Without knowing it, my mother probably laid the groundwork for my interest in scuba diving by signing me up for swimming lessons when I was only four years old. Everyone else was six, but I met the height requirement, so I was soon swimming up and down lengths of the Rockford College pool. While I never became a great swimmer, those lessons enabled me to enjoy and feel comfortable in water, which are necessary for a diver.

But how did a Midwesterner surrounded by cornfields and cows ever decide to be one? The first spark happened at the airport after a summer I spent swimming at the beaches in Europe. I saw a family carrying fins, masks, and snorkels, and I ran over to ask them where they did “that”? They said that they were returning from Cozumel and had snorkeled there. My next brush with diving occurred in Hawaii, where my friend and I were invited to snorkel in one of the lagoons. Using a mask for the first time, I was amazed at the beauty of the fish and coral, and we spent the day skin diving. We were not content to snorkel on the surface looking down, so we kept taking big breaths and diving down to join the fish and turtles. That was fun, but I wasn’t too good at holding my breath very long.

Years later on my honeymoon in Hong Kong, my husband and I spent the day swimming in Repulse Bay. The next day, while leaving on a boat, I looked down into the area where we were had been splashing around and saw two 12-foot hammerhead sharks circling. I vowed never to swim again outside a pool without first looking underwater to see what was there, and I immediately bought fins, snorkels, and masks, which we hauled around Asia but never used.

When my daughter Dana was a teenager, she and I went on a trip to Belize only because the travel agent found us a bargain vacation on Ambergris Caye. After our luggage was brought to our rooms, we went on a walk around the island. A dive shop was offering a snorkel-dive trip to the Blue Hole, and we signed up for it. The boat was small and the waves high. It appeared that everyone was sick and hanging over the side of the boat except us. We watched the flying fish and the staff catching barracuda.

Once at the Blue Hole, the divers descended. As snorkelers, Dana and I and a little German six-year-old finned around the edges of the deep. The coral and fish were amazing, but the more I watched the people “down there,” the angrier I felt about being on the top, and babysitting at that. The next morning while we were on a sailboat, I complained bitterly to a man sitting next to us that I didn't get to dive, and he suggested that I get certified. I told him that I was too old, so he asked me who said so, and how old was I anyway. I responded that no one had said so, and I was 50. He said, “So what are you waiting for? Do it!”

As soon as we got home, Dana and I went to a local dive shop and signed up for classes. On Halloween, when it was 25 degrees out and snow was falling, we took the water exam in a local lake. I was blue, but due to some miracle, I passed before freezing into an ice cube.

My first real diving experiences were in Cozumel, Cayman, and Little Cayman.
For the previous issue of the *ALDA News*, I helped as an ad hoc managing editor. Editor-in-Chief Nancy Kingsley has asked me to take on the job officially, and so I am, humbly, your new managing editor. I look forward to working with all of you, following most recently in the footsteps of Marta Watson.

We asked people to write articles centering on the theme of a favorite activity they enjoy doing despite their hearing loss. The reason for this theme is because we ALDAns thrive! We reach for the stars! We may have lost our hearing, but our inner selves remain intact! So what better fun and inspiration is there than to share what we do and enjoy with our fellow members?

We have a wonderful article by Carol Postulka, who shares her diving adventures in “Scuba Diving—My Very Visual Sport.” Judith Greaves reveals her relationship with music and how ALDacon’s Karaoke Night became a special part of that relationship in “Music without Sound.” Shari Eberts shares her experiences practicing yoga and calming the severity of tinnitus in “Can You Do Yoga with a Hearing Loss?” Anna Silverstein shares her twin loves of snow skiing and mountain biking in her article, “Adapting My Passions to My Hearing Loss.” Blue O’Connell writes about her professional music journey and her latest music CD in “Keeping Your Own Music Scrapbook.”

In addition, we have two articles about CART. In “Why I Love My CART Job,” Caryn Broome compiled comments from clients in her quest to find out what they find beneficial, and Phil Hyssong gives a brief review of CART history in “CART: Bridging the Communication Gap.”

We also are pleased to present our regular advocacy column by John Waldo, ALDA’s Advocacy Committee chair, who examines the next step in movie captioning regulations as well as the status of live entertainment captioning, which he calls “The Broadway Project.”

I’d like to thank our writers for their contributions—the *ALDA News* exists because of them! If you have any comments or suggestions, please contact me at ldrattell@yahoo.com. If you would like to write for us, email me—we are always looking for new ideas and articles about anything related to being late-deafened!

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**Linda’s Lines**

*Linda Drattell, Managing Editor*

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NOT A MEMBER?

Join online at [www.alda.org](http://www.alda.org)

Or

Use the form in this issue of *ALDA News*

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Note from Nancy

By Nancy Kingsley, Editor-in-Chief

In my message for the previous issue, I noted that Marta Watson was taking a leave of absence from her managing editor position due to NF2 surgery and recuperation. Marta is now recovering but has decided to resign because of the unpredictable status of her health. She has done a wonderful job recruiting articles and fulfilling the other responsibilities of the position, and her contributions have been greatly appreciated. Linda Drattell, who had temporarily taken on Marta’s role, agreed to stay on as our new managing editor and has also obtained a number of fine submissions.

This issue’s theme of favorite activities got me to thinking about mine. I’ve always been curious and always loved to read, so the Internet has opened up vast new possibilities for me. Perhaps you could call my favorite hobby “Internetting!” So far, I’ve avoided joining social media like Facebook and Twitter because I already spend more time online than I should. I keep in touch with people via email, read the news on Google (I read newspapers, too, but there’s so much more online, as well as thought-provoking reader comments), and whenever I want to know more about a topic, I research it.

I’m pretty good at ferreting out odd facts, and searching for them online is part of the fun! I also check movie ratings on Rotten Tomatoes and product ratings on Amazon, and I’ve had an ongoing email correspondence with a friend whom I “met” through the AOL membership directory almost 20 years ago (we’ve never gotten together in person and probably never will). Interestingly, ALDA was what brought me to AOL in the first place—I had previously used Prodigy, but I was asked to fill a vacated spot on the ALDA Board and needed to join AOL for the Board discussions.

The Internet, of course, is mostly accessible to people with hearing loss, with the exception of uncaptioned videos, and my iPhone lets me bring it with me wherever I go. Sometimes I joke that I really live in cyberspace!
This is my final column as ALDA’s president. ALDA is an important organization that advocates for the rights of deafened individuals, and I am proud to have been involved as president for the past two years. We have made some accomplishments and developed plans for more. Some of the accomplishments include the following:

**Website improvements**—the Board developed a contract with Communication Services for the Deaf (CSD) to modify and upgrade the ALDA website. If you check [www.alda.org](http://www.alda.org), you can see the changes. There will be more coming as we learn how to work the new programs on the site. Eventually, we plan to have a page for members to write their own blogs about issues and concerns. This interactive site will be a definite enhancement.

**Advocacy**—under the leadership of John Waldo, ALDA will be involved in advocating for increased access to live theater performances. Tina Childress and John are in the process of working with Fox Theatre in St. Louis, and there is also a plan to make theaters more aware of the need for live captioned performances.

In addition, the Board voted to establish the Cheryl Heppner Advocacy Award, which is discussed in an announcement elsewhere in this issue. Cheryl, who is a former ALDA president, served as both an official and unofficial advocacy representative for ALDA since the 1990s, and her efforts are much appreciated.

**Membership**—ALDA membership has remained stable. We hope is to increase membership figures through distribution of revised brochures that will be printed in January. They will be available to chapters to promote their activities, and we will use them to promote ALDA at other conferences where Board members or ALDA members may be attending.

**Election Results**

I am pleased to announce the following results:

- Sharaine Rawlinson Roberts—President
- Paul Wummer—Vice President
- Chris Littlewood—Region 3 Director (Southeast)
- Roy Miller—Region 4 Director (West)

I feel confident that the Board will continue to accomplish great things under Sharaine’s leadership, and I look forward to working with her and the rest of the Board in my new role as past president. This means I will no longer have to develop the agenda for monthly meetings, respond to multiple emails regarding legislation and advocacy efforts with DHHCAN in Washington, DC, and take care of various other tasks that have to be performed by the president. :-)

**ALDAcon 2017**

Lois Maroney and Bill Graham are doing a tremendous job in planning for ALDAcon 2017 at the B Resort and Spa in Orlando. The hotel is part of the Disney properties, and free transportation to the theme parks is available. Please mark October 11-15, 2017 on your calendar and plan to join us. We are arranging a group trip to see the Cirque du Soleil performance on Thursday evening, October 12, and you can purchase your ticket as part of registration.
Music without Sound
By Judith Greaves

Just two years ago, I attended the Norfolk, Virginia ALDAcon as a newbie. Many Florida members attended that conference, and I felt right at home. The Saturday night karaoke party had been briefly described to me, and I was looking forward to it. My first surprises were the fun outfits, brightly colored boas, Hawaiian shirts, etc. and seeing our own and only Ken Arcia as “Elvis”! I enjoyed watching people singing and dancing on the stage, but I could not connect to the music. The whole concept of listening to music felt out of reach—even holding balloons didn’t help me because I could not feel the beat. Needless to say, I spent the evening chatting and never got up on the floor. I was disappointed.

The next day, Chris Littlewood asked me if I saw him sing “Bad to the Bone.” No, I replied—I missed that because I had left early. Other members were saying, “Did you see so and so? Oh, that was such as blast!” For months afterwards, I kept going over that Saturday night in my mind, and I wanted to try again.

This past September, I was fortunate to be able to attend the Milwaukee ALDAcon with the support of my chapter, which awarded me its Cindy Reese Memorial Scholarship. I felt that I had to give karaoke another try no matter what the outcome was. I decided that I would hit the dance floor and request old songs if needed. I told myself that there was no way I was going to just sit at the table and chat all night again.

Dressed in a Toronto Blue Jay shirt and scarf, I arrived hopeful. I felt the balloons but again, I didn’t detect a beat. I couldn’t feel the bass in the floor, either, and was thinking that my deafness was beyond music. Suddenly, Bernie Palmer waved to say, “Come on, let’s go, get up and dance!” I grabbed a balloon and got in line facing the two giant screens. I can’t remember who was performing, but I did notice that with the balloon, I knew the music was on. Dancing to no sound was weird, but I kept it up. Others were signing and lip-syncing (I think), so I decided to sign and give it a try. WOW! I found that if I signed the words while dancing, it was almost like hearing the music. I was enjoying this! Signing and dancing along with everyone holding the balloon lifted me to a new high! It felt natural, I felt free, and I connected. I was having fun with the gang.

Later I asked my friend Debbe Hagner, who had a new cochlear implant, if people were singing or lip-syncing on the stage. She replied, “Both.” Wow, that was cool—you don’t have to sing; you can just fake it. I watched the interpreters enjoying signing alongside the deaf and deafened people on the stage and realized that it doesn’t matter whether you are deaf or hearing—you can have fun either way.

Suddenly I recognized an old Supremes song, “Stop in the Name of Love,” and many of us at the table jumped to the dance floor. My memory banks were opening up of Diana Ross, her hips swinging, tossing the stop sign out there. For weeks now I haven’t been able to get that tune out of my head, and I can’t wait to try it again at ALDAcon in Orlando. Thank you, ALDA, for giving me back my music.

Judith is a Canadian snowbird and learned about the ALDA-Suncoast chapter by attending a Deaf women’s tea in Clearwater, Florida in 2009. Deafened since August 2000 by autoimmune inner ear disease, she wears no hearing aids and due to health complications was turned down for a cochlear implant. Her life of show jumpers and racehorses is over, but she has found painting and teaching art fulfilling. She continues to learn sign and is involved in the Deaf community in Clearwater Florida and Niagara Falls, Canada. Contact her at jcgreaves@hotmail.com.
ALDA’s Advocacy Corner: Movie and Live Theater Captioning

By John Waldo, Curator

Just when we were beginning to think the drama would never end, it did. The Department of Justice (DOJ) has now issued the long-awaited movie-captioning regulations. And in a welcome footnote, the Department specifically acknowledges the role ALDA played in making captioning available throughout the country.

In a nutshell, the regulations will require all indoor movie theaters that either have or will install digital projection systems to provide caption-viewing equipment in every auditorium. Unfortunately, the theaters will have 18 months to comply. But by mid-July of 2018, this regulation will mean that no matter where one lives, one should be able to attend almost all movies and be able to read the dialogue as the movie happens.

Theaters are required only to provide individual caption-viewing devices, so-called closed captioning. The devices are either glasses that display the captions or cell-phone-like devices attached to a flexible support that fits in the cup-holder. While many deaf and hard of hearing individuals prefer open captioning, in which the captions are displayed on the screen and visible to everyone, this is not required. However, if a theater wants to avoid the expense of providing closed captioning, it may instead offer open captioning either for all showings or upon request prior to the start of the movie.

The regulations also stop short of what many of us wanted with respect to how many viewing devices a theater must have. The regulations initially proposed in 2014 would have required many more devices than are generally used, and the theaters balked at the expense. Recognizing that an insufficient number of devices was seldom a problem (as opposed to inoperable devices), the advocacy groups agreed to support a much reduced device count coupled with a mechanism to increase the number if demand warranted. However, we only got the bad half of that bargain—the reduced device count—since DOJ did not agree to our half of the trade—the mechanism for an increase if demand warrants.

We were also disappointed with the 18-month compliance deadline, a change from the initial proposal of six months. DOJ’s justification is that there might be such a crush of demand that the device-makers could not fill all the orders. That strikes me as unlikely—something like 70% of the movie auditoriums are presently equipped to show captions, so most of the demand has already been met.

The regulations also don’t help with increasing the amount of captioned content. Editor’s note: Because the Americans with Disabilities Act doesn’t cover products, captioning of the films themselves (as well as of DVDs) is done on a voluntary basis. The captions are done by the studios as part of the production, and they are furnished at no charge to the theaters. While most movies are captioned, a few are not, and relatively few previews are captioned. On the plus side, though, we did during this process establish a reasonably cordial working relationship with the theater owners’ lobbying group, the National Association of Theatre Owners (NATO). We agreed to work together to encourage more captioned content, particularly captioned previews, and I recently got in touch with John Fithian, NATO’s executive director, to ask that we begin.

While the movie regulations have been published, they are not yet cast in concrete. The Trump administration has vowed to rescind a lot of regulations. To repeal a regulation, an agency has to undertake the same sort of lengthy process required to adopt it. But for a considerable period after a regulation is adopted, Congress can rescind it by a simple voice vote. If Congress wants to rescind as many regulations as possible without any great concern for content, the movie regulations could get caught in that net. If that were to happen, though, we could still demand and almost surely obtain captioning in court.

DOJ did not buy the argument from the theaters that they always intended to provide captioning voluntarily. The Department said that in its view, the accessibility achieved to date has been because of litigation brought by states and private organizations, and the Department specifically referenced the cases ALDA and Linda Drattell brought in California against Cinemark and AMC, two of the nation’s three largest theater chains (Regal is the third). We played a major role in making this access happen.

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Why I Love My CART Job

By Caryn Broome

As we enter the holiday season, stories of thankfulness and helping others are all around. And I have one as well. Recently, I was asked to write about working with deaf and hard of hearing people and what they go through with their captioning services.

Approximately 48 million people in the United States alone have some level of hearing loss. As CART (realtime captioning) providers, we help make communication access available and accurate for our clients by converting speech into text.

Most of my jobs are remote, and I work from home every day, talking aloud in my office while the dogs lie on the floor near me and watch. Quite possibly, if you didn’t know what I was doing, you might think I had lost my mind if you heard the conversations I appeared to be having with myself and saw all the briefs I use for punctuation and terminology. But the need to make sure names and acronyms are correct are the reason I get up early and work late to prep for their next class, presentation, meeting, webinar, and church service. The tech issues involved, like the streaming/lag time/audio quality, have definitely made me my own IT person. I can troubleshoot just about anything with anyone these days and QUICKLY get the captions figured out.

I gathered information from my clients about what they believe is beneficial or not beneficial in CART captioning, because I would feel very uncomfortable speaking for somebody without their input. Here are excerpts from some client thoughts about captioning.

Shari Koeper, cruise coordinator for hard of hearing people:

Over 15 years ago, I first experienced CART. A writer had offered her services for our HLAA monthly meetings, but we were not sure if we wanted them (and they were free!). We thought, “We have the chapter president’s daughter finger pecking on a computer attached to a TV, and that’s working out okay, even if it’s tediously slow. It is the best we’ve ever had.” One month, the daughter couldn’t make it, so we asked the CART provider if she would like to come and type, and she said she’d love to. Within minutes after the meeting started, our jaws were on the floor. We immediately scheduled her for every meeting and felt as if we had won the lottery.

Ever since then, CART has been a very important part of my life. Without it, I have no idea what is being said. We have a wonderful CART provider for our church services, meetings, and cruises! There is no other way we could actually feel “hearing,” keeping up with the rest of the audience and feeling like part of the event. I thank God often for these wonderful people who hear for us and then share what they’ve heard through their keying hands. They have changed my life!

Christina Wieg, undergraduate, law:

I developed moderate to severe bilateral hearing loss several years ago as an adult. Before that happened, I had completed a bachelor’s degree in zoology and a master’s degree in environmental studies, had a well-developed career with the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and had become a mother of two young girls. When my hearing loss was diagnosed, I was devastated. All I saw were the limitations. I attempted to hide my hearing loss in fear of being treated differently, and I refused to wear my hair in a ponytail because people would see my hearing aids. I felt stuck between two communities, the hearing community and the deaf community, not really feeling as though I belonged to either. This diagnosis came just six months prior to my plans for applying to law school, and I literally broke down in tears in the audiologist’s office, believing that I had lost any possibility of attending law school. I still remember the fear from not knowing whether my hearing loss would progress or stabilize, the depression from being unable to hear the peppers on the farm pond in the spring, and the frustration from being unable to understand my children when they asked questions from the back seat in the car.

But I moved forward. I realized that I needed to stop being afraid of people treating me differently, and I worked with the university to provide CART to assist me in the fast-paced Socratic format of law school classes. I struggled and had my setbacks (and still do). However, when I received my

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**Can You Do Yoga With A Hearing Loss?**

By Shari Eberts

I love yoga! Not only is it fun, but I also find the health benefits to be extraordinary. My yoga practice saved me from real injury during a fall last year, and I think that it, combined with meditation, has helped calm the severity of my tinnitus. I recommend yoga to everyone I meet—whether they have a hearing loss or not!

But sometimes people with hearing loss are skeptical. They wonder, “How will I be able to follow along in class if I can’t hear the instructor?” or “Will my hearing aids stay on during the postures?” or “Will the classes be too loud?” These are all real concerns, but ones that can be offset by choosing the right class with an understanding instructor.

I practice Bikram Yoga, which takes place in a heated room. I like it because it is quiet—no music or other distractions. The teachers do not demonstrate the postures, but guide the class with their voice, often wearing a microphone headset so they are heard throughout the room. The class is identical every time, so I always know what posture is coming next, and there are mirrors in the front of the room so I can easily see when the class is moving in and out of a posture. But the heat is not for everyone.

I have also attended other types of yoga classes, some with more success than others. How much I enjoy the class always comes down to the quality of the instructor, my familiarity with the postures ahead of time, and my ability to just relax and go with the flow. My hearing loss is usually not a big factor, unless I let it be.

Here are my tips for practicing yoga with a hearing loss.

**BEFORE YOU START**

1. **Do your research.** Yoga has gotten so popular that there are likely several studios in your town. Visit them and ask the manager to recommend classes and instructors that avoid loud music and that tend to repeat the same series of postures in each class. Tell them about your hearing loss—there may be other students in the same boat. Ask which classes attract students with a broad range of ages and abilities—this will make class less intimidating.

2. **Take an intro class or a few private lessons first.** Most studios offer new student workshops on a monthly or more frequent basis. This is a great way to learn the basics in a smaller setting where hearing will be easier and one-on-one attention is the norm. Familiarity with the postures will give you confidence before you head into a group class. If new student classes are not available, you can always try a beginning yoga DVD at home to learn some of the basics. [Editor’s note: check to make sure the DVD is captioned!]

**AT CLASS**

1. **Talk to the teacher before class.** At the start of class, tell the teacher about your hearing loss and ask for the best place to set up your mat based on where the teacher will be spending most of his or her time. This knowledge will also allow the teacher to give you extra assistance if you seem to be missing something.

   *Expert tip:* There may be a line to talk to the teacher. Many students discuss physical limitations such as an injury or illness with the yoga teacher before class—you discussing your hearing loss will not appear odd at all.

2. **Set up your mat in the middle of the room.** Here, you can watch people in front of you if you don’t hear the teacher’s instructions AND you can see other yogis behind you or to the side if you are doing postures where you are not facing forward.

3. **Go with the flow.** Hey, it’s only yoga! Who cares if you are behind in transitioning from posture to posture or your postures don’t look ready for competition. This is about your health and mental well-being and nothing other than that is really important. Plus, it gets easier the more you do it. Don’t expect perfection early on.

4. **Be persistent.** The first class you try might not be the one for you. Try another class or a different instructor or even a different style of yoga. It’s kind of like trying out hearing aids or princes—the first one you kiss might not be a good match.

Yoga is not for everyone, but if you are interested in trying it out or maintaining a regular practice, don’t let your hearing loss stop you. Not only are the physical benefits of yoga (stronger

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ALDA Establishes the Cheryl Heppner Advocacy Award

The ALDA Board of Directors voted to establish a new award to be given annually at our October board meeting. The Cheryl Heppner Advocacy Award will be given to an ALDA member who has demonstrated exemplary advocacy activities on behalf of deafened adults. ALDA will be seeking nominations for this award.

The award is named after Cheryl Heppner, who served as president of ALDA in 1997 and was a long-time ALDA representative with the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Consumer Action Network (DHHCAN). Cheryl has been an active advocate for increased captioning for movies and television and has also advocated for CART and other communication access for deafened adults in various settings.

The first Cheryl Heppner Advocacy Award was given to Cheryl herself in November 2016 to reflect her contributions to ALDA. Please join the ALDA Board in applauding Cheryl’s efforts on our behalf.
CART: Bridging the Communication Gap

By Philip A. Hyssong

CART—is that like go kart? Maybe shopping cart? Just what is CART? Well, when I started in this industry, it was known as Computer-Aided Realtime Translation. That was a day when I had dark brown hair and wonderful ideas on how I was going to effect change in the world. Then at some point in the ’90s the name changed to Communication Access Realtime Translation. My hair was turning white and some of my ideas were working and some were not, but I guess to understand where CART was going, you have to understand where CART had been.

In the mid ‘80s, a group of folks began to use stenographic equipment to create captions. I will spare you the details, but basically, some court reporters became specially trained to provide captions for the television news. Some of the same court reporters had the desire to directly use their skill for people who experienced hearing loss. They could “write” what others said in realtime, and the words would appear on the screen.

The early days of CART were challenging. The leaders in the CART industry—people like Pat Graves, Judy Brentano, and Heidi Thomas, to name just a few—were challenged to use technology in new ways. Conversations went like this: “If we can put the words on the laptop screen, could we then project that screen so others in the room could see it?” The answer, of course, was yes, but this required expensive, heavy projectors, as well as screens that were awkward and difficult to maneuver. And there was the cabling from computer to projectors etc. No longer could the writers just write—they had to be technological wizards of sorts as well.

Technology continued to evolve and services progressed from on site to remote. Early remote was created by sharing the computer screen via telephone lines, which was cumbersome. At this time, the Internet was just getting started. It’s hard to believe that life existed before the Internet, but it certainly did! Once the Internet began to grow, so did remote CART services. The need had expanded significantly faster than the number of folks providing CART, and the only way to serve folks was to increase the number of hours a CART writer could write. Depending on the geographic area, early CART writers would pack up equipment, travel to a location, set up, provide the service, tear down, and leave. A two-hour job could easily take four or five hours. However, with the advent of remote services, CART providers were able to provide four to five hours of actual service in that period of time—there was no travel, no set up, and no lugging of equipment.

The CART industry has grown significantly in the past 20 years. While there were just a handful of providers early on, there are now hundreds providing services for thousands of consumers. Educational clients are probably one of the highest volume users, but students graduate and enter the workforce, where they often need services, too. We see CART being offered in just about every arena and work environment.

The passing of multiple laws continues to foster live captioning (CART’s sister industry) on television, in sports arenas, and for major meeting/convention events. The Federal Communication Commission in Washington, DC continues to look at CART and captioning. There are many venues and places where television and media are displayed, making the task to caption everything huge. Airports and airplanes are just two of the many places where attention has recently been given.

So how do you get CART for yourself? That can be a tough question, but there are many great CART agencies out there that can provide guidance and support. The major step that folks need to take is to ask for CART. I often tell my teenage daughter, “I don’t know what answer you’ll get if you ask, but I do know the answer you’ll get if you don’t ask. Many people are concerned about “rocking the boat” with their employer. I won’t tell you what to do, but many times I have seen employers look into providing the service for an employee. They may not provide CART for all events, but they may start offering it for major meetings or training events. Ask your human resource folks to allow a free demonstration so they can see it. We frequently say that “seeing is believing” with CART. It is hard to get the concept of the service, but seeing it reinforces exactly what it does. It is also important to show your employer how CART will benefit you and the employer. Ask yourself, “How can this service help me to be a better worker?” Show your employers how you will be able to participate more

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Yoga with Hearing Loss (continued)...

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muscles and improved flexibility) important, the mental benefits are also numerous. Yoga at its best combines physical postures with a philosophy of patience and self-acceptance, which can come in very handy when dealing with the day-to-day frustrations of hearing loss. I know it does for me.

Readers, have you tried yoga?

Shari Eberts is a hearing health advocate, writer, and avid Bikram yogi. She blogs at LivingWithHearingLoss.com, where this article originally appeared, and serves on the Board of Trustees of the Hearing Loss Association of America. She is the former board chair of the Hearing Health Foundation. Shari has an adult-onset genetic hearing loss and hopes that sharing her story will help others to live more peacefully with their own hearing issues. Connect with her on Facebook and Twitter (@sharieberts).

One of Us

By Karen Krull, Curator

I first met Sarah at an ALDA-Chicago social several years ago, and she was very shy and very sweet. She has evolved into a very knowledgeable workshop presenter, a savvy web tech person, and a good friend who is one of the nicest people I know. She serves on the ALDA-Chicago Board as vice president and is also the chapter’s webmaster. Nothing gives me more pleasure than to interview her for this issue. She’s definitely one of us. Contact Sarah at skwegley@gmail.com.

Name: Sarah Wegley
Where were you born? Philadelphia
What is your current residence? Chicago Heights, Illinois
What is the cause of your deafness? Sensorineural hearing loss
Age/year you became deafened? I was diagnosed in 2006.
Marital status? Married 22 years
What is your present job? Librarian
What is the worst job you ever had? Cleaning a bowling alley mornings at 4 a.m.
Movie you want to see again? Beyond Silence
Books you tell others to read? One Square Inch of Silence by Gordon Hempton and Aspire by Kevin Hall
I stay home to watch: Netflix
Favorite pig-out food: tacos
Hobbies: scrapbooking, photography, writing, puzzles
If I had more free time, I’d travel.
The hardest thing about becoming deafened is miscommunications with family and friends.
I began accepting my deafness when I got hearing aids.
The worst thing about deafness is that I feel less confident in myself.
The best thing about deafness is learning about Deaf culture and studying ASL.
How did you learn about ALDA? Online.

In what ways has ALDA enhanced your life? Members of ALDA are my friends and second family. They offer me support and acceptance, and spending time with them comprises most of my social life. ALDA has given me an opportunity to share what I’ve learned with others and to volunteer and advocate on behalf of those with hearing loss.

When I am depressed, I like to be alone. I don’t want people to see me like that.

My most irrational fear is heights.

If I could hear again, the first thing I would do is call my son on the telephone.
The thing I like best about myself is that I make myself laugh.
Nobody knows I’ve never met a dog I didn’t like.
What I can’t stand is stubbornness and a disregard for other points of view.
Favorite memory: Graduating with my master’s degree in communication studies last spring and feeling so proud of myself.
Favorite saying: When you absolutely, positively have to know, ask a librarian.
The bottom line is: My thoughts create my reality.

Sarah Wegley
Adapting My Passions to My Hearing Loss

By Anna Silverstein

My life changed substantially at age 51, when I was diagnosed with mild to moderate hearing loss. I had known for about three years that I was having difficulty hearing but wasn’t sure what to do. When my romantic partner insisted I needed hearing aids, I took his advice and went in for a consultation. Now that I have worn hearing aids for ten years (three different pairs, as my hearing loss became worse), I am exploring the option of a cochlear implant because my hearing aids are no longer helping and my word recognition is poor.

Hearing loss has been quite a challenge, and that has also affected me emotionally. Hearing aids have helped, but they will never replace what I have lost. However, the loss has not interfered with my passion for mountain biking, which I picked up late in life (at age 48). This sport thrills me much more than road biking. It requires hand-eye coordination and awareness of the path in front, since an obstacle like a root can appear at any time. My helmet doesn’t go over my hearing aids and is comfortable. Fortunately, my hearing loss does not interfere with this unique fun sport.

The main challenge I face is an inability to participate safely in winter and water sports that I love. Although I wear my hearing aids while I snow ski, they are not very useful in the cold weather under a hat. In fact, I should wear a helmet, but I fear it would totally interfere with my ability to hear and also cause the infamous feedback noise. I want to be safe on the mountain, but most resorts do not have a protocol for skiers with hearing loss. Maybe some ALDA readers have some advice? Additionally, my hearing aids have barred me from participating in my partner’s favorite extreme sport, sailing, because the aids cannot be allowed to get wet. I wouldn’t be able to hear commands, and if someone fell overboard, I wouldn’t hear calls for help. I have decided to explore the possibility of receiving a waterproof cochlear implant so I can sail again.

Another significant challenge is socializing in group settings. I used to enjoy group activities like water aerobics, dance exercise classes, Mahjong, bunko, temple services, and book clubs, but I no longer participate because I rarely understand the conversation.

A silver lining to the cloud is that I have picked up new activities such as gardening, listening to music with my friends (I wear ear plugs so my hearing won’t be damaged further), watching lots of movies with the closed captioning on, reading, and biking once a month with a very slow group (although I have difficulty hearing the other bikers). I always bring a writing pad with me when I will be interacting in a group setting, just as a precaution.

As a late-deafened adult, I have learned to adapt, and I am also hopeful that receiving a cochlear implant will allow me to once again participate in the activities I love and miss.

Anna lives in Lake Charles, Louisiana and Beaumont, Texas, where she divides her time with her partner Paul and her family and friends who live close by. Her children live in Auburn, Alabama; Charlotte, North Carolina; and San Francisco. She was employed for five years helping deaf and hard of hearing people and is now retired. She is a member of Slow Spokes Biking Club and volunteers time taking care of homeless cats at Hobo Hotel in Lake Charles. She can be reached at atinkle3@gmail.com.
A friend recently asked me, “What do you do for fun?” This was after I told her about my latest work projects, one of which was a music program for ESL (English as second language) students called “The American Experience,” which teaches them about American culture through songs in historical context. The question came from a teacher, so I can understand why doing lesson plans might not sound like a lot of fun. However, it is!

Music is the love of my life. While my friends in high school coupled up and dreamed about being married and having a family, I dreamed of music. However, it wasn’t until I was in my early 50s that I was able to do my music professionally. This is because I was diagnosed with a severe hearing loss and fitted for my first hearing aid at the age of 25. At age 50, I got my cochlear implant (CI).

Many people ask how my CI affected my music. I must be honest and say that it took months of aural rehab before I could really appreciate music again. This is because I had been unable to hear certain frequencies for many years. Once the CI was activated and those frequencies were suddenly there, my brain did not know how to process this information. It sounded like a bunch of noise.

My musical path got off to a rocky start when I was eight, after a failed attempt at clarinet lessons. A couple of years later, however, my passion for music was reawakened when I saw a live band and fell in love with the drums. I was given a pair of drumsticks and from there, I quickly learned every beat to Hawaii 5-0 and Mission Impossible theme songs. I subsequently gained some notoriety by becoming the only girl drummer in my high school band, and my dream was to become a rock and roll star. But all of this changed after I saw a folksinger friend singing one of her own songs. Inspired by her example, I got out my mother’s old Harmony guitar, a leftover relic of the ‘60s folk boom, and never turned back.

Many years of lessons and classes ensued, beginning at the Old Town School of Folk Music in Chicago. In my 20s, I studied classical guitar. When I relocated to Charlottesville, Virginia at the age of 30, I began writing my own songs and performing.

In spite of my hearing loss (brought on by mononucleosis and childhood fevers), I never gave up on music and, oddly enough, the loss didn’t really interfere with playing my guitar or singing but did create communication barriers. When I played at a bar or café and was on my break, it was difficult not being able to understand anything that was said to me. Back in those days, there was no Internet and thus no email, so all bookings were done by phone, and I didn’t do well communicating over the phone. How could I convince my potential employer to give me a gig when I couldn’t hear well?

Flash forward to the year 2003, which changed my life. It was then I learned about the Music for Healing and Transition Program, a national certification program that teaches musicians how to play musical prescriptions for patients with specific medical conditions. I knew then that that was what I’d been looking for all my life. I graduated as a certified music practitioner in 2005 and have been working at a hospital, at several nursing homes, and for groups of people with special needs ever since.

I’m also a presenter and performer and have one CD recording, Choose the Sky, to my name. The CD means a lot to me as it took me over five years to complete, since I had my CI surgery in the midst of the project. The interruption took longer than I expected because I had to undergo months of aural rehabilitation to regain music perception. In the beginning, when I was newly activated, music sounded strange and unpleasant. I continued playing my guitar, but it didn’t sound anything like music, so I needed to find auditory exercises that helped with music perception. One day I saw a music magazine advertisement for learning perfect pitch and thought, “Hey! I could buy this program and train my CI!” Instead, I found a music teacher, Aila Juvonen, who worked with me.

We started with interval recognition exercises. (Intervals are the distance between two notes.) During each lesson, Aila would play two intervals on the piano and I would attempt to identify them. I practiced at home using interval recognition.

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first semester grades, I burst into happy tears over the 3.8 GPA that I had received and proudly shared my scores with three people—my husband, the assistant dean, and the captioning firm. Without the CART providers acting as my “ears” in the classroom, there is no way I could have become a successful law school student. Never underestimate the impact your job has on another person’s life. Thank you!

Eric Utt, associate director of Science Policy & Public Affairs, Pfizer Global Research:

The captioning of my teleconferences has absolutely changed my life. I spent the first three-fourths of my career avoiding teleconferences because I simply could not participate satisfactorily. This significantly reduced my effectiveness and my ability to contribute. Since I began using the captioning service, I now feel like a real part of the team.

Because I work in a highly technical field, there are times when my CART provider is not familiar with some of the words, phrases, and acronyms. I think this is more of a frustration for the provider than for me, as I can usually make out what the correct word is.

One other aspect of captioning is that I get to know the providers; I really love this part, as I feel that I now have friends and acquaintances all over the country. I use the chat window to catch up on what is happening, make jokes while waiting for the call to begin, and thank the providers for their help. Thus, CART has unexpectedly opened a kind of social life in a way that I would not otherwise have had with people who are so remotely located from me.

Frustration occurs when the technology stops working. Streaming text can break down, Internet services can be slow, and other technological gaffs cause some headaches. But these are few and far between.

Because I am deaf, teleconferences were always a frontier that I simply could not cross, but now I have conquered that frontier.

Pomy Worku, doctoral student, psychology:

The CART provider assists me when necessary. For example, when I lose the context of the conversation, the provider explains it to me, and when the instructors mention a resource, the provider finds the link to help me out. In addition, the provider gave me a voice to report a professor who refused to caption a video.

Orin Fails, Information Technology (IT), Santa Barbara City College:

CART as seen from the hearing client’s perspective can be a very stressful, nerve-wracking process. The first time you go to live stream an event, you’re thinking that this should be a piece of cake. The CART provider watches your live stream, types the words, and viola! you have captions. However, you might not realize that your stream has a little delay, so all of a sudden, your text is 30 seconds behind the spoken words, which is a little too far off. So you realize that you have to get “live” audio to your CART provider, who is most likely not even in the same state as you.

Then you think of using videoconferencing. It works great—the captions are only a few seconds off, and everything is good… until you realize that some names and acronyms are being misspelled. You don’t want to offend anyone, so you find yourself scrambling to get a list of names to your CART provider.

Now, you have names being spelled correctly and the text appears close after the actual spoken words. Life is good! Then one day you go to start a meeting and… no captions. It’s 10 minutes until the event starts and nothing is working. This is the moment when you find out just how great or not great the group that you are working with is.

I’m a few months in now, and things are going very well. There are only minor glitches here and there. It is truly impressive that someone can sit for two or three hours working and have as much of it come out correctly as it does. Finding a CART provider who is very professional and really cares about their work is vital to having a positive experience. The other thing that is essential is to give the CART provider a clear, live audio stream and a list of names and acronyms. A clear video feed is helpful as well. Be sure to run a test at least 10-15 minutes before each event (and it really does need to be done for each event).

Once you realize what your responsibilities are and you find some great CART providers to work with, live captioning can suddenly become the least of your worries.

Connor Sullivan, doctor of audiology student:

I have quite a unique perspective on CART services. You see, never in a million years did I ever want to use CART. Don’t get me wrong—CART is great, it was just that I was one stubborn kid. When I was younger, I hated the idea of having that one
CART Job (continued)...  

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extra thing that would draw attention to my hearing loss.

I’m sure you can already tell that I was the kid in school who would never use his FM system or voluntarily go to speech therapy (I didn’t like the extra attention of being pulled out of class), I never liked the surround-sound speakers in the classroom, and heaven forbid if somebody asked me whether I could hear them from the front of the room! The speaker had good intentions, but man, did I want to melt into the little plastic chair from sheer embarrassment if that happened. I just didn’t like the extra attention!

Heck, when I went to high school, I put up such a fight about going to speech therapy that I was finally given an ultimatum: either go to speech, or enroll in drama class. I think they thought that I would be so shy about having to perform on stage that I would pick speech, but I actually picked drama so I could be around all the cute girls!

Fast forward to today. During Christmas of 2010, I received a cochlear implant. The process changed my life, and I changed from a drama major to pursuing a doctorate in audiology.

Now I rely on CART services constantly to ensure that I do well in the rigorous classroom environment. I’ve learned that without CART in those difficult listening environments, missing what somebody says (or responding with a completely wrong answer) draws more attention to my hearing loss than any ART microphone or FM system ever will!

CART isn’t perfect, but neither are any of the other technologies we use. What makes this work best for me is having somebody provide the service who is close enough to call my friend—somebody who is willing to go the extra mile to make sure that the technology is working properly and the words are being spelled correctly. In other words, somebody who cares about my listening success.

As a person with hearing loss, I know exactly what it is like to feel in the middle between the deaf world and the hearing world. We wake up every morning to some degree of silence, and we struggle in our listening environments. Our brains work much harder than everybody else’s, straining to understand what people are saying.

CART has been nothing short of a small miracle for me in those difficult listening environments where hearing something right the first time must happen.

Straightaway, I noticed that all these people have much more in common than a hearing loss. There are several themes to be considered, and how what they go through individually and corporately has affected and improved CART.

First theme: Participation. Through CART, my clients have equal access to participating in their communities, as we all desire. It takes real guts, determination, and confidence to live a full and rich life in general, but I would dare say it is even more challenging with a hearing loss. Yet, all of these men and women exemplify guts, determination, and confidence, and it is truly inspiring.

Second theme: Service to others. Their jobs as psychologists, lawyers, scientists, and audiologists so beautifully speak to that, and entities providing CART like churches, colleges, and many others not listed above such as healthcare firms, governmental offices, and various private companies, are in the business of helping people.

Third theme: Teamwork. Usually, they are reading “my words” as I provide captions. Now, when I read and re-read their words, it is I who feels like part of a team. My job may be providing the captions, but I am the one who benefits in so many ways. My clients literally are growing my career as a CART provider and trainer, and blessing me with their friendships.

Final theme: Kindness. The kindness clients extend in building a friendship with me allows me the comfort to chat with them on everything from what I need to adjust in the captioning for them and how their day/weekend/meeting is going to what is their favorite wine.

It’s a job where captioning perfection is like the end of a rainbow I am following—beautiful to dream about but harder to get there. Whenever I stumble in my writing, nobody ever minds my asking, “What was that word? It sounded like Padufa, Patoofa, or was it PDUFA?” It is why I learn new terminology, create new briefs, add words to Dragon (my software), and build job dictionaries. And I must admit that nowadays, probably 95% of anything new I learn is because of the great jobs that I have had working as a CART provider in meetings, classes, and services.

While I realize that my clients have both challenges and successes with their captioning, I don’t know if they know that what they go through collectively makes a difference on the opposite end, the CART provider’s end, but let me just say that IT DOES.

I am using the quote “listen-
Scuba Diving (continued)...

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Islands. I wanted to participate with a group, so I went online and found OBDC Dive Club (Old Broads Dive Club) from Orange County, California. The leader encouraged me to join them, and diving with them really opened the world to me. While every dive trip is my favorite, the Red Sea in Egypt had to be a highlight. We were on the boat for seven days. Our dive master told us to touch our hair. If it was dry, we dived, and if it was wet, we ate. The water was so rough that we couldn't dive off the boat and instead had to go onto a zodiac (a rubber raft) and on the count of three back roll into the water. There I went down 136 feet, the deepest I have been, through beautiful hanging gardens like nothing I had ever seen before.

Most diving is done between 45 and 80 feet below the surface, but it's not the depth that matters, it's what is there to see, such as playful seals in Baja, Mexico, and a whale shark. In Bora Bora, we saw the biggest manta ray I had ever seen. It looked like a space station gliding over my head. We played and swam with the dolphins in 75 feet of water in Honduras. In Fiji, we were down 100 feet on our stomachs holding onto coral as sharks were being fed right over our heads. The dive master sat a few feet above us in full mesh armor tossing chunks of fish to shark he knew by face and number. He said to keep our heads and cameras low or else, chomp! In Kasawari Lembeg, Indonesia, we went to the harbor at dusk, swam to a pile of coral that we hung onto, and watched colorful Mandarin fish chase each other around, rise up, mate, and zip away. There we also saw an octopus stuff itself into a pop can, come out to search unsuccessfully for food, then look around at us and zip back into its can! Hilarious, but hard to laugh while wearing a mouthpiece!

Signing deaf divers are actually at an advantage, as they can talk to each other just like they do on land. Hearing divers have devised signs to let the dive master know about their air status, how they are feeling, whether they have pain or equipment issues, and of course the various sea creatures they spot. Since most of these signs are different from ASL signs, deaf divers like me have to make sure they know the correct underwater signs for each area for safety reasons. Also, before each dive, I put on my cochlear implant and listen to the instructions. After that, members of my club make sure I am aware of everything that was said and quiz me if necessary. A cochlear implant can't be used at depths below 30 feet, so it's necessary to remove the earpiece before diving. (I try not to surface unless the boat is up above and I'm with the group, because I can't hear propellers. Chop, chop, chop!)

People who don't dive tell me that they would be scared to try. Actually, I'm terrified until I hit the water, and then I feel like I'm home, and where I'm supposed to be, flying like a bird with the fishes.

Carol bails from Rockford, Illinois, has belonged to ALDA for 27 years, is a member of ALDA-Chicago, and serves on the ALDA Board as the Region 2 director. She spent the first half of her career as a first grade teacher and the second half as a learning disabilities specialist in the hearing loss programs. She and her brother became late-deafened as a result of a progressive sensorineural hearing loss. Contact Carol at cpostulka@aol.com.

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So thank you, all of you guys!

After graduating from the Brown College of Court Reporting in May 2011, Caryn received her CCR and CVR-M certification and started her own company as owner/president of CMB Reporting Services, providing reporting services for depositions and the court system. In August 2011, she began mentoring under Heidi Thomas as a CART provider. Caryn initially provided CART for ALDA-Peach meetings and then began working full time with multiple CART firms in the United States and United Kingdom providing on site and remote CART. She now also has CM and RCP certifications. Of all the CART jobs she has had, she was most honored to provide services for Pope Francis in 2014 during the canonization of Pope John XXIII and Pope John Paul II. Caryn regularly provides CART for colleges, government agencies, and businesses. Her favorite jobs are weekly Baptist and Lutheran church services, and her funniest job was for comedian Keenan Wayans, Jr. From 2012 – 2015, Caryn was president of the Georgia Certified Court Reporters Association and is now its past president. She also serves as treasurer on the National Verbatim Reporters Association Board of Directors. Caryn lives in Newnan, Georgia, with her husband Andy. They have two adult children, and she loves gardening and riding around the countryside on the motorcycle with Andy. Caryn can be contacted at cmbreportingservices@gmail.com.
With the movie problem apparently resolved, a lot of ALDA’s advocacy efforts over the last year have focused on live theaters. As I reported in my previous column, the ALDA Board has approved what I labeled the Broadway Project, which is aimed at using the financial and technical resources of the Broadway theater community to develop and test new ways of providing captioning at live theaters.

Live theater captioning is a considerably more difficult problem. As with movies, the captions are prepared in advance. But unlike movies, where the content is exactly the same whenever and wherever a movie is shown, each live theater performance is unique—the timing varies from performance to performance, and sometimes the script changes in planned or unplanned ways. So the captions must be displayed by a live operator in sync with the pace of that individual performance. This means that unlike a movie theater, a live theater bears an additional cost for each performance unless a staff person takes on the caption display responsibility, which may not be permitted by some union contracts.

Nor is there any established and universally acceptable way to display the captions in a live theater. What is most often done is to have specific captioned performances, at which the captions are displayed on a portable reader-board placed in front of and towards one edge of the stage. Patrons requesting captions are then seated where they can see the captions and stage in the same line of sight. But this requires setting aside a block of premium seats.

What is needed is some means by which a live theater can provide captioning for every performance. And because we would like to be able to buy tickets at the last minute, just like everyone else, the captions need to be visible from any seat. The Broadway Project was conceived when I learned that such systems are, in fact, available. I was particularly impressed to learn about the efforts of a small theater in Baltimore, Maryland. That theater, the Everyman, uses a system that stores the prepared captions in the cloud (whatever that is), then uses a staff person to sync them to individual viewing devices, either cell phones or tablets, which can be provided by the user or the theater. The Everyman can offer captioning for every performance, and the director told me that there are usually half a dozen requests for the viewing devices.

Our initial working group was ALDA and two theater buffs, Tina Childress (a frequent Broadway visitor and ALDA stalwart) and Jerry Bergman (a New York resident). Our plan was to ask the three large Broadway theater owners to begin testing systems of that nature with the goal of every-show, every-seat captioning. Once the testing period was completed, we intended to ask theaters elsewhere to install similar systems. But we got a huge surprise. A week before we were going to send out our initial demand letters, we learned that the Shubert Organization, by far the largest of the Broadway theater owners, planned to test a similar system and was seeking deaf and hard of hearing theater-goers in New York City to participate in those tests.

The system Shubert is testing is called GalaPro, made by an Israeli company, and is basically a smartphone app. The captions are prepared in advance in several languages, and patrons can access them from their own smart phones or tablets. The syncing is done through the lighting cues rather than by a live operator.

Jerry Bergman attended the first test run and a subsequent group debriefing. Generally, the system was deemed promising, although it was still a work in progress. Syncing the captions to the lighting cues, which had been tried in the past with other systems, is problematic, because there isn’t necessarily a close correlation between dialogue and lighting. Holding a viewing device for the entire performance isn’t desirable, either, and battery capacity is also a problem. But those difficulties may be fixable.

 Actors’ microphones are usually turned on or off as the actor speaks, so it would make more sense to sync captions to the mic cues rather than to the lighting cues. The Baltimore theater fixed the problem of holding the viewing device by buying flexible clamps from Amazon. One end holds the device and the other attaches to the seat’s arm rest, allowing the user to position the device so that the captions and stage can be seen in the same line of sight.

Our understanding is that Shubert intended to display the system for its board of directors in December 2016, and then to roll out some form of every-seat, every-performance captioning throughout its system of 17 of the 41 Broadway theaters. Should that happen, we will then ask the other Broadway theaters to adopt something similar. Our hope is that if systems like this prove feasible, competitors will enter the market (there are already a number of similar... Continued on page 20
Communication Gap (continued)...

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and bring more to your work environment. Finally, there is what we call the “big stick” reason. By law, employers are required to make work environments accessible, and CART is considered a reasonable accommodation.

The employer is not the only person responsible for providing quality CART. The actual provider also needs to be held accountable. Just because someone has a steno machine and the necessary software does not mean that they are equipped to provide CART. I always like to say that folks need to be certified and qualified. Having certification in court reporting does not automatically mean that someone is a skilled CART provider. You deserve quality services. If the person is not competent, tell them so, and by all means do not continue to use them.

CART stories are numerous and most are very good. Countless times, people have shared statements like “This was the first time I was able to understand this event” or “Thank you for helping me to graduate from college.” Sometimes it is the personal aspects of providing CART that can be rewarding, like providing it at a funeral or at events when CART is used everywhere now. I have seen it used in surgery, for medical staff with hearing loss. I have seen it used on field trips where CART providers walk around writing the entire time for a student. It is an exciting time to be a CART provider. And as a consumer, thank you for opening doors for us.

Now my hair is pretty much white and the ideas discussed often include the word retirement, but I have learned that together we can walk through just about any door and make the message on the other side accessible!

Philip A. Hyssong is the owner and CEO of Alternative Communication Services, LLC (ACS), EduCAPTION, LLC, Home Team Captions, and Closed Caption Productions, LLC, and he also has an ownership and management interest in PostCAP, LLC, a family of text creation companies. Prior to launching ACS, Phil spent time as vice president of another national CART and captioning company and as executive director of a Christian media company specializing in media for people with hearing loss. He holds an undergraduate degree in education from Concordia University Chicago and a master’s degree in instructional design from Northern Illinois University. Phil is a certified manager of reporting services through the National Court Reporters Association and has completed training to provide speech-to-text transcribing (TypeWell). He has spoken at numerous conventions on the topic of accessibility as it relates to text services and brings over 30 years of experience to this topic. He can be reached at Phil@ACSCaptions.com.

Music Scrapbook Journal (continued)...

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song charts listing well-known songs with commonly heard intervals. These are examples: the first measure of “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star” has a perfect fifth, and “Somewhere over the Rainbow” begins with an octave.

We also worked on singing notes and melodies. I believe that singing is very important because our bodies become a resonating chamber to feel the notes. It helps to rewire our brains to learn musical relationships in much the same way that speaking words out loud reinforces learning language. We also worked with tuning forks to aid me in feeling the vibrations of the pitch frequencies. That was very interesting! These were some things I did to help me regain music perception. Two years after my CI surgery and rehab, I left my administrative office job at the university to pursue my dream of working as a professional musician. It’s amazing what technology can do.

Now even though I work full time as a musician, I still consider music a fun hobby where I am continually experimenting and learning. I keep a music writing journal book, similar to an artist’s sketchbook. If you are a musician, here are some things you might like to try doing for fun in your music journal:

1. Create a musical collage. Take three pieces of music that are in different keys and moods and cut them up line by line. Then turn over the scraps of musical lines so you cannot see what they are. Next, put the scraps in random order to fill one page of music. Turn them over and see the results. You may have to “disguise” melodic motifs from the pieces by rewriting the idea in a new way, maybe by changing the rhythm or chords, so you are not stealing a copyrighted idea from another composer. You may also need to add in your own musical phrases to make the music flow better. The process is like a patchwork quilt. I have one piece I composed by doing this, and it was a lot of fun to do and surprisingly successful as an original piece.

2. Rewrite a piece of music. Take a piece of music you really like, and if there is a phrase or part of the music you don’t like, rewrite it! At times a piece takes a direction that is too dramatic or fast or in some way not in the right mood for my work. Instead of abandoning the piece altogether, I write in a new bridge or an ending or whatever the part may be. This is good for working on honing composition skills, too. Many pieces have a middle bridge section that

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As has occurred with movie captioning—it will become financially feasible for smaller live theaters across the country to provide captioning.

It is worth noting that while systems of this nature provide access for people with hearing loss, the economic benefit to the theaters may come more from the ability to offer captions in multiple languages. Since almost 20% of Broadway theater-goers come from abroad, there could be a significant market for this access. (I continue to be baffled that the movie studios do not seem to be interested in doing something similar, considering the number of foreign language speakers here.)

We have been blessed in the past eight years with an extremely active, able, and sympathetic Department of Justice. The Disability Rights Section of DOJ’s Civil Rights Division has done wonderful work on our behalf. It appears as though the incoming administration will have other enforcement priorities, especially immigration. In that case, private enforcement will become even more important, so the role of individual advocates and organizations like ALDA will increase.

John can be contacted at johnwaldo@hotmail.com.

Music Scrapbook Journal (continued)...

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changes the mood. Ask yourself, where else can this go? If it is in a major key, you could move it to the relative or parallel minor. You could also add in your own intro with chord progressions leading into the opening motif. There are endless possibilities.

3. Go on an exotic or unusual chord hunt. Since we are often drawn to certain kinds of music, we can at times be limited by our personal taste. Therefore, it can be a fun exercise to look through songbooks of a different genre of music and search for chords you’ve never played before. I did this, and it led to my learning more about jazz music all of the beautiful colorful major 7th, 13th, or added ninth chords. It’s also a great compositional tool. I got inspired to compose one of my favorite pieces, “For the Lily Grows,” after finding some new chords. Here is a link for you to hear it: https://www.reverbnation.com/blueoconnell/song/11901248-for-the-lily-grows

4. Transcribe a vocal song and transform it into an instrumental solo (in my case, guitar) piece. I was asked to play a piece on my guitar by Swedish singer Evert Taube. I couldn’t find the sheet music for this beautiful song, “Lill Lindfors,” and so I wrote down the melody on guitar TAB paper.

These are a few things that I enjoy doing in my musical scrapbook to keep things fun. It is interesting to note that we say “play music” and not “work music.” It is a form of play similar to any hobby, although as a CI recipient; it took some work to make it fun. It was worth the effort, and I feel passionate about reaching out to others with hearing loss to encourage them to never give up on pursuing their dreams.

Blue O’Connell is a certified music practitioner, guitarist, singer/songwriter, and presenter based in Charlottesville, Virginia. In May 2014, she was awarded the Mildred W. Spicer Arts Fund Award, which was created to recognize a local person for outstanding service in improving artistic opportunities for people with disabilities. A cochlear implant recipient since 2009, Blue is passionate about helping others with hearing loss to regain enjoyment in playing and listening to music. In July 2016, she was selected to participate in the international Beats of Cochlea music festival in Warsaw, Poland. A scientific conference, “Hearing Implants and Music,” took place at the World Hearing Center in Kajetany, Poland, and Blue’s presentation, “Noise to Music” (which demonstrated techniques to regain music perception), was well received. For more information, visit www.blueoconnell.com. Blue can be contacted at blueoconnell@gmail.com.
**Chapter Happenings and GA to SK**

*By Ann Smith, Curator*

Francine Stieglitz reports that this fall, a lot of time was spent setting up the new ALDA-Boston website, with help from many people. Take a look at [http://aldaboston.org](http://aldaboston.org) and let Francine (fstiegli@bu.edu) know what you think. ALDA-Boston had several monthly tours at the Museum of Fine Arts. The next Accessible Guided Tour was scheduled for December 3 for the William Merritt Chase exhibition. “The greatest 19th-century painter you’ve probably never heard of, William Merritt Chase is ripe for rediscovery.” The annual holiday party on December 10 was again slated to feature a Chinese buffet, and on December 16, ALDA and HLAA planned to enjoy an Accessible Theatre Night at the New Repertory Theatre in Watertown, Massachusetts. Tickets to *Fiddler on the Roof* were discounted for the two groups, and the Mosesian Theater is now looped. The chapter’s annual New Year’s brunch on January 15 was to be held again at the Westford Regency Hotel and Conference Center. ALDA members expecting to be in the Boston area are invited to participate in the chapter’s events.

Sara Thompson reported for ALDA-Peach (Atlanta). The October meeting was a service-oriented opportunity at which Peach members sorted and packed medical supplies for clinics in developing countries. MedShare International, the global charity located in Decatur, Georgia, has brought healing and better lives to patients in 97 countries. The chapter met on November 12 to elect two board members and decide on a location for the annual December holiday luncheon. The new board members are Marge Tamas and Kristin Stansell, who join current members Steve Tamas, Jim Stansell, and Sara Thompson. The holiday luncheon was scheduled for the Golden Buddha restaurant on December 10. ALDA-Peach members also voted to meet every other month in 2017, beginning in February.

Send your chapter news (for “Chapter Happenings”) and personal news (for “GA to SK”) to Ann Smith at fabsmith@att.net by February 21.

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**SKSK**

Always find time for the things that make you feel happy to be alive.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Your membership in the Association of Late-Deafened Adults connects you with ALDAns around the world. Don’t miss our informative quarterly newsletter, ALDA News. Check our chapter directory at [www.alda.org](http://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](http://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

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

- Education
- Advocacy
- Role Models
- Support

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

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

Make a Difference! Become a Lifetime Member!

**Why a Lifetime Member?**

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

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

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

*Ann Smith, Lifetime Member*

**Lifetime Memberships**

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