



The Listening Post

Winter, 2015

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MHS President's Message

by Robert T. Guison, BC-HIS

As we start a new year, I wanted to take stock for a moment and review the accomplishments of 2014. We had one of the more successful conventions this last year due in large part to Janette Call, Linda Engelmann, Paula Lush and Brenda Roling from the MHS office. Thanks to you and those who serve on the MHS Board that helped in so many ways.

The Annual Convention is the life blood of our profession. It funds activities that allow us to continue to serve you and your practice. It pays for lobbying and legislative oversight, a critical and vital function that most of us take for granted.

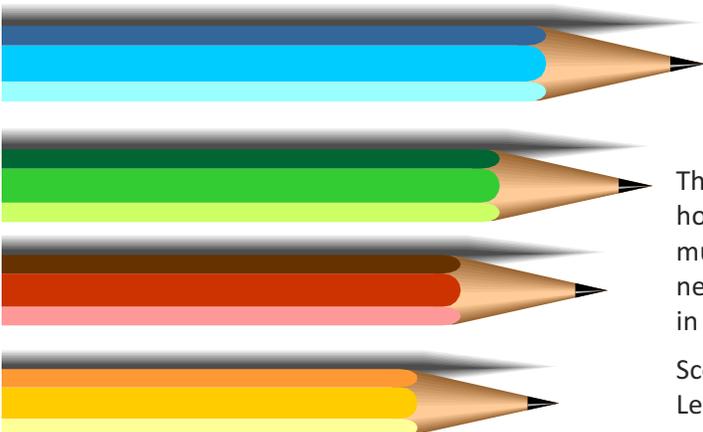
A big shoutout to Scott George and Lynn Royer who continue to attend the licensing board meetings.

There are upcoming events that could create greater opportunities and some that could adversely affect your business. I urge all of us to become more engaged by helping out with future activities and attending MHS sponsored events. I recognize that it is easier to take the free vendor sponsored education events, but in the long run it

undermines you and your associates. Please contact me if you would like to help out!

Finally, please take the time to be involved in the IHS "Fit to Serve" campaign to allow us to better serve veterans. It is critical that you contact your U.S. Representative or Senator on H.R. 353. Adding HIS would help veterans get the quality of care they deserve, while reducing their current long waits and travel. You can go on line to info@fittoserve.us or call 1-571-212-8596. IHS is your voice in the nation's capitol. Your membership and participation in these activities help us all.

I look forward to seeing everyone in St. Louis!



New Rules on CEU Requirements

The rules for CEU's are changing. No more than one half of your CEU hours can come from online sources. Additionally, one hour of CEU must be on Ethics. Both of these rules will be in place during the next renewal cycle. The upcoming MHS Conference, on March 6-7 in St. Louis, is a great place to satisfy both of these requirements.

Scott George
Legislative Chair

MHS 2014-15 Board of Directors



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MHS 2014-15 Committees

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Co-Chair: Janette Call
Co-Chair: Robert Guison

Education Standing Committee

Chair: Linda Engelmann
Member: Brad McMillin

Vendor Relations Committee

Chair: Paula Lush
Members: RanDee Guison
Susan Anderson

Silent Auction Committee

Chair: RanDee Guison
Member: Marsha Wade

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Members: Linda Engelmann
Dan Shandy

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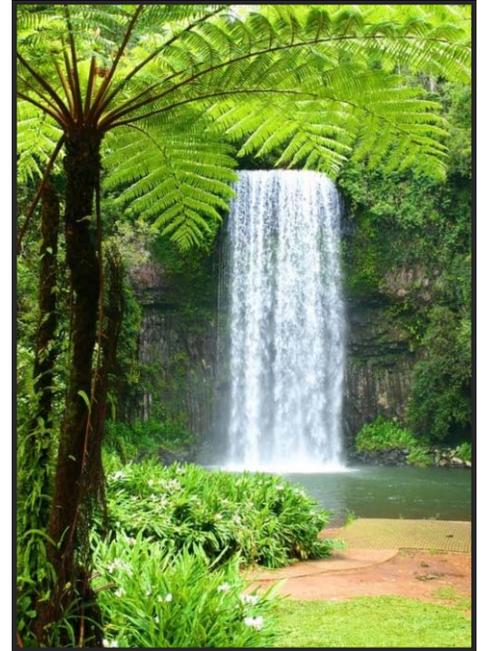
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Members: Julie Kilmer
Sheila Shelton

Legislative Committee

Chair: Scott George
Members: Janette Call
Charles Church

*“It’s a Jungle out
There - Can You
Survive with
Better Hearing”*



**Annual Convention
and Education
Seminar**

March 6-7, 2015

*Hilton St. Louis Frontenac
St. Louis, MO*



With Deep Sympathy

Randolph Dickins III, 70, vice president of marketing for MedRx died in a boating accident on August 22. Better known as Randy, Mr. Dickins worked at MedRx for 19 years and was the first employee hired by the company. Outside of work, he was an avid fisherman who loved boating. Mr. Dickins is survived by his daughter, Mary Cathryn Dickins; his brothers, Tarlton (Ted), Bruce, and Michael Dickins; his sisters, Page Donovan and Kelly Mason; his grandchildren, Dominick and Bryce; and his significant other, Nancy Krause. “He will be missed dearly by those who knew and loved him,” MedRx said in a statement.



Missouri Hearing Society CEU Award

The Missouri Hearing Society will again offer Continuing Education Awards for members who have completed a distinguished number of credit hours. Please complete the application for the MHS CEU Award.

You are eligible for the award if:

- ◆ Your membership is current as of December 31, 2014;
- ◆ Your membership is current at the 2015 Convention;
- ◆ Your application is received and in order at the MHS office by February 13, 2015.
- ◆ Remember that attained hours must be earned at an education program which has received prior approval from the Missouri Board of Examiners for Hearing Instrument Specialists, IHS, AAA or ASHA.

For the Silver Award

You have attained and documented **18 hours** during the 2014 calendar year (include copies of hours);

For the Gold Award

You have attained and documented **24 hours** during the 2014 calendar year (include copies of hours);

For the Platinum Award

You have attained and documented **36 hours** during the 2014 calendar year (include copies of hours); and

Please take advantage of this opportunity to earn recognition for your hard work!

MHS CEU Award Application

Applicant:

Name: _____
Company: _____
Address: _____
City: _____
State: _____ Zip: _____

MHS Should Send Press Release to:

Publication: _____
Address: _____
City: _____
State: _____ Zip: _____

Number of earned hours (circle one):
18 Hours – Silver Award (*copies enclosed*)
24 Hours – Gold Award (*copies enclosed*)
36 Hours – Platinum Award (*copies enclosed*)

Mail or Email CEU Award Application to:
Missouri Hearing Society
P.O. Box 1072
Jefferson City, MO 65102
info@missourihearingsociety.org



Dating, Deafness, Hearing Loss, Love Relationships

by Sarah Bricker, Freelance reporter for the *St. Louis Business Journal*

*“Everyone talks
in hushed
whispers ...”*

“What did you say?”

“It’s nothing. Never-mind.”

“No, tell me. You know it really upsets me when you do that.”

“Just let it go. It wasn’t important.”

It’s always important.

Anyone with hearing loss can tell you how difficult it is to converse with others, how self-defeating, physically exhausting and excruciatingly painful it is to carry on a normal 15-minute conversation without issue. And when you’re dating someone, are in love with someone, the conversations you have become a source of sadness or sometimes a reason to fight.

I’ve dated the most amazing guy for about three years now, and we still have issues with my hearing, on a weekly if not daily basis. He does his best to be patient, but in all honesty, I can’t really blame him sometimes for getting frustrated and just giving up. I mean it’s been three years after all, and if I were him, I’d probably have pushed me off a bridge at this point.

He’s normal, has perfect hearing; has two ears that function just as they should for a 24-year-old adult. He has no hearing loss, and there is no indication that he will ever suffer from any in the far-off future. I, however, hear just slightly better than my 54-year-old father without his hearing aids, and well, let’s just say that isn’t very well at all. “What?” or “Excuse me?” are the two most commonly used phrases in my vocabulary. I’d say they both get used at least 10 times a day. The songs birds sing in the early morning are voiceless, sports whistles are silent puffs of air, whistling is no longer a trick I am capable of (who knew this would go as my hearing did?), and in short, the list of things I can actually hear is far shorter than the list of things I cannot.

Everyone talks in hushed whispers of the difficulties faced when a couple is interracial or has conflicting religious views, but no one has really talked about the couple that is hearing and

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“By the middle of the week, the words hurt more.”

non-hearing. Obviously when compared to race or religion, hearing loss doesn't seem a big issue, but for those with hearing loss, it is a pivotal element in every relationship they have – professional and personal.

For me, as a “deaf” person, there are a few words and phrases that initially make me mad and then eventually lead me to frustrated tears: “Whatever.” “Just forget it.” “It's not important.” And my personal favorite, “Never-mind.”

Such simple words. Such seemingly harmless 20th century linguistic productions. Such horrid, hurtful and disgusting aberrations.

I don't hear these words when they are spoken. Instead, these short, blunt and utterly defeating noises simply remind me of how different I am, how less I am, how abnormal I am. “Whatever” really sounds like “I'm not willing to be patient and take the time to repeat what I'm saying until your ruined ears can get it.” “Just forget it” translates to “You're really not important enough for me to repeat it to.” “It's not important,” while it really may not be important, simply says to me that if I can't hear it the first time and everyone else did, that I'm not worth the effort of repeating or telling in a different way. And let me just say, no matter whether you consider it important or not, to me, it's always important.

And of course the most painful of all, “Never-mind,” well to me it's just a hidden “Forget you!”

So here I am with this amazing guy, three years into dating, and just about every morning in the car my hearing is an obstacle. When I drive, it's not quite as bad. My Jeep's small engine hums softly and while during the course of our conversation I may miss a few

things here-and-there, by the time I drop him off at work it's been an all-around pleasant trip. While I am sure the SXM fantasy football stations helps to encourage more repetitions than normal without complaint, talking is still much easier and much nicer than when we are in his Camaro.

I've had the big engined car. I used to love the subs blasting bass beats in my high school buddies' trunks, but now, whether as a subconscious effort to protect what little hearing I have left or whether my sensitivity to the “loud noise” has increased due to my older years, I dread talking in that Camaro. I dread it because he can't look at me and drive, and more-than-half the time while driving I can't hear without reading his lips. Conversation in the Camaro is exhausting, defeating and there are times when I have purposefully sat in silence just to avoid being abnormal for an hour.

And in his car, and sometimes in my own, the words I hate come out.

“Never-mind.” “Just forget it.” “Whatever.” “It's not important.”

Early in the week, I can handle the brutal sting of these words. I can remember that he's not trying to be mean, he's just frustrated. I would be too.

By the middle of week, the words hurt more. Sometimes when he exits the car and I am buckled into my own driver's seat, I sit in silence for five minutes, hug the steering wheel and let some tears fall. Self-pity it may be, but it's also more. It's frustration that I can't have a normal conversation with my boyfriend. It's anger that I am only 23 and hear as bad as my father who's almost twice my age. It's self-hatred of a physical part of me I cannot change.

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“All we can do is keep going, keep pushing, and keep trying.”

About the Author: Sarah Bricker received her bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Missouri - Columbia, MO and has received many national and regional awards in recognition of her skills. She has accomplished all of this with severe, genetic hearing loss. She has both auditory and phonetic impairments. To contact Sarah: sarahbrix@gmail.com

And it's sadness and hurt that the one I love has used those words.

By the end of the week, if I've heard those words enough, or if they have suddenly been accompanied by a loud, exasperated sigh, multiple deep breaths or fingers clenching and unclenching on the steering wheel, well the tears don't usually wait until I'm in the safe haven of my own car. They can't wait, I can't help it, and I can't deal with it. I am exhausted from work, from listening for five days straight in the morning, during the day and at night. I am frustrated with myself for having the problem and with others for just not getting it. I am already hurt to the point that the knowledge that he really doesn't mean it, is simply gone. So, I turn my face away towards the window, curl my legs up to my chest and try to stifle the stuffy nose that always accompanies the tears.

It's like this all the time, and no matter how hard I wish, it will never change. He will continue to be patient each week for as long as he can. He will continue to be careful of the words he uses, when he talks and where. He will still do his best to make sure I can see his face, to wait for somewhere quiet to talk about things that are important, and he will always know that I will never hear normally.

He will forget, and for a while I will not blame him. But then he will forget, and I will simply turn away, hide and cry in silence. We will both say nothing, because what really is there to say? There is nothing. Neither of us can fix my ears or make it easier. We cannot always be patient, always be aware, and we cannot always be accommodating. It is as exhausting for him to accommodate and adjust for my deafness as it is for me to

compensate and try to adjust for his normality.

There is no changing it, no turning back the clock, no waving a wand and chanting "bippity-boppity-boo!" There are no fairy godmothers for ears, and there is no permanent or perfect solution.

All we can do is keep going, keep pushing, and keep trying. I will never be able to fully appreciate whispered nothings in my ears, and he has accepted that for the rest of our lives conversations in the dark will never happen. We will fight, a lot, and my ears will always be the problem, but we know this, accept this and choose to move forward. I will be angry and hurt when he can no longer be patient, and he will be angry and frustrated when I cry.

He will always hear normally, and I will always be disabled. And yet, at the end of the day, he still wants to try. I still want to try. We want to try.

Love is a powerful thing, and while it's never a solution, it helps. There are issues a couple faces when they are of different races, religions or socio-economic backgrounds. These issues are the sources of fights, break-ups and life-altering decisions. There are issues a couple faces when they are of different hearing abilities. These issues are the sources of fights, break-ups and life-altering decisions.

It will never be easy being deaf. I know this.

It will never be easy dating someone who is deaf. He knows this.

It will never be easy, but then again, the best things never are, are they?

