

the BIG news

The Newsletter for the Buffalo Implant Group

Volume 25 • Issue 1 - 2013

BIG staff

Gail Cronin—Editor and
Acting Publisher
Janet McKenna—Assistant Editor
Margie Fitchlee—Writer
Shirley Jaskier—Writer

Upcoming Events

BHSC Black Tie Gala	March 9
B.I.G. Open Meeting	March 20
Walk 4 Hearing (Rochester)	May 5
HLAA Rochester panel	May 7
HLAA National Convention	June 27-30

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Meeting Notice
Wednesday
March 20, 2013
6:00 – 8:00 PM

**Buffalo Hearing and
Speech Center**
50 E. North St.
Buffalo

CRAIG AND JACKIE CARPENTER RETIRE TO FLORIDA AND ARE GREATLY MISSED

By Gail Cronin



Craig and Jackie Carpenter

The Buffalo Implant Group would like to dedicate this issue of The B.I.G. News to our tireless longtime leaders and friends, Craig and Jackie Carpenter, who have left Western New York to start the next chapter of their lives and enjoy their retirement in sunny Cape Coral, Florida.

The Buffalo Implant Group was founded by Craig Carpenter and friends in 1985 and soon became the first affiliate chapter of Cochlear Implant Club International, or CICI. Craig was the first director of B.I.G. Back then it was a small group of new cochlear implant users who met monthly to share their experiences. After attending his first CICI national convention along with his wife Jackie, Craig was asked to join the Board of Directors of CICI. Craig and Jackie became dedicated volunteers in the growing cochlear implant community. They traveled the country sharing their experiences and counseling many potential implant candidates. They were nationally known in the implant world for all the education and support they provided for people around the

country. As the internet expanded, more and more people contacted Craig and Jackie and wanted to meet with them. They never turned anyone away. They always made time to support people, most of them strangers, who were considering getting an implant, going through the process, or adjusting to sound. They spoke at countless conventions and published many magazines and newsletters for both CICI and B.I.G. As the implant world grew, their dedication grew along with it. Craig and Jackie were in contact with every implant manufacturer and were a resource to everyone.

Craig and Jackie were the glue that held B.I.G. together. Craig and Jackie were officers in our organization for most of the years that it has existed. When it was time for Craig and Jackie to cut back a little bit and diversify their time for the many volunteer organizations they serve, they still remained the lifeblood of our organization by remaining on our Board and by being the publisher and layout editor of our newsletter. They have always carried the largest burden of work for our organization. Much of what they did in recent years may have been unknown to all our members, but Craig and Jackie truly were at the heart of our leadership and carried a huge load.

In the late spring of 2012, Craig and Jackie told the Board members that they planned to retire to Florida by the end of the year. We were very happy for them. Then things progressed rather quickly. Craig and Jackie found their dream home in Cape Coral, near family. In a whirlwind, they put their home in Clarence on the

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THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Sue Wantuck



Sue Wantuck

H e l l o !
Hope you all had a wonderful holiday and New Year! My wish for all of you is to have a w o n d e r f u l healthy 2013.

This is a message from the B.I.G. president. Please allow me to apologize to all of you for not having a fall meeting or recent B.I.G. newsletters. This issue has been long overdue. Hopefully you will forgive us, the B.I.G. officers, B.I.G. Board members and mainly me. I am the one, and I truly feel bad that I have not been able to commit myself on time for the newsletter due to my job and my family. Now things are starting to get settled and back to almost normal. Please forgive me.

The B.I.G. officers and Board members met twice this past September and October at my house. I explained to them about the Deaf Awareness Week and our booth at St. Mary's School for the Deaf. Advanced Bionics and Cochlear Americas came to

St. Mary's School for the Deaf to display and share information about their cochlear implants. Med El also came afterward. I wanted to say a very special "thank you" to Fr. Bob McArtney, Sr. Dorothy Feltz, Margie Fitchlee, Gloria Matthew, Jimmie Sorrento, and a few more I may have forgotten who came to help educate people about our B.I.G. organization. There were several people who stopped by and talked with them and asked questions. Our member Sam Spritzer was there representing Advanced Bionics as well. We were happy to see him.

There were a few reasons why we were unable to get a location for a fall B.I.G. meeting. Our old location was unavailable. We tried other locations but could not secure them due to rental costs, insurance needed, and not being allowed to have food while we socialized afterward. We are still working on this issue. Our next meeting will be at Buffalo Hearing and Speech Center, which has graciously offered space at no cost to us. If you, our B.I.G. members, have any other ideas or connections for where to have a B.I.G. meeting, please let us know. You may

reach one of the B.I.G. officers or Board members by contacting us through our email addresses that have recently been added to our newly updated website. You may reach me at suewantuck@gmail.com.

There are moments I would like to express my feelings about Craig and Jackie Carpenter, our dearest friends who moved to Florida unexpectedly. We, the B.I.G. members, were so fortunate to have them for so long. To Craig, millions of thanks for helping and supporting us, especially those of us trying to decide whether or not to get the cochlear implant. You helped us to understand the cochlear implant better. Your comforting words really meant a lot to us. We still miss seeing you. I know there are ways to reach you through either email and/or Skype but meeting person-to-person with YOU meant more. Remember my words: "You are my role model!" You still are my ROLE MODEL!

I look forward to seeing many of my dear B.I.G. friends and our CI users very soon at our next meeting. Happy Hearing!

FROM THE EDITOR

By Gail Cronin

If you have been wondering what has happened to B.I.G. in the past few months, wonder no more. Although we haven't had a meeting or a newsletter since our B.I.G. picnic in July, we have been reorganizing behind the scenes and hopefully are back on track. Our next meeting is scheduled for March 20, and information about that meeting can be found on page 11.

It's no coincidence that our hiatus from activity came just when Craig and Jackie moved away. We've been like a ship without an anchor, especially where the newsletter is concerned. I truly had hoped to get an issue together in September, but it proved too daunting for me without Craig and Jackie's guidance and leadership. Even though I have been editing recent issues, with Craig as Publisher and Distributor and Jackie as Layout

Editor they were still shouldering a large amount of the responsibility for the production of each newsletter. They also had been keeping me on track with my editing duties. Moving forward without them has been extremely difficult. It took me a long time to get my act together and to fill the gaps by completing all the aspects of newsletter production that they always took care of. There has been a huge learning curve for me. Without Craig and Jackie, I will certainly need more help on future issues. I can't do it by myself.

B.I.G. has also suffered because we have a greatly reduced Board of Directors now. Both Craig and Jackie served on the Board and took care of a great deal of the planning, communication, and organization. In addition to not having them on the

Board, we have also had one vacant officer position for more than a year now and no one has stepped up to fill that spot for 2013 either. That position is for the office of secretary. If any of our readers is willing to join us in the role of secretary, we would certainly appreciate the help. Our post office box in Clarence Center was always maintained by Jackie and Craig. At this time we are planning to keep that address for continuity's sake, and I have taken on the task of driving over there and checking for mail on a regular basis. Ideally, our next secretary would take on that task, but I can continue to do it if distance is an obstacle for our next secretary.



Gail Cronin, MS CCC-SLP

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Shirley Jaskier

My son Jeffrey has completed his first trimester at the Rochester Institute of Technology. I still find it difficult to comprehend that my youngest child is in college. I can't figure out how all those years went by so quickly.

My worries were the same as any mom would have when their youngest child goes off to college. Will he get enough to eat? How will he get along with his roommates? Will he be able to concentrate in his dorm room with three other boys? Will he be able to keep up with his school work? Will he be able to "hear" what is being taught? Will he be homesick? What if he gets sick? All of these questions went through my mind. Even though he looks like a grown man, as the youngest, he will always be my "baby."

Being away from home, Jeff has had to learn to take care of everything himself. Luckily for him, he was raised to be self-sufficient. Although he did not always enjoy them, he now sees how having chores benefited him. Some of his fellow classmates are accustomed to other people picking up after them, and the adjustment is more difficult for them. When asked how he is handling cleaning his dorm room, he tells me, "If you don't make a mess, you won't have to clean a lot." That sounds right to me!

Jeff shares one large, open dorm room with three other boys from his high school. Each boy has a bunk bed, desk, chair, dresser and small closet. The room is jam packed, and there is no privacy. They share a bathroom with other students, which is at the end of the hallway. The bathroom can accommodate one person, and is locked, so they need a key to get in. Luckily for them, they don't have to clean it! It is an adjustment when you are used to getting out of bed in the middle of the night and walking a few short steps to

JEFF'S at COLLEGE!

By Shirley Jaskier

your bathroom at home. And at home, you don't need a key to get in!

The RIT campus is very large, so Jeff is getting a lot of exercise. He says the food is just ok. I think all of the walking from class to class has prevented him from the famous "freshman 15."

As of this writing, Jeffrey is preparing for exams for the second trimester at RIT. In one more week, he will be home for his break, and return to RIT for his last trimester of his first year. His first year of college has flown by for me. I find that the older I get, the quicker time seems to fly by. It seems like it was only yesterday that we moved him in to the twelfth floor dorm.

While Jeff was growing up, we always made him responsible for his own "stuff," such as homework, projects, deadlines, etc. You would not find me spending hours with him on homework. I would help him and answer questions in the early years, of course. However, he was responsible for his work, and if he did not do it, the consequences were his to bear. I believe that teaching the correlation between actions and consequences is important. Suffering those consequences makes one less likely to make the same mistake twice. Learning this life skill is now paying off for him at RIT.

Jeff is doing a great job keeping up with the workload. He made the Dean's List in the first trimester. We were so happy for him, and so proud! He really enjoys math and science, which is great since those are main courses in the Mechanical Engineering program. He says that adjusting to college and the workload was very simple. He said, "Get what you need done when you need it done." It's just that simple.

Jeff really likes the classes he has taken so far. He has had great professors for his courses. He says they are good teachers who come up with creative ways to teach the subject matter. All of the professors put in the extra effort to spark ideas and good discussion in the classroom.

The campus of RIT has approximately 17,900 students. He is one of approximately 1,500 deaf and hard of hearing students enrolled. The National Technical Institute for the Deaf is one of the Colleges at RIT, and

is well known for the quality education and excellent support services provided to the students.

Jeff is eligible to receive support services in his classes. During his first trimester, he had C-Print services. C-Print is very much like CART. There was a person in his classroom transcribing what the professor was saying, and he was able to read the notes on his laptop in real time. He is not using the C-Print services this trimester. He felt that due to the smaller class size, and the types of interactive classes that he is enrolled in, the C-Print Services would not be a benefit. However, it is good to know that these services are available to him should he desire to use them again. He also uses his Livescribe pen, which records the professors' words and links them to the notes he is writing.

RIT also has dorm rooms that have accommodations for deaf students. His dorm room is equipped with the flashing fire alarm light and a flashing light doorbell.

Jeff met other deaf and hard of hearing students at freshman orientation and around campus. He has been able to hear about other people's experiences, which are similar to his. He has not had any deaf students in any of his classes. He does not know sign language, but is picking up some signs as he interacts with others who sign. He can best communicate and relate to other



Jaskier's on Move-In Day

students that have a cochlear implant and primarily speak, or speak and sign. He says these students are a bridge between the hearing students and the deaf students.

Jeff does not have a lot of interaction with students that only sign

JEFF'S at COLLEGE!

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and do not speak. One student on his intramural volleyball team signed only. They were able to develop a series of signals to let him know which player called for the ball. It worked but was difficult for the player and the other boys on the team.

Most of the hearing students do not know sign, and some of the deaf students are not aided and only sign. This can be a barrier to communication, and without effort it is difficult to bridge this gap. Since neither group knows what the other group is "saying," it sometimes raises suspicious feelings between two groups. Jeff has said that to bridge the gap, they write down what they want to communicate, and have

the other person read it. Phones and iPads are great, because the students can type in what they want to communicate and just show the other students.

Having Jeff away at school has been an adjustment for the entire family. We miss him a lot, and he misses us too. We keep in touch with each other through texting and email. As any parent who has a child living out of town knows, it is not the same as having them home. It takes an extra effort to stay in touch and stay close. Jeffrey says that one of the more difficult things to adjust to has been not having his family around him. When he was home, we would talk and share things about our day. Without

that natural interaction, it is more difficult to keep up that level of sharing.

Although it is difficult to have him away at school, this is not new to my husband and me. All three of our children attended college outside of Buffalo, and our daughter now lives in New York. As hard as it is to let them go, we know that we are seeing the outcome that we have strived for, to see our children grow to be self-sufficient, responsible, caring adults who will find their own way to their own "success," whatever it may look like to them.

Written by Shirley Jaskier, proud mom of three awesome kids!

REFLECTIONS ON: ADVICE, STRUGGLES, TROUBLES AND FEARS

And dealing with them on your journey to better hearing; As seen through the eyes of a recent cochlear implant recipient

By Margie Fitchlee



Margie Fitchlee

As I enjoy another wonderful winter here in South Florida I can't help but think of my family and friends back in Western New York. They are doing what they do best: enduring another winter. Seasons come and seasons go and before we know it Western New York will be in the throes of another fabulous summer.

The summer of 2012 was welcomed by me with open arms. I kissed the summer hello, for it surely had arrived in Western New York with abundant splendor. It afforded me the opportunity to attend many outdoor activities, picnics, parades, art shows, functions and even outdoor church. One beautiful Sunday morning in July I attended the Worship in the Woods service at Mount Olive Lutheran Church in Lockport. The program for that Sunday's service really spoke to me. It was titled "Peace, Be Still." I could not help but digest the words of the disciples as they asked: "Do you not care that we are perishing?" The disciples' question resonates with anyone who has ever wondered if there is anyone who truly,

personally cares about the STRUGGLES, TROUBLES, and AND FEARS of our lives. When you face a stormy time of life, it can seem that everyone else is just going along happily with no troubles. It can seem that no one cares. Today Jesus answers the disciples with great compassion and power. With the wind howling, the boat taking on water, and the disciples afraid for their lives, Jesus speaks. Peace, be still, He says to the wind and the waves. And the Lord's word does what it says. The wind ceased. There was great calm. He put his mighty power to work on behalf of those who are perishing by dying and rising for salvation. The Mount Olive Lutheran Church pastor, the Rev. James T. Zang III, packed a lot of pondering into that paragraph.

I couldn't help but think back to the article titled "Thoughts of a Deaf Librarian" that Janet McKenna wrote for the last B.I.G. Newsletter. It also spoke to me. Advancing from the long ago time of the disciples all the way to the present time of 2013, we can see that people have always been confronted with STRUGGLES, TROUBLES AND FEARS. She did a fantastic job giving us insight to her personal cochlear implant experience. But one sentence in Janet's story really hit home to me. She stated that, "You don't have to face hearing loss alone." This is such an important and profound message to me. It's such wonderful advice to those struggling with profound hearing loss and deafness.

My hope for any of you out there who read our Newsletter is that our words may help you decide which route to take on your journey. The boat may seem like it is sinking, the storm may be escalating for you but there is help on the way for you. Help just as there was and is for me. I felt the fear of my world closing in on me. I felt the struggle. I withdrew and was really troubled by the onset of my late-deafness. Bill Cosby said, "Decide you want it more than you are afraid of it."

It took a lot of time for me to make the decision to call Dr. Ernesto Diaz-Ordaz. I am so glad I did. It took a lot of time for me to overcome my fear of the unknown (cochlear implant surgery). I am so glad I did. Lastly, it took a lot of time for me

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REFLECTIONS..... *Continued from page 4*

to decide that I wanted it more than I was afraid of it. Thank you Bill Cosby. This past July 10th was the third anniversary of my cochlear implant surgery. The writer H.B. Lovecraft stated, "The oldest and strongest emotion of mankind is fear, and the oldest and strongest kind of fear is the fear of the unknown."

I had a lot of help and support along the way of my journey. I still do. My Audiologist Dr. Donna Lavallee gave me the best piece of advice ever. She said, "Margie you have to be pro-active in dealing with your hearing loss." This advice helped me overcome many of my insecurities and fears. Thank you, Donna. She told me about this wonderful man named Craig Carpenter and his wonderful wife Jackie. She told me about a great organization called the Buffalo Implant Group and the fantastic people that made up that group. I will never forget how helpful and supportive she was to me. The folks in that group have been lifesavers to me. I grabbed onto the life ring they offered me and I haven't let go of it yet. Thanks to all of you for your support and love. YOU ARE NOT ALONE.

Janet McKenna is so right when she states that all of our cochlear implant experiences will differ. But what doesn't differ is the fact that we are all here to support each other and to offer support to those out there who are trying to decide if the implant can help them or their loved ones. We still have plenty of room on the boat so come out and join our group and you too will feel the support and love. If I can be of help to any of you please e-mail me: Margie8958@aol.com.

Remember the words of the Irish who state: "It is easy to be pleasant when life flows like a song. But the man worthwhile is the one who will smile when everything goes dead wrong. For the test of the heart is trouble, and it always comes with years, and the smile that is worth all the praises of earth is the smile that shines through the tears." So wherever you go and whatever you do, may the luck of the Irish be there with you. God Bless.

PICNIC REPORT

By Gail Cronin



On Friday July 20, 2012, members of B.I.G. gathered for our annual picnic and said farewell to Craig and Jackie Carpenter, our founders and hard-working leaders who led our chapter for so many years, before they left for Florida to enjoy their retirement.

As in recent years, we held our picnic at dinner hour at Westwood Park in Lancaster. Members brought appetizers and desserts to share. Dinner and beverages were provided by B.I.G. We enjoyed a chicken and pasta buffet from Desiderio's, which has been a proven favorite.

Sr. Dorothy Feltz organized a basket raffle to raise funds and offset costs. There were more than a dozen themed baskets to entice our members to participate. Everyone enjoyed the excitement. Crafts were available for the children, but most of them couldn't be pried away from the playground, which was just steps away from our shelter. Fortunately the weather cooperated.

There were a few announcements made, including a call for nominations for officers. The big announcement for the evening was that it was time to say goodbye to Craig and Jackie Carpenter who were preparing for their move to Florida. There were lots of sad faces and even some tears. Everyone wished them well and agreed that they truly deserved to actually retire!

Unfortunately, we missed our Southern Tier members, including founding member Ed Bastian, who usually make the drive for our picnic but had a conflict of schedule. We had some of our regulars and even a few people who were considering an implant. It was a very windy night, but rain-free and we certainly enjoyed one another's company.

Editor's Note: All photos of the picnic were provided by Fr. Bob McArtney. These and additional photos can be viewed on our website at www.buffaloimplantgroup.com.



Farewell Messages Craig & Jackie

Jackie and Craig were among the first members of B.I.G. that I met. They quickly dispelled any anxiety I may have felt coming among a new group. Their friendliness made me feel right at home. That friendship has continued and deepened through the years especially as I would attend meetings with them and receive help from them about the B.I.G. website. I am somewhat aware of what they have been doing behind the scenes to help the Buffalo Implant Group. Craig has been an invaluable source of information to me about maintaining the B.I.G. website. I know too of how they coped with health problems that would have sidelined many people. I wish them well in their new home and hope we can stay in touch and see them from time to time.

Fr. Bob McArtney

I first met Craig and Jackie Carpenter in 1997 when I was learning about cochlear implants. I cannot remember exactly the circumstances, but at the time, I was attending some meetings of the local SHHH group. At one meeting, Dr. Marlowe was the speaker and I was anxious to meet him and hear what he had to say about his work here in the Buffalo area trying to get a program going to perform cochlear implants. His work also included meeting and working with local health insurance companies to help prospective patients to gain insurance approval. Dr. Marlowe was interested in my case, because I had been denied insurance coverage a few years earlier for that purpose. He referred me to Buffalo Hearing and Speech Center and Gail Cronin in particular. And, as I recall it was Gail who told me about Craig and Jackie Carpenter. Especially during 1997-1998, I recall meeting and talking with them over the phone, TTY, and receiving encouragement from them. They shared Craig's experiences with me. It seems to me that B.I.G. was just getting re-started locally around that time. At any rate, I know that Jackie and Craig were most involved with that group and favorably influenced me to press on and not give up in my pursuit of an implant. Which did eventually happen and for which I am most grateful for that support, including of course, Dr. Marlowe's endeavors which ultimately achieved his goal and mine as well.

So, I certainly have wonderful memories of the support of Craig and Jackie that it makes me teary-eyed to think of it and to feel blessed to have the hearing ability that I have now. It has certainly been a "team-effort" of so many to get such an implant program, along with a support effort, that has been such a great benefit to so many persons who have had implants since those early years. And, we can thank Craig and Jackie for all of their help and support to so many who are now benefiting from their regained ability to hear and enjoy a more pleasurable life as a result.

I do wish the both of them well in their move to Florida and life there. I look forward to seeing them again when they come back to this Buffalo area to visit, maybe next year at the B.I.G. picnic.

Maxine Schwertfager

When I first came to B.I.G., at the first meeting I didn't know how I would be greeted, coming into the group. After I met Craig and Jackie, I felt so welcomed. They made me feel like I was in their family. They took me under their wings. After all, I had the Baha Implant that not so many had. I wanted to share my story of how excited I was. They gave me so much encouragement. They didn't know how much that meant to me. They were two of the few people who understood what it was to hear again. They shared my joy with me. For that I will always be grateful to both of them. Craig is such a inspiration to me. What he did for the cochlear users is great, to help every one of them, to spend time with every one of them, to share what he went though with them, and to encourage them, and he smiled all the time. I love you both for who you are. Craig and Jackie, you both have earned your feathers to your wings. I wish you both the best health. I know you will be happy in your new home. May God watch over my two friends.

Love you both,
Diane Mogavero

My Journey to better hearing has taken me down a very winding and at sometimes a very scary path. I have met many wonderful people along the way. To me, none are finer than Craig and Jackie Carpenter. Terri Guillemets said, "You'll meet more angels on a winding path than on a straight one." At a time when I needed them most Craig and Jackie came into my life. I was so fortunate to meet them and will never forget them. Nor will I ever forget the support and kindness they showed me. I wish them so much happiness in their new adventure. Buffalo's loss is definitely Cape Coral's gain.

I believe Eileen Elias Freeman must have had Craig and Jackie in mind when she stated, "Angels come to help and guide us in as many guises as there are people who need their assistance. Sometimes we see their ethereal, heavenly shadow, bright with light and radiance. Sometimes we only feel their nearness or hear their whisper. And sometimes they look no different from ourselves." I truly believe angels are amongst us and that I have had the privilege to meet two of the best...namely Craig and Jackie Carpenter.

I have a wish to pass on to you:
May you always have
Walls for the winds,
A roof for the rain,
Teas beside the fire
Laughter to cheer you,
Those you love near you,
And all your heart may desire.

God Bless you,
Margie Fitchlee

Dear Jackie and Craig,

Thank you so very much for being a tremendous support and source of encouragement to me when I was considering a cochlear implant. You answered my many questions with such ease and reassured me that I would be making a good decision. Thank you, too, for the many hours you gave to B.I.G. as well as to the B.I.G. website and newsletter. I will miss your pleasant smiles. I wish you much happiness in your new home and surroundings. I hope you'll come to see all of us now and then.

Love, Sister Dorothy

To Craig & Jackie

I want to say "Thank you." Because of your perseverance and dedication you created a wonderful organization, Buffalo Implant Group, devoted to helping those with and those considering a cochlear implant. It has encompassed those very young in age and those later in life who want to continue and pursue spoken language. What a wonderful footprint to leave to us.

I wish you the very best in your new adventure and hope you create many more memorable footprints along the way.

Lisa Hill Nowicki

Anyone who has been involved with B.I.G. knows the names Craig and Jackie Carpenter. They have been actively involved with the organization since the beginning. They have both worked tirelessly for many years building the organization and the newsletter. The organization would not be in existence today if it weren't for all of their hard work and dedication.

There is a saying that people won't remember what you said, but they will remember how you made them feel. Well, I can't recall what was said when I met the Carpenters for the first time, but I do remember that they were so gracious, and made me feel welcome into the B.I.G. community.

Craig and Jackie were so helpful to me in sharing their experiences about their lives and Craig's cochlear implant. I am sure they grew tired of repeating stories and reassuring me that things would work out for my son Jeffrey, but they never showed it. They openly shared their experiences with me and many others. Their experiences were an inspiration to me and provided hope during some rough times.

Craig also took the time to talk to my son Jeffrey, even though he was just a little boy when they first met. It was so awesome for Jeffrey to meet a man that had a cochlear implant just like him. Craig was another role model for Jeffrey and was an example of what Jeffrey could look forward to someday.

Craig and Jackie's love and caring for each other, as well as others, was also an inspiration to me. They take care of each other, and make a great team. I am so happy that they are now able to move on to the next chapter in their lives, even though I will miss them. I am happy to have the opportunity to "sing their praises" a bit, because they sure do deserve it. I thank them for everything they have done, and for just being the kind people that they are.

I feel fortunate that I got to know them over the years, and I will sure miss seeing them at our B.I.G. meetings. Thanks to the internet, I am sure our friendship can continue for years to come.

Shirley Jaskier

Three years ago I lost my residual hearing and was devastated. I was overwhelmed with emotions, questions and uncertainty. While I was going through the grieving process many of my friends suggested that I contact Craig Carpenter for support and guidance. While I was considering the possibility of being a cochlear implant candidate, I was hesitant to contact or discuss my thoughts with anyone. I was familiar with Craig from the Deaf Community but was not ready to make my situation public knowledge at that time. Finally, I decided I would send Craig an email. He responded positively and invited me to his home. At our initial meeting, we made small talk about family, work, weather, everything besides implants. Craig eventually brought up the subject and I knew it was time to face the true purpose for why I had come. He asked about my knowledge on cochlear implants and awareness of the three CI companies. He also stressed the importance of establishing realistic expectations for myself and the device. He provided me with books, resources and contact information to further my research and continue the process. I was grateful for his warm welcome, knowledge, and experiences shared that day and many more to come. Following my surgery Craig invited me and my husband to my first B.I.G. picnic. He insisted on introducing me to everyone! At the time I was nervous about being a new CI user and meeting so many people. Looking back I am thankful for his encouragement, reassurance and support. Thank you Craig for everything you have done for me, and the Buffalo Implant Group over the years. I hope that you and Jackie have settled in nicely to your new home and that you will come visit us again soon.

Happy Hearing always and hugs too,
Sue Wantuck

When I was in graduate school and working with the Cochlear Implant Team at Manhattan Eye, Ear and Throat Hospital back in 1991, I told my supervisor Pat Chute that after I finished my masters degree at the end of the semester I would be moving to Buffalo. She was shocked and asked why I would want to do that. She had assumed that I would stay in New York or at least go to another large city known for CI research. I explained that my fiancé was here and then she softened her tone. I will never forget that she then said, "Well, at least Craig Carpenter is there. He is a CI pioneer and a great person."

Sadly, I didn't meet Craig right away. I was working here for quite a few years and not much was happening locally with cochlear implants. I remember my first meeting with Craig and his wife Jackie. It was in my office at Buffalo Hearing and Speech Center. I gave them a tour of our new building in the future medical corridor of Buffalo. We were all very optimistic about the future of cochlear implants. Craig and Jackie were very supportive of my vision to start a Cochlear Implant Team at BHSC. They were excited to reorganize B.I.G. and get it moving again after a lull of a few years of limited activity. I felt an instant kinship with them.

I was living in North Buffalo at the time and Craig and Jackie were in Kenmore. It was wonderful having them so close. When they told me that they were retiring and moving out to Clarence I was so sad. Looking back I realize that it was preposterous, but Clarence seemed a million miles away. But I drove out to visit and I loved their new home and their new community, and not long after that my husband and I were expecting our first child and decided to move out to Clarence too. I took comfort in knowing they were just two miles up the road.

I was spoiled living so close to Craig and Jackie. I could run over there at the drop of a hat to work on The B.I.G. News or have a meeting. They made everything easy. We would sometimes meet for breakfast at a nearby restaurant. Craig and Jackie always knew where the best places were. Craig and Jackie often picked me up and drove me to B.I.G. meetings and other events. Since I don't have good night vision and I hate to go places alone, that was very helpful. But the best part about hitching a ride with them was that I got to spend extra time with them to talk. They always knew what was happening in the neighborhood and what was happening in the world of cochlear implants.

I was sad when they moved 14 miles from me. Now they are 14 hundred miles from me! I'm sitting at my computer crying right now. I miss them so much. I am not good at goodbyes. Not good at all. And it all happened so fast. I wish I had said goodbye differently. I wish I had said goodbye the way they deserved, but I didn't know how. I still don't. But I want them to know how much I miss them and how much I love them. My supervisor Dr. Chute was right. Craig is a great person, equal only to his wife Jackie. I came to learn that first hand over the years. While I selfishly wish there were still living here in Clarence with me, I can understand why they wanted to move down to Florida and really retire. I wish them all the best and pray that they are enjoying every minute of it.

Gail Cronin

Farewell Messages

CI STAR ATHLETE

By Crystle Marion

My name is Crystle Marion I am a senior at St. Mary's School for the Deaf. I lost my hearing when I was three years old. The doctors said that I had a virus. I remember being angry about losing my hearing because I did not understand what happened. First my grandfather brought me and my mom to Mercy hospital to get some tests done. Then my grandfather told my mom to take me to Buffalo Hearing and Speech Center to get more testing done.

I started at St. Mary's School for the Deaf when I was four years old. I wore bilateral hearing aids but I did not like them. I would throw them off, eat the molds, put them in the toilet and hide them around the house. I can't remember why I didn't like them. My mom told me that if I stopped hiding them and eating the molds that I could get colored molds. I guess I was happy with that because I stopped taking them off.

When I started wearing my hearing aids regularly I began to improve my listening and speech. I wore my hearing aids during basketball, track, volleyball and other fun activities. During school I use my voice and sign, at home at I mostly just use my voice.

I think that my mom told me that Dr. Diaz-Ordaz suggested that I get a cochlear implant when I was younger. But my mother said no because she wanted me to decide for myself when I was older. I noticed in elementary school that some kids had hearing aids and some had cochlear implants. I asked my mom about implants and she said to wait until I was thirteen or older. In the meantime I decided I hated implants and was against them. At first, I didn't like the way a person's head looked after the surgery, getting it shaved and having a big scar. Now that I am older and educated I realize that the technology as well as surgery has changed a lot since then.

I wore my left hearing aid until 2011. I started seriously considering an implant in the Fall of 2010. I wanted to be able to hear more and communicate better. I thought that the implant would help me do those things. I decided that I was old enough to make a decision and I was ready to give it a try. At first, I thought about it myself. Would it work for me? Would I like wearing it? Then I asked Sue Wantuck, a middle school teacher and my volleyball coach, for help and to talk about how she felt having her cochlear implant. She also wore hearing aids for most of her life and recently became a cochlear implant recipient.

Sue and I went to talk with the school audiologist to learn more. She explained the entire process so that I could understand. Afterwards I talked to my mom about it. My mom was not too excited about the idea when I told her

and she wanted to become more educated and ask questions herself. My mom, grandma, myself and Sue met together to talk about my situation and the implant. My mom wanted to really make sure I was confident in my decision. My friends at school were supportive and excited. My mom's boyfriend did not really understand what it was until I got it and my grandma was happy with what I wanted.

When my mom realized that I was serious and had made up my mind she made an appointment at Buffalo Hearing and Speech Center. At the appointment the audiologist did some testing and said I am a candidate and would benefit. Then I had an appointment with Dr. Diaz-Ordaz. He asked my mother questions and asked me if I was ready to set up the surgery. I was excited and nervous at the same time.

My surgery was July 2, 2011. My surgery went fine and my initial mapping was in August 2011. At my first appointment I was hooked up to the computer and the processor was turned on. I felt mad because I was expecting it to be successful the first day. It was not what I was hoping for. I only heard beeping. I know now that everyone has different experiences and you have to be patient. After my appointment I wore my implant every day, but didn't realize if it was on or off. I wore my right hearing aid and used them together. I felt overwhelmed because I was not sure what I was listening to. I started to have trouble hearing my mother or grandmother when they were calling my name at home.

I continued to wear the implant, trying to be able to hear with it. It started to get better slowly. After about six months I felt happy with the implant and my decision. I was able to pick up different sounds that I didn't hear before such as chicks peeping, the wind, machines making noise, the engine of the car, the basketball bounce, and the shower running in the house. I am able to hear my mom when she calls me sometimes. Now I prefer to wear only my implant and sometimes my hearing aid. When I am playing basketball, volleyball and exercising at the gym I take off my processor because I am worried I will lose it or it will break.

I am going to try some different accessories to help keep the processor on during these activities so I can work on my listening skills as often as possible. I think that listening to music is better with my implant than with my hearing aid. I am also able to use the phone for short conversations. In high school I had auditory training two times per week and feel that it helped me to practice and improve my skills. Something important that I have learned is that you need to be



Crystle Marion

patient with yourself and not get frustrated. I look forward to continuing to improve my listening and speaking with the use of my implant.

Less than a month after graduating from St. Mary's School for the Deaf, I went to Toronto for the USADTF (USA Deaf Track and Field) 2012 for shot put. I came in fifth place. It was a really rich experience for me to go. I learned many things, especially how to develop better skills.

By Fall of 2012, I began my first year of college at ECC (Erie Community College). So far, I like it. I joined the Junior Varsity basketball team. At first, I was majoring in Physical Education but I have changed my major to Criminal Justice.

Since my surgery and the activation of my cochlear implant over a year ago, I have learned to hear so many different kinds of sounds. I mean, better than the hearing aid I had before. I can hear the fire alarm, weight lifting equipment, and even some clocks that tick. The thing I love most about my CI is listening to the music. Music sounded clearer and better overall, although I still hear the music on low. When people talk, the voices are so clear. It's better than the hearing aid. On my ECC basketball team they seem to be so curious about my CI. Overall, I have no regrets of getting the cochlear implant. I love it!

Crystle received many sports honors during her four years of high school at St. Mary's School for the Deaf. They are:

Volleyball – all 4 years ESDAA All-Star
-named Deaf All-American- 2 yrs
-earned MVP – from SMSD Sports Banquet

Basketball – with SMSD team won 3rd consecutive ESDAA Championship
-broke the All-Time WNY Girls Points Record
-earned 4 years ESDAA All-Star ESDAA Tournament MVP
-named Deaf All-American – 4 years
-named National -received several awards from AAU

Track – awarded 2011 PREP Player of the Year in field events by USA Deaf Track & Field
-received many 1st and 2nd place medals both shot put and discus plus broke school records

CRAIG AND JACKIE CARPENTER..... *Continued from page 1*

market, it sold right away, and they started packing. Those of us who attended the B.I.G. picnic in July had an opportunity to thank them for all they have done for us and to say goodbye. Within days, they moved to Florida.

Craig and Jackie Carpenter are sorely missed here in Western New York. They are especially missed by many members of B.I.G. In this issue you will find personal reflections and well wishes from some of our members. These represent just a tiny fraction of the lives that Craig and Jackie have touched. We wish Craig and Jackie all the best in their new lives in Florida, and we hope that they will come back and visit us from time to time.

BUFFALO HEARING AND SPEECH CENTER ANNUAL GALA

The BHSC "Black Tye-Dye Gala" fundraiser will be held on Saturday, March 9. Groove on back to the 1960's at the Seneca Niagara Hotel and Casino and raise funds for BHSC programming. Tickets are \$175. Information can be found at www.askbhsc.org

HEARING LOSS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA – ROCHESTER CHAPTER WALK4HEARING

The Walk4Hearing will be held on Sunday, May 5, at Perinton Park, Fairport, NY on the banks of the Erie Canal. At 8:30 am the registration opens. At 10:00 am the walk heads off. There will be music, refreshments, clowns, face painting, and a silent auction. Information can be found at www.hlaa-rochester-ny.org

HLAA ROCHESTER CHAPTER PANEL DISCUSSION

The HLAA Rochester Chapter will meet on Tuesday, May 7 from noon-1:00 pm (chapter meeting is 11:00am-noon) at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, East Ave. at Westminster Rd., Rochester, NY. The "Living and Hearing with a Cochlear Implant" panel discussion includes two B.I.G. members, Janet McKenna and Jimmie Sorrento. Information can be found at www.hlaa-rochester-ny.org

HEARING LOSS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

The HLAA National Convention will be held June 27-30 in Portland, Oregon. Registration is now open. Information can be found at www.hearingloss.org/content/convention

MANY THANKS

Buffalo Hearing and Speech Center
 Carm Bauer
 Gail Cronin
 Kathy Danahy
 Sister Dorothy Feltz
 Margie Fitchlee
 JoAnn Hammer
 Shirley Jaskier
 Crystle Marion
 Kathy Maroney
 Janet McKenna
 Dianne Mogavero
 Lisa Hill Nowicki
 Norma Ann O'Brien
 Jean Ras
 Maxine Schwertfager
 Joe Sonnenberg
 Sue Wantuck
 Zenger Group

IT'S NOT TOO LATE

If you would like to write a reflection or note of thanks to Craig and Jackie Carpenter and would agree to have it printed in The B.I.G. News, please feel free to email it to gdcronin@roadrunner.com for inclusion in our next issue.

*ITEMS FOR NEXT
NEWSLETTER
DUE
Monday, April 1*

FROM THE EDITOR *Continued from page 2*

A third issue that had been a stumbling block in 2012 was the loss of our website when we lost our web host. It happened rather suddenly just before the picnic and we were then without a website for many months. It took a lot of work on the part of Fr. Bob McArtney, and now thanks to him we have a working website once again. We were able to secure a new web host and even retained our old website address. So we are finally back online as www.buffaloimplantgroup.com and we hope to be updating and expanding the website in the coming months.

As of press time, we are still without a contact phone, fax, or email address. Previously, all of that was maintained by Jackie and Craig. When updated contact information is arranged, it will be posted on our website and listed in our next newsletter.

When I read the President's Column that Sue Wantuck submitted to me

earlier this month I saw that she took the blame for our lack of activity. I have to say for the record that she is not solely responsible for all of our delays. We don't have a full slate of officers and we don't have enough people on our Board. The few of us who remain are stretched thin.

I would like to also take a moment to thank JoAnn Hammer and Joe Sonnenberg at Buffalo Hearing and Speech Center who have given the remaining Board members a lot of encouragement to push on and are graciously providing us with meeting space. And I would personally like to thank our Treasurer, Lisa Hill Nowicki, who has assisted me with computer issues and mailing labels on short notice during the publication phase of this newsletter. And I have to thank Janet McKenna for assisting with editing and Margie Fitchlee who always writes for us and submits her articles

early. If I could clone Margie eight times we would always have a full issue and never have delays.

The officers and other Board members of B.I.G. have high hopes for 2013, but we need YOU! Please think about how you can help us and let us know. If you have an idea for a meeting or would like to volunteer to help us out with our website or Facebook page, or if you are interested in the position of secretary, please contact our President Sue Wantuck at suewantuck@gmail.com. If you are interested in writing an article for our next issue or would like to participate in the editing or publishing of the newsletter, please contact me at gdcronin@roadrunner.com. Please help us to carry on Craig and Jackie's legacy by making 2013 a strong year for the Buffalo Implant Group!

TREASURER'S REPORT

We ended 2012 with a net loss of \$487.40 for the year. Our income totaled \$1,019.83 from memberships, donations and pop can deposits. Our expenses were \$1,507.23 from postage, office supplies, newsletters, picnics and meeting expenses. Please take a moment to send in your 2013 dues. Reminder, dues are \$15 for the year. Send your check to:

Buffalo Implant Group
P.O. Box 350
Clarence Center, NY 14032-0350

DAS TO START NEW ASL CLASS FOR HARD OF HEARING, LATE DEAFENED, AND COCHLEAR IMPLANT USERS

In response to more hard of hearing, late deafened, and cochlear implant users requesting services at Deaf Adults Services (DAS), a new American Sign Language (ASL) class is being offered starting Tuesday, March 5 for eight weeks from 6:00-8:00 pm at DAS, 2495 Main Street (Tri-Main Building), Suite 446, Buffalo. This eight week introductory class will be offered for FREE. For more information or to register, please contact Donna Cork at either 716-335-9192 or 716-335-9193 or email her at donna@wnydas.org

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

B.I.G. is in need of your assistance. Without additional volunteers our future is in jeopardy. We have several vacancies to fill in order to maintain the meetings and events that we have traditionally held in recent years.

If you are interested in becoming an officer, we have an open position in the office of Secretary. As set forth in our bylaws, duties of the Secretary include handling all official correspondence and maintaining minutes of meetings. This might include up to four general meetings of the membership and four planning meetings held with our officers and Board.

If you would like to assist B.I.G. in other ways outside of holding an office, we are in need of newsletter writers and a photographer to take digital pictures at our meetings and other events. We are in need of someone to keep our Facebook page active and updated on a regular basis. We are also looking for several members to form a picnic committee for our summer picnic in July. Preliminary planning for our picnic usually begins in April.

If you possess other talents and are interested in volunteering your skills and time to B.I.G. in some other way, please let us know. No contribution is too small. Suggestions are always welcome.

Please contact Sue Wantuck today at suewantuck@gmail.com.

Buffalo Implant Group



Subscription/Membership Form
- \$15.00 per Year -

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip + 4 _____

Phone (day) _____ Email _____

Implant User

Parent Child's Name _____

Device Name _____ Age Implanted _____

Professional, What field _____ School _____

Other _____

Please make your check payable to **Buffalo Implant Group**
and

send the Subscription/Membership Form and/or donation to:
Buffalo Implant Group, P.O. Box 350, Clarence Center, NY 14032-0350

OUR NEXT B.I.G. MEETING AND SOCIAL

Wednesday, March 20, 2013

6:00 – 8:00 PM

**Buffalo Hearing and Speech Center
50 E. North St. Buffalo 14203**

Pizza, pop and water will be provided.

Please consider bringing a snack or dessert to share if possible.

But most importantly, we need YOU and YOUR IDEAS.

This meeting will launch our reorganization
and affect the direction of our future.

Free parking is available in the lot behind the building.
Enter at E. North St. and press the button to lift the gate.



BUFFALO IMPLANT GROUP
P.O. BOX 350
CLARENCE CENTER, NEW YORK 14032-0350

www.buffaloimplantgroup.com

Awards our Newsletter has Received:

Best National Chapter Newsletter by CIAI
Service to the Hearing Impaired by Kenmore Lions Club
Judy Weiner Award for Service to the Hearing Impaired by Western New York Academy of Audiology