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Maine-Lines: A Quarterly Newsletter for People who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing or Late-Deafened, Fall 2001

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

Blaine House Tea A Great Success!

By Alice Crandall Johnson

The Deaf Community, friends and supporters celebrated the 10th annual Blaine House Tea on September 19, 2001. The Tea starts Maine's Deaf Culture Week activities, which ends with the Deaf Culture Festival at Governor Baxter School for the Deaf. This year, Elisa Boxer, Anchor/Reporter for WMTW Channel 8 News, presented the keynote address. Her speech was entitled "Weathering the Silent Storm: Lessons Learned Covering a Community of Survivors," and outlined her journey and education in reporting on Safer Place since 1999. Elisa received the Media Award last year for her sensitive reports on and about Safer Place.



Elisa Boxer, Keynote Speaker

Each year, individuals are honored for their contributions and activities with the Deaf Community. This year six awards were presented by the Deaf Community, and the Division of Deafness Advisory Council presented its annual Clifton F. Rodgers Awards for long-time service to the Deaf Community.

Media Award for Safer Place What is Safer Place? It is a safe haven for the Deaf victims and survivors to meet, share and make plans to improve services relating to the abuse suffered at Governor Baxter School and Portland School for the Deaf.

Maine-Lines Fall 2001

Media on ASL, Deaf Culture and Deaf People Award



G. Hinkley, C. Bolduc, R. Gorneau, G. Pelletier, P. Martineau, D. Boilard, Not Pictured, James Levier's sister.

Safer Place

Why are we giving the media award to a group of people? The survivors/victims have been the driving force in getting services and compensation established. These individuals came forward to tell their stories in newspapers and on television. This media coverage not only educated Maine's citizens, it also educated other survivors/victims that they were not alone, nor responsible for what happened to them. Safer Place made a positive impact on the Deaf Community. We are finally able to start the HEALING process. We are now looking forward to a stronger and healthier Deaf Community.

This year three awards were presented for Outstanding Advocate for Needs of the Deaf Community.

Mary Edgerton, Civil Rights Director at Maine Center on Deafness, received her award for "working tirelessly for the Deaf Community." Mary has been advocating for the rights of Deaf, hard of hearing and late-deafened individuals in Maine for over 10 years. This year, she received over 8 nominations for an individual award. In fact, she has been nominated almost every year.

(Continued on next page)

**Outstanding Advocate
Special Commendation
Clifton F. Rodgers
Awards**



M. Edgerton, M. Troop, R. Thompson, J. Moore

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Meryl's hard work has resulted in convincing the highways to install the TTYs at rest areas, providing interpreters at the State Capitol two days a week when the legislature is in session, addressing many concerns with local television stations regarding emergency alerts and weather captioning, and providing advocacy for individuals.

James Moore, the Assistant U.S. Attorney in Bangor, also received an award. He has worked on several ADA lawsuits defending the rights of Deaf and hard of hearing individuals. Most of his cases have involved the denial or lack of interpreting services to Deaf individuals in a medical setting. For example; Janet DeVinney and the United States of America V. Maine Medical Center and United States et al., V. York Obstetrics & Gynecology, P.A. Jim has attended the Deaf Advocacy Group and the Legal Justice Subcommittee meetings to champion the rights of Deaf and hard of hearing people.

Representative Charles LaVerdiere was given the third Advocate Award. As Chair of the Judiciary Committee, he was cited for his compassion for the survivor/victims of abuse at Governor Baxter School and Portland School for the Deaf and for his tireless work on the three bills related to services and compensation for them. He also made sure that people from the Deaf Community and interpreters were notified when the compensation bill came to the floor of the Maine Legislature, so they could witness the historic vote of 132 to 0 in favor of compensation.

Representative LaVerdiere was unable to attend the Blaine House Tea and received his award at the Division of Deafness Advisory Council's Annual meeting in October.

A Special Commendation Award was presented to former Representative Richard Thompson, who has been a great advocate and supporter of former students who were abused at GBSD and Portland School for the Deaf.

Representative Thompson vigorously educated legislators and the public about "institutional abuse" when he served as chair of the Judiciary Committee. As a legislator, he championed Safer Place's efforts to improve services and to ensure cooperation of state agencies in preventing abuse and discrimination. He deserves to be recognized and applauded for being a key player in the passage of the compensation plan. He worked closely with the Judiciary Committee from the sidelines after he left the Legislature.

The Clifton F. Rodgers Award is presented by the Division of Deafness' Advisory Council to an individual who has served the Deaf Community for many years. This year's recipient was Meryl Troop, Director, Office of Deaf Services, Department of Behavioral and Developmental Services (BDS), formerly DMHMRSAS.

Meryl established Annual Conferences on Deafness and Mental Health to educate on the needs and rights of Deaf individuals with Mental Illness. She was active in establishing services for Maine's Deaf individuals with mental retardation, including a week-long summer camp, Camp Sign-A-Watha.

Meryl has also worked to improve the quality and quantity of interpreters in the State of Maine by advocating for Licensure, setting up workshops for mental health interpreting and working with Maine's Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (MeRID). When Meryl began this effort, there were no ASL-fluent mental health counselors in the state; now we have five positions funded by BDS.

She has worked with Safer Place since its beginning in 1998, and even before there was a group she listened to stories, provided support and set-up services for survivors.

She has done a tremendous amount of work for and with the Deaf Community.



Growing from 12 campers nine years ago to 50 (and as many helpers!), the annual group photo is a treasured tradition.

Camp Sign-a-Watha Experience

By Nancy Melanson

Photos by Meryl Troop

Camp Sign-a-Watha-- August 27 - 31, 2001--a camping experience for deaf adults with mental retardation.

Camp Sign-a-Watha was an experience of a lifetime for me.

Hard work, MOST definitely, but unbelievable REWARDS. Rewards not just for the campers, rewards for everyone who was there. Everyone seemed incredibly happy and content.

There were many different types of communication at camp, visual gestural, American Sign Language and whatever it took to communicate.



Picture bingo in the dining hall, with campers Tammy, Robert and Duane.

Every activity was loved and appreciated by campers and staff. Some campers experienced swimming, boating and fishing for the first time. Some campers only experience these activities at camp once a year.

Most campers enjoyed the craft shop. There were some beautiful creations happening in the shop. Finger painting, gluing, cutting, coloring, and placing different shapes and textures all over picture frames. Vanessa Kalter-Long did a wonderful job guiding the campers with their crafting activities.

Tie-dyeing t-shirts, line dancing, DJ night and visiting day were all huge successes for everyone. On Monday, campers tie-dyed their own t-shirts, and the results were beautiful. Campers and staff had a BLAST learning and practicing country line dancing on Tuesday night. Wednesday night we enjoyed the DJ and his music. The campers loved the music and the beat. Visiting day was on Thursday and it was great. Lots of people showed up, including old staff who visited campers and new staff. There was a juggler for entertainment and campers enjoyed sparklers instead of the campfire because of the high fire danger. Mike Cousins had taken wonderful pictures of all the different activities over the week, and he presented a slide show Thursday night, after a staff appreciation party with pizza and cake. Friday was the day to return home for all. Campers moved out by 11:30 A.M. and all campers left happy.

(Continued on next page)

Staff worked together to provide the best care and fun for all campers. One staff member to one camper was the norm. Staff members were patient, kind and wonderful to their campers. The staff helped campers to see their own potential to do whatever their heart desired. Nothing was impossible at camp. Everything was positive. This camping experience was the campers own. This was their vacation. Staffers respected that and made campers Kings and Queens for the week.



Reconnecting with friends from previous years at camp is part of the fun. Pictured: Robert Knox and Laurel Keith.

Tracey Frederick and Elinor Brown from Maine Center on Deafness did a wonderful job planning camp this year. There were many people that made Camp Sign-a-Watha successful. All the volunteers who gave their hearts and time were very much appreciated.



Butch and Robert check the sports and world news from the porch dining hall.

Everyone should go to Camp Sign-a-Watha just to experience the joy of making other peoples' lives a little better. You actually realize while you are there that your life changes and becomes more special because of the wonderful people you meet and the lasting friendships you helped form.

Deaf Culture Festival at GBSD

Written and Photos by William H. Nye



William Carwile performed mime acts against a colorful background of a giant waving US flag and streaming white stars which heightened the patriotic spirit at the festival.

The 12th annual Deaf Culture Festival was staged at Mackworth Island on Friday and Saturday, September 28 and 29. More than 400 attendees enjoyed a variety of activities, slide presentations on the Portland School for the Deaf and Governor Baxter School for the Deaf (GBSD), a dinner program with Mary Martone, the new GBSD principal as the featured speaker, presentations, a food bazaar, a morning membership meeting of the Maine Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc., hayrides, face painting, vendor exhibits and a timberfest demonstration. There was also a moment of silence in remembrance of the victims from the terrorist attacks, on September 11, 2001, followed by donations to the New York City Fire Department.



James Snow, a Sebago Fire Department volunteer, accepted a basket of donations in the amount of \$182.49 from William Carwile for the New York City Fire Department and victims of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.



Dr. Romy Spitz and Dr. Judy Shepard-Kegl from the University of Southern Maine shared the highlights of their research on getting involved early in the life of a deaf child.

The main festival area featured two speakers, Anselmo Aleman and Daphny Chang from Nicaragua, who presented in Nicaraguan Sign Language and were ably aided by four translators and interpreters. Anselmo, a classroom teacher, demonstrated the native language and its literature. Daphny, a teacher aide, described what it was like to be a student in a school with all deaf teachers. Another outstanding presentation by Dr. Romy Spitz and Dr. Judy Shepard-Kegl focused on their research on the importance of getting language exposure early in the life of a deaf child. William Carwile, a nationally-known performer, captured the audience with his mime acts on the stage and roved and entertained among the crowd during the day. The festival ended with an outdoor demonstration of timberfest skills by members of the Maine Recreation Association of the Deaf.



Gail Strattard performed face painting on the cheek of a deaf child while her mother looked on.

The CareerCenters in Maine

By Rod MacInnes

A few years ago, Maine residents would go to the Maine Job Service Centers or Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to look for jobs. At the Maine Job Service you might have looked at the microfilm to find out about available jobs in your community. Now all this has changed. There are now 23 CareerCenters throughout the state. Vocational Rehabilitation counselors work at many of the CareerCenters. Computers have replaced the microfilm machines. For the phone number of the CareerCenter nearest you, call 1-800-794-1110 TTY.

At the CareerCenter, you can do many different things, including:

- a) Making your own resume. (Press the WINWAY icon.)
- b) Matching your interests and skills to available jobs in your community. (Press the CAREERCENTER SELF SERVICE icon.)
- c) Finding out your skills, interests and aptitude for various jobs. (Press CHOICE CT or CAREERSCOPE.)
- d) Finding out about available scholarships for colleges. (Press the CHOICE CT icon.)
- e) Attending job-related workshops and seminars with interpreters. (Be sure to ask for an interpreter at the CareerCenter information desk.)
- f) Getting funding to pay for child care and travel expenses while you are at job training.
- g) Using the library to gather information about the labor market, computers, etc.
- h) Access to a TTY, FAX and copier for mailing resumes, making contacts with businesses, etc.
- i) Accessing America's Job Bank or ONET on-line for jobs.

The CareerCenter staff and the Vocational Rehabilitation counselor in your area can help you access these services. If you have questions, please contact Rod MacInnes, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (207- 286-2615 TTY or rod.macinnes@state.me.us).

Did you know?

- ❖ **AA Meetings at St. Hyacinth's Church, 295 Brown Street, Westbrook, are now interpreted on Wednesday evenings starting at 7 P.M. for one hour.**

- ❖ **JOB ANNOUNCEMENT**

Maine Center on Deafness

Telecommunication Equipment Project

Needs Peer Representatives

\$12.00 per hour plus mileage

A few hours a week/month

The Telecommunication Equipment Project (TEP) has been in operation at Maine Center on Deafness since December 1999. It was created by the passage of L.D. 2266 in 1998, and is funded by the Maine Legislature and the Telephone Association of Maine (TAM). TEP distributes phone equipment like TTYs, Voice Carryover (VCO) phones, amplified phones, hands free phones, and signalers to the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Late Deafened, Deafblind, and people with mobility, speech, and vision disabilities. Peer Representatives are needed to train customers how to use the equipment. When hired, we will provide the training for peer representatives.

If interested, please contact Diane McGinley at:

Maine Center on Deafness

Telecommunication Equipment Project

68 Bishop Street, Suite 3

Portland, ME 04103-2616

(207) 797-7656 V/TTY

(800) 639-3884 V/TTY

(207) 797-9791 Fax

mcdtty@maine.rr.com E-Mail

- ❖ The 2001 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 **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/

- ❖ **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 **2001 TTY Directory** is available through Maine Center on Deafness
(207) 797-7656 V/TTY or
(800) 639-3884 V/TTY
- ❖ The next **Division of Deafness Advisory Council Meeting** is **January 10, 2002**. The meeting starts at 6:15 P.M. and ends at 9:00 P.M. It is held at 2 Anthony Avenue, 2nd floor, Conference Room #2 in Augusta. Open to the public.
- ❖ **HOOKED INTO ABILENE INTERNET2 NETWORK**
The Abilene Network, originally confined to universities, has opened up to schools on the K-12 level. Two schools have signed on - Rhode Island School for the Deaf and the Governor Baxter School for the Deaf in Maine.

The Abilene Network, better known as Internet2, allows better video-conferencing.
Reprint *Deaf Digest* 10-14-01
- ❖ **New Law In Effect May, 2001**
An Act to Reduce Noise Pollution
It is now illegal to turn your car radio up. If the radio is above 85 decibels on a public road, and can be heard from 25 feet away, then it is against the law. If you are near buildings and the building or windows in the building shake or are rattled by the sound of the radio, it's illegal.

❖ **Equal Access Program: Public Law 377**

As of January 1, 2002, the Division of Deafness will begin a program which provides a 70% 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 after 1/1/2002 to sign up for the program.

❖ **Sad News**

Philip Staples, Jr. died in Florida October 2001 after a valiant battle with kidney disease. Phil worked as an intern with the Division of Deafness in 1988 and 1989, and later served as a Rehabilitation Counselor for the Deaf in the Rockland Office. He moved to Florida about 8 years ago. His father, Philip Staples, Sr. and his sister Carolyn Fairservice still live in Maine.

❖ **A SHHH (Self Help for Hard of Hearing People) group in Southern Maine.**
Hilary Liscomb is the Coordinator for the group. They will be meeting every 3rd Tuesday, 7 to 9 P.M. at the Dana Center at Maine Medical Center. C.A.R.T. will be provided so all can "hear".

❖ **NEW Web Sites**
MCD

<http://www.mainecenterondeafness.org/>

ADOP - Advocates for Deaf Oral Programs

<http://www.adop.org/>

DeafBlind information

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

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

The State Police TTY numbers are: Augusta 287-4478, Houlton 532-7576, Orono 866-5805, Gray 657-5740.

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

There will be a toll free number available in the near future. There is a possibility that when your call is answered the greeting maybe "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) has an informational TTY number you can call. The number is 626-4434, but this number is not accessible 24 hours/7 days a week. If you do not get an answer, please leave a message and they will return your call as soon as possible.

The Department of Labor Division of Deafness is currently working with Maine Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) to get 24 hour/7 days a week access to this TTY line.

❖ **If we can't find you, we can't help you!**
Please post your 9-1-1 address!

1) People should post their 9-1-1 address using the following guidelines: Always post the number on your home. Posted numbers need to be a **minimum of four inches high** and a **contrasting color** to the background. Reflective materials also improve visibility.

2) If your home is visible from the road, post the number on the mailbox and the house. If the house is not visible from the road and the mailbox is not beside the driveway, post the number on the mailbox and put up a sign or number post at the entrance of the driveway leading to the property.

3) If property owners use post office boxes for mail, they must still post their **9-1-1 addresses**.

4) Post the 9-1-1 address and directions by a telephone for easy emergency reference.

For more information contact:

<http://www.maine911.com/>

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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Division of Deafness
150 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0150
Tel: 624-5964 (TTY only)
E-mail: Jan.A.DeVinney@state.me.us

Mary Goodheart, Staff
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624-5954 (V)
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.*