

## President's Address

Webster's New World Dictionary defines "volunteer" as "a person who enters or offers to enter into any service of his own free will". The California State Chapter of the Alexander Graham Bell has a completely "volunteer" Board of Directors who have offered their time, energy and ideas to provide for our members at the state level. Every Board member is committed for a variety of personal or professional reasons. The Board consists of Parents of children who are deaf or hard-of-hearing, Adults who themselves are deaf or hard-of-hearing, and Professionals (teachers, audiologists, therapists) working with children who are deaf or hard-of-hearing. The Board's goal is promote awareness of oral communication and oral educational options, statewide, and to support the National Organization in it's mission of advocating for oral communication. This is a huge task for a volunteer board in a state the size of California! We have many remarkable people on our state board and I would like to take this space to thank some very special people who have been working hard to obtain our chapter's goals!

First, a huge amount of thanks is extended to the Conference Committee, in Northern California, who put together an incredible annual Conference last February in San Jose. Our annual conference, which alternates in location from a Northern California (in even years) to Southern California (in odd years), was well attended and provided over 120 members with a great educational program, an opportunity to network, and a fun day! Thank you to Marsha Haines, Sandra Hocker, Susan Burns, Mary Ruth Leen, and Joni Norris for your "volunteer" work on that event. (My apologies if I left someone out).

At the annual conference, Marsha Haines, became our newly elected Treasurer. She has worked many hours in transitioning the financial information back to Northern California and has been very diligent in completing our transactions in an orderly fashion. In addition, Marsha and Sandra Hocker, also coordinated a Northern California Fall Picnic for their families of Listen and Learn and included the AG Bell Chapter as participants. I have received many emails expressing what the wonderful time people had at the picnic and how great it was to network with others.

Susan Burns has worked on reformatting and updating our membership rolls and generating a Welcome Letter that provides the names of regional representatives for new members to have a more local connection. Thank you, Susan!

Jenny Ignacio, Sarah McBride, and Mary Ruth Leen have been working hard on developing our newsletter. It is difficult relying on other volunteers to submit information that can be placed into an informative manner. Many hours of "volunteer" work go into producing a newsletter, and I thank you three for your contributions!

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Lastly, a great deal of thanks goes to Ed Burns and Susan Burns for the work on the new website! It is now up and looking great! I am sure many, many hours were spent on that project and the product is marvelous. Check out the website at [www.calif-agbell.com](http://www.calif-agbell.com) and Thank You Ed and Susan! It takes many volunteers and volunteer hours to move a state chapter towards completion of their goals. Board members are elected every year at the annual conference. If you would like to help the California Chapter of the AG Bell Association, board members are needed in many areas: newsletter, membership, conference planning, picnic coordinators, leadership, to name a few! This is your state chapter, the sky is the limit in terms of how who and what we can affect in our state! Contact any of the current board members "to give of your time of your own free will!" or email me at [lindamdye@cox.net](mailto:lindamdye@cox.net) or [Mary Ruth Leen at mleen@jwposd.org](mailto:Mary Ruth Leen at mleen@jwposd.org) for further information regarding board opportunities.

## Website for Deaf Children

The International Deaf Children-EUR Society (IDCS) has launched a new website at [www.idcs.info](http://www.idcs.info) This is a global, online forum open to discussion of all aspects of childhood deafness. The purpose of the website is to encourage the exchange of information and ideas among professional working with deaf children, young people, parents, caregivers, and volunteers. The website will provide case studies and articles written by professionals and individuals, permit sign up for news updates and links to hundreds of useful organizations using IDCS-EUR online database of deaf organizations worldwide.



## Legislation News

Let your voice be heard through your Federal Representatives. Two important bills are being contemplated at the Federal level: Tax Credit for Hearing Aids (H.R. 3103) and Federal Health Care for Hearing Health including coverage for hearing aids (H.R. 3751).

Look up your Senate and House Representatives and see how they plan to support these two bills. Introduce yourself and share your family's stories dealing with hearing loss. First person experiences from a Representative's constituent have the best effect on getting the attention of our government representatives!

**Tax Credit for Hearing Aids (H.R. 3103)** This bill will allow for a \$500 tax credit for a person over age 55 or a dependent.

**Federal Employees Health Benefit Coverage (to include hearing health care and hearing aids) (H.R. 3751)** This would help lead the way for private insurance coverage as often the private insurers take the lead from the government insurance.

## Northern California Fall Picnic

It was a bright and sunny day when California Chapter AG Bell members in the north came together with families and friends of Listen and Learn at their 21st Annual picnic at John D. Morgan Park in Campbell, California. Over 100 parents and children along with ODAS members and professionals enjoyed sharing their favorite native potluck dish with others along with the steak and hot dog BBQ provided.

Old friends had an opportunity to catch up with on the latest happenings as well as meet new friends. The young children took turns hitting the piñata, playing in the sandbox, and on the playground equipment while the parents talked with each other. The teen age group has now grown to the point they are asking for board games, volleyball, and willing to talk and share with the new parents and children their experiences growing up. This is welcome information and support for those parents who have young and growing children.

Advocacy for children, IEP meetings, cochlear implants and child raising were hot topics this year. AG Bell's commitment to families and professionals was evident as everyone joined together for this social occasion. Please mark your calendars for the last Saturday in September, 2005 and join us next year.

## A Parent Perspective

We attended the state AG Bell Conference in Milpitas last year and we left feeling like we always do after a gathering with a group of professionals in oral deaf education, parents of deaf children and deaf adults. We left invigorated, challenged and motivated to be the best possible parents to our daughter. It is always inspiring for me to see how many dedicated educators, administrators, audiologists, doctors, speech pathologist and parents there are on a sunny Saturday taking time out of their normal weekend routine to share information and stories to help each other to help our children. We have met some wonderful, talented and dedicated people in the last couple of years since my daughter was diagnosed with a severe-profound hearing loss at age 22 months. Gatherings like this of people who have an interest in oral deaf education have been extremely reassuring and comforting.

Some of these educational events cover the same material and I am starting to question whether it makes sense to attend every event in the area, but then after the state conference I realized that YES it was worth the time, money and energy to attend. Even though the material being covered might be the same the professionals, panel participants, and presenters might be new. It is interesting how many different perspectives there are from different schools, implant centers, regulatory agencies, parents, etc. There are always new studies, new data and new ways of thinking about a particular issue. Technology is changing fast, new studies are being conducted and new ways of looking at this new data are changing opinions about how we should respond. One of the biggest reasons we always feel like we take home new information is because we are always focused on a new set of issues and concerns. First we were researching methodologies on education, then on cochlear implants and now we are starting to look at

mainsstreaming opportunities, self-esteem, psychological issues, behavioral issues, etc. Parenting is an ever changing set of circumstance and we tend to take in the information about where we are at the moment as we try to think ahead to the next set of issues.

The panel discussions have always been one of the most valuable experiences for me. We have heard oral deaf adults, oral deaf teenagers, parents of deaf children and this panel of parents and children together added a new category. One of the thoughts expressed by the adult panel this time is a reoccurring comment which is what you should do to parent your deaf or hh child is the same as how you parent a hearing child as far as discipline, activities, play and attention. One parent mentioned during the parent/child panel that raising a deaf child has its challenges there is always something to consider and work through. I find hearing stories, questions and solutions from parents is one of the most valuable ways to get information. We do not all have the same ways of parenting, but we learn from each others mistakes and successes. I look forward to many more panels and I am so grateful to those that have taken the time to share their experiences. We went to the National AG Bell conference in Anaheim where we again took home another pot of useful information.

-Pam Goode



### Cochlear Implant Seminar

The 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Seminar on Cochlear Implants in Children was held September 24 and 25 in San Ramon. It was sponsored by the Cochlear Implant Center at Oakland Children's hospital, California Ear Institute and Let Them Hear Foundation.

Mary Koch, M.A. CED, an Auditory Education Consultant presented information rehabilitation and early intervention with profoundly deaf children.

Iris Schrijver, M.D., Director, molecular Pathology laboratory and Asst. Professor of Pathology and Pediatrics at Stanford shared crucial information for the parents and professionals on the genetic basis of inherited hearing loss.

Lori Bond, PhD. discussed her experience with children who have cochlear implants and other learning disabilities.

These were just a few of the interesting presenters who shared their knowledge and experience with an audience composed of teachers, audiologists, early interventionists

and parents. This conference is held each year in the Fall in Northern California. Be sure to watch for it next year.

#### Ken Levinson Award

The Ken Levinson Grant winner for 2004 was awarded to Mariela Goett from Moraga. Here is what she wrote:

To the California Chapter of AG Bell:

Thank you for awarding me with the Ken H. Levinson Grant. There are many things I could do with \$400, and I would like to express my gratitude. With \$400 I could buy approximately:

- 182 pens
- 40 black ink cartridges from Canon
- 4 TI-83 plus graphing calculators
- 400 binders (really!)
- 16 PE uniforms
- 800 pages of photo paper

With \$400 I could also

- Pay the participations fee for 2 sports
- Buy a year's worth of books when I am in college
- Buy a round trip ticket to Peru

Pay the participation fee for LOFT and AG Bell Convention of course I will not suddenly decide to buy 182 pens or 40 ink cartridges, but I wanted everyone at AG Bell to realize how thankful I am for the wonderful gift.

Sincerely,  
Mariela Goett

Membership Renewal

Membership in California A. G. Bell ensures that you will continue to receive the state newsletter and information about state events. Members also receive a \$10 discount on registration for the state conference.

**Please renew your membership today and support California A.G. Bell!**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Voice/TTY

Work Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Voice/TTY

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Parent \_\_\_\_\_ Hearing Impaired \_\_\_\_\_ Professional \_\_\_\_\_

**Membership \$20.00 (2 yrs) per address**

Please make your membership check payable to California Chapter, A. G. Bell and mail the check together with this form to:

Susan Burns  
9925 San Luis Ave  
San Ramon, CA 94583

CA AG Bell  
Board Meeting

Sat.  
Feb. 26th  
9am

Unfortunately we will be not having an annual conference. A general meeting will take place at 11:00 to elect new board members. Everyone is welcomed to attend. The meeting will be at **Echo Horizon School in Culver City, California.**