

THE B.I.G. NEWS

BUFFALO IMPLANT GROUP

COMMUNICATING ▶ SHARING ▶ COUNSELING ▶ SUPPORTING



UPCOMING EVENTS

B.I.G. Meeting	March 13
B.I.G. Picnic	Aug 9
Walk4Hearing	Sept 29

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MEETING NOTICE!

Sunset Dinner Picnic

Friday, August 9

5:00 – 8:00 pm

**Westwood Park, Shelter #5
175 Pavement Rd., Lancaster**

Technology to Improve Restaurant Acoustics – It's About Time!

By Paul L. Battaglia, AIA, ASA

Restaurants have gotten noisier over the past several years as design trends have moved to use hard materials – concrete, gypsum board, wood, tile, glass, metal. These materials reflect sound so that it continues to bounce around and creates a din that makes it very difficult to maintain a conversation. For anyone with a hearing problem, including everyone over the age of 45, this is unbearable and ruins what could otherwise be a pleasant night out.

We now know what to do about it. An architectural seminar in the Department of Architecture, University at Buffalo, did a survey of patrons at local restaurants to determine what contributes to acoustical comfort – the ability to maintain a conversation easily, with privacy from being overheard by diners at nearby tables, and without noisy intrusion. What they found was surprising. It's not really how loud the sound is, but how reverberant or “echoey” the space is that makes for discomfort. When sounds tend to linger like they do in reverberant spaces, they cover or “mask” subsequent sounds that are the nature of speech – one syllable after another. Something needs to be done to lower what is called “reverberation time.”

Materials that absorb sound – carpets, drapes, acoustical ceilings – are what have been removed from trendy restaurants. Another absorptive material is needed in lieu of these not-so-trendy products. STC Sound Control is a local company that makes



and distributes a sound absorbing foam panel that's also fireproof. It's already found itself in local restaurants like Dobutsu, The Place, Ru's Pierogi, and others where everyone has noticed a big change in the ability to have a pleasant conversation. At the Country Club of Buffalo, stretched fabric is used to hide the panels – it looks like plaster but absorbs sound extremely effectively, unlike plaster.

BHS, a restaurant supply company with customers throughout the Northeast, is picking up the product called the STC Hi-Sabin Panel. Now when restaurateurs call to buy new dishes or kitchen equipment, they will have the option to consider the acoustical comfort of their patrons and do something to make it better. It's about time.

President's Corner

By Sue Wantuck



Hello Everyone! Has anyone started some Summer projects so far? I have been very busy moving! I've been going through lots of things that have piled up over the years while packing. We finally closed on our new house in April. We are downsizing and going into a ranch. I am looking forward to one-level living. The new house is still in Amherst; we are not going far. We sold our house to my son and daughter-in-law. For several weeks we were remodeling, tearing down the walls, removing lots of wallpaper (ugh!), painting the walls and painting the baseboards. I have also been meeting with some contractors like the electrician, plumber, and attic cleaner. I was impressed at how well I was able to interact with them, with only a little help needed from my son. My ranch home is coming along quite well. There will be two more projects to address - the kitchen and the bathroom. After that I hope we can sit back relax and enjoy our new place. A new house

means a new neighborhood, new sights to see and new sounds to hear on my walks with Max.

At our winter Board meetings, we continued to discuss options for a "social meeting" for the group as an option for our spring meeting. We had first reached out to a local movie facility to try and allow us to utilize a theater to run previews and try out their adaptive equipment. Unfortunately, we were unable to make this happen. Instead we were given a wonderful opportunity to spend a summer night with the Buffalo Bisons in June! I hope that all our readers were made aware of this on our website and through emails. The event was held on June 21 and there is information and photos in this newsletter. The B.I.G. Scholarship Committee has been busy, working on reviewing applications, selecting the winner and discussing changes for next year. The recipient was announced at the Bison's game.

In regards to my hearing journey it has been 9 years with my left processor (NU-5) and 6 years with my right (NU-6). I am patiently waiting and looking forward to having the NU-7 someday, or whatever the newest technology is, when I am eligible for an up-

grade. I often reflect on how long it has been since I received them and how far I have come along the way. I have needed a few minor parts replaced, like the magnet for my headpiece and the plastic hook that attaches to my processor. Otherwise, I have had no major issues or complaints, and I am happy and grateful for that. I love my bilateral cochlear implants. I am careful with them and their care. I enjoy changing the colors of the covers to match my outfits and adding stickers. I am not too concerned with keeping them concealed. If you are considering a CI or maybe even going bilateral, don't be afraid to ask questions and seek advice from others. That is exactly what we are here for, to support and help each other! Everyone's story and situation are unique. That is important to remember.

We are also working on collecting items and soliciting local businesses for donations for the basket raffle for the picnic. If you are able to help us out with this, we, especially, Sister Dorothy would greatly appreciate it!

I look forward to seeing you at the summer picnic in August. Happy hearing!

From the Editor

By Gail Cronin



Remember me? I wouldn't be surprised if you said no because it has been a long time since some of you have seen or heard from me. I was unable to attend the March meeting and the

June Bisons game due to health and family issues. Be assured that I have been attending the majority of our Board meetings behind the scenes. Also, following the results of the vote at the March meeting, the bylaws have been changed and we now only have three issues of The B.I.G. News per year. This is the second issue of the year. The first came out in February. I had intended to get this issue out in early June, but circumstances delayed me. In March I was diagnosed with Graves' Disease. It has been quite a battle. Since many of you have seen me last, I lost 20 lbs., then gained 25 lbs., and now I am losing weight again. They say it takes months for the medications to stabilize one's metabolism and that is no joke. Things are improving, slowly, and I hope to see you all at the picnic

on August 9. If I am well, I will be there. The picnic is always a wonderful event. There is plenty of time for socializing, a few announcements, and a delicious Italian buffet dinner. We also hold our basket raffle to fund the annual scholarship. As of press time we still need quite a few basket/prize donations. Sr. Dorothy Feltz and her team of volunteers have been working hard with the donations they have already acquired. If you would like to add a basket to the raffle, please bring it to the picnic. Come early if you can to help us set up. All the details are in this newsletter. If you are thinking about possibly getting more involved in 2020, we welcome anyone who would like to run for office. The picnic is a great time to talk to officers and Board members about the possibility. Nominations must be in by the end of summer so that we can hold elections at the fall meeting. Look for details in the fall issue of The B.I.G. News. Speaking of the fall issue, I have no articles left that I am holding. That means that I am in need of a personal cover story, a parent's experience for the Parents' Corner, and additional articles. Please consider writing for us. You can send your submissions directly to me at gdcronin@roadrunner.com

I greatly appreciate the efforts of Board member Kathy Danahy on this issue of The B.I.G. News. Kathy contacted Paul Battaglia, architect and UB professor, who wrote our current cover story. An expert in architectural acoustics, Paul is the founder and president of STC Sound Control. You can learn more at stcsoundcontrol.com. There are probably a lot of people missing from the "Many Thanks" list in this issue. Because I have missed the last two meetings, I am sure that there are people who contributed to our organization in recent months who were not on my radar. If you volunteered, donated, or shared your talents and I have omitted you, please email me and let me know so that I can include you on the list in the next issue.

Admittedly I have been mentally beating myself up for all the obligations I have neglected and events I have missed in recent months. My wonderfully supportive husband Joe recently reminded me of the words of tennis great Arthur Ashe who said, "Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can." This is great advice for anyone trying to overcome life's obstacles. And let's face it, we are all trying to overcome something. Let's do it together.

Meeting Report

By Melissa Burroughs

The Buffalo Implant Group winter meeting was held on Wednesday, March 13 at Buffalo Hearing and Speech Center. President Sue Wantuck welcomed guests and the participants on our Parents' Panel. Members voted to amend the by-laws regarding the newsletter. Starting in 2019 there will be three issues produced instead of four issues.

Jessica Holst served as the moderator of our panel. Our parent participants were Brian and Jessica Jurusik, Meg Blinzler and Megan Glasser. Their daughters ranged in age from 5-7 years old, all cochlear implant users. Two of the girls attended Buffalo Hearing and Speech Center's Oral Deaf Program and the other child attended St. Mary's School for the Deaf EARS program. All three are currently mainstreamed within their home school districts. In the school setting, the girls utilize FM systems, receive teacher of the deaf (TOD) services and speech therapy at varying levels. Parents discussed the importance of their child's "support team" at school and the need for everyone to be on the same page. They emphasized the reliance on visuals and how to incorporate them for better understanding and overall comprehension. Self-advocacy is always a skill to target. Examples include asking for clarification, repetitions and modifications of environments for optimal listening opportunities. Educating staff and students about their devices,

how they work, and what they are used for has proven beneficial for self-confidence. Parents discussed the different extracurricular activities that their daughters actively participate in. Each parent had a difficult time focusing on just one milestone, recapping what a "journey" it has been over the years and how proud and impressed they are with their children. All parents agreed what a struggle it was in the beginning to get their children to wear their implants for any extended period of time. One mother reflected on all the professionals in the early years telling her that "it is going to be ok" and instead she felt it wasn't just "ok" but "amazing!" What a miracle these devices are, and how rewarding it has been to watch their daughters, grow develop and learn over the past few years. Thank you to these parents for sharing their personal experiences with our group. What a wonderful opportunity it was to learn about these inspiring kiddos!



It's Time to Sign Up for the HLAA Walk4Hearing

By Gail Cronin

The HLAA (Hearing Loss Association of America) Walk4Hearing will be held on Sunday, September 29 at the Buffalo & Erie County Botanical Gardens at South Park Ring Road between Route 62 and Park Drive. Registration begins at 9:00 am and the Walk starts at 10:00 am.

The Walk4Hearing is always a festival-like atmosphere with food, music, informational tables, and activities for the kids at the starting location. The Walk itself is 5K/3.1 miles in total. Even if you are not able to walk the 5K, visitors and volunteers are welcome.

Again, this year, Buffalo Implant Group will be an Alliance Group organization with HLAA and sponsor a Walk Team. Our Team will be organized by our Walk Team Leader, Gloria Matthews, who is also serving HLAA as the Walk Treasurer. Funds raised are split between HLAA, a national organization that advocates and lobbies for people with hearing loss, and the Alliance Groups. B.I.G. keeps 40% of all the donations our walkers bring in. If you are interested in joining us on the Walk4Hearing, and/or raising funds for this event, please register online or speak to Gloria Matthews at

the B.I.G. picnic on August 9.

If you would like to learn more about HLAA, check out their website at www.hearingloss.org. To learn more about the Walk4Hearing, go to www.walk4hearing.org.



UB Hearing Health Lecture Series

By Gail Cronin

Many of our readers may be familiar with the Western New York Tinnitus Support Group, which has met for over two decades at The State University of New York at Buffalo, sponsored by the UB Communicative Disorders and Sciences Department. You may have heard that the group has disbanded, but it would be more accurate to say that it has evolved. The mission of the WNY Tinnitus Support Group will now be continued through the UB Hearing Health Lecture Series. The series will continue to address tinnitus, as well as other issues related to

hearing and hearing loss.

Under the direction of Dr. Richard Salvi, the WNY Tinnitus Support Group has provided education and support to our community for over 20 years. Dr. Salvi frequently brought in guest speakers to share their research and expertise. The UB Hearing Health Lecture Series will continue to do so, with a lecture each semester.

You can follow the UB Hearing Health Lecture Series on Facebook in order to be notified of future lectures, or contact the UB Communicative Disorders and Sciences

Department at (716) 829-2797 or cdsdept@buffalo.edu to be added to the mailing list.



B.I.G. at the Buffalo Bisons Game

By Karen Ward

On Friday, June 21, 2019, a large contingent of Buffalo Implant Group members had the opportunity to watch the Buffalo Bisons face the Norfolk Tides at Sahlen Field in downtown Buffalo. One hundred tickets were provided free of charge through the Bisons Community Care program. We considered this event to be in place of our spring meeting. It was a fantastic opportunity for our members to socialize with friends and families and see our minor league baseball team in action. The double-header also featured Nineties Night entertainment throughout the game with trivia about television shows and movies from the 1990s as well as music from that decade. The weather was terrific and the Bisons came through for the fans by winning both games, 2-1 and 1-0. Following the games, spectators were treated to a spectacular fireworks display to complete this wonderful evening.

Thank you to the Buffalo Bisons organization for making this event possible. We are also very grateful to our treasurer, Lisa Hill-Nowicki, for requesting the tickets as well as handling ticket distribution to our members. We hope to pursue this opportunity again next year.



Photos by Karen Ward and Lisa Hill Nowicki





Communication with your Medical Team

By Gloria Matthews



Some of you were made aware in the winter issue that I was fighting cancer. Last fall, I was feeling run down and unusually tired. I decided to take a small drive out to Ellicottville, NY with my son, Michael, just to get out of town for the day. It was a beautiful fall drive in the country and getting to walk around Ellicottville, window shopping and finally eating at my favorite restaurant EBC. On our way back, we decided, to stop by the Eternal Flame. It was definitely a hike down and back up to the parking lot! It was on that hike; I

noticed my body was struggling to keep up. As a former competitive runner, hills were always easy to hike for me, but this one left me out of breath and exhausted. Mind you, I spent the summer jogging once a week at Delaware Park with no issues.

Back home, I had my sweatpants and tank top on. My son pointed to my chest and asked me, “Mom, what is that red circle on your chest?” I looked down puzzled and saw a red circle just above my right breast. So, I looked in the mirror and it looked weird, so I contacted my primary doctor first by phone (CaptionCall) and set up an appointment with my Nurse Practitioner two days later. On the day of the appointment, I told my nurse practitioner that I had been experiencing breast pain for a few weeks. I was not exposed to any ticks nor ringworms. She was just as baffled as I was. So, she ordered blood work to make sure I didn’t have Lyme Disease, and that everything else checked out. I got the results within 48 hours. It was negative for Lyme Disease and everything looked normal. But something still didn’t feel right to me. Something was off. (I must note that I have been with my primary doctor’s office for the last eight years and they have always maintained facing me while they talk to me and making sure that I understood everything, but I always make sure that I ask for a repeat to ensure that I understood correctly).

The same day I got the results from my nurse practitioner, I contacted my gynecologist. I got an appointment three days later. I showed him the red circle and told him about the right breast pains. We talked about possibly seeing a dermatologist regarding the weird red circle and getting yet another ultrasound of the right breast. This isn’t my first ultrasound nor mammogram I had. My gynecologist has an accent and sometimes I have had to ask for repetitions or look to the female nurse for clarifications and usually they are good about that. If I have a hard time understanding or hearing them, I just ask that they write a brief summary of the visit on the “Summary of Visit” print out and that works for me. If I have any questions, I would follow up through the online portal and email my questions and I usually get an answer within 48 hours. Overtime, I have come to understand my gynecologist better. Sometimes repeated exposure to certain voices and accents trains the brain to get familiar with the speaker. He ended up referring me to Windsong Radiology for an ultrasound which I managed to get an appointment for two days later.

As a first-time patient at Windsong Radiology, I let the front desk person know that I am hard of hearing, so that when they call me, the individual will notify the staff to wave me over or point me out to the nursing staff in the wait area to be called back. I do this each time, as you may not always get the same front-desk individual. Now, this can be done differently as many medical centers will vary in experience. I will explain that a bit later.

Once I was called back, I was taken to an area with lockers and a secondary waiting area. I had to change to a robe top. I notified the nurse to alert the individual doing the ultrasound to come out to the waiting area when they called my name, and that she did. The technicians were very

considerate and professional and were all made aware of my hearing loss, as they all took the time to look at me and explain to me what to expect before the procedures began. This helped me in adjusting awkwardly for my unscheduled mammograms right after I had the ultrasound. Keep in mind, I had a script for an ultrasound only and it turned into two different mammograms. As soon as I was told another mammogram was needed, a magnifying one, I automatically knew something showed up. After the last mammogram, I was taken to another waiting area to wait for the Doctor of Radiology to discuss my mammograms and ultrasound with me and sure enough there was a perfect circle of microcalcifications. I was soon recommended to have a biopsy done. That procedure was done a week later. I found out the results of that biopsy, just five days after turning 35, that it was positive for cancer. That felt like a serious kick in my gut, especially after undergoing a hysterectomy not even a year before. I was immediately scheduled to meet with the Genetics Counselor and the Surgeon, but first had to attend the newly diagnosed informational panel.

For the informational panel, I had asked my friend and mentor, Petra, to take notes for me. I also asked her to do the same for my first appointment with the surgeon, to also take notes and ask questions as well because I know I was just processing the entire experience and drawing blanks for questions. It’s always good to ask someone you are comfortable with and someone you can trust to come with you on those initial appointments, especially regarding serious matters. As always, speak up and let the doctor know that you are hard of hearing and they will make the necessary adjustments to communicate effectively with you.

In the event that you utilize an interpreter, you must notify the receptionist to call the Interpreting Services, be it Deaf Access Services or Service Bridges, to request an interpreter. This request must be made well in advance, preferably a week or more. This will allow time for the interpreting departments to secure an interpreter for you. The medical office is responsible for securing the interpreters, not you. However, if you want to make sure an interpreter has been secured, you can contact the medical office three days prior to your scheduled appointment to ensure that an interpreter has been assigned for that day. Usually, if an interpreter hasn’t been assigned three days prior to the appointment, that means 1) the medical office must contact the interpreting services for an update or 2) they haven’t put in the request for one. If it’s the second reason, then you must push for them to make that request or else you will have to reschedule the appointment. Sometimes it’s better to be proactive in ensuring that you are getting access to the services you need rather than expecting others to just provide it. This is all tied into being your own self-advocate. I know it’s frustrating at times, but only through self-advocacy we can educate others about how to better serve our needs.

When I met with my surgeon, she utilized the posters in the office to discuss my diagnosis. The tumor was the size of a golf ball. It was initially diagnosed as DCIS - ductal carcinoma in situ. She made sure that she was facing me and made sure she took her time speaking with me. She told me what my choices were and at that time, I decided to go with the total mastectomy. I wanted to avoid radiation and chemo as I have seen the side effects of both first-hand. Thankfully, the tumor was only microinvasive and did not spread any further. But it did end up being HER2+, which is a more aggressive form of cancer. That is why I am now getting annual ultrasounds and mammograms of my left breast. I was negative for Estrogen and Progesterone Receptors. I still have to meet with my oncologist to make sure I stay in the clear. So far, no treatment is needed, but I was urged to think about taking a pill called Tamoxifen to reduce reoccurrence. But because my tumor was “too small” and easily removed with clear margins after the mastectomy, the risks outweighed the benefits of the pill. I was fortunate enough to have it caught early.

For my surgery, I had an all-female team and spoke to each one before I went in. I even told them about a mask called “The Communicator” by Safe

'N' Clear. It is a newly FDA approved surgical mask with a window to read the surgeon's mouth or any medical professional's mouths. The ladies loved that there was a mask like that because they said they had trouble understanding the other surgeon who spoke so softly in the operating room and that it would help them facilitate better communication! After all, I did manage to get my dentist's office on board with it and they love it!

All the ladies of the surgery team made sure I understood them, and because I had just had surgery not that long ago, I already knew the drill. When it came to taking my hearing aid and cochlear processor off, they waited until I was in the OR as they had to instruct me of what would happen, and then I would proceed to take them out and give them to one of the nurses in the OR who put them in a container and gave it to my best friend, Sarah, in the waiting area as I went under. This was all arranged prior to being rolled into the OR. They rock! So, talk to your surgery team, let them know while you are in pre-op waiting or the prep room area (where you are moved to before entering the OR) what your communication needs are and for them to alert others who will be interacting with you.

As a hard of hearing individual is it important that you:

- 1) Communicate to the receptionist that you are hard of hearing, this way you are giving them the heads up before the conversation begins.
- 2) Ask the receptionist to let the nurse (the one who will be the one calling you back to the exam room) know that you need him or her to be loud and clear when calling your name in the waiting area. This will help reduce the anxiety of missing your name being called.
- 3) While in the waiting area, pick a seat that allows you to see the door open from the area leading to the exam room or facing the areas where the nurse will most likely be calling you from. I usually try to get as close to the door or pathway as possible.
- 4) In a hospital or medical center, when you check in, alert the receptionist that you are hard of hearing. They will first try to make sure that they are speaking clearly enough for you. If they do not know how to effectively communicate with you, explain to them that they just need to speak normally and just a bit louder. Also let them know you may need someone to actually come out to the waiting area and call your name or wave to you in the window (if there is one) to come up to register or be admitted. What I do, is I basically let them know that I'm hard of hearing and that I would need a hand signal or someone to tap me on the shoulder if they are coming from behind me.
- 5) When dealing directly with doctors who are treating you, let them know to speak up a bit if you cannot hear them well enough. Also ask that they make a note in your medical records that you are hard of hearing and require face to face communications. This way, when different medical staff pull your records, they should see is that you are hard of hearing.
- 6) If you happen to be tired or unwell, your ability to hear even with a hearing aid and/or a cochlear implant can be hindered. Ask for a written summary of your diagnosis and treatment plan. This way you can read and ask any questions you may have.
- 7) Be patient! Trust me, I have met my fair share of those in the medical profession who lack knowledge on hearing loss and deafness. Sometimes, it's up to us to educate them and hope that it will bring more awareness to those with little to no knowledge in how to interact with patients who have a hearing loss or deafness. Self-advocacy goes a long way!
- 8) If your doctor(s) do not respect your wishes or they make you feel uncomfortable, find another doctor, if possible. I understand with the way the insurance industry is set up, sometimes finding another doctor isn't always a choice available for some.
- 9) Not all doctors are trained in learning how to communicate with those who have hearing loss. This is unfortunate, but for those that do, you can tell that they may have other patients with hearing loss as well and it's been a learning process for them as well.
- 10) Do not be afraid to ask for a friend or family member that you trust to assist in making appointments, taking notes or even assisting in asking questions that you may have not thought to ask. Sometimes we all need a little help but when it comes to our health, it's important to be proactive and make sure you have all the information available to you regarding medical decisions.

As for my recovery, it's been quite a bumpy road but I'm working on getting back to 100%.

Many Thanks

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Carol Schillace
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Matt and Dayna Taylor
Jan Telban
Debra Tilkins
Sue Wantuck
Karen Ward
Carol Wesley
Zenger Group**

Reflections on: Change

The good, the bad, and the inevitable!

By Margie Fitchlee

This July marks the 10-year anniversary of my cochlear implant surgery. If I were to focus in on one word that might describe how this incredible journey has impacted my life that one word would be “CHANGE.” I can’t believe that I have graced the pages of The B.I.G. News for almost 10 years. My goal has always been to encourage those of you who are facing big changes in your lives to never give up, to forge on, and to always remember what my friend Craig Carpenter told me all those years ago. He said that it takes practice, patience and perseverance to be successful when receiving that life altering cochlear implant.

Maya Angelou is a woman whom I admire. She has given us so much wonderful advice when dealing with issues in our lives. She simply tells us, “If you don’t like something, change it. If you can’t change it, change your attitude.” In a sense I think that all of us who have been faced with profound hearing loss and deafness have had to do just that. The attitude with which we have embraced our deafness has made us rethink everything that surrounds our everyday life. That attitude can make or break us. We forge on, we adapt, we miss out on many of the things we used to do. There are so many of the things we simply took for granted. We embrace this change we have undergone with a whole new zest for life. We never take for granted the little things that this life altering cochlear implant surgery has provided us with. It is what I call my miracle. Where would I be without it?

Socrates tells us, “The secret of change is to focus all of your energy, not on fighting the old, but building on the new.” We cannot go back; we cannot regain the natural hearing we have lost, but we certainly can build on the new life we have been

given by undergoing the cochlear implant surgery. I have often called Dr. Ernesto Diaz-Ordaz “the man who saved me.” I think I always will. I still can’t thank him enough.

An unknown author writes, “Change can come in many forms in our lives. It might come forcefully like a tidal wave, or creep along incrementally like a glacier.” Even though change is often difficult, many times it is for the best. Sometimes change pushes us beyond our comfort zones. Many times, the only way to improve our lives is to force ourselves to undergo difficult change. But whatever you’re dealing with, know that how you cope with that change will have an impact on your future. Some of you lost all of your hearing very fast, all at once. Others of you, like me, did so on a slower level. It may have taken years. Either way, we all know what it was like to be faced with all the changes that occurred after losing that hearing.

I continue on the journey to better hearing with thankfulness and hope in my heart. I encourage anyone who is on the fence about undergoing the surgery to think about these words from Deepak Chopra: “All great changes are preceded by chaos.” I felt the chaos as I made the decision to go forward with the surgery. I felt the chaos when trying to decide which implant to go with. I felt the chaos when waiting for my implant to be activated. Now, I can say that I have also felt the great changes that this modern miracle has afforded me with.

So, if you are in doubt, try to think positively. Mary Anne Radmacher has some very inspiring words for us when she says, “When in doubt, choose change. Courage doesn’t always roar. Courage is the little voice at the end of the day that says I’ll try again tomorrow.” That is my wish for all of us. Keep trying! You will amaze yourselves. God Bless!

B.I.G. 2019 Scholarship Winner

The Buffalo Implant Group Scholarship Committee met in early April to review the scholarship submissions and select a winner for 2019. We are happy to announce that the recipient of the Second Annual B.I.G. Scholarship in the amount of \$500 is Kate Scheffler. Kate graduated from Frontier High School this past January and will attend the Rochester Institute of Technology in the fall. Congratulations, Kate! Details about our scholarship for students graduating in 2020 will be included in our fall newsletter and will be posted on our website www.buffaloimplantgroup.com

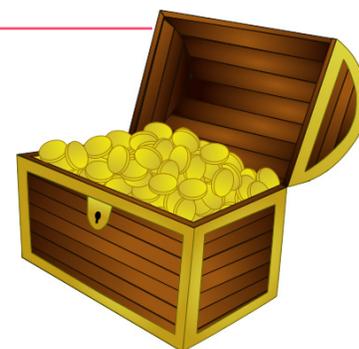


Treasurer’s Report

By Lisa Hill Nowicki



Similar to past years, the first half of 2019 keeps B.I.G.’s income greater than its expenses. Thank you everyone who has paid their 2019 dues of \$20. We are around 50% in compliance of payments. Please look to the right of your name on the address label to see if you are up to date. You can send in your payment to our Post Office box or provide it to me at our summer picnic.



Parent's Corner: Summer Camp!

By Lisa Hill Nowicki

It is that time of year again. Summer... now what to do with the kids. Below are a few summer camp options for kids who are deaf and hearing-impaired, that you may not be aware of.

RIT-NTID program offers a few options:

- July 20-25, 2019 TechGirlz/ TechBoyz is a week-long summer camp for deaf or hard-of-hearing girls entering 7TH, 8TH, or 9TH grade who are interested in science, technology, engineering and math. The cost is \$700, which includes housing in a residence hall and food for the week and classes are taught in English and sign language. Limited Financial assistance is available.
- July 6–11, 2019 and July 13–18, 2019 Explore Your Future (EYF) is a six-day career exploration program for college-bound deaf and hard-of-hearing high school students who will begin their junior or senior year in fall 2019. This program focuses on personal growth and career awareness for students as they begin to think about college. As an incentive, students who attend EYF who enroll at RIT/NTID for college will receive a \$1,000 scholarship and an application fee waiver to apply to RIT at no cost.

Other camps in NYS:

- KIDSign Summer Camp at Camp Sisol in Honeoye Falls is a day camp that offers a traditional summer camp experience to children, grades 3-6, in a unique, signing environment. The semi-immersive atmosphere facilitates American Sign Language acquisition by new signers and makes camp accessible and welcoming to experienced ones. Team-building activities and instruction in ASL help build bridges between campers, hearing and deaf. Activities include sports, games, arts & crafts, swimming and more! This two-week day camp is staffed by professionals in ASL interpretation, deaf education and adapted physical education and takes place at JCC Camp Sisol at the beautiful Markus Park in Honeoye Falls. Tuition costs include all snacks and meals as well as busing to and from camp.
- Camp Mark Seven is located in the beautiful Adirondack Mountains of New York. It is a peaceful, welcoming retreat with a vast array of life-affirming educational, recreational and spiritual programs for deaf, hard of hearing, and KODA/CODA individuals. CM7, established in 1982, is home to outdoor and waterfront activities such as mountain hiking, kayaking, canoeing and swimming. Fun, adventure, safety, and great camaraderie in ASL are our passion for the campers. With campers and participants from all 50 states and several countries, we value full communication access at CM7.
- ASL and Deaf Culture Immersion Week (Ages 18+)
16 Jun 2019 - 22 Jun 2019
- KODA Children Week (Ages 8 - 10)
23 Jun 2019 - 29 Jun 2019
- KODA Youth Camp (Ages 11-13)
30 Jun 2019 - 12 Jul 2019
- KODA Teen Camp (Ages 14 - 16)
14 Jul 2019 - 26 Jul 2019
- Deaf Film Camp (Ages 13-16)
28 Jul 2019 - 09 Aug 2019
- Deaf STEM Camp (Ages 8-14)
11 Aug 2019 - 23 Aug 2019
- Mark Seven Bible Institute Week (Ages 18+)
25 Aug 2019 - 31 Aug 2019
- ASL Family Week (Parents/Children with Ages 3 and up)
25 Aug 2019 - 31 Aug 2019
- CM7 Family Week (Parents/Children with Ages 3 and up)
25 Aug 2019 - 31 Aug 2019
- Active Deaf Adults 50 Plus Week
25 Aug 2019 - 31 Aug 2019

Close to us:

The Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf offers a summer camp experience for Deaf and Hard of Hearing youth, who are between the ages of 7-17 (who have not yet graduated from high school). This year's deadline was June 7, 2019 for camp June 23 – June 28, 2019. The cost is \$175 per camper. The camp fee includes lodging, meals, and all activities for 5 full days.

Location changes every year:

AG Bell offers a summer program called Leadership Opportunities for Teens (LOFT), which is a program dedicated to shaping and transforming the lives of deaf and hard of hearing teens by teaching them valuable skills. Among these skills are self-advocacy, self-confidence, leadership, and communication. They also learn to work closely with other people in a way they may not have been able to do before. Part of what makes AG Bell's LOFT program so important to these teens is the everlasting bond they establish with their peers. The teens (9-12th grade) come to the program for five days and make friends for life. The 2019 edition of LOFT was held in Washington, D.C. Applications are due in February to be considered.

The American Society of Deaf Children has also put out a extensive list by state that you can access here <http://deafchildren.org/2019/04/2019-camp-list/>

Or try

<https://www.veryspecialcamps.com/summer/deaf-camps/>

While it may be too late to take advantage of some of these programs for 2019, consider these options when planning your child's next summer break schedule. Good luck and happy camping!

Should New York Follow Hawaii with an Open Caption Law?

By Gail Cronin

On July 1, Hawaii became the first state to require movie theater chains to provide open captioning for people with hearing loss. While some say this is a leap forward in respecting the needs and rights of people who are deaf or hard of hearing, others are unhappy with the legislation.

The Hawaiian law requires theater owners who have two or more locations within the state to provide open caption movies twice per week for each feature shown. Some theater owners objected to the law, citing decreased attendance by the general public when captions are projected across the screen for all in the theater to view. While some moviegoers appreciate the on-screen captions, other people find captions distracting.

Currently in NY State theaters must provide some form of assistive device for people with hearing loss. This is often a closed caption system, such as caption glasses. Some people like the glasses, and others do not. When the equipment is working it can be beneficial, but many people report that the equipment is not routinely checked

and often does not work. An additional problem with these devices is that there is a limited number per theater, making it impossible for groups of people with hearing loss to attend together and providing no guarantee that there will be enough to go around at any given movie showing.

Some Hawaiians have also expressed the concern that movie theaters plan to essentially bury the open caption movies by running them at unpopular times when few people are there to see them. For people who are working, they may not be able to attend an 11 AM movie showing on a weekday. It will be interesting to see just how cooperative the theater owners will be with scheduling captioned films to honor the spirit of this law rather than the letter of this law.

So how do YOU feel about possible legal enforcement of open captions for movies, to allow access for those who have hearing loss? Would you like to see open captioned movies in theaters? Is this a service you would enjoy? And would you like to see a similar law where you live? We would love to hear from you!

It's Picnic Time!

Mark your calendars for our annual...

Sunset Dinner Picnic

Friday, August 9, 2019

5:00 – 8:00 pm

Once again, dinner will be catered by Bobby J's Italian American Grille, served at 6:00 pm.

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

Westwood Park, Shelter #5 - 175 Pavement Road - Lancaster, NY 14086

The entrance to Westwood Park is on Pavement Road between Walden Avenue and Broadway. Shelter #5 is just past the enclosed pavilion (where restrooms are located) on the left side, with parking right in front. The children's playground is a short walk away.

The picnic is FREE to all who want to come. We do encourage you to participate in our fundraisers if you are able to do so.

Our Basket Raffle fundraiser helps provide funds for our new annual scholarship, awarded to a student entering college. Additional basket donations are appreciated. Baskets can be dropped off to any Board member by prior arrangement, or simply brought to the picnic during set-up time, which begins at 4:00 pm. Volunteers during set-up time are always needed. A basket donation form can be found in this newsletter. Please fill one out for each basket you are donating in order for us to have a description of the contents of your basket. Baskets that appeal to men and children are always needed. The Basket Raffle is once again being coordinated by Sr. Dorothy Feltz.

A 50/50 raffle will also be held to help us with our regular operating funds. Our grey and teal B.I.G. t-shirts will also be on sale to help us raise funds.

We need a general idea of how many members will be attending, so RSVP to Secretary Melissa Burroughs at 716-523-2991 (voice or text) or email melissab@smsdk12.org by August 2 (one week prior to the picnic) if possible, to let us know that you are coming and how many people will be with you.

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



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Buffalo Implant Group Basket Raffle Donation Form

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