



**From the Corner: TDCAA Connections**



The recent Annual Criminal & Civil Law Update at South Padre is another example of the benefits the Texas District and County Attorney's Association provides to our Office and other County and District Attorney Offices across the State.

The TDCAA is dedicated to serving Texas prosecutors and attorneys in government representation. The TDCAA website lists other benefits members may find useful including upcoming training opportunities, a news feed with articles of interest from across the nation, and an archive of the monthly journals dating back to 2007. Of equal importance, the TDCAA provides opportunities for Texas District and County Attorneys and their staffs to come together to meet, exchange ideas, and discuss issues common to our Offices. Through connections made at conferences and meetings, County and District Attorneys are able act as a resource for one another, sharing experiences and knowledge to benefit all Texans.

As the largest County Attorney's Office in Texas and the largest civil Office, we are pleased when we are called upon for advice from other counties. And the arrangement is reciprocal. Recently, when our office needed expedited service on a man in Diboll, an Angelina County District Attorney investigator helped obtain service on the individual. Today's newsletter features recent examples of how our Office works across county lines with other County and District Attorneys to be of "Service to All According to Law." — Vince

**Happy Anniversary!**

**Thank you for your service to the public:**

Gully Puente	2 years	Lynn Chamberlin	19 years
Franshameka Blackman	3 years	William Cox	19 years
Virginia Garza	3 years	Gene Gundersen	19 years
Melanie Rodney	3 years	Janice Jones	19 years
Melanie Brooks	7 years	Terry Lindner	19 years
Lynette Williams	7 years	Curtrina Majors	19 years
Leah Gordon	8 years	Stella Parker	19 years
Frances Smith	9 years	Eileen Begle	22 years
April Pool-Baker	12 years	Gloria Cruz	22 years
Franchell Joubert	13 years	Sandra Hachem	22 years
Mary Baker	18 years	Charles Moritz	30 years
Jana Brandt	19 years	Cheryl Ratliff	32 years
Pat Butler	19 years		

**Everybody wins: Team gear OK every Friday this season**



With the Texans poised to win games this year, the opportunity to show some old-fashioned team spirit is just too much to pass up. Employees may sport their favorite team's gear every Friday during football season. So throw your JJ Watt jersey in the wash because it's going to have to pull double duty from here on out. Pictured above is our team on the first Friday of football season.

**Vinson leads Strike Force, seeks volunteers**



Assistant County Attorney Celena Vinson will lead the 2014 Election Strike Force, a group of attorneys and investigators tasked with responding to issues that may arise at polls during the November election. The Strike Force works to ensure that the voting process is carried out according to the law.

The success of the Strike Force is dependent on volunteers who are willing to be on-call to assist election workers and Celena is currently seeking additional volunteers.

- ▶ Members of the Strike Force will be on call throughout the early voting period, which begins October 20 and ends on Halloween, and again on Election Day, which is November 4.
- ▶ Volunteers may sign up for as little time as a single day and need not be election law experts to help out.
- ▶ Strike Force members will be accompanied by an investigator while responding to election issues.
- ▶ Members of the Strike Force will need to attend Election Law Training at 2 p.m. on October 9 in the Driscoll Courtroom.

If you would like to volunteer, email [Celena.Vinson@cao.hctx.net](mailto:Celena.Vinson@cao.hctx.net) with your availability during early voting and on election day. Also, let Celena know if you would like to volunteer, but are unable to attend the October 9 training.

**More than \$1 million collected in hotel taxes**



Thanks to the efforts of Assistant County Attorney Mimi Han, Paralegal Erin Werner and Administrative Assistant Lupe Fonseca our Office has collected more than \$1 million in revenue from the Hotel Occupancy Tax this year.

**Connect5 Five questions for Joe Lawson**



- What was your favorite song in High School?**  
A Long December by Counting Crows.
- If you could have dinner with anyone, who would it be?**  
My wife, Emily — she's delightful.
- What book would you recommend?**  
Walden Pond by Henry David Thoreau.
- If you were stranded on a desert island, what 3 items would you want with you?** Swiss army knife with fork and toothpick, Mary Ann's Gilligan's Island Cookbook by Dawn Wells, and a good supply of Old Bay seasoning.

**What's on your bucket list?** Sail in the Chicago Yacht Club Race to Mackinac, write the great American novel, and build a dining room table my wife will actually let me put in the dining room.

Joe Lawson is the Deputy Director at the Law Library. He has been with our Office since 2014.



*WE, THE MEMBERS OF THE HARRIS COUNTY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE, BOTH LAWYERS AND NON-LAWYERS, ADHERE TO THE HIGHEST STANDARDS OF PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL ETHICS AS WE SERVE THE PEOPLE OF HARRIS COUNTY AND STRIVE TO BE THE BEST PUBLIC LAW FIRM IN THE UNITED STATES.*

**Useful Links**

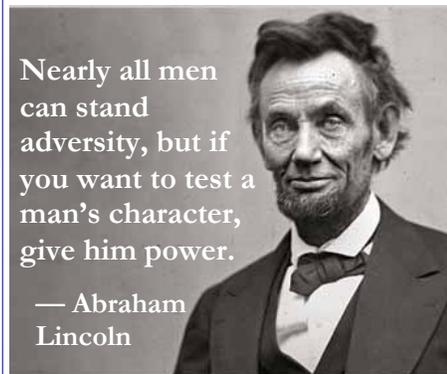
- County Attorney [SharePoint](#)
- County Attorney [Policy Manual](#)
- County Personnel [Regulations](#)
- County Attorney [Website](#)
- Payroll Reports & Benefits [Online](#)
- County Attorney [Directory](#)

**Coming Attractions**

**Election Law CLE**

**Speaker:** Doug Ray  
**When:** 2 p.m. on October 9th  
**Location:** Mike Driscoll Courtroom

**CLE Credit:** 1 hour



Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power.  
 — Abraham Lincoln

**Across County Lines**

- ▶ Dori Wind provided information to the purchasing agent in Collin County about the sale of 8 liners.
- ▶ David Brooks assisted the Collin County District Attorney concerning the adoption of an anti-fraud policy.
- ▶ Eileen Begle helped the Fort Bend County Attorney's Office with a Fair Labor Standards Act issue.
- ▶ Douglas Ray assisted an Assistant District Attorney from Dallas County with an issue involving the purchase of property through Community Block Development Grants.



**PID-Right of Way gets new director**

Shannon Watson has been named Director of the Right of Way Division of the Public Infrastructure Department. Shannon started as an intern almost 18 years ago at Harris County Flood Control District and later transferred to Architecture and Engineering. Shannon is a Professional Engineer and has worked as a liaison with Right of Way and our Office for the past three years. Our Office works closely with the Right of Way Department in the acquisition and sale of real estate on behalf of Harris County and its related governmental entities.



Shannon Watson

**Registration still open for Harris County 5K walk/run**



Harris County will host its first ever 5K walk/run on October 11 at Tom Bass Park, 3452 Fellows Rd, Houston, TX 77047. The event kicks off at 8 a.m.

The 5K will be chip-timed for the true competitors among us. Participants may walk or run this scenic course. This event is free for all employees covered by the Harris County Medical Plan, as well as new, full-time employees still within their benefits waiting period.

Friends and family of County employees are also welcome to participate for a \$7 registration fee. Registering for the event includes a timing chip, race bib, t-shirt and post-race food. [Click here for more information.](#)

**HCAO files suit against after-hours club**



Our Office took action against the owner and landlord of an after-hours night club that serves alcohol without a permit and harbors criminal activity that often spills over into fights in their parking lot.

The suit was filed against Ernesto Gonzalez Dominguez, owner of the Acapulco Night Club at 10632 FM 1960 West, and J PAL Properties, Inc., owner of the land where the club is located, as well as against the property itself. Aggravated assaults, sexual assaults, and drug activity are just a few examples of the habitual criminal activity taking place at the club. This [YouTube video](#) of an altercation just outside the club earlier this year illustrates the violence associated with Acapulco Night Club. In addition, the lawsuit alleges that Acapulco Night Club has violated Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission rules by selling alcohol after hours, without a permit, and to underage patrons. Channel 13 ran [this story](#) about the issue.

The lead attorney on the case is Julie Countiss. The petition filed by the County Attorney is available [here](#).

**Larry Payne highlights servant leadership values**

Houston-area leader and author Larry Payne delivered a presentation for our Office on September 11. The seminar covered values that drive servant leadership actions, behaviors, and decision making in our organizational life. Mr. Payne examined models of right thinking and right action that inspire others to follow and discussed the character and qualities of servant leadership that are essential in today's changing culture.

