



Canadian Hard of Hearing Association

North Shore Branch

Published four times a year on the 15th of March, June, September and December. Your submissions are always welcome. Please Contact the Editor: Hugh Hetherington
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Issue 35 December 2001

Mountain Ear

President's Message Losing a Gift to Gift Giving

"LOOK OUT! There's a fire engine on the road!" My sister was screaming at me. I remember standing in the middle of our quiet country road, a little six year old, oblivious of the commotion my sister was making. Until the fire engine stood right behind me, sirens blaring, that's when I thought I had better move off the road! That was also when my parents decided to find out whether I had a hearing problem or was just being a stubborn little girl. They had had enough of my inattentive behaviour.

I had just recovered from a serious illness, but no one dreamed that my hearing had been affected. It wasn't until twenty years later, while receiving genetic counselling, that I was told the anti-biotic I had taken when I was sick was the likely culprit.

It has been many years now that this precious gift of hearing was taken from me. Through the many ups and downs in my life journey, I have learned that other gifts can take its place. But these gifts aren't mine by osmosis. I need to develop them and then use them. Today I am still learning how to use my gifts for others. Using our gifts is, I believe, one of the reasons why you and I are part of this great organization. And each one of us has so much to offer! When I attend the various activities of CHHA, I am amazed at the willingness of members to use their gifts.

What are some of these gifts that I see among us?

There is compassion for others who have lost their hearing, gratitude to those who willingly repeat themselves when not heard, resourcefulness in finding ways for all of us to hear, encouragement to those who need it, companionship with those who need a friend, and support to the ones struggling with their loss. There are also leadership gifts used to advocate for the hearing impaired in our community. We couldn't survive long as a group without administrative gifts. I love the gift of humour being sprinkled throughout our meetings; without laughter we lose perspective. The gift of servicing is readily available at the literature and coffee tables. I am always looking for inspiration from the stories I hear from you. Thank you for giving so much!

As your president, I am thankful that I can use some of my gifts with the North Shore Branch of CHHA. During this season of celebration of giving and receiving, will you join me in thinking about your gifts and how you would like to use them in the coming year?

May each of you be blessed this Christmas Season with joy.

Ho Spratt



CHHA – North Shore Branch Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting was held on September 17th, 7:00 PM at St. John's Anglican Church in North Vancouver. There were over 35 in attendance with a number of visitors, including Maggie Dodd, President of CHHA – BC Chapter. Alfred Kobbeltvedt was MC for the evening.

The highlights of the business portion of the meeting included the election of a new Board of Directors for 2001/2002. The new Board members shown in the photograph from left to right are: Marion Ladkin, Vice-President; Joan Bennett, Member-at-Large; Erica Barrett, Past President; Joan Gouws, Member-at-Large; Flo Spratt, President; Alfred Kobbeltvedt, Member-at-Large; Hugh Hetherington, Secretary; Rosemary Almond, Treasurer. Another item of business was the passing of a motion to raise the Branch membership fee from \$7.50 to \$10.00.

As this was Erica Barrett's last meeting as President, she was honoured with a Branch award and



Maggie Dodd making presentation to Erica.

a gift of an engraved silver tray and flowers which were presented on behalf of the Branch by Maggie Dodd. Erica has served the Branch for 12 years and due to her hard work and dedication to hard of hearing issues, the Branch has come a long way since its formation in 1989. Erica is currently working on writing a history of the North Shore Branch, a shortened version of which was printed in the last issue of

Mountain Ear. Following the meeting adjournment, the drawing for door prizes, and our guest speaker for the evening, refreshments were served and there was a large cake to share among the attendees in Erica's honour.

Stuart Bird of the Vancouver Rotary Club was our guest speaker for the evening. Mr. Bird spoke to us of the involvement of the Vancouver Rotary Club in supporting the needs of hard of hearing people

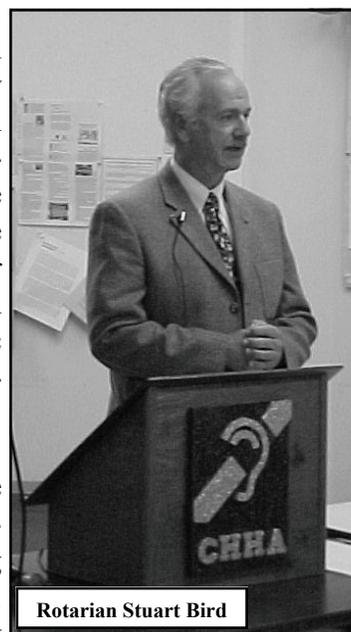
Mr. Bird has been on the Rotary Hearing Foundation (RHF) board since 1984. Some of the Projects RHF has been involved in over the years are an annual bike-athon, funding research into cochlear implants, an ENT clinic at St. Paul's Hospital and a tinnitus clinic.



The major project RHF has been

working on for the past seven years is to establish a centre that will bring together all the disciplines related to the hard of hearing. They have talked to all the groups concerned and have established how much space would be needed. To come up with a design for the facility, they sponsored a competition at BCIT as a class project. They wanted the building to include office and testing space, be near the V.G.H. Campus, and be accessible to public transportation and parking.

They have raised five million dollars and continue to work to bring this plan into being. There are many different groups to bring together and, with the changes that occur from time to time in the administration of these



Rotarian Stuart Bird

groups and changes in government, the process is one with many stops, starts and turns. At this point, Mr. Bird still hopes they will be successful in their goal. It is a worthwhile one. Mr. Bird mentioned that there are many needs. There is also a need for satellite centres for people who live in outlying areas.

Mr. Bird mentioned how important it is for the Hard of Hearing community to speak up about their needs for assistive listening equipment. He said that mechanical services are usually the first to go, when cutting costs. Mr. Bird's presentation was a testimony to how much people can accomplish when they work together and give of themselves.

Submitted by: Andrea Gauthier.

Thank You! Thank You!

Thank you for the wonderful evening at the Annual General Meeting held on September 17th. The beautiful "Hummingbird Card" with the kind words and many of the members best wishes, the plaque that honours my 12 years of work as one of the founders, director and president, the lovely large dish garden, the gorgeous cake (in my colours too) and then the beautiful engraved silver tray were most wonderful and totally unexpected. I was so completely overwhelmed with your generosity that I forgot a number of things I meant to say and perhaps that was for the best. Among those important things was to thank the Master of Ceremonies, Alfred Kobbeltvedt for his kind words and for taking on the job of conducting the meeting. Also, I must thank Maggie Dodd, president of CHHA B.C. for her kind words, and also congratulate the new president and Board. I also wanted to thank Alfred for running for breast cancer in the next few days. That really touched my heart. It is not often I am left speechless but I was having problems finding my voice to express my thanks because

my emotions were hard to get under control due to being so touched by all your kindness. The work of the North Shore Branch with new direction, ideas, younger board members will now continue moving ahead in giving support to hard of hearing residents and making awareness of Hearing Loss in the communities of the North Shore for years to come. I thank the Board and previous Boards, committees and all volunteers because without all of you, there would be no North Shore Branch of the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association. The very best to all of you and may God Bless each one of you.

Erica Barrett

Managing Your Hearing Loss Course

The next Managing Your Hearing Loss Course is to be held at Capilano Community Services Society, 600 West Queens Road, North Vancouver in the North Building with entrance off Windsor Road. The course will commence on Tuesday, February 26th. Sessions will be held for 8 Tuesdays from 10:00 AM to 12:00 Noon. There will be no session on March 19th for the Spring Break, with the last session on April 23rd. For information or registration, please contact Joan Bennett at 604-983-3131.



DO YOU WANT TO HEAR BETTER?

Not hearing as well as you did? Improve your ability to "hear" and understand by learning about and practicing speechreading (lip-reading). A drop in program at the West Vancouver Senior's Activity Centre will provide an introduction to speechreading and also provide practice for those who have completed the course. The Practice Sessions will commence February 12th for 8 weeks, 10:00 AM to 12:00 Noon. The last session is on April 2nd. For details call W.V.Seniors' Activity Centre. at 604-925-7280.

CHHA – BC Conference & AGM Sheraton Guildford Hotel

Submitted by Andrea Gauthier.

The annual CHHA-BC Conference took place on October 26-27, 2001. I attended the first day of the two-day event. Those who attended deserved medals for venturing out on a day when even the ducks would have preferred to stay indoors!

One session I attended was entitled negotiating effectively. The presenters tackled one of the most essential skills for the hard of hearing and such a hard one to learn.

The Workshop was chockfull of material and included an assertiveness check-up, information on interaction styles, being advocates and preparing for a meeting or discussion. There were also help groups during which we offered examples of personal situations where negotiating had not been successful. Based on their own personal experiences, others in the group suggested alternate ways of dealing with such situations. Everyone shared the wisdom they have acquired over time in dealing with their disability. Having others understand and appreciate



the frustrations involved was very comforting.

By offering this workshop, the seeds have been sown for us to pick up on the subject in our branch and help each other to learn to advocate for ourselves and others.

Another workshop I attended focussed on Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), the presenter, Dr. Deborah Hu, earned her M.D. in China and a Master's Degree in Science in Ontario. Her training allows her to have an understanding of both TCM and what she referred to as Conventional Medicine (CM) and how they compare with each other.

Dr. Hu described TCM as the coming together of philosophy and science into an art, with balance as its goal. TCM treats the "root" of imbalance or disharmony. The emphasis is on prevention.

There are many "branches" in TCM: Herbal therapy, in which herbs and medicines are sometimes prescribed, acupuncture and acupressure, which are concerned with points along the meridians in the body, ear therapy, osteopathy, which involves surgery, and health food therapy, which involved the combination of food and herbs. Dr. Hu said that because there are many branches in this approach, it is wise to choose a doctor who is good at making a diagnosis, before embarking on one or another of the branches. In describing how Traditional Chinese Medicine views health, Dr. Hu gave specific explanations as to how this approach is used in dealing with hearing and Ear Disorders. Dr. Hu left time to respond to questions and provided comprehensive written material.

Beyond the wonderful workshops offered, I appreciated the opportunity to meet new people and share in a way that makes one feel less alone in one's disability. Those who gave so generously of their time, energy and talent to put together this

conference fill me with inspiration and gratitude.

BC Conference Cont'd.

Editor's Notes:

The conference continued on the second day with a number of other workshops and presentations:

1. Nurturing writers presented by Dr. Marietta Paterson, Principal, Vancouver Oral Centre was designed to help parents and educators identify and address some of the common language problems and knowledge gaps revealed in the writing of hard of hearing children and youth.

2. Community Partnerships was a workshop to inform Branches about strategies to enhance community participation in public information, advocacy and lobbying in rural and urban areas.

3. A Technology Workshop was presented by Hans Roesler of ALDS, Inc. and Brad Bice of the Western Institute for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. During this workshop many devices to help the hard of hearing were displayed and demonstrated.

4. Education Standards of Hearing Instrument Specialists was presented by Jeff Germaine from the Board of Hearing Instrument Specialists.

5. The final workshop was a presentation on the New Speech Therapy Techniques for people with a hearing loss. During this presentation a molded palette was demonstrated which when fitted in the mouth and connected to a computer was able to display the position of the tongue in the mouth for both the therapist and the student.

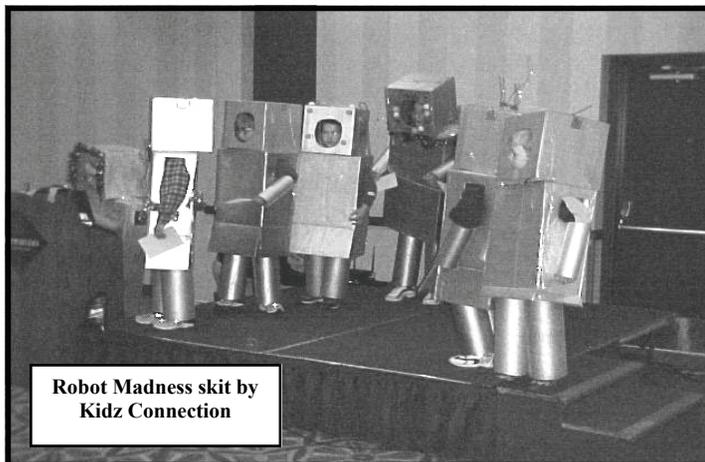
There were also displays from various manufacturers and groups which provided information and demonstrated new devices and hearing technology. There was a silent auction where items donated by various groups and Branches were sold to the highest bidder in order to raise funds for the conference. Child care was provided for infants, toddlers and preschoolers, and for children aged 6-11 there was *Kidz Connection* providing fun with games, art, drama, movies and socializing. For the teens, there

was *The BEST in YOU*, a workshop to explore potential and learning to understand and accept yourself. All attendees to the conference were treated to a delicious buffet dinner on Friday evening at which they were entertained with a skit called *Robot Madness* put on by *Kidz Connection*. The evening closed off with *Chuckles, Challenges and Choices*, MC'd by Dawn Fuller, the laff lady. A buffet lunch was served on Saturday. The conference was followed by the Annual General Meeting on Saturday afternoon.

NORTH SHORE HEALTH REGION POPULATION ADVISORY IN DISABILITIES

By Erica Barrett.

A group from the Population Advisory in Disabilities of the North Shore Health Region gave a presentation to the board of directors of Lions Gate Hospital on October 3, 2001 at 2:30 p.m. This was held in the hospital auditorium. The presenters consisted of a group of seven, Blind, Multiple Sclerosis, Fibromyalgia, and Hard of Hearing persons. We told the directors who we were: We are members of the Population Advisory Group for people with disabilities.



We represent a cross section of disabilities both visible and invisible. Why were we here? We are here to raise the level of awareness of all staff in the North Shore Health Region to both the physical and emotional needs of people with disabilities when they enter the health care system. Our message: We want you to complement your clinical skills with humanitarian skills and to understand the vast diversity within the disabled community. We told the directors we were a small sample of the larger disabled community on the North Shore.

I was asked to tell about the experience I had at my

preliminary admittance for surgery and how it affected me. My problem was that they showed me a video that was not captioned. I related this and how it caused me stress because I really had no idea what they were saying about the routine of surgery and related items. I was informed that I would be able to tell by the actions in the video. There was no face to speechread. I pointed this out in my presentation by asking the board to go home and turn on the television without sound and no visual face and see if they could understand by the actions on the television what it was all about. I also mentioned that with the room not being looped, I was unable to attend the Annual meeting of the North Shore Health Region held recently. We have to get this message out about the needs for assistive listening systems in hospitals, other public places and meeting rooms.

The group gave our recommendations to the board. We only had twenty minutes so it was a condensed presentation. This presentation was to be given last May but with the bus strike it was postponed and at very short notice it was given on October 3rd. A question period followed.

At the next meeting on Wednesday, October 17th which was attended by your vice president, Marion Ladkin, It was reported that the October 3rd presentation had been well received by the Board of Directors.

Disability Tax Credit

Submitted by Fred Clark.

Although optometrists have been qualified to assess a vision impairment, audiologists, in the view of Revenue Canada, were not authorized to evaluate a hearing loss.

For brevity, and to make a long story short, I had the occasion while in Ottawa a few years ago, to meet with Paul Martin, the Minister of Finance, and also Jane Stewart who at that time was Minister of Revenue. After making my plight clear to the Ministers both agreed that audiologists should be qualified to assess hearing loss for tax benefits.

As a result, the Disability Tax Credit (D.T.C.) Application, which is Income Tax Form T2201, now clearly indicates that an audiologist has the authority to complete the form.

If you wear hearing aids and also depend on speech reading to understand words in a quiet place you MIGHT qualify for the D.T.C. Not everyone will qualify for this tax exemption but you will be assured of a fair hearing evaluation from an audiologist

Check with Revenue Canada or your tax accountant for details related to the completion of your Income Tax Return.

(Licensed doctors which includes Ear Nose and Throat specialists, as well as, family physicians are still authorised to complete the D.T.C. Application form T2201.)



Next Members' Meeting

Getting Your Needs Met as a Hard of Hearing Person will be the topic for our next members' meeting. It will be held at St. John's Anglican Church, 220 West 8th Street, North Vancouver on **Monday February 25th at 7:00 PM.** Our guest speaker will be Doug Spratt, husband of our president Flo Spratt, who will share insights into living with a Hard of Hearing person. Refreshments will be served. Family members and friends are welcome to attend. Our meetings are both hearing and wheelchair accessible.

Please mark this date on your calendar now.