



# Canadian Hard of Hearing Association North Shore Branch

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September and December by CHHA – North Shore Branch,  
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## Mountain Ear

## Prez Mez

by Mike Hocevar

Hello everyone. I hope you have all had a great summer and have enjoyed our long stream of hot weather. As we approach the upcoming branch Annual General Meeting I am pleased to report that all directors have agreed to stay on for another year. Thank you Hugh Hetherington, Alan Dion, Ruth Lapointe, Caroline Wickham, William Friend and Susan Gelinas for your ongoing service and commitment.

Having said this, the strength of our branch is dependent on membership. Not only am I asking all of you to renew, but also are you able to bring someone else in as a member? The CHHA National \$30 fee entitles one to be a member of our branch for free as per our membership motion last year to waive the annual \$10 branch fee.

It's a convenient local opportunity to seek advice for your hard of hearing issues, and to attend the monthly Sound Advice meetings, the Summerhill guest speaker presentations and to receive our very informative quarterly branch newsletter *The Mountain Ear*. And, you will be receiving reports in the near future about exciting new initiatives the directors are endeavoring to achieve in this, our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary year.

On this note, recognizing the need to sustain our branch's vitality, the directors want to encourage younger members into the CHHA-North Shore Branch. In a positive and regular communication

with principals of the Young Adult Network (YAN) group of members, we have invited them to join us and to implement their annual conference motto "Tomorrow's Leaders".

## September AGM

**Monday, September 18, 2017**

**7:00 pm at the Summerhill**

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

**Guest Speaker**

**Gael Hannan**

**Topic**

**"I'm Hearing as Hard as I Can"**

**Gael is an author and Humourist and frequent guest speaker at CHHA meetings and conferences. She is also an editor and frequent contributor of articles to**

**HearingHealthMatters.org**

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We realize that not too far down the road we'll need members to step up as future branch directors. To encourage such, the directors have determined that through the generosity of a bequest by long-time member Carrell Hearn who passed away in 2014 at age 105, that some funding for YAN projects can be offered. But rather than just write cheques, we'd like to see actual branch participation and decision making on their part for such.

To start this off, the directors will be creating a \$1000 scholarship in Carrell Hearn's name for hard of hearing students enrolled in post secondary education. This will be administered through CHHA-National. Further, we're funding the printing of a Peer Support Network brochure for wide distribution that was produced by them, and will consider other funding for the group as part of our commitment to seeing them become involved with the branch.

Young Adult Network membership is a free option for CHHA members 18 to 40+ who mainly are students and working people. Most of you in the branch know our present membership has been mostly of an age range mid-50 and up but we're open to all ages, and want to see that reflected in the branch membership.

Another initiative we're currently making progress on is to review, revamp and revise our website [www.chha-nsb.com](http://www.chha-nsb.com). We feel it can be improved and made more relevant for the public to access. The directors have been brainstorming in advance of meeting a web designer to redesign as required, and down the road with input from YAN members that we can engage in some of the social media options available to create interest in our branch, and especially to encourage more membership.

The need to keep the membership growing and seeking out interested people to make themselves available for the board of directors is, and must be, our important key goal. It is important so that the branch can operate viably for another 20 years and further, delivering valuable educational resources to you and your families, and to our friends and neighbours here on the North Shore. The directors thank you for your confidence and support to date, and we hope you can make it to the upcoming AGM that will feature a very entertaining and enlightening guest speaker, Gael Hannan, author of the book "The Way I Hear It A Life With Hearing Loss," who will have you laughing and informed with her presentation.

## June Presentation

by Hugh Hetherington

For our June presentation, we were happy to have Lorianne Jenstad, Ph.D., Aud(C), RAUD, RHIP, Associate Professor at the UBC School of Audiology & Speech Sciences return to give us a presentation entitled "What's That Test All About? Understanding what the audiologist is doing when setting your hearing aids to be right for you." Lorianne has spoken at our meeting before and we are always delighted to have updates on her research into hearing loss and hearing aids.

To open her presentation Lorianne was asked from the audience to explain the credentials behind her name and what they mean to a person looking for a hearing professional to test and provide them with hearing aids. She said that in B.C. there are two categories of individuals that sell and fit hearing aids, Audiologists and Hearing Instrument Practitioners (HIP). Both categories are registered and regulated by a body called the College of Speech and Hearing Health Professionals of BC. The designation RAUD after the name means the person is a registered audiologist with the College and RHIP means the person is a registered Hearing Instrument Practitioner with the College.

Both audiologists and Hearing Instrument Practitioners are trained to assess and fit hearing aids. HIPs go through a college training program while audiologists follow a university program that includes a masters degree or equivalent. Both also have to have a minimum number of hours of clinical practice under supervision. Audiologists have additional training in identifying and diagnosing areas like hyperacusis, tinnitus, balance and dizziness and in pediatric care and fitting. They also have training in counselling and rehabilitation. Both are qualified to test adults for hearing loss and fit hearing aids. In B.C. audiologists are also required to have HIP registration in order to dispense hearing aids. You may also see the initials Aud(C) following the name. This means that the audiologist is certified with the National organization, although this is not a requirement to practice in B.C. It was also asked about the designation Doctor of Audiology (AuD). Lorianne explained that this indicates a doctoral level degree given in the USA that is equivalent to the Masters degree program given to audiologists in Canada.

Lorienne also mentioned that B.C. has the only audiologist training program west of Ontario and only accommodates training for 12 audiologists a year. Therefore you will find that in B.C. there are more HIPs in practice than Audiologists.

The College is there to protect the public through regulation of the hearing aid industry. They dictate what is supposed to happen in the testing and fitting of hearing aids. They create what are called policy documents. In other words they look at the research that is out there and they put that into policy documents that professionals have to follow in their jobs.

What happens when you get a hearing aid? Up front is the selection of the hearing aid that is right for your hearing loss. This is done between you and your hearing professional and takes into account a whole lot of factors. These include your range of hearing, your listening needs, situations where you are having the most trouble, the situations where you want to hear better. These are all discussed so that they can tailor the hearing aid for you.

Other factors that go into choosing the right hearing aid for you include such things as, how comfortable you are with technology, whether you want your hearing aids to be fully automatic, whether you want to show it off or keep it hidden, and whether you may need a telecoil program for the telephone or loop system listening.

It is also important to let your hearing professional know if you have any special listening requirements. For instance, if you sing in a choir or play a musical instrument. This became evident during the meeting with 3 musicians in the audience and through their stories and questions. The newer hearing aids are better able to accommodate music than older models.

The hearing professional will examine your ears with an otoscope to determine if your ear canals are clear and not occluded with earwax. You may also be given what is called a tympanometry test. This tests the condition of the middle ear and the mobility of your eardrums. You will then be given certain other tests that will include what is called an audiometry test. This tests your ability to hear individual sounds. You will be presented with tones of differing frequencies to determine the lowest level at which you can hear each tone. The results will be

plotted on an audiogram. Another test will be a speech recognition test. In this test you will be presented with words and sentences at a certain volume level and asked to repeat what you hear. The percentage of words that you hear correctly will be put on the audiogram for each ear. These sound tests are normally carried out in a sound proof booth.

Once the testing is complete and the above considerations discussed, the hearing aids are connected to a computer and set up according to the results of your tests. The settings of your hearing will then be tested with a system that is called real ear probe microphone testing. This is done to ensure that the hearing aid is doing what it should be doing. If not, then additional adjustments are made on the computer. This process is repeated, as necessary, until the hearing aid is correctly programmed for your hearing loss.

The reason this is so complex is that for every hearing aid there are over one million combinations of setting that can be programmed. Because of this complexity there are a number of ways it can go wrong. It also means that if you are not comfortable with your hearing aids, if they don't sound right to you, there are a lot of adjustments that can be made.

In talking about Real Ear Measurement testing, Lorienne used the analogy of playing the bagpipes in an open field as compared to playing them in a small room. In each situation they sound quite different. Similarly, a hearing aid will sound different if put in different sized ear canals. The real ear measurement is carried out to make sure the hearing aids will sound right to you and won't damage your hearing. This is done by placing a very small tube in your ear canal close to the eardrum. There is a microphone at the end of this tube. The hearing aid is put in your ear over top and speech signals or tones are played and measured at your eardrum. The test is done with soft, average and loud speech. The result is printed on a graph and will determine that the hearing aid is not under or over amplifying any sounds for you. A neat feature of hearing aids is their ability to detect soft sounds and turn up the amplification and for loud sounds turn the amplification down. Your hearing professional wants to ensure that your hearing aid is going to allow you to hear soft sounds, like a whisper, and not over amplify loud sounds so as to damage your hearing.

The directional microphone ability can also be tested with the Real Ear equipment. Sounds can simultaneously be presented to the hearing aid from the front and the rear and the levels from each are plotted on a graph. The graph will show that the sounds from the front are amplified and sounds from the rear are reduced.

The real ear measurement testing has been mandated by the college for all hearing professionals since 2011 and should be carried out for all hearing aid fittings and whenever significant adjustments have been made to the hearing aid. The equipment used for this test will vary depending upon manufacturer and even some hearing aids are able to produce the necessary sounds on their own.

Following her PowerPoint presentation Lorieanne took a number of interesting questions from the audience:

Q. With reference to directional, it was asked what to do in a room with an audience where you want to be able to hear a question from behind.

A. If it is a relatively quiet situation the hearing aid should be on omni-directional setting so that voices can be picked up from all around. If your hearing aid is automatic in its program selection it would analyze the environment and probably remain in omni mode as long as the room remains relatively quiet.

Q. Are there limitations with the directional microphone setting in limiting surrounding noise with the open fit hearing aids?

A. Depending upon your hearing loss you may still hear the lower pitches from all around as these do not pass through the hearing aid and enter the ear canal directly. You will still get benefit though because the higher pitch sounds will be reduced.

Q. Why don't we get tested for how we hear in ambient noise like in a restaurant or coffee shop?

A. Such tests are now available and Lorieanne is training more and more audiologists that they should be using those tests in their clinic. Those tests exist but the College doesn't require them. They are very beneficial because when you come in for a test it is because you are having difficulty in noise. The audiologist doesn't want to make things worse and hope-

fully better. More and more they are pushing that those tests should be done clinically.

Q. When you are looking to purchase a hearing aid how do you know whether the clinic has an audiologist or a hearing instrument practitioner and what is best?

A. This should be stated in their advertising or you can ask when you phone for an appointment. Lorieanne qualified this by saying there are many great HIPs out there. She said that although she talked about the differences in education, what is more important for you is someone you can connect with and it doesn't matter what their training is as long as you feel comfortable with them and they answer your questions to your satisfaction.

Q. How do I know what questions to ask my audiologist?

A. Lorieanne complimented our Branch on the job we are doing with our Sound Advice sessions by empowering people to think about what questions to ask and what to look for. She said educating people before they take the first step is huge. Hearing professionals don't always want to overwhelm their clients with a lot of detail. If you ask questions, they are more than happy to provide it. The most important thing is to ask questions and see what comes back.

Q. I got musician's earplugs to use when I am playing in my band but it makes it difficult to hear what others in my group are doing. What can I do to protect my hearing and also help me with this?

A. The group can get in ear monitors so that everyone can hear what the band is doing. You can also get musician's earplugs with different degrees of attenuation.

Q. My hearing aids are 5 years old now. Have hearing aids changed enough to warrant spending another \$5000 or more?

A. Apparently for some, yes! One or two others in the audience backed this up by mentioning their own experiences.

Q. How do I know whether my clinic will provide the best hearing aid for me?

A. This is a matter to discuss between you and your hearing professional. Most clinics limit themselves

to 2 or 3 brands for practical reasons. Each manufacturer's software is different and each has many different complex settings. You want them to be very familiar with their products so that you get the best result. If your clinic believes that there is a better hearing aid for you that they don't sell they could refer you to a different colleague who does.

Q. If you are new to an area and already have hearing aids where do you go to get adjustments made? Won't the clinic try to sell me a new hearing aid?

A. If your hearing aids are relatively recent they normally wouldn't try to sell you a new pair. Shop around to find out who in the area handles your particular brand. They will be able to make adjustments but you should expect to have to pay a fee to have this done.

Q. When should I seek out a medical specialist to deal with my hearing loss?

A. Most hearing loss doesn't normally require extensive testing beyond what your hearing specialist will do. If there is something medically necessary your doctor can refer you to an Ear, Nose and Throat Specialist (ENT) for further evaluation. Your hearing professional is trained to recognize medical conditions that require this type of intervention. It may be necessary in cases with sudden hearing loss, especially in one ear or balance and dizziness disorders, head injuries, accidents, etc. If the cause is due to earwax accumulation some audiologists will deal with this or they may refer you to your doctor.

Thank you Lorianne for another great presentation.

## Have you met my friend Roger?

by Alan Dion

I was first introduced to Roger about 3 years ago, and the impact to my life has been wonderful.

Let me explain who, or rather, what Roger is, and then I'll tell you about how he has helped me.

Roger is a "pen shaped" device made by Phonak that uses a proprietary FM technology to transfer "sounds" that it picks up and then sends them directly to my hearing aids. It is, simply, a receiver of sound and a broadcaster/transmitter of this same sound. It comes with a lanyard to hang around one's

neck, and can also be used hand held or laid down on a flat surface.

The technology behind Roger is quite amazing, but in concept it is really very straight forward. Like a radio transmitter it picks up signals and then transmits these signals, but it is not sent out to the "general public", only to those who are using the proprietary hardware and software to receive it. Obviously, I have this hardware and software, which is basically the Roger system, known as the "pen" and a receiver along with my later generation hearing aids.

Simple, eh?

But let me tell you of some of the ways that I have used Roger, and you'll see why I refer to "it" as my friend.

I often go to courses and seminars, and always try to get a seat in the front where I can get as unobstructed a view of the speaker as possible. I still seemed to miss more that I hear, unless the location is in a looped environment, but that is quite rare. On my first lecture with Roger, I asked the speaker if he would mind wearing Roger. Once assured that it was harmless, he said OK. I heard the entire talk! Now, whenever I attend a talk, rally, lecture, seminar I ask the person up front to wear the pen and very rarely do I receive an objection. It's now a pleasure to go to these types of event again. I even once asked a yoga instructress to wear it, reluctant at first, she agreed to give it a go. Following her would have been impossible before, but now I picked up over 80% of her instruction. This was good enough for me.

Probably my favourite use of Roger has been during Ballroom dancing. For many years my wife and I would go dancing, and we'd make a pretty fair dance couple. But slowly it was getting harder for me. Not only was the music being played quieter and quieter, but they were also turning down the bass. Without the bass I couldn't get the beat, and no beat means no more dancing. Much to my wife's chagrin, we began dancing less and less, and finally stopped altogether.

About 5 or 6 years after we stopped I found Roger. With my older hearing aids turned up, and with Roger placed immediately below the loud speaker, I was able to hear the music and the beat again. I could dance once more. We were rusty, and needed lots of practice, but we have managed to revive an old, but beloved, pastime for the two of us.

Any amount of time with hearing aids in a group is too much time. However, with its directional ability my Roger lets me get a lot more out of conversations than before. It is still not perfect, and I have to make sure that many other factors are looked after, but with Roger I do much better in group environments than before.

Also, it makes a wonderful invisible leash. I discovered this with my wife wearing my Roger, and walking away, but letting me know where she was all the time. She was wearing the pen, and me the hearing aids. At a crowded art show in Vancouver she walked around, even in different rooms from me, and could keep me informed of her whereabouts. She can talk, and I can hear, the reverse doesn't work. But when she says "come here", well, I have my instructions!

## Call out for Members

The North Shore Branch of the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association is a small branch, but we are looking to expand. We need your help. We want to be able to provide support to people living with hearing issues. You could be the one with the hearing issue. You could be caring for or living with someone with a hearing loss. We want input from you. We want you to join our team. We want to know what you need to make daily living easier. We want to know what you've learned that makes your life easier. And we want to find more ways to make life easier. We want to be able to share the information we collect and have it available to the public. But we need more branch members and more board members. We would like to attract younger members. We need people who have technical skills, accounting knowledge, interests and skills in sharing information. Come to our Sound Advice Meetings. Come to our Summerhill presentations. Email us. Ask to speak to a board member. Ask us for information. Give us information. Let's find a way that hearing loss gives us a voice to make the world a more hearing friendly place, and not a wall to keep us away from what makes our lives full and meaningful.

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.

## Access4All Fair

Celebrate the completion of the West Vancouver Memorial Library's new accessibility ramp with an afternoon of activities designed to promote access and inclusion. Hear motivational speakers, talk to community service providers and learn about the Library's assistive services. Tuesday, September 19, 1:30 – 5 p.m.

A Rick Hansen Access4All Canada 150 Signature Initiative, supported by the Government of Canada.

## Sound Advice

Presented by:

**The Canadian Hard of Hearing Association**

**North Shore Branch**

**The group meets on the First Friday of each month**

**(except July and August)**

**from 10:00 AM to 12 Noon**

**Next Meeting September 8**

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 include:

Technology; Speechreading;

Effective Coping Strategies;

Behavioural Issues;

Improving Relationships;

Improving Hearing Environments

**For Information call:**

**604-926-5222**