

ASLTA

American Sign Language Teachers Association

Newsletter

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JNCL and NCLIS

By Leslie C. Greer and William J. Newell

We went to Washington DC for JNCL/NCLIS Delegate Assembly on May 17 – 19, 2001. There were other language organizations in attendance. There were two important issues discussed. They were Foreign Language Assistance Program (FLAP) and National Security Education Program. We would like to share those issues with you.

Senator Cochran (Republican – Mississippi) introduced an amendment to Senate Bill 1 which is the Senate appropriations bill for Education, that restored 14 million dollars in funding for FLAP. The students will have a better opportunity for their careers when they have knowledge of two or more foreign languages. When we learned foreign language during high school, there always were problems with language because language takes more time than just four years to learn.

One girl from Mississippi wrote to the U.S. House of Representatives to express her concern about foreign language. "What is someone who speaks just one language? American!" The letter is very true because in Europe and Asia, foreign language education starts to teach the students during their elementary level or kindergarten level. The students will not remain interested in their foreign languages after high school due to lack of interest or peer pressure. They will be more successful than us because they have more foreign languages than we do. The young children will learn foreign language at an early age which makes it much more easy to remain interested. Foreign languages should be mandatory with math, science and English. Once the foreign language becomes mandatory, it will help foreign languages and ASL teachers obtain more jobs in the future.

On the House of Representatives side, the Education Bill was called, "No Child Left Behind". The HR 1 bill calls for "block grants" to the states instead of targeting specific money to federal priorities. With "block grants" the states receive federal education dollars and they do with it what they want. They set their own priorities. This would put foreign language programs in jeopardy because the states will most likely spend the money on "the back to basics" Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic, not on foreign language, music and other enrichment programs.

JNCL was interested in restoring the FLAP to the targeted federal money. They wanted all language organizations to support Senator Cochran's amendment. This is the "issue" that the

JNCL delegates "lobby their senators and representatives" while we are in Washington DC. The National Security Education Program supports that idea because of China's problem. Do you remember that the Chinese had a problem with our Army spy airplane? The Army soldiers spoke no foreign language and they spoke only English. The Chinese won't hold them longer if one of them had been Chinese fluent. The problem would have resolved more quickly.

On May 17th, we had sessions with updates from NCLIS staff and two legislative staff members of the 107th Congress. They also gave us role-play for our meeting with senators and representatives to convince them to vote for the bill, S-1 and house of representative to express our concern about HR-1. After lunch, delegates met their senators and representatives for their lobbying efforts about S-1, HR-1 and FLAP.

On May 18th and 19th, the delegates reviewed what happened with their visit with their senators. During Saturday afternoon the delegates broke into groups to discuss various issues. These group sessions were about the Bush Administration and Education, New Visions Update (curriculum for foreign languages), Foreign Languages and Higher Education, National Professional Standard Training, Higher Education, Research and Technology and Teacher Recruitment and Training. Leslie attended Teacher Recruitment and Training with other delegates to express our ideas for recruitment and training programs for foreign language teachers. Bill attended National Professional Standard Training which discussed a National Certification Test for Teachers of Foreign Language which would be for Advanced Certification. The test is being developed by Educational Testing Services with input from language teachers. There was a lot of dissatisfaction with the process that ETS is using and the teachers were concerned that the test will not be "up to date" with the Five Cs approach. There was not a lot of confidence that ETS knows how to develop a good certification for foreign language teachers.

JNCL and NCLIS helps our organizations to recognize concerns and messages from legislation and bills. We also help JNCL/NCLIS by attending to talk with senators and representatives to express the concerns of foreign language professionals to help them to understand the whole picture. Our participation in JNCL also helps to educate foreign language teachers and representatives of other foreign language organizations that ASL is a language and can be taught just like they teach their foreign languages. Many of the delegates are amazed with our discussion about ASL. They asked us many questions and they realized that our teaching techniques are very much the same as they use. They left the meeting with a better understanding of ASL as a true language.

We strongly encourage you to visit JNCL/NCLIS website because they provide the update on pending legislation and new regulations. They also provide information about grant opportunities, advocacy efforts, organizations and associations, and concerns that relate to our profession. The address is <http://www.languagepolicy.org>.

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Editor's Letter



A New Feature

A common ground among members who are working on ASLTA certification is to seek and learn more about ASL teaching. Attending to a conference can be very rewarding but it only happens once a year. Obtaining some resources to pursue one's learning outside of the conference or workshops can be very challenging. I have decided to add a section in this newsletter. This will become an advantage for members to use as a learning resource. Holly Roth wrote a few wonderful articles providing useful teaching tools. I, as an evaluator, will add some comments to her articles.

ASLTA Newsletter on WEB

I have received a few responses. A few responses apparently put me in limbo because I was not able to rely this as the primary source to present an argument whether I should pursue with the new change. I have discussed with the President. A possible option is to place the next newsletter in the website of ASLTA for a month trail in the fall. I would appreciate to have your input on this new change. The new plan is tentative.

Summer Vacation

Many of us will be on vacation deserving a mental break. It is a good time for you to buy or borrow some books that are related to ASL or Deaf Studies. Read and enjoy. It is a good time to "expand your mind (I always say that to my children)." Just a matter of fact, my children owe me some book reports. Smiles.

Enjoy your SUMMER!!

President's Report

ASLTA Board Retreat

ASLTA Board members, ASLTA liaison and NAD liaison, Kent Kennedy went to Arizona for the retreat which was held for the first time in 26 years. Marilyn Smith from Washington State came to Arizona to train and educate us about running non-profit organizations. We worked hard for two full days to develop guidelines, policies and other matters which ASLTA will need when we become an independent non-profit organization. The Board would like to have the manual ready before the next term of officers begins. ASLTA Board members, liaisons and I spent time with Arizona ASLTA members and non-members at a Mexican restaurant and disco. I want to thank Marilyn Smith for her wonderful training skills she shared with ASLTA. I also thanked all ASLTA Board members, and liaisons for their hard work. At last, I want to thank Tom Riggs and others for their hospitality.

ASL Way Conference

The ASL Way Conference was held at Monterey Bay, California in March. The local chapter, Northern California ASLTA, ran the conference. I was invited to the conference as the Keynote speaker. The workshops were marvelous!! I felt that ASLTA should establish a committee to develop the standard of learning ASL with "The Five Cs" according to ACTFL guidelines. They are communication, culture, connections, comparisons and communities. You can get information from the organization, American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, Inc. (ACTFL) by looking at its website, [<http://www.actfl.org>]. I finally watched the entertainment, "Deaf First" (same people from Deafywood). The play was so fabulous. I want to thank the ASL Way Conference committee for their wonderful job at the conference.

Deaf Studies VII Conference

Laura J. Thomas and I gave our presentation, "ASLTA Forum" at the Deaf Studies Conference in Orlando, Florida in April. We presented about the history of ASLTA, chapters, membership and certification. We had the chance to meet Florida ASLTA

members and discussed how to motivate more members participation in local chapters. I really would like to see all chapters to remain active because members are in a need for professional development hours to obtain ASLTA certification.

JNCL/NCLIS

Bill Newell and I went to the Joint National Council Language and National Congress on Languages and International Studies Delegate Assembly for three days. We met the staff of New York Senators, Charles Schumer and Hillary Clinton to express concerns of our organizations. We gave them a folder {included ASLTA membership brochure, ASLTA pin and pen, History of ASLTA, list of colleges/universities that accept ASL as credit courses, list of states that recognize ASL as a foreign language, CD-ROM of ASL vocabulary and others} to emphasize to them that ASLTA is a professional organization. Bill clarified to them that ASL is like any other language and should not be considered a "disability" issue because ASL is a true language such as French and other foreign languages and ASLTA is one of JNCL-NCLIS members. We also met one staff of Representative Louise Slaughter to express the same ideas. This was a great opportunity and a good starting point for developing understanding about ASL with US Congress. I really want all of you to look at the JNCL-NCLIS website because you need to write letters to your state senators and representatives that foreign language is very important to America! You will be amazed that your efforts will pay off if you visit your local state and federal representatives. You don't have to go to Washington DC. They all have offices in your local communities. ASL teachers need to become more politically active to promote ASL as a language.

ASLTA Board Meeting

ASLTA Board, ASLTA liaison, NAD liaison, CIT liaison, Carolyn Ball who is the current CIT President and I had board meetings in Chicago on the first weekend of June. We are still working on guidelines and policies. We had a pizza dinner with Chicagoland ASLTA members and non-members. I want to thank Sue Etkie, Barbara Fairwood, Drucille Rondon and Edna Johnson for their hospitality. The next board meeting will be in Missouri in the fall season, Washington DC with NAD Board members in January and Texas in the spring season. You are very welcome to watch our meetings.

Have a wonderful summer!

Continued from page 7

they already made and to consult ASLTA for guidance. We visited the technology based exhibits and found they DO HAVE the technology to make it easier for us to use ASL on computer to the students through chats, etc.. The students can sign their assignments and turn it in to us via email then, teacher gives feedback or corrections and sends them back. This is far easier than using videotapes. In conclusion, there is a lot we need to make sure that the other language organizations learn more and accept ASL without any presence of fear or threat. Time is right for ASLTA to become more involved with large language organizations such as ACTFL. Carolyn Stern, Coordinator for ASL- World Languages and Cultures, California State University Monterey Bay.

Laura Thomas, Chapter Chair

ASLTA Becoming An Independent Organization

Last January, a mailing was conducted among all ASLTA members about achieving independence with its very own 501(c) 3 status. You all may remember checking either YES or NO on a postcard. Approximately 60% responded to this vote, which is an unusually high number for a mailing. The final results are as follows:

YES - 514
NO - 56
ABSTAINED - 4

A report has been made to the ASLTA Board, which was shared with Libby Pollard, NAD President and Nancy Bloch, NAD Executive Director, along with other NAD board members. NAD fully supports ASLTA achieving independent status and collaboration will continue afterwards. Further information about this process is forthcoming and from your President, Leslie Greer and the ASLTA Board.

NAD State Association Conferences

This is the year for individual NAD state conferences. It is strongly encouraged ASLTA members attend their state conference to show continuing support for NAD and ASLTA activities on a statewide level, especially for legislative activity. Consider setting up an exhibit, displaying activities of your chapter. If there is no chapter in your state, this is a golden opportunity to recruit interested persons to form a chapter. Information may be shared about national ASLTA and the other 35 chapters in USA.

Revision of Chapter Affiliation Guidelines

Current chapter affiliation guidelines have been revised and ultimately, reviewed by the ASLTA Board at its June meeting in Chicago, Illinois. Revisions were necessary to reflect an affilia-

tion fee increase to cover cost of materials, number of workshop hours from 8 to 12 per year and a time frame for the actual affiliation process. The guidelines will be shared with the general membership at the 2002 general meeting for final approval.

Chapter maintenance guidelines will be developed to ensure proper compliance of affiliation with national ASLTA. The proposed guidelines for maintenance will be proposed to the ASLTA Board at its fall meeting.

National ASLTA Bylaws

One of the prerequisites for achieving 501(c)3 status is to have current bylaws. The ASLTA Board, along with some interested members, have been hard at work in modifying the bylaws. This is a work in process and the proposed bylaws will be shared with the general membership in 2002 for approval.

Chapter Development Training

At the 2000 conference, it was suggested ASLTA host an one or two day training session, prior to the NAD conference in Washington, D.C. The purpose is to have all chapter presidents and professional development coordinators come together to share ideas, resources and learn innovative ways for ASLTA chapter development and maintenance. This involves recruiting new members, encouraging more applications for certifications, professional development opportunities and board meeting management. A survey will be sent out during this summer, with the assistance of Amy Jo Thomas, Chapter Affiliation/Bylaws assistant.

Want to Form a Chapter in Your State?

With 35 affiliated chapters in USA, we are yet in meeting our goal for a chapter in EACH state. If there is no chapter in your state and you are interested in working with a team, contact: chapter@aslta.org for additional information on how to form a chapter. We are more than ready to assist you in forming a new chapter!

ASLTA Evaluation Chairperson's Report

Many of you certainly have been keeping my three assistants and me busy. Since last December, my e-mail box has received at least 175 inquiries about ASLTA evaluation and certifications. Since last December, 18 candidates are awarded with Provisional-level certifications, 5 candidates are awarded with Qualified-level certifications, 1 with Professional-level certification, and 1 with renewal for Professional-level certification. We have 126 active files for Provisional and Qualified level certifications. Seven candidates are on a waiting list for Professional-level interviews which will occur in first week of July, 2002 in a conjunction with the ASLTA conference and NAD Biennial convention.

You may notice that only ONE has renewed the certification. It is **EXTREMELY IMPORTANT** for you to renew your certification or apply for next level of certification.

Several candidates have sent their evaluation materials to the NAD Home Office in Silver Springs, Maryland which will create a delay. Please send your evaluation materials to me **DIRECTLY** at:

Gardner-Webb University
Campus Box 7283
Boiling Springs, NC 28017

It has been an average of three months of waiting for you to know your result after you send your evaluation application and materials. If you have passed your Provisional-level evaluation and you have enough hours of Professional Development and teaching ASL, you can immediately apply for Qualified-level evaluation.

For more information about ASLTA Evaluation system, please go and see our website of <http://www.aslta.org>. If you have any question, please feel free to contact me at evaluation@aslta.org.

What Do You Need To Know About Teaching ASL?

Holly Roth and Cindy Campbell

At the first day of class, all students receive a course syllabus. It is an agreement between a teacher and students. In the contents of the course syllabus, it should be included:

- A) Course Title
- B) College/University
- C) Instructor (office and email)
- D) Days of the week and time
- E) Course description
- F) Course Materials (see for Holly's article)
- F) Course objectives
- G) Course outline
- H) Evaluation

In each component of the course syllabus, it should be explained very clearly of what the teacher intend to teach on what materials. It helps preparing the students to know what to expect from the teacher. This forms a two-way street agreement between the teacher and students. As for ASL teachers, you are required to understand this basic principle involved in ASL teaching. We strongly recommend you to look up some resources related to this and learn more about it.

Regarding to the required course materials, Holly gives an advice of how to write the reference:

Name of a:

1. book
2. author(s)
3. published who
4. printed when
5. ISBN number
6. cover which units/pages

Check with your department chairperson to give you the formula of course syllabus.

Report to National ASLTA Board : November 2000 ACTFL Representation

I was the first representative for ASLTA attending to 2000 ACTFL conference. The board there had passed the two resolutions back in 1990-1991 showing ACTFL acceptance of ASL as a language equal to other languages. People were asking me why they should consider ASL as a language. On the other hand, there were also a lot of people excited to see me and other deaf person, Cathy Haas from Stanford University (one of the attendees for the California Foreign Language Project).

Nearly half of the seminars and presentations involve technology which urges us to get more involved with the development of more technology in ASL teaching. One could see a lot of information involving CALICO (language organization with heavy emphasis on use of technology) in language teaching. Upon checking their program, it amazed me to see that they are so far advanced and ASL was not included yet. They were very interested to involve ASLTA in their future conferences.

Even with earlier requests from both the Board and myself, the President and Vice President did not have an opportunity to meet with me to discuss future involvement of ASL teachers in their conferences. I found them at the general assembly and nicely asked if they would make a few minutes to talk with me and Cathy, and they replied that they were too busy. Other board members of the executive board heard and came to us and assured us that they are very interested in involving us and will work on this in the future board meetings. This is a very positive sign. I encourage the ASLTA Board to work with the ACTFL board. There is so much to learn from other language presentations that we can easily apply to our ASL teaching.

I accepted the impromptu invitation to participate in the ACTFL forum "Vision of the Future." I gave a short presentation on ASL topic. In summary, I nicely reminded the steering committee and the audience of 1200 that the ACTFL already accepted the language. I encouraged them to not continue to ask us WHY's but to start asking us HOW's. How can ACTFL influence the local language organizations in our states and districts to involve us since most of them are still not open to us yet. How can we all work more closely? How can we share the languages? How can we start learning together? How we can promote the information that not is ASL an only visual language but that there are other visual languages such as Spanish, British, Japanese, and so forth.

From having met with these committee members who arranged the forum and panel discussions I learned that they are planning to research and pick a few more language groups to join their organization and help them with the standards. They want to continue evaluating and rating more languages on the difficulty of learning, set up four levels of language skills for the students to achieve in language programs and write the competency levels for each language according to their guidelines. This is urgent matter for us to learn more and how to incorporate these guidelines into ASL teaching. I have added the ASL version of their standards and invite your feedback on it so that we can submit it to our chapters, regions, and national level meetings then submit it to ACTFL organization.

At a few exhibits which demonstrated new teaching ideas or games, we gave the exhibitors some ideas on making ASL versions of the materials

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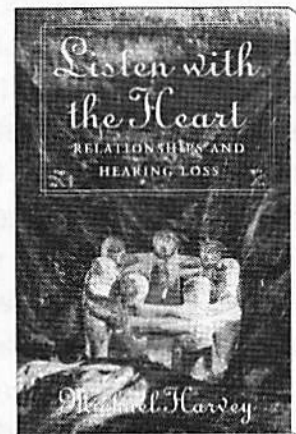
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