

# TSPRA UPDATE

Texas School Public Relations Association

August 1994

## TSPRA takes top chapter honors in Toronto

The National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA) presented TSPRA two major chapter awards at the national association's seminar in Toronto July 10-13.

On behalf of the Texas School Public Relations Association, Past President Chuck Hornung accepted the Blue Ribbon Chapter Award and the prestigious Distinguished Chapter Award (Year-Round Project Winner).

A total of 15 chapters earned the Blue Ribbon Chapter Award, which is based on points accumulated in various categories during the school year. Killeen ISD's Bob Massey was responsible for TSPRA's entry.

Based on the Blue Ribbon nomination, a committee selects the recipients of the Year-Round Project Award and the Single Project Award. TSPRA's Year-Round Project Award was based on the quality of the organization's activities throughout the year. The Oklahoma chapter won the Single Project Award for its program to encourage members to seek NSPRA accreditation.

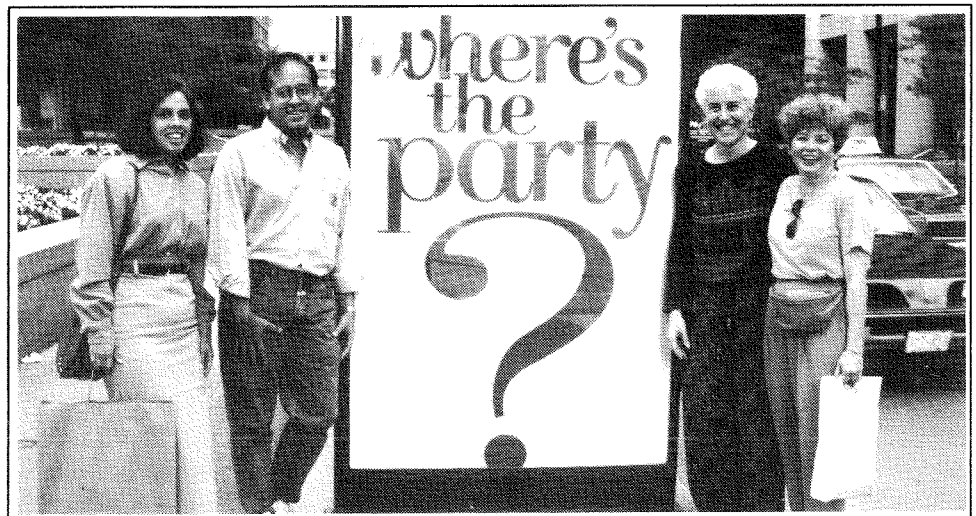
TSPRA also was recognized for having the most individual members contribute to NSPRA's building fund drive. A total of 25 individual TSPRAn's have made contributions to the building fund. In addition, TSPRA presented a \$100 check to Ginny Ross, who is coordinating the drive.

TSPRA scholarship recipient Phyllis Kinnison, Region 17 ESC, was among the approximately 20 TSPRAn's travelling to Toronto for the seminar. TSPRAn's who presented sessions at the conference included South Texas ISD's Brenda Nettles-Riojas, "How to Promote a New Mag-

net School"; North Forest ISD's Hollis Hood, "Love Them Anyway . . . When They Don't Get Along, Diffuse!"; and Humble ISD's Karen Collier, "Bond Referenda: The Thrill of Victory or the Agony of Defeat".

Also, Garland ISD's Steve Knagg, "Defeating Stress: A Survivor's Guide to Sanity"; Lamar CISD's Kris Taylor, APR, "Opinion Research: If You Want to Know, Just Ask!"; Dallas ISD's Larry Ascough, "School Violence: The Ultimate PR Challenge" and Dallas ISD's Bobbie Foster, "Communicating with a Diverse Population".

*Brenda Nettles-Riojas, South Texas ISD; Henry Garcia, Laredo ISD; Dorian Martin, Eanes ISD; and Karen Collier, Humble ISD, concentrated on networking opportunities at the NSPRA conference in Toronto last month.*



## From Dorian's Desktop

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by Dorian Martin,  
Public Information Director,  
Eanes ISD  
TSPRA President



“Generativity.”

Don't run to your trusty Webster's Dictionary, because that word won't be there. Instead, credit Ian Percy, who shared this new word at the National School Public Relation Association's seminar.

“Generativity,” according to this keynote speaker, is a combination of “generate” and “generous.” The Canadian's definition of this new word is “returning the joy of creative collaboration; being with others in a significant way, participating in their growth and creativity.”

What a wonderful concept! In this day of empowerment and teamwork, this word fits right in and still adds two key components – “joy” and “significant.” And how it describes our organization!

During my 10 years in this organization – and especially this year – I can point to numerous times when “generativity” came into play.

One recent example involves Galveston ISD's Sheila Lidstone, who is co-chairing the Texas Public Schools Week campaign. She's been working most of the summer on developing the logo and theme for the project. When the executive board met in June, they enthusiastically endorsed one of Sheila's themes – “A Landscape for Learning.” Then they sent feedback to Sheila on the proposed logos. After a little bit of tinkering, a lot of creative thinking, and a large dose of “generativity”, I think this year's Public Schools Week design will have a very distinctive and impressive theme and logo. If Sheila's efforts are indicative of what the other members of this committee are doing, I predict TSPRA members and Texas educators will wholeheartedly endorse this *significant* packet to benefit education.

For “generativity” to be successful, one has to take joy in new – and unexpected – experiences and opportunities. Take Mission ISD's Jenny Robinson, Terry Cannon and Margie McCarthy for instance. Because of unforeseen circumstances, the chairmanships of three TSPRA committees became available this summer and these three TSPRAns agreed to fill the vacancies. Jenny had volunteered to serve on the membership committee and already had ideas for the South Texas area, when she was approached about taking the lead on the state committee. She jumped at this opportunity in an instant. Terry took on the responsibility for Update, and Margie agreed to chair the Star Awards contest. Watch these committees as a sense of *joy* is evident in the newly appointed chairpersons

Another key phrase in Percy's definition of “generativity” is *creative collaboration*. For an example, look at the members of the evaluation committee, led by Spring ISD's Jerry Smith, ASPR, and Region 17 ESC's Phyllis Kinnison. As soon as the TSPRA seminar was completed in February, these two vice presidents – who agreed to go above and beyond the call of duty in also assuming a committee assignment – had the faxes whirling, the telephones ringing and the mailman busy making deliveries to their committee members. These efforts will culminate in a program to help each of us evaluate the job we do presently and how we can improve our efforts. That's significant stuff!

And these are just a few of the wonderful things that presently are occurring in this organization. And still TSPRA does more.

The state organization is stretching this feeling of “generativity” across the nation. At the NSPRA seminar in Toronto, NSPRA Vice President (and Texas' own) Bob Sharp, ASPR, TSPRA past president Chuck Hornung and I met with NSPRA executive director Rich Bagin, APR/ASPR.

By the time we finished with lunch, Rich had a multi-faced proposal of what TSPRA could do for NSPRA.

Continued on next page

## Volunteers needed

# N. Texas members getting ready for TASA/TASB

The North Texas region is gearing up to host another TASA/TASB Convention this fall at the Dallas Convention Center.

Susan McGuire, Denton ISD, currently is recruiting TSPRAs to cover sessions and write articles to be published in a statewide magazine.

Margaret Gurecky, Lewisville ISD, is enlisting volunteers for the Counseling Booth and Ambassador's Desk.

Once again, Steve Knagg's white pick-up will be carrying members' publications to the TSPRA counseling center. Please send 50 copies to Garland ISD, marked:

*TASA/TASB Counseling Booth, 720 Stadium Drive, Garland, Texas 75040.*

TSPRA members who will be making presentations at TASA/TASB are

Bond Elections - **Carole Griesdorf**, Plano ISD; **Debbie Moehnke**, Beeville ISD

Research Methods - **Kris Taylor**, Lamar CISD

Communications in Site-Based Management - **Riney Jordan**, Grapevine-Colleyville ISD

School Foundations - **Elaine Free**, Irving ISD

Alumni Associations - **Becky Nugent**, Bryan ISD

Crisis Communications - **Ann Spears**

Working with the Media from a Small District's Perspective - **Ann Kate**, West Orange-Stark ISD

Planning a Communications Program - **Linda East**, ASPR, Socorro ISD

Partners in Education - **Elaine Naleski**, Austin ISD

Crisis Management - **Dixie Parris**, Mesquite ISD

PR for Small School Districts - **Lynnda Queen**, Region 16 ESC; **Bill Britcher**, Leander ISD

Working with the Media from an Urban or Suburban District's Perspective - **Bonnie Sparrow**, Fort Worth ISD

Staff Relations - **Paula Good**, Birdville ISD

Starting a PR Program - **Pam Keeton**, Copperas Cove ISD; **Annell Todd**, TSPRA

How to Prepare Winning Entries for School Board and Superintendent of the Year - **Suzy Czeschin**, Harlingen ISD.

## TSPRA wants you!

It is time to nominate members interested in serving as association officers beginning Feb. 24, 1995.

The positions to be filled are president-elect (a three-year commitment) and vice presidents (a two-year commitment) from the Central, West Central, East Texas and Northwest regions.

"I encourage everyone to nominate a TSPRA mem-

ber who would make a good association officer," said Katy ISD's Charles Rogers, Nominations Committee chairman.

A TSPRA candidate nomination form will be mailed to every member this month. Completed forms are due to Rogers (Katy ISD, PO Box 159, Katy, TX 77492-0159) by Sept. 9.

## From Dorian's Desktop (continued)

This included:

- Allowing NSPRA to market the principal's assessment booklet across the nation, with both NSPRA and TSPRA benefiting financially from these sales.
- Having TSPRAs volunteer in the NSPRA booth at the National Association of Secondary School Principals conference in San Antonio in early February.
- Proposing that Texas be considered as the host state for a future NSPRA Past Presidents Conference as well as a future NSPRA Seminar.

Yep, as usual, Texas has the lead position in making a difference in education and in school public relations! And it's wonderful to be a part of all of this "generativity"!!

## Firefighting 101

# Hot tips for blazing new trails

By Celia Longoria,  
Pharr-San Juan-Alamo ISD

(The following is a summary of a session from TSPRA's Seminar in February.)

Newcomers to the school public relations field should feel more at ease about putting out fires after attending a session, "Fire Fighting 101: Hot Tips for Blazing New Trails" conducted by Julie Moulton and Kris Taylor, APR, during the Texas School Public Relations Association Seminar.

Moulton, director of public relations at Waxahachie ISD and Taylor, director of communications at Lamar CISD, offered several helpful hints during their presentation.

Taylor advised those attending the session to develop a battle plan that includes goals and chief functions of the public relations office.

Moulton discussed the importance of networking. "Network, network, network. Don't reinvent the wheel," she said.

In order to build credibility, Moulton and Taylor suggested the following:

- Always keep your word;
- Admit your mistakes in public and with successes, give everyone credit for their part;

- Keep your cool when put on the spot;
- Be approachable, be a source of information;
- Act like a sponge – keep

- cards on everyone you meet;
- Evaluate often to keep giving them what they want;
- Be organized or fake it really well;
- Find out who really runs things and deal with them;
- Keep a high profile on chamber boards, realtors, community organizations, etc.
- Do the lunch circuit;
- Learn to tolerate a lot of questions;
- Be someone who empowers people – encourage others and always recognize good deeds; and
- Keep a camera with you.

Moulton and Taylor also suggested that the public relations officer carry a large calendar with all appointments and have an emergency kit or folder with material such as the latest floor plans, employee lists, phone numbers and media contacts.

"You are a first class professional with an area of expertise that no one else has. Your first year of PR is the worst. Remember, you can't do everything," Taylor said. "We have to understand that the result of our job is what happens in the classroom."

### A note to TSPRAnS

Thank you for honoring me with the \$1,000 scholarship to attend the NSPRA Conference.

After attending my first national conference last year in San Diego, I vowed not to miss another one. The opportunity to listen to and learn from the PR gurus and to meet and network with colleagues from throughout the country was truly a most beneficial and rewarding professional experience, and I appreciate your making it possible for me to make the trip to Toronto.

In a word, the conference was *magnifique!* The only problem I had was trying to choose from all the *grande* sessions that were provided.

I encourage all TSPRAnS to make plans to attend NSPRA '95, July 9-12, in Seattle. I am confident that it, too, will be *supurbe!*

- Phyllis Kinnison,  
Region XVII ESC,

# Writer advises, 'Know your audience'

by Lisa Robert, Angleton ISD

*(The following is a summary of a session at the TSPRA conference in February.)*

In her session "Improving Your Writing Skills," journalist Jan Phenix reminded public relations writers of the most important thing they need to know -- their audience.

"You can take the same subject and write it from a different angle for students, parents, teachers and administrators," said Phenix. "You need to know who you are writing for before you decide how to write."

Several tips that Phenix offered include knowing what the audience knows or wants to know about the subject, knowing your role as the writer (neutral? advocate? enemy?) and setting your tone and attitude accordingly.

"You need to write concisely," Phenix advises, "Don't say any more than you need to say...Use as few words as possible to say what you need to say."

Using the familiar pyramid form is still the best method for writing news leads. Writers who struggle with feature leads may find it helpful to wait until last to write the lead, she said.

## TSPRA Committees

## Chairperson

TSPRA Update	Terry Cannon, ASPR, Round Rock
ASPR Program	Linda East, ASPR, Socorro
Membership Recruitment	Jenny Robinson, Mission
Mentoring	Pam Keeton, Copperas Cove
Texas Public Schools Week	Sheila Lidstone, Galveston
Paraprofessional Workshop	Kris Taylor APR, Lamar Con.
Campus Level Assessment Workshop	Sharon Woldhagen, S'west
Principals Handbook	Mary Ann Simpson, Region 4 ESC
Communications Contest	Dixie Parris, Mesquite
Communications Contest Evaluation	Margie McCarthy, Pharr-San Juan- Alamo
Scholarship	Vera Porter, White Oak
Audit	David Ochoa, South San Antonio
Professional Awards	Gary Reese, TEA
Governmental Relations	Lynda Queen, Region 16 ESC
TASA/TASB Convention	Larry Comer, ATPE
TASA/TASB Reporters	Julie Zwahr, Waxahachie
TASA/TASB Display,	Susan McGuire, Denton
Counseling & Ambassadors	Margaret Gurecky, Lewisville
Publicity & Promotion	Lori Burton, Region 12 ESC
University Liaison	Angela Smith
TSPRA Archives	Sara Harris
Media Handbook	Linda Meyer, Alief ISD
Corporate Liaison	Paula Good, Birdville ISD
Past President's Council	Ann Spears
Evaluation Process	Billie Koetter, Harris County Dept. of Ed.
Teller	Jerry Smith, ASPR, Spring
Bright Idea Booklet	Phyllis Kinnison, Region 17 ESC
	Clark Lyman, Austin
	Hollis Hood, North Forest

# A Message from the Executive Director

by Annell Todd, APR  
Executive Director

Your officers and committees have been working during the summer to make 1994-95 another outstanding year for TSPRA. It was 32 years ago in July that a band of Texans gathered at the annual NSPRA meeting and decided to form the Lone Star Chapter. I think they would be proud of their legacy.

TSPRA continues to provide the support and resources that help you get your job done. To keep the chapter strong and fiscally sound, the second phase of the dues increase goes into effect this year.

## What do you get for your dues?

- A bargain. TSPRA dues -- at \$50 per year -- are still among the lowest of any professional association in the state.
- Top notch professional development at the annual seminar and in regional meetings
- Networking opportunities and spirit that defy description
- A communications contest and awards program
- Discount on Texas Public School Week packets
- Pride of belonging to a perennial Blue Ribbon Chapter of the

National School Public Relations Association

- Membership directory and newsletter
- Opportunities to mentor newcomers to school PR, to write articles, to make presentations, to serve on committees, to become an officer
- And last, but never least with TSPRAnS, being part of a group that plays as hard as it works.

Send in your dues on time, so we can get the directory out early. Recruit a new member, and let us hear from you. Call the state office or your area vice-president with ideas and suggestions for how to make this year -- our 32nd -- the best one yet.

*Sex education, OBE, self esteem, multiculturalism, AIDS education,*

## Facing the pressure

By Karen Collier, Humble ISD

*(The following is a summary of a session at the TSPRA conference in February.)*

Sexuality education. Outcome-based education. Self-esteem curriculum. Critical thinking skills. Multiculturalism. HIV/AIDS education. Whole language learning.

Will these terms become the four letter words of the '90s? Many pressure groups across the country seem to think so. And if this is their perception, then it is also the reality that public relations professionals and school districts must be prepared to face.

Three school public relations professionals discussed their experiences with pres-

sure groups. The panel included: Jennifer Grossman, director of communications of the Colorado Association of School Boards and Nation School Public Relations Association vice president; Judy R. Jonas, project coordinator of the Texas Comprehensive School Health Initiative; and Dr. Nancy McClaran, executive director of the Texas Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. The three summarized the key issues and offered recommendations for being proactive with pressure groups.

"It is crucial to have in place a two-way communications program," Grossman said. This includes research-based surveys and a strong support network inside the

school district. A strong relationship with the press year-round is needed. So are board policies with which you can protect yourself. Most of all, translate educational jargon and present information in easily understood terms.

It is also important to remember that those who belong to pressure groups are concerned and care about children. "We have the ideal situation in a way because we can talk about helping children learn," Grossman said. But with that opportunity also comes the responsibility to know what is being taught and the need to listen to parents' concerns and to accommodate them when possible.



**Building Fund Drive**

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Please make checks payable to the NSPRA Building Fund Trust and mail to 1501 Lee Highway, Suite 201, Arlington, VA 22209-1100.

## Important dates

Sept 9, 1994	Officer nomination forms due to Charles Rogers	Jan. 26-28, 1995	NSPRA Past Presidents Seminar <i>Hilton Head Island, S.C.</i>
Sept. 31, 1994	10 AM - TSPRA Board Meeting	Feb. 22, 1995	TSPRA Seminar Overlap Day with TBEC, TAPE <i>Hyatt Regency in Austin</i>
	3 PM - TSPRA General Membership Meeting	Feb. 23-25, 1995	TSPRA Seminar <i>Hyatt Regency in Austin</i>
	TSPRA Nominating Committee Meeting  <i>Loews Anatole Hotel, Dallas</i>	Feb. 27-Mar. 3, 1995	Texas Public Schools Week
Sept. 31-Oct. 3, 1994	TASA/TASB Conference <i>Dallas</i>	July 9-12, 1995	NSPRA Seminar <i>Seattle, Washington</i>

### TSPRA UPDATE

Official newsletter of the

**Texas School Public Relations Association**

1615 Guadalupe, Suite 203

Austin, Texas 78701

512/474-9107

FAX 512/477-0906

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