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Diversity Day provides opportunity to explore attitudes on sexual orientation

Homophobia, like racism, sexism, and other 'isms,' is far too prevalent in society. Because Gallaudet University, which is a microcosm of society, also experiences instances of homophobia, it was a focal point of Diversity Day, held March 27 in the Gallaudet University Kellogg Conference Center.

There are people who experience fear because of their sexual orientation, said MJ Bienvenu, Diversity Day coordinator and an instructor in the Department of ASL, Linguistics, and Interpretation. Some students, she said, get threats via e-mail, or perhaps a note slipped under the door of their dormitory room.

Just like it did in 1993 when the daily routine was put aside for the Gallaudet community to come together and discuss issues dealing with race, Gallaudet's Diversity Day this year was about acceptance for everyone, regardless of sexual orientation. "No one should live in fear on this campus," said Provost Jane Fernandes at the opening of the daylong event. "I believe we will learn that, fundamentally, we are all the same; we can learn to live together as a community." To accomplish this involves changing attitudes, said Bienvenu. She motioned toward her podium, which bore a copy of Gallaudet's founding seal of 1864. She pointed to the Syriac word *ephphatha*, which she said means "to open one's ears," and added that perhaps it could be interpreted as, "to open our minds and hearts."

In addition to morning and afternoon sessions designed to give information that is needed to enlighten and therefore unify the campus, motivational presentations were given. The speakers were Warren Blumenfeld of the University of Massachusetts, an

author and founder and first director of the National Gay Student Center; and Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-D.C.) and Rep. Barney Frank (D-Mass.), both champions of national hate crime legislation that would add additional penalties to violent crime motivated by race, religion, sex, or physical characteristics of the victim.

Just after Blumenfeld opened his talk about the negative impacts homophobia has on everyone—heterosexuals, as well as people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgendered (GLBT)—he played clips of foul, mostly unprintable epithets that he has received on his home answering machine. They graphically illustrated the fears that people face daily if their sexual orientation is out of the mainstream.

"I hope you die of AIDS," one caller hissed. "Sick, sick. That's all you people are is sick," another ranted. Homophobia, like most behavior, is taught, influenced by the period of time a person grows up in, by family, and by external factors such as the media. Blumenfeld, for example, grew up in the conservative 1950s, a decade in which Senator Joseph McCarthy railed against communists and homosexuals. Blumenfeld's parents, concerned about his masculinity, would not let him learn to play the violin unless he joined Little League baseball. And because of their fears about his sexual orientation, he had to see a child psychiatrist for eight years. He hoped that when he went off to college, things would be better, but on the first day his roommate announced, "I am not rooming with a fag."

Situations like this are common, said Blumenfeld, and it is therefore unsurprising that among

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Graduate student Irvine Stewart responds to a question during a panel discussion on "Is There Homophobia on the Gallaudet Campus." Looking on (from left) are moderator Dr. Katherine Jankowski, interim dean of the Clerc Center; Earl Parks, MSP technology specialist for Learning Technologies; Dr. Donald Ammons, professor in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures; student Melanie "Mel" Christensen; GIS scheduler Alex Young; and Steve Collins, an instructor in the Department of ASL, Linguistics, and Interpretation.

Breakout workshops give community awakening on issues

During Diversity Day on March 27 there were 10 workshops that allowed the campus community to discuss issues related to sexual orientation.

"The issue is very subtle," graduate student Irvine Stewart said during a panel discussion. "I will walk into a room and other people will start talking about me. Then when I look towards them, they stop."

Audience members had the opportunity to ask the panel questions. In response to a question about what Gallaudet can do to decrease the fear and intolerance that members of the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) community feel, Earl Parks, MSP technology specialist for Learning Technologies, had a ready answer: "I already feel safer with

the Safe Zone program. Now I feel comfortable talking to people who have put the safe zone stickers on their office door."

In regards to a few Diversity Day protesters who gathered outside the conference center, Dr. Donald Ammons, a professor in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, said, "They have the right to do that. They don't have to listen to us. There are some things I don't like and don't want to see or hear about. I abhor violence on TV and refuse to watch it. Everyone can turn off what they don't want to hear or see." Parks added that he "believes in freedom of speech ... It doesn't bother me."

At another workshop, "I'm Okay, You're Not!: Understanding Heterosexism," Dr. Eleanor Hubbard talked about how difficult

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Webcam technology comes to Gallaudet

By Dawn Bradley

Construction progress on the new Student Academic Center (SAC) can soon be viewed using a video webcam.

A network camera has been set up to view the site from a room on the fourth floor of HMB. Two options will be available for downloading: still images, which work for a general audience, and motion, which is suitable for high speed Internet users. The SAC should be completed in 2002 in time for Deaf Way II.

Ralph Fernandez, webmaster for the Office of Public Relations, is working in tandem with Bill Millios, an assistant professor in the Mathematics and Computer Science Department, on the video webcam project. Technology with web cameras is becoming popular on many university web sites. The construction progress can be checked regularly through a link

on Gallaudet's News Center site (<http://news.gallaudet.edu>), the Construction Services site (ab.gallaudet.edu/cons/cons.html), and the SAC website (depts.gallaudet.edu/sac/).

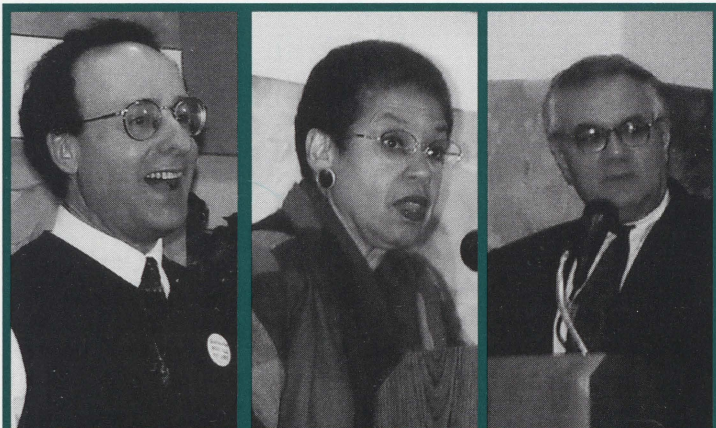
"Our goal in doing this project is to keep the public informed about the progress of the construction of the new building. It helps people feel involved," said Fernandez. Alumni, donors, and others who are interested in Gallaudet can get a visual picture of what's happening on campus with just a few clicks of a computer mouse.

According to Daniel Kirby, director of Construction Services, "I'm so excited to be able to watch the construction every day on my computer. I'll be able to keep track of what's happening at the site from the convenience of my desk, although of course I

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Webcam comes to

Diversity Day presenters—



Warren Blumenfeld
founder, National Gay
Student Center

Del. Eleanor Holmes
Norton (D-D.C.)

Rep. Barney Frank
(D-Mass.)

Diversity Day

continued from page 1

youth suicides, 30 percent are GLBT, that 28 percent of GLBTs drop out of school, 25 percent live on the street, and more than 50 percent abuse drugs. Today, even though there is far more support and acceptance for GLBTs than when he was growing up, Blumenfeld said that many stereotypes and negative opinions exist. GLBTs are misportrayed in print media and in television shows, and in the music industry rappers viciously attack them in their lyrics. The upshot is a negativity to words of GLBTs throughout society. A *Newsweek* survey, for example, showed that a large percentage of Americans feel that GLBTs should not be allowed to marry or to teach in schools. *Esquire* magazine surveyed 2,000 college students and asked them which group they felt they could make jokes about. GLBT was the group picked by the majority of males and females as the group they can most comfortably joke about.

But homophobia's negative effects extend beyond its victims, said Blumenfeld. Those who practice it lock all people into rigid, gender-based roles, inhibiting cre-

ativity and self-expression. Many heterosexuals who would like to learn more about GLBT issues decline to do so for fear of being identified as GLBT. It is also unfortunate that homophobia inhibits the ability for people of the same sex to form close relationships with each other, and to appreciate GLBTs' many contributions to society.

Norton said the actions against GLBTs "makes them the blacks of the 21st century, when it comes to overt violence." The mourning and the outrage that Gallaudet experienced with Eric Plunkett's death, and the possibility that his being gay could have motivated it, is not enough, said Norton. Rather, it is "a tragic consciousness-raising event for the country, the city, and for this campus." She urged Gallaudet to mobilize and appeal to Congress to pass new hate crimes legislation, of which she is a co-sponsor, that is designed to further protect the rights of people in issues of race, sex, sexual orientation, or disability.

Anyone who is discriminated against, said Norton, is empathetic to all other groups who are oppressed. This is why, as an African American woman who grew up in Washington, D.C., she

came to know the sting of discrimination and the need to eliminate it. "I hope that recent events encourage you to raise the consciousness of the Congress of the United States," said Norton. "These people are real asleep when it comes to [GLBT]; you have got to wake them up."

Frank also spoke about the need for Congress to pass not only legislation dealing with hate crimes, but to broaden existing anti-discrimination law to cover GLBTs. Regarding hate crimes, he explained that laws exist on the state level against violent crimes committed on any person. The legislation would add tougher penalties against anyone who assaults or destroys property of a person based on his or her religion, sex, sexual orientation, race, or physical characteristics, because it helps protect others who share those same characteristics and have a right to fear for their safety. The reason legislation is needed at the federal level, he explained, is that in some parts of the country, prejudice exists against some groups of people that local law enforcement may not be willing or able to protect. In these instances, federal intervention may be required, but current law doesn't permit it. **G**

Workshops on diversity

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simple life situations can be for GLBT people. "When a straight person goes to the hospital to visit their spouse, no one says anything. When a gay person visits their partner in the hospital, they ask, 'What are you doing here?'" she said.

Hubbard also said it's hard for gay people to talk about their relationships. An audience member with a gay brother concurred. He said, "I can talk about my wife and kids, but my brother has to be careful talking about his partner. He doesn't know what people's reaction will be."

During a Parents and Friends of Lesbian and Gay People (PFLAG) workshop, friends and family of gay people spoke. Laurie James, vice president of the Washington area PFLAG, said, "I saw the Eric Plunkett memorial service. It inspired me the way the Gallaudet community came together to support his family!"

James admitted she hasn't always known much about GLBT issues. She had a couple co-workers who were gay that educated her on the issue and told her how difficult life can be. She also had a male co-worker who she thought was very handsome and well-dressed. When she was told he was gay, she thought, "No way." It taught her that you can't identify someone as being gay just by looking at them.

"Being educated about problems gay people face helped me when my brother announced he was gay. I knew how to support him," said James.

The goal of Diversity Day was for the people who left the workshops to have a better understanding of the issues GLBT people face in everyday life. MJ Bienvenu, chair of the Diversity Day committee, said, "This was a very positive awakening for people. People are learning about themselves and about how straight society looks at the GLBT community. It's a positive move for Gallaudet." **G**



Freshman Paul Khourl (standing) talks about an incident that took place in one of his classes during a discussion on "Racism and Homophobia." Also pictured are (from left) interpreters Mary Thumann and Jolinda Greenfield, and moderator Mandy Carter.

If your department is receiving too few or too many copies of *On the Green*, please let us know. Call Roz Prickett at x5788 (V/TTY) or e-mail roz.prickett@gallaudet.edu.

Former FCC Chair William Kennard to give commencement address

William E. Kennard, who served as the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) chairman from 1997 until January 2001, will give the commencement address at Gallaudet University's 132nd commencement exercises on May 11. Gallaudet will be awarding about 290 undergraduate and graduate degrees.

Kennard will also be awarded an honorary doctorate degree along with Father Cyril B. Axelrod.

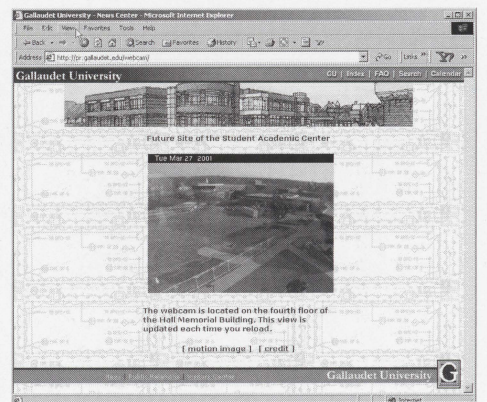
During his tenure as FCC chair, Kennard shaped policies that created an explosion of new wireless phones, brought the Internet to a majority of American households, and implemented policies to bridge the digital divide in the United States and around the world. He is well known for his advocacy to people from diverse backgrounds, low-income households, and Native Americans. During his tenure, the FCC dramatically expanded access to communications technologies for people with disabilities. Kennard aggressively implemented the FCC's e-rate program by investing over \$6 billion to bring the

Gallaudet

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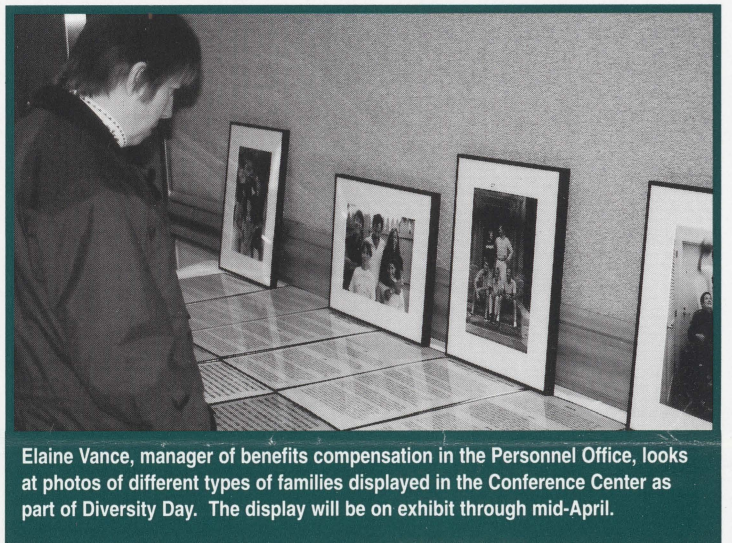
also plan to be at the site regularly."

Once construction is completed, Millios intends to develop a movie that highlights the history of constructing the SAC. This will involve combining and editing all of the photo images that have been posted on the web site. "I think this project is going to provide a visual focal point for the University," said Millios. "We are mentally, spiritually, and financially invested in the new Student Academic Center. I was really happy to be able to find a way to implement an 'eye in the sky' for us—and for our friends and



donors from afar who may not be able to visit—to watch the SAC being built, seeing a concrete return on their investment."

Special thanks goes to the Office of the Provost for making arrangements to use space at HMB to set up this long-term project. **G**



Elaine Vance, manager of benefits compensation in the Personnel Office, looks at photos of different types of families displayed in the Conference Center as part of Diversity Day. The display will be on exhibit through mid-April.

Check out 'On the Green's' Web version. Many of the articles and photographs that appear in each week's issue of *On the Green* can also be read in *On the Green's* Web version, the online version of Gallaudet's faculty/staff newsletter. *On the Green's* Web version can be accessed through the University's homepage.

ON THE GREEN

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ASK AUNT SOPHIE

Dear Aunt Sophie,

Yikes! I heard that they are going to do away with the giant fig tree as part of the renovation to the Student Union Building. I know this is one of your favorite trees on campus and thought you might want to know.

Tree Lover

Dear TL,

Woe is me. Upon receipt of your missive, Aunt Sophie popped over to the SUB with her trusty Brownie Box camera to see for herself what was happening to Fiona the Fig. You're absolutely correct, my dear, the plan is to chop her down and use her for firewood or some such. Fortunately, I was able to gather a few of the old girl's leaves, which I will turn over to our biology gurus. Surely they can do a bit of DNA magic. In the meantime, I am organizing the Fiona the Fig Fan Club. Membership is open to all. Please send me suggestions for a club motto.



Our beloved fig tree stands amidst the rubble at the Student Union Building.

CAMPUS HIGHLIGHTS

Gallaudet's audiology and speech-language pathology programs are once again ranked among the best in the country. The survey by *U.S. News and World Report* ranked the speech-language pathology program 26th out of over 220 programs. The audiology program ranked 18th out of the more than 110 programs. Both programs maintained the same rankings from a year ago. The survey can be seen at the following web addresses: <http://www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/beyond/gradrank/gbslp.htm>

and <http://www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/beyond/gradrank/gbaudio.htm>

The Student Health Service sponsored a screening process for individuals to determine their risk for kidney disease. The National Kidney Foundation was at Gallaudet March 20 for the four-part screening process, which included a one-on-one consultation with a registered nurse. Participants were provided with their results and risk factors for the development of kidney disease.

AMONG OURSELVES

"Who Wants to be Somebody," the Office of Enrollment Services' recruitment video, has won national honors—a Bronze Telly Award and a silver award in the Admissions Marketing Record. The script for the video was written by **Terry Giansanti**, and developed by **Sandi White** of Gallaudet University Television. The video was produced by **Sandi White** and edited by **Patrick Harris**, also of Gallaudet University Television, and has distributed worldwide. "Who Wants to be Somebody," based on a game show in which contestants compete to win a four-year scholarship to Gallaudet, stars

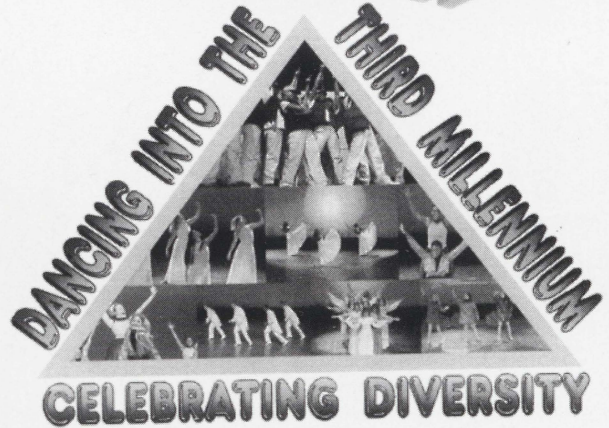
Gallaudet students **Maleni Chaitoo**, **Laurie Anderson**, and **John Serrano**, graduates **Charmaine Miller May** and **Ben Hoshina**, and assistant professor of mathematics and computer science **Bill Millios**.

Dr. Deborah Maxwell-McCaw, an assistant professor in the Psychology Department, successfully defended her thesis on January 30 and obtained her doctorate in clinical psychology at George Washington University. The title of her dissertation is "Acculturation and Psychosocial Well-Being in Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Individuals."

Going once
Going twice
Going gallaudet

WANTED: ASL tutor, preferably with prior tutoring experience. Contact Teresa Wonnell at twonnell@psyc.umd.edu

GALLAUDET DANCE COMPANY



Dance Company to put on show for 46th consecutive year

This year's Gallaudet Dance Company annual dance concert theme is "Dancing into the Third Millennium, Celebrating Diversity." The show—which is in its 46th year—will incorporate a variety of dance pieces employing genres such as jazz, hip-hop, tap, and modern dance. The performances will include "Cabaret," "42nd Street," "Hero," "Morning Has Broken," and "Miss You Much Medley." The performances are April 20 and 21 in Elstad Auditorium.

In addition to the Gallaudet Dance Company, there will be performances by The Spanish Dance Theatre of the Spanish Dance Society, Sankofa Dance Theatre, and the MSSD Dance Company.

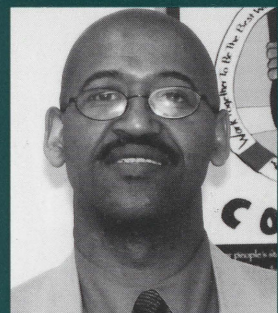
There will be a number of stu-

dent and guest choreographers, including Gallaudet graduate student Irvine Stewart, who will direct students in a dance called "Miss You Much Medley," a tribute to loved ones who have passed away. "It's a very romantic piece, and there will be several couples dancing," Stewart said. "The whole show will be very emotional. We will take you on a tour from happy to sad to inspired and back."

Performances for both days are at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$10 for adults, \$8 for students and senior citizens, and free for full-time Gallaudet students with I.D. Box office hours at Elstad are April 16-20, 3-6 p.m. For more information, call x5493 (TTY/V) or x5591 (TTY/V). **G**

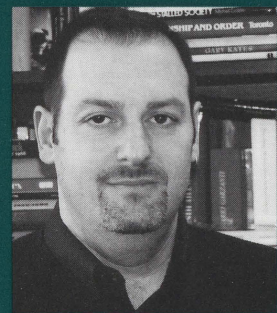
ROVING REPORTER

What changes do you hope to see from Gallaudet faculty, staff, and students as a result of this year's Diversity Day?



Lindsay Dunn, special assistant to the president for diversity and community relations:

I hope that we will all learn enough to become strong allies against any form of insensitivity, rudeness, disrespect, and intolerance towards those different from ourselves.



Barry Bergen, associate professor of government:

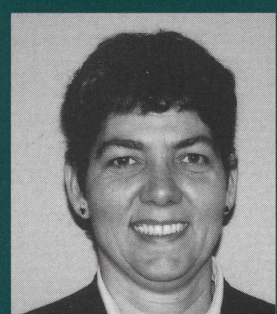
I hope that, as individuals, the straight faculty, staff, and students begin to move toward empathy, then understanding, and finally acceptance of the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered members of our community. I

hope that GLBT faculty, staff, and students begin to feel a little safer and a little more accepted. And I hope that as an institution we continue to create acceptance for and nurturing of all the many diverse parts of the Gallaudet family.



Dr. Jane Fernandes, provost:

I hope to see faculty, staff, and students inspired to work toward that great day when everyone of us respects the differences among us.



MJ Bienvenu, instructor, ASL, Linguistics, and Interpretation:

(Three things:) (1) Awareness of LGBT people on campus and increased sensitivity to homophobia and joined efforts in fighting harassment. (2) Application forms (for students, employment) that ask: married, single, or partner (domestic partner) (either straight or LGBT couples). (3) Pictures of LGBT couples in Gallaudet publications as part of diversity.



Sports Roundup

By David Tossman

Softball:

After spring break, the women were back in action at the Wilson Invitational Tournament March 24-25. A game scheduled for March 21 against Catholic was cancelled due to rain.

At the Wilson Invitational in North Carolina the weekend of March 24-25, the Bison went 1-3. The women defeated Wilson 7-1, while losing to Frostburg 8-4, RIT 14-3, and Cazenovia 5-2. Kari Richards, Katie Spiegel, and Jill Bianco were named to the All-Tournament Team.

The women will host the Gallaudet Invitational Tournament on April 7.

Baseball:

On March 20, the baseball team swept Philadelphia Bible College 6-2 and 9-8 in a doubleheader. With their third win of the season, the Bison have already excelled over last year's total of two wins. Freshman Curtis Christopherson pitched a three hitter in the first game to earn his second win of the season.

Senior Daniel Patterson leads the team in batting with a .333 average. Freshman Brett Talley is hitting .275 with one home run and seven runs batted in. Freshman Sean Moore leads the team with eight stolen bases.

The Bison have four home doubleheaders scheduled for the first two weeks of April. This includes the April 8 doubleheader against Lincoln University at which a pregame ceremony will be held to name the field after Dummy Hoy, a former deaf baseball player famous for inventing the hand signs to signal balls and strikes. The Capital Athletic Conference Tournament starts April 17.

Track:

The track team will host a home meet April 6 when Columbia Union and Bowie State will challenge the Bison speedsters. This will be the only chance for the Bison faithful to watch the track team compete at home this year. **G**

Demolition crews clear way for renovation

The first steps toward a newly renovated Student Union Building (SUB) started in earnest March 1 when crews from Clark Construction of Bethesda, Md., began demolition work and asbestos removal. When the project is completed by its target date of July 2002—in time for the Deaf Way II celebration—it will offer a wide array of services for the Gallaudet community that will complement the academic offerings of the adjoining Student Academic Center.

It is important to distinguish between the Student Union Building and Ely Center, which is attached to the south side of the SUB and is the site of various offices and the temporarily relocated Bookstore. This section of the building will not be renovated, whereas the SUB is being gutted to make way for a totally refurbished facility that will include a multimedia theater, food court, exhibition/lounge area, chapel,



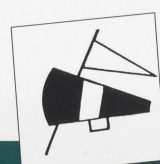
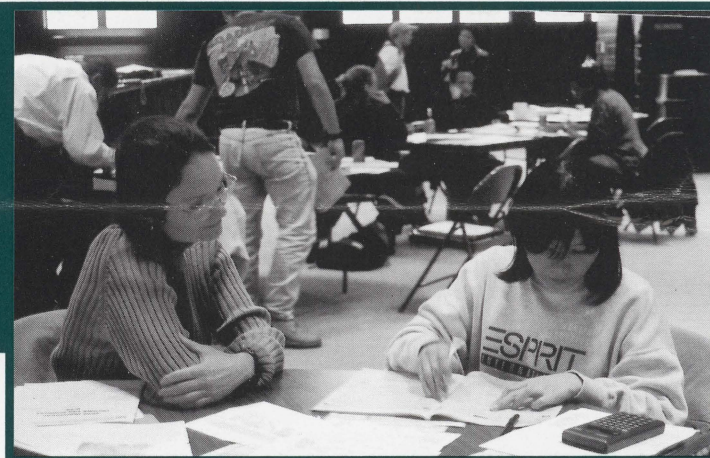
Construction crews remove debris from the lower level of the Student Union Building. The ball returns from the old bowling lanes in the downstairs recreation center are one of the few traces that remain of the former Student Union.

bookstore, post office, and Rathskellar.

The renovation work should begin this month. For the past month, Clark Construction has been busy with gutting the old Student Union and asbestos removal. According to Jack Dunn,

project supervisor for Construction Services, getting rid of asbestos from insulation in air ducts and floor tile and adhesive involves sealing off areas of the building, where the asbestos material is bagged and removed to an approved landfill. **G**

Graduate student Tamara Jo Beatty nervously waits for Keng Tan to finish her 2000 tax return. Tan, a senior majoring in business administration, was part of accounting professor Emilia Chukwuma's group of students who completed federal and state income tax forms free of charge on March 21 and 22. "My life status has changed, and I wasn't sure how to do my return. Watching Tan do it, I think I know how to do it now," said Beatty.



WHAT'S HAPPENING... AND WHEN

April:

6-Open House for Prospective Students, Admissions Office, Chapel Hall. Itinerary includes a class observation, campus tour, student panel, student/parent connections, and lunch with faculty and students, 8 a.m.- 4 p.m. For more information, contact Patty Shaffner, x5383.

6-Third Annual Multicultural Festival, 10 a.m.- 2 p.m. location TBA. Sponsored by the Office for Diversity and Community Relations and Multicultural Student Programs.

6-Signing Gospel, 6:30-9 p.m., Ely Auditorium, signed praise songs to celebrate the Easter Season. Sponsored by Multicultural Student Programs.

6-7-Developmental Mathematics Workshop, covers various topics in developmental mathematics including issues related to deafness, ESL students, math anxiety, and special needs, 9 a.m.- 4 p.m., GUKCC. For more information, contact Jack Mika, x5315.

6-7-Lysistrata, presented by Gallaudet's Theatre Arts Department, Elstad Auditorium, 8 p.m. E-mail joanne.rackham@gallaudet.edu, or call x5502 (TTY), x5500 (Voice).

7-Gallaudet Invitational Softball Tournament, TBA

7-Tennis vs. York College, 1 p.m.

8-Baseball vs. Lincoln University (2 games) 1 p.m. (Preceded by naming of Dummy Hoy Field)

9-Blood Drive sponsored by the American Red Cross at the Student Health Center, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., to sign up call x5090.

12-Baseball vs. Lincoln University (2 games), 1 p.m.

12-Softball vs. Shenandoah University (2 games), 3 p.m.

14-Tennis vs. Shenandoah University, 1 p.m.

16-Tennis vs. Hood College, 3 p.m.

17-Softball vs. Wilson (2 games), 3 p.m.

18-Softball vs. Villa Julie College (2 games), 3 p.m.

20-Open House for Prospective Students, Admissions Office, Chapel Hall. Itinerary includes a class observation, campus tour, student panel, student/parent connections, lunch with faculty and students, 8 a.m.-4 p.m. For more information, contact Patty Shaffner, x5383.

21-24-National Academic Bowl for five regional winners, GUKCC. For more information, call x5883.

Key positions filled on interim basis

Two key administrative positions at Gallaudet have been filled on an interim basis.

University Provost Jane Fernandes announced March 21 that Dr. Katherine Jankowski is serving as interim dean of the Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center. College of Liberal Arts, Sciences, and Technologies Dean Jane Dillehay on March 26 named Eileen Matthews as interim associate dean of Academic Programs and Student Support.

Dr. Fernandes expressed confidence in Jankowski, who has been director of the Demonstration Elementary and Secondary Schools since 1997, for her leadership during the time that Gallaudet conducts a national search for the dean's position. "Dr. Jankowski brings a wealth of educational administration and teaching experience to this position," said Fernandes. "During her work as director of KDES and MSSD, she has continued the implementation of theme-based, integrated team teaching; reshaped early childhood education programs; developed community building strategies; initiated

the standards and benchmarks project; and begun new programs in student life to further integrate its programming with literacy, transition and family involvement goals."

Dr. Dillehay stated that Matthews, an 18-year employee of the University, "has the breadth of experience to understand the academic and support needs of our students." Matthews comes to the position of interim dean from the Office of Planning, where she was faculty fellow. She is also a faculty member in the English Department. Matthews' accomplishments, Dillehay added, "include spearheading the development of two competency-based associate degree programs; leading the faculty initiative to establishing an undergraduate diversity requirement; improving the quality of the program review process while overseeing the review of more than 30 academic and student support programs; chairing the Academic Affairs committee which wrote the Affirmative Action Hiring Guidelines for AA; and guiding University strategic planning efforts." **G**