



# Canadian Hard of Hearing Association

## North Shore Branch

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Editor: Hugh Hetherington

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## Mountain Ear

### Pres Mez

by Mike Hocevar.

With the CHHA National Conference just over and the CHHA BC AGM coming up in a few days, it is my sincere hope that we will as an organization come up with a plan to promote the establishment of many new branches. In BC we have not seen new branches established in recent years, but rather the loss of some.

Can you imagine life without our North Shore Branch? No more "Sound Advice" sessions which have been very popular especially to those new to hearing aids and for those planning to purchase the newest hearing aid technology. No more public guest speaker meetings keeping us informed with stimulating and current information.

So look at what would be so positive to all other communities. An organizing plan and branch support system has to be put into action. I plan to raise this at the BC Provincial AGM in June and will report back to you.

On a more personal note, I am recovering from a pinched nerve in my lower back. It is now in its third week as I write this message. It's kept me stuck in bed most of the time, an injury sustained while doing the setup for an event put on by another volunteer organization I am involved with. It's my own fault for not staying fit since my dream early retirement from a very physical job last year.

The pain makes me imagine that this is like being hit by local boy Milan Lucic who plays for the Boston Bruins. (Or was it by the notorious Matt Cooke - I don't know, I didn't get the guy's number...) And you know the intense facial contortions that BB King and Carlos Santana have, for example? That's me when I have had to roll in and out of bed. Only I don't play guitar...

*(Continued on page 2)*

### June Presentation

**Monday, June 16, 2014**

**7:00 pm at the Summerhill**

**135 West 15th Street, North Vancouver**

### Guest Speaker

**Victoria Mcleod, M.Cl.Sc., Aud(C)**

**Training Audiologist for**

**GN Resound**

**Topic**

**Tinnitus and Hearing Loss  
And What's New at Resound**

**Everyone Welcome**

**Wheelchair and Hearing Accessible**

**For information call 604-926-5222**

I don't seem to be able to sit more than about 10 minutes without my back seizing up. So no watching TV or working at the computer. In fact, I am handwriting this column and will scan and send it to our editor, Hugh Hetherington to retype it for me instead of me electronically composing and transmitting it to him. It's also the middle of the night since I am wide awake from so much sleep from being in bed all of the time.

But the show must go on... It's a grim reminder for something I say often, usually when I have described my genetic Usher's Syndrome deaf - blindness condition. I have been fortunate in that for me it has been a long slow progressive decline. But the main thing is that even with my 75% hearing loss and current legally blind status with no peripheral vision and other visual challenges, that we need to otherwise stay healthy because of possible, and in many cases, probable medical breakthroughs.

We have seen a number of technological aids for all kinds of medical and physical conditions, and now we can anticipate regenerative therapies to occur. Already for a couple of different total vision loss conditions, pioneering operations to restore sight have been conducted in the past few years.

Exciting news is also found for hearing loss. Successful use of gene therapy in mice and guinea pigs has now led to planned operations this summer to combine gene therapy with cochlear implants, of which over 300,000 people worldwide have been recipients. This is designed to make sound clearer and for a larger range of pitches to be heard.

Maybe someday this sort of research will mean a cure for hearing loss, maybe even without technological aids. That's why it's important to stay otherwise healthy. That is just what I plan to do upon recovery from this back ailment, and continue to express hope!

## Rising Postage Costs

If you are receiving a printed version of this newsletter by mail and would be willing to receive it by email instead, Please send an email to [chha\\_nsb@telus.net](mailto:chha_nsb@telus.net) with Newsletter on the subject line and we will add your email to our email list, Thank You!

## April Presentation

Report by: Hugh Hetherington

On April 28th 2014, Sharon Miller, Communication Devices Showroom Manager at the Western Institute for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (WIDHH) gave a presentation to 35 members and guests at the Summerhill in North Vancouver. Her presentation covered many of the communication devices, alerting, signaling and other devices available to help Hard of Hearing individuals in their daily life.

The WIDHH is the largest non-profit agency of its kind in Western Canada and has been in operation since 1956. The WIDHH offers excellent services to Deaf, Deafened and Hard of Hearing which include: Audiological and Hearing Aid Services, Counseling, Employment Services, Community, Medical and Legal Sign Language Interpreting and Communication Aids and Devices.

Communication Aids are products that improve communication in a variety of situations. They include assistive listening devices, telephone and television devices, text telephones and much more.

Sharon Miller, who has been employed by the WIDHH for 24 years has served as a technician in the audiology department for 16 years and for the past 8 years in the Communication Devices Showroom. Sharon Miller was born Deaf and has a severe flat hearing loss at all frequencies in both ears. She has worn hearing aids since the age of 2 1/2 years. She was trained to speak at the Vancouver Oral Centre.

In Sharon's presentation she described how technology has advanced over the years and through her PowerPoint presentation demonstrated the many



changes that have taken place in most of the technology used by the Hard of Hearing.

With the telephone she demonstrated how we have come from the rotary dial telephone to the modern home and cellular phones we use today. The many advances

have included speaker phones, amplified handsets, in-line handset amplifiers, phones with call display and built-in amplifiers and now smart phones with texting, computer access, and speech recognition.



In audiology we have come a long way from hearing trumpets of yesteryear and the body style hearing aids that served more like assistive hearing devices than the modern ear level bilateral hearing aids of today.



In other devices Sharon demonstrated how we have evolved from the wind-up alarm clock to a vast array of lifestyle changing signaling

devices that have immensely improved the lives of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. These include fancy digital clocks with added on bed shaking devices and flashing lamps to wake us in the morning, to vibrating wrist-watches. There are also similar devices that will alert us to the sounding of smoke and carbon dioxide detectors, doorbells, burglar alarms and telephones ringing. There are also special loud telephone ringers that can be set to frequencies that are more audible to people with hearing loss.



In text type communication, Sharon described how the WIDHH was the recipient of the older TTY (teletype machines) that were used by communication companies for long distance messaging in the old days. These were put to use by the Deaf community to provide them with a more effective way of telephone communication. A technician at the WIDHH effectively maintained these devices for many years. They have now become obsolete and this type of communication has been replaced by a

number of different means over the years. Some of these include acoustically coupled TTY phones, voice carry-over phones, computer communication, such as, Skype, Face-



Time, and messaging applications. The voice carry-over phone permits a hearing impaired person to have phone communication with hearing individuals through the use of an assistance operator employed at the telephone company. The call

is placed to a special number. This brings in the operator who types back the responses from the hearing person to the carry-over telephone used by the hearing impaired person. In other words, there is voice communication on one direction and texting back in the other direction.

Sharon was able to add a great deal of authenticity to her presentation because, as a hard of hearing person herself, she has over the years used, in her own daily life, many of the devices she described.

Sharon brought with her, a number of the devices to show and tell and demonstrate to her audience. These included the pocket-talkers, TV listening devices and the various amplified telephones and signaling devices carried by the WIDHH in their

showroom.



Sharon invited us all to visit the WIDHH showroom and try out the many devices on display. The WIDHH is located in Vancouver at 2125 West 7th Avenue (7th and Arbutus St.). Their telephone number is 604-736-7391 and their hours of operation are Tuesdays through Saturdays from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM. They are closed for lunch from 12:00 noon to 1:00 PM. You can also order devices on line at [www.widhh.ca](http://www.widhh.ca) and you can contact Sharon by email at: [smiller@widhh.ca](mailto:smiller@widhh.ca).

Thank you, Sharon, for your excellent presentation.



WIDHH Showroom

## BC FERRIES ACCESSIBILITY COMMITTEE

I am writing to you as a member of the BC Ferries Accessibility Committee. This is a committee made up of representatives of numerous associations whose purpose is to help people in BC deal with their various disabilities while travelling on the ferries. I am the representative of the Canadian Hard Of Hearing Association. This committee meets twice a year with representatives of various department heads to discuss accessibility issues. As a result of these meetings, there have been many changes to existing facilities, but more important is that the needs of the disabled are front and centre when new facilities are being designed (such as ships and loading ramps).

If you are going to be travelling by BC Ferries, and you have a disability, I strongly suggest that you visit their web site, [www.bcferrries.com](http://www.bcferrries.com). (Click on "reserve and plan" and then "persons with disabilities") and learn about the assistance that is available to you. If you have mobility issues, your needs can be better met by planning ahead and informing the customer service department of your travel plans and needs. Did you know that you can have a friend help you get on the ferry and get settled and then leave the ferry before it sails?

Did you know that there are wheelchairs available at the terminals and on the ships for use by the public? Reserving ahead will make sure one is available for you.

Did you know that using the hazard lights on your car will alert the loading staff to the fact that your vehicle is the one that needs to be parked close to the elevator? (You will have previously informed the customer service department and mentioned it to the ticket booth employee just to be sure everyone is aware of your needs.)

Did you know that if you do not tell BC Ferries of your needs, they will not know what they are? That seems like a silly statement, but think about it. How many of us are hesitant to speak up and tell people what we need from them. (Don't tell me you do not want to be a nuisance. People want to help, they just don't know what to do, so tell them!) There is lots more information on the BC Ferry web site.

Planning is now taking place for the mid-life refit of the Spirit Class vessels. The engineers are aware of the benefit to the hard of hearing of an induction loop. Because the ships are made of steel there are many difficulties putting one in a ship. However they are working on this with the goal of having a loop system installed on the Spirit Class vessels when they go in for their refit. Hopefully there will also be monitors around the ship that have closed captioning of announcements.

If you travel on the ferries and have had any difficulties related to your disabilities, you can send me an email and I will bring it to management's attention. You should also write or call their customer service department. Both the hearing and hard of hearing know that the speaker quality is terrible, so there is no need to bring up that topic.

Change happens slowly, but things are getting better. You can write to me at [hughsheila@shaw.ca](mailto:hughsheila@shaw.ca)

Yours truly  
Hugh Mitchell

## Gotta Love That iPhone (Part 3)

By Hugh Hetherington

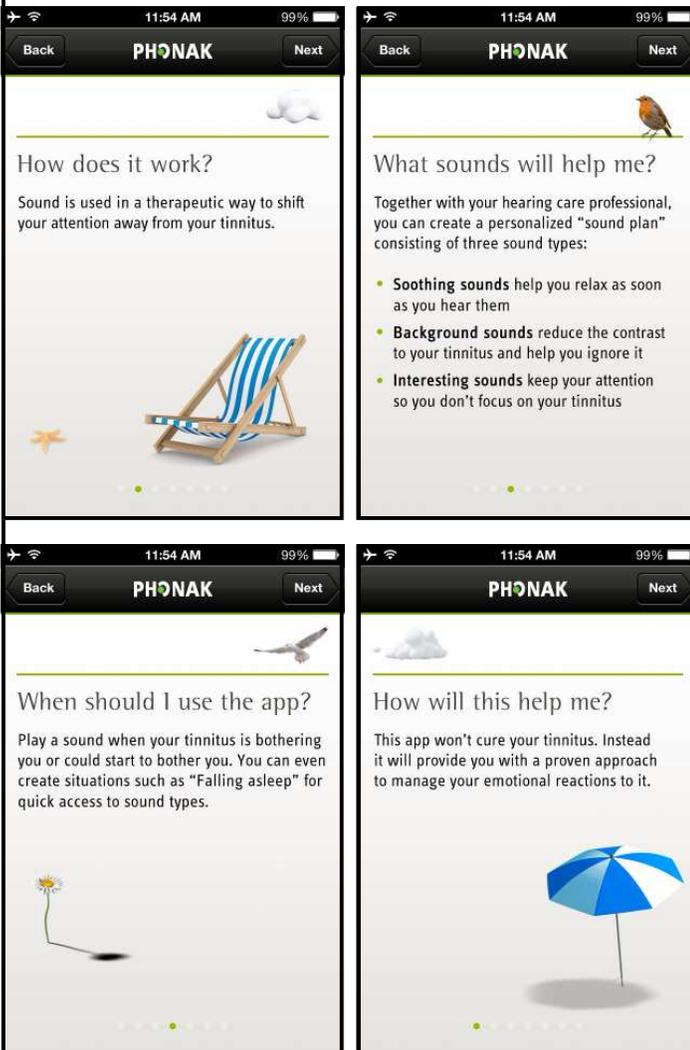
In the June and December issues last year I described a number of iPhone apps that were helpful to the Hard of Hearing. In this issue I am going to describe a few more that may be of help.

There are a number of ways that you can search out relevant apps for yourself. In the App Store you can search out apps by subject, for instance, "Hearing Loss", or just "Hearing", "Tinnitus", etc. You can also search by hearing aid brand name. Many of the hearing aid manufacturers have developed apps to work with their models of hearing aids or to provide help in setting up and working with your products.

When searching out apps it is a good idea to read the full description and any reviews, especially for paid apps. Many of the items are produced by amateurs and can be virtually useless. Also, look to see if there are any in-app purchases that you might have to obtain to make the app useful. An app may be

free on the surface but you might have to purchase additional features in order to make it useful.

In searching out "Phonak" I found two interesting apps. The first one is called "Tinnitus Balance". It is



designed to help you with a tinnitus management plan. It allows you to select soothing sounds from either within the app or from your iPhone's music library. You can stream your chosen sounds over bluetooth via your Phonak ComPilot directly to your ears. You can also set a timer to use when falling asleep with your chosen sounds. The App does not provide a cure for tinnitus, but is designed to take your attention off your tinnitus by providing distracting sounds.

The second Phonak app is called "Audéo Q Support". This app is designed to help people who have the Phonak Audéo Q hearing aids in managing their hearing aid care. It allows you to set up the app for

your exact model and features and provides instructions for things like program change, daily cleaning, battery changing, how to insert the device, etc. It also includes instructional videos that you can watch to help you adjust to your hearing aids. There is also a section on problem solving.



Other companies that provide apps for their products are ReSound, Siemens, Starkey Laboratories, Beltone, and others. For example ReSound have provided apps to control the features on the new ReSound Linx series of hearing aids.

The next app I want to mention is called "AUD1". This is an app that turns your iPhone into a hearing aid. The app processes sound received by the microphone and delivers the processed sound via headphones. The user is able to customize the sound by selecting built-in algorithms. The sound can be adjusted for each ear independently. Other adjustments



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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.

include control over the dynamic range of the processed sound.

The last app I will mention this time is called "Hear Coach". This app is a series of listening games developed by Starkey Laboratories. These games challenge both your cognitive and auditory sharpness. It allows you to track your progress and unlocks more



difficult levels as your progress improves. A different background noise stimulus within each of the levels allows you to train your auditory system in different environments.

When space permits, I will be searching out more useful hearing applications and will review them in future issues of the newsletter.

## Hearing Aid Battery Recycling

Bring your used hearing aid batteries to our meetings and we will take care of recycling them for you

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)**

(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.