



# AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION



## "DIFFICULT ROADS OFTEN LEAD TO BEAUTIFUL DESTINATIONS"

**Updates from the Board: challenges experienced, website, 2015 conference, strategic planning, and many more...**

It has been a difficult road to getting the new ASLTA website launched. Since February, ASLTA has been working with a web developer to design a new ASLTA logo along with an interactive website with a one-stop information center for members and the public. Unfortunately many roadblocks arose in the process. The web developer originally agreed to have the website launched by the end of May, but asked for a month's extension on the website release. In June, the logo was completed and the ASLTA Board was shown the "front end" of the website with the promise that it would be ready for launch pending resolution of some technical problems.

All through June, the Board aggressively met with the web developer on various issues with the website. [continued on p. 6] developer again promised a launch date of July 1, but that date came and went. The web developer continued to work on issues until August 26 when ASLTA President, Timo Owens demanded the launch of the website.

The website was subsequently launched so that we could identify problem areas while still getting information out to the public. Board members continued to meet with the web developer daily on many issues, but not much forward progress was made. [continued on p. 6] Board to issue an ultimatum

through a Letter of Notification on September 17, asking that top issues be resolved by September 24. These demands were not met, so the contract with the web developer was terminated as of September 25, 2014.

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our hosting company, DreamHost, identified a hacker trying to get into the website. Their server shut down the website to protect the website. The ASLTA board took immediate action to hire another web design company to restore and disinfect the website to be sure all security issues were addressed. DreamHost assures us that all credit card, information is secure; because it is not stored on the website, this data was never in

danger of being compromised. Investigation by the DreamHost security team showed that user data was never accessed. The website is now back up and appears to be running normally thanks to the quick action of the Board.

The ASLTA board is moving swiftly to research website development companies and choose a company that can complete the website project. We hope to soon have a fully functional website where members

and the public can enjoy in-depth information about our organization, a clear registration process, members-only area with unique benefits including employment announcements. Thank you for your patience and support during this transition time.

Sincerely,  
The ASLTA Board

For the ASL version of this notice:  
<http://youtu.be/X-00NFUVI8U>

## Is a Name Change in Our Future?

The National ASLTA board is floating an idea in our professional community – the possibility of changing the organization’s name to American Sign Language Professionals Association (ASLPA). This name change would reflect the expanded scope of ASLTA – to embrace and encompass ASL Specialists, ASL teachers K-12 in both L1 and L2 teaching as well as college-level and community-level teaching, ASL mentors, and ASL program managers.

The ASLTA Board is interested in brainstorming and combining efforts with focus organizations such as the ASL Round Table (ASLRT- focusing on L1 ASL teaching) to develop specialty certifications in the areas of ASL Specialists, Bilingual education coordination, L1 ASL teachers, and more.

### Job Skill Crossover

On the employment front, people who have the knowledge and skills to be ASL teachers often straddle the fence by switching between jobs as primary

language teachers and secondary language teachers throughout their careers. For instance, in Gallaudet University’s MA program in Sign Language Teaching, the majority of students are presently secondary language teachers, but many of them express a desire to work as primary language teachers if jobs are available. Having an organization that serves both would enable those teachers to simultaneously pursue their interests and increase their knowledge in both specialty areas. There are also full-time primary language teachers in the MA program in Sign Language Teaching.

### Grant Possibilities

One additional justification for broadening our scope is that, with combined scopes, we can pursue grants more effectively with participant numbers to back up our proposals. With ASLTA as the umbrella organization for L1, L2 and Deaf Studies specialists, our combined numbers represent a much more significant movement. As an instance, at our last conference in Charlotte, NC in 2013, over 400 individuals attended, this

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number includes the traditional L2 college teachers but also many who work in the primary language field, as ASL Specialists or teaching Deaf Studies.

### Teaching Resource Webpage in the Works

There's a constant demand for teaching materials. For L1 and Deaf Studies teachers, the lack of a curriculum is a challenge. The ASLRT has begun to address this by promoting development of specific language teaching materials annually and has done outstanding work in specifying how ASL can best be incorporated in language arts and content area classes. ASLTA would like to build on this and offers the use of our website for the creation of a share site where all teachers can access lesson plans and materials.

The new ASLTA website will have information available in both ASL and written English and it'll be user-friendly and interactive with focus areas in L1, L2, and Deaf Studies teaching and research. In the L1 section, primary language

materials for various grade levels and content areas can be posted for sharing. This curriculum and materials repository, maintained by expert L1 teachers, will ensure easy access for K-12 teachers in obtaining classroom tools. Similar share sites for the L2 and Deaf Studies teaching materials are also in the planning stages.

ASLTA hopes to encourage more resource development work sessions across the country, to enhance the offerings on the resource share sites.

The ASLTA Board desires to make significant progress in all levels of the ASL professional field. Progress in research, resource provision, coordination of information-sharing and promotion of best practices for primary language teachers is what ASLTA is all about. When we are ready for the next step, the ASLTA Board will invite key individuals and leaders in the ASL L1 and Deaf Studies teaching fields to participate in a process to set up a clear vision statement and plan of action that will direct our future joint endeavors.

## WE WANT YOU!

Are you a member of ASLTA?  
Have you renewed your ASLTA membership  
dues for the **2014-2015** year?

If not, DO IT TODAY:

<https://www.aslta.org/membership/>





## MEET THE BOARD



**President: Timo Owens**

[president@aslta.org](mailto:president@aslta.org)

Timothy Owens or “Timo” as he is well-known for, currently is the coordinator of the ASL/Interpreting Studies Program in the Department of Classical and Modern Language at the University of Louisville in Louisville, KY. He has received his BA degree from Gallaudet University (Theatre Arts) and his M.Ed. from Western Maryland (now McDaniel) College. He holds RID CDI certification.



**Vice-President: Arlene Garcia Gunderson**

[vicepresident@aslta.org](mailto:vicepresident@aslta.org)

Arlene Gunderson, M.Ed., ASLTA Professional, recently started her new position as K – 12 Principal at Colorado School for the Deaf. Arlene was the Director of the Gallaudet University Regional Center Southwest at Austin Community College for four years. Arlene brings years of teaching experience in ASL, Deaf Culture, Deaf Education, Deaf Studies, Interpreting and Human Services.



**Secretary: Christine Multra-Kraft**

[secretary@aslta.org](mailto:secretary@aslta.org)

Christine Multra Kraft, MA, ASLTA Professional, CDI ASL has been passionate about ASL for the past 22 years! She is a manager with Sorenson Professional Development, helping interpreters increase their ASL language and interpreting skills through workshops, training, and mentoring. Currently she is pursuing her doctorate in Applied Linguistics at Ball State University. She lives in the Indianapolis area with her husband, Roger, and their four KODA children.



**Treasurer: Bill Newell**

[treasurer@aslta.org](mailto:treasurer@aslta.org)

Bill Newell is a retired full professor from the National Technical Institute for the Deaf in Rochester, NY where he taught ASL and Deaf Studies for 26 years. After retiring from NTID he taught ASL and Interpreter Education at Valdosta State University in Georgia and then moved to Vancouver, WA where he was the principal of the Washington School for the Deaf for 6 years. In September 2013 Bill retired from WSD and moved to Arizona. He is married to Bev, for 42 years (in 2013) and have two grown sons, Eric and Chris.



**Professional Development: Sharon Lott**

[pdchair@aslta.org](mailto:pdchair@aslta.org)

Sharon Lott, M.S., M.A is an Assistant professor at Eastern Kentucky University (EKU). She has 30 years of experience as an ASL instructor and ASL specialist at various Colleges/Universities and Deaf school in North Carolina and New York. Sharon is one of the 4 trainers for the national board of SLPI: ASL and she does screening for the DO-IT center at UNCO, evaluations for the ASLTA, and evaluations of interpreters for Purple Communication.



**Member-At-Large and Media Liaison: Keri Brooks**

[mal@aslta.org](mailto:mal@aslta.org)

Keri Brooks, M.Ed., CDI, ASLTA: Professional, has been working in the ASL teaching field since 1999. Currently, she teaches ASL and Deaf Culture at the University of Vermont. On the side, she works as a freelance interpreter providing mostly Deafblind and community interpreting services. On a personal note, Keri resides in the beautiful state of Vermont with her three young boys.

# RECOGNITION OF ASL: 50 YEARS IN THE MAKING



[\[Click here to view video.\]](#)

## 2015 ASLTA CONFERENCE



**JUNE 24-27, 2015**

8th BIENNIAL NATIONAL  
PROFESSIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE

HILTON MINNEAPOLIS/ST.  
PAUL-AIRPORT/MALL OF  
AMERICA





# 2015 ASLTA CONFERENCE INFORMATION

**REGISTER ONLINE** or click on any of the links below to download forms.



[Register for 2015 Conference](#)



[Hotel Information and Reservation](#)



[Vendor and Exhibit Booth Forms](#)



[Call for Papers](#)



[Donation and Silent Auction Information](#)





## BOARD STRATEGIC PLANNING

### **Strategic Goal #1: Constant communication with our members**

The Board is committed to transparency and clear communication from here on out, beginning with this e-Newsletter, with ASLTA members and the public. We seek to promote the highest standards as a professional organization with our certification reflecting this standard. Through our website, e-Newsletters, and e-blast announcements, we have the long-term goal of serving as a resource center for those in the ASL and Deaf Studies teaching fields.

### **Strategic Goal #2: Responsible financial oversight and fiscal stability/growth**

The Board is committed to maintaining our recently restored 501c3 status and this is going to be an ongoing priority. By having a responsible fiscal oversight, built-in checks-and-balances to ensure good stewardship of ASLTA funds, and good management of our primary fundraiser which is the biannual conference, ASLTA's financial health will be able to remain stable for years to come.

### **Strategic Goal #3: Update Bylaws, policies, procedures and guidelines**

When the Board takes actions on behalf of ASLTA, its program coordinators and members needs to have clearly defined parameters. The Bylaws need to be updated so they clearly reflect the organization's ideals and specifically detail the scope of the responsibilities and parameters of actions undertaken in the name of ASLTA. The changes that will be made in the Bylaws need to reflect the collective will of the members and realistically follow the needs of the profession.

### **Strategic Goal #4: Update the certification system**

To remain current with other World language and heritage teaching certifications, ASLTA's certification system needs to reflect similar certification requirements. The ASLTA Board is committed to working with the chapters and members to ensure that 'ASLTA Certification' becomes a standard job requirement for all ASL and Deaf Studies specializations. This ideal can be promoted in various programs locally, on a state level, and on a national level.



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## **Strategic Goal #6: Establish a home office with an Executive Director**

In order to bring ASLTA up to par as an organization with similar World Language teaching organizations, the organization needs to move beyond being a volunteer organization. This means the number of chapters and members need to increase in addition to the need to develop partnerships with other organizations such as NAD, CIT, ASLRT, ASDC, ACTFL, JNCL, to name a few. With a home office and an Executive Director, ASLTA will be offered many opportunities of growth within the ASL and Deaf Culture professions. It is of utmost priority to ensure that this goal becomes a reality.

## **Strategic Goal #7: Explore the idea of becoming 'ASL Professionals Association' (ASLPA)**

ASL, backed by research as a second language in addition to a heritage language and Deaf Studies as an official field of study has naturally led to differentiation of roles within the ASL teaching profession. There is a need of greater emphasis and action on behalf of 3 focus areas: ASL L1 and L2 teaching plus Deaf Studies and the inclusion of ASL Specialists, ASL Mentors, and ASL Program Administrators. This is a sign that ASL as a profession is growing. ASLTA is the "trunk" that supports these "branches" (focus areas) and it is the Board's priority to provide equitable support to these professions through the concerted action of the members.



### **ARE YOU CONFUSED? Membership vs. Certification 'Valid to Stamp'**

Our Certified members are often confused about the relationship between the date on the 'Valid to Stamp' on their certificate and when they need to pay their Membership dues.

#### **Membership Dues:**

- Fixed cycle - Sept. 1 through Aug. 31 each year
- Membership dues are *not* related to 'Valid to Stamp'

#### **Certification Anniversary and 'Valid to Stamp':**

- Members can become certified any day of the year
- Date becomes the Certification "anniversary date"
- Each year members will receive a 'Valid to Stamp' on anniversary

Certified members must renew their membership dues each year that they hold a certification, due by September 1st. Pay the Certified Member dues each year and members will be sent a 'Valid to Stamp' on their certification anniversary date. The 'Valid to Stamp' will show that their certification is valid for 1 more year.

**Example:** You become certified in March 2014. Your 'Valid to Stamp' says "Valid to March 2015." In September 2014 you pay your membership dues (valid September 1, 2014 – August 31, 2015). Later on, in March 2015, the Certification office checks the membership database. Yes, you are a member. Voila, you are sent a new 'Valid to Stamp' that will say "Valid to March 2016." Each year, this procedure repeats.



# Evaluation Committee Update

Evaluation and Certification Chair: Dr. Keith M. Cagle

The ASLTA Evaluation and Certification office continues to be busy with many applications and evaluations. Since the 2013 ASLTA conference in Charlotte, NC, the statistics on certifications and extensions are:

**New Provisional certified persons: 44**

**Extended Provisional certified persons: 7**

**New Qualified certified persons: 11**

**Extended Qualified certified persons: 3**

**New Professional certified persons: 17**

**Renewed Professional certified persons: 3**

When Tony Ellis assumed the role of Evaluation Assistant in July 2012, all evaluations including videos submitted after July 2012 were digitalized and stored in a hard drive, a hard drive back up, and in a cloud storage to safeguard all data.

Remote interviews for Professional-level evaluation via webcam was successfully implemented in January of 2014. Several candidates have completed interviews using this approach, with a few more candidates lined up to do so. For more information about conducting a remote interview, please see Appendix K in the newly revised Professional level evaluation package on the ASLTA website.

The Evaluation System Revision committee has completed an updated version of questions for the Professional interview. In addition, they have completed a draft of proposal for a new evaluation system. It will be sent to the Evaluation team for their

review and input, before bringing it to the ASLTA board.

On a personal note, I have been experiencing a severe case of tendonitis in both arms since last November and they have been causing pains through my shoulders, arms and hands. I am very grateful to have Tony Ellis, our Evaluation Assistant, who has been doing most of the evaluation work and Mark Halley, my graduate assistant at Gallaudet University, to assist me with answering some emails when my arms are in pain.

For the last 14 years, I have been serving as the ASLTA Evaluation and Certification chair. I have witnessed many changes over the years, especially with evaluations previously being sent through snail mail and making copies to currently with almost everything being sent electronically. We are indebted to Tony for transforming the evaluation system to an electronic system. Although I need to cut down typing to heal my tendonitis completely, I am willing to continue until we find a qualified and reliable person with a strong impartiality and eager to assume the position of Evaluation and Certification chair.

I want to thank the following evaluators for their dedication to the evaluation and certification process: Glenna Ashton, Pat Beech, Betti Bonni, Sandra Fontana, Leslie Greer, Lynn Jacobowitz, Lisa Johnston-Nakis, Christine Kraft, Sharon Lott, Ken Mikos, Bill Newell, Barbara Ray-Holcomb, Amy Rowley, Laura Thomas, and Dorothy Wilkins.

It is my hope that everyone has a productive Fall semester with their students.

Best,  
Dr. Keith M. Cagle



# FROM THE TREASURER'S OFFICE

Treasurer: William "Bill" Newell

Greetings from the Treasurer's Office. Since April 2014 I have been working hard to transition the Treasurer's Office to our new address:

ASLTA Treasurer  
10413 E. Spring Creek Rd.  
Sun Lakes, AZ 85248

Cathi Bouton, our former treasurer decided it was time to turn this huge job over to another person. ASLTA thanks Cathi for her service as Treasurer and especially for spearheading the application process and appeal process to finally receive our 501(c)3 status from the IRS. BIG HANDS WAVE! This was a huge task with pages and pages of applications and documentation and countless hours. Thank you Cathi for this very significant achievement for ASLTA!

So now the burden of this office falls to me. What was I thinking when our President, Timo Owens asked me

nicely to serve as Treasurer. Oh my goodness... In October 2013 I retired from full time work and moved to Arizona thinking I would enjoy golf, swimming, exercising, travel etc. in sunny Arizona. In April 2014 suddenly I had a full time job again on a completely voluntary basis. What was I thinking?

But I have accepted the challenge. "Full speed ahead," I always say.

Many of you have heard from me by email or letter in the last few months. This is a reminder that the 2014/15 membership year began on September 1. Please get your dues in promptly. You can pay 2014/15 dues online at our new website. Go to [www.aslta.org](http://www.aslta.org). Click on Membership. It is easy and secure to pay online.

If you are certified or the president of an ASLTA chapter you are required to pay dues annually. If you owe dues for past membership cycles, you will be hearing from me. (Maybe you already have.)

Past dues payments are made through a special link that I can send you or through the mail by sending check or money order to the address above.

Remember that through your certification you are making a strong

statement in support of ASL being taught by qualified teachers and you are showing your respect for our profession, ASL and Deaf culture. If you are not certified, why not begin the process today?

Remember the Treasurer's office is here to serve you. Please feel free to contact me at any time at: [treasurer@aslta.org](mailto:treasurer@aslta.org). I am very responsive to email and will get back to you usually within 24 to 48 hours. Sorry we do not have VP at the Treasurer's office. The Treasurer's office is not a Headquarters Office for ASLTA. We do need one and it should be a high priority for our organization over the next several years. We cannot continue to operate with an all-volunteer board running the show. Any member who has ideas for how we can achieve a home office with an Executive Director and staff, please shoot those ideas to your ASLTA board.

And finally don't forget that we have a fabulous conference coming up from June 24 – 27, 2015 in Minneapolis, MN. Early bird rates expire soon, so get your conference registrations in now. Don't be stuck paying higher conference rates. Be a member and get the best conference rates now.

~Bill

## Maryland ASL Teachers Association

Fourth Statewide Conference

November 15, 2014 \* McDaniel College

<http://www.mdaslta.org/>

