



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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Charitable Registration No. BN 89672 3038 RR0001

Editor: Hugh Hetherington Issue 82 September 2013

Mountain Ear

Pres Mez

By Mike Hocevar

Hugh Hetherington, Henry Romain, Lauren Cotterall, Ruth Lapointe, William Friend, Caroline Wickham and myself are pleased to stand again for another term as directors for your North Shore branch of CHHA. Former board members **Karen Hunter**, and **Birgit Cook** continue to work with Flo Spratt and Hugh Hetherington in the West Vancouver *Sound Advice* sessions.

The package for the Annual General Meeting was recently mailed to all members. Review the report and statements; and be sure to ask any questions regarding such at our AGM on September 16th.

We are very appreciative for the recent municipal community grants of \$1100 each from the City and the District of North Vancouver, along with an increased donation of \$2000 from District of West Vancouver.

Combined with dues from our loyal membership and other donations it allows us to concentrate on doing what we do best: delivering the monthly *Sound Advice* drop in sessions and the Summerhill guest speaker series in addition to the quarterly newsletter to keep you and the other citizens on the North Shore up to date on all matters on hard of hearing issues and hearing aids.

CHHA National's annual awareness and fundraising Walk2Hear is on again on September 21ST over at Jericho Beach Park. Details are provided on page 6

Annual General Meeting Monday, September 16, 2013

7:00 pm at the Summerhill

135 West 15th Street,

North Vancouver

**Special Guest Speaker
Glen Grigg, Ph.D., R.C.C.**

Psychotherapist in Private Practice

**Professor of Psychology at the City University of
Seattle In Vancouver**

**Researcher and Consultant working for the Fraser
Health Authority and the Ministry of Health**

Topic

**“In Case You Were Planning
to Get Older”**

Everyone Welcome

No Admission Charge

For Information

Call

604-926-5222



in this newsletter. We Hope you will join in on a fun outing.

Renewal committees are underway both nationally and provincially to provide focus to those branches of CHHA on the role and service delivery provided by each.

It has been reported that the first of the baby boomer generation is reaching age 67 this year. We know how noise and especially loud music has been a big environmental factor over the recent years affecting peoples' hearing. So our organization will continue to have great relevance and we want to ensure CHHA is efficient and dynamic.

Our branch is submitting a brief to CHHA BC outlining what has kept us successful here on the North Shore, and will also suggest ideas for providing support (non-financial) to local branches.

In the meantime, excellent information and articles continue through the newsletters sent to all members. One item to note was the announcement of highly visible vests displaying the hard of hearing logo, which could prove very helpful when shopping, on the bus, or even in interactions with the police who in a hypothetical situation would immediately recognize your hearing status and respond accordingly. We'll try to have one of these vests at the AGM for display.



A note of condolences, to member **Rick Waters** upon the passing of his mother in late June.

June Presentation

New Innovations from Phonak®

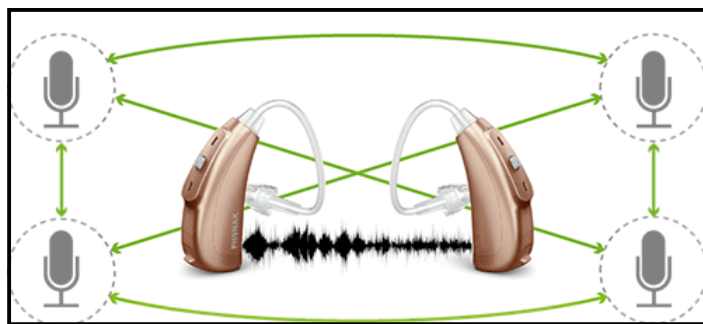
Report by: Mike Hocevar

If Dan Paccioretti, M.Sc, Aud(C) is very excited about the rapid advances in hearing aid technology since his last visit with us a couple of years ago, then we should be as well. Dan's pedigree, after all, has 32 years working as an audiologist in public health with City of Vancouver, design work for cochlear implants, time working with hard of hearing children through the Ministry of Education and now as the

Western Canada Sales Manager for the past seven years with Phonak, the world's leader in the manufacture of hearing aids.

*As our Summerhill guest speaker in June, Dan provided updates as to how hearing aid technology is evolving tremendously. In particular, he spoke about the newest features being provided by his company with their new "Quest®" platform. Dan noted that a successful company will innovate to ensure solid market share and continuing profits, but will be in tune with the demands of the consumer. This is good news, and it means Phonak's **competitors** are also having to keep up and to offer advanced technology also.*

***Binaural VoiceStream Technology®** was introduced with "Quest" to Phonak's premium models in late 2012. This system configures both hearing aids to work together to provide the unique power of a four microphone beam forming array. This feature vastly improves the ability to capture the direction sound comes from using a form of beam reception. It maximizes the ability to hear in many previously hard to hear situations. This includes wind noise, which measures at 1.5 khz and below and is loud enough to distort or interfere with hearing, or to just be plain annoying. The problem with wind is that it is dynamic. It will often rise and fall as gusts occur; which often means people will turn their hearing aid off or put it away. With the VoiceStream technology, the hearing aids are able to sense the direction of the wind and reduce the wind noise band in the affected hearing aid while at the same time filling in the resulting missing speech content from the non-windy side to the windy side. Another major improvement with this technology includes auto StereoZoom. This*



allows the hearing aid to focus in on the sound directly in front while diminishing sounds from all other sides.

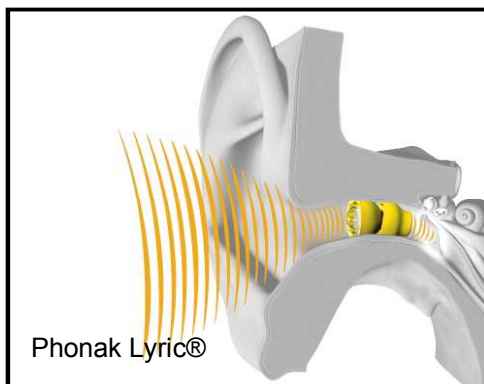
Beam forming arrays are not necessarily totally new technology, according to Dan. He notes that other past innovations incorporated multiple microphones into devices for better directionality, but that the size of these devices did not appeal to the market.

DuoPhone® is now a feature available in three “Quest” technology levels, Premium, Advanced and Standard. This feature can be manual or automatic and permits the hearing aid user to hear on the telephone with both ears. If the phone is held up to the left ear, the sound from the phone is also transmitted across to the right ear, and vice-versa. It works with both telecoil and EasyPhone® options.

SoundRecover® is another feature that has been available in all Phonak products for many years. With this feature the sound in very high frequency ranges that are not audible to the hard of hearing person are transposed down into a frequency range where they can be heard.

Phonak RemoteMic® captures the voice at the source. These are separate Bluetooth wireless omnidirectional microphones that transmit directly to the users hearing aids via a ComPilot® (streaming device). They work up to about 20 metres with a battery life of about 8 hours. They are light weight and can be clipped to your partners clothing. They are less expensive than FM and do a similar job.

Lyric® Hearing Aids are the world’s first and only long wear 100% invisible hearing aid. They are placed deeply in the ear canal by an audiologist. They provide hassle free hearing 24/7 for up to four months. They can be worn while showering, exercising and sleeping. There are no batteries to change. They are purchased by subscription and inserted and replaced by audiologists who are specially trained to dispense Lyric Hearing Aids.



About 55-60% of hearing aid sales are for the newer open-ear and RIC (Receiver in the Canal) be-

hind the ear (BTE) models. In the past these were only suitable for those with mild to moderate hearing losses but today they are able to fit more severe hearing losses. They also come in many colours to match the person’s skin or hair colour. Dan also spoke about the smaller Custom Hearing Aids which fit right in the ear including those that fit deep in the canal. A problem though, is that these lack the extra benefits like the telephone coil for hearing better when using a phone, or for using assistive FM devices for television and stereo. Telephone coils are included as a standard feature with the larger Phonak products, not as an option. Incidentally, Dan says that new hearing aids are built to be extremely water resistant to handle rain, sweat and humid conditions.

The Binaural auto adjusting system will eventually be incorporated into lesser priced model platforms the same as with all new technology trickling down with new generations of products. Other companies will likely be introducing this concept in their hearing aids also. Currently the hearing aids have several programs installed for maximum sound reception efficiencies, depending on models. These are pre-programmed according to a user’s audiogram and can be further fine-tuned based on actual wearer experience.

“Roger®” is Phonak’s new wireless remote system that is replacing Phonak’s FM and Dynamic FM systems. It is currently available for pediatric use and will later be introduced for adults. The term “Roger” comes from aviation and means message received and understood. That is generally the goal. It is the new digital wireless technology standard, operating on the 2.4 GHz band. Roger® is based on a new microchip developed by Phonak with 6.8 million transistors. It consists of wireless microphones and wireless receivers that are still the best way to improve speech understanding in noise. Phonak will offer receivers for select cochlear implant speech processors and universal receivers for all Hearing Aid brands. The system also guarantees privacy.

Questions from the audience were accepted throughout the presentation; Dan’s expertise meant lots of clear answers, including information for those who raised issues surrounding assistive listening devices like Phonak’s ZoomLink® and ComPilot®. His session was much appreciated with lots of people meeting with him afterwards!

From one Life to Another, My Hearing Journey

Editor's note: In the March issue we started a new series excerpting from a blog written by Rick Waters as he was awaiting cochlear implant surgery. As Rick has been very prolific in his writing it is impossible for us to include the full blog in this newsletter. However, in this issue we will continue with some more of the highlights. You can read his full blog at: <http://rickwaters69.wordpress.com/going-bionic-a-cochlear-implant>. We bring the series up-to-date now where Rick has been living with his implant for several months now.

Smackers

With almost four full months of bionic listening under my belt, a sense of perspective is developing as I journey through this new world of sound.

First of all, we live in a very, very noisy world. The noise was there before my implant was activated, but I didn't hear very much of it. Here are some examples of the noises I hear now.

The transit buses in Vancouver use compressed air to activate the brakes, and to raise and lower the bus for passenger loading. Frequently, the air system on the bus vents a blast of compressed air, with a distinctive and quite loud hissing noise. And some young drivers take pride in fitting loud exhaust systems to their cars, and many motorcycles on the street appear to have no mufflers in their exhaust systems.

Construction noise is tough to escape, and much of what used to be done manually in the past is now done by machinery, such as concrete pumps, air-powered nailers, and stone and tile saws. And in our neighbourhood, there are very few folks left who mow their own lawns with a hand powered mower. Most people hire a contractor to tend to their lawns, and the sound of gasoline-powered mowers, trimmers, and blowers never seems to end.

Restaurants often have an open-kitchen plan, but

restaurant kitchens are noisy places, with powerful vent fans, the clatter of cooking utensils and serving dishes, and the cooking staff talking loudly. But, and I think I've mentioned this before, those wonderful restaurant managers love to try and drown out the kitchen noise with music systems playing music that I suppose is the favourite of someone on the staff, someone a lot younger than me!

The heating and air-conditioner blower fan in our house makes a sound, as does the blower in the oven. Everyday objects make noises too, such as the crinkling of plastic bags, the noise of water running in the pipes, and the microwave oven's rushing noise. And then, my favourite noise: the sound of people making smacking noises with their mouths as they eat or talk. Before I had an implant, I never heard this sound, but it certainly jumps out at me now, and yes, it's very annoying. Why can't they find a way to open and close their mouths without that smacking sound?

Now, I've been tempted from time to time to just take off my processor, and enjoy the silence, but I don't do that, because I am trying to become used to the noise, just as those with normal hearing are used to it. And, there are two program slots in my processor with special mapping to help eliminate noise, but for the same reasons, I do not generally use those programs. Simply put, I want to become so used to all that noise, that my brain learns to simply tune it out.

To bring perspective to this world of sound, the best plan would perhaps be to point out that despite all this noise, and despite my reluctance to use the special noise reduction algorithms built into the CI processor, I can hear conversations, even in those noisy restaurants, very well, so I'm not complaining about the performance of my cochlear implant. The problem is when there is no conversation, just those smacking sounds from people's lips.

Perhaps the next big advance in cochlear implants will be a special program called Lip Smacking Suppression.

A Journey Without End?

I recall listening to Nana Mouskouri singing “Outward Bound” when I was in my early twenties. In that beautiful song, she sung of a “journey without end”, and while I’ve no doubt that my hearing journey will continue, I’m also sure that the most interesting points have already been visited. And, with a feeling that I’ve been in my new world of hearing for some time, I’m finding that I’d prefer to spend my time participating in the world, rather than writing about “the journey”.

There has been a gratifying response to my blog, even though I did not set it up properly to allow search engines to find it easily. Over 2900 different views have been recorded, and I’ve received some heartwarming comments, along with some encouraging e-mails. There were some suggestions that it might make a good e-book with a little organizing work, something that might be helpful for those who are thinking of a cochlear implant, or for the family and friends of those with severe hearing loss. Let me figure out how much work that would be, bearing in mind that the blog totalled around 44,000 words, and was rather disjointed.

Would I take this journey again? In a heartbeat!!

On Friday, I went to Via Tevere, a fantastic Neapolitan-style pizza joint near Commercial Drive in Vancouver. Crowded, with a lineup on the sidewalk. Noisy, full of hard surfaces and folks having a great time. Prior to the cochlear implant, not my kind of place, but now, I had no trouble being part of the conversation with our group of six.

I remember being somewhat self conscious about watching peoples’ lips as they talked, rather than their eyes. I had to do this, because I depended so heavily on lip reading. Now, with most people, I can watch their eyes when they talk.

Before, when I chose to watch television, I was often frustrated by the cantankerous nature of my blue-tooth audio system that I absolutely needed to hear the announcers. Now, I just turn on the TV, and I’m

good to go.

And using the phone, something I avoided (the telecom companies did not offer a plan with only 20 minutes a month, all I needed) is so easy. I just hold the phone up to my ear, and voila! I can hear the other party.

And most importantly, I remember that there were countless times when my communication with my wife, Lynn, was short circuited by my hearing loss, forcing her to repeat herself, or just give up. Now, I can hear Lynn even when she’s in another room.

Of course there are things that could be better: the sound from a CI tends to have a pronounced high-frequency emphasis, and I’d like a “fuller” sound. And I can’t wear it while I’m sleeping, as it would brush off, so I am not aware of possible important sounds at night.

We began with the first blog post on January 13, and the journey has been wonderful beyond my wildest expectations. And that brings me back to that same Nana Mouskouri song:

“So farewell, adieu, so long, vaya con dios

May they find whatever they are looking for

Remember when the wine was better than ever again

We could not ask

We could not ask for more”

Social Service Grants

CHHA – North Shore Branch

acknowledges with thanks the following
Municipal Community grants

District of North Vancouver \$1100

City of North Vancouver \$1100

District of West Vancouver \$2000

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.



Canadian Hard of Hearing Association
Association des malentendants canadiens
PRESENTS
Walk2Hear
Vancouver

Mobility accessible!
Opportunity
to connect with
other hard of
hearing people
and service
providers in
your community!



**Jericho Beach
Park,
East End
(Park
restrooms,
parking and
concession
stands)
available)**

Walk2Hear Walk-A-Thon!
2 km, 5 km or 10 km walk
September 21, 2013



Registration starts: 8:30am Official Launch: 9:30am



**Prize Draw for two economy class return
tickets to anywhere Air Canada
flies in North America**

Who will you walk for this year?
To pick your team and register online, please visit:
<http://www.chha.ca/walk2hear/vancouver.php>

Hearing Aid Battery Recycling
Bring your used hearing aid batteries to our
meetings and we will take care of recycling

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

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**
(No meeting in July and August)
Next Meeting September 6, 2013

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

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

Everyone Welcome



**CANADIAN HARD OF HEARING ASSOCIATION
NORTH SHORE BRANCH
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Prov. _____

Postal Code: _____ Phone: _____

Please mail application to:

CHHA—North Shore Branch
Attention: Treasurer
600 West Queens Road
North Vancouver, B.C.
V7N 2L3

Cheque enclosed

Money Order Enclosed

Charitable Registration No.
BN 89672 3038 RR0001

I wish to support the aims of CHHA and the North Shore Branch and enclose my \$40.00 annual membership fee. (National \$30.00, Branch \$10.00). Membership is paid annually from 1 October to 30 September.