



Gavel & Badge

The Official Newsletter for the Justices of the Peace and Constables Association

December 2024

GREETINGS FROM PRESIDENT HOLLY WILLIAMSON

Dear JPCA Members,

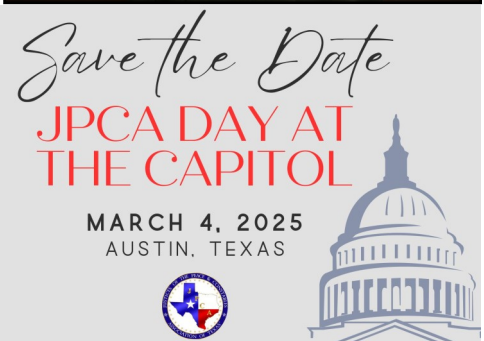
I hope this message finds you well. It is with great joy that I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the newly elected Justices of the Peace and Constables—30 new JPs and 140 Constables have joined our ranks! We warmly welcome you to your elected offices and look forward to the contributions you will make in your communities.

I would also like to acknowledge the dedication of those who were re-elected. Your continued service is invaluable, and we are grateful for your commitment. Additionally, our sincere thanks go out to the retiring Justices of the Peace and Constables. Your hard work and service to the State of Texas and your communities have made a lasting impact, and we appreciate all you have done.

I am thrilled to report that our recent Week of Service was a tremendous success! Many offices participated in outreach efforts across their communities, showcasing the spirit of service that defines JPCA. I encourage you to visit our Facebook page to see the incredible pictures and stories from this event. Thank you to everyone who took part; your efforts truly represent the best of JPCA.

As we look ahead, the legislative session is upon us, with thousands of bills already filed. Our committees have been diligently working on behalf of our membership. Please remember to save the date for our gathering at the Capitol on March 4th. It promises to be an exciting day, and I look forward to seeing all of you there!

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! May this holiday season bring you joy and peace.



Warm regards,

JPCA President

Judge Holly Williamson

Chaplain's Corner

*By Constable Dwain Read,
Ochiltree County*

In the Old Testament book of Genesis there is a Bible story that epitomizes man's faith & God's providence. It is about Joseph whose life may be summed up as a story of rags to riches. Joseph was 17 yrs old when his story begins. (Gen 37:2). He was 30 years old when he was elevated by Pharoah (Gen 41:46). Probably he was not over twenty when he was sold into Egypt. Joseph experienced many disappointments and frustrations just as we have. But he never soured in spirit or lost his faith in God.

As you follow his life story, you cannot fail to see a human parallel to the divine experience of Jesus Christ. Joseph was the beloved son of his father but was hated and betrayed by his brothers. He became a slave, the lowest order among men. Though innocent, he was identified with criminals. But through God's providence he was exalted to a place of rulership and power. He was used of God to be a savior of men, including his brothers who had hated and betrayed him. Rather than being vengeful toward them, he was compassionate. He stands in the line of the ancestry of our Lord who experienced infinitely that which Joseph experienced finitely.

What I glean from this story is that trust in God's providence enables a person to persevere through the varied trials in life. Hopefully, we recall hard experiences which later proved to be part of God's providential plan.

God has a providential plan for your life. Things happen in our lives and from those happenings many times we are directed in a direction that God uses us. As Judges, Constables, Deputy Constables, and Clerks, you are right where God placed you. As we come into this time of year of Thanksgiving and Christmas, be thankful but also understand God's providential plan included sending his Son to us to be our Savior! May God bless you and this Great State of Texas!

2025 TJCTC EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Don't miss the chance to enhance your understanding and skills at the upcoming educational events hosted by the Texas Justice Court Training Center (TJCTC)! These sessions provide a deep dive into crucial topics relevant to judges, constables, and court personnel. Register today!

Judges

Corpus Christi, 20 hour: Jan. 12-15
Austin, 10 hour: Mar. 2-4
Grapevine, 20 hour: Mar. 23-26
Secrets of the Dead Workshop: May 11-13
Lubbock, 20 hour: June 1-4

Constables & Clerks

Corpus Christi, 16 hour: Feb. 12-14
Galveston, 16 hour: Feb. 24-26
Austin, 20 Hour Civil Process: March 4-7
Virtual 20 hour Civil Process: April 21-24
Galveston, 20 Hour Civil Process: May 4-7
El Paso, 20 hours Civil Process: June 23—27



GREAT ADVICE FOR YOUR PRECINCT

QUESTION: Can multiple counties or municipalities use a Youth Diversion Coordinator from one county and send their defendants to that county? Is a contract needed? Are there fees other than the \$50.00 from the defendant?

ANSWER: Yes. Multiple counties can have the same plan and share a youth diversion coordinator. There would need to be some sort of agreement (MOU or contract) about how that is going to look/which counties pay what. Note, however, that defendants should not be required to travel a distance that makes it difficult to

participate in diversion. Other options could include having virtual meetings or having the coordinator travel. Also note that if a case is actually filed in your court, it cannot be transferred to another county. Criminal cases must be filed in the county where the offense occurred. The only cost that is collected as part of a juvenile diversion case is the \$50 administrative fee (if applicable). However, money from the youth diversion fund and the juvenile delinquency prevention fund can also be used to fund the coordinator position.

QUESTION: Plaintiff & Defendant reside at the same address. Plaintiff is evicting Defendant. Service by Constable is given to Plaintiff who is over the age of 16. Is this ok?

ANSWER: No.

QUESTION: Are we allowed to give Defendants copies of order/motions for appointment of receiverships? Do the rules for exempt items still apply in receivership cases? We have had 3 different parties call and say "all" their bank accounts had holds and they were not aware of why. They stated they had agreed judgments that were worked out and payments being made. Do the receivers have to notify the parties of intent to collect?

ANSWER: 1. Yes. You are allowed to give parties copies of orders the court has rendered in their cases, and generally parties who have made an appearance should receive an initial copy of any order rendered by the court. Rule 679b(a)(1) specifically states, "the receiver or judgment creditor must serve the judgment debtor with the Notice of Protected Property Rights, the Instructions for Protected Property Claim Form, and the Protected Property Claim Form approved by the Supreme Court." Rule 679(a)(2) states, "The receiver or judgment creditor must serve the documents in (1) within three business days after the receiver or judgment creditor has notice that the judgment debtor's property has been frozen or seized, whichever is first." We are concerned that the debtors might not be receiving the notices they are entitled to.

2. The laws concerning exempt property absolutely apply in receivership cases. The court has a duty to ensure that receivers are complying with the law and the rules of civil procedure. It may be time to have a hearing to see if the judgment debtors' concerns are valid.

JPCA

WEEK OF

SERVICE

JPCA encourages all elected officials and JPCA members to serve their local communities by volunteering and supporting local charities. The following are examples of great work by our members during the 2024 JPCA Week of Service, Nov. 17—23.

JPCA President Holly Williamson, Harris County Pct 8-1, and her entire office volunteered with the City of Pasadena's food drive. They sorted food, packed boxes for delivery, and provided hours of needed volunteer support.



Judge Angela Williams, Williamson County Pct 2, hosted a community lunch in partnership with the Leander Citizens Police Academy and participated in the 19th Annual Leander High School craft fair!



Constable Jevonne Pollard, Jefferson County, Precinct 1, partnered with "Sleep In Heavenly Peace" and helped by delivering mattresses with complete bedding sets to 20 families in need. Deputies assembled bed frames and disposed of worn items.



Judge Wayne Mack, Montgomery County Pct 1, and his clerks went shopping at HEB to provide all of the groceries needed for a thanksgiving dinner to their friends in need at the Montgomery County Community Assistance Center.



Constable George Lopez, Travis County Pct 4, his deputies, and clerk "elves" filled over 200 stockings with gifts and candy for area children.



Constable Carlos Lopez, Travis County Pct 5, held a food drive in partnership with Men As Allies, Toyota of North Austin, and a SignatureCare Emergency Center.



Dr. Kim Webb, JP for San Jacinto Pct 4, served hot meals to 350 families and provided \$15 gift cards toward the purchase of a holiday ham. She also participated in the community's Turkey Trot fun run.



Constable Tonya Nixon, Travis County Pct 1, held the 4th annual Ceehawkk & Friends Annual Day of Giving with a hot meal served to all those who attended. Sponsors for the event included local restaurants and HEB.



Judge Sylvia Holmes and Constable Stacy Suits, Travis County Pct 3, coordinated efforts to assist unsheltered families by donating dozens of blankets and socks.



Constable Chad Davis & Judge Roger Howell, both Hood County Pct 1, and their offices signed Christmas cards for service men and women unable to spend the holidays at home.



Constable Kat Brown, Bexar County Pct 4, hosted a community day that provided school supplies, haircuts, and 1000 turkeys to families.



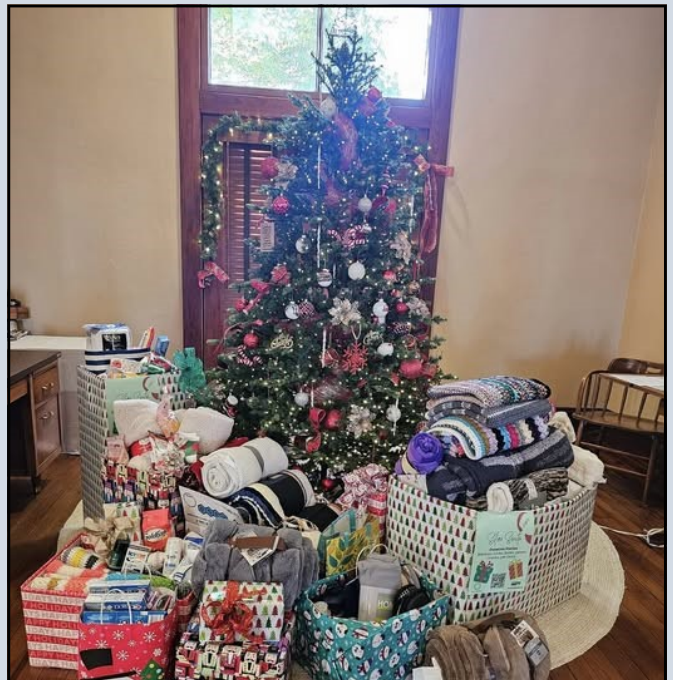
Constable Emmanuel Zamora, Uvalde County Pct 6, provided 'Trash Roll Off Days' as an easy and free way to dispose of old tires and trash.



Constable Wesley Hicks, Smith County Pct 5, held a fundraiser for Blue Santa to provide toys at Christmas for local children.



Judge Michele Van Stavern, Kendall County Pct 1, hosted 'Cookies with Santa' an evening to meet Santa and to collect donations for the local Meals on Wheels program.



Constable Brantin Carr, Franklin County Pct 1, participated in the "Help a Child" annual fundraiser that netted over \$150k for scholarships and local child advocacy centers.



Constable Buck Stevens, Brazoria County Pct 3, and his officers spent Thanksgiving morning delivering happiness and hearty meals to seniors.



Constable Jeff Anderson, Williamson County Pct 2, co-hosted a blood drive with Justice of the Peace Angela Williams to support their local blood bank.

Williamson County Precinct 2 Constable & Justice of the Peace
#JPCAWEEKOFSERVICE

BLOOD DRIVE

Monday, Thursday, & Friday
November 18th, 21st, & 22nd, 2024

Between the hours of:
8:00am - 6:00pm

We Are Blood
251 N Bell Blvd Ste 111A, Cedar Park, Tx

"A Drop of Blood, a Million Lives"

Today, you can be a hero to many people. By donating blood, you give a chance at life to those in need.

USE CODE D-597 AT CHECK IN TO DONATE

For More Information & to Schedule Appointment:
www.weareblood.org

 A graphic showing two arms with white bandages that have a red heart on them, set against a red background with a white outline of a heart.

Constable Anthony Ross, Tyler County Pct 4, participated in the Spurger homecoming Parade and assisted with security at the football game and accompanying dance.



Judge Joe Stephens, Harris County Pct 3-1, gave away turkeys and food items to hundreds of families in anticipation of Thanksgiving.



JPCA WELCOMES AMY BRUNO, NEW TAC LEGISLATIVE CONSULTANT

Amy Bruno joined the TAC's Legislative Services team in 2024, bringing more than 17 years of experience in Texas policymaking. Before TAC, Bruno served as vice president of advocacy at a nonprofit, where she worked to promote policies and innovations that support child wellbeing.

Amy's career also includes roles as chief of staff and legislative director for several state representatives, as well as work with a government affairs firm and various Texas political campaigns.

At the national level, she has worked for a U.S. senator and held multiple roles on a presidential campaign.



Bruno earned dual Bachelor of Arts degrees in political science and Russian from The Ohio State University and studied as a fellow with Ohio State's John Glenn Institute for Public Affairs and Public Policy in Washington, D.C.

Amy lives with her husband and son in Austin, Texas. In her spare time, she enjoys traveling, reading, wine, and watching Bravo TV.

PRO SE JURY VIDEO SERIES CREATED WITH TEXAS BAR GRANT

The right to a jury trial is fundamental and should be pursued in earnest by parties seeking resolutions. However, a person's efforts to win over a jury may be thwarted if that person doesn't know what to do at trial. The selection of jurors is often viewed by lawyers as the single most important part of a trial and vital to their client's success. Pro se parties are commonly unaware of the jury process and unprepared to effectively participate in the selection of jurors.

Judge Sylvia Holmes, Travis County Precinct 3, has a large precinct with frequent jury settings for civil matters. As a former attorney, Judge Holmes regularly participated in jury trials. As judge, she noticed that pro se parties were routinely unprepared for jury selection and often, mistakenly, believed that the Court was responsible for selecting the final jurors. She grew concerned that potential jurors felt their time had been wasted by unprepared parties and that jurors were being seated who may not have been able to fairly follow the law. A search for education materials at the local and state level was fruitless, so Judge Holmes reached out to the local bar association for ideas. The Austin Young Lawyers Association aims to empower newly licensed attorneys by providing curated classes and easy to use reference guides, but had no materials related to jury selection. AYLA agreed that this information would be helpful to pro se parties and to new lawyers who may be just as unfamiliar with how to approach a jury trial. A final critical partner was found with Velva Price, the Travis County District Clerk, whose office handles all juror requests for Travis county justice courts. Together, they sought funding from the Texas Bar Foundation for a one-time special use project to create a video series that would quickly and simply give parties basic information about how a jury trial works, the importance of jury selection, and what they can and cannot ask potential jurors.

The Texas Bar Foundation awarded \$15,250.00 in October 2023 to implement How to Pick a Jury without a Lawyer in JP & Municipal Courts.

The ensuing 12 months were spent developing scripts, recruiting "actors" from the local bar, securing a video/film crew, on-site filming, and post-production editing. Their hard work resulted in the creation of 7 videos including a 10 minute general jury trial tips and 5 minute videos with specific ideas for questions to ask in hearings for evictions, traffic tickets, negligence, car wrecks, breach of contracts, and personal property recovery. Each video contains closed captioning and foreign language translations.

Courts may request free materials for all parties by emailing: JP3@TravisCountyTX.gov.



JURY SELECTION
HOW-TO VIDEO SERIES
FOR JUSTICE COURTS
& MUNICIPAL COURTS

HELPFUL INFO AND INSTRUCTIONS

- 🕒 Jury Selection Overview
- 🗋️ Sample Questions to Ask
- 🕒 Tips and Hints to Selecting

JPCA MEMBERS ATTENDED THE ANNUAL TAC LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE



President Holly Williamson (*pic. far left*) delved into the pressing challenges facing judges and constables across Texas. Her candid discussion shed light on the critical areas requiring attention and reform, underscoring her commitment to supporting the Texas judiciary and constabulary through JPCA.

The JPCA booth was a beacon of knowledge and dedication, thanks to the efforts of Secretary/Treasurer Constable Chad Jordan (*pic. far right*).

Pres-Elect Carlos Lopez, Judge Sylvia Holmes, and Judge Mack (*pic. left to right*) stopped by to visit and offer support.



Judge JR Woolley, Constable Justin West, and Judge Wayne Mack (*pic. left to right*) are a dynamic trio of voices for JPCA in the TAC Core Legislative Group.



THANK YOU TO OUR RETIRING CONSTABLES & JUDGES

As we approach the end of another year, it is with great respect and gratitude that we recognize the dedicated service of those who have served as elected judges and constables in their respective counties. Their hard work, leadership, and commitment to upholding the law have greatly impacted their communities, ensuring justice and safety for all. As they step into retirement, we celebrate their careers and thank them for their invaluable contributions.

Their contributions go far beyond the daily responsibilities of their positions. They have been mentors, role models, and pillars of their communities, leading with a commitment to integrity, responsibility, and service. Their leadership has not only upheld the law but has also set an example for future generations to follow.

As these dedicated public servants enter retirement, we extend our heartfelt thanks for their service. Their years of work have helped build a strong foundation for justice, security, and fairness in their counties, and their legacies will undoubtedly continue to inspire others.

We wish each of these retiring judges and constables a well-deserved rest and success in the next chapters of their lives. The impact of their service will resonate for years to come, and they will always be remembered with gratitude for their contributions to their communities.

Thank you for your service, and may your retirement be filled with health, happiness, and fulfillment.

The following individuals have dedicated their time, energy, and expertise to the service of their communities and are retiring after many years of exemplary public service:

RETIRING JUSTICES OF THE PEACE

- **Hon. Keith E. Reed** – Bell County
- **Hon. Lee Haney** – Brown County
- **Hon. Sallie Gonzalez** – Cameron County
- **Hon. Dora Olivo** – Fort Bend County

THANK YOU TO OUR RETIRING CONSTABLES & JUDGES cont.

RETIRING CONSTABLES

- **Hon. Kim Holliday** – Anderson County
- **Hon. Doug Lightfoot** – Anderson County
- **Hon. Dan Gomez** – Andrews County
- **Hon. Charles Ray Anthony** – Angelina County
- **Hon. Rolly Correa** – Bell County
- **Hon. Bradley W. Moon** – Chambers County
- **Hon. Dennis Dugat** – Chambers County
- **Hon. John D. Maxwell** – Edwards County
- **Hon. Mike Jones** – Ellis County
- **Hon. Jose Ramirez** – Frio County
- **Hon. Rick Lee Sharp** – Galveston County
- **Hon. Michael E. Putman** – Grayson County
- **Hon. Dale Schaper** – Grimes County
- **Hon. Ted Heap** – Harris County
- **Hon. John Langdon Floyd** – Henderson County
- **Hon. John C. Miller** – Hill County
- **Hon. Norman Colyer** – Hopkins County
- **Hon. Joe Sterling** – Jasper County
- **Hon. Ronnie Hutchison** – Jasper County
- **Hon. Joe "QB" Stevenson** – Jefferson County
- **Hon. Bartolo Guajardo** – Jim Wells County
- **Hon. Steven Gallegos** – Kinney County
- **Hon. George Y. Holleman** – Leon County
- **Hon. Leslie Hulsey** – Liberty County
- **Hon. Bruce T. Thomas** – Live Oak County
- **Hon. William D. Edwards** – Llano County
- **Hon. Joe B. Simpson, Jr.** – Llano County
- **Hon. Charles L. West** – Milam County
- **Hon. Robert Cisneros** – Nueces County
- **Hon. Michael R. Santifer** – Palo Pinto County
- **Hon. Ray Myers** – Polk County
- **Hon. Jose Alfredo Saldana** – Reeves County
- **Hon. Johnnie J. Garza** – Refugio County
- **Hon. Craig Mecklin Leath** – Robertson County
- **Hon. Chris Durant, II** – Titus County
- **Hon. Randy Harris** – Tom Green County
- **Hon. Carl Casey** – Trinity County
- **Hon. Ronnie G. Ford, Jr.** – Tyler County
- **Hon. Ronnie Mitchell** – Upshur County
- **Hon. Lawrance Hollingsworth** – Upton County
- **Hon. Pat Jordan** – Van Zandt County
- **Hon. James E. Calaway** – Victoria County
- **Hon. Bo Hashaw** – Waller County
- **Hon. Harold Devally** – Webb County
- **Hon. Rex Allon Hoskins** – Wise County
- **Hon. Kelly Smith** – Wood County
- **Hon. Tommy Martin** – Young County

GATHER YOUR TEAM FOR JPCA DAY AT THE CAPITOL!*Save the Date***JPCA DAY AT
THE CAPITOL****MARCH 4, 2025
AUSTIN, TEXAS**

Join our JPCA team and be part of an initiative to represent judges, constables and their staff from across the state. United we can show our strength in numbers. Help us spread the word about this event!

SUBMIT YOUR STORIES, SHOUT OUTS, and PHOTOS!

Brag about your precinct! Submit your awards, accolades, and success stories to the Gavel & Badge.

Share your funny stories, heartwarming moments, and educational anecdotes with other members. Photos are always welcome!

Send items via email to Sylvia.Holmes@Traviscountytx.gov or by using the QR code (right).

