

**H
R
A** CELEBRATING
19 YEARS
OF
SERVICE

Handicapped Resource
Association of Texas
April/May 1997



Fold it, Stick it, Slap it in the Mail

HRA's eight faithful folders, spindlers and mutilators of The Resource - the ones who give lots of hours every year to prepare the newsletter for mailing - will face a challenge this April and May.

Brand new materials telling our friends about new opportunities to become a donor to HRA are coming very soon! The package, designed and prepared by Olivia Alexander (winner of a Barbara Jordan Award), will be ready to mail by the end of April.

What does that mean for YOU? It means that we need at least **four more helpers** to donate at least four hours of their time to sending out this mailing to over 2,000 potential HRA supporters.

If you are ready, willing and able, AND if you like staplers and stickum and paper cuts (for a good cause), please call Olivia Acosta at HRA (469-1977) to volunteer.

New insurance law to help those with pre-existing conditions

When it takes effect on July 1, the Kassenbaum-Kennedy health insurance law will help many people avoid potentially costly lapses in coverage for pre-existing conditions when they change jobs.

Temporary losses of coverage happen because nearly all health insurance policies (but not HMOs) require a waiting period of 12-24 months before they cover pre-existing conditions. Under present law, most employees must start a new waiting period each time they change jobs.

After July 1 whenever you change jobs, this waiting period under your new health plan, will be reduced by one month for every month you had in the old plan. Other rules apply and Texas has not made a decision about what happens for those with pre-existing conditions who must move from a group health plan to an individual plan.

For more information call the Texas Department of Insurance toll free at 1-800-599-7467.

(excerpted from The Disability Policy Consortium.)

HRA Now a Model of Efficiency! (Really!)

Over the next month the last finishing touches will be put on HRA's new computer automation. Soon the staff in Dallas and Arlington will be able to access important files from either city through the magic of computer networking!

As this step has allowed us more quantity, we are now concentrating on quality, and therefore have made some assignment changes. Get a load of this:

PAYROLL, including time sheets and the issue of checks, is now the responsibility of the lovely **BETTY BAKER**. Betty will also take on CPR renewals.

ATTENDANT ISSUES, including recruiting, retention and assignments, belong to **RENEE JUDD**, for all Attendants, in both Dallas and Fort Worth offices. This means that Renee can begin building stronger referral lists and incentive programs that allow us to address issues our employees and customers think are important. Renee will also begin networking more with community agencies to identify dependable sources for Attendants. Renee processes applications and oversees Attendant training.

JAMIE McCARTNEY (no relation to Paul), has taken on work with the **CONSUMERS** who are served through the Arlington office. He has the responsibility of interfacing with Consumers and oversees assessments and problem solving.

TERRY RIDLE is Jamie's Dallas counterpart, as she interfaces with Consumers in that market. She will also be working to strengthen HRA ties in that community.

Telephone News!

You can now call our Dallas office toll free! Just call Arlington and ask to be transferred to Dallas. If you call and get a message, please leave full information so that a real person can call you back. If, however, you need an answer like NOW and have tried your damndest to reach the right person, please call Dave Watson, the PAS Program Director at the Arlington office.

New Insurance law for pre-existing conditions



Gloria Estefan Gives to
Spinal Cord Research

Have You Met Nellie Harrell?

What did Nellie do before coming to HRA in 1992? Nellie's life before HRA was consumed with raising a son and a daughter and being partner to her husband as he wrote launch instructions for the Saturn Space Explorer and built the prototype for the lunar landing rover. In her spare time she hosted industrialists from Germany and France! We wonder if she served them her famous potato salad and jello cake.

As a widow, Nellie left the Girls' Club to come to HRA and has since moved from a bookkeeper position to Business Manager with responsibility for managing all finances for HRA. Her son Ken is a manager with the City of Arlington. Daughter Cindy is with AISD in Special Education. A brother in Aiken, South Carolina, four grandchildren and a hobby that includes composing wreath and flower arrangements round out her life. We are glad to have her.

A PenPal's Potential

Anybody want an internet penpal? **Jon Teague**, a surfer who recently landed in our NET webpage, seeks a penpal with disability. He can be contacted at DAVI@webtv.net. (*Editor's questions: How old is he, and is he cute?*)

**Want to communicate with Texas Rehabilitation Commission?
TRC has a 24 hour a day, seven day a week Consumer Response Line.**

1-800-522-5264

This is a toll-free telephone number to a recorded message line. To talk to a warm body call (512) 424-4400.

**OR, the electronically adept can log on to the TRC website at <http://www.rehab.state.tx.us>
E-mail address is kaye.beneke@rehab.state.tx.us**

Eggs, Bread and Milk Money

For over a year the friends of HRA have been using their KROGER CARES CARDS when they buy groceries. Each time they buy that canned whipped cream or Cheetos, a percentage of all purchases made with the HRA card is donated directly to the agency. At the end of the year we should draw several hundred dollars from our Kroger account. We should, if all of us continue thinking of HRA when we shop at Kroger - just show the card with Handicapped Resource Association printed on it before your checkout is complete. Thanks to all of you who are helping HRA take advantage of the Kroger plan. If you need a new card call Kroger Card Queen Olivia Acosta at HRA.

Christopher Reeve's New Movie, *In the Gloaming*

-from Dallas Morning News

The terms "cable movie" and "minimalist filmmaking" aren't often used together in the same sentence. But most cable movies don't possess the quiet polish and power of *In the Gloaming*, Christopher Reeve's directorial debut, which airs Sunday April 20 on HBO.

In the Gloaming has been much publicized as the return of the former *Superman* paralyzed from the neck down in an equestrian accident two years ago.

Gloaming stars Robert Sean Leonard (Dead Poets Society) as Danny, a young man with AIDS who has come home to die. Unfortunately, home is not always where the heart is.

Dad, played with rigid distance by David Strathairn, has trouble acknowledging his son's presence, let alone his illness. His mom (Glenn Close) wants to serve ice cream on the patio and wait for Danny's AIDS to go away. Sister (Bridget Fonda) still harbors resentment toward her brother's "preferred" treatment as a child.

It's a bit too much to mull sometimes, but Mr. Reeve packs in plenty of icy family chemistry into this film about people imploding in the face of crisis. Mr. Reeve has come up with an impressively understated work, a bright harbinger of a second career.

He could be one of Liz Taylor's Exes...one never knows.

Nationally known entertainer Andy Hickman will perform at this year's Celebration! HRA. Chosen by Jerry Hipple and the Celebration! HRA steering committee, Hickman is a front-runner at Professional Platform Associates of Dallas and plays to standing ovations all over the country.

Said one person who witnessed his show, "Andy turned an evening destined for pinstriped boredom and terminal politeness into an animated evening full of fun and laughter." Mark your calendars now for this October 17 evening!!

WHO SAYS YOU DON'T EXERCISE??

<u>ACTIVITY</u>	<u>CALORIES BURNED</u>
Beating around the bush	75
Jogging your memory	125
Jumping to conclusions	100
Climbing the walls	150
Passing the buck	25
Grasping at straws	75
Throwing your weight around (depends on your body weight)	50-300
Dragging your heels	100
Pushing your luck	250
Making mountains of molehills	500
Spinning your wheels	150
Flying off the handle	225
Running around in circles	350
Chewing nails	200
Eating crow	225
Pouring salt on wound	25
Hitting bottom	600

See? You probably get more exercise than you thought.

From TPSA Tips, Houston Texas

Bus fares remain at \$2

The DART board recently declined to reverse its recent increase in fares for people with disabilities.

On a 9-4 vote, members denied Dallas member Jesse Oliver's request to roll back the \$2 HandiRides fare to the previous \$1. The new fares, approved by the board in November, took effect Jan. 1.

The issue of fares for people with disabilities has been contentious for several years, and until November, the DART board had backed off staff-recommended increases, saying the service was not good enough to justify the higher rate.

But late last year the majority of the board agreed that the service has improved, and that the economics of the service - about a \$30 subsidy for every ride provided - demanded a \$2 fare to help offset costs.

Another Dallas representative, Arthur Hollingsworth, pointed out that 40% of HandiRides fares are paid by government agencies; he said the \$2 fare might be an incentive for some users to learn to use the less expensive bus and rail system.

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Singer Gloria Estefan, who took nearly a year to recover from a broken back suffered in a bus crash, has given Miami paralysis researchers \$250,000 and the promise of more. Ms. Estefan said recently that she will also donate royalties from two of her songs - *Path of the Right* and *Love and Always Tomorrow* - to the Miami Project, where researchers hope to restore partial movement to paralyzed people within two years. The Miami Project has raised \$75 million since 1985 for spinal cord research and a facility that should be completed by the year 2000.

-Dallas Morning News



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New Supplemental Insurance for Medicare Beneficiaries

Texans under 65 who receive Medicare because of their disabilities in the past have had difficulties finding insurance to fill the gaps in Medicare.

In the past, only a few companies sold Medicare supplement insurance policies to people under 65. Companies that offered such coverage could reject people whose medical histories made them more likely than others to file claims.

Now however, many Texans under 65 who receive Medicare due to their disabilities have a special window of opportunity called an "open enrollment period". During this period, insurance companies may not deny them the basic Medicare supplement policy because of medical histories or health problems.

An insurance company cannot charge a disabled person under 65 more than its normal rate for a policy solely because it was bought during the person's open enrollment period. Rules that took effect January 1, 1997 created two distinct open enrollment periods:

People under 65 who enroll in Medicare Part B after January 1, 1997 have six months from the date of enrollment as an "open enrollment period."

People under 65 who enrolled in Medicare Part B between March 1, 1992 and January 1, 1997 are now in a one-time open enrollment period that lasts until July 1, 1997.

During an individual's open enrollment period, insurance companies that sell Medicare supplement insurance are required to make available at least Medicare supplement Plan A without regard to health status. Plan A helps with the 20% coinsurance, blood and coinsurance for long term hospital costs.

For further information, contact Lee Jones or Jim Davis at the Texas Department of Insurance Public Information Office, (512) 463-6425.

(excerpted from the *Disability Policy Consortium*)



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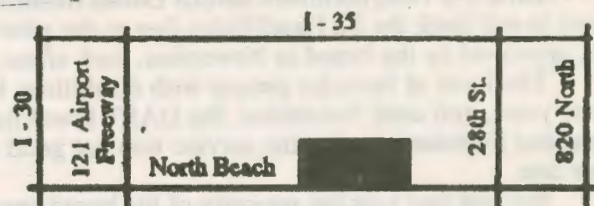
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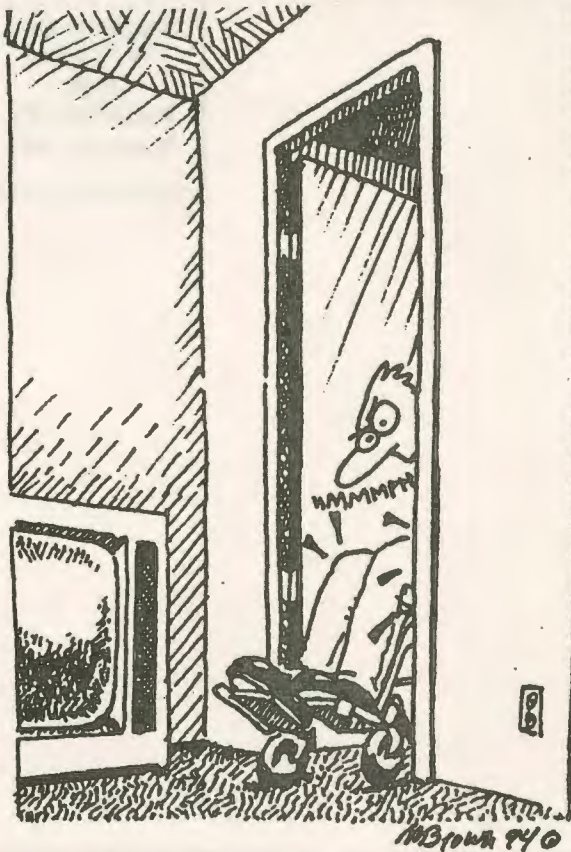
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April/May
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