The Lupus Foundation of America, New Jersey Chapter, Inc. (LFANJ), held its first Forever Valentine Dinner Dance, on February 24, 2011. Music was provided by the Brotherhood Band, an offshoot of the New Jersey Garden State Band played while the attendees danced the night away. This event brought in just under $1,400.00 net profit in the first year. Next year’s Forever Valentine Dinner Dance is scheduled for February 16, 2012. We hope you can join for this fun-filled evening. Call to office for more details!

The Foundation’s annual Beefsteak Dinner was held at the Brownstone, in Paterson, New Jersey on April 7, 2011. There was a river of beef and the comic styling’s of “Uncle Floyd” Vivino who had everyone laughing till their sides hurt. The tricky tray and 50/50 raffles were as popular as ever! The event brought in just over $5,300.00. Next year’s annual Beefsteak Dinner is scheduled for April 5, 2012. Uncle Floyd will be back to bring the laughter. Hope to see you there! Call to schedule your tickets now; seats are limited!

The Annual Business Meeting, which included the Volunteer Recognition Awards and Walk Presentations, was held at the Springfield Free Public Library’s Museum Room in Springfield, New Jersey. Dr. Anca Askanase spoke on updates in lupus and focused much of her presentation on Benlysta, the newly FDA-approved drug specifically indicated to treat lupus.

Volunteer certificates and awards were presented. Margery Carrion, co-facilitator of the Hudson County Support Group was awarded the Cathy Lee Iczowski Service Award for her dedication and commitment to the LFANJ and the members of her support group. This award is named in honor of Cathy Lee shortly before she passed away. Cathy Lee was one of the co-facilitators of the Passaic County Support Group for many years. She devoted all of her time to the LFANJ and the members of her support group. Past recipients of the Cathy Lee Iczowski Service Award include Angela Rossi, Georgette Dwyer, and Beverley Danner.

Every walk has a number of teams and individuals who raise the most funds for the LFANJ Walk for Lupus Now. The 2010 awards were presented to Team Lugo, Laura’s Lupus Loonies, Bawiec’s Bunch, Hogan’s Heroes, and Team T. The individuals recognized were Kristine Kingsbury, Rachel Counterme, Allison Saia, J. Rincon, Jim and Sis Triano. Simply outstanding!!!

The LFANJ Bylaws were updated and approved and the Board was confirmed. Three new Board Members have joined the Foundation. They include: Anthony Albanese (2014), Brooks Cabinetry and Cabinet Mobile; Tammy Allen (2014), Aegis; and Chuck Saia (2014), Deloitte. John Rokosny (2014) was accepted as a replacement for former board member, Michael Elson (2011) and then formally voted upon to his current commitment. John is a producer with NY MPV Productions and has created some of our public service announcements featuring Sparky Lyle and Uncle Floyd. Rosalinda Perez, Michael Pinhas and Dr. Victor Sloan were re-elected for another three-year term.

The Tupperware fundraiser had raised a little over $688.00 and on June 30th, the Gold for Cash fundraiser raised a total of $600.00. On July 2nd the Somerset Patriots Fireworks Night Fundraiser raised $802.00. Monmouth Fun Day, held on July 17th at Monmouth Race Track, raised approximately $8,126.00 with more to come! We are most grateful to Nancy Ostrander and her team for organizing and hosting Monmouth Fun Day. The 2011 LFANJ Walk for Lupus Now will be held on Sunday, October 23rd at Nomahegan Park in Cranford, New Jersey. For more information please contact the office, visit our website at www.lupusnj.org or register online at www.walkforlupusnj.org! Help support the LFANJ so that we can continue to provide you with programs and services. Upcoming fundraising events also include a wine tasting, skateboarding auction, and rummage sale - time and date to be announced.

Thank you to the Sponsors of the Lupus Foundation of America, New Jersey Chapter!

The LFANJ would like thank its sponsors for supporting the programs and services provided by the Foundation. We are most grateful for their generosity and hope that you will take advantage of the services provided by these establishments.

- Angels of Animals, Inc.
- Arose Association of Restaurant Owners
- Castle “The Window People”
- Brook Custom Cabinetry, Inc.
- BYGONE, DAYS, INC.
- Cabinet Mobile
- Catholic Voices
- C.J. Dental Supply, Inc.
- Clinton Closet Co., Inc.
- Cruz Golf Country Club
- Forest Hill Health Care
- Kenneth Gibbons, LLC, CPA, MST
- Hanson & Ryan, Inc.
- Amy Hepler - Web Design & Graphic Design
- Island Computers, Inc.
- Jeff Jones, Agent – State Farm
- KRA Insurance Agency, Inc.
- Cheryl Mihalik “Certified Notary Signing Agent”
- MSPC - CPA’s and Advisors
- Newman & Andreuzzi, Esqs.
- Phases of Nutrition
- PIONEER PET CARE
- Preferred Dining Corp.
- Residential Home Funding Corp.
- Silpada
- David S. Silverman, Esq.
- Donald A. Spitzer, DDS, FAGD
- Twin City Pharmacy & Surgical
- Villa Nova Financing Group
- Laurene A. Wolf, DMD, MSD
Somerset Patriots Fireworks Night Fundraiser raised $802.00. Monmouth Fun Day, held on July 17th, was accepted as a replacement for former board member, Michael Elson (2011) and then formally voted upon to his current commitment. John is a pro-
The LFANJ Bylaws were updated and approved and the Board was confirmed. Three new Board Members have joined the Foundation. They include:
Every walk has a number of teams and individuals who raise the most funds for the Georgette Dwyer, and Beverley Danner.
Cathy Lee shortly before she passed away. Cathy Lee was one of the co-facilitators of the Passaic County Support Group for many years. She devoted
Iczowski Service Award for her dedication and commitment to the LFANJ and the members of her support group. This award is named in honor of
Volunteer certificates and awards were presented. Margery Carrion, co-facilitator of the Hudson County Support Group was awarded the Cathy Lee
newly FDA-approved drug specifically indicated to treat lupus.
The Annual Business Meeting, which included the Volunteer Recognition Awards and Walk Presentations, was held at the Springfield Free Public Li-
The Foundation's annual Beefsteak Dinner was held at the Brownstone, in Paterson, New Jersey on April 7, 2011. There was a river of beef and the
provided by the Brotherhood Band, an offshoot of the New Jersey Garden State Band played while the attendees danced the night away. This event
LFANJ Walk for Lupus Now will be held
• Clinton Closet Co., Inc.
• Castle "The Window People"
• Arose Association of
Restaurant Owners
• MSPC - CPA’s and Advisors
• Kenneth Gibbons, LLC, CPA, MST
• David S. Silverman, Esq.
• Preferred Dining Corp.
Benlysta has been on the market for four months. After some inherent administrative hurdles we are starting to use it. We have put out first patients on the drug and are eagerly awaiting the results. Some patients are already starting to feel better, and their symptoms are improving.

For the nearly 1.5 million Americans who suffer from lupus hope is finally here. Thanks in part to the thousands of lupus patients who participated in the research, the Lupus Foundation of America (LFA1) that supported every phase of the drug development and lobbied for the approval of the drug, the many lupus researchers who devoted their time and energy to conducting the research, and, of course, thanks to the Human Genome Sciences that believed in this drug, the recently FDA2-approved belimumab3.

Belimumab is the first new medication designed specifically to treat lupus and is one of the first drugs to emerge from the genomics revolution. Belimumab targets Blys, the B lymphocyte stimulator that plays a major role in activating B cells to produce auto-antibodies.

This is an extraordinary achievement. We have finally broken down the wall to getting a drug approved for lupus. Patients and their families have been eagerly awaiting this moment for decades.

Until now, patients have relied only on corticosteroids, antimalarial drugs, and immunosuppressants prescribed off-label. But the risk of severe side effects, such as weight gain, bone loss, and infection, loom large. By targeting Blys, belimumab not only lessens disease activity, but also decreases the need for high doses of steroids.

Living with SLE is a big challenge for patients, mainly due to the unpredictable nature of the disease. Whereas many patients cope well and have normal and productive lives, others become their disease. There is a great urgency to finding new treatments for this terrible disease. It is fair to say that each day we do not have newer and better therapies for SLE4 is a day that we lose a patient, both literally and metaphorically. While some patient will die because the drugs we use are either inefficient or toxic, others simply lose a battle of faith; unable to cope with the burden of this devastating disease. They cease to be workers, mothers, daughters, and, instead, become absorbed in the vicious cycle of disability, depression, and anger.

We have seen major successes in dealing with this illness. We have improved the mortality rate to less than 20% over a patient’s lifetime; but this is not good enough. Most of the affected patients are young women. I challenge anyone to tell a blossoming twenty year-old woman that she has a one in ten chance she will die before her children go to grade school, and that the best we can do is try – with no promises – to keep things under control . . . if they don’t spiral out of control. We must find better, safer drugs, now! While, Benlysta is a great success story, in terms of research it is yesterday’s success story, we need to continue the search for new drugs to treat lupus. Just like the disease has many faces and can affect people in different ways, we need an armamentarium of lupus drugs that can effectively treat the different aspects of lupus. I believe that the future will bring individualized treatments for each lupus patient.

I have ingrained in all of my patients the urgency for SLE progress, such that my patients consistently ask me about any ongoing clinical trials, and are all eager to be even a small part in the huge task of bringing new drugs to lupus patients. At the NYUHJD5 Peter D. Seligman Center for Advanced Therapeutics, we are on the Lupus vanguard. We are a center that participates in all of the major NIH6 and industry-sponsored SLE clinical trials, currently with four large therapeutic clinical trials actively enrolling patients. At the same time, three registry-type studies are collecting valuable information on a large number of our lupus patients, while two more therapeutic trials are in the final stages of approval by our institutional review board (IRB).

Hopefully, one of these studies will find the cure, be it the anti-interferon alfa drug (interferon levels are elevated in SLE patients), the anti-CTLA4-Ig, or the TACI-Ig (interrupt the B-T cell communication), or the anti-BAFF (BAFF is another name for Blys), or anti-CD22. And if not one of these, then the next one or the one thereafter, or the one that tomorrow’s lupus doctors will propose.

We and our patients are a family. We have been through life and death together, and for the most part we win. Winning is the only option in this dangerous game.

References:
1 LFA: Lupus Foundation of America, Inc.
2 FDA: Food and Drug Administration
3 Belimumab’s Trade Name: Benlysta
4 SLE: Systemic Lupus Erythematosus
5 NYUHJD: New York University Hospital for Joint Diseases, NYU Langone Medical Center, NY, NY
6 NIH: National Institutes of Health, Baltimore, MD
* Anca Dinu-Askanase is the Co-Director of the Lupus Clinic at Bellevue Hospital; Assistant Professor of Medicine, NYU School of Medicine; Principal Investigator and Rheumatologist, Department of Medicine, NYU Hospital for Joint Diseases, NYU Langone Medical Center, New York, NY