

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.

INFORMING THE NORTH TEXAS JOURNALISM / COMMUNICATOR WORKFORCE



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



From SPJ Region 8 coordinator **Kathryn Jones**, who, it appears, is mentally on this riverboat already:

*I wanted to share more info about this year's [SPJ hybrid national convention, Sept. 2-4](#). You can choose whether to attend in person in New Orleans or online.*

*Scheduled speakers include "60 Minutes" correspondent **Bill Whitaker**; Pulitzer Prize-winning cartoonist for *The Washington Post* **Ann Telnaes**; White House news producer for CBS News **Fin Gómez**; chief investigative correspondent for *Inside Edition* **Lisa Guerrero**; and 2021 Fellows of the Society **Yamiche Alcindor**, **Maria Hinojosa** and **Clarence Page**.*

*You won't want to miss the opening night reception on the City of News Orleans Riverboat.*

*Breakout sessions will cover diversity in newsrooms, freelancing, mental health, freedom of information, staying safe, connecting with sources and audiences, digital tools and more. Three Super Sessions will focus on objectivity, the 20th anniversary of 9-11, and diversity and representation.*

*Register by Aug. 6 and be entered in a drawing for a \$50 Visa gift card. See you there!*

QUICK HITS

- Worthy Awards 2021 Call for Entries — deadlines Aug. 27 (\$80) and Sept. 3 (\$100). [Info.](#)
- Arlington Conservation Council remote monthly program, "DFW Air Quality and More," with **Jim Schermbeck**, Downwinders at Risk — 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 4. [Info.](#)
- GFW PRSA monthly program (in person!), "The Ethics of Speaking Out," with Dean **Kristie Bunton**, TCU Bob Schieffer College of Communication — 11:30 a.m. Wednesday, Aug. 4, Colonial Country Club. [Info.](#)
- Botanic Garden/BRIT — Lunchtime Lecture Series: Topics on Texas Aquatic Ecosystems, Aug. 3; Plants in Art, Through the Ages, Aug. 19; *Arte y Artesanía Botánica*: Mexico's Abiding Connection to the Natural World, M-F Aug. 13-Nov. 5; *Plantarum Succulentarum Historia*, through December; Research Lecture Series: Native Pollinators and Supplemental Wildflower Fields, Aug. 27. [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 Temple Daily Telegram seeks an experienced page designer/copy editor; platform is QuarkXPress, although switching soon to InDesign. [Info.](#) ... ALM Media Properties needs a journalist based in metro Dallas, Austin or Houston to cover state and federal courts, with emphasis on the Texas Supreme Court. [Info.](#) ... United Way of Tarrant County is hiring a communications and marketing associate to develop content for website, blogs, social media, media advisories, e-mail marketing and advertising. [Info.](#) ... The Fort Worth ISD seeks an executive director of external and emergency communications. [Info.](#)

[more eChaser on p. 2](#)

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[“What is good journalism?”](#)

**F.O.I.F.T. UPDATE** Opinion: Supplying information swiftly — not delaying it — is government’s duty. ... Austin police will now release video footage from critical incidents, like shootings that involve officers, within 10 business days, the department announced July 23. Details. ... Gov. **Greg Abbott** announced that on Sept. 1 he will lift his suspension of sections of the Texas Open Meetings Act. The suspensions, ostensibly in response to the pandemic, went into effect March 2020. Details.

**PEOPLE & PLACES**

FWBG | BRIT researcher **Jason Best** co-authored a paper published in the journal Nature Plants that demonstrates the lack of a global record of plant field photographs and advocates for a centralized repository. “We know there is a wealth of plant images scattered across the internet, but they can be difficult to find and offer only an incomplete picture of botanical diversity,” he says. “If we can consolidate these images and plant data, it will be a very powerful tool for research and conservation.” More here. ... Well-traveled Missouri grad **Alexis Allison** has joined the nonprofit Fort Worth Report as a healthcare reporter. She earned her bachelor’s in creative writing at Pepperdine University and a master’s in data journalism at the Missouri School of Journalism, but her most formative education, she says, took place in China and Iraq. After living abroad, she taught high school English in Los Angeles. The position is supported by Texas Health Resources.



**Richie Escovedo, APR; Jessamy Brown, APR; Kay Colley and Tracy Greene,** above from left, represented Greater Fort Worth PRSA at a community service event July 17 for the Tarrant Area Food Bank. The volunteer team helped with quality control leading to the contribution of 12,058 meals.



from left, **Fettig, Cuillier, Fuentes, LoMonte**

## Tracking sunshine across a dark sky

Open government advocates must overcome some alarming trends if they hope to restore the balance between the public’s right to know and individual privacy. That was the message from state and national free speech experts who gathered virtually in March for a Fort Worth SPJ Sunshine Week discussion.

They said that too frequently open records laws lack teeth or don’t exist. “We see (increased compliance) in some states that do have penalties, but it’s going to be tough to get stiff penalties passed into law,” said **David Cuillier**, president of the National Freedom of Information Coalition. **Todd Fettig**, the coalition’s outreach coordinator, noted that in Michigan, where he works, the governor and Legislature are exempt from FOI laws.

Cuillier, an SPJ past president, said federal stonewalling has been increasing for 30 years, regardless of who’s in power. “Democrat or Republican, they learn how to game the system, and when I say ‘they,’ I mean the bureaucracies. The bureaucracies have gotten really good at controlling the message. This country is not headed in the right direction.”

**Frank LoMonte**, a media law professor at the Brechner Center for Freedom of Information at the University of Florida, questioned whether the **Biden** administration will apply sufficient resources to tackle the FOIA backlog that got “desperately unmanageable” under the **Trump** administration.

**Diana Fuentes**, deputy metro editor of the San Antonio Express-News and a past president of the Freedom of Information Foundation of Texas, said Texas used the pandemic to squeeze the flow of public records. “In Fort Worth, Dallas, El Paso and San Antonio, they had full staffs working by remote (but) not answering public information requests for standard stuff, and their answer was, ‘Well, our offices are closed.’” She said legislation that would define any day other than Saturday, Sunday or a holiday as an open day has drawn bipartisan support.

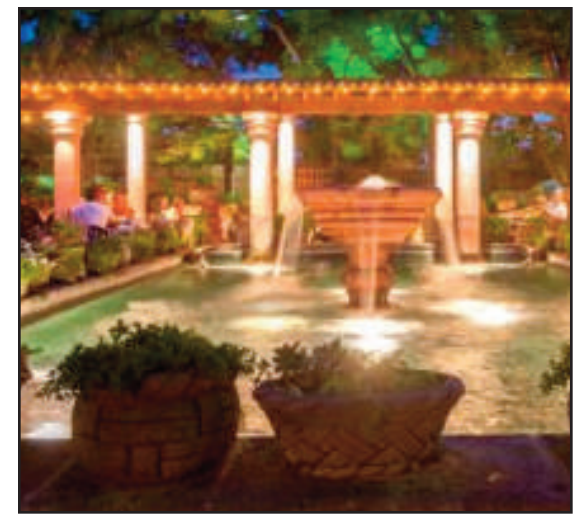
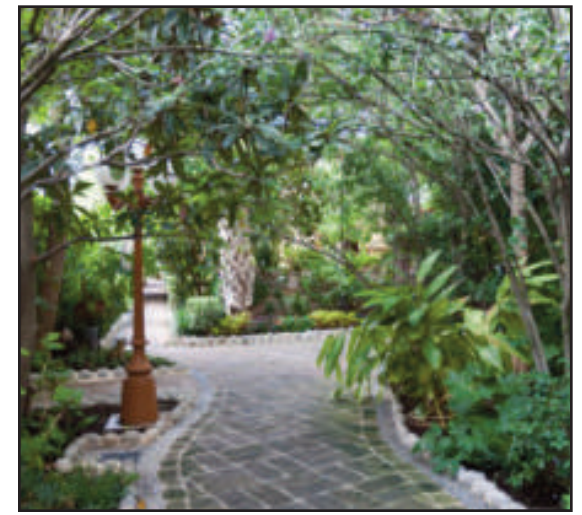
LoMonte, a past director of the Student Press Law Center, said the news media should seek out advocacy groups that can help open the public information pipeline. “You build alliances. You figure out who has interests that are adjacent to yours. The adjacent community right now that we need to be all over is the open data community. They’ve got a direct pipeline into every tech company in America and access to money that we can only dream of. I think that there’s a role for journalists and the open data advocacy community to work together on improving the quality of data.”

Cuillier and LoMonte also pointed fingers at the news media itself for stoking fears of identity theft and thus bolstering governmental authority to control the information. “Who are the folks that scared everybody in the country about these stories of identity theft? It was us,” Cuillier said. “Now we’re just doing our jobs, telling people what’s happening. But we are a fearful nation, and not just fearful of identity theft and privacy invasion but fearful of foreigners, fearful of, you name it. The psyche of America is changing, and one of the results is this willingness to accept greater government secrecy, greater authoritarianism. These are huge forces at work here.”

— *Robert Bohler*

[more eChaser on p. 3](#)

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# VITAL READS: Near and Far

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Nonprofits that help unaccompanied minors get legal aid are struggling

As covid-19 rose, so did teen suicide attempts. Girls are most at risk

Fort Worth moves forward with big plans for former public housing project

## Fort Worth Report

How Fort Worth is chipping away at homelessness one apartment at a time

On his way out the door, water district general manager unloads

FW pastors: Critical race theory debate is tearing apart the Christian church

## Fort Worth Star-Telegram

45 years after Davis mansion murders, FW landmark to be leveled

Tales of Masonic Home's "12 Mighty Orphans" overlook 3 Latino brothers

While a third of downtown FW shops are vacant, some see a rebound

He fled El Salvador to make a life in Texas. Now he's in limbo

Analysis: The noisiest branch of Texas government goes into overtime

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With so many fake reviews on Amazon, how do you know whom to trust?

Texas DPS, DMV to stop selling personal info to marketing companies

Among Texas governor worst acts, where is Abbott legislative branch veto?

Why did energy reform not make the special session?

With Texas electricity, you're on your own — take the preparedness quiz

On bitcoin machines, retired teacher pensions, property tax reform, roofers, robocalls: Spin the consumer wheel!

OVER & OUT | John Dycus, Fort Worth SPJ

Celebrating a journalism legend, for whom the Dallas Press Club named its awards: Happy 90th birthday (Aug. 2), **Hugh Aynsworth**. ...

Boots on the ground. Dallas Free Press launches a journalism pathway, seeks coordinator.

**SPJ factoids:** The Buffalo Newspaper Guild, which represents 150 Buffalo News employees, is going on an indefinite byline strike, withholding names from stories and photos to protest changes proposed by ownership. The staff also is negotiating its first contract with Lee Enterprises. ...

Sen. **Ron Wyden**, D-Ore., proposed a new shield law, the Protect Reporters from Excessive State Suppression (PRESS) Act. ...

The Justice Department charged a U.S. Capitol riot suspect with assaulting a cameraman during the Jan. 6 attack. The man is the first insurrection defendant to be arrested for allegedly harming a member of the media. ...

Three Al Jazeera journalists who were tear-gassed during a racial injustice protest in Ferguson, Mo., after **Michael Brown's** death in 2014 settled a lawsuit with St. Charles County when the county agreed to pay the journalists \$280,000. ...

Minnesota's court system is considering allowing more cameras in criminal court proceedings after the **Derek Chauvin** trial. ...

The U.S. Postal Service plans to increase periodical rates for newspapers by 8 percent starting Aug. 29, which almost surely will hurt small dailies, weeklies and rural newspapers. ...

A review from the State Department's Office of Inspector General cleared the names of six Voice of America employees dismissed by the previous **Trump**-appointed VOA leader, **Michael Pack**. ...

TV journalists are experiencing increasing violence while on the job, continuing a trend that was seen throughout 2020, possibly the most dangerous year in history for reporters in the United States. ...

Attorney General **Merrick Garland** formally prohibited federal prosecutors from seizing the records of journalists in leak investigations, with limited exceptions, reversing years of department policy. ...

Watch this trend. Local investors are buying news outlets back from large chains. Gannett has sold 24 newspapers back to local owners. But there appears to be a sharp divide in American journalism, with business booming for national journalists covering tech and politics on the coasts and local newspapers continuing to shrink. ...

Most large U.S. newsrooms are now led by someone other than a white male.

**Caught my eye:** Plastic rain Is the new acid rain ... US Army's gravity-defying aluminum panel purifies water with sunlight ... Will it make a difference? Biden's jobs plan is also a climate plan ... Are there problems with lab-grown meat? ... China's switch to biodegradable plastics won't solve the pollution crisis

**Closing words** [with gratitude to **Garrison Keillor** and Prairie Home Productions]: "I like to crack jokes now and then, but it's only because I struggle with math." — **Tina Fey** ... "News is what people want to keep hidden, and everything else is publicity." — **Bill Moyers**

[back to p. 1](#) | [back to p. 2](#)

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## Cowcatcher Magazine

All about the community of model railroading and rail enthusiasm in the Midwest and Southwest



## UNSUNG: REMEMBERING JEWELL HOUSE

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