



# Canadian Hard of Hearing Association

## North Shore Branch

Published four times a year in March, June,  
September and December by CHHA – North Shore Branch,  
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Editor: Hugh Hetherington Issue 90 September 2015

### Mountain Ear

## Pres Mez

By Mike Hocoever

Greetings to everyone. I do hope you have all handled the great 2015 drought well and kept yourself hydrated and cool as we went through this very unusual extra hot Summer. Myself, I got some relief when on the waters of False Creek with my vision impaired dragon boat team “Eye of the Dragon.” There is often just the right amount of breeze down there.

Our Annual General Meeting is approaching. Come and hear Glen Grigg deliver what I am sure will be another of his thought-provoking and humorous talks with practical advice for our hard of hearing life issues. Glen will be talking about the importance hearing plays in successful aging in his talk entitled “Happiness, Hearing and the Science of Positive Aging”.

I am pleased that the current board of directors is prepared to stand again, and do note, we have an extra seat which I hope someone would be interested in offering themselves to fill it. We meet every two months for an hour and a half or less (otherwise -- I demand a motion to extend the meeting by five minutes!) Of course, there is Sound Advice and our Summerhill guest speaker meetings that you can help with too. We break for the summer. I encourage you to to contact us for further information about being a director; it is a lot of fun and very informative and educational as you participate in the branch business. The main qualification we need from you to be a director: just your common sense, thank you.

## Annual General Meeting Monday, September 21, 2015

**7:00 pm at the Summerhill  
135 West 15th Street,  
North Vancouver**

**Special Guest Speaker  
Glen Grigg, Ph.D., R.C.C.**

**Glen is a practicing Psychotherapist,  
a Professor of Psychology at City University  
of Seattle in Vancouver,  
and a Consultant to Several Health Authorities**

**Topic  
“Happiness, Hearing and the  
Science of Positive Aging”**

**Everyone Welcome  
No Admission Charge**

**For Information**

**Call**

**604-926-5222**

Our branch has been a successful operation for many, many years and will continue to be so. I am confident of that. But it does take people ready to step up and I am hoping we can do a bit of a membership renewal this year. Can you invite a friend, or a family member to join up? Their support is most welcome.

Thank you all for your continued support as a branch member. It really means stability and says to us directors that you endorse our simple and effective program of Sound Advice workshops, our splendid guest speaker program and the newsletter. And, it is nice that in addition to our individual donations that the City of North Vancouver, District of North Vancouver and District of West Vancouver continue to generously provide us with grant support. We are proud to serve you and our friends and neighbours in the concept of making our communities more accessible and livable.

Indeed, the independent provincial government Seniors Advocate, Isobel Mackenzie acknowledged such at a special meeting hosted recently by North Shore Community Resource Society. There are a lot of communities out there around BC that don't have the wonderful support networks and agencies we find here on the North Shore.

I found it interesting in her comments about seniors, that even in assisted living homes where a variety of participant programs are offered, that quite a percentage do not participate. One reason for isolation could be due to the big change of leaving one's own home for this new situation in life, another could be what I suggested in the feedback portion of Ms. Mackenzie's talk—that if a person who needs a hearing aid and doesn't have one, they just won't go out much in the first place to participate in social settings.

Ms. Mackenzie jumped right on this in agreement, and stated that the matter of seniors without hearing aids is largely driven by the very high cost of hearing aids and this really has to be addressed seriously. There are a lot of collateral issues that are consequential to such including loneliness, depression and even onset of dementia. I was impressed how well Ms. Mackenzie had a handle on it.

Her interim report is available online if you Google "BC Seniors Advocate Report" or phone to your local MLA office and they will mail you a copy. Do not hesitate to write to your MLA to support Ms.

Mackenzie's advocacy.

Being Hard of Hearing though, is not just a senior's issue as we now observe a much younger demographic showing signs of hearing loss. This is particularly due to the high environmental soundscape out there these days, and the use of headphones and ear buds to listen to music—it can be very damaging over time.

In the National Canadian Hard of Hearing Association we have a Young People's Network who promote themselves as tomorrow's leaders. But many are leaders or are prepared to become leaders now and so it is important that we support them. The best way to be supportive is to take part in the annual Walk2Hear event that will take place at Jericho Park in Vancouver on Sunday, September 27<sup>th</sup>. This is a key funding initiative for the cross-country caucus of young people. I hope you will consider donating either through the walk or straight donation. Your branch directors will be there. We hope you can come out too. See the information on page 8 in this newsletter.

I also want to emphasize what I indicated earlier about inviting new members and for new directors to join and learn from the experienced. While Hugh was invited at the National Conference to share our experience and program in the North Shore branch (and very well received) it doesn't mean we can be smug about it. We need renewal of people in the branch and the board to keep it going. We are very fortunate to see past directors like Flo Spratt, Birgit Cook and others staying involved. This creates the solid backbone for our branch to continue to be relevant to you, the members and the public.

We must encourage and support CHHA National to lay out a program of establishing branches all over the country because there really are not many, especially here in BC. Hugh and I were happy to share the North Shore experience with the folks out in Abbotsford who have been getting a branch underway this year. We are also prepared to lend our support to other communities too. But for sure, we want to be "mindful of our own store" and that is why our AGM is an important part of it. Our branch Annual Report and Financial Statements are mailed to you before the meeting, so please read through them and write down any questions and your comments. Feedback, is welcomed when we see you on September 21<sup>st</sup>.

# June Presentation

## “Speech Reading:

### How can I make it work for me?”

By Mike Hocevar

While it is common for the brain to gradually trigger developing some lip reading ability as one response to adapting to declining hearing, as our guest speaker said she’s sorry, but that popular FBI agent character on TV that reads lips and conversations perfectly from a distance is just not reality.

Lisa Dillon Edgett, Ph.D., RAUD, our guest speaker in June says it is an impossibility because firstly, our eyes cannot possibly keep up with the number of words spoken per minute, and secondly, that only a maximum of about 40 percent of spoken words is visible in mouth movements to attempt any lip reading.

But fortunately, lip reading is not speech reading — which is what Lisa teaches at Vancouver Community College. An effective level of speech reading obviously utilizes lip reading as a component, but there are lots of other strategies to employ and that is what Lisa came to outline in her presentation.

Lisa is an audiologist who explored the psychology and management of hearing loss for those affected in her studies for a Master’s degree. In professional life Lisa gravitated to the area of what makes for successful speech reading and says people can be trained to help themselves immensely in this area.

She asserts that hearing is just so important in life. Lisa quoted famous deaf and blind Helen Keller, “Blindness cuts you off of things, while deafness cuts you off from people.” But hard of hearing people are often frustrated by friends and families who just don’t understand this as most people take hearing for granted until it becomes a problem.

The common reaction for people in response to someone with hearing loss is to raise their voice or shout. They are often frustrated too and are just trying to help, but they don’t always know how. One has to be able to say, “I appreciate your talking louder, but I need you just to talk clearer,” or some other suggestion.

Lisa agrees there are some advantages to lip reading:

- The auditory and visual parts of speech are complimentary. Sounds that typically are the most difficult

to hear are easier to see on the lips. They include high frequency, soft and quiet sounds.

- The combination of what you see and what you hear gives you more clues to understanding the message. This is better than relying on any single source. So when you look at someone who is speaking you get more information by combining what you see and hear together.

Some limitations of speech reading include:

- The difficult visibility of sounds. Only 40 percent of sounds can be seen on the lips as tongue movement inside the mouth makes many more.

- The rapidity of speech. Most people don’t have a moderate easy rate of speech, and will speak 150 – 200 words a minute. Even if your eyes can see everything, you can’t keep up with that kind of pace.

- Co-articulation and stress effects on words. Some sounds look different depending on what words come after them. Or, depending on the stress in how the word is pronounced, some words don’t always look the same.

- Talker effects. Different people speak differently. Some will move their lips a lot while some have lips that hardly move at all.

- Visemes (the facial movement or image for a single sound) and Homophenes (words that sound differently but look identical on the lips) These are all different sounds that look and even sound similar in speech, some examples are: P b m, f v, t d n l, sh ch j, w r, k g ng, th s z.

When seeing and hearing words with these similar patterns on the lips, one needs to know the context to understand what words are being said. Lisa demonstrated some words and sentences to illustrate this. They make it more difficult to lip read. So, these are some reasons why lip reading alone isn’t enough for successful understanding. Yet, if you can put together a couple words in the sequence being spoken, you may be part of the game as the brain figures out the context, the subject etc., especially if it is something you are familiar with.

Different factors affecting understanding, and what you can do about them:

- Environment.

- Think about this as it has a big impact on your ability to hear. Lisa pointed out that someone got up and shut the meeting room’s

front door. The result was that outside traffic noise was blocked from coming into the room.

- What is the lighting like to see the speaker's face? Is there background light that creates a shadow or silhouette effect on the speaker's face?
- What effect does the physical room or location have on receiving speech — the room might not have good acoustics and a lot of reverberation such that sound is not clear, or the location could have competing and overriding noise.

In analyzing the environment recognize how such adjustments can be achieved to optimize being able to listen and receive the message as best as possible.

- Consider your position. Physically, 3 to 6 feet away is the ideal distance from a person speaking, with face-to-face being best. This is so one can observe not only the lips and eyes, but body gestures as well; all have meaning to help understand the conversation.

- The more you know of the speaker the better for you to receive the message. Also, it is important to be aware and to identify the subject of conversation. Ensure the speech is clear. Volume is important. Too loud often hurts your ears and is uncomfortable; remember most people think that hearing loss is simply an issue of volume rather than clarity. You need to share with them how they can help in speaking to you in the given situation.

- The listener – it's more than just a hearing loss – That's not the only factor that affects your ability to understand: attitude, fatigue, stress, your assertiveness level, knowledge and interest in the subject are considerations. Your personal physical and mental state has an effect on your ability to engage and receive. If you are tired, bored or don't listen as well then it will be harder to retain or understand. If you are assertive and tell people you have hearing loss and give tips on making it a better exchange, you will have improved your stress level in such a situation. Being interested will help you to be involved and not miss so much. Knowing the agenda at meetings is a useful tip too.

Think about the message to a speaker: How you share your need is important, the message is almost as important as how you say it. Instead of repeating "Pardon" or a similar term over and over, try to pro-

vide an explanation and the solution to solve the problem. Otherwise, you will often have the speaker repeat everything over again the same way, and that you may not catch it the second time either.

Think of conversational strategies. Request repetition and review what was said, clarify points to be sure you understood. Likewise, it is courteous to acknowledge that you are hearing the message or that the proposed solution works and is appreciated. Again, familiarity of topic and topic maintenance will make it easier to stay engaged. It lets the other person know you are interested in what they are saying. But it is so important to be assertive — that you tell the other of your needs to make it work. It helps to sound and look assertive in explaining a request.

Humor: should be incorporated in communication strategies whenever possible; it has proven benefits to alleviate tense or stressful situations

About technology: Hearing Aids are a great help for many but not a cure for hearing loss. They are just an "aid". And there is the Assistive Listening Technology including FM receivers, Infrared and Room Loop systems to support wireless direct sound to hearing aids. Other technologies are CART (communication access real time translation) , Speech to Text, alerting devices like door bells, baby monitors, smoke and fire alarms. All of these are there to help, and should be taken advantage of wherever available.

All of the foregoing is about "making it work" as part of a successful effective speech reading package.

- Recognize that hearing is important.
- Learn what works for you.
- Learn to be assertive.
- Teach others what you need as people will only be able to help if they know what help you require.
- Give feedback
- Communicate about communication—work out rules or ways that make effective conversation.

Lisa says we must be realistic too. Not everything will be perfect but to keep the focus on the tips and techniques, keep humor alive, and repeat over and over the necessary practice that adds up to successful speech reading. In the speech reading course she teaches, all of these things are explored in detail, as

well as, use of video for practice in recognizing the way words are spoken and seen on the lips.

The Speech Reading Course that Lisa teaches at VCC is offered as a once per week for 12 weeks Level 1 and 2 course offered January, April and September. Cost is estimated to be around \$230.

For more info contact Lisa at 604 871-7348 or email [ldillonedgett@vcc.ca](mailto:ldillonedgett@vcc.ca).



Gael Hannan, Editor  
**The Better Hearing Consumer**  
 @ Hearing Health & Technology Matters!  
*Hear Well. Live Well!*

## When I say I want telecoils.....

### ...I mean it.

By Gael Hannan

It wasn't just an opening line to my hearing aid provider, so that she could come back with, "That's old tech. Your hearing aid manufacturer has a great in-home kit, and a streamer, and lots of other neat stuff for just a few hundred dollars extra." Although, that's pretty much what we said to each other.

I said I wanted telecoils so that I could use them with the phone and in looped environments. I had seen how much my friends benefited from the system and I wanted what they had—and I got it.

It's only been five years since embracing telecoils and hearing loops. In those new (and soon to be retired) hearing aids, I had to choose between telecoils and Bluetooth. I couldn't have both (which apparently I can in my upcoming set) so I opted for telecoils.

In "The Way I Hear It", my book on living with hearing loss, I talk about the wonder of it all.

But today, for the first time, I have telecoils in my hearing aids and I know how to use them. When I use the phone, I push a little button (which may look as if I'm poking myself in the head) and BOOM! I can talk on the phone without feedback. I use a neckloop that attaches to my cell phone or iPad, and when I activate it, POW! The music comes directly into my ears. Listening to a speaker in a room that has a hearing loop around the perimeter of the room, I just hit those T-switches and KABAM! The speaker's voice fills my head. (Page 75, soft cover

version)

It's a simple system that delivers sound directly to my hearing aids. Let me define 'simple'. It's scientifically simple if you are scientifically minded—which I am not. But it's simple to use. All I do is poke myself in the side of the head and voilà! I hear voices directly in my head, right where I want them to be—not floating in on sound waves that diminish in power with every inch they travel, so that by the time the important or interesting or melodic information reaches my poor, frayed hearing system, I can't understand it.

Or as writer Neil Bauman puts it on his website [hearinglosshelp.com](http://hearinglosshelp.com): With a loop system, both lower- and higher-frequency sounds are captured by a microphone before the higher-frequency sounds are lost in the air. These sound signals are then amplified and "piped" to the t-coils in the hard-of-hearing person's hearing aids without having to travel through the air as sound waves. (Which is kind of what I said, right?)

Many hearing health professionals pooh-pooh telecoils and looping as old technology that doesn't always work well. (Oh, like Bluetooth is perfect?) Tell that to the people who use the system—us, the people with hearing loss—who like it! It's inexpensive and universal in its application. We use loop systems when we're at the bank or the theatre or in business meetings. Our telecoils connect us instantly to telephones that are hearing-aid compatible—which most phones are these days. We use personal neckloops to enjoy our music, TVs, cellphones and computers in quiet privacy.

Yes, the technology may have been around for a while but that's OK; it's working better than ever and advocates around the world are advocating for more looped venues and services. That's why city subways, major theatres and other important venues are installing loop systems. That's why phones are hearing aid and CI-compatible!

In an email to a friend (who shared it on the website of Juliette Sterkens, renowned hearing loop advocate), Barbara Bajurny wrote about her first experience with loops at the HLAA convention in Rhode Island: "(My friend) told me to switch my hearing aids to telephone mode setting. We were sitting in the very back end of the ballroom. For the first time in my life, I was able to hear every single word (they) spoke without having to read their lips or rely

on interpreters. I got goose bumps! I will never forget that day as long as I live.”

At the recent annual conference of the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association, Juliette Sterkens moderated a panel discussion on looping, delivered to rapt audience members sitting inside a looped area, many for the first time. I have it on good authority that immediately after the session, several hearing health professionals started the process of installing loops in their clinics. Imagine—using a loop system to communicate effectively with your clients who have hearing loss—what a concept!

We talk about loops a lot at HearingHealthMatters.org. A recent post even shows you how to set up hearing loops in small areas. I don't care how it's set up, I just want it to be set up in places that I need it.

As people with hearing loss, we are open to all technologies that will help us communicate better and we often use many of them simultaneously. We luxuriate in the almost overwhelming array of helpful tech-stuff—and we can even afford some of it.

But when we say we want telecoils and looping, we mean it.

*Reprinted with permission from:  
HearingHealthMatters.org*

## Effective Coping Strategies

By Neil Bauman, Ph.D.

### The Right Way to Help Your Spouse Hear

A lady wrote, "I am hearing and my husband is very hard of hearing. When we are together and my husband doesn't understand someone, I often pitch in and repeat or rephrase what the other person is saying. I would love to have some guidelines for doing this in a respectful and effective way."

When you are married to a hard of hearing person, it's so easy to become the other person's ears (and thereby become his slave in that sense). This is not good for your hard of hearing spouse. It's not good for you. And it's definitely not good for your marriage.

Each hard of hearing person needs to take responsibility for himself and for advocating for his own

hearing needs. Therefore, it is best if you stay out of it UNLESS he asks you for help.

For example, if someone says something to me and I can't get it, and I know because of the situation I'll never get it and need help, I'll look at my wife Diane. This is her cue that I need help and that I want her to "translate" for me.

However, in a different situation where I think I can get it myself, I look at the person talking to me (and not at Diane--which is her default cue to let me handle it) and tell that person what I need them to do so I can get the message.

One place that you can "jump in" and help without him specifically asking you for help is in situations when someone talks to him from behind (or out of his line of sight) where he isn't even aware of anyone talking to him. In such cases, the "proper" way to help is to get his attention and tell him that someone behind him is talking to him and maybe point so he knows who it was. At that point, it is up to him to tell that person he didn't hear them and ask them to repeat what they said. THEN, if he finds he needs your help, he should look to you as per above as your cue to jump in and help.

Unfortunately, too often, the helpful, hearing spouse jumps in and takes over communicating for the hard of hearing spouse (not to take control, but to make it easier on the hard of hearing spouse) without his asking for help. This is not good. The result is he withdraws and is detached from the situation (and probably now doesn't have a clue what is going on). It is now your conversation, not his. When this happens, he never becomes good at advocating for himself.

The real question is, "How do you know in which situations he typically wants help, and in which situations he typically wants to handle the communications himself? A good way to find out is to discuss ahead of time how to handle various situations.

For example, if I go to a fast-food place alone, I order for myself without much trouble--even without my hearing aids on--I'm speechreading of course--yet if Diane and I go together, I normally tell her ahead of time what I want and let her order for both of us. This just expedites things and it is our choice. You see, I can't hear what she orders and if the clerk asks a question, I don't know whether it relates to her part of the order or mine. Essentially, I am lost. This

doesn't happen when I'm alone, I know everything has to relate to my order.

Here's another good reason not to jump in uninvited. For many people, lack of independence and low self-esteem go hand in hand. Thus, the more you let someone to do things for you, instead of you doing them for yourself, typically the more your self-esteem drops.

Therefore, in order to increase your self-esteem, you need to take charge and do everything for yourself that you can. Only ask for help if you really need it.

This means that it may take you longer than normal to do certain things (or understand a given communication), but that's ok. It's no big deal. Overcoming the challenge improves self-esteem.

One exception to this is during an emergency. In an emergency, a hearing person may have to take charge and suddenly yank you out of danger if there is not time to tell you and get you to understand the emergency situation. I'd rather be unceremoniously yanked away, than get maimed or killed while someone is patiently trying to explain to me that there is an emergency and I need to get out of there now!

*Reprinted with permission from the Hearing Loss Help eZine, March 24, 2015. You can read this and other articles at <http://hearinglosshelp.com>*

## **Brief History of T-coils and Loop Systems**

by Neil Bauman, Ph.D.

When I ask hard of hearing people when t-coils were first used in hearing aids (and thus providing the technology and impetus for the beginnings of loop systems), the response is, "I don't have a clue." or "Probably in the 1970s or so".

In truth, the beginnings of t-coils go back almost 80 years! The very first hearing aid to have a t-coil (as far as is known) was the Tel-Audio table-top hearing aid made by the National Electrical Research and Mfg. Co. in Washington, DC way back in 1936.

This t-coil wasn't the tiny coil of wire used in modern hearing aids. No sir! It was humongous by today's standards. It was so big it was external to the hearing aid itself—housed in a separate Bakelite case measuring 4.6" x 2.8" x 1.8" (11.8 x 7.3 x 4.5 cm).

Two years later, in 1938, the Multitone Electric Co. Ltd. Of London, England, came out with their Vest Pocket Model (VPM) that contained an internal t-coil. This was the first wearable hearing aid that had a t-coil. (You can see the 1937 Multitone Model "VPM" hearing aid that did not have a t-coil, but looked very similar to the t-coil model if you read this article on the Center's website. The permalink is given at the bottom of this article.)

Wearable hearing aids with internal t-coils weren't manufactured in America until 1946 when RadioEar, then based in Mt. Lebanon, PA, came out with their Permo-Magnetic Multipower (PM) 3-vacuum-tube hearing aid that contained an internal t-coil.

For the first number of years, t-coils were used exclusively to help people hear on telephones—hence the name "T-coil". The "T" stood for telephone.

Eventually, someone discovered other uses for them. For example, by 1956, t-coils were being used to listen to radios and TVs via small loop pads.

Also, in this article on the Center's website (link below), is an example of a miniature loop pad that Sonotone Corp. of Elmsford, NY produced around d 1956. To use it, you clamped the two alligator clips across the terminals of the radio or TV's loudspeaker. Then you switched on the t-coil and placed the body-worn hearing aid on the loop pad instead of in your pocket and voila, you had a simple loop system. (I acquired the loop pad along with this Sonotone Model 200 4-transistor body-worn hearing aid that came out in 1956.)

I don't know when the first room loop was made, but I was introduced to the wonders of room loop systems from reading a short article in an Amateur Radio magazine in 1971 so they were starting to be known by then. (I'd had t-coils in my hearing aids from sometime in the 1960s, but had never come across a use for them apart from the telephone until this time.) This primitive room-loop sounded good to me. As a result, I built my first home loop system that same year so I could hear my TV without blasting my new bride out of the house! Thus I've been using room loops now for going on 45 years!

*Reprinted with Permission. The permanent link for this article is on the Hearing Loss Help website at:*

*<http://hearinglosshelp.com/blog/brief-history-of-t-coils-and-loop-systems/>*



**Sunday, September 27, 2015**

**At**

**Vancouver's Jericho Beach Park,  
East End**

**Starting Place is Between**

**2nd Avenue and Wallace Street**

**Registration: 9:00 AM to 10:00 AM**

**Walk Begins at 10:00 AM**

## **Social Service Grants**

**CHHA – North Shore Branch  
acknowledges with thanks the following  
Municipal Community grants for 2015.**

**District of North Vancouver \$990**

**City of North Vancouver \$1100**

**District of West Vancouver \$1100**

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**

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

**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;

Behavioural Issues;

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.