



TSPRA update

a newsletter from the **texas school public relations association**

Awards presentation kicks off annual conference

The first general session of the annual TSPRA conference featured award presentations and an address by Commissioner of Education **Jim Nelson**. Both Nelson and former State Board of Education Chairman **Jack Christie** praised TSPRAs for their contribution to education. Christie, whose award was announced last October, made brief remarks after being introduced as TSPRA's 1999 Key Communicator.

Vera Porter, Harris County Department of Education, chaired the awards committee this year and announced the recipients as President **Bill Britcher**, APR, presented the winners with their plaques. Award winners for 2000 are as follows: Professional Achievement, **Bob Sharp**, APR, Spring Branch ISD; Most Valuable, **Kathy Clausen**, Goose Creek CISD; Rookie of the Year, **Renae Gonzalez Murphy**, Wichita Falls ISD; Bright Idea, **Louise Henry**, APR, Grapevine-Colleyville ISD; Media award, **Martha McClain**, managing editor/reporter for the *San Benito News*.

Bob Sharp has served on the board of both TSPRA and NSPRA and is a perennial presenter at the regional, state and national levels. He is an accredited public rela-



TSPRAs honored the chapter award winners at the First General Session of the annual conference. Pictured left to right are: Vera Porter, Harris Co. Dept. of Education, awards committee chairperson; Bob Sharp, Spring Branch ISD, recipient of the Professional Achievement Award; Louise Henry, Grapevine-Colleyville ISD, recipient of the Bright Idea Award; TSPRA President 1999-2000 Bill Britcher, Leander ISD; Kathy Clausen, Goose Creek CISD, recipient of the Most Valuable Member Award; Renae Gonzalez Murphy, Wichita Falls ISD, recipient of the Rookie of the Year Award; and TSPRA Executive Director Annell Todd.

tions professional who "plies our trade with knowledge, diplomacy, and determination," Porter said. Sharp currently serves as executive director for communications in the Spring Branch ISD and previously worked in Galveston ISD. He has chaired and served on numerous committees including NSPRA's accreditation committee.

Last year, Spring Branch passed a \$250 million bond election by an 84 percent margin.

Kathy Clausen received the Most Valuable Member award for contributing significantly to the improvement of the association. Among Kathy's most recent contributions is the successful 2000 Texas Public Schools Week campaign. She chaired the committee that developed the promotional materials and packet that were utilized across the state. She has also chaired conference registration and is an accomplished presenter for TSPRA at paraprofessional workshops and the TASA-

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President's Perspective

The following excerpts are from Julie Thannum's speech at the installation luncheon during TSPRA's Annual Conference in February.

TSPRA is an organization that values the importance of personal relationships. This organization's greatest strengths are sitting in this room. Last year, Bill Britcher so eloquently encouraged us to put the public back in public schools. I now ask that we follow by putting the personal relationships back in our 'PR.' This business is about people helping people. Whether you are a veteran member who has seen it all or a first-year rookie with fresh ideas and energy to match, my charge to you is to consider how you can "Let Your Light Shine"



Julie Thannum, APR,
Carroll ISD,
TSPRA President

for TSPRA. If you will just keep your fire burning and take the time to share a part of your flame with the one who stands next to you, we will prevail. I stand as a living testimony that TSPRA can provide you with a firm foundation to stand strong and confident in the face of adversity. And when

politics prevail and bond elections fail, you will still find a way to let the light shine on all that is good and right in this public education system.

Our goal in the coming year is to make TSPRA your family. To make it your place of refuge and retreat when stress begins to crumble your world, where you can laugh, cry and bear your soul to ones who will listen, understand and care, where you can have fun, grow professionally and be better off for having actively participated.

Some of your fellow TSPRAn have graciously agreed to help us blaze new trails in leadership development. By starting a Leadership TSPRA program, we hope to instill in our younger TSPRA members a commitment to this organization and to preserving its rich history. We also hope to increase the number among us who are accredited in public relations, not because the initials alone represent anything elite or out of the ordinary to our members, but that it is yet another sign to the outside world that we have knowledge and strategies that have been successfully proven in real life situations.

Ed Moore told us to "balance your looks ahead with a few

looks back." That is what Leadership TSPRA will be about. It will be a program to nurture and groom leaders who understand TSPRA's background - its history - its roots - and leaders who are prepared to use what we have learned in our history to shape the future.

You'll hear more and more this year about what I like to call the M&M's - Mentoring and Membership. I believe all our wonderful products and moneymaking endeavors are meaningless unless we continue to nurture and meet the needs of our individual members.

Ed Moore challenged us to focus on what our traditional customers need from us. He reminded us to create a world where our publics can meet, communicate and grow to feel at home. How ironic that his message is exactly what I want our focus to be in the coming year. We need to meet - communicate - and grow to feel at home. That's TSPRA for so many of us and through M&M's - Mentoring and Membership - it can be that for you, too.

We need mentors who are willing to invest time in people. We need to aggressively pursue districts that have yet to ac-

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The 2000-2001 TSPRA Board

The 2000-2001 TSPRA Executive Board, (front row, l-r), Vice President Todd Overpeck, Region 12 ESC; Executive Director Annell Todd; President-Elect Mary Ann Simpson, Fort Bend ISD; President Julie Thannum, Carroll ISD; and Vice Presidents Susan Castro, Alief ISD, Katherine Cernosek, Mesquite ISD, and Annette Garcia, Region One ESC. (Back row, l-r) Vice Presidents Don Clark, Judson ISD, and Pifas Silva, San Elizario ISD; Past President Bill Britcher, Leander ISD; Vice Presidents Theresa Bledsoe, Sam Houston State University, and Cecilia Masters, Plainview ISD; and Parliamentarian Jon Dahlander, Dallas ISD.



Ammerman training workshops



Ken Haseley, Ammerman trainer for TSPRA seminars.

Response to TSPRA's partnership with the Ammerman Experience, a national communications training firm headquartered in Houston, has been overwhelmingly positive. To date five full-day media training sessions have been conducted, as well as a break-out session at the TSPRA Conference.

Almost 200 school administrators and TSPRA members have participated in the training and evaluations have been excellent with many requesting more training. The on-camera interviews are ranked as most valuable with the role playing in the crisis scenario and lecture on the nine media interview traps also receiving high marks.

Following are some of the evaluations.

- *Awesome - perfect for me! -TSPRA member*
- *Excellent training! Ken Haseley was an outstanding presenter. He was clear, interesting, expressive and knowledgeable. - principal*
- *I thoroughly enjoyed it! Thank you for the opportunity. - assistant principal*
- *I appreciated the opportunity to brainstorm and practice a response to a crisis. -principal*
- *Everything was valuable - realize I need more practice. - assistant principal*

Kudos to the TSPRAs who have facilitated the five workshops: **Julie Thannum**, Carroll ISD; **Carol Perry**, Waco ISD; **Nicole Wright**, Austin ISD; **Cindy Randle**, Carrollton-Farmers Branch ISD; and **Vera Porter**, Harris County Dept. of Education.

Shirley Brothers, Alvin ISD, will be facilitating a training session on May 31. **Lori Burton**, Region 11 ESC; **Don Clark**, Judson ISD in San Antonio; and **Cecilia Masters**, Plainview ISD are also making plans to host the training.

TSPRAs who have facilitated the training report that their "stock has gone up" with their colleagues who have admitted they did not appreciate the pressure of dealing with the media.

To schedule a TSPRA/Ammerman seminar, contact **Annell Todd** in the TSPRA state office.



Part of the training includes on-camera interviews involving a crisis scenario.



Participants have included TSPRA members, principals, central office administrators and board members.

The 2000 Annual Conference



Bill Britcher, left, Leander ISD, and Vera Porter, right, Harris Co. Dept. of Education, applaud Commissioner of Education Jim Nelson, (center), after his speech at the first general session.



The closing general session featured Rick Kaufman, 2nd from right, speaking on *The Columbine Tragedy: Managing the Unthinkable*. Pictured with Kaufman are Bill Britcher, back, and Julie Thannum, right. Scott Milder, left, is with SHW Architects + Engineers, sponsors for the Kaufman presentation.



Newly installed leaders President Julie Thannum, left, and President-Elect Mary Ann Simpson, who chaired the 1999 Star Awards Contest.



Outgoing TSPRA board members pictured, front row (l-r): Vice President Kirk Lewis, Pasadena ISD; Parliamentarian Joey Lozano, Texas Education Agency; and Vice President Drue Brown, Brownsville ISD. Back row (l-r): President Bill Britcher, Leander ISD, who will remain on the new board as past president; Vice President Sherilyn Conn, Mansfield ISD; and Immediate Past President Lynda Queen, Region 16 ESC.



Carroll ISD Superintendent Ted Gillum's humorous remarks elicit laughter from Julie Thannum at the installation luncheon.

Photos by Sharon Cotton, Ian Halperin and Adam McGilvray.



President Bill Britcher, right, Leander ISD, receives the TSPRA president's ring, a gift from Brady Hull, left, Brady Hull and Associates.



Riney Jordan, left, and Reavis Wortham could still sing after signing book autographs all day.



Retiring TSPRAn Joy Roberts, Ennis ISD, is serenaded with her own personal version of "Take This Job And Shove It," during the Coupland Inn Barbecue.



The annual scholarship to attend the National School PR Seminar is presented to Patti Pawlik-Perales, left, San Benito ISD, by Attorney Laura Fowler, center, of Henslee, Fowler, Hepworth and Schwartz L.L.P, and Scholarship Chairperson Jennifer Williams, Leander ISD.



Banquet Emcee Riney Jordan sings Happy Birthday to TSPRA Past Presidents Sharon Cox, left, Denton ISD, and Susan Dacus Wilson, Richardson ISD.



Past President Cindy Randle waves to the crowd after her winning bid for a Jon Dahlander CD. Jon played the piano during the Star Awards Banquet for the third year.

National speakers along with experts from TSPRA shared their PR knowledge at the annual conference at the Marriott at the Capitol in Austin Feb. 28-March 1. Riney Jordan returned to emcee the Star Awards Banquet with Chairperson Mary Ann Simpson. Becky Nugent again organized an outstanding round table sharing session, and the trip to the Old Coupland Inn was a memorable experience. Capturing the spirit of TSPRA, Past President Lynda Queen shared the following when Bob Massey recorded her "what TSPRA means to me" message. She also read it at the awards banquet.



Crystal and Platinum Star Award communications contest winners, pictured front row (l-r): Mark Thomas, Birdville ISD; Cheryl Hassmann, Temple ISD; Brad Press, Greenville ISD; Judy Kriehn, Garland ISD; Pat Sanchez and Katherine Cernosek, Mesquite ISD; and Stephanie Ferguson, New Braunfels ISD. Back row (l-r); Reavis Wortham and Steve Knagg, both of Garland ISD; and TSPRA Past President Bill Britcher, Leander ISD.

In honor of the inspiring life and work of Charles Schulz, I invite you to take a look at TSPRA as the Peanuts family.

We have the creative talent of Schroeder, the daring spirit, imagination and vision of Snoopy, the friendship and camaraderie of Woodstock.

We are full of Lucy's advice, the unrefined honesty of Peppermint Patty, the support of Sally; and Pig Pen lives in many of our offices!

We find security in a network that, like Linus' blanket, covers us on every issue while uniting us in our profession.

We are tied together by the vulnerability, humanity and heart of Charlie Brown and by a hope for school children that compels us to wait in Pumpkin Patches and seek approval from a girl with red hair.

Like you, Charles, Schulz, we make a difference in a world focused on kids; and like you, Charlie Brown, TSPRA is a good man.

*Lynda Queen
2/27/00*



Third General Session speaker Ed Moore, left, former manager of Communications Briefings, who teaches public relations at Rowan, discusses his presentation with Luis Villalobos, El Paso ISD.



Burnet ISD was out in full force at the Star Awards Banquet in support of Sharon Cotton, 3rd from right, who received two best of category awards.

Award Winners

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TASB Convention. Whether it is working in the TASA-TASB counseling booth or decorating for the awards banquet, she is always willing to help. She has served as a mentor, not only to her own staff members, but also to many TSPRAn in her region.

Rena Gonzalez Murphy was named public information officer for the Wichita Falls ISD last year and has exhibited a "creative, dedicated and professional approach to school communications" which is the criteria for receiving TSPRA's Rookie of the Year award. She began as the administrative assistant in the Student Assignment Office and was then named Magnet Information Specialist focusing on marketing four magnet schools, three elementary and one high school international baccalaureate program. The hands-on training allowed our Rookie of the Year to suc-

ceed longtime TSPRAn **Sylvia Hawkins**, who retired last year, with a wealth of knowledge about the district and a determination to improve the communication between administrators, campuses, media and the general public.

Louise Henry's Bright Idea Award winning entry this year will surely be replicated across Texas and the nation. The idea is actually two ideas. The first is a virtual brochure which will be distributed on a business-card sized CD. Its primary use is to market the Grapevine-Colleyville district to prospective teachers. The brochure works on any computer CD Rom drive with sound and video combined with print. The bonus of the CD is that it also connects the user to the Grapevine-Colleyville ISD Education Foundation's Internet Service.

Congratulations to all the award winners.

Reminders

- Fort Worth ISD has a position open for director of communications. For information on this and other job postings check the TSPRA website at www.tspra.org

- If you want to purchase an audio tape of **Rick Kaufman's** presentation on the Columbine tragedy, recorded at the TSPRA conference, contact the state office. Thanks to **Bob Massey** for recording the tapes. Price \$10.

- Visit the **TX2K** website at www.knagg.com for information on the upcoming **NSPRA** seminar.

Welcome New Members

Reg	Name	District	Reg	Name	District
1	Lizette Lizcano	La Joya ISD	8	Jerry Black	Liberty-Eylau ISD
1	Elizabeth Salinas	McAllen ISD	10	Glenn Hyde	Ennis ISD
1	Roger Torres	San Benito CISD	10	Karen Jonas	Richardson ISD
4	Steve Brunsman	Spring Branch ISD	10	Amy San Miguel	Irving ISD
4	Tandi Cox	Texas City ISD	10	Wynn Shakelford	Richardson ISD
4	Steve Gaskin	Danbury ISD	10	Kate Sullivan	Richardson ISD
4	William Griffin	Danbury ISD	10	Nathan Withee	Mesquite ISD /ITV
4	Julie Harris	Harris Co. Dept. of Ed.	11	Karen Campsey	Denton ISD
4	Susan Heaslet	Crosby ISD	11	Terri Duncan	Alvarado ISD
4	Amy Jones	Alief ISD	11	Jocheszette Phillips	Fort Worth ISD
4	Susan King	Alief ISD	11	Carla Stone	Weatherford ISD
4	Keryn Miles	Fort Bend ISD	11	Elizabeth Trimble	Fort Worth ISD
4	Shyrl Pellerin	Alief ISD	12	Alice Wooten	Killeen ISD
4	Doug Reed	Danbury ISD	13	Rod Allen	VTV: Varsity Television
4	Richard Silva	Cypress-Fairbanks ISD	13	Iliana Cavazos	TASA
4	Tanisha Williams	Fort Bend ISD	13	Karen Limb	TASA
4	John Woods	Region 4 ESC	13	Dana Marable	Marble Falls ISD
5	Tom Madden	Beaumont ISD	13	Kenneth Oltmann	Region 13 ESC
6	Ray Howard	Livingston ISD	13	Olga Wilson	Texas Education Agency
6	Jeanie Okruhlik	Region 6 ESC	15	Dan Gellman	San Angelo ISD
6	Phil Sulak	Bryan ISD	15	Lucy Thomas	San Angelo ISD
6	Martha Watson	Livingston ISD	19	Gwen Keefer	Canutillo ISD
7	Kathy Allen	Pine Tree ISD	19	Alice Ramos	San Elizario ISD
7	Linda Buie	Longview ISD	20	Albert Garcia	Southwest ISD
7	Jackie Cunningham	Athens ISD	20	Gilbert Garcia	Southwest ISD
7	Gary Jones	Athens ISD	20	Heidi Kabanek	Southwest ISD

Letters

Executive Director Annell Todd received the following letters at the State Office following the annual conference.

I was both honored and humbled to be presented with the Most Valuable Member Award although neither of these adjectives seems quite adequate to describe the intensity of the emotions I felt when my name was called. To have a group of talented, dedicated TSPRA peers select me for this award is a gift I will treasure forever.

What a wonderful honor it was to be chosen from the TSPRA membership's vast wealth of experience, dedication, and talent! I have a tremendous amount of respect for my colleagues in this organization and am so grateful to be a part of such a worthwhile group. TSPRA means so much to me -- it is both a lifesaver and an oasis for me as a public relations professional. When I need immediate help in a difficult situation, I can always count on a fellow TSPRAn to be there with invaluable experience and advice. It also seems that just when my energy is waning, I see or talk to a TSPRA friend, and I feel refreshed.

It is a tribute to TSPRA that my superintendent and Board of Trustees realize the importance of our professional organization and this award. After returning home, I was recognized at a Board meeting and presented with a coveted School Bell Award usually reserved for those who demonstrate excellence in teaching. Indeed this has been a very special time for me.

Thank you, TSPRAns, for being there, for caring, and for giving me the honor of a lifetime.

Kathy Clausen
Goose Creek CISD

I am so excited to have been selected to receive the NSPRA Scholarship for the 2000 NSPRA Seminar! I am looking forward to the opportunity to meet more PR professionals from across our state and the nation, as well as the many new things I will learn that will help me grow professionally and personally! Dear TSPRA members, thanks to you, the Scholarship Committee and the Attorneys of Henslee, Fowler, Hepworth and Schwartz. I thank all involved for their kind generosity!

Patti Pawlik-Perales
San Benito CISD

Thank you so much for your support and guidance in making it possible for me to attend the annual

conference in Austin. Without the help from you, Janet Crock and the organization, I know it would have been impossible for me to attend this important meeting.

I was somewhat overwhelmed at times by the sheer volume of information that was available and had to spend many moments in deep thought digesting this and how I would be able to use it once I returned to Hereford. Some of the biggest help came from the 20 or 30 new acquaintances I made and their willingness to share information and experiences that will go a long way in helping with our school district.

Again, my thanks to you and the organization for making this possible.

Jack Stein
Hereford ISD

The TSPRA Annual Conference in Austin, Texas was my first conference with your association. After 25 years of attending various national and regional conferences, I tend to be judgmental about where we invest our time and money. Your conference proved to be of great value. We not only made good contacts (which is always a goal), but we learned important new information. Over the years the good organizations have shown their strength by the energy and participation of it's members. TSPRA was most impressive and passionate about it's direction and goals. We agree that it is time to stand up for the children and lead by example. It is sad that the personal objectives of a very few often gets in the way of doing the right things, often resulting in things not being done or not being done right. ASAP Connect.com commends and supports your agenda. We plan to work with the school districts on a local basis. We also offer to support TSPRA in any way we can. . .

I would also like to compliment your staff. They were cordial and very helpful. We were always greeted with a smile and "how can I help you?"

We are very interested about becoming part of the TSPRA family. Because of this positive experience, we will attend the National Conference in San Antonio.

John Nalley
ASAP Connect.com

President's Perspective continued from p.2

knowledge the importance of the public relations professional and do whatever it takes to ensure that they have the resources of TSPRA available to them. We are no longer small in number. We have before us a tremendous challenge to grow and yet still maintain our same level of PR - Personal Relationships.

My charge to you is to "Let Your Light Shine." Seek out a new committee or project and share with us fresh ideas from a new perspective. And for those of you who feel tired and frustrated and like there's nothing new left to learn, be willing to step out - open your heart and your mind to a new generation of public relation professionals who have good ideas and the energy to accomplish them. We must lean on each other and learn from each other. And though one of us standing alone seems a futile attempt to light the way, all standing together radiate a beam of light that neither time nor circumstances can extinguish. For only together can we truly show the world that our defining bright moments come not to us as individuals, but together as TSPRAns.

Remember your M&M's - Mentoring and Membership - if we can focus on this in the coming year, I believe that TSPRA will remain Your Guiding Light in the 21st Century.

Corrections

Please correct the following:

Vera Porter, Amy Williams & Jimmy Wynn: email is @hcde.-texas.org NOT hdce

Steve Knagg: email is sknagg@garlandisd.net NOT org

Julie Zwahr: phone 817-337-7546; fax 817-337-7565

Adam McGilvray: phone 817-337-7547; fax 817-337-7565

Don't miss NSPRA 2000 in San Antonio

by Don Clark

TSPRA vice president & coordinator,
public information, Judson ISD

The month of July will be special for all TSPRA's as we host the annual NSPRA seminar.

The National School Public Relations Association will hold their conference at San Antonio's Hilton Palacio del Rio, in the heart of the River Walk.

Your professional organization, TSPRA, has a glowing national reputation for talent and leadership and is the largest and most active school public relations association in the country.

So, please consider volunteering to help with an event at the conference. Contact **Steve Knagg** (sknagg@garlandisd.net) or **Julie Zwahr** (jzwahr@kellerisd.net) for more information all of the details on what you can do to make this the best conference ever for NSPRA.

I am coordinating the sign-up dinners and need a TSPRA person (who is attending the conference) to escort folks to the dinner places (that's a technical term used by sign-up dinner people).

The following restaurants are on the sign-up list, let me know if you can help: Boudro's - A Texas Bistro, Cafe Ole Fajitas y Margaritas, Casa Rio Mexican Restaurant, Lone Star Cafe, Michelino's, Rio Rio Cantina, Planet Hollywood, Presidio, and Hard Rock Cafe San Antonio. All except the last three are on the River Walk. The last three are a 10 to 15 minute walk from the hotel.

NSPRA seminar registration information/form are found on the NSPRA web page (www.nspr.org). Payment must be received before May 26 for the early discount fee.

Permission needed to use TSPRA name

The TSPRA by-laws now read that permission must be obtained to use the TSPRA name. Anyone wanting authorization to use the TSPRA name, must have board approval. The individual or organization seeking authorization should contact the state office at 512-474-9107. Most of the time approval can be obtained with this phone call.

This action was taken in an effort to protect the use of the TSPRA name and prevent any potential ethical or conflict of interest.

The change was approved by the general membership at the February 2000 TSPRA annual conference.

Bond Aid: If you don't have it, get one

Bond Aid is the definitive work on how to prepare for, start, run, and complete a successful bond election.

So, you've been through 5 bond elections? There is something in Bond Aid for the rookie and the seasoned vet.

It is a BIG book, put together by some of the most savvy TSPRA bond veterans. The book has examples of what to do and not to do, all very helpful to any PIO, or as a source of handouts to board members and superintendents.

Bond Aid is especially useful for the smaller districts without a full-time, or any, school public relations person.

Cost: \$95, plus \$10 shipping. Your budget can afford this. You can print an order form off of the TSPRA website - www.tspra.org.

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2000-2001 TSPRA Board

Julie Thannum, APR, President
Mary Ann Simpson, President-Elect
Bill Britcher, APR, Past President
Annette Garcia, Gulf Coast VP
Susan Castro, Houston/Beaumont VP
Theresa Bledsoe, APR, East Texas VP

Annell Todd, APR, Executive Director

Visit our web site at www.tspra.org

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Katherine Cernosek, North Central VP
Todd Overpeck, APR, West Central VP
Don Clark, Central VP
Cecilia Masters, Northwest VP
Pifas Silva, Far West VP
Jon Dahlander, Parliamentarian