Larger Than Life

A public artist's creations are grand in both design and scale.

As a junior at Syracuse University, Robin Brailsford became frustrated with the small size of the jewelry she was designing. A switch to sculpture gave her the grander scale she craved. She's been thinking big ever since.

Brailsford is a public artist in San Diego. One of her latest works is the Martin Luther King Promenade bike path, which is 27 feet wide, more than two miles long, and paved from end to end with Brailsford's massive mosaics. She's currently designing the children's entrance to Balboa Park, site of the world-famous San Diego Zoo. Shaped like a lemon wedge, the six-acre area is called Bird Park. Brailsford created the park's landscaping to resemble a bird when seen from above.

"Public art is looking for the potential in people, places, and things and then realizing that potential," says Brailsford, who received a bachelor of fine arts degree from SU in 1975 and was recently named a San Diegan of the Year by San Diego Home and Garden Lifestyles magazine.

Creating such art isn't easy. "Public art is huge, it has to be permanent, and it has to discourage graffiti and vandalism," says Brailsford. "Some of it has to take being driven over by cars. One piece of art I did in Los Angeles was engineered to withstand an earthquake that registered an eight on the Richter scale, a hurricane, and a 250-pound person walking on it. And that was a canopy in the air."

Brailsford has created her various works with materials ranging from concrete to neon lights, and has gained a large measure of satisfaction from all her enormous designs. "What I like about public art is that my politics match the art that I'm doing," she says. "If I say I'm concerned about the underprivileged and I want to make the world a better place, then I go and make diamond jewelry for people with large houses who sell bad baby formula in South America, then my politics and art are in conflict. But when I do public art, I make things that belong to everybody. I have a project over a freeway that 130,000 people see every day."

—PAULA MESAROLL

Works by public artist Robin Brailsford include a trolley canopy at the Los Angeles Convention Center (above) and a community fountain at Imperial Beach, California (right).
The mission of the Syracuse Community Health Center is simple—to guarantee medical, dental, and counseling treatment for all who need it. Angela Young, the center's vice president of operations, is responsible for making sure that mission is carried out.

"Our main objective is to keep people healthy and out of the hospital by offering good preventive services," says Young. "It is the poor people, the under-insured, and the uninsured who need our services most. But we are here to serve the health needs of all members of the community."

The demand for Medicaid-managed health services continues to grow in the Syracuse area, which is why the Syracuse Community Health Center has expanded from one facility to three since opening in 1978. A team of nearly 300 physicians, nurses, dentists, counselors, social workers, administrators, and general support staff now handle more than 175,000 annual patient visits.

Young, who received master's degrees in social work and public administration from SU in 1979, says the Syracuse Community Health Center is also sensitive to the ethnic diversity of its patients. That sensitivity is reflected in the diversity of the staff. "Sixty-three percent of the patients we see here represent some minority group, whether it be African American, Hispanic, or Asian," says Young. "It's much easier, for example, if a Hispanic patient can walk in the door and talk with someone who is Spanish-speaking, rather than walk in worrying that they're going to have to have someone translate for them."

Young's desire to pursue a career in community service was instilled long ago. "When I was growing up, if someone needed 20 cakes made for a wedding or other celebration, my family would be up all night helping out," she says. "It's not the same kind of work, but it's for the same cause—to help others."

—KRISTEN JORDAN

Darrel Rippeteau is an architect with a novel approach to making natty neckwear. His year-old line of ties is swathed with sketches of great American buildings, including the United States Supreme Court in Washington, D.C., the John Hancock Tower in Chicago, Faneuil Hall in Boston, and the Flatiron Building in New York City. The collection, marketed under the Archifetti label, is inspired by drawings from Rippeteau's sketchbook, priced at $30 a silk crepe-de-chine pop, and, if plans pan out, soon to be marketed nationally.

"My hope" says Rippeteau, "is that every attorney arguing a case before the Supreme Court will wear my Supreme Court tie, that every stockbroker on Wall Street will wear my stock exchange tie, and that everyone who visits Chicago will wear my John Hancock Tower tie."

Rippeteau is a 1973 graduate of the School of Architecture, the award-winning owner of Darrel Downing Rippeteau Architects in Washington, D.C., and the person responsible for the restoration of SU's home in the nation's capital, the Paul Greenberg House. He began his wardrobe-building business by chance, when a friend suggested his sketches had far-reaching potential. "It started as a lark, but now it's something I see as a possibility for success," says Rippeteau. "The more I got into this, the more I realized there's nothing else like this out there in neckwear." Next up for the gender-conscious Rippeteau are two lines of architecturally appointed scarves and, possibly, an SU tie highlighting Hendricks Chapel, Maxwell Hall, and Crouse College.

—Bob Hill
Jon Bard gave up the hectic pace of New York City to begin a simpler life in rural Colorado. Today, he is a self-employed newsletter publisher and also teaches a college course on how others can follow in his footsteps.

**Slow Lane**

*Jon Bard '84*

When the public relations agency Jon Bard ran began to run him down, he got out. Fed up with the frenetic world of New York City, he and his wife set off for a gentler life. "We decided we could live wherever we wanted, however we wanted," says Bard, who earned a bachelor's degree in advertising from the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications in 1984.

They settled in Fairplay, Colorado, an old mining town 80 miles west of Denver, and launched *Children's Book Insider*, a newsletter for writers of juvenile literature. They also began a catalog business that provides materials on how to become a children's writer.

"It became clear to me that making it in the boonies wasn't so impossible," says Bard, "and I thought that maybe I should share this knowledge with other people who might be interested in doing the same thing." So Bard became an instructor at Denver's Colorado Free University. He teaches a course called "Making a Living in the Boonies," which explores the realities of rural living, picking the perfect town, becoming part of a new community, and choosing a business.

"Most people who take my class are successful in what they do, but are tired of what they do," Bard says. "They've come to understand that money and power aren't what life's about. I help change their mindset and point them in another direction. I let them know that being a rural entrepreneur is easy."

Information-by-mail businesses, like Bard's newsletter, are ideal for rural dwellers. They allow people to turn a hobby into a career, says Bard. "Information products are easy to produce and there's a growing demand for them. And if you build your business around something you enjoy, you'll spend the rest of your life doing something you love."  —*Andrea C. Marsh*

**Rolling Reporter**

*Peter Wilkinson '82*

From the moment Peter Wilkinson walked into his first newswriting class, professor emeritus John Keats knew this talented student would go far. "Even then," says Keats, "Peter looked like a reporter, he acted like a reporter, and, most importantly, he was as arrogant as I am."

Wilkinson is a contributing editor to *Rolling Stone* magazine. He credits his ambition, determination, and a healthy dose of self-assurance for much of his success. "More than anything else in this business," he says, "you have to keep your confidence up, maintain your self-discipline, and, above all, have faith in your ability." Wilkinson earned a dual bachelor's degree in English and magazine journalism from SU in 1982. Two days after graduation, he set off for New York City with little more than $100 in his pocket, determined to carve out a career in the competitive world of free-lance magazine writing. "I had pretty lousy luck," he says. "I interviewed everywhere and was hired nowhere. I remember wanting to work at *Esquire* as an editorial assistant, but after my interview they told me, 'Sorry, but we're looking for someone a little more humble.'"

Undaunted, Wilkinson took a job tending bar in Brooklyn while pursuing any journalistic opportunity that came along—including writing about dairy products and pantyhose. His persistence paid off in 1983, when he landed steady work as a court reporter investigating criminal activity in Manhattan's Garment District for *Women's Wear Daily*. Three years later, he became a contributing editor for *Manhattan, Inc.*, and also freelanced for the likes of *Vanity Fair, Details, GQ*, and *Men's Journal*. In 1989, Wilkinson was awarded a Citation for Excellence/International Reporting from the Overseas Press Club for a *Rolling Stone* article on an SU alumnus who was wrongly jailed in Spain for alleged drug trafficking and later freed. Shortly after completing that story, Wilkinson was named a contributing editor of the magazine.
Virtual Success

Lee Stein '75

Lee Stein is the San Diego-based president and CEO of a company without walls, windows, or water coolers. It's incorporated in Wyoming, has toll-free phone lines answered in Oregon, operates computer servers in Ohio, and has employees scattered throughout the country. Ace Hardware? Not quite.

First Virtual Holdings is just what its middle name suggests—a virtual company. It exists in cyberspace. That's where First Virtual's meetings are held and futuristic deals transacted.

Launched last October, First Virtual may be on the cusp of a financial revolution. The cover story of the June 12 issue of BusinessWeek magazine examined the coming onslaught of electronic commerce and cash. One of the entrepreneurs leading that charge is Stein, whose company offers consumers an Internet-based network of global merchants, including Apple Computer (which sells software), Reuters (financial reports on specific companies), and National Public Radio (transcripts of programs).

Unlike on-line systems such as CompuServe or Prodigy, users needn't be existing subscribers to Stein's service. To make a purchase, all that's required is a credit card, a computer, and an e-mail account. According to The New York Times, Stein's system "may herald a shift comparable to the transition a generation ago, when the members-only department store credit card gave way to use-anywhere cards like Visa and MasterCard."

First Virtual has customers in 43 countries and receives 200,000 contacts a day through its Internet address, says Stein, who earned an accounting degree from SU's School of Management in 1975 (as did his wife, June). Stein worked previously as a real-estate developer and financial adviser for, among others, recording artist Rod Stewart, actor Gene Hackman, and the rock band Journey.

Stein has far-reaching plans for First Virtual's role in the fledgling field of electronic commerce—banking, merchandising, entertainment. "Its potential is really unlimited," says Stein, who's always looking for new opportunities. "I have an accounting and law background and I like toys. I like to play with the newest toys out there, and the Internet was the next place to go."

—Bob Hill