

From: Paul Stevens [stevenspl@live.com]
Sent: Saturday, August 30, 2014 9:54 AM
To: stevenspl@live.com
Subject: Connecting - August 30, 2014

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Connecting

August 30, 2014

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of the Teletype



Colleagues,

Here are stories of interest on this start of the Labor Day weekend.

If you are among the predicted 33 million Americans who will travel 50

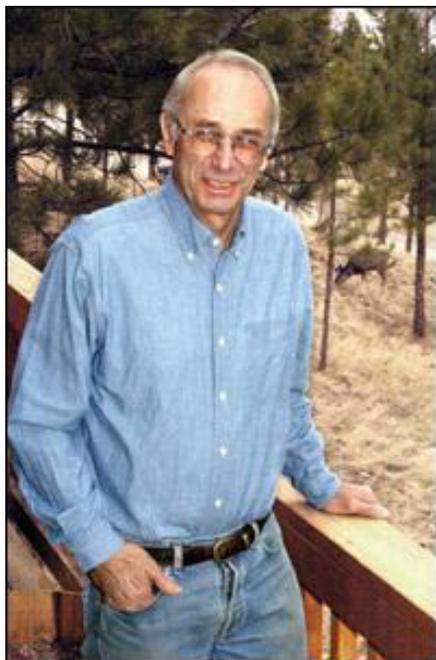
miles or more during the holiday weekend, paying an average of \$3.72 per gallon of gas and 4-6 percent more than last year for a hotel room, well, have fun and stay safe. And be patient.

Paul

Connecting mailbox

Cheyenne and the #@\$%&* Teletypes

[John Kuglin](#) - I've been told by the staff that Cheyenne is the bleakest domestic assignment in the AP. It's naked on the High Plains. The cruel winds bend its few trees in the direction of Nebraska. If you left your car out overnight and there was a ground blizzard you might have to spend half an hour digging it out. They cleared the bars at 4 a.m. during the Frontier Days rodeo with German shepherds and Mace. But Cheyenne was actually a pretty nice place when I was AP's correspondent there for a couple of years in the late 70s. Except for the #@\$%&* Teletypes.



With the exception of Denver Tech Gene Hodge, none of the techs there liked to make the 100-mile trip to Cheyenne. And they couldn't get there anyway after troopers locked the gates at the Colorado border when the plows couldn't handle the snowdrifts. We had three Teletypes, one for the CO/WY SNO wire, another for the weather wire and the third for broadcast. The Teletypes continually malfunctioned. And their replacements usually croaked a few weeks after they arrived from Denver Communications in a large, heavy wooden crate, delivered from the bus station by a short, elderly cabbie with a bad back. A few months after I

arrived in Cheyenne, the cab company stopped picking up Teletypes, claiming they were too heavy. So I began hauling dead Teletypes for Denver to the bus station in the back of my Jeep and picking up "routined" Teletypes shipped by Denver; usually they were dripping solvent and oil. I was discouraged after I picked up a couple of Teletypes that, when uncrated, had tags attached that said "Defective," and I had to see a chiropractor after I nearly destroyed my back lifting Teletypes.

Finally, I figured out that the main gear shafts on the broadcast and

weather wire printers were interchangeable, even though the weather wire ran faster. This made life easier. But about this time I had a phone call from the news director at Cheyenne's TV station. He didn't like AP very much, claiming that years earlier he received only a \$3 stringer check for covering a plane crash and losing two finger tips from frostbite. "AP just sent me sissy paper," he yelled. "I won't use pink paper." Luckily, we had 25 boxes of green and yellow Teletype paper in the bureau, which I delivered to the station. I hauled the pink paper back to the bureau in the back of my Jeep, which at this point was driving like it needed new shocks. I hate Teletypes. They should all be hauled to the nearest landfill and crushed.

Our staff, including newsmen Joe Wheelan and Lee Catterall, also had a lot of trouble with the two Hendrix 5200 CRTs in the Cheyenne, whose memory cards continually burned out. Denver Communications usually sent a tech to reseat new cards, but after I made the mistake of saying I could change gears in Teletypes they began shipping me new cards directly from East Brunswick, including -- you guessed it -- a shipment with a label inside that said "Defective Cards." The main cable connecting the Hendrix work station to the memory units in the computer room kept shorting. Communications wouldn't fix it, so we tied a piece of twine to where the cable was shorting near the memory unit, ran it across a false ceiling to the newsroom and pulled it whenever the copy would start garbling. This worked some of the time. Then the other Hendrix died. I called Bob Johnson, who was ME then in NYC. Two days later, a tech from East Brunswick showed up, along with the COC from Denver. They ripped apart both Hendrixes and said they had never been properly wired. They worked for a long time. I don't know why I ever left Cheyenne.

Using Morse Code to get the news out

[Doris Selig](#) - I love reading and reminiscing about the way things were. They didn't use pigeons, but when I first started with AP, the Albany Times Union got their Saratoga race results in Morse code.

After I transferred to New York and teletypes were going out and everything was getting computerized, the Cables department kept one for a long time. It was used for Western Union copy, mostly incoming. One time, there was a summit on an island in the Pacific and the only way to get copy out was via WU at 50 baud, 5 level. The machine in NY had a reperf connected to it and the Cables clerk would feed the tape into the computer. Luckily I could read the tape as sometimes a garble would set up an end-of-transmission sequence early in the item.

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



To

[Kristi Chew](#)

Stories of interest

[This Week in Review: The danger of freelance foreign journalism, and Facebook goes after clickbait](#)

This week's essential reads: The key pieces this week are The New York Times' Nick Bilton on the shortcomings of Twitter and livestreams in news about Ferguson, and The Awl's John Herrman on Facebook's changes and how we define clickbait.

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[Journalism and the internet: Is it the best of times? No - but it's not the worst of times either](#) (Bob Daugherty)

Having just written what I consider a defense of the internet's effect on journalism and the media industry, I didn't expect to have to do it again so soon. But just after Andrew Leonard's short-sighted piece in Salon about how the internet has crippled journalism, David Sessions wrote on the same topic in Patrol magazine, and arguably did an even worse job of describing the current state of journalism, calling it a morass of "cynical, unnecessary, mind-numbing, time-wasting content."

It's not just the over-riding pessimism of both of these pieces that bothers me. It's the failure to appreciate that the complaints they have are the same ones that have been made about journalism for decades - combined with the unrestrained longing for some mythical golden age of journalism.

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[CNN Reporter Posts Video of Her Layoff](#)

Former CNN Capitol Hill reporter Lisa Dejadins posted a video of her final sign off from CNN on Thursday as she prepared to leave the building after being laid off.



Dejadins, a reporter for CNN.com who was not an on-air personality, compares the mass goodbye emails from laid off CNN employees to the personal ones, finding a wide discrepancy in the general tone and niceness between the two, and expresses her disappointment CNN's decision to get rid of a congressional reporter given the bipartisan struggle in the Capitol.

However, CNN is in the midst of expanding its digital staff in Washington, D.C. as it prepares for the 2016 presidential race. The news giant recently recruited Politico alum Rachel Smolkin as executive editor for politics to spearhead an elaborate digital initiative out of D.C. Dejadins' departure was part of a restructuring of CNN's Washington bureau and not part of the buyout offer.

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[The Press in Ferguson](#) (Scott Charton)

On the ninth night of the protests in Ferguson, Missouri, Chris King, the managing editor of the St. Louis American, one of the country's oldest black newspapers, got word from a protester that "outside agitators" were in possession of grenades. The St. Louis County Police Department had already fired tear gas and rubber bullets at demonstrators, and at the media, but the possible presence of grenades suggested escalating violence.

King was monitoring the protests from home, via a combination of online streaming video, Twitter, CNN, e-mail, and texts. He picked up his cell phone—a battered Sprint relic, the letters on the space bar worn down to "Spa"—and, just before 10 P.M., he texted a high-level member of the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department: "Guy w brown visor & white bullhorn running around was the guy who brought the Molotovs and may have grenades."

"White or black," the police official texted back.

"White man," King wrote, still watching footage of the protests. He added, "Get that guy. He is dangerous." (A law-enforcement source told me that the reports of grenades were credible, but that none were confiscated at the scene.)

AND

[Grading the Media on Ferguson Coverage](#)

Now that the Ferguson protests are slowly beginning to wind down, it's likely a good time to assess how the media handled the coverage of the recent unrest, triggered by the police shooting of unarmed teen, Michael Brown.

From the coverage I've seen myself, I would have to grade the media a C to C-, mainly for coverage that I thought was uneven, at best, with some national reporters even crossing journalistic lines to become advocates, rather than unbiased, objective third-parties. And, by some standards, a grade of C, is likely too generous.

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[Why I Decided War Reporting Was No Longer Worth the Risk](#)

About a year and a half ago, I found myself in the living room of a luxury condominium overlooking a beach in Naples, Florida. I'd been reporting in the Middle East, and, for the first time in two years, had returned home to the U.S. for a visit. My family and I were making the holiday rounds, which brought us to this high-rise, the home of my half-brother's friend's wealthy relatives. I'd hoped to just enjoy the view. Instead I got cornered by small talk.

Our hostess asked where I lived. In a small town in southern Turkey, I answered. Inevitably, she asked what I did there. "I'm a journalist covering Syria."

Without hesitation, she bore in: "So, is your reporting truthful?" She inserted the question the way someone might confront a WWE wrestler about whether what happens in the ring is real. We all know it's made up. Just admit it.

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[BBC could soon overtake CNN as leader of online news](#)

BBC's global audience has grown to 73.4m unique browsers, taking the

corporation to just 200,000 under CNN, the leader for online news visits.

The research by comScore found that the BBC's global audience has grown by 30 per cent since 2012.

Product investment, enhanced feature content on bbc.com, the increasing popularity of the BBC's suite of language sites and commitment to first-hand reporting were listed by the BBC as the reasons why it has seen this growth.

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James Foley's Brother Says Journalists Need More Support

The brother of James Foley, the American journalist who was violently killed by the Islamic State, hopes that the death of his brother will now raise awareness about the importance of journalists worldwide.

Michael Foley said Friday during an interview with Good Morning Britain that his brother, who had been missing in Syria since 2013, died doing something that deserves much greater attention.

"It's a vitally important cause that others need to get behind," he said. "I think journalists, particularly independent journalists, need more support."

He added that he and his family knew the dangers of what his brother was doing, but they could never have tried to talk him out of it. It was his "calling," he said.

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Miami Herald won't cover FIU football opener after credential for beat reporter is denied (Doug Pizac)

For the first time since FIU created a football team, the Miami Herald will not cover the Panthers' home season opening game Saturday because the school has refused to provide a press credential to the newspaper's beat reporter.

FIU athletics officials denied the Herald's request for a game pass for reporter David J. Neal, who has been covering FIU sports since June, 2011. Passes were granted for a Herald columnist and photographer.

No explanation was given by FIU, but Neal's access to FIU coaches and athletes had been dwindling for months, to the point where he was no longer permitted to attend football practice or conduct interviews. Last

week, when Neal attempted to write a story on the FIU women's soccer team, he was told no one was allowed to talk to him.

Paul Stevens
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