



Canadian Hard of Hearing Association

North Shore Branch

Published four times a year on the 15th of March, June, September and December by CHHA – North Shore Branch, 600 West Queens Road, North Vancouver, B.C. V7N 2L3.
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Charitable Registration No. BN 89672 3038 RR0001

Editor: Hugh Hetherington Issue 78 September 2012

Mountain Ear

Prez-Mez

By Mike Hocevar

Let's celebrate, why don't we? And not just for our Summer which did finally arrive! The Canadian Hard of Hearing Association is 30 years old this year, and our North Shore Branch has been around for 22 of them to help make life easier in dealing with hard of hearing issues.



How useful the efforts and information to us has been due to those dedicated folks who founded our organization. You've enjoyed and benefitted from the programs we offer locally through the monthly *Sound Advice* drop-ins, our dynamite guest speaker lineup at the Summerhill public meetings, and by the personal assistance that our "Tekkie-in-Residence" **Hugh Hetherington** so willingly provides to individuals and local churches on assistive devices. He also takes care of the books and produces our informative newsletters.

A great way to celebrate CHHA is to join our branch directors at the September 22nd **Walk2Hear** event at Jericho Beach. You can walk as much as you want, there will be refreshments and even a draw for a trip! Bring along family & friends to ensure this year's awareness event is another great success! Check out the details on page 5 of this newsletter.

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Annual General Meeting Monday, September 17, 2012

7:00 pm at the Summerhill

135 West 15th Street,

North Vancouver

Special Guest Speaker

Glen Grigg, Ph.D., R.C.C.

Professor of Psychology at the
City University of Seattle
In Vancouver

Topic

**"Correction or Adaptation"
Creating Expectations and
Strategies For Coping With
Hearing Loss**

Everyone Welcome

No Admission Charge

For Information

Call

604-926-5222



Let's take time too, to celebrate a couple of really terrific people that have made a real impact with our branch. I refer to **Flo Spratt** and **Karen Hunter**. They will not be standing for re-election to the Board of Directors at the September annual general meeting but have pledged to continue to do the *Sound Advice* sessions and other important jobs.

I remember getting great advice (which, naturally I didn't listen to at the time...) when I was much younger, that "getting involved" could be quite addictive, that I should be aware that I ought to pick and choose commitments because once you got going that it was too easy to start volunteering for "everything".

And that's why Flo and Karen after many, many years on the board have made a decision to step down, to be focused with the other things and commitments in their lives. We thank and wish them the best!

So we need our branch membership to celebrate them by having a couple of new people step up to join the incoming board. We keep our duties as directors very manageable. We do not try to do "everything" but rather focus on our successful educational programs aforementioned.

The directors meet for a set maximum of an hour and a half just six times a year at the Capilano Community Centre at Delbrook Recreation Centre. No experience is needed and you will find these meetings quite enjoyable as we take care of the business to keep CHHA North Shore the wonderful group you have shown loyal membership to.

Please give this serious consideration, and do call for more information.

Some items to mention: Thanks are in order for the Municipal Community grants from the three North Shore Municipalities which have been approved as requested and now received...At the September AGM we will introduce to you what is a very handy Hospital Kit to take with you if you have to stay in a hospital or care situation. It contains signage indicating you are hard of hearing and a few other useful items. These will be made available to our members by request, and some will be provided to local audiologists and doctors' offices...Rides to our guest speaker meetings has not been a big issue, but should you require such, by all means leave a message on

our answering machine a few days in advance of the meeting and we'll see what can be arranged...What are you doing with your old hearing aid batteries? They should be saved for recycling. Now you can bring them with you to the Summerhill meetings and we'll take care of this job for you...It is impressive how considerate our membership has been when it comes to renewing on time, or at the Annual General Meeting each year. It sure makes it easier on our treasurer to not have to keep dealing with these by bits and pieces. So a thank you and gentle nudge to continue to do your part.

I sincerely thank our directors for their service and our past year's superb guest speakers who informed and entertained us on our hard of hearing issues.

And to you the membership—I, on behalf of the directors, celebrate *you* for your solid support with capacity attendance at our Summerhill meetings. We look forward to seeing you again on September 17th at the Annual General Meeting!

June Summerhill Presentation Speaking about lip reading...

By *Mike Hocevar*.

It's obvious that there is more than meets the eye when it comes to reading lips, or speechreading as it is now generally referred to. This is the conclusion drawn from the insight provided by **Lisa Dillon Edgett, Ph.D.**, and Registered Audiologist at our June presentation at the Summerhill. Lisa is the instructor for the speechreading and communications skills program at Vancouver Community College.

Declining hearing often leads to a reliance on the ability to read lips to assist in understanding a speaker and enabling effective personal face to face communication. It's an amazing example of how the brain and body attempt to adapt to a disability.

In her presentation "Speechreading—It's More Than Just Reading Lips", Lisa provided a very informative overview of a broad plan to optimize speechreading for one's benefit.

Lisa started off by explaining that speech reading involves combining the information you get from hearing sounds, seeing the speaker's lips, face and gestures and your own knowledge of the speaker

and topic in the given situation. The big advantage in developing your speechreading skills comes about because auditory and visual parts of speech are complimentary to understanding the message, rather than having to rely on just one source.

Lisa used a chart of common sounds in words and demonstrated how they “look” when spoken. Interestingly some of the hardest sounds to hear are the easiest to recognize in lip reading.

But there are limitations (did she have in mind the Seinfeld episode on “Lip Reading” where some misreads led to embarrassing misunderstandings?). Recognizing these situations can assist in alleviating the difficulties posed.

Some of the considerations are the ability to see the speaker’s face clearly by ensuring the lighting is sufficient, that you have the speaker’s attention and he/she is facing you (ideally a range of 3 to 6 feet away), and minimizing any surrounding background noise. If you are indoors try to reduce the effects of the room’s reverberation and acoustics by moving away from hard surfaces like windows and bare walls. Have the conversation voiced clearly and at an appropriate spoken volume.

“Planning ahead” by thinking of theoretical situations you may find yourself in is useful to plan strategies for coping. Think about being in restaurant settings, live meetings, talking with children or elders, driving in a car or traveling on the bus. There are many other settings, even those that might not involve lip reading like telephone listening situations. These can also cause interference to your listening experience. Such analysis might enable you to handle those times with less stress and anxiety than if you were to walk into them “cold”.

Lisa emphasized too, the importance of a one on one conversation dynamic: It is important how you handle it and respond. What you say can be almost as important as how you say it. Think about the words you use. Keep the details short and avoid being long winded.

Hearing loss is not the only factor that affects your ability to understand. Other factors include one’s energy, interest level, attitude and stress. We must remember that as hard of hearing folks we experience a natural draining fatigue over the course of the day because of the listening effort expended.

So, as previous guest speakers have encouraged us over the past year, Lisa declared that it is up to us to have a measure of assertiveness with another speaker. We have to show initiative in communicating any hearing difficulty. Request repetition, rephrasing, review, clarification, topic identification and so on, as required. In other words, show the required initiative on our part to successfully engage in conversation. In addition to helping yourself, it shows respect to the speaker and that what they have to say is important to you.

And again, just as previous guest speakers have advised, because hearing aids are not the answer in many situations, Lisa encouraged us to investigate the many hearing assistive devices available for helping us cope in everyday life with hearing impairment.

If it interests you to learn enhanced techniques for speechreading, you are invited by Lisa to enroll for one of the sessions that run once a week for twelve weeks in September, January and April. There are evening and afternoon options. Speech and spoken sound recognition techniques will be taught and classes are limited to 10 but you can bring your spouse or close friend if you’d like.

Lisa can be contacted for further information at:

ldillonedgett@vcc.ca or by phone at 604-871-7348.

Thank you Lisa, for a most informative and inspiring presentation.

Diary of a Cochlear Implant

“I Want to Hear Just like You”

By Flo Spratt.

A number of people who knew me before my CI (cochlear implant) surgery continue to remark how impressed they are with my ability to hear with very little effort. In fact, some of my HOH friends who were once reluctant to even consider applying for a CI are now hoping to become CI recipients. They too want to enjoy the world of sounds and speech as I do. They have seen the change in me and others

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with CIs, and realize they too may have that gift, should they be eligible for this technology.

Recently two of these friends visited me to ask questions about the process of eligibility for the surgery and the rehabilitation that one undergoes after the implant is turned on (6 weeks later). I did my best to answer their questions that afternoon. However, I realized that, given the 3 years since I had my surgery, there could well be some more up-to-date information regarding the issues that concern them. So, after the visit, I asked my audiologist at St. Paul's, Jowan, to give me more current information. Once again he was very helpful (see my article in the June, 2011 issue for his input on the process of getting a CI). In this article I will respond to the questions my friends asked by giving combined responses from both Jowan's expertise and my own experiences.

Question: When is someone too old to apply for a CI?

Answer: Age is not a factor. The clinic looks primarily at one's medical/surgical candidacy along with the audiological criteria. This means Dr. Westerberg, the surgeon, needs to determine if the person is healthy enough to undergo the surgery, and will assess this by your medical records and current health status. There have been cases of younger applicants who met the audiological criteria for CI, but were not healthy enough to undergo surgery safely. If you desire to pursue the CI surgery, you must ask for a referral to the program and get assessed (see below on the referral process). Your capacity to undergo surgery is the decision of the surgeon.

Question: What if I'm doing "OK" in quiet situations because I use a huge variety of coping strategies with a variety of grammar/semantics skills, to figure out what is being discussed and how to work my way in conversations, but I am not coping well in the real world where noise and constant unpredictable sounds interfere with my interactions with others? How can the clinic assess

that aspect of my eligibility for a CI when I would be assessed in the quiet environment of the sound booth?

Answer: The current candidacy criteria are based on sentences in quiet. This is consistent across all clinics in North America and the criteria have been approved by Health Canada and FDA. The candidacy criteria are supported by research which indicates that it is safe and reliable to implant that group of patients. There is continued research to evaluate the candidacy criteria for implantation. St. Paul's clinic has been and continues to be involved in this research. If the person is not deemed a candidate, it means that there should be reasonable amounts of residual speech understanding that would allow him/her to benefit from ALDs like FM technology. Also, the tests results indicate that he or she is doing better than every other CI recipient who was deemed to be a candidate at the time of their assessment.

I can't underestimate the use of ALDs (Assistive Listening Devices) and other means that technology offers to the hard of hearing in addition to hearing aids. For me, prior to my CI, I used the FM system almost continuously, even in quiet situations; I also used the Voice Carry Over telephone (by Ameriphone) and email exclusively to keep in touch with the people in my life. Because they were my life line, I became comfortable using them.

Question: What will the clinic tell me if I fail the candidacy process?

Answer: If you are not YET deemed to be a candidate for a CI, you will be encouraged to pursue options that are available for improving your quality of life. The clinic will explain your current level of hearing and whether your hearing aids are fitting you appropriately. They will show how your results compare with what could be acquired, given your hearing levels and what could be provided, given your aids' power or stronger hearing aids that are available. The clinic will encourage you to work with your hearing aid person to increase settings to

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get optimal hearing and will encourage you to have a good trial with FM technology. The clinic will discuss the value of speech reading courses to augment your hearing and to contact community resources such as CHHA to provide further supports to you and your family. Finally, you will be made aware that none of their recommendations will restore hearing to normal, but rather that you are to maximize the use of your residual hearing. An important point to remember is that a small 10-20% increase in speech access is a bigger deal for people coming in for CI assessments than for normal hearing people. I think we all, as hard of hearing persons, understand this fact: for example, just having background music turned down or off is a tremendous benefit to our efforts in hearing others, even though our hearing loss does not change.

Question: What can the clinic recommend in the unfortunate case of someone who meets the audiological criteria but is deemed physically unable to undergo the surgery due to a critical condition (e.g., a terminal disease)?

Answer: In the cases where a HOH person can't have the surgery and is without sound or only can access limited sound, the clinic will discuss things like Vancouver Community College's speech reading course, support services by CHHA, consideration for use of ALDS, as well as other technologies like Dragon Dictation software which can be used on computers or as an app on iPhones. If necessary, they will also discuss the possibility of using sign language if that is something the person is willing to consider. Jowan emphasized to me that, fortunately, it is extremely rare to have someone turned down permanently.

Question: Who makes the referral to St. Paul's clinic for my application for a CI?

Answer: Audiologists, Hearing Aid Practitioners, ENTs, and GPs can all make referrals now. By opening up the referral sources, the clinic at St. Paul's is trying to make the CI program more accessible to those that need it. Once the clinic reviews all



Canadian Hard of Hearing Association
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Walk2Hear
Vancouver

Mobility accessible!
Opportunity to connect with other hard of hearing people and service providers in your community!



Jericho Beach Park, East End (Park restrooms, parking and concession stands) available

Walk2Hear Walk-A-Thon!
2 km, 5 km or 10 km walk
September 22, 2012

Registration starts: 8:30am Official Launch: 9:30am



Prize Draw for two economy class return tickets to anywhere Air Canada flies in North America

Who will you walk for this year?
To pick your team and register online, please visit:
<http://www.chha.ca/walk2hear/vancouver.php>

of the materials that you need to send in, they do an intake on the information. If the information indicates that you might be a candidate, then they will contact you and book you for an assessment. If you are clearly not a candidate then the clinic will also contact you and recommend that you work with your hearing aid provider by exploring ALDs and support from your local CHHA branch.

As a long standing member of CHHA, I can't say enough for the support I have received from our CHHA branch. I have been challenged many times to try yet one more coping strategy, to learn pleasing and assertive ways to understand what others are saying, and to not give up. I have received encouragement and understanding by others with hearing loss that enabled me to feel less alone and hopeless in my circumstances. Most of all, I learned that, even with a hearing loss, I have much to offer others and that life is about focusing on what we can give.

All opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association or CHHA – North Shore Branch.

Hearing Aid Battery Recycling

Bring your used hearing aid batteries to our meetings and we will take care of recycling them for you

Do you need a ride to our meeting. Call or leave a message at:

604-926-5222

We will try our best to arrange a ride for you. Be sure and give us notice at least a two days in advance.

Social Service Grants

CHHA – North Shore Branch acknowledges with thanks the following Municipal Community grants

District of North Vancouver \$1100
City of North Vancouver \$1100
District of West Vancouver \$1000

CHHA—North Shore Branch Programs are funded in part by Social Service Grants from the City and District of North Vancouver and the District of West Vancouver.

Sound Advice

Presented by:

The Canadian Hard of Hearing Association

North Shore Branch

The group meets on the First Friday of each month from 10:00 AM to 12 Noon

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

(No meeting in July and August)
(September meeting in on the 7th)

When we meet, we discuss topics and issues dealing with hearing loss.

We look forward to seeing you there.

Bring a friend, a family member, they are welcome too.

Subjects to be addressed will include:

Technology; Coping Strategies;

Improving Relationships;

Improving Hearing Environments

For Information call: 604-926-5222

Everyone Welcome



CANADIAN HARD OF HEARING ASSOCIATION
NORTH SHORE BRANCH
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Prov. _____

Postal Code: _____ Phone: _____

Please mail application to:

CHHA—North Shore Branch
 Attention: Treasurer
 600 West Queens Road
 North Vancouver, B.C.
 V7N 2L3

Cheque enclosed

Money Order Enclosed

Charitable Registration No.
 BN 89672 3038 RR0001

I wish to support the aims of CHHA and the North Shore Branch and enclose my \$35.00 annual membership fee. (National \$25.00, Branch \$10.00). Membership is paid annually from 1 October to 30 September.