



RLE

undercurrents

Volume 7, Number 1 • Fall 1993

A Newsletter for the RLE Community at MIT

Behind the Scenes in RLE's Electromagnetics Group

"I love my work," Kit-Wah Lai speaks enthusiastically about her challenging position as administrative assistant to Professor Jin Au Kong in RLE's Electromagnetics Group. Kit provides secretarial support to Professor Kong, seven research staff and visiting scientists, and almost twenty students.

In the group's fast-paced environment, Kit manages her many tasks efficiently: preparing reports to sponsors, technical papers, and class materials; arranging student and visitor appointments; monitoring contract reporting and monthly budget expenses; scheduling seminars and meetings; supervising typists and temporary workers; making travel reservations; and managing all other group activities. Kit enjoys working with the group's students and learning about their diverse cultures and backgrounds.

A native of Hong Kong, Kit earned a bookkeeping certificate from the Standard College of Language and Commerce in 1978. Before coming to the United States, she worked on the Hong Kong stock exchange and served as an editorial clerk at the business desk of the Hong Kong Standard Newspaper.

In 1989, Kit relocated to Medford, Massachusetts, to be close to her parents, seven brothers and sisters, and several nieces and nephews, all of whom live in that city. She began working as a Secretary for Professor Kong in August 1989. Recently, Professor Kong commented that "Kit is very responsible, efficient, hard-working, and takes her work very seriously. She is friendly to all group members and manages the group like a family. She is truly a most capable person and deserves the best."

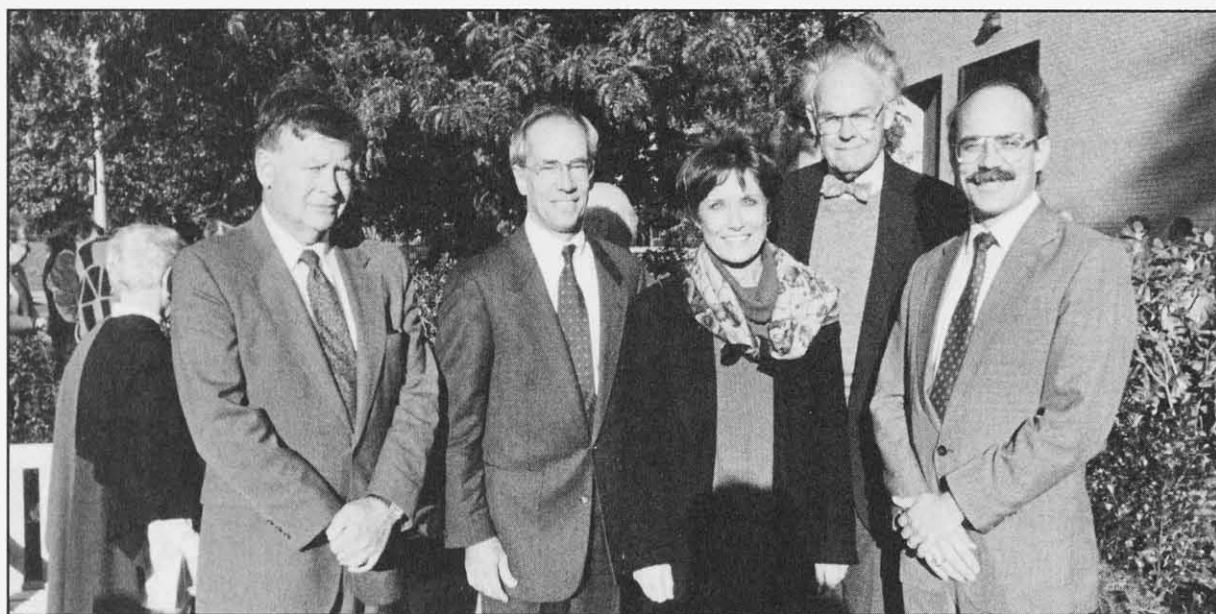
Kit and her older sister Vicky live on different floors of the same house and share a huge collection of CDs. Kit describes herself and Vicky as "crazy for music," enjoying everything from rock music to Chinese opera. Kit loves to watch movies in her brother Stephan's home theater, which houses a large collection of movies on laser disc. Kit also enjoys knitting and wears many of her own lovely creations. Shopping, particularly



From eclectic to electric, Administrative Assistant Kit-Wah Lai loves all kinds of music. (Photo by John F. Cook)

window shopping, is another hobby which Kit pursues avidly. Future plans include taking courses to enhance her secretarial skills and working toward a college degree.

Ruth Ippen Garden Dedicated



Present at the dedication ceremony for the Ruth Ippen Garden (from left): MIT Senior Vice President William R. Dickson; Mrs. Ippen's son, Professor Erich P. Ippen of RLE's Optics and Devices Group, and his wife Dee; Professor Emeritus Donald R.F. Harleman, former Director of Parsons Laboratory; and Professor Rafael L. Bras, Head of MIT's Civil and Environmental Engineering Department. (Photo by John F. Cook)

Tucked away behind the clatter of heavy construction and traffic on Vassar Street lies an oasis for everyone to enjoy. A new vest-pocket park, the Ruth Ippen Garden, is a welcome stretch of beautifully landscaped green space located behind the Ralph M. Parsons Laboratory (Building 48) at the corner of Vassar and Main streets. Thanks to the generosity of MIT and the donations of more than one hundred friends, the newly completed garden was dedicated in memory of the late conservationist at a ceremony on October 5, 1993.

Ruth Ippen, who died in 1989, was the wife of the late Arthur T. Ippen, Institute Professor of Water Resources and former director of Parsons Laboratory, and the mother of Professor Erich P. Ippen of RLE's Optics and Devices Group. A former president of the MIT Women's League, she was also a community leader who championed public green spaces and community landscaping. Mrs. Ippen was an avid gardener and had planted the daffodils and pyracantha that still grace the front of Parsons Laboratory.

Musical Notes



Senior Staff Assistant Felicia G. Brady and graduate student Palmyra E. Catravas performed a two-piano recital on September 24, 1993, in MIT's Kresge Auditorium. Felicia (right) and Palma, both with RLE's Plasma Physics Group, rendered works by Bach, Poulenc, Rachmaninoff, and Copland to generous applause and rave reviews. The concert was made possible through the MIT Council for the Arts.

Felicia performs frequently as a piano soloist and accompanist and also teaches piano. She received her bachelor's degree in Piano from Texas Tech University in 1986 and an Artist's Diploma in Piano from Boston University in 1990. Felicia has been a piano faculty member of the Boston University Tanglewood Institute where she served as Assistant to the Director of the Piano Program.

Felicia also has a country/folk band, Tulia Mirage. Last summer, Felicia and her band,

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New Faces



Anne E. Conklin began working part-time as a senior staff assistant on August 25, 1993, for Professors Bernard F. Burke and Jacqueline N. Hewitt in RLE's Radio Astronomy Group, and also for Professor John G. King. A native of Utica, New York, Anne

received a bachelor's degree in English Literature from St. Lawrence University. Anne was previously a self-employed artisan for seven years and lived alternately in Jamaica Plain and France. Her plans for the future include earning a master's degree in English as a Second Language. Anne enjoys tinkering with her '64 Volkswagen bug, watching movies, reading, traveling, and Latin dancing. (Photo by John F. Cook)



Senior Staff Assistant **Denise M. Rossetti** began working part-time for Professor Jae S. Lim in the Advanced Television and Signal Processing Group on October 12, 1993. A Medford resident, Denise has worked as a business manager at

Epicurean Expressions, a catering company, and as a secretary in the loan department of the former Arlington Five Savings Bank. Denise and her husband Arthur, an electronics technician at Lincoln Laboratory, have two children: three-year-old Olivia and fifteen-month-old Danny. (Photo by John F. Cook)



On August 31, 1993, **Laura M. von Bosau** joined RLE's Plasma Physics Group as a part-time administrative assistant with Professor Abraham Bers. After coming to Boston from Minneapolis in October 1986, Laura worked for Boston University in

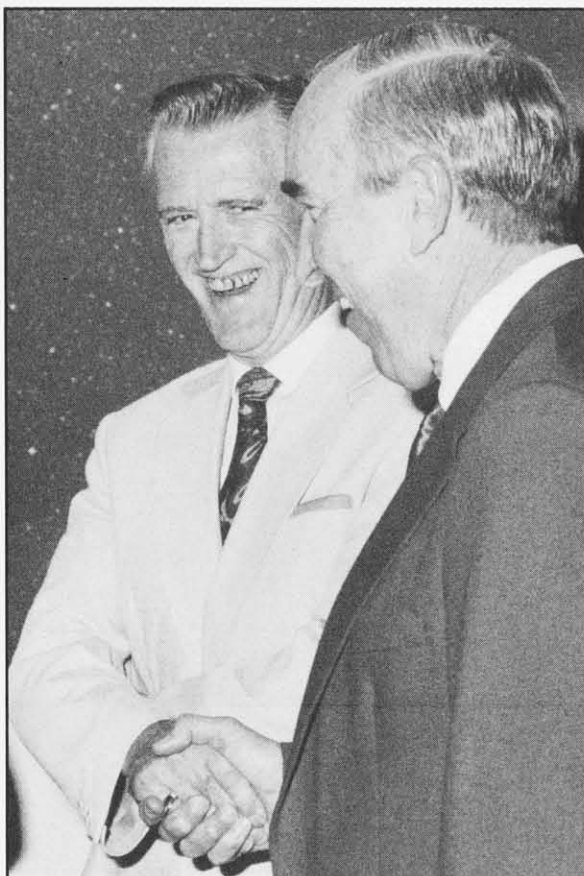
several capacities. Laura is currently working toward her bachelor's degree in English at BU. Laura loves to read, especially history, nonfiction, and science fiction. Her husband Walter works at BU's Film Library, and the couple enjoys watching movies in their home theater in Brighton. (Photo by John F. Cook)



A Fond Farewell

In May 1993, Senior Staff Assistant **Kerry L. Gafney** of the Plasma Physics Group joined the U.S. Department of State in Washington to pursue a career in international diplomacy... Senior Staff Assistant **Wendy E. Hunter** of the Radio Astronomy Group relocated to New York City in September 1993, to devote herself to a professional singing career... After fifteen years at RLE, **Dr. John Melngailis**, senior research scientist in the Materials and Fabrication Group, was appointed to the faculty at the University of Maryland at College Park, beginning October 1, 1993. On the day before he departed for Maryland, Dr. Melngailis was honored at a gathering of faculty, staff, and students from RLE and the Microsystems Technology Laboratory... Senior Technical Illustrator **Robert H. Priest** moved to New York City in September 1993, to pursue a career as a professional artist. Bob's imaginative work and creative designs will be missed, especially by the staff of *undercurrents*.

Retirements



On June 22, 1993, friends and colleagues gathered to say good-bye to two long-time RLE staff members: **John W. Barrett** (right), a member of RLE's Sponsored Research Technical Staff in the Radio Astronomy Group for 42 years, and **Donald F. Duffy**, RLE's fiscal officer who retired after 31 years of service to MIT. (Photo by John F. Cook)

Senior Secretary **Barbara A. King** retired in July 1993, after nine years with the Optical Communications Group.

Professor of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science **Campbell L. Searle** announced his retirement after 45 years at RLE; 35 of those were served on the MIT faculty.

In Memoriam

A memorial service was held at the MIT Chapel on August 31, 1993, for **Jane C. Burke**, wife of Dr. Bernard F. Burke, Professor of Physics in RLE's Radio Astronomy Group. Mrs. Burke died in August following a brief illness. Memorial donations may be made to the Putney School of Putney, Vermont.



The Boston Globe reported the death of prize-winning artist **Patricia L. McDowell** on May 19, 1993. Ms. McDowell, 44, died of breast cancer at Youville Hospital in Cambridge. A junior detailer and technical artist in RLE from 1974-1978, Ms. McDowell went on to a successful career as a professional artist and was recognized for her dreamlike expressionist paintings that recall the genre of William Blake. Among her survivors are her husband Robert Simon and two sons, Benjamin and Adam, of Cambridge.

Musical Notes



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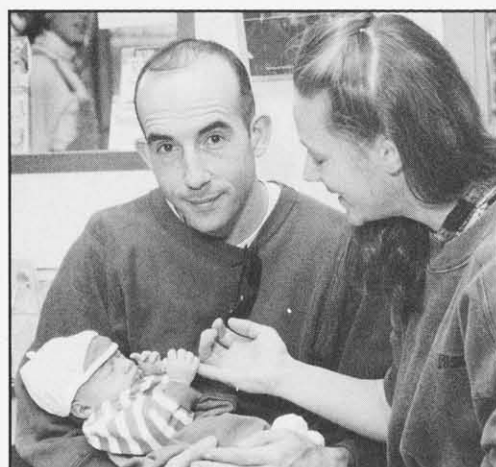
joined by other Boston musicians, performed a noontime concert at the Stratton Student Center (see photograph below).

Palma is working toward a master's degree in Electrical Engineering. She is a graduate of the University of Maryland with a bachelor's degree in both Music and Electrical Engineering. Palma soloed at the age of twelve with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra and has performed with her older brother Nicolas on radio and television.



Performing at a summer concert outside the Stratton Student Center are (from left): graduate student Ali J. Azarbajani of the Media Lab; former RLE Senior Staff Assistant Wendy E. Hunter; Felicia G. Brady, senior staff assistant in RLE's Plasma Physics Group; graduate student Anthony G. Della Ratta of Materials Science and Engineering; Harvard graduate student Susan Thornberg; and Boston musician Dan Keller. Other performers were: graduate student Robert P. MacHold of the Biology Department and graduate student Stephen A. Gilbert of Brain and Cognitive Sciences. (Photos by John F. Cook)

And Baby Makes Three



When the staff of *undercurrents* realized that we had accidentally omitted Peter Guiod, technical assistant in RLE's Speech Communication Group, from the "New Faces" section of the spring 1993 issue, we set out to make things right. We recently found Peter, accompanied by his wife Antonette (Toni) and a really new face, Joshua Daniel Guiod, eight days old. Joshua was born at Brigham and Women's Hospital, weighing seven pounds and ten ounces, on November 10, 1993.

Peter began working at RLE on November 16, 1992, and is in charge of subject recruitment, travel and logistics for the Speech Group's acoustic neuroma project and does data extraction for its voice project. Peter, a native Bostonian, spent three years with the U.S. Army's 82nd Airborne Division, attaining the rank of staff sergeant. Peter graduated from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst in 1990 with a bachelor's degree in

Linguistics. Currently, he is in the reserves and working toward a master's degree in Speech Pathology at Northeastern University. Toni is a former teacher for the First Congregational Church Day Care Center in Revere. She and Peter like to camp in New Hampshire. (Photo by John F. Cook)



RLE undercurrents

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