



TRC TODAY
a newsletter for
employees of the
Texas Rehabilitation
Commission

Vol. 12 No. 5
May 1990

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Monkey see, monkey do

Client finds independence with simian helper

Maggie spends most of her "off" hours in a large, comfortable cage next to Lance Scott's bed.

When she's working, Maggie is all around the room, fetching juice containers from the refrigerator, picking up Scott's mouth-stick, or adjusting computer equipment for him.

Maggie is a Capuchin monkey, trained by Helping Hands, Inc. of Boston. She's part of a TRC-sponsored pilot project to help Scott, a quadriplegic, and other people with severe disabilities become more independent using monkeys as helpers.

According to Paul Baganz, independent living services counselor in the Fort Worth Easter Seal Field Office, Scott has been a TRC client since 1983. That summer, he was paralyzed from the neck down in a Brazos River diving accident.

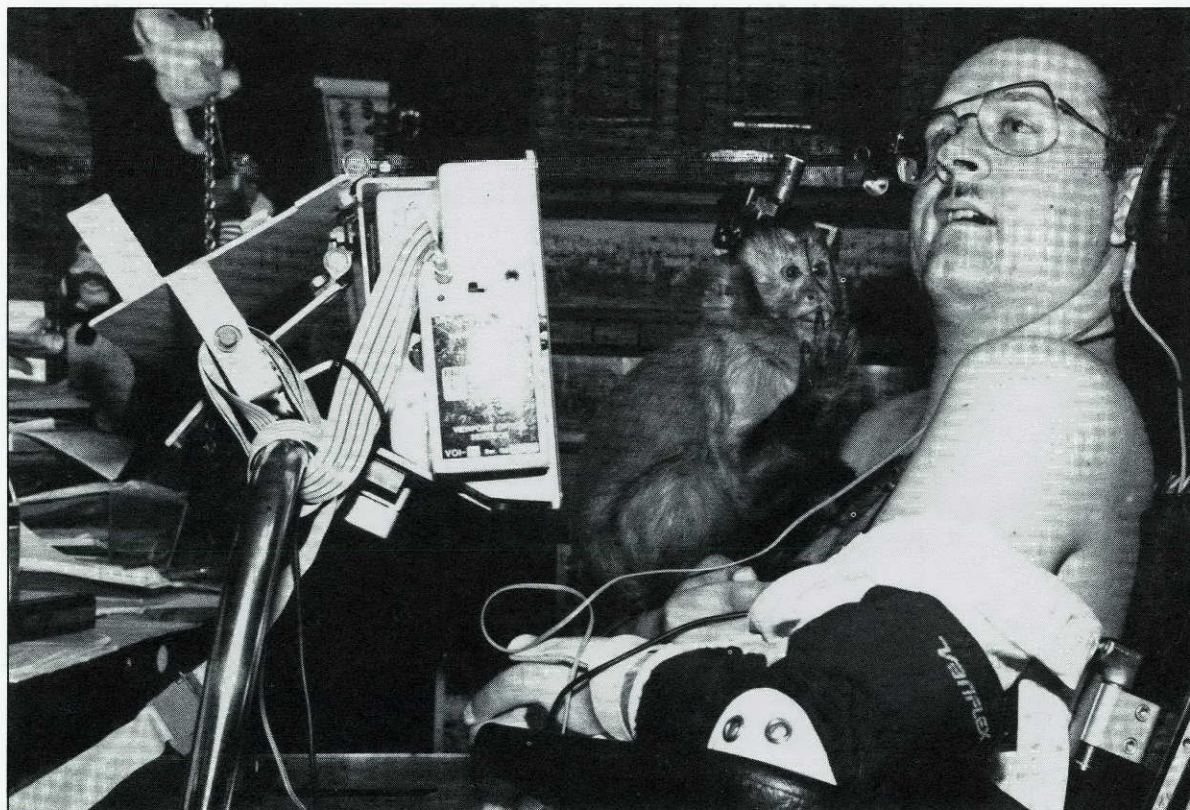
Oxygen loss to the brain due to near drowning left Scott without the ability to speak.

Scott now uses a Prenke-Romisch Light/touch Talker to synthesize his speech. He's also working with a speech therapist to improve his conversational abilities.

In addition, the Center for Computer Assistance to the Disabled (C-CAD) program at REACH, the Fort Worth independent living

Maggie, Lance Scott's helper, was trained by Helping Hands, Inc. of Boston. Maggie's trainer, Judy Zazula, worked as a consultant on the movie "Monkey Shines." "I was curious to see the movie before I accepted Maggie," says Scott.

Continued on page 4



*We're
going in
the right
direction
to better
serve
people
with
disabilities*

TRC Board "OKs" appropriation recommendations

The next legislative session is just around the corner. Preparations have been underway for months on recommendations for the FY 1992-93 Legislative Appropriations Request--recommendations which were approved by the TRC Board at its March 30 meeting.

Board-approved recommendations were shaped heavily by consumer input, particularly in the program areas.

In a recent mail-out, consumer groups and individuals were invited to respond to the proposed LAR. Two hundred ninety drafts were mailed out, and 41 responses came back.

Additional responses to the TRC/LAR were generated at an LAR consumer input meeting March 15 at the Central Office. In direct response to consumer comments, the TRC Board approved the following actions recommended in the LAR:

- increase the proposed funding level for existing independent living centers by 10% (\$2.7 million in FY 1992 and \$4.1 million in FY 1993)
- double the funds originally requested for personal attendant services (\$2 million in FY 1992 and \$3 million in FY 1993)
- change the term "Alternate Community Employment" to "Community Integrated Employment" and de-emphasize Sheltered Employment (re-named Alternative Sheltered Employment) with the expectation that 2 of 3 Extended Rehabilitation Services clients will be in Community Integrated Employment by 1993
- add 47 counselors with specialized training and small caseloads to work with people who have catastrophic disabilities such as traumatic brain injuries, communication disabilities, and serious mental illness (add \$17 million in VR case services)

In addition, the proposed LAR contains key strategy shifts in grouping of services. Extended Rehabilitation Services, for example, is no longer the same thing as sheltered employment. Instead, it includes a range of long-term employment support activities.

Another shift is the return to specialty caseloads in the VR program to provide services to people with catastrophic disabilities.

"I think we're going in the right direction to better serve people with disabilities," says Commissioner Arrell.

He adds that changes could occur before the next regular session begins. But, the TRC focus will remain the same.

"Any adjustments will be adjustments in numbers and not in the philosophy and direction we have set," he says.

Meetings: make them work for you

Believe it or not, meetings can be productive. Agendas can be covered. Action can be taken. People can be re-energized. Cooperation can result.

Here's how to make meetings work for you:

1. Draw up and distribute an agenda. Identify the meeting's purpose. Assign time slots for each topic. List decisions to be made. Set a closing time.
2. Invite only those who need to be there. Provide them with backup material for study prior to the meeting.
3. Start on time. Stay on schedule.
4. Encourage each person to participate.
5. Take notes, especially on decisions made.
6. Send memos about the group's conclusions to all participants.



The pedestals of "leaves" in the Central Office lobby, offer a tribute to all TRC employees who have enriched agency traditions over the years. Here, Central Office employees look for their names inscribed on the brass leaves of the pedestals: (from left) Doris Banks, systems analyst; Brenda Miller, systems analyst; Sally Acuna, facilities technician; David Jourdan, accounting control coordinator; and Leslie Delvige, purchasing and supply officer.

Heritage symbol unveiled at Central Office

An artistic tribute to TRC heritage was unveiled in the Brown-Heatly Building (TRC Central Office) April 2 in Austin.

Two symbolic granite pedestals of "leaves" containing the names of all TRC employees, past and present, now stand in the Central Office lobby.

"It is my privilege to support the movement within the Commission to recognize those who have made our heritage so rich," said Commissioner Arrell.

The unveiling highlighted a ceremony attended by around 400 Central Office and Disability Determination Services staff, field staff and retirees from around the state.

Among the speakers was retiree G.C. Holder, former supervisor in the Fort Worth TRC office. He congratulated current TRC management and staff on their ability to change with the times in providing services to people with disabilities.

Commissioner Arrell pointed out that the basic philosophy of the Commission, laid years ago, is still sound.

"But, unless we pay attention to the past, we're bound to repeat it," he said. "Our goal is to build on what we've learned in the past and move ahead to the future."



"TRC TODAY" is published by the Texas Rehabilitation Commission for distribution to its employees and retirees throughout the state. We welcome submissions for publication, but reserve the right to edit or screen materials according to newsletter policy. Submissions or inquiries may be addressed to Vernon Dement, Public Information Office, Texas Rehabilitation Commission, 4900 N. Lamar Blvd., Austin, Texas 78751-2316; or telephone (512) 483-4422.

Vernon Dement.....Editor
 Susan Antoniewicz....Illustrator
 Printing Services.....Printing
 Randy Jennings.....Director
 Kaye Beneke....Assistant Deputy
 Commissioner



As a result of two congressional resolutions, the last week of June is designated Helen Keller Deaf-Blind Awareness Week nationwide. This year, June 24 - 30 the Helen Keller National Center, along with other agencies and organizations, are focusing on awareness of older adults who are losing their vision and hearing.



The Spina Bifida Association of America has announced its special programs for Vietnam Veterans and their disabled children. These programs include a Continenence Training Project and Independent Living Skills Summer Institutes. Made possible by a grant from the Agent Orange Class Assistance Program, the programs are available to any child born to a Vietnam Veteran who served in or near Vietnam between 1961 and 1972. SBAA will also provide scholarships to week-long Independent Living Skills Programs in Chicago and Phoenix. For more information contact the Spina Bifida Association of America, 1700 Rock-

ville Pike, Suite 540, Rockville, MD 20852. Telephone: (800) 872-8058.



The nation's only dove hunt for hand and arm amputees is in Olney, Texas, September 7-8. The event includes food, glove swapping, door prizes, storytelling, cow chip chunkin', music, one-arm talent and an auction. The event is a chance for amputees to share ideas and help new amputees adjust to a different way of life.



State employees *do* make contributions--beyond assigned duties--to their communities and their state. State Employees Recognition Day, scheduled for May 18 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the state Capitol in Austin, will highlight ways state workers give of themselves both on and off the job. The event will include displays from various state agencies, bagpipers, cloggers, and a proclamation, signed by Gov. Clements, designating State Employee Recognition Day.

Monkey See *Continued from page 1*

center, has designed a system around Scott's Light Talker which allows him to access his IBM-compatible computer using the laser light beam.

"Before, he had to use the mouthstick to activate the computer keys," says Baganz. "It was a slow process. With the laser light, Scott's work on the computer is much faster."

The system has allowed Scott to do bookkeeping work for his father's electrical contracting business.

"He's come a long way since his injury," says Baganz. "We thought Maggie would be just the thing to help increase his independence."

Maggie is taught to respond to commands using Scott's laser light beam.

Regular training sessions are designed to increase the number of functions Maggie can perform for Scott. Her performance is meticulously recorded in a training log Scott keeps on his computer.

"Placing Maggie with Lance was a challenge for Helping Hands because he can't give voice commands," says Roger Ward, director of programs in the Central Office.

"We want to open up the boundaries for monkey helpers to work with more people with very severe disabilities," he says.

The Commission is currently studying proposals to place other monkeys around the state, at least one with a VR client who has a home-based business.

"Our primary aim is to see if we can make attendant care less costly for clients who want to go back to work," says Ward.

**TRC served
1,740 people
with spinal
cord injuries
in FY 1989**

Cord injury treatment discovered

Excerpted from the New York Times National, 3/31/90

BETHESDA, Md., March 30 -- For the first time, researchers have shown that drug treatment can reduce paralysis and other disability in people with serious spinal cord injury.

In research announced today at the National Institutes of Health, scientists reported that large doses of a steroid hormone given soon after injury can improve the outcome for people with serious spinal cord injury. The treatment, tested in a trial involving 487 patients at 10 medical centers, includes giving high doses of the steroid methylprednisolone within eight hours of the injury and continuing infusion of the drug for 24 hours.

Dr. Michael B. Bracken of the Yale University Medical School, who directed the study, said that the treatment was not a cure for spinal cord injury, but that it offered some hope for reducing long-term effects of this condition.

"We now know that paralysis after spinal cord injury can be reduced by early treatment," said Dr. Bracken. "We were never certain about that before this study."

All spinal injury patients treated appeared to benefit from the therapy, said Dr. Phanor L. Perot, Jr., of the Medical University of South Carolina, but the most severely injured recovered less function and did not respond as well as those with less severe injuries.

Dr. Bracken said the drug appears to work by reducing swelling in the injured

tissue and preventing cell degeneration. The success of the therapy supports the theory that much of the damage after spinal cord trauma comes not from the injury itself, but hours after, when tissues begin to degenerate.

Officials of the Neurological Institute, one of the National Institutes of Health, said doctors may obtain information about the spinal injury treatment by calling (301) 496-5751 on weekdays during working hours and (800) 633-3425 on weekends for recorded information.

Paralysis can be reduced by early treatment

Voucher processing record set

Let's say you have 78 vouchers in front of you. And you have one hour. What could you do with them? Read each one? Maybe. Remember, you have less than a minute on each one.

Nancy Harp, terminal voucher update operator in the claims section at the Central Office, did more than that. On March 16, she updated a record average of 78 vouchers per hour (during a six-hour time period), entering them into a computer terminal for payment to TRC vendors.

That's a total of 465 VR and DDS vouchers!

Harp, who came to the voucher processing unit almost three years ago from Disability Determination Services, broke her own record, set in February, of 71 vouchers per hour.

Louise Stubblefield, supervisor of voucher processing, points out that Harp's average of 78 vouchers per hour is double the performance standard for TVU operators.

"Considering the volume coming in everyday, it's vital that production be consistently high," says David McKay, assistant controller. "But, when something this outstanding happens, it's worthy of recognition."

TRC receives some 2,500 vouchers each working day from vendors providing services or equipment to TRC clients and disability benefits claimants.

With employees like Harp and the other hard-working members of the voucher processing unit, McKay estimates that TRC currently "turns around" 95 percent of its bills within four working days.

March for equality

Five-hundred disability rights advocates march on Capitol

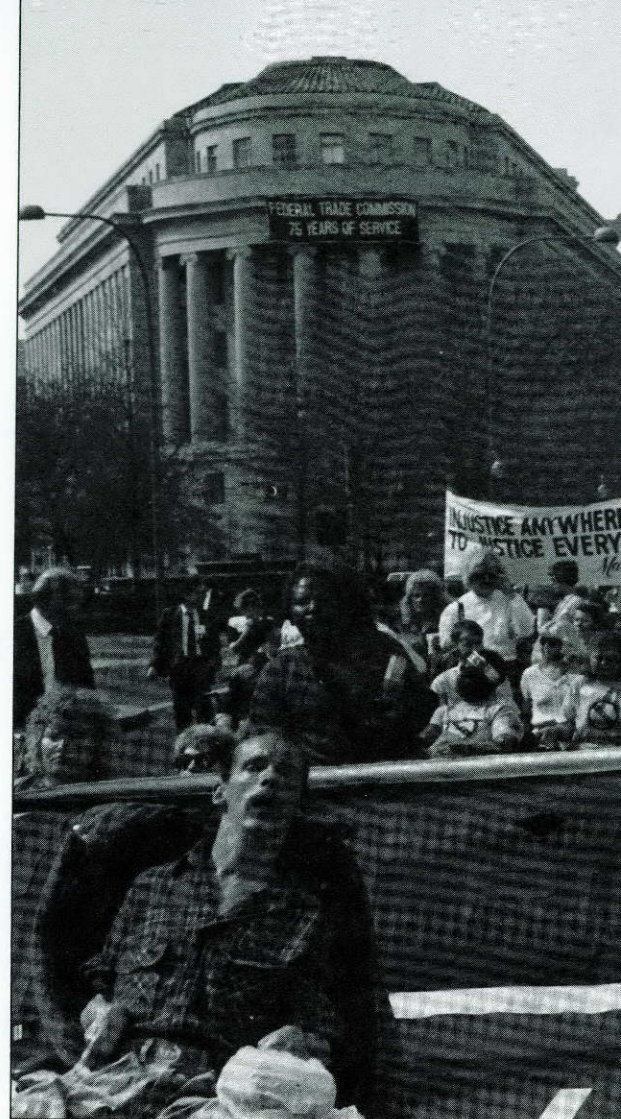
Organizers called it "Wheels of Justice," the biggest-ever nonviolent direct action in support of disability rights.

Five hundred disability advocates, many of them severely disabled, marched to the nation's Capitol calling for congressional and public support for the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Called landmark civil rights legislation, the ADA will provide equal access for people with disabilities to public housing, transportation and employment opportunities, among other things.

Resistance to the bill comes from small business lobbies concerned about renovation costs for accommodating people with disabilities.

Organized by American Disabled for Accessible Public Transportation (ADAPT) and supported by the National Rehabilitation Association, the march, along with speeches on the steps of the Capitol, drew



immediate public media attention and rallied support from sympathetic congressmen.

Simultaneous marches and press conferences at state capitols around the nation, including Austin, solidified ADA support. *USA Today* ran the following quotes from important congressional supporters of the ADA:

- "What we did for civil rights in the '60s, we forgot to do for people with disabilities." --Rep. Pat Schroeder, D-Colo.
- "Yes, there are costs associated with this bill, but these costs are manageable." --Rep. Norman Mineta, D-Calif.
- "It will reach the floor, we will have a conference with the Senate, and it will become law." --House Speaker Thomas Foley, D-Wash.

Federal Facts

- the federal government is the largest employer in the United States
- federal civilian employees make up about 2.8 percent of the total U.S. workforce
- more women are employed in Washington, D.C., by the federal government than in all other locations in the U.S. combined



People with disabilities and advocates, some 500 strong, marched almost two miles up Pennsylvania Avenue to the Capitol March 12 to show their support for the Americans with Disabilities Act.

At this writing, the House Energy and Commerce Committee has finalized its version of the proposed ADA.

The House Public Works and Transportation Committee and the Judiciary Committee have not yet scheduled sessions to "mark-up" the measure.

Tech Tip

Information provided by Matt Knezevich, data services maintenance technician

You're in the middle of a document and suddenly your computer locks up. Not only that but the file you were working in is lost.

What happened?

You may have answered incorrectly when the computer asked, "Do you wish to leave Intercom resident y/n?"

The correct answer is "no."

Why? When Intercom (ICC) is left resident, valuable RAM (random access memory) is being reserved for ICC's use only, meaning there is less memory to do other tasks such as SAMNA and MULTIPLAN.

Running ICC resident can cause your machine to freeze in your application and destroy your current document/file.

To check whether ICC or any other program is running resident, issue a MAPMEM command from the DOS prompt.

This command will show everything running resident in RAM. The only things that should show under the "owner" column are "config," "command," "dcm???", "int61h" and, possibly, "mode."

Under the "bytes" column at the bottom there should be at least 570,000 bytes free. If you are a LAN user, there will be an additional one or two owners, but there should still be at least 510,000 bytes free.

Don't risk losing important information you've taken valuable time to create. Take a moment to check the resident programs on your computer.

Awards

TRC Service

APRIL 1990

Region I

20 years:

Suzanne R. Brunt

Region II

10 years:

Celia A. Morrow

Region III

15 years:

Jimmy D. Wilson

Region IV

10 years:

Hilda Faye Taylor

Region V

20 years:

Patricio Alba

Region VI

10 years:

Karen K. LaFon

15 years:

Diane Garcia

DDS

10 years:

Michelle S. Hillman

15 years:

Margaret M. Castillo

Central Office

15 years:

John C. Burns

20 years:

Ronald Trull

Corpus Christi hosts leadership conference

Leaders from 10 mayor's committees gathered in Corpus Christi March 15-16 to tighten the focus on employment of people with disabilities in the 90s.

The event was a leadership conference sponsored by the Governor's Committee for Disabled Persons and hosted by the Corpus Christi Mayor's Committee for over 100 statewide participants.

Kent Waldrep, Jr., former chairman of the Governor's Committee for Disabled Persons and current TRC Board member, spoke about mayor's committee cooperation with TRC in targeting jobs for people with disabilities.

In addition, local employers offered tips from the private sector on getting the competitive edge to move people with disabilities into the work force.

Among the conference highlights was a working forum where mayor's committee representatives shared real-life approaches to successful committee activities.

"We wanted committee leaders to leave with a better idea of what works and what doesn't," says Dik Johnson, chairman of the Corpus Christi Mayor's Committee.

Here are some of the approaches mayor's committee leaders agreed upon:

- re-define committee purpose, setting goals and success factors
- involve local business in committee events for expertise and support
- build a strong relationship with the mayor and keep him/her informed
- develop "how-to" manuals for successful projects
- encourage volunteers and recognize them for their efforts

Reflecting the underlying philosophy behind these approaches, Corpus Christi Mayor Betty Turner presented Johnson with an award for outstanding work with the local committee on behalf of people with disabilities.

We wanted committee leaders to leave with a better idea of what works and what doesn't



TRC staff members statewide work closely with mayor's committees in their areas. Above, Ray Fenton, counselor in the Nacogdoches Field Office (second from right), stops for a photo with (from left) Sam Knox, chairman of the Nacogdoches Mayor's Committee, Almarie Henderson, Nacogdoches Mayor's Committee; Kent Waldrep, Jr., TRC Board member; and Larry Standridge, Nacogdoches Mayor's Committee.

Photo by Cindy Counts

Facts in focus

The Texas Employment Commission recently reported that unemployment in Texas is approaching 7% (10% is the sign of recession in the economy).

The most conservative estimate of joblessness among people with disabilities is 50%, with some estimates reaching as high as 75%.

Trull receives restaurant award

Hospitality industry pushes for work opportunities

Ron Trull, director of supported employment, travels to Chicago May 21 to take a bow for his work with the hospitality industry.

The award, to be presented by the National Restaurant Association at its yearly conference, cites Trull for boosting the industry's awareness of the benefits of hiring people with disabilities.

"The National Restaurant Association wants to say 'thank you' in a concrete way," says Philip Nelan, director of the NRA's handicapped employment programs.

Through Nelan, the restaurant association has developed an aggressive program to place disabled workers in the food service industry nationwide.

Program efforts include a regular newsletter questionnaire asking readers if they would consider hiring workers with disabilities.

In Texas, with Trull's guidance, such efforts meant as many as 1,549 jobs for people with disabilities in FY 1989.

"Last year, Nelan gave us the names of 100 different Texas employers interested in speaking to us about hiring people with disabilities," says Trull.

According to Trull, one problem the restaurant industry faces is high

employee turnover. "By tapping our resource of qualified clients, they are getting workers who will be loyal and stay with the job," he says.

Some food service industry placements are clients in supported employment. Many, but not all, have mental disabilities.

Trull's work with the restaurant association is a spin off of his placement activities over the last nine years. A few years ago, he helped develop a training package for TRC counselors focusing on client placement.

"It shows counselors how to talk to employers and get them to say 'yes' to hiring people with disabilities," says Trull.

"The heart and soul of this effort is the relationship counselors develop with local restaurant owners," he says. "When these relationships exist, people with disabilities get jobs!"

Currently, the most enthusiastic response to TRC clients comes from three restaurant chains in Texas--McDonald's Pizza Hut and Red Lobster.

Trull will receive the NRA citation at a press conference where the McDonald Corp., the Marriott Corp. and Nina Davis (consultant to the Ohio Rehabilitation Commission) will also get NRA recognition.

The heart and soul of this effort is the relationship counselors develop with local restaurant owners.

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 I

Nedra Dill, counselor in the Amarillo Field Office, recently appeared on the KCIT-TV program "Noonday" to discuss local TRC efforts with its NETS program. Dill was invited for a guest appearance to help generate community awareness of the NETS program in the Amarillo area. In addition, Dill, and her work with TRC clients, was the subject of a well-written article by Jim McBribe which appeared in the *Amarillo Globe-News*.

Region III

The second annual Opportunity Fair for People with Disabilities is set for May 23 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Palmer Auditorium in Austin. Last year, over 1,000 people with disabilities came to the fair to interview for jobs, learn interview techniques and identify services available to them. For more information, contact Roxanne Wheelis at (512) 462-0092.

Region V

Lloyd McCall, former TRC supervisor in San Antonio, died March 14. McCall became a TRC counselor in 1956 and worked in several San Antonio offices until he retired in 1977.

The first work session for San Antonio's business-based computer programmer training for people with severe disabilities was held April 19. Representatives from the business community, IBM, TRC and San Antonio College met to work out details of the IBM-sponsored program. The training is scheduled for kick off in September. The San Antonio project will join similar IBM-assisted programs in Dallas and Houston designed to prepare people with disabilities for computer industry jobs.

TRC Region V will host the third Native American Conference June 5 - 6 in San Antonio. The June 5 program will be held at the Institute of Texas Cultures from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. The next day, conference events will move to the Menger Hotel from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. TRC is co-

sponsoring the event along with Northern Arizona University. Representatives of the three Native American tribes in Texas--Tigua, Kickapoo and Alabama-Coushatta--will give presentations on the history of their respective tribes. For more information on the conference, contact Rueben Perez, regional training officer at the San Antonio Regional Office at (512) 680-2091.

Region VI

Diane Garcia, counselor in the Dallas Northwest Field Office, received an award March 10 from the Association for Retarded Citizens of Dallas for her outstanding work with people who have mental retardation. Garcia's award was one of several given by ARC in conjunction with Mental Retardation Month.

DDS

Trudy Wiley, formerly of Unit 35, has been selected as the employment clerk for DDS/Human Resource Management effective March 19.

DDS/Computer Data Management met March 6 for its monthly awards ceremony where it recognized the achievements of five employees in particular. For the first time, these employees maintained a 100 percent accuracy rate for computer entries for 12 consecutive months. Les Albrecht, deputy commissioner for DDS, gave the the following employees a special award for their high rate of accuracy: Laverne Caldwell, Kay Shaw, Lynn Gray, Cora Lane and Denice Whisenant. CDM is responsible for all DDS case receipts and clearances as well as the majority of DDS data entry--up to 6,500 transactions daily.

The first training class for new disability examiners in 1990 begins May 21. DDS/Staff Development predicts 21 trainees in the May class which will run approximately 12 weeks.

Harris L. Denton, former initial unit supervisor, died March 4 in Austin at age 73. A

retired Air Force officer, Denton worked with DDS from 1960 to 1977.

Central Office

Leslie Delvige, former purchasing clerk in Purchasing and Supply, was promoted to the position of purchasing and supply officer April 1.

The American Heart Association 1990 campaign is underway! Ray Minyard,

assistant deputy commissioner for administrative services, is campaign coordinator for TRC's Travis County employees. Heart disease claims nearly 1 million American lives each year and causes disability from related disorders to countless others. The American Heart Association needs funds to continue its battle against heart disease. Send your contributions to Ray Minyard at the Central Office before May 7.

Direct deposit pays off

If you're still trying to beat your bill payments to the bank with your monthly paycheck, you are not alone.

Eighty-six percent of all working Americans and over 43 percent of TRC employees are not signed up for direct paycheck deposit.

You are losing bank interest while you wait for your paycheck to clear or delay a trip to the bank or the post office--not to mention the inconvenience it causes.

Direct deposit is safer, more convenient and more reliable than a paycheck, yet many TRC employees don't take advantage of this service.

Direct deposit means:

- no waiting in long bank lines
- no fear of lost or stolen checks
- no worry about deposits if you are sick or on vacation

According to Glenda Collins, supervisor of travel/payroll, some TRC employees in Houston recently had first-hand experience with paycheck worries.

Their paychecks, mailed four working days before the end of the month, didn't arrive. Four days

after payday, they still hadn't arrived.

TRC fiscal staff canceled those checks and re-issued new ones. The original checks arrived in the mail the same day as the replacement checks.

It took only a few days, but that's a long time to go without a paycheck. Direct deposit would have eliminated a very tense time, and possibly some embarrassment, for these employees.

All you have to do is fill out an authorization form (74-158) for your regional personnel officer empowering the Comptroller's Office to electronically deposit your salary.

For more information on direct deposit, contact your regional personnel officer. In the Central Office, contact Susan Simpkins at 483-4333.



56.2%
of TRC
employees
participate in
direct deposit



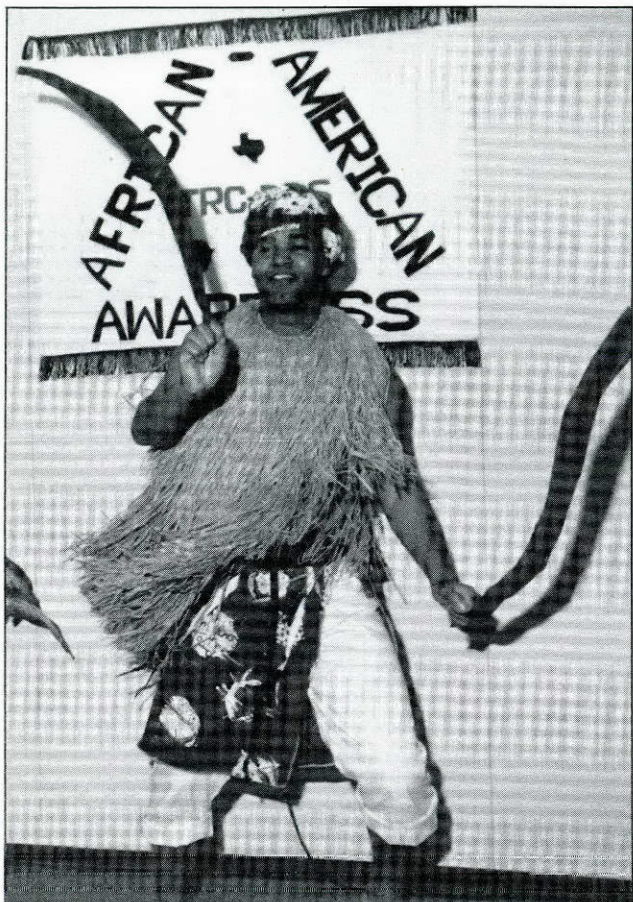
100%
of Japanese workers
use direct salary deposit



75%
of
European
workers
use direct
salary
deposit



Only 14%
of Americans
use direct salary deposit



Performers recreated authentic African Dances as part of the entertainment during the February 28 DDS Black History day celebration.

DDS celebrates Black History

Burton Kennedy. Does that name sound familiar to you? More than likely, it doesn't. But, the organizers of Black History Day for Disability Determination Services employees decided to dedicate the February 28 event to Kennedy.

Kennedy was the first black disability examiner in Texas. Hired in 1965, while the program was still under the Texas Education Agency, he worked for 16 years as an examiner before his retirement. Kennedy died in 1988.

His memory reflects the spirit of the first ever Black History Day in DDS.

The celebration, with its focus on black arts, drew over 200 DDS employees who browsed through displays of sculptures, wall hangings and paintings. There was also ethnic cuisine, music and short dramatic performances.

Skip Frazier, disability examiner in CDR Unit 60, served as program host. "It gave an opportunity for a lot of people to learn what black culture is all about," he says. "It was more an educational experience than anything else."

"I see Mr. Kennedy as a trail blazer," says event organizer Jean Martin, operations supervisor for Unit 16. "He had to break down barriers so that we don't have to. Now it's easier for us to concentrate on the business of serving people with disabilities."

DDS Black History Day was held in conjunction with the national month-long observance. It's the first of what Martin hopes will become a yearly celebration.

Next year, the event will focus on black contributions to science.

TEXAS REHABILITATION COMMISSION
4900 N. Lamar Blvd.
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