

INFORMING THE NORTH TEXAS JOURNALISM / COMMUNICATOR WORKFORCE



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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.

Congratulations, Mike Cochran, recognized by the Big Country Athletic Hall of Fame with its Lifetime Achievement for Media Award

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- [On social media, American-style free speech is dead](#)

Next at [Fort Worth SPJ](#) ... updates on the [homepage](#) and [Facebook](#) page

QUICK HITS

- Women & Wealth inaugural virtual event, with **Arlan Hamilton**, founder, venture capital firm Backstage Capital — 1-6 p.m. Thursday, May 20. [Info.](#)
- Arlington Conservation Council remote monthly program, "DFW's Sustainability Journey," with **Kris Russell**, Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport — 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, May 5. [Info.](#)
- GFW PRSA remote monthly program, "A Look at What's Next for Fort Worth Tourism," with **Mitch Whitten**, Visit Fort Worth — noon Wednesday, May 5. [Info.](#)
- Botanic Garden/BRIT — May highlights: [Sean Kenney's Nature Connects \(with Legos!\)](#), May 6-Aug. 1; Bella's Book & Nature Club, May 5; Lunchtime Lecture Series: Permian Texas — Exploring an Ancient Tropical Landscape, May 4; Self-Care Workshop: Bring on the Sun!, May 15; Texas Bee Oasis, May 27-Nov. 28. [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.* ... The Houston Chronicle seeks an "all-around digital native" who can handle every aspect of online journalism, from engaging readers over social media to reporting news that has caught the state's attention. [Info.](#) ... The Amarillo Globe-News has an opening for an enterprise reporter to cover an array of issues in Amarillo and West Texas. [Info.](#) ... Texas Public Radio seeks an experienced, knowledgeable producer on its border and immigration desk. TPR serves a weekly broadcast audience exceeding 200,000 across a wide expanse of the state plus a fast-growing digital audience around the country. [Info.](#) ... Peloton Land Solutions seeks a full-time marketing coordinator in its Fort Worth office. [Info.](#)

[more eChaser on p. 2](#)

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[“What is good journalism?”](#)



Byrd Williams IV, left, and Mark Birnbaum on the Denton square

Images for all time

There’s the story ... and the story behind it

Documentary filmmaker **Mark Birnbaum** likes to fade into the shadows and let his subjects tell their story. Photographer **Byrd Williams IV** eliminates personalities entirely and freezes his subjects stock-still for five seconds. Together, the visual artists are chronicling 21st-century North Texans in a manner that should endure for millennia.

Williams and Birnbaum shared the story of the massive Walking Dead Project, which will eventually yield an estimated 600 images, and the documentary that tracks it in a [video interview](#) with Fort Worth SPJ board member **Sarah Macias** and a Zoom Q&A session Jan. 27.

The pair also collaborated on “Proof,” both a book and a documentary that encompass 100 years of Williams family prints, negatives, equipment and journals. University of North Texas Special Collections bought it all in 2014. In early 2020, Williams took his great-grandfather’s 19-century camera and plowed proceeds from the UNT sale into funding The Walking Dead.

“I’ve made them (prints) all of the most permanent materials I could find,” he said, “where you soak in gold and soak in silver and selenium (a chemical element for toning). That way, they have not a hundred-year life like digital prints (but) as long as 400 to 800 years.” UNT will keep the photos temperature perfect, “and after we’re all gone, everybody who’s in the collection is gone,” anthropologists will get to examine “how we dressed, our faces, population movements. This is pure social science, not vanity or art or any of that.”

Williams is producing 12-by-14-inch plates for faces and 16-by-20-inch plates for full-length images of each subject, dressed in everyday garb. (“Our clothes end up marking our culture and saying a lot about what we are and what our culture is.”)

The plates can only be developed a few at a time, and the process requires three days. The black and white images, taken with a five-second exposure (much quicker than in the 19th century), are stark and revealing. His subjects can’t smile and can’t move. “They stand against the wall, exactly like they shot them in the 19th century. It’s why everyone looks so grim in those photos. That big camera turns it into a ritual.”

When Birnbaum heard of the project he knew “here was this amazing visual part of the story that was just there for the taking.” He approaches his craft the opposite of Williams as he chronicles his subjects acting and reacting.

“Byrd’s exposure is for five or six seconds, and mine can be for 45 minutes. And I can allow whatever it is to unfold, and then I edit.” His demeanor never changes once he begins shooting. “In about 20 minutes I’m translucent, and in a half hour I’m transparent. Nobody sees me anymore.”

Birnbaum said he’s careful not to get in people’s faces. “That’s what works for me, and it has worked for me for a long time. And the fact that the cameras get smaller and more light sensitive makes it easier to be there and record what’s happening.”

The technology enabled Birnbaum to record the development process for The Walking Dead in real time. “(Photography) has always been magic to me. As Byrd says, they’re always talking about the print coming up in development. That’s the magic. I was able to bring 21st-century video technology to Byrd’s 19th-century technology. I could shoot in his darkroom like it was yellow daylight and watch print after print after print come up.”

The Walking Dead Project sprang partly from Williams’ appreciation for European portraiture that offers a visual history of several hundred years. And he wanted to create a record of life in the 21st century. He said:

“It was time for me, I’m at an age where I have to give something back.”

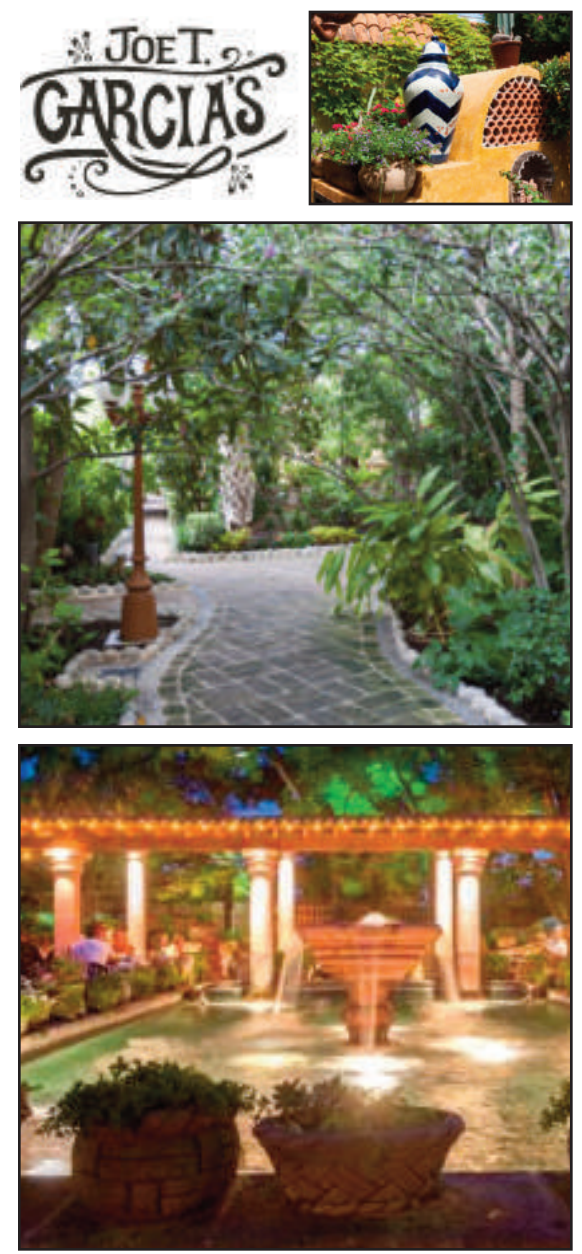
— Robert Bohler

among the faces in Byrd’s world ...



[more eChaser on p. 3](#)

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VITAL READS: Stories from INN newsrooms

INSTITUTE FOR NONPROFIT NEWS

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F.O.I.F.T. UPDATE As the legislative session winds down, the Texas Press Association, Texas Association of Broadcasters, Freedom of Information Foundation of Texas and other members of the Transparent and Accountable Government Coalition are backing bipartisan bills to promote open government and correct public information access problems that arose amid the pandemic. [Details](#). ...The Texas House State Affairs Committee unanimously approved two major bills April 14 addressing governments that quit responding to public information requests during the pandemic. [Details](#).

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

Fort Worth Report, now fully up and running, is officing not in a traditional commercial space but a *coffee shop*. I love this. Reasonable rent, you’d think; benefits a city business; and as you’re going home, snag a cup, maybe a cruller. Hey, maybe a story tip from the guy one table over ! Did you see [this](#) in FWR or [this](#) in the Business Press or [this](#) in the Star-Telegram or [this](#) in the Morning News or [this](#) in FW Weekly? Just a taste. Support local news. If America is to be saved, it’ll be by local news.

SPJ factoids: A [study](#) summarizing 30 years of sports coverage on televised news and highlights shows found 80% of the shows had no stories on women’s sports. A [striking newspaper campaign](#) turned real news pages into infographics to illustrate how rarely women are covered in sports. ...

Journalists now have a [new place to discuss their mental health](#). BBC journalist **Tom Hourigan** created the website and social media feed [Newsbreak](#) in response to the “unprecedented strain” placed on journalists while reporting on the pandemic. ...

Jimmy Lai, founder of Next Digital media group, which publishes the Apple Daily, was [found guilty of unlawful assembly](#) in Hong Kong related to massive demonstrations in the region two years ago. “There is no doubt that the Chinese authorities are pursuing a campaign of intimidation ... ,” International Press Institute deputy director **Scott Griffen** said. ...

As protesters continued to gather across America in response to the [death of 20-year-old Daunte Wright](#), journalists on the scene in a Minneapolis suburb were [forced on their stomachs by law enforcement](#), rounded up and only released after having their faces and press credentials photographed. This despite a judge issuing a temporary order barring the Minnesota State Patrol from using physical force or chemical agents against journalists. SPJ and nearly 30 other journalism outlets and organizations [sent a letter](#) to Minnesota Gov. **Tim Walz**, demanding better treatment. SPJ has [compiled resources from experts and partners](#) for the next time. ...

Reporters Without Borders’ [2021 World Press Freedom Index](#) shows that journalism is completely or partly blocked in 73% of the 180 countries ranked by the organization. And a New York Times story gave a comprehensive look at the [Supreme Court’s increasingly negative view](#) of the news media. ...

A [blank front page](#) greeted readers who picked up a copy of Kansas City’s Northeast News on March 25. The 89-year old free newspaper has lost ad revenue during the pandemic, and the blank page was a warning to the community if the paper ceased publication.

Caught my eye: [Reef revival: Fiji’s corals bouncing back after ruinous cyclone](#) ... [The radical case for growing huge swaths of bamboo in North America](#) ... [Recyclable alternative to Styrofoam made from paper waste](#) ... [Overfishing, pollution, and the film documentary you can’t un-see](#) ... [Good vibrations: bladeless turbines could bring wind power to your home](#)

Closing words [with gratitude to **Garrison Keillor** and Prairie Home Productions]: “Once you’ve spent two years trying to wiggle one toe, everything is in proportion.” — **Franklin D. Roosevelt**

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