

# What me write for the ALDANews? **Yes You!**

**Carolyn Piper and Candis Shannon**

The ALDANews is the quarterly newsletter put out by the Association for Late Deafened Adults. It's focus is on providing the sharing of the life experiences of members as well as providing information on coping with hearing loss. Since the success of the News hinges to a large extent on the participation of, and submissions from, the members of ALDA, the News Staff held a hands-on writing workshop designed to help participants to learn how to present their ideas and experiences in writing.

During the workshop ALDANews Editor-in-Chief Candis Shannon, Managing Editor Mark Dessert, Assistant Editor Lori Heir, and Editorial Review Board Member and contributing writer Carolyn Piper discussed the writing process, beginning with the discussion of how ideas are generated, and how to get them down on paper. To do this it is important to Remember that:

Each one of us is a creative person.  
Every time we think we are creating.  
Every time we feel, we are energizing our thoughts.  
Every time we act (communicate) we are sending our thoughts and feelings out into the world.  
Each of us has a unique story to tell.  
We don't have to create something new.  
For we ourselves are our own stories.  
We can tell our own story.

In telling our stories through the written word, something magic happens. We are able to connect in a new way with who we really are. Afterwards, when we share our words with a trusted person or group it helps us to grow even more, and then, as we rewrite our words, we Begin to make anew connections both within and without.

The final step-- publication, is a birth of sorts that helps us to let go and begin again, for in having told our stories we have renewed both our own spirits and those of others through the sharing of our common humanity.

It can be hard to do this. We all have an inner critic which is all too eager to hinder our self expression. The only way to silence this voice is to write. Or, in the words of the famous Nike commercial : Just do it."

Write anything.  
Just put it down on paper.  
Give yourself permission to write,  
Don't worry about being perfect.

Once you have written something, take time to savor it. You don't have to share it right away. It may take time before you are ready to do so. When you feel ready, find a trusted person and ask for feedback; someone you trust to be both gentle and honest. Remember though that

this is YOUR writing. It belongs to you, and only you can decide what changes need to be made. As you revise, take time to not only figure out the best order, change weak passages, strengthen transitions and work to unify the piece so that it makes sense as a whole, but to see within your creation both yourself and your experience in new lights. By doing this, a new World opens up in a very wonderful and magical way.

There is a writing warm up that can help this process called "Word Throws." To do this sit down and write out what immediately comes to mind, without censoring and using critical thinking to stop the flow. Then, using the best of what is produced, incorporate the material into a longer story. Try it. Have fun with it, and see what happens.

Using this technique we can learn to pull from within our creative selves new insights and develop new ways to learn to express sides of ourselves we may never have been aware of before.

Another exercise is to look at a collage or picture and come up with a sentence or two which describes your feelings about it. In the workshop this was done with collages which were made by the group. Here are some of the writings which resulted:

"Although difficult at times, a negative can be turned into a positive by appreciating the experience and seeing it as a learning experience with an end result of fulfillment by helping others to gain confidence."

"Becoming deaf can be like the fall. Things die, but many are just hiding till the spring."

"In silence, things have a life of their own; in a feather, a flower, a perfume, there is a memory of sound."

"Find the beauty in the center of everything -- even if it can't be heard or easily seen."

Writing is challenging. Writing is a window into the soul. All of us can learn to write to express the music within ourselves, to express what is true and unique in our lives. Try it...and when you do, send it to the ALDANews. Share your unique story that we may all learn and grow together in this challenge filled life of living with hearing loss.

**Contributions to the ALDANews are eagerly welcomed and may be sent to:**  
Mark Dessert at: [mdessert@ix.netcom.com](mailto:mdessert@ix.netcom.com), or, 2343 Chipmunk Drive, Secane, PA. 19108.

**Carolyn Piper has a BS in Occupational Therapy from Columbia University. She lives in northern Vermont with her husband and has two grown sons and has been deaf for some 25 years due to a childhood illness. A longtime member of ALDA, she is the editor of the Proceedings and serves on the Editorial Board of ALDA News. [wicwas@wcvr.com](mailto:wicwas@wcvr.com)**

**Candis Shannon is the Editor-in-Chief of ALDA News. She works and lives in Fairbanks, Alaska. Candis truly enjoys helping out with ALDA News. She feels each ALDAn has an important story to be shared, and encourages all "to keep on writing." Candis received ALDA's Able ALDAN award at the 2000 'con in Santa Fe. [ffccs@aurora.uaf.edu](mailto:ffccs@aurora.uaf.edu)**