It was at the 1995 ALDAcon in Rockford, Illinois, that I jotted a quick note with the phrase, “Lost my Hearing…Found a Family,” which I then posted on the Lost & Found bulletin board. Marylyn Howe still has that original note. I had no bloody idea it would become the “catch-phrase” for the organization and a conference—to boot!

That conference was my first exposure to ALDA, and to be quite honest, I had no idea what to expect from it. I was attending as a vendor. I knew Rockford had a clock museum and because my wife’s father had been a watchmaker, I thought that viewing that museum might make an interesting side trip. Ironically, years later, when we moved from California to Hawaii, my wife and I found the brochure for the clock museum in Rockford. I was flooded with memories about my first ‘con and all the journeys and friendships ALDA has vicariously brought to me.

In Rockford, it didn’t take me more than 24 hours to realize that I truly had “found my family.”

- A family with which I did not have to struggle to communicate.
- A family that understood my anger and frustrations.
- A family that “got it” without my having to say more than two words.
- A family that wasn’t afraid to put out a little effort to communicate with me.

Whoa! My world was absolutely and completely rocked by my deeply heartfelt and profound experiences in Rockford! While there, I even helped introduce the “balloon concept” to several attendees to encourage them to feel the vibes of the karaoke tunes.

But that wasn’t all I found.

I found friends with whom I still communicate regularly (thanks to the Internet, videophones, Facebook, and email). They are among my deepest relationships.

We have laughed with each other.

We have cried with each other.

We have supported and encouraged each other through life’s journeys, ever since that ‘con in the fall of 1995.

I communicate with my new ALDA family much more, and with supremely less effort, than I do with any of my biological family members.

Wow, that is a powerful statement, isn’t it? Even as I write this and realize its profundity, I am sure others feel the same way.

The connections I made through ALDA have given me abundant career opportunities in addition to cherished friendships.

It has been an amazing, incredible, and intimate journey, one that I am deeply grateful for, a journey that we will be sharing with many new folks, too.

Have I met you yet? Welcome to the ALDA family!
ALDA NEWS

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My connection to ALDA goes back almost to the organization’s beginning. I’ve had a progressive hearing loss since childhood, and just around the time that ALDA was holding its first 'con in 1989, I was starting a hearing loss support group at a local center for independent living. Somehow, I learned of ALDA and wrote to co-founder Bill Graham for guidance. He responded encouragingly, and I attended ALDAcon II in 1990, where I saw CART (then known as “ALDA Crude”) for the first time and was blown away by it. The following year, I organized ALDA-NJ, which I lead until moving to Pennsylvania in 2006. (I also served a term as president of ALDA-Garden State.) Bill asked me to be ALDA’s chapter coordinator, a role I took on from 1991 to 1996, after which I filled an ALDA Board vacancy in the regional director position. I’ve also served as the ALDA Bylaws committee chairperson since 2004 and as ALDA News editor-in-chief since 2006, and I’ve attended about a dozen ‘cons. So ALDA has played a big part in my life for well over two decades.

Why did I become—and equally important, remain—invol ved? I found ALDA just after I had run out of other coping ideas. Realizing that I kept getting deafer, I had decided to study ASL with the intention of joining the Deaf community. I took all the courses offered in ASL and Deaf culture at a nearby community college interpreting program and attended many Deaf events, but I was unable to understand “strong ASL” signers, and my life experiences were very different from those of people who had grown up culturally Deaf. Just as joining the Deaf community stopped looking like a workable solution, I learned about ALDA and discovered my identity.

In addition to enabling me to meet many others like myself, ALDA gave me the opportunity to develop and use leadership skills that the communication barrier prevented me from exercising in other settings. I started out as a bundle of needs and ended up being able to meet those of other late-deafened people. It has been an extremely rewarding journey!
Hi, gang!

Our theme this go-round was “Lost My Hearing. Found a Family,” and we have lots of material from and about that family! You will find a diverse amount of stories, creativity, commentary, and updates that all relate to this hearing loss bubble that we are in. So, prop up those feet, sip somethin’ good, and be inspired. Here is just a glimpse at what you have to look forward to...

“Lost My Hearing. Found a Family” kicks off the issue. I think the majority of us can relate, and did you ever know the story behind this famous ALDA phrase? Well, by now you have seen (and probably read) our cover story. Meet Larry Littleton, the genius behind it all! More than likely, you will be shouting from the rooftop in agreement. I know I was!

ALDA’s new president, David (Dave) Litman, shares his 2014 plans and goals for ALDA in “From the Desk of the President,” and he encourages all ALDAns to volunteer their talents to help ALDA thrive. Email him to let him know what you can do!

Bob Elkins shares a moving personal story in “The Fourth Time is the Charm.” This is Bob’s uplifting journey to reach a lifelong goal that was almost derailed by his hearing loss. Just wait until you get to the end and find out what he is doing, why he is doing it, despite a significant hearing loss….all at 77 years YOUNG! Hugs, high fives, and all that jazz to YOU BobEE! I wish I could hear what a flushing toilet kind of sounds like <sigh> (y’all read his masterpiece and you will get it). Ok, moving on...

Jim Laffer sent a fantastic report to Ann Smith for her “Chapter Happenings” column, which we have published as a separate article! Congratulations, Jim and ALDA-San Jose. You have been busy, hard-working ALDA bees, and you have earned your entire page in this issue! You deserve the special acknowledgement and we wish you much success (and more CaptiView gadgets) in 2014!

I know many of you have read, want to read, or have at least heard about the book Shouting Won’t Help: Why I—and 50 Other Americans–Can’t Hear You. Margreta von Pein gives us a detailed review of Katherine Bouton’s story about her journey with sensorineural loss during her intense career as a senior editor and freelancer for The New York Times and The New Yorker. I have heard good things about this book and have seen the author interviewed on the Today show. Her book is on my reading list, for sure!

Al Maurer has shared a beautiful poem he has written. As you read “Listening,” meditate and really think about what his words are saying to you. We are hard of hearing or late-deafened, but we still are listening in more ways than one!

ALDA’s 2012 president, Brenda Estes, has been selected for Hamilton Relay’s 2013 Deaf Community Leader award for the state of Virginia! It is no secret what she has done for ALDA over the years! Just wait ‘til you read all of her many, many accomplishments. Congratulations Brenda! You are awesome!

In case you did not make it to Albuquerque, we have shared Kathryn Woodcock’s speech when she received the I. King Jordan award, ALDA’s highest. A prestigious award, indeed, and well deserved! Congratulations Kathryn!

Chris Littlewood is “One of Us” in this issue. Karen Krull, as always, has conducted a wonderful interview to introduce us to another ALDA family member! Chris, it is very nice to meet you!

You will learn what is happening with our ALDA chapters and members as you read Ann Smith’s “Chapter Happenings” and “GA to SK.”

We conclude the issue with ALDA Biz reports and updates from ALDA board members and committee chairs.

As always, thanks to all who contributed to this issue, and thank YOU for rockin’ with me for a few moments! It’s cold here tonight. I am gonna go wrap up in my Snuggie and cozy slippers, eat some dinner, and wish the computer sweet dreams!

Happy winter and of course...

ALDA hugs, high fives, and all that jazz to all!

-Rachael
From the Desk of the President

By David Litman

As you are reading this, a new year is upon us. New goals. New ideas. But for most of us, no new hearing! I don’t think that is covered with New Year’s resolutions. For me, this year I am faced with the new and exciting challenge of being president of ALDA. Let me begin by apologizing in advance for any errors I make over the next year...I am sorry! So as the months pass by, please refer back to the previous sentence. But please also know that any mistakes I make come from wanting to do the best I can for ALDA, not from any intention to do harm.

All of us who support ALDA are volunteers. Whether we serve on the Board and/or committees, write for the ALDA News, work with a local chapter, or spread the gospel of ALDA, we are all donating our time. To help ALDA grow and do better, we need you (picture my face as Uncle Sam pointing at you). There are many ways you can help. Please contact me at president@alda.org if you have an interest in volunteering, and put “Volunteer” in the subject heading. I will make sure you get connected to your area of interest as a volunteer.

If I could summarize my plans for 2014 into one theme, it would be, “Make ALDA more connected with the new age of technology.” This does not mean you will see a 3D virtual representation of me at next year’s ALDAcon! For me, it means making sure that ALDA stays current with what is available. For example, I would like to connect as often as I can with local chapters and groups. Since I live in North Carolina, I cannot be there in person. Does this mean I cannot participate? NO. I could be there through the use of remote CART, our www.alda.org chat room, instant messaging, Skype, or any other ideas you might have. Please feel free to invite me to any meeting and I will do my best to be there. It is also important to make sure that our forms and documents are accessible and easy to follow (maybe we have some people who would like to volunteer to help with this?).

The most important goal I have for this year is for us to say what we will do and do what we say. Make sense? I want you to know what we are trying to accomplish, and I want to hear your ideas for things we should do. However, I want our words to become action and not just ideas that get lost in the shuffle of life. If you send an email and do not get a response...send it again! PLEASE!

I am writing this article the day after the death of Nelson Mandela, who was a person of hope, courage, and forgiveness. One of his most famous quotes is very applicable to us as late-deafened adults: “One cannot be prepared for something while secretly believing it will not happen.” For me, this means if you doubt you can do something, the doubt will win. You have to be willing to throw that doubt away and truly believe you can do it (whatever “it” may be). You are the agent of change in your own life. Before that change can happen, you must BELIEVE change is possible. All of us at ALDA are here to support each other and help make that change possible, but true change starts with you (picture me as Uncle Sam again pointing at you).

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The Fourth Time Is the Charm

By Bob Elkins

A week ago I joined a foreign language class at its third meeting, a late start that I hated, but I had not known the class was being offered before then. I was thrilled to find that there were only a half dozen students, which may explain why I was allowed to sign up after it had already met twice.

I was thrilled not only because there were so few students but also because we were placed around a large rectangular table facing one another, three on each side with our instructor sitting at the end, and I made sure I sat facing him diagonally.

I had informed the teacher that I was practically deaf and relied upon lip reading. I emphasized that he had to face me so I could understand what he was saying. He assured me it would not be a problem. Hey, what do you know, I thought to myself, perhaps I have a chance with a foreign language class after all. I only hope I have the guts to go through with it.

As I was introduced to my fellow classmates, I smiled and nodded, but of course the only way I am able to learn names is when name tags are provided. During the break, a woman came over to talk to me. “I'm sorry,” I said, “I did not get your name,” as I handed her a pen and notepad. “Would you mind writing it down for me?”

Eileen looked to be in her 70s. She had grayish curly hair that came down over her ears and a pleasant smile. She wore a light blue dress with a floral design. Her clear enunciation relaxed me. She told me that although she was putting much effort into the class, she was having difficulty keeping up. The others were catching on more easily.

“Tomorrow I get my hearing aids,” she confided. “Will this be the first time you’ll have hearing aids?” “Yes,” she replied, “first time.”

I suppose that on seeing my hearing aids, she felt at ease talking freely with me. But, oy vey, if the class was difficult for her, what was it going to be like for me? I could feel myself becoming apprehensive.

“You’ve already had your hearing aid earmold impressions done?”

She didn’t know what I was talking about; her audiologist had said nothing about earmolds, which I found puzzling. As the class ended I wished Eileen good luck with her hearing aids and reminded her that it takes time to get used to wearing them. But it’s thrilling to hear sounds you haven’t heard for a long time. Just wait until you hear what a flushing toilet sounds like. LOL.

The following week I showed up for class early to make sure that I grabbed the seat next to the instructor. When Eileen arrived she rushed over to me and said, “I got them; I’m wearing them.”

Unlike my hearing aids, which are prominently displayed on my bald head, hers were invisible under the hair cascading over her ears.

“Did you get hearing aids that fit inside your ears or on top of your ears?” “They rest on top of my ears.”

“She pulled back her hair, and there were no molds attached to her behind-the-ear hearing aids. Instead I saw thin tubes running from her hearing aids into each ear. I had heard about that set-up, but this was the first time I actually saw it. It looked uncomfortable to me.

“How do they work for you?”

“I hear so much better. And it’s wonderful to be able to hear my grandchildren. That makes it worth the discomfort and awful expense.”

“There shouldn’t be discomfort. If that continues, make sure you tell your audiologist. He needs to make adjustments. And don’t forget you are entitled to a trial period; if you find you want to try different aids or even a different audiologist. You need to be assertive.”

Once the class started it became clear that the instructor’s natural habit of facing a student who raised a question or facing the blackboard as he spoke dashed my hopes of his remembering my handicap. I felt exasperated. I mustered up a frown at him.

“Bob, could you hear me?”

“No, I’m sorry,” I replied, wondering why I was apologizing to him.

He faced me and repeated what he had said.

I resolved to keep after him. Too bad if his repeating for me bugs anyone else. Easy enough to say that, but...

But why the heck was I attempting to learn a foreign language, one I was obligated to learn

Continued on page 17
We had a successful September meeting with about 12 attendees, many of whom went to the annual Deaf Counseling, Advocacy & Referral Agency (DCARA) picnic afterwards. We discussed changes to the FCC program covering captioned telephones, and I gave a talk about my second cochlear implant. People were interested in what it was like to be bilateral. I had just had the surgery and been activated in early August. As an interesting side note, 9 of the 12 people who attended have cochlear implants. It’s really taking off as a technology, at least here in the Bay area where there are so many great centers that perform the surgery.

We also have had two social events with another two planned. The first was a movie outing to see *The Butler*, but only three members went. That actually turned out to be a good thing, as the theater only had four CaptiView devices and initially could only find one. After some prodding they found the rest and were able to issue them to us. Unfortunately, mine died midway through the movie, so I soldiered on with my improved hearing and by leaning over and glomming captions off other members’ devices. The theater issued me a coupon to come back for free in the future, but I do recommend that groups planning similar outings call to let the theater know they are coming and give a rough count of how many will be there so the theater can plan for it. Most theaters can get more devices shipped in if they have prior notice, at least in major cities where there is more than one multiplex of that chain.

In early November we had a simple lunch and it was again, kind of small, with only six members showing up, including one first-timer. It was still a lot of fun and we sat at our table for well over two hours gabbing about ALDAcon and life in general.

We are planning on attending a Meetup event hosted by DCARA on November 22. DCARA presented at our June meeting and asked for feedback about how they could better serve hard of hearing people. This type of event is one of the things we asked for, and they not only planned it, they moved the time as we had asked for and will have a CART provider—which is fairly common for them but sometimes they use only sign interpreters for Deaf events. I am encouraging people to attend, since DCARA actually listened to our recommendations, and we already have five yeses. We will be meeting for dinner in advance and carpooling, since the event is 30 miles from San Jose.

The final event this fall will be our annual Holiday Party on December 7. It’s always one of our best attended events, and the white elephant gift exchange is a lot of silly fun.

An initiative I started with the group is an “open email address” mailing list. Our group had always sent group emails BCC to protect people’s identities, but I started this to help encourage more open communication between group members so all communications won’t have to go through me to reach other people. So far we are up to about 15 members who have accepted this arrangement, and I expect it to grow as time passes. This is in addition to our Facebook group page, which continues to be an excellent place to post info, pictures, links, and other group-related stuff and is a steadily growing place for group members to talk online in between our events.

I also tried to create some holiday spirit and build more links between members by asking people to offer to host other group members at their home for holiday dinners (specifically Thanksgiving or Christmas, but I left it open for other holidays also). We hope to have a potluck/BYOB New Year’s Eve party, for which the group will buy some drinks and utensils/plastic plates, and people will bring a party-type dish and their own alcoholic beverages. I volunteered to be designated driver for the party, and here in the Bay area there are free taxis available to help prevent drunk driving.

*Jim leads ALDA San-Jose (California) and is also active in the Bionic Ear Association for cochlear implant users. He works for CaptionCall, installing captioned telephones. Jim received the Bob Hawley Fearless Leader Award in 2011. For more information about ALDA-San Jose, contact info@aldasj.org.*
Review of *Shouting Won’t Help: Why I—and 50 Million Other Americans—Can’t Hear You*

By Margreta von Pein

Katherine Bouton introduces her book with her own hearing loss story. Her inexplicable sensorineural loss stretches over 30 years during her high pressure career as a *New York Times* senior editor and a *New Yorker* freelancer. For most of this time, she confesses, she ignored her hearing loss and the recommendation for a hearing aid. This denial, though, compelled her to research deafness. Competitive and highly trained in her field, Bouton was driven to find out why her inner ear hair cells were not functioning and what can be done about hearing loss. Both she and her readers benefit from her exacting research.

Due to the author’s professional writing and editing background, the style and content of *Shouting Won’t Help* is completely readable, detailed, and even a bit exciting. (I was waiting for the revelation that makes her face her denial.) In 250 pages, she covers all the relevant biological and psychological research on hearing loss from the statistics on Americans with hearing loss to the intricacies of the most current hair-cell regeneration lab work. Only in the last chapter does she admit, “I’ve come to accept my hearing loss. I’ve replaced denial and anger with something more productive” (p. 243).

Bouton skillfully interweaves her hearing loss saga, including her experiences with a cochlear implant, throughout her research reports. Fifteen pages of chapter notes appear at the end of the book. Although the text is weighted on the scientific side, the information is so clearly presented that I was surprised by how much new information I was absorbing.

I have always felt that Arlene Romoff’s *Hear Again* and Michael Chorost’s *Rebuilt* are excellent personal documents on hearing loss and obtaining cochlear implant sound. *Shouting Won’t Help* ranks right up there with them. It may be more scientific and less personal, but it is a welcome addition to the list of the best books coming out on hearing loss.

Listening

By Alfred Maurer II

Listening...One hears the rhythms of life...
Feels the Pulse of the Heart...
The ticking of the Clock....

Time...Steady in Rhythm..
Yet Quick in Passage...
from Past to Present & Future.

Faith...a Cornerstone
For our Existence..
Through History &
what will become.

Child, Woman, & Man..
Cultivate Dreams of Mind..Soul..
Utilize Knowledge of Past & Present.

Rhythmic in Pace..
Strong in Faith..
Listening..in all Regards..
To what was..is..& will Be.

The author notes, “I believe that the feeling/experience in this poem relates to those of us who are hard of hearing or late-deafened, since for us, there are many ways we can and do ‘listen.’” He was born with sensorineural hearing loss due to either a genetic defect or the German measles. He wore hearing aids in both ears until age 23; most of the hearing in his left ear is now gone. He was mainstreamed through public school and earned a bachelor’s degree from Curry College in Milton, Massachusetts and worked mostly in the service/retail sector. Over the past 25 years, he has been a member of HLAA (formerly SHHH), and in the ’90’s he served a term as SHHH Greater-Boston Chapter president. In recent years he has been an ALDA-Boston member and looks forward to being an ALDA, Inc. member. He can be contacted at almaurer2@yahoo.com.
Brenda Estes Selected for Hamilton Relay 2013 Deaf Community Leader Award for the State of Virginia

Hamilton Relay announcement:

Brenda Estes continues to be a pioneer, innovator, mentor, leader and tireless advocate for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing. After fighting to overcome her own personal challenges, Brenda was inspired to advocate for others, ensuring that individuals with hearing loss know their rights and how to access appropriate accommodations.

Brenda has been involved with numerous associations, organizations, clubs and activities throughout Virginia. Through her work at the Endependence Center, she assists individuals with captioned telephones and assistive devices. A longtime member of the Association of Late Deafened Adults (ALDA), Brenda has served as the Secretary, President Elect and President of the organization. She was on the planning committee for the ALDA International Convention and had the opportunity to be Host of a previous convention.

Brenda served as the 2013 Vice President for the Virginia Beach Chapter of the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) and served two terms as President for the Virginia Beach Chapter of Self Help for Hard of Hearing [People] (SHHH). She was a member of the Advisory Boards for Southeastern Virginia Society of the Deaf, Tidewater Community College American Sign Language (ASL) Program and the Virginia Relay Advisory Council. Furthermore, Brenda served on committees for the ALDA & TDI 2013 Joint Conference, and as a committee member and consultant for the Virginia Association of the Deaf Conference.

In addition, Brenda has been involved with the Virginia Beach City Public School for the Deaf/ HOH Task Force, the Northern Virginia Community Roundtable for Deaf and Hard of Hearing and has been an SHHH Mentor for children between the ages of 10-14.

Highly acclaimed by her peers, Brenda is described as a compassionate, humble and down to earth leader who relates well with others and communicates effectively. For those reasons and more, we commend Brenda for her efforts and are proud to award her as the recipient of the 2013 Deaf Community Leader Award for the state of Virginia.

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. . .

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TDI - Shaping An Accessible World
Chapter Happenings and GA to SK

By Ann Smith, Curator

Diana Fanuel tells of a delightful brunch that ALDA-Garden State held in November at Beethoven’s Cafe in Chatham, arranged by Lori Messing, a long-time ALDAn. Two new members showed up; a third prospective member was unable to make the meeting. They had found the chapter online. ALDA-GS decided to focus on socialization in 2014.

Francine Stieglitz reports that ALDA-Boston has been busy. After a fabulous potluck 4th of July celebration, members vacationed in August. In September, Molly-Jane Rubinger, MSW presented the second part of her talk on how hearing loss affects relationships. She provided lots of suggestions for both those with hearing loss and those who are involved with/supporting those with hearing loss. October was the Walk for Hearing, and Team ALDA was well represented.

Since November 2013, ALDA-Boston and HLAA New England chapter members and friends have been able to take advantage of the free accessible guided tours offered by the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. Valarie Burrows, the MFA’s Accessibility Coordinator, has been instrumental in expanding options for people with hearing loss to explore the museum’s galleries and exhibits.

ALDA-Boston’s annual holiday party was scheduled for December 7, with ALDA-Boston supplying the main dishes and guests bringing appetizers and desserts. Four weeks later, it was followed by the annual New Year’s brunch featuring a presentation by Larry Goldberg, founder and director of the Carl and Ruth Shapiro Family National Center for Accessible Media (NCAM) at Boston’s public media leader, WGBH.

Jim Stansell reports that in September, ALDA-Peach featured Hamilton Relay’s Ellen Rolader, who spoke about the company’s services. In October, several members brought some of their pictures for a second session on photography led by the chapter’s own Kristin Stansell. Members also enjoyed a wonderful cake from Sara Hartman, who recently started a bakery business.

In November, Dave Litman, ALDA’s acting president, gave members a recap of the 2013 ALDAcon joint conference with TDI. Also, the new board was elected: Robin Titterington as president, Kristin Stansell as vice president, Steve Tamas as treasurer, Jim Stansell as secretary, and Mary Platt as the member-at-large. The annual holiday luncheon was scheduled for December.

Send your chapter news to Ann Smith at fabsmith@att.net. Deadline for the next issue is February 21.
From Bill Graham’s introduction:

Our recipient of ALDA’s highest award, the I. King Jordan Award for Distinguished Achievement Award, lives in Canada. She deserved this award for her academic and volunteer contributions, and she was even a former ALDA Board member. She is a tenured associate professor at Ryerson University for both the school of occupational health and public health, and the department of mechanical and industrial engineering. She has specialized in human factors engineering since 1978 and is a certified professional ergonomist and a fellow of the Association of Canadian Ergonomists. She is the first deaf woman to earn a Ph.D. in engineering, and she is Canada’s longest serving deaf professor. As such, she also contributed as a role model for women and people with disabilities in the sciences.

Dr. Woodcock has been involved with applications of her work to the amusement industry since 2002. She has led research and development involving rides and other attractions in theme parks, carnivals, and other events in Canada, the United States, and Japan. She is a frequent instructor in human engineering and safety topics for the amusement industry. She has also authored a health and safety guide for sign language interpreting adopted by the Association of Visual Language Interpreters and has coauthored several research papers in this area.

Before joining Ryerson, Dr. Woodcock taught graduate and undergraduate courses in industrial engineering at Rochester Institute of Technology and the University of Waterloo. During the 1980s she was a hospital vice president and was active in the Ontario Health Care System. She was also the first deaf president of the Canadian Hearing Society, and she has been active on a variety of boards and councils, including the Ontario Council for Regents and Colleges in Applied Arts and Technology, the Ontario Hospital Association, the board of governors of Centennial College in Toronto, the National Captioning Institute’s board of directors, the executive council of the Association of Canadian Ergonomists, and others. Dr. Woodcock has received awards for community service, advocacy, and volunteerism, including the Ontario Medal for Good Citizenship, and honors from professional societies and community organizations, including the Citizenship Award from the Canadian Council of Professional Ergonomists and Engineers and the Outstanding Alumna medal from the University of Waterloo faculty of engineering. She has been recognized by ALDA, the Ontario Association of the Deaf, and the International Alumni of Delta Epsilon at Gallaudet University. In 2000, the University of Toronto press published her book, Deafened People: Adjustment and Support. She also is an incredible speaker.

Kathryn Woodcock’s presentation:

I was deafened progressively throughout adolescence. I kept it secret for many years, and my parents said I could hear if I tried hard enough. I first came out as a deaf person during the Deaf President Now movement in 1988, which culminated in Dr. Jordan’s presidency. When my sign language teacher showed video clips of the protest in sign language class, I thought it was historical video that I just didn’t know about because I was outside the Deaf culture. But when one of my colleagues at work asked me about this event, I realized it was happening in real time. I first connected with ALDA at ALDAcon 2, and I wrote a history of the founding of ALDA for the first ALDA Reader and for the National Association of the Deaf’s Deaf American. I was on the ALDA Board way back when this award was new. No one knows better than I do how significant this award is, being ALDA’s most prominent affirmation that deaf people can do anything that hearing people can do except hear. I can’t say how much it means to me to have this on my CV. I understand that it’s my duty share a little bit of wisdom to prove that I can do anything hearing people can do except hear, so I decided that I would talk briefly about whether becoming deaf is like a roller coaster ride. Here are five insights from an amusement engineering professor.

The first rule of amusement research is that amusement rides are not as dan-
ALDAns at TDI-ALDA Joint Conference 2013 in Albuquerque

Bob and Ling Elkins (seated), Larry Littleton (standing)

Dave Litman presents Able ALDAn award to Tess Crowder

Cynthia Amerman chats with Carolyn Piper

Photos by Ken Arcia
Kathy Evans receives President's Special Recognition Award from Acting President Dave Litman
Kathy Schlueter, Pat Graves, and Karen Krull

Margreta von Pein presents ALDA Angel award to Marylyn Howe

Marsha Kopp, Lauren Storck, and Sharaine Rawlinson Roberts
Ken Arcia, Bernie Palmer, and Bill Graham at the karaoke party

Steve Larew, Miguel Aguayo, Dana Mulvany, Bill Graham, Linda Drattell (in back), Marylyn Howe, Valerie Stafford-Mallis, and John Waldo perform at the karaoke party

Photos by Ken Arcia
One of Us

By Karen Krull, Curator

I first met Chris Littlewood at the joint TDI-ALDA conference in Albuquerque. We shared a table at one of the luncheons, and he proved to be an excellent conversationalist. Chris got both his bachelor’s and master’s degree from the University of South Florida in Tampa (Go Bulls!) and works for St. Petersburg College’s Center for Public Safety Innovation and the National Terrorism Preparedness Institute. He enjoys most aspects of his job, but his favorite part is advocating for people with hearing loss and training emergency planners and the public to include people with disabilities in emergency planning.

Chris served on the Emergency Access Advisory Committee (EAAC) for the Federal Communications Commission 2011-2013, holds the ALDA seat on the Florida Coordinating Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, serves on the ALDA-Suncoast board, and works with many other state and local organizations to advocate for people with hearing loss and people with disabilities. He has been an instructional designer and project manager for almost 20 years, and before that worked for about 10 years in civilian law enforcement roles. Chris enjoys advocacy for people with hearing loss in everything he does. The most important thing to him is his family and friends. You can touch base with Chris via email at cslittle@gate.net. Read on to discover why he’s “one of us.”

Name: Chris Littlewood

Where were you born? Flushing, NY, but I moved to New Hampshire three weeks after I was born.

What is your current residence? Seminole, Florida (near Tampa and St. Petersburg)

What is the cause of your deafness? I swam in the shallow end of the family gene pool—I’m kidding; it’s a progressive sensorineural hearing loss caused by dysfunctional mitochondrial DNA.

Age/year you became deafened? After a mild loss that started in my early 20s, fast forward 20+ years to my severe-to-profound loss. I still identify most of the time as hard of hearing; I hear lots of sound, but I have very little speech understanding, and hearing aids don’t help me.

Marital status? Married 10 years in February 2014

What is your present job? Instructional technology coordinator—I coordinate, design, and develop public safety training.

What is the worst job you ever had? Overall, I haven’t really had a worst job.

Movies you want to see again? Too many to name, but if Shawshank Redemption or Ferris Bueller’s Day Off comes on, I’ll stop everything to watch.

Books you tell others to read? I like John Grisham, and my favorite book of all time is Hemingway’s Farewell to Arms. A good book for Deaf/late-deafened readers is Secret Signs by T.J. Waters.

I stay home to watch: Blue Bloods, Blacklist, Parenthood and Big Bang Theory.

Favorite pig-out food: Macaroni and cheese, ground beef with ketchup on it—my college roommate nicknamed it Bachelor Surprise! Don’t knock it till you try it.

Hobbies: Home repair projects, disability advocacy, ALDA, writing, watching movies

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

The hardest thing about becoming deafened is: having a hearing family.

I began accepting my deafness: more so in my late 30s, when I did all the stages of grief several times, I think. Now I am very proud of my hearing loss/deafness.

The worst thing about deafness is: it’s a hearing world.

The best thing about deafness is: it makes me feel connected to my mom, who passed away about the same time my hearing loss started. She was very hard of hearing/late-deafened too. Also, the friends I have made.

How did you learn about ALDA? Lois Maroney, the founder of ALDA-Suncoast, called me (I think on my TTY) back in the mid-90s and told me about our local ALDA chapter. I always joke that I stopped going for several years while I pretended to be hearing, but as my hearing loss progressed, I found my way back. Tess Crowder, our chapter CART provider, invited me to speak about some of the caption/interpreter projects I was working on for emergency planning. I was so glad to see old friends from ALDA-Suncoast and quickly made several new ones.

In what ways has ALDA enhanced your life? The friends I have made and the social...
in my youth, but not now, not at my advanced age? I’m not a teenager; I’m 77 years old. When I was young, my hearing loss was not nearly so severe. Now, at the profound loss stage, should I really be doing this?

As I sit here at the keyboard, focusing on my memory of my youthful years, I recall there were actually three previous times that I was confronted with learning a foreign language.

There was a requirement during high school for college-bound students to learn either Spanish or French. I opted for Spanish, which was known to be the easier of the two. After school, my close friend Vic and I met either at his house or mine to go over our Spanish homework. He was terrific at helping me with the correct pronunciation of the Spanish vocabulary. One night during our studying together, we found ourselves stuck on figuring out the Spanish word for “fight.” Finally, Vic called out, “I have it. “It’s frosk.”

“How do you spell it?” I asked.

The next day the teacher asked how to say “fight” in Spanish. I was excited, for I rarely had an answer. I waved my hand frantically. “Frosk,” I said proudly. She looked puzzled at my response, shook her head no, and called on someone else.

I glanced at Vic. He was as surprised as anyone else, for he had figured I understood he was joking the night before when he had thrown in a word he knew from a foreign vocabulary he had picked up elsewhere. Now we laugh about that incident, but at the time it was just another moment of being embarrassed. I struggled along, repeating Spanish three times until learning barely enough for acceptance at our local community college.

In college, the major I signed up for required German. Within two weeks I asked the German language teacher to sign my drop slip. I was a lost soul in that subject. She tried to talk me out of dropping the class, saying she thought I could do it. But I was convinced it was impossible. Instead, I switched to a major that did not require a foreign language.

Well, what about the third language I was speaking about?

Having a bar mitzvah was an important commitment for Jewish boys reaching the age of 13 in order to be accepted as a member in good standing in the community in which I grew up. A bar mitzvah traditionally entails reading a portion of the Torah (first five books of the Old Testament) in Hebrew on a stage in front of an audience of family, friends, and other attendees during a religious service.

Everyone I knew—all my friends and family—underwent the process, some eagerly and others with trepidation. But in my case I was frightened of the ordeal. I feared stumbling during my attempt at reading out loud in front of an audience.

Moreover, attending Hebrew school after daily dismissal from public school resulted in additional feelings of failure. I was definitely not a good Hebrew student and Mina, my Hebrew teacher, was constantly looking stern, giving me looks of disapproval. Now, with hindsight, I realize she was perpetually frowning not so much at me, despite my poor progress, as about events taking place thousands of miles away. World War II was over and the world was just finding out about the Holocaust and what was left of the surviving Jews, who were struggling to establish a Jewish state, which looked doubtful. Mina and her husband David were very involved in the plight of the Jews; she no doubt had relatives murdered by the Nazis; there was good reason she seldom smiled. I understand now why she had little patience with a kid like me in class, one who constantly stumbled with his efforts to pronounce Hebrew and was not well behaved. I was always desperate for attention and approval, but the manner of my attention-getting resulted in the opposite of approval.

And then it happened. Mina must have heard me cussing, for she grabbed me, dragged me to the lavatory, picked up a bar of soap, and washed my mouth out as punishment. As soon as she let go of me, I ran home. No matter what my parents threatened, no matter how important they claimed having a bar mitzvah was, nothing would make me go back to Hebrew school.

“Bobby, are you sure you don’t want to have a bar mitzvah?” my mother asked me. If you really don’t want one...I don’t know what to say. It will be terribly embarrassing. And you’ll have to live with that stigma forever.”

“I don’t care. I don’t care, I don’t care. I don’t want any damn bar mitzvah, never, never.”

As I grew older I found I was reluctant to admit I never had a bar mitzvah. I felt self-conscious about it. In fact, much later when the girl I was planning to marry confessed to her parents that I had not had one, they were horrified. That on top of my having a hearing loss led them to advise their daughter that I was not a good catch. “Find someone better; someone who does what is expected of him and one you don’t have to worry about producing children who might have hearing problems.”

As I look back on my life, I ask myself what was really behind my refusal to continue with Hebrew school. At age 12, was I aware that my hearing was the problem? I don’t know the answer to that.

Continued on page 19
I. King Jordan Award Winner (continued)...

Continued from page 11

gerous as they seem. Every year hundreds of millions of
people visit amusement parks and attractions around the
world, and very, very few are injured seriously enough
to need medical attention. The chance of irreversible
injury in an amusement park in North America is small.
Now, the media loves unusual things. That’s why you
hear about them.

Well, deafness is not as dangerous as it seems. We
don’t hear about the millions of deaf people leading suc-
cessful and productive lives. When we read about deaf
people in the news, it’s because they had an operation to
make them perceive sound. It’s like the most significant
thing we could do is to be a good medical record. But
we don’t read about deaf people getting a promotion
at work. Or getting a paper published in a journal. Or
running a marathon. Success is neither as difficult nor
as unusual as it seems from what we hear about in the
media.

The second principle from amusement design is
that everybody doesn’t like the same kind of ride. Some
dislike motion simulators, but I bought my own for my
lab. I don’t care for wooden coasters, and others dislike
rides that go upside down or spin. People have different
preferences and comfort zones. If a ride is just not for
you, there are lots of other rides.

Everybody doesn’t have to respond to deafness in
the same way, either. It’s perfectly understandable that
we have different preferences for how to communicate,
access the world, and get on with our lives. It’s good
to be open minded about trying new things, but if you
know somebody who has similar preferences to yours,
what works for them might be a pathway to something
that will be successful for you, too.

The third rule for roller coaster enjoyment is if you
are a chicken, sit in the front seat. You may think that
I am trying to pull a trick on you and that this is way
too scary. But there are both cognitive and physical
reasons why the front seat is the seat for you if you are a
chicken. Even if you can’t control where you are going,
both to be able to see what’s ahead and physically
and mentally brace for what’s about to happen. The
front seat also has a smoother ride and lower G forces.
Thrill seekers like the back row because there are more
surprises and more airtime. Sitting in the front is a good
experiment for you, if you’ve never enjoyed coasters
before. Ask to sit in row 1, and you will wait just a very
short time and have a much better ride.

Well, as a deafened person, you can sit in row 1 of
your own life. It may superficially seem easier to let the
medical experts tell you what to do, but if you are sitting
in the front row of your life making your own choices,
you’ll know what’s coming if it’s a rough ride, and that
will give you control over your responses.

The fourth thing to know about roller coasters is
that if you have to evacuate between stops part way
around the track, you should be grateful. The incon-
venience is actually the best option of all of the things
that could have happened at that time. You might have
crashed into the car in front of you. You might have
stopped in an awkward place on the track. Likewise,
deafness may be a consolation prize of not dying of
meningitis or a head injury. When a roller coaster stops
at a brake zone, there is usually an evacuation platform.
There are steps and maybe an elevator that will take
you down. The park operations team members practice
evacuations for people with physical agility and those
with mobility limitations. It’s not the ride that they
hoped that you would have when you came to the park,
but it’s a plan B. When things happen in our lives in
general, there is almost always a plan B. It often has un-
comfortable parts and you may need to be patient, aid in
your own rescue, and learn from people who have more
experience than you. Plan B may not be as much fun as
what you signed up to experience, but things could have
been worse. And it can be a story that you tell at parties.

The fifth rule that you probably heard many, many
times is to remain seated until your vehicle comes to a
full and complete stop. Most injuries to riders happen
when riders are attempting to enhance their thrill by
standing up, rocking the seat, reaching out, or leaning
out. These are among the most tragic accident reports
that I have to read. Please ride the way that the designer
intended. Enjoy the ride for what it is. Don’t try to make
it into another different ride.

The life lesson metaphor I draw from that is that for
many people, hearing is a more appealing ride than the
ride they bought a ticket for. But if we focus on trying to
make our deaf experience the same as a hearing experi-
ence, we can be disappointed or hurt. There are a lot
of wonderful things about deafness, Deaf culture, Deaf
arts, and people meeting at these conventions. There are
effective ways to participate in almost anything simply
by removing the barriers to access. We don’t have to
not be deaf in order to be ambitious and successful and
innovative.

Those are my five lessons. I want to, first of all,
thank Miguel [Aguayo, my husband] for being support-
ive and being here with me. ALDA was his family before
it was mine, since he was one of the original group at
Bill’s house party 25 years ago. And thanks also to Bill
for the nomination. I am truly, truly appreciative you
that think of me, and I am humbled to join the previous
recipients of the award.
By the time I entered USC graduate school, I realized I would have to get hearing aids in order to succeed. At that time, when I only had a moderate loss, hearing aids helped me greatly. I began earning straight A's and continued to do so until I graduated with a doctorate.

For 12 years I taught elementary school and was able to hear young kids in the classroom with little or no problem. But at times, fears about my hearing disability continued to surface. When I was serving as the school principal, it was proper to have my faculty members stand up and be introduced. I intentionally neglected to do that out of fear I would mispronounce the teachers’ names. Afterward the teachers had good reason to complain, and I did not have what it took to explain my action.

My hearing ability continued to deteriorate to the point where I realized it would be best for me to give up teaching sixth graders and switch over to teaching adults, whose voices I could hear. For 20 years I taught as a professor of education, training future teachers in the philosophy and methods of teaching. But eventually my hearing loss became so great that my adult students would say to me, “Dr. Elkins, that was a very interesting and informative answer you gave us, but it had no connection to the question we asked.” I retired on disability at 56.

For the last 20 years I have been thinking and writing about what I observe. I think back over my life about what I would have done differently if I had it to live over. I should have been more assertive about my hearing loss. I should have bluffed less and had the courage to do things that I ran away from. One of those things was having a bar mitzvah. I regretted that. And I asked myself, if I regret it, why not do something about it? If not now, when?

And that, my dear readers, is why I am attending Hebrew classes now. What do I do to compensate for being unable to follow the rabbi or cantor preparing our class for having a bar mitzvah (for males) or bat mitzvah (for females)? I had the good sense to hire a private tutor for one-on-one instruction.

The date for my bar mitzvah is April 26, 2014. Will I stick it out? I intend to, God willing. Currently people do not notice my hearing aids; they stare instead at my kippah (or yarmulke—a skullcap).

Bob is a retired university professor and lives in California with his wife Ling. He enjoys reading and writing and can be contacted at saywhatbob@gmail.com.

component of ALDA are awesome. It has provided for some nice professional advocacy connections, too.

When I am depressed, I: eat, clean house, or spend money in no particular order and not necessarily all at once.

My most irrational fear: I don’t really think I have one.

If I could hear again, the first thing I would do is: have a good long chat with my six-year-old son about whatever he wants. He’s a chatty guy, but I struggle to understand him and yet love him so much. I am still mostly oral (with a hearing family and work). We sign at home some but still mostly communicate via talking. Then I would probably go for a drive with the radio on.

The thing I like best about myself: my creative mind

Nobody knows: I am VERY critical of myself.

What I can’t stand is: selfish, impatient people. Everyone is selfish or impatient at times, but if that is the core of who you are, I would rather spend time with others.

Favorite memory: I’ve been blessed—there are so many good ones. Chats with my mom as a teen, riding and talking with my dad when he was working, my wedding day (mostly the party), and the birth of both of my kids.

Favorite saying: It is what it is.

The bottom line is: the best way to be happy is decide that you are. Family first, all other things second. Find a job that doesn’t feel like work and give everything your all.
GA to SK

By Ann Smith, Curator

Jim Laffer shares some happy news from ALDA-San Jose. Three of their members are successfully recovering from cancer. One is Nancy Hammons, who is well known in ALDA circles and used to lead ALDA-East Bay, a predecessor of ALDA-San Jose. Another is Helen Montanez, a new member who just attended her first group event and already volunteered to help out with holiday party decorating and other things.

Diana Fanuel of ALDA-GS (Garden State) in NJ took a 14-day cruise out of Bayonne, NJ. The Celebrity Summit went to two ports in Maine and several along the Canadian Maritime provinces (Halifax, Sydney, and Charlottetown), Quebec City, and Gaspe. The October cruise weather was pleasantly warm. Celebrity had asked if Diana needed an interpreter, which surprised her. She didn't follow up on this because she didn't want an interpreter to be constantly with her.

ALDA-Peach’s Jim Stansell report that big congrats goes to member Angie Fuoco on her milestone birthday (no, Angie, he doesn’t give out a lady’s age) and her graduation in December with an MPH (master’s in public health).

Send your personal news to Ann Smith at fabsmith@att.net. Deadline for the next issue is February 21.

SKSK

Friendship is born at that moment when one person says to another: “What! You too? I thought I was the only one.”

C.S. Lewis
In October 2013, I took on the role of acting president while the current president, Mary Lou Mistretta, recovered from back surgery. My primary role was to lead ALDA during the joint conference with TDI in New Mexico. When the conference was completed, I continued to serve as acting president. I would like to thank the Board and our members for their patience during this abrupt change. I also wish Mary Lou a speedy recovery and look forward to working with her and learning from her in 2014.

I want to report some things we have been working on as well as some goals I have for the coming year. First, however, I would like to provide a short report on the joint conference. This was a great learning opportunity for both TDI and ALDA and a success in many ways. ALDA had a wonderful representation, and I enjoyed the opportunity to meet many new people. We had members present from several countries, truly making this an international conference. The Friday evening entertainment kept everyone on their feet, and of course, the Saturday night karaoke party was a hit as usual. In 2014, ALDA will be hosting ALDAcon from October 8 to 12 in Norfolk, Virginia. This will be an ALDA-run convention. One question many of you have asked is, “Will ALDA have a joint conference with TDI again?” We are still collecting feedback from our members and TDI. Therefore, it is too soon to say whether a joint conference will happen again, and we continue to look to you and your feedback if this is something we should consider in the future.

These are some of the issues that the Board has addressed recently:

- Our website has been a major focus this past year and we are pleased to announce that we have made great strides with it. I encourage you to check it out as we continue to make upgrades. I also want to thank Brenda Estes, our website chair, for putting in many long hours and for being a go-between for our members and the webmaster.
- We approved Valerie Stafford-Mallis as the ALDAcon 2014 program chair, and the committee is in place.
- We discussed ways that ALDA can make use of more social media in a user-friendly way.

As I am set to become president in 2014, I want to share some goals I have for the year. I also encourage you to let me know what is on your mind and would love to receive your feedback about ALDA and your vision for us.

- Participating in meetings of every chapter and group. I have already made contact with several
groups and look forward to meeting with them in 2014 either in person or virtually.

- Ensuring that our website becomes a place that our members access frequently for information, updates, and communicating with other members and the Board.
- Helping ALDA to become more immersed in the social media world and to develop our own ways of communicating with our members and late-deafened people in line with today’s technology.

I can be reached at president@alda.org.

**Past President’s Report**

**By Brenda Estes**

As December 31, 2013 rapidly approached, I began to have mixed feelings about leaving the Board. After serving on it for five years, initially being elected as secretary in 2009, I felt somewhat sad, as though I’m leaving my siblings behind, and yet proud of all we’ve accomplished. So that I wouldn’t have sudden withdrawal pains, grin, I agreed to be co-planning chair of ALDAcon 2014 in Norfolk, Virginia.

ALDA has been fortunate over the years to have so many wonderful, dedicated volunteers to help lead it into the future. Many of our members have skills, creativity, and expertise that could greatly benefit ALDA, but they are too shy to step forward to offer their time for fear of rejection. Well, let me be the first to say “you won’t be rejected!” We can always find a place for you on one of our committees, and if you’re interested in running for the Board of Directors, start acquiring leadership experience on the local level; write articles for the ALDA News and/or the ALDA Reader so people can get to know you; submit a workshop proposal for ALDAcon; volunteer to be a newcomer’s buddy; and above all, if you receive an email asking you to participate on a committee or to run for a Board position, please don’t ignore it. A response from you ensures that you received the email and appreciated the sender’s time in contacting you.

My “second family,” thank you so much from the bottom of my heart for allowing me to represent you on the Board of Directors these past five years. To the current and future Board, I wish you the very best in continuing to lead ALDA into the future.

**Treasurer’s Report**

**By Matt Ferrara**

I have not yet received the final accounting from TDI, which did all the financial work for the Joint Conference. As of Nov 27, 2013, the ALDA bank accounts had $64,302 cash, as follows:

- ALDA operating expenses: $33,589*
- ALDA-Carolina Flight chapter funds: $4112**
- Scholarship funds: $26,601

All federal and state (Illinois) forms that were required for 2013 have been filed. I thank Gloria Popp (finance committee member) for her help with these.

All outstanding bills have been paid. We are on or near budget with our expenses

* This includes the $20,000 bequest from the Mary Clark estate. I am moving this to a scholarship fund by the end of 2013.

** ALDA-Carolina Flight asked the ALDA treasurer to hold its share of ALDAcon 2012 profits until the chapter gets a bank account established.

**Finance Committee Report**

**By Matt Ferrara**

Since this was a Joint ‘con, we did not get any individual donations. It is not too late (it is never too late) to donate to ALDA. And, as a reminder, ALDA, Inc. is a nonprofit corporation, so donations are tax-deductible. Also, some employers have matching donation plans. If you have any questions regarding donations, please contact me at treasurer@alda.org.

**Secretary’s Report**

**By Karen Krull**

I continue to update the Board Manual regularly, keep the minutes of Board-related business emails, track motions, and tally votes. The Board passed a motion to form a new committee specifically for veterans, called the veterans committee. We approved an upgrade of Quick Books to keep the Treasurer’s reports current. The Board discussed ways to give back to the chapters and moved that ALDA, Inc. will donate $5 to the chapter for each person who is an active member in good standing of both ALDA, Inc. and that active chapter. That motion was tabled and brought before the chapter leaders for further discussion. A motion was passed to offer two issues of ALDA News ads and three months of
website ads FREE to the Silver and above sponsors from ALDAcon 2012 and the equivalent of the 2013 ALDA/TDI joint conference. We replaced our website designer in the effort to get the website functioning to utmost benefit for our members.

**Region 1 Report**  
**By Gene Romero**

I took over as Region 1 Director in the middle of the year and quickly tried to get up to speed. I learned about the policies and procedures of being a Board member and responded to several requests for information. I was also able to work with several people who were interested in becoming ALDA members.

I have been working with a group of people in Pennsylvania who are trying to set up a chapter in their state. I also participated with ALDA-Boston and interacted with several of their local members.

**Region 2 Report**  
**By Marsha Kopp**

I received many inquiries regarding help with purchasing hearing aids. I also received several requests for information about the joint conference and provided it. I responded to concerns people had regarding access to website information. I also received requests for ALDA chapter start-up information and provided it. Some people requested ALDA newsletters, which I shared with them, and they related that the information was helpful and they did not feel so alone in the world anymore.

**Region 3 Report**  
**By Rachael Morris**

Hi gang! Here is a glimpse at what has transpired since my last report. Y’all enjoy and be good!

I passed along information to ALDA-Suncoast regarding ASL classes being offered at Miami Dade College.

An administrative assistant from the South Carolina Association of the Deaf contacted me in regard to a phone message she received from someone who wanted resources for late-deafened adults in Columbia, SC. He did not know sign language and communicated through texting. She wanted my permission to pass along my contact information, so I gave it to her, as well as inviting this man to join our chapter. I was never given her client’s name, so I am not sure if he has been in touch with us. He has not directly contacted me, so I do not think he has.

The team at Visit Orlando in Orlando, Florida contacted me again, hoping to assist us in planning our 2014 ‘con. As with the previous two years, I had to decline because this event is already planned, but I made note of the offer for discussion about the next conference location.

A mother of a 30-year-old daughter contacted me in early October, hoping to get support, assistance, information, etc. to help her daughter, who is rapidly losing her hearing for unknown reasons. Her work has been affected, as well as her social, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing. They live in my region and that’s why the mother contacted me, but she was humbled to know I am 31 and have had a very similar path. I provided her all sorts of info from ALDA to the Division of Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DSDHH) to vocational rehabilitation to my personal Facebook page, but haven’t heard from her in the two months that have passed.

Several ALDA members contacted me in regard to when their membership would need renewal. I responded to each after researching the ALDA database.

I sent a Fall ALDA News, a couple of older issues, and a welcome note to a new ALDA-Peach member who is now also an ALDA, Inc. member.

I sent hearing aid funding resource information to folks in Texas, Mississippi, Arkansas, and Tennessee.

**Region 4 Report**  
**By Margreta von Pein**

The challenge I faced was with the database. I often have the occasion to email members in one or another state in the region. Since the database is arranged alphabetically by name, I have to sift through the whole database to find the people in the region’s states I am interested in. It would be useful to have the categories arranged first by region, then state, then alphabetized by name and email address. The email address is so far across the page from the person’s name that tracking across the page is very difficult. Despite this challenge, I have accomplished the following:

- Responded to emails forwarded by the regional coordinator
- Responded to chapter leaders’ dilemmas as they came up
- Shared several pieces of information with members
- Responded to members inquiring about the ALDAcon scholarship and sent their query to the
ALDAcon Program Committee Report
By Valerie Stafford-Mallis

I recently began as program chair for ALDAcon 2014 and am excited with the committee I have. We have a wonderful mix of Board members and experienced non-Board members. We have been working to finalize the tracks and plan to send out a Call for Papers (CFP) in early 2014. We are also in the process of developing program guidelines and searching for speakers.

Newcomer Committee Report
By Cynthia Amerman

We wrote to everyone who identified him/herself as a newcomer, gathered information about them to be used in the bingo icebreaker, planned and ran the newcomer orientation, and continued to meet newcomers throughout the convention (some of whom were there on business). We asked newcomers to speak at the Farewell Breakfast and followed up with emails after the convention. I tried to figure out how to spend less of my own money on orientation materials. I got some reusable stamps and stamping pads to make the passports so we will not have to print the materials in colors, which can be very costly. The TDI president sent me the list of newcomers each month, making it much easier to keep up with than in other years. It was still hard to gather all the names because of late registrations, but this can’t be helped. We always get a number of newcomers at the very end, which doesn’t allow much time for contacting them.

Membership Report
By Karen Krull

Many thanks go to those who have renewed recently, and please keep those renewals coming. You are all the lifeblood of ALDA, and we need you. I’d like to inform you of an upcoming membership drive. Hopefully in January, once the website revamp is finished, ALDA will be offering a discount of $10.00 if a member renews for two years. The discount will be available for all membership types and will only be available for January and February 2014 renewals. Watch for an E-news blast announcing it, and be sure to take advantage of the discounted rate. No matter when your current membership expires, this will add two more years.
I ran for treasurer years ago and lost. Several years later, I ran for secretary and was elected.

By the time this goes to press, the election will be over, and we'll be welcoming the 2014 Board of Directors. Please join me in wishing them a successful year.

**Website Content Report**  
**By Brenda Estes**

As website chair, my primary responsibility is to oversee the redesign/development of the website.

Summary: We now have space for six advertisement banners on the website and expect to have these filled in the immediate future.

For the first time since December 2010, the members’ log-in section is up and running. The features currently available are:

- ALDA, Inc. bylaws
- Sample of chapter bylaws
- Chapter petition
- Group petition
- Nonprofit status information
- ALDA News archive for 2013
- List of chapters/groups (information is in the process of being updated)
- Chat room

The forum for chapter and group leaders will be installed in early 2014. In addition, we are correcting typos and updating old information, and ALDAcon Proceedings from 2010-2013 will be uploaded.

We have faced numerous redesign delays that were beyond our control, and we appreciate the patience of our membership as we navigate through the process of creating a more user-friendly website. It is an evolving process, but we've made tremendous progress in 2013 and it will only get better.

**ALDA Database Manager Membership Report**  
**By Gloria Popp**

We currently have about 300 members, nearly 40 of whom are new. We plan to move the database to a secure place on the website, to allow Internet access to member-only information and more interaction between our members and the ALDA board. We are optimistic that this will be completed in the first quarter of 2014.

**Conference Proceedings Report**  
**By Margreta von Pein**

By November 2013, the committee had received 14 workshop transcripts, eight of which are being assessed by the editors for editing and suitability for posting. Two editors are editing transcripts that made the cut. Two challenges beset us:

1) We do not have enough active editors.
2) Six of the 14 transcripts from CART arrived incomplete, and I am working with Caption First to get complete transcripts.

**Scholarship Committee Report**  
**By Carolyn Piper**

This year we helped seven people attend the 'con in New Mexico. Fund availability is an ongoing issue that influences ALDA’s ability to provide scholarship assistance each year, so donations are very much appreciated. In the coming year we will identify any changes that may need to be made in the scholarship program as a whole.

**Technology Report**  
**By Ken Arcia**

I sent the ALDA News, ALDAcon (ALDA / TDI Joint Conference) updates and eBlasts as needed electronically. I also made minor changes to the ALDA website when there were problems with our contractor on updating / modifying it. I am updating the website with information from the recent Joint Conference, including award winners and photos. I plan to be trained more in-depth on “how-to” with WordPress (our system for operating the website).
What Is ALDA?

The mission of the Association of Late-Deafened Adults (ALDA) is to support the empowerment of late-deafened people.

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

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

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

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

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

If you are interested in learning about ALDA in your area or seeing ALDA become active there, please contact your regional director (contact information is at “Contact Us” on the ALDA website).
Your membership in the Association of Late-Deafened Adults connections you with ALDAns throughout the world. Don't miss our informative quarterly newsletter, ALDA News. Check our chapter directory at www.alda.org to find a chapter near you. Our fully accessible annual convention is a must for newcomers and old-timers alike.

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

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

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

Name ____________________________________________

Organization: ________________________________________

Address______________________________________________

City ___________________________________________________

State: _______  Postal Code: _______  Country: _______

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

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

Fax __________________________________________________

E-mail ________________________________________________

URL/Website Address: __________________________________

ALDA Chapter (Name/None): ________________________________

Gender:  Male □  Female □

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

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

If paying by check, please mail this form to:

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

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

□ New  □ Renewal

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


For Credit Card Payment by Mail:
□ MasterCard  □ Visa

Amount ________________________________

Account # ________________________________

Expiration Date ___________________________

Signature ________________________________

(For Credit Authorization)

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

Education  Advocacy  Role Models  Support

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

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

Make a Difference! Become a Lifetime Member!

Why a Lifetime Member?
A. ALDA and the work it does to support the empowerment of deafened people means a lot to me; I want to support ALDA financially
B. I don't have to worry about forgetting to renew my dues
C. I plan to live to be at least 130 years old; think what a bargain Lifetime Membership will be!

Ann Smith, Lifetime Member

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

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<th>Lifetime Membership Tier</th>
<th>Bronze $500 - $1,499: receive a personal letter from the President, bronze plaque</th>
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<td>Silver $1,500 - $2,999: receive a personal letter from the President, silver plaque and priority seating at future ALDAcons</td>
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<td>Gold $3,000+: receive a personal letter from the President, gold plaque, priority seating at future ALDAcons and complimentary registration to a future ALDAcon</td>
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Contact ALDA treasurer: treasurer@alda.org or visit www.alda.org