

THE CHASER

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Fort Worth Chapter / Society of Professional Journalists

"If it happened in Fort Worth ...
it's news to us!"

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Everything You Wanted to Know About Book Publishing, Wrapped in a Flour Tortilla

"So you want to write a book?" is the "my true story" topic for SPJ's Feb. 18 gathering at Los Vaqueros restaurant, 2629 North Main. Meet and greet at 5:30 with dinner beginning at 6. Following these exercises in socializing, some real live published and publicized scribes will share their experiences so the rest of us can decide how determined we should be to bring our books to life.

Pierre Salinger's buddy Jeff Guinn, Star-Telegram ghost-story editor, and novelist/retired Tandy exec Lewis Kornfeld will take us through publication and beyond. Lenore Markowitz, a celebrity publicist who has squirmed around about every author passing through town, will reveal what happens on a signing tour and why these junkets are so important in the book biz. Associated Press veteran Mike Cochran, with some authoring experiences of his own, will keep discussion moving (as if these people would be at a loss for words). If you're expecting mahi-mahi crepes with a fruit cup for dinner, naw, it's beef and chicken fajitas sauteed with onions and green peppers plus the ubiquitous beans and rice, served with guacamole, sour cream and pico de gallo, for \$5.95 plus tax, beverage extra. There's also a cash bar. Hope you can join us. Please call let us know by Monday, Feb. 17 — the home answering machine is 926-9316, the work machine 871-6119. At either number, it's impossible to get a human, but don't count on it.

Crisis communications such as storms, crashes, explosions and other ruin-your-day occurrences will be the program topic for March. Date and time still later. April's meeting will be part of the Region 8 conference.

The plot thickens.

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But first: It was a dark and stormy night ...

Busy spring ahead for chapter

At least one book eager to see print, lusting after made-for-TV fame, lurks inside each of us — and that's where it should stay, an editor pronounced recently, with emphasis on *stay* when I noted how this month's SPJ meeting should be interesting since we all want to write the great American novel in our copious spare time.

I recall the creative writing teacher in college who advised that if we wanted to publish a poem we should consider our first 200 rejection slips as "dues" (in the Dead Poet's Club, I suppose). If it takes 200 turn-downs for just one poem, how many would stack up before Fabio tears off his shirt on *your* book jacket?

For success stories, tips on getting started and a sampling of the bad and the ugly — the agent who has already talked to Mel Brooks about starring in the movie version of your novel but who can't get the book published; the publisher who loves your first book but wants to debut it as a package of three and can't advance any payment until all are finished — join us Feb. 18 at Los Vaqueros, across North Main Street from Billy Bob's in a marvelous, old cowboy-exotic

refrigeration warehouse turned eatery.

Dominic Hart and Sons Livestock Co. built the structure in 1915. Following a series of uses, it was boarded up in '83 and reborn as a restaurant in August '96. In October it received the Tarrant County Historical Society's Community Pride Award. The building alone is worth the price of the pico.

Another reminder: **SPJ Region 8 conference**, April 11-13 at the Ramada Fort Worth–Downtown. Super-organized Verlie Edwards is crafting the snazziest programs, on hot subjects like "Covering the Cowboys: From the Sports Page to the Front Page" with columnists, talk show personalities and editors who must decide how to play the stories. Sessions will cover burnout, talk radio, using the Internet and more, with seminars for pros and students alike. We will also "Experience Cowtown" with a walking tour of the North Side and dinner at Los Vaqueros.

When the regional meet comes calling, we throw the doors open wide. Get ready for an informative, packed weekend.

— Carolyn Poirot

SPJ
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