

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

JANUARY 2022 • Back Issues

INFORMING THE NORTH TEXAS JOURNALISM / COMMUNICATOR WORKFORCE




75+1 FW-SPJ

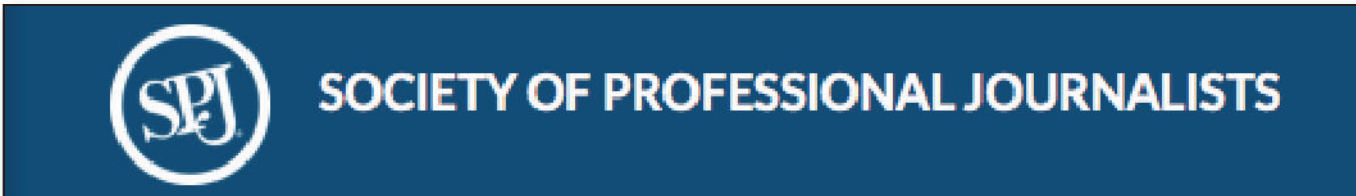
to subscribe or to submit items, e-john@xdycus.com

* 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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- [Lee Enterprises holds off an Alden takeover — for now](#)
- [Mark Meadows, the signal, and the noise](#)
- [Chris Wallace, an old approach, and something new](#)
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Next at [Fort Worth SPJ](#) ... updates on the [homepage](#) and [Facebook](#) page



- In a vigorous 2021, accomplishments aplenty:
- Installed Fort Worth SPJ's **Rebecca Aguilar** as the 105th SPJ president and the first Latina and woman of color in that role, and welcomed a very diverse [Board of Directors](#), including the first transgender woman to serve.
 - Initiated a new leadership program for student journalists — the [Student Leadership Institute](#) — and launched a new ethics program featuring a go-to journalism website, [SPJ Ethics Central](#).
 - Experienced a 3% membership increase (18% boost in student members).
 - Successfully completed its second all-virtual convention, [SPJ 2021](#).
 - Following an increase in awards submissions, honored hundreds of journalists through the [Sigma Delta Chi](#) and [Mark of Excellence](#) awards.
 - Gave thousands of dollars through the [Legal Defense Fund](#), and [spoke up numerous times](#) on First Amendment issues.
 - Debuted the [Future Leaders Academy](#) with a diverse cohort of volunteers.
 - Started the [SPJ Student Trustee Council](#), an advisory board of student members, and began a partnership with Associated Collegiate Press and College Media Association; watch for a [shared conference](#) in Washington, D.C., Oct. 27-30.
 - Started the [Sigma Delta Chi Society](#), a select group of members who donate at least \$100 annually to SPJ or the SPJ Foundation.

QUICK HITS

- Arlington Conservation Council — annual meeting (Zoom) 7 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 19. [Info.](#)
- GFW PRSA — networking meeting Wednesday, Jan. 12. [Info.](#)
- FWBG | BRIT — Buffalo Soldier Display and Presentation, Jan. 15 and 16; Forest Bathing (in the Japanese Garden), Jan. 29; Healthy Meal Planning with Ease, Jan. 15; Art Talk: In Between: **Charles Demuth's** 1926 "Calla Lilies (**Bert Savoy**)," Jan. 6; Cactus Garden Cut-outs, Jan. 29. [Info.](#)
- Meetups: [hosting an online event](#) [Trinity Arts Writers Workshop](#) ... [Fort Worth Area Journalists Meetup](#)

IN THE WORKPLACE: GET A JOB *Listings in [journalismjobs.com](#) and [dfwcommunicators.com](#) appear in this report.* ... The Beaumont Enterprise seeks an enthusiastic and versatile assistant editor to serve in the No. 2 leadership position in its newsroom. [Info.](#) ... The Lubbock Avalanche-Journal/lubbockonline.com, part of the USA Today network, has an opening for a regional agriculture and natural resources reporter to chronicle the leading economic and cultural drivers on the South Plains and in the West Texas Panhandle. [Info.](#) ... Texas Monthly has an immediate opening for a copy editor strong in grammar and style. Focus is on the print magazine, plus massaging content for other editorial platforms as needed. Full-time position, benefits, compensation negotiable. Preference goes to Austin residents, but candidates living elsewhere in Texas will be considered. [Info.](#) ... The nonprofit Texas Tribune seeks a bilingual community reporter in the Panhandle and South Plains (where 13 counties lack a newspaper). Skills: audio/broadcast, reporting, writing. [Info.](#)

[more eChaser on p. 2](#)

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["What is good journalism?"](#)

F.O.I.F.T. UPDATE An open government advocate asserted in November that if Texas legislators can one day close a loophole in the state's public information act, municipalities will no longer be able to work around certain requirements — such as responding to requests. The handling of a recent request concerning the delayed city manager search in Rio Grande City became the latest example of such a loophole in the Texas Public Information Act. [Details](#). ... Two new transparency laws — Senate Bill 930, which ensures that families of nursing home residents have access to information about outbreaks of communicable diseases in the facilities, and Senate Bill 1225, which tightens the TPIA catastrophe exception — took effect in September, but at least seven other bills sought by journalists and media lawyers fell short. [Details](#).

Compromises limiting student journalists

The ideological climate in which university administrators attempt to curtail independent reporting by student publications is growing, in part because of economic models and administration efforts to put the best face on how the universities are covered, five front-line practitioners told a [Fort Worth SPJ panel on the welfare of student media](#).

Tarleton State University in August instructed a student editor to remove stories written more than three years ago about allegations of professional misconduct by students against a faculty member. The incident was not the first scrap over the years between the administration and the Texan News Service.

The SPJ panel, moderated by SMU professor **Jake Batsell**, included former TNS adviser **Dan Malone**; Student Press Law Center legal expert **Frank LoMonte**; College Media Association president **Chris Whitley**, a longtime adviser and student media director at Tarrant County College; and SPJ Region 8 director **Kathryn Jones**. Administrators at Tarleton State were invited to the discussion but declined.

Jones resigned last year from her teaching position at Tarleton. Malone retired after several years on the journalism faculty.

Malone said TNS was founded to provide student journalists an unrestricted platform for news coverage after the university "retaliated" against its official newspaper, The JTAC, for publishing stories about sexual assaults on campus.

"We felt our students needed an outlet to print their stories where they couldn't be subjected to that sort of post-publication retaliation," he said. The sexual assault stories disclosed situations that had gone unreported on campus or to the U.S. Department of Education and resulted in DOE fines against the university.

Today, Malone said, "if there are sexual assaults on campus, they're being reported, thanks to Tarleton State students."

As for the news coverage pulled from the website in August, Malone said the reporting was legally sound. "The stories that have been controversial were triple fact-checked. There's no basis for a libel suit. The only motivation for it is to try to intimidate." At least one of the stories can be found [here](#).

Malone, Jones and former Communication Studies Department head **Charlie Howard** agreed that the university's tactics were based not on fear of a lawsuit but on wanting to avoid controversy. The Student Press Law Center recently uncovered the university's severance agreement with the former faculty member, and it precludes any legal action against the university, Howard said during the discussion.

Both Whitley and LoMonte described the Tarleton situation as indicative of increasing efforts by universities to muzzle the student press and maintain a more favorable public image. The irony, Whitley said, is that universities "get into trouble by meddling in the process"; meanwhile, the number of reported incidents of First Amendment infringements and threats to advisers is increasing.

"They're trying to be more controlling about the content, but by doing that they also end up leaving themselves more liable because they're government employees working against the First Amendment," he said. "Not getting in the way of students deciding content is safer legally."

College administrations are gaining more control because the traditional ad-based news models that provided student independence are failing, with academic journalism absorbing more training, LoMonte said. If the faculty member in a lab setting has the final say on what is or is not published, that person is legally "vulnerable." LoMonte also directs the Brechner Center for Freedom of Information at the University of Florida.

"If you can come up with a structure that walls off that adviser, and the editor makes the run/don't run decision, that is your best insulation against liability," he said. "That's what the courts have said. The problem is that when you're doing it in a classroom setting, it gets harder to disclaim responsibility."

Regardless of the causes of administrative intervention, it's the student journalists who get "short-changed" by losing the opportunity for professional growth, Jones said. "Students aren't going to get a real-world experience. A lot of them are afraid of challenging authority already."

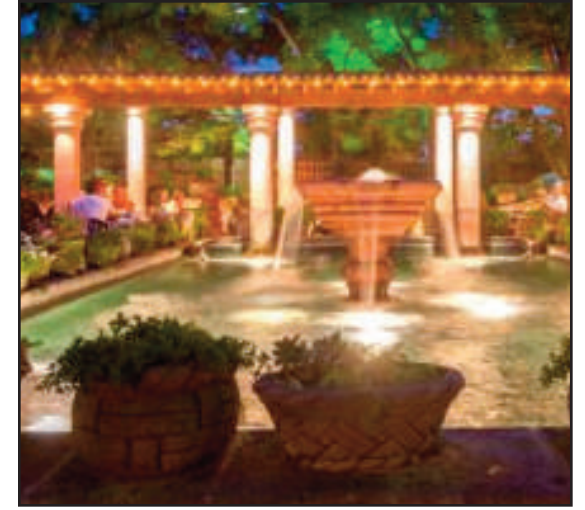
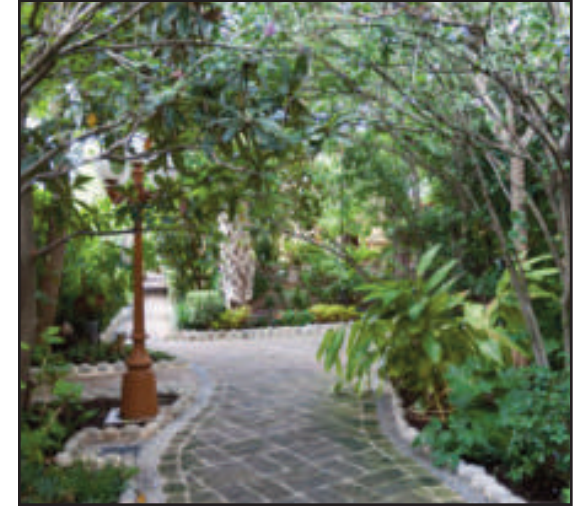
Howard called the erosion of student media independence and the guidance that comes with it "a global worry."

"It's hard to cover hard news stories and takes a lot of gumption," he said. "When you're 18 or 19 years old, that takes a bit of spine."

— Robert Bohler

[more eChaser on p. 3](#)

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



What an exceptional Cool Yule party! Watch these pages throughout 2022 as **Nico Badeaux's** photos magically appear, or you could always do the full show *right now*. ...

It didn't take **Haley Samsel** and **Kailey Broussard** long to find work after McClatchy severed relations with Report for America, which had been paying half of their Star-Telegram salaries. Fort Worth Report snapped up Haley to cover environmental issues, and Kailey joined KERA as a government accountability reporter. Meanwhile, Report for America is expanding. Everybody wins but the S-T. ...

The ups and downs and sidewayses of [unionizing in Texas](#).

SPJ factoids: In 2009 reporter **Bruce Alpert** filed a Freedom of Information Act request related to former U.S. Rep. **William Jefferson**, D-New Orleans. When the [documents arrived 12 years later](#), the case had been over for four years and Alpert had been out of daily journalism for six years. FOIA requests are supposed to be answered within 20 days. ...

The Indiana Supreme Court is [testing cameras in the courtroom](#). ...

A New York trial court judge [extended an order](#) for The New York Times to temporarily refrain from publishing or seeking certain documents related to Project Veritas. First Amendment advocates say this [violates basic constitutional protections](#) for journalists, a view echoed by the Times. ...

Chicago Public Media, parent company of radio station WBEZ, signed a letter of intent to acquire a legacy paper, the Chicago Sun-Times, [creating one of the largest local nonprofit news organizations in the country](#). ...

States Newsroom, a network of nonprofit newsrooms covering state government across the country, [plans to nearly double its presence](#) from its current 25 states to about 40 over the next two and a half years. Next up: outlets in Nebraska, Alaska, Arkansas, South Carolina and Kentucky. ...

Each year, Nieman Lab asks the smartest people in journalism and media to predict the next 12 months. Topics for 2022 include [accessibility](#), [climate reporting](#), [embracing management opportunities](#) and [manipulated media](#), and SPJ member **Amara Aguilar** says [print will make a comeback](#). ...

AP executive editor **Julie Pace** [urged the Department of Homeland Security to explain](#) why Pulitzer Prize-winning investigative reporter **Martha Mendoza** was identified as a potential confidential informant during the **Trump** administration.

Caught my eye: [Pushing renewable power immediately could save trillions in health costs](#) ... [Hurricane 'price tags' could reveal one cost of global warming](#) ... [Sustainable pencil stubs Sprout into plants](#). ... [Supermarket cuts emissions 53%, offsets the rest](#). ... [Climate change right before your eyes](#)

Closing words [with gratitude to **Garrison Keillor** and Prairie Home Productions]: "The degree of civilization in a society can be judged by entering its prisons." — **Fyodor Dostoyevsky**

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