

DEAF HISTORY International

An Association for All Interested in the Study, Preservation, and Dissemination of Deaf People's History

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SUMMER & FALL 2010

WE DID IT!

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A NEW ERA: Deaf Participation and Collaboration



Photo Credit: Joe McLaughlin

THE OFFICIAL SIGNERS OF THE NEW ERA ACCORD FOR THE FUTURE at the 21st International Congress on Education of the Deaf (ICED 2010) Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

From left to right: Claire Anderson of Delta, B. C. (Chair, ICED 2010 Organizing Committee), Wayne Sinclair of Surrey, B. C. (Coordinator, British Columbia Deaf Community's ICED Committee), Markku Jokinen of Helsinki, Finland (President, World Federation of the Deaf), and Doug Momotiuk of Winnipeg, Manitoba (President, Canadian Association of the Deaf).



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The DHI Newsletter

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Notes from the Editor



Way back in 1880, the world heard “Viva la parola! (Long live speech!). This was cheered by the victorious oralists at the 2nd International Congress of Teachers of Deaf-Mutes in Milan, Italy. Several resolutions were officially passed endorsing speech and lipreading (“oralism”) and rejecting sign language and fingerspelling (“manualism”) in schools for Deaf children. One of the resolutions adopted at the Congress read: *The Convention, considering the incontestable superiority of speech over signs, (1) for restoring deaf-mutes to social life, (2) for giving them greater facility of language, declares that the method of articulation should have the preference over that of signs in the instruction and education of the deaf and dumb* [quoted in E.M. Gallaudet, “The Milan Convention,” *American Annals of the Deaf and Dumb* 26 (no. 1) (January 1881): 5-6].

Was the voting at the Milan Congress fair? No, definitely not! Here’s why. There were 256 registered at this convention. The majority of the delegates came from Italy (158) and France (67) and were proponents of oralism, outnumbering those who supported the use of sign language and fingerspelling. The other countries represented at the congress were: England (12), Germany (8), United States (6), Belgium (1), Canada (1), Norway (1), Russia (1) and Sweden (1). Of these, only two of the voting delegates were Deaf themselves (James Denison, principal of a primary department [later Kendall School] at the Columbia Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb [now Gallaudet University] in Washington, D. C. USA, and Claudius Forestier, director/principal of an educational institution for Deaf children in Lyon, France). They voted against the resolutions. Someone wrote that this was the beginning of the darkest period in Deaf History and Deaf Education.

One hundred thirty years later at the 21st International Congress on Education of the Deaf, in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada (July 18–22, 2010), there was a thunderous applause and cheering by most of the delegates from all walks of life (a mixture of hearing and Deaf teachers, administrators, researchers, students, and others) when a statement was issued regretting and rejecting all resolutions that were passed at the 1880 Milan Congress. Please keep in mind that it is not a formal apology, but a regret and a rejection. Further information about this historic Statement of Principle and Accord for the Future with an article written by Wayne Sinclair, one of the advocates who successfully campaigned for this change will be found in the pages of this newsletter.

The 2012 DHI Conference Planning Committee is busy at work arranging for an exciting and action-packed 8th DHI Conference, which will be held in Toronto, Canada, July 24–29, 2012. Please watch for further conference details (to be released in early 2011 as they become available) in future issues of this newsletter and also on our conference website which will be launched in early 2011. Have you marked your calendar and started saving your dollars, euros, pesos, francs, marks, rupees, centavos, pounds, yens, rubles, kronor or whatever your country banknotes and coinages are called?



The Deaf History International Newsletter welcomes Deaf History-related submissions of news, articles and essays, book and film reviews, images and photographs, newspaper clippings, conference and workshop announcements, websites, and other readings of interest for possible inclusion.

Please submit them to the editor by the following deadlines:

DHI ISSUES	SUBMISSION DEADLINE	DISTRIBUTION DATE
SPRING	March 15	April 15– 30
SUMMER	June 15	July 15 – August 15
FALL	September 15	October 15 – 31

FOR FUTURE ISSUES



President's Column

By Peter Jackson (United Kingdom)

It seems like yesterday that we were at the 7th DHI Conference in Stockholm, Sweden but it has actually been over 12 months. We are already preparing for the next one at Toronto, Canada in the summer of 2012. How time really flies...

It has been a busy half-year since I took over as President with the approval of the Bureau (and the support of ex-officio members) as announced in our Communiqué dated 12 May 2010, when the previous President was no longer able to perform his duties. Much of this time has been consumed by the issue of the DHI website. Another area of concern is the need to re-visit the Bylaws and see where they needed strengthening in the light of recent events, including the loss of the President in the middle of his six-year term..

While it is the usual practice for all members of the Bureau to communicate by e-mail, it was clear that there were issues that needed to be resolved through face-to-face meetings, and consequently, as President, I have had several meetings between August and November with Bureau members to talk through matters and exchange views. In August, Bureau Member-at-Large Jon Martin Brauti of Norway met with me at my office in Warrington, England and in September and October, I met with Member-at-Large Gordon Hay twice in Edinburgh, Scotland where incidentally the 2015 DHI Conference is to be held.

Also in September, I flew to meet Member-at-Large Corrie Tijsseling of The Netherlands at Amsterdam's Schipol airport for a three-hour meeting. Finally, on 23 November, I met with the DHI Secretary/Treasurer Edna Sayers and the DHI Newsletter editor, Clifton Carbin, in his capacity as an ex-officio member of the Bureau, at the Marriott Hotel in Cleveland, Ohio USA.

The outcome of all these discussions is that we are finally ready to proceed with the thorny issue of the DHI website, having to break off negotiations with the Minneapolis web-designer chosen by the previous President due to disagreements that could not be reconciled. The outcome also saw some agreement on the Bylaw amendments to be proposed to the next General Assembly in Toronto. These include a decision by the Bureau that the post of Vice-President remains vacant until Toronto. We are also ready to agree on procedural matters for the future election of the Bureau and for the conduct of the General Assembly, to try and avoid the problems that arose at the last one in Stockholm. Details will follow in a future newsletter.

While on the subject of the next DHI Conference in Toronto 2012, all members and national associations are reminded that the venue of the 2018 DHI Conference will be decided by the Bureau during that conference. Any association desirous of getting together a bid to hold this Conference should start thinking about it and making plans now. To refresh your memory, the previous conferences have been held at these venues: 1991 Washington D. C. USA; 1994 Hamburg, Germany; 1997 Trondheim, Norway; 2000 Washington D. C. USA; 2003 Paris, France; 2006 Berlin, Germany; and 2009 Stockholm, Sweden. Future conferences will be held at Toronto, Canada (2012), and Edinburgh, Scotland UK (2015).

While there is no reason for any country or city not to host the conference again, I think the feeling of the Bureau is that it would be good for a different country or city to host the 2018 DHI Conference.

I will close my President's report with the sad news of the death of Jochen Muhs of Germany, a former Bureau Member-at-Large and Vice-President of the DHI for 7½ years (2000–2003 [half of 3-year term], 2003–2006 and 2006–2009). An article about him appears elsewhere in this newsletter.

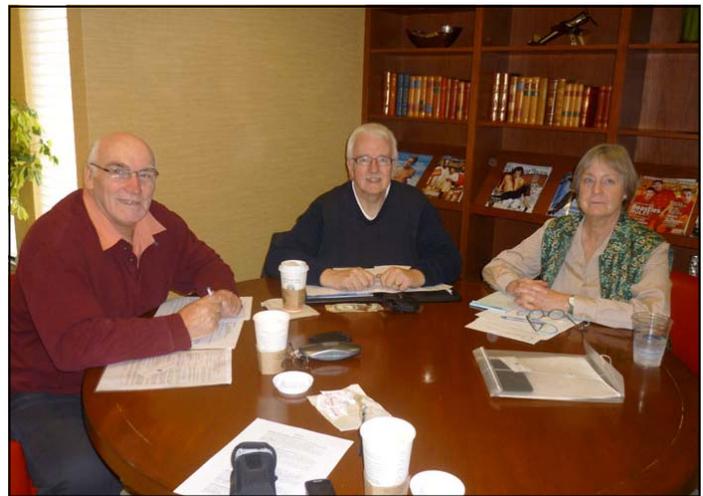


Photo credit: Maureen Jackson (United Kingdom)

Pictured at a DHI business meeting in Cleveland, Ohio USA
(From left to right): Peter Jackson (President), Clifton F. Carbin
(Editor, The DHI Newsletter) and Edna Sayers (Secretary/Treasurer)

ADVERTISEMENTS

The DHI Newsletter welcomes advertisements for inclusion in its publication. The content of all textual advertisements should be related to the field of Deaf history and the educational purposes of the newsletter. The rates are \$100 for a full page and \$50 for a half page. There is no charge for ready-made graphics.

For further information, contact the editor.

JOCHEN MUHS

4 July 1942 – 16 November 2010

by John A. Hay (United Kingdom)

Known for his insights into experiences of Deaf Germans during the Nazi regime, former DHI Vice-President Jochen Muhs passed away suddenly at his Berlin home on 16th November 2010.

It was at the 2nd DHI Conference in Hamburg in 1994 that Jochen first became interested in Deaf History. At the end of the conference, Jochen was elected to the first ever Bureau of Deaf History International which was officially constituted at that time.

As the leading Deaf authority on deaf experiences under the Third Reich and perhaps the Deaf equivalent of the late Horst Biesold, the author of *Crying Hands!*, Jochen delivered numerous presentations entitled "Deaf People under the Third Reich" outside of Germany.

At the 1st Spanish National Congress of Deaf History held in October 1995 in Granada, Jochen was an excellent sign-narrator and very competent user of International Signs, who adapted his presentations to meet the visual needs of the deaf audiences. I was privileged to get to know Jochen personally during this time as we were invited as guest speakers in the same bracket as Harlan Lane.

My wife and I were delighted to play host to Jochen and his delightful fraulein, Monika at our home for one summer weekend before they took a tour of Cornwall and Devon; later we were honoured to be guests at his house for the duration of the 2006 DHI Conference in Berlin. I also had the pleasure of travelling with him on two occasions in 2008 and 2010

as guests of the Norwegian Deaf History Society. During our frequent friendly banter regarding the Second World War, Jochen would often try to correct my politically incorrect signs for various prominent German figures, something I shall remember with affection.

The 2nd DHI Conference gave Jochen and others with the same interest the initiative to form a Deaf History Interest Group in 1996 to focus on and analyze the history of the Deaf in Germany. From this, *Kultur und Geschichte Gehörloser e.V* (KuGG) was established in 2001.

At the 3rd DHI Conference in Trondheim in 1997, he delivered a paper on Wilhelm Gottweiss and Fritz Alberghs, the leading Deaf Nazis. At the 6th DHI Conference in Berlin, a Deaf Jew, Paul Kroner (1880–1943) who was noted for his strong association with deaf sports was the subject of Muhs' paper. This presentation helped lead to the public apology extended by the German Deaf Sports Association for its failure of recognising his outstanding services as well as for his murder at Auschwitz, and the installation of a memorial plaque on the pavement outside of Kroner's former home. In the presence of a number deaf children.

While Jochen had not presented a paper in the United Kingdom, he acted as the contact person for *SEE HEAR!*, the BBC-tv magazine for deaf and hard of hearing viewers for its special programme entitled *Life Unworthy of Life: Experiences of Deaf People in Nazi Germany* which was broadcasted on 6th of March 2004. He was also featured on this programme sign-narrating the deeds of Fritz Alberghs among few other things.

In April 2007, Jochen, as a guest of the Swedish Deaf History Society, undertook a

Deaf People under the Third Reich lecture tour in Sweden.

His favourite historical personality was Eduard Fürstenberg, the Deaf activist who founded Germany's first Deaf Club in Berlin in 1848. Jochen was a vigorous campaigner in re-education of Deaf Germans and amongst his outstanding achievements was the setting up of the *Ehregrab*, the grave of honour dedicated to a citizen for extraordinary services, in one of the Berlin cemeteries. This was the subject of his Norwegian tour in September 2008 as well as his paper which described Fürstenberg as a *Forgotten Deaf Giant* at the 7th DHI Conference in Stockholm last summer of 2009.

In 1963, Kennedy quoted "*Ich bin ein Berliner*", a phrase which certainly applies to Jochen Muhs who was a man fiercely proud of his city. He enthusiastically undertook the role of tour guide of the city of Berlin to participants of the 2006 DHI Conference in more than three occasions. One of the participants of this tour, Allison Fanara (USA) remarked "Jochen was and is one heck of a fast walker." This was indeed an indication of Jochen's eagerness to show as much of his beloved home as possible to visitors.

A cultured man, Jochen had a deep abiding interest in art and firmly believed that history could not exist without art. Incidentally, his wife Monika is an artist in her own right.

The addressing of sensitive historical issues faced by deaf Germans will forever be Jochen Muhs's legacy to Deaf History.

Profound and sincere condolences are extended to Monika and their two daughters, Claudia and Birgit.

Auf Wiedersehen! Farewell, Jochen!



Jochen Muhs (left) and John Hay (UK) outside Berlin Deaf Club, 2006



Jochen Muhs giving his presentation at the 2008 Annual General Meeting of the Norwegian Deaf History Society in Kristiansand.

Photo courtesy: Doug Bahl (USA)



Jochen Muhs as a city tour guide with a piece of the Berlin Wall

Jochen Muhs (far right) at the 2009 DHI Bureau Meeting in Stockholm, Sweden with Annemieke Van Kampen (The Netherlands), John Hay (UK), Doug Bahl (USA) and Clifton Carbin (Canada)



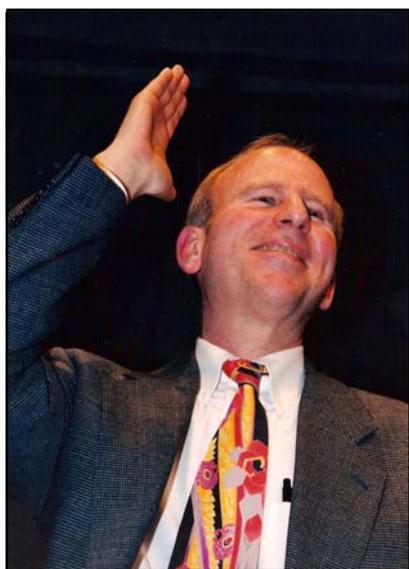
8TH DEAF HISTORY INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE TORONTO, CANADA JULY 24-29, 2012



TELLING DEAF LIVES
BIOGRAPHIES & AUTOBIOGRAPHIES

www.dhiconference2012.ca

(Conference Information & Website to be available in Spring 2011)



Dr. Larry R. Fleischer

IN MEMORY: A Deaf Man of Great Accomplishments

Lawrence Raymond Fleischer, 64, died unexpectedly a year ago on November 1, 2009, from a heart attack upon returning from the American Sign Language Teachers Association (ASLTA) conference where he presented the endnote speech. Having attended the New York School for the Deaf (Fanwood), Fleischer graduated from Gallaudet College (now Gallaudet University) and taught mathematics for three years. He then spent the next 30 years at California State University, Northridge, where he established and chaired the Deaf Studies Department there. He also earned a doctorate in education from Brigham Young University. He was active in many organizations, having served as president of the American Athletic Association of the Deaf (now USA Deaf Sports Federation) from 1989 to 1997 and again in 2005 until his passing. He was also inducted into the U.S.A. Deaf Basketball's Hall of Fame in 2008. He produced *I Love You, But...*, a film presented in ASL. He served on the Gallaudet University Board of Trustees, the American Speech and Hearing Association board, the Consumer Policy Board of Sorenson Communications and the Registry of Interpreters of the Deaf National Certification Board. He is survived by his wife, Vera, son Flann, daughter Flavia, son-in-law Will, and granddaughter Ryssa.

— Adonia K Smith and Lynn Jacobwitz, ASL Rose (USA)

We Did It!

The Rejection of Milan Resolutions

Wayne Sinclair (Canada)*



Vancouver was not in existence when the 2nd International Congress of Teachers of Deaf-Mutes (later renamed International Congress on Education of the Deaf) met in Milan, Italy from September 6th to 11th, 1880 to create what has been widely regarded, rightly or erroneously, as the most notorious single event in the history of Deafkind. Before 1880, oralism had taken roots throughout

Europe and made its presence felt in a growing number of schools on the North American continent. The much hated Milan event was simply to place an official sanction on the prevailing tides of oralism.

Unfortunately, this official endorsement given by mostly invited attendees in Milan has induced many unwitting parents and misguided officials in ministries of education around the western world to insist upon the practices of oralism for Deaf pupils. This officialdom has been viewed by the majority of Deaf leaders on both sides of Atlantic Ocean as being the roots of high rates of unemployment and severe cases of under-education or even mis-education, thus leading to frequent instances of mistrust between the Deaf and others in western societies and even in non-western societies.

It is for these reasons that the Deaf community in the modern multi-cultured metropolis of two point three million inhabitants of Vancouver, now the largest city in British Columbia, decided to take the ICED to task about the widespread sufferings experienced by Deaf citizens around the globe. Vancouver happened to be the site of ICED 2010.

Canada had already apologized to Japanese Canadians for internment during World War II, to Chinese Canadians for the head tax, and to First Nations peoples for usurping their cultures. Many of them were residents of British Columbia but they were not only ones to receive an apology from the various governments in Canada. At the beginning of this century, Deaf citizens in British Columbia who took the B. C. provincial government to court were awarded not only a hefty amount of money but also a monument in which the government recognized the sufferings of Deaf students at the provincially-run Jericho Hill School for the Deaf. Moreover, the nationally famous Eldridge decision rendered by the Supreme Court of Canada (*Eldridge v. British Columbia (Attorney General)*, [1997] 3 S.C.R. 624), which mandates the delivery of interpreting services, has its roots in British Columbia. Also, with thanks to Henry Vlug, B. C.'s Deaf attorney, the B. C. Deaf community led efforts to create the first province-wide TTY relay service in North America which subsequently became the first national TTY relay service on the continent.

Being no stranger to civil rights issues, the B. C. Deaf Community held a townhall meeting at Douglas College in New Westminster on Thursday, January 15, 2009, firstly to deal with the problematic lack of video relay services in Canada, but more significantly for purposes of this article to become aware of the upcoming ICED 2010 in Vancouver. A Deaf activist, Wayne Sinclair,

made a power-point presentation targeting the disastrous effects of the Milan decisions and suggested how the Deaf community could attempt to reverse the trends from the official sanctions by demanding an apology from the ICED. At the meeting's end, many volunteered to work towards that end.

After much discussion, research, many letter revisions, and notably mentally stimulating coffee meetings with Monte Hardy¹, a then resident of Aldergrove, B. C., Sinclair finally sent a letter on September 19, 2009, to Claire Anderson², chair of the Vancouver ICED 2010 Organizing Committee. It began with "We, the Deaf Community of British Columbia, are writing this open letter to you, the Vancouver organizing committee of the 2010 International Congress on Education of the Deaf, and all others involved in the International Congress on Education of the Deaf:..." The letter listed some of the harmful effects of the Milan Congress and pointed out that "we ask for – and expect – the apology during the convention of International Congress on Education of the Deaf in Vancouver in July 2010." Furthermore, the apology "must include the ICED's intentions to work with Nations around the world to involve Deaf citizens in redesigning educational programmes, in making economies more accommodating to the Deaf workers, in recognition and facilitation of Deaf communities, et cetera." Finally, Sinclair expressed in the letter that the apology was necessary so that "our many lost generations of Deaf citizens will not have fought in vain."

Anderson responded on October 6, 2009, acknowledging that the "resolutions at the Milan Congress have indeed had a longstanding impact on the lives of Deaf people and have caused considerable pain and suffering." She wrote that she "directed a small sub-committee headed by Joe McLaughlin³ to meet with 3 or 4 members of your committee to discuss how we might best resolve these issues..."

The admission of the "considerable pain and suffering" delighted Jim Roots.⁴ He sent an email message to Sinclair on October 14, 2009 stating that "it is somewhat eye-popping that she would admit in black and white print that Milan caused much pain and suffering. That admission can be used by us against anyone in ICED who refuses to consider making the apology." Roots then submitted a request for membership on the B. C. Deaf Community's ICED committee which was granted.⁵

On November 12, 2009, both sides met at Douglas College to begin negotiations for the evasive apology.⁶ McLaughlin wondered how his committee could offer an apology since the ICED had no organizational structure. The corporation which governed the ICED dissolved in 1920 after which it had become simply a "talkfest" with international educators of the deaf gathering every few years to discuss their findings, innovations, and new pieces of information or assumptions. In Hamburg, Germany, there was an attempt to make a motion to deal with the Milan resolutions during the ICED 1980 but it was dismissed as the German organizers felt they did not have any authority whatsoever to deal with this matter or any other formal proposal.⁷ Besides, it was felt that the attendees were not representative of their home countries. Another endeavour was made in Rochester, N. Y., in the United States, where the ICED 1990 was held. Unfortunately, the Deaf Americans were snubbed.⁸

The Vancouver organizers were essentially suggesting they had

*Wayne Sinclair was high school principal at the Maryland School for the Deaf in Frederick. After his retirement, he returned to his hometown of Vancouver, B. C., Canada.

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no authority whatsoever to grant the Deaf community's request for an apology. The Deaf community negotiators countered by suggesting that a notice be sent to all participants in advance of the meeting in Vancouver to outline the post-Milan difficulties faced by Deaf communities and to ask for a vote. The organizers argued that many participants might know nothing about the Milan resolutions and might not be familiar with the obstacles faced by Deaf adults; many participants were simply researchers interested in such matters as auditory amplification and new educational theories, and not well versed in classroom teaching and not familiar with the daily life of Deaf citizens.

Chauvet suggested that if both sides continued to work together, then, instead of producing just a document that might be shelved away to collect dust, they find a way to create a legacy that would continue for generations. Beside his suggestion, the best outcome of this meeting was a decision to meet again to try to find a solution that would satisfy both sides. An initial thought from representatives of the B. C. Deaf Community was that the organizers either lacked courage to be willing to try a vote from participants or felt their ICED 2010 was not responsible for the ICED 1880. Each ICED was independent from an immediately preceding ICED and dependent only upon the decisions and actions of organizing residents of its ICED meeting site.

Because the Vancouver organizers were viewed as seemingly reluctant to proceed with the concept of apology and especially with the understanding of the need to begin healing for Deaf communities, Sinclair decided to withdraw himself from the negotiating group⁹ and proceeded to make public through YouTube the issues concerning the need for an apology. He continued to remain the coordinator of the Deaf community's ICED committee. During the broadcasts, he attempted to show that the ICED 2010 was responsible for the 1880 ICED. After all, ICED was ICED.

Although much was done during the development of a written agreement between the two sides, a thorny issue that remained for several ensuing months concerned the word, apology. The organizers offered an acknowledgement, not an apology, of "the detrimental effects of the Milan conference." Sinclair then broadcasted two more video clips through YouTube in March 2010 to discuss the difference between the heartfelt apology and the unemotional and distasteful acknowledgement. On Friday, March 19, 2010, Sinclair got a videophone call from McLaughlin and Chauvet who reported that the ICED organizing committee accepted and agreed to the concept of apology. They also requested that the two video clips be removed from the website, to which Sinclair immediately agreed. An announcement was then broadcasted about the acceptance of apology on March 20, 2010.

The negotiators for the Deaf community was ecstatic about the breakthrough only to be rebuffed when the organizers backed away from the apology and instead chose another word, regret.¹⁰ That was in startling contrast to the spirit of collaboration and partnership during much of the earlier negotiations. Hardy and Howard reported to the B. C. Deaf Community's ICED Committee¹¹ that, despite the lack of the word apology, the organizers were fantastically helpful in strengthening the various areas of the written agreement. In fact, the organizers offered to reformat the document to include their support for the Deaf community's list of requests for the Nations of the world to take corrective steps to restore the dignity of Deaf citizens.

An "apology" document usually comes with two parts, the first part for the offending party to make an admission of guilt or hurtful action and the second part for the victims to make known their needs and desires. The offending party's signatures were to be

placed at the bottom of the first part whilst those of the victims were to go to the bottom of the second part. As indicated earlier, the organizers proposed that both sides sign at the bottom of the entire document, thus making evident that the organizers were willing to accommodate the Deaf community's demands for redress from the political jurisdictions around the globe.

At this point, this writer wishes to bring attention to the reader that the initial letter to the organizing committee chair, Anderson, made it clear that "we do not assume to speak for the international Deaf Community," even though "we are cognizant of the fact that those same communities around the world share the same challenges that we face here in British Columbia..." For that reason, on October 19, 2009, Sinclair sent an email message to the generic email address of wfd@kl-deaf.fi at World Federation of the Deaf in Helsinki, Finland. He informed the organization about the local Deaf community's involvement on this world stage. On November 10, 2009, Roots sent a message to the WFD on behalf of the CAD, describing the events happening in Vancouver.

Meri Hyrske-Fischer, WFD's liaison officer, responded to both Roots and Sinclair on November 13, 2009, to lend a support to the endeavour and, more importantly, to be desirous of sending President Markku Jokinen¹² to Vancouver the following summer to receive an apology. A later email message was sent to Sinclair to invite him to write an article for its December newsmagazine about the ICED. Hardy wrote the article for the Deaf community.

As the negotiations continued with the document taking shape, Sinclair forwarded a document copy to the Canadian Association of the Deaf in February, 2010, and obtained an endorsement for it from its board on March 5, 2010. Then he transmitted it to the World Federation of the Deaf in the same month. He received a response that it was referred by its board in meeting in Turkey to its education support group for analysis and recommendations. A response would be sent within two months.

At the same time, the Deaf community in California was in an uproar about a threatening and obnoxious bill being considered by the California Legislative Assembly, known as AB 2072¹³. A letter campaign was underway to oppose the bill. Linda Cundy of Edmonton, Canada, who has strong ties to the United States, sent Sinclair a copy, one item of which caught his attention. The letter, in part, stated it was politically incorrect to consider communication options for Deaf infants and children. Hardy and Howard, who continued to negotiate for the Deaf community, were alerted to it as the first clause in the second part of the draft document asked that all Deaf children to be exposed to appropriate communication modes during their schooling years. Sinclair now wanted all references to communication forms eliminated from the document and to place an emphasis on education per se.¹⁴

In all this meanwhile in the spring, letters poured to the ICED organizing committee, mainly from Europe, including national associations of the deaf and those of the Deaf youth, in such places as Belgium, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and Norway. They all asked for an apology – an ever-evading concept to which the organizers refused to agree.

Sinclair returned to the negotiations late in the spring to review the final wording of what is now known as *Vancouver 2010, A New Era: Deaf Participation and Collaboration*. Minor but significantly important changes were made to reflect the partnership of local organizing committee and the local Deaf community with the intention to expose and reveal the educators' support for the Deaf community's calls to the Nations of the world to attempt several undertakings for their Deaf citizens. In return, the Deaf community agreed that the organizers' rejection of the Milan resolutions and their acknowledgement and regret of "the detrimental effects of the

(Continued on page 8)

Milan conference” would suffice. Also, equally importantly, the educators agreed, in their part of the document, to accept all languages, including signed languages, and all forms of communication that are used in both signed and spoken languages, not just the oral communication mode. Howard reported to the B. C. Deaf Community’s ICED Committee that he inquired beyond North America about apology vis-à-vis regret. The universal reaction from international and influential Deaf community members was that regret, especially sincere regret, was sufficient.¹⁵

An email message was received on July 2, 2010, from the World Federation of the Deaf with an attachment of a PDF-formatted June 30, 2010 letter to Anderson from Dr. Bobbi Beth Soggins, President of National Association of the Deaf in the United States. In part, the letter read, “We also respectfully request that the 21st Congress issue a declaration calling upon all world nations to endorse and adhere to the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CPRD), and related resolutions adopted by the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) at its 2007 World Congress in Madrid. These resolutions recognize the acquisition and use of sign language as a human right within the global deaf community.”

At the suggestion of the WFD to make explicit a new clause about sign languages as a human right, Sinclair met with McLaughlin and Henderson on July 10, 2010, barely over one week before the ICED2010 was to begin. It was quickly turned down as clauses about education and the WFD’s Madrid resolutions, including the sign languages, were already included listed in the *New Era*. The letter from the NAD was too late. After all, there were only days before the ICED 2010 was to begin.

It was decided to have four original copies of the *New Era*, one for the British Columbia Deaf Community¹⁶, the second one for the Canadian Association of the Deaf, one more for the World Federation of the Deaf, and the last one to serve as a legacy copy to be passed back and forth between the WFD and future ICEDs.

Sinclair and Doug Momotiuk, President of the Canadian Association of the Deaf, signed the four copies during the Deaf Canada Conference on July 13, 2010. Anderson then signed them on July 17, 2010. McLaughlin gave the copies to Jokinen who requested to have a meeting with other WFD board members and McLaughlin’s sub-committee members for clarification. At 11:30 p.m. on July 18, 2010, the day before ICED 2010 was to begin, he signed them, having had just received a unanimous approval from his board through electronic channels.

On July 19, 2010, while reading the *New Era* document during the opening ceremony, Henderson proclaimed, “Therefore we reject all resolutions passed at the ICED Milan Congress in 1880 that denied the inclusion of sign languages in educational programs for Deaf students;...” A loud, long-standing and emotional applause erupted and lasted what appeared to be several moments. Tears flowed down faces, and people were looking for their Kleenex tissues. This interruption was such that Henderson had to say, “Hey, I have some more....”

Thanks to the modern marvel of instantaneous mass communication, the news flashed around the globe within minutes of the announcement – so fast that heads were spinning dizzy. Reactions from the global Deaf community were mostly positive.¹⁷ Reporters from various news outlets were at the congress to begin interviewing. Even Alexander Graham Bell Association reported the news by noting in its website that “all forms of communication” are to be respected,¹⁸ unlike the majority of global Deaf community which places the highest value on education and acquisitions of signed and spoken languages.

Henderson resumed, “...acknowledge and sincerely regret at the detrimental effects of the Milan conference;...” Silence. No applause. Just eager attention from the congress participants. She continued reading the document without any emotional interruption.

That was the first day of the Vancouver Congress. The legacy copy was then placed on a booth table for participants to sign to indicate their support. It was pasted in a book, titled *Legacy*.

On the last day of the congress, July 22, 2010, the *Legacy* had a list of over 600 signatures from participants. The Hong Kong Association of the Deaf announced at the congress a list of additional 300-plus signatures. Through a link from its website, the WFD is allowing additional signatures, and, as of this writing, there are over 7,500 signatures for the legacy copy.¹⁹

There were at least 760 participants from 61 countries, including 147 Deaf attendees²⁰, at the Vancouver gathering, none of whom were specially invited, unlike the majority of Milan participants.²¹ The fact that over 600 of them, from all walks of life, gathered in Vancouver of their own free will, signed the legacy copy exemplifies the willingness, openness, freedom of decision, and their very indisputably strong support. The official action in Vancouver has a much broader basis than the narrow Milan officialdom, now rejected. Oralism no longer is officially superior to the very basic human need for Deaf people – or anyone else – to communicate.

The Milan oralists’ schismatic slogan “*Viva la parola*” is now history. The spirit of Vancouver grew as a result of continued evolution of trust between the two local negotiating groups with much compassion and passion for all peoples of the world.

Footnotes

1. Monte Hardy moved in the Fall of 2010 to Ontario where he assumed a regional director’s position within the Canadian Hearing Society in Hamilton. He had previously been the executive director of Provincial Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Burnaby, B. C.
2. Claire Anderson is an itinerant teacher in the Metro Vancouver area. She lives in Delta, B. C.
3. Dr. Joseph McLaughlin of Surrey, B. C., was vice-principal at British Columbia School for the Deaf, his alma mater, until he resigned to assume a Dean’s position at Ohlone College in California. He had returned to British Columbia the previous year after a four-year stay in California.
4. Jim Roots is executive director of Canadian Association of the Deaf located in Ottawa, Ontario.
5. There was no provincial affiliation of the CAD in British Columbia, hence Root’s request for involvement. Lacking a provincial association of the deaf, the British Columbia Deaf Community routinely held townhall meetings in recent years for any interested Deaf citizen to tackle any current issue.
6. Representing the ICED organizing committee were, beside Dr. McLaughlin, Marguerite Henderson (principal at B. C. School for the Deaf—now retired) and Vincent Chauvet (department head of ASL Studies at Vancouver Community College). He will assume presidency of the Canadian Cultural Society of the Deaf in January 2011. For the B. C. Deaf Community, beside Sinclair and Hardy, were Nigel Howard (instructor of Douglas College’s interpreting program), John Fraser (a counsellor in the Deaf community in Vancouver), and Kristen Pranzl (an energetic Deaf community member).
7. Richard G. Brill, *International Congresses on Education of the Deaf: An Analytical History 1878-1980* (Washington, D. C.: Gallaudet College Press, 1984), p. 350.
8. The request from the board of the National Association of the Deaf to repudiate the Milan resolutions was snubbed, hence “The Great Rochester Snub of 1990.” Larry Stewart, “NAD Hot on Trail to Repudiate ICED 1880 Resolution,” *The NAD Broadcaster*, 12:11 (November 1990), 1. See also the next issue, December 1990, for letters between ICED’s Dr. William Castle and NAD President Dr. Rosalyn Rosen.
9. Hardy and Howard conducted most of the negotiations for the B. C. Deaf Community.
10. McLaughlin told Sinclair in the videophone call of November 29, 2010, that he meant “regret” when he signed the universal ASL sign for “sorry.” Sinclair felt to this day about apology because he had made several broadcasts about the

(Continued on page 9)

word "apology." Needless to say, there is no meeting of minds between McLaughlin and Sinclair on this matter.

11. Members of this committee included Hester Hussey, Doug Lambert, and Janice Lyons, all of Metropolitan Vancouver, as well as all five negotiators for the B. C. Deaf Community. Roots was also a participating member of the committee.
12. Markku Jokien of Helsinki, Finland, who is WFD President, is also the executive director of Finland Association of the Deaf.
13. AB 2072 which was vetoed by the California governor would have allowed consideration of various communication options by certain professionals and specialists. The Deaf community had wanted total access to languages, that is, American Sign Language and English. Looking at options, the Deaf community rightly feared, would be to delay clear access to an education.
14. As a result, the first clause in the second part of the document, now reads: "Call upon all Nations of the world to ratify and adhere to the Principles of the United Nations, specifically those outlined in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities that state education is to be delivered with an emphasis on acquisition of language and academic, practical, and social knowledge." There is only one reference to "communication forms" in the document but that was in the first part which "belongs" to the offenders.

15. The concept of apology varies from one culture to another, also from one language to another. Regret appears to be more universally consistent. However, two Deaf organizations in the United States continued to insist upon the inclusion of the word "apology" in the document.
16. Sinclair hopes the B. C. Deaf Community's copy will be placed on a permanent display at the yet-to-be-built Canadian Museum of Human Rights in Winnipeg. Preparations are being made for its temporary public display at the Western Institute for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Vancouver.
17. There was one exception. Deaf Bilingual Coalition in the United States sent a message the next day that the Milan resolutions were not overturned. Apparently, the message was quickly withdrawn.
18. See <http://nc.agbell.org/NetCommunity/Page.aspx?pid=934>. Contrary to a popular belief, Alexander Graham Bell, a die-hard advocate for oralism, did not attend the ICED 1880 Milan Conference.
19. www.petitions24.com/wfd
20. This is a record-breaking number of Deaf participants for an ICED event. Most of them came from overseas.
21. The Milan participants were mainly French and Italians who were invited to the 1880 event. Many, if not most, were believed to be clergymen, according to Dr. Clifton F. Carbin, a Deaf freelance researcher and writer, specializing in Canadian Deaf historical subjects and editor of *The DHI Newsletter*. For further information, see www.milan1880.com.

A Surrey, B. C. resident, Dr. Joe McLaughlin of ICED 2010's negotiating subcommittee showing one of the original copies at the closing ceremony, July 22, 2010.



Photo Courtesy: Janice Lyons of Surrey, B. C.

Photo Courtesy: Janice Lyons of Surrey, B. C.



WFD President Markku Jokinen acknowledging the efforts made by many people, "and in particular, the BC Deaf Community...," while ICED 2010 Organizing Committee Chair, Claire Anderson of Delta, B. C., listens.

Vancouver 2010

A New Era: Deaf Participation and Collaboration

In partnership, the International Congress on Education of the Deaf (ICED) Vancouver 2010 Organizing Committee and the British Columbia Deaf Community present the following as a Statement of Principle.

Statement of Principle

Globally, many Deaf citizens encounter the general population's perception of being Deaf as one of disability. This "disability mindset" contributes directly towards the exclusion and devaluation of all people who are considered "different" including those who are Deaf. As a result, Deaf citizens in many countries are still hindered and excluded from participation in the larger society. Many are prevented from equal access to decision making, employment opportunities, and quality education.

Despite this 'disability mindset,' Deaf citizens positively contribute to societies that embrace diversity and creativity. They enhance their nations in areas of education, economic activity, politics, arts and literature. For Deaf people, it is an inalienable right to be acknowledged as a linguistic and cultural minority integral to every society.

Therefore, all nations are urged to recognize and facilitate participation from all its citizens, including those who are Deaf.

The resolutions of the 1880 ICED Congress in Milan

In 1880, an international congress was held in Milan to discuss education of the Deaf. At that time, the members passed several resolutions that affected the education and the lives of Deaf people around the world. The resolutions:

- Removed the use of sign languages from educational programs for the Deaf around the world;
- Contributed detrimentally to the lives of Deaf citizens around the world;
- Led to the exclusion of Deaf citizens in educational policy and planning in most jurisdictions of the world;
- Prevented Deaf citizens from participation in governmental planning, decision-making, and funding in areas of employment training, retraining and other aspects of career planning;
- Hindered the abilities of Deaf citizens to succeed in various careers and have prevented many of them following their own aspirations; and
- Prevented the opportunity for many Deaf citizens to fully demonstrate their cultural and artistic contributions to the diversity of each Nation.

Therefore, we:

- Reject all resolutions passed at the ICED Milan Congress in 1880 that denied the inclusion of sign languages in educational programs for Deaf students;
- Acknowledge and sincerely regret the detrimental effects of the Milan conference; and
- Call upon all Nations of the world to remember history and ensure that educational programs accept and respect all languages and all forms of communication.

Presented at the 21st International Congress on Education of the Deaf, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, July 19th, 2010.

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Accord for the Future

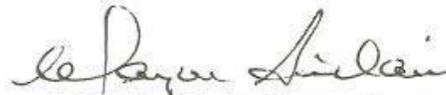
Let it be stated that we, the undersigned,

- Call upon all Nations of the world to ratify and adhere to the Principles of the United Nations, specifically those outlined in the Convention on the rights of Persons with Disabilities that state education is to be delivered with an emphasis on acquisition of language and academic, practical, and social knowledge;
- Call upon all Nations to endorse the resolutions adopted by the World Federation of the Deaf at its 15th Congress in Madrid in 2007 specifically those that promote and support equal and appropriate access to a multi-lingual/multi-cultural education;
- Call upon all Nations to include the sign languages of their Deaf citizens as legitimate languages of these Nations and to treat them as equal to those of the hearing majority;
- Call upon all Nations to facilitate, enhance and embrace their Deaf citizen's participation in all governmental decision-making process affecting all aspects of their lives;
- Call upon all Nations to involve their deaf citizens to assist parents of Deaf infants, children and youth in the appreciation of the Deaf culture and sign languages;
- Call upon all nations to support a child-centred approach in educational programs and a family-centred approach in all support services for both Deaf and hearing family members;
- Call upon all Nations to refer all identified Deaf infants to regional and national organizations of the Deaf, schools and programs for the Deaf for support with early intervention;
- Call upon all Nations to make every effort to ensure that their Deaf citizens obtain information about their human rights; and
- Call upon all Nations of the world to recognize and allow all Deaf citizens to be proud, confident, productive, creative and enabling citizens in their respective countries.

Signatures:



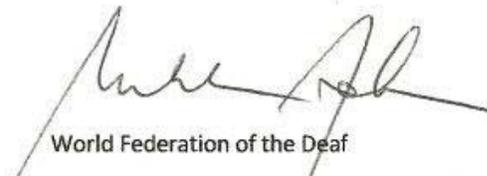
ICED 2010 Vancouver Organizing Committee



British Columbia Deaf Community



Canadian Association of the Deaf



World Federation of the Deaf

(Signatures scanned from B. C. Deaf Community's original copy of the document)

(continued on page 11)

Definitions:

Child-centred approach—an education program that promotes the child’s personal learning utilizing their strengths and natural abilities for learning.

Citizen—a person with all inherent status, rights, privileges and opportunities of nation.

Deaf—may include anyone who is deaf, hard of hearing or deaf blind and self-identifies as being deaf.

Devaluation—degrading perception of those who are ‘different’ than the majority population and are considered to be of lesser in value and abilities, and as a result are considered less deserving of status, rights, privileges and opportunities.

Disability—a term used by the majority population to define the population of people who have some missing or limited physical attribute such as physical mobility, sight, hearing or intellectual capacity.

Disability mindset—perception that views “person with disabilities as ‘objects’ of charity, medical treatment and social protection” (introduction to UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities).

Equal access—the same opportunity to receive and provide communication or information using the most accessible and functional equivalent means possible as perceived by the Deaf person.

Exclusion—act of excluding from status, rights, privileges and opportunities available to the majority population either by intent or ignorance.

Family-centred approach—a service that promotes an innovative approach to the planning, delivery, and evaluation of support services that is grounded in mutually beneficial partnership among the child, families, support service providers, and the Deaf community.

Legitimate—having legal recognition in the eyes of a nation’s law.

Linguistic and Cultural Minority—minority group of people who have a culture and language different from those of the dominant population in a nation or society.

Multicultural—having several different cultures

Multilingual—having several different languages

Participation—act of participating in various services, programs, and government decision-making processes.



Photo courtesy: Doug Lambert of Burnaby, B. C.

Doug Lambert of Burnaby, B. C., manning the British Columbia Deaf Community’s booth during the ICED 2010 event. The book, *Legacy*, is on the table awaiting more signatures.

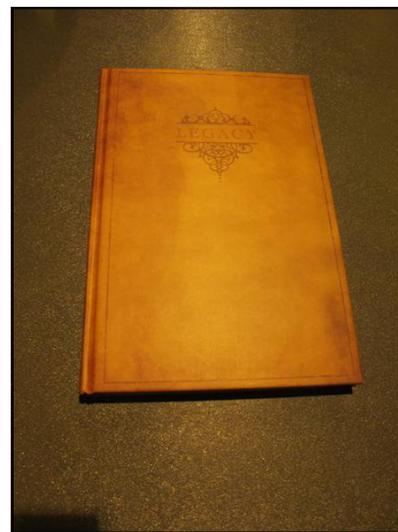


Photo courtesy: Juancito Druetta of Córdoba, Argentina.

This book, *Legacy*, collected more than 600 signatures at the end of the ICED 2010 event.

Joanne Greenberg
Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, N.Y. (1970)
Hardcover, 275 pages. ISBN 03-085066-5

Reviewed by Edna Edith Sayers, retired English Professor, Gallaudet University (USA).

A Look Back:

Joanne Greenberg's *In This Sign*, 1970

Forty years ago, when Joanne Greenberg's *In This Sign* was released to the reading public, no novel or short story had ever before depicted the American DEAF WORLD. Deaf people themselves rarely wrote anything at all for mainstream publication, let alone literature, in those days and the few deaf writers like Howard Terry who did tackle novels or short stories usually avoided deaf characters. They assumed that hearing readers would find deaf characters unattractive and uninteresting -- and they were probably right!

Hearing authors, on the other hand, had almost no access to deaf people beyond, perhaps, a neighbor's child who had been orally educated, and therefore they almost never had any notion that Deaf communities existed. They rarely created deaf characters at all, and when they did, they usually got everything terribly wrong. The near-universal error, of course, was assuming that deaf people were solitary beings, isolated in "a world of silence" from which they eagerly, and easily, lipread friends and family. The character John Singer in *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter* is a prime example. Although the novel opens with a depiction of Singer's friendship with the only other deaf man in town, the friend is promptly dispatched to "the state insane asylum," leaving Singer alone to lipread his way through the remaining 300 pages of the novel.

Other errors made by hearing writers were various, and sometimes comical to deaf readers. In 1889, American satirist Ambrose Bierce's "Chickamauga" portrayed a rural deaf boy as frightened by a rabbit because of its long ears, and then sleeping through a Civil War battle in which troops marched and cannons were fired just inches from his head. Bierce apparently imagined that deaf children had a special fear of ears and was unaware that marching men and cannon fire cause strong vibrations and air movements that would awaken any deaf person.

In 1939, Beatnik poet Weldon Kees's story "I Should Worry" portrayed a hearing brother and deaf ("mute") sister, adults who had lived together their entire lives, as having no means to communicate except by writing. Kees was apparently unaware of the natural development of home sign, and seems to have had no idea that any deaf person in the 1930s with good literacy was almost certainly orally educated.

In 1943, Pulitzer Prize winner Eudora Welty's "First Love" portrayed a completely unschooled deaf orphan living in 1807 as not only able to read and understand a newspaper but also as being

knowledgeable about the American founding father Aaron Burr and the charge of treason against him. Welty, who also wrote "The Key," a story about a poorly educated deaf couple who miss their train because they find a key and naively think it's important. She might have known that her deaf orphan in "First Love" could not possibly be as literate and astute as she makes him out to be. Perhaps she thought her readers would not notice the slip.

It is a rare occasion when one encounters a hearing author who is a good observer of real Deaf people and knows that they live in communities and communicate by signing. Such careful observation would have led to producing cameo roles for Deaf characters that ring true to Deaf readers today. Nobel Laureate Saul Bellow, for example, in his 1949 novel *The Adventures of Augie March*, depicts

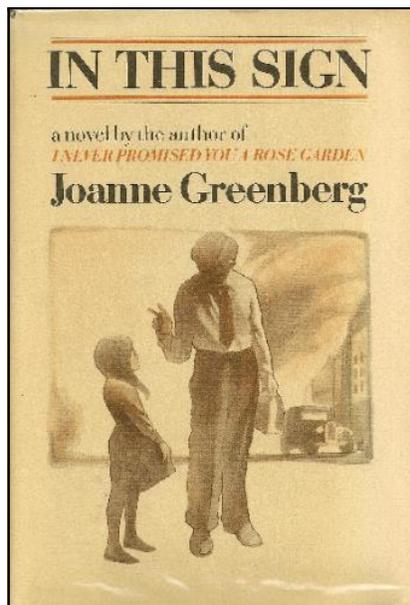
three Deaf people, a woman and two men, at a police station where one of the men is being charged with assaulting the other and the woman is present as a witness. No interpreter is available, though, so the police throw all three in jail overnight. The police seem annoyed that the three of them act as though they are living in their own little society. Although this brief scene takes up only one page of the novel, it's clear that something different is happening here. Bellow is showing Deaf people in social interaction -- a love triangle! -- and signing with one another. But again, such scenes are extremely rare in American literature, and perhaps in any national literature.

Therefore, when *In This Sign* appeared in 1970, the reading public had never seen anything like this. It was an extended, realistic portrayal of Abel and Janice, an ill-educated, barely literate couple trying to make their way in the world and raise their children during the Great Depression of the 1930s while terrified not only of the hearing world but also of the

censure of the better educated Deaf.

In an email exchange this fall, I asked Joanne Greenberg how she was able to depict ordinary Deaf people in such realistic detail. I knew that when she wrote *In This Sign*, she was already well-known and critically acclaimed for *I Never Promised You a Rose Garden* (1964), a semi-autobiographical novel about the treatment of schizophrenia. I assumed the DEAF WORLD would have been pretty far afield for her. She told me that in the years before she began *In This Sign*, she had moved to Colorado, where she still lives and where her husband had taken a job as a vocational rehabilitation counselor with a large caseload of deaf clients. In those days, long before everyone had TTYs, relay services, email and pagers, her

(Continued on page 14)



husband's clients would simply show up at her home and she needed to be able to communicate with them. So she enrolled in sign language classes (this was years before the term "ASL" came into common use) and there she made friends. Joanne told me that she had seen first-hand the behaviors and attitudes that later went into her novel.

What has changed for deaf Americans since the 1930s and '40s (when the novel is set) and the '60s (when it was written)? Technology, of course, or rather its immediate effect of enabling deaf people to be much better informed about the world around them. We now can absorb current events from TV captioning and the internet without the huge investment of time and the high levels of literacy we had to bring to newspaper reading before the '80s. Abel and Janice, in contrast, know almost nothing about the world around them. Janice doesn't join the union at her workplace to negotiate for better wages because she has no idea that such a thing even exists. Instead, she brings piecework home and works night and day for a pittance. She has never heard of the GI Bill, which paid college tuition for the veterans of WWII (and consequently swelled the ranks of college students all over the country), so she spends years thinking that her daughter has lied to them about her student husband.

Other differences have more to do with a change in attitudes, brought about largely by the exposure to signing Deaf people created by the National Theater of the Deaf (founded in 1967) and Sesame Street's Linda Bove (beginning in 1971), as well as by enhanced civil rights provided by the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act. Hearing parents no longer assume their deaf child will be a life-long burden, so they don't break off contact with their deaf offspring as Janice's parents do. Deaf parents no longer must use their hearing children as interpreters, putting them into positions that they simply are too young to handle. In the book, Abel and Janice do this again and again to their little daughter Margaret. In one powerful episode, they take the little girl to a coffin showroom to buy a "dead box" for her baby brother. Also, court-appointed interpreters no longer scold and threaten deaf defendants for giving

the Deaf community a bad name, as Comstock does to Abel when he's brought to court for failure to make car payments he didn't even know he owed.

On the other hand, some things just never change. Like Janice, I am convinced that my daughters talk constantly to their mothers-in-law on the phone, sharing with them information that will never be shared with me. Our hearing children still get frustrated and annoyed with us, even embarrassed sometimes, as Margaret does when she introduces her parents to her hearing in-laws. And most of us have the same difficulty Janice does in understanding English idioms like "taking food out of my children's mouths"; Janice claims she never took any food away from anyone and has no idea the expression refers to not joining the union and, in effect, working as a strikebreaker. For anyone without effortless access to daily conversation in English, such expressions will always be tough.

As for the Deaf community depicted in *In This Sign*, vast changes in deaf people's earning power and, consequently, our families' economic status, seem not to have eliminated our penchant for social hierarchies wherever we come together. The social hierarchy most commonly seen in Deaf communities up through the 1980s is depicted in the Deaf church that Abel and Janice attend, despite Janice's embarrassment about not being able to afford the right clothes. There, the community elite are the white men (and their wives) with the best speech and, therefore, the highest incomes. Abel and Janice, with no really usable oral skills, occupy the lowest rung of the social ladder, the congregation's poorest and most abject members. How quaint! Today, these two grassroots signers would be admired and envied for their highly coveted native signing skills. Both of them would be serving as deacons at the church and running the ASL program at their local community college.

In This Sign is now available for sale in paperback, and it can be borrowed from most public libraries. It is highly recommended not only for its portrayal of Deaf life before the era of deaf rights, but also because it is simply a very good book and an engrossing read. It can provide us all with food for thought as we speculate on where new technology and Deaf activism will lead us in the second decade of this new century.



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