# The Observer

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THE OBERLIN COLLEGE FACULTY AND STAFF NEWSPAPER


## $350,000 Mellon Grant Will Enable Faculty to Expand Use of Technology in Teaching

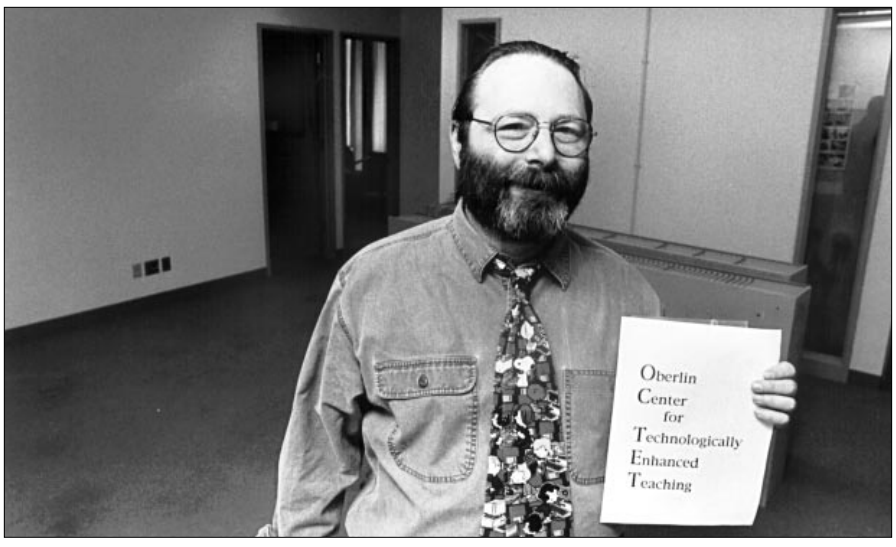
### Gary Kornblith to Head New Center; Program to Focus First on Expository Writing and Quantitative Proficiency

Beginning next school year Oberlin College will take a major step to help faculty increase their use of technology in teaching—and do so in a way that will be comfortable for faculty and students. Thanks to a $350,000 grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, over the summer the suite of offices in King 141 will become the operating base of the Oberlin Center for Technologically Enhanced Teaching (OCTET).

Directed by Gary Kornblith, associate professor of history, the center will help spread the use of teaching technology more evenly across the curriculum, evaluate the effectiveness of the technology, and establish models of its use. A major goal will be to stimulate faculty members' and students' expertise, confidence, and willingness to employ computer technology. The first focus of the center will be to help faculty use educational technology to strengthen teaching in expository writing and quantitative proficiency.

"Incorporating technology to teach expository writing and quantitative methods should have broad impact," says Kornblith, "because demonstrated proficiency in these areas is one of the few curricular requirements placed on all students and an endeavor in which a large number of faculty across the curriculum are involved."

OCTET's first undertaking will be a workshop for incoming students without computer experience. Next will be a comprehensive assessment of current uses of technology in each department; departments' curricular and technology goals, needs, and priorities; and the level of technological proficiency, experience, and interest of each faculty member. Also on the docket are "a lot of public presentations" about educational technology, says Kornblith, along with brown-bag demonstration-and-discussion lunches, and a World Wide Web home page with examples of innovative electronically enhanced pedagogy used in a wide variety of disciplines at Oberlin and other institutions.




PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN SEYFRIED

**Give Gary Kornblith a few months, and this empty room, future headquarters of OCTET, will be transformed into a safe space for faculty to experiment with educational technology.**

### Staffing and Activities

Kornblith will have a two-thirds-time appointment as director of OCTET. He will continue to teach one-third time (one or two courses a year), thereby maintaining a tie with the faculty as a fellow practitioner of technology in the classroom. Overseen by the Office of the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, the center will be part of a broader initiative to encourage excellence and innovation in teaching. The General Faculty Educational Technology Committee will supervise the work of the center and its director.

"Technology clearly has the potential to assist greatly with innovative pedagogy," says Clayton Koppes, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. "This Mellon grant, for which we are deeply grateful, will be a decided boost in the collegewide efforts by Oberlin faculty to introduce the newest pedagogical techniques, where appropriate, for our students.

"I'm delighted that Gary agreed to take on this challenge. He ranks high on the charts of what's known in the computer business as 'early adopters.' And his exemplary service last year as acting director of the Houck Computing Center gives him unrivaled experience in both the teaching and technical camps."

OCTET will help faculty in the con-

*Continued on page 3*

**Emerson**

**Dredge**

**Kostova**

**Kimmage**

## 3 More Students Receive Fellowships; Recent Graduate Accepts a Mellon

Joining this year's earlier two Watson Fellowship winners (see *Observer*s of April 25 and 11), three more Oberlin seniors have received important fellowships, and an alumnus has been named a fellow in the Mellon Fellowships in Humanistic Studies program.

Neuroscience major Mark Emerson will be attending Harvard University in the fall on a fellowship from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI). The fellowship pays for three years of support and may continue for two more years. Interested in the molecular basis of behavior and development, Emerson, who is from Bala Cynwyd, Pennsylvania, will study for a Ph.D. degree in the neuroscience department of Harvard's medical school. Emerson rejected a National Science Foundation fellowship in favor of the more selective HHMI honor, which covers more years and offers more financial support. The annual HHMI Fellowship stipend for 1997-1998 will be $15,000. The award also includes a $15,000 cost-of-education allowance.

English major Margaret Dredge, from Arlington, Massachusetts, will undertake a year-long training program in orchestra management with the American Symphony Orchestra

*Continued on page 3*

## Are We Wired or What: Oberlin Makes List of Top 100

Almost simultaneously with the news of receiving a $350,000 Mellon grant to beef up faculty and student use of teaching technology (see story on this page), comes this: Oberlin College is already ranked with the top 100 colleges and universities in the nation for how well it uses the Internet.

Oberlin's specific rank is 41, according to a survey conducted by *Yahoo! Internet Life* magazine, a publication of the Ziff-Davis Publishing Division and Yahoo! Inc. The magazine looked at how many courses an institution teaches using the Internet for online homework, research, and course home pages; the number of computers available to students and sufficiency of technical infrastructure; the number of nonacademic services such as chat rooms, newsgroups, and space for student home pages provided by the institutions; and availability of online student resources.

The top three schools were the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Northwestern University, and Emerson College. Harvard University came in at 64, and Stanford University at 84.

No sooner were the rankings announced than the survey came under fire

*Continued on page 3*

The final long-range-planning report received the attention of the College's administrative assistants Wednesday, when President Nancy Dye addressed the group. Other groups with whom Dye has spoken on the topic are the General Faculty (April 15), Administrative and Professional Staff (April 30), JFO Society (May 3), and students (May 6). She will discuss the report with Conservatory and College faculties May 13, service workers and security officers May 16, the General Faculty May 20, trustees June 12-14, and the Alumni Council Executive Board June 20-22. The General Faculty held a special meeting Tuesday, May 6, to discuss the topic; see "Faculty Meeting" inside.

# *Faculty and Staff Notes*

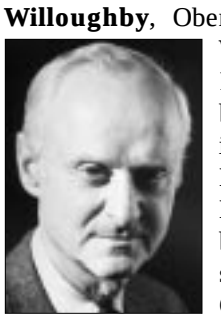
An article co-authored by **Warren Darcy** '68, professor of music theory, and former conservatory faculty member **James Hepokoski** (now at the University of Minnesota), "The Medial Caesura and Its Role in the Eighteenth-Century Sonata Exposition," has been accepted for publication in *Music Theory Spectrum* and will appear in the Fall 1997 issue. Warren says he and James "are developing a genre-based sonata theory, according to which moment-to-moment compositional choices in sonata-form works are understood as elements of an ongoing dialogue with reasonably ascertainable, flexible generic norms." • The publisher Bolchazy-Carducci has released *Plato's Apology, a Grammatical Commentary*, a revised edition of Professor of Classics **James Helm**'s 1981 work.

A commentary on the Greek text of one of Plato's best known works, the new edition adds a Greek–English dictionary, a list of vocabulary by frequency of occurrence, and diagrams of the longer and more complicated sentences. Jim changed the format to provide Greek text and the relevant commentary on facing pages. "The first edition went through a number of printings," he says, "and it has been in use on three continents. Initial response to the new version has been very positive." • **Clayton Koppes**, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, delivered a paper at the annual meeting of the Organization of American Historians in San Francisco April 19. His paper, "Cracking the Code: The Decline of Movie Censorship in the 1950s," is part of his larger study-in-progress on motion-picture censorship and sexuality over the past century. •

The March issue of *Acoustic Musician* mentioned **Marilyn McDonald**, professor of violin and teacher of baroque violin, in an interview with jazz and blue-grass violinist Matt Glaser. In the article Glaser says that Marilyn "had a blast" as his student at a recent music camp. Marilyn's more usual professional activities continue: This season she has appeared as soloist with the Omaha Symphony and the Peninsula Music Festival Orchestra and in many recitals with the Castle Trio, including a performance in London celebrating the Smithsonian's 150th anniversary. She has toured with the Smithsonian Chamber Players and has been concertmaster for Boston Baroque, most recently for its performances of *Don Giovanni*. •

**Richard Povall**, associate professor of electronic and computer music, presented a paper on interactive performance technologies and performance composition in April at the Digital Creativity Conference, held at the University of Derby in England. He also presented a CD-ROM installation, *mouthplace*, with Ireland-based writer and performer Jools Gilson-Ellis, and chaired CyberGLOO, a live panel discussion between participants at Digital Creativity and participants at the site of another conference occurring simultaneously at the University of Western Australia. In March and April *mouthplace* was the feature exhibit at the InterMedia Festival at the Triskel Arts Centre in Cork, Ireland, where the artists gave a gallery talk on the work. The work was shown at the third Annual Performance Studies in Atlanta, where the artists gave a lecture/demonstration on interactive performance. Also in April Richard presented a new work at the fifth Arts and Technology Symposium at Connecticut College, with choreography and performance by TIMARA senior Christina Agamanolis. Richard has been invited to present his work this summer at the Journées d'Informatique Musicale in Lyon, and to work as a composer with AlieNation Co, a new-media theater company based in Berlin. • On April 9 **Eve Sandberg**, associate professor of politics, gave an invited, paid presentation to the Council on African Studies at Yale University. Following her 50-minute talk—"Constitution Writing and the Creation of Provincial Political Institutions as Strategies of Political Party Rivalry in Namibia and South Africa"—Eve took questions for an hour. A dinner for faculty, staff, and graduate students affiliated with the council capped the event. •

**Michael Schulze**, director of audio services in the conservatory, was quoted in a syndicated Newhouse News Service article that ran in papers across the country, including the *Atlanta Journal* and the *Atlanta Constitution*. "Analog tape has a soft, warm sound that people like; but it tends to be noisy, and it's not quite faithful to the original sound," Mike is quoted as saying. "The advantage of digital recording is that it's a much more accurate way to record sound." • **Robert Willoughby**, Oberlin's first Robert Wheeler Professor of Performance, will begin teaching flute in the fall at the Longy School of Music in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He has lived in Cambridge since 1987, when he retired from Oberlin and began to teach at the Peabody Institute; he teaches at Peabody now. Last year Bob received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Flute Association. • Several faculty members recently presented a program for the Learning and Living Institute, which is jointly sponsored by Lorain Community College and Oberlin College. Teaching in the six-session course, Looking at Gender Roles through History and Literature, were **Phyllis Gorfain**, professor of English, who presented "The Interaction of Race and Gender in Othello"; **Adrienne Jones**, associate professor of African-American studies ("Race and Gender in African-American Culture"); **Nicholas Jones**, associate professor of English ("Felicia Hemens, Romantic Poet"); **Carol Lasser**, associate professor of History ("Origins of the Second Wave of Feminism"); **Thomas Van Nortwick**, professor of classics, ("Gender and Imagination in Greek Literature"); and **Sandra Zagarell**, professor of English ("Friends? Foes? Relations between Women in American Women's Writings").



## William Lanier, Geology Department

William Lanier died April 28 in Emporia, Kansas, at age 43. He had been a member of Oberlin's Geology Department for the four years between 1985 and 1989, two as a visiting assistant professor and two as a research associate. He left Oberlin in 1989 to join the faculty of the Department of Earth Science at Emporia State University, where he had worked ever since. He was an associate professor at the time of his death.

"Bill was an energetic, hands-on scientist who did important research on subjects as diverse as modern tidal flats in France and 3.4 billion-year old volcanic strata in South Africa," says Bruce Simonson, professor of geology. "The breadth of his interests, both in geology and beyond, was matched by the passion with which he pursued them. A first-rate chef as well as a keen competitor in sports, Bill could cook a mean paella, and he captained the only softball team the geology department has fielded in at least the last 20 years."

Lanier received a B.S. degree from Southern Methodist University in 1976, a master's degree from Louisiana State University in 1980, and a Ph.D. degree from the University of Arizona in 1985. He was a geologist who specialized in the study of sediments and the early history of life. He is survived by his wife, Susan Stover, and their three daughters as well as his mother, a brother, and three sisters.

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# *Faculty Meeting*

## GF Discusses Final Planning Document in Special Meeting

Before discussing the final long-range-planning report at a special meeting May 6, the General Faculty heard registrar Lori Gumpf present the list, by category, of the 637 students graduating this year.

Much of the planning-report discussion focused on what should happen next. President Nancy Dye has indicated for some time that she hopes for a vote of affirmation at the May 20 General Faculty meeting. Dye said she saw the final report as a work-in-progress, and a platform for future action.

One member of the faculty called the report "a remarkable first step," a first coming together rather than a conclusion, and said the College, having formulated the report, should now move beyond broad directions to more specific discussions.

Another focus of discussion was the place of the social sciences and humanities. Some faculty members said they thought those fields were ignored in the report and wondered how what they perceived as a gap reflected or might affect College priorities. On the contrary, Dye responded, many of the ideas in the report, including the emphasis on international studies and engaged citizenship, assume a thriving social science and humanities professoriate. The relevant assumption underlying the document, reached in small-group discussions, Dye said, was that the natural sciences and the arts are now facing "turning points" that other divisions are not.

Some faculty voiced a wish for a formal ranking of the many priorities set out in the document. Others, including Dye, said the intertwining of ideas about the College as a whole are the hallmark and strength of the report.

"The entire document is about academic excellence," said Dye at the conclusion of the meeting. "Oberlin is not a generic institution," she said. "The document defines what excellence means at Oberlin; that's why it needs to be affirmed."

## Correction on Suzuki Method: Off by a Decade

The late Clifford Cook, emeritus professor of string instruments and music, brought the Suzuki Method to the U.S. in 1958, not 1947, as the April 25 *Observer* reported in "Faculty and Staff Notes."

## Wired . . .

*Continued from page 1*

for its methodology and data-collection process.

The *Chronicle of Higher Education* is one publication that reported on the controversial nature of the survey. For an article appearing in the May 9 issue "Colleges Attack Data Used in Ranking of 'Most Wired' Campuses," the *Chronicle* spoke with John Bucher, Oberlin's director of computing.

"I can't say that [the survey] was adequately done," Bucher is quoted as saying, "but I've made some hay out of it here at Oberlin, by pointing out how well we're doing with regard to networking issues on campus."

Earlier Bucher had told the *Observer*: "I don't think that you can read much from the absolute numerical ranking itself, but to be sure, a campus that was way behind the curve in networking issues probably wouldn't make it to the list. The credit is due to many people—we owe thanks to past and present administrators and trustees who planned and supported the financial needs of our network infrastructure. And although it sits behind the scenes, it's what makes everything else go. As with almost any other success," Bucher added, "we can't afford to sit and gloat. The components of our network that allow us to make this list must be constantly upgraded."

## Mellon Minority Fellowships to Continue

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation has awarded Oberlin $350,000 to renew the Mellon Minority Undergraduate Fellowships (MMUF). First established at Oberlin in 1988, the fellowships seek to increase the number of underrepresented minority students pursuing doctoral degrees in disciplines that continue to produce few minority scholars. Each year up to five sophomores are accepted to the program, which is open to underrepresented minorities majoring in the humanities, anthropology, computer science, geology, mathematics, physics, and related fields.

Associate Professor of Sociology Clovis White, director of the Office of Undergraduate Research, administers the program.

"Over the years," says David Love, director of sponsored programs, "grants from the Mellon Foundation have supported projects integral to Oberlin's mission, and the minority fellowships program has been one of the most important and effective."

Forty-one Oberlin students have been in the program since 1989, and the renewal will fund 20 more fellowships over the next five years. As of spring 1996 over 62 percent of Oberlin's graduated Mellon fellows had entered master's or doctoral programs, a rate matched by only one other MMUF Program institution.

## Fellowships . . .

*Continued from page 1*

League's Orchestra Management Fellowship Program. Following a two-week orientation at the league's Washington, D.C., office, Dredge will participate in three residencies with professional orchestras of different budget sizes. She'll also spend time with a community orchestra, the for-profit music industry in New York City, and two national orchestra-league conferences. At Oberlin Dredge has been a marketing and public-relations intern for the Akron Symphony; she has worked for the Tanglewood Music Festival in the summer.

Violin-performance major Denitza Kostova has won the Montgomery Symphony Orchestra Violin Fellowship Competition and will become the concertmaster of that orchestra September 1. Her prize includes a concerto performance with the Montgomery Symphony on the opening concert of each of the next two seasons, three solo recitals, and a $25,000 annual concertmaster salary. Kostova, whose home is Pazardgik, Bulgaria, is a student of Professor of Violin Taras Gabora. Last year she was a semifinalist at the Paganini Violin Competition in Italy. Her previous honors include the Gold Medal at the Bulgarian National Festival of Music, First Prize in the Nedialka Simeonova Competition, Second Prize in the Svetoslau Obretanov Competition, and First Prize in the Rio Hondo Symphony Concerto Competition.

Michael Kimmage '95 has received a Mellon Fellowship in Humanistic Studies. Currently studying at Oxford University for a second B.A. degree in European history under a British Marshall scholarship (see "Senior Awarded Marshall Scholarship" in the December 8, 1994, *Observer*), Kimmage will return to the U.S. this fall to begin studying for his Ph.D. degree in the history of American civilization at Harvard University. The fellowship covers tuition and mandated fees, and provides a stipend of $13,750 for the first year of graduate study.

## Technology . . .

*Continued from page 1*

servatory and the college and will become an essential part of academic-support services, aiding, in particular, first-generation, minority, and disabled students who may leave high school with little or no computing experience, or require adaptive technology. The center will ensure that these students, especially, gain critical word-processing, spreadsheet, electronic mail, and Internet-access skills at the start of their academic careers.

Other center activities will include collaborative projects with the library staff on electronic research resources and with Christian Koch, professor of computer science, on the Computer Science Program's Third Stream Computing offerings.

The new Mellon project includes support for released time for faculty members wishing to work with OCTET on expository writing and quantitative proficiency projects, technology-based curriculum development, and assessment of new applications.

A full-time recent-graduate intern and two part-time student interns will assist the director, test software for reliability, and help faculty prepare and run equipment and applications during class.

### Faculty Development Includes Summer Workshops

One of the center's most critical initiatives, says Kornblith, will be summer workshops that give faculty experience using educational technology. The first summer workshop, to be held in 1998, will be open to faculty who teach literature, including professors of African-American studies, classics, East Asian studies, German, Russian, Judaic and Near Eastern studies, Romance languages, and English. The 1999 and 2000 summer workshops will serve faculty in a range of disciplines. The workshops will feature an educational-technology specialist from outside the College who will demonstrate and discuss with faculty new applications and teaching strategies under development in their fields across the country and around the world. Faculty will receive stipends for their participation in the week-long workshops.

With the Computing Center OCTET will organize short-term workshops and training sessions during the academic year and Winter Term. A limited number of travel grants will allow faculty to attend technology conferences or visit other educational institutions using applications or software in innovative or effective ways. Competitive summer curriculum-development grants administered by the College Faculty Educational Plans and Policies Committee will support faculty who wish to integrate pedagogical applications of technology.

The second and third years of the project call for faculty fellowships (involving released time for one course a semester) and semester leaves. The first faculty fellow appointed to the center will research recent developments in adaptive technology and applications, and review the effectiveness and ease-of-use of existing equipment. The center and faculty fellow will also help faculty and staff of the Office of Student Academic Services increase their computer proficiency and identify promising pedagogical applications of technology and software that could benefit students with disabilities. The faculty leaves (with replacements funded) will be authorized for major projects to develop courses and applications supporting expository writing and quantitative proficiency.

### Applying Technology to Expository Writing, Quantitative Proficiency

Many faculty members, says Kornblith, hesitate to emphasize writing or offer certification and writing-intensive courses because of the time, budget, and staffing such courses require. "Applying technology to the teaching of writing can alleviate these pressures and enhance learning in new ways. Technology can facilitate peer review of drafts and collaborative writing, leading to the development of new skills and models for interactive learning," he says.

The Mellon grant program will address quantitative proficiency at three levels. OCTET will help faculty from the mathematics department and student academic services identify and develop computer-based tutorials that help students develop critical mathematical skills at the precalculus level. With the Quantitative Proficiency Committee Kornblith and faculty fellows will explore ways that educational technology can help increase the number of offerings that teach certain skills, such as those necessary to understand the strengths and limitations of various mathematical techniques. OCTET and the quantitative-proficiency curricular initiative will help faculty in various disciplines identify innovative applications of technology—including educational games—and provide critical support and assistance in their development.

### Expectations

Today about 10 percent of Oberlin's faculty regularly incorporate educational technology into their teaching while another contingent uses it occasionally or in a limited fashion.

"Oberlin faculty are already fine teachers," says Kornblith, "and given a host of competing demands on their time, many faculty are reluctant to experiment with new educational technologies. They don't feel great urgency to change the way they do things, and some worry about not having strong computer or technical backgrounds. We designed the center to make it easier for faculty to try out new teaching techniques without committing themselves to in-depth retraining. We aim to provide the customized guidance and support that faculty need to take advantage of user-friendly software and Oberlin's impressive network capabilities to enhance teaching and learning.

"Of course, it's not realistic to expect all faculty members to embrace the use of new technology. Nor would it be desirable, in my opinion. The pedagogical goals of some faculty can be achieved better through other methodologies. OCTET, however, hopes to encourage faculty who are searching for fresh ways to teach material to an ever-changing (and increasingly computer-oriented) student body." Kornblith expects the proportion of faculty using educational technology on a regular basis to rise to 25 percent by the end of the three-year grant period.

During the final year of the program the College will assess the role of OCTET, levels of computer proficiency, and use of educational technology among college and conservatory faculty, and problems and concerns with pedagogical applications of technology across the curriculum. If additional guidance and support in the area are still needed, the College will seek to continue the work as a separate facility or by merging activities and staffing with those of the Computing Center.

David Love, associate vice president for research and development, and Pamela Snyder, director of corporate and foundation support, wrote the grant application with advice from a committee that included John Bucher, director of computing; Jan Cooper, Reid Associate Professor of Expository Writing and associate professor of English; Rudd Crawford, associate professor of mathematics; Ray English, Root Director of Libraries; Barbara Fuchsman, director of federal support; Suzanne Gay, associate dean of the College of Arts and Sciences; Clayton Koppes, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences; Kornblith; Associate Professor of Chemistry Michael Nee, chair of the Quantitative Proficiency Committee; Bruce Richards, associate dean of the College of Arts and Sciences; and Gloria White, associate dean of student academic services and instructor in mathematics.

## Observations

# Astronomical Sabbatical

**By Dan Stinebring**

About halfway up the ladder to the focus cabin, 150 feet above the ground, I was ready for a new line of research. August is a cold month in the western plains of New South Wales, Australia. A misty rain had been falling all night, and the wind was gusting up to 30 miles an hour.

The ladder I was climbing hand over hand was access to the top of the Parkes radio telescope, where I had to flip several switches, adjust a dial, and change a cable. Easy enough work once I got up there, but at the moment my attention was focused on the 50 feet or so of empty space between me and the surface of the 250-foot-diameter dish, although a fall from this height would hardly be slowed by the thin aluminum panels that make up the dish.

This was a good time to concentrate on the ladder and the simple work of moving hands and feet rung over rung. I started humming the last movement of Beethoven's Ninth as a way to ease the tension. Finally, after a long time on the ladder I made it to the door of the apartment-sized focus cabin and swung it open. In my rush to get inside I smashed my hard-hat on the top of the door frame, almost knocking myself backward down the ladder.

A few minutes later, my tasks accomplished, I started back down the ladder—and discovered that going up was the easy part! Not my idea of fun, but as my laconic Australian colleague remarked upon my ashen return to the control room in the base of the telescope, "you get used to it."

I did get used to it in the many subsequent trips I have made up to the focus cabin in the past nine months, and I even heartily recommended it to the two Oberlin students, Josh Kempner '97 and Naomi McClure-Griffiths '97, who spent five months with me in Australia. I guess that shows how quickly unpleasant experiences can be turned into motivational exercises for the student.

Climbing ladders was just a means to an end, though, the end being to learn something about our galaxy by collecting radio waves from collapsed stars called pulsars. Only 10 miles across but with as much mass as the sun, these ultra-dense stars are radio beacons in space, shining across thousands of light years of gas and dust in the plane of the Milky Way.

PHOTOGRAPH BY RYAN HODGINS

**Dan Stinebring, Josh Kempner, and Naomi McClure-Griffiths appear to be holding up a radio telescope on the grounds of the ATNF in Sydney. Not the one that had Dan reconsidering his profession, this much smaller telescope has been used by other astronomers to map the distribution of gas in the Milky Way.**

Although both Josh's and Naomi's honors projects involved pulsars and used observations made with the Parkes radio telescope, the similarity ended there. Josh used special equipment to study periodic flashes of radio waves as brief as a few millionths of a second from a bright pulsar rotating like a lighthouse 177 times a second. Our goal with his project was to better understand how pulsars produce their intense beacon of radio waves.

He analyzed a prodigious six terabytes (six million megabytes) of data in the process of extracting new information from the signals from this star. In the end we showed that, despite its rapid rotation rate and other peculiarities, the strong and brief flashes of radio waves from this object had more similarities than differences with the pulses from most of the other 700 known pulsars. The finding underscored the robustness of the still poorly understood physical process at the heart of pulsar emission, and it cast doubt on a recently reported claim of special spikes of radiation coming from this star.

Naomi's project used the radio waves from a much more distant pulsar to explore the distribution of gas in the vicinity of the star and between the pulsar and the Earth. The pulsar she studied is in orbit around a luminous star with a mass 10 times that of the sun. Every three and a half years this pulsar, which is in an elongated orbit much like that of most comets, rapidly swings by this companion star, passing near enough to have its radio emission blocked out entirely by a disk of gas thrown off by the rapidly rotating companion star.

By studying the spectrum of the radio signals given off by the pulsar, we were able to determine that the nearby surroundings of the pulsar did not strongly affect the radio waves when the pulsar was far from its companion. This helps to determine the properties of the gas cloud around the pulsar.

I thought long and hard before agreeing to supervise two honors students during my year-long sabbatical in Sydney. On the one hand, working with Oberlin students on my pulsar research is the most rewarding part of my teaching effort. Students are also essential to progress on many of the projects I work on, since there is often much data to be analyzed before scientific interpretation can be made. On the other hand, even good students like Josh and Naomi need guidance and help in a new situation, and I was not at all sure how easy it would be for them or me and my family to settle into life 10,000 miles away from home.

Besides, this was sabbatical, a time of renewal and a chance to finish the projects that I have under way. As it turned out, the gamble worked out "brilliantly," as the Aussies are fond of saying. Josh and Naomi settled into Sydney life well, staying in a dorm near the city center and commuting by train, bus, and foot the hour or so needed to get to the Australia Telescope National Facility (ATNF) where we did most of our work. Even though the commute was tiring for them and for me (my family and I lived not far from them), it was nice in the evening or on weekends to pop down to the Opera House for a performance, have dinner at one of the multitude of ethnic restaurants in the city, or walk around the botanical gardens by the sparkling harbor.

Both Josh and Naomi worked hard and well on their projects, getting a much deeper and broader exposure to scientific research than would have been possible back at Oberlin. They both got credit for their research work under the Enrolled, Not in Residence program. And they both did an excellent job writing up their results in honors theses, which we will now revise for submission to a scientific journal.

The "we" involved in this work included two key Australian collaborators as well as other people who helped us in a variety of ways. Our daily routine involved our commute, which ended in a pleasant walk through eucalyptus trees topped by king parrots and laughing kookaburras. After settling down to work for a bit we would meet out in the courtyard at 10:00 a.m. for morning tea, which drew out the 100 or so staff members of the ATNF for lively discussions of science and cricket or rugby, depending on the season. Lunch time would often be spent at one of several informal group meetings, hearing about the latest in galaxy or pulsar research. In the afternoon we would often gather around a whiteboard for a while, drawing diagrams, doing calculations, and arguing over interpretation or processing strategy. Once or twice a week we would attend a colloquium, usually given by a visiting speaker to the ATNF or the major optical astronomy headquarters in the adjoining building. In between these interesting diversions, we got a lot of work done, with the pace increasing as Josh and Naomi's Sydney residency drew to a close.

As for me, I have had about three months on my own since they returned to Oberlin in late January, and I have three more months of work time ahead before I return to Oberlin. Although I missed their lively presence at first, I have adapted to quieter and more uninterrupted working days. We have stayed in close touch, though, by nearly daily E-mail and fax exchanges, as well as an occasional phone call. I was fortunate that my scientific interests could be pursued from such a great base as Sydney, with outstanding local colleagues and all the pulsars in the southern sky observable with excellent telescopes. Sydney has surpassed all of our expectations, and we have had the fun of sharing it with several groups of family and stateside friends.

This sabbatical time has done just what it was supposed to do. I feel invigorated by the experience and will be returning to Oberlin with a fresh outlook and renewed energy. By working with Oberlin students this year, my return will be easier and less abrupt than it might otherwise have been. And the new ties that I have made with colleagues in Australia will provide opportunities for collaborative work in the future and, I hope, several return visits for me and other Oberlin students.

*Dan Stinebring, associate professor of physics, has just received word that his funding from the National Science Foundation, which has supported his work for the last four years, has been extended for three more years. The title of his project, which will involve student researchers, is Pulsar Studies and the Interstellar Medium.*