

FIJ – SUPPORTING INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING PROJECTS AROUND THE WORLD

## People in this Issue

**Danielle Mackey**  
**Alan Berlow**  
**Anu Narayanswamy**  
**Doris Truong**

## News from FIJ

- FIJ is happy to announce two new board members.

**Alan Berlow** is a freelance reporter, a former foreign correspondent for NPR, and author of [Dead Season, A Story of Murder and Revenge](#). His work has appeared in The New York Times Magazine, The Atlantic and Harpers. Berlow has himself received two FIJ grants, in 1977 and 1991. He is a board member of the Morton K. and Jane Blaustein Foundation.

**Anu Narayanswamy** is a data reporter for [The Washington Post](#), working on the political enterprise team with a focus on money in politics and government accountability. She has previous investigative reporting experience both at the Center for Public Integrity and the Sunlight Foundation. Originally from Mumbai, India, she has a master's in Journalism from the University of Missouri – Columbia and is a member of the IRE/NICAR.

At the same time, **Doris Truong** will be leaving the board after a three-year term. FIJ wishes her the best of luck as she continues as the director of training and diversity at [the Poynter Institute](#).

- The past month has brought in three substantial funding grants for 2019.

**The Weissman Family Foundation** donated \$75,000 to again support FIJ reporting grants in the coming year.

In addition, **The Nara Fund** donated \$21,000. Of that, \$6,000 is earmarked for continuing diversity outreach. Jonathan Ingbar, president of the Fund wrote, “All of us at The Nara Fund are inspired by the work that you do and we are honored to help support it, especially so at this time.”

That money had the added benefit of fulfilling a \$25,000 matching challenge grant from the **Ethics and Excellence in Journalism Foundation**.

And **The Reva and David Logan Foundation** – a long-time supporter – made a grant of \$50,000 to fund even more reporting.

The FIJ board and reporting grant recipients are deeply grateful, and hope that the generosity will continue flowing through the holiday season.

## News from FIJ *continued*



And also, please consider a tax-deductible donation to FIJ this holiday season. Less than two weeks remain to count a donation in your 2018 tax filing. But we promise the warm feeling will last throughout 2019.

[Click to donate.](#)

*Photo by Jerry Redfern*

***Thank you!***

## Investigation Spotlights



*A view of prisoners inside Apanteos prison, west of San Salvador, El Salvador. Photo by Salvador Meléndez/Revista Factum*

highlighted in the [New York Times](#) and [Longreads](#).

The second piece reports on [a historic change in U.S. foreign policy](#) toward El Salvador that allows aid money to be used to help people leave gangs. The unannounced policy shift happened after a years-long political battle fought in both Washington and the U.S. Embassy in San Salvador.

- In two stories for The Intercept, **FIJ/Schuster Institute diversity fellow Danielle Mackey** reports on the difficulty and politics of leaving criminal gangs in El Salvador. [The first piece follows a 21-year-old](#) who wants to retire after 10 years of murder and extortion with the gang Barrio 18. He hopes for a new life working with an evangelical Christian church. To his surprise, the gang lets him go, with conditions.

Besides entanglements with their old gangs, former members are ostracized by society and are targeted by police and other gangs. There are about 60,000 gang members in El Salvador. Mackey asks, “What is the solution to this problem if they can’t retire?” This story was

### Investigation Spotlights *continued...*



*View of the City-County Building in Pittsburgh. Photo by Kat Procyk*

- Over five months, **PublicSource** in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, [investigated](#) the use of “piggybacking” contracts used by city and county governments in the region. The practice allows some government officials to circumvent contract vetting processes by “piggybacking” on contract requests already approved by other agencies. Doing so can save governments time and money by avoiding negotiation and approval steps. But critics say the practice has led to higher costs for taxpayers and leaves government agencies vulnerable to fraud.

According to data compiled by PublicSource from Pittsburgh’s contract repository, only 10 percent of 1,135 contracts that were active as of December, 1, 2018, were actually negotiated by the city. City Controller Michael Lamb told PublicSource, “When you just automatically jump to these cooperative contracts rather than doing a local competitive process, I think you’re cheating taxpayers.”

*The FIJ Newsletter was compiled by Jerry Redfern.*

-30-