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# News & Views

★ Texas Rehabilitation Commission ★ A Human Energy Agency ★

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## Kane Appointed Chairman

TRC board member Jerry Kane of Corpus Christi has been appointed the new chairman of the Board by Gov. Mark White.

The Governor also selected Ernestine Washington, Beaumont, and Wendell Faulkner, Pecos, to serve as new members on the board.

Thirty-six-year-old Kane replaces Dr. George McCullough of Fort Worth, who has served as chairman since Sept., 1979. McCullough will continue to serve on the board for the remainder of his term.

Kane is executive vice president of Sam Kane Beef Processors in Corpus Christi and a 1969 graduate of the University of Texas at Austin where he earned a bachelor's degree in business administration.

In making the appointment, Gov. White stressed Kane's experience as a businessman and his com-

mitment to disability advocacy as major factors in his decision to appoint Kane chairman.

"I have every confidence that Mr. Kane will be an effective leader of the Commission's policymaking body," White said. "His interest and abilities will serve the disabled people of this state and the employees of the Texas Rehabilitation Commission well."

Commissioner Max Arrell said Kane has expressed a "keen interest" in providing the best services possible to disabled Texans.

"At the same time, he is sensitive to the need for our services to be efficient and cost-effective in consideration of the taxpayers who support our programs," Arrell said.

New member Ernestine Washington is a teacher at Austin Middle School in Beaumont. Wendell



Jerry Kane

Faulkner was a county commissioner in Reeves County before his retirement in 1982. Each will serve a six-year term.

## State Budget Request Approved

At its March meeting, the Texas Rehabilitation Commission Board unanimously approved the Commission's legislative budget request guidelines for fiscal years 1986 and 1987.

These guidelines are tentative. The actual state dollars TRC will request has yet to be determined and will depend on the federal money the Commission expects to receive. The amount of federal funding for these two years also has not been decided.

The guidelines request money for 18 more counselors over the two years so that the current counselor/resident ratio of one to 45,000 can be maintained as the state's population grows.

More support staff members are requested to assist the additional counselors.

The client service budget for counselors is increased to offset inflation, with \$129,000 per counselor requested in fiscal year 1986 and \$139,000 per counselor in fiscal year 1987.

Money is requested for two additional independent living centers, which would bring the total to seven centers in different cities across the state.

The Extended Rehabilitation Services (ERS) budget is increased so that five new projects can be started.

Funds also are requested to provide services to catastrophically and severely disabled people before they are eligible for vocational rehabilitation services.

It is asked that classified salaries increase 6.8 percent in fiscal years 1986 and 1987, for a total increase of 13.6 percent.

The guidelines also request some changes in travel regulations for employees, including a mileage reimbursement of \$ .27 per mile, up from the current \$ .23 per mile.

It is asked that the per diem for meals and lodging be raised to \$65 in fiscal year 1987, and \$75 per day for these two items when reimbursement is based on the actual cost of travel.

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# Examiner Training Includes Dose of Realism

by Connie Villec-Nemmers

It seems an innocent enough of a beginning.

The people training to become disability examiners walk into the Disability Determination Division classroom on the first day, find the place with their name on it and take their seats.

They probably don't get suspicious, says DDD staff development training officer Bruce Rollman, until they notice that each of them has been given an entire table to him- or herself.

Why a whole, uncluttered table for each trainee?, they may wonder.

"The first day of training, the tables are clear and all the desk space doesn't seem necessary," Rollman said.

But as the first five weeks of training continues, the manuals and books — at least 18 of them — and countless number of papers, desk aids and memos begin to pile up.

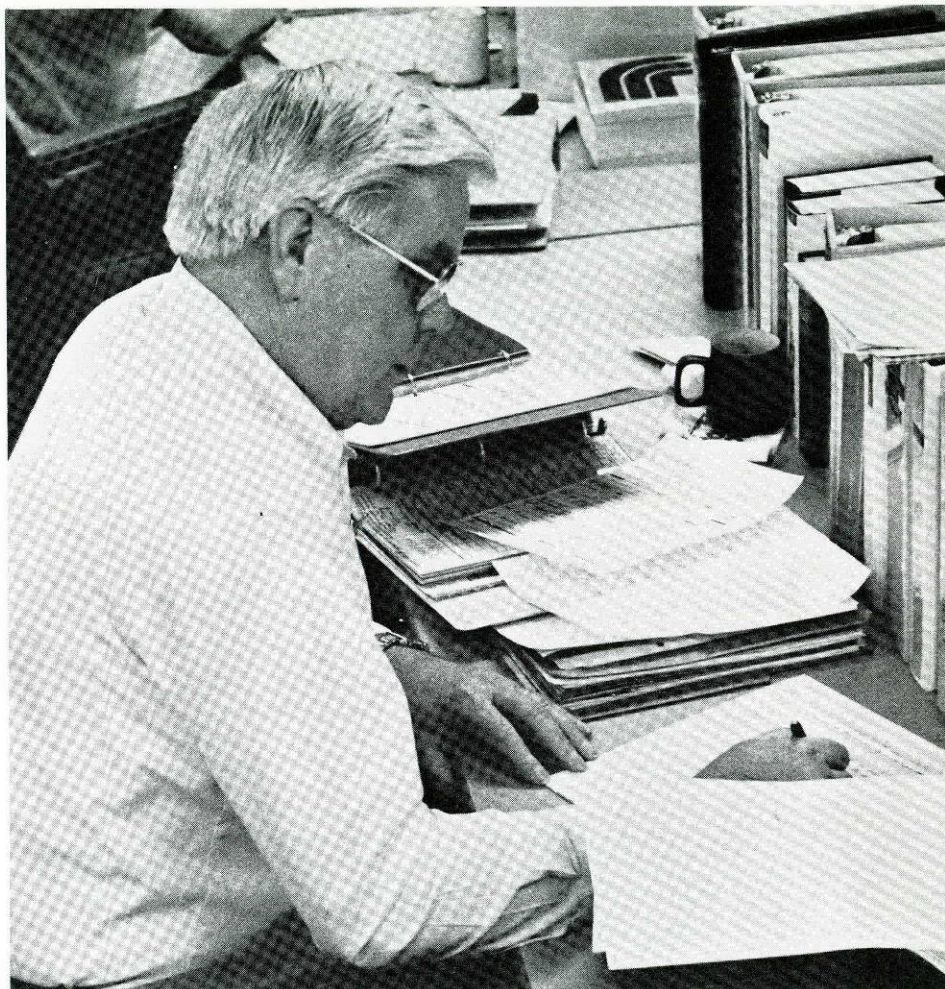
The training is intense, starting with five weeks for eight hours a day.

Then, after working for a week in their disability determination units, the trainees return to the classroom two hours a day for six weeks of advanced medical training. The other six hours of the day are spent working in their units.

"By the end of the training, the tables are full of manuals and books and papers, and they've probably had to put some of their stuff on the floor," Rollman said.

It's obvious that the job of determining whether an applicant for Social Security Disability Insurance or Social Security Income is eligible for benefits involves a great deal of paperwork and familiarity with many manuals and reference guides.

The training new examiners receive is intended to make them familiar with the forms and other



Trainee Eddie Lake takes notes, surrounded by the manuals and papers he's accumulated during his weeks of training.

material they'll be working with every day. The instruction is not a staff development effort alone. A variety of DDD staff — including doctors, disability examiners and vocational consultants — help train the new employees.

Though the schooling they receive in those first weeks is as thorough as possible, Rollman said most of the detailed training takes place once the examiners begin working in their units.

"It takes at least a year of working cases before new examiners begin to feel comfortable," said Rollman, who started working as a disability examiner in 1973. "You have to work as an examiner for three years before you can be certi-

fied by NADE (National Association of Disability Examiners)."

Despite the paperwork and exhaustive training, the success rate for new examiners is high.

Rollman said in the past two years, DDD has trained 56 examiners and 48 of them are still examiners. Of the eight that left, three are working for TRC's Vocational Rehabilitation Division.

Still, it can be a little intimidating at first. On the last day of the five-week training, the mailroom brings shopping carts to the training room to haul the new examiner's material to their offices.

Each examiner's books and papers fill an entire shopping cart — and then some.

# From Modeler to Mariner

by Connie Villec-Nemmers

You're not going to find this model in a box on a toy store shelf.

But the idea behind it is the same as the tediously tiny boats and airplanes that kids build, or try to build, with a little glue and a lot of time.

Jim Curd, media coordinator in Central Office's Staff Development, is constructing a 36-foot working model of a World War II P.T. (patrol torpedo) boat that will do more than collect dust when it's finished.

The cruiser will be fitted with twin engines, dining and lounge areas and enough beds to allow six people to sleep comfortably.

Without blue prints, instruction guides or an engineering background, Curd designed the boat himself, has constructed the pieces making up the hull and now is looking for a place to assemble his creation.

"I like to build things," Curd said. "That's how I get my kicks."

The boat will weigh about four tons when it's finished and will require a large crane and a flatbed truck to move it from land to sea.

It's easy to see that this is no small weekend project.

But Curd is confident he'll finish the task. He's already built a 15-foot, two-person replica of a P.T.



You can only imagine what the neighbors think when they see Curd set up the ribs and spine of his boat in the front yard.

boat that causes quite a sensation when he takes it out on Lake Travis in Austin.

"The hardest thing about going out in the boat is learning to keep a straight face," Curd said. "You spend a lot of your time waving back at people."

He has been interested in models his whole life, starting out on the toy store variety as a child.

As an adult he became interested in radio-controlled airplanes but quickly realized that the cost of that hobby was not worth the fun of building and flying the planes.

"Those type of planes are expensive and have a tendency to crash."

So he decided on boats and after a 15-year lull got to work on his first P.T. boat.

Now that project has been eclipsed by the big boat, which should be completed in the spring or summer of 1985.

Curd will be the first to agree with you that the undertaking is a little crazy and he good naturedly puts up with jokes about bringing in the animals two by two.

But his sense of humor is intact and he doesn't seem to mind the kidding.

This is, after all, the same man who dressed up as a frog and floated on a lily pad during a boat parade last summer.

Curd keeps from smiling as he heads out on Lake Travis in his 15 foot P.T. boat.



# Seminar Focuses on Service to Deaf Clients

Thirty-one counselors and area managers representing all six TRC regions recently attended a communications seminar at the Texas State Technical Institute (TSTI) in Waco.

The seminar gave counselors and their supervisors the chance to learn more about the deaf people they serve and to exchange ideas with each other.

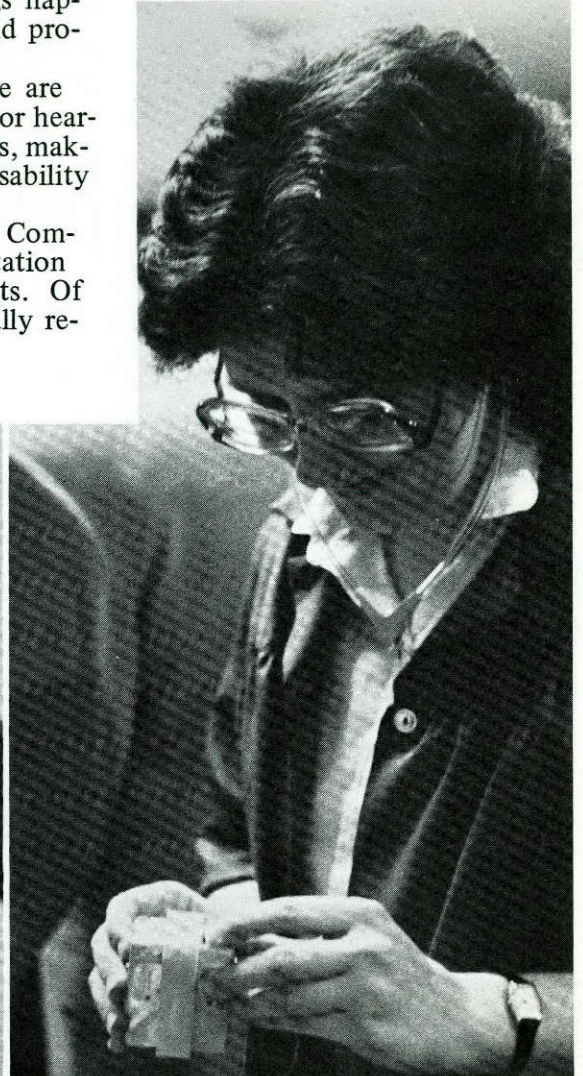
The objectives were to help clients through new technology, evaluate a client's communication potential, improve psychological evaluation of clients, develop strategies to remove or reduce a client's communication handicap and instruct counselors on how to use the services of TSTI.

Participants also toured TSTI's deaf services program.

Among the highlights of the seminar were the "Sunshine Commercials" given by TRC counselors. During the five-minute commercials, staff shared some of the innovative and positive things happening with their clients and programs.

It is estimated that there are more than one million deaf or hearing impaired people in Texas, making this one of the largest disability groups that TRC serves.

In fiscal year 1983, the Commission provided rehabilitation services to 4,197 deaf clients. Of these, 1,077 were successfully rehabilitated and employed.



TSTI interpreter Katie Gau tries out a receiver that amplifies sound for people wearing hearing aids.

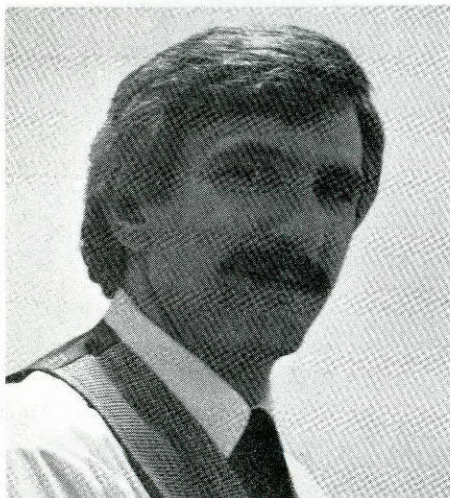
TRC counselor Calvin Willard, Waco Field Office, tests an alarm for people with hearing impairments.

## Help with Computers Offered to Staff

A growing demand for office computers has led to a reorganization of TRC's Informational Services and the creation of a new office automation section.

Andy Robinson, formerly assistant to Assistant Deputy Commissioner John Ribble, has been chosen to direct the new section as well as oversee several other computer-related activities.

"Much of what we'll be doing was already being done on an informal basis," Robinson said.



Andy Robinson

"We're simply upgrading and formalizing a whole lot of functions."

Robinson stressed that the role of his staff is primarily one of service to other TRC employees and of providing expertise in the areas of microcomputer use and purchasing.

"Getting people oriented to their computers and educating them about automation is part of our job," he said. "We'll be working closely with Staff Development on training people to work with computers."

His staff will check with TRC field and central offices requesting microcomputers (independent, usually desktop computer systems) and advise them on what sort of equipment will be appropriate for the job.

As part of its service to employees, Information Services has a telephone number -- 445-USER -- staff can call when they need help with their computers.

"We plan to respond quickly to staff questions," Robinson said. "Suggestions from employees also are welcome."

## Pickle Bill Passes House

By a vote of 410 to one, the Disability Reform Amendments of 1984 passed the U. S. House of Representatives on March 27.

The bill, introduced by Rep. Jake Pickle, Texas, calls for a series of changes in the legislation for Social Security Disability Insurance recipients.

Among other things, it requires proof that a person's medical condition has improved before disability benefits could be ceased.

It also provides for benefits to be continued while a person is appealing a decision to cease benefits.

The U. S. Senate Finance Committee has not held a session to consider legislation on this matter.



## Retirement

**Bernard Smith**, counselor in the Amarillo Field Office, retired effective Feb. 15, 1984. He began working for TRC in November, 1969.

## Deaths

**Dr. Norma P. Shultz**, a Harlingen physician who was a member of the Texas Rehabilitation Commission's Medical Consultation Committee and a local medical consultant since 1962, died March 26 from a heart attack.

**Mary Carr**, clerical supervisor in the Dallas West Field Office, died March 20 from injuries she received in a March 19 car accident. Carr was a TRC employee for 12 years.

## In Box

**Roger Ward**, program officer in the Fort Worth Regional Office, recently received a letter from former client **Carrie Hadaway**, who has been hired by **Marriott In-Flight Service Company** at DFW Airport. Hadaway was the client of senior counselor **John Cosgrove**, Fort Worth Field Office North.

"I have had several jobs before this, but since I appear a little slow at first people never gave me a chance.

The people at Marriott have been very supportive and gave me as much time as I needed to get accustomed to their business. In return, I've worked hard and I'm sure I'm a good employee for them.

I feel my life has some meaning now to have a job and friends there.

I hope this program continues to help others as it's helped me.

I can't thank the Rehabilitation Commission and guidance and friendship of Mr. Cosgrove enough."

**Verlon Strickland**, senior counselor in the Abilene Field Office, received a letter from former client **Dee Dee Castillo**.

"My business is doing very well. You don't know how happy that makes me! My family is also very happy and proud. Thanks to the TRC and you. The talent that was there, only hidden, is coming out and making a name for me. It took a year for me to get where I am now, but thank God and TRC I finally made it. It's a wonderful feeling . . . Keep up the great work."

**★ Applause**

**Congratulations to:**

... **Dr. Fermin Calderon**, Del Rio, who received a certificate of appreciation from TRC for the time he contributes serving as a local medical consultant for the Commission. **Hector Flores**, TRC counselor in the Del Rio Field Office, presented the certificate to Dr. Calderon.

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... **Billy Feltman**, senior counselor in the Lufkin Field Office, who recently was named to the Angelina County Handicapped Advisory Committee. Appointed along with Feltman was former TRC client **Josie David**, whose TRC senior counselor was **George Moore** of the Lufkin Field Office.

.....

... **Ben Golden**, security guard in the Central Office, who received a plaque from Commissioner Max Arrell for his excellent work. Golden has left the private security company that contracts with TRC and has taken a job with the Department of Public Safety.

... **Justin Dart**, national disability rights advocate from Austin, who received a certificate of appreciation from the TRC Board at its March meeting for his outstanding leadership as former chairman of the Governor's Committee for Disabled Persons.

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... **Rueben Perez**, counselor in the San Antonio Field Office North, who has been chosen chairman of the San Antonio Mayor's Committee for Disabled Persons.

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... **Tommy Williams**, TRC warehouse supervisor, and all his employees, who were honored at the March TRC Board meeting for their outstanding contributions to the Commission. The entire warehouse crew was invited to the board meeting while employees of Purchasing and Supply kept the warehouse running. Williams' employees are: **James Shaw, W. L. Brooks, Jack Creamer, Robert Thomason, Asuncion Galarza, Edgar Sevier, Larry Thompson, Curtis Behrends, Jeffrey Davis** and **Donald Grohman**.



**Justin Dart**



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