



Canadian Hard of Hearing Association

North Shore Branch

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Mountain Ear



The North Shore Branch Board of Directors wish all our members and friends a Happy Holiday Season and a Healthy and Prosperous New Year

Prez-Mez

By Mike Hocevar

Thanks to everyone for their participation at September's annual general meeting; it was another positive occasion especially highlighted by member **Andrea Gauthier's** partner, **Glen Grigg, Ph.D., R.C.C.** who delivered what I would term a great "pep talk" to inspire us. He used great humour and anecdotes to support the message that despite the many difficulties associated with hearing loss, we can and should adapt to ensure we have a positive lifestyle and healthy personal relationships. Check out the account of his presentation in this issue of *Mountain Ear*... We welcome **William Friend** as a new director, and encourage anyone else to step forward as an additional vacancy was created for this term's board... Congratulations also to director **Henry Romain**; though he couldn't be at the AGM it was because he was with family as he celebrated his 60th wedding anniversary to his wife Leola... Past director

Karen Hunter spent several weeks in Europe this summer, and found Tuscany very much to her liking! ...A lot of excitement also, for our other past director **Flo Spratt** as her son landed a job in New York City this summer, and of course experienced the big super storm... The annual CHHA Walk2Hear event back in September saw participation from some of our branch members over at Jericho Beach Park. Not quite as many walkers this year but report backs are that it was a fun outing... A reminder that we have handy hospital kits for you or for someone you may know who is hearing impaired to help ease things a bit for a stay in the hospital. Contact us and we'll get one to you... Be sure to save your used hearing aid batteries; bring them to the next Summerhill presentation or Sound Advice and we'll take them in for recycling. The batteries are small, yes, but many of them have mercury or zinc which are harmful to the environment if just thrown out with the regular trash... Coincidentally, just hours before my annual hearing test with audiologist **Rhea Rosario** at the North Vancouver Connect Hearing, one of my hearing aids expired. Good timing I guess in a sense as it

needs to be replaced. So I am giving it to **Hugh Hetherington**. He has a great little personal museum of hearing aids ranging from the primitive horns all the way up to modern types... You can visit it online at www.chha-nsb.com and clicking on the "Museum" link.... We, the directors extend our very best wishes to you all for the upcoming joyous season!

Annual General Meeting

Keynote Speaker: Glen Grigg, Ph.D., R.C.C.

“Correction? Or Adaptation?

Creating expectations and strategies for coping with hearing loss”

Let’s recall for a moment, the 1948 classic movie *Key Largo* where Humphrey Bogart as Frank McCloud is engaged in mind games with his captor, the mean gangster Johnny Rocco as played by Edward G. Robinson, with Lionel Barrymore as a fellow captive in the role of James Temple: (Text courtesy of Google)

Johnny Rocco: There’s only one Johnny Rocco.

James Temple: How do you account for it?

Frank McCloud: He knows what he wants, don’t you Rocco?

Johnny Rocco: Sure.

James Temple: And what’s that?

Frank McCloud: Tell him, Rocco.

Johnny Rocco: Well, I want, uh...

Frank McCloud: He wants more, don’t you Rocco?

Johnny Rocco: Yeah. That’s it. I want more! (and remember the ecstatic look on Rocco’s face!)

James Temple: Will you ever get enough?

Frank McCloud: Will you, Rocco?

Johnny Rocco: Well, I never have. No, I guess I won’t. You, do you know what you want?

Frank McCloud: Yes. I had hopes once, but I gave them up.

Johnny Rocco: Hopes for what?

Frank McCloud: A world in which there’s no place for Johnny Rocco.

This scene appears to illustrate perfectly the common trait of human nature which Dr. Glen Grigg

termed “The pleasure treadmill” in pursuit of “the big extravaganza”, supposedly designed to achieve happiness. And Dr. Grigg’s point is that many who subscribe to such a process will fail. Especially folks with hearing loss.

It’s a fact: a degree of hearing loss will affect almost everyone, it is a natural progression. Dr. Grigg further suggests what is also natural for most people affected by hearing loss is a degree of unhappiness. He wants hearing impaired people to challenge and overcome such feelings.

So he asks, “What is happiness?” and to attempt answering this, he employs a psychological analysis as to why folks suffering hearing loss are at a very high risk of falling into the trap of misery. Understanding the psychological processes involved will help maintain a healthy and active life, and emotional stability.

No question that hearing loss wouldn’t matter if we could go about our daily tasks without hearing; if we could keep ourselves safe without hearing; if we could engage and exchange information without hearing; or if we could make emotional connections without hearing. Of course, we with hearing loss experience these challenges.

We think, then, that we can correct hearing loss through the use of hearing aids and assistive devices, and various coping strategies that can be learned and employed. After all, there is proven success in correcting poor vision.

But Dr. Grigg says we are clinging on to too high an expectation in this regard; and with some irony. The eyes work with receiving light, instantaneously. Through lenses and reshaping the eyeball a measure of restoring good vision can happen.

With our hearing aids and assistive devices, sound also is received instantaneously, or in a sense, overwhelmingly. But it is an amplified state and not as a natural reception. Normal or good hearing allows for sensing direction of the sound, by the volume and just how close or far the source is, and to recognize in a speaker’s voice the emotional meaning---not what is said but how it is said. Hearing aids and assistive devices throw much of this out the window, creating a confusion to our brain that requires processing the “info” overtime.

Using a hearing aid requires using more of your psychological resources. It takes more effort as you are

left with a bit of a “brain strain” coping with your hearing loss.

Reactions for us therefore include frustration (why if I have this hearing aid, can't I hear like I used to?). Also irritation is felt (I want to hear like I always have) and Dr. Grigg says a crank up in anxiety results from having to cope in life with hearing loss, particularly due to our safety senses being compromised with hearing loss.

Dr. Grigg stresses that by recognizing the limitations of living with hearing loss and recognizing that it cannot be fully corrected, shouldn't be seen as a defeatist attitude.

Rather, one should establish what the full situation is. We have our doctor, who can examine for any diseases of the ear; neurologists to ensure our electrical systems from the ear to the brain are functioning; audiologists to provide ways of getting acoustic information into our ears; and what Dr. Grigg calls our “unsung heroes” (and named our own Hugh Hetherington in this regard) who design sound environments for optimum hearing and listening experiences. Perhaps an addition here could include organizations like CHHA that educate and inform on the latest developments in the field of hearing loss.

Dr. Grigg provided lots of interesting detailed and somewhat surprising material regarding the predicaments we are in living with hearing loss. But he got back to the matter of encouraging a rethink and adjustment of our expectations to find the right groove for us to live our lives as satisfactorily as possible.

He noted some cases of clients who are obscenely rich yet are not happy, that they don't have enough or have a hangup over an amazingly simple thing such as not finding hired help that can make a bowl of oatmeal the way they expect. Then there is the client who is almost homeless, but still enjoys life. So it gets back to personal expectations, and the question of “What is happiness?”

Dr. Grigg implores us to appreciate ourselves for being able to function with our poor hearing. It's about finding out what we are doing right, what goes well and to do more of it.

Once we love ourselves, we can extend love to others. It creates the proper psyche to really define what truly is a genuine “big extravaganza” in our lives. You can find many things in your acoustic environment that are very satisfying hearing experi-

ences. How about starting with being grateful for the “little things”. For example, to still be able to hear certain precious sounds like the voices of our grandchild, or to still be able to listen in some way to our favorite music? Small things, perhaps, but big in contributing to achieving our personal happiness.

Dr. Glen Grigg's impressive credentials include actively practicing clinical psychology at Jericho Counselling in Vancouver, teaching applied psychology at City University of Seattle's Vancouver campus, Vancouver Community College and at the Justice Institute of B.C., and is a Researcher and Consultant for Health Combined Services, B.C., and Fraser Health Authority.

DIARY OF A COCHLEAR IMPLANT

Looped Again!

By Flo Spratt.

Many of us who wear hearing aids know about the T-coil and its benefits, especially when it is used with the loop system. The T-coil, or telephone switch as it was originally called, uses a simple, yet extremely helpful, technology that enables a hearing aid wearer, who has a T-coil, to hear a speaker at a distance in specially looped facilities. The speaker uses a microphone connected to an amplifier and wire looped around the room. When you come to our meetings, you can enjoy hearing our speakers as if they are speaking right into your ears, without having to hear over noises that are made around you.

I was able to use this technology for many years, even with my analog hearing aids, when my hearing loss was at the severe level. A number of years ago, when we renovated our kitchen, we had a loop system placed in the ceiling of our kitchen so that I could listen to our favorite pastors and lecturers. However, by then my hearing loss was at the profound level, and I found it too difficult to understand the lectures that were fed into the system. By then, to understand anyone, I relied heavily on speech reading.

But that all changed after a couple of years with my implant. Recently I attempted to listen to lectures again using our loop. I was pleasantly surprised to find that I could even understand speakers with ac-

cents or who spoke quickly. My speech processor, the device that sits on my ear and is connected by magnet to my implant, picks up the speaker even when I walk outside the loop's perimeter. So, as I do my chores in and outside my house, I enjoy listening to a wide variety of speakers with relative ease. I am again reminded of the vast improvement in my hearing due to my cochlear implant.

The loop is a wonder tool for us with hearing loss. We at CHHA North Shore Branch often remind our members and friends how much this technology means to us. Recently I learned that there are some loop systems you can use in your home that are easy to install and/or are portable, so that you can take it with you to other homes where you plan to use a sound system (e.g., TV). Come and learn about this tool at our next Sound Advice meeting or call us to find out how you can obtain one for your home.

'Til next time,
Flo

NORMAL FOR YOUR AGE - CERTAINLY NOT!

By Quenton Currie, Audiologist

As an Audiologist, I can't tell you how many clients come into my office and say the following: "I had a hearing test once and it showed my hearing was down but the doctor told me that it was normal for my age."

One recent client expressed how insulted she was that the doctor assumed, because she was a senior, good hearing wasn't important to her (she was 89 by the way!). I would have to strongly agree with her feelings and my blood boils every time I hear another account of how a health professional, however well-meaning, mis-informs their patient.

If their patient had a broken leg would they say, "That's normal after a fall like you've had." Or if they had cataracts would they say, "Oh your vision is going but that's normal for your age." Certainly not! They would recommend the appropriate course

of action to restore the patient to as close to full health as possible. While hearing loss amongst seniors is indeed common, it is also common for non-seniors as well but you don't hear them being told "Hearing loss is normal for a 22 year old like you."

So many people live with hearing loss and taking action is a big step which takes no small amount of courage and humility. They're looking for reassurance from their doctor that they're not "going crazy" and indeed need some help and good advice. That there's some hope for improvement if they go see an Audiologist. When they're told "it's normal for your age," the real message is, "You should just live with it, it's who you are now, a person who doesn't need to hear because you're old."

Un-addressed hearing loss causes communication problems that are anything but 'normal' and the negative impact on a person's general health and medical status is very real and well documented.

But the tide is changing. Slowly, physicians are taking a more proactive approach to hearing care and recommending that patients get tested even before problems arise. Today's seniors are re-defining what it is to be a senior. They're active, involved, and engaged in shaping the economy, society and the entire world. What will be considered 'normal' in 8 years when two thirds of North America is over the age of 60!

So if someone tells you hearing loss is 'normal for your age' politely, but firmly let them know that your hearing is important to you at any age. Everyone is entitled to enjoy easy, natural communication with their loved-ones and friends. To deny the opportunity to stay connected is in effect saying they don't matter. And you matter!

Reprinted from the CHHA - NL newsletter "Sound Waves" with the kind permission of Quenton Currie, a clinical audiologist since 1995 and who has worked both in the public health system and for a hearing instrument manufacturer. Currently he is the owner of Red Door Hearing & Speech in St. John's, NL.

Why Having a High-Frequency Hearing Loss Causes Problems Hearing in Groups

by Neil Bauman, Ph.D.

A man wrote: "I am 23 years old and I have recently started to believe that I may have a mild hearing loss. I often have trouble understanding other people in noisy environments, such as cars or restaurants, and I seem to be the only one having difficulties. In quieter environments, on the other hand, I have no trouble understanding what the other is saying.

I have tested my hearing many times online, and also with an audiologist. The results showed consistently that I have a normal hearing when there was no background noise – possibly with a slight weakness towards higher frequencies. With background noise, however, my hearing was on the edge between "still normal" and "mild hearing loss".

I often feel I do not belong to a group because I cannot understand what others are saying. Can you relate to my description of the problem? I read in one of your articles that when hearing loss occurs, one of its side effects is that my ability to differentiate multiple same-frequency noises vanishes, therefore making it impossible for me to understand someone if another is speaking simultaneously. Could you explain why that is so?"

Neil Bauman: You may be surprised to learn that one of the first symptoms of high-frequency hearing loss is exactly what you describe--when you can hear and understand people in quiet places, but cannot understand the same people in noisy surroundings.

Hearing loss is hearing loss--whether you are in noise or in quiet. There is no difference. What is different is how much you understand of what you hear. It doesn't take too much high-frequency hearing loss to begin to notice you don't understand as much in the presence of noise--and that is what you are experiencing. The result is that you often feel left out

when you are in a group of people all talking at the same time.

Let me explain why a high-frequency hearing loss causes these problems. First, here are three principles you need to know.

1. Low-frequency sounds travel well through air, while high-frequency sounds quickly "drop out" of the air. Thus low-frequency sounds travel much greater distances through air than do high-frequency sounds.
2. Most of the volume of speech is produced by the low-frequency vowels.
3. Most of the intelligence in speech is produced by the high-frequency consonants.

What this means is that because you hear the low-frequency sounds well, you hear people talking with no problem, but because you cannot hear the high-frequency sounds as well now, you don't hear the high-frequency consonants that carry most of the meaning of speech. Thus you don't understand as much of speech as you used to.

This condition is exacerbated by increasing distance (you lose more of the needed high-frequency sounds since they do not travel well through air) and by noise (loud low-frequency sounds mask the softer high-frequency sounds needed to understand speech).

Therefore, one solution is to GET CLOSE to whomever is speaking so you can catch the softer high-frequency sounds, and at the same time, try to CUT DOWN the loud low-frequency background noise by shutting open doors/windows, moving to a quieter spot, turning down the volume on any background music playing, etc.

Another solution is to get and wear hearing aids that will boost the volume of the higher frequencies. A third solution is to use assistive devices that put the

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.

microphone close to the speaker's mouth, thus capturing the high-frequency sounds before they drop out of the air.

Neil Bauman, Ph.D. is the Executive Director of the Center for Hearing Loss Help in Pennsylvania. He has a website at www.hearinglosshelp.com where you can find information on many aspects of hearing loss. There are numerous articles to read, also many books and assistive devices that can be purchased. This article is reprinted from his e-Zine of December 21, 2012 with permission.

Hearing Aid Battery Recycling

Bring your used hearing aid batteries to our meetings and we will take care of recycling them for you

Do you need a ride to our meeting. Call or leave a message at:

604-926-5222

We will try our best to arrange a ride for you. Be sure and give us notice at least a two days in advance.

CHHA—North Shore Branch Programs are funded in part by Social Service Grants from the City and District of North Vancouver and the District of West Vancouver.

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

(Holidays excepted) at the West Vancouver Seniors' Activity Centre's Social Rec Room, 695 21st Street in West Vancouver.
(No meeting in July and August)
(December Meeting is on the 7th)

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; Coping Strategies;

Improving Relationships;

Improving Hearing Environments

For Information call: 604-926-5222

Everyone Welcome



**CANADIAN HARD OF HEARING ASSOCIATION
NORTH SHORE BRANCH
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Prov. _____

Postal Code: _____ Phone: _____

Please mail application to:

CHHA—North Shore Branch
Attention: Treasurer
600 West Queens Road
North Vancouver, B.C.
V7N 2L3

Cheque enclosed

Money Order Enclosed

Charitable Registration No.
BN 89672 3038 RR0001

I wish to support the aims of CHHA and the North Shore Branch and enclose my \$35.00 annual membership fee. (National \$25.00, Branch \$10.00). Membership is paid annually from 1 October to 30 September.