

HEAR HEAR

M A G A Z I N E

HEAR the Technology



Find out more about
our **NEW** "Include-ME"
Program Pg. 12

**Spring
2023**



**Hear Entendre
Québec**

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Follow us on



In Loving Memory Of

June Wilkins, Dini Bourinot,
 Richard Lubelsky, Dr Clermont Fradette,
 Elie Elias & Phyllis Amber

We would like to send our deepest condolences to their families and friends. These members have touched us and supported the organization for years. We will miss them dearly.



We are deeply saddened to hear of the passing of Richard Lubelsky & David Tait. They were true supporters of HEAR Hear Quebec. Their hard work and dedication as Board Members will always be remembered and cherished by all of us.

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A Word from the Executive Director



Serving our Members is at the Very Heart of Our Mission

2023 is off to a great start and we are so excited for all the opportunities that lie ahead. We have new staff and new programs like **"INCLUDE-ME/ INCLUS-MOI"** that are inline with our strategic direction, and as you read this edition of the HEARHEAR magazine a new season is in the air with April just around the corner.

However we are also very aware that there is a lot of insecurity with the increased cost of living and the news of a looming recession. Everyone is reevaluating their spending habits and looking for ways to save money and be cost efficient.

Serving our members is at the very heart of our mission. One of our main priorities this year is to review and evaluate our current membership structure. We want to ensure that you are aware and are more than satisfied with all of the programs and services you get access to with your membership. We want to make sure that you feel that your membership brings value to your life and helps you along your hearing journey.

Last year we worked with students from McGill University to discuss how our membership structure could be updated and have an even better impact for our members. They surveyed our members and did an internal analysis of our current structure.

They have made several recommendations on how we can improve and update our memberships.

However, before we move forward and make a decision that will impact you, we need to **"HEAR"**

from you. We are committed to consulting and working with our members every step of the way. We will be reaching out to you to participate in focus groups and to complete some feedback surveys. We will also be asking you to share your stories in the next couple of months. We need to know your opinions, thoughts, needs, and priorities related to your membership and how it helps you with your hearing journey. As well as what you enjoy doing with us!

Check out these great events happening over the next couple of months. Don't forget to register for them.

- **Volunteer and Donor Appreciation:** Save the date: **April 19th, 2023** this will be an in-person celebration after a pause of 2 years. We are so excited to wine and dine all of our amazing volunteers including our new Peer Mentors and donors, but mostly we want to share the impact you have on our members during their journey.
- **Annual General Meeting** save the date **May 30th, 2023**
- **4th edition of Access Comedy**



"We are committed to consulting with you every step of the way."



Cochlear Implants in Montreal: *The story of a dream becoming reality*



Doctor Tamara is an assistant professor at the Department of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery at McGill University. She is an expert in Otolaryngology, Neurotology and Skull Base Surgery and holds degrees of MD, CM and FRCSC. Additionally, Dr. Mijovic serves as the Otologist and Neurotologist Director of the Adult Western Pole - Cochlear Implant Program at the MUHC.

In the field of ear surgery and hearing rehabilitation, no innovation comes close to cochlear implantation in terms of quality of life improvement. The development of this technology in the 1980s and its implantation in millions of deaf children and adults over the last 40 years, has changed the profile of deafness in the world.

History of cochlear implantation in Quebec

The first cochlear implant in Canada was performed by Dr Melvin Schloss at the Montreal Children's Hospital in the early 1980s. In 1987, under a government mandate to concentrate the expertise of this emerging ear surgery, l'Hôtel Dieu de Québec and the Institut de réadaptation en déficience physique de Québec (IRDQP) joined forces and founded the Québec Cochlear Implant program.

For more than 30 years, Quebec City was the sole site where cochlear implant surgeries could be performed. It ensured that expertise was developed in the use of this new technology.

The first cochlear implant in Canada was performed by Dr Melvin Schloss at the Montreal Children's Hospital in the early 1980s

Over the years, as cochlear implantation was becoming a standard otologic procedure offered in most university centers across the world, fellowship-trained otologists and neurotologists skilled in cochlear implantation surgeries returned to practice in several centers in the Greater Montreal area. Attempts to establish a Montreal Cochlear Implant program have failed several times over the years to finally succeed in 2018 under a patient-led initiative pioneered by William Steinberg, a double cochlear implant recipient and the mayor of Hampstead, and supported by McGill University and University of Montreal Otolaryngology departments.

The pleas for greater access to care closer to home for the hard of hearing population, already challenged in their capacity to navigate the healthcare system, was finally heard by the CAQ government and the process of establishing a western pole (point of service) for cochlear implantation was started in 2019. The efforts were slowed down by the COVID-19 pandemic, but the team was able to get back on track and welcome the first cochlear implant patients at the MUHC in October 2022.

The Western Pole of the Quebec Cochlear Implant Program

The McGill University Health Centre (MUHC), with its partners, has become the second cochlear implant point of service in Quebec. The hearing impaired and deaf population, living in the western part of the province, both adult and pediatric, can now be treated in Montreal by a full team of bilingual hearing professionals. The Lethbridge-Layton-Mackay Rehabilitation Centre of the CIUSSS Centre-Ouest-de-l'Île-de-Montréal and the Centre de réadaptation en déficience physique Raymond-Dewar (IRD) of the CIUSSS Centre-Sud-de-l'Île-de-Montréal are the MUHC's partners in the care pathway for patients living in the western



Many of our Members are on the waiting list to receive their Cochlear Implant

part of the province. Otolaryngologists from the University of Montreal will also be joining the McGill team of surgeons in the care of cochlear implant candidates at the MUHC.

In terms of organization, for children and adults, the medical component (evaluation, surgery and medical follow-ups), the initial intensive programming and the programming follow-ups during the first twelve months are provided by the MUHC cochlear implant team. Specifically, children are cared for at the Montreal Children's Hospital and adults are cared for at the Royal Victoria Hospital.

After the first year, programming follow-ups are provided by the Lethbridge-Layton-Mackay Rehabilitation Centre or by the IRD, based on the patients' language of preference. Intensive functional rehabilitation following surgery is provided by the rehabilitation center in the patient's region or by one of the rehabilitation centers mentioned above, if the regional rehabilitation center does not offer this service.



1st MUHC Adult cochlear implant clinic held on Oct 28th 2022
(From left to right)

Marjolaine Couture – CI Audiologist
Dr Emily Kay-Rivest Otolaryngologist
Dr Tamara Mijovic Otolaryngologist
François Prevost Audiologist and Coordinator of the Western Pole Cochlear Implant Program

To get an appointment with the MUHC cochlear implant team, the application must still be sent to the Quebec Cochlear Implant Program's provincial office located in Quebec City. This emphasizes that there is still one single Cochlear Implantation Program in Quebec with two points of care (the western pole in Montreal and the eastern pole in Quebec City) that apply the same candidacy evaluation criteria and have an overall equivalent approach to care. The development of two points of care is an immense win for the Quebec population who will not only benefit from care closer to home, but will also see a reduction in wait times for implantation as the process has led to an overall increase in the number of cochlear implants offered in the province of Quebec.



Looking into the future

The first cochlear implant candidates were welcomed for evaluation at the MUHC in October 2022 and we are aiming to perform the first surgeries in January 2023. Behind the scene, a colossal amount of teamwork within the MUHC and instrumental collaborations with our partners were necessary to make this dream a reality. We are very proud of what the western pole has accomplished so far. We look forward to collaborating with the eastern pole and advocating together for the enlargement of selection criteria to allow an even wider patient population to benefit from the wonders of cochlear implantation.



William Steinberg was born with severe hearing loss which he overcame with cochlear implants that he received in 2004 & 2018. In 2019, **Hear Quebec** recognized him with the “**Hearing Hear’os Award**”, given to an individual who has had when a positive impact on the hearing health community, for his efforts as the former Mayor of the Town of Hampstead to persuade the Quebec Government to perform cochlear implant surgeries in Montreal. He is currently the President of the Cochlear Implant Recipients Association.

Legacy Gift Brings Technology up to date for our Members



Layne has been the program manager at Hear Quebec for over a year. She is passionate about staying active and being a great mom. Layne's mission is to stay engaged with our members about what matters to them.

Throughout Hear Quebec's 40 + year history we have seen technology around hearing loss evolve and improve. There are many challenges to keeping up, including costs, skills development and access to the newest technology available.

Thanks to a generous legacy donation from the Estate of Catherine Tomson we were able to purchase a brand new FM system made by Rogers Phonak. This new digital system is smaller yet more powerful. It is capable of bringing a better listening experience to both large scale events or intimate group settings.

This technology works by placing a 360° microphone in the center of the table you are sitting at, or by attaching a special microphone to the person speaking. What is amazing about these microphones is that it is able to focus on the speaker, and eliminates superfluous or distracting sounds. The microphone then transmits sound wirelessly through the receiver you are wearing to your hearing aid through your T-Coil and the neckloop, or by headphones. We also have a second system designed for larger events such as concerts, plays and comedy shows that connects to the sound system being used.



The system can be used by people who wear hearing aids as well as those who do not.

How it can work for you

You may be thinking to yourself: great, but how will this system benefit me?

This system will be available at most of our in-person activities beginning this spring such as Coffee Breaks, **HEAR**Talks, Cocktail hour and of course the AGM. You can also ask us if we can bring it to where you go as part of our new **Include-ME** program! Do you have a community space, place of worship or an upcoming event that you would like to see become more accessible? We are happy to coordinate a demonstration of how this technology works with the places that are important to you.

Contact info@hearhear.org to find out where and when the system will be in use or to request a demonstration of how it works.

“This FM system was great for the meeting, I had no trouble hearing everybody. When I take it off now it's like oh no! I want to bring it home! It helped define everything”

Linda Theriault, Member

Auditory Training: *The Link Between Hearing & Understanding*



Alana Christou, MPH, Partner, Neurotone, Inc. Master of Public Health and currently the Director of Talent & Operations at Frankel, has always been driven by a desire to make a positive impact on people. She thrives when she can contribute in a way that benefits those around her, both personally and professionally.

We know that most hearing loss can't be reversed. However, auditory training programs can make life-changing improvements to how hearing-challenged individuals are able to communicate with the world around them. For more than 20 years, Listening and Communication Enhancement (LACE) has been helping new hearing aid wearers and adults with listening challenges to do just that.

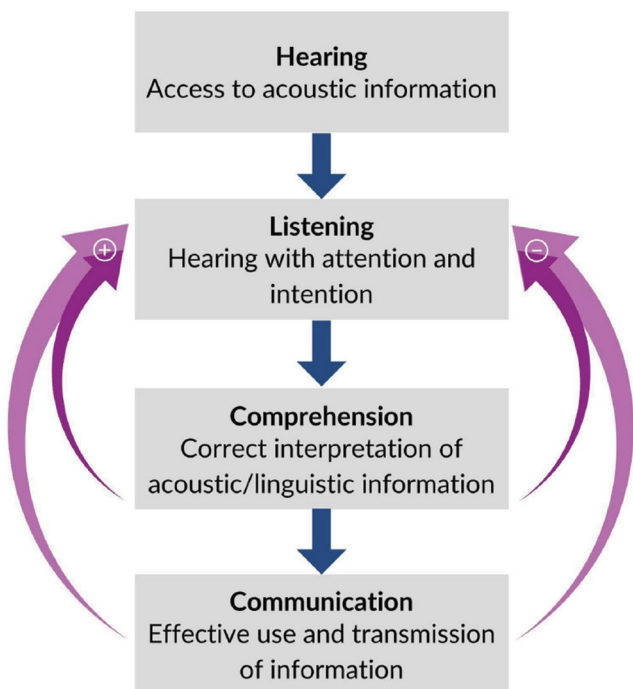
LACE is an aural rehabilitation solution that works to improve users' ability to listen to and understand speech in three common difficult and often frustrating listening situations: in the presence of background noise, with rapid

speakers, and when trying to listen to one voice in the presence of a competing speaker. To understand how LACE helps people with hearing loss, let's look at the elements of communication Figure1*.

Listening and understanding are part of the active process that connects hearing to communication. Hearing sounds is one thing - it's simply access to acoustic information, which devices like hearing aids can provide. But listening to and understanding those sounds is another thing: it's a skill that requires participation and active involvement from your brain. Without listening and understanding, communication suffers.

When hearing loss reduces your ability to hear, it often leads you to disengage from the sounds of the world around you. This reduces the time you spend exercising your brain's listening skills and working to understand what you hear. As a result, individuals with hearing loss experience a weakened connection between their ears and their brain, with the brain essentially becoming out of practice in understanding sounds and how to interpret them. This effect can be especially prevalent in challenging listening situations like noisy environments or when someone is speaking quickly.

***Figure 1. The interaction of the elements of communication. Central to LACE is the principle that enhanced listening skills lead to better comprehension and communication, and better comprehension and communication will further enhance listening skills.**





This spring we will be developing an Auditory Training Pilot project, which will be launched in 2023. Included in this program is access to the LACE online training program as well as weekly group sessions with Hear Quebec to further reinforce your listening skills. As there will be very limited space, priority will be given to members who have previously participated in Speechreading, Skills Building or the Peer Mentoring program.

The goal of this program is to give our members the space to really challenge themselves to practice and reinforce their skills in relation to their hearing loss.

The path to reconnecting hearing and understanding lies with retraining the brain, and that's where LACE comes in. In the same way physical therapy is necessary to rebuild physical strength and compensate for weakness following surgery or an injury, LACE strengthens the ear-to-brain connection when it is weakened by hearing loss. It's like physical therapy for your brain.

LACE is simple, self-paced, and usable on any device with a modern web browser and an internet connection (computer, tablet, etc.). The program consists of 11 self-paced, scored training sessions with four types of training tasks: Speech-in-Noise, Competing Speaker, Rapid Speaker, and Target Word (auditory working memory). Three types of standardized assessments, including the QuickSIN, as well as communication tips and strategies, are also included. LACE adapts to each user's performance, so it will make sure all levels of hearing ability are challenged and able to work to improve their skills.

Almost anyone who struggles with mild to severe hearing loss can benefit from improving their listening and communication skills with auditory training. Scientific studies on LACE have shown many benefits, including improvements in speech-in-noise perception and understanding of competing sentences, increased overall communication function, positive changes in neurophysiologic responses, QuickSIN score improvement, and reduction in hearing aid returns.

Auditory training can be especially valuable for new hearing aid wearers. The weakened ear-to-brain connection caused by hearing loss means hearing aids usually aren't an immediate hearing fix in the same way that glasses can be for compromised eyesight. If the brain is out of practice listening to and interpreting sounds, simply regaining access to them can be overwhelming and confusing. LACE provides a tangible way to help your brain re-learn how to listen and understand the influx of sounds hearing aids provide.

Improving listening and communication skills with auditory training is an important component of the journey to better communication for individuals with hearing loss. LACE is a tool that allows anyone to take an active role in their hearing health journey and get the most out of the sounds of life.



LACE is an easy-to-use, web-based software program usable on any device with a modern web browser and an internet connection

Membership & Registration

Membership is valid between **April 1 and March 31** of each year and must be renewed annually. Please complete both sides of the enclosed 2023-24 membership form if you are a new member. This form is available on-line at: <https://hearhear.org/become-a-member/>

Renewal Membership Forms for the **2023-2024** membership year, past members will receive a simplified renewal form. To complete the renewal form please sign and return to Hear Québec with payment. If you did not receive your renewal form, please contact: info@hearhear.org

Registration is mandatory for all programs, events, and services. Please register prior to your activity and not on the day that it starts. Indicate your interest on the registration forms and complete the process with your payment. Only members who complete the registration and payment will have their seat reserved. Spots will be reserved on a first-come, first-served basis. Register early to secure your place! This form is available on-line at: <https://hearhear.org/become-a-member/>

Accessibility, All programs, events, and activities will be **accessible for those with hearing loss**. This can include **sound amplification, FM systems, or Live Transcribe**. If there is a virtual event, we will use accessible platforms with closed captioning. If you feel that you need further accommodations, please **contact: layneturner@hearhear.org** for more information. To ensure the accessibility and safety of our members, clear accessible masks will be provided when needed.

Payment Methods:

Hear Quebec offers 3 easy and secure ways to process your payments:

- On-line: You can conveniently make secure payments online at <https://hearhear.nationbuilder.com/donate>. Please use a message box to detail what your payment is for ex: 15\$ membership and 25\$ donation.
- You may also pay in-person using cash, cheque, credit card, or debit card.
- You may send your cheques by mail. Please, make cheques payable to Hear Québec. We kindly ask you to do not send cash by mail

Organization/Professional Membership

Becoming a professional member with us gives you access to exclusive benefits such as our referral list, bi-annual publication, marketing material and advertisement opportunities.

If there is a concern due to financial hardship, please email the Executive Director at: heidywager@hearhear.org or call 514-488-5552 ext 4500.

Please return all completed forms by mail, email, or in-person, and ensure that corresponding payments are made in accordance with the forms. The available online forms should be emailed to: info@hearhear.org



Socializing & Community Building

This spring we will continue to offer daytime coffee breaks online, complemented by a monthly Lunch Meet up in the West Island to make sure we build our community. Yes, lunch is included! Cocktail hours continue online in the evenings, plus we have individual peer mentoring.

1 Coffee Breaks

Mode: **Online** End Date: **June 7th**
Days: **Wednesdays** Time: **10:30am to**
Start Date: **April 12th** **11:30am**

3 Les Rencontres Francais

Lieu de Rencontre:
**7000 Sherbrooke Ouest,
Salle C-233**

Modalite de ces programmes:
Presentiel

- Brunch & Jeux avec Melanie
Le **13 avril**
11h à 14h
- Brunch & Conférence avec Dany Lasablonniere, Oreille Bionique
Le **4 mai**
11h à 14h

5 Peer Mentoring

Do you need support with your hearing loss? We have **11 trained peer mentors available** to help guide you along your hearing journey.

Call us to schedule a one-on-one session with someone who has been through this before and will be there to listen with empathy and compassion.



2 Exceptional Lunch League

Where: **Sarto-Desnoyers Community Center on 1335 Lakeshore Drive in Dorval**

Dates: **April 20th, May 18th and June 15th**

Time: **11am-1pm**

Mode: **In-Person**



4 Cocktail hour

These activities take place in the evening to be accessible for people who work and go to school.

Mode: **Online**

- **Movie Night: "The Sound Barrier: An Irish Documentary about Cochlear Implants"**
The Sound Barrier follows a number of people who decided to receive a cochlear implant. The cameras capture their remarkable journey from silence to sound.

Date: **April 18th**

Time **7:00-8:30 pm**

- **The Hard of Hearing Mama: Parenting with Hearing loss**
Join our featured Perspectives author **Janna Cowper** as she discusses parenting and hearing loss.

Date: **May 11th**

Time: **7:00-8:30 pm**

New Hearing Skills 2.0

Due to popular demand for skills based programs, this spring we will be offering **7 weeks of skill building activities**. These skills are important steps in managing your hearing loss and making the most of the hearing you have. **Space in this program is limited, so priority will be given to members who commit to attendance at all 7 sessions.**

Mode: **In Person**
Time: **10am-12 pm**
Where: **7000 Sherbrooke Street West, Room B-315A**

1 Speechreading

These 2 sessions will focus on practicing the skills you learned in prior classes such as attention critical visual cues, components of speechreading and the techniques for practicing at home.

Dates: **April 11th, 18th**
Presented by: **Jill Johnson**

3 Taking care of you

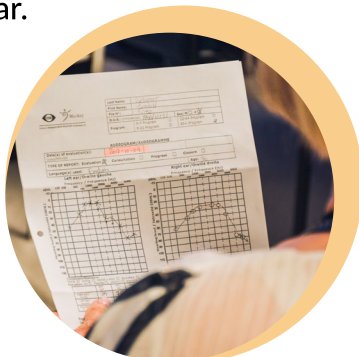
A guide to self-compassion. This session will be a reminder to treat yourself kindly and provide the tools to do so

Dates: **May 9th** Presented by: **TBA**

5 Reading your Audiogram and Auditory training

Learn what your audiogram means and how auditory training can improve your listening skills and your ability to hear.

Dates: **May 23th**
Presented by:
Dale Bonnycastle & Layne Turner



2 Communication Skills

These 2 sessions will discuss how to use constructive strategies to improve communication including optimizing your listening environment, educating others and sensitizing your audience to your needs.

Dates: **April 25th May 2nd**
Presented by: **Dale Bonnycastle**

4 Include-ME

Learn the importance of self advocating and how to become an ambassador for accessibility with our new **"Include-ME"** service.

Dates: **May 16th**
Presented by:
Eva Basch & Layne Turner



HEARTalks:

Stay up to date on the latest technology!
These sessions will happen **in-person** and **streamed online**.



Mode: **Hybrid**
Time: **2:00-3:30 pm**
Where: **7000 Sherbrooke street west
Room C-233 and streamed virtually**

1 Get Smart

How to make the most out of your smart technology

Date: **April 27th**
Presented by: **Paul Evers, Specialized
Educator, Lethbridge-Layton-Mackay**

2 Programming your hearing aid

What is involved and what should you ask your acoustician?

Date: **June 8th**
Presented by: **Joel Morin, Acoustician
at Les Centres Masliah**

Hear Quebec Events & Important Dates

1 Annual General Meeting

Save the date! Learn what Hear Quebec has achieved this year and exercise your right to vote! Dinner and special guest speaker.

Date: **May 30th**

3 Volunteer and Donor Appreciation Event

To include our Annual Awards Ceremony for the 1st time

Date: **April 19th, By invitation only**

5 May "Better Hearing Month"

Special event at the Segal Centre.
More details to follow!

2 Canadian Hard of Hearing Association Annual Conference

This year the CHHA conference will be taking place online. In honor of National Accessibility Week we will be streaming this event at our office. More info to come.

Date: **June 1st -June 2nd**

4 American Sign Language

The Oklahoma School for the Deaf is offering free online ASL classes. If you have always wanted to learn ASL but cost has prevented you, this is a great opportunity.

Scan the QR code
to know more



Summer

Stay tuned this Summer for exciting activities, such as **Shakespeare in the Park & ZOOFEEST Comedy Show**

How turning my voice off created ACCESSIBILITY



Janna is originally from Montreal, Quebec, Canada. She has been moderate to profoundly deaf since birth and has utilized hearing aids since the age of 2. Janna has two daughters, ages 7 and 4, who are also hard of hearing. Janna is currently attending Gallaudet University and completing her certificate to be a Peer Mentor to the deaf and hard of hearing. Janna resides in Orange County, California

Have you ever considered navigating a store or the airport without using your voice?

I was born deaf/hard of hearing and grew up using spoken language(s). Not being exposed to a Deaf culture, it seemed normal to me that as a society we only use our voices to communicate.

One day I came across an Instagram reel in which an ASL user reminisced about using their voice in college and struggling to get accommodations. Their professor eventually asked them, “if others won’t accommodate you, why would you accommodate them?”

I suddenly realized that all my life, I have been the person who accommodates. I accommodate the hearing world by speaking, wearing hearing devices, attending speech therapy, making sure others can understand me, as well as providing accommodations for myself if one wasn’t provided.

Because I use my voice, others tend to think that I don’t need accommodations. This often

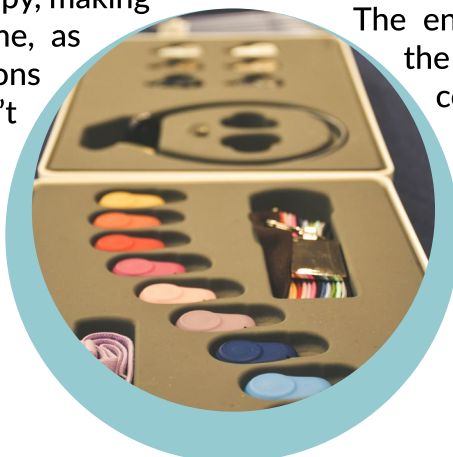
“For turning off your voice in any situation, use your best judgment and comfort level. If it doesn’t feel right or you don’t feel it will help you, please stay in the mode you are comfortable with.”

-Janna-


leads to a breakdown in communication. Where I might be trying to understand all the words and perhaps trying to explain, a hearing person may start talking louder to get their message across and show visible frustration.

The entry of masks into our society at the start of the pandemic led to more communication barriers. There were times I would give up trying to get requested information.

One day I decided to see what would happen if I stopped using my voice in public spaces.



How do you communicate with your voice off?



I use an app on my phone called “Make it Big” which allows me to type out large print text. I use it when getting a prescription at the pharmacy, asking questions in stores, and at the airport.

Turning off my voice was empowering. I wasn’t struggling to communicate. I would show my message, and people understood that they needed to accommodate me. We wouldn’t go back and forth multiple times trying to understand each other. When people realized they couldn’t speak back to me, they were quick in taking out a pen and paper to write, phones to type, or even using gestures to point. It made communication quick and efficient but most importantly, it let people know that I need an accommodation.

Is it deceiving to let people think you don’t speak?

My oral communication provides access for the hearing world. I still work hard to understand and piece things together. Making out some words does not always provide access for the whole situation.

One example is when I stopped to order a bagel at a loud and busy airport. I typed and showed my order to the employee. He asked, “do you want the bagel toasted?” I accessed the question, but my instinct kicked in to point to my ears indicating that I couldn’t hear. He picked up his phone and typed the question. I nodded and went to wait.

There were 15 other people waiting for their bagels.

Orders were called out with masks on. I could not hear or access the callout from the distance. Because this employee was aware I needed an accommodation, he pointed to me when



my bagel was ready. If I had verbally answered him about the toasted bagel, he would have never known an accommodation was needed. This step avoided potential confusion for both of us in figuring out which bagel was mine. Better yet, it educated about accommodations.

What did I learn?

Am I advising to stop using your voice? Absolutely not. Especially if this makes you uncomfortable. What I’m saying is there are lessons to be found in the way we communicate by trying a different approach. I learned that:

I can disclose my disability, without over explaining. When I try to explain my disability first, people are confused. If I state what I need versus trying to explain, people are happy to accommodate.

Accessibility is not my responsibility alone. Communication is a two-way street and I do not need to feel embarrassed to make my needs known. This helps me avoid fight or flight mode where I might get frustrated or leave the situation without the information I need.

Taking ASL classes really helped in my comfort to communicate without my voice. While not mentioned in this article, ASL classes are a great way for deaf and hard of hearing people to learn to communicate without relying on their voice as well as meet deaf and hard of hearing peers.



Peter

Aan



Whereas some people's hearing was never lost, others, lost and then found and yet others, lost and not yet found.

Here's where I see myself fitting in

Oblivious to my subliminally declining hearing from childhood, there was never any point when I considered it as lost; therefore, when I walked out of the acoustician's office into the street, I discovered hearing. Somewhat like receiving a substantial amount of money in the mail from a forgotten, deceased relative.

Excitement with all its nuances overwhelmed me. I was saddened in a strange perverted way for those who have not experienced this audio-metamorphic high.

I am composing this expose because I feel this high every morning when I insert my hearing aids.

Path to Euphoria

In my late pre-teens, my parents became concerned that I was not hearing well. That was a long time ago; nevertheless, some of the symptoms bandied about were: hard-of-hearing, 'distracted', 'indifferent' and a normality associated with pre-teen boys. I felt an odd comfort with the latter and embraced it.

Further along

I had no particular concern about my level of hearing (although, thinking back, I should have) until ten years ago. The moment was when I was confronted with an accusation of racism upon apparently ignoring the solicitations of a client at my workplace. The person had addressed me clearly, but from behind, and I didn't hear him.

“I had no particular concern about my level of hearing (although, thinking back, I should have) until ten years ago”

Hearing Journey



Peter Allan was born in Montreal (1943), lived and educated in Ottawa (1953-1972) and returned, married, to the province of Quebec in 1977. Employed mainly in civil engineering planning and residential renovation counseling. He Retired in 2017. His past volunteer experiences include Big Brothers - United Way- Optimist Club and most recently, Hear Quebec His interests are Photography and Biographies, Geography, Model aircraft assemblage, social bridge and chess.

My manager, who had been unhappily involved, and who doubted that I would deliberately ignore anyone, helped me realize that I had extreme difficulty hearing from behind. That led to my first hearing test.

Biting the bullet

At that time in my career, proper hearing at work was essential. I was entitled to a pair of economy hearing aids from RAMQ. The acoustician may well have brought that to my attention; however, with the backing of my family I decided to go for higher-quality devices. I ended up paying a substantial amount out of pocket for higher-end hearing aids. I was thrilled with the immediate results, the guarantee and after-sales services.

Wear and tear

Over the next two or three years mishaps occurred. My daughter's dog chewed one; one was run over by a truck; all were replaced at no cost. It finally came to a point when all guarantees had exhausted and I had only one hearing aid in operation. Happily, my new audiogram showed very little measurable decline in four years. I was by then retired and was offered and accepted an economy model for one side

at no cost to me. As time went on, I was eligible to replace my RAMQ device. As the one I had was still working, we had the new one fitted for the other ear. This allowed the associated streaming device to be more effective.

Devices status stabilized

Now, my expectations for my hearing health are such that I am motivated to obtain maximum results from the level of technology I possess.

I have graduated from that time-honoured school of 'Hard Knocks' with an undergraduate degree in "Listening to Hear" and am presently doing post-grad work in the field; my thesis is "There is Life After Deaf".

Field work

Several years ago, I became associated with Hear Quebec. I arrived during an amazingly fortuitous era as some of the original organizers of the association were still here and 'hands on'. Their industry and social and organizational skills seemingly belied any apparent hearing impairment. Over time I began to perceive and appreciate their coping skills. Timing was also propitious, because hearing device technology was just beginning to proliferate and be more available.





“There is **LIFE** after deaf”

Among many, I shall mention one with which I was more intimately connected. FM Looping is a technology involving wireless transmitting from an on-stage microphone directly into a headset furnished to you for the occasion; furthermore, certain (most nowadays) hearing aids can receive the sound directly.

High tech

One particular concept that took me an inordinate amount of time and effort to comprehend was “Bluetooth”. It turned out that it basically meant “wireless”. We have been living with wireless for well over a hundred years (Marconi and his Radio, for example). Bluetooth allows one to receive sound directly from the TV, Radio or sound system amplifier. Also, Bluetooth allows receiving from a remote microphone/emitter in the center of a table. In addition, there has been a breakthrough in the availability of quality voice-to-text cell phone applications.

Key to success

Success in optimizing our hearing enhancement is only partly dependent on present and upcoming technology; it is heavily dependent on our understanding of our auditory status and actively seeking strategies and practical high-tech offerings.

Lest we forget. We must continue to advocate for recognition and accommodation for an increasingly larger percent of our population who do not hear well.



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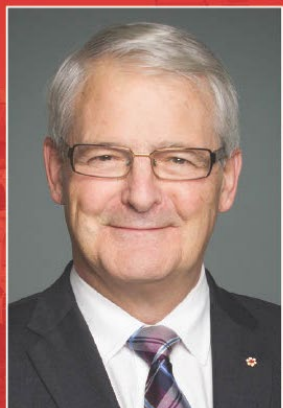
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