

ASL NEWS

Volume 12, Issue 1

Fall 2010

Back to School Time

It's that time of year when students of all ages head back to the classroom. Whether you are with us in person or in spirit, we wish you a great fall season.

Here is what's been happening since the last newsletter. During the spring, Peralta's Board of Trustees decided not to renew the contract of chancellor Elihu Harris. When it expired June 30, he was replaced by Wise Allen who will serve until a permanent chancellor is selected. Prior to this appointment, Allen was the interim vice chancellor of educational services at the Peralta district office. During his long career with Peralta, Allen has worked at every campus. The board has



engaged an executive search firm to assist in the process of selecting a new chancellor.

The build-out of Berkeley City College's 4th floor east wing and 3rd floor west wing are complete. The 3rd floor

hosts new EOPS/CalWORKs, PACE, and student services offices as well as the college's new Teaching/Learning Center. The 4th floor east, which once largely housed store rooms and unfinished shells, now is home to several multi-purpose classrooms and a small stor-

continued on page 11

Inside This Issue

Rick Weaver	1
Events & Announcements	2
Wanna Get an "A"?	4
Books for Deaf Children and Teens	5
IRS Information in ASL	9

Officer Rick Weaver's ASL Skills Bridge Deaf, Hearing Communities

By Shirley Fogarino, BCC Public Information Officer

Rick Weaver's American Sign Language classes at Berkeley City College forever changed the way he approaches work as a California Highway Patrol officer. Assigned to Solano County, Weaver often is called on to help communicate with Deaf drivers, passengers, colleagues and investigators. As part of his job, he also serves as Solano County's School Bus Safety Officer, teaches drivers to communicate with Deaf students, and provides safety presentations for Deaf riders.

"A couple of Deaf friends encouraged me to take ASL classes through Vista*" Weaver recalls. "I had only intended to take a couple of courses, then became friends with Karen Carruthers and Ken Mikos, two of our teachers. They encouraged me to enroll in more classes to build an in-depth understanding of Deaf culture."

As he studied ASL, Weaver found that Solano County's highway patrol desperately needed someone who could sign. His knowledge of the Deaf community, its language and culture, lead the CHP officer to be the primary communicator at automobile collisions, investigations and academy graduations, and in other professional and social situations. In 2008, the CHP presented Weaver with a Disabled Awareness Award.

Weaver recalled one instance when a Deaf motorist was life-flighted to John Muir Hospital after a serious

continued on page 2

Events & Announcements

Three Free Places to Park Your Bicycle in Downtown Berkeley.

1. BCC Bike Room. Enter the building through the main doors and take the elevator on your left down to the ground floor. Do not bring bikes up or down on the stairs. 2. Across the street from BCC at the City Garage. **Also FREE vehicle parking for people with disabilities available here.** 3. At the Downtown Berkeley Bike Station at 2208 Shattuck Avenue, just beyond the intersection of Shattuck and Allston Way. (510) 548-7433 or www.bikestation.org.

Information about local Deaf events is available at DCARA's web site, www.dcara.org and click on "events". One-time and on-going events are listed as well as a captioned movie finder.

Monthly Pizza Night. 1st Thursday of every month at Pizza Patio in Fremont. Starts at 6 pm. For more info contact Mitchel at either whazzzzup17@aol.com or whazzzzup17@tmail.com. Open to Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and ASL students.

ASL COFFEE SOCIALS

Berkeley. 2nd Friday of the month, 7-10 pm. Royal Grounds Coffee & Tea, 2409 Shattuck Avenue. For more info contact Daniel at pah_daniel@aol.com or Pam at pmbrawl@aol.com.

Dublin. 3rd Friday night of the month. 3 of their baristas sign. Starbucks, 7197 Village Pkwy., corner of Village Pkwy. & Amador Valley Blvd. www.deafcoffee.com/html/california/dublin.html

San Francisco #1. 1st & 3rd Fridays of the month, 6:05-9:05 pm. Starbucks at 2727 Mariposa Street, near KQED. For more information: sanfransclub@gmail.com.

San Francisco #2. Every Thursday 6-8:30 pm. ASL Cafe by Project Insight. Moscone Recreation Center, 1800 Chestnut Street. For more information, including changes, cancellations, moves, etc.: contactpi@sfgov.org or www.projectinsight.org.

San Francisco #3. Deaf LGBT. 1st Friday of the month, 6-8 pm. Cafe Flore, 2298 Market Street, San Francisco (across from LookOut). For more information go to <http://r1sdbayarea.googlepages.com/calendar>. All hearing and deaf LGBTIQ and straight folks are welcome.

Santa Clara. 3rd Friday of the month, 8:30-11:30 pm. Starbucks at 3605 El Camino Real. For more information: michelyn85@aol.com.

Santa Rosa. Meets every Sunday at 10 am at Aroma

continued on page 3

Weaver continued from page 1

auto accident. He was not able to answer any of the paramedics or officers' questions. Weaver was quickly summoned.

"He was afraid and the doctors or the officers couldn't understand where his pain was," Weaver remembers. "He also wanted to let them know about medications and I helped him communicate so that he could ease his mind and allow people to understand him."



Officer Rick Weaver of the California Highway Patrol is featured in the CHP's "Making a Difference" campaign. Weaver continually uses the ASL skills he learned at Berkeley City College on his job.

Photo by Suzanne Cancilla-Fox, Peralta Community College District

Signing Naturally, BCC's American Sign Language curriculum, was developed in the mid-1980s by instructors Ella Lentz and Ken Mikos (both retired) and Cheri Smith at Vista Community College, BCC's predecessor. All are native signers, that is, either Deaf or children of Deaf parents who learned ASL as their first language and English as their second. Their work is adapted and used throughout the U.S. and internationally. It is considered the gold standard of ASL instruction.

"I would drive for an hour from Vacaville after a full day's work and always look forward to class," he remembers. "Everyone was impressed with the instructors' professionalism and passion for the language and culture. It's also the only place I knew where the faculty was Deaf."

From the moment students step into class, they become part of a Deaf community. It means cultural immersion from day one, with only signing and writing allowed. No vocalizing is an iron-clad rule

continued on page 3

Events continued from page 2

Roasters at Railroad Square on 4th Street.

Vallejo. 1st Wednesday of the month, 7-11 pm. Starbucks at 400 Lincoln Road East. Contact: tatobud@sbcglobal.net

ASL MEETUP GROUPS

Berkeley. www.meetup.com/Berkeley-ASL-Meetup/

San Francisco. 2nd Friday of the month, sometimes more often. Various locations (usually close to BART). <http://asl.meetup.com/294/>

Tri-Valley. 1st Friday of the month. Meeting locations will be changing each month. <http://asl.meetup.com/tri-valley-asl-group/>

Vallejo Bible Church of the Deaf. Sunday services at 10:45 am and Bible study 2nd & 4th Fridays of the month at 7:30 pm. 448 Carolina Street, Vallejo. For more information: vallejodeafchurch@yahoo.com.

Hands On Travel tours. Small group tours in ASL. 2011: England, Wales & Scotland in June, Portugal & Spain in October, and Italy in October-November. 2012: Italy in March-April, Japan in April-May, Spain in May-June, Russia in September, Germany in Sept-October and France in October. For more information and a listing of all tours go to www.handsontvl.com

Family Connection Program's Club Saturday. September 25, October 23 & December 18, 9 am to 12 noon. To promote family bonding time, ASL conversational skill development, Deaf culture awareness, socialization skills, and FUN! For deaf and hearing parents with deaf, hard-of-hearing, and late deafened children. Hearing siblings welcome and hearing children of deaf parents. Grandparents and friends also welcome. Activities include ASL games, special guest speakers, parent forums, ASL storytellers and more. Deaf Community Center (DCC), 1550 San Leandro Blvd., San Leandro. Cost: children under 12 are free, others \$5/person. Refreshments will be provided. Information: Deborah O'Willow at (510) 343-6671 VP or deborah.owillow@dcara.org.

Film: Black Sand. September 10 at 7pm & Sept 11 at 1 pm with subtitles; Sept 11 at 7 pm no subtitles. California School for the Deaf, 39350 Gallaudet Drive, Fremont, Little Theatre. \$11 admission. Tickets sold at the Outreach Division, cottage 18 or at the door, if available. Info: Cheryl at cboyd@cddf-cde.ca.gov or VP (510) 344-6076 or Virginia at voice (510) 794-3707.

Sign and Dine. September 10 & October 8, 6-8 pm. Opportu-

continued on page 4

Weaver continued from page 2

for all.

"Even on our breaks, we signed," Weaver says. "We were required to experience the culture outside the classroom by attending plays and by involving ourselves in the Deaf community."

As part of their evaluations, Weaver and his classmates had no choice but to sign because the entire ASL faculty is Deaf. There was no tolerance for slackers.

Members of the Deaf community do not consider themselves disabled. Rather, they are part of a culture with its own language, traditions, and history. Weaver learned to see ASL, the third most used language in the United States, as an integral part of that world. ASL is accepted as a linguistics or language elective at many American universities.

"Most people don't know that it was a Deaf baseball catcher who brought many of the signs and signals now used in the sport," Weaver notes. "It is a rich heritage with plays, arts and a literature which has volumes of heart-wrenching stories."

"When I retire from CHP, I want to go into advanced interpreter training," he says.

I love the language and the culture."

**Vista Community College was renamed Berkeley City College in June 2006.*



BCC Library Fall 2010 Hours

Monday-Thursday
8:30 am-7:30 pm

Friday 8:30 am-4:00 pm

Closed on weekends

Open August 23-December 17

Events continued from page 3

nity to practice ASL in a relaxed atmosphere. Finger foods provided. Beginner through advanced signers welcome. Deaf Community Center (DCC), 1550 San Leandro Blvd., San Leandro. Admission \$5; \$1 per child under 14; Information: Linda Drattell at linda.drattell@dcara.org or 510-343-6678 VP.

Intertribal Deaf Council: Sacred Circle Celebration. September 15-18. Chinook Winds, Lincoln City, Oregon. www.deafnative.com

Deaf Awareness Week. September 19-25. This celebration is held annually in the last full week of September in the U.S. Look for tons of activities and events during that week as well as the rest of the month.

International Week of the Deaf. September 21-27. Celebration held annually in the 4th week of September to recognize achievements and concerns of Deaf communities around the world. The World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) is the sponsor. For more information: WFD, P.O. Box 65, FIN-00401, Helsinki, Finland or info@wfdeaf.org, www.wfdeaf.org.

Heritage Hall of Fame Ceremony. September 24, 4:30 pm. California School for the Deaf, 39350 Gallaudet Drive, Fremont. Honors alumni for excellence in arts, community service, & education and literature. Spaghetti dinner 4:30-6 pm. \$15 at the door. Hall of Fame ceremony 6:30 pm, no admission fee. Contact: VP (510) 344-6075 or voice (510) 794-3707 or mchiou@csdf-cde.ca.gov or vfoletta@csdf-cde.ca.gov. Registration form at www.csdeagles.com/outreach/community.html.

California School for the Deaf Homecoming. September 25. 39350 Gallaudet Drive, Fremont. 10 am volleyball vs. Fremont Christian; 12 pm food booths; 1 pm parade; 2 pm football vs. Texas School for the Deaf; 7 pm CSDAA social at La Pinata. www.csdeagles.com

Deaf Awareness Day at Great America. September 25. Tickets include park entrance, all-you-can-eat picnic, interpreters throughout the park, and exhibits by Deaf organizations. Discounted price of \$35 available through 9/10. Ticket order form available at dcara.org under events. Information: Nicole.Quasney@cagreatamerica.com or (408) 986-5947.

DeafHope's 9th Annual Tea Party. September 25, 3-6 pm. Veteran's Memorial Building, Pleasanton. \$75. Tickets and information: www.deaf-hope.org

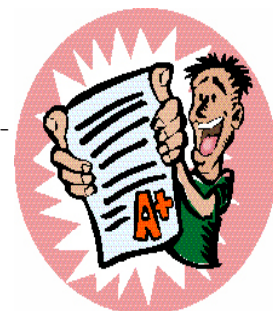
continued on page 5

Wanna get an **A**?

Use These 7 **A**-mazing Tips from Instructor Iva Ikeda

Assignments and Activities: Complete homework and other assignments on time to prepare you to participate in class activities. Not only will you benefit from the practice and prep which will help you be fully engaged in class, but it also shows respect to your classmates. If you come to class unprepared, it unfairly puts the burden on your fellow students to fill you in on what you missed. Meaning they can't take full advantage of the activity.

Attendance: Attendance affects your learning and sign skills. In other courses it may not be crucial to attend every class, but with ASL, you can fall behind quickly if you aren't present. Plan your schedule so that you will not have appointments or other commitments preventing you from being in class. If you **must** miss a class, check with your classmates to find out what was covered while you were out.



Attention: It might seem to go without saying, but I'll say it anyway: pay attention to what the instructor is demonstrating in class. Particularly, look for handshape, movement, palm orientation, structure, and facial grammar.

Assessment: Learn to assess your own signing skills in order to improve. Instructors will guide you in various way to learn how to assess your skills. Use these techniques when reviewing your work to recognize your strengths and improve your weaknesses.

Assertiveness: Be assertive. Participate and practice in class activities, whether in pairs, groups, or whatever. Ask your instructor to repeat or for clarification if you have trouble following what is happening. Help your classmates as well. Helping others will help you to develop your ability to express yourself in ASL (instead of relying on finger-spelling).

continued on page 5

Events continued from page 4

International Day of Sign Language. September 30. State Capitol, Sacramento. A celebration of ASL. Hosted by the California Association of the Deaf. Information: CADCelebratesASL@aol.com or Cheryl Bella, ASL Celebration Chair, at cheryl4bella@yahoo.com.

Theoretical Issues in Sign Language Research Conference (TISLR 10). Conference theme: Research Methodologies in Sign Language Linguistics. Purdue University, September 30-October 2. For information: www.purdue.edu/TISLR10

A Feast for the Eyes. October 1, 7 pm. California School for the Deaf, 39350 Gallaudet Drive, Fremont, Little Theatre. Storytelling, jokes, sign play. Adults \$7; high school and younger + senior citizens \$5. Tickets sold at the door. Voice interpreted. Contact: Cheryl at cboyd@csdf-edu.ca.gov, VP (510) 344-6076 or voice (510) 794-3707; Susan Rutherford drsr@deafmedia.org, (510) 841-0165 TTY or -0163 voice.

Oktoberfest. October 2, 4-9 pm. Deaf Community Center, 1550 San Leandro Blvd., San Leandro. German food, beer tasting, raffles, silent auction, entertainment and more. 21 years and older only (ID will be required). Tickets \$40. Information: info@dcara.org or (510) 848-6670VP/voice. Buy tickets at DCARA's headquarters office at 14895 E. 14th Street #200, San Leandro or via dcara.org/oktoberfest. Proceeds benefit DCARA programs and services.

Deaf Nation Expo. October 9, 9 am-5 pm. Alameda County Fairgrounds, Young California Building, 4501 Pleasanton Avenue, Pleasanton. Free admission. A touring trade show for, by, and about deaf people, including exhibitions and entertainment. <http://deafnation.com/deafnation-expo/dnexpo-pleasanton>

3rd Annual Picnic. October 16, 10 am-4 pm. At Central Park in Fremont, Site C at Lake Elizabeth, next to the boat-house and snack bar. Sponsored by DCARA and the City of Fremont. DCARA will provide BBQ meats, please bring a potluck dish to share and your own drinks. Information: Tanja Bierschneider at tanja.bierschneider@dcara.org or (510) 371-0042 VP.

50th Anniversary of Temple Beth Solomon of the Deaf. October 24, 11 am-4 pm. Warner Center Marriott, 21850 Oxnard St., Woodland Hills, California. The temple, located in the San Fernando Valley, is the "only deaf synagogue in the world." \$50/person. More information at www.tbsdeaf-jewish.org/templenews.htm#anniversary

continued on page 6

Get an A continued from page 4

Attitude: Try to maintain a positive attitude. We all have different backgrounds and life experiences. We don't learn at the same pace, so don't compare yourself to others. Focus on what you can do and try your best. Also, show respect to Deaf people and their culture in the classroom and when you are at events. This means no use of voice when Deaf people are present.

Have a great semester! 🙌🙌

Gallaudet Instructor Blogs about Books for Deaf Children, Teens

By Nancy Cayton, ASL Department Staff

A little over seven years ago, while Sharon Pajka was teaching high school English at the Virginia School for the Deaf, one of her students requested a summer reading list, with the caveat that any recommended books must have a deaf character that she and her peers could relate to. Unfortunately, there weren't many options she was aware of, so Pajka began to research to come up with a list for that student.



Since then, Pajka has been collecting and reviewing books with deaf characters. Eventually, she went back to school to continue her own education, and the "Portrayals and Perceptions of Deaf Characters in Adolescent Literature" became her doctoral dissertation. After completing her dissertation in 2007, Pajka launched a blog, [Deaf Characters in Adolescent Literature](#).

Originally intending to simply provide the information to young people who wanted books with deaf characters, the blog grew to be much more. Before the first year was over, the blog contained more than 20 author interviews and a list of 165 books with deaf characters, targeted to various age groups.

continued on page 6

Events continued from page 5

Latino Family Weekend (Fin de Semana para Familias Latinas). October 29-31. California School for the Deaf, 39350 Gallaudet Drive, Fremont. For families with Deaf children. Register by 10/15. No cost. Contact: VP (510) 344-6075 (Spanish speaking video relay interpreter 866-987-7523) or (510) 794-3707 voice. Registration form and program: www.csdeagles.com/outreach/pdf/latino-weekend.pdf.

2nd Annual Bark at DV. October 30, 1-4 pm. San Leandro Marina Park, San Leandro. Howl-o-ween fun for people and their dogs. Prizes for most creative costume. Refreshments. \$30. Information: Susan Gonzalez at susarf13@gmail.com or Natalie Williams at nataliespanger@gmail.com. Benefits DeafHope. Order tickets at www.deaf-hope.org.

Deaf Studies Track at Italy's Siena School for Spring 2011. Deadline to register for the spring term is November 1. This track includes instruction in Italian language and culture, Italian Sign Language and Deaf culture, and more. Open to hearing students with 2 semesters of ASL and Deaf students who know ASL. Information: (includes the intensive summer program) www.sienaschool.com/site/pages/asl-spring-2011.aspx

WORLDDEAF Cinema Festival. November 4-7. Gallaudet University, Washington, DC. <http://wdfc.gallaudet.edu>

California School for the Deaf Annual Open House. November 11, 8:30 am-3:15 pm. 39350 Gallaudet Drive, Fremont. Visit classrooms & cottages, displays & exhibits, food & crafts, entertainment. Contact: (510) 794-3707 voice/TTY or (866) 790-4035 VP.

5th International Deaf Academics and Researchers. November 21-24. Florianópolis – SC, Brazil. Theme: Inclusion of Deaf at the University. Organiser: Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina / UFSC. www.deafacademics2010.com

Clerc and Gallaudet Week. December 5-11 (held annually the first full week of December to celebrate the birthdays of Laurent Clerc and Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet). Program aimed at bringing Deaf awareness to the public through the library system. Organized by the Friends of Libraries for Deaf Action (read more about FOLDA in the box 10).

6th Triennial National Asian Deaf Congress. June 22-26, 2011. New York City, NY. Hosted by the Metropolitan Asian Deaf Association. www.madanynj.org

Pajka continued from page 5

Today, books listed on the blog are color coded to indicate the type of reader they are most appropriate for: juvenile (early chapter books, some with illustrations), middle (chapter books), teen-to-crossover (adult book content with young adult characters), and graphic novels and comics. While not a comprehensive list of all the books with deaf characters, the blog includes 201 books Pajka considers “contemporary” and readily available. Out-of-print or otherwise hard to obtain books are rarely included. In addition to author interviews, the blog features links and other information.

Books on the blog aren’t just a list of titles and authors, broken down by reading level; Pajka’s goal is to include only those titles that have characters that offer something significant to readers, books that represent the “multiple realities of the deaf human experience.” Books that focus primarily on the issue of deafness are less likely to get a thumbs-up, but an engaging deaf character that is part of a larger story is likely to make the grade.



Some of the factors Pajka checks for are: whether the book contains misinformation, or if the author relies on stereotypes rather than portraying the deaf character accurately, such as including cultural behaviors like attention-getting by visual or physical means and use of things likely to be part of a deaf person’s everyday life, like captioning, TTYs/videophones, or a text pager.

She also considers how deafness is presented. For example, is the entire focus of the plot the character’s “problem” of being deaf? Is deafness represented as something to be ashamed of? Is deafness merely a literary device to emphasize something like isolation? Or does the character simply happen to be deaf and the plot focuses his or her life and abilities?

Although many books with deaf characters are written by hearing people, Pajka feels they can still present convincing characters. She cites such authors as Steve Kluger, who wrote *My Most Excellent Year: A Novel of Love, Mary Poppins, and Fenway Park*, and Jac-

continued on page 7

Congratulations to the 2010 ASL Graduates!

Ilona Anderson*

Denise Barron

Prisca Besson

Mark Dietrich

Helle Fauerskov

Maria Fung

Diana Guzman

Phanda Jones*

Katherine Lewis

Xin Yi Liang

Kelsey Maheney

Joanne Otsuki

Monica Paz

Gabriella Peluso

Majesty Scott

Jody Wong

***Also received a Liberal Arts
degree.**



Pajka continued from page 6

queline Woodson, writer of *Feathers*, whose characters were influenced by deaf people in their lives and further developed through research. She also notes that “just as deaf individuals are vastly different from one another, the portrayals of the deaf characters differ.”

These days, Pajka is often contacted by publishers and authors to review their books, but in the beginning, she had to search for authors and beg for interviews. She jokes that if her career in higher education hadn’t panned out, she might have had to fall back on stalking since she developed some amazing skills tracking down authors she wanted to meet.

Even though the tables have turned, and now authors and publishers seek her out, meeting authors and discussing their work is still a thrill for Pajka. In fact, she says that when she secures an appointment with someone she really wants to interview, she will — no kidding —

jump up and down. Although she gets books directly from authors and publishers, Pajka continues to hunt down new titles and authors, as well as following up on suggestions from her blog readers.

As enjoyable as it is to maintain her blog, it is a sideline to her real job — an associate professor in the Department of English at Gallaudet University. Among the courses Pajka teaches are adolescent literature and the online class “Deaf Characters in Adolescent Literature,” although any literature course she teaches includes some works containing Deaf characters and by Deaf authors. Her students are always trying to find books that she hasn’t read yet, and although they rarely find any, they enjoy the challenge of looking.

Pajka, who identifies as a hearing person but experiences fluctuating hearing loss due to Meniere’s disease and uses ASL all day, every day, tries to instill a love of books in her students, one that she didn’t always have. Despite having a Ph.D. now, as an elementary school student, she was a “struggling reader.” That changed in middle school when she discovered the “Sweet Valley Twins” series. She says, “I couldn’t get enough of



continued on page 8

Deaf & ASL-Related News

Ph.D. in Interpretation Approved by Gallaudet Board of Trustees in May

Gallaudet University's Department of Interpretation is now offering a new Ph.D. program in Interpretation. The program includes courses in interpretation research from a variety of disciplines, research internships, as well as courses on interpreting pedagogy, and numerous elective options. It is unique in that it is designed for students who are already certified interpreters and have experience in the field. Gallaudet already offers a B.A. & an M.A. degree in interpreting. All programs are designed for deaf, hard of hearing, and hearing students. For more information contact the department at: jeanelle.faith@gallaudet.edu or check out the Web site: www.interpretation.gallaudet.edu

Information provided by the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf

ASL/Deaf Studies Indefinitely on Hold at San Diego State University

Part of the School of Speech, Language & Hearing Sciences, the ASL/Deaf Studies concentration is a casualty of state budget cuts. Due to \$1.5 million in cuts to SDSU's College of Health and Human Services, part of the system-wide cuts to all CSU campuses, the campus administration decided to suspend the program indefinitely because it is so much smaller than other programs in the department. The other concentrations, speech-language pathology and audiology, will continue. The ASL/Deaf Studies students are petitioning the suspension. Read the article in the SDSU newspaper, *The Daily Aztec*, at www.thedailyaztec.com/city/deaf-studies-program-closed-1.2264910

Bristol University's Deaf Studies Department Faces Closure

The internationally renowned Deaf Studies Department at Bristol University in England is likely to close within two years due to a 75% budget cut. The Centre for Deaf Studies has been in existence for more than 30 years and about 20% of the country's sign language interpreters come from this program. It is Europe's first academic institution to concentrate solely on research and education that aims to benefit the Deaf community and founded the world's first postgraduate degree in Deafhood Studies. Paddy Ladd, author of the book

continued on next column

Pajka continued from page 7

those books, and the characters Elizabeth and Jessica were like friends to me."

Although she is an academic, she continues to read all kinds of books, including a current favorite, Charlaine Harris' Sooke Stackhouse in the "Southern Vampire" novels. She has been reading the series from the beginning, well before the HBO series "True Blood," which she watches religiously.



Her love of reading has also translated into a desire to write, and she is at work on a book.

Find Pajka's blog at www.pajka.blogspot.com. You can also take one of her online classes; details for fall classes are at http://cpso.gallaudet.edu/CPSO_Home/Fall_2010_Programs/Online_Courses.html.

Pajka wrote a review of the book Deception's Full Circle by J. G. Martinson and included an interview with the author in the Spring 2008 issue of this newsletter. The book has d/Deaf characters and the author is Deaf. 🙋🙋

Headlines continued

Understanding *Deaf Culture: In Search of Deafhood*, is a senior lecturer there. The cuts are part of a university-wide budget reduction of £15 million. The reason for such severe cuts to the Deaf Studies Department cited by the university is that it "does not fit with its academic ambitions."

From *The Independent*

20th Anniversary of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

On July 26, 1990, the ADA was signed into law by President George H. W. Bush. The ADA gives civil rights protections to individuals with disabilities. It guarantees equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities in public accommodations, employment, transportation, state and local government services, and telecommunications. At the time, the ADA made the U.S. the international leader on this civil rights issue. You can learn more about the ADA at www.ada.gov. Look for public service announcements on television featuring President Obama discussing the progress made and work remaining since the ADA became a law.

IRS Information Now Available in ASL

You are probably familiar with the old saying that nothing is sure in life except death and taxes. Despite the inevitability of taxes in our lives, many people try to avoid thinking about them until April 15th approaches. Once tax season starts, people often go into a panic trying to get the forms and information they need.

One way the IRS tries to meet taxpayers' needs is to make information available year-round in many formats. Currently, not only forms, but videos are available with tax information on the IRS Web site and its YouTube channel. That's right, you read correctly, even the IRS has a YouTube channel. Among the videos the IRS produces are a sizable, and growing, number in American Sign Language.

The ASL videos are produced by Toby R. Silver, a veteran television producer and director who has been working for the Internal Revenue Service's corporate television department in the national office in Washington, D.C. for more than 10 years. Silver is Deaf and just happens to have been the director for the original *Signing Naturally*, Level 1 student videotext materials created in the late 1980s.

Interestingly, when Silver was hired by the IRS, they were not looking for someone to produce materials in ASL. Her job was to produce videos for a hearing audience, which she continues to do, although it was her dream to someday produce for a Deaf audience. In 2008, the IRS gave her an opportunity to create an informational piece in ASL about the economic stimulus payment (ESP) for taxpayers. She produced, directed and performed in a series of pilot videos on the ESP, with some translation assistance.

To get the information to the Deaf community, the IRS partnered with the National Association of the Deaf (NAD). The NAD posted the ESP videos on its Web site, followed by three additional public ser-

vice announcements and an instructional video about the 1040A tax return form. It also did outreach to let people know the information was available.

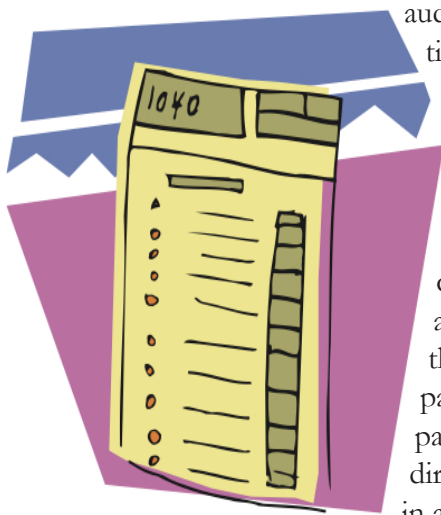
The IRS has also partnered with agencies such as Communication Services for the Deaf (CSD) in South Dakota. This past tax season, CSD ran full-page ads in its publication, *SIGNews*, created e-news blasts to send to its list of 10,000 deaf and hard of hearing people, and placed a banner ad on the front page of the CSD Web site (www.c-s-d.org) to direct visitors straight to the IRS YouTube channel.

Feedback from Deaf and hard of hearing communities about the first videos was very positive. Many of the comments indicated that being able to see the information in ASL made it much more accessible than simply reading it in English, that the videos "leveled the playing field," for ASL users. The feedback also indicated that people wanted to see captioning in addition to signing, which has since been added, along with voice-over, to all videos.

The videos were moved from NAD's Web page to its YouTube channel before the IRS launched its own ASL YouTube channel in 2009. Today, the IRS has three channels: English, Multilingual (primarily Spanish language information, but also includes a bit in Korean and Vietnamese), and ASL. It is believed the IRS is the only federal agency operating three language channels on a regular basis.

Producing materials for a Deaf audience has been empowering for Silver, who, as the project manager for the IRS's ASL YouTube channel, is involved in the planning and designing of the videos but now stays off-camera. The videos are created based on scripts provided by the communications division. Each English script is translated by a freelance translator or linguist who is Deaf and a native ASL user.

The on-camera talent are other Deaf IRS employees, chosen based on a variety of criteria, including showing the diversity of people working for the IRS.



continued on page 10

The translator creates two items for the on-camera talent to use in preparation for the filming. One is a rough video of the signed translation, and the other is a printed script using glosses*. The glosses are also used on a teleprompter so the signer doesn't have to memorize the entire script.

* "Gloss" is a linguistics term that means representing one language with another language's written characters, a transcription of sorts. Because ASL does not have a written form, glosses are used when having something in writing is called for. A gloss is not a translation; it is a label and can be very different from the meaning.

Prior to shooting, the translator, Silver and the on-camera talent confer and agree on how the piece will be signed. Because the videos are viewed by a national audience, the signs used must be the most broadly understood, as well as accurate.



While an ASL video can be completed in about a week, often scripts are developed and taped long before

they are needed for public distribution on the YouTube Channel. The script must be translated into ASL, taped, edited, voiced over and captioned. Some topics may take longer to produce, some videos about time-sensitive issues can be produced very quickly, such as the one to inform people about making tax-deductible contributions to help earthquake victims in Haiti for the 2009 tax year.

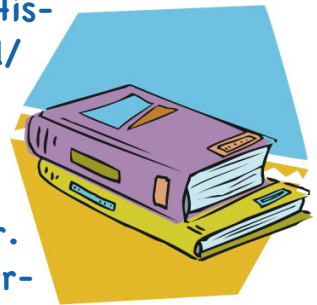
The agency's three-pronged approach includes giving deaf and hearing taxpayers the same access to information via video, audio, and text. This "best practice" provides increased visibility and outreach efforts to the diverse segments of the taxpayer population.

Visit the IRS's ASL channel at www.youtube.com/irsvideosasl. You can also find the videos through the IRS's Web site, www.irs.gov. Click on the "accessibility" link at the bottom of the home page. Students (Deaf or hearing) may be particularly interested in the entries for educational tax credits at www.irs.gov/newsroom/article/0,,id=204170,00.html. From the

directory, choose "Education Tax Credit — Claim It (Parents)" and/or "Education Tax Credit — Claim It (Students)" for ASL videos, or visit <http://www.irs.gov/newsroom/article/0,,id=213044,00.html> for a written English listing of tax benefits for education. The original economic stimulus payment video is still on NAD's Web site and can be viewed at http://blogs.nad.org/advocacy/?page_id=56. 🙌🙌

Friends of Libraries for Deaf Action (FOLDA)

Invites individuals and organizations to join its campaign for the nation's libraries to observe the National Deaf History Month and/or other appropriate annual events during the year.



If you are interested in supporting this campaign, send your name and email address to FOLDA86@aol.com.

Monetary contributions are also welcome. Suggested donations: \$2 or more for individuals and \$25 or more organizations. Checks may be mailed to:

FOLDA
2930 Craiglawn Road
Silver Spring, MD 20904-1816

Contributions, monetary and in-kind gifts, will help FOLDA with the expenses to publicize deaf resources, especially the National Deaf History Month Kit, within the library community. More information is available at www.folda.net.

age area.

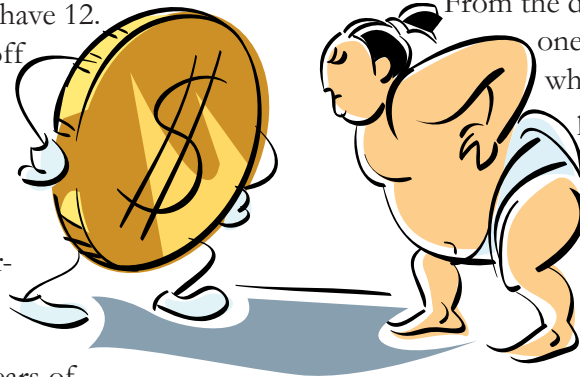
Several positions have been eliminated at BCC as a cost cutting measure. These are two instructional deans, a tutor, and the student activities director. Also, staff people will have six furlough days during the school year and administrators will have 12.

The days each employee is off will vary, ensuring that the school will remain open on all regular work days during the semester.

Marty Sarbey de Souto, coordinator of BCC's Travel & Tourism program has retired after more than 33 years of teaching. Economics and do-it-yourself online reservation systems have, in part, lessened demand for travel professionals and thus for a Travel & Tourism major. For the time being, the program is closed, but the college will examine future possibilities and may offer fee-based classes.

During the summer session a new fee was added to the accounts of all students enrolled. All students enrolled in at least one course earning credit were charged \$14 for student health services. During fall and spring

semesters, the fee will be \$17. The fee covers primary care medical visits, reproductive health, dental cleaning and exams, mental health counseling, financial and legal counseling, Medi-Cal and Healthy Families enrollment. All services are available at the Laney College Student Center.



From the details provided so far, it appears that no one is exempt from the fee except students who are "dependent exclusively upon prayer for healing in accordance with the teachings for a bona fide religious sect, denomination, or organization" or the student is attending a community college under an approved apprenticeship training program. Look for more information on the Peralta Web site.

Our college district has contracted with Alerify Mass Communication Digital Broadcasting System to instantly reach students and employees in cases of major catastrophic emergencies. In the event of an emergency, you will receive a brief alert informing you of the emergency and the action warranted. If you have provided an emergency contact it has already been uploaded into the Alertify system. If you are unsure if the college has the correct contact information for you, you can check that information in your student account on the Passport system. 🙌🙌

continued on next column

Currently employed deaf and hard of hearing people are needed to participate in a survey for research examining how technology is associated with the employment of deaf and hard of hearing people. The purpose is to collect current data so that social policy makers, programs, educators, and funding sources can use it to continue to provide valued resources to the deaf and hard of hearing communities. The survey is confidential and anonymous. It is being conducted by James Schiller, a faculty member at Gallaudet University, Department of Social Work and a doctoral candidate at Walden University. For more information or to complete the survey, go to www.surveymonkey.com/s/DETS

Berkeley City College
American Sign Language Department
2050 Center Street
Berkeley, CA 94704



Berkeley City College (formerly Vista Community College) is part of the Peralta Community College District

The *ASL News* is published four times a year, in August/September, November, January and April by Berkeley City College's (formerly Vista Community College) American Sign Language Department. Unsolicited contributions are welcome, but may not be printed. We reserve the right to edit submissions for length and content and to hold contributions for later printing. Opinions expressed are those of the writer and not necessarily those of the college or ASL Department. The ASL Department reserves all rights to publication. Reprinting of any material published in this newsletter is not allowed without the express permission of the ASL Department.

News or comments may be directed to:
Nancy Cayton ncayton@peralta.edu
Berkeley City College
2050 Center Street
Berkeley, CA 94704
(510) 981-2872 voice (866) 971-1994 VP

Important note about this publication for students with disabilities: This publication can be made available in an alternate media format upon request. Should you need accommodations, contact Programs & Services for Students with Disabilities office at (510) 981-2912 voice or cmassey@peralta.edu.