

## Special President's Report



Cheryl Moose, CI and CT, Illinois,  
RID President



Bobbie Beth Scoggins,  
NAD President



Cheryl Moose

This past summer, I was honored to attend the 49<sup>th</sup> Biennial National Association of the Deaf (NAD) Conference in New Orleans, LA. During the conference, NAD and RID Executive Directors Nancy Bloch and Clay Nettles, along with NAD-RID liaison Judith Gilliam, met with Presidents Bobbie Beth Scoggins and me, to reaffirm our commitment to continue building and nurturing our strong partnership and collaboration, to prioritize issues of common concern to both organizations and to strategize ways in which we can work together on these matters. During our meeting, we had several agenda items of importance:

- Encourage and recruit deaf leaders in RID and on the board of directors
- Report on the status of the National Interpreter Certification (NIC) program
- Develop a holistic approach to resolve oppression
- Discuss issues related to the RID Certified Deaf Interpreter (CDI) test
- Stronger presence at our respective national conferences

This meeting and the items on the agenda are significantly related to the priorities and goals of my presidency. I would like to give you a brief historical glimpse at how these priorities were formed.

In 2006, the RID Board of Directors began discussing the upcoming 2007 election of the new executive board. Several board members had decided not to run for another term in office. At that time, then-Vice President Jimmy Beldon and I discussed strategies for him to run for president and for me to run for vice president. I was extremely excited about the possibility that I might serve as the "right-hand man" to the first deaf president of RID. Jimmy, my good friend and respected colleague, felt a huge responsibility to represent the deaf members of RID, to encourage more

deaf leaders to get involved, to advocate for the unique needs of deaf members and to ensure that the training and certification of deaf interpreters was a priority of the organization. Unfortunately, as sometimes happens, "life" got in the way of Jimmy's run for the presidency. He struggled with the priorities, as we all do, of family, career and service. Rightfully and respectfully so, family and career had to come first, and Jimmy decided not to run for president. During a heart-to-heart talk between Jimmy and me, when I decided I would take the giant step and run for president, I promised to be the advocate Jimmy envisioned achieving during his presidency. Thus, among my goals and challenges as RID president are the following:

- Establish and nurture relationships among the association's membership, Deaf community, affiliate chapters and other stakeholders to promote and contribute to the growth of the interpreting profession
- Build strategic alliances/partnerships/collaborations with others
- Identify RID's involvement with the Deaf community and the Deaf community's involvement with RID
- Measure and ensure the validity of the RID administered tests and improve the testing experience for a more cohesive testing system

Flash forward to the NAD-RID leadership meeting held in July 2008. Bobbie Beth and I agreed to write co-presidents columns for the fall 2008 issues of our respective publications. These columns will be used as a catalyst to inform our members of the forward movement of the NAD and RID collaboration as well as our commitment to build a bridge of involvement and membership in both organizations. I would like to see deaf and hearing members of RID embrace the idea that it, plain and simply, just makes sense to join,

serve and get involved with both NAD and RID. Check out the NAD *Across America* program at [www.nad.org/nadacrossamerica](http://www.nad.org/nadacrossamerica).

Recently, the RID Board of Directors, wanting to send a clear message to members about the priority of CDI testing concerns, passed the following motions:

#### **MOTION #2008.13**

Upon the regular review of the Certified Deaf Interpreter test, the board of directors wishes to express its serious concerns with the percentage of testers failing the exam and to direct the national office to work with the psychometricians and the National Consortium of Interpreter Education Centers (NCIEC) deaf interpreter work group in order to make adjustments which will result in a more reasonable expectation of success.

#### **MOTION #2008.18**

To develop a partnership with the National Consortium of Interpreter Education Centers (NCIEC) Deaf Interpreter Work Group and provide financial assistance in the amount of \$10,000.00 to assist with further research on Certified Deaf Interpreter (CDI) testing and training challenges to assist RID in improving the outcome of the CDI evaluation.

The history of the CDI written and performance tests as documented in the official RID motions table provides an interesting and relevant insight to the current concerns of the exam:

#### **MOTION #97.10**

To accept Certification Council recommendation # CC 97.02 to suspend CDI written testing until a formal review has been conducted.

#### **MOTION #97.33**

To accept Certification Council recommendation # CC 97.12 that the Board of Directors appoint a CDI Task Force charged with the responsibility of working with the psychometrician, the NTS Coordinator, and the CC to revise the CDI written test pending financial availability.

#### **MOTION #97.58**

To accept Certification Council recommendation # CC 97.12 to appoint a CDI Task Force charged with the responsibility of working with the psychometrician, the NTS Coordinator and the CC to revise the CDI written test to ensure all candidates experience a fair and appropriate testing mechanism budgeting sufficient funds for three face-to-face meetings in FY 97-98. The size and composition of the Task Force and time lines for work to be completed will be based on association funds.

#### **MOTION #99.19**

To accept Certification Council recommendation # CC99.02 to accept Certified Deaf Interpreter Task Force recommendation # CDI 99.01 that the CDI task force develop the CDI job analysis survey in videotape format as well as paper for distribution to Deaf interpreters across the nation.

**Rationale:** The CDI Task Force believes that Deaf people will better understand the concepts presented in the survey if English was interpreted into ASL; thereby generating more reliable results. The results of the survey will form the blueprint of the CDI test.

#### **MOTION #99.20**

To accept Certification Council recommendation # CC99.03 to accept CDI Task Force recommendation # CDI 99.02 that the CDI test being developed be available on videotape as well as in written format.

**Rationale:** The CDI Task Force believes the knowledge/written test should be available in the applicant's native language. The test is designed for Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals. When testing for knowledge, it is inappropriate to also test their ability to understand the written English word if this is not their native language.

#### **MOTION #2001.04**

To accept Certification Council recommendation # 2000.13 to accept CDI Task Force recommendation # 2000.08 which modifies the current eligibility requirements of the Certified Deaf Interpreter examination.



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The first CDI test was implemented at the 1995 RID Convention in New Orleans. In less than two years, it was halted due to passing rates. A second task force was appointed to address these issues and their work was completed in 2001 right before the RID Conference in Orlando, FL. In both cases, the task force consisted of deaf and hearing member experts working for over a year on CDI research and development. The task force members, after careful review and revision of the test and their work, announced that the test was designed to ensure the qualifications of a professional deaf interpreter and stood behind the test. In 2007, the Deaf Caucus Member Section convened during the RID conference in San Francisco, CA, and considered requesting the CDI tests be put on hold, yet again, until research could be completed on successful test-takers. After a lengthy discussion, Deaf Caucus members agreed to send a strong message to the board to look at this issue, but not to withhold the opportunity from members to take the tests.

In 2007, RID administered more

than 1,100 written and 1,400 performance tests. In 2008, the number is expected to be much higher due to the CI and CT tests ceasing at the end of the year and what is projected to be a 35 percent increase in NIC interview and performance tests. Of the totals noted above, the CDI test had 56 written and 15 performance tests administered. While the certification department was quickly able to gather the needed numbers to do statistical analyses of the NIC tests, it is taking much longer to gather enough evidence to do psychometric analyses of the CDI written and performance tests. Add to that the strict policy that any changes to an RID administered test must be developed and approved by a task force convened of RID member-experts and include consultation from the RID Certification Council (CC) and the psychometrician to maintain the integrity and validity of RID tests and considering the cost and length of time to do so, and you can understand the dilemma and the reason for passing MOTION #2008.13 and MOTION #2008.18 printed above.

Cathy Cogen, Chair of the National Consortium of interpreter Education Centers (NCIEC) Deaf Interpreter Work Group, had the following to say about the proposed collaboration:

“I believe that the Consortium’s goals in the area of Deaf interpreting - to improve access to interpreting services by underserved and at-risk deaf adults and youths who do not benefit from traditional ASL-English interpreting services, to advance the practice and education of Deaf interpreters (DIs), and to enhance understanding of the contribution of Deaf interpreting to the field generally – are closely aligned with those of RID. Our qualitative research is helping to give us a clearer picture of who DIs are, what their work consists of, how they see themselves as professionals, what perspectives underlie decisions they make, and what they want for this emerging profession. Given the opportunity, the Consortium could make a worthy contribution to RID’s efforts to improve CDI test outcomes by assisting in identifying any needed



*Bobbie Beth Scoggins*

**O**ur NAD partnership with RID has clearly established its place in history.

In the years to come, we’ll be able to better appreciate the results of these joint efforts. Together, we indeed have a wonderful legacy!

My association with interpreting began in Dallas, TX, when I was 10 years old. I tagged along with my father to an exploratory meeting on establishing a new statewide organization called the Texas Society of Interpreters for the Deaf. (Of course, I brought my Nancy Drew book to stay out of trouble!) While reading, I happened to peep out of my book to check on dad (I thought the world of him and still do) to see what he was up to. I didn’t realize how significant his remarks were until I became older and wiser. One person in that meeting pointedly asked my Dad, “What are you doing here, as a deaf person, taking so much interest in getting a new organization formed?”

adjustments to test content and structure based on our findings, and promoting effective educational practices for DIs. This seems an excellent area for collaboration between RID and the Consortium.”

During my presidency, to ensure I achieve the goals and challenges listed above, I also serve as board liaison to the Deaf Members in Leadership (DML) Committee and keep in close communication with the Deaf Caucus (DC) Member Section. The DC scheduled forums at all of the 2008 regional conferences, and I had the opportunity to talk with deaf members about their concerns and priorities related to membership and leadership in RID and testing. In December, the DML will be meeting face-to-face at the national office. We have developed a strong agenda that includes the following: discussing issues presented during the DC forums, planning a deaf friendly 2009 national conference, considering motions the DML may need to present at the 2009 conference and recruiting deaf leaders. Leaders of the DML and DC have developed action plans that include: developing a successful test-takers list of tips on “What I did to pass the CDI Written Test,” sharing the list with members, participating in various committees for 2009 national conference planning, ensuring the conference program includes quality and challenging deaf interpreter training, encouraging a deaf friendly 2009 conference environment, working with the conference planning committee to offer oppression awareness training and committing to writing articles on deaf interpreting for RID *VIEWS*.

I appreciate DML Chair Lewis Merkin’s and DC Chairs Juliann Wasisco’s and Dawn Watts’ commitment to work together with the board of directors to ensure the deaf experience in RID provides equal access to opportunities for success and participation as that of the hearing experience. ■

*Cheryl Moose*

Mind you, this was back in the 1960s. He responded by saying, “I am here because I want my children to have what

I didn’t have – access to interpreters. By being here, I can make known the very great need for quality interpreters for all of us.” Reflecting on this powerful statement under ordinary circumstances coming from a deaf person who didn’t have access what we have now – VRS, captioned TVs, pagers, laptops and all kinds of communication access devices and modes--this is my Dad’s legacy to my brother, Byron, and me, as well as to the American Deaf community.

The interpreting profession has since matured. The need for partnerships between the interpreting and deaf communities became obvious during the 1970s, more so during the 1980s. In the early 1990s, the NAD and RID joined forces, and look at how much we have accomplished!

We at the NAD take great pride in the success of the NAD-

RID National Interpreter Certification (NIC) exam, the result of many years of blood, sweat and tears - and raising funds to bring this to a reality. We are also proud of the fact that NAD certified interpreters are part of the RID membership system.

We are proud of our involvement with RID through its various committees as well as the upcoming formation of a subject matter task force to fine tune the NIC exam. The NAD-RID Council on Interpreting has definitely accomplished its mission.

Still, we know we have much work to do. A memorandum of understanding between the NAD and RID is now in the works to articulate areas of collaboration, with identification of current and future challenges. A new NAD-RID leadership team will take this partnership yet further.

During the recent 2008 NAD Conference, there was a strong message from our Council of Representatives (delegate assembly) regarding certified deaf

interpreters and the CDI exam. Ranked second among top priorities of the NAD, this calls for the NAD to investigate the reason there are insufficient CDIs across the nation. Further, this priority calls for the NAD to work closely with RID on modifications to the CDI written and performance exams. We intend to do exactly this over the next two years, and we are committed to working with RID on their motions on this matter.

In addition to our collaboration with RID, we are also working closely with the National Consortium on Interpreter Education Centers (NCEIC) on a number of issues of importance to the deaf and interpreting communities – one being video remote interpreting standards. We are also encouraging our state association affiliates to become actively involved in partnership with RID affiliate chapters across the country. There have already been a number of joint conferences at the state and local level to date, which have been very successful. Such collaborative

efforts are vitally important so that we can continue to build mutual respect as well as promote dialogue and exchange of perspectives and resources between our respective communities.

I will continue to stay in close touch with RID President Cheryl Moose as we both seek means to expand joint endeavors. The NAD will remain vigilant and aggressively devote time and energy to various RID committees, as well as joint efforts involving other groups.

Together, we will carry forward my dad's legacy to the next level! ■

*Bobbie Beth Scoggins*  
President  
National Association of the Deaf



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