



A Letter From the ^{New} President

I'm so proud to have been elected to serve as President of HLA-LA for the next year. It will be hard to fill the shoes of Valerie Stern. How she managed to handle the duties while giving birth to Aidan and starting her new job at GLAD is beyond me!

Thank you Val!

I am grateful that I step into the task knowing I have the other nine members of the Steering Committee to help me achieve our goals.

I'm also proud of HLA-LA. We've come a long way from that original meeting of the seven of us.

However, our mission remains the same: we want to reach

out to the million people in the Los Angeles area who have a hearing loss. Many of those people have no idea that they are not alone in their day-to-day struggle. We want to reach out to their family, friends and co-workers who also find their lives impacted by hearing loss. We want to support each other, share our fears and frustrations, our knowledge and successes. And we want to have fun while we're doing it!

We have accomplished so much during these past two years. As of this writing we have 88 people on our Yahoo group. We regularly have 30 or more people at our monthly meetings. We've worked together and played together. We've shared, supported, laughed and cried and become a "family." As much as I am proud of what we've achieved so far, I am also excited by what the future holds for HLA-LA. We have an opportunity to build on these first two years and become even more successful in reaching out to others. Because we know how much this group has meant to us, we are passionate about setting new goals and starting new projects.

At our first official Steering Committee meeting – the first since we held elections – we discussed selecting three projects for our group to accomplish during this next year, three goals to shoot for:

One is a "Welcome" package for everyone who comes to a meeting the first time. This could include things like a copy of the "Hearing Loss Magazine," the newsletter and a list of resources available in our library.

Another is putting together something like the Hospital Kit that some of you purchased from Nanci

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PAT

A Letter From the ^{Outgoing} President

As I confidently pass the reins to Pat, the new President and face of our organization, I want to reflect a moment on HLA-LA's journey up till now.

In October of 2004, seven of us transformed a desire for a place where hard of hearing Angelinos and their families could socialize and learn into SHHH-LA. The two years since have seen much change: our name, some of our founders' marital, parental, and cochlear implant status, and, not least, our membership rolls.



VALERIE

I can only look back with pride on HLA-LA's growth. It has fulfilled my fondest hopes, and maintained itself as a source not only of important information for the usually packed room of monthly meeting attendees, but also as a place where open discussion and emotional support are an unwritten part of every agenda.

I'm thrilled to say that it all turned out at least as well as I'd hoped.

We've developed a vibrant, top-notch newsletter, a dynamic website, a strong outreach strategy, and successful fundraisers to pay for it all!

We haven't always met our self-imposed deadlines, but that's OK – we're volunteers. We're doing the best we can, and we're learning.

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OUR FIRST-EVER ELECTION RESULTS

Once upon a time, there were just the seven of us, who left our self-help group because it had become overly bureaucratic. We decided to organize our new group loosely, without fixed titles or duties, and just see what happened.

But after two years, we felt it was time to un-anoint ourselves and actually hold elections for what we'd come to call the Steering Committee. (Although calling it a committee implies a level of organization that never existed. It was like a raft where anyone who could climb in could grab an oar and steer a new course at any time.)

So on September 23, elections were held, and the first official, 10-member Steering Committee was seated. The committee met a few weeks later, elected a President, and determined (via drawing) who would serve for one year, and who would serve for two. (Next year, five seats will open, and a new President will be selected by the committee.)

We're proud to announce the new Steering Committee (profiles start on p. 2):

ONE-YEAR TERM

Alicia Fernandez
Mike Kaplan
Chloé Parent
Mary Rappazzo
Lisa Yuan

TWO-YEAR TERM

Katherine Burns
Diane Gross
Valerie Stern
Danny Tubbs
Pat Widman (P)

KATHERINE “KAT” BURNS

Committee Member Since: 2004
City: Glendale
Occupation: Technical Editor
Type of Hearing Loss: Severe high frequency progressive
Device: two digital hearing aids
Age Noticed Hearing Loss: Mid 30s
Favorite ALD: I’m still trying to figure out my loop system with my new hearing aids!
Hearing-loss story: One of the newest employees at my work, who’s about 20, came by and said: “D’ya hababubaban...?”
 Me: “Pardon?”
 “A bubaban...”
 “A WHAT?!?”
 “BUBABAN!”

I sat there for a few seconds and finally figured it out. She wanted a rubber band! To cover my embarrassment and silence, I asked, “Big or little?” I only had one size anyway. Why couldn’t she go to the supply closet like everyone else?!?

Profound Thought: Life can only be understood backwards, but must be lived forwards.

ALICIA FERNANDEZ

Committee Member Since: 2004
City: Monrovia
Occupation: Art Director / Blue Sky Creative
Type of Hearing Loss: Progressive genetic hearing loss
Device: one CI

Age Noticed Hearing Loss: Late 20s
Favorite ALD: Captions (even though it’s not technically an ALD)

Hearing-loss story: Before I got my CI, I traveled to Argentina with my family. There were six of us and walking around was a challenge since Buenos Aires has tiny sidewalks which often made us walk single file. At one point, we were heading into the subway. I promptly led the way downstairs. As I got to the subway platform, I realized none of my family was around. I was alone. I walked up the stairs. No one. I stood there fuming. My family changed plans mid-stream and never made sure I understood. My brother-in-law ran up looking worried and guilty. “We forgot you couldn’t hear us!” I glared at everyone the appropriate amount of time. After that I made sure not to lead the way.

Profound Thought: “Not everything that is faced can be changed. But nothing can be changed until it is faced.”

— James Arthur Baldwin

DIANE GROSS

Committee Member Since: 2006
City: East Granada Hills
Occupation: Professional volunteer
Type of Hearing Loss: A component of Usher Syndrome, which also affects my vision.
Device: two analog hearing aids. Scheduled for CI surgery Nov. 8.
Age Noticed Hearing Loss: Diagnosed at age 7; left hearing aid, age 11; right ear, 18.
Favorite ALD: Toss-up between Phonak Handi-Mic personal FM, and the large print TTY.
Hearing-loss Story: The time mom hung up the phone and said “Cole started summer school today” but I heard it as “Cole has the stomach flu.” Around here, we call that “misunderhearing.”

Profound Thought: “Everything makes perfect sense once you figure it out”; “A hard part of getting older is trying to put on a pair of socks”

MICHAEL KAPLAN

Committee Member Since: 2004
City: Monrovia
Occupation: Copywriter / Blue Sky Creative
Hearing Loss: none
Favorite ALD: heads-up captioning device being developed by SightLine Media.

Hearing-loss Story: About 15 years ago, when I first worked with my now-wife, Alicia, we were at an office party, when I tried to make a joke about the so-called “sexy butt” of our hostess’ dog. At this point, I’m not sure either one of us realized Alicia was losing her hearing. Anyway, Alicia got mad, thinking I was talking about our co-worker in a crude way; she missed the part about the dog! We laugh now, but not then.

Profound Thought: It’s not the size of the dog in the fight, it’s the size of the fight in the dog.

CHLOE PARENT

Committee Member Since: 2005
City: Los Angeles
Occupation: Graphic Designer/Art Director
Type of Hearing Loss: Bi-lateral (left ear deaf from birth, right ear with severe hearing loss)
Device: Hearing Aid

Age Noticed Hearing Loss: left ear, early childhood; right ear, about 6 years ago.

Favorite ALD: captioning on movies and email if they can be considered ALDs; Hearing aid, I could not communicate without it.

Hearing-loss Story: There are TOO many!!!

Profound Thought: Never think that you are half of a person because you have hearing loss. You are a person and a half, actually, because you can face more challenges than any normal person would. Never let people decide for you.

“Mom hung up the phone and said, ‘Cole started summer school today.’

But I heard it as ‘Cole has the stomach flu.’

Around here, we call that ‘misunderhearing.’”



KATHERINE



MIKE



ALICIA



DANNY

“For 30 minutes, the guy kept thinking his house alarm or car alarm was going off.

I finally realized it was [the feedback from] my hearing aids, but I was too embarrassed to tell him the truth! So I just let him think his alarm was broken.”

MARY A. RAPPAZZO

Committee Member Since: 2006

City: Glendale

Occupation: Fine Artist

Type of Hearing Loss: Nerve

Device: Hearing Aids

Age Noticed Hearing Loss: 9 months.

Hearing Loss Story: I had a message on my answering machine. I listened a dozen times, and thought, “It could be so and so.” That person was interested in me. I called back and left a message saying that I wasn’t interested.

A few weeks later, I got an email from one of my closest friends, asking if I got her phone call a few weeks back. I realized it was the message I couldn’t get. My friend had called crying because she broke-up with her boyfriend. Calling the wrong person and missing the opportunity to talk to my friend was the most embarrassing thing ever!

Profound Thought: I often wonder about the violence and anger in our society. These people probably never got the opportunity to resolve their issues and carry their anger. I am grateful that we have a group like Hearing Loss Association of America to find our place.

VALERIE STERN

Committee Member Since: 2004

City: West Los Angeles

Occupation: Hard of Hearing Specialist, Greater Los Angeles Agency on Deafness

Type of Hearing Loss: Progressive sensorineural hearing loss

Device: one CI

Age Noticed Hearing Loss: 16

Favorite ALD: Wireless cochlear implant FM system and real time captioning

Hearing-Loss Story: I was driving with my husband Willy, my dad (in the back seat) and my dog, Pandora. I had opened the window in the back so Pandora could put her head out. As I was getting on the freeway, I decided to close it. Suddenly, my dad started yelling what sounded like “Close the window now!” He kept yelling louder and louder. Finally, Willy reached over to open the window I’d closed. My dad had put his hand out to protect Pandora, but she pulled her head free before the window touched her. Dad ended up with his finger stuck. As he was yelling to open the window, I heard he wanted me to close it!

Profound Thought: Attitude can be the only true disability.

DANNY TUBBS

Committee Member Since: 2004

City: Glendale

Occupation: Creative Director,

Genius Products Home Video

Type of Hearing Loss: Hearing Spouse

Hearing-loss Story: Three hard of hearing ladies driving somewhere near London:

First lady: Is this Wembley?

Second Lady: No, it’s Thursday.

Third Lady: Good, me too, let’s stop for a drink.

Profound thought: We joined this group to learn and share information about hearing loss, and what we found was some life-long friends!

PAT WIDMAN

Committee Member Since: 2004

City: Valencia

Occupation: Retired

Type of Hearing Loss: Profound progressive bilateral sensorineural

Device: one CI

Age Noticed Hearing Loss: Mild to moderate loss in left ear as a child. I started to lose hearing in right ear in my late 20s. I was 32 when I had my first major vertigo attack and the real decline started then.

Favorite ALD: Before my Cochlear Implant, I found I was really helped by my personal FM system

Hearing-loss Story: My then three-year-old grandson had a deaf cat. When he learned Grandma had “broken ears,” he wanted to know if I could tell him what Floppy was saying! I thought it was funny and cute — but I think everything my grandkids do is cute and funny.

Profound Thought: Profound thoughts? Me????

LISA YUAN

Committee Member Since: 2006

City: Torrance

Occupation: Graphic Designer

Type of Hearing Loss: Severe bilateral sensorineural

Device: BTE Hearing Aid

Age First Noticed Hearing Loss: 20

Favorite ALD: None

Hearing-loss Story: I went on a date right after getting new hearing aids, not knowing the aids were giving off all kinds of feedback. For about 30 minutes, the guy kept thinking his house alarm or car alarm was going off. It was driving him crazy. I finally realized it was my hearing aids, but I was too embarrassed at this point to tell him the truth! So I just let him think his alarm was broken.

Profound Thought: Never mistake hearing loss for stupidity!



MARY



LISA



DIANE



CHLOÉ

Hearing Impaired vs. First Responders:

WHEN HEARING IS A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH

By DIANE GROSS

What if... you are in a car accident and your hearing aids or CI processor are knocked loose or damaged?

What if... you're home alone while your neighborhood is being evacuated due to a bomb scare or chemical spill?

What if... there's a major earthquake and power is knocked out?

What if, indeed.

In all three of these cases, we hard of hearing people have one thing in common: How would we communicate with "first responders" — the police, firefighters and paramedics who are first to arrive on scene to assess the situation and give aid? Just as importantly, how would they communicate with us?

These and related issues were covered in a day-long workshop organized by CEPIN – the Community Emergency Preparedness Information Network – attended by myself, Alicia, Pat and Ray.

The workshop, held in September at the Eagle Rock home of the Greater Los Angeles Agency on Deafness, was developed by Telecommunications for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Inc (TDI) with a grant from the Department of Homeland Security.

The purpose was to bring together various groups most likely to have communication difficulties in a major emergency: deaf, hard of hearing and deaf-blind citizens, and uniformed first responders.

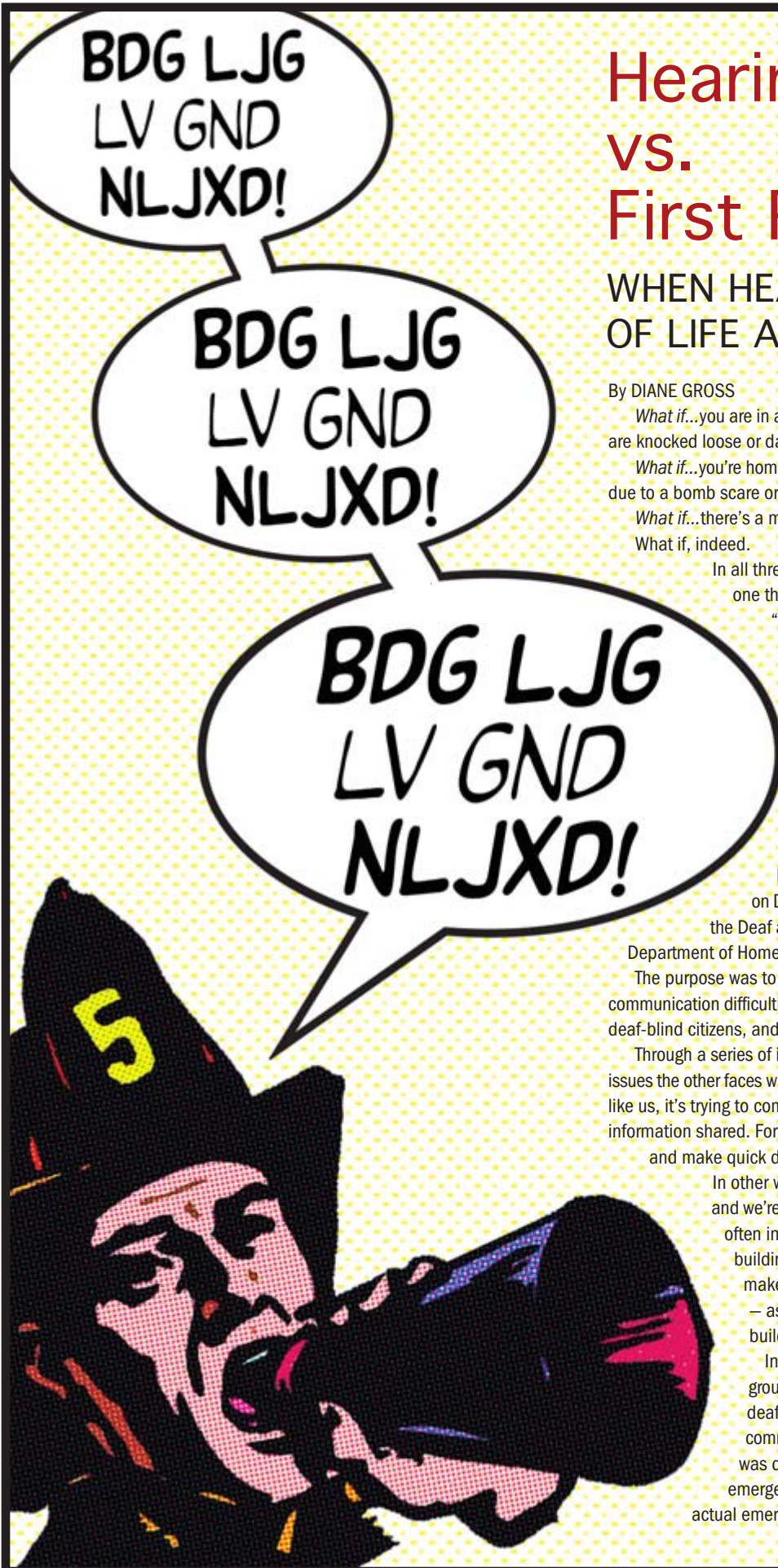
Through a series of interactive exercises, each group learned about the issues the other faces when dealing with an emergency situation. For people like us, it's trying to communicate in a way that makes sense and gets information shared. For first responders, it's to assess the overall situation and make quick decisions.

In other words, first responders are focused on saving lives, and we're focused on finding out what's going on. The two are often in conflict. If a fireman is rushing through a burning building pounding on doors to evacuate, does he stop to make sure the hearing impaired resident in 2C heard it — assuming he even knows a HOH resident lives in the building?

In one interesting exercise, we were split up into five groups, each containing at least one first responder, one deaf, one deaf-blind and one HOH. We had to try to communicate without using ASL or captioning. The result was difficult and frustrating — and this was a calm, non-emergency situation. Imagine what it would be like in an

actual emergency!

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WAYS TO GET MORE AND BETTER EMERGENCY INFO



There are any number of steps we can take to become better prepared to deal with both emergencies and first-responders. Information about emergency preparedness can be found both on the web and in various local, state and national publications.

But working with first-responders is a tougher challenge, and the CEPIN workshop was only a first step. Some tips that came out of our sessions include:

■ **GET TO KNOW YOUR LOCAL FIRE AND POLICE DEPARTMENTS.** It might take a bit of courage, but introduce yourself to your local police precinct and firehouse, and let them know about your hearing. Ask them, in case of emergency, to make sure you're alerted. It won't always work, but it's a good, pro-active start.

■ **VOLUNTEER TO TAKE PART IN DISASTER-PREPAREDNESS EXERCISES.** Emergency personnel learn about our needs by meeting us, and this is the best way to improve service for us all.

■ **HAVE A SIGN/DECAL, VISIBLE FROM YOUR FRONT DOOR, ALERTING FIRST-RESPONDERS TO YOUR NEEDS.** It's common to see signs alerting first-responders to pets in the home — why not disabilities? A simple decal of an ear with a slash through it should work.

Radio? Yes, Radio.

While weather disasters are less common here in Southern California than, say, Florida, it's best to stay alert. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) broadcasts National Weather Service warnings, watches and other hazard information 24 hours a day.

But, you say, how does a radio help me?

Weather radios now come equipped with text read-outs for disasters, and you can sign-up to receive more in-depth reports via e-mail or your pager. Many of the radios allow you to plug in alerting devices (strobes or shakers) to signal an incoming notice.

Leading models include HomeSafe Model 2005 HS Public Alert and Weather Alert Radio; the Midland WR300 Emergency Alert Weather Radio; and SilentCall Weather Radio WX-67. All cost under \$100.

Soon, look for captioned radio. Radio Data Service already provides station numbers and other info on your car radio's screen) and may expand to include emergency broadcasts and Amber Alerts.



The Hunt for Portable Captioned TVs

With all the state-of-the-art consumer electronics out there, it must be easy to find the right TV set for emergency use, right?

Well, no.

Assuming the electricity is out (a safe assumption following an earthquake or severe storm, the most likely disasters to hit Los Angeles), a portable, battery-operated television is the best way to get information. But most portable sets are smaller than 13-inches, and thus do not require a closed-caption decoder. And while captioning decoders can't add more than a few dollars to the cost of engineering a TV set, not one manufacturer currently offers a battery-powered set *and* closed captions.

The last hold-out was Toshiba, which offered two models as recently as 2004. Both, however, have been discontinued.

Limited quantities of one model (the Toshiba MD9DP1, a 9-inch set with a built-in DVD player) remain available in limited quantities, at inflated

prices. The sets used to cost \$200; now they're selling at twice that.

It seems incredible that no one offers a TV set with these two, off-the-shelf features, but it's true.



The Toshiba 9-inch MD9DP1 was the only portable TV set to offer closed captioning. Until Toshiba scrapped it. There is no replacement.

The 411 About 911

For deaf and hard-of-hearing adults, communicating with the nationwide 911 emergency system is a frustrating experience.

While FCC regulations require all phones (including cell phones) to automatically report their location to emergency operators, text-messaging systems and most relay systems do not send the correct information — or any information in the case of text messages — to police or fire operators.

If you have an emergency — but you can't communicate over a regular phone line — most experts now advise you to simply dial 911 on your land line or cell phone, and leave the connection open. It is policy to send emergency personnel to respond to calls where the line is open but there is no response to questions.

In addition, you can also continually shout out the nature of the emergency without waiting to hear a response. As before, emergency personnel will be sent to your location.

CAPTION UPDATE

Every time we turn around, it seems there's a new captioning system, or some new gizmo that promises to make lives better for the deaf and HOH communities. Now is no exception.

Two breakthroughs — one major, one minor — will be coming soon to a theater near you.

The first may end one of the big frustrations involved with Rear Window Captioning: the plastic viewscreens that never seem to stay where you position them.

Earlier this year, the Media Access Group at WGBH and Boston Light & Sound unveiled a new and improved Reflector, the RWII-23. It's lighter, fits better into theater cupholders, and features a new arm design that both increases adjustability and holds

to meryl@blsi.com.

A far more revolutionary step comes from the newly formed SightLine Media, which has spent several years developing a personal "heads-up" display (similar to ones used in the military) that will make captions seem to "float" in front of the movie screen.

The system, developed at Georgia Tech university, uses PDAs (personal data assistants) that wirelessly download the captions, and feed the info to a "micro-display" that is worn on the head or clipped to eyeglasses.

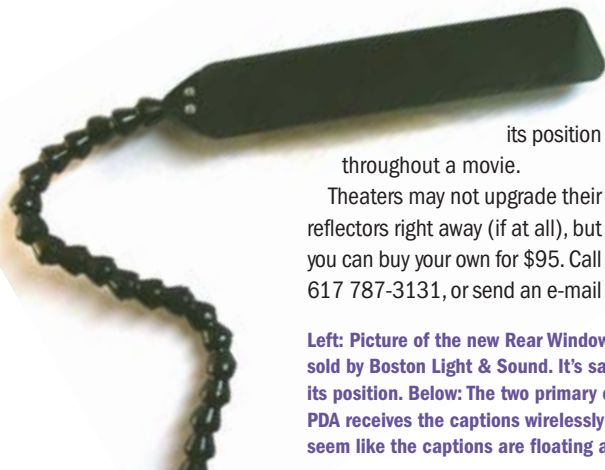
The system is somewhat similar to Rear Window Captioning, but keeps the captions and movie in focus at the same time. And there are multiple advantages. Captions move with your head; the display can't be blocked by other patrons; caption size and color can be customized by the user; and multiple languages can easily be handled at the same showing.

The system has been undergoing tests and demonstrations for the past year, but no official roll-out date has been scheduled.

its position throughout a movie.

Theaters may not upgrade their reflectors right away (if at all), but you can buy your own for \$95. Call 617 787-3131, or send an e-mail

Left: Picture of the new Rear Window Captioning Reflector, developed and sold by Boston Light & Sound. It's said to be lighter and better able to hold its position. Below: The two primary components of the SightLine system: The PDA receives the captions wirelessly; and the tiny micro-display makes it seem like the captions are floating about 18 inches in front of your face.



New PRESIDENT

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Linke-Ellis. This could be a multi-chapter activity, and we are thinking of expanding it to include all sorts of things to help someone deal with their hearing loss. This "Survival Kit" could be sold to audiologists and hearing aid dispensers and would include contact information for our local chapters.

Last, we've discussed a major fundraiser, also to be done with other chapters, that would not only bring in additional funds but would raise awareness for Hearing Loss Association of America. We had hoped to put our energies into the Walk4Hearing in 2007, but unforeseen problems made us rethink the best use of our time, talent and energies.

We hope you will be interested in participating in some of these projects. There is so much more we can do to let people know about HLA-LA. Yes, there is much work to be done, but there's also so much fun ahead! I for one, can't wait to get started!

Outgoing PREZ

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And to top it all off, our members' enthusiasm to step up to the plate when the call goes out proves we're not running out of steam. I extend a hearty welcome as Chloé Parent, Diane Gross, Mary Rappazzo and Lisa Yuan officially join our Steering Committee.

I hope the group can continue to grow and influence people, and continue to be the weekend social group that people with hearing loss in the Los Angeles area look to first.

And while I'm no longer President, I'm proud to still be on the Steering Committee, and I don't plan on going anywhere for a long, long time.

— Valerie Stern, MSW

LIFE OR DEATH

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The hope is that people who attended the workshop left with a better understanding of how to "prepare for, respond to and recover from emergency situations" involving people with different communication needs. We were all urged to not only be prepared personally (a topic covered in the previous HLA-LA newsletter), but to establish a network of friends and neighbors and to plan with local emergency providers so that communication needs can be met.

The workshop was the first step in long-term project. We will be reaching out to local first responders, putting together hospital kits, and bringing in community reps to speak to us.



HEARCenter

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Guide for Parents:



Things most children do at different ages and stages

Birth to 3 Months

Quiets to familiar voices or sounds.

Startles, blinks, stops sucking, cries or wakes up with louder noises.

3 to 6 months

Turns eyes or head toward sounds.

Starts making speech sounds like, “ga,” “ooh” and “ba,” and “p,” “b” and “m” sounds.

6 to 9 months

Responds to name and looks when called.

Understands simple words like, “No,” “Bye-bye.”

Babbles, “da da da, ma ma ma, ba ba ba”

9 to 12 months

Responds to both soft or loud sounds.

Repeats single words and imitates animal sounds.

Points to toys or foods when asked.

12 to 18 Months

Uses 10 or more words.

Follows simple directions like, “Get the ball.”

Points to people, body parts or toys when asked.

Bounces to music

18 to 24 Months

Uses 20 or more words.

Combines two or more words, “More juice.” “What’s that?”

Uses many different consonant sounds at beginning of words

Listens to simple stories and songs

2 Years to 3 Years

Uses two- to three-word sentences

At two years, people can understand what the child says some of the time (50%-75%)

Follows two-step instructions, “Get the ball and put it on the table.”



In late December we received an early holiday gift, thanks to Jeremy Green and Project D.A.T.E. We were able to attend the first-ever Open Captioned musical at the Ahmanson Theatre, “The Drowsy Chaperone.” All the dialogue and lyrics were prominently displayed on an LED screen on the right side of the stage. With seats on the right side of the orchestra section, it was pretty easy to follow along. There was also lively ASL translation. The performance was a funny and exhilarating play-within-a-play homage to the 1920s. A foot-tapping good time was had by all, and no wonder: “Drowsy” went on to win five Tony Awards.

Live Captioning Takes a Bow



Don't we clean up nice? A group pose, *après theatre*: Top row (l-r): WILLY, VAL, GEORGIA, DANNY, KATHERINE, BOB, RAY. Middle: JENNY, NANCY, ELIZABETH. Front: ALICIA, CHRIS, JON, MICHAEL. A sad note: Jenny Carlson passed away in August after battling cancer. She was a good friend and will be deeply missed by those who knew her.

“An unabashed love letter to musical comedy.”

James C. Taylor, Los Angeles Times

After the success of “The Drowsy Chaperone,” the Ahmanson and Project D.A.T.E. brought us a new open-captioned musical on its way to Broadway. Lucky for us, we hit the jackpot again — a world premiere musical by the legendary team of Kander and Ebb (the men behind “Cabaret” and “Chicago”). The subject: a hilarious murder mystery set backstage at a Boston theater.



Classic Musical Comedy



DAVID HYDE PIERCE leaves “Niles” behind to play a Boston detective who’s also a huge theater fan. While solving a murder, he’s not above singing, dancing and falling in love.

Dressed up with somewhere to go: Michael, Alicia, Georgia, Mary, Grace, Diane, Pat, Nanci, Nancy, Sally, and Katherine’s brother Robert were some of our group who saw “Curtains”



GLAD House of Blues Brunch



A special Sunday Gospel Brunch at the House of Blues benefited GLAD. The food was fattening, and the music was deafening. And thanks to Val, the speeches and songs were all captioned and a sizable HOH group joined what had been a strictly deaf affair.



Deaf actors TY GIORDANO (left) and SHOSHANNAH STERN (“Jericho”) were emcees. Right: View of the crowd, including the HLA-LA table (center).

“The show has audiences cheering long before the curtain comes down.” Jonas Schwartz, TheaterMania.com

[Holiday Party '05]

Who was the big winner at The Secret Santa Gift Exchange? We think it was GUS (below), happily munching his Mom's gingerbread house which got passed around but ended up with this happy little boy.



Whether the gifts were tasty, cool, or just plain goofy, the fun was in sharing the holiday spirit and wishing each other all good things for the new year.



Ho! Ho! Holi-Hats!!!



Being an elf is not all it's cracked up to be! ALICIA rolls her eyes at MICHAEL's Santa performance



BETTE ANN has always been in a league of her own and so are her many hats! This one proves the point.

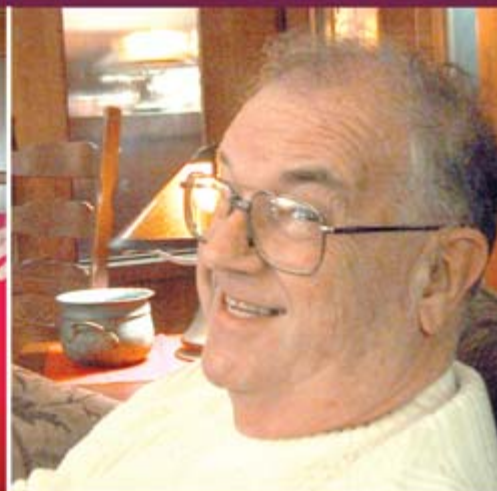


French women look *tres chic* avec les chapeaux. AIDAN shows off her soon-to-be trademark style.



KATHERINE shines as much as the sparkles in her pretty red hat.

Tis the Season To Be Jolly (and close to friends)



The Red Luck Club! Top Row: DANNY, little MICHAEL, big MICHAEL and PAT. Bottom Row: VAL, ALICIA and CHLOE. Right: RAY enjoys the Secret Santa Gift Exchange.

The love is in giving...the fun is in stealing!



NANCI



GEORGIA



DIANE



ARMAND

This bunch all packed up their troubles in their old kit bags and SMILED, SMILED, SMILED for the camera.

Ever seen adults fight over silly gifts? We do every December!



Three lovely ladies posing with their transitory gifts. From left: CHLOE holds onto a basket of breakfast treats; MARY holds what looks like a gift certificate; and DONA clutches a small box. Did they all get to keep their gifts? With this crowd of vultures? Not a chance!



Left: Lovely LISA and her pretty Mom, URANIA.



KENNY and JON talk guy stuff.

Our Santa is easy—naughty boys & girls welcome.

Our goals are to empower, support and enjoy each other. We hope all meetings have a bit of each. We welcome suggestions to make them better.

TOMMY P. HOREJES of GLAD (the Greater Los Angeles Agency on Deafness) shared his expertise on communication technologies. He also encouraged us to stand up for ourselves and offered his help as a Community Advocate.



Who knew learning could be this much fun?



Our members listen intently to Tommy's fascinating technology presentation. We often have a big turnout and make full use of The Hear Center's well-appointed conference room.



Left: "Ladies who lunch" — KATHERINE, PAT, ELIZABETH and BETTE ANN. Right: JO WILSON of The HEAR Center (host to our monthly meetings) came by earlier this year to fill us in on the Center's history and services. Thanks!

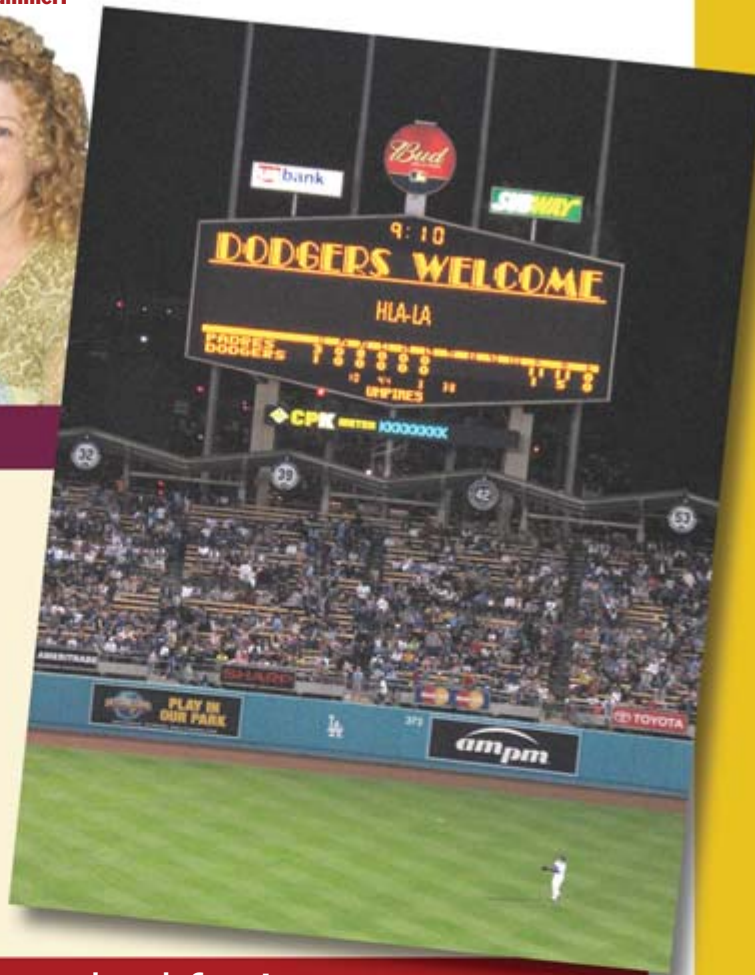
Come to chat, come to laugh...and come hungry!

Sport rituals we love: Super Bowl party at Katherine and Danny's.

Then a group outing to Dodger Stadium late in the summer.

PAT and KATHERINE

realize the game has gone to the dogs!



On the one hand, we picked a date at random, and it turned into one of the biggest games of the year, a clutch playoff battle. On the other hand, the game was over in the middle of the 2nd inning, when the Padres scored eight runs. Fans were still arriving when the LA crowd started leaving. Weird.

But who could complain with a perfect night to see a game, and see our names up in lights.

Lousy game, but ain't we had fun!



CHLOÉ & GUS can't make sense of this American game and frankly neither could the rest of us. NANCY, GEORGIA, SANDY, NANJI & STEVE huddle for the shot, as GRACE (lower right corner) is ready for her close-up.

[Sports]

“A hot dog at the ballpark is better than steak at the Ritz.” Humphrey Bogart

[Fun in the Sun]



Let the sun shine in and let's turn on our BBQ. This is why we love L.A. MICHAEL and ALICIA kicked off the hot season on Memorial Day weekend with a "do" in their backyard. DANNY (left) captured everyone's sunny mood perfectly. Later in the year, DIANE helped us enjoy the dog days of summer partying on her rear deck with friends, buying used books and petting our fave canine companion, Atticus (right).



On Memorial Day, AMBRYN (left) shares travel stories. Center (clockwise): GRACE, DIANE, CAROL & SALLY check out the prior newsletter. More fun than a bucket of monkeys? AIDAN (right) cools off while Dad WILLY looks on.



↑ Memorial Day BBQ Cocktail Party & Book Sale ↓



PAM chats with CAROL (back) while CAROLYN cruises the land deck. JIM shares a laugh with RAY. DIANE and Mom GRACE not only hosted but put on a book sale. A great fundraiser, plus it added literary caché to the partying.

“Spring is nature’s way of saying, let’s party.”

Robin Williams

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coffee mugs and other gear. All proceeds benefit HLA-LA.
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GET INVOLVED WITH US

There are a lot of ways you can get involved with HLA-LA, and almost as many ways for us to get involved with you. What follows is just a sample of what we have to offer:

Check out our website

We are slowly rolling out the features on our group website, <http://www.hla-la.org>. Right now, there are announcements of upcoming events, PDF copies of our newsletters, and links to dozens of useful sources of information. When fully implemented in the coming months, there will be transcripts of past meetings, member profiles and a complete, interactive guide to local facilities for the deaf and hard-of-hearing.

Join our Yahoo "list-serve"

A "list-serve" is an automated mailing list that broadcasts e-mails to everyone who is subscribed. To join our Yahoo list-serve, you just need to register your e-mail address with Yahoo Groups. Then go to the Yahoo home page, click on "Groups" and enter "HLA-LA" in the search field. Follow the on-screen prompts, and you should be good to go.

The list-serve is the primary way our members communicate with each other, and the best way to keep up on upcoming social events, newsworthy developments and more. For many of us, the Yahoo list-serve acts as a sort of "party line" telephone. However, if the constant barrage of messages is too much — we admit, we're a little chatty — you can elect to receive a "digest" version with the day's posts in a single e-mail. Just click "Edit My Membership" on the main Yahoo Group page.

Attend our monthly meetings

We generally meet at 10am, on the fourth Saturday of every month, at The HEAR Center in Old Town Pasadena (301 E. Del Mar). The HEAR Center, which offers audiology services and speech training, is a great facility with a large meeting room and a full kitchen available to us. We provide real-time, open captions at every meeting, so everyone present can follow the conversation. Each meeting features a topic that we can all discuss, or a speaker we can all learn from. And every meeting features a bite to eat.

Occasionally, calendar conflicts require us to change meeting dates and times, or a special event will pre-empt our monthly meeting. Please check our website or our Yahoo List-Serve to confirm meeting times, dates and subject matter.

Donate

We never charge a fee to be a member of HLA-LA, or to attend our meetings. However, we occasionally ask for the generous support of our friends, family, community and yes, our members, to help fund our operations. We need funds to pay captionists, buy projection equipment, to print and distribute this newsletter, to host our website, and to continue our outreach efforts. All contributions are fully tax-deductible.

One fun way to contribute is to buy merchandise through the newly opened HLA-LA store (see above), which features a new line of shirts and merchandise featuring the newly designed HLA and HLA-LA logos. We plan to constantly update and expand our merchandise throughout the year.



www.hla-la.org

c/o Valerie Stern
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