MEETINGS

Next at IABC Fort Worth

No regular meeting in March. How about an irregular meeting? That’d do.

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Next at Greater Fort Worth PRSA

No regular meeting in March, but how ‘bout an irregular meeting? That’ll do!

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Next at Fort Worth SPJ

Details are being finalized for the March meeting — a night at the theater — and then it’s the 12th annual First Amendment Awards and Scholarship Dinner, Friday, April 17, at Cacharel in Arlington. Watch for details.

Meanwhile, for anyone craving immediate meeting action, note (above) that the PRSAers are cruising the Stockyards on March 19, seeking mischief. Would they withhold camaraderie from a journalist and deny him the buttered tortilla? Not likely.

Seen at the SPJ Student Careers Conference in February, from left: Brett Shipp, Oghenetega Okparavero, Rebecca Aguilar, Todd Unger, Stella Chavez. More pictures on p. 2.

STRAIGHT STUFF

Fort Worth ISD students had a big hand in recording fairy tales as part of the Bass Performance Hall’s “Once Upon a Tale” storytelling project. Students from Southwest High School and Daggett Montessori prepared scripts in English and Spanish for the Three Little Pigs, the Little Red Hen, Borreguita and the Coyote, and the Tortoise and the Hare. NBC 5 news anchor Deborah Ferguson (English version) and Telemundo 39’s Nancy Leal (Spanish version) were enlisted to do the voice-over work. But when they suggested that students from Southwest’s media program provide the animal voices, well, the rest was the best story of all. Watch the video here.

The recorded fairy tales will be distributed on DVD to all FWISD first-graders in preparation for the “Once Upon a Tale” program March 23-26 at Bass Performance Hall.

The Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce has released its comprehensive, hyper-local 2015 Greater Fort Worth Media Directory, a 60-page guide to print media in Tarrant, Johnson, Parker and Hood counties, area television and radio contacts, wire services, national bureaus, online news outlets and local blogs. Listings include e-mail addresses, fax numbers, circulation figures and distribution areas. The directory comes in .pdf and Excel formats and costs $30 for Fort Worth Chamber members, $50 nonmembers. Call 817-338-3332 or fill out an order form.

Native Texan novelist, essayist, scholar and literary critic Clay Reynolds, director of creative writing at UT Dallas, will discuss “The Writing is Done; What Next?” at the next Writers’ Guild of Texas meeting, 7 p.m. Monday, March 16, at the Richardson Public Library. Dr. Reynolds is the author of more than 1,000 publications ranging from scholarly studies to short fiction and poems, essays, critical reviews and 20 published volumes. More on the Writers’ Guild of Texas at writersguildoftexas.org.

IABC local update: Shari Chernack of Ketchum Change will examine “Being Liquid: Communicating in a State of Constant Change” at the IABC Dallas meeting Tuesday, March 10, at The Clubs of Prestonwood (new location). Info.

PRSA local update: The PRSA College of Fellows invites qualified members to apply for election to the college. Qualifications include 20 years of experience in public relations, PRSA accreditation, and meeting standards regarding contributions to the chapter, community and profession. The college offers free and confidential assistance through its Goodfellows mentor program. The next application deadline is 4 p.m. May 7. More info on Greater Fort Worth PRSA Fellows Doug Newsom, Carolyn Bobo, Mary Dulle, Bill Lawrence, Amiso George or Gigi Westerman.

PRSA local update II: PRSA Dallas Pro-Am Day, March 27 — “Emerge, Elevate, Engage” — will connect students with public relations professionals from a nonprofit, agency or corporate field through a shadowing opportunity followed by a luncheon. Info.
As PR pros fully understand, a lot of work goes into preparing a politician for a press conference. And one of the first steps is to make sure the politician realizes there's going to be a press conference.

Elementary, you say? It was not to Woodrow Wilson. That's pretty much what happened March 15, 1913, when he became the first president to hold a press conference, sort of.

The new president had been in office less than two weeks, and his administration included a man named Joseph Tumulty. During Wilson's tour as governor of New York, Tumulty had been his personal secretary, a job that included being press secretary — again, sort of.

Wilson was not fond of the press. Wanting his boss to get a good start with the Washington media, Tumulty proposed inviting a few reporters over for a meet-and-greet. By all accounts, Wilson was receptive to the idea.

But when the president walked into his White House office, more than 120 journalists awaited him — quite a few more, in his mind, than a few. "I did not realize there were so many of you," he said astutely. Then he uttered the words that would change the history of presidential PR: "Your numbers force me to make a speech to you en masse instead of chatting with each of you, as I had hoped to do."

He proceeded to make some broad remarks for which he was wholly unprepared. Today, they would provide excellent fodder for the evening talk show hosts.


So the conferences became a regular feature, with Wilson sometimes meeting the press twice a week, a level of access that would be unthinkable now. There was only one catch: All of the president's comments were off the record, and reporters were allowed to use them only with permission from the White House. My, how things have changed.

Not surprisingly, it was not always smooth sailing for the two sides. As the country edged closer to war in 1915, the president temporarily halted the meetings, and in his second term, the conferences tapered significantly.

Just a few months after he took office, an irate Wilson threatened to cancel them completely after one of the newspapers printed some of his "off the record" remarks. My, but things never change.

Wilson left office in 1921, but the formal press conferences remained and, over time, would evolve. FDR made the first televised appearance, Eisenhower held the first televised news conference, Kennedy made them into a form of entertainment, and Nixon held the first prime-time televised conference. Today the press conference is as much a part of the presidency as, well, "Saturday Night Live." (Tina Fey and Amy Poehler did their first Sarah Palin / Hillary Clinton parody news conference in September 2008.)

But it all started in 1913 with Woodrow Wilson, a roomful of reporters and a simple misunderstanding — proving once again that PR, good planning is always critical. Except when it's not.
Three Texas Tribune interns will develop a plan to help "refine and perfect our story-building process." The Tribune is seeking interns for April 29 to May 28 to "blow up" the "clicks strategy," a system that depends on getting readers to click on as many stories as possible.

One of the interns will focus on visual storytelling, while the other two will work on developing story ideas. The interns will be paid $1500 a month, and have the opportunity to develop their skills in writing, research, and data analysis.

The position is open to anyone who is interested in storytelling and wants to develop their skills in journalism.

We are looking for three interns to join our team and help us refine and perfect our story-building process. The interns will work from April 29 to May 28, and will receive a monthly stipend of $1500.

**Responsibilities:**
- Develop a plan to help "refine and perfect our story-building process.
- "Blow up" the "clicks strategy," which depends on getting readers to click on as many stories as possible.
- Focus on visual storytelling.
- Develop story ideas.

**Qualifications:**
- Strong writing and research skills.
- Experience in storytelling.
- Interest in data analysis.
- Ability to work independently.

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