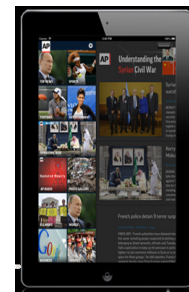

From: Paul Stevens [stevenspl@live.com]
Sent: Saturday, May 10, 2014 9:39 AM
To: stevenspl@live.com
Subject: Connecting - May 10, 2014

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Connecting

May 10, 2014



Colleagues,

Five days before Mother's Day, the mother of Joplin Globe editor **Carol Stark** died at a nursing home in nearby Carthage, Missouri. Carol shared this remembrance of her mom, Nancy Cowan, shown in the photo below, on the eve of the special day that honors all of our mothers.

Carol is a longtime friend of the AP (and of mine, as her former bureau chief) and directed the Globe's news coverage of the 2011 Joplin tornado that killed 158. That coverage won APME national honors for deadline and enterprise reporting in 2012. Click [here](#) if you'd like to drop her a note.

Saying good-bye to Mother

By Carol Stark
Editor, The Joplin Globe

It had been a good day as days go when you live at a nursing home, as my mother did.



Our conversation Monday went something like this:

"Hi, Mom, how you feeling today?"

"Well, just pretty good. They've really kept us busy today. After breakfast, I had physical therapy and then bingo and lunch. Well, I thought I might get a nap in, but I had some company and then we had a party for Cinco De

Mayo."

I asked her what they did to celebrate the fifth of May.

"Well, we had all kinds of food and they made margaritas."

Knowing full well my mother probably took a pass on the margarita, I asked her anyway if she had one.

"Oh no. But I had a virgin one," she told me, almost giggling at age 77.

"Are you sure about that Mom? You seem pretty happy to me. Maybe you got one with the alcohol?"

"Well I guess that could have happened," she answered, almost teasing me.

I told her goodnight then. Her reply was one that I hadn't heard for quite a while.

"Behave yourself," was the way she ended our short but happy chat.

Shortly after 7 a.m. Tuesday, I got the call from St. Luke's Nursing Home in Carthage that my mother, Nancy Cowan, had died in her sleep. No signs of pain or distress. She was simply gone. My immediate grief was as swift as my mother's death. But it hurt in a way I had not really imagined. I was beside myself, as were my two sisters. Dad had died just a few days after Father's Day of 2012. Now, we would face Mother's Day without ours.

The only good thing about planning a funeral is that it keeps you busy and demands you stay within the lines. And, I knew as sure as the world

that Mother would be very disappointed if we didn't get our acts together and give her a proper sendoff.

I may have learned about the philosophical side of life from my father, but my mother was a realist. And just like that, I sat down at the kitchen table and started making a list of what needed to be done. It's exactly what she would have done.

There are two kinds of good people in this world. Those who aspire to it and those who are born that way. I fall in that first category. I want to be a good person. I want to live by the Golden Rule. I want to make this Earth a better place. I aspire, but it isn't necessarily my natural state.

Mother was a Category 2. She simply WAS good and she did it so quietly you hardly even noticed. Her own father, a miner, died when she was 5, leaving my grandma with a house full of kids and very few skills to earn a living. But Mom was a survivor. She used to tell us about going to bed hungry sometimes and worrying about their fate. It drove her in a way no little kid should have to be driven and explained the work ethic she adopted, and later instilled in my sisters and me and in her grandchildren. "Those who don't work," she would say, "don't eat."

If you read mother's obituary, you might have seen that she won a General Electric range for her home economics room at Carterville High School when she entered a national cooking competition. It was one of her proud moments, I believe, because she told us girls about it often. Me, especially, because during the 1970s I crushed her when I refused to take home ec. It was the beginning of my rebel years, although since both my parents were strict disciplinarians, my "rebelliousness" was severely limited. Choosing a drama class over home economics in ninth grade was my way of "acting" out.

Looking through the box of old black and white photos on Wednesday I discovered the pictures of the cooking competition. I had never seen them before and didn't even realize they existed. There mother was, on a stage. She was waif thin and smiling in the photo, the dimples in her cheeks showing. She was so beautiful it made me hurt.

A year later she would marry my father and two years later she and I met for the first time in a maternity ward in Tulsa, Okla., after she had labored for 36 hours. My sister, Diana, came three years later and in another three years, Marcia completed our family.

I always believed that Mother cooked wonderful, bountiful meals as a way to escape the hunger of her youth. I now know just how wrong I was about that notion. She cooked because she loved it. She approached each and every day planning meals, cooking for sick

neighbors, church and school functions and any special occasions.

Mother was a natural-born caretaker. She took care of us, she took care of the neighbors, she took care of her own mother and then her mother-in-law. And after both of my grandmothers had died, Mother surprised us all. She sat down. The ache in her back had become something more. While she was taking care of everyone else, she had fallen victim to a degenerative bone disease. She went from cane to walker to wheelchair and then to St. Luke's.

She could have been bitter. She and Daddy only had a few short years after retirement for travel or any kind of adventures. Now she found herself in a nursing home. But she didn't become sullen and resentful. You know what she did? She made friends. She loved her roommate, Beth Watson, and delighted in choosing small gifts for her. She did the same for other residents and she kept a big bowl of candy in her room because she knew if she did that members of the staff would come and visit her room so they could get a Tootsie Roll or a Hershey's Kiss.

She played bingo, and games and sometimes she would sit at a table and measure out ingredients for cookies that the staff would bake.

On Wednesday, when I went to pack up her belongings, I was met by a round of hugs from the staff. There were tears and condolences.

"We don't know what we will do without Nancy," they all told me.

Mother had that way about her. Quietly, she took care of people and gave them what they needed.

And, just as quietly, she went to sleep and never woke up. Mother absolutely hated to inconvenience anyone. It's almost as if she had planned it all this way.

My sweet mother brought joy and love and light to this world.

And she makes me want to "behave myself" as she did.

Happy Mother's Day to a woman who changed lives while she thought no one was looking. Guess what, Mom, we all noticed and we will always remember.

(Click [here](#) for her mother's obituary in The Joplin Globe.)

News of the AP

AP changes style on District of Columbia references

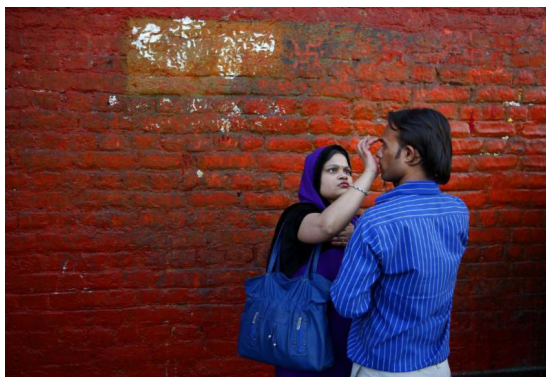
The "District" in "District of Columbia" can now be capitalized on second reference, AP said in a Stylebook update in March. (I didn't notice it until AP reporter Ben Nuckols tweeted about it this morning; this change was overshadowed somewhat by AP's shift on "over" and "more than," one of the most important events in Stylebook history.) Click [here](#) for the story.

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The work of AP New Delhi photographer Saurabh Das

Here is a look at the work of India-based @AP photographer Saurabh Das. @YahooNews slideshow. Click [here](#) to view a portfolio of 46 of her photos. (Shared by Paul Colford)

In this photo by Saurabh, a woman applies vermilion mark on the forehead of her husband after praying at the temple of Hindu monkey god Hanuman in New Delhi, India, Tuesday, March 18, 2014. The wall at the



background is colored orange by devotees who smear vermilion and oil as part of offerings as they pray. (AP Photo/Saurabh Das)

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AP board OKs third option for basic newspaper service

The AP board on May 2 approved a plan to offer newspaper members a third option for their basic text service. AP will continue to offer Member Choice Complete and Member Choice Limited, and will introduce an intermediate option in January 2015.

With three options for Basic Service, members will have more flexible choices to better meet their needs - in both content and price. We expect to be able to provide members with rates for the three basic text services in August.

Connecting mailbox

Overheard in the Newsroom

Wire editor, picks up phone: "Hello? ... No, you've reached [newspaper]. No problem. (hangs up) They were calling for [TV station.]"

Slot editor: "Next time, get the news tip before you get rid of them."

Who's the biggest newsroom barnacle of all

Jim Romensko reports that David Brooks of the Nashua (N.H.) Telegraph (not the New York Times columnist) sends this note:

I was recently handed a piece of paper congratulating me for working 27 straight years as a reporter and/or copy editor in my paper's newsroom - a document that I suspect is going to be pretty rare in the future.

This led me to wonder: Who is the longest-serving newspaperperson in the country? That is, who has worked the most continuous years in the newsroom of the same publication as a full-time reporter or line editor?

No upper managers, no ombudsmen or academics, no columnists who wander in once a week with their submission, no freelancers churning out copy from their home.

And I don't mean people who have moved around to a lot of papers. I'm looking for a rock-clinging barnacle like me - who's the biggest newsroom barnacle of all?

Any nominations?

CONNECTING MEMBERS - Send along any names you might think of to share with Brooks.



Connecting wishes Happy Birthday

To

[Craig Klugman](#)

Stories of interest

[This Week in Review: Weak net neutrality and stifled startups, and a glimpse of U.S. journalists](#)

This week's essential reads: The three key reads this week are Stanford professor Barbara van Schewick on net neutrality and innovation, Indiana professors Lars Willnat and David Weaver's findings from their survey of American journalists, and The New York Times' David Segal on unwatched online video ads.

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[NPR names Jarl Mohn its new president and CEO](#)

Jarl Mohn is the new president and CEO of NPR. The chairman of Southern California Public Radio replaces Paul G. Haaga Jr., who'd been NPR's acting president and CEO. Gary Knell, the last person to hold the job, left unexpectedly last year after 21 months in the top spot

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[Why CNN Is Obsessed With Flight 370: 'The Audience Has Spoken'](#)

CNN's near-constant coverage of the disappearance of Malaysia Airlines Flight 370 has led to widespread derision and critique of the network. How can a strategy ridiculed by critics, media watchers and even President Barack Obama have spurred a TV ratings and digital traffic spike for the network? Because the audience told them it would.

-0-

[Raju Narisetti: Can the Pulitzer Prizes do more for journalism?](#) (Mark Mittelstadt)

The Pulitzers cause a stir in newsrooms one Monday a year. Could they be structured to promote the value of good journalism the other 364 days a year?

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[Who's Killing the Great Comics of New York? *\(And Why?\)](#) (Bob Daugherty)

IT'S LIKE a Sudoku puzzle wrapped in an enigma shrouded in the mystery of a missing cartoon balloon: Who would kill the comics in the New York Post and - with what remotely logical motive - why?

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[A Photographer Walks Through Tulsa](#)

Some people have told Mike Simons that his latest photography project is putting his life at risk. Simons, a staff photographer for the Tulsa World, is walking all 16 miles of Peoria Avenue, a busy street that slices from one end of Tulsa, Oklahoma, to the other, traversing the city's richest and poorest neighborhoods along the way, the most rural to the densest. He started in North Tulsa, one of the rougher parts of town, and he heard from a few folks who thought it wasn't a good idea.

Paul Stevens
Connecting newsletter
stevenspl@live.com

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