

Week's events honor deaf culture

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Storytelling in sign language, art gallery tours led by a deaf docent and a vintage game of baseball featuring the portrayal of William "Dummy" Hoy, a deaf baseball star from the late 1800s, are some of the activities planned during Deaf Awareness Week beginning Sunday.

The biennial event is not only cause for Rochester's large deaf community to celebrate their culture, but also is intended for hearing people to understand more about deafness.

"A lot of people want to learn sign language but might be intimidated," said Matthew Starr, chairman of this year's event. "Everybody is welcome."

The area is home to several thousand deaf people who rely on sign language as their primary means of communication. Deaf Awareness Week is one way to encourage the groups to come together, regardless of whether they were born deaf, are hard of hearing or have a cochlear implant, said committee member Steven DeBottis.

More than 1,400 people attended events at the 2004 Deaf Awareness Week, Starr said. DAW has been hosted by different groups since the first local event in 1984. This year, the Rochester Recreation Club of the Deaf is hosting the event.

"It makes perfect sense for them to host," said committee member Jackie Schertz. "It's coming from the heart of the community."

Thomas Holcomb, a professor of Deaf Studies at Ohlone College in Fremont, Calif., is keynote speaker at Sunday's event.

"The deaf community has experienced quite a few changes. There are quite a lot of reasons to celebrate our past," he said in sign language via videophone from California. "Who knows what our future holds? Everything keeps changing with technology."

Holcomb, 46, worked at Rochester Institute of Technology's National Technical Institute for the Deaf from 1982 to 1991, and knows about the large deaf population here.

"Rochester is a forerunner of the deaf world and how it progresses," Holcomb said. "What happens in Rochester will eventually spread throughout the rest of the United States. Rochester is like a microcosm for what will happen in the future. ... It's really a special place for both deaf people and for the community that has embraced the deaf community so well."

Deaf Awareness Week schedule of events

(September 21, 2006) — More information may be found at: <http://rochesterdeafclub.com/daw>.

Sunday

12:30-4:30 p.m., kickoff ceremony, Memorial Art Gallery, 500 University Ave., with opening remarks at 1:30 p.m.; keynote presentation, "Celebrating Our Past and Creating Our Future," at 2:30 p.m. by Thomas Holcomb. Also storytelling, gallery tour and arts and crafts.

Monday

1-2 p.m., "Deaf Jurors, Serving the Courts & Community," by Charles Perreaud, jury commissioner, at Penfield Public Library, 1985

Baird Road, Penfield.

7-8:30 p.m., "An Inside Look at Advocacy Services for Abused Deaf Victims," by Vicki Hurwitz and Mary Mowl, Forum Conference Room, Building 1, Monroe Community College, 1000 East Henrietta Road.

Tuesday

10-11 a.m., "Signed Languages of the World: A Cross-Linguistic Comparison," by Michael Weingart, ASL instructor, Forum Conference Room, Building 1, Monroe Community College, 1000 East Henrietta Road.

7-8:30 p.m., "Deaf Patients: Knowing Your Rights in Medicine," by Dr. Michael McKee, at the National Center for Deaf Health Research, 300 East River Road, Door A, Suite G-100.

Wednesday 9:30-11 a.m., Deaf Storytelling, Barnes & Noble, 3349 Monroe Ave., Pittsford.

6:30-8:30 p.m., "Dual Sensory Loss: Varied Deaf/Blind Experience," panel discussion, at Lifespan, 1 Mt. Hope Ave. E-mail: bbushart@lifespan-roch.org in advance if you need interpreting or other communication accommodations.

Thursday, Sept. 28 Noon-1 p.m., "New York Relay Service," by Susan Demers Postlethwait, at Chili Public Library, 333 Chili Ave.

1:45-3 p.m., and repeated at 3:15-4:30 p.m., "Deaf Culture/Interacting with the Deaf Community," by Rita Staubhaar, at St. John Fisher College, Campus Center, second floor, 3690 East Ave., Pittsford.

3-5 p.m., "Everything You Always Wanted to Know About ASL, But Were Afraid to Sign!," by Deafworks!, at Chili Public Library, 333 Chili Ave.

7-8:30 p.m., "In the Open Air/Light: An Introduction to Impressionism," by Jackie Schertz, deaf docent at the Memorial Art Gallery, 500 University Ave. Free, but reservations needed by Sunday by contacting rdaw2006@yahoo.com.

Friday, Sept. 29 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Children's Program, with students from Rochester School for the Deaf and Rochester's School No. 1 performing, storytelling and songs in sign language, at Strong National Museum of Play, 1 Manhattan Square. Free with museum admission: \$9; \$8 for seniors; \$7 for children 2-17; free for children under 2.

3-8 p.m., Deaf Exhibitions, at Marketplace Mall, in Henrietta.

Saturday, Sept. 30 10:30 a.m., William "Dummy" Hoy Classic, recreation of a historic vintage baseball game, at Genesee Country Village & Museum, 1410 Flint Hill Road, Mumfords; discussions about Dummy Hoy and what life was like for a deaf person 100 years ago, at 2 p.m. Museum admission: \$14; \$11 for students and seniors; \$8 for children 4-16; free for children under 4.

8 p.m., "The Abababa Road Tour," Alan Abarbanell on stage to tell his experiences of growing up hearing in a Deaf family, for ages 12 and up, at Robert F. Panara Theater, NTID at Rochester Institute of Technology, 52 Lomb Memorial Drive, Henrietta. Tickets are \$7 at the door; \$5 in advance.

7 p.m., Mad Hatter's Gala & Closing Ceremony, prizes for creative hats, at the Rochester Recreation Club for the Deaf, 1564 Lyell Ave., \$5 admission.

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