



Photo by Len Epstein

Welcome to our future home

It's like planning a wedding. At first, two years seems like a long time. It's now well under a year until we have the "studio warming" for our impressive new facility at St. Vincent's Hall in St. Joseph's Seminary.

In late August a lease agreement between the unit and the seminary was signed for the site, conveniently located on Seminary Drive in Plainsboro, behind the Forrestal Shopping Village, between Route 1 South and the Delaware and Raritan Canal. It is also accessible from Route 27 by Academy Street and Mapleton Road off Route 1.

Work has already begun to convert these former science labs to a 14

booth recording studio, educational outreach center and administrative office for the New Jersey Unit. There is also ample space for pre- and post-production activities, braille production and a volunteer lounge. With your support, these facilities will be in use in Spring 2003.

The unit has been blessed in finding this ideal new facility after a very short search. We are also fortunate that St. Joseph's has agreed to defer payment of rent because the unit will shoulder the cost of renovations. These costs, approximately \$509,000, include asbestos abatement, air conditioning, making the site compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act and

other renovations, the purchase of new recording booths, digital recording equipment and moving existing equipment.

The Board of Directors kick off the building fund campaign in October to raise the funds to cover the renovation and relocation costs. The funds will be raised by solicitations to individuals, corporations and foundations. There are many ways RFB&D NJ Unit supporters can contribute. Gifts can include cash, securities, or life insurance, and naming "in honor of" or "in memory of" opportunities are available. For further information contact: Sandi Wilson, (609) 688-0485.



Enter here! The entrance to St. Vincent's Hall, soon to be our new home.



Hard to miss! St. Joseph's Seminary in Plainsboro is easily accessed from Routes 1 and 27, College Road and Mapleton Road. This beautiful facility is set between the picturesque Delaware and Raritan Canal and Lake Carnegie and the Forrestal Shopping Village. It will be home to the New Jersey Unit's 14 recording booths, Educational Outreach Center and administrative offices.



Picture this! Stripped now, this former science lab will house eight of 14 booths.



Developing story! Director of Development Sandi Wilson welcomes us to her future office.



Reach out! Reach out and help turn this into our new Educational Outreach Center.

Rutgers study documents LTL™ success

A recent study by Drs. Barbara Turnbull and Stanley Vitello of Rutgers University confirms that RFB&D's *Learning Through Listening™* program is an effective accommodation that improves reading skills and academic achievement for students diagnosed with reading difficulties.

A project conducted with students using LTL™ in different settings found "that more frequent use of the audio books in either analog or digital format in guided and structured activities results in the greatest improvement in student reading skills and achieve-

ment. However, all the students who participated in RFB&D's *Learning Through Listening™* program appeared to have some degree of improvement as measured by the standardized reading assessments or classroom grades and assessments."

The study also looked at students with attendance problems. It states, "Teacher feedback indicated that students with poor attendance began to attend class much more regularly after they began using audio books," due to improved levels of reading confidence.

Thank you Harriet!

Many of the photos used in this *Recorder* were taken with a new Fuji FinePix 2800 digital camera donated to the Educational Outreach Center by **Harriet Teweles**.

They say a picture is worth a thousand words, and this camera will make it easier to communicate our work in the classroom and the studio to our members, volunteers and donors in print, on the web, and in displays and presentations in the studio, to government and education officials, and to civic groups and foundations interested in RFB&D.

Trenton and the NJ Unit...Perfect Together

When the New Jersey Unit asked its donors to raise \$10,000 for educational outreach in the Trenton school district during the 2001 Record-A-Thon, our donors exceeded that goal. So when Rachel Herring of Trenton's Martin Luther King Middle School needed a language arts library for middle school students who read below grade level, the unit was able to record a series of books from Perfection Learning Corporation for her class.

The school's psychologist and Learning Disabilities Teacher-Consultant Joy Toft approached Dr. Stuart Barudin, Director of Special Services for Trenton Public Schools, and he approved a plan to purchase the textbooks. Joy contacted unit outreach coordinator **Sherry**

Deutsch, who works with teachers in 12 of the district's schools, about their needs and soon West Windsor studio director Olivian Boon had volunteers recording the series.

In all, the unit recorded a dozen books



Cooperation between the New Jersey Unit and Trenton school officials brought recorded texts into this Martin Luther King Middle School class.

Photo by Len Epstein

for Martin Luther King including titles like: *Treasure Island*, *The Secret Room*, *United in Freedom*, *Tales of Washington Irving* and *Tales of Rudyard Kipling*.

This is just part of Trenton's growing commitment to the *Learning Through Listening™* program. RFB&D was introduced into three elementary school classes during the 2000-2001 school year. This year 12 elementary and middle schools will have access to recorded texts because of the enthusiasm of administrators like Dr. Barudin, Trenton Schools Superintendent Dr. James Lytle, Principal Marzene Bennett, Vice Principal Jermaine Blount of Martin Luther King Middle School, and the continued commitment of the unit's team of volunteers, donors and staff.



Eternity's End. Drs. Jerry Friedman and Peg Waldron celebrate the conclusion of recording *Internal Medicine* at the Princeton studio. Peg dubbed it Eternal Medicine since it required 110 tapes to record 437 hours of the epic.

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 Sandi Wilson, Director of Development
 Jeanette Eng, Development Assistant
Princeton Studio
 Amy Steinmetz, Studio Director
 Jessie Falcone, Assistant Studio Director
 Raya Kuzyk, Studio Assistant
West Windsor Studio
 Olivian Boon, Studio Director
 Gail Clauer, Assistant Studio Director
 Tony Gruenewald, Assistant Studio Director/
 Communications Coordinator
 Judy Wilson-Smith, Studio Assistant
 Helen Fortunato, Studio Assistant
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New Brunswick shares its *LTL*[™] journey



Photo by Ross Stout, Taylor Photo



The journey to academic success. A fifth grade class at New Brunswick's Roosevelt Elementary School chronicled their achievements using RFB&D's *Learning Through Listening*[™] program in a book the students created (l.). They shared their story at a New Brunswick Board of Education meeting and during a presentation at RFB&D's national headquarters. At right, Roosevelt students Bryan Ortiz, Mohamed Conteh, Amir Sierra, Ana Mendez and Luis Sanchez with New Jersey Unit Outreach Director Christine Ranaghan, Assemblyman Joseph Doria, RFB&D Marketing Vice President Peter Smith, New Brunswick Schools Superintendent Ronald Larkin and RFB&D President and CEO Richard O. Scribner. Doria, the Chair of the Assembly Education Committee said, "You can tell the children are interested, the children are excited, the children want to learn. That's what *Learning Through Listening*[™] is all about."

The record breaking 2002 Record-A-Thon



Special guests like Mark Van Ness and Ken Prehl from WPST's Wake-up Crew with Jeff Kaplan (l.) and the dedication of volunteers like the Saturday crew at Hibben Road helped the unit raise over \$24,000 and record 500 hours of text during Record-A-Thon 2002. WPST's parent company, Nassau Broadcasting, donated \$10,000 and Fleet Bank and Boston Properties were other major sponsors of the event.

Sandi Wilson joins staff

Sandi Wilson recently joined the New Jersey Unit staff as Director of Development. Ms. Wilson has over 14 years of experience in development in the fields of health and education, working with the Camden Area Health Education Center (AHEC) in Camden, HiTOPS, Inc. in Princeton and the Kidney Foundation of Maryland in Baltimore.

Sandi brings not only her professional expertise, but also her personal experience. Her son is dyslexic and was a member of RFB&D throughout his school years. Sandi knows first hand the challenges that face children with dyslexia and has seen how the program can lead to academic success. "It is my job to assist the organization in developing sound fundraising practices that will help to maintain the recording studios and outreach programs. As an organization, we have a vision that all the children in New Jersey with visual impairment and learning disabilities will benefit from this program and achieve their academic and professional potential."

Sandy Shapiro honored by RFB&D

Sandy Shapiro took time off from her duties on the unit's board, reading science texts at the West Windsor studio, and designing and maintaining the unit Web site to be recognized as the New Jersey Unit's Volunteer of the Year at a banquet dinner at RFB&D's national conference in Philadelphia.

Sandy has volunteered with the New Jersey Unit since 1992 and also serves on its development and facilities committees. When not devoting time to RFB&D, she volunteers for the League of Women Voters and works as a bookkeeper at the office of Dr. Daniel Shapiro.

She and Volunteers of the Year from 21 other units attended a luncheon with RFB&D CEO Richard O. Scribner and toured national headquarters. "I enjoyed meeting with vol-

unteers and studio directors from around the country as well as seeing the operations at Headquarters," said Shapiro. She was pleased to note, "The commitment of the volunteers is matched by the employees."



Volunteer of the Year Sandy Shapiro (left) with Educational Outreach Director Christine Ranaghan after being honored at RFB&D's national conference in Philadelphia.

AudioPlus™ Lifts Off Successfully

On September 3rd, RFB&D officially launched its digital age when it offered digital talking books to all of its members for the first time.

AudioPlus™ compact discs offer the student over 40 hours of recorded text per disc. RFB&D's Classic Cassettes™ hold four hours each. The discs offer greater navigational ability and can be played on a personal computer equipped with special software as well as portable players available through RFB&D.

Over 6,000 of RFB&D's most requested titles are currently available in digital format, with many more in the process of being recorded digitally or converted from analog tape. Classic Cassettes™ will still be available to members as long as there is demand.

The New Jersey Unit participated in a product placement testing that preceded the organizationwide launch.



Their faces say it all This fifth grade class from New Brunswick's Roosevelt School was part of a nationwide product placement program that proved the performance of AudioPlus™ in the classroom.

Students from New Brunswick's Roosevelt School were thrilled with the improved sound quality and navigational ability that digital offered. According to one fifth grade student at Roosevelt, "The machine is fun to work with and easy to use. It makes it fun to read and

I want to read more interesting books."

Our members seem to agree. In the first four weeks they were made available, 1,823 AudioPlus™ books were ordered.



Making a good thing even better Students using RFB&D's new AudioPlus™ discs are offered better sound quality and greater navigational ability than in the past.

www.rfbndnj.org

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