



# Canadian Hard of Hearing Association North Shore Branch

Published four times a year in March, June,  
September and December by CHHA – North Shore Branch,  
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Editor: Hugh Hetherington Issue 113 June 2021

## Mountain Ear

### From the Desk of the President

Is that a light that I see at the end of the tunnel? Boy, I hope it's not a train heading this way, because



we've been in this tunnel quite long enough, thank you. Besides, I can see lights, not sure if I can hear the train, until it's too late, that is.

Two short, and conflicting, thoughts on this pandemic. Who would have thought that it would have lasted so long, and, secondly, isn't it amazing how quickly the scientists have worked to get us on the road to recovery?

Well, as this is not a medical journal, I'll try to avoid this subject for the balance of my letter.

Did you catch our North Shore Branch April presentation with Lisa Dillon Edgett, on Zoom. If you didn't, then I'm sorry to tell you that you missed an extremely interesting, informational, educational and entertaining session. You can tell from the fact that I used four (4) positive adjectives that I really enjoyed the talk. Hugh wrote up a great summary for the newsletter on page 2 for those who missed it.

It's interesting how many really great presenters we have in our hard of hearing community. As usual, this is also a plug for our talks, Sound Advice meetings, as well as all things CHHA!

Speaking of things CHHA, I had occasion to spend 4 or 5 hours at Lions Gate Hospital this past week, nothing serious, just a small accident, I'm fine. However, just a reminder, whenever I'm out of the

### June Presentation

Monday, June 21, 2021  
7:00 pm Via Zoom

### Guest Speaker

**Lorienne Jenstad, Ph.D.,  
Associate Professor  
School of Audiology & Speech  
Sciences at U.B.C.**

**Topic: What's Up Doc?  
"What Consumers want  
their Audiologist to Ex-  
plain to Them During  
Hearing Aid Verification"**

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house I wear an “I’m Hard of Hearing” button on my lapel. Boy, this really helped in communication with ALL levels of staff and care givers at the hospital. If you don’t have a button and would like one, send an email or letter, or call the CHHA office to get one, they really make a difference. (Our contact information is in the header of this newsletter).

On page 1 of this newsletter, you’ll find the details on the June Zoom meeting. We have invited Lorraine Jenstad from the UBC School of Audiology to talk about how your audiologist makes sure your hearing aids are working right for you. She will also talk about a recent research project on this same subject. Don’t forget to register at [chha\\_nsb@telus.net](mailto:chha_nsb@telus.net), and I’ll see you there.

So, I guess it’s fair to say that another event rapidly coming down the tracks is the start of Summer. It’s my favourite season. I don’t really like snow, never been fond of skiing and soccer is my winter sport, not hockey. But I like sunshine (and lollipops) and enjoying the warmth over my body. It’s the one season that you don’t really need to get “dressed up” for.

I enjoy barbequing, do you? I wonder if anyone has a recipe for a first class bbq sauce that they would like to share. Must have no garlic though, as I’m allergic to it. Anything that makes the cut will get full mention in the “Fall” newsletter, I may even make it and invite you over to judge how well I’ve done, Dr. Henry permitting.

Do you have Crave TV. Unfortunately, I don’t. The reason that I mention it is that this weekend (mid-May) the movie “Sound of Metal” previews on the TV. From what I’ve read, and the trailers that I have seen, it seems to be a movie that none of us should miss. Let me know if you enjoyed it.

Another thing coming along very soon, June 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> to be exact, is the CHHA National Conference. There are a lot of very interesting presentations being put on, all via Zoom. If you are at all interested, you will find some details and how to register on page 5.

That’s about all for now, enjoy your summer, as best you can. Remember, be safe, be kind, etc. and hug the loved ones that you can.

Til Next Time,

Alan

## April Presentation

by Hugh Hetherington

On the 19<sup>th</sup> of April the subject of our Zoom meeting was “Filling Your Communication Toolbox” presented by Lisa Dillon Edgett, Ph.D., RAUD, Aud (C), instructor in the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Department at Vancouver Community College (VCC). The purpose of Lisa’s presentation was to help you discover the communication tools that you have at your disposal to help you dealing with your hearing loss and improving your communication skills.

Lisa’s goal was to get you to think about some of the tools that are important and worthwhile to have as options in order to communicate more effectively. She started out by stressing the importance of starting with a good foundation. That means getting the best out of your knowledge, technology and your support system, meaning your family, friends and others you associate with on a regular basis. By technology, Lisa meant your hearing aids, cochlear implants and/or any other devices that you rely on to communicate. Getting the best out of these provides you with the foundation you need to work on developing other strategies and skills that are important to help reduce the impact of hearing loss and associated stress and other issues that can complicate our lives.

Knowledge about your hearing loss is also important so that you can communicate to others your special needs that are so important in helping you cope on a daily basis. When others understand your circumstances and needs you will find that they are willing to help. After all, communication is a two-way street and by helping you they also help themselves in enhancing your mutual conversations.

Lisa also stressed how important it is to keep a positive attitude. It takes considerable effort to stay engaged and connected to people and events. Nobody wants to sit by themselves and become isolated. It is just not in human nature. Having a positive attitude helps when you look at a situation as a challenge to be solved rather than dreading, avoiding, or complaining about it. And the bonus is that a positive attitude encourages others to help and support you.

Another tool is speechreading. Teaching this skill is Lisa's specialty. Most of us already do this naturally. However, Lisa's approach is to stress that speechreading is more than just trying to read lips. It involves integrating what you hear, what you see on the lips, facial expressions, body language, context or what you know about the topic, people, and situation at hand. When all of this is factored into your conversations, what is happening is that you are activating additional areas of the brain than with just speechreading alone. Only 30-40% of speech sound can be seen on the lips. The other components are to fill in the rest of the "puzzle" to give you as complete a picture as possible.

Covid masks in our present day situation have also made speechreading very difficult. There are tools to help with this and Lisa talked about cell phone speech-to-text apps, such as, Otter and Ava to help in very challenging situations. (Editor's note: I included an article in our March newsletter on this topic)

Other factors that have an impact on conversations are also important to consider. Lisa puts these into four categories: environment, speaker, listener and message. She feels that a good understanding of these factors is important for at least two reasons. The first is so that you can set realistic expectations for yourself AND secondly, so that you can help to educate others about such things as selective hearing. With this, Lisa means to help dispel false notions, for example, statements like "you could hear me yesterday, why can't you hear me today?"

Looking at the other factors:

Environment involves noise, lighting, distance, comfort, numbers of people and being in the same room when trying to communicate.

Speaker involves how do they communicate: too fast, too quiet, mumblers, covered mouths or whether they move their lips when speaking.

Listener involves factors that are more to you than just your hearing loss. They include, health, interest, assertiveness, amount of energy and eyesight.

Message involves such things as social versus transactional, familiar versus unfamiliar topic and sup-

porting evidence like facial expressions, gesture or written material that is provided. Consider also what you can change, what do you have to deal with, the type of situation, positive, challenging or tolerable.

Lisa also talked about communication strategies. She mentioned alternatives to using the most common "Pardon? or Sorry?" like responses. She suggested some different and more effective methods of requesting a repeat, such as, ask a specific question, summarize what you heard, ask the person to use different words or say it in another way. It may also be that you need to ask for the topic of the conversation to help your understanding of what's being talked about.

Lisa talked a lot about assertive behaviour. It's important to understand what this means. To Lisa, assertive behaviour means communicating clearly and honestly. When you behave assertively, you ask for what you need, but you also consider the needs and feelings of others. The key components of behaving assertively are courtesy through words, tone of voice, and facial expressions. Also give directions on what you would like them to change and to include an explanation why. Asking for accommodations from others may make some people feel uncomfortable or vulnerable – but if you can develop the courage to make it a habit, others may also share what they need from you – and this might lead to more authentic relationships.

Lisa also talked about the importance of giving positive feedback when you are helped by others. Tell them about it, explain why. Everyone appreciates positive feedback. It lets them know that their efforts have made a difference. It makes it much more likely that they will make that effort again and encourage them to make that same effort for others in similar circumstances.

In speaking about humour, Lisa said that she realizes that hearing loss is not funny, or at least not always. It is more often aggravating, frustrating and challenging. Moving forward is not always easy or possible when you are angry. Humour can be a good coping mechanism. It can lighten the mood, ease any tension and help connect you to others. Share stories about miscommunications. Tell people, "you're not going to believe what I thought you

said.” Humour can also help people to see what you are dealing with. It can be educational for them.

In finishing her presentation, Lisa talked about having realistic expectations, knowing what you can manage at any given time. Lisa also mentioned communicating about communications. By this she meant that when you are living in a family where there is hearing loss it is important that everyone understands what is important. Know the rules about communication. Share your thoughts and feelings and work on the problems together. Lisa’s final words were about what she calls “Building your ‘crew.’” It means using all the tools spoken about, positive attitude, assertive behaviour, humour, etc. to build your support team or “crew” who will support you in your communication efforts. You are not alone. Share your knowledge with others in similar circumstances. As Lisa put it, find your crew and share your tools. You might also want to enroll in one of Lisa’s “Living Successfully with Hearing Loss” courses. There is much more to learn and practice to make these tools become second nature in your daily life.

Thank you Lisa for a very important presentation. There is more information about Lisa’s upcoming Fall courses on page 6 in this newsletter. You can also find out more about the VCC “Living Successfully with Hearing Loss” at <https://vcc.ca/courses/dhhe-0618/>

## My Toolbox

by Meagan Hirvonen

Greetings to everyone at CHHA, hope you are all doing well and keeping safe. As a new member, I am looking forward to getting to know all of you, and joining in our collective life journey as deaf, deafened, or hard of hearing individuals.

To briefly introduce myself, nearly 48 years ago I was born with a profound-severe, sensori-neural hearing loss. I wore hearing aids until six years ago, when I received a cochlear implant for my left ear. I am fluent in both speech and ASL and use both interchangeably depending on my environment.

In 1997 I obtained a BA degree in Psychology at the U of A, then in 2007, changed my career path to follow my heart and earned a Journeyman ticket & Red Seal Certificate in Cabinet Making at NAIT. For a period of 13 years, I worked as a cabinetmaker, and as a sole proprietor for 4 years, doing custom woodwork. Overall, this was a very intense and challenging period of time in my life, which I am most proud of in terms of personal achievement and satisfaction. Unfortunately In 2016, a serious back injury forced an early retirement from cabinetmaking, and a mid-life career change. I still enjoy woodworking on the side at home, though miss the regular experience of laboring long hours over a complicated project and seeing it come to shape.

The apprenticeship process, and working in busy, noisy, often multi-lingual woodshops, have ingrained some essential skills on how to successfully level the playing field, with regards to accessibility and communication. Along with my wooden toolbox of hand tools, of equal importance to me is my mental toolbox. I know these will carry me through to the next life phase. This toolbox is always changing and expanding as my life and circumstances change. My favorite tools include technology, knowing my limits, the written word and being kind to myself.

### Technology

Gone are the days of relying on a limited array of clunky, simplistic and expensive equipment to facilitate phone calls, conversations, or wake up in the morning! One new feature I’ve added recently to my toolbox is the use of voice-to-text software to transcribe phone messages and non-captioned meetings. It’s best to research the available apps and software, and find one that best fits your phone type, budget, and usage rate. Some apps to consider are: Google Live Transcribe, Ava, Microsoft Translator, and Web Captioner.

These apps are very easy to use and a huge help in understanding speech. If I can use them so can you, embrace the technology!

### Know your limits & take breaks

Managing my energy and eye-work during social interactions is important. Taking frequent micro breaks when needed is a strategy that often gets forgotten, especially when in the thick of things. How-

ever, it is a vital strategy for restoring and maintaining both mental and physical energy. This can be as simple as getting a glass of water, gazing at something far away to refocus the eyes, and taking time to stretch my arms and neck. Take the physical break you required to release tension, refresh the mind and restore energy.

Get the written word

Getting information in writing as much as possible, before and during an event, goes a long way to participating more efficiently. This can include names, notes by someone else, brochures, meeting outlines. Voice recognition technology can also be used to record the conversations for review later, if no one is available. Always feel free to ask for a copy of the meeting minutes and agenda.

The most important tool in my box is Self Loving-Kindness

There will be times when technology fails, no information is available, tiredness or stress will hamper your skills, and you will feel outside the social bubble, and not in. Remembering to breathe, and to practice self loving -- kindness is, for me, the best tool here. It helps me to get through tough moments with grace, and is the perfect antidote to stress and anxiety.

I have only mentioned a few of my favorite tools, the list is always growing and adapting. Let us all work together and share experiences to help expand our tool boxes collectively. This is one of the best parts of being in this group with each and every one of you.

Kind Regards,

Meagan Hirvinen

## Rising Postage Costs

If you are receiving a printed version of this newsletter by mail and would be willing to receive it by email instead, Please send an email to [chha\\_nsb@telus.net](mailto:chha_nsb@telus.net) with Newsletter on the subject line and we will add your email address to our email list, Thank You!

## CHHA National Conference June 2—June 3, 2021

The 2021 National Educational Conference will be held June 2 and 3, from 12-6 PM (EST). This special project will host a variety of educational sessions and networking opportunities to help strengthen the connection within the hearing loss community from across Canada.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the 2020 conference could not take place in Saskatchewan as originally planned, for 2021 they are bringing some of Saskatoon to guests with the theme for this year as: Prairie Spirit: 'Bringing some Saskatoon to you.'

Featured at the conference is headlining guest speaker Justin Osmond, the son of Osmonds lead singer and bassist, Merrill Osmond, who was diagnosed with 90% hearing loss when he was two years old. Along with, author and actor Gael Hannan and cochlear implant recipient and race car driver and coach Kris Martin

Beside our headlining speakers, the National Conference will also offer eight programming sessions highlighting the work of Dr. April Pike and Anne Griffin, Dr. Marshall Chasin, Penn State University Professor Saeed Abdullah, Alison Butler, Abby Stonehouse, Sheila Serup with Ruth Warick and Dorota Simpson.

To view the conference website, full agenda or for registration information, please visit: [CHHA 2021 Virtual Conference \(chhaconference.ca\)](http://CHHA2021VirtualConference(chhaconference.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.

## Living Successfully with Hearing Loss

Living Successfully with Hearing Loss classes through Vancouver Community College are scheduled for online delivery for the Fall 2021 semester. Courses will have a course website to access the material and a weekly Zoom meeting to review, discuss, and practice the material. Classes meet once per week for 12 weeks. Class sizes are limited to 8 people. Friends and family members are also encouraged to register! Find out more here: <https://vcc.ca/courses/dhhe-0618/>

### Living Successfully with Hearing Loss, Level 1

Tuesdays, 1 pm, from Sept. 14 to Nov. 30

Tuesdays, 7 pm, from Sept. 14 to Nov. 30

### Living Successfully with Hearing Loss, Level 2

Wednesdays, 1 pm, Sept. 15 to Dec. 1

Wednesdays, 7 pm, Sept. 15 to Dec. 1

If you are interested, have questions, or want to register, please email Lisa Dillon Edgett at [ldillonedgett@vcc.ca](mailto:ldillonedgett@vcc.ca)

## 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 [chha\\_nsb@telus.net](mailto:chha_nsb@telus.net) 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**