LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF DENTON
VOTERS GUIDE

Denton County Primary Election – March 4, 2014

The March election is a Party Primary Election and only Democratic and Republican candidates are on the ballot. You may vote in either the Democratic Party or Republican Party Primary election on March 4 and cast votes to elect the party’s candidates for national, state and county races.

The League of Women Voters of Denton’s Voters Guide for the March 4, 2014 elections includes the candidates for U.S. Representative (District 24, 26), State Senator (District 30), State Representatives (District 63, 64, 65, 106), District Judge (District 158, 211, 367), Criminal District Attorney, County Judge, Judge County Court At Law (1, 2), Judge County Criminal Court (1, 2, 3, 4, 5), Judge County Probate Court, District Clerk, County Clerk, County Treasurer, County Commissioner (Precinct 2, 4), Justice of the Peace (Precinct 4, 5, 6), Constable, and County Chairman.

National, state and regional races in Texas can be found in the League of Women Voters (LWV) of Texas’ Voters Guide available along with the LWV of Denton’s Voters Guide.

Questions were sent to candidates in races that are contested within the same party. Candidates were asked to reply within specific word limits. Answers exceeding the word limit are abbreviated at that limit, marked with three slashes (///). The League has not edited any responses for grammar, spelling, or punctuation. Candidates who do not have an opponent on the ballot are listed in the Voters Guide. The Voters Guide is organized by party, by office and by ballot order.

EARLY VOTING, February 18 - 28

by personal appearance will be available at the following locations and times for the city of Denton:

Denton County Elections Administration: 701 Kimberly Drive; Denton
February 18 - 21 8:00 am - 5:00 pm
February 22 7:00 am - 7:00 pm
February 23 1:00 pm - 6:00 pm
February 24 – 28 7:00 am - 7:00 pm

For Early Voting by personal appearance locations outside of the city of Denton, contact the Denton County Elections Administration Office at 940.340.3200 or www.votedenton.com/early-voting-information/early-voting-in-person. The new address for the Denton County Elections Administration is 701 Kimberly Drive; Denton, TX.

POLLING PLACES on March 4th, Election Day, are by precinct.

For your Precinct and/or for Polling Place locations, contact the Denton County Elections Administration Office at 940.340.3200 or http://www.votedenton.com/election-day-information/election-day-polling-locations.

This VOTERS GUIDE is published by the League of Women Voters of Denton, with partial funding from the League of Women Voters Texas Education fund. An electronic version of this guide is available at www.lwvdenton.org. The purpose of the guide is to help eligible voters make an informed decision about candidates in contested races.

The LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF DENTON is a nonpartisan organization that works to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation in government. The League does not support or oppose any political party or candidate. The League publishes and distributes factual information to help prepare citizens to cast an informed vote. The League takes action on selected governmental issues that it has studied.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE—JOIN US!

Be directly involved in shaping the important issues in our community. LWV is one of America’s most trusted grassroots organizations, where nonpartisan, hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement. Membership is open to men and women 18 years and older. Visit us online at www.lwvdenton.org or send your name, address, phone and email address, plus $50 membership fee to: LWV-Denton, P.O. Box 424945, TWU Station, Denton, TX 76204.

This ad is paid for by the League of Women Voters of Denton.
United States Representative, District 24
Patrick McGehearty - Unopposed

State Representative, District 63
Daniel Moran - Unopposed

State Representative, District 64
Emy Lyons – Unopposed

State Representative, District 65
Alex Mendoza – Unopposed

State Representative, District 106
Lisa Osterholt - Unopposed

District Judge, 367th Judicial District
David Heiman – Unopposed

County Chairman
Phyllis Wolper – Unopposed

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United States Representative, District 24
Kenny Marchant – Unopposed

United States Representative, District 26

Questions:
1. What specific measures would you take to ensure access to affordable health care? (Limit: 100 words)
2. What are the three most critical issues facing your constituents? (Limit: 100 words)
3. What role should the federal government play in protecting the environment and human health? (Limit: 100 words)
4. What would you support to narrow the income gap? (Limit: n/a)

Joel A. Krause

1. Repeal Obamacare. Weekly, we learn of more costs and potential bailouts needed for insurance companies with this law. Allow Medicare to negotiate prices. The nation’s biggest buyer of healthcare services has to pay 6% above average sales price for medicine and other goods and services. Being a large buyer should allow us to pay less, not more. This is a direct result of lobbying from healthcare companies and inflicts higher prices on “We the People”. Force transparency on financial interests in services recommended by hospitals and other medical entities. Add real competition to this sector and it will lower prices.
2. Most critical issues are the Deficit, the rising cost of healthcare in this country and the influence of the Lobbyist in the legislative process. The consequences of our debt include higher taxes and interest rates, national security is impacted, fewer jobs, eroded life savings and reduced benefits and programs. We spend more on health care than other developed nations, yet have no better health outcomes. There is far too much money given from lobbyists to get perks in legislation. The job should be about “We the People”, not the special interests. I have specific plans to address these issues.

3. Right now we are over regulated. A lot of this is due to the lobbying by certain groups. Many regulations over the sale of asthma inhalers or the prohibition of the purchase of drugs from Canada are the direct result of lobbying and are not due to a sound policy decision. The government should have a more limited role in regulation and not hinder the economy.

4. The best way to help narrow the income gap is through hard work, good choices and education. This country was founded on that principal. We need encourage secondary education for those skill sets that employers need. I would suggest low cost student loans for those entering into engineering and technology degrees, in order to provide those with the drive to succeed the skills they need for life. Statistically, this is difficult to solve because you can not force people to make good choices.

Michael Burgess

1. Immediate steps would be to allow the creation of health saving accounts to offset these extremely high deductibles that people are seeing in the bronze and silver level plans available under Obamacare. The Tax Code could and should be amended to allow persons buying health insurance in the individual market the ability to deduct these expenses as large business may when they are providing health care to their employees. The type of liability reform done in the state of Texas would provide a great deal of relief as far as the spiraling upward costs of health care in this country.

2. Job Creation, the State of the Economy, and out-of-control Federal Spending. Creating jobs and getting Americans back to work is a necessity. In order to be successful, we must address the Federal Government’s out of control spending. We need a government that is efficient, less expensive, and more responsive. Not a government that continues to overspend and places burdensome regulations on small businesses. I will continue to work hard to promote a pro-growth, pro-job creation agenda which will put people back to work, cut the national debt and get the economy growing again.

3. The President does not have the unilateral ability to impose regulations. The President should recognize that there is a co-equal branch of government at the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue and he would do well to consult with the United States Congress, both the Republicans and Democrats from time to time. There are regulations proceeding through at the agency level now that could be very deleterious to energy production in the United States and job creation in this country. I will continue to push for energy policies that will ensure energy is safe and affordable and keeps jobs in America.

4. The one program that will provide the greatest amount of relief to the income gap is job creation and economic growth. Any proposal that is deleterious to those two concepts will not have my support.

Divenchy Watrous
No response received.

State Senator, District 30
Craig Estes - Unopposed

State Representative, District 63
Tan Parker – Unopposed
State Representative, District 64

Questions:
1. What specific measures will you address to ensure that education is adequately funded? (Limit: 100 words)
2. Do you favor expanding the rights of local government to regulate oil and gas development? Please explain. (Limit: 100 words)
3. What specific measures would you take to ensure access to affordable health care? (Limit: 100 words)

Myra Crownover

1. As a member of the House Committee on Appropriations in 2013 I fought to restore the cuts to education funding. In 2013, we covered enrollment growth and added 3.2 billion to public school funding. I will continue to fight to control spending and increase efficiency in entitlement programs because entitlement spending is crowding out funding for education.

2. I believe in local control. However, there are aspects to oil and gas that need to be regulated at a statewide level. For example, pipelines often travel through multiple jurisdictions. If each local government sets different standards for pipelines (size of the pipeline, how deep to bury it, etc.) the result is more dangerous than statewide uniform regulation of pipelines would be. I also believe that the state can always improve things. In 2009, I passed legislation to require pipeline companies to use public right-of-way instead of private property whenever possible.

3. For the last five legislative sessions I have filed legislation to increase access to Health Savings Accounts. I firmly believe that HSAs are an important tool that give patients more control over their health care and empower them to make decisions as a consumer. Increased use of HSAs has been shown to drive down health care costs and increase patient participation in their health care decisions.

Read King

1. The Texas Constitution requires that the Legislature provides for the support and maintenance of an “efficient” system of public free schools. By not focusing on the constitutional requirement of an efficient system, we ensure no amount of funding will ever be adequate. Increasing competition in the Texas education system through education scholarships and tax credits is necessary so that our public schools are incentivized to run more efficiently. Increasing access to distance learning by reducing restrictions for online learning would also provide competition necessary to increased efficiency. Texas should reduce the money it spends on administration, overhead, and non-instructional functions.

2. I do not favor allowing local communities to add additional regulations because I do not believe the authority to regulate is different from one community to another. I favor ensuring that regulations and laws do not favor some companies or industries over others, whether big or small, and strict, consistent enforcement of laws protecting the rights of property owners. We must also protect private property owners from abuses of eminent domain for private gain as opposed to public use.

3. Texas’ insurance plans are subject to 62 mandates, ranking the state as one of the country’s 10 most heavily regulated. The combined effect of mandates drives up the cost of a basic health plan with each mandate adding from just under 1% to as much as 10%. One out of four uninsured individuals does not have health insurance because of the inflated prices resulting from government programs and mandates. We must eliminate all insurance mandates not required by federal law and allow Texans to purchase health insurance policies offered by providers regulated by other states.

State Representative, District 65
Ron Simmons – Unopposed

State Representative, District 106
Pat Fallon – Unopposed
District Judge, 158th District Court
Steve Burgess – Unopposed

District Judge, 211th District Court
Brody Shanklin – Unopposed

District Judge, 367th District Court
Margaret E. Barnes – Unopposed

Criminal District Attorney

Questions:
1. What is your occupation? Please describe your education, training and experience that qualify you for this position. (Limit: 50 words)
2. What are primary challenges of this position and how will you address them? (Limit: 100 words)
3. Discuss significant improvements you would like to make, if elected. (Limit: 100 words)

Karen Alexander

1. I graduated from Baylor University with a Bachelor of Arts degree and a degree of Juris Doctor (Law Degree). I have been a prosecutor in the DA’s Office and I have built a law firm. I know to manage and lead people and how to prosecute criminals.

2. Restoring the integrity and public confidence in the D.A.’s office is the most urgent task. Through strong leadership, knowledge and experience, I will bring honor and stability to the D.A.’s office. I have proven experience as a prosecutor, defense attorney and successful business owner that sets me apart. The last census indicated Denton County is one of the fastest growing counties in America. I will develop a strategic plan to address the increased demand for services from the D.A’s office. Overall, the primary challenge for the D.A. is the daily management of the largest law firm in our county.

3. I plan to not only restore the district’s attorney’s lost reputation but reinvigorate the office as well. Special training, tightened procedures, balanced workloads and process improvements will eliminate tax money waste and related scandalous headlines. I am passionate about initiating a therapeutic justice program for the mentally ill and a zero-tolerance policy for domestic violence and child and elder abuse. My plan includes an improved hands-on working relationship with law enforcement to fight drugs and gangs, reduce recidivism, reduce local jail populations and increase judicial efficiency. There is also a need for continuous improvement in information technology.

Hank Paine

1. Managing Partner March, Paine, & Waddill. BA Texas A&M    JD St. Mary’s School of Law    Former State/Federal/Special Prosecutor    Board Certified Criminal and Juvenile Law    Adjunct Professor TWU – 1996-present    Former Elected Trustee, Denton ISD

2. The primary challenge to the office is the restoration of Justice for all citizens. The current DA has not shown the ability/willingness to make the difficult decisions regarding cases that demand the severest penalties. I have the experience and character to make the ultimate decisions. Working with the Courts on issues of Veteran affairs and Mental Health Issues is paramount. I have the ability to work and make any changes that are authorized. I would not wait 3 years to establish the Veterans Court as the current DA did. I will address training of new prosecutors by establishing mentorships.

3. When elected I will re-establish the close working relationship between the DA and county/State law enforcement. I will establish a Citizens Prosecution Academy to educate the public on the true workings of the DA’s office. I will have an open door policy and be accessible to every citizen of Denton County. I will accept nothing less than the highest standards of professionalism and ethics in the office. The Mission Statement of the Office shall be: “It is not the primary duty of all prosecutors not to convict, but to see that Justice is done.”
Paul Johnson

1. I am the Elected District Attorney. I earned my law degree from the University of Houston. I began my career in law enforcement as a prison guard. I have been practicing law for 29 years, including 7 years as District Attorney and 15 years as an Assistant District Attorney.

2. The DA’s Office employs over 120 people, handles 1000’s of criminal and civil cases each year, and oversees a $12 million budget. It is critical to elect a District Attorney with the experience and proven track record leading an office this size. A primary challenge facing the DA’s Office is the increase in technology based crimes. To combat this problem, my office trained an investigator as a Certified Computer Forensic Examiner to recover data from computers and cellular phones for use in the prosecution of sex offenders, drug dealers, and white-collar criminals.

3. First and foremost, I will continue to aggressively seek justice for victims of crime. I am proud of the improvements in my office, including implementing a Veteran’s Court Program, partnering with Denton ISD to create a criminal justice intern program for high school students, and providing financial support to Friends of the Family, the Children’s Advocacy Center, CASA, and local police agencies. My office will address the significant amount of time it takes to receive scientific lab results, especially in drug cases. My office, in conjunction with the Sherriff’s Office, will pursue an accredited crime lab at UNT.

County Judge Questions:
1. What is your occupation? Please describe your education, training and experience that qualify you for this position. (Limit: 50 words)
2. What are primary challenges of this position and how will you address them? (Limit: 100 words)
3. Discuss significant improvements you would like to make, if elected. (Limit: 100 words)

Paul Ruggiere

1. Self Employed Evaluation Consultant. B.B.A., PhD. Employed 20 years at UNT running a business operation that helped state and local governments be more responsive to the citizens they serve. Elected two terms to Corinth City Council and currently serving five years as Mayor reducing debt by 39%.

2. For this position, the best leadership approach is to be a consensus builder—not an autocratic leader. In Corinth, I have been elected and re-elected because I have a record of bringing people together, of openness and inclusion, and of finding the right solutions to the tough issues that rapid growth has caused my community. I will bring these same skills to work for the people in this rapidly growing county. Moving forward, it is important that Denton County grows the right way so that our budgets are supported by commercial operations and not just homeowner taxes.

3. Large residential developments in rural areas often require the county to provide city-like services—especially emergency services—to those districts while saddling their residents with excessive taxes. Any proposed projects must have a plan to provide and fund law enforcement and emergency services without placing additional burdens on the county budget. When providing commercial development incentives, it is important that we do not "give away the farm." When our corporate citizens are forgiven their tax responsibilities for 40-year periods, you and I are asked to cover the difference. County policies must change to keep the budget in balance.

Mary Horn

1. I’ve served as Denton County Judge since 2002. Previously, I served as Denton County Tax Assessor-Collector for nearly ten years. I started by career spending 17 years in management for Braniff. I then started my own successful marketing company before selling it to move into public service.

2. The challenge remains planning for future growth while maintaining the lowest possible tax
rate. As I did years ago to secure our AAA bond rating, I will be resourceful and creative always looking for ways to save money and make Denton County attractive to investment. I will encourage economic and industrial growth county-wide to continue expanding our tax base and attract new jobs to the County. I will continue to do this while also working with other elected officials to upgrade public infrastructure, protect important safety standards and ensure emergency preparedness for our community.

3. Denton County doesn’t need significant improvements. Denton County needs a leader that understands how to keep a steady, but not stifling, hand on our community. I am proud of Denton County and the work I have done with fellow elected officials to make Denton one of the most successful counties in the Country. As outlined previously, we are not without our challenges but you can count on me to maintain a low tax burden, protect our citizens and pursue infrastructure improvements. I will stay focused on the formula that has led us to success.

**Sherman Swartz**

1. I’m a businessman and an attorney, and I’ve spent my career in the private sector working with Fortune 500 companies such as Google, Amazon, Walmart, Yahoo, Microsoft, IBM, AOL, Chevron, Sprint, AT&T, Exxon, Verizon and Apple, among others. Denton High School University of North Texas Baylor University School of Law.

2. Denton County is no longer the sleepy, rural community that it was just a few short years ago. Since 2002, our population has grown nearly 50% to almost 750,000 residents. Denton County government is now a quarter-billion dollar a year “company,” and we need new conservative leaders in elected office with the breadth and depth of experience required to properly manage it. I have the business experience and the knowledge of what would a business want and need to bring in those quality enterprises to Denton county.

3. I want to see a sharper pencil used in the budgeting process and insure that we are getting the best values for the dimes and dollars that are spent and seek to insure that the dimes and dollars are kept in the pockets of the taxpayer. Additionally I want to bring quality business to Denton county to diversify the tax base. That would lessen the pressure to increase the tax valuations each year and the tax rate as well. This would help keep the dimes and dollars in the taxpayers pocket.

**Judge, County Court At Law (No. 1)**
Kimberly McCary – Unopposed

**Judge, County Court At Law (No. 2)**
Robert Ramirez – Unopposed

**Judge, County Criminal Court (Court 1)**
Jim Crouch – Unopposed

**Judge, County Criminal Court (Court 2)**
Virgil Vahlenkamp, Jr. – Unopposed

**Judge, County Criminal Court (Court 3)**

Questions:
1. What is your occupation? Please describe your education, training and experience that qualify you for this position. (Limit: 50 words)
2. What are primary challenges of this position and how will you address them? (Limit: 100 words)
3. Discuss significant improvements you would like to make, if elected. (Limit: 100 words)

**David Garcia**

1. Since 1997 as the Judge of this court, I have defended the constitution and protected the citizens of Denton County. Texas Tech University B.A., University of Texas, J.D. Recognized judicial leader in our State, our court has the lowest number of pending cases, quickest trials and the lowest attorney’s fees.
2. Drugs and alcohol continue to lead to involvement in the criminal justice system. Though my efforts, our courts have two programs that specialize in rehabilitating individuals who have substance abuse issues. One program is designed for the college age individuals and the other specifically for individuals who are older and have addictive disorders. Both programs require comprehensive and strict court monitoring of individuals to address their substance abuse issues yet still holding them accountable for their crimes. The goals of both programs are to ensure these individuals become productive members of our community and not burdens on society.

3. Expand the Denton County Veterans Treatment Court Program that was established in 2009. I volunteered to take over this program in November 2012. Prior to my involvement, there were no veterans in the program. Now our court operates a highly structured program specially designed to help combat veterans returning from overseas deal with PTSD and other combat related mental issues that has contributed to their involvement with the criminal justice system. Although the Veterans program is a small fraction of the courts dockets, because we have a highly trained and dedicated treatment team, it is by far the most rewarding.

George Mitcham

1. I am a Felony Prosecutor with the District Attorneys Office I was a U.S. Paratrooper and Bradley Fighting vehicle commander 7 years and I was a Carrollton Police Officer for 7 years. The Judge of the Veterans Court should know what a soldier has gone through and I do understand

2. With 42 thousand veterans in Denton County and the VA Currently dealing with at least 250 thousand cases of PTSD Denton County will see a steady rise in Veterans Court cases as time passes and Veterans continue to be diagnosed. This county is one of the fastest growing in the nation and veterans will continue to be part of the influx. It is going to take a tremendous amount of understanding to help those who gave us almost everything to defend and protect our freedom and as a former paratrooper and police officer I'm uniquely qualified for the task ahead.

3. Witnesses are crucial to the Jury Trial process and in many occasions they are less than enthusiastic about attending because of the work family time they will miss. It makes it worse when they are continually sent home only to return days later on multiple occasions due to the natural delays of preparing for trial. I would overhaul the announcement and reset process to minimize the impact on witnesses so they are less likely to be unable to cooperate.

Judge, County Criminal Court (Court 4)
Joe Bridges – Unopposed

Judge, County Criminal Court (Court 5)
Questions:
1. What is your occupation? Please describe your education, training and experience that qualify you for this position. (Limit: 50 words)
2. What are primary challenges of this position and how will you address them? (Limit: 100 words)
3. Discuss significant improvements you would like to make, if elected. (Limit: 100 words)

Vic Rivera

1. Judge in Flower Mound for over 3 years. Own a law firm where I practice criminal defense and family law. Bachelor's degree in Political Science and Criminal Justice from Midwestern State. MBA and Law degrees from Texas Tech. Former Ft. Worth police officer, Army veteran, and Christ follower.

2. The biggest challenge is to eliminate the backlog of nearly 1000 cases that are on this court’s docket. A backlog is very inefficient and costs the taxpayers money. I would create a master list of active cases and establish the reasons for the delays. Then I would meet with the other four criminal court judges to create a plan to slow down the assignment of new cases to this Court so that the old cases can be addressed and finalized. I would then meet with the District Attorney's office to see if they can aid in this project.
3. Carefully review defendants’ criminal histories and scrutinize the punishments given to repeat offenders to prevent leniency to habitual criminals. Increase efficiency by separating when attorneys and pro se litigants come to the court. Cut down on the length of time between hearings to move the cases along faster. Possibly cut out one hearing so that citizens do not have to repeatedly miss work or school. Look for newer and more improved rehab facilities and programs. Try to use technology to better equip the defense attorneys in communicating with the Court. Participate in trying to establish a mental health court.

**Coby Waddill**

1. Attorney at Law; Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice – UNT 1994; Law Degree – St. Mary's University 1999; Board Certification in Criminal Law – Texas Board of Legal Specialization 2005; Denton County MHMR Board member since 2003.

2. Keeping the budget in check and efficiently running the cases on the court’s docket. I would thoroughly review each attorney fee voucher prior to authorizing it’s payment. I would boost the efficiency of the docket by requiring cases to be set on the court docket once per month rather than once every two months.

3. I would like to implement a mental health managed caseload similar to those in Collin, Tarrant and Dallas Counties. People with mental illness who are also charged with criminal offenses pose a significant issue in the Denton County courts and jail. These defendants require a different type of supervision to keep our families safe. With my extensive experience in the mental health field, I am uniquely qualified to implement and supervise this program.

**Judge, County Probate Court**

**Bonnie Robison** – Unopposed

**District Clerk**

**Sherri Adelstein** – Unopposed

**County Clerk**

Questions:
1. What is your occupation? Please describe your education, training and experience that qualify you for this position. (Limit: 50 words)

2. What are the primary challenges of this position and how will you address them? (Limit: 100 words)

3. Discuss significant improvements you would like to make, if elected. (Limit: 100 words)

**Juli Anne Luke**

1. Graduated Saddleback HS with honors. Attended Riverside College. Presently, I am a Senior Criminal Court Clerk – 8.5 years in the criminal court system, handling all court records and filings while maintaining compliance with legislative updates. Previously coordinated the Driver Education Program for Lewisville ISD.

2. The primary challenge of this office is maintaining a fiscally responsible approach to managing all the county records of rapidly growing Denton County. With roughly 70 employees, in-house education and training are key to keeping the costs down. The taxpayers should expect a very high level of service with a low cost basis. In addition, restructuring the management will also bring a more fiscally conservative approach.

3. If elected, I will cut the budget, starting with excessive travel. I will reduce the layers of management between the office and the public. I will work more cooperatively with other elected officials and department heads, increasing productivity. I will treat the employees with respect and professionalism, reducing turnover and saving tax dollars.
D’Lynne Shelton

1. Chief Deputy County Clerk. I have worked at each level of responsibility in the Denton County Clerk’s office for 20+ years. The last 17 years I have served in various leadership/management positions. I have received specialized clerk training and extensive management training to prepare me specifically for County Clerk.

2. Managing a large staff with such diverse departments is always a challenge. Using my management training and the resources I have gained will allow me to continue to resolve issues and problems with consistency among all departments. Serving such differing departments requires extensive management experience. County growth adds to the complexity meeting these challenges without continuing to increase resources. During my 20 years in the office, I have been able to implement technology and develop procedures to greatly meet the demand of growth using the resources we have available.

3. Improvements are always a necessity. I will continue to innovate and improve practices to save money and resources. I have a record of implementing the necessary steps to be the first clerks office in Texas to e-record, winning the Superior Innovation Award. I will make certain that we are the first office to e-record plats. As county clerk, I will make the criminal and juvenile courts paperless. Continuing to innovate and lead to improve the experience for residents and customers while saving taxpayers’ dollars is my commitment to you as your next county clerk.

County Treasurer
Cindy Yeatts Brown – Unopposed

County Commissioner, (Precinct No. 2)
Ron Marchant, Unopposed

County Commissioner, (Precinct No. 4)
Andy Eads, Unopposed

Justice of the Peace (Precinct 1)
Joe Holland - Unopposed

Justice of the Peace (Precinct 2)
James Depiazza, Unopposed

Justice of the Peace (Precinct 3)
Becky Kerbow, Unopposed

Justice of the Peace (Precinct 4)

Questions:
1. What is your occupation? Please describe your education, training and experience that qualify you for this position. (Limit: 50 words)
2. What are primary challenges of this position and how will you address them? (Limit: 100 words)
3. Discuss significant improvements you would like to make, if elected. (Limit: 100 words)

J W Hand

1. Justice of the Peace Denton County Precinct 4 since 2007. BS degree University of Tulsa. kept up to date reading the Scientific American ever month since. Extensive training by FDA, DEA, DOJ and CIA. Texas police officer and extensive JP training. Federal Law Enforcement Special Agent, supervisory experience in investigations///

2. The Justice of the Peace Court is constitutionally designed to be the people’s court for simple justice. You don’t need a lawyer to present your case. 96% of Texas JPs are not lawyers. No Denton JP is a lawyer and yet about
90% of all civil and criminal cases are resolved at this level. Texans want to be heard, not herded. I conduct more hearings than any other Denton JP court and will continue to do this. JP4 ranks second in revenue with the smallest staff. We do more with less. A new facility should even improve on this.

3. Denton County has a larger population than some US States. JP 4, has the largest population of our JP Precincts. This precinct is larger than Taylor County, Abilene, Texas. This Precinct has twice the population of Parker County. We have a docket of nearly eight thousand cases and we do it with four court clerks in the worst facility in Denton County if not Texas. You now go through the Clerks offices to get into the courtroom. Distractions are constant. Our good performance is accomplished by being efficient, using every available tool such as going paperless for simple eviction cases.

Scott Smith

1. A small business owner who has served the public for 30 years as mayor, councilman, precinct chairman, finance committee chairman and community volunteer. As Town Magistrate I worked with police signing arrest warrants and setting bail. Through these experiences I have developed the skills and abilities a justice must possess.

2. Provide fair and equal justice for all from a compassionate judge while treating everyone with the respect they deserve. A good justice must act with integrity, listen to all perspectives, and relate to adults and youth alike since this office addresses juvenile issues such as truancy. For thirty years I have dedicated my life serving our community as an elected public servant and volunteering such as the Wounded Warrior project, Meals on Wheels and National Day of Prayer. The most important things to me are family and community. I will apply these attributes to your Justice Court. The “Peoples Court”.

3. The main challenges are making the court more accessible for working citizens, managing the budget in a fiscally responsible manner, and creating a proactive involved relationship with our youth and schools. Expand office hours and hold court one night a week for easier accessibility. The budget for this office increased nearly 20% in the past 8 years. Take necessary action to ensure it’s run in a cost effective manner. Survey our school districts to determine how we can work together to better educate our children on the consequences of truancy and other juvenile issues. Establish a local Teen Court.

Harris Hughey

1. I have over 20 years of legal experience as an attorney and prosecutor. I have a Doctorate of Jurisprudence from the University of Tulsa and a B.B.A. from Texas Wesleyan University. I was a high school basketball coach, taught special education and am a small business owner.

2. With jurisdictional limits rising, it is imperative to have someone on the bench, who understands fundamental principles of law and can apply them to any set of facts. A JP Judge must also be knowledgeable, intelligent, and use common sense. I practice in this particular court on a regular basis and there is a need for improvement and change. A correct and proper judicial ruling, based on sound principles of law, which are acquired through years of legal practice, minimize the number of appeals sent to the county courts, thereby saving taxpayers money.

3. I will treat every litigant, witness and attorney with respect. Anything less is unacceptable. Judicial temperament and demeanor set the tone for the courtroom and staff. It will be drastically improved. The number of appeals will be significantly reduced. I will get it right the first time while rendering competent, honest and ethical justice, using sound principles of law. As a steward of your tax dollars, I will manage the staff, docket, and budget efficiently. Dockets will move forward in a timely fashion. Taxpayers deserve the most experienced judicial candidate, which is Harris Hughey.
Al Filidoro

1. Texas Wesleyan Law, JD; LeTourneau University, MBA; Cleveland State University, BBA. Associate Professor/Law. Attorney and Mediator. My track record as a public official, mediator, educator, and legal professional demonstrate that I can best serve the wide variety of cases that come before this Court. I will serve without biases or prejudices.

2. This Court needs new energy, integrity, and efficiency and a Judge that will serve full-time. I will put my law practice on hold to dedicate my full efforts to this Court. I will work with school officials to develop an effective enforcement program that will address truancy, drugs, and bullying that will hold both student and parents accountable. I will guarantee equal justice under the law. Both sides will have an equal right to be heard without biases or prejudices. Decisions will be decided by rule of law, not whims or feelings. I will make you proud for supporting me.

3. It's time for a refresh! Decisions will be made according to the law. Taxpayers will not pay for this Court's mistakes again on appeal at the County Court level. I will get it right the first time. The Judge of this Court is also its administrator. My successful experience as CFO of a major agency with over $1.5 billion annual revenue proves I have the skills to manage tax dollars wisely. Both sides will know they were treated fairly and with respect regardless of outcome. School administrators will be enlisted to help me address truancy through an Education Advisory Committee.

Justice of the Peace (Precinct 5)

Questions:

1. What is your occupation? Please describe your education, training and experience that qualify you for this position. (Limit: 50 words)
2. What are primary challenges of this position and how will you address them? (Limit: 100 words)
3. Discuss significant improvements you would like to make, if elected. (Limit: 100 words)

Paul Moore

1. I am a business owner. I served our Country as a Marine for six years. I have years of law enforcement experience as Deputy Sheriff and State Trooper. I've worked as a mid-level Manager for fortune 500 Companies. I serve as elected Precinct Chairman for the Republican Party.

2. The Justice Court in Precinct 5 will experience increased case loads resulting from the amazing growth in our area. I will utilize my experience to coordinate efforts with legislative, Judicial, Law Enforcement and Community Officials to run this court efficiently. I will be proactive regarding the distribution of information that will assist residents in our community by facilitating better access to Justice Court Services. I will work closely with local entities to proactively address issues insuring that options are considered before a case is heard in Justice Court. Lastly, I will fairly and reasonably represent the residents of Precinct #5.

3. The primary improvement that I would make would be to become more accessible. I will interact with members and leaders within the Law Enforcement, Judicial, and Legislative communities to create an environment of cooperation to not only improve efficiencies within the Justice Court but to assist other organizations and agencies. I will work with school leaders to take proactive steps to reduce truancy issues in our community. To reach this goal I will pursue opportunities to visit schools and communicate the benefits of a proper education as well as to highlight the many pitfalls of poor attendance.

Cynthia Mitchell

1. County Clerk. I have 15 years experience supporting and managing the county civil and criminal courts. Each year I receive specialized training in the courts and local government issues. In 2013, we received a best practices award for my court practices. I have extensive experience in managing county issues.

2. The primary challenges of any JP court is having an experienced judge presiding over criminal and civil matters. In the last Legislative Session, significant changes were made to the Civil
Practices and Remedies Code. My experience and training in this area of the law will allow me to better serve all who come before me as JP. Additional challenges facing this office are reaching the youth of Pct 5 to reduce truancy and setting them on the right path for future success. I will implement a youth programs working with schools and families to address these issues.

3. Implementing an effective teen court program will be the first step I will take. I worked in the very first teen court program in Denton County as a prosecutor when I was 16. I witnessed the positive impact this program has on youth. As the JP, I will work with our communities to enrich programs available to assist youth and their families. Also, I will manage the docket to make it the most efficient JP docket among all offices. In doing so, I will coordinate with the local communities to assist in providing courtroom space to them.

Danny Spindle

1. I serve as the City of Sanger Municipal Judge, currently in my 27th year. I have attained over 300 hours of continuing education credit through TMCEC. I have been a Production Manager for Peterbilt Motors for 28yrs. Supervising both budget and production for up to 50 employees.

2. Under our State Education Code, school age children must meet State mandated attendance requirements. I will work with our School Administrators and our Constables office to effectively reduce “truancy” violations within Precinct 5. Our goal will be to educate our youth, while also saving tax dollars lost for non-attendance. Docket backlog: I will challenge the District Attorney to provide prosecutorial personnel necessary to reduce the backlog of pending cases set for this court. This Court is by definition “The People's Court” and as a Litigant or a Defendant, you deserve to have a Speedy Trial.

3. As Justice of the Peace you are responsible for all actions and activities involving the Court and its personnel. I firmly believe in having a well trained staff and will provide the opportunity to all current personnel to receive the training necessary to obtain certification in their respective roles. I will be a full time Magistrate and make myself available to personnel and Law enforcement 24 hours a day when needed. Court room decorum(dress code) will be established and posted for anyone entering the Court room.

Mike Brucia

1. President of Double M Vending Inc., a local Denton business. US Air Force veteran. Known as the go-to person when problems arise throughout 30 plus years leading private sector businesses, my knowledge and experience, partnered with integrity, compassion and common sense have provided successful outcomes for employees and companies.

2. Over 11,000 civil and criminal cases are filed annually in Precinct 5. The far majority of cases heard are civil cases. Most of these are evictions and repair & remedy cases. Landlord and tenant, service provider and consumer, I have experience and insight into both sides of these cases. Growth in Precinct 5 will undoubtedly result in more case filings. My background has prepared me to be flexible and efficient while maintaining high standards. My leadership, ability to quickly discern relevant facts, decision making skills and commitment to Texas law and the US Constitution make Mike Brucia, the right choice.

3. State law passed in 2011 resulted in new rules for Justice Court effective 8/31/13 that empower the Judge to apply logic and common sense to deliver speedy justice to the parties. My experience delivering products and services worth more than they cost to produce, managing service businesses and real estate leasing, my understanding of the law, strong work ethic and good judgement will maximize budget dollars and reduce the number of cases filed in higher courts. Volunteer service with organizations such as CASA, Rotary, United Way, and Knights of Columbus demonstrates my commitment to community involvement and leadership.

Mike Sweet

1. 33 years service as a Peace officer, over 21 of that in Denton. Current assignment- Detective in the Criminal Investigations Bureau; Master Peace Officer and Certified Police Instructor. Advanced training in the following:
2. The main challenge of this position is dealing fairly and equitably with people who have a grievance. Decisions made by the Justice of the Peace can affect a person financially and, in some cases, affect their freedom. This cannot be taken lightly. People who come before the Court deserve to have attention paid to them, to be heard and must be treated with dignity and respect. In my current position, I do this daily. I will draw from my training and experience to strive to do what’s right for the citizens of Precinct 5.

3. In talking with people, I have found that many do not know what a Justice of the Peace does, what services are offered through the JP Court or how to access those services. I will initiate an information program so that citizens can understand and feel more comfortable accessing the JP Court. The goal is to generate more use of the JP Court. I will initiate an intern program drawing from the local colleges and universities. Interns will be utilized in the information program as well as assisting office staff. I want to build on the firm foundation laid by Judge Bateman.

Mike Oglesby

1. 35+ years law enforcement real world experience, retired Texas State Trooper/Investigator, licensed Master Peace Officer; mediation and crisis intervention trained; financial, fraud, property and cyber crimes experience, extensive interviewing and courtroom procedure experience (JP, County, State, Federal); proficient liaison with local, State, Federal officials

2. Keeping the docket up to date to avoid a backlog of cases: work efficiently with litigants and/or their attorneys to make it an efficient and fair process for everyone. Proper case scheduling on the docket, open communication with Constables, and an organized and complete docket allows Constables to make the courtroom flow smoother with calling the proper parties at the appropriate times. E-filing: in advent of electronic filing of cases, preparing the office to implement the new system efficiently by providing proper education and training.

3. I would put into place a continuing education and training program for staff to keep the office competitive with other JP offices. Education and training would be designed to keep staff current with all legislative updates, updated systems, new and amended policies and procedures, and provide continued growth in customer service. Understanding that citizens need a fair and cost effective venue to address grievances, I would increase the reach of the current public education programming so our citizens truly understand how JP5 can assist them. Public education on current trends and issues in Precinct 5 would be essential.

Justice of the Peace (Precinct 6)

Questions:

1. What is your occupation? Please describe your education, training and experience that qualify you for this position. (Limit: 50 words)

2. What are primary challenges of this position and how will you address them? (Limit: 100 words)

3. Discuss significant improvements you would like to make, if elected. (Limit: 100 words)

Gary Blanscet

1. Attorney, 34 years, business law practice. Earned law degree and Master of Public Administration; train and teach mediation; teach graduate level Business Ethics; trained in court administration; former Mayor and City Council of Carrollton; current and past public service and community nonprofit board memberships; member of business advisory councils.

2. Precinct 6 steadily grows not only in number of people, but also in the strength, sophistication, economic, and social standing of its urban, business base. Nearly 6,000 cases were filed in 2013, and the case-load will continue to expand. According to the NCTCOG, the SH121 corridor bordering on JP6 is “the
fastest-growing part of the U.S.” This growth places increasing demands on the performance of the public service duties of this and all offices of our County. My commitment is to manage this office and its docket full-time with an attention to modernization, professionalism, and courteous customer service.

3. Precinct 6 constituents historically have received a well-run Justice Court by Judges Marchant and Larson, so significant operational changes from their tenures are unlikely. However, needs impacted by the 2013 changes to the “small claims court” service obligations and a potential increase of the Court’s jurisdictional limits beyond $10,000 will dictate such service improvements as adopting modernized, economically-viable electronic record-keeping and filing systems; and streamlining the docket management and control process. Electing a Judge with legal experience, a public administration background, and mediation training will also significantly address the increasing service demands expected to be placed on this office.

Tom Washington

1. I am a professional licensed CPA and Real Estate Broker in Texas. I hold a BBA degree and have advanced training in real estate. I have 30 years of community volunteer experience in leadership roles. I am available as a full-time judge by virtue of selling my successful businesses.

2. This is a service position for the community. Continuing the efficient & courteous service currently offered and delivering fair, impartial justice with integrity is my goal. People seeking redress and justice should feel like they have received fair treatment when their hearing is complete. With my extensive business background and deep knowledge of the community, I will be able to apply that knowledge in service to the community. My knowledge of law is gained from business law training at university, serving as legal affairs officer for my international businesses and working with legislators drafting new laws in Austin.

3. In order to improve efficiency, the Justice Court should be converted to a paperless system, as much as will be allowed by the Denton County Commissioners Court. While filings will be made by plaintiffs and defendants on paper forms, converting these forms using scanners to electronic filings will save filing space and speed up file sharing. The Justice Court is not a court of record but does have to share documents in connection with appeals, collection of fines and to serve warrants and legal documents on other parties.

Constable (Precinct 1)

Questions:
1. What are the most important responsibilities of this office in serving the people of Denton County? (Limit: 100 words)
2. What training and experience qualify you for this position? (Limit: 50 words)
3. Discuss significant improvements you would like to make, if elected. (Limit: 100 words)

Jesse Flores

1. The Constable and Deputy Constables are peace officers like the Sheriff’s dept. or municipal officers. Constables have the unique assignment of handling civil orders of the court. They serve summons, writs and judgments. This includes seizing property related to civil judgments, evicting occupants of a residence or taking custody of a child from a non-compliant parent under court order. The constables office is vital to ensure the rights of those involved in civil suits are reconciled. In addition the Constables office serves as the Bailiff of the Justice of the Peace court and serving arrest warrants of the JP court.

2. I have been a peace officer for 22 years. I have served in patrol, Investigations and as a Supervisor. I have my Master Peace Officer Certification and my Advanced Civil Process Certification. Being the Incumbent I have mastered the budget and completed my first year with a $20,000 surplus.

3. I inherited an office from a man I respect very much, the late Constable Jim Dotson. He was experienced and respected in the community. I will maintain his philosophy and principals in serving the citizens of Denton County. Where I have made improvement is in the introduction of technology. I am in the process of automating as much of
our daily processes as possible. I have purchased computers for use in the patrol units in order for officers to have computer data bases available. This eliminates the travel to the office to research parties we are attempting to locate.

**Johnny Hammons**
No response received.

**County Chairman**
**Questions:**
1. What are the most important responsibilities of this office in serving the people of Denton County? (Limit: 100 words)
2. What training and experience qualify you for this position? (Limit: 50 words)
3. In what areas would you expect to make significant improvements? List the improvements you would recommend. (Limit: 100 words)

**Dianne Edmondson**

1. The County Chair is the leader of his/her political party, elected by the Party’s Primary voters. The Chair has responsibility for the Primary, picking the judges and sites for Election Day; ensures that the Headquarters is functional to serve both the Party’s candidates and constituents, and raises the money to do so; speaks to the media on behalf of the Party; chairs the monthly meeting of the Pct. Chairs and other Republicans. I believe it is also the County Chair’s responsibility to educate voters about key issues and the GOP positions and to hold elected officials accountable to the Party Platform.

2. I served as vice chair of the DCRP for 6 years and have been the current County Chair since 2002 and have led the DCRP to statewide prominence as a model of organization and results. Statewide candidates now court Denton County voters as they can’t win without carrying Denton County.

3. We intend to grow the DCRP to include many more grassroots activists, since our Party is built from the ground up, and so are emphasizing our Precinct Meetings (Conventions) this year, which will take place at 7:30 on Election night at each precinct’s polling site. We encourage Republican Primary voters to attend, even if they voted early. They can call our HQ to find that location: 940-321-2671. As Denton County continues to grow, we will find incoming conservatives and help them register to vote and become involved in the DCRP and also appointing new Precinct Chairs in our vacant precincts.

**Write-in Candidate**
No response received.

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You may bring this VOTERS GUIDE into the voting booth!
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