



APRIL 2009 e-NEWS RID REGION IV REPORT

Submitted by:
Amie Seiberlich
Region IV Representative

Happy spring!!!

Being from Wisconsin, I truly love the change of seasons. And the advent of spring, for me, is a time of creativity and rejuvenation. I find myself with more creative energy – ok, and a *strong* desire to play – as summer inches closer. I'm finding that this cycle of creativity and rejuvenation is not bound only to my personal life; I also see the effects of spring in the work of the RID board. I recently attended a face to face Board meeting at the RID national office and came away from our five days together feeling optimistic, excited and inspired with creative ideas for the upcoming fiscal year. Some of these ideas are already in motion and will manifest themselves to members as *change*. Fear not, change can be a powerful and wonderful thing!

As you may know, this is a time in our country when the business of non-profit organizations is becoming more closely scrutinized. New, more stringent IRS regulations have been enacted to protect members of the public, and members of organizations, from leadership abuse of financial power. While these regulations serve to protect the integrity of organizations, they also require that we alter some of the long-standing mechanisms that we have relied on as our organization has grown to nearly 15,000 members.

The changes that you will begin to see in RID over the next year or two are being initiated as a result of increasing governmental scrutiny of non-profit organizations. The board labors long and hard over changes recommended by legal and fiduciary counsel; changes recommended solely to maintain the integrity of our 501 C3 status. In response to some recent changes, I have heard members state that the board is trying to maintain control that rightly belongs to members. I can assure you that the current board's intent is to allow members to participate in determining the direction of the organization, while allowing those in the national office to provide guidance on moving forward in a legal and fiscally responsible manner.

That said this is an exciting time to be a part of the RID Leadership Team! There are a number of initiatives being discussed that have the potential to bring members of the organization, the field and the larger community closer together. These initiatives include:

- The Philosophy, Mission, Goals and Diversity Workgroup: Simply put, this workgroup is tasked with connecting with as many members as possible to determine whether or not our guiding documents truly reflect the values, mindset and goals of our members. The proposed approach for doing so, approved at the recent board meeting, is creative, inspiring and one that will serve not only the purposes of the workgroup, but will help to bring members of the organization and community together in unique and powerful manner. The first workgroup session will be held as an "issues forum" at the upcoming 2009 RID National Conference. We hope you will attend! In the event you are unable to for whatever reason, look for

another opportunity to participate in this dialogue on either a state or regional level soon.

- Examination of RID Committee Structure: As RID continues to grow in numbers, experience and organizational expertise it is becoming clear that some of the structures that have been in place for some time may need to be reviewed and tweaked. Just as occurs on a state level, from time to time national committees come full circle, fulfill the needs they were originally created to fulfill, and find themselves looking for new direction. The RID board is reviewing the purpose of each committee to ensure that we are putting time and energy into structures and projects that truly support member needs. Look for more on how the board is working to optimize committee work in upcoming president's letters in the *RID e-News* and *IEWS*.
- Assessment of Regional Conferences: As you may know, RID recently hired a new Director of Meetings, Cori Dossett. As a part of transitioning the responsibility of national conference planning from the RID Executive Director Clay Nettles to Cori, a need to review our current regional conference structure has arisen. At this point I have no details to share; I just want to make you all aware that you may be hearing more about new ways of providing regional educational and networking opportunities in the coming year.

As always, there is so much more to share! In the event you would like additional information on anything mentioned in this article I hope you will take a moment to contact me at region4rep@rid.org. I will continue to use this e-News column as the primary means of communicating other updates and changes that will impact you as members and professionals.

Before I let you go, I also want to give a shout out to two new members of the RIV Leadership Team. Help me welcome the first RID Region IV Financial Steward, Barbara-Jean Slopey (pictured on the right) and Connie Herndon, outgoing Nebraska RID President and the new RID Region IV Historian. We are thrilled to welcome Barbara-Jean in this capacity and look forward to extending Connie's creativity and passion for Region IV as she transitions into her new role.



We are still looking for just the right person(s) to move into the role of RID Region IV Fundraising Coordinator – if this is something that is of interest, please reach out to me via e-mail and I'll send you all of the pertinent information you will need to make an informed decision about joining the RIV Leadership Team.

Now, on to more updates from RIV State leaders.

amie

Nebraska RID
President Connie Herndon

Nebraska RID ambitiously sponsors two conferences annually. Spring 2008 marked the beginning of a new approach to the typical conference setting when 20 dedicated and diligent members gathered for a retreat. The impressive results led members to request another retreat for spring 2009.

March 13-15, 2009, 16 energetic and focused neRID members gathered in LaVista, Nebraska, at the Embassy Suites and LaVista Conference Center for the "Spring Working Retreat." The environment was neither rustic nor too far from the city, but the venue provided an escape from the routines of daily life and a very comfortable and technologically convenient place for work, fun, networking, and rest. The attendees also served as a scouting party to determine the suitability of this brand new facility for the upcoming fall conference. The theme of the weekend, "Beyond neRID's Provocative Proposition," challenged members to rise to the next level of energizing activity for the organization. The group faced the reality of bringing bylaws in line with the national office while capturing the energy and vision of the organization's provocative proposition. To avoid the expenses involved with out-of-state presenters, member Connie Herndon presented "Bylaws: Where's the Nose?" The tailor-made presentation engaged members in the study of the etymology and meaning of "bylaws." The hierarchy of entities who govern the format and content of bylaws was introduced. Participants examined what bylaws should entail and compared documents from sister affiliate chapters and the national organization to determine what elements must be included in a heavily revised bylaws document for neRID.

However, the focus extended beyond just bylaw details. Brainstorming, action plans, and teamwork formed a challenging framework for the weekend's purpose. Members worked in teams aligned with the tenets of the provocative proposition. The first letter of each tenet forms the acrostic "N E R I D." All activity of neRID now falls into one of the five tenet categories.

Members first brainstormed and created a snapshot of the "big picture" of what the provocative proposition inspired for their particular team. Using that macro view, members identified elements of the vision that required definition in the bylaws or guidance in a policy and procedure manual. As activities of the weekend progressed, the macro and micro workings of neRID became more apparent.

During the course of the weekend, members identified how the teams' work would be interdependent, developed a survey to assess member perspectives and needs, and formulated a thorough timeline of actions to give life to the dreams prior to the fall conference.

To reflect the intent of the provocative proposition, neRID members decided to adopt some "nicknames" for the typically corporate-sounding labels for organizational activity. Traditional names will appear in legal documents, but members will use the "nicknames" in general conversation and planning. Committees will be called "action teams." The chair or coordinator will be known as the "action team lead." Since one of the tenets emphasizes a collaborative, shared experience, the board members will be called "collaborators."

A special treat for the weekend was a collection of inspirational quotes. Each attendee, as part of her preparation for the retreat, brought one or more inspirational quotes. During the weekend, members took turns drawing a quote from a quote bucket. Oddly enough, each quote seemed to be very apropos to the focus of the moment and helped create a stronger bond among those present.

Action team members who attended the retreat represented veterans, CDIs, recent graduates, certified, and pre-certified. Three of four state areas were represented. Every imaginable interpreting setting was represented. Differences were not evident. All persons present united to discover ways—personally and collectively—to unleash the possibilities with neRID.

New Mexico RID

Co-President Dana Sumrow

No report at this time.

North Dakota RID

President Cindy Kupfer

No report at this time

Oklahoma RID

President Lisa Mathes

The most recent news from OKRID relates to our endeavors with the Oklahoma Association of the Deaf on the OAD/OKRID Licensure Task Force. We prepared a licensure draft that was introduced this legislative session. It passed the House of Representatives, but died in Senate committee. The process has been very educational to say the least! We remain committed to our goal of seeing licensure enacted in Oklahoma. Over the next year we intend to hold a series of public meetings in order to continue to educate the interpreting and Deaf communities regarding these issues and will submit it again next session. Feel free to contact me at <mailto:lisamathes@sbcglobal.net> if you would like more details regarding the draft or our experiences thus far.