

GPCIA Newsletter

See you at Cohutta in July. Thank you for your support! I now introduce to you our new president, Carol Underhill. Thank you again for your friendship,
Connie Stratigos



Past-president's Message

Happy New Year and the very best to all of you in 2010! 2009 was an unforgettable year for GPCIA. Due to slow registrations probably because of the economy we were forced to cancel our retreat, a first in the history of Georgia Peach Cochlear Implant Association. However, the good news is that our board voted to have our annual retreat at Cohutta Springs in Crandall, GA. The Program and Educational Committee has worked very diligently to bring you a most impressive program this year. PLEASE register early and show your support to our board.

I have only served one year as president and have appointed Carol Underhill as the next president. Carol comes well qualified for this position. She has been a teacher for most of her life. Currently, she is a "teacher of deaf & hard of hearing students" in Forsyth County, GA. Her profile was in the August 2008 newsletter which can be found on our website. Carol is a very well organized & enthusiastic individual and I hope that we give her all the support she needs and deserves.

Hearing loss is difficult to accept sometimes, yet, with my hearing loss I have made such great friends and will continue to do so. Success is never easy, yet talking on a regular phone to another person with an implant; I find that to be a miracle in itself.

Years ago I never dreamed anything like this would be possible. Isn't life wonderful!

President's Message

Although, I'm relatively the 'new kid on the block', I have enjoyed my short time on the GPCIA board for the past two years. I'm looking forward to serving you as GPCIA president for the remainder of Connie's term this year.

We are actively pursuing the finishing touches to our 2010 GPCIA Retreat - **'HELP YOURSELF TO BETTER HEARING'** in regards to our educational speaker's forum and activities. Please check out our website at www.gpcia.org if you have any questions pertaining to the retreat. Registrations forms are available on the website.

PLEASE consider registering before April 1st to have your name entered in the drawing for a 'free' weekend at Cohutta Springs. The information as to 'where' to send the registration packet is on the registration form.

Once again we will offer 'childcare' during the break-out sessions, so the parents can enjoy the educational sessions.

So come enjoy the fun and 'mingle' with your old friends and make some new friends. See you there!

Warm Regards!

Carol Underhill

March 2010

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By Dora Sweigart

SPOTLIGHT ON RICHARD!



As the unofficial “CEO” of Georgia Peach Cochlear Implant Association, Inc. (GPCIA), Richard has been the backbone of the organization for several years. In addition to serving as President for six years, he has been invaluable in organizing our annual retreats.

“Without doubt, the success of GPCIA, and especially the annual retreats, is mostly attributed to his leadership and resourceful work” comments Fred Pryor, long-time friend and GPCIA Board of Directors member.

Anything from typing name tags to maintaining spreadsheets, from buying napkins to organizing cookouts, from ordering T-shirts to negotiating contracts – the list is endless. *“I’m never too proud to beg for GPCIA”* he often says. Blessed with that good ole’ Southern boy charm, he instantly draws people in. *“He is an inexhaustible repository of Southern colloquialisms which I can never remember but which make me laugh out loud”* says Cindy Gary, his Audiologist.

Born in Calhoun, GA with deafness in his left ear, he began losing hearing in the right ear as a teenager. Despite

the challenges, he graduated from high school and Shorter College in Rome, Georgia. He achieved success in several careers, working for Atlanta Gas Light and WCGA radio station as a bookkeeper and radio announcer. He later became interested in nursing and attended LPN school at Gordon County Hospital. He headed up seven departments and outpatient clinics for approximately 13 years while working for Paulding Memorial Hospital in Dallas, Georgia. A career change brought about managerial positions at Days Inn of America and Motel 6, which expertise proved extremely beneficial to GPCIA in negotiating retreat venue contracts.

While working at Murray County Hospital at Chatsworth, he met Nina Lunsford, and in 1965 they were married. The couple has two daughters, Cindy and Andrea, and one grandchild, Lauren Elizabeth.

Richard lost total hearing in 1993 and was implanted with a Cochlear device in 1994. *“He was amazed at the sounds he was hearing”* says Nina. *“Birds he had not heard before, cats meowing, dogs barking, microwave buzzer. His byword was ‘what’s that noise?’ He upgraded to the BTE processor when it became available, and that was a big difference – no more wires to contend with!”*

He has an *“unrelenting enthusiasm for life”* (Cindy Gary) and an *“unselfish”* devotion to GPCIA (Fred Pryor). We are thankful – so very thankful – to **Richard Bowman.**



Mardi Gras Party

Beads, beads, beads everywhere! It was a Great day to gather together, share wonderful food, and meet old and new friends. We are so fortunate that Atlanta Hearing School allows us to use their facility.

Many of us shared how we are doing with our cochlear implant and shared ideas that we could use in our own lives. Of course, it’s always a joy to answer the many questions a cochlear implant candidate may have. Many of us who are recipients remember that phase.

One mother was interested in organizing an event just for kids- where they simply have fun! Right now we are brainstorming but suggestions and ideas are welcome.

News was shared about the big summer conference in July where there will be something for everyone.



Welcome Susan Lantz – New Board Member-



Susan has been residing in Georgia for six years. For two years she was a DHH preschool teacher in Bogart (Clarke County). Later she changed to Mundy's Middle School DHH program in Clayton County in Jonesboro. Prior to receiving her Masters in DHH in Omaha, Nebraska under Dr. Conway (Volta Review editor for many years), she had a diversified career with mostly nonprofit agencies as well having her own business.

In 2002, Susan successfully became a recipient of a Cochlear America cochlear implant. She lost her hearing at 18 months of age (50-60%) range. At the age of 5, she received her first hearing aid. Due to the philosophy back in the 1950's, Susan's determination to do well on the educational front was due to her excellent lip reading skills.

Susan grew up in Nebraska and raised her family there as well. She is mom to three grown children (2 daughters live in the Atlanta vicinity) and one son still resides in Nebraska. Susan is blessed with two grandchildren who live here as well.

When not teaching, you will find Susan spending time with church related activities. This summer she will be part of the Navajo mission trip

and is volunteering with Young Life in Gwinnett County.

Susan is interested in being involved with GPCIA and knows it is important for cochlear recipients to have assessable opportunities to share information and experiences with each other.

Information about the GPCIA Retreat & Speakers for the '2010 GPCIA Family Retreat'

Keynote Speaker – Dr. Brian McKinnon – Medical College of Georgia in Augusta, GA. He is an implant surgeon and Assistant Professor in the Otology/Neurotology Department.

Sessions-at-Glance:

Adult Track:

“Why Go Bi-lateral?”

Dr. Sanjay A. Bhansali, M. D.

“What’s Available for Follow-up Therapy?”

Teresa Huber-AuD, CAVT

Adult Panel:

Dr. Bhansali, Dr. McKinnon, Teresa Huber & Debbie Brillling

“Troubleshooting Your CI & Gadgets to Help Hear Better”

Cindy Gary, Audiologist
Auditory Verbal Center Staff

Children’s Track:

“Why Go Bi-lateral?”

Dr. Norman Todd, M. D.

“What’s Available for Follow-up Therapy?”

Candace Haney, CAVT

Children’s Panel:

Dr. Todd, Jolie Fainberg & Candace Haney

“Navigating Your Child through the SSI & College Procedures”

Debbie Brillling, Parent & CAVT

“How to Navigate the School System with a 504 Plan or IEP”

Susan Swanson- GA Pines

Other Sessions:

CI Manufacturers

Motivational Speaker

AMAC –Alternative Media

Access Center

(Some sessions may be adjusted or altered to accommodate our speaker’s schedule)

“Cochlear 4th”Dinner

Saturday evening dinner will be an outdoor event! Wear your favorite hat and join the fun at the Pavilion. John’s BQ of Dalton, GA will be providing the southern-style dinner of beef barbeque, hot dogs, bake beans, potato salad and cole slaw. Hayrides will be available -

ODDS & ENDS about GPCIA

We hope and pray that Catherine Shippy continues to feel better each day from her recent illness. ☺

We hope Richard Bowman continues with his healing process, so he can be at the retreat. ☺

The annual **GPCIA Picnic** will be September 18, 2010 at Wills Park in Alpharetta.

*******IMPORTANT*******

Membership Dues – If you have not paid your membership dues this year – please remit your \$15.00 to GPCIA.

We are still one of the ‘cheapest’ organizations around! ☺

These can be submitted to the organization mailbox-

GPCIA

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