



Gavel & Badge

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

June 2024



FAREWELL FROM PRESIDENT BATES

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*By Constable Christopher Bates,
Jefferson County,
Precinct 2*

Hello JPCA Family,

First and foremost, THANK YOU from the bottom of my heart! Serving as President of this incredible organization has been an absolute joy. Since the day Judge Sergio De Leon swore me in, every moment has been remarkable. Your unwavering support and love throughout my presidency is something I will always cherish.

As I transition to the role of Immediate Past President, I want to extend a special thank you to the Executive Board and Board of Directors for their faith in me throughout this journey. At our 80th Annual Conference, I will deliver a more detailed farewell speech at the banquet, but I wanted to take a moment through the Gavel & Badge to express how amazing you all are!

I hope to see everyone at our 80th Year Celebration, where we are on track to achieve a record-breaking 500 registered attendees! Let's continue to strive for greatness across the state, always remembering that JPCA is the Heart & Soul of Texas. God Bless!

Constable Christopher L. Bates Sr.

President of JPCA



JUDGE YVONNE WILLIAMS HONORED BY TCWLA FOUNDATION

District 7 - Judge Yvonne Williams of Travis County PCT 1 was recognized with the prestigious Travis County Women Lawyers Association Criminal Justice Award. This honor shines a light on the often unheralded contributions of legal professionals.

Her nomination by peers underscores her status as a valuable asset to the local legal community, evident through her volunteer efforts and her com-

mitment to fostering an inclusive workplace environment. From the onset of her esteemed legal journey, Judge Williams has endeavored to provide all courtroom participants with understanding, accessibility, and empathy.

Utilizing her position, Judge Williams has spearheaded efforts to expand juvenile programs and establish community partnerships to tackle the complex issue of truancy.

Prior to assuming office in 2011, she served as an Associate Municipal Court Judge for the City of Austin, following a successful tenure as a civil rights trial attorney in federal courts during the 1980s, having earned her law degree from the University of Houston Law School.



Pictured (above:): Judge Williams and Travis County JP Raul Gonzales, Pct 4, celebrate her achievements at the TCWLA luncheon in honor of the 2024 award winners.

Pictured (left): Judge Williams accepts award from Gabrielle Smith, President-Elect of the Travis County Women Lawyers' Association. Judge Williams was honored for her lifetime of contributions to the legal community.

CONSTABLE CHAD NORVELL'S OFFICE RECOGNIZED BY TPCA

District 10 - The Fort Bend County Precinct 1 Constable's Office has achieved the prestigious "Accredited Law Enforcement Agency" designation from the Texas Police Chiefs Association Law Enforcement Accreditation Program.

Begun in 2006, the Accreditation Program evaluates an enforcement agency's compliance with 173 best practices for Texas law enforcement. These standards were developed by Texas law enforcement professionals to assist agencies in the efficient and effective delivery of police service. The guiding principles cover all aspects of law enforcement operations including use of force, protection of citizen rights, vehicle pursuits, property and evidence management, and patrol and investigative operations.

This voluntary process required the office to conduct a critical self-review of the agency's policies, proce-



Pictured (left to right): Lt. Brandon Bolin, Chief Deputy John Hermann, Constable Chad Norvell, TPCA President Chief Albert Garcia.

dures, facilities and operations. The lengthy process began in 2021 by preparing proofs of compliance for each of the *Texas Law Enforcement Best Business Practices*. The Precinct 1 Constable's Office becomes the 202nd agency in the State to be accredited and only the 4th Constable's Office to attain accreditation. "We're also proud to be the first county-level agency in Fort Bend County to be accredited," stated Constable Chad Norvell.

I consider our agency to be amongst the most professional and I take pride in the work my staff has done to receive this coveted award.

- Constable Chad Norvell, Fort Bend County

JPCA GO TEAM SUPPORTS HEMPHILL COUNTY AFTER WILDFIRES

District 1 - On May 8, 2024, Georgia Estrada, the Potter County Constable for Precinct 2, presented a check to Leticia Navarro, the Chief Clerk of the Hemphill County Justice of the Peace, on behalf of the "JPCA of Texas GO team." This generosity came in response to the Texas Panhandle Wildfires, which forced evacuations and left many without power.

The JPCA-GO Team was formed to support justices of the peace, constables, deputies, and clerks during emergencies, following its establishment after Hurricane Harvey. Constable Estrada, who also holds the position of Potter County Constable for Precinct 2, expressed her honor in meeting with Jay Moseley, the Justice of the Peace for Hemphill County, and his clerk, Leticia Navarro.



Pictured above (left to right): Hemphill County court clerk Leticia Navarro and Justice of the Peace Jay Moseley

TRAVIS COUNTY PRECINCT 3 RECOGNIZED AS CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

District 7 - On April 30, Judge Sylvia Holmes, Travis County Pct. 3, and her team received recognition as a Center of Excellence by the Office of Court Administration. Beckie Garza, the Court Administrator, along with Nancy Clark, the Court Manager, and senior clerks Sally Nichols and Brianna Waugh, played pivotal roles in the court's ongoing success and were present to accept accolades for their exceptional contributions. Senator Judith



Pictured above (left to right): Judge Holmes, Becki Garza, Nancy Clark, Brianna Waugh, Sally Nichols, Chief Justice Hecht

Zaffirini and Texas Supreme Court Chief Justice Nathan Hecht formally extended their

congratulations to Judge Holmes and her team for their achievement.

COURT SECURITY TRAINING HOSTED BY WILCO JP & OCA

District 7 - On May 22, an essential security training session was held at the Williamson County Precinct 3 office, drawing approximately 50 participants from various counties, including Caldwell County, Dallas County, Ellis County, Williamson County, Travis County, Robertson County, and several municipalities. The event was open to Justices of the Peace (JPs), court clerks, constables, and other law enforcement officers, underscoring the importance of a united front in ensuring courthouse security.

Sheriff Mike Gleason from the Williamson County Sheriff's Office (WCSO) kicked off the event with welcoming remarks, setting a serious yet collaborative tone for the day. Nick Barsetti, a Court Security Specialist from the Texas Office of Court Administration (OCA), provided critical insights into courthouse security measures. Additionally, Mi-

chael Smith from the OCA spoke about the Centers of Excellence program, highlighting best practices and innovative strategies to enhance court security.

The training covered a comprehensive range of topics vital for court personnel, including responses to active shooter scenarios, bomb threat protocols, evacuation and shelter-in-place procedures, and personal safety strategies to avoid becoming a victim. These sessions aimed to equip attendees with the knowledge and skills needed to safeguard court staff and visitors effectively.

Running from 9:00 AM to 4:30 PM, the training was designed to be both intensive and thorough. The primary goal was to educate court personnel—including judges, clerks, bailiffs, and other relevant staff—on the fundamentals of security, ensuring they are well-prepared to handle potential threats and emergencies within courthouse environments.

This initiative reflects a proactive approach to court security, emphasizing the need for continual education and preparedness. The participation of a diverse group of counties and municipalities highlights the collective commitment to this crucial aspect of public service.

"I was very honored to co-host the court security training with the Texas Office of Court Administration.

The safety of our courtroom and the well-being of all who enter it is paramount. It is essential that our court personnel are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to respond to any situation."

- Judge Evelyn McLean, Williamson County

ROUND UP YOUR OFFICE FOR FUN IN FORT WORTH



OVERVIEW OF CONFERENCE

The conference offers up to 16 hours of continuing education for justices of the peace and court personnel. Constables can earn up to 20 hours, with 20 hours approved for TCOLE; 20 hours provided to civil process* with mandatory attendance.

*To receive TCOLE educational credit for Constable Course #1415 or Deputy/Clerk Course #3131, you must attend all 20 hours offered from June 24 -28. You cannot miss any civil process education class or leave early if you want to qualify for the 20-hour civil process training. If you would like to pick and choose classes, you will receive generic civil process credit instead. You cannot qualify for both types of training.

À la Carte Education Sessions

Day passes are \$25 for a half day (morning or afternoon) and \$50 per day (morning and afternoon). Day passes do not include admission to evening events.

DOOR PRIZES & SILENT AUCTION DONATIONS!

Please bring a door prize from your county and an item for the silent auction.

DRESS TO IMPRESS AT THE BOOTS & BUCKLES BALL

Pull out your finest western gear, shine your boots, and starch your denim. This year's JPCA Jam Session is themed "Boots & Buckles". Wear your best duds to Billy Bob's on Wednesday, June 26th for fun lasting 8 p.m.—midnight!



FELLOWSHIP ACTIVITIES BEYOND CLASSROOM EDUCATION

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY
7 a.m. Golf Outing at Rockwood Park Golf Course. If you are interested, contact Judge Holly Williamson via text at (832) 282-5557 or email to Htwilliamson@comcast.net. Sign up by June 3.	4:45 p.m. Night on Your Own You will be in the heart of downtown Fort Worth, surrounded by dining and nightlife. Sundance Square — home to theaters, restaurants and shops — is a five-minute walk.	6 p.m. 42 Domino Tournament at Billy Bob's Texas, 2520 Rodeo Plaza, Fort Worth, TX 76164 8 p.m.-midnight JPCA Jam Session "Boots & Buckles Ball" Location: Billy Bob's Texas, 2520 Rodeo Plaza, Fort Worth, TX 76164 <i>Attire: Country & Western style boots, hats, and denim.</i>	7:30-9 a.m. Prayer Breakfast Hilton Hotel Ballroom 8 a.m.—3 p.m. Silent Auction Please bring an item to donate on behalf of your county. 6-7 p.m. President's Reception 7-9 p.m. Installation of Officers and Awards Banquet

OVERFLOW CONFERENCE HOTEL RECOMMENDATIONS

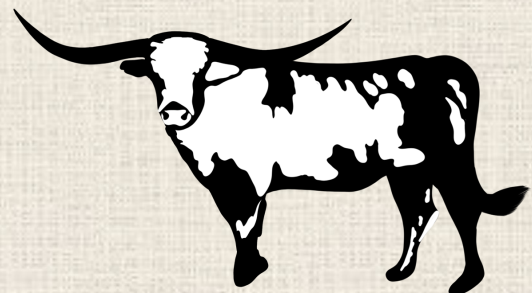
Hampton Inn and Suites Fort Worth Downtown
 1001 Commerce St.
 Fort Worth, TX 76102
 (817) 332-5300

Kimpton Hotel "The Harper"
 714 Main St.
 Fort Worth, TX 76102
 (800) 482-8372

The Ashton Hotel
 610 Main St.
 Fort Worth, TX 76102
 (817) 332-0100

FUN FACTS ABOUT FORT WORTH

- ♦ Fort Worth was founded in 1849 as a military outpost against Comanche raids and was named for Major General William Jenkins Worth, the commander of U.S. Troops in Texas.
- ♦ City nicknames include Cowtown, Funkytown, and Panther City. City mottoes are “Where the West Begins” and “Crossroads of Cowboys & Culture.”
- ♦ Fort Worth was a major trading point on the Chisolm Trail for cattle being sent to the meatpacking plants in Chicago. 4 million cattle passed through the city between 1867 and 1884. You can watch a cattle drive twice everyday at 11:30 a.m. and 4 p.m in the Fort Worth Stockyards National Historic District.
- ♦ The oldest honky tonk in town is the White Elephant Saloon, established 1890, and the site of the legendary last gunfight between corrupt Sheriff Longhair Jim Courtright and saloon owner Luke Short.
- ♦ Fort Worth has been well supplied in drinks thanks to one of its oldest businesses, Ben E. Keith, distributor of food and beverages, which was founded in 1906.
- ♦ The Original Mexican Eats Café, est. 1926, proudly serves the “Roosevelt Special”, an enchilada-taco-chalupa combo named after President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who was a frequent patron in the 1930s.
- ♦ Enjoy a steak at the Double Eagle Steakhouse, but beware of ghosts. The restaurant occupies the site of a former bathhouse and is rumored to be haunted by the spirit of a gambler murdered in the bathtub by a greedy thief.
- ♦ Hell’s Half Acre was the red light district of Fort Worth during the late 1800s and a known hideout for thieves, criminals, and working women. A historical plaque is located on the corner of 12th and Houston Steet.
- ♦ Oilman JR Ewing might have been from Dallas, but Larry Hagman was a native Fort Worthian.



JPCA LEGISLATIVE WEEK OF ACTION, June 9 - 15

JPCA needs your help!

Contact Your Legislators: Please reach out to your state representative and state senator. If you're unsure who they are, you can easily find out by visiting the "Who Represents Me" section here: <https://wrm.capitol.texas.gov/home>

Set Up Meetings: We encourage you to arrange meetings with both your representative and senator. This is a great opportunity to introduce yourself and JPCA to them. Offer to meet them for coffee, lunch, or invite them to a community event in their district. If an in-person meeting doesn't work, try to set up a call to introduce yourself.

Share JPCA Information: Many legislative members do not know our roles and responsibilities. Sharing this with them will help build the relationship and accomplish our legislative goals.

Exchange Contact Information: Building a relationship with your legislators now will be invaluable. We may need to call on you to reach out during the Legislative Session, so it's beneficial for them to know you beforehand. Ask them for their cell number and personal email. In return, offer to give them yours.

Follow Up: Let your legislators know that we will be finalizing our JPCA legislative platform soon and that you will be in touch to share it with them. Your involvement is crucial for our advocacy efforts.

Once you contact your members, please complete this survey:



<https://tinyurl.com/jpca24>

We want to announce at the Fort Worth conference how many of our members reached out and connected with your legislators. The in-person meetings can occur after the conference. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to Buffy Crownover, our JPCA Legislative Liaison, at Buffy@txlobby.com.

Thank you for your continued support and participation.

JPCA WEEK OF SERVICE - CONTRIBUTIONS BY MANY!

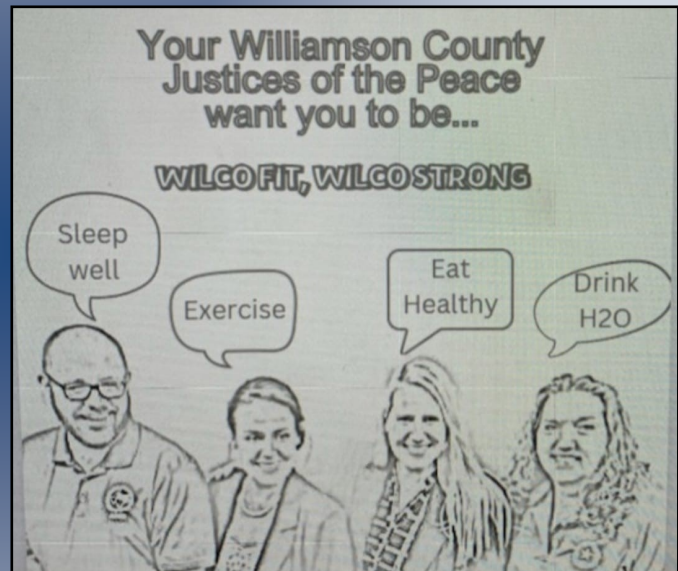
Raising Situational Awareness

Constable Matt Carpenter, Collin County Pct. 1, educated a packed crowd of women on situational awareness to help them better understand, perceive, and respond to difficult or dangerous situations.



Creating a Healthy Community

Williamson County Justices of the Peace created a campaign to shared with the public information about the leading causes of natural death in Williamson County (obesity, high blood pressure and high blood sugar). All of these are preventable or reversible.



Nurturing a Beautiful Earth

Fort Bend County Justice of the Peace Sonia Rash and the Precinct 3 staff held a second event during the Week of Service in honor of Earth Day, celebrated every year on April 20. Her office planted seeds, flowers and plants to commemorate the day.



JPCA WEEK OF SERVICE - CONTRIBUTIONS BY MANY!

Helping Others One Sole At A Time

Sandra Bryant, Hays County Justice of the Peace, Pct 5, and her office hosted the BIG SHOE GIVE-AWAY. They sorted through hundreds of shoes in preparation for kids, teens, women, & men to receive free shoes to the Hays CISD schools and the community.



Making Wishes Come True

Travis County Pct 5 Constable Deputies joined forces with The Learning Experience Academy of Early Education for the Let's Grant Wishes Carnival, where they helped make dreams come true for deserving children in partnership with Make-A-Wish. Deputy Criswell, Deputy Schultz, and Deputy Pace showed their amazing dedication to our community.



Empowering Students on Campus

Dr. Kim Webb, JP Pct 4, San Jacinto County, hosted the second session of the Judicial Mentorship and Internship Program. Students participated in a full day of events to help them gain a better understanding of things like verbal de-escalation, emergency preparedness, active shooter response, customer service, community policing, Clery Act, HIPAA, first aid, and more. Students met with campus police officers and toured the Texas Prison Museum.



JPCA WEEK OF SERVICE - CONTRIBUTIONS BY MANY!

Starting the School Day Off Right

The Constables and Justices of the Peace of Fayette County spent a morning serving as Leopard Door Greeters welcoming students in the carline at La Grange Independent School District.



Extending Friendship Through Fun

Constable Jevonne Pollard, Jefferson County, Pct 1, played bingo at the Grand Pine Senior Apartments. Her efforts spread friendship and goodwill to all!



Planning for the Future

Judge Sonia Rash, Fort Bend County, Pct 3, hosted a Wills and Probate seminar as part of a Free Educational series that she has been offering to the community on a regular basis. Attorneys Farha Ahmed and James E. Soto, presented to a packed courtroom of attendees.



UPCOMING TJCTC TRAININGS AND SEMINARS

Court Clerks:

Experienced Personnel
Virtual Civil: June 11 - 13

Experienced Personnel
Corpus Christi:
July 22—24

New Clerks, Austin:
August 20 - 22

Constables:

Ft. Worth 20 Hour Civil Pro-
cess Program:
June 24 - 28

Galveston Constable Clerk
Workshop:
August 11—13

Justices of the Peace

Lubbock 20 Hour:
June 2 - 5

Criminal Law Interactive Expe-
rience Workshop in San Anto-
nio: July 14 - 16

Impaired Driving Symposium
in College Station:
August 1 - 2

Chaplain's Corner

*By Constable Dwain Read,
Ochiltree County*

A professor of philosophy stood before his class with some items in front of him. When the class began, wordlessly he picked up a large empty mayonnaise jar and proceeded to fill it with rocks about two inches in diameter. He then asked the students if the jar was full. They agreed that it was full.

So the professor then picked up a box of pebbles and poured them into the jar. He shook the jar lightly and watched as the pebbles rolled into the open areas between the rocks. The professor then

asked the students again if the jar was full. They chuckled and agreed that it was indeed full this time.

The professor picked up a box of sand and poured it into the jar. The sand filled the remaining open areas of the jar.

"Now," said the professor, "I want you to recognize that this jar signifies your life. The rocks are the truly important things, such as family, health, and relationships. If all else was lost and only the rocks remained, your life would still be meaningful. The pebbles are the other things that matter in your life, such as work or school. The sand signi-

fies the remaining "small stuff" and material possessions.

If you put sand into the jar first, there is no room for the rocks or the pebbles. The same can be applied to your lives. If you spend all your time and energy on the small stuff, you will never have room for the truly important things.

As you serve as a Justice of the Peace, Constable, Deputy Constable, or Clerk, stay focused on what is important as you go through your day always showing the love of Christ in your life.

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY REQUIRED FOR ALL TEXAS COURTS

In February, pursuant to the directive of the Texas Legislature during the 2023 session, the Texas Supreme Court amended Rule of Judicial Administration 7.1, mandating that all courts, including justice courts, institute a confidentiality policy.

Effective May 1, the confidentiality policy requirement came into force. To facilitate compliance among courts, the TJCTC has developed a Sample Policy for adoption or customization by all justice courts. According to the revised rule, all new hires must undergo

training on the policy before engaging in substantive duties. Existing employees must receive this training immediately and be provided a refresher training every two years. The sample policy is available for download on the TJCTC website.

SB4 MAGISTRATION POLICY REMAINS ON HOLD AT 5th CIRCUIT

During the 4th Special Session of the 88th Texas Legislature, SB 4 was passed, introducing various new immigration-related criminal offenses and establishing a process for magistrates and courts to issue orders for defendants to return to a foreign country under certain circumstances. Initially slated to take effect on March

5, 2024, the law faced legal challenges.

The United States, alongside other plaintiffs including El Paso County, filed a lawsuit seeking an injunction. A district judge granted the injunction, which was initially upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court. Currently, a stay is in place

from the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals, preventing the law from being enacted.

Oral arguments from both sides were heard by the 5th Circuit in late March. A final ruling has not been issued, but the training center will send an email with updates as they become available.

SUBMIT YOUR STORIES, SHOUT OUTS, and PHOTOS!

Has your office been rewarded or recognized for success? Do you want to give a shout out to someone in your office? Have you seen or heard a case that would be of interest to others?

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).



JUDGE JR WOOLLEY APPOINTED BY GOVERNOR ABBOTT TO TIDC

On May 16, Governor Greg Abbott appointed J.R. Woolley, Waller County Justice of the Peace Pct 2, to the Governing Board of the Texas Indigent Defense Commission (TIDC) for a term set to expire on February 1, 2025.

The Commission monitors indigent defense in all 254 counties through data collection and in-person audits. TIDC funds public defense in each of Texas's 254 counties through grants to fund indigent defense systems like a new public defenders office, providing reimburses for a portion of indigent defense expenditures, funding innocence projects in Texas law schools, and by providing assistance to counties that incur extraordinary indigent defense expenses that cause the county a significant financial hardship. Texas counties are required to report data about representation of children and parents in child protection cases to the Texas Indigent Defense Commission (TIDC).



Judge Woolley previously served as the chief investigator for the Waller County District Attorney's Office and as an investigator for the Waller County Sheriff's Office. He is the legislative chair of the Justices of the Peace and Constables Association, member of the American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators, and a non-attorney member

of the State Bar of Texas Justice of the Peace Section.

Additionally, he is a member of the Heroes on the Water Matagorda Chapter Executive Team, assistant chief for the Whitehall Community Volunteer Fire Department, and former fire chief and former board president of the Tri-County Fire Department. He served in the U.S. Air Force.