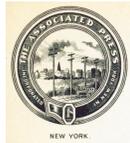

From: stevenspl@live.com on behalf of Paul Stevens [stevenspl@live.com]
Sent: Thursday, March 20, 2014 10:11 AM
To: stevenspl@live.com
Subject: CONNECTING - March 20, 2014

Having trouble viewing this email? [Click here](#)



Connecting

March 20, 2014



Colleagues,

The AP will add up to 30 new reporters to bolster its statehouse coverage, **Gary Pruitt**, AP president and CEO, said Tuesday at the NAA's mediaXchange conference in Denver. Pruitt also pledged more alignment of state government reporting with its members. Here is a story from NetNewsCheck:

By Michael Depp
NetNewsCheck

DENVER -- The Associated Press will add 20-30 new reporters as part of an initiative to beef up its statehouse coverage and state bureaus, Gary Pruitt, the AP's president and CEO, told attendees of the Newspaper Association of America's mediaXchange here on Tuesday.

Some of those new reporting positions were filled at the end of 2013, while the rest will be added this year, Paul Colford, AP's director of media relations, noted by email.

Pruitt also pledged more alignment of state government reporting with

its members, part of a slate of improvements he promised to members of the cooperative.

Those improvements include more flexibility and options in purchasing AP content. He says members can now purchase an intermediate pricing tier or buy content in topical blocks such as sports.

"You as members can decide what works for you," Pruitt says. "You can dial up or dial down."

Pruitt says that since 2006, which marked the beginning of a seven-year decline in ad revenue for newspapers, the AP's assessments for members have not been raised and in some cases have fallen by 40%-60%.

"Do you have any other vendors who are as responsive to your plight as that?" he asked.

The AP will also look to improve its video products in 2014, increasing the number of clips each day and adding an unspecified number of more journalists to the task. Pruitt says there will also be a broader mix of videos, especially around areas like breaking and regional news, entertainment and health.

He says the production value of the videos themselves will also improve as will the speed with which they become available.

"We want to get you the clips immediately so you can get the traffic," he says.

Pruitt also touted the AP's digital news experiences, "consumer-ready digital verticals" around things like major sporting events, that were

available free to members as well as offering them a revenue share on national ads sold into the content.

More globally, Pruitt pledged fealty to the industry that launched the AP: "AP's commitment to U.S. newspapers is strong and true and continuous since our founding in 1846."

But he also had strong words for the newspapers that are considering ending their membership. "If you walk away from AP, you walk away from your ownership stake in the most important news organization in the world," he says. "Good luck."

-0-

AP team wins Shadid Award

MADISON, Wis. (AP) - A team from The Associated Press has won the 2014 Anthony Shadid Award for Journalism Ethics for a story that revealed the CIA ties of an American who vanished in Iran.

Reporters Adam Goldman and Matt Apuzzo, and editor Ted Bridis, won for their report in December on the disappearance of Robert Levinson, a former FBI agent who went missing while working in Iran in 2007. Click [here](#) for the story.

-0-

AP changes Crimea dateline

<http://www.politico.com/blogs/media/2014/03/ap-changes-crimea-dateline-185383.html>

-0-

Embarrassing work moments, continued

Marc Wilson - My most embarrassing moment came in Chicago in 1979. President Jimmy Carter, on a national tour, came to Chicago for several stops. The AP White House staff asked for help from the local bureau, and I was assigned to staff the AP wire car in the presidential motorcade from downtown Chicago to suburban Wheaton, where Carter would

spend the night with an old friend. I was told that it was critical to leave the meeting area as soon as the president finished his speech. I was warned repeatedly: The motorcade waits for no one, so don't be late! So just as soon as Carter finished his speech at the convention center, I rushed for the motorcade and located Wire Car 2, my assigned car. I jumped in the back seat. Then a reporter from Time climbed in the car to my left, and a New York Times reporter got in the car to my right.

The driver started cursing. "Where the hell is he? Damn it, we're going to leave!" The Times reporter asked, "Who are we waiting for?"

"The damned AP guy!" the driver answered.

"What do you mean?" I asked. "I'm the AP guy."

"You're supposed to be in the front seat, you dumb shit!" the driver said. "You're supposed to be on the phone up here, on the AP phone!"

Just then, the motorcade pulled out -- at full speed.

As the motorcade roared onto Congress Street on the way to the Eisenhower Expressway, I climbed from the back seat, over the front seat into my assigned seat, as reporters from Time and the New York Times laughed.

-0-

"That's why I take pictures"

Connecting colleague and St. Louis Post-Dispatch photographer **James Forbes** touched many hearts on Facebook recently with this post and photo. "That's why I take pictures," said the veteran photojournalist, a member of the Missouri Photojournalism Hall of Fame. His post:

We were in Weston, Mo. over the weekend. It's a little tourist town on the Missouri River north of Kansas City. I saw this family at the next table in a restaurant. It was such a touching moment that I had to take a picture. I didn't know the woman's story, but I offered to send her a copy of the photo. This is the reply I got back:

Thank you from the bottom of my heart. I cried when I saw this photo. I just finished 6 months of breast cancer treatment. First, a radical double



mastectomy then months of chemotherapy. I lost my breasts, hair, nails, gained 50 lbs and got lymphedema in my right arm. Most troubling, I had tremendous cognitive loss and often wondered if I was still capable of being a good mother. Could I still comfort my children when I could barely lift my arm to hug them? Could I teach them when I often couldn't recall the names of people, places or simple math? Then I get your photo. Things are, of course, different. But I realize looking at your photo, I still get to be their mom and I am blessed.

Thank you forever, Rebecca

-0-

From the Connecting mailbox:

Steve Fox - New member of Connecting, on his career: I worked at the LA bureau from 1973 to 83, the last six years as a business writer. I had previously worked at The LA Times as a copy and news editor, the Syracuse Post-Standard as a copy editor during college and the New York Daily News as a copy boy, right out of high school. I also was a stockbroker and partner in an investment advisor firm before joining the AP. I left the AP for Investor's Business Daily, where I was president and editor for five years. Since 1989 I have been self-employed as a communications consultant to the investment industry, which as a practical matter has meant ghosting stock market commentary for banks and brokerage firms, and producing annual reports, investment newsletters and marketing materials for a variety of financial services companies. Unusual note: my father, Jack, was with UPI for 42 years, the last 10 in their LA bureau. We went head to head on a number of stories, and I wrote his obit for AP when he died in 1981. As for my birthday, it's Saint Patty's Day.

Howard Goldberg, New York City bureau chief: Thanks for sharing former Los Angeles bureau overnight staffer Cathy Strong's recollection of covering the Northridge quake in 1994. Connecting readers may be wondering why Cathy remembers having "trouble getting the attention

of NY and getting national help despite lots of resending and urgent phone calls." The reason: Our computer network had crashed at the worst possible time. I was sitting in as national editor, and had taken a call from Sue Manning, reporting the quake from her bedroom doorframe. Sue calmly dictated the news even as the tremor shook her voice. The General Desk supervisor, Stephanie Nano, quickly prepared a bulletin as I took a series of calls from helpful Southern California staffers and retirees. When our urgent news failed to clear DataStream, we focused briefly on making sure the technician on duty understood what a disaster we were facing. We caught up quickly, and I stayed on a dedicated open phone line for several hours with Julie March (then known as ACoB Julie Aicher), passing on rapid developments to the General Desk lead writer, Mitchell Landsberg, now of the Los Angeles Times.

Later I would experience earthquakes as ACoB in Los Angeles myself. One time I slammed shut a file drawer and was surprised to feel the entire bureau newsroom shake. I didn't understand what had happened until I heard John Antczak say he had filed the "urgent" on what turned out to be a relatively minor quake.

-0-



Dudley welcomes the newest members of Connecting:

Stan Miller

Phil Sandlin - retired Miami photo editor.



Connecting wishes a Happy Birthday

to

Giovanna Dell'Orto

Stories of interest...

Robot writes LA Times earthquake breaking news article (Michelle Morgante)

-0-

Washington Post pilots new partner program, expanding access to Post digital content (Mark Mittelstadt)

-0-

Bernie Madoff speaks: Politics, remorse and Wall Street

-0-

A Website Asks Readers to Finance Independent Journalists (Latrice Davis)

-0-

Bloomberg Media - A New Direction

-0-

Restaurant inspection reporter puts her kitchen to the test (Bob Daugherty)

-0-

An Afternoon with Liz Wahl, the Reporter Who Quit RT and Hasn't Heard the End of It

-0-

Mexican authorities bungled case of slain journalist, group says

-0-

How to handle 'a shit assignment' when you're working for a small newspaper

-0-

NAA's new chairman says newspaper biz should have collaborated sooner

-0-

No interviews, please! Michelle Obama's China trip questioned as she won't take Q&A with reporters and only offers 2 true 'open press' events (out of 22 on her calendar)

-0-

AP Beat of the Week (Valerie Komor shared)

Colleagues,

Despite its subject, the marijuana beat is anything but mellow - at least the way Seattle newsman **Gene Johnson** works it.

He's in constant contact with prominent attorneys, police, state officials and longtime illegal pot growers. Countless phone calls, lunches and coffees have paid off with a series of scoops, culminating with a major exclusive: While the U.S. Justice Department insists that states ensure that no criminal elements are involved with legalized marijuana, the FBI is refusing to perform background checks on people who would deal in dope in Washington state.

<http://bigstory.ap.org/article/ap-exclusive-fbi-balks-pot-background-checks>

It started with a tip from a longtime federal source. In the course of lunch, the source mentioned that at one point last fall, there had been some dustup about whether the FBI would run background checks on Washington state marijuana business applicants.

According to the state's own rules, applicants needed to pass a federal background check before they were awarded a license. And last summer, the Justice Department announced that states would have to tightly regulate marijuana markets to keep out those with ties to organized crime and to prevent legal pot shops from becoming fronts

for the trafficking of other drugs. Without nationwide background checks, how could the states expect to accomplish that?

Johnson sought answers from the state's Liquor Control Board. At first, one spokesman said he thought the issue had been resolved, but a few days later the board backtracked: No, it hadn't been settled. The FBI had not responded to a year of requests from the board asking whether it would perform the checks, and the state had received no explanation for the silence.

U.S. Attorney Jenny Durkan would only say she was "working on it" and promise an interview that would never come to pass. Johnson, meanwhile, reached out to newswoman Kristen Wyatt in Denver, and together they discovered an odd twist: The FBI had conducted pot-industry background checks there since 2010, when Colorado regulated its medical marijuana industry. There was no apparent explanation for the discrepancy.

Johnson spent another day pestering the DOJ's public information office in Washington, D.C. Finally, the Justice Department issued a statement that didn't explain the inconsistency, though it tacitly acknowledged that Washington and Colorado were being treated differently. It said the DOJ was reviewing its policy to ensure a consistent national approach.

As for the matter of the state issuing licenses in violation of its own rules requiring background checks? A spokesman at the Liquor Control Board essentially acknowledged it, saying the state was ready to supply the fingerprints of applicants as soon as the FBI was ready to run the checks.

The story received prominent play on websites and on front pages. Even a one-time felon who has applied for a grow license called Johnson to say he couldn't believe out-of-state criminal records weren't being checked.

"Great story, man," a competitor at The Seattle Times wrote. "So now gangsters with ... no WA record can get a license?"

For his hard work developing sources, and his persistence in following a lead that broke news, Johnson wins this week's \$500 prize.

Others whose work impressed the judges:

_ Josh Boak, business writer, Washington, for getting Wal-Mart's chief executive to acknowledge that his employees would benefit from leaving the company for higher-paying jobs. The admission belied the company's claims that its lower-wage jobs are a gateway to the middle

class.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RijJkE54RB0> <http://bit.ly/1qzIX6i>
<http://bit.ly/1qzIX6i>

_ Steve Peoples, political writer, Boston, for breaking the news that former Republican Massachusetts Sen. Scott Brown was launching an exploratory committee to seek campaign staff for a possible Senate run in New Hampshire.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/03/13/scott-brown-senate_n_4957099.html

_ Eileen Ng, newswoman, Kuala Lumpur, and Joan Lowy, transportation writer, Washington, for reporting that someone in the cockpit of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370 had deliberately turned off communications devices and steered it off course. Lowy's source provided the first hint, and then Ng kept pursuing an official investigator, finally wearing him down at 1 a.m. Malaysia's prime minister later confirmed the scoop.

http://www.denverpost.com/breakingnews/ci_25342118/vietnam-downgrades-search-missing-jet

_ Audrey McAvoy, newswoman, Honolulu, for reporting that a civilian defense contractor accused of giving national defense secrets to his Chinese girlfriend was accepting a plea deal.

<http://news.yahoo.com/apnewsbreak-defense-contractor-plead-guilty-040021061.html>

_ Kathy Gannon, special regional correspondent, Afghanistan and Pakistan, and Anja Niedringhaus, photographer, Kabul, for documenting a rare firsthand account of a battle between Afghan police and insurgents, providing unique insight into government forces in action without international help.

<http://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2014/03/12/afghan-police-3-insurgents-killed-in-shootout>

_ Tami Abdollah, newswoman, Los Angeles, for obtaining a report by a union a week ahead of time saying that Los Angeles Airport wheelchair attendants, skycaps and other service workers were ill-trained and woefully unprepared for last year's fatal shooting.

<http://www.sltrib.com/sltrib/world/57685374-68/story.csp>

_ Steve Wine, sports writer, Miami, for reporting that owner Stephen Ross is paying \$400 million of his own money to upgrade the Dolphins stadium.

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/sports/nfl/2014/03/10/ap-source-dolphins-owner-will-pay-for-renovations/6265915/>

_ Lynn Elber, television writer, Orange County, Calif., for the first on-the-record confirmation of the death of comedian David Brenner.

http://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/tonight-show-favorite-david-brenner-dies-at-78/2014/03/16/223fb460-ad24-11e3-a49e-76adc9210f19_story.html

_ Hillel Italie, Entertainment, New York, for an hour's beat on the death of Joe McGinniss, author of two of the talked-about books of the last 50 years, "The Selling of the President" and "Fatal Vision." For hours, Italie's obit was the only full-length report. He had begun working on preparedness soon after McGinniss announced a year ago that he had terminal prostate cancer.

<http://www.boston.com/ae/celebrity/2014/03/10/fatal-vision-author-joe-mcginniss-dies-age/SyQrFEfq8xHoJ8DBQhmJrL/story.html>

Mike Oreskes

-0-

And **Bill Kole**, Boston bureau chief, points out: If the journalism thing doesn't pan out, AP can always do this:



Paul Stevens
Connecting newsletter
stevenspl@live.com

[Forward this email](#)



This email was sent to stevenspl@live.com by stevenspl@live.com | [Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Instant removal with [SafeUnsubscribe™](#) | [Privacy Policy](#).
Connecting newsletter | 14719 W 79th Ter | Lenexa | KS | 66215