

# THE INTERPRETER CONNECTION

Issue 12

April 2018

## GC Hires Deaf Interpreters for Annual Council

**O**n October 7, 2017 another Deaf Interpreter (Selina Shearer) and I, paired with ASL interpreters Monica Mack and Lynn Davis, provided interpreting at the Sabbath morning service at the Annual Council of the General Conference (GC) in Maryland. The services were broadcast on livestream through the Hope Channel Church. Not only was I excited to have the opportunity to work as an interpreter on the platform at the GC, but I also believed it to be the first time that the GC hired Deaf interpreters.

This provided us with the opportunity to expose them to the Deaf community and to educate them as to why they needed to hire

Deaf Interpreters as well as hearing ASL Interpreters. Currently there is an increase in awareness about Certified Deaf Interpreters in the Deaf

community. I was thrilled to see this awareness happening in the Deaf SDA community as well.

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*Interpreters Monica Mack and Selina Shearer interpret for Annual Council of the General Conference*

# Byrd and Taylor interpret Black History Program

**T**his past winter, two of our SDA interpreters, Cheryl Byrd and Valerie Taylor, interpreted a Black History Program.

Cheryl and Valerie volunteer with various groups in the churches and youth in the community, teaching them songs and basic signs. Valerie's group performed in March and the deaf community was invited.

The Black history program, a paid event, was televised through the local news. Its goal was to bring awareness of campus race issues to the community through national leadership councils on the college campuses across the nation.

When asked about what their favorite part of interpreting this event, the response was "What we enjoyed most was the information shared from a young man that courageously stood against the odds for equality and fair treatment on college campuses. His voice sparked a domino effect that influenced 3 states and ultimately our nation by way of CNN. Because of his voice, the administration of the University of Missouri was forced to step down and a new team with fair treatment to all was established. We have provided interpreting services for the historically black institution

of North Carolina A&T State University and other college campuses for over 10 years. We could never be successful in this work without a trusting and skilled team interpreter that we have with each other (and more as needed). Due to the length and intensity of this program, we team interpreted about every 10-15 minutes."

Between the two of them, Cheryl and Valerie have more than 30 years of experience as teachers



*Cheryl Byrd interprets for Black History Program in North Carolina.*

for the Deaf and educational interpreters. Valerie has served the states of Pennsylvania, Maryland,



*Cheryl Byrd and Valerie Taylor*

Alabama and New Jersey, but most of their careers have been in North Carolina.

Cheryl Byrd and her husband have been married for 36 years with two adult children and live in Winston Salem, centrally located in North Carolina.

Valerie Taylor serves with her husband as the Family Life Leader and the Woman's leader in their church. She is a local elder and a recording artist/vocalist. Between her and her husband, she is the mother of 5 adult children and the grandmother of 6. She and her husband live in New Bern, on the East coast of the beautiful state of North Carolina.

# Tidbits: Happenings & Events



*Deaf Young Adults for Christ (DYAC) in Montebello, VA.*



*David and Francisca Trexler were invited to Mountain View SDA Church in Arkansas where David was asked to preach to the hearing and deaf in the congregation. Pictured is Francisca Trexler teaching Sabbath School. Photo Credit: David Trexler.*



*Deaf Men's Retreat held in Yamhill, OR.*

## UPCOMING INTERPRETER/ DEAF EVENTS

**July 8-15, 2018**

Western Deaf Camp meeting  
Milo Adventist Academy  
Days Creek, OR

**August 2-5, 2018**

3rd National Congress of Adventist Deaf 2018  
Villahermosa, Tabasco, Mexico

**August 8-12, 2018**

7th Day Interpreters' Conference  
Southern Deaf Camp Meeting  
Cohutta Springs  
Crandall, GA

**August 8-12, 2018**

Southern Deaf Camp Meeting  
Cohutta Springs Conference Center  
Crandall, GA

**August 24-28, 2018**

Southern New England Conference  
Deaf Camp Meeting  
Camp Cherokee  
Saranac Lake, NY

**October 12-15, 2018**

DYAC Camp Meeting  
Kentucky (more information later)

**October 25-28, 2018**

DEAR Deaf Camp Meeting  
Camp Blue Ridge  
Montebello, VA

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The four of us (the interpreters) were in the video studio all morning. We were split into two teams, and Deaf Interpreter and an ASL Interpreter working as a team, and taking turns.

After working in the video studio, I have gained an increased understanding of how the video studio process works. It also gave me some idea of what I can do better the next time. For instance, when I was in front of the camera and Lynn Davis, who was my team



*Interpreters Sheelah Kimbrough and Lynn Davis interpret for Annual Council Meeting of the General Conference*

ASL interpreter, stood next to the camera, the TV screen was behind

me and I could not see how the services looked to the viewer. It would be beneficial for the Deaf interpreter to have a second screen where he/she could see what the viewer is seeing. This would help us convey our message more effectively.

*Sheelah Kimbrough is a Certified Deaf Interpreter, lives in Ft. Meade, Maryland, and churches at DEAF, Deaf Evangelistic Adventist Fellowship in Silver Spring, MD.*

## From the Editor



One of my favorite quotes is found in the book *Steps to Christ*: “Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as a to a friend. Not that it is necessary in order to make known to God what we are, but in order to enable us to receive Him. Prayer does not bring God down to us, but brings us up to Him.” SC page 93. How do you pray? Do you open your heart to God? *The Interpreter Connection* will include a story about prayer in the July edition. For this April edition, enjoy reading!

Do you want to contribute? Send all articles, pictures or points of interest for *The Interpreter Connection* to [7thdayterps@gmail.com](mailto:7thdayterps@gmail.com). Thank you for all of your services for God!

—Nohe

### DID YOU KNOW?

Older editions of *The Interpreter Connection* will be archived at Three Angel Deaf Ministries webpage. To see what you have missed, please visit [3adm.org](http://3adm.org) and click on “ministries,” “interpreter” and then scroll to the bottom of the page. Click on the link labeled “Interpreter Connection.” Other locations for archived issues will be announced soon.

# Interpreting State Licensure: Navigating its Complexities

Advocates within the Deaf and Interpreting communities are continuing its push for state licensure, even when the waters of what makes an interpreter qualified are increasingly murky. This push for state licensure started well before the current situation with the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) and its separation from the national credentialing process. With this shift in the credentialing process, the push for state licensure becomes complicated; the language used in states that have already adopted this measure made little or no provision for changes in certification programs. How should we move forward together, as interpreters and

disciples of Christ, and support each other, and at the same time support our community, and our profession?

To give ourselves a better view of the state licensure issue, let's review the turbulence within the Interpreting profession over the last few years. Due to some ongoing lawsuits, RID, once a national credentialing body, made the decision to separate itself from its credentialing division and create a separate entity, the Center for Assessment of Sign Language Interpretation (CASLI) was created. Although still doing business under RID, CASLI operates independently with its own board of directors and

business function. This separation helps RID manage its future monetary risk on behalf of its membership.

In its transition of the credentialing process to CASLI, RID took action based on recommendations made by its Certification Council and sunset several certification programs: the Educational Certificate: K-12 (Ed:K-12), the Specialist Certification: Legal (SC:L), Oral Transliteration Certificate (OTC). RID continues to recognize all three certification programs, but is not awarding any new certifications under those programs (Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc., 2016). RID also removed the performance portion

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## GYC Meetings Held in Phoenix

In December, 2017, Generation of Youth for Christ (GYC) held meetings in Phoenix, AZ.

Darrel Strait, Melissa Neave and Nohelani Jarnes were the interpreters for the meetings. Michelle Boykin serves as the current ASL Interpreter Coordinator for GYC. A health convention was held prior to GYC, "Your Best Pathway to Health" offering free medical, dental and vision services. Thousands of individuals were served at Pathways including those from the Deaf community.

Both Pathways and GYC were a huge blessing to all who attended.



*The GYC interpreting team 2017*



**Meet new friends!**

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**Skill enhancing  
workshops**

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**Deaf Ministry  
workshop**

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**Interpreting  
Revelation Speaks  
Peace workshop**

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**Hang out with Deaf  
campers!**

# **DON'T FORGET!**

## **AUGUST 8-12, 2018**

### **7<sup>TH</sup> DAY INTERPRETERS' CONFERENCE**

**Come to enhance your skills and have fun!**

In 2018, come to join the fun and enjoy the Interpreter workshops at Southern Deaf Camp Meeting at Cohutta Springs in Crandall, GA! Registration for the Interpreter Conference is \$60 a person. For Lodging and food cost, please contact Pastor Jeff Jordan.



**QUESTIONS?**

Contact Nohe Jarnes

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Check us out on  
Facebook! 7<sup>th</sup> Day  
Interpreters' Conference

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of the Certified Deaf Interpreter examination, so only the Knowledge Examination (the written exam) can be taken, and begin a “bridge plan” towards being fully certified upon satisfaction of this component (Center for the Assessment of Sign Language Interpretation, 2016). In other words, no Deaf Interpreter can become nationally certified until a bridge plan is created or a new certification program developed. At this time CASLI is designing new tests for the interpreting examinations for both deaf and non-deaf interpreters. In the meantime, some states are in limbo because they passed interpreter licensure laws that provides for national certifications by RID as a way to identify qualified interpreters.

The reasoning behind the initial push by advocates for state licensure is to align states with the best practices of the interpreting profession. Ideally, the interpreting profession should be advanced as a professional organization from within, but circumstances are controlled not only by businesses and government but also by interpreters who are novices and/or who work without credentials (Best, 2014; Mikkelson, 1996). Interpreter Researchers and Educators have consistently cited interpreting credentials as a minimum standard of quality (Mikkelson, 1996). A credential can be a certification by a professional certifying body, or professional licensure granted by the state if available. This is a benchmark set higher than the definition as provided within the Americans with

Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). This law defines qualified interpreters as providers of effective communications using terminology appropriate for that environment. So why are those advocates pushing for a higher standard than what is written in ADA?

The state licensure avenue provides guidance to agencies and businesses within their state with specific measures on what makes an interpreter qualified. The rationale behind state licensure, according to Tseng’s Theory of Control, is to provide states guidance on qualifying interpreters, and return the control over the interpreting work and the market to the interpreting professionals for protection and autonomy (Mikkelson, 1996). Currently, businesses and government control the interpreting industry by looking for the lowest possible price, and creating great demand for additional services. Over the last ten years, we have seen an explosion of new Interpreter Training Programs with the introduction and expansion of the Video Relay Interpreting industry as well as the upward demand for additional community interpreting work. Many of those interpreters are getting work not because of the quality of their services, but because of their attractively low rates. Usually, but not always, the language of the state licensure law, as requested by the Deaf and Interpreting communities, involves national certification as a minimum standard of quality. This standard

sets the bar higher than the measure of quality as written in ADA (Mid-Atlantic ADA Center, 2017). To businesses and government agencies (such as public schools, and other services provided by states) meeting the bottom line is the ultimate target. State licensure would begin to standardize the definition of quality at the state and local level, because that’s not possible at the national level.

A state licensure law would also address consumers and interpreters’ avenues for legal recourse. The state licensure process for interpreters would also hold interpreters accountable for the assignments they accept as a licensed interpreter. Some see the state-wide mandate as being more effective than trying to go through the professional certifying body in ensuring that businesses and the agencies who hire interpreters follow best practices rather than focusing on the lowest available rate. Currently there is no legal recourse if a consumer experiences a significant loss during an interpreted situation, except through RID. The mediation process with RID is not legally binding, and requires a commitment from both parties to follow through with their agreement. Some people within the Deaf and Interpreting communities think that it would be better to pursue recourse through civil court, without setting up a state licensure law. That approach would place the burden of providing proof of liability squarely on the shoulders of the consumer. This approach fails to consider the struggle Deaf consumers already

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experience in navigating systems already biased against their linguistic and communication needs.

Consumers and Interpreters are both frustrated with a widespread problem of some interpreters accepting work beyond their skill-set. This is considered unethical among professional interpreters who accept the RID Code of Professional Conduct. and agencies assigning interpreters to jobs without a formal screening process. If a consumer has a problem with a particular interpreter or agency, there is no way for the consumer to pursue a resolution unless there is a state law that outlines the legal action available to them. Advocates believe that it would be best to define the qualifications as we would a doctor, or a lawyer, because this would place the responsibility on the interpreter in ensuring they obtain updated certifications, follow the law, and address any legal action against them. So, a state licensure could build in its own code of ethics, or adopt the RID Code of Professional Conduct.

Unfortunately, a poorly-written state licensure law may restrict the consumer's desire to hire an uncertified interpreter, even if they already know they work well together. If states wanted to create a provision for interpreters who do not hold a national certification, they would need to create and maintain a formal screening process to qualify interpreters at the state level, without requiring them to obtain a national credential. Some states prefer not to invest funds in creating and maintain

a screening process, because that would mean the state would need to shoulder the fiscal impact. If there is no provision for a screening process beyond national credentials, then breaking into the interpreting field would be more restricted.

The problem is complicated and real. As Disciples of Christ, we must take care to consider carefully each job and to remember the greatest commandment given to us to "love our neighbor as ourselves" (Mark 12:31). We as interpreters and consumers must remember that interpreters are linguistic and cultural mediators working with consumers who are themselves part of an underserved minority group. When our response as a consumer, an interpreter, and/or a business owner, is self-serving on any level, we end up proposing solutions that but the solution requires a holistic approach that concedes to the needs of the interpreters, consumers, businesses and the government. This approach must be adaptable to the ongoing changes of the credentialing process as important benchmarks. Since ADA does not adequately define qualification, or provide a means of recourse in handling the individual needs of consumers, businesses, and government; creating state licensure to confirm the standards of qualification and the professional ethics created by the professionals within the interpreting field seems to be the best available solution.

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