

CANADIAN HARD OF HEARING ASSOCIATION - BC CHAPTER'S

THE LOOP



Canadian Hard of Hearing Association British Columbia Chapter

A consumer-run, non-profit,
self-help organization working with
hard of hearing consumers, their families
and support networks.

WE OFFER

Education:
Conferences, Workshops,
Resources and Outreach

Peer Support and Guidance:
Managing Your Hearing Loss Courses
and Online Hearing Loss Mentoring

Advocacy:
Public Policy and
Self-advocacy Skills Development

www.chha-bc.org
info@chha-bc.org

Message from the President



DR. RUTH WARICK
President, CHHA-BC

Without volunteers, we'd be a nation without a soul." – Rosalynn Carter

Hugh Percy Hetherington (1936 to 2026) was a volunteer par excellence. He was President, Treasurer, Secretary and so much more of the North Shore Branch of the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association. He devoted his retirement years to his volunteer work and lead monthly Sound Advice sessions for hard of hearing persons to talk and share together, He was a pioneer in providing hearing accessibility, helping many churches, local centres and other venues to set up hearing accessibility systems.

As a community, we will gather to celebrate Hugh's life on Monday, April 27th from 9:30 to 11:30 am at Silver Harbour, the very site that he led Sound Advice sessions for so many years. Please see the notice in this issue and read more about Hugh, written by Flo Spratt.

My thanks to Alan Dion, President of North Shore, and board members Mike Hocevar and Chuen-Ping Lau in organizing the event. They have also been planning next steps with me for the Branch which is in transition since a members' meeting last year voted to discontinue.

In this issue you will find an announcement of a world premiere of the film, *Heard*, on April 14. Just as we were going to press we learned that the event is sold-out, but we have also heard that there may be another showing. If you are not already booked for the first showing, I suggest going to the website www.heard-film.com to sign up for updates for the second screening. It is rare that a hard of hearing person shares their story on film – thank you Brian for having the courage to do so.

I would also like to give a shout-out to Gael Hannan whose Ted talk is now available on YouTube. More information is in an article. We are very proud of Gael who also serves as Vice-President of the CHHA BC Board.

This month CHHA BC has been engaged in two major consultations. One pertains to service delivery for children 0-5 being undertaken by the Ministry of Children and Families. They invite the public to comment in a survey by April 3rd. Please take the opportunity to do so. The survey link is www.ngage.gov.bc.ca/deafandhardofhearing.

Another major consultation pertains to over-the-counter hearing aids. The Ministry of Health is considering a regulation change to allow for the sale of non-prescribed hearing aids (another term for OTCs). CHHA BC with CHHA Vancouver has submitted a position statement which is posted on our website www.chha-bc.org. Key components of our position are that we support over-the-counter hearing aid sales for persons with professionally assessed mild hearing losses, but not other levels of hearing loss. We recommend better standards by Health Canada and more funding for affordable hearing aids for all citizens.

Wishing you all the best as spring is here and Easter is just around the corner.

With warmest regards,

Ruth Warick
President
President@chha-bc.org

Community Celebrates World Hearing Day with Hearing Health Fair



JOY BORGONIA
Operations Manager, CHHA-BC



Attendants at the Hearing Health Fair.

On March 3, 2026, the hearing loss community came together to celebrate World Hearing Day with a vibrant and informative Hearing Health Fair held at Floral Hall in VanDusen Botanical Garden, Vancouver, BC. This year's theme, inspired by the World Health Organization's message, is "From Communities to Classrooms: Hearing Care for Every Child in British Columbia." The Canadian Hard of Hearing Association - British Columbia highlighted the urgent need for accessible hearing care for children across the province.

The event aimed to break down communication barriers and raise awareness about the importance of hearing health for individuals of all ages. One hundred guests attended to learn, connect, and explore resources designed to support hearing wellness.

The program featured informative talks by Dr. Lorie Jestad on hearing health and aging. A panel discussion allowed hearing aid and cochlear implant users to share their personal stories. Dr. Paul Mick provided insights into cochlear implant surgery, while Meredith Wilson discussed the process

of obtaining a cochlear implant. Guests also had the opportunity to visit booths from various cochlear implant manufacturers, as well as representatives from CHHA-BC, the Wavefront Centre for Communication Accessibility, and UBC's Audiology and Speech Sciences. Guests signed up for hearing tests and learned about useful resources and listening devices.

The Hearing Health Fair showed how important hearing health is and helped build a community where everyone can communicate and connect easily and confidently.



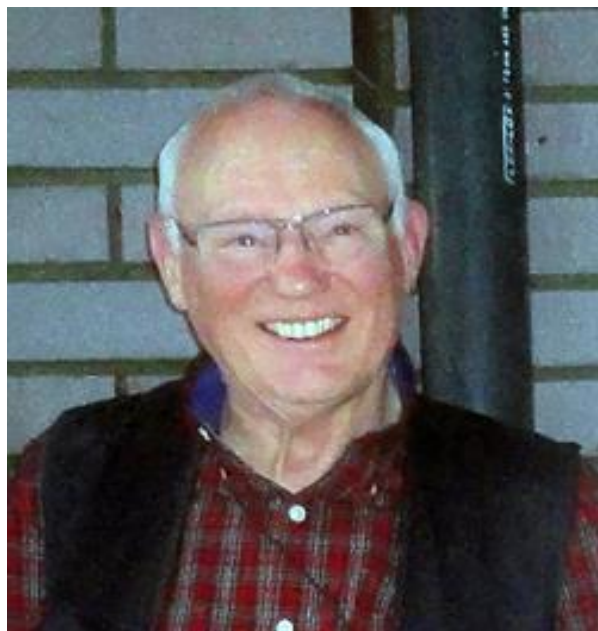
CHHA-BC Table at the Hearing Health Fair

Remembering Hugh Hetherington



Flo Spratt

Canadian Hard of Hearing Association – North Shore Branch



Hugh Hetherington

A wise man, long ago, spoke these words: *“A man shall be satisfied with good by the fruit of his mouth: and the recompense of a man’s hands shall be rendered unto him”*. (Proverbs 12:14, King James Bible)

This proverb reminds me of Hugh.

Hugh and I worked together in Sound Advice, where we facilitated a monthly support group for keen learners and mentors within the hard of hearing community. We started this group in 2003 at the West Vancouver Seniors’ Centre and later added a second venue, at North Vancouver’s Silver

Harbour. I am particularly grateful for how Providence brought us together, as we complemented each other with our own skills and knowledge.

Hugh also worked in other capacities for the broader hard of hearing community.

Let me describe some examples of how this proverb reflects Hugh and his many years of service to our community:

- In our meetings, Hugh eagerly shared his rich and current knowledge of the fast-moving technology in the hearing aid industry. He encouraged us to use tools that he knew could make a difference; for example, specific assistive listening devices that could best fit our

needs, maximizing our current aids' capabilities with assistive listening devices, and other technologies he was familiar with.

- Sound Advice meetings were a highlight for Hugh. After each session, Hugh and I would share reflections of what we learned from those who shared their experiences. He often expressed what he learned from the participants.
- Hugh paid countless visits over the years to homes of those who needed help with connecting their hearing aids to their audio-visual systems. No request for help was too small for Hugh.
- Implementing the loop system in North Shore's churches, theatres and public meeting spaces was largely due to Hugh's tireless consulting services for these venues. One only needed to ask; Hugh would fit a consultation visit in his already busy schedule.
- Hugh's editorship, written articles and publishing the Branch's "Mountain Ear" newsletter were professionally executed and timely, each issue providing advice, summaries of presentations and notices of upcoming events.
- Hugh worked with and around the various challenges and "obstacles" that appeared over the years. For example, how we could serve the hard of hearing community during COVID with the in-person restrictions. Zoom technology was suggested, and Hugh readily managed and maintained the platform so that we would all stay connected.
- Hugh's personality, skills and knowledge fitted his role in our branch like a hand in glove. I never witnessed an angry reaction from Hugh to challenging situations; his calm demeanor gave me confidence that the situation would be resolved successfully.

Hugh's Gifts and His Lasting Impact

Throughout the many years Hugh devoted to our community, he distinguished himself through his exceptional generosity and unwavering commitment. He freely shared his extensive knowledge, always encouraging others and offering reliable support whenever it was needed. Hugh dedicated his time and resources selflessly, ensuring that members of the hard of hearing community had the assistance and guidance they required.

Those who knew Hugh held him in high regard, admiring his kindness and deeply appreciating his efforts. In turn, Hugh responded with the same warmth and affection, continually offering his unique gifts and giving of himself without hesitation. His consistent generosity and caring nature left a profound and enduring impact on all whose lives he touched.

The Proverb

Hugh was content, indeed, satisfied to be used for the benefit of others, especially the many people connected to the Hard of Hearing community on the North Shore and beyond. He often spoke to me that he received more back than he gave! More than once, when offered some recognition for his services, he would decline, telling me he did not need such recognition: his joy was to serve. Fulfilling the proverb above, Hugh was a man who truly was satisfied with good by the gifts that he gave.



About Flo: Flo Spratt joined the North Shore branch in the late 1990s. It was not long before she and Hugh recognized their shared desire to make a greater impact on the HOH community, leading to the creation of Sound Advice in 2002. They formed a strong partnership: Hugh brought his expert knowledge of audio technology, while Flo contributed her background in special education and public speaking. Together, they provided effective solutions to the real-world challenges faced by individuals with hearing loss.

New Documentary Film: HEARD



The poster for HEARD

HEARD features filmmaker Brian Ceci's quest to accept his own hearing loss, a condition he's dealt with since birth but unconsciously avoided throughout his life to blend in. Searching for community, Brian connects with four other people whose unique hearing experiences help him connect the dots and move forward with his own hearing.

The film premiere followed by a live Q&A session with the cast on April 14th is now sold out.

Signup for updates on a second screening on the film website (www.heard-film.com).

CHHA-BC is pleased to be one of the sponsors for the first screening of the HEARD film.

How to Communicate Better With Hearing Loss



Gael Hannan addressing the audience at TEDxVictoria

Gael Hannan is a prominent speaker and advocate for positive aging and hearing health, based in British Columbia. She empowers seniors and raises awareness about hearing loss through engaging talks and advocacy.

Have you ever nodded along without fully grasping what was said? Gael explains how this common reaction can harm relationships and emphasizes the importance of honest communication for deeper connections. With 30 years of experience and several award-winning books, she highlights the power of authenticity and understanding. Currently living on Vancouver Island, Gael champions accessibility, inclusion, and meaningful connections for all.

Watch on YouTube at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xk2WGDXYKRI>

When Asked to Repeat Yourself, You Have Options



Gael Hannan

Author, Speaker, and Vice President CHHA-BC



The 10 most used words in the English language are *the, be, to, of, and, a, in, that, have, and I*.

For people with hearing loss, however, this list might include the words *pardon, what* or even *huh* – yes, it’s in the dictionary! We use them frequently because we ask people to repeat themselves frequently.

What? Wha? Huh? Hey? Pardon? Sorry? Hmm? All of these can be often accompanied by an upward thrust of the chin, raised eyebrows and a small head tilt to favor a better ear. With people we know well, we use a questioning grunt-noise or give a long stare as we try to process what was said in hopes of getting it right.

Just as we have different ways of asking for repeats, how people comply is equally diverse, but not all repeats are appropriate or even effective.

In the following five examples of ‘repeat styles’, the first two demonstrate good communication style. The others not only have the potential to irritate us, we may judge you as insensitive, impatient and you should count yourself lucky if we ever waste time talking with you again.

1. **Straight Repeat:** Repeat the words in the same tone of voice, same facial expressions and same rate of speech. In short, exactly how you said it the first time. This is often sufficient, but not always.
2. **Let's Try Another Way.** If you're asked a second time to repeat what you said, rephrase with different words and in a different order but convey the same message. (I prefer a straight repeat first, followed by this, if necessary, because I may be confused by the second iteration if I've caught most of the first one.)
3. **Long Pause Response.** Slight roll of the eyes which, trust me, we can see because we are speechreading geniuses. And we can also sense that major ferris-wheel eyerolling inside your head! You might give a little sigh which we may not hear, but we see the slight intake of breath and long exhale that says, oh-gawd-not-again...before you give the repeat.
4. **Dramatic Repeat (sometimes known as the AI approach):** You pause to consider how you're going to do this, visibly gather your strength, and then you reply in a **louder voice** and/or with **significant weight given to each word, with eyes boring into ours.**
5. **Over the Top.** Your head moves forward and your lips contort into odd shapes as each word leaves your mouth. You are borderline yelling. This is off-putting and unhelpful. Also, frightening.

People with hearing loss need to negotiate good communication with friends, family and colleagues. While we can't always control the listening environment or the spontaneous speech of others, we can use 'teachable moments', with as much grace as we can muster. *Thank you but there's no need to yell. Can you face me? Just speak normally or just a smidgen slower?*

If you're not sure what to do when asked for a repeat, just ask us!

Reprinted by permission of Gael Hannan and HearingHealthMatters.org



Honouring Hugh Percy Hetherington

CHHA NORTH SHORE BRANCH

A celebration of life will be held in honour of Hugh Percy Hetherington, who passed away on January 16, 2026, at the age of 89 after a brief illness. Hugh was a foremost hard of hearing leader in North Shore and British Columbia, generously offering his time and expertise to benefit countless hard of hearing persons. He was a mainstay for CHHA North Shore Branch, serving as President and Secretary Treasurer for numerous years.

Please join us in an acknowledgement of his life and contributions on **Monday, April 27, 2026.**

Time: 9:30 am to 11:30 am

Location: Silver Harbour Centre

144 East 22nd Street, North Vancouver

Refreshments will be served.

Kindly confirm attendance to northshore@chha-bc.org by April 20th.



WEBINAR: Making Virtual Communication Truly Accessible

WAVEFRONT CENTRE



DATE AND TIME: April 8, 2026, at 4:30-6:00 pm PT

COST: Free

LOCATION: Online via Zoom. Register here:

https://wavefrontcentre.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_vbS24w7hQC-nSSsvKS1UnA#/registration

This webinar bridges the gap between evidence and everyday practice for how to make virtual sign language interpreting and captioning services more accessible and reliable for Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing people.

Presenters:

- **Brenda Poon**, Senior Research Fellow, Community Research Department Lead
- **Chris Atchison**, Research Support, Community Research Department
- **JoAnn Bentley**, Director, Accessibility Services
- **Aminah Clerigo**, Executive Housekeeper, Holiday Inn Express Metrotown



THE UNIVERSITY
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



WEBINAR: Recognizing and Responding to Hearing Loss in Adults

UBC and WAVEFRONT CENTRE

DATE AND TIME: April 9, 2026, at 6:30-8:00 pm PT

COST: Free

LOCATION: Online

This webinar for primary care providers and hearing health professionals will explore how primary care providers can support adults with suspected hearing loss through effective screening, communication strategies and practical tools.

For more information and to register for the webinar, visit

<https://ubccpd.ca/learn/learning-activities/course?eventtemplate=1073-recognizing-and-responding-to-hearing-loss-in-adults-what-every-primary-care-provider-needs-to-know>.

This is an outcome of the Breaking Barriers research project undertaken by Wavefront Centre and the University of British Columbia's School of Audiology and Speech Sciences.



Hard of Hearing Peer Group

VCH Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Deaf-Blind Well Being Program (WBP)

Hard of Hearing Peer Group Spring 2026

Learn tips and tricks, share stories, joys, and hardships with other HoH people.

6 sessions with experienced facilitators

Every Wednesday on Zoom
6:00-7:30pm

April 8
April 15
April 22
April 29
May 6
May 13

To enroll, contact Geo at: geo.mclean@vch.ca

Learn tips and tricks, share stories, joys and hardships with other HoH people.

6 sessions with experienced facilitators

DATES AND TIME: Every Wednesdays
(6 sessions (April 8, April 15, April 22, April 29, May 6, May 13))

DATES AND TIME: 6:00-7:30 pm

COST: Free

LOCATION: Zoom

To enroll, contact Geo at geo.mclean@vch.ca

Web: <https://deafwellbeing.vch.ca/series/hard-of-hearing-peer-group-spring-2026/>



Canadian Hard of Hearing Association British Columbia Chapter

VOLUNTEER JOB OPPORTUNITY

Position of Treasurer for CHHA-BC

Are you enthusiastic about supporting the hard of hearing community? Do you have a background in finance or accounting? Are you interested in contributing to the hard of hearing community? CHHA-BC is seeking a Volunteer Treasurer to join our board.

CHHA-BC is a non-profit organization dedicated to advocating for and supporting individuals who are hard of hearing across British Columbia. We strive to improve accessibility, awareness, and resources for our community.

We are looking for candidates who:

- Are hard of hearing and residing in BC.
- Have a background in finance, accounting, or related fields.
- Are willing to contribute time and expertise to our mission.

Interested?

Please send your resume and a brief statement of interest to info@chha-bc.org.

Join us in advocating for accessibility and inclusion.

Share your experiences with the community

For each edition of the newsletter, CHHA-BC reaches out to the hard of hearing community and asks if anyone would like to tell us a story about themselves and how they have dealt with being hard of hearing.

If you would like to contribute a short story for a future edition, please email operationsmanager@chha-bc.org.



Canadian Hard of Hearing Association
British Columbia Chapter

CANADIAN HARD OF HEARING ASSOCIATION, BRITISH COLUMBIA CHAPTER

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LINKEDIN: linkedin.com/company/chhabc/

CHHA-BC ACKNOWLEDGES DONORS FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTION

It is through such generous contributions that we can continue to offer programs and services for hard of hearing persons. Thank you for your donation.

CHHA-BC ACKNOWLEDGES PROVINCIAL FUNDING FOR THE LOOP

This financial support makes possible regular and direct communication with members and friends.