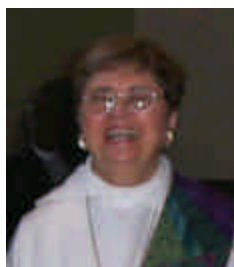


ALDA-GS News

Winter 2007



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Dear ALDA friends,

On December 2, 2006, ALDA-GS held its annual fall workshop at the East Brunswick Library. It was a huge success with about forty people attending, an all-time high.

The workshop consisted of three presentations: Judy Ginsberg presented "Today's Assistive Technology". Judy was able to relate the technology to her own life which made her presentation very personal as well as knowledgeable. Joey Garth presented "Adaptive Mobile Phone Communications". The subject of cell phones and other new communication technologies was well presented with power point and clear descriptions. Joey made us aware of what a fast-changing market this is and how we can explore it for our own needs. Carol Granaldi presented "Touching Someone Through your Local Library". Carol taught us how we can use our libraries to reach out to those who may need to learn about hearing loss. CART (Computer Assisted Real Time) captioning, assistive listening devices and sign language interpreters were provided to meet the varying needs among us. After the presentation, we enjoyed a light but good lunch.

I want to thank the Board members who helped me prepare for the event and on the day itself. Special thanks to Richard O'Neill and Darshan Arora for helping carry goods and equipment from the parking lot to the meeting room, and back again afterwards.

On April 28 we will again meet at the East Brunswick Library from 10:30 AM till 2 PM. This is our annual celebration of ourselves and our outreach. This year, we will celebrate our Dozenth Birthday Party. Our speaker will be Craig Barth, M.A., CCC-A, FAAA, whose topic is "Benchmarks for Successful Hearing aid Fittings"

Mr. Barth has a long history of involvement in the deaf, late-deafened and hard of hearing communities. He frequently participates in discussions on our listserv and answers our questions in a knowledgeable way. We will be honored to have him with us on April 28.

Because of health reasons, Scott Christern can no longer fill his position of Vice President with ALDA-GS. Scott was among our founders. He has many friends among ALDA-GS members and we all join in sending him wishes for healing and strength. Our Past President, Eileen Hollywood, who is our nominations chairperson, suggested new member, Debbie Erickson, to take over the post of vice president. I am delighted that Debbie was willing to step in and fill this post. Read more about Debbie on page 3. Please plan to attend on April 28 and give Debbie a big welcome.

The rest of the Board remains the same for the next term. A complete board listing can always be found on page 2 of this newsletter.

Cont. page 10

ALDA-GS
Association of Late-Deafened Adults-
Garden State

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Editor:
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908-832-5083 CapTel

We welcome advertisements, articles, and information.

E-mailed articles preferred, no faxes please.
Other submissions must be clearly written or typed double-spaced and sent to:

Editor, ALDA-GS
3 Tamarack Farm Lane,
Califon, NJ 07830-3415

Calendar

April 28, 2007

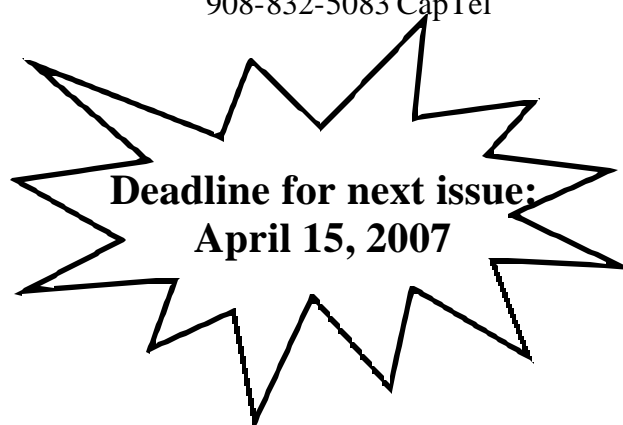
ALDA-GS
Dozenth Birthday Party
East Brunswick Public Library
10 AM till 2 PM

Speaker: Craig Barth, M.A., CCC-A-FAAA
"Benchmarks for successful hearing aid fittings"
Light lunch and birthday cake to follow.
Contact: Sheila Shuford
scshuford@optonline.net
973.027.5554 CapTel

May 20, 2007

ALDA-NJ Social
2 PM

To be held at the home of
Jeff Coppolo, Saddle Brook
Contact: Elinore Bullock
elinorebullock7@earthlink.net
908-832-5083 CapTel



Welcome
New Member

Rev. Kathy Deats,
Flanders, NJ

The opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the organization. Each article has been written from an individual member's viewpoint.

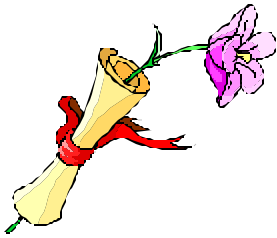
MEET OUR NEW VICE PRESIDENT, DEBBIE ERICKSON

Editor's Note: On the recommendation of Eileen Hollywood, ALDA-GS's past president, Sheila Shuford, our current president, has appointed Debbie Erickson to serve as our Vice President for the coming year. All other board members will stay in place. We regret that Scott Christern is no longer able to serve as vice president and thank him for his past loyalty. We welcome Debbie aboard.

Debbie Erickson, a resident of Mahwah for the past eighteen years, is relatively new to ALDA-GS. A progressive hearing loss, which began fifteen years ago, affects her auditory nerve. The mother of three grown children, she returned to school and graduated from New York University with a Masters in Social Work in 2005. She currently works with children in a school for Classified Students.

Debbie says, "Life is a journey where we often find ourselves in unexpected places, but if we open our eyes and settle ourselves into our new surroundings we often find a beauty that was hidden, people who inspire us, and unforeseen opportunities

She looks forward to getting to know us.



ALDA-GS SCHOLARSHIP TO BE AWARDED

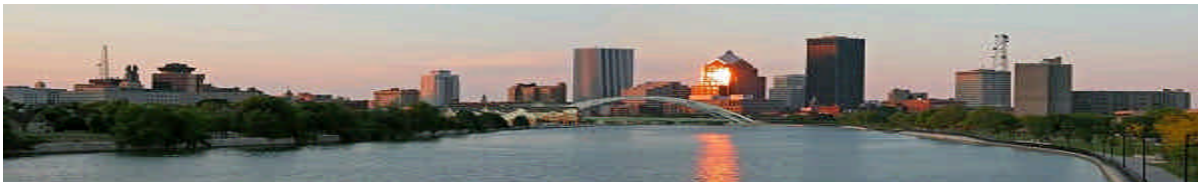
We are pleased to announce that ALDA-GS will once again award a scholarship to a deaf or hard of hearing high school student or adult who resides in New Jersey and has been accepted at an accredited college, university or trade school for the year 2007.

This year, our award is for \$2000.

Applications are available online at: elinorebullock7@earthlink.net. Please follow instructions if the Spamblocker is activated.

Or write Diana Fanuel, Scholarship Chair, 413 Valley View, Pompton Plains, NJ 07444
aldafann@hotmail.com

She will mail you a hard copy



ALDA-CON 2007

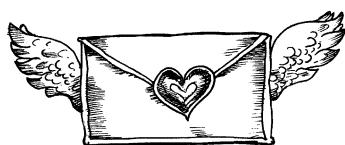
Rochester, NY

Sept. 26-30

Details to follow on ALDA, Inc website.

www.alda.org

[Call for Papers now ongoing: For more info: sweetsigns@comcast.net](mailto:sweetsigns@comcast.net)



AN OPEN LETTER TO ELINORE BULLOCK

From Nancy Kingsley

Thank you for your lovely sendoff to me in the ALDA-GS news (which, as usual, is a wonderful issue, and shows that ALDA-NJ will be in great hands with you at the helm). I enjoyed my advocacy work in New Jersey and will miss my many friends and colleagues. I also want to thank ALDA-GS, President Sheila Shuford, for her kind words as well

I've begun "learning the ropes" in my new hometown of Lancaster, Pennsylvania. My daughter Wendy (who lives with me, along with her two children) very thoughtfully gave me a GPS system for my car, so I can find my way around without fearing that I'll somehow end up in Maryland, since I have no sense of direction! The system is both visual and auditory, so it's not necessary to be able to hear to use it, but I find it very helpful to hear the beeps (via my CI) that indicate when to make turns. I miss New Jersey's self-service gas stations (gas is also more expensive here), but the outlet shopping is great, and the horse-drawn Amish buggies create a quaint country look.

It's interesting to compare hearing loss services with New Jersey's. There are no captioned live theater performances or captioned movie showings in Lancaster, but Philadelphia (about an hour and a quarter away) has some captioned shows and open-captioned movies.

Pennsylvania has a service that's lacking in New Jersey--an agency called Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services, with locations in various parts of the state, including Lancaster.

The listings of houses of worship in Lancaster County's newspaper depict the wheelchair, assistive listening, and interpreting symbols to indicate which congregations have each of these forms of access. Of the 198 listed congregations, 148 are wheelchair accessible, and 58 of those with wheelchair access also have an assistive listening system. Two additional congregations that are not wheelchair-accessible have an assistive listening system, and three provide all three forms of access--wheelchair, assistive listening, and interpreting. Some denominations do a better job of providing hearing access than others--for example, 8 of 12 Presbyterian churches have assistive listening systems, but none of 12 Catholic churches do.

The main office of the Office for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (Pennsylvania's equivalent of NJ's Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing) is in Harrisburg (the capital), about 45 minutes from Lancaster, and there are three regional offices (however, the latter only have TTY phone numbers). Like DDHH, the ODHH has an Advisory Council, and four of its members must be deaf or hard of hearing. Lancaster has a Hearing Loss Association chapter, which I plan to attend (there's also a state association, as in New Jersey), but there's no ALDA group anywhere in the state.

I'm glad I'll be able to keep in touch with you and my other NJ friends through cyberspace, and I also hope to return for occasional visits.

Love,
Nancy Kingsley

Elinore's response: So good to hear from you Nancy, and to learn that you're finding your own niche over there. Nice about the GPS, but honey, everyone knows that New Jersey is where the sun comes up and Ohio is where it goes down! You can tell that I'm jealous of your GPS, but grateful that you told us that it can work for those who can hear beeps. Y'know, you can get pretty lost in NJ, too!

Enjoy those buggies and the country life, Nancy, but don't forget to do something about the lack of an ALDA chapter in PA. That state needs you!



BUYING A HEARING AID? BUYING TIPS FOR THE FIRST-TIMER by Carol M. Granaldi

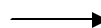
Buying a hearing aid for the first time can be very confusing and baffling for most people. There are so many variables in types, brands, and prices that it is a daunting task for most first-time hearing aid purchasers. During our lifetimes, we may buy various familiar appliances such as refrigerators and computers often enough to be comfortable with the types, brands and prices, so we have some experience in making good decisions based on hindsight or purchase satisfaction. Here is some information which should help you with buying a hearing aid.

Your hearing aid dispenser should be provided with an audiogram taken by a qualified CCC-A (or higher) audiologist who uses a sound-proof booth with calibrated testing equipment. Testing should minimally include, but not necessarily be limited to, an audiogram. An audiogram should at least include a pure tone test by air and bone conduction and speech reception and discrimination tests. The audiogram results determine the nature(origin) and degree of one's hearing loss. Some forms of hearing loss are medically correctible so a referral to an otolaryngologist (ENT) may be appropriate. However, for most cases of nerve (sensorineural) hearing loss, a hearing aid is the most appropriate form of help. From the audiometric testing, the audiologist should be able to make recommendations as to the type and style of hearing aid and degree of your hearing loss to provide you with the greatest remedy for your hearing loss. Lifestyle is also a consideration when choosing a hearing aid.

For example, for many simpler mild to moderate hearing losses, one might be fitted adequately with an analog hearing aid, which is available in BTE (Behind The Ear), ITE (In The Ear), ITC (In The Canal) or CIC (Completely In The Canal) models. These analog hearing aids can be lower in cost than those which are digital, but then have fewer features. One may ask to try the analog hearing aid first, if an analog model matches the type of hearing loss and if the specific model is still being manufactured. Analog hearing aids should provide a T-Coil, and direct audio input (DAI) microphone capability. There are, however, now more digital models being manufactured today than analog models.

If one's hearing loss is more complex or more demanding, then perhaps a digital BTE, ITE, ITC, CIC or the newer (OF) Open Fit aid may be needed. The digital aids have a wider range of features, including being programmable for a number of listening situations, such as emphasis on higher or lower frequencies, noise suppression, and directional microphones which adjust to various noise environments. Digital models easily connect to accessories such as an FM assistive listening device (ALD), direct audio input (DAI) lapel mic, separate remote control which is worn on the wrist, carried in a pocket, or even worn around the neck on a chain. Whenever technically possible a T-Coil (Telephone Coil) should always be included and should always be included as part of the hearing aid's cost. The more features added, and the higher degree of technological sophistication, of course, will correspond to a higher price. Prices will vary in affordability from manufacturer to manufacturer.

When cost is a factor, always try the lower cost hearing aid first. If not satisfactory, then work upwards over the trial period. A hearing aid dispenser's motivation should be to help you hear to the best of your ability with a hearing aid that has been thoughtfully chosen with the most appropriate and effective options best suited to your needs. That is, you should not be "oversold," nor "undersold." Beware of a dispenser who attempts to sell you a high-priced



Hearing Aids, cont.

hearing aid. Insist upon a thorough explanation, in layperson's terms, as to why this instrument is best suited for you and your needs.

Especially in the beginning, it's important to spend time with a dispenser and to return for hearing aid adjustments and to compare different sound settings. You and your dispenser should work together to achieve the best hearing situation for you, instead of buying a pricey aid with no follow up. Remember, not all hearing aids can remediate every form of hearing loss. If your hearing loss requires a more powerful hearing aid, and a BTE is indicated, don't succumb to vanity and insist on an ITE, or CIC hearing aid for cosmetic reasons. Also, remember that motivation on your part to adjust to newly-heard sound is important and takes time.

As part of your office visit, you should be provided with a copy of your hearing test taken by a Licensed Audiologist. Non-Audiologist dispensers may have a staff Audiologist (defined by the CCC-A or FAAA designation) who will test your hearing prior to fitting a hearing aid. If your hearing is tested at this dispenser's site, you should receive a copy of your audiogram. In recent years, the trend is towards a licensed dispenser/audiologist providing the total service, and many have acquired a FAAA and AuD certification. These credentials should be posted in a prominent manner on the office wall.

Be watchful of wording that "cost of audiogram is applied to the price of any hearing aid purchased in this office." This is not considered to be a desirable sales procedure. Sometimes a hearing test is medically recommended and might be paid for by your medical insurer. If you or your insurance pays for the Complete Audiologic Evaluation, you have a legal right to the audiogram. On the other hand, with bundled hearing tests, you do not have that legal right. With a copy of the hearing test in your possession, you may compare it with previous hearing tests or seek a second opinion.

An area which sometimes is overlooked is to ask your spouse, family member or significant other to accompany you if possible. Oftentimes, when one does not hear well, or may have trouble remembering what was said, having another person with you to observe the proceedings may be beneficial. It's helpful to write down some notes about what is being said, or to assist with difficulties in understanding instructions. Hearing loss involves not only the person who cannot hear, but also one's spouse, significant other or family member.

Here is a short list of items you should consider:

HEARING AID PURCHASE "PUNCH LIST"

1. STYLE OF AID -- ITE (in the ear), BTE (behind the ear), ITC (In The Canal), CIC (Completely in Canal), or Open Fit. Price ranges vary for each style.
2. ANALOG - DIGITAL? -- Are available in BTE, ITE, ITC, CIC and the newer Open Fit styles. (see paragraph 3 & 4 above).
3. DOES AID HAVE A T-COIL? Important for telephone use, and use of assistive listening equipment.
4. FITTING CHARGES? -- Is the earmold included in the price?

5. BUNDLED SERVICES? -- Follow-up visits, adjustments, consultations, educational material, included in the price?

6. POST FITTING VISITS? -- How many visits, how many weeks/months period?

7. WARRANTY? -- 1, 2, 3, years? Loss/damage of aid?

8. TRIAL PERIOD? -- 30 to 60 days is preferable, not required by law, but competitive edge for dispensers to provide even longer.

9. FREE BATTERIES? -- Dispensers which provide free batteries for a period of time is a competitive edge, so ask.

10. DEXTERITY ISSUES? -- Can the aid be adjusted with easy-to-use buttons and dials? Can the aid be used with a remote attachment? This is important when there are dexterity, arthritis, nerve damage, finger rigidity, etc. issues.

11. BRAND NAME RECOGNITION? -- Many large, popular brand names such as: Oticon, Phonak, Widex, Siemens, etc. are advertised in trade journals, and magazines oriented to deaf and hard of hearing people. These brands are often globally available and may provide repair or replacement services for those who are travelers. (mention of these names is not an endorsement).

12. RETURN POLICY FEE? -- Some dispensers charge a return fee -- could be as high as \$300 if the aid is returned because it's not satisfactory.

13. SALES CONTRACT? -- Ask to see the sales contract to check for warranties, return policy fee, waivers, etc. etc. Watch for very small print.

14. LOANER AVAILABLE? -- When hearing aids need to be repaired or sent back to the manufacturer for reprogramming or adjustments, will your dispenser have a loaner available for you? What is the loaner fee per day or week?

16. AUDIOGRAM COPY? -- Important to proper fitting of the hearing aid.

If you have a complaint about your hearing aid dispenser's sales procedure or feel that his/her service was inadequate or unprofessional, in New Jersey you may file your complaint to:

NEW JERSEY HEARING AID DISPENSING COMMITTEE (HADEC)
124 HALSEY ST., NEWARK, NJ 07101,
Renee Clark, Executive Director
phone: (973) 504-6331 Voice

Jenny Beilis wants to share the below website goldmine with you. Thank you, Jenny.

GROUP SUPPORT

Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) www.hearing-loss.org/chapters/index.asp
or 301-657-2248 (voice or TTY)

Association of Late Deafened Adults (ALD) www.alda.org or 866-402-2532 (v or TTY)

Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (AG Bell)
www.agbell.org or 202-337-5220 (voice)

INTERNET GROUPS

Say What Club: www.saywhatclub.com

Beyond Hearing <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Beyond-Hearing>
and click "Join this group."

INFORMATION

Deafness Research Foundation www.drf.org

The Center for Hearing Loss Help www.hearinglosshelp.com

**The National Institute on Deafness
and Other Communication Disorders** Call 800-241-1044

READING MATERIAL

Living with Hearing Loss. Marcia Dugan, 2003. ISBN: 156368134X \$13.95

**The Consumer Handbook on Hearing Loss and Hearing Aids: A Bridge
to Healing.** Richard Carmen, Au.D. (Editor), 2004. ISBN: 096661821668 Paper-
back \$18.05

Overcoming Hearing Aid Fears: The Road to Better Hearing, John Burkey, 2003.
ISBN: 0813533104 \$17.95

Your Guide to Better Hearing Publication from Better Hearing Institute; an overview of how
hearing loss affects us.

"Your Guide to Hearing Aids" Publication from Better Hearing Institute assists in un-
derstanding hearing aids and how to achieve maximum use of the aids.

www.betterhearing.org Order: 702-684-3391

Write: Better Hearing Institute, Suite 420, 515 King Street, Alexandria, VA 22314



WORKSHOP REPORT— DECEMBER 2, 2006

Forty people attended our 2006 workshop. There were several new faces among them, including two student interpreters..

Many thanks to Darshan Arora and Richard O'Neill who helped carry stuff into the meeting room from the parking lot, and back out again afterwards. They helped set up the chairs, too.

Judy Ginsberg, a consultant of assistive listening devices at The Fair Lawn Deaf Program, demonstrated a variety of devices to help those who cannot hear. A baby cry alarm flasher, body pagers, FM systems, conference microphone, the PockeTalker, and a device to use with the car radio that would also enable the hearing-impaired driver to understand people in the backseat, were among the devices she demonstrated. Judy also told how she used those things in her own life. She encouraged the attendees to visit the Fair Lawn Deaf Program if they wanted further information. The web address for this program is: <http://www.deafvision.net/fldp> The phone numbers are: 201-794-5505 (Voice or TTY) 201-703-1120 (Fax)

Judy also fetched an FM system from The Library for the Blind and Handicapped for those who might need it. Several people seemed to be making the most of this assistance, including me. (Elinore) Chrissy Olsen returned them to the library for us.

Joey Garth, of Garth Wireless, told us about the Sidekick, Blackberry, Motorola Q and Treo 500 phone systems and explained the various carriers. He advised us to check the reception of the various carriers in our own homes before choosing one. He listed the features of each phone. He said all cell phones will be hearing aid compatible soon. He told us that if we buy Blackberry through Aparna Lele, Account Manager, Sprint in NJ for Data plan only, we would get the **Sprint** relay as a free feature. For more detailed information, go to: <http://www.garthwireless.com/> FAX: 1-908-879-0878

We paused for lunch and a socialization time. Sheila had brought a delightful variety of sandwich makings, complete with luscious croissants and elegant Cape Cod potato chips. Eileen brought soda and cookies, and Diana picked up containers of America's best-tasting coffee from Dunkin Donuts. Providing the coffee this way was a first for us and made that job so much easier. It should become a regular way to do the coffee. Elinore brought the paper goods and ice.

After lunch, Carol Granaldi, a long-time advocate for the rights of late-deafened people, told us about her experience in presenting a Hearing Awareness program at her local library in New Egypt. She had a display of materials, including a proclamation from the mayor, to inspire us. The purpose of her presentation was to encourage others to do the same at our own local libraries and thereby reach out to those who may need our help. She took us through the process step-by-step.

Meeting adjourned at 2 PM.

President's Corner, cont.

The rest of the Board remains the same for the next term. A complete Board listing can always be found on page 2 of this newsletter.

I want to give special recognition to Elinore Bullock. She is an honorary, but non-voting Board member because of her position as editor of this newsletter. She is much more than the editor, as she adds her expertise to many of our discussions and hers is a most valued voice.

As I write this we are in the process of seeking candidates for our scholarship. This year, we are offering a \$2000 scholarship to a deaf, late-deafened or hard of hearing New Jersey resident. See page 3 for more information.

I welcome input from all you good people who make up our membership and help us grow to better serve you, advocate, educate and support the late-deafened population in New Jersey and the surrounding areas.

I wish you all the warmth and beauty of the spring and hope to see on April 28.

Peace.
Sheila Shuford



Mark your calendars!

Come to our
Dozenth Birthday Party
With
Guest Speaker
Craig Barth, M.A., CCC-A, FAAA

[http://craigbarthaudiologist.com/
default.aspx](http://craigbarthaudiologist.com/default.aspx)



Who will speak on
"Benchmarks for a Successful
Hearing Aid Fitting"

April 28th, 2007
10:30 AM till 2 PM
At the East Brunswick Library
Lunch included
CART, interpreters and
Assistive devices provided
Courtesy of the DDHH

Flyers to follow in April

