

INFORMING THE NORTH TEXAS JOURNALISM / COMMUNICATOR WORKFORCE



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The Heat Reporter

AG Paxton rules ERCOT not subject to Texas Public Information Act

Naomi Osaka and the meaning of press freedom

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'Made for TV,' and where it got us

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UFO coverage and journalism's limits

Global repression: pandemic reporting | Covid-19 still killing journalists

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What is the 'mainstream media'?

Opinion: American democracy isn't dead yet, but it's getting there

Big Tech sues Florida, saying social media law violates First Amendment

Facebook extends Trump ban, eases exemptions for politicians' posts

The Republicans' wild assault on voting rights in Texas and Arizona

What happens when the news is gone?

The newspaperman who championed black Tulsa

'Republicans are defunding the police': Fox anchor stumps congressman

Permanence and loss at the Capital Gazette

Next at Fort Worth SPJ ... updates on the homepage and Facebook page

Paula LaRocque, 1937-2021

Paula LaRocque had a love affair with the written word, and a legion of scribes across the nation are better off for it.

She authored three non-fiction books — “Championship Writing,” “The Book on Writing,” “On Words: Insights into How Our Words Work – And Don’t” — and was the writing coach at The Dallas Morning News in 1981-2001.

Her commentaries on language aired regularly for many years on National Public Radio in Dallas. A longtime member of SPJ, she wrote a column for its Quill magazine or 20 years and was a consultant for the Drehscheibe Institute in Bonn, Germany, and for European Stars and Stripes.

She taught students at SMU, TCU, Texas A&M and Western Michigan University and professionals at myriad communication seminars for corporations and institutes. She served on the executive board of the Associated Press and received its Meritorious Service Award for Exemplary Service to Journalism.

In the last few years she wrote a blog on writing. Her affinity for words and their relationship to each other and with readers was obvious.

She was a member of the Dallas-Fort Worth Writers Workshop and of Mystery Writers of America. In 2011 she wrote her first novel, “Chalk Line” — appropriately, a murder mystery.

She earned a BA degree summa cum laude and an MA from Western Michigan and also worked on a doctorate, but her career became so demanding she did not complete it.

Paula died June 1. A gathering of friends will be held at a later date to commemorate her life.

She was married to longtime Fort Worth Star-Telegram editorial director **Paul LaRocque**. Paul's e-mail is paullarocque@sbcglobal.net.

— Donna Darovich



QUICK HITS

- Arlington Conservation Council — no meeting in July
- GFW PRSA — no meeting in July
- Botanic Garden/BRIT — Art in the Garden Tour, July 3; Tea at the Garden: Summertime Afternoon Tea, July 10; Gardening with Native Plants, July 10; Family Workshop: Building with Rogue Brick, July 17; Homemade Kombucha Workshop, July 17; A Slow Garden Experience, July 17. [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.* ... Tarleton State University's Department of Marketing and Communication seeks a manager of trademarks and licensing, a multimedia production specialist (video and photography) and a senior web developer. [Info.](#) ... The Austin American-Statesman is hiring a metro columnist to “fearlessly give voice to those in need” and call out abuses. Requirements include at least seven years experience at a daily publication. Spanish fluency is a plus. [Info.](#) ... The Bryan-College Station Eagle seeks a news editor. [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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["What is good journalism?"](#)



SUMMER 2021
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 Words & Language

F.O.I.F.T. UPDATE State agencies are abusing the Texas Public Information Act and the Texas attorney general's "skeleton crew" guidance. Some have not responded to records requests even though they were working remotely during covid-19 (most records are available electronically). The Freedom of Information Foundation of Texas has urged the AG's office to update its guidance on TPIA business days in relation to government office physical closures and "skeleton crews." Details [here](#) and [here](#).

PEOPLE & PLACES Submission deadline is July 16 for proposals from qualified agencies to support Trinity Metro marketing and advertising efforts in bus, rail and micro-transit services. The selected agency will develop and implement campaigns designed to increase ridership and improve sentiment toward public transportation and Trinity Metro. [More here](#); reference RFP 21-T037.

NEW MEMBERS Tawnell Hobbs, The Wall Street Journal ... Jessica Priest, Fort Worth Report ... John Schmeltzer, Gaylord College of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Oklahoma ... Kailey Broussard, Fort Worth Star-Telegram ... John Gravois, The Dallas Morning News ... Randy Loftis, indie writer environment/science/history

It just looks new: Attempts to enlighten newsroom culture — essentially the struggle for minority groups to gain a presence and a voice — have been ongoing for more than 50 years, USC prof and former New York Times and Wall Street Journal reporter **Bill Celis** said in a wide-ranging Zoom session in May.



Celis, in the first of several Fort Worth SPJ discussions on the evolution of newsrooms, said calling for increased inclusion harkens back to the 1968 Kerner Commission findings that a white-oriented news media played a role in the inner-city riots that plagued America in the mid- to late 1960s.

Numerous indictments of journalism came out of the report, Celis said, such as findings of "uneven, inaccurate and nonexistent" coverage of the black community. "When you read the report, it's astonishing. The writers could be writing about 21st-century America. Now instead of just black Americans, you include Latinos, Asians, LGBTQ immigrants and working-class people who include poor white Americans."

Spurred by a "racial reckoning" for social justice, news organizations are revisiting diversity initiatives that had languished. Some newsrooms are tying management incentives to coverage and hirings that better reflect the communities served. "It's happened very quietly," Celis said. Overall, he added, the news business has made progress. "There's always a lot of handwringing, but dig a little bit, and you see good things happening."

Celis is a former associate dean and director of USC's Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism; his diversity initiatives drew praise from the American Society of News Editors and the Association of Educators of Journalism and Mass Communication. While at USC he sought out employers and set up 20-plus paid internships in Southern California because he so disliked unpaid internships.

"I got tired of watching the division (between haves and have-nots). It wasn't just wealthy white students — there were students of color who could afford them — but the kids who couldn't take them were young people of color from south LA, growing up in Watts, first-generation students."

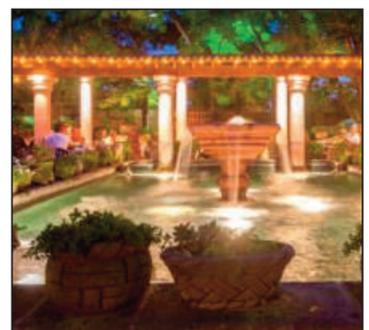
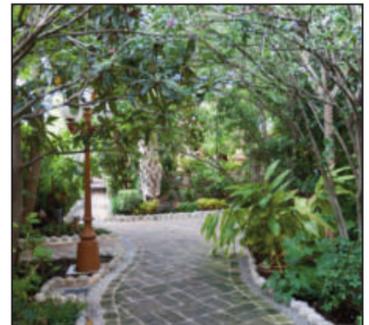
He said the early efforts to effect newsroom change had rough patches because of friction between the minority groups and management and also within the minority factions vying for advantage. He said younger generations have greater solidarity.

"These dust-ups are another layer of complication, but it's a generational thing. I think that when a critical mass begin to work themselves into leadership situations, things are going to start to change substantively and permanently."

— Robert Bohler

[more eChaser on p. 3](#)

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Fort Worth Report

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POWER TO THE PEOPLE *paywall code https://dmn.pub/watchdog*

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

Love the term “journopreneur,” which TCU’s **Amiso George**, APR, Fellow PRSA, applied to **Tommy Thomason** — the Lancelot of local news — upon his induction June 12 into the Texas Newspaper Hall of Fame at the Texas Press Association 141st annual convention in Denton. Tommy founded the [Texas Center for Community Journalism](#); he retired from TCU in 2019 and TCCJ moved to Tarleton State University, where the beat goes on. In the j-business, the little guy never had a greater champion than Tommy.

SPJ factoids: It is the [50th anniversary of The New York Times publishing the Pentagon Papers](#), arguably the [greatest journalistic catch of a generation](#). ...

[Judicial Watch filed a lawsuit against Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot](#) on behalf of the Daily Caller News Foundation and reporter **Thomas Catenacci**. Lightfoot said she would only grant interview to reporters of color “on the occasion of the two-year anniversary” of her inauguration. ...

The White House announced a [series of sanctions against Belarus](#) for its forced landing of a Ryanair commercial flight and the subsequent removal and arrest of opposition journalist **Roman Protasevich**. ...

Although the AP Stylebook recently updated its entries on covering disabilities, freelance journalist **Jen Ramos** argues that the [language used in journalism is often ableist](#). She notes that a better way to minimize harm is to ask disabled subjects what they are most comfortable with. ...

Although climate change is [being reported more](#), meteorologists and weather journalists worry that the topic is under-covered and over-politicized. Covering Climate Now, which collaborates with newsrooms to produce more climate stories, suggests [calling it a "climate emergency"](#), but some major outlets say that sounds like activism. ...

Attorney General **Merrick Garland** says he will [tighten Justice Department policies](#) on obtaining lawmakers’ and reporters’ records. Justice said it will no longer secretly obtain such records after reports that the **Trump** administration tried to do just that for reporters at The Washington Post, CNN and The New York Times. ...

Things are looking up slightly for the news industry. Certain factors suggest the [media industry is rebounding](#) quicker than originally anticipated. ...

A [Pew Research Center study](#) found that about a quarter of U.S. adults get their news from YouTube. Observers have raised a number of concerns about news on YouTube, ranging from misinformation and political bias to the control YouTube has over its content creators.

Caught my eye: [Climate podcast Drilled returns for Season 6 to expose natural gas Industry ... On climate change, UN draft report warns: Worst is yet to come ... Exxon, Shell, Chevron all lose big on climate battles ... How many people die when polluters exceed their limits? ... Mexico City is sinking at an 'unstoppable rate' ... A zombie-fire outbreak may be growing in the North](#)

Closing words [with gratitude to **Garrison Keillor** and Prairie Home Productions]: “Above all, be the heroine of your life, not the victim. Insane people are always sure that they are fine. It is only the sane people who are willing to admit that they are crazy.” — **Nora Ephron**

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UNSUNG: REMEMBERING JEWELL HOUSE

RESOURCES

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