



# AZ HANDWIND

Official Newsletter of the Arizona Association of the Deaf

March 2008

Volume XIII, Number 1

**AZAD Board of Directors  
Jan 1, 2008—Dec 31, 2009**

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## Bylaws Ratification and New Challenges Ahead Inspire Confidence in AZAD and Hope for Deaf Arizonans

A follow-up general business meeting of the AZAD took place at the Phoenix Deaf Community Center on Saturday evening, January 26, 2008. Harvey Goodstein led an oath of the AZAD Board of Directors for the 2008-2009 term. During the meeting, Deb Stone made a motion that the members in attendance ratify the revised Bylaws as a whole with Treasurer Larry DeVenny seconding. It passed with almost no difficulty because the membership completed most of the revision proposal during the biennial AZAD Conference at Tucson on September 30, 2007. Now in effect, the ratified Bylaws of the AZAD include the following important clauses:

1. The primary objectives of the AZAD as a statewide organization serving the deaf and hard of hearing shall be education, social equality and rights of deaf and hard of hearing citizens who are current residents of the state of Arizona.
2. Any deaf, hard of hearing, or hearing resident of the state of Arizona at least 18 years of age may choose to become an active member of the AZAD upon payment of biennial membership dues.
3. American citizens living outside the state of Arizona at least 18 years of age are welcome to become associate members of the AZAD upon payment of biennial membership dues.
4. All Officers and Board Directors of the AZAD should be able to communicate with deaf and hard of hearing people in American Sign Language (ASL).

Mark King resigned as a Board member of the AZAD from the 623 Area and President Oster appointed Walter Werra to replace him for the remainder of the current term. In addition, President Oster appointed two Board members at large, William Baim and Angel Ramos.

Membership dues remain same as before (See page 4). Affiliation dues are \$100.00 per business or organization affiliated with the AZAD for a period of two years in 2008-2009. The AZAD will prorate membership dues and affiliation dues. The AZAD Board of Directors will review and determine liability insurance. The annual Deaf Festival will take place in the fall of 2008. You will know more about an upcoming ASL films event shortly. Deb Stone represents the AZAD in the area of Arizona ASL Teacher Certification through the Arizona Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ACDHH). The Board of Directors will meet on Saturday, March 1. The AZAD will have a booth exhibit during the DeafNation Expo at Phoenix on Saturday, March 15.

## A DEAF SLAVE LEGEND DURING THE CIVIL WAR

There is a legend going on at times in Arkansas. It involved a deaf slave during the Civil War. A Confederate soldier captured this deaf slave. Since President Lincoln freed all slaves, he pardoned the deaf slave who happened to be a soldier with stone mason skills. In addition, he knew the tricks of the trade. Eventually, he became the town stonemason to whom everyone turned for various work projects. Yet when the deaf man passed away and was buried, he was not allowed to be honored with a tombstone with his name on it, thanks to segregation laws! The town people, however, got around it and purchased a tombstone to honor him. Is it a true story or just a legend? So, was he the only Deaf Slave that we know of, or were there others? We do not know. --*Deaf Digest Gold* February 17, 2008

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- Editor: Larry Forestal
- For newsletter information, contact: LForestal@aol.com
- For further information on the AZAD, contact: President Jim Oster at JAoster@aol.com
- For membership information, contact: Treasurer Larry DeVenny at bluelali@aol.com

**Utah Deaf Genealogical Association**

5th Family History Conference  
June 18-21, 2008  
Radisson Hotel –Downtown Salt Lake City, Utah

Deaf lecturers present all workshops.

For information, contact W. David Samuelson dsam@sampubco.com

Registration fee for \$140.00 covers classes, educational materials and banquet.

Deadline is March 31, 2008. Registration will cost \$160.00 from April 1 to June 1, 2008.

Please make check payable to:  
Utah Deaf Genealogical Association  
c/o Patty Kitchen  
382 N. 580 W  
American Fork, UT 84003-1467



**Editorial**

**Deaf men and women are capable of reading and writing far beyond the fourth grade level.**

(Excerpts from the newsroom of the World Now and the KVOA-TV, Channel 4 News, Tucson, Arizona, Thursday, December 19, 2007) Statement from Assistant Superintendent of the Arizona School for the Deaf and Blind:

**"Nationally, the typical reading level of graduating students who are deaf is 3-4th grade. This has been documented for over 30 years. The ASDB's curriculum is aligned with state of Arizona standards."**

Editorially speaking, this statement made by a high-level educational administrator is irresponsible and misleading. There is common knowledge that deaf Americans, men and women alike, are capable of reading and writing at a very advanced level to a varied degree in the nation including Arizona. On the average, the school-age deaf population is approximately two years behind the school-age hearing population in reading achievement test scores. It is not practical to continue stereotyping deaf children and adults based on the age-old statistical information that they could read at the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> grade level any more.

The Arizona Association of the Deaf (AZAD) believes that the Arizona School for the Deaf and Blind (ASDB) can review and upgrade its school objectives and academic curriculum from time to time. Similarly, the public school systems consider the student's useful and responsible citizenship as the major objective of educating students from preschool years to high school years.

Unmistakably, the ASDB should keep in mind that the ASDB Junior National Association of the Deaf Chapter recently hosted a successful deaf youth conference on the Tucson campus. At the ASDB Ava Crowell is currently an ASL specialist and a Junior NAD faculty advisor. There is without a doubt that Ms. Crowell makes a good role model with her high-level reading and writing abilities. Celebrated American deaf leaders, Dr. Mervin Garretson, Dr. Frank Turk and Gary Olsen were invited to work with deaf youth at the ASDB as well as from other schools for the deaf and public schools during the Junior NAD Conference. All of these deaf people read and write well. They have been also nationally known speakers and writers for over 40 years.

Many of the parents of deaf students have been attracted to such successful educational institutions as the California School for the Deaf at Fremont, the Maryland School for the Deaf at Frederick and the Indiana School for the Deaf at Indianapolis. In fact, a good number of deaf students are able to read and write at the 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade levels or beyond across the nation.

The AZAD finds the ASDB Assistant Superintendent's public statement extremely disappointing and disheartening. The AZAD believes that the ASDB should reassess its current school philosophy and policies that must demonstrate total commitment to the educational advancement of deaf students toward useful and responsible citizenship as stated above. In the long run, the ASDB is capable of improving and strengthening its educational institution and academic programs.

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(From the newsroom of the World Now and the KVOA-TV, Channel 4 News, Tucson, Arizona, Thursday, December 19, 2007)

Parents of deaf boy said that the school failed him. The parents of a Tucson teenager are calling out the Arizona Schools for the Deaf and Blind, saying they failed to prepare their son for college. "He has to go through three additional years before he can go to college level classes. He's not even at 101 yet," said Charlie Kennedy.

(See page 3)

Category Title LINKS:

**Arizona Association of the Deaf (AZAD)**

www.azadinc.org  
www.nad.org

**Arizona Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing**

www.acdhh.gov

*“Let the Good Times Roll!  
Together, We Move Forward!”*

**NAD Conference at New Orleans on July 7- 11, 2008**  
www.nad.org/conference

**Phoenix Association of the Deaf**

www.pad.org

**DeafNation Expo Phoenix Phoenix Convention Center - Hall D**

**100 N. Third Street  
Phoenix, AZ 85004  
9:00 AM - 6:00 PM**

**Free Admission  
Be sure to register at  
www.deafnation.com**

**Upcoming GUAA Cookout Valley of the Sun Chapter**

**Sunday, March 30, 2008  
11:00 AM - 5:00 PM**

**Phoenix Deaf Community Center, 1545 W. Osborn Rd., Phoenix, AZ 85015**

For further information, contact: Albert Couthen at acouthen01@cox.net

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Charlie and his wife Wendy have filed three separate complaints against the Arizona School for the Deaf and Blind (ASDB), saying they misdiagnosed their deaf son's reading disability and failed to properly follow his individual education plan (IEP), among other things.

Chad Kennedy, 19, graduated in May from the ASDB. The only catch, according to his parents, is that the school graduated him knowing he only had a third grade reading level. In fact, Chad had the honor of being a class valedictorian.

"Our concerns are the level of education that the Arizona Schools for the Deaf and Blind is not providing to the students," said Wendy Kennedy. The Kennedys say the school notified them too late that Chad had a reading disability and they say the school did not follow Chad's IEP when they failed to administer the proper psychological educational evaluation test on two separate occasions.

When it was time for Chad to attend college, the Kennedys said that the schools he applied to did not feel he was ready. That infuriated Wendy Kennedy, also an interpreter. "These deaf schools have low expectations of the students, so therefore they're not challenging them to the higher levels needed."

News 4 contacted ASDB for a comment. Assistant Superintendent Robert Hill emailed us this statement: "Nationally, the typical reading level of graduating students who are deaf is 3-4th grade. This has been documented for over 30 years. The ASDB's curriculum is aligned with state of Arizona standards."

However, the Kennedys say that is just not good enough "My tax dollars pay their salary, so they should be educating these people. This 3rd and 4th grade reading level is not acceptable," said Charlie Kennedy.

The ASDB has been found to be out of compliance on several allegations. After Chad graduated, the school asked to have the case dismissed, and a judge agreed. The Kennedys are now appealing that decision. Meanwhile, Chad has been accepted to Utah Valley State College, but he has to complete 82 pre-college credits first; the equivalent to three years of college prep classes.



**To Hear or Not to Hear ... How Stressful!**

**Jim Oster, President, Arizona Association of the Deaf**

With the advent of modern technology, we have come to a crossroad where one can correct one's hearing with cochlear implants. This medical wonder has been most welcomed among "Hearing parents" of deaf children. However, solving old problems create new ones, which go far beyond medical solutions. So much so, that it begs to look into social, cultural and ethical questions. Numerous researches have been conducted and will continue to be as long as there is deafness and deaf cultures.

Not to be overlooked, CODA's (Children of Deaf Adults) are facing a grueling reality of choices, which puts them on the spot regardless what they choose. Many of these CODA's carry the deaf gene as well as carry the existence of "deaf" culture. More and more CODA's spouses are deaf or hearing impaired and rely totally on manual communications not to mention that many relatives are deaf too.

The dilemma parents' face is often heart wrenching because they know that the success of a cochlear implant has to happen while the recipient is very young. They also know that if the implant is successful, the possibility of sign language fading out of existence is very real. (It is quite similar; it appears, to our Indian culture where most Indians are now assimilated into our Anglo society. The modern American Indian, oftentimes, has very little connection to his/her heritage, religion, language and life style simply by not speaking their native language and/or moving off the Reservation. (They may shed a tear or two but they move on; or they stand aside and rue the day they allowed Anglos into their country and reluctantly move on.) This issue raises more questions than solutions.

Yet, is it fair to have a parent decides the child's fate by implanting cochlear implants when that child can benefit immensely from sign language? Is a parent derelict in her/his duty as a parent to bypass the opportunity to correct the child's hearing impairment? Is it fair that we allow a child to grow up until the child becomes an adult to decide for him/her self to have an implant? There is no right or wrong answer, only (See page 4)



**Arizona Association  
of the Deaf  
Established in 1936**

The mission of the Arizona Association of the Deaf is to promote, protect and preserve the rights and quality of life of deaf and hard of hearing individuals who are current citizens of the state of Arizona. Since the National Association of the Deaf is a federation of approximately 50 State Associations of the Deaf through affiliation, the AZAD is affiliated with the NAD.

**WHY NOT JOIN THE AZAD NOW**

**ALTERNATIVELY, RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP AS SOON AS YOU CAN**

**Regular \$24.00 biennial membership dues or Senior \$20.00 biennial membership dues**

**Please note that the AZAD will prorate your membership dues from one biennial conference to next conference.**

**Please make your check or money order payable to: AZAD and mail to:**

**AZAD Treasurer  
2388 N. Central Ave.  
PMB #277  
Phoenix, AZ 85004**

**BIG THANKS!**

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consequences.

Perhaps looking at this as half-full or half-empty cup is misleading us to forego the importance of what is inside the cup, mainly the deaf child. Conflicting parental ideology causing inactivity or indecision for the child could seriously cause evaporation of learning opportunities for the child. Which leads to an even greater issue, I believe, that has not been properly addressed over the decades: **Ability to read and write.**

As we look around us, we will find that the computer and internet age is going to be our salvation as long as we are able to read and write adequately. It does not matter how much hearing you have or how much ASL you command, or how well you speak that will determine your future. Language acquisition is not dependant on only audio input but mostly on visual aid for the deaf.

The passionate advocacy of Oralism and Manualism as a means of implementing a method of language development has become an ideological battlefield. My observation is I have found that teaching a deaf child how to speak is rarely the most efficient way to help develop language because the child has faulty audio input to begin with. An exceptional few have achieved it and that is quite remarkable but it is an exception not the norm. The same goes for deaf children who are raised in a deaf culture and use ASL all their lives.

Achieving the spoken language in an ASL environment is quite remarkable but not necessarily efficient in being fluent in the written English for. That is simply the result of being bilingual. However, the controversy is that Oralism reflects parental yearning that the child or person speaks well enough that their hearing counterpart will accept them unconditionally. On the other hand, Signers are seen and utilize more and more in employment as more hearing people are becoming interpreters and/or being CODAS. The presence of sign language is becoming awe inspiring and accepted as a wonderful manifestation of the Deaf culture. Acceptance among our hearing peers is not an issue any more as in former times as we become much more enlightened.

In fact, many, if not most, most deaf signers are generally productive citizens. They have children, jobs, own businesses and function just like everyone else. They do read and write, rely on visual aids of all kinds, including video and teletype relays. They use interpreters when interacting in an educational, medical and social setting. The only thing that they cannot do is hear normally, unless aided by hearing aids and maybe cochlear implants. Will they be able to hear comprehensively and independently? Most probably cannot but with sign language to fall back on, taking that step forward, they might be willing to try it as adults. The Key word is they have a choice. In addition, if it does not pan out, they have sign language.

Though it will have to be substantiated, most cochlear implants are not as successful as it seems. I have personally known two cases where the recipients had such a tremendous success that they were able to hear and converse very fluently over the phone. The rest of them (and they were many) that I know had regrets or wished they did not let them implant it. It requires much therapy and many insurance policies do not give adequate amount time to benefit from the implants. Then again, it may require a lifetime of therapy and there is no guarantee of success either.

Many doctors are unaware of the downside of cochlear implants (CI) and do not sufficiently encourage the parents to look into the Schools for the Deaf or mainstreaming that has a Deaf staff to meet the kids needs, meets successful Deaf signers who are willing to share their experiences with parents, and encourages parents to meet former Oralists who have learned to sign and are extremely grateful that signing exists.

Many doctors have a monetary stake in CIs, and either through lack of awareness or not, think they are doing the parents a big favor by recommending CIs. To the doctor, it is a win-win decision ... he wins the gold, you win a hearing child! (Moreover, the parent(s) does not have to go through the grueling process of learning another language, ASL). Realistically, it often does not happen that way long term.

In addition, the deaf child is getting the bum end of the stick. Parental and familial communication is tragically often non-existent. Precious time to learn how to read and write is often wasted as the child often spends his/her educational and (See page 5)

***"There is no danger of sign language disappearing. It will live long after you and I are dead. If we were all to die tonight, a hundred years from now it would still be alive and serving the deaf."***

--John W. Jones, 1913

***"The place to test the success is not in the school room or in conversation over the social tea cup, but out where men (and women) toil and earn their daily bread."***

--J. Schuyler Long,  
Principal, Iowa School for  
the Deaf, 1902-1933

***"In those times we were on a miniscule budget, and the idea of paying 10,000 bucks a year to an NAD office man shook a lot of people."***

--Dr. Robert G. Sanderson,  
NAD President, 1964-1968

***"It is time that the deaf are studied as the human beings that they are as a living representation of the experience of Everyman in his journey through life."***

--Robert F. Panara,  
Professor Emeritus,  
RIT/NTID

***"Parents have the right to know just what is in store for their deaf children. They have the right to an honest assessment of their child's potential and his chances for success."***

--Frederick C. Schreiber,  
NAD Executive Director,  
1966-1979

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formative years to learn how to pronounce "BALL." The result of the self-image is woefully inferior.

As I am very conscious of the influence I may have, I would like to remind you I was an Oralist, much to my parents' relief until there was no oral school to attend after we made major relocation due to my father's health. I attended a school for the Deaf and, quite naturally, like a frog never been in water, discovers that he can swim, croak and generally be a frog on his own terms, discovered Sign Language. The rest is history. My father never lived long enough to appreciate the benefits of sign language with me and my mother was often relieved she did not have to learn it to communicate with me. I was a good lip reader but could not get through to her that as long as there were deaf people, fortunately there will always be sign language. Perhaps in heaven she is signing away with Dad to communicate with God who might happen to be deaf.

I recall a Deaf teacher who was approached by a parent who totally supported the oral method and was dismayed to learn the teacher was not speaking but using sign language to his child. He expressed that he was exhibiting a bad example to his child for not speaking verbally. The parent was considering pulling out the child from his class and enrolls him into an oral program. Quite wisely, the teacher went to the chalkboard to write, and asked what profession he had hope for his child after he graduates? The parent wrote back he hoped his child becomes a teacher! The teacher responded diplomatically, "You are looking at one". What an insightful teacher his child had!

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## Gerry Francini Heads 2009 ASLTA Conference at Phoenix



The American Sign Language Teachers Association (ASLTA) announced that next national ASLTA conference would take place at Arizona Biltmore in Phoenix on October 28 - November 1, 2009. The ASLTA Board appointed Geraldine "Gerry" Francini as the conference chair. Currently, Judie Cronlund, assistant chair; Larry Forestal, ASLTA vice president and Judy Mohan, registration coordinator are now serving on the ASLTA conference committee with Gerry. Approximately 400 conference participants are anticipated from across the nation and foreign nations. At least 350 people attended the previous ASLTA conference at Tampa, Florida in October 2007. Further information and details are forthcoming.

ASL is the natural language of the American deaf community. In September 2007, the National Association of the Deaf (NAD) hosted "Celebrate ASL!" in observance of the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) International Day of Sign Languages at Gallaudet University in Washington, DC. Furthermore, the NAD has reaffirmed its stance that acquisition of language from birth is a human right for every person, and that deaf infants and children should be given the opportunity to acquire and develop proficiency in ASL as early as possible.

Concurrently, the ASLTA works closely with the Conference of Interpreter Trainers (CIT). The CIT is a professional organization, which promotes educational advancement and specialized training for sign language interpreters. Undoubtedly, the ultimate success of professional interpreting depends on students' ASL proficiency, academic knowledge of the linguistic aspects of ASL, and the principles of effective interpreting in various fields such as education, business, employment, community service, and cultural enrichment.

At present, the ASLTA is the only national organization dedicated to the professional growth of teaching ASL and Deaf Studies. It is an individual membership organization comprised of ASL and Deaf Studies teachers and program directors ranging from elementary education to higher education as well as public/private service agencies in the United States.