

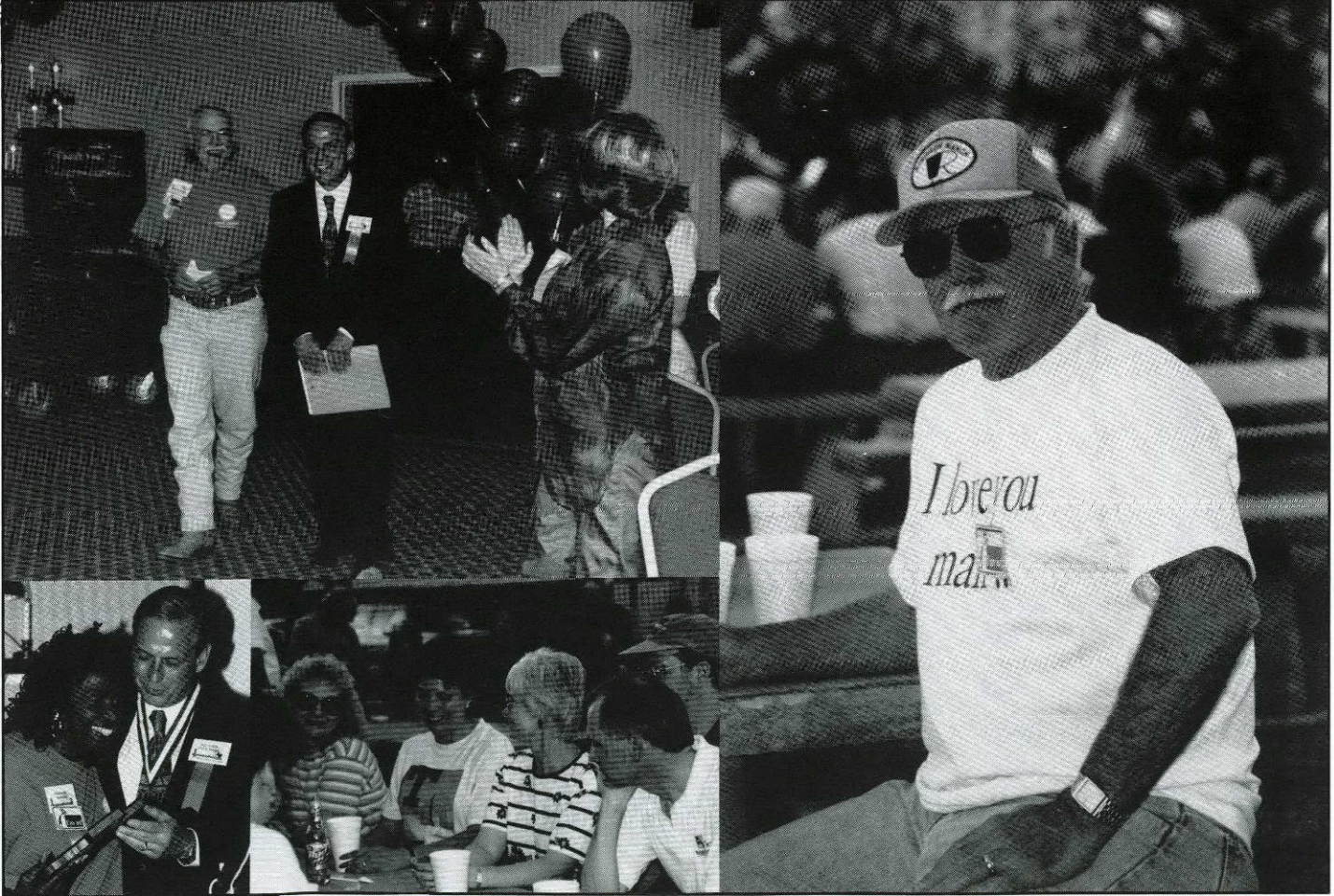
Vol. 19 No. 6 June 1996

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trc today

An Employee Newsletter for Texas Rehabilitation Commission

KERRVILLE!



An important part of the TRC culture is the Commissioner's Conference held every three to four years in Kerrville. Packed with special training, awards and important messages, this conference held up the tradition. Managers left with a reborn optimism about the future of this agency and a clear sense of what is needed to make it happen. In the photos: Top and lower left: Congressman Gene Green with Arrell and Frankie Watson. Lower middle: DDS managers enjoying the barbecue. Right: Commissioner Arrell wearing a special t-shirt made for him. What you don't see is what it says on the back of it: "But you're not getting my VR program."

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Texas Rehabilitation
Commission
4900 N. Lamar Blvd.
Austin, Texas 78751-2399
Vol. 19 No. 6 June 1996

The 1996 Commissioner's Conference

An important part of the Commissioner's Conference is when we get to hear what's on the Commissioner Arrell's mind. He had a lot to say about where we are and where we are going as an agency. And the really good news is he's going there with us.

Commissioner Arrell announced that, after 40 years with TRC and 15 years as commissioner, he is NOT going to retire in the near future. "I started this fight and I'm going to finish it," he said with visible emotion. "I'll fight in Washington, I'll fight in Baltimore, and I'll fight in the state capitol for the integrity of our programs and what we do."

The Commissioner prepared staff for a rocky road in national and state legislation. "H.R. 1617: we dodged a bullet but Reauthorization of the Rehab Act is around the corner. It will be one of the hardest things we will go through as an agency. We also have to fight a growing trend to dismantle the Social Security program and privatize it."

Arrell gave a rallying cry for the Commission to band together as an agency. "Nobody does it better than us and our production is good," he said, "But I feel that there is a grow-

ing trend of not looking beyond our own areas of responsibility to see what other areas are doing. We are not DDS. We are not Central Office. We are not Rehab Services. We are all the Texas Rehabilitation Commission. We need to understand and help each other."

His down-to-earth, back-to-basics style seemed to be what folks enjoyed the most. A statement that brought the house down was this: **NO MORE NEW INITIATIVES.** "We've been through management by objective, top-down management, bottom-up management, interactive planning and reengineering," said Arrell. "If we put into place everything we've learned, we'll be doing good. It all comes down to this: In VR, it's competitive employment, employment, employment for our clients. In DDS, it's concentrating on timely and accurate adjudication."

Ending, Arrell made a call to leaders and a call for action. Indeed, the last words of Arrell's speech were, "I need you to either lead, follow or get the ___ out of my way ... because we are moving forward." This was so memorable that it became the unofficial theme of the conference.

Seeing Green

The Commissioner's Conference started with over 200 green balloons floating to the ceiling. And looking through the boisterous audience, you could see about every shade of green possible on attendants. Outsiders might have thought it was a late St. Patty's Day. Guess again.

It was our way of telling Congressman Gene Green and his staff how much we appreciate their towing the line for pulling VR out of HR 1617. During the opening ceremony, Commissioner Arrell presented Congressman Green with a Commissioner's Medallion, the fourth ever given. Green credited his staff for the behind-the-scenes work with consumers and state agencies that he claims laid the groundwork for success.

Congressman Green, during his talk, gave us an update on the status of H.R. 1617. After months of inaction in Conference Committee, recent progress in negotiations gives hope that the bill will be voted on this session, which would be good news for VR. You might recall that we were excluded from job training consolidation in the bill and given links to the one-stop centers.



Congressman Gene Green with his assistant Marc Gonzalez



Klues, klues, whose got the klues?

The game was Kerrville Klue. In it, VR managers proved they were also super sleuths when using TRC electronic tools to solve mysterious cases. Here is one team tenaciously tracking down the klues.

Inside

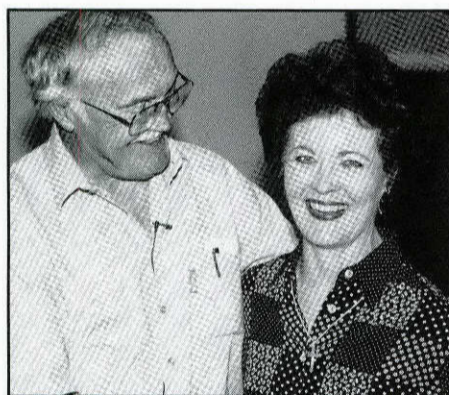
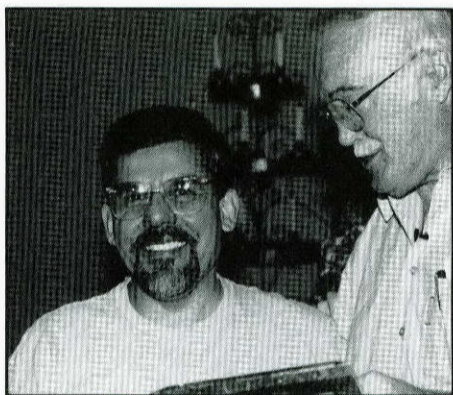
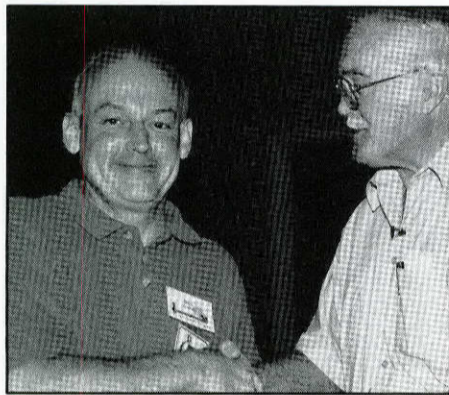
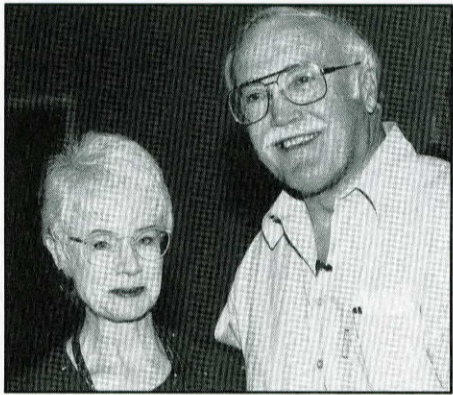
More from Kerrville.

- * TRC manager award winners; and
- * a new association for public rehabilitation professionals.

Manager Awards

At the Commissioner's Conference, TRC managers were recognized for their contributions and effective management style in a variety of categories.

This year, Dave Ward, associate commissioner for DDS Administrative Management Services, became a two-time winner for the Manager of the Year Award. For good reason. During the last year, Ward successfully oversaw the completion of the new DDS building and the move into it. He lead initiatives to bring automation to DDS and was instrumental in getting Texas approved for the only full-process pilot of the national disability process redesign. "He demonstrates an unswerving commitment to serving people with disabilities," reads his nomination. "He carries out his duties with integrity and great skill and serves as a positive role



Arrell with winners: Kathleen Jones, Bill Glenn, Arnold Barrera and Linda Monk.

I'M IN!

The "I'm In" buttons at Kerrville created quite a stir. They were given to new members of an association named the Texas RehabAction Network.

Following H.R. 1617, it became clear that there was not an association dedicated solely to the needs of the public vocational rehabilitation professional. RehabAction is designed to fill this important niche.

"In the upcoming Reauthorization (of the Rehabilitation Act), the issue will be the competency of the public vocational rehabilitation counselor," said Joe Owens, executive director of the CSAVR, at the conference. "It is now time to advocate for your profession, your work and the good it does."

RehabAction will have a special focus on advocacy but will also offer continuing education, service projects, networking, publications and an annual conference. Anyone interested in joining can call Jackie Feinberg at (512) 263-3684 for an enrollment form. Also, the t-shirt seen on Commissioner Arrell on the cover of this newsletter is available for purchase through the association. Call Jackie for details.

The Winners

Communication (tie)
David Norman,
DDS Public Information
director

Rick Phelan,
director of Programs
Administration

Creativity
Stephanie Slattery,
area manager, Houston
North Field Office

Cultural Diversity
Bob Marx
Region II director

Ethics
Maria Nava
area manager, El Paso

Extra Mile
Kathleen Jones,
DDS director of Policy
Administration

High Achiever
Mary Sconci-Wolfe
legislative liaison

Interactive Management
Tom Henderson,
Unit 23 supervisor

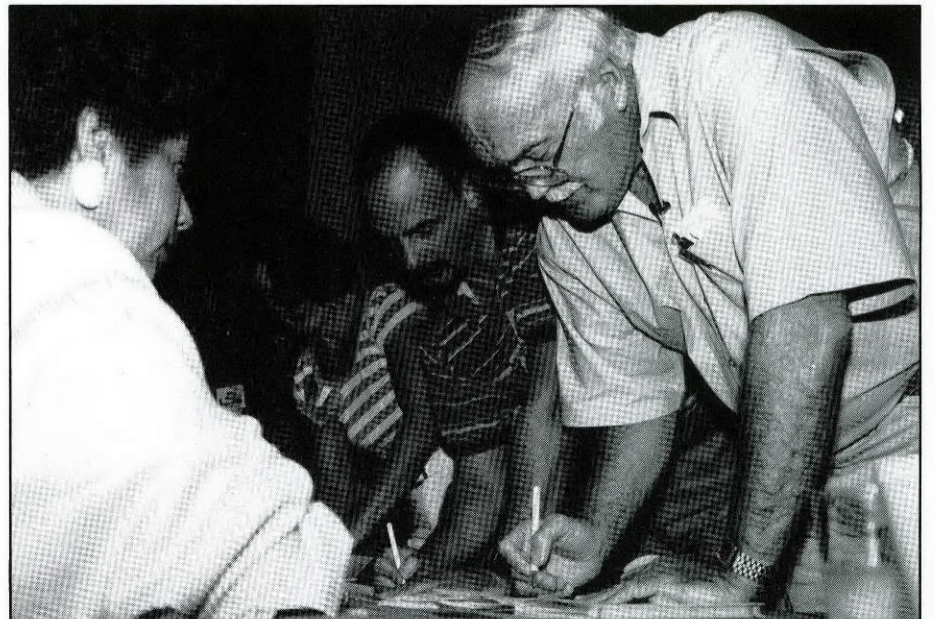
Leadership
Joellen Flores Simmons,
deputy commissioner,
Rehabilitation Services

Mentoring
Bill Glenn
area manager, San Antonio
North Field Office

Public Image
Arnold Barrera
Region IV programs
director

Spirit of Teamwork
Linda Monk
Unit 50 supervisor

Manager of the Year
Dave Ward
associate commissioner for
DDS Administrative
Management Services



Commissioner Arrell signing up for the Texas RehabAction Network.

Kids at Work

If you were W.C. Fields, it would have been a day to call in sick. There were kids everywhere. Throughout TRC, close to 500 children attended work with their parents or guardians, doubling the amount from the previous year.

Children enjoyed finding out what their parents do all day and why some parents claim to be so tired when they get home at night. But it didn't seem to tire out the kids at all. To reward them for their hard day's work, children received a certificate and t-shirt. HRM, Facilities Management and the Media Department deserve a big pat on the back for making the day special for the children.

Here's one child's letter sent to Commissioner Arrell:

"Thank you for letting me come to TRC with my aunt, Bertha Hinojosa. I had a good time. I helped her work arranging her plaques and I did a neat poster for her manual. I helped other people faxing, copying and mailing. I learned a lot. Thanks for the t-shirt." — Elizabeth Benavides



The Garland Field Office was one of many offices throughout the state that made this day a special one. In the photo are employees and their children in front of the building.

Letters

A portion of a letter sent to Jeri Badgett, counselor in the UT Austin Field Office, from a client.

Thanks for being with me as I walked across the platform that night and picked up my diploma, although you may have not known you were there. It was truly a momentous occasion for me, and although I was the only one seen when they called out my name, there were a lot of people walking with me as I went.

I also want you to know that I know how much you supported me. Yes, there was the financial aspect of it, of course, but what meant more to me was your faith, your trust, your consistency, your sincerity, your honesty, your strength, your compassion, your counsel, your sense of humor. You stuck in there with me and you told it like it was. I will remember you always. Thanks Jeri.

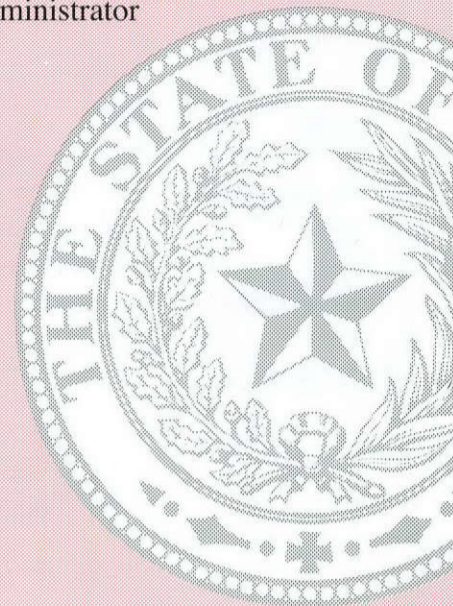
A portion of a memo sent to Brenda Croom, Unit 70 supervisor from Susan Scheel, CAS Unit 06.

I had the opportunity to visit with Ruth Wonders, a consumer benefit specialist with Beaumont Life Services. In our discussion, she was most complimentary of Bruce Sweet, examiner in Unit 70. She was impressed by his caring attitude, professionalism and helpfulness. It's nice to hear that there are examiners who have a very positive and respected name in various communities.

Across the State April 1996

Welcome Aboard!

Cynthia Hestand, data base administrator
 Stephen Hummel, clerk
 Lisa Lindeman, clerk
 Veranda Almanza, clerk
 Terry Shaw, library assistant
 Shirley Ferguson, RST
 Shirley Cox, RST
 Gloria Armento, RST
 Elida Gonzalez, RST
 Anita Herrera, RST
 Marcia Sapp, counselor
 Sherry Carlisle, RST
 Elsa Rodriguez, RST
 Patricia Rodriguez, counselor
 Olga Garza, RST



Retirements

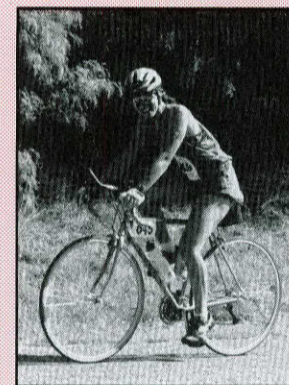
Nathalie Hallmark, MSS in the Beaumont Field Office, retired April 30, 1996 after 30 years of TRC service.

Kudos

Congratulations to TRC athletes going that extra mile!

- Judy Psenda, area manager in the Houston West Field Office, finished the Boston Marathon in three hours, 37 minutes. Out of 38,000 runners, she placed 13,078.

- Johna Kay Ramirez, video journalist in the Public Information Office, completed a 162 mile bike ride from Houston to Austin. The proceeds from the event went to the National Muscular Sclerosis Society. Also, Ramirez just completed the Danskin Triathlon.



At the recent Goodwill Industries Annual Meeting and Awards Luncheon in Fort Worth, three TRC counselors received awards for Referring Professionals of the Year. Shown left to right: Goodwill Industries president and CEO Fred Gandy; Tom Burchfield, counselor in the Fort Worth South Field Office; Zack Hilliar, counselor in the Arlington Field Office; Stephen Price, counselor in the Fort Worth South Field Office and Bernard Kern, Fort Worth Goodwill's executive director.

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*Randy Jennings, Director of Public Information
Shayla Fleshman, Editor
Randy Phinney & Susan Antoniewicz, Design*

State Service Awards - June 1996

10 Years

Melba Haynes
Sherry Jo Young
Juliet Biechlin

15 Years

Ellen Schroeder
Rebecca Benoit
Jeanette Parker
Sylvia Connor
Gary Rackley
Karen Kimbriel
Maria Irene Pena-Miller
Provi McCarthy

20 Years

James Weston
Lupe Ramirez
Lavene Jones

25 Years

Sharon Corry
Antonio Ocana, Jr.
Roberto Garcia

30 Years

Lucy Woodall
Lucille Chupik
Patricia Lincecum

35 Years

Billie McKinnon

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