



IDHHC

Winter 2011

Volume 19 No. 2

THE ISLAND BEACON

Newsletter of Island Deaf and Hard of Hearing Centre

Acoustic Ecology: the Sounds Around Us



... preserving the natural sounds that those of us in urban settings rarely hear.

I have always been sensitive to my sound environment and can remember as a very small child crying while my mother vacuumed. I can remember running into the house in a panic if an airplane flew overhead or if a large truck drove by the yard. There was a definite interaction between the sound in my environment and me.

I have continued throughout my life to have a relationship with sound both in

my profession as an audiologist and in my hobby as an amateur musician. So imagine my delight to learn there is a discipline that studies the interaction between living organisms and their acoustic environment or soundscape. This multidisciplinary profession, called Acoustic Ecology, has its early roots in the work of Dr Murray Schafer, a musician from Simon Fraser University. Dr. Schafer started recording the soundscape of Vancouver in the early '70's and believes that just as the landscape of places varies so to does the soundscape. I was fortunate to hear some of these early recordings of Dr. Schafer's several years ago and recall hearing primarily industrial noise, traffic noise and honking horns. Most if not all of the sound was man-made.

This past October the Canadian Academy of Audiologists met in Victoria and the guest speaker for this was Acoustic Ecologist Dr. Gordon Hempton. His focus is somewhat different than Dr. Schafer's as he has traveled the globe extensively in pursuit of the earth's rarest natural sounds and has made many recordings of these sounds. The title of his presentation was "Our Earth is a Giant Solar Powered Juke Box." Dr. Hempton had recordings of sounds from the forests around the equator and recordings from the more temperate and northern forest areas. And indeed, as one moved north from the equator both the diversity of sounds and the intensity of sound lessened. I'm now convinced the earth is solar powered even when it comes to sound. Dr. Hempton played a recording of the sound that wind off the ocean makes as it blows through a large hollowed out log. It was like listening to the largest wooden flute I had ever heard being artfully and beautifully played and my whole body felt and heard it. And then there

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IDHHC

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Island Deaf and Hard of Hearing Centre Association is a registered charity dedicated to working with the Deaf, Late Deafened and Hard of Hearing of Vancouver Island.
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from the Desk of The Executive Director

With this being our first addition of the Newsletter for 2012, I wonder as I do each year, what the New Year will bring for the agency. Last year at this time, we had just moved into our lovely new Victoria office, which we can now see was a wonderful decision even though at the time we were unsure.

In 2012, one major change will be to our Employment program as the Provincial Government's new Employment Program of British Columbia (EPBC) is set to start on April 2, 2012. Currently our employment team provides the Employment Program for Persons with Disabilities (EPPD), but effective April 2 this program will cease to exist and the services we provide will become part of the new model. This change will not just affect IDHHC as all organizations providing employment services will be changing to this new model. How everything will look is still not clear but we do believe that clients will continue to access services pretty much the same as always. I am confident that we will find our way within this new system in a relatively short span of time as this is certainly not the first time our employment team has had to completely change how they deliver services or who they must report to. One thing I do know is that by the time I write my next report the changes will have taken place and I will be able to update you further.

Another change is the 2012 Sound and Silence Run/Walk, which for the last number of years has been held on Mother's Day, will now take place on May 6 as we felt more people would be able to participate on that date. As well, we will be introducing a 5km run this year. We hope we will see many of you there.

As 2011 comes to a close I would like to say what a wonderful time I had at our Big Band Bash on November 15, 2011. The bands were fabulous as always, and there were more people there than ever before.

Whatever this New Year brings I wish you all a very happy and healthy year.

Penne Roberts

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Big Bands Rock the Floor for IDHHC

On November 15th Island Deaf and Hard of Hearing Centre (IDHHC) hosted the 4th annual Big Band Bash which showcased three of Victoria's top Big Bands at the Victoria Edelweiss Club in James Bay. The funds raised support the hearing loss prevention services offered at IDHHC. These include in-services to high school and university music students, and the general public on the importance of looking after their hearing.

The dance floor was rocking and rolling all evening as many from the swing dance community, friends of the centre, and supportive family members turned out to dance and listen to the music of The Island Big Band, The Commodores and The Swiftsure Big Band who graciously donated their time to support this fundraising event. For those wanting to learn some fancy dance steps, a complimentary dance lesson was provided by the Swing Dance Association of Victoria (Swing Victoria).

Many thanks to our sponsors: Broadmead Hearing Clinic, Oak Bay Hearing Clinic, Richardson GMP – advisor Stephen Brice, Larson Music, Seabridge Bathing, Sun Life Financial-advisor John Crisp, Tycon Steel, Harley J. Crabb & Co Inc., Megson FitzPatrick



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to our prize donors: The Fairmont Empress, The Royal & McPherson Theatre Society, Delta Victoria Ocean Point Resort and Spa, Big Fish Lodge, and Strathcona Hotel.




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Acoustic Ecology, cont'd from page 1

was the melting snow tapping out a rhythm so complex that even the best percussionist would be challenged to imitate it. What a musical delight Mother Earth has to offer if we only would listen!

Dr. Hempton shared a more personal side of his life and mentioned that his wife is deaf. He also shared that one night his wife could not sleep and got up and started looking at his written descriptions of the many sounds he had captured on tape throughout his journeys. His wife was astounded and very moved and questioned why people never talk about the richness of the sound that we hear. I thought about this and feel the answer is fairly complex. First of all, many of us who live in urban areas can go for long periods of time without hearing sounds that aren't man-made so we aren't going to hear the richness and diversity of wonderful sounds that Dr. Hempton has described and recorded. Something Dr. Hempton mentioned is that the sounds of our earth are being lost because artificial sound is invading just about all areas of the earth. He is currently studying Grasslands National Park in Saskatchewan and is considering trying to have it designated as a silent site; that is a place where nothing but the natural sounds of the earth is allowed.

Even when we think it is quiet, it really isn't. How do you feel when the power goes out and the hum of the fridge, freezer and computer stop? For me, it is as though a weight is lifted off my shoulders. That is closer to a world without artificial sound than that in which we normally live and we have forgotten, or never known, what a world with only natural sound is like. We often walk down the street or ride the bus wearing headphones or earphones listening to music. It is a pleasanter sound than the traffic noise all

around us but it is still man-made. Secondly, I think many of us tend to be more visual than auditory. When we describe places, our travels or our adventures, we often use visual descriptors and not auditory. We take pictures but rarely record the sounds of the environments we are in. This reminds me of the many buildings that I have been in during my life that look beautiful but seem to have poor acoustics. The visual seems to be more important than the auditory. And finally, our sense of hearing is working all the time. Even when we are sleeping it is on guard for sound and like many areas in life, we often take for granted that

which is with us all the time.

I hope this helps you to think about sound in slightly different way: to think about the sounds of the earth and the effect we are having on these, to think about noise pollution and how it is rarely mentioned as a factor affecting our lives, and to think about the role of sound, even if you are listening with a hearing loss, in your life. I am encouraged to know that there are people who are studying sound and our interactions with it and working on preserving the natural sounds that those of us in urban settings rarely hear.

Janet Holland, Audiologist

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Alison Love M.Sc., Aud (c) Audiologist

www.oakbayhearing.com

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Employment Program for Persons with Disabilities (EPPD) – Supplemental Services Program

Our objective is to support individuals to develop socially and economically through skill building to gainful employment. From High School students entering the workforce to seniors wishing to continue being contributing members of society.

High School Transition Planning – career planning and skill building over a period of time, starting with students in grade 11. Students leave high school with an awareness of career and support options available to them, and having taken the appropriate courses needed to transition into training or work. Some examples of areas that high school students have entered include: Computer Science Engineer, Dental Assistant, Community Support Worker, Cook, Animal Technician, Early, Childcare Certification, Human Services/Teachers Assistant, Carpentry Pre-App, Class “1” and “3” drivers.

Intensive Life Skills Training – one on one life skills training to assist individuals to gain the daily life management skills needed to enjoy an improved quality of life, and prepare them for pre-employment services. Some examples of Employment and Volunteer placement are: Community Support Worker, Food Services, Warehouse, Retail Services.

Re Entry into the Workforce – to support older individuals with severe hearing loss to return to employment, volunteer and stay active and connected with their communities. Individuals with a severe hearing loss will be able to get aural rehabilitation that will allow them to remain in or re-enter the workforce or volunteer. Some examples of Employment and Volunteer placement are: Companion Support and Driver, Group/Class Facilitator.

For more information and to access these services please call IDHHC’s employment team :

Steve Clarke
steve@idhhc.ca
Nanaimo Employment Counselor

Tracy Bohay
tracy@idhhc.ca
Victoria Employment Counselor



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Keep up the good work!



TYCONSTEEL

From the Window of the Job Developer

Boy oh Boy do I feel like a broken record! It seems to me that all my newsletter submissions for the last 18 months (at least) have been pretty much the same.....gloom and doom and how bad the labour market is. Well not much has changed. To say that job search is challenging is really an understatement. When the labour market is as poor as the one we are currently experiencing, clients of IDHHC feel the pinch BIG TIME. More people out of work, means more applications for the same job and as my colleague likes to say "Often, employers take the

path of least resistance" and will hire an individual who has no barriers to employment. It is a sign of the times.

In a recent conversation with a Vocational Counsellor from another agency, I was stunned to hear her comments on the current labour market situation. "I have been a Vocational Counsellor for the past 25 years. I have never seen a worse September for new hires in all that time. It is really unbelievable and quite disheartening for everyone"

As a team, we are doing our utmost to support and assist our cli-

ents in their employment search. As always, we are making strides, with some clients moving into employment, but certainly at a much slower pace than say three years ago. We need more Employers... call me!!!! I can help you with your staffing needs!! The order of the day is "Stay the Course" and so I will continue to talk with more employers to be creative with job carving and in general "thinking outside the box"

With High Hopes for a Better Labour Market,

*Katrina O'Reilly-Ryan,
Job Development Specialist*

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Lunch party Celebrates Zone's Office Hero

This past fall, Erynn Sheardown, IDHHC's Admin Assistant/Receptionist entered The Zone @ 91.3 radio station contest to become The Zone's Office Hero! She had to fill out a questionnaire as to why The Zone should choose her to be The Zone's Office Hero for her workplace and why she felt the staff deserved a lunch party. Well, to our delight she won. The Zone partnered with Sauce Restaurant who provided all of the staff with delicious appys and a complimentary meal.

We also got front row seats to enjoy The Zone's Lunch-hour Concert Series, hosted by Jeremy Baker which featured a live acoustic performance from local band, Quoia, who provided CD's to each staff member.



Patti O'Connor and Jenny Laing enjoying the Quoia performance.

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IDHHC Connects with The Victoria Royals

The Western Hockey League (WHL) has returned to Victoria. The Victoria Royals are a major junior hockey team representing Victoria, the first WHL team since 1994. The opening game on September 24th 2011 had the Victoria Royals playing against the Vancouver Giants to a sold out crowd of 7,006 people. The first 6,000 fans through the door received cowbells and Connect Hearing was onsite handing out earplugs for fans to protect their hearing.

Connect Hearing, a sponsor of the Royals, contacted IDHHC to ask if we would be interested in being the chosen charity for the night. IDHHC was happy to be involved as the exposure and funds raised from the event were much needed. We were able to gather 40 volunteers to assist with selling 50/50 tickets and Chuck-a-Puck tickets with the proceeds going towards IDHHC.

IDHHC was able to raise \$7,000 from this event and cannot thank Connect Hearing enough for this wonderful opportunity and fun event. I was also asked to present the 3 Stars at the end of the night, which was fun but also intimidating to stand on centre ice in front of 7,006 people. I thank all the volunteers, Royals staff and Connect Hearing for their support and for making this event such a success.



Erynn with first star of the Royals Hockey Game, goalie Keith Hamilton

One of the volunteers, Angela Miranda and her Hearing Assistance support dog, Chip, were mentioned in a Times Colonist article. If you would like to read the article please check out the following link: [www/timescolonist.com/sports/Victoria+Royals.../story.html](http://www.timescolonist.com/sports/Victoria+Royals.../story.html)

Erynn Sheardown, Administrative Assistant



Proud to support the Island Deaf & Hard of Hearing Centre

Congratulations on the 4th annual Big Band Bash

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Board Highlights

Our Board has had a busy, productive autumn. For me, the highlight was the excellent Board Development Workshop of October 22nd.

IDHHC was one of only six non-profits selected by **United Way** for this special opportunity. The broad goal was to help directors of non-profit boards analyze their structures, function, and priorities. It achieved all that and more!

Patti Hunter, of the **Benchmark Group**, facilitated. She was amazing, and a delight to work with, leading the Board with energy and humour through a full day of analysis and planning.

With a number of new Board members, one goal was to get to know each other, our strengths and interests. We wanted to become a rejuvenated and engaged Board with a deeper understanding of our roles and relationship with staff. We also took a hard look at committees and strategic planning.

With new focus and purpose, we explored ways to raise the IDHHC community profile, increase our fundraising capabilities, and build strong relationships with other Victoria non-profit agencies.

Board members and staff felt the time had been very well spent. We committed again to take the important work we do to new levels for our clients and our community.

*Mike Hayes
IDHHC Board President*

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Introduction to the Trades

Presented by Steve Clarke, IDHHC Employment Counselor

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