

# REGISTRATION

REGISTERED INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

NATIONAL TECHNICAL INSTITUTE FOR THE DEAF

# Parent News

*Spring/Summer 2005*

# Student Poets Visit Japan

**L**ast year, Film and Animation major Sam Sepah was thrilled when he learned that, as a winner of the Robert F.

Panara Haiku/Tanka Competition, a video of him performing his haiku would be shown on an outdoor video screen in Tokyo, near the United States Embassy.

Thanks to the Postsecondary Education Network (PEN)-International, sponsor of the annual competition, Sam and four other winning poets from RIT/NTID visited Japan in May to celebrate their artistic success and enjoy a cultural exchange.

Combining an ancient Japanese poetry form with the expressive beauty of American and Japanese Sign Languages, the Haiku/Tanka Competition has become an annual opportunity for students from both RIT/NTID and Japan's Tsukuba College

of Technology (TCT) to try their hand at creative poetry writing.

The competition began in 2000 as the brainchild of now-retired NTID Professor Jerome Cushman, as a way to honor beloved Professor Robert F. Panara, NTID's first deaf faculty member, regularly incorporated haiku into the English classes he taught for deaf and hearing students.

Cushman's idea found support from PEN-International Director James DeCaro and The Nippon Foundation of Japan, the philanthropic organization that funds PEN-International.

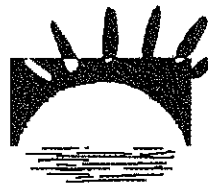
According to competition rules, students may submit Haiku (three-line poems) as well as Tankas (five-line poems).

This year, a record 249 poems were submitted by 28 students from both schools.

Competitions were staged separately at both colleges, but video conferencing allowed the students to watch each other's performances.

This year's RIT/NTID student winners are Stephen S. McDonald, Sam S. Sepah, Jessica A. Thurber, Jack R. Williams, and Christopher J. Zahniel. Honorable mentions were given to Leon Lim, Michelle Peterson, and Cassie Haynes. McDonald's Tanka follows:

*red sun  
on the horizon  
reflecting off  
knolls of sand  
my desire to drink*



TCT's five student winners and four faculty members visited RIT/NTID in March, and welcomed NTID's student winners and chaperones in May. Winning poems can be found on the PEN-International Web site at [www.pen.ntid.rit.edu/news.php](http://www.pen.ntid.rit.edu/news.php).