Hearing Loss Lessons  
By Eileen Hollywood

What did I find after I lost my hearing? A new job? Nope, I continued working for the same employer, even when my world went silent. A new hobby? Not really; reading took on a new meaning for me (it allowed me to lose myself in a world where hearing loss didn’t matter), but then again, I always enjoyed a good book, even before deafness. A new place to live? Uh-uh, I stayed a Jersey girl through all the ups and downs of hearing loss.

So what did I find? Well, for me, it’s not so much what I found as what I learned. I learned that life can throw some pretty unexpected punches, but we go on living anyway. I learned that friends are not always true, but we go on making friends anyway. I learned that sometimes hearing loss makes one want to stop smiling, but we go on smiling anyway. I learned that when we feel hopeless, we go on hoping anyway. Kind of like Martina McBride’s song, “Anyway.”

Anyway (sorry, couldn’t resist!), below are some thoughts on what I’ve learned from my hearing loss over the years. Mind you, there is nothing earth-shattering here, just some personal reflections on my own experience as a late-deafened adult.

1. I learned that ALDA is an invaluable, irreplaceable lifeline, and ALDAns make the best friends a person could ask for. Who else inherently understands why we grimace at the phrase “never mind,” why we hold balloons to hear music, why we avoid group settings, why we get exhausted from lipreading (and from struggling to explain this exhaustion to hearing people), why we struggle to learn sign language, why we dread hearing tests? Who else understands those feelings of awkwardness and frustration that ensue when we fail miserably at our attempts to bluff, when we goof by saying “Congratulations” where an “I’m sorry” is needed, when we feel left out at the holidays? Who else is there when we need to laugh and vent and escape the troubles of hearing loss? Who else makes ALDAcon possible? Who else but ALDAns!

2. I learned that technology is a great equalizer. The Internet, email, texting, IM, videophones, captioning, and other marvels have done wonders to narrow the gap and blur the lines between the hearing and the non-hearing. Don’t get me wrong—those lines still exist, and technology in no way completely eradicates the isolation that comes with hearing loss. However, technological advances have greatly helped to bridge the communication divide. When I think about the late-deafened people of 50 or even 25 years ago, it makes me ever more grateful for the things I sometimes take for granted today. Yes, technology can be frustrating when it fails; yes, it can be agonizingly complicated at times, but without it…well, for me, life would be very different, and I suspect, very difficult.

3. I learned that, for all its benefits, technology still can’t replace human contact and face-to-face interactions. This is why ALDAcon is so special. The personal smiles, the socializing, the laughter—these are all so priceless. Without question, physical hugs trump virtual ones.

4. I learned that hearing and listening are completely different activities and that deafened people can be far better listeners than hearing people. ’Nuff said.

5. I learned that hearing loss can be fraught with embarrassing communication missteps, but it is not the only reason for my life’s sticky mo-
We’ve had a changing of the guard. Eileen Hollywood, who has been the ALDA News managing editor since our winter 2008 issue, just retired from this position, but (thankfully) she hasn’t disappeared, as you can see from her cover story in this issue. Eileen has been a tremendous asset in keeping the gears oiled by faithfully sending out calls for articles, corresponding with authors, and writing the “Eileen Here” column for each issue. She received a well-deserved Able ALDAn award at last year’s ALDAcon in recognition of her many contributions. Fortunately, ALDA was able to recruit Rachael Morris to serve in Eileen’s place, and Rachael has been going like gangbusters ever since. Be sure to read Rachael’s introduction to readers in her new “Rockin’ with Ray” column. Thanks, Eileen, and welcome, Rachael!

Since my progressive hearing loss started in childhood, I always had to take it into consideration when making choices. Socializing in groups was impossible, so I had a best friend, and my favorite hobby was reading. I also developed strong spiritual interests, which I originally thought were due to my efforts to cope with my hearing loss, but after meeting many people with hearing loss who don’t have this interest, I realized that other unknown factors must have been involved.

I majored in English in college and initially signed up for the teacher training program, but I became worried that practice teaching would be too difficult without good hearing, so I decided to drop the program (it turned out that the school where I was supposed to practice teach was similarly concerned). Instead, I became an editor (and, as you can see, I still am one!).

My husband was serving in the Army in Germany when we got married, so we had the opportunity to travel extensively in Europe during his leave time. Knowing that I wouldn’t be able to understand tour guides, I read travel books and planned our sightseeing myself, which worked out very well.

I had obtained hearing aids after graduating from college, and I was able to participate in structured small group discussions, so that gave me a social outlet. I thought I had everything worked out until my loss reached the point where I could no longer function in such groups. Fortunately for me, cochlear implants had become available, and getting one in 1998 gave me the ability to participate socially again.

Thanks to technological advances and laws like the Americans with Disabilities Act, I actually have much more access now than I did as a child. When someone forwarded a “good old days” email that showed an old TV set with the headline, “Life was better in black and white,” I wrote back, “Life wasn’t captioned in black and white!”
Hey, y’all! You may be wonderin’ “Who in the world is this Rachael person that is now managing editor of ALDA News? She seems so informal in her way with words!” Well, gang, that’s me! I write just like I talk and hope it brings a smile to your face!

Let me introduce myself. I am Rachael Morris. You can call me “Ray” if you want. I am 31 years old and live in High Point, NC. I completely lost my hearing in 2007 due to bilateral acoustic neuromas, associated with neurofibromatosis type 2 (NF2).

NF2 is a disorder characterized by the growth of benign tumors throughout the nervous system. The most common are called vestibular schwannomas or acoustic neuromas and develop along the auditory nerve. Tumors that occur on nerves in other areas of the brain or spinal cord are also commonly seen with this condition. I have a hefty timeline of surgery after surgery, radiation therapies, and even chemotherapy under my belt. These tumors throughout my body have resulted in various impairments, some temporary and some permanent.

Several of our writers in this issue as well as many other ALDAns are just so darn lucky to also have this condition! (There needs to be a “sarcasm font,” in my opinion.) Enough about that—I do not care to dwell on it. So moving right along with my intro...

As a 25-year old young woman I was lonely, scared, confused, and very lost in a new deaf world. I was introduced to ALDA a year later and my attitude completely changed. I was hooked and in love. After attending four ALDAcons so far, I am still blown away by the acceptance and kindness I received! There are two “holidays” I look forward to every year—Christmas and ALDAcon!

Now, five years after stumbling into ALDA, I am a founding member and current leader of ALDA-Carolina Flight. I served on the ALDAcon 2010 Program Committee, ALDA Outreach Committee, and ALDA Volunteers, and I was the ALDAcon 2012 planning chair. I have also served as Region 3 director since 2010. My most recent gig, look-ee here, is managing editor of ALDA News, and I could not be more excited!

I am an honest, supportive, and friendly “people” person, and I have tremendous passion and admiration for my deafened peers. You ALL are such huge inspirations to me! We are in this together!

I love making others laugh with my silly and random commentary. Nothing makes me happier than seeing another person smile and succeed because of an influence I had on them. I have never really been a shy gal. I grew up dancing, singing, performing in musical theatre, and cheerleading. Although I can no longer hear a tune, I still have a tendency to break out and dance or sing a song. My implanted iPod is constantly in full swing! I’m a nut, what can I say, but a smart nut with a lot of love in my heart!

Thank you all so much for your encouragement as I take on this new position! I am truly honored to be doing this and I love it! My predecessor, Eileen Hollywood, is amazing and has been such a tremendous asset! She has big feet and I have huge shoes to fill! Thank you, Eileen and Nancy, for holding my hand, being patient with me, and guiding me! “I lost my hearing and found…” a love for creative writing! This position fits me and is one I am meant to have!

I hope you enjoyed rockin’ with me for a few moments and most importantly, I hope you enjoy what we have put together for you in this issue of ALDA News on the theme of “Lost my hearing—found a new (fill in the blank)” or “Chose a career/hobby/whatever to fit my hearing loss.” Please do not hesitate to contact me with comments, questions, ideas, etc. at RMorris423@gmail.com. Y’all be good and remember, “Only the strong survive!”

ALDA hugs, high fives, and all that jazz!

Rachael
ALDA Mourns Loss of Harriet Frankel

Editor’s note: Harriet Frankel, a member of ALDA-Peach and former ALDA News columnist, died at age 96 on September 14, 2013. She is survived by her daughter Ellen Matson and her granddaughter Aleysha Anderson. ALDA published a collection of Harriet’s articles, which I had the privilege of editing, as Twenty-Five Chats with Harriet, which was issued to celebrate Harriet’s 95th birthday during ALDAcon 2011. Robin Titterington shares her memories below.

Harriet joined ALDA when she was over 80, and I can’t tell you how many times she said, “ALDA changed my life,” so it’s never too late! She always had a hearing loss, which eventually became profound deafness. She did not sign, and (bless her) she was famous for being LOUD! I mean REALLY LOUD! She’s the only deaf person I ever knew about whom other deaf people would say, “wow, she’s LOUD!” And we loved her!

I thought that those of us who sign and the wonderful last-minute volunteer interpreter would sit in the back for the funeral at her temple. But the rabbi had the interpreter stand next to him and introduced him, and we sat in the front row. I believe six ALDA-Peaches were there. After the service, I told the rabbi that I loved Harriet and she was “a character.” He said, “OH, I’ve heard stories!” and I responded, “anyone who knew Harriet had a story!”

My favorite recollection remains the ALDA-Boston group taking Harriet to see Chippendales, a male revue in Las Vegas. She was probably a mere 89 or so. I was so nervous that she would not understand (she was not a great lipreader) and would think she was going to a furniture show, but the next morning she loudly proclaimed, “THOSE MEN WERE GORGEOUS!” We will miss our Harriet so very much.

Lynn Osborne adds: “I am so sad to hear of Harriet’s passing. I only had the chance to meet her once during my first ALDAcon in Rochester, NY [in 2007], and her dynamic spirit had a great impact on me. Little did she know that spending those few days with her helped change the fear I felt about losing my hearing so suddenly to a feeling of I can accomplish great things in my life after hearing loss. When I got home, I returned to college.”

As Robin noted, “we will miss our Harriet so very much.”
Two Cultures, One Identity?

By Norma Ortiz

In Spanish, Deaf is written sordo, hard of hearing is written sordo, and deafened is also written sordo. In the U.S., people who are Deaf, deaf, hard of hearing, or deafened recognize that they share a similar condition: the impossibility of hearing well or at all. But they also notice that the needs and feelings this condition causes them are very different for each group. Hence, if you are unable to name these differences, it is like thinking that Buddhism, Catholicism, and Judaism just refer to one single idea: religion.

I was born in Mexico City in a country where the variations between Deaf, deaf, hard of hearing and deafened aren’t identified. Sus diferencias no son algo importante; al final, todos son sordos (Their differences are not a great deal; in the end, everybody is deaf). Most Mexican people believe that anyone who is deaf is also mute and uses sign language. Hearing people don’t think they can become deaf. Most Mexicans believe that deaf people are all born this way.

I started to lose my hearing when I was 23. Finally, three years afterwards, I was diagnosed with neurofibromatosis type 2 (NF2). I am now 28 and still live in Mexico City. I have total deafness in my right ear and a profound hearing loss in my left ear. Living with NF2 and hearing loss have been the toughest challenges I’ve ever faced. It goes without saying that if hearing loss differences are unknown in my country, NF2 is the weirdest kind of illness you can develop.

I could write a book about my journey from the time I was diagnosed in 2010 to my approval for treatment in the U.S. But to be brief, I am participating in the five-year NF2 protocol at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in Bethesda, MD. The study guidelines ask the participants to visit the hospital every six months for follow-up tests, including hearing tests. I was enrolled in the protocol two years ago and fly to Washington, DC at least twice a year. It has been because of these frequent travels to Maryland that I’ve learned a new way to live with my hearing loss.

Losing your hearing changes your life, but you already know that—this is not a new concept for anyone in ALDA. But in my case, losing my hearing has forced me not only to move from one world to another—from one of sound to one of silence—but also from one culture to another—from the Mexican to the American one.

It is interesting the way my hearing loss and NF2 are changing my life. As time goes by, I’m developing different abilities to cope with hearing situations in both countries. In Spanish I’m a good speechreader, but in English I can’t speechread. In contrast, I find the signs from ASL logical and easy, but it’s difficult for me to understand signs in LSM (Mexican Sign Language). In the U.S. I’m more active in advocating for my hearing loss, while in Mexico I sometimes get tired of advocating. I’m living in two realities. The funny thing is that I’ve noticed I’m not exactly the same person in each country.

Right now, my friends are the most peculiar side of my double life. All my Mexican friends are hearing and live in Mexico City, so I can chat with them whenever I want. My American friends are deaf or hard of hearing, and I don’t even know what some of them look like in person. I communicate with them by online chat or email because they live far away. Despite our geographical distance and cultural differences, these new friends are becoming a very important part of my life.

Having the chance to spend time in two countries has its frustrating side, too. Every time I travel to the U.S., I notice that it provides a more comfortable way to live with a hearing loss. Specifically, I see the services that the U.S. government provides to the American people. I know they aren’t perfect, but at least Americans have something. [Editor’s note: many of the services available in the U.S. are mandated by law and not provided directly by the U.S. government.]

Living with a hearing loss in a developing country can be tougher than you can imagine. You have to find a way to come to terms with your loss and, at the same time, you have to find a way to force your government to recognize your needs. For example, in Mexico there aren’t special telephones for hard of hearing or late-deafened adults. TV programs don’t have captioning. Universities don’t have CART or sign language interpreters. There isn’t a law like the ADA that protects deaf and hard of hearing people from job discrimination. There aren’t doorbell signalers or fire/smoke alarms for deaf people. Toddlers and senior citizens aren’t candidates for CIs. Regardless of the degree of hearing loss involved, implants are only available for children and a few late-deafened adults.

As far as technology and services for disabled people are concerned, trust me: Americans are
ALDAns Invited to Attend Both ALDAcon 2014 in Virginia and Late-Deafened Conference in Europe

As indicated elsewhere in this issue, ALDAcon 2014 will take place in Norfolk, Virginia. Stichting Plotsdoven, the late-deafened organization of the Netherlands, will be celebrating its 25th anniversary by hosting its first international conference there from March 27-29, 2014. Members of Stichting Plotsdoven attended ALDAcon 2011 in Indianapolis, and we encourage ALDAns to attend this European conference planned by our sister organization. Let’s show our support for their first late-deafened conference in the Netherlands!

Advanced Technology Facilitates CART for the Nordic Summer Week

*By Liisa Sammalpenger*

![CART at dinner](image)

At the 21st Nordic Summer Week for deafened people (held every two years alternatively in Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Finland—this year, it was in Denmark), advanced technology was used in providing CART for the all-day tour. Finns received a translation from Danish to Finnish at their bus seats through iPads and iPhones connected wirelessly to the CART provider's computer via the VNC local network. Swedes and Norwegians read Danish CART along with the Danes on the screens while on the bus. Outside the bus, we used CART in our own languages on laptop screens.

For the last night’s fest dinner, CART was provided through the VNC local network for Finns, while Danes had a wireless system to read on tablets and the others had laptops.

We had 16 sign language interpreters and CART providers working for 45 persons attending the week. The interpreters used signed Danish, Swedish, and Finnish in spoken language order.

We’ll meet again in Southern Norway in 2015. Cooperation between deafened Scandinavian national organizations/units is handled via VDNR.org, the Nordic Council of Deafened People.

*Liisa lives in Finland and can be contacted at sammalpenger@gmail.com.*

![CART on the bus](image)

---

**ALDA Award Winners for the ALDA-TDI 2013 Joint Conference**

**I. King Jordan Distinguished Achievement Award:** Kathryn Woodcock
**President’s Special Recognition Award:** Kathy Evans
**Robert Davila ALDA Angel Award:** Marylyn Howe
**Able ALDAn Award:** Tess Crowder
**Bob Hawley Fearless Leader Award:** Francine Stieglitz
Hello, ALDA Fan Club! I am profoundly deaf and excited to participate in writing an article for the ALDA News. This gives me a chance to mentally heal myself by sharing how I lost my hearing and found a new life, a positive life even though my world suddenly went silent on March 2, 2007. I have been deaf for six years now and am doing wonderfully. It’s as if this change is part of God’s plan for my life.

Before I lost my hearing, I worked as a stockbroker answering phones and placing orders for equity trades such as stocks, bonds, mutual funds, exchange traded funds, and option trades. When the market crashed in 1997, jobs were eliminated, including mine. I had loved my job, and the stock market is still my passion.

I then became an electrician because the pay is excellent. Not realizing this was a male-dominated field, I was often the only female on a job site. I received a lot of gawks and heckles from the guys, which made me work that much harder and molded me into a much stronger woman. I learned to wire newly constructed homes and was good at it. I noticed that the only time the guys wouldn’t heckle me was when I was carrying a power tool. However, after five years in the field, I learned what a “glass ceiling” was all about: I was paid less for the same work that the guys did. In other words, it took me five years to realize that this was a dead-end job.

At this point I became very ill and thought I simply had some type of flu. One evening, I was unable to keep my food down. I had a high fever and chills, and then without warning I passed out. Luckily, my spouse of 17 years was there for me. She and another friend rushed me to the nearest hospital, where I became delirious and was asleep for three whole days as a result of meningitis. When I woke up on the third day, all I could hear was a very loud humming in both ears. When the doctors (two of them) entered my room, they spoke to me but I couldn’t understand anything, so they wrote instead. One wrote, “Royce, you are one lucky lady because you did not die and you did not wake up as a vegetable. You’re lucky that all you lost was your hearing.”

Now what was I to do for a living to support myself? I could no longer work as an electrician because being on a construction site and being deaf do not mix. About two years later, I attended Central Piedmont Community College in Charlotte, NC. I had had no lessons in American Sign Language (ASL) and only knew how to introduce myself and sign, “Nice to meet you.” I got through my first year and realized I could not go any further without knowing ASL. I became very frustrated and discontinued my life as a college student. [Editor’s note: the Americans with Disabilities Act requires provision of “effective communication.” If someone is not fluent in ASL, another form of communication access must be provided, such as CART (realtime captioning) or (if the person is hard of hearing) an assistive listening system.]

After my stint at CPCC, for three years I dwelt in sadness and self-pity. I must have experienced every negative emotion possible after becoming deaf. Finally, in 2013, I opened an individual trading account and began investing in stocks. I did not need a phone to place my trades. I became excited because not only was I making some extra money but I was also inspired to start my own investment club, which I called Power-House Investment Club. I currently have three Investors who are partners in my club, and I couldn’t be happier. All my old student loans have been discharged from my credit history, leaving my credit in excellent condition.

Being deaf has its difficult moments, and I feel lonely at times, but deafness has also given me the courage to become self-employed. And my signing has improved tremendously.

Royce is a member of ALDA-Carolina Flight, grew up in Denver, and lives in Charlotte, NC. She enjoys outdoor activities like hiking, camping, horseback riding, and biking. She can be contacted at roycelawarren@outlook.com.

Two Cultures, One Identity? (continued)...

Continued from page 6

lucky to be in the U.S. But while Americans are supportive, Mexicans are tender. That’s the good side of my hearing loss: the chance to perceive these differences in culture and take the best from each of them. In the end, having a hearing loss is turning me into a better person. And two years after living between two different cultures, I’ve started to feel at home in both worlds.

Norma is a fan of the arts, especially painting and sculpture, and is currently learning to write novels and short stories. She loves traveling and drinking coffee and has lived with her brother in a family apartment since she was 21. Norma can be contacted at riks arbeiten@hotmail.com.
I am in love with Montana. For other states I have admiration, respect, recognition, even some affection, but with Montana it is love, and it’s difficult to analyze love when you’re in it.

—John Steinbeck

I was already a “mature” lady when I lost my hearing to NF2 in 2002. Up until then, “Trust in the Lord and He will direct your path” had kept me going in times of trouble, but at age 51, it seemed more difficult to hold onto that promise. So if anyone had predicted that over the next several years, God would direct me on to adventure, independence, and contentment in the wilds of Montana, I would have asked them what they had been sniffing. But direct me He did, and on the journey I fell in love.

It began very innocently, when my husband Dave and I were visiting relatives in northwest Montana. Most everyone who travels to Kootenai River country loves the incredible scenery: the mountains, rivers, lakes, and wildlife. We were no exception. We both felt something special, though; it was more than simply the vacation high and respite from daily life.

We had been considering finding a vacation home for years and by chance happened to see a picture of land for sale in a realtor’s window. We simply had to have a look-see. Following some rather vague instructions we got a bit lost, but we finally located the remote property 12 miles outside of Libby, Montana. The land was undeveloped, off the grid, and hard for “off balance” me to even walk on, but I managed. And was it ever worth the effort! Five acres of trees on a beautiful creek just waiting for someone (us, we were sure) to build that cozy vacation cabin. We both fell in love, and we fell hard, but I think I fell harder.

Everything about what we now call “Moose Chippings” (because Dave spied a moose down by the creek) seemed meant to attract—the fragrance of the forest, the sparkle of the creek dancing over the rocks, the gentle breeze’s caress, THE TREES, oh, the trees! I felt like God had created this place just for us. And the best thing? I didn’t need my hearing to appreciate it!

We began to dream about building a getaway where we could relax and soak up all that beauty. There were obstacles, of course. We would have to produce our own electricity or live without it. Still, our minds were made up almost as soon as we saw the creek. This was OUR place. Elation was the key emotion, and since my becoming deaf, elation was a rare sensation for me. We were in love, plain and simple.

Within two years, our getaway dream had become a reality. There was only one problem: I didn’t want to “get away”—I wanted to stay there in Montana. Just a few days of living in Moose Chippings had convinced me that it was where I could be a happy deaf lady. Dave, however, had to earn a living, not only to put bread on our table, but also to keep me medically insured for NF2 treatments, which cost a lot more than bread. So if I stayed it would have to be on my own.

Like anyone in love, I refused to give up, in spite of all the “tsk-tsk’s” about my being deaf and unstable on my feet (and 57). What would I do in an emergency, how would I manage? The only negative as far as I was concerned was being separated from Dave. I just had to do this. In my entire life, I had never lived on my own. I had gone from my parents to college dorms, to marriage. I felt like I had to prove to myself that I could be independent, and what better place than Moose Chippings, where I was so happy? Also, because NF2 seemed to always be in the background, I wanted to experience the joy of doing things on my own before the disease could prevent me entirely. Dave, great guy that he is, understood and gave his blessing; and because I loved Montana, and he loved me, he did everything in his power to make sure it would be a positive experience. Power…check; Internet…check; deaf alert system…check!

After I learned to manage the off-grid power system, (yes, really) and met our only neighbors, who lived about ¼ mile away, things just fell into place. I felt ready to be alone with my newfound love, Montana.

I eased into it gently in June 2008. The grandkids came to visit for a week. I will never forget my drive back from the airport to the empty house and being filled with trepidation. Almost immediately, though, when I entered the house again, the “peace that passes all understanding” filled me. I was beyond thankful!

Each day was a challenge, and each day I learned something new. I planted and nurtured a flower garden almost all by myself; lugged sacks of soil and dozens of very large rocks for the borders; pored over books about Montana’s

Continued on page 10
Montana and Me (continued)...

Continued from page 9

trees, wildflowers and critters; and not only learned how to prevent a power blackout (don’t use the microwave and vacuum at the same time...duh!) but also how to get things restarted. Sometimes I took what I now know to be unwise chances like going on solitary walks on very remote roads, or scrambling on all fours onto a large rock in the middle of the creek and then having to figure out how to get back to dry land. I was rarely scared or worried, though.

And the wildlife...wow! Deer visited daily, hummingbirds would remind me to fill their feeders, raccoons made mischief, rabbits ate my flowers, and large wild turkeys tromped through my garden in big groups. I have had bears and mountain lions cross my path as I was driving to town. Great stuff for this former suburban gal.

I reveled in the solitude, glad to be away from having to deal with the hearing world, and ventured into Libby only for supplies. Of course I entertained visitors from time to time, and I joyously welcomed Dave when he was able to fly up, but for the most part I was alone with my beloved Montana and my little dog Sweetpea, which was just fine by me.

Solitude is good, yes....but isolation can be bad, and I am not sure exactly when I realized that as a people person, I might have been inadvertently shooting myself in the foot, isolating myself more than necessary to achieve this special sense of peace. But how could I have it both ways? I prayed for help in solving this conundrum. And the answer came: “Just take the first step and introduce yourself.” When I did that, I found the very best of Montana, because the real enchantment of Montana is in its people.

I had rarely encountered so many folks who accepted me and my deafness with such active caring (ALDA excepted, of course!) as I did in Libby. People from church were generous with their time and friendship. In the community, help was never further away than the nearest person’s smile. Local service people went beyond the normal service call to make sure I was okay and understood things. Shop clerks were patient and helpful. Whenever I was in town, I saw friends and collected hugs. I had never experienced such kindness from strangers. One day, almost before I realized that my tire was flat, someone had contacted the tire guy, who arrived in minutes to repair the puncture, free of charge. When I couldn’t get to a nighttime function because of my eyesight, people I had just met signed up for a chance to fetch me.

I could share many stories, but there is one that perhaps best illustrates my point: Sweetpea and I were walking up a remote road one morning (remember what I said about taking unwise chances), when a pickup with two rather scruffy looking men pulled up, startling me. I could not understand what they were saying. One got out and reached into the back of his truck, and I stiffened in a panic thinking “Oh Lord, I guess my number is up—he’s getting a gun.” But no, it wasn’t a gun or a knife—what he lifted up was a container of huckleberries. He wanted to know if I would like to take a couple of cups. Seems they were on their way home from berry picking. As relief flooded through me, I remember thinking, “Only in Montana! Thank you, Lord! I DO LOVE IT HERE!”

The huckleberries were yummy, by the way!

Over the next four years, I spent entire summers, often into late October, basically on my own at Moose Chippings. (I was even able to bring my 95-year-old daddy up for a month a few times. He was happy to live in his own little trailer.) Each year found me crying as I left and counting the days until I could return.

In 2012, we took a big leap of faith to make Moose Chippings our permanent home in spite of some big NF2 issues. Dave has semi-retired and needs only to be away for a few weeks a year. It took some major logistics, but we are now Montanans—officially, legally, and most importantly, in our hearts. And I am indeed a very content, very thankful, and very blessed 62-year-old deaf lady who knows exactly what Steinbeck meant, because I too am “in love with Montana.”

Marta is a happily married wife, mother of two, grandmother of four, and daughter of a wonderful (almost) 98-year-old dad. Due to NF2 tumor removal, she completely lost her hearing eleven years ago, and her main form of communication is ABI-assisted speechreading (and talking, which she says she does a lot more of). Marta would love to become proficient in signing, but her only opportunities to practice are when she is with other ALDAns. Her hobbies include gardening, knitting, reading, and writing emails, and she has taken a new interest in watercoloring. The things she misses most since becoming deaf are her family’s voices, music, being able to understand sermons and prayers at church, and the sounds of nature. Marta says she tries to focus on all things bright and beautiful and be thankful. Her email address is martacitaw@yahoo.com.
Nominations for ALDA Board Positions

Each year ALDA, Inc. holds an election to fill open positions on the Board of Directors. The Nominations Committee is now soliciting nominations for the following positions effective January 1, 2014:

**Vice President** – During the changeover to President/Vice President in 2014 that was passed in 2011, this year the office is for a one-year term. The Vice President assists the President, and, in the event of the President’s extended absence or disability, performs the duties of that office. The Vice President may be elected for a second two-year term.

**Treasurer** – The Treasurer serves a two-year term, has custody of ALDA funds and securities, keeps accounts of all receipts and disbursements, and chairs the Finance Committee.

**Regional Directors 1 and 2** – Regional Directors serve two-year terms, represent one of four regions, MUST live in that region, and are elected by members residing in the region. Regional Directors respond to communications requesting information about local resources; provide support to groups, chapters, individuals, families, and professionals within the region; and represent regional interests at Board meetings.

**Region 1:** Connecticut, Washington DC, Delaware, Massachusetts, Maryland, Maine, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, West Virginia, Virginia, Quebec, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, United Kingdom, Finland, Norway, Netherlands, Europe, Middle East.

**Region 2:** Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Ohio, Wisconsin, Manitoba, Ontario.

Nominees must be members of ALDA, Inc. in good standing, be willing to attend the annual general business meeting and Board meetings, and accept committee assignments. If you would like a form to nominate yourself or another member, contact Brenda Estes at pastpresident@alda.org. **Deadline for nominations is November 15, 2013.**

---

**Hearing Loss Lessons (continued)...**

Continued from page 1

ments. Take the time a few years ago when I sent an email to a co-worker named Bob, my clumsy butter-fingers inadvertently dropping an extra “o” between the two “b”’s in his name. No, the spell checker did not catch my faux pas, and Outlook proceeded to fire the email out into the ethers and into Bob’s Inbox. Oops! So when I make a gaffe due to my hearing loss, rather than get upset over the hearing-loss hand I was dealt, I try to remember that even if I had perfect hearing, I’d still be making blunders.

6. I learned that there will always be insensitive people in the world—those who say “it’s not important,” who sigh and roll their eyes at the inconvenience of repeating something, who respond with “I don’t have time for this” during captioned call delays, who ignorantly mutter “death” instead of “deaf” (never could figure that one out!), who complain about captioning in public venues. But I’ve also found that there are many patient and caring people in this world as well, and the good they do far outweighs the negativity I encounter elsewhere.

7. I learned that new habits develop after a hearing loss. One that I learned the hard way is to check the faucets before walking away from a sink. Many years ago in college, I awoke one night feeling thirsty, stumbled over to the sink for a glass of water, and went back to bed, blissfully unaware of the bubbling gurgles coming from the faucet. Several hours later, I awoke, horrified, to see my roommate wading through an ankle-deep lake in our dorm room. Thankfully, she was an amazing (and forgiving) person who never once rebuked me for the awful mess I made. Instead, she laughed it off as just another day in dorm living, showing me that it’s really not worth crying over spilt milk (or spilt water). To this day, even with my cochlear implant, I still invariably put my hands under the faucets to make sure they are off. No, it’s not obsessive-compulsive disorder, it’s deafness.

8. Perhaps most important, I learned that there’s still so much to learn…

Eileen lost her hearing overnight at age 21 while a senior in college and received a cochlear implant three years ago. She has worked for Merck for 23 years and is currently a senior specialist in the IT Compliance area and a member of the company’s differently-abled employee resource group. She joined ALDA in 2000 and is a past president and past treasurer of ALDA-Garden State, as well as a past managing editor of ALDA News. **She continues to learn something from her hearing loss every day and can be contacted at EileenA2@aol.com.**
Valerie Stafford-Mallis, ALDA’s outreach chair, works for ACS (Alternative Communication Services, LLC), a full-service captioning and sign language interpreting company. She conducts trainings and advises and educates public and private organizations on methods that improve communication access for persons who are deaf, hard of hearing, late-deafened, and deaf-blind.

In addition to her duties as chair of the ALDA outreach committee, Valerie serves on the Board of Trustees for the Hearing Loss Association of America and the Hearing Loss Association of Sarasota, her local chapter, and she was voted Communication Access Inc.’s 2013 Hearing Loss Advocate of the Year.

Valerie also supports the Humane Society of Manatee County. You may contact her at Valerie@acscaptions.com.

Name: Valerie Stafford-Mallis
Where were you born? Miami Florida
What is your current residence? Bradenton, Florida
What is the cause of your deafness? Heredity and environmental exposure to loud noise and secondhand cigarette smoke
Age/year you became deafened? I was first diagnosed with moderate to severe sensorineural hearing loss at age 22.
Marital status? I’m married for 30 years.
What is your present job? Business Development Manager for Alternative Communication Services (ACS) LLC.
What is the worst job you ever had? Preparing proposals for a construction firm.
Movies you want to see again? The Jazz Singer starring Neil Diamond and Flipper starring an amazing Atlantic bottle-nosed dolphin whose real name was Suzy.
Books you tell others to read? Simple Abundance by Sarah Ban Breathnach and Emotional Toolkit by Darlene Mininni, Ph.D.
I stay home to watch: NCIS
Favorite pig-out food: Mac’n’cheese; Cajun-battered French fries, Popeye’s fried chicken
Hobbies: United States Masters Swimming; TRX Suspension Training, interior design, reading, visiting with friends and family, being outdoors

If I had more free time, I’d: finish reading my 54-volume set of the Great Books of the Western World and my set of The 100 Greatest Books Ever Written.

The hardest thing about becoming deafened is: losing my capacity to perceive the sound of music the way I used to and to perform my vocal repertoire. I was a classically trained singer and still have a pretty good instrument, but a tone-deaf opera singer is not a good thing! However, once a year at ALDA karaoke, I get to scratch that itch, because it does not matter whether I can match pitch or not. I was definitely Born to Be Wild.

I began accepting my deafness: as a New Year’s resolution for 2008. All kinds of wonderful doors opened to me after that, and I am eternally grateful for the opportunities I have been given.

The worst thing about deafness is: being more dependent on my sight, which is not so great anymore either.

The best thing about deafness is: now that I have CIs I can slip in and out of my cocoon of silence at will.

How did you learn about ALDA? From my local deaf services center and ALDA’s Lois Maroney.

In what ways has ALDA enhanced your life? ALDA karaoke!!

When I am depressed, I cry and I tend to catastrophize.

My most irrational fear is: never thinking I am good enough and my incompetence will be exposed.

If I could hear again, the first thing I would do is: listen/sing along to all my classical recordings: Handel’s Messiah would be first and then Gounod’s Ave Maria.

The thing I like best about myself: my intelligence, persistence, and versatility
Nobody knows I swear like a sailor when peeved.
What I can’t stand is: lies
Favorite memory: Swimming with the dolphins and performing as a guest soloist with an orchestra
Favorite saying: What a cluster ——  (I told you I could swear.)

The bottom line is: How much you loved while you were here on this earth and what you gave back.
Kim Mettache reports that ALDA-Northwest Indiana was looking forward to their chapter picnic on September 21.

Rachael Morris tells us that ALDA-Carolina Flight was scheduled to reunite after a summer hiatus on September 21 at the United Way of Davidson County in Lexington, NC to discuss plans for the upcoming year and hear David Littman speak about his work for the Division of Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. The chapter is under the new leadership of Rachael Morris and Nancy Gordon.

ALDA-San Jose meets four times a year and enjoys social events beyond that. James Laffer reports that they are “muddling onward,” but those social events sound like they are having fun.

Diana Fanuel reports that ALDA-Garden State (NJ) had a summer dinner get-together at the Famished Frog in Morristown with 10 members in attendance. Cynthia Amerman (AZ), an original NJ member, graced the dinner with her presence. Jeff Coppola scheduled a Sept. 22 ALDA-NJ social at his home.

Joe Linder sends a great report about ALDA-Chicago’s recent activities. Over the summer months, members were able to enjoy the museums, grounds, and dining at Cantigny in Wheaton, attend Cleo Simmons’ annual pool party, and journey to Lake Geneva, Wisconsin for a cruise tour and dining. During Cleo’s pool party, a drawing was held for the 25th anniversary quilt that Fran Bowden crafted. Marsha Kopp was the lucky winner.

Attendees at the Cantigny event were fascinated by the art deco style of the cinema room in the mansion, where the president of Chicago Tribune newspapers and his guests watched movies from the 1930s until his death in 1955. Colonial McCormick, as he was often referred to, was a world traveler who kept a sizable gun and sword collection in his lounging room, while other rooms contained cultural artifacts collected by his two wives. A museum dedicated to veterans since World War I contained many lifelike exhibits.

The Lake Geneva cruise included a 45-minute narrated tour with a stop at a historical estate on a bluff overlooking the lake. Handouts were given to visitors unable to hear the narrator, and cruise goers were able to view estates and other points of interest along the shore. The Lake Geneva area has been an upscale resort community since just after the Civil War, and in the late 19th century, many wealthy Chicagoans built mansions to enjoy as summer retreats. Upon arrival at the Black Point Estate, visitors climbed approximately 100 stairs from the pier to the estate for a 90-minute guided tour of the mansion and its grounds. The 20-room Queen Anne style cottage included 13 bedrooms but just one bathroom. Following the estate tour, visitors were able to take in the numerous shops surrounding the docks before going for dinner.

Ann Smith reports that Bob Green, a dear friend of ALDA-Peach, gave a presentation on Apache ASL Trails at the June meeting. Bob recently visited this retirement community in Tempe, AZ, which was developed specifically for Deaf seniors. Bob is involved in efforts to build a similar community in Georgia. In July, the Peaches met at a local buffet for the annual summer lunch. Normally, it’s too hot in Georgia to cook at that time, so members enjoy letting someone else do the cooking. This was not a normal summer; it was raining, but attendees still enjoyed the food and the company. ALDA-Peach’s own Kristin Stansell gave an excellent presentation on taking better photographs at the August meeting. She did such a great job that the members asked her to give a follow-up session in October.

Send your chapter news to Ann Smith at fabsmith@att.net. Deadline for the next issue is November 24.
Abruptly, my wife turned her back on me and walked away.

“Ling, why are you just walking off like that?” I demanded, feeling abused. “Are you finished with our discussion or something?”

“Bob, I didn’t just walk off. I said, ‘Come over here—I want to show you what I’m talking about.’ ”

“Oh, I didn’t hear that. I’m sorry,” I said, feeling once again deeply annoyed with my deafness.

This autobiographical account is about the effects of progressive deafness on two of four brothers: Bobby, the oldest (me) and Bee Bee, the third one born, eight years later. Bobby lives in the San Francisco Bay area; Bee Bee lives in northern Pennsylvania. Once or twice a year Bobby flies to visit Bee Bee and once or twice a year Bee Bee drives across the country to visit Bobby. The two brothers take long walks together or sit with good lighting in a quiet place reminiscing about the effects that progressive deafness has had on their lives. The anecdotes they swap cover selecting friends, careers, spouses, employment, entertainment, recreation, and communicating, comprehending, learning, and teaching. This is a synopsis of their discussions over the years on learning and its relation to their hearing losses.

Once upon a time, a long time ago, in the deep dark forest there were educators who had primitive knowledge about what to do with deafened children. Should they be placed in the same classrooms as normally hearing kids? Would this interfere with the academic progress of normally hearing students? Wouldn’t those who can’t hear need teachers with special training? Should deafened children be sent to schools that teach sign language? Would it be better to have them taught orally, i.e. by talking and reading lips? Otherwise they would end up separated from the vast majority who speak.

As we know, this controversy continues to this day.

Bobby and Bee Bee are unable to pinpoint the beginning of when their hearing began to deteriorate. They assume that during infancy their hearing loss was mild or absent, for both learned how to talk in the customary manner, by interacting with parents, relatives, and playmates. How could they know that others were able to hear better than they did? In the Days of Yore, hearing tests were not a standard procedure for schoolchildren. It would be akin to asking someone with mild vision loss if he has 20/20 vision without giving him a vision test. It was not until the early 1950s that Bobby and Bee Bee discovered in different ways they were not members of the normally hearing world.

In Bee Bee’s case, the day arrived when his third grade teacher and the school principal called his parents in for an urgent conference in which it was announced that it was best to transfer their son to Mary E. Bennett School for the Deaf. Initially the parents were adamantly opposed. “Our son is not deaf,” his mother argued passionately. “He understands what is said. You just have to get his attention.”

Teacher and principal informed the parents that their child would not be able to succeed unless he was sent to a school that specialized in his needs. They had arranged for a formal hearing test for him, and the results verified that he had difficulty hearing. It required a series of persuasive talks to get the parents to surrender. Shortly thereafter, a school bus trekked back and forth from East L.A. to West L.A. in order for Bee Bee to attend the school for the deaf.

What was not explained to the parents was that the Mary E. Bennett School specialized in the oral approach, while most other deaf schools used sign language as the mode of communication. It is not known whether the educators themselves knew about the controversy going on between the oral and manual approaches or whether it would have mattered to them.

Bee Bee is angry that Mary E. Bennett School students were denied the opportunity to develop sign language skills; signing was strictly forbidden. Also, the school’s mission was to teach children to talk, but he could already do so—he had difficulty hearing but not speaking. He was bored sitting in class while the teachers endlessly repeated the lip movements of words accompanied by their voice sounds. The teachers felt that Bee Bee was so far advanced over the other students they didn’t need to pay attention to him. He developed a habit of not listening; he knew if he missed something, it would be repeated later.

Bee Bee believes that if he had been furnished with hearing aids and glasses, he could have managed in a regular school, and he wonders why that wasn’t tried. When he finished at the school for the deaf, he transferred to Hollywood High and was mainstreamed except one class to help special ed students with classroom work. It was a real struggle for him to

Continued on page 15
Dealing with My Deafness

By Kristin Stansell

I did not think becoming deaf would be so bad. I had friends who originally thought that this would be only a simple complication. Sign language for communication, television/theater captions, bed alarm vibrators, flashing light alerts for doorbells and fire alarms, etc. are all available. But having actually become deaf as a result of an automobile accident, I found that I’ve been tossed into an entirely different world.

I called myself hard of hearing for years. Some people raised their voice and others yelled at me, which communicated anger. I felt angry at myself because I could not hear them. We could have had an anger party! I hid the fact that I was “socially deaf” because there is a stigma to being deaf (think “deaf and dumb”). I call it being “socially deaf” because I can lipread my family members, who are patient and willing to rephrase.

Helen Keller said that deafness is far worse than blindness because of the inability to communicate with others. But I myself adore various visual representations (being a photographer) and the vast differences in colors, so I do not think that I would agree, being grateful that I lost my hearing and not my vision.

Fortunately, technology helps. Just look at how successful we have become in improving vision with glasses, contact lenses, and even surgery! I wear glasses, wore contact lenses in high school, and had surgery after my auto accident that helped my double vision although it did not cure it. Hearing was next on this generation’s agenda with the development of sophisticated hearing aids, cochlear implants, and captioning. I waited eight years for Colombo to be captioned! Even movie theaters now have special glasses with captions on the lenses that are invisible to those who are not wearing these glasses.

Communication is the main area on which I focus. I have been learning sign language, but there aren’t many people who understand it, so I have forgotten most of what I learned. Most people who can sign are Deaf (the big D refers to cultural deafness), and it is difficult to break into this culture. I recently came to understand why from watching the television show Switched at Birth. People would rather communicate with those who are familiar with their language and lifestyle. I learned this recently after a disheartened experience. However, I want to become a part of Deaf culture; so in time, I plan to volunteer at a Deaf school. For those who have become deaf, deafness is a disability, but for Deaf people who are immersed in Deaf culture, being able to hear is abnormal. It is difficult to join the Deaf culture, but it IS possible, and I will either do it or create a culture of my own!

Kristin is vice president of ALDA-Peach and lives in Marietta, Georgia. She spends her day working on her abilities, reading, and writing and can be contacted at Kristin.Stansell@gmail.com.

Deafness and Learning (or Not) (continued)...

Continued from page 14

Bob is a retired university professor of philosophy and lives in California. He enjoys reading and writing and can be contacted at saywhatbob@gmail.com. He will continue his account in future issues.
ALDAcon 2014

Inspiration on the Waterfront

Marriott Norfolk Waterside
Norfolk, VA
October 7-11, 2014

Co-Planning Chairs Brenda Estes and Karen Krull have been hard at work putting together a fantastic team of volunteers to coordinate ALDA’s next ALDAcon, to be held at the beautiful Marriott Norfolk Waterside Hotel in downtown Norfolk, VA. The hotel is one block from the waterfront and within walking distance of 40+ restaurants, bars, delis, an indoor shopping mall, a light rail train, a Regal Cinemas movie theater, performing art center venues, a naval museum, the decommissioned battleship U.S.S. Wisconsin, and mermaids. That’s right. Norfolk is well known for its 130 mermaid statues strategically placed throughout the city; 25 of them in the downtown Norfolk area.

We negotiated a fabulous guest room rate of $99 per night plus tax (good for 1-4 people in each room); at those rates, you’ll want to reserve yours as soon as possible. All the meeting rooms are located on the third floor, which also connects to the parking garage and has two balconies facing Main Street. The second floor has a bar, a piano lounge, a dining room, and a quiet lounge for relaxing.

We encourage you to check our website beginning in January for the latest information on ALDAcon 2014, “Inspiration on the Waterfront.” To keep informed, be sure to sign up for ALDA’s eNews blasts if you haven’t already done so. (Go to www.alda.org, select “Resources,” click on “ALDA Publications,” and click on “sign up for eNews today” under “ALDA eNews.”) See you at the waterfront!
Chapter Happenings and GA to SK

By Ann Smith, Curator

Kim Mettache of ALDA-Northwest Indiana reports that she is now a runner! She’s run in three 5Ks so far and has lost “serious” weight. She and her family are planning a southern Caribbean cruise in December. Kim, you’ll be stunning in those resort clothes!

Diana Fanuel of ALDA-NJ/Garden State is having a busy summer and fall. She traveled to Williamsburg, VA in May for the SayWhatClub (SWC) convention. She also accompanied her son Doug, his wife Melissa, and grandson Drake to their condo on Bimini Island in the Bahamas in June. Diana’s other son, Dan, was scheduled to marry Dawn on September 21 making five “D Fanuels” in the family! On October 5, Diana planned to begin a 14-day New England/Canada cruise with another Cedar Crest Village resident.

Terri Singer, a member of both the NW Indiana and Chicago chapters, traveled to Valencia, CA in September to take part in a cochlear implant research study at Advanced Bionics. She tested the new Naida (nah-ee-dah) processor while there and was very favorably impressed.

At the end of the first day of testing, Terri and her traveling companion drove to Palmdale to celebrate a very special birthday. They met up with Georgia, one of the five Dutch attendees at ALDacon 2011 in Indianapolis, and her friend Paschella, who was performing as a belly dancer in Las Vegas. Paschella is the only deaf belly dancer in the Netherlands, and she planned to meet a woman in Las Vegas who is the only deaf belly dancer in the US. Georgia was thrilled to receive Terri’s gift of a print of “Pubs and Cafes in Indianapolis.” Terri also presented each of the Dutch ladies with an eyeglass case from Vera Bradley.

Terri looks forward to seeing Georgia again, along with Bianca and Gerard, whom she also met in Indy, at ALDacon 2013 in Albuquerque. They will be making plans to reunite in March 2014 in Amsterdam at the Congress of the Dutch Association of the Late- and Sudden Deafened in the Netherlands.

Yael Shaner of ALDA-Peach has a video of her family and friends doing a “Harlem Shake.” Yael’s granddaughter’s family was visiting from Germany, and some out-of-town friends were also included. It’s great fun to see them dancing together. As Yael says, it doesn’t matter if you can’t hear the music. You can see the video at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2hc8DdwTLYg&feature=youtube_gdata_player

Margreta von Pein writes that the captioned showing of Julius Caesar that the late Mary Clark made available to attendees at ALDacon 2011 inspired her to get the local Shakespeare theater near her to caption. This year, CalShakes in Orinda, California (an outdoor theater in the San Francisco East Bay hills), captioned each of its productions. Margreta notes, “It turns out that this theater captioning activity is catching. Ann Thomas, the leader of the HLAA Diablo Valley chapter, convinced Berkeley Rep, a legitimate theater in Berkeley, to caption its 2013-14 season, and in San Francisco, three live theaters already caption their shows. The Theatre Development Fund [www.tdf.org] is a good resource for theaters to pay for captioning. I encourage any of you who love live theater but are not attending to contact the theaters in your area and ask for captioning.”

Send your personal news to Ann Smith at fabsmith@att.net. Deadline for the next issue is November 24.
What Is ALDA?

The mission of the Association of Late-Deafened Adults (ALDA) is to support the empowerment of late-deafened people.

Late-deafened adults are people who have lost their hearing in any degree after having acquired spoken language. ALDA members may or may not use hearing aids, may or may not use assistive listening devices, may or may not use cochlear implants, and may or may not use sign language. What ALDA members DO is “whatever works.” This is the philosophy that keeps the doors to ALDA wide open to anyone who is interested.

ALDA is committed to providing a support network and a sense of belonging to late-deafened people, sharing our unique experiences, challenges, and coping strategies; helping one another find practical solutions and psychological relief; and working together with other organizations and service providers for our common good.

ALDA provides networking through local chapters and groups as well as our annual convention (ALDAcon). We offer social activities, advocacy, peer support, up-to-date information on new technology, and guidance for late-deafened adults, their families, and their friends on ways to deal effectively with the difficulties arising from losing our hearing. ALDA is inclusive, never exclusive. Members find themselves part of a family, with emotional and social support, and, above all, acceptance.

Membership in ALDA provides support for outreach: newsletters, brochures, mass mailings, public presentations, and participation in local and national events to spread the word about ALDA to the more than 31 million Americans, and other late-deafened people worldwide, who would benefit from our organization. ALDA also assists chapter leaders and regional directors to expand ALDA through more chapters and groups and increased membership.

You can join ALDA via the form in this issue, or go to www.alda.org or contact ALDA, Inc. at 8038 MacIntosh Lane, Suite 2, Rockford, IL 61107, 815-332-1515 V/TTY. Membership entitles you to receive the quarterly ALDA News, which spotlights personal experiences of late-deafened people, and to attend ALDAcon at the lower member rate.

If you are interested in learning about ALDA in your area or seeing ALDA become active there, please contact your regional director (contact information is at “Contact Us” on the ALDA website).
JOIN THE FAMILY.....JOIN ALDA!

Your membership in the Association of Late-Deafened Adults connections you with ALDAns throughout the world. Don’t miss our informative quarterly newsletter, ALDA News. Check our chapter directory at www.alda.org to find a chapter near you. Our fully accessible annual convention is a must for newcomers and old-timers alike.

To join or renew using credit cards on our secure site, go to www.alda.org. To mail your membership, please complete this form and send with check payable to:

ALDA, Inc., 8038 MacIntosh Lane, Suite 2, Rockford, IL 61107-5336

I'd like to: □ Join ALDA  □ Give a Gift Membership to:

Name ________________________________

Organization: ____________________________

Address ____________________________________________

City ____________________________________________

State: _______ Postal Code: _______ Country: _______

Home Phone: ______________ TTY □  Voice □  Cap Tel □  VP □

Work Phone: ______________ TTY □  Voice □  Cap Tel □  VP □

Fax ____________________________________________

E-mail ____________________________________________

URL/Website Address: ______________________________

ALDA Chapter (Name/None): __________________________

Gender: Male □  Female □

Hearing Loss:
Late-Deafened □  Hard of Hearing □  Deaf □  Hearing □

Newsletter preferred format (select one):
□ Electronic (Email) □ Paper (U.S. Mail)

□ General Member, Age 61 or under……$30.00
□ Senior Member, Age 62 or over……$25.00
□ Veterans Membership $25.00…………$25.00
□ Business Membership…………………$50.00
□ Tax-Deductible Donation………………$ ______

□ New  □ Renewal

If paying by check or money order, payment must be in U.S. funds and drawn on a U.S. bank. If paying by credit card, complete the section below or Renew online by going to:


For Credit Card Payment by Mail:
□ MasterCard  □ Visa

Amount ____________________________

Account # ____________________________

Expiration Date _________________________

Signature ____________________________________________

(For Credit Authorization)

If paying by check, please mail this form to:

ALDA, Inc.
8038 MacIntosh Lane, Suite 2
Rockford, IL 61107
Make a Difference! Become a Lifetime Member!

**Why a Lifetime Member?**  
A. ALDA and the work it does to support the empowerment of deafened people means a lot to me; I want to support ALDA financially  
B. I don't have to worry about forgetting to renew my dues  
C. I plan to live to be at least 130 years old; think what a bargain Lifetime Membership will be!  

*Ann Smith, Lifetime Member*

**Lifetime Memberships** may be tax deductible and can be paid in three annual installments by check or credit card.  

**Lifetime Membership Tier**  
- **Bronze** $500 - $1,499: receive a personal letter from the President, bronze plaque  
- **Silver** $1,500 - $2,999: receive a personal letter from the President, silver plaque and priority seating at future ALDAcons  
- **Gold** $3,000+: receive a personal letter from the President, gold plaque, priority seating at future ALDAcons and complimentary registration to a future ALDAcon.

Contact ALDA treasurer:  
treasurer@alda.org  
or visit www.alda.org