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17th Annual First Amendment Awards and Scholarship Banquet

... a Zoom event in the cloud: 7 p.m. Sunday, May 3

Like so many organizations, Fort Worth SPJ had to cancel a major event this spring, its awards banquet, scheduled for April 17. However, we still want to congratulate our scholarship and contest participants in a special way — through a virtual banquet.

At the traditional banquet we announce scholarship recipients and honor the winners of the First Amendment Awards contest for professional and student journalists. That's all still a go, plus keynote speaker **Frank LoMonte**, director of the University of Florida's Brechner Center for Freedom of Information, will outline the threats facing student news media in America. And the evening may hold a surprise or two.

We hope you can join us for everything you'd expect at such an occasion, minus the chicken. It's free but with an RSVP required by April 30 — to john@xdycus.com — as access is limited. Your reservation gets you a connection code. A banquet video will be posted on the chapter website.

This celebration is the chapter's main fundraiser for its 501(c)(3) Texas Gridiron Club Scholarship Endowment. Without the endowment, there likely would be no scholarships to give. In place of a banquet ticket or formal sponsorship, please consider donating. Checks should go to SPJ-FW, P.O. Box 3212, Fort Worth, TX 76113, or you can give online at spjfw.org.

Your support means the world to us and to the journalism community we serve. As always, we're grateful.

Board of Directors
 Society of Professional Journalists, Fort Worth Pro Chapter

QUICK HITS

- GFW PRSA virtual networking meeting, "How Public Relations Practitioners Can Help Organizations Adapt to COVID-19," with Dr. **Julie O'Neil**, TCU Bob Schieffer College of Communication — 11 a.m. Wednesday, May 6. [Info.](#)
- BRIT + Botanic Garden — weighing the possibility of reopening mid-May
- Writers Guild of Texas Critique Group — 7 p.m. Wednesday, May 20; general meeting — 7 p.m. Monday, May 25, Richardson Public Library. [Info.](#)
- Urban Alchemy Coffee + Wine Bar, Arlington — [reopening](#). still delivering
- Meetups: [hosting an online event](#) Fort Worth Chapter – Nonfiction Authors Association ... [Trinity Arts Writers Workshop](#) ... [20BooksTo50k - Michael Anderle](#) ... [Fort Worth Area Journalists Meetup](#) ... [The DFW Bloggers Classroom](#)

IN THE WORKPLACE: GET A JOB *Listings in journalismjobs.com and dfwcommunicators.com appear in this report.* Dallas-centric Advocate Online Media, the producer of four award-winning glossy magazines, has an opening for "a conscientious, relationship-building" freelance photojournalist. [Info.](#) ... Texas Public Radio in San Antonio is looking for an editor with "an ear for sound and good storytelling," someone "highly organized, a sharp thinker and excellent communicator." [Info.](#) ... Spectrum Networks in Coppell seeks digital journalists to populate a new mobile news app focusing on hyperlocal content. [Info.](#) ... The Key Center for Learning Differences in Fort Worth, an early pioneer in Texas for students with learning differences and now serving students in kindergarten through 12th grade, seeks a marketing director. [Info.](#)

[more eChaser on p. 2](#)

In these times when journalists are disrespected, condemned, ridiculed, assaulted and constantly face layoffs, pay cuts and worse, let it be known that we honor and support journalists and journalism. Keep at it. Your work is important to the people and essential to democracy itself. - Roger Summers

* In the days of hot type, a chaser was a late edition of the newspaper for which the presses were not stopped until the plates were ready. Those pages were said to be "chasing" a running press.

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7 POINTS OF PANDEMIC SURVIVAL | Updates with Dr. John Campbell
 Q&A on coronaviruses from the World Health Organization

“What is good journalism?”



top to bottom, left to right: Dr. Chris Gearhart, Mike Hodges, Kathryn Jones, Dan Malone, Dr. Tommy Thomason, Dr. James Hurley, Bill Crist, Dr. Eric Morrow, Sara Vanden Berge — Kurt Mogonye photos

Same mission, same spirit color, new address

Tarleton State University in Stephenville is the new home of the Texas Center for Community Journalism. The nonprofit center was based at TCU until the end of 2019 when its founding director, journalism professor **Tommy Thomason**, retired.

With financial support from the Texas Newspaper Foundation, TCCJ offers free workshops and seminars to Texas community journalists. After covid-19 brought social distancing, two scheduled sessions — at Tarleton on enterprise reporting and in Fredericksburg on generating revenue — had to be postponed. The revenue workshop has been rescheduled for August.

TCCJ co-director **Kathryn Jones** said the center is exploring ways to resume training, either with Zoom meetings or video tutorials. For now, its [Facebook page](#) is staying current by posting news tips, industry updates and roundups of how Texas newspapers are covering the pandemic.

“This critical time is showing a lot of people how vital journalism is to Texas communities,” Jones said. “Many news outlets are seeing their online traffic shoot through the roof, but what they need is for readers to subscribe or even give them donations to keep paying their staffs. Community journalism is really hurting right now when more people than ever, need locally based reporting.”

Tarleton marked the center’s opening with a reception Feb. 20 attended by Thomason, Texas Press Association Executive Director **Mike Hodges**, Tarleton President **James Hurley**, university professors and students, and about a dozen community journalists from Aledo, Austin, Azle, Comanche, Decatur, Fredericksburg, Hamilton, Kyle, Snyder and Stephenville.

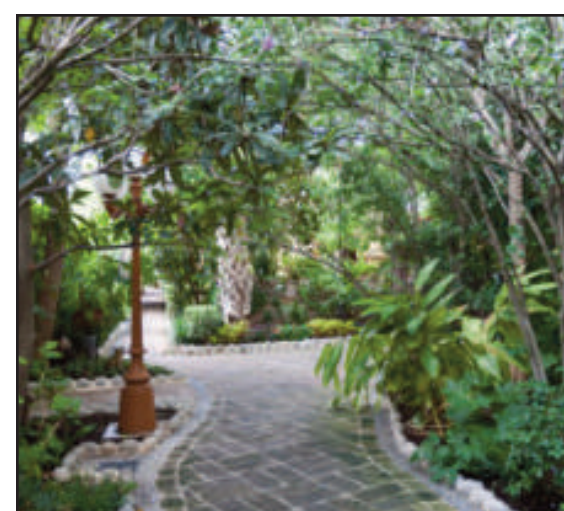
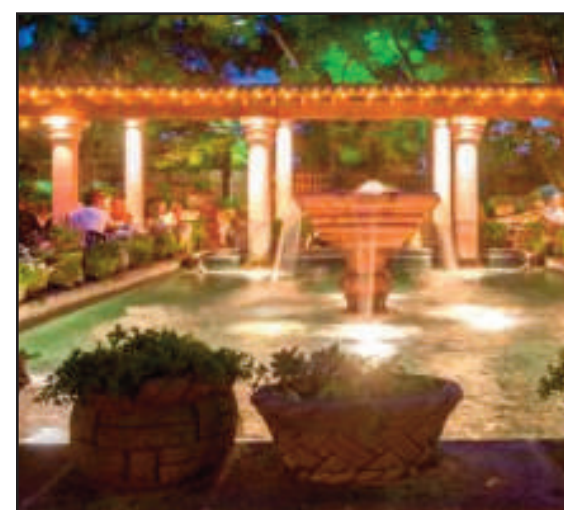
Thomason said TCCJ is the only center of its kind in the nation to offer mid-career training at no cost for journalists at small-town, rural newspapers and websites. Texas has hundreds of those compared with a relatively small number of big-city news organizations, he added.

“When you talk journalism in Texas, you are talking community journalism,” he said. “These are heroes — the only ones reporting on elections, the only ones covering JV football games, the only ones who take pictures of the prize-winning sheep at the 4-H auction — the only ones who are watching out for the town.”

Many Texas community newspapers have struggled or even closed as ad revenues fell in their small markets, classified ads migrated to online sites, and editors found it difficult to attract trained journalists. The center has provided that training on topics such as feature writing, page design, crafting websites and videos, social media presence and photography.

more eChaser on p. 3

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POWER TO THE PEOPLE Here a scam, there a scam.

- Quick quiz: How smart are you at spotting coronavirus scams?
Think a local business making surgical masks goes at it 24/7? Think again.
Why are auto insurers offering rebates? How do you get yours?
One reason medical costs are high: We have shortages, and Made in America isn't working.
Your property tax bill is not going down. Here's how you fight an increase.
I thought I caught covid-19. My mind was playing tricks on me. You, too?
Dallas is teeming with price gougers, while a neighbor gives money away.

NEW AND REINSTATED MEMBERS

Randy Keck, The Community News ... Sandra K. Murray, freelance copy editor ... Fred Willis, SoulProsper Media Group

F.O.I.F.T. UPDATE: A new Texas law aims to provide more transparency through public access to government contracts under the Texas Public Information Act. Specifically, it's intended to show how taxpayer money is being spent. Reporters are already using the law and learning about its scope. The law is "a good tool to have on our side in terms of making public entities provide clear information to taxpayers and everyone else in the public," said Austin American-Statesman reporter Bob Sechler. Details. ...

A new state law, passed after Hurricane Harvey, has weakened the public's right to know information in a timely fashion during a crisis. Some governments appear to be stretching the limits of the law and suspending filling open records requests for weeks on end. Details. ...

The Amarillo City Council once tried to ban clapping at its meetings, then decided to start meeting at 7 a.m., a move some locals said was done to reduce public input. Finally, last year, the council moved all public comments to a work session an hour before the regular meeting. In South Texas, Hidalgo County commissioners and the city councils of Pharr, Mercedes and Donna elected to completely halt public comment at meetings. So did McAllen, where council members asserted that someone could get sued over remarks made by citizens. Such actions led to the Texas Legislature in 2019 enacting a law requiring local governments to allow public comment before votes are taken on agenda items. Details.

PEOPLE & PLACES That's UTA Shorthorn ex and former legal journalist Mark Bauer running as an Independent for Texas' 24th Congressional District. The seat is held by Rep. Kenny Marchant, who is retiring at the end of his term. Bauer says he would bring bipartisan solutions to major issues, among them the economy, education, immigration, healthcare, cybersecurity and data rights, criminal justice reform, LGBTQ rights and individual liberties. A sixth-generation Texan born in Fort Worth, he grew up in Arlington and graduated from James Bowie High School and UT Arlington (bachelor's degree, journalism). He worked as a journalist for 10 years, the last two in Washington, D.C., before making the switch to politics. "Texas isn't a battleground state," he says. "It's home."



OVER & OUT | John Dycus, Fort Worth SPJ

SPJ factoids: Brands are blocking advertisements from appearing next to news content that mentions the coronavirus, hurting digital ad revenue. The changes are causing publishers to downsize staff and cut pay. Although certain types of ads are likely to be considered inappropriate, experts say if the messaging is respectful, it will likely not hurt the brand. ...

Hospitals are threatening to fire healthcare workers who speak out about the lack of gear. ...

Photojournalists are finding it difficult and dangerous to capture the pandemic. They're on the front lines, privacy issues block access, and there are major health risks. World Press Photo has gathered some resources. ...

NPR canceled its summer internships due to uncertainties, as did The Boston Globe and Minneapolis Star Tribune. Other outlets plan to keep their interns but offer remote positions or postpone for later in the year. ...

Evening news audiences are surging as more Americans stay home. Network newscasts had lost some relevance to cable and digital media but are making a comeback. Some broadcast networks are experiencing their highest viewing levels in 15 years. ...

Seeing 2020, a nationwide collaborative reporting initiative from Reveal, seeks to empower local and ethnic media outlets to report on the census. To join Seeing 2020, fill out this form. ...

Anticipating the 2020 elections, MPR News in Edina, Minn., launched a service for listeners to submit potentially false news for fact-checking. And the media company Tegna is partnering with First Draft to bolster its reporting and will expand its fact-check initiative, Verify, by adding more fact-checkers and authenticating items submitted by viewers.

Caught my eye: Asthma rates plummet in Kentucky as coal plants shut down. ... Photos, charts show natural world thriving with humans indoors. ... We're taking coronavirus seriously. What if we did that with climate change? ... Climate models are running red hot, and scientists don't know why. ...

Closing words [with gratitude to Garrison Keillor and Prairie Home Productions]: "Humor is emotional chaos remembered in tranquility." — author and humorist James Thurber ... "If you attack the establishment long enough and hard enough, they will make you a member of it." — political humorist Art Buchwald

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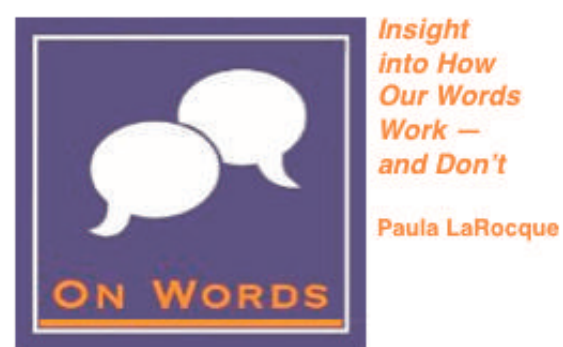
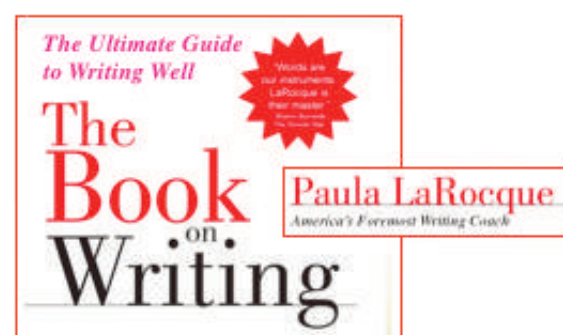
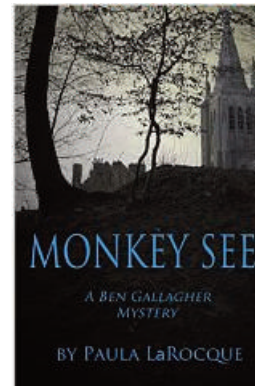
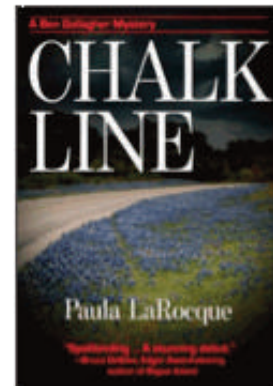


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