

TRC TODAY

TRC TODAY
a newsletter for
employees of the
Texas Rehabilitation
Commission

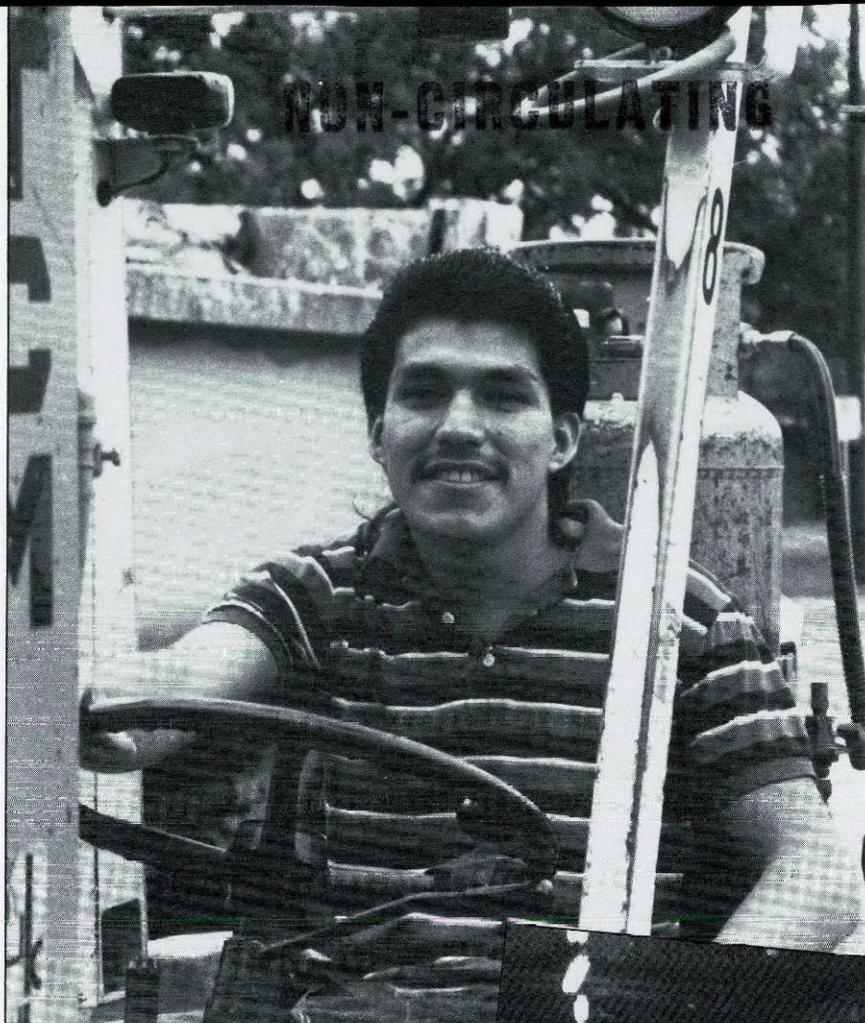
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May 1991

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The real world opens up for Joe Pesina

Joe Pesina is a lucky dude, and he knows it. Not many people grow up in a street gang and leave it for a better life. He has.

Two friends and a cousin have died in street gang fights over the last nine months. Joe has been assaulted by a gang member in the last six months. Even so, he is upbeat and optimistic about his plans for the future.

What happened? Falling in love didn't hurt.

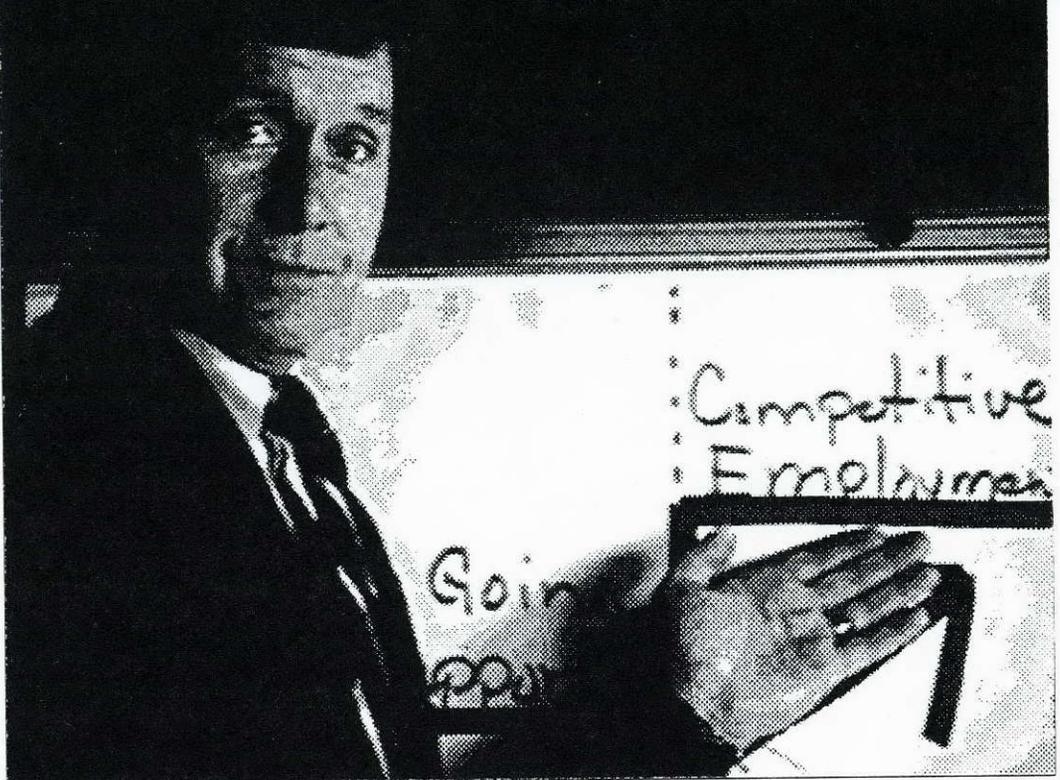
He has also had the best our system can offer to break the lure of the gang ... boot camp program for young offenders, substance abuse treatment, job readiness training, assault prevention classes, and job coaching.

Carey Taylor, Joe's VR counselor whom he simply refers to as his "friend," credits Joe with finally being able to distinguish between a real and a fantasy existence.

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||
*This is our
concept of
the future*
||



This picture, of Jimmy Jackson, is a laser printed video frame from the program.

Continuum of services:

The changing focus of rehabilitation

James L. Jackson, executive deputy commissioner, opened an 18 minute video presentation on continuum of services with the statement, "This is a major change," and closed it with, "This is our concept of the future." He wasn't exaggerating.

The concept of "continuum of services" has been used for several years to explain the array of services TRC offers to people with disabilities depending upon their need and ability to achieve competitive employment.

Jackson addressed the continuity among these services as they apply to extended rehabilitation services (ERS) and independent living services (ILS) and how both can complement VR services.

His major points were:

- Both ILS and ERS began as special programs to attend to specific needs of people with severe disabilities. Services

for these people have been limited to certain projects and locations.

- Beginning in fiscal year 1992, ERS services will be opened to all clients, statewide, on a fee for service basis. The ERS program managers will become VR counselors.
- At time of referral, each counselor will determine one of three tracks for client participation in their rehabilitation program – independent living services (not employment), ongoing support (ERS, requiring life-long support in community integrated employment or sheltered employment) and competitive employment (VR).

"Staff have worked very hard to develop clear policies and procedures that can be easily applied for our client's benefit," says Ken Vogel, assistant commissioner for central office programs operations. "The goal of the ERS program, for example, will be to serve clients statewide and focus on individual client needs services rather than grouping services into a contract model."

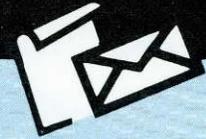
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Letters



Joellen Flores Simmons, assistant deputy commissioner, wrote the following memorandum to Nelda Choate, counselor in the Athens Field Office:

"I received the most wonderful phone call from Mrs. Dailey (mother of client named Cynthia) regarding her appreciation of the work you have accomplished with her daughter.

"It was a welcome break to receive this wonderful call. She related that they were formerly from California and that TRC services have succeeded where others have failed.

"Special commendation for your efforts and to those of Cynthia's job coach (Lisa Williams). A job well done!"

Disability Examiner Shirley Carter, CDR Unit 40, received the following note from a claimant:

"Sending you a rainbow of thanks! This card says it all Ms. Shirley Carter and TRC staff."

Here is a portion of a statement from a client submitted by a member of the Consumer Advisory Committee, David Vander Hee:

"My name is Larna. I have Multiple Sclerosis. I believe I have had it for many years....

"In September 1990 I heard about VAIL Independent Living. I contacted Mr. David Vander Hee. ... Believe me, thru him my life is changed. He suggested I go to Texas Rehab. I met a lovely lady in a wheel chair Marilyn Zinsmeyer, counselor. Seeing her and David, both in a wheel chair, yet busy helping others was better than medication....

"I'm truly grateful to you folks at Texas Rehabilitation Commission. I've asked for a ramp and lift and scooter. Thank you so much for caring and helping people like me...."

La Juana Burgess, disability examiner CDR Unit 20, received the following note from a claimant's mother:

"I am writing to thank you for helping me and to send you one of Bradley's programs. Also he had enough money to pay for his cremation. May God bless and keep you always."

Charlene Morgan wrote the following letter to the Editor of *The Leader* in Orange, Texas:

"So many charitable organizations don't get the recognition they deserve.

"As an amputee I have had the privilege of personally dealing with an organization. Texas Rehabilitation Commission has given me the opportunity to build my confidence and character by funding my college education. They have proven to me that my tax dollars are not going in vain.

"I would like to express my appreciation for the help Texas Rehabilitation Commission has given me in furthering my education and self-betterment."

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Regional Notes



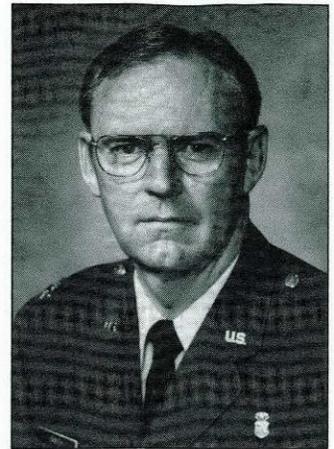
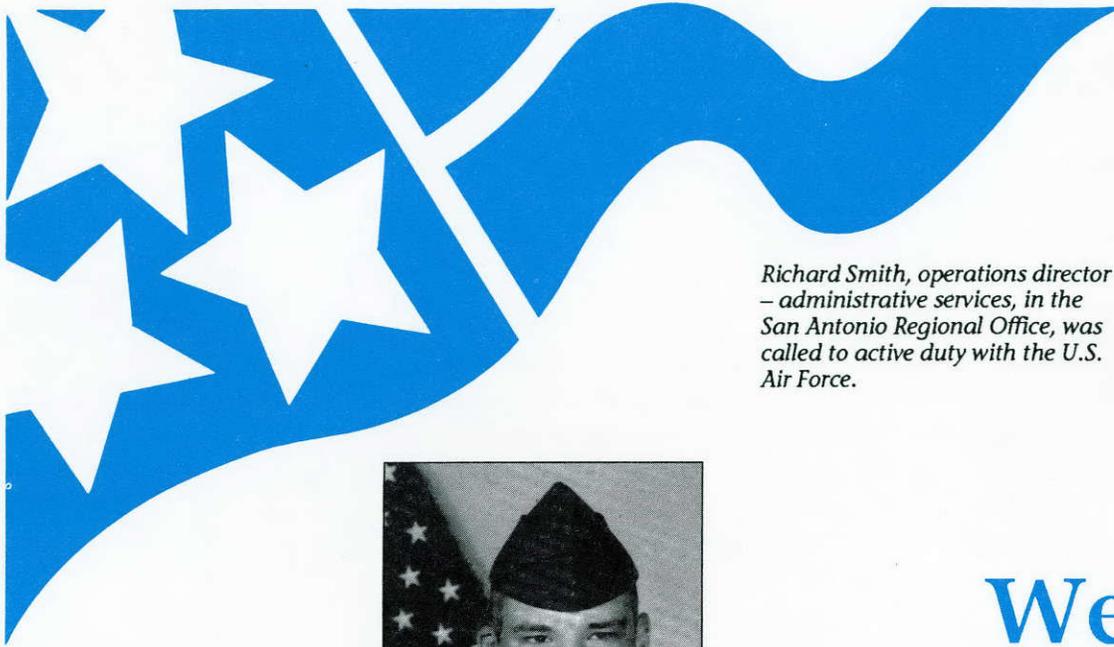
Editor's Note:
If you have items of interest in the various TRC regions (including DDS and Central Office), such as local awards, press coverage, conferences, meetings or other TRC-related activities which could appear in *Regional Notes*, please submit them for consideration to "TRC Today" c/o the Public Information Office.

Region V

Area Manager West Huerta announced that Alejandro Solis joined the McAllen Unit as a counselor and that Nancy Garces is the new rehabilitation services technician as of April 1.

DDS

Amalia Lozano, disability examiner in CDR Unit 40, retired Feb. 28 with 11 and one-half years of service.



Richard Smith, operations director – administrative services, in the San Antonio Regional Office, was called to active duty with the U.S. Air Force.

We salute you

May is a special month with Forces Day and Memorial Day to honor TRC employees and members who served our country during the Persian Gulf War.



Juan Martin Rodriguez, brother of Rose Mary Rodriguez, counselor in the El Paso Field Office East, a reservist called to active duty and served on the U.S.S. Haleakala.



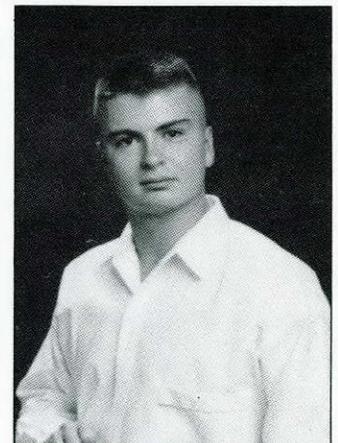
Pfc. Greg Grayson, 3rd Armored Division, served in Kuwait and is the son of Robert Grayson, disability examiner in DDS Unit 35.



Lance Cpl. Anthony Scott Ross, nephew of Judy Hoffman, DDS Unit 07 and Connie Neely Unit 01, served with the First Marine Division in a regular combat unit.



E3 Jeffrey Scott May, nephew of Judy May, rehabilitation services technician in the Lufkin Field Office, served aboard the U.S.S. Barbour County in the Persian Gulf.



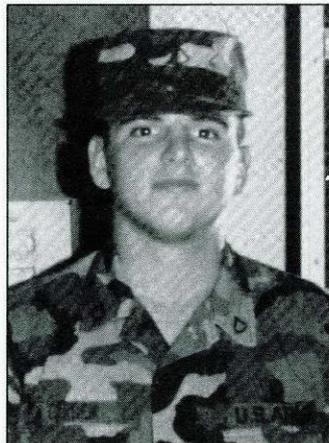
Spec. James F. Nelson, 82nd Airborne Division, son of Maria Rutledge, administrative coordinator in Legal Services, was in the Saudi Arabia operation.



Pfc. William A. Matthews, brother of Linda Matthews, administrative technician in DDS Quality Appraisal Services, served in Operation Desert Storm.



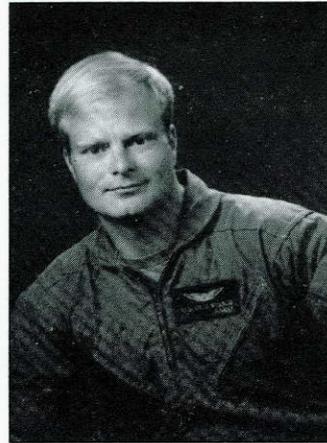
Seaman Kalon Conder, stepson of Juliet Swieczkowski of Central Office Publications, is serving on the Ranger Aircraft Carrier in the Gulf.



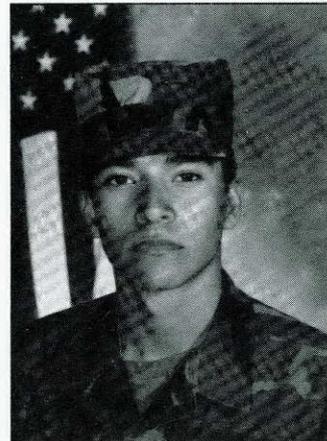
E4 Randall A. Garren, 75th Field Artillery, is the son of Nancy D. Garren, disability examiner in DDS Unit 06.



SSgt Jesse D. Almanza is the brother of Rehabilitation Services Technician Gloria A. Cortez, San Antonio Field Office South.



Capt. Michael Werner, U.S. Army, 1st Inf. Division, 7th Army, is still in Iraq and is the son of Judy Baize, rehabilitation services technician in the Abilene Field Office.



Albert D. Alvarez, nephew of Otilia Fraga, a purchasing assistant in the Central Office, is serving with the U.S. Army.



More TRC family members who also served.

Rufus G. Dill, is a Navy hospital corpsman serving with the Navy Fleet Hospital Five in eastern Saudi Arabia. Dill is the stepson of Nedra Dill, counselor in the Amarillo Field Office.

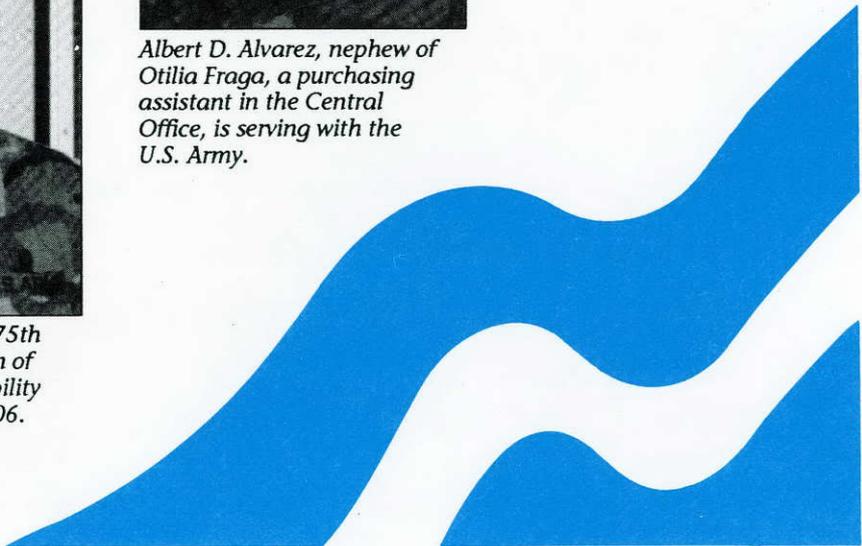
Rick Arispe, counselor in the Houston North Field Office was called to active duty with the U.S. Army 1st Medical Group.

Lt. Col. Ramon Rubio, husband of Sarah Pierce-Rubio, a counselor in the Return to Work Program in Region 5, was activated as part of the 94th General Hospital and is still in Germany.

Spec. 4 Mark E. Espeseth, U.S. Army, 1st Inf. Division, 34th Armor, is the brother of Susan Fleming, counselor in the Houston South Field Office.

Raymond Mitchell, grandson of Carmen Colvin, rehabilitation services technician in the Houston South Field Office, is still serving in Operation Desert Storm.

Spec. Sheila Saenz Young, niece of Bertha N. Hinojosa, operations director – program services at the Dallas Regional Office, served in the Saudi operation.



Letters



Here is a portion of a letter from the Internal Revenue Service to Lydia Arguello, administrative technician in Central Office:

"Thank you for the important role you played in making the Austin Compliance Centers' 1990 observance of Disability Awareness Day a success.

"Thank you for bringing and setting up the display for Texas Rehabilitation Commission assisted technical aides which enable persons with various disabilities to function effectively. Volunteering to attend and demonstrate these aides for day shift reflected your sincere interest in increasing employee awareness.

"...She mentioned that it was a pleasure to work with you because you demonstrated exceptional professional expertise, knowledge, attitude and ensured that this event was a great success."



Counselor Terry Zimmerman, Amarillo Field Office, received the following letter from the wife of client Michael Dobson:

"Just a note to thank you for your visits and concern for Michael. We appreciate your staying involved in Michael's case. We are blessed he is doing so good and I see improvement on a monthly basis. Once again, thank you!"



The Victoria Field Office and Counselor Joey Crow received the following letter from a client:

"This is a letter to thank TRC and Joey Crow for your assistance. I have become a Certified Alcoholism and Drug Abuse counselor. Without your assistance in regards to tuition and mileage allowance, I could not have achieved this. I do regret the interruption of my attendance at the University of Houston at Victoria. I very much appreciate the attention and financial assistance which you gave to me. I needed financial assistance and guidance in this area and TRC followed through. I feel that I can now complete my college education on my own without any further assistance from TRC. I now work for Talbot House/Gulf Bend MHMR and am very pleased with my employment here. Many thanks for your assistance, guidance and attention."



Here is a portion of a letter that Disability Examiner James Carter, Initial Unit 13, received from a claimant:

"I just wanted to take the time to "Thank You" for ALL your concern and support; concerning my case.

"I know you, who work in Social Government; never get "That pat on the back!" you so richly deserve. I can only imagine the stress you must go through."



Some of us have bouts of mental illness occasionally. Some conditions are barely noticeable; others may be quite incapacitating and affect our families, jobs, and social life. If you are experiencing difficulties, if life is not satisfying, talk to a friend first. For more objective help, seek a professional. Don't give up until you're over whatever may be bothering you and are fully enjoying life again!

TRC supports our Employee Assistance Program (EAP), a confidential counseling and referral service, provided free of charge to employees and their dependents. The EAP offers assistance whether the problem be financial, marital, emotional, legal, alcohol/drug or stress related.

..... Austin (512) 477-4491, Houston (713) 640-1721,
FOR Irving (214) 445-1150, Beaumont (409) 727-7129
HELP
CALL Other locations around the state call toll-free:
1-800-343-3822 and TDD call toll-free 1-800-448-
..... 1823.



A giant leap forward for DDS

DDS has not had a major expansion in resources since 1973. They have lagged behind the growth in other parts of the agency.

The demand on people and resources seemed endless and frustrating. When others were getting more automation, they seemed to be getting more work. Federal court decisions weren't going their way. Backlogs were growing and tensions mounting.

This is changing. DDS is making a giant leap forward.

A recent U.S. Supreme Court decision, *Zebly vs. Sullivan*, requires the Social Security Administration to radically change their procedures for establishing children's claims for Supplemental Security Income (see TRC Today, Sept. 1990).

Faced with having to rework some 25,000 children's claims, this decision is actually a blessing in disguise for DDS, being the catalyst for a supplemental federal funding to respond to the backlog.

Supplemental funding is expected in May 1991 to assist with the court cases. Recently, the Office of Management and Budget also released \$40 million dollars to assist DDS across the nation with the backlog of initial, reconsideration and hearings and appeals cases.

Put together, this ambitious expansion will include:

- Hiring of 130 new positions in DDS, from clerical support to program administration
- development of a remote office, away from the 118 E. Riverside address, which could house up to 100 new employees
- the commitment to have these positions "on-line" and productive by the end of the present fiscal year.

"This expansion provides an excellent opportunity to bring DDS into the 1990s and beyond with improved service

delivery to Texans with Disabilities," says DDS Deputy Commissioner Les Albrecht. "This should provide a work force with the enthusiasm to support our mission in a quality that is second to none."

In related objectives during this expansion, DDS plans to bring the ratio of examiners to staff to 40 percent, or better, by March 1992. This will place TRC DDS in the top 20 percent among other Disability Determination agencies in DE to support staff ratio. Recruiting efforts will focus on a diverse pool of qualified applicants, including persons with disabilities.

"This expansion might seem ironic to the observing public while the Texas Legislature is talking streamlined government operations," says Commissioner Arrell. "I can assure you that we have pressed very hard for this funding from the Social Security Administration and it is long overdue. We are not through yet. There are still some funding issues that we are negotiating with SSA."

Services *continued from page 2*

Assisted employment, a more expanded term than the traditional supported employment, will be available to VR clients, on a time-limited basis. After closure, the counselor will specify which agency, such as a MHMR center, will be providing ongoing support.

"This shift in focus may be difficult to implement at first," says Joellen Flores Simmons, assistant commissioner for programs field operations. "However, the impact on clients will be worth it. We are opening up services statewide for clients as never before in these programs."

The videotape presentation by Mr. Jackson was distributed in April to area managers and regional offices. Copies are also available in the TRC Library.

Awards

TRC Service

APRIL 1991

Region I

10 years:

Ron W. Erwin

15 years:

Magdalena Hancock

Region III

10 years:

Stephen Schoen

25 years:

Charlene Zegub

Nathalie Hallmark

Region IV

10 years:

Doris J. Weir

Region V

15 years:

Yolanda How

20 years:

Hector R. Flores

Eliseo Smith III

Lily Rodriguez

Region VI

15 years:

Ronona L. Sellars

DDS

10 years:

Jack Pfister

Patricia Ryan

William Walters

William Wilson

Virginia Musick

Thomas Hamilton

Irene Antonik

Pamela Sue Eaker

20 years:

Fred Olson

Central Office

10 years:

Meredith Jacobs

Karin Balch

David McKay

20 years:

Randy Scott



ADA training great success

Richard Pimentel, key contributor to the first training package in disability awareness entitled Windmills, engages an audience of 75 trainers from various state agencies in a TRC sponsored ADA training session. Pimentel, representing Milt Wright and Associates, is an ex-vocational rehabilitation counselor from California and is known for his lively, candid and interactive style of training in disability awareness.

Pesina *continued from page 1*

"During a recent jail experience, things cleared up for Joe," says Taylor. "He began to set his sights on things which have a future – a job, getting married and raising a family. Once that happened, his rehabilitation program took off."

A dock worker at Goodwill, he is not content to just do his job – he wants to learn everyone else's so he can understand how the whole system works.

Want to be a partner?

The Texas Planning Council for Developmental Disabilities is looking for "Partners in Policymaking" from among parents and self-advocates. This program is designed to provide information, training and skill building to consumers, parents and guardians so that they may obtain the most appropriate state-of-the-art services for themselves and others. Partners attend two-day training sessions eight times a year with each session beginning Friday at noon and concluding late Saturday afternoon. Applications are due on May 31, 1991. For more information, call Jopie Smith at (512) 483-4089.

He sees life more clearly now.

He is saving his money to bring his girl friend from the Valley to live in an apartment in Austin.

"I used to think I could never change, but now I know I can," he says. "I want to do it for me. I'm going to be a father, you know."

Joe's not looking back to the old days and thinks his chances are good. His friend agrees.

**TEXAS REHABILITATION COMMISSION
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