I graduated from high school in 1980 (guess that tells you my age, grin) and immediately started college. I was the first of my friends with an apartment, so there was lots of partying, since everyone would gather at my apartment every night. After two semesters of a GPA lower than 1.0, I realized I wanted (needed?) a break. It didn’t help that my chemistry class was at 8 a.m.!

During that break, I had to deal with my neurofibromatosis type 2 (NF2) issues. I had two tumors that needed to be removed. My doctor, Dr. William House, decided we should go for the one on the right side because it was slightly bigger than the one on the left. They did the surgery at House Ear Institute in Los Angeles in March of 1982, and I got back the function of most of my facial nerve and some of my hearing. We waited a year for me to recover, then did the left side in 1983.

The left side was much more complicated. My facial nerve was damaged, my hearing nerve never recovered, and I am completely deaf on that side. Hearing aids don’t help, and because of the auditory nerve damage, I am not eligible for a cochlear implant (CI). When I had the second surgery in April of 1983, I had no idea what lay ahead, and I put complete faith in my doctors. Remember, before these surgeries, I did not know anyone with hearing loss or even what that meant.

It took me several months to recover, and I could not drive until seven months after this surgery because I would become very dizzy when attempting to make any turns while driving. During this time, I started thinking of going back to school. After high school, I had gone to college because it was expected of me, but I didn’t really want to be there. Now, I had a DESIRE to go. So in the fall of 1983, I started back at the local community college.

I didn’t know anything about hearing loss or hearing aids when I started school again, and I was also in denial about my hearing loss. So I suffered along, sitting near the front to hear better (little did I know that I was also lipreading). I took the general education classes required, and near the end of my second year, I found my calling. I can remember the teacher of my Psychology 101 class as clear as day. He was in his late 40s and had long hair and really made each class interesting. I realized I loved learning how the mind works and at the end of that semester, I declared my major: psychology.

After about two years of classes and with the encouragement of my sister (who also had a hearing loss from NF2, but that’s another story), I decided to check into getting hearing aids. I contacted the local Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) counselor (who had also helped my sister) and asked about hearing aids. She sent me for tests by a local audiologist who was a former marriage and family therapist (MFT). I found out that I had learned lipreading because of my hearing loss, and I finally also had an audiogram showing what I could and could NOT hear. I got my first pair of hearing aids in late 1985…over two years since my last surgery.

I should mention that I said “aids” because I had BiCROS aids. I was completely deaf in the left ear but wore a hearing aid on that ear that took all the sounds it received and sent them over to the right hearing aid. This was done wirelessly (way cool!) and helped me if sound or speech was on my left side, where I could not normally hear it. But it also made for a lot of snapping my head from side to side while trying
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Hello, everyone!

Our theme for this issue is “Education and Hearing Loss,” and you will find some great articles from writers describing their educational experiences as late-deafened adults. Many of the stories hit home for me as I recalled my own days as a late-deafened student in high school and college, and I hope these accounts touch you in some way as well. And of course, we also have articles and columns on other topics related to hearing loss.

Our cover story, “A College Student’s Experience” by Ken Arcia, provides a personal look at his educational journey and the various accommodations he received. Next, we have a very informative article, “The Battle for Captioned Movies,” in which John Waldo explains the trials and triumphs in the fight to secure captioning in movie theatres. And in “Hearing Loss in School and Afterwards,” Denise Dailey speaks openly about the many difficulties she encountered.

In “Communication Access for the Classroom,” our editor-in-chief, Nancy Kingsley, gives a great explanation of the various communication options available to today’s deafened students, and Robin Titterington enlightens us about her pre-ADA experience of having to choose between access for deafness or wheelchairs in “Accommodations in College: I Used What I Could.”

Karen Krull, a longtime ALDAn and the new “One of Us” curator, introduces us to a wonderful new member of ALDAn, Jessica Congdon. And ALDA’s own Harriet Frankel will once again make you smile as she writes in “Chatting with Harriet” about the undesirable effects of faking an understanding of what someone has said.

Lynn Osborne’s inspiring story of determination, “Find Another Path,” explains how she successfully faced the challenges of returning to school after losing her hearing. Jennifer Beilis tells us about her experiences in overcoming obstacles in the classroom, not only as a student but also as an instructor, and Michele Bornert’s “Late-Deafened Life” column explores the long road toward becoming an interpreter.

You will also find our other regular columns, as well at ALDAcon 2010 registration information. I hope you will consider attending the ‘con this year, as it is such a positive experience that can change your life.

If you have any comments about our articles or suggestions for future themes, contact me at EileenA2@aol.com. We value your feedback and want to provide you with the stories and topics that are of interest to you.

ALDA best,
Eileen

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Nancy Here

By Nancy Kingsley

I was educated before the passage of legislation protecting the rights of people with disabilities and thus had to cope without any accommodations. My progressive hearing loss had started in early childhood, but I was able to attend regular public schools by sitting in front so I could best hear and speechread the teacher. Since I couldn’t understand group discussions, I didn’t participate in school clubs and just had one best friend, but educationally, I didn’t have any significant problems.

College, however, presented me with a major new difficulty—the need to take notes, which was impossible to do while speechreading. Today, students with hearing loss can have the college provide notetakers, but I had to make my own arrangements by asking people in each of my classes to let me copy their notes. Since many students wrote notes that were useful only to themselves, it often took me several tries to find a suitable notetaker, and in the meantime, I missed whatever was being said in that class. Needless to say, finding notetakers for every course each semester was a very stressful experience.

Another major problem (which can still be a hurdle for today’s students) was the college’s foreign language requirement. I was unable to participate in conversational French and asked the dean for an exemption so I could drop the course. She conferred with my French professor, who wisely and sensitively decided to excuse me from attending class and graded me only on my papers and written tests. In contrast, my professor for speech (another required course), who had a Ph.D. in speech and language pathology and should have known that hearing loss can affect a person’s ability to reproduce sounds, told me that the only reason she wasn’t flunking me was because she didn’t think I would benefit from repeating the course.

During my freshman year, students were seated together at tables for lunch and dinner, which were served by student waitresses. Since I couldn’t understand the table conversations, I started skipping those meals (which my parents had already paid for) and buying sandwiches at the student center instead. Fortunately for me, the next year the college opened a new dining room with an informal cafeteria style of dining.

In 1998, I obtained a cochlear implant, which enabled me to benefit from assistive listening devices. A few years ago, I decided to take several short non-credit adult education classes at a local community college and asked the volunteer instructors to wear my portable FM transmitter. All were cooperative except one, who seemed to have a hang-up about the device and refused to wear it (ironically, her field was psychology). I informed the college that the instructor’s refusal to accommodate me was against the law, and they said they wouldn’t have her teach future courses for the program. I wish this legal protection had been in place when I was earning my degree, but it’s gratifying that it’s available for today’s students.

Peer Mentoring Program at Gallaudet University

☞ As an individual with hearing loss have you ever struggled with your hearing loss or having your needs met?
☞ Do you repeatedly meet individuals who are struggling to cope with their hearing loss just as you did (or still do)?
☞ Are you active in the hearing loss community and interested in improving the quality of life of others?

If you answered yes to these questions then you may be a good fit for the peer mentoring program at Gallaudet University; a two-year online certificate program designed to help train deaf, hard of hearing, and late-deafened adults in meeting the diverse needs of individuals with hearing loss. Please visit peers4access.org to learn more about this unique program or email us at info@peers4access.org.
President's Message

By Linda Drattell

Many of you have volunteered to help with ALDAcon and to work on our committees. Martha Mattox-Baker, our volunteer coordinator, will be assisting people to find ways to help ALDA—which means ways to help ourselves and our fellow members! It is a fun process, and you yourself determine how much time you are able to contribute. Even an hour or two a month is a great help to all of us.

MOU with RIT/NTID

As a result of prior years’ efforts, we now have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Rochester Institute of Technology/National Technical Institute for the Deaf to work with military veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Many soldiers come home with hearing loss, and need the support of both organizations. RIT/NTID will offer a program for veterans to pursue educational, employment, and career opportunities, and ALDA will provide the necessary emotional and social support. Cynthia Amerman, our president-elect, will be the ALDA liaison with RIT/NTID in promoting this program.

ALDA's Website and Advocacy

Please be sure to frequently check the ALDA website, www.alda.org, as information is updated regularly. The Advocacy page reflects current national projects, but we would also like to include what each of you is doing—whether it is letter writing to advocate for more captioning, joining the board of an agency or government organization to promote the interests of people with hearing loss, or calling your congressman regarding an issue related to hearing loss; all advocacy activities are important and should be shared with the rest of our membership. Those of you who participate in advocacy are helping the rest of us not only through your advocacy efforts but also by serving as role models and sharing what you find has worked to ensure communication access and inclusion. Please email me at president@alda.org regarding any advocacy efforts you have made, no matter how large or small, and attach a picture of yourself as well. I hope to include these stories in a report at ALDAcon this year. We had such a report two years ago, and I would like to continue this practice.

ALDA's Vision Statement

We have modified ALDA's vision statement to reflect a more future-oriented perspective. The next step is to promote a strategic plan that will include a tighter relationship between ALDA and the membership it serves, which in turn will enable ALDA to provide more services.

Membership Dues

As of June 1, 2010, ALDA Inc. membership dues will increase by $5 for each membership category. (There will be a discounted membership category for military veterans.) Business memberships will increase to $100 per year but will include the added benefit of one month of free advertising on our website. ALDAcon registration will be higher this year as well. So if you haven’t joined or renewed yet, this is the time to do so before the rate increase June 1st!

Our Personal Influence on the World

Each of us influences the world around us. Sometimes we don’t even know the extent of the power of our actions. I recently searched for the ALDA name on the World Wide Web and found that, in addition to the many links to ALDA on other websites, an Asian international organization on disabilities is referring people to our newest ALDA group, ALDA-Asia Pacific! See www.dpiap.org/links/index.php?orgtypeid=04&orgtype=International+On-governmental+Organization. Gallaudet’s website also refers to ALDA-Asia Pacific at http://aaweb.gallaudet.edu/CPSO_Home/Center_for_International_Programs_and_Services_(CIPS)/World_Deaf_Information_Resource_Project/Deaf_Orgs/International_Deaf_and_Disability_Organizations.html. A fellow ALDA, LaRonda Zupp, who writes her own vlog/blog, “Ear of My Heart” at www.earofmyheart.com, noticed that her name was associated with a research paper at NTID. It was very empowering for her to know that her own journey through hearing loss had made an impact on someone else on the other side of the country. For the details and why she believes that deaf people should continue blogging or vlogging, go to http://www.earofmyheart.com/wordpress/2010/01/08/why-continue-blogging-or-vlogging.
The Battle for Captioned Movies

By John Waldo

America’s favorite “night out” is a night at the movies. In 2007, an estimated 170 million Americans bought 1.5 billion movie tickets. After a drop-off in 2008, attendance roared back to record levels in 2009, as we responded to the recession by looking for affordable forms of entertainment.

For all its popularity, though, “movie night” remains inaccessible for a large and growing number of people—those of us with hearing losses such that we can’t understand the soundtracks, even with the volume-enhancing assistive listening devices that the theaters provide. We wait until the movies are available on DVD with captions, and watch them at home. But we miss out on the social experience, which only furthers the isolation we all sense. [Editor’s note: We also miss out on the opportunity to see movies when everyone else does and participate in the resulting discussions.]

Technically, movie accessibility is easy—the movie dialogue can be reduced to writing and displayed as captions in synch with the films. The fact is that the vast majority of mainstream, wide-release films are captioned. The captions come on a CD-ROM that the studios furnish free to theaters. What the theaters must do is purchase, install, and operate the equipment needed to display the captions.

Display is done in two ways. One method is open captioning, in which the captions come from a separate projector and are superimposed on the movie print, much like subtitles for a foreign-language movie. Open captions are seen by the entire audience. The other method is closed captioning, in which the captions are seen only by those patrons who request the necessary viewing equipment. The main form of closed captioning currently in use is Rear Windows Captioning, in which the captions are displayed in mirror image on a data board at the back of the theater, and can be seen on a reflecting panel supported by a flexible arm that is inserted into the cup-holder. [Editor’s note: A second form of closed captioning provides the captions on hand-held devices similar to PDAs; users must constantly look between the device and the screen.]

So the problem isn’t that captioning can’t be done. It is done. The problem is that the theaters don’t want to pay the cost of installing the equipment for closed captioning, they don’t want the hassle of training staff to use the equipment, and they believe that open captions turn off the rest of the audience.

Congress tried to address problems like this by passing the Americans with Disabilities Act. But after 20 years, the ADA has had only limited effect on movie theaters, and accessible movies remain few and far between.

At first blush, this seems odd. Businesses covered by the ADA—and movie theaters are covered—are required to furnish “auxiliary aids and services” when those are needed to provide patrons with “full enjoyment” of the business’s offerings. “Auxiliary aids and services” are defined by example, but include interpreters and captioning. So it would surely seem that movie theaters would have to show either open-captioned or closed-captioned movies.

But when lawyers and judges get involved, what seems to be simple can become rather complicated. And despite that seemingly clear language, the movie theaters have been surprisingly successful in court at avoiding any broad captioning requirement.

Part of the problem is that when it passed the ADA, the House of Representatives attached a report stating that the law “does not require movie theaters to show open-captioned movies.” The theaters have seized on that statement of “legislative intent” to argue that the seemingly plain language of the ADA must actually mean something else.

Also, the ADA does not require any business to offer accommodations if doing so would constitute an “undue burden.” Unfortunately, neither the law itself, the federal agencies charged with enforcing the law, nor any courts have articulated a clear standard for determining when a burden becomes “undue.” And that lack of clarity has also helped the theaters.

The first case trying to impose a broad captioning requirement under the ADA was brought in Oregon in 2002. In that case, the attorney for a number of deaf individuals asked the court to require that all theaters in the country be equipped to show closed-captioned movies. The theaters raised a number of arguments, one of which was that the cost of equipping every theater in America to show captioned films would exceed the net worth of all of the theater companies. Such an expense, the court said, would constitute an “undue burden” as a matter of law, so it dismissed the case.

Two years later, a federal court in Texas came to the same conclusion. Again, the complaining parties asked the court to order that every theater

continued on page 20
Hearing Loss in School and Afterwards

By Denise Dailey

My hearing loss has been gradual over the years due to my having had scarlet fever as a baby. It was first recognized when I was 13 years old, due to a mandatory hearing test I was given in school (44 years ago). My parents took me to a doctor and I was given more tests, then hearing aids. I rebelled against everything. Unfortunately back at that time there wasn’t too much available when it came to hearing loss. (Even if there was, I doubt I would have done any searching.) My folks took me to an acupuncture doctor but decided it wouldn’t help and of course, I was rebelling about it. The hearing aids sat in my dresser drawer for years. I felt like a freak and got into mischief all the time. After I got the hearing aids, whenever there were mandatory hearing tests at school, I just didn’t bother to go that day as I hated the feeling of another test that would reveal my disability.

I always sat in the back of the class, and if the teacher insisted I sit up front I just didn’t go to that class. I did make it through high school with a C average and graduated in 1971. It’s amazing that I graduated, as I was drinking and smoking pot and also working. The partying took up the better part of my time, though.

I had been living in California during all of this, and then I moved to Washington State by myself 37 years ago. I was still somewhat rebellious but growing more mature. I wasn’t into the drinking and pot smoking as much. I decided to put myself through college and study psychology. The instructor convinced me to wear my hearing aids, and things definitely turned around for me at that time. The instructor also had us do volunteer work where there were disabled people and I chose the Rainier School in Buckley. [Editor’s note: this is a residential facility for adults with developmental disabilities.] It was such an eye opener to me that there were/are so many people much worse off than I was/am, so that also helped in my “recovery.”

I met my husband around this time, got married, and began having children, so I dropped out of school to help pay bills and take care of the children. When my husband and I divorced a few years later, it wasn’t easy for me to raise the little ones alone with my hearing still continuing to fail, but I did the best I knew how. I had no one to help me as my family was 1200 miles away and my ex-husband’s family just didn’t seem to care about the children.

We have been having issues recently with my son (24), and at times I blame myself for how he was raised and my not being able to hear so much of his life and what was bothering him, but I remind myself that I did all I could being mom dad, grandparents, and friend to him, so I can’t put all the blame on myself. He is rebellious towards me for not being able to hear well and asking him to repeat what was said. I now tell everyone who tells me “it’s not important” to repeat it anyhow and let me decide if it was important, as telling a hard of hearing/deaf person that something wasn’t important is one of the rudest things a person can say to us.

I am still learning so much about hearing loss and am thankful for the people I have been meeting through the Internet.

Denise likes to go to the ocean, camp, visit the casino, and stay home to watch TV. She can be contacted at sweetestma@aol.com.
ALDA Needs Your Help for Nominations

By Kathy Schlueter

As past president, I am responsible for the Nominations Committee and annual election. This committee must include at least two other people, one of whom must be a board member, and one a representative of a chapter. Additional members are desired to increase the geographic and other diversity of the committee and ensure gender balance. The committee must start to seek nominations by April 15 and continue to do so until the date of placement of names on the election ballot. If you would like to be a member of this important committee, please contact me at past.president@alda.org.

Nominations for 2011 will be solicited for the following positions:

President-elect - This is the first position of a three-year commitment. The president-elect assists the president in the discharge of all functions of that office. In the event of the president’s extended absence or disability, the president-elect performs the duties of that office the first year. The following year the person elected will serve as president, followed by one year as past president.

Secretary - The term of office for this position is two years. The secretary keeps minutes of all meetings of the Board of Directors, the Executive Committee, and the annual general business meeting. The secretary ensures that all notices are given in accordance with ALDA, Inc. bylaws, keeps the organization’s non-financial records, and maintains a list of the mailing addresses of ALDA members. The secretary also maintains files of all official ALDA correspondence, presents reports to the general membership as directed by the board, serves on committees as assigned and, in general, performs all duties incidental to the office of secretary.

Regional directors 3 and 4 – Regional directors serve two-year terms. Each director represents and must be a resident of the region for which he/she is being nominated and is elected by members residing within that region. The director is responsible for communications addressed to ALDA by individuals who reside in and seek information and local resources within that region. The director also provides support and information to groups, chapters, individuals, families, and professionals within the region; establishes linkages and networks; and represents regional interests and concerns at board meetings.

Region 3 - Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Mexico, Central America, Africa, South America.


A member wishing to be nominated or to nominate another member must complete and submit a nomination form, indicating the name of the nominee and the office for which s/he is being nominated. If you would like a nomination form, please contact me at past.president@alda.org. The deadline for submitting nominations is November 1.
Communication Access for the Classroom

By Nancy Kingsley

[Editor’s note: this is slightly revised from an article published in the ALDA News, Fall 2000.]

ALDAns who are thinking of going back to school are fortunate in being able to choose from a variety of communication possibilities. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 require colleges and other educational institutions to provide communication access for all services, programs, and activities, including continuing education classes. (This is true even if the cost of providing the access exceeds the tuition for the class.)

If the educational institution is private, it can decide which form of access to provide, as long as the result is effective communication. If it’s public, primary consideration must be given to the student’s preference.

Students who encounter difficulties in obtaining appropriate access can receive assistance from the Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights (OCR). To find the location of your local OCR enforcement office, call OCR’s national headquarters toll-free at 800-421-3481 or 877-521-2172 TTY or contact OCR by fax at 202-245-6840 or email at OCR@ed.gov. Instructions for filing a complaint are given at http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/howto.html.

Here’s a rundown of available communication options.

Interpreting. Students with good receptive signing skills can request a sign language interpreter. If you know how to sign but are not well versed in the grammar of American Sign Language (ASL), you can ask for English-based interpreting (transliteration), which uses ASL signs in English word order. If you have good speechreading ability, you might want to use an oral interpreter. Sign language interpreters may have to do a considerable amount of fingerspelling for highly technical classes, which can be difficult for both the interpreter and the student.

Cued speech. Some students use this method, which the National Cued Speech Association describes as “a visual mode of communication that uses handshapes and placements in combination with the mouth movements of speech to make the phonemes of a spoken language look different from each other.”

CART (communication access realtime translation): This form of access is provided by a court reporter who uses a special shorthand machine and a computer to display words on a computer monitor, TV, or screen as they are spoken. A skilled CART reporter can produce about 200 words per minute, making it possible to display virtually every spoken word. Not all court reporters can perform with the degree of accuracy and speed necessary for providing CART, so it’s essential to be sure that the chosen reporter has this capability. The reporter needs to be given a list of names and special terminology in advance in order to enter shorthand codes for these terms in the computer dictionary. For study purposes, it may be possible to arrange for the reporter to provide a diskette with the unedited transcript (typically consisting of about 20 pages for a one-hour class) at the end of each class. Some CART provides offer remote CART, making it unnecessary for the reporter to be present in the classroom.

C-Print. This is a computer-aided speech-to-print transcription system that was developed by the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID) in Rochester, New York. A typist (C-Print captionist) uses an abbreviation system and special software to type a condensed version of the classroom lecture into a laptop computer. The typed information is simultaneously displayed on a second laptop computer or TV screen, and the printed text (about seven pages for a one-hour class) is available immediately after the class. C-Print is less expensive than CART, and some students find the shorter C-Print transcript easier to use as notes than the lengthier, nearly verbatim CART transcript. (TypeWell is another transcription system that is similar to C-Print.)

Assistive listening devices. Hard of hearing students and ALDAns with cochlear implants may find an assistive listening device helpful. Because of its portability, FM is most commonly used in classroom settings. The teacher wears a pager-like FM transmitter attached to a small lapel microphone, and the student wears a similarly sized FM receiver that is tuned to the same channel. Because FM signals pass through walls, students using FM in other classes being held at the same time need to use different channels. Hard of hearing students can listen through headphones; if they have a hearing aid or cochlear implant with a telecoil, instead of using headphones, they can turn on their telecoil and plug a neckloop into the FM receiver jack. Students can activate both the telecoil and microphone in their hearing aid or cochlear implant so they can hear environmental sounds, including their own voice and the voices of other students while using the FM system (some FM receivers have a comparable environmental microphone feature).

In lecture halls or auditoriums where speakers use a microphone, either an FM,
Accommodations in College: I Used What I Could

By Robin Titterington

I became deafened the summer after my freshman year at St. Andrews Presbyterian College (SAPC), a rural Christian college. I was fortunate that it was small and the professors spent a good deal of time in their offices, because they saw a lot of me! I think it was a positive for me that I had already been there for a year and knew some of the professors. I did have notetakers, who in those days made carbon copies (with that messy paper in between!). Hey, it was a long time ago!

In the fall semester of my junior year, my advisor suggested I take a semester off and go to Gallaudet. I had said several times that my friends seemed to have changed, and he would patiently ask, “How much of this is related to your hearing loss?” I would say, “No, no, it’s not that.” I knew my hearing would not get better and if I answered yes, I was afraid this meant I would always be so unhappy. At any rate, I did NOT want to go to Gallaudet—that was a college for deaf people and I sure wasn’t deaf (yes, I am!). But to Gallaudet I went, and it was a wonderful experience. I made so many great friends and started learning sign language. One night, we were talking/signing and laughing in the Rathskeller, and I had an epiphany: I had not changed; only my method of communication had.

At the end of the semester, I had a decision to make: Gallaudet was great for my hearing loss but definitely not great for someone who uses a wheelchair. I very much missed the physical freedom I had had at SAPC, which had been designed with wheelchair-users in mind. I kind of had to “pick my disability.” So I returned to SAPC for my senior year, to the campus and curriculum that I enjoyed and to the friends that—although we often struggled—I loved and still do.

I again had only notetakers at SAPC (CART wasn’t in use yet, and assistive listening devices wouldn’t have worked for me), but I graduated with honors. And then it was on to New York University for graduate school. I can’t even tell you what an adjustment THAT was, that’s a whole other article! They gave me interpreters for class and my first thought was, “oh no, they think I will understand them!” But surprisingly enough, soon I could follow the interpreters, and I graduated in three semesters.

With the accommodations now available and required by law, I would not go through a class without them. That said, I probably could manage if I had to—I did it once, so I could do it again if I wanted something badly enough.

Robin has lived in Georgia for 30 years and is a past president of ALDA. She can be contacted at furriesmom@comcast.net.

ALDA Volunteers Wanted—No Experience Necessary!

By Donna Maderer

• Would you like to meet new and interesting people and develop lifelong new friendships while contributing to ALDA’s growth and strength? Then consider becoming an ALDA volunteer!
• Volunteers are the lifeblood of ALDA. Without the support of its dedicated volunteers, ALDA could not exist. The ALDA Board of Directors, ALDA ad hoc committees, and ALDAcon planning committees are all staffed by unpaid volunteers.
• Are you a “people person?” Are you just naturally comfortable with folks the first time you meet someone? You could help with membership outreach, fund raising efforts, advertising, or ALDAcon sponsorship. There’s an ALDA or ALDAcon committee that’s a perfect match for you!
• Do you have an eye for artistic design? Do you enjoy detail-oriented work? Then consider becoming a part of ALDA’s website development team.
• Do you have strong feelings about the availability of captioning and CART for people with hearing loss? Do you enjoy a challenge? Don’t like accepting “no” for an answer? Are you willing to work for improved communication access? ALDA’s Advocacy Committee NEEDS YOU!
• Do you have good written English skills? Assistant editors are needed for the ongoing Proceedings of ALDAcon project. Proceedings editors condense ALDAcon workshop CART transcripts into easily readable format for archiving on the ALDA, Inc. website.
• Afraid you don’t have any special skills or abilities that ALDA needs? Don’t let that stop you! Everyone can make a valuable contribution to ALDA as a volunteer. We will find the right place for you because WE NEED YOU!

ALDA VOLUNTEERS can be Voices for Outreach; Listeners who are Understanding and Nurturing; Teachers who are Educating; and Everyone who is Resourceful in Service to the ALDA membership. Contact ALDA Volunteer Coordinator Martha Mattox-Baker at volunteers@alda.org and we’ll match you to a volunteer position.
Introducing Karen Krull, Curator

This is Karen’s first column as our new “One of Us” curator, and we would like to introduce her to our readers. Karen says she lives in “beautiful downtown Burbank (Illinois, unfortunately, not California),” a suburb near Chicago’s Midway Airport. At age four, she developed a severe hearing loss (cause unknown), which progressively worsened until she was about 10. She attended regular schools and learned to read lips. At 21, Karen lost the hearing in her right ear but could still hear on the phone and “get by.” Soon after she turned 40, she lost her remaining hearing suddenly, and seven years after that, she received a CI.

Karen has been a grateful ALDA member since ALDA was about two years old. She is a past president of ALDA-Chicago, served as planning chair for the 1998 ALDAcon in Chicago, and chaired registration for the 2008 ALDAcon. She also served on the ALDA-Chicago board of directors for many years and remains active as the chapter’s membership chair. She has been happily married for 42 years to her high school sweetheart and is a proud mother of two and grandmother of four. A retired office manager, she currently writes articles and stories for children’s magazines and volunteers as a tax preparer for the Chicago Hearing Society’s VITA program. She loves meeting new people from different backgrounds and thinks that conducting the “One of Us” interviews is an excellent way to do this.

One of Us

I first met Jessica and her grandmother when they attended ALDAcon 2008 in Chicago as newcomers. Jessica grew up hard of hearing, became late-deafened two years ago, and is learning sign language. She’s 31, happily married, and has a 5-year-old daughter, Hailey. Jessica has worked in the childcare field for 12 years, currently at Community Action, Inc., and earned her childcare diploma from Blackhawk Technical College. She is considering switching careers to work with deaf and hard of hearing children. Coming from a large family, Jessica is blessed with their understanding and support, and she’s very family oriented. Read on to find out why Jessica is “one of us.”

Name: Jessica Lynn Congdon
Where were you born? Janesville, Wisconsin
Where is your current residence? Janesville, Wisconsin
What is the cause of your deafness? Craniodiaphyseal dysplasia—it’s a bone disease
Age/year you became deafened? 29/2007
Marital status? Married to a wonderful husband, Michael
What is your present job? Childcare teacher/curriculum coordinator
What is the worst job you ever had? Subway
Movies you want to see again? Proposal, Pretty Women, The Net, and Save the Last Dance
Books you tell others to read? Twilight series and books by Wanda Brunstetter, Cindy Woodsmall, and Karen Kingsbury
I stay home to watch: Bones, Sue Thomas FB Eye, Reba, Survivor, and Nick Jr. (with my daughter Hailey)
Favorite pig-out food: Anything chocolate
Hobbies: Scrapbooking
If I had more free time, I’d: be more involved with our church and volunteer more at my daughter’s daycare/school. I would educate people about hearing loss and tell them about ALDA.
The hardest thing about becoming deafened is: not hearing my daughter talk; she is such a storyteller and loves to entertain people. I am blessed to still be able to watch her.
I began accepting my deafness: I am still in the process. I struggle with depression due to my loss of my hearing.

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The worst thing about deafness is: feeling so alone even when you have a wonderful support system.

The best thing about deafness is: in a noisy restaurant, I can enjoy my meal in quietness.

How did you learn about ALDA? I was taking classes in Rockford, Illinois at the Center for Sight and Hearing. My speechreading teacher (Heidi Adams) told me about ALDA-Rock.

In what ways has ALDA enhanced your life? ALDA has really been a blessing to me, giving me the opportunity to meet others who are going through, or who have gone through, what I am going through. It has also helped me to be able to educate others about deafness and becoming late-deafened.

When I am depressed, I: have a hard time doing my daily activities. Having a family and job, I try to do what needs to be done. When at home, I tend to just sit and cry.

My most irrational fear is: being alone

If I could hear again, the first thing I would do is: sit and have a conversation with my daughter and just listen to her.

The thing I like best about myself: I really like the fact that I can listen to others when they are having problems.

Nobody knows: I hate having my picture taken.

What I can’t stand is: people telling me how I should feel.

Favorite memory: I have two, the day of my wedding (I truly felt like a princess) and the birth of our daughter.

Favorite saying: Never bend your head. Hold it high. Look the world straight in the eye. (Helen Keller).

The bottom line is: you never stop learning.

Chapter Happenings

By Ann Smith, Curator

Francine Stieglitz reports that ALDA-Boston has had a delicious start to 2010. Approximately 20 people from all over Massachusetts and from Rhode Island met for brunch at the Westford Regency on January 10th. February’s event was a captioned performance of “Twelfth Night” at the Trinity Repertory Theater in Providence, R.I., followed by a dinner prepared by one of the members. In March, 10 lucky members planned to enjoy a tour of Tomb A, a current exhibit at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, with assistive listening devices provided. The annual meeting and election of new officers will be in April, and the chapter will celebrate its 21st birthday in May. Ellen Bailey, the webmaster, donates her time to keep ALDA-Boston’s website updated; please check it out at www.aldaboston.org.

Ann Smith reports that ALDA-Peach enjoyed the chapter’s annual holiday luncheon in December. The chapter arranged a speaker and CART for the January meeting, but the meeting was cancelled because of unusually bad (for Georgia) winter weather. The speaker was rescheduled for February, but a second snowstorm caused a postponement until the next week. Hopefully, the chapter will finally get to hear the speaker later this spring. ALDA-Peach published a beautiful commemorative issue of its newsletter, Peach Fuzz, for the chapter’s 10th anniversary in November, and some issues are still available for $5 plus $1 shipping ($6 total). Checks payable to ALDA-Peach can be sent to ALDA-Peach, PO Box 1813, Decatur, GA  30031-1813.

Marlene Thometz reports that ALDA-Chicago elected new officers for 2010. They are Marsha Kopp, president; Beth Botts, vice president; Gary Price, secretary; and John Garvey, treasurer. Mary Clark gave a wonderful holiday party for the chapter in December, with a photograph taken of the group on the stairs in Mary’s home. In January, 18 people attended an afternoon of bowling, followed by a pizza party.

Send news about your chapter to Ann at fabsmith@att.net by May 18.
Chatting With Harriet: Faking Can Be Dangerous

By Harriet Frankel

I don’t know about you, but as deaf or hard of hearing people, most of us do a lot of faking. It’s easier in a casual situation just to nod your head or smile. For instance, you’re at a gathering such as a family party, and there are some people you don’t know. Someone introduces you, and you don’t tell them you are deaf. You answer, “I’m glad to meet you” or some such pleasantrity, smile, and move on to meet someone else. This can go on for a whole evening without your really knowing exactly what has been said or anyone’s name, and since you can talk in a normal voice, they have no idea that you are deaf.

This is fine in many social situations. It also works for grocery shopping—the cashier tells you what you owe or it’s posted on a display where you can see it and pay your bill. The same goes for the drugstore, the cleaners, and other situations where you can anticipate what people are saying, but there are other times when you really need to know exactly what has been said.

Today I went to my bank because I was puzzled about my statement. I couldn’t understand why my balance was so different from what I thought it should be, and I didn’t know what another smaller figure was for. Did I owe money that hadn’t been paid?

Fortunately, I had made friends with a staff member named Nicky, and whenever I had a problem I always talked with her. She knows that I’m deaf, and I can pretty much read her lips. She told me that the large amount was my savings account and the small one was what I owed on my Visa checking account.

“My saving account!” I exclaimed. “I don’t have a savings account with this bank. Why didn’t they take what I owed from my checking account?”

“Yes, you do have a savings account,” she replied. “Remember, I suggested that you open one the last time we talked, and you agreed.” Then I realized what had happened. I had been faking and probably smiled and nodded my head without really knowing what she had said.

This experience raised a big red flag about the real trouble I could get into by faking. I swear to be much more careful where it could have serious consequences such as in banks, lawyers’ offices, and the like. But I’ll probably continue faking in social situations. Who knows what the consequences of that could be? It might even be fun.

Harriet welcomes chats at harrietfrankel@hotmail.com.

Obituary: Ev Chard

Condensed from the Granite Falls, Minnesota Advocate Tribune, January 07, 2010

Everett Chard, 69, died December 31, 2009, at the Granite Falls Manor in Granite Falls, Minnesota. He was born on May 8, 1940 in Grayslake, Illinois. He attended Grayslake High School, where he was one of three valedictorians in his class. He then obtained his undergraduate degree from Miami University, Ohio, and his PhD in political science from the University of California, Berkeley. As part of his post-graduate work, Everett spent a year in Kenya and traveled in Europe. He taught at Western Washington State University in the ’70s before moving to Minneapolis. Everett received an MBA from the University of Minnesota and worked as a computer programmer for Honeywell and the Minnesota State Legislature Library. From 2001-2003 he served in the Peace Corps in Ghana, where he worked with the Ghana Eastern Regional Association of the Deaf.

Everett was active in several organizations for the deaf, started the Minnesota chapter of ALDA (Association of Late Deafened Adults), and was a staunch advocate for the rights of the disabled. He enjoyed gardening, reading, running, and hiking and ran in the New York City Marathon, among others. He is survived by two sisters, two brothers, and ten nieces and nephews.
Entering college can be overwhelming for young adults with fresh minds and enthusiasm. However, returning as an adult brings an entirely different perspective. The mind is not quite as fresh and while you may be enthusiastic, your energy level diminishes because you now have responsibilities.

After beginning college right out of high school 25 years ago, I got married and began a family. Every opportunity I had I enrolled in courses at Brookdale Community College in Monmouth County, New Jersey until I was diagnosed with Meniere’s disease in the fall of 2005.

One morning I woke up and my body felt like it was on a boat, but my left ear chose a different mode of transportation because I kept feeling the urge to “pop” it as if I were on a plane. I heard bells, whistles, carousel music, you name it. Every emotion possible hit me. One concern stood above all others; what if it happens in my right ear? Well, it did in February 2007! At that point I was devastated. “Now what am I going to do?” I asked myself.

I researched Meniere’s disease and came across a new term, late-deafened adult. It was hard to believe but I was now part of this group. I went further in my search and found ALDA. None of the many hearing professionals offered me any hope or resources to find ways to live with my new condition, so I contacted ALDA, hoping to be given some direction as to what I could possibly do for a career after hearing loss.

Everything I am trained for requires excellent listening skills. My doctor had recommended that I not return to healthcare because having Meniere’s classifies me as an unreliable worker. Having managed the operations for several assisted living residences, I knew the stress and expectations involved with that field. I felt that it was no longer a feasible option. I am also a licensed real estate salesperson, but initially I had no hearing aids, so communicating was very difficult. I wanted something that would fit my needs better.

When I contacted ALDA, I was made aware of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS). “Contact them,” I was told, “they may be able to assist you with obtaining your hearing aids.” What did I have to lose? Nothing! I filled out the contact form on their website and a case manager contacted me to arrange an appointment. This was a whole new world to me! I had to first accept my deafness and then be willing to accept help. I was always the helper, the strong one, the go-to person when something needed to be done. Now the shoe was on the other foot.

In the meeting, the case manager (through an interpreter) mentioned training and education. She asked if I was aware of the services provided for college courses. I almost leaped out of my seat with excitement. But with two young adult children (one in college and the other preparing to go) and my decreased income, going back to school myself seemed highly unlikely. Besides, how would I hear? By the end of my meeting, I was told they would provide me with hearing aids and tuition.

I picked up my very expensive aids and with anticipation I expected to have normal hearing again. There was a marked improvement, but I still had a great deal of difficulty. I had heard about FM transmitters and other assistive devices that were available, so back on the Internet I went and located an FM system that my hearing aid company manufactured. I contacted DVRS and asked if the FM system would also be covered by their service. Surprisingly, they said yes, with a recommendation from my audiologist. After all was said and done I had my hearing aids and FM system thanks to DVRS and ALDA.

It finally came time to enroll in school. I decided to finish my degree in psychology so that I could become a counselor. Being newly late-deafened, I had no idea about the resources available to me. I was just so grateful to have a way to return to school. I said by any means necessary I will complete the four courses I enrolled in. Once the semester started, I knew it was going to be difficult, more difficult than I expected. The high ceilings, the distance, trying to capture everything that was going on in class, hearing videos, etc.—it was exhausting just trying to keep up.

I went to an ALDA workshop and happened to speak with the CART (realtime captioning) provider. She was the one who told me I could receive assistance in my classes. Who knew? I was amazed.

The following week I arranged to meet with the director of disability services at the college. I was told to have my doctor write a letter stating my diagnosis and the services I needed. I called my ENT to request the letter. After two frustrating weeks without receiving it, I called the office

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Find Another Path (continued)...

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to see if there was a problem. Yes, the doctor needed to know what CART was. Oh my! I had no idea that specialists in hearing wouldn’t know what services are available to the patients they treat!

For several reasons, the meeting with the director of disability services ended up not transpiring until the end of the semester. When we finally met, he explained to me that the school’s small budget only allowed them to offer notetakers, priority seating, and permission to tape classes without restriction. He was very helpful and assured me if I ran into difficulties with my professors that I should have them contact him directly. I completed the semester and even earned my associate’s degree in social science, completing four courses, including ASL.

I posted the news on ALDA-GS chat and learned that I was actually entitled to receive many more services than I had been given. Again, not being one to let things linger, I wrote a letter and faxed it to the college on Christmas Eve, hoping the issue of CART would be addressed quickly so that it would be in place for the start of my next semester. The director contacted me and basically wanted verification from my ENT that CART would enable me to participate better in class. Back onto the ALDA-GS forum I went to share the latest update. Once again, I received very knowledgeable information specifying how yet again I was being asked for information and hindered from services that were rightfully mine. The new semester was right around the corner and I was eager to return with new tools that would help me succeed. Throughout this experience I was cheered on by my fellow ALDAns who said that my success in gaining services would make it easier for the next person with hearing loss to do the same. I truly hope that is true. No one should feel denied an opportunity to improve himself or herself because of a lack of accessibility.

In January 2008 I entered my first course and scouted the room for my CART provider. Actually, she wasn’t hard to spot with her laptop and stenograph machine. After introducing ourselves to one another and giving an explanation to the professor, we were off.

Fran and I clicked pretty much right away, and having her gave me a greater sense of confidence in the classroom. During our first class there was a disturbance in the back of the room and I had no idea what was happening. Fran typed that there was another class entering and told me to turn around. I knew from that moment that she would be my ears. All the little nuances I had missed the previous semester I wouldn’t miss now.

As the end of the semester approached, I knew that I would be graduating from community college and planned to attend the commencement ceremony. I, of course, was concerned that I would miss my name being called along with important speeches, etc. I contacted the disability services director, who in turn contacted our very own Woody Waga (from Veritext, the company that coordinates CART services), and once again arrangements were made for Fran to be with me. I graduated from Brookdale in December 2007 and she was at the commencement with me in May 2008.

As much as I would like to say that everything turned out perfectly, some obstacles could not be overcome. I had a less than considerate professor with a very strong accent teaching my statistics course. Although Fran and I explained how CART worked, she felt that I was asking for special considerations that weren’t afforded to other students and would not slow down her pace so we could keep up. I voiced my concerns about the professor’s attitude to all concerned and received repeated apologies. Had I complained from the beginning, I could have changed instructors without penalty. I chalk that one up to experience—live and learn. Now I know what to do. Fran was a trooper and tortured herself through another stats course to help me succeed. I cannot thank Woody, the disability services director at Brookdale Community College, or Fran enough for their support.

I am currently attending Georgian Court University, and I expect to complete my bachelor’s degree in psychology in May 2011. If all goes well, Fran will be with me there as well. I jokingly told her that by the time I finish, she will be on stage as well receiving an honorary degree. I will start the peer mentoring program at Gallaudet in August 2010.

This year (my first year) living with bilateral Meniere’s disease and hearing loss has been full of ups and downs, but honestly, there have been far more ups than downs. I am so thankful for where I am because it could be so much different. I could have given up and held a continual pity party but thankfully that is not my forte.

My mother taught me through her example that where there is a will there is a way. She attended nursing school and worked while raising seven children. I was two when she graduated.

Whenever I find myself saying “I can’t,” I think of my mother and say to myself, “There is no excuse. Just find a different way to accomplish the goal.” So, I say to others who may have experienced a life-changing event like losing their hearing, “Don’t give up on your dreams. Just find another path.”

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Are you planning to renew your membership in ALDA, Inc.? Why or why not? And if you’re not a member, why aren’t you one?

I’m not a member—I have not investigated. I would like to learn more.

The reason I haven’t joined is that I don’t know anything about how to join. I imagine there may be a website, but I haven’t taken the time to look for it. I don’t know the cost, etc. I have heard of the conference, which would be wonderful to attend, I am sure. If I knew more about it, I would probably join. I love the email list I am on. I am sure I would probably love the ALDA organization.

I simply got carried away with swimming on the beach daily and loving my Hawaiian life—the post office and I are not best friends yet!

I can’t remember when I last renewed my membership. I have yet to receive a renewal notification, so I am not sure if my membership has expired. Who is responsible for the notifying the members? As secretary of ALDA-Boston some years ago, I used a database program with an automatic reminder capability that notified me who was due for renewal the next month, and a reminder letter with a brochure would be sent to them. Nine out of ten members renewed. However, I understand that ALDA, Inc. and some chapters have decided to go “green” to save trees. Perhaps ALDA, Inc. can send out renewal notifications by email to renew via PayPal or snail mail.

Possible reasons [for nonrenewal]:
1. ALDA doesn’t send out membership-renewal notices like it used to.
2. ALDA is a victim of its own success—i.e., former members no longer need it or, perhaps, they grow out of it.
3. Conversely, former members feel that ALDA doesn’t meet their needs and/or doesn’t know what their needs are. (Has a needs assessment ever been done?)

I am new to ALDA here in Atlanta and didn’t know about ya’ll. I’d love to see your publication.

At one time I was a member, but I never renewed because I never saw any benefit to it. At the request of someone in the group, I submitted an article for the ALDA News but never received a copy. What is the benefit of membership? I would probably renew it if I knew what it was.

Well, I’m a lifetime member, so no, I probably won’t be renewing my ALDA membership. One never knows, though; if it’s possible to do so in the afterlife, I will!

Next question: How have professionals in the field of deafness (doctors, audiologists, rehab counselors, etc.) helped or hindered your adjustment to deafness? What changes are needed in services? (Previously asked in the Spring 1994 issue.)

Send your responses to Bill and Robin at aldanonymous@gmail.com by May 21.
Transition from Hard of Hearing Student to Teacher

By Jennifer Beilis

I have a hearing loss due to Meniere’s disease, and I obtained my A.A. in social sciences at Brookdale Community College in New Jersey. The classes were very fast-paced and challenging for me. I wore hearing aids to hear in class and sometimes when I was out with friends, but I was still in denial about my hearing loss.

Then I went to Rowan University and majored in psychology. I wanted to find out about careers in the helping field. Closed captioning was not available on videos back in the 1990s. I wrote a letter to the editor and the university provided me with captioned videos to watch at the high school so I didn’t have to go home to watch them. That was one of my first starts in finding myself. I also became active in Alpha Phi Omega, a national coed service fraternity, and learned how to interact with others. It was quite an accomplishment for me; but I still needed to learn much more about myself and hearing loss.

One day, my dad cut out an article about Carol Granaldi, who was the president of SHHH-NJ (now HLA-NJ) at the time. I am most fortunate to have had my parents and grandparents’ guidance about obtaining a higher education. Carol and I formed an instant and lasting bond. She is a wonderful mentor and friend of mine and my family. Shortly after, I met my wonderful husband Marc. My parents helped to sponsor my trip to New Orleans for my first HLAA convention. Boy, did my eyes open up: I saw hearing dogs, flashing lights, FM systems, and more for the first time!

I will never forget the time when I stood up and asked for help in obtaining my M.A. degree. I had several people come up to me, and I am grateful to the late Tim Cronin of New Jersey’s DVRS, who informed me about NYU’s deafness rehabilitation program. [Editor’s note: NYU no longer has this program.] I entered the program at NYU, and it was the most enlightening experience of my life. I learned about all levels of hearing loss, coping techniques, and technology. “Knowledge is power” was my grandfather’s favorite expression. I finally came to grips with my hearing loss and am now able to help many people with disabilities.

At New York University, my hearing loss became a major challenge. It was very hard for me to hear the students and professors, so I used interpreters (they mouthed the words until I learned American Sign Language), CART, FM devices, a notetaker, etc. I believe that with the proper accommodations, anyone can obtain his or her degrees and a successful career.

Marc proposed shortly afterwards, and we have been very happily married for over nine years. He is a wonderful man and always helps me to hear. He is very encouraging of my career goals as well. We have implemented many skits and tried to help other people cope with their hearing losses and other problems in life.

I am currently a teaching psychology to freshmen and sophomores in a community college. I wear two Phonak Savia BTE digital hearing aids and use a Contego FM system in the classroom. On the first day of each semester I introduce myself, telling the students that I am hard of hearing. I encourage them to tell me if I misunderstand or don’t catch something they have said. I also explain that the FM brings their voices to my hearing aid directly to me to help me hear them better. Sometimes I wear a button to tell people to please face me.

The faculty, staff, and students have been wonderful to me. In meetings, they have used a microphone for each speaker after I asked the department in charge to please have one for me. It all is in how you ask—if I say “Can the speakers please use a microphone?” I am more likely to get what I need than if I say “I need a microphone now!” In the office the staff members face me and repeat what I miss over and over again. I never had a problem with the staff helping me. As for students, they are usually very proud of themselves and learn something about how to help others. I commend them by stating “Good job, class, and thanks for your help.” It is always important to give positive feedback to people.

As for my future goals, I would love to have more classes and work fulltime someday. I also enjoy helping students with disabilities to pursue higher education and a career. I have had many struggles with my hearing loss but I am very grateful to my friends at ALDA and HLAA and to my family, friends, and coworkers. I hope that I can guide many people to cope with their hearing loss and other disabilities.

Jenny has been married almost 10 years, has a Sheltie, and lives in Ocean County, New Jersey. Her favorite hobbies are walking, using coupons to save money, reading novels and psychological self-help materials, and meeting new people. She dedicates this article in memory of her father, who recently passed away from cancer. She can be contacted at Jenny08520@aol.com.
The most exciting piece of news from the IC this season is that, for the first time (as far as we know), an official from ALDA will be participating in a meeting of the International Federation of Hard of Hearing People (IFHOH). Cynthia Amerman, president-elect of ALDA and a member of the IC, will be at the meeting in Sweden in June this year, and we look forward to hearing all about it. ALDA is a voting member of the IFHOH.

A reminder to all reading that “international” means all of us! Many ALDAns love to visit other countries and cultures. Also, many of us live in parts of the USA that have visitors, residents, and new citizens from other countries. We welcome your stories of how you manage life with hearing loss “inter-culturally” at home or abroad. Send us an email.

Many of you recall learning about ALDA-Asia Pacific, the first official ALDA group overseas, which is led by Akram in Pakistan. He writes that as a result of attending an International Conference on Accessible Tourism (ICAT) 2007, he and his organization, Danishkadah, got to work to promote accessibility in tourism. Inspired by the showing of a Turkish Airline flight safety video with sign language, Akram advocated with Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), and PIA has agreed to include sign language in its flight safety video.” Akram is also requesting captioning for people with hearing loss who do not use sign language.

Information about the ICAT conference is at:

Information about accessible tourism from the perspective of deaf and hard of hearing people is at:

Speaking of captioning, I flew on Lufthansa Airlines recently, where captioning was provided on the safety video, in two languages! I was very impressed and relayed this information to the new national project I founded, the Collaborative for Communication Access via Captioning (CCAC), which is discussing ways to advance captioning in transportation and other areas (education, health care, government, and much more). While CCAC is a national project, we know that many other countries are also moving forward to help our societies become communication-accessible for all. Captioning benefits deafened, hard of hearing, and deaf people. For information about the CCAC, email me.

A bientot, until soon, with thanks to Akram and Cynthia for contributions to this article

Lauren Storck, drlestorck@gmail.com
Skype - lestorck with same email address
Late-Deafened Life: How to Become an Interpreter in Just One Class…Not!!!

By Michele J. Bornert

Last night I had a dream that I was in a classroom, with an interpreter who was interpreting after only taking three sign language classes. I raised my hand and asked the teacher in ASL, “YOU MEAN THAT POE WROTE HORROR STORIES?” The interpreter squinted, wet her lips, and stuttered in what was supposed to be English, “You fork impossible Poo wrote terrible sentences.” The class roared in laughter, and the teacher looked at me as if I were some kind of idiot.

As a sign language teacher, I am asked a lot of questions. “What is the difference between Contact Sign Language and American Sign Language?” “Do all Deaf people know sign language?” “Do Deaf people know Braille?” But by far, the most common and intriguing question is, “If I take your beginning American Sign Language class, will that mean I’m certified?” No, no, no! And, quite frankly, that question scares me to death!

If someone decided that they loved the language of Japan and wanted to be a Japanese interpreter, would they take a single class in Japanese and then head out into the world to show off their skill? I highly doubt it. Yet people often think they can take one class in sign language and then they’ve mastered the art.

I think many people regard sign language as English and figure that all they have to do is memorize vocabulary. For some interpreting, that may be fine. But to call yourself an actual “interpreter,” you need to know the foreign language of ASL. I’m sure many of you already know this, but, in case someone who is reading doesn’t, American Sign Language is a full language with its own grammatical structure and syntax. Sure, sometimes it’s sufficient to sign ASL vocabulary words in English word order, but anyone who wants to be an interpreter should prepare to meet many people who don’t have English skills and use ASL as their first and primary language. If an interpreter is hired to interpret for a strong ASL user and show ups signing in English, the ASL user may not understand the interpreter. Imagine what a predicament that would put the interpreter in!

When I was becoming deaf, I really didn’t know anything about sign language, and I tried different paths. At first I tried the hearing aid path, but my hearing soon dissipated to an unusable amount. Next, I tried the cochlear implant route, but I found that my auditory nerves had been destroyed, so that did no good. Finally I had the CI removed from my left ear (leaving no residual hearing in that ear) and my auditory nerve severed in the right ear (in a feeble attempt to minimize the unbelievable tinnitus I was enduring). That left me completely, 100% deaf.

No problem, I thought. I will just learn to lipread. No problem, my patootie! Anyone out there with no residual hearing and no experience lipreading knows that it’s very, very hard (if not impossible) to do. Not to mention that it is often said (and I believe it) that lipreading is a skill that you either have or you don’t have. Well, I fall into the DON’T-HAVE category. No matter how hard I tried to learn, I never succeeded. That left me with sign language, and I decided that if I was going to do it, I was going all the way.

Studying for hours and hours made my skills pretty good in this area. Finally I found something I could work with! Thank God I also had a husband who was willing to learn, too. I think the fact that signing came naturally to me and that I just downright needed it affected why I was able to learn it faster than my husband could. But I didn’t just learn English-based (or Contact) Sign Language, as many late-deafened people do. I decided to learn American Sign Language, too. Maybe it was just out of curiosity or maybe I wanted to be sure I was equipped to chat with any deafie, but I decided to learn it all. It was NOT easy, let me tell you that!

But even if my hearing were magically restored and I had all of my sign language skills, even though I use sign on a daily basis and it’s the foundation of my communication abilities, no matter what I feel my skill level is (I teach it, but I will ALWAYS be learning), after over 10 years of signing, I do not believe that I would be able to interpret for another person. Learning how to sign is one thing. Learning how to interpret is a totally different ballgame.

So when someone thinks they can take a sign language class (even...continued on page 24
in America be equipped to show open-captioned movies. Once again, the theaters argued that they couldn’t afford it. Once again, the plaintiffs failed to offer any contrary evidence, and the case was thrown out.

In the Texas case, though, the judge went beyond ruling that the theaters couldn’t afford to equip every theater to show captioned movies. Apparently paying no attention to the “auxiliary aids and services” requirement, he said that in his opinion, the ADA only required theater owners to open their doors and let us in, and that if we couldn’t understand the movie dialogue, that was, essentially, our tough luck.

Efforts to achieve movie captioning through court action haven’t all failed. In a 2003 case from the District of Columbia, the judge refused to throw the case out of court. She said that while the ADA did not require open captioning, it might require closed captioning. After being denied a total victory, the AMC theater chain then agreed to equip a certain proportion of its theaters to show closed-captioned movies.

Meanwhile in New Jersey, the Attorney General’s office charged that the movie theaters there were violating the state law against discrimination by failing to show captioned movies. Again, that led to a settlement in which captioned movies were shown more frequently than had previously been the case, although even then, only a small proportion of movies were shown with captions. [Editor’s note: The Attorney General’s charge was based on New Jersey’s Law Against Discrimination. Four theater chains signed an agreement in 2004 to provide one screen with captions in multiplexes with at least 10 screens, and two in multiplexes with more than 15 screens. The agreement required displaying the captions at every showing, and the chains were permitted to choose between open or closed captions. They all chose closed (Rear Window) captions. In 2006, New Jersey signed a separate agreement with Regal, the largest movie chain in the country, which agreed to show open captions at least eight times a week in 10 of its 12 theaters. In 2005, New York State’s Attorney General reached a movie captioning agreement with 8 theater chains.]

Then disaster struck in Arizona. The Attorney General’s office and the state disability law center sued the Harkins theaters, a company with a very significant presence in Arizona but few theaters elsewhere. The Harkins attorneys didn’t argue that they couldn’t afford captioning. They argued that their business is the showing of non-captioned movies, and that because the ADA does not regulate the products or services that a business offers, the ADA cannot require captioned movies.

This is an argument that the theaters had made, without effect, in the prior movie-captioning cases. But this time it worked. The federal district judge agreed that captioned movies are a different product than non-captioned movies, and that despite the requirement of “auxiliary aids and services,” nothing in the ADA limits a business’s freedom to sell the “products or services” it chooses to offer. All the theaters had to do, she wrote, was permit us to come into the theater and watch the same non-captioned movies shown to everyone else.

As bad as that outcome was, the reasoning was worse. If movie theaters could successfully declare that their “product” was non-captioned and therefore inaccessible movies, there is no reason that a live theater couldn’t declare that its “product” was non-captioned and inaccessible plays. A college could potentially argue that its “product” was non-captioned and inaccessible instruction. Essentially, there would be no circumstance left in which auxiliary aids and services could be required, and ADA would become a useless tool for people with hearing loss.

The Arizona attorneys appealed to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. That was a big gamble, because the district court decision applied only in Arizona, but a decision from the Court of Appeals would become “the law” not only in Arizona, but also in California, Nevada, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Washington, Alaska and Hawaii. Moreover, the decision of the first federal appeals court to consider an issue is frequently influential throughout the country. In essence, the appeal in the Harkins case was likely to establish a national rule for movie captioning, and possibly for any other situation in which we might seek accommodations for hearing loss.

Because of the importance of the case, a number of organizations on both sides filed friend-of-the-court briefs. The theater companies and their trade groups argued that the decision was correct and should be affirmed, and groups representing the interests of people with hearing loss argued that the ruling was defective and must be reversed.

The “wild card” was the federal Department of Justice (DOJ). Because that department is charged with interpreting the ADA, its views are highly influential. We were all holding our breath wondering if DOJ would file a friend-of-the-court brief, and if so, on what side.

Thankfully, DOJ did indeed file a brief, and on our side. DOJ takes the position that the ADA does indeed require captioned movies—closed-captioned movies—to be exhibited to the extent that doing so does not constitute an undue burden.

The oral argument in
Battle for Captioned Movies (continued)...

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the case took place in San Francisco in January, and the small courtroom was packed. I had asked for real-time captioning for the argument, and ASL interpreters were provided as well.

When the attorney for Harkins started, the judges opened fire. In response to the argument that the theater had the right to choose to show non-captioned movies, Judge Kozinski asked why the court couldn’t take the position that it chose to offer justice in a building with steps, and that if people in wheelchairs couldn’t crawl up the steps or find someone to carry them, then that was just their tough luck.

“In fact,” Judge Kozinski said, “that case actually happened, and some poor attorney had to argue that being able to crawl up the steps was good enough. People today laugh at that argument, and I wouldn’t be surprised if in three or four years, people are laughing at your argument.”

Kozinski then went on to say, “I can’t understand why your clients don’t want to do this. You are going to lose on this issue—maybe not lose this case, but someday, you will lose. Why don’t you get out in front of this and look like heroes instead of resisting and looking like jerks?”

As for any argument about costs, Judge Kozinski referred to the CART captioning being provided at the hearing. “We don’t have any budget for this, and we pulled it together in a day,” he said. “In the overall scheme of things, this isn’t a significant cost.”

The court didn’t make a ruling on the spot, and you can’t always tell from the questions which way the judges are leaning. But sometimes you can make a pretty good guess, and based on the questions, no one would have been willing to bet on the theaters.

Despite the justifiable elation over the way the argument went, it’s important to note that there were some caution flags in some other questions. The judges did seem concerned that captioning, and especially open captions, could alter the movie-going experience for other patrons. The judges suggested that those interests will have to be balanced against our needs for accessibility. They specifically asked where that balancing should be done—by them, by the district court, or by the parties themselves through settlement discussions.

A couple of weeks after the argument, the Harkins people waved the white flag of surrender. They asked the appeals court to hold off on making any decision while the parties went through mediation to try to settle the case.

This isn’t as good news as it might seem—at least not for folks outside of Arizona. The problem is that if the parties settle, the appeals court won’t issue a ruling. The lower-court decision will remain on the books, and the theaters can still claim that the case is valid and instructive.

In fact, the theaters are doing just that right now in Washington State. Our non-profit advocacy group, the Washington State Communication Access Project (WashCAP, www.wash-cap.com), filed suit against the corporate theater owners in the Seattle area asking for more captioned movies. We did not sue under the ADA at all, but rather, under our Washington state statute.

The ADA is national in scope, and sets a floor of protection. But the ADA specifically states that it does not exert control over state or local laws that offer more protection to the rights of individuals with disabilities. One thing we particularly like about our Washington state law is that it states that making a business “accessible” means making its services “usable or understandable.” Because “understandable” is a specific requirement, we believed that the theaters would not be able to argue that all they must do is open the doors and let us in.

In our Washington case, we are seeking an order stating that the theaters must provide captioned movies to the extent it is reasonably possible for them to do so. We are not asking the court to determine at this time what it is reasonably possible for the theaters to do—that could require extensive discovery into movie-theater economics and technology.

For their part, the theaters are arguing that even under Washington law, they have no obligation to show captioned movies. They repeat the argument that captioned movies are different services, and they can offer the services they select, citing the Harkins case as precedent. They also claim that the requirement that services be made “understandable” is too vague to be enforceable.

We anticipate an initial hearing on those motions in our case some time in March, and hope for a decision shortly thereafter. We’ve received strong signals from the theaters that if they are not successful in getting the case thrown out, they will be interested in talking about settlements. (We’ll post progress reports on our website, www.wash-cap.com.)

So what might we be able to get? Well to start, at least in Washington, we are not going to try to specify the kind of captioning the theaters must do, only that what they do has to allow us to understand the movies. Some theaters may choose open captioning, some closed captioning, and some may try something altogether new.
Battle for Captioned Movies (continued)...

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I don’t think we’ll be able to require that every theater be equipped to show captioned movies, or that every showing be captioned—especially if the theater show open-captioned movies.

What I think is reasonable is to ask that every theater multiplex and that every movie for which captions are prepared be accessible to us. If every multiplex equips one of those auditoriums to show captioned movies, then rotates the movies through that theater, it should be possible for us to have a captioned movie available to us at most times, and it should be possible for us to see every movie during its initial run. [Editor’s note: In some states, legislation is being attempted. Recently, Kentucky introduced a bill for the second time to require theaters with at least five screens to provide closed captioning on one, and Maryland’s House of Delegates introduced a bill to require closed captioning technology and set a minimum number of accessible screenings in movie theaters. The cost is about $12,000 per screen.]

The law is not a perfect instrument, and it has taken 20 years to get to this point. But I think that finally, those of us with hearing losses will be able, like our neighbors, to enjoy a night at the movies.

John Waldo is a practicing attorney on Bainbridge Island, Washington. His practice focuses on advocacy for and representation of people with hearing loss, something he has lived with since childhood. He is founder and counsel for the Washington State Communication Access Project (Wash-CAP) and counsel to the Oregon Communication Access Project, nonprofit membership corporations that advocate for accommodations that make public places accessible to people with hearing loss. He is representing Wash-CAP in the Washington lawsuit, and he filed a friend-of-the-court brief in the Arizona case referred to in this article. He can be contacted at john@wash-cap.com.

Find Another Path (continued)...

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Originally published in ALDA-GS News, Fall 2008; slightly revised.

E. Lynn Osborne is married with two children and resides in Howell, New Jersey. She holds New Jersey state licenses in practical nursing and real estate sale a certified assisted living administrator. After earning her associate’s degree in social science from Brookdale Community College in 2007, she continued her studies toward her baccalaureate degree in psychology from Georgian Court University. She has also been accepted to the Gallaudet University peer mentoring program for 2010. Lynn enjoys practicing yoga and meditation, and her hobbies include writing, art appreciation, and volunteering. She experienced her initial hearing loss in one ear in 2005 as a result of Meniere’s disease. In 2007, she again had a sudden hearing loss, this time in both ears. In October 2008 she received her first cochlear implant and continues to wear a hearing aid in her right ear. After searching online for others who experienced sudden hearing loss, she connected with ALDA through Carolyn Piper and joined in 2007. Her email address is losborne65@aol.com.

Communication Access for the Classroom (continued)...

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infrared, or induction loop assistive listening system can be used, as long as appropriate receivers are provided. Students who have hearing aids or cochlear implants with telecoils don’t need induction receivers for an induction loop assistive listening system, but other users do. Some infrared receivers can’t be used in conjunction with telecoils because there is no jack for plugging in neckloops.

Notetakers. Since students using communication access services generally cannot take notes, a notetaker may be required unless a CART or C-Print transcript is available. The student cannot be forced to choose between a notetaker and an interpreter or other form of communication assistance. Notetakers may be paid or may be volunteers, as long as the notes being provided are an effective accommodation.

Now that you have the ABCs of access, it’s time to start planning your course of study!
to find the source of sound. The hearing aids took a lot of getting used to.

That audiologist had a weekly support group whose members met to discuss their hearing loss, hearing aids, and how to support and learn from each other the ways to handle the “real world.” From that small support group, we established the first Fresno chapter of Self-Help for Hard-of-Hearing people (SHHH), which is now called the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA). I was the youngest member of the group...by at least 30 years! I really owe a lot to that group. This is where I was first exposed to being assertive about asking for what I need to communicate. I also learned about FM systems, various types of hearing loss, assistive listening systems, lipreading, coping skills, etc. And I learned that I WAS NOT ALONE. It was also through SHHH that I found ALDA. Many years later, when I attended the California state SHHH convention in Concord, I met several peers who also signed and were about my age. I asked, “Are you with SHHH, too?” They said “Yes, but we are also with ALDA.” I learned more about ALDA and suddenly felt like I had found my second family. But back to the story.

I used what I learned from SHHH when I transferred from the local community college to the “big university”...Fresno State. When I transferred, I contacted the Disabled Students (DS) office and asked about support services, such as notetakers. VR had already bought me a nice new FM system, so I just needed to ask each of my teachers to wear my microphone. I also reminded them to PLEASE take it off before going to the restroom. I asked the DS office for support or help if my teachers were reluctant to wear the microphone. My fellow students were nice enough to use carbon paper for notes. The only problem with this was that I had TWO sets of notes to read each night—my own and those of fellow students, to see if there was anything I had missed. I was also taking sign language classes and meeting others who signed.

The FM system worked well while I completed my undergrad work, which consisted mostly of lectures. However, when I started graduate school, I quickly learned that my setup for using the FM system was not going to work. Why? Those of you who have attended graduate school know that the classes are more like discussion groups. There are fewer lectures and more interaction with students and the teacher. So I had to pass the microphone around to my fellow students. This was often cumbersome and definitely slowed down the interaction. I really thank my fellow students for their help with this.

One time I had asked the DS office about notetakers and they asked me if I wanted a sign language interpreter. I was not fluent in sign, but I thought I’d try it. The interpreters I had also “mouthed” the words as they signed them, so I was using my FM system, watching the interpreters, and reading their lips. Needless to say, I was EXHAUSTED at the end of EVERY day. But this also helped me get as much information as possible from all of those sources. Remember, this was before the availability of CART (Communication Access Realtime Translation), also called realtime captioning, so that was not an option as it is nowadays.

One added advantage of using interpreters was that I learned some new signs. I was able to lipread and match the signs with what I heard. Using sign language everyday also helped reinforce my sign language learning. An interpreter was a BIG help in the group discussions, since I didn’t have to try to figure out who was talking (normally, by the time I did that and looked at that person, he or she was done!).

I made it through my graduate schooling but did not officially graduate (due to developing appendicitis during my final semester, I didn’t complete my thesis project). But thanks to SHHH, VR, and my audiologist (and his support group), I learned what was available to me and took advantage of these services. Nowadays the same services, plus CART, are usually available through VR and/or a school’s office for disabled students. Thanks to the ADA and other education-related laws, we have many more options (and more access, too!) than before. Technology is also improving, and now it’s possible to use FM systems, infrared systems, Bluetooth, etc. with a hearing aid or cochlear implant. I advise students to make sure to ask others with hearing loss for suggestions for dealing with the educational environment. I’m glad I did!

Ken Arcia was born in Fresno, California and moved to the San Francisco Bay Area after completing graduate school. He is a past president of ALDA and a winner of ALDA’s highest award, the I. King Jordan Distinguished Service Award. He has worked for Sprint Relay for almost seven years and is a self-titled “geek.” He loves technology and also enjoys travel and photography. He is currently the chair of the ALDA Technology Committee and also helps to run the www.alda.org website. He can be contacted at alda96ken@dslextreme.com.
Late-Deafened Life (continued)...

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American Sign Language) and then venture off into the world to help interpret for people, I have to hold up my stop sign and let them know emphatically that it would not be possible. I hope they find a great class and learn and grow and, above all, enjoy the language (heck, if they’re in the Michigan area, they can look up my classes). But they shouldn’t expect to become an interpreter that quickly. The interpreter training programs in my area are two years in length, but if you asked the graduates, you would most likely be told that it’s still quite intimidating and difficult to interpret even after two years of intense studying. In fact, anyone trying to master a foreign language and understand the culture will always be learning.

_Michele can be contacted at DeafExpressions05@gmail.com._

GA to SK

_By Ann Smith, Curator_

_Marge Tamas_, ALDA-Peach chapter president, has submitted an application for admission to Georgia State University’s graduate certificate in public health program. This certificate is a preliminary credential along the path to earning a master’s in public health, and Marge anticipates acceptance for fall 2010.

_Diana Fanuel_, ALDA-Garden State treasurer, is excitedly looking forward to an April Disney cruise with daughter, Danae, and Danae’s children, Luke (5) and Grace (23 months) Richards. The day cruise from Florida to Europe will make port calls at Funchal, Portugal; Cadiz, Spain; Gibraltar; and Barcelona, Spain.

_Robin Titterington_ of ALDA-Peach just became a certified volunteer for DeKalb County Animal Services and Enforcement. She completed four hours of required training for this certification, and you can find her hugging furries at least two hours a week!

_Send your personal news to Ann at fabsmith@att.net by May 18._

SK SK

_It is what we think we know already that often prevents us from learning._

—Claude Bernard
ALDAcon Call for Papers

The ALDAcon 2010 Call for Papers (CFP) has gone out to past ALDAcon presenters. Others interested in presenting a workshop at this ‘con (September 1-5 in Colorado Springs) can obtain the CFP by contacting Kathy Evans at patches_alfa@yahoo.com or c/o ALDA, Inc., 8038 Macintosh Lane, Suite 2, Rockford Illinois, 61107. The deadline for submitting a proposal is April 15.

Scholarships for ALDAcon 2010

ALDAcon 2010 will be held September 1 - 5 in Colorado Springs, Colorado. As in years past, ALDA, Inc. will provide a limited number of scholarships to help those who desire to attend but are in need of financial assistance to do so. Applicants for a scholarship must be members of ALDA, Inc. and be in actual need of financial assistance in order to attend. Priority in awarding scholarships will be given to first-time attendees. Deadline for the reception of applications is July 15, 2010.

Questions regarding applying for a scholarship may be sent to Carolyn Piper, the scholarship chair, by email at wicwas@wcvt.com or by postal mail at 82 Piper Place, Huntington, VT 05462.
Registration Form

Please complete BOTH pages of this form, print and mail, OR register online at http://www.alda.org

Name: __________________________________________________________

Address: ________________________________________________________________________________

City/State/Zip/Country: ________________________________________________________________________________

Phone: (_____) ______________ Voice __ TTY __ CapTel __ VP __

Fax: (_____) ______________ Email: ______________________________

I am:

__ Late-Deafened __ Hearing __ Hard of Hearing __ Deaf at Birth

__ bringing a hearing / service dog. (Dogs must remain on leashes in public areas.)

__ a member of ALDA chapter/group ________________________________________________

__ a Personal Care Attendant (Registration is free but must purchase meals. Complete a copy of this form.)

__ a newcomer (attending my first ALDAcon) __ a previous ALDAcon attendee

__ Other (Explain) _________________________________________________________________

Special Needs

My special dietary needs are: ______________________________________________________________

Allergies: __________________________________________________________________________

Mobility needs: _____________________________________________________________________

Any other needs: ___________________________________________________________________

All workshops and events will have sign language interpreters and CART (Communication Access Realtime Translation).

FM assistive listening devices will be provided at no cost. To make sure enough devices are available, you MUST reserve now. You will be asked to turn in your driver’s license when you receive the device. Your license will be returned when the equipment is returned.

__ I would like to reserve an FM assistive listening device to use during the convention.

To use the FM device I need: __ neckloop __ earbuds __ headphones __ other ______________

Roommate Match

__ I need a roommate. I am __ male __ female

ALDA, Inc. Membership: Include payment with your registration.

Note: Membership in ALDA, Inc. is NOT the same as an ALDA chapter/group membership. You must be a member of ALDA, Inc. to obtain the member rate for the convention.

__ New __ Renewal __ Already a member; my membership expires on ______________________

__ Age 62 or older ($20.00) __ Age 61 or youner ($25.00) __ Business Membership ($45.00)
**Registration Fees**

*Full registration* includes: *Thursday Welcome and President’s Luncheon  *Friday Buffet Luncheon  *Friday I. King Jordan Award Banquet  * Saturday Award Luncheon  * Saturday Karaoke Party  *Sunday Brunch  *Exhibit Hall  *All workshops

A limited number of scholarships are available. Contact Carolyn Piper, Scholarship Chair, at wicwas@wctv.com for more information.

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*Day registration* is available for access to the Exhibit Hall and one day of workshops. **Meals are not included** and may be purchased separately.

- **One day $65**
- **Two Days $120**
- **Three Days $160**

Days Selected: Indicate which day(s) you will be attending: Thursday_____  Friday_____  Saturday_____

A la carte meals:

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**Method of Payment**

- Credit Card (check one): ___ MasterCard  ___ Visa  ___ Check (payable to ALDAcon 2010)
- Card Holder’s Name: ________________________________________________________________
- Card Number: ________________________________
- Expiration Date (Month/Year): ________________________________
- Signature: ____________________________________________

Mail to: ALDAcon 2010 Registration  Or email registration@alda.org

PO Box 785  Bedford Park, IL 60499

**Refund Policy for Registration**

*Request for refunds (minus $50.00 handling and processing fee) will be honored until August 1st, 2010.*

*No refunds will be given after August 1st, 2010.*

*Substitution of a registration will be allowed **ONLY from one member to another.** Contact ALDAcon 2010 planning chairs at JaneS256@aol.com or katherine.schlueter@gmail.com for substitution information.*

**Reserve Your Hotel Room TODAY! Use Group Code ALDA10**

Special ALDAcon room rate of $105.00 at the Antlers Hilton Hotel ends August 1st. Reservations toll-free number is 866-299-4602. Hotel direct number is 719-955-5600. For more information, go to www.antlers.com or www.alda.org.
I. King Jordan Award for Distinguished Achievement Nomination Form

This award will be presented at the discretion of the ALDA Board of Directors, but never will there be more than one recipient in a given year. The award will be presented to a late-deafened person who has (a) had a successful and distinguished career in his or her chosen field of endeavor, (b) made significant contributions to their community, profession, and/or nation, (c) served as an outstanding role model for late-deafened adults everywhere, and (d) clearly demonstrated to the hearing community that a person’s competence, integrity, and human worth are not necessarily diminished by the fact he or she is deaf. Recipients will be chosen by the ALDA Board of Directors.

Nominations for the 2010 Award should be submitted by June 1, 2010, to:

Linda Drattell
I King Jordan Award
C/O ALDA Inc
8038 Macintosh Lane, Suite #2
Rockford, IL 61107
Email: president@alda.org

Nominee

Name of Nominee __________________________________________________
Address ____________________________________________________________
City/State/Zip: ______________________________________________________
Phone_____________________      Voice __    TTY __   CapTel __   VCO __
Age of onset of Deafness ________________
Title / Occupation ___________________________________

Is the person you are nominating aware of the nomination?                Yes___ No___
Has person consented to having his/her name place in nominations? Yes ___No___

Please provide the following information in a narrative attached to this

1. What are the nominee’s significant accomplishments in his/her field of endeavor?
2. What significant contributions has the nominee made to her/his profession, community, and/or nation?
3. In what ways has the nominee been a role model for late-deafened adults?
4. How has the nominee demonstrated to the hearing community that a person's competence, integrity, and human worth are not necessarily diminished by the fact he/she is deaf?

Name of person making this nomination: ___________________________________________
Phone: ___________________ Voice __    TTY __   CapTel __   VCO __   Email: ______________________
The Association of Late-Deafened Adults
Plans 22nd Convention

Are you frustrated due to adult-onset hearing loss? Discouraged? Isolated? Are you curious about technology that might be helpful to you? Do you feel like you will never be able to enjoy a group activity again? Then come to ALDAcon 2010! It will change your life!

This year the Association of Late-Deafened Adults (ALDA) will meet from September 1st through 5th in gorgeous Colorado Springs, Colorado. The convention will be held at the Antlers Hilton, within sight of Pikes Peak and just one block from downtown Colorado Springs. The hotel has an indoor pool, complimentary Internet access, coffeemakers in each room, and a complimentary daily newspaper. In addition to the Rocky Mountains, nearby attractions include the United States Air Force Academy, the United States Olympic Training Center, the Garden of the Gods, golfing, hiking, and tennis.

ALDA, Inc. is an international organization that serves a diverse membership: people of all ages who have slowly or suddenly lost their hearing through a variety of causes. ALDA strongly believes in a communication strategy of “whatever works.” Some our members sign well, some sign poorly or not at all, some use residual hearing, some speechread, and some use CART (captioning on a large screen). No matter how severe your hearing loss is or which communication mode you prefer, you WILL understand all that goes on at ALDAcon.

Keynote speakers and workshop leaders are often deafened themselves. There are exhibits showcasing technology and services, as well as social events, group meals, a closing brunch, and the always popular Saturday night karaoke party. (YES, we do SING!) Special events are scheduled for newcomers. Significant others are also welcome, and the needs of those with other disabilities are accommodated as much as possible. For the four days of our conference, communication is so easy that it feels like there is no such thing as a hearing loss.

ALDA seeks sponsors at a variety of levels to meet the major expenses of this grand gathering. For information on sponsorship, contact Kathy Schlueter at the email address below. Some scholarships are available for attendees with financial need; contact Carolyn Piper at wicwas@wcvt.com for information. If you have other questions, please contact any of the below or check out www.alda.org.

Come to ALDAcon—your new family is waiting! ♪“Nothing can keep me, keep me from you!”♫

Kathy Schlueter (Katherine.schlueter@gmail.com) and Dr. Jane Schlau (janes@smsdk12.org)
Co-Chairs, ALDAcon 2010
Kathy Evans (patches_alda@yahoo.com) Chair, Program
Robin Titterington (furriesmom@comcast.net) Chair, Public Relations
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 conference (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, 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).
ALDA News

 General Member, Age 61 or under . . . $25.00
 Senior Member, Age 62 or over . . . . $20.00
 Business Membership . . . . . . . . . . . . . . $45.00
 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:
www.alda.org/alda_membership_form.htm

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)

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

ALDA’s Mission Statement:
To Support the Empowerment of Deafened People.

 Education   Advocacy   Role Models   Support

ALDA provides networking opportunities through local chapters and groups as well as at the annual ALDA conference (ALDAcon).
Don’t Just Be a Member, Be 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.

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

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.

Visit us on the web at: www.alda.org