



TAEA Newsletter

Texas Association of Elections Administrators

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TAEA Updates and Regional Groups



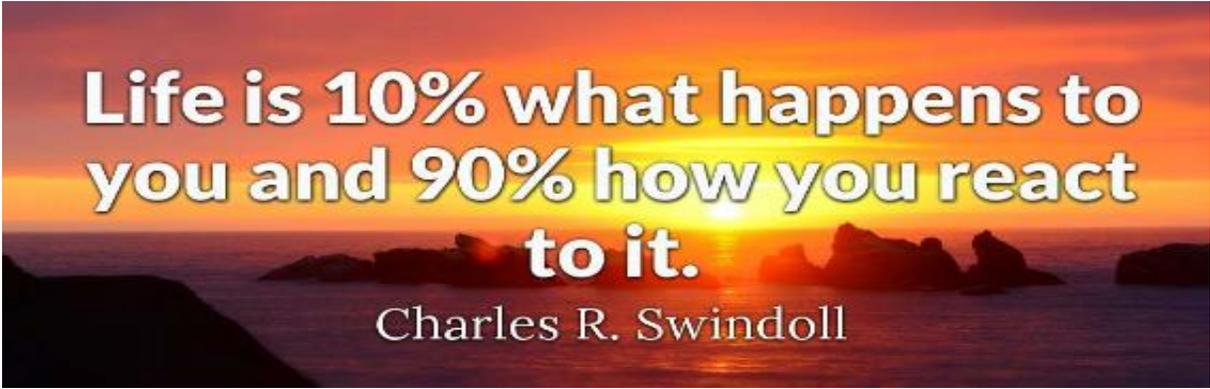
Work is underway to better organize & update [the TAEA website](#). One of the areas we've focused on is the Regional Groups section. Our goal is to assign a page to each regional group and give regional group organizers the ability to upload their own meeting notices, agenda, minutes, photos, documents, or really whatever they'd like. The first part is done and we're happy to add other regional groups (or even new members to existing groups). The second part may take some time as we iron out the site-editing privileges that we want to give to groups.

Another area we want to improve there is in educational & legislative resources. This is where we can either upload or provide link to past seminar/conference presentations, as well as provide links to our past legislative proposals and committee hearing videos.

Lastly, we're aiming for tighter integration between [our Facebook page](#) and [our Twitter feed](#).

If you have thoughts on what you'd like to see, please don't hesitate to [contact us](#).

-CJD

<p>Vice President</p>	<p>2018 Primary....nothing has changed! It's challenging, busy, sensitive, emotional, difficult, demanding, exciting, eventful, tiring and so much more. But, like always before, we will look back and ask ourselves, "How did we get it all done?" It takes great planning and a great staff, for sure!</p> <p>God bless us all, as we begin our early voting next week. May we all be ready, strong, positive, and may we all have a great 2018 Primary!</p> <p style="text-align: right;">- Yvonne Ramon</p>
<p>Treasurer</p>	<p>Happy Primary Season Everyone!</p> <p>First of all, how about we all take several deep breaths, in through our nose and out through our mouth. Don't you feel better now? For a lot of us, this isn't our first rodeo but for those of you who are new, I want you to know that you have all of us to turn to for help. You are not alone and we will help you get through this.</p> <p>Things here in Aransas County have been a little, no A LOT, crazy. Thankfully, I have found an assistant who will start on February 26th. I was hoping she would start next week but who can pass up a vacation in Panama in the middle of an election? I felt like it was best to let her get it out of her system before she enters the real world which we all call elections. I will introduce her to y'all next month.</p> <p>I don't have anything new to report to you guys but I do want to wish you a smooth and uneventful election. I am looking forward to none of us making the news this time around. :) Until next time.....</p> <p style="text-align: right;">- Michele Bennett</p>
<p>Legislative Chair</p> 	<p>Nothing to report at this time.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">- Mina Cook</p>
	 <p style="text-align: center;">Life is 10% what happens to you and 90% how you react to it.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Charles R. Swindoll</p>

Continuing Education



Pardon my rant, but 2018 has started out as a very frustrating year. Just as we were mailing out confirmation notices, we started receiving Ballot by Mail applications. Our application system for ballot by mail has reached the absurd. I turned 65 last year and have received exactly 10 applications for ballot by mail from candidates. We all know about the first Abbot mailing. Now we are getting a reprinted one from that campaign. About half of the other ones I received contained erroneous information telling voters that they could mail, fax, or email the application back. When we contact the voter to tell them that they have to mail, we are now “stupid” for sending out erroneous information. Of course we are also stupid for not knowing that those 15,000 voters to whom we mailed Confirmation Notices had moved last year....because they had updated their info with the Post Office and we should know that.

I, and Heather Hawthorne have been asked to testify to a Senate select committee on Election Security. The hearing is in Austin on the 3rd day of Early voting. Among the items the committee is charged to study is to “review voting security protocols as well as the responsibilities and duties of members of the Electoral College”, although I am not sure why these two items are in the same sentence. The mandate goes on to say the committee will study how to ensure that the “will of the people is reflected through their ballot and carried out through their presidential electors”. Another charge is to examine “disenfranchisement occurring inside nursing homes and assisted living facilities.”

Those of us who have been doing what we do for more than a few years know that our elections are more accurate and secure than they have ever been. We also know that there is some fraud and abuse, especially involving the use of ballot by mail. In reality, most of the examples we see in Fort Bend are parents signing ballot by mail applications for their student who is away at college. Maybe if we would send a couple of Aggie Moms to prison for falsifying their kid’s application, it would stop. Whatever the danger of ballot by mail fraud, I firmly believe that the reality pales next to the perception. If I received ten solicitations for ballot by mail, so did a lot of folks in their 80’s and 90’s many of whom are in those nursing homes. Many sign and mail back every one they receive. Some are annual, some are only marked for the Primary, some are not marked for the Primary, and in many case we receive different applications for party primaries from the same voter. Then their children call and ask why we sent their parent a ballot. Then the voter calls and says why did you send me a Republican ballot I wanted a Democrat ballot. Then they show up at the polls and want to vote and deny that they ever submitted one, much less four, applications. Then stories turn up on Facebook and get shared 43,000 times. Then the media calls and wants to know about the ballots that were sent out to voters who did not apply (despite those 4 applications). Then the legislators introduce bills to curb the ballot by mail fraud reported by the media. All of this adds to the perception that there are far greater problems in our electoral system than truly exist.

The last couple of weeks have also seen a resurgence of stories about the hacking of our voting systems. Occasionally, some of the stories are somewhat factual but the headline may read “U.S. Voting systems hacked” but the story is about someone attempting to hack a statewide data base. Of course the story couldn’t be about hacking voting system, because none are on line, and none have ever been remotely hacked.

All of that being said, I hope everyone has good elections and has the opportunity to welcome spring.

- John Oldham

Just a SPECIAL NOTICE for the recipients of the newsletter. The association newsletter is intended for members and associates of Texas Association of Election Administrators. Those individuals who are not members or associates of the association may be removed at any time.

