

A BRIEF HISTORY

In year of 1904 National Association of the Deaf Convention was held here in St. Louis. Missouri Association of the Deaf (MoAD) was organized during this convention.

In year of 1907 MoAD and Missouri School for the Deaf Alumni Association had a joint convention. MoAD setup a GOAL. First dollar was donated toward establishment of a home for the aged Deaf Missourians. That was MoAD's first GOAL.

The MoAD Home Fund grew slow.

After World War II ended, MoAD required all chapters (when started?) to transfer all their funds exceeding \$500.00 to the MoAD Home Fund. As the time passed, this requirement somehow dried up. It just vaporized after Mrs. Pearl Steinhaus "retired" from her post as President of MoAD at 1969 convention. She was a driving force on this requirement.

It has been said from time to time that MoAD worked hard and saved the Deaf Missourians' rights to have driver licenses. This is not true.

It was not known what year it was when a bill to deny the Deaf Missourians' right to drive was drafted and proposed by one of the state legislators. One Deaf Missourian alerted many Deaf leaders about the bill. The Deaf leaders went to work and started many Auto Deaf Clubs-St. Louis, Kansas City, Fulton, Hannibal, Cape Girardeau, Springfield, Joplin, St. Joseph, Jefferson City, and maybe Sedalia. Probably Sedalia Deaf banded with the Jefferson City Deafs. Their GOAL was to stop the bill from passing.

The Auto Deaf Club members drove their own vehicles to Jefferson City and parked around the State Capitol. They lobbied the state legislators to vote against the bill. The state legislators went outside to see a long line of parked Deaf's vehicles. Shortly afterward the bill was killed.

Many Auto Deaf Club members were members of MoAD. What did MoAD officers do? They just wrote letters to the state legislators, asking them to vote against the bill. That was perfectly all right, nothing wrong with that, but the MoAD officers were not at Jefferson City with the Auto Deaf Club members.

The Auto Deaf Club leaders kept their eyes on the state legislators actions. As time (year) flew, no further bill to ban the Deaf Drivers' right to have the drivers' license was introduced again. Then one by one, the Auto Deaf Club dissolved, and their remaining funds were transferred to MoAD's General Fund. Hannibal Auto Deaf Club was last one to be disbanded.

Sometime in early part of 1950, a state legislator from Sedalia submitted a bill to ban the Deaf Drivers' right to have drivers' license. MoAD officers were alerted, and they wrote letters to their state legislators and, as well as the State Governor. A news paper reporter asked State Governor about this bill. I never forget this governor's reaction: "If a blind driver can drive, then Deaf can be allowed to drive. I will veto the bill when brought to me." Next day the bill was shelved.

I believe that this last part was a reason for Mrs. Pearl Steinhaus to orchestrate that MoAD saved the Deaf Missourians from losing their rights to have the driver's licenses. She had not

mentioned about the Auto Deaf Club's hard leg works.

The MoAD's Home Fund continued to grow.

Many young Deaf Missourians were invited to join MoAD. They asked what is MoAD? When told about MoAD's GOAL (a home for the Deaf Missourians), they declined the invitations. However, the middle-aged Missourians joined MoAD, and many of them dropped out for whatever reasons unknown to a composer below.

In early part of 1966 MoAD applied for IRS tax-exempt status. At 1966 MoAD convention, held here in St. Louis, President Pearl Steinhaus announced that IRS had denied MoAD's tax-exempt application.

After this composer was elected as MoAD Treasurer in 1966, he checked with a local (St. Louis) IRS to find out a reason why MoAD's application was rejected. IRS explained that they had written a letter to MoAD, asking for more information. Since MoAD did not reply within a 90 day period. IRS tabled the application. They did not turn down MoAD. The composer made his report to Pearl Steinhaus. She lambasted him for contacting IRS without her permission.

During Mr. Raymond Atwood's tenure as President of MoAD, MoAD applied again, Local IRS turned it down because MoAD had not done anything to prepare establishing home for the aged Missourians. At that time any non-profit organization was not allowed to appeal.

Fortunately shortly after MoAD's application was rejected, a U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of hearing non-profit organization that any non-profit organization has right to appeal the ruling of rejection to chief IRS in Washington D.C., and soon MoAD got a letter of determination, recognizing MoAD as a non-profit organization.

Local IRS was not pleased, and later they pestered MoAD to get on with establishing home for the aged Missourians or otherwise they would forfeit MoAD's tax-exempt status.

MoAD officers then went to work. In 1983 a new organization was formed. It was called Missourian Association of the Deaf Apartment Associates (MADAA). It was done on a suggestion submitted by a law firm representing MADAA. The new officers of MADAA were Francis Shaver, President; Edgar Templeton, Vice President; and Arthur Merklin, Secretary. MADAA applied for its own tax-exempt status from local IRS and got it.

MADAA twice applied for a 30-year loan from U.S. Housing Urban Development (HUD) and was turned down. MADAA's legal advisor got the MoAD Board members to agree to "co-sign" for a 40-year loan. (MoAD's attorney was not present at time the agreement was signed).

HUD granted this 100% loan. Thus MoAD became MADAA's sponsor. Should MADAA default a monthly payment, MoAD is required to pay a late monthly payment for MADAA.

HUD bought half of MoAD's property for MADAA. MoAD received from HUD, \$49,100 (from part of 40-year loan) for it. This MADAA is a sole owner of this parcel. MoAD still owns other half of land, east of MADAA's property. A 40-unit apartments were built on MADAA's land, and it opened in late 1984.

Then MoAD's GOAL was achieved.

And then now what? What is MoAD's next GOAL? The Chapters of MoAD have been sitting, waiting for MoAD officers to decide on a new GOAL. It has been a long 14 year wait. Any MoAD officers, past as far back as 1984, and present, should not be blamed. Nobody asked them.

Composed by Thomas "Tom" E. Short

This Brief History by Thomas E. Short , are reprinted with his permission for MoAD History purposes for new members to learn something about MoAD. This was during the year of 1998.