Her doctors told us that we should start learning sign language, as she would eventually become deaf. DEAF! No way! Not my child! This can't be happening!

We were in denial and managed to stay there for several years. Rachael had several surgeries early on, but they were to remove tumors from her back, not her head. My child won't become deaf! There must be a mistake; she seems fine. Surely her NF2 is not as bad as they say.

When Rachael was 20, she had her first gamma knife surgery to treat the growing tumor on her left acoustic nerve. The gamma knife zapped the tumor, but it also zapped her hearing in that ear. Little did we know that this was the beginning of so many losses that Rachael would face. Over the next five years, she lost partial use of her left leg and right hand; she lost her beautiful, thick, curly, red hair; she lost her hearing completely, some friends, her boyfriend, and her dreams.

One of the hardest days of my life was after that first gamma knife surgery, when she looked at me with tears in her eyes and said, “Mom, I've lost my smile! And that was my favorite part of me!” As a parent, there is nothing more painful than watching your child suffer.

By the end of 2007, Rachael's health began to stabilize. She was completely deaf, but the tumors that had ravaged her body for the previous five years began to shrink. Her doctors told us that she would eventually become able to hear again. We were overjoyed! But as time went on, the tumors began to grow again, and we knew that it was only a matter of time before they would attack her hearing once more.

In the fall of 2014, Rachael was admitted to the hospital with severe back pain. Her doctors told us that she had a ruptured disc and would need surgery. We were scared and completely devastated. We knew that this was the beginning of the end for our precious daughter.

Rachael passed away on July 14, 2014, just one day after her 32nd birthday. She left behind a legacy of love and strength that will never be forgotten. Her memory lives on through the ALDA award in her name, the Susan Morris Award for Outstanding Service to the ALDA community.}

What ALDA Meant to My Daughter Rachael

By Susan Morris

Editor’s note: Susan Morris is the mother of the 2014 Able ALDAn winner Rachael Morris, who died at age 32 on July 14, 2014.

Rachael was my third born. She was the precious baby sister, the little girl that I wanted so badly. We already had two boys, Rusty, 7, and Benji, 4. In those days you learned the sex of your children when they were born; and, like all parents, we were praying for a healthy child, but we were secretly longing for a girl. She came to us on April 23, 1982. We were beyond thrilled to welcome this beautiful red-headed baby girl to our family. Her childhood was filled with pink clothes, hair bows, dolls, ballet lessons, voice lessons, soccer games, cheerleading, school, church, friends, family and laughter—lots of laughter. Life was good for Rachael and our family.

In the fall of 1996, life as we had known it changed forever. While performing in a community theatre production, Rachael began to experience severe back pain. Her doctors were puzzled by what appeared to be a ruptured disc. What could she possibly have done to rupture a disc at the young age of 14? She was referred to a specialist at Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center. He ordered brain and full spine MRIs, and her doctors discovered a large tumor in her lumbar spine that required surgical removal. They also found hundreds of smaller tumors, along with bilateral acoustic neuromas, the hallmark of neurofibromatosis type 2 (NF2), a genetic condition that affects the central nervous system.

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Note from Nancy
By Nancy Kingsley, Editor-in-Chief

This is a good time to remind our readers that the ALDA News depends on submissions from its readers. Lisa Harbour, our new managing editor, has done a great job obtaining articles for this issue, but we need a continuing supply of new (as well as previous) authors in order to fill each issue. The deadlines are March 1, June 1, September 1, and December 1, but articles about any topic related to late-deafness can be sent anytime to Lisa at lisaharbour45@comcast.net. Don’t worry if you aren’t a polished writer—we will add the polish! For more information, just contact Lisa.

We prefer submissions to be at least 900 words long but will accept some shorter ones. Authors retain the copyright to their articles, so you can republish what you send to us. And you can also send us material that you’ve published elsewhere, including your blogs.

Please don’t wait to be asked—put on your writing cap and send us an article. (Yes, that means YOU!)
A BIG hello to all my fellow ALDAns!

It is so hard to believe that another year has come and gone already. That old saying “time flies when you are having fun” certainly holds true for us. Planning for next year’s ALDAcon is currently underway, and I hope to see all of you there in Scottsdale in September 2015. It is such a great week of fellowship and learning and most importantly, FUN. It is always nice to be around other people like us who understand the daily struggles of living with hearing loss!

Inside this issue are many “thoughts from the late-deafened trenches.” We can all relate, right? I will take this opportunity to introduce myself a little. I was deafened at the age of 8 (not exactly late, but thank God, it was after I acquired speech) by a blow to the head from a baseball bat. My hearing loss has progressed over the years from moderate to severe to finally profound. I received a cochlear implant in 2000, but that didn’t work because of auditory neuropathy on that side. The great doctors at Johns Hopkins also found out that my sudden hearing loss was caused by EVAS (enlarged vestibular aqueduct syndrome), which can lead to hearing loss after a blow. I will probably have my “good” side implanted at some point, but I’m just not quite ready yet! I do want to take a moment to give a shout-out to the speech pathologists who worked with me to help me retain normal speech. These folks go largely unrecognized and are so important for us deaf folks!

Working with Nancy on this issue was a lot of fun and also gave me a new appreciation for what goes on behind the scenes in getting the ALDA News ready to go to press. I am beyond grateful for the people who took the time to submit articles for this issue. A special thank you to Susan Morris (Rachael’s mom). I know it was difficult for her to write, and she did her daughter proud. I smile when I think of Rachael (as she would want it), but there is no doubt that her presence will be missed for years to come.

Recently, my 10-year-old daughter Madison expressed an interest in how and why I lost my hearing. It’s been interesting to try to explain hearing loss to a kid in terms that she could understand. After I gave what I thought was a nice, not-too-detailed explanation, Madison asked, “But why does this happen to some people?” My answer was simple. We all have something to deal with in our day-to-day life, and mine (and yours) just happens to be hearing loss. We all take the hand that we are dealt and make the best of it. Many of us are extremely successful in spite of our hearing loss. I have always said that I can do everything except hear on the phone!

I met several newly deafened folks at the convention this year, and my advice to them is to have perseverance and patience! It does get easier as time goes on. Be gentle with yourself and allow yourself time to get used to this strange new world!
A Message from the Past President

By Dave Litman

By the time you are reading this article I will have retired as president of ALDA and will be sitting on a beach somewhere drinking Long Island iced teas and relaxing in the sun!

It has been an honor and privilege to serve as president. I enjoyed the opportunity to interact with our membership, sponsors, and advocates in a variety of ways. I learned a lot about the different challenges that adults with hearing loss face and some of the solutions. One of the most important things I learned is how active ALDA is at the national level for people with hearing loss. This is something I did not realize as a member, so I know that in the future we need to improve our communication with the general membership about the wonderful national advocacy work ALDA is doing.

This year my focus was on having ALDA become more engaged with technology as a means of outreach and communication with our membership. I hope you have taken the opportunity to check out our improved website. Brenda Estes and Bruce Greenfield deserve so much credit and appreciation for making that happen. We are working to establish an ALDA channel on YouTube and to have a stronger presence on Facebook. It is wonderful to see all the communication our members are having on Facebook since ALDAcon 2014.

ALDAcon 2014 was one of the best times of my life. I was so impressed with the people who attended ALDAcon for the first time, and I want to thank them for having the courage to attend and embrace the family aspect of what ALDA means. I never felt as much love as I did the week of ALDAcon.

I am hopeful that the enthusiasm and excitement we all felt at ALDAcon 2014 will carry over to the new year. ALDA needs all our members to be actively involved at the local and national level to spread the gospel of ALDA and to advocate for themselves and other adults with hearing loss. While I will no longer be the president of ALDA, I will still be as active as I can be to support ALDA as an international leader for late-deafened adults.

I thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve you as president, and I look forward to my collection of ALDA hugs at ALDAcon 2015 in Scottsdale, Arizona if I do not see you before that.

Dave Litman was president of ALDA, Inc. in 2014 and has been involved with ALDA in various roles for several years. His passion for ALDA began in 1998 and continues to grow stronger with each passing year. He works for the North Carolina Division of Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DSDHH) as a hard of hearing services specialist, helping hard of hearing and late-deafened individuals get the resources they need to be successful. He became deaf at 26 from NF2 and received his BA and MSW after attending his first ALDAcon in 1998.
I was born profoundly deaf and grew up in the hearing world, wearing one analog hearing aid on my left ear and lipreading. My hearing was very limited, but my analog aid always provided important environmental information such as doors opening, my spoken name, and a few vowel sounds to differentiate words.

My original Beltone hearing aid lasted me from age 5 to 14, and I wore my first over-the-ear Oticon aid from age 14 to 30. Then for the following 18 years, a wonderful hearing aid repairman kept my next aid, an analog Oticon E35P, clean and working.

At age 45, I bought a backup Oticon from eBay for $75, but it never worked well. Finally, when I was 47 and it was 19, my trusty E35P Oticon began dying. My repairman could no longer find used analog aids to purchase, even for parts. Sending my aid away cost $350 each time and the repair warranty was only for six months.

I sent my hearing aid out for repair four times, watched eBay, emailed multiple hearing aid dispensers and deaf friends, and looked everywhere for a spare analog Oticon for two years without success. I also tried and hated digital hearing aids. Even the most powerful digital aids sounded much too quiet and distorted after the volume and bass of analog sound.

During this process, a friend invited me to join her at our first HLAA and ALDA conventions, where I found instant camaraderie and understanding. I was unsure what to expect, but I learned that ALDA isn’t a bunch of “deaf strangers.” Instead, I discovered rooms full of new friends who UNDERSTOOD my life!

Every single person took the time to communicate clearly. Some of us were born hearing and had a gradual loss; others faced sudden losses overnight as adults. We each had a unique story with the common ground of hearing loss. It was a joy to be together!

I met my first cyborg in 2012 at one of these conventions. Cochlear implants were a completely new idea to me—an intriguing but foreign concept. Not everyone is a good candidate, and a positive outcome requires rehabilitation and practice. Also, each person’s hearing loss history influences their progress, and many people with cochlear implants (especially children and late-deafened adults) adapt fairly quickly. Most cyborgs I met had some auditory memory and wanted a semblance of normal hearing back.

I certainly did not fit into this category. How could I miss what I never had? Did I really want to hear more? Would my brain be able to untangle the noise? But now that my one trusty hearing aid was failing, I had nothing to lose by learning more. After a year of intensive research, I decided to get bilateral MED-EL cochlear implants in March 2013.

Giving up my hearing aid and my tiny bit of familiar sound was NOT an easy decision. Because I have very little auditory memory, electronic hearing has been a challenging adjustment, but it is slowly getting better. I thank God every day that I went into this journey with positive hopes and realistic expectations. I also am incredibly thankful that I have my ALDA friends, who understand this journey like no one else can.

People ask me all the time what I can hear. For me, electronic hearing is NOT instant, not easy! For the first year, I heard a lot of static mixed with some recognizable sounds. I have to deliberately focus on every bit of incoming noise and think—moment by moment—about what I might be hearing. My brain has been working in overdrive behind the scenes for more than a year.

Learning to listen from scratch requires tremendous concentration and energy. I wear my cochlear implants 14 hours a day, and everything is listening practice—environmental sounds, conversations, audiobooks, Pandora music radio, and several auditory apps, each transmitted in a variety of ways—through the air, an FM neckloop, telecoils, or a cable connected directly to each processor.

I can identify a variety of environmental sounds if the background is quiet, and now my brain is beginning to sort out specific sounds even when there is background noise. This new clarity is very encouraging after a year of mostly one-dimensional garble. There were many days when I hated the jarring noise in my head and ripped my CIs off for breaks of golden silence, but those moments are becoming fewer. Voices are still fuzzy and unclear without lipreading, and most music is unpleasant, but I knew that the human voice and music would be the most difficult sounds to learn.

Continued on page 16
Almost 15 years ago today, I (un)officially became a card-carrying member of ALDA. As a recently-graduated audiologist—oh yes, irony of ironies—I had no idea that I would experience a progressive hearing loss over nine months that would leave me with profound hearing loss and a collection of hearing aids, cochlear implants, and bags and bags of assistive technology. There must have been a higher plan, though, because not only was I in the field of audiology where I learned about topics related to my own situation, but I was also exposed to and became fluent in ASL. Most important, though, I met people along the way who helped to mold me into the person I’ve become. Family members, colleagues, friends, and mentors were by my side as I learned how to be deaf, hard of hearing, or whatever label I happened to choose for a particular situation because, really, it depends, right? Same goes for whether I am being a wife, mother, audiologist, bilateral cochlear implant recipient, advocate, friend, or teacher. We may use labels to help us organize and make sense of our world, but they do NOT define us.

I am so, so honored to be receiving this award today, especially when I know that it’s named after a champion of advocacy and acceptance—thank you, King. Thank you also to the past recipients who have contributed to the world of hearing loss in their own very impactful way.

For me, becoming deaf was a blessing and a curse. There are definitely days when I wish I didn’t have to work so hard to understand, or miss jokes, or be on the receiving end of the “pitying look.”

But there are many, many more days when I am proud to know that students look up to me because they understand that I understand, that I’ve influenced another young person to know they can indeed become an audiologist with hearing loss, that I’ve shared information on my Facebook page which people have also shared and learned from, that I’ve taught someone how to use a piece of assistive technology which makes communication easier for them, that I’ve helped advocate for captioning in my local movie theater and it’s now available in a nearby live theater so I can continue to feed my addiction to the musical Wicked and see it for the 20th time (yes, it will be #20).

Thank you to the people who nominated me: Lisa Harbour, whom I met at ALDAcon two years ago and whom I continue to be friends with both in person and via social media (I cherish our times when we get to see each other face-to-face) and John Waldo, someone I admire, enjoying talking about advocacy with, and am proud to call a friend.

My family was not able to be here today but I know they are here in spirit. I don’t say this enough, but I am so grateful for how they support me whether it’s acting as my interpreter (when I let them) or taking care of each other as I travel and do what I do. As with all families, there can be extreme highs and lows, with the communication piece added—me taking off my implants and turning off the lights, them mumbling or being “hard of listening”—but together, we make it work in our own crazy way. I love you Matt, I love you Madz, and I love you Mia.

What ALDA means to me:
• Lifelong friends to share laughter and tears with
• A place to learn about things that deal with not only ears but also hearts
• The best three hours on a Saturday night that I look forward to every year—Karaoke

ALDA is my mother ship that I also call home. Thank you to my ALDA family for this award. Without you, your support, your advocacy efforts, your mentoring and your friendship, I would not be in the place that I am in.

Contact Tina at tina.childress@gmail.com.
My ALDacon Experience

By Cassandra Horton

I live in Nanuet, New York, and became deaf in 2000 due to meningitis. I was in a coma for three days and when I first woke up, I could hear, but about two days later, it was total silence. I received a cochlear implant that year but have no speech recognition. I am trying to learn sign language but have not become proficient, so I have to rely strictly on reading lips and/or captioning. I may only hear a cling and a clang occasionally, but I am grateful to still be alive, working, and doing well.

I am a graduate of North Carolina Central University (NCCU) and worked for IBM for 17 years in various locations and positions. I currently work for the Rockland County Department of Social Services as a special projects assistant in the staff development unit. I am active in my community; I serve on the board of directors of the Rockland Negro Scholarship Fund, am a lifetime member of the NAACP, and belong to the Delta Sigma Theta sorority (I celebrated my 40th anniversary this year), the Rockland County Deaf/Hard of Hearing task force, the Westchester HLAA chapter and national HLAA, and ALDA, Inc., just to name a few. I still enjoy traveling and socializing with family and friends.

I found out about ALDA at the HLAA conference in Austin, Texas. Cynthia Amerman told me about ALDacon, and I am so grateful I was able to attend for the first time in Norfolk, Virginia. Angie Fuoco actually mentioned ALDA to me after one of the workshops at the HLAA convention and told me to locate Cynthia, but Cynthia located me!

I had the most amazing time at ALDacon. The breakfast for newcomers followed by the workshop with Pat Dobbs sharing the Nine Guiding Principles of the Hearing Loss Revolution was the perfect start to a memorable occasion, and the road map for newcomers was extremely helpful in facilitating participation. The workshops were very informative, educational, and motivating. The exhibitors’ products were enlightening, the speakers at luncheons were awesome, and the social events, karaoke, and wine and paint party were most enjoyable. The silent auction was exciting, too! I bid on some items and was able to outbid my opponents on three of them. I also attended the ALDA board meeting and can now put a face to the names of many of the board members, who were so nice and welcoming.

I met so many people who were inspiring and helpful; it felt like I had known many of them for a long time. “Lost my hearing; found my family” is such a fitting phrase for ALDA. I learned a lot and I am going to encourage the members of my HLAA chapter to attend an ALDacon when they can. ALDA is where I fit in. In HLAA, everyone benefits from some sort of assistive hearing device, but in ALDA there are more people like me, who do not.

Words cannot adequately convey my ALDacon experience. ALDA is such a warm and friendly organization and accepts whatever it is you need to communicate, whatever it takes. I am so glad I found ALDA! This was my first ALDA conference but it certainly will not be my last. I am already looking forward to attending ALDacon 2015. Meet me in Scottsdale, Arizona!

Cassandra can be reached at cassandrahorton@dfa.state.ny.us.
Get Moving Today Toward a Grand Time

By Terri Singer

Avoid the stress of last-minute planning for ALDAcon 2015 (to be held in Scottsdale, Arizona from September 16-20). Here are six things you can do to ensure a smooth preparation:

1. Make your room reservation now. If necessary, it can be canceled at practically the last minute. Blocked rooms for ALDAcon attendees often sell out and attendees are forced to find rooms at a nearby hotel. That isn’t as conducive to staying up later with your buddies or slipping up to your room whenever you want. Go to www.hilton.com, enter Scottsdale, AZ, as the location and scroll over to enter your dates. Before selecting your room type, scroll down the left side of the page and click on “Have a special code?” Enter “ALD” for the ’con code and proceed with completing the reservation.

2. Register right away. You can use the EZ-Pay plan with at least $10 to lock in the early bird rate. Check the rules for cancellations. If you need to cancel months from now, consider the penalty amount as a donation to ALDA. With this payment plan in place, there is no reason for the ’con planners to extend early bird deadlines. Everyone has ample time to lock in the lowest rate.

3. Start checking air fares. You may not want to book a flight this early, but start shopping prices. It seems that almost every year, I see a fare in the $300 range and hesitate to book that soon. Travel experts report that the best fare is posted 60 days before departure, but that has never worked for me because I fly out of a smaller city airport. Twice, I’ve ended up paying about $200 more than if I’d booked when I saw the great fare a few months earlier. In reality, I’d only cancel due to a death in the family or my own illness and generally, it isn’t difficult to get a refund for those reasons.

4. Go back to the Hilton website and find the Scottsdale hotel. Explore that area to check out the amenities and photos of the facility. It will excite you about staying in such a beautiful place and familiarize you with the layout. The site also gives information on transportation from the airport to the hotel, including a bus ride for $2.50.

5. Do a Google search for Scottsdale, AZ, and find loads of information on things to do and places to go while you’re in the area. You may want to extend your stay to do more sightseeing.

6. Check the ALDA web site (www.alda.org) every three to four weeks for updates. As plans are firmed up, you’ll find more and more to thrill you about ALDAcon 2015.

So don’t sit on your hands and lose the opportunity to save money in a big way. You’ll be assured of a room in the convention hotel and can look forward to fun, excitement, education, revelation, revolution, and having a blast with people just like you!

Terri Singer has been an ALDAn since 2006. She lives in Evansville, Indiana and is a member of both ALDA-Northwest Indiana and ALDA-Chicago. Her email address is TLSevin@aol.com.
“Bagels and Babes” is a special time at my kids’ school, where they invite the mothers to come out and bring all their children for a breakfast of… wait for it… bagels for the babes (babies, kids, short people). I, ever the wanting-to-spend-time-bonding-with-her-kids-type mother, decided that this year, we would indeed attend.

I’ve never been very good at estimating arrival times. I always give myself way too much time to get there and then drive like a bat-out-of-hell, only to arrive 45 minutes early. This morning, I did better. I was only a half an hour early. Hey, it’s a step in the right direction.

So, when we pulled up in our van that desperately needs a new furnace and some shocks, we were all a little beat up and ready to snack. Unfortunately, we were the only ones in the parking lot and the only snack I had in the car was a half-eaten Snickers bar with fuzz stuck to it. This surprised me. Not because it was gross or the only thing in the car to eat. By why in the world would anyone only eat half a Snickers bar? That’s just insane.

I had Mollie, my oldest, run into the school to see if we were allowed in yet. We were. So I bundled up my nerves, grabbed my purse, and headed for the school gym, which would double that morning as the cafeteria.

We were, in fact, the first people there. Well, the first people not setting up, there. The woman behind the breakfast table waved a hearty hello and shouted something to me that seemed pleasant. She could have been saying, “You guys sure are too fat to be arriving so early for food. Can’t you starve a little and give the hungry kids of the world something to chew on for once,” and I wouldn’t have known the difference.

I gave my usual, “Hi! Do you need any help,” only to be answered. Now, why did I ask a question when I knew I wouldn’t know what in the world the answer was? It is a terrible habit I have. Perhaps it’s just me wanting to feel the vibrations of my own vocal cords. I talk quite a lot, actually. I talk to fill up the air, knowing that I sound like some poor, dying animal on the side of the road. But poor, dying animal sounds are better than nothing, right? I think that may be debatable.

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Thankfully, she shook her head as she answered. By Michele J. Bornert

By Michele J. Bornert

Bagels and Babes: Bonding with my Hearing Children...Kind of

the way, is the second most fluent signer in the house (behind me, of course), and she interpreted that the woman had been there for 20 minutes and was all set up. Hmmm. If only I would have driven a little faster and met my usual 45 minutes early time pattern, I could have lent a hand. Alas, all I could lend was my mouth and my stomach at this point.

After a couple of minutes of very awkward silence... well, awkward for the woman (everything is silent to me)... I decided to start digging into the donut holes on the far right of the table and a glass of hot chocolate, located in the middle.

I was so involved in deciding which hole would be the least caloric with the most taste that I failed to realize that more people had accumulated in the gym for the festivities. So when I grabbed the two holes I’d decided on, I moved directly back toward the middle of the table to pick up a glass of hot cocoa. Unfortunately, someone else had already picked up theirs, so, when I moved to the left, not looking where I was going, I hit the woman on her arm and sent the hot beverage flying.

“Oh, my gosh! I am SO sorry! I didn’t even realize you were there,” I spat out as I observed where the glass and its contents were going to land. Thankfully, it wasn’t on another person. What’s a wet wall at 7 a.m., anyway? All was OK—except the fact that the woman, who had politely smiled off the collision, had decided to start a conversation with me. She began by introducing herself. I think. Her name was Felicity or Barbara or Veronica. Maybe it was Diandra. Could have been supercalifragilisticexpialidocious for all I knew. But, because I had absent-mindedly left my paper and pen in the van, I smiled and introduced myself and shook her hand.

She talked and laughed. I laughed and smiled. She talked some more. I nodded. She jabbered on as she started to eat her bagel, which was smothered in cream cheese. (I know this because she ate and talked at the same time.) I smiled and tried not to gag at the grossness. I quickly looked around the gym for one of my three children. Perhaps they could give me an excuse to get away from this bevy of crumbs and saliva and confusion. Nope. They were all busy with their own friends. So, I did what any other person would do in this situation: I created a new child. A fictitious child. A child who was always in trouble and was making a ruckus waaaaaaaay on the

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years seemed to have stopped growing, and she was able to finally complete her college degree. She volunteered in several local schools, helping out in the special needs classes and assisting teachers with grading papers. This is also when we decided it was time to learn some sign language, and several family members and friends took classes with her. We wanted so badly to be able to communicate with Rachael, but it is difficult to learn sign language when you go to class only once a week and do not have a regular opportunity to interact with others who are more fluent. We felt isolated from Rachael, and she felt isolated from us and the world. The confident, happy, funny, optimistic young woman that I knew was disappearing…but not for long.

In the spring of 2009, Rachael heard about a meeting in Charlotte that Dave Litman was planning. We did not know Dave, but Rachael was intrigued by the possibility of meeting with other late-deafened adults. Dave was trying to drum up interest in establishing an ALDA chapter in the Carolinas, and Rachael’s brother Benji and his wife Suzi took her to that first meeting. My good friend Beth Tuttle and I later took her to a second meeting. Rachael was really getting excited about the new friends that she had met and the possibility of meeting more people with hearing loss like herself.

Dave told us about ALDAcon and all the great workshops, the fun times, and the welcoming and inclusive attitude of the ALDA members. Rachael was hooked but could not travel alone, and because of a work commitment, I could not go with her, so my friend Beth, Rachael’s second mom, traveled with her across the country to Seattle for their first ALDAcon. It was love at first sight for Rachael. She was inspired by all the workshops and amazed by CART and the sign language interpreters. The ALDA slogan “whatever works” for communicating really resonated with her. And the karaoke…OH MY GOSH…the karaoke! Rachael was in heaven! That was her favorite part of the whole conference.

ALDA changed Rachael’s life forever. After two and a half years of being totally deaf and feeling isolated from everything in life that she loved, she found a new center, a new home. She understood, better than most, ALDA’s saying, “lost my hearing, found a family.” For the next five years, Rachael immersed herself in working for ALDA. She served as Region 3 director; she co-chaired the ’con in Columbia, SC; she worked hard to keep ALDA-Carolina Flight going; she served as managing editor of the ALDA News; and she worked tirelessly, through her many Internet connections, to get the word out about ALDA to anyone who would listen.

I will be forever grateful for what ALDA gave Rachael. Through ALDA she found renewed meaning and purpose in her life. Her confidence returned and she once again believed she could do anything she put her mind to. She found community, loving acceptance, and many dear friends.

Susan can be contacted at scimorris@gmail.com.

Bagels and Babes (continued)...

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other end of the gym.

“Sorry, but I have to go. Bartholomew is always making a fuss. I need to make sure he hasn’t maimed or killed anyone yet. It was nice to meet you.” I went to leave and the woman with her mouth full spat a few crumbs at me as a goodbye and went about making small talk with another poor victim.

After that….er….situation…I decided that maybe I should eat my holes and drink my chocolate and just sit somewhere. I did so. I acted like I was totally engrossed in the origami book my son asked me to hold. I’d never found a paper crane so interesting! When I was done with my food and realized that my kids didn’t even know I was there anymore, I went about getting ready to leave. After all, a mother was about to give a presentation on the importance of including your children in your everyday activities. Definitely not something I wanted to sit through in silence.

I left knowing that, even though they didn’t give me the time of day, my kids appreciated my effort to be with them. I left knowing that I had done my job and shown my children a little extra love. I left knowing that some people just haven’t a clue about the proper eating habits of not talking with your mouth full! And I left knowing that I had a half-eaten Snickers bar in my car if I crashed in the snow on the way home.

Slightly edited from Michele’s blog at http://deafexpressions.blogspot.com. Michele was born with a hearing loss and became deaf as an adult. She is a freelance writer and ASL instructor in Grand Rapids, Michigan, where she lives with her hearing husband, Kenny, and three hearing children, Mollie, Jacob, and Natalie. Contact her at DeafExpressions05@gmail.com.
Speechreading Tips from a Lip Reading Mom

By Shanna Groves, Lipreading Mom

My eyes were often my ears as a child growing up with an undiagnosed hearing loss. In college, I majored in communication and took several classes that emphasized voice and diction. This exposed me to the importance of enunciation and clear speech. Through the years, I had become a master at reading people’s lips and didn’t even know it.

When I developed tinnitus at age 27 after the birth of my first child, I received the diagnosis I had long suspected: progressive hearing loss. Learning everything I could about speechreading (sometimes called lipreading) became a professional interest and necessity as my hearing deteriorated. I had two more children, and my hearing worsened. Reading my children’s lips gave me an appreciation of this skill, and I wanted to share it with others.

Speechreading Facts

A couple of years ago, I launched Lipreading Mom Communications to teach individuals with hearing loss how to speechread. Here are a few interesting facts about speechreading:

- Thirty to forty percent of spoken language is visible on the mouth area (lips, tongue, teeth, jaw, and chin).
- The easiest consonant sounds to distinguish are B, F, L, M, P, TH, and V. The lips visibly press together for B, P, M. Letters F and V involve the top front teeth biting the lower lip. For L and TH, the mouth opens and the tongue thrusts out slightly between the teeth.
- O and OO (as in ‘cool’) are the most visible vowel sounds on the mouth. The lips pucker and have a small round opening.
- Speechreading also involves watching the speaker’s facial expressions and body language to determine context and emotion.

It is important to note that speechreading is a skill that may take months to perfect. The following are essential to mastering this skill:

- Good lighting and acoustics—a small to medium-size room is best, preferably with low ceilings and carpeted floors to reduce echoes. When outdoors or near a sunny window, the speechreader’s back needs to face the sun to reduce sun glare in the eyes. The front of the speaker’s body, on the other hand, should face the light to avoid shadows.

Hearing with the Eyes

When a person loses hearing, he or she naturally becomes more dependent on the other senses, particularly sight. Learning to speechread greatly assists a hard of hearing person’s understanding of spoken language. It is useful in one-on-one conversations, at meetings, in restaurants, at church, and in any professional or social setting.

I have taught speechreading to hearing and hard of hearing adults, hearing spouses, and hearing caretakers. In my class, we learn not only to listen with our eyes and our ears but also to practice good communication traits such as clear articulation and correct word pronunciation. A husband and wife, both of whom have hearing loss, attended a class in order to speechread and better understand one another. Some people with normal hearing participate to learn how to enunciate clearly.

With my own family, I try to practice daily what I teach. My three school-age kids, who do not have hearing loss, make sure to face me and have my complete attention before talking to me. I remind them not to chat while chewing gum or food. A big no-no is attempting to speechread my kids through the rear view mirror while driving, or to speechread when I am cooking at a hot stove or chopping food. Speechreading requires full attention.

As a Lipreading Mom, my communication motto is “My eyes are my ears.”

When Shanna Groves is not teaching speechreading or carpooling with the kids, she enjoys conversations with friends and family, including her husband of 18 years, Ron. Her children are 13, 10, and 6 and love chats with their Lipreading Mom. Two of Shanna’s books, Lip Reader and Confessions of a Lip Reading Mom, share stories about hearing loss, and she blogs about her hard of hearing adventures at www.LipreadingMom.com. Shanna can be reached at sgrovesuss@msn.com.
Got Hearing Loss? Get a Cat!

By Gael Hannan

You’ve seen the videos. A dog brings slippers to his human, or becomes delirious with joy and jumps into his owner’s arms after a separation, even if it’s only been for a day.

My cat sits on my slippers and is grumpy when I finally manage to pull them out from under her. When I walk through the door, Nicky and Charlie look up from their nap, acknowledge me with an eye blink (if I’m lucky) and then go back to sleep. And if they do get up, it’s to stretch and make their way to their food dish, where they wait expectantly.

Needless to say, cats don’t top the lists—and frankly seldom make any list, especially official ones—of best service animals. Dogs are the only service animals recognized by the Americans with Disabilities Act and felines appear to rank in popularity as service animals far behind dogs, miniature horses, pot-bellied pigs, capuchin monkeys, ferrets, and even boa constrictors. Although I see Internet pictures of cats in service vests, and have found the occasional reference to a cat owner training her pet to be of hearing service, there appear to be no official training programs for cats as service animals. Some would say this is because cats aren’t trainable.

But as therapy animals, cats are among the best! Therapy cats and their handlers are trained to assist humans for relaxation and in healing of health issues. As an antidote for loneliness, depression and stress, cats—along with rabbits and guinea pigs—are in high demand by nursing homes as therapy animals. I’m guessing it’s due to their softness, small size and short legs that are not as painfully intrusive as trying to lap-cuddle a Doberman. According to the website raisingtroubledkids.com, cats and other good natured creatures like ferrets, birds, or lizards are therapeutic pets for children struggling with physical, behavioral and developmental disabilities.

And it’s not just seniors and young folks who benefit from a little cat therapy. In a University of Buffalo study (Allen, Izzo, Shykoff, 1999), groups of hypertensive New York stockbrokers who had cats (or dogs) were found to have lower blood pressure and heart rates than those who did not have pets. When they heard of the results, most of the stockbrokers in the non-pet group went out and got one!

Owning a cat could reduce your risk of a heart attack by nearly one third, according to a study released by the American Stroke Association at their 2008 conference. The finding was the main result of a 10-year study of more than 4,000 Americans by researchers at the University of Minnesota’s Stroke Institute in Minneapolis. Interaction with pets relieves stress, which in turn cuts the risk of heart attack, a theory also put forward in an August 2013 article in the Huffington Post, which said that the positive effects on our health are due to the feelings of happiness caused by the release of the oxytocin hormone when we’re around pets. Oxytocin is the hormone directly linked to human bonding and increasing trust and loyalty. Animals, cats included, also release the “love hormone” when they interact with each other and with humans, according to Paul J. Zak, a professor at Claremont Graduate University.

All of these studies assume, of course, that one likes cats. Many people don’t—to the point that being asked to cuddle a cat might bring on heightened stress and anxiety.

Having lived with cats since 1992, I can attest to the oxytocin thing. When I’m edgy, missing somebody, or just need something warm and fuzzy, there’s nothing better to grab than a Doberman. Doug understands this and we’ve been known to compete for the cuddle services of Nicky who is always up for a good hug or for a chat in the bathtub.

But my cats also help with my communication. To be truthful, they don’t intend to be helpful and the only thing I’ve ever trained them to do is use the litter box, and even that has had spectacular moments of failure. But regardless of intention, they do fill in some information gaps for me.

They hear and react to things that I may not: doorbells, knocks at the door, phones ringing or buzzing, someone entering the house or ‘something moving outside’. When their ears and heads prickle up and a sound I haven’t heard, I always check it out, for peace of mind. Many times, I’ve...

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Huhs? in the House of Worship

By Angie Fuoco

Are there “huhs? in your house of worship? You many not hear them, but yes! there are...and since all are entitled to “hear” in their favorite worship space, this ALDAn has embarked on a journey toward “full accessibility in the house.”

For the past few years, I’ve sponsored FM assistive listening systems in several churches and a Messianic synagogue in Georgia, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania. But this year, I took it up a notch, as I joined a unique networking opportunity with people of the same mind: a group called Churchear, based in Europe.

Churchear (www.churchear.org) was created 18 years ago by pastors, priests, and laity who were concerned that people with hearing loss were being left out of most church communications, from the pulpit to around the coffee pot. Its goals are to facilitate communications for hard of hearing people across national and church borders, in every corner of each represented church, and to spread the message of the need to help people hear in every church around the globe. For many years, Churchear was comprised mainly of leaders of European churches. That changed in 2014, when “Angie the American” joined the biennial conference in Krakow, Poland on August 21–25, 2014.

Two dozen Christians from Europe and yours truly met to discuss the conference theme, “Only One Sheep?” from Jesus’ parable about leaving 99 protected sheep to get the lost one that had wandered from the flock. In this case, it’s the one who is missing everything because of a hearing loss (though we know this is more like 10 or 20 out of 100, with U.S. and German statistics showing 19% of teenagers and adults with some degree of hearing loss in both countries).

Most of the group had varying degrees of hearing loss. Some used hearing aids; some wore cochlear implants; and some used various national signed languages. All spoke at least one of the two languages of the conference: English and German.

“Communication Heaven” (pun intended) isn’t limited to ALDAcons! It was there in Krakow too, with bilingual CART for lectures, printed materials in both languages, looped meeting rooms, and even portable FM and CART for tours. Bus rides, a sobering tour of nearby Auschwitz-Birkenau, and a walking tour of Krakow were conducted with German and English translation, FM assistive listening units, and captionist (portable CART provider) Ginny Johansen typing spoken tour words from her laptop so we could see them on tablets loaned to us by her husband, Soren.

At meals, Soren passed out tablets and mikes for one-on-one conversations, so we could either see words or hear them better (transmitted directly to our T-coils!). These measures helped greatly, as the conference was held in a restored Benedictine abbey with grand, echoing hallways and meeting rooms, normally kept quiet by the monks. But the best part was communication that transcended language and culture. I was the only one who managed to engage our Polish abbot, who ate lunch with us after Sunday Mass. Apparently, the abbot didn’t know much English or German, so when I saw him as the “lost sheep” of our table conversation, I addressed him in Italian, which of course he understood, knowing his Latin well. And I made him laugh!

Conversation also ensued in ASL and various European signed languages: German, Norwegian, Finnish, Swedish, and Hungarian, just to name a few I remember. And when we couldn’t understand each other in spoken language, we could figure out the meaning in our signed languages, since many signs are similar. This was truly a multilingual and international “whatever works” at its best!

So we brainstormed and exchanged ideas for getting more “sheep” to understand what is said in houses of worship. The Europeans even invited me to their next conference in Denmark in 2016, and I came away with so many blessings: a new church family (like my ALDA family!), a CD of the conference, beautiful Polish and German gifts, wonderful memories, more ideas, renewed commitment to help others with hearing loss engage in worship, and a personal goal to initiate at least one “fully hearing-accessible” U.S. church in 2015.

And we’re still working on what “full hearing access” in a house of worship means. So now I ask: What does “full hearing access” mean to you? Also, do we need to list sign language access separately (since sometimes we “hear” by seeing, via a signed language, captions, or a

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By Jerry Davich

Crickets.

It’s their sound that we often joke about when describing the emptiness of silence. But, poignantly, this is the sound that Clark Rainey misses most from his hearing days.

“I loved their sound, especially in the spring when they first start chirping,” said Rainey, a 57-year-old former truck driver. “I also miss hearing the birds and their songs.”

Without a hint of self-pity, Rainey told me this outside his rural Valparaiso home as the sound of singing birds filled the morning air. But only for me, not for him.

He knew birds were in the many trees surrounding his home. He could see them. He could feel their presence. He could close his eyes and remember their songs. He just can’t hear them anymore.

This began five years ago when Rainey heard a continual ringing in his ears.

“Everything sounds like I’m hearing it through a tin can,” he told his doctor.

Without any apparent cause, such abrupt cases are often diagnosed as sudden idiosyncratic hearing loss, or nerve deafness. But then his hearing came back, or so he thought.

“I was released to go back to work, and I worked one more day,” he recalled. “I went to sleep at 9 p.m. that evening, expecting to work the next day. I woke up at 12:30 a.m. to discover that my hearing again had vanished, permanently this time.”

He couldn’t hear the phone ring. He couldn’t hear his keys jingle. He couldn’t hear the toilet flush. He couldn’t even hear his boss’ response when he called him that morning.

He has been labeled a “late-deafened adult.” It hasn’t been easy. But it has been a blessing, he now believes.

“Sometimes what seems to be bad news can change to good news,” he wrote in an email to me. “Tears rooted in sorrow can turn to those of joy with time and help from the right people.”

The absence of sound often isn’t the biggest problem for deaf people of any age. It’s the absence of acceptance, understanding and communication with others. As Helen Keller aptly put it, “Blindness cuts you off from things. Deafness cuts you off from people.”

Rainey learned this hard truth almost immediately, calling it the “darkness of sudden deafness.”

“I felt extremely isolated. I didn’t want to leave my house. I didn’t even want to be with my own friends because I couldn’t understand what they were saying,” he told me.

Over the next few months, he lost his job and his focus. Day-to-day things that hearing people take for granted became frustrating chores to be avoided. Phone calls required an interpreter. Television needs closed captioning. Radio and music ceased to become entertainment options.

“My new iPod was worthless to me,” he said.

One-on-one conversations were a struggle and still are. If someone is facing Rainey, he can have a conversation with them. But if he can’t see them speak, with situational cues and body language, he can’t understand them.

Group interaction is nearly impossible for a deaf person. Listening and understanding becomes a guessing game. Understanding is left behind. The sudden loss of hearing isolates a person and turns them inward, self-searching for a reason why it happened.

“Somewhere in the mix, I realized I’m more a deaf person than a hearing person,” Rainey said, noting that it took him nearly three years to reach that point.

And even though technological advancements such as email, the Internet, closed captioning and text telephones are leveling the playing field, it’s still not an easy game for him.

He was fitted for hearing aids, but it was an “unpleasant experience,” not only because it rings with the stigma of disability. He has very little “residual” hearing left.

“When considering your hearing might be restored to its former state, you begin to believe it might be a good thing. You might be wrong in that assumption,” Rainey said via email.

His hearing aids are undiscerning in their capabilities. They pick up every sound and amplify it, no matter how faint. For instance, the simple crumpling of a candy wrapper becomes a loud and intolerable sound. Background noises override conversations, he said.

“The end result is that I have two ways of not hearing and understanding. One is that I just can’t hear enough, and the other is that I hear too much,” he said.

I noticed a CD of Creedance Clearwater Revival in his kitchen and asked if he plays it. He bought it for a friend but tried listening anyway.

“I can’t hear the lyrics. I can only

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In fact, learning to hear after a lifetime (48 years) of near-silence is the most challenging thing I’ve ever done, other than parenting three now-adult children. But it IS possible. More sounds are beginning to make sense. My brain is slowly untangling the mess into meaning.

An analogy is to think of a blind person transitioning from black and white to black, white, and grey, and then slowly adding colors. Jumping straight from black and white to a complete rainbow of color plus brilliant sunshine would just be too much information to process at once. Building new auditory pathways in the brain—and then learning to process, identify, recognize, and finally understand individual sounds—takes time. Connecting groups of sounds into words and then stringing words together is a more complicated task. When I get up in the morning, I always wait to put my ears on until AFTER my husband and son leave for work and school—and I have a quiet cup of coffee first.

We recently had two days of heavy rain and I realized—for the first time in my life—that running water makes many different sounds. I’ve never heard these variations before, so I had no idea. I could even hear the rain pouring onto the roof and hitting the windows—from INSIDE my house! I grabbed my camera and raincoat and felt like a kid at Christmas. The rain drove hard against the windows, poured from the downspouts, ran through a hanging chain and decorative buckets, and slowed to a few drops at a time in puddles. Of course I stomped in the puddles and listened to that too.

I walked past a fountain the other day and suddenly, unexpectedly, I realized that I could hear the water splashing. I could even hear the difference in timing between big splashes and smaller splashes. I stopped and listened for the longest time. I am sure the people hurrying past had no idea why I was standing there with tears running down my face.

The neuroplasticity of the human brain is amazing. All this comes from two titanium wires threaded beneath my skull plus two tiny computers and a bit of plastic perched on each ear.

Cochlear implants are a lifetime journey.
- Frustration mixed with discovery,
- A slow process,
- A miracle.

Robin Jones Taber chose bilateral MED-EL implants in May 2013 after 48 years of wearing one analog hearing aid in her left ear. She was born 10 weeks early, and her profound hearing loss may have been caused by the antibiotic gentamycin in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU). Robin hears nothing without her CI processors, is a fluent lipreader, and was raised in the hearing world in the 1960s and 1970s, before cochlear implants became available. She had no interpreter or CART but managed to survive school and college by taking notes and borrowing outlines from a few other students. She and her husband Mark have been married for 26 years and have two sons and a daughter. Robin can be contacted at taberfamily2@gmail.com.

Got Hearing Loss? Get a Cat! (continued)...

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gone to the door because of my cat’s pricked ears and found someone there. This alone qualifies my babies as “hearing cats.”

When I’m alone in the house at night, which is rare, they are a comfort. I know they won’t physically save me from a bad guy, and probably won’t even tap me on the face to say “hey, get up, you’re in danger!” But if I’m lucky, the intruder might be highly allergic to cats, have an immediate breakout of hives and race off the premises, scratching wildly, while I sleep peacefully on.

I know that other cat owners receive communication support from their felines, and I would love to hear from you. The relationship between people with hearing loss and their cats is not as well documented as those with hearing dogs, such as Denise Portis and her friend Chloe. But my cats make me happy and if they help me hear, that’s a bonus.

Originally published November 24, 2014 on hearinghealthmatters.org. Gael Hannan is a writer, humorist, performer and public speaker who is passionate about hearing loss issues. She is also a director on the national board of the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association (CHHA). Gael divides her time between Ontario, British Columbia and California, often traveling with her husband and two cats in their fifth wheel. Contact Gael at hannangd@gmail.com.
One of Us

By Karen Krull, Curator

Our “One of Us” interviewee for this issue is Joe Linder, who received the Fearless Leader Award at ALDAcon 2014 for his steadfast work with ALDA-Chicago. Joe was born deaf, placed in an oral training program when he was about three, and learned to speak. By the time he was in first grade, he was mainstreamed in his neighborhood school. Even though he could not always follow everything in the classroom, he did well enough to make the honor roll in high school and go to college at Notre Dame. Joe graduated with a degree in accounting, did interviews with prospective employers, and received feelers from a commercial bank and a recreation company. He took the offer from the bank and has worked there in a number of positions over a 35-year period.

Joe has three kids, two grown and on their own and a third attending the University of Miami. He was remarried seven years ago to his lovely wife, Dawn, who encouraged him to join the ALDA-Chicago chapter about five years ago. Contact Joe at linder-j@sbcglobal.net and read on to find out why he is “one of us.”

Name: Joe Linder
Where were you born? Fort Wayne, Indiana
What is your current residence? Glendale Heights, Illinois
What is the worst job you ever had? Boring summer work in a warehouse
Movies you want to see again? Field of Dreams
I stay home to watch: Amazing Race and PBS history programs like National Parks and the Roosevelt Dynasty
Favorite pig-out food: Pizza
Hobbies: Going to my summer home
If I had more free time, I’d: be more active in ALDA-Chicago
The worst thing about deafness is: Missing out in conversations
The best thing about deafness is: sleeping soundly
How did you learn about ALDA? From my wife’s involvement
In what ways has ALDA enhanced your life? Social engagement

When I am depressed, I: find ways to keep myself busy
My most irrational fear is: saying the wrong thing at the wrong time
If I could hear, the first thing I would do is: Jump for joy
The thing I like best about myself: Overcoming my inherited handicap
Nobody knows: I was a big Indy 500 fan in my growing years
What I can’t stand is: Politicians over-promising and under-delivering
Favorite memory: Seeing my future wife for the first time
Favorite saying: Take charge of your life
The bottom line is: Being with ALDA is a fabulous way to feel alive again

Joe Linder

Huhs? in the House of Worship (continued)... Continued from page 14

pre-printed sermon)? Churchear and I are working on criteria to define whatever works for the “lost (hearing) sheep” of churches and synagogues...so email me your thoughts at angiefugo@yahoo.com.

Thanks! Danke! Grazie! (Italian, for the abbot) And watch me sign “thank you!”

Angie Fuoco is a member of ALDA-Peach and an honorary member of ALDA-Carolina Flight. She works at the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta and finds time for hearing loss or other adventures wherever she can in the world.
ALDAcon 2014 Pictures

Brenda Estes receives President’s Special Recognition Award from Dave Litman

Karen Krull flanked by Fearless Leaders Joe Linder (L) and Marsha Kopp (R)


All photographs courtesy Ken Arcia
L to R, Dave Litman, Tony Yuppa, Doreen Yuppa, Ken Arcia. Front, Eileen Hollywood

Valerie Stafford Mallis & Bill Graham—apparently Bill needed help at lunch!

We had 37 ALDAcon 2014 newcomers!
My First ALDAcon

By Dinah Scharfenberg

I was sponsored to attend ALDAcon in Norfolk because it was being held in my state. Since I am a vocational rehabilitation counselor with deaf and hard of hearing people, it was considered helpful to me in my job. Little did I know that it would be most helpful to ME, as a late-deafened adult. To me, that means anyone who is postlingually deaf.

I probably lost my hearing due to the high fevers I had with the German measles, mumps, and chicken pox. I remember having frequent earaches and placing my head on one of those old rubber water bottles. My deafness was not discovered until I was in the second grade and my teacher figured out that I couldn’t hear. I had a 90 dB bilateral loss, so evidently I was lipreading and not knowing it. I wore two body aids until I was 13, when (thank goodness) powerful BTE aids were developed.

I attended public schools and had no support services other than speech therapy. I battled headaches from the intense daily lipreading. P.L. 94-142 (Education of All Handicapped Children Act, now called Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or IDEA) was not in effect back then.

I was fortunate to attend NTID/RIT (National Technical Institute for the Deaf at the Rochester Institute of Technology) and majored in social work. Later I obtained my master’s degree in rehabilitation counseling. Throughout my career, I have worked in some capacity with deaf and hard of hearing people, as well as with those with normal hearing, in the field of human services. Finding ways to break down employment barriers and instill confidence in my consumers is rewarding.

ALDA...wow...what can I say...I have never met a nicer group of people. It’s like the world ended and everyone who was left is nice (and FUN!) and they are ALDA!

As a cochlear implantees, I have had my share of the “not deaf enough” attitude and of misunderstandings by hearing people. It’s great to be around a group where “whatever works” is so true. I greatly enjoyed the few days I spent with ALDA members and cannot wait to see everyone again. I hope to be able to attend ALDAcon every year, as that recharges my inner battery. As the saying goes, “one can’t help others without helping himself first.”

Dinah can be contacted at dinahlec78@yahoo.com.

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...
Does your hearing loss make it more difficult to use your smartphone? InnoCaption may be the solution you need!

Our patented technology, in conjunction with live stenographers, provides instantaneous captioning so that you can communicate using your smartphone.

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The Perils of Marie

By Marie Drew

I was excited as I made my travel plans to attend the 11th annual “Ohio Gathering” organized by the NF2 Crew to be held October 10-12, 2014. This event takes place every Columbus Day weekend in Columbus, Ohio and is primarily a social event for deaf people with paralyzed faces who walk like I do. This is the ONE and only occasion I know of where they can feel like “one of the crowd” rather than someone everyone stares at. It is a rare opportunity for us to have face-to-face communication. There is a morning of talks by doctors, but the big draw is really the social aspect. Most people with NF2 are not good signers, but we are VERY patient with one another. On each table in the meeting room, there is a huge stack of notebooks and black marking pens (because many of us have vision problems) to use for writing to each other.

The scheduled MARTA Mobility van picked me up on Friday, October 10 at 6 a.m. Arriving at the airport, I got a wheelchair pickup by an assistant. This assistant, like many, did not know how to handle both a walker and a wheelchair, so he laid the walker awkwardly across my knees.

I was required to give my license and boarding pass to the assistant, who gave it to security people for me. After the assistant and I were going toward the train to the concourse, I asked him, “Can I have my license and boarding pass back?”

“Oh,” he said, “I don’t remember where I put it.” After much searching, we finally found it in the basket below the walker. As we were waiting for the train to the terminal, I looked around but didn’t see my backpack, so I asked the assistant where it was. Eventually, he figured out that he forgot it at security and we went back to get it.

I finally get to the departure gate two hours before the flight. I told the airline staff person at the gate desk, “I am deaf. Please let me know if there is a gate change or delay.” Then I went to get coffee and use the ladies room. I returned to the gate and sat down.

About 30 minutes before boarding, I got up again to verify the gate departure sign. It now read, “Air France.” So I handed my boarding pass to the new person at the airline check-in desk to find out from which gate my flight was now departing. He wrote down the new gate number and I double-timed it over there with my walker and backpack to make the flight.

I was finally seated on the plane, but after remaining on the tarmac for half an hour with seemingly no progress toward taking off, I said to a fellow passenger, “What is the problem?” It turned out that they needed to install a part for the plane.

The plan was that when I arrived at the Columbus airport, I would meet Tev Dorfman, a deaf friend with NF2 from New York, who unfortunately had no cell phone. After I met Tev, I would then text another friend who was waiting at a nearby McDonald’s to pick us up and take us to the hotel.

The plane finally took off an hour and a half late. Since I had no way to contact Tev, I was getting upset, so I sent a text to my son at home in Georgia. He asked me to give him the number of the guy at McDonald’s and said, “I’ll handle this.” Then I had to turn off my phone because the originally fully-charged battery was about to die.

Finally, we landed and I was escorted in a wheelchair by an assistant who wanted to know where I wanted to go. I didn’t know, so I texted my son, who responded “Baggage claim” just before my phone died. Fortunately, I did connect with Tev and the person who picked us up.

That was GETTING there. On way back, I arrived at the airport two hours early. Half an hour before flight time, I got up to check the board; it said two-hour delay, and I asked what was wrong. It seems the flight left Atlanta but developed mechanical problems, so they turned around and were getting a new plane. The next time I looked at the board, it said, “three-hour delay.”

During this time, I was texting my son. (Fortunately, there is a charging station by the seats, so my phone was ok.) Finally, he said the plane should land in Columbus in 30 minutes at Gate C54. I said, “I am at C55 and there is nothing here about a gate change.” But I got up, walked down to C54, and saw that it said “Atlanta.” So I moved there, and eventually they must have told the other people, because they came to C54.

When we landed in Atlanta, I went to meet wheelchair assistance. Well, the wheelchair was there but no one to push it, and I found my walker lying on the floor. I waited for someone to show up, but no one came, so I finally picked up the walker and walked down the concourse. I assumed someone would be at the gate desk. Nope. So I started walking down the terminal, figuring I would run into someone who could help.

Continued on page 24
Chapter Happenings

By Ann Smith, Curator

Chris Littlewood reports on the summer activities of ALDA-Suncoast, including an ice cream social and meetings. Many members attended the emergency planning and hurricane preparedness discussion in July for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. Monthly coffee socials, food court socials, Sunday brunch and more continue, with special thanks to Cindy Henrion and Bill Reese, past presidents who keep these events coordinated.

Francine Stieglitz sends the latest news from ALDA-Boston. The chapter participated in the Walk4Hearing on October 12th in Brighton, Massachusetts. The ALDA-Boston T-shirts were so popular that more extra-large ones had to be ordered. On October 18, the Boston chapters of ALDA and HLAA collaborated in bringing Dr. Brad Ingrao, Au.D. to Boston for a full-day conference on hearing assistive technology. The morning presentation, “Maximizing Hearing Technology for Everyday Listening Success,” provided the tools needed to be successful in all sorts of listening situations, and the afternoon session on “Music and Hearing Loss” covered devices besides cochlear implants and hearing aids that help with hearing and enjoying music. Tours with assistive listening devices at the Museum of Fine Arts have continued, with “Art of the Americas” on October 25 and “Goya: Order and Disorder” on November 15. ALDA-Boston’s fabulous holiday party was scheduled for Saturday, December 6.

Jonathan Matt, a former ALDA-Boston member, passed away on September 3 at age 56 as a result of complications from diabetes. His ALDA-Boston St. Patrick’s Day corned beef and cabbage dinner was spectacular and is fondly remembered.

Jim Laffer sent a newsy report about the doings of ALDA-San Jose. They focused on social events in 2014 with great success. They had two picnics at a local landmark—the San Jose Rose Garden—and each had 12 or more members present. In September, the chapter had one of its formal meetings, with a presentation by a local life coach, LaRonda Zupp, who is hard of hearing herself and specializes in helping people with hearing loss find their way in a hearing world. LaRonda gives retreats that can last for eight hours, but she did a “mini-retreat” for the chapter, with 12 attending, and members prepared vision boards to help people picture how they wanted their life to be in 5-10 years and how to get there. They cut up magazines and made collages, and it was a lot of fun. Bowling in October was surprisingly well attended. People had been concerned about noise, but it wasn’t that bad, since members went in the morning. The chapter’s holiday party in December is always the biggest event of the year. There is a “White Elephant” gift exchange, and people can steal the gifts others have chosen when it’s their turn to pick. The chapter has had some success in getting more members involved this past year, making it much easier to lead the group. One member took on a social director role and planned several of the events.

Jim Stansell of ALDA-Peach reported that in September, the chapter’s own Yael Shaner spoke on “Talking with Your Doctor: Making the Most of Your Medical Appointments.” Yael gave tips for making communications with medical staffs less stressful. In October, Heidi Thomas, a local CART reporter and a good friend of ALDA-Peach, spoke about her experiences providing CART in meetings around the world, both for corporations and for UN agency meetings. In November, the chapter held its annual business meeting with a Skype interview with ALDA, Inc. president David Litman, who gave a report on ALDAcon 2014.

ALDA-Peach member Kristin Stansell received her new service dog (Shadow) from Canine Assistants in November. Kristin reports that he is a black 40-pound Labrador (Labrador retriever plus poodle) and just 18 months old.

Send news about your chapter (for “Chapter Happenings”) and your personal news (for “GA to SK”) to Ann at fabsmith@att.net. Deadline for the next issue is February 18.
Perils of Marie (continued)...

Continued from page 22

Nope. Next, I had to find the elevator to go down to the train. Fortunately, someone pointed it out to me.

I found the train stop, but I had to read the signs to get on the right one. As I was trying to read them, a lady asked, “Do you need help?” I said, “Oh, yes!” She took me onto the train and then led me to next elevator.

Due to the three-hour delay, my son had cancelled the MARTA Mobility van scheduled to pick me up. He wasn’t able to get me himself, so he hired a car service ($80). When we got to the terminal, the car service people hold up signs with the passenger’s name, which, of course, I couldn’t read. I told the nice lady my name and she got me to the driver. I was SO relieved to get home!

When I get stressed, my head shakes even more from the essential tremors that can be part of NF2. Two days later, my head was still acting like a bobble doll!

Edited from ALDA-Peach FUZZ, October 2014.

Marie has neurofibromatosis type 2 (NF2), poor eyesight, and “rotten” balance, joking that she is basically quite healthy other than being unable to hear, see, and walk. She lives in Decatur, Georgia and has two sons, one in Georgia and one in Wyoming. Marie has been active in the NF2 community for a long time and was a volunteer resource coordinator for the state in her working years. Her email address is Marie.Drew@comcast.net.

His World Is Silent but Not Despairing (continued)...

Continued from page 15

imagine them because I know those songs,” he said with a shrug.

Out of sheer necessity, Rainey joined Facebook to meet and chat with others.

“Facebook has helped me get to know people, especially those in the deaf community,” he told me via Facebook. “I developed a need to meet deaf people and make deaf friends.”

His cyberspace search led him to the Northwest Indiana Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community, a group that can be found on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. They welcomed him immediately.

“Meeting the members of the deaf community has given me a new purpose,” Rainey said. “I see and experience firsthand the struggles they faced long ago and have endured for a lifetime. I relate to those struggles in a very personal manner. Without the way they accepted and welcomed me, I’m not sure where I’d be today.”

He knows where he will be in October—at the group’s third annual festival at Forest Ridge Academy in Schererville.

“Deaf parents, deaf children, children of deaf parents and hearing people all come together to share fun and laughter, joys, sorrows, stories and interests,” he said. “I consider myself lucky that deafness brought me to know these people, to bring light to my darkness.”

This is my last report as president of ALDA. The year has been a valuable learning experience for me, and I appreciate the patience and support of the board members. We passed some motions that will impact ALDA, the most important of which is approving electronic elections for board members. One of the things I wanted to accomplish this year was to help ALDA use technology to the best of our ability, and I truly feel that running the election electronically will benefit ALDA.

We also worked together to prepare for our various responsibilities during ALDAcon, which is ALDA's most important time of the year, and to help ALDA find volunteers for various tasks. We had a very successful ALDAcon and met many people who are willing and ready to step up and lead ALDA.

As president I have continued to participate in different consumer advocacy groups. ALDA has signed on with many petitions that focus on all groups of people with hearing loss. Some of the issues addressed are relay accessibility, closed captioning in emergency situations, and communication access in movie theaters. I am appreciative of the support I received from the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Consumer Advocacy Network (DHHCAN), Cheryl Heppner, and John Waldo, who taught me so much about advocacy this past year.

I look forward to continuing to work with and for ALDA in other roles and it has been a sincere pleasure to be president of ALDA in 2014. Thank you so much for being a part of my second family.
The focus of my work these past few months has been preparing for the election. I selected a team to help me recruit people to run for ALDA board positions and worked with the president to help initiate an electronic election this year.

Past President's Report

By Mary Lou Mistretta

The focus of my work these past few months has been preparing for the election. I selected a team to help me recruit people to run for ALDA board positions and worked with the president to help initiate an electronic election this year.

In 2013, TDI did all the financial work for the Joint Conference and I had a year off. In 2014, it was back to work as the 'con business manager.

ALDAcon 2014 was a great conference, but unfortunately, it was not a financial success. Although the final numbers are not in yet, it looks like it's going to incur a small loss, probably in the $3000 to $4000 range.

The ALDA Board of Directors met during ALDAcon and got a lot accomplished. You can find the list of relevant motions on the website by logging into the members’ section and going to “Board Updates.” We passed the motion to implement electronic voting for all future elections and approved the planning and program chairs for ALDAcon 2015.


Treasurer's Report

By Matt Ferrara

In 2013, TDI did all the financial work for the Joint Conference and I had a year off. In 2014, it was back to work as the 'con business manager.

ALDAcon 2014 was a great conference, but unfortunately, it was not a financial success. Although the final numbers are not in yet, it looks like it's going to incur a small loss, probably in the $3000 to $4000 range.

As of October 27, 2014, total cash in the ALDA Bank accounts was $50,487. Below is the balance sheet for these accounts:

- ALDA operating expenses: $26,646*
- ALDAcon 2014 account: $(6090)**
- ALDA-Carolina Flight Chapter: $750***
- Scholarship funds: $29,181

All federal and state (Illinois) forms that were required to date for 2014 have been filed. I thank Gloria Popp (Finance Committee member) for her help with these.

All outstanding bills have been paid. We are slightly above budget because of ALDAcon-related expenses.

*This includes the $20,000 bequest from the Mary Clark estate.

**This is a negative balance. I am expecting a sponsorship payment of $6500, but there are still expected invoices of about $4000.

***ALDA-Carolina Flight donated most of the ALDAcon 2012 profits to ALDA, Inc.

Secretary's Report

By Karen Krull

In the two months prior to ALDAcon, we focused on the budget and chose recipients for various awards. We discussed the best way to handle an electronic election, and the cost saving if we chose to use it. The ALDA Board of Directors met during ALDAcon and got a lot accomplished. You can find the list of relevant motions on the website by logging into the members' section and going to “Board Updates.” We passed the motion to implement electronic voting for all future elections and approved the planning and program chairs for ALDAcon 2015.

Vice President's Report

By Chris Littlewood

I continue to manage and maintain the ALDA Info email address. I receive, forward, or reply to inquiries to ALDA. The most frequent questions continue to be on how to get financial assistance for hearing aids and how to connect with local chapters. I respond to all or refer to regional directors as appropriate.

I continue to promote ALDA, Inc. through my presidency of the ALDA-Suncoast Florida chapter and involvement in the hearing loss community throughout the southeast. I am the chair for the Florida Coordinating Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (reappointed by Governor Scott in August 2014). So I share as often as I can about what ALDA does. My chapter continues to collaborate with the Hearing Loss Association of America, and my family led an ALDA Walk team in the Jacksonville Walk4Hearing, where we raised over $1,100. Finally, I represented ALDA at the Communication Access Technology Expo in Tampa on Nov. 22, 2014.

I hope to continue to be involved with ALDA, Inc. as much as I can.

Finance Committee Report

By Matt Ferrara

The committee is investigating the best ways to use the Mary Clark bequest and is also looking into various fundraising campaigns.

And, as a reminder, ALDA, Inc. is a nonprofit corporation, so any donations may be tax-deductible. Also, some employers have matching donations plans. If you have any questions regarding donations, please contact me.
Region 1 Director’s Report  
By Eleanor Shafer

I answered several requests for information regarding hearing aids and support. I hope to become more efficient in answering requests for support and financial help related to hearing loss and in using the regional database so I can better assist the members in my region.

Region 2 Director’s Report  
By Katherine Schlueter

There was very little action in my area this quarter. The most recent emails were passed through the info@alda.org address requesting information about hearing aids and where to get them. My recommendations were to first check with an ENT and audiologist. I also recommended becoming part of the online ALDA chapter/group to get information from other late-deafened individuals. Most requests have been coming from the Ohio area.

I have received a lot of spam messages going to RD2@alda.org, with only 31 emails being legitimate requests.

I have not reached my goal of setting up a web chat with the Midwest area and am not sure whether anyone would participate because I have received no feedback to my responses. Please drop me a line to show an interest and I’ll work harder to make it happen for 2015.

I am currently also serving on the finance committee and on the ALDAcon 2015 planning committee as sponsor/exhibit chair.

Region 3 Director’s Report  
By Steve Larew

Since replacing the late Rachael Morris as regional director, I have been busy updating my knowledge of ALDA policies and procedures. I was able to attend ALDAcon in Norfolk and make new acquaintances.

I provided information to one member about presenting to a professional organization in regard to appropriate services for persons who are deaf, hard of hearing, or late-deafened. I have also been in communication with a member who would like to start a new ALDA group in Austin, Texas. If you live in the Austin area, please let me know if you would like to become involved.

Region 4 Director’s Report  
By Margreta von Pein

I try to maintain contact with my members through email and to provide relevant information about ALDA. I also welcome new members and help those interested in forming groups and chapters as requested.

I recently received several emails from people in my region, and I also emailed personal letters of thanks to several individuals for attending ALDAcon 2014.

Proceedings Committee Report  
By Margreta von Pein

The purpose of the Proceedings Committee is to select, edit and post transcripts of workshops held at each year’s ALDAcon. After ALDAcon ended, I received five transcripts of some of the speeches and workshops. I notified last year’s editors and proofreaders and am beginning to collect a staff to read the transcripts as Pat Graves sends them to me. Normally the committee of editors and proofreaders reads 10-15 workshop transcripts and selects up to seven that we can edit.

Membership Report  
By Karen Krull

My goal for membership is to have automatic renewal notices sent to members whose memberships are about to lapse or have expired. Many members renew when they fill out their registration for ALDAcon, but many have no idea when their membership is due for renewal. The expiration date is shown above your name on the address label of the newsletter. If you receive the electronic version, the date is on the email giving you the link. Being a member entitles you to the discounted member rate at ALDAcon, access to the members’ area on the ALDA website, and a whole lot more. Membership dues provide support for outreach materials, newsletters, brochures, mailings, and public presentations, and participation in local and national events to spread the word about ALDA. With your dues, we can offer support to our chapters and groups. Please take a minute to check your renewal date, and renew if you are lapsed, or will be soon. We are counting on you!
We truly appreciate your patience as we continue to update the website so that it's more user-friendly. It's a slow process, but it has come a long way in the past year!

New Features on the Website

- **Photo gallery** from ALDAcons 2011 to present is now under the “Convention” tab
- **Articles & ALDA News** has posts of recent news videos, such as ALDAcon 2014 members’ experiences; Veteran’s Day message from the ALDA president; EEOC lawsuit against FedEx; press release on deaf/hard of hearing advocacy groups’ signing of an agreement regarding movie captioning; and Lori Messing’s wonderful promotional slideshow for ALDAcon 2014. And we now have the capability to upload YouTube videos and similar videos!
- **“Donation”** button has been added to the right-hand side of the home page and a hyperlink has been embedded so when you click on the button, it opens up to the description of the various donation types.

Website Updates

- 2013 Proceedings were uploaded under Publications and the 2014 ALDAcon Proceedings have been forwarded to the Proceedings Committee for selection and editing.
- In the members’ section, a link is provided to Board news “Hot off the Press”
- ALDA’s Facebook link has been moved to the top right-hand corner of the home page for more visibility. Click on the “f” icon, which will take you directly to ALDA’s Facebook page—you do not need to be a member of ALDA or Facebook to access it.

**eNews Blast**

This is a great way to find out the latest news of interest to those with a hearing loss; a perfect example occurred in November 2014, when ALDA joined several other national deaf and hard of hearing loss advocacy groups in signing an agreement with movie theaters to offer captioned movies.

From January 2014 to October 2014, 32 eNews Blasts were disseminated. If you did not receive them and had previously signed up for them (ALDA membership is not required—this is a public service announcement), please email me at bestes755@yahoo.com so you aren’t left out of the loop.

If our chapters/groups have photos to share with our members, they can send them to me for uploading onto the website. If you have any questions about the website or suggestions for improvement, contact me at bestes755@yahoo.com

**ALDAcon 2014 Report**

**By Brenda Estes and Karen Krull, Planning Co-Chairs**

Time and time again, folks said how extremely pleased they were about the hotel’s location and the many venues, shops and restaurants within walking distance. And they loved F.R.E.D. (free ride every day). F.R.E.D. is a ten-passenger electric vehicle that operates free of charge within the downtown area, and many of us took advantage of it.

We were disappointed that one of the naval base water tours did not provide, upon request, an outline of the various narrated sights on the tour. A letter has since been sent to the Norfolk Mayor’s Commission on Disabilities.

Also, two of our members were unfortunately stuck on one of the elevators for a short time when the hotel suffered a temporary power failure. These two individuals were able to reach one of us via text message, and we called the hotel front desk to facilitate communication between the hotel, fire department, and our two members. They were successfully rescued approximately 45 minutes later!

ALDAcon 2014 offered several new events that were well received, such as fresh, hot-off-the-grill waffle cones made on an iconic 1903 cone-making machine and a “Wine & Paint” class that may have inspired several others to sign up for a similar class in their hometown areas. For the first time, all the ALDA awards, including the prestigious I. King Jordan Award, were presented at the Friday evening banquet by none other than our “host of ceremonies” Dave Litman, who was our “Billy Crystal.” Saturday evening karaoke was done ALDA style, and many wore pink in celebration of our “Ray of sunshine” Rachael Morris, who passed away a few months before.

The ALDAcon 2014 planning and program committees hope you thoroughly enjoyed attending the convention and will share your positive experience and the information you gathered in the various workshops with folks in your community and encourage them to join us next year.

We were thrilled that many of you joined us in Norfolk, and we hope to see you at ALDAcon 2015 for a reunion with your “ALDA family” in Scottsdale, Arizona, September 16-20.
The ALDA scholarship program allows newcomers an opportunity to receive sponsorship to the annual ALDAcon based on their need for financial assistance. Rarely, the committee accepts an application from a person who has previously attended our convention. We regret that we cannot provide reimbursement of travel expenses to any scholarship recipient.

In 2014, we offered eight scholarships, all to newcomers. One recipient received funding from our largest chapter, ALDA-Chicago. Most of the others were partially or fully funded by ALDA, Inc. for registration and/or hotel costs, and secondarily from the Edna Shipley-Connor fund for newcomers, as well as from the Candis Shannon fund. One scholarship awardee was unable to attend because the US consulate in Germany did not process his visa request in time, making a total of seven recipients, all from North America.

Karen Krull served on the committee as the board liaison and maven of scholarship finances, Carolyn Piper served as member-at-large, and I served as chair pro tempore when Carolyn needed a leave of absence to take care of family matters. Carolyn returns as chair in 2015.

Scholarships will again be offered for the convention in Scottsdale, Arizona (September 16-20, 2015). Information about scholarships and application forms may be obtained from Carolyn Piper at wicwas@wcvt.com or via snail mail at 82 Piper Place, Huntington, VT 05462.
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 Maclntosh Lane, Suite 2, Rockford, IL 61107, 815-332-1515 V/TTY. Membership entitles you to receive the quarterly ALDA News, which spotlights personal experiences of late-deafened people, and to attend ALDAcon at the lower member rate.

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

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

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

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

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

Name ____________________________________________________________

Organization: ______________________________________________________

Address __________________________________________________________

City ______________________________________________________________

State: __________ Postal Code: __________ Country: _________________

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

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

Fax ______________________________________________________________

E-mail ____________________________________________________________

URL/Website Address: ____________________________________________

ALDA Chapter (Name/None): ________________________________________

Gender: Male □ Female □

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

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

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□ Senior Member, Age 62 or over.........$25.00
□ Veterans Membership $25.00.............$25.00
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ALDA provides networking opportunities through local chapters and groups as well as at the annual ALDA conference (ALDAcon).
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