

Hearing loop brings world to deaf child

Nine-year-old Sandy Brooker has been profoundly deaf since the day she was born. Two powerful hearing aids and a special school program help her communicate, but until recently many of the activities other children enjoy passed her silently by.

Now, Sandy's world has widened to include *Smurf* cassettes, radio broadcasts, TV's *The Polka Dot Door* and even *The A-Team*.

They come to her via a loose, lightweight plastic necklace she wears when she wants to tune in directly to a broadcast over radio, cassette or television.

"Previously, if Sandy wanted to watch television, it meant having to turn the volume up very loud, which understandably put out everyone else in the family," says Allan Silburt, who made the loop device she now uses.

"She'd be picking up static through her hearing aids and the signal probably wouldn't be clear enough for her to get much."

But, based on a principle called electromagnetic induction, Silburt invented a "personal loop" Sandy now uses to listen to broadcasts.

Made of flexible plastic containing several thin wires, the loop is worn loosely over San-

dy's clothing. Attached is a thin wire with an ordinary jack she can plug into radio, cassette or television.

The loop acts like a transmitting antenna, taking sound from the radio or cassette and transmitting it across a small airspace to her hearing aid.

It works because of a little known piece of equipment in most hearing aids that lets the deaf listen to the telephone without having to hold it against the aid.

"A hearing aid contains something called a telecoil adapter which picks up the weak signal from the telephone as long as it's somewhere near the aid," says Silburt, who once worked for an electronics company that makes hearing-aid parts.

Sharon Brooker is so enthusiastic about it she has formed a partnership with Miriam Vanderhoff-Silburt, Allan's wife, to sell the devices to other deaf people.

With estimates of as many as 30 000 hearing-impaired people in the Ottawa-Carleton area alone, the Canadian Hearing Society believes there is a market for such devices. At \$30 per loop, the Silburt model is "the lowest priced device of its kind I'm aware of, and it seems to be quite durable", he says.



Sandy Brooker wears new loop.

The Citizen

Stamp marks twenty-fifth anniversary of St. Lawrence Seaway

The St. Lawrence Seaway, the partly man made, waterway linking the Atlantic Ocean and the Great Lakes, is the subject of a new stamp issued on its twenty-fifth anniversary, June 26.

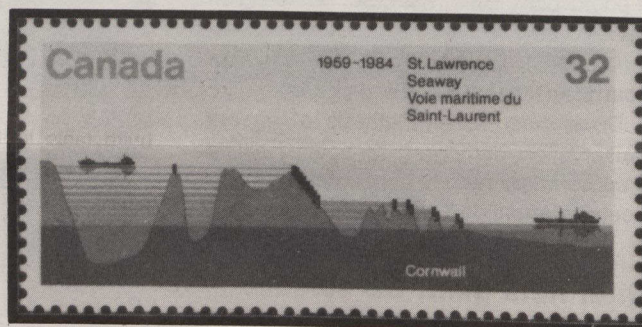
André Ouellet, Minister responsible for Canada Post Corporation, said that "as we celebrate twenty-five years of successful operation of this joint Canada-US engineering marvel, Canadians and Americans can look back with pride on the drive and determination of those who saw this gigantic project to completion.

"Never before — or since — have two sovereign nations co-operated to jointly produce a project of such magnitude in their nations' interests," he said.

Canada and the United States began discussing such a venture in 1900. Construction finally got under way in 1954. Queen Elizabeth II and US President Dwight D. Eisenhower officially opened the Seaway on June 26, 1959.

Both the US Postal Service and Canada Post are issuing commemorative stamps, each with its own design, to mark the anniversary.

The Canadian stamp, by Toronto designer Ernst Barensher, illustrates a profile view of the entire inland waterway made navigable by the St. Lawrence Seaway, from Montreal to Lake Superior. A red highlight on the stamp marks the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority's headquarters in Cornwall. The city is celebrating its bicentenary this year.



US awards for Canadian films

The National Film Board (NFB) and Toronto-based Atlantis Films shared a total of four blue ribbons and several other awards at the recent twenty-sixth American Film festival in New York City.

The NFB won a blue ribbon for *Daisy: The Story of a Facelift*, a one-hour documentary directed by Mike Rubbo. The Board also distributes another blue-ribbon winner, *All of Our Lives*, a film about aging and women co-produced by Laura Sky and Helen Klodawsky.

One of two Atlantis blue ribbons went to *Boys and Girls*, the half-hour drama directed by Don McBrearty and based on a short story by Alice Munro that won an Oscar this year for best short live action film. The other was awarded to director John Walker's *Chambers: Tracks and Gestures*, a documentary about Canadian artist Jack Chambers.

The NFB also won a red ribbon for *Faces*, an animated short film directed by Paul Bchner, and an honourable mention for Norman McLaren's most recent film, *Narcissus*.