



# Northside Bus Chatter Newsletter

Northside Transportation  
Department

March, 2001

## Inside this issue:

### From The Director's Desk

We continue to move forward on a positive note for the 2000-2001 school year. Due to your efforts our accident rate continues to reflect our attitude and commitment of keeping our students safe and secure. The biggest news presently centers around the pressures of a passed bond issue. Your attendance and excellent questions at our recent informational meetings were definitely noted by Mr. Medina and Mr. Torres. Our voice was heard at the polls. After conducting informal information meetings with Forum Representatives, I continue to feel very positive about this process which has enhanced communications among Department personnel. Our Forum Reps are doing an excellent job on your behalf. We have quite a bit to look forward to since passage of the bond package. I look forward to the new structures and buses and working together to better provide for the welfare of our students and work environment.

*Debra Homeister  
Brave Bus Assistant* 2

*South Station Is  
Being Remodeled* 3

*Ron Mack, Assistant  
Station Mgr.-Rhodes* 4

*Angie Gonzales, Also  
At Rhodes Ctr.* 5

*The Technician's  
Bay* 6

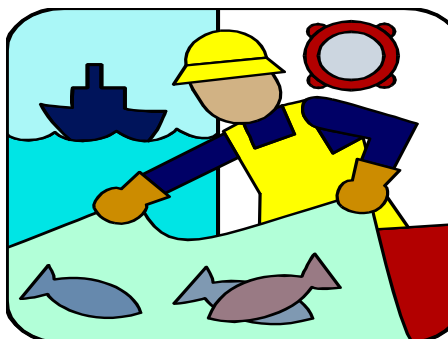
*Driver Team Self-  
Test* 7

*Forum Members* 8



### Let's Go Fishing!!!

The first annual Transportation Department Fishing Tournament will be held April 28, 2001 at Port Aransas. Money for the tournament is needed ASAP to see who will be on this trip. Call Charles Morales at Rhodes (695-3812); David Trevino at North (561-5800) and Mike Rodriguez at South (678-2908).



## March, 2001

12-14 Spring Break  
23 All Trainers  
Meeting at NAC  
9:30 AM

## April, 2001

13 Easter Break  
16 Easter Break  
(Driver Teams  
only)  
27 Battle of Flowers



## **R. C. Hernandez-- Bus Driver & Teacher In Training**



An NISD driver since 1995 R.C. Hernandez is one of our own who used his job as a driver to support his family while completing a Bachelors Degree in Education. After student teaching at Brauchle ES and Taft HS, he recently graduated from UTSA majoring in Kinesiology and was on the Dean's list every semester. Before graduating from Nixon HS in Laredo (1991) RC distinguished himself as a young scholar and a successful high school athlete. He has served on the Forum, as a fueler and as an excellent driver for the Department. RC has starred for six (6) years now playing Minor League Football with the San Antonio Storm and formerly with the Seminoles and the Stampedes. Driving for the rest of this school year he starts teaching next fall. We are proud of you and wish you the very best in your future endeavors!

## **Debra Homeister: The Bravest Bus Assistant I Know**



The bravest person I know is not a heroine for saving a child using CPR or evacuating a special needs students from a burning bus. She is a HEROINE for overcoming a challenge in life. That life-long challenge is dyslexia. Debra Homeister is the bravest person I know. Throughout her entire lifetime she could not read—not even this article about herself--until she was enrolled in the NISD Learn and Earn Program. As a NISD employee with severe dyslexia her one-on-one tutoring in reading is free. Debra can now REALLY READ! Now she devours high interest-low vocabulary books. The other part of Debra's real bravery is her goal to complete the High School GED. Knowing Debra just as you may know her she will get that GED someday! When she does we will all celebrate her graduation! Debbie we are so proud of you! The "sky is the limit!" Congrats to a VERY SPECIAL and COURAGEOUS PERSON!



## South Station Is Now Being Remodeled



Upstairs at South Station things are definitely falling apart--and then being rebuilt--to a brand new standard of service, excellence and spaciousness! If you were to walk upstairs at South Station you would see steel stud walls, sheetrock paneling, electrical conduits running along everywhere, a lot of DUST and even more NOISE! You have to use your imagination when Mr. Tom Brown, our Station Manager, walks you through a tour and says...."Here is the Training Room, and over here there will be an expandable wall to separate two large areas into training and driver team lounges. "And over here..."Tom Brown goes on to say "...will be the individual trainer's areas. There will be full upstairs accessibility to persons using wheelchairs or other mobility aids when construction is complete...sometime after SPRING BREAK....Maybe near April 15, 2001." When completed two training rooms can be used at the same time for all Steps and CDL courses--one upstairs and one downstairs to forward NISD Transportation Department training requirements. The large upstairs group meeting area designed will accommodate up to 100 people at a time.

## On the Radio...For Better or Worse, In Sickness and in Health... Until Cell Phones Do Us Part

For 135 special needs buses that serve all elementary school, middle and high schools as well as Northside Vocational Transition Program (NVTP) or Northside Habilitation Program (NHP), Holmgreen Jr/Sr High School, Northside Children's Center, Mi Casa, CAMP at Lackland AFB, the Transition School, Special Olympics, Adaptive Aquatics, Community-Based Vocational Training (CBVT) and other programs, two-way radio connection with the Stations, supervisors and the outside world is absolutely essential. Until hand-held cellular phones are officially permitted on these--and perhaps on regular buses--we must ALL do our utmost to use **Radio Safety, Radio Security and always to demonstrate Radio Common Sense and Radio Courtesy**. When a driver announces an emergency then **RADIO SILENCE** must be maintained until the emergency is resolved. If an emergency requires a **9-1-1** call, that call has the highest priority over all other radio traffic. **Radio dead spots throughout the district** leave some drivers unable to hear or to transmit (or both). Radio safety suggests that they **pull over and use a land line phone or their personal cell phone**. Avoid identifying children by name, their phone numbers or addresses over the air if at all possible. When you know where the door key is kept or how a child can get into a side window or door without a key, please be discreet with that confidential information on the radio.





## Radio Common Sense and Courtesy

You can easily get diverted from a situation when using the radio to get help from the Station, supervisors, or from the Special Needs Department. **Take a deep breath. Think what you need to say. Then hit the button to transmit.** Remember that the Station Dispatcher will have to ask you a series of questions to clarify the situation and to determine what help you need. **Be patient** with the Station personnel who are answering your radio. **Be firm with your requests.** If you really do need help then ask for it. Ask for it again on the radio if necessary until you get what you need. **Always follow up with the dispatcher or office personnel when you had trouble** with your radio messages being understood. Remember messages can be mixed up, overlapped with others at other stations or just plain not heard—but rarely are they ignored. An essential part of RADIO COMMON SENSE is **RADIO COURTESY.** The more courteous you are on the radio the more others listening and responding can and will help. **The Golden Rule applies to our radio activity.** It is always good to extend RADIO COURTESY to each other at all times.



### Ron F. Mack—New Rhodes Center Assistant Station Manager

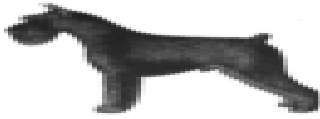
Ron F. Mack (USAF, Retired) was recently been selected as one of two Assistant Station Managers at the Rhodes Center. Ron has been with the NISD Transportation Department for two years starting as a bus driver in August 1999. Mack was born in Brooklyn, New York and raised in Baltimore, Maryland. With over 30 years in the United States Air Force Ron brings a wealth of supervisory and managerial experience to his new post. He was a global traveler where he worked in Kenya, Germany, Iran, Holland, the United Kingdom, Thailand, Midway Island, Hawaii, Alaska, the Philippines, Korea, Japan and Taiwan. Ron Mack is married to the former Sherilyn Y. Ivey of San Antonio, Texas.

Ron is responsible for supporting the State Foundation Routes and supervising those personnel while assisting Charles Rentschler, Rhodes Center Station Manager.





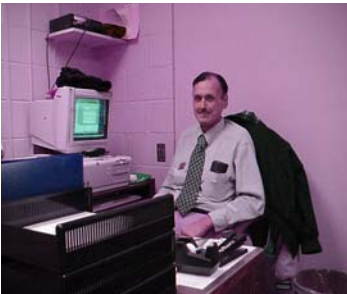
## **Angie Gonzales—The Other New Rhodes Center Assistant Station Manager**



Angie Gonzales is also an Assistant Station Manager who also was recently selected for the Rhodes Center. Angie has been with NISD Transportation for 11 years both two years as a state foundation route driver and nine years as a special needs route driver. She was a Policies and Procedures and a C.D.L. Trainer for four years. She has also specialized for years in routing for the Magnet Schools and in Federal Programs. Angie was an Office Trainer Assistant to two previous Assistant Station Managers before being selected for the position. She is responsible for supporting the Special Needs Rhodes Center Driver Teams while assisting Charles Rentschler, Rhodes Center Station Manager. Angie also works in sync with Dr. Ray Turner, the Special Education Transportation Coordinator and Dallas Gass, the Special Needs Route Coordinator. Her favorite

dog breed and a family friend is a Schnauzer named “Duke.”

## **Gary Sanders Is South Station’s New Assistant Station Manager**



Gary Sanders was recently selected at South Station as the Assistant Station Manager. Gary was born and raised in the Gary, Indiana area. He completed a Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree in 1971 from Olivet Nazarene College. Moving to Kansas City in 1977, Gary then graduated from the Nazarene Theological Seminary with a Master of Divinity degree in May, 1981. For the next 14 years he worked at the Nazarene Publishing House before moving to San Antonio in 1995. He joined NISD Transportation Department in September, 1995 as a substitute bus driver. Since then, Gary has driven both State Foundation and Special Needs Routes, including lift buses. He has been a Trainer at South Station for

Student Management as well as Special Needs. He was a Trainer with Routing Emphasis for school year 1999-2000. Currently, Gary is a part-time graduate student at UTSA in military history and in writing. He is married with three grown children and a stepson.



## **Julio Ybanez Is South Station’s Training Coordinator**

Julio Ybanez (678-2908) is the South Station Training Coordinator assisting Tom Brown, South Station Manager. A driver for 12 years Julio for 9 years of that time worked with Alternative School students. He has also been a Trainer for eight years.



## The Technician's Bay



Randy Zanatta, our NISD Transportation Maintenance Supervisor SEZ.....Older wheelchair tiedown equipment on all lift buses have been replaced with the Kinedyne Retractor system. It has taken several months to install systems that work in conjunction with wheelchair shoulder harnesses (called "occupant restraints"). Students using wheelchairs all face forward on the lift bus. They have four-way Kinedyne tiedown systems to secure their wheelchairs before any bus moves on the route. They use occupant restraints much like three-way car seat belts with their tiedowns to be fully secured during bus movement. Floor tracks for all lift buses are being reconfigured to the new tiedown system.



Guess who has a favorite hobby of fishing in the Gulf or along the shoreline? We wonder if Randy will be at the First Annual Fishing Tournament at Port Aransas?



## Ann McCormick Is North's New Training Coordinator

At North Station Ann McCormick (561-5085) is the Training Coordinator with the most seniority. Ann assists Ernie Esquivel, the North Station Manager, with the overall training effort.

## Bob Artz Is Rhodes Center's New Training Coordinator



Bob Artz (695-3812) is the Rhodes Center Training Coordinator. Bob brings great energy and dedication to his job to support Rhodes trainers and Driver Teams.

Together all three training coordinators interface with Bruce Warner, the NISD Safety and Training Coordinator, and Dr. Ray Turner, the Special Education Transportation Coordinator along with 45 part-time trainers who are regular or special needs drivers or assistants to train our 650 Departmental

employees.

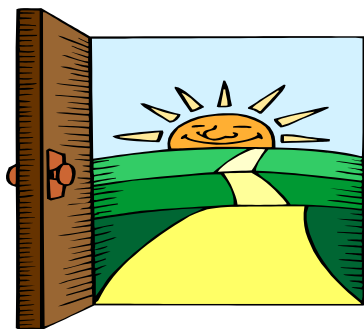


## Safety Tips for Driver Teams

### Safety Tips+

**Drivers (State Foundation Routes, Special Needs, Substitutes)** please remember to have your CDL Texas Certification and medical examination cards in our possession while driving for NISD Transportation Department at all times. Maintain during all working hours and for all driving responsibilities a drug free environment. Be drug free. Do not tolerate drug use in fellow employees or supervisors. Drive with your bus lights on. When the engine is running your lights should be glowing! Don't forget the clearance lights as well No personal radios on NSID Buses. Use of radio music on the bus is NOT an appropriate behavior management

## Is Your Bus In Order? A Self-Test For Each NISD Bus



Answer the following questions with a resounding **YES** and you probably have consistently good student bus behavior or have found an effective way to resolve problems on your bus. If your answer(s) are **NO** ....then take the Behavior Management Refresher Course at your Station followed by the Department's CPI-Nonviolent Crisis Intervention course to help you say **YES** to your bus situation(s).

1. I know my bus route and can change it as often as required without being personally stressed. I report changes to management.
2. I know my student riders by face, by name, by address and by their bus behavior.
3. I know administrators for every school I serve. They know my face and do recognize me as an NISD Driver or Assistant.
4. I promptly write up inappropriate student behavior on the Bus Safety Report. I submit it directly to the campus administrator for corrective action.
5. I will meet at school with parents, the student rider and with campus administrators to resolve student bus behavior issues.
6. I observe every student as they enter and exit my bus at the bus stairwell. No one gets on my bus that I have not observed and know to be safe.
7. I have completed Nonviolent Crisis Intervention (CPI) and regularly practice it to avoid all confrontational situations (on or off the bus). I avoid physical contact with students unless absolutely appropriate and necessary!
8. I live and work on the bus by the same bus rules that I require of my student riders.



Our Student Management initial and refresher courses provide excellent information on handling student bus behavior and should be combined with your taking the CPI course. If any of your answers above are **NO** then refresh your skills with these important classes.



## Forum Representatives

Please contact your forum representative at:

**Rhodes Center**—Rebecca Guarnero; Tom McDonald; Primo Soto; Rebecca Pompa; David Powell and Lorenzo Rodriguez. Technician-At-Large: Robert Hamilton.

**North Station**—Martin Martinez; Don Proulx; Jack Reed; Debra De Winne.

**South Station**—Rosie Johnson; Henry Jones; Lucy Rodriguez; Ron Jones; Mike Rodriguez; and Warren Deshield.



Northside Transportation Department  
Rhodes Center  
12005 Leslie Road  
San Antonio, TX 78254

