

Deaf Culture Question of the Week - February 9-13, 2009

Bill Newell, Principal, Washington School for the Deaf

The acronym RID stands for:

- a) The name of a head lice treatment favored by deaf schools
- b) Regional Interpreters for the Deaf
- c) Rules for Interpreters for the Deaf
- d) Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf

Go to bottom of the page for the answer and see the bonus question

Answer "d" – Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) established in 1964. RID is a national membership organization representing the professionals who facilitate communication between people who are deaf or hard of hearing and people who can hear. Interpreters serve as professional communicators in a vast array of settings such as: churches, schools, courtrooms, hospitals and theaters, as well as on political grandstands and television. Check out the RID website at <http://www.rid.org>

Bonus Question – Why do some people consider the name Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf an inappropriate way of referring to this organization?

Bonus Answer: ASL/English Interpreters are “for” the hearing as much as they are “for” the Deaf. Interpreters facilitate communication between deaf and hard-of-hearing people and hearing people. They are working to facilitate this communication for both parties in a communication exchange. It might be better to call this organization Registry of ASL/English Interpreters or something similar. It is interesting to note that interpreters of Spanish do not refer to themselves as “Interpreters for the Spanish Speaking People. They usually refer to themselves as Spanish language interpreters.

It is often the case that in exchanges between deaf persons and hearing persons, the deaf person has more skill to communicate with the hearing person than does the hearing person to communicate with the deaf person. Deaf people often can "understand what the hearing person is trying to communicate" through reading "the situation, the person's facial expression, speech movements etc. Deaf people are often more adept at this than hearing people are at understanding ASL. Maybe the acronym should have been RIH (Registry of Interpreters for the Hearing). Nah, actually would be best to focus on the languages being interpreted. How about Registry of ASL/English Interpreters? I doubt this organization's name will change but maybe now you will think about this name differently when you encounter it.