



GUARDIAN GAZETTE

For the Guardians of Democracy

Happy New Year from Travis County Elections!

A DAY IN THE LIFE

of a Curbside Clerk



Serena Horn
Personnel Coordinator



THE IMPORTANCE OF CURBSIDE CLERKS

Back when I was a wee little girl, my elementary school was a polling site. I remember walking into the cafeteria and seeing booths with curtains that hung to waist level. There were adults waiting in line to go into these booths, pull the curtain, and I could tell by their back of their legs that they were doing something. David Copperfield was huge at the time so I thought they were magicians. I asked Mrs. Walker, my first-grade teacher, "Are they performing magic?"

Mrs. Walker answered, "Yes, they are performing magic. **It's called democracy.**"

Mrs. Walker went on to explain what voting is, why we vote, and why it's important to vote in every single election. My seven-year-old brain was blown away by democracy and I couldn't wait to participate.

Fast forward about thirty years. I was walking through a parking lot on Halloween and broke my ankle. I slipped on some gravel, stepped into a pothole, and that was it. I was just devastated. Not so much about the ankle (it's totally fine now) but at that time, I still haven't voted in the current election. I was putting it off until after the weekend to go early vote and now I was heading to the ER. The doctor informed me I was on bed rest until after the surgery and the surgery was scheduled for the end of the last day of Early Voting. The deadline to request a ballot by mail had passed, so I was worried about not being able to perform the magic of democracy in that election. If only there was another way I could vote?

This is exactly what I think about every time I ask one of you to be a Curbside Clerk. It is amazing that we now have a way for a voter that is unable to physically come into the polling location to participate in the magic of democracy.

Curbside voting is such a vital and necessary part of the voting process. It's for those voters that fall in that tender middle. They missed the deadline to request a ballot by mail but are unable to enter a polling location for various reasons. It could be something like me with my very well broken ankle or it could be like my neighbor that is immunocompromised due to her chemo treatments. In fact, my neighbor wanted me to send her thanks to the Curbside Clerks at Millennium Youth Complex because that was how she was able to vote in the November 2022 General Election.

We need our Curbside Clerks, so if you are willing and capable to step into this role, please volunteer next time we call to assign you a polling location. It is a huge help and a vital service to our community. If you know of anyone that is capable of being a Curbside Clerk and is thinking about working for Elections, encourage them to call us. We thank you in advance!

CURBSIDE CLERK DUTIES



Curbside Clerks process curbside voters by bringing the voting equipment outside to the voter's vehicle. This includes:

- Bringing the Resolution ePollbook to the voter's vehicle to check them in.
- Returning the ePollbook to the Resolution Table to print the voter's Ballot Card.
- Lifting the Ballot Marking Device (BMD) onto the Curbside Cart and transporting it outside to the voter's vehicle.
- Returning the BMD and voter's completed Ballot to inside the polling location to cast the Ballot and put away the equipment.

Curbside Clerks complete other necessary duties in the polling location, same as the other Clerks, when they are not processing a curbside voter.

See pages 71-72 of your Poll Worker Training Manual for the complete steps for processing a curbside voter.



Special Feature:

DANA HESS

TRAVIS COUNTY CLERK DEPUTY CHIEF

Dana Hess has served as the Travis County Clerk Deputy Chief since December of 2019. Prior to this position, she was the Civil and Probate Division Director, where she brought in new processes and led a very smooth-running operation. Always eager to learn more, Dana was honored when she was offered the position of County Clerk Deputy Chief by then-County Clerk, Dana DeBeauvoir. She accepted the position on the same day it was offered to her!

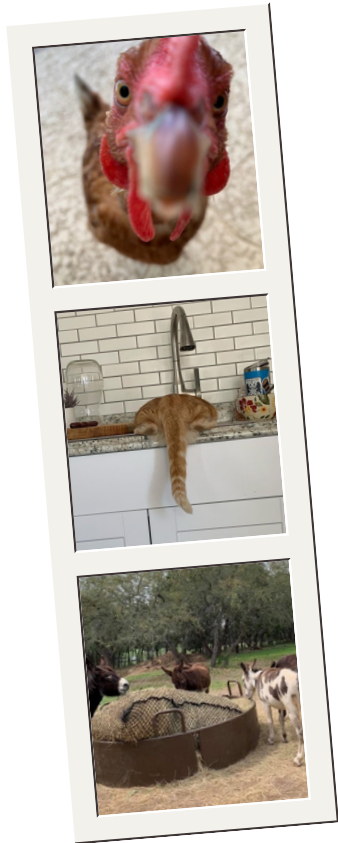
Aside from her years of service in the County Clerk’s Office, Dana has quite an impressive history. She is from the small Southeast Texas town of Silsbee but left when she was 18 to attend Texas A&M University. She began her career in public service as a high school biology and anatomy teacher and basketball coach. After 17 years, she decided to attend law school at Seattle University in Washington. She passed the Bar Exam in Washington and spent 10 years practicing law there, where her specialty was employment law. In 2009, Dana moved back to Texas to be close to family and began working for Travis County’s Human Resources Department. She also spent time as the Director of Employee Relations at Rice University and Assistant Director of Human Resources at Whole Foods.

When asked what her favorite part of working for the Travis County Clerk’s Office is, Dana quickly replied, “The people!”. She appreciates the dedicated staff of all County Clerk Divisions, who see the big picture, work together well, and contribute to a comfortable and cohesive workplace.

Dana has enjoyed learning about all the innerworkings of elections. Her most memorable election experience was the ballot by mail drop-off station at the Elections Office for the November 2020 Election. She says it was nice to see how appreciative the voters were, and how determined they were to cast their ballots, despite it being a pandemic. To all our Travis County poll workers, Dana says, **“Thank you, thank you, THANK YOU!** I know it’s challenging at times, but also rewarding. I hope you know that all of us here at the County Clerk’s Office are here to support you and make the job as rewarding as you would like for it to be. Again, thank you!”

When she does have free time, Dana enjoys spending time with all her animals on her farm. She has goats, donkeys, chickens, horses, cats, and dogs. She’s also picked up golfing as a hobby in the last year and a half and enjoys walking the course (no cart needed!). Dana’s favorite color is blue and she loves Mexican and Asian foods.

Our last question for Dana was whether or not she would ever consider working as a poll worker when she retires someday. Her answer? “Absolutely!”



MEET OUR NEW TRAVIS COUNTY CLERK: *Dyana Limon-Mercado*

Dyana Limon-Mercado is the newly elected Travis County Clerk. You can read a short biography of her online at www.countyclerk.traviscountytexas.gov.

In the February issue of the Guardian Gazette, we will have a special feature on Dyana and her swearing in ceremony.

Keep reading! There’s even more on the next page.

TRAVIS COUNTY ELECTIONS AT TAEA CONFERENCE



Chelsea Townsend
Personnel Coordinator

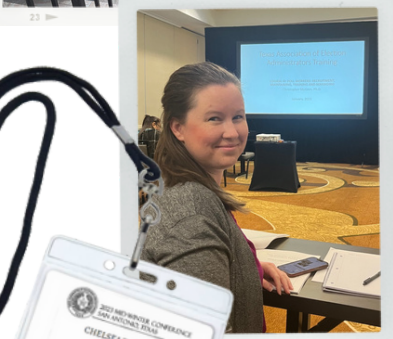
This year's Texas Association of Election Administrators (TAEA) Conference was in San Antonio. Our Elections Division got to enjoy amazing food, some new and some familiar sights, and fed our passion for Elections with intriguing classes. For a few of us, there were Registered Election Official certification classes and several staff graduated. Congrats to Michaela, Caitlin, MiShon, and Emma! Quite a few of us went through the renewal class and received certificates too!

The Conference speakers were a range of experts from the Texas Secretary of State, FBI, Elections officials from other Texas counties, Department of Homeland Security, The Elections Group, and the Texas Association of Elections Administrators. My personal favorite was the Keynote Speaker, Col. Nicole Malachowski. She told her story of being one of the first 10 women jet fighter pilots and going on to join the Thunderbirds Air Demonstration Squadron, only two of her many accomplishments. Her focus was on the importance of daring to have big ideas, big integrity, big ambitions for ourselves and our work.

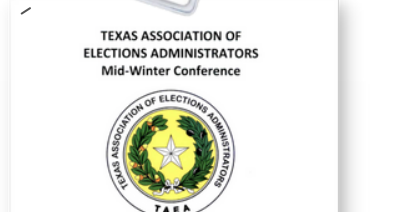
Col. Malachowski spoke on continuing to follow our "wingman's contract," those ethics and guidelines that keep the community's faith in us and our trust in each other. Knowing we can rely on one another to do their part, and maybe a bit more when any of us need help, because that's how we keep it working smoothly.

While some may not know what we do, and some even question our ability and motives to do so, we know we work hard to be the best public servants we can be. **We know the dedication and drive it takes to move forward with such a heavy responsibility carried so well, without fail, every election cycle.** We all owe a great deal to each other and to our community.

Thank you for joining and following our "wingman's contract," and doing your part to be mindful stewards of such a sacred practice of democracy. I look forward to continuing our amazing performance record with y'all again this year. Let's fly!



In class!

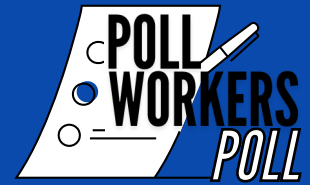


"IT'S TRUE!" with Drew



Drew Dillard
Sites Coordinator

- There's a misconception in Elections that odd-numbered years are slow and quiet. In 2023, in addition to the two scheduled elections, we will be tracking and adjusting to new State Legislation and preparing for the 2024 Presidential Primary Elections with Early Voting starting a mere 51 days into the year (Tuesday, February 20, 2024).
- The Sites and ADA Department welcome Cinnamon Babbitt as the new co-Sites Coordinator. Cinnamon started at Travis County Elections as a tech in late 2017 and has also worked in Sites, Ballot-by-Mail, and now back to Sites. We're very excited!
- FUN FACT:** In years when federal elections aren't held, not all states feel the need to have an election on the traditional first Tuesday after the first Monday in November. In 2015, Oklahoma, Rhode Island and Louisiana held elections later in the month.



Every month, we have a Poll Workers Poll where we want to hear from you!

Polling results will be shared in the following month's issue of the Guardian Gazette. This month, we want to know...

What do you love most about working elections?

Answer the poll online by going to this link in your web browser: www.tinyurl.com/Jan23Poll



When is the next scheduled election?

After working seven elections in 2022, you may be wondering when the next scheduled election will be in 2023. The good news is that you have plenty of time to get some rest and enjoy the new year before our next election! Currently our next scheduled election is:

May 2023 Local Election

Early Voting:
Monday, April 24 -
Tuesday, May 2, 2023

Election Day:
Saturday, May 6, 2023



ELECTIONS STAFF SPOTLIGHT



Staff Spotlights provided by:
MiShon Davis
 Administrative Coordinator



BRIDGETTE ESCOBEDO ★ *Elections Division Director*

A born and raised Austinite, Bridgette has served as the Travis County Elections Division Director since December 2019. Previously, Bridgette worked for Bastrop County for 13 years and served as the Elections Administrator there. After accomplishing all she had set out to do, she was ready to take a leap of faith and bring her talents and experiences to a larger audience. When she came to interview at Travis County Elections, she fell in love right away.

When reflecting on her experience so far at Travis County, Bridgette's greatest accomplishment has been holding many successful elections during the COVID Pandemic and legislative changes. Of course there were challenges, but she is proud to be a part of a team that is resilient and able to navigate any circumstances to continue putting on successful elections. Bridgette's favorite election memory was coordinating the ballot by mail drop-off station in the November 2020 Election. Inspired by H-E-B's curbside grocery set-up, Bridgette was able to pull together hundreds of employees, secure multiple locations, and work outside her normal election duties (and hours!) to create a voting experience that was safe and enjoyed by many voters – Willie Nelson being one of them. **Along with a very dedicated team of election staff, Bridgette was being able to ensure that each voter's voice was heard, despite the circumstances.**

Prior to working in elections, Bridgette worked in the call center at AT&T, where she got to be a part of the first roll out of the iPhone. Her favorite color is red and her favorite food is pizza. In her free time, Bridgette can be found kayaking, swimming, fishing, or enjoying any other kind of water-related activity. Bridgette is married and has four kids, two grandkids, an English Bulldog named Izzy, and two cats named Waylon and Luna.

To all the Travis County poll workers, Bridgette says she is thankful for them and their service to their community. She recognizes that they have persevered through the Pandemic and really stepped up to serve when they were needed most. Bridgette says that without a doubt, she would work as poll worker when she retires someday.



CHARLIE JOHNSON ★ *Assistant Director*

Charlie originates from Jacksonville, Florida, spent middle and high school in a small town in Kentucky, went to college in Florida, and moved to New York City after graduating. In 2012, he moved down to Austin and has been here ever since. Charlie worked for Starbucks for ten years, which allowed him to move throughout the country and led him to work at a location in downtown Austin when he moved to Texas. State and county employees frequented the location to grab coffee, piquing Charlie's interest in government work. In 2013, he was hired as a Court Clerk Assistant for the Travis County Clerk

Criminal Division. In August 2020, he was hired as the Ballot Technologies Manager for Travis County Elections. He faced several challenges, with his first election being a Presidential Election during a pandemic, but is grateful for the guidance and training he received from his peers and supervisors at the time. One of his favorite memories so far was attending a conference in South Padre toward the beginning of his election career and getting to learn a lot about elections and spend time with his coworkers.

Although he has only been working in elections professionally for a handful of years, **Election Day has always been Charlie's version of the Superbowl.** He enjoys watching every debate and Election Night coverage. He even has a tradition of going to Firehouse Subs (a restaurant native to Jacksonville) to pick up a tuna sandwich, BBQ chips, and a pickle to enjoy while watching the results come in. Of course, now serving as Elections Assistant Director, he is pretty busy on Election Night ensuring that materials are brought back securely and results are reported accurately.

Charlie's favorite color is green and his favorite food is Italian. In his free time, he enjoys taking his dog, Carlos, for walks and hikes (yes – *THE Carlos who is our Elections Mascot!*). When thinking about the thousands of poll workers who've served Travis County voters over the last year, Charlie said, "It takes a team to execute an election and every single person involved is just as responsible for it's success." When asked if he would work as a poll worker someday, Charlie said, "Of course!"



Q: What's the High-Definition camera's New Year's resolution?

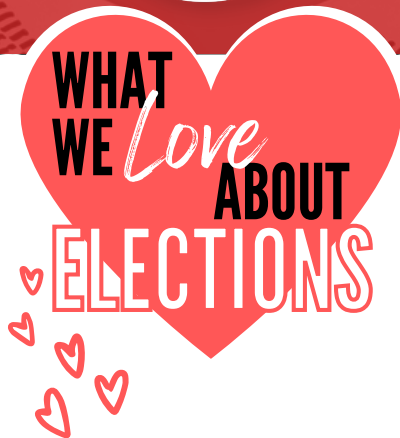
A: 1080p

That's all for now! Check your inbox on February 14th for the next issue of the Guardian Gazette. You're going to LOVE it!



GUARDIAN GAZETTE

For the Guardians of Democracy



We asked Travis County's guardians of democracy what they love most about working elections. Here's what they had to say!

"Getting to be a part of **my community's voices being heard.**"



Destini Williams
ADA Coordinator

"What I love most about working elections is seeing all of our poll workers at Supply Pick-Up and CRS on Election Night. It's like seeing family at a reunion - **you build bonds.**"

"I love **meeting and greeting voters.**"

"The **enthusiasm** that you see people have when casting their ballots."

"Honoring safe and fair elections — **being apart of what makes democracy work.**"

"The opportunity to **help voters professionally and cheerfully!**"

"**Meeting & greeting voters.** Seeing how many people are excited to vote!"

"I have two favorite things about working elections. One is that **I worked my first election with my daughter**, who was 16 at the time, and we've always worked together ever since. The second is that **keeping positive energy in the polling site** makes it so much happier for voters AND election workers. I love when almost all of the voters thank me for being there - it makes me realize what an important job we're doing as election workers."



Adam Alvarez
Personnel Manager

"I love working in elections, and with poll workers in particular, because they are made up of **people from our community who play such a vital role** in the democratic process, and they embrace it!"

"Well, it's a toss up between getting paid and **seeing all the neighborhood folks**. I also love writing the tally numbers on the yellow sheet. I really do!"

"I love **interaction with voters and co-workers** at the polls."

"**Meeting all the people.** Every day something new happens and we also learn something new about people. The subjects are limitless!"

"I have a **fun crew that I usually work with**, so every time we work in election together it's like catching up with old friends."



Shelton Charles
ePollbook Coordinator

"The thing I love most about elections is getting to play a role with so many other hard working people in an effort to **support such an important part of our democracy.**"

"**Meeting other poll workers and voters.** I love it when parents bring their young kids with them to teach them the importance of exercising their right to vote!"

"I love **when voters understand that we truly care** about the election and we are there to help anyway we can."

"Having the privilege of **being part of the democratic process** and working with and meeting such amazing people!"

"What I love most about working elections is **the civic duty and the people.**"



Jonathan Williams
Voting Equipment Coordinator

"What I love about working elections is striving to be able to deliver a **smooth, convenient, and stress free voting experience** to the public."

In this issue of the Guardian Gazette:

Page 1: Poll Workers Poll: What We Love About Elections

Page 2: Meet our Travis County Clerk, Dyana Limon-Mercado

Page 3: Ask Elections: Ballot by Mail, Polling Locations We Love, Logic and Accuracy Testing Invitation

Page 4: Elections Staff Spotlight, The Last Laugh with Juan

TRAVIS COUNTY CLERK, *Dyana Limon-Mercado* IN HER OWN WORDS



What inspired you to run to be Travis County Clerk?

"Since I was young, I have wanted to solve problems and help people. I've always had an interest in government and politics, and I worked as a Court Clerk for the Austin Municipal Court at the start of my career. The opportunity to serve as County Clerk seemed like a once-in-a-lifetime chance to bring my court, management, and elections experience together with my passion for process and community."

Prior to being elected as Travis County Clerk, what did you do?

"I was the Executive Director for Planned Parenthood Texas Votes, the advocacy and political arm of Planned Parenthood in Texas where I worked in public policy, elections, and managing teams for the past 12 years. I also served as the Travis County Democratic Party Chair from 2018 – 2020."

Where did you grow up?

"My family has lived here in Austin for 130 years. I went to Travis Heights Elementary, Porter and O. Henry middle schools, attended Travis High School part-time as a mariachi and graduated from Austin High School."

Where did you go to school and what did you study?

"I went to Texas State University, formerly Southwest Texas State University. I earned a BBA in Management and also have an associates from ACC in Business. I got my MBA from UT San Antonio in International Business, with a focus in Finance and Economics."

What is your favorite part of your current position so far?

"Meeting all the employees!"

What is your favorite election memory?

"This historic voter turnout and victory when Obama won in 2008, and of course, my most recent election victory and now getting to serve as the new County Clerk."

What is your favorite color?

"Green."

What is your favorite food?

"Seafood and anything fried, preferably with some sort of dipping sauce."

What is your favorite thing to do in your free time?

"I like to hang out with my family, especially with my husband and kids. We see a lot of live theater together at the ZACH Theater and The Paramount. I also love to watch movies, reality TV, and Hot Cheetos."

What message would you like to say to the poll workers?

"Thank you for giving your time and putting in the hours to ensure the integrity of our elections. I appreciate your service to our community! I am so inspired by how adaptive and responsive our election workers have been to challenges like SB1, COVID, changes in technology, and cultural shifts around voting." ♥



Dyana's Swearing In Ceremony



Keep reading!
There's even more on the next page.



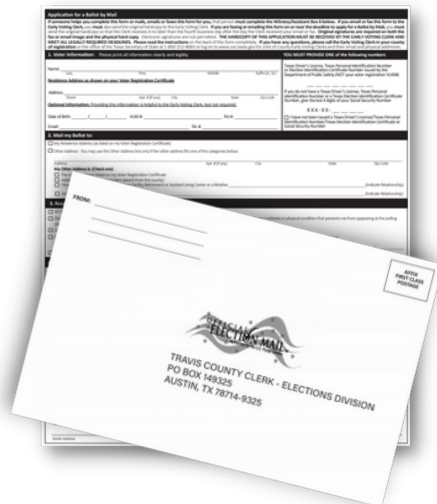
Do voters have to reapply for Ballot by Mail every year?



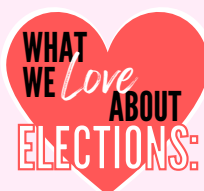
Jacqueline Augenbraun
Ballot by Mail Coordinator

Yes, eligible voters who wish to vote by mail must reapply every calendar year by submitting an Application for Ballot by Mail (ABBM). All ABBMs expire on December 31st of the year in which they are submitted. This is true for both Annual and Nonannual applications.

Annual applications are only available to voters 65 and older and voters with disabilities. If a voter is voting by mail on the grounds of confinement in jail, pregnancy or an expected absence from the county during the election period, they are eligible to submit a Nonannual application for one election and its resulting runoff.



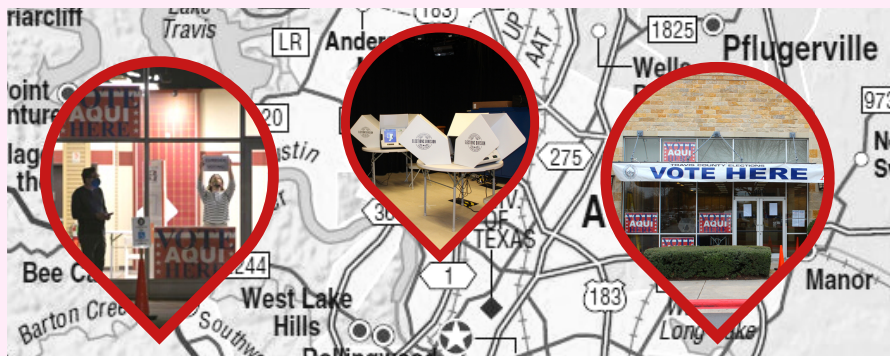
Learn more about ballot by mail by going online and visiting www.traviscountyelections.org and clicking on "Ballot by Mail."



Drew Dillard & **Cinnamon Babbitt**
Sites Coordinator & Sites Coordinator

ELECTIONS: OUR POLLING SITES

Any facility that opens their doors to the voting public is a hero in our eyes. That said, there are a handful of sites where the staff go so far beyond the call of duty, they deserve special recognition.



What a lot of people may not realize is that as soon as we announce the polling sites for a particular election, members of the voting public are under the impression that the polling site itself should be a source of voter information and the phones start ringing.

We'd like to single out Laura Holst, Administrative Assistant at Ben Hur Shrine Center. From the moment the first campaign sign goes up, Laura is fielding dozens of calls "are you open?" "how long is the line?" "did you find my glasses?" "how do I vote curbside?" "if I applied for a ballot-by-mail but want to vote in person..." Not surprisingly, Laura handles these calls with professionalism and aplomb, but we know this was not part of the job she signed up for. Hats off to Laura for being one of our many Election Heroes!

Public Logic & Accuracy Testing

Logic and Accuracy Testing (L&A) is a pre-election test of the election equipment to ensure that each part of the system functions properly. The test checks the function of the equipment, programming, and that the election database accurately reads results from individual pieces of equipment.

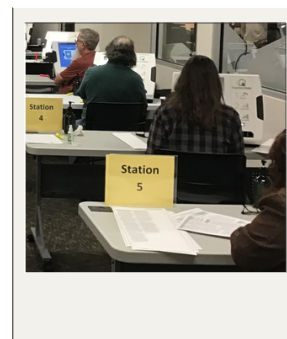
Did you know that this test is open to the public to observe? You are welcome to attend if you would like.



Thursday, March 2, 2023
9:00AM - 4:00PM



Elections Office
5501 Airport Blvd
Austin, TX 78751



Keep reading! There's even more on the next page.

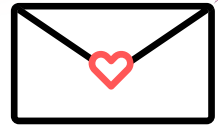
ELECTIONS STAFF SPOTLIGHT



Staff Spotlights provided by:
Michaella Glover
Training Coordinator



OUR NEW BALLOT BY MAIL COORDINATORS



BEVERLY BARRETT

Beverly (also known as "Bev") has worked for Travis County Elections since October 2022, first serving as a Voting Equipment Tech and now as a full-time Ballot by Mail Coordinator. She loved working as a Tech and learning about the voting process and the work it takes to put on an election. Prior to joining the Travis County Elections team, Bev worked at the Central Texas Foodbank, in kids meals overseeing logistics. She also has experience as a photographer with the Daily Texan Newspaper and camera work with Austin PBS. Bev is a born and raised Austinite who got a degree

from The University of Texas at Austin in photo journalism. Bev's favorite election memory so far has been meeting the other Techs in the November 2022 Election. She said that everyone was very helpful and knowledgeable! Now, she is enjoying learning all of the Ballot by Mail procedures and making great memories with her new team as they prepare for the May 2023 Local Election. Bev's favorite color is orange and her favorite food (as of today!) is pasta, specifically spaghetti. In her free time, she enjoys seeing movies with friends and spending time with her three kids and her dog, Sugar Cookie. To all of our election workers, Bev says, "I was so inspired by your dedication and amazing work. You inspire me!"



NEIL PLUMBLEY

Neil joined the Travis County Elections Team in Fall of 2022 as a Data Entry and Verification temporary staff member. Neil is happy to now serve as a full-time Ballot by Mail Coordinator! Before he began his Elections career, Neil worked for eight years as an Account and Project Manager for Premise Health, focusing on employee healthcare. Neil is originally from Marfa, Texas but moved to Austin when he was in elementary school. He lived in San Antonio while he attended The University of Texas at San Antonio to study math. His favorite election memory was, as a voter, the 2008

Presidential Election, and seeing voters' voices being heard to create change. In his new job as Ballot by Mail Coordinator, Neil is enjoying learning about the election process. His favorite color is chartreuse and his favorite food is puffy tacos, which he frequently enjoyed while living in San Antonio. In his free time, Neil enjoys playing board games and hanging out with his cat, Granger. Neil's message for our election workers is, "I am excited for another year working with you! If you see me, say hi!"



Elections Staff at Dyana Limon-Mercado's swearing in ceremony with former County Clerk, Rebecca Guerrero, and County Clerk Deputy Chief, Dana Hess.



Elections Staff sworn in as VDRs by Bruce Elfant, Travis County Tax Assessor-Collector and Voter Registrar



the last laugh WITH JUAN

Juan Gregg
Personnel Coordinator

Q: What did the French chef give his wife for Valentine's Day?

A: A hug and a quiche.

That's all for now! Check your inbox on March 15 for the next issue of the Guardian Gazette.



GUARDIAN GAZETTE

For the Guardians of Democracy

WE'RE *Lucky* TO HAVE SUCH AMAZING ELECTION WORKERS! 

A DAY IN THE LIFE:

Elections Personnel Dept.



Adam Alvarez
Personnel Manager



Juan Gregg
Personnel Coordinator



Serena Horn
Personnel Coordinator



Chelsea Townsend
Personnel Coordinator



Paul DeLaRosa
Call Center Coordinator

Have you ever wondered what a day is like in our different departments and teams within the Elections Division? This month, we'll get a peek into a day in the life of our Personnel Department and learn about what they are doing *now* to prepare for the May 6 Election.

Recruiting Election Day Poll Workers & Internal Temporary Staff

We are currently setting up outreach opportunities with local organizations and events, like the Central Library, Austin's Coffee House 10K, and Nerd Nite! We hope to find more passionate, dedicated Austinites this year by checking out what our wonderfully weird city has to offer at the same time. While Early Voting for May is mostly staffed already, Election Day is the next round of assignments. We especially need more Curbside Clerks, and this is a great year to train for the fast-paced year that will be 2024!

Placing Early Voting and Election Day Poll Workers

We are in the process of contacting our returning poll workers, and a few new faces, to staff the Early Voting and Election Day polling sites. Our goal is to have successful poll worker teams of our experienced returning staff along with some new dedicated workers that we can count on going forward into the next elections.

Preparing the Call Center

Currently, we are recruiting representatives to work in the Call Center for the May Election. We are also developing resource guides for our representatives to use on common calls such as Poll Worker Procedures, Ballot by Mail for domestic and overseas voters, or voter eligibility lookup. All representatives must attend Poll Worker training and Call Center training before answering calls.



Shelton Charles
ePollbook Coordinator




Did you know that when there is a change made to the voting system (new questions, forms, colors, etc.), the devices are put through a rigorous testing phase conducted by the Texas Secretary of State's office? This testing is conducted on all voting systems in Texas prior to their use by counties. You will see some small changes to workflows and procedures on the ePollbook in the upcoming election, which we'll mention next month in the Gazette and cover in detail in your training class.

With a bit over a month until early voting, the Travis County Elections ePollbook team has already begun preparing for the upcoming election. At this stage, we are preparing the contents of the orange and yellow kits that are deployed to each of the voting locations. This period of time, consisting of multiple tests and configuration changes, is used to ensure accuracy and consistency for the equipment being deployed. Over the coming weeks, our team will be coordinating closely with the other Elections Division departments, all working toward the goal of a successful election. We are looking forward to working with you and seeing you next month!

This month in the Guardian Gazette:

- **Page 1:** A Day in the Life: Elections Personnel Department, Shelton Says
- **Page 2:** Elections ADA Team: Celebrating 1 Year of Service
- **Page 3:** Election Staff Spotlights, It's True with Drew, The Last Laugh with Juan

Following the Travis County Clerk's Office on social media is a great way to see election news and updates.

-  **Travis County Clerk**
-  **@TravisCoClerk**
-  **@TravisCountyClerk**

ELECTIONS ADA TEAM

CELEBRATING 1 YEAR OF SERVICE!

Our Travis County Elections ADA Team began one year ago and since then they have worked tirelessly to ensure that our polling locations are as accessible as possible for all voters. We interviewed them to hear what their experience was like in this first year.

What was your favorite memory of working on the ADA Team this year?



Tim: "When we hit the 200 site surveys mark!"



Dan: "Working with the other ADA Coordinators!"



John: "One of my favorite memories was during a site survey, someone who worked at the church we were surveying helped us by doing stuff like holding our tape measure. It was really nice!"



Destini: "My favorite memory of working on the ADA team this year would have to be my first week joining the team and seeing how many things actually went into picking a polling place."

What was something unexpected that you learned or experienced this year?



Tim: "You can actually fix a lot of issues by propping a door open!"



Dan: "I was surprised by the amount of federal ADA guidelines and how exact they are. It has been a year and we are still learning about it! I also was surprised by the amount of hurdles in the way of voters with accessibility needs, which I didn't always see until beginning this work."



John: "I learned all the different ADA standards and measurements. Now I can look at any door or access aisle and know if it's compliant!"



Destini: "Something I didn't expect when I joined the ADA Team was how many places in Austin don't have flat parking and how many gaps and level changes on city sidewalks needed to be filled."



What was the most challenging part, and most rewarding part, of this year?



Tim: "The most challenging part was the heat of the summer when we were surveying sites. The most rewarding part is when the sites are all confirmed for an election. It is a lot of work, so we celebrate every step we can!"



Dan: "The most challenging part was surveying all the polling sites, especially because we were just learning along the way. The most rewarding part was learning what it takes for things to be accessible and how to go about doing that. It was also great to see the support from other election staff members as they helped us integrate into the team."



John: "The most challenging part was surveying sites when it was 100 degrees in the summer, and also when it was rainy or cold in the fall. The most rewarding part was being able to go to every site and complete all of the surveys."



Destini: "The most challenging part of the year was meeting our March 1st deadline to upload all the surveys of the sites we used during the 2022 calendar year to the Department of Justice. The most rewarding part about this year was seeing how many sites took our feedback and either repaved their whole parking lot, filled gaps or fixed any level changes, or made doors more accessible. Seeing that our job really does pay off, seeing how far Travis County would go to ensure that all voters get the same voting experience, and not putting a limit on our voters who are disabled was very rewarding."

THANK YOU to our Elections ADA Team for their hard work this year!

Keep reading!
There's even more on the next page.

ELECTIONS STAFF SPOTLIGHT



Spotlight provided by:
Michaela Glover
Training Coordinator



MI SHON DAVIS ★ ADA, Sites, & Training Manager

MiShon Davis is a born and raised Austinite who has been a part of the Travis County Elections Team for 18 years. She began her Elections career straight out of college as a temporary worker in the Call Center after hearing about the job from her mom, who worked part-time in the Elections Division when MiShon was a kid. MiShon joined the team full-time in the Personnel Department, then also spent time working in the Operations and Training Departments. In December 2021, she was promoted to Administrative Management Coordinator, and last month in February 2023, she transitioned to the role of ADA, Sites, & Training Manager. MiShon said that so far, her favorite part of her new position is managing the team. "There is never a dull moment!" she said.

MiShon began her college journey at Baylor University, then transferred to Concordia University Texas in Austin to study Business Administration with a concentration in Human Resources Management. MiShon is very excited to be graduating next month, on April 29, 2023! When she has free time from school and Elections work, MiShon enjoys spending time with her husband, Cory, and their four-year-old daughter, Alayna. She also enjoys spending time with friends, shopping, shooting pool, and watching home improvement shows. Her favorite color is purple and she loves any kind of seafood.

With 18 years of elections experience, she didn't even know where to begin when asked what her favorite election memory was. After thinking for a moment, she said, "I would have to say the 2008 Presidential Election was my favorite memory, due to the sheer number of voters that turned out and seeing the lines wrapped around the polling places even at 7pm. I loved seeing how motivated and excited people were about voting in that historical election!"

To all of the Travis County poll workers, MiShon says, "Thank you! I don't think that you realize how much of an impact you have on us (full-time Elections Staff) as well as the voters. You really are making a difference every time you agree to work an election and we couldn't do it without you."

"IT'S TRUE!" with Drew



Drew Dillard
Sites Coordinator

- ✔ Sites are now set for the May election with **24 Early Voting and 106 Election Day** polling locations.
- ✔ We are very happy to announce that for the first time in several years (thanks to the new equipment in 2019 and then the pandemic in 2020 and 2021), polling sites are starting to remain consistent from election to election. We have only **one brand new polling site** for May 6 and that's Riojas Elementary School in Pflugerville. It replaces the Avalon Pool and Amenity Center. We will be in the cafeteria and we're very excited to be there.
- ✔ Because it is a Saturday election, voters will also **find us at a few schools we've used before, but not for a while:** Bowie High School, Houston Elementary, St. Elmo Elementary, and McBee Elementary.



the last laugh WITH JUAN

Juan Gregg
Personnel Coordinator

Q: Why should you never iron a four leaf clover?

A: You'd be pressing your luck!

That's all for this month! Check your inbox on April 14 for the next issue of the Guardian Gazette.



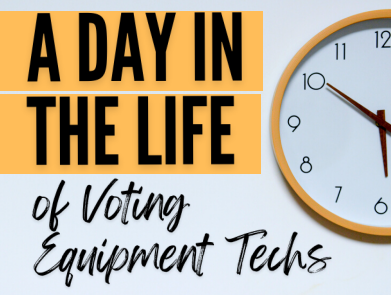
GUARDIAN GAZETTE

For the Guardians of Democracy



10 days until **Early Voting**

22 days until **Election Day**



Dan Grosser

Dan is the Voting Equipment & Operations Manager. He has worked for Travis County Elections since 2012 and actually started as a Voting Equipment Technician (VET)! In his free time, he enjoys flying drones and spending time with his 2 basset hounds.



Jonathan Williams

Jonathan began working for Travis County Elections as a Trainer in 2003, then worked as a VET, and currently is the Voting Equipment Coordinator. A fun fact about him is that he is not a fan of mayo.

ELECTION CORRECTION



Michaela Glover
Training Coordinator

Q: Is there a new version of the Poll Worker Training Manual?

A: Yes! It is very important that you use the new version of the Poll Worker Training Manual for this election. There have been several changes to procedures, which you'll hear about in your training class in the coming weeks. There have been other changes to the Poll Worker Training Manual as well, including additions about ADA, updated photos, and more.

If you are a Deputy or Alternate Deputy for Early Voting, or a Judge or Alternate Judge for Election Day, you can access the manual in one of three ways:

1. If attending an **in person training class**, you will receive your manual at class.
2. If attending an online webinar training, you may **pick up your manual at the Elections Office** (5501 Airport Blvd) during office hours.
3. Access the manual anytime online on the **Online Elections Training Center**.

There will be one Poll Worker Training Manual in every site's Forms Box that all Poll Workers can reference. Everyone can also access the manual online on the Elections Training Center as well.

We look forward to seeing you at Training class this month!

Have you ever wondered what a day is like in our different departments and teams within the Elections Division? This month, we'll get a peek into a day in the life of our Voting Equipment Technicians (VETs) as they prepare for Early Voting and Election Day.

Preparation and Configuration of Voting Equipment

Voting Equipment Techs (VETs) prepare the Ballot Marking Devices and Scanners for Early Voting (EV) by performing basic maintenance tasks, loading the current election, testing the equipment with paper ballots to make sure they print and read correctly, and then adding security seals. EV equipment is prepared first, and then the VETs transition to the preparation of voting equipment for Election Day (ED).

Delivery and Setup of Early Voting Polling Locations

Prior to the start of Early Voting, VETs in teams of two meet with the EV Deputies at each polling location by appointment to assist with setup of the location. Prior to the scheduled appointments, a separate group of VETs perform the delivery of Election Supply Carriers (ESCs), scanners, and ADA equipment to each EV polling location. It should be noted that VETs generally are not able to assist with setup of ED sites due to the large number of locations involved.

Technical Support and Resupply During Early Voting Period

During EV, VETs provide technical support and resupply of consumable items (blank ballot cards, forms, etc.) to all polling locations within their assigned routes. Routes are sized to enable VETs to visit each of their assigned polling locations several times during each shift, during which time they will observe for correct signage and electioneering activities, ensure that the locations are processing voters at an efficient rate, and provide technical support and supplies as needed. VETs are scheduled to support two shifts daily, with the AM shift running 5:30am to 1:00pm, and the PM shift running 12:30pm to approximately 8:00pm, depending on when polling locations close. PM shift VETs are tasked to remain in their routes until all their assigned polling locations have closed successfully for the day.

Early Voting to Election Day Conversion for Polling Locations

Upon completion of Early Voting, VETs will assist in converting EV sites to ED sites by replacing the scanners, replenishing supplies, reconfiguring the ePollbooks from EV to ED, and cleaning up the location as needed. Note that most, but not all, of the EV polling locations also serve as ED locations.

ELECTIONS STAFF SPOTLIGHT



Spotlights provided by:
MiShon Davis
Sites, ADA, and Training Manager



KATONYA WILLIAMS ★ *Operations Coordinator*

Katonya Williams recently celebrated twenty years of being a part of the Travis County Elections Team! She began working for the Elections Division on March 29th, 2003 and has worked in the Operations Department. Her favorite part of her current position is seeing everything come together. Katonya is in charge of loading the Election Supply Carriers (ESC) and preparing the supply kits, keys, and cell phones for all polling locations.

Prior to being a part of the Elections Team, she worked for Dell. Katonya is a born and raised Austinite who attended Lanier High and studied Business Administration at Austin Community College. Her favorite color is green and she loves Mexican food. In her free time, she loves to travel, shop, and spend time with her two grandkids and other family and friends.

Katonya's favorite election memory was in 2010, when Travis County was able to help Harris County when their warehouse burned down. "We worked to package and send them extra equipment so that they could conduct their election," Katonya recalled.

When thinking of all the Travis County poll workers, Katonya said, "We appreciate them for their service. Everything we do in Operations is to help them have an easier time setting up and managing their polling place equipment and supplies."



SARAH WOOD ★ *Administrative Coordinator*

Sarah Wood began working for Travis County Elections as a temporary staff member on Valentine's Day 2022, and has recently began working full-time for the Elections Division as the Administrative Coordinator. Prior to beginning this position, she worked in governmental affairs for the Chamber of Commerce. Sarah is from Harlingen/South Padre Island. She came to Austin after graduating from Texas A&M University in 2008 with a degree in hospitality. She lived in Austin until 2012, then recently moved back in 2022.

Sarah's favorite parts of her new position at Travis County Elections are the people she works with, the challenge of learning new things, and the satisfaction of knowing the job is important. Her favorite election memory was working Limited Ballot during G22 when she was 7 months

pregnant. Over 700 people were able to vote limited ballot in just one day and she loved seeing hundreds of college students get out and vote.

Sarah's favorite color is mint green and her favorite foods are sandwiches and ahi tuna. When she's not busy with elections, she enjoys spending time with her husband and three-month-old son, Townes, and tending to her garden of succulents. To all of the poll workers, Sarah said, "Thank you! We understand it can be long hours, and we really appreciate your dedication and service."



Spring 2023 Elections Training Team - ready to see you!

For Fun:

Thank you to our Ballot Technologies team for this fun puzzle! Search the Gazette to match the Election Staff Member with their fun fact.

	Dan G	Jonathan	Katonya	Sarah	Cinnamon	Beverly
Enjoys flying Drones						
No Mayo Please!						
20 years with Travis County						
Worked for the Chamber of Commerce						
Background in Graphic Design						
Designed new curbside voting sign						

ELECTIONS REDESIGN

Some of the signs and legally required postings that you are used to seeing at your polling sites will look a little bit different this election. To name a few: The 4 Nearest Sites Posting, Voter Entrance and Exit Signs, Electioneering Distance Marker, and the Curbside Voting Only sign have all had a makeover! Of course, like everything in Elections, this was a team effort, but we'd like to introduce you to two of the very talented staff members who helped streamline and brand these signs and postings:

Some of you might notice that there are some new signs being deployed to polling locations! I'm very excited to be a part of this project and put my background in Graphic Design to good use. Our end goal is to create **beautiful, branded signs that our staff and members of the public can easily recognize as messages delivered straight from Travis County Elections**. We've also laminated these signs to preserve them for many elections to come, to withstand the weather (and tape!), with the added bonus that we can cut costs & effort on printing signs before every election. We couldn't put on elections without our wonderful community of election staff. So, I hope these serve you well, and if they don't please reach out to your friendly-neighborhood-sites department!

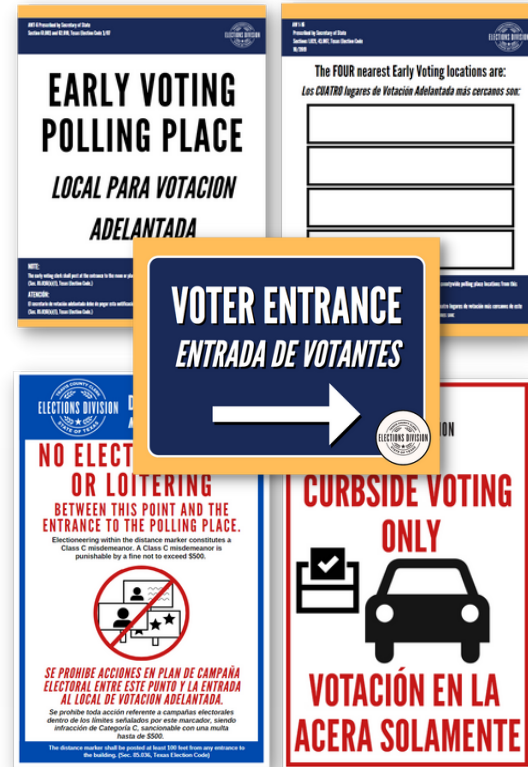


Cinnamon Babbitt
Sites Coordinator

Designing the Curbside Voting sign was a **fun process because I got to collaborate** with people in Ballot by Mail, Training, and Sites. I also loved that I got to remember my prior experience as a Voting Equipment Technician, working with polling locations supporting curbside.



Beverly Barrett
Ballot by Mail Coordinator



"IT'S TRUE!" with Drew

The Importance of the Site Set-Up and Maintenance Packet



Drew Dillard
Sites Coordinator

The ever-evolving Site Setup and Maintenance Packet will be handed out at Early Voting Site Setup and Election Day Supply Pickup. Amongst other things, the packet includes all the newly designed signs (see above!) and instructions on where to place them. It also includes the VERY important ADA Remediation Checklist and Numbers Sheet to ensure your site's ADA compliance.

You will notice that the new signage has been laminated. Our hope is to kill less trees and re-use these signs election after election. If you feel your site needs a sign that is not included in your packet, let us know. Please don't make and display homemade signs. We can usually get whatever sign you need within the day. At the end of the election, please remove the tape and return the signs to us for future use. We appreciate your helping us take care of the environment and look forward to your feedback.

FUN FACT: The first voting machine used in a US election was in 1892 in Lockport, NY. By 1930, voting machines were used in almost every major US city.



I have questions about payroll! Is there a guide where I can find all the answers?

Yes! See the file attached to this email, "Travis County Elections Payroll FAQ". It will cover pay schedules, how to read your pay statement, how to set up direct deposit if you are an Early Voting worker, and more! If you have any additional questions, contact our Personnel team.

erecruiting@traviscountytexas.gov

Keep reading!
There's even more on the next page.

TIPS from the Trainers



Caitlin Arzate
Training Coordinator



Michaella Glover
Training Coordinator

Addressing the "Address Not in Election" Flag

This election is not a county-wide election, which means that some Travis County voters will not have anything to vote on, depending on the address at which they are registered. If a voter comes to your polling place but does not reside in a jurisdiction holding an election, a red **ADDRESS NOT IN ELECTION** flag will appear on the Voter Eligibility screen.

If the voter has any questions or contests our records, direct them to the Resolution Table where the Deputy/Judge can call the Call Center to initiate further research.

For more information on this scenario, refer to page 55 in your Poll Worker Training Manual.



ePollbook Reminders

Shelton Charles
ePollbook Coordinator



REMEMBER, MIFI FIRST!

Remember to power up the MiFi *before* any other ePollbook equipment because it will help with connectivity.

If the MiFi is already on, then a freshly powered up ePollbook will find the network much easier.

PLUGGING IN THE EPOLLBOOK

Below, see photos of the side of the ePollbook that show where the power cord should be plugged in. A common problem is that poll workers accidentally put the cord into a small gap between the ePollbook and the case, rather than into the ePollbook charging port.

If someone accidentally does this and doesn't realize it, the battery of their ePollbook could die. It is important to keep the ePollbook plugged in so that it will have power for the entire day.



VS.



Q: If April showers bring May flowers, what do Mayflowers bring?

A: Pilgrims!

We look forward to seeing you at the polls soon! Check your inbox on May 15 for the next issue of the Guardian Gazette.



GUARDIAN GAZETTE

For the Guardians of Democracy

MAY IS NATIONAL Pet Month!

To celebrate - meet our elections pets! See the Division Directory on this page featuring some of the most adorable mascots of Travis County Elections.




Some Elections Staff members have chosen adoptable animals. The adoptable animals have the Austin Pets Alive! logo next to them.


Click on the pet photo to see their adoption listing. Please refer to Austin Pets Alive! for availability and eligibility of the pets for adoption. The most up-to-date information can be found on their website: <https://austinpetsalive.org/>

2023 FORMS BOX SURVEY


We are grateful for all the hard work and expertise you bring to your roles in the polling place. We would love some feedback from you on how you interact with your Forms Box so that we can continue to improve it for future elections. Please take a few moments to respond to our anonymous and optional survey to let us know what you think!

WWW.TINYURL.COM/FORMSBOX


 **Izzy**
Bridgette Escobedo's Dog

 **Cooper & Andy**
Sarah Wood's Dog and Cat


 **Carlos**
Charlie Johnson's Dog


 **Gus**
Dan Hayes' Dog

Sites, ADA, and Training


 **Polo, Gypsy, & Shana**
MiShon Davis' Dogs

 **Jules**
Drew Dillard's Cat

 **Monkey & Bear**
Cinnamon Babbitt's Dogs

 **Sid & Lenny**
Dan Racer's Pugs

 **Ghost, Charlotte, & Hamilton**
Destini Williams' Dog and Pigs


 **Romani**
John Bennett's Dog


 **Bella Tricks**
Caitlin Arzate's Dog


 **Buffalo Chicken**
Michaella Glover's Cat

Operations & Voting Equipment


 **Flower & Willow**
Dan Grosser's Basset Hounds


 **Do It For Johnny**
Chosen by Jonathan Williams


 **Kilo**
Chosen by Katonya Williams


 **Coco**
Jorge Escoto's Dog

Ballot Technologies


Clayton & Lena
Chris Baldenhofer's Dogs 

Dante
Jacqueline Augenbraun's Cat 

Granger
Neil Plumbley's Cat 


Ducky
Beverly Barrett's Bird 


Caicos & Hazel
Dan Roman's Dogs 

Rocky & Hunter
Emma Lever's Cats 


Matt Damon & Gamera
Shelton Charles' Turtles 

Personnel

Leo
Adam Alvarez's Dog 

Rocky
Juan Gregg's Dog 

Gizmo
Chelsea Townsend's Dog 

KitKat & Bucky
Serena Horn's Cats 

Goober
Chosen by Paul DeLaRosa 

ELECTIONS STAFF SPOTLIGHT



Spotlight provided by:
MiShon Davis
 Sites, ADA, and Training Manager

CAITLIN ARZATE ★ Training Coordinator

Caitlin started working for Travis County Elections in 2011 as a Receiving Substation (RSS) worker. Her knowledge of procedures and statistics led her to become a training and Call Center worker from 2012 – 2020. Caitlin took a break from the elections world and worked as a 911 call taker for the Travis County Sherriff's Office. Upon her return in 2021, she was hired for a full-time position as a Training Coordinator.

Caitlin was born in Abilene, TX and lived in various places throughout her childhood. She came to Austin, TX in 2008 to attend the University of Texas. She finished with a degree in Communication Studies in 2019. As a Training Coordinator, she has been able to put her degree to work as she provides much insight to the procedures for use of voting equipment, as well as providing input to State programs such as the Risk-Limiting Audit pilot program.

Risk Limiting Audit Pilot Program



Caitlin Arzate
 Training Coordinator

In 2021, the Texas Legislature passed SB598, which requires risk-limiting audits be conducted for all elections beginning in 2026. Travis County Elections previously conducted a pilot RLA in 2019 and is actively participating in the Secretary of State's Risk-Limiting Audit Pilot Program.

A risk-limiting audit is just one type of post-election audit. In Travis County, we use the ballot polling method where audit teams hand-tally a random sample of ballots from all ballots cast in the election. Then they compare the selections on those ballots to the reported overall results.

Why do we use random ballots?

The best way to understand why we audit random ballots is to use a metaphor from the leading RLA expert Philip B. Stark.

Think about the last time you cooked soup. The last step of the recipe says "salt to taste" so you add a little salt. Right away, we can make a couple observations that apply to audits:

- If you taste a spoonful without stirring, it's either too salty or not salty enough.
- After stirring, you don't need to eat the whole soup to know whether it's too salty.
- It doesn't matter how big the pot is, one spoonful is enough!

As you're reading this, we have all the ingredients for a successful RLA of the recent local election. We have:

- all the ballots cast in Travis County - our soup!
- secure and organized ballot storage;
- chain-of-custody tracking paperwork;
- a ballot manifest -a record of every ballot and where it's located.

Now that we've taken all the steps to prepare, the audit itself is incredibly straightforward:

1. We use a random number generator and the ballot manifest to select ballots randomly from all ballots cast - our spoonful!
2. The randomly selected ballots are located and retrieved.
3. Selections from the random ballots are hand-tallied.
4. The hand-tallied counts are compared to the overall results.
5. The audit stops when a statistically pre-determined number of votes are counted for the winner compared to the loser(s).

This type of post-election audit is statistically designed to verify reported results with the fewest number of manually counted ballots possible – way more efficient than a full recount! For the November 2022 RLA we only had to audit 74 ballots!

If you're still reading, BRAVO! and thank you! If you want to read more, a great place to start is Mark Lindeman and Philip B. Stark's [Gentle Introduction](#) and their longer paper about the ballot polling method linked at the top of the paragraph.

"IT'S TRUE!" with Drew



Drew Dillard
 Sites Coordinator

- ✓ After a rather slow start, turnout rallied on the last two days of Early Voting and Election Day. Once again, Ben Hur Shrine Center had the highest turnout with 6,052 voters during Early Voting, almost twice the turnout of the next nearest sites (Austin Oaks Church, Balcones Woods Shopping Center, and Randalls Flagship Westlake Hills). And yes, Ben Hur was #1 on Election Day as well...by a long shot.
- ✓ Let's salute ALL the sites for being there for the Travis County voters that needed them. In a non-county-wide election, with isolated entities and polling sites such as Hays CISD (Creedmoor Community Center), Village of Webberville (Dailey Middle School), and City of Elgin (ACC Elgin Campus), poll workers sit there for the same 12 hours to serve the voters of their smaller communities. Hats off.

A DAY IN THE LIFE of the Call Center



Paul DeLaRosa
Call Center Coordinator

Have you ever wondered what a day is like in our different departments and teams within the Elections Division? This month, we'll get a peek into a day in the life of our Elections Call Center.



The Call Center is full of Election Heroes!

Training for Call Center Representatives

Elections Call Center. How may I help you?

Election season is a very busy time for everyone in the Call Center. Each call is unique, yet we can predict and train for the types of questions the caller will have. Some calls are not for the Elections Division at all and are transferred to the appropriate department. For Election calls, we begin training 3 weeks before Early Voting begins on the newest Election Laws passed by the State Legislature and voting procedures. We review jurisdiction boundary lines to determine if a voter qualifies for a Limited Ballot. We verify voter's registration status, find their nearest polling location, and help them preview their sample ballot.

Calls from Poll Workers

As poll workers, you know about most of our conversations. If you can't find a voter, call the Call Center and we will connect you with Voter Registration. If your report isn't printing, call the Call Center and we will connect you with the ePollbook team. If you need more "I Voted" stickers or Statements of Residence or if your Ballot Marking Device is stuck on its bootup screen, call the Call Center and we will dispatch your Voting Equipment Technician. Call us when you are open for voting at the beginning of the day and when your last voter has finished voting at the end of the night.

Calls from Ballot by Mail Voters

Vote by Mail voters reach out to our office to request an Application for Ballot by Mail (ABBM) be mailed to them, to verify that their ABBM was received, to confirm that we mailed their ballot, or if we received their voted ballot. Other times, we call the voter if they forget to sign or include their ID numbers on their Carrier Envelope or if they left their driver's license at the polling location.

Fun Fact:

The Call Center Staff plan themed dress-up days during Early Voting.



"Red and Black" day



"Twin" day



"Denim and Diamonds" day

TEAMWORK MAKES THE DREAM WORK!

Election

It is important to us at the Elections Division to be cross-trained and help with the different parts of the election process. Read below about a few Elections Staff members who stepped out of their comfort zone this election and learned something new by helping other departments.

MAKING POLLING PLACE SIGNS



MiShon Davis
ADA, Sites, & Training Manager

"Even though I'm a manager, **I like to do the work with my team.** I am not exempt from anything they are tasked to do."



TEACHING TRAINING CLASSES



Dan Racer
ADA Coordinator

"Working with the training team this election has been great. Being involved has been a **great opportunity for me to further my knowledge** of elections procedures and work with a great group of election workers."



PACKAGING MAIL BALLOTS



Tim Moore
ADA Coordinator

"Our job is to successfully host an election. That doesn't stop at our immediate title that was given. **We pull together to make sure everyone crosses the finish line!**"

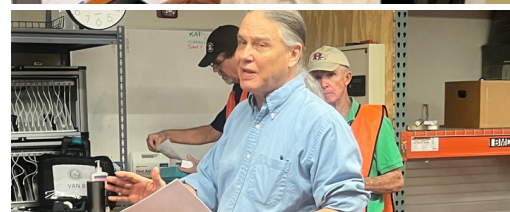


DISPATCHING VOTING EQUIPMENT TECHNICIANS



Drew Dillard
Sites Coordinator

"**By nature and necessity,** all the departments at Travis County Elections collaborate with each other to pull off a successful election. Cinnamon Babbitt and I particularly enjoy our partnership with the Voting Equipment Techs who have consistent interaction with the polling sites."



Guess the Elections Anagram!

We've taken several election terms and switched around the letters to make anagrams. Can you match the terms with their anagram?

Anagrams

- bloke loop
- act bollard
- cooler theine
- airman limes
- anti ring
- lens prone
- trickiest dove
- blues toleration

Word Bank

- Election Hero
- Similar Name
- Ballot Card
- ePollbook
- Personnel
- Training
- Resolution Table
- I Voted Sticker

Answers: 1D, 2C, 3A, 4B, 5F, 6E, 7H, 8G



Q: What are the hottest days of summer?
A: Sundays!

That's all for now!
Check your inbox on **June 15** for the special 1 Year Anniversary Issue of the Guardian Gazette.



GUARDIAN GAZETTE

For the Guardians of Democracy

Celebrating **1 YEAR** of the Guardian Gazette!

What else do you want to see in the Guardian Gazette?

We want your feedback!

GUARDIAN GAZETTE SURVEY

We've already been sending out the Guardian Gazette to Guardians of Democracy like you for one year! Our vision has always been to use the Gazette to share information with you that is valuable, helpful, and interesting. We want to know what YOU would like to see in the next year (and beyond!) in the Gazette. Please take a moment to respond to our short, optional, anonymous survey to share your feedback and ideas for the Guardian Gazette.

Visit www.tinyurl.com/GGSurvey23 to complete this optional, anonymous survey. Thank you!

In this issue of the Guardian Gazette:
Page 1: Guardian Gazette Survey, Ask Elections
Page 2: Recruiting for Upcoming Elections, It's True With Drew Crossword
Page 3: Risk Limiting Audit Recap
Page 4: Elections Staff Spotlight, The Last Laugh With Juan



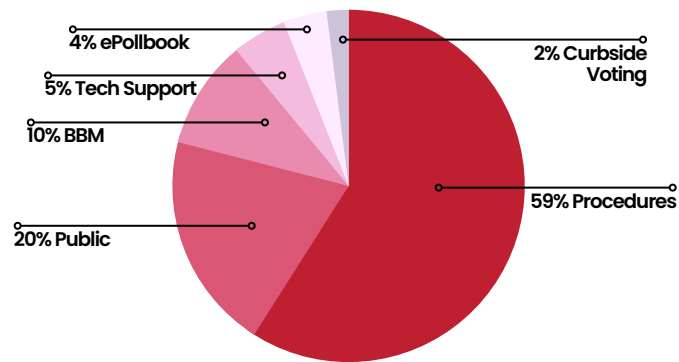
How many calls did the Call Center answer in the last election?



Paul DeLaRosa
Call Center Coordinator

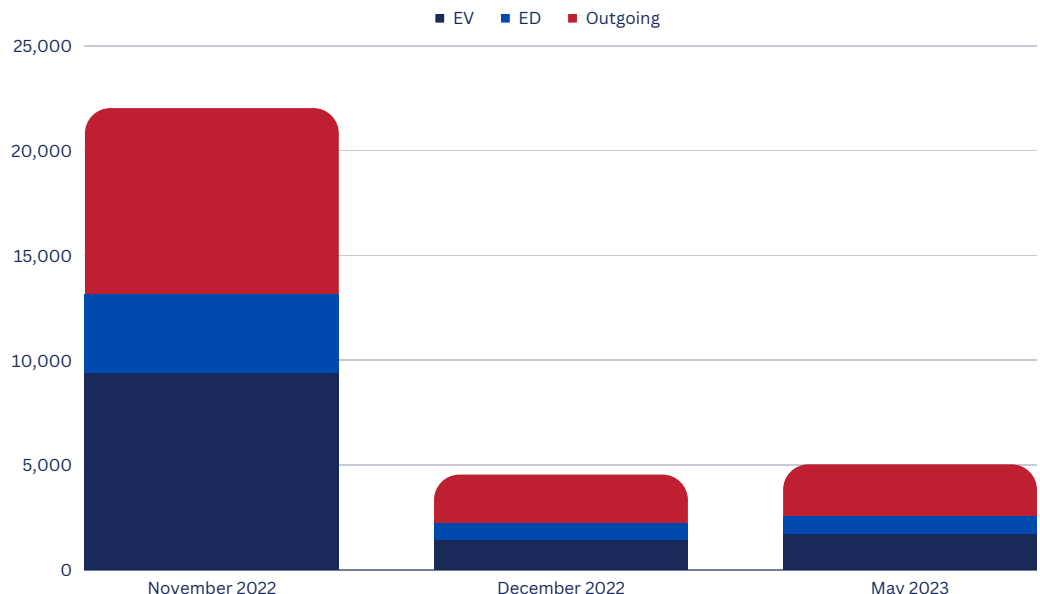
With 13 Call Center Representatives in the May 6, 2023 Election, we were able to answer a total of 2,582 calls! See the "Queue Management" pie chart to the right to see which topics we most often received calls about.

Queue Management



Our Call Center was much busier in the November 2022 Election. See our statistics from the last few elections below:

Calls Per Election





Looking For Election Heroes!



Adam Alvarez
Personnel Manager



Juan Gregg
Personnel Coordinator



Serena Horn
Personnel Coordinator



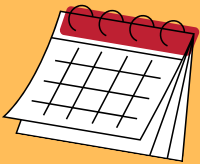
Chelsea Townsend
Personnel Coordinator

Know of anyone who should join the Election Hero team? Send us their contact info and what you think makes them a great candidate! We're on the lookout for new Guardians of Democracy and would love to hear who you think is ready to join.

✉ Email Personnel at: ERecruiting@traviscountytx.gov

Reminders of starting qualifications for an Election Hero:

- Registered voter in Travis County
- 18 years old & up
- Student Clerks: 16 years old & up
- Able to attend in-person, hands-on training
- Early Voting interest: Pass a criminal background check & be available for 1 half day shift during entire Early Voting period (between 7 – 12 days depending on the election)
- Election Day interest: Available for full day
- A fantastic aptitude for customer service & enthusiasm for civic engagement!



Mark your calendar for the next election!

Early Voting

Monday, October 23, 2023 -
Friday, November 3, 2023

Election Day

Tuesday, November 7, 2023

"IT'S TRUE!" with Drew



Drew Dillard
Sites Coordinator

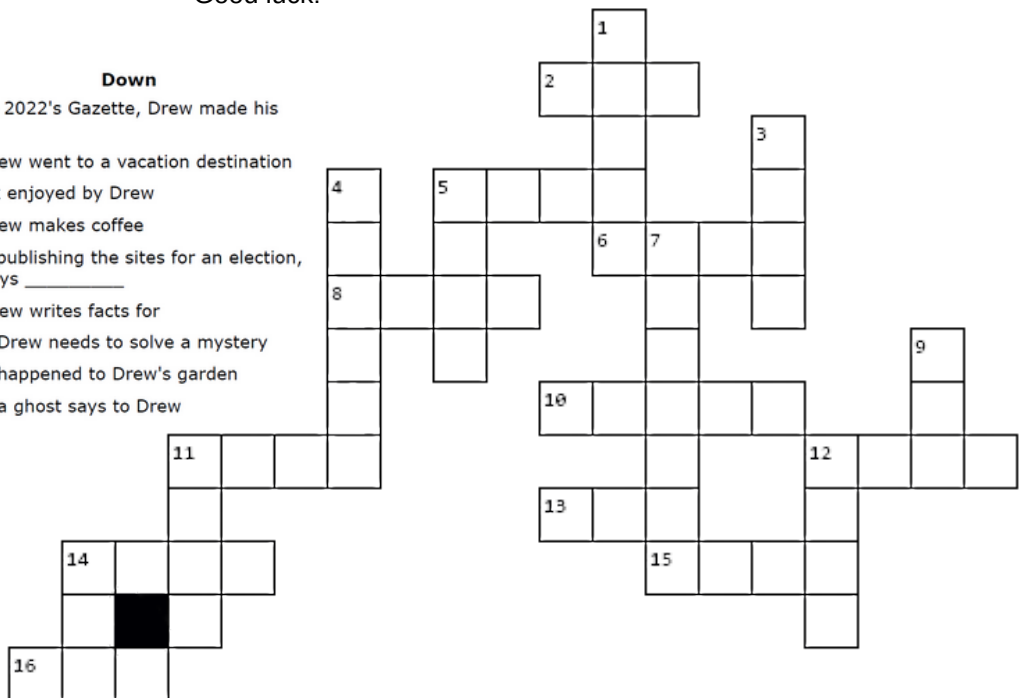
In honor of 1 year of facts from Drew, we have a special crossword puzzle just for you! Every word rhymes with "Drew". Good luck!

Across

- In 2010, Drew was _____ to Elections
- A type of cheese that Drew enjoys
- When Drew is sharing a fact, it is...
- Drew's dinner on a cold day
- How Drew would say goodbye in French
- What Drew does with a pack of gum
- How Drew gets 2 papers to stick together
- What Drew's cat says
- The color of Drew's shirt in his headshot
- Something Drew wears two of everyday
- Where Drew goes to see animals

Down

- In June 2022's Gazette, Drew made his _____
- How Drew went to a vacation destination
- A snack enjoyed by Drew
- How Drew makes coffee
- Before publishing the sites for an election, Drew always _____
- Who Drew writes facts for
- What Drew needs to solve a mystery
- What happened to Drew's garden
- What a ghost says to Drew



Answers are on page 4.



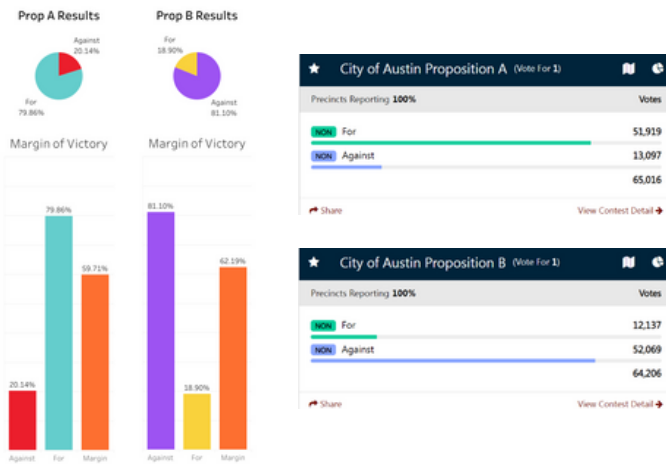
Risk Limiting Audit Recap

Caitlin Arzate
Training Coordinator

Last month we introduced you to risk-limiting audits and were deep into preparing for a pilot audit for the recent May local election. So how did our risk-limiting audit go?

It was a success! We had 10 people audit 69 unique ballots over 2 separate rounds. The pilot took just 4 total hours to complete. For this pilot, we selected City of Austin's Propositions A & B as the contests to be audited.

Here's how auditing those ballots one at a time either adds to or takes away from our overall confidence:



Note how the teal and purple ballots move us closer to our risk-limit. While red and yellow move us further away.

Our goal was to really test our readiness, so we set a strict risk-limit of 1%. This meant we stood a pretty good chance of not completing the audit in a single round. That's because the stricter the risk-limit, the more evidence (aka votes for the winner) we'll need to see to meet the limit's confidence-level.

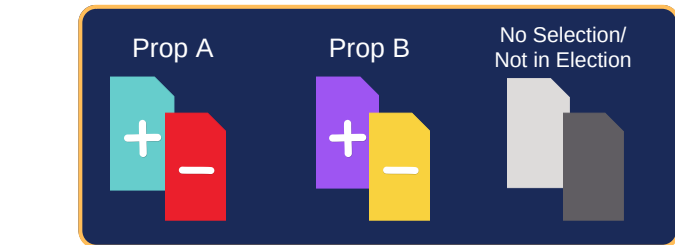
As you can see, we didn't meet the 1% risk-limit for either contest by the last ballot in Round 1. During Round 2 we audited 48 more unique ballots. Here's how Round 2 went:

But what does that actually mean?

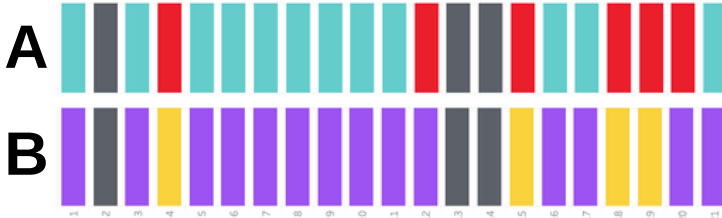
Generally speaking, auditing a ballot with a vote for the winner adds confidence that our overall reported result is correct, and auditing a ballot with a vote for any loser detracts from our confidence in our reported results.



Success! We met the 1% risk-limit after just 25 total ballots for Prop B and 64 total ballots for Prop A.



Check out the votes for the 21 ballots audited in Round 1:



With this pilot audit, we strengthened our existing procedures and developed some new ones. We know that we're ready for the statewide audits coming in 2026!

ELECTIONS STAFF SPOTLIGHT



Spotlights provided by:
MiShon Davis
Sites, ADA, and Training Manager



MICHAELLA GLOVER ★ Training Coordinator

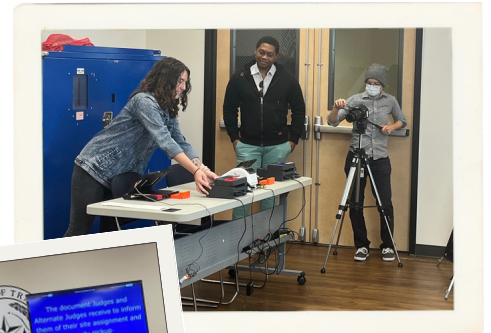
Michaella Glover was born in Norfolk, Nebraska. She lived in Ohio for 10 years and then moved to Texas during her senior year of high school. She attended Texas State University and majored in Organizational, Workforce, and Leadership Studies, with a concentration in Teaching. Her early career started by working for the Texas House of Representatives Sergeant-at-Arms Office doing administrative tasks during the 2021 Legislative Session.

Her election work began as a poll worker in 2020 in Hays County. She became a Travis County Ballot by Mail Coordinator in August 2021 and then transitioned to the Training Team in December 2021. She has been instrumental in the newly designed manuals, the Guardian Gazette, and the training videos that you may have seen.

Michaella is married to Lance Glover and they have 3 cats and 2 dogs named Mr. Kitty, Poptart, Buffalo Chicken, Jellybean, and Waffles. In her spare time, she enjoys gardening, Zumba, and recently took up knitting. Her favorite food is grilled cheese, her favorite color is pink, and her favorite music artist is Taylor Swift.

Michaella brings such love, light, and laughter to all who meet her. Her fun-loving and bubbly personality has led her to fulfill a lifelong dream of becoming a teacher. Michaella will leave Travis County Elections in July of 2023 to become a 3rd grade teacher for Round Rock ISD.

What Michaella will miss most about working at Travis County Elections are the poll workers and the Elections staff, and the passion for the democratic process that they all share. When asked about her memories and time here at Travis County Elections she said, "To go from being a poll worker in 2020 and 2021 to getting to train the poll workers and see the other side of elections has truly been the greatest honor. I love to serve the voters in this way. I have seen how hard the Elections team works, but also love how much fun we have doing what we do. Teamwork makes the dream work!"



It's True With Drew Crossword Answers:

Across:

- 2. new
- 5. bleu
- 6. true
- 8. stew
- 10. adieu
- 11. chew
- 12. glue
- 13. mew
- 14. blue
- 15. shoe
- 16. zoo

Down:

- 1. debut
- 3. flew
- 4. cashew
- 5. brew
- 7. reviews
- 9. you
- 11. clue
- 12. grew
- 14. boo



the last laugh
WITH JUAN
Juan Gregg
Personnel Coordinator

Q: What is the most famous animal in the sea?

A: Star Fish!

That's all for now!
Check your inbox on
July 14 for the next
issue of the Guardian
Gazette.



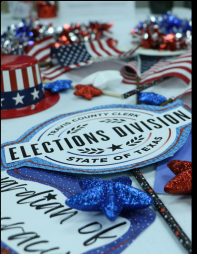
GUARDIAN GAZETTE

For the Guardians of Democracy

June 28, 2023

ELECTION HERO

Appreciation Open House



Thank you to all of the poll workers who attended our Election Hero Appreciation Event on Wednesday, June 28, 2023 at the Elections Office. Our Election Heroes in attendance enjoyed cupcakes (and cookies from Kay H. - thank you!), meeting and taking photos with Travis County Clerk, Dyana Limon-Mercado, and received their new 2023 Election Hero pins.

Thank you to all who attended! The entire Elections Division Staff enjoyed welcoming you into our office and celebrating your hard work and dedication for our Travis County Voters. If you weren't in attendance, don't worry - you'll get your Election Hero pin when you work the November 2023 Election.

Video Recap

See a video recap of the event on our Instagram page (@traviscountyclerk).

Mark Your Calendar!

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What are some other ways to be involved in the community?



Serena Horn
Personnel Coordinator

I know how much our poll workers love to serve the community. We at Travis County Elections appreciate your service. But what to do when there isn't an election? Early Voting doesn't start until Monday, October 23rd and Election Day isn't until Tuesday, November 7th. So how can you serve your community until then? If you are looking for more ways to serve this summer, these organizations could use your help. Click on the links below to learn more!

- **Caritas of Austin**- Help them end homelessness in Austin.
- **Central Texas Food Bank**- Help end food insecurity in Central Texas.
- **Meals on Wheels**- Help Deliver meals and perform much-needed safety checks on homebound seniors.
- **Central Texas SPCA**- Be a part of a dedicated team helping homeless dogs and cats in our community.
- **Keep Austin Beautiful**- The name says it all, help keep Austin beautiful.
- **Ronald McDonald House of Central Texas**- Help make a difference to our children and families during their time of need.

Thank you again!

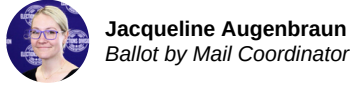
Serena speaking with poll workers at the Election Hero Appreciation event.



In this issue of the Guardian Gazette:

- Page 1: Election Hero Open House review, Ask Elections
- Page 2: Early Voting Ballot Board & Signature Verification Committee, Clearinghouse Awards
- Page 3: Elections Staff Spotlight: Drew Dillard, It's True With Drew, Poll Workers Poll, The Last Laugh With Juan

EARLY VOTING BALLOT BOARD & SIGNATURE VERIFICATION COMMITTEE



Jacqueline Augenbraun
Ballot by Mail Coordinator

To meet the volume of ballots and the required deadlines, the Early Voting Ballot Board (EVBB) and Signature Verification Committee (SVC) each play an integral role in qualifying and processing voted mail ballots. Members serving on EVBB are different from those on SVC to incorporate multiple layers of review, promoting transparency and integrity of the process. This is conducted under 24/7 live stream video per the election code. Our office, the Early Voting Clerk (EVC), supports both groups in ensuring all eligible absentee votes in the county are counted.

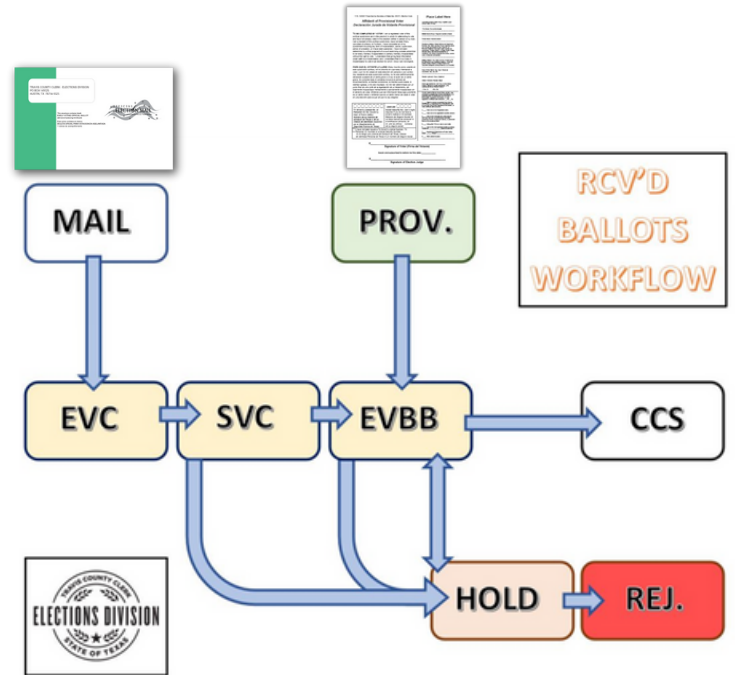
Signature Verification Committee (SVC)

The Early Voting Clerk receives, and preps voted ballots for SVC who conducts the first round of verification. SVC is comprised of at least five members where a Committee Chair is the administrative authority. Bipartisan teams of two will verify voters' signatures and identification numbers. They do this by comparing carrier envelopes to their corresponding Voter Registration records. SVC does not open carrier envelopes but will process ballots either as pre-accepted or to be placed on hold. Ballots in hold status will be worked by the Early Voting Clerk support staff to initiate cure process if applicable.

Early Voting Ballot Board (EVBB)

Accepted ballots are then transferred to EVBB. EVBB consists of a presiding judge and at least two other members of each major party. They qualify ballots voted by mail as well as provisional ballots. EVBB will open and separate accepted ballot and carrier envelopes and prepare them for delivery to Central Count Station (CCS) for final tabulation. EVBB also checks for supplemental paperwork such as Statement of Residence forms.

If you're interested in being a part of either SVC or EVBB please email eRecruiting@traviscountytexas.gov to find out more!



Victoria Hinojosa
County Clerk Executive Assistant

In 2022, the Travis County Clerk's office held its first "I Voted" sticker design contest. Students attending college in Travis County were eligible to submit "I Voted" sticker designs relating to Texas, Travis County, or voting. A panel of judges selected the winning design, which was printed and used during the November 2022 election period. The U.S. Election Assistance Commission awarded Travis County with an **honorable mention** in the Creative and Original "I Voted" Sticker Design category for their 2022 Clearie Awards.



ELECTIONS STAFF SPOTLIGHT



Spotlights provided by:
MiShon Davis
Sites, ADA, and Training Manager



DREW DILLARD ★ Sites Coordinator

Drew Dillard has worked for Travis County Elections for 13 years. He began as an Early Voting Deputy, then became an internal temporary worker as a Voting Equipment Technician (VET) and VET Administrative Lead, then joined the team full-time as Sites Coordinator. He also served as Entities Coordinator and Public Engagement Coordinator when Travis County adopted its current voting system in 2019. Prior to working at Travis County, Drew had an exciting career in the film industry from 1976-2006, as a Location Manager and Production Manager. He grew up in Abilene, Texas and studied liberal arts at the University of Texas, and then got a graduate degree in Film Production at New York University. Drew's favorite part of his current position is the opportunity to provide quality polling sites to the public and coordinating with the polling site contacts.

When asked what his favorite memory has been of his career at Travis County Elections, Drew replied, "Everyone pulling together and creatively innovating for the 2020 Presidential Election during the pandemic." Drew's favorite color is skobeloff, his favorite food is Tuscan cuisine, and he enjoys hiking in his free time. To all of the Travis County Election Heroes, Drew says, "Thank you! You are all amazing."

"IT'S TRUE!"



The Birth of Early Voting in Texas

- ✔ Prior to 1987, the only reason a Texas voter would be permitted to vote early would be to appear at the County Election Office with a valid excuse as to why they would not be in their home county on Election Day. Then, in 1987, the Texas Legislature passed the Extended Voting Law, giving all Texas voters the option to cast a "no-excuse absentee ballot." What is now known as Early Voting was born.
- ✔ The first major Election to feature this new "early voting option" was the 1988 Primary where Texas voters had 17 days (February 21 – March 9) to vote early. At that time, Early Voting could only take place at the County's Election Office.
- ✔ In 1991, the law was amended to allow Counties to establish "Temporary Branch Locations" so that voting could take places such as grocery stores and other places convenient to voters.



We want to hear from YOU! This month, our Poll Workers Poll question is...

Where are you going on vacation this summer?

Respond to the poll online at: www.tinyurl.com/July23Poll

Responses to the poll are anonymous. We will share the responses in the August 2023 issue of the Gazette.



the last laugh
WITH JUAN
Juan Gregg
Personnel Coordinator

Q: Where do dolphins go on vacation?

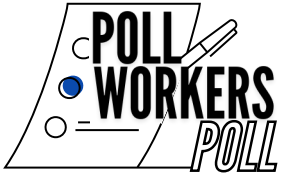
A: Fin-land!

That's all for now!
Check your inbox on
August 15 for the next
issue of the Guardian
Gazette.

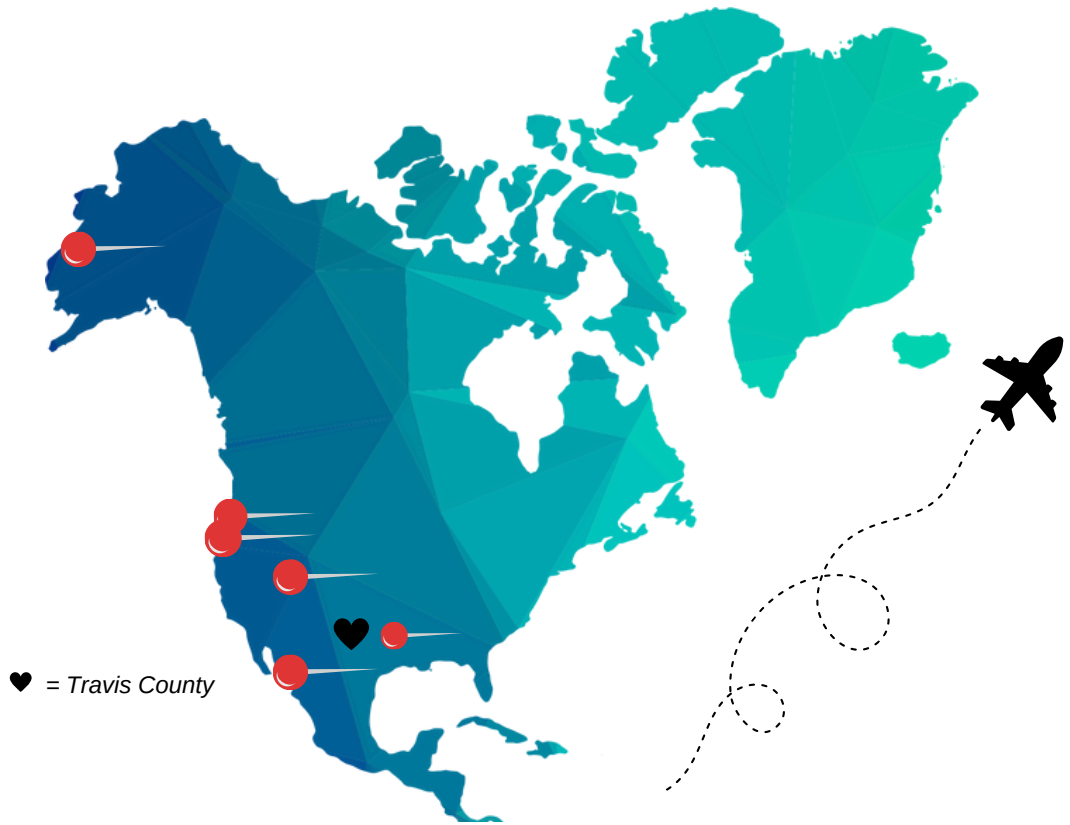
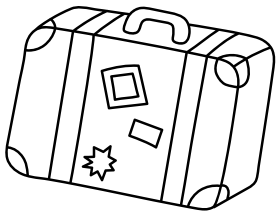


GUARDIAN GAZETTE

For the Guardians of Democracy



Last month we asked where you, our Election Heroes, were going on vacation this summer. Check out this map to see the many places you're traveling around the United States!



SOS ELECTION LAW SEMINAR

The Secretary of State Election Law Seminar was held on July 31st - August 2nd at the Austin Renaissance Hotel. Featured speakers included the SOS elections director Christina Adkins (pictured).

We had an awesome time learning about the law changes and best practices concerning polling place set up, Ballot by Mail, and keeping up with ADA in the polling place.

The State Election Law Seminar gave us a chance to meet other election officials from all over the state. We did a lot of networking, especially with smaller counties.

It truly was a wonderful experience and we look forward to attending the seminar next year!



Keep reading!
There's even more on the next page.



What are the new election-related legislative changes going into effect?



Jonathan William
Operations Coordinator

SB 477

Makes changes to better accommodate votes with disabilities (voting priority and curbside specific parking).

(Section 63.0015) Priority processing: An election officer shall accept a person with a mobility problem that substantially impairs a person's ability to ambulate who is offering to vote before accepting others offering to vote at the polling place who arrived before the person. (This also includes a people assisting that voter)

The Notice of Voting Order Priority shall be posted in the kiosk, where people in line can see it.

(Section 64.009) Accommodations for voters with disabilities will be posted on the County Clerk's website.

Two parking spots for voters not entering the voting site (curbside) now required. These cannot be ADA designated spots.

SB 1089

Unopposed candidates will appear on the ballot. The result will be a longer ballot in certain elections.

SB 1599

Allows Ballot By Mail voters to correct certain defects in their BBM application via mail, in addition to correcting the defect in person or by using the SOS on-line ballot by mail tracker.

HB 357

SOS now sets the date for May and November runoff elections.

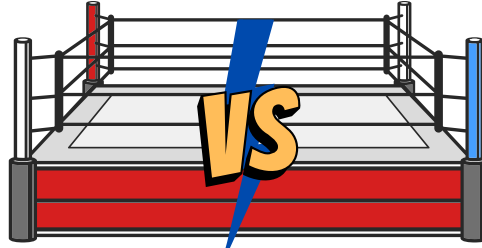
HB 1243

Penalty for illegal voting reverted from a class A misdemeanor to a felony penalty.

HB 1631

Poll Watchers can come and go on ED and do not need to be there for a minimum of 5hrs anymore.

CURBSIDE VOTING



ADA PARKING

KNOWLEDGE KNOCKOUT

Become an expert at voter accessibility

Curbside spaces are for voters who are **not entering** the polling site to vote. Texas Election Code requires that curbside spaces **can not** be spaces designated as ADA parking.



Curbside spaces should be on a route accessible by poll workers and can be in existing non-ADA spaces.



Texas Election Code (§64.009) requires curbside voting as of Sept. 1, 1997.



Texas Election Code requires 2 spaces for curbside voting at every voting site.



Look for guidance on setting up your curbside on the new ADA Quick Reference sheet in the ADA folder of your forms box.

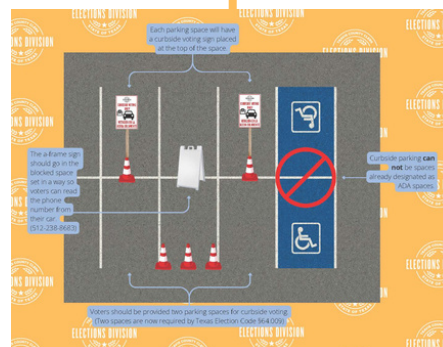
ADA spaces are for voters who **do want to enter** the polling site to vote. Federal law requires a specific number of ADA spaces for the total number of spaces in a parking lot. (1 for every 25 up to 100 spaces with at least 1 van accessible space)

ADA spaces should be on the shortest route to the entrance of the voting site and must be on level, firm and slip resistant ground.

Federal law (ADA of 2010) requires accessible parking for all public facilities. (Voting sites are considered public facilities)

Federal law requires a specific number of ADA spaces for the total number of spaces in a parking lot. (1 for every 25 up to 100 spaces with at least 1 van accessible space)

If you know of anyone that could be a great poll worker or if you are interested in working the November election, send us an email at: eRecruiting@TravisCountyTX.gov



BONUS ROUND!



Check out our brand new ADA training modules online!



Keep reading! There's even more on the next page.

ELECTIONS STAFF SPOTLIGHT



Spotlights provided by:
MiShon Davis, Sites, ADA, and Training Manager



CHRIS BALDENHOFER

★ **Ballot Technologies Manager**

Chris Baldenhofer was born in New Orleans, Louisiana. He attended Louisiana State University (Go Tigers!) and studied English Literature. He came to Austin in August of 2007 and started in the Elections Division as a temporary employee as a tech in September of 2007.

He worked hard and was always willing to lend a helping hand. He was hired on permanently in July of 2017. He is the Ballot Technologies Manager, which is in charge of Ballot by Mail, Ballot programming, and ePollbook management.

In his spare time, Chris enjoys talking long walks. He has one brother who is a plastic surgeon in New York.

Chris would like to tell our election workers that you are greatly appreciated. We could not do Elections without you and depend on your expertise, knowledge and skill to pull this off year after year. Your continued dedication helps us navigate the changes inherent to our industry and show up for our voters.

"IT'S TRUE!"

with Drew



Drew Dillard
Sites Coordinator

THE TRUTH? IT'S TOO DANG HOT

The 88th Texas Legislature passed some laws standardizing Early Voting minimum days and hours across the state, but Travis County has been exceeding these minimums for years, so these changes will not impact us.

- ✓ They also tightened rules regarding combining Election Day Precincts, but again, Travis County was already meeting the requirements of the new laws.

As we (theoretically) approach fall (aw, that sounds nice)... we are happy to announce that voters in the Lago Vista area once again have an Early Voting site... welcome Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church, who have agreed to host Early Voting for this fall and for the 2024 Primary. We also welcome Cepeda Branch Library at the corner of East 7th and Pleasant Valley as a brand new Early Voting/Election Day site.

Did I mention it was hot?



the last laugh
WITH JUAN
Juan Gregg
Personnel Coordinator

Q: Why did the belt go to jail?

A: It held up a pair of jeans!

That's all for now!
Check your inbox on
September 15 for
the next issue of the
Guardian Gazette.



GUARDIAN GAZETTE

For the Guardians of Democracy

BACK TO ELECTIONS

TIPS from our Trainers



Caitlin Arzate
Training Coordinator



Daniel Racer
Training Coordinator

Hey everyone! We know that it can be difficult to know exactly where to file forms on election day, so we're highlighting this handy resource. You can find it in the forms appendix of your manual. During early voting, you'll file most paperwork in your daily balancing envelope!

REFRESHER: ELECTION DAY ENVELOPES

Envelope:	Yellow Envelope #2	Pink Envelope #3	Grey Envelope #4
Description:	Yellow 9"x15" Envelope	Pink 9"x15" Envelope	Grey 9"x15" Envelope
Where to Find it:	Envelopes folder of the Black Forms Box		
When to Use it:	To store: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RIDs • Standard Affidavits • Worker Oaths • Oath of Assistance • Notice of Total # of Voters Who Have Voted 	To store: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judge's copy of Worker timesheets • results report • pink copy of Ballot and Seal Certificate • extra Provisional List labels 	To store: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SORs
Envelope Instructions:	Complete the location and date information at the top left of the envelope. Sign if required.		
Where to File:	Return to CRS in the Clear Return Bag on Election Night.	Judge retains this envelope for their records for 22 months.	Return to CRS in the Clear Return Bag on Election night.



- OCT 10** LAST DAY TO REGISTER TO VOTE
- OCT 23** FIRST DAY OF EARLY VOTING
- OCT 27** LAST DAY TO APPLY FOR BALLOT BY MAIL (RECEIVED, NOT POSTMARKED)
- NOV 3** LAST DAY OF EARLY VOTING IN PERSON
- NOV 7** ELECTION DAY

Election Countdown:
 38 Days until Early Voting starts
 53 Days until Election Day

In this issue of the Guardian Gazette:
 Page 1: Tips from the trainers
 Page 2: Election Staff Spotlight
 Page 3: Dress code for poll workers
 Page 4: Tips for Staying Organized

All of us at Travis County Elections are so grateful for you: the dedicated election workers who show up year after year as well as our brand new poll workers! We are looking forward to working together as we preserve the integrity of our upcoming elections in Travis County. Together, we'll serve our communities and preserve Democracy.

Keep reading!
 There's even more on the next page.

ELECTIONS STAFF SPOTLIGHT

MEET OUR NEW Staff Members!



MiShon Davis
Manager



Cindy Ramirez ★
Elections Coordinator

Hi y'all! I'm originally from Dallas, but I've lived in Austin for the past eight years after attending UT. As a firm believer in community building I served two years with AmeriCorps VISTA, and continue to volunteer with local organizations. Before joining the BBM department, I worked three elections with the amazing Call Center. Outside of work, I love to read (or more like add fiction books to my to-read pile), watch TV comedies, and listen to non-fiction podcasts.



Andres Sanchez ★
Training Coordinator

Hey! I've lived in Austin for the past 5 years. Before that, I spent more than a decade in San Antonio. (If you ask me, breakfast tacos are better there!) I spent most of that time in risk management and corporate training. I value cooperation and teamwork and I'm always available for questions. On the weekends, you can find me coaching indoor rowing classes, meditating, hiking or talking to my plants.



Jordan Sanchez ★
Training Coordinator

Hello! I am originally from San Antonio. After graduating from Texas Tech's School of Music, I spent the last five years teaching middle school choir here in Austin. I have a deep passion for learning, growing, and supporting my community. My hobbies include sewing, crocheting, reading, and singing! Talk to me about TV or movies. I can't wait to hit the ground running with y'all to provide free and fair elections to the people of Travis County!



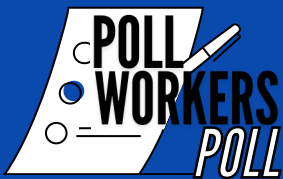
This month, our poll question is:

What is your favorite place to eat near a polling site?

We will share the results in the October Issue.
You can respond to the poll at the link below:

www.tinyurl.com/Sep23Poll

Your response to the poll is anonymous.



Every month, we have a Poll Workers Poll where we want to hear from you!





What is the dress code for poll workers?



Serena Horn
Personnel Coordinator

My favorite things about going back to school were making new friends, seeing my old friends after summer break, and back to school shopping. Even though my mother and I had a million arguments in fitting rooms across Texas before school started, I did love having brand new clothes to wear on the first day. In honor of that *new clothes* feeling, let's go over the dress code for poll workers.

To summarize, the dress code emphasizes comfort and professionalism. Basically, we'd like you to be **comfortable and also professional**. That is it. Also, please remember to wear closed toed shoes in training class and in the polling place. Instead of going over all of the ways you can be comfortable and professional, we've listed the types of clothes and accessories that are not appropriate below:

- Shorts, flip flops, or tank tops
- Oversized shirts or baggy pants
- Shirts with elongated armholes or low cut necklines
- Pajamas or slippers
- See-through or overly tight-fitting clothing
- Backless, spaghetti strap, strapless or halter-style tops
- Visible Undergarments
- Ripped or torn clothing
- Excessive amounts of visible jewelry, make-up, tattoos or piercings
- Clothing/accessories that promote candidates, controversial issues or have vulgar/obscene images or words
- Clothing that requires frequent adjustment to keep it from being too revealing



ELECTION CORRECTION

The Site Setup & Maintenance Packet



Drew Dillard
Sites Coordinator



Cinnamon Babbitt
Sites Coordinator

Those of you who have worked elections for the last couple of years are likely already familiar with the Legally Required Signs and Postings packet sent to you by your Sites Department. It looks a bit like a hazmat warning (bright orange for EV, bright pink for EDAY); Early Voting Deputies receive them at set-up and Election Day Judges receive them at Supply Pickup. As the name suggests, it contains LEGALLY required postings for your polling site, such as "Four Nearest Polling Sites" and "Notice of Voting Order Priority," but it's so much more than that! It includes all kinds of relevant polling site information including:

- Parking
- ADA Remediation Checklist
- Voter Exit and Entrance signs
- Curbside Voting
- Site setup information
- Other site-specific signs with instructions about where they go
- Building Access
- Sign map with outdoor sign placement suggestions

TIPS

Keep the call center number handy and call any time you have questions!

512-854-4783



How do you stay organized at your polling place?

- “I like to place the most commonly used forms at both the check-in and resolution table for easy access and then replenish them throughout the day as they get used.”
- “Keep envelopes with their openings upright for easy access in the forms box.”
- “We try to stay on top of organization by filing forms immediately in their appropriate envelopes so we have less to sort through at the end of the day.”
- “I file all memos that are sent from TC Elections in the forms box so that we can refer back to them as needed.”



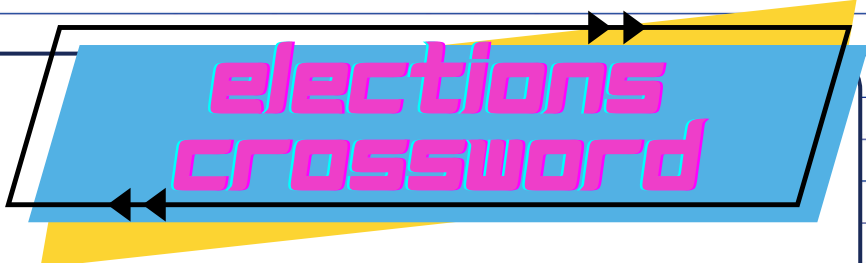
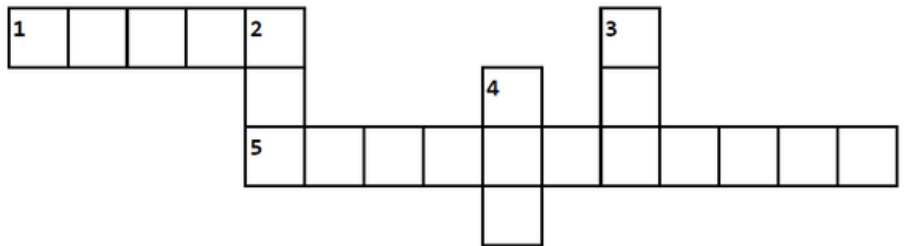
Cindy Ramirez
 Elections Coordinator

ACROSS

1. Manages the polling site on election day
5. Determined by the precinct of a voter's residence address

DOWN

2. ePollbook
3. Where election supplies are delivered at the end of election night
4. Form used to update a voter's registered address



the last laugh WITH JUAN

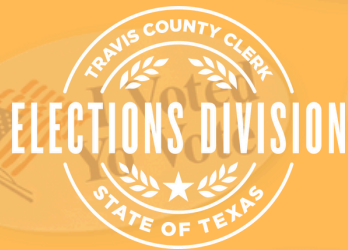
Juan Gregg
 Personnel Coordinator

Q: Why did the fastest cat in class get kicked out of school?

A: Because he was a cheetah!

Save the Date!

The deadline to register to vote in the November 7, 2023 Joint General & Special Election is **October 10, 2023.**



GUARDIAN GAZETTE

For the Guardians of Democracy

TIPS FROM THE CALL CENTER



Paul DeLaRosa
Call Center Coordinator

- Please identify yourself and your site at the start of the call.
- Any poll worker who is resolving an issue can call the Call Center, not just the Deputy/Judge.
- Keep the Travis County cell phone fully charged with the ringer volume at the highest setting.
- Please keep the phone connected to the charger where it can be easily accessible.
- Make sure to share your phone number with the call center if you prefer to use your own device.
- Avoid using the speaker phone unless directed by the Call Center. Some information is sensitive in nature and is only meant to be shared with you (and other election heroes).
- When in doubt, please call the Call Center! Procedures change every Legislative session and we want to follow Election law.



(512) 854-4783



IMPORTANT DATES



Election day is November 7, 2023
Polls are open 7am - 7pm

Early Voting begins Monday, October 23,
and ends on Friday, November 3

Mega-Centers will stay open until 10 pm
on the first and last day of Early Voting

TRAVIS COUNTY HAS 817,002 REGISTERED VOTERS



Entities on this year's Ballot

- 14 State Propositions
- City of Jonestown
- City of Lago Vista
- City of Manor
- City of Mustang Ridge
- City of Pflugerville
- Village of Point Venture
- Village of The Hills
- Village of Volente
- Lago Vista ISD
- Lake Travis ISD
- Pflugerville ISD
- Round Rock ISD
- Wells Branch Community Library
- TCWCID No. 17
- TCWCID No. 20
- Oatman Hill MUD
- Travis County

UPDATE REMINDER



- SB 1089: Unopposed candidates will appear on the ballot.
- HB 1631: Poll watchers do not have to stay for 5 hours at a polling location on Election Day.
- HB 1243: The penalty for voting illegally is changed from a misdemeanor to a felony.
- SB 477: Poll workers must allow voters with mobility issues to move to the front of the line.
- All polling locations are required to have two curbside voting parking spots.

2023 ELECTIONS CALL CENTER



Something strange in your neighborhood?
Who ya gonna call? **THE CALL CENTER!**



In this issue of the Guardian Gazette:
Page 1: Tips from the Call Center
Page 2: Election Staff Spotlight
Page 3: Supply Pickup Best Practices



READ MORE



ELECTIONS STAFF SPOTLIGHT



MiShon Davis
 ADA/Sites/Training Manager



INTERVIEW WITH Paul DeLaRosa
 Call Center Coordinator

Can you tell us a little bit about your journey here at Travis County Elections?

I started as a poll worker and then joined the Tech team in January 2018. In August 2020, I became full time with Ballot by Mail and then in August 2021, I moved to the Call Center.

What did you do before working at Elections?

I was a student at UT, and worked part time at the Events Center.

What do you like to do for fun?

I go to a lot of UT sporting events. Hook 'em!

What is your favorite part of working for Travis County Elections?

I've always liked helping and interacting with voters.

What is your favorite Halloween costume?

As a child, I always wanted to be a superhero. My favorite was Batman.

Training Reminders:

- All training classes for this election will be held in person at Sawyer Hall.
- Early Voting classes will be 10/13-10/21 for all election positions.
- Election Day classes will be 10/25-11/6 for Judges & Alt Judges only.
- Election Day Clerks can complete a self-paced, online course through Rise.



Pictured: Jordan Sanchez leading training class!

HALLOWEEN DURING EARLY VOTING



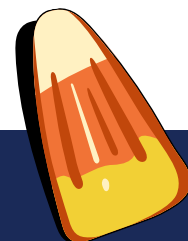
Chelsea Townsend
 Personnel Coordinator

During the holiday season, our policies on appropriate work attire at the polls still apply. Please keep in mind that poll worker badges must be clearly visible at all times. Costumes, face paint, masks, and prop weapons are not work appropriate. However, you can still spread Halloween cheer with fun accessories! Here are some ideas that you can take and make your own:

- Bring out those eerie earrings, scary socks, haunting headbands, and terrifying ties!
- Wear a shirt, vest, or jacket featuring your favorite holiday creatures! Bats, ghosts, spiders, pumpkins, crows, cats, and more are welcome here.
- Keep it bright and light! Sporting Halloween or fall colors is a great way to be festive while helping voters this election.
- Fabric prints and motifs galore: Enrobe yourself in magical patterns and shimmering details like gossamer spiderwebs, vibrant papel picado, bright stars, and classic candy corns.



If you have any questions, please call the Call Center.



POLL WORKERS NEEDED FOR 2024! FOR MORE INFORMATION:



512-854-4996



traviscountyelections.org



erecruiting@traviscountytexas.gov

READ MORE



SUPPLY PICKUP BEST PRACTICES



Katonya Williams
*Voting Equipment
 Coordinator*

**IT'S A TREAT HAVING
 SUCH AMAZING
 ELECTION WORKERS!**

- Before you arrive, please make space in your vehicle for your supplies.
- Once you arrive at 5501 Airport Blvd please place your car in park and stay inside. If your trunk opens automatically, let us know!
- Have your Writ and the name of your Election Polling Site handy.
- Be ready to show your Driver's License or ID Card when we arrive at your car.
- Due to the high volume of cars, please keep conversations to a minimum. We want to make sure all of you are supplied in a timely and organized manner.
- Please do not leave any supplies in your car overnight unless you park in a garage.
- When you get home, be sure to charge the provided cell phone. In the morning, put both the cell phone and the charger back into its bag.
- On the morning of Election Day, be sure to bring all of the supplies into your polling site. Check your vehicle to make sure nothing is left behind.
- Do a thorough inventory of all the supplies you received to make sure your important memos, legally required signs, and all postings packets reflect your assigned polling site. If there are any missing supplies or forms, please notify the Call Center as soon as possible!
- If for any reason you are unable to make it to 5501 Airport Blvd during your allotted time for supply pick-up, don't worry! We can make other arrangements as long as you give us a call.
- Get plenty of rest before Election Day!

Thank you for supporting Travis County Elections!

Follow the Travis County Clerk's Office on social media for more election news and updates!

- Travis County Clerk
- @TravisCoClerk
- @TravisCountyClerk



ELECTIONS CROSSWORD



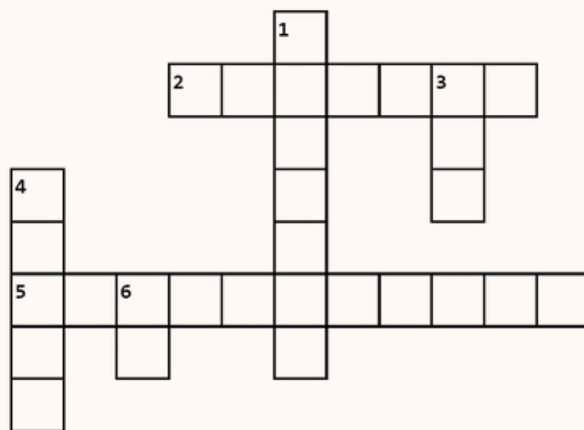
Cindy Ramirez
Elections Coordinator

ACROSS

- _____ house
5. November 7, 2023

DOWN

1. Carved for Halloween decoration
3. Must be on or before EDay for a voter to participate in that election
4. Trick or _____
6. Starts on October 23, 2023



Answers to last month's crossword: 1. Judge 2. EPB 3. CRS 4. SOR 5. BallotStyle

THE LAST LAUGH WITH JUAN



Juan Gregg
Personnel Coordinator

Q: Who's the best person to watch scary Halloween movies with?

A: "Your boo"

Thank you for all of your hard work for Travis County Elections! Check out our next issue on November 15th!

GUARDIAN GAZETTE

For the Guardians of Democracy



Issue 18: November 17, 2023
traviscountyelections.org

I would like to express my gratitude to each of you for your commitment to Travis County Elections during the November 7 Constitutional Amendment Election. Thanks to your collective dedication, knowledge, patience, and professionalism, we were able to conduct a fair & free election smoothly, efficiently, and with integrity.

As the faces of both Early Voting and Election Day, you played a pivotal role in our mission to serve Travis County voters to the best of our abilities. I understand that the hours can be long, and the job is demanding; even when challenges arose, you were able to navigate through and provide a seamless voting experience for our voters.

As the County Clerk, I am immensely proud of the team of dedicated individuals who stepped forward to uphold the integrity of our elections. Your collective efforts instill confidence in the election process and prepare us for an even more successful 2024. Thank you for everything that you do! We cannot do it without you, and we hope to see each of you next year!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dyana".

A MESSAGE FROM THE COUNTY CLERK



Dyana Limon-Mercado
Travis County Clerk

ELECTION DAY SHOUT OUTS:

Top 3 Busiest Polling Locations:

- Ben Hur Shrine Center, **2000** Voters
- Austin Oaks Church, **1863** Voters
- Southpark Meadows, **1684** Voters



Top 3 Fastest Polling Locations by Check-In Time:

- Circle C Community Center, **0:34** Average
- Canyon Ridge Middle School, **0:34** Average
- Austin Oaks Church, **0:36** Average

Top 2 Fastest Poll Workers with Check-In Time Average 0:28:

- Renee L., Balcones Woods Shopping Center, **537** Check-Ins
- Andrew B., Millennium Youth Complex, **450** Check-Ins

G23 ELECTION SUMMARY

144,882 Total Ballots Cast

6.36% of Registered Voters

Election Day Turnout: **72,836** Check-Ins

Early Voting Turnout: **68,438** Check-Ins

Ballot By Mail: **3,608** Ballots Received with **99%** acceptance

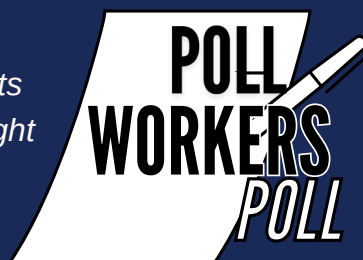
146 Election Day Polling Sites with over **700** Poll Workers

8,405 Total Calls Fielded by the Call Center

In this issue:

Page 1: Election Highlights

Page 2: Employee Spotlight



What are your favorite election memories from 2023?

We want to hear from YOU!

Respond to the poll online at: <https://tinyurl.com/Nov23Poll>

Responses are anonymous. Look for them in the next issue!

READ MORE



ELECTION REWIND *with our Trainers*



Andres Sanchez
Training Coordinator

During our in-person training sessions, we discussed several drills (shoutout to the Brady bunch!) and fielded questions about List A approved IDs and List B supporting documents. Now that the election is over, we thought you'd be interested to know which ID types made an appearance on Election Day:

- TX Driver's License/State ID: **71,927 Voters (95.97%)**
- US Passport/Passport Card: **1,143 Voters (1.52%)**
- Copy/Original Gov. document that shows voter's name and address: **179 Voters (.24%)**
- TX License to Carry a Handgun: **61 Voters (.08%)**
- US Military ID with Photo: **60 Voters (.08%)**
- Voter Registration Certificate: **37 Voters (.05%)**
- Other: **87 Voters (.1%)**



Employee Spotlight and Farewell to Dan Hayes



This month, we are saying goodbye to Dan Hayes, our Assistant Director of Elections over ADA, Sites and Training. Ever since he joined Travis County Elections, he's been an exemplary leader who has steadfastly supported our mission, our team, and the voters of Travis County.

Those of you who have spent an election day here at 5501 Airport will know that Dan moves with a sense of urgency and tends to be exactly where the action is happening, either providing solutions, troubleshooting issues, or offering support. Dan has made significant contributions to the fabric of Travis County Elections, and we are extremely grateful to benefit from his leadership.

In his time here, Dan has been a role model for all of us, both in terms of his work ethic and his positive attitude. He's always willing to go the extra mile, and he has always been there to help others.

We wish Dan the most amazing retirement and all the best for the adventures ahead! Thank you for everything, Dan!

Keep telling jokes and laughing!!! -Dan



LOOKING TO 2024 with Personnel



Adam Alvarez
Personnel Manager

We wish all our poll worker heroes a happy and safe holiday season. Thank you for your hard work and dedication throughout 2023. Because of you, we processed over 219,000 voters in 2023! We don't say it enough, but we and the voters of Travis County appreciate your dedication, diligence, and service to our community.

We'll need plenty of workers to process even more votes in the four elections already set for 2024! Recruiting for new poll workers starts in the next couple of weeks, so tell that neighbor, friend, or family member that always says they wish they can serve that now is the time. If you know of anyone that can be a good poll worker, tell them to email us at eRecruiting@traviscountytx.gov.

Thank you again for all your hard work! Be safe! Be happy! Have a wonderful holiday!

NOW HIRING ELECTION Heroes

CONTACT US



STAY CONNECTED

Follow the Travis County Clerk's Office on social media for more election news and updates!

- Travis County Clerk**
- @TravisCoClerk**
- @TravisCountyClerk**

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ELECTIONS CROSSWORD



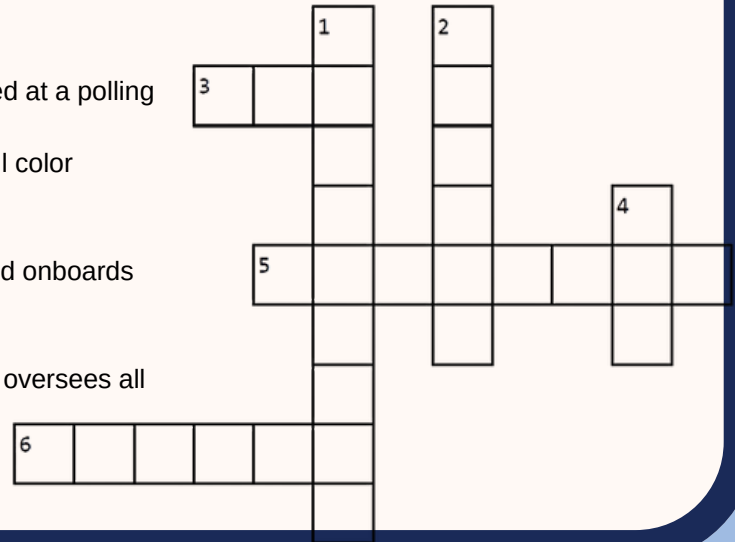
Cindy Ramirez
Elections Coordinator

ACROSS

- 3. Baked dessert
- 5. Contains all forms that are used at a polling site
- 6. Recognized as a prominent fall color

DOWN

- 1. Elections team that recruits and onboards poll workers
- 2. Synonym for fall
- 4. Acronym for state agency that oversees all election activities



Answers to last month's crossword: 1. Pumpkin 2. Haunted 3. EDR 4. Treat 5. Election Day 6. EV



the last laugh WITH JUAN

Juan Gregg
Personnel Coordinator

Q: What do you call a pig that does karate?

A: A pork chop!

That's all for now! Check your inbox next month for the December issue of the Guardian Gazette.

GUARDIAN GAZETTE

For the Guardians of Democracy



Issue 19 - December 15, 2023
traviscountyelections.org



2023 YEAR IN REVIEW

PAGE 2



CALLING ELECTION HEROES!

PAGE 4



ELECTION HIGHLIGHTS

READ MORE



2023 in Review: Favorite Elections Memories



TAEA Conference

We started 2023 by heading to San Antonio for the Texas Association of Election Administrators Conference!

Dyana is sworn in

Dyana Limon-Mercado was formally sworn in as the Travis County Clerk on January 27, 2023.



Election Hero Appreciation Open House

Thank you for coming to our office on June 28th to help us celebrate your hard work and dedication for our Travis County Voters! We appreciate you so much!

Plant Club Fosters Growth

We started a plant club this summer to connect to nature and work on a fun project to beautify the planters in front of 5501 Airport. We even attracted monarch caterpillars and got to witness their magical transformation!



SOS Election Law Seminar

The Secretary of State Election Law Seminar (July 31st- August 2nd) gave us a chance to meet election officials from all over the state. It was a wonderful experience and we can't wait to attend next year!



2023 Elections Timeline

January

- 2-6: TAEA Conference
- 27: Dyana sworn in as County Clerk

April

- 24-30: Local Election Early Voting

May

- 1-2: Local Election Early Voting
- 6: Local Election Day

June

- 28: Election Hero Open House

July

- 7/31: Texas Secretary of State Election Law Seminar

August-September

Prepping for General Election!

October

- 23-31: General Election Early Voting

November

- 1-3: General Election Early Voting
- 7: General Election Election Day

December

Wrapping gifts with Travis County Sheriff's Brown Santa



READ MORE



2023

ELECTIONS DIVISION

Meet your Travis County Election Team Members



Bridgette
Director



Charlie
Assistant Director



Sarah
Assistant Director



Adam
Personnel Manager



Chris
Ballot Tech Manager



MiShon, Mgr
ADA / Sites / Training



Andrés
Training



Caitlin
Training



Chelsea
Personnel



Cindy
Ballot by Mail



Cinnamon
Sites



Dan
Training



Destini
ADA



Drew
Sites



Emma
Ballot Programmer



Jacqueline
Ballot by Mail



John
ADA



Jonathan
Voting Equipment



Jordan
Training



Jorge
Operations



Juan
Personnel



Katonya
Voting Equipment



Neil
Ballot by Mail



Paul
Call Center



Serena
Personnel



Shelton
E-Pollbook



Tim
ADA

NOW HIRING ELECTION *Heroes*

Know of anyone who should join the Election Hero team? Send us their contact info and what you think makes them a great candidate! We're on the lookout for new Guardians of Democracy and would love to hear who you think is ready to join.

Reminders of starting qualifications for an Election Hero:

- Registered voter in Travis County
- 18 years old & up
- Student Clerks: 16 years old & up
- Able to attend in-person, hands-on training
- Early Voting interest: Pass a criminal background check & be available for 1 half day shift during entire Early Voting period (between 7 – 12 days depending on the election)
- Election Day interest: Available for full day
- A fantastic aptitude for customer service & enthusiasm for civic engagement!

POLL WORKERS NEEDED FOR 2024! FOR MORE INFORMATION:

512-854-4996 traviscountyelections.org eRecruiting@traviscountytx.gov



MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR THE NEXT ELECTION!

Tuesday, March 5, 2024 - Primary Election
Early Voting Period: February 20, 2024 - March 1, 2024

Tuesday, May 28, 2024 - Primary Runoff Election
Early Voting Period: May 20, 2024 - May 24, 2024

Saturday, May 4, 2024 - Uniform Election Date
Early Voting Period: April 22, 2024 - April 30, 2024

Tuesday, November 5, 2024 - Uniform Election Date
Early Voting Period: October 21, 2024 - November 1, 2024

STAY CONNECTED

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Travis County Clerk
@TravisCoClerk
@TravisCountyClerk

FOLLOW US



ELECTIONS CROSSWORD



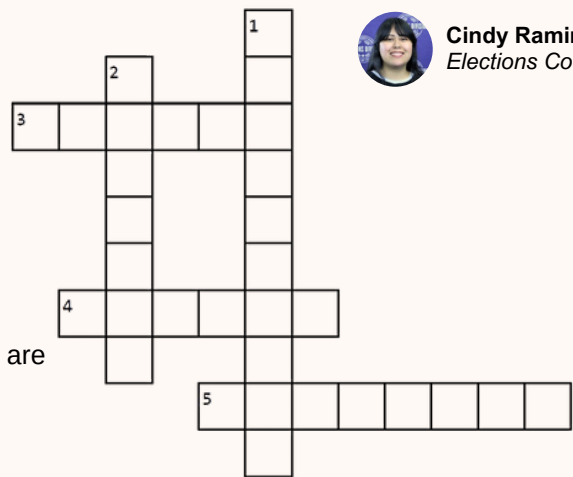
Cindy Ramirez
Elections Coordinator

ACROSS

3. Poll workers are Election _____
4. Holiday decoration hung on doors
5. Warm chocolate beverage

DOWN

1. Table where more complex situations are handled
2. Our first election in 2024



Answers to last month's crossword: 1. Personnel 2. Autumn 3. Pie 4. SOS 5. Forms Box 6. Orange

The Last Laugh with Juan



Juan Gregg
Personnel Coordinator

Q: What does the Gingerbread Man put on his bed?
A: A cookie sheet.



That's all for now!
You did paw-sitively amazing this year.
See you in 2024!

Elections Mascot, **Carlos the Dog**