EVALUATIONS... often dreaded by both those being evaluated and the supervisor doing the evaluations. If not dreaded, evaluations are often looked at as formalities and are performed only in order to meet Texas A&M University System Regulations that require that each staff member’s job performance be evaluated annually. Greg Richmond shares some ideas on the annual evaluation process.

Supervisors and employees should not be intimidated by the evaluation process. It should be approached as a positive opportunity that benefits all of the involved parties. Participation in the performance evaluation process can be beneficial to both supervisors and employees. The supervisor can provide positive reinforcement to the employee by officially recognizing accomplishments, identifying areas that may have room for improvement, and setting specific objectives for the year ahead. Part of the performance evaluation process is to have the supervisor and employee review the employee’s current Position Description or equivalent document. The Position Description should include a list of essential functions and physical requirements of the position as well as justification for the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) status. The employee and supervisor should discuss and make updates as needed.

Employees have opportunity to discuss any concern about the position or department, as well as career goals and what support may be need from the supervisor to meet those goals.

Evaluations also assist department heads and managers in evaluating the work force, identifying employee potential, and establishing priorities for training, education and salary increases. TAMUS budget guidelines require that each request for a merit increase or promotion be based on a performance review conducted within the six months prior to the request.

Performance evaluations should not be viewed as a time of churning stomachs, rather as an occasion that both parties look forward to because the process is a “win/win opportunity.

May
13 Mother’s Day
28 Memorial Day

June
7 Support Staff Retreat
17 Father’s Day
21 Summer Begins

July
4 Independence Day Holiday

Thanks to everyone who contributed to this issue of the newsletter. Over twelve members of the support staff sent in ideas and articles. That makes my job easier and makes the newsletter much, much more interesting. Thanks again.

Shanna Yates
**CHANGES**

Lisa Palmer will be leaving TTI June 1 and will be moving to the Dallas area. She will be missed very much in Administration. Shanna Yates will be assuming some of the duties Lisa performed for Administration and TTI as a whole, but it is widely known that no one person will be able to replace Lisa. Best wishes to Lisa.

Jason & Cindy Busa, receptionist for the Business Office are proud parents of a baby girl. Kirstie Helen. She weighed in at 9lb. 4 oz., 21+ inches on April 17.

**Carleen Goodsell** is the new receptionist in the Business Office. She and her husband have just moved to the area from California.

**Michelle Hoelscher** recently moved back to ITEC and joined the Media Relations group working for Bernie Fette. She provides general administrative assistance and does various other things like keeping track of TTI in the media and responding to requests for information.

**Congratulations**

Leah Smith, Human Resources, will receive her Master’s in Human Resources Management this May. Leah is to be commended for achieving this goal while working full-time.

**GOT WORD?**

For many, moving from WordPerfect to Word has been frustrating, to say the least. Even if you do not completely switch to Word, you may find that there are times when you cannot escape using it. One of the biggest complaints I have heard is that Word does not have reveal code capability found in WordPerfect. While not as convenient to use, there are tools in Word that give some information about the code.

- One useful tool is the **Show All (¶)** feature found on the Formatting toolbar. This feature displays formatting marks such as tab characters, paragraph marks, and hidden text.
- Another useful feature is to look at a document in the **Normal View** found in View on the Standard toolbar. This is particularly handy when trying to see breaks (page, section, column).
- A third tool is the **What’s This** feature of Help that is accessed through the Help menu or by “shift” F1. The cursor will change to an arrow with a question mark. Clicking the cursor on any text will give you information regarding paragraph style (which sometimes causes trouble with auto formatting) and font formats.

If you have found tips that you have found helpful while using WORD or any other package you use, please share by sending tips to Shanna to be included in future newsletters.

…Shanna Yates

**Recipes**

One support staff member expresses a common frustration, “It is becoming more and more difficult to plan meals for the family. My time from 8-5 is so hectic that there is no time to even think about supper. After 26 years of cooking I have found it harder to come up with good meals. I need some new ideas, but not time consuming ones.”

Sheila Fields writes, “For folks ‘on the go’ with little time to make an elaborate meal these cookbooks are really great! **http://www.fouringredientcookbook.com**

Several have sent in recipes. I will be sending these out about one a week by e-mail. Keep sending them in so they can be shared. …Shanna Yates
Lisa Patke from the Houston office sends these suggestions.

Hockley Oil Ranch, Hockley, 281/859-1616, 936/931-3879 - swimming pool, hay rides, Indian village, paddle boats, maze, pony rides, petting zoo, miniature golf, train ride

Old McDonald Farm, Humble, 281/446-4001 - entry fee includes day access to swimming pool, multiple play grounds and covered picnic tables, petting zoos, pony rides, train ride, hay barn/ swing, Indian village, sand pit, duck pond

Cypresswood Stables, Humble, 281/446-7232 (darolyn@swbell.net) - horseback riding through wooded trails ($25/hour)

Lake Raven Stables, Huntsville State Park, 409/295-1985

Splashtown Water Park, Spring, 281/355-3300

Waterworld and Astroworld, Houston, 713/799-1234

Kemah Boardwalk, Kemah (www.kemahboardwalk.com)

Aerodome Ice Skating Complexes, two locations (Sugarland 281/265-7465; Northwest Houston SH 249/1960 281/847-5283)

Ice Skating Center at the Galleria, 713/621-1500

George Ranch Historical Park, Richmond, 281/545-9212

Michelle Hoelscher writes about one of her favorite places in Texas to go.

Garner State Park - located in the hill country, in Uvalde County, 31 miles north of the town of Uvalde, 9 miles south of Leakey, or 8 miles north of Concan on the Frio River. The Frio River is clean and cool. On the way, you can visit the Salado Caverns or the Natural Bridge Caverns that are about 20 miles west of New Braunfels. They also have a drive through ranch where kids can feed the exotic animals. The kids love it

Check out these websites for information about Garner State Park and other state parks in Texas. http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/garner/garner.htm
http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/

Tommy Clement is now in charge of TTI's mail service. His office is located in the CE/TTI Building, 205A. Phone:(979) 862-4729, E-Mail Address: t-clement@tamu.edu

Tommy reminds everyone that it is important to use first and last names on all mail, both on-campus and external as well as on incoming shipments received by TTI personnel. This helps the mailroom get both incoming and outgoing mail to the right person faster and more accurately.

SUMMERTIME = VACATION
Everyone needs to get away once in a while. Here are some ideas.

03 Jessica Franklin
26 Margarette Goss
30 Judi Rush
14 Nora Martinez
29 Leah Smith
20 Cynthia Lowery
21 Cheryl Burt

HAPPY BIRTHDAY
Summertime...that season kids look forward to and working parents often dread. What do you do with the kids while you are at work all day? Can anything be done to stave off the familiar, “I’m bored”? In addition to the most important issue, safety, parents also must deal with the finances involved in providing summer care for their children. Here are some thoughts sent in.

“At home on the hook.”… and “At home...Harlee (4) takes care of Hanz (1). They usually don’t tear up the house too much and enjoy sleeping or looking out the window most of the day (they’re cats).”… as well as “Lock them in the closet.” Perhaps more practical solutions are listed below.

- Some children stay in the same daycare facility as younger siblings.

For now, they are all still young enough to all be at the same daycare ... but it's REALLY EXPENSIVE!! I'm thinking of using my income tax return to help pay for daycare this summer.

- Others mentioned that their children participate in the summer programs conducted by BISD and CSISD.

- Some make arrangements for their children to stay at home.

I am having one of the Champions (BISD’s after school care program) instructors who is not working with the program during summer break coming to the house.

One summer we had an older cousin fly down from New Hampshire to stay 2 months (mid-June to mid Aug) and that way we were able to take short day trips on the weekends and show the state off to the cousin.

- Older children often stay home by themselves.

My daughter stays at home when she is not in camps. She goes to the volleyball camp offered during the summer here at A&M... cheerleading camp... and track camp at UT. When she isn't in camps and is at home, she goes to the swimming pool until I pick her up.

(My son) has been staying home alone since he was 12. He is 14 now. He has chores, feeding the dogs, cats, and horse, unloading the dishwasher, stuff like that. I'm not brave enough to let him try laundry yet!

- Grandparents and flexible working schedules help smooth the summer schedule.

Their grandmother lives with us so they stay at home. We live out in the country so they swim and ride 4 wheelers all day...

Fortunately, my parents live in the area and are retired now so they are planning to help me out with my 3 (ages 7, 9, and 12) as much as possible this summer, which is a BIG relief. Last summer was the first year that they didn't just go to a traditional day care. They went to College for Kids at the area community college (Arlington area) for 3 weeks and to a few other day camps offered in the area. These things, coupled with our family vacation and a day here and there at their grandparents just about covered the whole summer. But, all these activities ADD UP QUICKLY!! We are also considering letting my 12-year old daughter do a little of the babysitting this summer - maybe for a 1/2 day at a time. I don't like the idea of them being locked up in the house all day by themselves (but don't feel comfortable letting them go out if we aren't at home, either) but they like to have some days that they can just sleep in and not have to go anywhere (not that I can blame them!) so the 1/2 days at "home alone" are our compromise. My husband and I are going to try to work flex schedules on those days with one of us going in early and the other working late to minimize the hours that they will be at home alone or one of us will take a 1/2 day of annual leave on those days. We really have wondered whether my 12 year old is old enough to leave in charge; I know I was babysitting by that age. I'd be interested in hearing at what age others have decided to start letting their kids stay home on their own.

In reality, this issue must be worked out to suit the needs of individual families. Often there are no easy solutions. It sometimes helps to hear what others have found.

Thanks to those who took time to share.

...Shanna Yates