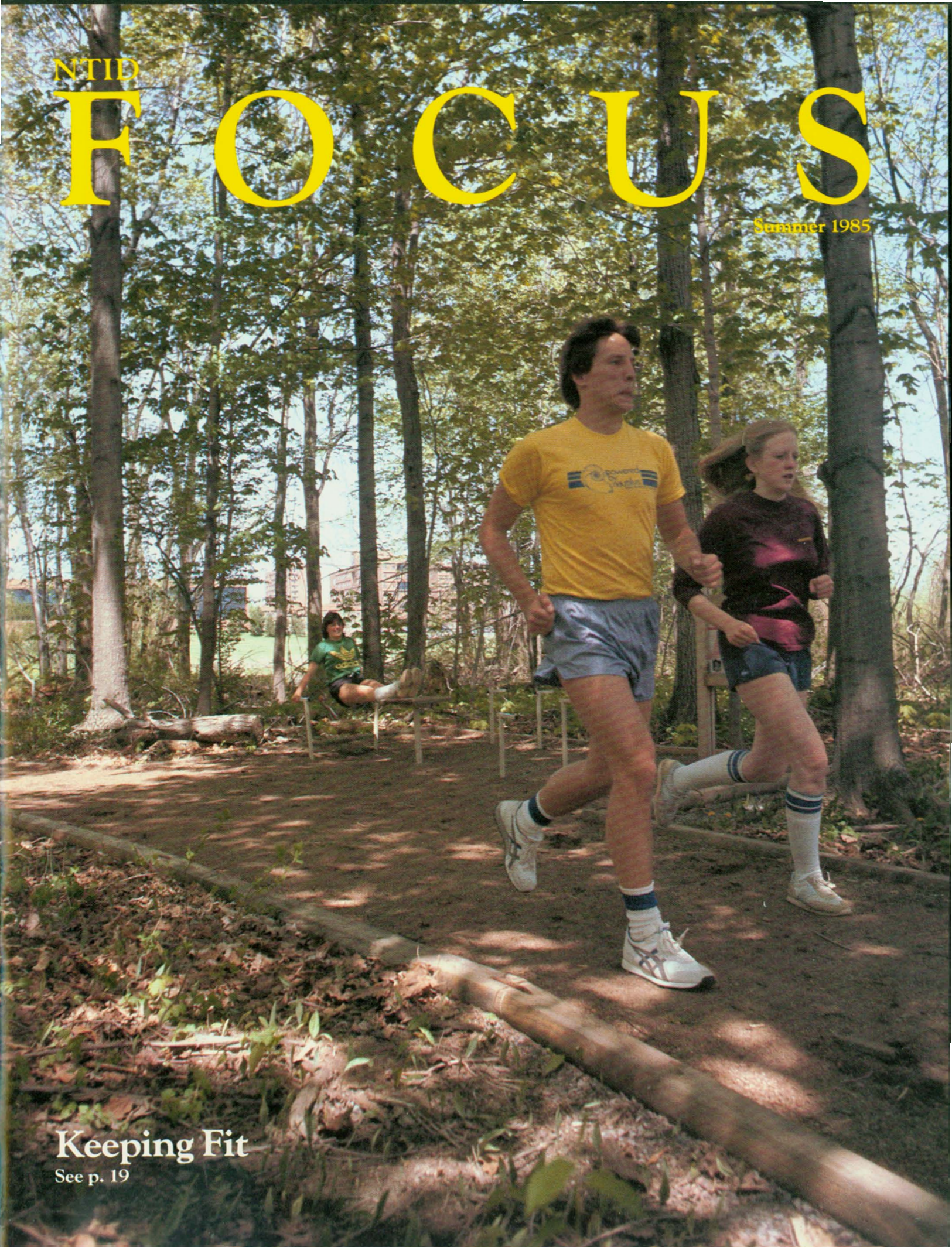


NTID

FOCUS

Summer 1985



Keeping Fit
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NTID FOCUS

Publication of the National Technical Institute for the Deaf
at Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, NY 14623

Summer 1985

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The fitness trails that wind behind the RIT campus provide the perfect setting for a summer run. Students Pamela Bartels, Roland Granfors, and Christine Donofrio (on exercise station in background) enjoy an afternoon workout. (Photograph by Jim Castelein)

◀ *It's Over! The Academic Awards Ceremony, held the day before Commencement, is a time for laughter, tears, and accolades. Graduate Sarah Quintero of Aurora, Illinois, gets a big hug from identical twin sister Sylvia, a 1983 graduate of NTID. (Photograph by A. Sue Weisler)*

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NTID Focus is published by the Division of Public Affairs at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf and Communications at Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, New York.

Director	Writers
Michael R. Franco	Emily Andreano
Associate Director	Vincent Dollard
Marcia B. Dugan	Jean Ingham
Editor	Ann Kanter
Kathleen Sullivan	Tom Willard
Art Director	Photographers
John Massey	Jim Castelein
Designer	John Danicic
Walter Kowalik	A. Sue Weisler
	Contributing Photographers
	Martha Redden
	Elaine Sutherland
	Tom Willard

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Preparing for Life's Challenges

From the Director's Desk

This issue of *NTID Focus* contains a wealth of articles about the link between NTID and its host institution, RIT. Most obvious is the centerspread article by RIT President M. Richard Rose, the second in a five-part series. This cooperative spirit also is reflected in a number of stories about students, faculty, and staff members who individually and collectively display the unique qualities of an RIT education.

Staff members at RIT's Student Health Service, for example, have initiated several steps to learn more about their hearing-impaired clientele, including adapting their communication methods and curricula for hearing-impaired students. Read about their efforts on p. 5.

The same is true of RIT's Department of Physical Education, where education takes place, not only in the classroom, but on the playing fields. "Keeping Fit" on p. 19 details the diversity of physical education classes and facilities available, all of which promote healthy interaction between hearing and hearing-impaired students.

Robert Menchel is one of many faculty members at RIT called upon by other countries to share their expertise. Menchel visited Israel in November and December to participate in the Second International Symposium on Design for Disabled Persons. He shares his experiences on p. 8.



Four students and Assistant Professor Elaine Sutherland attended the New York City Opera Company's (NYCO) interpreted performance of an opera adapted from the original Broadway musical, *Sweeney Todd*. Sign interpreted opera is fairly new, and one of its prime movers has been renowned coloratura and NYCO General Manager Beverly Sills, whose daughter, Muffy, is hearing impaired. Details of this unique musical experience are found on p. 3.

New York was one of several cities that *Sunshine Too*, NTID's theatrical outreach group, visited during its 1984-85 tour. This year's troupe included RIT graduate Christopher Felo, who, like many hearing students, became interested in deafness while a student at RIT. Read how Felo parlayed that interest, as well as one in theater, into a successful season with *Sunshine Too* on p. 24.

Fellow RIT graduates Donna Merrill and Jennifer Gravitz took more circuitous paths to NTID than Felo. Both received bachelor's degrees in social work from RIT, and both—one is hearing impaired, the other hearing—found that RIT offered their first opportunity to interact with deaf persons. Read about these interesting graduates on p. 14 and p. 17, respectively.

A class at NTID for postlingually/adventitiously deaf students—the first of its kind in the country—offers a simultaneous support group and educational experience to persons who become deaf later in life. Instructors Donna Burfield and James Casey explain the concept behind their class on p. 26.

The U.S. Navy and RIT share a friend in Paul Meyer, whose association with the Institute spans nine years and hundreds of successful co-op and permanent job placements for hearing-impaired students and graduates. Meyer's commitment to disabled persons and his success in finding jobs for them are detailed on p. 22.

All employers look favorably on students and graduates with good speechreading skills, a communication method to which researcher Carol DeFilippo has devoted a trio of projects. "Aiming for the Best" on p. 12 describes her projects and how she hopes they will lead to improved speechreading capabilities for NTID students.

It is easy to "read" the reactions of people who taste graduate Jimmy Libman's chocolate chip cookies—"Mmm." The enterprising New Jersey native has turned his local cookie-making scheme into a successful business venture that employs several hearing-impaired workers. Libman contends that his business is proof positive that, "Deaf people can run their own business—and do it well." Read about "Gimmee Jimmy's Cookies" on p. 10.

And finally, the NTID Theatre Department's director, Dr. Richard Nichols, just completed his first year at NTID. He shares his background and reflects on his first season on p. 30.

William E. Castle

A Night at the OPERA

By Ann Kanter

At 4 a.m. on a bleak November morning, a silver Toyota and a brown Datsun formed a small caravan leaving Rochester, New York. Its destination was New York City and an American Sign Language-interpreted production of the opera, *Sweeney Todd, The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*. Passengers in the cars were NTID Assistant Professor Elaine Sutherland and students Lulu Bowers, Pauline DiMaggio, Ramona Galindez, and Willa James.

Galindez, the daughter of a musician, was born and grew up in New York City; none of the others had been there before. James, a pianist in the NTID Combo, had attended an opera when she was 11 years old; for the others, *Sweeney Todd* would be their first.

Signed interpretations of folk and women's music began in the late 1970s, and *The Elephant Man* in 1980 was the first Broadway show to be sign language interpreted. Signed operatic performances are newer and less common. In fact, the New York City Opera Company's (NYCO) performance of *Susannah* in 1982 was the first sign-interpreted opera performance in New York City.

Stephen Sondheim's *Sweeney Todd*, which NYCO adapted in operatic form, is the fifth. (NYCO's other signed operas have been such standards as *The Merry Widow* and *The Mikado*, and the lesser-known *The Cunning Little Vixen*.)

Opera companies in Florida, Minnesota, Alabama, and Oklahoma also have given signed performances, but they were dress rehearsals opened to deaf audiences. NYCO is the first company to interpret a regular production for deaf viewers.

Prime mover behind this innovation is soprano Beverly Sills, who sang with the company for 25 years, and since 1979 has served as its general director. Sills has a personal interest in communicating to hearing-impaired persons—her 25-year-old daughter, Meredith "Muffy" Greenough, has been deaf since birth.

From the time she was young, Greenough almost always attended the opera when her mothersang. Sills would explain the plot, "and Muffy seemed to enjoy the operas that had some dance and could give her visual pleasure."

When Greenough began working as a mechanical artist for Grosset & Dunlap, she met Ann Silver, then an associate art director with the firm. Silver, also congenitally deaf, serves as a deaf accessibility consultant to the cultural arts scene.

"I wondered what she thought of opera," says Silver, "because all her life she has been in an opera house when her mother performed. I wondered what it was like for her, being unable to hear her own mother sing."

And so Silver asked Greenough to accompany her to a sign-interpreted performance of the Broadway musical, *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*. Sills and husband Peter Greenough joined them.

Noting her daughter's pleasure at seeing the interpreters, Sills asked Silver about the possibility of signing an opera.

"And that," says Silver, "is how it all began."

Interpreting for music and theater is different from interpreting everyday conversations. Theatrical signing employs larger, more dramatic gestures, while musical signing also includes body movements that convey beat and mood.

The art so fascinates Sutherland, an English instructor at NTID as well as an avid opera buff, that she is writing a book on its different forms, including signing for opera, Broadway shows, jazz, folk music, and political music.



All hands on stage
Interpreters added to the visual appeal of the performance of "Sweeney Todd."

Research for the book took her to New York, and it was then she decided that NTID students might enjoy the opportunity to experience the opera.

"NYCO's interpreters are first rate," she says. "They have theatrical experience, they sign vividly, and they really are up to the task."

"I want my students exposed to the highest form of sign language," continues Sutherland, "and at NYCO, that's what they'll see."

The students showed varied reactions. Bowers, who cannot hear any music, says she did feel "little vibrations."

would have preferred having the interpreters stand next to the characters for whom they were signing.

James disagrees. "Sometimes the houselights dim, and when that happens, you wouldn't be able to see the interpreters. By standing to one side," she says, "they were spotlighted throughout the performance."

James, who did not begin to lose her hearing until after she learned to speak, is a good speechreader. In normal conversation she does not use sign language and has no need for an interpreter. Nonetheless, when musical instruments and

doing public service commercials for the International Year of Disabled Persons.

Champion, another child of deaf parents, teaches sign language at the New York Society for the Deaf and has interpreted for Broadway productions of *The Elephant Man*, *A Chorus Line*, *Ain't Misbehavin'*, and *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*.

Deaf people watching an interpreted performance have the wearisome task of turning their heads from side to side to watch the actor and the interpreter, like spectators at a tennis match.

"Much of the action in *Sweeney Todd* is repetitive," explains James. "After a while, you realize that each person who sits in the barber chair will have his throat slit and then disappear through the trap door. Once you know that, you can take your eyes off the actors and pay more attention to the interpreter."

A nice touch, according to James, was the inclusion in the opera program of drawings of each of the character's sign names. Were it not for this, she explains, interpreters would have to take the time to fingerspell each name many times throughout the performance.

"I enjoyed *Sweeney Todd*," she says, but she has not been converted to an opera fan. Taken as a whole, however, the New York trip was valuable to her growth.

"I'm from Chicago," she says, "but I had no idea that New York City was as big as it is."

She'd like to go back, but not for more than a few days at a time. "That's all I could take. It's not so much all the skyscrapers, but the sheer number of human beings."

Bowers admits to feeling "overwhelmed" by New York City, which she had expected to be not unlike her hometown of Denver, Colorado, "only larger. I had seen New York on television," she says, "but it was impressive to really be there—to see the World Trade Center and Saint Patrick's Cathedral and the Brooklyn Bridge."

DiMaggio never really understood opera, and found it "a beautiful experience."

Sutherland would like to make this experience available to even larger numbers of NTID students. Continued research for her book will take her to New York once again in the fall, and if housing and transportation were available, "I would take 20 students," she says.



Heading for the Big Apple

The NTID group about to depart for New York City includes, from left, Ramona Galindez, Elaine Sutherland, Willa James, and Pauline DiMaggio. Missing from the photo is Lulu Bowers.

"But it was great to understand everything so clearly," she says. "It was a huge audience, and all those people were used to watching opera and music. I felt involved with them while they watched because I could understand through the interpreter."

"It was a big-time theatrical performance," interjects Sutherland. "The best."

Galindez agrees. She can hear some music, "especially the mens' lower tones," she says. She has attended many interpreted theatrical performances, but prefers the opera.

"It was blissful for me," she says. "The set was more decorative [than for straight theatrical performances], the actors had more expressive faces, and I could see it through the interpreter."

DiMaggio, fourth cousin of the baseball player, also hears some music, but cannot distinguish the lyrics. She was happy to see the opera interpreted, but

voices are combined, she cannot discern the lyrics and depends on an interpreter.

The interpreters for *Sweeney Todd* were Bill Moody, Marie Taccogna, and Alan Champion.

Moody, a graduate of the Goodman Theater School of Drama in Chicago, has been a sign language interpreter for more than 15 years. He established the Chicago Theater of the Deaf in 1974, and for seven years served as a French sign language interpreter for the International Visual Theatre in Paris. Currently, he is president of the New York Metropolitan Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf.

Taccogna, whose parents are deaf, is a staff interpreter with the Gallaudet College Interpreting Service in Washington, D.C. She has interpreted network TV programs such as "Eyewitness News" and "America Alive," in addition to

A Healthy Dose Of Care

By Emily Andreano

At some point in your life, you may have had to go to the school nurse, or the college infirmary, or the sick bay at camp or in the military. If it was the school nurse, she might have held your hand, or called your mother, or maybe even taken your temperature. She probably told you that she wasn't allowed to give out any aspirin.

The college health service of today may be more sophisticated than the old school nurse, but much of the work done with patients is equally routine. At the RIT Student Health Service, staff members have a challenge, which, say many of them, "makes" their jobs. That challenge is serving patients who are hearing impaired.

Encouraging those staff members to rise to the challenge is Director E. Cassandra Jordan.

Jordan has been the principal instigator of a move to encourage Health Service providers to learn to sign for themselves, and to develop health education courses with curricula either specifically for, or inclusive of, hearing-impaired students.

Reaction among staff members to Jordan's exhortations to focus their attentions on RIT's hearing-impaired population is warm.

"I know that, for myself," says Nurse Practitioner Julia Steigbigel, "the infusion of hearing-impaired students into the patient load is what keeps me enthusiastic about my work."

Nurse Pat Coniglio nods assent. "I work nights, mainly serving students in the residence halls. My work at RIT has introduced me to a deaf culture that I never knew existed."

The combination of skills that Jordan brings to her post makes the changes she has instituted unsurprising. She spent 16 years in special education as a teacher and administrator, is a registered nurse, and was an administrator within a hospital setting.

"I dealt with deafness, as well as with all other areas of exceptionality, in the public schools," says Jordan. "I have a commitment to working with these students."



Making it perfectly clear

Cross-registered student Mitchell Siegel explains his ailment to interpreter and medical office assistant Rachel Warren while former Health Service nurse practitioner Robert McCann examines him.

Jordan came to RIT in September 1982 and immediately set about devising ways to "enhance the comfort level of hearing-impaired consumers."

One tack she took was to insist that all Health Service employees study sign language. Observations of provider-patient situations where the latter were hearing impaired led her to conclude that an interpreter, while vitally necessary in certain situations, could at other times hinder interaction between the patient and the primary care-giver.

Staff members balance the atmosphere of privacy and confidentiality against the need for effective communication in trying to decide when to request certified interpreter and Medical Office Assistant Rachel Warren.

"Although the student may understand intellectually that confidentiality is not lost through the use of an interpreter, a certain sense of intimacy can be," explains Dr. Martin Zinaman.

Nurse Practitioner Julie Leonardo agrees: "It helps to be fluent in sign language; at times a third person seems to interfere. At other times, though, it helps to have Rachel clarify things we're not sure the student is picking up. We have a nice balance."

Jordan also reviewed a human sexuality course that is required of all female students seeking a pelvic examination. She decided to offer hearing-impaired students an option: they could either attend the regular course, which is presented by an instructor who uses an interpreter, or they could choose a



Signs of the times

Not all deaf students want an interpreter present when discussing their medical problems, so Health Service providers sign for themselves. Nurse practitioner Julia Steigbigel has regular practice sessions with internist Joseph Kutchukian, a part-time consultant.

second course—developed especially for hearing-impaired students under Jordan's tutelage—that moves at a somewhat slower pace and is conducted by a teacher who signs for herself.

Other courses already had been tailored to meet the needs of hearing-impaired students, such as one on stress.

The Student Health Advisory Committee, which includes hearing-impaired students among its members, continually proposes new courses or course changes to the Service.

A family planning health fair has always included participants from NTID's Department of Student Life, and a signed skit called, "To Be, or Not to Be Pregnant" is presented to all students by members of the Health Service.

The inroads Jordan has made have shown themselves in the increase of visitations by hearing-impaired students.

"Right after SVP [the Summer Vestibule Program, an orientation program for new NTID students], we usually have a huge influx of students; those

"Now we are more attuned not only to deafness, but also to the special medical problems attendant to such phenomena as the rubella epidemic."

who are used to having their parents take care of them for every little sniffle," she says with a laugh. "But if they see us as a nurturing environment, that's fine—I don't mind. We're still getting those hearing-impaired students—although they are fewer in number—who come in and tell us that until they got sick, they didn't even know we were here."

Prominent among those who wait until they get sick, or a crisis erupts, are hearing-impaired women who require routine gynecological care. Hearing-impaired students of both sexes encounter other sexual problems as well, as many embark on their first experience away from the relatively sheltered environment of home or residential school.

"The difficulty that some hearing-impaired college students have with abstract thought can pose problems in terms of self-responsibility," says Julie Shattuck, nurse practitioner for the Women's Health Care Service. "It is not unusual for hearing-impaired students to engage in sexual behavior with less insight into its ramifications."

The Health Service is addressing this problem through a new peer sexuality training program.

The curriculum for the program is still being written. When complete, its aim will be to transmit accurate sexual information to hearing-impaired students on campus through the use of specially trained peer counselors.

Jordan has affected the Health Service staff in other ways, urging them to increase their awareness of deafness in general.

"In the past, a medical interview with a hearing-impaired patient might have been short-circuited; attention was paid only to the problem at hand without any attempt at health education. A cough was treated without bothering to try to tell the student to quit smoking," says Robert McCann, former nurse practitioner for the Service.

"Now we are more attuned not only to deafness, but also to the special medical problems attendant to such phenomena as the rubella epidemic."

As examples of those problems, Dr. Igor Mihajlov cites retinitis pigmentosa, vertigo, external otitis (ear infections), tinnitus (ringing in the ears), and other neurological problems.

As often is the case, the increased sensitivity to deafness has become second nature to some of the providers, producing positive results for all students.

"I think we are far more likely to give written instructions to our patients now," says Women's Health Care Coordinator Deanna Turner.

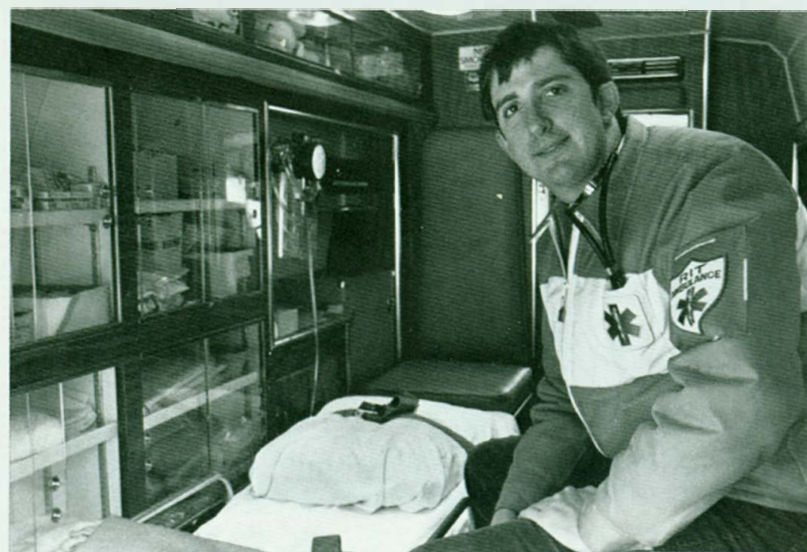
"Not only that," adds Dr. Zinaman, "but we also are more prone to ask for feedback, to make sure that our instructions have been understood."

"We use pictures more," says Shattuck, "frequently showing a demonstration of an anatomical part."

Internalizing the will to communicate effectively with patients has had its humorous side as well: "We all sign to the foreign students," Shattuck admits.

"My primary concern when I arrived," says Jordan, "was that we had a population that was basically well, and yet as a service most of our energies were spent taking care of the sick. As a nation, we still focus on taking care of the sick. We have to do more; people can accept and move beyond that. RIT is a marvelous example—the staff members here have made it work."

"A Sense of Priorities"



Richard Rademaker

Richard Rademaker has forgotten the little cuts and bruises from his active childhood. But he remembers the professional care he received from his mother, a registered nurse, and he has grown up caring about other people.

A fifth-year student at RIT's College of Applied Science and Technology, Rademaker is a New York State certified emergency medical technician (EMT) and a member of the RIT Volunteer Ambulance Corps, an ancillary division of the RIT Student Health Service.

During his second and third years at RIT, Rademaker, who is hearing impaired, took an 80-hour course leading to a state certificate.

"The hardest part of the EMT program was all the studying," Rademaker says. "But I was used to it because my major is computer science."

Administering a blood pressure test, a procedure that usually depends on the tester's ability to hear, was hard to learn, and Rademaker still finds it difficult.

"In a very quiet environment, I can rely on my hearing," he says. "Otherwise, I keep my eyes on the meter and use my sense of touch."

As a volunteer, Rademaker devotes at least two hours each week to the RIT ambulance service. In his four years as a member of the Corps, he has found that deaf patients often are happy to discover that a member of the ambulance crew is hearing impaired.

RIT provides routine health care and emergency medical service to both deaf and hearing students, Rademaker says.

"Parents can rest assured that there is good medical service available for students, faculty, and staff. The cost of maintaining the ambulance is paid out of student health service fees. It is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, while classes are in session."

Rademaker finds the volunteer work educational and satisfying.

"Preparing for the EMT certification taught me quite a bit of responsibility," he says. "It taught me to develop a sense of priorities between my ambulance and school work. I've learned how to react to a crisis in a calm, efficient manner. I've also had the experience of meeting and working with many different people."

Rademaker recommends the ambulance work to other hearing-impaired students.

"I would encourage hearing-impaired students to try," he says, "but I'd recommend that they be realistic about the severity of their hearing loss. My own hearing loss is moderate to severe, corrected to conversational level through a hearing aid in my right ear. I've worked with the Civil Air Patrol and have experience using radios."

Other students may find that using the Corps' two-way radios is difficult, he suggests.

"I'm proud to be a member of the RIT Ambulance Corps," he says. "It is an outstanding group of professionals. They are good at what they do."

To Israel

Robert Menchel Attends Symposium on Disabled

By Vincent Dollard

If James Bond ever loses his hearing, the Weizmann Institute in Rehovot, Israel, has just the hearing aid for him. It looks like a tobacco pipe—the microphone is where the tobacco receptacle would be, and sounds vibrate through the user's teeth.

Robert Menchel, senior career opportunities advisor for the Division of Career Opportunities at NTID, tested the pipe during a 17-day visit to Israel last November and December.

How well did the hearing aid/pipe work?

"I couldn't hear anything," Menchel says, "but a fellow delegate, who also is hearing impaired, said it worked well!"

Menchel was participating in the Second International Symposium on Design for Disabled Persons, whose focus was on how best to integrate disabled persons into the community.

Teams of scientists and designers from France, Norway, the Netherlands, Great Britain, and Israel also attended.

Menchel was part of an American delegation that was sponsored by the National Science Foundation. The delegation consisted of 14 individuals, nine of whom were disabled.

In between his meetings, discussions, presentations, and tours, Menchel learned about deafness in Israel.

"Although Israel does not have a secondary school system geared specifically for deaf or hearing-impaired people," he says, "they have made great strides in education for deaf persons. We went to

see what we could learn from them and to help them avoid making some of our mistakes."

Occasionally, Menchel had to contend with a double language barrier.

"Not only is the spoken language different, but Hebrew Sign Language is completely different from American Sign Language," he notes.

During his presentation on "The Technology Explosion—New Employment Opportunities for Deaf People" at Tel Aviv University, four interpreters worked simultaneously. Two interpreted in American and Hebrew Sign Language, and two interpreted orally into English and Hebrew.

"It was pretty confusing at the start," he says, "but it all worked out."

Menchel also met with parents of deaf Israeli children. Although the parents came from diverse backgrounds, Menchel tried to convey the same message to all of them.

"We tried to make them understand that deaf children need encouragement," he says. "We told them not to be afraid of failure—many times it is only a temporary setback."

"There is no NTID in Israel; children and parents don't have many successful deaf role models. We tried to give them encouragement."

He was impressed with the programs that have been instituted for deaf children.

"Mainstreaming with hearing children begins at an early age in Israel," Menchel



A trio of tourists

Robert Menchel, center, and two other members of the delegation study a model of the Weizmann Institute in Rehovot.

says. "Israeli children accept their deaf counterparts right away. All the children, both hearing and deaf, were warm, accepting, and happy."

Menchel also examined educational and job opportunities for hearing-impaired people in Israel.

"It was interesting," he says. "Most of the opportunities are in blue-collar areas. There also aren't many deaf or hard-of-hearing students in postsecondary education.

"However," he continues, "I met a full professor of nuclear physics at Hebrew University who was deaf. He had gotten his degrees from M.I.T. and Cornell University here in the States.

"And I met a deaf student who was working on her master's degree in social work," he says. "I found many deaf people doing different types of social work."

Menchel also learned about Israel's culture through travel.

"Even though we were quite busy," he says, "we did take time to visit many places. It was a stimulating experience, standing in the same spots that we have read about in the Bible.

"We went to Bethlehem, and the shepherd's fields," he says. "If you remember the story of the birth of Christ, the shepherds were nearby. Today, it would be just a five-minute bus ride!

"And we celebrated the Sabbath at the Western Wall in Jerusalem," he points out. "It was a moving experience to be in the city at that time.

"Then we traveled to Jericho and along the border between Israel and Jordan," he continues. "We went to the Sea of Galilee and visited 'The Baptist's Place,' where John the Baptist lived."

Menchel says one of his memorable experiences was a lunch on the shores of the Sea of Galilee.

"We were sitting on the water's edge, eating 'St. Peter's Fish,' which is a whole fish, deep fried in oil, and very tasty. I realized that we were probably having lunch on the same spot where people ate thousands of years ago!"

Menchel says that it stretches the imagination to grasp the history and age of the land.

"We passed by groves of trees that are 2,000 years old and still bearing fruit."

To get a true "taste" of the Israeli culture, Menchel spent ample time sampling its cuisine.



Kibbutz visit

NTID interpreter Michael Levy, Judy Heumann, vice president of the World Institute of Disability in Israel, and Menchel visited Kibbutz Shefayim, near Tel Aviv.

"If you're an American looking for American food, forget it!" he laughs. "Breakfasts are not like ours. They have a lot of fresh fruits and vegetables. Instead of cereal, there is a buffet with tomatoes, cucumbers, cheese, and different kinds of fish. It takes a little getting used to, but it is delicious.

"We ate Yemenite food, and falafel, which is a Middle Eastern dip made from chickpeas. There was so much to choose from because of the many different cultures in Israel."

Although the country is rich in culture and history, Menchel discovered that scientific research in the area of deafness is still relatively new—and limited.

Menchel speculates: "Perhaps research money only goes into products that can be marketed internationally; they have to look at their potential for sales.

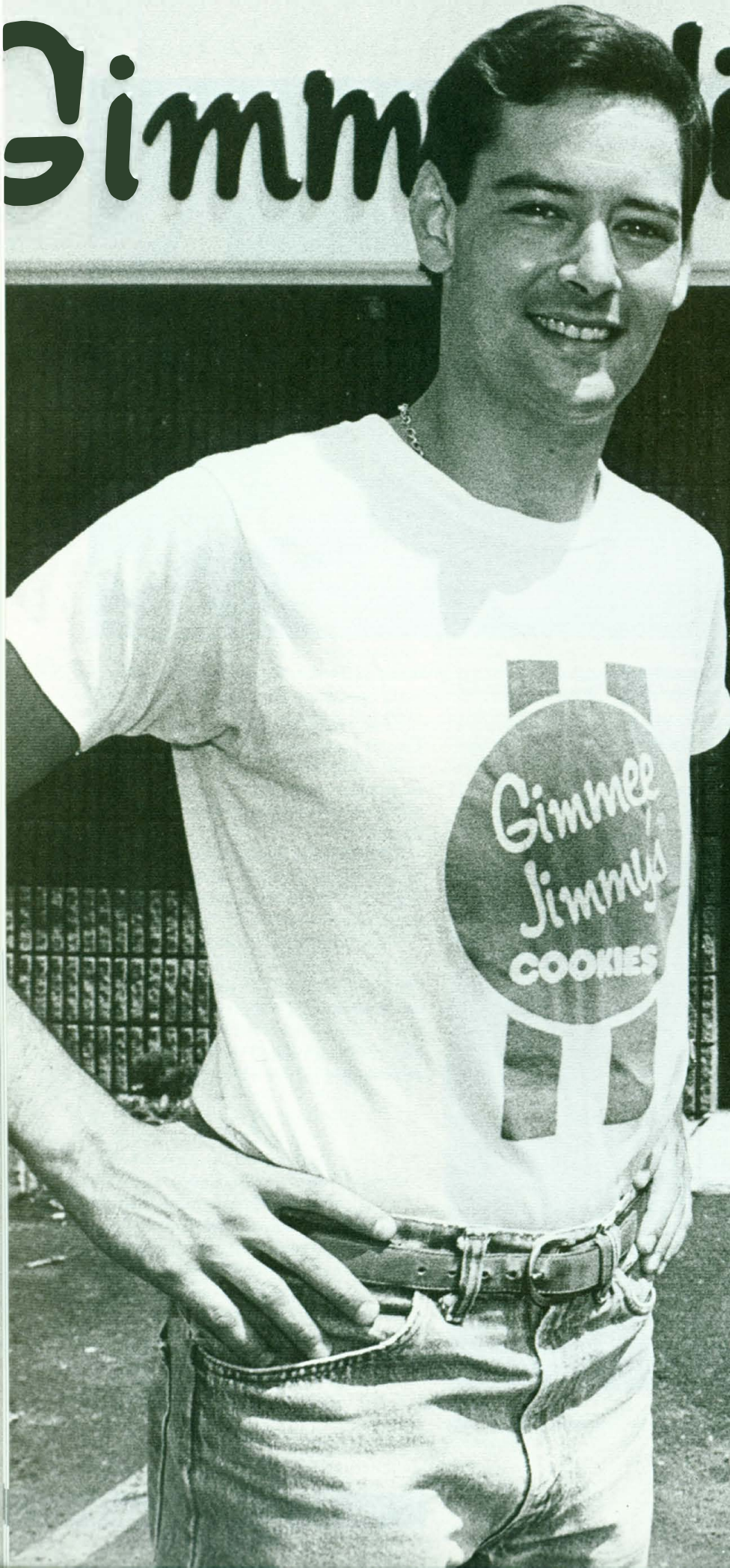
"For example," he notes, "we visited Elscint Corporation, one of Israel's 'hi-tech' companies. They are world leaders in nuclear magnetic resonance equipment, which they export to the United States."

Menchel says that he sees today's deaf Israeli citizens at the same crossroads that deaf Americans faced about 20 years ago.

"But you must remember," he says, "that Israel is a young country. The people are motivated. Currently, 56 percent of the country's budget goes to the military. Those involved with education and research related to deafness do an outstanding job with limited resources."



Gimme Jimmy's



Rollin' In the Dough

By Kathleen Sullivan

The smell of success has been more than sweet for Jimmy Libman. When all the butter, eggs, and chocolate are tallied, it adds up to nearly 3,000 pounds of gourmet chocolate chip cookie dough churned out weekly from his successful homespun business—Gimmee Jimmy's Cookies of West Orange, New Jersey.

The 28-year-old graduate of RIT through NTID has been supervising his delectable business for nearly two years, since he and his enterprising sister, Ellen, decided that their cookie business had grown too big for the family living room, where in 1983 they set up shop and set out to make "the perfect chocolate chip cookie."

How did a college graduate with a diploma in optical finishing technology and a certificate in photography end up in the cookie business?

It was the lure of being his own boss, he confesses. After reading an article about the growth of the gourmet cookie business, he and Ellen began to experiment with their mother's "secret recipe." Trays upon trays of test batches slid from the oven into the hands of agreeable neighbors until the perfect cookie was derived.

When boxes of their gourmet delights began appearing—and then disappearing—from the shelves of local distributors, Libman realized that demand was rapidly exceeding supply. A large oven bought and placed in the family living room took care of things for a while, but

All smiles and no cavities

Owner Jimmy Libman poses in front of Gimmee Jimmy's Cookies, where gourmet delights are manufactured daily. (Photograph courtesy of the West Orange Chronicle)

when his orders jumped from 30 to 75 boxes a week, Libman realized that he had the ingredients for a full-scale business.

He obtained a loan from the Small Business Administration in 1983 and built his own shop.

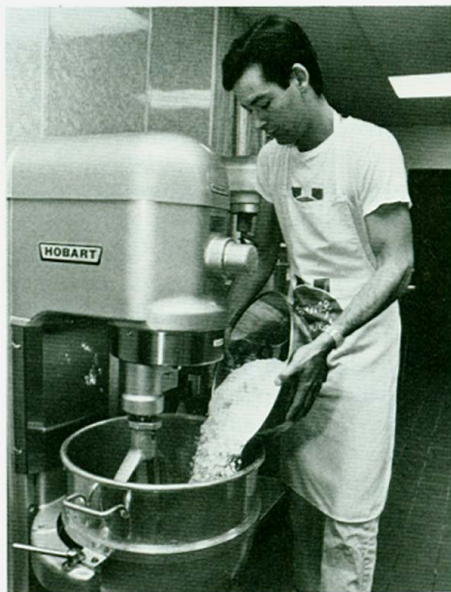
"Friends helped me build the bakery," he explains. "People gave us everything from materials to accounting and legal services. Everyone was very supportive."

The West Orange shop includes two convection ovens, a walk-in refrigerator, two large mixers, and several preparation tables. The bakery is staffed by 10 employees, three of whom are hearing impaired.

"I want to encourage an understanding of the deaf community," Libman says. "I think this is a good way to show people that a business can be run—and run well—by deaf people."

"The employees all get along. If there is a communication problem, we try to work it out."

Libman designed a strobe system for his shop similar to the one used in



Mixin' it up

Libman is involved in each step of the cookie production, even mixing the dough. (Photograph courtesy of New Jersey Newsphotos)

NTID's residence halls. (NTID residences include a strobe system to alert students to visitors at the door, messages from a 24-hour desk, and emergencies.)

Libman's system includes two master blue and white strobes, the first positioned in the bakery room and the second in his office. When those lights come on, he says, "everybody looks to see what's happening."



Another batch ready to go

Gimmee Jimmy's has 10 employees, three of whom are hearing impaired. (Photograph courtesy of the West Orange Chronicle)

Green lights for the front door of the bakery ("for customers or delivery people coming in"); orange for the ovens, which are on remote timers; white for the telephone; and red for smoke, fire, or emergency round out his system.

"We are totally 'hi-tech' deaf," he says proudly.

His cookie business may be "hi tech," but Libman admits that it was NTID's basic skills in math and business that provided the key ingredients in his recipe for success.

"Besides the general academics," he recalls, "I think that learning how to be independent was the most important thing that I gained from college. I enjoyed everything about NTID—the programs, the campus life, and the social life, too!"

The five varieties of Gimmee Jimmy's cookies—chocolate chip, chocolate chip walnut, chocolate chip pecan, coconut pecan, and oatmeal raisin—are enough to make cookie monsters drool. So are the prices, which range from \$7-15 per pound. But Libman believes firmly that "people are looking for quality, and I can give it to them."

Ellen rejoins, "Gimmee Jimmy's cookies are even better than your mother's." Who could resist that allure?

Not many people, evidently. Those with affluent appetites are purchasing the cookies in large quantities at several gourmet shops in New Jersey and New York City. Jimmy and Ellen share the

delivery work, making daily runs to several locations. They plan to open another bakery soon in New York City, and again will hire hearing-impaired employees.

"Eventually, we may hire other disabled people," he says. "But first I want to make a point of hiring deaf people. Who knows? We may start a trend."

"Going into business is a great thing for deaf people to do," he says. "No matter what the obstacles are, nothing is impossible. Every problem has a solution."

Libman welcomes comparisons to established cookie manufacturers such as Famous Amos and Mrs. Field's, and contends that he's ready to take a bite out of the competition.

If he could have anyone in the world sample his cookies, who would that be?

"President Reagan," he answers, "because everything that he does is news. If he tried my cookies, everyone would know about them, because he would love them and he would tell everyone."

Pennsylvania Avenue, look out.



Aiming for THE BEST

By Ann Kanter

Watch yourself in the mirror as you pronounce the words "mat," "bat," and "pat." It may surprise you to see that there is not much visible difference among them.

Based on their similarity, "m," "b," and "p," the first letters of those words, may form a viseme group. (A viseme is the smallest unit of visible speech, as the phoneme is the smallest unit of audible speech.)

Studying and classifying viseme groups is part of the research into speechreading that is being conducted at NTID by Assistant Professor Carol DeFilippo and her colleagues in the Communication Research Department.

Speechreading skills are among several important methods of communication taught to NTID students. If they are to get jobs in "the hearing world," even students who have grown up communicating in sign language must be able to communicate with people who do not sign. For that reason, methods to improve students' speechreading techniques are the subject of considerable research at NTID.

DeFilippo's research includes studies in three related areas of speechreading: visual intelligibility of deaf speakers, optical distortion, and viseme development.

Since visemes are the building blocks of visible speech, their identification and classification will facilitate future studies of speechreading.

"There are no established viseme groups to parallel phoneme groups already in existence," explains DeFilippo.

To define such viseme groups, DeFilippo proposes to analyze lip movements of videotaped speakers, using a digital film analyzer and a freeze-frame technique. This will permit her to examine lip positions close up and to measure the dimensions of the lips as they change during the articulation of different visemes.



Now you C it...

Carol DeFilippo points to the C-shaped form that she uses on closed-circuit television to test visual perception.

For such precise examination, choice of the proper speaker is vital. DeFilippo felt that oral deaf persons would be good candidates since they are accustomed to watching carefully the lip movements of others and would most likely utilize good lip movements in their own speech.

To test her hypothesis, she set up a test utilizing four groups of speakers, with four individuals in each group. The groups included deaf faculty members, deaf students, audiologists, and oral interpreters.

The goal of the 15-minute test, which included 100 words, was to pit elements of each assumed viseme group against the other to see if the speakers could present them in a distinguishable way.

Her feeling was that the speaker rather than the lipreader is the more important determinant of intelligibility.

Test results showed insignificant differences in the visual speech intelligibility of individuals in the four groups. Thus, DeFilippo confirmed her hypothesis that deaf persons who have grown up in oral environments can be effective speakers to study in future digital film analyses.

Another of DeFilippo's research projects in the area of speechreading uses the technique of optical distortion as a training strategy for new users of hearing aids or vibro-tactile devices—hand-held mechanisms that substitute vibrations of varying intensity for sound. Like hearing aids, these devices are most beneficial to profoundly deaf persons when used in conjunction with speechreading.

To understand the need for such a strategy, it would help to view the situation through the eyes of a fictional test subject, Mary Jones. To compensate for her hearing loss, Jones has developed skill in speechreading.

Now Jones decides to get a hearing aid. But she has become so dependent on speechreading to interpret spoken messages that her "watching" skills have come to dominate her listening skills. She needs to be retrained to sharpen her listening skills so that she can concentrate on sounds received through her hearing aid.

DeFilippo will accomplish such training via a closed-circuit television system, within which she will "handicap" Jones' dominant visual perception by introducing onto the screen the blurring element of "snow." This strategy relies on the assumption that when Jones' speechreading is impeded, she will be forced to pay more attention to the sounds received through her hearing aid.

Before initiating Jones into the training situation, DeFilippo will set up some pre-test situations to establish methods for calibrating the amount of "snow" to be used. First, the TV screen will display a C-shaped form, which test subjects will be asked to view through varying amounts of "snow" in order to describe the direction of its opening.

Next, DeFilippo will develop speech tests to calibrate the amount of "snow," so that she can control the amount of visual interference. The C-shapes will be replaced by a speaker, whose lips the subjects will try to read through the "snow."

Carol DeFilippo

...confirmed her hypothesis that deaf persons who have grown up in oral environments can be effective speakers to study in future digital film analyses.



Finally, Jones will be brought in for a 10-week training period, during which she will practice her speechreading, using the closed-circuit TV. The purpose of the research is to test the procedure's effectiveness in teaching Jones to integrate what she sees with what she hears. A control group will undergo equivalent training without the "snow."

DeFilippo hopes this testing will prove that use of visual "noise" helps the hearing aid user develop better listening techniques.

DeFilippo also is interested in studying viseme development in children. To do this, she plans to use a method of research parallel to the method used for investigating patterns of phoneme development. This involves asking a child to differentiate between various non-sense words.

For test purposes, DeFilippo needs a series of objects that have no association outside the testing situation so that they can be referred to, for example, as "Mr. Bim" and "Mr. Fim." The objects must be attractive, safe, non-breakable, and fun for pre-school age children. She had them designed by a student in the College of Fine and Applied Arts, who did the work as part of a senior project.

To validate the use of these forms, DeFilippo must prove that they are free

of associations. To do this, she will present them to a group of 5 to 7-year-old children. If they recognize or name one of the shapes, she will have to discard it and seek another.

Then DeFilippo must select the features for the test, such as frication (as produced by an "s" sound) and nasality (as produced by an "m" sound). She will conduct the studies both cross sectionally and longitudinally, studying different youngsters at different age levels, and selecting certain children to study over a period of time.

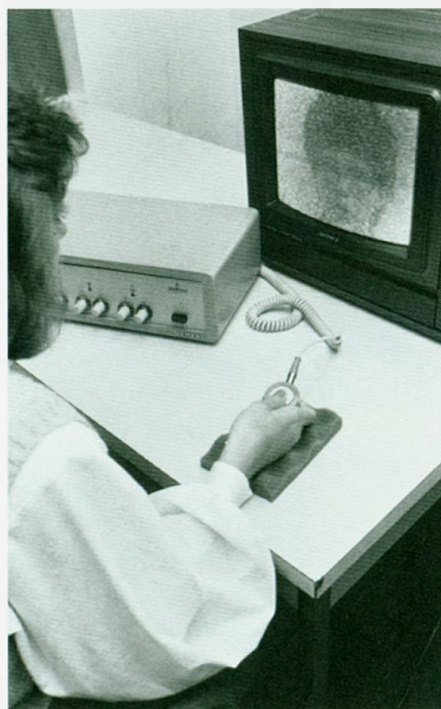
Once appropriate forms are obtained, DeFilippo will locate deaf children whose parents want them to develop oral skills. She will teach them to associate the non-sense names with the forms. Then she will play a shell game with them, utilizing the forms and asking the child, for example, to "show me Mr. Bim."

Since the child's chances of being right are 50-50, the game must be repeated with enough frequency to assure statistical accuracy. If the child is correct a significant proportion of the time, then the viseme represented by the two non-sense words is one that the child "knows." If the child is unable to discriminate between the two, it is assumed that this distinction will come later in the developmental sequence.

This project aims to prove that deaf youngsters can develop a viseme system of learning parallel to the phoneme system used by hearing youngsters.

The goal of all three projects is to systematize speechreading instruction for deaf individuals.

"I'd like the hearing people at NTID to think more about the information they can provide on their faces," says DeFilippo. "I'd like them to realize that it is possible to develop good speechreading skills and that they can do much to facilitate this by being aware of their own characteristics as speakers."



Picture this

A digital film analyzer, above, permits close-up examination of lip positions, making it possible to measure the dimensions of the lips as they change during the articulation of different visemes. Below, a subject studies the lip movements of a speaker who is partially obscured by "snow."

ADVENTURE BOUND

Donna Merrill sets a new direction in her life

By Emily Andreano

Donna Merrill has been to hell and back.

Once, she pondered whether her life was worth living. Now, she is a 24-year-old RIT social work graduate, set to begin studying for her master of social work degree in the fall at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri. Merrill is choosing to go to St. Louis for another adventure, in a life that has been full of them.

It seems only logical that a hearing-impaired person from Rochester, as is Merrill, would study social work at RIT, particularly as she is herself the daughter of two social workers. But the route she took was nothing if not circuitous.

Merrill, who is profoundly deaf, has an older sister whose hearing loss is slightly greater than hers. Merrill's speechreading ability enabled her to be a mainstreamed student in public schools, unlike her sister.

While her exceptional abilities allowed her to pass into the hearing world academically, squeaking by socially was another matter. Children are notorious for the unkind manner in which they tease anyone a little "different," and Merrill did not escape unscathed.

By the time she reached high school, she became so unhappy that she drifted away from her suburban schoolmates, finding friends in the inner city whose values she did not consider so shallow. These city dwellers who were willing to accept her had problems of their own, drug and alcohol abuse among them,

and Merrill soon fell into a pattern that was to dog her throughout her adolescence and early adulthood.

Her hearing impairment notwithstanding, she took an accelerated program in high school, the sooner to leave that hated environment. She had thought about going to college and studying art, which she had taken up as a form of "self-therapy."



Instead, she embarked upon a solo trip to Europe, armed only with a smattering of high school Spanish. It was the beginning of a journey of self-exploration that would take her to many locales.

Upon her return from Europe, she shouldered her backpack once again and hitchhiked her way through New England. While there, a classified ad in a

newspaper caught her eye: a wealthy Hollywood couple was looking for a governess to care for their children. Merrill applied for the job and was hired.

About the experience, she says ruefully, "It was interesting. In the two-month span I was with them, they spent two weeks in Hawaii and two in Tahiti. They had everything—four cars, for example—and thought they didn't have enough."

Two days before Christmas she left for Mexico, where she spent six weeks, the last two in Cabo San Lucas at the end of the Baja Peninsula.

"It was winter," she recalls, "but I lived in my bathing suit. I ran out of money; then I met a man who lived in San Diego, so I rode back to the States with him. I stayed at his place rent-free for a month, but he was a gambler who took LSD and cocaine, so I left."

She found work there taking care of a woman who had Alzheimer's disease. She stayed three months until the woman was placed in a nursing home by her son.

From there, she took a job taking care of a middle-aged woman in a wheelchair who had muscular dystrophy. It was during that time span—also three months—that she began reflecting on her life thus far and had what she terms her "personal crisis."

She became suicidal; she describes her personality at the time as "manic-depressive." Although her nightmare was relatively short, to her it "felt like forever."

And then, she says, "One day I woke up, and it was over."

She packed her bags and headed for Orange County, about a half hour south of Los Angeles. On the day she arrived, she "went out and found a job and a local college, and registered for classes."

The job was as the manager of a bakery/delicatessen/import store, hiring and firing employees, doing book-keeping, and delegating responsibilities. Her spotty knowledge of Spanish was called into play in dealing with both customers and employees.

"Sometimes," she says with a grin, "I simply had to resort to mime."

The college was Orange Coast College in Costa Mesa, a two-year school where she obtained an associate degree in liberal arts, with a concentration in psychology. She intended to go from there to California State University at Fullerton, to major in psychology.

But she came home for what was to have been a two-week visit, and a friend who had graduated from RIT with a bachelor's degree in social work attempted to convince her to take the same route. Her father's enthusiasm for the idea sealed the deal.

So Merrill enrolled at RIT, completely unaware of the array of support services that the Institute offers to hearing-impaired students.

"Suddenly," she says, "I was in the midst of all these deaf people, and I didn't know sign language. I didn't fit in with the deaf people because I couldn't sign, but I wasn't hearing, either."

"That first quarter I was moody, sarcastic, snobbish, and a loner. I hated everybody and I hated social work. That was my introduction to RIT."

Then she reacquainted herself with Florene Hughes, an assistant professor in NTID's Human Services Support Department.

Merrill requested Hughes for her advisor because she had known her as a child, when Hughes had served as her speech therapist.

"I give her a lot of credit for keeping me going," says Merrill.

Hughes recalls Merrill as "delightful and interesting even as a child. I attended the same church as her family, so I knew she had gone to California and was struggling to find out who she was. She was living as a 'hearing' deaf person; that's quite a load to carry."

Merrill told Hughes that she was having trouble paying her way through RIT.

"Well, how deaf are you?" Hughes remembers asking Merrill. "Perhaps you can qualify for government assistance as an NTID student."

Merrill's hearing loss more than qualified her for that assistance, solving one problem, but, says Hughes, "she was still confronted by all these deaf stu-



Sympathetic ear

Alumna Donna Merrill had a full schedule as a cross-registered student in RIT's College of Liberal Arts, yet she found time to volunteer at a Rochester shelter for battered women, many of whose residents arrive with children in tow. Merrill chose to work with the children; here, she chats with two of them in a playroom.

dents. She knew only a little fingerspelling, and not a lot of sign language."

A perceptive teacher paired her on a joint project with a student whose primary mode of communication was American Sign Language. Merrill asked the teacher for another partner, but the teacher refused.

She went back to the student, expecting her to communicate with pencil and paper; instead, the student patiently taught Merrill sign language. In the process, she became more accepting of her own deafness.

"She is from a family of Quakers," says Hughes, "who have always been concerned about issues relating to justice and peace. She is also a very open person, who shares of herself easily, and I think she was worried for a while that some of her hearing-impaired friends were becoming too dependent on her, because she is so capable of negotiating her way in the hearing world.

Merrill chose to do her internship at Threshold, a Rochester youth agency that mainly attracts troubled teens from the inner city, Merrill's old stomping ground. Her clients there were blacks between the ages of 15-20, mostly high school dropouts from single parent families and misusers of alcohol and other drugs.

Her job was to help facilitate a weekly "teen action group," a social group where she provided them with "different alternatives to their self-destructive behavior," as well as meeting with them individually to help them "assess their own life situations."

She kept a log of her efforts, and reading it convinced Morales that "there was more to Donna than she was showing me. I decided to challenge her, and risked her anger in doing so, but she fought back in a positive way."

What Morales had uncovered was that Merrill, while engulfing herself

"I finally was able to talk about that with them," she says. "They could not have been more supportive."

Dr. Morales found Merrill's improving self-image so heartening that he invited her to be a guest lecturer to his classes, feeling that her drive and positive attitude would be inspirational to hearing and hearing-impaired students alike.

Merrill realizes that she also has changed in some profoundly personal ways.

"I leapt from childhood into adulthood so rapidly," she confesses, "that I left myself no time for all the social fun that comes in between. I'm just starting to catch up in that area, being less afraid to let people into my life."

She divulges that her work at the women's shelter has forced her to become "more patient and flexible—something that has always been very hard for

"I leapt from childhood into adulthood so rapidly... that I left myself no time for all the social fun that comes in between."

"I think she is just beginning to achieve the proper balance," Hughes continues, "where she can use her incredible energy in ways to advocate for deaf people. She continually thinks of new ways to challenge herself.

"I'm delighted to see the young child matured into adulthood and to have had a small part in it."

Another person who played an influential role in the development of Merrill's career at RIT is Dr. Richard Morales, an associate professor in RIT's social work program and the coordinator of Merrill's field placement.

"All social work majors are required to do a six-month internship with an agency," explains Dr. Morales. "Donna first came into my class as an intern."

busily in other people's problems, had yet to confront her own deafness. He told her to work on ways to identify opportunities for other deaf people, much as she was doing for the clients at Threshold. She decided that maybe social work wasn't for her after all.

"I told her to fish or cut bait," says Dr. Morales.

Merrill rose to his challenge. She began volunteering at a shelter for battered women, choosing to work with their children—"the children of violence," she calls them.

As she involved herself with these children, she was able to filter her own frustrations through their experiences, coming to the realization that "we both had handicaps. Perhaps that's why I was able to relate to them so easily."

She also came to terms with the main reason that she was wavering in her choice of a social work career—the expectation that she, as a hearing-impaired person, could not possibly be as successful in that role as her two hearing parents.

me. Still," she says with a wry smile, "I find myself wanting to solve all of the children's problems at once."

Despite the taste for adventure to which she gave vent earlier in her life, Merrill professes to love "book learning," and is enthusiastic at the prospect of her graduate studies. She feels that it is premature to commit herself to a career as a social worker dealing mainly with deaf clients, or with "women's issues," or with adolescents as troubled as she once was, but Hughes and Morales are united in their opinion that she is equipped for whatever she chooses.

One senses that Donna Merrill, who has stared her demons in the face and overcome them, would agree.



Hearing Students Benefit From NTID at RIT



Dr. M. Richard Rose

How often we speak of the myriad benefits of the National Technical Institute for the Deaf at RIT. The technological education provided by NTID has a significant impact on the lives of deaf young people. Evidence of this impact is the fact that deaf RIT graduates are finding employment in areas that previously have been closed to them.

We have more than 1,200 deaf students enrolled at NTID as well as in a host of programs in the other RIT colleges. Consistent with RIT's philosophy, these programs are designed to give them the skills to be self-sufficient professionals at graduation.

This is not an inexpensive education, because of its nature and the support that these students require. Yet the federal government, which provides funding to make NTID possible, receives a 7 to 1 payback from its investment. Freeing deaf persons from dependence on government support alone means a 3 to 1 payback. Nearly all of RIT's deaf graduates are employed. Their income taxes represent another payback to the federal government for its investment in their education.

This "return-on-investment" approach, of course, does not address the human factors involved, which are equally compelling. There is an equivalent impact on the lives of RIT's hearing students. Every year, thousands of them come into contact with deaf students in the classroom, in the dormitories, and in social situations.

Hearing students, for example, often become interpreters for deaf students in campus activities. Others become advisors in dorms with deaf students, or have deaf students as advisors. That contact, and other opportunities on the RIT





campus, offers human beings the opportunity to get to know one another—to appreciate the differences that make life interesting, and to recognize the great human resources that we have in our deaf citizens.

One hearing graduate told me that her most broadening experience at RIT has been as a residence advisor to deaf students. When she attended an RIT reception recently, she discovered two deaf RIT graduates whom she had never met. She didn't wait for an introduction, but began communicating with the two individuals, proving that friendships can be made quickly when people are willing to reach out to one another.

I'm not suggesting that all, or even a major portion, of our hearing students learn sign language or have deaf friends, but a great many do. Overall, though, as our hearing students graduate, we expect that they have become more tolerant of differences in others. Once employed, we believe that they are among the growing number of professionals who recognize the skills that deaf persons, or people with other disabilities, can bring to the office, the research lab, or the drawing board.

Support of NTID, therefore, is an investment in our country's future. It also promotes the development of our most precious resource—talented young people.

Dr. M. Richard Rose, President
Rochester Institute of Technology





Rochester Institute of Technology

One Lomb Memorial Drive
Post Office Box 9887
Rochester, NY 14623

Lawyer with a Difference

Jennifer Gravitz interprets law for deaf clients

By Ann Kanter

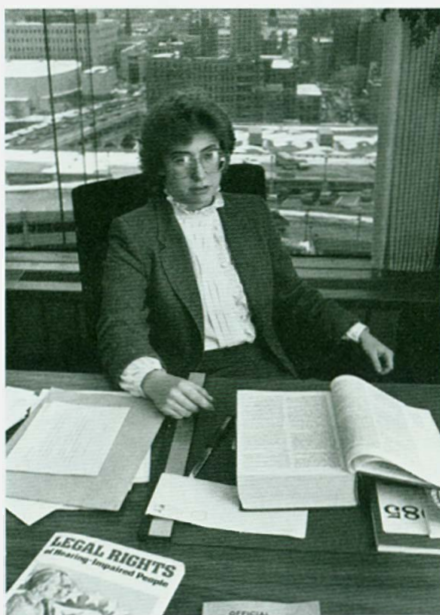
Although Rochester, New York, is home to more than 50,000 people with moderate to severe hearing losses, until last April the city had only one lawyer who knew sign language and whose practice included deaf clients.

That situation changed with the graduation from Albany Law School last spring of Jennifer Gravitz, who is employed by the Rochester law firm of Fulreader, Rosenthal & Kaul, and who plans to specialize in representing deaf persons in need of legal assistance.

Gravitz, a 1979 RIT graduate with a bachelor's degree in social work and a masters in instructional technology, is also a certified sign language interpreter. Daughter of the former chairperson of the RIT social work program, Gravitz, at age 13, had accompanied her father to classes in sign language, for which she seemed to have an innate talent.

Capitalizing on her ability, she enrolled in NTID's Interpreter Training Program while still in high school. After becoming, at age 16, the youngest graduate of that program, she worked her way through high school and college as an interpreter, gaining experience in religious, medical, educational, and legal settings.

While interpreting in Family Court, Gravitz met and worked with Michael Hagelberg, at that time the only attorney representing deaf clients in the Rochester area. She understood his frustration as a lawyer when his cases involved deaf people on opposing sides of a dispute and the other attorneys could not communicate with their clients. Realizing that Rochester's deaf population urgently needed more lawyers with signing skills, Gravitz decided to enroll in law school.



Room with a view

Attorney Jennifer Gravitz takes a moment from her busy schedule.

As graduation approached, Gravitz applied to many Rochester law firms, but none were interested in her unique combination of talents. None, that is, until she contacted Fulreader, Rosenthal & Kaul. That firm actually was looking for someone with different credentials from the ones she presented—someone with two to three years experience practicing law.

"We had many applicants whose resumes contained the qualifications we were seeking," says Marvin Rosenthal, a principal of the firm. "Although Jennifer did not have the extensive experience that the other candidates did, her resume and cover letter made me feel that I must meet her.

"The fact that deaf Rochesterians needed a lawyer who could sign had occurred to us," continues Rosenthal. "However, it was not her signing ability

alone that interested us, but her sincerity, and her sensitivity to the special needs of deaf people. We realized that hiring Jennifer would enable the firm to provide legal representation of the highest caliber to the hearing-impaired community."

"I had an opportunity that many people who learn sign language don't have," says Gravitz. "I had a lot of practice signing everyday with deaf students while I was at RIT. In addition, I spent three years as a resident advisor."

She recalls an occasion during that time when a fire broke out in one of the residence halls, and she used her signing skills to stop two deaf students who were about to jump from a fifth floor window.

The window was, indeed, the only way out of the room, but Gravitz, who had been able to exit safely from her fourth floor room, was standing outside the building where she could hear the scream of approaching fire engines. By signing to the students, she was able to calm them down until firemen arrived and hoisted a snorkel to get them safely out of the building.

Because she has lived as a peer with deaf students, Gravitz has an understanding of the separate culture that develops among deaf individuals who grow up communicating in sign language.

"It is a culture," she says, "like any other—a culture with its own norms and rules of conduct. Familiarity with that culture can make a difference in terms of how legal cases are prosecuted and defended.

"Law is an intangible," she says. "Understanding it necessitates a mastery of the English language. Hearing people pick up much of their knowledge of the law from television shows, movies, and

conversations, but that's difficult for many deaf people. Until now, no one has informed them about their legal and consumer rights."

Gravitz plans to change that. In addition to her work with individual clients, she speaks to deaf audiences on consumer, criminal, and civil rights, including rights under section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which makes it illegal to discriminate against persons with handicaps.

"Many deaf people fail to take legal action until their affairs reach crisis proportions," she says, a situation that she ascribes to the unavailability of legal counsel for deaf persons. "I am committed to making the law accessible to deaf people," she says.

Gravitz serves as legal counsel for the New York State Council of the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) as well as the local Genesee Valley Region Chapter of RID.

What kind of a schedule allows so many activities?

"It's a schizophrenic existence," says Gravitz, laughing. "There is no 'typical day.' Yesterday at 5 a.m., I was dictating a memo for Richard [Kaul] relating to research on legal technicalities that I hope will result in dismissal of a felony indictment; then I spent all morning in court. In the afternoon, I had an appointment with a new client, met with four individuals involved in a grievance action, and met with another client on a divorce proceeding. In between, I handle business for the other lawyers."

With Gravitz aboard, Fulreader, Rosenthal & Kaul has installed a TTY on the receptionist's desk to receive phone calls from deaf clients. The receptionist-bookkeeper, a secretary, and a paralegal all have learned to use it. In addition, Gravitz is teaching them the rudiments of sign language so that they can greet deaf clients and make them feel at home.

Gravitz's courtroom appearance in her sober gray suit belies the ease with which she laughs and the warm relationship that she shares with the principals and staff at Fulreader, Rosenthal & Kaul.

It comes as a surprise, then, to learn that in her undergraduate days at RIT, she and her husband, Mark Roos, won a state contest in ballroom dancing. Roos, who also is fluent in sign language, is an RIT graduate of the College of Graphic



High-powered conference

Gravitz confers with firm members John Fulreader, Richard Kaul, and Marvin Rosenthal.

Arts and Photography. He is employed by Case-Hoyt/Rochester Printing Company.

Besides providing legal counsel in such matters as wills, home mortgage closings, personal injury, and divorce proceedings, Gravitz handles many forms of discrimination cases.

One recent case involved a deaf person accused of driving while intoxicated. Gravitz claims that the arresting officer did not advise her client of his rights and did not communicate with him in a language he could understand; both omissions were violations of the client's constitutional rights. In addition, she feels that the policeman, unfamiliar with the facial expressions and body language used by deaf people, may have misinterpreted them as indications of inebriation.

On February 14, Gravitz made the local evening news with her statement that, "It is unconstitutional to deny a person the right to serve on a jury because of a disability."

She made this statement to explain her action on behalf of client Shirley Cooligan, who also appeared on the news program. Cooligan was selected to serve on a trial jury in Rochester, but subsequently was rejected for the Grand Jury list when the assistant district attorney and the presiding judge noted that she is hearing impaired and requires an interpreter.

The purported grounds for the court's action lie in New York State law, which states that no one other than the jurors

be present in the Grand Jury room during deliberations.

"The judge relied upon a very narrow interpretation of one statutory provision of the law," says Gravitz. "The law, taken as an entirety, permits and encourages handicapped individuals to serve on a grand jury. By issuing a special court order, a judge can permit an interpreter to accompany a deaf individual into jury deliberations."

Gravitz seems confident of winning for her client, saying, "The laws pertaining to qualifications of jurors were amended in 1983 to comply with Amendment 504 of the Civil Rights Act, which forbids discrimination because of a handicapping condition."

Providing legal counsel for deaf clients and serving as a deaf rights advocate would seem to be enough to fill anyone's days. Nevertheless, Gravitz is planning to increase her responsibilities by teaching a course in sign language to bank employees through the Rochester Chapter of the American Institute of Banking. Through this and other endeavors, she hopes to raise the consciousness of Rochester's business community concerning the needs and rights of deaf people.

"The more attorneys we get in town who can communicate directly with deaf people, the better the legal services to the deaf community will be," Hagelberg agrees.

From horseback riding to running trails, at RIT there's no excuse for not

KEEPING FIT

By Tom Willard



Net strategy

Instructor Janice Strine offers some advice during a volleyball class.

Swimming, says Chris Campbell, is the best all-around exercise. "It gives the whole body a good workout," he explains.

Betina Gertz prefers to lift weights. "No question about it, weight training keeps me in shape," she says.

Whatever their preference, NTID students can find their favorite activities among nearly 60 classes offered by RIT's Department of Physical Education (PE).

Dancing? Students dance their troubles away with classes such as aerobics, disco rock, modern, ballroom, and sign dance.

Martial arts? Judo, karate, and kung fu keep students on their toes.

Water sports? Students can get their feet wet in swimming, diving, water polo, swimming for fitness, and scuba diving.

The traditional gym classes—basketball, softball, and volleyball—fill to capacity each quarter. At the same time, students with a taste for the offbeat choose from such offerings as juggling, billiards, frisbee, English or western horseback, fencing, rope climbing, archery, and badminton.

Students, except those over 25 or with a medical waiver, are required to

take a minimum number of PE classes to receive their degree. Four-year students take six classes; two-year students take three. However, in keeping with its motto—"Nurturing the Total Person Through Physical Activity"—the PE Department encourages students to sign up for as many classes as they wish.

Students take PE classes for different reasons. For Campbell, his swimming classes will result in certification allowing him to work as a lifeguard this summer. Gertz has a simpler reason.

"Exercise helps me look good and feel good," she says.

While half the classes are free, the others charge fees, ranging from \$10 for fishing to \$65 for scuba diving and western horseback, to cover the cost of instruction when a specialist is brought in from outside RIT.

Registration for PE classes takes place the first week of each quarter, with classes offered on a first-come, first-served basis. In some classes, two sign-up sheets are provided—one for hearing students, another for hearing-impaired students—to ensure an even mix.

Two of RIT's 13 full-time PE instructors—Nancy Hargrave and Janice Strine—serve as NTID specialists. At a college where mainstreaming is an important objective, they play a key role.

"PE classes help to break the barrier between the deaf and hearing students," Strine says.

Hargrave and Strine use sign language when they teach, which not only helps many deaf students feel more comfortable, says Strine, but has an added advantage as well.

"When a class has an interpreter," she explains, "the hearing students watch the teacher rather than the interpreter. When teachers sign for themselves, though, the students can't help but pick up some signs."

Strine recalls a student who admitted, "I'm mesmerized watching you—I love to see you sign."

Nonetheless, some PE teachers prefer to use an interpreter. In certain courses, the interpreter attends only the first session, when the teacher explains class policy. In other situations, the class is interpreted throughout the 10-week quarter.

Structured classes do not provide the only way for students to keep fit. The year-round intramurals program, for example, affords opportunities to compete in nearly 20 activities, including flag football, floor hockey, inner-tube water polo, and slow-pitch softball. Students organize their own teams, and games usually take place evenings and weekends.

"Last year we had more than 1,000 participants from NTID in the intramurals program," Strine says. (A student who played on two teams would be

**"IT'S GOOD TO SEE
the interaction in my classes.
Through signs, gestures, and body
language, the students support and
challenge one another."**

"At first, both groups feel hesitant, but within a few weeks they feel more comfortable and begin to communicate with each other."

"For many freshmen," says Hargrave, "physical education classes represent their first involvement with deaf students, and they end up wanting to learn more. In volleyball class, for example, they ask me how to sign numbers, so that they can sign the score."

PE classes serve a valuable purpose, Hargrave notes, in promoting communication between students.

"It's good to see the interaction in my classes," she says. "Through signs, gestures, and body language, the students support and challenge one another."

They help one another, too. Gertz, the weight training enthusiast, remembers an aerobic dance class that often had no interpreter.

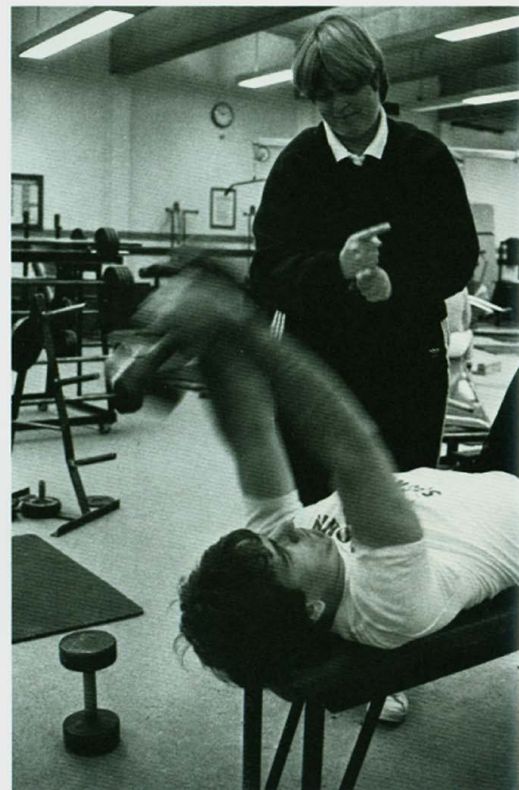
"When that happened," she says, "the hearing students would make sure we knew what was going on."

Some teachers use neither sign language nor interpreters. Helen Smith, who teaches two of the most popular classes—bowling and volleyball—often has deaf students in her classes, but rarely uses an interpreter.

"I have no problem communicating with deaf students," she says. "I show them how to do it, and they learn by doing."

Not every PE class gets the blood circulating—some are oriented more toward the mind than the body. A two-credit course, "The Mind/Body Connection," teaches such topics as nutrition, weight control, stress management, spiritual awareness, basic first aid, and alcohol, drug, and smoking awareness. Students also create personalized fitness programs and learn ways to improve their self awareness.

Other life support and safety programs offered through the PE Department include Emergency Medical Technician Training, CPR/Multi-Media First Aid, and Care and Prevention of Athletic Injuries.



Weighty matters

Strine encourages a student getting a workout in the weight room.

considered two participants.) "Often the teams with all-deaf members would win the championships.

"They really want to show the hearing students that they are capable. Their attitude is, 'I may not hear you, but I'm not handicapped.'"

In addition to PE classes and intramurals programs, RIT offers a number of facilities that allow students to work out on their own—morning, noon, and night.

One of the newest is a mile-long exercise and jogging trail, located in the woods behind the "quarter mile" walkway that links the residence and academic areas. The winding trail has a special running surface and contains 20 exercise stations, where students can do sit-ups, pull-ups, stretching, and other

exercises. The PE Department developed the scenic exercise/jogging trail through a contribution from the Wells Fargo Bank.

Another recent addition is the recreational bubble, an air-inflated dome that contains three multi-purpose courts. Students use the bubble frequently for basketball, volleyball, and tennis.

More improvements are on the horizon. The student-run Residence Halls Association is building a fitness center in the basement of Mark Ellingson Hall, a

size pool. The Edith Woodward Memorial Swimming Pool provides open swim periods three times a day.

The Frank Ritter Memorial Ice Arena is another place students can go for recreation. Open skating times are provided daily, with the rink open to students, staff, and—on Sundays—family members. The upper level of the ice rink has a running track around the outer edge—a popular place to run when the weather turns nasty.

Of course, students do not have a monopoly on physical fitness at RIT. Many staff and faculty members skip lunch to give themselves a workout. Some join their colleagues to run or briskly walk around campus, others sign up for midday classes—aerobics is popular—and a few take part in the traditional "Noontime Warriors" pickup basketball games.

Dr. Jeffrey Porter, chairperson of the Human Development Department, has been a "Warrior" for many years.

"These games have become an important part of our daily routine," he says.

"The players come from different departments throughout RIT. We hear a lot about mainstreaming students; these games encourage mainstreaming of faculty and staff."



Signs of life

Instructor Nancy Hargrave, left, supervises students practicing resuscitation techniques during a CPR class.

12-story residence housing more than 500 students. The Bruce Proper Memorial Fitness Center, named after RIT's late director of Physical Education, Recreation, and Intramurals, will open in early fall.

Amidst all these recent additions, some older facilities continue to assist students in their efforts to keep fit.

The Strength and Fitness Center, for example, hums with activity throughout the day as students take advantage of a variety of weight training equipment. A new carpet enhances the center, located in the basement of the George H. Clark Memorial Gymnasium.

After a hard workout, students can cool off with a swim in RIT's Olympic-

The College Alumni-Union Game Room contains eight billiard tables and an eight-lane bowling alley, used for classes and informal gatherings.

Aside from classes and facilities, the PE Department organizes special events throughout the year. The annual fall "Run-In" attracts a large number of students and staff, while the Dorm Olympics allow students to compete with their floormates. Other programs have included "How to Care for Your Back," an introduction to CPR, and a computerized health and lifestyle evaluation.

"LAST YEAR

we had more than 1,000 participants from NTID in the intramurals program."

In addition to having fun, the players provide a good example to students, Porter believes.

"Students sometimes take physical fitness for granted," he says. "It's important to recognize the relationship between physical fitness and our mental and emotional health."

That's the point Hargrave tries to impress upon her students.

"Physical education is important," she says, "especially in college. What students learn here will help them all their lives in taking care of their health and adjusting to their free time."

Strine agrees. "PE classes help to relieve the stress and tension of academic work. Students learn to accept different kinds of people, and develop the social skills—communication, patience, cooperation, fair play—that we all must learn in order to succeed in life."



Joins T · H · E Navy

Paul Meyer "recruits" students for co-op jobs

By Emily Andreano

If Paul Meyer were a salesman, someone might be the lucky owner of the Brooklyn Bridge. So it's not hard to believe that he talked the U.S. Navy into letting him develop a program for handicapped persons.

The Brooklyn Bridge would be an apt commodity for Meyer, for he is a fast-talking native of that borough, although he left it for Washington, D.C., without regret 18 years ago. He is now handicap program manager, Naval Material Command, and director of Equal Employment Opportunity Programs for the David W. Taylor Naval Ship Research and Development Center in Bethesda and Annapolis, Maryland.

One of Meyer's responsibilities is to recruit handicapped people to work at 20 locations. He has been recruiting at NTID for the past nine years, selecting approximately 15 students each year for co-op and permanent positions.

He first learned of the school at a conference on postsecondary education for disabled persons.

"I attended a presentation given by your National Center on Employment of the Deaf," he recalls, "and was extremely impressed by what I saw."



Satisfied customer

Student Lindi Sue Hoffman enjoyed her cooperative work experience at David Taylor so much that she is going back for a second co-op. Here, she is re-interviewed by Meyer.

Meyer's acquaintanceship with deafness has made great strides since then. He can sign for himself when conducting interviews with hearing-impaired students, a skill he says he acquired by "hanging around Gallaudet College one night a week for the last seven summers."

But his understanding of deafness has reached a more profound level than merely an ability to use sign language. He has learned how deaf persons function in the workplace, and has reached the conclusion, often missed by hearing people, that there is no correlation between the amount of residual hearing and job performance.

"The caliber of deaf people's work and their ability to hear or use their voice is not related," he concludes. "Given enough practice, co-workers of even profoundly deaf persons can usually understand their speech patterns."

He no longer makes recruiting trips himself, save one—to NTID. He says that he really enjoys visiting the RIT college each year, and he must, for his most recent visit was during a powerful blizzard in a city already beset with several inches of snow.

When Meyer first went to work for the Navy at David Taylor, it was in a role like that of thousands of others employed there—as a mathematician. But an interest in hiring handicapped people, engendered by a daughter in a wheelchair and a mother who is legally blind, found him dabbling in that area on his own time. Eventually, the hobby eclipsed the “regular” job, and he—as he puts it—“picked up staff” and began his new career full time.

Meyer has wheedled and cajoled his way into gaining myriad benefits for the employees whom he hires. Typical of his methods is the way he found housing for the college students that he places in a summer co-op program.

“I went to some people at Gallaudet College,” he says with a laconic smile, “and convinced them that, since we’d been taking their students for so many years, they should give us a dormitory. And they very graciously did.”

He is equally sanguine in his dealings with the managers whom he must convince to hire handicapped workers, using a combination of “motivation and nasty letters,” the former often being in the form of a plaque in appreciation of extraordinary efforts.

Meyer confesses that he uses the summer co-op program as a foot in the door for handicapped persons. It is, he says, a means of “raising the conscious-

ness” of those whose attitudes had heretofore been “the heck with ‘em.”

His brash wit and engaging manner have won him acceptance in many quarters previously closed to sellers of his wares.

For NTID students, his skills have proven especially fortuitous.

One of them is Harry Friedman, a recent graduate of RIT’s College of Applied Science and Technology with a B.S. in audiovisual communications. Friedman spent last summer working in David Taylor’s photo department. It was an enlightening experience for him.

“Others in the summer program were dyslexic, in wheelchairs, legally blind, or wore prostheses. After seeing the difficulties which these people undergo every single day, I felt lucky to be able to use whatever hearing I have.”

That heightened self-awareness is, in fact, Meyer’s secondary goal in integrating the students. That, and raising the consciousness of his colleagues in the Navy.

Another student whom Meyer placed is convinced that, at least in the case of hearing-impaired people, he is getting his message across. She is Lindi Sue Hoffman of Baden, Pennsylvania, a second-year student whose eventual goal is to be a certified public accountant.

She was so impressed by her brief stint with the Navy that she hopes to make it her permanent career. Her assessment of Meyer is straightforward.

“He allows us,” she says, “to demonstrate that deaf people may not be able to hear—but they can do.”



More than technical training

Alumnus Harry Friedman, who worked on videocassette recorder editing systems similar to this one at David Taylor, says that the education he received there was not just of the technical variety.

Taking the Show

ON THE ROAD

When lunchtime comes, teachers who have spent an entire morning instructing schoolchildren usually are ready for a break. Consequently, they find it difficult to understand the delight that 28-year-old Christopher Felo derives from lunching with their pupils.

Felo is one of six members of *Sunshine Too*, NTID's theatrical troupe of hearing and deaf actors, who each year travel throughout at least 26 of our United States as well as Canada, creating awareness of both deafness and NTID. Formed five years ago by Assistant Dean Bruce Halverson, the troupe annually performs in voice and sign language for more than 650 deaf and hearing audiences, comprising approximately 70,000 people.

Aside from Felo, a native of Binghamton, New York, the 1984-85 troupe includes Michael Canfield, of Colmar, Pennsylvania; Camille Jeter, of Detroit, Michigan; Phoebe King, of Charlotte, North Carolina; Michael Murphy, of Rochester, New York; and Dennis Webster, also of Rochester.

A 1979 RIT graduate with a bachelor's degree in business administration and a masters in human services management (1984), Felo was in his senior year as an undergraduate when a close friend who was an interpreter interested him in sign language.

"Once I started to learn signing," says Felo, "a whole new world opened up to me. There were so many deaf students, and suddenly I could begin to communicate with them."

Felo became so interested in signing that after taking only a few sign language courses, he applied to NTID's interpreter training program. His skills were not up to the standards required for admission to that program and he was rejected.

It is a testament to his persistent nature and interest in the program that he remained at NTID, working as a traffic controller in the Instructional Televi-

By Ann Kanter



Concentration

Chris Felo gives students at Public School 46 some pointers in checkers strategy.

sion Department and continuing his sign language studies. He was accepted into the interpreter training program the following year.

"I like the kinds of people who are interpreters," he says, explaining why he took this detour after graduating with a business degree. "Interpreting is a grueling job, but the people in the field are artistic and creative."

One year after graduating from that program, Felo joined the NTID interpreting staff, while at the same time pursuing his master's degree.

During his undergraduate days, as well as while he was studying for his master's degree and working as an interpreter, Felo participated in a variety of theatrical performances, including *Steam Bath* with the Brick City Players, an RIT theater group of the '70s, and *See How They Run* and *School for Wives* with the NTID Theatre. He also participated with a group of interpreters in signing *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, a presentation of RIT's Talisman Film Series.

Although Felo has had no musical training, he has interpreted musical performances by groups such as "Pure Blarney," a band specializing in Irish songs, and "Passenger," a Rochester-based rock band.

With his combined experience in theatrical performance and sign language interpretation, it is not surprising that Felo decided to audition for *Sunshine Too*.

"Each year, between 30 and 50 people try out for the troupe," says Timothy Toothman, Performing Arts outreach coordinator and *Sunshine Too* company manager.

"Chris is highly qualified," he says. "He sings, plays the guitar, acts, signs beautifully, and has a level temperament."

Sunshine Too presents information about deafness and deaf individuals in an entertaining way, while its performers serve as positive role models for deaf students.

"Its purpose," says Associate Professor Jerome Cushman, director of *Sunshine Too* for the past three years, "is to break down stereotypical concepts about deaf people—to show that sign language can be fun and entertaining as well as beautiful. It demonstrates that deaf people have the same feelings as other human beings, and that you can communicate with them easily if you want to."

Players accomplish this through performances and workshops that concern themselves with human relationships

and deafness. Entertainment is adapted for different age levels from kindergarten through adult. The youngest children delight in watching plays, while the format of a variety show has more appeal for older students and adults.

Scripts and lyrics for the five-year-old troupe are new each year and for the past three years have originated with Cushman, although he insists that they are "a collaborative effort."

One of this year's productions is called *Fearbuster!*, a title inspired by the popular film, *Ghostbusters*, and geared for youngsters from kindergarten through grade four. The play helps them to discriminate between important and unnecessary fears.

"The Fearbuster" is a computer that answers questions and solves problems, and the "Computer Wiz," played by Murphy, knows the password to gain access to "The Fearbuster."

Sunshine Too employs many means to reach out to its young audiences. Cushman, in conjunction with members of the troupe, conceived a "Fearbuster" logo, from which the Media Production Department designed a sticker. Tuning in to the current rage among young people for gummed paper stickers, they made 1,000 of these with the "Fearbuster" logo, which *Sunshine Too* cast members distribute at performances.

"The kids go wild for them," says Felo.

In workshops that follow the performances, children have the opportunity to discuss their own fears and join cast members in theater games dealing with emotions and attitudes. Cast members demonstrate how, even without using sign language, people communicate through mime, body language, gestures, and facial expression.

In addition to performing at public schools and schools for the deaf, *Sunshine Too* performs at colleges, civic clubs, and occasionally at juvenile detention centers.

"Some of the older boys there can be pretty tough," says Felo. "You know right away by their body language that they are not about to participate. But Dennis has no fear. He shows them that he is just as tough as they are. He'll ruffle their hair or pull their caps off, and then they laugh and become involved."

Felo's favorites, however, are the children.

"The younger, the better," he says. "The hearing kids, when they're young, will come up and ask what it's like to be deaf."

"When we performed in Rochester in February," he says, "the kids saw a photographer about to take my picture and crowded around, hamming it up and making donkey ears behind my head."

"At lunchtime, they all took turns playing checkers with me," he recalls. "When they beat me, they can brag about it all day."

Felo, however, insists that he never "throws a game."

"I like to win too much," he says.

"Chris's love of kids is apparent in his work with *Sunshine Too*," says Toothman. "Cast members put in long days—it's not unusual for them to be up at 5:30 in the morning. Sometimes, they get only a half hour for lunch, and often, Chris doesn't leave for a break. He stays with the kids and answers their questions, and the kids just climb all over him."



"You've got it!"

During a workshop, Felo encourages students to use their newly learned sign language.

"Being a part of *Sunshine Too* is not like anything else in the world," says Felo. "It's the only situation I know of where you're with your co-workers 24 hours a day."

"I room with Dennis," [who is deaf] he explains, adding, "It would be difficult to bring a strobe light or a vibrating alarm clock on the road, so I act as his alarm clock. It works out fine, because I get to be first in the shower!"

Showers turn on early in the morning for *Sunshine Too* players on the road. One week in February had them giving shows at 7 and 8 p.m. at the Florida School for the Deaf in St. Augustine, then striking the set and grabbing a few quick hours of sleep. At 5 a.m. it was up again, to drive one hour south and give two more shows at Belle Terre Middle School in Palm Coast.

Despite occasional nights with minimal sleep, members of the troupe keep up a strenuous life. In addition to their performances, they act as their own technical crew—maintaining, setting up, and dismantling sets, and daily packing them into their van along with several sets of costumes, their own clothes, and their sound equipment, consisting of an electric piano, synthesizer, color organ, slide projector, and speakers.

"Since I've been with *Sunshine Too*, my arms have gotten a lot stronger," says Felo.

Despite the glamour often associated with acting and the theatrical profession, performing the same show day after day could become boring. What prevents the members from getting "burn-out?"

"Going out and seeing the faces on those kids," says Felo. "And seeing a different audience every day," he adds.



Pioneer Seminar Offered at NTID

Reaching Out to A New Audience



James Casey

By Emily Andreano

If you are of a certain age, you might remember *Get Smart*, a funny-dumb TV show of 1960s vintage that featured comedian Don Adams as Secret Agent Maxwell Smart. Adams' boss was known simply as the Chief, and when Max Smart and the Chief needed to have a little confab, they retreated into a soundproof enclosure known as The Cone of Silence.

It is that Cone of Silence that comes ineluctably to mind the first time you meet the students in NTID's "Seminar in Postlingual/Adventitious Deafness." The students are all people upon whom

deafness has descended comparatively late in life. On television, the Cone of Silence was a riot. In real life, it is not.

Faculty members Donna Burfield and James Casey created the seminar in the spring of 1982. It came about when Casey showed up in 1979 as a student in one of Burfield's sign language classes. Burfield is an instructor in NTID's Communication Instruction Department IV; Casey is a former assembly line worker who happened to have been hit on the side of the head with a 1,200-lb. machine part.

It is through Casey's efforts to find a niche for himself at NTID that attention began to be paid to persons in his predicament. After a long and torturous bout with repeated attacks of depres-

sion, three suicide attempts, and frustratingly unsuccessful litigation to extract disability benefits after his accident, Casey finally decided that he had to get on with his life.

He arrived at NTID only to be met with a new set of frustrations, principally because he was an anomaly. At that time, only one percent of the NTID student population was postlingually deaf.

Tests administered to Casey placed him above the normal educational level for an entering NTID student; hence, he was transferred to RIT and set up with an interpreter, who was not advised that Casey had never before been exposed to sign language.

He sat bewildered in his RIT classes, and annoyed in his NTID sign language classes, where, in his agitated emotional state, he found it impossible to cope with the normal freshman antics displayed in the classroom.

Burfield remembers him as an angry sort.

"He always sat in the rear of the classroom," she recalls, "with his arms folded across his chest, sporting a scowl and a black leather jacket."

Casey at last could bear no more, and with some sympathetic assistance from Burfield, became the first NTID student permitted to take sign language classes with faculty and staff members. (Postlingually deafened students are now free to select from offerings designed primarily for faculty and staff members.) Bending the rules not only allowed Casey, then 30, to be with persons more his contemporary, but also afforded him the opportunity to take sign language classes more advanced than those offered to students.

It is Casey's good fortune that he persevered in the study of sign language, for his skill in that subject is now providing him with an income, earned by hustling from place to place teaching sign language to members of the Rochester community. At NTID, he is an adjunct faculty member.

Most of Casey's wages, however, are siphoned off by the federal government, in service to a debt he accrued over a period of years when he mistakenly continued to accept government assistance, despite the fact that he was employed in a position that earned him the annual sum of \$2,100—\$200 over the legal limit.

Burfield's and Casey's main goal in teaching the course is the hope that they can shorten the length of time it takes a person to adjust to the sudden onset of

deafness. The adjustment stages, they explained in a workshop presented last winter to faculty and staff members, are denial, anger, guilt, depression, and adaptation. Typically, they are worked through in a period of three to five years.

These stages can take many forms.

"My mother had lengthy conversations with God," says Casey, "asking what she—or I—had done to deserve this."

Casey's own period of adjustment was marked by uncommonly severe depression, prompted in part by the pain that he still experiences as a result of his accident. He has a plate in his head, and his teeth and nose are not the originals.

His anger has turned to cynicism. He had the stapes (a bone that conducts sound) from his right ear encased in a lucite plaque. From time to time he pulls it out for others to admire, rather like a bowling trophy.

But at least he has mastered sign language and has had some training in speechreading, conduits that re-open the door to communication for deafened individuals, much like the stream of water that marked the dawn of understanding in young Helen Keller's life.

There are no doors or windows for many of the first-timers in Burfield's and Casey's seminar. A 44-year-old man, having suddenly lost his hearing a year ago as the result of a virus, sits in a coma of helplessness.

Participants in the course are asked to fill out a questionnaire. They are requested to rate their social lives on a scale from one to seven, with one being "poor" and seven being "excellent." He gives himself a two.

By the end of the course, he is starting to talk about getting a TTY and learning sign language. Burfield and Casey have thrown him a lifeline and he has decided to re-connect with the land of the living.

Deafness has seemed to make only the barest trace of a difference in the life of another part-time student, at least in her attitude. A claims representative for one of the nation's large insurance firms, she did most of her job on the telephone.

One night, at the age of 45, she went home, had supper, and lost her hearing. Two years later, no one knows why this happened.

There were no powerful unions to force her out of her job, as Casey claims they did to him. Instead, after years of professional status, she was relegated to the mailroom.

But she fought back, firing off a letter to the company's deputy regional vice president.

"The news that I had been demoted and stripped of my dignity," she wrote him, "was worse than my loss of hearing—I lost my hearing, not my brain. I have attached a copy of the equal rights employment policy which is posted on our bulletin board. Does it apply in my case?"

She is back at work as a claims representative, in a job tailored to her particular needs. Her current supervisor allows

Other students admit grudgingly that they can and do adjust to their hearing loss. But the pain between the lines is still fresh.

One of the questions on their final examination is, "What have you learned in the classroom to help you understand your deafness educationally, socially, and communicatively?"

"I really don't like the way you put this question," a student answers, "because I got a lot out of the class, but I don't think I learned anything that is gonna help me understand deafness any



Donna Burfield

that her letter to the boss "had an influence" on that decision.

Another older student coped with her situation in a similarly brisk fashion.

"For me," she says, "hearing loss was just one more happening along the way to maturity. It was not the worst thing that had ever happened to me. By the time I was 22 I had survived the Great Depression, child abuse, factory work, and World War II in the Navy with my husband a prisoner of war in Germany.

"When I bought my first hearing aid, I had my ears pierced and bought some pretty earrings. I'd had 40 years of ordeals and needed some fun. I decided to get a part-time job and get out; meet new people; dress sharp; grow."

better. See, my deafness is something that I doubt I will ever understand—maybe it's because I still think that one of these days everything's gonna be okay.

"Ya know—like one of these days I'm gonna wake to birds chirping or something like that. Sounds like a movie or something, right? As far as the class goes, I think the one thing I learned that was important to me was that, even if my little fantasy doesn't come true, I can still be happy."

In answer to the same question, another student writes, "Don't look at life as a 'downer' because you have been deafened. Don't give up. Keep on keeping on!"

Results such as these have encouraged Burfield and Casey to dream big dreams for their little seminar. They are hoping, with the help of an NTID instructional developer, to develop a curriculum that will be marketed to others interested in teaching similar courses. The two have had inquiries from as far away as Denmark.

Additionally, they will publish two articles on the subject in the *Journal of the Academy of Rehabilitative Audiology*, aided by NTID Rehabilitative Audiologist Lawrence Scott (who, with Mental Health Specialist William Yust, has participated in the seminar) and Dr. Frank Caccamise, senior communication research associate. In the fall, they may be teaching their course at a local community college as well as at NTID.

Burfield, who is referred to by one of her students as "an amazing woman," is pursuing a doctorate in counseling from the University of Rochester. She envisions a day when NTID might become a national center for postlingually deafened persons.

Casey, who went to work on the line at 21, has just received a bachelor's degree in human development from Empire State College. He expects to begin studies for a master's degree in the same subject this fall at the University of Rochester.

When he first made the decision to come to NTID, he left his wife and two children in another city, and saw them only on weekends for five years. They are now reunited, but the marriage has suffered the dual consequences of their separation and his deafness. After a long period of angry denial, his wife is trying to shore up their crumbling relationship.

But Casey himself vacillates as to whether his moribund marriage is worth a rescue attempt.

"I don't know," he says with a shrug. "I've changed a lot as a person, which in turn has placed added pressure on the marriage."

Whatever his personal hesitations, his leadership of the seminar has clearly made a difference in the lives of others.

A student deafened by neurofibromatosis, the disease that formed the subject of the play and film, *The Elephant Man*, writes:

"The most important thing I have learned from this course is that, yes, Jim Casey as a deafened person has had troubles, but he has overcome them. He has shown us that it is possible to do and be something meaningful in life."

Between Two Worlds: Fragments Toward a Deaf Autobiography

This is an adaptation of a paper written by a student in Burfield's and Casey's course.

I shall never forget that snowy New England morning in my 11th year. Bundled up, I swung my lunchbox while waiting for the kitchen clock to say 8 a.m. Suddenly I became aware of a strange sensation—"Ma, I feel like I've got mosquito bites behind my ears." My mother, who could be stunningly sensible at times of crisis, gently probed, took my lunchbox away, and told me to get into bed.

What ensued is both vivid and obscure. I remember the terrible pain, the burning as if my head were on fire. I was nearly crazy with pain. My mother nursed me as well as she could, and I drifted from pain to sleep, sleeping and waking, daylight and darkness.

At the end of two weeks, the fever had abated and the painful swelling behind my ears had gone away, so I took up my lunchbox and went to pick up where I had left off. For a few months, nothing seemed amiss. If my hearing was less acute, I don't remember.

I do recall participating in the standard school hearing tests, after which my parents received letters informing them that I had failed.

By the time I was 11, I knew that I had a hearing problem, and was fascinated in a clinical sort of way. I found an article in *Today's Health* about problems affecting the inner ear and eagerly learned the terms: auditory canal, cochlea, organ of Corti, stapes, incus, malleus. I also learned about the hair cells that my fever had destroyed. I fell into a routine which would last through most of my adolescence: with few or no friends, I preferred my books, writing, or drawing to the company of other people.

In school, I was sullen, a "discipline problem," who "could not interact well with peers." At home, I fought constantly with my older brother and parents. My room was a haven from the world. Mom practically had to pull me out of bed on schoolday mornings.

What were my parents to do about this sudden change thrust into their

lives? What did they know about deafness? What must have been their feeling of guilt and hurt pride: "What have we done to deserve this?"

My mother was not articulate or intellectual, and her desire to deny the reality of what was happening was probably a natural, if not useful, reaction. But she accompanied me to the doctors for tests and more tests; she was the one with whom they discussed my disability. I don't think my father ever understood my deafness. He has never mentioned it to me, but that's not unusual; I've never been able to get a straight word out of him.

Ultimately a name was found for my condition: bilateral sensorineural loss ranging from severe (in the better left ear, where I wear an aid) to profound (in my right ear). But this is mere quibbling. The reality is indisputable: a condition which means a slow, inexorable slip into deafness. A terrible silence which has intensified with time.

I vividly recall my first glimpse of American Sign Language. I was watching a TV program in which the National Theatre of the Deaf performed a scene from *Hamlet*. There was a voice-over narrator, so I could coordinate the signing with the text. I was enthralled.

Later, when I was in college, I felt intense interest and curiosity when I saw two people signing to each other. But fear kept me from approaching them. Fear. For years, the main bugaboo of my life.

Briefly told, then, I stumbled through public school with no support services. When I was 16, a dedicated guidance counselor pushed hard for me. I was taken to an eye and ear clinic where I underwent a day-long battery of tests which resulted in the verdict, "Nothing can be done." My guidance counselor, however, would not give up. As a result, I was sent to a guild for the hard of hearing, to be fitted with my first hearing aid—paid for by the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR).

By then I was 18, and ready to graduate from high school. In the fall, I went off to a private eastern university to

become a professor of literature—again, on a grant from OVR. I had my new hearing aid, but was reluctant to wear it.

When people ask how I managed to get through college with no support services, I'm baffled myself. How did I manage?

The same way I managed everything else, by dint of cleverness, whatever charm I possessed, wheedling, sponging, procrastinating, and then last-minute all-night sessions. And by being a good writer—I generally manage to make better impressions on paper than in person.

As for class notes, I found that distance and acoustics permitting, I could manage. I remember asking to borrow a classmate's notes, only to be told she'd rather not lend them; apparently she felt that I was stealing her efforts. I remember trying to explain that I was not trying to take advantage of her, that my need was legitimate. I also remember that I never borrowed her notes again.

I learned to cope with people's condescension and ignorance, the well-meaning people who think they do you a favor by shouting in your ear or whispering behind your back. I encountered the inscrutable smiling masks of interviewers, who said, "We'll be in touch if anything opens up." It rarely did.

I reached the point where I felt I must fib about my background and I merely said I was a high school graduate. I began to suspect that if there was anything they liked less than a deaf person, it was a deaf person with "education."

Things became confused when I was at a midwestern state university, where I had accepted a job as an assistant instructor of freshman English. Those two semesters were the most traumatic 10 months in my life. I found myself unable to correct my students' compositions. My boss could easily have fired me, but instead he got a speech therapist to work with me during my last few months.

The speech therapist was brilliant. She also was hearing impaired—albeit to a lesser extent than I—but you couldn't tell. She was alert, crackling with energy, and genuinely wise. She became my friend, and taught me a lot about myself.

In addition to my boss's concern and advice, I also had a wonderful communications counselor and some real friends. But I was losing my ability to function in the hearing world. There were days

when I could not understand anything my teachers were saying. I bought a cassette recorder and used it to tape their lectures.

Days of bleak depression settled on me then, days when I was terrified that I was losing my remaining hearing and wasn't going to get it back. That was when one of my friends taught me the manual alphabet, and that was the beginning of the beginning, so to speak.

It was at a party, at this university, that I met my husband. Two years later we married and moved to a large midwestern city, where the last phase of my life in the hearing world played itself out with painful inevitability.

Unable to find work, unwilling to return to a conventional classroom situation, I lapsed into bouts of depression. I stayed up all night writing letters and poems, daydreaming and combing through catalogs, trying desperately to bring order and beauty into the chaos of my life.

And then the upward strain asserted itself. I decided to take a sign language course at a local community college, which boasted a Gallaudet College Regional Extension Center. The transportation problem was horrendous, and so were the expenses. But that was not the most important thing. Neither was the ASL class—the hardest "B" I'd ever earned. What did have the greatest significance was the warm and concerned attitude of the man who was head of the counseling department. He recommended that I apply to NTID; he felt that, with my background, I'd be happier in Rochester.

I wept as I filled out the application forms. I knew it would mean leaving behind everything comfortable and familiar. It also meant leaving my husband. But there was no future for me.

My husband was supportive and encouraging—he hoped that I would grow proud and independent. With his encouragement, I took the preliminary step. I was notified by NTID that they didn't know where to put me! An anomaly in the hearing world, I was to be an anomaly in the deaf world as well. Borrowing a TTY from a local hospital, I had an earnest talk with one of the counselors. Then I waited.

When I learned that I'd been accepted, I felt numb with shock. Half-heartedly, I began to break up the apartment amidst dire premonitions of being torn limb from limb by angry "deafies." I felt like a hypocrite, an impostor; I felt that I belonged no place.

My life as a hearing person ended the moment I stepped onto the airplane bound for Rochester. I felt my life lying about me in fragments, and there was little I could do but stand up and walk away from it. As Hamlet observes, we are more apt "to bear those ills we know/Than fly to others that we know not of."

One of the first things I did after arriving was ask about deaf theater groups at NTID. My acting teacher had an understanding heart. He asked me what it was like for me to be deaf. "It's like shuttling between two worlds, and being a full citizen of neither," I remember answering.

My first months at RIT were full of pain and frustration. But the pain and frustration were different from what I'd felt before. After I told my husband that I wanted to remain for a bachelor's degree, he wrote talking of "freedom," unable to mention "divorce." Again, I felt numb shock, and I had to fight harder than ever. When I had more than I could bear, I turned to my NTID counselors.

I had been at NTID a few months when I began to feel a stirring within, a fresh greenness, a kind of brightness peering through the clouds after a long rainstorm: hope.

It's difficult to say how profoundly my deafness has affected my life. It has become inextricably woven into the daily texture of my life, my dreams, and my feelings—for better or worse. My challenge is to find a creative way to come to terms with it, and to achieve the autonomy, pride, and self-confidence which are my rightful portion.

I would like to achieve that transcendence described in an Old Testament Psalm: "The stone that the builders rejected/ Has become the chief cornerstone."



FOCUS on Richard Nichols

By Jean Ingham

Act I—College

Enter a young, enthusiastic high school graduate named Richard Nichols. Born and raised in the small town of Ionia, Michigan, he is 6 feet tall, with reddish blonde hair. His dream: to become a high school basketball and baseball coach.

As a physical education major at Michigan State University, he tries out for the varsity baseball team. He fails the last cut and knows that he will not make the team that season. He decides, however, to continue in his major.

One year later, he tires of physical education and begins looking for a new major. On a dare, he auditions for a part in a theater production.

He gets the role—as the beast/prince in “Beauty and the Beast”—and a new love takes flame. He changes his major to speech/theatre.

Nichols graduates from Michigan State University in 1963. His bachelor's degree is in speech/theatre, with a minor in English, and he receives his Secondary Education Certificate.

The day after graduation, Nichols marries Sharleen Estep. They had met in high school—she sat behind him in typing class.

Act II—Graduate School

Enter an ambitious graduate student, whose love for the theater now takes him to Ohio University to pursue a master's degree in theater direction and design. His graduate assistant's job, as a theatre shop technician, keeps his family, which now includes a newborn son, Robert, afloat.

His doctoral work, at the University of Washington, is in Asian theater. He has decided that he wants to teach Japanese and Chinese theater.

Nichols' work with Asian theater piques an interest in Asian martial arts. These gentle arts do not employ the force used in, for instance, karate. Aikido and Kendo use the aggressor's force against himself. The disciplines they instill and the exercise they provide keep the mind and body healthy.

After receiving his degree, Nichols goes to Japan in 1973 to do postdoctoral work, researching contemporary Japanese theater and studying classical Kabuki (one of the oldest classical forms of theater) at the National Theatre of Japan. The Japanese government funds his research. He studies stage fighting during the day and goes to plays at night.

This separation from his family, which now includes a daughter, Maureen, is difficult, since he is a family man. No matter how busy he is, he always makes time for activities in which his children are involved. The family is separated many times by his work—sometimes it seems the theater consumes his entire being.

When he returns to the States, Nichols becomes “somewhat of a workaholic.” School breaks are not spent as he'd like, working on translations of Japanese folklore. Instead, he travels from college to college, giving workshops in mask technique and stage combat.

Nichols adds the Alexander Technique of physical self-reeducation to his repertoire.

Developed by F. M. Alexander, this technique teaches a person to be aware of the misuse of the body and to inhibit this habitual way of moving; simultaneously, a person begins to use the body more efficiently.

One practices inhibiting the old and reinforcing the new movement patterns throughout the normal work day—while typing, washing dishes, reading, or working with tools. Gradually, one's posture changes: one stands taller, is more balanced, and moves more easily and gracefully. It is a dynamic relationship of the many parts of the body.

Nichols uses the Alexander Technique when teaching theater movement classes.

He studies the technique with Marge Barstow, a venerable woman whom he believes to be Alexander's only living pupil.

Act III—NTID

Enter a more mature, but still boyish looking, Richard Nichols. At 44, eager for a new challenge, he is looking for an administrative position. He receives a phone call from an old college friend,

Dr. Bruce Halverson, assistant dean for General Education at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf. Dr. Halverson suggests that he apply for the position of director of Performing Arts at NTID.

It is April 1984. After a series of interviews, Nichols is offered and accepts the position.

around my head—or so it seemed. It sounds funny now, but I panicked then.”

As Nichols joins in the laughter, he explains that he was doing his morning exercises: kneeling to gain focus, removing the sword from its scabbard, swinging, replacing the sword, and then beginning the sequence again. Practitioners of Aikido attempt to do their sword

“I’d gone to sleep before Dick came in. I heard a rustling noise and awoke to see a man swinging a sword around my head—or so it seemed.”



On his first day, Halverson regales others in the theatre office with a tale about Nichols: “Richard and I shared a room at a convention many years ago. I know that he uses martial arts exercises to keep in shape, but it was not foremost in my mind. I’d gone to sleep before Dick came in. I heard a rustling noise and awoke to see a man swinging a sword

movements a minimum of 300 times a day—dedicated swordsmen do 1,000.

Nichols joins other new faculty members for orientation and manual/simultaneous communication classes. He is pleased to find sign language merely an extension of movement.

“The fluidness and the flow are part of what I’ve been learning and teaching all these years,” he says.

Co-worker Patrick Graybill, however, insists that Nichols’ college-age daughter signs better and faster than her father.

“I don’t doubt it one bit,” Nichols says. “She has become so intrigued with manual communication that she plans to transfer into RIT’s associate degree program in interpreting.”

Nichols enjoys his administrative work, but regrets that he must give up, temporarily, one of his great joys—full-time teaching. He hasn’t yet had the opportunity to work as closely as he’d like with hearing-impaired students. Perhaps next year.

His plans for future performing arts activities include a late summer workshop for theater directors, headed by Mark Medoff, author of the Tony Award-winning play, *Children of a Lesser God*. This workshop will help directors to understand and work with hearing-impaired performers.

Nichols still believes that his family is the most important thing in his life. Each year they try to go whitewater canoeing, or camping in the backwoods of Ontario, Canada. In the north country, they are isolated from telephones, television, movies, and even automobiles. They return to civilization rested and ready to tackle another year.

Nichols’ love of Japan is evident in his office—where several prints provide a serene focal point for meditation—and in his home, furnished in the sparse, Japanese style, with a few choice pieces of art.

He travels to Toronto, Canada, for further lessons in the Alexander technique. He also is searching for a Kendo teacher. He would like to be able to combine his bimonthly trips to include both Alexander and Kendo classes.

He explains, “Even those martial arts students who attain the title of ‘master’ never really cease being students. One is forever learning.”

Right now, however, he is taking a little time for himself. “I’m reading a novel,” he says. “A *real* novel. Do you realize that up ’til now my reading was basically plays? One right after the other. I’m really enjoying reading something different.”





World class athletes

Ten hearing-impaired RIT student athletes will be among those who will represent the United States at the 1985 World Games for the Deaf in Los Angeles, July 10-20. The 12-sport international competition is held in Olympic format every four years.

The students will be part of U.S. teams in track and field, swimming, women's basketball, soccer, and wrestling. Kneeling, first row, from left, are David Schultz (swimming), Corey Blackwell (soccer), Karl Wilbanks (swimming), and Michael Chappell (track); standing, from left, are Todd Morris (wrestling), Roland Granfors (soccer), Jeffrey DiBiase (soccer), Earl Hollinshed (swimming), James Davenport (swimming), and Farley Warshaw (assistant volleyball coach). Missing from the photo is Nancy O'Neill, who will compete in volleyball.

Grant Awarded

The Metropolitan Life Foundation has awarded an \$18,000 grant to RIT to fund a human sexuality peer education program for hearing-impaired students attending the Institute.

The new program is designed to provide information and guidance about sexuality issues to hearing-impaired students who might hesitate to seek such information on a preventive, rather than an acute care, basis.

Coordinator Vicki Hurwitz is working with E. Cassandra Jordan, director of RIT Student Health Service, and Dr. Jeffrey Porter, chairperson of Human Development, to train six hearing-impaired students as human sexuality peer educa-

tors. They will present information to their fellow students through formal presentations within the Student Health Service, through programs offered in the residence halls, and during the Summer Vestibule Program for new students who are hearing impaired. The educators will be available as both peer counselors and referral agents.

"We want to increase students' knowledge and understanding about human sexuality so that they can make better use of information and services to prevent problems," Jordan says. "This program also will help them become better prepared to assume responsibility for their own welfare."

Performing Arts Workshop Scheduled for July

The Department of Performing Arts at NTID will host a national directing workshop July 29-August 3. NTID faculty members will share their expertise in such areas as directing musicals, rehearsal techniques, using an interpreter, and sound reinforcement systems.

The final two days of the workshop will be devoted to production issues connected with *Children of a Lesser God*,

the award-winning play by Mark Medoff that has deaf characters in the central roles. Medoff, winner of the prestigious Tony and Drama Desk awards, will be in residence to lead those sessions. Questions or requests for further information about the workshop should be directed to Dr. Richard Nichols, chairman of the Department of Performing Arts.



A special teacher

Roxanna "Shan" Nielsen, assistant professor and English specialist in NTID's Communication Division, received the 1985 Eisenhart Award for Outstanding Teaching. She was one of four RIT teachers honored in a May 6 ceremony. Nielsen, who joined NTID in 1978 as a visiting instructor in English, says, "I would like to be able to wrap up and give away the answers to 'good teaching,' but I don't know what they are myself. I love to teach, and my students constantly renew me personally and professionally."

Explore Your Future

NTID this summer will offer a new program for high school students.

"Explore Your Future" is designed for students entering their senior year of high school in the fall.

Between July 9-13, approximately 30 students from area schools will learn about a variety of technical careers, get hands-on experience with different work tasks, live in the residence halls, and experience college life. They will explore

their interests and abilities as they relate to a technical post-secondary education.

Participating students must meet the basic eligibility requirements for NTID. This program is designed to motivate these students academically and to provide a more realistic picture of the challenges and rewards of college life.

If the pilot program is successful, it may be expanded in the future to accommodate a national audience.

A Final Word...

Hearing students receive a richer and more diverse education as a result of the hearing-impaired students we have on campus.

Dr. M. Richard Rose
President
Rochester Institute of Technology



Rochester Institute of Technology

National Technical Institute for the Deaf
One Lomb Memorial Drive
Post Office Box 9887
Rochester, NY 14623

**R. I. T.
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