
From: Paul Stevens [stevenspl@live.com]
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Connecting

June 24, 2014

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Colleagues,

Good morning. Here are stories of interest.

News of the AP

AP names Vivian Salama as Baghdad bureau chief

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CAIRO (AP) - Vivian Salama, a television and print journalist who has reported on the Middle East for over a decade, has been named as Baghdad bureau chief for The Associated Press.

The appointment was announced Monday by Ian Phillips, AP's Middle East news director based in Cairo.

Salama, 34, succeeds Adam Schreck, who is now based in Dubai and oversees AP coverage of the Gulf Arab countries as well as Iran. Salama will be the senior reporter and will lead a team of reporters, photographers, video journalists and support staff covering Iraq.

"The AP is one of the few international news organizations to have maintained a continuous presence in Iraq before and after the U.S. occupation," said John Daniszewski, vice president and senior managing editor for international news in New York. "With Iraq again front and center in the news, Salama is a serious student of the region and her expertise will inform AP's reporting as the drama continues."



"She is an accomplished journalist who will write with authority about the challenges facing Iraq and who understands the power of visual storytelling," said Phillips.

Salama, who speaks Arabic and holds a master's degree in Middle East and Islamic Studies from Columbia University, has covered major stories overseas including Egypt's historic presidential election, the resurgence of violence in Iraq and drone deaths in Yemen.

She begins her new position in Iraq at a critical time for the country as security unravels nearly three years after the U.S. military withdrew. Sunni militants have overrun several cities in northwestern Iraq near Syria, hoping to exploit the chaos to link territories they control on both sides of the border.

"The fast-moving events show how important Iraq remains, with impact on surrounding countries," said AP's regional text editor Dan Perry, who oversees AP's in-depth reporting across the Middle East.

Salama, of New City, N.Y., moved to the Middle East in 2003 and was a freelancer for Associated Press Television News in Cairo from 2004 to 2006.

She went on to report in Pakistan, and opened the Bloomberg bureau in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. Salama also has appeared as a commentator on BBC, the South African Broadcasting Corp., Voice of America and NPR, among others. She has also contributed to Newsweek, the Daily Beast and the Atlantic.

Previously, she worked as a producer for NBC and ABC News in New York.

In addition to her master's degree from Columbia, Salama is a graduate of Rutgers University in New Jersey and has lectured in journalism there. She also authored a lengthy study on jihadists' use of media, contained in "Radicalization, Terrorism and Conflict," which was published in 2013 by Cambridge Scholars.

How A Horrifying Story About Babies Buried In A Mass Grave Got Reported So Wrong

On Friday afternoon, the Associated Press published a lengthy correction on a story from earlier this month about recently unearthed records that showed 796 children were buried in a mass grave outside an old Irish orphanage for the children of unwed mothers.

The AP correction acknowledged four errors including that it "incorrectly reported that the children had not received Roman Catholic baptisms" and "that Catholic teaching at the time was to deny baptism and Christian burial to the children of unwed mothers."

Click [here](#) to read more.

A faster, new format for AP's Major League Baseball game stories

For decades, AP reporters have chronicled every big play, every no-hitter and every controversy that erupts on the field during the hundreds of games that make up the Major League Baseball season.

Now, we're reshaping the way that game coverage looks.

Starting July 28, we'll launch a new format that presents the game story in a faster, more accessible and more customizable package. Instead of a traditional 600-word game story, our coverage will feature 300 words about the game and then up to five bullet points that highlight mini storylines, injuries, key plays and what's coming next for a team.

Click [here](#) to read more.

Answer to Monday's quiz

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[Bob Daugherty](#) - The UPI photo of the NY skyline is the UPI Telephoto sign off and was transmitted at the end of the day to clients.

"Open Mike" with new White House press secretary

In this morning's Politico Playbook, **Mike Allen** shared these highlights of an interview with **Josh Earnest** in his first interview on his first day of school as White House press secretary on Politico's "Open Mike" video series, which can be found by clicking [here](#).

--On his new office, arguably the second best in the West Wing (includes fireplace):

"[T]he first thing I did when I walked in the office today was I took a little Instagram photo. I have a private Instagram account, but I was able to share the big day with my family and friends, at least who follow me on Instagram. ... It's fun to, after five-and-a-half years of sitting in the same office here in Lower Press, actually to get upgraded to the big office upstairs. ... Lots of windows, even a chandelier, which is a little fancy for my personal taste."



--On whether the bank of TVs in his office will include ESPN: "Absolutely. It will ensure my own personal sanity."

--The best new perk: "Probably the parking spot. I had a pretty good parking spot before -- one that my father was very impressed by. But I can't wait until he comes back next and he can see my upgraded parking spot. ... Now I'm on West Exec[utive Avenue], so pretty close to the west entrance of the West Wing."

--On Stephen Colbert's observation, during Jay Carney's appearance last week, "What a name for a press secretary: Josh Earnest. His name literally means, 'Just kidding, but seriously'": "There's a whole generation of my friends who used to tease me about my name as kids who have been shown up. He is the first one to make fun of my name in a way that actually made me laugh."

--On sitting through the Gibbs and Carney eras: "I wouldn't have this opportunity [but for] the opportunity that the two of them gave me. Gibbs hired me on the campaign. I still remember vividly on election night in November of 2008, before the President gave his speech, we were all at the hotel before going over to Grant Park, and Gibbs pulled me aside and said, 'I want you to work on my staff at the White House.' I was so excited when he told me that. And ... under Jay, I've gotten the opportunity to stand at this

podium on multiple occasions. I traveled a lot with the President and did briefings on Air Force One."

--On what works from the podium: "[T]he most important part of standing up here and being able to talk about this job is to understand that the job that you're doing is really, really serious and that the stakes for handling it properly and professionally are really high. At the same time, you can't take yourself too seriously, and having a little modesty."

--On the headline of a profile of him by AP's Nedra Pickler, "more honey, less vinegar": "Well, we'll see if that continues to be the prevailing opinion of the press corps after I've been in this job for a couple of weeks. Look, I also understand that ... the press secretary is on the firing line and is the point person for all of the frustration and criticism that comes along with being a White House correspondent. And as the principal deputy [his previous post, you dodge a little bit of that, and it's easy to be the good guy and the good cop, occasionally.

"So, I have no illusions about the fact that there will be aspects of even my attempts to bring a little honey to this job that will sour some people on occasion. What I hope is that, over the course of my tenure here, people will sort of take a little bit of a longer view and recognize that, in the way that I had been an advocate for White House reporters sitting in the small office downstairs, that advocacy will continue, even when I'm sitting in the big office upstairs."

--On whether he'll keep his Twitter handle, @JEarnest44: "I actually am going to be handed the steering wheel to @PressSec. I'm not sure what's going to happen to @JEarnest44. Maybe it will just be mothballed for a while until I get ready to leave. ... I am probably not the most skilled contributor to Twitter, ... but I'm going to have to ramp up my activities."

--On how Twitter drives the White House day: "Twitter is something that everybody pays attention to and ... we are following the Twitter activity of the White House press corps, in particular, ... to take the temperature ... Is there a story that White House reporters are particularly interested in that's revealed by the frequency of their tweets about that particular story? ... [P]eople will sort of tweet some skepticism about one particular story, or they'll tweet some surprise at finding out some aspects of one particular story, even surprisingly upside."

--On what's going to happen to, "West Wing Week," the weekly White House video he narrates: "'West Wing Week' is going to keep on trucking. There are no changes anticipated at this point. It is something that I enjoy and something I look forward to working close with the digital strategy team to continue doing."

--On whether it's a coincidence that Obama has been taking more questions lately: "I am an advocate for the President taking questions. ... [T]here is no better messenger for our -- for the President's priorities than the President himself ... I'm not in a position to take credit for all of the questions that he's taken in the last few weeks, but that is

something that the President feels strongly about."

--On whether he'll commit to POTUS taking questions from the press at least once a week: "No, because I think that's an artificial standard, right? I think what we're going to be focused on is we're going to be focused on making the President as accessible as possible."

--On POLITICO's report that he got the job in part by making the case to Chief of Staff Denis McDonough and others that the White House could cultivate a more productive relationship with the press: "I bring an interesting perspective to this job, having sat in the office ... sort of literally on the front lines of the White House Press Office [just inside the door from the briefing room] ... I was the first stop as people were looking for information -- literally would show up in person standing inside my doorway saying, 'I'm mad about this,' or 'I'm interested in this,' or 'It is a crisis and I need a quick reaction to this.' ... [T]hat ... has given me some good insight into what the needs are of the White House Press Corps. ...

"[I]f we're going to have a genuinely independent professional press corps, ... we're [not] going to like every story. Not every story is going to make the President look good, but the standard that I want to hold reporters to is[:] ... [A]re you going to explain to your viewers or your readers what it is the President is doing and why he's doing it? ... It doesn't mean we're going to like every story, but I want to make sure that, inside that story, is a clear description and explanation about what it is the President actually is doing."

--On what the Nats and his hometown Royals have in common, and which is more likely to go the distance: "[B]oth teams have struggled with a little inconsistency on offense. The Nats lineup has a much higher ceiling, and I think that is the thing that is most likely to hold back my hometown Royals. Both teams have pretty good starting pitching; both teams have a strong bullpen. I think I was reading just last night that the Nats actually have the lowest ERA of any bullpen in the Major Leagues. The Royals had that distinction last year. So, having a good bullpen is really, really important and it's going to help them protect some leads, but I think the Nats are going to farther. Their offense, right now, is just a little bit stronger. But it's not going to cause me to root any less harder for the Royals."

Other stories of interest

[Ex-Aide to Cameron Guilty in Hacking; Brooks Not Guilty](#)

LONDON - In another dramatic turn in a high-profile case that has transfixed Britain, Rebekah Brooks, the former head of Rupert Murdoch's newspaper holdings in Britain, was



acquitted on Tuesday of phone-hacking and other charges. Andy Coulson, a former tabloid editor and onetime head of communications for Prime Minister David Cameron, was found guilty on at least one count.

The verdicts after a week of deliberations by a jury came after lengthy hearings into a scandal at the Murdoch news empire that shook the British police, news media and political elite and forced the closure of a leading Murdoch Sunday tabloid, The News of the World.

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Kerry hits 'draconian' Al-Jazeera convictions

Secretary of State John Kerry on Monday condemned an Egyptian court's decision to convict Al-Jazeera journalists on spurious terrorism-related charges.

"Today's conviction and chilling, draconian sentences by the Cairo Criminal Court of three Al Jazeera journalists and fifteen others in a trial that lacked many fundamental norms of due process, is a deeply disturbing set-back to Egypt's transition," Kerry said in a statement. "Injustices like these simply cannot stand if Egypt is to move forward in the way that President al-Sisi and Foreign Minister Shoukry told me just yesterday that they aspire to see their country advance."

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CNN to study drone use for reporting

Seeking to speed up government rule-making about the use of drones in newsgathering, CNN and the Georgia Institute of Technology said Monday that they would jointly study how to operate unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) safely and effectively.

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New Knight News Challenge winners receive funding to help strengthen the Internet

The Knight Foundation is out with the most recent group of winners in the Knight News Challenge, with \$3.4 million going to projects that help promote innovation on the Internet.

The 19 winning projects will expand access to libraries through new digital tools, create pipelines for underrepresented talent in the technology sector, and bolster efforts to track online censorship around the globe. The announcement was made moments ago at the annual MIT-Knight Civic Media Conference at the MIT Media Lab.

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Should Philly's Newspapers Operate as Charity Cases? (Bob Daugherty)

Gerry Lenfest has spent much of the last decade giving his fortune away for worthy causes. So maybe it's no surprise that when he finally sealed his complete ownership of Interstate General Media this week, Lenfest ended up sounding like Philly's major newspapers were another one of his philanthropic enterprises

"I've given a lot of money away," he told the Daily News. "But I can't think of any cause that we support that's more important than the support of the newspapers."

And finally... A Sandia Selfie

Connecting colleagues **Julie March** (left) and **Margy McCay** in a "Sandia Selfie" taken by Julie during a trip up the Sandia Tram in Albuquerque. Margy's recent western swing cluded a visit to **Dave Tomlin** and family in Ruidoso. (Connecting editor **Paul Stevens** thanks colleague **Andy Lippman** for sharing, although it conjures up longing memories of lunches with former AP colleagues **Kent Walz** and **Matt Mygatt** at the Sanitary Tortilla Factory in downtown Albuquerque during Stevens' ABQ chief of bureau days.)



Paul Stevens

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