



ALDA Boston – P.O. Box 600622 – Newtonville, MA 02460

Website: www.aldaboston.org

ALDAgram – February 2016

The bitter wind did not deter the hearty members who attended Ellen Perkins' mini-class on "How to Talk to Your Legislators" on Saturday, February 13th at the Lexington library. We were very pleased that Massachusetts Senators James Eldridge and Mike Barrett were able to attend. They and Ellen told us a lot about how the legislative process works followed by a very informative Q&A. Ellen had excellent slides and some very good handouts including a fact sheet about



House Bill 946, An Act Providing Coverage for Hearing Aids. After hearing more about potential budget cuts, all of us were concerned that MCDHH continues to lose staff and resources, (77 positions in 2001 to 40 positions currently). Advocates are asking for funding to reinstate staffing.

Read more at **News of Note** on Page 3.

It's Still Membership Renewal Time

Many thanks to those who have renewed their 2016 membership since the last ALDAgram was printed: Merlyn Cajolet, Ann Canfield, Elizabeth Cappella, Evelyn Flaherty, Majorie Hickey (with a donation), Paddie Hunt, Carol Keenan, Jeanne Kennedy, Michael LaPensee (with a donation), Rebecca Lenick, Betty Lynch (with a donation), Ann Maderer, Harriet Wollman, Sherrie Wile.

If you haven't yet renewed, please take a few minutes to do so now. Dues remain at \$15.00 and our mailing address is at the top of the ALDAgram.



Upcoming ALDA Events

ALDA is going to the dogs at our next ALDA event. Please mark your calendar now and be prepared for a fascinating afternoon at the Lexington library. Carol Agate and Molly will be two of our presenters. **April 9th** is also the date of our Annual Board Meeting, which will take place following the presentations. More information will be coming shortly.



Other Events of Interest

The Central Massachusetts chapter of HLAA is sponsoring a three-part series titled “Navigating Your Hearing Loss. The first in the series is scheduled for Saturday, February 27, from 2:00-4:00 pm at the Northborough Free Library. Each overview/presentation will be followed by an interactive discussion.

Trinity Repertory Company in Providence has added a new open-captioned performance of *To Kill a Mockingbird* on Sunday, March 6 at 2 p.m. If you haven’t been to the Trinity, it’s well worth going and only a short distance from Boston. To reserve OC tickets, call the box office at 401-351-4242.

Sunday, March 20th is the next BEA gathering at the West Suburban YMCA in Newton. Geoff Plant of the Hearing Rehabilitation Foundation will be the speaker. To RSVP, email Barbara Abineri, Chapter Leader at barbabineri@gmail.com.

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Museum of Fine Arts Accessible Guided Tours, 2016.

Visiting Masterpieces: Pairing Picassos is the theme of the next ALD tour, which will be on March 12 at 10:30.



"This exhibition centers on pairing and juxtaposing works by Pablo Picasso (1881–1973). A loan of four major works from the Fondation Beyeler in Basel, Switzerland, and loans from private collections will complement the MFA’s holdings of painting and sculpture by the artist, looking at different stages of his career and his exploration of form.”

News of Note

The Joint Ways & Means Committee invites the public to testify on the FY17 budget on March 4th, starting at 10:00 a.m. in the Gardner auditorium at the State House. EOOHHS Secretary Marylou Sudders has provided a summary of the H.2 FY17 budget for Health and Human Services at <http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/newsroom/eohhs/fy17-hhs-budget-details.html>

Andrew Vieth, the new president of MSAD, explains the current legislative process at <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=vjd1zg4SdPc> The Call to Action is worth reading.

Caroline Jackson, a staff attorney at the National Association of the Deaf Law and Advocacy Center in Maryland is investigating accessibility on online videos in schools other than Harvard and MIT. Right now they are looking specifically at the University of California, Berkeley. If you have tried to access online content from UC Berkeley, feel free to contact Caroline at Tel.: 301-587-7466; VP: 301-830-6127; or Fax: 301-587-1791.

Researchers from King's College London and the Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute have for the first time demonstrated a direct link between the Wbp2 gene and progressive [hearing loss](#). The scientists found that loss of Wbp2 expression led to progressive high-frequency hearing loss in mice as well as in two clinical cases of children with deafness with no other obvious features. This study, published in *EMBO Molecular Medicine*, opens up the Wbp2 pathway as a new route to therapeutic approaches that more specifically target the inner ear.

Professor Karen Steel, senior author of the study, from the Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience (IoPPN) at King's College London, said the research demonstrates that Wbp2 is crucial for hearing in humans. We found two children affected by severe to profound deafness, each carrying two variants of the Wbp2 gene.”

Central Auditory Processing Disorder is one of the research areas that Hearing Health Foundation is supporting in 2016. Research that will increase understanding of the causes, diagnosis, and treatment of CAPD, an umbrella term for a variety of disorders that affect the way the brain processes auditory information.

WHAT IS VISIBLE



KIMBERLY ELKINS

Laura Bridgman was the first deaf/ blind person to learn language, fifty years before Helen Keller.

What is Visible was recommended to me by someone in my book club who first heard about it on WBUR's Radio Boston show about summer reading book suggestions. Here is what she said in an email to me. "The story line caught my attention. I finally read it earlier this month and really found it fascinating, taking me into a world I didn't know and learning about an interesting historical time and interesting people. It is historical fiction and I learned about Laura Bridgman (someone I had never heard of) and the start of Perkins School for the Blind and a lot about people we heard of from Boston and beyond living in that period of time. Very interesting characters. In the Afterword, the author tells how she did the research, what is true and what is fiction. I thought her writing was quite good. The chapters are mostly short alternating

between 3 characters (Laura, Samuel Howe, and Julia Howe) all very interesting characters."