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Magazine

3 Stranger in a strange land

Foreign students have more trouble than most making friends. They're far from home and using a second language, but they try anyway. Story by Cindy Stevenson

4 Sounds of silence

Going to college is tough, but doing it without being able to hear seems infinitely harder. Story by Tanya Bricking

6 Anticipation

They're what many children dream of being when they grow up — firemen. And they aren't playing kids' games. Story by Ann Schlagenhauf

Jason Summers
Magazine editor

John Dunham
photo editor

Cover photo by Randy Greenwell/Herald. Fireman Bob Hall pauses for a moment while fighting a brush fire on Ewing Ford Road.

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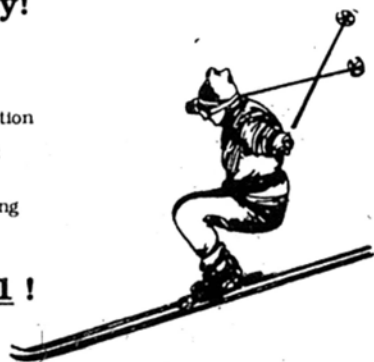
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Students in foreign lands can beat loneliness

By CINDY STEVENSON

Tamie Nishihara confessed that she couldn't stop crying when she realized she was trapped at Western.

"I was crying morning to night, 24 hours a day," the exchange student from Japan said. "Especially the first week. I was very sad because I was so homesick and I didn't try to understand people."

Even when she was talking with other international students during orientation, she was thinking, "I wanna cry. But I didn't want to cry in front of the others."

"Most students are nice to me," she said, but to make friends, the ability to speak fluent English and carry on conversations is essential.

"I didn't expect to have a good close American friend."

But after her first week here she met a girl who grew to be a terrific friend — although Nishihara said she thinks it's a "really rare case."

Close friendships between international students and Americans really are the exception here, said Ronald Eckard, interim international student adviser.

"The rule is they (international students) have difficulty meeting with and opening up with Americans," he said. "It's not all the Americans' fault. It's a combination of all those cultural things" — especially language.

Western has about 160 international students. The main value of having them here is that "they add cultural diversity to the campus," said John Petersen, vice president for academic affairs. "They bring to the campus people from other backgrounds so our mainstream students have a chance to be exposed and learn from students from other backgrounds."

"International students look for the same goals — friendship, understanding, communication," said Kristine Bernhard, a sophomore from Guatemala. "We're not only homesick, we're country sick."

"We can understand the English," she said, "but sometimes it's hard with Americans when they lock their ears" and don't try to understand us.

"It's easier to make friends with other internationals because they're all going through the same adjustment problems," Eckard said.

Joan Lindsey, international programs and projects administrative secretary, agreed.

"They're in the same boat in the sense that they come from another country," she said. "Lots of students say there's no way they can translate what they're thinking. I think it all gears to the language more than anything."

However, "there have been exceptions," Eckard said. "It depends on the individual."

Nishihara and Michelle Ward are one exception. They said they notice their differences but have enjoyed learning from them — at school and in Ward's Elizabethtown home most weekends.

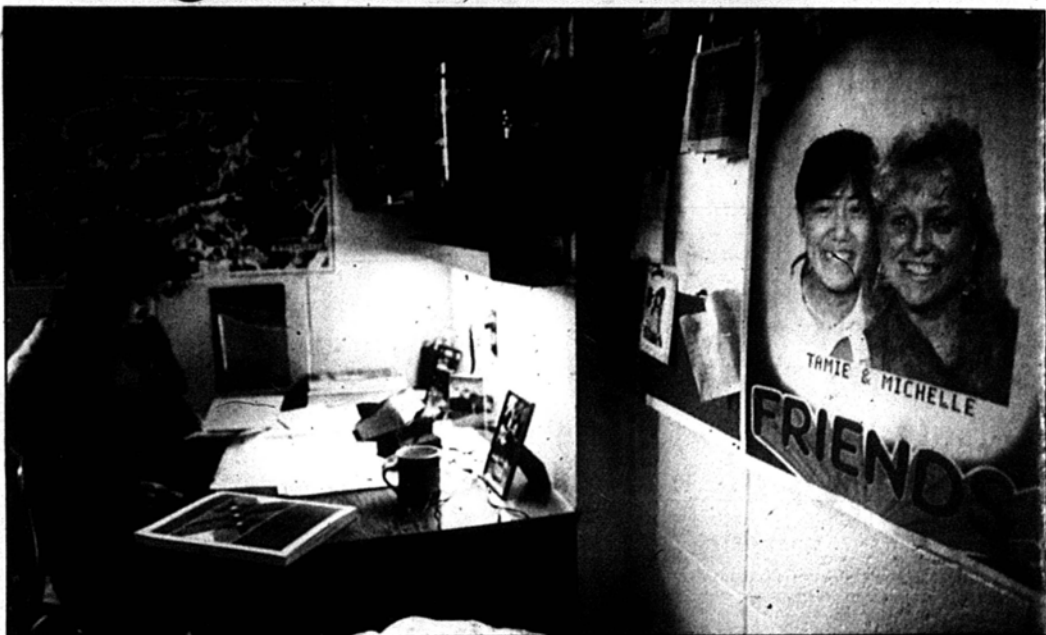
"I'm learning American culture — especially the English," Nishihara said, laughing. "She's always correcting my English."

Brushing her long blond hair aside and grinning with her friend, Ward said, "I learn so much about Japan. How they express their feelings within the family. And we talk about the boyfriend, girlfriend situation."

"I was so glad to get such a good friend." "Me and Michelle is really close friends," Nishihara said. "I always say everything to her and she always says everything to me."

Nishihara and her roommate Stephanie Guyer have had fun getting to know each other, too.

"I had to get used to her accent," the Henderson junior said. "Sometimes she might say a word with an accent different than we do. So I'd say, 'write it down.' Now



Mike Teegarden/Herald

Tamie, a junior English major, studies about four hours a day, but she studied more when she first came here, she said.

it's no problem hardly ever. We've stayed up many nights talking."

Guyer said she plans to travel to Japan this summer, to visit her friend and learn a new way of life.

Nishihara said she loves her new friends, but cultural differences still cause a rift.

"I think my Japanese friends are closer," she said. "I can speak more. I can express my feelings more. More than with American friends."

Other students agree that it's more difficult to express themselves with foreigners than with people from their own countries, especially because they're often speaking their second language.

"When I first came here, I'd never talked with Americans," said Aries Widiyatmoko, a senior from Indonesia, so he couldn't understand their slang. And when he spoke, he said he found it embarrassing when people didn't understand his pronunciation or he had to repeat things.

"Most thing is language," he said. "If we (Indonesians) talk our language, we are more understanding and we can joke."

But "American person will be hard to understand what I try to say. Sometimes what I say, it doesn't make sense with them. We are not going to get into the subject."

But when he speaks English with other international students — because he knows they're also speaking their second language — "we can talk any feeling."

Kurt Cannon, a Bowling Green senior who spent last year in Japan as part of an exchange program, also had difficulty adapting to people who couldn't understand him. The Japanese usually spoke to him in English, he said, even though most of them had only a limited command of the language.

"It was frustrating to want to try to say something to them, but for me not to have the words to say it," he said. "I could ask superficial questions to people. But if I

wanted to ask how they felt about something, I couldn't. I never did make any really close friends."

Clark Agathen, an Elizabethtown senior who spent last year in France, said even though he spoke French it was easier for him to spend time with other foreigners, but he tried to resist that temptation.

"Your natural tendency is to stay with people who are like you," he said. "You can say anything you want to. You have the same cultural background. It's just the easiest thing."

Although she knows many international students stick together, Nishihara — intent on getting along — found ways to reach out and touch American students' hearts.

"I always try to be interested in everything. Even if I'm only interested a little bit, I say, 'That's neat!'" she said, her wide eyes filled with enthusiasm. "And I try to be friendly and adjust to customs and cultures."

"I should not follow the Japanese way here," she said. "I try to follow the American way."

That's how to make friends with people in foreign lands, said Bob Wurster, an English professor who has spent much of his time traveling.

"It all depends on how outgoing a person is," he said. "I've had no trouble meeting people when I've traveled."

He admitted that sometimes "it's difficult to talk about concepts and abstracts." But he said people anywhere will be interested in getting to know you if you "show interest in what they're doing."

Nishihara has learned that well. She is so involved with her many American friends, "I usually don't participate in programs for international students," she said. "Even if I have time, I don't. I came here to learn American culture."

Of course, for many it's not that easy. And when problems arise, the Rock House — where students from around the globe, including some Americans, congregate — and the International Student Organization provide support.

The Rock House offers "a safe, accepting environment," Eckard said. "They know they can be themselves here."

If they mispronounce a word or say something wrong, they won't be laughed at, he said. "We empathize. They know this whole building is really theirs."



Mike Teegarden/Herald

Tamie writes home at least once a week, and she's gotten 98 letters.

"A lot of them get homesick. We call them once in a while and invite them places," said Masoud Rahnamani, a senior from Iran and ISO president. "Especially when you first come to this country it's hard to get adjusted."

Nishihara hasn't escaped those difficulties. Although she's adapted well to her American lifestyle and said she feels content most of the time, occasionally, homesickness still attacks — especially when she sits in her room at night.

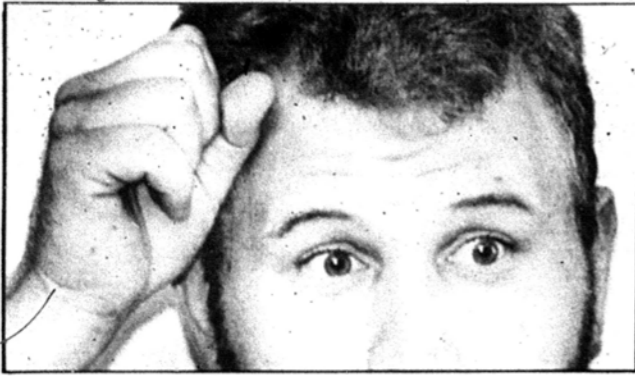
"If I start thinking about my family, I'm going to feel homesick, I'm sure," she said. "I try not to think about that."

Agathen said when he was in France, sometimes he felt the same way.

"You can feel the loneliest you've ever felt," he said.

But though she feels lonely sometimes, Nishihara said she doesn't want to leave yet. She wants to learn and make friends. And she thinks that's always possible — no matter how different people are.

"If the people really have patience and really try to understand, we can be close friends."



Kemp depends on other senses for sound — especially his hands.

A common sense

How a deaf student handles classes and life on the Hill

By TANYA BRICKING

James Kemp said he came to Western as an experiment.

He wanted to know what it was like to take classes at a university that was not specialized for the deaf.

At 25, Kemp, a junior from New Albany, Ind., said he was ready for a new challenge after enrolling in classes at Western this fall.

He became almost totally deaf from unknown causes when he was 2½ years old and grew up in a hearing family that knew little sign language.

Most of his communication with them was spoken, and he learned to read lips. But he said he doesn't read lips as well as his wife who is deaf. She learned to read lips from her toothless grandfather. "He was like a puppet," she said.

Kemp and his wife met when he was visiting friends in Louisville in 1984. They got married in August 1985.

"She's always behind me through good and bad times," he said. "She's there when I need to talk to someone." They talk in sign language.

Patricia Matheny Kemp, a graduate of the Kentucky School for the Deaf in Danville, also grew up trying to communicate with her family through speech. She became deaf when she was 18 months old.

She takes cake decorating classes at New Albany (Ind.) Vocational School and said she hopes someday to have a business selling cakes. But now she stays at home to take care of their daughter, Christina, who will be 3 next month.

Christina can hear perfectly, she speaks and she can communicate through sign language.

Kemp said Christina has little trouble adjusting to the hearing world, except sometimes with her speech. "She has trouble with letter 's' words."

"Christina can sing, but not so great," he said jokingly, "and she's trying to whistle."

Even though Kemp uses a hearing aid, it just helps him "pick up sounds — but not words."

He said he teaches Christina "just like anybody teaches their daughter or son, only that I use both oral and sign language to communicate."

Kemp and his daughter share not just blond hair but a fear of the dark.

"Being in the dark and not being able to hear anything in the dark is pretty scary," Kemp said.

"When something's wrong I make a noise, and they come," Christina said.

That's because the Kemps have a baby signal alarm for Christina, which lets them know if she is crying or making noise. The alarm can be hooked up to a lamp or a vibrator connected to the bed, which wakes Kemp.

Kemp said he is sensitive to light, and his alarm clock is connected to a lamp, too.

They also have a fire alarm which works like a strobe light, "but I have a good sense of smell for smoke," he said.

"Everyday living works just like any kind of people," Kemp added. He and his wife cook and "just watch the time" and do the normal things families do.

Last Friday they put up their Christmas tree, like anyone else. Christina played with the ornaments and rolled wrapping paper across the floor and walked on it while her parents tried to decorate.

And just like any other family, Kemp said they often watch television. But they don't try to read lips. Instead they have a closed-caption-for-the-hearing-impaired device, which flashes words on the screen for some programs.

Major networks, prime time news and educational programs provide this service, he said, but the dialogue is condensed.

"When we were little there was no closed caption," he said. "We're making up for what we missed."

They don't have a telephone in their apartment — so the mail, notes and advance notice for visits serve as solutions.

Kemp said he and his wife drive, and they sometimes have problems because they can't hear sirens, horns or noises from their car.

But so far they haven't had much trouble getting around.

Kemp attended the National Technical Institute for the Deaf in Rochester, N.Y., where he was on the dean's list and was student congress academic director, which is equivalent to Western's Associated Student Government president.

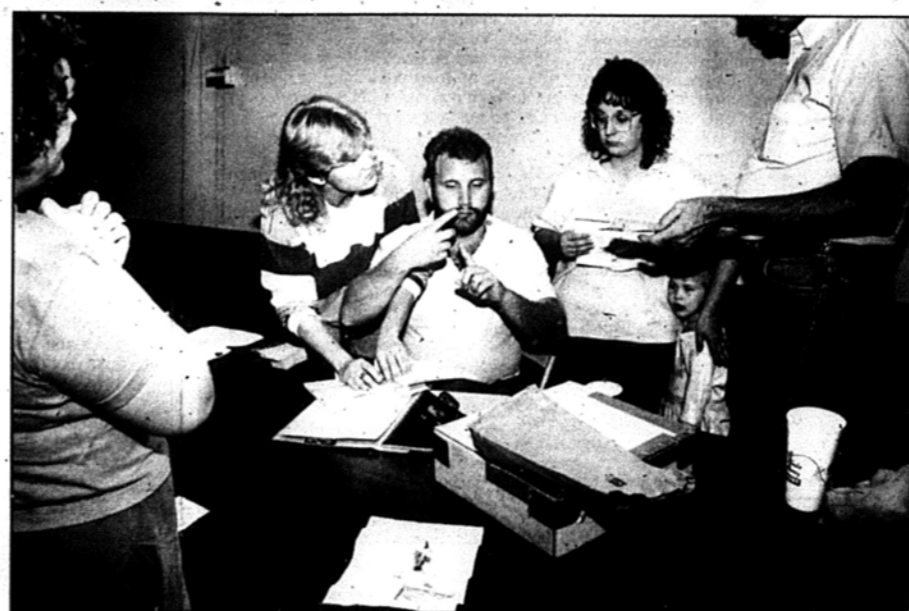
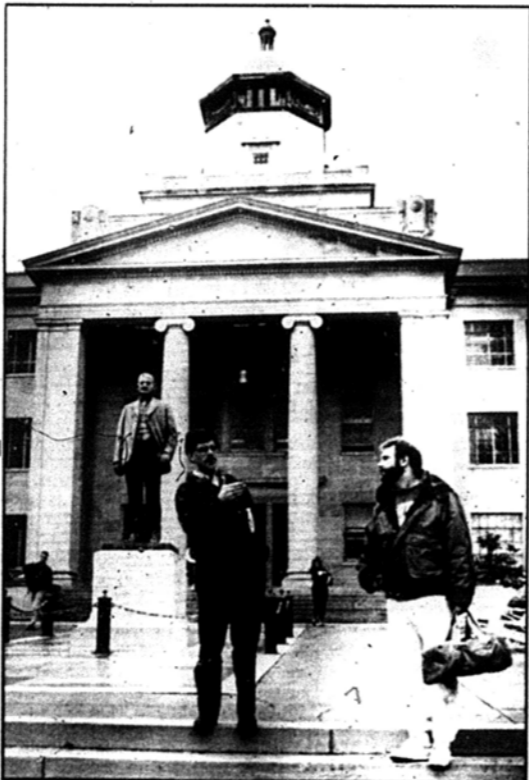
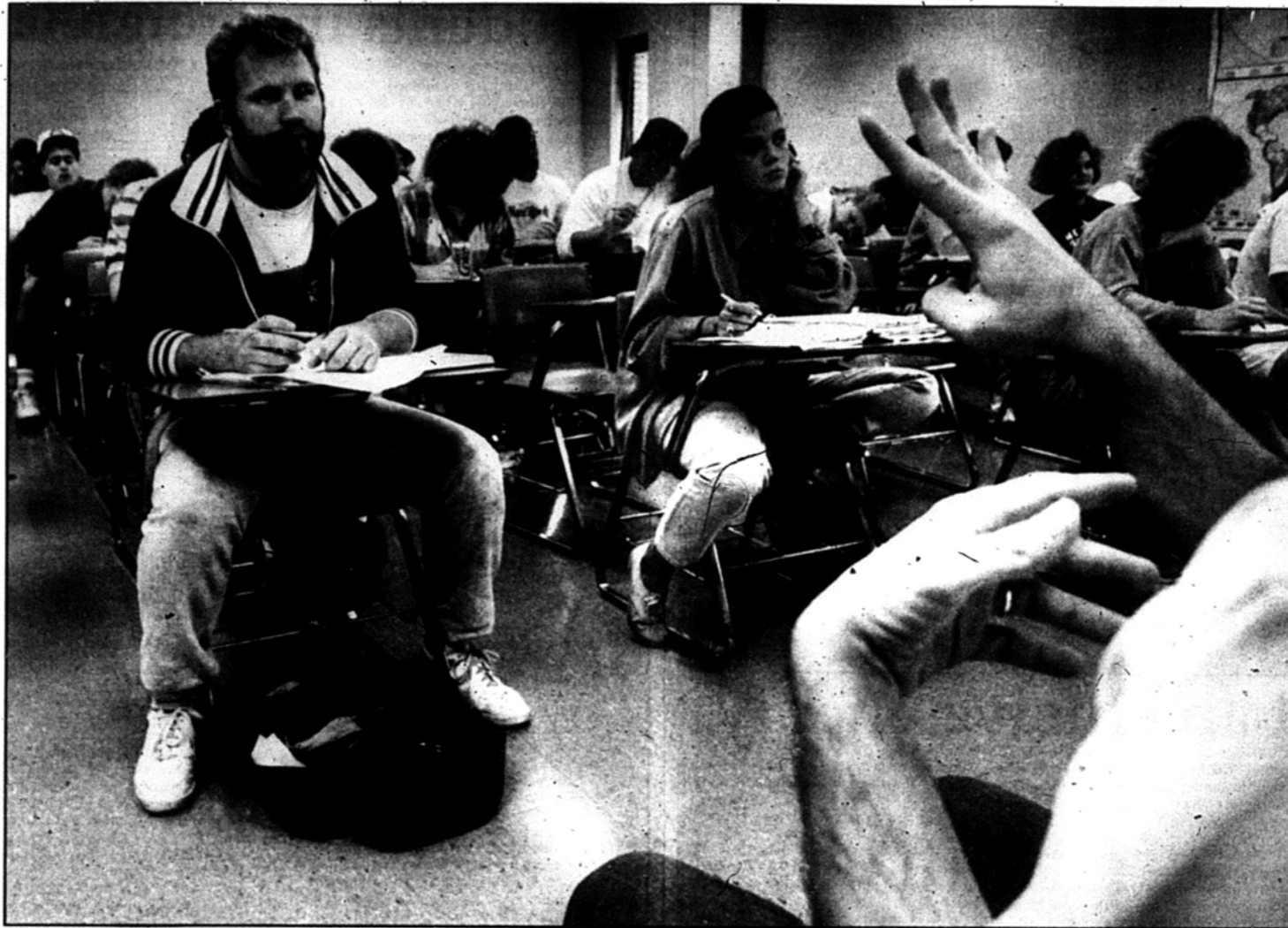
Four or five of his academic director awards still hang on his bedroom wall.

He has expanded his leadership abilities, which began when he was president of Student Council and Junior Achievement at the Indiana School for the Deaf in Indianapolis, a residential high school. Now he's president of the Barren River Deaf Club, a non-profit organization, where he goes to "catch up with deaf culture."

"Deaf people want to have a social life," he said, so they meet about twice a month to talk and plan parties.

His wife, who is social director of the club, helped organize the Halloween, Thanksgiving and upcoming Christmas parties.

"I try to spend my time with my wife and my daughter as much as I can," Kemp said. "Other than that, I study, do some work with deaf club, and prepare for another year."



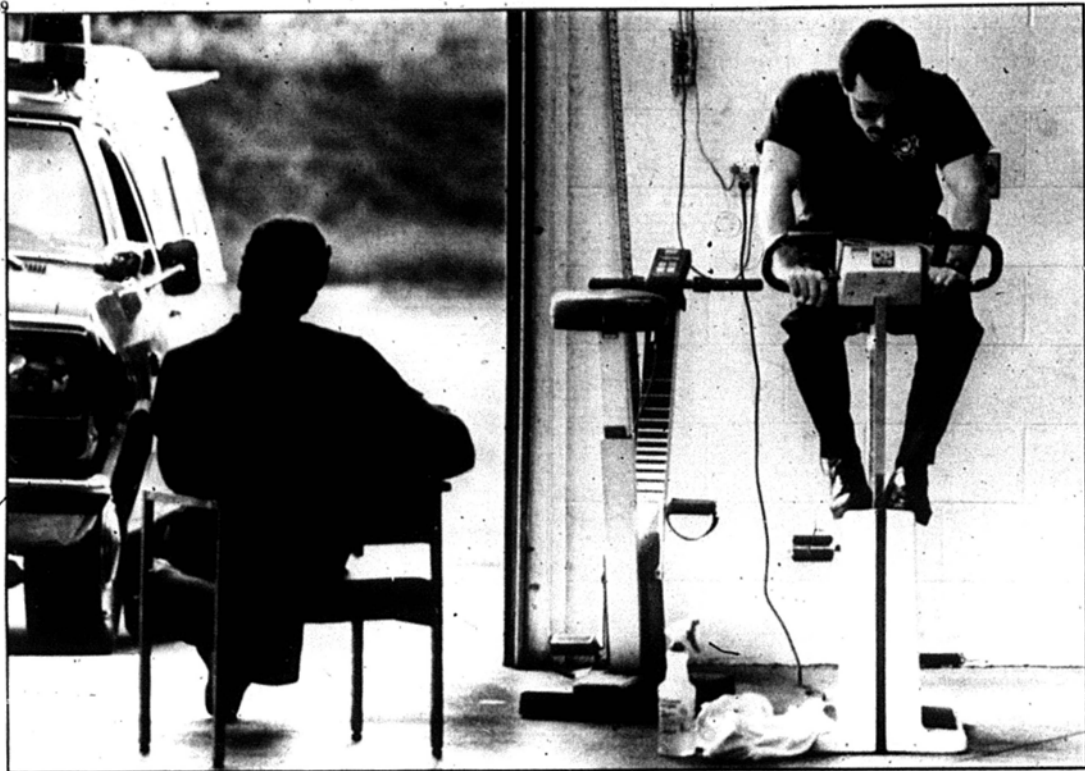
(Left) On their way home from their 11:45 class, Stan Brown and James Kemp sign outside Cherry Hall. (Above) Barren River Deaf Club members wait around as Treasurer Beth Driver of Bowling Green, Kemp and his wife work out a fee payment problem.

(Left) During Kemp's geography class in the Science and Technology building, Brown interprets assistant professor John Bingham's lecture. Kemp keeps his eyes on Brown's hands while hearing students take notes. Kemp takes one-word notes and has notetakers in his classes. (Below) Just after putting up the Christmas tree in their Bowling Green apartment, Kemp gets a bear hug and a kiss from his daughter Christina.



James rests his head in his hands in a tired laugh during a sign language night class. Patricia smiles as Stan Brown, the instructor, makes a joke during a lecture at the Bowling Green State Technical Vocational School. The Kemps were there to help test Brown's hearing students on their signing ability.

Firemen David Stiffey (left) and Mike Brown sometimes read and exercise to pass time during their 24-hour shift. The men work until about 4 p.m. each day training and doing jobs in the fire station unless they are putting out a fire.



Randy Greenwell/Herald

Firemen wait to fight an elusive enemy

By ANN SCHLAGENHAUF

It's clear, low and unexpected. The signal is barely noticeable, but for the men who spend their work days waiting for it, the tone that signaled them to drop everything and head for the fire trucks came through, loud and clear.

There is no running. Everyone goes down the tiny hallway in quick, often-rehearsed movements. The men step into their boots and yellow fire-resistant pants, ready for the two-tone signal and address that would send them out into the crisp Friday night.

The tone doesn't come, but the address does; signaling that this run would go to one of the city's three fire substations located at West 11th Street, Industrial Drive and one near the airport. "Pumper three," one man says, seconds before the truck number was announced.

None express surprise or disappointment as they climb out of their gear and off the vehicles. After all, it happens almost every work day. Only a few moments had passed on "20/20," much less than it had seemed, while waiting for the address. Everyone goes back to what they were doing before — waiting.

For the 78 men of the Bowling Green Fire Department, most of their job is waiting. The men eat and sleep at the station, with three shifts, A, B and C, rotating 24 hours on, 48 hours off. Their days and nights at work are spent waiting for a tone that may not come and training for fires that only come occasionally. But their days are still full, starting when the shift arrives en masse at 7 a.m.

Mornings are spent checking the equipment and cleaning up the station, said Capt. Bob Sanborn. Trucks get a rigorous going-over every Monday.

Each week jobs are assigned, including cleaning the bathrooms and the recreation areas, cooking and doing the dishes.

Each 26-man shift (there are no women firefighters) also has larger assignments of upkeep on the building that is their home one out of every three days.

When applying for a job in the fire

department, applicants must pass written and physical tests that are "fairly rough," according to fire inspector Richard Storey.

Newly-hired firemen receive training based on their former experience, Storey said. But firemen are usually put immediately on a truck, and taught the basics on the job.

Pay for a fireman starts around \$17,000, and after 400 hours of training they receive a \$2,500 raise from the state to ensure departments keep a high standard of training, Storey said.

"Do you want to put on some fire clothes?"

Sgt. Walter Jordan, driver of pumper four for B shift, picks up 5-year-old Lisa Taylor and puts her in the gigantic firefighter's boots and zips up the fire-resistant pants. The clothes envelope her as her 7-year-old sister Jennifer giggles. "You look silly, Lisa," she says.

Another child warns Jordan, "Don't forget your jacket."

"Oh, we won't," said Jordan. "It stays on the fire truck. It stays on the fire truck all the time."

"Even the helmet?"

"Yeah."

Jordan and the rest of B shift were conducting the yearly open house, held on a Sunday afternoon in October during fire prevention week. But even with guests, signs warn visitors to move to grassy areas if the alarm sounds.

The open house is as much a part of their job as fighting fires, Jordan said.

"It gives kids a chance to get to know the fire engine so they aren't afraid of it if they ever get into a situation" where the fire trucks are around, he said.

Most run-ins with firemen come at bad times, with property loss and family or friends injured or killed, Jordan said. During open house, "they get to see a different side of us."

The department will do more for Bowling Green residents than just put out fires, Capt. Gerry Brown said. "Almost anything someone gets themselves into, we'll go out for them."

A 911 call can be for getting "a ring off a finger to getting kids out of a bathroom to people lost in caves," Sanborn said. "It gets pretty-interesting."

"We're a little bit misunderstood," Brown said.

Firefighters and officers expressed concern for their image, saying the public doesn't realize the training and stress involved in being a fireman.

"It's hard to talk to the public about a job that every time we roll out someone's hurt or there's property damage," Sanborn said.

"Some people have an idea of what we do, and some don't," Brown said. "They don't realize we're out here training, preparing for different types of emergencies — that when the alarm goes off, we're putting our lives on the line for someone else."

"Most people think we just sleep and play cards."

Shifts are allowed to relax after 4 p.m. and on weekends. Then the routine is "a little more laid back," Sanborn said. "But we're always available."

During off-time the men will watch television and play games or sports. Some go out on the front lawn facing Fairview Avenue and play basketball.

But basketball games, meals, training and sleep can all be interrupted by a simple low tone that's only remarkable by the reactions of the men who hear it.

Some can't take the stress of waiting for the alarm, some firemen said. It can even be rough on the hardened.

"In essence, we're waiting for somebody's world to go to pieces," Brown said.

The alarm puts a lot of stress on the firemen, Capt. Billy Smith said. "Talk about getting your adrenaline going, and your heart," he said. "When I get off tomorrow, I'll be exhausted."

Much of the stress comes from the unpredictability of the job. Some days there are no runs at all, and "at times it all comes in one load. It just works you to death," Assistant Chief Bob Hampton said.

The stress on the body is almost as bad. Firemen are required to retire at age 57.

Firemen even wish the fire would come, knowing it will come sometime, Sanborn said.

"If it's going to happen, I hope it happens when I'm going to be here."

Sgt. David Stihl agreed. "Sometimes you get ticked off. It's like, 'God, I hate to hope for a fire, but this place is closing in on me.'"

Some of the firemen, like Stiffey, were volunteer firefighters before joining the force. And all said one reason they took this job was to help others.

Brown said he loved helping others and "the sense of doing something no one else can do. It's a real high when you've put out a fire or made a good rescue."

"You whipped it. It's that simple."

The victims were two light bulbs, hidden behind a garbage can lid.

The men of pumper four and the rescue truck were practicing search and rescue in a smoke-filled building at the training site one sharp, sunny September afternoon.

"Kids hide in the strangest places," Brown explained. "You might find them under the bed, in the bathroom or in a closet."

Two men had suited up, compressed air tanks and all, and headed into the smoking cement building to search for the bulbs.

The shifts typically spend two or three hours each working day in training, which includes lectures, films and working at the training site.

After a long wait for the firefighters to come out, Brown sent in two relatively new firefighters, David Stiffey and another, to lead the first two out and search for the bulbs.

The more experienced firemen came into the sunlight, claiming the "victims" weren't in there.

"If two rookies go in and find them, you'll never hear the end of it," Brown warned.

Seconds later, Stiffey came out, the bulbs hidden in the large gloves that protect his hands.



Randy Greenwell/Herald

(Left to right) Mike Brown, James Pendleton, Jeff Essig and David Stiffey show how they remove the top from a car during Fire Prevention Week in October.

Firemen

Continued from Page 6B

"You'll never convince me they were in there," one of the first pair of firefighters said. "They didn't cough or cry or anything."

A warm scarlet glow radiated from inside the tiny, ramshackle house located at 950 Barren River Road, looking inviting in the icy rain of a cold October night.

Firefighters illuminated by television cameras and the popping flashes of cameras sprayed the welcoming glow with silver-white water as thick, pearl-gray smoke filled the yard and road.

No one could see more than a few feet away as smoke shifted in the blustery wind.

But firefighters were easy to find, thanks to the bell on their air tanks which rings when they are almost out of air. Men knelt on the gravel road so co-workers could adjust their tanks.

The men circled the house, taking axes and water to the smoking wood. The fire was under control, but not out. It crept into the rafters, licking cheerfully away at the flammable wood house.

Walking up the gravel road to a fork, a police car sat blocking the street to keep cars from entering the scud of smoke.

Hat pulled down over his ears to protect him from the icy rain, the policeman waved annoyed, drivers to a detour. The policeman, spotting someone coming from the fire, asked with resignation in his voice if the fire was out yet.

But the fire trucks stay on a scene until

the firefighters had checked for "hot spots" — areas that might flare up again — cleaned up the area and salvaged as much as possible, Watson said.

The home, belonging to Fred Bryson, received \$20,000 worth of damage. Storey said a faulty extension cord probably caused the blaze.

Although a "surround and drown" fire such as this one isn't bad, Sanborn said, "the spooky ones are when they're going in" to the fire.

"Usually they're the ones when the guys get hurt," Sanborn said, pausing. "Other than that it's a great job."

The hazards are getting worse. The Bowling Green Fire Department plans to set up a hazardous materials response team, which would respond to hazardous material problems in a larger area. And the chemicals used in furnishings now have increased the toxins and heat buildup at fires.

Tony Russell, who has been a fireman for eight months, said he's never gotten away from the fear.

"There's not a time that I can honestly say that I'm not scared," he said.

"If you weren't," Smith said, "you'd be crazy."

But the men can't panic, Stihl said. "Mr. Panic will get you killed in a minute if you listen to him."

But the men are chosen and trained to be able to handle the job—stress, fear and all, Sanborn said.

"We got a lot of motivated professionals," Sanborn said. "If they call 911, we'll try to put out the best."

"The motto around here is you don't have to eat it but you've got to pay for it."

Cook-for-the-week Stihl repeats the standard for fire station meals as he stirs a cauldron of spaghetti sauce.

Cooks are excused from other duties, and the other men are always willing to help out in the kitchen, Stihl said. After all, they have

to eat it.

And if the cook has to go out on a run, whoever is left in the station will take over. "They've got an investment in it," Stihl said, waving toward the pot of sauce.

As the night comes on, the kitchen gets to be a place for group discussions. As other men carrying their boots go off to bed, some stay, snacking, drinking coffee and talking.

Finally yawning, the last few head off to bed, hoping for some sleep before a call comes.

But even asleep, the men usually wake to the clearing tone, and can be to the trucks by the time the alarm sounds, Sanborn said.

That night was quiet, with the only noises the hum of the inner workings of the station and the rattle of the soda machine.

In the morning men wandered into the kitchen one by one, searching for cups of coffee and something to eat as they waited for their shift to end at 7 a.m.

The incoming shift must be on time, Stihl said, and the men must stay until their replacement arrives. "They can have a fire at 6:59 just as easy as 7:01."

If there's a big fire, the shift can go to the scene to help the shift they're replacing, Sanborn said. Or if not, "we just say, well, it's yours, and it starts all over again."

The men stretch out on couches, watching the television flicker.

The noise blends in with the steady hum of the station. But the men were up and out of the room before an observer even realized it was the clearing tone.

The men hurried to the trucks and waited impatiently for the tone. Once again, only the address comes over the public announcement/address system, giving the run to another station.

The men take off the bright yellow pants and boots and troop back to the television. Everyone seems to feel the letdown of the adrenaline rush.

Half-disappointed, half-relieved, one said, "all dressed up and nowhere to go."



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day.
At one Deaf Club meeting, Kemp had to turn the lights off and on to get the attention of about 15 members who were in small groups chattering in sign language.

Meanwhile, Christina ran around the meeting room yelling and laughing, but no one noticed her.

She managed to get someone's attention by walking up to him and tugging on his leg.

Then, while her father wasn't looking, she went up and took his chalk off of the table, pulled a chair next to the blackboard and began drawing.

After Kemp noticed his daughter and made her believe, he continued with the meeting.

While Kemp doesn't need any help getting along in the deaf community, he must depend on others at Western.

Kemp brings a guest to most of his classes, but his professors don't mind.

The guest is Stan Brown, an interpreter. He and Kemp met through the Vocational Rehabilitation program. Kemp said Brown gets paid by the Kentucky Commission for the Hearing Impaired and Deaf, which also pays for tutors and notetakers.

Kemp said Brown helps him understand what professors say in class.

A few weeks ago in Ronald Veenker's

Old Testament class, Brown sat in a wooden chair in front of the classroom opposite Kemp's desk. That's where he sits to interpret for Kemp every time the class meets.

Pulling down a map during his lecture, Veenker said jokingly that he hoped he wouldn't get his tie stuck in it.

He caught Brown's sign language of his joke when Brown tugged an imaginary tie around his neck. Veenker paused, and everyone in class laughed — including Kemp and Brown.

Veenker, a philosophy and religion professor, said he doesn't change his class format because of Kemp, but "I sometimes spell words on the board that I wouldn't normally spell." And sometimes he stops to ask Brown how he interprets unusual words.

Brown, of Russellville, didn't know much about sign language until 1980.

"It really just started as an interest," he said. "There for a while I didn't use it very much, but (I've) kept up with it since 1982."

Brown, a 1981 Western graduate with a degree in special education, said he gets personal satisfaction through his work with Kemp.

He said he has the feeling he's doing something that he's wanted to do for a long time — something he's "called to do" — and it's exciting for him.

"I've taught for five years in public schools in Kentucky and spent one year at an industrial school and two years in graduate school in the seminary," Brown said.

He resigned his teaching position at Stevenson Elementary School in Russellville last year, and he doesn't know how long he'll continue interpreting.

Brown said he's learned a lot in the classes he goes to, "but financially it's difficult to do this full time," he said.

Sometimes during class Kemp signs back to Brown. Unlike hearing students, they are able to have silent conversations.

Kemp said in his academic life he depends on Brown because otherwise he'd be lost.

Kemp also said he feels somewhat isolated at Western because he's a transfer student and doesn't really have any friends here.

"All I got was a 'hello' there and here and 'how are you?' here and there," he said. "I only have maybe one (friend) which is in religious studies. She's great and tries to keep me busy."

Kemp said he would describe himself as "an open-minded guy who likes to keep things in perspective on all sides. I try to understand what I am here for."

He said he likes to help people, and "I'm happy to be what I am now."

His goal is to complete a bachelor's

degree in computer science and get a job. He has a student loan, and his education is sponsored through Vocational Rehabilitation.

Kemp wants people to know that "deaf (people) are not dumb."

"People think this way," he said. "That's wrong. You don't tell someone who speaks a different language they're dumb."

Kemp said he needs to know what it's like to go to a hearing school.

"It's harder," he said, and he thinks he's probably making C's instead of his former A's — but he's broadening his education more than he could at a school for the deaf.

"Very few people understand deafness at this school," he said. "That's one of the things he said he'd like to change by getting programs for the hearing impaired started such as getting people to interpret, take notes and tutor."

To understand what it's like to be deaf, Kemp said, a hearing person should put cotton in his or her ears, turn the TV down low and try to understand what's going on.

He said after taking the cotton out after about eight hours, the hearing person will say, "Great! I can hear."

"For me," he said, "I will never hear again."

Despite his disability, Kemp said his life is not much different from hearing people's.

"I'm just as normal as anybody else."



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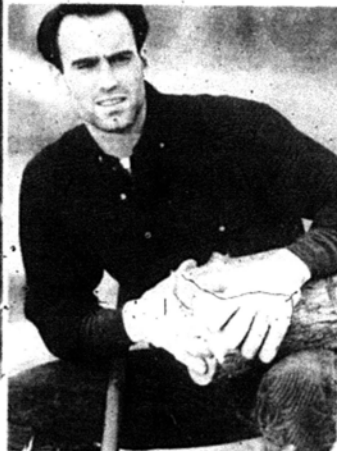
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