

# Report on the Pilot Project

## *Rolfing / Rolfing Movement Integrated Training*

by Heather Wing

**I**n November 1990 we certified ten new Rolfers, who graduated from our first Rolfing/Rolfing Movement integrated training, also called the Pilot Project. There has been much discussion and many questions about the Pilot Project. I offer this report to answer some of these questions and let the community know how it went.

The first portion was taught by Gael Ohlgren and Jane Harrington. Gael is both a Rolfing instructor and a Movement instructor and was primarily responsible for teaching the structural work. Jane is a Movement instructor and a Certified Rolfer and was primarily responsible for teaching the Movement work. With ten beginning students in action, both were called upon to use their skills in both modalities to the fullest.

The seven-week course took place in the spring of 1990 in Boulder. The first week was the usual anatomy lead-in. During the following six weeks the stu-

dents gave each other the basic ten-series of the structural work and eight sessions of Movement work. Each day began with a circle to check in with the students on their individual processes. On Monday and Thursday each week Gael would give a lecture/demo of the next Rolfing session. Then students worked in triads, one giving the session, one receiving, one witnessing - three rounds. On Tuesday and Friday Jane gave a lecture demo of a Movement session, and again the students gave each other sessions in the triad rotation. Wednesday was a day off in order to allow the students a breather, since they were giving and receiving four sessions a week.

Tom Wing was the faculty evaluator and spent one week visiting in Part I and two days visiting Part II.

By all reports, Part I was a very intense period of personal process and learning for everyone concerned. The students bonded strongly with each other. I spoke

recently with Jane and asked her how she felt about the first portion of the training. She said, "The feeling tone of that first class was incredible to be in." She went on to say that one reason she thought the students bonded so deeply was because of the Movement work. The Movement sessions gave the students a chance both to explore their own process and to work with another's process. Because they had not seen the ten-series all the way through before they began giving it, they were as Jane said, "flying by the seat of their pants." She felt that increased their sense of camaraderie and was "sometimes frustrating, sometimes ecstatic."

Gael expressed concern that there wasn't enough open space for questions, tangential concerns, hanging out together. A number of the faculty, including Pilot Project teachers, were concerned that the students had not seen the ten-series through before they did their first session. There has been some talk about adding another



**Members of the Pilot Project Class conducted in Scottsdale, Arizona in the Fall of 1990. Standing L-R: Don Van Vleet; Rodney Taft; Jeff Maitland, Instructor; Thomas Earnest; Debi Stone; Mollee Brooke; Jennifer Hayes; Allison Hubbard; Steven Gorbet. Sitting L-R: Heather Wing, Co-instructor; Gray Kimbrell, Jack Donisvitch. Photo: Courtesy Rodney Taft.**

week to this first portion with time at the beginning to watch a video of the ten-series (Tom Wing's recommendation), but there are financial considerations that may make that not feasible.

The second portion of the Pilot Project took place in the Fall of 1990 in Scottsdale, Arizona and was taught by Jeff Maitland, Roling instructor, and me, Heather Wing, Movement instructor and Certified Rolfer. It was an eight-week course with anatomy lead-in and seven weeks of Rolf training.

In this portion, the primary focus was to be on the structural work, resulting in Roling certification. For certification in Movement these ten new Rolfers still need to take Levels III and IV of the Movement Training.

Although the primary focus was to be the structural work, we also wanted to keep the movement thread alive and vital. My job as Movement Instructor was to integrate the movement modality into the continuation of the structural training. Jeff and I put it together in the following way.

Each student had three models. Two of these received the standard ten-series; and one, a thirteen-series (a ten-series with three Movement sessions added after Roling sessions 3, 7 and 10). On days one and three of class, Jeff and I gave a lecture on the next Roling session. Jeff carried most of the lecture, and I added two sections, one on movement and educational goals for each session and one on movement strategies for each session. With these movement goals and strategies we were looking at how education and movement modalities might become an

enriching and integral part of the Roling session. Jeff then Rolfed his model. On days two and four of each week we had open discussion during lecture time, continuing input directly related to students' questions and concerns around both Roling and Movement work. Then I demonstrated the thirteen-series with my model. Beginning at 11:30 a.m. we had three rounds of five models each, thus fitting in the thirty student models in a twice-a-week schedule as is traditional.

On days when I demonstrated a Movement session, I also gave a lecture on the Movement session. The focus of the first Movement session, given after Roling session 3, was core. The second session, after Roling session 7, focused on whatever sleeve concerns (arms, legs, sitting) were most relevant to that particular model. The third session, after Roling session 10, focused on assisting the model with daily life activities. After the models had left, we followed the Movement sessions with a debriefing period for the whole class, sharing questions and experiences.

Throughout the class I worked with the students on their body use as they Rolfed.

Early in the training I guided the class through a Movement sequence at the end of the day. Thereafter we had a movement sequence at the end of every other day of class, each time led by a different student, until all had had a chance to lead. We had some pretty creative sequences!

One of the questions that has come up most often as I have talked with colleagues about the Pilot Project is whether or not, without the traditional audit, we would produce as skilled a Rolfer. Jeff and I were certainly holding that question as we began the second phase of the train-

ing. We were soon reassured. The first few sessions there were, to be sure, the usual buckling fingers and awkwardnesses, but these students took hold quickly with a level of sureness and far better body use than we were accustomed to seeing in beginning practitioners.

We had an immense number of models—thirty-two is a lot feeling-wise. I soon realized these students would end up "auditing" almost as much as in a traditional training. In a traditional training with six practitioners, auditors see fourteen models and six practitioners go through the ten-series, twenty in all. In the first portion of the Pilot Project, the students witnessed one demonstration model and one of their fellow students go through a series. In the second portion, they could watch seventeen models being Rolfed. (They themselves would be working while the other fifteen were being Rolfed.) So, in a traditional audit they see the series twenty times; in the Pilot Project, nineteen times. Not too great a difference.

Where the great difference was was in the level of motivation and vision these students brought to their auditing times. A session looks a lot different if you've just done it and/or are just about to do it than if you know you're not going to feel it for three to six months. We had the students during their witnessing time pair up with a fellow practitioner to watch one model all the way through. During other periods of work we advised them to float seeing the session as it was happening in five bodies rather than just one process. When they were watching the one model we saw some really nice team work: a practitioner sometimes asking advice of his/her witnessing colleague, sometimes asking the colleague to participate in moments of four-handed work.

This was a class without hierarchy in the student body and that created a very different feeling tone than in a class of auditors and practitioners. Morale was high. The group was deeply bonded as I have said earlier. The feeling was of a large affectionate family. Perhaps because of the depth of their process in Part I, there was very little ego-shell, resistance. Everyone had their stuff, indeed, and everyone else knew it and teased lovingly about it. If Jeff or I needed to address an issue with one of the students, he/she might initially protest but would quickly hear us and get off it. I have experienced this level of responsiveness in other students over the years, but never a whole class at this level.

Perhaps because the focus for the students in Part I was their own process, in Part II we saw very little of their personal process. The focus was on the processes of the models and on learning Roling. At the same time there was a quality of emotional availability in the students to which the models responded by being usually open, a large proportion of them sharing and allowing healing of some deep traumas (and these were Phoenix, not Boulder, models).

We are quite satisfied that we accomplished our goal of inspiring the students to use movement modalities to enrich the Roling process. I quote from Tom Wing's report, "They (the students) were evoking a lot of interest on the part of their models in the area of embodiment. This seemed to go beyond what I have experienced in other basic classes. The models generally appeared very involved both in more actively participating in the sessions being done and in exploring the effects and impact of the work between sessions. There was a feeling of security and competence and of general excitement in the class." Some of the Movement sessions they gave their models of the thirteen-series were really excellent, some a bit rough. Jeff and I agree it was important and valuable for them to do this work, even though they will receive more specific training in Level III than time allowed in this portion of the Pilot Project. There was generally excitement about the Movement sessions from both models and students, good questions asked and good discussion in the debriefing times following the Movement sessions. Toward the end of the class I saw increased creativity both in the Movement work being done in the context of the Roling

sessions and in the final Movement session after Roling session 10.

As to their competence in the structural work Tom, Jeff and I were very impressed. I quote from Tom's report, "Bottom line for me is that the students were indeed doing very competent work, with minimum need for guidance. There was a congruence of competence across the whole class that seems unusual to me." In private conversation, Tom told me he felt the whole class was working at the level of "star students" in traditional classes. Jeff and I both felt the students' quality of touch and the way they contacted tissue were well above average. They also approached 8th and 9th sessions, often a juncture of anxiety, with a confidence and finesse unusual in a basic class. The last week Jeff had them do line-sessions with each other and was enthusiastic about what he saw. For the next few days he kept saying to me in wonder, "Those were some of the best line hours I've ever seen."

A true bonus of the Pilot Project has been the context it created for faculty to learn from each other across lines that have separated movement and structural work in the past. We began looking at such questions as to how do we decide whether structural or movement work is more appropriate at a given time in a client's process. Jeff asked me, after I had demonstrated a Movement session with my model, if I was in touch with the structural logic of my session. No, I wasn't. I was coming from an entirely different focus. So he outlined the structural sequence for me, and we both saw that even though my focus in that particular session was unraveling an emotional charge, structural logic underlay it. Together with the class, we began to track and describe the quality of movement we were able to see after each Roling session. With thirty-two models we were able to see some clear themes. For the first time we were able to see what difference occurred in a group of models who had had some Movement sessions during their Roling process, and models who did not. These and other explorations, not so easy to put into words, created an ambience of discovery and excitement that was really fun to be part of. Morale was high with the teachers too.

Know that I understand that I am an inside evaluator and that this report is colored by my enthusiasm and my long-term dedication to the integration of

movement and structural modalities. All who share my enthusiasm also understand that what we have seen is only one class, with many variables that may not apply to subsequent classes. However, this first class proved so successful that the faculty has decided to schedule a second Pilot Project in 1992. We will all be watching with interest to see how it works out. □