

# deafweekly

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Deafweekly is an independent news report for the deaf and hard-of-hearing community. It is mailed to subscribers every Wednesday morning and available to read at [www.deafweekly.com](http://www.deafweekly.com). For information, contact [mail@deafweekly.com](mailto:mail@deafweekly.com).

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**NATIONAL**  
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## **DEAF SAILOR COMPLETES VOYAGE AROUND THE WORLD**

Charl de Villiers returned home to Texas on Sunday, ending a 289-day solo trip around the world in his 37-foot boat, "Island Time." The 44-year-old South African native, who became deaf at age 9 from antibiotics used to treat injuries received in a fire, is believed to be the first deaf person to make the trip by himself. Before the voyage, de Villiers had never gone out more than 50 miles or stayed on the water more than one night. A crowd of some 300 friends and family were on hand at the Palacios port to welcome his return, including his wife, Beverly, and children Sharleen, 19, and Gideon, 17. "It all seemed so unreal," he told the Victoria (Tex.) Advocate, "but when I hugged my wife and my children, I knew it was all real and I was home for good."

## **PROPOSED SIGNING TOWN CONTINUES TO MAKE PROGRESS**

Progress continues to be made on Laurent, the proposed town in South Dakota for signers. Organizers Marvin Miller and M.E. Barwacz, writing in the Dec. issue of The Laurent Town Crier, said, "We cannot stress enough that the town of Laurent WILL be built. It will be a reality soon." The coming year will see groundbreaking, construction and possibly even the first residents moving in, they said. Do not wait if you want a home or business in the town, they advised: "Get started now."

## **COLUMBUS CLOSE TO DEAL ON FORMER DEAF SCHOOL PROPERTY**

Two city agencies in Columbus, Ohio, are close to acquiring a leasehold interest in the former Ohio School for the Deaf complex. The agencies hope to buy out the remaining 38 years on a 60-year lease held by an

investment group in Dallas. The \$1.8 million deal was expected to close Dec. 20, said Business First in its Dec. 17 edition. "This puts it back in friendly hands and gives us a chance to determine collectively how best to reposition the Deaf School," said Bob McLaughlin, the city's downtown development administrator. The former school building currently leases 22,000 square feet, an occupancy rate of 23 percent. The city's Department of Recreation and Parks is thinking of leasing 40,000 square feet to consolidate its operations in one location.

## **EMERGENCY TRAINING PROGRAM OFFERED TO DEAF COMMUNITY**

New York's Monroe County, home of one of the nation's largest deaf communities, plans to expand its Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training to include deaf and hard-of-hearing community members. A free ASL-interpreted CERT training program will begin Jan. 25 and take place once a week through March 8. Course topics include disaster preparedness, fire suppression, medical operations, light search and rescue, disaster psychology and disaster simulation. Upon completion of the program, participants will receive a certificate and a CERT kit filled with safety equipment such as helmet, goggles, flashlight, vest and basic first aid supplies.

## **AFTER 2 YEARS, ORAL SCHOOL FINDS NEW HOME**

Officials at Ohio Valley Voices, the Cincinnati area's only oral deaf school, ended a two-year search for a new home when they announced plans last week to relocate to the River Hills Christian Church in Loveland, Ohio. Maria Sentelik, the school's director, rejected about 50 potential locations before settling on the church property, which will become vacant late next year when River Hills moves to a new church now under construction. According to the Cincinnati Enquirer, school officials had crossed off the church from its list over concerns that a nearby cell-phone tower would interfere with students' cochlear implants. Further testing, however, showed that the tower would not be a problem. The school opened in a church basement in 2000 with 12 students; growing enrollment (currently 32) is the impetus behind the relocation project, which is expected to cost \$2.5 million.

## **CONTEST ENTRY WINS SCHOOL \$10,000 IN EQUIPMENT**

A 100-word essay by American School for the Deaf technology teacher Bob Nitko has earned the West Hartford, Conn. school \$10,000 worth of high-tech equipment. Nitko wrote the essay for the Samsung Electronics' Hope for Education contest. The nationwide contest invited parents, teachers, students and school supporters to explain the importance of technology to their schools. Said Nitko: "Computers and software applications have opened up doors for our teachers to connect with our students."

## **INTERPRETER DROPS DEMAND FOR A SPEEDY TRIAL**

Natasha McCrary, the Athens, Ga. sign-language interpreter accused of sexually molesting three male students, has dropped her demand for a speedy trial. McCrary's attorney, Kim T. Stevens, withdrew the demand because of scheduling conflicts, the Athens Banner-Herald reported Dec. 10. McCrary, 32, was charged in September and filed the speedy trial demand in order to be exonerated and allowed to return to her work with children. She claims that she herself is the victim, arrested based on lies told by one student's parents who were attempting to extort money from her. Judge Steve Jones said he would put the case on his calendar for a January trial.

## **MAN CONVICTED OF SEXUAL ASSAULT OF DEAF GIRL, 13**

Eugene Cromety, 35, a former cable TV installer who lives in Stratford, Conn., faces up to 30 years in jail after being convicted last Thursday of raping the 13-year-old deaf daughter of his former girlfriend. Cromety, found guilty of first-degree sexual assault and risk of injury to a minor, will be sentenced Feb. 16. The victim,

who testified in court with two interpreters, was assaulted on three separate occasions, authorities said. The conviction "shows that people who think they can victimize the weak and get away with it are sadly mistaken," State's Attorney Mary Galvin told the Associated Press.

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### **Happy Holidays from Harris Communications**

Harris Communications would like to wish you a Happy Holiday season and a New Year filled with peace and joy. Remember there is still time to take advantage of Holiday specials on clocks, signalers and ttys. These specials will expire December 31, 2004. Visit us at <http://www.harriscomm.com/link/?www.harriscomm.com?sr=deafweeklynews> or contact us at <mailto:info@harriscomm.com> for more information.

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## **INTERNATIONAL**

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### **DEAF EGYPTIAN TEEN HELD IN ISRAELI CUSTODY 4 MONTHS**

A deaf 15-year-old boy, believed to be Egyptian, has been held in Israeli police custody for more than four months, imprisoned with adults and lacking legal representation or communication access, the Haaretz-Israel News reported Dec. 2. The teen was caught by police Aug. 4 along with four men on suspicion of smuggling drugs into Israel. An anthropologist familiar with sign language met the youth and learned that he had been raised in a Bedouin tribe on the Sinai coast and was kidnapped and forced to smuggle drugs from Egypt into Israel. Two human rights groups filed petitions earlier this month requesting that a deportation order be cancelled and that the boy be immediately released and housed in a safe place until his family can be located in Egypt.

### **'CRISIS WILL DRAG ON' AT CHS, SAYS TORONTO STAR**

The Canadian Hearing Society is in no danger of collapse, said the Toronto Star Dec. 18, but the controversy over the dismissal of president and chief executive Kelly Duffin may lead to the end of CHS's monopoly on deaf services in Ontario. Board president Bryan Searle refuses to say why Duffin, 40, was fired in November, citing only "philosophical differences." Duffin, who is hearing but signs fluently, joined the CHS in April 2003 and turned a deficit of nearly \$980,000 into a surplus of \$835,288 after just 11 months on the job. Since her dismissal, protestors have picketed outside CHS's Toronto headquarters and nearly half of the board of directors have resigned. CHS vice-president Susan Main told the Star that CHS will hold a meeting for people to air their concerns, but not until after the holidays.

### **WALES MAN UPSET OVER INTERPRETER CHOICE**

John Lennon of Wrexham, Wales, was told recently that he could not take his usual interpreter to a hospital appointment because the interpreter is in dispute with the Royal National Institute for the Deaf, which registers interpreters. According to icWales, the situation has already led to problems, as the new interpreter could not handle the assignment and had to be replaced. This is "simply not acceptable," said Lennon. "I insist that the choice of interpreter should be mine."

### **DEAF AFRICAN COUPLE CELEBRATE 50TH ANNIVERSARY**

The Monitor of Kampala, Uganda, Africa, reported Dec. 19 on the 50th wedding anniversary of Andrew Kawooya and Perepetwa Kulabako, both of whom are deaf. Friends and family gathered to honor the couple at their home in Mityana, a house that Kawooya built himself after learning the construction trade on his own. Kulabako decided that she wanted a gown like the one she wore at her wedding, and family members rushed to comply, finding a similar gown just hours before the party. According to the report, Kawooya didn't know his bride was also deaf until their wedding day, when he saw her talking with others in sign language.

## NEW ZEALAND LAGS BEHIND IN NEWBORN HEARING SCREENING

Ten years ago, the average age for identifying children born with hearing loss in New Zealand was two. Today, the average age has increased to four. The international standard is three months, said the New Zealand Herald last Thursday, and the National Foundation for the Deaf wants the government to rectify the situation. NFD chairman Peter Thorne said New Zealand lagged behind the rest of the developed world, and wants authorities to begin a national newborn screening and intervention program that would detect the roughly 170 babies born each year with a hearing impairment.

## CANADIAN MAN VICTIM OF MISTAKEN IDENTITY

A hard-of-hearing man from Regina, Sask. (Canada) was "shell-shocked" after police ordered him to the ground and handcuffed him Dec. 6. Police had been looking for a man involved in a nearby traffic incident when they came upon James Ferguson, 25, as he arrived at the restaurant where he works. According to CBC Saskatchewan, a co-worker rushed out to tell police they had the wrong man. Ferguson, a political science major at the University of Regina, said one officer apologized, but Ferguson's mother, Lois, said the police need to be more careful and should undergo training on how to deal with deaf and hard-of-hearing people.

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## LIFE & LEISURE

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## NEW VIDEO FROM DEAF MISSIONS PREMIERES IN IOWA

The Iowa School for the Deaf in Council Bluffs hosted the premiere last week of a new video produced by Deaf Missions, a group that produces religious educational material for the deaf and hard of hearing. "Finger Food Café, A Christmas Gift" was created to help deaf and hearing people get along better and get to know Jesus Christ, Duane King, executive director of Deaf Missions, told The Daily Nonpareil. King hopes the

video will help families where parents who can hear often do little to interact with their deaf or hard-of-hearing children.

**NEW COLLEGE GRAD WANTS TO BE A PROBATION OFFICER**

Amanda Pierce was one of about 1,000 students who graduated Sunday from the Metropolitan State College in Denver. With her new degree in criminal justice, Pierce hopes to become the first deaf probation officer. According to the Denver Post, Pierce already volunteers at the Arapahoe County Probation Department and interned with the Denver and Arapahoe counties' parole departments. A former Miss Deaf Colorado (1987-89), Pierce, 38, wants to help deaf clients improve their lives. Many deaf people "don't understand everything that happens" in the justice system, she told the Post. "They have a right to know what is going on."

**NOISE FROM TOYS CAN DAMAGE HEARING OF SMALL CHILDREN**

The noise from toys not only annoys parents, it may also damage the hearing of small children. So reports the Manitowoc (Wisc.) Herald Times Report in its Dec. 19 edition. Studies have shown that toys can emit noises of 85 decibels and above, a level that has been proven to affect hearing. A recent analysis of 22 toys by the Sight & Hearing Association showed that five produced noise of more than 100 decibels. "If it's really loud, I put tape over it," said one mom, Chermaine Meissner. "Usually the noisy toys are from relatives."

**STUDY: GENETIC TESTING BETTER FOR DIAGNOSING HEARING LOSS**

Researchers at the Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center have released a study showing that genetic testing is a better way to diagnose inner ear hearing loss in children than current testing methods. Doctors normally use such procedures as urine and blood tests, thyroid function tests, electrocardiograms and imaging studies to reveal hearing loss in children. However, says Doctors Guide Publishing, such tests are not foolproof and can be expensive and time-consuming. Genetic testing, particularly a screen for the GJB2 gene, should be the initial diagnostic test of choice, said researcher John H. Greinwald, Jr. M.D.

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**WORKING WORLD**  
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**MEAT PLANT WORKER OVERCOMES TROUBLED CHILDHOOD**

"A guy with an entry-level job at a meat plant may not seem like a big deal," the Daily Press of Hampton

Roads, Va. reported Dec. 15, but Travis Lee Moore isn't just any guy – he's "the first deaf and mute employee to work at Smithfield Foods." Moore was 2 when his deafness was discovered, and 8 when his grandmother, Irene Jones, rescued him and two older brothers when they were living with their single mother in an abandoned building. The older brothers took "the path of excuses and failure," the newspaper reported, and one of them shot Moore accidentally with a shotgun, "tearing up his kidneys," Jones said. He recovered from his injuries, and now, his grandmother said, "He's the only one trying to make something of himself."

## **IOWA SCHOOL INTERPRETER RECEIVES 'EXCELLENCE AWARD'**

Karene Christenson, an interpreter with the Iowa School for the Deaf, was one of five individuals awarded the Iowa Board of Regents' Staff Excellence Award at a banquet Dec. 15. According to the Daily Nonpareil, Christenson was recognized for her enthusiasm and willingness to take on additional responsibilities. In addition to interpreting, she helps run the school's elementary and high school libraries, maintains several community affiliations and attends college to earn a bachelor's degree in K-9 education.

## **SCHOOL BUS DRIVER SIGNS UP TO LEARN SIGN LANGUAGE**

Victoria Bedford, a school bus driver of special needs students in the Bethlehem Area School District, has taken it upon herself to learn sign language so she can communicate more easily with deaf students who ride her bus. According to the Express-Times of Easton, Pa., Bedford signed up for a beginner's ASL class at Northampton Community College in September. She's already up to the intermediate level and plans to continue to advanced studies in the spring. Her new skills have already come in handy, but one thing's for sure: "I do not drive and do sign language at the same time," she said. "I keep two hands on the wheel."

## **CONTROVERSIAL SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT RESIGNS**

Maureen Schloss is the new superintendent at the South Dakota School for the Deaf, following the resignation of Jon Green, who held the job since 1995. Schloss has been interim superintendent since Green left for sabbatical in September. Green, 56, will become a research professor with the state Board of Regents, where he will study educational issues involving deaf and hard-of-hearing children. According to the Sioux City Journal, Green's tenure was marred by criticism from parents who claimed he showed a hostile attitude toward staff who promoted deaf culture and discouraged students from attending institutions for the deaf. "As a parent, I'm very happy with the new leadership," said Marvin Miller, one of those who criticized Green's leadership.

## **VERIZON GRANT BRINGS SMARTBOARDS TO PSD**

The Pennsylvania School for the Deaf announced last week that it has received a grant of \$5,500 from the Verizon Foundation to install two Smartboard stations and LCD projectors in two classrooms. The Smartboards will assist high school students and Job Center clients with their literacy skills and job-related training. According to a PSD news release, Smartboards "allow users to place their hands directly on the large wall-mounted units to correct grammar, map sentence structure, work on math and science equations, and prepare PowerPoint presentations."

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## **SIGN LANGUAGE FOR THE FAMILY VIDEO SERIES and COMPANION BOOK**

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## ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

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### DEAF 'SURVIVOR' CHRISTY SMITH HOSTS NEW TV SHOW

Christy Smith, the deaf woman who spent 33 days in the Amazon for the CBS reality show "Survivor," is the star of a new PBS television series. "Christy's Kids: Challenge Yourself" will air its pilot episode Dec. 26 on KBDI-Channel 12 in Denver. According to the Rocky Mountain News, the first episode was filmed at the Aspen Camp School for the Deaf and features Smith enjoying outdoor activities with hearing and hearing-impaired children.

### ANOTHER WEBSITE IDENTIFIED FOR 'SUE THOMAS' FANS

Last week's Deafweekly spoke of an effort to save the PAX-TV show, "Sue Thomas: F.B.Eye," from cancellation. Although there are two and a half years left on the contract, production is scheduled to shut down at the end of January. Deafweekly has learned of another website where fans of the show can express their support. The address is <http://suescrew.zerolimit.net/?x=zap-op> and it is the official fan site of the show. To learn more about what you can do to save the show, visit the site and voice your concerns.

### MAINE'S BAXTER SCHOOL UNVEILS PAINTINGS BY CHUCK BAIRD

Deaf artist Chuck Baird is wrapping up a three-month artist residency this week at the Governor Baxter School for the Deaf in Falmouth, Maine, following the unveiling of his two six-foot-square oil paintings last Friday. The paintings show two different aerial views of Mackworth Island, where the school is located. One shows an eastward view as the sun rises over Casco Bay; the second takes an opposite approach, looking westward as the sun sets. Baird told the Portland Press Herald that the paintings could be interpreted as a "model of daily school life," or could represent the entire school experience for Baxter students. Wooden hand shapes superimposed over the paintings make a sign in ASL that could have about 200 meanings, Baird said, ranging from "provide" to "Do you want a hug?" The artworks will be installed in Brewster Hall, the school's new \$2.3 million academic building.

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### Upcoming DIIT Workshops

<http://www.rit.edu/diit>

or 585-475-2225 V/TTY

Deaf Initiative in Information Technology (DIIT) would like to inform and invite you to attend their upcoming workshops held at NTID. DIIT sponsors computer and information technology workshops designed especially for deaf and hard-of-hearing professionals.

The workshops provide a *unique* opportunity:

\* An All Sign Environment



- \* Learn New Technical Skills
- \* Network with Other Deaf IT Professionals

**Introduction to Macromedia Dreamweaver**

Instructor: Karen Beiter  
Date: January 24-28, 2005  
Place: NTID/RIT, Rochester NY  
Cost: \$300

**Creating Web Pages with HTML**

Instructor: Elissa Olsen  
Date: February 21-25, 2005  
Place: NTID/RIT, Rochester NY  
Cost: \$300

**Introduction to Microsoft Access Database**

Instructor: Ari Ogoke  
Date: February 21-25, 2005  
Place: NTID/RIT, Rochester NY  
Cost: \$300

**Introduction to Macromedia Flash MX 2004**

Instructor: Karen Beiter  
Date: February 28-March 4, 2005  
Place: NTID/RIT, Rochester NY  
Cost: \$300

**PC Hardware Maintenance and Repair**

Instructor: Tony Spiecker  
Date: February 28-March 4, 2005  
Place: NTID/RIT, Rochester NY  
Cost: \$400

For more information visit: <http://www.rit.edu/diit>. If you are interested in attending, click “Registration” on the left side of that web page, or call 585-475-2225 V/TTY.

*DIIT is supported by a grant from the National Science Foundation.*

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**SPORTS**

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**CONTROVERSY OVERSHADOWS UPCOMING DEAFLYMPICS**

With the 2005 Deaflympics set to begin Jan. 5 in Melbourne, Australia, there is some confusion over whether or not more than a dozen countries have pulled their teams out of the Games. Rafael Pinkhasov Pinchas, an independent deaf sports analyst, claimed in a press release last week that 21 teams from 14 countries have withdrawn from the competition. Pinchas said that the rules of the CISS (the international deaf sports governing organization) require withdrawing teams to pay a penalty fee of \$5,000, meaning CISS can expect



to receive \$105,000 in penalties. However, interim CISS president Donalda Ammons, contacted by Deafweekly, said Pinchas' report of team cancellations is "absolutely untrue." Pinchas also contends that the USA owes more than \$10,000 in penalty fees to the CISS for withdrawing its teams from tennis and wrestling championships in 2003 and 2004. Said Ammons in response: "There is no truth to it."

**DEAF COLLEGE FOOTBALL PLAYER ON WAY TO ALAMO BOWL**

The Alamo Bowl is coming up Dec. 29 in San Antonio, Texas, and Oklahoma State freshman football player Martel Van Zant is looking forward to it. Van Zant is the only deaf player in the Big 12 Conference, said Chris Matthews of the OSU Athletic Department. He relies on his eyes to stay in the game, but "it's not really difficult," the Texas native told the OSU's Daily O'Collegian. "It's really easy." He confesses to having been nervous when he first joined the team, and admits that his college classes are harder than high school, but he's glad to be in the Cowboy lineup. OSU coach Les Miles is happy to have him. "He's bright, physically capable 6-2, 200-pound corner that runs like heck," said Miles. "He's just the right kind of guy."

**HEARING LOSS MAKES TEXAS BOXER 'DOUBLE STRONG,' COACH SAYS**

Nakia Peterson is not your typical boxer, said KCEN-TV News in Temple, Texas last week. Peterson, 30, took up the sport just six years ago, somewhat late for competitive boxing, and he faces the challenges that come from being born deaf. Being unable to hear or speak leaves Peterson "short two things, so that makes him double strong," said his coach Joseph Thomas. Peterson competes throughout the state and has a record of eight wins and nine losses. He'll be starting college next month, and after he hangs up his boxing gloves he'd like to become a chef.

**FIRST DEAF DODGEBALL TOURNAMENT COMING UP**

The National Dodgeball Association of the Deaf has announced plans for its first annual tournament, to take place June 9-11, 2005 in San Antonio, Texas. The fee to enter is \$100 per team and the deadline to sign up is April 10. Men's, women's and co-ed teams are invited, and if you don't have a team, you can send \$10 and you'll be placed on a team if available. Ein Long and Ricky Hernandez are chairing the event, and you can reach them for information at [EinTLong@msn.com](mailto:EinTLong@msn.com) or [Softballfever\\_9@yahoo.com](mailto:Softballfever_9@yahoo.com).

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**COMING EVENTS**

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**DEAF, HARD OF HEARING IN GOVERNMENT TO MEET**

Registration is underway for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Government National Training Conference. The three-day event will take place May 9-11, 2005 at the George Washington University Cafritz Conference Center in Washington, D.C., and will focus on employment, advancement, retention and culture of deaf and hard-of-hearing government employees. For information, visit [www.dhhig.org/ntc/2005/registration.htm](http://www.dhhig.org/ntc/2005/registration.htm).

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**MILESTONES**

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**MARGARET ABARAVICH, 85, LONGTIME DEAF ADVOCATE**

Margaret Abaravich, 85, a longtime Milwaukee resident and advocate for the deaf, died Dec. 15 of heart failure in California. Mrs. Abaravich, whose husband Vincent died in 1997 after more than 50 years of marriage, lost her hearing at age 9 due to spinal meningitis. She devoted herself to raising her children – Patric, Vincent and Margaret – before returning to school and earning a bachelor’s degree in English Literature at the age of 61. She was described in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel as “a passionate advocate for the deaf” who served as an officer of several organizations. Just a few weeks ago, Mrs. Abaravich was told by her retirement community that she had to sit at a different table, away from her friends, because she used a wheelchair and scooter. “She did a sit-in,” said her daughter Margaret Atwell, “and eventually, they just said, ‘Sit wherever you want to sit.’ ”

**MARY M. GOODE, 87, MOTHER OF SEVEN CHILDREN**

Mary M. Goode was a “bundle of energy,” said the Detroit News, “who overcame deafness to raise seven children without ever slowing down. Mrs. Goode, 87, died of a stroke at home on Dec. 15. Her daughter, Martha Goode, told the newspaper that her mother “covered more ground running after her children than the 800 miles between Syracuse, N.Y. (her birthplace) and her home in Madison Heights.” Martha Goode added that her mother learned to read lips, and “If she didn’t understand what someone said, she was smart enough to figure it out by reading the person’s body language.”

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**EMPLOYMENT**

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**Employment Opportunities (4 positions)**  
TDI Community Emergency Preparedness Information Network Project (CEPIN)  
Regional Emergency Preparedness Specialist (2 positions)  
– Mid-Atlantic and Southeast region (NVRC, Fairfax, VA, closes 1/14/05)  
– New England and Great Lakes region (D.E.A.F., Inc., Allston, MA, closes 1/14/05)  
National Coordinator - TDI/CEPIN, Silver Spring, MD, closes 1/7/05  
Public Relations Specialist - TDI/CEPIN, Silver Spring, MD, closes 1/14/05  
All positions full-time, contingent on project funding.  
For more information about these positions, visit the TDI website <http://www.tdi-online.org/> and click on “Our Resources” then “Emergency Preparedness” and “Job Announcements”.

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