



## Spring Meeting, Berkeley Heights March 31, 2019

The Spring meeting on March 31, 2019, was held at the Summit Medical Group facility in Berkeley Heights, NJ. Thirteen patients and caregivers, including four board members, attended. The meeting was a remarkable freewheeling discussion of personal experiences with acoustic neuroma. It was a fun meeting with much useful AN-information sharing. Kathy Cecere opened the meeting. Wilma Ruskin began by demonstrating her 'CaptionCall' telephone specially designed for persons with hearing loss. (See the notice in the ANA/NJ Newsletter for October 2017) CaptionCall is free, thanks to the Americans with Disabilities Act. The phone lets you read as well as hear your phone conversations. An Internet connection is needed to get going. For more information, phone 1-877-557-2227 or visit the website [www.captioncall.com](http://www.captioncall.com) on your computer.



This began a lengthy discussion of types of hearing problems and possible solutions, with special attention to bone anchored hearing systems (e.g., the Baha by Cochlear, the Ponto by Oticon and the Adhear by Bonebridge) all designed for patients where traditional hearing aids have proven inadequate and single-sided deafness has likely developed. The Baha bone conduction hearing system has a titanium bone implant with an external abutment through the skin near the bad ear. A detachable sound processor fits onto the abutment, as demonstrated at the meeting by Naimesh Choksi, who already has the Baha. It was interesting that Clint Sarian, a new member of our support group who is a financial consultant by day and Ninja Warrior by night ([www.smilingninja.com](http://www.smilingninja.com)), expressed personal reservations about Baha because of possible damage to its external audio processor during his Ninja sessions.

There was some confusion about the difference between a bone anchored hearing system like the Baha and a Cochlear Implant (CI). The CI is a much higher level of remediation for individuals who have severe to profound hearing loss in both ears. As advised by the Institute on Deafness of the National Institutes of Health (NIH): "Hearing through a cochlear implant is different from normal hearing and takes time to learn or relearn." (see [www.nidcd.gov](http://www.nidcd.gov)) In our newsletter for Sept 2015, Cindy Rivkin has described her experience with the CI. ANers might want to do a Google search for 'What's the Difference between a Cochlear Implant and a Bone Anchored Implant.' Jane Huck observed that for the next ANA/NJ Directory she will be asking patients to report any hearing device they have used.

Dave Lavender described his hearing problems as a professional musician. Special ear plugs have been very beneficial for him. His translab surgery in 2007 for a 3.0 cm acoustic neuroma also led to troublesome balance issues, and he continues to have special physical therapy sessions. Clint Sarian commented on how persistent work with balance helped him to prepare for his unique role as Ninja Warrior.

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