



# Canadian Hard of Hearing Association North Shore Branch

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## Mountain Ear

### From the desk of the President

Hello, everybody, it's almost year end, and have you noticed how all my "prez-mez" articles start with something about, "OMG, where has the time gone?" It seems that I had much more time before I retired but isn't that a common complaint now-a-days?

Anyway, here we are, or should I say "here I am", about to tell you all something of the comings and goings at your organization since the summer. Much will be a repeat of what you are already aware of, but I do need to keep everyone updated, especially those who can't or do not come to our meetings or are somewhat house bound.

Firstly, as those of you who attended the AGM at The Summerhill in September will know, we elected a 6<sup>th</sup> Director at that meeting, and shortly thereafter your board was able to appoint a 7<sup>th</sup>, so that we now have a fully stocked board of directors. I think that you'll find that both the activities and the finances of our organisation are in the safest, securest and most capable 14 hands that you could wish for.

If you'd like to know more about any (or all) of your directors you can look them up on our new website, which if not up and running at the time of your reading this, won't be far behind.

Speaking of the new web-site, Susan Gelinias has almost got it ready. It should be up to replace our old one in the new year. The amount of time and effort in getting this new tool up and running has been quite major, but I'm sure that you'll all agree that it

will have been worth the effort. My hope is that if you have a question that you could ask at Sound Advice, but cannot come to Sound Advice, then your next best way to get your answer will be from the new web site.

At the last Silver Harbour Sound Advice session, held on Monday October 28<sup>th</sup>, we were excited to have 2 staff members from the City of North Vancouver attend. Their goal was to see what we do, and how, with a view to bringing Sound Advice "in house" for their own staff. Also, they hope to work in concert with the staff from the other North Shore municipalities and that they will all bring the help and expertise that we offer to a wider audience. As I've mentioned in these pages before, this is an ongoing "event", but we hope to achieve some real success next year. 2020 may be perfect for vision, but we are hoping to simply see it as a step forward for hearing.

The experiment with two Sound Advice sessions per month has been a success, and it is my hope that not only will we continue to grow, but that our numbers will grow also. Speaking of growing, if you are not a member of our branch, or not currently paid up, why not consider renewing your membership, and maybe even volunteering some of your time to help with some of the chores that are necessary for the continued good functioning of the branch.

At the AGM previously mentioned, the after meeting presentation was given by none other than our favourite HOH, Gael Hannan. If you were not there

you missed a wonderful evening. Gael's presentations are insightful, funny, educational, funny, poignant, funny, thought provoking, inspiring and funny. Did I mention that she had us all laughing in the aisles?

Gael has a way of re-telling (her) history in such a way that you felt that you were there, you knew beforehand what the outcomes would be, you cried with her, you triumphed with her, and you really didn't want her to grow up and stop the story. Next time she's here on the North Shore, make sure you see her, she's easily worth the entrance fee, and we got her for free!

Another important event, or perhaps I should say series of events this fall, has been the courses being taught by Lisa Dillon Edgett called "Speech Reading". The title of her course is a little misleading, as it is much more than simply "lip reading". Lisa comes to us from The Deaf and Hard of Hearing Department of the Vancouver Community College. Basically, her course gives us all (both hearing and hard of hearing folks) a plethora of tools to help us communicate with each other. Her 12 week courses (2 of them) have been fully booked, so if you are interested (& I say you should be) in taking one next year, Lisa's contact information to register is on page 6 in this newsletter along with some testimonials from past participants on page 5.

My wife and I have been attending one of these courses, and they are informative and fun, and we've both learned a lot. And with the discounts offered to Seniors, they are extremely affordable. Additionally, the courses have been presented at West Vancouver Seniors' Centre and Silver Harbour Seniors' Centre, so access is very easy.

In an effort to increase the scope of our help, your board has been actively helping the Young Adult Network with funding for various activities. They, (YAN) will be hosting a major international event next year, and we will be helping them with funding for this event.

So, just as I always find it difficult to start these "messages", I'm always a little sad when I run out of things to tell you, and it's time to end. I've been President for a year now, and as I keep saying, doesn't time fly.

Bye for now!

Alan Dion.

*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.)*

## **Latest Tinnitus Research Findings**

by Neil Bauman, Ph.D.

There is a lot of ongoing tinnitus research. Some of the findings are not new, but reinforce what we already knew about tinnitus.

For example, a study about the efficacy of Tinnitus Retraining Therapy revealed that success rates strongly correlated to two things. First, the length of the treatment—meaning longer treatment times (close to 3 years) gave better results than shorter treatment times. Second, the closer a person adhered to the TRT protocols, the better the results. This is nothing new. It just reinforces the fact that if you want to have success in tinnitus reduction when using TRT, you have to follow the "rules" day by day and persevere to the end. Too many people are impatient and try to short-circuit the process, and that just doesn't work. (1)

Another study revealed that when treating tinnitus, you get more effective results when you address the person's emotional and cognitive reaction to tinnitus. This means that expecting a treatment such as tinnitus masking, or drugs, or low-level laser treatment by themselves will not be nearly as effective (successful) as giving the same treatment, but treating the person's emotional response at the same time. I have said for years that tinnitus is a "psychosomatic" condition and you have to address both the physical and the emotional components of tinnitus in order to be successful. This study just reinforces this view. (2)

Another study found that 43% of all elderly people have tinnitus. Of this group, 59% have tinnitus in both ears. Now you know (whether you wanted to or not). (3)

This same study found that there was a "weak" connection between hearing loss and tinnitus. (In the

*(Continued on page 4)*



## 10 TIPS FOR DINING OUT WHEN YOU HAVE HEARING LOSS

*Article reprinted with permission from the Newfoundland chapter newsletter Feb.6 2019*

When you have hearing loss, dining in a restaurant can often feel like a challenging experience. What if you cannot hear your companions? What should you do when you can't understand your server because the music is so loud? Here are **10 Tips for Dining Out When You Have Hearing Loss** to help improve your overall experience.

**1. Self Identify:** If you do not identify yourself as a person with hearing loss, how will servers know that you might need a little bit of clarification when they are speaking? Let them know what you need, such as have them face you when they are speaking to you, or have them write down key points.

**2. Ask to Sit in a Quiet Area:** If you don't request a quiet area (either in advance with a reservation, or when you arrive at the restaurant) you risk being seated in a high traffic, noisy area of the restaurant. Do not be afraid to ask for an area away from noise.

**3. Good Lighting is Key:** Although fancy candlelit dinners are nice, if you have hearing loss and rely on speech/lip reading, opting for a restaurant with good lighting will allow you to understand people better. If your server sits you in a dark corner of a restaurant, ask for a table where the lighting is better. Chances are, your experience will be a lot better when you are able to properly lipread. At the very least, ask for more candles!

**4. Sit so You Can See the Most People:** Along with good lighting, sitting so you can see the faces of the people you are eating with is also important. If you are in a large group and can only speechread what three or four of your companions are saying,

choose to sit across from the people you want to talk to the most.

**5. Use Your Noise Control Programs:** If you use amplification technology, like hearing aids, a cochlear implant, or other listening device, you may have noise control settings or programs which will enable you to turn the volume up or down, as needed, so you can ensure that you will not get a headache from being in a noisy environment. Some technology also allows for multiple sound settings that can be pre-set for different types of acoustic (sound) environments, that will soften the background of noisy environments such as restaurants. If you're uncertain that your hearing aids or cochlear implant has this functionality, please discuss with your hearing health provider.

**6. Pick Restaurants That are Quieter:** Restaurant review websites, like Yelp, now have a section which states whether people thought the restaurant was loud, average or quiet. If the rating is not listed, ask around. Many people who are hard of hearing tend to frequent the places that they know are quiet, sometimes without realizing it. As well, if you notice that the music is really loud in a restaurant, you have the option to politely ask them to turn it down. Chances are, if you find it loud, so does everyone else. If a restaurant refuses to turn down the volume, consider speaking with management or taking your business elsewhere.

**7. Have Your "Person" Near You:** Having a person that you know is easy to talk to, will include you in the conversation, and will let you know when the topic changes, is a great help when you are trying to communicate with people in a noisy setting. This person could be a friend, sibling, coworker, anyone that will "keep you in the loop" about what is going on.

**8. Ask People to Communicate Effectively:** When voices are overlapping, it can be hard to pick out what each individual person is saying. Asking others to slow down, speak clearly, face you and wait for another person to finish before they speak will improve the conversation for everyone.

**9. Have a Pen and Paper on Hand:** When you are in a noisy place, having a pen and paper (or even a phone or other device you can type on) on hand can make a world of difference. If you can not hear, ask the person to write it down. This ensures that you understand exactly what they mean.

**10. Do Not Bluff:** If someone is talking to you and you did not hear what they said, ask them to repeat it or ask for clarification. Do not pretend to understand if you did not – it can sometimes get you in trouble.

By following our 10 Tips, your restaurant experience can be greatly improved. Remember to use the tips that you feel will work best for you, because hearing loss is different for everyone who experiences it.

**Bon appetit!**

*(Continued from page 2)*

past studies have shown that 70+ percent of the people with hearing loss have tinnitus so I think the connection is not quite that weak.) But here's something new. They found that there was a strong connection between tinnitus and diabetes mellitus and hypertension. Therefore, if you have diabetes or

hypertension, you have a good chance of getting tinnitus as a result. Thus, it behooves one to get their diabetes and hypertension under control. This will reduce your chances of ending up with constant tinnitus. (3)

If you want to learn more about tinnitus, the many things that can trigger tinnitus, or more about a number of things you can do to help bring your tinnitus under control, check out my book, "When Your Ears Ring—Cope with Your Tinnitus—Here's How."

(1) Thong, J. F., et. al. Dec. 2013. Habituation Following Tinnitus Retraining Therapy in Tinnitus Sufferers. *Annals, Academy of Medicine, Singapore*. Summarized in *Tinnitus Today*, Spring, 2014, p. 19.

(2) Rabau, S., et. al. Jan. 2014. Changes Over Time of Psychoacoustic Outcome Measurements Are Not a Substitute for Sub-

jective Outcome Measurements in Acute Tinnitus. *European Archives of Oto-Rhino-Laryngology*. Summarized in *Tinnitus Today*, Spring, 2014, p. 19.

(3) Gibrin, P. C., et. al. Dec. 2013. Prevalence of Tinnitus Complaints and Probable Association with Hearing Loss, Diabetes Mellitus and Hypertension in Elderly. *CoDAS*. Summarized in *Tinnitus Today*, Spring, 2014, p. 19.

## **You Already Have the Best Coping Strategy: Your Attitude!**

by Rick Waters

A person with a hearing loss can cope with that issue by finding a good audiologist and acquiring suitable hearing aids. Next, they can improve the acoustic environment at their home by minimizing noise, improving the acoustics by choosing drapes, carpeting, and furniture to minimize echoing. Following that, they can learn about how to use assistive devices in appropriate situations. But, there's one more thing that can be done, and it's perhaps the most important thing, and that is to adopt a positive attitude towards your hearing.

I'm talking about making an attitudinal change towards your hearing loss. That change starts with taking ownership of your hearing loss. It's natural to deny that you might be losing any of your capabilities, but that denial is a potential barrier to enjoying good communications with your family and friends, a barrier to enjoying meals out, entertainment, television around the house, and just the pleasure of everyday communications with all those you encounter in a typical day.

Many of us assume that others will judge us negatively if they know we have hearing loss. And yes, there are some jokes about hearing loss, but my personal experience tells me that that is rarely the case. I always let people know right up front that I have hearing loss, and almost always, I've received a positive response. People are curious about my hearing loss, and when I tell them about it, and about my cochlear implant and my hearing aid, they become more comfortable, and they genuinely want to help.

Once you take ownership of your hearing loss, you will persevere when you first begin wearing hearing aids. Although they might not sound "natural" at first, it takes a period of time before your brain adapts to the new sounds, sounds it likely has not

had to deal with for a few years, and you will find yourself glad that you made the decision to get those hearing aids. And you'll be comfortable letting others know that you need a little extra help with conversation, that it's important to choose a quiet table in a restaurant, and that you'd like them to wear a remote microphone in appropriate circumstances. It will also be easier to ask theatre staff for the use of their assistive devices, and it will open you up to learning how to use the many assistive devices that are available.

We often hear the term advocacy. With the power that comes from making that attitudinal change, it becomes easy to be your own advocate. Reminding medical personnel and service employees that you need them to accommodate your hearing issue, letting hotel and theatre personnel know that simple assistive devices are required to ensure you are treated as an equal, requesting captioning, and requesting special seating, or that presenters wear microphones all help, and all are easy to do when you make that decision to be open and up front about your special hearing needs.

### **What do past students from the VCC Speechreading courses say?**

Lisa Dillon Edgett: ldillonedgett@vcc.ca

"I have learned to have a more positive attitude in helping myself and in communicating to others what works best for me. It is important because it will keep me better connected with family and friends."

"I have more knowledge about my hearing loss to explain to family/friends/co-workers/general public what I need/what helps in communication. I use this knowledge daily!"

"The most important thing I learned was "to advocate for myself and assessing environments and changing circumstances to hear better".

"I really enjoyed our group. It was nice to be with people who have hearing problems like me as they understand the problem."

"I have put in use the strategies and knowledge that I have gained in this course. My family and I are less stressed and have more meaningful conversations."

"It helps everyone involved with me and fills me up to live less isolated, therefore could give so much more back to this world".

"A wonderful class - clear and effective instructor; caring and sharing classmates, and a safe and open environment to talk about our hearing loss."

"I find this class is helpful to how I deal with my hearing loss in effective ways. Also I realize a lot of people have the same problem as I have. I am not alone."

"Knowing and understanding hearing loss and its impact on my daily life. It is important because when I understand it better I can find better solutions for difficulties."

"I wish I had known about it a long time ago, as I could have benefited greatly."

"It was much more than I expected as the course includes social, physical, environmental approaches rather than just lip-reading techniques."

"Assertiveness helps move emotions aside. I've had ongoing unrealistic expectations of how I "should" hear. This caused much disappointment, heart-ache, and even lower self-esteem. The class helped me to move into yet another stage of acceptance."

"I'm lipreading a bit better. I'm helping people assist me MUCH better. It hadn't occurred to me what it would be like being in a class with other hard of hearing folks. The communal impact was huge for me. I didn't expect to be so well supported and accepted."

"...I have become more aware of my attitudes towards others. I don't hesitate to let them know what works best for me as well as compliment them on any changes they have made to help me. For some, I need to take more time to explain how severe the loss is because they really don't know."

"The class provided much more than I anticipated and proved to be so much more than reading lips. Very highly recommended!!"

"This class is designed to teach us coping skills - to be confident - to take the initiative - to inform people of ones disability without embarrassment. I became expert at developing reasons and excuses to not socialize, or to remove myself from challenging situations - I was gradually isolating myself from friends and family. The Speechreading course has been the best thing I have ever done for myself - self-confidence fully restored, happiness and humour and independence greatly improved. I now have the skills to enjoy a positive and normal life and embrace each day with confidence and joy. And that is why I can now say to our amazing teacher Lisa ...Thank you Lisa for giving me my life back again."

"This is an essential course for anyone with hearing loss."

***(Editor's Note: We at the North Shore Branch highly recommend Lisa's course. Information on classes and how to register are on the next page of this newsletter)***

## Vancouver Community College Fall Speechreading Courses

Registration is now open for the Spring Speechreading courses!

The Speechreading course promotes skill development and attitudinal change towards communicating with a hearing loss. Participants, including individuals who have hearing loss and their partners, reflect on how hearing loss affects communication. The course allows the students the opportunity to create more effective personal communication, to identify and select communication strategies and tools, to increase self-confidence levels, and to become more effective at self-advocacy. The students also practice speechreading: they detect differences in mouth movements, discriminate and identify visual aspects of speech, and incorporate visual information with what they hear with the goal of improving personal communication.

Students will learn:

- Advantages and limitations of speechreading
- How to combine what you see with what you hear
- How to identify factors that affect your ability to communicate
- How to use a variety of strategies to communicate more effectively
- How to behave assertively in difficult situations
- Tips for stress reduction and relaxation
- The class meets for 2.5 hours, once per week, for 12 weeks. In January, we have two time options and two locations available:

Monday afternoon, 1:00pm-3:30pm

Dates: Jan. 13—Mar. 30

Location: Broadway Campus, Vancouver Community College

Wednesday afternoon, 1:00pm-3:30pm

Dates: Jan. 15—Apr. 1

Location: Silver Harbour Seniors' Activity Centre, North Vancouver

Possible Course: Tuesday afternoon, 1:00pm-3:30pm

Dates: Jan. 14—Mar. 31 (If enough registrations)

Tuition and fees for the course are \$270.05, but a senior tuition waiver is available for those 65 and over (Cost will be \$93.40.)

For more information, or to request registration forms, contact Lisa Dillon Edgett:  
604-871-7348 or [ldillonedgett@vcc.ca](mailto:ldillonedgett@vcc.ca)

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.

## Sound Advice

Presented by:

**The Canadian Hard of Hearing  
Association**

**North Shore Branch**

**Now at 2 Locations**

**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.**

**The group meets on the First  
Friday of each month  
from 10:00 AM to 11:30 at the West  
Vancouver Seniors'  
Centre's Social Rec Room.**

**We also meet on the Last Monday of  
each month  
From 10:00 AM to 11:30  
at the Silver Harbour Seniors' Cen-  
tre In North Vancouver  
in the Card Room  
(No meetings in July & August)**

**Subjects to be addressed  
include:**

**Technology;  
Speechreading;  
Coping Strategies;  
Improving Hearing  
Environments**

**For Information call:  
604-926-5222**