Connecting - April 15, 2015

1 message

Paul Stevens <stevenspl@live.com>
Reply-To: stevenspl@live.com
To: pjshane@gmail.com

Wed, Apr 15, 2015 at 9:28 AM

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Connecting

April 15, 2015

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Colleagues,

Good Wednesday morning.

A memorial service for **Dave Pyle**, veteran Minneapolis AP bureau chief who died Monday, has been set for 11 a.m. Friday at the White Funeral Home, 14560 Pennock Ave., in Apple Valley, Minnesota. A gathering of family and friends will be held one hour prior to the service. The AP wire obituary for Dave moved Tuesday and is presented as the first item in today's newsletter.

Today's Connecting also brings more memories of Dave from his friends and former AP colleagues.

And **Larry Knutson** provides a follow on his story Monday on the 150th anniversary of the assassination of President Lincoln and the first bulletin of the shooting at Ford's Theatre by AP Washington chief agent Lawrence Gobright.

Today marks the 30th anniversary of AP Newsfinder, a service for weekly newspapers based in suburban Milwaukee and operated all that time by **Sandy Hamm,** a Connecting colleague and longtime friend, who tells you about Newsfinder in today's issue.

What Sandy doesn't say in his story is that he and his wife Cecily are the parents of two former U.S. Olympic gymnasts, twins Paul and Morgan Hamm. Paul won the Gold Medal for individual all-around competition in the 2004 Summer Olympics in Athens. The two were part of the U.S. team that won the Silver Medal in those Olympics. The Hamms' daughter Betsy was a seven-time All American in gymnastics.

I had the Newsfinder responsibility for AP and during one visit to see Sandy, he brought along Paul's Gold Medal that had been stuffed in a sock drawer at home, for me to don over my neck at our restaurant. Any similarity to Paul beyond our common first names ended right there.

Paul

AP obituary for Dave Pyle

By Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS - David L. Pyle, a longtime bureau chief, news editor and reporter during his 33-year career with The Associated Press, has died. He was 61.

Pyle, who worked for the news cooperative in five states, most of it as bureau chief in Minnesota and Wisconsin, died at his home Monday in the St. Paul suburb of Apple Valley, according to his son, Christopher Pyle.

The Iowa native joined AP as a newsman in Omaha in 1979. He later worked in Dallas and Providence, Rhode Island, before moving in 1991 to Minneapolis, where he spent the last two decades of his career and oversaw major breaking news.

Such stories included the 2007 Minneapolis bridge collapse, in which 13 people were killed and 145 injured when the Interstate 35W bridge broke apart over the Mississippi River during evening rush hour, and U.S. Sen. Paul Wellstone's death in a plane crash in 2002. He also oversaw the marathon recount of the state's U.S. Senate race in 2008, and coverage of a teenage gunman's 2005 shooting at a high school on the Red Lake reservation that killed 10 people.

Pyle, who suffered from diabetes and underwent a kidney transplant in 1999, showed "great courage" in coping with a disease, said Tena Haraldson, the AP's former bureau chief in North Dakota and South Dakota.

"Dave often worked in pain and fatigue. He wore an insulin pump for many years, but that didn't stop him from driving hundreds of miles and putting in long days, often in bad weather, to meet with members or cover news. He went through a kidney transplant that

saved his life. But the anti-rejection drugs also left him susceptible to serious infections and illnesses," Haraldson said.

"He didn't talk about it because he didn't want to be defined by his illness, and he never was. When he was ill his voice might have been weaker, but his jokes and observations remained as on-target and irreverent as always."

Paul Stevens, in his role as AP's Central Region vice president from 2003 to 2009, worked closely with Pyle.

"Dave was a newsman, first and foremost, and in the visits we made together to Minnesota and Wisconsin members, the respect he held from member editors and publishers was so very apparent - gratifying to witness but not surprising," Stevens said.

"He never lost his sense of what made AP essential: Our news coverage. And he never lost sight of what made bureau chiefs unique: Their ability to listen, to consult, to problem solve, to be the face of the AP in newsrooms large and small."

Two years after joining AP in Omaha, Pyle was promoted to news editor. He was named supervisory correspondent in Providence in 1983, and five years later moved to Dallas, where he was briefly news editor before being promoted to assistant chief of bureau.

Pyle was promoted in 1991 to bureau chief in Minneapolis, where he spent 21 years before stepping down in 2012. He led news and membership efforts in a territory that eventually grew to include Wisconsin.

John Bodette, executive editor of the St. Cloud Times and a former president of the state AP newspaper board, recalled Pyle's efforts in establishing an AP award for new journalists and an annual jobs fair for AP members.

"That kind of extra effort and vision, that's a legacy," Bodette said. "I don't want people to forget what he did."

Along with his son, Pyle is survived by his wife, Maria; his daughter, Kate; and three grandchildren.

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You can reach the family at:

Maria Pyle

7210 131st Circle
Apple Valley, MN 55124

Or

Christopher.pyle@gmail.com

Click **here** for a link to the AP wire story above, published on the Washington Post web site.

Click **here** for a link to his obituary on the funeral home web site.

More memories of Dave Pyle

Jim Carlson (Email) - When Dave Pyle became bureau chief in Wisconsin as well as Minnesota, I didn't know what to expect as a veteran member of the Milwaukee staff nearing retirement age. But it didn't take long for Milwaukee staffers to learn the kind of boss Pyle would be -- caring, friendly, approachable, willing to delegate his authority while still keeping close tabs on what was going on.

He made sure he was present in August 2009 when John Hartzell and I were honored at a party as we both left active duty with AP. My wife, Ellen, came away saying how nice he was -- and how lucky I was to have had him as a COB.

I was shocked to learn later that he too was leaving AP because of the change in management that eliminated the Minnesota-Wisconsin bureau chief's job. I saw Dave a couple years later at a party when Roger Schneider was promoted from Milwaukee news editor to head the news operation in Detroit, and he was the same friendly, engaging guy as ever. As others have noted, he never mentioned the health issues that we now know had been with him for so long.

I always knew AP would miss his presence and now we all will. What a great guy.

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Giovanna Dell'Orto (Email) - I was first introduced to Dave in fall quarter of 1998, at the University of Minnesota's signature media law and ethics lecture. I could not believe that someone as important as a bureau chief for The Associated Press would be that nice to a 21-year-old, first-year Master's student in mass communication. Could I really try to get a job with AP???

At the end of that academic year, Dave hired me for my first AP position, a relief/temporary newswoman. He said that he was greatly impressed by my AP test -- so much so that he was willing to forget how horribly I had butchered the sports part (what can I say, I had grown up with a different kind of "football" ...).

In spring 2012, Dave and I met again at a University of Minnesota lecture -- this time an event on journalism and migration that I had organized, being now a professor at the School of Journalism & Mass Communication. Dave was there with tough probing questions and crucial encouragement, as he had been through the years.

I know many of my colleagues at the SJMC will miss him as a mentor to class after class of Minnesota journalism students. I miss my first boss, whose forgiveness of pigskin blunders changed my life.

(Photo of Dave and Giovanna's parents in 2012 by Peter Beck.)

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Bill Hanna (Email) - I was already at the Mesabi Daily News in Virginia, Minn., as editor for six years when Dave Pyle took over as Minneapolis bureau chief in 1991.

I had been with the AP as a newsman for a couple years covering the Legislature in South Dakota, working under AP's Minnesota/Dakotas Bureau Chief Charles Hill. When Charles was named Michigan AP bureau chief in Detroit, Dave took the AP reins in Minneapolis.

The Iowan and the Minnesotan struck a chord of friendship upon their first meeting that grew ever stronger with each passing year.

Dave was a bureau chief who loved to explore the hamlets, towns and cities where AP member editors put out daily newspapers.

He came up often to Minnesota's hinterland that is Mesabi Daily News territory, a little more than an hour from the Canadian border. And he was wise and astute enough to come in the summer or fall; never in the winter.

He always enjoyed the quirky character of "Da Range" in Minnesota's iron ore mining country, and its many characters who also have plenty of their own quirkiness.

We would share dinner, some brews, plenty of stories, and talk of family and newsmakers and news events of the day.

And we would laugh, often. For all his health difficulties, Dave so loved a good story - telling it or listening to one - and he so thoroughly loved to laugh in the moment.

Fond memories of Dave now provide smiles and some laughter through the tears.

He was a great friend; a great guy; and a great newsman.

I am fortunate to have had such a trifecta in my life.

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Mike Holmes (Email) - Dave and I crossed paths from time to time, but it wasn't until I became Omaha COB that we really got to know one another well. Whenever I needed to know what "really" was going on or how to handle some difficult situation, he was one of the wise men to turn to. Dedicated, loyal to the AP and an all-around good guy. We'll miss him.

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John Kuglin (Email) - I know one thing about Dave Pyle. Every day he worked his heart out for the AP.

The members and his staff loved him. He was a tireless and effective advocate for the public's right to know.

Despite the snow and sometimes the coldest temperatures in the country, Dave spent a lot of time, regardless of the weather, visiting the members. For a while, Dave and I were the only COBs with Jeep Cherokees. We needed them.

Dave put out a damn good news report for his states, too. He was always minding the wire. He never complained about his serious medical problems.

He had a great sense of humor, and took orders from other COBs for ``Media Jackal'' T-shirts after Jesse Ventura called reporters jackals. We'll all miss Dave. A lot.

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Lew Ferguson relays these thoughts from **Gene Lahammer**, who retired in 1994 after 25 years as AP Capitol reporter in St. Paul. He worked under Dave Pyle the last five years of his career, then returned -- at Pyle's insistence -- to help declare winners in primary and general elections every two years for 18 years, through 2012.

On Pyle's passing, Gene said, "I had a wonderful relationship with him, the first five years when I was at the Capitol and assisting with the elections after that. When I retired, Dave made me promise I would come back to work elections. He was a great, kind boss and I considered him a good friend. I was very saddened to hear of his passing."

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Dale Leach (Email) - I would say that Dave remained admired among his former newspaper colleagues in Minnesota, even after leaving the COB job there.

In my visits to Minnesota newspapers, editors and publishers never failed to ask about him and how he was doing. All recalled him fondly.

I last saw him in the summer of 2014, as he was preparing for a meeting with candidates at the Minneapolis Star Tribune, which continued to hire Dave for the job of putting political candidates through their paces before the newspaper decided on an endorsement.

This is further evidence of the high esteem in which he was held in the Minnesota newspaper community.

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Michelle Morgante (Email) - I am stunned and terribly saddened to hear of Dave's passing.

As part of the reorganization that compelled Dave to depart from the AP, I became CoB for the new territory based in Minneapolis. I was new to this part of the country and it wasn't easy to step into the role that had been so well filled by Dave (and Tena Haraldson in the Dakotas and Nebraska). Dave knew everyone in Minnesota, it seemed. Members I visited always spoke well of him and I could tell they doubted I - or anyone, really - would ever match up.

Fortunately, for me, Dave generously offered me his support. He helped me quickly get up to speed on the various issues facing the region and would give me the scoop on the different players. He went out of his way to introduce me to people and help me get connected. We shared a love of music and, as others have said, he was so very proud of his son's talents and of his family as a whole. I am deeply grateful to have had Dave to help me as I moved into the role.

His passing is a tremendous loss.

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Jim Reindl (Email) - Dave was my good friend, an AP comrade and a fellow lover of blues, R&B and music in general. Smart, smart Alec and quick witted, he had great insight into our world in AP and as CoBs. I will miss him.

Travel well, Pyle.

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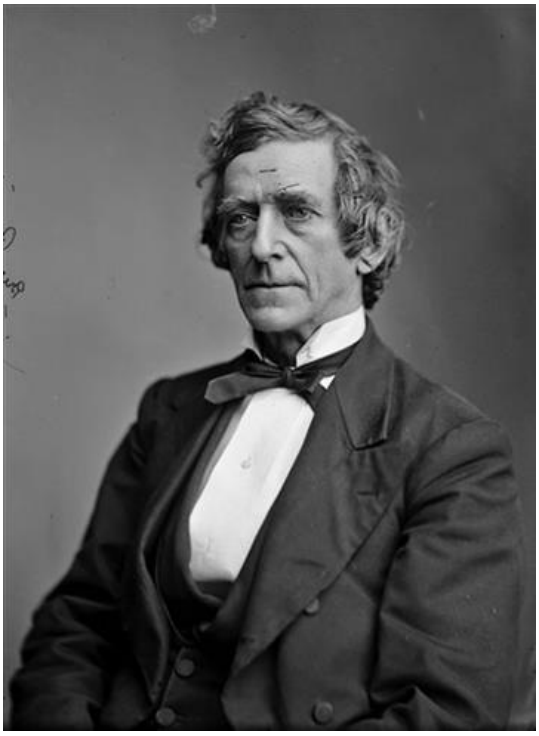
Colleen Newvine Tebeau (Email) - When I started in U.S. Newspaper Markets, I was conscious that I was brand new at AP while many of the CoBs had worked at AP for decades and I had a lot to learn.

Dave was one of the chiefs who made me feel like a member of the family. I could always count on him to tell it like it was, and to combine his smart insights with a laugh.

Setting the Standard:
Lawrence Gobright and impartial journalism

By LAWRENCE L. KNUTSON (Email)

Lawrence Augustus Gobright would be remembered - not only in the Associated Press but by journalists generally - even if he had never written the April 14, 1865, bulletin reporting that Abraham Lincoln had been shot.



The Civil War was well underway when in early February 1862, Gobright was summoned before the House Judiciary Committee and asked why his dispatches seemed to breeze past military censors while the reports of other special correspondents often did not.

He was asked the question directly: "Can you state whether you have been able to send information over the telegraph wires which other correspondents of particular papers have been unable to send?"

In his answer, Gobright offered an explanation which he said might "render this matter clear to the committee:

"My business is merely to communicate facts. My instructions do not allow me to make any comments upon the facts which I communicate. My despatches are sent to papers of all manner of politics, and the editors say they are able to make their own comments upon the facts which are sent to them.

"I therefore confine myself to what I consider legitimate news. I do not act as a politician belonging to any school but try to be truthful and impartial. My despatches are merely matters of dry fact and detail. Some special correspondents may write to suit the temper of their own organs, although I try to write without regard to men or politics, I do not always escape censure."

Gobright's words set a standard for straight news reporting that the AP and advocates of 'objective journalism" have kept before them ever since. AP writer Calvin Woodward, exploring the Gobright testimony in a 1998 history of the Washington bureau, said that his "credo of objectivity helped put the wire service in the forefront of Civil War journalism and gave it a proximity to power that would endure."

Decades later, AP General Manager Melville Stone said the mission of the AP was to tell the truth in nonpartisan news reports. Echoing Gobright, Stone said that AP members

represented the political spectrum "from deep purple to infrared." Therefore, AP reporters, were to present the news straight. Later, AP General Manager Kent Cooper credited the news service with "the finest moral concept developed in America and given the world. That is the concept that news must be truthful and unbiased."

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Born in Pennsylvania in 1816, Lawrence Augustus Gobright arrived in Washington during Andrew Jackson's administration in 1834. He worked in a variety of newspaper jobs there and elsewhere and in 1848 was hired by the New York Associated Press as its chief agent in the nation's capital. He reported from Washington for the news agency for more than 30 years, covering a succession of administrations including that of Abraham Lincoln. He retired in 1879 and died two years later.

The Washington Star, in an obituary, offered this assessment: "Mr. Gobright, although he had a keen nose for news, was conscientious and trustworthy and would not violate a confidence to make a sensation. He had a kind disposition, courteous manners, was entertaining in conversation, and in his intercourse with the leading men of the nation for a third of a century made many friends and possessed the confidence of every president from John Tyler to Rutherford B. Hayes."

Sources: *WASHINGTON (AP) Witness to Power and Politics, The Associated Press, 1998*

Reporting From Washington, The History of the Washington Press Corps, by Donald A. Ritchie, Oxford University Press, 2005.

Note: It was with some surprise in 1998 that Larry Knutson discovered Gobright's testimony, handwritten by a House Judiciary Committee recording clerk, safely stored and easily obtainable at the National Archives.

AP Newsfinder Celebrates Its 30th Anniversary

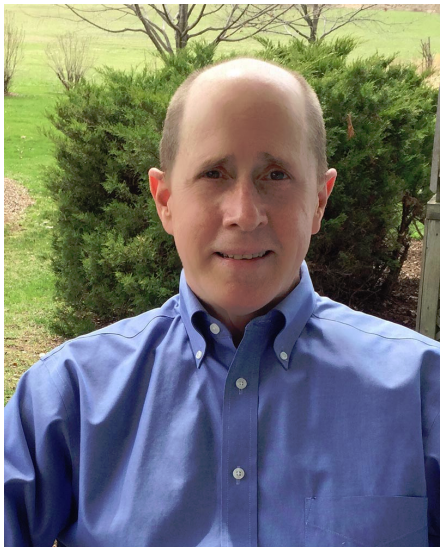
By SANDY HAMM (Email)

April 15, 1985, a Monday - Tax day and my first day working for AP Newsfinder.

In late 1984, Tom Brettingen and executives at ARI Network Services, Inc. (Milwaukee, Wisconsin) strategized to develop AP Newsfinder as a service for non-daily publications. At the time there was no World Wide Web. In fact, initially Newsfinder content was delivered by 300 baud dial-up service, and the output was to a dot-matrix printer - copy had to be rekeyed; a Radio Shack TRS-80 Model 100 was a top flight machine.

AP Newsfinder has always, offered the "mega-feed." But also always imposed an embargo so that content is only released 24 hour after original transmission. Newsfinder was an early "retrieval" system as opposed to the traditional more passive AP satellite delivery system.

Today, Newsfinder still "hand-curates" the stories by adding what today are called hashtags. No one said "hashtags" back then. There were "slugs" (specific to a story) and "keywords" (general to a category of content). Newsfinder staff still rewrites headlines since we like them to be a bit "catchier" for a retrieval service, than what is needed for a passive delivery system.



In the mid-1980's there were few, if any, weeklies as AP members. Newsfinder went through several pricing models in the beginning to determine what weekly publishers would accept. Newsfinder has always been sold based on circulation and only to publications publishing fewer than 3x weekly. Offerings today include text, photos and online reuse - all embargoed.

An interesting cadre of AP staffers has touched Newsfinder. Brettingen was a "founder" of the service while at AP in 1984, and managed the relationship with ARI until 1986, when he was recruited by ARI to be their VP of Information Products & Services. "TRB" returned to AP in 1994, initially to start AdSend, and quickly rose through the ranks and ultimately retired as Senior VP and Chief Revenue Officer.

In '86 when Brettingen left AP, with Wick Temple as VP of "Membership," the responsibility of overseeing the Newsfinder relationship went briefly to John Brewer and then for quite awhile to Dave Tomlin. Tomlin then got a law degree and began his tenure as General Counsel to AP President and CEO Louis D. Boccardi.

When Tomlin moved out of Membership, Elaine Hooker was assigned to the Newsfinder relationship. Elaine passed the torch to Dan Day, and in early 2002, after a dispute with ARI, ownership and management of Newsfinder was transferred to SCH Information Service, Inc. (Sandy C. Hamm).

The list of prominent AP executives that have had a hand in Newsfinder is impressive. Notables include Rich Spratling briefly after Dan Day, followed by Kevin Walsh, and then to someone all readers of this newsletters appreciate - Paul Stevens.

Upon Paul's retirement in 2009, Dave Pyle out of the Minnesota bureau briefly managed the Newsfinder relationship for AP. But very shortly after that the responsibility returned to NYC and since then and for some time now has been under the current leadership of David Marcus and Kate Butler.

Thirty great years - great company, great service, great people. We have all been blessed.

Connecting mailbox

'Burying the lead' in Lincoln coverage?

George Krimsky (Email) - Larry Knutson did a superb job of recapping in CONNECTING AP's exclusive coverage of President Lincoln's assassination at the Ford Theater 150 years ago yesterday (April 14).

Unfortunately, in the anniversary coverage of the event the AP was criticized by some - unjustifiably - for "burying the lede." This came about because an overview story by Washington Correspondent Lawrence Gobright was labeled his "original" report on the assassination. It was not.

Gobright had already filed a number of urgent dispatches, starting with the following telegraph to New York headquarters, which was immediately relayed to member newspapers:

The President was shot in a theatre to-night, and perhaps mortally wounded.

Only a few papers were able to publish the initial bulletins (The New York Daily Tribune being one) because of the late hour. The story that most papers ran a day later was Gobright's chronological account that first mentioned the shooting at the Ford Theater in the third paragraph ("The groans of Mrs. Lincoln first disclosed the fact that the President had been shot ...")

All this was clearly pointed out in Knutson's story, which was, alas, confined to CONNECTING. Pundits like David Corn only saw the mass-circulated story, tweeting about AP's coverage in 1865: "Perhaps the biggest lede-burying of all time."

I am a bit obsessed by this travesty, because I and many others have for decades taught journalism writing, using Gobright's first bulletin as a classic example of concise, deadline reporting. It contains only 12 words but includes all of the Five Ws except for "Why." We can still learn from something written a century and a half ago.

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Knutson story on Gobright 'fascinating'

Andy Lippman (Email) - Larry Knutson wrote an absolutely fascinating article (in Tuesday's Connecting) on Lawrence Gobright and the Lincoln assassination. Like many, I've been a Lincoln buff, and the Gobright article was so superior to anything I've read on that evening. Can you imagine being able to do all he did - with adrenalin and emotion involved - and still turn out such a story?

Larry's story was a great guide to what Gobright did, because I was able to follow what he highlighted as I went through the article. I sure am now a Gobright buff and I've always been a fan of Larry's. Thanks for being such a great guide and writer.

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What If POLITICO Had Covered the Civil War?

POLIT-ICO Play-Book, presented by UNION-PACIFIC RAILROAD - JAN 1, 1863 EDITION -- - ROSCOE CONKLING NEW YEAR'S PARTY -- Democrats livid over 'Caesar' Lincoln executive power - New aide-de-camp for Gen'l Sherman -- 250 years of chattel slavery to end -- JEBEDIAH ALLBRITTON IS 81! -- POLIT-ICO PRO launches reconstruction-contracting vertical

FIRST LOOK: Explosive ELIHU B. WOODINGTON pamphlet chronicling backbiting and unchivalrousnes in Lincoln cabinet. Excerpt today in Washington Periodic Miscellany. BOMBSHELL: Wm. Seward once mocked E.M. Stanton with comic doggerel! Blind quote: "This is what happens when you elect an untested one-term Congressman. Permitting White House rivalries is no way to proceed in this hamlet." PARLOUR GAME BEGINS: Who are Woodington's sources? Pamphlet goes on sale Tuesday for 5 cents; the lovely Mrs. Joseph Pulitzer hosts book party to-night.

Click **here** to read more. (Shared by Valerie Komor)

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Upstart Oilman

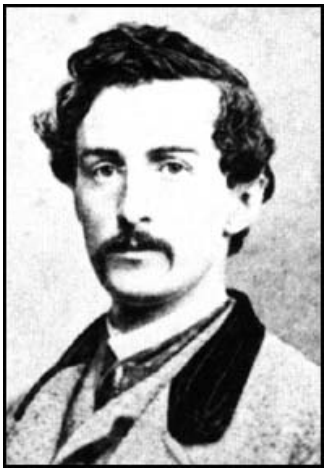
George Zucker (Email) - It was a good day to start a newspaper in Titusville, Pa., America's first oil capital. The fledgling industry was faring well, despite some early setbacks for a man named Getty. And then there was that uproar over another promising local oilman who killed President Abraham Lincoln.

In other news: Jim McCune's barn burned down. A runaway horse upset its wagon on Franklin Street. Ground was broken for the Morey Farm Hotel. Everyone was talking about the great strawberry festival. And a swell organ, shipped all the way from Boston, "was awaiting its introduction to sacred melody at the new First Presbyterian Church of Titusville."

But the big news that day was the source of all these divers and worthy tidings - the debut edition of The Titusville Morning Herald, a four-page broadsheet launched with lofty purpose in the heart of this prosperous oil town. It was Wednesday, June 14, 1865 - just two months to the day that a local oilman, John Wilkes Booth, (right), gunned down President Lincoln.

Besides fires and frightened horses, readers learned a man named Getty was having

trouble with his first oil well. A story buried on an inside page disclosed that for two days, Getty's initial well had produced a respectable130 barrels daily until the good flow was slowed to a trickle by a mysterious accident. The story offered the curious reader no details.



But in a statement that would prove historically astute, The Morning Herald said work on the stalled Getty operation "will be commenced very soon and every confidence is had in its turning out a good well."

And so The Titusville Morning Herald set forth in 1865 to be a good and true record of petroleum news. The young oil industry was rife with intrigue. But in the spare journalistic style of the day, this was left to readers of The Morning Herald to glean for themselves. In the first edition, a fascinating historical nugget awaited the diligent reader under a one-column heading, "Oil News." The lead item was about the Homestead well on the Hyner farm, reputed to be pumping 500 barrels a day as "probably the most productive oil well in Pennsylvania."

"The owners of the well are Boston parties," the story said, saving the real news for last. "Their property consists of 25 acres in fee of the Hyner farm. John Wilkes Booth purchased one-thirteenth interest in the territory in August 1864. The price of the entire interest was then $15,000."

The story concluded with a startling revelation, but left readers hungry for details: "We are credibly informed that this Homestead well in which Booth was interested was destroyed by fire on the day he assassinated President Lincoln."

After Booth was shot and buried, his older brother, Edwin Thomas Booth, 28, an actor of some repute, wro te fellow Masons in New York, thanking them for their condolences. The debut edition of the Titusville Morning Herald published the letter in full, given John Wilkes Booth's local celebrity as a promising oilman.

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Tornado memories

Joe Edwards (Email) - When a tornado hit, and they often did in Tennessee, colleagues began calling sheriff's offices and first responders. I could hear the General Desk asking, "We need real people quotes!" I usually called a Cracker Barrel in the area and I could always get a real person quote that way.

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My afternoon with Andy Lippman

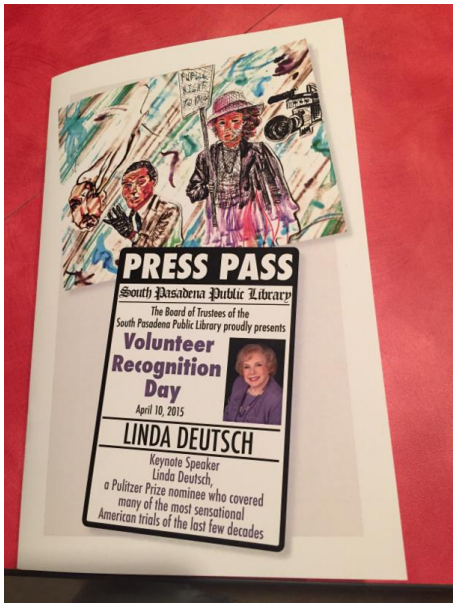
Linda Deutsch (Email) - I had the great joy to spend an afternoon with Andy Lippman last

Friday at the South Pasadena Public Library. Andy, the most beloved AP/LA bureau chief ever, is a trustee of this amazingly beautiful and active library and he asked me to be a speaker at a thank-you luncheon for the large group of volunteers that keep the place going. I had no idea what a terrific experience it would be. My audience included the mayor and other officials of the city who count this library as a community treasure.

What a welcome they had arranged. The AP archives provided some of my famous headlines which were posted on the entryway a young artist's rendering of events in my career graced a beautiful program produced by the volunteers. Andy had suggested I keep my remarks somewhat brief because folks would have to get back to work. But the response from this group kept me talking much longer than I expected. They were so responsive and asked many great questions. Andy said I intrigued them when I started out by telling them my mother was a librarian.

Andy also gave me a great introduction and I told some Andy stories including the one about when he sent me to Alaska to cover the Exxon Valdez trial in the dead of winter. He did arrange for me to get some cold weather gear since it was 17 below zero when I got there.

In his introduction, Andy told the group that I am going to write a book as soon as I finish my "victory tour" of speeches. He's not wrong about that. The week that ended in Pasadena began in San Diego where I joined Judges Lance Ito and Jackie Connor on a program in which they questioned me about my career before an audience of some 200 members of the Association of Business Trial Lawyers.



Again, I had been told there was time limit, but with Judge Ito using an amazing power point he created, and both judges quizzing me on points of a pre-interview we had done, the 40-minute program stretch to about an hour and a half. At the end, I was overwhelmed to receive a standing ovation.

The program organizer, attorney Marisa-Janine Page, sent me a note later saying: "Folks who usually complain about going over on time were shocked the time was already up and didn't want you to stop. And, in 13 years I've never seen a standing ovation for any guest except for Justice Ginsburg." To even be mentioned in the same sentence as Justice Ginsburg is one of the great honors of my life.

And now for something that may come under the heading of burying the lede or it's a

small world. A young woman lawyer came up to me afterward and said, "I think you know my father." And who might that be? "His name is Gary Pruitt, " she said. Katherine Pruitt, a recent law school graduate and daughter of AP's CEO, has a job with a San Diego law firm. She said she had told her father she was coming to my speech.

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50 years ago, the execution of the Clutter killers

Joe McKnight (Email) - During his two-year term as governor of Kansas in 1965-67, William H. Avery had the final say on the state's first double execution by hanging in modern history.

The case was that of Richard Eugene Hickock, 33, (at left in photo) and Perry Edward Smith, 36, infamous stars of Truman Capote's non-fiction novel, "In Cold Blood." It was published in 1966, the year after Hickock and Smith were put to death (April 14, 1965), and was considered one of the greatest crime novels of its time.

The book told of the murders in 1959 of Herbert Clutter, a farmer, his wife, son and a daughter at their farm home near the village of Holcomb in far south-western Kansas.

Capote, already a successful author (Breakfast at Tiffany's, 1958), heard of the crime and quickly traveled to Kansas with friend and fellow author Harper Lee ("To Kill A Mocking Bird). Together, they began talking with residents and investigators working on the case.

Hickock and Smith were arrested about six weeks after the crime and spent six years in prison as their convictions went through a lengthy appeals process before they were hanged. Capote spent almost seven years working on the book.

Soon after he left office in 1967, Avery spoke to a meeting in Wichita, KS, of Sigma Delta Chi -- forerunner of today's Society of Professional Journalists -- and gave details of events immediately preceding the scheduled midnight executions.

He recited the usual last minute appeals for clemency from family members, ministers, and opponents of capital punishment. Avery also told of a few crank threatening calls and noted that because of those, the Kansas Highway Patrol posted an extra patrol car and patrolman outside the governor's mansion that night. He said he took a final call from the warden at the state prison in Lansing, KS. He said he told the warden there was no change in the decision to proceed.

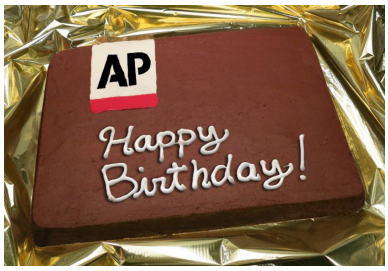
The governor then went to bed. only to be aroused about daybreak by noise outside the governor's mansion. He saw the flashing lights of a state patrol car in front.

Avery said he put on a robe, went to investigate and saw that the patrol car had blocked the path of another vehicle in the circular drive in front of the mansion.

"After a few minutes," he said, "one of the patrolmen saw me at the door and came to tell me they had stopped a car which sped up the drive and threw an object at the front door.

"He told me it was the paper guy delivering the Topeka newspaper."

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



To

Ron Harrist (Email)

David Wilkison (Email)

Welcome to Connecting

Chuck Hawkins (Email) - I joined the AP in New York in 2004 as deputy business editor and left at the end of 2010 for a job as a news editor on the U.S. News desk at the Wall Street Journal. I deal mostly with the Journal's Washington bureau on politics and policy stories for the newspaper and online.

Drew Kieffer (Email)

Don Rehill (Email) - Director of AP election research and tabulations, New York

Sean Thompson (Email)

Stories of interest

Lumberjack: Now better than being a newspaper reporter (Poynter)

CareerCast's annual jobs rated report has "newspaper reporter" ranked dead last - worse than lumberjack, a profession which it beat last year.

Decreasing pay, growing stress and a contracting industry all contributed to the abysmal ranking, said Tony Lee, publisher of CareerCast.com

"Newspaper reporter is one of the few jobs that actually has a negative growth rate," Lee said.

A few of the jobs better than newspaper reporter, according to CareerCast: Lumberjack, enlisted military personnel, cook and corrections officer. Other media jobs don't fare much better - photojournalist and broadcaster are also ranked near the bottom of the list.

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Diversity Advocates Bring Outside Help to UNITY (The Root) (Shared by Mark Mittelstadt)

Unity: Journalists for Diversity, the coalition given up for dead by its creators after the National Association of Black Journalists and National Association of Hispanic Journalists pulled out, demonstrated Friday that the appetite for an umbrella group to work for newsroom diversity still exists-even if there is no agreement on what form that group should take.

An assembly of 60 diversity advocates that included two newly filed candidates for NABJ president, along with current NABJ President Bob Butler, heard recently installed Unity President Russell Contreras say, "We messed up as an organization. . . . We've gone astray. You don't have to tell us. We know. We got that. Then let's move on."

Today in History - April 15, 2015

By The Associated Press

Today is Wednesday, April 15, the 105th day of 2015. There are 260 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On April 15, 1865, President Abraham Lincoln died nine hours after being shot the night before by John Wilkes Booth at Ford's Theater in Washington; Andrew Johnson became the nation's 17th president.

On this date:

In 1715, the Yamasee War began as members of the Yamasee tribe attacked English settlers in colonial South Carolina.

In 1850, the city of San Francisco was incorporated.

In 1912, the British luxury liner RMS Titanic foundered in the North Atlantic off Newfoundland more than 2 1/2 hours after hitting an iceberg; 1,514 people died, while less than half as many survived.

In 1945, during World War II, British and Canadian troops liberated the Nazi concentration camp Bergen-Belsen. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who had died on April 12, was buried at the Roosevelt family home in Hyde Park, New York.

In 1955, Ray Kroc opened the first franchised McDonald's restaurant in Des Plaines, Illinois.

In 1960, a three-day conference to form the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) began at Shaw University in Raleigh, North Carolina. (The group's first chairman was Marion Barry.)

In 1974, members of the Symbionese Liberation Army held up a branch of the Hibernia Bank in San Francisco; a member of the group was SLA kidnap victim Patricia Hearst, who by this time was going by the name "Tania" (Hearst later said she'd been forced to participate).

In 1985, South Africa said it would repeal laws prohibiting sex and marriage between whites and non-whites.

In 1986, the United States launched an air raid against Libya in response to the bombing of a discotheque in Berlin on April 5; Libya said 37 people, mostly civilians, were killed.

In 1989, 96 people died in a crush of soccer fans at Hillsborough Stadium in Sheffield, England. Students in Beijing launched a series of pro-democracy protests; the demonstrations culminated in a government crackdown at Tiananmen Square.

In 1990, legendary actress Greta Garbo died in New York at age 84. The comedy sketch

show "In Living Color" premiered on Fox TV.

In 2013, two bombs packed with nails and other metal shards exploded at the Boston Marathon finish line, killing two women and an 8-year-old boy and injuring more than 260. (Suspect Dzhokhar Tsarnaev (joh-HAHR' tsahr-NEYE'-ehv) is on trial; his brother and alleged accomplice, Tamerlan Tsarnaev (TAM'-ehr-luhn tsahr-NEYE'-ehv), died in a shootout with police.)

Ten years ago: A Paris hotel fire killed 24 people, many of them African immigrants. A Russian Soyuz rocket blasted off from the Central Asian steppes, catapulting three crew members on a two-day journey to the International Space Station. The final first-run episode of the situation comedy "8 Simple Rules" aired on ABC.

Five years ago: An ash cloud from an Icelandic volcano drifted over northern Europe, causing the largest disruption of flights since the 2001 terror attacks. President Barack Obama, visiting the Kennedy Space Center, predicted his new space exploration plans would lead American astronauts to Mars and back in his lifetime. Civil rights leader Benjamin Hooks, onetime executive director of the NAACP, died in Memphis, Tennessee, at age 85.

One year ago: Boko Haram terrorists kidnapped some 276 girls from a school in northeastern Nigeria. Survivors, first responders and relatives of those killed in the Boston Marathon bombing marked the first anniversary of the attack with tributes that combined sorrow over the loss of innocent victims with pride over the city's resilience. Five young people were stabbed to death in Calgary, Alberta, Canada; suspect Matthew Douglas de Grood has been charged.

Today's Birthdays: Country singer Roy Clark is 82. Author and politician Jeffrey Archer is 75. Rock singer-guitarist Dave Edmunds is 72. Actor Michael Tucci is 69. Actress Lois Chiles is 68. Writer-producer Linda Bloodworth-Thomason is 68. Actress Amy Wright is 65. Columnist Heloise is 64. Actor Sam McMurray is 63. Actress-screenwriter Emma Thompson is 56. Bluegrass musician Jeff Parker is 54. Singer Samantha Fox is 49. Olympic gold, silver and bronze medal swimmer Dara Torres is 48. Rock musician Ed O'Brien (Radiohead) is 47. Actor Flex Alexander is 45. Actor Danny Pino is 41. Actor Douglas Spain is 41. Actor Luke Evans is 36. Rock musician Patrick Carney (The Black Keys) is 35. Actor-writer Seth Rogen is 33. Actress Alice Braga is 32. Rock musician De'Mar Hamilton (Plain White T's) is 31. Actress Emma Watson is 25. Actress Maisie Williams (TV: "Game of Thrones") is 18.

Thought for Today: "We do not know what we want and yet we are responsible for what we are - that is the fact." - Jean-Paul Sartre, French philosopher (born 1905, died this date in 1980).

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