



# Canadian Hard of Hearing Association North Shore Branch

Published four times a year in March, June,  
September and December by CHHA – North Shore Branch,  
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Charitable Registration No. BN 89672 3038 RR0001

Editor: Hugh Hetherington Issue 103 December 2018

## Mountain Ear

### Annual General Meeting

by Hugh Hetherington

The annual General Meeting for the CHHA North Shore Branch was held on September 17<sup>th</sup> at the Summerhill in North Vancouver. Twenty seven members and guests were in attendance. The members present at the meeting approved the 2018 annual report, financial statements and the guideline budget for 2018-2019. The incumbent board members, Mike Hocevar, Hugh Hetherington, Alan Dion, Susan Gelin, Ruth Lapointe, William Friend and Doug Muir had all expressed their desire to serve again for another year and were elected by acclamation. Our invited guest speaker, Kelly Tremblay, Auditory Neuroscientist and Professor of Speech and Hearing Sciences at the University of Washington in Seattle was unable to attend at the last minute due to illness. As we were unable to get a replacement speaker at such short notice, we decided to hold a special Sound Advice panel discussion with Flo Spratt, Hugh Hetherington and recently retired audiologist and member Deborah Maloon. The panel took questions from the audience and provided answers and advice to the audience.

At our subsequent board meeting held on October 12<sup>th</sup>, our president, Mike Hocevar reluctantly tendered his resignation from the Board citing personal reasons and the other Board members accepted the resignation, also with reluctance. We want to express our sincere thanks to Mike for his service and dedication to the job over the last 8 years. We hope that

he will join the Board again in the future when he feels the time is right. Board member, Alan Dion has volunteered to step in as president and was approved by the other Board members at the meeting. We want to welcome Alan in the new job and look forward to working with him for the benefit of our members and the community at large.

Another change to our operation decided at the board meeting was to reduce the evening Summerhill meetings to three a year. We had previously changed the November and February meetings to Sound Advice workshops following a review of the attendance. Many of our members no longer drive at night in the winter and with the weather being unpredictable bringing in guest speakers was not always easy or appropriate. These three remaining meetings will as usual take place on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday in April, June and the AGM in September.

The November and February Summerhill meetings are now cancelled. We have arranged with the Silver Harbour Seniors' Activity Centre located at 144 East 22nd Avenue in North Vancouver to establish a new series of Sound Advice workshops similar to those in West Vancouver. These will take place on the 4th Monday from 10:00 AM until 11:30 AM. The first three meetings will be held on January 28th, February 25th, and March 25th. These sessions will be in addition to the West Vancouver sessions on the first Fridays.

The Board members look forward to serving you again in the coming year and wish everyone a very happy Christmas and Holiday Season.

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CHHA NORTH SHORE BRANCH

by Susan Gelinias

While working on the development of our new Branch website, I found it interesting to look back into the history of the North Shore Branch. A lot of its early history was not recorded or was lost in the jump to the digital world and is anecdotal. Reading through our early bulletins and newsletters was very helpful in putting this short chronology together. What stands out most is the strength of the drive to help Hard of Hearing people live their lives to the fullest.

The group was established in 1989 under the name North Shore Hard of Hearing (NSHH) when a group of people of all ages became interested in forming a local branch of CHHA. This would save people the trip over the bridge to the Vancouver Branch. Monica Craver was our first president and applied for and received the Federal Charitable Organization registration. This was shortly after the Branch received its charter in the spring of 1990. Monica served in this capacity until 1994 when Erica Barrett, previously treasurer, was elected president. Erica remained president until 2001 when Flo Spratt took over until 2009. Subsequent presidents included Teresa Hemsing, (2009-2010), Mike Hocerar, (2010-2018) and currently, Alan Dion (2018-)

In the early days we didn't have an office or a meeting place but the need to find and share information was very strong and meetings were held regularly. For the first two years meetings were held in various members' homes and in some churches. We were then able to find space at the North Shore Disability Resource Centre where their meeting room was equipped with a loop system. Meetings became more structured and were held about 10 times a year with 5 or 6 of them devoted to presentations, seminars, equipment displays, by ENT doctors, audiologists, speech therapists, and health care givers.

In the November 1995 issue of our newsletter, we started using "CHHA-North Shore Branch" as our name. Over the next two years, Lynda Jobes (now Hepworth), our secretary and Jean Taylor, our recording secretary at the time, put together the North

Shore Branch's Constitution and Bylaws. On April 22, 1997, the North Shore Branch received its registration as a BC Society. In October of 1998 we started meeting at St John's Anglican Church in North Vancouver. In March 1999 we established a permanent address on the North Shore at the Capilano Community Services Society at 600 West Queens Rd, North Vancouver. Initially we had an office space and the Red Cross volunteers located there took messages to be relayed to the appropriate Board members. We still retain that mailing address, but we later established our own phone number with an answering machine.

In September 1997 we started sponsoring a six-week "Managing Your Hearing Loss" course with member, Joan Bennett, B.Ed., a CHHA certified instructor for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. The course initially started at the Capilano Community Services Society building, but then moved to the West Vancouver Seniors' Activity Centre for subsequent courses. The courses were held twice a year and after Joan Bennett's retirement board member Birgit Cook, a retired Hearing Rehabilitation Specialist from Sweden started a new course from 2006 through 2010 using her Sensimetrics® CD ROM program, "Seeing and Hearing Speech".

Also in September 1997, members of the North Shore Branch and other volunteers took part in filming a training video for West Van Transit. This video was for a number of years used in the training of Lower Mainland bus drivers to teach them how to communicate with Hard of Hearing transit riders and about hearing service dogs. Participating in this training video were members Erica Barrett, Audrey Kirkpatrick, Jake and Masie Siebel, Hugh Hetherington, Jean Taylor, Bill Tivy, Roy Duncan, Alice Keating and her hearing dog, Mindy.

In September 2002, our meeting format changed and we held our first meeting at the Summerhill retirement home. These meetings have continued to this day and are held in February, April, June, our AGM in September, and November. These meetings are open to the members and the public, free of charge. They feature keynote speakers who give us up to date information related to hearing issues but also of general interest to seniors.

In February 2003, the first Sound Advice workshop,

facilitated by Flo Spratt at West Vancouver Seniors' Activity Centre was held. These meetings have continued to this day, meeting the first Friday of each month, September through June. Flo continues to host and her area of expertise is coping skills. Hugh Hetherington co-hosts and his area of expertise is the technology behind our hearing aids and assistive devices. These two meetings, Summerhill and Sound Advice are the core programs of our branch.

Communication with our members has always been a priority. We started off with regular "Bulletins" mailed out to members, generally reminders of meetings, but as our stand in the community as a resource for the Hard of Hearing strengthened, our newsletters became more formal, first adopting the name ((( SPEAK ))) in 1995, then adopting the name "Mountain Ear" and taking on its current format in January 1997 edited by Hugh Hetherington ever since. In the newsletter, we still have reminders of meetings, but there are articles of interest, meeting summaries, messages from the current president, requests for questions about concerns, requests for input, and information about the work being done on behalf of the Branch and the Hard of Hearing in the community.

Providing information about hearing issues has also been a priority. Initially conceived as a self-help group, it became apparent very quickly that we had to go beyond that. Our meetings were one avenue, but we also had to go out into the community: setting up information tables at malls, health fairs; speaking at various community groups and churches; leading educational presentations at various health centres; attending advisory groups. We made posters, flyers, and our first membership brochure in March 1997. In April 1997 members distributed 2000 North Shore Branch brochures, 160 large International Noise Awareness Day posters and 180 flyers, as well as 34 smaller posters and flyers to North Shore audiologists, family doctors, dentists, medical clinics, podiatrists, physiotherapists, opticians, community agencies, recreation centres, libraries, facilities, professional services, such as, home support, North Shore Health, Lions Gate Hospital, the North Shore Health Board, as well as the municipalities, RCMP, West Vancouver Police, Community Policing offices, Emergency Rescue, Fire Halls and the Coast Guard. We still hand deliver notices of our Summerhill meetings and post-

ers for our Sound Advice meetings to local audiology clinics and community centres. We still reach out to the public through newspaper ads, health fairs and community groups.

Over the years we also provided our members with reading and audio-visual materials on loan from our library. That aspect of our services is currently being updated. Our members are the heart, soul and motor of our branch. We started off with a group of about 15 people and we've seen that number increase/decrease many times. To date there have been a total of over 250 members pass through the Branch. From those members we get the manpower to carry out our mission statement. We always want more members: to give us ideas, to be able to go into the community and provide important information: to provide a voice to communicate with local governments; to provide support to Hard of Hearing people; to create awareness; to educate; to make changes. The list goes on. Our branch has always consisted of volunteers. But to run a branch, we needed money. Initially the membership fee was \$5 and over the years that increased to \$10. Members of CHHA-North Shore Branch had to also become members of CHHA National and those fees are currently \$30. Initially we relied on those fees and any donations. Once we became a BC Society in 1997, three members (Hugh Hetherington, Jean Taylor, & Alfred Kobbeltvedt) initiated the process where the branch applied for grants on a regular basis. Currently, we have dropped our branch fee to encourage people to join. CHHA-North Shore Branch is now a very visible organization on the North Shore. Volunteer members take the time to go out into the community to speak on Hard of Hearing issues at Service Clubs, Hospitals, and Seniors' Organizations. We sit on various committees and advocate for the needs of the Hard of Hearing wherever we feel we can make a difference: easing the isolation of the Hard of Hearing; increasing access in public areas for the Hard of Hearing; advocating for Closed Captioning, assistive listening devices, loop systems in meeting room settings, theatres, banks, etc. We visit seniors and members in their homes to help with technical issues. We file reports with various community and government agencies to voice our concerns. We receive the minutes from other organizations so we know what is going on. We are very proud of what we have accomplished and we will continue to advocate for the Hard of Hearing.



## Small book...big impact!

### “Talking with Hard of Hearing People – Here’s How To Do It Right, Eh?”

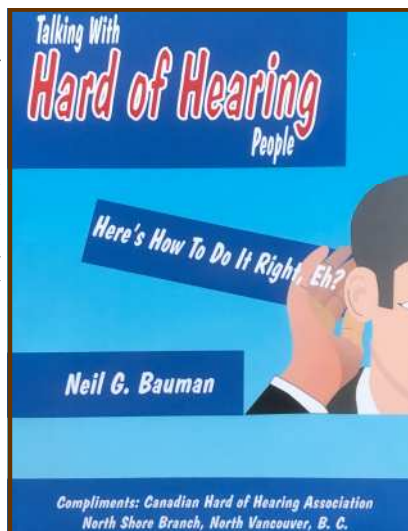
This book by **Neil G. Bauman** is a staple in my clinic. I am fortunate that Flo, and now Alan provide me with a constant supply of this little gem of a book. In just 25 easy-to-read pages, the author packs in very informative and practical information for people living with a hard of hearing person/persons. This book educates the loved ones and care givers of the hard of hearing on HOW TO COMMUNICATE WITH THEM EFFECTIVELY.

Just recently, I gave this book to a dear patient of mine to give to her husband. This woman is an experienced hearing aid user. Her word recognition ability had been deteriorating as of late. She lived in constant frustration at home because her husband’s voice is naturally quiet and monotone. During our appointments together I would give her tips on communication strategies they both could use. She would relay these to her husband and he would try these strategies for a short while but would quickly go back into old habits.

I asked her to give him the “Talking with Hard of Hearing People” book to read. I also explained that the Canadian Heard of Hearing Association – North Shore Branch distributes the book so it’s heavily supported by an empathetic group of Hard of Hearing advocates.

The next time I saw this woman, she raved about how much this book changed her husband’s habits and most importantly, their relationship! Frustration

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.



levels dropped significantly, her husband’s understanding of effective communication with her increased significantly, and both of them were just generally more relaxed and happy. Sometimes people respond better to the written form versus verbal (“nagging”, or “in one ear, out the other”...), which is why this book is so valuable. It’s short and very much to the point.

The only regret I had was not giving the book to this couple sooner!

Thank you to CHHA – North Shore Branch for providing this book to local hearing clinics. I have been an audiologist for over 20 years and this book remains one of my favourite counselling tools.

Rhea Rosario, M.Sc., Aud(C)  
Registered Audiologist, RAUD, RHIP  
Connect Hearing - North Vancouver Branch

*(Editor’s Note: You can pick up a copy of the booklet free at any of our meetings or Sound Advice sessions.)*

## Ask an Audiologist?

A new feature we are adding to our newsletter is a column called “Ask an Audiologist”. Member, Deborah Maloon, RAUD and recently retired from practice has agreed to answer questions sent in by our readers. Questions selected will be answered in the newsletter. Please feel free to send in your questions to the newsletter at [chha\\_nsb@telus.net](mailto:chha_nsb@telus.net).

For our first question to start off the column, Alison, who attended our AGM in September asked Deborah if she could elaborate more on the comments she made at the meeting regarding how hereditary hearing problems may be different from normal ones and if there is more to the problem than just damaged receptor hairs in the cochlea.

Deborah’s answer.

Dear Alison

Thank you for your question!

Genetic factors may make some people more susceptible to hearing loss than others. Their genes make them more predisposed to hearing loss due to ageing or induced by noise, drugs or infections. It is estimated that the causes of age-related hearing loss

are 35-55% genetic. There is a significant amount of research being conducted in recent years related to genetic therapy and stem cell therapy. Presently, the treatment for hereditary or genetically determined hearing loss and hearing loss from any other cause is treated the same way. One should always have a complete hearing evaluation and a diagnosis as to your specific hearing loss, conducted by a professional. The treatment in most cases is the prescription of customized hearing amplification.

I hope this answers some, or all of your question.

Regards,

Deborah

*(The following article is reprinted here with permission and is from the blog section of the website [www.hearinglosshelp.com](http://www.hearinglosshelp.com) where you will find many more interesting articles. Neil Bauman, Ph.D. is a hearing loss coping skills expert and the owner of the website from which the articles are taken.)*

## **Hearing Loss and the Terrible Toll It Takes on Hard of Hearing People At Family Gatherings**

by Neil Bauman, Ph.D.

There is a terrible, yet invisible, toll that hearing loss extracts from many hard of hearing people at family gatherings when family members do not take steps to effectively meet the hard of hearing person's hearing needs.

To help you understand what it is like to be hard-of-hearing at family gatherings, below are a number of stories from hard-of-hearing people who endured a family gathering this past Easter.

One lady exclaimed, "How I hate holidays and having so many people together at once! Too many conversations. My brain gets so tired from trying to listen and figure out what everyone is saying that I eventually just shut down. It's exhausting and so frustrating. I can't wait until everyone just goes home. I love my family, but I'm already exhausted."

Another lady chimed in, "I feel the same way! I thought it was just me. I love my family, but I just get so lost and overwhelmed trying to keep up with the simplest conversation."

Another person explained, "I know how important it is to have quiet time to recharge your brain. I find myself fantasizing about quiet time when I'm in a noisy environment for too long."

This is how yet another lady felt, "I also feel this way! I've just been told there will be 25 people at our family dinner! I literally feel a stomach ache coming on."

A lady related, "We went to visit my husband's family for the holidays, and I don't think that anyone really understood why the whole thing stressed me out so much. I couldn't even begin to explain. Nothing gets me more frustrated than being in a room with tons of people talking at once! I usually escape to the hallway to hang out with a dog or cat."

Another lady lamented, "It is exhausting to have to hear so much. I usually find myself a little quiet time too. I'll spend extra long in the bathroom or go outside. I've spent time with people's pets to avoid human speech too. After a couple of hours my brain is fried. I don't have a large family so that's usually not my problem. It's other large groups that get me."

Another lady had an unusual coping strategy. She explained, "My Easter was okay until it was time to eat and later watch a movie. I left twice to return home to peace and quiet.. Fortunately, I lived right across the street so I could do this."

Another lady lamented, "This was my first get together with a group of people after getting my new hearing aids. Even though the group was only 7 people, they were all loud. It was overwhelming. I couldn't wait for everyone to leave. And the first thing I did was take my hearing aids out and rest my ears. Very stressful day and I'm so glad it's over!"

One lady sorrowfully explained, "I feel like a burden to my family who either have to talk slower or repeat everything they say. It makes everything so tiring. I have severe headaches after even a short time of trying to communicate with anyone." Then she asked, "The one question I have is how do you get over the anxiety of being around people?"

Unfortunately, there is no easy answer. The ideal solution would be that only one person speaks at a time. To ensure this happens, and so that the person with hearing loss knows who is going to speak next,

you could pass around a “talking stick”. If you are not holding the “talking stick” you keep your mouth shut. It’s that simple.

We would love it if everyone did that, but only in exceptional families will that ever happen. The reason it seldom happens is that by meeting the needs of the hard-of-hearing family members, it would totally destroy the dynamics of the hearing members conversation.

As a result, people with hearing loss are stressed out, left out and thus often can’t wait to get out.

Family members need to put themselves into the shoes of their hard-of-hearing family members and figure out ways to meet their hearing needs while at the same time not totally destroying the ebb and flow of the family conversation.

One lady explained, “I am currently “hiding” upstairs in my husband’s childhood room seeking relief. It got to be too much. My head was pounding. Tomorrow there will be 17 people for lunch. I love my in-law family, but I love it more when a couple of us break away for a smaller conversation.”

Notice her last sentence, “I love it when a couple of us break away for a smaller conversation.” Taking the person with hearing loss to a quiet location away from all the racket of the group and having a one-to-one conversation is an excellent coping strategy. If each family member did this one by one, the person with hearing loss could have a good little chat with each person present without all the strain and stress of trying to hear in a room where their ears just cannot function.

Hearing family members, how about it? Can’t you tear yourself away from the main group for a few minutes to chat with your hard-of-hearing loved one? Sure you may miss something. But think of your hard-of-hearing loved one. He/she misses everything!

## Sound Advice

Also Coming to Silver Harbour Centre  
144 East 22nd Street, North Vancouver  
First Meeting January 28, 2019  
10:00 AM to 11:30 AM

## Speechreading Course

Vancouver Community College is offering another outreach speechreading course to take place at the West Vancouver Seniors’ Activity Centre starting in the new year.

The 6-week course will take place on Monday afternoons from 1:30 PM until 4:00 PM from January 7th to March 25th.

The course will be limited to 8 students. To register for the course contact the instructor, Lisa Dillon Edgett, Ph.D., RAUD, Aud(C) at:

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

## Sound Advice

Presented by:

**The Canadian Hard of Hearing Association**

**North Shore Branch**

**The group meets on the First Friday of each month**

**(except July and August)**

**from 10:00 AM to 12 Noon**

**Next Meeting December 7th**

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

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;

Coping Strategies;

Improving Relationships;

Improving Hearing Environments

**For Information call:**

**604-926-5222**