



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,
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Issue 46 September 2004

Mountain Ear

President's Message Some Words of Wisdom from Hearing Persons

Student: (pointing to his nose so his hand covers his mouth) I have a mosquito bite on my nose.

Me: What did you say?

Student: I have a mosquito bite on my nose.

Me: You have peanut butter on your nose?

Class: Hysterical laughter.

Student: No! I have a MOSQUITO BITE ON MY NOSE!

After the student and I joined in the laughter, I was able to explain why I could not hear the student (his mouth was covered). To be sure, covering his mouth, because he was pointing to his nose, was a natural thing for him to do. He wasn't being difficult or forgetting to be clear and helpful. He was just being normal in his communication.



Most of us hearing impaired people can relate to an incident like this. Sometimes the situation is humorous, other times it is simply frustrating. In this article, I'd like to focus on what hearing people have to say, from their point of view, about their experiences with us.

I asked my husband, Doug, and younger son, Nathan, what they would like us to keep in mind. I like what they said.

(Continued on page 6)

CHHA North Shore Branch Annual General Meeting Monday September 20, 2004 7:00 PM

**Place: The Summerhill
135 West 15th Street
North Vancouver**

Special Guest Speaker:

John Neumann

Executive Director

**Information & Advocacy Services
North Shore Disability Resource Centre
A Resource in Your Community.....**

How Can We Help You?

**Meetings are Hearing and
Wheelchair Accessible
Refreshments will be served.**



Donations

Thank you from the North Shore Branch
for a generous donation from

**Capers Community Markets
2496 Marine Drive
West Vancouver**

June 23rd Meeting Challenging Moments in the Life of the Hard of Hearing

Our June 23rd meeting took place at the Summerhill in North Vancouver. The theme for the evening was to take a humorous look at some of the issues that challenge the Hard of Hearing in their daily life and to discuss ways and means of dealing with these situations. This was presented through a series of skits written by Rick Waters, performed by Flo Spratt, Lynn Fleming, Marsha Harris, Rick Waters, and narrated by Hugh Hetherington.

Skit No. 1. Let's Have a Quiet Conversation. The scene is two people who meet in the park and decide to sit down and have a quiet conversation. While trying to carry on a conversation, a park employee comes by with a leaf blower and makes the conversation impossible. Points that came up in the discussion included: moving to a quieter location; asking the employee to stop; advocate for better noise by-law enforcement; and also to realize that people with normal hearing would not be able to carry on a conversation under the same circumstances either.



Skit No. 2. Galiano or Bust. The scene is where two people drive into the ferry terminal at Tsawassen and while waiting for their ferry hear what they believe to be an important announcement regarding their ferry's departure. Unfortunately, the message heard is very garbled and the reverberation from the



loud speakers makes it impossible to understand the announcement. Many locations are not acoustically friendly and this situa-

tion can arise in many public venues, such as bus stations and airports. Some of the discussion points included: Look for visual display boards; Ask someone else nearby; Check with an employee; and again realize that hearing persons may also have difficulty in this type of location.

Skit No. 3. The Dreaded Answering Machine. The scene depicts two people arriving home to find what sounds like a very important message on their answering machine. The person leaving the message has spoken very quickly and neither the hard of hearing person nor his partner



are able to understand what the message has said, including the name of the caller or his phone number. Answering machines are often a curse to the hard of hearing and as this skit pointed out, even the hearing person was unable to interpret the message. One very good suggestion is to get caller ID on your telephone line. This way you will know who has called. You should also include the phrase "please speak slowly and clearly" in your message. If you are leaving a message for someone on their answering machine remember to repeat telephone numbers and names, and also to spell out difficult names.

Skit No. 4. The Infamous Shouted Response. The scene is the husband who has left his shoes where his spouse almost trips over them. While he is sitting with his back to her, she asks him not to do this. He doesn't catch what she has said and asks her to repeat. He faces her and she repeats the message by shouting which doesn't help the situation or the mood. When dealing with hard of hearing people there is rarely a need to shout. Make sure you have their attention before you speak. Realize that hearing aids can clip or distort on loud sounds and can even cause the sound to be painfully loud. Other suggestions the hard of hearing person can employ: Explain your hearing problem;



Ask for context; tell the speaker to repeat more slowly, or ask the person to write the instruction down.

Skit No. 5. The Waiting Room Dilemma. The scene is a doctor's waiting room. As the patients arrive the receptionist tells them to have a seat. One hard of hearing person explains to the receptionist that she is hard of hearing and asks that the receptionist please catch her attention when the doctor is ready to see her. Another hard of hearing man comes in and takes a seat at the far end of the waiting room and out of site of the receptionist. He has the last appointment and when his name is called does not respond. The receptionist puts him down as a "no show" and goes off to lunch. The message in this is very clear. (1) Identify yourself as hard of hearing. (2) Ask the receptionist to make eye contact or approach you when calling your name. (3) Sit as close to the receptionist's desk as possible. (4) If necessary, take a hearing friend along with you.



It was a very enjoyable evening with many of those attending commenting on how much they enjoyed the humour and information conveyed through the presentations.

Operating Fund Grants

The CHHA – North Shore Branch gratefully acknowledges the following Municipal Community Grants:

District of North Vancouver \$1100.00

City of North Vancouver \$1100.00

District of West Vancouver \$300.00

We also thank the North Shore Community Foundation for a grant of \$500.00

WHEN HEARING AIDS ARE NOT ENOUGH

By Hugh Hetherington and Rick Waters.

Many hearing aid wearers find that they can communicate well in quiet locations and one-to-one situations. It is, however, a well known fact that background noise, reverberation, long distances from the speaker or sound source present much greater difficulty for the hard of hearing person compared to the person with normal hearing. This often prevents those with hearing loss from participating on equal terms with normal hearing persons in group conversations or in larger assembly type situations. While hearing and understanding the spoken word is of great importance to those with hearing impairment, there are also many other situations where a little help from an assistive device would come in very handy.

Fortunately, we now live in a time where advances in technology affect the everyday lives of almost everyone on the planet. For the hearing impaired there are many solutions available through the appropriate use of technology. Let's look at a few of the many situations where assistive devices might help to make your lives a little easier.

Will a hearing aid help you hear your dinner companion in a noisy restaurant? It might not be enough. You might want to consider getting a Pocket Talker or Personal FM system with a neckloop so that your dinner companion could wear a small lapel mike. Make sure your hearing aids are equipped with a telecoil in order to take advantage of this solution. (Not sure what a telecoil is? See item in March 2004 newsletter "The Mysterious T-Switch").



How about on the phone? Sometimes the telecoil feature works great here, but there are times when a telephone amplifier will make all the difference in the world. There are a wide range of amplified telephones and telephone amplifiers available to suit any budget.

You've got that new hearing aid, and decide to go out to the backyard to work on the garden. The doorbell may not be loud enough for you to hear in the yard. Consider getting an inexpensive wireless doorbell that you can carry with you or wear on your belt.

You take off your hearing aids, and bed down for the night. But, you don't want to miss your flight. When you are not wearing your hearing aids the alarm clock

is not going to do the job. You can buy a bed vibrator, or a flashing light to attach to your alarm.

Even with a hearing aid, you find that if you turn up the TV to the point where you can hear it, it may annoy others. A remote headphone attachment, or an Infrared or FM cordless headphone system will most likely make it much easier for you to hear the TV, or your stereo without bugging others.

You have those great new hearing aids, but you're a little tired after listening hard all day. You decide to take them out, and just relax for awhile, but you are afraid of missing the phone ring. Did you know you can get a ringer device with a strobe light to signal you when the phone rings. You can also get a more sophisticated device that can "hear" the telephone, the smoke alarm, the doorbell, and the alarm clock, and keep you fully informed with flashing lights

There's a new movie in town. You'd love to see it, but you're afraid you might not hear it, even with those fancy new hearing aids. Why not call the theatre, and find out if they have an assistive listening system, such as a loop, or an infrared system. If they do, go a bit early to the theatre, and take advantage of the technology.

You have to go to an important meeting in the boardroom. There are about 12 people at the meeting, and the air conditioning system is droning away. You can only hear the people at your end of the table,



even with the best hearing aids. The answer is to get a remote microphone system, with a central microphone, or twin micro-

phones that are placed at strategic places on the table. The remote microphones communicate with FM radio signals. Your hearing aid can either have an FM receiver, or you can use an inductive loop to connect your hearing aid to the FM receiver.

To find out more about the many assistive devices available, ask your audiologist or hearing professional, visit the Communication Aids department of the Western Institute for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing or call the CHHA – North Shore Branch at 604-926-5222. Some devices are also available at your local electronic stores.

FRUSTRATIONS FOR THE HEARING PERSON

By Hugh Hetherington and Rick Waters.

A lot has been said about the difficulties faced by the hard of hearing in their daily lives, however, in this article we are going to turn the tables and look at the frustrations of

the hearing person in a relationship with a hard of hearing person. As a hard of hearing (HOH) person we are often so caught up in our own anxieties and frustrations that we forget to look at how our disability affects those around us. It is important for the person with hearing loss to realize that they also have a responsibility in helping to make a relationship run smoothly. How many of the following situations have come up in your life? How did they affect you?



The most common scenario is when a person has to repeat what they have just said. Typically, they forget to get the attention of the hard of hearing person first. Then they have to repeat what they've just said. Sometimes, they just can't be bothered and this produces stress and anger in both individuals.

How about when your partner wants to whisper something to you in the theatre, at a restaurant or some other quiet location.

You can't speak out loud, and therefore can't communicate something that's important at the time. How frustrating can that be?



You need the television or radio volume turned up louder than is comfortable for your hearing partner. There are solutions for this problem. Get a closed caption decoder or a TV set with built in closed captioning, or look into getting cordless headphones for yourself.

Your hearing partner really wants to go to a particular movie or drama presentation, but knows you will not be able to hear it. Now what can he/she do? Go alone? What about the HOH person's feelings? Where do they come into this dilemma?

Sometimes the hearing person says something to the hard of hearing person and there is no apparent response. Did they hear? What did they hear? Should the hearing person repeat what they've just said? What do you think?

Our hearing person is upstairs. The HOH person is on main floor. The doorbell or the telephone rings and is heard by the hearing person. What a dilemma! Should they run downstairs? Will the HOH person hear it? Maybe they even feel like shouting, but we know what problems that can cause.

An interesting song on the radio is heard by our hearing person who would really like to get the reaction of the HOH person to the lyrics. Of course, the HOH person can't pick up the lyrics.... You know the rest.

What happens when the hearing person asks the HOH person a question and the answer back does not make any sense at all. He/she realizes that the HOH person did not hear the question. Do they bother to go back to square one? What frustration!

Our HOH person has had a long day, and decides to relax. Out come their hearing aids and they settle down with a good book. Meanwhile, their hearing partner wants to talk about something that happened, and only after about 5 minutes do they realize that the HOH person hasn't heard a single word! We're back to square one again.

Finally, here's one that often doesn't even get connected with being a hard of hearing issue. The hard of hearing person makes a comment on something to his hearing partner. The hearing partner angrily comes back with "I just said that to you." This phenomenon occurs because of the way the brain reacts with sounds that it didn't quite hear. The subconscious continues working in the background and because of the context it is working within comes out with the statement and takes the idea as its own. Have you ever accused someone of not paying attention? Maybe you should think again.

Deaf, Who Me? By R. Wayne Edwards

My wife's getting hard of hearing,
I really have to let her know.
When you are getting old, like her,
Your hearing's often first to go.

She also mumbles when she talks
Just like that deaf girl on TV.
But when I try to let her know,
She says the one that's deaf is me.

So I snuck into the kitchen
And whispered, "What's for dinner, Dear?"
Her back to me, I heard no answer.
That proved my point, she couldn't hear.

From closer up I asked again,
"What are you cooking for tonight?"
Once again I heard no answer.
So now it seems that I was right.

I went right up behind her back
And put my mouth up to her ear.
In voice quite loud, I asked once more,
No way, this time, she couldn't hear.

She turned and asked, "Are you stone deaf!
Your hearing's gotten worse, Old Dear.
I've had to answer you three times!
We're having chicken. Can't you hear?"

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For more fun poetry please visit :
www.familypoet.com



President's Message

(Continued from page 1)

First, just like we do, hearing people have tolerance levels that go up and down, depending on their energy and time. When they express frustration or impatience, give them a break and just let it go. Or when it is a difficult environment for us to keep up with the conversation, give them permission to carry on without us. We don't always have to be part of the action. One example in our family is during our car drives. Often I let my husband chat with the boys and I just enjoy the gardens and scenery as we go. It is simply too stressful for all of us to be straining to include me. I have come to accept that, reminding myself that we have many other opportunities to communicate together.

Secondly, it is natural that they don't always believe we didn't hear them. Why do I say that? Because sometimes we DO hear them the first time! From their point of view, why, after their best effort of speaking clearly and directly, can't we "get it" right away? Another reason comes up frequently in my family. I will often repeat what one person had just said a few minutes earlier, though I swear I hadn't heard it at all. To them it will appear that I did hear it, but just wasn't listening hard enough. Even we hard of hearing folks can't always explain why we did not hear it, but can later repeat exactly what was said earlier.

Thirdly, when in a group situation, don't ask your hearing spouse or friend who is with you, "What did he/she say?" It is embarrassing for him or her to have to answer, "I don't know!" in front of the others. After realizing this, I now give a cue or non-verbal look, and my husband will tell me IF he heard it. Doug usually prefers it if I simply ask the speaker what he/she said, and then, if I am still stuck, he will help me out. Another solution that works for me is to simply ask, "What are you all talking about?" The group now understands my silence and can help me join the conversation.

Lastly, use the listening devices that are available! My family often waits until I have my hearing device in place before they communicate with me in a difficult situation. That way, we all save on our energy and our relationship is not hindered because of my disability.

Doug and Nathan's comments prompt me to realize

that our conversations with each other are really a partnership. I am not alone in my desire to hear!

Thank you, all you hearing people out there. Your part in our lives is greatly appreciated.

Til next time,



Sound Advice

A monthly series of informal workshops and discussions around issues affecting the hard of hearing.

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 Learning Studio, 695 21st Street in West Vancouver.

Come and join us and other Hard of Hearing people who get together to share and discuss.

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;
Speech Reading
Behavioural Issues;
Improving Relationships
Improving Hearing Environments

For Information call: 604-926-5222 or
Fax: 604-925-2286

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