



www.chha-hamilton.ca  
chhahamilton2@gmail.com  
Founded 1986

# Canadian **HARD** of **HEARING** Association **CHHA-Hamilton** **HERE, HEAR!! Newsletter**

**Remember . . . You are not alone!**

**March, 2020**

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**Refreshments**

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- Advocacy
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**Oticon's specialist  
will discuss  
Bone conduction  
hearing devices which  
transfers sound  
by bone vibration  
directly to the cochlea,  
bypassing the outer  
and the middle ear.**



## **Meeting cancelled due to COVID-19 virus**

**Speaker:** Janna Brubacher, M.Cl.Sc. Reg. CASLPO

**Date:** Thursday, March 26th, 2020

**Time:** 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm

**Location:** The South Gate Church  
120 Clarendon Avenue, Hamilton L9A 3A5  
Rear entrance door & parking lot accessed from Terrace Dr.

**Registration & info:** chhahamilton@gmail.com or 905-575-4964

**Charge:** \$5 for non-members

**Captioning** & Infra red system available

Refreshments

**ALL WELCOME!**

*Sponsored by* **Oticon Medical Canada**

# President's Message



Hello everyone,

Welcome to the new decade. I hope this decade will result in many advances to hearing aid technology and wish that knowledge about hearing impairment will become more widespread and adapted, and stigma about our disability will diminish.

I believe the most important thing we can all do is to learn about our disability and pass the knowledge on. EDUCATION (especially self awareness and self education) will be one of the best things that each of us can do to help champion the cause of the people living with the largest invisible disability on the planet: Hard of Hearing.

To that I'd like to share 3 things that I recently learned by speaking to folks with hearing loss as well as taking part in a study conducted with one of our manufacturers located a short drive from Hamilton.

Bone Anchored Hearing System

## Ponto 4

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I'll start with a conversation I had with a friend who received hearing aids a while back. My friend was saying that it was time for him to get a new pair of hearing aids. As we were talking, I asked him "Why?" to which he replied that a lot of things sound "Tinny" to him. I asked him what his audiologist/hearing instrument specialist said when he complained about the "tinniness". Surprised by his answer: "Nothing – I never went back and had adjustments."

I explained to him my philosophy on getting new hearing aids. I always kept going back to my audiologist to get adjustments made until I was satisfied with the performance of my hearing aids. I kept abreast of new developments and improvements in the technology and if a net new advancement came along, I weighed the pros and cons to see if the value outweighed the cost and it was time for an upgrade. However, I believe that tinniness adjustment can be considered mature technology and can easily be adjusted.

Two things I learned as part of my study with the manufacturer. Our (hard of hearing folk's) disadvantage when it comes to accurately identifying the direction/distance of the sound and our (dis)ability to tell feelings based on sound without the visuals. Let me tell you I learned a lot about my disability based on the answers I provided to the exercises. I got many/many answers wrong: i.e. thinking that the sound was coming from far and front when was close and behind me or thinking that the person was happy when hearing the sentence when it was actually an annoyed voice. Through this exercise my determination became stronger to be very aware of my shortcomings, and until technology becomes better, make sure I focus on my visual senses to aid with my hearing disability when identifying feelings/direction and distances of sound.

Continued on page 3 . . .

## Ask Mark . . .

**Mark not only wears hearing aids, he is also an Hearing Instrument Specialist.**

**Send *your* questions to Mark at [chhahamilton2@gmail.com](mailto:chhahamilton2@gmail.com)**

**Q** How do I get wax out of my ears?

**A.** The first and most important rule about ear cleaning is don't stick anything smaller than your elbow in your ears and never stick anything in your ears *if* you have a perforated ear drum.

Your ears are self-cleaning. They do this by slowly migrating the wax and dead skin out of your ear while you move around during the day or while bathing or during sleep.

Wax is only produced in the outer half of your ear canal. When wax is pushed in by cotton swabs or with a hearing aid the wax cannot follow its usual process and will not come out. The longer it stays there the harder and darker it will get.

Family doctors usually flush the ears out with water using a syringe. This method is the most common tried and true method. It does work most of the time.

Sometimes the wax won't come out with flushing and further intervention is required. In this case the family doctor will advise you to visit a hearing clinic that does alternate forms of wax

removal, like vacuuming, or they will refer you to an Ear Nose and Throat Specialist Doctor (ENT).

Prior to your visit for wax removal you can apply oil to your ears for 5-7 days by putting 5-7 drops of oil in your ears. Olive oil works very well if it's from a fresh, clean bottle not one that has been in your pantry for the past 10 years. Over the counter drops also work very well just talk to your pharmacist about which is the best brand.

**A special note:** you should *never* put anything into your ears unless you know you need to. If you're not sure if you have wax or not, visit your family doctor or go to any hearing clinic and ask them to check for wax. You don't want to have oil in your ears for 5-7 days if the problem is a painless ear infection or if you have a perforated ear drum as this can cause serious complications.

The main reason you can't clean your own ears is that you can't see in there to tell if you did a good job or not. Ear canals are not straight, they bend and turn. This causes a lot of issues with trying to remove the wax when it's done by a professional with proper lighting and tools, let alone someone trying to remove the wax themselves with a bobby pin or the end of a pencil.

### **President Message . . . Continued from page 2 . . .**

This year we have the usual four public meetings, in addition to the Cochlear Implant meeting and the golf tournament planned. We'll have many details coming your way about those events. One change we are making, of which I'm excited about, is that we are holding our CI meeting at the newly LOOPED facility at Bernie Morelli Recreation Centre.

As always, please provide feedback on topics you are interested in, so we can consider them for our future meeting topics. Hope to see you all at our upcoming events.

CHHA for now!

Levi

## **LOOKING FOR NEW CHHA BOARD MEMBERS**

***Why volunteer*** with the Hamilton Branch of the Canadian HARD of HEARING Association?

- ◆ Meet new people
- ◆ Receive satisfaction by helping others
- ◆ Build your confidence
- ◆ Stay active & healthy
- ◆ Make a difference to people in the hearing loss community.
- ◆ Help us shape the future
- ◆ **Contact us at [chhahamilton2@gmail.com](mailto:chhahamilton2@gmail.com)**



# How to explain hearing loss to the uninitiated

by Shari Eberts, Living with Hearing Loss

Hearing loss is difficult to understand if you have never experienced it. Part of it is obvious — we don't hear things well — but other parts are confusing. Why do we hear well in one situation but not in another? Why are we sensitive to loud sounds? Why can we hear some people easily, but not others. Why must communication partners face us when speaking? Do we all know sign language? The questions are endless, as are the ways we try to explain our experience to the uninitiated.

Below I share some ways I have found to be effective in illuminating the mystery of hearing loss to the hearing community.

## Hearing Loss Is Like Playing Wheel of Fortune

Imagine a game board from the Wheel of Fortune. Some of the letters are filled in; others are blank. This is what a person with hearing loss hears. Then they must combine these assorted and incomplete sounds with lipreading cues and what they know about the topic being discussed to create words and phrases that make sense in the context of the conversation. It takes a lot of brain power and can be [exhausting](#).

## I Don't Have Peripheral Hearing

A big thank you to Jon Taylor, [HLAA's NYC Chapter](#) Vice President for this one. When I first heard him say it, a lightbulb went off. It perfectly describes that for people with hearing loss, hearing is not passive; it is an active process that takes concentration and effort. Hearing is not something we do in the background, while performing another activity. It *is* the activity. This explanation also demonstrates why it is important to get the attention of the person with hearing loss before you speak. Unless they are alertly listening, they are not going to hear you.

I CAN'T HEAR  
YOU COVER  
MOUTH.

IF YOU DON'T  
HEAR ME  
I CAN'T  
TALK  
FACE ME.

## Hearing Aids Don't Work Like Glasses

People often wonder why we don't hear "normally" with our hearing aids. It is because hearing aids do not work like glasses. Glasses take an image that is blurry and distorted and for most people, turn it into something that is sharp and clear. Unfortunately, hearing aids do not work the same way. Hearing aids make things louder, but not crisper. The sound pattern often remains muffled or unclear.

Hearing aids are also not good at differentiating among sounds, so they augment the unwanted background noise in addition to the important speech sounds. This can often make it harder to hear in a noisy environment.

## I'm A Little Bit Deaf

While I do not consider myself to be culturally Deaf and do not use sign language to communicate, explaining my hearing issues as being a **little bit deaf** can work wonders. Automatically, my requests for accommodations or the use of [communication best practices](#) are taken more seriously. Perhaps "deaf" sounds more serious than hearing loss. Be sure to clarify that you do not use sign language, unless, of course, you do. Many people incorrectly assume that the vast majority of people with hearing problems know how to sign. The opposite is actually true.

## If I Can't See You, I Can't Hear You

For people with hearing loss, hearing is both auditory and visual. Body language, lipreading clues and facial expression are all important components we use to make sense of the sounds we hear. A fellow HLAA NYC Chapter member Ruth Bernstein recommends saying, "Don't speak until you see the whites of my eyes," stating that it is much clearer than simply asking someone to face them. It is also more memorable, which might make compliance with the request more likely.

<https://livingwithhearingloss.com/2020/03/10/how-to-explain-hearing-loss-to-the-uninitiated/>

# 10 Commandments when speaking to someone with hearing loss

Thanks to Levine Hearing

## *10 Commandments of hearing loss*

- I. Thou shalt not speak to the listener from another room.*
- II. Thou shalt not speak with your back toward the listener or while the listener's back is toward you.*
- III. Thou shalt not speak as you walk away.*
- IV. Thou shalt not turn your face away from the listener while continuing to talk.*
- V. Thou shalt not speak while background noise (water running, radio or TV laying, people talking, etc.) is as loud or louder than your voice.*
- VI. Thou shalt not start to speak before getting the listener's attention and while the listener is reading, engrossed in a TV program, or otherwise preoccupied.*
- VII. Thou shalt not speak while your face is hidden in shadow.*
- VIII. Thou shalt not obstruct a view of your mouth while speaking.*
- IX. Thou shalt not speak rapidly or by shouting.*
- X. Thou shalt be patient, supportive and loving when the listener appears to have difficulty comprehending what has been said.*

*[www.chha-hamilton.ca](http://www.chha-hamilton.ca)*



# WARNING

## Buying Hearing Aids from the Internet?

### Serious Health Risks

In Ontario, a prescription is required by law prior to a hearing aid being dispensed.

- Without obtaining the assistance of qualified hearing healthcare professionals, you will not have obtained proper testing, selection, counseling and dispensing.
- Hearing Aids are a Class II Medical Device which must be approved by Health Canada to ensure they are safe and effective.
- Hearing aids over the internet may be counterfeit, cause serious infections, be recalled due to safety concerns or have missing parts.



Be Safe. Love Your Ears !





# Beethoven & Bone Conduction

Ludwig van Beethoven was a German composer (c. 1770–1827) who composing his most beautiful and extraordinary music while going deaf is an almost superhuman feat of creative genius.

**Beethoven** began to lose his **hearing in approximately 1801**. He suffered a severe form of tinnitus, a "roar" in his ears that made it hard for him to appreciate music and as a result, avoided conversation.

An interesting fact, **Beethoven**, discovered **Bone Conduction**. He found a way to hear the piano through his jawbone by attaching a rod to his piano and clenching it in his teeth. ... **Bone Conduction** bypasses the eardrums. [If you wish more information on Bone Conduction, be sure to attend the CHHA-Hamilton & Area Branch meeting on March 26<sup>th</sup>. Details on page 1.]

In terms of the astonishing output of superlatively complex, original and beautiful music, this period in Beethoven's life is unrivaled by any other composer in history.

He died on March 26, 1827, at the age of 56, of post-hepatic cirrhosis of the liver, although there is dispute over the cause of his death.

Researchers at Harvard Medical School and Boston Children's Hospital have found a potential treatment for hereditary deafness, the same condition thought to have caused Beethoven to lose his hearing. Scientists are using a new gene-editing approach they say could someday prevent profound hearing loss.

Beethoven's Fifth Symphony is a cornerstone of classical music. It's hard to believe the composer was almost completely deaf from a genetic condition when he finished it.

Now, these aptly named Beethoven mice might hold the key to a potential cure. Scientists believe the animals have a defect in the same gene that most believe may have caused Beethoven's deafness.



Researchers identified a hearing gene called TMC one. It's a gene that comes in pairs. Using a newly refined gene-editing system, they disabled the defective copy of the TMC one gene, leaving the good gene in place. "By eliminating just the bad copy, that would be sufficient to preserve hearing," said David Corey, Ph.D., professor of neurobiology at Harvard medical School. "We put little scalp electrodes on the back of the head, play sounds into the ear, and can measure the brain activity in response," Jeffery Holt, Ph.D., professor of otolaryngology at Boston Children's Hospital, said.

A famed composer, his namesake mice, and a team of scientists using cutting-edge medicine to help people who would otherwise go deaf... hear.

The scientists said this research paves the way for using the new editing system to treat as many as 3,500 other genetic diseases that are caused by one defective copy of a gene. It's important to note that Holt holds patents on TMC one gene therapy.

<https://www.wmccactionnews5.com/2020/01/29/best-life-beethoven-mice-prevent-deafness-medicines-next-big-thing/>

# WHY JOIN CHHA?

- We offer Lip/speech reading classes to assist you in communicating
- We are advocates for those who suffer from hearing loss
- We host events that help build community amongst hard of hearing individuals
- We raise funds to assist the hard of hearing in our region

All of these projects help us to fulfill CHHA's mission to make the community a better place for the hard of hearing.  
Please renew your membership *or* join us for the first time and find out what CHHA is all about.



To keep our association strong we have to know that *you* are supporting us by becoming a member.

*Craig Ellis,*

Membership Chair

## **CHHA-Hamilton Membership Application & Renewal Form**

Your Membership is due effective ***now*** to – August 31, **2020**

**Please mail this form with your payment to:**

CHHA Membership, 762 Upper James, Box 122 Hamilton, ON L9C 3A2

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: 19—30 \_\_\_\_ 31—50 \_\_\_\_ 51+ \_\_\_\_

**I hereby apply for one of the following memberships (please check one):**

Individual Membership: \$35.00 / year

Family Membership: \$50.00 / year

Lifetime Membership: \$350.00 plus \$5.00 / year

*Make cheques payable to: CHHA-Hamilton*

**Donations to CHHA-Hamilton** may be made in memory of loved ones and friends.

Tax receipts will be issued and announcements sent to the family.

Charitable Reg. No. 89647 8419 RR0001

***Remember . . . You are not alone!***