

INFORMING THE NORTH TEXAS JOURNALISM / COMMUNICATOR WORKFORCE



to subscribe or to submit items, e-john@xdycus.com

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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Next at [Fort Worth SPJ](#) ...

Lois Norder, AJC senior editor for investigations

Friday, April 16, 6:30 p.m. via Zoom



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QUICK HITS

- [Covering Climate Now webinar](#) — 1 p.m. Wednesday, April 7. [Info.](#)
- "Crime, Mugshots and Takedown Requests: Editors Share Newsroom Approaches," hosted by the News Leaders Association and the Donald W. Reynolds Journalism Institute — 10:30 a.m. Friday, April 9. [Info.](#)
- Arlington Conservation Council remote monthly program, "Texas Blackland Prairie — Past, Present, Future," with wildlife scientist **Brandon Belcher**, The Nature Conservancy — 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, April 7. [Info.](#)
- GFW PRSA remote monthly program, "The Credibility Crisis: Building Trust in an Age of Misinformation," with Dr. **Kristy Roschke**, News Co/Lab, Arizona State University — noon Wednesday, April 7. [Info.](#)
- Botanic Garden/BRIT carefully resuming in-person activities — April highlights Topiaries in the Garden: Shear Delight, through June; Photographing the Parade of Pollinators, April 7; Bella's Book & Nature Club, April 7; Girls Nature Workshops — Flower Power: Neato, Flower!, April 10; Sketching the Japanese Garden, April 22. [Info.](#)
- Meetups: [hosting an online event Fort Worth Chapter – Nonfiction Authors Association](#) ... [Trinity Arts Writers Workshop](#) ... [20BooksTo50k - Michael Anderle](#) ... [Fort Worth Area Journalists Meetup](#)

IN THE WORKPLACE: GET A JOB *Listings in [journalismjobs.com](#) and [dfwcommunicators.com](#) appear in this report.* ... Greenville-based Green Shoot Media seeks freelance writers to produce high-quality newspaper advertising sections on a wide range of lifestyle subjects, from real estate and automotive to senior citizens and weddings. Need fluency in AP style and journalism experience. [Info.](#) ... The Killeen Daily Herald in Central Texas has an opening for an investigative reporter to cover Killeen city leadership and issues important to residents. Requirements include editing skills, knowledge of AP style and experience filing an FOI request. [Info.](#)

[more eChaser on p. 2](#)

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Social change inside and outside the newsroom

Take the usual adjustments in transitioning from a college newsroom to the pros, then add political upheaval plus a pandemic plus a level of social unrest not witnessed since the late '60s. For good measure, add a pinch of existential crisis as traditional newsrooms face an infusion of diverse new voices. It's a recipe for unprecedented external and internal hurdles.

That was one message a panel of professional journalists delivered at Fort Worth SPJ's Careers Conference 2021 in February. But there were upbeat angles, too, in the opportunities for self-discovery and effecting long-lasting change in newsroom culture.

2019 UNT graduate **Raegan Scharfetter**, a news line producer at CBS News, said the great equalizer is that even the newsroom old guard has never encountered such a perfect storm. "Everyone is dealing with a whole lot of new things, so I think we're on even playing fields now. I don't know any of my veteran co-workers who have dealt with a worldwide pandemic or a presidency that was so chaotic."

Tarleton State University alumna **Quanecia Fraser**, also a 2019 graduate and now a reporter for KETV in Omaha, Neb., said covid-19 forced adapting to a second major change after just finding her newsroom groove.

"You're already kind of getting used to things, and this pandemic comes in," she said. "I didn't feel like it was affecting me that much, then over a few months I realized it's changing the job dynamics. It's almost like double the learning that you're having to do."

For UTA grad **Linah Mohammad**, now an audio producer at The Washington Post, there was no calm before the storm. Her postgraduate internship at KERA in Dallas began in January 2017 — the same month **Donald Trump** was inaugurated president.

"When I hear veterans, especially in the Post newsroom, say, 'Oh, things used to be so much calmer,' I don't know what that feels like," said Mohammad, citing Trump's first impeachment, the pandemic, civil unrest nationwide and the storming of the nation's capital. "I have never experienced that. My entire life in journalism has been insane."

The panel and some of the students also weighed in on being rebuffed, often for cultural reasons, by editors whose stance, as Mohammad put it, is: "This is not how we've done journalism for the past 70 years."

"There's a reckoning happening at most media organizations," she said. "You've most recently seen it at The New York Times, and we've definitely had it at The Washington Post. Those are the challenges that I see, both as a younger journalist in the newsroom as well as a journalist of color."

TCU grad **Mario Montalvo** described the pushback he encountered when starting out as a broadcast reporter at KGET 17 in Bakersfield, CA. "I would want to highlight stories about (Latino) farm workers, and I literally got told by my news director that that's not our demographic, that our demographic wouldn't care about those stories. That was kind of a punch in the gut."

Montalvo is now a public information officer for the California Department of Transportation. He urges journalists to persevere when they're confident of the news value. "You can still do those stories," he said, "but a lot of times you really have to fight for them."

Panelists urged the future journalists to find support through community involvement outside the job and to network. UTA alumna **Christian Burno** with WBUR, Boston National Public Radio, "went on a social media binge," saw who her future colleagues were following, and announced that she was moving to Boston. "Then people started following me, and I would follow them back. I really deep dived into trying to find any kind of story."

— Robert Bohler



Jessica Priest

PEOPLE & PLACES The new Fort Worth Report is filling out its roster. **Jessica Priest**, formerly an investigative reporter for USA Today based in Austin, will be the government and accountability reporter. Her stories about a lack of mental healthcare in a rural community spurred elected officials to start addressing the problem, and she was part of a team that earned a national Sigma Chi Delta Award for public service for reporting on lessons learned after Hurricane Harvey.



Jacob Sanchez

Jacob Sanchez's coverage of local government, education and politics earned multiple awards from the Texas Associated Press Managing Editors. A native of West Texas, he got his start at The Texas Tribune and the Texas Observer before joining the Temple Daily Telegram in 2016. UTA Shorthorn ex **Neetish Basnet** brings recent experience at the Fort Worth Business Press and previous work at the Dallas Business Journal, The Irving Rambler and the Burseson Star. ...

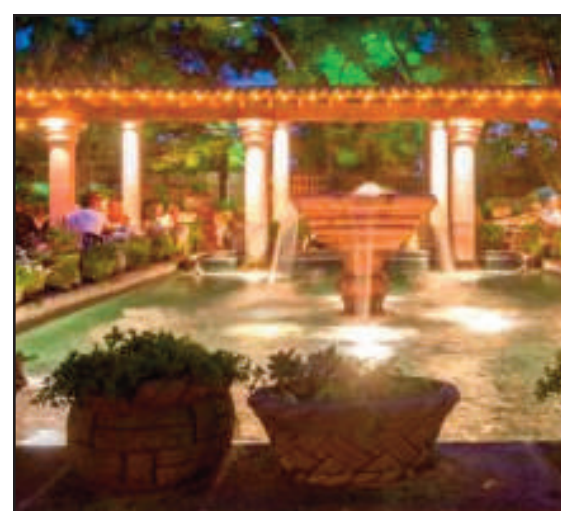
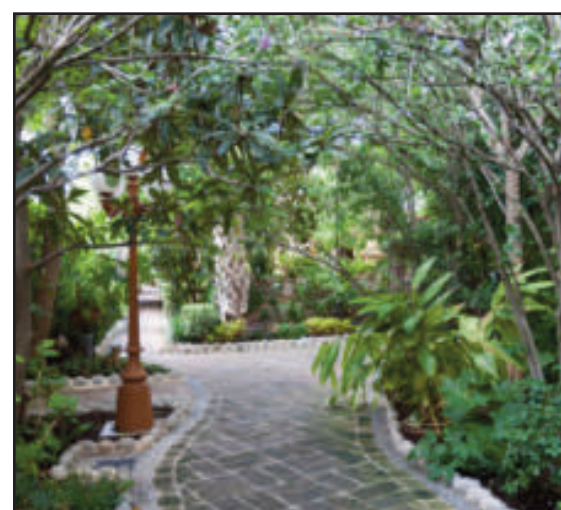


Neetish Basnet

They're tickled at J.O. over recent recognitions: Trinity Metro Make Your Move Anthem video, Platinum Hermes Creative Award and Platinum AVA Digital Award; Trinity Metro We Got You campaign, Gold AVA Digital Award and Gold AAF Addy Award; Tarrant County College Foundation fundraising brochure, local AAF Addy Award; Tarrant County Blue Officer Hull press release, Gold Hermes Award.

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F.O.I.F.T. UPDATE Opinion: [In pandemic era, Texans’ access to public information at risk](#) ... Texas House Speaker Pro Tem **Joe Moody**, **Josh Hinkle** of KXAN-TV, **Eva Ruth Moravec** of the Texas Justice Initiative and **Kathy Mitchell** of Just Liberty discussed the [latest in police transparency laws](#) during a one-hour webinar Feb. 24. ... Rep. **Giovanni Capriglione**, R-Southlake, has filed an open government bill designed to clarify “business days” for governmental entities responding to requests made under the Texas Public Information Act. Throughout the pandemic, some governments have refused to respond to TPIA requests if their physical offices were closed, even if the staff was working remotely. [Details.](#)

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

Let’s all line up to [buy a “ticket”](#) to the 18th Annual First Amendment Awards and Scholarship Virtual Celebration, a night of deserved recognition and substantive remarks from former Star-Telegram ME **Lois Norder**, now senior editor for investigations at the Atlanta Journal-Constitution. This 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. Donors of at least \$50 enter into a drawing for four real tickets to Billy Bob’s Texas and an overnight at the glistening new Hotel Drover.

SPJ factoids: The U.S. intelligence report on the 2018 killing of Washington Post journalist and SPJ Fellow of the Society **Jamal Khashoggi** confirms that Saudi Crown Prince **Mohammed bin Salman** approved capturing or killing Khashoggi. The crown prince [has not faced any repercussions.](#) ...

While most of the 126-plus journalists arrested or detained last year while covering Black Lives Matter protests were released without charges, at least four journalists were [due in court last month.](#) ...

[BuzzFeed laid off 47 HuffPost workers in the U.S.](#), most of them journalists, and closed down HuffPost’s Canadian operation, reportedly without warning to staff, March 9. ...

[States Newsroom](#) is launching a free syndication service, “Capital Connections,” through which other news organizations can republish coverage from the network’s 20 newsrooms. ...

Des Moines Register public safety reporter **Andrea Sahouri** was found not [guilty](#) on charges of failure to disperse and interfering with official acts, in connection with Black Lives Matter protests last summer. SPJ is [advocating on behalf of journalists worldwide](#) who are targeted while covering news. ...

In commemoration of International Women’s Day, Reporters Without Borders published a report, [“Sexism’s toll on journalism.”](#) ...

Judge **Tim Kelley** ruled for The Advocate and Times-Picayune reporter **Andrea Gallo**, saying Attorney General **Jeff Landry** [must release public records](#) related to a sexual harassment investigation of one of his top aides.

Caught my eye: [Agroforestry approaches for gardens and small farms](#) ... [Abandoned wells threaten Texas’ environment — will taxpayers foot the bill?](#) ... [Bioplastic made from wood powder entirely degrades in three months](#)

Closing words [with gratitude to **Garrison Keillor** and Prairie Home Productions]: “Nobody has ever measured, not even poets, how much the heart can hold.” — **Zelda Sayre Fitzgerald** ... “All of science is nothing more than the refinement of everyday thinking.” — **Albert Einstein**

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