

EYE HEAR

Better Hearing Australia
(Vic.) Inc.
Autumn Issue
March 2008

We are well and truly into the New Year as we enter the wonderful season of Autumn! I hope everyone had a relaxing and healthy start to this year and that you are looking forward to great events in your life.

Since returning to work after the festive season we have continued with a busy schedule as you will read further in this newsletter. In addition, the staff are increasingly being sought by the media for comments or interviews on topical issues of public interest. As an example, Anna Rosati was interviewed by Red Symons (ABC 774) on January 16th on the theme of lipreading and sledging at the cricket. Anna handled this interview very well and was able to get important messages about hearing loss across to the audience while engaging in good humour with Red. In fact this interview was replayed the following Saturday morning – great publicity and free to air!

Furthermore, *The Age* maintain their support by running our ads free of charge in various sections of their paper spasmodically throughout the week, which I hope everyone has seen at some stage.

During the year we lodge grant applications to various philanthropic organisations and to date we have been successful with a number of these applications.

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER

This additional specifically targeted funding enables us to purchase new equipment to improve services to our Members and the community, as well as replace existing worn or aged equipment.

Last year the Committee of Management approved my request to purchase an additional car to provide greater flexibility in service delivery outside the metropolitan region. In January I purchased a new Hyundai i30 SX. This addition to the fleet (of 2!) has been very well received by the staff, particularly with its added safety features and good visual seating.

Recently I wrote to the Producers of *Guys and Dolls*, *Billy Elliot* and *Shout* to request provision of captioning and signing of their shows informing them the onus of providing equal access for hearing impaired people is a legal requirement that falls to the Producer. I pointed out that not only would this support equal access and opportunity for the hearing impaired community to attend such musicals, but it could potentially increase patronage of their shows if they were captioned and signed appropriately. As individual Members you may also wish to contact Producers of forthcoming shows to encourage them to provide captioning and signing as a standard requirement of access.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

February heralded our return to Better Hearing after the summer holiday, but of course hearing loss doesn't take a holiday, and the problems we experience through the year continue through holidays. At this time of year though, I like to take stock, considering such questions as 'how did I go last year?', 'what did I achieve?', and 'what will I do this year to better manage my hearing loss?' At my first session for 2008 as tutor at Lilydale, I asked the members to consider these questions also by completing a checklist. They were asked to consider how well they are managing their communication, their hearing aids, and their personal experiences. What do they need to work on, or find out about, or further develop in order to successfully manage their hearing loss? What do they want to achieve this year? Might I suggest that all members give some thought to these questions, and if you need help, remember that BHA is only a phone call away.

2007 finished with a flourish at BHA with our usual convivial Christmas Party, together with a 75th Anniversary Afternoon Tea at 5 High Street in December. I was delighted to see over 20 people at the afternoon tea, and to see people catching up with old friends and meeting new ones. I hope that many of you were also able to gather with BHA friends to finish off the year in a festive spirit.

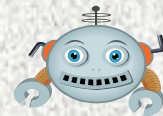
The Members' Forum met in February and I was pleased to see three new members attending this meeting. We discussed a range of issues, including ways of promoting BHA and its membership, and proposed social functions. You will see a flyer included with this newsletter about our next function, and we do hope you will consider joining us. And if you would like to take part in the Membership Forum meetings, the next is at 5 High Street, Prahran on 8th April at 1pm.

Carole McCarthy



DIARY DATES

- 18th March C of M Meeting 5pm
- 21st March Good Friday
- 28th March Captioned DVD Movie
- 1st April April Fools' Day Lunch 12—3 at 5 High St.
- 8th April Membership Forum Meeting at 1pm
- 15th April C of M Meeting 5pm
- 25th April ANZAC DAY
NO DVD MOVIE
- 20th May C of M Meeting 5pm
- 30th May Captioned DVD Movie



The HipTop mobile phone

HipTop phones are a new kind of mobile - like having a text mobile and laptop in one.

Developed by Telstra and only operating on the Telstra network, Telstra has provided Better Hearing Australia with a number of these phones free for distribution. Some are available from us at BHA (Vic).

In summary these phones provide unlimited

- Instant messaging
- Standard text messaging
- Standard picture messaging
- Web browsing
- Emailing

A minimum contract applies of \$30 for 24 months for the above services but the phone is free if we determine it would be of assistance to an applicant. This is also a mobile voice phone but the standard contract rate does not include voice calls which are additional at Telstra voice call

TELEPHONE NEWS

rates. This is a mobile phone with a QWERTY keyboard so messages are typed as you would on a normal keyboard. It is larger than the standard mobile phones and hence the term HipTop – it fits well on a belt.

This phone is most suitable and economical for those people who primarily use a mobile phone for text messaging, or only for text messaging and with the added features.

We will be discussing this – and should have our supply by then - at our Phones Today discussion session in April or give me a call beforehand if you may be interested in getting more information or go to www.cnet.com.au/mobilephones/phones/0.239025953.339272029.00.htm

Uniden phone - WDECT3355

Many people find that using a phone with good volume control on speaker gives most satisfactory reception. In addition to

the hands free facility, this Uniden model is also a cordless phone. We have received a very good and reliable report on the phone from a member with a cochlear implant who gets good reception without having to use the Telstra cochlear implant adapter for the phone as was necessary previously. One or two extra handsets and chargers can be obtained. The phones retail on a sliding scale depending whether one is purchasing the WDECT3355 with no extra handset or +1 extra handset or +2 extra handsets. From pricing at one retailer the basic unit starts at \$79 or \$99 plus extras for handsets and chargers. The phone also incorporates an answering machine. We don't have one yet for our selection of phones but

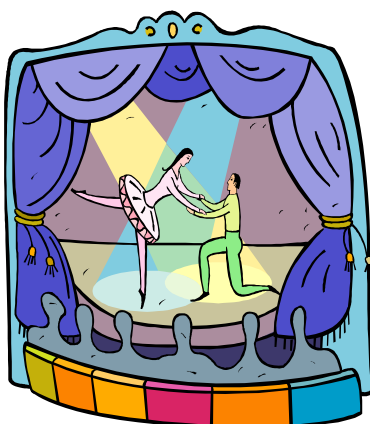


ARTS ACCESS EASE TICKETING SERVICE

- Arts Access Victoria provides this ticketing service to **EASE** members who can access a range of benefits for many arts activities. Membership is available to a person with a disability or chronic illness and people who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing.
- Individual **EASE** membership is \$30 and this service makes it easier to enjoy the arts by offering practical information, personal service and affordable prices to its members to a range of events such as theatre, opera, cinema, museums, galleries, circus and musicals.;
- **EASE** has played a significant role in many initiatives to increase access to the arts and

cultural events for all Victorians so membership is also supporting a very worthwhile advocacy service.

Go to www.artsaccess.com.au or give me a call for further information about live captioning and other access facilities available that you may not be aware of, or for an EASE brochure, or membership form.



CAPTIONING ISSUES

How to complain about DVD Accessibility:

The Australian Visual Software Distributors Assoc. (AVSDA) has released a DVD accessibility framework document affirming its commitment to making available access features such as captioning and audio description. AVSDA will also respond on behalf of members to complaints about accessibility to specific DVD titles where access features were available overseas and not in Australia.

Latest Figures on Captioned DVDS: Captioning rates have remained stable over the last 12 months, 60 % of titles were either captioned or subtitled.

The Other Film Festival 2008: Australia's only disability film festival is back in 2008. The Other Film Festival will be held at Melbourne Museum in early September this year. Entries for the Festival are now being accepted—1st prize is \$5000.

For further information visit info@mediaaccess.org.au or phone (02) 9212 6242.

BRANCH MATTERS



SERVICE DELIVERY REPORT

HEARING ADVISORY SERVICES TO THE COMMUNITY

Holidays have come and gone well and truly but our services continued through January with the usual steady stream of work for the Hearing Advisor (HA) team. And yes we are changing our title from Hearing Loss Management Advisor -was always a bit of a mouthful - to Hearing Advisor, mainly to reflect more accurately what we do, and what happens in Aural Rehabilitation - developing the best use of hearing combined with all the other strategies and supports. This term also encompasses the broader hearing health care aspects that we attend to such as information on hearing conservation, tinnitus and other ear disorders. We have also been busy sourcing work through our established contacts and networks as well as seeking out new horizons for outreach work for the months ahead. Also note the planning that Julie has done for the *Afternoon Round Table Discussions*. Once again we look for support from members. These are planned to promote the work of BHA, not only to the wider community, but also to provide an opportunity for sharing with everyone current information and the many developments in the field of hearing loss management (aural rehabilitation). All participants are asked to promote their ideas and experiences too.

SEMINAR & SYMPOSIUM FOLLOW UP

Work has continued on preparing programs that reflect additional ideas gained from Geoff Plant's and Louise Hickson's materials as presented at the Seminar and Symposium to mark the 75th BHA (Vic) year. It was pleasing to hear from Geoff late in December that he would be very pleased to come back and do some detailed training with us and hopes we would give that some consideration. There has not been an opportunity to pursue this yet but it is an offer too good not to be pursued with such an expert in the Aural Rehabilitation field as Geoff Plant OAM.

DEAFNESS FORUM BALLARAT EXPO

I attended the Deafness Forum Hearing and Health Expo in Ballarat for 2 days on 6th & 7th February which provided an opportunity for publicity for BHA (Vic), including presentation on the Speakers Program; for further networking with other organisations both locally and nationally; and providing some individual hearing loss assistance to people who attended. BHA (Vic) was also represented by Margaret Robertson, Committee of Management member who came along on one day. Thanks for the support and company Margaret.

HEARING AIDS NEEDED

The consistent demand for reconditioned hearing aids and the program we provide through our Community Assistance

Scheme continues. So this is just a reminder if anyone out there has any unused behind the ear hearing aids, or knows of anyone else who may have any, please let us have them. We may be able to use them. I can assure you that anyone who does want a hearing aid and cannot obtain one any other way, is so grateful for the support we provide. You too might be able to help with the Scheme.

ADVOCACY WORK

In addition to HLM work directed at meeting community needs and our contractual obligations, various team members continue to be involved in providing feedback to the *Equal Opportunity Commission* including a submission to the recent review, the *Department of Human Services* with representation on the Disability Act Implementation Advisory Group and input to policy development with *Consumer Affairs Victoria*. These relationships provide valuable opportunities to broaden understanding in their organisations of the difficulties faced by people with hearing loss and contribute to raising the public profile of BHA (Vic).

*Gwen Rosengren (Hearing Advisor
Team Leader) for Anna Rosati, Julie
McMillan & Caroline Cocker.*

BHA (VIC) MEMBERSHIP FORUM

The Membership Forum would like to thank everyone who attended the Christmas Dinner and hope that you all enjoyed it. Special thanks to Bill Trumble, our Aussie Santa, who once again had everyone hysterical with laughter when he auctioned the gifts—*even though he threatens to resign from being Santa each year we hope he does enjoy it as much as we all do!* Thank you to everyone who donated items for our Christmas Hamper Raffle. Winners were:

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1 st prize: Hamper | <i>Jack Clarke Bendigo</i> |
| 2 nd prize: Ladies Hat | <i>Bill Robertson Somerville</i> |
| 3 rd prize: Bottle of Wine | <i>C. Peters Mt Martha</i> |
| 4 th Prize: Bottle of Wine | <i>H. Emery Mt. Martha</i> |
| 5 th Prize: 2 Tins of Sweets: | <i>Barbara Trumble Melbourne</i> |

**Congratulations to all the winners!
Raffle, gift auction & dinner raised a total of
\$1622 a fantastic result!**

Our next social function is the

**APRIL FOOL'S
FRIVOLOUS FUN DAY**

APRIL 1st 12noon—3pm at 5 High St.

(see separate invitation for details)

Come & join the fun!.



Don't forget Captioned DVD Movies on the Big Screen at 5 High Street on the last Friday of each month starting at 1pm—BYO Lunch—everyone is welcome!



CONSUMER ISSUES



BAHA AIDS FOR ASHLEY



The television program *Saving Kids*, on Channel 10, has been following the story of Ashley, a nine-year-old girl born with no outer or middle ears. Her inner ears (cochleas), however, were perfect – sound just couldn't be transmitted to them properly. As the surgeon said, "You have hearing in there – we just have to tap it".

Ashley could hear to some extent using a head-worn bone conduction hearing aid. This aid only gave her indistinct, partial hearing. Ashley couldn't identify where sound was coming from; she couldn't hear her schoolmates calling her, making them think she was aloof and unfriendly. At Sydney Children's Hospital, a medical "first" was decided on – to give Ashley two BAHA bone anchored hearing aid implants at the same time. We saw the surgery – the skin shaved away as the implants were inserted. Then came the six-month wait till "osseointegration" (the implant melding with the bone) had taken place, before the two implants could be "switched on".

Finally, switch-on day arrived! Both sound proc-

essors were put in place and activated. Ashley was immediately able to detect where a sound was coming from, and said the sound was much clearer than with her old hearing aid. As she left hospital, she was delighted at being able to hear the birds – and cross the road by herself for the first time! – now that she could hear traffic. Certainly the two BAHA implants worked very successfully for Ashley – the program showed what promise this device could have for those with malformed ears, who can't benefit from a cochlear implant.

The BAHA device has received much less publicity than the cochlear implant, so is less well known. This program would help promote public awareness of it, so more people may enquire about getting it. Let's hope many more people will find BAHA their entry to the wonderful world of sound!

by
Kaye Gooch

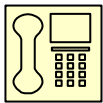


Fraud Fortnight

As part of our continuing contact with Consumer Affairs Victoria regarding consumer protection issues, BHA (Vic) has been invited to participate as a community partner in "Fraud Fortnight". The aim of this initiative is to increase the level of scam awareness in the community and educate consumers to protect themselves from scams. Whilst not specifically targeting people with hearing loss, information on how to recognize scams and what we can do to protect ourselves is valuable to all of us. See enclosed information for details.

Round Table Discussions at Prahran

This year we will be holding a series of "Round Table Discussions" on a variety of topics related to managing hearing loss to replace the "Information Days" presented over the last two years. The Round Table Discussions will consist of a "mini talk" providing up to date information from one of our HA team and/or guest speaker followed by an opportunity to ask questions and share thoughts and experiences over a cup of tea or coffee and cake. We trust that this change of format will appeal to those who faithfully attended our Information Days and attract interest from many other BHA members and the wider community.



Wednesday April 30th - "Focus on Phones"

(This is a topical issue, especially with the closure of the CDMA network and the difficulty of choosing suitable mobile phones. We will also be discussing the new HipTop phones as well as a range of phones for home use.)



Wednesday June 25th - "Hearing Aids – What Can They Do Now?"

(An update on hearing aid technology)



Venue: 5 High Street, Prahran.

Time: 1:45 to 3:30 pm

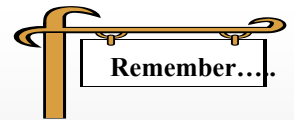
(or as long as you have questions and issues to discuss!)



To let us know you would like to come along *(and to make sure we have plenty of cake!)* or if you would like more information about these events, please contact Julie on (03) 9510 1577 or julie@betterhearing.org.au

Everyone welcome!!

Watch for further dates and topics in the next newsletter.



BHA Vic. receives a lot of information about issues which affect our members. If you would like to receive copies of these notices/information by email or post please give Judith Voce your contact details so we can keep you informed.

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We're on the web!
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