Canadian Hard of Hearing Association

North Shore Branch

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Mountain Ear

Pres Mez

By Mike Hocevar

To start out, I'll give you an update on the back problems I reported in the last issue of Mountain Ear. I moaned and groaned about my temporary (thankfully) bad back situation. The update is that I am just fine now and been having a superb summer---- I hope you have been enjoying a great one too!

I am so glad many more of you could catch Victoria McLeod's Tinnitus presentation at the June guest speaker meeting at the Summerhill. The board felt that because the very nasty weather situation on the day of the November meeting resulted in a very poor turnout to hear Victoria, that it would be worthwhile to have her come again this June. Victoria was very glad to do this for us, and as expected we had an excellent audience to hear her superb presentation on Tinnitus.

So, thank you Victoria for being generous with your time and for the upbeat presentation! Rather than redo the account of her presentation again, you can read the report in the December 2013 issue and you will find further supplemental information about Tinnitus elsewhere on these pages.

Also, in June the CHHA BC annual general meeting and conference was held in Surrey. Hugh Hetherington and I attended this daylong gathering. Of special interest to me was what Rosalind Ho, president of the CHHA Young Adults Network (YAN), reported from the CHHA national conference in Toronto this spring.

The theme of the YAN caucus was "Leaders of Tomorrow." It sounds like there are some pretty committed young people coming up and such a movement can only boost the strength and directions of our organization. Rosalind is from Vancouver and

Annual General Meeting

Monday, September 22, 2014

7:00 pm at the Summerhill

135 West 15th Street, North Vancouver

Guest Speaker

Jeff Small, Ph.D.,

Associate Professor

UBC School of Audiology and Speech Sciences

Topic

Challenges and Strategies In Understanding Speech

"How our ears "talk" to our minds and why it matters in the way we communicate"

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advised that they operate their section of CHHA on a very low and tight budget that pretty well is exclusively acquired through proceeds from the annual Walk2Hear fundraiser.

Walk2Hear is a walk-as-much-as-you-want along a designated route in Vancouver's Jericho Park. It will be held for the third year on Sunday September 28th. Walkers are asked to register with a $25 donation fee, and encouraged to consider raising further donations from family, friends and the public. Please think about sending a donation of any size to support other walkers if you cannot get to the walk yourself.

Also, at the CHHA BC AGM, there was some follow up activity to the major public forum on the high cost of hearing aids in BC held in April at the Vancouver Public Library. Feedback received from the Provincial Health Ministry indicates that no subsidies are to be expected anytime soon. However, the new Seniors Advocate wants to learn more about this issue, and the NDP's health critic, Judy Darcy from New Westminster has a willingness to learn more also. CHHA Provincial president, Marilyn Dahl has really put great effort into leading this initiative and deserves great recognition as such, along with the other steering committee members, Miron Gazda, Charles Lazlo and Ruth Warwick, with whom I had the pleasure of serving.

Other information that I brought up at the AGM was that government health ministry funding has enabled Speech Reading training courses at Vancouver Community College King Edward campus to be very accessible. There is a Level 1 course for $57 and a Level 2 follow up for just $27. These are two-hour sessions once a week for three months with an option to take it in the day or the evening. Lisa Dillon Edgett provides outstanding instruction. Lisa was a guest speaker for our North Shore Branch meeting in June 2012.

I have now just completed both course levels. While the absolute best anyone can realistically achieve through speech reading alone is about a 45 – 50% ability to understand every word, I found it very valuable along with practical extra coping mechanisms to assist me in my everyday life. I can recommend this course very highly. It is very enjoyable and provides lots of great tips to help you cope with hearing loss. I should note also, that CHHA BC is training a number of speech reading instructors; we urge the Provincial Chapter to use the teachers to do out of town training sessions since VCC has an established course here in the Vancouver Area.

Our branch Annual General Meeting package with the reports and financial statements has now been mailed out to all members. You are asked to read it over and to jot down any questions to present to the directors on September 22nd. The material outlines clearly our program to educate you and the general public on hard of hearing issues and the latest assistive technologies. We keep it focused and believe we achieve quality results for the North Shore.

This year we are pleased that our keynote speaker for the AGM will be Dr. Jeff Small, Associate Professor at UBC School of Audiology and Speech Sciences. Jeff has presented to us a number of times in past years and will give us a presentation on the Challenges and Strategies in Understanding Speech. We have had the great pleasure in having Dr. Glen Grigg, Professor of Psychology and Registered Clinical Counsellor as the keynote speaker for several AGM's. This year Glen will be out of town in September. We hope to have him back again in the future.

Finally, very special thanks and regrets are extended to Lauren Cotterall who just recently and reluctantly advised that due to other work obligations she is not able to commit to serve as a director for this coming term. Hopefully, she may be able to return in the future. Thank you, Lauren for your past service to the hard of hearing.

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.

Hearing Aid Battery Recycling

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

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 with Newsletter on the subject line and we will add your email address to our email list, Thank You!

June Presentation

Report by: Mike Hocever

As mentioned in my president's message on page 1, our speaker for the June presentation was a return visit by Victoria McLeod, M.Cl.Sc., Aud(C), Training Audiologist for ReSound Canada. Victoria spoke on the Topic of Tinnitus and the new products from ReSound Canada. You can read a full account of Victoria's presentation in the December 2013 issue of Mountain Ear, which is available on our website: www.chha-nsb.com.

Following up on Victoria McLeod's presentation, here is some further information for dealing with Tinnitus -- the "ringing in the ear" condition that affects many people, some of whom are hard of hearing.

The cause of this is generally from damage to/loss of hair cells in the organ of Corti of the inner ear. It manifests differently in different people and its severity can range from hardly noticeable, slightly annoying to severely disabling. Presently, there is no cure for Tinnitus but great research efforts are ongoing. The beauty of finding such a cure is that it is likely that hearing may in some cases also be restored.

Experiments, using mice, a species that have ears similar to a human's, conducted last year through the use of drugs saw some limited success of which the findings will be built upon. A big hope is that gene cell therapies to regenerate the hair cells in the inner ear will eventually within a few years be the method employed.

But, in the meantime, lots can be done to assist those with Tinnitus. A number of strategies and treatments have been devised to help one to manage the sound. Some medical and technological aids may be used also.

A formal Tinnitus program is offered through St. Paul's Hospital in Vancouver. A referral from an otolaryngologist (ear, nose and throat specialist) is required to initiate acceptance, and they require an audiogram from a hearing test taken in the past six months. They can conduct this if it hasn't been done in that recent time frame. The otolaryngologist visit first is to check for any particular medical situation that might be causing the problem.

The treatment is officially called Tinnitus Retraining Therapy (TRT). It involves Individual and group counseling as one facet of the treatment, while various sound therapy techniques are utilized. Information can be obtained about the St. Paul's TRT through Glynnis Tidball at 604-806-8660 or by email gtidball@providencehealth.bc.ca. The treatment is not covered by MSP and the fees vary depending upon the services provided.

Such a program as St. Paul's appears to be provided by the University of Iowa Tinnitus and Hyperacusis Clinic with a description online in the Hearing Health Foundation website. It reports that their program looks at how sleep can affect the condition. Strategies before and during sleep are taught and also about the use of background sounds and learning relaxation techniques.

There are also audiology clinics locally that provide TRT. In West Vancouver there is Rahim Ghanbari, AuD, Aud(C), Raud, RHIP, at the Noble Hearing Clinic, 1475 Marine Drive, 604-281-1475. In Vancouver there is Carol Lau, BA(Sp & H Th), MA (Aud), Aud(C), at Sound idEars Hearing & Speech Clinic, #304 – 650 West 41st Ave., Vancouver, 604-708-9780.

Tinnitus sometimes brings out emotional issues and during counselling, patients are asked to describe feelings and fears about the impact on their health and lives. This helps to offer patients ways to change their reactions and to find ways to live with the condition.

Distraction by the Tinnitus sound in our daily lives is examined as to times it occurs; practice doing activities involving concentration exercises and using background sounds for masking the sound are explored – a big part of managing Tinnitus can be achieved through sound therapy, which can help to take attention away from it and make it less noticeable.

One example recommends use of low level masking sound, at a level that you can hear both the sound and your Tinnitus sound. Another involves employing broadband noise like static on a radio, played at different frequencies. Music can also provide definite benefits. Rather than pop style music that tends to be very stimulating, the use of slower paced instrumental music is more helpful because of its relaxing nature.

Ken Jones, who runs the free Greater Vancouver Tinnitus Self Help Group, says that relaxation is a huge part of coping with Tinnitus. Ken has been a speaker at our Summerhill presentations several times in the past. He says that reducing stressful situations, positive thinking and finding acceptance is essential in learning to live with Tinnitus. Ken strongly recommends avoiding the use of drugs or medication to cope with the condition

The Greater Vancouver Tinnitus Self Help group is very much like our own "Sound Advice" format. Ken is quoted saying, "Support persons (spouse, friend or relative) are welcome. The group is casual, supportive and for all ages. It varies in size from 2 to 8 most of the time. An experienced facilitator will be present to facilitate the discussion." Ken has had loud tinnitus since 1984 and has facilitated the group since 1996. Meetings are held on the first Wednesday evening from 7:30pm – 9pm each month except January, July & August at Holy Trinity Anglican Church, 3rd floor located at 12th & Hemlock, which is one block east of Granville Street.

Ken is inspirational in promoting a good attitude and willingness to learn to find what works for oneself in coping with Tinnitus. He is available to tell about the group by phone at 604-535-2204 or drop him an email to kenjjones@gmail.com.

As 90 percent of those with Tinnitus also have hearing loss, coping strategies such as those taught at our North Shore "Sound Advice" Sessions can be very helpful.

Further information on Tinnitus is found on many websites for those connected to the web. Just google in "Tinnitus" and you will be amazed what shows up, including in our own Canadian Hard of Hearing Association National website.

WALK2HEAR 2014

Sunday September 28, 2014
Registration starts 9:00 AM
Jericho Beach Park
East End
(2nd Ave & Wallace St.)
To Register visit the website at:
chha.ca/walk2hear/vancouver.php

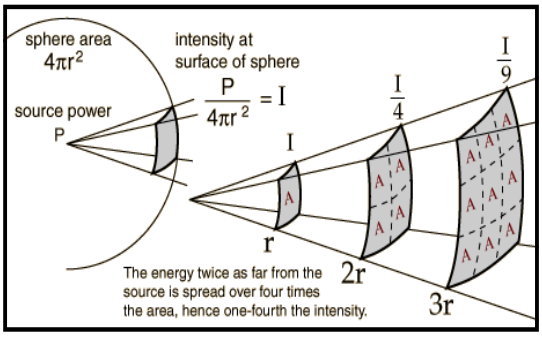
Taking Advantage of Technology

By Hugh Hetherington

(Note: This article is updated and reprinted from Mountain Ear March 2007 issue.)

Although we don't often consciously think about it, acoustics always play an important role in the life of a hard of hearing person. When we struggle with hearing loss, three of our major enemies are distance, reverberation, and noise. All of these factors have an effect on how well we hear and consequently the intelligibility of what we hear. Taking them individually, let's first look at how they impact our communications.

When someone speaks to us or we listen to the radio or television, the sound travels to our ears through the air. The sounds we hear are the vibrating molecules of the air we breathe. Sound cannot travel in a vacuum. Perhaps you remember the experiment we used to do in science class. An electric bell is placed under a bell jar and the air is pumped out creating a vacuum. When the vacuum is created, we can no longer hear the bell ringing. Although air is the medium through which sound travels, it is far from perfect and this is true even if you are not disadvantaged with a hearing loss. Distance has a major impact on the sound we hear. This is because the intensity of sound varies inversely with the square of the distance from the sound. It means that with every doubling of the distance between you and the source of the sound, the intensity of the sound is reduced by a factor of four. As a hard of hearing person, a conversation is best when we are within two to four feet from the speaker.



Reverberation or echo is when sound bounces off hard surfaces and arrives at the listener's ears slightly delayed from the original sound. Reverberation is measured in delay time and the longer the delay, the more difficult the listening situation becomes. A person with good hearing can often tolerate delay times of up to 1 second or more, while a hard of hearing person will have great difficulty when de-

lay time reaches 0.5 seconds. The competing echoes manifest as noise in the listener's ears. For example, try and carry on a conversation in a school gymnasium during a basketball or other sports game.

Background noise is probably the situation that most comes to mind when we talk about the difficulties we have as a hard of hearing person. Noise can come from many sources. It may be competing speech when more than one person is trying to speak at once or a radio or television playing in the background. It may be an air conditioner, traffic noise, water running, a vacuum cleaner or other machinery. The list is endless and let's face it, we live in a very noisy world today.

Fortunately, technology is all around us today and we no longer have to suffer in silence, so to speak. When we walk down the street or visit the malls, how many people do we see with devices in their ears? There are people listening to music with earphones, people talking on their cell phones with hands free devices, etc. With this technological paraphernalia all around us, we shouldn't be shy about improving our lives and the lives of those around us in a similar fashion.

For a person with hearing loss, a good hearing aid should be the first consideration. Louder is not necessarily better. It can help, but when noise and reverberation are also amplified it generally makes the situation worse. Today's modern digital hearing aids don't just amplify sound. They are tiny computer devices capable of listening for us, processing the sound and delivering to our ears more of what we want to hear while helping to minimize the background noise we don't want to hear.

To combat the problems listed above, these modern digital hearing aids can be equipped with such features as directional microphones and digital noise reduction capability. These features both work independently to help us in noisy environments and digital hearing aids can be equipped with both.

Directional microphones are designed to pick up more sound from in front in contrast to an omnidirectional microphone that picks up sound from all around. Many modern hearing aids will automatically switch from one mode to the other as we move from one listening environment to another. In carrying out a conversation one to one in a noisy location, the directional microphone will focus mainly on the person in front of us.

Digital noise reduction works in a different way to enhance the listener's comfort in noise. It accomplishes this by analyzing the nature of the sounds in our listening environment and amplifying the speech content more than what it perceives to be noise. Noise has certain characteristics different from speech, and as such can be processed differently in the digital circuitry of the hearing aid.

Another important feature in a hearing aid is a telecoil. Sometimes referred to as a T-switch, this is a small magnetic pickup coil inside the hearing aid that can be switched in to replace the microphone when talking on the telephone. This allows the hearing aid to receive the sound from the phone by magnetic induction. With the microphone off, background noise is reduced or eliminated for the listener. Since many public facilities are now equipped with induction loop systems, this feature can also be used to the listener's advantage in meetings and presentations taking place in these facilities. In this case the sound from the microphone being used by the presenter will deliver the sound clearly to the hearing aid wearer's ear without any background interference.

When hearing aids are no longer enough to fully satisfy the listener's needs, FM technology can be a real boon to the hard of hearing. Although FM systems have been available for a number of years now, recent advances in technology have vastly improved their capability to improve the signal to noise ratio making speech more intelligible in noisy environments. A new system of note is the Phonak Roger Pen introduced last year. Roger is the military term meaning "message received and understood." The Roger system consists of a pen shaped microphone that automatically adjusts to the listener's needs depending upon how it is held or placed. This is accomplished by means of an incorporated accelerometer that automatically switches the device through three modes, directional, omni-directional or lapel mode. These modes can also be locked in manually, if needed.

The Roger Pen can be used for conversations in noisy environments like restaurants, meeting rooms, social gatherings, and while in the car or other transportation modes. Other features of the system allow it to be used to wirelessly transmit your TV sound directly to your hearing aids or to connect via Bluetooth to your cell phone.

While the Roger Pen system connects seamlessly with all newer Phonak hearing aids, it can also be used with any manufacturer's hearing aids that incorporate a telecoil by using the Pen with a Roger neckloop receiver. There are also Roger receivers available for select cochlear implant systems. A Roger clip on microphone is also available that can be used instead of the Roger Pen.

If the Roger system is something that you think would be of benefit to you, you can find out more about it from your audiologist or hearing instrument practitioner. You can also find out more by attending our North Shore Branch Sound Advice sessions taking place on the first Friday each month.

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.

For Information call: 604-926-5222

Everyone Welcome

Do you have a hearing loss? Come try new hearing aids!

Primary Investigator:
Lorienne Jenstad, Ph.D., Aud(C), Registered Audiologist & Hearing Instrument Practitioner
Associate Professor
School of Audiology and Speech Sciences

Project Title: Contextual Momentary Assessments by Wearers of Hearing Aids

Wanted: Adults with hearing loss to participate in a study about how evaluations of speech and noise change under different conditions. The aim of this study is to look at participants' ratings in a lab setting. These lab results will be used to compare against field measures in the future.

The study will be carried out at UBC Campus. It will take two or three 1- to 2-hour sessions. We will ask some general questions about your health and test your hearing, memory, and attention. Candidates for the study will be fitted with hearing aids. You will then be asked to listen to recorded speech or complete a simple task (e.g., Sudoku puzzle) in noise. We want to know how much of the speech you understand and your ratings of the sound in each condition. So, we will ask you to complete a short questionnaire during and after each testing block.

Participants will receive a compensation of $50 and the results of their hearing test.

If you are 18 years or older and think you have a hearing loss, please contact: Lorienne Jenstad, Ph.D.
(604) 827.3338
e-mail: amplab@audiospeech.ubc.ca