our Managing Your Hearing Loss Course for 2008 commences on Monday, October 6<sup>th</sup> and runs for eight Mondays from 1:00 PM to 3:30 PM (Thanksgiving day excluded). Registration is now open at the West Vancouver Seniors' Activity Centre. You can register by dropping in to the Seniors' Centre or by calling 604-925-7280.

We look forward to seeing you at one of our meetings or workshops. Your hearing family and friends are more than welcome at our meetings. In fact, bringing them along will help them understand their part in living with your hearing loss. After all, they make up the other half of the communication process.

Perhaps you have been coming to our meetings. Are you keeping it a secret? Please invite the neighbor or friend who is having trouble hearing lately. Or even the person you noticed in the grocery store who is wearing hearing aids. We welcome everyone; they do not need to be a member to attend our meetings.

You can also visit our website at [www.chha-nsb.com](http://www.chha-nsb.com) where you will find much more information about our North Shore Branch.

Till Next Time,

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## Social Service Grants

**CHHA – North Shore Branch acknowledges with thanks the following grants and donations**

**District of North Vancouver \$1100**

**City of North Vancouver \$1100**

**District of West Vancouver \$ 600**

**We also gratefully acknowledge generous donations from the Howe Sound Lions Club, West Vancouver Kiwanis Club, and the Telus Volunteer Involvement Program**

## June Meeting

By Hugh Hetherington.

The North Shore Branch held its Summer meeting on June 16<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 PM at the Summerhill in North Vancouver. Our special guest speaker for the evening was Michael Currie from the Vancouver Branch. Michael is a cochlear implant recipient and spoke to us on the subject of Cochlear Implants – What Happens When Hearing Aids are No Longer Enough.



Michael Currie was born with a profound bilateral hearing loss and grew up wearing hearing aids. Throughout elementary school he used an FM system in order to hear the teacher. By the time he got to college, hearing aids were no longer working for him. After graduation, he went through the cochlear implant program and

was implanted in 2001 at age 25. He is currently working as a computer technician and taking courses at UBC part-time and is working towards getting his Masters of Science in Audiology degree.

Michael's outcome with the cochlear implant was excellent and he now has a speech recognition score with sentences of 98% with no lipreading. From my own experience in talking with Michael, you would hardly know he had a hearing loss.

In his talk, Michael described the parts of the ear and how with sensorineural hearing loss the hair cells are missing or damaged. It is this type of hearing loss that can be helped with a cochlear implant. He further described how the implant bypasses the absent or damaged hair cells and stimulates the auditory nerve directly through the application of an electrical current. This process converts the acoustic information into an electrical pattern interpreted by the brain as sound.

The cochlear implant consists of two parts. (1) The

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implant component is surgically implanted just behind the ear and the attached electrode is threaded through the cochlea making contact with the auditory nerve. (2) The sound processor, is a device worn behind the ear that captures sound from the environment and processes it into digital information and transmits it to the implant.

To be a candidate for a cochlear implant, an adult must have a profound hearing loss in both ears and experience very limited benefit from hearing aids. They must also be healthy enough to undergo a surgical procedure. Following the test for candidacy, the person must decide to undergo the surgery, following which, the incision will take from 3 to 6 weeks to heal. Next comes the initial fitting with the programming of the implant. Successive programming adjustments, rehabilitation and learning to hear again follow the successful implantation.



Audience Members at June Meeting with Michael Currie

The different products are from: Cochlear Corporation; Med-El, and Advanced Bionics. The Cochlear Corporation is the primary provider used in BC.

For Cochlear implant candidates, Michael pointed out that the benefits of a cochlear implant include:

1. Potential for significantly better speech understanding than with a hearing aid.
2. Potential to be able to talk on the phone.
3. Potential to be able to appreciate music.
4. Environmental awareness and responsiveness.
5. More independence from visual clues or fam-

ily members for day to day living.

6. Reconnecting with the world of sound.
7. Reconnecting with nature.
8. Reconnecting with family and loved ones.
9. Reconnecting with a wide hearing community.

One must also consider that there is a range of outcomes and a person's potential for understanding speech clearly with an implant depends on a number of factors that include:

1. Duration of Deafness.
2. Age at which hearing loss was acquired.
3. Auditory nerve survival (this is impossible to measure beforehand)
4. Amount of hearing left prior to surgery.
5. Cognitive skills.
6. Rehabilitation effort after the implant.

Michael took a number of questions from the audience and the meeting concluded with a social time with refreshments served. Thank you, Michael for a very interesting and informative presentation.

## The Lowly Telecoil

Article reprinted from NVRC News - June 30, 2008 (Northern Virginia Resource Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Persons)

By: Cheryl Davis

The telecoil isn't new technology--but this simple and dependable hearing aid option can make the difference between tuning in or tuning out.

Hearing aids and cochlear implants can be very effective in quieter settings, but noise can interfere with a hearing device's effectiveness. For people who have a hearing loss, the sound that they want to hear (signal) needs to be significantly louder than other ambient sounds (noise) to be intelligible. Although hearing aids may have technology that reduces background noise, it often compromises the speech signal. That's why an additional assistive listening device (ALD) is so important, and the telecoil is a simple option to connect ALDs to hearing aids.

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Telecoils work by induction. A wire with a current running through it naturally gives off a magnetic field. If another wire is placed near it, the magnetic field in one wire induces a field in the other. Magnetic fields carry signals. Sometimes the information is disorganized (e.g., static), and sometimes it is organized (e.g., music or speech). Telephones and stereo speakers give off this magnetic field unless the equipment has been shielded to prevent it.



Hearing access symbol indicating there is a loop system available at the cash register location in a Curries.digital electronics store in England.

A telecoil is a small coil of wire wrapped around a metal rod. Telecoils were first put in hearing aids to assist in hearing on telephones. The user simply flips a tiny switch on the hearing aid to turn it on. When the user placed the phone speaker near the telecoil, the signal would be picked up and the hearing aid would convert it to acoustic sound waves, amplify the signal according to the individual's hearing loss, and send the new amplified sound into the ear canal. The trick is to get the best signal reception from the speaker to the hearing aid. Early hearing aids were often body worn, not the compact components worn behind or in the ear. This means that the telephone speaker would be put over the aid (wherever it was worn), not over the ear for this signal reception.

The reason why telecoils are such an exciting option is that, if a room or area is looped with an induction system, the user does not need any additional equipment besides the hearing aid to enjoy improved listening. As long as someone is speaking into the microphone attached to the system, the signal will be sent out from the loop of wire through the magnetic field. Newer induction systems come in a variety of

styles, such as free-standing small panels, chair pads, and floor mats. There is a movement in Holland/Zeeland, Michigan to loop it and other cities in Michigan and across America. For more information on this initiative, go to [www.hearingloop.org](http://www.hearingloop.org).

Even if an FM or infrared system is being used, a telecoil can be useful. For people who need more amplification, removing their hearing aids to use headphones is not a viable option. Covering the hearing aid ear molds with headphones can result in feedback. Coupling via a neckloop (a coated wire that is worn around the neck and plugged into the headphone jack on the FM or infrared receiver) prevents this. For people who don't want to be too obvious about using an assistive device (e.g., by wearing headphones in a classroom), the neckloop is a desirable alternative.



Hearing access symbol on the door of a banking establishment in England indicating there are loop systems available at the teller counters.

If you are working with someone who is preparing to purchase hearing aids, make sure he or she is aware of the inexpensive telecoil option. The consumer needs to advocate for this, as audiologists may not realize that the individual will be using ALDs. Especially in newer hearing aids and cochlear implants, the telecoil must be programmed. A great deal of confusion stems from consumers trying to use it without checking with the audiologist first to be sure that it has been activated and that it is adequately powered to provide a strong enough signal.

From PEPNet Perspectives, Spring 2008 Newsletter  
For more PEPNet Perspective newsletters: <http://www.pepnet.org/resnewslet.asp>

See editors note on the next page.

## Editors Note

The two pictures shown with the previous article – The Lowly Telecoil were sent to me by a friend in England to show that many business locations in England and Europe have loop systems installed to make their establishments more hearing accessible to their clients and customers.

The CHHA—North Shore Branch is continually working to advocate for more hearing accessibility in our own communities. Many churches and community centres on the North Shore already have induction loop systems installed. If you know of a location that is interested in installing a loop system, please have them contact the North Shore Branch at 604-926-5222.

If you are purchasing a new hearing aid please be sure to talk to your hearing professional about the benefits of having this feature included on your hearing aids.

In keeping with our theme on the telecoil and showing what other areas have done, the following article is reprinted from The Marlborough Express, New Zealand - August 11, 2008. This article describes how airports can be improved with hearing accessibility.

## Airport's audio loop sounds good for all

[Rose Daly](#) - The Marlborough Express

**ALL ABOARD:** Hearing Services Marlborough chairman Bob Taylor demonstrates the audio loop technology just installed at Blenheim Airport.

**"Calling all passengers" will be a more accurate boarding call at Blenheim Airport from now on as a new audio loop system will ensure everyone hears the announcement.**

"This brings the number of loops in Blenheim to 22," says Hearing Services Marlborough chairman Bob Taylor adding several more are being installed, including an over-the-counter loop at the Air New Zealand check-in desk which should be ready next week.

An audio loop is a wire loop attached to an amplifier. It creates a magnetic field that broadcasts sound, in a pure, undistorted form, directly to people who are



within the loop and who have a hearing aid containing a telecoil. The loop operates on a universal frequency and is also compatible with people who have cochlear implants.

Before the loop was installed, the voice broadcast over the PA system was distorted for the hearing impaired and background noise made it even harder to understand the announcements.

Blenheim Airport administration manager Angela Adye said the PA system was due to be upgraded and they had been approached several times by Hearing Services to improve the set-up.

"It was on the books to do, update the PA system, so we decided to do the loop at the same time. They suggested it would also be a good idea to install one at the check-in area, so they don't have to lean forward and struggle with background noise."

Several Blenheim churches have had loops installed as well as over-the-counter loops at the Clubs of Marlborough and district council front desk. Part of the council chambers are being refurbished and a complete audio loop is in the plan so the public can hear as well as the councillors.

Mr. Taylor said he is going to raise the supply of loops at both Blenheim funeral homes and all the local bank branches have been approached, "They've referred us to head office, so that's in hand." he said.

The Marlborough Civic Theatre is having its loop

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amplifier changed over and Mr. Taylor hopes it will be back working in four weeks. The town library is also on Mr. Taylor's list as "an essential one".

To take advantage of the new technology, those with hearing aids will need to switch to the telecoil on their devices to pick up the audio loop signal. Now there is one less excuse for missing your flight.

## Hearing Loss May Be More Widespread Than Thought

MONDAY, July 28 (HealthDay News) -- Hearing loss among American adults may be more common than previously reported, a new study says.

The researchers evaluated 1999 to 2004 survey data from 5,742 people, ages 20 to 69. From 2003 to 2004, 16.1 percent (an estimated 29 million) of American adults had speech frequency hearing loss in one (8.9 percent) or both (7.3 percent) ears, and 31 percent (an estimated 55 million) had high-frequency hearing loss (12 percent in one ear and 19 percent in both ears), the study found.

Hearing loss, especially at high frequency, was identified in 8.5 percent of people ages 20 to 29 and in 17 percent of those ages 30 to 39. Men were 5.5 times more likely than women to have hearing loss. White and Mexican-American men had the highest rates of high-frequency hearing loss and hearing loss in both ears. Blacks were 70 percent less likely than whites to have hearing loss.

"Increases in hearing loss prevalence occurred earlier among participants with smoking, noise exposure and cardiovascular risks," wrote Dr. Yuri Agrawal, of Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, and colleagues.

The findings were published in the July 28 issue of the journal *Archives of Internal Medicine*.

Extracted from an article on the BH News Group.

**CHHA—North Shore Branch Programs are funded in part by Social Service Grants from the City and District of North Vancouver and the District of West Vancouver.**

All opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association or CHHA – North Shore Branch.

## Sound Advice

Presented by:

**The Canadian Hard of Hearing Association  
North Shore Branch**

**The group meets on the first Friday of each month from 10:00 AM to 12 Noon**

(Holidays excepted) at the West Vancouver Seniors' Activity Centre's Learning Studio, 695 21st Street in West Vancouver.

**(No Meeting in July and August)**

When we meet, we discuss topics and issues dealing with hearing loss.

We look forward to seeing you there.

Bring a friend, a family member, they are welcome too.

Subjects to be addressed will include:

Technology; Coping Strategies;

Improving Relationships;

Improving Hearing Environments

**For Information call: 604-926-5222**

## Managing Your Hearing Loss Course Eight Mondays Beginning October 6, 2008

1:00 PM to 3:30 PM

**(Exception: Course will not be held on Monday, October 13, Thanksgiving Day)**

**West Vancouver Seniors' Activity Centre  
695 – 21st Street, West Vancouver**

**Course Fee \$36.75 includes Text Book  
For Registration contact West Vancouver Seniors' Activity Centre 604-925-7280**

