



Spring 2012

# Seizing the Momentum

Texas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty

## Bexar County Campaign to Host Juan Melendez Speaker Tour

Things are changing in Bexar County—the county that has sent the third-highest number of people to death row in Texas. In 2011, there were no new death sentences in Bexar County. Over the past four years, seven out of ten capital murder trials resulted in sentences other than death. This fact is hugely significant and shows that juries and prosecutors alike are recognizing that there are alternative sentences that punish the truly guilty and keep our communities safe.

But there is still a lot of work to be done! Bexar County accounts already for one execution this year, and two more individuals convicted in Bexar County are scheduled for execution later in 2012. Anthony Bartee, whose execution date in February was withdrawn so that testing could be completed on DNA evidence, has received a new execution date even though the results of these tests are still not known. Last year 40% of homicides in San Antonio went unsolved. This was up from 25% the year before, and Bexar County faces a major budget deficit—straining funding that is available for vital social services that we know are essential for creating a safe, healthy, and prosperous San Antonio.

Over the past year, TCADP has been engaged in a Bexar County Campaign to educate and mobilize a base of community members, organizational allies and faith communities to send a message to the district attorney's office and to city, county and state elected officials that we are ashamed of Bexar County's track record with the death penalty. We do not believe the high number of death sentences and executions reflect our values, and we can be smart on crime while also using our tax payer dollars to invest in the human resources of our community—in education, public safety, support for victims, and other programs that help disadvantaged individuals and neighborhoods.

This message clearly resonates as we have more than doubled our base of support in just under nine months. Over 250 people attended our "Religious Leaders Dialogue on the Death Penalty" at Trinity University last October, where leaders of seven different faith traditions spoke out on their faith's teachings against the death penalty and Bishop Cantu gave the closing remarks. We have held campaign partner meetings, community activist trainings, speaking events at local churches and civic organizations, and we have had a presence at community festivals and conferences. Thanks to all of our wonderful volunteers, we aim to triple our base of support by the end of this year!

The next outreach and volunteer opportunity is "Death Penalty No Más", a speaking tour with death row exoneree Juan Melendez from April 12-15. Juan will speak at a series of public and private events at local colleges, high schools and churches. [Please join us on Friday, April 13<sup>th</sup> at 7pm at the Radius Center for an evening with Juan that is free and open to the public!](#) Additional public talks and documentary screenings will be announced as we finalize the schedule. Please check back at: [www.tcadp.org/bexar-county-campaign](http://www.tcadp.org/bexar-county-campaign).

Throughout the year, campaign staff and other guest speakers can be scheduled at your church or organization for a discussion, film screening or training. Please contact TCADP's Bexar County Campaign Coordinator, Anita Grabowski, for more information: [anita@ncadp.org](mailto:anita@ncadp.org). Please get involved by signing up on the volunteer section of TCADP's

website and we'll call you (look under "Get Involved" at [tcadp.org](http://tcadp.org)). Don't have time, but want to support TCADP's important work? Please consider becoming a Partner for Justice [www.tcadp.org/donate/partners-for-justice](http://www.tcadp.org/donate/partners-for-justice). **Together we ARE making a difference!**

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### Scheduled Executions

#### April

26 Beunka Adams

#### May

2 Anthony Bartee

16 Steven Staley

#### June

6 Bobby Hines

Execution Vigils: [tcadp.org](http://tcadp.org) under "Get Involved - Stop Executions"



## From the Executive Director

Dear friends,

I recently marked the fifth anniversary of my arrival in Texas. Shortly after I moved here, TCADP Board President Bob Van Steenburg taught me a favorite local expression that I quickly embraced: "I wasn't born in Texas, but I got here as fast as I could." As a non-native Texan, I have found myself defending the Lone Star State time and time again to my colleagues in the abolition movement and to friends, family, and the occasional complete stranger. As you can imagine, "Texas bashing" is a popular pastime of those who abhor the death penalty - understandably so. Yet I would much rather see our colleagues *lift up the signs of change in Texas*. At every opportunity, I point to the dramatic decline in new death sentences, our increasing number of supporters, encouraging dialogues with elected officials and grassroots leaders, friendly editorials from the media, and the fact that my car still hasn't been rear-ended -- even though I proudly display a TCADP bumper sticker everywhere I go -- as evidence of progress.



Not surprisingly, abolitionists aren't the only ones with strong opinions about our state. According to an article that appeared earlier this year in the *Houston Chronicle*, a recent survey by Public Policy Polling found that 40% respondents view Texas favorably and 31% hold an unfavorable view. Just 29% said they were unsure how they feel about Texas -- only California had a lower rate of uncertainty (28%) and more than half of respondents felt unsure about most of the states. It's hard not to imagine that those who view Texas unfavorably are reacting to the frontier justice, hang 'em high image that some people like to project.

Yet just as I seek to reduce the groans and sarcasm that the mere mention of Texas can induce among those who oppose the death penalty, I would like to give our state's reputation a makeover among our fellow Americans and friends overseas. Rather than being known as the nation's busiest execution chamber, I would like people to know the Texas that I've discovered in the past five years... the amazing richness and variety of musical genres, the incredible regional diversity, the stark beauty of the open skies of West Texas, the dance halls and honky tonks, the cuisine, the wildflowers that are now blooming along our highways, and the hospitality of people everywhere.

Over the last five years, I have come to love every corner of this state. I know that Texans are better -- and can do better -- than the death penalty in responding to acts of violence in our society. It's up to us to create this climate for change so that the death penalty is no longer considered the status quo and we Texans (native and transplants alike) can be proud of all our state has to offer.

Thanks for all you do to support the work of TCADP!

### TCADP Seizing the Momentum

*TCADP Seizing the Momentum* is published quarterly by the Texas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty, the only statewide grassroots organization working solely to end the death penalty in Texas through education, outreach and advocacy.

Subscription Information: *TCADP Seizing the Momentum* is distributed to TCADP members and allies. To find out more about the organization and become a member, visit our website at [www.tcadp.org](http://www.tcadp.org).

Issue #36, Spring 2012  
(Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall)

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Contributors: Kristin Houlé, Chris Castillo, Anita Grabowski, Dave Atwood

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Linda White, Murder Victim Family Member  
Bishop Joe A. Wilson, Retired Methodist Bishop

### Volunteers

Thanks so much to the following individuals who have volunteered in the TCADP Office or provided administrative support in recent months: Lauren Zielinski, Alexandra Noll, and Margot Cromack. We are immensely grateful for your assistance!



## Calendar of Events

### April

- 1 Odessa Chapter Meeting, 4:00pm [odessa@tcadp.org](mailto:odessa@tcadp.org)
- 4 "Remembering Kandy Kirtland: A Mother's Journey after Murder" Lunch discussion with Jan Brown, Vicki McCuiston and Rich Woodward at Texas A&M, College Station. Public invited, Rudder 402, Noon-1:30
- 11 Respect Life Fair, St Edward's University, Austin
- 12-15 Juan Melendez Speaking Tour, Bexar County
- 18 Dallas Chapter Meeting, 7:00pm, [dallas@tcadp.org](mailto:dallas@tcadp.org)
- 22-28 National Crime Victims' Rights Week
- 23 Anthony Graves - Friendship West Baptist Church, Dallas
- 26 Scheduled Execution: Beunka Adams
- 28 "First Amendment Day Celebration" 1:00—4:30pm, TriPoint - San Antonio (TCADP Tabling)
- 30 El Paso Chapter Meeting, 6:00pm, [elpaso@tcadp.org](mailto:elpaso@tcadp.org)

### May

- 2 Scheduled Execution: Anthony Bartee
- 6 Odessa Chapter Meeting, 4:00pm [odessa@tcadp.org](mailto:odessa@tcadp.org)
- 8 Puro Slam - Poetry on the death penalty, San Antonio
- 8 Restorative Justice Program, Trinity UMC, Austin 7:00pm
- 11-12 Gulf Coast ELCA Synod Assembly, Houston
- 16 Dallas Chapter Meeting, 7:00pm, [dallas@tcadp.org](mailto:dallas@tcadp.org)
- 16 Scheduled Execution: Steven Staley
- 19 TCADP Board of Directors meeting
- 26 DFW International Festival
- 28 El Paso Chapter Meeting, 6:00pm, [elpaso@tcadp.org](mailto:elpaso@tcadp.org)

### June

- 3 Odessa Chapter Meeting, 4:00pm, [odessa@tcadp.org](mailto:odessa@tcadp.org)
- 6 TX UMC Annual Conference—Witness to Innocence
- 6 Scheduled Execution: Bobby Hines
- 7-10 SWTX UMC Annual Conference
- 8-9 Democratic State Convention, Houston
- 9 San Antonio Pridefest
- 14-16 Rio Grande UMC Annual Conference, San Antonio
- 15-16 Texas Black Expo, Houston
- 20 Dallas Chapter Meeting, 7:00pm, [dallas@tcadp.org](mailto:dallas@tcadp.org)
- 20-21 Baptist Fellowship Assembly, Fort Worth
- 23 Houston Pridefest
- 25 El Paso Chapter Meeting, 6:00pm, [elpaso@tcadp.org](mailto:elpaso@tcadp.org)

Full event descriptions and monthly chapter meeting dates with active links can be found at [www.tcadp.org](http://www.tcadp.org) under "Get Involved - Attend Events".

## Follow TCADP on TWITTER!

@TCADPdotORG

Breaking news,  
coming events,  
things you  
should know!

twitter



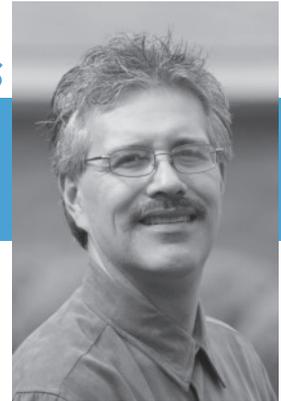
RETWEET!



## Voices of Texas

*"It is my goal to keep (my Mother) Pilar's memory alive and create a legacy that she would be proud of."*

- Chris Castillo



### Remember National Crime Victims' Rights Week—April 22-28

Every April in communities across the U.S., crime victims, victim advocates, criminal justice professionals and the general public commemorate National Crime Victims' Rights Week. For 30 years Texas has been a leader in the victims' rights movement, and there is no better time than now for Texans to focus on the hard-won rights that victims of crime in our state have earned, according to the Texas Department of Criminal Justice's Victim Services Division.

Attending at least one crime victims' rights week event every year has become a habit for me - specifically a candlelight vigil. It is a place where crime victims can unite to remember loved ones and pay tribute to the struggle of overcoming victimization.

For crime victims, learning to live with the aftermath of a crime is a journey. It is something that is always part of you and sometimes molds who you are and who you become. I like to think that the death of my mother, Pilar- who was murdered in 1991 - has made me a different person. I believe it has changed me in a way that would make my mother proud. Now I am working with crime victims through Murder Victims' Families for Reconciliation.

It is my goal to keep Pilar's memory alive and create a legacy that she would be proud of. Crime victims' rights week gives my family a chance to remember my mother and pay tribute to her accomplishments. (Pictured: Chris with his mother, Pilar)



On a state level, crime victims determined to overcome the effects of crime and regain control of their lives were the driving force behind the creation of the Texas Crime Victim Bill of Rights, which became law in 1985. Prior to the Texas Crime Victim Bill of Rights, crime victims in Texas had little or no opportunity to participate in the criminal justice process. Even among criminal justice professionals, few were aware of victims' needs: to feel secure, to be informed, and to be heard and heeded by the criminal justice system. In May 1993, a Victim Services section was established in the Parole Division of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. The section notified crime victims, whose offenders were incarcerated within TDCJ, about their offender's status, particularly in regards to the parole review process, according to the Texas Department of Criminal Justice's Victim Services Division

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice demonstrated its commitment to crime victims when "to assist victims of crime" was added to the agency mission statement and the Victim Services section was elevated to division status in 1997, according to the Texas Department of Criminal Justice's Victim Services Division.

I urge you to participate in National Crime Victims' Rights Week events in your community and to support victims' families year round.



Submitted by Chris Castillo, National Outreach Coordinator for Murder Victims' Families for Reconciliation, [ccastillo@mvfr.org](mailto:ccastillo@mvfr.org).

Read more "Voices of Texas" at the link under "Resources" - <http://tcadp.org/what-we-do/victims-outreach/>



- To date, the State of Texas has carried out three executions in 2012, out of nine nationwide. Donald Newbury received a stay of execution in February, while the execution date for Anthony Bartee was withdrawn to allow time for DNA testing. (Note: Bartee has received a new execution date of May 2, 2012, even though the testing has not been completed, nor has the requisite hearing taken place.) There currently are seven executions scheduled in Texas through the end of the year.
- On January 27, 2012, jurors in Tarrant County sentenced Kwame Rockwell to death for the murder of store clerk Daniel Rojas in 2010. This is the first new death sentence imposed this year in Texas, but the 71st death sentence from Tarrant County since 1976. Last year, there were a total of eight new death sentences in Texas.
- On March 23, 2012, jurors in Johnson County sentenced Mark Anthony Soliz to death for the murder of 61-year-old Nancy Weatherly during a crime spree in 2010 that stretched across Johnson and Tarrant Counties. Soliz also faces capital murder charges in Tarrant County for the murder of deliveryman Ruben Martinez, who was shot on the same day that Weatherly was killed. This is the sixth death sentence imposed in Johnson County since 1976.
- Carl Wayne Buntion, now 68 years old, was resentenced to death by a Harris County jury on March 6, 2012. He was convicted of the 1990 shooting of Houston police officer James Irby. His original death sentence was overturned because of flawed instructions to jurors, which prevented them from fully considering mitigating evidence.
- On February 14, 2012, a jury in Williamson County rejected the death penalty for Bobby Ray Burks Jr., who was convicted of murdering Raul Vizuet Torres. This is the first case in 2012 where a death-qualified jury has rejected the death penalty and instead chosen the sentence of life in prison without the possibility of parole. Over the last four years, death-qualified juries have rejected the death penalty in at least 14 capital murder trials.
- The death row population of Texas has dropped below 300 for the first time since 1989, according to research by TCADP.

## New Resources

### Bring “Incendiary” to a Theater Near You!

Since December, TCADP and community partners have hosted three screenings of the film “Incendiary” in Cedar Park, Houston, and Plano in collaboration with [Tugg, Inc.](#), an exciting new organization that works to bring important films to mainstream movie theaters by letting audiences determine what they want to see.

Local organizers work through TCADP and Tugg to select a theater and decide on a screening time. They then use email and social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter to promote the event. Get enough RSVPs by the deadline, and the event’s a go!

Once a screening is confirmed, Tugg handles all the details, including ticketing and delivering the selected film to the reserved theater.

Contact Kristin at [khoule@tcadp.org](mailto:khoule@tcadp.org) to learn how you can organize a screening in your community!

### Anatomy of Injustice: A Murder Case Gone Wrong (Hardcover) By Raymond Bonner

From Pulitzer Prize-winner Raymond Bonner, the gripping story of a grievously mishandled murder case that put a twenty-three-year-old man on death row.

In January 1982, an elderly white widow was found brutally murdered in the small town of Greenwood, South Carolina. Police immediately arrested Edward Lee Elmore, a semiliterate, mentally retarded black man with no previous felony record. His only connection to the victim was having cleaned her gutters and windows, but barely ninety days after the victim’s body was found, he was tried, convicted, and sentenced to death.

Elmore had been on death row for eleven years when a young attorney named Diana Holt first learned of his case. After attending the University of Texas School of Law, Holt was eager to help the disenfranchised and voiceless; she herself had been a childhood victim of abuse. It required little scrutiny for Holt to discern that Elmore’s case—plagued by incompetent court-appointed defense attorneys, a virulent prosecution, and both misplaced and contaminated evidence—reeked of injustice. It was the cause of a lifetime for the spirited, hardworking lawyer. Holt would spend more than a decade fighting on Elmore’s behalf. (<http://www.bookpeople.com/book/%5Bmodel%5D-12>)



## TCADP Annual Conference Wrap-Up

The TCADP 2012 Annual Conference, held on Saturday, February 18 at the University of the Incarnate Word Sky Room in San Antonio, was a great success with over 120 participants from around the state and around the world. A big thank you goes out to all the TCADP members and supporters who came out, the many volunteers who assisted with the planning, the speakers and workshop presenters who shared their expertise with us, and the award winners who inspired us to keep on fighting!

We bid a fond farewell to TCADP Board Members Linda White and George Cunningham, whose terms have ended. Linda has agreed however to serve on the TCADP Advisory Board! And we welcome the new TCADP Board members who were elected at the conference (listed on page 10).

[See some of the photos from the awards ceremony and workshops.](#) (TCADP Facebook Page)

All of the conference information, including award winners, is available online at <http://tcadp.org/what-we-do/annual-conference/>.

Pictured: opening panel discussion on the changing demographics of Texas and the impact on the Texas death penalty



### SAVE THE DATE:

Saturday, February 23, 2013 TCADP Annual Conference in Austin. Plans are already underway! [See you there!](#)

### Tweets from TCADP conference...

[@tcadpdotorg](#) [#tcadp2012](#)

[Jan Anderson](#) Why I'm in [#SanAntonio](#) today <http://twitpic.com/8lk42t>

[Susan Buchanan](#) it really brings death penalty issues home to be sitting across the table from someone exonerated after 18 years on death row

[Susan Buchanan](#) New death sentences in Texas have declined by 70% in the last 8 years.

[Jan Anderson](#) Ex. Dir of [@NCADP](#) speaking [@TCADP](#) 2012StateMeeting <http://twitpic.com/8lkqjc>

[Susan Buchanan](#) Kansas, Colorado, & Maryland are close to repealing the death penalty.

[Hooman](#) The Impact of Texas' Changing Demographic on the Death Penalty panel moderated by [@jamesrhenson](#). <http://pic.twitter.com/CVEHSTqR>

[PW Keeth](#) [@MALDEF](#) represented on panel discussion at annual conference for [@TCADPdotORG](#) [#deathpenalty](#) <http://pic.twitter.com/j72jKrbj>

[PW Keeth](#) Room full of [#deathpenalty](#) abolitionists with [@TCADPdotORG](#) in San Antonio <http://pic.twitter.com/y1jk2vuK>

[PW Keeth](#) From TCADP annual conference [@ACLUTx](#) adding [#deathpenalty](#) abolition as part of strategic plan

[Susan Buchanan](#) Majority of Blacks oppose death penalty. Majority whites favor death penalty in TX.

[Susan Buchanan](#) Advocacy w/ most impact is "good ole shoe leather." Trained advocates from community going door to door.

[Jan Anderson](#) A [#Prayer](#) for [#Texas](#) from Pax Christi Tx <http://PaxChristiTexas.org> Amen! <http://twitpic.com/8lk9hi>

[Susan Buchanan](#) When presented w/ option of life w/out parole or death penalty, majority in Houston choose prison sentence

[Susan Buchanan](#) Jordan Smith: It's excellent to be recognized for slamming your head against a wall. (writing about death penalty)

[Susan Buchanan](#) Jan Brown: Murder victim's family against death penalty told "It's not about you. It's about the state of Texas."

[Susan Buchanan](#) Bishop Joe Wilson: award to a Bishop says something to Christians (esp UMC) to do more about death penalty

[Susan Buchanan](#) 1% of counties account for 30% of executions in US since 1976

[Susan Buchanan](#) Very moving afternoon session on sensitivity to victims' families



## Partners for Justice Enrollment Form

**YES! I want to participate in the Partners for Justice program to help ensure a steady, reliable source of income that is crucial to the success of TCADP's outreach, education, and advocacy initiatives!**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

**WE WILL NOT SHARE YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS.**

I will make my gifts by:

**E-Check**

By selecting this box, I authorize my bank to pay TCADP the amount I have indicated in the time frame stipulated below. I understand this agreement will remain in effect until I notify TCADP that I wish to change or cancel my pledge.

**Recurring Pledge Amount:**

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Frequency:**

- Monthly
- Quarterly
- Semi-Annually
- Annually

**Payment Information:**

Routing Number \_\_\_\_\_

Bank Account Number \_\_\_\_\_

*\*Please note that the minimum amount for credit card and e-check transactions is \$10.00.*

**Credit Card**

By selecting this box, I authorize TCADP to automatically charge the amount indicated below to my credit card on a recurring basis. I understand this agreement will remain in effect until I notify TCADP that I wish to change or cancel my pledge.

**Recurring Pledge Amount:**

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Frequency:**

- Monthly
- Quarterly
- Semi-Annually
- Annually

**Payment Information:**

- Visa
- MasterCard
- American Express

Credit Card Number \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_

Security Code \_\_\_\_\_

**Check**

My first gift by check is enclosed.

**Recurring Pledge Amount:**

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Frequency:**

- Monthly
- Quarterly
- Semi-Annually
- Annually

THANK YOU!

Your gift will make a difference in our work for justice.

If paying by e-check or credit card, please sign and date below:

Signature (required) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**To enroll as a Partner for Justice, please mail this completed form to:**

Texas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty  
2709 S. Lamar Blvd. Suite 109  
Austin, TX 78704

*TCADP is a 501 (c)(3) organization. Gifts to TCADP are fully tax-deductible. No goods or services are ever sent in exchange for gifts.*

## Member Spotlight...

Bryand Spencer, El Paso, TX



### How did you come to be against the death penalty?

I don't think I was ever for the death penalty. But I became more aware of the failings the death penalty has when I was in the Army. The last few years have had events that caused me to be more active in the elimination of the death penalty.

### How did you learn about the Texas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty?

At the State Democratic Convention 4 years ago in Austin, TX

### What are your expectations in becoming an organizational member of TCADP?

Increase my awareness and to help bring the message to more people

### Where do you see the most progress in the movement to end the death penalty in TX?

The high cost of trials has reduced the option of prosecutors to ask for the death penalty at trial.

### What is the most compelling argument for you that the death penalty should be repealed?

No one or no government can take a life.

### What other societal issues concern you?

Racism, economic stratification

### What other organizations are you a member of?

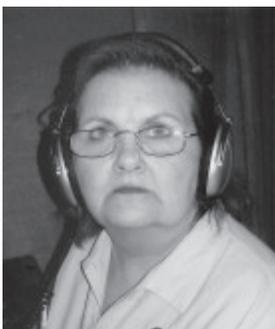
Democratic Party

### What are your gifts, hobbies and areas of expertise?

Tax Law, Fishing, Photography, Stamp collecting

## A Tribute to Marta Glass - A Voice for the Voiceless

Marta Glass, long-time friend and supporter of the Texas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty (TCADP) died in Houston on March 14, 2012. Marta was one of the original members of TCADP. In fact, she was the person who most encouraged me to found TCADP in the early 1990s and make it a statewide organization. Marta wrote the first TCADP newsletters in the 1990s - not professional like we have today, but the beginning. She had a heart of gold that went out to all the prisoners in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ).



Why was Marta so strongly opposed to the death penalty? One reason was that her husband, Jimmy Glass, whom she dearly loved and married when he was in prison, was executed in 1987. Jimmy's execution motivated Marta to work against the death penalty for the rest of her life. Sr. Helen Prejean included a quote by Jimmy Glass in the front of her second book, The Death of Innocents.

(Picture provided by KPFT.)

Marta was a long-time commentator on Ray Hill's "The Prison Show" on KPFT Radio in Houston. In fact, it would be fair to say that KPFT was Marta's home away from home. Because of her dedication to the welfare of prisoners in TDCJ, Marta was loved dearly by these prisoners. She received thousands of letters from prisoners and responded to most of them. Often, TDCJ officials would receive a letter from Marta demanding that a problem in one of the prisons be corrected. Marta had no tolerance for cruelty to prisoners.

Marta was also a teacher. She once asked me what I knew about Eugene Debs, the union leader who died in 1926, I said, "Not much" and so she gave me a quote by Debs which has hung in my office ever since:

*"Your honor, years ago I recognized my kinship with all living beings and I made up my mind that I was not one bit better than the meanest on earth. I said then, and I say now, that while there is a lower class, I am in it, and while there is a criminal element, I am of it, and while there is a soul in prison, I am not free."* - Eugene Debs

This is the creed by which Marta Glass lived her life. I am proud to have been her friend.

-Dave Atwood



## News from the Field

**Brownsville:** Members of the Brownsville chapter participated in the annual Gathering for Peace and Justice in Weslaco on February 4, 2012 at South Texas College. They had an information table and distributed literature about the death penalty; they also sponsored a breakout session. Approximately 50 people signed a petition.

**College Station:** On April 4, a lunch discussion entitled “Remembering Kandy Kirtland: A Mother’s Journey after Murder” will be presented to the public and Texas A&M staff and students by Jan Brown and other members of TCADP, who will talk about their experiences with the criminal justice system and what makes the death penalty a social justice issue. Public invited, Rudder 402, Noon-1:30.

**El Paso:** On March 24, 2012, 18 El Pasoans attended TCADP’s Community Activist Training, which took place at St. Pius X Catholic Church and was led by TCADP staffers Vicki McCuiston and Kristin Houlé. Participants included members of the League of Women Voters of El Paso, the NAACP- El Paso Chapter, St. Patrick’s Church Criminal Justice Ministry, UTEP Alumni, the Unitarian Universalist Community of El Paso, and St. Pius X (pictured below). Through this training, we aimed to set goals and develop a strategy for our work in El Paso; we also sought to determine appropriate roles for volunteer leaders and establish local committees charged with carrying the work forward.



Activists brainstormed about effective messages against the death penalty, with a particular focus on their relevance to El Pasoans. (While El Paso has been called the “Safest Large City” in America, it is confronted daily with violence that occurs just over the border in Juarez, Mexico.) Participants also discussed ideas for increasing community involvement and reaching out to grassroots leaders and took responsibility for several action items related to religious and civic outreach. Everyone enjoyed a delicious lunch, catered by Sagrado Corazón Tortilleria & Grill.

A special thanks to EPADP Coordinator Lety Moreno for securing the meeting space and taking care of logistics, to Wayne Daniel for providing a history of EPADP and reaching out to his networks, and to Pat and Charlie Doyle for hosting our visit!

This was TCADP’s first community activist training of the year. We intend to conduct additional trainings in locations across the state throughout 2012 – stay tuned to TCADP for details on training opportunities that may be offered soon in your area!

**Houston:** On January 26, 2012, the Houston chapter hosted a meeting with Brandon Dudley, the Chief of Staff for State Senator Rodney Ellis, who spoke about recent criminal justice reforms.

*Cont. Page 8*

### TCADP Office and Local Contacts

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#### San Antonio

Roger Barnes

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Look for TCADP on Facebook and “Like” today! See photos of activities and links to important news developments.

facebook



## News from the Field cont. from page 7

Members of the chapter joined the Houston Peace & Justice Center (HPJC) for a special screening of the film "Incendiary" on February 1, 2012, in conjunction with Tugg, Inc. ("Incendiary" focuses on the case of Cameron Todd Willingham, who may have been wrongfully executed in 2004 and who was the focus of an investigation by the Texas Forensic Science Commission.) TCADP Founder Dave Atwood, Texas Defender Service Executive Director Kathryn Kase, and filmmaker Joe Bailey, Jr. participated in a discussion after the film.

As part of Amnesty International USA's Death Penalty Action Weeks, the local Amnesty group and the TCADP Houston chapter screened the film "Dominique's Story: Thou Shalt Not Kill" on March 11 at the Houston Mennonite Church. The film focuses on Dominique Green, who was executed in 2004 by the State of Texas. He was convicted at the age of 19. David Atwood spoke afterwards about his friendship with Dominique.

David Atwood will speak about the death penalty during the first annual conference of the Civil Rights Coalition in Houston on March 31, 2012.

**Odessa:** The chapter continues to hold monthly meetings. On February 5, 2012, members participated in a Pro-Life Rally with the Knights of Columbus; the Bishop of the Diocese of San Angelo has declared the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of every month as "Pro-Life Sundays."

**San Antonio:** On January 30, 2012, the Baptist University of the Americas (BUA), the Christian Life Commission of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, and TCADP hosted a screening of "At the Death House Door". The film was followed by a Q & A with Anita Grabowski, Texas State Campaign Coordinator for NCADP, Rev. Carroll Pickett, and Stephen Reeves, Legislative Counsel for the Christian Life Commission. Rev. Pickett spoke during the BUA chapel service on January 31. That evening there was a panel discussion at BUA featuring Rev. Pickett, Dr. Javier Elizondo, Theological Studies professor at BUA, Sam Mill-sap, former Bexar County District Attorney, and Stephen Reeves (moderator).

On February 4, 2012, TCADP co-sponsored another screening of the film "At the Death House Door" and a discussion with Rev. Carroll Pickett in San Antonio. Former TCADP Board Member Roger Barnes provided opening remarks. The event, entitled "Ethics and the Arts: A Workshop; Addressing Social Justice and the Death Penalty," took place at Our Lady of the Lake University and was co-sponsored by Amnesty International San Antonio, NASW San Antonio, The Mexican American Catholic College, Our Lady of the Lake University Worden School of Social Work, Vitas Hospice, and the Alamo Area Ethics Committee. Participants received Continuing Education credits. Eighty-seven people attended the event.

## Vigil Locations [tcadp.org](http://tcadp.org) under "Get Involved"

**Huntsville (Location of Executions)** Corner of 12th and Ave. I (in front of Walls Unit) at 5:15 pm

**Austin (Site 1)** - On Congress at 11 St., 5:30 - 6:30 pm, **(Site 2)** - Prayer vigil at St. Ignatius Martyr Catholic Church on Oltorf and Congress at 6:00pm (approx 20 minutes)

**Beaumont** Diocese of Beaumont, Diocesan Pastoral Office, 703 Archie St. @ 4:00 pm on the day of an execution

**Brownsville** 802 and Paredes Lane from 4:30 -5:30pm

**College Station** 5:30 to 6 pm, east of Texas A&M campus at the corner of Walton and Texas Ave. across the street from the main entrance

**Corpus Christi** Sisters Of Incarnate Word Convent, 2930 Alameda, 6:00 pm

**Cuero** At Gazebo on Main Street , next to Library, 5:45 pm. Public Invited. For information call 361-676-2921

**Dallas** SMU Catholic Center at the corner of University Blvd. and Airline Rd., starting at 6 pm

**El Paso** 6:00 pm Saint Patrick Cathedral, 1118 N Mesa St , Our Lady of Mount Carmel, 131 S Zaragosa Rd and Our Lady of Guadalupe 2709 Alabama.

**Ganado** At Assumption Catholic Church Pro-Life Monument, 5:45 pm Public invited. For information call 361-771-3325

**Houston** Rotating Locations... April-June 5:30 to 6:20 St. Paul's Methodist Church, at the intersection of Main and Binz.

**Lubbock** St. John's United Methodist Church, 1501 University Ave., 5:30 to 6:30 pm

**McAllen** In front of The Monitor, corner of Nolana and Jackson at 5:30 pm

**McKinney** St. Gabriel the Archangel Catholic Community located at 110 St. Gabriel Way, the last Sunday of the month, following the 11:00 mass to remember those scheduled for execution in the following month, as well as the victims of their crimes and family members on both sides

**Odessa** Public vigil takes place from 5:00 to 5:30 pm in front of St. Joseph Catholic Parish, 907 S. Dixie, Odessa 79761. Prayer takes place inside the church from 5:30 to 6:00 PM. All are welcome. The church phone number is 432-337-2213

**San Antonio (Site 1)** - Archdiocese of San Antonio, in the St. Joseph Chapel at the Chancery, 2718 W. Woodlawn Ave. (1 mile east of Bandera Rd.) at 11:30 am on the day of execution. Broadcast on Catholic Television of San Antonio (Time-Warner cable channel 15) at 12:30 pm and 6:30 pm on the day of execution. **(Site 2)** - Main Plaza across from Bexar County Courthouse and San Fernando Cathedral - Noon **(Site 3)** - Join the Sisters of Divine Providence and friends in vigil and prayer from 6:00 - 6:30 pm on Texas execution days in front of Our Lady of the Lake Convent by the large crucifix. 515 S.W. 24th Street

**Spring** Prayer Vigil at 6 pm on evenings of executions at St Edward Catholic Community, 2601 Spring Stuebner Rd, Spring, TX 77389 for the murder victim, for family and friends of the murder victim, the prison guards and correctional officers, for the family of the condemned man/woman, for the man/woman to be executed and to an end to the death penalty

**Victoria** At Incarnate Word Convent, 5:45 pm. Public Invited. For information call 361-575-7111



This interview was conducted with Anthony Graves by Vicki McCuiston, TCADP Program Coordinator using questions submitted on the TCADP Facebook and Twitter pages. Anthony's responses are listed below each question. TCADP is so very happy for Anthony and his new life and truly hope the best for him. His story was recently highlighted again on *48 Hours Mystery* on March 17. View the episode:

<http://www.cbsnews.com/video/watch/?id=50121760n&tag=contentMain%3BcontentBody>

facebook

Jerry McCombs Wow, I don't have any questions for this man....I am totally speechless after reading the *Texas Monthly* article. I only hope that the state will do the right thing for him and that changes will be made so that this cannot happen again. I would think that the investigators and prosecutors who did this would be under some sort of charges for their actions. I hope that you will relay to him that I hope and pray that he will get to put together a life that is fulfilling and rewarding for him. As a former Texan I am sorry that he had to pay for other's greed... Wow, Thank you.

Jessica Arnold Reinhardt Did he ever start to lose faith in GOD while he was serving 18 years in prison for something he didn't do?

No, because it wasn't God who did it to me. It was man who did it. God saw me through it. God was always there with me.

**I am wondering if he still prays?** I talk to God all the time.

**What does he pray about now?** Gratitude. Appreciation for life given now and I pray for the wisdom and ability to use it.

**What would he like others to pray about for him?** Please pray that I stay passionate about my work. It is a lot of pressure to continue to fight for the

guys left behind on death row. Pray for strength.

**Does he get treated differently now by his family and outside world now that he's out?**

Yes, but it is great. The reception has been the best thing. I am accepted by society after being cast away for 18 years. It is such a relief to be embraced.

**If he could have one thing in this world, anything he wanted, what would it be?**

For us to abolish the death penalty, it is such an inhumanity. It makes us look bad. I would start there and then next would be world peace. We cannot bomb our way to peace. And, that I continue to have a good relationship with my Lord and Savior.

**And last one, will he ever be able to forgive those that put him in prison?**

Already have. Moved on the moment I was released.

King Rawlins **What permanent effects on his personality has false incarceration had on him?**

I am more aware of myself and who I am after having so much time to reflect while sitting in prison for 18 years.

Christina Polanco **How do u feel now about the state of TX and their quickness to prosecute those of color?**

Forgive, for they know not what they do. They are blinded by something other than justice.

**Do u feel TX as a state is racist in its use of the d/p and how can this be changed?**

The United States of America is racist and Texas is part of that. Texas was one of the last states to abolish slavery. Slavery was not abolished until 1865, 2 years after the Emancipation Proclamation. However, the younger generations will change it. Racism will be washed out with the coming generations.

AnneMarie Barrios **How difficult is it to reconnect with friends and family after 18 years away, especially with children and grandchildren?** It is hard. I was isolated for many years and not used to being around a lot of people. It has not been a smooth transition but I am just taking one step at a time and it will be good.

**Where do you see the fight against the death penalty in Texas right now, and do you believe it will ever be abolished here?** I see in Texas that people are starting to learn about the death penalty. It is permeating and continues to show up. We are growing more uneasy with the death penalty. Awareness is coming about because of the exonerations. It makes people nervous. It is going to start showing in the polls and be more of a topic of conversation.

**I have another question--how does one come to a place of peace with the system and the people who unjustly took away 18 years of your life (with continuing consequences).** You have to put life in perspective to find peace. It was one incident, not my whole life. Life is a journey. You control your peace.

**I don't know how a person could not be consumed with pain and hate after having this happen to him. How did you handle this?** Love conquers all. If you have love in your heart you can overcome. I knew who I was when I was arrested and convicted so their labels couldn't define who I was. I was a man of peace and love and I was not going to give that away.



*"You have to put life in perspective to find peace. It was one incident, not my whole life. Life is a journey. You control your peace."*

*- Anthony Graves*



**Caitlin E Adams** Anthony, so very grateful that you are free. What could you tell me about advocating for an innocent man on TX death row, I want to do any and everything possible to bring justice for this man.

You already answered the question. You do any and everything possible: writing letters, making phone calls, getting involved in the fight, making connections, attending events. The people that will help you are at out there you have to connect with them.



**Anders Johansson** What can people in Europe do to help abolish the DP in the US? Seems that no argument helps...

There are a lot of groups that are good advocates. But, we need to start in the court rooms when people are charged. We need to make sure they have good representation and investigations. If counties have a formidable opponent in the court room they will not spend the money on the death penalty. I want to find lawyers who will do pro bono cases. I had to get a formidable opponent to help me get my life back. We are swimming up stream with post-conviction, but if we put someone who is formidable against a prosecutor in a court room we can stop the use of the death penalty.

**Kaori O** Q: While in DR for a crime you didn't commit, what was best way for civilian to help you from outside?

Write me a letter, keep me encouraged, support me. Think about what you would need. Send Soap, toothpaste, deodorant.

## TCADP Welcomes New Members to the Board of Directors



**Carolyn Esparza, LPC.** With almost 40 years experience as a counselor and social services administrator, Carolyn Esparza is Founder and Director of Community SOLUTIONS of El Paso, a non-profit social service agency uniquely serving the prison family. She is a university instructor, a recognized workshop leader and professional training facilitator, and author of *"The Parenting Business: Hindsight is 20/20"* and articles featured in several magazines and newspapers. Carolyn received her Master's Degree in Social Work from Our Lady of the Lake University in San Antonio. She has provided court ordered psycho-social assessments for the courts in San Antonio; served as Family Involvement Coordinator and Social Service Administrator for a maximum secu-

urity facility of the Texas Youth Commission and as the Treatment Director for a maximum security private youth detention facility in Colorado; and instructed parenting classes at a federal prison located in El Paso, Texas. She also has been involved with prison ministries in both adult and juvenile facilities. In 2009, Carolyn initiated the first-ever National Prisoner's Family Conference, which is now in its fifth year; she serves as the conference Chair. In addition, she is the President of the El Paso, Texas chapter of CURE, an international organization seeking prison reform.



**Rev. Bernard Kern.** Bernard Kern is a retired minister of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the past Executive Director of Goodwill Industries of Fort Worth. He is a native Texan who grew up in Houston and graduated from the University of Texas in Austin with a Bachelor of Business Administration Degree. He then attended the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago, graduating with a Master of Divinity Degree in 1962. He served for 10 years in parish ministry, holding pastorates in Point Comfort and Houston, before joining Goodwill Industries. During his Goodwill career and throughout retirement, he has continued to be involved in parish ministry, serving as interim pastor in 10 congregations, the last being Hope Lutheran Church in Springtown, Texas. In addition, Bernard has served as Executive Director

of the Mission Endowment Fund for his Synod, President of Peace Action of Tarrant County, and co-chair of the Inter-Faith Network for Peace and Justice. He resides in Fort Worth.



**Estrus Tucker.** Estrus Tucker is an independent consultant and keynote speaker specializing in small and large group facilitation, and in designing and leading conversations and retreats across the country in support of personal and professional development, community renewal, conflict transformation, healing and reconciliation, appreciation of cultural diversity and strategies of inclusion. Estrus is a seasoned practitioner of the Circles of Trust, Social Change for Leadership Development and other models of civic engagement. For the past fourteen years, he has served as President & CEO of Liberation Community, Inc., a social justice network, and Past President & Moderator of the Minority Leaders & Citizens Council hosting a weekly live audience, Cable & Radio Leadership Forum that encouraged dialogue & action.

He has also served as President & CEO of the Metropolitan Black Chamber of Commerce and Vice President of United Way of Tarrant County. Estrus' current volunteer service includes Commissioner and Chair of the Fort Worth Human Relations Commission, member of the Tarrant County Workforce Development Board, International Assoc. Of Human Rights Agencies Board, the National Center for Courage & Renewal Board, and the Fellowship of Reconciliation Tarrant County Steering Committee. He is a Vietnam-era Veteran and an ordained minister active in interfaith and ecumenical initiatives, and has served congregations in Baptist, Presbyterian and nondenominational Churches. Estrus is an alumnus of the University of Texas at Arlington, Leadership Fort Worth and the John Ben Shepherd Texas Public Leadership Forum. His mission is to inspire courage and life-giving values that promote community, nonviolence and justice, in service of a world that works for all.



# Thank You for Your Generous Support

TCADP thanks the following individuals & organizations for their generous contributions in the past quarter (January 7 – March 20, 2012). Your financial assistance is critical to all of the activities and events described in this newsletter! Please let us know if we have inadvertently left you (or your partner) off of this list. We apologize in advance if we missed anyone.

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\*Signifies Partner for Justice, TCADP's recurring donation program; look for the insert in this newsletter or go online for details!



## Giving through Social Media

<https://www.snoball.com/o/texasdeathpenalty>

*Snoball* is a new application made to make giving easier and lots of fun! In addition to standard monthly and one-time donations, you can create your own way of giving. By creating "giving Snoballs", you can bring giving into the everyday. Imagination is your only limitation. Some examples include:

- Every time I go to my coffee shop, I give \$1 to TCADP
- When I work out, I'll give \$1 to TCADP
- When my team wins, I'll donate \$5 to TCADP
- When someone follows me on Twitter, I'll give 50 cents to TCADP

Creating a Snoball takes just a few seconds. Once it's completed, you'll be notified whenever your Snoball is triggered. You can modify and delete Snoballs at any time.

**Create a Snoball and give to TCADP today!**

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**TCADP 2012  
Award Winners!**



Pictured Left to Right: Jan Brown—Courage, Kelly Epstein—Appreciation, Jordan Smith—Media, Bishop Joe Wilson—Founder’s Award, Brother Brian Halderman—Appreciation. Congratulations!