

Green, Scott

From: Paul and Linda Stevens <stevenspl@live.com>
Sent: Monday, August 05, 2013 12:07 AM
To: Paul H. Stevens
Subject: CONNECTING: Remembering Elliott Minor; AP one-person correspondencies

Colleagues,

As I expected, reaction has been great to my call for stories of one-person correspondencies in the wake of the death of longtime Albany (Ga.) correspondent Elliott Minor.

A few of you shared comment on Elliott:

Peggy Walsh: Thanks for the sad note about Elliott's death. I was news editor when he came to Atlanta. He was a strong person. I remember he was on his way to an assignment when I learned his father had died. I finally tracked him down, told him how sorry I was and, of course, said I would get someone else to cover the assignment. He thanked me but said, no, he'd do his job and then mourn his dad. That's been almost 30 years ago and I never forgot it.

John Bolt: When I was night supe in Atlanta, more than once I got a call from Marty Steinberg on the Gen Desk looking for stories for the budget, and he would often ask if Elliott had one of his good features about "peanuts or something." And Elliott also most often drew the assignment of witnessing an execution -- AP's presence was written into state code. One of the times he couldn't make it, I had to take his place among the media witnesses. It was one of those times that comes in every journalist's career when you have to write objectively/ neutrally about an issue about which you have strong feelings. Elliott was a good colleague and good to work with.

Robert Meyers: Jody Kurash, photo editor for the "South Wire", doubtless has many great Elliot Minor stories. I would share two of my own. As referenced in the obit, Elliot was a citizen soldier. One of the things he did was become a human guinea pig for experiments with a Taser. Early on as this technology was being explored for pacification. Elliot was voluntarily "tased" at a National Guard base in Georgia and wrote about it for the AP. He told me on the phone it "hurt like hell" but he was able to describe in minute detail from the anticipation, the shock, the aftermath. Every phone "check in" with Elliot was interesting at least, often amazing. In the 1980s when I was based in London as a photo editor. Elliot's coverage of major flooding along the Flint / Chattahoochee river system in Georgia caught my eye. Not only because of my interest in Georgia (my mother's side of the family) and my start in journalism at The Darien News, but here was a man who was writing all the copy on a major disaster, but also creating the bulk of the photos for the wire, supplemented by member copy. Elliot supplied dramatic images that carried the story and published well in European newspapers and on the BBC television news.

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One-person Correspondencies:

Marty Thompson leads off with a list he compiled, noting that it is not intended to be complete -- or current. It may be that some of these correspondencies have disappeared as the AP has changed. A couple are state

capitols, some of which may have more than one staffer during a legislative session. I have added remarks of those of you who responded to my request for memories. **I would welcome any further comments that can be shared in subsequent Connectings, as well as any corrections or additions.**

Juneau, Alaska – maybe the largest physical territory of any one-person correspondency. Tad Bartimus, who became bureau chief in Alaska in 1974: John Greely was a great guy, wonderful correspondent and dogged newsman who knew all the players... he also became best man at our wedding, and had to borrow the groom's tie (the groom got one as a wedding gift so turned out to be presentable to the future mother-in-law)...he is still in Alaska, still working, but now for the State of Alaska... health insurance!!!

Fresno, Calif. - Also Fresno, which was the base of ag coverage in Caalifornia. Joe Bigham, who died a few years ago, was longtime correspondent. Los Angeles news editor Brian Melley is a former Fresno correspondent.

Orange County, Calif. – Andy Lippman: I established the Orange County bureau in Santa Ana in about 1991. Marty Thompson provide huge help from the NY side with the opening. I followed him in LA and he knew exactly what the bureau was facing in that area. There it was a matter of traffic that was the problem. To New York, it looked like I wanted to open an office right down the road from the LA bureau. Problem was that road often was clogged with traffic and it could take an hour and a half to go 25 miles. Also, Santa Ana provided a straight shot east to the Inland Empire. I moved Lynn Elber there after she got married and was about to follow her husband to Orange County. I made her a three=day a week correspondent, and then fulltime. She later became TV writer and stayed in that office. Larry Gerber took over. Current correspondent is Gillian Flaccus.

Tucson, Ariz. – Andy Lippman: I started as the night reporter in Tucson in 1973. It had great freedom. I could do features to my heart's delight during the day and do my routine at night. plus, since I liked sports, CoB Tom Aden let me cover all the sports at the University of Arizona in Tucson and then the next night, I'd drive up to my parents home in Phoenix and cover Arizona State. Then, I'd drive back to Tucson on Sunday and sometimes write the Western Athletic Conference roundup. It was amazing how far away you felt in those days. You would send a story up on carbon paper by fax to Phoenix where it was edited and punched. Then, you waited to see if it made it to LA and maybe New York. It was like listening for the splash at the end of a deep well. That splash was when you saw your byline on the national wire or sports wire. Mike Chihak, who went on to become publisher for several Gannett papers before returning to Tucson, was correspondent while I was there. What fun days.

Flagstaff, Ariz.

New Haven, Conn.

Dover, Del.

Cape Canaveral, Fla.

Savannah, Ga.

Champaign, Ill.

Peoria, Ill.

Evansville, Ind. - Another single correspondent bureau was Evansville, who had some glorious alums including Nancy Shulins who became an AP special correspondent; Debbie Newby, who works in the Atlanta bureau; Connie Cass, who went on to be correspondent in San Diego and then went to Washington, and Mark Chellgren, who became legislative correspondent in Lexington

South Bend, Ind. – Paul Stevens: I opened the correspondence while Indianapolis CoB, and the best ammunition I had for NY approval was that UPI was planning to open one, as well. I don't recall that UPI ever got it done, but we did, and were housed in the South Bend Tribune where managing editor Jack Powers was a strong AP supporter and gave us free space. The first correspondent was Tom Wyman. He was later followed by Nancy Armour, now in Chicago working as a national sports writer. I recall hearing that when news broke of the South Bend correspondence, Chicago sports writer Joe Mooshil was crest-fallen. For years, the only bright spot in his sports beat – with normally dismal Chicago teams to cover – was Notre Dame football and he loved taking the train from Chicago to South Bend to cover the Irish. It turned out well for Joe in that Tom Wyman had no interest in sports and we were able to continue having Joe cover games while Tom provided week to week coverage. Tom Coyne is the current South Bend correspondent.

Iowa City, Iowa – Margy McCay was the first Iowa City correspondent, from 1978 to 1982, and shares: George Zucker was bureau chief in Des Moines when a one-person correspondence was approved for eastern Iowa, based in the newsroom of the Quad-City Times in Davenport. The paper had been the largest-circulation UPI-only paper in the state, and it was a big deal getting the Lee flagship back into membership. John Lumpkin became COB shortly before I moved from Des Moines to Davenport in March, 1978, and then to Iowa City in November of that year. The IC correspondence was my favorite AP job. My four years there coincided with a golden period in athletics at the University of Iowa (located in IC), and I covered a lot of sports. The Hawkeyes went to the Rose Bowl under Hayden Fry and the Final Four under Lute Olson. And the wrestlers were perennial national champions, coached by Olympic gold medalist Dan Gable. The beauty of my one-person correspondence was the variety of stories I covered and the freedom I was allowed to pursue them. The membership work was pretty painless, because every stop yielded a story idea, and JOL did all the hard work on that front. There was crime (a two-day manhunt through cornfields for "T-Bone" Taylor, wanted for killing two police officers; a January prison riot in Fort Madison in which a prisoner [and a guard?] was killed -- thank God for my buddy, the late photographer Bob Jarboe, who arrived a few hours after I did, and whose company outside the prison gates during that long, cold night, were -- along with the Jack Daniels he brought -- most welcome), politics (Jimmy Carter's trip down the Mississippi; the release of Iowan Kathryn Koob, one of two women held hostage in the U.S. embassy in Teheran and whose sister lived on a farm near Waterloo), protestors (single mom/firefighter Linda Eaton returned from maternity leave and demanded breaks in her 24-hour shifts during which her son could be brought to the Iowa City firehouse for breastfeeding; farmer Delbert Banowetz defied state law to sell raw milk from his dairy farm near Maquoketa), interesting locals (Keokuk artist Rose Tertichny and her exquisite Ukrainian-style dyed eggs) and bits of history (Muscatine was once the "Button Capital of the United States," when Mississippi River clam shells provided the iridescent raw material). It was a joy.

Wichita, Kan. – Paul Stevens: I moved to Wichita as correspondent in 1976, succeeding Dave Bartel when he moved to The Wichita Eagle, host for the bureau, and was amazed in my three years there by how much news could happen in a smaller city. An early gay rights battle, a firemen-policemen strike, trials of serial killers, the farm strike, Nancy Landon Kassebaum's election to the Senate, the explosion of an Air Force strategic missile in its silo, and on and on. My bureau was a desk in the Eagle-Beacon newsroom and my communication device was a Teletype puncher. It spit out yellow tape that I then inserted into a device that transmitted the story to the Kansas City bureau for editing. No computer for me. Central and western Kansas was my beat, and I was on the road a lot, preparing me, I suppose, for what was to come. In 1979, Keith Fuller called me to New York

and appointed me Albuquerque bureau chief. One of my last assignments as Wichita correspondent was to join Kansas City photographer John Filo in covering Bob Dole in Russell, Kansas, in his bid for the Republican presidential nomination. I filed for overtime pay and got an immediate call from Kansas City CoB Fred Moen who was clearly unhappy with the OT request. He said, "OK, Stevens, I'll approve it, but that's the last overtime pay you're ever going to get. And when your new staff files for it, you won't be happy either." He was correct, both times. I was succeeded as Wichita correspondent by Scott Kraft, now with the LA Times. (My first hire in Albuquerque was Betsy Brown, a reporter for The Eagle, and Scott met her when he administered her the AP writing tests. They later married and are parents of two children in an LA suburb.) Mike Bates succeeded Scott and held the job until his death in 1996, then came Traci Carl, now West Region editor, and after her, the current correspondent, Roxana Hegeman.

Lexington, Ky.

Pikeville, Ken. – Andy Lippman: I started the Pikeville, Ky. bureau the second or third year I was CoB in Kentucky. The state is very wide, and most roads run east and west. So it is very difficult to get into the eastern portion which is very mountainous. Plus there were not any major dailies running south from Ashland in this area of the state. The more I investigated the region, the more I saw that there was more than enough daily news and features to support a bureau which would cover an area of interest to Kentucky, but which could also support Virginia in its western part of the state, help West Virginia and also cover the area in northeastern Tennessee. Then Tennessee COB Nancy Shipley helped me organize my presentation to NYC, which as you can imagine was incredulous. Nevertheless, Keith Fuller brought the subject up himself when I was in to visit him, and agreed to my idea. The bureau was in the offices of the Pikeville, Ky., weekly newspaper. The eastern weeklies were amazed and delighted. They always had a feeling they were being ignored, and Pikeville and Paintsville, both weeklies joined the cooperative. People also saw that the AP was not just a "drop by" organization which would come only when mine disasters happened. That's important in Appalachia. The first correspondent in Pikeville was Bill Bergstrom, who up to then had been news editor, and he was well-known to members. One of the most successful Pikeville correspondents and an example of how reporters could showcase their writing was Allen Breed. He soon was turning out not only state, but wonderfully showcased, national features. Pikeville was a victim of the consolidation you talked about.

Annapolis, Md.

Hagerstown, Md.

Ann Arbor, Mich. See Richard Pyle remembrance below.

Grand Rapids, Mich.

Traverse City, Mich. - Paige St. John, who won a Pulitzer at a Florida paper a couple years ago, was at Traverse City.

St. Paul, Minn.

Columbia, Mo. – Scott Charton was the roving correspondent for Missouri, based in Columbia. He was succeeded by Alan Zagier, who moved to the St. Louis bureau in the past month.

Springfield, Mo. - Connie Farrow: I will be forever grateful for the opportunity to work for the AP. As you know, I had the unique opportunity to work with the Springfield (MO) correspondents, and to eventually staff

the bureau. My memory has past correspondents as: Jerry Nachtigal; Josh Lemeux; Karen Testa; John Rogers; Connie Farrow; and Marcus Kabel. I covered everything from the deadly Pearce City tornado and the impact of the Iraq/Afghanistan wars on Fort Leonard Wood to Andy William's anniversary in Branson. The member newspaper papers and radio stations kept us informed. Many of those tipsters are dear friends.

Billings, Mont.

Carson City, Nev. – Jeannine Yeomans: I worked as a solo at the Carson City office in 1969-70, then Brendan Riley, now in the Nevada Journalism Hall of Fame, worked there for many years

Fargo, N.D.

Atlantic City, N.J. – Mark Mittelstadt: The one-person correspondence certainly was an integral part of AP's second-to-none state and national reports. Some talented AP people "made their bones" in them. Certainly one of the best correspondent jobs ever in AP has to be Atlantic City -- the Jersey Shore, the casinos, Donald Trump, for decades the Miss America pageant, big name entertainment, boxing, conventions, weather (including Nor'easters and hurricanes), crime, forest fires, news of the bizarre. Some past AC correspondents: Pete Mattiace, Hank Stern, the late John Curran. The current occupant, Wayne Parry, appears to be carrying on the tradition.

Woodbury/Mt Laurel, NJ - for many years run by Melanie Burney, who later moved to the Philadelphia Inquirer. The correspondence has since been closed.

Santa Fe, N.M.

Garden City, N.Y. – Pat Milton was correspondent.

Syracuse, N.Y.

Fargo, N.D.

Toledo, Ohio

Tulsa, Okla.

Grants Pass, Ore. - Grants Pass, Ore., where Jeff Barnard continues to serve. Jane Seagrave was an earlier Grants Pass correspondent.

Allentown, Pa.

State College, Pa – Kelly Kissel: I was State College, Pa., correspondent before coming down to Little Rock in 1994 for Whitewater/Paula Jones duty and Michael Giarrusso, now Phoenix CoB, replaced me.

Charleston, S.C.

Chattanooga, Tenn.

Memphis, Tenn.

El Paso, Texas

Fort Worth, Texas – where Mike Cochran held court for many years.

Harlingen, Texas

Lubbock, Texas

San Antonio, Texas

Roanoke, Va. – Estes correspondent recalls he was the first correspondent and covered moonshiners, coal miners and Jerry Falwell. Filed with teletype sender until computers came along. Loved the job and the mountain people. Current Kansas City CoB Kia Breaux held the position later and recalls coverage of Michael Vick, the assimilation of VMI, the accidental switch of the Johnson and Chittum babies at the University of Virginia hospital, and the controversy over whether Thomas Jefferson fathered children with his slave Sally Hemings. Kia was there when the Hemings and Jefferson families started having the annual joint family reunions.

Montpelier, Vt. – Walter Mears: My one-person correspondence is long gone - Montpelier has a small bureau now. But when I went there in the fall of 1956, opening the first AP bureau in Vermont, the bureau was me. I had a desk and a TTS printer in the press room on the top floor of the state house. That press room is long gone, too. I was 21 and at the time, the youngest correspondent the AP had. I covered the legislature one floor below (the press galleries were down one flight of stairs) and dealt with state stories via stringers and the eight member newspapers. I was correspondent for 3 1/2 years - got a second newsman part time late in my tenure. Went on to Boston and then Washington. That solo correspondence was my journalism school - a crash course in AP coverage - I'd spent about 6 months in Boston before my Montpelier assignment, got the basics from my editors there but nothing like the experience I got on my own. Years later, I was asked about that time and said it was the best job I ever had. It was.

Yakima, Wash.

Morgantown, W. Va. – David Wilkison: Past correspondents include: Kurt Repanshek (? - 1985), Julia Martinez (1985-87), Ray Formanek Jr. (1987-92), David Wilkison (1992-96), David Sharp (1996-98), Vicki Smith (1998+) When I was itching to move on after a few years, Pete Mattiace told me I would look back at my time as a one-person correspondent as the best of my career. Seventeen years later and he's still right. I've had a number of terrific AP jobs but nothing has come close to those four years having half the state as my beat. (I grew up in Morgantown, so Pete also made me promise him I wouldn't retire there before he would give me the job! To this day, my wife is still miffed we left there for Newark.)

Wausau, Wis.

And as a bonus, this from Richard Pyle:

There may be no more perfect model of the idyllic college town in the United States than Ann Arbor, Michigan. That was true, at least, in 1960 when the AP, having hired me off a medium-size daily paper (the Royal Oak Tribune) in Detroit's Oakland County suburbs, sent me there on my first assignment.

Through the good offices of CoB Clem Brossier, who had hired me, and sports editor Dave Diles, I became one of AP's Lone Rangers.

Michigan was among the Midwestern states where AP exerted a lot of journalistic influence. Along with its busy Detroit bureau (DT) and the state capitol bureau in Lansing (LJ) there were one-man correspondencies in Grand Rapids (GS), which covered western and northern Michigan, and Ann Arbor (AO). The latter, I would learn, was financed by a special state membership assessment, primarily to provide coverage of the University of Michigan, and most especially its football program.

The U-M campus was woven into the town's fabric, and Ann Arbor's civic pride was based heavily on its being the location of the "Harvard of the Middle West," a sobriquet that status-conscious faculty and alumni did not discourage. Boosters pointed to U-M's prestigious medical and law schools, and the tradition-steeped football program, operating even then in a 101,001-seat stadium, the nation's largest such college facility, in years later dubbed the Big House.

In the early 1960s the university also was on the cusp of a prominent role in the coming social upheavals of the time. Thomas Hayden, the editor of the student newspaper, the Michigan Daily, was also the leader of an as-yet little known group called Students for a Democratic Society, and the drafter of its manifesto, the Port Huron Statement. The Daily was an AP member paper, and as one of my first acts as the new guy in town, I dutifully paid a call on Mr. Hayden at his office. It was sobering to realize, from his diffident reception, that he couldn't have cared less about the AP or what I was doing there; that his interests were not journalism per se but in the paper as a political platform for subjects and issues about which I then knew little or nothing.

Meanwhile, at the university and among the sizable number of Ann Arbor citizens who cared about college athletics, there was a special pride in knowing that it rated a resident AP correspondent - on a par, so to speak, with the school's two most important Big Ten football rivals, Ohio State University in Columbus and Michigan State University in East Lansing. Naturally I was welcomed at the Ann Arbor News, which provided a desk and wire room space for the AP person, and also at the university's public affairs and sports offices. But the cordiality began to change when I answered the customary routine questions about my personal and journalistic background.

It was typical of U-M's extreme self-regard that its athletics department couldn't fathom how a major news agency like AP could assign a reporter to cover its sainted football team who was a native of Columbus and had spent his freshman year at the "cow college" in East Lansing. To make matters even more awkward, in the two years I spent in Ann Arbor, the Wolverines were saddled with one of their most mediocre teams ever, with two losing seasons in the Big Ten, including four losses to the two hated rivals. (Anyone who saw HBO's recent documentary on the Michigan-Ohio State football rivalry will have an idea of what I'm talking about).

Aware that my lack of "Go Blue" credentials made me a suspect figure, I generally avoided barroom-type sports discussions. I did appreciate that head coach, Bump Elliott, and his staff gave me no problems; they could see from my copy - much of it published in the Ann Arbor News - that I was fair and balanced in my treatment of their football difficulties.

I do admit to some secret satisfaction when Woody Hayes' Ohio State Buckeyes kicked Michigan's butt in both of the two seasons I spent in AO. In retrospect I'm sure it would have been more interesting if the ultra-polite Elliott had been a bombastic quote machine like Hayes.)

As such jobs went, Ann Arbor was actually a rather cushy assignment. I was one of three AP football writers covering Big Ten teams who traveled with the team to "away" games (the Columbus and East Lansing-based writers were the others), and as a one-man bureau, it was a total-immersion wire-service experience. I learned to punch and read the perforated tape that transmitted my copy to the AP bureau in Detroit, something I assume most if not all of AP's Lone Rangers had to do.

Fortunately, there was more than sports in the Ann Arbor beat.

In October 1960, about a month after I started the job, the national news media suddenly descended on us in the middle of the night. Senator John F Kennedy, the Democratic candidate for President, had held his third campaign debate with GOP candidate Richard Nixon in NYC that night and his entourage landed at nearby Willow Run airport and rolled into the U-M campus for a prescheduled stump speech about 2 am. Hundreds _ of students _ some estimates were a thousand or more _had gathered outside the Student Union, some even perched in trees.

Being new to this heady level of journalism, I found and introduced myself to one of the two Washington-based AP reporters on the trip. Was there anything I could help them with? I don't remember his name but I do recall his response: "Yeah, well, who the hell are you?" Then, to his colleague, "Jesus, get a load of this guy."

Kennedy walked into the middle of this swirl, took a microphone in hand and delivered an impromptu three-minute oration, challenging the students to go abroad and perform service missions to help improve lives in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

How many of you who are going to be doctors are willing to spend your days in Ghana? Technicians or engineers: how many of you are willing to work in the Foreign Service and spend your lives traveling around the world? ... on your willingness to contribute part of your life to this country, I think will depend the answer whether a free society can compete."

Presidential security not being as paranoid as it would later become, I was standing about 50 feet away, just another bystander for what was later described as Kennedy's first public test of the idea for a Peace Corps. (He formalized it three weeks later in San Francisco). When Nixon passed through a few days afterward, I met him at Willow Run and asked his view of JFK's proposal. He airily dismissed it with a few words, but as it turned out, few if any of the reporters who had been with Kennedy had reported his remarks either. I did get a story on the wire the next year when Sargent Shriver, JFK's brother in law and Peace Corps director, came to Ann Arbor to deliver a sendoff speech for the first PC volunteers bound for Thailand. But even then, the story was not about that _ it was about a racially insensitive postcard carelessly dropped by a young Peace Corps volunteer in Lagos, Nigeria.

By the next time I covered JFK, I had graduated from Ann Arbor to the Detroit bureau. It was a political visit to Michigan in October 1962, and on a trip to the northern part of the state, security was mysteriously tight. Two days later, after Kennedy cut the visit short due to a "cold," we learned why - something about Soviet missiles in Cuba.

But there was one more story for me in Ann Arbor. In May 1964, President Lyndon Baines Johnson used the University of Michigan's outdoor commencement at the Big House to deliver what became known as his landmark "Great Society" speech.

By then based in Lansing, I served as backup for AP's famously gracious White House reporter Frank Cormier, and we sat in the same press box at Michigan Stadium where I had covered all that gridiron agony and ecstasy. As LBJ wound up his oration, I was seized by a momentary impulse to grab my notebook and head for the dressing room.