

Deaf Culture Question of the Week – June 3-7, 2013
Bill Newell, Principal Washington School for the Deaf

Which of these deaf scientists discovered a comet?

- a. David James
- b. Harry Lang
- c. Anne Jump Cannon
- d. Olaf Hassel

Scroll down for the answer.

Answer: “d” – Olaf Hassel was born in Norway in 1898. He became deaf when he was one years old. He was fascinated with stars most of his life and became an amateur astronomer. One night while gazing into the sky he saw something unusual. It was a comet that had never been seen before. Two other astronomers had also seen that never before observed comet. Olaf reported his sighting and his name along with the two other scientists who observed the same comet was given to the comet. It is known as the Jurlof-Achmarof-Hassel Comet.

Olaf Hassel was very active in the Norwegian Deaf community. He used Norwegian Sign Language with deaf people and read lips and used written language to communicate with hearing people. Read more about this fascinating deaf person and see a picture of the comet he discovered at:

<http://www.twu.edu/dsc/hassell.htm>. All of the other answer choices are famous deaf scientists as well. Read about these inspirational deaf people at this same website. [Cited from: <http://www.twu.edu/dsc/hassell.htm>]

Note: This is an excellent resource for Science and Deaf Studies teachers who want to inspire students with the accomplishments of deaf persons who have succeeded in the field of Science. Add it to your "Two Clicks" resource list.

Finally,

This is the last Deaf Culture Question of the Week I will write and send on a weekly basis. I will be retiring from WSD at the end of this school year.

I have enjoyed exploring Deaf culture and American Sign Language with readers of DCQW over 5 and 1/2 years. I hope you have enjoyed receiving these weekly questions and you have sometimes been challenged, have sometimes been amazed and inspired, have sometimes been humored, and have always been fascinated as I am by the ingenuity, creativity and accomplishments of Deaf people and the beauty and uniqueness of American Sign Language.