

Division of Deafness

MAINE-LINES

A Quarterly Newsletter for People Who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing or Late-Deafened

Vol. 2/No. 4

Winter 2002-2003

Deaf Community Forum 3

The *Deaf Community Forum 3* took place on March 8, 2003 at the University of Maine Augusta, from 9 A.M. to noon. The event was sponsored by the Department of Labor, Bureau of Rehabilitation Services and organized by the Baxter Compensation Authority (BCA).



Echo Smith and audience members portray the five member Baxter Compensation Authority Board.



Audience members portray the three-member Compensation Panel.

Jonathan Connick from Maine Center on Deafness (MCD) introduced John Shattuck, the director of the BCA Program.

John Shattuck introduced two of the three members of the BCA Compensation Panel, David Norman, and Meg London. The third panel member, Mike Finneran, was unable to attend. John also introduced the two claims consultants, Echo Smith and Mike Germano. The five members of the BCA board which set up the policies for BCA and hired the panel, were unable to attend.



Brenda Schertz role-playing at the forum.

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After the introductions there was a role-play by Brenda Schertz, BCA board member, acting as a claimant and Echo Smith as the claims consultant. They explained how the compensation process works. They started with a claimant's first contact with the BCA, meeting and talking with the claims consultants, filing the claim with the compensation panel, receiving the payment and signing the release form. They also explained that the pain doesn't go away just because compensation money is received. They did a wonderful job.



Echo Smith role-playing at the forum.

Jana Harbaugh, a therapist from Community Counseling Center in Portland, and Roxanne Baker role-played what therapy might look like. Jana explained what a therapist does and Roxanne asked questions.



Jana Harbaugh and Roxanne Baker role-playing the counselor/client.

Two wonderful Deaf interpreters from Massachusetts, Jim Lipsky and Arkady Berlozsky worked with hearing interpreters Betsy Reifman and Mary Jane Tarazewich to make sure everyone at the forum, Deaf and hearing, were able to understand.

After a mid-morning break, Shana Cohen, Sara Treat, and Ralph Sprague (signing mental health counselors) explained more about what therapy is, why it helps, how it works and how to find a therapist. The audience then asked questions of the three therapists.

The forum was a success, with many questions answered for a lot of people. Please call the BCA with any further questions. The contact information for the BCA is:

69 Sewall Street (physical address)
 47 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333 (mailing)
 (207) 287-6715 (TTY)
 (207) 287-6712 (V)
 (207) 622-6228 (FAX)
 Website: www.baxtercomp.org



Shana Cohen, Sara Treat, & Ralph Sprague, signing therapists, answering questions.

Baxter Compensation Authority Panel Chosen

The three-member BCA Compensation Panel will hear claimants' stories, decide if they are eligible for compensation and determine how much compensation is appropriate. Here are the three panel members.



David Norman, Compensation Panel member

David Norman has worked as a lawyer for 35 years in the Portland area. He started the law firm Norman, Hanson & DeTroy in Portland, Maine. He worked at the law firm from 1975 to 2000. He belongs to the Maine Bar Association and the American Bar Association.

He graduated from Colby College in 1962 and graduated from Boston University School of Law in 1965.

He lives in North Yarmouth with his wife, Judith and he has four children. He enjoys golfing, fly-fishing, cross-country skiing, and reading.

David represents the panel member with knowledge of the law and legal practices.



Meg London, Compensation Panel member

Meg London has worked for nine years at Family Crisis Services with abuse victims in outreach and court advocacy. She supervises the instructors of batterer's education and has created one of the country's first advocacy programs for elder victims of domestic violence. Meg's previous employer was Pine Tree Legal Assistance where she worked as a client advocate.

She graduated from Hunter College in New York City where she earned a BA in Political Science and History; and completed the paralegal certificate program at the University of Southern Maine in 1991.

Her interests and hobbies are traveling, reading, Cape Cod, art museums, artwork, growing things, and especially watching her wildly, entertaining son grow up.

Meg represents the panel member with knowledge of abuse issues.



Michael Finneran, Compensation Panel member

Michael Finneran is presently working as a Director of Outreach Services for the Austine School for the Deaf in Vermont and lives in Putney, Vermont. Michael is Deaf.

He also worked at the California School for the Deaf as a Dean and Principal, and the Mississippi School for the Deaf as the Superintendent.

He graduated from Gallaudet University in 1972 with a B.A. in Government. In 1973 he received a M.A. in Special Education from California State University, and in 1979 he received a M.A. in Administration and Supervision from California State University.

Michael represents the panel member with knowledge of Deafness, American Sign Language, Deaf Culture and the Deaf Community.



Michael Germano, BCA Claims Consultant

New BCA Claims Consultant Michael Germano

Mike Germano is the new claims consultant at the Baxter Compensation Authority. He replaced Jason Nichols and took over working with people Jason had worked with. Mike is a Deaf lawyer from Portland.

He graduated from Gallaudet University in 1994 and Quinnipiac College School of Law in 2000. He is very happy to be in Maine and working with Maine's Deaf Community on this very important issue.

Contact Information:

69 Sewall Street (physical address)
 47 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333 (mailing)
 (207) 287-7203 (TTY)
 (207) 622-6228 (FAX)

Website: www.baxtercomp.org

Legislative Updates

LD 397—An Act to Study the Development of an Emergency Alert Notification System for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Individuals

The public hearing and the work session were held for this bill on March 13, 2003. Testimony in favor of the bill was heard from Art Cleaves, Director of Maine Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) Mario Mauro, the Mauro children, Mark Myers and Mary Edgerton. The Energy and Utilities Committee agreed to appoint to the Study Committee individuals suggested by Maine Center on Deafness and the Division of Deafness. (Art Cleaves also agreed to chair the study committee.) The proposed timeframe is to have the Committee finish its work by November and report back to the Energy and Utilities Committee to draft necessary legislation for a system and back-up system to alert Deaf and hard of hearing people in case of an emergency like bad weather or a terrorist attack. The seven legislators present all voted “ought to pass” and it will now go to the Senate and House.

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

This is a bill to require health insurance providers in Maine to cover the costs of hearing aids. This bill will have a public hearing and a work session on April 16, 2003, 1:00 P.M., room 427, State House. This bill may be carried over into the next half of the Legislative Session.

LD 768—An Act to Improve the Administration of the Baxter Compensation Program

The public hearing was held on March 20, 2003 before the Judiciary Committee. The work session took place on April 2, 2003, with the Judiciary Committee. The bill left the committee with “ought to pass as amended” and it will now go to the Senate. The amendment makes the changes happen immediately after the bill is passed in the Legislature. This bill is asking for three changes.

1.) Current law states that once a claim is submitted, the claim becomes public record. This bill would ensure that only certain pieces of information become public. That information would be: the claimant’s name, the amount of compensation, and a summary of the panel’s decision. Everything else would remain confidential except to the Attorney General’s office, the Governor’s office, and the chairs of the Judiciary Committee.

2.) The law now reads that no new information can be presented to the appeal board that has not been brought to the panel. The change would be that new information can be brought to the appeal board and then the claim may be sent back to the panel to be reconsidered. The appeal board can increase but cannot decrease a compensation award.

3.) The current law limits administrative costs (money to pay staff, rent, phone, etc.) to 15% of the BCA Special Revenue Fund. As claims are paid out, this fund decreases, which would limit the ability of the BCA to keep claims being processed as they are received and to keep the doors of the BCA open. This bill repeals the 15% limitation because the annual report will show how the money is being spent. Part of the amendment included the 15% change of the special revenue fund for administrative costs, not to exceed \$1.5 million over the course of the program.

Award Given to Deaf Community member, Jonathan Connick

Recently, the Maine Judicial Branch Special Recognition awards were presented in Portland. Chief Justice Leigh Saufley presented awards to persons making significant contributions to Maine’s court system. The Judicial Branch Performance Council, in recognition of persons or groups whose efforts assist the courts in achieving their mission, gives awards annually.



Jonathan Connick, Advocate for Justice Award winner

Jonathan Connick, the Director of the Maine Center on Deafness, was honored as this year’s Advocate for Justice. The award is given to that person, judge, employee, legislator, public official, lawyer, or citizen who has most effectively championed the cause of justice in our society. Mr. Connick of Portland has assisted the Judicial Branch in achieving its goal of making the courts more accessible to all persons through his efforts on behalf of the Deaf Community.

Did you know?

Identification Cards Available for Deaf and Hard of Hearing People. The Division of Deafness has ID cards for 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 now available by calling the Division at the numbers listed on the last page of this newsletter. You don't have to have an ID card, only if you want to.

Camp Sign-A-Watha needs donations. Fundraising for camp has started. The funding for camp has been cut from the state budget and camp is not going to happen without help. Please join in the fundraising activities. Contact Maine Center on Deafness to see how you can help. Maine Center on Deafness, 68 Bishop Street, Suite 3, Portland, ME 04103.
Tel: 1-800-639-3884 (V/TTY free in Maine)
(207) 797-7656 (V/TTY), (207) 797-9791 (FAX)

The **Cumberland County Sheriff's Department** has a new TTY number 1-800-501-1111 and FAX number 893-2844. Please change the numbers in your TTY Directory listing.

The Division of Deafness has a new toll-free TTY, please distribute the number to others: 1-888-755-0023. The 1-800-698-4440 number is now voice only.

The **Division of Deafness** is searching for a new design for the cover of the *Resources A Guide to Services for People who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing*. All ideas are welcome, drawings, poetry, etc. If interested, please send your entry into the Division of Deafness.

AA Meetings at St. Hyacinth's Church, 295 Brown Street, Westbrook are now interpreted on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month. Meeting time is 7:00 P.M. TO 8:00 P.M. This information has been confirmed.

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 **2003 edition of *Resources A Guide to Services for People who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing*** is now available. For your **free** copy contact the Division of Deafness. Contact information is on the last page of this newsletter.

The next **Division of Deafness Advisory Council Meeting** is **June 12, 2003**. The meeting starts at 6:15 P.M. and ends at 9:00 P.M. It will be held at the Augusta CareerCenter, 2 Anthony Avenue, 2nd Floor, Conference Room 2 in Augusta. Please call the Division of Deafness for directions or information. This meeting is open to the public.

TTY Directories are available from the **Maine Center on Deafness**. Call now for your **free** copy. 1-800-639-3884 (TTY/V) or (207) 797-7656 (TTY/V) or visit the Maine Center on Deafness at 68 Bishop Street, Suite 3, Portland.

The **Equal Access Program** provides a 70 percent rebate for all cell phone calls made to or from a person using a TTY in Maine including relay calls. Please contact the Division of Deafness to get an application or for more information.

There are TTY numbers for information about Bio-terrorism or Terrorism incidents.

The Nonemergency Toll-Free Number for the State Police is 1-888-524-7900. This number is answered in Orono and then routed to the closest State Police Barracks.

The State Police TTY numbers are:

Augusta 287-4478
Houlton 532-7576
Orono 866-5805
Gray 657-5740

All numbers are accessible 24 hours/7 days a week. These numbers are to be used for information only, not emergencies.

There is a possibility that when your call is answered, the greeting may be "911, what is your emergency?" or "Is this an emergency?" If this happens, do not be alarmed. Just explain that you need information.

Did you know? (cont.)

If you have an emergency, you should dial 911 or your local emergency number.

Maine Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) now has an informational TTY number you can call. The number is 626-4434, this number should NOT be the first number called. Please call your local police department first, the State Police second, and MEMA last.

Your local TTY Information numbers should be available from your local police department or sheriff's office. We have high hopes that the next TTY Directory will have local information numbers in the blue pages.

***Maine-Lines* Anyone?**

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

Help us find your classmates from Baxter School and the Maine School for the Deaf.

If you know someone who does not receive *Maine-Lines*, that means we don't have their name and address and they may miss very important information related to compensation and other news in the Deaf community. If you know someone who would like to receive this information, please call the Division of Deafness at the numbers on the last page of *Maine-Lines*.

Captioning Complaints

Please refer to the *Resources A Guide to Services for People who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing*, complaint section.

Websites

New Website for the
Baxter Compensation Authority (BCA)
<http://www.baxtercomp.org/>

ADOP - Advocates for Deaf Oral Programs
<http://www.adop.org/>

DeafBlind information
<http://www.helenkeller.org/>

The **State of Maine** has a **web home page** that can connect you to all the different State agencies. **The Web site is: www.Maine.gov/**

The **Maine Department of Transportation** has a Web site to **check road conditions**. **The Web site is: <http://www.Maine.gov/mdot>**

The Blaine House Tea will be taking place on September 18, 2003, 2:00 P.M. to 3:30 P.M. Nomination forms for awards will be mailed out. If you want a nomination form and you do not receive one by August 1, 2003, please call the Division of Deafness.

Only a 7-year old girl could say this

A mutual friend introduced her 7-year old granddaughter to Shirley Glassman, *DeafDigest's* Blooper Guru. The friend explained to the girl that Shirley is deaf and that she relies on lipreading to communicate. Blurted the little girl "there are no words on my lips."

DeafDigest Blue 12/15/02

Updated List of TTY Pay Phones in Maine

This issue of *Maine-Lines* includes a pull out section to keep in your vehicle. This page of the newsletter has the updated list of pay TTYs from the Maine Center on Deafness. It would be helpful if people would stop at these pay TTYs and use them and also check for any problems listed on the TTY checklist page. Please return the checklist to the Maine Center on Deafness to help with this on-going process. MCD's address is on the bottom of the checklist. TTY Pay Phone updates will be included in future issues of *Maine-Lines*.



Pine Tree Society's innovative Video Relay Interpreting services available in nine hospitals

BATH (March 14, 2003) – Video Relay Interpreting (VRI), an innovative project of Pine Tree Society's Deaf Services program, is now available in nine hospitals throughout Maine. The purpose of VRI is to make healthcare more accessible to Maine's Deaf and hard-of-hearing community.

While hospitals must be accessible to people who are Deaf or hard-of-hearing, the shortage of sign language interpreters combined with Maine's large geographic area often makes this a challenge. VRI enables the pool of interpreters clustered around Maine's largest cities to reach participating hospitals using a network of state-of-the-art Interactive Video Conferencing (ITV) technology operating at 30 frames per second via ISDN high speed telephone lines. With the development of protocols, procedures and capacity at participating hospitals, Pine Tree Society's Deaf Services program is now able to effectively provide services via VRI.

"This service increases the options available to Deaf and hard-of-hearing patients at participating hospitals," said VRI Coordinator, Lois Morin. "It's important for the Deaf Community to be aware that VRI is on-line in their local community."

Currently VRI is available at:

- Maine General Medical Center, Augusta;
- Cary Medical Center, Caribou;
- Mayo Regional Hospital, Dover-Foxcroft;
- Franklin Memorial Hospital, Farmington;
- St. Mary's Hospital, Lewiston;
- Stephens Memorial Hospital, Norway;
- Maine Medical Center, Portland;
- Penobscot Bay Medical Center, Rockport;
- and Spring Harbor Hospital, South Portland.

The VRI project is made possible by the Technology Opportunities Program, National Communications and Information Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce with additional support from the Maine Health Access Foundation, The Bingham Program, and the Davis Family Foundation.

For more information, please contact Lois Morin, VRI Coordinator at (207) 885-0536 (voice/tty) or by e-mail at deafservices@pinetreesociety.org. For more information on Pine Tree Society, please visit their Web site, www.pinetreesociety.org.

Deaf Role Models needed to share a talent at **Sign-N-Kids** summer program! Looking for clowns, magicians, storytellers, actors, or other special talent for Sign-N-Kids summer program.

July 7 - July 31, Monday - Thursday, 9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.

If you can visit us and share a talent please contact:

Carrie Pierce
33C Ledgewood Drive, Hampden, ME 04444
E-mail: SIGNNKIDS@aol.com
207-862-2029 (TTY/FAX)

A Twinkle Morning

A Poem by: Stephen A. Gagnon

Sunshine of bright twinkles beaming through the windows up on the walls. It's going to be a great day.

Somebody will look upon you and see morning twinkles shining on your face. Your melting away the pains of the day.

When your raised with twinkles that shine it's all a matter of praise.

Put on some more twinkles so that tomorrow will be a better day.

Maine Department of Labor
Division of Deafness
150 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0150

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1-800-698-4440 (V) (within Maine only)
624-5980 (FAX)
E-mail: Nancy.A.Melanson@Maine.gov

*The Division of Deafness provides a
program of services to Deaf, heard-of-hearing
and late-deafened citizens of Maine,
which include: information and
referral, advocacy, statewide registry,
and accessibility promotion.*

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