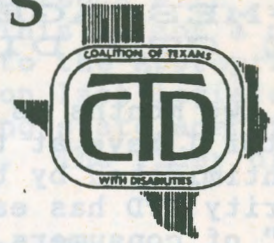


March 1991

# COALITION OF TEXANS WITH DISABILITIES NEWSLETTER



## **BOB GEYER APPOINTED TO DHS BOARD: FIRST PERSON WITH DISABILITY EVER**

Bob Geyer of El Paso, a former President of the Coalition of Texans with Disabilities (1980), has been appointed to the Board of Directors of the Department of Human Services. His appointment marks a historical event as he is the first person with a disability ever to be appointed to this position. "As someone who has lived in a nursing home and received services in the community, I have a personal understanding of the importance of developing alternatives to institutionalization for people with disabilities, young and old," said Mr. Geyer. Bob proposes that one way in which the DHS could better serve the population is to "maximize Texas' use of federal funds, and streamline service delivery so people get the greatest amount of services from our tax dollars...we must also be sure we are meeting people's needs." CONGRATULATIONS Bob!

### **Make Policy Get Appointed to State Boards**

Governor Richards has promised to appoint more persons with disabilities to governmental boards. Persons with disabilities should be represented in all state functions, not just health and human services and the Governor encourages persons with disabilities to continue to submit their names for consideration. To be considered for an appointment you need to submit a

letter to the Governor with a copy of your resume. You must also get a letter of support from your Senator. If you wish CTD to send a letter supporting your nomination, send your resume to us, as well. The Board of Directors will review resumes and make a determination regarding support of your nomination.

CTD has sent letters of support to the Governor for the following CTD members seeking appointments to the Boards or Committees:

Margaret Robinson - Amarillo Disabled in Action Governor's Committee on Persons with Disabilities or Texas Planning Council for Developmental Disabilities

Redge Westbrook - MIGHT Governor's Committee on Persons with Disabilities

Judy Wingard-Westbrook - United Cerebral Palsy Association Texas Rehabilitation Commission Board

Mary Amos - West Texas Association of Persons with Disabilities Continuing Advisory Council on Special Education

Florence Fowler - West Texas Association of Persons with Disabilities Continuing Advisory Council on Special Education



## \*\*\*MESSAGE FROM THE CTD DIRECTOR

In my two months as executive director I have at times felt awed and intimidated by the respect and authority CTD has earned as "the voice" of consumers. It is obvious that my predecessors, each and everyone, worked extremely hard to give a substantive voice to Texans with disabilities. The work of committed members in making disability rights a reality is equally significant. One and 1/2 staff, myself and Laura Brown, cannot begin to fully address even all the most important issues, nor can only one organization. This is why a coalition is necessary and why CTD came to be in 1978 and continues on today.

Right now our most important battles are in the Texas legislature and responding to proposed regulations for the Americans with Disabilities Act. I recently attended a panel discussion with several legislators present and I asked them: "What really makes a difference to legislators?" Their reply was overwhelmingly unanimous: "The voice of INDIVIDUAL constituents." In other words, one letter or visit from you to your legislator could have more impact than a 1,000 letters written on CTD letterhead. All legislators have "home" offices where you can visit them or their aides and send letters.

Getting legislators to support the disability issues of our Coalition requires your voice. Your calls, letters, or visits to your legislators is a VERY powerful way of effecting change in government policies. One voice does make a difference.

Opportunity has never been greater. With ADA and a new Governor who has stated several times that in disability issues, "I want Texas to be a model for the rest of the

nation," this could be the season of our content.

Below is the CTD legislative agenda--those issues resolved and voted in by you--and where we stand. Read the information carefully, but remember that you do not have to be an expert. Just write, call, or visit your legislators and let them know which of these issues are important to your life (or any of the other important issues). Most of these issues will not be fixed this year so your letters are important today and six months from now.

Your voice and your membership in CTD is important to all people with disabilities and I thank you for this opportunity to work with you.  
....Belinda Carlton

### CTD LEGISLATIVE POSITIONS

#### Employment:

CTD members resolved in 1989 that state agencies should take affirmative measures to hire qualified disabled persons at all levels and make reasonable accommodations. An estimated 72% of persons with disabilities are unemployed. We had requested several times over the past several months for the data on disability hirings that state agencies are required to submit to the Governor's office but they stated they could not find any such information. Yesterday, we received a copy of disability hirings in 1989 outside the Governor's office. It makes the case that state agencies do not hire persons with disabilities. FORTY-SEVEN PERCENT OF STATE AGENCIES EMPLOY NO PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES.

TWENTY-NINE PERCENT EMPLOY LESS THAN 5% PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES. THAT MEANS ONLY 18% OF THE STATE AGENCIES HAVE MORE THAN 5% EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES. Who did the best?



The Private Investigators and Private Security Agencies have 33% employees with disabilities (11 of 33 employees). The Comptroller of Public Accounts (under Bob Bullock) had 27% (83 of 214 employees). The House of Representatives had 20% (23 of 115 employees). Funny, I figured state disability agencies would be at the top, didn't you?

CTD is working on getting a rider put on to the Appropriations Act that will require all state agencies to hire persons with disabilities. The rider proposes to:

- 1) Set a goal of 15% hiring persons with disabilities at all levels (percentage based on estimated work force of persons with disabilities)
- 2) Require state agencies to create or modify hiring practices that will remove barriers that prevent persons with disabilities from being qualified (i.e., unnecessarily high education levels or years of experience, allowing for comparable volunteer experience)
- 3) Require state agencies to establish line items in their budget for job accommodations.
- 4) Report hirings be reported to Texas Commission on Human Rights and Governor's EEO or the Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities.
- 5) Use the hiring reports as one of the performance criteria of the legislature when they set funding levels for state agencies and when the Sunset Commission reviews an agency for restructure or continuance.

#### Status of Employment Rider:

Senators and representatives we have talked to are generally supportive, but caution that the Governor, Lt. Governor and Speaker of the House must support this action. PLEASE Contact your representatives and senators, the Governor, the Lt. Governor and Speaker of the House. Ask them to support a Rider to the Appropriations Act that will require state agencies to take affirmative

action to hire persons with disabilities. This is not a novel idea. A rider to the Appropriations Act was placed on last legislative session requiring state agencies to hire minorities. The rider did have impact.

#### Health Insurance Reform:

CTD members resolved that health insurance should be affordable and available for everyone, including persons with disabilities. It is estimated that of 17 million Texans, about 4 million are not insured. CTD legislative committee member, Tony Schrader, has been participating in a Health Insurance Task Force, with consumer, children's rights and senior citizen groups. The insurance industry, Texas Medical Association and the legislature all have insurance reform agendas but do not allow persons with disabilities to get insurance or get out from under the restrictions of Medicaid. If passed as in original form the TMA bill will take benefits away from people who have coverage. Senator Eddie Bernice Johnson has filed Senate Bill 720 a UNIVERSAL PLAN FOR HEALTH INSURANCE bill and already 10 other senators are supporting it. It is modeled after many of the national universal health plans and was written by Citizen Action.

Status of Health Insurance: Let your legislators, the Governor, Lt. Governor and Speaker of the House know your personal insurance stories; why a universal health care plan is the only way for many people with disabilities to get covered and how this would help people chained by Medicaid restrictions that keep them unemployed (because they lose eligibility if they make over \$6,000 per year).



## Council on Disabilities:

HB 909 and SB381 abolish the Council on Disabilities and move its functions to the Governor's Committee on Persons with Disabilities. CTD members resolved to support this action in 1990 and made these recommendations to the Sunset Commission. The bills create the the Governor's Committee on Persons with Disabilities by law for the first time, and locate it within the Office of the Governor, but it would still be administered and housed by the Texas Rehabilitation Commission. The bills give the Governor's Committee very important mandates. The Governor stated in her Blueprint for a New Texas, "The most immediate action on behalf of persons with disabilities is implementation of ADA. We will designate the Governor's Committee on Persons with Disabilities to coordinate the implementation of this law and work directly with the Governor's Committee."

### Status of Governor's Committee:

House Bill 909 by Rep. Sue Schecter and Senate Bill 381 by Steve Carriker has been sent to the House subcommittee of Government Organizations. CTD will testify to the need to place the Governor's Committee in the Governor's Office and remove it from the control of TRC; it must have a greater voice in implementing ADA and the independence, respect and power it deserves.

## Pediatric Nursing Homes:

CTD members resolved that children have the right to appropriate community-based support provided in their homes and children should be de-institutionalized and no new pediatric nursing homes should be established. The pediatric nursing home is in Gladewater, Texas.

### Status of Pediatric Nursing Homes:

There is no legislation on this, but in testimony before House and Senate appropriation and health and human services subcommittees we have voiced this position at every opportunity. Write your legislators and tell them children have the right to grow up at home.

## Community Living:

CTD members resolved that the DHS Board should make it a policy to be proactive in developing new initiatives and advocate for community supported living. Advocacy, Inc., CTD, ADAPT and UCPA visited with Commissioner Lindsey and ADAPT and CTD held an action at DHS which resulted in the DHS Board adopting a policy at their January board meeting committing the agency to become proactive in community-based services. The action on DHS resulted in Commissioner Lindsey writing a letter to Louis Sullivan, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Human Services, in support of a flexible system which allows states to utilize Medicaid dollars for community based services without linkage to institutional placement. The TDHS position is outlined below:

### ***TDHS Position on Community-Based Services***

The introductory comments of the TDHS position statement talk about the guarantees of ADA and how these guarantees will be hollow without support services necessary to exercise these rights. It further commits TDHS to taking all appropriate and necessary programmatic and administrative actions to support community based services which:

- \* are based on individual need;
- \* serve persons with disabilities of all ages and provide support to families of persons with



disabilities where appropriate;

\* offer the service recipient opportunities for choice and control;

\* recognize and allow for changing needs and circumstances over time;

\* avoid promoting dependence and create incentives to self-reliance and productivity, including options for cost sharing;

\* coordinate a range of services, supports and other assistance both public and private; and

\* are available throughout the state, in both urban and rural settings.

**ALAN MEYER RESIGNS AS  
DIRECTOR OF DHS OFFICE ON  
DISABILITY:  
DHS COMMUNITY BASED SERVICES  
POSSIBLY THREATENED**

CTD should be concerned and saddened by the resignation, March 8, of Alan Meyer from the position of Director of the Office on Disability at the Texas Department of Human Services. Alan is a former director of CTD and an extremely keen and effective advocate. We feel confident Alan played a key role in the DHS board of directors recently adopting a policy committing the agency to developing a comprehensive community based service system. It is cause for alarm to lose Alan at this critical juncture and DHS must act quickly to replace Alan with another strong advocate for consumer controlled community-based services. WRITE TO: COMMISSIONER RON LINDSEY, TEXAS DHS, P.O. BOX 149030, AUSTIN, TX 78714-9030 and tell him not to jeopardize the great progress made at DHS toward getting adequate community based services.

Alan is heading off for a month long road trip to the Florida Keys then

up the East Coast (A Travels with Charlie in Search of America). Several folks offered to quit their jobs and go with him. When he comes back to Texas he will be doing consultant work. Good Luck, Alan.

**ADA UPDATE - REGS  
Comments Due**

The following information was supplied by Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund (DREDF) - 202/986-0375. Responding to the proposed regulations is critical and CTD will provide dialogue for members who will write. Call us today if you will---512/478-3366.

All proposed rules are expected to be published in proposed form, with a sixty-day public comment period. All final rules are due to be published July 26, 1991, one year after the ADA's enactment.

Federal Communications Commission (FCC) - Comments were due February 15. The National Center for Law and the Deaf reports that the proposed regulations are satisfactory and they submitted detailed comments. NCLD - Galludet University, 202/651-5373.

Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance (ATBCB) - The proposed ADA Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities are, in general, very good and it is important to defend them. Comments are due March 25. (CTD has already submitted written comments and CTD member Ralph Rouse presented CTD's testimony at the hearing held in Dallas late February.) The proposed regs for Transportation Vehicles and Transportation-related Buildings should be out by the time you receive this newsletter.

Department of Justice (DOJ) - will publish two sets of rule: one for Title III and one for non-



conferences information is available to you through your modem. You can sign on to the Yellow Dream Machine BBS by calling 512/473-2702. CTD member Bill Scarborough is the System Operator.

## 1990 CTD CONVENTION WRAP-UP Amarillo is OKAY!

November 9-11, 1990 CTD had its annual convention in Amarillo. Over 150 attended. The comments and evaluations turned in by participants were overwhelmingly positive and we have numerous persons to thank for the success.

Marilyn Golden of Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund, our key note speaker, spoke on the passage and enforcement of A.D.A. All of the staff at the Harvey Hotel were outstanding. If anyone wanted or needed anything they were there. Amarillo Spec-Trans did an absolutely wonderful job providing transportation for the out of town people. They did not miss a pick up or delivery to the airport, thanks to the efforts of Jess and John. This was the first charter for Spec-Trans and with the success they had, please, consider them when your organization has something special. Our Amarillo Chamber of Commerce helped with our registration and chartering of Spec-Trans. With our Chamber we ought to be able to pull more conventions into Amarillo. Syb Saunders' family ran our Casino Night. You would have thought they were real "Las Vegas" dealers. Ha! Thank you to all our local merchants who contributed items for prizes. ADIA, PACILS, and PCD supported CTD in every way they could. When the convention was over all were saying, "Let's have it in Amarillo next year." I appreciate the confidence and am proud everyone enjoyed, but, no, we won't have it in Amarillo next year!!

Let me say "Thank You" to all who helped. It was a success because of your efforts.

I enjoyed serving as your president and will continue to serve as a Board Member as long as CTD wants me. Thank you for a supportive year  
.... Margaret Robinson

## 1991 CONVENTION UNDERWAY San Antonio Selected

The 1991 Convention will be held in San Antonio. Board members, Jerome Wright and Chris Mlynek are our key coordinators. CTD voted to lift the ban on San Antonio because of their efforts to get their transit system accessible. The only barriers now seem to be very expensive hotel prices. More details soon.

## HAVE FUN -- RAISE FUNDS FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION CTD 11th Annual FUN\*RUN

CTD members in or "near" Austin need to join us for the annual FUN\*RUN set for May 19, 1991 at U.T. Memorial Stadium. It's EASY MONEY for your organization. You get folks to solicit pledges from friends, co-workers, and family and then run, walk, or wheel around the 1/4 mile track for 1 hour each. This is not a competitive event. It's fun. Participants get a free T-shirt and free food and folks who make 20 laps get extra prizes. Runners average \$100 each in pledges. CTD handles all billing, collection and accounting. If you want to run for your local organization, too, we split the profits 50/50 with your organization. Call Laura at CTD to sign-up and get questions answered - -- 512/478-3366.



## **CTD REPRESENTATION ON STATEWIDE BOARDS**

Several statewide organizations and committees request representation by CTD and some require our representation. Please let us know if you are representing CTD on a statewide board or committee. The ones that we know of are listed below:

Texas Transition Task Force - Mary Amos, WTAPD, El Paso  
Advocacy, Inc. - Joyce Dwidczyk, UCPA, Austin  
Texas Alliance of Human Needs (TAHN) - Jean Langendorf-Geyer, El Paso  
Texas RELAY Service Advisory Committee - Edward "Tad" Willard, UCPA, Austin

### **CTD MEMBER SOUGHT FOR TAHN BOARD**

CTD is a member of the Texas Alliance for Human Needs (TAHN). TAHN is a statewide multi-issue coalition of organizations concerned with issues affecting low and moderate income people in Texas. TAHN Board of Director positions are open at this time. CTD member, Jean Langendorf-Geyer of El Paso, is currently serving as a representative of CTD and is encouraging CTD member organizations to join the Texas Alliance for Human Needs and recommend disability rights advocates for board membership. Send nominations (including brief biographical information) to TAHN, 2520 Longview, Suite 311, Austin, Texas 78705 before March 20, 1991. For information contact Jean Langendorf-Geyer at (915) 541-4377 or 565-2808.

### **INTERACTIVE PLAYSCAPE**

CTD has been asked to serve on an advisory committee to build an interactive playscape here in Austin. This playground is an innovative and revolutionary new

playground designed specifically for children with disabilities to play alongside their non-disabled friends. The park will be fashioned after Chris Davidson Opportunity Park in Midland, Texas located on the Midland Association of Retarded Citizens' grounds. The city of Austin has donated park land for this playground.

## **BARRIER FREE DESIGN WORKSHOP**

Texas Association for Interior Design is holding a conference in Austin on Saturday, April 21 at the Wyndham Southpark Hotel. It will provide an overview of the functional needs in interior spaces and recommend specific space planning and design applications for both commercial and residential interiors. Design professionals, administrators, facility managers and organizations serving the aging population and persons with disabilities are invited. Registration is \$45 for this all day workshop. CEU credit is available. Topics include: research relative to cueing, orientation and wayfinding, visual perception and physical manipulation; application of designs that ease daily activities; Call CTD for registration form/brochure.

### **FAX MACHINE NEEDED**

The CTD office is in desperate need of a fax machine. Our landlord is eliminating fax privileges for all tenants. If you would like to donate one or (or sell it to us cheap!) call our offices. (512) 478-3366.

### **A DEFINITION OF STRUCTURAL ACCESSIBILITY**

CTD called Quarters Hotel in Austin when arranging accommodations for



the March board meeting. When asked if they had any accessible rooms for persons with disabilities, they replied, "Oh yes, we have elevators in our hotel, but you probably want to stay on the second floor because it is warmer up there." So there you have it: elevators and warmth...a new definition of accessibility!

## **CTD TO HIRE FULL-TIME COMMUNITY ORGANIZER**

CTD is looking for a full-time community organizer to start as soon as hired. The organizer will develop active cross-disability leadership in local communities across the state. San Antonio, El Paso and Houston are the target cities for the first year --- the job requires extensive travel. Qualifications needed are: proven organizing and leadership skills, fund raising experience, knowledge of disability issues, and experience with disability and poverty. Sign Language and Spanish skills are a plus. Salary is \$20,000 a year with limited benefits. Please send resumes to: Organizer Position, CTD, 316 W. 12th St., #405, Austin, TX 78701.

## **VOLUNTEERS -- GIVE THEM A HAND!**

With the limited staff we now have here at CTD, our volunteers are even more important to us than ever. Texas size Thanks to:

Steve Scott - CTD encouraged Advocacy, Inc. to put their Legislative Alert on tape and Advocacy offered to pay CTD to do it. We agreed to do it because it has to be done---it's not what you would call a profitable venture. The bulletin is weekly and must be taped, dubbed and mailed every friday. It would be impossible to

do this if it were not for the volunteer efforts of Steve. He is here every friday, unless he is out of town competing in wheelchair tennis (Steve's team won the national competition in Montreal).

Ron & Kathy Cranston - Ron and Kathy provid their van to take our board members in wheelchairs to dinner or to the capitol. Ron will sit all day at the Capitol waiting to testify why the legislature should not cut funds to community based services. Both Kathy and Ron will fold, label and sort CTD mailings and record tapes. We are glad they just can't say no.

Gene and Margarite Brooks - At the CTD Convention in Amarillo Gene and Margarite told me they wanted to get involved in legislative issues. They are now very active CTD legislative committee and did a considerable amount of research on our proposed rider to the appropriations act on disability hiring practices. Gene and I have been visiting legislators trying to garner support for the hiring rider.

Tony Schrader - Tony is a former employee of the State Board of Insurance and a person with a disability. Tony's expertise on CTD's legislative committee and experience is invaluable.

Bob Kafka and Stephanie Thomas- Bob and Stephanie's knowledge and endless days of "camping out" at the Capitol are vitally important. Bob chairs the CTD ongoing Attendant Services Task Force. The two are definitely champions of disability rights.

Ralph Rouse - Ralph has offered his time and expertise and has helped tremendously by giving testimony for CTD before the Architectural and Transportation Barriers and Compliance Board (ATBCB) and the Department of Justice (DOJ) on ADA regulations.



Redge Westbrook & Judy Wingard-Westbrook - On our legislative committee, both give as much time as possible. Redge has been the chair of CTD's legislative committee for several years.

Bill Scarborough - Bill donated a modem and modem software, plus WordPerfect, installed, trained and continues to provide "crisis intervention" to the CTD staff.

Audley & Kathy Blackburn - braille the newsletter and other information for CTD.

#### **MIUSA SPONSORS SCHOLARSHIPS FOR USSR/MEXICO EXCHANGE PROGRAMS**

Mobility International, USA (MIUSA), a non-profit dedicated to integrating persons with disabilities into international travel and exchange programs, will be sponsoring 2 exchange programs for the summer of 1991 for disabled and non-disabled young adults. They called CTD because they have scholarship money for people with disabilities --- Call MIUSA now (503/343-1284) if you are interested.

USSR In July, a delegation will visit the USSR. This is Environmental Exchange, the second half of a program begun this past summer when MIUSA brought 22 persons, 15 with disabilities, to the U.S. Stays in Moscow and Georgia, with outdoor activities and seminars on environmental and disability issues are planned. The goal is to send a delegation of diverse geographical, ethnic and disability representation.

MEXICO This summer 10 people with disabilities from Mexico and 10 from the U.S., ages 18-26, will gather in Eugene, Oregon for 3 weeks of leadership skill building, outdoor activities and cultural exchange.

#### **ILRU TO HIRE TWO ASSOCIATES**

ILRU Research and Training Center on Independent Living has two positions open for Program Associate(s) to assist the Program Director(s) in conducting innovative technical assistance, training and research in independent living. These positions offer an opportunity to work in a team oriented environment. Requirements: Management of independent living center, report/technical writing. Prefer experience providing technical assistance and training, program assessment and word/data processing. Smoke free offices. Preference to person with personal experience with disability. \$25-30,000. Send resume to: Laurie Gerken and Laurel Richards, ILRU at TIRR: 3400 Bissonnet, Suite 101, Houston, TX 77005; 713/666-6244 666-0643(TDD)

#### **THANK YOU CTD CONTRIBUTORS - SEPT.1990 - FEB.1991**

Campaign for Human Development  
Live Oak Fund for Change  
Texas Planning Council for  
Developmental Disabilities  
Weir Foundation  
Southwestern Bell Telephone  
Texas Trial Lawyers Association  
Sprint/Relay Texas  
Amarillo National Bank  
Grupo Dignidad, Igualdad,  
y Oportunidad  
Yellow Dream Machine, BBS  
(Bill Scarborough)  
Texas Paralyzed Veterans  
Amarillo Disabled in Action  
The Silent Network  
David P. Elsi  
Justin Dart  
Margaret (Peg) Nosek  
Frances Patterson  
The Honorable Paul Moreno

Thank you very much for your support!



# Coalition of Texans with Disabilities

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