



Canadian Hard of Hearing Association North Shore Branch

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September and December by CHHA – North Shore Branch,
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Editor: Hugh Hetherington Issue 118 Sept. 2022

Mountain Ear

From the Desk of the President

Hi Everyone,



So, here I am again, ready to update you on my “hearing aid adventures” and other goings on, but, before I do I have some important news.

This will be my last letter to you as President, as I have given my notice to the Board that I will no longer be able to serve in

this position.

I will remain on the board, but there are too many “things” demanding my time, as well as other pressures adding stress to my life, that something had to give. It has been a privilege to serve the interests of the Hard of Hearing Community, and I hope that my term will be remembered fondly.

Covid impacted my goals severely, but hopefully, whoever takes over the reins will find the sailing much smoother from now on.

So, next on my literary offering are my comments on the weather. It’s a truism that the weather is never “right”. It’s too hot or too cold, wet or dry, foggy or damp or whatever, we’re easily upset by the subject and never at a loss for a comment. But, never the less, it’s been too hot, don’t you agree? I’m finding it harder every year to accommodate this heat, and, at

the same time it’s been getting hotter and for longer. As I said, never happy.

Problem is, everybody complains about the weather, but nobody does anything about it!

Annual General Meeting

Monday, September 19, 2022

7:00 pm Via Zoom

Guest Speaker

Gael Hannan

Topic:

“Getting Better at Hearing Loss”

(Also see page 5)

For information call

604-926-5222

To request an invitation to join this Zoom meeting please email chhansb475@gmail.com

One of the problems that I experience regarding the weather is how I handle covid. I want to get away, somewhere near a beach, swimming pool and a swim up bar, but, I don't want to fly, not yet, anyway. I don't like wearing a mask. I think that they are still mandatory on a plane or at the airport, and anyway, they are a good idea, so I feel stuck. Still exploring another cruise, but options from Vancouver are limited if you are not flying.

Anyway, I will continue to use a mask when indoors in public places, where there are lots of people happy, probably unknowingly, ready to share their germs.

So, I can hear you thinking, what about your hearing aids. Well, after trying different brands and models,, all of which were excellent hearing aids, I've pretty well made up my mind, but, I have to say that I have had to compromise. Because of where I live, I decided to keep to vendors local to where I live. I wanted to make sure that service, when needed, was available by foot. The Hearing Aid Providers (HAPs) in this area have all shown professionalism and patience. We are well served here on the North Shore. NexGen on Lonsdale caught me in my least disagreeable mood and have helped me to come to a decision.

I have chosen the Phonak Paradise. I chose not to go for the rechargeable battery as I felt it left me too exposed to power outage. With a changeable battery I can just pop it in. I also decided against waterproof as, although a desirable feature, it necessitates having the rechargeables. I have included the tele-coil as I need that. I am somewhat surprised and disappointed by all manufacturers' seeming reluctance to include this feature as standard.

In the past I have utilized landline telephones that paired with my hearing aids. These worked very well, but again, I am disappointed that they are not available with the Paradise. I will be looking at other technological alternatives to help me with the landline in my home. I know there are options available out there.

So, there you have it.

Thank you for letting me into your home, and your mind, while I've been busy trying to keep mine straight. As a last point, I would like to thank the other members of our CHHA Board for so patiently and politely allowing me to "sit at the head of table".

And, to you, dear reader, your Board needs all of your support. It also needs new, additional life. Please give careful consideration to joining, as, as of this AGM, Monday September 19th, our Board will be at least one member short.

Thank you again for reading my scribbles

Alan

The Many Faces of Hyperacusis

By Hugh Hetherington



On June 20, 2022, our evening guest speaker was Neil Bauman, Ph.D. who gave us a presentation with the title "The Many Faces of Hyperacusis." Neil is the owner of the website hearinglosshelp.com. He is also the author of numerous books on many aspects of hearing loss. This presentation was based on his recently updated book "Hypersensitive to Sound?" (fourth edition). This book, as well as, many of his other books on hearing loss can be purchased from his website.

In his presentation, Neil spoke on what he termed "The Seven Faces of Hyperacusis".

Loudness Hyperacusis

Amplification Hyperacusis

Annoyance Hyperacusis (Misophonia)

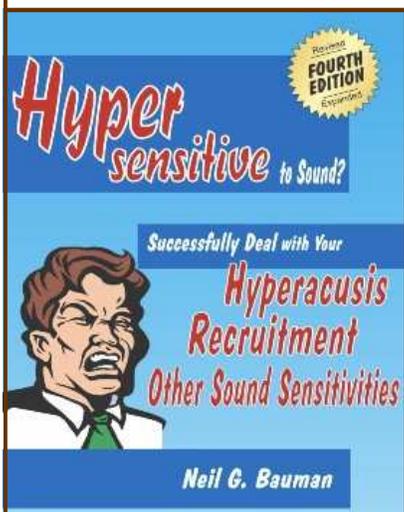
Fear Hyperacusis (Phonophobia)

Pain Hyperacusis

Vestibular (balance) Hyperacusis

Conductive Hyperacusis

His book devotes a number of chapters to each of these types of hyperacusis, dealing with descriptions, causes and treatments. Neil found it difficult to condense a 500 plus page book down to a one hour presentation and dealt mainly with the most



common type, loudness hyperacusis. In the talk he touches on each of the other types so as to help you determine if you are experiencing any of the other less common types.

In defining hyperacusis, Neil explained that it comes from the Greek word “hyper” meaning “over” or “above”

and the Greek word “akousis” meaning “hearing”. In other words it literally means “better than normal hearing”. In our context, it means, of course, “hypersensitive to sounds”.

In explaining its effect, Neil explained that the dynamic range for a person with normal hearing is measured from 0 db (the softest sound) to 120 db (loudest sound our ears can tolerate). In a person experiencing hyperacusis this dynamic range may be considerably reduced, in some cases ranging between 0 db and 70 db or less. The person will experience unpleasant reaction or pain with sounds louder than the upper threshold.

Loudness Hyperacusis

Symptoms of loudness hyperacusis experienced in those with the condition:

Reduced sound tolerance (100%)

Tinnitus (92%)

Feeling of fullness or ears blocked

(50%)

Hearing loss (49%)

Headaches (40%)

Ear Pain (28%)

Common causes of loudness hyperacusis:

Exposing ears to sudden loud sounds (50% to 60%)

Loud music (30%)

Ototoxic drugs (?)

In determining how long hyperacusis might last can depend on whether you continue to expose your ears to loud sounds and also on your emotional makeup. It may feel like the volume control is stuck on high. It may cause you to experience anxiety and depression or even feel totally isolated from life.

Is loudness hyperacusis treatable? Neil says to take heart—loudness hyperacusis is NOT a life sentence. There are treatments. Don’t believe all the on-line negativity out there as you will just lose hope. There are two components in treating hyperacusis. First, on the Psychological component, learn about loudness hyperacusis. Reduce your stress and anxiety. Look into Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT).

Secondly, there is the sound therapy component that can be treated with sound enrichment and low level sound therapy. This includes a neutral sound you can easily ignore such as white or pink noise and water sounds. Try not to have negative reactions, such as, annoyance, fear or distress.

Some other things Neil mentioned, don’t underprotect your ears, but don’t overprotect them either. There is also a treatment pecking order when treating hyperacusis with tinnitus. Always treat the loudness hyperacusis first. Tinnitus is of secondary im-

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.

portance and may automatically come under your control as you successfully deal with your hyperacusis.

Amplification Hyperacusis (Hearing Aid Hyperacusis).

This is a man made loudness hyperacusis when hearing aids are not, or cannot be set to correctly match the wearer's specific hearing needs. In one study, 25% of the people stated that the loudness of amplified sounds was a reason they did not wear their hearing aids.

Annoyance Hyperacusis (Misophonia)

This was formerly (and still is) called Misophonia. It is a disorder of emotion processing in which certain trigger sounds cause emotional distress. It may make you feel strong emotions, such as, irritation, disgust, anger, rage or extreme anxiety. Trigger sounds are typically related to eating but include many other sounds. Persons with Misophonia are not bothered by the sounds they make themselves. It can elicit immediate, negative, involuntary reflex to even a single occurrence of a trigger sound. It typically develops in childhood between the ages of 7 and 12. It can often be associated with tinnitus, hearing loss (recruitment) or loudness hyperacusis. It often begins when you intensely dislike a certain sound that drives you buggy.

Fear hyperacusis (Phonophobia)

This was formerly (and still is) called phonophobia which is a fear of certain, or all, sounds. It typically flows out of loudness hyperacusis, tinnitus and annoyance hyperacusis. It may be due to a traumatic event, typically occurring in childhood. Effective treatment includes completing a behavioural-change program that may include Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and/or Exposure Therapy.

Pain Hyperacusis.

This is a condition that causes you to experience pain from hearing sounds that do not cause pain in people with normal hearing. The pain is typically from softer sounds, not extremely loud sounds. The pain may be a hot burning pain or sharp stabbing pain inside your ears. It is often a component of other types of hyperacusis, such as, loudness and

vestibular hyperacusis. It includes things, such as, Acoustic Shock Disorder (ASD), Stapedius Myoclonus, and Tonic Tensor Tympani Syndrome (TTTS).

Vestibular (Balance) Hyperacusis.

This is manifested with vertigo and balance issues. Loud sounds can cause vertigo and falling down due to a "hole" allowing auditory signals to get into the vestibular system. It has caused or is associated with vestibular migraines in over 80% of cases. It can be treated surgically with some degree of success.

Conductive Hyperacusis.

This is true hyperacusis where you actually hear sounds louder than normal. They are bone conduction sounds—typically internal body sounds like hearing your voice louder, hearing your heartbeat or hearing your eyes moving or blinking. The causes are related to your middle ear, like Otosclerosis or open Eustachian tubes. It may sound like you are talking into a barrel, you hear breath sounds as roaring sounds, or you hear your heartbeat.

If your conductive hyperacusis is due to a "hole" in your inner ear, some of the air-conduction sound energy is diverted through the "hole" with the result that you hear the conductive component of sounds as louder than normal. The result, as shown on your audiogram, can be totally misleading because your audiogram shows you have both a conductive and a sensorineural hearing loss, when, in fact, you don't have either of these conditions.

What's all the Fuss about Noise and Safety?

By Rick Waters

Safety. It's a basic human need, along with food and shelter.

But, have you ever thought about how hearing is related to safety?

Let's imagine a group of pre-historic folk, sitting around their campsite in the night. They are, of course, worried about threats from wild animals, or people from other tribes coming to raid their camp. So, how do they stay on guard? There is brush and forest blocking their vision, and it is dark, so they

can't use their eyes. So, how do they protect themselves, how do they stay secure?

We know they can't see, but, they can hear, so they used their ears to listen for warning sounds, such as the sounds of crunching gravel, snapping twigs, bird calls, hushed voices, coughing, panting, etc. These sounds are the typical warning sounds of approaching animals, or people, which signals possible trouble, and warns them of danger, telling them to take action to stay safe.

Later, they domesticated dogs, and the dogs would bark if something approached, but that's another story.

Our sense of hearing is our security sense. We listen for oncoming cars before stepping out on the street; we listen for the sound of running water; we listen for the sound of the smoke detector, the sound of the "beep" that says the washing machine is all finished; we listen for the sound of footsteps on our porch or staircase. As babies, we hear all those sounds, and all the other sounds in a very noisy world. At first we do not know what they all mean, but as we grow and learn, we soon figure them out. As we do, our brain learns to "tune out" the sounds we do not need to worry about, and we learn to pay attention to the important ones, such as emergency signals, sirens, serious mechanical noises in our cars or other machines, the sounds of people in distress or those calling or crying for help, and so on.

But, If we suffer from hearing loss, our security system breaks down, and our brain is forced to work harder, and we become uncertain and stressed. We are left to rely on other senses and folks around us.

So, lets make this relevant to the new hearing aid or CI Journey. As your hearing loss developed over time, you could no longer hear all the warning sounds, and most other environmental sounds became inaudible as well. And then, when your audiologist activates your hearing aids or your CI processor, suddenly, you can hear much of it again, but, and this is a BIG BUT, your brain, which has not heard many of these sounds, perhaps for years, has to learn all over again which sounds are important, and which ones to ignore. The cacophony of new sound through the hearing aids or cochlear implant can be overwhelming. Wind, birds, furnace fans, cooking sounds, the kids playing video games, cars on the street, planes flying overhead, and so much more. Which ones are important, and which ones can be

"tuned out?" In effect, you are like the baby all over again.

Well, your brain will figure that all out eventually, but for the first few days, weeks, or even months, it can be difficult to navigate through the new noise-scape. Frustration is common, and some new hearing instrument users want to take off their hearing instruments and give up. But, give it time, persevere, and eventually, your brain will 'tune out' the sounds you don't need and it will all start to make sense. The noises that are not important will no longer "register", and you will once again be able to hear the important sounds, and the ones you want to hear, such as conversations with partners and friends, the sounds of grandchildren, and so on. To help the process, you can plan to spend some time in quiet environments, perhaps just conversing with one other person, or listening to familiar music. But, it is important to expose yourself to the total sound environment to give your brain the practice it needs to learn to tune out noises which are not important. And, after a while, it will all come together, and the noise will no longer be a problem.

AGM Announcement

CHHA—North Shore Branch will hold its Annual General Meeting on September 19th at 7:00 PM on Zoom. To receive a link to join the AGM and confirm your attendance, please send an email to:

chhansb475@gmail.com

The short AGM will be followed by a Presentation from Gael Hannan on "Getting Better at Hearing Loss".

Gael Hannan is an author, humourist and frequent guest speaker at CHHA conferences and meetings. Gael is also an editor and a frequent contributor of hearing loss articles to hearinghealthmatters.org, an online magazine.

Gael's first book was titled "The Way I Hear It—A Life With Hearing Loss" and her latest book recently released is "Hear & Beyond—Live Skillfully With Hearing Loss" co-written with Shari Eberts.

Please make every effort to attend our AGM as it is with your participation that we keep you informed of our activities and renew our mandate to continue our work in the coming year. Thank You.

Living Successfully with Hearing Loss

Why are specific 'repair' strategies more powerful and effective than our habitual "what?" or "pardon?" when we don't understand?

How can we make better use of the visual cues we receive when we watch our communication partners?

How can we navigate the frustration felt by us (and those who talk to us!) when we just can't understand?

Learn about these strategies and much, much more through the Living Successfully with Hearing Loss courses delivered through Vancouver Community College. Courses will continue to be delivered online through the Fall semester, where weekly material is delivered through a course website, and weekly meetings on Zoom provide time to review, discuss, and practice. 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.

Level 1 courses (<https://vcc.ca/courses/dhhe-0618/>):

Tuesday afternoon, 1pm from Sept. 13 to Nov. 29
Tuesday evening, 7pm from Sept. 13 to Nov. 29

Level 2 courses (<https://vcc.ca/courses/dhhe-0619/>):

Wednesday afternoon, 1pm, from Sept. 14 to Nov. 30
Wednesday evening, 7pm, from Sept. 14 to Nov. 30

Please contact Lisa Dillon Edgett to learn more, ask questions, or register for an upcoming term. Courses begin in January, April, and September.

Lisa Dillon Edgett, Ph.D., RAUD, Aud(C)

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Email: 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.**

**We are happy to announce that beginning
in September we will be holding both In-
person sessions and Zoom Sessions.**

**The West Vancouver Seniors' Activity
Centre Sound Advice Sessions on the first
Friday of the month will be held on Zoom
at the usual time of 10:00 AM.**

**The Silver Harbour Sound Advice
Sessions on the last Monday of the month
will re-commence on September 26th as
IN-PERSON sessions at 10:00 AM**

**To receive an invitation to join
the Zoom meetings send an email to:
chhansb475@gmail.com and you will
be added to the list. 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**