

FEBRUARY 2023 • Back Issues

INFORMING THE NORTH TEXAS JOURNALISM / COMMUNICATOR WORKFORCE



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Taking the plan to the people

A tidy gathering of journalists young and not as young heard the word Jan. 19 from FW SPJ finance VP **Max Baker**, right, at Enchiladas Olé Forest Park.



Thirteen people showed up for happy hour. Veteran chapter members swapped war stories and touted story ideas to the young journalists.



Writers and photographers from the Fort

Worth Star-Telegram and Fort Worth Report were treated to plates of nachos. Star-Telegram investigative reporters **Kaley Johnson** and **Emily Brindley** visited with others about the recent newspaper strike while Fort Worth Report's environment reporter, **Haley Samsel**, above left with **Sandy Baker**, swapped news tips.

Star-Telegram photographer **Candi Bolden** shared her experiences on the digital side while SPJ board member, and Star-T reporter **James Hartley** described the joy of being back at work.

Emily Wolf, Fort Worth Report's local government accountability reporter, and freelancer **Tynan Stewart** discussed their interests. Stewart, who was raised in Mississippi and educated in Georgia, has decided to make North Texas his home and has started an online newsletter, "Lost in Panther City." The endeavor is his approach to the history of Fort Worth from a newcomer's point of view.

Organizers predicted more mixers to come.

QUICK HITS

- Arlington Conservation Council monthly Zoomer (recorded), "Feeding your friendly backyard herbivore," with Dr. **Alison Ravenscraft**, UTA biology department — 7 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 1 ([link](#)).
- GFW PRSA professional development meeting, "Effective Emergency Communication: Successful Messaging for Good Times and Bad," with **Reyne Telles**, city of Fort Worth; **Brian Murnahan**, American Red Cross Greater North Texas — 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 1, Ridglea Country Club. [Info](#).
- FWBG | BRIT — World of Orchids, Feb. 24-April 9; Art+Science Exhibition | Illuminations: Past, Present, and Future of Fern Research, Feb. 17-June 30; Girls' Nature Workshop: Kitchen Scrap Gardening, Feb. 11. [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?”



from left:
Steve Mines
Kathy Kauffman
Jyoti Madhusoodanan

Part 1, October 2022: A matter of interpretation

Tips for working with interpreters

Do your homework. Understand the rules. You say you'll never need an interpreter to assist an interview? What about that on-site story you're doing with detainees on the Texas border? There are best practices, you know.

• Hire professionals. **Kathy Kauffman**, a Spanish-speaking legal and conference interpreter who has interpreted for the BBC and Reuters, believes reporters should hire career interpreters, preferably someone with a college degree, who is familiar with codes of ethics. Whenever possible, Kauffman recommends hiring interpreters who are native speakers of the language the source speaks — or who speak that language almost as fluently as a native speaker — because they are generally more familiar with the nuances that inform full comprehension.

• Use association directories. Some organizations have directories that enable searching for interpreters by field. The National Board of Certification for Medical Interpreters, for example, offers a search by language, location and certification type. The American Translators Association directory identifies interpreters by specialty. The National Association of the Deaf and National Deaf Interpreter have public directories. You may also want to reach out to federal district courts, consulates and embassies.

• Set boundaries before the interview begins. Introduce the interpreter to your sources and explain their role. That should go a long way in helping interviewees understand the responsibility of a language professional and feel more comfortable, Kauffman said, “because they're talking to two people instead of one.”

• Now and then, there's room for interpreters to act as cultural brokers. But **Steve Mines**, a longtime legal and conference interpreter in Austin who has worked for the U.S. State Department, stressed that interpreters should assume that role only at the reporter's request. If the interpreter is asked to change roles, Kauffman said the reporter and the language professional should together establish the ground rules of what that will entail. And Kauffman said the reporter should let sources know that the interpreter now has a different job. “Any time you're wearing two hats,” she cautioned, “those waters get muddied.”

• Journalists should address confidentiality matters before interviews. Because some sources share sensitive information with reporters, Mines said interpreters should know what's on or off the record, such as information about medical diagnoses, criminal activity and rape. “Interpreters play a delicate role, in that language allows them to earn, in many cases, the trust and the confidence of the people for whom they are interpreting. They may hear things that the people they're interpreting for wouldn't say if it weren't in that exchange of trust.”

• Explore other reporters' experiences. Because she had never worked with an interpreter before she had to hire one, Portland-based science writer **Jyoti Madhusoodanan** read a lot of articles on reporting with language services professionals. The one tip that stood out was to “focus on the source because it's the source's story, not the interpreter's story.” Keeping eye contact with the sources helped her catch emotional cues, she said.

– Margarita Birnbaum
federally certified interpreter | Texas licensed court interpreter

A version of this story appeared in the American Translators Association Interpreters Division Blog and as a blog post and tip sheet for the Association of Health Care Journalists. For more on reporting with interpreters, see “Across the Language Barrier,” Columbia Journalism Review, cjr.org; “Overcoming the challenges of using an interpreter during interviews,” International Journalists' Network, ijnet.org; “How journalists can work well with interpreters during interviews,” The Poynter Institute, poynter.org; SPJ Code of Ethics, spj.org

POWER TO THE PEOPLE

Keller ISD invites a messianic clergyman accused of assault to say a prayer

It's not always good when you win a Watchdog Award

That product you see online is dirt cheap. Should you be suspicious?

Watchdog consumer rights movement originated in a most radical place

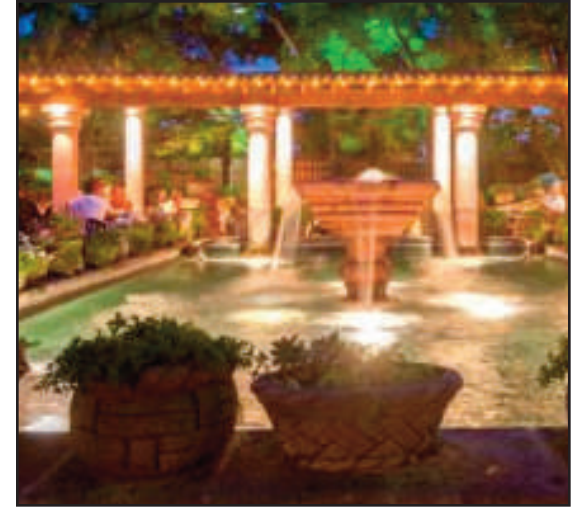
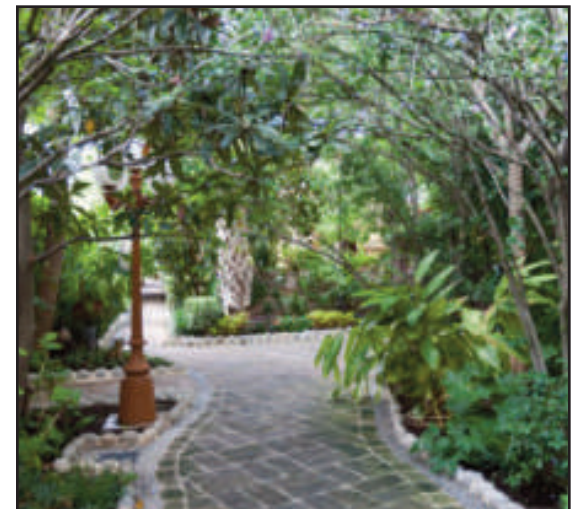
Paxton could fight for consumers; instead he battles people he calls 'woke'

Stamp prices jump. Cotton Bowl AT&T cell service. ERCOT's open records



PEOPLE & PLACES More than 1,000 PR pros, speakers, exhibitors and sponsors gathered at the Gaylord Texan Hotel in Grapevine on Nov. 12-15 for ICON 2022. Organizers say the Dallas and Fort Worth PRSA chapters knocked the hospitality out of the ice park. More here.

more eChaser on p. 3



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(PANTS ON FIRE!)

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Fort Worth Star-Telegram

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TEXAS STANDARD

THE NATIONAL DAILY NEWS SHOW OF TEXAS

[Two years after the Jan. 6 Capitol riot, Texans involved face charges, prison time](#) || [Texas Supreme Court says it can't force state to process deluge of applications for tax breaks expiring this year](#) || [Harris Health's \\$45 million deficit finds American Rescue Act stopgap after last fall's budget battle](#)

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

UTA Shorthorn ex **Heather Loeb**, who writes a column for the Corpus Christi Caller-Times, [shares a concern](#). ...

That happy hour Jan. 19 at Enchiladas Olé Forest Park was small but I think significant. Fort Worth SPJ meetings tend to be *orchestrated*. This deal was walk in the door and grab a menu and commence conversation. Experiences were shared, new friendships formed, encouraging words offered. Thanks, **James Hartley** and **Kailey Broussard**, for a good idea here. Look for more events like this. ...

New Region 8 coordinator **Laura Victoria Garcia** [hit the ground running](#). Planning is underway for the regional conference, to be hosted this year by Texas A&M University-San Antonio's student SPJ chapter. Look for a mixer Friday, March 31, then a full day of sessions plus MOE awards April 1. What would you like to see at the Region 8 conference? Send Laura ideas for sessions, keynote speakers, etc. ...

The headline says it all: *Fort Worth Report receives \$1.1 million grant from American Journalism Project to ensure long-term sustainability*. Congratulations all around. This is great for local journalism, great for the local journalism job market, great for the community. And it's good for the Star-Telegram, too, if it motivates McClatchy to meet the coverage challenge. The Star-T team on the ground is aggressive, talented and determined, and it needs — deserves — more resources.

SPJ factoids: A part-time reporter with West Virginia Public Broadcasting was fired in an alleged act of retaliation after pressure was placed on the state-owned broadcaster following reporting that criticized the state's Department of Health and Human Resources. [here](#), [here](#)

The company that owns The Birmingham News, The Huntsville Times and The Press-Register in Mobile, Ala. said all three publications will stop publishing a printed newspaper after Feb. 26 and become digital only. No cuts to newsroom jobs are expected. [here](#), [here](#)

A group of regional and national news organizations have formed a coalition to oppose the narrowing of the gag order issued Jan. 3 in the case against the man accused of killing four University of Idaho students. [here](#), [here](#), [here](#)

Nobel laureate and SPJ Fellow of the Society **Maria Ressa** was acquitted of four charges of tax evasion by a Philippine court Jan. 18. [here](#), [here](#), [here](#)

Caught my eye: [Chemical conversion process gives plastic waste new life as fuel](#) ... [Red-eyed mosquitoes engineered to break the chain of Zika virus transmission](#) ... [Major brands commit to selling products in refillable containers](#) ... [The unlikely cure for burnout? A second job](#)

Closing words [with gratitude to **Garrison Keillor** and Prairie Home Productions]: "For a country to have a great writer is like having another government. That's why no regime has ever loved great writers, only minor ones." — **Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn**, who won the Nobel Prize in literature in 1970 ... "To acquire the habit of reading is to construct for yourself a refuge from almost all the miseries of life." — **W. Somerset Maugham**

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