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**Publication Review
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Advertising Manager

Ron McCracken
reactads@reactintl.org

Editorial Address:

The REACTer
P.O. Box 180922
Austin, TX 78718
reacter@reactintl.org

Circulation Address:

5210 Auth Rd., Ste. 403
Suitland, MD 20746
react@reactintl.org

REACT International

Dora Wilbanks, Ofc. Mgr.
5210 Auth Rd., Ste. 403
Suitland, MD 20746
voice: 301-316-2900
fax: 301-316-2903



the REACTer

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On the Cover:

Travis County (Tex.) *REACT's* biggest
event each year is the city's
Trail of Lights (see page 8)
(photo courtesy
Austin Parks & Recreation Dept.)

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From the Executive Vice-President



Now that 2005 has arrived, we are preparing for a fantastic convention this year in sunny Southern California. You can put away your raincoats, snow shovels, and sand bags for some real western fun. This year, the convention is being hosted by the CREST Communications *REACT* Team located not far from Los Angeles and only about twenty miles east of Disneyland in Corona, California.

This location was selected to keep the costs to a minimum; visiting Southern California in the summer can be expensive if you stay in LA, Anaheim, or one of the other tourist destinations. Corona is slightly outside the "mainstream," but all the major attractions are nearby: Knott's Berry Farm, Disneyland, Magic Mountain, Angels and Dodgers baseball stadiums, and much more. Hollywood, Los Angeles, and San Diego are just a hop away for even more attractions.

Shopping is always a treat at one of the major Outlet Store Malls.

The hotel is Ayres Suites Corona West where every room is a suite. Included in the \$89 room for two is a daily buffet breakfast. The convention fee is only \$75 which includes the awards banquet, a free T-shirt, a free group photo, a free "goody bag," and more. Interesting presentations, guest speakers, and workshops are planned to enhance your knowledge. The

CREST team also promises a great barbeque for attendees this year. CREST is negotiating with an airline for a convention special. Watch the website for additional travel information..

Make sure you don't miss the CREST red carpet service; you should arrange for your vacation time at work today. The dates of the convention are June 22-24, 2005, which is a Wednesday through Friday. The weekend was left open so you may take in additional sites or trips if you wish an extended stay. The hotel will honor our room rates for early or extended convention days for attendees. International visitors need to arrange for their passports, visas, and birth certificates now.

There are three airports available. Ontario is the closest and best, being only about twenty

miles north of Corona. Next would be John Wayne Orange County Airport about thirty miles west of Corona. Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) is about fifty miles away from Corona.

Watch the *REACT* website for additional information. The e-mail address for additional information is <2005Convention@reactIntl.org>. The CREST Team phone number is (951) 279-9358. If you have never attended a *REACT* convention before, here is your chance to meet *REACTers* from all over the country (and beyond!) and have a wonderful vacation at the same time. All attendees will be eligible for a free entry in the door prize drawing.

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Ohio Teams Help with High School Football Playoffs

Football has deep roots in Ohio. American professional football began in Canton, and in the early days teams were fielded by Akron, Canton, and Massillon, among other Ohio cities. Thus it's no wonder that

one of the biggest events of the year is the annual high school football championships, held in Massillon, a northeast Ohio city of about 30,000.

And in 2004, *REACT* played a key role in the playoffs.

Last November, the chief of the Massillon police department contacted Massillon-Stark County *REACT* and asked for assistance with traffic control. The Team readily agreed to help – and soon realized that there were not enough members available for the event, which ran from November 20 through December 4 and involved eight games leading up to the state championships.

M-SC *REACT* called for help through the Ohio *REACT* Council's Mutual Aid officer, who relayed the call to other Teams in the area. No less than five other Teams responded, including Tri-County North *REACT*, Great Lakes

REACT, Geauga County, Flag City (a brand-new Team!), and Medina *REACT*.

The members were assigned to operate the traffic control signals at key intersections before, during, and after the games at two Massillon stadiums, under the supervision of MPD traffic officers. With high school teams from all over the state bringing their families and fans, the town's population more than doubled for each game, creating the potential for mammoth traffic jams. Thanks in part to the good work of the *REACT* Teams, there were no major problems.

Afterward, the police complimented the members of M-SC *REACT* – and were surprised to learn that five other Teams had been involved. As far as the police were aware, everything went as smoothly and professionally as if only one group had been there.

-Paul Jackson

New Membership Brochure

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Nominations

are now due for

Regional Director

Regions 3, 6, and 9!

Nominate the person you think will best represent your Team, Council, and Region. See the Nomination Form on Pages 13-14. The form must be received by RI no later than April 20, 2004.



A typical guest suite at the Ayres Corona West, site of the 2005 *REACT* International Convention. (Photos courtesy of the hotel.)

and a zoo nearby, or you could try your luck at an Indian casino – or take a quick bus trip to Las Vegas.

But aside from all that, the main reason to come to Convention 2005 is to meet *REACT* members from all over the world, discuss and decide issues that will determine the future of *REACT*, and learn from guest speakers and experts on all the fields of concern to *REACT* members.

Delegates to the *REACT* International Convention in 2003 decided to hold conventions every other year, rather than every year; the convention in Corona will be the first one since that decision – and the last one until 2007. It's an experience you won't want to miss!

More details, including a list of workshops and speakers, will be in the March-April issue of *The REACTer*, along with a registration form. Can't wait? Check the RI web site, < www.reactintl.org >, from time to time; the official Convention web site will be there soon, with the registration form.

commuter rail system.

Radio communications will be available throughout the convention, on CB, GMRS, and amateur frequencies. The Crest GMRS repeater is available for those with the proper license.

Aside from the attractions listed above, there are nearly infinite vacation possibilities within easy reach of Corona. Hollywood

and the major TV studios are less than an hour's drive away; sky diving, scuba diving, water skiing, fishing in local lakes or deep-sea, mountain climbing and hiking, and every other sport or athletic activity you can imagine are readily available. Corona has several large malls, or you could take in a trip to the Farmers Market in LA. There are several museums

Calendar

January 1	Team Renewals due at RI
January 17	Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday (US)
February 2	Deadline for Mar-Apr <i>REACTer</i>
February 21	Presidents' Day (US)
March 13	Commonwealth Day (Canada)
March 15	Deadline for Nominations for Regional Director (Regions 3, 6, & 9)
April 4	Deadline for May-June <i>REACTer</i>
April 15	Deadline for "Early Bird" Registration for 2005 RI Convention
June 6	Deadline for July-Aug <i>REACTer</i>
June 22-24	<i>REACT</i> International Convention, Corona, California

with Lights

Travis County (Texas) REACT



Volunteers await their instructions from Trail of Lights Director Maria Ciccirelli at the Volunteer Center. The small metal building at left is the Communications Center, staffed by Travis Co. REACT, with radios provided by the Austin Radio Communications Club.

By far the most frequent problem at the Trail of Lights (aside from burnt-out strings of lights) is not medical, but misplaced children. Especially on the nights when the crowds are heavy, it's not unusual to have half a dozen – or more – children separated from their parents.

REACT personnel and volunteers are told not to use the phrase, "lost child," because it's unclear. Instead, if a volunteer sees a child who is apparently not with an adult, especially if the child is upset, the volunteer is instructed to calm the child down but keep him or her at the display where the child was found. Almost always, the parents will show up within a few minutes. On the rare occasion when that doesn't happen, the Trail Captain brings the child to the Volunteer Center to wait for an adult to appear.

If a parent tells a volunteer that their child is *missing*, that's

another matter altogether; it is treated as an emergency. With dozens of lighted, and in some cases animated, displays, plus a variety of natural hazards (the nearby Town Lake, several wooded sections, and so forth), the Trail could be a dangerous place for a lost child. A description of the missing child is broadcast immediately, and Trail Captains (along with Parks Police, who are always present during the Trail) begin a concentrated search. In the more than ten years that REACT has been involved with the Trail, no child has ever been truly lost or seriously injured.

Of course, with so many thousands of visitors, all sorts of other problems occur. There have been various sudden illnesses (in a few cases, epileptic seizures have been caused by flashing lights) and minor injuries: a scraped knee, a twisted ankle, as someone stepped where they shouldn't have.

One night several years ago, all of the lights suddenly went out; the entire Trail was plunged into darkness due to the failure of an electrical transformer. Fortunately, all of the volunteers and Trail Captains are equipped with flashlights, and they were able to lead the crowds out of the park without further incident.

Texas's famously fickle weather can create problems as well. On one occasion, a cold front – known locally as a "Blue Norther" – swept through the area in the middle of the evening. The temperature plunged from about 70 degrees to less than 40 degrees in an hour – along with high wind and sleet. Many of the visitors were in shirt-sleeves and shorts. That was one time when nothing REACT could do would help the visitors enjoy the Trail!

Working the Trail of Lights is a major operation for a relatively small Team. Some members, because of their work or other commitments, are only able to help for one or two evenings; others are there every night that the Trail is open (anywhere from nine to fifteen nights, depending on the calendar).

Non-REACT members from the local ARES group, members of the newly-organized CERT (Citizens Emergency Response Teams), and local hams help fill some of the slots that Travis Co. REACT otherwise would have trouble filling. Despite all the effort and inconvenience, the REACT members and their friends return year after year; as more than one has said, "The Trail of Lights is my Christmas!"

REACTivities -- Team & Council News

Minnesota REACT Council

Minnesota REACT Teams participated in the Benton County Terrorism Disaster Drill in August. The theme for the drill was a terrorism event with terrorists taking control of a public school, containing well over 1,000 students, and releasing a chemical agent. Ironically, days later an event with some similarities occurred in Russia.

The REACT Teams assisted in setting up, staffing, and providing communications in the Benton County Mobile Communications Trailer, which was used as the command center for the drill. There were 350-plus people participating in this event, which included over twenty different organizations, including the Benton County Sheriff's Office, Sauk Rapids, Sartell, and Saint Cloud Police and Fire Departments, specialized hazardous materials (HazMat) teams, medical first responders and ambulance companies, and helicopter medical evacuations, along with one major hospital, the new nationally created CERT (Citizen Emergency Response Teams), Salvation Army, elected officials, state and federal Homeland Security Management (HSM), bus companies, and school administrators.

Welcome New Teams!

REACT of Madison County (N.C.), Team 6099
Tehama County (Calif.) REACT, Team 3431 (reactivated)

The exercise was funded by a grant received by the Benton County Emergency Management Director through a Federal Homeland Security Grant. St. Cloud REACT team member Ron Bomstad is the Benton County Emergency Management Director.

-Connie Reichensperger

St. Cloud REACT President Charles Reichensperger, Minnesota REACT Council President Roberta Ernston, and Ramsey County (Minn.) REACT President Paul Oby in front of the Benton Co. Mobile Command Center.

-photo by Lis Nistler



Chicago Metro REACT

On November 4, 2004, the members of Chicago Metro REACT were called in to the Wheeling Police Department. The reason for this meeting was unknown. The only reason given for the meeting was, "They want to speak to all of you," and "they" was not specific. Many thoughts race through one's mind when a request like this comes in: Did we do something wrong? Is there a special detail that "they" need help with? Who are "they"? and many more unpleasant thoughts.

As the members of the Team gathered at the police station lobby, our liaison officer, Cpl. Tom Lorenz, came out and told us we should all wait with him until everyone had assembled. Whatever was going on required everyone to be present at the same time. When all of the members were present, we were ushered through the station to the training room in the back of the building. More thoughts of gloom and doom: Is this some type of training they wish us to take? Or do they want us away from the staff to "fire" us?

As the door to the training room opened, the whole command staff was present — along with the mayor and one of the village board members. We were asked to take seats so that the meeting could begin. The police

Continued on Page 15



REGIONAL DIRECTOR 3, 6, or 9 CANDIDATE NOMINATION FORM

Complete and mail to:
REACT International, Inc.
5210 Auth Rd, Suite #403
Suitland, MD 20746

PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT

Must be received by April 20th

Nominee Name _____ Telephone (____) _____

Address _____ E-Mail Address _____

City _____ State/
Province _____ Zip _____ Country _____

Education _____

Occupation _____ Employer _____ How
Long? _____

Age _____ Sex: Male Female Marital Status _____

Children, sex & age _____

Team # Name _____ Region: _____

Date joined REACT _____ Date joined present Team _____

Previous Team # Name _____

Team offices served (position/dates) _____

Council offices served (position/dates) _____

International offices/committees served (position/dates) _____

International conventions attended (year/location) _____

Experience with other non-profit corporations or public agencies (position/dates) _____

Communications capabilities: CB GMRS Amateur Internet E-Mail Other

Chicago Metro

Continued from Page 11

department and the Village of Wheeling wished to honor the members of Chicago Metro REACT for many years of service to the village. All of the REACT members were given a plaque commemorating the occasion. We were then the guests of honor at a pizza party. We were all astonished.

Everyone who joins a REACT Team does so because they want to be involved with their community and help out in times of need, not for accolades or praise, but it sure is nice when it happens!

-Michael LaScola

REACTivities -- Team & Council News

Dutchess/ Putnam Co. (N.Y.) REACT

When you have a holiday Safety Break, you never know who is going to stop by. We've had many people from all over the world stop for a cup of coffee, soft drink, or a donut at the many Safety Breaks we've held over the years. But a visitor to our Fourth of July Safety Break was certainly the most famous: Dr. Henry Kissinger, former Secretary of State under Presi-



Lauren Mejorado, Barbara Deitz, Melinda Seymour, Jonathan Fish, and Warren Deitz surround Dr. Henry Kissinger, who visited the Dutchess/Putnam County Safety Break on the Fourth of July.

dent Richard M. Nixon. Break, but he graciously He didn't say where he agreed to "pose" with was headed when he some of our members. stopped at our Safety -Warren Deitz

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