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# Maine-Lines: A Quarterly Newsletter for People who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing or Late-Deafened, Fall 2002

Maine Department of Labor

Maine Bureau of Rehabilitation Services

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

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**DIVISION OF DEAFNESS**

# MAINE-LINES

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

## Maine's Deaf Community Celebrates 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Deaf Culture Tea at the Blaine House By Alice Crandall Johnson

The 2002 Blaine House Tea was the largest ever, 96 members of Maine's Deaf Community, professionals and friends gathered to celebrate the kickoff of Deaf Culture Week 2002, September 22 through 28. The keynote speaker was Brenda Schertz, member of the Baxter Compensation Authority Board and instructor at the University of Southern Maine.



Brenda Schertz, Keynote Speaker

The title of her talk was "Deaf Culture; Why We Celebrate." Brenda's presentation was exciting and full of stories about the pride Deaf people have in their unique culture. She gave many examples of *things* Deaf Culture has given to the American culture. Did you know the football huddle and baseball signals were invented by Deaf people?

The Tea includes an awards ceremony. This year six individuals or agencies were honored by the Deaf Community and the Advisory Council to the Division of Deafness.



Nick Bloom, Media Award

The Media Award is given to a person or agency that expands the knowledge of ASL, Deaf Culture and Deaf People to the public. This year's recipient, Nick Bloom, former director of the Maine Festival, has exposed thousands of people to ASL by conscientiously hiring qualified sign language interpreters for all events for the Maine Festival and L.L. Bean's Summer Concert series. One of the individuals nominating Nick said "I go to the Maine Arts Festival annually and I see many performances and plays with interpreters. I feel like a regular person."



Community Counseling Center of Portland, Outstanding Advocate Award

Two awards were given for Outstanding Advocate for the Needs of the Deaf Community. First, Community Counseling Center of Portland.

Six years ago the Center hired Jana Harbaugh to counsel Deaf individuals with mental health issues in their native language, ASL. Since then, three more counselors skilled in ASL have been hired: Jennifer McCann, Shana Cohen, and Mike Dorsey. They go out of their way to ensure that barriers are removed and strive to help the Deaf Community.



Peter Martineau, Outstanding Advocate Award

An Advocate Award was also given to Peter Martineau of Freeport, a founding member of Safer Place. Peter was the first survivor of the abuse at Baxter School to stand up and say "I've had enough...something needs to be done." He is a leader in the Deaf Community because he is willing to speak with the media on many issues concerning the Deaf Community.



Stephan Bunker, Special Commendation Award

Special Commendation Awards are given to people or agencies that deserve recognition for their activities in and with the Deaf Community. Stephan M. Bunker, E9-1-1 Operations Manager, received this award for training more than 800 E9-1-1 dispatchers in Deaf Culture and TTY skills and active participation on the Emergencies Services Ad Hoc of the Advisory Council.



Goodwill Industries of Northern New England, Deaf Services Programs  
Special Commendation Award

The second Special Commendation went to Goodwill Industries of Northern New England, Deaf Services Programs, and was accepted by Kevin Bacck, Executive Director. Since 1985 Goodwill's, Deaf Services program has served Deaf people with additional disabilities. It started when the Caron St. home, an eight-bed residence for deaf people with mental health/mental retardation issues opened. Now, Goodwill has five programs serving more than 40 Deaf individuals **and** employs more Deaf staff than any other private, nonprofit agency or business in Maine. It has consistently modeled a language rich signing environment to other agencies.

**The Clifton F. Rodgers Award** is given by the Advisory Council of the Division of Deafness to an individual who deserves recognition for outstanding service in a professional or voluntary capacity to the Deaf and hard-of-hearing communities in Maine. This award is named for Clifton F. Rodgers, a life long resident of Maine and a member of the Advisory Council. His life work was to educate the people of Maine about the Deaf Community.



Tracey Frederick, Clifton F. Rodgers Award

Tracey Frederick was this year's recipient for over 20 years of dedication and hard work with Deaf individuals living with mental retardation. She is a strong advocate for the rights of Deaf individuals living with mental retardation.

She supports and helps to educate the staff and support personnel who work with Deaf consumers by working closely with them and teaching visual-gestural communication techniques. Tracey is also an interpreter in educational settings and community settings. The smiles from consumers' when she enters a room to visit or work with them really says it all.

## **BAXTER COMPENSATION AUTHORITY CLAIMS CONSULTANTS HIRED!**

The Baxter Compensation Authority (BCA) is open and accepting claims from former students of the Maine School for the Deaf and The Governor Baxter School for the Deaf (GBSD) who were physically and/or sexually abused at the schools.

The claims consultants will be meeting with former students all over the state to document their attendance at the schools and their stories of the abuse. When each claim is finished, the consultants will give it to the Compensation Panel who will decide if a person is eligible and how much compensation they will receive.

The BCA hopes to have the three-member panel set up by the end of this month.

Let's welcome the two claims consultants.



### **Echo Smith:**

Current: Live in Bath, ME with my fiancé, and two beautiful children.

Work history: Have worked in Mental Health since 1993 throughout the State of Maine. I have done crisis work, social work, and case management.

Involvement in the Deaf Community: Started taking American Sign Language classes in 1999 and “fell in love with” the community and language. In 2000 I was offered, and accepted, a job with Goodwill as a Program Manager for Community Support Deaf Services. This program assists people who are deaf and have a major mental illness. I also, in 2000, started to attend USM as a student of ASL interpreting. You can reach me at Tel: 287-6713 (V), 287-7165 (TTY). E-mail:

[Echo.Smith@state.me.us](mailto:Echo.Smith@state.me.us)



### **Jason Nichols:**

Hi, my name is Jason Nichols, new Claims Consultant of BCA. I am profoundly deaf and fluent in ASL. I graduated Gallaudet University in May 1999 with a Bachelor of Arts in Social Work.

I am strongly involved with the deaf community and helping all deaf and hard of hearing people's needs. I moved to Maine from Philadelphia, PA and I worked as Case Manager and HIV Prevention Outreach Educator for the Philadelphia deaf and hard-of-hearing community.

I have a strong background working with prenatal care, womens' health, HIV/AIDS, domestic violence, and children. I also supervised the staff with Deaf Senior Citizens at Valley View Assisted Living for the Deaf. I am looking forward to meeting you all and I am happy to be in this beautiful state. You can reach me at 287-7203 (TTY).

E-mail: [Jason.J.Nichols@state.me.us](mailto:Jason.J.Nichols@state.me.us)

**Baxter Compensation Authority (BCA)**  
69 Sewall Street, Augusta, ME 04330

John Shattuck, Program Director  
Mary Goodheart, Administrative Assistant  
Tel: 287-6712 (V); 287-6715 (TTY)  
Website: : <http://www.baxtercomp.org/>



## CAMP SIGN-A-WATHA 2002

By: Nancy Melanson



The official sign for camp 2002

Camp Sign-A-Watha--August 26-30, 2002--a camping experience for deaf or nonverbal adults with mental retardation.

Another year at camp, again I must say how wonderful and rewarding this experience was. Happy campers everywhere and the staff was there to cater to the happy campers.

There were many different ways to communicate: American Sign Language, Visual Gestural, etc., whatever it took to communicate.



Camper and Willie Tarr, staff, communicating

Staff worked together to provide the best care and fun for all campers. The staff helped campers to see their own potential to do whatever their heart desired.



Craft shop at camp, many campers enjoyed this activity daily

There were many activities to do at camp this year. Swimming, boating, and making crafts daily. Karl Anderson was the person in charge of crafts this year, and he did a fantastic job. Campers enjoyed making necklaces, fingerpainting, cutting, gluing, and coloring. There was something for everyone.



Campers and staff enjoying the swim/boat area

Katrina Day was in charge of the life guard activities. It was great, campers were able to swim and go boating. There was a motor boat this year and campers who wanted a ride were taken out. Many campers enjoyed the canoes under the watchful, kind eyes of Katrina and her fellow lifeguards.



Julie and Wendy, staff, getting ready for the traditional tye-dyeing T-shirts activity

Tuesday brought the long time favorite of tye-dyeing T-shirts. Wendy Gilbert and Sarena Jarvis worked with campers to create their spectacular designs. That night campers danced to the rhythm of the music.

What would camp be like without a campfire? Well we don't know because Camp Sign-A-Watha had theirs on Wednesday night. Sitting by the campfire enjoying everyone's company, true friends are made around camp fires.



A pie in the face for Jim Gardiner, staff person. Mmm that was good pie.

On Thursday a big Carnival came to camp. Campers enjoyed the "House of Bounce," cotton candy, a pie-throwing contest with Jim Gardiner as the target, bowling, dunking tank with Jim Howsare being dunked several times, and picture taking of the campers with a palm tree background.



Chris Tinsley, Staff coordinator

Jim Howsare and Julie Novack were directors of the camp this year and they did a wonderful job. Chris Tinsley and Peter Martineau were staff coordinators. They were the ones who made sure each camper had a staff person and that all staff got a break. All the volunteers and staff that gave their hearts and time were very much appreciated.

Now we can't forget to talk about the food. It was great this year! The chocolate brownies on Monday night were out of this world. We had Alyssa Gagnon as Head Chef and Jim Gardiner right beside her. There were many others who worked in the kitchen; forgive me for not mentioning them all.



Campers waiting for the next activity to begin

If you haven't been to camp, remember it happens every year and it is worth the trip. Volunteers are needed immensely every year and the experience is unforgettable. A big thank you to all the staff personnel who worked so hard on making camp this year such a fantastic success. There's nothing better than making other people smile.



Staff and camper having fun and smiles. Is that you Fred McKinley?

## Deaf Community has an Award Winning Poet Stephen A. Gagnon



Stephen Gagnon, Award Winning Poet

Hello Everyone, you might already recognize me, my name is Stephen Gagnon. I am a member of the Deaf community.



I graduated from the Governor Baxter School for the Deaf in 1974; and from St. Paul Technical College in 1977. I then attended Southern Maine Technical College.

I am married and my wife's name is Susan. I have 3 daughters and 2 grandsons. I worked at the Maine Youth Center in South Portland for 20 years. I retired recently from the Maine Youth Center. I'm presently attending the University of Southern Maine studying communication, with the goals of providing social services for the Deaf as my future employment.

In my spare time I enjoy writing poetry and some of my poetry has been published in a book called "Bending Light."

Below is my poem dedicated to September 11, 2001 and Deaf victims.

**We Shall Remember**  
**By: Stephen A. Gagnon**

**We shall remember those whom has perished during 9/11 for the innocence of heart is saddened,**

**America the beautiful was sung in the Capitol Hill with the grace of God from all faith by hand.**

**Oh! America still stands with the smoke and fire going out with songs of Patriotic flinging up the nerve. We will not forget you victims and loved ones but the tears that run down our faces. Put on an Patriotic heart and be bold for the battle is not finished and the terror is still at hand.**

**Oh! America what more can our prayers be referred to the Almighty God which all things are possible to see victory at hand.**

**Don't let the wrath of evil storm our freedom for our America flag still standing during battle with songs. We stand united together in hands that we shall remember our history.**

## **DID YOU KNOW?**

- ❖ **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.**
- ❖ **Division of Deafness is having a Contest!**  
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 welcomed, drawings, poetry, etc. If interested please send your entry into the Division of Deafness by January 15, 2003. Division of Deafness contact information is on the last page of this newsletter.
- ❖ **AA Meetings at St. Hyacinth's Church, 295 Brown Street, Westbrook are now interpreted on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto:place4safe@aol.com)**
- ❖ **The 2002 edition of *Resources A Guide to Services for People who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing* is now available. Call Nancy Melanson at (207) 624-5965 (TTY) or (207) 624-5963 (V) for a free copy.**
- ❖ **The next Division of Deafness Advisory Council Meeting is January 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, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Conference Room 2 in Augusta. Please call the Division of Deafness at the numbers on the last page for directions or information. This meeting is open to the public.

- ❖ **2002 TTY Directories** are now 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.

- ❖ **Equal Access Program**

As of January 1, 2002, the Division of Deafness began a program which 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 at the numbers on the last page to get an application or for more information.

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

**The New 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.

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 is accessible 24 hours/7 days a week. 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. It is with high hopes that the next TTY Directory 2002 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@state.me.us](mailto:Nancy.A.Melanson@state.me.us)

- ❖ **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/>

Maine Center on Deafness (MCD)  
<http://www.mainecenterondeafness.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.state.me.us/](http://www.state.me.us/)

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

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

Return Service Requested

**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 include: information and referral, advocacy, statewide registry, and accessibility promotion.

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624-5980 (FAX)

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