ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR MESSAGE
This month’s message was guest written by Ed Seymour. Carol Keeton Rylander is the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts. She has just published a comprehensive performance review of TxDOT entitled “Paving the Way: A Review of the Texas Department of Transportation” (http://www.window.state.tx.us/txdot/). In the transmittal letter of her report she says, “What I found at TxDOT is troubling”, and her recommendations would focus TxDOT on its “core function—driving every possible transportation dollar directly into road construction.” Notice this doesn’t say operations.

Some of the proposals would revisit the historical practice of using engineers extensively throughout the chain of command—including a recommendation that would remove the requirement for the TxDOT executive director to be a registered engineer. Other proposals would restructure TxDOT by moving some production staff positions to the districts and moving some administrative functions to Austin in order to “maximize efficiency.” Highly “specialized ‘subject matter experts’”—such as those dealing with statewide Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) matters—would remain in Austin though. Yet other proposals would change the current management-to-staff ratio of one manager for each 6 staff members closer to the statewide objective of one manager for each 11 staff members. Many other changes are recommended—from funding, to inventory management, to increasing the amount of roadway construction performed by private sector firms, and so on.

What a lot of challenges for TxDOT! These potential changes will increase the stress on an organization that is already carrying the burden of an underpaid staff (as cited in the report) and one that is experiencing high employee turnover.

And what are the corresponding opportunities for us in our relationship with TxDOT? How can we help them do a better, more effective job? Where can you focus your research and implementation efforts to serve their needs? We can’t expect to be told; we have to find the ideas and answers ourselves, within our expertise and for our customer-partners.

As American essayist and poet Ralph Waldo Emerson observed, “people only see what they are prepared to see.”

I encourage each of you spend some time casting ahead in the near future. We have a new president from Texas and an imminent legislative session. These circumstances are likely to energize our state’s sense of expectations and capabilities. Now is the time to refresh your plans for our collective future.

Ed Seymour

CALENDAR MARKS
Feb 12 Lincoln’s Birthday
Feb 14 Valentines Day
Feb 19 Presidents Day (TxDOT Holiday)
Feb 19-23 Engineers’ Week
Feb 22 Washington’s Birthday
Feb 28 Ash Wednesday
Feb 28 Brazos Valley ITE meeting, noon, Gilchrist Building
Mar 2 Texas Independence Day (TxDOT Holiday, minimal staffing for TxDOT)
Mar 3 Youth Alliance Symposium
Mar 5 Mid-semester grades due
Mar 8-9 TxDOT SDI Working Group Meeting
Mar 12-16 Spring Break
Mar 15-16 Faculty and Staff Holiday
Mar 26 Islamic New Year
Mar 28 Brazos Valley ITE meeting, noon, Gilchrist Building
Mar 30 Transportation Science Competition, TTI
Mar 30-Apr 1 TxDOT Research Proposals due to TxDOT
Mar 31 Expanding Your Horizons
Mar 31 Cesar Chavez Day
Apr 1 Daylight savings time begins
Apr 8 First day of Passover
Apr 13 Good Friday
Apr 15 Easter Sunday
Apr 16 Federal Income Taxes Due
Apr 21 Aggie Muster
Apr 27-29 Parents Weekend
May 11-12 Spring Commencement
May 13 Mothers Day
May 19 TOG Annual Meeting, TBD

TOG’s Mission
To facilitate innovations in transportation system operations through leadership in research, education, and technology transfer.
To kick off the New Year the Brazos Valley TexITE Chapter held a luncheon social on Tuesday, January 30, 2001. Fourteen members attended this social which was hosted by the Membership Committee. Discussions ranged from TRB and TexITE stories to auto racing and steel-toed shoes.

The first speaker meeting of the new year will be held on February 28, 2001. Our speaker for this meeting will be Kay Fitzpatrick and she will speak on the current research and implementation issues in geometric design. She will specifically discuss issues concerning Stopping Sight Distance. The March meeting will be on March 28, 2001. This meeting is tentatively scheduled as a joint meeting with the local chapter of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE).

More information about this upcoming meeting will be provided through our Chapter listserv. If you would like to be added to the listserv contact Marcus Brewer. Remember local membership is only $5.00. Applications and additional membership information can be obtained from Nada Trout, n-trout@tamu.edu.

Melisa Finley
Brazos Valley TexITE Chapter, President

NOTES FROM THE CPD

Texas Junior Science and Humanities Symposium
Debbie Jasek recently participated as a judge in the 27th Annual Texas Junior Science and Humanities Symposium hosted by the College of Science. The Symposium, which was held on campus January 25-27, provided outstanding high school students the opportunity to present research findings in a professional arena. Stephen Lin of Plano won 1st place in the competition. Stephen presented findings on a project about an artificially intelligent computer memory system that is capable of storing and retrieving high-resolution color bitmap images.

Engineers’ Week

The Texas A&M ITE Student Chapter and the Brazos Valley TexITE Chapter are planning an engineering workshop and tour for a local 5th grade class to celebrate Engineers’ Week, which is February 19th -23rd. The CPD, TransLink®, Driving Simulation Laboratory, and College Station Police Department are assisting in the morning workshop. Students from Branch School will participate in a sign workshop, a pedestrian and bicycle safety workshop, a tour of TransLink®, and a tour of the Driving Simulation Laboratory.

Traffic Signal Summer Camp

The National Institute for Advanced Transportation Technology (NIATT) will conduct a Traffic Signal Summer Camp on the University of Idaho campus in Moscow, Idaho, on August 12-17. Traffic Signal Summer Camp provides a fun and productive way to spend five days with industry professionals working with the latest equipment and software (traffic controllers, video detection, loop detectors, and controller interface devices). TSSC provides an opportunity to participate in an important professional development activity to university juniors, seniors, or first year graduate students with a strong interest in transportation engineering. Further information and an application form can be accessed through http://niatt.uidaho.edu.

As always for more information on these topics please contact Beverly Kuhn at 862-3558 or by e-mail at b-kuhn@tamu.edu or Debbie Jasek at 845-5239 or by e-mail at d-jasek@tamu.edu.

Beverly Kuhn

TTI DAY AWARD WINNERS

Congratulations are in order for this year’s TTI Day Award winners. The TOG recipients include:

Carroll Messer: TTI/Trinity Senior Researcher Award. For his significant contributions to the field of traffic operations and highway capacity research; his unwavering commitment to the education of Texas A&M students; his dedicated service to the transportation profession; and his selfless devotion to the people and programs of TTI.

Roelof Engelbrecht: TTI/Trinity New Researcher Award. For his innovative work in developing TTI's hardware-in-the-loop simulations capabilities, for his leadership in the area of traffic signal operations at highway/railroad grade crossings, for his commitment to producing outstanding quality of work, for his selfless dedication to TTI and for his willingness to serve as a mentor to others.

Beverly Thompson-Kuhn: TTI/Trinity Researcher Award. For her comprehensive approach to transportation operations research, for her attention to details, for her ability to work with new partners and for her innovative approaches to the dissemination of transportation research.

Student Awards. Congratulations to Michelle Jozwiak and Josias Zietsman. Michelle was selected as the Southwest Region University Transportation Center outstanding Texas A&M masters student. Josias was selected as the Southwest Region University Transportation Center Robert Herman Award nominee from Texas A&M University.

Congratulations to all of you!
CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations to Mike Fontaine, Melisa Finley, and Garry Ford on their recent promotions to Associate Transportation Researchers. All three were praised for their research contributions, project management efforts, and leadership by their supervisors. Mike and Melisa both work in the Traffic Operations Program. Garry works in the San Antonio Office. Congratulations to all of you and keep up the good work!

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Statistical Applications for Transportation Professionals
TRB Human Factors Workshop, January 7, 2001

The Statistical Applications for Transportation Professionals was a one-day workshop held on the Sunday prior to TRB as part of the Human Factors Workshop series. Kay Fitzpatrick attended the workshop.

The workshop was essentially an one-day summary of a four-day NHI course being developed on the topic. In addition to brief overviews on statistical approaches such as linear regression and parametric and non-parametric methods, time was spent on topics such as conducting transportation research (directed towards state DOTs representatives) and managing and handling data. We were provided with a copy of the slides; however, the course notes are still under review and were not available. Based on the material provided, I believe the upcoming NCHRP report will be an excellent reference to have on statistics. In addition, the NCHRP project research team is developing a web site that will include links to a glossary and other sections. The web site will also be a valuable tool in learning basic information concerning statistical evaluations. The instructors predicted that the report and web site will be available by late summer or fall.

Kay Fitzpatrick

What Causes Accidents and How to Prevent Them
TRB Human Factors Workshop, January 7, 2001

What Causes Accidents and How to Prevent Them was a one-day workshop held on the Sunday prior to TRB as part of the Human Factors Workshop series. Mark Wooldridge attended the workshop.

The workshop provided an introduction to traffic accidents, reviewing and expanding on topics related to accident reporting, attribution, and analysis. One aspect of the workshop dealt with records limitations. Analyses can be limited by the form provided to the emergency responder to report the accident. Falling into the “if all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail” category, the check-off form itself can influence reported accident causes and interpretations. Other issues discussed included low reporting rates and potential lack of accident investigation training among those individuals completing the accident reports. Another presentation centered around a study reported from Canada that applied the principles of “Positive Guidance” to a section of roadway, indicating potential complicating or causal factors present in the roadway environment. In the key presentation in the workshop, Vincent Cantwell of the Maritime Institute of Technology examined accidents and accident investigations. In this discussion, various cognitive models of accident and decision processes were reviewed. This provided insight into accident causation by providing a conceptual understanding of current models regarding decisions, how they are made, and how incorrect perceptions, conclusions, or assumptions can contribute to the likelihood of accidents.

Mark Wooldridge

TTI PARTICIPATION AT TRB

The Annual Meeting of the Transportation Research Board attracts over 8000 people from all over the world to Washington, D.C. each January. It is the forum in which the national program of transportation research is developed. Because over 90 percent of the Texas Transportation Institute’s budget expenditures are from competitively procured contract research, it is important that TTI staff actively participate in TRB activities. This allows TTI to remain knowledgeable of, and provide input to, the development of this research program.

New travel justification policies were implemented by TTI in 1998 to ensure that all staff attending the meeting are significant participants in the program and are representing TTI in the wide variety of transportation research topics in which the Institute is actively involved. This policy was again followed for the 2001 TRB meeting. TTI’s participation in that meeting can be summarized as follows:

• 51 TTI staff attended the 2001 TRB meeting.
• 18 TTI staff attendees are members of one or more TRB technical committees or task forces.
• 31 staff members attending the meeting had formal papers accepted for presentation.
• TTI staff presented 36 papers during the meeting.
• 4 TTI staff members presided over paper presentation sessions.
• 2 TTI staff served as chairs of TRB technical committees.

Jerry Ullman

TTI NOTED IN ITE WASHINGTON WEEKLY

The February 2, 2001, issue of the Institute of Transportation Engineers Washington Weekly has an article about speed trailers improving safety in work zones. The article summarizes work done here at TTI by Paul Carlson. Congratulations Paul!
QUICK REFERENCE CHART AVAILABLE

ITEC has published a quick reference chart for developing TxDOT reports. The chart provides the basic guides to get you started and can also be used to perform last minute checks on the reports. The chart features quick reference points for preparing front matter, formatting, graphics and tables, metrical and numbers, and references.

The September 2000 edition of Guidelines for Preparing, Editing, and Submitting TxDOT Technical Reports, is also available. The guidelines may be viewed on the TTI Intranet at http://ttinet.tamu.edu/itec/editing/TTI_guidelines.pdf. Printed copies are also available by contacting, Rhonda Brinkmann or Kelly West of ITEC.

TTI RIGHT-OF-WAY SAFETY

A right-of-way safety committee for TTI convened to review TxDOT safety requirements as they apply to TTI research projects. Article 21- Roadway Safety, of the TxDOT/TTI agreement defines the safety requirements to be followed when TTI personnel work on TxDOT projects. This article states that “The University agrees to follow all safety rules while working on State rights of way as prescribed in the TxDOT publication Handbook of Safety Practices.”

It has been recommended by the right-of-way safety committee that for any project that requires work on or near a TxDOT-maintained roadway, TTI employees should consider that they are on the right-of-way and wear the required personal protective equipment.

Required personal protective equipment described in the Safety Handbook for working on the right-of-way is
• A safety hat, which is an ANSI approved hard hat, preferably white.
• A safety vest, which is reflective and either orange, red, or light green.
• Safety shoes, which are ANSI Z-41 approved, steel toe shoes.
• Safety glasses, which are optional.

The committee has also recommended that all personnel conducting project work on TxDOT right-of-ways be provided with a copy of the TxDOT Handbook of Safety Practices and receive first aid training.

MEANWHILE BACK AT THE RANCH

At TRB, Kay Fitzpatrick made a presentation called “Design Factors that Affect Driver Speed on Suburban Streets.” The work was from a TxDOT project. She also attended several meetings. The ITE Traffic Engineering Council along with others are sponsoring the development of a Traffic Control Devices Handbook that is estimated to be published by the end of this calendar year. During the TRB Operational Effects of Geometrics meeting the committee decided to host a 2nd Symposium on Urban Street Design in 2003 (Kay is co-chair of the planning committee) and a 3rd Symposium on International Geometric Design Issues in the summer of 2005 (probably in a northwest city or in Canada).

Srinivasa Sunkari, Sangeetha Sunkari, and Kevin Balke attended the Winter meeting of TexITE in San Antonio from January 25th-27th. Srinivasa made a presentation at the meeting on Video Detection.

Bob Brydia, Ricky Parker, Hassan Charara, Srinivasa Sunkari, David Rickerson, and Paul Davis traveled through this past this month to Houston to collect data for a METRO project.

Debbie Jasek recently spent two days traveling on patrol and observing a Department of Public Safety License and Weight Inspector. One of the days included observing a License and Weight Task Force effort which consisted of a joint truck inspection effort by troopers from 5 different south Texas counties.

RoelofEngelbrecht and Leonard Ruback traveled to Washington, D.C. to attend a meeting on XML.

Kay Fitzpatrick along with Gene Hawkins, Mark Wooldridge, Jim Bonneson, and Michael Manser met with YoungJin Park (Deputy Manager, Yooshin Engineering Corporation), WonHo Suh (Researcher, Yooshin Engineering Corporation), Jun Hwa Jung (Senior Researcher, Korea Institute of Construction Technology), and Young Tae Son (Assistant Professor, College of Engineering, Myongji University). The meeting was held on Monday, January 29 and focused on geometric design research conducted at TTI. From College Station, they will travel to Washington, DC to meet with FHWA.

HELLO AND GOODBYE

Hello and Welcome

We want to take this opportunity to welcome Sean Merrell to the graduate program. Sean worked for the TransLink® Research Center as a student worker and he received his Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering in December. Sean will continue to work in the TransLink® Research Center. His career interests include traffic operations, transportation planning, and intelligent transportation systems (ITS). Welcome to your new position Sean!

The TransLink® Research Center would also like to welcome David Rickerson, who is co-oping with the Center this semester. Welcome David!

The Traffic Analysis & Design Program would like to welcome their new student workers: Justin Burns and Jeremy Davis, welcome aboard!
GET WELL SOON  
Best wishes for a speedy recovery are sent to Nada Trout and John Denholm both of the Traffic Operations Program. Our thoughts and best wishes are with you and we hope you get well soon!

DID YOU KNOW?  
Darrell Borchardt, BS, MS, PE, a Research Engineer in the TOG Houston Office, has as an avocation of training dogs for competition. His talent for training dogs goes way beyond “speak, roll over, and fetch.” His dog, Crossraguel Casino Gambler, ChU, CD, CDX, JH, OA, NAJ, WCX (Cassie for short), is a Flatcoat Retriever and as you can see, has a lot more “degrees” than Darrell does (even more than Tom U.). Of course, Cassie gets the awards because of the hours and hours of training she received from Darrell. Just to give you an idea of what all those dog degrees mean, I have created a table that shows their parallel in academia:

- ChU=TRB Best Paper Award
- CD=BS in Obedience Competition
- CDX=MS in Obedience Competition
- JH=PhD in Hunter Competition
- OA=MS in Agility Competition
- NAJ=BS in Agility Jumping Competition
- WC=BS in Working Dog Competition
- WCX=MS in Working Dog Competition

Getting certified in Obedience, Hunter, Agility, Agility Jumping, and Working Dog is akin to getting degrees in five different disciplines because each has its own specific competitive requirements. I’m sure Darrel and Cassie will earn PhD in all those fields as well. As one who only got to the CD level with my dog, I can appreciate the hard work, love, and patience by both dog and man.

Darrell and Cassie  

CONGRATULATIONS!  
Congratulations to the Paul Adamson of the Houston Office and his wife Marilyn on the birth of their son. Lucas Dalton Adamson was born on December 30, 2000, and weighed 8 pounds and 13 ounces. Congratulations to the whole family!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Feb 2  Liz Perez  
Feb 9  Lisa Patke  
Feb 9  Nadeem Chaudhary  
Feb 12  Kathy Tran  
Feb 15  Jerry Ullman  
Feb 15  Tom Urbanik II  
Feb 22  Nada Trout  
Feb 23  Paul Adamson  
Feb 26  Bryan Miller  
Mar 3  Hanseon Cho  
Mar 4  Russell Henk  
Mar 6  Steve Schrock  
Mar 28  Helen Olivarez  
Mar 29  Kay Fitzpatrick  
Mar 31  Paul Davis  

TOG ANNUAL MEETING  
The TOG Annual meeting is scheduled for May 19th so mark your calendars and plan to have a day of fun! This years meeting will be held at McKinney Roughs Environmental Learning Center near Bastrop. TOG committee members want your input on what you want! Members of the committee are: Debbie Jasek (Chair), Rob Benz (Vice Chair), Srinivasa Sunkari, Leonard Ruback, Jim Carvell, Tim Gates, Paul Barricklow, and Mark Wooldridge. Please contact any one of us if you have ideas for the meeting.

Debbie Jasek  

MANAGEMENT LESSON  
A crow was sitting on a tree, doing nothing all day. A small rabbit saw the crow, and asked him, "Can I also sit like you and do nothing all day long?" The crow answered: "Sure, why not." So, the rabbit sat on the ground below the crow, and rested. All of a sudden, a fox appeared, jumped on the rabbit and ate it. Management Lesson? To be sitting and doing nothing, you must be sitting very, very high up.

Jim Carvell
REMEMBERING SHIRLEY KALINEC

Shirley Kalinec, a member of the Traffic Analysis & Design Program, passed away on January 12th after a long battle with brain cancer. Shirley joined TTI in 1995 as a technical writer for Dan Fambro and Kay Fitzpatrick. Her primary duty was to facilitate the processing of the technical reports generated within the two programs. She not only assumed responsibilities for those areas, she also developed other techniques that helped to expedite the report development process.

One of the best descriptions of Shirley was found in the directory compiled for the TOG annual meeting. Shirley Kalinec is a native of Bryan, Texas. She is a technical writer who prefers working on a project from beginning to end. She has two children, and enjoys reading and gardening. She is an outdoor person who likes to waterski, camp, and fish. She enjoys watching her son Lucas play Little League Baseball, and daughter Cassie dance.

Shirley on Life

Shirley was planning on building a house on a large piece of property that she had recently purchased. We used to talk about how the kitchen could be designed and debated the merits of having a drive-in window so that take-out food could be DROPPED off. She provided me this list of bumper stickers and noted that “these bumper sticker messages go great with my idea to build that house without a kitchen (especially the last one).”

A Messy Kitchen Is a Happy Kitchen and this Kitchen Is Delirious.

No Husband Has Ever Been Shot While Doing the Dishes.

A Balanced Diet Is a Cookie in Each Hand.

Blessed Are They Who Can Laugh at Themselves for They Shall Never Cease to Be Amused.

A Clean House Is a Sign of a Misspent Life.

Countless Number of People Have Eaten in this Kitchen and Gone on to Lead Normal Lives.

My Next House Will Have No Kitchen – Just Vending Machines.

“She is planning on building a house on a large piece of property that she had recently purchased. We used to talk about how the kitchen could be designed and debated the merits of having a drive-in window so that take-out food could be DROPPED off. She provided me this list of bumper stickers and noted that “these bumper sticker messages go great with my idea to build that house without a kitchen (especially the last one).”

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“While I miss Shirley greatly, I feel enriched to have known her. She had a very positive influence on my life and I am privileged to have been able to call her my associate and my friend.”

Kay Fitzpatrick

“Shirley was someone that you could talk to endlessly about anything and everything and the whole time you talked she listened. She loved life and thought everyone should treat each other with dignity.”

Maria Medrano

“What a friend! Funny, beautiful, generous, dedicated, frustrated, caring, and full of life for as long as she could be. Shirley made us laugh, she showed us how to love, she shared our joys and our sorrows, and, eventually, she made us cry when she left. She reminded me that life doesn’t last forever... and to take care of the important things. She was my friend, and I miss her every day.”

Angela Parham

“I remember someone who was a loving and caring person. She always took time out of her busy day to listen if you had a problem, and tried to cheer you up if she noticed you were a little unhappy. I think of her as a friend with a cheerful smile, and a positive attitude.”

Joanie Stapp

“What a great friend! How we laughed at each other, ourselves, and at the world. Shirley will always be in my memories every baseball season. We always agreed that there is nothing more wonderful than sitting in the sun enjoying life, and baseball was as good an excuse as any to do just that.”

Debbie Jasek