Freedom of Information Foundation of Texas update: An overseas junket by members of the San Antonio City Council took flak last month from critics who say it skirted Texas' open-meeting law. Six voting members — constituting a quorum — traveled to Spain in a trip that was announced in advance, with a declaration that "no official city action will be taken during this mission." With no reporters or members of the public present to verify the pledge, skeptics aren't assuaged. The Texas Open Meetings Act "requires a meeting of a governmental body to be held in a location accessible to the public." Details.

RSVP by July 7

where: 2102 Pembroke Drive, Fort Worth (map)

Fort Worth SPJ rolls out the food, fellowship and measured frolic Saturday, July 9, at Berkeley Place. Enjoy Buddy Jones' scrumptious beef brisket, Harriet Harral's elegant home in one of the city's most cherished neighborhoods, Berkeley Place.

Next at Fort Worth SPJ

Wednesday, Aug. 10. Watch for specifics.

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Four years in the field is eligible for membership in the world’s leading professional association for communications practitioners. Whether you’re ready to sell your book or just now putting ideas on paper, Brian Smith has advice on what to do next, and it’s yours for the taking at the Writers’ Guild of Texas meeting at Richardson Public Library. A nine-year Army veteran and award-winning author of 15 novels, Smith earned three degrees within 10 years and held several high-profile communications jobs before taking a job at the Writers’ Guild of Texas. Smith earned three degrees within 10 years and held several high-profile communications jobs before taking a job at the Writers’ Guild of Texas.

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[This column reflects the author's views and is not intended to represent
An irreverent look at the people and events that keep us up at night
THIS MONTH IN PR/MARKETING HISTORY BY JEFF RODRIGUEZ

A Brief History of the Man Credited (and Blamed)
for Helping Define Public Relations

Born in 1877, Charles Lindbergh was not only an aviator
and his contributions to the profession are as immense as they are
controversial.

A Georgia native, Lee graduated from Princeton and went to work as a
newspaper reporter in 1900. But he quit after a few years, unhappy with the
long hours and low pay — I know, hard to believe. In 1904 he and his friend
George Parker established Parker & Lee, considered to be the nation's
third PR firm. They championed "Accuracy, Authenticity and Interest," the
same principles guiding today's reality television shows, except for the
accuracy and authenticity parts.

While with the firm, Lee hit his stride. In 1906 he wrote a book, "Declaration
of Principles," wherein he argued for accuracy and transparency,
maintaining that PR firms had a responsibility not only to the client but to
the public. It was a powerful, radical idea, even if Lee didn't fully embrace it
himself.

Also in 1906, he persuaded executives at the Pennsylvania Railroad Co. to
break with tradition and disclose the details of a terrible train wreck in
Atlantic City (no, not by the railroad, becoming the first PR pro in an executive-level position,
where it was much easier for the execs to consult with him. Or blame him.

Speaking of blame, in 1914 Rockefeller hired Lee to ease a minor PR
problem: The oil baron was attempting to quash a miners' strike in
women and children who suffocated and burned to death.

It was not the best time for the family name, but Lee shrewdly advised
Rockefeller to travel to Colorado and meet personally with the miners. While
many executives do this sort of thing today, it was a bold idea then; Rockefeller's visit was widely covered by the media and boosted his public
image. Lee scored another victory in 1914 when the government finally
agreed to raise the railroad freight rates. He had pursued this goal for
years, and his work is widely hailed as the first PR campaign.

good PR story, is mixed. He profoundly influenced the industry, advocating
for PR to be approached as a dialogue between the company and the
public, and he opposed President
reform efforts, and some scholars believe his "factual" news releases often
were attempts to manage the story and negate the work of investigative
journalists.

After the coal mine tragedy, he put out several inaccurate releases and
blamed the union for the children dying. Among those sympathetic to the
miners he was known as "Poison Ivy." Shortly before his death, Congress
began investigating Lee for providing consultation to the Nazis — ironically,
the very type of PR mess that would require someone with his skill.

Now that we've had time to reflect on Lee's life and work, we can see
him as a pioneer who helped establish the profession as it is known today.

And for PR pros today, it's up to you to tell your story — or a history book.

Bloxom Armstrong
Thursday, Nov. 3, at 6 p.m.

Hunger Strikers, 1970s Chicago, Walter Chrysler

The Gallery

in search of good content

Agnieszka Grochulska: The Little Pusher

Charlotte Blalock: The Blindside

Dione Grubbs: The Involuntary Witness

Erika Schenkel: The Social Engineer

Jeff Rodriguez: The Insider

Jana Baker: The Displacer

Kaitlin Conlisk: The Media Roadie

Liz Confiliano: The Social Media Engineer

Melissa Miller: The Life of a Publicist

Richie Jefferies: The Publicist's Assistant

Sarah Schimpff: The Virgin Prussia

Rick Hadley: The Publicist's Assistant

Jeffie E. Mackie: The Publicist's Assistant

Jenni B. Viqui: The Publicist's Assistant

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Jamie Brown: The Publicist's Assistant

Details here