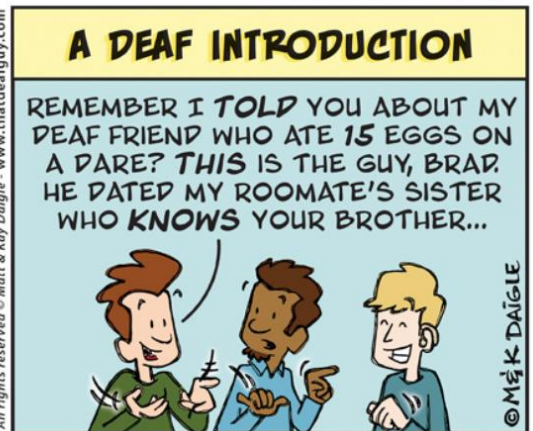


Culture Close-Up

THAT DEAF GUY

BY MATT & KAY DAIGLE



Deaf Introductions

When Deaf people **meet for the first time** or introduce each other, they will often provide more personal details than a hearing person might. They always give first and last names, because there is a higher chance, in a small community, that this will provide information about their family or community connections. This can be particularly important if they come from a family with several generations of Deaf people - such families are considered to be at the core of the Deaf community. They will often add other information about their associations with particular places, sporting or cultural organisations, or the school they attended.

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The Long Goodbye

Auslan, or any sign language for that matter, is purely a visual, face-to-face language, with communication historically being limited to times when deaf friends are physically present with each other. As 90% of deaf people are born into hearing families, such times of meeting with other deaf people would be cherished and enjoyed as they communicate in their own language and with ease. This has impacted upon their culture, contributing to lengthy goodbyes.

Lengthy goodbyes form an integral part of Deaf culture. The Deaf place a high emphasis on relationships and being interconnected, and therefore will ensure that they seek out and say goodbye to each friend present. In the process of doing this, they will often indicate when they expect to see each other again, confirming times and dates. Deaf culture also places a high emphasis on physical contact when parting, usually in the form of a hug.

With the emergence and availability of technology, communication has become more accessible, in the forms of TTY, sms, email, video conferencing, social media, etc. Therefore, perhaps some of the deeply embedded culture of long goodbyes has lost some of its imperativeness. However, it has not been completely lost, and taking time to say goodbye and establish an expectation of the next time one will see the other is still significantly valued.