



# WASLI Newsletter

WASLI is committed to the advancement of sign language interpreting world wide

## NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

### SCOTLAND - SASLI HAS A NEW DIRECTOR

The Scottish Association of Sign Language Interpreters (SASLI) have great pleasure to announce the appointment of Helga McGilp as their new Director. Helga will take up post in November.

Helga brings with her a wealth of knowledge, skills and experience that she has gained as Director of Scottish Deaf Association (SDA). Helga has already indicated the need to move the association in a positive and progressive direction with key stakeholders such as the Deaf community and other major players in the public, voluntary and private sectors. This appointment is truly inspirational and ground breaking for the Deaf Community as Helga is herself Deaf and a British Sign Language (BSL) user. As a recipient of interpreting services she is fully aware of the skills and standards that are required.

With the appointment of Helga, the first Deaf Director of an interpreting association in the UK, the introduction of a compulsory programme of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) also a first within the UK and with many more developments in the field, this is indeed an exciting time for the BSL/English interpreting community.

### NORTHERN IRELAND

### SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS IN SHORT SUPPLY IN NORTHERN IRELAND

The 'Hands On' good practice guide for Government departments was launched recently. This project is a part of a Government project to increase access to information in British and Irish Sign Language for the local deaf community.

Minister for Culture, Arts and Leisure Maria EAGLE reiterated her Department's commitment to working to increase the number of qualified interpreters throughout the province. At present, there are only nine qualified interpreters working in Northern Ireland, servicing a community of approximately 5000 deaf sign language users.

The Minister said: "Government has a responsibility to encourage respect for British and Irish Sign Language as a part of the rich linguistic diversity that exists in Northern Ireland today.

Government is looking at areas such as improving the supply of tutors and interpreters in Sign Language. We need funding for courses to attract more people to train as sign language interpreters and tutors and those people need the assurance of employment. It is a slow process but I believe we are getting there."

Professional interpreters allow sign language users quicker and better access to services such as the NHS, the police and public bodies. Currently in Northern Ireland, sign language users are made to wait longer for an appointment with their GP or hospital than hearing patients, due to the three-week waiting time to book an interpreter. Similarly, sign language users have difficulty accessing an inter-

prefer for meetings at work, or parent teacher evenings, or taking up further education, due to the insufficient number of qualified interpreters available locally.

The Minister also launched a booklet by Brian SYMINGTON and John CARBERRY, published by Linenhall Library, titled: "British and Irish Sign Languages – The Road to Recognition". The booklet outlines progress made over the last century in developing sign language awareness and usage in Northern Ireland, culminating in official recognition of British and Irish Sign Languages in 2004.

Source: Press release by RNID (Royal National Institute for the Deaf)

## CANADA

### INUIT SIGN LANGUAGE MAY GET LEGAL STATUS IN NUNAVUT

Nunavut (in the Northern part of Canada) already recognises four languages: English, French, Inuktitut and Innuinaqtun. Now it is considering legal status for two sign languages, one of them apparently unique to deaf Inuit.

If that happens, the territory would be the first jurisdiction in Canada to recognize an indigenous sign language. It would also have to develop more services for deaf people.

There are about 155 deaf people in Nunavut. While many of them learned American Sign Language in southern schools, deaf Inuit who don't know ASL tend to communicate with a combination of hand signals, body language and facial expressions that is being called Inuit Sign Language. A 1999 court case involving a deaf man drew attention to the possibility that an indigenous sign language existed in the territory.

Jamie MacDOUGALL, a specialist in language and perception, was brought in from Montreal to determine if the man could communicate in any known sign language.

After spending time with him in his home community of Baker Lake and viewing videos of deaf people in other communities, MacDOUGALL realised they had many signs in common.

"Watching people communicate, I found that, well, there did seem to be a very powerful language there," said MacDOUGALL, who is a professor at McGill University in Montreal. "So that set us on a trend to recognise what I've termed Inuit Sign Language."

At a recent workshop for deaf people and their families, Inuit from opposite ends of the territory found they could communicate with in a common language.

Mary Rose ANGUSHADLAK came from Rankin Inlet to interpret for a deaf relative. "I'm really hoping that it will be recognised ... because it's in our language," she said.

New legislation to protect languages; is expected to be introduced in Nunavut's legislature early next year. The department responsible for official languages is putting together a proposal to include both Inuit Sign Language and American Sign Language in that bill. If it passes, it would give the government a mandate to develop more services for deaf people.

Source: CBC News - <http://www.cbc.ca/story/canada/national/2006/07/23/inuit-sign060723.html>

## KENYA - Global Deaf Connection Sponsors First-Ever Interpreter Training Course in Kenya

In July, 11 Deaf Kenyan Students graduated from Machakos Teacher Training College, MTC! This is the largest graduating class that GDC has ever sponsored. There are currently six first-year students and two second-year students attending MTC.

The most obvious answer we have found to the question "Why are Deaf students failing secondary school exams?" is the lack of sign language and interpreting skills in classrooms. To improve the situation, a four-day mastery workshop on "Sign Language Interpreting in Educational Settings" was conducted from August 31st to September 3rd 2006 at the Machakos Teachers' College in Kenya. This is the facility where GDC sponsors Deaf students to pursue teaching credentials.

Forty interpreters, Deaf leaders and officials attended the Workshop. This

first ever interpreters course in Kenya was taught by the experienced international lecturer Dr. Daniel Burch, past president of the American Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf and former working group member and current co-optee to the Board of the World Association of Sign Language Interpreters. Dr. Burch was assisted by GDC's board member and experienced educational interpreter, Cara Christopherson, her colleague Deana Fischer and seasoned Kenyan interpreters and Deaf leaders.

This workshop was coordinated by KRIDT's Jean-Claude Adzalla and GDC's Joel Runnels and Samuel Mureithi. It is the first of four interpreter preparation training courses to be conducted over the next two years thanks to a grant from USAID, Kenya. This grant will also provide resources through GDC to Kenyan Deaf leaders to update and expand their Kenya Sign Language.

## BURUNDI – INTERPRETERS COMING TO WASLI 2007

The Burundi National Association of the Deaf has indicated their intention to send 3 interpreters to the WASLI Conference in 2007.

This is good news.

## BAVARIA - GERMANY

Bavaria is one of the states of Germany and has its own Association of Sign Language Interpreters. The President/Chair is Oya Ataman. Visit their website at <http://www.bgsd-bayern.de>

## VACANCY

### SIGN LANGUAGE INSTRUCTOR/ COORDINATOR

Full-time Faculty

<http://www.mcckcjobs.com>

#### POSITION SUMMARY

Full-time coordinator/faculty position in Sign Language Interpreting and Deaf Studies Certificate programmes. Responsibilities include classroom and laboratory instruction and program coordination including supervision of adjuncts, curriculum design and development, student recruitment and selection, advising and job placement.

#### REQUIREMENTS

Masters' degree in a Deafness related field, linguistics and/or teaching OR Bachelors' degree in a Deafness related field and Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc. (RID), Comprehensive Skills Certificate (CSC) or Certificate of Interpretation (CI) and Certificate of Transliteration (CT) or National Association of the Deaf (NAD) and/or American Sign Language Teachers Association (ASLTA) and/or Missouri Interpreter Certification at a Comprehensive or Advanced level. Must hold or be willing to obtain a Missouri Vocational Certification. Minimum of two (2) years experience as a sign language interpreter and certification at a high level of proficiency

For more information or to apply online, please visit us at: <http://www.mcckcjobs.com>  
An Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer

## NEXT EDITION: More news and information from WASLI

If you have any news or information that you would like to include then please send your contribution to the WASLI Secretary at the email address below.

### The WASLI Executive Board & Co-optees (2005)

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

**Officers:** President: Liz Scott Gibson (Scotland) - Vice President - Philemon Akach (South Africa) - Secretary - Zane Hema (England) - Treasurer - Liz Scully (Canada)

**Regional Reps:** North America - Deb Russell (Canada) - Asia - Emiko Ichikawa (Japan) - Transcaucasia & Central Asia - Anna Komarova (Russia) - Europe - Marco Nardi (Italy) - Australasia/Oceania - Jemina Napier - South America - to be advised - Africa - to be advised

**Co-optees:** Dr D Burch (USA) Bill Moody (USA) Nigel Cleaver (England) Arun Rao (India) Francois Deysel (South Africa) Ito Tadashi (Japan) Knud Sondergaard (WFD) Carol-lee Aquiline (Former Working Group member)