

CHIP The Communicaider



Making the most of
the hearing we have
Since 1979

Executive Update joodi MacDonald

Fall 2007

With Fall coming, we at CHIP are looking forward again to seeing all "the usual suspects" (You know who you are!) at our wide selection of promising programs. We are also eager to meet new folks, too—those trying out CHIP's offerings for the first time. Old favourites and new treats await you all.



The past season wrapped up in grand style with an excellent turnout to hear Dr. Mark Ross speak at our annual meeting on June 5. Dr. Ross' insights into hearing loss, hearing aids and cochlear implants were most enlightening, coming as they do from his vast personal experience of hearing loss and a lifetime of professional expertise. We are always delighted to be able to share with you the very best people in the fields of hearing loss and related services.

Add to this a transfusion of new blood into the Executive. We welcome Stanley Frank and Pierre Cohen and the expertise and dedication they bring . . . and CHIP is on a roll!

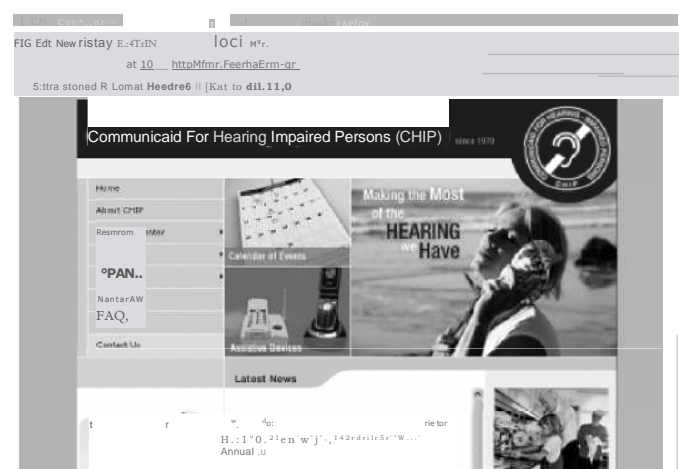
So what else is new? Our website (www.hearhear.org) has been completely revamped and much expanded. (Thanks to Ken Tatebe and Kenny Southall of CHIP and web designer Frank Lee.) If you are "connected," log on - you will find lots more info and much easier navigation.

Dr. J-P Gagne, of the University of Montreal presented his take on speechreading and it was really challenging. He expanded our skills considerably while we also had fun. He has agreed to continue with us this Fall. If you thought you had "done" beginners' and intermediate

levels, you missed out. Dr. Gagne tailors his sessions to ensure that the students are challenged. If you missed it in the Spring, don't make the same mistake this Fall.

But wait—there's more! Finally, after many, many requests, our long-time favourite teacher will offer an advanced level speechreading course this fall on Thursdays in September and October. This course is ONLY for people who have completed the beginner and intermediate levels of speechreading. As I write this, we are waiting for confirmation of the time, which we will know after September 9. Check our website (www.hearhear.org) or call the office at 514-482-0500, ext 215.

One new session introduced this past Spring was "Nosh and Natter." This is an afternoon tea with sandwiches, sweets and beverages in a setting conducive to conversation for those of us with hearing impairment. We talked about all sorts of things—not just hearing loss related topics—and thoroughly enjoyed each other's company. We will, by request, be repeating this event on Tuesday, September 25 at 1:30 pm. Come on down—we will be



waiting with open arms and, of course, cookies.



Resource Centre News

Cell phone shopping – a structured approach?

Ken Tatebe

My six-year old cell phone is on its last legs, so I decided it was time to look for another. Besides, I was at a point where I could no longer hear the phone ringing in a noisy environment. Whether it is my hearing or the phone remains to be seen.

I knew from past experience that asking service providers for hearing aid compatible phones would be an exercise in futility. They will not know what I am talking about.

Thus, I decided to select several models from different manufacturers and then go to the store to try them out. The problem was how to go about accomplishing this.

The first thing was to determine my requirements and desirable features:

- A loud adjustable ring tone, with a choice of rings or songs
- Compatible with the telecoil of my hearing aid
- Small, slim and light enough so I won't feel like I'm carrying a rock in my pocket
- Bluetooth compatible for wireless operation

- Digital camera with at least 1.0 mega pixel and flash so I won't have to carry my bulky regular camera
- Audio output plug for a hands-free device or special neck loop
- Manual volume adjustment
- and finally, the most important feature: little or no interference with my hearing aid.

The next step was to visit the web sites of the various service providers: Bell, Telus, Rogers, Fido, Virgin, Solo, and Videotron, to get an idea of available models.

After that, I visited the web site of major manufacturers: Motorola, Nokia, LG, Samsung, and Sony Ericsson. I looked at specifications and features. I tried to find out if their phones were HAC (Hearing Aid Compatible) by looking at their online manual. If they were HAC, it was usually at the end of the manual.

I selected seven models that came closest to my requirements. All manufacturers are required to produce some models that are HAC. I could not find any documentation for LG, Samsung, and Sony Ericsson models to that effect. They probably have it somewhere, but I couldn't find it. Therefore, I did not pay too much attention to these models, although I did not eliminate them from the search.

I found some Motorola and Nokia models that were listed as HAC. I called Motorola's main office to obtain more information and spoke to a knowledgeable person who knew about HAC standards. Nokia has a web page that lists their phones that conform to the new ANSI (American National Standards Institute) standard for interference with hearing aids. Their site is www.nokiaaccessibility.com Click the Hearing tab on top, and then Hearing Aid Compatibility at the left column.

The ANSI standards range from M1/T1 to M4/T4. The phones are rated for their level of immunity to interfer-

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ence with the hearing aid. "M" denotes microphone use and "T" denotes telecoil use. The higher the number, the less interference with hearing aids. However, these numbers are no guarantee that the phone will be interference free. It will also depend on the immunity level of the hearing aid.

I also discovered that interference level depends on the technology the service provider is using. Service providers in Quebec (and I assume across Canada) use one of two main cell phone technologies: GSM (Global System for Mobile service), and CDMA (Code Division Multiple Access). The sales pitch for GSM phones is that they can be used in Europe, Asia, and other countries....for a price. However, tests have shown that GSM phones are more prone to interference with hearing aids than CDMA phones. This was confirmed when I tried four phones, three of which had the M3/T3 standard. I still heard a buzzing sound in my hearing aid in the "T" position. It was acceptable for short calls, but I would not want to use it for longer calls. The other non-rated GSM phone was so noisy I could not hear anything.

Next I searched the Internet for cell phone reviews. There are hundreds of sites that review cell phones. Open the Google search engine, www.google.com, and enter "cell phone reviews" in the search box.

Most dealers were willing to let me try my chosen models in the store. Some even opened brand new boxes and dialled a special number so I could listen to a pre-recorded message. It was difficult, however, to properly assess the volume level, ring sound, and interference in a noisy shopping mall. Nevertheless, it gave me some idea how the phone performed under noisy conditions. I could not detect any interference with CDMA phones, even if they were not rated as ANSI compliant.

My final choice came down to three models that use CDMA technology. I eliminated one because it did not have an audio output jack, and another because the model had been discontinued and was no longer available.

My next step was to decide whether to go with a contract or prepaid method. With a 2-year contract, for example, the cost of the phone is absorbed

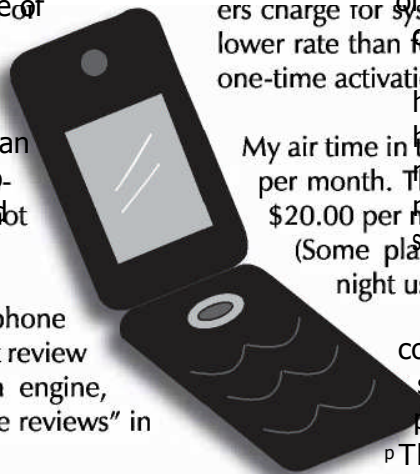
in the monthly premiums and the initial outlay for the phone is minimal. The longer the contract period, the cheaper the phone. In addition to the monthly fee, service providers charge a one-time activation fee, a monthly fee for system access and 911. Air time is charged by the minute instead of seconds. Therefore, if the call lasts 15 seconds, the charge is for 1 minute. However, there are two service providers that still charge air time by the second.

With the prepaid method, the phone is purchased outright and there is no long-term contract. However, in order to keep the phone active, it is necessary to add 10, 20, 30, dollars each month, depending on the chosen plan. If not, the phone number is cancelled and the phone cannot be used. Some service providers charge for system access and 911 fees, albeit at a lower rate than contract plans. They also charge a one-time activation fee.

My air time in the past never exceeded 150 minutes per month. Therefore, I chose the prepaid plan at \$20.00 per month with 200 minutes anytime use. (Some plans have different rates for day and night use.)

I compared the cost on a 2-year basis between contract and prepaid plans for 200 minutes per month. The result showed that even if I paid up front for the phone, the cost of prepaid was half as much as the contract plan for the 2-year period. The service provider I chose does not charge activation fee, system access, or 911 fees.

I purchased my cell phone at a retail outlet with a 30-day return policy. I did not activate the phone immediately, as I wanted to check the sound of the ringer, different tones, volume of the ringer, etc. I also wanted to transfer my old cell number to the new phone. The return policy after activation was only 10 days. Therefore, I had to be reasonably sure I would keep it rather than returning it because I would be without a phone and lose my current phone number. Finally, the next day, I activated the phone and asked the provider to transfer my number to the new phone. About 2.5 hrs later, I was able to use my new phone and my old account with the previous provider was automatically cancelled. Be aware however, there may be extra charges from the old provider should you can-



cel an account before the contract period is over.

The only thing I could not really test before activation was the volume level of the incoming voice. So with some anticipation, I asked my wife to call me on the new phone. On the first several calls, I could hardly hear her... panic set in; what have I done? Should I have kept the old phone? If I remembered correctly, the volume on this model was louder at the shopping mall when I briefly tried it out.

After calming down, I spent the next several hours reading the 84-page User Guide and learning how to make adjustments. I changed the 'normal' default settings to my hearing ability. I adjusted the phone for "T" coil setting, and tweaked the volume level to the maximum setting. I later discovered the manual volume control was set at minimum. Finally, I could hear reasonably well without any interference using the "T" coil of my hearing aid.

I also tested the phone using a hands-free device with a silhouette behind my BTE hearing aid; and with a special neck loop designed for cell phones. The results were amazing. I actually had to manually lower the volume level.

Thus far, I am happy and satisfied with my new toy. The steps I went through to get a cell phone may not apply to everybody. However, I am glad I did my homework and purchased a phone that met my expectations.

The Noisy Corner

Joodi MacDonald

The question: How Loud Is Too Loud? The Answer: It depends on how important hearing is to you. Do you like jokes, sweet nothings, stimulating conversation, chatting with small children, birds singing, music, lectures, guided tours, theatre, movies, television and talking on the phone (just to name a few hearing pleasures)?

If you do not want to spend any part of your life missing out on these delights, then you must protect your ears from excessive volume now and every day. Whether or not it is "good" sound (music, sporting events, etc.) or "bad" sound (traffic and horns, shrieking kids, etc.) if it is too loud, it will rob you of your hearing. . . and that would be a crime!

Ears are on duty before we are even born, and continue working 24/7 for every moment of our lives or until we experience hearing loss – whichever comes first. Ears never close. Eyes have lids. Two good ears provide stereo "surround" sound. Your eyes see only where they are currently looking. Ears work in the dark. Eyes do not. If the baby cries at night or the smoke alarm goes off our ears notify us. Do we ever give a thought to what this constant wear and tear does to the delicate apparatus that brings us sound? Not really.

At my house I checked out some noisy items with a decibel meter:

- Telephone dial tone 80 – 84 dBs (decibels)
- 10000 BTU air conditioner at one metre distance averages 78 – 84 dBs
- 1600 hairdryer 95 dBs

All of them are louder than is safe. Sadly, at my house, there are no good ears to be damaged by this racket. My hearing loss is genetic. It is bad enough without having to live with the realization that my loss was self-inflicted. Life should be kept to less than 80 decibels. This is just to avoid damage over time to the tiny hair cells in the cochlea, which, once damaged do not heal.

Over 90 decibels (dBs) is dangerous. Ear protection is *required*.

80 – 85 decibels over the years will gradually damage the hair cells.

(Would you be content at 30 or 40 or 50 to say goodbye to good hearing?)

80 dBs or less is the way to protect your ears from noise damage for a lifetime.

Regular rest periods every day are good for your ears, too. Treat them to a little silence, stillness or quiet and not only your ears, but your whole body will thank you.

Next time: How to evaluate the noise levels in your environment.

The Communicaider

Hear Here

joodi MacDonald



he bells . . . augh . . . the bells ! Recently, having breakfast out with a friend, I found myself in sympathy with the hunchback of Notre Dame. My 'good' hearing aid was in the shop for repair and

I was using my 'backup' aid – without directional microphones and noise suppression features. The place was noisy (duh!) and I had turned up the volume in an attempt to hear what my friend was saying – silly me! I also turned up the noise – as you all well know. Suddenly I 'heard' bells clanging loudly – like church bells – just behind me. I hurriedly turned down my aid and asked "What the *&\$%#@ was that?" (Forgive the language – the noise level was shocking!)

Turns out it was a waitress gathering up some balloon glasses by the stems. The 'bells' were the tinkling sound made by the glasses tapping together. It was a stunning



example of how turning up the volume turns up the noise. It was the first time I had experienced the phenomenon so dramatically. Needless to say, I didn't like it. It is just one more sad tale from the annals of dining out. What I do now appreciate is just how much noise suppression and directional microphones improve the hearing experience.

While I am in promotional mode, here is an item I found interesting. Thanks to Laura Ross, (we are always learning from each other at CHIP) I was introduced to a Personal Amplified Listener by Nexxtech and which can be found at The Source stores. It is a small device that clips on to a lapel or pocket and brings amplified sound to your ear through an earbud.

Fall 2007

At under \$25, you should not expect miracles. What impressed me was that I could hear enough to manage in a one-to-one situation in a quiet setting. Why did that impress me? Since unaided I can hear nothing, it was surprising that such a modest device could give me that much gain. I now have one for emergencies. If, like me, you are the auditory equivalent of a claustrophobic (I panic when I can't hear), any extra little gizmo that stands between me and the dreaded total silence is a comfort. Understand that this is just for emergencies. It is not a solution for hearing loss. DO NOT run out and buy one on my say-so – but if it interests you – then go out and try one. Do not buy anything without trying – not a little gizmo, not a top-of-the-line hearing aid. It has to be right for you. Let the buyer beware!

This Fall there are several items to note.

- Check out our updated and infinitely cooler website (www.hearhear.org) for heaps more information.
- Also, there will be a panel of Executive members reporting the latest news from the big conferences on hearing loss that they attended this Spring. You do not want to miss this opportunity to find out about new technology and devices and the general buzz among the hearing impaired.
- Speechreading is expanding. We are adding an Advanced Level to our speechreading programs.
- Not only that but the Beginners' and Intermediate Levels will once again be conducted by Dr. J-P. Gagné, who has proven himself very adept at tailoring his classes to the ability levels of his students. Know-it-alls still have a lot to learn and Dr. Gagné will definitely take you on that journey. If you missed out last Spring– do yourself a favour and "begin " again this Fall.

We hope to see loads of you at the various programs throughout the Fall.

Sharing and Learning Together After Hearing Loss

Support group for late-deafened people

We are organising a support group for people who have experienced significant hearing loss and want to get help coping with their loss and with the problems and challenges it creates in their lives. The group will be a place where people can share information, feelings, and strategies for coping with their hearing loss, and learn about hearing loss and helpful resources.

We will have an eight-week session of 4 to 8 people who will meet every Thursday from 10:00 am to 12:00 noon at the Mackay Rehabilitation Centre. The first meeting will be on Thursday, October 18, 2007 and it will end on Thursday, December 6, 2007. The group will be led by Marc Gervais and Dale Bonnycastle, both professionals in the field of deafness. There is no cost, and we will provide real-time captioning (similar to TV closed-captioning) to help with communication. Members must:

- Be late deafened or have a severe hearing loss. (If you were once hearing or hard-of-hearing and lost all or most of your hearing later in life, you are eligible. Hearing loss can be gradual or sudden.)
- Be able to commit to attending 8 sessions from October to December.



Hearing spouses and/or one or two family members are welcome to attend. For more information, please contact:

- Dale Bonnycastle – Tel: (514) 482-0500 ext. 253; [Email: dbonnycastle@ssss.gouv.ca](mailto:dbonnycastle@ssss.gouv.ca)
- Marc Gervais – Tel: (514) 482-0487, ext 318 [TTY only]; [Email: mgervais@ssss.gouv.qc.ca](mailto:mgervais@ssss.gouv.qc.ca)



Centre de réadaptation **MAB-MACKAY** Rehabilitation Centre

Adult Services for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing

Open Daily from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Evening Office Hours on Thursdays from
4:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Call for an appointment (514) 482-0500

Audiology (local 229)
Assistive Devices (local 237)
Counselling (local 318, TTY)
Social Service (local 251)
Programme Coordinator (local 419)

CHIP Programs Fall 2007

“Freedom Writers” – a captioned film review

An idealistic new teacher in a rough inner-city Los Angeles high school gets a rude awakening on her first day: the curriculum she has been assigned to teach is of no interest to her students and of no relevance to their needs. For many of them, the name of the game is simply to survive – not to learn what’s in books. This clever, caring teacher finds a way of reaching her students by involving them in a project that leads them to discover connections between their lives and the lives of other innocent teenagers (generations ago) who struggled to survive. But her unorthodox teaching methods get her into serious trouble with the school authorities who prefer the one-size-fits-all approach to education. This film would be interesting enough if it were fiction, but the story is true. With electrifying performances from its stellar cast, including two-time Academy Award winner Hilary Swank, this provocative drama, based on the best-seller THE FREEDOM WRITERS DIARY, touched me deeply ... and I think it will do the same for you. (A.G.)

“Nosh and Natter” with Joodi MacDonald

Date: Tuesday, September 25, 1:30 to 3:30 pm

It’s often hard just to socialize easily with a hearing loss - but with our assistive devices and amplification, everyone can hear and be heard. Come and share light refreshments, funny stories, tales of woe, and a good chinwag.

“What’s New in Hearing Help?”

Date: Tuesday, October 9, 1:30 – 3:30 pm

Get the technology and buzz in the world of hearing impairment from a panel of CHIP Executive members who attended the big conferences this past Spring. You won’t want to miss this chance to hear the latest information and ask questions.

“Time Management and Hearing Loss - The Connection” with Carol Segal, s.w., Mackay

Date: Tuesday, October 23, 1:30 to 3:30 pm

People have frequently commented that it takes time to deal with the needs and changes generated by a hearing loss. Certainly this is true. The question is, “Where do I find the time?” In a world that lends itself to creating over-programmed people, time has become a precious commodity. The challenge is to use it in such a way that it works for, and not against, oneself. This workshop is designed to discuss the “extras” that require doing, and the ways in which to manage time so that they become “doable.” Come and join us for a productive afternoon.

Please Register! By mail, fax, phone or in person at the CHIP office.

CHIP Programs • Fall 2007

Here's the line-up of CHIP's ongoing classes and programs:

HEAR Program



Hearing Education for Aural Rehabilitation

The ability to cope with hearing loss does not come naturally; it must be learned. Fortunately, the skills are easily learned. This program is designed so that a family member or friend can participate along with you, learning together to communicate better. The program is a series of six two-hour units, one per week, and it is FREE.

The HEAR program will be given on Mondays from 10:15 am to 12:15 pm.

Dates: Sept 10, 17, 24 and Oct 1, 15, 22

(Note: The order of fall sessions 2 and 6 has been reversed due to a scheduling conflict.)

Speechreading (Lipreading)



Classes are \$5 each. Register by fax, mail, or in person at the first session.

Beginner and Intermediate classes: Friday mornings from 10 am to noon.

Dates for Beginners Class: Sept 7, 21, and Oct 5, 12, 19

Dates for Intermediate Class: Nov. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30

NEW ! - Advanced Class: Thursdays, Sept 20, Oct 4, 11, 18, 25

(Time to be announced after Sept 9 - call the CHIP office or check the web site)

Signed English — Communication help at your fingertips! Thursday evenings from 7 to 9 p.m



Signed English can help you fill in the blanks by learning some basic signs and finger spelling. Dates: Sept 6, 20, Oct 4, 11, 18, 25. Fee: \$50 per person or \$75 with a partner. A minimum of 6 and a maximum of 12 students are required to run a class. Please call us for details.

Captioned Films

Drop by the CHIP Office to pick up a Film Program brochure.



Please Register

Please don't forget to register. We plan our classes and programs carefully. We want to make sure that we have all the necessary listening equipment and seating to make each event a success for everyone involved. Use the enclosed registration form, or call us at the CHIP office: (514) 482-0500 Local 215.



Figure It Out



Word Puzzles by Carol Segal, s.w.





 +  **ER** = _____



 **ER** + **E** = _____

L + **IS** +  = _____

 +  = _____

 +  = _____

 + **SY**  = _____

DEC 31 1999 +  +  = _____



Answers on page 13

The Importance of One

**Carol Segal, s.w.
Mackay Rehabilitation Centre
Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program**

Hearing impairment is the most invisible and misunderstood of all disabilities. There is the myth that a hearing aid will cure all ills. There is the belief that if individuals can hear some things they can hear all things if they choose to do so. There is the notion that a booming voice is the antidote to communicating with people who have a hearing loss. False premises abound.

To educate the general public is a Herculean task. As though sheer numbers of individuals, agencies, schools and institutions are not daunting enough, the scope of the subject is vast. Hearing loss can be likened to a kaleidoscope that changes pictures with the smallest of turns – causes, age of advent, degree, kind, education, mode of communication, personality, and individual needs, to cite but a few.

Professionals and volunteers who work with the Deaf and Hard of Hearing frequently give lectures to staff in schools, hospitals, CLSCs, and residences for seniors. This is a start but there are many more of them than us. Also, turnover in agencies is rapid, leading to an “educated today, gone tomorrow” syndrome. Over the years there have been noticeable gains in public awareness, followed by concrete responses as a result, and a plethora of new technology has enhanced the lives of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing remarkably.

In the campaign to disseminate information on hearing loss you, as a deaf or hard of hearing individual, have a critical role to play. Wherever you go, consider yourself an ambassador for the hearing impaired. Speak to those you meet about hearing loss and how they can be of help. Invite leaders of seniors’ groups to which you belong to schedule a lecture. Provide your bank

tellers and grocers, hair dressers and barbers, lawyers and notaries, doctors and therapists, with a sheet of communication tips. Leave a paper trail wherever you go. What good can one person do? A story...

“A small boy lived by the ocean. He loved the creatures of the sea, especially the starfi sh, and spent much of his time exploring the seashore. One day he learned there would be a minus tide, leaving the starfi sh stranded on the sand.

The day of the tide he went down to the beach and began picking up stranded starfi sh and tossing them back into the sea. An elderly man who lived next door came down to the beach to see what he was doing.

‘I’m saving the starfi sh,’ the boy proudly declared.



When the neighbour saw all the stranded starfi sh, he shook his head and said ‘I’m sorry to disappoint you young man, but if you look down the beach one way, there are stranded starfi sh as far as the eye can see. And if you look down the beach the other way, it’s the same. One little boy like you isn’t going to make much of a difference.’

The boy thought about this for a moment. Then he reached his small hand down to the sand, picked up a starfi sh, tossed it into the ocean and said, ‘I sure made a difference to that one.’ ” [Author Unknown]

The MAB-Mackay Rehabilitation Centre team has two pamphlets available for distribution if you are interested:

*Deaf and Hard of Hearing Clients and Their Families:
An Information Brochure for Workers*

*Work Community and Deaf Community: An
Information Brochure for Employers of the Deaf*
written by Marc Gervais, Counsellor and Carol Segal, Social Worker

Ask for some the next time you come to a MAB-Mackay or CHIP program, group, or meeting.



New & Noteworthy

Lily Bernstein

Visiting the DEAF CULTURE CENTRE was one of the highlights of my recent trip to Toronto. I had read about it, but quickly found that exploring it was exciting, interesting, and very enlightening. The architectural concept stressed signing and the movement of the hand, which resulted in the design of the loft-like open spaces, and glass partitions of the centre. It was clear that a lot of thought went into the design by architects and graphic design artists.

Inspired by the Canadian Cultural Society of the Deaf, the final structure is a soundproof, flexible, two-storey open concept, with movable walls and screens in the exhibition space that can be transformed into a room for parties, a kitchen, a greeting area, and a gift shop. The centre is equipped to celebrate deaf culture through the performing arts, language, literature, history, and the visual arts. Many classes are held throughout the year, in sign language, film-making, sports, culinary arts, dance, and poetry. The Centre is dedicated to the graduates of residential and sign language schools for the deaf.

As always, if you come across any news for the hearing impaired, write to me at info@hearhear.org

Information empowers us and helps us move forward.

We particularly enjoyed the tour of the exhibition area which featured paintings, and beautiful carved bowls and vases exquisitely decorated with colourful designs. The paintings were done by deaf Canadians from various parts of our country, and by our First Peoples including Inuit and Algonquins. The paintings used sign language with other symbols to portray harmony and dissonance, for example.

The guides were very hospitable and used sign language and spoken language to explain the exhibits. The centre is located in the old Distillery District of Toronto, a trendy downtown area with many restaurants, art galleries, and performing areas around it. Exposure to deaf culture is both enlightening and

heart-warming for all levels of society – deaf, hearing, and the hard of hearing. I highly recommend you put it on your list of places to visit next time you're in Toronto. (*Deaf Culture Centre Brochure*)

An article in "Vibes" (*Winter 2006, Canadian Hearing Society Magazine*) by Joyce Lange describes the merits of the Blackberry with its cell phone, e-mail and text messaging features for the deaf, deafened, or hard of hearing. As she puts it: "Have Blackberry Will Travel!" The device proved to be a lifesaver for a deaf Canadian travelling alone in Thailand in 2005 when the Tsunami hit. A friend back home sent him a message, and was relieved with a reply 24 hours later assuring him that his travelling friend was OK. It can also be used as a doorbell when flashing lights fail. In a hotel where there are no alerting system devices for deaf patrons, Lange reports on occasions people in the lobby send her a message that they are on their way up to her room. Blackberry users can also register for emergency alerts. Given their many useful features, I understand why they can be addictive and people call them "crackberries!"

On March ✕ 22, a headline in the Gazette read: "FIREFIGHTER SAVES HEARING-IMPAIRED RESIDENT." This resident did not hear the five-alarm warning that a serious fire was taking place in her building. The woman lives alone, was asleep, and oblivious to all the signals. Suddenly she saw a firefighter, who entered her bedroom. He urged her to go with him, and to quickly get out of the building. The fire involved 40 trucks and 120 firefighters. One hundred tenants were out on the street, and Mrs. Burke was the last one to get out. Fortunately, no one was hurt. This episode should be a warning to all hard of hearing, deaf, or deafened people who live alone to inform the caretaker of their deafness, let the fire department know, and also have a deaf symbol on the door.



Answers to Figure It Out Puzzle:

Pocket Talker, Battery, Listen, Palm Pilot, Eardrum, Loop System, Decibels



Questions and Answers

**Dale Bonnycastle, MSc
Audiologist**

What is the best hearing aid?

David Fabry (Hearing Health, Spring 2004) states that "there is no single best hearing aid for everyone." The most critical factor is matching technology to the individual's needs and expectations." It is essential that your audiologist and hearing aid acoustician know about what situations are giving you difficulty, about your lifestyle and its communication demands, and any medical limitations. I sometimes ask clients what they have stopped doing as a result of their hearing loss. Sometimes there are technology solutions: One client now uses an FM system to follow lectures in her synagogue; another client who was often on and off the phone obtained an aid with an automatic T-coil and found it very helpful. Sometimes a client benefits from a change of model of hearing aid – for example, switching from a smaller instrument to a larger behind-the-ear (BTE) model. A larger hearing aid can hold more technology and can also be easier to manipulate.

Besides digital hearing aids, how else can I improve my hearing in noise?

FM systems with array microphones are very effective in noisy situations. Array microphones are hand-held microphones (similar to FM systems) that can be pointed at a speaker. The microphone picks up the speech of the talker and transmits it wirelessly to the hearing aid, usually to a tiny FM receiver attached to the back of the hearing aid. These new microphone systems can also be helpful in round table discussions, in the car, at lectures, and when listening from a distance. They can be switched from a super directional mode (e.g., to pick up one person in a noisy restaurant) to less directional and also to omni directional – at a round table meeting, for example, you might prefer the omni directional setting to pick up more speakers.



I have a hard time switching my hearing aid to the T position. Is there a solution?

Yes, an automatic telephone coil allows for telephone to aid coupling without any manual switching. It is convenient and also very helpful for persons with reduced fine motor functioning due to arthritis or other conditions.

I see advertisements for mini power hearing aids, what are they and how do they work?



These small discreet hearing aids actually separate the receiver from the rest of the hearing aid, and the receiver rests in the ear canal encased in a small mould. Because the receiver is separate from the rest of the

hearing aid, it can provide adequate gain for a person with a moderate loss without feedback. Although the hearing aid portion behind the ear is very small, it can house digital technology with complex sound processing capability.

Is there anything new in the area of auditory training and rehabilitation that might help me?

Yes. A home based auditory training program called LACE (Listening and Communication Enhancement) has been developed by an American Audiologist Dr. Robert Sweetow that lets you improve your listening skills using a computer with internet connection. Just as you would not go home from the hospital after a physical injury without physiotherapy, nor should you not have therapy for your hearing loss. The LACE program includes different listening exercises and communication strategies training and has been shown to be effective. Other important aspects of aural rehabilitation include speech reading training and group aural rehabilitation programs such as the ones offered by CHIP.

The importance of sharing difficulties, information and solutions in an environment where everyone shares the same problem cannot be underestimated. Also learning to cope with hearing loss and obtain the best services and technical aids is an ongoing task. Life changes, and so do the communication demands on each person. Technical aids improve, hearing can change. It is important to have an ongoing dialogue and follow up with your hearing aid acoustician and audiologist. Good luck and good listening.

Smile from Ear to Hear

Lou Brock



attended the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association Annual Conference in Edmonton, Alberta from May 24 to 27, 2007. The conference was called "Smile From Ear To Hear," and was based on the theme of fun and humour.

Michael Kerr, the keynote speaker, was a government manager who spoke about trying to lighten up our lives with humour. His hilarious talk, "Putting Humour to Work" had the audience bent over with laughter.

The workshops I attended were interesting and some were a lot of fun. Unfortunately they did not have a workshop on assistive listening devices, which is what I was most interested in. I attended a workshop on Cochlear Implant Technology by audiologist Sandra Vandenhoff, who received an implant last January. I was also invited to a luncheon on Cochlear Awareness sponsored by Cochlear Canada Inc, supplier of the Freedom Cochlear. The talk was mainly about the benefits of a second implant for those who have a bilateral hearing loss.

A workshop called "Tuned Out", presented by Gael Hannan and Mrytle Barrett was the most fun. The workshop dealt with communication between spouses or partners and how the hearing person copes with the hard of hearing partner everyday situations and in-



Hear Here Commendations

We want individuals and organizations to know when they are doing a good job of serving the hearing-impaired, and when they are not.

Tell us who gave you good service as a hearing-impaired client and we'll send them a HEAR HERE! commendation to display in their office. Tell us who didn't make the effort, and we'll send them a Recommendation for Improvement and an information kit on how to better serve their hearing-impaired clients. (Don't worry, we will not use your name.)

You can email your commendation or recommendation to: info@hearhear.org, or use the form provided in this issue.

imate relations. Gael and Mrytle told comical stories about their hearing loss and then opened the floor to the audience to tell their stories.

A hearing man told about the time he was in bed with his wife at night with the lights out. Since his hard of hearing spouse could not understand what he was saying, he wrote words on her stomach. Someone in the audience asked if she understood what he wrote, and he said she understood and her answer was ok. The room burst out in uncontrollable laughter.

The trade show was not particularly good and I believe that we have most of the exhibited equipment available at the CHIP Resource Centre. But all in all it was a good conference and I made sure that being the only delegate from Montreal, I was very visible.



The next CHHA convention will be in Vancouver from July 2 to July 6, 2008 and will be held in conjunction with the International Federation of Hard of Hearing People.

The CHIP HEAR HERE! Project

Feedback Form

We want individuals and organizations to know when they are doing a good job of serving the hearing-impaired, and when they are not. Tell us who gave you good service as a hearing-impaired client and we'll send them a HEAR HERE! commendation to display in their office. Tell us who didn't make the effort, and we'll send them a Recommendation for Improvement and an information kit on how to better serve their hearing-impaired clients. (Don't worry, we will not use your name.)

I would like CHIP to send (check one):

- A 
 Commendation 
 A Recommendation for

Improvement

To the following organization, institution, business, professional office or individual:

Name of Organization: _____

Name of Individual (if applicable): _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

My Experience

- The staff who served me made every effort to
- communicate clearly with me, ensure that I understood the situation and that I felt comfortable.
 - Yes, all the time

Somewhat
Not at all

I advised the staff who served me that I was hearing-impaired:

- Verbally In writing
- With a Comm unicard
- With a Broken Ear sticker on my Medicare card
- A friend or family member advised the staff for me
- The staff was not advised that I was hearing impaired

My Comments: Please describe your experience. If this was a positive experience, CHIP would like to know what techniques the staff used that helped ensure good communication. If this was a negative experience, we would like to know what you think this organization or individual could do to improve their services for the hearing-impaired.

My name: _____ Phone: _____ or TTY: _____

Please fax this form to CHIP at (514) 482-4536

or mail it to: CHIP, 3500 Decarie Boulevard, Montreal, Quebec H4A 3J5



HEAR Program
Aural rehabilitation



Resource Centre



Speechreading



Signed English Classes



Captioned Film Screenings



School Program



Reach Out



If you are listening but not hearing, CHIP can help.

At CHIP we make the most of the hearing we have - and you can too!

- Visit our Resource Centre and try out the latest technology and assistive listening devices that can help you hear better
- Come to the HEAR program and learn how to cope with your hearing loss
- Improve your communication with friends and family through lipreading and Signed English classes
- Enjoy life and make friends at CHIP's Tuesday workshops and Wednesday captioned film screenings
- Make a difference – Become a CHIP volunteer

Membership is only \$10 a year.

**Donations to CHIP are tax deductible
and receipts will be issued**

CHIP

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