

# FORUM

Gallaudet College has established a Rehabilitation Engineering Center for the Deaf and Hearing-Impaired with partial support from the National Institute of Handicapped Research of the Department of Education. The Center will be a program of Gallaudet College's Division of Research. The Director of the Center is James M. Pickett, Professor of Speech Communication Research and Director of the Sensory Communication Research Laboratory.

The new Center will include development and research projects carried out at three institutions: Gallaudet College; Massachusetts Institute of Technology; and Johns Hopkins University. A collaborating project of Gallaudet will also involve the Stanford University Division of Otolaryngology. The project areas of work cover a range of technologies for application to both deaf and hearing-impaired persons to improve their communication, particularly by speech. The specific projects are in five topic areas:

1. surveys for use of in-place or off-the-shelf technology, such as TV, information services, automatic speech recognition, and speech synthesis;
2. wearable aids to speech reception via the tactile sense;
3. electro-auditory implants in the cochlea;
4. phonation and articulation aids for the deaf; and
5. new diagnostic procedures based on speech-cue acoustic patterns.



The following information comes from the American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery, Inc., 1101 Vermont Avenue, N.W. Suite 302, Washington, D. C. 20005 and may be of interest to our readers.

The American Academy of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery has published a leaflet which explains in simple language the causes and possible treatment for ringing in the ears (called tinnitus). A question and answer format is used to discuss 10 areas which otolaryngologists are most frequently asked to explain about this common problem.

Nearly 36 million Americans suffer from various types of head noise or ringing in their ears. The noise may come and go, or be continuous. It can vary in pitch from a low roar to a high squeal or whine. More than seven million people are afflicted so severely that they cannot lead normal lives.

Tinnitus is a "symptom," not a disease and it can be caused by a variety of conditions including allergy, high (or low) blood pressure, a tumor, diabetes, thyroid problems, or trauma to the head or neck. It can also result from middle ear problems such as infection, a hole in the eardrum, or an accumulation of fluid. These problems along with middle ear diseases, such as otosclerosis, often involve a loss of hearing. The most common cause of tinnitus relates to problems with the hearing nerve.

If a specific cause for head noises is found, it may be corrected. But in most cases the causes cannot be identified, and there is no specific treatment. However, there are many ways to lessen the noise. One is to avoid nerve stimulants such as coffee and colas (caffeine) and smoking (nicotine). Also, a competing sound such as a ticking clock or a radio may help "mask" the noise. For example, many patients are helped by dialing between two FM stations to pick up subdued static at low volume. This can be extremely soothing, with a soft, rushing sound known as "white noise." (White noise tapes can be purchased in specialty shops.)

Some people are helped with a tinnitus masker, a small electronic instrument built into an over-the-ear hearing aid. It generates a competitive but pleasant sound which may mask the tinnitus by reducing awareness of the sound. The result is similar to successful use of white noise. Others have reduced the intensity of tinnitus with "biofeedback" training. This involves concentration and relaxation exercises designed to teach voluntary control of the circulation to various parts of the body and how to relax muscle groups throughout the body.

People with impaired hearing, even a minor loss, sometimes find that their hearing aids reduce head noise and occasionally cause it to go away. However, a thorough trial before purchase is advisable if the primary purpose is the relief of tinnitus. Often, when the hearing aid is removed, the head noise returns to its former level. Individual complimentary copies of the leaflet are available from many otolaryngologists throughout the U. S. If you send a stamped, self-addressed business envelope marked "tinnitus" to the Academy, they will be happy to send a copy and a list of qualified otolaryngologists in your state or metro area. The address appears at the head of this item.

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## **INTERPRETERS FOR DEAF CONVENTION IN HARTFORD, INVITE WORKERS WITH DEAF**

The national Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) will hold its biennial convention in Hartford, Conn., July 27 through August 1, 1982, at the beautiful Sheraton-Hartford Hotel.

Have you ever been assigned to help a deaf person or family? What are their special problems? Have you ever had to use an interpreter for the deaf in your daily work? Are you unsure of communicating through an interpreter and ethical considerations? These issues will be addressed at the 1982 Convention in forums, rap sessions and workshops. An inside view of the interpreters' role, and some insights on special problems each deals with will make an interesting and worthwhile program.

Details on the program are available from RID Convention '82 Chairman Christine Stranges, C/O Connecticut Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, P. O. Box 12202, Hartford, Connecticut 06112. In the meantime, MARK YOUR CALENDAR, join RID in Hartford, which has many points of interest, including pre- or post-convention fun, in July 1982.

## BOOK REVIEWS

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ed by *Deaf Heritage* begins in 1803, when agitation began for the establishment of a school for deaf children, and traces events leading to the establishment of the Connecticut Asylum for the Education and Instruction of Deaf and Dumb Persons (now the American School for the Deaf) in Hartford on April 15, 1817. Other states began to establish similar schools, and by the turn of the century there were approximately 69 schools for the deaf. From this breeding ground emerged the characters and personalities forming the substance of the book.

So deeply ingrained in deaf people is loyalty to one's school that one's first impulse is to turn to that page listing his or her school and it is satisfying to find drawings or pictures, and a capsule history. Likely, too, the deaf reader is apt to learn something he or she did not know before.

But schools are not the only part of the book worthy of note. There is much, much more.

History is not events; history is people, their impact upon others, and events that follow. In a true sense, this book is not a total history of deafness in America; rather, after the chronology of the school section, it becomes a broad, sweeping picture of deaf people of different generations, their accomplishments and activities in a stunning array of highly skilled arts. Artists, inventors, engineers, aviators, poets — all are represented, to mention but a few, with illustrations of some of their work.

Perhaps the greatest appeal of the book, in the opinion of this reviewer, is that one may open it at any page and find a fascinating account of a deaf person's achievement. There are boxed cameos, as well as straight narratives. Deaf people turn out to be interesting *as people*.

*Deaf Heritage* is a book that should be made required reading in every school for the deaf, in every college program where American Literature is on the curriculum, for teachers as well as for students. Deaf children need models, and this book is replete with them. Older deaf students need inspiration, a boost to help them develop latent

talents, and *Deaf Heritage* provides examples.

While recognizing the problem of space limitations, this reviewer notes that there is a tendency to skim lightly where some depth would add to the dimension and color of a personality. People do not just do things; they are happy, lively, morose, withdrawn, outgoing, gregarious, or whatever, and this does not always come through.

*Deaf Heritage* is a remarkable achievement, well researched, indexed, thorough, and interesting for a wide range of audiences — deaf adults, students, teachers, and scholars. I recommend it without reservation.

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### **Deaf Heritage: A Narrative History of Deaf America.**

Not since Harry Best's landmark publication, *Deafness and the Deaf in the United States*, has there been an attempt to compile an encyclopedic collection of information about deaf Americans. It is entirely fitting that such a project has been undertaken by the National Association of the Deaf and carried off so well by Jack Gannon, author of the recently published *Deaf Heritage: A Narrative History of Deaf America*. Mr. Gannon, deaf himself, has compiled a wealth of historical information about America's deaf citizens.

Best, in his classic work, approached the subject of deafness basically from a scientific and demographic perspective, with scant attention to organizations within the deaf community or the accomplishments of deaf citizens. Gannon's book is primarily concerned with an historical overview of events that have affected deaf people, their role in those events in the United States since Gallaudet and Clerc's establishment of the first school for the deaf, and the accomplishments of deaf Americans in diverse fields of endeavor.

## BOOK REVIEWS

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The book is organized chronologically with chapters devoted to the early history of the education of the deaf and significant events for, and of deaf Americans in each decade from the 1890's to the present. Chapters are also devoted to deaf artists, deaf humor, publications of the deaf, sports, American Sign Language, and the National Association of the Deaf.

There has long been a need for a book that chronicles the contributions and achievements of deaf Americans in our society. Mr. Gannon has done an admirable job in filling

this need with his comprehensively researched and efficiently organized book, *Deaf Heritage*. It should prove to be a valuable reference work for those who work with the deaf or aspire to do so, for deaf students who are learning about their culture, and for the deaf community in general. *Deaf Heritage* is a source of pride and inspiration for deaf Americans.

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