

**Publication of the
Canadian Hard of
Hearing Association
(CHHA)**

**NORTH SHORE
BRANCH**

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MOUNTAIN EAR is a publication of the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association North Shore Branch. It is Published 5 times a year on the 15th of March, May, August, October and December.

Your submissions are always welcome. Please contact the Editor:

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

We have all heard a lot about the Y2K problems that some are expecting as we reach the year 2000. We have also heard about the many celebrations planned for the new millenium. Did you know that we at the NORTH SHORE BRANCH of CHHA have our own reason to CELEBRATE? Our Branch turns 10 YEARS OLD in the year 2000. We will be making plans over next few months to celebrate this anniversary.

The time seems to have gone so quickly. We were not able to accomplish all that we had hoped for, mainly because we lack volunteers to reach these goals. Since 1990, we have come a long way in informing the community about hearing loss issues and by providing helpful information to those with a hearing loss to help them understand and cope with this problem. Some members of the branch are giving presentations to various community groups. A lot of work is also being done preparing brochures, advertising, attending community meetings and doing all the branch can to promote awareness of hearing loss.

We have sponsored a course "Managing Your Hearing Loss" for interested participants. Hugh Hetherington has developed assistive listening devices that make it possible for some of our members and friends to have affordable devices to help improve their hearing in certain locations. He has also added an FM system to our already existing loop system for meetings. Our funding committee has made it possible to carry on the work of the branch by finding sources of funds for our work.

There is so much more to do and we would be grateful for any volunteers willing to assist us in our endeavors.

For those of you who were unable to be present at the April 19th members' meeting, you missed an excellent program. I'm sorry you missed hearing our National President, Colin Cantlie, who gave an excellent presentation along with Cindy Horton, a travel agent on the North Shore and Hugh Hetherington.

The Board of Directors will give the members a Dessert Party on June 17th at St. Martin's Church, 7:00 PM. Please note the change of location and day, which is a Thursday. There will be entertainment and a 50/50 draw. This is your night to come with your questions and what you would like to see in the future of the CHHA - North Shore Branch. See you there!



Three President's attend North Shore Branch Members' meeting:

Erica Barrett, President North Shore Branch

Lloyd Dahl, President B.C. Chapter

Colin Cantlie, President CHHA National

Members' Meeting April 19, 1999

Everyone has the occasion to travel at some time or other. Being away from familiar surroundings can present challenges for just about anyone, but the hard of hearing, particularly, face additional difficulties that hearing persons don't have to think about. Unfamiliar voices, foreign accents, acoustically unfriendly environments, such as, aircraft, buses, hotel lobbies, restaurants, noisy streets to name just a few, and of course, the additional worry that we may not hear things like fire alarms, announcements or pages.



Audience at members' meeting



Colin Cantlie speaking at members' meeting

The April members' meeting featured a program of speakers to provide some helpful information for hard of hearing travellers. Hugh Hetherington, North Shore Branch Board member and editor of *Mountain Ear* spoke about assistive listening devices available to help the hard of hearing traveller. In particular, he showed a low cost FM system that the North Shore Branch has been making available to members. The components are available through the Branch. The system can be used as a personal listening device for conversations in noisy environments, as an AM/FM radio through the telecoil (T-Switch) on your hearing aid, as a listening device for your television or other sound source and can also be used at lectures or on tours to hear the speaker better. For more information on the system you can contact the editor at the telephone numbers shown on the front page of the newsletter.

Our main guest speaker was Colin Cantlie, National

President of the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association. Colin is retired from Canadian Airlines, Flight Operations Division and lives in Calgary. He has done extensive volunteer work with several national organizations including The Canadian Transportation Agency (CTA) on the Accessibility Advisory Committee, Transport Canada's Advisory Committee for Accessible Transportation (ACAT) and president of the Board of Directors of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services.

Colin opened his talk by telling us a bit about himself and how he suddenly lost his hearing through sudden hearing loss syndrome and Meniere's disease. Since Colin worked in the aviation industry, his hearing was vitally important in his work and he eventually had to face up to this after dealing with the fears, frustration and anger over his dilemma. After owning up to his employers about his hearing loss he was given promotion and went on to make a successful career in management in the airline industry.

Colin's advice to us was that we have to take charge in our own situation. We must expect and insist upon equal access, but we must also be reasonable in our expectations and not overly demanding. At airports and hotels, we must identify ourselves as having a hearing problem and make sure this is indicated on our travel documents. He pointed out that as we age our eyesight and hearing gradually become less acute than in our younger years. We maybe walk a bit slower and can't always do all the things we used to when we were younger. Seniors don't usually consider this aging process a disability. It is an accepted part of growing old and we take advantage of the aids available. When our eyesight begins to fail we

Emergency Alert Response System (E.A.R.S.)

Reprinted from the WIDHH quarterly newsletter Winter 1999.

The wail of a siren, an emergency vehicle dodging traffic is a situation replayed thousands of times daily throughout North America. Besides causing fear and panic in many drivers, it also causes more than 50,000 accidents a year. However, even more fearful and more panic stricken can be someone who doesn't hear the siren and subsequently doesn't take the necessary action to get out of harms way.

For this very situation, the Emergency Alert Response System (E.A.R.S.) was developed to alert drivers with a minimum 30 dB hearing loss that an emergency vehicle with sirens activated is in their vicinity. E.A.R.S. may be installed in a new Ford, Chrysler, or General Motors vehicle at NO COST to a new vehicle owner or lessee who has a hearing loss of more than 30 dB. This device, along with a turn signal quality enhancer qualifies under special programs of the three big North American car manufacturers.

The program has been promoted in Ontario for a few years but is not widely known or advertised in B.C. Unfortunately, many of the dealerships have not even been aware of their own program. However, this winter, a company called Sensible Solutions Inc. has begun to distribute E.A.R.S. actively in the B.C. market. Jan Inouye, President of Sensible Solutions has visited the majority of audiology and hearing instrument clinics throughout the lower mainland and Victoria to let everyone who comes in contact with the deaf and hard of hearing know of this product and the tremendous benefits of this special program. It is a win-win program for everybody which is why Jan is anxious that everyone who can benefit from the program knows of its existence. This program is available to anyone who purchases or leases a vehicle and can be retroactive up to 12 months with some manufacturers, 6 months with others.

EARS is a small rectangular plastic enclosure fitted with four red warning lights which is mounted on the driver's dashboard or wherever it can be easily seen. It is connected to a microphone programmed to detect all siren sounds, which is placed on the outside rear windshield or inside the trunk.

A simple assessment form, confirming a 30 dB hearing loss in any frequency, signed by a health practitioner is all that is required to qualify for the program. Sensible Solutions Inc. will make all the arrangements with the dealership for the installation of the E.A.R.S. unit.

If you are planning to purchase or lease a new vehicle other than a Ford, GM or Chrysler, Jan still encourages



Cindy Horton speaking at members' meeting

don't think twice about getting eyeglasses. When we start to experience hearing loss, hearing aids can be just as important to the ears as eyeglasses are for the eyes. Hearing loss is often gradual and can go unnoticed for many years, so annual hearing tests are very important as we become older. Colin went on to answer many questions for the audience about hearing loss and what is being done in the airline industry to make it more accessible to the hard of hearing traveller. It was a very enlightening presentation, and we are grateful to Colin for coming all the way from Calgary to speak to our group.

The third guest speaker for the evening was Cindy Horton, owner of Infinity Travel Professionals which recently merged with Travel Experts forming Infinity Travel Concepts of North Vancouver. Cindy has worked in the travel industry for 25 years and holds the CTC designation and is a member of the Canadian Travel Institute. She spoke about the travel agency business and many of the changes that are taking place, especially regarding billing for travel agent's services. New charges are starting to show up in the industry because of the recent cuts to agent's commissions by the airline companies. She spoke of fare structures and also about booking travel on the internet. Cindy also addressed many questions from the audience including some related to how the travel agent would deal with making special needs known to the various hotels, and other services booked through them. Our thanks to Cindy for her useful and most interesting presentation.

The meeting was attended by 18 members and a number of guests. There was a 50/50 draw and time for socializing and refreshments.

you to speak with her as she is willing to try and persuade other manufacturers to match the program. Of course, you can also have E.A.R.S. or the turn signal enhancer installed in your vehicle at your own expense unless another organization, such as, DVA can be persuaded to provide re-imbusement.

If you would like to know more about E.A.R.S. contact WIDHH: Brad Bice (604) 736-7391 voice, Ken Loehr (604) 736-5891 TTY or Jan Inouye (voice) 207-9150 or (fax) 207-9165 Toll Free Voice: 1-888-846-5899 Toll Free Fax: 1-888-846-5799

Tinnitus - Noise without Sound

By Julian Hoogstra

Reprinted from Right to Quiet - Spring 1999

Tinnitus is defined as the perception of a sound in the absence of an external source. For many people, particularly those who have some hearing loss, the inability to ignore their tinnitus can lead to psychological difficulties, and worse.

This problem has been exacerbated by the medical community's traditional lack of interest in tinnitus, and a consequent attitude of "learn to live with it". Fortunately there has been substantial progress in the last few years in the awareness and treatment of tinnitus, and although a cure is still some way off, the newer treatments do offer some relief.

There are four aspects to dealing with tinnitus.

First, tinnitus needs to be prevented. One of the most common causes of tinnitus is loud noise, either suddenly or built up over a lifetime of exposure. Readers of the RIGHT TO QUIET newsletter know well the situation of too much noise in our daily environment. Rock concerts are undoubtedly a cause of increasing complaints of tinnitus from the aging boomer generation. Turning down the music may well reduce the incidence of tinnitus.

Second, we need to raise awareness about tinnitus. More knowledge among the public, patients and hearing specialists will lead to a push for more research, which will lead to more prevention, more awareness, more types of treatment and eventually a cure.

Locally, Vancouver will benefit from a lecture on June 27 this year by Dr. Stephen Nagler from Atlanta. Dr. Nagler had to give up his surgical practice due to his tinnitus, but he has overcome the distress and he is now a phenomenally energetic spokesman for tinnitus awareness. Dr. Nagler is a director of the American Tinnitus Association (ATA). Globally, the ATA stands as the best-organized advocate of tinnitus research.

Third, the auditory processes leading to tinnitus need to be understood better.

Tinnitus is now thought to be mostly due to changes in the brain as it attempts to compensate for a changed signal due to damage somewhere in the auditory pathway, usually the inner ear. The inner ear is a very small and very delicate mechanism, encased in a bony shell, making it extremely difficult to investigate. But knowledge of the mechanisms of hearing increases every day.

Fourth, treatments must be improved. But here there is hope. Tinnitus Retraining Therapy (TRT) uses directive counselling in conjunction with use of white noise generators for up to two years to retrain the brain so that it no longer actively perceives tinnitus. The noise generators are similar to maskers, except that the volume is kept low enough so as not to mask the tinnitus. TRT has been shown to reduce the perception of tinnitus to the point that 80 percent of those treated say that tinnitus is no longer a significant factor in their lives.

The outlook for tinnitus relief appears bright, but we must be ever diligent in increasing awareness, particularly of the effects of loud noise.

Resources:

<http://www.ata.org>

<http://www.tinnitus.org>

Newsgroup alt.support.tinnitus

Tinnitus Self Help Group: first Wednesday of each month (except January, July, August) 7:30-9:00 p.m., St. Andrews Wesley Church.

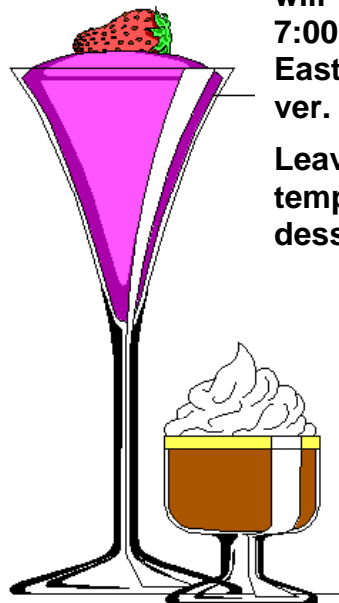
Contact Julian Hoogstra at (604) 224-3101 or hoogstra@istar.ca.

Members' Meeting Thursday June 17th at 7:00 PM

A Social Evening and Dessert Party will be held Thursday June 17th at 7:00 PM at St. Martin's Church, 195 East Windsor Road, North Vancouver.

Leave some room after dinner to tempt yourself with some delicious desserts and refreshments which

Family members and friends are also invited to come along and enjoy the evening and get acquainted with our members. There will be entertainment and a 50/50 draw. We shall be showing our low cost personal FM listening system and we shall have



SEE YOU ON