



# TRI-VISION QUARTERLY NEWS

SPRING 2010

## *Communicating in the 21st Century for Deaf and Hard of Hearing People*

Today, deaf and hard of hearing people have many different ways to contact friends and family members. It is hard to believe that almost 50 years ago, deaf and hard of hearing people did not have a reliable way to use the telephone network. Back then, the ability to use the telephone was an unwritten rule for success. If you could not use the phone, you probably would not be able to find a good job, ask someone out on a date or even order a pizza on your own.

As corporations were abandoning Teletype (TTY) machines in favor of new computers in the sixties, deaf people were eagerly snatching them up. If you had a TTY, you could

only call someone else who also had a TTY, and they were hard to find. Telecommunications for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (TDI) was formed in 1968 to publish a directory of TTY users in the United States and to distribute discarded TTYs. In its first year, the directory had only 174 listings.

Today, TDI's Blue Book directory has grown to more than 20,000 listings of deaf individuals along with businesses and government agencies, and includes all the different methods we use to contact people. Right now, TDI is a leading advocacy organization whose mission is to provide leadership in

*(Continued to page 6)*

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Marie Younkin-Waldman</i>	2
<i>Debra Raicbe</i>	3
<i>Jordan Sack</i>	4
<i>Sprint Relay</i>	5
<i>Rhode Island Relay</i>	8
<i>Technology Resources</i>	9
<i>Jeannie Desmarais-Valdez, ORS</i>	10
<i>Denise Corson, ATEL</i>	10
<i>Commissioner Vacancy Notice</i>	12
<i>What is RICDHH?</i>	13
<i>RICDHH Quiz</i>	13
<i>2010 Schedule</i>	14

## *From Executive Director's Corner*

How does the 21st Century Communication Technology impact on individuals who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing? I feel that 21st Century Communication Technology has provided the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community with a more convenient, clearer, easier, quicker, and more efficient way of communicating than what we had in the past. We are able to use our natural language with ease, whether it's using CapTel, Video Relay Services, mobile devices, etc. As a result, the productivity in performance at home or at work has been increasingly solid. Because of this, I have seen a significant number of individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing in the United States navigate their career paths more successfully, whether they are lawyers, business owners, service providers, directors, doctors, and many more. I foresee that communication technology will become smaller and smaller with devices such as the ipad, which can do about anything, and it can be brought anywhere we go! I also notice that individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing tend to keep up with their personal technology in order to communicate better. So for public accommodations with hospitals, restaurants, airports, and places of employment, their communication technology often lags behind. It is our job to keep educating them about the benefits of new, upcoming and rapidly evolving communication technology that would benefit us all! I hope you enjoy reading the Spring Issue of the Tri-Vision Newsletter.

*Steven A. Florio, RICDHH Executive Director*

**Mission Statement:** *To provide innovative leadership in public policy, advocacy, service delivery and accessibility throughout the Ocean State, RI CDHH ensures opportunities for each deaf and hard of hearing person to become an empowered, contributing citizen.*





## By Marie Younkin-Waldman

### Mastering the CapTel Telephone

“BEST OF ALL, I  
COULD  
CONNECT WITH  
FAMILY AND  
FRIENDS AND  
NOT FEEL SO  
LEFT OUT AND  
ISOLATED.”

Not being able to use the telephone and connecting with the world around them is one of the scariest things for hard of hearing people. I can speak from experience, having had a progressive bilateral nerve loss all my life, and losing my ability to use the phone was a traumatic event. For many years I had survived with hearing aids, assistive listening devices and amplification on my telephone. Then the time came when I became profoundly hard of hearing and could not use the phone at all. What was I to do? I had a television show ("Tea with Marie"), a new book I was marketing ("Simply South County"), and I wanted to stay in touch with my children and grandchildren as well as friends.

For a while I depended on an associate to make the marketing calls to vendors and publicists for my book but we know how it feels to have someone else try to express our words. It doesn't always go the way we want it (no matter how helpful they try to be.) I had others research and schedule guests for my television show also. As to my family, I was starting to feel cut off and isolated from them. Sometimes I could catch a few words with one of my daughters while she was trying to share something important but I would miss the "key" words that were the crux of the matter and the times that my daughter most needed my emotional support. How do you build a relationship with your children if they are not able to gain compassion from you?

Then I heard about the CapTel telephone and how I could obtain the phone from the R.I. ATEL (Adaptive Telephone Equipment Loan) program in Providence. I was able to exchange the equipment I had for a CapTel telephone to use instead. The CapTel phone looks like a standard phone but has a window at the top for the captioning of the messages so you can read them instead of struggling to listen. The complete directions for use come in the box

on a captioned DVD. Basically, there are two ways to set it up on your phone system. If you have a single line phone you have people call you through a special 800 CapTel number. If you want to make it simpler for those calling in, you can adopt a two-line system as we did. We already had a second line as a fax line so callers could call us on our original home line so that the CapTel system could use the fax line to supply the captions directly. I would pick up the phone after the light flashed or phone rang and the phone automatically dialed the CapTel number on the second line to get to the operator and then I could see the message on the screen from whoever was calling. Like anything else, you have to try it a few times to get used to it but before you know it you are using it regularly.

Using the CapTel phone became a godsend during that time when I could not hear on the phone. I was able to call my own vendors and make business calls for my book business. I could contact the guests and connect with them or schedule them for my television shows. Best of all,

I could connect with family and friends and not feel so left out and isolated. I was able to understand what my daughters were saying and keep the bridges of communication open with all of my family. Now I have a cochlear implant and can hear well on the phone, fortunately, but I highly recommend the CapTel phone for those who can't hear on the phone and are anxious to still stay connected to the world around them.

*The author, Marie-Younkin Waldman, wrote a book, To Hear The Birds Sing and to learn more information about this book, please visit: [www.ToHearTheBirdsSing.com](http://www.ToHearTheBirdsSing.com)*



#### Websites for more information about:

CapTel - [www.captel.com](http://www.captel.com)

ATEL - [www.atel.ri.gov](http://www.atel.ri.gov)



*By Debra Raiche*

“SUCH INNOVATIONS EMPOWER AND HAVE RESULTED IN GREATER INDEPENDENCE AND INCREASED EFFICIENCY IN MY ABILITY TO SERVE MY CLIENTS, DEAF AND HEARING ALIKE, AND HAVE STREAMLINED MY INTERACTIONS WITH COWORKERS AND OTHER PROFESSIONALS.”

Much has changed in the field of communications for the Deaf, especially in the past decade. When I first started working at my current place of employment, ordinary communication was a daily challenge. I relied on the available services at the time – relay – TTY/TDD – slow and cumbersome process/es for all. The transition from text-based to video communication via increased use of the internet, especially high-speed access, has had an enormous impact. “The internet is creating new kinds of meeting places and work areas and the possibilities of new types of relationships across time and space”<sup>1</sup>

One of the first displays of video telephony was made at the World’s Fair in New York City 1964. Presented by AT&T, the “Picturephone” allowed two deaf people to communicate from two different cities for the first time. During that time several other telecommunications companies began research on video telephones. The arrival of Fiber Optic and Integrated Services Networks technologies during the 1990’s further developed videophones and made them less expensive, easier to access, and easier to set up. In 1995/1996, the Texas Public Utility Commission began to



establish a network of sign language interpreters to relay communication between deaf and hearing persons, expanding video phones to 10 cities in Texas for test trials and research. The United States and other countries subsidize companies who provide Video Relay Service (VRS) companies. Year 2001 saw many internet providers offering high speed internet connections, creating competition in the VRS market and fueling development of VRS products. The rise in

access to VRS products saw the increase in deaf specific products that were distributed to deaf and hard of hearing users for free. The continuing advance in VRS technology and mobile phone technology have given the deaf and hard of hearing greater ease communicating with others. In particular, use of computer videoconferencing products and the videophone benefits both caller and call recipient. Gone are the many barriers and the time constraints imposed by having to wait – and take turns – for caller’s typing, the operator’s interpretation, and the recipient’s response. Here to stay is the faster, near seamless and direct line of communication between two or more parties.

Equipment and computer technological advances and improvements have dramatically affected not only my personal life (I am nearly wedded to my Blackberry and my videophone!) but also my work as a licensed chemical dependency professional, affording me quick and easy access to people and information through a variety of methods. Such innovations empower and have resulted in greater independence and increased efficiency in my ability to serve my clients, deaf and hearing alike, and have streamlined my interactions with coworkers and other professionals.

<sup>1</sup>Elizabeth Keating and Gene Mirus, “American Sign Language in virtual space: Interactions between deaf users of computer mediated video communication and the impact of technology on language practices,” *Language in Society*, 32, 693-714.

*The author, Debra Raiche, is a licensed chemical dependency professional (LCDP) and the coordinator of services for the Deaf at Bridgemark, Inc., a Rhode Island behavioral health organization.*



## By Jordan Sack

### My Transition from Hearing Aids to a Cochlear Implant

As the title implies, my experience with hearing aids and a cochlear implant has allowed me to describe how each device has impacted my life. I am able to provide this comparison because I utilized bilateral hearing aids upon my parents' discovery of my severe-profound hearing loss at thirteen months of age, and only received a cochlear implant when I was ten years old. I had been ineligible for a cochlear implant earlier in my life because the FDA guidelines did not permit cochlear implants for those who had severe-profound hearing loss, and that policy only changed in 1998 (when I was ten years old). Currently, I am a senior at Brown University and I utilize both a cochlear implant and a hearing aid. And, I can say with complete confidence that the hearing aid and cochlear implant do not sound the same. In fact, the same sounds sound very different!

As a young child, I was able to hear and to speak with bilateral hearing aids because of intensive speech therapy twice a week and because my parents chose the auditory verbal approach. The auditory verbal approach strengthened my speech and listening skills because it reinforced recognizing speech sounds, encouraged intensive practice with sounds, and discouraged lip reading initially, as that is a visual rather than an auditory skill. At school, I had done reasonably well in a mainstream private school that had small classrooms. My teachers even wore a microphone that was transmitted to my hearing aids. Indeed, I heard quite well with the hearing aids considering the severity of my hearing loss.

However, the hearing aids were not completely sufficient as I could not hear on the phone or understand the TV (keep in mind that captioning was not around when I was a child). Often I would watch the cartoons and make up the plot as I could not understand what was

being said. It was also very difficult for me to participate in social activities as my hearing aids would also amplify background noise and my friends (keep in mind I was only a young child) did not always face me. Additionally, my speech was nasal and there were many sounds that I could not hear including the "z", "th", and "f" sounds. Instead of saying "zoo," I would say "sue." Moreover, because I could not hear some sounds with my hearing aids, I did not pick up as much information as my hearing peers. Consequently, I missed out on information at school, at home, and at social settings. Over time, I developed language and cultural gaps which began to hinder my performance.

To ensure that I would be able to speak better and to hear more clearly, my parents decided to look into a cochlear implant. The cochlear implant was going to work well for me (despite the fact that I was ten years old) because I had stimulated my auditory pathways with my hearing aids. Nonetheless, my family and I researched and discussed it for several months before I finally received it.

I remember the day I first got the cochlear implant. It was initially surprising to hear so many new sounds which were loud and clear. By the end of that first day, I could finally distinguish my parents' voices. Since I was hearing new sounds (note that some old sounds sounded completely different), I had to have intensive speech therapy to relearn how to hear and to speak again. It took me about a year to be fully comfortable with the cochlear implant. But the result was very rewarding as I was able to hear so many new sounds including the "z," "th," and "f" sounds. Moreover, I could hear the rustle of leaves and the click of the mouse on the computer. Eventually, I was able to hear the TV and the phone. As my hearing improved, my speech began to improve as I was able to hear my own speech and realized how different it sounded compared to the speech of other hearing peers. As I

"FOR ME, THE COCHLEAR IMPLANT HAS ENABLED ME TO COMMUNICATE WITH PEOPLE IN PERSON AND ON THE PHONE WITH RELATIVE EASE AND WITHOUT THE NEED FOR ASSISTIVE DEVICES."



## By Sprint Relay

Sprint Relay and Sprint 4G Wireless Network

Sprint Relay offers a comprehensive range of relay services, and wireless devices including a data only plan. Sprint is widely recognized for developing, and deploying innovative technologies and the ability to offer you the freedom to choose the best communication resources that benefit you, including Sprint Video Relay, Sprint IP Relay, Sprint IP using Instant Messaging, Sprint WebCapTel®, CapTel®, and Federal Relay.

Sprint Relay is the leading provider of relay services in the United States so that those who are deaf and hard of hearing can have anytime, anywhere communication. With over 20 years of experience in providing Telecommunications Relay Services, Sprint Relay allows the standard voice telephone users to talk to people who are deaf, hard of hearing or who have a speech disability.

Sprint is the first national wireless carrier to offer a 4G wireless network. What is 4G? Sprint 4G is a higher speed, higher capacity, Internet-based services for video, data and voice. Sprint 4G is capable of delivering up to 10 times faster download speeds than 3G networks.

4G products are available in 3G/4G data cards, also known as air cards, for laptops and netbooks. Within a 4G coverage area, customers are able to make video calls using a laptop or netbook virtually anywhere, at the park or hotel, as long as the 4G network is available in that area.

devices. Sprint plans to expand the 4G network in 2010, visit [www.sprint.com/4g](http://www.sprint.com/4g) to check coverage areas.

The Sprint Relay Store offers the Sprint Relay in a Package that includes a U301 3G/4G Mobile Broadband air card or Overdrive™ 3G/4G Mobile Hotspot by Sierra Wireless, which are a dual-band with 3G and 4G services. For more information on these and other devices, go to: [www.sprintrelaystore.com](http://www.sprintrelaystore.com).

Under Title IV of the Americans with Disabilities Act, all telephone companies must provide free relay services either directly or through state programs throughout the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and all of the U.S. territories.

Relay services involve a relay operator or video interpreter serving as an intermediary for phone calls between a deaf or hard of hearing person, or a person with a speech disability and a hearing party. The relay operator speaks

words typed or signed by a relay user on a text telephone (TTY), internet or via a high-speed Internet connection with two-way video equipment and relays the hearing person's spoken response by typing or signing back to the Relay user. For more information visit, [www.sprintrelay.com](http://www.sprintrelay.com)

“UNDER TITLE IV OF THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT, ALL TELEPHONE COMPANIES MUST PROVIDE FREE RELAY SERVICES EITHER DIRECTLY OR THROUGH STATE PROGRAMS THROUGHOUT THE 50 STATES, THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, PUERTO RICO AND ALL OF THE U.S. TERRITORIES.”



*Communicating in the 21st Century for Deaf and Hard of Hearing People*

*(Continued from page 1)*

achieving equal access to telecommunications, media and information technologies for deaf and hard of hearing people. Its leadership in access is widely recognized and respected by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) as well as other deaf and cross-disability advocacy groups. To learn more about TDI, visit [www.tdi-online.org](http://www.tdi-online.org).

“THE ADA DEFINES  
"TELECOMMUNICATIONS  
RELAY SERVICES" TO  
MEAN TELEPHONE  
TRANSMISSION  
SERVICES THAT PROVIDE  
THE ABILITY FOR AN  
INDIVIDUAL WHO HAS A  
HEARING IMPAIRMENT  
OR SPEECH IMPAIRMENT  
TO ENGAGE IN  
COMMUNICATION...”

During the seventies and eighties, relay services came about, but they were run by volunteers during business hours. We had to endure many arcane restrictions on the calls we were able to make. Business calls were allowed only ten minutes. Calls were forbidden at night unless it was an emergency. Calls to banks or other places with telephone menus were virtually impossible because it took too long for the operators to type the menu options and the calls were disconnected. The quality of relay phone calls was often low.

On July 26, 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed into law by President George H. W. Bush. Title IV of this landmark civil rights act opened up the telephone network further. The telephone companies took up the responsibility of providing relay services and set up relay call centers throughout the country. Calls can be made 24/7, no restrictions on the type or length of calls. All calls must be confidential.

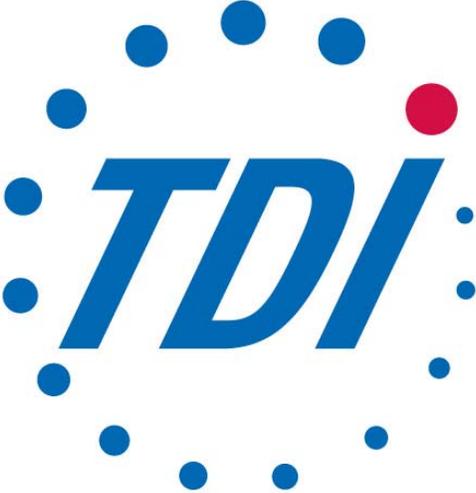
The ADA defines "telecommunications relay services" to mean telephone transmission services that provide

the ability for an individual who has a hearing impairment or speech impairment to engage in communication in a manner that is functionally equivalent to the ability of an individual who does not have a hearing impairment or speech impairment to communicate using voice communication services by wire or radio. Such term includes services that enable two-way communication between an individual who uses a TDD (TTY) or other non-voice terminal device and an individual who does not use such a device.

Furthermore, the ADA also states, "The Commission [FCC] shall ensure that regulations prescribed to implement this section encourage the use of existing technology and do not discourage or impair the development of improved technology. This phrase provided the impetus for TDI and other consumer advocates to upgrade the level of service for relay users so that their telephone experience is nearly

equivalent to a hearing person. TDI argues that it is not enough to provide just a dial tone, but to provide access to all services that are available on the communications network.

When the Telecommunications Act of 1996 was passed, the FCC gained new responsibilities in overseeing our access needs. Section 255 required telecommunication product manufacturers and service providers to include input from people with disabilities when designing new



## *Communicating in the 21st Century for Deaf and Hard of Hearing People*

*(Continued from page 6)*

products and services. Section 713 gave the FCC authority to impose captioning requirements on television programming.

Now today we have digital wireless handsets that offer several choices in communication. The most common things you will see are email, text messaging, third party instant messaging such as AOL, Google Chat and Yahoo. Virtually all programs on television are captioned as well.

However, within a few short years, the Internet became popular. Email became the preferred choice of communication for two big reasons. Email is accessible to people who are deaf or hard of hearing. Second big reason is that unlike the TTY, almost everyone has access to a computer.

Almost simultaneously, instant messaging began to emerge as a viable replacement for the TTY. Several relay providers offer their services through AOL and Google-Chat, which works well with wireless handsets. All of a sudden, we have options everywhere, not just at home or at work, but also on the street. One recent enhancement is real-time texting, now available on AOL Instant Messaging where you can see the other party's characters as soon as they are typed - we no longer have to wait and wonder if they were paying attention to our messages.

Surfing became a popular means of researching new information. It became easier to find facts online than to call a company for service assistance. With the right skills, a person can download information about a product and be able to purchase or repair it himself. Some large companies like cable TV providers provide tech support through its own live chat program where you can type back and forth with an agent instead of using the phone.

In 1964, AT&T first introduced a PicturePhone at the New York World's Fair.

This was the same year that the TTY modem was invented by a deaf physicist and ham radio operator named Robert Weitbrecht. This modem, then called an acoustic coupler connected the telephone with a TeleType machine (TTY). While the TTY network grew slowly and had limited appeal, the videophone would not become feasible until broadband became more affordable in the 21st Century. This was when several visionaries such as Ed Bosson from Texas and others felt that it was time for videophones to become a reality. For people whose primary language is sign language, videophones offered real functional equivalency because they could call other people using their own natural language and have a free-flowing conversation.

For hard of hearing people, many of them already had years of experience using regular phones and were not comfortable using the relay or the TTY. Early relay services offered something called Voice Carry Over but it was cumbersome to set up and other people were turned off when they learned there was a third party in the call. Ultratec invented the first captioned telephone system that is completely transparent to the other party. The caller speaks directly to the other end but the other end's voice not only returns to the caller, but also goes to a call center where an agent re-voices the message into a computer with automatic speech recognition. Unless the caller discloses the relay service, the other party would not feel hampered by the awkward stop-and-go of traditional relay calls. Traditional relay conveys words at about 60 -100 words per minute. On today's captioned telephone, the conversation rate runs at a smooth rate of 250 - 300 words per minute.

*(Continued to page 9)*

## By Rhode Island Relay

Rhode Island Relay (RIR) is a public service provided by the State of Rhode Island that allows people who are Hearing, Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deaf-Blind or Speech Impaired to communicate with each other via the telephone. The service is accessible by dialing 711 and is available 24-hours a day, 7 days a week, making communication by telephone easy, reliable and convenient. There is no charge to place or receive calls using RIR, however, long distance charges do apply.

Rhode Island Relay offers many different call types for Deaf, Deaf-Blind, Hard of Hearing and Speech Impaired to use. They are: TTY-to-Voice, Voice Carry Over, Hearing Carry Over, Speech-To-Speech, and Captioned Telephone. Additionally, Spanish Relay is available. Bi-lingual Communication Assistants are available to translate relay calls to/from people who can hear and speak Spanish.

In order to make calls easier and more efficient, relay users can take advantage of completing a customer profile to let RIR know their calling preferences. As an RIR relay user, you can set up a speed dial list, choose your own greeting, specify the type of relay service you prefer, and request ASL translation. If you do not request ASL translation, the RIR communication assistant will voice verbatim what you type. In addition, you can ask for background sounds to be removed, such as “dog barking” or “talking in the background”. It is also very important to choose your preferred long distance company. If you do not specify a preferred long distance company, your bill will come from ATT. So as you can see, completing a customer profile allows RIR to process your calls the way you want them to be!

Also, Rhode Island Relay is introducing a Captioned Telephone, CapTel, a service similar to the closed captioning

provided on most television programs. The CapTel™ telephone displays written, word-for-word captions of everything the caller says.

CapTel™ is a new technology developed by Ultratec, Inc., of Madison, Wisconsin that allows individuals with hearing loss to read their telephone conversations. This device is perfect for people who have intelligible speech, but cannot hear well over the phone.

The CapTel™ phone works like a regular phone but has one major difference – captions of the other party’s conversation appear on the phone’s built-in screen. Because the captions appear almost simultaneously with the spoken word, CapTel™ user can understand that is said – either by hearing it or by reading it. The CapTel™ phone allows people to enjoy natural telephone conversations through its high level of amplification, while at the same time giving them the capacity to check the captions for added clarity.

If the event you experience being hung up on by a business, did you know that you can ask the Rhode Island Relay outreach coordinator to educate that particular business about RIR so they “Do Not Hang Up”? The RIR outreach coordinator is available to provide free training to businesses, and in exchange, they will have an opportunity to participate in the “Relay Friendly Partners” program. Upon completion of training, the company’s business name and contact information will be posted on the Hamilton Relay website, as well as be published in the Communication Accessibility Directory from the Rhode Island Commission for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing.

Sean Gill, the RIR Outreach Coordinator, is available to answer your questions, or you may schedule a presentation or request that he attend your event. Sean can be reached at Sean.Gill@hamiltonrelay.com or (401) 239.1221. To learn more about Rhode Island Relay, please go to [www.hamiltonrelay.com](http://www.hamiltonrelay.com).

“THE CAPTEL™ PHONE  
 ALLOWS PEOPLE TO  
 ENJOY NATURAL  
 TELEPHONE  
 CONVERSATIONS  
 THROUGH ITS HIGH LEVEL  
 OF AMPLIFICATION,  
 WHILE AT THE SAME TIME  
 GIVING THEM THE  
 CAPACITY TO CHECK THE  
 CAPTIONS FOR ADDED  
 CLARITY.”

# Rhode Island Relay

## *Communicating in the 21st Century for Deaf and Hard of Hearing People*

*(Continued from page 7)*

What is next? There are many ideas out there. The industry is rushing to bring 3-D TV sets and that brings a challenge to captioning users trying to watch the video and read the captions. Videophones may become holograms where you can communicate with your friend as if they were sitting in a chair across the room. People may be able to carry "pens" containing a microphone that will automatically pick up and translate any sound into text on a tiny digital display.

Communication tools and devices are becoming more innovative, but the question remains if they are accessible in the first version, or will we have to wait until a future upgrade? We see captions on television, but not on the Internet. Deaf-blind people cannot get telephones because the cost of up-to-date equipment runs to approximately \$8,000. History has proven several times that in order to have accessible products, most vendors wait until regulations come about.

One such regulation that is circulating the halls of Congress is H.R. #3101, also known as the 21st Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act of 2009. Introduced last year, this bill extends the provisions of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 into the Internet. This is an important bill, as it will address many of the problems we face today. The FCC does not have any authority to regulate the Internet. If passed, this bill will give that authority to the FCC and provide accessibility to today's digital and tomorrow's technologies. For more information, go visit the Coalition of Organizations for Accessible Technology (COAT) website at [www.coataccess.org](http://www.coataccess.org) and make sure your Congressman supports the bill. Also, ask your Senator to sponsor or support a companion bill when it comes on the agenda.

*Jim House, Public Relations Director, Telecommunications for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Inc. (TDI)*

## *Helpful Telecommunication Technology Resources*

- [CapTel - The Captioned Telephone](http://www.captel.com)  
[www.captel.com](http://www.captel.com)
- [Coalition of Organizations for Accessible Technology \(COAT\)](http://www.coataccess.org)  
[www.coataccess.org](http://www.coataccess.org)
- [Communication Service for the Deaf, Inc. \(CSD\)](http://www.c-s-d.org/PDFs/AccessForward6_08b.pdf)  
[www.c-s-d.org/PDFs/AccessForward6\\_08b.pdf](http://www.c-s-d.org/PDFs/AccessForward6_08b.pdf)
- [Federal Communications Commission: Hearing Aid Compatible for Wireless Telephones](http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/hac_wireless.html)  
[www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/hac\\_wireless.html](http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/hac_wireless.html)
- [Federal Communications Commission: Internet Protocol Relay Service](http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/iprelay.html)  
[www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/iprelay.html](http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/iprelay.html)
- [Federal Communications Commission: Video Relay Services](http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/videorelay.html)  
[www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/videorelay.html](http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/videorelay.html)
- [Telecommunications for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Inc. \(TDI\)](http://www.tdi-online.org)  
[www.tdi-online.org](http://www.tdi-online.org)

*By Jeannie Desmarais -Valdez, Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS)*

Communication is of utmost importance in our daily lives and it's what keeps us connected and informed. Technology advances very quickly in relatively short time and the videophone is one example. Videophones change the way we communicate on the phone. It's obvious at ORS. While we have both a TTY and videophones in the office, I noticed a significant increase in VP calls over the past few years. Use of TTYs has decreased drastically since the installation of VPs, averaging maybe two to three times a month. VP point to point calls are at an average of three per day. There were some days when I received as many as twelve VP calls in one day. (Note that this does not include hearing callers or use of VRS due to technical difficulties.) Despite the difficulty with seeing each other clearly on the screen, clients STILL favor use of VP over TTY and are willing to tolerate the blurry screen!



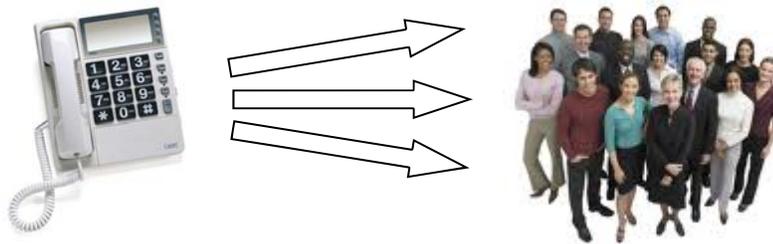
I, myself, often use a VP whenever possible to make calls to clients, and I am certain that once the technical difficulty is resolved, and our visual screen clear, the number of VP calls will increase to twice the average, and include calls from and to hearing callers (service providers, employers, etc).



Office of Rehabilitation Services  
 Vocational Rehabilitation Program  
 QRCD Jeannie Desmarais -Valdez

*Did you know that...?*

The Adaptive Telephone Equipment Loan Program (ATEL) has distributed approximately eighty CapTel telephones to Rhode Island residents in the past two years!



For more information about ATEL or application for CapTel:  
 Adaptive Telephone Loan Equipment Program  
 c/o Office of Rehabilitation Services  
 40 Fountain Street, 5th Fl.  
 Providence, RI 02903  
 Denise Corson  
 Program Coordinator  
 Email: [DCorson@ors.ri.gov](mailto:DCorson@ors.ri.gov)  
 Voice: 401-421-7005 x357  
 TTY: 401-222-1679  
 Fax: 401- 222-3574



## By Jordan Sack

*(Continued from page 4)*

became more comfortable with the cochlear implant, I became more independent as I could participate in social and academic settings without wondering if I was hearing correctly. Consequently, I was able to succeed in school and to attend Brown University.

You may be wondering why sounds are heard differently with the cochlear implant than with the hearing aids. It's because there are many technological features of the cochlear implant that make sound quality better than with the hearing aids. The cochlear implant allows one to hear more sounds because the device is designed to stimulate the auditory nerve directly, ensuring that most or all sound frequencies are heard. Hearing aids cannot ensure that all sound frequencies are heard because damaged hair cells reduce or prevent stimulation of the auditory nerve. Furthermore, the cochlear implant is personalized as each user has several programs that are designed based on the user's ability to hear certain sounds. Those programs are adjusted every few months to reflect changes in the user's hearing skills. The cochlear implant also contains several programs which the user can change depending on the listening environment. Some programs are designed to minimize background noise and to increase the volume and quality of whatever conversation you are having with the person next to you. Other programs are designed for quiet settings and the telephone (telecoil mode), among other scenarios. The user also has the option of adjusting the volume and sensitivity of sounds for each program. Additionally, depending on the model, the cochlear implant can be connected to a variety of devices including HATIS, FM receivers, iPods, and phones. In fact, I will

soon be testing a stethoscope for the cochlear implant (which I will need when I start Medical School at Brown University this fall).

Again, this list is only a small sample of the many features of the cochlear implant. All these features may suggest that the cochlear implant is very complicated to use. This notion is false as most settings are automatic and many users choose what works best for them and often stick with it for most listening environments. Consequently, each person's experience with the cochlear implant is unique. For me, the cochlear implant has enabled me to communicate with people in person and on the phone with relative ease and without the need for assistive devices. However, in lecture classrooms, I utilize a FM system and CART because my professors talk too quickly and have an accent. This route is best in lecture settings because it is difficult to ask for repetition in the middle of a lecture on a frequent basis. Otherwise, the cochlear implant has allowed me to be self sufficient.

I would like to conclude by noting that my journey of "changing sounds" has been an exciting one for me. It has made me reconsider how we perceive everything including sound. After all, the same sounds do not sound the same with the hearing aids and cochlear implant.

*The author, Jordan Sack, is a Commissioner and Treasurer of the RI Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.*



# OPEN APPLICATION FOR COMMISSIONER

## CDHH is now accepting applications for Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Hearing Commissioners

### What is a Commissioner?

- Represents Deaf and hard of hearing viewpoints
- Brings issues re: education, employment, health care, family relations, interpreter/CART services, technology, and rights to the Commission
- Wants to improve life for Deaf and hard of hearing people
- Oversees the operation of the CDHH

### What does a Commissioner do?

- Attends CDHH meetings at least 4 meetings a year, mostly at CDHH office building behind the State House in Providence, RI
- Serves on at least one committee
- Lets Deaf and hard of hearing communities know what is happening and encourages more consumer participation
- Advocates for Deaf and hard of hearing by testifying at legislative hearings, writing letters, and filing complaints
- Participates in CDHH events

### How do I become a Commissioner?

- Let CDHH Commissioners know you are interested
- Contact CDHH by phone, fax, email, or letter, or stop by CDHH office
- Fill out an application and let us know why you would like to be a Commissioner

### What's next?

- Commission discusses application and votes to recommend you to Governor
- Governor looks at recommendations and gives final approval

To review the composition of the CDHH Board of Commissioners see SECTION 23-1.8-1 online at <http://www.rilin.state.ri.us/Statutes/TITLE23/23-1.8/23-1.8-1.HTM>.

**Application Deadline: May 28, 2010**

**RI COMMISSION ON THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING**  
ONE CAPITOL HILL, PROVIDENCE, RI 02908-5850  
401-256-5511 (TEL/VP)      401-222-5736 (FAX)  
CDHH@CDHH.RI.GOV (EMAIL)      WWW.CDHH.RI.GOV (WEB)

# RHODE ISLAND COMMISSION ON THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

Dept. of Adm. Building  
One Capitol Hill, Ground Level  
Providence, RI 02908-5850



**PLEASE CHECK  
OUT OUR UPDATED  
WEBSITE!  
WWW.CDHH.RI.GOV**

## *What is RICDHH?*

The Rhode Island Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (RICDHH) is an advocating, coordinating, and service providing entity committed to promoting an environment in which the deaf and hard of hearing in Rhode Island are afforded equal opportunity in all aspects of their lives. The RICDHH develops policy; initiates and lobbies for favorable legislation; fosters cooperations and awareness among state agencies and community organizations; and educates and advises consumers, state agencies, and employers about Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) rights to equal access. The RICDHH also provides direct services in its operation of a Sign Language Interpreter Referral Service, a lending library of books and videotapes, and as a clearinghouse of information and referral on all topics related to hearing loss.

## *Services RICDHH Offers*

- Sign Language Interpreter/CART Referral Service
- Public Awareness
- Information and Referral
- Ongoing Needs Assessments
- Opportunity to improve quality of life in education, employment, healthcare, family and technology
- Networking among Agencies & Organizations
- Assistive Listening Devices Loan Program
- Multimedia Library
- Legislation Initiation and Lobbying
- Statewide Coordinating Council to Implement Strategic Plan for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children

### **Current Commissioners:**

Travis R. Zellner, Chair  
Ed Rawlings, Vice Chair  
Jordan Sack, Treasurer  
Mary Wambach, Secretary  
James B. Compton  
John Dunsmore  
Sean Gill  
Andrew Knight  
Lisa Lieberman Sack  
James Simon  
Christine Thompson

### **RICDHH Staff:**

Steven A. Florio, Executive Director  
Pamela Zellner, Program Manager  
Paul Barnaby, Interpreter/CART Referral Specialist

## **RICDHH Trivia**



**Diana Doucette is the winner of our previous Trivia!**



The individual in the picture was one of RICDHH former Commissioners and her name is Lea Arnold. Currently, she resides in Vermont with her husband Ed, and they have two grown children, Jared from RI and Jennifer from VA. Lea is a Video Interpreter for Video Relay Service, and doing some freelance work, too. She is also a proud grandma of a seven month old baby girl!

## **New Trivia**



She was one of RICDHH former Staff and do you know who is she? If you can recognize her, please email your answer to [cdhh@cdhh.ri.gov](mailto:cdhh@cdhh.ri.gov).

Winner will be announced in next issue!

**Emergency Sign Language Interpreter Service For Medical, Mental Health and Legal - Call 401-586-6100**

**IMPORTANT:** The Emergency Interpreter Service is for EMERGENCIES ONLY!

Examples of emergencies are: Police/arrests, Hospital emergency, Psychiatric emergency

For all non-emergency calls for Interpreter Service, please call the RICDHH Interpreter and CART Referral Service at 401-222-5300 Voice, 401-222-5301 TTY or 401-354-7630 Videophone between 8:30am to 4:00pm, Monday - Friday.

*Schedule of 2010 meetings/functions:*

All meetings will be from 6pm to 9pm and held in Conference Room A, 2nd Floor at the Department of Administration Building, One Capitol Hill, Providence, RI 02908.

**EZINE  
SUBSCRIPTION**

Would you like to receive an electronic copy of RICDHH's next newsletter? Add your name or organization to our Ezine distribution list by email to [cdhh@cdhh.ri.gov](mailto:cdhh@cdhh.ri.gov).



May 19, 2010	September 22, 2010
June 23, 2010	October 20, 2010
July 21, 2010	November 10, 2010*
August 25, 2010	December 8, 2010

\* CDHH Annual Coffee Hour at State House, Governor's Reception Room



All meetings are open to the public. Please contact CDHH office if accommodations are necessary to ensure equal participation. Call (401) 256-5511 (voice/VP) for meeting location, meeting agenda, or to request an accommodation to participate in a meeting.



Rhode Island  
Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing  
One Capitol Hill, Ground Level  
Providence, RI 02908-5850

