When I reached my early 20s, many people noticed my hearing loss, and it was time for hearing aids. At this point I also became a mom and had three kids fairly close together. My traveling urge hadn’t diminished and I was often on the go. I now had the option for selective hearing, and most of the time, I chose not to wear my hearing aids in the car. The children’s bickering and whining was toned down to a manageable volume and I could ride for hours without them getting on my nerves. If their dad was along, he would let me know how unfair this was! He didn’t realize that analog hearing aids picked up road noise, paper bag crinkling sounds, and a child’s sudden screech, which raised the hairs on the back of my neck and made my head twitch. The only thing I couldn’t ignore were the kids kicking my seat to get my attention.

Now and then I would have a hearing adult riding with me. When the kids acted up in the back, I would usually yell at the one who made the most noise to quiet down. The hearing adult would tell me, “You don’t know what’s going on back there.” It’s true, I didn’t. I would feel a little guilty and put in my hearing aids, but I still couldn’t hear everything they said, and all the other noises would give me a headache. What most people didn’t understand was they were hearing aids, not hearing miracles.

A few times, my kids forgot that most adults could hear. Doing what kids do except with the advantage of a mother who couldn’t hear well, they...
ALDA NEWS

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Full page (7.5 x 9.5) ................................................. $200.00
Half page (7.5 x 4.5) ............................................. $125.00
Quarter page (3.5 x 4.5) ......................................... $75.00
Eighth page (3.5 x 2.25) ................................. $45.00

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Now that the winter’s unrelenting fury of blizzards and sub-zero temperatures has morphed into the calm of spring and people have emerged from hibernation to venture beyond the shelter of home, travels to destinations near and far will undoubtedly increase. While traveling can be relaxing, it does pose a unique set of challenges to those of us with hearing loss, so we are pleased to present an issue of ALDA News that focuses on the topic of travel.

Our cover features an article by Chelle George, “Hearing Loss and Communicating in the Car,” that will appeal to late-deafened drivers and passen- gers alike. Next, in “My Assistive Listening Device Confronts Airport Security,” Janis Aaron Moore recounts an unnerving experience that many readers will identify with, particularly in this age of pat-downs and seemingly endless security checks. “Deafness, Boars, and Handsome Fish in Southern Tuscany” may seem like a cryptic title, but it will make perfect sense when you read this entertaining article by Donna Maderer about her trip to Italy.

Our previous issue noted ALDA’s recent movie captioning lawsuit against Cinemark, and now, in “One of Us,” you can meet John Waldo, the driving force behind this advocacy effort, to whom ALDA is deeply indebted. “The Skyer Siblings” provides a personal look at an exemplary and remarkable family that included ALDA’s co-founder Kathy Hering, her brother Rick, and her sisters Mary and Maureen, all of whom were deafened by NF-2. Struggling signers in ALDA’s ranks can take heart from reading “Crappy Sign” by ALDA co-founder Bill Graham, in which he defines and validates the style of signing that is so familiar to many late-deafened folks.

Returning to the travel theme, Dr. Lucy Miller’s trip home from ALDAcon 2010 was not the uneventful journey she had planned, and you can read about her experience in “ALDAcon Ain’t Over until the Last Missed Flight.” And on the topic of missed flights, you won’t want to miss “Leaving on a Jet Plane” by a beloved ALDAn, the late Jerry Barnhart. This issue’s exploration of some of our roots concludes with an insightful interview with ALDA pioneer Mary Clark.

Of course, we also have our regular columns for your reading pleasure, including light-hearted articles by Michele Bornert and Harriet Frankel that will make you smile. And be sure to read the ALDAcon information in this issue. The ALDAcon planning committee is hard at work on this year’s convention, which promises to be a huge success.

Contact me with any comments about this issue or suggestions for future issues. ALDA News wants to hear from you!

ALDAbest,

Eileen Hollywood, Managing Editor

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30 What Is ALDA?
My late husband and I made very enjoyable trips to Europe and Mexico as well as to major American tourist destinations. Before I received my cochlear implant, I couldn’t understand tour guides, so I used Frommer’s, Fodor’s, and AAA books to plan our trips, and I came to love the flexibility of being able to see the specific sights we preferred for the length of time we wanted to spend.

Captioning was nonexistent during my early, pre-ADA travels. Then Walt Disney World was forced to become communication accessible after losing a Department of Justice lawsuit, and other sites slowly began to provide captions for their films and videos. I sometimes discovered only by accident that captions were available, because there was no sign or other publicity. In one museum that showed an introductory film, I noticed several small screens attached to the benches. I guessed that they might be for captions, so I pressed the button on the one near me, and sure enough, captions appeared! However, it was impossible to watch the movie and look at the caption screen at the same time, and in addition, the print was too small for me to read.

One museum’s ticket booth proudly displayed a sign that prominently featured the wheelchair symbol, along with the words “Assistive Listening Devices Available.” I wondered how many people with hearing loss bothered to read the sign after seeing the symbol. (Apparently, the staff was unaware that there is an assistive listening symbol.) In another location, the availability of captions was posted, but I was the first visitor who asked to have them turned on, and the staff person on duty had no idea how to do it. Fortunately, she made several calls to other employees and found out, so I was able to enjoy the film.

The National Aquarium in Baltimore has a looped section for their dolphin show, and they were savvy enough to have induction receivers available for those without telecoils. Unfortunately, the looped area isn’t situated where the guides speak, making it impossible to speechread them.

I’ve also tried requesting an accommodation when traveling. For a Carnival cruise, I asked for a TTY, which was installed in our cabin shortly after we boarded. However, when I used the device to call the front desk, no one answered the TTY line, so I had to go there in person to ask the staff to please answer TTY calls.

I’ve traveled by Amtrak a few times, and I worried that I might miss my stop, since I couldn’t understand the announcements. To avoid that possibility, I counted the number of stops listed on the schedule and then counted them off during my trip. This wasn’t the most relaxing method, but it worked.

One of our writers in this issue recounts being unable to call for help when her car was disabled. I had a similar experience one afternoon on Route 80 in New Jersey. My car began losing speed, so I pulled onto the shoulder, got out, and tried to flag someone down to call AAA for me, but all the cars kept whizzing by. As time passed, I began getting panicky because evening would soon be approaching and I couldn’t drive in the dark. Finally, an elderly couple stopped, but they didn’t have a cell phone, so I had to try to flag down another car. Eventually, a younger man with a phone stopped and made the call for me. The problem was simple and quickly fixed, and I was on my way again.

After that experience, I knew I had to have some way of contacting AAA myself, so I bought a cell phone with downloadable relay apps and signed up for the data-only plan. Ironically, several years passed before I needed to use the device for the reason I had bought it, but in the meantime, I found it handy for texting and surfing the Internet. When my car finally got stuck again, my relay call to AAA worked like a charm, with only a couple of tiny glitches. The call was first routed to California because that’s where the relay operator was located, but it was then rerouted to my location. And when AAA asked for my phone number to call me back, I requested text messaging, which at first they said they couldn’t provide, but one of their employees used his cell phone to text me, so that worked out too.

I’m happy that communication access for travelers has greatly improved over the past couple of decades, thanks to the Americans with Disabilities Act and technological advances. And when things don’t work out as well as they should, a sense of humor always helps!
My Assistive Listening Device Confronts Airport Security

By Janis Aaron Moore

In 2006, I was on my way to the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) convention in Orlando and was excited at the prospect of seeing my extended family in Florida for the first time in five or six years. I was also a bit concerned about airport security. I hadn’t flown anywhere since 9/11 and didn’t know what to expect. I wasn’t worried about weapons or bombs or drugs, but I was concerned about the keepsake Swiss Army knife I carry on my key chain, since I’d heard those were confiscated. I was also concerned about my digital camera, hearing aids, and assistive listening device (ALD). Would any of these be damaged by X-rays? Would any set off the alarm?

I carefully searched online for information and found the TSA (Transportation Security Administration) website. It had a section for persons with disabilities and medical conditions at www.tsa.gov/travelers/airtravel/specialneeds, which included a link to a page entitled “Hearing Disabilities.” Since I wore two hearing aids and sometimes relied on a PockeTalker for communicating, I found this page helpful and informative. It discussed hearing aids, cochlear implants, and related tidbits, but it had no information about ALDs, and it was therefore no help regarding my PockeTalker.

At the airport, while standing in a line of people waiting to be checked, I thought the worst that could happen would be that something on me would trip the alarm, I’d find the offending article, it would be X-rayed, and I would pass through the portal with flying colors. But when I walked through in my bare feet and set off the alarm, I was totally unprepared for the events that followed.

The man who screened me asked me to step inside and have a seat. He went away and a few moments later a woman approached me. She asked me to stand on a mat with my feet over footprints painted on it. She then passed a wand over the front, back, and sides of my body. After that, she asked me to move one foot to a forward position, whereupon she passed the wand between my legs. There was actual contact with my body because I was wearing an ankle-length peasant dress, and I immediately felt violated. No stranger had ever touched my inner legs, either with a wand or a body part. As she asked me to move my feet back and forward and “wanded” me, I began to look around, wondering who was watching. I was in a fishbowl of glass cubicles, in full view of half a dozen other screening lines full of screeners and potential travelers, and I felt humiliated.

The woman then asked me to take a seat again, and she went away. I was alone in the cubicle, waiting and wondering what would happen next. She came back in a few moments with a tissue in her hand and said she had to test my PockeTalker for “residue.” When I asked what residue she was seeking, she answered “from plastic bombs.”

I was too upset to be able to recite a verbatim account of this whole incident. I’m sure it only took a few minutes, but it seemed to last forever. I do remember asking several times, “Why don’t you just run the PockeTalker through the X-ray and let me go through the portal without it? I’m sure I would pass.” (I’d forgotten I was wearing a dress with brass buttons, a heavy metal necklace, metal earrings, an “I Read Lips” button, two hearing aids, and my PockeTalker—all with metal.) Finally the woman explained that she didn’t want to run the PockeTalker through the X-ray because she didn’t know whether the device would be damaged by it. She eventually “passed” me and hugged me (I had broken into tears), even giving me a tissue, but I just wanted to get away.

I don’t know exactly why I became so upset. I had spent “sleeping time” preparing for my trip, so perhaps I was overtired. I suspect that, as I became more distressed, I missed important cues the woman may have tried to give me. I know I was surprised that she didn’t immediately try my suggestion to X-ray my PockeTalker, and I hadn’t expected such an extensive search.

I had reservations to fly home two weeks later, and I wondered what would happen. I was now prepared for the “worst,” so the search (if the alarm sounded) wouldn’t be quite so distressing. I would take a second pass over my wardrobe and accessories to minimize the risk of setting off the alarm. But I could really use some authoritative... continued on page 18
ALDA News

ALDA Nominations Committee Needs YOU (Finger Pointing)!

By Linda Drattell

It seems like yesterday that I ran for president-elect. Now I am past president and am looking forward to the next group of motivated ALDAns to run for office.

I am also responsible for the nominations committee, and that might mean YOU, if you aren’t interested in running this year. The committee must be comprised of at least two people, one of whom must be a board member. What if a gazillion people are interested in joining the nominations committee, you ask? Not to worry! No pushing or shoving necessary! We encourage geographical, social, and other diversity on the committee. So join up! This is a fun job. If not, you can yell at me through email (I can’t hear). My contact information, if you choose to accept this assignment, is past.president@alda.org.

What do nomination committee members do? Oh, they search high and low, north and south, east and west, for our talented members to run for office. They look in nooks and crannies, ride broomsticks and carpets—well, now we just use email—to reach out to people who are willing to apply their skills to lead ALDA through to its 25th year! Yes, that’s right. The people who run for office this year will be in office as we enter ALDA’s 25th birthday! Come be part of the fun. Come help make history. Join the nominations committee

Beginning on April 15, we will be seeking nominations for 2012 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.

Treasurer—This position is a two-year commitment. The treasurer is the principal accounting and financial officer of the Association, has custody of all ALDA funds and securities, and keeps accounts of all receipts and disbursements. The treasurer is also chair of the Finance Committee, which is responsible for fundraising, developing and supervising all fiscal record-keeping systems, and ensuring that all required financial reports of ALDA are completed correctly and filed on time.

Regional directors 1 and 2—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 1—Connecticut, Washington, DC, Delaware, Massachusetts, Maryland, Maine, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, West Virginia, Virginia, Quebec, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, United Kingdom, Finland, Norway, Netherlands, Europe, Middle East.

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

If you would like to be nominated or nominate another member, you must complete and submit a nomination form. Write/type the name of the nominee and the office for which s/he is being nominated. There is a 150-word maximum limit to the description/background of the nominee and why this person should be elected. The deadline for submitting nominations is November 1. To obtain a nomination form, contact me at past.president@alda.org. Looking forward to hearing from you!
I’d recently completed a round of relatively experimental radiation treatments in an attempt to stall if not fully duck the deafness that was coming at me like a fleet-footed, coked-up mugger on a dark street (I have NF2). Radiation left me tremendously weak for months, unsteady, and mostly deaf. The treatment, like all of life, was a gamble—you know, you can’t win if you don’t play, as we used to call out back in my carnie days.

During a fit of “a good trip will make me feel better” optimism, “no illness will get the best of me!” determination, and “geez, this invalid crap is boring” impatience, I booked a flight to Italy for me and my best pal Jen. We would visit with Cindy and Giovanni at their new home in Sarteano within the province of Siena.

When I was choosing the flight, I noticed the button for special needs—“deaf” in the drop-down menu. I clicked it, curious as to what this would trigger, what kind of help they would provide. Would the airline personnel communicate with me via ASL or write down any/all announcements? Nope. When we got to Milan to change planes, there was someone to meet us, escorting us to the gate for our connection to Rome. That was it.

This struck me as fairly amusing. Sure, I was weak, but it was my hearing that had vanished, not my ability to read signs or find my way ’round an airport. I was just moving at slightly slower than my usual speed-walk pace. I still check off “special assistance—deaf” now—naturally, I’m waiting for the ASL-fluent stewardess to come by asking if I need more wine.

One of the first places we went, upon arrival in Italy, was a festival in nearby Cetona. At the word “festival,” my mind conjured up crafts fairs full of handmade pottery and finely woven shawls. On the side would, of course, be a bunch of booths selling the local cheese, Pecorino, and baked goods (canola—YUM!). Back in reality, though, few if any crafts were there, but the festival did boast LOADS of food sellers (this being Italy, after all).

What struck me as funny and made me feel queasy were all the boars’ heads mounted on or displayed near the booths. Cindy explained that it’s one of the big local dishes. Boar hunting? I thought that was just something they did back in The Taming of the Shrew and Canterbury Tales days. I felt as though I’d time-traveled: here we were in this small medieval town, in the 21st century, high in the Tuscan hills, looking at severed boars’ heads next to trays of astounding delicate pastries, breads, and cheese.

That night, we had a cookout along with our hosts’ good friends Guiliano and Fausta. They had been out fishing on a nearby lake earlier in the day and caught our dinner. Now, me, I’m used to buying fish at the local US mega giant superupermarket where the salmon, haddock, and trout are cleaned and filleted, bearing little resemblance to actual fish. But here the heads were on, intact, and they were all staring at me with very dead, dark eyes. Naturally, I started naming them. This one is Horace, this one Celeste, and here is dear Miles. An important dining tip: do NOT name your dinner, especially not before it hits the grill. Thankfully, Giovanni filleted Celeste for me, removing her head—and those beady dead eyes—from sight.

As Cindy announced, if I lived in Italy, I would surely be a complete vegan.

Next, I wondered how I’d fare with dinner conversation. As a hearing person I’d always been right in there, in the thick of the conversational mosh pit. I don’t know much Italian, and among our hosts and their guests, only Cindy spoke both Italian and English. My lip-reading, while significantly better now after a few years of practice, is not and will never reach that totally mythical level shown in Hollywood spy movies. You know: it’s midnight, and the spy is on the roof of the building across from the apartment where the suspect is having the game-changing, all-important tête-à-tête with his posse. Through a pair of binoculars, the hero succeeds, with little sweat, in reading everyone’s lips and foiling the plot to overthrow the government/major corporation/clueless principal/prom queen.

Right. Sorry. That’s a plot device, not reality.

Dinner conversation was a fast-moving soccer match as Guiliano, Giovanni, and Fausta talked, argued, and laughed while Cindy translated at a pace rivaling the Tour de France riders in the final stretch. In turn, Jen translated into ASL. Finally

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Deafness, Boars, and Handsome Fish in Southern Tuscany

By Donna Maderer

Donna Maderer
One of Us

By Karen Krull, Curator

John Waldo graduated from Pomona College in California, and then from University of Utah College of Law. Most of his career was spent as a trial attorney, but his hearing loss curtailed his actual courtroom work for a number of years. He received a CI in the summer of 2010, and between that and a powerful hearing aid, he’s able to function relatively well in most situations, including the courtroom. Before going to law school, and during a five-year break from practicing law, he worked as a newspaper editor and reporter. He is married to writer Eve Leonard.

John is heavily involved in advocating for movie captioning and was instrumental in testimony and written response to the Department of Justice. He is co-counsel with Disability Rights Advocates of Berkeley, California, in a class-action case filed in that state against Cinemark, with ALDA as the organizational plaintiff. The two individual plaintiffs are active ALDAns: ALDA Past President Linda Drattell and Rick Rutherford. John can be contacted at johnwaldo@hotmail.com or john@wash-cap.com. Read on to find out why John is clearly “one of us.”

Name: John Waldo

Where were you born? Rochester, New York, and raised in Salt Lake City, Utah

What is your current residence? Portland, Oregon

What is the cause of your deafness? It’s anybody’s guess. I have a slowly progressive bilateral sensorineural hearing loss, about 82dB, and I received one CI last July.

Age/year you became deafened? It probably started in childhood. My speech skills are too good for me to have been born with a significant loss, but when I watched TV cartoons as a kid, I didn’t realize Donald Duck was actually saying something.

Marital status? I’m married with five adult children in a blended family, two grandchildren, and a third on the way.

What is your present job? I’m a lawyer doing advocacy work for people with hearing loss. I founded the Washington State Communication Access Project (Wash-CAP), a non-profit membership corporation, and I am its advocacy director and counsel. I’m also counsel to a sister organization in Oregon. Along with Disability Rights Advocates of Berkeley, California, I represent ALDA in a class-action lawsuit in California against Cinemark, trying to get more movie theaters to offer captioning. After Wash-CAP filed suit in Washington against some of the major corporate theater chains, two of the major ones—Regal and Cinemark—have begun offering closed captions for all movies where the studios have furnished captions.

What is the worst job you ever had? That’s easy. In high school and college, my summer job was cleaning out animal cages. It was really crappy.

Movies you want to see again? I never get tired of “Casablanca” and “My Favorite Year.”

Books you tell others to read? Crime and Punishment, Oscar and Lucinda, and Ian McEwan’s Saturday are awfully good. I’m also a big fan of an Irish writer named Sebastian Barry, who I think uses language better than anyone else writing today.

I stay home to watch: [names of TV programs] “Mad Men,” “Parenthood” and “Modern Family” are the can’t-miss programs. I also watch a lot of football.

Favorite pig-out food: Salted nuts

Hobbies: Golf

If I had more free time, I’d: travel more.

The hardest thing about becoming deafened is: learning to accept that the problem is my hearing, not everybody else’s mumbling, and that I need to learn to cope.

I began accepting my deafness: sometime after college. I was a very poor student in college, in part, I think, because I was only vaguely aware of my hearing loss, and made no real effort to cope. I was drafted immediately after graduating, but failed the physical because of my hearing loss. I realized that the qualifications for packing an M-1 through the rice paddies of Vietnam were likely not too strict, which meant that my hearing loss was pretty significant. When I went to law school a decade later, I adjusted for my own hearing problems and did very well.

The worst thing about deafness is: the isolation from groups. I do pretty well one on one, but communication as part of a group is difficult.

The best thing about deafness is: well, the peace and quiet can sometimes be nice. But in my case, it has been the ability to combine my life experience as a person with a hearing loss and my professional background as a lawyer into deeply satisfying work.

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The Skyer Siblings

There was a time when late-deafened people were on their own, left to devise their own coping strategies or networking as best they could, in the framework of existing organizations that hadn’t been set up for them. Isolation, desolation, despondency—they were all too often forced to go through these alone.

That the situation has changed so dramatically during the past 20 years can be partly credited to the experiences of the Skyer siblings. There were three sisters and two brothers, four of whom were diagnosed with neurofibromatosis type 2 just as they were starting to map out their careers. Three of the four became vigorous champions of NF2-affected people specifically and late-deafened people in general. None of them saw their 55th birthday. NF2 ravaged their lives, deafening them and robbing them of their facial expressions, balance, health, and ultimately their lives, but could not touch their courage.

The story begins with Richard Skierkiewicz, Sr., of Chicago, who shortened his name to the more manageable “Skyer.” He and his wife Agnes (Shaunessey) had five children: Michael, Kathleen, Maureen, Mary, and Richard, Jr. Agnes died in 1955, shortly after Rick Jr.’s birth, from what doctors thought was a brain tumor, but was actually bilateral acoustic neuromas. What she had, and what four of her five children inherited, was neurofibromatosis type 2. She was only 24 when she died.

Richard remarried, to Jean Dunlop, who had three children of her own. It was not a happily blended family, as Jean, who also died young, was an alcoholic and emotionally abusive to her stepchildren. (Rick Sr.’s third marriage was to a woman around the same age as his older children.) The only Skyer sibling unaffected by NF2, Michael (born 1949) maintained little contact with his siblings and, since their deaths, has had no contact at all with Rick Jr.’s family.

Richard remarried, to Jean Dunlop, who had three children of her own. It was not a happily blended family, as Jean, who also died young, was an alcoholic and emotionally abusive to her stepchildren. (Rick Sr.’s third marriage was to a woman around the same age as his older children.) The only Skyer sibling unaffected by NF2, Michael (born 1949) maintained little contact with his siblings and, since their deaths, has had no contact at all with Rick Jr.’s family.

Kathy Skyer Hering: February 24, 1950—October 22, 2004

Kathy lived in Glenwood, Illinois, and had several loves: her husband, John Hering, her dogs, her family, her friends, and her work. She earned her B.A. in history education at University of Illinois, Chicago, then entered UIC’s master’s program in history. In fall 1975, she was diagnosed with NF2 and underwent her first surgeries to remove acoustic neuromas. She was able to hear in one ear until she suddenly lost her remaining hearing in 1978, after completing her coursework. The following year, now totally deaf, she enrolled in the NIU [Northern Illinois University] counseling program and, in 1981, earned an M.A. in counseling with deaf people.

She initially worked as a counselor and program manager with minimum-language-skilled deaf adolescents and adults. In 1988, she joined the board of directors of the Will-Grundy Center for Independent Living and served as board president several years.

After finding that there were no support groups for late-deafened adults, she organized one, which met at Ravenswood Hospital in Chicago. Bill Graham learned about the group, stopped by, and met Kathie. After three or four more meetings, she stopped coming, probably because of another bout with surgery. She gave Bill her list of 25 contacts, and he used it to round up attendees for the epochal pizza party (March 28, 1987) that led to the founding of ALDA.

Kathie was the first president of ALDA’s original chapter—Chicago—starting in 1991, and edited its newsletter, ALDA Chicago Style. She served on the national board of Neurofibromatosis, Inc., promoting public awareness of NF1 and NF2.

As she wrote: “I use humor to deal with the deafness and put others at ease. I readily ask people to write if I can’t understand them. I learned to sign well. I read as much as I can so I do know what is going on in the world and can share opinions…Do I experience self-pity and depression? Not so much now as years ago… I have this anger which doesn’t always come out at the right times—but if you cut me off on I-80 your ears would sting!”

After her death, Bill Graham wrote a poignant tribute, “The Gift of Kathie Hering,” that was published in ALDA Chicago Style, ALDA News, and The NF2 Review.

Maureen Skyer: November 24, 1951—April 6, 1996

Maureen was “the quiet one.” She wasn’t actively involved in NF2 advocacy or ALDA as Kathie, Mary, and Rick were. She worked as a telephone operator and Spanish translator in Los Angeles, but had to quit after she began losing her hearing and was diagnosed with NF2. 

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The Skyer Siblings (continued)...

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After her first surgery and becoming deaf, she took sign-language and speechreading classes at CSUN [California State University, Northridge]—all of the four learned to sign and speechread—and enrolled in a counseling group headed by a survivor of acoustic-neuroma surgery. Maureen’s neurosurgeon informed her that she had a cyst developing on her frontal lobe that required immediate removal. She refused, continuing her classes at CSUN as though nothing were wrong. The cyst burst, necessitating emergency surgery to remove what was left. As a result, Maureen developed epilepsy and sustained memory loss. At age 45, she was the first of the four siblings to succumb to NF2.

Mary Dianne Skyer: March 8, 1953-June 25, 2003

When Mary was 5, her left eye was surgically removed. In her teens, she learned that the tumor that had invaded her eye was a retinoblastoma. She received her B.S. in early childhood education from Illinois State University. The last of the four siblings to be diagnosed with acoustic neuromas, she became deaf at age 24, then earned her M.S. in rehabilitation counseling at San Francisco State University. She worked at the Independent Living Resource Center in San Francisco for 14 years, serving deaf, late-deafened, and hard of hearing clients.

As she wrote in 1992: “The way I see it, we all got a bad roll of the genetic dice...I’m at the point where I can feel more peaceful about living with NF2. Even with all the surgeries and being in a state of limbo all the time, life is still ‘worth it.’ This doesn’t mean I like it or that it’s fair. Life isn’t fair, period. NF2 sucks. How do I cope? Humor, one tumor/cyst/lump at a time. It’s overwhelming and I can’t deal with it in any other way. I have to break it down into manageable portions. I’m not trying to be courageous or inspiring. I resent that. I have enough to deal with, I don’t need a halo on top of it! Why do I keep going? Stubbornness runs in the family, too. I have things to do!”

Richard S. Skyer, Jr.: March 30, 1955—December 13, 2005

The youngest of the Skyer siblings, Rick was the only one to have children.

A champion wrestler during his high-school days, he was also a singer for the Illinois Youth Chorale for several years. When he was 20, a pre-med student at UIC, he was diagnosed with NF2 and became totally deaf. Transferring to NTID [National Technical Institute for the Deaf] and taking advantage of its support services, he learned sign language and speechreading. After earning a B.S. in biology from RIT [Rochester Institute of Technology], he earned an M.S. in deaf education from Western Maryland (McDaniel) College and worked as a teacher and laboratory technician in the Urology Research Department at University of Rochester, and analytical chromatography technician at Eastman Kodak Company.

Actively involved in ALDA, he attended every ALDAcon from 1991 until 2004. He founded the Rochester chapter of ALDA in September 1992, and led it until he became physically incapacitated. He endured multiple surgeries and a stroke that left him unable to eat. For 25 years, he was a devoted husband to Solange (Sally) and father to two children, Melissa and Michael, who also have NF2. Sally, who’s an associate professor in NTID’s counseling department (and born-Deaf herself), continues Rick’s legacy of advocacy, presenting workshops at ALDAcons and meeting with late-deafened folks in Rochester.

In August 2005, a Celebration of Life/Belated Birthday Party was held. Rick received over 300 cards and letters from friends in NF2 networks and ALDA. He died four months later, age 50. He donated his inner-ear structures to the House Ear Institute of Los Angeles, and many of his tumors to Dr. Mia MacCollin of Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, to further NF2 research.

Condensed and reprinted with permission from Deaf Life, October 2010.
Crappy Sign

Several years ago I quietly dubbed my style of signing “ALDA Crappy Sign.” The term derived from the Association of Late-Deafened Adults (ALDA), where other people sign just like me, or even worse. Recently Howard Rosenblum, the brilliant incoming CEO of the National Association for the Deaf, suggested that my term be made more generic and called simply CSL for Crappy Sign Language. That made good sense and now I too refer to persistently vague and misguided signing as CSL.

I used the term CSL for the first time in a public forum recently while speaking at the ALDA convention in Colorado Springs. It got laughs, as I knew it would, but afterwards people came up and thanked me for calling a crooked spade a crooked spade. I guess it validated their own fractured efforts to sign and made their world safe for mediocrity.

For many deafened adults, there’s undeniable practicality in using CSL. When I communicate verbally with others, there are many words I can’t hear, lipread, or guess at correctly in context. In such cases, miming, exaggerated mouthing and facial expressions, and exceptional slowness in connecting signs with words—the key characteristics of Crappy Sign—often come to my rescue.

I probably speak for Crappy Signers everywhere in saying that the most important factor for understanding a conversation is pacing. We cannot, repeat: cannot, follow fast signing. Even one fast sign in a sea of pokey ones can upset the applecart of comprehension.

Most sign language interpreters don’t get it. They are trained in rapid-fire ASL, perhaps the most elegant and evocative mode of communication ever invented. By association, interpreters are elegant and evocative when they use it. And the faster they go the more elegant and evocative they become. But in the CSL universe, speed kills communication. That road kill on the ASL Highway is my brain.

I’d love to be fluent in ASL, but I never will be. If I worked really hard I could maybe move up from CSL to BSL (Better Sign Language), but I doubt I’ll find time to try. Crappy Sign will remain my native method of signing, and in my eyes it’s a beautiful place. Hands move slowly, mouths go wide, and almost always I understand.

Ah, home.

Bill Graham is the co-founder of ALDA. This article is reprinted with permission from his September 8, 2010 Reveries blog at http://aldareveries.blogspot.com/2010/09/crappy-sign.html.

By Bill Graham

One of Us (continued)...

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How did you learn about ALDA? Christine Seymour, a former ALDA president, was the first Wash-CAP member. With her encouragement, I submitted a workshop proposal for the Seattle convention in 2009 that was accepted. I had a great time and made some lasting friendships.

In what ways has ALDA enhanced your life? Other than the friendships, I’d say the opportunity to do advocacy work on ALDA’s behalf has been very rewarding.

When I am depressed, I: listen to twangy country music and sort of wallow in it.

My most irrational fear is: electricity. I’m convinced that the little electrons are just waiting to jump out of the sockets and zap me.

If I could hear again, the first thing I would do is: listen to new music. I do quite well with music that I first heard back when my hearing was better, but less much well with newer groups like Arcade Fire that weren’t around when I could hear more.

The thing I like best about myself: that I’m doing something professionally that I can do well and that makes a positive difference in people’s lives.

Nobody knows: I was once a competitive bowler.

What I can’t stand is: self-righteousness.

Favorite memory: One of them would have to be the first captioned live-theater performance in the Pacific Northwest. Wash-CAP had been communicating for some time with Seattle’s largest theater about that, and after some initial fussing, they agreed. We had about 50 people ask for tickets to the caption section. Not only did a bunch of people get to enjoy theater for the first time in many years, but the theater itself also warmed to the idea and has become one of our stronger supporters when we ask other theaters to add captions.

Favorite saying: Bad deals with good people are a lot better than good deals with bad people.

The bottom line is: we need not let our hearing losses keep us from fully participating in life.
Chapter Happenings

By Ann Smith, Curator

Congratulations to ALDA-Midwest! Martha Mattox-Baker reports that the online group celebrated its 10th anniversary as an ALDA group in December. The Yahoo! group was started in February 2000, and the ALDA, Inc. board approved ALDA-Midwest as an ALDA group in December 2000. Great work, Marty!

Marlene Thometz reported on ALDA-Chicago’s election of officers: Marsha Kopp, president; Beth Botts, vice president; Gary Price, secretary; and Karen Krull, treasurer. Marlene also reported on the chapter’s holiday party, which attracted 46 members and guests to Mary Clark’s house on a cold, rainy December evening. Hors d’oeuvres were followed by decorated trays of turkey breast slices, filet mignon, marinated cooked vegetables, bow tie salads, cheese assortments, fruit kabobs, and other tasty treats. Mary’s dog, Cooper, quietly crashed the party by helping himself to a good portion of filet mignon. Thanks for another great party, Mary!

Marsha Kopp listed the following plans for ALDA-Chicago socials: January, joint town hall meeting with HLAA Lincoln Park chapter; February, captioned play at Victory Garden Theatre and dinner in Chicago; March, workshop presentation by Tina Childress on her life as a deaf audiologist and how to talk to audiologists; April, the chapter’s 23rd birthday celebration at Anyway’s Restaurant in Oakbrook Terrace.

Cynthia Amerman brought us up to date on ALDA-Sonoma and its members. After a fall program by Lisa Furr of Hamilton Relay in Fountain Hills near Phoenix, during which the group tried remote CART for the first time, members agreed to put ALDA-Sonora on hold this year while its group leader is ALDA, Inc. president. Marta Watson, ALDA-Sonora’s newsletter editor extraordinaire, is currently developing some wonderful ideas with ALDA’s Strategic Planning Committee, of which she is chair. Another member, Michelle Lewis, recently retired as ALDA Region 4 Director. ALDA-Sonora has made some strides in unofficially partnering with the HLAA Fountain Hills chapter. Fountain Hills President Liz Booth and several other HLAA members have attended ALDA-Sonora meetings, and ALDA-Sonora members have attended one or two of their meetings. Liz and Cynthia prepared a National Association of Social Workers Arizona chapter workshop on hearing loss that was very well received, and they are working with the University of Arizona and the Adult Loss of Hearing Association (ALOHA) in Tucson to give community workshops on hearing loss that are funded by an Arizona Community Foundation grant.

Ann Smith reports that ALDA-Peach members held their 12th annual holiday luncheon in December, at Longhorn Steakhouse in Tucker. In January, the Peaches met for a planning session and the chapter’s annual “unbirthday” party celebrating the birthdays of all members. In February, ALDA-Peach had a “book club” meeting, during which members shared information about their favorite hearing-loss-related books. Authors whose works were discussed included ALDA’s own Cheryl Heppner.

Send your chapter news to Ann at fabsmith@att.net by May 21.
How do you handle situations where you are told “Never mind” or “It’s not important” when you ask someone to repeat something?

Like all things, it depends on the situation. Have you noticed how much people talk, and how few of the words we (deaf and hearing) really need to understand and communicate? So much of the time it isn’t important. Hearing people can realize that they’re just yammering away and be embarrassed about that! So, often I understand it really wasn’t important, and I let it go. If I sense the speaker is frustrated with my inability to understand, I simply say I know it’s frustrating but what you have to say is important to me, and I really would like to hear it and communicate with you. If they still won’t repeat it, I just chalk it up as something I have no control over, and move on.

For years when someone would say this to me, I would get huffy, puffy, and say, “Oh, it was important enough for you but not for me?” and then walk away. Now that I’m older and wiser, I calmly ask the individual, “How would you feel if I told you ‘never mind’ or ‘it’s not important?’”

A couple years ago I invited a hearing friend, whose signing is very limited, to a home party filled with ASL users. I felt bad that I couldn’t keep up to interpret and found myself saying, “It’s not important!” I was kind of horrified because I hate hearing that myself. But the truth was, so much was really NOT important! So I guess it goes both ways.

At an ALDA gathering I attended, another person asked me to recount something he missed, which not only wasn’t important but was also somewhat complicated. However, I didn’t see how I could say “It’s not important” to him, considering how we feel about those words, so I repeated and rephrased until he understood. When I finally finished, he responded, “Why did you bother to tell me all that?” Sometimes you just can’t win!

When someone I know well says, “Never mind,” I respond with, “Oh, yes, something a deafened person loves to hear.” When a stranger says this, I reply with “Ah, once again proving most people talk to hear their own voices, not so others will hear something important.”

The last time it happened with my husband was at the end of a long day. We were both tired and I just became very quiet and was sad. At that point he got out of the car to run into a store for a minute, and when he came back he was very apologetic and felt terrible that he hadn’t been more sensitive.

In my home, my family members are trained not to say those two little phrases. It is like using four-letter words. Every so often there is a slip-up, though, and I have to point my finger and say, “No, no, no...Don’t tell me that!” I have pointed out that it is basically like saying I am not important enough to have what was said explained to me. “I” decide what is important to me. If a friend or an acquaintance says it, I say with a big smile, “Oh no, I want to know now! I want to understand what everyone else just heard. No fair! Tell me!” (Inside I am seething and thinking about throwing them against a wall.) The other line that is right up there along these lines is “I’ll tell you later.” Bleah!

When someone says “never mind,” if I must have information from the speaker, I will pursue it: “I’m sorry but I must know. Please write it down.” If it’s not important, I’ll let it go, or I might get the information from another source.

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ALDAAnonymous (continued)...

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It makes me feel angry and inadequate, and I want to say, “Damn it, if you bothered to say it, it’s important to me—please repeat it!”

With strangers, over the years I’ve become less sensitive to “never mind.” I pick my battles. When I sense that what has been said isn’t worth repeating, I don’t push, but if I think it is, I politely let them know that understanding what they said is important to me.

After many years, my family has come to realize that “never mind” gets my dander up, and they are much better at making sure I understand, often by restating in other terms. I got them over the hump by saying things like “unless you are talking about ‘violins on television,’ don’t tell me ‘never mind.’” (Thank you, Gilda Radner.) [Editor’s note: The late comedian Gilda Radner played the part of elderly hard of hearing Emily Litella on Saturday Night Live, with Emily often complaining based on a misunderstanding of what was said, e.g. mishearing “violins on television” instead of “violence on television,” and when corrected, saying “never mind.”]

I hear this daily, several times a day. Sometimes, depending on what was being discussed, I let it slide. Sometimes I get upset and tell them to repeat what they said. How does it make me feel? Mad. Like I am unimportant. Like they do not care enough to make sure I am informed.

In the past, I brought up this topic with my family, and they told me they got tired of repeating themselves when the words were NOT important. I miss jokes a lot. I miss small details that will later be brought up in a discussion. How can I know about them when I’ve been told it was not important? This is the biggest irritant of all.

I only hear this “not important” comment from family members. Everyone else is polite enough to repeat several times until I hear enough to get it. Isn’t it funny that we are ruder with our family than with outsiders? We need to treat our family as politely as we treat those at church or business.

At first it annoyed me, but it became clear that the people who do this (in my experience) are the same ones who don’t have that much respect for what I have to say, anyway. I rarely do anything, unless it’s a professional situation and the person responding in such a manner needs key information and is not being patient enough to receive it. In this case, I repeat what I think they’re asking until they can confirm that I understand them correctly. In personal situations it’s not usually worth expending this much energy.

I say “It IS important to ME! I just want to understand you. Tell me again, please?” That usually works

This is a frustrating comment and detracts from our ability to be part of our world. I explain that I would very much like to be part of the conversation, understand the speaker’s thoughts, share my own thoughts, and just otherwise “be normal!” Sometimes I say, “What you have to say is important to me, so please repeat it.” I think most people don’t realize that these words are dismissive and just get frustrated and embarrassed—that’s what my friends tell me, anyway.

I am well versed on all the “proper” responses to “never mind, it’s not important”...but no matter which response I choose, nothing can change that initial sting of those words my mind hears as saying “you’re not important.”

Next ALDAAnonymous question:
How do you feel around children as a deafened adult? Are you more comfortable communicating with kids than adults, less so, or about the same?

Send your responses to Bill and Robin at aldanonymous@gmail.com by May 21.
Life in ALDAland: ALDAcon Ain’t Over until the Last Missed Flight

By Lucy Miller

My departure from the Colorado Springs Airport Sunday morning was a true ALDAn experience. I, the once-intrepid traveler, made sure to arrive at the airport in plenty of time. I checked my bag, found the gate number on my boarding pass, went through security, and ambled to the gate. I took a seat facing the gate so I could see when people started lining up, and I started reading the Sunday paper, looking up at the gate every now and then.

By the time I finished the paper, the gate agent still wasn’t there, nor had a line started forming. Uh, oh. I walked over to a neighboring gate to ask about it. She exclaimed, “Oh, you just missed your flight. We changed to this gate and called your name just a few minutes ago before closing the door.” Oops. My mistake was in not double-checking the boards for changes.

Well, the agent felt sorry for me after seeing my face and realizing that I was deaf. She apologized after saying the next flight to Los Angeles (LA) wouldn’t be until the next day. We also verified that my checked luggage was on the plane I missed. Finally, after a half hour of fumbling with her computer, she came up with an alternative: take the next flight to Denver, where I could catch a flight to San Francisco and connect to another flight to the Los Angeles International Airport (LAX). Three flights instead of one, making it an all-day affair.

Upon my evening arrival at LAX, I went directly to the baggage office, expecting to pick up my waiting bag. Oops. My bag was already on its way to my final destination of Lihue, Hawaii. Over the next three days I called United to try to get it back, but it hadn’t been found yet. On my last evening (still wearing the same clothes and getting by on the few emergency toiletries I’d bought), United finally located my bag and told me that it was being sent back to LA the next day. I explained that I wouldn’t be in LA, as I was returning Lihue that day as per my original reservation, and to please hold the bag there for me.

Unfortunately, it turned out that my bag had taken another trip of its own, independently of me. We were finally reunited at my home airport after another week of frustrating phone calls tracking it down!

Dr. Lucy Miller, a marriage and family therapist and educator, has given a number of presentations and workshops for ALDAcon. Two workshops were travel-related, and she could be described as a seasoned traveler, which is not to say she is immune to glitches! She can be contacted at dlucy@hawaii.rr.com.
Being the wife of an airport/government employee, you would think that flying wouldn’t make me nervous. Ha! You’d be wrong. But since we have very little money, we haven’t gone anywhere by air in the past few years. However, driving? Now, that’s a different issue altogether.

There was a time, not too long ago, when driving anywhere alone was quite risky for me. We didn’t have great cars, so there was always a chance that the car could break down. I remember very well the time it actually happened. About ten years ago, we didn’t have a phone for me to carry—I just had to say a prayer and hope. So there I was, driving on the highway and passing East St. Louis, Illinois. If you know the place, you also know that it’s been rated one of the most dangerous cities in America. Bad place. Bad. We’re talking machetes and tuberculosis. OK, maybe not TB. I’m trying to set a mood here!

This particular night, as I drove past, I hit a bump and one of my back wheels exploded. What do I do? I thought to myself. I don’t know how to change a tire, no one is stopping to help me, I’m right outside East St. Louis, it’s about 9 p.m. so it’s really dark, I have nothing with me to contact anyone, and my husband Kenny just happens to be at a very small church that doesn’t answer the phone when there’s a service going on. Oy vey!

I didn’t have much of a choice, so I decided I would walk into East St. Louis and try to find a phone. Problem: I couldn’t use a normal phone! So I would need to walk up the highway exit ramp, try to stay in the light (street lights didn’t work in most places), find a pay phone, and then ask someone who happened by to make the call for me. No problemo. Ya think? Not to mention that since I couldn’t call Kenny, I would need to call my parents collect, try to explain where I was, and then walk back to my car. I was lucky in so many ways!

I waited for my dad to come to get me, but it took over an hour even though my parents lived within a 10- to 15-minute drive. I was starting to get worried when my dad finally showed up. Apparently, the man had said I was on Highway 70, when I was actually on 270. Dad got tired of driving up and down 70 trying to see if he’d missed me, and then finally told himself to just drive down 270 and look there.

Now, anytime I’m on the road, I’m terrified that my car might break down. Although I now have a Sidekick and that helps immensely, it only does text messages. I would not know what to do or who to contact! [Editor’s note: several relay services can be downloaded onto the Sidekick, and one of them can be used to call AAA if you’re a member.] My husband gets a ride to work with a friend, so he wouldn’t be able to drive and help me… but let’s leave this story on a positive note. I mean, I could go on about getting lost and trying to find someone to read my notebook, where I wrote my questions, and understand that they need to write their answers to me!

I’m not scared of flying—it’s the falling from the sky, crashing, and bleeding that gets me. But I’m a lot more comfortable knowing I can have a fairly worry-free trip via air instead of traveling alone by car. At least one of my cars…

Michele J. Bornert is a totally deaf
Leaving on a Jet Plane
By Jerry Barnhart

Editor’s note: This article originally appeared in the ALDA News, Summer 1998. Jerry was one of the founders of ALDA-Garden State and was the curator of the ALDA News “ALDAnonymous” column until his death in February 2008.

We have all heard (seen) someone tell the story about a deaf person who got on the wrong train or plane, but those are just stories, right? Deaf people are smarter than that, right? Wrong. You’re reading about one of the not-so-bright deaf people.

I fly extensively, going to conventions and back to Montana at least once a year. When I was single, I most often flew alone. Of course, you would think that I always let the airline personnel know I am hearing impaired and make sure they keep me updated on the flight schedules and changes, right?

Wrong. I am a typical male who refuses to ask directions no matter how hopelessly lost he is. Not only being male, but being a deaf hearoholic (one who constantly pretends that he is still hearing), I continue to blindly—or should I say deafly—go through life trying to pick up visual cues to get by. Most times I am successful—other times I end up in Duluth.

This was not my fault, of course. Let me tell my story and you be the judge.

I was flying back from Montana to Washington, D.C. and had a two-hour layover in Minneapolis. I’m very careful about checking the arrival and departure times and the gates when I arrive at a terminal, making sure to get to the gate in plenty of time. This was no exception. I found my connecting flight number and the corresponding gate and strode down to check in. There at the gate was listed my flight number with destination to Washington. I showed my ticket to the lady at the counter and she nodded her approval. I then sat down contentedly, reassured that I was at the right place, and became absorbed in a new novel for the next two hours awaiting my flight.

After about an hour, more people began arriving as expected. At the same time my flight was scheduled to leave, the people stood and began boarding the plane—me included The attendant took my ticket, I walked on board, settled into my seat, and prepared for a two-hour nonstop flight to Washington, confident I had beaten the system one more time.

About 30 minutes into the flight, I felt the plane losing altitude. But since it was dark and cloudy, I could not see the ground to be sure. I looked around to see if anyone else was noticing the change, but everyone acted as if nothing was wrong.

A short while later, I looked out the window and saw lights below. Lights very close. The plane was landing! I looked around again, and no one seemed to be bothered that this nonstop flight was landing an hour and a half early. I tried to calmly consider the implications and decided there must be one stop that was not printed on my ticket. No problem. When we landed, I would stay on the plane while a few people got off.

We landed. They were all getting off! Was I the only person going to Washington, D.C.? I finally swallowed my pride and asked the woman next to me where we were. I lipread “Duluth.”

I said, “But I thought this was a nonstop flight.” She looked at me strangely and said, “It is—to Duluth.” I was in trouble.

The people in Duluth were very helpful dealing with a distraught deaf man and managed to get me back to Minneapolis, but there were no more flights out that night. The airline put me up for the night in a hotel and arranged another flight the next day, all free of charge. I had no baggage (it had no problem making the right flight and was waiting for me in D.C., along with an angry friend who was supposed to meet me). I had no change of clothes, and I had to get up early the next morning to make my flight.

Of course, I told the hotel clerk to arrange some way to wake me, right? Let’s all answer together—wrong. Instead, I stayed awake the whole night to be sure I got up on time.

Later, I found out they had switched departure gates sometime during my wait. Apparently they made an announcement, but it didn’t do me any good. They did not catch the error when I boarded. So of course I was a completely innocent victim in this matter, right?

Have I learned my lesson? Sort of. I still don’t tell anyone I’m deaf, but now I check the gate departure board every five minutes. If it happens again, I hope I land in Hawaii.
My Assistive Listening Device Confronts Airport Security (continued)...

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technical advice:

• Would passing my PockeTalker through the X-ray damage it?
• Would the PockeTalker set off the X-ray alarm too?
• Was there a card I could carry to explain what a PockeTalker is and to verify that it’s not dangerous?
• Was there a rule not to separate hard of hearing people from their hearing devices? (I didn’t have the PockeTalker turned on at the time—I was wearing it in case I needed its help to understand the flight stewards.)

At the HLAA convention, I spoke to a Williams Sound technician, who informed me that X-rays would not harm my PockeTalker, so on the way home, I put it in the X-ray basket and passed through the security portal without setting off the alarm.

Often we say to ourselves, “I should write someone a letter about that!” Well, I actually did. This is from TSA’s response: “As the screening is being conducted, the screener should be describing the procedures he or she is employing. Passengers may request any enhanced screening be conducted in a private location, and screeners are required to offer private screening to passengers who are subject to a pat-down inspection of their sensitive body areas. Private screening will be conducted in a room or in an area away from other passengers, depending on the configuration of the airport.”

I also conducted a little research and discovered that the security personnel are prohibited from asking passengers to remove their hearing equipment. But despite this regulation, I have learned about incidents where air travelers have been asked to remove their hearing devices.

Information on government websites is not comprehensive and often omits important facts. Nor are airline and security personnel consistently or well briefed on hearing loss and the devices which help us communicate. Do your own research with your trusted audiologist and the technical support staff where you purchase your assistive listening devices before you travel so you, too, can pass through security without a hitch.

Janis earned her pilot’s license in the 1970s, and flying had been her favorite mode of long-distance travel—at least before the airport security experience in 2006. As a result of what she learned, her several subsequent flights have been uneventful. She obtained her first hearing aids in 1997, but by 2010, her speech recognition was 0% in one ear and 20% in the other. After many recommendations from friends and professionals, and at last overcoming her denial (see her article in the Winter 2008 ALDA News), Janis had a cochlear implant evaluation at the University of Washington, which offers a hybrid implant that does not destroy all the residual hearing. Although she qualified for the hybrid, she was advised to have a regular implant, which she did. At her one-month evaluation, her speech recognition had jumped to 89%. She is participating in a cochlear implant research project at the University of Washington and is happily pursuing goals she had thought were a lost cause because of her deafness. Janis started a blog about her experiences at http://talkshop.info/blog and has also written numerous articles and created some multimedia presentations about hearing loss, which can be viewed at www.talkshop.info/hoh. She can be contacted at JAMoore@talkshop.info and she is also on Facebook.

Deafness, Boars and Handsome Fish (continued)...

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we all ran out of energy and called “fermata,” “fine.” The Italians were a bit surprised, since we all seemed to be keeping our respective oars in the fast-moving conversation quite well. We allowed that we just need to catch a breath, and then off we went again.

Yes, I finally had boar in a ragu sauce. None too shockingly, it was a bit gamey for my taste. Nonetheless, I'm glad to say that I tried it.

Post courtesy of guest blogger Donna Maderer, adventurer extraordinaire; originally published on www.travelleadersblog.com, August 2010.

The Late-Deafened Experience: Car Trouble

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freelance writer and artist, and an ASL instructor via her business Deaf Expressions, which serves all of West Michigan. She lives with her hearing husband, Kenny, and three hearing children, Mollie, Jacob, and Natalie, in Grand Rapids, Michigan. She wonders whether there are any members who’d like to form a Michigan ALDA chapter. You can reach her at DeafExpressions05@gmail.com or visit her sites at www.DeafExpressions.net and www.MicheleBornert.com.
Mary Clark, an ALDA Pioneer

By Jim Keith

Condensed from ALDA Chicago Style, November-December 2008. This interview was part of a series celebrating ALDA's 20th anniversary.

Mary Clark is one of ALDA's earliest and most active members and has served in many roles both nationally and locally, including two terms as ALDA president.

Would you fill everyone in on the highlights in Mary Clark’s life since 1988?

I lost my hearing that year but gained so much once I got over the initial shock—new friends, new careers, new babies, just to name a few. I started giving speeches about being a late-deafened adult and had to take days off from my teaching job. I kept thinking, “I should be getting paid for this!” I liked the “people aspect” of presenting and working with deaf individuals. I eventually quit teaching and became Deaf Services Coordinator for Progress Center for Independent Living. They actually paid me to go out and do this “people” stuff that I loved. It was the most enriching experience even though I gave up my pension and my summer vacations! It lead me on the road to other things as well...resource manager for AT&T relay center, back to Progress Center as executive director (even as a soon-to-be mom for baby number 3) and on to executive director of Hearing Loss Link.

You weren’t at Bill Graham’s first party, the event that turned out to be the beginning of ALDA. How did you first hear about ALDA or the group that was to become ALDA? When did you become involved and how did that happen? What were your first impressions of the group?

I did not go to Bill Graham’s first party as I did not know Bill or ALDA at that time. I started to lose my hearing while teaching. A teacher friend who also worked at a health club told me about two funny men, Bill Graham and Steven Wilhelm, who worked out at her club. She said they were both late-deafened and hilarious. She also mentioned they had a self-help group, and she gave me Bill’s number. I had just learned how to use a TTY and, as terrified as I was, I called him and asked about the group. I remember asking him if he was old, as I was only in my 30s and worried that the group would be a bunch of old men. It took me a year to get up the courage to go to the group. When I did, I was hooked.

Tell us a little about how ALDA developed during those early years; what things stand out in your mind as high points on the road from “ALDA Yesterday” to “ALDA Today”? Were there any difficulties or disappointments as far as you’re concerned as the group grew and developed? What about major successes?

There were definitely disappointments as ALDA grew. We became kind of egoistic. I believe that was because as newly late-deafened adults we were somewhat oppressed and then after joining ALDA, our self-esteem went above and beyond what we sometimes knew how to handle. Things would also become a little political and there were “the groups” as I called them...kind of like high school where you wanted to be in the “popular” group. I was in the “I can sign a little and lipread pretty well and smile even when I don’t understand you” group. Being on the board was challenging...working with people who were not in my group was challenging. There were disappointments but there was lots of personal growth as well in learning how to handle those disappointments.

Now let’s talk about how things are today. Has ALDA become what you thought or hoped it would be when you were an early member? If not, what’s missing or different from what you hoped for and expected? What things have turned out better or bigger than you thought in the beginning they would?

We have always wanted an office, a director, and more outreach for ALDA. Many times we were close to getting those things but it did not happen. We did get grants and they helped with our mailings and outreach. Cleo Simmons was our angel (now my adopted mother) as she spent hours and hours writing letters to people she did not know and promoted ALDA. I think every president we have had, including myself, says to himself or herself: this is the year we get the office, the director, and the big bucks.

Tell us what you see for ALDA in the next 10 years. What do you think we’ll be like when our 30th anniversary rolls around in 2018?

I think we may have the same issues. We really need someone with time who can go looking for money and put a plan together. The other issue is that technology has come so far now that many of the folks in ALDA have cochlear implants and have learned how to cope and move continued on page 21
would lower their voices and talk to each other about how mean a mom I was. This once happened while I was driving around with my sister, who has extremely good hearing. She immediately turned around and lectured my kids about respecting their mother. She reminded them she could hear and they better mind me and her as well. This happened several times with other adults, with the same results. So when the kids started mumbling, I’d ask them for a repeat that I could hear, which halted their whole process.

As my children grew older, my hearing loss got worse. When they were teenagers they would sometimes still tease me from the back seat, but it was lighthearted and they would repeat for me. Music became a big part of their lives, and on long trips together we would take turns playing our music. I would use my selective hearing to tune out some of their music. When it was my turn, they would tune out my music by plugging in their ear buds. There were some songs we all knew (most of the time I looked up the lyrics on the Internet to get the words), and while we were in the car, the four of us would sing at the top our lungs. I’m off key and a terrible singer, but the kids didn’t care, so neither did I. Once they popped in a new CD by Eminem called “Cleaning out My Closet,” and I asked them if he said “Queen of my carpet.” That’s what we sang out loud from then on.

During this time I had to make a rule: while in the car, the kids could either have music on or talk to me, but they couldn’t do both. By then my right ear was my worse ear, making it hard for me to understand a front passenger, let alone what anyone was saying from the back seat. The kids took turns sitting up front, which included the responsibility of being my interpreter for the ones in the back. They are adults now, and the music or talking rule in the car has carried on through all our lives. Now two of them are experiencing some degree of hearing loss themselves and understand my experience better than ever, but I’m saddened they have to go through it also. Hopefully, I paved some of the way for them.

I give the music or talking rule to each new person in my life as we get into the car. I still travel often and things are changing again as I lose more hearing every year. I would rather be the passenger if there’s to be a lot of talking. It’s less of a struggle on my part to understand and it requires fewer repeats by the other person. If I’m the driver, I would rather play music than talk. (I listen to music from my youth or electronica with no lyrics.) Easy chatter is a thing of the past. No matter how much I love the person sitting next to me, I wish he or she would be quiet for a little while, because my brain needs the rest.

The new programmable digital hearing aids help with background noise reduction, but old habits die hard and I don’t always remember to put them in, so I invite people to remind me. I also have an FM system to help if I remember to take it with me. However, even when my aids are in and the FM system is on, hearing in the car is not easy. All the mental activity of trying to put words to sounds over road noise and such has me more worn out at the end of the trip than if had I gone by myself.

I can’t give up traveling any more than I can give up having people with me. I now have a brand new grandson in whom I would like to instill the joys of traveling. Communicating verbally will be extremely difficult for me with his child’s voice (when he gets old enough to talk), especially in the car, but I understand that babies can learn sign more easily than adults, and where there’s a will, there’s a way. I have lots of places I want to show him.

Chelle lives in Salt Lake City but is originally from Southern California. She’s 43, has raised three children, and became a grandma in November 2010. She is currently between jobs, enjoying skiing and traveling. Chelle is active in the Hearing Loss Association of America and is co-chair for the local Walk4Hearing. She recently started a hearing loss blog at http://hearinglosspages.wordpress.com and can be contacted at livinglife.fullest@gmail.com.
Chatting With Harriet: What’s a Twisit?

By Harriet Frankel

It’s hard to keep up with all the new computer communication terms. First there were “blogs.” What are they? Then there were Facebook friends. Do I know them and why do they want to know me? Now it’s Twitter and tweets. Well, I’m going to try another one that I invented, which has done a service for me and my friend Evie, because I’m deaf and she now has trouble talking and no one—not even she herself—can read her handwriting anymore.

Let me explain. Evie and I have been friends for over half a century, and when she broke her arm, I went to visit her. But from my point of view, the visit was a failure because I couldn’t hear her or read her lips. I sat in her lovely living room and balanced a cup of tea in my now-trembling hand and nibbled on a cookie, but we didn’t communicate at all. It was just a great loss of time with none of the pleasure of chatting.

I went home and put on my thinking cap. What to do? Evie worked for me when I had a business, and I know she has a computer. Aha! The next time I visit her, I won’t sit on her couch and sip tea like a little old lady. We will do what I do with my doctor when I need to know what he is saying: chat by the computer. Evie can still type and I can still read, so we can have a real visit—even though we are elderly, we both have all our mental faculties.

The next time I went to see Evie, I passed up the refreshments and we sat in front of her computer. I directed her to blow up the font size to 16 points bold, so I could read what she typed in comfort. Wow! We really had a great time. We did a tweeter and a visit, a combination I call TWISIT. Our longtime friendship was saved! I learned all about her three grandchildren and she learned about my granddaughter’s great new job. Later we skipped the tea in the living room and sat at the breakfast room table, where we had snacks with a glass of wine, celebrating our move into the 21st century.

All my deaf and hard of hearing friends who have buddies with PCs can just do a Twisit and enjoy an old-fashioned visit and chat by computer. Now all I have to do is learn how to write with my thumbs if I ever get a BlackBerry that I can’t eat and isn’t even a berry.

To chat further with Harriet, contact her at harrietfrankel@hotmail.com.

Mary Clark, An ALDA Pioneer

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back into the hearing world in some respects. On the other hand, people who are newly deafened are sitting in their houses in denial as we all once were and struggling with their jobs and family communication, as they don’t know what resources are available to them. So we still need ALDA and its peer support.

How many ALDAcons have you attended? What was your first ALDAcon and what do you remember most about it? Do any of the other ‘cons stand out in particular in your mind and if so, why?

I have been to all of them. The first one was here in Chicago and was actually called a leadership workshop or something like that. It stands out in my mind the most because it was where I met people who have become some of my best friends and still are after 20 years. I also remember getting up to speak. I was in charge of housekeeping stuff so I had the opportunity to tell everyone where the bathrooms were. Smile. I have been planning chair of previous cons, program chair, fundraising chair, and exhibit chair. I have loved them all. None of them were ever the same...new people and new experiences happen with each one I go to.

What would you like to say to our members, new and old (oops) long-time, and other late-deafened folks?

When you have crisis in your life—and I have with divorce and the death of my mother this year—my ALDA friends are the first to say, “What can I do to help?” That is truly a support group, and without having become deafened I would not have that today. Thank you, ALDA! Thank you, ALDA friends!
Brenda Estes visited her son and his family in Indianapolis and was pleasantly surprised to see her five-year-old grandson “signing” his name and demonstrating other signs he’d recently learned. Her seven-year-old granddaughter plays in a girls’ ice hockey league and is also a Girl Scout.

Ann Smith and Anne Taylor of ALDA-Peach volunteered for a “Communiversity” event at the recent Early Hearing Detection and Intervention conference in Atlanta. This was an interactive exhibit in conjunction with a presentation by Nancy Kelly-Jones, who demonstrated the diversity of communication methods used by deaf adults. The two Ann(e)s represented non-signing late-deafened adults and were joined by Jeff Boneu, an HLAA member who is a friend of Anne’s. Among the other groups represented were the Georgia Association of the Deaf, the Atlanta Area School of the Deaf, and Deaf Seniors of Georgia.

ALDA co-founder Bill Graham snapped a photo of former ALDA president Mary Clark and special guest Marlee Matlin (Oscar-winning Deaf star of “Children of a Lesser God”) at a February farewell party in Chicago for Howard Rosenblum, the new CEO of the National Association of the Deaf.

Muhammad Akram reports the following from ALDA’s International Committee (IC): Pakistan has ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The UN ESCAP (United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific) also launched a plan for 2013-2022 to implement the UN CRPD (United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities), with the slogan “make the right real.” On the request of Kathy Evans, IC members passed the ALDAcon flier on to many networks. The APCD E-café (Asia Pacific Development Center on Disability Empowerment Cafe), IFHOH (International Federation of Hard of Hearing People), EFHOH (European Federation of Hard and Hearing People), and IFHOHYP (International Federation for Hard of Hearing Young People) shared this information via their newsletters, websites, and mailing lists, so more people all over the world will know about ALDAcon 2011. EFHOH will have its AGM (Annual General Meeting) in April in Austria, and former IC chairperson Lauren Storck is expected to attend. Additional people from various countries are expected to join ALDA, but for many in Asia, the fee payment method is difficult, so the ALDA board has been asked to consider some way to make it easier for them.

Nancy Kingsley, ALDA News Editor-in-Chief, is delighted to announce the March 30 arrival of grandson Joshua Edward Kingsley, son of Sharon and Jeff Kingsley.
Warming Up the ALDAcon 2011 Engines

By Terri Singer

“Racing Ahead in Indy” isn’t just the ALDAcon 2011 motto; it’s a theme you’ll see throughout the Embassy Suites hotel in downtown Indianapolis from October 26 to 30. Signs, balloons, placards and other novelties will depict race cars and racing colors. Everything and everyone will be “revved up.”

Exhibit Hall

This year, exhibitors are being challenged to decorate their booth areas with a racing theme, and the winning booth/exhibitor will receive a prize from the Indy 500 gift shop.

During ALDAcon 2011, the exhibit hall will be THE place for attendees to be between Thursday morning and Saturday noon. Attendance prizes will be given away each day. As you visit exhibit booths, you’ll be given a numbered ticket to deposit in a designated container. At the next day’s luncheon, the prize winner will be announced (except on Saturday, when the drawing will take place at that luncheon).

A grand prize will also be awarded on Saturday, with the winner’s name coming from maps turned in by attendees who visit every booth over the course of three days. When you sign in and receive your program book, look for a special map within its pages. The map will show numbered exhibit booths in a variety of colors, and each exhibitor will have a colored pen that matches its color on the map. As you stop by each booth, get the exhibitor’s initials signed on the corresponding map space. On Saturday, sign your map and turn it in as you go to lunch. The winner of this prize drawing will also be announced during that luncheon.

Workshops

You’ll also want to attend many workshops this year, as the program features some very well-known experts and a few familiar faces. Presenters will include:

Michael Bower, BA, ACC, who has worked with seniors for 24 years, will discuss the risks faced by those with hearing loss for a misdiagnosis of dementia and the inappropriate treatments that can follow.

Tina Childress of Champaign, Illinois, will present a workshop for spouses entitled, “He Said, She Said.” It’s bound to hit the funny bones of all those with partners.

Drs. Mary Compton and Denise Tucker of the University of North Carolina Speech and Hearing Center will share the program they’ve developed as a special aural rehabilitation clinic for late-deafened adults who use cochlear implants.

Tess Crowder of Communication Access, Inc. in Tampa, Florida will discuss the CART, rehabilitation, education, counseling, and advocacy services offered by her non-profit organization.

Allen Ford, project coordinator of the Veterans with Hearing Loss Project at NTID, will conduct a symposium for veterans to address their particular challenges.

Dr. T. Alan Hurwitz, president of Gallaudet University, and Dr. Jane Schlau, principal of St. Mary’s School for the Deaf and an ALDA past president, will speak about the challenges of learning with hearing loss and teaching techniques that can help you.

Vicki Hurwitz will enchant you with stories of “Deaf Women in History.” She’s recently updated her repertoire, so you’ll get a full view of their accomplishments.

Dr. Ellen Kaitz, Martha Mattox-Baker and Rachael Morris will moderate a symposium covering the challenges of dual disabilities.

Heidi Lervik and Joe Pelatt from Cochlear Americas will cover cochlear implant technology updates that enable our brains to hear when our ears don’t.

Christine Pett from Med-El will provide a look at assistive listening devices and how they work with cochlear implants.

Dianne Senay from Oticon will demonstrate the astounding advancements in digital hearing aids that make them accessible to more late-deafened individuals than in the previous 10 years.

Our own Sally Skyer will once again discuss the ever popular topic: “The Resilient Self—Surviving and Thriving Through Your Deafness.”

Rex Waggoner will create a lively discussion with hearing partners and companions in his workshop, “Hearing Loss Is Not a Solo Act—It Takes a Strong Supporting Cast.”

John Waldo, an attorney in Portland, Oregon (formerly of Washington State), will give us an update on captioned movies, including the recent decision by Regal Cinemas to provide captioning in all its first-run theaters as the chain updates each to digital screenings.

In addition, there are two amazing events in the works but unfortunately, we couldn’t

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confirm them by the deadline for this issue. We’re also in discussion with intriguing luncheon speakers and will announce them, and more workshops, as soon as commitments are made. Watch for future eNews updates.

**Entertainment**

As an ALDAcon first, you’ll be treated to a captioned play on Friday morning at no charge! *Julius Caesar* will be presented at the wheelchair-accessible Indiana Repertory Theatre, right next door to the Embassy Suites.

If you read about the ’con in the winter issue of the ALDA News, you know the Friday night banquet will be held in the beautiful Indiana Rooftop Ballroom. Entertainment will be provided by the Vibrations from the Indiana School for the Deaf in Indianapolis. This is a singing, signing, dancing musical group with lots of drums! We’re certain they’ll delight you.

**Silent Auction**

We’re looking for donations from our ALDA members as well as ALDA chapters. Every year the members look forward to the silent auction. Keep in mind that most people fly to the ’con, so the items should be able to fit in a suitcase. Please contact Silent Auction Chair Jenifer Scott at jandcdog88@yahoo.com to advise her of any donations you’ll be sending or bringing to Indy. She’ll provide a shipping address.

**Indy 500 Bus Tour**

A dual tour of the Indianapolis 500 Speedway museum and Hall of Fame is scheduled for 3 p.m. on Saturday. Reservations for the bus will be limited to 50, so sign up soon. The bus will load by 2:30 p.m. and return to the hotel around 5 p.m., with time provided for visiting the gift shop.

**Publicity—the Key to Success**

Advertising is essential to success, and ALDAcon is no exception. The publicity committee, headed by Kathy Evans, is working diligently to target particular markets—including veterans, students, and seniors—as well as others. This committee needs your assistance to reach its goals. Kathy posted the initial flyer that is being sent to agencies and businesses connected to hearing loss so you can download it and either email it or print and send it through U.S. mail. If you can distribute these flyers to pertinent agencies and businesses, you’ll help guarantee the success of ALDAcon this year. For further information, contact Kathy at patches_alda@yahoo.com.

**ALDAcon 2011 Scholarships**

As in years past, ALDA, Inc. will be able to provide a limited number of scholarships to help those in financial need who want to attend. Applicants for a scholarship must be members of ALDA, Inc., and be in actual need of financial assistance in order to attend the ’con. Priority in awarding scholarships will be given to first-time attendees.

Inquiries regarding scholarship application should be sent to Carolyn Piper at wicwas@wcvt.com. While email is preferred, you may also contact Carolyn at 82 Piper Place, Huntington, Vermont 05462.

The deadline for application submission is August 31, 2011.

Donations to the scholarship fund are much needed and always appreciated. To donate, send a check made out to “ALDA, Inc.” to Carolyn at the address above.

**ALDA Reader Call for Submissions**

You have a story to tell and we want to hear it! Whether it’s an adventure you went on when your hearing loss hit (and haven’t we all been on an adventure?) or the journey of your loved ones’ acceptance of that hearing loss, it’s your story and it’s only yours to tell. Won’t you share it with us? We want to hear…uh, “see,” what you have to say. So please send it this way!

The ALDA Reader is the official journal of the Association of Late-Deafened Adults’ annual convention. This year, we expect everyone to be absorbed in reading this publication, and your story will help to make it happen! If you’re unable to attend this year’s convention, don’t worry—as a contributor, you’ll still receive a complimentary copy of the 2011 ALDA Reader.

Although the crux of the Reader is its articles, we are also looking for and excited to see your hearing loss related artwork, cartoons, jokes, captioning bloopers, photography, and poetry! If you have something creative to add spark, educational knowledge, or personal experience to this year’s edition, please send it to us right away.

Send your creative creation (catchy, eh?) to Michele Bornert at DeafExpressions05@gmail.com or by snail mail at 2133 McKee Ave SW, Grand Rapids, MI 49503, before June 30, 2011, and she’ll be sure to let you know it was received!

Please share this call for submissions with others who have a hearing loss or an experience with someone who does, because we want to hear from them as well. Happy creating!
ALDAcon 500 Club Announces First Winner—There’s Still Time to Enter!

Congratulations to Robin Titterington, winner of the free registration for ALDAcon 2011! Robin joined the ALDAcon 500 Club by making a deposit before the Time Trials deadline of March 1. Her name was one of many entered into the drawing, and she came out as a big winner. Now, she can apply what she had deposited toward her hotel reservation, if she wants.

If you missed that deadline, don’t wait to meet the Qualifications deadline of June 1. Those who join the club between March 2 and then will be entered into a second drawing with a chance to win a free night at the Embassy Suites hotel in downtown Indianapolis where the ‘con will be held between October 26 and 30. Even a small amount toward ALDAcon registration and/or hotel reservation registers you in the club, and you have until September 30 to pay the balance.

Gloria Popp, our business manager, will credit your account accordingly and when the time comes to make your final payment, all or part of the amount due will be ready and waiting. This plan is designed to alleviate the need to pay in full at the time of each registration deadline and to reduce or eliminate the need to pay your hotel bill all at once.

To mail in your initial deposit or to add to your account(s), use the form below. You may also register and join the club, or add to your account, on the ALDA website (www.alda.org).

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<td>1025 N. Canyon Drive</td>
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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 their chosen field of endeavor, (b) made significant contributions to their community, profession, and/or nation, (c) provided 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 they are deaf. Recipients will be chosen by the ALDA Board of Directors.

Nominations for the 2011 Award should be submitted by June 1, 2011, to:

Cynthia Amerman
King Jordan Award
2400 N Peter Seward Drive
Tucson, AZ 85745
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 placed in nominations? Yes___No___

Please provide the following information in a narrative attached to this form:

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: _________________
### Registration Form

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

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**I am:**

- __ Late-deafened ___ Hearing ___ Hard of hearing ___ Deaf at birth
- __ Bringing a hearing/service dog **(Dogs must remain on leashes in public areas.)**
- __ Member of ALDA chapter/group ________________________________________________________________________________________
- __ Spouse/companion (Copy and complete this form, select the appropriate rate, and attach with your form.)
- __ Newcomer (attending my first ALDAcon)
- __ Other (explain) ________________________________________________________________________________________

**Special Needs**

My special dietary needs are: ________________________________________________________________________________________

Allergies: ________________________________________________________________________________________

Mobility or ADA in-room kit needs: ________________________________________________________________________________________

Any other needs: ________________________________________________________________________________________

All workshops and ‘con events in the hotel 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 need an FM device. Check what you need to use the FM: ___ neckloop ___ 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 younger ($25.00) ___ Business membership ($45.00)
Registration Fees

**Registration Fees** includes Thursday Welcome and President's Luncheon, Friday Buffet Luncheon, Friday I. King Jordan Award Banquet, Saturday Award Luncheon, Saturday Karaoke Party, Exhibit Hall, and all workshops. Spouse/companion registration (limited to 1) includes all meals, workshops, and Exhibit Hall. Veterans: Time Trials registration fee level applies until August 30, 2011; then the Qualifications level applies. A limited number of scholarships are available. Contact Carolyn Piper, Scholarship Chair, at wicwas@wctv.com for more information.

**Time Trials**—before March 1; Qualifications—before June 1; Last Laps—June 2 to October 26

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**Time Trials and Qualifications registrations must be paid in full by September 30 to keep those rates.**

Partial registrations include access to the Exhibit Hall, workshops, and the luncheon on specified day(s).

| One day $95 | Amount due |
| Two days $190 | Amount due |

Day(s) selected: indicate which day(s) you will be attending: Thursday_____ Friday_____ Saturday_____

**A la carte meals:**

- Friday – I. King Jordan Banquet - $55
- Saturday Karaoke Party - $25

Total meals

**Total due:** Add membership and registration (or partial registration and/or a la carte meals) = $___________

Method of Payment

Credit card (check one): __ MasterCard  __ Visa  __Check  __ Money order (payable to ALDAcon 2011)

Card Holder’s Name: ____________________________

Card Number: ____________________________

Expiration Date (month/year): ____________________________

Signature: ____________________________

Mail to: ALDAcon 2011 Registration

1025 N Canyon Drive

Freeport IL 61032-7222

Questions? Email registration@alda.org

To pay through PayPal, go to www.alda.org and register online

If you’re making an initial deposit to your 500 Club account, check here _____ and indicate the amount to be credited toward your registration fee _________ and/or to your hotel reservation _________.

To make additional deposits, copy this section, fill in the information, and send to the address above.

Additional deposits also may be made through PayPal.

Refund Policy for Registration

Requests for refunds (minus $50.00 processing fee) will be honored until September 30, 2011. Contact ALDAcon 2011 planning chair Kim Mettache at ALDAKim2011@aol.com for consideration of unique circumstances, such as illness or a death in the family and for registration transfer information.

Reserve Your Hotel Room TODAY! Use Group Code ALD.

The ALDAcon suite rate of $119.00 ends October 4.

Reservations may be made online at www.indianapolisdowntown.embassysuites.com

Embassy Suites toll-free number is 800-362-2779. The direct number is 317-236-1800.

For more information, go to www.alda.org.
Your support is essential to help TDI maintain its advocacy work in our nation’s capital, Washington, D.C. Here are some of our goals!

- Current Bills in Congress on Internet Access (HR #3101 & S #3304)
- Mandate for Captioned Telephone Relay Service
- Relay for Deaf-Blind Users
- Universal TV Captioning at All Hours
- Captioning at Movies, Live Events and Online
- National Broadband Plan
- Modernized NG-911 Services
- And much more...

Join TDI as a member and help us fulfill our mission for accessible telecommunications, media, and information technologies!

Contact TDI:
Phone: 301-589-3786; Fax: 301-589-3797; Video: 301-563-9112; TTY: 301-589-3006
info@tdi-online.org; www.tdi-online.org

TDI - Shaping An Accessible World

One doesn’t discover new lands without consenting to lose sight of the shore for a very long time.
—Andre Gide
The mission of the Association of Late-Deafened Adults (ALDA) is to support the empowerment of late-deafened people.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Name __________________________________________________________

Organization: __________________________________________________

Address _______________________________________________________

City ___________________________________________________________

State: ___________ Postal Code: ___________ Country: _______________

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

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

Fax __________________________________________________________

E-mail ________________________________________________________

URL/Website Address: _________________________________________

ALDA Chapter (Name/None): ____________________________________

Gender: □ Male □ Female □

Hearing Loss:

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

Newsletter preferred format (select one):

□ Electronic (Email) □ Paper (U.S. Mail)

If paying by check, please mail this form to:

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

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

□ New □ Renewal

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

www.alda.org/alda_membership_form.htm

For Credit Card Payment by Mail:

□ MasterCard □ Visa

Amount _________________________________

Account # _______________________________

Expiration Date _________________________

Signature _______________________________(For Credit Authorization)

ALDA provides networking opportunities through local chapters and groups as well as at the annual ALDA conference (ALDAcon).
Be sure to check your address label. It shows the date your dues will expire. Don't let your membership lapse!

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

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 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.

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