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

Maine Department of Labor

Maine Bureau of Rehabilitation Services

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

Nancy Melanson

Maine Department of Labor, Nancy.A.Melanson@Maine.gov

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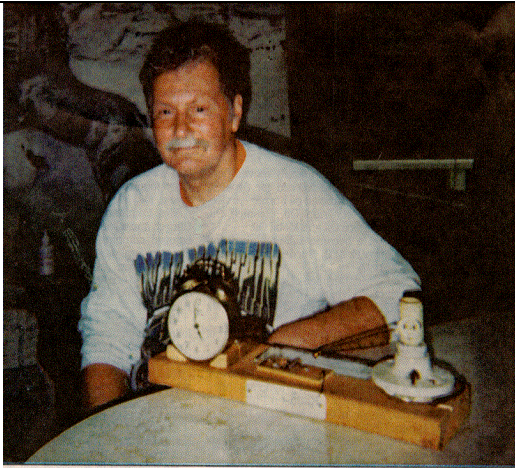
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DIVISION OF DEAFNESS

MAINE-LINES

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



James Levier with one of his inventions, alarm clock for Deaf people that lights up.

James Levier was a member of Maine's Deaf Community for 60 years. He was an artist, a father, a grandfather, a gardener, a friend, and most recently, a vocal advocate for students who suffered abuse at The Maine School for the Deaf and Governor Baxter School for the Deaf (GBSD). James had been abused while a student at the Portland school and GBSD prior to 1957.

James wanted to make sure that no child at GBSD would suffer as he did as a student. He was active in Safer Place, a coalition of former Baxter students and professionals working together to provide services, compensation and to heal the wounds of past abuse. James was the first to testify in front of the Judiciary Committee in April 1999 and also testified at the GBSD School Board about the abuse he suffered and how it has affected his entire life. "It damaged my life for good all the experiences I've had." Before his death, on March 16, 2001, James wrote messages on his house and his van. One message was "I Give my life to free Deaf people."

In Memoriam James Levier 1941 - 2001

Gone Home

*Though gone from sight...
Yet devour in your heart...*

*Absent in body...
his spirit always stay
among us...*

He already gone home...

by Jimmy Challis Gore

As reported in the March 18, 2001 *Maine Sunday Telegram*, "According to witnesses and police, Levier emerged from a van in the crowded parking lot at Shop 'n Save Plaza at 3 p.m. Friday and immediately began to march back and forth, pointing a hunting rifle in the air.

After an hour, just as an interpreter was to begin negotiating, Levier leveled the rifle in the direction of the police, who responded by firing five shots into Levier's chest and stomach"

The Governor issued an apology on behalf of state government to people who experienced abuse while students at the GBSD. Also, Governor King signed the bill to continue counseling services to

victims/survivors and the bills for the Compensation Program and funding were included with the budget and signed on June 21, 2001.

The death of James Levier shows the need to develop protocols for emergencies involving people who are Deaf.



Sen. Sharon Treat, Meryl Troop, Peter Martineau, Claude Bolduc, Gov. King, Gary Hinkley, Raymond Gorneau, Roxanne Baker, Jan DeVinney, J. Connick, Sara Treat

GOVERNOR'S MEETING

On May 1, 2001, Senator Sharon Treat, Jan DeVinney, Director of the Division of Deafness, and members of Safer Place met with Governor King. The meeting was very positive with the Governor expressing his support for the three bills related to compensation and continuation of services.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

"The Baxter Bills"

L.D. 178 - An Act to Implement the Continuation of Service Recommendations of the Committee to Develop a Compensation Program for Victims of Abuse at the Governor Baxter School for the Deaf

Signed by Governor King, May 2, 2001.
Private & Special Law Chapter 12

Compensation Program

The legislature approved both bills: **L.D. 271 - An Act to Establish the Baxter Compensation Program** and **L.D. 293 - An Act to Implement the Funding Recommendations of the Committee to Develop a Compensation Program for Victims of Abuse at the Governor Baxter School for the Deaf** by including the funding in the Part II budget. Governor King signed the budget on June 21, 2001. The \$5,000,000 for **L.D. 293** is divided over two years.

L.D. 1162 - An Act to Ensure Telecommunications Protections for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing People
Signed by Governor King, June 8, 2001. Public Law Chapter 377

L.D. 1581 - An Act to Allow the Department of Human Services Abuse and Neglect Investigators Access to Certain Baxter School for the Deaf Records
Signed by Governor King, May 25, 2001.
Public Law Chapter 265

E-911

L.D. 1467 - An Act to Facilitate the Implementation of the Enhanced 9-1-1 Emergency System
This funding was also included in the Part II budget. Signed by Governor King, June 22, 2001. The implementation of Enhanced -911 should be completed in mid-September 2001.

70% Reduction on TTY Wireless Communications

WHO IS NEW?



**Nancy Melanson,
Assistant to the
Director of the
Division of Deafness**

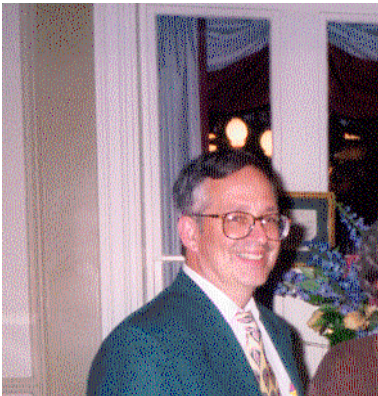
Hello, my name is Nancy Melanson and I'm Jan DeVinney's new assistant at the Division of Deafness. I

have worked in state government for 12 years at various agencies in the administrative field. My last job was with the Department of Agriculture in Augusta.

I have successfully completed American Sign Language classes I-V, Deaf History and Deaf Culture at the Governor Baxter School for the Deaf. I also instruct CPR/First Aid classes on a regular basis. I live in Augusta with my 2 children and enjoy outdoor activities.

I'll be: Updating the Resource Guide, TTY and Deaf Awareness trainings for state departments, state agencies TTY compliance calls, editing the *Maine Lines* for the Deaf newsletter and any other projects that Jan may need assistance on.

I'm looking forward to working with you and can be reached at 624-5963, 624-5964 (TTY) and 624-5980 (FAX). E-mail: Nancy.A.Melanson@state.me.us



**Rod MacInnes,
Rehabilitation
Counselor for the
Deaf**

I am using my extensive educational and vocational background in my job

as a VR counselor in the Portland/Saco area. I graduated from Clarke School for the Deaf in 1959. I majored in zoology and fishery biology when pursuing B.S. and M.S. degrees at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst.

After nine years working as a marine pollution researcher, I changed careers to rehabilitation and obtained a M.A.

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in Deafness Rehabilitation at New York University in 1987. I became a case manager of a mental health residential facility, and then became a supported employment specialist for three years at Motivational Services. I also tried my hand in teaching science at Governor Baxter School for the Deaf, before working as a Maine Relay Service educator, and Telecommunications Equipment Project director at the Maine Center on Deafness.

I am married to a hearing woman, named Joan.

My interests are reading and developing pictorial books for nonreaders.

My contact information: 286-2615 (TTY) and 286-2608 (FAX). E-mail: rod.macinnes@state.me.us



**Kelley MacKenzie,
Rehabilitation
Counselor for the
Deaf**

I grew up in Connecticut and did an internship in high school at the New York School for the Deaf. I moved to Maine to

attend the University of Maine at Farmington and received my bachelor's degree in rehabilitation in 1999 from UMF. I created my own deaf studies concentration there.

I went on to complete my master's degree in rehabilitation for the deaf from the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. While searching for an internship back in the "North Country," I encountered Jan DeVinney who referred me to the position of RCD at the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation in Lewiston...the rest is history!

I love my job here and really look forward to working with everyone in the years to come. Outside of work I enjoy going out with friends, art, poetry, pets, singing, and reading.

My contact information: 753-9060 (TTY) 753-9055 (V) and 753-9051 (FAX). E-mail: Kelley.E.MacKenzie@state.me.us

DID YOU KNOW ??

- ❖ The 2001 edition of the **Resources A Guide to Services for People Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing** is now available. Call Nancy Melanson at 624-5965 (TTY) or 624-5963 (V) for a free copy.
- ❖ **Diane McGinley** has replaced David Good as the **Director of Telecommunications Equipment Program at Maine Center on Deafness**. David and his wife moved to Massachusetts to be closer to family as they are expecting their first child. The TEP has a loan and cost share program for special phone equipment (TTYs, VCO phones, amplifiers, signalers, etc.). Contact Diane at MCD. 1-800-639-3884 (V/TTY), Portland area: 797-7656 (V/TTY).
E-mail: mcdtty@maine.rr.com
- ❖ The **new TTY Directory** is coming out soon. Get any new numbers or changes to Susan Graesser at Maine Center on Deafness as soon as possible. There is a form for changes in the 2000 TTY Directory or fax the changes to Susan at 797-9791.
- ❖ **Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)**: A fellowship of men and women who share experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking.

National Resources: U.S. website for Alcoholics Anonymous Resources for Deaf and Hard of Hearing AA 12 Step Recovery Resources. Web site:

<http://www.dhh12s.com>

E-mailto: info@dhh12s.com

AA Online E-mail Group Sounds of Sobriety (SOS) An AA group for Deaf, deafened, and hard of hearing. To contact the SOS AA online e-mail group go to:

http://www.egroups.com/community/SOS_online_group.

E-mail SOS Moderator:

SNA@sympatico.ca

SOS FLYER:

<http://www.dhh12s.com/sos.htm>

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- ❖ **13th Annual Conference of the Association of Late-Deafened Adults, Inc. (ALDA, Inc.)** **October 31 – November 4, 2001, at the Hyatt Regency in Newport, Rhode Island.** Since ALDA's inception in 1987, the organization has taken pride in serving the needs of people who lose their hearing after acquiring a spoken language. All workshops and social events at the Hyatt Regency will be interpreted in sign language and captioned in real-time. At ALDAcon 2001, you will find a supportive forum for sharing stories, feelings, and coping strategies. Conference participants include people at varied stages of hearing loss, their families and friends, as well as professionals working in related fields. No matter how deafness touches your life, the conference will be an occasion to meet others with similar experiences and gather information about improving the quality of late deafened life. website: www.alda.com
- ❖ **Safer Place:** Were you physically abused (slapped, pushed or 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:** 892-6814 (V/TTY) 892-6602 (FAX) or
E-mail: place4safe@aol.com
- ❖ The next **Division of Deafness Advisory Council Meeting** is **October 11, 2001**. 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.

- ❖ Social Security's "Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act" passed in 1999. With this program, you can work without worrying about losing your health insurance or if things don't work out at your new job, you can return to SSI or SSDI without problems or a waiting period. Benefits will be restored, no medical evaluations or reviews. To find out how employment will affect your benefits or health coverage, call the Social Security Office at 1-800-325-0778 (TTY/V) between 7 A.M. and 7 P.M. Monday through Friday or visit their web site at: <http://www.ssa.gov/work/>
- ❖ The State of Maine has a web home page that can take you through all the different State Agencies. The Web Site is: www.state.me.us/
- ❖ The Department of Human Services, Bureau of Elder and Adult Services (BEAS) has a contract with Elder Independence of Maine (EIM). EIM is a statewide home-care service. The following programs are available: Home Based Care (HBC), Medicaid Waiver for Home and Community Based Care (MW), Adults with Disability (AWD) and Private Duty Nursing (PDN). Their mission is to provide timely, cost effective and quality home-care services. They are a statewide resource for support to keep independence. The staff consists of skilled nurses and social workers committed to helping people. For more information, call Toll Free 1-888-234-3920 (V), (207) 795-7244 (TTY) or (207)-795-4009 (FAX). Bangor area call Toll Free 1-866-456-2322 (V), (207) 990-2401 (FAX)
- ❖ Correction from last newsletter: The toll free number for Julie Hebert, Alpha One is 1-866-906-5375.

ABILITY *first* GRANT:

Ability *first* is a federally funded grant program started in November of 2000, designed to reach people who are interested in learning new skills, and returning to work without losing their benefits (SSI, SSDI, Medicaid).

Ability *first* is sponsoring computer training in American Sign Language (ASL) to Deaf individuals at the Training Resource Center in Portland and soon in Rockland. **These classes are FREE for anyone who uses ASL and lives in one of these six counties: York, Cumberland, Sagadahoc, Lincoln, Knox, or Waldo.**

Hard-of-Hearing people who do not use ASL can also take advantage of Ability *first* classes in English by using FM loop technology, which is a small transmitter/receiver device provided at the class. The classes are for anyone who wants to improve or "learn from the beginning" computer skills.

Classes are taught by, John Dunleavy, a Deaf man skilled in ASL and Deaf culture, computers and technology. John spends two weeks every month in Maine providing instruction in Microsoft Office Suite applications and outreach to the regional Deaf Community.

Students attend half-day sessions in training and have access to the CareerCenter's computer labs for practice, with John available to answer questions.

For more information, or to register for classes, the TTY number is (207) 775-2777, 1-877-594-5627 (Toll-Free) or (207) 771-5627 (V) and the E-mail address is: classes@trcme.com

JOB OPPORTUNITY!

John Dunleavy, the **Ability *first*** computer teacher who is Deaf, is looking for another teacher to work with him. Applicants must know American Sign Language and have excellent computer skills. For information about the job, contact John at (207) 775-2777 (TTY) or E-mail: classes@trcme.com

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

Return Service Requested

Bureau of Rehabilitation Services

John Shattuck, 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.

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

Nancy Melanson
Assistant to the Director
Tel: 624-5965 (TTY)
624-5963 (V)
E-mail: Nancy.A.Melanson@state.me.us

Mary Goodheart, Staff
Tel: 624-5955 (TTY)
624-5954 (V)
624-5980 (FAX)
1-800-698-4440 TTY/V (within Maine only)
E-mail: Mary.E.Goodheart@state.me.us

Alice Crandall Johnson
Rehabilitation Consultant
Tel: 624-5965 (TTY)
624-5966 (V)
E-mail:
Alice.C.Johnson@state.me.us

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