

# PSH NEWS

## Talking computer helps blind student

John Rudy  
Capital Times Staff

Those using the computer lab in Room W-305 of the Olmstead Building may have noticed a computer sitting just inside the door that is reserved for "handicapped" users. That machine is fitted with special equipment which allows it to speak to visually impaired operators. It was installed to meet the needs of one Penn State Harrisburg student.

Harry Long, 45, a humanities/communications major, suffers from impaired vision and access to the talking computer has made his on-campus life much easier.

Long was born with cataracts, which were successfully removed, and his vision remained fairly good until he was almost 40. He suffered a severe loss of sight five years ago through detached retinas. Laser surgery restored some vision to his left eye, but his right eye no longer functions. He can see the computer, but "it's just a blue patch. I can't tell if there's anything on it," he said.

Long is currently the only Penn State Harrisburg student requiring this specialized equipment.

"It was originally put in just for me," Long said, "but with the hopes that other people who might need it would have access to it, too. It is available to anyone with a vision problem."

Long helped college administrators acquire the appropriate equipment by doing most of the research into what was available to users with vision problems.

"Funding for the special equipment was acquired through University Park's Center for Disabled Students," said Donald Holtzman, associate director of student affairs for student assistance. "The proposal went through the whole university bureaucracy before it finally got signed. Funds for these programs are limited, but we were able to make a case and get it funded."

"Penn State was very helpful in working with me to get the equipment," Long said. "All I did was tell them who to go through - PC Partners in Maryland - and the college set it up. The package included a speech board and special software."

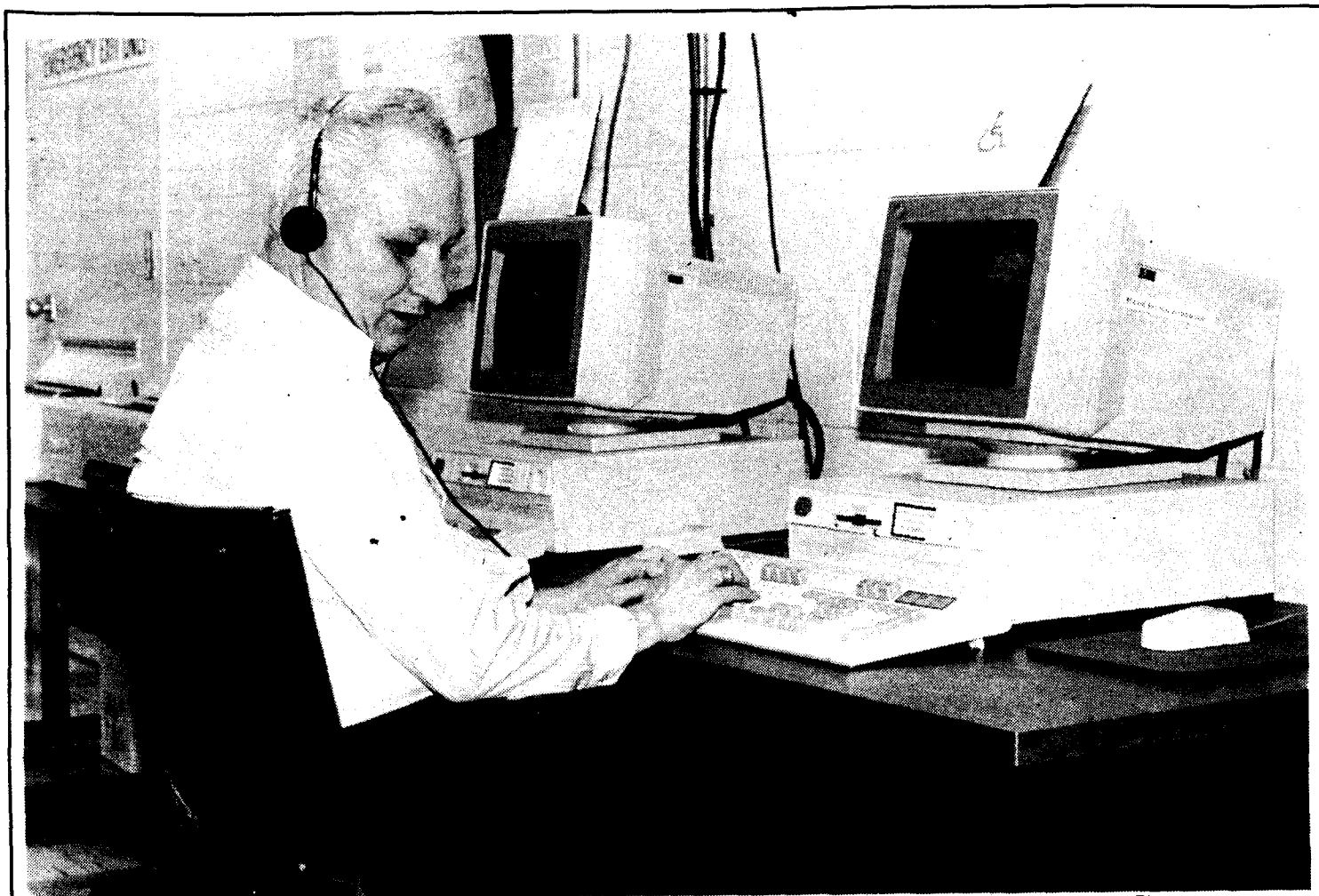


Photo by John Rudy

Harry Long, a humanities/communications major, works at a talking computer installed to help visually impaired students.

"A demonstration of the equipment was set up with PC Partners," Holtzman said, "and we decided to go ahead with the proposal and the purchase. The package cost just over \$1,100."

"Once we got the OK to purchase the package, Terry Majzlik, manager and operations coordinator of the computer center, got involved with getting it. Mark Lukens installed the package," Holtzman said.

Holtzman said that since the package was purchased with university-wide funds, the package is university-wide equipment. Once Long has graduated, there may be another student at another Penn State campus that will need it and it will be shipped to them.

Long has a similar setup at his Camp Hill home with equipment that is

perfectly compatible with that in the lab.

"I could do all my work at home, but I spend most of my time here on campus," Long said. "I'm a full-time student, taking five courses. I'm here six to eight hours a day and sometimes have two or three hours between classes, so I go to the lab to do my work. It's convenient."

"Without the on-campus equipment, my equipment at home would not be as useful. I do a lot of my work here on campus; writing term papers and working with material like professors' handouts. I put them on disk, bring them in here, and do my reading that way. All of my research is done this way."

"I can also contact LIAS from the computer lab and it talks. I can then

take a printout down to the library, and say 'this is what I need.'

"I'm very happy with the system. The equipment allows me to use my optical character recognizer [scanner] at home, so I can bring it into school to use it. I have my entire philosophy textbook scanned and stored on one disk," Long said.

The scanner was provided by the Bureau of Blindness and Visual Services in Harrisburg and Long has access to it as long as he has a use for it.

Long will spend another year at Penn State Harrisburg. He plans to graduate in May 1992.

## SGA elects new officers

Victoria Phillips  
and Angelique C. West  
Capital Times Staff

The new president of the Student Government Association says he wants to "make SGA a household name."

Mike Hermick, who ran unopposed, said he wants to make sure the students know that SGA exists for them.

"One of my major objectives is to open communications lines between the senators and their respective divisions, and the students in those divisions."

Hermick said he also wants to increase contact between SGA and other student organizations, such as the Black Student Union.

Other officers chosen in the elections April 9 and 10 were:

- Annie Buyofiski, vice president
- James Mullane, treasurer
- Brenda Wishnefsky, board secretary
- Krista Fuller, committee secretary
- Joseph Silver, business administration senior senator
- Terry Wolf, humanities senior senator
- Roselea Russo, public affairs senior senator
- David Frist, science, engineering & technology senator
- Dan Smels, senior senator at large
- Angelique West, junior senator at large.

## Campus honors retirees

Stanley Miller, professor of social science and education, who joined Penn State Harrisburg the year it began, is among a group of retiring faculty and staff to be honored at a reception April 29.

Miller served as provost from July 1, 1983 to June 30, 1984.

Others to be honored in a reception from 3-4 p.m. in the Gallery Lounge are:

Robert J. Brown, associate professor of finance, who joined the university in 1969.

John W. Harman, assistant professor of engineering, who joined the university in 1971.

Samuel J. Lynch Sr., associate professor of engineering, who joined the university in 1984.

Peg O' Hara, director of student affairs.

Also to be honored are:

George Atticks, John Joesph, Ruth Melcher, Clyde Perkins and William Walkinshaw.

Students and faculty are invited.