

## University

# Deafness is normal for this PSU student

by Zac Taylor

Imagine the sound of a doorbell. For most folks, that sound is a no-brainer. We know what a doorbell is and when we push the button on the doorbell we describe the sound it makes as “ding dong.”

Now imagine never having been able to hear the sound a doorbell makes. Imagine asking someone what happens when you push that button. Would the simple “It sounds like ‘ding dong,’” suffice?

For Jennifer Harbaugh the answer is no.

“I wanted more, of course. But [the explanation of the sound of a doorbell] leaves me to my own imagination,” she said.

Harbaugh, 21, has been deaf from birth. Not knowing the sound of something simple, like a doorbell, has frustrated Harbaugh for most of her life.

Harbaugh’s deafness is termed “pre-lingual impairment,” which indicates that Harbaugh became deaf before she ever heard a word of English.

But, that doesn’t stop her from reading and writing English better than most hearing people. In fact, Harbaugh, a senior at Penn State, majors in the one subject that should be the most difficult for her to master—English.

“When we put [language] into writing, it’s just a representation of what the sounds are,” Phyllis Austin, one of Harbaugh’s sign language interpreters said. “We learn language from hearing it.”

Austin said that people like Harbaugh, who are born deaf, have a greater difficulty learning language.

“It’s uncommon to see someone so profoundly deaf and so proficient in English,” Austin said.

Growing up, Harbaugh said she used hearing aids, which allowed her to hear faint noises and speech, but she didn’t like them.

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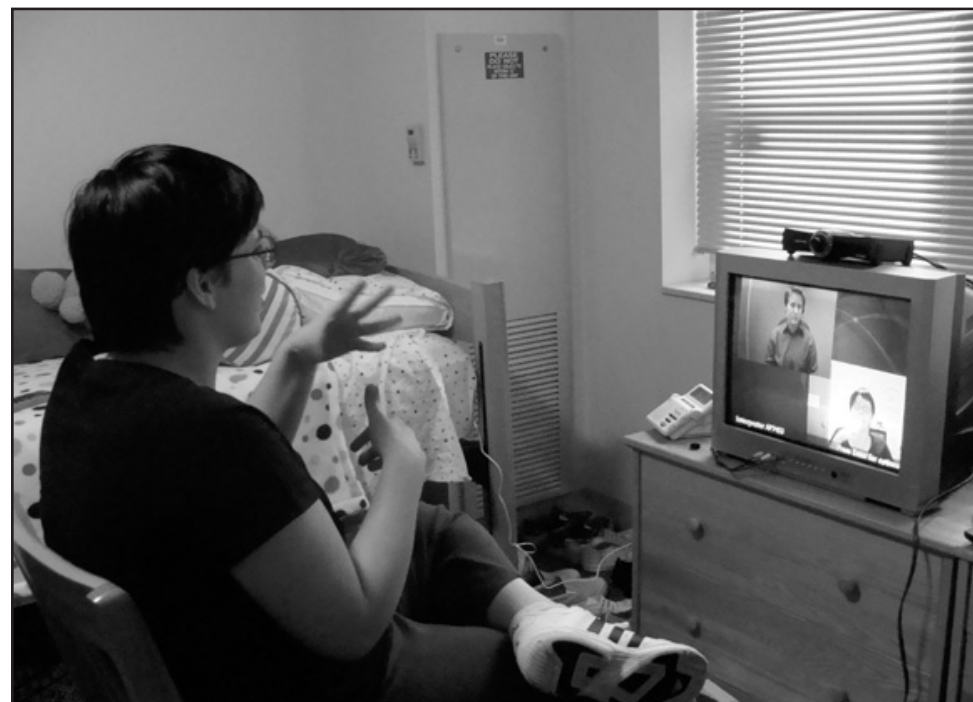


Photo by David Reinbold  
Penn State student Jennifer Harbaugh, who is hearing-impaired, uses a videophone attached to her television to make phone calls.

# Law students spread word about workers’ rights

by Katie Jacobs

Penn State students concerned about labor law now have a new ally on campus. The Work Law Society is rallying with students to fight for workers’ rights.

The WLS was created last spring as a resource for students enrolled in the Penn State Dickinson School of Law who are interested in labor law. Michael Berkheimer, the society’s president and main founder, said the organization also strives to raise awareness about workers’ rights to those not enrolled in the school.

Penn State students have made it clear that they are concerned about workers’ rights. Last spring, 31 students were arrested for criminal trespass at Old Main following a six-and-a-half hour sit-in where they urged the administration to adopt anti-sweatshop policies. On Sept. 2, members from United Students Against Sweatshops and Student Labor Action Project held a “welcome back party” at Old Main complete with cake.

“On campus there is a lot of interest in sweatshop issues, and there should be,” said

“A huge number of the people who work for the university and other employers do not earn enough to pay for housing here.”

--Ellen Dannin

Ellen Dannin, a professor in the law school. “However, that concern for the condition of workers doesn’t seem to translate to concern for the abysmal working conditions in terms of safety, pay, hours [and] benefits of workers right here in State College.”

One of WLS’s biggest efforts is the spreading of information about labor law to workers in Centre County. Adam Zebelian, the WLS vice president, said the biggest accomplishment of the WLS thus far will be completing its “Got Rights” manual, which is set to be completed by the end of the fall semester.

WLS plans to distribute the manual among Penn State students and employees.

“A huge number of the people who work for the university and other employers do not earn enough to pay for housing here,” Dannin said. “Several secretaries have told

me they work a second job to make ends meet.”

The WLS also supports protests urging the Penn State administration to approve the Designated Suppliers Program. The DSP promotes the use of suppliers that follow defined fair labor practices.

WLS provided legal observers last spring when the 31 Penn State students were arrested following the sit-in at Old Main. Berkheimer and Eddie Richardson, another member of the WLS, served as the observers.

“I believe that the administration’s refusal to meet and discuss the concerns of student organizations leaves the students little choice but to commit acts of civil disobedience to get their voice heard,” Berkheimer said. “If the administration denies them the opportunity to work for reform within the

traditional framework, it forces them to work outside the system.”

The WLS also wishes to draw attention to these issues from those not specifically interested in labor law.

WLS has arranged for David Kovalik, a labor attorney with the United Steelworkers, to speak on campus. Kovalik graduated from the Columbia University School of Law as a labor and human-rights lawyer and was also a former labor organizer in Columbia.

He has received the Project Censored award after he wrote an article about the murders of trade unionists in Columbia.

“I believe that he will appeal to a wider community than just the law school,” Berkheimer said. Kovalik will speak at 7p.m., Oct. 15 in the Beam Building.

WLS is striving to inform not only the workers directly affected by labor law but also students who may not realize that foreign countries aren’t the only places with poor working conditions.

“Students are interacting every day with people who labor under bad conditions,” Dannin said.

from Harbaugh, pg. 16

"I decided that I shouldn't [wear hearing aids] just to fit into the hearing world," Harbaugh said, adding that if she were to learn speech, then she should do it for her own benefit and not for the benefit others.

"I'm happy with the way that I am," she said.

For her classes, Harbaugh needs a sign language interpreter who listens to the lecture and uses sign language to translate. This semester, Harbaugh has two sign language interpreters, one for her daytime classes and one for her night class.

The sign language interpreters are provided to Harbaugh from Penn State's Office of Disability Services. ODS provides services for students with special needs.

ODS also provides captionists, or people who listen to the lectures, but, instead of signing the translations to the deaf student, a captionist types the translations on a computer screen that the student can see from a monitor.

But, Harbaugh prefers a sign language interpreter over a captionist. In her experience, a captionist usually lags a sentence or

two behind the professor's lecture. The sign language interpreter is more precise, she said.

While Harbaugh is generally happy with the services ODS provides, she said it is much harder to find a sign language interpreter for social situations outside of the classroom.

Simply ordering food in a restaurant or asking for directions can be a frustrating experience for Harbaugh, especially when the people around her don't understand that she is deaf.

In such situations Harbaugh tries to communicate to them that she needs a pen and paper.

"They don't know how to respond to that. They act like they saw a ghost or something," she said.

Harbaugh said that when people finally



Jennifer Harbaugh

understand she needs a pen and paper to communicate with them, they sometimes act impolite.

"I feel like a circus freak sometimes," she said.

Harbaugh showed *Voices* some of the amenities in her Eastview Terrace apartment that make her life a little easier.

Harbaugh wakes up every morning to a vibrating alarm clock device under her pillow.

When Harbaugh wants to make a phone call, she uses a videophone attached to the top of her TV. She sits in front of the TV, dials the number she wants to call with the remote control, and waits as the video call is transferred to an operator who communicates with Harbaugh using Sign language. The operator then translates Harbaugh's sign language message for whomever she is calling.

If there is a fire in Harbaugh's apartment while she is asleep, a strobe light in her room flashes brightly enough to wake her up.

But aside from the obvious assistance Harbaugh needs—the in-class sign language interpreter, a videophone, vibrating alarm clock, and strobe-light fire alarm—

she considers herself very independent.

"If I [was not independent] I would not be able to live at [Penn State] with 42,000 people around," she said.

In fact, Harbaugh fits right in with those 42,000 students. According to Harbaugh, there are no obvious signs that she has a disability or needs help getting around.

Harbaugh had looked into going to other colleges that enroll only deaf students, but she said she couldn't pass up the opportunity to go to a renowned school like Penn State.

"Education was my priority, not my social life," Harbaugh said.

The term disabled, which is often pinned on deaf people, is especially frustrating for Harbaugh.

"It insults me," Harbaugh said. "I know I cannot hear, but that doesn't mean I can't live without it. I'm independent; I'm at a hearing college and aiming for grad school."

Above all, Harbaugh emphasized that she functions in everyday life just like everyone else. The only difference is that she cannot hear.

"Deafness is normal to me," Harbaugh said.



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# Short visit to Israel changes student's life goals

by Art Goldschmidt

Can a Brooklyn-born, 22-year-old biology student at Penn State learn about the Middle East conflict and find a direction for his own career by spending two weeks in Israel and the occupied West Bank?

Isaac Kassis, a Muslim of Palestinian background, was one of 14 delegates sent to the Israeli-occupied West Bank by the Interfaith Peace-Builders and the U.S. Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation in the summer of 2008. Kassis talked to Jewish Israelis and Muslim and Christian Palestinians holding a wide variety of opinions about the conflict and possible solutions while visiting Palestinian refugee camps and Jewish settlements in the West Bank.

Israelis whom he met included Hebrew University students, Mizrachim—or, Oriental Jews—including members of the “Black Panther” organization and a Jewish settler in Hebron. One of the Jewish guides for the delegation had refused to serve in the Israeli Defense Force. Kassis met no current politicians, either Israeli or Palestinian. He did meet a former member of the

Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and observed that its head, the late George Habash, remains popular among West Bank Palestinians.

Kassis said he joined the delegation because he wanted “to experience first-hand the region for which I have been passionately speaking out.” He is the vice president of Penn State’s Students for Justice in Palestine and a member of Amnesty International. Both of his parents were born in Birzeit, near Ramallah, and he still has relatives there.

Kassis observed many things during his short stay in Israel that help illuminate popular sentiments across that country today: Israeli settlers walking around carrying M-16 rifles, Israeli children not being punished if they assault Palestinians, Israelis fearing an anti-Jewish massacre like the one that occurred in Hebron in 1929, pro-Israeli groups being protected by armed guards while Kassis’ delegation had no guards.

The large Jewish settlement of Ma’aleh Adumim, which the group visited, resembles San Diego and splits the predominantly Arab-Palestinian West Bank in half. He

characterized its Israeli settlers as striving to live like Americans at the Palestinians’ expense.

“The Israeli settlements are on the land, but not a part of it,” Kassis said. “Even after 60 years their roots don’t go as deep as the Palestinians’ roots, whatever they may claim.”

When the group visited Deheisheh Refugee Camp, Kassis was impressed at how much the Palestinian people make the best use of what they have.

Between 1993 and 2001 the Clinton administration tried to achieve a solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict based on having an Israeli and a Palestinian state living side by side in peace. Kassis thinks that the large numbers of Jewish settlers and settlements in the West Bank have made this “two-state solution” impossible. He believes, instead, that there should be one state for Jews, Christians and Muslims. The Palestinians should say to the Israelis: “You won. Now give us our rights.”

“Jews should be free to go to the West Bank. Palestinians should be free to go to the beach in Jaffa,” Kassis said.

“Jews should be free to go to the West Bank. Palestinians should be free to go to the beach in Jaffa.”

--Isaac Kassis

This trip has done for Isaac Kassis what Operation Birthright has done for Jewish students that it sends to Israel. It has deepened his knowledge and strengthened his support for the cause that he already believed in. It has also changed his career goal, he said. Instead of going to medical school to become a doctor, he now wants to do graduate study in Islamic and Middle East history. As a teacher, he feels he can enlighten generations of students about the conflict.

If Kassis earns a Ph.D. in Middle East history, it’s likely he will generate discussion—if not conflict—in his classes.



## The State Theatre presents



### Ebony and Ivory Tribute

For the Bob Zimmerman Steinway Piano Fund  
To benefit The State Theatre  
Sun, Oct 5 • 4pm



### The Del McCoury Band

with special guest The Belleville Outfit  
Wed, Oct 22 • 8pm

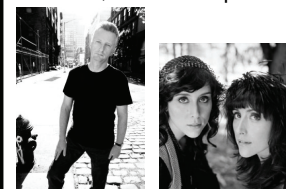


### An Evening with Jonatha Brooke

Wed, Oct 15 • 8pm

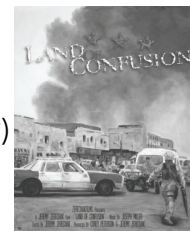
### Billy Bragg

with special guest the Watson Twins  
Fri, Oct 17 • 9pm - Note Special Start Time



### Land of Confusion

(Special Screening & DVD Release Party)  
Sun, Oct 26 • 7pm



### A night of comedy with KP Anderson

Executive Producer of E!’s *The Soup*  
Fri, Oct 24 • 8pm



### An Evening with Richard Thompson

In association with Webster’s Café  
Wed, Oct 29 • 8pm



## Halloween @ The State

Oct 30 • 1-7pm

### Halloween Blood Drive

In the Upper Lobby  
Get a free movie pass &  
enter to win great prizes!

## Classic Film Features

Oct. 30

4pm: Teen Wolf (1985/PG)

7pm: Alien (1979/R)

9:30pm: Friday the 13th (1980/R)



Oct. 31

7pm: An American Werewolf  
in London (1981/R)

9:30pm: Poltergeist (1982/R)

Midnight: The Shining (1980/R)



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