

2-1-2004

Maine-Lines: A Quarterly Newsletter for People who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing or Late-Deafened, Winter / Spring 2004

Maine Department of Labor

Maine Bureau of Rehabilitation Services

Maine Division of Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing and Late Deafened

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Recommended Citation

Maine Department of Labor; Maine Bureau of Rehabilitation Services; Maine Division of Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing and Late Deafened; and Melanson, Nancy, "Maine-Lines: A Quarterly Newsletter for People who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing or Late-Deafened, Winter / Spring 2004" (2004). *Rehabilitation Services/Disability Services Documents*. 31.
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DIVISION OF DEAFNESS

MAINE-LINES

A NEWSLETTER FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE DEAF, HARD OF HEARING OR LATE-DEAFENED

Governor Baxter School for the Deaf Builds a New High School By Jane Hecker-Cain



(Pictured: Governor Percival Baxter & Curtis Gibbert,
Student at GBSD in April 1954)

Governor John Baldacci ceremoniously broke ground November 7 for the new Academic Building at the Governor Baxter School for the Deaf (GBSD). Surrounded by children with “golden” shovels, he wielded the same wooden shovel that was used by former Governor Percival Baxter at the school’s original groundbreaking in 1955.



(Pictured: Curtis Gibbert, Governor Baldacci, &
Jacob, present student.)

Also on hand for the ceremony were, Patrick Phillips, Deputy Commissioner of Education; Jean Gulliver, Chair of the State School Board; Elaine Clark, Director of the Bureau of General Services; State Representative Gerald Davis of Falmouth; and the Director of the Division on Deafness, Jan DeVinney.

Other special guests included GBSD alumni who had attended the 1955 groundbreaking as young schoolchildren from the Maine School for the Deaf in Portland.

GBSD’s new building was designed with the special communication needs of deaf and hard of hearing children in mind.

Portland architect Nancy Barba of Barba Associates enlisted the help of Deaf architect John Dickinson, of Winter & Co. located in Boulder, Colorado, to make sure the building was “deaf-friendly”.

Much attention was given to capitalizing on natural light while minimizing glare so the student's eyes will not tire from watching signed instruction. Likewise, attention was paid to sound levels so that hearing aids and assistive listening devices will function optimally.

In addition to classrooms, the new building includes an Art Room, a Science Lab and Library. A national bid for artists is currently being conducted to commission a piece of art that will compliment the design and purpose of the space. Every effort is being made to reach Deaf artists in particular. Occupancy of the building is expected by July 2004 so GBSD plans to be using their new facility during the entire '04-'05 school year.



Maine Relay Service is Changing Carriers -Hamilton Relay-

With the assistance of the Advisory Council to the Maine Relay Service, Maine has selected Hamilton Telecommunications as its new provider of Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS). Hamilton will begin providing the service April 18, 2004, by dynamically routing Maine relay calls through its existing TRS Centers.

"The Advisory Council finds Hamilton to be at the forefront of providing relay service and is confident Hamilton will bring forth new technological offerings to Maine relay users," says William Black, Deputy Public Advocate and a member of the Maine Telecommunications Relay Service Advisory Council.

Telecommunications Relay Service enables telephone communication between individuals who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing or Speech Disabled and standard telephone users.

Individuals with hearing or speech difficulties use a TTY or other text telephone device to call a telecommunications relay center. A Communications Assistant answers the call and then places another call to the telephone number the person wishes to reach. The Communications Assistant then translates and relays conversations confidentially by converting voice information to typed communication and reading aloud typed messages to hearing persons.

The Relay Service is available from any telephone in Maine; toll free, by dialing 711. Dialing 1-800-437-1220 for text telephone users and 1-800-457-1220 from a standard telephone can also access the relay service. The service is available 24 hours a day, every day. There are no charges to call the relay or to place local calls; however, long distance charges apply when placing toll calls.

Long distance charges for intrastate calls (originating and ending within Maine) are automatically reduced in cost by 70 percent, pursuant to state law. Normal long distance charges apply to calls to another state or country.

"Hamilton will deliver many enhanced features and services and will provide an unmatched quality of service which will greatly benefit the relay users in Maine," says Dixie Ziegler, Vice President of Hamilton Relay Service. "With Hamilton, Maine relay users will gain control of their service, the features, and procedures that are implemented and the overall quality of the relay."

Hamilton offers a variety of features and services to further enhance relay communication. Hamilton Internet Protocol Relay (www.hiprelay.com) allows relay consumers to use computers and other web-based devices to connect to Hamilton Relay via the Internet rather than a TTY in order to call any hearing telephone user. Hamilton Video Relay Service (www.hipvrs.com) enables relay consumers to communicate in American Sign Language via high-speed internet access and a variety of video conferencing equipment rather than a TTY and typing.

Hamilton Telecommunications, based in Aurora, Nebraska, currently provides relay services to the states of Nebraska, Idaho, Kentucky, Louisiana, Wisconsin and Rhode Island. Established in 1901, Hamilton also provides local telephone, cable television service, call center services, Internet services, computer sales, network integration and much more to customers in Nebraska and across the country.

Outreach and education services regarding the Maine Relay Service will continue to be provided by the Maine Center on Deafness, located in Portland, Maine. Individuals and organizations that would like more information, or would like to arrange for training or education about the Maine Relay Service can contact Julia Bell, Relay Service Outreach Manager, at 207-797-7656 (V/TTY) or via email at mcdmers@maine.rr.com. Individuals can also contact Hamilton Relay Service at 1-800-618-4781 (V/TTY), e-mail to relay@hamiltonrelay.com or mail to P.O. Box 285, Aurora, NE 68818.

Contact: Dixie Ziegler: 402-694-3656
Vice President of Relay
Hamilton Telecommunications

Legislative Updates:

LD 1819, An Act To Implement the Recommendations of the Study Group To Examine an Emergency Alert Notification System for Deaf and Hard-of-hearing Individuals

The study group reported to the Utilities and Energy Committee. The bill passed and is now Public Law 553. The telecommunications equipment program (TEP) funding will be increased to cover the costs of two-way pagers, other alerting devices and extra staffing. Money for this will come from Homeland Security grant money and the Public Utilities Commission Universal Service Fund. The target date for the TEP to have 2-way pagers is July 1, 2004.

LD 1087, An Act to Require all Health Insurers to Cover the Costs of Hearing Aids

This bill, as amended, would have covered hearing aids for children up to age 18, \$1,400.00 per hearing aid every three years. The bill passed in the Senate but failed twice in the House and is now dead.

LD 1688, An Act To Clarify the Law Regarding Interpreting Services for People Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

If this bill passes, it will move the appropriation for \$80,000 from the Division of Deafness directly to the Courts for providing interpreters and CART for Court proceedings.

The Division of Deafness will maintain a list of qualified legal interpreters.

Interpreters would need to be nationally certified and have special legal training. The bill requires the phase-in of stricter qualifications. Money from the fund may only be used for interpreters who qualify to be on this list.

Some funding will remain with the Division of Deafness to be used by private attorneys when they represent deaf clients to cover interpreting costs. Without funding to cover the cost of interpreters for lawyers, there is concern that deaf people will have a hard time finding lawyers willing to represent them.

This bill has passed in the Labor Committee as amended and is now going to the Appropriations Committee for approval of the funding transfer.

LD 1682, An Act to Ensure the State's Commitment to Former Students Who were Physically or Sexually Abused at the Governor Baxter School for the Deaf (GBSD) and the Maine School for the Deaf

Senator Beth Edmonds introduced this bill. The BCA is requesting a \$6 million dollar appropriation to continue paying claims to survivors. When more information becomes available we will inform people.

Baxter Compensation Authority Update

There have been 264 claimants who have applied to the Baxter Compensation Authority (BCA). 113 people have gone before the BCA panel and 77 have been paid. 34 people have gone before the panel but are on a waiting list to be paid. Over four million dollars has been paid out. However, now the BCA has run out of money. A bill has been introduced to provide more funding (see above).



(Deaf Community Rally at the State House on March 25, 2004, to protest that the Governor did not put money in his Budget for the BCA)

GBSD Students at Portland High
So Far, So Good
By Jane Hecker-Cain



(Pictured: Jonathan Baldwin, a junior from the Gov. Baxter School for the Deaf, introduces himself Friday morning during an art class at Portland High School as A.J. Less, also a Baxter junior, watches.)

Staff photo by Jill Brady

By TESS NACELEWICZ, Portland Press Herald Writer
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The first semester for GBSD students at Portland High School (PHS) is over and the mid-term report card on the unique collaboration between the two schools is good. Ten Deaf/hard of hearing students attend PHS, five Juniors and five Freshmen.

Seven of the students are boys who live in the GBSD dormitory during the school week. The three girls are all freshmen and commute to school from home.

Academically, the students are adjusting well. Four GBSD students made the Honor Roll the first quarter.

In addition to having qualified interpreters in their classrooms, the students have the added benefit of a certified Teacher of the Deaf, who is Deaf himself, attending classes with them.

A second certified Teacher of the Deaf teaches the GBSD students their Language Arts courses. Both of these teachers provide tutoring after school in the dorm for an hour, four days a week.

In addition to their coursework at PHS, the Juniors pursue career preparation at the Portland Arts and Technology High School every day for half a day. Socially, the students have also done well. They have attended school dances and football games. One female GBSD student is on the school's wrestling team. Over fifty PHS students completed a course in American Sign Language the first semester taught by a Deaf instructor

provided by GBSD. Sixty-five students are enrolled in ASL I this semester. With so many students learning sign language, friendships between Deaf and hearing students just naturally bloom.

Athletically, the students have maintained the GBSD tradition of active involvement in the Eastern Schools for the Deaf Athletic Association. GBSD attended soccer tournaments in the fall and the basketball tournament in the winter. The teams also played small local schools as an independent soccer team and as a Maine Principals' Association Class D basketball team.

Deciding to send GBSD students to PHS was not an easy decision. Setting up a successful collaboration was not an easy process. But now that the program is in place, all indications are that it is working out well. One sure indicator of success: GBSD is getting inquiries from families of mainstreamed Deaf/hard of hearing teens about transferring to PHS next fall!

Deaf: A Cultural Perspective
By Mary Martone & Jane Hecker-Cain

For most Americans, the term "cultural diversity" brings to mind an appreciation of people from other countries; people of different races and ethnic backgrounds, people whose native dress, food and customs are different from most Americans. Few would consider people who are Deaf as part of this cultural diversity, yet that is exactly what many hearing parents with profoundly deaf children must learn to do.

Two examples of the Deaf cultural perspective have already appeared in this article. You may have noticed that both "deaf" and "Deaf" have been used.

This is because the Deaf Community distinguishes between "little d" deaf, which means audiotically deaf and "big D" Deaf, which refers to Deaf people who consider themselves to be culturally Deaf. The second example is referring to parents as "hearing". This distinguishes them from Deaf parents of Deaf children.

As a matter of fact, 90% of deaf children are born into hearing families with no other deaf members, no experience with deaf people and no knowledge of sign language.

For these parents, learning to accept their Deaf child involves learning about and becoming acclimated to Deaf Culture. The most obvious aspect of this culture is, of course, its manual/visual language, American Sign Language, most often referred to as ASL.

As a rule, Deaf people value American Sign Language because it is the most accessible language for them and ties them all together. But there are other aspects of Deaf Culture that over time, hearing parents who have Deaf children come to recognize and appreciate.

Deaf Culture, along with more than 70 percent of world cultures, is collectivist as opposed to American culture, which is individualistic. In collectivist cultures, the priority of the group takes precedence over the priority of any one member. Deaf Culture is a “one for all and all for one” culture. Moreover Deaf people believe that a member’s behavior is often perceived as a reflection on the entire community. The Deaf Community’s recent intense interest in Christy Smith, the Deaf woman on television’s *Survivor*, is indicative of how closely they are bound by their Deaf identity.

Deaf Culture is based on a connection that develops through the shared Deaf experience. More often than not, a Deaf person is willing to do favors for other members of the Deaf community. A Deaf accountant, for example, may not charge his Deaf friend to do his taxes because he knows that friend will fix his car the next time it needs repair. In addition, Deaf people often will go out on a limb to help other members in times of need. This demonstrates the strong bond that Deaf people have with each other.

The Deaf Community is built on strong and open relationships. When two Deaf people meet each other for the first time, their introductions generally focus on finding someone else in the local or national Deaf Community that they both know, often through their attendance at a state residential School for the Deaf.

Most Americans tend to introduce themselves and others in terms of where they went to college, what degree they have and what they do for a living. Deaf people may get around to that information eventually, but not until they have found a more personal connection. During introductions, Deaf people also want to know whether the new person is Deaf or hearing so they can determine how to interact with that person. You will notice that this article’s authors have identified themselves accordingly in their bios on the next page.

Deaf people are openly affectionate. Hugging is part of saying hello as well as saying farewell. Deaf people may shake hands the first time they meet, but they will generally hug by the end of even that first conversation. In the course of conversations, Deaf people often touch each other on the back, arm, or leg especially if they have a close relationship. Touching is a natural and integral part of signed conversations.

Communication among Deaf people is so direct it can often appear to an outsider to be blunt or rude. For example, a hearing mom of a deaf child might be surprised to have a Deaf adult comment, “I see you’ve gained weight.” While most Americans tend to deliberately avoid the topic of weight no matter how obvious the change, among Deaf people it is considered par for the course.

Even time can be viewed through a cultural lens. Edward T. Hall divides cultures into monochronic and polychronic. The United States is monochronic while the Deaf Culture within it is polychronic. Polychronic cultures place people and relationships over agendas and schedules.

Picture this: a Deaf member arrives late for a meeting at a Deaf Club. Since the meeting is being run according to the rules of Deaf Culture, business would be temporarily suspended while the tardy member was filled in without even a hint of annoyance from anyone present. People familiar with Deaf Culture often call this “DST” for “Deaf Standard Time”.

Another common example of the differences in Deaf and hearing cultures is the length of time it takes to say goodbye. When an event ends, most Americans head for the door and to whatever is next on their calendar. Deaf Americans, on the other hand, linger, chat, comment on the event that just ended, make plans for the next get-together, etc., etc. It can easily be another half hour (or even three hours!) before a classic “Deaf Goodbye” ends with a final hug!

Cultures are fascinating, perhaps even more so when members of the same family can grow to feel comfortable in two. Such is life for the hearing family into which a deaf child is born.

If you would like to learn more about Deaf Culture, we recommend you contact the library at the Governor Baxter School for the Deaf. Its Parent/Professional Collection includes numerous books on Deaf Culture, which can be interlibrary loaned to a public library near you. The GBSD Library can be reached at 781-6237 (V/TTY). More information about GBSD can be obtained at www.baxter.pvt.k12.me.us.

About the Authors:



Jane Hecker-Cain, who is hearing, holds a bachelor's degree in Deaf Education and several sign language interpreting certificates from the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf. Jane is the Director of Communications at the Governor Baxter School for the Deaf in Falmouth, Maine.



Mary Ellen Martone, who is Deaf, holds a master's degree in Deaf Education and a graduate certificate in Educational Leadership, and has been principal at the Governor Baxter School for the Deaf since July 2001.

AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE (ASL)

IT'S NOT ENGLISH!!!

Like all languages, ASL has its own vocabulary, syntax, grammar, and pattern of discourse—most of which differs markedly from English. Like German, ASL verbs are often at the end of statements. Like Spanish, ASL adjectives follow the nouns they modify. Like Hebrew, ASL does not employ certain forms of the verb “to be”. Like Japanese, feedback signals from the listener are expected in ASL. Like French, there is reflection in ASL sentences and discourse.

ASL vocabulary is conceptual, but not English—or aurally based. For example, ASL uses different signs for the many-faceted English homonym “run”—run for president, run to the store, run a machine, run in your stocking, runny nose—whereas ASL has productive homonyms of its own, such as the signs for island and interest (of the fiscal sort), which happen to be the same.

ASL structure is not derived from English nor is other countries' sign language based on their oral languages. Sign languages evolve anthropologically through the social intercourse of deaf people living in a given area.

From: Pollard, R.Q. (1996) Professional psychology and deaf people, the emergence of a discipline. American Psychologist, April 1996, 389-396.

CAN YOU LIPREAD ENGLISH?

Did you know that only 30% of spoken English is visible on the lips for lip-reading? Do you realize how much constant guessing lip-reading requires? Below are listed a few examples of words which, when spoken, look exactly the same on the lips. Try mouthing them in a mirror without using your voice, or ask a friend to mouth them to you. You will discover why many deaf people prefer to use an interpreter or read your writing rather than your lips.

Bed, bet, bent, bend, pen, pet, pent, pend, penned, met, meant, mend, men, Ben

Bide, bind, bite, mite, might, mind, mined, mine, Pied, pint, pine, pined

Bustle, muscle, muzzle, mussel, puzzle

Cent, sent, send, scent

Dead, debt, den, dent, ten, tend, tent, net, Ned, Ted

Dose, doze, nose, toes, knows, does

Drug, drunk, truck, trunk

Fade, fane, fate, faint, feigned, feign, fete, fain, vain, vein, vane, feint

Had, hat, hand, ad, add, and, ant, aunt, at, an, Ann, Anne

Incite, inside, insight

Juice, choose, shoes, Jews, chews

Known, don't, tone, toned, towed, toad, tote, note, dote

Mad, man, mat, bad, ban, bat, band, banned, pat, pant, pan, panned, pad

Paid, maid, made, payed, pain, paint, bane, bait, mate, Main, Maine, pate, pane, bade, bayed

Pedal, peddle, petal, medal, meddle, metal, mental

Sign, cite, site, sighed, sight, signed, side

Straight, strayed, strait, strain, strained

Upcoming Events

The Baxter Compensation Authority (BCA) and the Department of Behavioral & Developmental Services (BDS) will be hosting a forum for survivors of abuse at GBSD or the Maine School for the Deaf who have mental retardation. The forum will be held at the **University of Maine at Augusta on Thursday, May 6, 2004, 3 PM to 6 PM.** Individual Support Case Managers, parents, guardians, and others who work or live with survivors are encouraged to attend this informational forum.

Public Meeting: Your/Our Views: You & the Deaf Community. Saturday, May 8, 2004, 1-5 PM, Luther Bonney Hall Auditorium, Bedford Street, Portland. Interpreters will be provided. The purpose of the meeting is to provide the opportunity for individuals to express their views on the Deaf Community through a panel discussion, individual comments and group sessions. The main objective behind the meeting is to identify, assess and prioritize needs or issues with the involvement of individuals in the Deaf Community.

Portland Adult Education - Literacy Class for Deaf Adults.

When: April 29th through June 17th, Thursdays, 6:00 - 8:30

Where: West School, 57 Douglass Street, Portland

What: Learn written English by studying Civics (Voting, Government).

All students need a skills evaluation to help the teachers plan the class work.

The skills evaluation is scheduled for Thursday, April 15th, from 6 to 7:00 p.m., at the West School in Portland.

Contact: Portland Adult Education, 874-8155 (Voice)
Driving directions available at
www.portlandadulthood.org/drive/php

Did you know?

❖ **NEW: Self Help for the Hard of Hearing (SHHH).** Support Groups are now meeting every month in the southern and central Maine area. SHHH is a volunteer, international association of hard of hearing people, their relatives, and friends. It is a non-profit, educational organization devoted to the welfare and interest of those who cannot hear well. Contact Jody Went at 439-3197 in southern Maine and Marianne Winnett at 685-3885 in central Maine for further information.

❖ **Identification Cards Available for Deaf and Hard of Hearing.** The Division of Deafness has ID cards to offer to anyone who is deaf or hard of hearing. The laminated cards are produced at the Division of Deafness, and they are free of charge. Applications and examples of the cards are available by calling the Division at the numbers listed on the last page of this newsletter or visit DoD's website www.maine.gov/rehab/dod.

❖ **Safer Place:** Were you physically abused (slapped, pushed, hair pulled) by teachers or staff at Governor Baxter School for the Deaf or Maine School for the Deaf? Were you sexually abused (touched on your body or forced to have sex) by teachers, staff, or other students?

Contact Safer Place:
(207) 892-6814 (V/TTY)
(207) 892-6602 (FAX) or
E-mail: place4safe@aol.com

❖ The next **Division of Deafness Advisory Council meeting is June 10, 2004.** The meeting starts at 6:15 p.m. and ends at 9:00 p.m. It will be held at the Criminal Justice Academy in Vassalboro. Please call the Division of Deafness at the numbers listed on the last page of this newsletter for directions or information. This meeting is open to the public.

❖ **Maine-Lines, Anyone?**
Give *Maine-Lines* to a friend. Encourage them to sign up for mailings. All we need are names and addresses sent to the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services, Division of Deafness, Attn: Nancy Melanson, 150 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333 or e-mail to Nancy.A.Melanson@maine.gov.

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Bureau of Rehabilitation Services

Kathleen Brogan, Director

Division of Deafness

The Division of Deafness provides a program of services to Deaf, hard-of-hearing and late-deafened citizens of Maine, which includes: information and referral, advocacy, and accessibility promotion.

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*The Maine Department of Labor provides equal opportunity in employment and programs.
Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.*