

the **BIG** news

The Newsletter for the Buffalo Implant Group

Volume 26 • Issue 3 - 2014

BIGstaff

Gail Cronin - Editor and Publisher
Margie Fitchlee - Writer

UPcoming Events

B.I.G. Picnic	Aug. 1
DAW kick-off	Sept. 13
Deaf Awareness Week	Sept. 13-20
B.I.G. Fall Meeting	Oct. 29

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B.I.G. Picnic
Friday, August 1
5:00 – 8:00 pm
Westwood Park, Lancaster
Enclosed Pavillion

MY LEAP OF FAITH

By Jane Ploetz



Jane Ploetz

I'm 61 and had a cochlear implant (Nucleus Freedom) in January 2006. I had two nephrectomies as an infant at ages 3 and 11 months. I developed high fevers, triggering my nerve deafness. This resulted in a 95% loss in my left ear and an 80% loss in my right ear. A blind man was my speech therapist. He was wonderful. Even with my profound hearing loss, I speak with barely an accent. I started wearing my first hearing aid at 11 years old and my second one at 38 years old.

I was under the impression that cochlear implants worked only on conductive hearing loss and not nerve deafness. My mother kept coaxing me to investigate the possibility of a cochlear implant. Fifty-three years later I was getting my hearing aid repaired at The State University of New York at Fredonia. I happened to mention to

Marc Wilcox, my audiologist that it's a shame that the cochlear implant only works for conductive hearing loss. Marc said, "What do you mean? You would be a perfect candidate for this. If I were you, I'd check into it." I was in awe. I went home in tears of joy for a possible chance of an opportunity to hear and to better understand conversations. Everything was going through my mind.

Then came several months of research and touching base with past CI users. Longtime B.I.G. member Amanda Hilliker was my guiding influence. I took my leap of faith and made one of the most monumental decisions in my life to go forward with the surgery. The timing was bitter-sweet. My mom was dying of lung and brain cancer at this time. My first and foremost thought was to forget the whole thing. If I couldn't have my mother, nothing else mattered. It was my mom who told me the biggest gift I could give would be the gift of hearing and to go ahead with the cochlear implant. Her tears said it all.

My mom was with me the day of my surgery on January 7. Mom was also by my side on February 14 when JoAnn Hammer enabled my processor for the first time. There were tears of joy from all of us and I knew then I gave my mom and myself this precious gift of hearing.

~ Continued on page 3

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Sue Wantuck



Sue Wantuck

Hello! Summer has finally arrived! Hopefully you are taking advantage of the longer days, sunshine and warmer temperatures. This wonderful season is when our devices can be at risk, lots of outdoor/water activities.

Remember to keep your hearing devices in safe and dry places when they are not in use. It is also a good idea to frequently use your drying kits to ensure any moisture is fully removed. Make sure that your kit has been replaced recently. Check with your manufacturer for recommendations. I use the "Breeze by Dry & Store" by Cochlear Americas and the "Dry-Brik II," which needs to be replaced every two months. I am eagerly waiting for the new "Aqua +" water accessory from Cochlear Americas to be available. I can't wait to try it out in the Adirondacks. I will report in the next newsletter about my experiences.

Each and every day in different listening environments, my ability to hear, process, interpret and understand is challenged. This is especially so during my individual auditory rehabilitation training sessions once a week. Recently we were working on discrimination of ending sounds with the same word. For example, nutrient, nutrition, and nutritious. I found it quite difficult to focus in and identify them correctly consistently. I do not think I was able to pick up this information before with my hearing aids. Now I am working to re-train my brain using my bilateral processors to catch on to this important information,

with a lot of repeated practice. I have also been noticing certain words people say on the radio, or while watching TV, or during conversations, that catch me by surprise. I realize that all these years I used to hear and say them wrong. A recent word was "devastated." Learning to listen with bilateral devices is not something that happens overnight. Patience is important and I am committed to improving my skills.

I was excited to finally see our members again at the spring general meeting on May 21 at Buffalo Hearing and Speech Center. Thank you to all of the BHSC panelists who volunteered their time to provide relevant information and answer a variety of member questions/concerns. Two major topics discussed related to traveling with devices and music appreciation. Several members related their personal travel experiences with their implants. It was very interesting to hear that security personnel in other countries were not aware of processors. It came up during discussion that we had a guest speaker, Tina Childress, on the subject of travelling with a cochlear implant about two years ago. We have since made a transcript of that meeting available once again on our website. Visit our website at <http://www.buffaloimplantgroup.com/BIG-Transcript-11-29-2011.pdf> to read the transcription notes from that presentation. The Board will be discussing a possible future presentation regarding music appreciation.

I'm looking forward to seeing everyone at our next gathering, which will be the annual picnic on August 1 at the Westwood Park in Lancaster. Happy Hearing!!!

FROM THE EDITOR

By Gail Cronin



Gail Cronin

My first order of business for this column is to offer my wholehearted thanks to Janet McKenna for all her support as my assistant editor over the past 2 years since I took over production of the newsletter from Craig and Jackie Carpenter. Janet's expertise has been invaluable. As a retired librarian,

her vast knowledge of grammar and written style were a wonderful asset and she taught me a great deal. I especially appreciate all she has taught me about keeping the newsletter internally consistent with style and phrasing. Janet has relocated to Rochester and will still be connected to our chapter, but will step back from the large role she has played in the production of this newsletter.

I would also like to acknowledge someone who has recently increased her involvement in the running of our organization. Margie Fitchlee has gotten more involved with our Board and has taken the lead with bringing ideas to us regarding fund raising. Several projects are currently being explored based on all the research and leg work that Margie has put in on the fundraising front. There will be more information on fundraising initiatives in future issues and on our website.

And speaking of funds, they are certainly getting tighter for everyone. Balancing our books has become increasingly challenging, as costs continue to rise. Due to increasing production costs for our newsletter, we are looking at some potential major changes in how our newsletter will be produced in the future. I will possibly be taking over a larger role in

~ Continued on page 3

FROM THE EDITOR..... *Continued from page 2*

the layout and graphics, which may have an impact on the appearance of our publication. Those changes may or may not be noticeable in our next issue. Only time will tell. Since we only publish quarterly, I cannot offer more information at this time. A lot can happen in a span of three months. One thing I know for sure is that we could use more assistance with the production of the newsletter. In particular I need people who are experienced with layout/design, graphics, photography, writing, and editing. If you have some background in any of these areas and want to help, please email me at gdcronin@roadrunner.com.

If you haven't shared your personal story with us, please consider writing yours in an upcoming issue. Even if you have never written anything before, we can help you. Submissions are welcome from implant users, parents of implant users, family members, professionals working with implant users, and graduate students. All stories are welcome. I am setting a very early deadline for our fall issue in anticipation of a longer layout and production process. I am asking for submissions to be emailed to me by September 1.

Just in time for this issue we were blessed to receive a great cover story from Jane Ploetz. Jane has a great attitude and sense of humor and I really enjoyed her article. Plus, reading about all her active-life interests at the end of her story motivated me to take a break from editing and take a 3 mile walk. That proved to be good for both my body and mind. Thanks Jane!

Also in this issue you will find an important press release from St. Mary's School for the Deaf. They are announcing the start of a variety of new programs to benefit our community.

This issue also contains information on our upcoming annual picnic on August 1. Please come. This is our most well attended meeting of the year and it's a wonderful opportunity to stay connected to the cochlear implant community. This year we are trying something new by using the indoor pavilion, so this event should be fun for all no matter what the weather brings.

The picnic is a great time to meet our Board members and officers face-to-face. If you are considering getting more involved in our organization, this would be a great time to step forward, ask questions, and work with us to find a way to use your unique skills to strengthen our organization. By the time of the picnic I should have more information about the future direction of our newsletter. I hope to see you then.

MY LEAP OF FAITH..... *Continued from page 1*

At first everything sounded like a rusty pipe organ or a woman's high pitched screeching, but hey, these old auditory nerves hadn't been exercised in 52 years so it would take time to get the brain and CI in sync. Driving home on the day I was enabled, I heard the turn signals clicking. I always thought they just flashed. I enjoyed hearing the pitter-patter of my Chesapeake Bay Retrievers running and hearing the beautiful, roaring ocean and seagulls in Maine. Sitting on my mom's porch swing above the Zoar Valley Gorge, my mom was able to spend her last few months helping me identify such sounds as coyotes yipping and howling, the chimes of her mantle clock, and so much more. I also have learned of the many "mis-heard" statements that seem quite hilarious now. In our wedding vows, I am sure glad that the "in sickness and in Hell" was not the proper terminology. I am sure glad my husband of 42 years hasn't made any of that come true. Additionally, I now know that "ping tails" are a part of a certain animal's anatomy. Anyone else ever pick up these little peculiarities due to a hearing deficiency?

I still have issues in noisy environments and I cannot get enough volume to use the telecoil, but the gains have been miraculous. No more driving around at night with the dome light on so I can read my husband's lips. Hey, sometimes I can even decipher the teller or attendant at a drive-through for my husband. The world is full of many new wonders. I have now upgraded to the Nucleus 6 and have seen a few more modest improvements. Learning that the rechargeable batteries are more sweat resistant than the disposable "Air" batteries has increased my enjoyment while biking and running. The Air box has helped rid my CI of moisture, to keep everything working tip top. The support at Buffalo Hearing & Speech Center and Cochlear Americas has been tremendous. I have no problem recommending this to anyone in need of or considering a cochlear implant. Anyone wishing to discuss the experience with me, email works best. wploetz@netsync.net

I am so blessed to have such a supportive family. My husband is the same now as before I got my cochlear implant, ever so patient and helpful. This is my 'short story'. Thanks for listening.

Jane Ploetz lives in Dunkirk on a beach near Van Buren Point with her husband of 42 years and her Chesapeake Bay Retriever, Chester Duke. She enjoys biking (fast) running (slow) walking, kayaking, stand-up paddleboarding, streetstriding, landscaping and being outdoors.

TREASURER'S REPORT

By Lisa Hill Nowicki

Thank you to all who have sent in their 2014 dues. Currently our 2014 dues are just covering our 2014 current expenses. That is wonderful, but know that we have the summer picnic and two more newsletters to come. With that said, if you have not sent in your 2014 dues I will have a table set up at the B.I.G. picnic to collect them. See you August 1. Remember that your dues expiration is to the right of your name on your newsletter mailer.

REFLECTIONS ON: LIFE'S CELEBRATIONS AND SMILING AGAIN

By Margie Fitchlee



Margie Fitchlee

This July I will celebrate the fifth year anniversary of my cochlear implant surgery. I have written much over these past five years about

my successes, my challenges, and my belief in faith and the human spirit. I hope that I have been able to give you insight into what it is like to walk in my shoes. I have talked often about what I call "My Journey to Better Hearing" and the road it has taken me down. I understand fully that each of our experiences will differ, and that our challenges will vary but it has always been my hope that my words would inspire you and comfort you in whatever decisions you make regarding your hearing.

As Rumi said, "It's your road and yours alone. Others may walk it with you, but no one can walk it for you." It was the end of another school year for me when I realized it would also be my last. The excitement of summer vacation, relaxing, resting up, reenergizing, and heading back to the classroom in September were stripped away from me. My profound loss of hearing led me instead to Sister's Hospital in Buffalo and out of the classroom for good. My heart was truly broken. So much so that I had to pull the car off to the shoulder of the road that day. I sat there and sobbed. I thought I still had so much to give at school, but my lack of hearing made that task impossible for me. Dr. Ernesto Diaz-Ordaz was my link to regaining my life.

I remember well the first time I met Dr. Diaz-Ordaz. I remember his wonderful smile and how at ease he made me feel as he examined me and asked me what my expectations were regarding cochlear implant surgery. I was frightened by my situation and realized that my main goal was to be able to communicate with my loved ones again. That was what I

wanted the most. I never realized what a monumental goal this was. I knew it was going to be different, that it would be a huge challenge, but I put my fears behind me and had the surgery.

I also remember that right around that same time I was making plans for my surgery, music icon Michael Jackson passed away. The world was mourning his loss and it was written that Michael Jackson's favorite song was "SMILE." The lyrics to that song really hit home to me. My husband would frequently say to me, "MARGIE SMILE!" The words to that song almost seemed to have been written with me and my broken heart in mind:

Smile thought your heart is breaking.

Smile even though it's aching.

Although a tear may be ever so near,

You should smile, what's the use in crying?

You'll find that life is still worthwhile,

If you just smile.

Today, almost 5 years later, I have much to smile about. My goal of understanding my loved ones and others has been met. I still have challenges, and yes even some fears, but I can smile as I hear my granddaughter Hana and her friends enjoying one another's company. I can smile when I understand the sermon at each Sunday's church service. The sounds that surround me also make me smile. I realize that each day that I continue to hear them is a miracle, a miracle that so many of us share.

I would like to dedicate this article to Dr. Ernesto Diaz-Ordaz, Michele Dube, and the fantastic staff at the Buffalo Hearing and Speech Center. We are so blessed to have these wonderful caring professionals working so hard to make our lives better. I thank you with all my heart.

Lastly, I leave you with this

thought written by James A. Murphy: writer of inspirational quotes-

"Just for today, smile a little more. Just for today, ask someone how he or she is really doing. Just for today, remember, while some may have it better than you do, there are others whom definitely have it worse than you! Just for today, just let go, just for today..."

FROM A GRATEFUL HEART

By S. Dorothy Feltz

I'm sitting here quietly with my window open "listening" and "hearing" all of the sounds of Spring and Summer. Birds chirping, children playing, lawn mowers mowing (hurrah – no snowplows), horns beeping, ice cream wagon's music, clock ticking, telephone ringing, dogs barking, a car starting, wind blowing, people chatting, etc.

The beauty of the change of seasons entrances me. And, I am so grateful that I am able to enter into and enjoy the sounds because of my cochlear implant. My right ear was initially implanted in November of 2008.

I am now inquiring about an upgrade to a Nucleus 6, insurance coverage and the different features of an upgraded model. I am slow at making changes. Friends who already have a Nucleus 6 are giving me all kinds of answers and suggestions to my many questions, as they did when I was initially considering a cochlear implant. How blest I am to be a part of such a wonderful group of people who are willing to help each other.

I cherish the B.I.G. newsletter and am grateful for all the work that goes into that. The socializing at our group meetings is always a joy too. I look forward to seeing all of you at our B.I.G. Picnic on August 1. And, if possible, please bring a gift basket to add to our basket raffle.

SPRING MEETING REPORT

By Gail Cronin



On Wednesday, May 21, members of B.I.G. gathered at Buffalo Hearing and Speech Center for our spring meeting. We started the evening off with our usual pizza dinner, along with snacks and desserts brought by our generous members.

B.I.G. President Sue Wantuck began the meeting by welcoming the members in attendance. We had approximately 40 people. We then enjoyed a panel presentation entitled: "BHSC's Cochlear Implant Team: What's New in Service Delivery and Access." The panel was led by Speech-Language Pathologist Amy Bamrick, who is the Director of Clinical Services at BHSC. Amy introduced a variety of center staff including JoAnn Hammer and Michelle Dube, CI Audiologists, Monica Lucarelli, Speech-Language Pathologist in the oral deaf education program who conducts CI candidacy evaluations,

Sharon Warner, Speech-Language Pathologist specializing in post-implant rehabilitation, Tracy Balon- Speech-Language Pathologist and manager of the oral deaf education program, Lynn Shea, Director of the Early Childhood Program, and Pam Vacanti, support staff person for the clinical Cochlear Implant Program.

JoAnn Hammer and Michelle Dube gave an overview of the current audiological services provided to cochlear implant candidates and users, and answered many questions. They reported that their team has recently been trained on the new hybrid CI from Cochlear Americas and expect to start offering that device soon. They also reported that the team is scheduled to implant their youngest CI user at the age of 9 months. Dr. Hammer answered the question of why Pam Kruger recently left the BHSC CI team and was pleased to report that Dr. Kruger left to take a position with Advanced Bionics so that she could dedicate herself full time to the support of cochlear implant centers. Drs. Hammer and Dube also mentioned that CI users who are considering an upgrade to new equipment should inquire about the availability of a loaner device over a weekend to help in their decision making.

Sharon Warner and Monica Lucarelli discussed options for post-implant rehabilitation, including the latest option of teletherapy for those who are not able to commute to the Center for rehab. It should be noted, however, that teletherapy is not currently funded through private insurance.

Speaking of insurance, there were many questions from the participants about issues surrounding insurance reimbursement. Pam Vacanti provided wonderful information about navigating the insurance maze and the importance of letting her know if you have any difficulties with insurance reimbursement.

Members asked many questions about learning how to appreciate music after receiving a cochlear implant. Lynn Shea recommended that CI users start by listening to recordings of one instrument at a time, rather than arrangements of multiple musical instruments. It was also suggested that B.I.G. schedules a future meeting on the subject of music appreciation.

Another topic of discussion was issues surrounding travel with a cochlear implant. Several participants expressed that they have had difficulty with airport security when travelling outside the United States.

B.I.G. secretary Melissa Burroughs took minutes of the meeting, which can be found on our website. Special thanks goes to our wonderful sign language interpreters from St. Mary's School for the Deaf.



COCHLEAR IMPLANTS FOR PEOPLE WITH SINGLE-SIDED DEAFNESS?

By Gail Cronin

For the past few decades we have seen more and more people become eligible for cochlear implants as the once strict criteria have been relaxed. In the early days, only profoundly deaf adults were eligible. Then, cochlear implants became available for children as well. Not long after, adults with less severe hearing losses became eligible. Then cochlear implants became available for some people with moderate-profound hearing losses. But all throughout this time period, cochlear implants have been approved in the United States only for people who had hearing loss in both ears. That may change in the near future.

More and more research is being conducted in which people with deafness in only one ear, called “single-sided deafness,” are receiving a cochlear implant. The results have been quite remarkable. There is a lot to be learned from the outcomes of this new generation of CI pioneers.

Conventional thinking has long been that people with normal-range hearing in one ear do not need normal hearing in the other ear in order to function adequately. And while it is true that most people with single-sided deafness and normal hearing in the other ear can do well in a quiet listening environment, it is widely known that those same people have difficulty hearing in noise. Not surprisingly, this is the same situation we often see with deaf people who use a single cochlear implant. Performance in an “ideal” environment is not the same thing as performance in the real world. We also know that people with single-sided deafness have great difficulty localizing sound, or knowing from which direction the sound is coming. Again, this is the same situation that we see with people who have one cochlear implant.

In recent years, as bilateral use of cochlear implants has become more and more popular, the data (and our own members’ experiences) show that two ears are better than one, particularly in the real world – the noisy world – the world in which we need to know where sound is coming from. It stands to reason that just as deaf people usually do better with two cochlear implants instead of one, people with single-sided deafness should do better with a cochlear implant in their deaf ear. The only question holding us back is, will the brain integrate the two signals (one digital, one biological) enough to improve the person’s quality of life?

Researchers from the Department of Otolaryngology - Head and Neck Surgery at the University of California Davis Medical Center in Sacramento reviewed all the published case studies of cochlear implantation in individuals with single-sided deafness through 2012. Based on all the data available, they concluded that “modest benefits” have been achieved in both speech perception abilities and sound localization. Cochlear implant users with single-sided deafness consistently reported improvement in their quality of life after cochlear implantation.

Interestingly, as more and more people with single-sided deafness have been implanted as part of research, a new justification for the use of a cochlear implant has emerged. As we know, tinnitus (that annoying ringing

sound inside our heads) often accompanies hearing loss. However, tinnitus accompanies hearing loss in an extremely high number of cases of sudden, severe hearing loss as is often seen in people with single-sided deafness. (Some research indicates that over 90% of people with sudden, severe hearing loss experience tinnitus along with the sudden hearing loss.)

A landmark Belgian/German study published in *Otology and Neurotology* (June 2013) looked at 15 people with single-sided deafness who had severe tinnitus and were implanted with MED-EL devices. Speech reception tests were administered in the audiological booth and it was shown that unilateral tinnitus in the deaf ear significantly decreased speech reception in noise in the non-tinnitus (normal hearing) ear. Thus, tinnitus truly interferes with comprehension of speech. The researchers also observed that the tinnitus could be reduced dramatically when the cochlear implant was activated. This means that the cochlear implant can be used as a treatment for tinnitus, and can also have the added benefit of improving speech reception scores in cases where the tinnitus is interfering with the understanding of speech.

As we see an increase in the use of cochlear implants in people with single-sided deafness, it will be interesting to see what recommendations implant centers make regarding how to get used to the implant and come to rely on it. Right now there is much debate among audiologists regarding the use of a hearing aid in a non-implanted ear. Many audiologists recommend that patients with new cochlear implants stop using a hearing aid in the non-implanted ear. Some recommend this only while getting used to the implant, some recommend this only during therapy/rehabilitation activities, and some encourage patients to stop using a hearing aid altogether. In cases of single-sided deafness, you can’t tell a person to stop using their normal ear! You can fit a person with an earplug, and some implant centers are doing just that. Some audiologists recommend using the ear plug only during rehabilitation and others recommend using it all the time until the patient learns to use the implant. This is an area that clearly needs further study. And the results of that research may influence recommendations not only for people with a cochlear implant and a normal ear, but for those with a cochlear implant and hearing aid as well. Thus, as we learn more about cochlear implant users with single-sided deafness we will again learn more about cochlear implants for everyone.

Sadly, the greatest obstacle to cochlear implantation for individuals with single-sided deafness in our country is insurance reimbursement. Insurance companies will not pay for it, and therefore there are few Americans with single-sided deafness who are getting them. But because cochlear implants are funded in Europe for people with single-sided deafness (as seen in the Belgian-German study of 15 MED-EL users mentioned earlier) we are beginning to see more and more research data which may be used in the future to make the case for them with American insurance companies.

DING DONG!

By Joe Kolis



Ding Dong! Ding Dong! Did you hear the doorbell? Are you wearing your CI? Maybe or maybe not. If not, you may have just missed Ed McMahon with the \$1 Million Publishers Clearing House grand prize!

If you didn't hear the doorbell, there is a product that could help you. It is a doorbell with a strobe light. The model I bought is the NuTone Wireless Door Chime with Strobe Light (LA-204WH). I bought it on

Amazon.com for approximately \$42. It's not cheap but it is very useful. When the doorbell transmitter button is pressed, the chime and strobe light are activated. The chime has a pleasant ring and the strobe light is bright. You can add additional receivers to plug into outlets in multiple rooms so you will always know when someone is at your door. It is designed for those with hearing loss and is a useful tool.

Most people would use this at their home entry. However, my family and I don't use this doorbell in the traditional manner. I installed the doorbell outside our bathroom door and plugged in the strobe light receiver inside the bathroom. My daughter Jillian, a bilateral CI user, loves, loves, loves long showers! Of course, she locks the door, can't hear us knocking on the door, and we have to stomp on the floor to get her attention, which sometimes works. It becomes a problem when we need to use the bathroom and she hasn't finished turning the bathroom into her personal steam room! With the strobe light we can always get her attention. It doesn't necessarily mean she gets out of the shower, just that she is aware that we want to get in!

Installation was truly as easy as advertised. No wiring is required. A couple of screws hold the button to the wall and the receiver plugs into a regular power outlet.

There are a few small negatives about the product. In order to work, the receiver must be plugged in. That sounds obvious but the receiver is 3.5" x 4.5". When it is plugged in the bottom outlet, the top outlet is available for use. However, if the other appliance, such as a hairdryer, has an oversized plug, it won't fit in the outlet with the receiver. So, if you unplug it to dry your hair, plug it back in when you are finished. A minor issue is that you need to have an outlet where the strobe light is visible. A little planning alleviates this issue. Also, as I mentioned above, it is a bit pricey.

Overall, it is a very good product for how we use it. We have been using it for about six months and have had no problems. We don't have to stomp on the floor anymore and the strobe light lets my daughter know that she has to share the bathroom!

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

According to the Buffalo Implant Group bylaws, elections must be held each year at the fall meeting. In order to accommodate elections in the fall, nominations for officers must take place prior to the fall meeting. Therefore, nominations for the four offices of the organization can be made at the summer picnic on August 1 or at any time during the month of August. Please speak to Sue Wantuck or Gail Cronin at the picnic if you would like to nominate a candidate. You may also nominate yourself. If you are unable to attend the picnic, you can email Sue at suewantuck@gmail.com or Gail at gdcronin@roadrunner.com in order to nominate a candidate. Below you will find a description of each officer's duties, as it appears in our bylaws.

Article VII – Duties of Officers

Section 1: The President shall 1) represent B.I.G. to the public and other organizations, 2) promote cochlear implants in the media and serve as media contact person, 3) arrange quarterly meeting locations, 4) set all meeting agendas and lead the meetings.

Section 2: The Vice-President shall 1) support and assist the President, 2) act in the President's absence at B.I.G. events, 3) organize committees for development and special events (speakers, social activities, etc.)

Section 3: The Secretary shall 1) handle all official correspondence and 2) maintain minutes of all meetings.

Section 4: The Treasurer shall 1) handle all finances and 2) maintain an accurate accounting of all finances.

A breakdown of the officers' duties can be found on the "Board" page of our website. If you have any questions or would simply like more information, please feel free to contact any of the current officers. Contact information can be found on our website.

If you are interested in assisting the organization in another way, besides running for a specific office, please contact any of the Board members. We are always in need of volunteers.

Items for the Next Newsletter Due Monday, September 1

Follow us on Facebook at

www.facebook.com/BuffaloImplantGroup



Follow us on Twitter @ [BFLOCOCHLEAR](https://twitter.com/BFLOCOCHLEAR)





IT'S PICNIC TIME!

Our next gathering will be our annual...

Sunset Dinner Picnic
Friday, August 1, 2014
5:00 – 8:00 pm



Dinner catered by Desiderio's, served at 6:00 pm

Water and pop will be provided. Please bring an appetizer or dessert to share.

Westwood Park, Enclosed Pavilion - 175 Pavement Road - Lancaster, NY 14086

The entrance to Westwood Park is on Pavement Road between Walden Avenue and Broadway. The enclosed pavilion is on the left side, with parking right outside the building. Our new location shares a parking lot with our former location and is the same building in which the restrooms are located. The children's playground is a short walk away.

Please plan on participating in our Basket Raffle fundraiser to benefit our upcoming scholarship program. Additional basket donations are appreciated. We are especially in need of baskets themed for children and for men. Baskets can be dropped off to any Board member by prior arrangement, or simply brought to the picnic. A basket donation form can be found in this newsletter. Please fill one out for each basket donation in order for us to have a description of the contents of your basket. The Basket Raffle is being coordinated by Sr. Dorothy Feltz. Tickets will be 2 for \$1 or 20 for \$5.

We need a general idea of how many members will be attending, so RSVP to Secretary Melissa Burroughs at 716-523-2991 or bufimpgrp@yahoo.com by July 25 if possible.

Friends and family are welcome! We look forward to seeing you there!

DEAF AWARENESS WEEK 2014

Deaf Awareness Week will be held during the week of September 13 - 20, 2014. Please join us at our B.I.G. information table at the DAW kick-off event at the Walden Galleria Mall on Saturday, September 13th from 11 am to 2 pm.

INFORMATION ON TRAVELLING WITH A COCHLEAR IMPLANT

As was mentioned at our last meeting during the discussion portion of the evening, B.I.G. sponsored an event in November 2011 on the subject of travel that was very informative. Tina Childress, audiologist and late-deafened adult who uses a cochlear implant, shared information about technology and procedures while travelling. Several members who missed that event were interested in what Tina had to say. We have made a transcript of that evening available on the web at <http://www.buffaloimplantgroup.com/BIG-Transcript-11-29-2011.pdf>

WHITE'S LIVERY APARTMENTS AVAILABLE FOR PEOPLE WITH HEARING LOSS

Savarino Construction has just finished building White's Livery Apartments in the heart of Buffalo's West Side at Jersey & Richmond. Four out of fourteen units were specifically designed & reserved for people with hearing loss, or have low vision, and/or physical disabilities. These unique apartments in a fully renovated historic livery stable feature indoor parking and on site laundry, are energy efficient and smoke-free. The apartments are subsidized for moderate income individuals/families & thus are only \$505-\$605 p/month. Income restrictions apply. For more information, call The West Side Neighborhood Housing Services, Inc. at 885-2344 ext. 21.





MANY THANKS



Brooke Burch
Melissa Burroughs
Craig and Jackie Carpenter
Priscilla Chaukam Li
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Jimmie Sorrento
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CORRECTIONS

In the last issue of The B.I.G. News, we erroneously reported on an announcement that Google would be acquiring MED-EL Corporation. As it turns out, that announcement was an elaborate hoax that spread throughout the internet, as part of an April Fools joke.

Although attempts to verify the story were made by both the writer and editor of The B.I.G. News, the story was widely repeated and therefore misled us into thinking it was legitimate.

We credit the team at CochlearImplantHELP.com for teaching us all the meaning of the word “pwned.” This term is techno-slang for “dominated by an opponent.” The term “pwned” originated from a typo of the word “owned.” If your opponent can defeat you or trick you, then you have been “pwned.” Regular use of the word “pwned” has spread throughout the internet, not unlike the way April Fools jokes often do.

In summary, MED-EL Corporation is not being acquired, and The B.I.G. News was in fact pwned.



Sue with Chris Hasson

CHILLY MORNING AT ROCHESTER WALK4HEARING

By Sue and Danny Wantuck

On Sunday May 4, my son Danny and I headed to Rochester for the Walk4Hearing. The sun was shining but the temperatures were chilly. We packed our sweatshirts instead of our tank tops like last year. We enjoyed the quiet ride and admired the many signs of spring with the heater blowing to keep us warm. This was our third time participating in the event which raises money for the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA). When we arrived at the park we saw several people dressed for fall instead of spring. Some

gathered together while others were drinking coffee and hot chocolate, trying to stay warm. Luckily, it did not rain. We were thankful for that. Before the walk started, I chatted with a few people whom I had met in previous years. It was nice to catch up on life. I also meet Chris Hasson from Cochlear Americas. I learned that he utilizes a BAHA and represents our Northeast regions. Sam Spritzer, Janet McKenna, Buffalo Hearing and Speech Center staff, and one family from BHSC were among the familiar faces I recognized. The three mile walk along the Erie Canal was beautiful despite the cold temperatures.

Next year hopefully more members will be interested in taking the short drive and spending a few hours for a great cause. “Thank you” to those of you who donated to the Walk4Hearing 2014!



Janet McKenna with Sue

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