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*Handicapped Resource
Association of Texas
June/July 1997*



THE RESOURCE

*Educating, advocating
and empowering adults with
disabilities*

A newsletter sponsored by Westlake's
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Rosalie Wells Resigns

HRA is sad to announce the resignation of its Executive Director, Rosalie Wells. Wells made the decision to leave the agency last month to relocate to be near her first love: the Texas coast. The decision was made after more than two years in residence at HRA.

In her resignation letter, Wells writes, "Handicapped Resource Association is structurally and financially very strong. Automation, funding, service delivery, staffing and reputation are exemplary. I am very proud to have been association with the agency, its consumers and friends."

Melinda Havran, HRA Board President, says the financial stability the agency now possesses is largely due to Wells' revenue raising efforts. She says that HRA's annual budget doubled from \$600,000 in 1995 to more than \$1.3 million under Wells' leadership. Besides raising private donations, Havran said, Wells obtained contracts from the Department of Human Services and the Texas Rehabilitation Commission to provide attendant care services.

The staff, Board, and friends of HRA are sorry to see her go, but wish her the best of luck.

DFW Classic Car Show July 12 & 13

On Saturday and Sunday July 12 & 13, come see the 5th Annual DFW Classic Car Show at the Ballpark in Arlington. David Shuford, Car Show Director, expects about 150 antique, classic, collectible and special interest cars and classic cars and other vehicles. As in past years, the show will be held under the shaded concourse at the Ballpark with DJ'd entertainment, food, drinks and more. The popular **Collectible Toy Expo** is back, as is the **North Texas Volkswagen Club's Bug Swarm III** and the **Southwest Swap Meet**. This year's sponsors include **Arlington National Bank, Spring Creek Barbecue, Arlington Morning News, Jerry McKinney Auto Group and the Texas Rangers**. Get your \$2-off coupons through all show sponsors as well as through local auto parts stores and car clubs.

The DFW Classic Car Show is a joint project between Great Southwest Rotary and HRA; proceeds benefit both organizations and form a major part of the year's funding for HRA.

A few volunteer slots are still available! To volunteer or for more information about the show call the DFW Classic Hotline at metro 817-461-3750.

Celebration! HRA

Plan now to join us at Celebration! HRA, the annual evening of dinner and entertainment honoring the people who support HRA.

Man of the Year for 1997 is John Dycus, one of the founding members of the organization and past President of the Board. Now, even without an "official" position within the organization, John continues to support HRA in countless ways.

As a respected professional in his field, to people with disabilities as well as the able-bodied, John communicates, "I can do it...so can you." John's life is full of people who took on tough tasks because John thought they could.

The October 17 event will be held at the Arlington Hilton and will include dinner, drinks and live entertainment by illusionist Andy Hickman.

Your presence that night will help us honor John Dycus and will help to benefit people with disabilities who need HRA year-round.

Tickets are available by calling HRA at 817-469-1977.

Tips for Travelers

New Executive Director



Search
Barbie Does a Wheelie

Traveling with Disabilities: Two Approaches

Approach I: BE CAREFUL.

Have questions or doubts about traveling abroad? Travel consultant Jim Bennett, a senior information officer of Tripscope, a London-based nonprofit organization, offers free advice on traveling around the world to older people or those with disabilities. For information, write the Courtyard, Evelyn Road, London, England W45JL.

Bennett believes strongly in making adequate preparations for any major travel:

-Medications. Can you get your medication abroad? Can you take it into the country you are visiting?

-Medical Insurance. Lots of firms say they'll cover you while traveling, but read the small print - sometimes pre-existing conditions aren't included. Make sure that any medical equipment such as an electric wheelchair, is insured for damage or loss.

-Planning. How do you plan to get from your home to the airport? From your vehicle to the check-in counter? What happens to your wheelchair on a plane or train? Suppose you want to use the bathroom while on board? It's wise to investigate these issues in advance.

Approach II: TAKE A CHANCE!

Rick Crowder of Clarksville, Tennessee, takes a more cavalier approach to travel. A former Air Force pilot who was partially paralyzed in a motorcycle accident, he now writes for several magazines. He says, "I tell travelers with disabilities: Overcome your fear and get out there and do it! Get to know travel agents and tour operators who specialize in disabled travel. I know I'm a minority, but I don't plan *anything* before I go to a new place. I just show up and say, "here I am, deal with me!" The more we folks with disabilities get out and about, the more the architectural and attitudinal barriers that surround us will be knocked down."

*-from an article by Rudy Maxa in
Modern Maturity, May/June 1997*

Wanna go to the State Fair? Get your name on the list - Quick.

As a client of HRA, you can go to the State Fair of Texas this year on Wednesday, October 1 *for free* with a special ribbon available when you register with Olivia Acosta before August 15. Each client can enter and bring one guest free. All guests who receive ribbons to get in free must be at least 7 years old.

Call Olivia Acosta at HRA (469-1977) to reserve your ribbons.

Challenge Baseball gives kids a place to play

There's a new baseball league in Carrollton for kids with disabilities. In this league, there's no booing, no unfair plays - just fun and support of kids who want to play baseball but just need an opportunity.

Challenger Baseball tailors the regulation game to the players' disabilities. Each player gets a buddy. In the field, the buddy helps with the play, maybe catching the ball and tossing it to the player. But the player has to step on the base or tag the runner.

Each batter gets three or four swings at a ball lobbed underhand, but if they seem to be having trouble, the ball goes on a tee. And when they get a hit, the buddy pushes them toward first if they're in a wheelchair or runs alongside them if they aren't.

Most importantly, everyone gets a chance to bat each inning, no matter how many outs the team has.

Unfortunately, say players' parents, a lot of kids, and a lot of parents, don't seem to know about Challenge Baseball.

"What we really need," one mom said, "is to get the word out. So far, there are barely enough players to make teams. These kids are so happy when they're playing," she says.

"It's not too late to join up," added Larry Pettey, one player's dad. "If a kid wants to play, even if it's the last game of the season, we want them to play."

Executive Director Search Under Way

The HRA Board of Directors has launched a search for a new Executive Director to replace former Director Rosalie Wells. The Board has been accepting applications and resumes for several weeks, and hopes to begin interviewing within the next month.

According to Melinda Havran, HRA Board President, the group is taking a careful approach to the process. "Although we need to bring someone in quickly, we want to be sure and make the right selection," says Havran. The Board will accept resumes until a reasonable pool of qualified candidates is gathered.

Qualifications sought include a strong background in human services, budget planning, public relations and fundraising.

RESOURCES FOR TRAVEL AND TOURS

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Accessible Journeys

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The Guided Tour, Inc.

7900 Old York Rd. Ste 114-B
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215-782-1370; fax 215-635-2637
Worldwide tours for adults with developmental and physical challenges.

Search Beyond Adventures

400 S. Cedar Lake Rd.
Minneapolis, MN 55405
800-800-9979; fax 612-377-5861

BOOKS:

The Cruise Guide for Wheelchair Travelers

Available only through Cruise Lines International Association-affiliated travel agencies. Free.

Fodor's Great American Vacations for Travelers with Disabilities

800-533-6478
A two-volume guide, \$19.50

Accessible Bus List

American Bus Association, 1100 New York Ave NW
Washington, DC 20005-3934.
800-283-2877. Lists US tour bus companies. Free.

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Welcome to new Board Member, Jim Liddell! You'll hear more about Jim in upcoming newsletters.

For over a year, the friends of HRA have been using their KROGER CARES CARDS when they buy groceries. Each time you buy canned whipped cream, tofu 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. So- we should all 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.

Sick of summer bugs?? Create a toad abode

A little shade here, a little moisture there...some leaves around the shrubs and no pesticides. These simple steps encourage a frog or toad to call your backyard home. These critters are entertaining - and part of a complete ecosystem. **Plus, they eat mosquitoes and june bugs like crazy.**

So, if you want to cut down on the bugs naturally, here's a way to lure the little critters into your yard.

-Cut out garden chemicals. These weaken insects, making them easier to eat. Then, the insecticide gets into the frogs and toads' systems.

-Toads like to lie under moist leaf litter in the heat of the day, so provide some. They also like loose soil, so make sure your beds are worked.

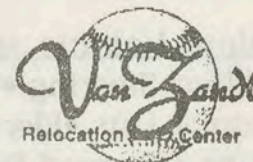
-If you don't have a pond or standing water in the backyard, supply the froggies with a large shallow dish of water. They need water to lay eggs.

-Leave the porch light on to attract bugs.

-Discourage children from trying to capture and keep toads and frogs as pets. Chemicals on hands such as lotions, bug sprays, etc. are easily absorbed into the skin of frogs and toads. And, they can die in captivity because their keepers don't know how to care for them properly.

"Don't take shortcuts to get frogs and toads in your yard," says Karen Gilley of Rohde's Nursery and Nature Store. Let them find you, she says; don't try to buy them at the pet store. Introducing exotic frogs into the environment probably isn't a good idea.

Frogs and toads need all the help they can get. "They're on the decline, and we don't know why," says Don Wilhelm, a biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Even studies in thinly populated areas show frogs and toads are dying out. Scientists hypothesize that their thin skins expose them to ultraviolet rays of the sun allowed by a depleted ozone layer. And, since they exist in water and air, they feel the effects of pollution in both environments. -From Dallas Morning News writer Betsy Simmacher



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American Lung Association wants your old cars

American Lung Association of Texas wants to help remove polluting vehicles from roads & neighborhoods. Now donors of old cars, no matter the condition, can deduct the fair market value of old cars, trucks, recreational vehicles and water crafts as a charitable donation, from their 1997 itemized income tax return. ALA will send you a statement citing each vehicle specifically. They will also provide you with the necessary IRS documentation for your donation.

For more information call the American Lung Association of Texas at 800-252-5864 or 512-467-6753.

Barbie's on Wheels!

Mattel Inc. has just unveiled the newest member of Barbie's circle of friends. She's an 11.5 inch strawberry blonde in a hot pink wheelchair.

The doll is billed as not just another pretty face but also as a step in breaking down barriers for children and others with disabilities.

With the same trademark bendable joints that come on all Barbies, "Share a Smile Becky" isn't just stuck in a wheelchair. Because of this, 9-year-old Hannah Withers' mom is hoping the doll will be more than just fun.

"You can bend Becky's legs at the knees," she says. "This is something that Hannah is working on. Hopefully she can teach her doll to walk as she learns herself."

"The visual image is worth a million words," said Patricia McGill Smith, executive director of the National Parent Network on Disabilities. "It's a huge step through a great big door. Madison Avenue America has recognized that children with disabilities are part of their whole constituency."

-from an article printed in the *Dallas Morning News*

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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

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June/July
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