

12th annual
**First Amendment Awards
 and Scholarship Dinner**
 Society of Professional Journalists,
 Fort Worth Professional Chapter

Keynote Speaker
Alfredo Corchado
 Mexico City Bureau Chief, The Dallas Morning News

Friday, April 17, 2015
 cash bar 6 p.m., dinner 6:30

Cacharel
 2221 E. Lamar Blvd.,
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\$50 per person
 RSVP by April 15

MEETINGS

Next at [IABC Fort Worth](#) ...
Awaiting the rebirth: [website](#), [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#).

Next at [Greater Fort Worth PRSA](#) ...
Go for the Gold: How to Get and Keep Your APR

Fifty years since its establishment, the Accredited in Public Relations credential remains the gold standard. Chapter leaders ask: Have you achieved it? If not, what's holding you back?

In recognition of April as Accreditation Month, **Dan McFadden**, APR, the PRSA Southwest District's APR committee chair, will explain the importance of the APR — what it means to a practitioner and how it can be achieved and maintained.

Greater Fort Worth PRSA has numerous successes on the accreditation front in the PRSA Southwest District. McFadden, a self-described "APR evangelist," will discuss how Fort Worth and the district are excelling while other chapters struggle to get their APR programs off the ground.

McFadden has 30 years of experience in PR, broadcasting, marketing and new media. He's a past president of the Arkansas PRSA chapter, where he served nearly 10 years on its board. In 2010 he received the chapter's Crystal Award for service to the community and the profession. As an assembly delegate he created the "APR Ready to Roll" program.

Time & date: 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Wednesday, April 8
Place: Colonial Country Club, 3735 Country Club Circle, Fort Worth ([map](#))
Cost: chapter members \$25, national members \$30, nonmembers \$35, students \$20; walk-ups add \$5
Registration has closed; walk-ups are welcomed

Next at [Fort Worth SPJ](#) ...
A night to shine: [First Amendment Awards and Scholarship Dinner](#). RSVP by [April 15](#).

STRAIGHT STUFF

The TCU Friends of Fine Arts and Friends of Communication Guild scholarship awards luncheon will be Wednesday, April 22, at the Dee J. Kelly Alumni and Visitors Center, 2820 Stadium Drive. More from **Charlene Smith**, 817 257-7232. ...

New York Times best-selling author **Taylor Stevens** will reveal her journey into publishing, offering an insider's viewpoint on the industry, agents and how to get a book into print, at the next Writers' Guild of Texas meeting, 7 p.m. Monday, April 20, at the Richardson Public Library. Stevens writes the acclaimed Vanessa Michael Munroe series and has been published in more than 20 languages and optioned for film by **James Cameron's** production company, Lightstorm Entertainment. Her books are international boots-on-the-ground thrillers featuring a mercenary information hunter in a non-testosterone mix of Jason Bourne and Jack Reacher. More on the Writers' Guild of Texas at [writersguildoftexas.org](#).

IABC local update: **Chris Vary**, head of digital practice for Weber Shandwick Southwest, will front IABC Dallas' "wildly popular" SXSW recap luncheon Tuesday, April 14, at The Clubs of Prestonwood. [Info](#).

PRSA local update: **Roslyn Dawson Thompson**, leader of the largest regional women's fund in the world and a former agency executive supporting Fortune 50 companies, will examine "Principles to Propel You to Leadership" at the PRSA Dallas monthly luncheon Thursday, April 9, at Seasons 52 at NorthPark Center. [Info](#).

more eChaser on p. 2

The Gallery

PR faces in the news



Dan McFadden, APR, marketing director for Arkansas Children's Hospital and a past president of the PRSA Arkansas chapter, will discuss the intricacy and grandeur that is the APR at this month's Greater Fort Worth PRSA meeting. See p. 1.



Erika Aguirre has joined J.O. as a public relations account executive. Previously, she was the PR and social media community manager at Lopez Negrete Communications, the nation's largest Hispanic-owned and operated full-service agency.



Lisa Albert has been named senior communications manager for Justin Brands. After serving most recently in a similar role at TCU, she brings 14 years of experience, with expertise in branding, media relations, social media and community relations.

THIS MONTH IN PR/MARKETING HISTORY BY JEFF RODRIGUEZ
An irreverent look at the people and events that keep us up at night

Things Go Badder with Coke

How Coca-Cola Tried to Catch the Wave — but Got a Tsunami Instead

Thirty years ago this month, the Coca-Cola Co. sent a message in a bottle. The message was about New Coke, and it is one everyone should read, even today.

Most people know how vividly New Coke failed. Less known is how close it came to succeeding.

For years, Coke had been losing market share to arch-rival Pepsi. The only thing keeping Coke No. 1 was its many contracts with restaurants and businesses. Pepsi, with **Michael Jackson** as chief spokes-dancer, dominated the all-important youth market. (I still think it would be cool if Wall Street traders referred to this as Coke belly futures.)

Simply put, Coke's prospects were flat. Company executives knew that a fresh product would dilute sales from established Coke, resulting in Pepsi becoming No. 1. The P company already claimed that more people preferred the taste of its drink. Coke could never allow Pepsi to say that more people actually *drank* it. Further complicating matters, the No. 3 soft drink was Diet Coke, which tasted a lot like ... Pepsi.

Enter "Project Kansas," the top-secret scheme to upgrade the Coke formula. It is important to note that Coke did not just pop the top on its new product: In extensive blind tests, tasters overwhelmingly liked the flavor of New Coke over both old Coke and Pepsi. But even this success posed problems.

For obvious reasons, Coke could not tell the tasters that it was considering replacing the old formula with the new. Instead, the tasters were asked if they would choose the product if it indeed was Coca-Cola. Here again, encouraging news bubbled up: Most said they'd be fine with it. A small number of tasters, fewer than 13 percent, said they would not, and many of these people felt quite strongly about it. But hey, how much trouble could one small group cause?

On April 23, 1985, New Coke was rolled (poured?) out to the public. But Coke's PR woes had already started. Four days earlier, when the company promised the media a major announcement for the following week, Pepsi pounced. The CEO announced a company-wide holiday, then bought a full-page ad in The New York Times proclaiming that Pepsi had won the "cola wars." Behind the scenes, the shrewd Pepsi PR team was feeding questions to the media.

When Coke CEO **Roberto Goizueta** met with reporters in New York City to herald New Coke, he found himself in an awkward position. He could not admit that Pepsi was winning in taste tests. But how, after decades of telling Americans that Coke is "the real thing," could he now say Coke had something even more real? Remember, these were the days before augmented reality.

Even so, the product had a crisp start. Sales jumped 8 percent from the same period the year before, and the stock was up. Critically, 75 percent of the thirsty survey respondents said they would buy New Coke, preferably with a Moon Pie.

Then came the Southern rebellion. The New Coke malcontents were a vocal bunch, and many lived in the southeastern U.S., where the company's Atlanta headquarters are located. Suddenly, boycotts were being organized and bottles emptied in the streets. The Coke-heads' vitriol was noted (and no doubt agitated) by media coverage. The folks behind the Real Thing had a Real Problem.

Angry letters and phone calls bombarded Atlanta. A Texan spent more than \$1,000 stocking up on old Coke, bottlers filed suit, and one irate citizen filed a class action suit. But he also thoughtfully created his own PR firm and said that if Coke would switch back, he'd be glad to provide counsel.

In other words, people were becoming upset because people were becoming upset. In Georgia an elderly woman reportedly attacked a New Coke deliveryman with her umbrella. And the guy who filed the class action suit had taken the taste test and actually preferred New Coke. These situations weren't covered in our PR classes (or perhaps we just overslept that day).

For Coke, the last (sippy) straw may have been when **Fidel Castro** complained about the new drink. Just as troubling was **Bill Cosby**, perhaps worried about damaging his good reputation, announcing that he would no longer serve as pitchman. (Nostalgic pause as we remember a time when both Cos and Michael Jackson were considered suitable in that role.)

And then it was over. Seventy-seven days after the New Coke announcement, the nation's long nightmare ended. On July 11, Coke said it was bringing back "Coca-Cola Classic." To break the story, ABC interrupted a soap opera. A senator took the floor to proclaim the reversal. Gratitude abounded from sea to shining C. Within months, Coke was back on top.

But fate would not be kind to New Coke: It was renamed Coke II in 1992 and, in 2002, quietly discontinued. Meanwhile, the "Classic" title was dropped in 2009, leaving us right where we started, except with much bigger bottles.

Theories have been offered on why New Coke fizzled, and many hold some credibility. Most authors do not believe Coke planned the whole thing. After all, it spent thousands of dollars developing the new drink, and taste tests had been overwhelmingly positive.

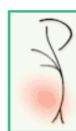
It's easy to say this is one idea that should have been canned. But in 1985 Coke was stumbling, and the company needed to do something. This just wasn't it. Here's the life lesson: In the world of PR and marketing, the formula for success can quickly turn into a recipe for disaster.

more *eChaser* on p. 3

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Freedom of Information Foundation of Texas update: From the [Tyler Morning Telegraph](#): "One of the best ideas to come out of this year's Sunshine Week — a week dedicated to open and accountable government — is a bipartisan movement in Austin to change the way governing bodies such as cities and counties do economic development. An 'Economic Development Transparency Coalition' has formed, calling on the Legislature to change the Open Meetings Act and the Public Information Act to make economic development matters — like tax incentives and abatements — open to the public." ... Following violent incidents involving private university police officers, the Senate Criminal Justice Committee approved legislation that would classify those campus police records as public information. The committee voted 5-0 in favor of sending Senate Bill 308 by Sen. **John Whitmire**, D-Houston, to the full Senate. **Robert Arnold**, a reporter for KPRC-TV in Houston, who reported on a videotaped beating of a man by Rice University police, testified on the bill. The 2013 beating was captured on a dash camera that Rice police refused to fully release to the public. [Details](#). ... Advocates for watchdog reporting testified March 2 in favor of a Senate bill that provides limited protections for news accounts about potential wrongdoing that are based on third-party allegations. Senate Bill 627 would codify what has been part of common law since 1990, said Sen. **Joan Huffman**, R-Houston, as she introduced her bill before the Senate State Affairs Committee, which she chairs. [Details](#). ... When the Senate Education Committee convened on the Senate floor March 4, just minutes after the day's session recessed, senators quickly discussed and passed a bill concerning high school graduations. Even though the meeting involved public business, their discussions were not public. The reason: A new Senate rule, sergeants-at-arms insisted, as they ordered staff and reporters to outside a brass rail several feet away, where the proceedings were mostly inaudible. [Details](#).

GET A JOB

Brite Divinity School at TCU has an opening for a receptionist and meetings coordinator (securing caterer, arranging room reservations). Primary responsibility is entering donations as they come in and preparing acknowledgments, other communication to donors, board, etc. See job code 55092 at TCU Human Resources. [Info](#). ... The Texas Observer seeks two news interns and one intern concentrating on cultural coverage. [Info](#). Submit a brief cover letter, résumé and no more than three published clips or other reporting/writing samples to managing editor **Brad Tyer**, tyer@texasobserver.org. Application deadline April 21. ... The Victoria Advocate seeks a writer skilled in online convergence and First Amendment reporting. [Info](#). The family-owned paper also has an opening for a photographer. More on that from ccobler@vicad.com. ... The Seattle Times is looking for a full-time associate sports producer. [Info](#). ... The Fredericksburg Standard Radio-Post, the largest weekly newspaper in Texas, seeks a full-time reporter to cover the county and police beat. Some weekend and night work required, as well as features and sports reporting. Send cover letter and résumé to ken@fredericksburgstandard.com.

NEW AND RETURNING MEMBERS

SPJ ... **Carol Cropper** ... **Jenny Martinez**, KRGV-TV (Weslaco) ... **Gerlyn McDonald**

PRSA ... **Erica Turner**, Lockheed Martin Aeronautics ... **Lauren Krieg** ... **Liz Ruglic**, Warren Douglas Advertising ... **Kelly Ann Doherty** ... **Atif Elkadi**, Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport ... **Jessica Limmer**, Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport ... **Lesley Merritt**, Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport ... **Barbara Pack**, Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport ... **John Petty**, Allied Electronics ... **Cynthia Vega**, Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport ... **Kelsey Young**, Dallas/Fort Worth International ... **Kimberly Talley** ... **David Magana**, Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

[Michelle Clark](#), APR, Greater Fort Worth PRSA

This month's luncheon celebrates those who have earned their Accreditation in Public Relations, as we also acknowledge Accreditation Month. **Dan McFadden**, APR, will explore what it takes to earn and maintain this prestigious designation.

Over the past few years, our chapter has implemented some tremendous programs to encourage earning the APR. From boot camps to personal mentors and scholarships, we've made great strides. This year we will see even more members take advantage of these supportive measures.

For me, the greatest value associated with becoming accredited was the process. I learned a lot about myself as a professional. Many things I was so proud of were not in line with APR best practices; the Readiness Review, in particular, offered an opportunity to assess these aspects and explore how they could be improved.

The accreditation process isn't easy, but I urge my PRSA colleagues to undertake it. This academic approach to theories, laws, ethics and the RPIE can help a public relations executive add a strategic underpinning to what might otherwise become a tactics-driven discipline.

I hope to see you at our April luncheon. Let's continue to push for accreditation as a means to ensure that we all achieve the highest professional standards.

OVER & OUT

[John Dycus](#), Fort Worth SPJ

If you attend only one SPJ meeting in 2015, make it the [12th annual First Amendment Awards and Scholarship Dinner](#), Friday, April 17, at Cacharel in Arlington. RSVP [here](#). Distributing scholarship money — \$17,500 this year to 10 students — and honoring working journalists for their service to mankind, all in an elegant setting, brings a certain reward. Don't miss an opportunity to meet KRLD's **Alice Rios** and hear **Alfredo Corchado**, The Dallas Morning News Mexico City Bureau chief, a top-tier journalist in a dangerous land. ...

You might want to hang out with the [SPJ Freelance Community](#), a virtual chapter that meets online, linking SPJ members who are freelancers, regardless of their locale. The site has a calendar of events, a revamped jobs board and forums. Or form groups within the group — freelance editors and copy editors, freelance photographers and broadcast journalists, freelance social media journalists, freelance data journalists. Whatever your specialty, it's easy to connect on SPJ with people who do the same work. Send comments to **Michael Fitzgerald** at michael@mffitzgerald.com or comment on the freelance message board. ...

Searching for a job? The SPJ Career Center showed 62 jobs on Easter Sunday. Even if one doesn't fit your career needs now, upload your résumé to get attention from future employers who visit the site. Employers: Reach those who are most dedicated to the profession by posting your openings. Hey, it's better than a fleeting tweet!

Caught my eye. [Government launches \\$3.2 million campaign to save monarch butterflies](#). ... [Non-invasive Alzheimer's treatment restores memory using ultrasound](#). ... [P-MOB electric car travels 12 miles on solar power alone](#). ... [Diaper-mushrooms to cut down waste](#). ... ['Smog-eating' material breaking into the big time](#). ... [How Morro Bay went from a national disaster to a sustainable success story](#). ... [Artificial leaf can make oxygen in space with water and light](#). ... [Human trials planned for genetically modified 'super bananas'](#). ... [World's first integrated solar system generates electricity and heat](#). ... [Wastewater that cleans itself results in more water, less sludge](#).

Closing words: "A woman's a woman until the day she dies, but a man's only a man as long as he can." — comedian **Jackie "Moms" Mabley** ... "I asked a man in prison once how he happened to be there, and he said he had stolen a pair of shoes. I said if he had stolen a railroad, he would be a United States senator." — legendary labor organizer **Mary Harris Jones**

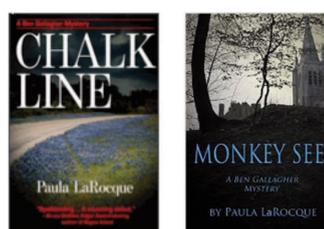
Closing words II, close enough for a Republican: "No, but I think I would do pretty well. I know the Declaration of Independence was signed in 1776. I know World War II was started Dec. 7, 1941. I know what the Civil War was fought over." — State Rep. **Bill Zedler**, R-Arlington, apparently believing World War II began after the attack on Pearl Harbor; Zedler filed a bill that would require all high school students to pass a civics test before graduating

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