



# TRUTH, JUSTICE AND INFORMATION FOR ALL

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE COLLIN COUNTY LAW LIBRARY

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## IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Articles and Websites of Interest

### Rule 263 Trial by Agreement

Texas Lawyer, Vol. 27 no. 3 (2011), p. 20-21.

This article highlights Texas Rule of Civil Procedure 263, which allows attorneys to submit an entire case by an agreed statement of facts, eliminating the need to present evidence in open court. Acting under Rule 263, the court only has to determine the applicable law and apply it to the agreed facts and evidence submitted by the parties. Rule 263 can expedite litigation and save the expense of a trial. To implement this rule, parties must "file a written motion with the court stating all the essential facts of the case to which they have agreed; they also must request judgment on the agreed statement of facts. The parties or their attorneys must sign the motion. It should include a certificate for the court to sign, which certifies and approves the agreed facts."

### An Invitation to Apply for Certification in Criminal Appellate Law

Voice for the Defense, Vol. 40 no. 1 (2011), p. 32-35.

The Texas Supreme Court approved Criminal Appellate Law as a new specialty last year. This article reviews the requirements for certification, including the grandfathering section which

allows an applicant who has been licensed for ten years, certified in Criminal Law and satisfies other requirements, to be certified without taking the written exam. You can also see the certification requirements at [www.tbis.org](http://www.tbis.org).

### Legal Writing: Lessons from the Bestseller List

Texas Journal of Business Law Vol. 43 No. 3 (2009), p. 593-631.

The author starts out by reviewing *why* legal writing is important: it helps win cases, enhances credibility with judges and other lawyers, and prevents malpractice and grievances. He reports on the results of a survey taken from the Harris and Dallas County Judges about writing preferences and pet peeves, and reveals:

- What judges read: summary judgment briefs, almost no discovery dispute briefs, and "the majority" of other briefs filed.
- Top pet peeves of judges: briefs filed just before hearings, and wordiness
- Judges like: briefs that plainly state the requested relief on the first page, that are concise, contain a brief introduction, no footnotes, and descriptive section headers.

Most expositions on writing style are as dry as old bones (I personally remember being bored to tears by *Elements of Style*). [continued on p.2]

Copies of these articles are available in the library, or from the law librarian via email:

[ldodds@col.collin.tx.us](mailto:ldodds@col.collin.tx.us)

## Articles and Websites of Interest (continued)

Baruch, however, manages to breathe life into this dusty subject, by being clear, concise, and lacing his text with examples from current fiction writers— quotes

from Elmore Leonard, Robert Parker, Quintin Jardine, John Grisham—as well as examples from legal briefs. Here’s a quote from his section on Strong Conclusions:

“A strong conclusion is nearly as important as a strong introduction. Stuart Woods did a great job ending his early novels. In ending a book about a middle-aged man recounting his youthful adventures... ‘The years have passed, and all this has remained fresh with me. I think of Mark often. I cannot bear to think of Annie.’ ”

Some of his other recommendations are: “Write in something resembling English,” “Tell a Good Story, or Any Story,” “Avoid Screaming Adjectives.”

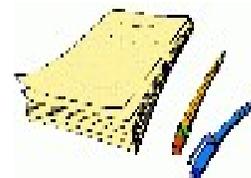
The article is broken into eight sections and numerous subsections and the whole thing is very easy to browse.



## Librarian Activities

On March 11 and 12, Library Director Lori Bull Dodds and Assistant Librarian Ellen Heavner attended the joint meeting of the Houston Area Law Librarians and the Southwestern Association of Law Librarians held at the University of Houston’s Law Center. They attended seminars on Alternatives to Westlaw and Lexis-Nexis, Online Government Information, Apps for Law Librarians, QR Codes, and other topics. They also toured the O’Quinn Law Library and networked with other librarians.

Ellen also attended a one day Legal Reference Skills seminar held at the Texas Wesleyan School of Law on April 8th. She participated in sessions on Finding Federal Law online, the Federal Court System, and Texas Statutory History.



## IT Tips and Trends

### Contact Information:

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Hours of Operation:  
Monday–Friday  
8:00 am–5:00 pm

*Staff is available for a  
presentation to your  
organization.*

### How secure is my password? <http://howsecureismypass.net>

This site will tell you how long it will take a desktop PC to crack your password, based on a “brute force” algorithm. It’s a good idea to check your passwords. One of my favorites would only take 3 hours to break. Hmm. Time to do some updating.

### How to make connecting to Gmail, Facebook, and Twitter more secure <http://www.techsupportalert.com/content/how-make-connecting-gmail-facebook-and-twitter-more-secure.htm>

Briefly: make sure you are using **https** in your browser—if you are not, and you’re using a wireless device, it’s very easy for someone to eavesdrop on your activities.

### Email Alerts for Federal Circuit and Supreme Court Cases [www.courtlistener.com](http://www.courtlistener.com)

Developed by a grad student at UC Berkeley, this FREE website allows you to set up email alerts to deliver search query results to email. The search interface is fairly simple, and you can set up results to be sent to your mailbox on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis.

## Announcements

### **SAVE THE DATE!!**

2011 Collin County Bench Bar Conference  
June 3-5, 2011  
Tanglewood Resort Hotel and Conference Center  
290 Tanglewood Circle  
Pottsboro, TX 75076

Registration forms are available at the Law Library or online at  
[www.Texasjudge.com](http://www.Texasjudge.com)

The Texas Criminal Defense Lawyer’s Monthly Publication, The  
Voice for the Defense, is now online at  
[www.voiceforthedefenseonline.com](http://www.voiceforthedefenseonline.com)

The site provides a complete archive of pdf issues, going back to 1972.



**The Law Library  
will  
be closed May 30  
for Memorial Day  
and July 4 for  
Independence Day.**

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## New on the Shelf:

- My Demons were Real: Constitutional Lawyer Joseph Calamia's Journey, 2010.
- O'Connor's Federal Employment Codes Plus, 2011.
- O'Connor's Texas Causes of Actions Pleadings, 2011.
- O'Connor's Texas Civil Appeals: Practice Guide and Annotated Texas Rules of Appellate Procedure with Forms, 2011.
- Roach's Texas Rules of Evidence Annotated: with Federal Rules of Evidence Appendix, 2011.
- Texas Attorney's/Paralegal's/Secretary's Handbook, 2011.
- Texas Rules of Court: Volume III- local, 2011.

## A Little Legal Humor

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