



Canadian Hard of Hearing Association North Shore Branch

Published four times a year in March, June,
September and December by CHHA – North Shore Branch,
600 West Queens Road, North Vancouver, B.C. V7N 2L3.
email: chhansb475@gmail.com website: www.chha-nsb.com
Tel: 604-926-5222
Charitable Registration No. 89672 3038 RR0001

Editor: Hugh Hetherington Issue 115 December 2021

Mountain Ear

From the desk of the President

Hi Everyone,



I think that I am a little more “up” than I was in my last message, I’m even back to the gym. However, with that comes terrible pain in my back where I seemed to have done a little early damage after being so inactive for so long. Well, pills and creams will help me

with a speedy recovery, and nothing feels as good as sitting in the hot tub!

If you’re reading this, then you have survived Covid, at least so far, and although we are not out of the woods yet, I think that we can look ahead with a little optimism. It’s not yet the end of the world.

Now that Halloween is done for another year, time for a review. We decided to have candies for as many as up to 100 little people. In the past we had had as few as only four (4), and we have run out of treats after over 100 kids. So, there we were, armed with two large boxes of goodies and right in the middle of dinner the doorbell rings. So, off I go to be visited by two of the cutest little guys (arent they all?) with big baskets.

Two down, and more to go. Back to dinner, and guess what, the doorbell rings! So, up I get again,

February Presentation

Monday, February 21, 2022

7:00 pm via Zoom

Special Presentation

Sound Advice

With Flo Spratt and
Hugh Hetherington

Hearing Loss Workshop—Come
and Join us for Answers to your
Hearing Loss Questions

For information call
604-926-5222

To request a link to join
the session please send
an email to:
chhansb475@gmail.com

funny how my wife always lets me do it, actually, she gets me to do it (but I'm not complaining), and another two little darlings. Back to dinner, and this time I get to finish eating. The dishes get done, the news comes on the television, and after a little while I go to check the doorbell. Everything is working.

By 7:30 when we decided to go out for a walk, it was a beautiful evening, I realized that I was going to have enough chocolates to last beyond Xmas, not one more doorbell. Candies, anybody??

Since the last time that I wrote we have had our Annual General Meeting, hopefully you took it in. Immediately following the meeting we had a guest speaker, Annwen Loverin, the Executive Director of Silver Harbour Seniors' Centre. Annwen gave an interesting talk on both the new Silver Harbour and on how the Centre meets its responsibilities to the North Vancouver Seniors, its constituency. It was very interesting to get this look into our future. You can read Hugh's report on it in this newsletter.

Nothing to do with the subject of hearing, but have you been following along with all the construction this side of the 2nd Narrows Bridge. I'm not sure how much difference all of this will make to commuting times, but it sure is interesting. Also, there are a lot of new, interesting walks that have been opened up, especially around the creek and the canyon. After that last "great" rainfall, walking along there, even "deaf, old me" could hear the water rushing noisily down the river.

I'm often told by people who read my message that they have enjoyed reading them, and, while appreciated, I am not quite sure what and why they are enjoyed. I would appreciate it if, assuming that you enjoy my message, you would drop a line and let me know why. The corollary to this is to get you to give me some suggestions as to what you might like included. Writing this little column can sometimes be very difficult, not really knowing what any of you would really be interested to hear. So, help, please. Now that Fall is well and truly here, and the clocks have gone back, and it is so dark in the mornings, just a last note to tell you to keep warm, bundled up, get your Flu shot and Covid booster when offered, keep out of harm's way and keep well.

All the best

Alan

Annual General Meeting and Presentation

By Hugh Hetherington

Our Annual General Meeting was held on September 20th at 7:00 PM on Zoom. There were 13 members and 2 guests present. At the meeting the incumbent Board was re-elected for another year. Alan Dion, President, Susan Gelinias, Vice President and Website Coordinator, Hugh Hetherington, Treasurer, Doug Muir, Recording Secretary, Deborah Maloon, Director and Clinic Liaison, Ron Chapman and Ruth Lapointe remain Directors-at-Large. The annual report, financial report and budget for 2021-2022 were all approved and adopted by the members present.

Following the AGM at 7:30, Annwen Loverin, Executive Director of Silver Harbour Seniors' Centre joined the meeting to give us a presentation entitled Seniors' Needs During Covid-19 and Silver Harbour's Ongoing Role. Rising to the challenge meant looking at the issues facing seniors during the pandemic. These included, transportation, isolation, personal connection, visibility, anxiety, food security and technology gaps. Flexible funding was essential and many agencies took on more responsibility than usual to reach out to seniors.

A North Shore Seniors Working Group was originally convened by the three North Shore Municipalities. It was comprised of 17 organizations and agencies in co-planning senior's services and programs. This involved outreach in a number of ways, virtual programming and services, food services, transportation and housing. Silver Harbour's role during the pandemic consisted of about 35 of the typically 70 programs and services with about 45% of their pre-COVID participation numbers. In working with other community organizations, they worked to reduce barriers to participation for immigrant seniors and for those with mobility barriers. They provided input into community plans and also into academic and community research.

Annwen provided us with a great deal of detail in all of the above and then followed this part of her presentation with information about the planning of a new building for Silver Harbour. This is being planned in conjunction with the replacement of the Harry Jerome Community Centre. The current Harry



Jerome Community Centre will be closing down at the end of this year and rebuilt on the north side of 23rd Street between Lonsdale Avenue and St. Georges Street. The plans are to have it open again in 2025. Silver Harbour will remain open in its current location. Annwen illustrated her presentation with proposed floor plans for both the new Harry Jerome Centre and the new Silver Harbour Centre which is shown above.

The following article is reprinted here with permission from Neil Bauman, Ph.D. (Dr. Neil), owns the Center for Hearing Loss Help in Lynden, WA. (<https://hearinglosshelp.com>). He also is the owner/curator of The Hearing Aid Museum (<https://hearingaidmuseum.com>) currently also in Lynden, WA. You can see more pictures/descriptions of the Vactuphone in the Hearing Aid Museum at <https://hearingaidmuseum.com/gallery/Vacuum%20Tube/OtherMakes/info/vactuphone.htm>

The 100th Anniversary of the World's First Electronic Hearing Aid

By Neil G. Bauman, Ph.D



October, 2021 marks the 100th anniversary of the release of the world's first commercial electronic hearing aid. Acoustic ear trumpets had been around since the mid 1700s. Carbon (electric) hearing aids, which used batteries, had come out in 1898, but truly electronic hearing aids had to await the development of the triode vacuum tube.

Naval engineer, Earl C. Hanson of Washington, D.C. invented and patented the first vacuum-tube hearing

aid. He filed a patent for it on June 11, 1919 and the US patent office issued patent number 1,343,717 for it on June 15, 1920. (Here is a simplified link to view the original patent papers: <https://tinyurl.com/j9e72je8>.)

Named the “Vactuphone”, this first vacuum-tube hearing aid derived its name from a contraction of the words “VACuum TUBE telePHONE”. It was a collaborative effort by two companies—the Western Electric Co., Inc. of Kearny, NJ, which manufactured it, and the Globe Phone Manufacturing Company of Reading, MA which distributed it

The Vactuphone looked much like a box camera of the day. This was deliberate. Manufacturers often deliberately designed early lunch-box-sized hearing aids to look like box cameras so people wouldn't know you were hard of hearing. This was because the stigma of being hard of hearing was alive and well back then, just as it had been before then, and has been since that time.

Actually, the Vactuphone was a bit bigger than the typical box cameras of the day, measuring 7.25” wide by 4” deep by 7.5” high (18.4 x 10.1 x 19.1 cm). It weighed 3 lb, 14 oz. (1.76 kg.) without the batteries. With the batteries it weighed a whopping 7 pounds (3.2 kg.).



All vacuum-tube hearing aids required two batteries—a 1.5 volt “A” battery to heat the tube filaments, and a higher-voltage “B” battery to provide the plate current.

The Vactuphone used a 1½ volt No. 6 dry cell for the “A” battery, and a 24 volt “B” battery. (This was a bit unusual, as most early vacuum-tube hearing aids used 45 volt “B” batteries). The whole bottom of the Vactuphone case was the “door” to access the battery compartment.

The Vactuphone consisted of four basic components—an amplifier, microphone, headphone and batteries—all contained in a faux-leather-covered wooden box. The amplifier used a single, triode vacuum-tube. Triode vacuum tubes consisted of three elements—a filament, grid and plate. The tube used



in the Vactuphone was the Western Electric 215A

“peanut” tube, but boy, what a vacuum tube! The Hearing Aid Museum (hearingaidmuseum.com) has not only one, but two of these venerable hearing aids, and guess what? Those 100-year-old vacuum tubes are still working today!

Although the patent papers described a two-vacuum-tube amplifier, the two-vacuum-tube version was never produced.



The microphone was similar to the standard carbon-shot (carbon ball) microphones used in many carbon hearing aids of the time. Note that carbon microphones had to be kept somewhat vertical.

If laid on their backs (or fronts), they wouldn't work as the carbon shot then wouldn't make contact with the two electrodes to allow current to flow.

The output from the amplifier went to a single headphone that was mounted on a headband.

Like many of the carbon hearing aids that preceded it, the Vactuphone was a transportable desktop unit, meant to be carried to where it would be used, rather than using it while moving around. You placed it on a desk or table with the microphone facing the person to whom you were talking. (Note that wearable hearing aids, meant to be used all the time whether moving or stationary, didn't appear until 13 years later in 1934.)

The Vactuphone was easy to use since there was only a single control—an on-off switch/volume control—mounted on the opposite side of the case from the microphone so you could easily control the volume without disturbing the way the microphone was facing.

To access the “secret” vacuum tube compartment hidden behind a spring-loaded trap door on the right end of the Vactuphone, you simply pressed the hidden “button” located near the top right corner.



Sound quality wasn't the best. Speech sounded much like the scratchy, thin sounds produced

by early gramophone record players, but with a “boomy” quality like talking in a barrel.

Back in 1921, the Vactuphone sold for \$135.00. That would be equivalent to \$2,058.96 in today's econ-

omy due to inflation over the past 100 years. So its price was more or less in line with what we pay for hearing aids today.

However, back then, unlike today, batteries were quite expensive so purchasing and operating this hearing aid was beyond the reach of many people. Fortunately, if they couldn't afford a fancy new vacuum-tube hearing aid, they could still purchase various styles of ear trumpets for between \$3.00 and \$8.00, or one of the many carbon hearing aids for around \$4.00 to \$11.00.

This article is from Gael Hannan's blog and was originally published on the website hearinghealthmatters.org. Reprinted here with permission.

A HoH's Trip List: Hearing Essentials

By Gael Hannan

The Hearing Husband and I seem to get antsy if we're in one place for too long. Maybe we just get bored with too much togetherness and decide we need to 'see the family', hit the open road and climb a few hills.

This means we're frequently packing and unpacking and packing again. You'd think we'd have nailed the list of things to go in the suitcase. You also might correctly guess that on each and every trip something 'important' gets left behind. Often it's just “*oh shoot, I forgot to bring my gray running shoes.*” No real panic.

But if you're a HoH like me – someone with hearing loss – and the left-behind item is essential to communication, that's cause to break out in a sweat, yell OMG, and start tearing through every bag in the hope that you've simply put it in the wrong place.

At Christmas time, while visiting family in California, I discovered I didn't have the right wax guards for one of my hearing aids. This might not set your heart thumping, but if I try to use a wax guard not designed for my hearing aid, it might fall out in my ear, adhere to my ear drum and require professional help getting it out. Been there, done that, never again thank you. Or, I could just go without the wax guard for a while and hope that not too much ka-ka works its way into my hearing aid and cause inner damage. Also been there, done that, no way thanks.

I phoned several clinics in the San Jose vicinity and finally found one a few miles away that carried my brand. I was almost crying with gratitude and relief as I picked them up – always a bit embarrassing in front of strangers.

So now, as we prepare to head off in our trusty fifth wheel, *Flag*, I've got a hearing travel checklist that, before we leave, will be triple-checked. You know, like your passport – you never stop fingering it until you've made it through customs without being arrested.



An artistic display of Some of the stuff

This is what I'm taking:

* Hearing Aids (2): I always take a backup hearing aid when I travel. Actually, I wear each of these hearing aids for different reasons, so both are essential.

* Cochlear Implant:

Sound processor

Extra hair clip

Remote Assistant

Phone clip

MiniMic2 (an all-purpose must have – for example, the Hearing Husband can talk into this while we're hiking and I don't have crane my neck to read his lips, thus perhaps falling off the trail cliff.)

Connector cable (for iPhone and iPad and computer) Charger for c/, d/ and e/. Very important things simply don't work if they're not charged. No amount of yelling will change this.

Other bits of cord that I can never figure out what they do, but don't want to leave them behind just in case.

- * Batteries (many, many packages – I'll be away for 3 months)
 - * Size 312 for one hearing aid
 - * Size 13 for the other
 - * Size 675 for the Sound Processor
- * Smartphone: Connects me to everything! Along with the CI's remote assistant, an app allows me to use the MiniMic to listen to my phone and iPad.
- * Neckloop that also lets me to listen via telecoil on both my hearing aid and cochlear implant.
- * Information booklets for my cochlear implant. The internet has all the info I need, but you just feel better having the paper copy, you know? Power outages.
- * Secret storage place for websites, passwords, technology serial numbers, and other important stuff if I need to contact any of the manufacturers.
- * Cleaning supplies for all hearing aids and sound processors.
- * Drying aids: one electric one for the cochlear implant and a more portable, non-electric one perfect for hearing aids.

And so, the HoH hits the road again. This time, well-armed with all the necessary technology and doo-dads, which I can keep charged in *Flag*, I plan on having a dazzling and connected few weeks traveling the American western wilderness. Unless there's that one thing that I forgot....

Living Successfully with Hearing Loss

Sometimes we need to search for brightness and positivity to get us through challenging times.

COVID has certainly provided challenging times! However, if it wasn't for COVID, I would not have made the leap to teaching the Living Successfully with Hearing Loss (previously known as Speechreading) course online. The first term came with a steep learning curve - how many people knew about and used Zoom before March of 2020?!? Now though, with 5 terms of online teaching under my

belt, I am grateful that I was pushed to investigate this alternative. While technology can be challenging at times, there are many benefits to this new delivery system. We know masks make communication harder for everyone. The ability to communicate mask-free on Zoom is a blessing these days. Participants can connect and set their audio in a way that works for them, and we even have automated captioning to help us along. We don't have to schedule travel time, search for parking, or battle inclement weather. Course material is provided in advance each week online as well - so you can review it in your own time, as often as you'd like, before our small group discussions on Zoom. We have participants now from all across Canada! You no longer have to live close by to participate.

We didn't plan this challenge, but we can reap the benefits. We will get back to face-to-face courses in the future, but for now, we have a wonderful opportunity to experience. We are offering online courses for the January term through Vancouver Community College (VCC) with the following schedule (provided we have sufficient interest). The planned Zoom times are:

Level 1

Tuesdays, 1pm, from January 11 - March 29

Tuesdays, 7pm, from January 11 - March 29

Level 2

Wednesdays, 1pm, from January 12 - March 30

Wednesdays, 7pm, from January 12 - March 30

We meet once per week for 12 weeks. The current cost of the course (tuition and applicable college fees) is around \$285. If you are 65 or older when the course begins, you can apply for a senior tuition waiver - the remaining fees are about \$95. You can find more information about the courses here: Level 1 (<https://vcc.ca/courses/dhhe-0618/>) and Level 2 (<https://vcc.ca/courses/dhhe-0619/>).

Please contact me if you have questions or would like to register for the course. I'd love to tell you more about them and why you (and a friend or family member) should join us!

Lisa Dillon Edgett, Ph.D., RAUD, Aud(C)
Vancouver Community College
Email: ldillonedgett@vcc.ca or leave a message at 604-871-7348.

Sound Advice

**Presented by:
The Canadian Hard of Hearing
Association
North Shore Branch**

**When we meet, we discuss topics
and issues dealing with
hearing loss. We look forward to
seeing you there. »**

**West Vancouver Seniors' Centre
sessions and Silver Harbour sessions
are now being held online as Zoom
meetings. West Vancouver on the
First Friday of each month and
Silver Harbour on the last Monday
of each month both at 10:00AM.**

**To receive an invitation to join
either meeting send an email to
chansb475@gmail.com and you will be
added to the list for both. You are
welcome to join either meeting or both
if you desire.**

(No meetings in July and August)

**Subjects to be addressed include:
Technology;
About Speechreading;
Expert Coping Strategies;
Improving Hearing Environments**

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