



Canadian Hard of Hearing Association

North Shore Branch

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Editor: Hugh Hetherington Issue 89 June 2015

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By Mike Hocevar

May is Hearing Awareness Month. What does it mean to you and your family? We, who live with hearing loss, often don't consciously think about our hearing issues as we try to adapt and cope with it as we live our daily lives.

Perhaps it can start with a visit to your audiologist for an updated hearing test. This will allow your audiologist to make any required adjustments to reflect the results. Your audiologist will also clean the hearing aids. We are always concerned about the high costs of hearing aids, but this is one of the services that is included in the cost. So let's do our part to ensure that we are proactive in doing all we can to ensure effective and stress free communication with our families and friends.

Using this Hearing Awareness Month as a trigger for some thoughts, how about making an effort to "spread the gospel" about our North Shore Branch? Share with others the positive benefits and experience of being a member of the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association. Encourage your friends to mention to others, that if they have questions or know of someone in their own family or circle of friends that might be at the stage of requiring hearing aids, to get in touch with us anytime. Our telephone number is listed on this front page. Also, make sure they know about our "Sound Advice" sessions at the West Vancouver Seniors' Activity

Centre. The last session before our summer break is on June 5th but we are starting a new series on September 11th which happens to be the second Friday since the centre is closed until after Labour Day.

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June Presentation

Monday, June 15, 2015

7:00 pm at the Summerhill

135 West 15th Street, North Vancouver

Guest Speaker

Lisa Dillon Edgett, Ph.D., RAUD

**Instructor: Speechreading and
Communication skills at Vancouver
Community College**

Topic:

**Speechreading—How Can
I Make It Work For Me?**

What is Speechreading? Its benefits & limitations

Factors that affect your ability to communicate

A sampling of strategies for difficult situations

**Everyone Welcome
Wheelchair and Hearing Accessible
For information call 604-926-5222**

Hearing Awareness Month this year featured the CHHA National Conference. It was held in Halifax and the branch delegated Hugh Hetherington to attend on our behalf. There was to be a vote on a possible change of name for the organization but the proposal has been put on hold for further consideration. One theme that will be getting attention after the conference is "Let's Loop Canada". The idea is that more churches, public and commercial spaces & businesses should get on board with wiring rooms to make them more accessible for those of us with hearing aids. This initiative was strongly promoted at the conference. Apparently, in the United States there are laws requiring designated spaces to be hearing accessible, but here in Canada we need to advocate for this ourselves. Our branch has been instrumental in getting a number of churches on the North Shore looped, but there are more to be done. If this is something that would be helpful to you and your church, talk to them about it and ask that they contact the North Shore Branch for free information about how this can be done.

Still in the realm of Hearing Awareness Month, it will be summer before we know it. We will be back into the fall season when the fifth annual Walk2Hear will take place again at Jericho Park. Generally, when we think of the hard of hearing in this country, the image is that we're in the older age demographics. For the most part it is true enough, but growing numbers of younger people are experiencing hearing loss so one of the biggest targets for the funds raised at Walk2Hear is the CHHA Young Peoples Network. They meet on post secondary campuses and bring awareness of CHHA and the importance of protecting their hearing to youth. The important thing here is that we are developing dedicated and future leaders of the organization through this initiative.

Thoughts for me in Hearing Awareness Month include a desire to see a program of action by CHHA National and the Provincial Chapter to promote branch establishment in every community. A simple outreach through local media and personal contact with community leaders to identify possible people to involve in organizing a branch should be undertaken. I would like to see a "How To" set of guiding instructions and ensuring Provincial Chapter support for getting the branches up and running.

I am pleased to update from our last newsletter, that Hugh and I went back to Abbotsford in April and witnessed the formation of the new Abbotsford branch. There were a couple of dozen people in attendance. A board of directors led by the new president Jerry Gosling was elected, and great support was shown from some local audiologists. Congratulations! The people of Abbotsford will soon begin to appreciate having a CHHA branch like ours.

Also, I will just mention that many of you will not have heard Lisa Dillon Edgett who will present at the Summerhill as guest speaker in June. She will give some very useful observations and tips on lip or speechreading, which most of us incorporate naturally as part of trying to cope with hearing loss. Lisa teaches the two-part course over at the King Edward campus of Vancouver Community College. The course is held once a week for three months and repeated three times a year. Come and learn a few things from Lisa at our meeting. You may want to consider signing up for one of her courses. A family member or friend is permitted to attend with you for free.

Finally, I invite you to plan to attend the BC Chapter's "Hearing Health & Wellness" special daytime free public presentation at Vancouver Public Library central downtown branch on Saturday, June 13th. I think you will find it to be full of very useful information. Please refer to the notice on page 5.

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

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!

April Presentation

By Mike Hocevar

Move over Smart Phone—now there are Smart Hearing Aids. Many hearing aid manufacturers have been introducing their latest technology to the marketplace over the last year or so. Our guest speaker for April was **Dan Paccioretti**, Western Canada Roger and FM sales manager from Phonak. Dan shared with us their new “*Venture*” platform, the revolutionary new family of hearing aids his company has recently introduced. Their latest offering is the Phonak Audéo V RIC (receiver in the canal) and Bolero V BTE series. These hearing aids have more than twice the processing power and with 30% less battery consumption than the previous platform.

For some time now, we have been saying to everyone who will listen, that hearing aids are no longer just little amplifiers. They are sophisticated computers that believe it or not, pack more power than your large home personal computer. The new models strive to provide programs to match with any given listening situation and to give the best hearing possible in the most difficult situations.

According to Dan, the shelf life of new technology today is about 18 months and new innovation is required to maintain an edge over competitors and to retain market share. So it has always been very exciting to see the improvements in hearing aid technology coming out in recent years.

You will recall that last year Dan told us all about the new “Roger pen” system as the next step beyond FM systems to wirelessly deliver sound direct to your hearing aids successfully for the best signal to noise ratio in the most adverse of listening situations. The “*Venture*” series of hearing aid products incorporate much of Roger’s salient features, along with other advanced features.

The “smart” part found in Phonak’s latest Venture Platform series is with “AutoSense OS”. This is the central brain of the new Phonak hearing aids. It captures and analyzes the incoming sound and can draw on over 200 settings to match the sound environment exactly. This allows the hearing aid to seamlessly provide the best setting for that environment without requiring any manual interaction by the wearer. The Phonak Audéo V series are available in four performance levels, Premium – V90, Advanced – V70, Standard – V50, and Essential – V30. The informa-

tion that we are describing here is for the Premium Audéo V90 model.

A very key component of “*Venture*” is its ability to select the best program as optimally as possible even in the most adverse listening situations. Autosense OS uses binaural directionality. This technology uses a four microphone system where information is shared from one hearing aid to the other. The programs for “*Venture*” include the following within AutoSense OS:

Calm provides the optimal gain setting for speech understanding and listening comfort. Simply explained, the “*Venture*” hearing aid features not only four directional microphones to allow for focused directional sound catchment, but there are tens of millions of transistors built into the device. That’s right, about 45 million. These serve to filter and clarify sound – it is not always more volume that is required but how clear the sound is heard through the hearing aid. A windblock feature allows the wearer to enjoy the outdoors by suppressing the side that detects wind noise and transfers the sound from the clear side to the windy side.

Speech in Noise adapts and reduces noise from behind in real time and optimizes the signal to noise ratio for the best listening outcome. Once a certain level of background noise is received for 20 seconds, the hearing aids send signals to each other to focus on the sound you need in front of you in a speech situation with corresponding background noise suppression; speech within the “beam” will be dominant.

Speech in Loud Noise zooms in on a single voice in a diffuse noise environment, improving speech intelligibility. This program is an improvement on previous noise suppression technology that kept raising volume above noise to the point where it was all an overwhelming situation. It uses beam-forming technology with a narrow beam of directionality to the front while adaptively suppressing noise from the back and from the sides.

Speech in a Car reduces broadband noise in the car to create a stable listening environment for easy communication. This can be a very difficult listening experience for most hard of hearing people. Although in a confined area, the hard of hearing have a hard time to see the people speaking when involved with the operation of a car, or clearly hearing the other passengers depending where everyone sits.

This naturally makes using lip/speechreading, a natural adaptive coping strategy, difficult in this kind of situation. But, the *AutoSene OS* dramatically increases the ease of listening in a vehicle with better directional catchment than most present technology that focuses the microphone towards the front windshield. Excellent results have been achieved in the technology trials and of user satisfaction for those who have bought "*Venture*" since its introduction this past November.

Comfort in Noise actively reduces noise in the surrounding environment for increased comfort when no speech is present. Positive listening experience with this aspect includes when in a busy shopping mall or perhaps on public transit.

Comfort in Echo is a new program within Auto-sense OS for the V90. It recognizes the frequency of any reverberation and applies the appropriate amount of gain reduction, resulting in less distortion and making speech more comfortable. We know that not all rooms or halls have good acoustics. Sound has a little more clarity and just the right amount of echo required for natural speech recognition is retained.

Music offers an expanded dynamic range with slow compression speed and increased gain for a richer and fuller experience. It is interesting that one of the challenges with digital hearing aids, surprisingly, has been to find a way to make music a more enjoyable listening experience than from the former generation of hearing aids using analog. It appears that Phonak in the "*Venture*" model has made a breakthrough to create a major improvement for enjoying music.

In addition to the hearing aids, Phonak offers a number of add on products to enhance your enjoyment of life. The options that are available include:

Phonak EasyCall. This device connects the hearing aids binaurally to any Bluetooth cell phone including older phone models. The devices attaches to the back of the cell phone and streams the conversation to both hearing aids in unmatched sound quality.

Phonak ComPilot II. This device is a streamer that is worn around the neck and streams the sound from a TVLink connected to your television directly to your hearing aids in full stereo sound. It is also capable of pairing with your Bluetooth cell phone as an alternate to EasyCall. It can also connect your hearing aids to any stereo sound source or your computer. It is rechargeable with a 24 hour streaming capacity.

Phonak ComPilot II Air. This device is also a streamer that is clipped to your clothing rather than by neckloop. It has much the same features as the ComPilot II, but with a 4 hour streaming capacity.

Phonak RemoteControl App. This turns your smart phone into an advanced remote for the Venture hearing aids. It works in conjunction with the ComPilot II or the ComPilot II Air to enable direct selection of programs and provides volume control of the hearing aids, as well as, individual left and right volume control. The App can be downloaded free from your cell phone App store.

Other options that are available include the **Phonak Dect II home phone**, which streams the conversation from the phone to both hearing aids wirelessly, and the **PilotOne II** which is a pocket remote control to control all the features of the hearing aids. This device is especially useful when dexterity issues make it difficult to access the buttons on the hearing aid.

With Dan you can be confident of the information he brings. Before being with Phonak for the past 10 years, he was for many years in the public health care system as an audiologist with the City of Vancouver and then the provincial education ministry working with school aged children and development of programs to facilitate their classroom experience.

Further, Dan was earlier very involved with the introduction of cochlear implants which to this day provides great hope to many of those who have lost just about all of their hearing. Dan always uses as his guiding principal that he is an audiologist first, and sales rep for Phonak second. He went with Phonak because of their work in pediatrics over the years. Dan also is involved with launching the company's latest technological advancements. It's a far cry from the time he first started out 40 years ago when a micro screwdriver was all that was used to make any and all adjustments in the old analog hearing aids. Now that hearing aids are digital, they are all computer programmable.

Hugh Hetherington recently purchased the Audéo V90 hearing aids and spoke very highly of them and their features. A couple more members of the audience backed him up by mentioning their own positive experiences. But, Dan was diplomatic, and sincere, to acknowledge competitors and their hearing aids, indicating most are of good quality and many

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You Are Invited
To a public conference on

HEARING HEALTH AND WELLNESS

"What consumers know and want to know about hearing health care"
"Lessons from health psychology: health behaviour and hearing care"
 Speaker: Dr. Lorienne M. Jenstad, PhD, AUD(C), RAUD, RHIP
 Associate Professor, Audiology, UBC

and

"Services provided by the College of Speech and Hearing Professionals of BC to the hard of hearing in BC"
 Speaker: Diane O'Connor Registrar, CEO, CSHPBC

followed by the

Annual General Meeting of Canadian Hard of Hearing Association – BC Chapter

Saturday, June 13, 2015

10:00 am - 4:00 pm

**Alice MacKay Room-Level one
Library Square Conference Centre
350 West Georgia, Vancouver**

**Assistive Listening System & English Realtime Captioning provided
with "first come, first served" seating.
Lunch provided**

**Registration (free) is encouraged at
<http://chha-bc.org>**

For information contact: info@chha-bc.org

Phone: 604-795-9238

Toll free: [1-866-888-2442](tel:1-866-888-2442)

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have certain handy features. He says the hearing aid business is very competitive and at some point other companies will find ways to match Phonak's recent major advances with "Venture" and "Roger". Even the one-year-old *Roger system* has been improved upon with a new simplified Roger Pen.

Dan also mentioned that because *Roger* technology is so superior to FM technology of which Phonak became an industry leader and which is still very good, that Phonak will be discontinuing their FM technology later this year.

Because everyone's own individual hearing loss is different, Dan cautions sometimes when profound hearing loss is involved that even the Venture series aids may not be the most suitable hearing aids. Only an audiologist can determine this, and we the consumer can get to try any of these for a reasonable trial period to decide if the device is effective for our hearing loss. Otherwise, find an alternative device or consider incorporating additional assistive listening devices.

The talk finished with questions from the audience for which Dan provided useful answers and advice. We are pleased he appeared as part of our ongoing series of guest speakers and latest reports from the different hearing aid manufacturers of their latest products. Thank you, Dan!

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
NORTH SHORE BRANCH
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Prov. _____

Postal Code: _____ Phone: _____

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.

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**

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

**(Next Meeting is on June 5)
(No meeting in July and August)**

**The September Meeting will be on September 11
(2nd Friday)**

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;
Improving Relationships;

Improving Hearing Environments

**For Information call:
604-926-5222**

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.
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