

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

((( SPEAK )))

Publication of the Canadian Hard Of Hearing Association (CHHA)

**NORTH SHORE BRANCH**

---

Issue #8 ----- January 1996

---

CHHA BC has received a grant for  
**"Managing Your Hearing Loss"**  
which the North Shore Branch will participate  
in. Jean Taylor has been selected to take the  
Teacher Training Program from our Branch.

There will be three teacher training sessions in  
February 1996, September 1996 and February  
1997. Members may apply (Priority given to  
CHHA members) to take the course as well, but  
must pay for the course fees at their own expense.

The cost of each course, excluding travel, will be  
about \$500 (two people per hotel room) plus a  
cost for basic meals. Duration of training will last  
for a duration of five days each time.

The program involves the Instructor training five  
volunteers who will teach seniors who are Hard  
of Hearing and other interested persons on how to  
manage their hearing loss. This course is run in  
partnership with a local centre in our community  
which has agreed to support training sessions.

Applications to take the course should be sent as  
soon as possible to the President of CHHA - BC.

For Further Information  
Contact Lloyd Dahl at (604) 941-4227

**Bridging the Gap**

Extracts from "One Man's Odyssey"  
by Peter D. Taylor

Permission given by the publication department of  
the Canadian Hearing Society's  
Quarterly Magazine 'Vibes' (December 1995)

At thirteen years of age, Peter Taylor was in an ac-  
cident and lost 30-40 percent of hearing loss in both  
ears.

***Life Lesson #1: Hearing is a precious and vul-  
nerable gift. You can lose it in an instant.***

Fall turned to winter and winter to spring. I never  
noticed my hearing loss at the time of the accident  
and no one thought to have my hearing tested.

Twenty years passed. I finished university, started  
a career, married and settled into a happy married  
life with my wife, Nancy, and our daughter,  
Stephanne.

Nancy first noticed there was something wrong with  
my hearing. Why, she asked, could I hear the baby  
cough in the night but never hear the phone? Why  
did I seldom answer when she called me from up-  
stairs? Why didn't my alarm clock wake me up?

During a routine visit to our family doctor, Nancy asked the doctor to check my hearing. He tested me with a tuning fork and referred me to a local otolaryngologist. I was genuinely shocked when the otolaryngologist showed me my audiogram. 'this line', he said, 'represents normal hearing. These lines from your test show how your hearing drops off sharply above 500 hertz in both ears'. In simple terms, I suffered from high-frequency deafness. Hearing loss, the doctor explained does deteriorate naturally over time. If I were 70, he had said, my hearing would be perfectly normal. I was only 32.

***Life Lesson #2: Hearing loss is often invisible, undetected, or denied.***

Everything had changed and yet nothing changed. I wasn't encouraged to get hearing aids because I seemed to be coping well enough without them. I put acoustic amplifiers on my telephones and asked those working closest to me to speak clearly and directly, and got on with my life. Twelve months later, the pattern was the same.

At that time, I was working as Publications Manager for the University of Guelph. The building that housed my department was an ancient two-story structure with its original fire hose racks, creaky hardwood floors and frosted glass doors. My office windows faced the Central Utilities Plant that ran 24 hours a day. In summer, I had only two choices: listen to the drone of the of the air conditioner or listen to the Utilities Plant.

In winter, I had only one choice. The background noise while I was on the phone was so bad at times I would often cover my opposite ear and close my eyes just to concentrate. I seldom got names or telephone numbers right on the first try. I began to realize how profoundly my hearing loss had affected my life and personality. The greater the background noise, the more difficulty I had in understanding what people were saying to me. I experimented with different commercial devices to augment my hearing, without much success.

Knowing I had a hearing loss helped me cope, but I still found myself becoming impatient and frustrated with my own limitations. This was a difficult time for my family as well as for me.

***Life Lesson #3: A coping strategy is anything that works. The key is patience, persistence and support.***

Another six years pasted. Stephanie grew, I changed jobs to become the Director of Publications for the College of Family Physicians of Canada. I hadn't been tested for more than five years. I asked our new family doctor for a referral. Monday, January 22, 1991 turned out to be one of the toughest days of my life.

The audiologist told me I needed two hearing aids. The very idea of needing hearing aids challenged my personal sense of health and well-being.

Finally, it was my family and my boss who convinced me to keep the appointment and get hearing aids. Both assured me that the people around me would simply reflect how I felt myself. If I accepted the change, others would accept it too, and the novelty would wear off in a matter of weeks.

***Life Lesson #4: Half the battle in facing hearing loss is the fear itself - fear of the unknown, fear of change, fear of failure or disappointment***

I picked up my hearing aids and wore them to work full-time. Walking into the office that morning, I felt acutely visible and uncomfortable, but determined to carry through my decision. Everyone could see that I was wearing two hearing aids, and I dreaded having to explain the change. My family had been right all along - people did notice, but waited until I said something before commenting themselves. Hearing aids don't adjust your hearing, they alter your life. All the sounds I had been missing for 26 years came flooding in - a cacophony of unwelcome noise.

Outside, my hearing aids whistled in the wind. Indoors, they squealed if I forgot to switch to the telecoil before picking up the phone.

It was as though the familiar sound track from my entire life experience had suddenly been replaced by one filled with these new and arbitrary sounds that I had to painstakingly identify and re-catalogue. At times, this process was both frustrating and exhausting. I learned to position myself in group meetings and conversations to maximize my ability to hear speakers clearly. Gradually, my level of tolerance for sound increased as my brain learned how to filter out these new extraneous sounds. I took a course in speechreading and ASL from the Canadian Hearing Society. I found several assistive devices that actually helped me.

***Life Lesson #5: Hearing aids don't restore normal hearing: they supplement the limited hearing you already have.***

Perhaps the most significant change of all is my own self-awareness as a hearing-challenged person who competes daily in a hearing world. By recognizing my limitations and by applying my strengths, I can turn my understanding of my hearing loss into an advantage. By sharing my experience with others, we can learn from each other. The key to all this is to maintain a positive attitude, set realistic goals, and ask for support.

My family have been supportive and patient with my adjustments, and my colleagues at work have gone out of their way to accommodate my hearing limitations. In return, I have tried to minimize the need for special arrangements by using my own resources and experience to enrich my own life and the lives of those around me every day.

YOU CAN, TOO.

***Life Lesson #6: Hearing loss is a part of life, not the end of life. What you couldn't do yesterday, you can still do tomorrow.***

Extracts from "Dear Dad" by Stephanie Taylor  
(12 years old and daughter of Peter Taylor)  
Permission given by the publications department  
of the Canadian Hearing Society's  
Quarterly Magazine 'VIBES' (December 1995)

"Dear Dad,

So you want to know how I feel about your hearing loss, do you? Well here are a few of my ideas. You're right - hearing loss affects everyone in our family, but in different ways. There are some positive side effects to this situation. Let me explain.

I must admit I do get a little frustrated when you don't hear me speak to you. Maybe I haven't got your attention first, or maybe its because I speak a hundred miles an hour - sometimes my brain's faster than my mouth! But sometimes you just don't seem to paying attention because its easier for you not to. Well here's a deal. I'll try to get your attention first and speak clearly, if you'll pay attention to what I say. Is that fair?

I know you don't like wearing them (hearing aids) when its hot and humid, but its better for everyone when you do, Dad. I guess I wouldn't like to have those sweaty little things in my ears either.

That shake-awake alarm clock sure gives me a jolt. Maybe that's what I need - you know what a dawdler I am in the morning. Watching TV with your infrared 'ears' is neat. Mom and I can watch the show too and not have to tell you what everyone is saying. I love that telephone - big buttons, flashing lights, the works. Yes, I admit it - I'm a techno-kid of the 90's. I'm really glad the phone works better for you now. Sometimes you used to copy things down wrong and get them embarrassed. Just tell them to say it again slower, Dad, so you can get it right.

You just have to tell people when you can't hear them, or they will think you are out to lunch or something. Besides there are benefits. For instance, I liked it when you taught me the hand alphabet and some sign language - good for secret codes!

So you don't have to worry about how I feel about your hearing loss. This whole situation is normal for me because you've always been that way. And don't worry that I might be embarrassed when you wear your hearing aids. You always told me you are what you are and if other people don't like it then that's their problem, not yours.

With or without your hearing aids and gadgets, I'm always glad you're my Dad.

Love, Stephanie

---

---

### **SOUND FAMILIAR**

" You are at the dining table eating and find it most difficult to distinguish those eating from those talking. Harder still to identify are those talking with their mouths full, let alone follow what they are saying "

From "*Hazards of Deafness*"  
By Roy K. Holcomb

The publisher grants the rights to reproduce portions of this book without permission for the purpose of entertaining deaf, hard of hearing and hearing persons.

### **DID YOU KNOW?**

People who suspect they have a hearing loss wait a average of seven years before getting a hearing test.

Whales can hear sounds from more than 500 miles away, because of good low frequency hearing and water is an excellent conductor of sound.

Whales can also produce sounds at more than 150 decibels.

---

---

### **"HELP ME COMMUNICATE"**

On January 11 and February 1, CHHA - North Shore Branch held a "Communication And Resource Training Program" for Community Policing volunteers to work with the Hearing Impaired.

After a number of volunteers had experienced hearing loss by wearing ear plugs, they were all asked to deal with clients. Some of our branch members acted as clients by playing different scenarios. Discussing the feedback from both volunteers and branch members caused some amusement on managing communication.

However, volunteers informed us that they found the experience extremely helpful including information on resources. They felt similiar training programs would be beneficial to other agencies. Also, the volunteers were informed about one on one assistive listening devices by Katherine Stead from ALDS, Richmond, BC .

**WATCH FOR MORE TRAINING SESSIONS  
IN THE COMING YEAR**

The North Shore Speech Language Pathology group invited the CHHA - North Shore Branch to attend part of their meeting on January 15 and informed members of the Branch's Aims and Objectives. Two North Shore Branch members attended this meeting.

It is hoped that our Branch will be able to co-operate in some way with this group in the future. It was suggested that we participate in May (Hearing Awareness Month) by having a stall for a short period during one day at Lion's Gate Hospital. We agreed to keep the group informed about arrangements for the International Noise Awareness Day.

### **NORTH SHORE HEALTH GOALS WORKSHOP- January 20, 1996**

This workshop was presented by North Shore Health to discuss an overview of the Health Goals process for British Columbia

Two of our Branch members, Jean Taylor and Evan Hamilton attended the all day workshop at The North Vancouver District Hall.

The workshop opened with a presentation and discussion on determinants on health by Dr. John Millar, Provincial Health Officer. After a short break, Dr. Brian O'Connor, North Shore Medical Health Officer gave an overview of "North Shore Health Status and Health Indicators"

The audience was then divided into small discussion groups on ideas to improve health in the community. After lunch, the groups reported back on their individual ideas.

Michael Hayes from the Ministry of Health presented a draft of Provincial Health Goals and Objectives. The rest of the day was spent discussing Health Goals for British Columbia in small groups.

### **WANT TO MAKE A DONATION**

Donations to the North Shore Branch are welcome from any member, organization or business

All donations can be sent to:  
Alfred Kobbeltvedt, Treasurer  
1127 Lillooet Road  
North Vancouver, B.C.  
V7J 3H7

Make all contributions payable to:  
CHHA - NORTH SHORE BRANCH

---

---

### **SEA SITES AND SOUNDS**

CHHA NATIONAL CONFERENCE  
Victoria, B.C.  
MAY 30 - JUNE 2, 1996

Registrations kits are being mailed out to all CHHA members. For further information, please contact the CHHA Victoria Office at (604) 388-6854 or the Conference Coordinator, Bob Sochowski at (604) 389-0825

---

---

### **SUGGESTIONS, COMMENTS**

Write to the Editor

Evan Hamilton  
Upper Suite, 240 West 5th Street  
North Vancouver, B.C. V7M 1K1

Phone (604) 987-3415

---

---

NEXT MEETING - MARCH 21

**WATCH FOR DETAILS IN THE  
NEXT NEWSLETTER**