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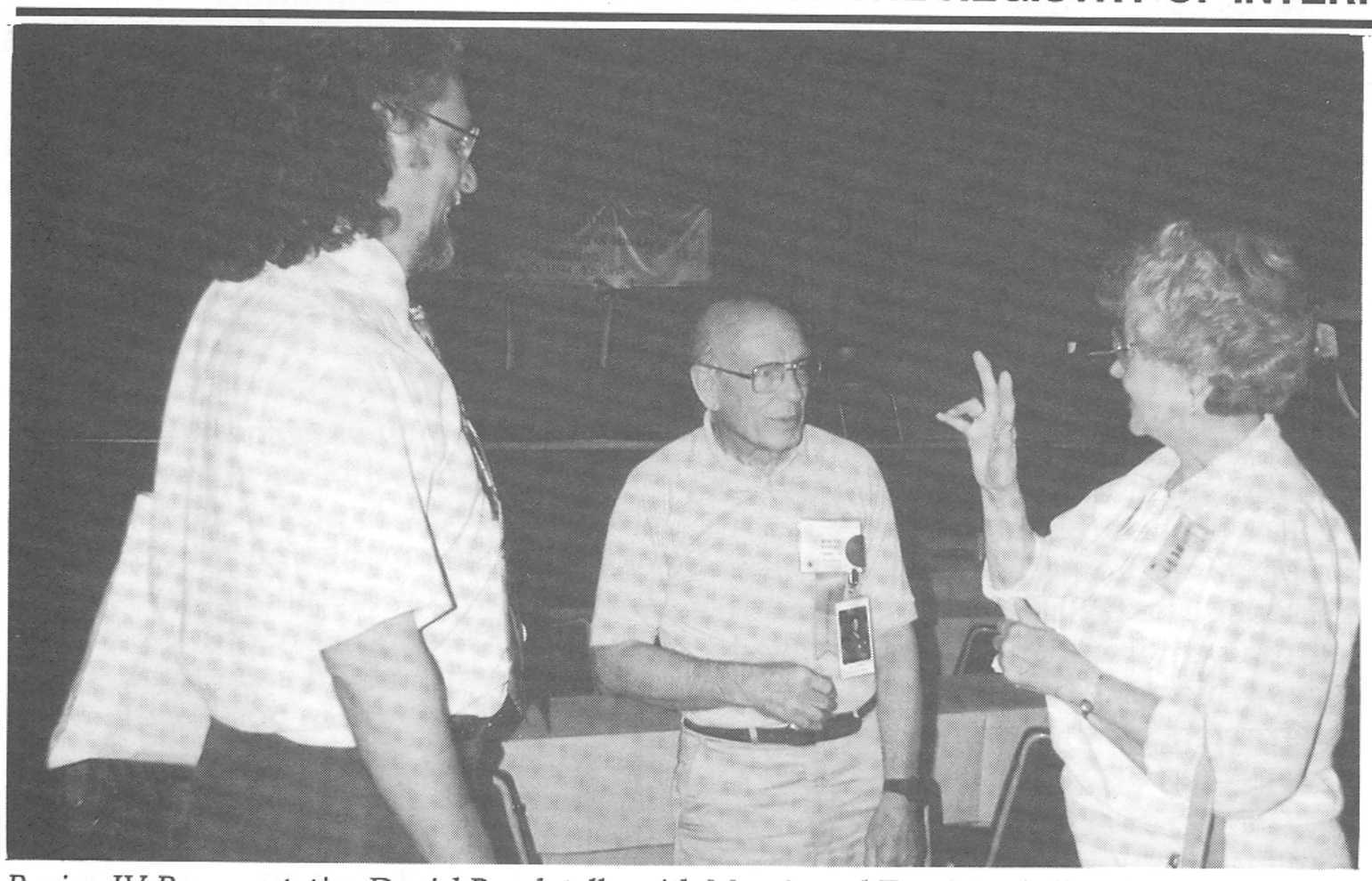

Region IV Representative Daniel Burch talks with Marvin and Tess Marshall at the NAD Convention in Tennessee. Marvin was a Co-Chair for the 1993 RID Convention.

ASL Interpreting:
Meeting the Needs of Deaf Consumers

Jo Anna Liedel, M.Ed.

During recent years, a movement towards a bilingual-bicultural philosophy in both education of the D/deaf and interpreting has gained momentum. Many interpreters view ASL interpreting as the mode of choice; being an ASL interpreter may be viewed as a way to gain status in the interpreting field. In the move to become a politically correct interpreter, ASL interpreting is often advocated for and given preference to.

While ASL interpreting may meet the needs of a bilingual-bicultural philosophy, an ASL-only approach may be unrealistic in light of the needs of D/deaf consumers. In Ohio, approximately 2,300 D/deaf students are placed in public school programs, while 150 are placed in the Ohio School for the Deaf. D/deaf students in public schools usually sign in some form of manually coded English (MCE). As adult consumers, these students are likely to require MCE as the mode of communication when using interpreters/ transliterators. Even if some of these young adults begin to learn ASL, they may still require or prefer MCE transliterating at least for a while.

Even when a D/deaf person prefers ASL interpreting, options for interpreting services may not make such a preference feasible. When a D/deaf person requests transliterating for educational and professional situations, interpreter/transliterators then often assume that the D/deaf person prefers transliterating for ALL situations. They do not seem to even think that requests for transliterating may be due to their inadequate ASL

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Team Interpreting:
Deaf and Hearing Interpreters As Allies

By Ruth Sandefur, RSC

Recently the subject of Hearing/Hearing interpreting teams has been addressed. The subject of Hearing/Deaf interpreting teams has been mentioned, but never covered in depth. This author will attempt to address Hearing/Deaf interpreting teams since the CDI certification will soon be available for Deaf interpreters who wish to become certified members of RID. The CDI (Certified Deaf Interpreters) holders will enhance interpreter team situations, especially at conventions such as those held by the National Association of the Deaf (NAD) .

At the 42nd Biennial NAD Convention in Knoxville, Tennessee, this author coordinated interpreting services. In recent years approximately 2,000 - 2,400 NAD members have attended the NAD Biennial Conventions. The Council of Representatives and General Assembly meetings are usually difficult meetings to interpret. They are complicated because the audience uses different modes of communication (ASL, Signed English, Oral, etc.). Also, information pertaining to the meetings, like far too many meetings, is not always readily available beforehand for the interpreters. Since the proceedings of the meeting were being captioned, it was critical that the interpreters who were voicing the Deaf speakers had to be accurate as humanly possible.

At the NAD convention this author tried to ensure greater accuracy at the General Assembly and Council of

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Sandefur cont'd *(from page 1)*

Representatives meetings (as well as the forums) by using a Deaf interpreter in conjunction with the real time captioning. Effective teaming, as Walker explained in her RID *VIEWS* article, "teaming," depends on one person who "monitors the entire setting," (Walker p. 21), and "this external monitoring can only be provided by another interpreter." (Cokely, p. 160). So a Deaf interpreter was used during these meetings to monitor the proceedings via a TV set placed below the speaker who was signing on stage. S/he was watching the Deaf speaker and the real-time captioning for "miscues or conceptual inaccuracies" (Leitson, p. 3). This enabled the Deaf interpreter to check the accuracy of the voice interpretation by comparing the captions on the TV screen with what the speaker was signing. Several Deaf interpreters, one of whom was a RSC holder, teamed with the Hearing interpreters. The Deaf interpreter's function was not only to ensure the accuracy of the voice interpretation but also to support the Hearing interpreter by nodding in an affirming way when the interpretation was accurate.

It is important for the Deaf and Hearing interpreter partners to know that some of the inaccuracies on real-time captioning is due to a word that is not in the real-time reporter's dictionary. "Basically, each stroke is a syllable, so that word 'reporter' is written in three strokes, RE/PORT/ER" (Deer) also mentioned that real-time reporters just blow it sometimes and make a "pure and simple" error because reporters are human, too (Ibid). Kinsey made a very important point when she wrote, "Interpreters are human beings and are not perfect " (Kinsey, p. 20). Since interpreters are humans and capable of making mistakes, the teaming approach is especially critical because the Deaf interpreter is "there for checks and balances" to reduce the potential for human errors during the interpreting assignment (Ibid).

A Deaf interpreter can back up a Hearing interpreter in other ways. Deaf interpreters are often more visually sensitive than most Hearing interpreters, including native ASL signers who are hearing. The Deaf interpreter will often spot subtle errors such as incorrect concepts or incorrect interpretation of directional verbs; i.e., BRING-HERE versus TAKE-THERE, etc.

Most importantly, though, is the dynamic of Hearing interpreters and Deaf interpreters trusting each other. They both must see each other as allies. They also must respect each other. The Hearing interpreters who trusted the Deaf interpreters, when teaming during the recent NAD Convention were less stressed out after completing an assignment. One Hearing interpreter mentioned that s/he felt the presence of the Deaf interpreter helped her/him focus more attentively on the task.

"Deaf interpreters are often more visually sensitive than most Hearing interpreters, including native ASL signers who are hearing."

During the NAD Convention, this author assigned a Deaf speaker the opportunity to stand on the stage and "mirror" (copy) the questions or comments from the audience. This procedure enabled the Deaf speaker the opportunity to concentrate on what the person in the audience had asked and respond appropriately. Many Deaf people do not appreciate having to walk up to the stage so everyone could see his/her question or comment.

Several of the hearing interpreters preferred to turn and face the audience whenever they were voicing for the people in the audience. At one point there was a brief period of confusion because the Hearing interpreter was voicing for a different person in the audience than the President had recognized. This is a problem that was resolved by Hearing interpreters who decided to voice what the mirroring interpreter was signing. The result was that there was a few seconds delay when the interpreter voiced what the mirroring interpreter was signing. Nevertheless, the slight delay was better than voicing for the wrong Deaf person because the interpreter did not see who the President recognized when s/he turned to face the audience.

When this author asked several of the Hearing interpreters for their reason in choosing to voice the people in the audience, their responses were that the people in the audience were more expressive than the mirroring interpreter. For this reason it is important that the mirroring interpreters incorporate appropriate expression whenever they are copying signs for people in the audience.

It is the conclusion of this author that there will be more opportunities for CDI holders to team with Hearing interpreters than there were for RSC holders. Historically, RSC holders were Deaf members of the Evaluation teams in the 1970s and 1980s, when the Evaluation process for the CSC was discontinued. RID now uses Deaf raters as part of their system for evaluating candidates. Some of the Deaf raters might wish to become certified (CDI), but it is not mandatory for the raters to become CDIs. The names of the Deaf raters are not common knowledge for obvious reasons, but CDIs will be recognized publicly since they, hopefully, will be interpreting more on teams with hearing interpreters. These teams will vary naturally. The size of the teams will depend on the nature of the event that the teams are used for. It is quite possible that one Deaf interpreter will be assisting a Hearing/Hearing interpreting team.

Interpreting for the recent NAD Convention was a challenging experience for everyone, I believe, but equally rewarding. There were minor blunders, but there was not anything that created a crisis. Like most interpreting assignments, each one of us was more wise afterwards than we were before the Convention. One of the reasons most interpreters, both Hearing and Deaf, remain in the interpreting profession is that each interpreting assignment is unique.

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