



Canadian Hard of Hearing Association North Shore Branch

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September and December by CHHA – North Shore Branch,
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Editor: Hugh Hetherington Issue 97 June 2017

Mountain Ear

Pres Mez

By Mike Hocevar

Quite the recent provincial election, eh!-- and maybe quite the opportunity for us as hard of hearing folks to finally make some gains as the three party leaders have pledged to work with each other given the results.

CHHA-BC hosted a major conference a couple of years ago over the affordability of hearing aids and B.C.'s lack of financial assistance compared to some other provinces. Seniors' Advocate Isobel McKenzie has acknowledged this as a major issue for many but she is not a legislator. Hopefully in the near future we might be able to get such issues addressed with the current makeup in Victoria.

Further, you'll recall a reference I made in the last newsletter to the newly-formed Barrier Free B.C. non-partisan group with which our provincial chapter CHHA-BC is a participant. The immediate goal is to see enacted a British Columbians with Disabilities Act (similar to the Ontario model) which could produce some positive ways to promote our hard of hearing issues and needs.

How can you help in this regard? Please contact the office of your local North Shore MLA. They are Ralph Sultan for West Vancouver-Capilano and newly elected Bowen Ma for North Vancouver-Lonsdale. Please be on record that you want them to support Barrier Free B.C.'s campaign for the British Columbians with Disabilities Act. No more than a

phone call to them is necessary right now but would be very helpful.

This year the CHHA National Conference was held in Sidney on Vancouver Island. The venue was the Mary Winspear Centre and Charlie White Theatre on the lovely Saanich peninsula on Vancouver island with great sunny weather all three days.

June Meeting

Monday, June 19, 2017

7:00 pm at the Summerhill

135 West 15th Street,

North Vancouver

Guest Speaker

Lorienne Jenstad, PhD, Aud(C),

RAUD, RHIP,

Associate Professor

School of Audiology & Speech Sciences

University of British Columbia

What's That Test All About?

**Understanding what the audiologist is doing when
setting your hearing aids to be right for you**

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For Information

Call 604-926-5222



This year was CHHA National's 35th anniversary and coincidentally the 20th anniversary of your CHHA North Shore Branch. It was incorporated as a BC Society on April 22, 1997.

It was great to see Dr. Charles Laszlo, CHHA National's founding president at this special year's conference. Attending this year's conference from the North Shore Branch were directors Hugh Hetherington, Caroline Wickham, Alan Dion and myself. I also noted that our former president Teresa Hemsing was also present so we had a very good representation from the North Shore. We took in a lot of guest speakers with a great variety of topics.

On Friday, keynote speaker Marshall Chasin spoke on "Hearing Loss—Getting the Music Back" and reported on the advances in music reproduction in the newer hearing aids. This is very exciting news. Marshall is a frequent contributor to Hearinghealth-matters.org and you can access his many articles there. Saturday, the plenary session speaker was Dr. Douglas Beck who spoke on "Issues in Tinnitus for Consumers 2017", timely for us in that we have just covered tinnitus at our last Summerhill meeting which you will read about in this issue. It is well worth checking out his website at douglasbeck.com for many articles.

The conference concluded with a monologue performance "I'm Hearing as Hard as I Can" by Gael Hannan accompanied by local musician Patrick Godfrey on the piano. Gael, of course, will be our Summerhill guest speaker in September.

Switching tracks to conclude. Isn't it amazing for us hard of hearing to hear certain sounds extra loud when we don't want to? Such as the early morning garbage trucks, people in the suite above, or thunderstorms---especially when we are trying to sleep!

Funny how that goes sometimes.

OK, thanks to all of you who have been attending the monthly "Sound Advice" workshops at the West Vancouver Seniors' Activity Centre and the Summerhill guest speaker presentations—the last one before the summer coming up on June 19th with speaker Lorienne Jenstad, Associate Professor from the UBC School of Audiology and Speech Sciences.

Please mark your calendar also for the September Sound Advice workshop. That will be on Friday September 8th since the Seniors' Centre will be closed until after Labour Day. Enjoy the summer everyone!

April Presentation

By Hugh Hetherington

Kenneth "Ken" Jones is, of course, no stranger to the North Shore Branch. He has given presentations to us before in September 2011 and February 2008. He always has such a strong positive message to share with those who have annoying tinnitus. Introducing him again, Ken is a former BC MLA who served in the opposition Liberal government in the 1990s for Surrey—Cloverdale. He has also been a city councilor in White Rock and Port Hardy, as well as, a Deputy Fire Chief in Hudson Hope.

Currently, Ken is Vice President – Operations of QuakeKoso Canada Ltd., the Factory authorized distributor in Canada for California Seismic Gas Shut-off Valves. Relating to tinnitus, he is Director, Tinnitus Association of Canada, Acting President, B.C. Tinnitus Association and the Facilitator of the Greater Vancouver Tinnitus Self-Help Group.

Ken, himself, has severe tinnitus resulting from an automobile accident in November 1984 when he was rear-ended while stopped at a traffic light. He initially only suffered neck pain but later the noises started in his head and have been constant ever since. A subsequent similar accident in August 1999 unfortunately made the situation worse. Ken, in understanding the devastation that tinnitus can cause in a person's life, and as busy as he is, has devoted himself to spreading the word that there is life after tinnitus.

Ken describes tinnitus as a sound generated in the brain that is not related to any outside sound. It is caused by some kind of a physical injury that has occurred somewhere between the inside of the eardrum through the inner ear, the cochlea and the auditory nerve and up to the auditory parts of the brain. The injury somewhere in that area has caused the brain to generate some kind of a sound to indicate a problem. The type of sound can be just about anything ranging from a high frequency hissing or whistling to the sound of a bell ringing and even music.

At the present state of technology there is no cure for tinnitus. Although there is research being done in

many parts of the world, at present the best tool available to treat the symptoms is with what is termed Tinnitus Retraining Therapy (TRT). This is designed to help people with tinnitus to deal with it and reduce its effect on their life.

The most common cause of tinnitus, experienced by 55 percent of the cases, is noise exposure, which damages the hair cells in the cochlea. In the past, the common causes were from industrial noise and the military. Today, the entertainment industry is probably the most prevalent cause of tinnitus in people. Loud music from TV, amplification in movies, concerts and churches, as well as, music players are the leading causes. Ken noted that many of the people showing up at his self-help group meeting now are teenagers and young adults and not the seniors as in the past.

Another cause of tinnitus is whiplash. As stated earlier, this is what Ken experienced from his automobile accident. His tinnitus is perceived at about 92 dB loudness and is a constant shushing sound. A 90 dB sound level is what the WCB limits a worker to be exposed to for only one hour. He credits the tinnitus retraining therapy that he underwent for allowing him to live a relatively normal lifestyle.

Other causes of tinnitus are antibiotics and antidepressants. Ken suggests that you always check with your pharmacist regarding possible side effects. There may be an alternative drug for the same purpose that can be substituted. Calcification of the three tiny bones in the inner ear is another known cause along with inner ear infections and the treatment thereof. In a very small number of cases a more serious cause can be a tumour in the auditory part of the brain or along the auditory nerve pathway. This is why it is important at the onset of tinnitus to get a referral from your doctor to an ear nose and throat specialist (ENT) or neurologist. A CT scan or MRI can rule out this cause. This is important because in the early stages a cure may be possible and may save your life. This could make you thankful for the early warning the tinnitus brought about.

Tinnitus is something Ken strongly believes should be talked about more and brought out into the open. Tinnitus sufferers often won't talk about it. Bringing it out into the open like mental illness is important

so that caregivers and society have a better understanding of it. If kept in the dark it leads to isolation and depression and in the very worst-case thoughts of, or actual suicide. Ken wants to get the message out that tinnitus is manageable. There is life after tinnitus.

Ken's message is that there is a lot that can be done about tinnitus. He feels that one of the best treatments is Tinnitus Retraining Therapy (TRT) developed by Drs. Pawel Jastreboff and Jonathan Hazell in 1990. It is now considered the gold standard for the treatment of tinnitus. In Vancouver there are two practitioners of TRT, Audiologist Carol Lau at Sound idEARS Hearing and Speech Clinic at Oakridge Mall and Glynnis Tidball at St. Paul's Hospital Tinnitus Clinic. Ken noted that TRT can help 80% of tinnitus cases for those that completely follow through the program. The basis of the TRT is that the brain can be habituated to ignore the tinnitus sound by convincing it that the sound is not important and not life threatening.

Ken also talked about things that do not help with tinnitus. Many quack cures are offered which may include health food supplements and medications. Acupuncture and candling also have not proven to be of help with tinnitus. Generally, these are a waste of money and he recommends that you avoid falling for them. One of the supplements Ken mentioned specifically was Ginko Biloba, a leaf extract that has been claimed to help with tinnitus. This has not been proven and its side effects can make it unsafe for some people. As the facilitator of the Tinnitus Self-help group for 21 years Ken has heard it all, what does and doesn't help.

Stress reduction is another factor taken into consideration in TRT. It is important to avoid stress in your life. Stress levels and tinnitus loudness go hand in hand in an almost linear relationship. If you can reduce the stress, you can reduce the tinnitus. Thinking positive thoughts and distraction from your tinnitus is also a great help. Focus on things that you enjoy doing. Think about the one thing you enjoy doing most and concentrate on that a little bit every day. It might be a hobby, reading, listening to music or soothing sounds. Whatever helps you to relax can help reduce your tinnitus. According to Ken, these are immediate steps you can take to help but he does recommend that you consider taking the TRT be-

cause the trained audiologists know more about tinnitus than he does and can help you bring about a greater satisfactory result.

Even with moderate tinnitus, some people try to go it alone. They later find out that the tinnitus has increased. TRT works best when your tinnitus is mildest. The worse your tinnitus, the harder it is to treat.

Ken spoke about a number of high profile individuals who suffered from Tinnitus. He mentioned William Shattner and Leonard Lemoy of Star Trek, Barbara Streisand, Neil Young, Steve Martin, Tony Randall and others. Many of these people have been strong advocates for tinnitus research in America. He recommends visiting the website for the American Tinnitus Association and even becoming a member of the organization for all the information and help that is available. The membership is \$55.00 US a year. They produce publications that keep you up to date on what is happening in the world of tinnitus. He suggests that donating to the ATA helps to promote tinnitus research.

Ken recommends that you avoid websites that claim they have an answer for tinnitus. Only go to sites like the American Tinnitus Association (ata.com) where you can get reliable information. He also recommends the Atlanta Tinnitus Consultants website (atlantatinnitus.com). This site is run by Dr. Stephen Nagler, MD, a former surgeon who developed tinnitus because of an antibiotic and now runs a website devoted to helping other with tinnitus and hyperacusis, a condition that makes you overly sensitive to loud sounds.

Ken facilitates the Greater Vancouver Tinnitus Self-help group held from 7:30 until 9:15 PM on the 1st Wednesday each month, except January, July and August. The location is Holy Trinity Anglican Church at 12th Avenue and Hemlock Street. The group has been in existence since 1984 and Ken has been the Facilitator since 1996. For the past three years there has also been a self-help group in New Westminster run by Gerald Blackwell. It is held at Century House, 620 8th Street 7:00 until 8:30 PM on the 3rd Tuesday of each month.

Finishing off, Ken related a story about a person once calling him offering to bequeath some money to the organization before he committed suicide.

This situation affected Ken deeply and since that call he has made it very public that he is available 24/7 to speak to anyone, day or night, who feels that they are in a crisis situation. He can be reached at 604-535-2204 or emailed at kenjjones@gmail.com. Thank you, once again Ken, for a very informative and insightful presentation.

The following article and poem are from Gael Hannan's blog at: gaelhannan.com. They are re-printed here with her kind permission. Gael Hannan is an actor, humorist, writer, public speaker and an editor and contributor to Hearing Health Matters Magazine. Website: hearinghealthmatters.org. Please note that Gael will be our guest speaker at our CHHA North Shore Branch AGM on September 18, 2017. Please mark this date on your calendar. You will not want to miss Gael who frequently speaks at CHHA conferences and events.



How to Talk to a Hard of Hearing Person (2016)

By Gael Hannan On October 4, 2016

Gael's Note: I first posted this article five years ago to the day. I've made only a few minor changes, but the info is the same and even more important today because, presumably, there are now a lot more people with hearing loss. That means there are a lot more people who need to know how to talk with 'us': family members, friends, law enforcement officials, coffee baristas, our financial advisers, therapists, dental hygienists, our dog trainers....

Conversing with a hard of hearing person is much easier if you, the ‘hearing’ person, are *aware* of the hearing loss.

If you don’t know that the person you’re talking to has a hearing problem, you’re forgiven (somewhat) for looking off into space as you prattle on, or mumbling, or putting your hands in front of your mouth. It’s understandable that you might speak softly, indistinctly, or use unconnected phrases with no verbs. And how could you possibly know that your facial expressions and body language should match your actual words?

Here’s a little quiz.

What chance of success do these two people share?

A blindfolded, first-time archer trying to hit the bulls-eye from 100 feet.

A hard of hearing person trying to understand all your words when you’re facing away, chewing gum, or not moving your lips.

Answer: The success rate for both would be approximately *zilch, nada, zero-ish*.

Many people are hesitant to broadcast their hearing loss for a variety of reasons, but if the person has not made you aware of their communication needs, you’re off the hook! You can’t be blamed for assuming that this seemingly normal person requires *anything* beyond the standard communication of the hearing world.

However! Once someone tells you about their hearing loss, from that point on – forever and ever – you *share* responsibility for effective face-to-face interaction. But if you are like most ‘hearing’ people, you’ll forget about the hearing loss from time to time, and lapse into poor communication.

My husband forgets, my son forgets. My audiologist forgets. And to be truthful, sometimes I forget too.

Why else would I start a conversation from another room, and expect my husband to think, “*Well, even though Gael started talking to me from the kitchen, I know she won’t understand my response. Therefore, I shall get up from my comfy couch and go down and talk with my beloved, face-to-face, the way I should.*” Like that’s gonna happen.

If you do forget, on occasion, don’t beat yourself up too much; simply re-read the guidelines below – and try harder next time.

How to Talk to a Hard of Hearing Person

- 1 With the same respect and courtesy that you accord to anyone.
- 2 Ask the person with hearing loss what would work best for optimal communication.
- 3 Get the person’s attention before starting to speak. It’s difficult to catch up when tuning in halfway through the first sentence.
- 4 People with hearing loss need to see the face. Make sure the light is on your face, and that nothing is obstructing their view of your lovely eyes and mouth.
- 5 Communication Calisthenics: Keep the head up, minimize head and body movement, keep mouth clear of hands and other objects, keep mustaches trimmed and lose the gum, food or cigarette.
- 6 Speech should be clear and at a normal or even *slightly* slower pace. Do not shout; this is painful to the ears and visually distorts the words, making speechreading difficult. You also run the risk of looking mean.
- 7 Facial expressions and body language should match words, helpful when a *tone* of voice can’t be heard.
- 8 Eliminate background noise, whenever possible.
- 9 If asked, use assistive technology: computers, text interpretation, captioning, FM systems, and amplification.
- 10 A reminder – ask the person with hearing loss if the communication is working for them.

These are the basics. There’s an advanced course in Effective Communication for People With Hearing Loss, but this will do. For a start.

We have had donated a large number of packages of size 13 and 312 hearing aid batteries. While supply lasts these will be available for free at all of our meetings including Sound Advice and the guest speaker meetings at the Summerhill.

If I Could Hear Perfectly...

October 7, 2016 blog,
hearing perfectly, hearing poetry Gael Hannan

If I could hear perfectly,
For just one day
I'd ask everyone to whisper,
Facing away
Just to feel, for just one day...
The exquisite naturalness of
Of hearing perfectly.

By Gael Hannan, in honour of National Poetry Day in Britain, 2016.



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.

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

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

No Meeting in July and August

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 include:

Technology; Speechreading;

Effective Coping Strategies;

Behavioural Issues;

Improving Relationships;

Improving Hearing Environments

For Information call:

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**CANADIAN HARD OF HEARING ASSOCIATION
NORTH SHORE BRANCH
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North Vancouver, B.C.
V7N 2L3

Cheque enclosed

Money Order Enclosed

Charitable Registration No.
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I wish to support the aims of CHHA and the North Shore Branch and enclose my \$30.00 annual membership fee. Membership is paid annually from 1 October to 30 September.