

# TODAY

TRC TODAY is a newsletter for the employees of the Texas Rehabilitation Commission.

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# the SPIRIT of America



Our military forces did their jobs and confirmed their reputation as the best-trained, best-led, and best-equipped in the world. Our technology withstood the test and earned new respect for **AMERICA**. At home we earned top marks for the support showered on the troops and the loved ones they left behind—through countless letters and packages mailed, prayers offered, yellow ribbons tied, and numerous flags unfurled.

In the wake of the Allies' victory in the **PERSIAN GULF WAR**, Americans are prouder and more appreciative of their freedoms than we have been in many years. Watching and reading about the devastations of war and the freedoms lost by others have caused us to pause for reflection. Victory in a brief war has dramatically united us as a people.

Americans know all too well that it is not enough to attain **LIBERTY**. It must be protected without any compromise.

"The price of freedom is eternal vigilance," said Thomas Jefferson. A half-million troops were vigilant for freedom this time and more than 100 Americans paid the ultimate price. Americans have been vigilant in defending the cause of freedom for 215 years. Although the cause is abstract, the **SACRIFICE** made by individuals is very real.

The greatest salute to our freedom—and to the men and women who have defended it— will be to stand united against the threats to our freedoms at home. Poverty, illegal drugs, crime, ignorance and discrimination still deny **FREEDOM** to Americans throughout our nation. Let's move on from our Fourth of July parades and fireworks rein-vigorated to right wrongs close to home, so that all Americans, including people with disabilities, can feel the legacy of freedom touch their lives.

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# Makeover: shorter RSM manual due next year

The RSM (Rehabilitation Services Manual) is being totally reorganized, reformatted and rewritten. Early 1992 is the target date for the new manual's publication and use.

Executive Deputy Commissioner Jimmy Jackson calls the new manual "one of the agency's most important projects." The new manual will not contain new policy but will update terminology and procedures, and will cite federal regulations applicable to each chapter.

The massive project started in mid-1990, when regional directors called for an RSM committee to look into improving the manual. The most recent RSM edition appeared in 1980.

Program Specialist Mike Brevell chairs the committee and coordinates activities of such diverse regional representatives as: Arnold Barrera, program officer, Houston; Ken Bowen, area

**"The pages already rewritten indicate the new manual will have 40 percent fewer words."**

manager, Victoria; Elayne Halkias, management support Specialist, Fort Worth; Rick Hall, program specialist, Central Office; Randy Jacobs, program officer, Lubbock; Aris Lopez, counselor, San Antonio; Ismael Melgoza, counselor, Dallas.

Committee representatives encourage input of

concerns or suggestions to improve the policy manual. The committee work is supported by Watt Pye, publications technical writer/editor, and Sid Womack, supervising VR auditor, Central Office.

To date, almost 20 percent of the manual has been rewritten. Its 834 pages and table of contents start with referral and progresses through the VR process to closure and beyond.

"Our objective is to make policy and procedure easier to find, read and use," says Mike Brevell. "The pages already rewritten indicate the new manual will have 40 percent fewer words."

## DDS moves over—and out

Things are still jumping at DDS.

On May 22, the state awarded a contract to begin construction of a new building for DDS operations. The address for the new building will be 12080 Park 35 Circle, in North Austin. The projected date for completion is December 1992.

DDS has approved its first remote site at 4175 Friedrich Lane, in South Austin, which will house a new directorate of 4 units and support staff. Meanwhile, the current location at 118 E. Riverside has been remodeled and expanded by 4100 square

feet to accommodate 130 new employees hired as a result of the growing workload and the "Zebley" Supreme Court decision.

The DDS training department recently graduated 90 disability examiners, the largest class ever. "Things are moving fast, but in the right direction," says Commissioner Arrell. "The

remote sight office for DDS is an effort to position ourselves in the future for the possibility of face-to-face consultation with disability applicants and the training of 90 new examiners is a remarkable achievement."



### June 1991 Service Awards

**Region III**  
**15 years:**  
Lupe Ramirez

**Region IV**  
**10 years:**  
Sylvia Sherron

**Region V**  
**10 years:**  
Sylvia B. Connor

**Region VI**  
**10 years:**  
Rebecca Benoit

**20 years:**  
William B. Forrester

**DDS**  
**10 years:**  
Provi McCarthy  
Gary Rackley  
Karen J. Kimbriel  
Frederick Braastad  
Carless Grays

**Central Office**  
**15 years:**  
James B. Curd

**25 years:**  
James L. Jackson

## PCEDP conference hits all-time highs

The annual conference of the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities in Dallas is now history—but not before it made some history of its own.

A record breaking 6,500 people attended the conference. The host facility, the Loews Anatole Hotel, did a remarkable job of accommodating the needs of people with disabilities in such diverse activities as luncheons, theatre-style meetings and training sessions.

TRC, working with the Dallas Mayor's Committee, provided video-based disability awareness training for more than 400 Loews employees, and the employee's sensitivity showed. The staff had the attitude that they treated the conference guests like they would treat anyone who walked through the front doors of the hotel.

As the countdown for ADA enters the final year, the Loews Anatole's successfully hosting this conference set new quality compliance standards, not only for their industry, but for private enterprise in Texas.



*At the annual PCEDP conference, this Loews Anatole doorman practiced the disability awareness training he learned.*

## Comp rehab: a call for consumer input

On May 16, Gov. Ann Richards signed the Comprehensive Rehabilitation Trust Fund law, which will provide much needed funds to serve persons with severe spinal cord and

traumatic brain injuries. The law establishes a dedicated fund for newly injured persons who need costly comprehensive medical rehabilitation services and do not have the resources to pay for such services themselves.

In the near future, consumers and TRC staff will be writing the policy which will implement the program. If you have any concerns about eligibility, type of service, service duration, or how dollars will be spent per client, let us hear from you. We want this program to have major consumer input. As you prepare your response, please remember that the law limits services to the spinal cord and traumatic brain injured and the funds can only be spent for comprehensive medical rehabilitation services.

Call or send your comments to Kaye Beneke, assistant deputy commissioner for Consumer Affairs:

Consumer Affairs Office  
Texas Rehabilitation  
Commission  
4900 N. Lamar Blvd.  
Austin, Texas 78751  
(512) 483-4400

**TODAY**  
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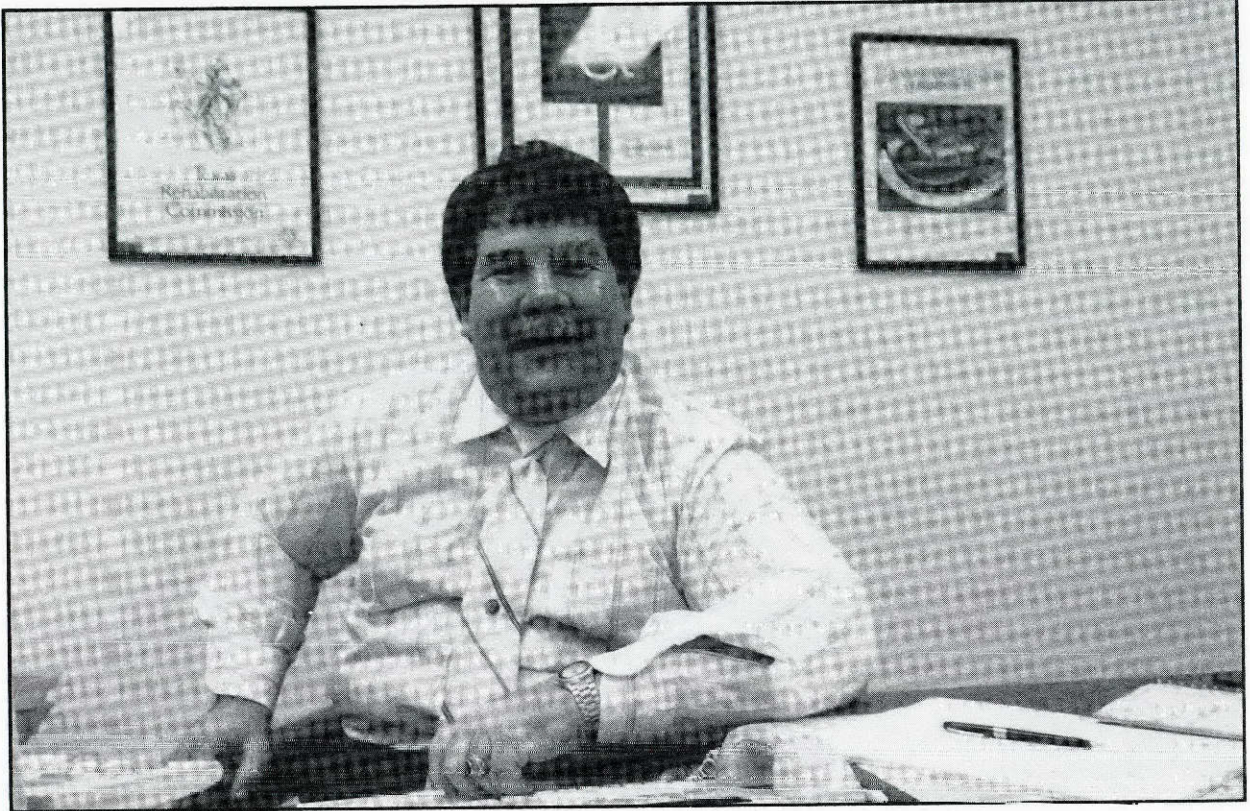
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Texas Head Injury  
Association presents  
The 10th Annual Family and  
Professional Conference

**"Creating Options"**  
August 2-3, 1991  
Stouffer Hotel  
Austin, Texas

For exhibit information:  
Jean Coufal  
817/774-2111  
or 817/774-3240

For conference information:  
Cindy McLendon  
512/450-0966

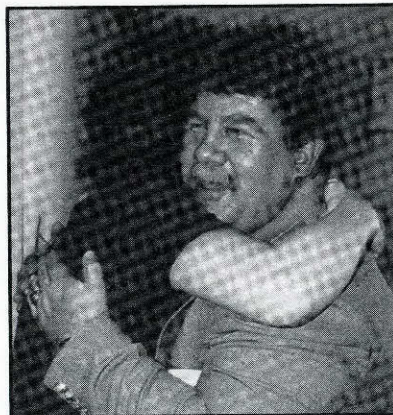


*The Maestro, Frank Arrington, is a bright, personable individual with a high energy level and a quick smile.*

He never thought he would grow up to be a receptionist for a state rehabilitation agency and be called a "maestro" because of his finely orchestrated efficiency—but he is loving every minute of it!

For 10 years, Frank was a medical corpsman in the Navy. That was all he ever wanted to be. But rigid weight requirements forced him to leave the Navy, and it was not the last time his weight would cause him a problem.

In 1987, after making a successful adjustment to the



civilian world of selling cars, he suffered a serious heart attack.

"Best thing that ever happened to me," he says. "It made me look hard at my life and reassess my priorities. It also allowed TRC to help me look for options."

Frank credits his Pasadena TRC counselor, Alan Craig, with his doing so well in his rehabilitation program. But Craig just writes that comment off to Frank's humility. "Frank is really very much into his own plan of rehabilitation—he gives 150 percent. I wish I had 30 more

clients like him," Craig says.

Being a receptionist/switchboard operator at the busy Houston Central Office can be very stressful. Is he worried about his health?

"Oh no, it is a good kind of stress for me," he says. "I get a great satisfaction from the challenge of helping people with their problems, making them feel welcome and relieving their anxiety. My blood pressure is the lowest it has been in six years. This is really working for me."

Debbie Smith, one of the counselors in the Houston Central Field Office, has dubbed him the "maestro."

"You ought to see how he orchestrates the hectic activity of our reception area—balancing phone calls with everything else," she says. "He is impressive."

Just about anyone who calls or comes by this office will second that.

# People with disabilities as employees

**A**s we approach the 1992 effective date for the Americans with Disabilities Act, a Bureau of National Affairs survey found that 82 percent of responding organizations already employ individuals with disabilities.

**O**f those employers responding to the survey, 78 percent have taken steps to aid the performance or advancement of disabled workers. The most frequent action has been modifying work station equipment by adding items such as special telephone devices or lighting, or altering work station furniture by height adjustments.

**F**or responding employers, the main disabilities among workers were hearing impairment (56 percent), visual impairment (39 percent), speech impairment (33 percent), wheelchair users (27 percent), mental handicaps (27 percent) and mental illness (13 percent).

## Current study shows high numbers, diversity of people with disabilities

TRC has been trying, unsuccessfully, to get the legislature to authorize a demographic survey of Texans with disabilities for several years.

The state of Illinois, roughly equivalent to Texas in population figures, completed such a survey. Information obtained from the survey will aid the rehabilitation agency in planning the size, cost and distribution of their services.

One of the problems with earlier estimates is differences in definitions of what constitutes a disability. The Illinois study used a functional definition.

For instance, people who said they cannot find a job or move around without assistance because of a disabling

condition were counted as being disabled. Such a definition is more helpful for service providers who are less interested in how many people have disabilities than in how many need assistance.

### Illinois data highlights

- About 600,000 people, or 5 percent of Illinois' population, have a disability.
- 55 percent of people with disabilities have mobility impairments; 22 percent have sensory impairments; 8 percent have mental or cognitive impairments; and 36 percent have health impairments.
- 10 percent of people with disabilities are 21 years old

## EYE ON THE 90s

or younger; 38 percent are between 22 and 59; and 52 percent are 60 years old or older.

- 32 percent of households of people with disabilities have incomes of less than \$10,000, compared to 15 percent of households in the general population.
- 61 percent of working age people with disabilities are unemployed, 29 percent work full time and 10 percent work part time, while 72 percent of unemployed people with disabilities say they want to work. Of those not working, 60 percent have no limiting medical condition, and could work with appropriate supports, technology and services.

# Conference highlights diversity in rehab field

Opportunities in rehabilitation are as diverse as the recent graduates entering the field, but reaching out to these individuals and informing them about career choices can be a major challenge for established professionals.

More than 300 participants attended the Region VI "Careers in Rehabilitation" conference held in Dallas this April. The conference offered students from Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico and Oklahoma the chance to learn about career options in the rehabilitation field. Students attended panel discussions about the many facets of rehabilitation.

The multi-purpose agenda also provided profes-

sionals, educators and exhibitors information about innovations, curriculum developments and networking in the rehabilitation field. The \$50 exhibitor registration fee paid for student lunches and cash awards.

Keynote speaker Dr. Fred McFarlane, director of RRCEP at San Diego State University, said the field is growing; he told students choosing a career in rehabilitation requires certain personality traits. "A belief that people are positive, a belief



*Delores Packer at the "Careers in Rehabilitation" conference last April.*

and commitment to people, a desire to address the whole specter of individuals' needs and a willingness to accept diversity are all needed for a career in rehabilitation," he said.

## Regional Notes

### Region I

**Joyce A. Parkey**, rehabilitation services technician in the Plainview Field Office, retired on April 30 after 10 years services with TRC.

**James Geiger**, counselor in the San Angelo Field Office, was appointed as a member of the Concho Valley Private Industry Council by Gov. Ann Richards.

### Region IV

Region IV had more nominations for Outstanding Employee of the Year than they have had in years—18 people were nominated.

### Region V

**Norman Hooge**, a counselor in the San Antonio Field Office West, was recently awarded a doctorate in philosophy degree. Hooge's dissertation, "Effects of Rational

Behavior Training on Attitudes of Rehabilitation Support Personnel" was written with the help of TRC employees in San Antonio.

### DDS

**Hilma G. Onofrey**, medical records technician in the Waco DDS Field Office, and Disability Examiner, **David H. League**, Initial Unit 03, both retired May 31 after 16 years of service with the Commission.

### Central Office

**Delvin Sparks**, program specialist, had an article, entitled "Migrant Farm Workers in South Texas" printed in the Spring 1991 issue of *OSERS News in Print*.

**Judy Bruce**, program specialist, served as TRC's representative under SCR 82 by Sen. Zaffirini. Bruce attended conferences throughout the state to inform Texas citizens of benefits available to women who have served in the military.

# Cause for applause

**Ufot Umana (South Austin Field):**

I took my last final Saturday and made arrangements today for my grades to be sent to Eastern Illinois University. Except for the paperwork that is left to be done, that made me a GRADUATE! I couldn't have done it without you and your support. It is the achievement of a life-long dream, and I was able to complete it because of the Texas Rehabilitation Commission and you. I'm a writer—words are my business, and yet I can't find the words to adequately express how I feel about all you have done for me. I guess "Thanks" will just have to do.

Diane Lee

\*\*\*

**Roger Peterson (San Antonio Central Field Office):**

I wanted to write and thank you again for speaking at our ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis) Association Support Group meeting. The information that you brought our members about the Texas Rehabilitation Commission was most helpful.

I recently had the pleasure of seeing Manuel Gonzales operate his computer with voice synthesizer. Your help has brought joy to this man and to his family and friends.

Mary L. Klenke

\*\*\*

**Dwight Lindsley (South Austin Field Office):**

I write these few lines simply to say "thank you T.R.C." for

your wonderful support of my counseling and upcoming tuition fees.

Were it not for the help of social services for my children and now, T.R.C. for myself, I could continue to be lost.

TRC has proven to be the light at the end of our tunnel.

I thank Dr. Ufot Umana for his words of advice, but most especially I would like to thank his assistant, Ms. Carol Hyatt for her wonderful and efficient support.

From the moment TRC, Dr. Umana and Ms. Hyatt said we can help, I've felt my self-esteem begin to grow.

I will be eternally grateful for your support.

Idalia Maldonado

\*\*\*

**Patsy Heard (Port Arthur Field Office):** (This letter is from a client of 10 years ago. Her counselor at that time was Richard Pittman. The client offers thanks to Richard Pittman, Edna Reynolds, RST, and to Patsy Heard.)

I am writing you this letter because after all these years, I would like you to know how very grateful and appreciative my daughter and I are for all the help and support we received through TRC.

Texas Rehabilitation Commission was not only a positive influence in our lives, but a turning point. We were started on a new road with a positive self-image and self-confidence; because of TRC we have learned to cope, and

to live life to the fullest.

My daughter has developed into a confident, successful working wife and mother. Her nine-year old son is healthy and doing very well in school. As for me, I am happily single, employed, and feel very good about myself. I cannot thank TRC enough for everything it has meant to us.

Delia Moreno

\*\*\*

**John O'Brien (Dallas Southwest Field Office):**

I am a client of Beth Palmer's. I am currently finishing my last module in the OST program at El Centro.

I would like to take a moment of your time to express my gratitude to the Rehabilitation program and the fine people who make it. Especially Beth!

My background is opioid dependency. After months of rejection, I turned to the "Return to Work" program for help. And to tell the truth, I really wasn't expecting too much.

Well, Beth surprised me! Her constant support and approval helped me so much.

My class is ending, but I have been accepted with the Internal Revenue Service to do my internship.

People and things can change with the proper encouragement and aid. I believe I am proof. But only because I received the proper help along the way from dedicated people like Beth Palmer.

Jacqui Dugan

## Letters



The following are portions of letters received from clients.



## Rising star

*She is still a "star." Martha Bursik retired from TRC after 43 years of service and was featured in the December 1990 issue of TRC Today. She was recently featured in the Healthscope publication of All Saints Health Care, Inc., where she has not only made a text book recovery from surgery for a blocked artery, but has worked to encourage others at the All Saints Carter Rehabilitation Center. Now a diet and exercise buff, she is making plans for "stepping out" once again.*

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