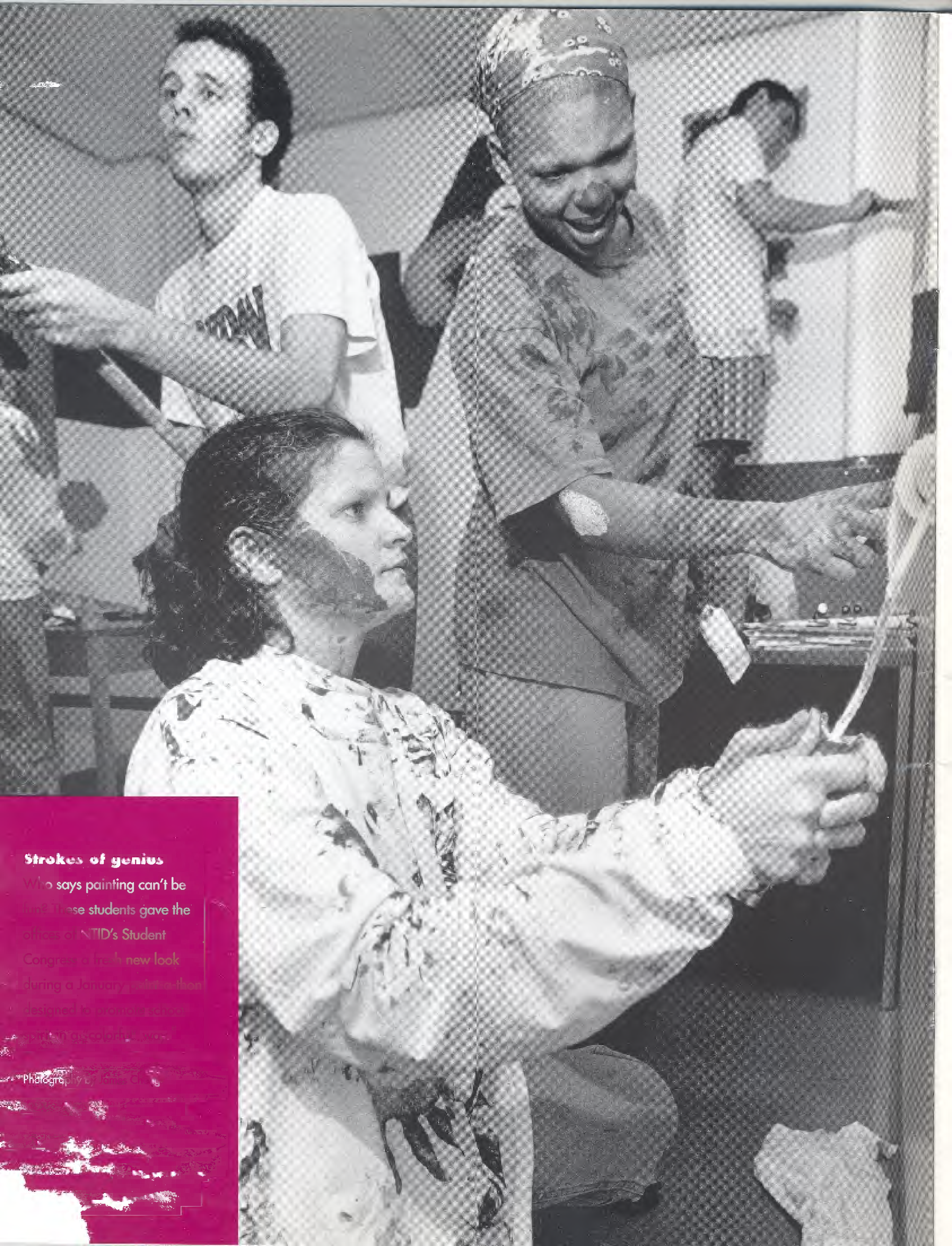
SPRING 1995

FOCUS NTID

National Technical Institute for the Deaf • A College of Rochester Institute of Technology



Strokes of genius

Who says painting can't be fun? These students gave the offices of NTID's Student Congress a fresh new look during a January paint-a-thon designed to promote school spirit in a "colorful" way.

Photography by James Cheng

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ABOUT THE COVER

Just as deaf RIT graduates are shaping the public's image of deaf people through the media, state-of-the-art technology allowed *FOCUS* to shape this computer-manipulated composite photograph to illustrate the story "The New Image Makers" on page 14.

Cover graphic by *FOCUS* art director Colleen Clarke and fourth-year professional photographic illustration student Kim Cornelison. Photography by A. Sue Weisler. Special thanks to Mark Benjamin and *The Atlantic Monthly*.

FEATURES

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Courtesy Kenneth Puckett—p. 13 (right)
NTID Archives—p. 17
Courtesy E. Maindron, *L'Académie des Sciences* (1888)—p. 20
Courtesy Harvard College Observatory—p. 21 (top)
Courtesy Gallaudet University Archives—p. 21 (center)
Courtesy Reidun Guldal—p. 21 (bottom)
David Carson—p. 22
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FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

It is with great enthusiasm and a sense of renewal that I have assumed the responsibilities of interim director of NTID in addition to my ongoing role as dean. As the Institute moves into the final implementation stages of our strategic plan, our mission of educating deaf students has become revitalized with fresh purpose and vision.

Throughout the past several years, all of us in the NTID community have had an opportunity to examine and challenge our traditional notions about the teaching/learning process. We know that our commitment to provide an excellent education for deaf men and women requires us to remain flexible in order to keep learning how best to meet the needs of our students and continually improve the quality of our academic offerings.

So, too, must our students have the ability to continue learning and improving throughout their lives. Now more than ever, institutions of higher education must provide students not only with the hands-on skills to enter a technical career but also with knowledge, an awareness of individual differences and cultural traditions of those in the world around them, and the ability to understand new concepts in order to excel and remain mobile in today's rapidly changing workplace.

This educational approach—built on the idea that academic programs should balance technical courses with study in the liberal arts—is what defines NTID today.

Thanks in large part to the work completed last year by members of the Institute's task force on appropriate balance of graduation expectations, NTID is structuring a balanced curriculum to ensure students' successful transition from the college environment to the global community. NTID always has been a leader in opening the doors to employment and technical careers for deaf men and women; now more than ever before, we invite our students, regardless of their chosen profession, to cross the threshold of higher education in its broadest form and to embark on a path of lifelong learning.

The future holds great promise for tomorrow's graduates. All of us at NTID look forward to sharing in the challenges that lie ahead.

James J. DeCaro

AROUND THE QUAD

Borinquen Dance Theatre

NTID celebrates Hispanic culture

In observance of National Hispanic Heritage Month in October, NTID hosted "Celebrando la Cultura Hispana," a celebration that featured a performance by Rochester's Borinquen Dance Theatre and presentations by students on Hispanic cultural heritage.

The Borinquen Dance Theatre brings to the world of dance a dynamic blend of Puerto Rican folk culture and a contemporary Latin style. The group's expressive performances mingle the African, native Taino, and Spanish influences that make up Puerto Rican culture.

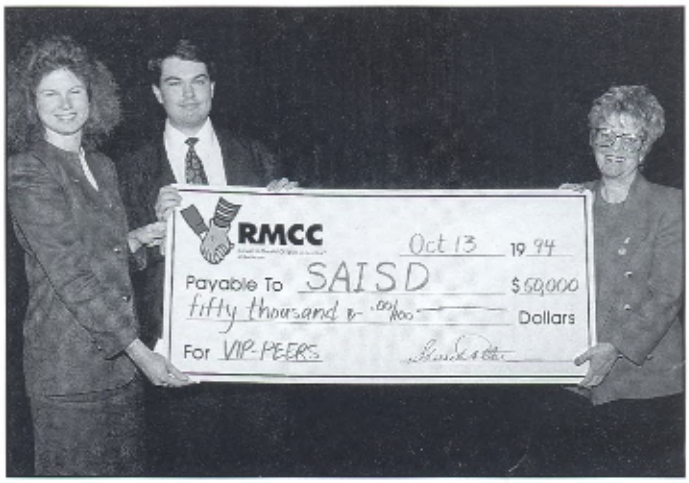
The event was sponsored by NTID's departments of employee relations/affirmative action and human development, the NTID Affirmative Action Advisory Committee, and RIT's Commission for Promoting Pluralism.

Ronald McDonald Children's Charities donates $50,000 to drug prevention program

Ronald McDonald Children's Charities (RMCC) last fall donated $50,000 to NTID's Volunteers in Prevention Promoting Education, Encouragement, Resources and Support (VIP-PEERS), a program that works to increase the availability of educational information about alcohol and substance abuse to the nation's young adults who are deaf.

"We at McDonald's take pride in being a good neighbor and in giving something back to the community," said Sharon Potter, vice president of the board of the Rochester Chapter of RMCC, while announcing the donation in October. The award will assist the VIP-PEERS program in supporting educational outreach activities, including production and dissemination of a packet that will include a national resource directory, manual, slides, and captioned videotapes.

Through grant awards, RMCC, established in 1984 in memory of McDonald Corporation founder Ray Kroc, supports efforts of various not-for-profit organizations that help children. These programs specialize in health care and medical research, education and the arts, and social and civic activities.



Check it out Sharon Potter, Ronald McDonald Children's Charities vice president and local McDonald's owner/operator, right, presents a $50,000 check to RIT controller Peg Cass and Ralph Gaboury, RIT student body president.

NEWSMAKERS

Faculty and Staff

Two NTID faculty members recently completed requirements and were awarded doctoral degrees. **Dr. Christine Monikowski**, sign communication specialist in the Center for Sign Language and Interpreting Education, received the Ph.D. in Educational Linguistics from the University of New Mexico. **Dr. William Newell**, research associate in the communication research department, earned the Ph.D. in sign language teaching from Greenwich University.

Dugan Davies, education specialist for physical education and athletics in NTID's department of human development, presented "Signing in Physical Education" at the November meeting of the New York State Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance.

Gail Kovalik, staff resource center specialist, and **Marsha Young**, instructional developer, are the joint recipients of the first Paragon Award, presented by NTID's Center for Research, Teaching, and Learning. The award honors members of the center who exhibit exemplary service and dedication to NTID.

Geoffrey Poor, sign communication specialist in the Center for Sign Language and Interpreting Education, has been named editor of the newsletter of the American Sign Language Teachers Association (ASLTA). Poor also serves on the executive board of ASLTA.

Mark Rosica, career development counselor in the department of business counseling services, gave two presentations in Budapest last summer. With members of the Division of Family Programs at the University of Rochester/Strong Memorial Hospital, Rosica co-presented "Community-Wide Systems-Oriented Collaboration" at the International Association of Marriage and Family Therapy. The second presentation was an overview of education of deaf students in the United States at the annual meeting of the Hungarian Association for the Deaf.

Beverly Price, associate professor in NTID's applied science/allied health department, conducted a workshop about a simulated hospital laboratory environment, "St. Elselab," at the annual meeting of the Empire State Association for Medical Technology, held in Buffalo, New York.

Jacqueline Schertz, counselor in RIT's Substance and Alcohol Intervention Services for the Deaf program, has been named to the Rochester, New York, United Way board of directors.

Wendell Thompson, assistant to the NTID director for government and administrative affairs, last fall was one of eight faculty and staff members to be honored by RIT President Albert Simone with the Presidential Award for Excellence. Thompson was instrumental in establishing a team of RIT financial staff members and an outside consultant to develop a comprehensive set of cost principles for the Institute.

Southern belles and wedding bells In NTID's fall performing arts production of Carson McCullers' *The Member of the Wedding*, a play about growing up in 1940s Georgia, Berenice Sadie Brown (Tracey Washington) comforts her young charges, Frankie Addams (Sara Larson) and John Henry West (Davin Searls).

New journal to be published

Oxford University Press has announced the establishment of the quarterly *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*, to begin publication in January 1996.

The journal, to be edited by Dr. Marc Marschark, director of NTID's Center for Research, Teaching, and Learning, will focus on issues that underlie the development, education, and lives of individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing and will publish international research from both laboratory and applied (including classroom and home) settings.

Other NTID faculty members involved in the journal include: Dr. Susan Foster, research associate in the Center for Postsecondary Career Studies in Deafness, who will serve as associate editor; and editorial board members Dr. John Albertini, research associate in the department of communication research; Dr. Karen Christie, assistant professor in the department of English; and Drs. Harry Lang and Michael Stinson, research associates in the department of educational research and development.

Switzer Gallery features U.S. premiere of Mitsui porcelain

"Bamboo and Two Birds"

Last fall, NTID's Switzer Gallery featured the U.S. premiere of the ceramic works of Japanese artist Eiichi Mitsui (also known as Tamekichi III), considered the foremost creator of Japan's renowned Kutani ware.

Mitsui, who is deaf, is a graduate of Kanazawa University College of Arts and Crafts. He has received worldwide acclaim for his new style of colored porcelain that incorporates traditional elements and colors of Kutani ware. Mitsui operates the porcelain business of Sanmeido, founded during the Meiji era (circa 1875).

At the opening of the Mitsui exhibit, the artist announced his donation of the entire exhibit to NTID. The gift of 50 pieces has become part of NTID's permanent collection.

Students design ornaments for White House

Students in NTID's applied art and computer graphics program last fall were invited to participate in a unique holiday exhibition at the White House. Eleven second- and third-year students created 12 ornaments for the First Family's Blue Room Christmas tree.

NTID's program was one of 99 art and design schools across the country whose students took part in the show, the theme of which was "The Twelve Days of Christmas." Guidelines for size and weight were given to participants, who could choose to work in glass, paper, metal, fabric, or ceramic. The NTID students all designed their ornaments by computer and executed the designs on paper.

NEWSMAKERS

Students

Several students recently were awarded scholarships to continue their studies at NTID. Receiving the Farid Bozorgi Scholarship, given to promising deaf graphic design students, were **Kurt Stoskopf** of Kansas and **Wendy Sullivan** of New York. Receiving Max Factor Family Foundation Scholarships, given to students from the Greater Los Angeles/Southern California area, were **Maria Lejano** and **Christina Shaw**. The following students received Maurice and Maxine Forman Scholarships, given to promote the incentive among NTID students to pursue baccalaureate studies at RIT: **Lee Kowalsky** of Michigan, **Sonia Latoison** of Pennsylvania, **Kellie McCleery** of Canada, **Joseph Seifner** of Pennsylvania, **Leah Simmons** of New York, **Deborah Struebing** of Pennsylvania, and **Trevor Thomson** of Canada.

Students **Richard Postl** and **Becky Zartman** are volunteer teachers for a group of Explorer Scouts. The group of nearly 20 hearing high school students from the Rochester area meets biweekly with Postl and Zartman to discuss different aspects of Deaf culture.

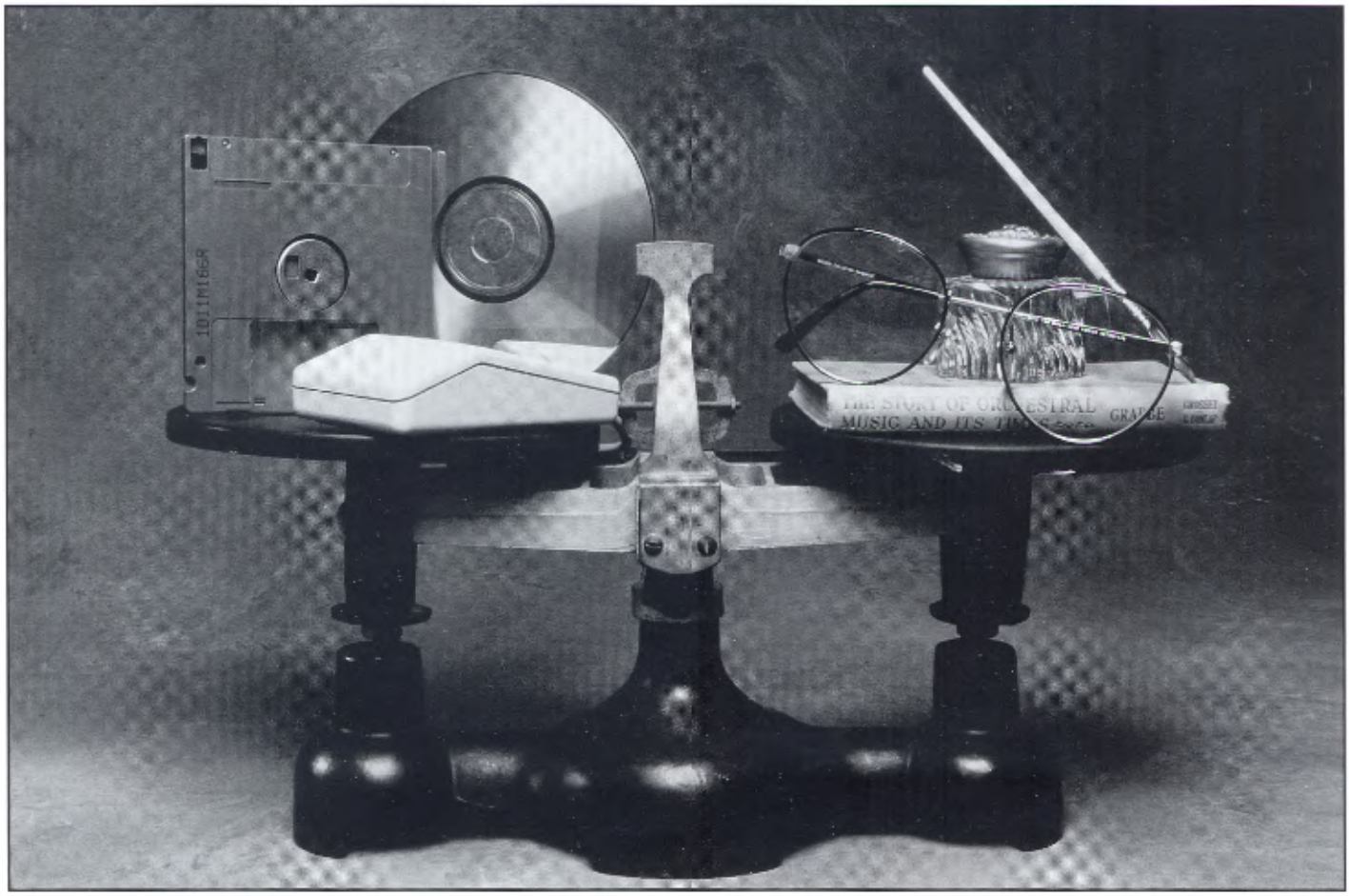
In November, third-year social work student **Andrew Miller** joined nearly 40 other deaf students to protest at an adult group home in Rochester to promote awareness of the rights of the deaf residents there. The students were showing concern about the lack of appropriate services for deaf clients, who make up approximately 5 percent of the home's clientele. A spokesperson for the home agreed to investigate their concerns about captioned television, strobe lights, text telephones (TTYs), and other accessibility issues.

Twelve drummers drumming Applied art and computer graphics students, from left, Duane Vonada, Munir Salem, and Suyapa Suarez, compare a computer-generated ornament design with the finished product.

NTID students who designed and created ornaments, which have become part of the permanent White House collection, are Daphna Blech, Erick Clodfelter, Carmen King, Eduardo Palabrica Jr., Munir Salem, Andrea Jo Sljva, Suyapa Suarez, Duane Vonada, Frank Wasko, Christopher White, and Matthew Williams Sr.

Striking a balance

by James Graves



"They're spoonfeeding us," claim some students. "They don't think we've got what it takes to make it in a challenging college environment."

"It's already too tough," argue others. "I don't see how they can make it any more difficult than it already is."

One of the topics most hotly debated by students on RIT's computer network is the issue of whether NTID's educational programs offer the right balance of technical and liberal arts offerings. Striking such a balance, everyone agrees, is necessary in order for students to graduate from NTID with the variety and texture in education that leads to rich and full lives.

Faculty members have had essentially the same discussions, fretting over the appropriateness of requirements, poring over new ideas for curricula, and wondering how to give students a balanced education that will enable them to get jobs when they graduate.

During the 1993-94 academic year, as part of the Institute's strategic planning process, those discussions among NTID faculty members were formalized as a task force was appointed to study the issue.

That 15-member task force on appropriate balance of graduation expectations, led by Center for Arts and Sciences Director Laurie Brewer, defined and described graduation expectations—including requirements and probable completion schedules—for each NTID degree, certificate, and diploma program and developed standards by which academic programs would balance technical credits with those in the arts and sciences.

The new policy's lasting contribution, says Brewer, will be that "Students will be better prepared when they graduate, ready to begin careers and have the kind of lifelong learning needed to continue to evolve in their careers."

A sampling of the critical principles within the new policy, adopted by faculty in May 1994, gives an indication of the extensive nature of the changes, now in the implementation process.

All preparatory courses will become part of the First-Year Experience (FYE), a program now being developed to assist in preparing students to enter an academic program, guide them through their first year of college, and increase their skills. Lawrence Scott, assistant professor in NTID's audiology department and a member of the task force, views this new program as the "central piece of the new policy."

"By moving core courses and prerequisites to the FYE," says Scott, "we will be providing students with a more realistic time frame with regard to graduation."

Brewer notes that the task force was committed to the FYE as a program for all students and to the development of experiences that conform to the needs of individual students.

"Students enter college with different levels of academic and social preparation," says Brewer. "We need to provide curricular and co-curricular experiences that assist them in making the transition from home and high school to college and selecting a major."

The new policy will strengthen associate degree programs, emphasizing their transferability to related bachelor's degree programs. It also authorizes the continuation of some diploma programs, specifically those for which graduates' skills are appropriate to the entry-level job requirements in the field.

Fully prepared students will now be able to enroll in associate degree programs that they should be able to complete in six to seven quarters, with a range of 90 to 108 credits. (In the past, associate degree program requirements stretched upwards to 190 credits in some cases.) Diploma programs are now projected for four to five quarters, with a range of 60 to 72 credits.

The New York State Board of Regents has a long-standing requirement that the associate in applied science (A.A.S.) degree must include at least one-third of its course work from the arts and sciences. However, there has been no such state requirement for the associate in occupational studies (A.O.S.) degree. The new policy devises a similar credit allotment in courses taught in NTID's Center for Arts and Sciences for students in these programs.

Students disagree on the merits of this new requirement. While third-year social work student Chad Miller calls the addition of arts and sciences courses in the A.O.S. curriculum a "waste of many students' time," computer animation graduate student Tracey Salaway calls the move "optimistic and sophisticated, moving NTID up to a higher level."

Weighted discussions Dr. Laurie Brewer, director of the Center for Arts and Sciences, standing, answers questions from student leaders about the curricular changes called for in the Balance Task Force report. Students, seated clockwise from right, are Liz Stone, Sonal Patel, Erin Esposito, Luis Reyes, and Alok Doshi.

The "certificate" designation, as it has been known at NTID, will be dropped, as some current certificate programs are eliminated and others converted to diploma programs. But, in what Scott calls "one of the new policy's most innovative elements," the name "certificate" will be employed as a new program category, roughly equivalent to what many colleges and universities call a "minor."

These newly designed programs—both in technical and arts and sciences areas—will require 12 to 15 credits in a specific concentration and will be offered to alumni interested in career enhancement, current NTID students desiring to augment their degree programs, qualified continuing education students, and students interested in creating minor concentrations in such areas as deaf studies, communication studies, and performing arts.

There are many other facets of the new policy, all of which are founded on a set of basic principles. First, all courses should contribute to the development of skills necessary for future college work, employment, and professional opportunities. Second, program courses should be arranged in clear sequences, from preparatory to advanced, and programs should have multiple entry points. Third, English and American Sign Language (ASL) are recognized as the languages of instruction at NTID.

Implicit in the overall policy is the expectation that balancing major study in a technical field with appropriate work in liberal arts will prepare students for independent, lifelong learning. How will that happen?

"The beauty in this new way of structuring an academic program," says Brewer, "is that it will give students proficiency in the learning process itself, not merely in the command of a particular body of knowledge." ■

Designing man

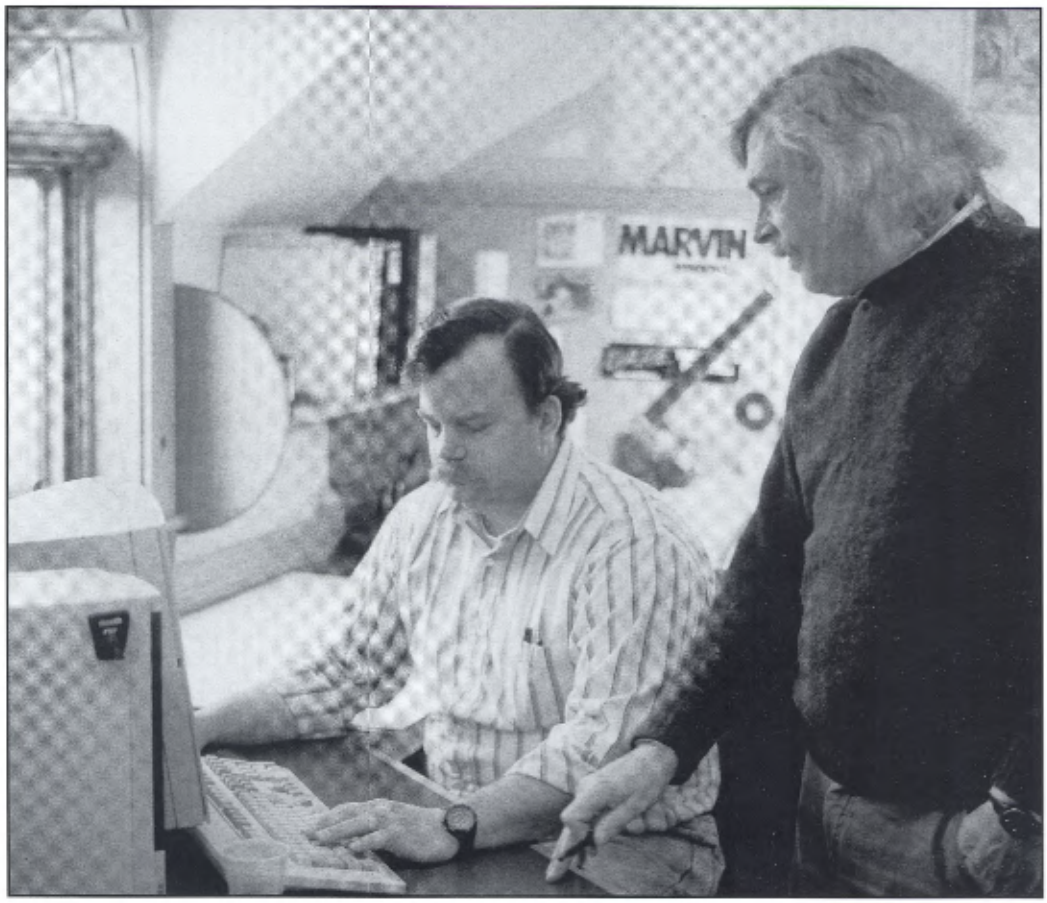
by Debbie Waltzer

A passion for resuscitating tired buildings and conceiving new structures has led 1980 architectural technology graduate Michael Ritter to carve a life and career in the woods of central New Hampshire.

Employed as an architect for Christopher P. Williams Architects, a seven-person firm in Meredith, New Hampshire, Ritter's projects are as varied as university student union renovations, expansive new lakeside homes, and restoration of historic country inns.

Ritter's infatuation with arches, mortar, and hard hats leaped onto the blueprint of his life when, as a teen accompanied by his professor dad, he roamed among the University of Virginia's magnificent classical edifices and marveled at their beauty.

"When it was time for me to select a program of study at NTID, the answer was obvious and cast in stone that I would pursue a career in architecture," he explains.



From the drawing board... Michael Ritter, left, and his supervisor, Christopher Williams, discuss projects in the design phase.

Ritter, 37, is remembered as a colorful character by Jules Chiavaroli, associate professor in NTID's department of construction technologies. The enthusiastic student helped make Chiavaroli's first year of teaching at the Institute memorable.

"Mike was a joy to teach," says Chiavaroli. "He was gregarious, highly motivated, consumed by architecture, and always willing to help his fellow students with their projects."

After observing Ritter at work on a class project designing the renovation of a downtown Rochester office building, Chiavaroli felt certain that Ritter possessed "the creative and organizational skills necessary to become an architect."

Ritter's training has guided him toward myriad challenging opportunities since he tossed his NTID mortar board skyward with pride 14 years ago.

Following college graduation, Ritter, who attended elementary school at the Clarke School for

the Deaf in Northampton, Massachusetts, worked for four years as a production drafter for an architectural firm in Center Harbor, New Hampshire.

Seeking new professional challenges, he then moved south to work in a two-person architectural firm located a few blocks from the White House in Washington, D.C. There, Ritter learned volumes from his supervisor, an expert in historic preservation of old buildings.

But the lure of New England, rooted deeply in his soul during his years at the Clarke School, motivated Ritter, his wife, Vicky, and their son, Franklin, to relocate to Connecticut in 1987. The move proved fortuitous, because during the next few years, Ritter experienced a professional opportunity tailor-made for an architect who is deaf.

Within a 10-minute walk from his new office in West Hartford stood the venerable American School for the Deaf, founded in 1817 and sorely in need of major renovation. Ritter was thrilled to learn that his new employer landed the contract.

"My boss and I worked on the school's master plan, which included new buildings and grounds to carry them well into the 21st century," he explains. "As we began the project, we learned that although both NTID and Gallaudet University have designed facilities to meet the needs of students who are deaf, there were no uniform standards. So, in a sense, we started from scratch."

The pair tackled numerous details, including softening wall and floor colors to reduce eye strain, recommending improved lighting, widening corridors to enhance conversations among deaf people, and relocating classroom doors and windows to streamline teacher/student communication.

In fact, the two-year project was so successful that it was featured in the December 1992 issue of the *American Institute of Architects* (AIA) magazine.

Just as Ritter was wrapping up that project in 1992 and preparing for new challenges, a letter arrived from Christopher Williams, Ritter's former co-worker and mentor who had founded his own architectural firm in central New Hampshire. "Come work for me," read the letter, and Ritter and his family eagerly hopped on Interstate 91 and headed north to Meredith.

"This is the best job of my career," says Ritter, who enjoys extensive client contact and manages the firm's computer-aided design and drafting operations. "My responsibilities range from renovating college buildings throughout the state to designing summer homes for wealthy individuals."

...to reality Ritter has played a major role in designing such structures as the Robert Frost House, top, and the Hartman Union Building, both at Plymouth State College in Plymouth, New Hampshire.

Likewise, Williams is happy to have Ritter on his team.

"Mike is a wonderful guy with a terrific sense of humor," he says. "He's a reliable and committed architect who does what he says he'll do."

Working with a deaf staff member has affected Williams in ways he did not foresee.

"The experience has been so positive," says Williams. "I've learned to communicate more clearly with *everybody* in the firm, not just Mike. Now I focus much more on the person with whom I'm speaking."

Through his relationship with Ritter, Williams has become an outspoken advocate for the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). When Ritter wanted to attend an educational program sponsored by the local AIA chapter and requested an interpreter, the AIA board suggested to Williams that his firm pay the interpreter's fee. Williams disagreed, stating that, according to the ADA, the chapter's treasury should cover the expense. Finally, the board agreed.

One of Ritter's clients at the firm is Ray Hutchins, supervisor of environmental services for Plymouth State College in Plymouth, New Hampshire. Hutchins and Ritter were "attached at the hip" for several months in 1992 as they co-designed the campus' academic commons and renovated the college's planetarium.

"Mike was a good listener, willing to take information from me and come out with a final product that everybody liked," says Hutchins. "We surely could use more people like him."

Ritter believes that employers can find more individuals like himself by forging partnerships with NTID. Because of his belief in the Institute, Ritter has served as an active alumnus, making presentations about his profession during student orientation programs and appearing in a recruitment videotape.

"I can't say enough good things about NTID," says Ritter, who credits the Institute with helping him to prepare for a successful career. "NTID folks are always behind you. But I know that despite all the Institute has to offer, it's up to me to do the legwork to make my career grow."

A STUDENT STUDY

by Debbie Waltzer

A table for five The Kelly clan—from left, Rachel, Tina, Josiah, Paul, and Rosella—fills family time with homework, crafts projects, religious studies, books, and warm conversation. The closest television set is next door and isn't missed at all.

It's been 10 years since Paul Kelly last completed classroom homework assignments and took exams, but the skills quickly are coming back to him.

Kelly—husband, father of three, and part-time pastor for roughly 20 deaf members of Rochester's Bay Knoll Seventh Day Adventist Church—recently added "full-time student" to his roster of identities.

The 37-year-old Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, native, who previously earned a bachelor's degree in religion from Union College in Lincoln, Nebraska, enrolled in RIT's information technology program last September. He also is taking history courses and hopes eventually to earn a master's degree in education in order to teach history to deaf high school students and conduct research on Deaf culture.

"Paul is a motivated student and anxious to do well in his studies," observes Dr. Richard Chu, professor of history in RIT's College of Liberal Arts. He remembers Kelly, who took RIT's "Asian Civilization" course last fall, as a student who "never hesitated to raise valid points in class."

At night, every corner of the Kelly household is crowded as Paul and children Rachel, 13, and Josiah, 8,—both students at the Rochester School for the Deaf (RSD)—and Rosella, 11—a student in a Rochester city school program for hard-of-hearing children—hit the books.

The discipline is tough, says Kelly, who arrived in Rochester with his family in 1991. But after 10 years of pastoral work, he and his wife, Tina, concluded: "We can't live on bread crumbs forever."

So Kelly is working diligently to juggle his many responsibilities: a full-time college course load; preaching to his parishioners every Saturday morning; attending meetings of RSD's parent-teacher association; offering Bible study sessions for NTID students and deaf adults in the Rochester community; organizing occasional family hiking outings; and housework.

Kelly's juggling prowess was perceived during his admission interview by Shirley Baker, admissions counselor in NTID's department of recruitment and admissions.

"Paul struck me as a committed and serious student," she recalls. "I was particularly impressed by his ability to balance all the components of his life."

"I'm taking my life one step at a time," says Kelly. "I hope to earn a master's degree, and then see what the next step will be. As an older student, I'm committed to using my time wisely." ■

Spreading the word Elizabeth Bell, a counselor for New York state's vocational rehabilitation agency, explains NTID admissions procedures to a potential student.

Allied Forces: The NTID/VR Connection

by James Graves

Even though Little Rock, Arkansas, is more than a thousand miles from Rochester, New York, admissions counselors in NTID's department of recruitment and admissions view Arkansas vocational rehabilitation (VR) counselor Robert Sanders III as a colleague. They consider him a key partner in their efforts to encourage qualified deaf students to enroll at RIT.

Sanders—along with the more than 900 other VR counselors throughout the United States—generally begins working with young deaf or disabled students during the students' high school years, helping them prepare and train for permanent employment. Vocational testing and evaluations lead to exploration of colleges and training programs, which result in enrollment, study, graduation, and—finally—employment.

Through this process, which may continue over a number of years, VR counselors provide all manner of support for their student clients, including acquiring monetary stipends. In return, students must maintain an acceptable grade point average, secure approval before making changes in their programs, and make regular reports to the counselor.

Shirley Baker, NTID admissions counselor, speaks of the pivotal role played by VR professionals in the educational process for deaf students, noting that "The VR counselor is often one of the really special people in a deaf student's life.

"VR counselors also play an integral role in the recruiting process," adds Baker. "Many times a student first hears about NTID from a VR counselor."

Indeed, Karen Hopkins, NTID's student financial services coordinator, indicates that growing numbers of students come to NTID because of careful planning for future employment encouraged and facilitated by VR counselors. And approximately 80 percent of all deaf students who enroll at RIT receive VR stipends and are supported in a variety of other ways by these same advisors.

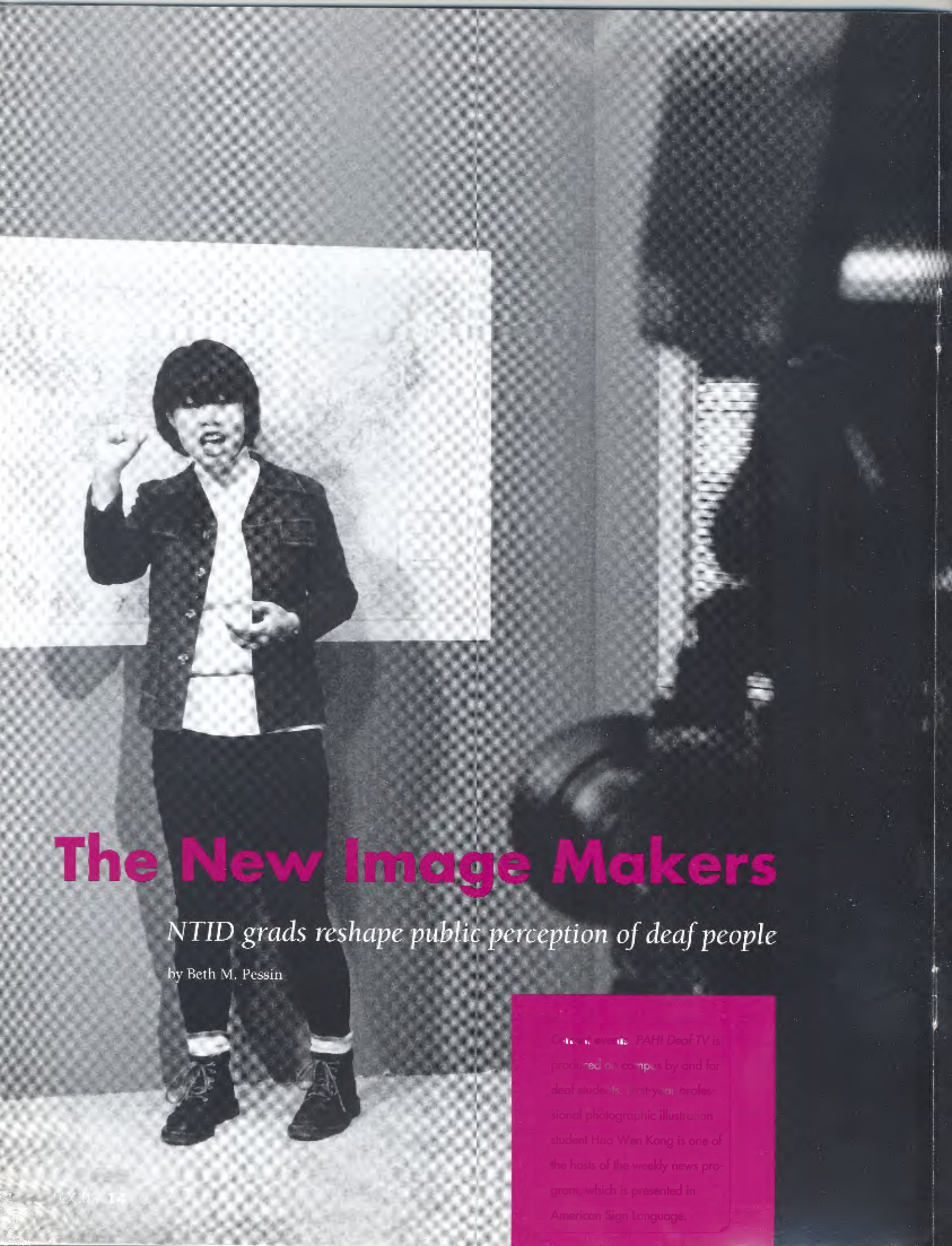
As a young deaf person begins the process of working with a VR counselor on future educational or training plans, the initial questions are essentially the same: What do I do after high school in order to prepare myself to get a good job? Where do I go to college?

Careful not to let his special ties to NTID get in the way of his objectivity, Timothy Beatty, 1980 RIT social work graduate and program manager of deaf and hard-of-hearing services in the California Department of Rehabilitation in Sacramento, counsels young deaf students.

"It is my responsibility to give prospective college students all their available options, including the full range of educational institutions and training programs that might be appropriate for persons with their career interests."

Others in the field echo Beatty's sentiments, including Rochester, New York, counselor Elizabeth Bell.

"Because deaf people communicate differently from many of the people around them, they miss a great deal of



The New Image Makers

NTID grads reshape public perception of deaf people

by Beth M. Pessin

Current events *PAH! Deaf TV* is produced on campus by and for deaf students. First-year professional photographic illustration student Hao Wen Kong is one of the hosts of the weekly news program, which is presented in American Sign Language.

Information. Without it, where would we be? Each day messages and images come to us through network and cable television, videos, print media, and computer networks. These conveyors of information educate, entertain, and influence us in different ways. How information is relayed, who shapes the messages, and who has access to media all play influential roles in society. Historically, people who are deaf have had limited opportunities to participate in shaping those messages as well as images of themselves.

However, within the last few decades, many deaf individuals—NTID alumni among them—have ardently pushed to gain greater access to the media. Among NTID's graduates are an editor of a nationally recognized newspaper for people who are deaf, entrepreneur and publisher of a national magazine, former host of a local network television talk show, and vice president of production for a national satellite network.

Their journeys into the world of media have paved the way for others interested in pursuing similar careers.

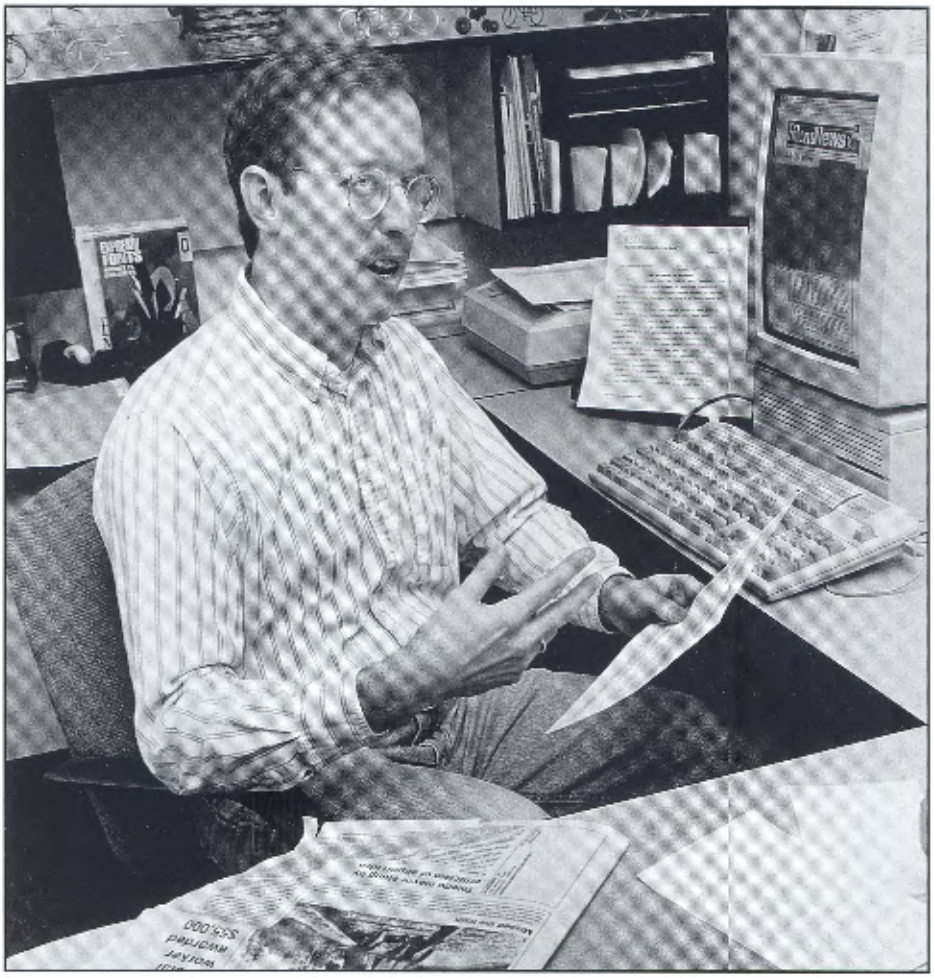
"Journalism is in my blood...it seemed like the natural career for me," says Tom Willard, editor of *Silent News*, a Rochester (New York)-based national newspaper, and 1985 RIT graduate who received a bachelor's degree in professional photography.

Willard's journalism career began at age 10 when he started producing a monthly family newspaper. During high school in Westfield, New Jersey, Willard continued his journalistic pursuits as editor of his school's weekly newspaper.

After graduating from high school in 1975, Willard attended college, but without access services found it frustrating, and after a few months he left school. Willard worked as a free-lance photographer and photo lab technician for five years before returning to college, this time at NTID, and became editor of the *Observing Eye*, NTID's now defunct monthly student paper.

After graduating from RIT, Willard and his wife, Tracey, set up Deaf Artists of America (DAA), a national non-profit organization. In addition to administrative and public relations duties, Willard edited DAA's quarterly newsletter, which later developed into a magazine.

Willard's "dream job" came in 1991 when he assumed editorial responsibilities of *Silent News*. A monthly publication started by Julius and Harriet Wiggins in 1969 that now has more than 11,500 subscribers, the newspaper reports on developments that concern deaf and hard-of-hearing people while reaching out to new audiences and supporting deaf pride, according to Willard.



Working on deadline Editor Tom Willard works on the next issue of *Silent News*.

Willard says that he didn't pursue a position with a mainstream publication, such as a daily newspaper, because he didn't see opportunities for growth—primarily because of the potential communication barriers.

"Some people say that we are isolating ourselves," says Willard, referring to the composition of the *Silent News* staff, the majority of whom are deaf. "But I believe that we are changing perspectives in indirect ways. One of our goals is to educate deaf people about how journalism works...some deaf people don't understand the role of the free press."

The newspaper often reprints articles about deaf and hard-of-hearing people that have appeared in mainstream newspapers across the country. In January, *Silent News* introduced a new monthly publication, *Deaf Rochester*, to address the information needs of Rochester's large population of deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals.

According to Cliff Andrews, *Silent News* circulation manager who graduated from NTID in 1972 with an associate degree in photo/media technologies, those reprints help community members keep in touch, but they also reveal how mainstream publications portray deaf people.

"Every once in a while, the mainstream media 'discovers' deaf people," says Willard, referring to recent cover stories in *Atlantic Monthly* and *The New York Times Magazine*. "And we still continue to see stories about how deaf people 'overcome their disabilities' or 'live in a world of silence.'"

Despite such stereotypes about deaf people, Willard and Andrews agree that as awareness about deaf people's abilities increases, attitudes begin to change. They say that four major occurrences—Marlee Matlin receiving an Academy Award for her 1986 performance in *Children of a Lesser God*; the 1988 Deaf President Now movement at Gallaudet University; the 1989 Deaf Way conference; and last year's selection of Heather Whitestone as the first Miss America who is deaf—have contributed to that increased awareness.

"Hearing journalists are investigating the mysterious, intriguing, and colorful Deaf culture," says Matthew Moore, publisher and co-editor of *Deaf Life*, a national monthly magazine initiated in 1988 that addresses a range of topics and issues of concern to people who are deaf.

A 1983 graduate of RIT's social work program, Moore believes that the media play an important and powerful role in shaping perceptions.

"Harness the power of the mass media, use it positively, and you can effect social change," says Moore, who gained initial media experience as editor of his high school newspaper in Indianapolis. Later, while a student at NTID, Moore gained additional experience as editor of an NTID student newspaper, *Perspectives*, a publication of the Student Communications Center that Moore founded to give NTID students hands-on experience working in print and broadcast media.

In 1992 he published the book *For Hearing People Only*, which answers some commonly asked questions about the deaf community and Deaf culture.

"Change sometimes happens in trickles; sometimes in torrents," he says. "If you change hearing people's attitudes toward deaf people—and deaf people's attitudes toward themselves—that's pretty much half the battle."

Jacqueline Schertz, a counselor in RIT's Substance and Alcohol Intervention Services for the Deaf program, agrees that representations of deaf people in the media have increased in recent years.

Looking back David Pierce began his television production career as a student at NTID.

"More and more deaf people keep popping up in the media," says Schertz, former host of *Hey Listen*, a Rochester network television program produced from 1988 to 1989.

"Just a few years ago, you didn't see many deaf people in commercials or in publications," says the 1983 graduate of RIT's social work program. She explains that the "out-of-sight, out-of-mind phenomenon" was at work. "Hearing people often are uncomfortable and scared of dealing with deaf people."

In 1986, the McDonald's Corporation ran its first television commercial featuring deaf actors, which may have influenced other advertisers to follow. Beth Ann Bull, sign communication specialist in NTID's Center for Sign Language and Interpreting Education, was one of two deaf people featured in the restaurant chain's advertisement.

Now, however, as more deaf people become involved in media-related jobs and their visibility increases, Schertz says that there is less "deaf phobia."

"I love to see that happening. It's nice to see positive portrayals of deaf people rather than promoting the 'poor kid' attitude," she says.

Schertz's entry into the media domain happened serendipitously in 1988. While working as program director of the Monroe County Association for Hearing Impaired People, she was asked to host the first *Hey Listen* program that focused on deaf women and the challenges they face.

Hey Listen was a weekly hour-long audience participation talk show that used American Sign Language (ASL). The program focused on topics ranging from fashion to AIDS to political leadership to child rearing.

"It was a forum for deaf community members to discuss issues using their own language," explains Schertz, who continued hosting the program until it ceased production.

While the program had community and advertising support, it was expensive to produce, according to Schertz, and after running for a year and a half, *Hey Listen* ceased production. Although short lived, such small efforts cumulatively create a ripple effect. In the ensuing six years, the media climate at the national level has indeed changed, and both financial support to produce such programs as well as employment opportunities are becoming increasingly available for deaf people.

For example, Kaleidoscope Television (KTV) is a national 24-hour cable network that is produced by and for people who have disabilities and people who work with them.

"Through our programming, we aim to destroy old stereotypes and present new images," says David Pierce, vice president of production for KTV, formerly America's Disability Channel, based in San Antonio, Texas.

KTV features a variety of program formats, including news and information, sports, talk shows, comedy, and children's shows.

"We want to focus on abilities and provide vital and accurate information of interest to people with disabilities, their family members, and people who work with them," says Pierce, 1988 graduate of NTID's photo/media technologies program. "We are committed to changing perceptions about people with disabilities.

"In the past, people usually focused on the disability and not abilities," he adds. "Today, large corporations include deaf people in advertisements, a substantial difference from just a decade ago, and deaf people are gradually breaking into print and television fields as evidenced by current industry trends."

A video production aficionado who received his first movie projector when he was 3, Pierce became a producer with Silent Network, a cable television network in Hollywood that featured programming for people who are deaf, soon after graduating from NTID. In 1990, when Silent Network was sold and reorganized under the name KTV, Pierce accepted a position with that organization.

In 1993, Pierce, along with *Deaf Life* publisher Moore, received a Distinguished Alumnus Award from NTID for his contributions to the deaf community. Last year, he received a Barbara Jordan Award from the Texas

"I wanted to see deaf people like me in charge of program destiny."

Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities in recognition of his documentary titled *Portrait of a Deaf Irish-American: Terrance James O'Rourke.*

Pierce has quickly moved up the career ladder. As vice president of production at KTV, he is responsible for all production, captioning, and satellite operations. He says his work has been and continues to be a learning experience.

In addition to the heightened awareness generated by newspapers and television, cable, and satellite networks, opportunities for deaf people to have an impact on television programming have increased.

"While growing up, I was disappointed that there were no programs in which people communicated using sign language," says David Strom, NTID's employee relations administrator/affirmative action coordinator. "I wanted to see deaf people like me in charge of program destiny.

"That all started happening in 1980 when the Silent Network was established...it was an inspiration to me," adds Strom, an RIT graduate who received a bachelor's degree in engineering technology and a master's degree in career and human resource development in 1988 and 1992, respectively.

Taking the lead from Silent Network, Strom, while he was a student, lobbied NTID administrators and faculty members to support a student-run television network on campus.

"I started thinking about a student television organization as a way to bring Deaf culture and sign language to the RIT community," says Strom. "I thought that such an organization also would provide opportunities for students to get a feel for television production work."

In 1982, NTID's Student Television Network was formally established, with Strom taking the lead with programming. Strom invited other NTID students who were studying in video and television production courses, including Pierce, to become involved.

The Student Television Network still offers opportunities for students to gain experience and experiment with different program formats, although student interest has waned in recent years. Programs are aired on campus through NTID's instructional television and media services (ITV) department, and equipment such as video recorders and editing machines are available for students to produce programs. The program's staff advisors are Frank Kruppenbacher, television programming coordinator, and John Panara, senior captioning specialist, both in the ITV department.

Last fall, *PAH! Deaf TV,* a program with some of the same goals as the Student Television Network, was initiated at the Institute. Presented in ASL by deaf students, *PAH! Deaf TV* brings campus, national, and international news to students on campus.

Patricia Durr, assistant professor in NTID's department of human development, proposed the idea to educate students about current events.

"I've always been interested in film and video as a means of providing students with information," says Durr, who teaches history and current events. "I noticed that many students did not have time to read the newspaper and also did not seem to enjoy watching the national news, even with captions. I thought that a news program produced by deaf people might be more attractive to students."

The entire program is run by students, under the leadership of Durr, who guides students in producing the segments, and David Conyer, television production coordinator in the ITV department, who handles the technical aspects of the programs such as editing. In addition to the program's informational value, students gain experience in gathering, processing, and presenting news information in a clear and interesting way, according to Durr.

Pilot programs of *PAH! Deaf TV* aired last fall through RIT's on-campus television network, and student response was favorable.

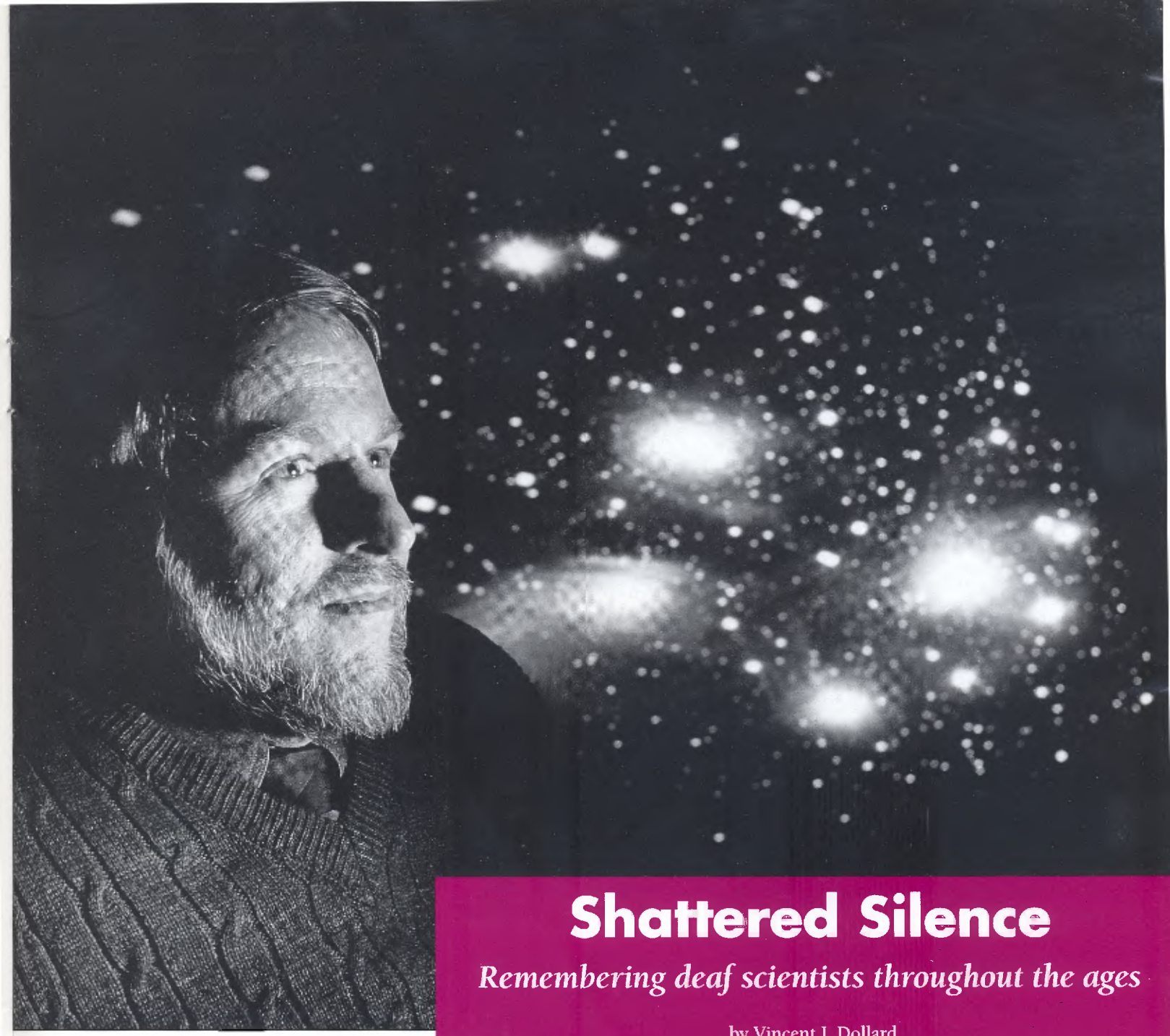
"The program is popular among students," says second-year student Karl Reddy, who is co-director with Durr. "Students watch the program in the cafeteria during lunch or dinner and can catch up on the news."

Reddy, a student in the business/computer science program, says he hopes to use his producing and directing experience when he returns to his home in South Africa to create similar programs that address deaf issues.

Kevin Sanderlin, first-year business student and reporter for *PAH! Deaf TV,* says he wanted to work on the program because of its informational value.

"It was a good start for us to do this show," he says, "because deaf people need to know about events around the world and in their hometowns, too."

"I enjoy working on this project because I love helping people," says Reddy. "This experience is showing deaf students that they can produce quality programs for other deaf people." ■



Metaphoric meditations Author Harry Lang ponders the mysteries of the night sky.

Shattered Silence

Remembering deaf scientists throughout the ages

by Vincent J. Dollard

On a warm summer night I lie upon a grassy hill, looking up and thinking about the stillness that surrounds me.... There has been a long silence among men and women congenitally or adventitiously deaf who have striven to have their voices heard. It has been a silence marked by prejudice and discrimination not unlike that experienced by other marginalized groups; a silence defined in part by their deafness, whose invisibility, for whatever reason, has failed to open the eyes of society to their great contributing potential; a silence perpetuated by the very fact that deaf scientists are too few in number to organize an effective cadre to systematically address their needs as scientists and as members of society.

This silence, in the spheres of human scientific endeavor, is my metaphor.

From *Silence of the Spheres: The Deaf Experience in the History of Science* by Dr. Harry Lang

Silence of the Spheres: The Deaf Experience in the History of Science is more than a compilation of accomplished deaf scientists, mathematicians, and engineers. It is a brick thrown against the "glass ceiling" faced by many deaf people who aspire to technical careers.

Silence of the Spheres, written by Dr. Harry Lang, research associate in NTID's department of educational research and development, traces the deaf experience in science back to the Renaissance.

Lang identifies and describes 670 deaf individuals who rose above daunting odds to make a mark in science, medicine, or engineering.

"Deaf men and women pursuing science today still face formidable attitude barriers that have persisted throughout history," says Lang.

"These attitudes remain because people do not realize the great contributions to science made by deaf individuals."

Lang, who published his book in March 1993, says the problems presented by attitudinal barriers are compounded by a lack of role models for young deaf students interested in science and math.

As a student at the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf in the 1960s, Lang wanted to major in science when he went to college, but at the time he couldn't find any literature on deaf people in that discipline.

"Before publication of this book," says Karen Davis, production editor at The Greenwood Publishing Group, which published *Silence of the Spheres,* "there was a complete absence of literature on the contributions of deaf men and women in science. We felt this was an important book, one that would make a difference in many lives."

Vicki Hurwitz, student development educator in NTID's department of student life, agrees. She teaches a course about deaf women's studies and has incorporated the book into her curriculum.

"I was intrigued with the information about deaf women," say Hurwitz. "I'd already done so much research on deaf women in other areas, and I found Harry's work to be a great addition to my unit on deaf women in science."

Lang says that researching and writing *Silence of the Spheres* took six years of searching in history books for references to scientists with hearing losses, then following up with library work or personal correspondence with family members when possible.

He humorously refers to his project as "NIH—Needle in a Haystack" research because of the lack of available information.

But Lang, who spent hundreds of hours cross-referencing notations and any mention of hearing loss, says the work was a wonderful professional development experience.

On his way to uncovering a wealth of information about deaf scientists, Lang fell in love with history, learned about European cultures, and took courses in British Sign Language and German.

His exhaustive research bore fruit as he studied the emergence in the 16th and 17th centuries of "scientific societies," groups of academicians in Europe who provided the first records of the works of deaf scientists.

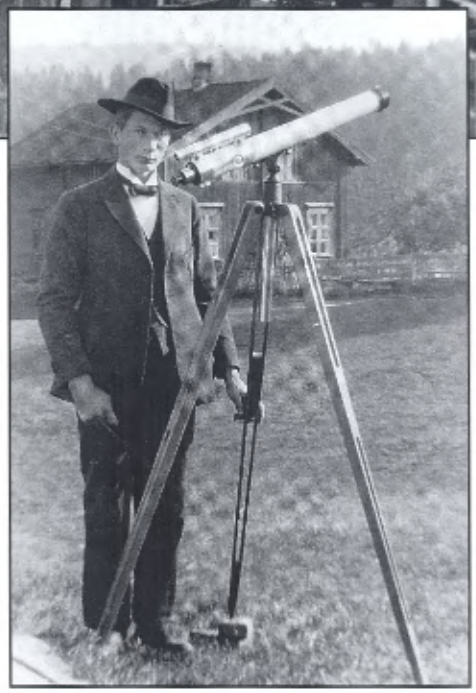
Lang reviewed rare transcripts that chronicled the first detailed notations of experimentation into hearing loss.

"In 1622 came the London Royal Society and in 1666 the Royal Academy of Sciences in France," Lang writes, "both...serving as rich sources of information about the few deaf scientists who lived in the 17th and 18th centuries."

One such scientist was Guillaume Amontons (1663-1705). Amontons was the first deaf physicist and one of the first to describe the phenomenon of evaporation, thus laying the foundation for study of the atmosphere.

Lang also learned about T. Kennard Thomson, who earned a bachelor's degree in civil engineering in 1886 and went on to earn a doctor of science degree.

Thomson, who lost his hearing at age 2, was instrumental in the design and construction of skyscrapers and presented numerous papers with the assistance of an earphone, a 19th-century listening device.



Silent no more Lang's book chronicles the emergence of scientific societies, such as France's Royal Academy of Sciences in the 18th century, opposite page; an early electricity class at Gallaudet University in 1904, right; and the accomplishments of such noted deaf astronomers as Annie Jump Cannon (1863–1941), who classified more than 300,000 stars, top, and Olaf Hassel (1898–1972), who discovered Comet Jurlof-Achmarof-Hassel and Hercules Nova, bottom.

He also earned a reputation as a visionary through his proposal for a "utopian city" to alleviate congestion in Manhattan.

"The elaborate and detailed design," writes Lang, "included the building of a double seawall and pumping out the water to reclaim nine square miles of land...buildings covering whole blocks, with rapid transit, hydroelectric power, gardens, playgrounds, and museums."

Lang also uncovered information about Kreigh B. Ayers, one of the first deaf chemists hired by Goodyear as the United States entered World War I.

"Ayers' knowledge of electrochemical processes was in enough demand that Goodyear, for which he worked for 25 years, loaned him to its Aircraft Corporation. There he published various reports on the solubility of sulfur in rubber, and he was considered to be the 'best of the dozen deaf chemists in America.'"

Lang says that he wrote *Silence of the Spheres* primarily for professionals. He acknowledges that similar books about the struggles and accomplishments of female scientists and African-American scientists have been written, for the most part, as scholarly analyses of "barriers and contributions."

"Many students, parents, counselors, and teachers feel that science is too difficult for deaf students, especially those who were deafened early in life," says Lang. "However, two-thirds of the 670 scientists I identified were either born deaf or became deaf in the first six years of their lives. So science is no different from other fields in which deaf people have succeeded.

"Negative attitudes are what must change," he continues. "Too many people still focus on deaf people in the pathological sense—as broken hearing people."

Times are changing, however, and *Silence of the Spheres* is Lang's contribution to those efforts.

The book contains a number of recommendations in its conclusion intended to help break down persistent stereotypes about deaf peoples' capabilities. They include suggestions about developing curricula in science, reducing occupational stereotyping, increasing access to professional organizations, and better preparing teachers to discuss issues of historical importance to deaf people.

Dr. Marvin Sachs, chairperson of NTID's physics and technical mathematics department, is encouraging mainstream math and science teachers to use examples from the book in classroom discussions.

"*Silence of the Spheres* is an important book," says Sachs, "because it is so effective at promoting diversity and encouraging people to look beyond hearing loss."

Lang says that *Silence of the Spheres* is the realization of an important personal goal.

"This book is part of my own dream to make an impact on this issue," he says, "something to live after me." ■

Free-lance writer Vincent J. Dollard, former editor of FOCUS magazine, is director of public relations at Rochester's Hillside Children's Center.

Way to go! Anthony Anderton, right, socializes with his fraternity brothers at an RIT hockey game.

Making the Switch

Transfer students realize their potential at NTID

by Wendy Levin

They make up one third of RIT's deaf student body, yet even a knowing observer couldn't pick them out of a crowd. From towns and cities all across the country they come to campus—in true collegiate fashion—carting suitcases and cardboard boxes brimming with personal possessions. But these students bring with them one thing that other undergraduates do not—college credit earned at other schools.

Their reasons for choosing RIT are as varied as their individual life stories, yet students who transfer to the Institute have at least one thing in common: a belief that they will get a better education at RIT.

Among the benefits they say they reap are outstanding educational access services, a chance to gain hands-on work experience while earning their degrees, and an environment that boasts a deaf community as well as a wealth of opportunities for deaf and hearing students to study and participate in social activities together.

Having tested the waters elsewhere, many deaf transfer students on campus are quick to articulate the differences between RIT and the other schools they've attended.

"I am so much happier here than I was at my college back home," says second-year accounting and office technologies student Lisa Nagel.

Making the grade

The fact that NTID faculty members communicate directly with students makes all the difference to Nagel, who came to NTID after completing a year's worth of liberal arts credits at a four-year university in Indiana.

Nagel, the only deaf student on her hometown campus, had attended a program for deaf students in a mainstream high school. During her first year in college, she had an interpreter in each of her classes. Reflecting on that arrangement, she says, "It was OK, but I wanted to learn with other deaf people and take my own notes. I didn't want people to do it for me."

Other students say that RIT's well-established system of educational access services, such as interpreters and notetakers, is what convinced them.

Third-year electromechanical technology student Thomas Ruiz appreciates RIT's offerings in this regard. "I really wanted to earn a bachelor's degree, but I wasn't sure I could do it at a college that had few services for deaf students," says Ruiz, who transferred to RIT from a technical college in Texas. "I've found that this is a place where I can reach my goals."

Steppin' out With aerobics classes offered in RIT's Student Life Center, getting fit has never been easier for Sherry Thomas, foreground, one of many OWLs (older, wiser learners) at NTID.

Lynne Milun had completed a teaching certificate in history at a community college in the New York City area before coming to RIT to earn a bachelor's degree in biomedical computing. When it comes to educational access services, the contrast between institutions is "like night and day," she says.

"Previously, I felt like I was fighting to get services. I managed to get a few interpreters, but the fact that I have some hearing is what helped me the most. My instructors would record their lectures so that I could listen to them at home with the volume turned all the way up."

Now, at RIT, Milun has notetakers in all her classes. She takes her own notes, too, but this system enables her to ensure that she hasn't missed anything. She says, "RIT's educational access services have made my life a lot easier."

It's never too late

Many students transfer to NTID with college credits that they earned years—sometimes decades—before.

"Most older learners who come to RIT do very well here," says Vicki Hurwitz, student development educator in NTID's department of human development. "Their needs may be different from the younger students' on campus, due to their life experiences, but we try to address those considerations."

According to Hurwitz, who has organized social gatherings for mature deaf learners on campus—known as OWLs (older, wiser learners)—programs of this sort are helpful in making the adjustment to campus life a smooth one for these transfer students.

"I hadn't been in school for ages, but I decided that it was time to go back and expand my education," says 49-year-old Belle Reeder, who has enjoyed the camaraderie of her contemporaries by participating in OWLs' social gatherings.

Reeder, who took a few community college classes in the '70s and '80s, enrolled in NTID's photo/media technologies program last fall with the intention of going on to study biomedical photographic communications at RIT. "You're never too old to learn," she says.

Her classmate, Sherry Thomas, couldn't agree more. Thomas, who recently celebrated her 41st birthday, first set her sights on NTID while she was a high school sophomore at the Arkansas School for the Deaf. But marriage and motherhood at an early age caused her to shelve those aspirations—at least temporarily. Now that she is single again and her kids have grown, Thomas says she decided it was time to dust off her old dream and turn it into a reality. At the moment, Thomas is sampling a variety of NTID's programs.

According to Gail Rothman, chairperson of the visual communications counseling services department, the school's career exploration classes can be a big help for deaf students who need some guidance in deciding exactly what it is that they want to study.

"These classes give new students an opportunity to try out the array of majors available to them while they get prepared academically for the course of study they choose to pursue," says Rothman, who is in charge of the career decision sampling program.

Like many transfer students, Thomas reports that this option has been invaluable in smoothing her transition to RIT.

"I hadn't been in a classroom for years," she says. "I know now that I want to study social work, but it was good to be able to test other possibilities. It helped me confirm my interest in the field and clarify my career goals."

Thomas attended a community college while living in Texas 10 years ago. She learned the basics of her course work there by using interpreters, but she recalls her frustration at feeling somewhat removed from the goings-on of the classroom.

"I couldn't participate fully in classes there," she explains. "At NTID, I can be totally involved in class discussions because we all understand one another pretty well. Even when I enroll in RIT's College of Liberal Arts for my bachelor's degree, I expect to be fully involved, because everyone on this campus is more aware of Deaf culture and deaf people's communication needs."

New horizons Michael Nutter chats with a friend on the way to class.

Communication challenges

Given the broad range of communication styles in use at RIT, it's not uncommon for newcomers to find themselves facing new communication challenges, in and out of class.

Reeder, for example, whose primary language is American Sign Language (ASL), says she occasionally has some trouble understanding classroom discussions.

But when it comes to mastering new communication skills, perhaps the biggest opportunity for growth takes place outside the classroom.

"When I first came to NTID, I wasn't used to being with so many deaf people, and I didn't understand ASL very well," explains third-year manufacturing processes technology student Michael Nutter. "At first it was hard for me to communicate with students who do, but I have learned a lot of ASL since then." Nutter, who attended mainstream schools while growing up, prefers to use signed English and voice.

"Studying at NTID has been a good experience for me because I've made deaf and hearing friends who express themselves in a lot of different ways."

First-year imaging and photographic technology student Philip Mills, who transferred to RIT after earning an associate degree in computer-aided drafting at a community college in Oklahoma, agrees. The fact that students use a variety of communication styles "makes me feel right at home," he says.

By contrast, RIT graduate Robert Rice recalls feeling not entirely at ease as a student at the four-year university in Miami that he attended.

"After a hard day's work in my classes, I'd come home to my hearing roommate playing the stereo," he says. "He hated that I needed the captioning on during TV shows and movies, and he became frustrated when I couldn't hear him calling me from across the room."

That less-than-friendly reception, in addition to mounting frustrations related to obtaining educational access services, led Rice to transfer to RIT midway through his freshman year.

"Here I found that everyone was friendly. Having peers around me who share common experiences helped me to see that I had indeed come to the right place."

The fit is so good that Rice has decided to stay for a while. Since graduating last year with a bachelor's degree in business management, he has started taking graduate-level classes in RIT's College of Business. He's also an adjunct faculty member in NTID's department of business occupations.

What is it about NTID that lends itself to such a comfortable atmosphere for learning? According to Dianne Brooks, manager of NTID's department of recruitment and admissions, the answer is simple.

"This is a school where hearing students and deaf students truly live and learn side by side, and that's a rarity in the world of higher education," she says.

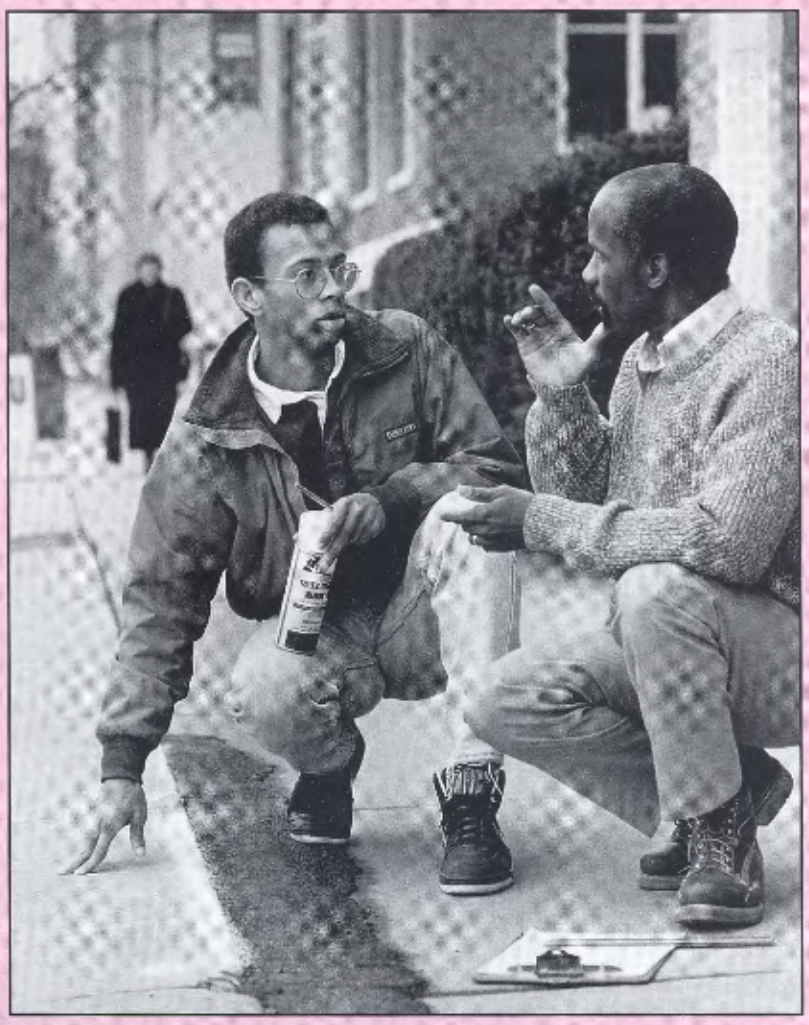
Learning by doing

Among RIT's other distinctions, its cooperative education (co-op) program provides students with unique opportunities to test the knowledge they've acquired in the classroom well before they graduate, explains John Macko, career opportunities advisor in NTID's Center on Employment, who advises students on how to get and keep a job.

"I liked my co-ops because I got to practice what I'd been learning in class, and I developed a lot of new skills that should make it easier for me to find work," says Nutter, who completed certificate programs in industrial and architectural drafting at a vocational college in Maine right after high school.

But, after spending three long winters without a steady job—"The crew didn't need me once the snow came," explains the brawny 26-year-old about his days repairing roads in his home state of Maine—he decided to go back to college to learn some new skills.

On his way to earning his associate degree at NTID, Nutter returned to Maine to complete two co-ops. His first stint was with McKenney Machine & Tool Company in Corinna, where he crafted the complex internal mechanisms of guns and rifles. Later he worked at Dexter Shoes, making and repairing parts for the factory's machines.



A two-way street Charles Lundy, right, shows co-op student Mike Cross how to inspect Rochester's sidewalks.

"For many deaf students, the co-op experience is the perfect time to test out their on-the-job communication skills with their co-workers," says Macko.

Take Mike Cross, one of Macko's students. A third-year civil engineering technology student, Cross came to NTID after studying at Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C.

As is often the case, Cross was the only deaf person on his co-op assignment, which took place in the department of environmental services at City Hall in Rochester, New York.

Much to Cross' surprise, however, his supervisor had taken the initiative to learn some sign language in the weeks between the intern's initial interview and his start date in the department.

"It was important for me to be able to communicate with Mike the best way I could, so I used a library book to learn some basic words," says Cross' supervisor, Charles Lundy. "That was enough to get us started. From there Mike taught me more signs, and I taught him how to inspect sidewalks. It worked out so well, we'd like to hire him back for another co-op."

Co-ops have opened the door to specific employment opportunities for some students. Indeed, NTID boasts an average 95 percent job placement rate for its graduates. But according to Macko, an RIT alumnus who graduated in 1991 with a bachelor's degree in business administration and finance, many other aspects of life at RIT contribute to students' preparation for the working world.

"By getting involved with community service projects and other social activities, students learn a lot about themselves and about the way the world works," says Macko.

All in a good day's play

Students can choose from a smorgasbord of student-run clubs and interest groups in addition to a calendar full of on-campus cultural and social events.

For third-year manufacturing processes technology student Anthony Anderton, being a member of Kappa Phi Theta—one of three predominantly deaf fraternities on campus—has been a rewarding learning experience.

"My involvement with the group has taught me how to be a leader," says Anderton, who came to RIT with academic credits he had earned at Gallaudet University.

For Anderton, who grew up in Chattanooga, Tennessee, with parents and two brothers who are deaf, membership in the fraternity has been an important outlet for sharing Deaf culture.

"I've enjoyed helping friends who aren't familiar with Deaf culture learn our ways," he says. "It feels good to see other deaf students becoming proud of who they are."

Thomas, who returned to school after so many years away from the classroom, shares that same sense of pride.

In addition to her studies, Thomas has been enjoying aerobics classes at RIT's Student Life Center. She asserts, "I've lost 15 pounds already. I have a new body to go along with my new life!"

Getting into shape is just one indication that transferring to RIT was a move that Thomas is happy to have made.

"For the longest time I dreamed of getting back into the classroom," she says, breaking into an enormous smile. "After I unpacked all of my things and settled into my dorm room, I sat back and thought to myself, 'I sure am glad to be here.'" ■

Karen Christie

by Kathryn Schmitz

Perhaps the most important lesson Dr. Karen Christie learned in Cape Coast, Ghana, last spring is the depth of human generosity. Christie, assistant professor in NTID's English department, took an unpaid professional leave of absence to teach English to young deaf Ghanaians last March through July. As the only "oburoni" (white) woman at the Cape Coast School for the Deaf, Christie experienced a few stares along with a great deal of hospitality during her stay.

"I didn't feel too weird," she says, "but having all the curious eyes on me all the time wherever I went sometimes made me tired. Because I'm white, the people knew I was a foreigner, so they shared what they had, even though they didn't have much. They wanted to make sure I was happy, had enough food, and felt welcome.

"For them, the most positive thing I could say was that I felt honored to be their guest."

Christie first traveled to Ghana in 1990 to visit her brother, a missionary who lived with his wife and three children in Accra, the capital of this country of more than 15.1 million people on West Africa's Gulf of Guinea. During that trip, she visited the Cape Coast School for the Deaf, which has approximately 175 students aged 4 to 17. When she returned to the United States, she

Memories of a year well spent Dr. Karen Christie, left, shares her fabrics and handcrafted objects from Ghana with James Christianson, first-year computer science student, center, and Tracey Washington, fourth-year criminal justice student.

corresponded with the school's administrators, who encouraged her to return to teach English to students in the U.S.-equivalent of 6th grade and junior high school.

The deaf Ghanaian students whom Christie taught use a sign language similar to American Sign Language. In fact, Christie learned that many of the signs are the same, but one feature may be different, such as the handshape or the location, almost like an accent. For example, the sign for "color," typically made over the chin in the United States, is identical in Cape Coast except that it is made over the cheek.

Despite her 11 years of experience teaching in the United States, Christie had to brush up on local customs to effectively teach English in Cape Coast. Ghana, under England's control during the 19th century, still reflects British influence in its use of the English language.

To be consistent with the school's practices, Christie had to remember to spell certain words the British way, such as "colour," "favours," and "grey." She also had to become accustomed to other British usages and grammar, such as the typically British use of the phrase "ought to" instead of the American preference for "should."

She also learned about the influence of cultural experience on idioms and figures of speech. While teaching students about idioms, she realized she did not know an appropriate example from her students' culture that would explain the idiom "pulling my leg."

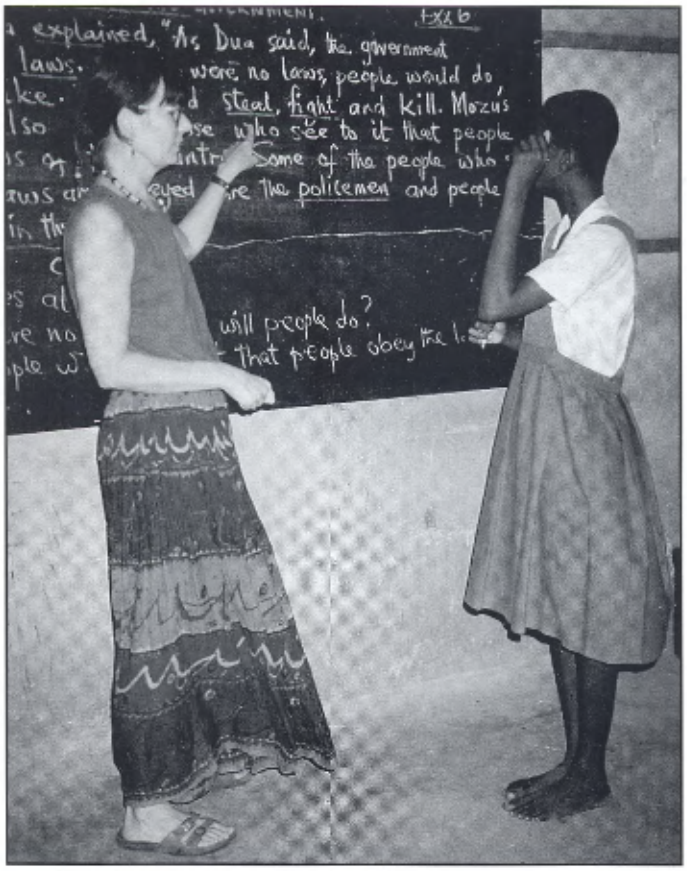
"I had to learn about their culture," she explains. "It took a long time before I had experienced enough of their culture to be able to give good examples of idioms."

Comfort Bimpong, a deaf woman who teaches at the school, guided Christie through local customs and etiquette.

The most important lesson I learned: My experience in Ghana reaffirmed my belief in the importance of teachers knowing the culture and language of their students.

Similarities and differences of NTID and Cape Coast students: Because I'm deaf like them, students at Cape Coast were comfortable sharing their lives with me, as are NTID students. They are slightly dissimilar in the classroom in that NTID students will challenge ideas and enter spirited discussions with me, whereas Cape Coast students tended not to challenge me.

What I'm most frequently asked by NTID students: NTID students are very curious about the differences between deaf and hearing cultures in Ghana, the sign language used there, and my occasional social mishaps while in the country.



Nouns, verbs, and adjectives galore Christie helps a deaf Ghanaian student decipher the components of a sentence.

"Comfort made me experience the life there," says Christie. "If I goofed in the culture, she told me bluntly what I had done wrong. Our bond was that we both are deaf. I felt *that* was stronger than our differences as white and black, American and African."

During her stay in Ghana, Christie came to realize that the bonds of the deaf community transcend national borders. She found herself preferring to be with her deaf fellows, not with the occasional white tourists who came to Cape Coast, to her friend's surprise.

"Comfort would point out other white people and assume that I would want to meet up with them when we saw them in the market," says Christie. "When I told her no, they were still *hearing*, she just laughed in a way that indicated our shared deaf experience."

Christie told her students about her life as an American deaf woman, amazing them with the fact that she is licensed to drive a car. In Ghana, deaf people are not allowed to drive. She also tried to explain some of the technologies that American deaf people take for granted, such as TTYs (text telephones), closed captions, and telephone relay systems.

"I just confused them when I tried to explain the relay," she says. "They don't even have a telephone at the school. In fact, they often don't have electricity."

In exchange for the great hospitality she experienced, Christie volunteered her teaching time in Cape Coast and gave money to the school for a gas stove. She also helped start a library at the school by donating books she had brought. But beyond material exchanges, Christie paid her respects to her hosts in other ways.

"To honor the experience, I have to tell about it," Christie says. And, through conversations with friends and colleagues as well as presentations to students, she has been doing so since returning to NTID. ■

Closed-captioned cinema

Reviewed by Peter Schragle

Gopen's Guide to Closed Captioned Video

Stuart Gopen
Caption Database Inc., 1993

An important resource for deaf and hard-of-hearing aficionados of cinema is *Gopen's Guide to Closed Captioned Video*, by Stuart Gopen, father of a deaf child. Gopen was inspired to undertake this ambitious project after observing that his son's reading ability improved as a result of watching captioned videos.

If you've wondered which feature movies, documentaries, or educational programs actually are closed captioned, this book is for you. This is by far the best and the only reliable resource available for anyone deaf or hard of hearing who has experienced time-consuming searches for captioned movies in video stores, often with frustrating results upon discovering a program is not captioned when the box is labeled with a closed captioning (CC) symbol.

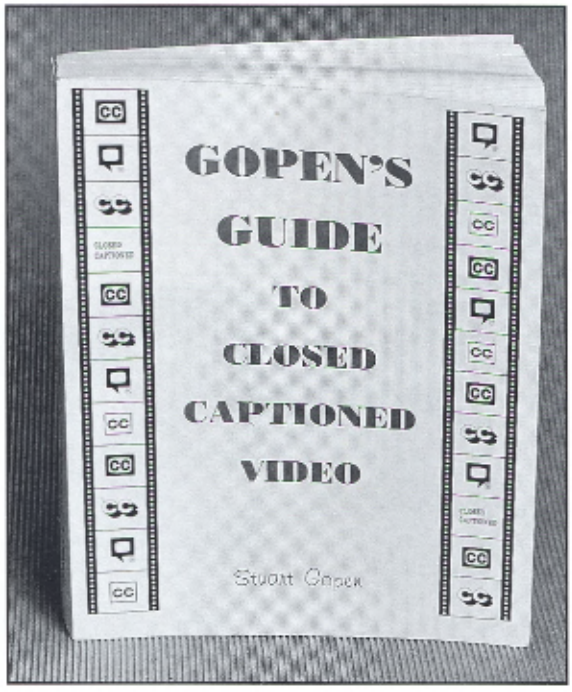
This guide resulted from a laborious inspection of 9,000 movie titles, of which 5,000 titles in 23 categories were determined to be closed captioned. The bulk of the book is devoted to synopses of movie titles that are verified to be closed captioned, regardless of whether or not their video boxes are properly marked CC.

Along with detailed synopses, other important information is provided for every title, such as movie length, cast members and directors, captioning producer, video distributor, whether the title is classified as "moratorium" (meaning the video currently is off the market), and video purchase price. All titles described in the guide can be purchased through the book's publisher using an order form contained in the book.

Other valuable information is provided in the guide: more than 150 titles of captioned videos placed in boxes without a closed captioning symbol, more than 100 uncaptioned titles incorrectly marked in boxes as closed captioned, about 135 titles that are possibly closed captioned although the author's "best guess" says they are not, a list of video suppliers and captioning companies, and a general index of all closed-captioned videos.

I highly recommend *Gopen's Guide* as a handy and accurate reference tool, although the book has a few minor flaws. Many of the synopses are written in a subjective manner, giving the impression that there are no bad movies in the guide. The categorization of movies is another weak point. Movie titles that I would expect to appear in one category are found in a different category, and sometimes finding titles requires referring to the index. I'd like to see other categories added, such as film classics and supernatural films that don't necessarily fall under the categories of "horror" or "suspense."

All in all, however, *Gopen's Guide to Closed Captioned Video* is a useful and reliable resource for people seeking closed-captioned videos. ■



Peter Schragle, 1972 RIT graduate, is senior captioning specialist in NTID's instructional television and media services department.

Professionals-in-training At a recent "paraprofessionals" fair on campus, students checked out NTID's student development educators program as well as a host of other such opportunities to work with their peers while learning responsibility and developing leadership skills. In the upcoming issue, *FOCUS* explores the myriad ways that students help themselves by serving others.

Photography by A. Sue Weisler

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Courtesy Karen Christie

A journey to Ghana, p. 26

Courtesy Reidun Guldal

The deaf experience in science, p. 19

David Carson

Feeling at home at RIT, p. 22