



# Canadian Hard of Hearing Association North Shore Branch

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September and December by CHHA – North Shore Branch,  
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## Mountain Ear

### From the Desk of the President

Can you believe it, summer is almost over and I'm only now beginning to write my mid-year message? With the 2019 AGM almost upon us, (Monday September 23<sup>rd</sup> at Summerhill, for those who may not have been aware), It's time to pen my next address, if that is the correct terminology.

It's been a busy year, they all seem to be that way, don't they? Your board has been advancing several issues and has made quite a fair bit of progress.

Susan's work on the Website is beginning to bear fruit. From what I can see, our new site is looking great, as well as becoming a fabulous place for anyone to stop by and learn or pick up hints on what we're all about. Once this is released, please take the opportunity have a good look, I'm sure that there will be lots of information for everyone. And, if you should spot an error or omission let us know, you'll get an honourable mention in my next newsletter message.

Doug is looking after the North Vancouver hearing clinics and making sure they know about our meetings and events. He will also be enquiring if they would like to be listed on our new website. Hugh will be doing the same for West Vancouver.

Hugh, while co-hosting both Sound Advice series, we're in North Vancouver as well as West Vancouver now, since the beginning of this year, still manages to keep everything running (every president should have a Hugh), and also keeps our books in order.

## September AGM

**Monday, September 23, 2019**

**7:00 pm at the Summerhill**

**135 West 15th Street,**

**North Vancouver**

**Guest Speaker**

**Gael Hannan**

**Topic**

**"I'm Hearing as Hard as I Can"  
Gael in an author and Humourist  
and frequent guest speaker at  
CHHA meetings and conferences.  
Gael is author of the book "The Way  
I Hear It—A Life With Hearing  
Loss" Gael is also the 2019 winner of  
the Prestigious CHHA "Golden Ear"  
award for her contribution to the  
Hard of Hearing Community.**

**Everyone Welcome**

**Wheelchair and Hearing**

**Accessible**

**For information call**

**604-926-5222**



Ruth ensures that our meetings are well run, that there are refreshments, a chair for everyone and a record of everyone who attends.

I have started to reach out to our local Municipalities and am hoping to provide a Sound Advice style of program for our municipal workers. More on this in the coming months but suffice it to say my goal is to bring our service and help to those who have the need but not the time to attend one of our Sound Advice sessions. At the moment, I am hoping to begin a pilot program with the City of North Vancouver this fall or winter.

As you can see from the afore-mentioned we still have only 5 directors on the board, and with the AGM coming up, I am hoping that many of you will be speaking with Hugh with the thought of standing for one of the vacant positions. Any organisation that cannot find sufficient volunteers to fill its vacant positions is doomed to fail, and I believe that our branch is much too important to fail. If the services and information that we provide are valuable to you, don't you want to ensure that they remain available to others also.

As you may have heard, CHHA British Columbia Chapter is moving its office from Chilliwack to Vancouver, they will be occupying office space in the new Western Institute for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (WIDHH) building at 4<sup>th</sup> and Quebec. For those of you who take advantage of the services that WIDHH offers, they expect to be up and running at their new location on October 7<sup>th</sup>. I would also like to announce that the WIDHH, as well as moving its head office location, has taken on a new identity. Its new name is now Wavefront Centre for Communication Accessibility.

Another of those "as you may know" items, your Branch, through CHHA National, contributes to an annual scholarship known as the Carrell Hearn Memorial Scholarship. This year we are pleased to tell you that the scholarship was awarded to a North Vancouver student, Laura Harris, who will begin her nursing studies at the University of Ottawa this fall.

So now I end, with a reminder to all to attend our AGM, Monday September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 7:00 p.m. at our usual venue, the Summerhill. As you are aware, after the business is concluded, we will have a special presentation from the incomparable Gael Hannan. You could pay big bucks and not be this well entertained.

So, enjoy the rest of the Summer, and see you at the AGM in September.

Alan Dion

## June Presentation

by Hugh Hetherington

"Hearing Loss is Not the Problem: Coping with Hearing Loss is the Problem" was the title of the presentation given by member, Glen Grigg, Ph.D. at our Summerhill meeting held on June 17<sup>th</sup>. Glen is a professor of psychology at Seattle University in Vancouver. He has a master's degree in counselling with a specialization in relationships. He is a Registered Clinical Counsellor and has a mild hearing loss himself but is in a family where hearing impairments range from mild to profound.

To begin his presentation Glen stated that Hearing Loss would not matter if:

- ◆ We could go about our daily affairs without hearing.
- ◆ We could keep ourselves safe without hearing.
- ◆ We could exchange information without hearing.
- ◆ We could make emotional connections without hearing.

Further, he talked about how hearing helps us to stay connected and engaged—and therefore mentally well. How hearing is a major gateway to the wonderful things our brains do for us. For example, as we age our ears and our brains are different—and can be better. This is important because our relational world relies on our sense of hearing. It's all about facing a few facts:

- ◆ Everyone has some level of hearing impairment sooner or later.
- ◆ Hearing loss is stressful because it is woven into the safety and security in our lives.
- ◆ There are few "correctives" for hearing loss—we need to adapt in order to cope.

Glen talked a bit about our ancestors and their need for good hearing by going back through history and describing the evolution of man from primordial times to the present. He said that a modern human

brain has lots of old “programs” genetically remaining from primitive history. It gets “wired up” early in life and childhood is when we adapt best. Our brain remains “plastic” i.e. changeable throughout our lifespan and although it changes throughout the lifespan, speed and acuity diminish, while at the same time, planning and abstraction improve.

In answering how this relates to hearing, he talked about how when hearing deteriorates, we use more brain power to compensate and we feel less safe and secure. This is a big price to pay and we have two basic choices: adapt to this change or withdraw from life. In the case of hearing loss some core adaptations include using assistive listening devices. Train your brain to use them and practice with them. Change your environment with simple things like turning up the lights and controlling the acoustics. Glen quoted Virginia Satir the late American author and therapist known especially for her approach to family therapy and her pioneering work in the field of family reconstruction therapy. “The problem is not the problem: coping is the problem”.

Our brains can become overworked coping with diminished input because what used to be whole is now in pieces and what used to make sense is now a puzzle. A key example he used was “Immigration Stress”. Little kids who immigrate have little trouble picking up new languages because their brains contain “acquisition devices”. People older than 18 have difficulty fitting in. Those over 30 have to be very deliberate and persistent with their learning. When you are older, your brain is different. Your ability to plan is improved. Emotional vulnerability to depression, negativity and sadness is diminished. Neural processing, but not accuracy slows down. Accuracy remains. Memory decreases. So, the question posed is: Are you an immigrant ...

- ◆ In the world of Hearing Loss?
- ◆ In the world of high-speed information processing?
- ◆ In the world of social media?
- ◆ In the world of digital devices?
- ◆ In the world of higher emotional awareness and better planning combined with a slower brain?

It’s all about adaptive aging, things to do after you have done all you can about “sensory input” – vision and hearing. Key ideas about memory, repetition—saying it over and over doesn’t help much. Deep processing—talking it over, using the information, rewording it—helps. The best kind of memory is spacial; visualize when you memorize. Episodic memory will fade. Some more ideas about memory were talked about, testing yourself really helps. Try driving that new route instead of just studying the map. Write it down without looking it up. This goes against expectation, but every study backs it up. Information without much emotion attached to it gets remembered and then pruned. Information with an emotional tag gets special storage with no “pruning”. It is easier to retrieve and is connected to all the other memories with that same emotion. Another trick is to externalize your memory by writing it down or recording it for playback.

Glen described what he called “scaffolding” to help with learning. Relate what you are learning to something you already know. The younger generation reboot while the older generation tune-up. As a general rule, in a learning situation, two thirds of the information is already known to you. An example of using scaffolding: When you go to live theatre and don’t enjoy it much because of straining to hear or see. Make a scaffold for the play by reading the play before you go, read some reviews, watch some video. The scaffold you build relieves the strain.

In Summing up Glen said that changes in your hearing is about living with the passage of time. Younger brains cope by taking on new information and behaviours. Older brains cope by adapting and innovating existing skills and behaviours. Maturity and wisdom have great value, especially for the community.



New name and location for the Western Institute for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (WIDHH). Their head

office is moving to a new location effective October 7th at 2005 Quebec Street (4th Avenue and Quebec Street) in Vancouver. Their new name is “Wavefront Centre for Communication Accessibility”. Their Willow office at #514-2525 Willow Street and Tri-Cities office at #210-2755 Lougheed Highway remain at their same locations.

## Help Wanted for Website

CHHA-NSB is always looking to increase our connection to our community. We always want to be able to provide up to date info and useful info. We do need help gathering that info as well as passing it on.

We would like help from our members in 5 areas:

1. We hope to have an updated website by fall. We would like to put as much helpful info onto the website as possible with easy access. Do you know of any articles, books, YouTube videos, websites, or people that have interesting or useful info about hearing loss, issues that we can publish or reference on our website? Or are you are interested in writing an article?
2. Can you draw? We are looking for someone who can draw some cartoons and graphics depicting hearing loss. Can you volunteer some time and your talent?
3. We all like to socialize in restaurants and most of us with hearing loss (and a lot of people without hearing loss) are finding those venues much too noisy to enjoy. We are compiling a list of restaurants, coffee shops, eating establishments on the North Shore that have a quiet factor. Can you add to that list?
4. Health and seniors' fairs are held several times a year on the North Shore. We would like to set up a table with brochures, books and info at each fair. We need people to "man" them. Would you have an hour or 2 to hand out brochures and chat with people? The next seniors' fair is Friday, September 6<sup>th</sup> at the West Vancouver Seniors' Activity Centre.
5. And lastly, we welcome new members. Let your friends, family, neighbours and co-workers know about our services.

If you can help in any of these areas please call us at 604-926-5222 or email us at [chha\\_nsb@telus.net](mailto:chha_nsb@telus.net) or speak to one of the board members with the details.

Thank you.

Susan Gelinias

## A Hearing Friendly Home

by Susan Gelinias

A hearing friendly home is a home like any other home: a place to eat, sleep, play and with the occasional chore or maintenance to be done. We want our homes to welcome us, to make us feel comfortable, to be a place we want to be, a safe place, a functional place, a peaceful place where we can hear what we need to hear, a place where everyone participates in conversations and solves issues.

When the home includes one or more people with hearing issues, some extra measures have to be taken in order to make the home comfortable. A hard of hearing person needs to be able to hear clearly. A lot of sounds that a person with normal hearing can disregard are actually noises to a hard of hearing person. Those "noises" can interfere with the Hard of Hearing (HOH) person's ability to hear clearly and can put stress on that person when you want to communicate with them. These noises can create kind of an echo to the HOH person, or they distort the incoming sound, or they can totally erase incoming sounds. They can also disrupt the person's enjoyment when that person wants to watch a TV show, listen to music, radio or an audio book.

The HOH person does have a responsibility to identify and communicate what those noises are. The normal hearing person must respect that those sounds are noises to the HOH person.

Some of those noises are:

background music, TV, running water, fans and air purifiers, echos, noises from the fridge, freezer and other household appliances, vacuums, hair dryers, dogs barking, cats meowing, birds singing, etc., any pet demanding attention, creaks & groans from opening and closing doors (cupboards, cabinets, and so-on), ticking clocks, cuckoo clocks, outside noises: garbage & delivery trucks, construction, lawnmowers and other landscaping tools.

Have a conversation with other household members to identify their "noises". You'll see that even the normal hearing person identifies some of these as noises.

Did you know that when a person is trying to hear conversation, the first syllable or two are critical? If the person misses those sounds, she/he will struggle to understand what's being said. If any noise drowns

out those first syllables, it makes it very, very difficult to be part of the conversation.

Making simple changes to your home can make your life and the lives of those around you much easier.

Start with some basic **House Rules**:

- ◆ If you want to talk to someone, you must go to that person.
- ◆ No calling from another room.
- ◆ You must have the person's attention.
- ◆ You must ensure that there are no noises interfering with your speech and the person's ability to hear you.
- ◆ House members must ensure that they are not creating any unnecessary noise.

Use the basic rules of communicating with a HOH person:

- ◆ Face them; don't chew gum etc when talking to them.
- ◆ Finish your sentence before expecting an answer and let the person finish a sentence before answering them.
- ◆ Only one person speaks at once.
- ◆ Have conversations away from noisy areas.
- ◆ Invite only small groups of people at a time to visit your home.

Then in each room, start with **sources of noise**.

Buy appliances that are "quiet". Check Consumer Reports to identify refrigerators, microwaves, dishwashers, washing machines, clothes dryers, fans, air purifiers, vacuums, hair dryers, etc. that are deemed "quiet". Listen to friends' appliances: do they sound quieter?

Put in soft-close doors and drawers, which close without making a sudden noise.

Check the acoustics in the room: high ceilings create echos and are not great for the HOH person, so don't use this room for family gatherings or group settings; it will probably only work for one on one meetings.

Hardwood floors and tiles are also not great for acoustics. Choose some attractive area rugs to cover those floors, and you'll make the rooms much easier places in which to hear.

Use soft materials for drapes and furnishings: they help reduce echos.

Often closing the drapes in a room will eliminate outside noises.

**Designate rooms** or areas of your house for specific purposes.

Make a space in your home and call it the "conversation room": it does not have a lot of traffic and it can be closed off from the rest of the house or away from "noisy" parts. This is where you can have conversations and enjoy them.

Have a TV or entertainment room: this one should have a door that closes. Encourage the normal hearing person to use headphones to listen to TV and/or the music system. Encourage the HOH person to use a wireless transmitter to send the audio signal to his/her hearing aids. Or turn on the closed captioning and the sound off.

For music, listen on a SmartPhone or iPod using the Bluetooth feature to connect directly to the hearing aids.

Always encourage ongoing conversations about how to eliminate noise and echos in your house.

Check the **lighting** in each room. A HOH person must be able to see a person's face clearly in order to hear the conversation to the best of his/her ability.

Lamps are sometimes better than overhead lighting. Rooms well-lit by natural light are healthy but aren't often ideal for the HOH person. Play around with seating so that the HOH person sits in such a place that each and everyone's face is well lit. The HOH must be able to read people's lips so don't place the other people in front of a window or other bright light. Often closing blinds and drapes and using lamps is more effective.

For the **Safety** of the HOH person on his/her own: there are lots of signalling devices on the market such as First Alert or Silent Call that provide either a visual or tactile signal that the doorbell has sounded, the phone is ringing, the smoke alarm is active or the alarm clock is trying to wake you up. Flashing strobe lights, bed shakers and wearable buzzers are some of the options.

Other ideas: consider having a loop system installed in one of the rooms of the house. Consider investing in the Phonak Roger® system or other type of listening system.

## Vancouver Community College Fall Speechreading Courses

Registration is now open for Fall 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. This Fall, we have two time options and two locations available:

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

Dates: Sept. 16—Dec. 2 (no classes Monday Oct. 14th and Nov. 11th)

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

Dates: Sept. 18—Dec. 4

Location: Silver Harbour Seniors' Activity Centre, North Vancouver

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

Dates: Sept. 17—Dec. 3 Location: Vancouver Community College (Broadway Campus), Vancouver

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.  
(Next West Vancouver Sound Advice is on  
Friday, September 13th because of the  
Seniors' Fair on September 6th)**

**We also meet on the Fourth 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**