

# FRANCIS SLABBER, JANET STEER & ASSOCIATES

PROFESSIONAL CARE FOR ALL YOUR HEARING PROBLEMS

## THE HEARING CLINIC

35 WATERLOO RD

WYNBERG, 7800

Tel: 021 - 797 7948

## TOKAI VILLAGE

VANS ROAD

Tel: 021 - 715 5623

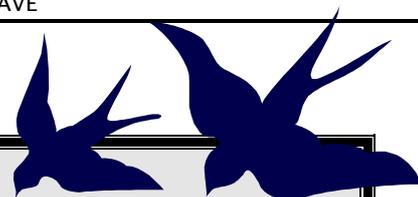
## VALYLAND CENTRE

FISH HOEK

## KENILWORTH MEDICROSS

ROSMEAD AVE

## Newsletter Spring 2005



### Making Conversation Easier

Today's hearing instruments may offer more flexibility and better sound quality than ever before, but they still cannot repair a damaged hearing nerve or revive a person's ability to interpret what they hear.

There are, however, techniques and strategies that can be applied to make conversation easier to follow. Do remember that it takes two to tango. In conversation there is always a speaker and a listener. If the speaker has done what is necessary to make themselves audible and the listener has done the same, there should be enough clear speech to hold a conversation.

By talking in a clear and concise manner, we are able to produce definite changes to the pattern of speech. We can produce sounds more completely without missing certain elements or dropping word endings. Naturally, speech becomes slower and louder and the stress on certain syllables more obvious. Combined with the use of quality hearing instruments, these changes are exactly what is needed for a hard-of-hearing person to improve their ability to follow a conversation.

Clear speech is when the speaker attempts to express every word and sentence in a precise, accurate and fully formed manner. It is not a substitute for other communication habits such as keeping eye contact, avoiding speaking from a different room and making sure your face is well lit to make speech reading easier. You still need to avoid background noise. Try not to over-pronounce words or to speak while chewing or smoking, while reading a newspaper or when leaning your cheek on your hand.

Almost everyone says that they can always hear us speak and ask why everybody else can't speak like we do. The truth is that they can. We are constantly aware of the fact that we are dealing with people with hearing impairments, but we never find it necessary to raise our voices or speak right into peoples ears. The techniques that we employ to make sure that we are heard, can be used by anyone, and those of you who come from the days of elocution lessons will know exactly what we mean by the following:

- ☞ Try to control the amount of background noise. When at home, turn the TV down when chatting and do not leave a radio playing in the background. If you have to turn the TV up to hear it, maybe invest in a good TV-Listener where you can set your own volume without setting the TV-set louder. Our offices are double-glazed which means we do not have to compete with the traffic noise outside. That doesn't mean that you should double-glaze your whole house, but it does make conversations easier when the competition is limited.
- ☞ Face the person that you are talking to. Don't converse from a different room or with your back turned. Even with normal hearing, this could be very trying and frustrating. And it is just not polite!
- ☞ Speak at a natural pace. Do not shout or over-articulate. With some hearing losses, speech actually becomes less distinct with more volume and the hearing aids today aim to clarify speech and not amplify it. Do the same when communicating.
- ☞ If you are having trouble being understood, try rephrasing. For example, for most it is difficult to hear the difference between "two" and "three". Try saying "second" or "third" and hold up some fingers. Some sounds are more easily heard than others and easier to differentiate.
- ☞ Gestures are a great way of making sure you are heard. Waving your hands and arms about, can make what you are trying to say much more visible and combined with good intonation patterns, it becomes less necessary to hear all that was said, because you can see what was said.
- ☞ And most importantly, try not to interrupt each other, especially in groups. It is easier to follow a conversation if you know the context of it. All of us use predictive measures to understand fully what is said in conversation, but without a "theme" it is difficult to guess what might be said next.

