I’ve been asked to write about a great friend to many people, Robin Titterington, also known to ALDA members as “Rockin’ Robin.” Those of us who knew Robin find it easy to describe her in “…est” terms. You know, nicest, kindest, sweetest, etc., but that really only does partial justice to her life, which ended too soon on February 23 of this year, when she was just 61.

Let me start with something from her Facebook page that was SO typical of Robin’s attitude toward her life:

A comprehensive list of everything you’re entitled to & that the world owes you…

Robin Jane Titterington was born Dec. 31, 1954 in Niskayuna, N.Y. She had spina bifida (literally “split spine”), a permanently disabling birth defect (see http://spinabifidaassociation.org). She was not expected to survive, but after she surprised doctors by doing so, they told her parents that she probably wouldn’t live past her 20s.

Robin never walked, and she used a wheelchair most of her life. This seemed a mere nuisance to her and did not define her or her life. Her parents and her “second mother” (her birth mother died when Robin was 14 and her father remarried) instilled in her that she was to work hard and use her abilities to do what she wanted with her life. She rarely asked people to do anything for her. Friends actually felt honored by those occasional times when Robin asked for help. She grew up to be a confident, resourceful, and independent woman.

Robin became deaf overnight at age 19 as a result of antibiotics given to treat a kidney infection. This happened while she was at St. Andrews College (now University) in North Carolina. Although this might have been a major obstacle for others, for Robin it seemed to be just another inconvenience. Her roommate from college, Ann Lavelle, noted on Robin’s Facebook page, “After you lost your hearing, you told me that mine was one of the last voices you heard and giggled as you told me not to worry, ‘Now you can play your stereo as loud as you want!’”

With the help of notetakers and whatever other resources she could find, Robin graduated from St. Andrews and went on to complete a master’s degree at New York University (NYU) in deafness rehabilitation. Somewhere, in her spare time, she learned American Sign Language (ASL), which gave her communication access through interpreters.

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As I write this up in northwest Montana, spring is only a promise. Planning for this issue of *ALDA News* has been a bright spot in my winter. Thank you to all who responded to my desperate plea for articles. You came through with fascinating offerings that are sure to stimulate and enlighten us.

In this issue, in addition to our regular features, we present encouraging personal stories, important information about captioning, news about remote conference calls, the latest for ALDAcon 2016, and an insider’s view of how ALDAcon 2015’s plenary session on “An Afternoon with Hearing Loss” came to fruition.

You’ll encounter some fresh faces like new ALDAn’s Wendy Ting and Thomas Clouser; Nathan Waldrip, a blogger with a great sense of humor; Debbe Hagner, an officer in chapters of both ALDA and HLAA; and Larry Schlau, a hearing spouse.

On a very sad note, ALDAns are grieving the loss of one of our own, Robin Titterington, who left us on February 23. Thanks go to Yael Shaner for her moving tribute to Robin, whose spirit shines through every line.

As always, we provide the writers’ email addresses (unless they request otherwise), and I encourage you to let them know when you enjoy their contributions. It can be a great way to get acquainted with other members of the ALDA family. (And it is always nice to get fan mail!)
Note from Nancy

By Nancy Kingsley, Editor-in-Chief

In the first two months of 2016, I lost two friends who probably never met one another but had much in common. One, Robin Titterington, who died on February 23, was well known to many ALDAns. The other, Rosemarie Kasper, who died on January 14, was active in the local chapter of the Hearing Loss Association of America, but she also wrote an article on “Hearing Loss as a Second Disability” for the Winter 2010 issue of the ALDA News. The photo that we published with her article is shown below:

Robin appeared in a number of ALDA News photos. The one below shows her with two of her beloved “furries”:

Both women were lifelong users of wheelchairs, for different reasons. Rosemarie was born with osteogenesis imperfecta (OI), also referred to as “brittle bone disease,” and Robin was born with spina bifida. Both also lost their hearing later in life, again for different reasons. Progressive hearing loss is very common in OI (the reasons are not fully understood). Robin’s deafness at age 19 was caused by antibiotics used to treat a kidney infection.

Both women also worked in rehabilitation services and loved to travel. In addition, they were actively involved spiritually. Rosemarie got her Catholic Church to provide CART, and Robin got her Episcopal Church to provide sign language interpreting. They were also positive and upbeat in their outlooks, made friends with ease, and inspired others by overcoming any challenges they faced. And interestingly, both were written up in their local newspapers when they died. You can read about Rosemarie at http://www.northjersey.com/news/a-life-rosemarie-kasper-s-disability-didn-t-stop-advocate-for-change-1.1512020?page=all and about Robin at http://www.ajc.com/news/news/local-obituaries/robin-titterington-61-triumphs-not-challenges-defi/nqYsq. We also have an article about Robin in this issue, written by Yael Shaner.

The lives of Rosemarie Kasper and Robin Titterington were beautiful illustrations of one of my favorite quotes: “BLOOM WHERE YOU ARE PLANTED.” They will not be forgotten.
Remembering Robin

By Marge Tamas

Robin Titterington’s memory will live on in all of us who were privileged to know her, and not just in the obvious ways. It goes without saying that we will remember her at every ALDA-Peach chapter meeting—she was the prime mover behind the organization of the chapter that is now entering its 17th year—and at every ALDAcon, the annual gathering that she treasured. It was her commitment to accessibility that I believe I will remember the most.

I think of her whenever I cross four-lane roads with crosswalks, and specifically the one near my house that crosses the Richard Sailors International Speedway. No doubt you have intersections like this in your city—the ones where you’re forced to sprint the last 20 yards before the light turns and the impatient drivers resume their 60 mph transit through a 45 mph zone. This crosswalk is a challenge for anyone with two working legs. Robin made me realize just how much more difficult it is for a wheelchair user.

Our chapter meetings not only had to be accessible in terms of communication, they had to be physically accessible as well. It was always surprising to discover the many places we would like to have visited on group field trips but had to remove from the list due to a lack of elevators, ramps, or accessible restrooms. When our homeowner’s association board complained about the high costs they said would be associated with making the restrooms in our common area ADA-compliant, I wrote an impassioned letter defending the need for the renovations. The defeat of that motion was one of the actions that spurred me, my husband, and many other homeowners to elect a new board. Would that have happened if I hadn’t known Robin? I don’t think I would have felt so strongly about the issue if I hadn’t.

As a gadget-loving engineer, Robin provided me with a new perspective on the limitations of technology. When she first got her custom-modified van, I had assumed this would be a great advance over her little green Honda. Not so—the van was awkward to park because other drivers didn’t leave enough room for the ramp to fold out, the tailgate was difficult to manage even with the extension strap to pull it closed, and it was constantly in the shop for repairs. Like the van, the Honda was fitted with hand controls. But the Honda’s simple wooden shelf where Robin stowed her wheelchair didn’t have any temperamental controls or parts that would break. And Robin could park the Honda just about anywhere. In designing adaptive technology, you have to think about not just the device itself, but also the system within which the device needs to work.

Robin inspired involvement and advocacy. She had a gift for bringing people together and a passion for breaking down the barriers that kept them apart. I look forward to carrying that part of her legacy into the future.

Marge was one of the founders of ALDA-Peach and can be contacted at mtamas@qsa.org.
Editor's note: Larry's wife Jane is a former president of ALDA.

How many years had you and Jane been married when you began to suspect she might be losing her hearing? Was it gradual or sudden?

Jane's hearing loss started gradually; we had been married for about 20 years.

Describe a few episodes that convinced you something was amiss with her hearing.

We were in Atlantic City and one time Jane walked away from me in the middle of a conversation. Another time I was behind her and told her I'd be right back. She didn't hear me and left, then found me in the hotel lobby and was furious. I told her not to be angry and said that she was going to the doctor.

At that point, was Jane herself becoming aware of her hearing loss? In what ways?

I'm not sure whether she was becoming aware of it, but I don't think so.

Did you two have any discussions about her hearing loss? If so how did talking help?

Yes, we had discussions about it. One conversation I remember was about my grandfather. He was very hard of hearing and he and my grandmother fought all the time. I remember promising Jane that the same thing would not happen to us. We also talked about hearing aids and the cost, and we talked about the changes that were happening because of her worsening hearing. I tried to keep communication going to help our children adjust to and cope with Jane's hearing loss.

What would you say has been the most difficult aspect of her hearing loss for you? For her? As a couple? In family matters?

My biggest issue isn't related to her not hearing things. Her loud voice drives me crazy (it became much louder as she lost more and more hearing). Her not being able to talk on the phone is also very hard.

As for Jane, I'm not sure she's really able to cope with her hearing loss. It affected her job dramatically, causing her to move and us to become a long-distance couple for quite a few years. Her deafness also made her become a very defensive, overly cautious driver. I know she really misses using the phone, and when I listen to the radio, she hears noise and it drives her crazy!

As a couple, communication between us has become difficult. If she calls me from another room, I have to go to her to find out what she wants because she can't hear me. I can't call her on the phone to let her know when I'll be home or what's going on or just to talk—and we used to talk for hours on the phone. Jane becomes very frustrated, and I have to be very patient with her.

How has Jane's hearing loss affected the children?

Since Jane's voice is loud, the children often thought she was mad at them. I had to talk to them frequently to reassure them.

Jane has obviously triumphed over the obstacles that hearing loss has placed in her life. When you look back, which one do you think was the toughest for her to overcome?

I think getting her doctorate was the toughest thing Jane did while she was losing her hearing. She tried all different types of accommodations as her hearing worsened, and she struggled through many classes. I know she thought of quitting, but she was fortunate to have a very supportive doctoral chair and family.

Larry can be reached at janeila@mac.com.
**President’s News**

*By Steve Larew*

This column is written with a heavy heart. ALDA lost one of its biggest cheerleaders when Robin Titterington passed away on February 23, 2016. Robin served as president of ALDA in 1996 and was a leader with ALDA-Peach in Atlanta as well. She was always cheerful, regardless of the barriers she had to overcome as a wheelchair user, becoming deaf, and receiving dialysis due to kidney failure. While there is no official documentation to support this, she was also one of ALDA’s leading huggers and ended almost all of her written communication with “HUGS.”

I first met Robin in 1976 while I was a senior at Gallaudet, through a friend who volunteered to push her around for classes. Gallaudet was NOT accessible at that time, with few elevators or ramps. I became a part of Robin’s reasonable accommodations by carrying her down steps to get to the Rathskellar in the basement of the Student Center. (The Rathskellar was then a pub where students could get beer and pizza and chat.)

Once, I was also Robin’s accommodation to visit her friends on the second floor of her residence hall. Her friends were so excited that I ended up sitting in the waiting area for an hour while she toured the rooms of her numerous friends.

Robin will be missed by many. The ALDA Board of Directors is in the process of establishing a memorial fund in her name. The purpose has not yet been decided, but please feel free to make a donation to the Robin Titterington Memorial Fund.

**ALDAcon 2016**

Plans are proceeding well for ALDAcon 2016 to be held September 14-18 at the Sheraton Milwaukee Brookfield Hotel. Registration, hotel, sponsor, exhibit and silent auction information is now available on the ALDA website, [www.alda.org](http://www.alda.org). The Call for Presenters is also available there, and proposals are due April 15.

We are pleased to have Dr. Jane Fernandes as our opening keynote presenter on Thursday morning, September 15. Dr. Fernandes is the first deaf woman to lead an American college or university. She was deaf at birth and did not learn sign language until attending college. She is currently the president of Guilford College in North Carolina.

I am also pleased to announce that King Jordan will be attending ALDAcon this year to present the award given in his name. His current plan is to be at ALDAcon Thursday and Friday. This will provide attendees an opportunity to interact with him.

**Board News**

- In an effort to encourage people to join both their local chapter and ALDA, Inc., the Board passed a motion to allow all chapter members to become members of ALDA, Inc. for the lowest $25 membership fee. The fee must be paid through the chapter and not individually. We will be sending details to chapter presidents to facilitate this process.
- The Board has contracted with Communication Services for the Deaf (CSD) to revamp our website to make membership and news information more easily accessible. We are just beginning to discuss and explore different ideas. Hopefully, you will be able to see the enhancements by May or June.
- The board has voted to host ALDAcon 2017 in Orlando, Florida on October 11-15, 2017 at the B Resort and Spa. This will be a return to October dates. Mark your calendar!
After my husband Eric and I moved temporarily to the United Kingdom (UK) because of his job, I realized once I set foot in our new flat (apartment) that things were going to be different. We weren't in Kansas anymore, Toto. Or California, where I learned to enjoy immediate access to movie captioning, CapTel and CaptionCall phones, video relay services, and a decent respect for service animals.

Here in the UK, there is open movie captioning at odd hours, but that's about it (similar to the way things were before the Cinemark settlement). There is no video relay service, from what I understand. And we almost got thrown out of our flat when the management company contended that its no-pets policy trumped the disability rights laws that gave us the clear right to have a hearing dog in our flat.

There is a captioning app for smart phones, NGT Lite, but I have yet to download it successfully. I had to first change my App Store from the U.S. to the UK (but didn't initially realize that), and now it seems I'll have to try downloading the app a few times before it will work. In the meantime, Eric is my secretary. (He is also my hearing dog when my official hearing dog gets too lazy.)

But I have found out wonderful things here in the UK that make me excited about living here. There is a UK organization for late-deafened people, the National Association of Deafened People (NADP), which is similar to ALDA. Their website is http://www.nadp.org.uk/. The only difference, I understand, is that no one at NADP uses sign language, but all are deafened. There is also an organization called Action on Hearing Loss (formerly known as the Royal National Institute for Deaf People or RNID), which offers a wealth of information. Another organization, Hearing Link, also provides lots of information through their website.

I also learned that you can adopt a second hearing dog once the hearing dog you have is considered senior (I think that is at 9 or 10 years of age). The older hearing dog is expected to help train the younger one after it is placed. That would be wonderful to have in the States! Right now, I believe many U.S. hearing dog organizations require that you not have another dog in your home before you can receive a new hearing dog.

Live theatre captioning here is done by Stagetext (www.stagetext.org), a registered charity funded by Arts Council England to provide captioning for arts venues. Stagetext was co-founded in May 2000 by Peter Pullan, Merfyn Williams, and Geoffrey Brown. As the Stagetext website states, they each had “varying types of deafness and a determination to improve access to the performing arts for all deaf, deafened and hard of hearing people.” Geoffrey Brown was a member of ALDA from 1994 until he passed away on July 27, 2011. He was a regular at our ALDAcons and I remember him fondly.

People with hearing loss whom I met here were surprised that there is no main organization like Stagetext in the U.S. that provides theatre captioning and that ours is provided by individuals or various companies. As in the US, there is remote captioning, which is provided by Bee Communications, White Coat Captioning, and Ai Media. (White Coat Captioning specializes in the medical, dental and veterinary community, hence the reference to “white coats.”)

What are referred to as “captions” in the U.S. are called “subtitles” in the UK, and live captioning is referred to as “speech-to-text.” In the US, subtitles provide only the words that are being spoken (and are usually used for foreign-language movies), while captions also provide non-audio information such as sounds, who is speaking, etc.

I decided to tackle British Sign Language (BSL) and opted for a one-on-one tutor rather than taking classes at the local college. To be honest, BSL is driving me crazy, but I assume I will get used to it. For one thing, BSL uses both hands to fingerspell, instead of one hand as in ASL. And if you know any ASL, you will need to unlearn it. Some signs in ASL, such as the sign for “25,” mean something inappropriate in BSL. The sign for “where” in ASL means “what” in BSL, and the sign for “what” in ASL means “where” in BSL. Sigh.

I do have a deaf friend here from the States—he lives here for six months of the year and in California for the other six months. It is very comforting to have someone I know nearby.
Unconquerable Robin (continued)...

Continued from page 1

After NYU, Robin moved to Georgia for employment, joining the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation offices where she worked for 20 years. She quickly became a part of the Deaf community in Cave Springs, Georgia and later Atlanta. I believe it was in Cave Springs that she received a sign name: the letter “R” combined with the sign for “cute” (on the chin). Yes, she was! Outside and inside.

When her kidneys eventually failed, Robin received a transplant, which served her well for a number of years before finally quitting. Due to her increasingly curved spine, she was unable to get a second transplant and was on dialysis for the rest of her life, which she took in stride as she did all of her other challenges.

Robin loved all things ALDA, including ALDAcons, where she was actively involved in welcoming newcomers. Due to her declining health, she was forced to stop attending ALDAcon a couple of years ago. However, up to that point she had only missed ONE ALDAcon (due to surgery). Additionally, she served as president of ALDA, Inc. in 1996 and as a co-founder (in 1999) and president of the Georgia chapter, ALDA-Peach. She received four national ALDA awards: the Able ALDAn Award, the Fearless Leader Award, the Robert Davila Angel Award, and the I. King Jordan Award.

Robin loved all things ALDA, including ALDAcons, where was actively involved in welcoming newcomers. Due to her declining health, she was forced to stop attending ALDAcon a couple of years ago. However, up to that point she had only missed ONE ALDAcon (due to surgery). Additionally, she served as president of ALDA, Inc. in 1996 and as a co-founder (in 1999) and president of the Georgia chapter, ALDA-Peach. She received four national ALDA awards: the Able ALDAn Award, the Fearless Leader Award, the Robert Davila Angel Award, and the I. King Jordan Award.

Robin and I became acquainted in 2007. I had just recently lost the remaining hearing in my previously “good” ear (the other ear had been non-working probably since birth). It had happened once before, but this time I knew the loss was permanent. So I started searching the Internet for people with a hearing loss like mine and came across the term “late-deafened,” which described people who lost their hearing after acquiring spoken language. Once I found that term. I used it in a search and came up with ALDA, Inc. and discovered there was a chapter (ALDA-Peach) near me in Atlanta! An email address was listed, so I wrote a short email and Robin responded.

Robin reached out to me with so much encouragement and welcoming that I was surprised by the warmth and relieved that I had found others like me. She offered to meet me for coffee the following Sunday at Starbucks, and we immediately became friends. We conversed in ASL . . . well, I should say Robin used ASL and I used CSL (Crappy Sign Language) as described by Dave Litman (the term was coined by ALDA co-founder Bill Graham). Anyway, Robin, as she always did with people, went above and beyond to make me feel comfortable. She encouraged me to come to ALDA-Peach meetings, where I made other friends. After I became a steady attendee, she drafted me for the ALDA-Peach Board.

Her encouragement was a turning point in my acceptance of being deaf. I felt a valued part of ALDA-Peach, and I realized from Robin’s example that being deaf was entirely livable and life was still enjoyable. Looking at what Robin had overcome, I saw no room for self-pity when all I had to live with was deafness! Largely due to her influence, my attitude toward my deafness became positive, which was a great help in my personal adjustment as well as my adjustment at work.

Robin shared freely about herself and how she dealt with communication challenges, giving me (and others) options as to how we could deal with similar challenges, such as getting doctors to provide interpreters, explaining the need for people to write down what they wanted to communicate, and understanding the accommodations that a person can get from an employer. Robin always shared her experiences in a humble way, and I did not realize until much later the extent to which she had actively advocated for civil rights for people with disabilities on a national and state level and how well-known she was.

“Fun” is one of the terms that come to mind when I think about Robin. One time a few years ago, she was the invited speaker at a breakfast event for the Bobby Dodd Institute in Atlanta, an organization that matches people with disabilities with employment opportunities. I was to pick her up and take her to the event. When I got to her house, she related that she had fallen out of her chair (again) while walking her dogs and thought she might have done serious damage to one of her legs. Since she had no feeling in her legs, she couldn’t tell for sure, and we decided that she should go to the hospital to check it out. We contacted the event organizers and told them neither of us would

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ALDA’s Advocacy Corner

By John Waldo, Curator

Since my last report on ALDA advocacy, we’ve resolved a couple of efforts that had been pending in reasonably cordial fashion. Unfortunately, cordial resolutions are not always available, and we appear to be on the threshold of “telling it to the judge,” as the saying goes, on another effort.

First the happy news. After some prodding and false starts, two major live theaters in the San Jose, California, area have agreed to begin offering captioned performances. TheatreWorks Silicon Valley, which offers performances at facilities in Mountain View and Palo Alto, will begin offering three open-captioned performances of each of its productions. TheatreWorks originally wanted to offer captioned performances only on a Wednesday—for both the matinee and evening performance—but after some further prodding on our part, the theater agreed to add a Sunday matinee, which is more readily accessible to people who work during the week.

Live theater captioning takes some advance planning. The captions are prepared in advance, using the actual script. The captions are then displayed on a portable LED reader-board in sync with the pace of that specific performance. Patrons wanting to see the captions are seated in an area where they can see the reader-board and stage in the same line of sight, enabling them to read the dialogue and lyrics and see the action on stage simultaneously.

As a nice additional bonus, the theater agreed to provide ALDA-San Jose with four free tickets both for the remainder of this season and for the 2016-17 season. We saw this as a win-win situation, believing that this offer could induce some people who had thought live theater was no longer a possibility to experience captioning.

ALDA member Carrie Levin was the driving force behind this effort. She told me at ALDAcon 2015 in Scottsdale, Arizona that she really wanted to be able to attend live theater in her area. I began corresponding with the theater on Carrie’s behalf, and while it took several months of back and forth, we ultimately achieved an excellent result.

We believe we have had a similar success with Broadway San Jose on behalf of ALDA member Roselle Schwartz. That theater has indicated that it will begin offering captioned performances in May, again after a considerable amount of correspondence. We are waiting to see the final details before calling that effort a success.

One problem we’ve had to address with both theaters is adequately publicizing the availability of captioned performances. As of this writing, the San Jose theater has not mentioned captioned performances anywhere in its online publicity, including its ticket sales. TheatreWorks did announce captioning online and directed interested patrons to telephone the theater for details. I always chuckle when I see this kind of directive, thinking that asking deaf-ish people like us to telephone for information is pretty much like a sign on a building stating that the wheelchair entrance is upstairs. When Carrie pointed that out to TheatreWorks, they immediately understood the problem and provided email contact information.

As these outcomes demonstrate, advocacy really can work. My method as ALDA advocacy chair is to communicate with the business at issue, tell them who we are, what we need, and why we need it, and ask them to consider our request. Sometimes it takes a fair amount of back-and-forth discussion, but quite often, we are able to achieve a successful outcome at no cost to anyone.

Unfortunately, dialogue and cooperation are not everybody’s first choice. Last summer, courtesy of ALDA co-founder Bill Graham, I was contacted by a Chicago Cubs season ticket holder who had been trying without success to get the Cubs to caption their public-address announcements and other aural information provided to their baseball fans. We noted that ALDA and the National Association of the Deaf (NAD) were partnering in an effort to bring universally visible captioning to professional sports venues across the country. As part of that effort, we sent letters in October to the Cubs and the 28 other U.S.-based Major League Baseball teams setting out what NAD and ALDA consider “best practices” to make professional sports accessible to deaf and hard of hearing patrons. We

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Since I was born, I have been hard of hearing, possibly due to my premature birth. At only three pounds, I spent my first month in an incubator in the '50s, when preemies did not have the advantage of the technology we have today. I wore two hearing aids most of my life. I have a very loving family that has been extraordinarily supportive of me all of these years.

As I grew up, the hearing aid in my left ear became progressively less effective and I became profoundly deaf in that ear, but I continued wearing an aid in my right ear. In 1993, I was recommended to see Dr. Joseph Farrior III in Tampa, Florida. He is a renowned otolaryngologist specializing in cochlear implants (CIs), and he suggested that I get a CI in my right ear (the good one). I did not want to possibly jeopardize my only hearing ear with surgery, so he advised that I wait until technology improved, as it was advancing. So I waited.

Fast forward to 2014. At the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) convention in Austin, Texas, I visited the Phonak booth and asked about new technology for digital hearing aids. I was told that the Naida model I had was the best—there was no stronger aid, and no upgrades or improvements were in sight. The exhibitor advised that I investigate a cochlear implant. I was stunned at this suggestion from a representative for hearing aids, as it meant that I might no longer be able to benefit from them.

At that point, I went to the three CI booths to speak with the various representatives and spent a lot of time with the MED-EL representative, Margarita Sweet. Then I attended ALDacon, where I met Dan Schwartz. He convinced me to meet with Dr. Loren Bartels, who was well known in the CI field but close to retirement.

My first meeting with Dr. Bartels was in December 2014. He discussed implanting the CI in my left (bad) ear, where a hearing aid gave me no benefit. I was quite doubtful that the procedure would help me, as I could not grasp that a CI could work better than a hearing aid. I returned for the required tests at the beginning of 2015. My sister Donna went with me for support, since she could clearly hear all the particulars. I would need a hearing test, a balance test for vertigo, and more. Dr. Bartels strongly suggested that I receive a pneumonia shot before the surgery and another one the following year to avoid getting meningitis.

On sentence testing, I scored 29% in the right ear, 0% in the left ear, and 18% in both ears. I had a 95 decibel (dB) loss in the right ear and a 115 dB loss in the left ear. I met with Kayla, an audiologist who gave me materials on all three CI companies. She suggested that I go with Advance Bionics. Later, the doctor suggested the MED-EL after he received the results of all the tests.

I had to come back for another test in which electrodes were placed on my head to see whether the hearing and balance nerves would respond. The vertigo test involved wearing special glasses and following the movements of the lights on a panel. After that test was finished, the technician flushed warm water and then cold water into my ear to see whether I got dizzy. This caused a weird feeling but no dizziness. I had to go back to the hospital to meet with the anesthesiologist to see whether I had sleep apnea and to complete my blood work.

I was going to schedule the surgery for March, but flying is prohibited for at least a month afterwards, so I scheduled it for May 12, after my April Salt Lake City genealogy group trip. My sister Donna delivered me to Tampa General Hospital at 5 a.m. for the 7 a.m. surgery. After all the pre-op preparations, I finally got to the operating room. My biggest problem there was that doctors and nurses wore face masks and I couldn't lipread through them. Bummer! I woke up in the recovery room with a huge plastic cup over the left side of my head where the CI was implanted under the skin, and I had to keep it on for 48 hours. Pain and nausea medicine were prescribed, but fortunately I never needed either of them. I was feeling great at this point. After Donna brought me home, I slept the rest of that day. I only had to clean the incision for two weeks and was told that tingling at the wound was a sign of healing.

May 26 marked two weeks since the implant, and I was scheduled to return for “Activation Day,” when my processor would be turned on. My California sister, Diane, arrived in time to accompany Donna and me for the activation and mapping. Continued on page 24
It was Marta Watson's idea. As a member of the program committee for ALDAcon 2015, Marta suggested to the other committee members that ALDA have a “deaf for a day” panel at the conference. Dave Litman, the 2015 ALDA president, had already contacted Sherri Collins, executive director of the Arizona Commission for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing (ACDHH, www.acdhh.org, is the government agency for hearing loss in Arizona), asking for assistance with the conference 11 months before it began. When the program committee contacted me five months before the conference and asked for help with this panel, I got to work fast!

I'm the ACDHH's hard of hearing specialist for the state of Arizona, where over 1.1 million people, mostly adults, are hard of hearing. I am, too, and my mother became deaf over her lifetime, so I really “get” what others like us are going through. I thought ALDA's idea for “deaf for a day” was brilliant but also challenging. How to get high-profile (i.e., locally famous) hearing folks to volunteer and participate? When a small, virtually unknown organization having a small conference suddenly wants to have an event featuring well-known hearing people who have volunteered to experience hearing loss for a day, well, that's a challenge. Smile!

As with any workshop or plenary session or event, there are hundreds of little details and dozens of people behind the scenes working diligently to make the event successful. I myself received almost 800 emails just about ALDAcon 2015! So how did a little yet mighty organization like ALDA pull off the very successful plenary “An Afternoon with Hearing Loss”?

Fortunately, ALDA asked ACDHH for help. ACDHH had a contract with a public relations firm, HMA Public Relations, which had an extensive network of contacts in the media and other fields. ACDHH was also fortunate to have good relationships with people like Nanette Odell, the disability services manager for the Arizona Diamondbacks and the Phoenix Suns (national baseball and basketball teams). Nanette knows ASL and is a hearing loss advocate and ally. Together, HMA and Nanette reached out to over 30 people and organizations and ultimately recruited eight: a radio DJ from a very popular Phoenix radio station MIX 96.9; a Phoenix Fire Department captain/public information officer; a radio show producer and on-air personality from another Phoenix radio station (KMLE 107.9); a newspaper reporter from Arizona’s largest newspaper, the Arizona Republic, a retired Phoenix Suns player and member of the Suns administration, along with two retired major leaguers who are part of the Diamondbacks organization; and the HMA senior account executive on ACDHH’s account. Four of the recruited people were able to participate on the panel and the other four appeared on a pre-taped video.

ACDHH has great relationships with many licensed audiologists and two, Dr. Debra Venkatesh and Dr. Georgine Ray, willingly gave of their time and materials to take the ear mold impressions (sometimes traveling to the volunteer to do so), send them off to the lab for creation, and then fit them onto each volunteer. Video captions were provided free for one of the pre-taped videos by a closed caption service provider in Arizona. The other three pre-taped videos were received too late to caption in advance but have since been captioned by ACDHH’s in-house staff and can be found on ACDHH’s website. I was pleased to moderate the panel when the initial moderator was unable to attend. I also interviewed two of the sports celebrities on the spot, hence my motto, “Expect the unexpected!” For tips on arranging a similar event, keep reading. And please feel free to email me if you’d like more information: M.Michaels@acdhh.az.gov.

What to Do/Avoid doing/Expect

- Ask for help with something as big as this as soon as you start planning the conference. Don’t wait.
- Create a tasks timeline with very clear absolute deadlines.
- Have an articulated vi-
Afternoon with Hearing Loss (continued)...

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- Press lead-time is months in advance, yet radio and television spots often happen at the last minute (ACDHH got a free 5:30 a.m. television news spot the day of the event—with just a few days’ notice!). Therefore, you have to work months in advance for press coverage and be ready at the last minute as well.
- Don’t schedule competing workshops/social events/outings at the same time as this plenary.
- Check who you are sending emails to. Don’t use “reply all” unless everyone on the email needs the information. Keep the subject line of the email accurate as to the content of the email, and don’t mix subjects in one email.
- Remind people often. They are busy, and busy people don’t mind reminders!
- Trust professionals to do what they commit to doing. They didn’t become professionals by not doing it.
- Remember the little things—water for the panelists, name cards for their places at the table, paper and pens, time afterwards for panelists to chat with attendees, flyers at the door with panelist bios, etc.
- Local universities with speech-language-hearing students and professors may want to volunteer to assist. Tap into that resource.
- Expect the unexpected. A moderator or deaf-for-a-day volunteer may not be available at the last moment. A video may arrive uncaptioned. A high-profile person’s flight may not arrive on time (yes, these all happened). Have back-up people and plans whenever possible!
- Think ripples. The newspaper reporter volunteer published her news article in November, two months after the event. It reached hundreds of thousands of readers! As of December, 2015 over 3,000 people had read the Facebook posting about the newspaper article on ACDHH’s Facebook page at www.facebook.com/azcdhh.

The in-person participants in the Afternoon with Hearing Loss on September 19, 2015, moderated by Michele Michaels, were Ben Murphy, aka “Lunchbox Ben,” producer of the Steve
Wendy’s Voice at Desert Vibes

By Wendy Ting

I learned about ALDacon while I was chatting with Jim Laffer, the ALDA-San Jose leader, after an Advanced Bionics cochlear implant (CI) function that we both attended in Pleasanton, California. Until then, I had assumed ALDA to be suited only to those who had lost their hearing later in life. I was told about its unique motto of “whatever works,” with various modes of communication (among a mixture of mostly CI and hearing aid users) including talking, lipreading, signing, writing, et al. being acceptably used at the convention.

I have been profoundly deaf for most of my life (I lost my hearing at age two during an illness with high fever, at which time an antibiotic caused my sensorineural hearing loss) and am a recent bilateral CI recipient, I live and function well in the hearing world, academically and professionally, but I didn’t realize I had been missing the “new family” that I found at Desert Vibes!

My first ALDacon in Scottsdale, Arizona was, by far, the best hearing loss convention I ever attended, in terms of the people present, the types of programs, and the convention size. Upon my arrival at the hotel, among the first ALDAns I ran into was Larry Littleton, a past recipient of the I. King Jordan award, and he succeeded in rubbing off on me the wonderful ALDA camaraderie spirit that was present during the entire convention.

Among the workshops I attended, most notable for me were “Amplify Your Audiology Appointment” by Tina Childress, where we learned how to better communicate with our audiologists; “Harnessing Your Hearing Loss Superpowers” by Angie Fuoco, where we aimed to formulate behavioral tools and steps to teach others to help us hear better in conversations; and “Emergency Preparedness” by Chris Littlewood, where we learned to encourage collaboration with community organizations on emergency preparedness.

An interesting addition to the convention demographics was the presence of some attendees from other countries, including Nepal and Finland. The Foot Reflexology optional workshop, coordinated with foreign language translation interpreters, was an unexpected experience, during which Ilse Jobse from the Netherlands explained reflexology massages to us. An evening trolley car ride to downtown Scottsdale for dinner was fun and enjoyable even though the shops were already closed during that time.

Inspiring sessions, useful workshops, wonderful social gatherings, new friends made—one thing led to another, ending with the amazing karaoke experience that I never thought I’d participate in, and I had a great time. The attached photo captures one of my favorite ALDacon moments.

Toward the end of the convention, ALDA Past President Dave Litman asked me to get in touch with him to discuss a possible chapter startup in Washington, DC. I look forward to getting involved, and I definitely plan to go to ALDacon 2016 in Milwaukee.

Wendy lives in metro Washington, DC where she works in the cyber security field. Her passions include travelling, hiking, scuba diving, wine tasting, and gourmet cooking. She can be reached at aurum47055@yahoo.com.

Late-Deafened in London (continued)...

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I am continuing to manage my Bay Epicenter of Advocacy for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (BEADHH) organization from here, which is easy to do because of the Internet. I am looking for more advocacy information to post on the BEADHH website, so if you would like to send me anything to post, that will keep me busy when I’m not touring, checking out palaces and castles, and eating scones with clotted cream...

Linda is a former president of ALDA and worked as community relations director and hard of hearing support specialist for DCARA in California. She served as an advocate in obtaining communication access in BART trains and stations and in her successful settlement with Cinemark Theatres and AMC Theaters for movie captioning. Linda received ALDA’s I. King Jordan Award, the Hearing Loss Association of California’s Outstanding Service Award, and DCARA’s Employee of the Year Award. She can be reached at lindra@comcast.net.
Scholarships Available to ALDAcon 2016

By Carolyn Piper

Many years ago, hearing loss had me on my knees wondering how, or even if, I could go on. 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 Brookfield, Wisconsin from September 14-18. More information, as well as the application itself, is at http://www.alda.org/aldas-convention. As usual, ALDAcon will contain numerous workshops and speakers, with all events completely accessible by IR assistive listening devices, sign language interpreting, and CART (Communication Access Realtime Translation of all speakers’ words displayed on large screens).

As it does each year, ALDA will be offering a limited number of scholarships to those who want to attend ALDAcon but need financial assistance to be able 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. Scholarship recipients must be willing to write an article for the ALDA newsletter (minimum of 600 words) about their ‘con experience.

Inquiries regarding scholarship applications may be sent to me at wicwas0@gmail.com, or 82 Piper place, Huntington, VT 06472. The firm deadline for the reception of all applications is July 1, 2016.

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 me at the email or snail mail address above.

Unconquerable Robin (continued)...

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be there, and then we headed to Piedmont Hospital.

We were in Piedmont’s emergency room from about 11:30 a.m. until 1 a.m. Between the triage, the doctor’s exams, and the X-rays, we had a ball. We talked about everything from movies to television (she loved Jeopardy), to books (she had just read Three Cups of Tea and entertained me with book reviews), to baseball (her Braves!). We spent time making up possible stories about our fellow patients, who they might be and why they were there. We just talked and joked our way through the hours until she was finally released. We were both tired after a certain point, but Robin never lost her good humor (unlike me). Later, we laughed about the incident several times, and it’s sad to know I won’t be able to do that again. It makes me realize that we need to cherish and hold on to the times we spend with the people we love. We never know when those times will end.

Rest in peace, dear Robin. We will sorely miss you.

Yael Shaner is the president of ALDA-Peach. She can be contacted at yaelpeach@ymail.com.

Robin, center, with Ellen Kaitz (L) and Rachael Morris (R) at ALDAcon 2011 (all three have since passed away)
One of Us

By Karen Krull, Curator

This issue’s interview is with a dear, long-time friend, Carol Postulka. We go way back to the early days of ALDA, and she has always been one of ALDA’s staunchest cheerleaders. She has a special soft spot for newcomers and will go miles out of her way to make them feel at ease. Most of the time, she prefers staying in the background and volunteering in a thousand little ways to promote ALDA. Carol is now serving as regional director for Region 2 on the ALDA Board. A seasoned traveler and an avid diver, she still works her ALDA magic in between trips around the world. She often makes the trek to Chicago, a two-hour drive from her home, just to meet friends. Her interview answers will give you some insight as to why Carol is one of us. Read on!

Name: Carol Kathleen Postulka
Where were you born? Belvidere, Illinois
What is your current residence? 14 miles down the pike in Rockford. After college, I couldn’t decide whether to move to the ends of the earth and spend my vacations going home, or live near family and spend vacations traveling to the ends of the earth!
What is the cause of your deafness? Progressive sensorineural loss shared by my little brother
Age/year you became deafened? I was 25 and got diagnosed at the Mayo Clinic when I was there for another issue; I asked the doctor to check my ears, as I had a wee little problem and maybe he could fix that too? He spun my chair around and talked to my back. When I didn’t respond, he realized I was nearly deaf. Thirty years later I learned my mother’s cousin “probably” had the same kind of loss, but she was never tested, lost her job when she couldn’t hear on the phone, and died young. That was most likely the hereditary link to hearing loss that my brother and I share.
Marital status? Widowed when my kids were very young. I was a young mother, my hearing was going down the drain, and I had two little kids to support. At the time I was teaching first grade, but it was obvious my hearing loss was going to kick me out of a job. So I took an educational leave and became certified to teach kids in Rockford’s hearing loss program. I stayed with the program for most of my career.

What is your present job? I’m retired now.

What is the worst job you ever had? Right out of high school, I was a secretary for an optometrist. I couldn’t understand the names of the people calling for an appointment. I’d set them up to have their eyes checked without knowing who they were. “Please spell your name… What?”

Movies you want to see again? Actually I’m thrilled to see any movies the first time that have captions with the device working through the whole movie. I used to go to captioned movies in Elmhurst in the ’90s, which were great. It’s hard not to lose my cool nowadays when the devices don’t work and the movie managers state: “Well, it’s new technology so you have to expect glitches.” Aargh…no, I don’t. Right now I’m watching Indian Bollywood movies on Netflix on my iPad in preparation for my trip to India. They all break out into big group dancing like a flash dance, so it’s kind of cool.

Books you tell others to read? Others tell me what books to read! Some I load on my Kindle and some I find in the library. I get a batch of books, start reading them all, and soon just keep picking up the one I like best. My favorite bookstore is Hudson Books at O’Hare Airport!

Programs I stay home to watch: A news junkie, I watch NBC Nightly News, CNN World and talk shows, Big Bang Theory, The Middle, and Last Man Standing. I don’t stay home for any of them, as I’d rather do things, go places, and see friends.

Favorite pig-out food: Chinese buffet food, guacamole and hummus, and berries in coconut vanilla yogurt with almonds, and don’t forget the soup!

Hobbies: Traveling and diving
If I had more free time, Pd: Do even more of my favorite things.

The hardest thing about becoming deafened was: Losing the ability to effortlessly understand what people said to me, and the “deer-in-the-headlights” feeling when I needed to make a response but I didn’t know what the question was, or even the topic of conversation.

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I began accepting my deafness: When I found ALDA and other people who lost their hearing and knew for the first time that I was not alone. Total acceptance was very slow to come. (That doesn’t mean I like it, but I accept it.)

The worst thing about deafness was: Raising my children as a single mom and not knowing what was going on with them. Not that any parent truly knows everything that is happening with their children, but I felt like my kids were doing things behind my back (actually, right in front of me) because they could, or perhaps they had told me and I had misunderstood or just not heard it at all.

The best thing about deafness is: other than having incredible friends, and having a bond with so many people through ALDA in particular during these 27ish years, is that noise doesn’t keep me awake!

How did you learn about ALDA? In two ways, and I almost missed both of them. In 1989, I was taking classes in deaf education at Northern Illinois University. For extra points, I went to a conference for Illinois teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing and picked up a paper in the exhibit room that was one of the first newsletters Bill Graham had written. I shoved it into my goodie bag, and weeks later was tossing that stuff out when something on those two sheets caught my eye. I started to read, and it was funny and about Bill and other people like me. I kept thinking, “This is me. This is me. I’m one of them from that stupid planet Deafo, who somehow accidentally got rerouted here.” However, there was no contact information. I carefully looked in my bag for a missing page with names and addresses on it, and there was none. The end....or was it?

One day, after looking at a newspaper, I laid it down on the table open to the want ads section that I never read. As I walked by, I glanced down and something jumped out at me. There was a tiny three-line ad about “Hearing Loss, Freeport Hospital Community Room, June 1989,” and an address. I went to the meeting in a small town 35 miles from my home. Kathy Schlueter, the group leader, talked about people who had lost their hearing and passed out a paper about an upcoming picnic in Chicago at Bill Graham’s mom’s house, and no, I didn’t put it together that this was the same man and same group whose newsletter I had read.

My 12-year-old daughter Dana went with me. We were kind of held hostage by the husband of the couple we walked in with, in the sense that he dominated the conversation, and people who came up to us to greet us finally walked away. Then he decided we four were leaving, but luckily, on our way out, Bill (who was playing volleyball) stopped me and asked if I would be attending that first workshop/conference at Mercy Hospital. I said no because I was in graduate school and had projects and papers all due at that time. Bill insisted that I tell him when I would be coming. I said in January, and when the time arrived, I drove for two hours to Chicago but panicked when I reached the parking lot and wanted to go home. Then the current ALDA president, Steve Larew, pulled up in front of me, so I opened my door and said, “Are you going in there?” He answered, “Yes, come on,” and that’s how it all started.

In what ways has ALDA enhanced your life? All the wonderful people I have met from around the country and the world whom I would not have met otherwise. I can’t start naming people because the list would go on and on, and I might accidentally miss some of them, but they know who they are. It’s so hard to lose these friends too, as we just lost Robin.

When I am depressed, I: just text or email someone from our ALDA family and they never fail to pull me up.

My most irrational fear is: crossing a street on foot when there is traffic, but that’s probably smart and not irrational.

If I could hear again, the first thing I would do is: I’d probably start listening to all the music I missed, and talk to friends and family without missing half of it.

The thing I like best about myself: I’m happy most of the time.

Nobody knows: That I’m terrified of water (I’m a diver, you know).

What I can’t stand is: losing stuff—my car keys, my phone, my whatever I need, it’s always gone!

Favorite memory: seeing my babies’ faces at birth and those tiny fingers and toes

Favorite saying: I’d never wish deafness on my worst enemy, but it has given me an incredible life with amazing people in it.

The bottom line is: Life is good, and let’s do lunch!
By Thomas Clouser

About a month ago, I filed a complaint with the FCC about the closed captioning on both a Sceptre and a Toshiba television set. With fast-dialog shows, especially news, sports, and talk shows, the dialog can become extremely hard to follow or at least more difficult to follow than it should be because of the type of captioning provided. More specifically, there are typically three lines of rotating captions, and on the comparatively easy-to-read TV sets, the lines scroll up from the bottom to the middle and then to the top. On the harder-to-read TV sets, the bottom line disappears and reappears as the middle line and then disappears and reappears again as the top line.

The FCC did respond to my complaint, asked me a few questions, and had a Sceptre representative call me (not that it was a useful conversation). In essence, the Sceptre representative took the position that preferring scrolling captions over disappearing/reappearing captions is just a matter of “personal preference.” My response is, “Where is the study showing this?” I cannot believe that anyone with a hearing loss would prefer the disappearing/reappearing method, since it is more difficult to read than the scrolling captions.

The FCC person indicated that there was nothing in their regulations that mandated that captions lines be scrolling, only that they be “readable.” I still do not know if the FCC will do anything, but I was left with the impression that I was the first person to complain about this. If there were more people complaining, I suspect they would take this matter more seriously.

I found out that the Sceptre and Toshiba TV sets had the undesirable kind of captioning by buying these TVs and then returning them. I tried to find out more about other TV sets in Target, Walmart, and Best Buy. At Walmart, I found a salesperson who wanted to help, but he could not find the remote for the set whose captions I wanted to check. He finally found a universal remote but could not make the captioning work. He also had no way to hook the TV to an antenna, so the only thing that could be tested was the continuously running tape that was pulled in over an Internet source. And the tape only showed pretty outdoor pictures and features without the fast-talking dialog that generates the rotating lines of captions that I described.

At Target, I got a salesman who came up with a remote for an Element TV. While he could not hook me up to an outside antenna, he got the captioning working, and I could see that the set had the very tiny letters that are also found on the Sceptre. So while I could not see rotating lines of captioning, it was apparent that this low-end set also would not fit my needs. (On the Sceptre, standard captioning size was tiny and the customized “large” size was still smaller than “standard” on other sets. Element seemed to be like the Sceptre.)

Since I have a Sony that provides good scrolling captions, I started to think that the top-tier sets all had the good captioning and the lower-tier sets all had the bad captioning, but someone pointed out that Samsung has provided the less desirable kind of captioning as well, and Samsung is upper tier.

At Best Buy, I learned to my delight that they did have the ability to actually hook up all televisions to an antenna, so I could see how the captioning worked, and I also found helpful salespeople who were willing to take the time to assist me. Much to my dismay, an upper-tier television by LG had the disappearing/reappearing captioning. When I looked at Samsung TVs, one set had the good captioning and one had the inferior captioning. Also, Sharp and Insignia had the bad captioning, while Sony and Vizio had the good captioning. (My old Sanyo, a lower-tier TV, has the good scrolling captions.)

So what is going on here? I am guessing that manufactures are generally abandoning scrolling captions in favor of the disappearing/reappearing methodology. If that is the case, I think this is a major setback for television viewing for people with hearing loss. I also found that on the upper-tier sets like LG and Samsung, the captioning with disappearing/reappearing lines seemed somewhat smoother than on the lower-tier sets, but still not as good as scrolling lines.

Several people, including a Best Buy salesperson, noted that if one has cable, the box from the cable company might provide the desired kind of scrolling captioning even if the antenna connection will not do this. What I fear, though, is that all the television manufacturers are switching their electronics to

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Remote Conference Captioning Now Available in Virginia

Editor’s note: Remote Conference Captioning (RCC), also referred to as Relay Conference Captioning, is currently available through Sprint Relay to Federal employees and residents of Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Hawaii, New Jersey, and North Carolina, and through Hamilton Relay to residents of Montana and Virginia. If you live in another state, you can advocate for RCC to be provided there.

If you have difficulty hearing what’s said during conference calls, there is a new service available in Virginia to help you never miss a word of an important conversation again: Remote Conference Captioning.

Remote Conference Captioning (RCC) allows people who are deaf or hard of hearing to have a clearer understanding of conversations and participate in conference calls in a more effective manner. RCC delivers word-for-word captions over the Internet, using Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) services to convert speech to text as it is spoken.

To use RCC, you need access to a conference bridge to allow the certified captionist to listen to the audio portion of the call. You also need access to an Internet-connected computer, tablet, or smartphone in order to view the captions. You do not need to download any software, only to click a link to view the captions in your web browser.

When using RCC, all call participants and the captionist access the conference call through a telephone conference bridge number. During the conversation, the captionist listens and produces realtime streaming text that is sent over the Internet. You are then able to view the text on your Internet-connected computer or mobile device after clicking on the provided link. The text shows up just seconds after someone has spoken, allowing for seamless conversations.

While viewing the captions on your computer, you have the option to customize the background and font colors, as well as the font size to suit your preferences. In addition, there is a chat box where you have the ability to message the captionist regarding setup or correct spellings of names and acronyms.

All captionists are certified by either the National Court Reporters Association (NCRA) or the National Verbatim Reporters Association (NVRA). RCC captionists produce a minimum of 180 words per minute while maintaining 98 percent accuracy or better. Both the NCRA and NVRA follow their organization’s Code of Ethics, which includes confidentiality and security guidelines.

RCC is already getting great reviews from Virginia Relay users. Nancy Anderson, who works for the Training and Technical Assistance Center at George Mason University, is using RCC to improve her conference calls at work and is thrilled with the results.

“As a hard of hearing business person, I have wanted a conference captioning service for years now,” she says. “I have used Virginia Relay’s Remote Conference Captioning service twice and I love it! It was so easy to request it, and then the relay operators did a wonderful job capturing everything people on my conference call were saying. It was fantastic, my dream come true! I love it! I have shared this great service with many people in my field to check this out! I plan to use it again and again!”

Available to Virginia residents who are deaf or hard of hearing, RCC is an optional relay service that is funded and provided by Virginia Relay. Virginia’s contracted service provider, Hamilton Relay, also provides RCC in one of its other contracted states, Montana. It is important to note that these services are to be used through a teleconference call and are not a replacement for relay captioning for one-on-one calls.

To request RCC services for your next conference call, simply complete an RCC Scheduling Request Form at www.hamiltonrelay.com/rcc, or call Virginia RCC Customer Care at 1-877-339-2665 (voice). Virginia Relay users are guaranteed access to RCC services if scheduled at least 24 hours in advance. RCC services can be scheduled within a two-hour notice for emergency situations but are not guaranteed.

Take advantage of Remote Conference Captioning for your next conference call. To learn more, please contact Virginia RCC Customer Care at 1-877-339-2665 (voice), varelaycc@hamiltonrelay.com.

Clayton E. Bowen is the Relay and Technology Programs Manager for the Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Virginia Relay enables people...
Maybe It Wasn’t the Rock Music

By Nathan Waldrip

My hearing problems really started around my first semester at ASU (Angelo State University—not the more famous ASU in Arizona). Everyone, myself included, assumed it was from all those years of “that loud heavy metal.” I was a metal head since the time my brother played Detroit Rock City for me when I was in first grade, and I listened to music ALL THE TIME, AS LOUDLY AS POSSIBLE.

So on Halloween 1988, sitting in my Intro to Art History class (ZZZZZZZZZ…), I looked over at my friend Eric and said, “AC/DC’s in Lubbock tonight.” We took off immediately after class in my VW Rabbit with no idea where we were going or how to get tickets, and with both of us broke. There was no such thing as a GPS or the Internet, so we just drove in the general direction of Lubbock, jamming to High Voltage and Powerage and debating whether Brian Johnson would, or should, dare to sing any of Bon Scott’s songs. As we got closer to Lubbock, local radio stations announced AC/DC was sold out.

Great. Now what?

We’d come this far…we’d try to find a scalper, or sneak in, or just hang out in the parking lot like idiots. We parked and started walking to the doors with no plan at all, just two stupid kids, when an older couple passed us going the other way, back to the parking lot. The guy told us they had a family emergency and asked if we needed tickets.

YES! Twenty bucks for two tickets to AC/DC.

And it was AWESOME. We were right up front against the rails when the cannons went off during For Those About to Rock, and I’m not exaggerating in the slightest when I say my ears have been ringing ever since. It was the best concert of my life. Until three months later, when two of my three favorite bands happened to be touring together: Metallica, with Queensryche opening. It was the best night of my life, with the (possible) exception of my daughter’s birth.

Having been right up front for two of the loudest bands on the planet three months apart, I just assumed that my sudden and severe hearing problems were a cause-and-effect situation.

The thing is, the problem wasn’t just lost volume, but also distortion. There were essentially a pair of cauliflowers I didn’t know about camping out in my auditory canals, and sound had to travel through and around them before getting to my brain. I started to be unable to recognize songs, and speech sounded muffled to me. I tried to fake my way through college. No one knew how bad my hearing was. In four semesters, I had a schizophrenic GPA rollercoaster, with two dean’s list and two Animal House finishes: 3.6, 0.6, 1.2, and 3.2.

One of the earliest signs that I was in trouble occurred in my first semester, even before the AC/DC concert. I had an interpersonal communications class, and one day near the beginning of the semester, we did an exercise in which we paired up and sat back to back, after which one partner would describe a picture while the other drew it, using only the verbal directions. I have ZERO artistic skills, but luckily I was paired up with a cute girl who started describing the picture she was looking at, which I was supposed to draw: “There are five squirrels lying on top of each other.”

What??

“The first is lying flat; the second is at a 45-degree angle rising up to the right; the third is parallel to the first…”

WHOA, WHOA, WHOA, SLOW DOWN. I was dealing with what, a squirrel DOGPILE? I was still on Squirrel Number One—I had his eyes all bugged out, tongue sticking out...

Meanwhile, the professor stopped walking around and stood right there watching me, smiling and waiting with the rest of the class members, all of whom had long since finished. She directed us to show our partners the results.

“What is THAT??”

“Five squirrels on top of each other!”

“SQUIRRELS?? I said SQUARES!!!!”

By my sophomore year, I realized something was wrong. I also had two knots on my head, one at the base of my neck, where my football helmet ended, that had been there a while and that I as-
City of Portland, Oregon Passes TV Caption Ordinance

February 2, 2016 by NCRA

In 2014, a coalition of concerned citizens called Portland: Turn on the Captions Now brought the issue of local businesses not turning the captions on their televisions to the attention of Portland, Ore., City Commissioner Amada Fritz. A year later, on December 18, 2015, an ordinance took effect that requires captions be turned on all the time on televisions in public places throughout the city. The expectation of the coalition: Businesses in Portland will turn on the captions once, and leave them on.

“The members of this coalition found that most often when they would ask for captions to be turned on at places that had televisions, the employees of the business would say they didn’t know how to turn them on, or they could not find the remote control, or it was too hard to do when they were busy,” said National Court Reporters Association (NCRA) member Carol Studenmund, RDR, CRC, a broadcast captioner and member of the Portland: Turn on the Captions Now coalition.

“Comcast is the major cable provider in Portland. And turning the captions on through a Comcast box is not always easy to do, even if you know how to work with TV equipment. Some businesses turn on the captions all the time and enjoy having them on. But those businesses are in the minority,” added Studenmund, who also serves on NCRA’s Broadcast and CART Captioning Committee.

Joining Studenmund on the coalition were Portland residents Jim House and Steve Brown, both deaf and long-time advocates for the deaf community on city, state, and nationals levels, as well as David Viers, a long-time advocate for people with hearing loss, who wears two cochlear implants.

According to Studenmund, prior to the ordinance, many businesses with televisions would have them turned on sometimes with the sound on and only sometimes with captions on, 99 percent of the time for entertainment purposes only. However, when emergency coverage goes on the air, the captions need to be visible so that everyone can understand what is being said. “The bottom line of this effort was to make sure all citizens in Portland have access to important information during times of emergency,” she said.

Studenmund said that captions can also help people learn to read and learn the English language. In Multnomah, Oregon, for example, County Sheriff Dan Staton ordered that captions be turned on the televisions located in the county jail over two years ago as a way to teach inmates how to read. In addition, when the National Captioning Institute sold caption decoders before televisions were required to have caption decoders built in, more than 40 percent of the people who purchased a decoder reported that it was to help them learn English as a second—or third or fourth—language.

“During the process of getting this ordinance written and passed, the U.S. Department of Transportation implemented a rule requiring all televisions in U.S. airports have the captions turned on all the time. That U.S. DOT rule helped the City Council come to its decision about this local ordinance. The vote of the Council was 5-0,” said Studenmund.

According to Studenmund, businesses should not have to spend any money to accomplish providing captioning on their television sets. Comcast, she noted, is ready to help its business customers turn on the captions. In addition, Portland has created a website (https://www.portlandoregon.gov/69431) with more information and may fine a business up to $500 per day for not turning on captions.

“But it is not the city’s goal to need to impose that fee on any business,” said Studenmund. “The goal is to turn the captions on and leave them on. Any fine would be imposed only after many unsuccessful attempts are made to get the captions turned on.”

Portland: Turn on the Captions Now also created a website (http://captionsonnow.net/how-can-businesses-comply) with information about its efforts to help ensure the captioning ordinance was approved. In addition, a number of organizations representing people who are deaf, as well as chapters of the Hearing Loss Association of America, are looking to Portland’s efforts as a model for possible legislation around the country. Among those chapters is the Hearing Loss Association of America – Kansas City Chapter, which recently launched the Kansas: Open Caption Initiatives and Kansas: Turn On the TV Captions Now projects (http://thejcr.com/2016/01/29/kansas-citychapter-of-hlaa-launches-open-caption-initiatives-project/). The projects will help
A knot on my neck was squishy (in medical jargon). Mom set up an appointment for me with Dr. Boone, whose real last name was WAY too long to pronounce. He looked at the knot, grabbed it, and started yanking. I yelled, “HEY!”

He responded, “Sis!”

“What?”

“No tumor. Is SIS.”

“Ovhhhhhh, a CYST.”

He didn’t do a biopsy or anything. The extent of his examination was grab-and-yank. If you tell a doctor you have hearing and balance problems and two sizeable knots on your head and his response is to grab, yank, and call it a sis, you should get a second opinion.

Fast forward a couple of weeks and I was at an ear-nose-throat guy in San Angelo. After a week of random tests left him clueless, he ordered an MRI, which in 1990 was new technology. He said he was looking for a tumor. If it WAS a tumor, I asked, would removal restore my hearing? He said possibly or probably or something to that effect. That night I lay in my dorm room and prayed for it to be a tumor. Nerve damage is irreversible, but having THIS could let me hear again.

The next day, the doctor told us I’d be deaf. Mom cried as we left. I told her I’d be fine, because I’d basically BEEN deaf for two years and was used to it. Dad said, “Let’s go eat.” He stayed cool as a cucumber, at least in front of me.

The moral of the story is, of course, be careful what you wish for; you might get it.

But this same doctor pointed us towards UT Southwestern and Dr. Mickey, my awesome neurosurgeon, so while God might have a slightly twisted sense of humor, He also helps you in ways you don’t see yet.

The OTHER moral of the story is, of course, CRANK IT UP, while you can.
the disappearing/reappearing method and at some point people who use only an antenna will not have any options for the better kind of captioning.

Again, I believe that I am the only person who filed a complaint with the FCC based on the premise that scrolling captioning meets the criteria for being “readable,” while the disappearing/reappearing captions hurt readability and therefore should not be allowed. If I am the only one who feels that way, I am sure my complaint will go nowhere. But if others understand the issue as presented here, agree with me, and file complaints with the FCC, then action might be taken to preserve and promote scrolling-line captioning. The complaint process is a very simple procedure online. I encourage people to go to http://esupport.fcc.gov/complaints.htm and let the FCC know about this and any other closed captioning complaints.

Thomas is a retired financial analyst living in Thornton Colorado and can be reached at dogniap@yahoo.com.

Remote Captioning in VA (continued)...

Continued from page 19

who are deaf, hard of hearing, Deaf-Blind, or who have difficulty speaking to communicate by TTY (text telephone) or another assistive device with anyone who uses a standard phone. For more information on Virginia Relay and its services, please visit www.varel@or contact Virginia Relay Customer Care by calling 1-866-894-4116 (voice) or 1-866-246-9300 (TTY) or emailing varel@hamiltonrelay.com. The author can be reached at clayton.bowen@vddhh.virginia.gov.

Caption Ordinance (continued)...

Continued from page 21

build statewide support for a mandate requiring captions on all TVs located in public places, as well as open captioning in movie theaters and at major public events.

This article was originally published on February 2, 2016 on TheJCR.com and is used by permission of the National Court Reporters Association.

Advocacy Corner (continued)...

Continued from page 10

asked the teams to tell us which of those practices they had implemented and which they were willing to implement. We received almost no responses.

We took the next step last month by sending a considerably more pointed demand letter to the Cubs on behalf of Bill Graham and Corey Axelrod, the season-ticket holder who is president of the Illinois Association of the Deaf, and also on behalf of ALDA and NAD.

This time, the Cubs did respond. They told us that they will provide captioning, but rather than display the captions on a universally visible scoreboard, as we had requested, they will transmit them to smart phones or a hand-held viewing device that can be checked out from the guest-service booth.

While this is a small step in the right direction, hand-held caption-viewing devices have proved unsatisfactory wherever they have been tried. One problem, which the teams are trying to fix, is that broadband usage during a game is so great that the devices don’t remain connected. But fixing that still won’t meet our needs. We want to use our phones to take pictures and post information about the game to our friends. The devices can be hard to see in the sun and hard to keep dry in the rain. We want our hands free for the peanuts and crackerjacks, and ASL users need their hands free to communicate about the game with their friends. So we will continue to negotiate.

This advocacy work is all done at no charge to ALDA or any of its individual members. When we get a cooperative resolution, as we have done with the San Jose-area theaters, I’m rewarded with a nice feeling of having accomplished something worthwhile. If businesses are unwilling to work with us, as was the case with the movie theater chains and appears to be the case with the Cubs, and if we then go to court, and if we prevail, then the other side pays our attorneys’ fees.

The critical requirement for advocacy, though, is advocates. ALDA can and will act on behalf of any of its members, but the members must let us know specifically what they want to see and do in their own communities. The ADA is a wonderful legal tool, but we have to be willing to use it to enrich our own lives. If there are places or events that you would patronize if they were communication accessible, let me know at johnfwaldod@hotmail.com. There is a really good chance we can get what you need.
Diane videotaped the whole thing. I could not wear my hearing aid in the right ear for one month, so that my brain would get used to the sound from the CI.

When the processor was activated, I could hear the beeps as the volume was adjusted. The audiologist had a chart for me to point at to indicate the level of sound I could hear, from “Quiet” to “Too Loud.” I looked up and noticed that both my sisters were crying at the miracle they witnessed of me being able to hear after 30 years. My hearing loss had decreased from 100 dB (very deaf) to just below 30 dB, a remarkable improvement. The hearing scale goes from -10 dB (very acute) to 120 dB (profoundly deaf).

Two weeks later, my nephews came along for my second mapping. They were fascinated by the technology and software used for mapping, as they had electrical engineering and computer backgrounds. My second mapping showed my hearing level to be around 20 dB, which was very satisfactory. I also received photos of the surgery.

For the first time, I could hear the turn signal in the car, the tire friction on the road, and the ADT alarm connection magnets in the door. I could hear the computer printer a room away, my keys jangling, the silverware as it touched the plates and bowls, the birds chirping, my keyboard clacking, and more (you can’t talk behind my back any longer!). The most annoying sound was the toilet flushing! I was looking forward to learning new sounds. This was all so amazing.

The CI processor for my left ear is connected by a short wire to a 50-cent-sized headpiece with a magnet that adheres through my skin to the internal magnet. When I remove the processor and have only my regular right ear hearing aid, the loss of sound is huge. I am totally addicted to the two of them now and am stunned at it all. At night, I don’t sleep with either the CI processor or hearing aid, so I enjoy the sound of silence. The only thing that wakes me up is lightning when there is a thunderstorm. As new processor technology comes out in the future, the implant that I have will be compatible with it.

There are a few problems. If I get too close to anything steel, the processor’s magnet whips right off my head onto the car, refrigerator, etc. I find this very funny. I also have to hug people from the right side to keep the CI from falling off. The CI battery only lasts two days, but the company gave me a one-year supply, and I am waiting for the FDA to approve the rechargeable battery for the United States.

I found the following books helpful: Listening Closely: A Journey to Bilateral Hearing by Arlene Romoff and I Can Hear You Whisper by Lydia Denworth (thanks to Juliette Sterkens for telling me about Lydia’s book).

I want to thank Scott Rinehart, the representative from Cochlear America (CA), Virgi Mills the representative from MED-EL, and Karalee Needelman, the representative from Advanced Bionics (AB) for explaining their cochlear implant products. I also thank a number of CI users, including Chris Wagner, president of the National Association of the Deaf, Gerry Buckley, president of the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID), Karen Kirby, Betti Bonni, Paul Morris, and many others for telling me about their personal experiences with the device. In addition, I thank Gary Coil, Denise Manning, and family far and near for being patient and helping me discover new sounds. Finally, I thank David Bitters, a supporter of Cochlear Americas, for pointing out the pros and cons of each company’s products and for taking me to a Cochlear Americas “Celebration” to meet the other participants.

I am now a progressively improving CYBORG! Stay tuned.

Debbe lives in Florida and is treasurer of ALDA-Suncoast and president of the HLAA Clearwater chapter. She has been doing genealogy for 45 years and has served as president of the West Pasco County Genealogical Society for 25 years. Her email address is debbehagner@yahoo.com.
Frances Stieglitz reports that ALDA-Boston celebrated the start of 2016 with a fabulous holiday brunch at the Westford Regency. Commissioner Heidi Reed of the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MCDHH) discussed the Commission's plans for 2016 and what ALDA-Boston members could do to increase awareness of hearing loss. The featured speaker was Caitlin Parton, a staff attorney with the Disability Law Center, who talked about advocacy and empowerment. Her talk sparked a lively Q & A discussion that might have gone on even longer, but the chapter had to vacate the room at 1:30 p.m.

On February 13, Ellen Perkins, an ALDA member and the hard of hearing independent living specialist at the Center for Living & Working, presented a mini-class titled “How to Talk to Your Legislators.” The goal of the program, which originated at the MCDHH, is to encourage Deaf, hard of hearing, Deaf-Blind, and late-deafened people to speak out about issues that concern them (both positive and negative) and to show how their voices COUNT.

Assistive listening device (ALD) tours at the Museum of Fine Arts are continuing. On February 20, the tour included restored rooms from three different mansions in and around Boston featuring furniture, decorative arts, etc. indicative of the times. The rooms contain paintings, carousel animals, weather vanes, sculpture and other decorative arts objects—a varied and interesting view of American life in the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries. March 12’s tour was of the Picasso exhibit.

The Annual Meeting was scheduled for April 9.

ALDA-Peach elected new board members at the January meeting. Officers for 2016 are President Yael Shaner, Vice-President Angie Fuoco, Secretary Sara Hartman, Treasurer Steve Tamas, and Member-at-Large Jim Stansell. The Peach chapter will focus on outreach during 2016, and a separate Outreach Committee has been formed, led by Steve Tamas and Jim Stansell. The chapter also decided to meet quarterly this year. The next meeting will be in April, when the Outreach Committee will present its report.

In Memoriam

ALDA-Peach very sadly reports the death of two of our beloved members. Each contributed enormously to the chapter, and each was greatly loved by all the Peaches. We miss them.

Roxanne Van Pelt Gasaway, an early member of ALDA-Peach, died on January 10, 2016. Roxanne was one of the first deaf graduates of the University of Houston, where she majored in journalism. She battled NF2 most of her life but was always cheerful and optimistic, impressing everyone with her courage and resourcefulness in the face of overwhelming adversity. She served as a board member of ALDA-Peach and as the chapter’s liaison with ALDA, Inc. for several years. She was unable to attend meetings during the last few years of her life but remained interested in the chapter and kept up with Peach members.

Robin Titterington died February 24, 2016 of complications from pneumonia, a collapsed lung, and an infection. She was a long-time ALDA, Inc. leader and former president and was the force behind the founding of the ALDA-Peach chapter. She served on the Peach board for many years and was the chapter’s most faithful and hard-working member. Robin inspired us all with her courage and determination and won our love with her good humor and cheerfulness.

Condolences go to ALDA-News Managing Editor Marta Watson, who lost her father, William Hergert, 100, on February 14.

Send your chapter news (for “Chapter Happenings”) and personal news (for “GA to SK”) to Ann at fabsmith@att.net. Deadline for the next issue is May 25.
What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson
ALDAcon 2016
Registration
Sept. 14-18, 2016
Sheraton Milwaukee
Brookfield Hotel,
Brookfield, WI.

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Postal Code: Country:

Phone: 
Circle Type: Voice Cell Text Captioned VP

Email address: 
Valid e-mail is required

I am a member of an ALDA chapter/group (if so, give its name):

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

You MUST indicate & dog must stay on leash.


On & after 9/1/2016, you may register onsite only, at the Tortoise rate, and above meals are included.

| ALDA MEMBER REGISTRATION (for EZ pay plan, see section after “Grand Total”): |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Early Bird                       | Until 6/15/2016 | $275            |
| Regular                          | 6/16/16-8/31/16 | $315            |
| Tortoise                         | From 9/1/2016   | $340            |

| NON-MEMBER REGISTRATION: |
|--------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Early Bird               | Until 6/15/2016 | $305            |
| Regular                  | 6/16/16-8/31/16 | $345            |
| Tortoise                 | 8/1/2015-8/31/2015 | $370            |
**VETERAN REGISTRATION:**

| Early Bird | Until 8/31/16 | $255 | $
|------------|---------------|------|------
| Onsite     | From 9/1/2016—Onsite only | $320 | $

**SPOUSE / SO (limited to one companion per full registration):**

| Early Bird | Until 6/15/2016 | $255 | $
|------------|-----------------|------|------
| Regular    | 6/16/16—8/31/16 | $295 | $
| Tortoise   | From 9/1/2016—Onsite only | $320 | $

**DAY REGISTRATION:** Please circle days (Day registrations include lunches but not Fri. Banquet or karaoke, which can be purchased separately below)

| One Day   | Thurs. or Fri. or Sat. | $70 | $
|-----------|------------------------|-----|------
| Two Days  | Thurs./Fri. or Fri./Sat. | $130 | $
| Three Days| Thurs., Fri., & Sat.   | $190 | $

**A LA CARTE MEALS/EVENTS:** Please specify number of additional meal tickets

| Thursday President's Luncheon  | $50 | Cty:____ | $
| Friday Appreciation Luncheon  | $50 | Cty:____ | $
| Friday I. King Jordan Award Banquet | $70 | Cty:____ | $
| Saturday Inspiration Luncheon | $50 | Cty:____ | $
| Saturday Karaoke Party        | $40 | Cty:____ | $
| Sunday Farewell Brunch        | $40 | Cty:____ | $

Join/renew membership — Regular (under 62 yrs.) $30.  $
Senior (62 yrs. or over) $25.  $
Business $50.  $
Veteran $25.  $

Lifetime (Bronze) $500, Lifetime (Silver) $1500, Lifetime (Gold) $3000.  $

**Tax-deductible donation**  $

Please add complete order here and pay in full  $

Use EZ pay plan below for partial payments.  

**EZ PAY PLAN:**

If you wish to make payments toward your registration and/or hotel costs, please use the fields below, instead of the Member fees above. Total registration must be received by August 1st using this multiple payment plan, which locks in the Early Bird rate, as long as you start before Early Bird deadline. Minimum payment of $50 is needed to start.

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**SPECIAL NEEDS:**  

28
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). Workshop rooms will be looped, to assist those with T-coils.

ROOMMATE MATCH:

By circling YES below, I agree to allow the ALDAcon roommate coordinator to share my information via email with an ALDA attendee of the same gender. Also, I agree to coordinate with my potential roommate to determine whether we are a match. We will discuss items such as service animals, allergies, smoking, etc. We will then notify the roommate coordinator by email as to whether 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 handling and processing fee) will be honored until July 31, 2016. NO refunds will be given from August 1, 2016 on. Contact ALDAcon 2016 co-planning chair Jane Schla at janeilla@mac.com for consideration of unique circumstances, such as illness or a death in the family, and for registration transfer information.

METHOD OF PAYMENT: (We accept Visa, MasterCard, and Discover only)

Check enclosed:   #   dated   for   $

Or credit card:

CC#   Expiration date:

Print name on card:   Security Code:

Signature:

Print form and mail to:

ALDAcon 2016 Registration

c/o Karen Krull

7815 S. Central Ave.

Burbank, IL 60459 USA

Reserve Your Hotel Room TODAY!

Reserve your room at the Sheraton Milwaukee Brookfield Hotel today! The ALDAcon room rate is $116.00 + taxes and ends on September 2, 2016 at 5 PM CST. Sheraton Milwaukee Brookfield Hotel phone number is (262) 364-1100. Online reservation may be made at the following link: https://www.starwoodmeeting.com/events/start.action?id=1511205976&key=851C0DD
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, may or may not use speechreading/lipreading, 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 connects 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 ☐

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

☐ General Member, Age 61 or under…….$30.00
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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:


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☐ MasterCard  ☐ Visa

Amount ____________________________

Account # ____________________________

Expiration Date _________________________

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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).
Association of Late-Deafened Adults

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

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

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

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