

Friday
November 04, 2011

Columns

Senior Power... In the loop

By Helen Rippier Wheeler

Friday November 04, 2011 - 02:21:00 PM

It's a "hearing aid that cuts out all the clatter" according to the New York Times, and it's called a hearing loop. The technology, already widely adopted in northern Europe, has been installed in stores, banks, museums, subway stations and other public spaces as well as in homes.

Loops have been installed at hundreds of places in the United States, including the Grand Rapids Airport, Michigan State University basketball arena, Stevens Point public library, Yankee Stadium ticket windows, the SoHo Apple store, Ellis Island, Metropolitan Museum of Art and American Museum of Natural History. And at least one senior center.

People who have felt excluded are suddenly back in the conversation. The hearing loss rate in older adults has climbed to more than 60 percent according to one national survey, and nearly two-thirds of Americans age 70 and older have hearing loss. (American Association for the Advancement of Science, February 28, 2011). "A hearing loop, typically installed on the floor around the periphery of a room, is a thin strand of copper wire radiating electromagnetic signals that can be picked up by a tiny receiver already built into most hearing aids and cochlear implants. When the receiver is turned on, the hearing aid receives only the sounds coming directly from a microphone, not the background cacophony."

The basic technology, an induction loop, relays signals from a telephone to a tiny receiver called a telecoil, or t-coil, that can be attached to a hearing aid. As telecoils became standard parts of hearing aids in Britain and Scandinavia, they were also used to receive signals from loops connected to microphones in halls, stores, taxicabs, etc. Telecoils have traditionally sold as an option accessory, at an extra cost of \$50.00 instead of being included automatically with a hearing aid. But today, telecoils are built into two-thirds of the hearing aids on the market.

Ten years ago, when I began to lose *it*, I was seventy-five years old. No family history, whatsoever. After a few years, I acknowledged that the problem was not other people's, the TV or whatever, and that Medicare does not fund hearing aids, although it does pay an otolarlyngologist. I was accused of "abandoning" the students when I had to discontinue teaching *Strong Women*, an adult school class that I had introduced at the senior center. More to this "impairment" than I had assumed.

Resources:

[Scientific American](#) (2010).Hearingloop.org creator, David Myers, in the Association for Psychological Science [Observer](#) (2011), [Hearing Review](#) (2010), and [Sound and Communications](#) (2010.) Eloquent first-person stories from musician [Richard Einhorn](#), after experiencing a Kennedy Center hearing loop, and from [Denise Portis](#). California audiologist [Bill Diles](#), who describes how his installation of more than 1800 home TV room loops has benefited his patients and his practice.In [Women](#) magazine, writer Terri Dougherty describes people's responses to audiologist Juliette Sterkens' "[Loop Wisconsin](#)" initiative.American Academy of Audiology president, Dr. Patricia Kricos, on "Looping America," in the Academy's magazine, [Audiology Today](#) (2010).

"A hearing aid that cuts out all the clatter." John Tierney, *New York Times*, October 23, 2011.

xxxxx

MORE NEWS

Current issues of several San Francisco, Oakland and Berkeley newspapers, including the Berkeley Daily Planet, are available for onsite reading at the Berkeley Public Library's 2nd floor Reference desk (not Periodicals on the 3rd floor).

On Oct. 17, 2011 United States Senator Diane Feinstein, who is a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, wrote: "...President Obama's Fiscal Year 2012 budget proposal requests more than \$2 billion for Older Americans Act programs, a 5% increase over Fiscal Year 2011 funding." Her Washington, D.C. office phone is (202) 224-3841.

Links we like:

www.berkeleycouncilwatch.com/
[Richard Brenneman: Eats, Shoots 'n' Leaves](#)
[Jane Stillwater's Web Log](#)

Email to [subscribe at](mailto:subscribe@berkeleydailyplanet.com)
berkeleydailyplanet.com.
 and get free email updates.

The Pepper Spray Times

[Read The November Issue](#)
 (and please support Grace Underpressure with a donation :-)

Donate



Harmful cuts to Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid are being seriously considered by the super-secret "super committee." Super committee members are reportedly ready to shrink Social Security retirement and disability benefits by reducing the cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) and are proposing to carve a big chunk out of Medicare, placing a higher burden on seniors to pay for increasing health care cuts. A Medicare cut would also be imposed on health care providers, meaning that fewer doctors would want to care for seniors. The Social Security COLA change would most negatively affect older women, who could lose income equal to a month's worth of groceries each year. A poll taken by both Democratic and Republican pollsters in September 2011 showed that voters overwhelmingly oppose cuts to Social Security and Medicare as a way to reduce the deficit. By a 50 point margin, they oppose including cuts to these programs as part of a possible super committee plan. Opposition to these cuts remains strong across party lines, as 82 percent of Democrats, 73 percent of Independents and 58 percent of Republicans oppose these cuts. Amajority of polled voters -- even among Republicans -- say that taxes must be increased on the highest income earners instead of cuts to Social Security and Medicare as a way to reduce the deficit.

Who's supporting the Older Americans Act? As of October 25, 2011, several members of Congress have shown their commitment to protecting and strengthening the Older Americans Act (OAA) as part of the One Away campaign. Sen. Herb Kohl (D-WI), Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Rep. Betty McCollum (D-MN), and Sen. Al Franken (D-MN) have shared or will soon share public statements about how OAA programs are vital to the lives of seniors.

The 2011 California legislative session has come to a close. The Legislature passed numerous bills and sent them to the Governor for his signature or veto. Those signed into law by Governor Brown include: AB 138 (Beall) – Elder Economic Security Index; service plans. Requires the California Department of Aging and Area Agencies on Aging to utilize the Elder Economic Security Standard Index to assess and address the economic needs of older adults when developing service plans. AB 588 (Perez, Manuel) – Domestic violence; rental housing. Provides greater protection to victims of domestic violence by increasing the time period in which a victim may obtain early termination of a residential lease after issuance of a domestic violence court order or police report. SB 48 (Leno) – Sexual orientation; educational materials. Adds lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Americans to the list of groups of people whose role and contributions must be included in social science instruction and accurately portrayed in public school instructional materials, and prohibits sexual orientation from being adversely reflected in educational materials. SB 930 (Evans) – IHSS; administrative requirements. Removes the requirements that In-Home Supportive Services recipients provide fingerprint images and that provider timesheets include spaces for provider and recipient fingerprints.

Despite high vaccination rates, senior citizens also account for 90 percent of flu-related hospitalizations, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Flu and pneumonia are the seventh-leading cause of death in the United States among persons age 65+. Some physicians and pharmacies are offering patients age 65+ a shot that packs four times the amount of dead flu virus to which the body can react. The elderly can choose the standard vaccine or the high-dose shot, manufactured by French pharmaceutical giant Sanofi Pasteur, proven in clinical trials to get a stronger immune response. CDC's standing message now is that everyone age 6 months+ should get a flu shot. Like the standard shot, the high-dose version is made of three flu strains deemed most likely to make people ill in that season. Sanofi reports that the higher dose of antigens also results in more reactions to the flu shot: slightly more local side effects, a bit more redness and tenderness around the shot area, a bit more fever.

Older adults represent 12% of the U.S. population, but make up 35% of all fraud victims.

Services & Advocacy for GLBT Elders (SAGE) has received a contract to create the country's first LGBT senior center -- the SAGE Center, opening in January 2012. It will offer a comprehensive array of services aimed at the thousands of LGBT older adults living in New York City. But see also: **"Gay Retirement Havens Run Into Financial Difficulty,"** by Dan Frosch (New York Times, October 28, 2011).

Because of state budget cuts, California's 274 adult day health care centers, including 10 in San Francisco and 23 more in Bay Area counties, are scheduled to lose their Medi-Cal financing and related federal matching funds at the end of November. One San Francisco center closed earlier this year and another one plans to shut in November. "Budget Cuts Erase a Daily Lifeline for the Elderly and Disabled," by Katharine Mieszkowski (New York Times, October 28, 2011).

xxxx

MARK YOUR CALENDAR: Be sure to confirm. Readers are welcome to share by email news of future events that may interest boomers, seniors and elders. Daytime, free, and Bay Area events preferred. pen136@dslextreme.com

Friday, Nov. 4. 1 P.M. Area Agency on Aging Focus Group. At the North Berkeley Senior Center, 1901 Hearst, corner MLK. Free. #25 AC bus stops at the NBSC. 510-577-3540, 981-5190.

Friday, Nov. 4. 6 P.M. Legal Assistance for Seniors' 35th Anniversary Gala. Oakland Marriott City Center Ballroom, 1001 Broadway. 510-832-3040.

Saturday, Nov. 5. Book Into Film: *The Last Station*. Central Berkeley Public Library, 2090 Kittredge. 510-981-6236 for required registration.

Sunday, Nov. 6. 2 P.M. Performers' showcase. At Central Berkeley Public Library, 2090 Kittredge. Participants from the weekly Playreaders program present scenes from classic and contemporary plays. 510-981-6241.

Sunday, Nov. 6. 3-5 P.M. Cuban Music & Dance, refreshments. At Redwood Gardens, 2951 Derby Street, Berkeley. Benefit Performance for the Berkeley-Palma Soriano Cuban Sister-City Association. To support December solidarity brigade delegation to Cuba. Street parking. AC #49 (Counterclockwise) stops in front. Sliding scale donation \$10-25.00, no one turned away for lack of funds. Contact: Dana Merryday 510-464-4615.

Monday, Nov. 7. 9:30 – 11:30 A.M. Roger Baer, Volunteer Instructor, returns to teach his American Backgrounds 7-weeks course. Free. Mastick Senior Center, 1155 Santa Clara Av., Alameda. 510-747-7506

Monday, Nov. 7. 7 P.M. "Castoffs" - Knitting Group at the Kensington Library, 61 Arlington Av. Free. 510-524-3043.

Tuesday, Nov. 8. 3 P.M. The San Francisco Guitar Quartet. Free. At the North Berkeley Senior Center, 1901 Hearst, corner MLK. #25 AC bus stops at the Center. 510-981-5190.

Wednesday, Nov. 9. 12:15 – 1 P.M. UC,B Hertz Concert Hall, free. Solo Cello, Rio Vander Stahl. Peteris Vasks: Gramata Cellam - The Book for Solo Cello. Popper: Requiem for Three Cellos and Piano. Villa-Lobos: Bachianas Brasileiras No. 1 (Intro). 510-642-4864.

Wednesday, Nov. 9. 12 Noon. Playreaders. Central Berkeley Public Library, 2090 Kittredge. 510-981-6236. Free. Also Nov. 16, 23 and 30. Wednesday, Nov. 9. 6:30-8 P.M. Drop-in poetry writing workshop. Free. Albany Library. 1247 Marin Av. 510-526-0660.

Thursday, Nov. 10. 10 – 11:30 A.M. Alzheimer's Caregiver Support Group. Mastick Senior Center, 1155 Santa Clara Av., Alameda. 510-747-7506

Thursday, Nov. 10. 10:30 A.M. New Member Orientation & YOU! Mastick Senior Center, 1155 Santa Clara Av., Alameda. Complimentary lunch provided by Bay Area Community Services (BACS). Registration required. 510-747-7506.

Saturday, Nov. 12. 12 Noon. Beef Bowl Anime Club meeting for adults. Albany Library, 1247 Marin Av. 510-526-3720 x 16.

Monday, Nov. 14, 11:30 A.M. & 12 Noon. J-Sei Center, 110 Carleton St., Berkeley. Lecture "Do You Have the Right Insurance?" Speaker: Darrell Doi-CLTC Financial Advisor. To place a reservation for the lecture and/or lunch, call 510-883-1106.

Monday, Nov. 14. 12:30 P.M. – 1:30P.M. Brown Bag Lunch Speaker's Forum: Bob Lewis, *Birds of the Bay Trail* cosponsored by Albany YMCA and Albany library at 1257 Marin Av. 510-526-3720 x 16.

Monday, Nov. 14. 7 P.M. *The Greek Isles-- History and Travel*. Laura Bushman will talk about and present a slide show depicting the white washed villages overlooking the Aegean Sea. She will also address, briefly, the current economic condition in Greece. Kensington Library, 61 Arlington Avenue. Free. 510-524-3043.

Tuesday, Nov. 15 is Annual National Memory Screening Day.
<http://www.nationalmemoryscreening.org>.

Tuesday, Nov. 15. 1 P.M. Falls Prevention Discussion Group. Senior Injury Prevention Project. Participants will receive a Falls Prevention Manual and other useful, easy to read information. Mastick Senior Center, 1155 Santa Clara Av., Alameda. 510-747-7506

Tuesday, Nov. 15. 7 P.M. Author Showcase. Annette Fuentes, investigative reporter and author of *Lockdown High: When the Schoolhouse Becomes a Jailhouse*, is an op ed contributor to USA Today. El Cerrito Library, 6510 Stockton Avenue. 510-526-7512.

Wednesday, Nov. 16. 11 A.M. Outreach Specialist Colleen Fawley (510-981-6160) will visit J-Sei Senior Center, 1710 Carleton Way, Berkeley, to answer questions and take requests for books and magazines available from the Berkeley Public Library in Japanese and English. 510-883-1106.

Wednesday, Nov. 16. 12:15-1 P.M.

The Nocturne. Faculty Recital: Louise Bidwell, Piano. Nocturnes by J. Field, Chopin, C. Schumann, M. Szymanowska, and Fanny Mendelssohn. Free. UC,B Hertz Concert Hall, free. 510-642-4864.

Wednesday, Nov. 16. 7 – 8 P.M. Adult Evening Book Group. Facilitated discussion. Albany Library, 1247 Marin Av., 510-526-3720.

Thursday, Nov 17. 10 A.M. – 12 Noon. Free dental consultation with Dr. Alfred Chongwill. By appointment only. Mastick Senior Center, 1155 Santa Clara Av., Alameda. 510-747-7506

Thursday, Nov. 17. 12:30 P.M. Birthday Celebration. Mastick Senior Center, 1155 Santa Clara Av., Alameda. 510-747-7506

Thursday, Nov. 17. 1:30 P.M. Volunteer Instructor William Sturm presents "Musical Grab-Bag" medley of pieces by composers discussed in the Music Appreciation Class for 2011. Mastick Senior Center, 1155 Santa Clara Av., Alameda. 510-747-7506

Saturday, Nov. 19. 10 A.M. – 4 P.M. Friends of the Albany Library Book Sale, 1247 Marin Av. Please do not bring donations the week prior to the sale. 510-526-3720 x 16. Also Sunday, Nov. 20 11 A.M. – 4 P.M.

Saturday, Nov. 19. 11 A.M. Landlord/Tenant Counseling. Central Berkeley Public Library, 2090 Kittredge. 510-981-6241.

Sunday, Nov. 20. 1:30P.M. Book Into Film. *An Education*. From a chapter of Lynn Barber's 2009 memoir of the same title. Central Berkeley Public Library. 2090 Kittredge. Free, but registration is required. 510-6148. Tuesday, Nov. 22. 3 P.M. Tea and Cookies. Central Berkeley Public Library, 2090 Kittredge. 510-981-6236.

Wednesday, Nov. 23. 1:30-2:30 P.M. Great Books Discussion Group: John Steinbeck's *Travels with Charley*. Albany Library, 1247 Marin Av. 510-526-3720.

Wednesday, Nov. 23. 1:30 P.M. Gray Panthers' monthly meeting. At the North Berkeley Senior Center, 1901 Hearst. Free. 510-981-5190, 548-9696.

Monday, Nov. 28. 2 – 3:30 P.M. "Vigee-LeBrun: Woman Artist in an Age of Revolution" presentation by Brigit Urmson. Mastick Senior Center, 1155 Santa Clara Av., Alameda. 510-747-7506.

Monday, Nov. 28. 7 P.M. Book Club. *Silas Marner* by George Eliot . Kensington Library, 61 Arlington Ave. Free event. 510-524-3043. Each meeting starts with a poem selected and read by a member with a brief discussion following the reading. New members are always welcome.

Wednesday, Nov. 30. 12:15-1 P.M. Gamelan Music of Java and Bali. Performed by classes directed by Midiyanto and I Dewa Putu Berata, with Ben Brinner and Lisa Gold. UC,B Hertz Concert Hall. Free. 510-642-4864.

xxxx

Monday, Dec. 5. 6:30 P.M. "Castoffs" Knitting Group. Kensington Library, 61 Arlington Ave. Free. 510-524-3043. An evening of knitting, show and tell and yarn exchange. All levels welcome. Some help will be provided.

Monday, Dec. 19. 7 P.M. Book Club. *Daughter of Time* by Josephine Tey. Tey is known as the mystery writer for those who don't like mysteries! Kensington Library, 61 Arlington Ave. Free event. 510-524-3043. Each meeting starts with a poem selected and read by a member with a brief discussion following the reading. New members are always welcome.