
From: markmittelstadt@yahoo.com on behalf of Mark Mittelstadt [markmittelstadt@yahoo.com]
Sent: Monday, February 24, 2014 4:35 PM
To: stevenspl@live.com
Subject: CONNECTING - February 21, 2014

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Connecting

February 21, 2014



Colleagues,

Connecting colleague **Kent Flanagan** went home from the hospital Thursday, one week after having surgery for pancreatic cancer. Doctors thought he would be hospitalized for around 10 days; he beat their estimate by three. His wife, **Janet**, posted on [Facebook](#): "He has had an amazing recovery from such a major surgery -- even the doctors are amazed. The drugs are out of his system, no more birds in the hallways. He will have some chemo to do in a few weeks but the path(ology) reports were very encouraging! To all of you who sent prayers, e-mails, kind offers of assistance, we both really appreciate you all!"

The Associated Press announced that **Ravi Nessman**, who has covered and led award-winning news stories in Asia, the Middle East, Africa and the United States, has been named [deputy editor for the U.S. South region](#), overseeing coverage from 13 states and the District of Columbia.

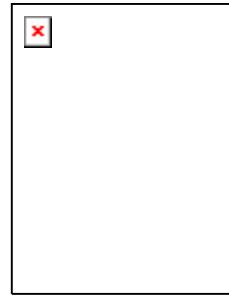


Ravi Nessman

Washington reporter **Mat Pennington** won this week's **AP Beat of the Week** for a three-day scoop on a headline-making [United Nations report on North Korea](#). See the full story and other nominees at the end of today's Connecting.

Dudley, the welcome dog

Connecting would like to correct an impression in yesterday's edition that **Dudley**, our welcome canine, was responsible for an error in an e-mail address. "I would like to strongly object to your yellow muckraking media-elitist characterization of Dudley as a bad speller," writes his best friend (and owner), former AP Chief of Bureau **Beth Grace**, now executive director at the North Carolina Press Association. "He has, I would like to point out with righteous indignation, no fingers. He is, in fact, a smeller. Not a speller. Good day, sir!" **Dudley**, by the way, is sporting a cone for the next several days to keep him from scratching at a "hot spot" on his face.

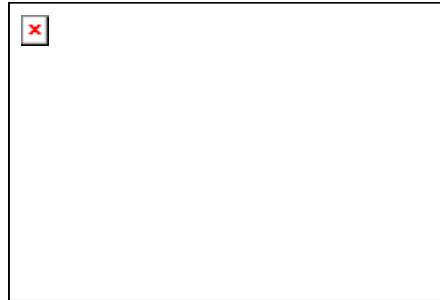


The Connecting mailbox is open...

While **Paul Stevens** is away, send tips, stories, photos to
apconnecting@yahoo.com.

Items of Interest...

[AP reporter witnesses carnage in Ukrainian capital](#)



[Politico Magazine: The day we pretended to care about Ukraine](#)

[Byron York: New Obama initiative tramples First Amendment protections](#)

[FCC Chief: We're not going to police your newsrooms](#)

[NBC, CBS, ABC silent on FCC plan to infiltrate newsrooms](#)

AP reporter Yuras Karmanau in front of a stage on the Independence Square, the epicenter of the country's current unrest in Kiev, Ukraine, Thursday. (AP Photo/Sergei Chuzavkov)

[Media Matters: AP helps Issa push Benghazi hoax \(shared by Bill Beecham\)](#)

[Shocking news! Negative headlines outperform positive ones \(shared by Bob Daugherty\)](#)

[Billionaire Carlos Slim planning bigger stake in New York Times](#)

[UPI cuts seven positions in a restructuring](#)

[Venezuela president threatens to expel CNN](#)

[That wolf in the Olympic Village? It was a Jimmy Kimmel prank](#)

[Woman walks up to TV news crew, admits to repeatedly stabbing mother](#)

[Study: PBS, member stations are America's "most trusted institution"](#)

[Virginia lawmakers honor late environmental reporter for Virginian-Pilot](#)

[Baltimore Sun Media Group to buy City Paper](#)

[Why celebrity magazines use yellow headlines](#)

[Cop as evaluator of art? Calling B.S. on the \\$1 million broken vase](#)

[For 7 years, L.A. Times homicide report has gleaned stories from grim data](#)

[Rieder: Not the Oscars, but journalism awards matter](#)

[App for journalists: Audio Memos, for recording interviews](#)

[Emotional excess is essential to writing and creativity](#)

[20 problems journalists deal with on a daily basis \(humor\)](#) (Beecham)



Reporter Scott Harper on assignment February 2012. (L. Todd Spencer | The Virginian-Pilot)

Media Ops



WNDU-TV, South Bend, Ind.

AP Beat of the Week No. 541

Mat Pennington didn't just beat his competitors on a headline-making United Nations report on North Korea. He beat them by three days, and the U.N. wasn't at all happy about it.

Pennington covers U.S.-Asian affairs for the AP's North America desk in Washington; he has long cultivated sources among government officials, activists and experts on North Korea, and often writes about its nuclear and missile programs. But he's also focused on human rights in the reclusive communist country, and in February 2013 broke the story that the U.S. was going to support the push by Japan and the European Union for a U.N. commission of inquiry to investigate allegations of atrocities under the regimes of Kim Jong-un, his father and his grandfather.

After the commission was formed, he was one of the few Western reporters to cover public hearings in Washington in October, when defectors and experts gave testimony, and he kept an ear out for the commission's findings, figuring it would be the strongest international effort yet to criticize Pyongyang for its rights record.

On Wednesday afternoon, in the course of a long conversation on another matter, a source volunteered that the final report was about to come out, and that it would indeed accuse North Korea of crimes against humanity and call for an international criminal investigation.

So far, so good. But Pennington needed a second source. He cast about for one in Washington, while correspondent **Edie Lederer** was enlisted to mine her sources at the United Nations. Finally, on Thursday night, Pennington e-mailed his editors: A U.S. official had confirmed the story. Pennington wanted to nail down a few details before he could write it in the morning.

There was one ticklish complication. The report, for release at 8 a.m. Monday, was supposed to be distributed to the media on Friday; once it was conveyed to anyone from the AP, we would be honor-bound to observe the embargo.

Pennington made sure that didn't matter. By the time Geneva chief correspondent **John Heilprin** picked up the report at 6 p.m. Friday Geneva time, Pennington had moved 900 words. No extra details from the document were included in writethrus filed after that time. (Defying precedent, a spokesman at the North Korean diplomatic mission in New York did provide Lederer with a response: North Korea rejected the commission's findings regarding crimes against humanity and would never accept them.)
<http://bigstory.ap.org/article/crimes-against-humanity-nkorea-un-panel-finds>

The story made headlines worldwide for days. Even outlets that did their own versions, including The New York Times and Washington Post, credited the AP's reporting prominently.

Another result: The U.N. had a fit. It accused the AP of breaking the embargo, while telling the U.N. press corps that the embargo was intact because the AP hadn't broken it.

In Geneva, **Heilprin** felt the worst of the U.N.'s wrath. A spokesman suggested the AP story was "calculated to undermine the impact and credibility of the report" and added: "Congratulations to AP for its gift to Kim Jong-un." He subsequently notified Heilprin that a planned AP interview with one of the investigating commissioners had been



Oct. 30, 2013 file photo shows Jin hye Jo wiping a tear as she testifies during a hearing of the United Nations mandated Commission of Inquiry about the human rights situation in North Korea. (AP Photo/Alex Brandon)

canceled because AP did not abide by the embargo. Then Heilprin was informed before the press conference for the report's release that in further punishment he was barred from asking any questions.

John Daniszewski, AP's senior managing editor for international news, rejected the criticism. "Mat is a dogged journalist and knows his story. This U.N. report was bound to be news, and we had sources willing to discuss its findings ahead of the choreographed rollout. That's fair game to report, and we are proud that AP's members and customers got it first."

For textbook source reporting work -- and refusing to allow the U.N. to dictate the handling of major international news -- Pennington wins this week's \$500 prize.

Others whose work impressed the judges:

_ **Scott Mayerowitz**, airline writer, Business News, New York, for reporting exclusively that flight cancellations since Dec. 1 had set a record. Government data on cancellations only went through last winter, so Mayerowitz cleverly had the flight-tracking website FlightAware tailor its data, up to date for the current miserable winter, to match the government's methodology.

_ **Joan Lowy**, transportation reporter, Washington, for unearthing records that showed commercial planes had landed or tried to land in the wrong place at least 150 times since the early 1990s. Lowy put in a Freedom of Information Act request to a little-known aviation safety database managed by NASA, and searched media reports going back two decades. The winning lede: "Do you know the way to San Jose? Quite a few airline pilots apparently don't."

_ **John Flesher**, correspondent, Traverse City, Mich., for placing the steady advance of the Great Lakes ice sheet in scientific and historical context and providing real-world examples of why it mattered. The story was accompanied by wonderful member photos from the Star Tribune in Minneapolis and the Traverse City Record-Eagle.

_ **Doug Feinberg**, basketball writer, Sports, New York, for two-day beat on an agreement in principle on a new collective bargaining agreement between the Women's National Basketball Association and its players' union.

_ **Martha Mendoza**, national writer, San Francisco, for breaking the news that Facebook had added 56 new gender identity options for U.S. users. Mendoza negotiated an exclusive for all formats.

_ **Tim Reynolds**, sports writer, Miami; **Tom Withers**, sports writer, Cleveland; **Steve Wilson**, European sports editor, London, and **Natacha Pisarenko**, photographer, Buenos Aires, for collaborating on the first and most detailed reporting of an accident at the bobsled track at the Sochi Winter Olympics. Pisarenko was nearby and had photos of an injured worker being put in an ambulance. He alerted beat reporters Reynolds and Withers, who sent the NewsNow, and Wilson, who was preparing to interview IOC President **Thomas Bach**, got on-the-record confirmation and the first details.

_ **Lolita C. Baldor**, Pentagon reporter, Washington, for showing the

increasing number of dismissals from the U.S. Army for misconduct. Baldor created her own spreadsheet with data from the Army and got a longtime source to give her information from a Department of Defense database.

_ Sandy Cohen and Mike Cidoni Lennox, Entertainment, Los Angeles, for a one-hour jump on the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences' announcement to hold a first-ever public concert honoring Oscar music nominees.

Mike Oreskes

Mark Mittelstadt
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