



Canadian Hard of Hearing Association

North Shore Branch

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Editor: Hugh Hetherington

Issue 88 March 2015

Mountain Ear

Prez Mez

By Mike Hocevar

It's a lovely thing, the birth of a baby. Even more so when it is a New Year's baby. So congratulations to **Jerry Gosling** in Abbotsford. ??? you are asking...so let me explain this good news.

Hugh Hetherington and myself met Jerry while attending the Vancouver branch AGM in the Fall. He indicated his keenness on establishing a branch in the Fraser Valley. So Hugh and I offered to attend the initial meeting to lend our support, if possible. And so, we did make it to this event in January.

In waiting for the meeting to start, we chatted with the people who showed up. It was so apparent the benefit such a local branch would be to them as Hugh shared lots of information in the form of a *Sound Advice* session.

It's so easy for us to take for granted how a successful branch operates. After all, the North Shore branch has been around since it was established in 1989.

And we have been successful with our focused effective program of running a monthly *Sound Advice* workshop and the Summerhill guest speaker presentations five times a year. This is not to say that any director of the branch can't pursue a beneficial initiative provided they will put the energy into it; for example, I will be undertaking a survey over the next few months of which public buildings have

loop systems installed for meetings, and to promote the idea to those which are not looped yet.

It's one of the nice things about the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association, that local branches are autonomous to decide what they want to offer. And this is where a brand new group like an Abbotsford Branch will be creating such an undertaking.

First, they need to know how to run formal meetings, decide on their event formats & activities, and to have people committed as branch directors. Also,

April Presentation

Monday, April 20, 2015

7:00 pm at the Summerhill

135 West 15th Street, North Vancouver

Guest Speaker

Dan Paccioretti, M.Sc., Aud(C)

Western Canada Roger and

FM Sales Manager, Phonak Canada

Topic:

“Venture Forth with Phonak”

A talk to share what is new from Phonak in hearing aids and Roger technology

Everyone Welcome

Wheelchair and Hearing Accessible

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importantly, they have to let their communities know they exist.

Hugh and I were able to share the North Shore branch experience. Others from the Provincial Chapter suggested further ideas to consider, such as the meeting venues and ensuring listening systems are available. Further, the Provincial Chapter can assist with publicizing upcoming meetings. With a few more people, the formal establishment of the Abbotsford branch will occur. To keep the momentum going they will be having another public meeting in mid-April.

I'm hopeful that CHHA National and the Provincial Chapter will seriously implement a dedicated program to encourage widespread branch establishment. Because, really, given the large proportion of the population with hearing loss, many more local branches are needed.

We recognize the great satisfaction from our North Shore branch in addition to the education and news provided from CHHA National and the Provincial Chapter. With a number of committees looking at the CHHA National organization and its standing with the citizens of Canada, perhaps such increased branch establishment will follow.

CHHA National and our Provincial Chapter must be given credit for their support to the Young Adult Network which encourages youth to become actively involved and for bringing people forward as future leaders of the organization, such as **Rosalind Ho** who has been active on local campuses and the annual Walk2Hear.

Hugh has been delegated by the directors to attend this year's National Conference in Halifax during the Victoria Day weekend. Our branch directors have encouraged him to convey this idea vigorously. The findings and reports from this conference will be shared with our members.

Just to mention some things in closing: *Sound Advice* and the *Summerhill* events continue to attract great participation and new members of the public. A couple of local events are coming up that will be of interest. One is a Senior Service Provider Expo to be held at the West Vancouver Seniors' Activity Centre on Saturday February 28 from 10:00 AM until 2:00 PM. Another Health Fair at St. Agnes Church is also in the planning for May 9th. More details on this will follow.

The following article is reprinted with permission from Gael Hannan's Column in HHTM Weekly of Feb. 2, 2015. Gael's column can be found at HearingHealthMatters.org.



Gael Hannan, Editor

The Better Hearing Consumer
@ Hearing Health & Technology Matters!
Hear Well. Live Well!

Upholding the Family (Hearing Aid) Tradition

My guest writer this week is David Drake, the founder and headmaster of the White Oak School in Westfield, Massachusetts, a school serving bright students with dyslexia and related learning disabilities. He lives with his family in Northampton.

by David Drake

I'm pretty sure I come from a line of serial hearing-aid abusers.

My grandfather's hearing aids were fascinating to me as a young boy. Somehow the electronics fit inside the temples of his thick, black glasses, with a tube extending downward, terminating in a mysterious piece of plastic that I was told was an "ear mold."

Now, when you're very young, and you're already put off by the bristly ears of adults, the term "ear mold" has a disturbing connotation. So I quickly put the glasses down, although I continued to examine them. They looked like a piece of Cold-War spyware, a combination of James Bond and Clark Kent, which were now inexplicably and permanently relegated to my grandfather's bedside table.

He didn't use them, of course. He didn't use any hearing aid terribly well. You had to shout around Grandpa. And Grandma, who had also become deaf. And frankly, you had to shout around Mom, too—his daughter who inherited his deafness when she was in her thirties.

Thanksgivings and Christmases were especially memorable due to this family trait, because in addition to the misunderstandings and the yelling, there was also the crazed soprano accompaniment of the hearing aid feedback whistles. Apparently, no one in

my family believed in having their hearing aid sound tubes or ear molds replaced when they cracked, so holiday dinners were accompanied by what sounded like a manic circus steam-calliope, with each hearing aid unexpectedly sending out its own distinct wail and toot. It was John Cage meets Oticon. And unfortunately, none of the musicians could hear, or appreciate, their own symphony.

Against the background of watching these yelling, gesticulating adults, trapped in their multiple feedback loops, I determined then and there never to be deaf. And so I wasn't, for a while. A long while, actually. But then things changed.

I was 33, a young professional working with disabled children in Los Angeles. I was also several years into passive-denial that I really, really needed hearing aids. Without knowing it, I'd started speechreading, I had to cup my ear in any but the quietest environments, and my colleagues were having to repeat what they said in conversation. And, of course, I had avoided getting hearing aids.

In addition to my regular work, I'd been invited to fly up to a city in northern California to do some pro-bono consulting for a new school that was being opened in the community. The founder of the school was wonderful; earlier in her life she had been the head trauma nurse in the ER of one of the state's busiest urban hospitals. With that background, she'd seen it all, and at 5'0" she was one of those energetic, direct, no-nonsense people who could stop a charging elephant with a raised index finger and a steely gaze.

All went well for the first couple of days, a whirlwind of meetings with parents, local foundation boards and so on. But at the end of the third day, and after her seeing how I was—and wasn't—dealing with my hearing loss, she pulled me aside. "David," she said, "You think your hearing loss is your disability to endure, right? It's your cross to bear, right?" It was a pretty direct question, there was no getting around it. Not seeing exactly where she was going with this, I cautiously agreed with what seemed to be obvious.

"Well," she continued, "let me tell you that the way you handle your hearing loss is affecting everyone around you. You're making it everyone else's disability too, because you don't do anything about it. We can't whisper to you, you make everyone repeat

everything, you misunderstand a lot of things, and basically you're projecting your disability onto everyone who values your ideas and cares about your opinion."

You could have heard a pin drop. (That is, if you were able to hear a pin drop. Which, of course, I wasn't.) But she was right. The hearing loss I privately cursed, but which I didn't address, was something I was forcing onto everyone in my world. They—my colleagues and friends and family—were the ones being forced to adopt my handicap because I wasn't taking responsible steps to address my own hearing.

Linda's advice was direct but wonderful, and it has remained with me.

And I've learned this: however much we, as adults with hearing loss, feel marginalized by the fully-hearing world around us, we also have to try to avoid projecting our own disabilities onto those around us. Obviously, we have to enlist the help of friends, family and employers to help us when we need help. But we also shouldn't expect others to step up to the plate until we've done our part. In my case it was a matter of finally getting appropriate hearing aids, and I've always appreciated the candid advice from a colleague who understood that straight talk is sometimes the highest form of respect.

Now, years later, I have progressed along the classic route of hearing-aid wearers, from little ITC jobs to—at the moment—big old behind-the-ears (BTEs). I've got a great, friendly audiologist, and she, too, has helped me by being candid. Not only are my once-lovely, state-of-the-art BTE's obsolete but, as she told me recently, the manufacturer isn't even willing to repair them after this spring. "Wow", I said to myself, taking a deep breath.

"They really won't even fix them?"

"Nope, sorry! Time to move on."

So once again, I'm stepping up to the plate. A new set of beautiful and expensive BTEs have been ordered, complete with a streamer, iPhone software and a second-party microphone. State of the art. Apparently, the two aids will be able to talk to each other (although I wonder what they're going to say about me). I'm probably the last person in North America with those old plastic sound tubes coming

down from the BTE into the ear. But I won't miss them; it's time, once again, to do the right thing for everyone around me, and do whatever I can, before I have to turn to someone and say, "What?"

February Presentation

By Mike Hocevar

On the evening of February 16, twenty-eight people turned out for a special *Sound Advice* meeting conducted in place of our usual guest speaker format. It proved to be, as always, a very useful informative session.

The last comment from one of the attendees in our audience summed it up well with her last comment, "One needs to know what questions to ask of an audiologist when getting a hearing aid and it's really important to write such questions down." Indeed! The response back to her was, "And this is the whole point of *Sound Advice*". Not only do we always get new people attending, but many come regularly over and over again so they can continue to learn—to become a well-informed hearing aid consumer.

An audiologist can read an audiogram following a hearing test, but additionally has to know your lifestyle needs in recommending your hearing aid and its features. The more competent you are at describing these needs, the better a fitting result your audiologist will be able to give you.

The reason for holding the evening *Sound Advice* like our monthly sessions in West Vancouver was that this time of year can sometimes feature ugly evening weather and in consideration for our guest speakers who may have to travel from various parts of the lower mainland during late rush hour. Also, many people are unable to attend our daytime sessions. Because of the good response, February will be considered for future evening *Sound Advice* sessions.

And it is led very capably by Flo Spratt, a long time branch past president along with current directors Hugh Hetherington, and Bill Friend who has a knack of sharing insightful personal anecdotal experiences.

Flo can provide 1001 different tips and techniques we call coping strategies to handle any difficult hearing situation or lifestyle situation. Hugh is amazing too, with his vast technological knowledge

of hearing aids & assistive listening devices. He is rarely stumped to provide an answer or advice.

Though, it almost happened at the February meeting---as a woman was in attendance with very limited English language. It was a challenge to figure out what she wished to have addressed. We must give her credit for her efforts. But not to worry, Hugh ascertained through looking at her paperwork from an audiologist that she has a very profound hearing loss. He explained her needs and wrote on a piece of paper the name of a local audiologist who speaks her language to pursue things further.

Once our introductions are done like acknowledging our North Shore municipal councils' community grant funding, Flo starts off the meeting by asking who in the audience is present for the first time. The newcomers are given the first chance to share their reason for coming, what their experience is with hearing loss and to ask any questions they may have. This most often sets the tone for the meeting.

There were several newcomers and they all were given the opportunity to explain their situations. The first woman expressed her difficulties with hearing the television. It was suggested to check into assistive listening devices.

Another mentioned that she finds her hearing aids not good enough for certain situations and is going to obtain some devices from ALDS, Inc. (Assistive Listening Device Systems) who presented at our last Summerhill meeting. It was recommended to everyone to ensure they had the current branch newsletter on the front table to see a summary of ALDS products.

Another interesting situation was shared by another first timer. Her request was for how not to hear—it turns out that a major renovation is taking place for the next few months in the condo next to her and the power equipment to be used will create noise levels in the extremely high range. The answer to this was to check out the Bose brand noise canceling headphones that can be very helpful in such a situation.

According to another newcomer, the earpiece for his hearing aid keeps slipping out. He was advised that his audiologist may be able to fit a mini-earmold to more securely hold the receiver in his ear.

Flo ran through a number of various coping strategies to solve certain difficult hearing environments.

She promotes recognition of such, to find ways to adapt or change the situation to allow for being able to hear. It requires an assertiveness to inform the other party in a proper way just what is needed for the particular scenario rather than just using the words, "What?" or "Please repeat that again" over and over.

The issue of lip or speech reading as another coping mechanism came up and it was noted that Vancouver Community College offers an extremely affordable once per week course for three months, three times a year.

Interestingly, there weren't any questions about telephone use difficulties which is often raised. But everyone did learn much about the wireless FM assistive devices that can block out background noise and bring sound direct to the hearing aid much like what was being experienced at the meeting with the room's loop system.

It was emphasized that you must insist that your audiologist ensures that your hearing aid has a telecoil, or T-Switch as it is sometimes known, to be compatible with loop systems or many other assistive devices.

Hugh described the outstanding simple looking but highly effective Phonak Roger FM system that looks like a pen. This has been out for just over a year but is the most advanced portable FM device. It features a highly focussed beam catchment of sound from wherever it is pointed. Yet, Phonak, the company that makes Roger, has now seemingly incorporated this technology right into its latest model, top of the line Audeo V hearing aids which sport 45 million transistors and capable of 552 million operations per second. Hugh has just purchased a set and can attest to the fact that they are highly effective in noise. More on this at the next Summerhill April presentation by Dan Paccioretti, from Phonak about their latest products.

Final closing comments from the audience included an observation that Phonak's earlier wireless FM systems like the ZoomLink and SmartLink are still highly effective for listening to radio, computer and television, as a plug in, or as a directional microphone in social situations.

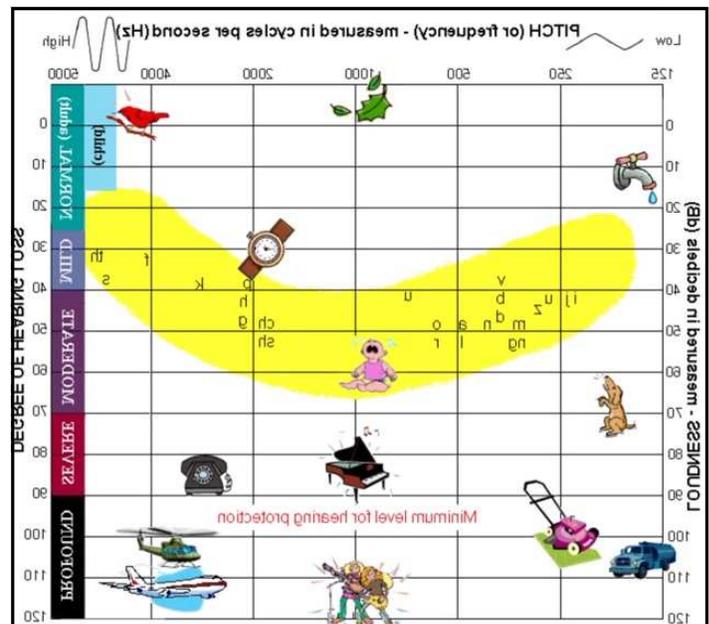
These powerful FM devices operate over quite a distance. It was cautioned through personal experience

that it had better be switched off when a companion wearing it heads into a washroom or as once happened while waiting in a department store, a companion's conversation was fully heard at the cash register aisles away, which prompted the comment, "You did everything right with that sales clerk—except you didn't get her phone number!"

Gotta Love that iPhone (Part 4)

By Hugh Hetherington

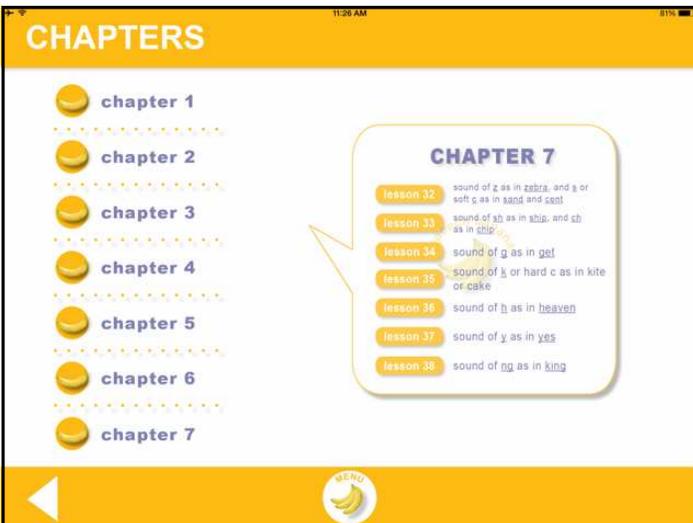
I recently became aware of a number of applications for the iPhone and iPad that are designed to assist cochlear implant recipients in adapting to speech and environmental sounds through their cochlear implant. The first one is called "*Speech Banana*." This is the term used to describe the area where the phonemes, or sounds of human speech, appear on an audiogram.



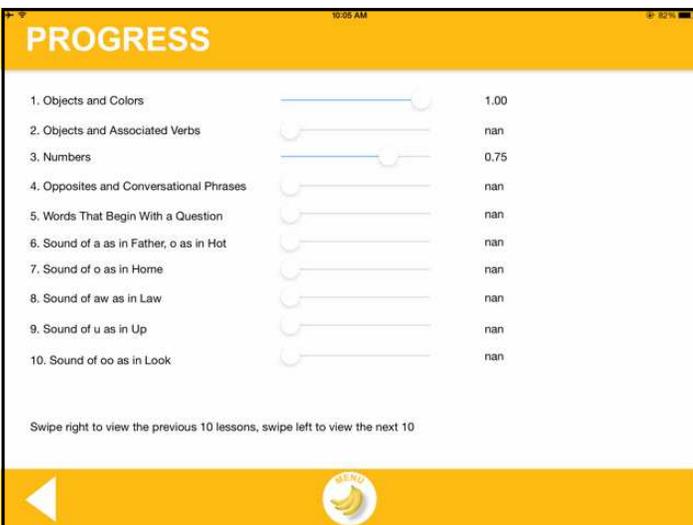
Speech Banana is an iPod Application (it is not available for the iPhone) developed by three students at John Hopkins University working under Dr. Ratanather at the Center for Imaging Science and the Institute for Computational Medicine in the Department of Biomedical Engineering at John Hopkins University. The goal is to provide adult cochlear implant and hearing aid users with affordable auditory training that is comparable to in-person sessions. This app can be used to supplement regular meetings with a therapist.

The app is based on the book "Auditory Training for

the Deaf’ by Whitehurst and Monsees published in 1952, which covers all the basic phonemes ranging from low to high frequencies. In this way the whole speech banana, the spectrum of sounds that we hear most in spoken communication, is covered. Dr. Ratanather used this book in the first few months after getting a cochlear implant.



The lessons are included in 7 chapters. Chapter 1 covers such things as objects and colours, numbers, opposites, conversational phrases and words that begin with a question, such as, where, who, why, how much, how many, etc. The remaining chapters cover the multitude of various sounds in the English language including vowel sounds, diphthongs and consonants.



In each lesson words are displayed which can be selected to play the word examples. This is followed in a testing session where the words are spoken and you are asked to type what you heard. You are then given a score and your progress is tracked.

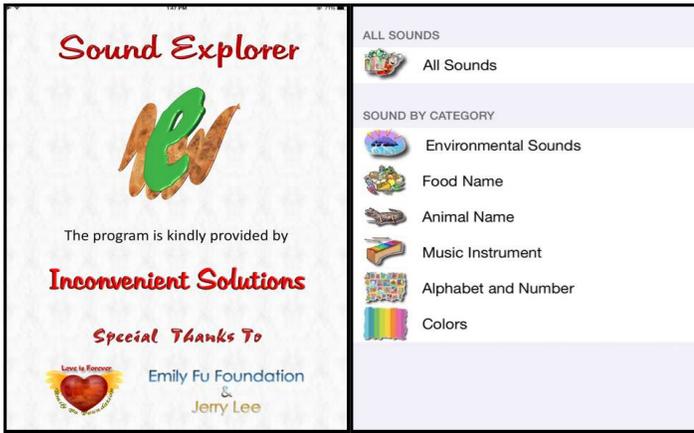
Another series of six apps available for the iPhone and iPad are from “Inconvenient Solutions” provided and supported by the Emily Fu Foundation.



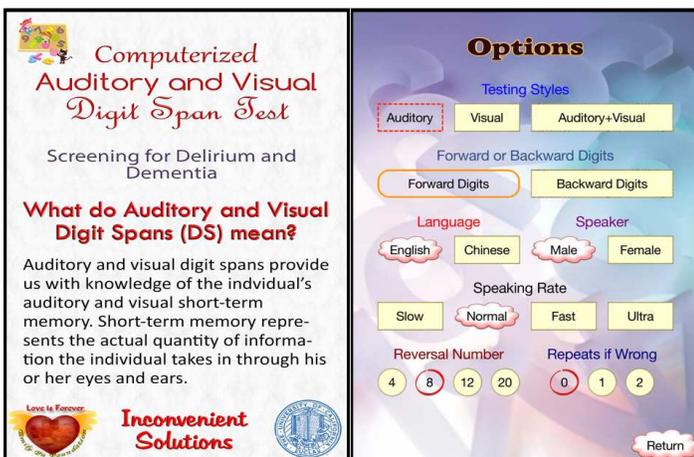
The first one is called “*iAngelSound*.” In this one a series of words are spoken and you are given a selection of four words to choose from. Your score is kept for each session and is plotted on a graph. There are a number of parameters that can be set to your individual preference and you can choose a number of different listening conditions and the speaking rate.



The second app is called “*Sound Explorer*.” In this app you can choose from different categories like, environmental sounds, colours, food names, animal names, musical instruments, alphabet and numbers. You select your category and pictures are displayed. When you select a picture the word associated is spoken.

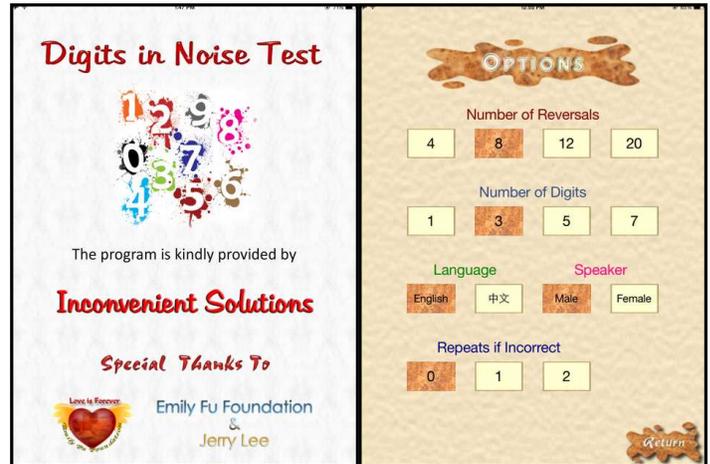


The third app is called **“Digitspan.”** It tests the users capacity to store numbers in the brain. A number of different options can be selected which include English or Chinese language, male or female speaker, speaking rate, etc. Your score is kept from the tests and is recorded and displayed on a graph.

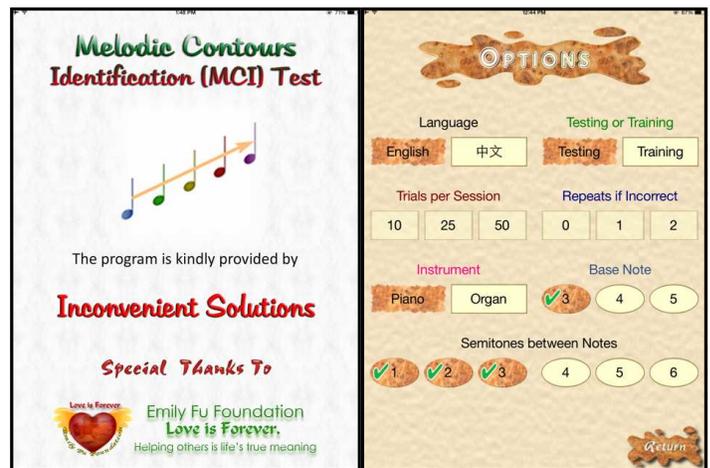


The fourth app is called **“Digitnoise.”** It is used to test your ability to recognize digits in the presence of background noise. A series of digits is spoken in noise and each time a correct answer is given another series will be presented with a reduced signal-to-

noise ratio (SNR). Your digit recognition threshold is the SNR in which you can identify digits on 50% of all trials. There are a number of options that can be selected and your score is kept.



The fifth app in the series is called **“MCItest”** (Melodic Contour Identification). It is designed to quantify the listeners’ ability to recognize musical melodies. There are a number of options that can be selected and your score is kept. This program is designed to provide a unique testing and training tool for anyone interested in improving their awareness of melodies, thereby improving their music appreciation.



The last app in the series is **“cSentNoise”** (Concatenated sentence recognition in noise). Five word sentences are generated in real-time using concatenation methods and the user must select the correct words. If the answer is correct, sentences with lower SNR are presented. Your score is kept and your sentence recognition threshold is the lowest SNR that a person can recognize 50% of all the trials. (Pictures continued on top of page 8)

**Concatenated Sentence
Recognition in Noise**

10X5
TEST

The program is kindly provided by

Inconvenient Solutions

Special Thanks To



Emily Fu Foundation
Love is Forever,
Helping others is life's true meaning

OPTIONS

Number of Reversals

4	8	12	20
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Repeats if Incorrect

0	1	2
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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.

Rising Postage Costs

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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.

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)

(Next Meeting is on March 6)

(The April Meeting is on April 10)

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



**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.