VDNR has two members/representatives/delegates from Nordic countries. They are encouraging Latvia, Estonia, Iceland, and the Faroe Islands to join VDNR (it is questionable whether the latter two will join, since their populations are so small that there are few deafened people). Two Estonian guests came this year and provided a report at the annual meeting. Two additional deputies to the Finnish delegates also attended, one of whom was Liisa Sammalpenger, a fellow ALDAn and member of ALDA’s international committee.

Liisa had invited me to attend the May 21 seminar, since I was living just under two hours’ flight time away in London. I was looking forward to attending it and learning from others, but I was in for a surprise.

I arrived in Hoje Taastrup, a suburb of Copenhagen, on Friday afternoon, May 20, and began receiving messages from Liisa and from the chair of the VDNR, Trine Gaarsdahl, asking when I would be coming to the meeting that day. Instead of just attending Saturday’s seminar as I had expected, I was informed that I would have 15 minutes to speak. As it turned out, the meeting ran over time and I was asked if I would mind presenting for 15 minutes on Saturday instead—they would find a place in their schedule to add me. Given that I had no expectation to present at all, I was perfectly fine with this. Sure, I said. I especially enjoy sharing what I love about ALDA.

On Saturday morning, at...
ALDA NEWS

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In the seven years since officially becoming an ALDA, I have discovered many things to love about this great organization.

• ALDAns who come from every walk of life and share a common experience of late deafness, yet have such unique stories to tell.

• ALDA’s “whatever works” communication philosophy that includes pencil/paper, looping, CART, ASL, lipreading, or even “sloppy signing.” (Editor’s note: ALDA co-founder Bill Graham called it “ALDA crappy sign.”)

• ALDA’s worldwide outreach, which encourages people facing hearing loss issues around the globe.

• ALDA’s commitment to advocacy, which not only spearheads important campaigns such as captioning in movie theaters but also keeps us informed about what is happening on the front lines of the fight for better accessibility.

• ALDA’s sense of community that impacts us in so many ways, whether through an ALDA chapter, our annual ALDAcon, the website, or the ALDA News.

I am pleased to say that much of what I love about ALDA is contained in this issue. You will find unique personal stories, news of advocacy work, updates about hearing loss issues around the world, information about improving your communication skills via lipreading, chapter doings, and ALDA Board news.

One last word—the purpose of the ALDA News is to keep you informed and to share experiences, but we also want to be a place where our ALDA members can express opinions about hearing loss matters. In future issues, we are offering a letters section called “In Your Humble Opinion” or “IYHO.”

“IYHO” will be a forum for YOUR ideas about what you would like to see happening in this organization. You can also comment on articles in the ALDA News, reports from the Board of Directors, or any hearing loss concern that you feel is important to late-deafened adults. There is no minimum length requirement, and while we will retain editorial discretion, we simply ask that your letters be about hearing loss, be civil in tone, and not include partisan political endorsements.

We hope this new feature will be a means to energize us all and to make the most of the opportunity to educate and advocate that the ALDA News can provide. Please feel free to contact me at aldamartacitaw@gmail.com for more information or to contribute your opinion.
Note from Nancy

By Nancy Kingsley, Editor-in-Chief

This issue includes a press release announcing an upgraded assistive listening system for the Arizona legislature and mentioning that interpreting is also available. Is something missing? We found that CART could also be requested, but this fact was not included. Unfortunately, the omission of information about CART is common, and even worse, its actual availability can be problematic.

When I moved to Lancaster, Pennsylvania from New Jersey almost ten years ago, the local live theater offered an assistive listening system and one interpreted performance of each main production. I had the good fortune to have been able to attend open captioned performances at several live theaters where I had previously lived in New Jersey, and I wanted the same opportunity in my new location. Fortunately, the Fulton Theatre was very progressive about accessibility and readily agreed to add open captioning (there are now two open captioned performances of each main production, a Saturday matinee and a week-night performance). The theater’s calendar notes the dates of both the interpreted and the open captioned performances.

More recently, the Giant Center in Hershey, Pennsylvania (which is near me) noted on its website that an assistive listening system was available and interpreting could be requested. When a friend and I decided to attend an event there, we asked for CART—and were turned down. Such a refusal is illegal, so I emailed a lawyer at Disability Rights of Pennsylvania and she contacted the Giant Center, which then provided the access we needed. I’m happy to add that Giant Center also agreed to mention the availability of captioning as well as interpreting on its website.

If interpreting is listed as an available service or is provided and publicized for an event, CART should be as well.
I am 46 years old and was diagnosed with a high-frequency hearing loss at 17. I recall my doctor telling me that I had the hearing of the average 65-year-old, which did not sound promising to me. However, hearing loss runs in my family, so I was aware that I could develop one and that my children might also inherit this loss. My father, my uncle, my grandparents, and many other relatives have a hearing loss that typically began in their 30s or 40s. My grandmother had a cochlear implant at the age of 65 and did marvelously. She was a dynamic and highly engaged person who was very full of life.

I went to nursing school after high school and then began to work in the intensive care environment. I knew that I would probably eventually lose my hearing entirely, so I worked hard to finish my bachelor’s and master’s degrees and finally obtain my doctorate. I realized that I would not be able to stay in the clinical nursing field with a severe hearing loss, so I chose to pursue academics. I am now an assistant professor of nursing and gerontology with a specialty in hearing loss at the University of Missouri, a Research I university, and will be tenured in 1 ½ years. Today, my hearing loss has advanced to severe with no high tones left at all. I wear hearing aids, but I’ve had to develop some additional techniques in order to interact with my research teams and teach a classroom of undergraduate students.

My current undergraduate classroom has 120 students in an auditorium-style room. I run a very interactive classroom, engaging students in as many different ways as possible during our sessions. We do role play, small groups, questions and answers, and/or gaming. My hearing loss can be a detriment, and unfortunately most assistive devices are meant to work from the student side of things. So I’ve added some technologies and methods to assist me.

1. I am very up front about my hearing loss and how the students can help me to hear. I also do a presentation about hearing loss in general and communicating with others with a hearing loss (this does fit nicely into a geriatrics class). For example, I explain that if they call my name and I continue walking away, I’m not ignoring them—I haven’t heard them. Also, if I answer in a way that doesn’t make sense, I may not have heard correctly. I ask them to say something like “You may have misunderstood my question. I wanted to know about…”

2. I use a discussion board online so students can type in any questions they have during class. If I do not get to the question during class time, I can post an answer on the class board as an announcement.

3. I use an FM receiver and have the students pass the FM microphone/transmitter to anyone with a question.

4. I randomly move the microphone to different students so I can call on them. This allows for more participation and prevents one or two students from dominating.

5. I assign specific students or groups (or draw names from a hat) to moderate certain sessions, especially ones in which students answer questions and someone needs to write their answers on the board.

We have a nonprofit organization in town called Services for Independent Living that has many resources for people with hearing loss. They can try devices and even check them out for a few weeks, and the staff is wonderful. I feel very fulfilled in my career and enjoy the engagement of students and colleagues. It is always difficult when I begin to use a new technology, but everyone soon gets used to it. I’ve found that hearing loss doesn’t need to be a huge barrier to success.

Kari is a registered nurse and assistant professor at the University of Missouri’s Sinclair School of Nursing. She has been a nurse for 24 years and has taught undergraduate and graduate nursing students for the past 20 years. Kari currently does research with older adults and nurses related to hearing loss and improving communication. She lives in Columbia with her husband and two children and can be contacted at Krlane67@gmail.com.
When someone—me, for example—says to you, “I’m deaf,” this is what it means. It means that I'M DEAF! The hearing’s kaput! You can talk as much as you want but if I’ve never conversed with you before, odds are, I’m not gonna understand what you’re saying. N.B., lipreading is one of those Jedi arts that most of us painfully human sorts can’t fully, 100%, totally master…ever.

Yesterday I interacted with not just one but TWO people who, while seemingly sentient, failed to understand what being deaf entails.

The first incident happened while my husband and I were at Mass General Hospital for a scan. We finished up and were leaving the imaging department, a rabbit’s warren of office, exam, and procedure rooms. We each stopped off at a restroom before the inevitably long ride home. While I was waiting for him, a smartly turned out, pleasant-seeming woman came out of her office (so she was a medical professional and everything!) and started talking at me—rapid-fire, too. I stopped her speech flood and smilingly told her, “Hi, I’m deaf, so I just missed everything you said.” I was about to ask her to either write down her message or say it SLOWLY, when she charged again with the quick-time march of words. This time, I put up the international crossing guard stop sign, known to all grade schoolers worldwide and said, “Hi, I’m deaf. This means that I’m unable to hear the words you’re saying. I’m standing here waiting for my husband to get out of the can. When he’s done, we’ll be on our way. Look, there he is now!”

I got it—the lady saw me standing around in the hallway, figured I was lost, and came out to see if she could assist. That’s lovely. Better wonderfulness would be in knowing how to communicate with folks who have difficulty understanding what you’re saying. I would think that in a major, big city teaching hospital, all staff would have at least some skill in this regard. Wouldn’t you?

The next incident happened in the pharmacy parking lot when I went to fill a ‘script. I came out to see that a giant “mini” van had parked tight next to my miniature smart car. It was so close that, had there been enough time, I would’ve joined Weight Watchers so’s I could more easily slip into the driver’s seat.

Nope, no time for that, so I very carefully opened my door. But while I was wriggling in, my door made VERY soft contact with the “mini” van. Honest to peaches, it was a light touch, NOT a hit. Nevertheless, the woman leaped out of her monster vehicle and raced to my door, demanding that I open it. I did. A flood of angry words were coming from her mouth, so I said, as before, “Hi, I’m deaf, so I missed everything you just said.” Obviously unfamiliar with the word “deaf,” she kept talking and then pointed at her side door which I’d supposedly mutilated. I looked. There wasn’t even a scuff mark. OF COURSE there wasn’t! I was driving the auto equivalent of a cotton ball!

At this point, driver babe spewed some more incomprehensible lexemes in my direction. I pointed out that she’d parked part way into my space, well over the lines. Then I apologized for touching her car, shut my door, and drove off.

Sheesh!

I believe I’m going to have cards made up for future occurrences. They’ll look like this:

Donna Maderer
Just In Case You Weren’t Sure
By Donna Maderer

Donna is a painter, illustrator, graphic designer, and former musician, living one town south of Boston, a place she calls Valhalla. She is 57, has been deaf for 11 years, and notes that “neurofibromatosis type 2 is the responsible, dastardly party.” You can find more of her stories at http://donna-tellmeastory.blogspot.com. Her email address is donna.maderer@gmail.com
ALDA’s Advocacy Corner: Captioning for Movies and the Internet

By John Waldo, Curator

Those portions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) that pertain to people with hearing loss are written in adjectives. Businesses must provide us with “effective” communication when “necessary” to provide “full enjoyment” unless doing so would impose an “undue” burden on the business. Because of the general nature of those terms, our rights are defined less by the ADA itself than by how the courts and the regulatory agencies interpret and apply the law.

Frequently, the developments that affect our lives come from the courts. That arena has been quiet. But the regulatory agencies are suddenly getting very active, particularly the Department of Justice and the Department of Transportation.

The Department of Justice (DOJ), which is empowered to issue specific regulations to implement the ADA, has announced that it really, for certain, will issue regulations about captioned movies in July 2016. The proposed regulations would require all theaters that have installed digital projection systems to provide individual caption-viewing devices within six months. These devices, either a small display unit attached to a flexible gooseneck that sits in the cup-holder or eyewear that fits over regular eyeglasses, lets us read the dialogue as it is being spoken without altering the movie-going experience for other viewers.

ALDA has been a critical player in this development. The proposed regulations mirror what we’ve achieved in the courts, including the case that ALDA brought in California against Cinemark on behalf of two of its members, Linda Drattell and Rick Rutherford. Indeed, the DOJ specifically said that the purpose of the proposed regulation is to make sure that people anywhere in the country get the same benefits as people who live in areas where lawsuits were won.

After the proposal was announced in 2014, ALDA instigated negotiations between the national advocacy groups for the deaf and hard of hearing, on the one hand, and the National Association of Theatre Owners, on the other hand, to see whether there were areas of potential agreement. Those negotiations proved fruitful.

Our concern was that DOJ might ultimately settle for requiring only some rather than all auditoriums to be caption-enabled. The theaters agreed to support a 100% requirement. Their concern was that DOJ was proposing to require the theaters to obtain an excessive number of viewing devices. We agreed to a flexible plan – a much lower number of required devices, coupled with a mechanism to increase the number as demand might warrant.

The hope is that once and for all, these regulations will make movies accessible to all of us with hearing loss anywhere in the country, ending a battle that has been going on for 25 years. (I have been actively involved in this issue since 2008, as has Linda and other ALDAns).

So what can go wrong now? I see the following possibilities:

1. DOJ may miss the deadline again, and if it does, this issue could die with the present administration.

2. The regulations may come out but may not be in the form we have approved and recommended.

3. Some theaters may challenge the regulations in court, which at the very least might delay the six-month rollout.

4. There may be a dispute over the exact reach of the regulations. DOJ proposes to define “movie theater” as “a facility other than a drive-in theater that is used primarily for the purpose of showing movies to the public for a fee.” While that seems straightforward enough, never underestimate the ability of creative lawyers to sow confusion. My specific concern is the increasing number of dinner theaters that offer fairly elaborate food and beverage services. Since those theaters no doubt derive a far greater portion of their revenue from the food and beverages rather than from the movie, are they going to argue that they are restaurants rather than theaters? This concern is heightened by the fact that those establishments do not, by and large, appear to offer any captioning.

Continued on page 23
Arizona Legislature Approves Budget for First in Nation Assistive Technology for House, Senate

Editor's note: We were pleased to see that the Arizona legislature funded an upgrade for its assistive listening system, but disappointed that in the press release below, the Arizona Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing only stated that interpreters are also available for the Deaf community, with no mention of CART. We checked and learned that CART will also be provided on request, but this information should have been included in the press release.

(Phoenix, Ariz.) – The Arizona State Legislature has approved a budget request from the Arizona Commission for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing (ACDHH) to provide the necessary funding to upgrade the assistive listening technology throughout the Arizona State House and Senate chambers. Commonly referred to as “looping,” a hearing loop is a special type of sound system for use by people with hearing aids and cochlear implants.

According to Sherri Collins, executive director of ACDHH, this technology has long been needed to ensure Arizonans with a hearing loss will have access to the state’s legislative process.

“The House and Senate are accessible for individuals with physical disabilities as mandated by the Americans with Disabilities Act. Interpreters are available for members of the Deaf community who are fluent in American Sign Language. But those with a hearing loss have not had effective assistive technology available to them in the chambers,” said Collins. “Until now.”

Collins added, “We believe the Arizona Legislature is the first in the nation to completely loop the public hearing rooms and galleries.”

The Legislative Council, a government agency with authority for both the House and Senate, received an appropriation for $250,000 and will oversee the installation. The funds come from fees collected through an already existing landline telephone tax.

According to Sen. Andy Biggs (R-Gilbert), President of the Senate, this upgrade to the Senate chambers will now enable those with hearing loss to fully participate and engage with their elected officials.

“The political process should be open and accessible to everyone. With the addition of the looping technology, the Senate is now more accessible to the hearing loss community that needs it,” said Biggs.

An induction loop system consists of one or more loops of wire driven by an amplifier connected to the sound system. The hearing loop transmits the sound from the PA system in the form of ripples in the magnetic field directly to hearing aids and cochlear implants set to the “T” or telecoil setting. A telecoil, a small copper coil found in most hearing aids and all cochlear implants, picks up magnetic waves from the loop and converts it into electrical energy. This is similar to how a microphone converts sound waves in to electrical energy. By switching the hearing aid to the “T” position, the electromagnetic field is detected and sound from the PA system is heard in the user’s ear clearly without background sound.

“Arizona’s legislature passed a bill in 2007 that supported increased hearing aid functionality,” said Rep. David Gowan (R-Sierra Vista), Speaker of the House. “The bill requires hearing care professionals to inform their patients about telecoils when purchasing hearing aids. And now thanks to the installation of the looping technology, these individuals will have full access to the House.”

The date for the installation has not been set yet, but Collins expects the process to begin this summer, with completion well in advance of the start of the next session.

“We have worked these past months to secure the funding needed for this important technology upgrade to the House and Senate. President Biggs and Speaker Gowan are to be commended for their response. We are pleased that the Legislative leadership saw fit to set aside the money to ensure that the hard of hearing community has access to a hearing loop system that is now so common in many public settings,” said Sue Kay Kneifel, chair of the board of commissioners of ACDHH.

About ACDHH

ACDHH serves as a statewide information referral center for issues related to people with hearing loss and aspires to be a national leader in communication access, support services and community empowerment throughout the state. The purpose of the organization, and its commissioners, is to ensure, in partnership with the public and private sector, accessibility for the deaf and hard of hearing to improve their quality of life. For more information about ACDHH, please visit www.acdhh.org.
One of Us

By Karen Krull, Curator

This issue’s focus is on Marta Watson, a very congenial soul I first met face to face at ALDAcon in Scottsdale, Arizona last year. We had communicated previously by email about registration and tips on making her hearing husband feel welcome at the ‘con. Marta is highly energetic, a wonderful person, and proud to be “one of us.” Read on to find out why. You can reach Marta by email at mart-acitaw@yahoo.com.

Name: Marta Watson

Where were you born? Albany, Oregon

What is your current residence? About 12 miles outside of Libby, Montana—off the grid. After living in five foreign countries and four states, we decided to retire to an entirely different kind of life in 2012. Our home, “Moose Chippings,” is our little slice of paradise for as long as we can manage it. I must admit that the stairs might force us out at some point, but for now we are both very happy here.

What is the cause of your deafness? Surgery to remove acoustic tumors caused by neurofibromatosis type 2 (NF2). I lost the left auditory nerve in ’77 and the right one in 2002.

Age/year you became deafened? Age 51 (It will be 15 years in August.)

Marital status? Hitched. My husband Dave and I have been married almost 45 years.

What is your present job? Retired (from teaching, although my last job was in human resources)

What is the worst job you ever had? Babysitting some very bratty kids as a teenager

Movies you want to see again? Hmm, that is a tough one because I can watch all the movies I want to see on Netflix and Amazon anytime—but I really am looking forward to seeing The Secret Life of Pets. The trailers are hilarious, and I need to laugh more.

Books you tell others to read? It’s hard to narrow the list down, as I am a voracious reader. These are some books that I wish others would read so we could discuss them (I’m open to additional recommendations):

- Thinking, Fast and Slow by Daniel Kahneman
- Defining the Wind by Scott Huler
- Gilead by Marilynne Robinson (as well as the sequels, Home and Lila)
- Bonhoeffer by Eric Metaxas
- Hunters and Gatherers by Francine Prose
- Deaf Sentence by David Lodge

I stay home to watch: Nothing. We don’t have TV, and I am truly thankful for that. I consider it a perk of living off the grid. I do watch Netflix, though, and just recently, my son gave me the complete Law and Order DVD set, I enjoy watching that because it is interesting to see how attitudes, fashions, and technology changed over the 20 years it ran. Just yesterday, I watched an episode about what was then (in 1993) the controversial use of cochlear implants.

Favorite pig-out food: I love Asian (particularly Indonesian, Japanese, and Malaysian) food—I can’t get enough of it, and it is very hard to find here in the wilds of Montana, so I try to cook my own. It isn’t quite the same as the real thing, though.

Hobbies: Gardening in the summer, knitting in the winter, and reading and traveling all year round are the basics. I dabble a bit with water colors now and then. Right now I’m full throttle into gardening. It is probably the hobby I enjoy most.

If I had more free time: Free time is not my issue—in retirement, I have plenty of it, and I am learning how to fill it more productively. Right now I help out with our church store and ALDA News. If I could, I’d spend a lot more of my free time with my grandkids, but they live several states away.

The hardest thing about becoming deafened is: the exhaustion from trying to communicate, and the frustration from miscommunication.

I began accepting my deafness: right away, but the steps were incremental. I am at peace with it most of the time, but I still have my moments.

The worst thing about deafness is: it robs me of a lot of life’s joys—music, the voices of loved ones, and the sounds of nature.

Continued on page 22
Coming Out of My Hearing Loss Closet

By Shari Eberts

My father had a hearing loss but never discussed it. His mother had a hearing loss but pretended she did not. I spent 10 years in denial about my own hearing loss, and then another 10 years hiding it. So how did I become this new person, a hearing health advocate, the Board chair of Hearing Health Foundation and the writer of a blog entitled Living With Hearing Loss? Here is my story.

I grew up the child of someone with a hearing loss. I knew it in a peripheral way—my father wore hearing aids, but they were never seen, always hidden by sideburns grown long for that purpose. He never discussed his hearing loss and went out of his way to hide it. I remember social gatherings where he would disappear, only to be found sitting at a table in the corner by himself. I always wondered why, but now I know. He probably couldn't hear and was embarrassed, or was exhausted and just couldn't bring himself to bother.

Looking back on it, I see that my family was not supportive of him. My mother would often whisper things to my sister and me behind his back saying, “Don’t worry, he can’t hear us.” Even as a child, I knew that wasn’t nice. But most of the time I was just unaware of the hardship he faced. I sensed his embarrassment and the taboo nature of the subject, but I didn’t dwell on it, being focused on myself as most children are. He never asked anyone to speak up or to face him when they spoke. He would never, as far as I could tell, position himself within the family group so that he could hear better. He never asked for a quiet seat at a restaurant or did anything to draw attention to his hearing loss. In fact, he would often pretend to hear what others said rather than admit that he couldn’t. It makes me sad to think of it.

So when I first started having problems hearing in my mid-twenties at business school, I hid it, following his example. And when I got my first pair of hearing aids, I refused to wear them, afraid someone might see them. I was embarrassed. I am not sure why. Was it a learned response from watching my father, or was it something larger—the stigma associated with hearing loss in this country that I wanted to avoid? In any event, my mother’s reaction was not encouraging. “Do you really need to wear them?” she asked me.

Eventually, the answer became yes, I really did need to wear them, but still, I avoided them as much as possible. I remember surreptitiously putting them in on the way to work, wearing them all day hidden behind my long hair (easier for a woman), and whipping them out as soon as the elevator door closed behind me on my way out of the office. And when I traveled, I would sneak them in and out right before and after important client meetings. I got pretty good at it but always worried if the telltale feedback whistle would give me away. I hated my hearing aids and only wore them when I absolutely needed to, and never socially or with my family.

But then I had two children of my own, and this forced me to come to terms with my hearing loss. Since my loss was genetic, I worried that I might have passed it on to them. Given the adult-onset nature of my loss, we won’t know for another 15 years, but I wasn’t going to sit idly by and wait to see. And if they did have an issue, I didn’t want them to feel embarrassed and ashamed of it. I needed to come out of my hearing loss closet.

So I did. Around this time, I left my work on Wall Street and started looking for some way to get more involved in the hearing loss space. I was lucky enough to become involved with Hearing Health Foundation (HHF) and found my way onto the Board of Directors. Before long, I was the chair of the Board. My work with the foundation has been a good excuse to be more vocal about my hearing loss. My friends asked me why I was devoting my time to HHF, and I would tell them about my hearing loss. Most of my friends had no idea, and none of them minded. And when I meet new people, they don’t mind, either. What had I been so worried about?

In fact, most of the time when I talk about it, the person tells me about his or her own issue with hearing loss or tinnitus, or that someone in his or her family or a close friend has hearing loss. This isn’t really that surprising given that there are nearly 50 million of us with hearing loss in the U.S. alone.

As time goes on, I have grown bolder. I now regularly advocate for myself—asking for quiet tables at restaurants, using caption readers at the movies, and rearranging the seating at family dinners to make sure I can hear and participate. I even started Continued on page 15
breakfast, I was informed that the opening speaker was sick. Would I mind presenting for the hour she was to have spoken, opening the seminar? A bit rattled, I said that was fine, but what would they like for me to talk about? I was told to speak about myself and the topics they mentioned earlier. A full hour? Oh, my.

I started peppering people with questions during breakfast, which they took to be small talk, until they noticed I was jotting down notes on a piece of folded paper. An interpreter/captioner (I'll explain momentarily) asked me if I wanted to follow the conversation or just work on my speech. I was genuinely embarrassed, but explained that if I were to give a speech I would need to know what was of interest to everyone. I put the paper away.

The Norwegian speaker I replaced had planned to speak about the psychological consequences of hearing loss. I was not a specialist in clinical psychology like her, but I did know firsthand the psychological consequences of hearing loss! I was also told that the audience did not expect statistics but were interested in how ALDA, DCARA, BEADHH and local advocacy efforts worked. I explained how we help each other cope and thrive in ALDA. I opened the seminar with a discussion about what it was like to become deafened (stages of grief, feeling isolated, relationships challenged), and how ALDA, with its philosophy of “Lost my hearing, found a family” and its motto of “Whatever works!” rise to meet the needs of those who are deafened.

I shared information about the Cinemark Theatres lawsuit and settlement, in which ALDA was the organizational plaintiff. I shared stories about ALDAcon—how precious newcomers are to us and how we creatively find ways to include them. I told them about ALDA's karaoke night, use of balloons to communicate the rhythm, line dancing, workshops, and using whatever modes of communication work for each individual attendee. I shared ALDA's philosophy of humor, as in our stories for the ALDA News. I explained how ALDA started and how captioning began as ALDA Crude. When I finished my presentation, Liisa joined me and gave a presentation about ALDAcon in Arizona last year.

After the presentation, two audience members said that they were inspired by ALDA's use of humor. I had a lot of fun talking about ALDA and enjoyed sharing the ALDA moments I cherish. ALDA is my favorite subject! I was told after my presentation that it was obvious I had given this speech several times, but I said no, I just loved talking about ALDA. I didn’t need to rehearse.

Seminar presenters included Aida Regel Poulsen, Secretary of the European Federation of the Hard of Hearing, who gave an informative speech, providing data about the percentage of deaf/late-deafened/hard of hearing/deaf-blind people in the UK (15.6%) and in Denmark (16%). These figures are comparable to the United States estimates (15%). Aida also reported that while deafened people are included in equality planning by various laws, in practice they are excluded due to lack of proactive planning, emphasis on “reasonable adjustment,” and lack of confidence in those needing accessibility. This, too, resonates with what we experience here in the States, where we repeatedly see a lack of accessibility despite the fact that we have moved from, as Aida put it, being “objects of charity” to individuals with human rights.

Other speakers talked about bilateral cochlear implants, training and employability of deafened people, whether work areas should be made accessible, lack of accessibility in government meeting locations, and the greater need for automated speech-to-text and its difficulties in processing dialects.

Strategies were also discussed, such as the Norwegian Hard of Hearing (HLF) focal points at the policy, community, and corporate levels. Decision-makers generally depend on success stories from the media, which create an illusion that being hard of hearing or deaf is not so bad, or that cochlear implants are a miracle cure. As a result much-needed supports are not provided.

How did we understand each other? Here’s the fascinating thing about interpreters in the Nordic countries: an interpreter is trained to provide sign language interpreting (whether it is Danish, Finnish, Swedish, or Norwegian Sign Language), but can also take an additional year of training to type on a QWERTY keyboard for captioning (speech-to-text) on the spot or as you go—also in these languages and in English, whatever is preferred. English and German are taught in each of these countries as second languages.* Some interpreters are only trained to caption.

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(VDNR) Nordic Council (continued)...
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One of Liisa’s interpreters was trained both in sign language and captioning, but others present were trained just to caption or sign. Liisa’s interpreters captioned in English when I was present, for which I was very grateful.

The keyboard is carried around along with a screen such as that of a tablet (even your smartphone will do) and can be propped up anywhere to facilitate conversations or presentations, such as on the table in the restaurant. For a guided tour, or while standing in groups, the interpreter balances the keyboard and tablet on a makeshift pad that is held in place against the abdomen by over-the-shoulder straps so that the interpreter can type while standing and the captions are readable as we walk around. For a large meeting, such as the seminar, a large screen is used.

The captioning effort tended to be slow and there were mistakes, but this might have been because more than one person was speaking; more than one language was being used, such as Danish and Finnish, with both being interpreted into English for the captions; or the limitations of using a QWERTY keyboard. Or all three. Regardless, having the captions in this portable way enabled conversations that would have been impossible to have otherwise. One exception was the captioning of the seminar and Friday meeting into Swedish by two brothers, one of who would translate and speak the words in Swedish through a makeshift tube into his brother’s ear, who then typed the captions in Swedish. I was told that the dual effort by the brothers ensured Swedish captions that were live, with minimal mistakes.

What was I most impressed with at the seminar? First was the interpreter/captioning role, in which the interpreter becomes a captioner...
as the situation warrants, and the fact that captioning could be mobile, using a portable keyboard and tablet.

Second was the government support of interpreters/captioners in Nordic countries. In Finland, the government pays for unlimited communication access in the workplace and other situations such as attending a seminar, volunteering, and participating in social events. Two interpreters/captioners flew to Denmark with Liisa, their expenses paid for by the Finnish government. In Sweden, you have to have documented costs and argue to get this kind of support; communication access is based on fixed employment or seeking a job in order to qualify for 20 hours of interpretation services per week. But this support is still provided by the government. In some instances in Sweden, the employer agreed to pay for the communication access. In Denmark, the situation seems to be better, but the various Danish municipalities offer different levels of support. Still, Trine Gaarsdahl mentioned that in Denmark she has unlimited hours of interpreting at her place of business.

And third, I was impressed with the Handicaporganisationernes Hus itself—from the holes in the plywood barriers to make them see-through and the naturally lit rooms that emphasize the use of daylight and open space, this is a place where all can find the greatest accessibility. Jesper Boesen, the owner and consultant of No Barriers Advice, was heavily involved in the construction of this accessible building and provided a tour. The challenge faced in its design was to provide for all disability groups in the same building. Compromises had to be made so it is not optimized for one particular group, yet it is one of the most—if not the most—accessible office buildings in the world. The reason for its success is that the designers and architects listened to all the disability organizations to make the right compromises and solutions.

The organizations, for their part, focused on articulating their demands and needs, not on the solutions themselves. Jesper emphasized that it is not always easy to agree on solutions, but it is easier to agree on needs. So the architects were provided with the problems to solve and they solved them. Additionally, it was not enough to say that each group wanted accessibility. For example, a ramp may be the ideal image of mobility access, but if you need to make a detour or take the back route to get to it then it isn’t right to think of the ramp as accessible. Therefore, in the design of this building, accessibility had to be equated with equal opportunity. To help the engineers gain insight, they were put into wheelchairs, wore goggles that gave them tunnel vision, wore earplugs and were blindfolded. Then they were taken 200 meters away from the meeting facility and were told to get back into the room. As a result, everything from the fire escape to parking spots was designed to provide equal opportunity, openness, and respect. And it was built at a cost that was a little less than the cost of an average office building.

I want to thank Liisa for inviting me to the VDNR seminar. It is always wonderful to share information and to see how others create solutions for the accessibility issues that face us all.

* Some of the spoken and written languages are similar and can be understood by the users of each. There are different sign languages in the Nordic countries, and interpreters do not know the signs of the neighboring ones. Swedish and Finnish signs are approximately 50% the same because they have had the same base since the 1800s. Swedish is the second official language in Finland, as Finland was previously East Sweden until 1809, and those from Finland tend to use Swedish when speaking with people from other Nordic countries. This was the second time the VDNR seminar was held in English in order to be accessible to other Europeans; last year, it was held in English in Estonia. Two years ago, the seminar was in Finland, using Finnish and Swedish. Before this, it was only open to the Council members.

Linda is a former president of ALDA and worked as community relations director and hard of hearing support specialist for DCARA. She served as an advocate in obtaining communication access in BART trains and stations and in her successful settlement with Cinemark Theatres and AMC Theatres 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. Contact her at lindra@comcast.net.
The Path Leads to Bilateral
By E. Lynn Osborne

When thinking about the question “Why get bilateral cochlear implants (CIs)?” I realized that depending on how it is asked, who is asking, and the tone of how it is asked, the answer is quite different. It can be asked in such a way that it sounds sarcastic, like “why?!” usually coming from someone who doesn’t have an understanding of being late-deafened. On the other hand, I was asked by several very happy bilateral recipients “Why not?!” The latter question quite frankly activated a spark of curiosity that made me give serious consideration to the reasons why I was holding onto the last vestiges of hearing in my right ear. Why bilateral CIs? The first and most obvious answer is so I can hear with both ears.

My hearing loss journey began on September 29, 2005 when I woke up to go about my regular routine. That day’s plans changed, because the first thing I noticed even before I got out of bed was that the hearing in my left ear was muffled. When I tried to get up, it felt like the floor was tilting, and there was terrible noise in my head. I crawled back into bed until we could call my doctor for an appointment. The doctor, who was covering for my primary, said it was an ear infection, but being a nurse, I knew better. By the time I got to see an ENT, he agreed that it wasn’t an ear infection and introduced me to the term Ménière’s disease. September 29, 2005 became a date engrained in my mind as much as my birthday and anniversary. It was essentially a new birthday. But if anyone had broached the cochlear implant subject at that time, I would have surely said, “Absolutely not!”

Before Ménière’s, my husband Kevin and I (who had been high school sweethearts) had a plan for how we pictured life. Ménière’s disease stepped in and interrupted much of that plan, especially my career goals as a nurse and assisted living administrator. I say “interrupted” because I quickly learned that I couldn’t plan anything because I never knew how I was going to feel. I also had my real estate license and thought I could fall back on that if and when I no longer felt that I could safely practice nursing. I tried switching in 2007 when I was 42, but working as a real estate agent did not pan out for a few reasons. For one thing, customers were not patient about facing me when we spoke in person and speaking slowly over the phone. At that time I was just becoming accustomed to unilateral hearing loss when I was hit with the double whammy of waking up yet again with sudden hearing loss in the other ear.

I wasn’t given information about any resources for coping with hearing loss by my ENT or audiologist and most definitely not by my employer. I felt like a Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade balloon floating untethered. Oddly, at this time the only person I could think of with a sudden hearing loss was Rush Limbaugh, and that is where I started my Internet search. Rush had been discussing getting a cochlear implant because he was concerned that his career in radio was in jeopardy.

My search led me to finding out about ALDA, so I contacted my regional director, Carolyn Piper. Never was a first impression more important than at that moment when I felt so alone and frustrated. Carolyn explained what ALDA was and told me that the annual ALDaCon was approaching (this was in 2007). She encouraged me to apply for a newcomer’s scholarship so I could meet people with varying levels of hearing loss using an array of assistive listening devices. Learning about the technology available is huge to a gadget geek like me.

The chain of events during this journey to choosing bilateral implants has been a progression just as my hearing loss has been. Attending ALDaCon introduced me to Gallaudet University’s peer mentoring training and ignited my desire to carry the kindness extended to me by Carolyn and ALDA to others. Any knowledge I gained in my own search would be shared with them. Seeing people with cochlear implants interacting was enlightening and enthralling, because they were able to hear and respond in a way that I envied. I was still missing punchlines and often having to ask people to repeat themselves.

When the realization sunk in that returning to work in my previous profession was highly unlikely and I was subsequently injured in an auto accident, I decided to change career paths and to return to college to pursue a degree in psychology with a focus on counseling.
**Life Is Very Good**  
*By Sharaine Rawlinson Roberts*

When I was a little girl with perfect hearing, I used to imagine that my desk was surrounded by barn wood that had a little window. I could see what was happening around me, but I couldn’t hear unless I opened the barn’s wooden door. I didn’t realize it at the time, but this was a foreboding of what was to come.

At age 14, I contracted spinal meningitis and lost all my hearing overnight—I couldn’t even hear a jet engine. I was deafened the same day I was to start my sophomore year of high school, and it sure was a wake-up call when I failed my first test ever. Gone were the days when I could understand everything in class and soak up the knowledge with ease, always passing tests with at least a B. Instead, I had to study very hard; a classmate in each class took notes and shared a carbon copy with me. There were no computers, sign language interpreters, or CART services in those days.

One might think that this drastic change in my ability to hear would have dampened my zest for life, but that was not the case. Instead, I buckled down and studied diligently. I also learned who my friends were. Those who taught me fingerspelling and wrote messages to me showed me that my deafness was not going to end our friendship. I worked on the school yearbook for two years and graduated number 106 in a class of 610. Not bad for a young lady who couldn’t hear a thing!

Fast forward to today. I’m happily married to a wonderful man, Randall. We just returned from a vacation where we photographed wild horses in the Sand Wash Basin of Colorado. My cochlear implant (CI) allowed me to communicate with some ease in the car, via a lapel microphone connected to my processor. The mic was clipped onto Randall’s shirt collar so I’d have direct audio input while either of us was driving. My CI also gave me the ability to hear some of the horses’ whinnies, snorts, and hooves as they hit the hardened soil.

Granted, I don’t always understand what Randall says, even with the microphone, so he uses sign language and fingerspelling as needed to augment communication. And I don’t hear every sound around me, especially in open spaces like Sand Wash Basin, nor in restaurants where there is a cacophony that can overwhelm me as I try to hear my family and friends. But life after deafness is still very good.

Sharaine is a native of New Mexico and a graduate of Rochester Institute of Technology and the University of Kansas. She is the marketing & account manager for Caption First, the Region 4 director for the Association of Late-Deafened Adults, a past board member of ADARA (formerly known as American Deafness & Rehabilitation Association), and a lifelong advocate for people with disabilities. Sharaine can be contacted at ALDASharaine@gmail.com.

**Hearing Loss Closet (continued)...**  
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a blog where I discuss my hearing loss and what I do to cope. My hope is that my story will inspire others to come out of their hearing loss closets. There is nothing to be embarrassed about. Nobody will mind, and in fact, they probably already know. Plus, being open about your hearing loss sure takes the pressure off having to hear everything perfectly all the time! And what a relief that is.

Slightly edited and reprinted with permission from Shari’s blog, Shari is a hearing health advocate who blogs at LivingWithHearingLoss.com and serves on the board of Trustees of both Hearing Health Foundation and the Hearing Loss Association of America. Her bylines include the Huffington Post, Good Housekeeping, Hearing Loss Magazine, and Hearing Health Magazine. Shari has an adult-onset genetic hearing loss and hopes that sharing her story will help others to live more peacefully with their own hearing loss. You can also find her on Facebook and Twitter. Contact her at shari@sharieberts.com.
Have You Heard?

By Karin Kasper

I am an administrative assistant for a nursing school in the San Francisco Bay Area. The university offers several health sciences degrees at three campus sites, and I work at the San Mateo site in the Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing program. The students who graduate from this one-year program earn a degree in Bachelor of Science in Nursing and then become eligible to take the registered nurse (RN) board exam.

In early 2011, the librarian at this campus, who is also my very dear friend, told me that she was going to give a presentation to the students about health literacy. Her son has auditory processing disorder, so she planned to share her personal stories about raising him with this disability. She went through many years of frustration dealing with doctors while trying to obtain the correct diagnosis. She also thought it would be valuable for the students to learn about other disabilities, so she asked if I would share my experiences growing up hard of hearing. The presentation, titled “Have You Heard? Health Literacy and Communication is a Vital Sign,” went so well that we received an honorarium from the main campus. We were also nominated for the “Dr. Cornelius Hopper Diversity Excellence Award” (also given by the main campus). Although we didn’t win, it was a great honor to get nominated. That same year, we produced a poster and presented it at a health literacy conference in Irvine, California. We have continued to present twice a year to the students in the health assessment class.

In the second year, we invited my husband, Ron, who has had a severe hearing loss since childhood due to the Rh factor, to tell about his childhood experiences growing up with a hearing loss and being an avid and strong athlete in baseball and football. Based on the evaluations after each presentation, his personal stories always seem to be most popular.

Ron’s favorite story, which always brings a great laugh, is something that happened several years ago when he went to a museum with a group of ALDAns. They had signed up for a guided tour, which went past lunchtime, and Ron started getting hungry. He mentioned this to our friend, Norma, who showed him how to sign the word “hungry.” The tour went on and on and he was getting really hungry, so he looked at Norma and signed the word “hungry” by moving his hand up and down several times. She started laughing so hard that she was crying. Ron couldn’t understand what was so funny until Norma finally came to her senses and told him that by making the sign several times the way he did, he was signing “horny.” When Ron tells this story, he adds, “Did I mention that Norma is 80 years old?”

Before the class (usually the day before), the librarian sends out a survey to the students to find out how much they know about health literacy and hearing loss. It is always surprising to find out how little the general public knows. Although I have stage fright, I feel I have an obligation to educate the students about hearing loss. Also, who knows, maybe one (or several) of these future nurses will be taking care of me one of these days. The librarian, who is a researcher at heart, also found out that the nursing students at this campus are apparently the only ones in California who obtain this kind of education.

In addition to sharing my personal stories about growing up in Sweden with a hearing disability, I include many tips on how to approach and treat patients with a hearing loss. My favorite story happened to a relative of one of our faculty members. Her husband’s grandmother is completely deaf from a childhood illness. She can read lips, but since she is now over 90, she often needs more complicated things written down. The grandmother was admitted to the hospital for a few fainting episodes. On the day of her expected discharge, her son was going to pick her up, but when he got there, the nurse told him that his mother might not be ready for discharge because she wasn’t cooperating with the physical therapist. The nurse explained that his mother needed to walk before being discharged but didn’t seem to understand what she was being told to do. The son asked, “You know that she is deaf, right?” The nurse responded, “No, nobody told me that!” The son then wrote on a piece paper, “Mom, they need you to get up and walk before they’ll let you go home.” His mother got out of bed, took her walker, and walked all the way to the

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Creating the ALDAcon Proceedings

By Margreta von Pein

Each year ALDAcon provides CART (realtime captioning) for the workshops, and from these captions, we are able to post the workshop talks on www.ALDA.org. Here’s how that happens.

After the workshops, the CART transcripts are sent to an ALDA volunteer editor, who is assisted by several other volunteer editors and proofreaders to transform the spoken messages into print essays. All this is done online. Each year, those essays make up the Proceedings.

I’ll offer my experience as an example as I have been a Proceedings editor for ten years and head of the Proceedings Committee for the past four years. When I receive the CART transcripts, I contact some ALDAns who are standing by to help me. After reading the transcripts, I decide what texts can be readily edited and what texts are not relevant or are repeats of previous postings. Then I send copies of the transcripts for each editor to review and choose the ones she/he wants to edit. There is lots of back and forth discussion online until the editors have claimed what they will edit. Volunteers edit one to three texts, depending on their skills, time, and inclination. Some volunteers choose to proofread but not edit (all the edited texts are proofread). After rereading the texts and adding a biography of each presenter, I submit the texts to the ALDAn designated to post the Proceedings online.

Time from receipt of the texts between November and January to posting takes six to nine months. In previous years, I have had three or four editors helping with this project. This past year, I started with three, but the number dropped to only one. This is therefore both an explanation of how the Proceedings are created and a plea for volunteer editors.

If you would like to edit or proofread, even if you have had no experience, please contact me at mv-pein@yahoo.com. I will be happy to fill you in on the details of the work before you decide whether to join the Proceedings Committee.

Have You Heard (continued)...

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elevator, ready to leave.

I usually end my presentation by telling the students that it can be challenging to deal with a person with hearing loss (or with any disability, for that matter), but they just need to keep the following in mind:

• It is not the patient’s fault that she/he cannot hear
• Please be patient and do not get annoyed or yell
• Never say “never mind” to a person with a hearing loss
• We don’t want pity, just respect and understanding

I also ask the students if they know anybody who is deaf or hard of hearing, and I give them an opportunity to share their stories, which always seem to be welcomed.

Doing this presentation has been very gratifying to me personally because it gives me the opportunity to educate the students and to earn their respect. Some approach me and my husband to show their appreciation for our sharing our stories. Others wave and say hello to me in the hallway during the year they are at the campus (always, of course, while facing me).

Although there is a lot of ignorance about hearing loss, we cannot expect to get respect and understanding unless we educate society about our needs.

Karin has been an ALDA member since 1993. Although she is hard of hearing since birth (due to lack of oxygen) rather than late-deafened, ALDA has a special place in her heart. Since her move from Sweden many years ago, she has received great support and gained lifelong friendships thanks to ALDA. When her local chapter, ALDA-East Bay, was active, she served as secretary, vice president, and president. She was also co-chair for ALDAcon 1996 in San Francisco and registration chair for ALDAcon 2003 in Las Vegas.

Karin can be contacted at swedekarin@aol.com.
The ability to communicate is a fundamental human need. While we have many wonderful devices at our disposal, it’s often easy to overlook the best of them: our own brain.

If we can see the person speaking to us, we have the option of reading their lips. With some training, our brains can learn to substitute one sense for the other. Many people have mastered this skill to a degree, and many late-deafened people benefit from the combination of visual and audio stimuli. Becoming proficient takes time and practice. Lipreaders who stick with it have learned to be patient with themselves and with the friends and family they’re trying to lipread.

Only about a third of the sounds we make are formed in the front of the mouth and easily seen. However, combining this with residual hearing and the context of the speech often makes understanding possible. This is why the skill is sometimes termed speechreading. Effective lipreaders learn how to integrate facial expressions, residual hearing, and subtle visual cues with the context of the speech to understand what’s being said.

One of the greatest misconceptions for novice lipreaders and speakers is that speechreading is akin to reading books, that every speech movement—visible or not—can be understood under any circumstance. Perhaps this is because some lipreaders are so good at it. If lipreading is combined with the use of a hearing aid or cochlear implant, comprehension often doubles and in many cases crosses the 80-percent threshold into the low 90s.

Sometimes the path to achieving that 80 or 90 percent may seem long and exhausting. When children first learn to read books, they need focused attention and fine-tuned visual skills that take time to develop. Eyes grow tired and frustration breaks through. Lipreading is similar in that it, too, requires concentration, acquired endurance, and deliberate practice. Ultimately, however, it works like a muscle: the more you stretch your ability, the sharper and stronger understanding becomes.

The best strategy is to take regular breaks and avoid becoming overwhelmed, overtired, or overstimulated. Your brain needs time to organize what you’ve learned, so when your concentration falters, take a break and try again when you’re ready.

What’s most important to realize, however, is that communication is a shared experience and a shared responsibility. Every speaker is different. An expressive friend in a calm, well-lit room will be easier to lipread than someone who is moving around in a noisy setting. Men’s beards or mustaches and people’s, regional accents can also make lipreading challenging.

That’s why having a low-stress place to practice is important. This is the idea behind online lipreading training: being able to practice over and over with a diverse group of speakers until all aspects of the skill are mastered. The speakers never get bored or frustrated, and the learner can have as many tries as needed.

In our testing with over a hundred participants, we discovered that the ability to understand speech based on lipreading alone boils down to latent lipreading ability (whether one has been paying attention to the speaker’s face throughout one’s life), familiarity with the speaker’s accent, and good visual perception.

It’s very useful to practice with the person you communicate with the most. Playing some simple, fun games with limited vocabulary options by mouthing the words can be an eye opening exercise for friends, and family. Here are a few games you can try at home:

- Play card games like Go Fish, or take turns drawing cards and lipreading from partners what they drew—the two of clubs or eight of hearts, for example.
- Play categories, taking turns lipreading female names through the alphabet. If you’re up for more, try male names or surnames.
- Start with a short phrase and take turns adding to it, lipreading each other and making the tale longer and longer.

Losing your hearing can leave you feeling isolated, but speechreading learning strategies can help. Learn the shapes that mouths make with lips, tongue, and teeth for various sounds. Then combine those skills with visual cues, context, and practice. Play lipreading games with other hard of hearing people. Most importantly, continue to learn and practice.

Joel is the director of lipreading.org and can be contacted at hello@lipreading.org. Prior to working on helping people learn how to read lips, he did consulting for large corporations on e-learning and software development. He started lipreading.org in 2012 in London and moved to San Francisco in 2014. Lipreading.org was born out of a hard of hearing friend’s frustration with lack of Internet options for learning how to lipread. On the side, Joel helps startup founders succeed and studies artificial intelligence.

Joel Csaba Solymosi
I’m from New Mexico, and the Scottsdale ALDAcon was my very first experience with all of you. I had such a lovely time meeting you wonderful folks! I cannot even begin to thank you enough for giving me this scholarship gift. You opened up a whole new world for me.

I’d never seen so many cochlear implants and was very impressed by how successful they were in helping people regain hearing. I’d also never seen nor even heard of CART. When I saw it, I thought to myself, “Now I can go back and finish college!” I was also very impressed by how relaxed and laid back communication was for everyone. Whatever works...really works for all of us.

My brother and I were born hearing but at ages four (me) and two (him), we were given the medication dihydrostreptomycin sulfate. (It is now a veterinary medication used mostly for cattle.) I am not sure of the story between developing our hearing losses and getting our first body hearing aids when I was eight and he was six. We had speech therapy, sound identification lessons, and strenuous lipreading lessons at Ball State University. We grew up in the ’60s attending hearing schools (until high school, when we first learned sign language). We were placed in front of the teacher’s desks, and the teachers were instructed not to walk around the classroom while talking. This worked out because students didn’t speak unless they raised their hands and were called on by the teacher, but today, a meeting at work is very free-flowing, sometimes with several conversations going on at the same time, and I find that very frustrating.

When I reached high school age, my family lived in Downey, California, and that area in Southern California started a program for the deaf called SELACO, an acronym for South East Los Angeles County. That was where I met Larry Littleton, who introduced me to ALDA. (Thank you, Larry!). While growing up, I had a great love for music (like many of you at ALDA, which I found out on karaoke night!). I played the piano and organ in my youth and had dance lessons that eventually led me to the drill team and marching band at my high school.

I had difficulty with American Sign Language (ASL) because of my need to lipread as well as the difference in language structure from English. While in college at California State University at Northridge (CSUN), I used Signing Exact English (SEE, covered in Signing Exact English by Gerilee Gustaston and Esther Zawolkow). While growing up, I had worked very hard to become proficient in English grammar, spelling, sentence structure, etc., so I felt lost in ASL, but through ALDA I learned about the big D and little D deaf, and that went a long way in helping me understand my trouble with ASL.

After high school I went to CSUN but didn’t finish college. I very badly wanted to go to nursing school but was not encouraged to do so, even though I’d already delivered three babies (1970s hippie style) and supervised a preschool with multiply handicapped infants. I ended up in an abusive marriage and got divorced, but from that marriage I had two beautiful and smart hearing daughters. One now has a Ph.D. in clinical therapy and the other is skilled in grooming, training, fostering, and re-homing dogs.

At ALDA, I was thrilled to find that I was not alone in my experiences along the road of life. I’ve been asked: “Are you deaf?” to which I’d answer, “No, I’m alive! How about you?” Also during both my pregnancies, even though people knew that I was born hearing and lost my hearing due to medication, I was asked whether my babies would be born deaf. I’d explain that if I’d had a leg or arm amputated, it didn’t mean that my babies would be born with amputated limbs...so, no, my babies would have their hearing.

The ignorance that people still have about deafness is incredible, so it’s up to us to educate the public. I want to share a story that illustrates this ignorance. I was asked to help a lady in her home, and when I arrived, we had a long conversation about where we grew up, life in the city, etc., I then asked her what she’d like me to help her with. She saw my hearing aid and started making noises like “ooh, ooh, unh, unh,” so I asked her what she was saying, but she just made the same noises. Then she pointed to a broom, and I said, “I am guessing you want me to do some-

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I. On Advocacy

When I was a university student, I noticed that I could not understand the whispers and comments of the new friend sitting on my left while we were attending a boring lecture. That got mis-diagnosed as the result of an allergy and stress. When I could no longer hear the geochemistry lecturer (I had chosen to study chemistry and geology), I gave up and started to work as editorial secretary. During those two years I went from a hearing aid user to deafness.

When I had a vocational rehabilitation evaluation, the ENT doctor said nothing. I cried to a neurologist that ear doctors are of no use, and he sent me for simple X-ray, a porosity tomography. It was 1976, before CAT scans or MRIs were available. I was 24 years old at that time.

Then I was tested by causing a temporary pneumo-cephalus (air in the cranial cavity) as a shadow component, to find out how big my tumors were (they were both thumb-sized). Because I was already deaf, the neurosurgeon and ENT surgeon decided to remove them immediately, with five weeks between the surgeries. I also lost my balance and have a three-wheeled bike and Nordic walking sticks.

I started the late-deafened movement in Finland. Some people had tried earlier to bring late-deafened adults together for a summer camp, etc., but I became deaf at the right time to start a national project to locate late-deafened adults, lead them to rehabilitation programs, and begin activities and an information exchange.

II. On Gardening

Were you always an avid gardener?

I have always been interested in gardening. When I was child I liked growing sweet peas but detested weeding! When I became deaf, my first idea was to try to find work in gardening. But after I was diagnosed with NF2, had surgeries, and lost my balance, I stepped back. I’d be a risk to any employer, since I might fall over plants and destroy them. Some other kind of work would be better. My own plants, my own risk, in my own backyard would be enough.

I was allowed to garden

Continued on page 25
Path Leads to Bilateral (continued)...
Continued from page 14

other late-deafened adults and people who have experienced a sudden life-altering change. Another birthday for me to remember is October 8, 2009, my rebirth as a cochlear implantee. I began volunteering with ALDA, HLAA, and Cochlear Americas to assist other late-deafened adults adapt to life after hearing loss.

The past ten years have been a roller coaster of experiences with my hearing loss for me and my family, but I was determined not to let go of my last bit of muffled, garbled natural hearing because, after all, it was mine. However, to appease my neurotologist, Dr. Anil Lalwani, I agreed to have my right ear evaluated for an implant in November 2014, knowing in my heart what the results would be. As suspected, my right ear had progressed or regressed to the point that it also would benefit from an implant. Why bilateral? Because the doctor said so.

In September 2015, almost ten years to the day after I took my first steps on the path of hearing loss, I was invited to attend Cochlear Americas’ End of Summer Bash in South Jersey by Alison Mendez, Engagement Coordinator for my area. Kevin and I attended the gathering and I saw some of the literature on the Nucleus 6 system and its wireless capabilities that I had heard about through social media, and I learned about Cochlear Americas’ volunteer support groups. I filled out a volunteer application and introduced myself to Alison, to thank her for inviting us. (Disclaimer: this is NOT an advertisement for Cochlear Americas.) The notion of having the freedom of wireless technology was a huge benefit to me. One of the must-have accessories with my hearing aids had been an FM system, but mine was no longer connecting with my hearing aid and I need both ears to hear clearly. The replacement cost was prohibitive, but, that is a whole other area of discussion. The knowledge that by going bilateral I could also upgrade my current processor to the N6 software and all its capabilities was a definite tick in favor of going bilateral. Wireless, Bluetooth, and Aqua accessories...tick, tick and tick!

Fast forward—it is now ten years since my new life began, and Kevin and I are in Hartford, Connecticut attending the Cochlear Americas Volunteer Leadership training, thanks to my meeting Alison Mendez. Making contacts and being open to new things is a skill that I have put extra effort into ever since attending ALDAcon in Rochester, NY in 2007. At the leadership training event, I could learn about the device that I would be upgrading to and much more, as well as meeting people who already had the N6 and learn about their impressions. Often, especially with new CI candidates, I hear a lot of brand bashing in an attempt to convince someone to choose “our brand.” I wish recipients would stop this, because it is unfair and confusing to the candidate. Once you choose a brand, you are in a committed lifetime relationship much like a marriage; however, with marriage there is the option to divorce, whereas your implant is with you forever.

In November, just before I was scheduled to see Dr. Lalwani for my annual examination, my husband turned and said something to me when I didn’t have my “ears” on, meaning no CI and no hearing aid. I could feel the vibration of his voice, so, I knew he said something. I should have been able to hear him with my right ear. I say “should have” because I was holding on to the fact that I still had some natural hearing left. It was at that moment that I accepted that I was deaf and without technology my hearing was gone. And implants are all the rage, right? Women get implants all the time to fluff up what is missing. In that regard, what is wrong with bilateral implants when you want to fluff up your missing hearing? Just saying.

While I wasn’t looking forward to another surgery, (in addition to getting my first CI in 2009, I have had several back surgeries as a result of that motor vehicle accident in 2007), I knew I would be in excellent hands with Dr. Lalwani. So as of January 21, 2016, I am a bilateral cochlear implantee, and on my activation day (two weeks ago as of this writing), I was able to hear and understand immediately upon going “live.”

I was overcome with emotion and started crying. My audiologist also had tears in her eyes. She said she was amazed that I not only understood her when she was right next to me but that I also understood her when she left the room and used the mini mic. It was a rainy day in New York City, so, she asked if I could hear the rain hitting the window and I could! With bilateral processors I could hear things that I hadn’t heard in ten years—footsteps on the sidewalk as we walked back to our car! Our iron beeps when the settings are changed—I had no idea! A friend whom I met through Facebook started a podcast yesterday; she had helped me with all kinds of projects, but we had never spoken. Yesterday, I heard her voice for the first time and got choked up. Continued on page 22
The audiologist who did my initial mappings said that I would probably be disappointed with how music sounded if I went bilateral; I emailed her last week to let her know that even though sounds are still a bit distorted, I am listening, understanding, and enjoying music.

I am grateful for a supportive group of family and friends because as much as I have had to deal with these unexpected changes, so have they. I tell everyone that hearing loss has been a blessing in disguise; because of it, I have met people whom I would have never met and done things I would have never done, and this has caused me to go way outside of my comfort zone. I am the returning president of our ALDA-Garden State chapter in New Jersey, an active mentor to people of all ages from school students to senior citizens, and an entrepreneur creating handcrafted jewelry with a line dedicated to hearing loss awareness, “hearami byE design.” As you can see, a common thread for me is how I can be of service to others, so I am very much looking forward to this chapter in my life as a bilateral cochlear implant recipient and seeing where my path leads next.

Lynn was born in Neptune, New Jersey and has lived in the Jersey Shore area her entire life. She is a licensed practical nurse and former assisted living administrator. She is president of ALDA-Garden State and a volunteer mentor with Cochlear Americas and iCouldBe. Her goal as a mentor with Cochlear Americas is to help educate senior citizens about the availability of implantable hearing devices. As a mentor with iCouldBe she draws from personal and professional experiences to offer guidance to students as they decide on future goals in education and other careers. She is the proprietor and designer of hearami byE design, where she channels her creative side into handcrafting unique jewelry with a focus on hearing loss awareness and supporting fair trade organizations building sustainable businesses for women in Kenya and Uganda. When circumstances arose that prevented her from returning to her career in nursing, she began her studies in psychology and is currently enrolled in the peer mentoring program offered by Gallaudet University. Lynn can be contacted at hearami@gmail.com.
Advocacy Corner (continued)...

Continued from page 7

5. Some theaters might simply ignore the regulations.

The most intractable problem is theaters ignoring the regulations or simply failing to do what they have agreed to do. Most often, this happens through neglect and inattention—captioning devices are not properly charged or are otherwise inoperative. The challenge is to convince management at the highest levels that maintaining the captioning devices and training on-site staff in their operation is really, really important.

When the captioning devices don’t work, theaters usually offer free passes to another showing. That is no skin off their nose. Because of the revenue-sharing arrangements with studios and distributors, movie theaters make very little money from admissions for all but the long-running blockbuster movies. The movies, though, do provide a captive audience for the sale of highly profitable concessions. Getting the attention of upper and corporate management requires more than getting free passes.

The ADA itself doesn’t help us a lot in that regard. Private citizens cannot sue businesses like theaters for damages, but only for an order that the theaters do it right in the future. The only remedy for failing to do what the law requires or what the theaters have agreed to is an order holding them in contempt of court, but there is no way any court would issue a contempt citation for intermittent failures.

Some state laws do permit people denied accessibility to recover damages, even if the failure was due to carelessness or oversight rather than anything deliberate. California is particularly notable because under that state’s law, a person subject to an ADA violation can recover a minimum of $4,000 per violation. That’s enough to get the attention of upper management, particularly if the theater chain is sued pretty much every time things aren’t done correctly. People in California and other states that permit damages to be recovered even without fault, including Florida, New Jersey, Texas, and Washington, owe it to all of us to stop looking the other way.

How can this approach help people in other states? Here is one possibility. Say that a large theater chain in California like AMC or Cinemark is socked with a few $4,000 awards. My suspicion is that the chain will develop training programs and protocols that will make such incidents very rare. It would then be possible to go into court and require the chain to apply those policies in other states.

What is good news in the long run, but a source of frustration in the short run, is that we don’t really need the regulations. We have been winning these cases in court and through negotiations without the regulations, and the possibility that the regulations might provide some defenses to some establishments seems to be a reason to drag feet rather than a prod to get moving. It would be nice to put this issue to rest once and for all, but that may not happen, and in that case, I would hope that ALDA would continue to be a leader in the fight for access to the movies.

While we may be nearing the end of the battle for accessible movies, the one for access to the Internet is just beginning. The ADA was enacted in 1990, before the Internet became a significant medium of communication, and the law makes no mention of it. So not surprisingly, entities that communicate over the Internet argue that the ADA does not apply to them.

Internet access, and especially captioning of online video content, has been spotty. The Federal Communications Commission has successfully required most content that has been shown on television to be captioned when shown on the Internet. Some courts have ruled that when a website is, in effect, a portal to a brick-and-mortar store, the website must be made accessible.

In 2010, DOJ proposed sweeping regulations that would require all websites maintained by government entities and private businesses to be made accessible to people with vision and hearing losses. (Contrary to what some alarmists claimed, there would have been no regulation of individual or non-business web postings.) The proposals sat, comments were duly analyzed, and then the proposals sat some more.

Advocates continued to turn to the courts. While some courts flatly declared that websites are not subject to the ADA, others left the door open at least a crack, and by careful selection of courts, advocates have made some major gains, including a settlement with Netflix that requires it to caption its content.

In early May of this year, though, DOJ took a huge step back. It announced that it was essentially scrapping the 2010 proposals and would start from scratch. It posed 123 separate questions about regulating government websites—business websites will wait until much later—and gave the advocacy community a very tight deadline to respond. After some fairly frantic consultations, we agreed that the National Association of

Continued on page 24
the Deaf would draft initial proposed responses, particularly to the 35 or so questions that specifically pertained to captioning aural content. Other organizations like ALDA would then join in whole or part.

A week or so later, DOJ announced that it is also undertaking an effort to measure the potential impact of captioning aural content on both government and private-business websites. It will do that by developing a questionnaire to be answered by individuals. This appears to be an effort to measure the benefits of accessibility for purposes of making a cost-benefit justification for any proposed rules. We’re awaiting details—whether DOJ will select potential respondents or whether it wants to hear from everyone. But we certainly hope ALDA and its members will weigh in on the importance of Internet access in our lives.

Among other things, the fact that DOJ will have to read, analyze, and consider every comment, and the number of questions asked, ensures that this regulatory effort will not be finished during the Obama administration. That certainty led to questions about whether it was even worth the bother to respond. The ultimate decision was that yes, we need to make the effort and hope that this work proves useful to the next administration.

Finally, the Department of Transportation (DOT) is taking a serious look at the long-standing problem of inaccessible entertainment on airlines. Airlines in flight are not subject to the ADA, nor can any of us go to court about lack of access. Instead, the rules are whatever DOT determines them to be, and our only remedy is to complain to DOT.

DOT announced this spring that it hoped to conduct negotiated rulemaking. The plan is to put together representatives from the various affected constituencies and see if they can find a proposal to which everyone can agree. If an agreement is reached, then DOT is obligated to adopt it.

DOT set aside two slots on the 25-person committee for advocacy groups representing people who are deaf and hard of hearing. Selecting them was really a no-brainer. One slot went to the National Association of the Deaf, which has been active in this area for a long time, and the other to the Hearing Loss Association of America. The panel had its initial two-day meeting in May and will continue meeting through October.

While convening the panel is a promising development, it is important to note that the panel will not deal with all the issues that can vex deaf and hard of hearing air travelers. It will not address communication on the ground, either in the TSA lines or at the gate. And the panel may or may not address in-flight communication, such as the announcements from the pilot. The NAD asked that the scope be expanded to include that topic, and there appeared to be preliminary consent to do so, but the airlines may yet find a way to exclude it.

In the past, airlines have been adamant that they would not show captioned in-flight movies. Our understanding is that technological changes have made this much easier and less expensive to do, just as conversion to digital projection has made it cheaper and easier for movie theaters to offer captioning. Let’s keep our fingers crossed that the time is right for an agreement.

John can be contacted at johnfwaldo@hotmail.com.

My New ALDA Family (continued)...

Continued from page 19

thing with this broom?” She responded by pointing at the ceiling and making more nonsense noises. I asked if she wanted me to sweep the ceiling, but she became frustrated and made still more noises.

Finally I stopped her and reminded her that we’d just had a ten-minute verbal, vocal, introductory conversation, so surely she knew that I could understand speech. She said, “But the thing in your ear!!”

I said, “Yes (sigh)...that is called a hearing aid and it helps me to hear better, just like your glasses help you to see better. So let’s stop the monkey noises and talk like civilized human beings?” Finally she chuckled a little and we were able to work well together after that.

This woman’s daughter is an accomplished author of several books, and when I told her what happened when her mother and I met, she howled with laughter and said, “I love it! I am so going to put this in one of my future books!!” Being deaf has its quirks, frustrations, and...lots of humor!

So once again, thank you so very much for your generosity so I could meet all of you at ALDAcon and learn how much has advanced in the deaf world. I am no longer alone. I now have a new family! As in the phrase that Larry coined, I “lost my hearing, found my family,” Thank you for being my new family!

Contact Debra at bee234@juno.com.
Liisa Sammalpenger (continued)...

Continued from page 20

some square meters at my husband’s sister’s country place where they spent summers. It is near Helsinki, where I live. I had a one square meter sweet pea bed in an allotment garden, a friend’s plot.

Earlier when I worked in Tampere, my workmates allowed me to plant sweet peas in their soil, which was required to have a one-year crop rotation.

Then finally I managed to purchase an allotment garden plot. (My husband and father loaned me the money for it, as I had just started to work again after several years of retirement after my surgeries.) The area was a tobacco field at the Kulosaari Mansion, which was built in the 1700s. The allotment garden was established in 1934.

**What type of gardening do you do? Flower, vegetable, organic?**

When I got my allotment garden plot, I started with sweet peas and Jerusalem artichokes, which I removed from the country place of my husband’s relatives. I’m trying organic gardening, including composting.

In the garden, there were five old apple trees, gooseberry and red currant bushes, and a jungle of mixed raspberries and goldenrod. After 30 years of gardening i have many kind of perennials for beauty, some clematis (last winter killed them), and garlic! I fell in love with winter garlic. I also have turnips, blue potatoes, carrots, leek (first time this year), angelica, and other herbs.

**How long is your growing season?**

Usually seeds can be planted in the middle of May and harvested in August or September. Tomatoes, leeks, etc. have to be pre-grown at home. Winter apples can be harvested in October.

**Do you start from seeds or do you prefer small plants to start?**

I purchased some leek plants, and I tried growing tomatoes from seeds.

**Do you participate in gardening clubs? If so, do they accommodate your hearing loss?**

Yes I am active in the allotment garden. I participate in meetings and the midsummer fest. In Finland, interpretation services are based on individual needs and paid for by general health insurance. So I write applications indicating the time and placed where I need this service (sign language interpreting and CART are both called interpretation).

**Do you garden in your own yard or in a community plot?**

The city of Helsinki owns the land, but we have to buy everything on the ground—cottage, trees, bushes, etc.

**Do you also can or preserve any produce you grow?**

In my apartment house we have a cellar where it is 40°F. I dry my apples.

**What are the challenges for gardening in a Nordic climate?**

Warming climate has caused troubles! *Arianta arbustorum* snails have invaded the southern Finland. We have a competition for whoever collects and kills the most snails, and the winner gets a prize at our August fest.

**What is it about gardening that makes it a good hobby for a late-deafened person?**

Well, philosophically, you (finally) have some control over your environment and circumstances. Plants do not talk. (You can talk to the plants, and they thrive!)

You can direct your aggressions toward weeding or mowing the lawn instead of other persons. You can change things/plants/furniture/circumstances, at least on your own plot.

**Would you recommend gardening to other late-deafened adults?**

Why not!

Liisa can be contacted at sammalpenger@gmail.com.
Chapter Happenings and GA to SK

By Ann Smith, Curator

Sara Thompson reports that ALDA-Peach had its quarterly meeting on April 9 with 10 members present. The unofficial topic was the future of ALDA-Peach. Since attendance is down and the group is aging, a membership committee had been appointed to research and present proposals for continuity and growth. Among the proposals was updating the ALDA-Peach membership brochure and website. It was noted that the chapter should remain committed to providing support, service, and social opportunities for late-deafened adults. The next meeting was scheduled for July, focusing on the issue of support, with a representative from the Georgia Council for the Hearing Impaired presenting.

Sharaine Rawlinson Roberts writes about her experience in meeting the boxer Muhammad Ali, who recently died. It happened in Louisville around 1995, when she was at a board meeting of the American Deafness & Rehabilitation Association (ADARA). Sharaine comments, “On Friday evening the ballroom doors opened with an exodus of people from a fund-raising dinner. One of my fellow ADARA board members, Bruce Hodek, told me Muhammad Ali was in the room and dared me to go meet him. I was sure that with people exiting in droves, Ali would be long gone, so I said I’d go look Sure enough, at the front of the room, there stood Ali with two of his ‘protectors.’ As I approached, I indicated I was deaf. He signaled for me to come forward. Ali’s eyes were peaceful and warm. Gone was the arrogance and mouthiness he had in his fighting days. He leaned over the head table and gave me a hug and a kiss on my cheek. Then he indicated to one of his ‘protectors’ to hand him paper. Ali gave me his autograph. I was stunned and delighted to have met this man. The next morning, during a meeting break, I was on an escalator going down to the lobby to get coffee. There was Muhammad surrounded by ten men. When he saw me, he pushed his team aside and approached me, giving me yet another hug. What a memory this gave me!”

Ruth Burrage, mother of long-time Peach member Marge Tamas, passed away on April 29. Marge reports that her mother was her first editor and also an enthusiastic hostess. Peach members offer their condolences to the Tamas family.

Congratulations go to Angie Fuoco for obtaining her Advanced Certificate in Disability Studies from the CUNY School for Professional Studies. She invited Cassandra Horton to the graduation ceremony, after which they went out for a bite to eat and drink at Café Fiorello on Broadway across from the Lincoln Center.

Send your chapter and personal news to Ann at fabsmith@att.net. The deadline for the next issue is August 24.
President’s News

By Steve Larew

The 2016 Board has been busy, and I want to share our activities.

ALDA Treasurer

Roselle Schwartz resigned as treasurer, and the Board selected previous treasurer Matt Ferrara to serve the remainder of her term through December 2017. Matt has been very dependable, completing and filing all our tax forms on time.

ALDAcon 2017

Lois Maroney and Bill Graham were approved as Planning Co-chairs for ALDAcon 2017 and are busy formulating plans and developing a theme. More information will be released at ALDAcon 2016 in Brookfield, Wisconsin. I was approved as Program Chair for 2017.

Bylaws Revisions

On June 1, ballots were mailed to all current ALDA members to vote on recommended bylaws changes developed by the Bylaws Committee. Roy Miller serves as chair of this committee, whose other members are Dave Litman, Terri Singer, and Sharaine Rawlinson Roberts. The Board approved all the recommendations before sending out the ballots, with the vote results being announced soon after July 1, 2016. One of the key recommendations was to allow bylaws changes to be voted on electronically instead of through postal mail. This change will result in financial savings on future votes.

National/Chapter Memberships

The Board voted to allow members of official chapters to become members of ALDA, Inc. for $25 in dues. The dues must be paid through the chapter, with the chapter treasurer or designated officer forwarding them to ALDA with a statement that payees are current chapter members. This is one small step the Board is taking to encourage more people to become members of both their local chapter and the national organization.

Website Revisions

Under the leadership of the Region 3 director, Brian Patrick Jensen, ALDA has contracted with Communication Services for the Deaf (CSD) to revise our website and make it more user-friendly. Brian and the content committee are currently working on this, and you will hopefully notice changes soon. We want the website to be more interactive and to include more information from ALDA chapters in addition to Board activities. Please feel free to share any feedback with ALDA Board members.

ALDAcon 2016

The planning and program committees are busy developing activities and workshops for ALDAcon 2016. The ALDA website and ALDAcon 2016 Facebook page will provide continued on page 28
ongoing updates.

**Nominations Committee**

Dave Litman, Past President of ALDA, is chairing the 2016 Nominations Committee, which is seeking candidates for four positions: president, vice president, Region 3 director (Southeast), and Region 4 director (West). If you are interested in serving on the Board in one of these positions, beginning January 1, 2017, please contact Dave.

I have enjoyed working with the Board and members for the past 18 months. If you have feedback on any items or issues, please feel free to contact me at President@alda.org. I look forward to conversing with you.

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**Treasurer’s Report**

*By Matt Ferrara*

In my previous report for the Fall/Winter Issue, I thanked you for your support during my terms as treasurer. But when the new treasurer, resigned, Steve Larew asked me to come back and complete her term. Needless to say, I accepted and appreciate the Board’s confidence in me.

As of May 31, 2016, the total cash in the ALDA bank accounts was $68,362. The balances in the accounts are as follows:

- ALDA Operation Expenses: $15,621
- ALDA 2016 Account: $15,425
- ALDA-Carolina Flight Chapter: $750*
- Scholarship Funds: $36,566

All federal and state (Illinois) forms that were required for 2015 and 2016, to date, have been filed, and all outstanding bills have been paid. We are about on budget.

**Finance Committee**

I am looking for volunteers for the Finance Committee, which will be looking into different fundraising campaigns.

As a reminder, ALDA, Inc. is a nonprofit corporation, and donations may be-tax deductible. Also, some employers have matching donations plans. If you have any questions regarding donations, please contact me at treasurer@alda.org.

*ALDA Carolina Flight donated most of the ALDAcon 2012 profits to ALDA, Inc.
Your support is essential to help TDI maintain its advocacy work in our nation’s capital, Washington, D.C. Here are some of our goals!

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

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

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

TDI - Shaping An Accessible World

——— Albert Einstein
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: ______________________________________________________

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City: __________________________________________________________________

State: _______ Postal Code: _______ Country: _________________

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

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

Fax ______________________________________________________________

E-mail _____________________________________________________________

URL/Website Address: ______________________________________________

ALDA Chapter (Name/None): __________________________________________

Gender: Male □ Female □

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

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

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

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

Education  Advocacy  Role Models  Support

General Member, Age 61 or under…….$30.00
Senior Member, Age 62 or over…….$25.00
Veterans Membership $25.00……….$25.00
Business Membership……………….$50.00
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8038 Macintosh Lane, Suite 2
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815.332.1515 TTY/V or 866.402.ALDA (866.402.2532)
info@alda.org E-mail
www.alda.org
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