My hearing started to fail when I was in my early 30s, which was 20+ years ago. Since then, I have gone from in-the-ear hearing aids to behind-the-ear hearing aids and am now a very happy bilateral cochlear implant user. The implants have giving me almost all my hearing back, and I’m so thankful and blessed.

During the deterioration of my hearing, there were a lot of dark years involving anxiety, panic attacks, frustration, and major worries about keeping my job. As a single parent back then, I had to keep my job to be able to give my son a roof over his head, food on the table, and an education. There was no time to think about me and how to cope with my hearing loss. What are the emotional and psychological aspects? How do I survive?

Being part of the hearing world for many years and waking up one morning without being able to hear my son talking to me was brutal. After a few months of dizzy spells from Meniere’s disease (an excess of fluid in the inner ear) and tinnitus (ringing in the ear), I had plenty of tension and stress and cried daily.

I also have otosclerosis, which causes formation of new bone that fixes the stapes to the oval window between the middle ear and cochlea. My first CI didn’t work; there wasn’t enough room to place the implant in the proper position. Again, I was blessed with a great medical team that didn’t give up, and about two years later, with the use of a new “navigation tool,” I was re-implanted successfully in both ears.

For many years I didn’t want to socialize and stayed away from gatherings. Just keeping my job in the hearing world exhausted me, and I only had enough energy to barely survive the work week. I was always tired. One day I decided that I would run during my lunch hour. I told my co-workers I wanted to be fit and have more energy and I thought running would help me with this. That was a lie; actually, I ran on my lunch hour to stay away from socializing during lunch. For that hour I could be alone and not worry about anyone talking to me and my not understanding them. By being alone running I reenergized myself for the afternoon work meetings. The good thing was that I got hooked on running, and I’m still running today.

About 10 years ago, I discovered ALDA through one of my audiologists. Wow! It was my very first support group. Things sure have changed for the better since. The most important thing I discovered as an ALDA member was that I wasn’t alone. I met with many people in my situation or worse. Through ALDA I got involved in American Sign Language classes and lip reading classes. The quarterly chapter meetings are so uplifting! We gather to learn about new technologies and ways to cope with our hearing loss, to support one another, and to have some fun. ALDA showed me how to speak up for what I need for better communication.

I can’t forget my first ALDacon in Seattle, with four days to mingle with people I knew and people I didn’t know, and to make new friends. There were many workshops on how to cope with hearing loss and how to empower oneself. I learned from plenty of displays of the latest technologies to help with coping. There was everything from vibrating alarm clocks to captions for cell phones. Of course, the

Continued on page 14
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Many things have helped me to cope with my hearing loss, but five Cs and a D have had an especially powerful impact.

The first C is *comradeship* (defined as “the company and friendship of others with common aims”), and ALDA played a very big role in this. Although I started to lose my hearing in early childhood, I didn’t get to know anyone like me until I obtained my first editing job after graduating from college. Another editor was also hard of hearing, and since she was considerably older, she became my “office mom.” Less than two years later, I got married and moved to Germany for nine months because my husband was stationed there by the Army, and I didn’t meet anyone else with a hearing loss for more than a decade, until an SHHH group (now HLAA) was started near our home in New Jersey. But SHHH was focused on maximizing the use of one’s remaining hearing, and by that time I didn’t have much left. I then decided to take ASL courses with the intention of joining the Deaf community, but my receptive fluency was insufficient and my life experiences were very different from those of people who had grown up in Deaf culture.

At this critical juncture, I discovered ALDA, which had recently been founded, and it was a perfect fit.

Lists of communication coping strategies, such as asking someone to rephrase rather than repeat, also helped in my day-to-day dealings with people, and I was greatly assisted by three technological advances in communication access—CART, captioning, and cochlear implants. (Another C, the computer, also became an invaluable asset but wasn’t developed specifically for hearing loss.) All these Cs have greatly expanded my ability to participate in the world around me, which has been further enhanced as a result of the D—disability rights laws like the Americans with Disabilities Act and the 21st Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act, which mandate provision of captioning and assistive listening systems in many settings.

Although much still remains to be accomplished, the five Cs and a D have led to significant access improvements in recent decades. When a friend forwarded an email to me about the “good old days,” depicting an early TV above a ditty that concluded “Life was better in black and white,” I wrote back, “Life wasn’t captioned in black and white!”
Hi there, pals! I am currently, at the beginning of March, a bit under the weather (NF2-related) and a lot over the weather (winter-related)! Please forgive me if this blurb is not as high-spirited as others. I will make up for it in our summer issue when my health is better and the snow and ice are long gone away!

This is a great issue with submissions from a diverse gang of writers! Thank you to all who submitted, and Eleanor, it is so nice to “meet” you! You will meet her too in Karen Krull’s “One of Us” column.

The theme this time around is what has helped us deal with our hearing loss, and I do want to tell ya how I cope.

My number 1 rule is, GET OFF THE PITY POTTY! Sure, I throw myself a party for, ummm, maybe 10 minutes. Then I flush that potty’s pitiful thoughts far, far away. I know that no one likes a pessimistic attitude and it will get me nowhere! So...when the “dog under the table” ignored feeling strikes and I feel the need to throw myself a quick party on the pot, I have a few strategies that help me through it. I reach down and love on the dogs that may actually be under the table. If it’s an at-home dining shenanigan, I’ll get up and start cleaning dishes or make myself busy doing something else. Sudoku is great!

Everyone tries to include me and I am grateful, but I still miss a lot! I constantly ask “what are y’all talking about?” but for the most part I just get told a few words about the topic, like “we are talking about so & so’s trip to Disney World.” Ok, I am thinking, but what are y’all saying about it? It is the absolute worst when everyone starts hysterically laughing and by the time word gets back to me, the moment has passed...it’s not funny anymore. This brings on my quiet mode. Sheesh, I am not a quiet kinda gal! I close my eyes, breathe, and meditate in my own little world.

I loved music before losing my hearing. Now that I can no longer hear it, reading the lyrics and playing the song on my “implanted iPod” brings an entire new life to the song! I was introduced to “If You Want Me To” by Ginny Owens in my last year of church camp, the summer before I left home for college. I bought the CD and played the song often, especially times in college when I was lost or scared:

The pathway is broken and the signs are unclear
And I don’t know the reason why You brought me here
But just because You love me the way that You do
I’m gonna walk through the valley if You want me to

‘Cause I’m not who I was when I took my first step
And I’m clinging to the promise You’re not through with me yet
So if all of these trials bring me closer to You
Then I will go through the fire if You want me to

It may not be the way I would have chosen
When You lead me through a world that’s not my home
But You never said it would be easy
You only said I’d never go alone

So when the whole world turns against me and I’m all by myself
And I can’t hear You answer my cries for help
I’ll remember the suffering Your love put You through
And I will go through the darkness if You want me to

Now, as I read and reminisce about those lyrics, they take on a whole new meaning. Know what else I learned? The artist is only two years older than me, and she became blind as a child. Like her, I’ve discovered that even if “the pathway is broken and the signs are unclear,” I can find a way to get through.
I would like to tell you what ALDA has been doing over the first few months of the new year.

I had the chance to meet with a couple of chapters remotely, and I really enjoyed the chance to talk with them and meet some new faces. It was a wonderful opportunity to use ALDA’s “whatever works” philosophy. I joined ALDA-Puget Sound via FaceTime and participated with ALDA-San Jose via a streaming of their captioned meeting (I was able to answer questions using Instant Messaging). I hope I can participate in more meetings this year—you can invite me by emailing aldapresident@alda.org.

In the last week of February I attended a retreat at the Northern Virginia Resource Center (NVRC) in Fairfax. The event was for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Consumer Advocacy Network (DHHCAN), which brings together multiple organizations that support people with hearing loss. ALDA has been active with the group, and this was my first time participating.

In the previous issue, I wrote about updates happening to the website. I hope that you have taken the opportunity to check out the new and improved version of www.alda.org. We are fortunate to be working with a web designer who has experience with hearing loss related websites and is easy to work with. One of the great features about our new website is that you can chat with other members. This helps us stay connected with each other. For example, let’s say on Sunday, June 22nd at 7 p.m. EST we set up a “Chat with the President.” After you log into the members’ area, you can join the chat room to talk with the president. Sound like fun? OK, let me repeat that so it is not hypothetical: Sunday, June 22nd will be an opportunity to “Chat with the President.” (If you receive this newsletter prior to Sunday, April 27th, this will be another opportunity for you to “Chat with the President”). I encourage you to access the members’ only area of our website before this time and if you encounter any problems, email me at aldapresident@alda.org.

This issue has a lot of information pertaining to ALDAcon 2014 in Norfolk, Virginia. We have a tremendous team working together, and I have confidence that this will be a great ALDAcon. Please take the opportunity to read through this information and contact us with any questions. At the end of March, the ALDA board will visit the hotel and meet its staff. Although ALDAcon will provide a wonderful program, what makes it special is YOU being there. People ask me what makes it so exceptional, and the answer I give is that ALDAcon is the only four days out of the year when I feel normal. So I truly look forward to October 8-12 and the chance to see old friends and make new ones.

ALDA hugs,
David

By David Litman

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Every now and then I hear another hard of hearing person say, “It’s easy for me to advocate for others but hard to advocate for myself.” Maybe part of the reason is that we spend a tremendous amount of energy trying to fit into the hearing world at work, at home, and in public. If there are too many hurdles to overcome in any particular area, we get mentally worn out. I think most of our challenges come from work and sometimes from home, so there’s not much energy left over to advocate for ourselves in public.

Another issue I have only recently overcome is being special or different. My sister and I were brought up to be humble and respectful of others. If we did something to gather praise we were also reminded not to get big heads because we weren’t special. There was no being self-centered, either—we were taught to think about others first, and standing up for them was okay because that wasn’t selfish behavior.

I discovered this buried, outdated idea last winter while going through old letters. Over the last year, I’ve thought of the letter often while trying to rewire my brain into a new thought pattern. My parents meant well, of course, but this thinking complicated certain areas of my life, especially my hard of hearing life. This year I retrained myself to accept a compliment instead of passing it off (I promise I won’t get a big head) and if I have special needs, I can ask for accommodations.

I know about all the hearing accommodations out there, thanks to attending hearing loss conventions over the last year and a half. Accommodations aren’t just assistive listening devices/systems (ALDs), either. The good people I met at the conventions taught me that there are several ways we can accommodate one another and each way is acceptable. Whatever works.

Over the last year, I’ve worked on these issues, bringing strength to my relationships and enrichment to my life. I state what I need in order to hear and stand by it. Even if I feel guilty, I make myself follow through because I’m not just standing up for myself when I make these requests—I’m educating others as well.

Now that my life is mostly settled at home and at work, I can focus outward into the community.

A couple of months ago I started rethinking a bad experience I had a few years ago and how I might turn it around. I had attended a writing workshop through our local community college. The workshop was for three nights, once a week, and it was held in a room with cement floors and walls that did not meet the ceiling, thus allowing bleed-over noise from the other rooms. I did everything right from showing up early to talk to the presenters, bringing my personal FM system, and asking for an outline in advance. However, none of my regular coping strategies worked. I couldn’t follow class discussion and the speakers were hard to understand unless they faced me (which wasn’t guaranteed, either). In total frustration on the third evening, I realized that the bad acoustics were the culprit. I was lost in a sea of noise.

A few weeks later another workshop that interested me was announced and I requested CART. They told me no way—it wasn’t in their budget. I should have geared up to demand my rights through the ADA, but my personal life was a mess and I dreaded the thought of yet another fight. I wound up moving away for a while to regroup and heal, and I let my request for CART go.

I haven’t been back to the writing center even though I’ve been back in town for a year, and I found myself missing the atmosphere. I used to attend a small writer’s group there with a handful of people (it was easier to keep track of the discussion, especially after I stated my needs), and the one-on-one critiques they offered were helpful, but the center’s refusal to work with me had left a bad taste in my mouth.

A month ago I wondered, why do I continue to let them limit me? Why shouldn’t I have the equal access everyone else enjoys? It’s time to fix a wrong. I looked up their schedule of events, found a workshop I was interested in attending coming up this May, and fired off an email to the writing center describing my last experience there and requesting my accommodation, CART. I advised them to get in touch with the disability resource center for the college and at the end I cited the ADA. It took them a few days to get back to me, which I had expected. I’m sure I shook them up, but I did it in the nicest possible way—I’m not out make...
ALDA Advocacy Follow-up

By John Prokop

I wrote an article for the summer 2013 issue of the ALDA News about a cruise my wife and I took on Holland America on February 4, 2013. I thought the cruise ship could have done a better job of accommodating my hearing loss, so I jumped into my ALDA advocacy role and tried to make a difference.

I made appropriate suggestions and gave feedback on the cruise evaluation form, and I also met with one of the administrative officers aboard the ship during the cruise. I never heard back from anyone, so I sent my ALDA News article to the corporate office, requesting follow-up and a response.

I was surprised and pleased when I received a letter from them on September 3, 2013. They assigned my correspondence a case number, and I am summarizing their comments and responses to my suggestions and feedback. Their original response was three pages long.

They first apologized for my not receiving a response from the Guest Satisfaction Survey that I completed, where I summarized my suggestions and recommendations and made a specific request to hear back from them. They were sorry to hear that the “Cruise Guidelines for Hard of Hearing (HOH) and Deaf Passengers” that I wrote and gave to the ship’s administrative officer never made it to their Guest Relations or Access & Compliance departments as I had requested. (I wish I had made a copy of those guidelines.)

Although they said they strive to be compliant with ADA regulations, they agreed that my cruise experience could be improved. They apologized that I did not receive a detailed letter upon embarkation, describing the accommodations that are available and printed instructions to take with me to the passenger emergency drill. They mentioned that this information is also readily available at the front desk and they invite passengers to request it if it’s not in their room.

They also mentioned that the ship safety video in the cabin has a closed captioning display option, but it has to be turned on. I do not remember seeing any indication of closed captioning on the safety video.

My comments and suggestions for future accommodations on board resulted in these actions and recommendations:

1. Movies in the ship’s theater: it is up to what their vendor stocks and sends. With 30 days’ notice to their Access & Compliance Department, they may be able to request movies with closed captioning capabilities.

2. Availability of TV closed captioning: This is dependent on the satellite reception and the networks that provide the services. Weather and programming can impede or prevent captioning from coming through.

3. Ship excursions providing written material for tours: This can be worked out with their Shore Excursion manager who, with 30 days’ notice, would work with vendors in providing written materials to follow along with the guide.

They said that if I was not satisfied with their response and efforts in resolving my concerns, I could pursue further action with the Department of Transportation or the Department of Justice, but I felt that they were earnest and fair in preparing this response and doing what they could.

It is important to remember that if you book a cruise in the future, you must notify the cruise line’s Guest Relations and Access & Compliance departments 30 days in advance, informing them of your needed accommodations. This will also require you to complete a special needs form before your departure.

I will see how well Holland America does the next time my wife and I take a cruise with them. I need to follow up, because an advocate’s work is never done. Besides, that it gives me a good reason to go on another cruise!

John lives in St. Petersburg, Florida and is a member of both ALDA and the Hearing Loss Association of America. His email address is jet@ij.net.
The Unfinished Story of Kristin Stansell

By Anne Thompson

This is the first time I’ve written about the horrible tragedy that befell Kristin Stansell, one of the best friends I’ve ever had. Kristin and I are part of a large and very close-knit group of friends from Emory University, and we even lived in the same apartment complex for a while. I spent nearly every evening with Kristin and her best friend, Nicole. When we graduated from Emory, we all planned to go our different ways, but only temporarily. I left for law school in Florida, and Kristin went to get her master’s in photography at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland.

This was the last letter I received from Kristin before all our lives were changed forever:

Merry Christmas, Anne!

I hope Santa was good to you this year, or have you been a bad girl? I’m sure you were good as gold and Santa filled your stocking with chocolate! I forgot to tell Santa that I was in Scotland this year, so he couldn’t deliver my stocking but I had a great Xmas nonetheless w/my flatmate and her b/f Alex. We feasted and sang and danced, it was great. I hope your studies are going well! I love you!

All my love,

PEACE, Kristin

Kristin also sent me a photo of my dog (I had the photo framed), bearing the inscription:

Anne, I was developing some film the other day and look what I found! It’s your baby! I love you,

PEACE, Kristin

For anyone who doesn’t know about Kristin and her photography, she’s an artistic genius. She has such a strong artistic eye that she can glance down at a patch of clover and instantly spot the four-leaf one. In fact, I used to have a photograph of hers showing two-four leaf clovers right next to each other. Unfortunately, I lost it. I guess I assumed that there would be plenty more to come...but maybe there will? I’ve seen enough of Kristin since her accident to know that she still has that artist’s eye.

The reason I’ve delayed getting to the crux of the matter is because it’s extremely traumatic for me. I know that, comparatively, I’m not the one who deserves sympathy. But the fact remains that all I can remember is flashes and vivid visual images of what happened next. I was completely in shock. For Nicole, Kristin’s best friend, it was even worse.

This happened at a time when several of us were planning to visit Kristin in St. Andrews: We were going to meet her in Amsterdam, then travel on to Scotland. But about a week before we were supposed to leave, we received a phone call from Nicole, saying that she had some news, and that we all needed to come over immediately. The impression from this phone call was that Nicole and her boyfriend were planning to announce their engagement, so we all arrived in a happy mood, only to have it crushed immediately.

Nicole didn’t tell us the full story; I think it was more than she could handle herself. I’ve seen very few friends who are closer than Kristin and Nicole. What Nicole told us at the time was that Kristin had been in a car accident and was still “asleep.”

So we went ahead with our travel plans. I had a great time in Amsterdam and expected that Kristin would be awake by the time we got to Scotland. We had changed our travel plans so that we would be staying at the hospital in Dundee with Kristin, so we checked into our hospital quarters.

It was not until the next day, when we actually saw Kristin for the first time, that the true gravity of the situation hit me. It was immediately clear to me that Kristin was not “asleep” at all, but rather had suffered a severe traumatic brain injury (TBI). Her eyes were open and I could see comprehension in them, but it wasn’t the kind of comprehension that could make sense of her surroundings. Knowing as little about TBI as we did at the time, our immediate fear was that we had lost Kristin forever.

I think I was the only one who saw hope, because although Kristin had her eyes open, she was rolling in bed and had no idea that we were even there. This behavior was a symptom of her TBI, but we didn’t know that at the time. It was absolutely terrifying.

Poor Nicole was a wreck. She and Kristin had exchanged diamond necklaces, one with an “N” and one with a “K,” and Nicole wore her necklace this whole time. But as I mentioned, I was strangely optimistic. While Nicole and I were out on the balcony, I told her that Kristin was still there. I could sense her presence.

Guess who turned out to be right? But at the same time, the most optimal solution turned
Life in ALDA-Land: I wish
By Norma Ortiz

For a single day in my life, I don’t want to talk about hearing loss. I don’t want to talk about NF2, either, because my hearing loss is NF2-related.

For a single day in my life I want to think about myself as a woman full of abilities, tenderness, and hope. I don’t want to think about myself just as a person who can’t hear anymore.

For a single day in my life I want to enjoy my life just the way it is. I want to love my broken ears and my fragile health. I want to enjoy the flowers blossoming and the sunset. I want to enjoy the book I read and the coffee I taste.

For a single day in my life I want to be patient with myself. I want to ignore the moment when someone shouted at me because I couldn’t hear. I want to say “I can!” I want the anger and frustration to stay outside.

For a single day in my life I want to remember who I am, because some days I’ve worked so hard to hear that I’ve forgotten what life is for. So I want to remember that I like drawing and walking. I want to remember that I’m not alone.

For a single day in my life I want to be happy.

Because I have faith, then...one day...I’ll feel no pain from my broken ears and my fragile health.
Thoughts on the 23rd Anniversary of the ADA

By John Waldo

While I want to talk broadly about inclusion and community today, I will speak through the prism of my own disability, hearing loss. I do this both out of a sense of immodesty and a sense of modesty. My legal practice focuses exclusively on how state and federal disability laws impact those of us with hearing loss, for better or for worse. Immodestly, I feel well qualified to speak on that subject. Yet on the modest side, I can’t and won’t pretend to have experienced the challenges specific to other disabilities. I would hope, though, that some of what I have to say has relevance for all of us.

Just a bit about me. I have been practicing law for over 30 years, and for the better part of 60 years, I have had a significant hearing loss. For the past six years, I have combined my professional background and life experience in an effort to implement the benefits and protections of federal and state disability laws, particularly in Washington state and south of the mountains in California, both of which have exemplary state laws that provide advocates with a few additional tools.

When Congress passed the ADA 23 years ago on July 26, 1990, it recognized that individuals with disabilities are frequently excluded, in one way or another, from full participation in public life. Congress addressed that reality by requiring employers, government entities, and many private businesses to provide some form of “reasonable accommodation” that will enable us to participate despite our disabilities.

We know from our own experiences that the promise of the ADA is not yet a universal reality. I am part of an online community of disability rights lawyers from around the country, and not a day goes by when I don’t read about another hospital failing to provide an interpreter for a Deaf patient, or a person in a wheelchair encountering structural barriers, or someone being ordered to leave a restaurant because of their service dog.

Yet we are seeing progress, and here I need to limit my remarks to the situation facing those of us with hearing loss. Many of our movie theaters are now providing individual devices that will enable us to read the dialogue and other aural information without disturbing the movie-going experience of other patrons. Portland Center for Performing Arts is now offering one captioned performance of each of its Broadway plays. The University of Oregon and Oregon State University are displaying the public-address announcements at their football and basketball games in written form on scoreboards visible to everyone, and the Seattle Seahawks began doing the same last fall.

When Congress passed the ADA, it recognized the important and fundamental reality that discrimination is seldom intended. Rather, discrimination against people with disabilities is most often an unintended effect of acts or omissions undertaken without considering the impact on them. Put bluntly, the problem is not so much that people are mean, but rather, that people are clueless.

So in regard to the obstacles that are preventing the promises of the ADA from becoming a universal reality, and with apologies to Stephen Covey, I want to talk about what I will call the Seven Illusions of Highly Clueless People.

Illusion No. 1—You are asking the impossible.

This is an argument that seemingly originated with a number of judges. They have looked at the language of the ADA to the effect that it is intended to provide “full and equal enjoyment” for people with disabilities. But, they have said, that is impossible, because blind people can never fully “enjoy” a sunset, nor can deaf people “enjoy” a symphony.

I want to just whack those judges. They are confusing perception with enjoyment. It’s quite true that I will never perceive the nuances of a musical performance to the same extent as someone with normal hearing, but I doubt anyone with normal hearing can imagine how deeply I enjoy a movie or a musical when, for the first time in 60 years, I can really understand the dialogue.

Nobody is more aware of our inherent limitations than we are. But the fact that we may never be equally able to hear, or to see, or to run doesn’t diminish the enjoyment we receive from being able to experience more than we have in the past. Our message is that even if it is not possible to achieve perfection, please do what can be done.

Illusion No. 2—You’re not missing anything important.

This argument jumps up in a lot of different contexts and guises. When our Washington group filed a legal action in Seattle asking the movie theaters to provide caption-viewing devices, a conservative radio talk-show host interviewed me and...
**One of Us**

*By Karen Krull, Curator*

This issue’s interview is with Eleanor Shafer, ALDA’s new Region 1 director. Eleanor found ALDA at a Boston chapter meeting in 1993. Three years later, she moved to Florida and became active in ALDA-Suncoast. Currently she lives in Bartlett, New Hampshire with her husband Dave and son Garrett. Eleanor has a ski-slope shaped bilateral sensorineural hearing loss. Ironically, she spends her winters skiing on the New Hampshire ski slopes!

Eleanor’s first ALDAcon was in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Since then, she has attended many ‘cons and hopes to attend them every year in the future. While at the South Carolina ALDAcon, Eleanor was asked what brings her to ALDA. Her answer was that ALDA has soul! I think Eleanor has a lot of soul, too. Read on and you’ll understand why. For ALDAns who wish to touch base with Eleanor, her email is emsgws@me.com.

Name: Eleanor McPherson Shafer
Where were you born? Dorchester, Massachusetts
What is your current residence? Bartlett, New Hampshire
What is the cause of your deafness? Lack of oxygen during my birth
Age/year you became deafened? I have bilateral moderate to severe sensorineural hearing loss, which continues to progress.
Marital status? Married for 18 years
What is your present job? I am a “stay at home” mom to an awesome 11-year-old boy, Garrett. I also am currently ALDA’s Region 1 director.
What is the worst job you ever had? Working on an accounting computer conversion after a concussion and broken finger from a car accident. We had to get the job done and there was no one else who could step in and help.
Movies you want to see again? *Green Card*, *Terminator*, and *Dirty Dancing*
Books you tell others to read? *Spontaneous Happiness* by Dr. Andrew Weil and *Your Life or Your Money* by Joe Dominguez and Vicky Robin
I stay home to watch: *Switched at Birth, Grey’s Anatomy, Scandal*, and *Blue Bloods*
Favorite pig-out food: Mint Milano cookies and shortbread cookies
Hobbies: I really love skiing downhill (Alpine) and cross country (Nordic), spending time outdoors, knitting, and reading.

If I had more free time, I’d: travel; I would love to spend a year in Ireland.

The hardest thing about becoming deafened is: communication breakdowns with family and friends.

I began accepting my deafness: when I met others like myself and learned more about my hearing loss.

The worst thing about deafness is: leaving the faucet running, not hearing someone say hello and not making a connection with that person because he/she assumes that I am being rude and ignoring him/her.

The best thing about deafness is: learning sign language and finding my people (those with hearing loss).

How did you learn about ALDA? From my friend Nini Silver. We were both working for DEAF, Inc. in Allston, Massachusetts and went to our first ALDA-Boston meeting together as part of her job. Later, I found the library at DEAF, Inc. full of *ALDA News* issues and read them during lunch. I would cry with the stories, and I felt connected to them on the hearing loss emotional journey.

In what ways has ALDA enhanced your life? I love ALDAcon and the way those connections fill me up for the whole year. ALDA has soul.

When I am depressed, I: can’t get anything done and eat cookies.

My most irrational fear is: that I will fall off when I’m climbing mountains and realize I am only connected to the earth by my feet. The sensation that scares me is the feeling that there is nothing behind my back. Yet I am fine with the heights from a chair lift at a ski mountain.

If I could hear again, the first thing I would do is: sit down and have conversations with friends and family and find out what I have been missing all this time.

The thing I like best about myself: is my ability to connect with people.

Nobody knows: that as a kid I was a very picky eater and now I will try most anything once. I try to eat healthy, and I have a green smoothie with spinach every morning.

What I can’t stand is: people who are not aware of their space and bump into me without

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As an American Sign Language (ASL) teacher and as a deaf person in general, I’ve found that almost all the people I encounter who want to learn ASL go into it with unrealistic expectations. They expect to take a series of classes and then be able to venture out into the Deaf community and converse in sign with little or no effort. And this goes both ways, meaning that they expect to be able to relay their messages in sign language and to comprehend all the signed responses.

For a while, I thought that the only reason for this was that people assumed that learning sign language would be easier than learning a new spoken language. Many think of sign as simply drawing pictures in the air. Sure, they’ll admit there are some things you must know the formal sign for, but that should be easy to pick up, right? It’s a primitive language—one that cavemen used—and therefore, it should be self-explanatory and easier to pick up than, say, German.

A lot of people actually believe that. I think that’s because many people generally view the main point of ASL to be mime or gesturing, so how hard can it really be? It’s like this grand game of charades. When they then decide to learn it “formally,” it’s hard for them to realize that they’ve had the wrong concept.

I had thought that believing it would be easy to learn a new language only applied to sign language, but then I asked my husband, who said that it often applied to spoken languages as well. When he had decided to learn Spanish so he could readily interact with the Spanish-speaking people he encountered at the airport where he works, he had signed up for a community class, excited by the prospect of being able to chat with other Spanish-speaking people when the class was finished. He believed that he would have a basic grasp of the language by the end of the class. When it was over and he took what he learned to work, he was frustrated that he still struggled to interact with the Spanish-speaking community.

I think it’s human nature—people want to master what they study at that very moment. Whether it’s learning how to speak a language, play a sport, or work the new computer, people (generally speaking) don’t have a lot of patience. So when they get the notion to learn a new language, they don’t expect it to be as difficult as it really is.

One common tendency is to take the new words you’ve learned and put them in a sentence using the word order of the language you already know, such as the common method of signing ASL in English word order. One factor of language learning that truly is a challenge is learning new grammatical rules and sentence structure.

Another area of difficulty is understanding that when you want to say something, there are many possible ways to word it. For example:

“I can’t believe that stupid guy over there is giving me a dirty look!”

“There is an annoying man sitting over there who keeps giving me a dirty look and it’s ticking me off!”

“Why is he glaring at me? It’s bugging me!”

“If that guy doesn’t stop staring at me, I’m going to get very upset!”

You get the idea.

So, too, in ASL, there is no one specific way that a concept absolutely must be worded. You’re learning a language; you’re not taking a biology class. There are nuances that you can only learn through interaction and practice.

Yes, of course you can be taught the vocabulary and grammatical structure. And if you study daily and immerse yourself with other signers (preferably native speakers), you can get a very good grasp of the language in about two years. It is said that fluency comes after seven to ten years of serious study. But you will always be learning. Always. That goes for any language you study. Heck, even native English speakers take English throughout their school years. There is no point where you can say, “OK, now I know it all” (although I do know many people who think they do).

So try to be patient. Don’t expect too much too fast. It’s not a skill like dancing, where you learn how to do a step ball change and then never need to learn that again. Language is an ongoing venture. But—and this is a big but—it’s a journey that will lead you through many wonderful experiences.

Don’t be hard on yourself if you’re not able to fully converse with a Deaf signer after, say, one 10-week class. That’s unrealistic. There’s simply too much to learn to accomplish it all in one course. You might want to have every possible bit of information crammed into every minute of each class in order to feel you’ve gotten your money’s and time’s worth. But you have to use what you learn. Every

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out to be the worst possible joke. Against all odds, we have Kristin back the way she used to be, but WE CAN’T TALK TO HER! What a cruel trick of fate. And the real question is: how do we overcome this problem?

This is from a recent email Kristin sent to me:

My friends always think about me, but I do need a community that I can talk to, and especially, one that I can easily understand. My old friends are VERY loving and try to include me but can’t for the most part, or they are unwilling to email—they would rather speak. Time to move on...

Is it really time to move on, Kristin? Your friends love you. Tell us. What can we do to make life easier for you? And how can we maintain our friendships? I think this is a question that we all need to ask ourselves.

Kristin CAN talk and she CAN lip read (with a bit more practice). Not only that, but she can also walk, converse through written language, become an activist, and even write articles for this newsletter. In fact, the only thing Kristin can’t do that she could do before is hear. She’s certainly surpassed her initial prognosis, and truly, the only barrier that remains is communication. And what a difficult barrier to overcome...

But while the nurses believed that none of these things were possible, I knew that they were. I knew that Kristin was still inside struggling to get out. And just like I knew then, I know now that Kristin will communicate with us again. In fact, every time I see her, her speech has gotten better.

As for all the readers out there, I hope that Kristin’s story can be an inspiration for others in their own struggles, as well as a reminder that, with enough determination, you can exceed whatever expectations are placed on you.

Kristin comments:

My accident was an incredibly abrupt change. One minute, I was a sassy, stylish postgraduate student in another country and the next, I couldn’t use my hands, stand, walk, talk, or hear. Everything I had been working towards was immediately erased and unable to be retrieved. It took time for my dominant right hand to stop shaking and for me to learn to use my left hand instead. I gradually found alternate ways to do things and am still learning how to walk after nine years. I had a very large group of friends before and they always try to make me feel included, so I cannot blame them nor is it my fault when this is difficult because of my hearing loss. Culturally Deaf people are impatient with my slow signing pace, and hearing individuals get impatient with the need to type or write to me. Texting is a fabulous approach, but it is still awkward. People make sure I understand necessary information like appointments, but they do not tell me casual things like jokes. My recollections may or may not have actually occurred, so I trust documenting the events of my life with photography and writing about these experiences from my viewpoint.

Anne Thompson is an attorney living in Atlanta, Georgia. She is a graduate of Emory University and Georgia State University College of Law. Her email address is annc.tatum@gmail.com.

Coping Through ASL? (continued)...  
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day. Go where the skilled signers are (not a bunch of students who are also just learning). Interact with people in the Deaf community. Become involved. There’s no point to learning a new language if you won’t have anyone to share it with. Man, oh, man! So many students I’ve worked have said that they don’t want to go to a Deaf event because they’re scared they won’t be able to communicate. But you have to go anyway. Why are you learning ASL anyway if you’re not going to actually use it with the people who speak it?

So will you learn ASL in a few months? No. Don’t expect that. Will you find that all ASL instructors teach how to say something in exactly the same way? No. But will all of your work be worth it in the end? Absolutely!

Just do me one favor: once you learn ASL, put it to good use.

Slightly revised from a blog article. Michele was born with a hearing loss and became deaf as an adult. She is a freelance writer and ASL instructor in Grand Rapids, Michigan, where she lives with her hearing husband, Kenny, and three hearing children, Mollie, Jacob, and Natalie. Contact her at DeafExpressions05@gmail.com and visit her blog at http://deafexpressions.blogspot.com.
**Getting My Access Needs Met (continued)....**

*Continued from page 6*

enemies. The writing center director let me know that they were in touch with the disability resource center and their risk management (I became a risk by mentioning the ADA?). She said she was working on my request, and other people might need to talk to me later on. I immediately replied, thanking her for the email telling her I knew it would take time and that’s why I started early. Things are in motion and I’m happy with that. They aren’t telling me “no” this time.

While I was at it, I sent another email to the downtown library, which was featuring a lecture by a local author. Since I hadn’t attended a lecture there before, I thought I’d work my way up in accommodations by asking if they had an ALD. I had no idea what the acoustics were like, so it might work for me. At the end of the email I mentioned the possibility of a hearing loop, which is the best ALD for me and others who are hard of hearing. I passed along a link to an article about a Colorado county that is making its libraries accessible with hearing loops. Later that day, the director of library experiences emailed me back, saying they had a portable ALD and would arrive early to set it up and stay to make sure it worked. She thanked me for the information on hearing loops. How super of them to give me such a swift reply!

I’m not sure how much I will hear at the lecture and if it doesn’t work out for me, I’ll take it a step further by requesting CART next time, since these are monthly lectures. Soon, I’d like to schedule a meeting to introduce hearing loop technology to the library. With valuable input from looping advocates, I feel prepared to take this on. I want more loops in my community, and the library is a good place to start, since they have access to a special fund for this type of accommodation. This isn’t just for me—I’m also standing up for others with hearing loss. While I can justify my actions in this way, I also know I deserve this. Culturally Deaf people are allowed their interpreters, and society should know that providing CART is like having an interpreter. We all deserve the same access.

Chelle lives in Salt Lake City but is originally from Southern California. She raised three children, became a grandma in November 2010, and enjoys skiing and traveling. She is active in the Hearing Loss Association of America and was co-chair for the local Walk4Hearing. She has a hearing loss blog at [http://hearinglosspages.wordpress.com](http://hearinglosspages.wordpress.com) and can be contacted at livinglife.fullest@gmail.com.

**Learning to Cope (continued)....**

*Continued from page 1*

Saturday night karaoke party was the best part, with a good time for all.

ALDA didn’t make living with a hearing loss better for me overnight, but sure it has made a huge difference in the quality of my life. Through ALDA I have met and befriended some great people that I wouldn’t have known if I didn’t have a hearing loss. Because of ALDA, I learned to open up to others about my hearing loss, accept it as a positive thing, and become a better person. Thanks, ALDA!

I have been blessed with a hearing family and friends that try hard to learn how to best communicate with me and not put me aside. Of course, it’s not a perfect situation every time; I still struggle with them at times and in large gatherings. I’m thankful because they try, and it has gotten much better since I obtained my CIs.

Learning to cope with my hearing loss started with my first accepting it. That wasn’t easy and happened after many years of denial, but when I finally did, everything else got easier. I have ALDA to thank for showing me the way. I learned to open up my mind and my heart to myself first and then to others and I realized I was going to be OK.

Looking back now, I think losing my hearing has made me a better person. I have more compassion towards others, and my loss has made me stronger emotionally. I’m not so afraid of facing new challenges because I feel if I can survive hearing loss I can survive anything.

Elsa was born in Portugal, now lives in California, and is married with an adult son. She likes running, reading, and spending time with good friends and is enjoying an early retirement. Her email address is dinis_mcviegh@hotmail.com.

**One of Us (continued)....**

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saying they’re sorry.

Favorite memory: growing up on a pond, playing outside for hours, family gatherings, having tea with my mom in the kitchen, my wedding, and becoming a mom.

Favorite saying: What a zipper head!

The bottom line is: Life is short, so ski the slope that you are on at this moment. Deal with the light and shadows you see and the conditions of the snow or ice that you are on. Most of all, enjoy it the best you can.
said, “Why can’t you just wait until the captioned DVD comes out?” When deaf football fans asked the Washington Redskins to caption the public-address announcements, the team said, “You don’t need to know what the PA announcer is saying to follow a football game.”

Those arguments profoundly miss the critical point. The issue is not the event itself. The issue is inclusion. People who just want to see the football game can stay home and watch it on television—it’s warmer, drier, and the beer is a lot cheaper. People go to the game to be part of a community experience. And yes, you can wait for the DVD to see a movie, but again, what you miss is the experience of participating with friends and family.

We may have lost our hearing, our vision or our mobility. But we have not lost our need, desire and entitlement to be part of a community. It is the inclusion that is important, not just the event.

**Illusion No. 3—There is no real answer.**

An argument closely related to the “it’s impossible” is what I call the “why bother” fallacy. In our case in Washington, the movie theaters argued that because there was no universal agreement on a single preferred method of display and because some individuals with hearing loss cannot read well enough to follow movie captions, the court should not require anything. Our argument, which the court accepted, is that the inability to do everything cannot become an excuse for doing nothing.

Now as an aside, let me say that some of the accommodation falls on those of us with disabilities. The old adage that “the perfect is the enemy of the good” applies with great force here. We have to acknowledge that our needs must be balanced against other legitimate considerations like cost and feasibility. An example drawn from my own work is that many if not most of us with hearing loss would prefer that the movies employ open captions, visible on the screen to everyone. The theaters claim that hearing patrons find open captions distracting, and this would reduce attendance. There is some empirical data to back that up, and the courts have generally bought that argument.

The bottom-line lesson for both sides is this: it’s not a perfect world. But it can and should be made a better world.

The close corollary to this argument is the “wait until next year” argument, in which businesses sometimes argue that at some undefined time in the future, there will be better, faster, and cheaper ways to provide accessibility, and we should wait until then. When the movie theaters hauled this one out in Washington as a reason why they should not be required to provide caption-viewing equipment, our response was not that “better, faster, and cheaper tomorrow” was untrue, but rather, that it would always be true. We hope that better solutions will appear, and that as they do appear, they will be adopted. But the prospect that perhaps we can do better tomorrow can’t be an excuse for not doing what we can today.

**Illusion No. 4—We know the answer.**

Even with the best of intentions, some businesses and facilities think they understand the nature of disabilities, and they offer solutions based on that incomplete understanding rather than on reality. This one hits really close to home for the millions of people like me who are hard of hearing but not part of the Deaf community and who communicate orally rather than through sign language. We are often offered either assistive listening devices or sign language interpreters. Both of those accommodations help some people and should be continued. But for those of us with significant hearing losses, our issue is clarity, particularly our inability to distinguish among the high-pitched consonant sounds that give meaning to speech. For us, the effective accommodation is captioning—putting what is said into writing.

The lesson here is not to assume, but to inquire. Some recent court decisions are really helping us out here. Essentially, the courts are beginning to recognize that nobody knows more about the nature of a disability and the appropriate means of accommodation than the people who have that disability.

**Illusion No. 5—It costs too much.**

Businesses often grumble about the anticipated cost of accommodating people with disabilities. In part, that may be because the costs are often overestimated. To a significant extent, though, the problem stems from the vague language of the ADA. The law states that architectural barriers are to be removed when doing so is “readily achievable” and that a business’s obligations end when the accommodation would impose an “undue burden.” But there is virtually no firm guidance about when a financial burden crosses the line to “undue” or when removal of an architectural barrier ceases to be “readily” achievable.

Unfortunately, the only way to resolve these disputes is to file a lawsuit. Sadly, the outcome of virtually all the cases that have gone to court is that legal fees end up being far greater than the cost of providing the accommodation in the first place.
23rd Anniversary of the ADA (continued)...

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One concept that offers some guidance is that if similarly situated businesses or entities are providing the requested accommodation, then the business being approached would have to show why it cannot do likewise. So whenever a business tells us that providing captioning, for example, would be too expensive, we point to similar entities that are actually doing it. That provides a valuable source of information as well as food for thought.

Illusion No. 6—It’s your problem, and it’s not fair to make it my problem.

Folks often think intuitively that a law like the ADA shouldn’t require them to bear any costs if they haven’t done anything wrong, so we often get told, “It’s not my fault that you can’t hear.” Indeed it isn’t their fault. Nor is it my fault. It is simply a reality, and remediing the problem is not something either of us can do alone.

In requiring businesses to provide accommodations for people with disabilities, the ADA is not about assigning blame. Rather, it is about allocating the cost of dealing with problems that are nobody’s fault. Congress decided that the most rational and fair way of dealing with the problem of accommodating disabilities is to say that this is a cost of doing business, to be shared by all patrons rather than being placed solely on the individuals who have the disability.

It’s also important to note that things can change at a moment’s notice, and a person who does not need accommodations today may need them tomorrow. Hearing loss provides a particularly interesting illustration of this, because under certain circumstances, virtually everyone is unable to understand what is being said. When we debriefed the University of Oregon after it provided captioning for its first football season, a hard of hearing student said that she had been going to the games with her father since she was a child, but she had never enjoyed them as much as when she could read what was being said and fully participate in the group experience. The assistant athletic director then added that it got so noisy in the stadium that he found himself reading the captions as well. The moral of the story: inclusion benefits everyone.

Illusion No. 7—Nobody wants this.

Providing accommodations is a two-way street—the accommodations must be made available, and they must be utilized. I can’t speak for other disabilities, but those of us with hearing loss have often failed to do our part. When the theaters do provide captions, only a tiny number of us show up to use them.

To a considerable extent, I think this will just take time. I recall that when Title IX of the Civil Rights Act was enacted requiring colleges to offer comparable athletic opportunities to women as to men, the colleges argued that far fewer women than men were actually interested in playing sports. The colleges appeared to be correct, based on then-present reality. But it turned out that college women had been denied meaningful participation opportunities for so long that they had simply gotten used to the idea of being spectators rather than participants. As opportunities became available, interest increased proportionately.

The one area where I fault some businesses—and some movie theaters are a good example—is a lack of publicity that the accommodation is available. Indeed, there have been some settlements of accessibility complaints where the business complies but demands that the settlement remain confidential. I have to say I just don’t get this—until accessibility is so universal that it is assumed, businesses have to let people know that opportunities have changed if they expect usage to change.

Nevertheless, much of the problem lies within us. For at least some people with disabilities, including many of us with hearing loss, isolation and withdrawal have become common coping mechanisms. We need to get over that and start actually using the accommodations that have become increasingly available.

Here is the bottom line after 23 years: the ADA is about inclusion. Things are far from perfect, but progress is being made and doors are opening for us. Let us go inside. And when we do, let us remember to say “thank you” to the people who stopped being clueless and made inclusion a reality.

This article is slightly revised from a presentation given in Portland, Oregon. John Waldo is an attorney whose practice focuses on enriching the lives of people with hearing loss by obtaining appropriate accommodations at public places. His work has contributed to the widespread availability of caption-viewing devices at movie theaters across the country and to scoreboard captioning at many sports stadiums in the western U.S. He has had a significant hearing loss since childhood and currently uses one CI and one hearing aid. He received the I. King Jordan Award from ALDA in 2011. John and his wife Eve divide their time between Portland, Oregon and Houston, Texas. His email address is johnwaldo@hotmail.com.
The ALDA Board of Directors Is Seeking Nominations for the Following 2014 ALDA Awards

The I. King Jordan Award—awarded to only one person each year at the discretion of the ALDA Board of Directors, the I. King Jordan Award is the highest honor given by ALDA. It is presented to a late-deafened person who has had a successful and distinguished career in their chosen field of endeavor; made significant contributions to their community, profession and/or nation; provided an outstanding role model for late-deafened adults everywhere; and 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.

Dr. Robert R. Davila ALDA Angel Award—presented to an individual or an agency providing ALDA with important services, funding, or other forms of support during the year.

ALDA Brainstorm Award—presented for a creative idea or initiative that has provided or will provide a significant long-term benefit to ALDA.

Bob Hawley Fearless Leader Award—presented to an individual for superior leadership in establishing, maintaining, or advancing an ALDA chapter or a group.

ABLE ALDAn Award—presented to a member of ALDA who has contributed time and hard work above and beyond the call of duty.

If you would like to nominate someone for one of the above awards, please send the nominee’s name and specify which award you are nominating the person for, along with a detailed explanation as to why the nominee is deserving of this distinguished award. Send to ALDA, Inc. Secretary Karen Krull at secretary@alda.org no later than August 1, 2014.

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Scholarships Available for ALDAcon 2014
By Carolyn Piper

It was not that many years ago that hearing loss had me on my knees wondering how, or even if, I could go on. And then I found ALDA and learned that there is life, and a good life indeed, without hearing. Step by step, ALDA has led me back to life. Along the way, a major joy was my discovery that ALDA is an all-volunteer organization. Gradually, as I gained confidence, I began to participate in a variety of ways after attending my first ‘con in 1997. And today, it is my privilege to be chair of the ALDAcon Scholarship Committee.

Each year, this committee works to enable members in need of financial help to attend ALDAcon. And each year I realize anew how wonderful my “job” as chair of this committee is as I meet newcomers to ALDA at the ‘con and see them reaping the clear benefits that ALDA has to offer us as late-deafened adults.

This year’s ALDAcon will be held in Norfolk, Virginia from October 8-12. For more information, visit the ALDA website at www.alda.org and click on the Conference icon at the top of the page. As usual, ALDAcon will feature numerous workshops and speakers, with all events being completely accessible by looping, sign language interpreting, and CART (realtime translation of the speaker’s words displayed on large screens).

The beautiful Marriott Norfolk Waterside Hotel is located in downtown Norfolk, one block from the waterfront and within walking distance of restaurants, bars, delis, and an indoor shopping mall. Additional attractions in Norfolk are performing art center venues; a naval museum; the decommissioned battleship U.S.S. Wisconsin; and the famed 130 mermaid statues strategically placed throughout the city, 25 of them in the downtown Norfolk area.

ALDA will be offering a limited number of scholarships to those who want to attend ALDAcon but need financial assistance to do so. Applicants must be members of ALDA, Inc., and be in actual need of financial assistance. Priority in awarding scholarships is given to first-time attendees.

Inquiries regarding scholarship applications may be sent to cynthiaamerman@gmail.com. While email is preferred, you may also write to Cynthia Amerman, 2400 N. Peter Seward Drive, Tucson, AZ 85745.

The deadline for scholarship application submissions is August 1, 2014.

The ongoing ability of ALDA to provide scholarship assistance depends on donations. All donations to the scholarship fund are tax-deductible and very much needed and appreciated. For information on making a donation, contact Cynthia at one of the addresses above.

Seeking an ALDAcon Roommate?

For many of us, attending ALDAcon is more financially feasible (and fun) when we share rooms with others in order to reduce the cost of the hotel stay. Those of you who would like to do so and need help locating a roommate can contact the ALDAcon Roommate Coordinator, Carolyn Piper, at wicwas@wcvt.com for more information.
You have imagination and creativity
And we want to share in it

If you can draw a picture with words, a pen, or a camera - if you can write a poem, tell a joke or write about a part of your life, we hope that you’ll share it with your fellow ALDAns in the Reader!

Yes, it’s time once again to compile contributions for the Reader for ALDacon 2014 to be held in Norfolk, Virginia in October. It’s the official publication for every Association of Late-Deafened Adults convention, and everyone looks forward to seeing it in their tote bags at registration.

We’re anxious to publish your stories, artwork, cartoons, jokes, captioning bloopers, poetry or photography. Life is an adventure and we want to “hear” about yours. Anything creative, original, or imagined that relates to hearing loss will be most welcome.

Send your masterpieces to Terri Singer at TLSEVIN@aol.com, or mail to her at 1336 Carousel Court, Evansville, IN 47715. You may also contact committee members Belinda Miller at belindamiller17@gmail.com or Heidi Adams at hadamscsh@gmail.com. The submission deadline is August 1. Please include a brief bio - such as where you live, number of years as an ALDAn, hearing loss status - whatever you want to include with your entry in the Reader. Please note that the committee reserves the right to edit all submissions as needed.

If you’re unable to attend ALDacon 2014, we’ll mail a complimentary copy of the Reader to you. Be sure to include your mailing address with your submission.

Don’t wait! Get those creative juices flowing and the imagination soaring right away. The committee is eager to see what you have to share!
DONATIONS ARE NEEDED FOR THE ALDACON 2014 SILENT AUCTION!

ALDAcon 2014 will be held at the Marriott Norfolk Waterside in Norfolk, VA on October 8-12, 2014. The convention will include the traditional ALDA Silent Auction to raise much-needed funds and we need your help! Want to help, but need some ideas? Consider the following:

- Something homemade
- Something yummy
- A game
- A book
- A scarf
- A poster
- A gift certificate
- Chapter/Group donations
- Buy from local stores with your friends

What you donate for the auction helps ALDA raise money to support its members!

Please contact Linda Drattell at lindra@comcast.net for more information.

We will soon provide you with information on where to send your Silent Auction donation.

THANK YOU!
26th Annual International
ALDAcon Registration
Oct 8 - 12, 2014
Marriott Norfolk Waterside Hotel
Norfolk, Virginia

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Join or Renew ALDA Inc. Membership: (Please circle one)
General $30 Senior(over 61) $25 Veteran $25 Business $50 ______

Lifetime Membership: Bronze $500 Silver $1500 Gold $3000 ______

I am a member of an ALDA Chapter/Group: ______

Hearing Status (circle): Late-Deafened Hearing Hard of Hearing Born Deaf ______

I am a Personal Care Attendant: YES / NO ______

This is my first ALDAcon: YES / NO ______

Hearing / Service Dog: YES / NO ______

Free registration but must purchase meals

You MUST indicate & dog must stay on leash.

Full Registration prices include workshops, exhibits, entertainment, & speakers.

Meals are included in registration fee for the following events:
* Wednesday Welcome Reception
* Thursday Continental Breakfast
* Thursday President’s Luncheon
* Friday Appreciation Luncheon
* Friday I. King Jordan Award Banquet
* Saturday Awards Luncheon
* Saturday Karaoke Party
* Sunday Farewell Brunch

ALDA MEMBER REGISTRATION:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Start Date - End Date</th>
<th>Price</th>
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<td>6/1/2014 - 8/31/2014</td>
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<td>9/1/2014 - Onsite</td>
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NON-MEMBER REGISTRATION:

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**VETERAN REGISTRATION:**

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**SPOUSE / SO:** limited to one companion per Full Registration:

<table>
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<th>Date Range</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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</table>

**SINGLE DAYS:** Please Circle Days

- One Day: Thurs or Fri or Sat $65
- Two Days: Thurs/Fri or Fri/Sat $125
- Three Days: Thur, Fri, & Sat $185

**A LA CARTE Meals/Events:** Specify number of tickets for each additional meal or event

- Thursday Continental Breakfast / President's Luncheon $40 Oty:_____ $
- Friday Appreciation Luncheon $40 Oty:_____ $
- Friday I. King Jordan Award Banquet $60 Oty:_____ $
- Saturday Award Luncheon $40 Oty:_____ $
- Saturday Karaoke Party $35 Oty:_____ $
- Sunday Farewell Brunch $35 Oty:_____ $

**Optional Items:**

- Thurs. Oct. 9th at 6pm for 2 hour Sunset Sail $22 Oty:_____ $ Minimum of 15; snack bar available for purchase of snacks and/or drinks. More info at www.americanrover.com
- Sat. Oct. 11th at 2:30pm for Wine and Paint $40 Oty:_____ $ 2 1/2 hour gathering includes assortment of wines, soft drinks, nibblers, 16x20 canvas and paint supplies for painting a mermaid

**Tax-Deductible Donation** $____

**Please sum complete order here** Grand Total: $____

Dietary needs are:

Allergies:

ADA room kit needed: (Please circle) YES NO

Mobility accessible room needed: (Please circle) YES NO

Any other needs:
All workshops / events will feature sign language interpreters and CART (Communication Access Realtime Translation). Assistive listening devices are available at no cost, but to ensure enough systems are available you MUST reserve now. Also, to assure return of all assistive listening devices, the attendee will be asked to turn in his/her drivers license. This will be returned when the equipment is turned in.

I would like to use an FM system (please circle) YES / NO
with (please circle) Neckloop Headphones Other
No, I have my own

ROOMMATE MATCH: By circling YES below, I agree to allow the ALDacon roommate coordinator to share my information via email with any ALDA attendee of the same gender. Also, I agree to coordinate with my potential roommate to determine if we are a match. We will discuss items such as service animals, allergies, smoking, etc. We will then notify the roommate coordinator by email of our decision after determining if we agree to room together & share expenses. NOTE: All room reservations are the responsibility of the agreed-upon roommates.

I would like help finding a Roommate (please circle) YES / NO
I am a (please circle) MALE / FEMALE

Refund Policy

Requests for refunds (minus $50.00 handling and processing fee) will be honored until September 1, 2014. NO refunds will be given after September 1, 2014. Contact ALDacon 2014 co-planning chair Brenda Estes at bestes1314@yahoo.com for consideration of unique circumstances, such as illness or a death in the family and for registration transfer information.

EZ Pay Plan

If you wish to make payments toward your registration and/or hotel costs, please use the fields below. Total registration must be received by August 31st using this multiple payment plan.

Payment toward REGISTRATION

Payment toward HOTEL
Total this payment:

Method of Payment:

Check enclosed: # dated for $  
CC# Expiration date: Security Code:

Print name on credit card:

Print form and mail to:

ALDacon 2014 Registration
c/o Gloria Popp
1025 N Canyon Drive
Freeport, IL 61032-7222 USA

 Reserve Your Hotel Room TODAY!

Reserve your room at the Marriott Norfolk Waterside Hotel TODAY! Use the following group name: LDALDA. The ALDacon room rate of $99.00 + taxes ends 9/30/14. Reservations may be made online at http://www.marriott.com/ofwsp Marriott Toll-free number is 800-880-1885. The direct number is 757-627-4200. For more information, go to www.alda.org
Chapter Happenings and GA to SK

By Ann Smith, Curator

Francine Stieglitz reported from ALDA-Boston. The chapter had a Holiday Party on December 7, 2013 at the home of member Ann Tanona. ALDA-Boston supplied the main courses, side dishes, and drinks, and guests brought appetizers and desserts. From Vermont came four different kinds of hard cider to sample. The chapter’s first event of 2014 was the annual New Year’s Brunch on January 5. More than 30 members attended and heard guest speaker Larry Goldberg, director of community engagement at Boston’s public media leader, WGBH. Larry spoke about captioning, which started at WGBH, and provided several handouts, including one indicating whom to contact at the various stations. A lot of that information is being put on www.aldboston.org. A lively question-and-answer session took place, and Larry could probably have continued for another hour if the chapter hadn’t had to vacate the room.

“Once” had both a captioned performance and an ASL performance, and many ALDA-Boston members took advantage of the discounted rate provided by Broadway in Boston. On March 22, member Ellen Perkins, the hard of hearing independent living specialist at the Center for Living & Working, Inc., was scheduled to tell chapter members about centers for independent living in Massachusetts, the population they serve, and why Massachusetts is fortunate to have CILs. The annual business meeting and election of officers will take place on April 26, featuring guest speaker Nancy Eaton, Eaton Court Reporting Services, who will tell members everything they never knew about CART.

Rachael Morris brought us up to date on ALDA-Carolina Flight’s activities. In December, the Olive Garden in Salisbury, North Carolina hosted the chapter’s holiday gathering. At the February meeting, seven members were present, plus two new faces. A March 8 meeting was scheduled for the regular meeting location in Lexington, North Carolina.

Tess Crowder informed us that ALDA Suncoast hit the ground running in January 2014 with a new President, Chris Littlewood. The year began with a board meeting focused on outreach and building membership. Chris was recently elected vice president of ALDA, Inc. and is also involved in several organizations advocating for people with hearing loss, including the Florida Coordinating Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. His passion is spreading awareness about emergency preparedness for people with disabilities. Tess is the chapter’s vice president and was awarded the Able ALDAn Award at ALDAcon 2013. She is the founder of Communication Access, Inc., a nonprofit organization that provides communication access and other services for people with hearing loss. She provides CART for ALDA-Suncoast’s board meetings and monthly chapter meetings and also serves as president of the Hearing Loss Association of Florida.

The chapter’s secretary, Cindy Dixon, has a master’s degree in library and information science and self-published several books. Her first one, My Hard of Hearing Life: Stories from Behind the Hearing Aids, is a humorous and touching account of experiences with hearing loss, and can be purchased from Amazon.com. Marion Roset, the chapter treasurer, has been involved with ALDA Suncoast for almost 20 years and is also very active in the Tampa and Clearwater chapters of the Hearing Loss Association of America. Tim Kimball, Bill Reese, Cindy Henrion, and Marilyn Tanfield are ALDA-Suncoast’s members-at-large and have been involved in chapter activities for many years. Tim is a former vice president; Bill was president for the past eight years and is the recipient of the Fearless Leader Award from ALDA, Inc. He also currently serves as vice president of Communication Access, Inc. Cindy served as the chapter president for five years and is one of the founders of Advocure NF2, a nonprofit organization raising funds to find a cure for Neurofibromatosis 2.

Chris Littlewood added that ALDA Suncoast has a new website at www.aldasuncoast.com and is on Facebook as ALDA Suncoasters-FL Chapter. The chapter meets the second Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. and has a north county coffee night (second Wednesday) and a south county coffee night (4th Wednesday) every month. It also planned to lend support to Communication Access, Inc. for a dinner and drinks to support the deaf and hard of hearing community in late February and to HLA-FL’s Hearing Loss Expo in Bradenton in March.

Jim Stansell reported on ALDA-Peach’s recent meetings. In January the Peaches held their annual Continued on page 25
A happy life consists not in the absence, but in the mastery of hardships.
—Helen Keller

Chapter Happenings and GA to SK (continued)...
Continued from page 24

planning meeting and unbirthday party. In February, members shared information about some of the books that they were reading. Some of the people and their chosen books include: Marge Tamas—Isaac’s Storm by Erik Larson; Stevie Dirst—A Year of Wonder by Geraldine Brooks; and Mary Platt—The Life and Adventures of Mr. Duncan Campbell by William Bonds (often incorrectly attributed to Daniel Defoe). Beverly Bridges said that Thank God I Have Cancer! by Rev. Clifford Oden was a great look into different types of cancer treatments. Kristin Stansell liked Marley and Me by John Grogan. If you are a dog lover, this is for you. Robin Titterington offered Gabby: A Story of Courage and Hope by Gabrielle Gifford and Mark Kelly. If you want a book of strategy, Jim suggested The Art of War by Sun Tzu. Works both in war and business.

Joe Linder sent a report on ALDA-Chicago. In October 2013 prior to the ALDA national convention, Heidi Adams did a wonderful job organizing the chapter’s fundraiser, which was held jointly with the HLAA Walk4Hearing. Proceeds from the fundraiser were split with HLAA, with ALDA-Chicago’s share going toward general administrative and CART expenses. In November 2013, ALDA-Chicago members attended a Wicked live theater performance and hosted a holiday party in Palatine, Illinois. In January 2014, members attended a performance at Steppenwolf Theatre in which the main character was a young deaf man living in a household full of eccentric characters. It wasn’t until the deaf man met another woman raised in a deaf household and fluent in sign language that he realized what he was missing in communication. After the performance, everyone gathered for dinner at a restaurant down the street. February was Super Bowl evening at a sports bar with two floors; members had one floor all to themselves with several screens to watch from their tables. Election of the officers took place during the last board meeting, which was postponed a week due to a blizzard and proceeded in spite of a second winter storm. The only change of officers was at the secretary level. Marsha Swetin was elected secretary for the coming year.

Several members of our ALDA family lost parents recently. We offer our condolences to each family. Kathy Schlueter, ALDA-Chicago, lost her mother in late 2013 and Bob Shanks, also of ALDA-Chicago, lost his father in January 2014. A year ago, Marty Mattox of ALDA-Midwest was celebrating the birth of twin grandsons, but this year, she’s dealing with the death of her mother, and the twins’ birthday was the day after her mother’s funeral. Another grandson’s birthday was the day before the funeral.

Send personal news (for “GA to SK”) and news about your chapter (for “Chapter Happenings”) to Ann at fabsmith@att.net by May 24. She especially needs more personal news about important happening in your lives!
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](http://www.alda.org) or contact ALDA, Inc. at 8038 MacIntosh Lane, Suite 2, Rockford, IL 61107, 815-332-1515 V/TTY. Membership entitles you to receive the quarterly ALDA News, which spotlights personal experiences of late-deafened people, and to attend ALDAcon at the lower member rate.

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

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

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

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

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

Name ________________________________________________
Organization: _________________________________________
Address _______________________________________________
City ___________________________________________________
State: ________ Postal Code: ________ Country: ____________

Home Phone: __________________ TTY □ Voice □ Cap Tel □ VP □
Work Phone: ___________________ TTY □ Voice □ Cap Tel □ VP □
Fax ___________________________________________________

E-mail ________________________________________________

URL/Website Address: __________________________________

ALDA Chapter (Name/None): _______________________________

Gender:  □ Male  □ Female

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

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

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

□ New  □ Renewal

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


For Credit Card Payment by Mail:
□ MasterCard  □ Visa

Amount __________________________
Account # _______________________
Expiration Date ________________

Signature _______________________
(For Credit Authorization)

If paying by check, please mail this form to:

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

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

Education  Advocacy  Role Models  Support

ALDA provides networking opportunities through local chapters and groups as well as at the annual ALDA conference (ALDAcon).
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

**Make a Difference! Become a Lifetime Member!**

**Why a Lifetime Member?**

A. ALDA and the work it does to support the empowerment of deafened people means a lot to me; I want to support ALDA financially

B. I don’t have to worry about forgetting to renew my dues

C. I plan to live to be at least 130 years old; think what a bargain Lifetime Membership will be!

*Ann Smith, Lifetime Member*

**Lifetime 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