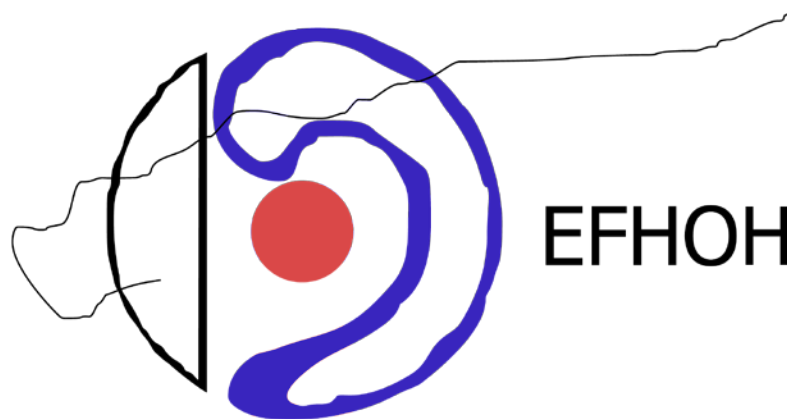


EFHOH

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Deadline for the next
newsletter is December
1./2011. Please email your
material to nh@niels-henrik.dk



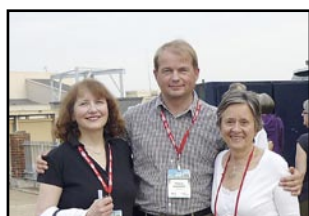
European Federation of Hard of Hearing People

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NEWSLETTER

September 2011



EFHOH President letter

Dear EFHOH friends,

Summertime is a great moment to remind us of our EFHOH success. I am happy to present to you this newsletter with a lot of articles about our successes:

- Media for all conference
- 2e International Hearing Loops conference
- Summer Holiday

Remember that the UN convention has been concluded by the European Union. This is a landmark victory and it will clearly have a positive impact on our lives.

We will inform you in this EFHOH newsletter and in the next EFHOH newsletters about the Disability Pact and its effect on the European Commission Disability Strategy 2010-2020.

The new bus and boat passenger regulations are also examples of a key collective victory for the disability movement in Europe.

Summertime is also a great moment to plan our next steps.

Three important steps for EFHOH are:

- In order to build up an European Council for deaf and hard of hearing organisations, we will start work with this council on the 1st of January 2012.

- The EFHOH board meeting in Hamburg takes place in the last weekend of October.

- IFHOH Asian meeting to build up a network/group/federation for hard of hearing organisations in Asia. I hope that EFHOH will be an example for the Asian people, about how they can co-operate for a better life, for hard of hearing people in this part of the world.

Oh yes, it is a very busy time for the five EFHOH board members who are the unpaid staff members of EFHOH, as so many other hard of hearing volunteers at local and national level. In this EFHOH newsletter an article is published about the European year of Volunteering 2011.

In November 2011 Lidia and I will participate in the last preparing meeting for the European Council for deaf and hard of hearing organisations in Europe. One of our difficulties is to find a good name for this co-operation. We will inform you more in detail, in the November EFHOH newsletter.



At the last weekend of October the EFHOH board have their fall board meeting in Hamburg/Germany. At this moment we are waiting for your suggestions for changes in our regulations. The deadline for sending the suggestions is 1 October 2011. You can send your suggestions to our email address efhoh@hrf.se. So we can discuss your proposals to make EFHOH a more democratic organisation.

In November I participate in the 1st IFHOH Asian meeting at the Asian Disability Centre in Bangkok/Thailand. It will be a historical moment to have a meeting with representatives of more than 10 Asian/Pacific countries.

Back to today. In this newsletter we have for you a very interesting article about the history of EFHOH. Kees Twilt also this time had an interesting interview in this newsletter, with one of the first EFHOH presidents Christina Wahrolin from Sweden. Christina and Lillian Vicanek are great examples for me. Christina was one of the first EFHOH presidents who made EFHOH visible at the European Union, and she had a very active role in the European Disability Forum (EDF).

In this line Lidia and I continued her work and we will participate in an European Parliament meeting where Ádám Kósa is the host on 7 September. This meeting is about Mobility and Inclusion of People with Disabilities. This meeting on 7 September is held for the first time with speech to text support. Yes, also it is a historical moment for the Hard of Hearing movement in Europe. Lidia Best has represented

EFHOH this year at all European Parliament Disability Intergroups. It is for the first time in our history that we as EFHOH, have been represented at so many EP intergroup meetings.

Congratulations to Karina Chupina, IFHOHYP president she is elected as global advisor of the Disability Rights Funds. Karina the EFHOH board wish you lot of success in your new job!

I hope that you all enjoy the last days of the summertime and that you come back with lots of new energy and new ideas for your local and national hard of hearing club/organisations. And that we together continue our battle for an accessible Europe, including the Hard of Hearing.

Warm regards,

Marcel Bobeldijk
EFHOH president.

United Nations High Level Meeting on Youth – a youth-focused meeting with captions provided!

By Karina Chupina, IFHOHYP President

I was honoured to represent IFHOH and IFHOHYP at the UN High Level Meeting on Youth that took place on 25-26 July in the UN Headquarters in New York.

A long correspondence preceded my participation, as I wanted to ensure that live captioning will be provided during the entire meeting. Without the additional advocacy from my part and efforts from the UN DESA staff, the captioning accessibility would not be possible. One of the reasons was that the internal UN Secretariat-wide policies and guidelines on accessibility were still in development process. Finally, after exchange of IFHOHYP advocacy messages and internal work of the UN DESA, the captioning was fully provided for 2 days.

IFHOHYP advocacy worked! A small step in the UN agenda, a big step for disability issues at the UN, for IFHOHYP and the entire hard of hearing community!

The UN High Level Meeting opened with captioning on two big screens. Ban Ki-moon, the UN Secretary General, opened the meeting. Captioning worked excellently, only the letters seemed a little small for those who sit in the far back. However, there was no induction loop accessibility in the UN General Assembly hall, and old headphone models (one ear-phone box) were impossible to put over the ear with a hearing aid. At times there were interpretation hiccups.

Funny thing: when the interpretation or headphones did not work, hundreds of pairs of delegates' eyes were fixed on the screens with text/ captions. This is the point of inclusion - captions are helpful + useful not only for deaf/ hard of hearing, but for everyone in the society!

To people the captions on screen looked as something natural that they took for granted. If they only knew what kind of work this involves! I spoke about accessibility needs in some interviews to press, and one short excerpt can be

found here: <http://www.policymic.com/articles/why-young-people-don-t-participate-in-politics>.

Below me in the General Assembly Hall, I saw a sign language interpreter translated speeches for a representative from Sweden. Another representative with a hearing loss! It turned out that it was Malin Johansson, deaf and young official representative of Sweden to the UN General Assembly. She later gave an inspiring speech in sign language! It was a remarkable visibility of disability AND youth on the High Level Meeting! She said in sign language: "I regret that there are so few young people representing youth here."

James Aniyamuzaala, past Board member of IFHOHYP, spoke at the UN High Level Meeting on behalf of the African Network of Youth with Disabilities on the need to include youth with disabilities into youth programmes and ensuring accessibility.

The UN High Level Meeting on Youth could be followed at <http://www.unmultimedia.org/tv/webcast/index.html>. Unfortunately, though the video says that captions (CC) are "on", I did not see them. There is still a lot of advocacy work to be done by IFHOHYP in cooperation with CCAC, Collaborative for Communication Access via Captioning.

UNHLM reflected the growing interest of international community to youth and youth issues, and the role of youth in changing the world. As one speaker aptly put it: "A nation that does not take care of its youth, does not have a future – and does not deserve one!" But behind the rhetorics, a lot needs to be done. The fact that there were few young Youth Delegates on behalf of the UN Member States, speaks for itself. State representatives were calling for more investment in youth and job opportunities, but incidentally, only a few representatives mentioned the need to pay attention to marginalized youth. The US representative of youth was a young person himself, who said he was from a poor family and his mother had a mental disability. It was his work in

community that helped him to grow personally and professionally.

One of the interesting concrete proposals was to create the world scholarship fund where every government contributes.

The Side Event on Youth with Disabilities was a 1,5 hour round table discussion with inputs from Vladimir Cuk, International Disability Alliance, Fred Doulton, UN DESA, and a few other speakers from Leonard Cheshire Disability Young Voices. I spoke about the importance of training and inclusive education for youth with disabilities, stressing the value of non-formal education, and gave a brief presentation of IFHOHYP. As a result of the event, IFHOHYP established good contacts and partnerships with the International Disability Alliance, UN DESA, Leonard Cheshire and Rehabilitation International.

UN DESA and IDA look at IFHOHYP as a possible partner in their projects and trainings related to the UN CRPD. The resolution of the UN High Level Meeting contains a mention about youth with disabilities, but as usual, as part

of "vulnerable youth". We discussed with IDA and the UN DESA that we need more advocacy for youth with disabilities specifically and explicitly. The strategies about uniting youth with disabilities worldwide for this aim are under development and you may hear about them in the near future.

IFHOHYP expresses its thanks to IFHOH for their help in registering for the UN event, to the UN DESA and Mr. Fred Doulton for their support in pushing through the accessibility at the UN High Level Meeting on Youth - captioning on screen that helped not only hard of hearing but all participants of the meeting!

Author's note: Before and during preparations for captioning inclusion, I was in contact with several good colleagues online, e.g. the CCAC (www.ccacaptioning.org), and others on the social media. The professional captioners also merit a big thank you, along with all at the United Nations who achieved communication access for us all.

News from Norway and the EFHOH world congress committee

Dear members of EFHOH and readers of the newsletter. The program committee has now started the final work with the congress program.

Before deadline for presentations August 1th, the committee had received 29 proposals for presentations of high quality. It was a difficult job to find a place for them all, but after a careful evaluation the program was completed and the speakers will be notified in the near future.

We are sure that the congress program will be of interest to both professionals and hard of hearing. New science, rehabilitation, education, work, the UN Convention, lobbying as well as presentations by hard of hearing themselves have it's place.

The motto for the congress "A better quality of life" concerns all hard of hearing from birth to old age in all parts of society.

October 10th is our timeline date for the program on the website www.ifhoh2012 together with the invitation and information about registration. There will be an early bird

fee, and the information about the deadline for early bird registration will also be at the website.

Daily I receive e-mails from persons who want to come to Bergen and the congress, and they are also interested in cruises and trips around Norway. On our website you will find information about Bergen and other parts of the beautiful western coast with all its fjords, and more will come.

Make you registration on the website and you will receive all updated news.

Hope to see you in Bergen!

Regards from Lillian Vicanek, chairman of the steering committee.



Welcome to a New Season from IFHOH President

Greetings from IFHOH as we begin a fall season which, to me, is really the start of a new year given that I work in an educational environment where students are beginning a new school year in September.

This fall brings three major activities for IFHOH. First, we will be co-sponsoring the first-ever Asia-Pacific hard of hearing leaders event in Bangkok November 2-4, 2011 along with the Centre for Research and Education of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (Vietnam), Danishkadah (Pakistan) and the Asia Pacific Development Centre on Disability (APCD). We look forward to developing networks in Asia and the Pacific region; over 30 participants from various countries in the region will be participating in the event. IFHOH will be holding its board meeting following the event, thus giving further opportunity for dialogue among us. We are grateful to the following member countries of IFHOH for their support for the venture which will subsidize captioning costs: Pro Audito Switzerland; HRF, the Swedish Association for Hard of Hearing People; the Hearing Loss Association of

America in the United States; and the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association in Canada.

The second major activity of the fall relates to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The fourth session of the Conference of States Parties for the Convention will be held in New York City from 7 to 9 September, 2011. The theme of the fourth session is "Enabling Development, Realizing the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities" and sub-themes are: "Realizing the Convention through International Cooperation," "Political and Civil Participation" and "Work and Employment." Sweden is the lead host for the conference.

There will be associated meetings scheduled around this event. IFHOH former president Jan-Peter Strömberg and IFHOH vice-president Ahiya Kamara will be attending as representatives of their country delegations. Ulf Olsson and I will be attending, representing IFHOH. We are thrilled that so many of us will be participating to advance the

agenda of hard of hearing persons as part of the world-wide disability movement. Ulf and I will be staying on for two days to attend the Panel of Experts meeting of the Special Rapporteur to the UN on disability issues as well as meetings of the International Disability Alliance. By way of information the Special Rapporteur reports yearly to the Commission for Social Development on the promotion and monitoring of the implementation of the United Nations Standard Rules for the Equalization of Opportunities of Persons with Disabilities. Shuaib Chalklen of South Africa fulfills this role, for 2009-2011.

A third major activity relates to preparations for the 2012 World Congress of IFHOH being hosted by our Norwegian members in beautiful Bergen, Norway from June 25-28, 2012. We are impressed that they have continued their important work despite a national tragedy that affected so many one very sad July 23rd day. Our hearts go out to them as they deal with their grief and our admiration flourishes to see the resolve of Norwegians to continue to value diversity and promote respect for all in their country. I know that my sentiments are shared by many in the hard of hearing community.

Finally, I want to close with thanks to all those involved in organizing the second Hearing Loop conference, held in Washington DC in June. Thanks to Siegfried Karg of Switzerland for the initial impetus for bringing hearing loops back to the forefront and for Brenda Battat and Hearing Loss Association of America and its partners, the Audiology Association of America, for carrying forth with this important initiative. Hearing loops used to be the past, and now they are the future. I was pleased to represent IFHOH at the event, along with Ulf Olsson, joined by our EFHOH President and colleague Marcel Bobeldijk. I believe that hearing loops are a viable hearing access option given its benefits in being low cost and easy to use. We look forward to raising its profile and continuing the momentum from the Hearing Loops 2011 conference.

All the best to you, my friends, as you embark on a new season.

Submitted by Ruth Warick
August 31, 2011



Ádám Kósa hosts new hearing on Mobility and Inclusion of People with Disabilities

Dr. Ádám Kósa, Member of the European Parliament, has organised a new hearing on the Mobility and Inclusion of the People with Disabilities on Wednesday, 7 September 2011 at the European Parliament in Brussels.

At the hearing, Ms. Viviane Reding, Vice-President of the European Commission, is invited to give a presentation about the EU Accessibility Act.

The EU Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, Mr. László Andor, is also invited to give a presentation about financial support for people with disabilities. EFHOH board members Lidia Best and Marcel Bobeldijk will be participating in the hearing and is looking forward to have a good and constructive discussion with the two EU commissioners.

Cooperation for Subtitling of All Programs (Soap!): 'We wish to improve the quality of all subtitling'

Article by: Nic van Son Translate by: Hannie Huigsloot

In the past few years the number of captioned television programs has increased. But now it is also time to improve its quality, says Inge Doorn. She is a project manager for SOAP, (cooperation for subtitling of all programs). Together with a consumer panel of hard of hearing and deaf viewers, with all means they aim at a better subtitling.

Things are going well at the captioning of the Dutch spoken television programs, for every year more and more subtitling is being applied. However, Inge Doorn, project manager of the common project of the national organisations for the deaf and the hard of hearing, (Cooperation for Subtitling of All Programs) (Soap!), wishes to refine that image. 'Now that more and more programs are being captioned, it is about time to study its quality better. For if subtitling keeps having failures, then the deaf or hard of hearing audience won't benefit at all.'

Not simultaneous

In order to make sure that you as a (hard of hearing) viewer, in future watch captioned programs of quality, SOAP at the moment aims at its improvement.

The central question which points at this, is: What does the hard of hearing audience consider important for subtitling? In order to receive an answer to this question, a consumer panel was installed. During the very first meeting it was already clear which problems arise for the users. Inge: 'Especially with live-broadcasts, the subtitling leaves a lot to be wished for. The captioning usually is much slower than the words being spoken at that moment. If you as a viewer, you wish to combine the subtitling with lip reading, it is not possible if it is not printed simultaneously with the spoken words.'

A different failure of quality is that many programs are not being literally captioned, but that they give a brief compact text. It kicks against the feelings of many viewers.'

Join us!

During the past 3 months, the quality panel of SOAP! have worked hard at the writing of two enquiries, in which the opinions of deaf and hard of hearing tv-viewers are compared.

Since July 2011 viewers can fill in an enquiry on the website of SOAP!, by means of a digital evaluation form, and they can express their opinion about the quality of their favourite television program. This investigation continues at least until September 2011.

In that month another enquiry will be put on line, at the website of SOAP. At this enquiry the following quality criteria are being aimed at:

-Which issues are explicitly important towards the proper subtitling, according to the viewer?

Inge: 'We are looking for as many hard of hearing respondents as possible.'

So, if the quality of subtitling affects you, please join our good work and please fill the enquiry at our site!'

Captioning, also for movie/dvd and internet films

At this moment, the quality panel are mainly involved with the subject of subtitling tv programs.

In the near future also the captioning of Dutch spoken movies in cinemas and DVDs will be aimed at. Fortunately more and more producers are showing their interests for this. An example is the Netherlands Film Festival (NFF) in Utrecht, the Netherlands. Every year a number of new Dutch spoken films is presented, inclusive captioning. The NFF this year takes place from Wednesday 21 September to Friday 30 September 2011 inclusive. You can find the program and more information through www.filmfestival.nl.

SOAP panel members speaking:

We want the captioning to be just as good as the BBC subtitling

Sophie Pluijm (52) is hard of hearing. She needs subtitling very much, in order to be able to follow the tv programs. 'I am always disappointed if the captioning is not sufficient. This holds for tv programs, movies in cinemas and on dvd. Recently I wanted to hire a dvd with a Dutch movie. The subtitling was available in English, but not in Dutch. This caused me not to watch that film.'

Such a missed opportunity!

At television I think subtitling of live programs is of very low quality.

As far as I am concerned, we should work towards the quality of BBC one day, where all texts are subtitled, word by word.

That is the very example of a good subtitling!

Systematic approach of Evert Boerma (72) has been wearing hearing aids since he was 45, and he feels heavily dependent of subtitling for television. 'I cannot follow a program properly without captioning. I am happy that I can give my opinion as a viewer through the SOAP panel.

The reason I subscribed as a panel member, is I think we should handle the quality of subtitling systematically. We will do this first by investigating which criteria of quality the audience apply:

Which issues do they think important, which demands should proper captioning aim at? The next step will be the judging of the diverse programs. Accordingly we will put up regulations for a right subtitling. These can and should be used by the public broadcasting and other companies, and subtitlers.

As soon as we have received the results of the enquiry, about wishes and demands of the viewers, we will discuss these with the public broadcasting companies.

I would wish not to restrict our attention to the public companies. Also the commercial television, the dutch spoken movies in cinemas and on dvd, leave a lot to be desired'.

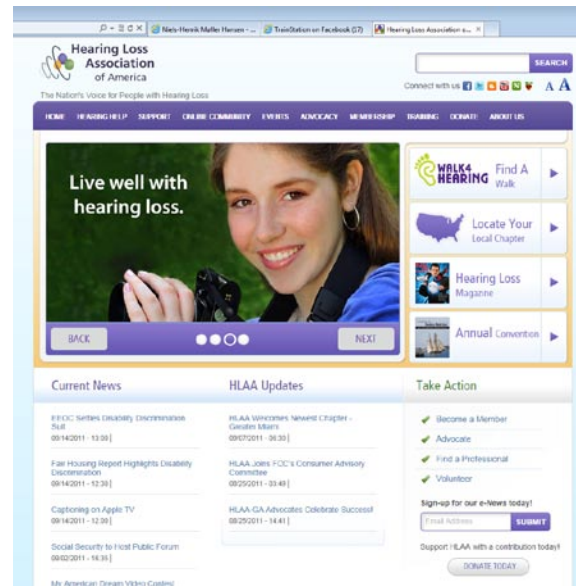
How do I use subtitling?

- In Holland you should use Teletext page 888 for finding the captions for public and commercial channels.
- In your tv guide the symbol (T) shows if a program is to be seen with subtitles.
- If you missed a public television program, you can sometimes watch this later on the website www.uitzend-ingemist.nl. If subtitled, you can press the 'Ab' icon.

Please fill in the enquiry at the site of www.ondertiteling.nu

SOAP! is the Cooperation for Subtitling of All Programs! All national organisations for deaf and hard of hearing people cooperate in this, including the NVVS (Dutch association for the hard of hearing).

If you (as a hard of hearing viewer) wish to see better subtitling on television programs, dvd or movies? Please give us your opinion and contribute in this way to a better quality of subtitling. On this website you can also find more facts about SOAP!



New website for Hearingloss Association of America

Dear all,

For your information our friends in the USA have a new updated website and it looks great.

It will be wonderful when it is possible when EFHOH have the same website possibilities!

The website name is www.hearingloss.org

When you look by events, convention, convention archives, 2011 photos you can find some photo's of the very successful 2e international hearing loops conference in the WDC last summer.

Marcel.



Is Media accessible 4 all?

The fourth Media4All Conference, was organized by the Imperial College in London. The conference dealt with the latest news and research in the audiovisual translation, latest practices and a chance to network for all in the field. The conference had gathered some 450 delegates, mostly from Europe but some also from South America and China. They were researchers, professionals working with subtitling in various media. Others were representatives from broadcasting companies and their branch organizations. But very few represented the "end-users". The EFHOH was one exception: We were represented by Lidia Best, who was a speaker at the conference, and Secretary Jan Lamby. Also Guus Coenen from the parent organisation FEPEDA attended.

Is TV and internet inclusive for those with hearing loss?
Is there instant and simple access to subtitles?

Two very important questions; and the answer is so far: NO. Lidia Best spoke in her presentation about the need to access to information and learning, spelling and phonics. She outlined some of the history of subtitling; the achievement so far especially on subtitling in TV. Most of this is found in the report "Status of subtitling in Europe", a report compiled by EFHOH in spring 2011. She presented the need for strong national legislation in media, following the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD), the latest directive from the European Commission. Some of the important actions in the European level:

- Disability Strategy 2010-2020
- Single European Accessibility Act 2012
- Standardisation in the provision of subtitling using DTV4ALL (Digital TV for all)
- A strong campaign for full inclusion of hard of hearing people in Europe

“Sometimes when listening to the presentations, it seems the wheel has to be invented again.”

About 50 people attended the presentation, one of six parallel sessions. The only misfortune was that we missed to take a photo of Lidia. The blame is on the Secretary, who wasn't enough alert!

One theory, presented by several speakers, was that the norm or level of subtitling should be based on the reading ability of people who are born deaf and have sign language as their first language. This means the level becomes very low. Naturally this group would benefit a lot more from a sign interpretation, as present in broadcasts in some countries in Europe. It seems many of the researchers confuse people who use sign language, with hard of hearing and deafened people.

It is important that everyone understand who is using subtitles, and provide as much verbatim delivery as possible without dumbing it down with smileys and making shortcuts in speech translation. For many of us it feels like patronizing.

Of course the reading ability varies individually, but we believe there have to be a linguistic standard set out for all broadcasters and subtitlers to follow. This standard has to be agreed with the organizations representing all people with hearing loss. We believe the only constraints we can accept, are technical and visual ones: The number of characters to be on one line; if it is better to have subtitling on two lines etc.

Sometimes when listening to the presentations, it seems the wheel has to be invented again. In several countries, mostly in southern Europe, who have a long tradition in

dubbing and now consider to use more subtitling, they say they need research. Well, we think they should be aware of the long tradition of subtitling in northern Europe: The Netherlands, UK and Scandinavia.

To summarize: It was a well organized conference, but disappointing in one aspect: There was no provision of hearing loop or other assistive listening system, despite we told the organizers before the conference; neither in the large assembly hall where the key-note speeches were held, nor in the other conference rooms. Due to lucky circumstances, we were able to use palantypists from Sweden. Although they normally work in Swedish language, they delivered an excellent speech-to-text service in English. Many thanks to the team Oscar and Petter Thorin.

It was an “eye opening” conference for us in EFHOH, and we have realized the need to include the so called end-users in the kind of gathering.

Otherwise, it feels like they are talking about us, without us!

Jan Lamby
Lidia Best



Also in this EFHOH newsletter an article about the history of EFHOH. And this time Kees Twilt meet Christina Wahrolin one of the former EFHOH presidents. So as you know all the articles of the history of EFHOH comes in a book that will be publish at the world congress 2012 in Bergen.

When I became a president of the Swedish Association of Hard of Hearing 1992 I heard about the international work for people with hearing loss.

Representative from HRF attended a meeting in 1993 I think when we founded the European organisations – I think we were in Germany.

Werner Butikofer (Switzerland) became the first president and I became a board member together with Mirja-Lisa (Finland), Christopher Shaw (United Kingdom) and Dick Klein Bussink (Netherlands).

But after some years I became the president, Werner Butikofer vice president, general secretary Lillian Vicanek (Norway) and treasurer Bas Koops (Netherlands).

I would like to say that I had a very fruitful cooperation with both General Secretary Mirja-Liisa and Lillian. I really appreciate their work.

The first years were difficult because IFHOH and EFHOH had some hard discussions. We in the Euro-

Interview with Christina Wahrolin



In the beginning of the organisations some of the persons did not even want to have induction loop system. I remember a lot of annual meetings, which could not provide that.



pean Regions would like to focus on the situation in Europe and try to strengthen the organisations of Hard of Hearing in Europe. We also try to build a new organisation. There were also discussions about money.

We also had discussions about who were our target group, who are we going to influence. Our European organisations should try to influence the European Disability Forum but also European Commission, the EU Parliament and so on. IFHOH should work to influence UN, but they were not interested in working with that.

Thanks to the Finish organisation we could have our General Secretary Mirja-Liisa in Brussels for six months trying to influence a lot of organisations working at the European level. At that time I was in Brussels quite often – I was a member of the EU Economic and Social Committee – and we had a very close cooperation – we took part in a exhibition and met a lot of people from different organisations.

We also arranged a leadership training course for board members in the member organisations of IFHOH. The seminar was held in Stockholm and Helsinki. I think this was very important trying to learn more about – how to lead an organisation.

We started to cooperate with European Hearing Instrument Manufacturers Association (EHIMA). In 1999 we held a conference together in Brussels – both IFHOH and EFHOH.

I think it was very important when we changed name to EFHOH and could act as an organisation at the European level.

We started also a newsletter.

From my point of view I think it is important to focus on what can we achieve together in EFHOH, for people with hearing impairment, to make people visible. But also trying to learn more about how we can do it, to work more strategic.

In the beginning there was more or less an organisation for individuals!

I think it is also important to arrange meetings in the name of EFHOH showing how an accessible meeting can be. In the beginning of the organisations some of the persons did not even want to have induction loop system. I remember a lot of annual meetings which could not provide that.

We were in Austria and our demands were – induction loop system in every meeting we had. But it was not – terrible I think. If we don't have any understanding in our own organisations how can we think that the society would provide us accessible meetings and so on.

So we have to start with ourselves

I have been involved at the European level for a long time – both in EFHOH, in the EU Economic and Social Committee and also as a executive officers within European Disability Forum – unfortunately I have to say – EFHOH were not a strong organisation at that time if I compare with other organisations. Representatives from EFHOH must take part in different meeting and learn to tell their opinions in a constructive way, trying to influence, lobby and so on. That's why I think leadership training course is very important.

It is not so easy to remember everything.

Today I am working as a full-time politician in my county council with health-care issues. But I am still involved at the European level as a politician working a lot with UN Convention for people with disability.

Christina Wahrolin, Sweden
august 2011

2nd International Hearing Loops Conference 18 – 20 June 2011, USA

HLAA was the host organisation of the 2nd International Hearing Loops Conference in Washington DC USA in this summer. It was two years ago that we had the 1st International Hearing Loops Conference in Winterthur, Switzerland, which had been organised by Siegfried Karg, our former vice president of EFHOH.

The first impression that I had when I arrived in the conference hotel was: 'yep, what a lot of hard of hearing people are here!' The HLAA convention 2011 brought more than 1,800 attendees to the national capital of the USA. It was the largest event that HLAA has ever hosted! People came from eleven countries to attend the Convention 2011. Another 200 people came especially for the 2nd International Hearing Loops Conference.

On Friday evening we went together with 700 other HOH people to the John F. Kenney Center, for a captioned and looped performance of the musical *Wicked the Untold Story of the Witches of Oz*. We all travelled by coach. What a great evening!

Saturday we got time to visit the interesting convention exhibition hall. Also the loop conference had their own exhibition area. It is always nice to see some new/different products from America, especially the telecommunication products that were new for me. They look really great.

The loops conference started Saturday evening. It was opened with a Capital Celebration (Banquet) with all the participants of the HLAA convention, together with participants of the loops conference. Sunday morning we started the day with a hearing loop breakfast, with a very interesting overview presentation. The subject was called *Getting into the Hearing Loop* by keynote speaker David Myers, Ph.D.

Juliëtte Sterkens, AuD., an audiologist born in the Netherlands and now living for many years in the Wisconsin/USA was the winner of the HLAA technical Award 2011. Juliëtte has a very interesting website www.foxvalleyhearingloop.com, just have a look at this website when you like to know more about loops.

Take a pictorial tour of the HLAA convention 2011 and the loops conference at the HLAA website, www.Hearingloss.org and press the icon for events.

I am very happy that Doug Edworthy, one of the speakers, is willing to write some articles in the EFHOH newsletters about loops. In this EFHOH newsletter you find his first article and it will be followed by other articles about loops in the next EFHOH newsletters.

Ruth Warick, our IFHOH president, was a member of the closing session and the final conclusion was: We all had learned a lot, we have had fun, and we have done so in a communication accessible venue.

And we like/we need a follow-up loops conference in some years time. Ruth and I promise the participants that we will discuss this in the EFHOH and IFHOH boards and we will inform you later where and when the 3rd International Hearing Loops conference will be held.

Thanks to all the participants, speakers, HLAA, sponsors and special thanks to Dana Mulvany and her team to make this 2nd International Hearing Loops Conference a big success!!!

Using MovieReading - a personal account

Article about MovieReading for the EFHOH newsletter

Recently I talked with Lauren Storck, manager of CCAC Captioning and Lidia Best Smolarek about the methods for subtitling/captioning of cinema movies applied in all the world.

In this case I explained to them that until last year there was the open captioning as method applied in some cinemas in Italy and it was often applied for movies in original version, but rarely for dubbed and Italian movies with captions in Italian for Deaf and Hard of Hearing People in Italy because in general Italians aren't very interested to watch the films in original version, only a few of them know English very well and then they aren't very openminded towards the people with disabilities, not only at the cinemas, but too in the daily life.

The manager of Universal Access Multimedia (UMA), a societary part of Colby (famous firm of subtitling for RAI), is Carlo Cafarella and he had the idea to organize the initiative called "Leggi il film" in collaboration with the Space Cinema Group and Samsung. It can permit the HoH people to read the captions in small screen of Samsung tablets when they are watching the movies in first run in the big screen. So in this way someone won't be tied to go to a few screens for watching old movies in uncomfortable times in own city, but she/he will go in any cinema and in any time with his/her friend, partner or parent.

The UMA and Samsung organized the press conference about "Leggi il Film" in the Cinema Moderno in Rome on 15th June with the policymakers of Italian Ministry of the Labour and Social Development, the one of Cultural Heritage, with the president of the FIADDA (Italian Association of Parents with HoH children), Antonio Cotura, and the one of the ENS (Italian Association of Deaf people), Ida Collu, and others. This initiative was started on 17 June for this first time in the history of movie subtitling/captioning in Italy in 10 cinemas of Space Cinema Group in Milan, Rome, Turin, Catania, Bari, Padova, Genova, Naples, Cagliari and Bologna.

The Samsung Apps used for this initiative is called "Movie Reading" and the main web site is www.moviereading.com available in Italian and in English.

You can load and install the MovieReading Apps in the Samsung tablets "Galaxy S I, II, Galaxy P 1000/1010 and others you can find in http://www.moviereading.com/supported_devices/,

you can see the catalogue of captioned movies, choose the one of movies available in that cinema and find the pre-recorded captions to read and to synchronise them with

the audio of the movie you can hear in big screen. Maybe this Apps has a little speech recognition system which can recognise the audio of the movie better if I sit in the seats not very far from the screen for the audio signal and so the captions will run in the same time of the beginning of the movie.

This system is the example of closed captioning for the cinemas because the captions don't appear in the big screen, but in the mobile devices and you can open and close them when you want.

On the beginning of August I went to Space cinema in Turin near my house and the box office attendant told me the box office can give 5-6 Samsung tablets to viewers otherwise if they are given all to 6 persons, you can bring your own Samsung Tablet with the installation of MovieReading Apps.

I was the first HoH viewer who came to see captions at that cinema in Turin and so he gave me a Samsung Tablet Galaxy P 1000 with a display 7" and he explained how it functions for the reading of captions. I brought it to the cinema near the big screen, I opened the MovieReading Apps, the movie I wanted to watch was an animated one "Cars 2" without 3D glasses and so I choose it for reading the captions in that tablet. The synchronising of captions with this Apps was very good, correct and so it was possible for me reading them for following the movie in the front of big screen. The captions were of high and accurate quality for understanding the audio of that movie in more accessible way, but for me it is only a little tiring to watch the movie in big screen and captions in a tablet both in the same time. I was glad to have tried this solution to read captions at cinema because I believed it can be a good solution for me to go to the cinema in a more accessible way with equal opportunities of hearing people such as I can go with a hearing girl or friend to watch her/his favourite movie in first run with captions without waiting for a DVD next months.

For more info you can see the following links:

MovieReading and Leggi il Film: http://www.moviereading.com/en/Models_of_Samsung_Tablets: http://www.moviereading.com/supported_devices

MovieReading Apps: www.samsungapps.com

Space Cinema Group: http://www.thespacecinema.it/listacinema_new.jsp

News of FIADDA about Leggi il film: http://www.fiadda.it/notizia/41-Vado_al_cinema_realizzo_un_sogno/



International Summer Holiday for Adults with hearing loss

6- 13 August 2011, in Szczyrk, Poland.

48 Adults with hearing loss in common from 9 different countries came to enjoy an EFHOH holiday together in the ski resort of Szczyrk, Poland.

The holiday came 5 years after their last holiday in Germany and 20 years after the last holiday for young hard of hearing people in the resort.

I would like to say that during the time we spent together I have seen the importance of such holidays, its value in developing new friendships, broadening our knowledge and supporting each other via co-operation and awareness rising.

I would like to point out the importance of co-operation as this is what has made this holiday special to me as the organiser.

Thanks to partnership with Kalle Tervaskali from Finland, we were able to have 4 speech to text interpreters with us. It is not just the Finnish participants who benefited but also many of us who use English. This happened thanks to the law in Finland who provides for communication support even on holidays.

We made the history in Poland with the first ever speech to text reporting shown during the tours of the Salt Mine, Zywiec Brewery and Auschwitz-Birkenau. The reaction we were getting was really important.

The awareness rising was not only important for Poland, but many participants want similar mobile speech to text support implemented in their countries and that is a very positive impact.

“

*We support each other and find ways
to overcome obstacles together.
We are a community of like-minded
individuals.*

”

Many thanks to Polish, Czech and Slovakian participants who took part in the EFHOH Seminar on the last day of the holiday. We had presentations from Ruud van Hardeveld about Cochlear Implants latest study, Vera Strnadova from Czech presented the speech to text project and Jan Lamby presented EFHOH.

I hope that the seminar helped with the new co-operation between European neighbours.

I would also like to express my gratitude to Kela – The Social Insurance Institution of Finland for the support and especially Kalle Tervaskali for organising speech to text reporters, to the translators for making our stay so enjoyable and to participants themselves for taking part in the holiday.

We all felt that the holiday went by too fast and I hope we will not wait too long for another one.

Special thanks to Dariusz Idziak and Michael Sadowski for the German and sign language language support.

One thing is for sure: we will not wait another 20 years for next holiday in Poland, and that's a guarantee!

Lidia Smolarek-Best
Szczyrk August 2011
EFHOH Board Member



Our EFHOH holiday in Poland

Our EFHOH holiday in Poland, led by Lidia Smolarek-Best, was a wonderful experience. Many people from our part of the world (30 minutes drive from Liverpool Airport) take the Ryanair flight to Krakow to see that historic city and visit the Salt mines and Auschwitz. But not many get the chance to see so much more of Poland as we did, staying at Szczyrk, a winter sports town two hours drive from Krakow.

On the first four days, a coach took the group on trips to Zywiec Brewery and town, to Auschwitz, on a tour of the mountains close to the Czech border and to the Salt Mines and Krakow. On all these drives we saw so much of the countryside, lakes, rivers and hydro-electric schemes and small places of interest as well as the main destinations. The wonderful ladies from Finland provided speech to text on the big screen at the front of the coach so we knew what was happening. Then they carried laptops and screens on slings providing STTR on all our tours. This was a system I have never seen before and was perfect for guided tours. It was hard work for them but was much appreciated.

The fifth day was a free day with everyone doing his or her own thing. Some got the bus to Krakow as we had only had 3 hours there the previous day. Others walked to the chair lift at the end of the main street and went up to walk at higher levels or used the facilities of this sports hotel to go swimming. David and I had experience of the Polish health service as we had to go back to the nearest town, Bielsko-Biala, for a check up on his sore foot. This had swelled up earlier in the week and become so painful that we had to miss the mountain sight-seeing tour and go to hospital on Tuesday. After that Dave was well enough for a gentle stroll in the area around about the hospital which was in the old town. It was a nice town, away from the usual tourist track and we enjoyed that

On the last day we had more free time and then some presentations and discussions held in our own large dining room. The room had a large screen which was also used every day for STT announcements. We were told that the communication support was down to Kalle Tervaskali, from the Deafened Organization in Finland. This is another side of European cooperation.

We were introduced to a group of Polish hard of hearing young people who are working hard to promote support for young HOH people at college and University in Poland. They are using English cued speech to teach English and Spanish cued speech to teach Spanish. They also need more subtitled TV in Poland.

Lidia was keen to give them the encouragement and support that she herself had received when she was a young hard of hearing person. We spoke to Adam Kopera who was at the first EFHOH meeting in Portsmouth in 1986. He was the only one from Eastern Europe to attend but he was made welcome and later he encouraged Lidia to get involved with young European HOH people.

Next was a power point presentation by Ruud van Harelveld from the Netherlands. He used information gathered by the European Cochlear Implant Users Association about Cochlear Implants in various countries in Europe. Obviously some countries have a much better record of providing implants than others and there is a need to support all countries. This was followed by some discussion especially on born deaf children and implants.

Then we had a presentation from a group of hard of hearing people from the Czech Republic. Four of them had set up a campaign to provide speech to text support. The government paid for sign language support but no money was provided for text support. They obtained sponsorship from Vodophone and specially targeted colleges teaching touch typing and prepared them to work at speech to text support. They worked hard to get demonstrations in shops, at social events, police workshops and town hall. Some diplomacy was needed to explain how important it was to give support in courts of law.

They had put on 304 STT events since 2008.

I was very impressed with what they have achieved in the four years since they got together for this campaign. I spoke about our efforts in England to demonstrate STTR to the University of the Third Age (U3A) without success so far. The U3A is an organization for retired people and many members have age related hearing problems.

Lidia then talked about what we have done in England, especially the work of Geoff Brown who was until recently, chairman of the IFHOH Late Deafened Commission. Geoff was one of three people who set up STAGETEXT, which is a form of captioning for theatre productions and is now used in many theatres in England and Eire. He was a quiet, modest person who encouraged and inspired us all to do our best for HOH and deafened people.

The Polish member of the European parliament, Lidia Geringer de Oedeberg, sent us a letter of good wishes for our holiday. The Euro MP takes a lot of interest in EFHOH and is involved in disability issues in the European parliament

After all the serious stuff we had a final Barbeque in the evening with good food, plenty to drink, alcoholic and otherwise, and some impromptu musical entertainment, including a solo Swedish rain song with general chorus and

Polish young people singing a national song followed by a tribute to Lidia.

Some had to get up for a 5 a.m. departure in the morning but others managed to stay up late, still chatting and sharing experiences. It was a good time and I think a valuable experience to mix with other nationalities. We met a lot of lovely people, including a very kind French lady who gave me her support for the long walk through the Salt Mines and I am so grateful and impressed that everything was conducted in English!

Norah and David Clewes from Chester UK

European Parliament Disability Intergroup meeting 28 June 2011

EFHOH board member Lidia Best was attended at the Disability Intergroup meeting of the European Parliament on 28 June 2011. President of the intergroup MEP Ádám Kósa invited MEPs and NGOs to discuss the future of the European Social Fund with special regards to people with disabilities.

The overarching theme was that the European Social Fund (ESF) can improve the lives of people with disabilities including Deaf people. Panel speakers included representatives from the European Commission, the ESF Committee, and EDF President Yannis Vardakastanis.

Jeroen Jutte from the European Commission presented the Commission's view of the European Social Fund and stressed that there are 10 million people benefitting from it, of which about 4% are disabled people. It will assist in providing access to social services and also services in general.

Xavier Verboven, ESF Rapporteur of the European Economic and Social Committee, clearly presented the values of the Social Fund detailing its key points and aims. He especially noted the added benefit of ESF in view of the financial crisis: it can give special support to disabled, socially marginalised and older people. ESF is therefore one

of the first tools of the EU to implement the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). He proposed to reduce bureaucracy and improve transparency of procedures and financial information in order to develop maximum synergies with other EC funds.

Yannis Vardakastanis, President of the European Disability Forum (EDF), stressed the monitoring mechanism of provisions, recommending the use of annual reports, which must clearly indicate the level of involvement of disabled people. EDF called on all EU institutions to include UNCRPD as a horizontal requirement to ESF regulation, as well as the inclusion of disabled people and non-discrimination as horizontal measures. Further, EDF wants greater involvement of civil society, in governance partnerships and in the management of funds. Yannis Vardakastanis concluded that stronger legislation is an important factor but existing legislation must be enforced and implemented in better ways at both the Commission level and at Member State level.

For more information on the Disability Intergroup, please contacted Lidia Best email address: EFHOH@hrf.se



Volunteering is generally described as an unpaid activity for the benefit of others within an organisation or for an individual. This can range from sports clubs to helping older people or engaging in fundraising for an organisation or a specific cause. Volunteering is of great importance especially to organisations in the social context, which do not have the funds to pay staff to do their work. Virtual volunteering is a relatively new concept whereby people help off-site, often from the comfort of their homes using the Internet. The Polish Presidency has termed virtual volunteering 'as an innovative tool enabling the implementation of social goals' in their work programme 2011. Examples of virtual volunteering include the management of online donation sites, creating videos, writing blogs or running social media sites.

Volunteering does not only offer personal satisfaction but can give individuals skills that will be useful in their career and also their private lives in the future. Especially so-called 'soft skills', such as intercultural competences, communication skills, or the ability to work in a team are easily acquired when volunteering on a regular basis. Other skills such as organisational skills can also be obtained by engaging in voluntary work.

The European Parliament conducted a special Eurobarometer survey in June 2011 relating to voluntary work. It questioned 26,825 Europeans and found that about 24% volunteer either regularly or occasionally. 6% work in an association or organisation defending the rights of patients of disabled persons and 16% are active in other NGOs or charity organisations. Social inclusion of disadvantaged citizens is seen as one of the most important fields of volunteering.

It is also extremely important to EFHOH and its member NADs. EFHOH Board Members and President are not paid staff members; they are engaged in this activity outside their full-time jobs. As most NADs across Europe and also the world. Volunteers therefore play an active role in promoting subtitling, accessibility, as well as acting as a role model for other Hard of Hearing people. Volunteering will also play an increasingly important role in countries where compulsory military has been abolished and thousands of organisations are now lacking those who

in the past opted for civil service. Volunteers will be the ones taking up those positions, actively supporting individuals and organisations mainly in the social sector. In view of the next European Year of Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations 2012 volunteering is an important factor in keeping older people fit and giving them the opportunity to contribute to society even after they are retired. Older people will make up an even larger proportion of citizens in the years to come and they will be indispensable when it comes to caring for those who are less able to do so. Older Hard of Hearing people are especially in danger of becoming lonely when they become older; volunteering must be a viable option for them to become actively included in society.

So far there is no European-wide best practice manual in place. Individual countries have best practice guides but they vary widely. The European Year of Volunteering wants to help sharing best practice across borders and facilitate volunteering abroad. Hard of Hearing volunteers must be protected adequately to be able to volunteer on an equal basis as other volunteers. The potential of Hard of Hearing citizens must and can be utilised to create a more social society that includes all.

EFHOH encourages Hard of Hearing people to become involved in volunteering, especially in local Hard of Hearing Associations or Hard of Hearing clubs in their hometown. EFHOH acknowledges the importance of volunteering; EFHOH and other Hard of Hearing organisations can only continue to exist with the support of volunteers who help put Hard of Hearing issues on the agenda locally, nationally and at European level. EFHOH also encourages Hard of Hearing people to become involved in mainstream volunteering to raise awareness about Hard of Hearing issues in other organisations. At the same time EFHOH calls for a European-wide model of best practice to adequately support and protect volunteers to ensure they can continue contributing in the best and effective way possible.



Communication Support in the palm of your hand

Bee Communications are pioneering the use of Remote Captioning, a service which enables deaf and hard and hearing people to access a Speech to Text Reporter (STTR) or electronic note-taker over the internet. This affordable and accessible service is now being widely used by our clients in a variety of settings.

With the growing use of smart phones and tablet computers the 'Remote' part of Remote Captioning is now even more relevant. These devices enable our clients to connect to an STTR and follow the captions on the move.

A tablet such as the iPad has a powerful inbuilt microphone meaning our STTR can clearly hear what is being said using an internet telephone service such as Skype. The tablet's 3G capacity means that there is a steady and reliable internet connection. This enables our clients to read the Speech to Text from our website.

What Other People are Saying about Remote Captioning

Bee Communications has been testing Remote Captioning on tablets and smart phones to see how it works. In fact we found out our clients were way ahead of us! Here are some of their comments:

"As Scotland Director of Hearing Link, I spend much of my time travelling to and from meetings or events. This means that I am often 'on the road' when our weekly Skype staff meeting takes place – a meeting that is supported by remote STTR from Bee Communications.

To connect to the meeting, I have bookmarked the link to our Skype Bee Communications address and can follow all of the discussion using the live transcript from my iPhone. This means that I have real-time information, can use my travel time effectively and don't have to catch up from meeting notes at a later date. For me, this is a great advantage and is easy to do, so I'm really pleased that technology allows such flexibility."

Linda Sharkey, Scotland Director, Hearing Link

"As with regards to the service, absolutely fantastic! I use the application on my laptop when I'm in the office and if

I'm mobile, I am able to use it on my HTC Desire (Android) mobile phone. This works really, really well.

The benefits are simultaneous voice and text, which is absolutely critical. Also as I have a regular 'note taker', i.e. you, you know generally who everyone is and all the acronyms that are used. Text Relay would not be able to cope with that."

Dan Birtles, BT Operate

"Remote Captioning on the iPad was great - the directions were easy to use and it worked really well. I think it is a product I could definitely use in the mainstream workplace. It would be really useful for meetings at short notice or even if you just wanted access to translation for an hour without wanting to make a minimum three-hour booking for an interpreter. Cheaper too! I'd use this service, definitely!"

Caroline O'Neill, private individual who tested Remote Captioning on her iPad

The more common place these devices become, the more potential there is for improved, remote communication support for deaf and hard of hearing people. This communication support would be in the hands of the individual, on demand wherever and whenever you are.

Please contact us for a test on your smart phone or tablet device, or simply for a chat about how Remote Captioning might help you.

We are happy to provide free demonstrations. Please get in touch for more details: beth@bee-communications.com | 020 7231 3192 | 07931 584 165

Why Hearing Loops Do, and Sometimes Don't, Work

© Doug Edworthy 2011

1. The Loop Experience – Good and Bad

"This is terrible. I can't understand a word the priest is saying," my father whispered to me at his grandson's wedding. Despite having two new digital technology hearing aids, my father couldn't distinguish the priest's words from the echoes and reverberating sound caused by the stone floor and walls and the vaulted roof of the 17th Century parish church. A modern sound system had been installed, but the church's acoustics made it difficult even for people with good hearing to understand what the priest was saying.

Knowing that a hearing loop had been installed in the church I asked my father to try the 'telecoil' setting for the first time on his new hearing aids. After a few seconds of fumbling to press the tiny button on each hearing aid his face lit up. "That's amazing!" he whispered, "It sounds as though the vicar is right here, and talking directly to me. Now I can hear and understand every word."

My father's first experience of hearing loops was a positive experience, and now he uses the telecoil setting whenever he sees a 'loop installed' sign. Almost always, he finds the hearing loop gives a much better experience compared to the sound picked up by the hearing aid's microphone.

The great advantage of a hearing loop system is that it bridges the gap between a person speaking and a listener's ear. That gap is where the echoes and reverberation caused by walls, windows, floors and ceilings, and the background noise from other people and their noisy activities, distort the sound and reduce the listener's ability to understand speech.

So a hearing loop system can take the sound from a microphone near a talker's mouth and deliver it directly to a listener's ears – also taking advantage of the hearing aid or cochlear implant's customised corrections to the user's hearing loss.

In addition, listeners need no additional equipment to use the hearing loop. As my father discovered, press a button on the equipment you already have (your hearing aid or cochlear implant), and it sounds as though the talker is right there with you.

But contrast his first experience of hearing loops with that of a long-time friend. Alice has worn hearing aids for many years and had once or twice tried the telecoil setting when buying tickets and attending theatre and shows.

But, mostly, all she heard was loud buzzing noises that drowned out the voice of the person on the other side of the ticket-office window, and person's voice disappeared altogether when she leant forward to try and hear better. In the auditorium she found the sound from the loop was too quiet and muffled even though she had asked for seats where the hearing loop coverage was supposed to be good.

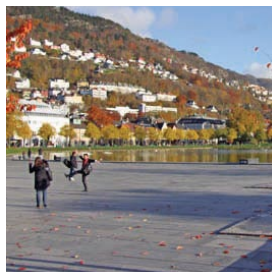
Because of these early bad experiences Alice very rarely bothers to use the 'telecoil' setting in her hearing aids, and stopped going to theatres and cinemas because she thought she won't be able to hear properly. This is a pity because many hearing loop systems work well she has been missing some great experiences, and the owners of these venues have lost a customer.

In part 2 of this article you can discover why the same technology can give such different experiences, and learn about ways (some simple, some not so simple) of overcoming problems.

In the meantime I would be pleased to answer your questions by e-mail. Please contact me at doug@edworthyaudio.com.

Bio:

Doug Edworthy is an independent audio engineer based in the South East of England. He has worked as a designer and commissioner of hearing loop systems since the 1980's, runs training courses on hearing loops for the UK's Institute of Sound & Communications Engineers, and serves on many national and international standards committees including three that are concerned with hearing loop systems and the equipment used in them.



You cannot miss the IFHOH World Congress 2012 in Norway, the Land of the Midnight Sun!

The last World Congress was in Vancouver, Canada in 2008.

The next one will be in Bergen, Norway, June 25 to 28, 2012!

The theme for the World Congress in 2012 is "A Better Quality of Life!"

À ne pas manquer, le Congrès mondial IFHOH 2012 en Norvège, le pays du soleil de minuit !

Le Congrès mondial précédent a eu lieu à Vancouver, Canada en 2008.

Le prochain sera à Bergen, en Norvège, les 25 au 28 juin 2012 !

Le thème du Congrès mondial 2012 est « Une meilleure qualité de vie ! »

WWW.IFHOH2012.NO

EFHOH - European Federation of Hard of Hearing People

The European Federation of Hard of Hearing People consists of National Associations of/for Hard of Hearing and Late-Deafened People, Parents' Organisations and Professional Organisations.

EFHOH comprises the European members of the International Federation of Hard of Hearing People (IFHOH) and was established in 1993. It has its own board and secretariat. The federation has non-profitable and benevolent aims and it is a non-political and non-sectarian organisation. EFHOH is a general member of the European Disability Forum (EDF). We also work in good co-operation with IFHOH and our official language is English.

The Board members of the EFHOH carry out their work on an honorary basis.