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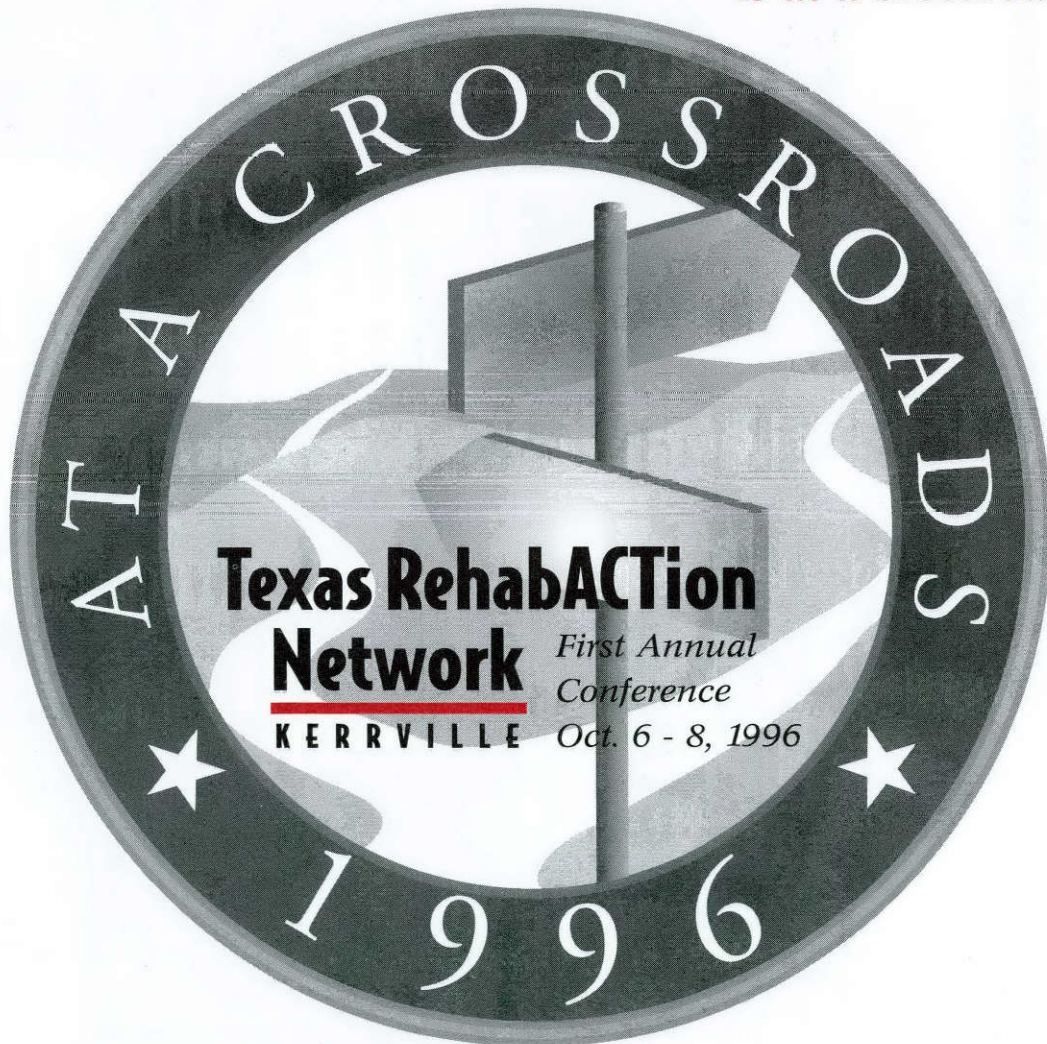
OCT 25 1996



trc today

An Employee Newsletter for Texas Rehabilitation Commission

**The state and federal partnership in
both vocational rehabilitation and
disability determination
is at a crossroads.**



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Texas Rehabilitation
Commission
4900 N. Lamar Blvd.
Austin, Texas 78751-2399
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At a Crossroads

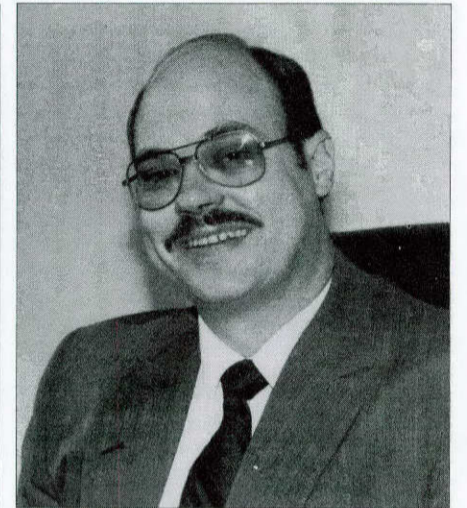
Last month, you read about a new association for public rehabilitation professionals — the Texas RehabACTION Network (TRAN).

On Oct. 6 - 8, at the Y.O. Holiday Inn in Kerrville, TRAN will hold its first annual conference. The event will highlight today's important issues such as Reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act and the Social Security Administration Disability Process redesign.

Other conference highlights include:

- Hands-on training in communicating to important audiences, including writing letters to editors, legislators and others.
- Dynamic keynote speakers such as Shar McBee speaking on "To Lead is to Serve."
- A panel of legislative aides to help you learn to build effective relationships with legislators in your district.
- Continuing education credits in a variety of areas.
- Fun social activities including a "select shots" golf tournament, tennis, volleyball, horseshoes and an open-mike night.

For those interested in joining the Texas RehabACTION Network and/or attending its first annual conference, cc:Mail Jackie Feinberg to request a membership form or pre-conference brochure.



Kenneth Vogel named executive deputy commissioner

On July 10, Commissioner Arrell selected Kenneth Vogel as executive deputy commissioner. In this position, he will oversee day-to-day operations of the Commission.

Vogel has to his credit a wealth of VR and DDS experience. Starting out as a counselor 26 years ago, he has since been a regional director in Region IV, an assistant deputy commissioner for Programs and, most recently, deputy commissioner for DDS.

"Ken clearly showed me that he had the greatest knowledge, skills and experience to do the job," says Commissioner Arrell. "He was also up-front with me about what he needed to do this position well and I respect that. I am very confident he has the leadership ability we need to move into the next century."

Mark your rolodex or organizer

~~483~~ is out 424 is in

Central Office is getting a new prefix for all phone lines excluding our 1 (800) lines. During the last week of September, a new telephone prefix 424 is replacing 483. The reason why: we're moving to a new technology called ISDN that is more cost-efficient and positions TRC to link computer and telephone services. For a smooth transition, a referral message will be placed for any 483 callers.

Making every day count



Robin Martin, Region V grants and contracts specialist, with her lifetime achievement award from the American Diabetes Association.

As a person with severe diabetes, TRC employee Robin Martin wakes up every morning thankful to be alive. And because of this she makes every day count. "My parents told me I would never live past the age of 18 and here I am twice the age they expected," says

Martin. "If I die tomorrow, I know that I have done the best that I can."

Martin has lived with this chronic disease since the young age of five. Because of this, her priorities are simple and concrete: to spend time with the people she loves, and

to know that she has used her gifts to help others understand what she knows so intimately -- diabetes.

Shortly after graduating from college in 1994, Robin lost her sight for six months due to a retinopathy caused by the diabetes. At the time, not knowing if her sight would return, Robin's life was thrown into a pivotal position.

When her sight returned, Robin decided she wanted to make a difference. And she has. She became the first diabetes specialist for the Commission for the Blind and developed expertise in adaptive equipment for people who are visually impaired to measure insulin and blood sugar levels. She was appointed to the Texas Diabetes Council in 1987 and is currently on the Board of the American Diabetes Association in San Antonio.

For the last three years, Robin has been with TRC as a grants and contracts specialist in Region V. From educating co-workers to continuing to work with diabetics who have also suffered from vision loss, she is not only effective at her job but is recognized for always going beyond the call of duty. "I have never seen anyone from any level of expertise convey the essential information pertaining to diabetes, and help people understand that information the way that Robin can," remarks Leeda Womack, TRC medical specialist, who now sits on the American Diabetes Council.

Martin just received a lifetime achievement award from the American Diabetes Association for her volunteerism and for her work as a professional in the area of diabetes. "What was such an honor was that people came from all over the state to share this moment with me," says Martin. "The only other person ever given this award was my mentor, so receiving it has been incredibly meaningful for me."

Hear ye, hear ye, town meetings are here

For years now, TRC has reached out to consumers through statewide public forums. The idea is a good one but now it's even better. Early this summer, out went the traditional public forums. In their place, town meetings were held that were casual, fun, and a whole lot more informative.

"I like this new format much better," says Jim Muhlhauser, Region III director, who attended a meeting in Lufkin. "You get real interaction, you get people talking and they bring out a number of things. Real issues come up and it's important to hear from consumers what they think the issues are."

"We had a great mix of people at the meeting in Lubbock — a cross section of individuals with different disabilities and service providers," says Mary Valentini, Region I director. "We broke into three groups and said 'let's go for it.' Then, leaders at each table reported to the whole group. It was a relaxed environment and consumers controlled what they wanted to talk about. Even after adjournment, folks stuck around to network and talk to each other. The communication was great."

Valentini also says that an assertive effort by her staff to invite and welcome people with disabilities to the meeting made a real difference. "We sent out letters and followed up with telephone calls. That really contributed to our wonderful turn-out."

by Sonia Nixon and Edna Walker

MENTORING - Two RSTs perspectives

Very important to assuring our customers quality services are employees who are informed and caring. TRC has found mentoring to be an important part of our total training program. Sure, it's useful to share information about the RSM and purchase orders. But it goes beyond that. Experienced employees pass along their attitudes and philosophy to the person mentored. It's contagious.

It's proven that a person learns faster when actively involved in the process. Mentoring gives hands-on experience and training. So, what makes a good mentor? Quite a few things factor in, but important ingredients of a good mentor are a positive attitude, pride in work, teamwork and patience, patience, patience.

"I'm grateful for the counselor who took me under his wing when I came to TRC a number of years ago," says Nixon. "I felt free to ask questions and had many years of experience at my disposal. This translates into better services for our clients."

Volunteers making a difference



As part of the Volunteer Program, TRC participated in a Summer Youth Program in Central Office. In the top photo Dana Stanislawski with one of her mentors, Lias B. Steen, BSSU/SP director. Says Steen: "We were lucky to have Dana this summer. In fact, she is a really hard worker, has a great attitude and was a joy to work with."

Using volunteers at TRC is a long-standing tradition, but now we're giving this idea new focus and treatment. A new Volunteer Program offers new ways to support the use of volunteers and to track our efforts so that the agency and the volunteer benefits.

Why use volunteers? The answer is simple: everyone comes out a winner. As volunteers gain experience, they also serve as an important resource for us. This idea doesn't change in the new Volunteer Program, it's simply enhanced.

The program offers a Manager's Volunteer Guidebook which helps managers and volunteers by spelling out policy and procedures. It also has useful forms to assist in documenting volunteer efforts.

"TRC has been using volunteers through the state for a while and we're really proud of these efforts," says Cindy Lara, HRM volunteer coordinator. "But if we're investing the time to train volunteers, then we should take the time to document their efforts. Volunteers can use TRC as a reference because their work is documented long-term. That's a very important benefit for them."

Regional coordinators are being appointed and this information will be on cc:Mail when formalized. In the meantime, folks interested in the Volunteer Program can cc:Mail Cindy Lara in HRM.

Across the State June/July 1996

Welcome Aboard!

Mark Estrada, clerk
James Swift, HRM
Margo Torres, clerk
Roxanne Torres, clerk
Tishalynn Revelle, admin. tech.
Shayla Welch, clerk
Laura Juarez, HRM
Rafael Garcia, Jr., counselor

Ruth Ann Zuniga, HRM
Dennis Grigsby, admin. tech.
Amelia Covington, counselor
Elizabeth Jogeese, RST
Alicia Pena, RST
Courtney Cording, counselor
Li Huang, admin. tech.

Retirements

Carmen Gonzales, RST in the San Antonio Field Office Central, retired June 30, 1996, after more than 24 years of state service.

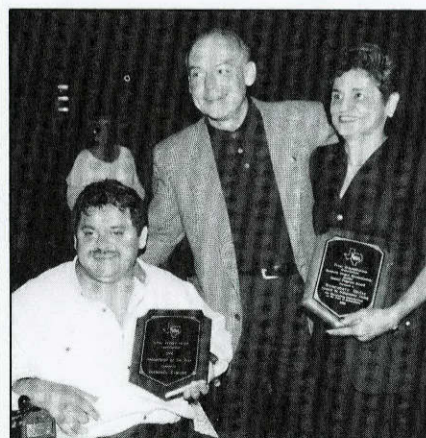
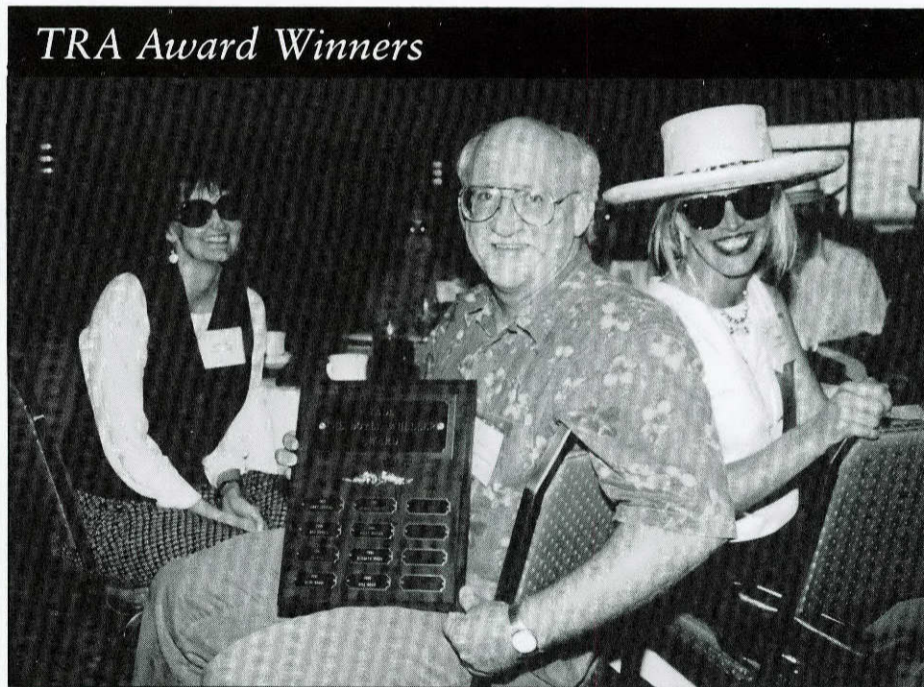
Deaths

Valerie McGregor, RST in the Dallas Northeast Field Office, recently passed away.

Richard Stanley, TRAC member and advocate for persons with mental illness, died June 23, 1996.

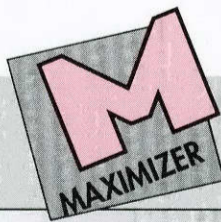
Sylvia Meyer, disability examiner in Unit 2 and president of the Texas State Employees Union, passed away after a lengthy illness.

TRA Award Winners



Here are two Texas Rehabilitation Association award winners from their annual conference in July. Left: TRC client and Promethean Award winner Fernando Hinojos with his counselor Bill Glenn and mother. Above: Jackie Feinberg (left) and Leslie Hendren (right) wear sunglasses in honor of Bill Dunn's Doyle Wheeler award — "The future's so bright, Bill .. you gotta wear shades."

Arlington Field Office Maximized to the Max



In the photo, the Arlington Field Office displays over 400 Maximizers they have received. Is that an agency record?

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Address Correction Requested

trc today

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*Shayla Fleshman, Editor
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State Service Awards - July 1996

10 Years

Michael Stark
 Pat Kennedy
 Maria Tirres
 Maria Silgero
 Randall Oshman

25 Years

J. C. Cardwell
 Cecelia Stark
 Darla Smiley
 Gloria Barron
 Betty G. Hughes
 Robert Sebesta
 Connie MacCabe

15 Years

Rafie McCullar
 Elvia Rodriguez
 Sandra Vandeven
 Mary Sturman
 Peggy Stewart
 Adrian Cervantez
 William Floerke, Jr.
 Sally Koch
 Dora Garcia

20 Years

Jim Curd
 Josephine Contreras
 M. L. Crone, Jr.
 Patricia Bell
 Sheila Carter
 Don Oelschlegel
 Camille Seaton-McAnally
 Cynthia Kingsley
 Robert Gips