

eChaser

MEETINGS

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Next at [Greater Fort Worth PRSA](#) ...
Engaged Journalism: Making the Connection

Jake Batsell spent two years visiting innovative news organizations that were experimenting with new methods to connect with — and monetize — their readers, viewers and digital users. He'll share what he learned at the January PRSA meeting (in a new location, City Club in downtown Fort Worth).

Batsell, an SMU journalism assistant professor, conducted interviews with more than 100 journalists across the United States and United Kingdom for his recent book, "Engaged Journalism: Connecting With Digitally Empowered News Audiences" (New York: Columbia University Press).

He concludes that for news providers to survive, they must constantly interact with and meet the specific needs of their audiences, whose attention can no longer be taken for granted. Toward that end, he proposes a set of best practices based on effective, sustainable journalistic engagement.

Time & date: 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 13
Place: City Club, 301 Commerce St., Fort Worth ([map](#))
Cost: chapter members \$25, national members \$30, nonmembers \$35, students \$20; walk-ups add \$5
RSVP by Jan. 8

Next at [Fort Worth SPJ](#) ...
If something happens, you'll know in time.

STRAIGHT STUFF

Writer/teacher **Win Shields** will discuss how to use profiling and stereotyping to create characters at the next Writers' Guild of Texas meeting, 7 p.m. Monday, Jan. 25 (fourth Monday, this month only), at the Richardson Public Library. More on the Writers' Guild of Texas at [writersguildoftexas.org](#).

IABC local update: **Gavin Donovan**, senior social media program manager at Trend Micro, will discuss "Best Practices for Aligning Social Strategy with Your Company's Financial Goals" at the IABC Dallas luncheon Tuesday, Jan. 12, at The Clubs of Prestonwood. [Info](#).

PRSA local update: Immediate past president **Michelle Clark**, APR, updated chapter members on the successes of 2015 at the December meeting. And a handsome list it is:

- Increased membership 10.1 percent.
- Increased the number of Worthy Award entries 65 percent.
- Held meetings on the top three topics requested by members: social media/strategy/planning, media panel, and personal brand development.
- Implemented a post-luncheon survey to gather immediate feedback on how programs are meeting member needs.
- Instituted a Past Presidents Club to give former presidents the opportunity to provide guidance and counsel.

PRSA local update II: **Ellen Hale**, for 11 years the senior vice president/director of corporate communications at The Associated Press until her retirement last month, will share behind-the-scenes reflections from the largest news organization in the world at the PRSA Dallas monthly luncheon Thursday, Jan. 14, at the Meadows Museum, Jones Great Hall on the SMU campus. [Info](#).

THIS MONTH IN PR/MARKETING HISTORY BY JEFF RODRIGUEZ

An irreverent look at the people and events that keep us up at night

[This column reflects the author's views and is not intended to represent Greater Fort Worth PRSA.]

Bombs Away
When LBJ Declared a Different Kind of War, He Unknowingly Launched a Different Kind of Propaganda

War is not for the faint of heart — but then, neither is PR. Both industries took on a new dimension Jan. 8, 1964, when President **Lyndon Johnson** proclaimed in his State of the Union address that he was declaring "war on poverty" and preparing legislation to lead the fight. He said:

"Our aim is not only to relieve the symptoms of poverty, but to cure it and, above all, to prevent it. ... We shall not rest until that war is won."

Johnson's concern was understandable. National poverty was around 19 percent, a good 4 percent higher than the current figure. And Congress responded, passing the Economic Opportunity Act, which created Head Start, Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA), Job Corps and numerous other social service programs.

How we're faring on this fiscal front is a subject of great debate (and income level). But one thing is certain: When the president announced the war on poverty, he opened the door for dozens of other "wars" to be declared.

In the decades since, politicians, pundits and the aggrieved of every stripe have been all too quick to call us to arms. Occasionally, they themselves declare war on something, but most of the time, someone accuses someone else of waging war. Either way, our nation stays rhetorically at DEFCON Level 1, with millions of Americans forever fighting something, defending something, or both. Consider but a partial list of things on which people say war is being waged:

- Christmas, cancer, crime, coal; science, solar energy, car dealers, oil.
- Teachers, education, Asian carp and independents; gangs, drugs, smokers and excellence.
- Rich people, poor people, the middle class and Satan; Wall Street, Hollywood, the Everglades and vaping.
- Marriage, traditional values, tolerance and homosexuality; liberals, Libertarians, grass-fed beef and personal responsibility.
- Farmers, gun owners, trial lawyers and religion; Christianity, Islam, atheists and nutrition.
- Blacks, whites, minorities, racism and diversity; women, men, transgenders, sexism and equality.
- Veterans, conservative women, the police and **Donald Trump**; reason, free speech, truth and space junk.
- The unborn, children, the disabled and the elderly; Medicare, Social Security, entitlements and comedy.

Clearly we are a hawkish nation — but a war on comedy? And this without even having a draft. But apparently no one is more war-minded than President **Obama**. In 2012 Mother Jones identified 109 things that anyone with internet access has accused him of waging war on, including fishing, poker, decency, conscience, facts, knowledge, success, Texas, America, Ireland, souvenir mousepads and Cheerios. Personally, I don't believe we should send troops to defend the Cheerios. But we could send arms to the Cheerios and train them to defend themselves.

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The Gallery



The face(s) of fun: **Sally Vincent** and **Ed Yeary** at the communicators Christmas party/JPS book benefit in December. Watch this space next month for a photo spread, or if you can't wait, 36 photos are [here](#).



Justin Brands senior communications manager **Lisa Albert**, upper right, received Greater Fort Worth PRSA's Unsung Hero Award at the December meeting for her extensive work organizing the chapter's financial accounts and managing funds. **William Moore**, communications director for the Grapevine Chamber of Commerce, received the Rising Star Award. He led communications for the Worthy Awards. Immediate past president **Michelle Clark** also recognized scholarship winners **Cameryn Fannin**, on the left above, from TCU and **Desiré Nesmith** from UT Arlington. Cameryn is an honors student and vice president of chapter development for TCU PRSSA. Desiré is the news clerk for the UTA newspaper, The Shorthorn.

Worthy Awards Gala lights up the night

Greater Fort Worth PRSA honors top work at Fort Worth Club



above: **Claire Bloxom Armstrong**
 above left: **Patsy Thomas, Michelle Clark**
 left: **Kenneth Parsons, Rita Parsons**
 below from left: **Jennifer Henderson, Katie Miller, Erika Aguirre, Lisa Miller, Lara Uselding**
 — Glen E. Ellman photos; [see the complete set \(scroll down\)](#)



above: **Pete Matthews, Holly Ellman; Claire Olson; Amiso George, APR, Fellow PRSA; Bill Lawrence, APR, Fellow PRSA; Pam Lawrence**
 below: TCU marketing and communication team — Best of Show winner — from left, back row, **Cris Waters, Rick Waters, Liz Parks, Tracy Syler-Jones, Margaret Kelly, Jim Seeley, Gorland Mar, Katherine Polenz;** front row, **Holly Ellman; Amiso George, APR, Fellow PRSA; Michelle Clark, APR; Nancy Styles; Tracy Bristol; Megan Murphy**



Despite our incessant *faux* hawk yammering, the U.S. is reluctant to declare actual war. The first instance was the War of 1812, and the last was when President **Roosevelt** declared war on Japan — 11 times total. Otherwise we conduct “extended military engagements,” which sounds like something sold on Travelocity.

I don't want to start a fight, but maybe we're too eager to use the W word. These days, anyone who opposes our view on anything is waging war on it. This discourages meaningful dialogue and greater understanding. Why does it always have to be a “war”? Couldn't it occasionally be just a campaign? Or maybe even a good old-fashioned mud-slinging?

People who know real combat are far more cautious about tossing around the term, as evidenced by Confederate Gen. **Stonewall Jackson**. “It is painful enough to discover with what unconcern they speak of war and threaten it,” he said. “I have seen enough of it to make me look upon it as the sum of all evils.”

Stonewall was right: Try to envision a mother writing her son who's serving in Afghanistan: “Son, this terrible war on solar energy drags on. Just last week, thugs vandalized the Robertsons' rooftop panels and spray-painted ‘We ♥ oil slicks’ on their car. It was disturbing to see.” *I'm so sorry, Mom. I'll have some flowers sent.*

As PR pros, we have a responsibility to carefully consider every word we use. We also are in a position to counsel colleagues and clients alike in their use of the language; hyperbole may grab headlines and arouse anger, but it seldom helps settle differences.

So for the New Year, let us negotiate a communicative armistice. When we discuss, let it be healthy discussion; when we disagree, let it be respectful disagreement. It is good for our profession. Heck, it's good for us.

And when we encounter people who call for war at every slight, every opinion misalignment, every stomach upset in the body politic — and thus diminish the courage of those who truly know military conflict — let us gently guide them to heightened awareness in their choice of words.

And if that doesn't work, we'll hit 'em with everything we've got.

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Freedom of Information Foundation of Texas update: A Texas law banning desecration of the flag is unconstitutional, the state's highest criminal court ruled in October. The Court of Criminal Appeals tossed the law, saying it was too broadly written and criminalized an act that the First Amendment protects as free speech. Rarely used, the 26-year-old law threatens a year in jail and \$4,000 fine for those who intentionally damage, deface, mutilate or burn the U.S. or Texas flags. [Details](#). ... A state district judge threw out a lawsuit by UT System regent **Wallace Hall** that sought to force the system to turn over records related to an admissions scandal. Soon after, Hall's lawyer vowed to appeal, meaning the case is far from over. [Details](#). ... Austin's Public Safety Commission worries that state law might not provide enough guidance on how to protect victims' privacy if police are wearing body cameras. Under the law, footage recorded in a private space, such as a home or business, may only be made public with the consent of those shown in the video. It also requires anyone seeking video footage to submit the date and time of recording, location and the name of one or more persons who appear in the recording. [Details](#).

PEOPLE & PLACES

J.O. has hired two seasoned directors with Texas ties — UT Austin graduate **Lara Uselding** and TCU grad **Joncee Blake** — to oversee public relations and design, respectively. Since 2002, Uselding had worked as a spokeswoman for two federal agencies managing crisis communications across the nation in nuclear energy, national security and aviation. She has agency experience with a boutique Los Angeles firm that made inroads into the Hispanic markets, and overseas experience managing bilingual marketing and advertising for a company in Latin America. Blake has nearly 13 years experience as a graphic designer, stylist, photographer and writer for companies such as FUNimation/DragonBallZ, American Airlines' Celebrated Living first-class magazine, 3monkeys and Quorum International.

GET A JOB

Applications close Jan. 5 for a 40 hours/month from-home contract position with MediaShift writing a weekly original post (with interviews, Q&A or thought piece) and editing other stories posted on the website. Requirements include knowledge of the media business, especially new forms of journalism and digital media, and experience with blogging platforms, particularly WordPress. [Info](#). ... Bluebeam Software, a fast-paced technology company in Pasadena, Calif., seeks a creative editor/writer to help build an innovative multimedia publication. [Info](#). ... Gatehouse Media has a reporter opening at its newspaper in Brownwood, Texas. The Brownwood Bulletin publishes six days a week (no Monday) in print and 24/7 online at brownwoodtx.com. Would write news, features, maybe a little sports. Pagination considered a plus, digital media knowledge a must. Pay starts around \$27,000. Contact managing editor **Derrick Stuckly** at dstuckly@brownwoodbulletin.com.

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

[Liz Confiliano](#), Greater Fort Worth PRSA

On behalf of Greater Fort Worth PRSA, welcome to 2016! I'm sure many of you have set personal and professional goals for the new year, and I will tell you firsthand that becoming more involved in the chapter can help you tackle them.

Attend our monthly luncheons — held this year at City Club in downtown Fort Worth — to learn more about topics impacting PR and swap best practices with your peers to stay at the top of your game.

Join us at a PR After Dark event to network with leaders in the field and maybe even find that great new gig or employee, all while enjoying the company of others who are "in the same boat as you."

Get involved with the 5th Annual Worthy Awards and help honor (and maybe even be honored for) the exceptional work done right here in public relations and strategic communications. There are also many opportunities to serve on committees that work year 'round in community service, ethics, diversity, the APR certification and more.

Reach out to me or any member of our board for the numerous ways to get involved. You won't regret it.

Now let me join immediate past president **Michelle Clark** in congratulating the chapter's newest Rising Star, **William Moore**, and Unsung Hero, **Lisa Albertson**. Michelle detailed their contributions at the December meeting.

A new member, William was assigned to the Worthy Awards committee, where he not only participated enthusiastically but took over the communications plan. He jumped in with a great attitude and did an outstanding job keeping the committee on task.

I greatly appreciate William's willingness to accept whatever challenge we put before him. He had such efficiency and professionalism that he worked himself into a co-chair position for next year's awards!

As for treasurer Lisa's life-saving heroics, few know the full difficulties our finances faced in 2015. Early in the year, our chapter bank account was hacked and had to be closed. Opening a new account brought to light inefficiencies and outdated technology related to the way we process credit card payments. Between PayPal and Cvent, the technology wasn't interfacing, which led to hours on the phone (most of the time on hold) with both vendors before we finally determined a solution.

With support from treasurer-elect **Beth Lamb** and hospitality chair **Tracy Greene**, Lisa also made sound recommendations for how to streamline board processes to smooth officer transition from year to year. This, combined with hard decisions about luncheon and dues rates for 2016, led to a stressful financial year, which Lisa navigated with fortitude, perseverance and patience. For her grace under pressure, we are all thankful.

OVER & OUT
[John Dycus](#), Fort Worth SPJ

The clean-energy boom in North America is about to be transformed. In a surprise move, lawmakers, predominantly Republican, agreed to extend tax credits for solar and wind for another five years — a deal that could add 39 gigawatts of renewables. This will give an unprecedented boost to the industry and change the course of deployment in the U.S. More [here](#) and [here](#) and [here](#). ...

"No matter what **Donald Trump** says that makes Muslim-Americans feel unsafe and unwanted, there are men and women in America's armed forces who won't stand for it." ...

Representatives of more than 50 journalism and open government organizations met recently with White House press secretary **Josh Earnest**, urging greater openness and transparency from the federal government. SPJ president **Paul Fletcher** said the delegation sought "a clear statement that government employees are free to speak without interference from the press and public." Current policies, he said, undermine democracy and the public trust. More [here](#).

Caught my eye. [Kids can now get themselves to school — and parents won't get arrested](#). ... [Adoption rate of solar energy by top US businesses grows 183% in four years](#). ... [Are sound waves a better way to move data?](#) ... [Researchers breeding 'super coral' to help weather global warming](#). ... [Fried seaweed that tastes like bacon!](#) ... [LG 55-inch 'wallpaper' OLED TV hangs on the wall with magnets](#).

Closing words: "When we are in partnership and have stopped clutching each other's throats; when we've stopped enslaving each other, we will stand together, hands clasped, and be friends." — labor organizer **Eugene V. Debs** ... "I couldn't wait for success, so I went ahead without it." — comedian **Jonathan Winters**

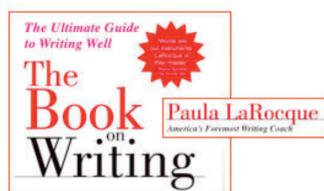
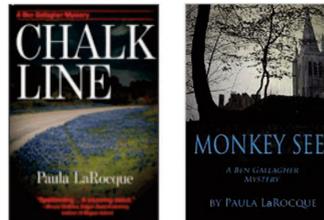
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- the industry / tools of the trade
- [11 Rules of Writing](#), [Grammar and Punctuation writers.com](#) [wilbers.com](#)
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