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Connecting - July 11, 2015

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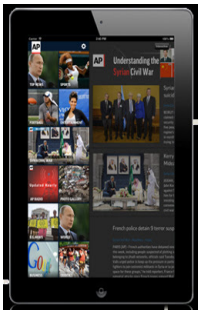

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WTF! Did that come from your Minion?

Photo by Evan Berland

Colleagues,

Good Saturday morning!

One of your kids or grandkids - or maybe you? - receive a little yellow talking Minion with the purchase of your McDonald's Happy Meal? And do you think - as many across the nation do - that the words your Minion says may be a bit off-color? Like - WTF?

If so, then rest assured that the AP is watching out for you and for them.

Minions, if you don't know, are those small, yellow pill-like creatures who have existed since the beginning of time, evolving from single-celled organisms into beings who have only one purpose, to serve history's most despicable masters. The movie Minions has just been released in theaters around the world, a spin-off from the Despicable Me franchise. And the reason why McDonald's is featuring them in its Happy Meals.

AP New York business writer **Marley Jay** writes in the story below that the AP concludes - after buying and testing out a McDonald's Minion - that the sounds that they make could indeed be interpreted as cursing, as some McDonald's customers complain.

And even our Connecting colleague, and AP standards editor, **Tom Kent** has entered the

fray. That is Tom holding the AP Minion in the above photo, and he reports: "Thanks for preserving this moment for posterity in Connecting. In the background is **Candice Choi**, a business writer who covers the food and beverage industry. The photo was taken at the Nerve Center as we attended to the very important verification of what the Minion was saying when banged against a hard surface. We also determined that 'WTF' was an acceptable way to characterize what many people thought the Minion was saying."

Ye Olde Connecting Editor - forever trying to draw out your stories - asks colleagues to share their unusual (and fun) coverage stories such as this. You gotta admit - for Tom and his New York colleagues, this has to be a nice break from decisions involving the weighty issues of our world. But I've got to know - what will Accounts Payable say when it sees an expense voucher for Minions!

Stay tuned, and have a great weekend!

Paul

Why toy 'Minion' curse words might just all be in your head

By MARLEY JAY
The Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) - McDonald's swears up and down that the little yellow "Minions" Happy Meal toy is speaking only nonsense words and not something a little more adult.

Experts say the company may be right, and the curse words many hear may be tied to how our brains are primed to find words even when they're not really there.

The world's largest hamburger chain and purveyor of Happy Meals said Friday that it doesn't plan to take the talking Happy Meal toy out of distribution, even though some customers say it sounds like it's cursing.

A toy bought by The Associated Press made a sound that could be interpreted as the phrase often abbreviated as "WTF." Another phrase sounded like it could be "Well I'll be damned." The sound quality of the toy makes it hard to say definitively who is right.

The little yellow Minion characters speak a nonsense language and McDonald's Corp. said the Minion Caveman toy makes three sounds - "ha ha ha," ''para la bukay," and "eh eh." The Oak Brook, Illinois-based company issued a statement saying it received only a few comments from customers about the toy, which was introduced July 3.

Nonsense speech will sometimes sound a bit like a real language, and experts say human brains are also wired to look for meaning in noise and images. So people will sometimes hear words in gibberish - including words they might think are inappropriate.

"The brain tries to find a pattern match, even when just receiving noise, and it is good at pattern recognition," says Dr. Steven Novella, a neurologist at the Yale School of Medicine. "Once the brain feels it has found a best match, then that is what you hear. The clarity of the speech actually increases with multiple exposures, or if you are primed by being told what to listen for" - as most people who heard the toy online already had been.

The technical name for the phenomenon is "pareidolia," hearing sounds or seeing images that seem meaningful but are actually random. It leads people to see shapes in clouds, a man in the moon or the face of Jesus on a grilled cheese sandwich.

The audio form of pareidolia has been causing confusion for years and years. In the 1960s the FBI investigated The Kingsmen's version of the song "Louie Louie" after concerned citizens complained that the lyrics were obscene. The band denied it, but hardly anybody could figure out the lyrics, including the FBI. The agency officially declared the words unintelligible.

A similar phenomenon could have contributed to the belief that rock bands would put messages in their music that could only be heard by playing a record or running a tape backward.

That contributed to the "Paul Is Dead" conspiracy theory - in which the Beatles were supposedly covering up the death and replacement of Paul McCartney, but were constantly dropping hints about the cover-up in their songs - and lawsuits against heavy metal bands.

Last year a group of researchers published a paper called "Seeing Jesus in toast: neural and behavioral correlates of face pareidolia." They wanted to understand what happens in the brains of people who see a face pop out of the toaster, and they received an Ig Nobel Prize, given to scientists who do unusual, imaginative or odd work of questionable importance.

The McDonald's promotion is scheduled to run through the end of July. The film "Minions," a prequel to the "Despicable Me" movies, premieres Friday. Some moviegoers will probably be listening intently to the Minions' dialogue.

(AP Writer Candice Choi contributed to this report.)

Click **here** for the link to this story.

'The Latest' format delivers the latest news

By PAUL COLFORD
The Associated Press

The fiscal crisis in Greece, plans by the U.S. and Cuba to open embassies in each other's capital and tennis competition at Wimbledon are among the many developing stories in recent weeks that AP journalists have covered in a live blog type of presentation.

The filing system, called The Latest, presents short blocks of text on a running story in a broadcast-friendly fashion that works for both online and on-air use.

When used, The Latest replaces AP's current breaking news filing protocol for text - in which a story is first reported as a so-called NewsNow of 130 words or less containing key developments, and then written-through again to restore all the details and background.

Instead, AP journalists file time-stamped updates stacked on top of each other so that The Latest becomes a running file showing how a story evolved.

"The Latest allows us to imbue developing stories with a you-are-there quality, which makes them feel all the more fresh and current," said Director of Top Stories Kristin Gazlay.

"For instance, when the Boston Marathon bombing trial started and it took awhile for the proceedings to kick off, one of the first updates to The Latest led off noting that Dzhokhar Tsarnaev was sitting alone at the defense table and described his demeanor," Gazlay added. "That's something we would have been unlikely to file a freestanding NewsNow on, but a detail readers would devour on a top story."

She noted that the pilot would be expanded to more stories, "including ones that have fewer developments but still can benefit from this treatment."

Gazlay added: "We've heard from a number of TV customers that it's actually a time-saver for them _ they don't have to search through a number of separate files to glean the highlights of a story, since they're all in one file. And the self-contained entries are ready to read on-air."

At least 200 newspaper, television and radio websites featured The Latest when AP used it for the NCAA Final Four games, including many TV network affiliates.

The Latest also is increasingly gaining traction on Twitter: Versions of it showed in Twitter's top 10 rankings for each of the three days of the U.S. Memorial Day weekend.

The bottom line is that The Latest has turned out to be effective in showcasing the newest information about a story in a way that is palpably fresh, fast and even more useful to

customers. AP plans to expand its use.

Click **here** for this example: The Latest: Muslim Brotherhood calls for Egypt 'rebellion'

Remembering Ed Dennehy

Robert Weller - I suspect that the sensitivity Ed showed will mean that individuals will have different memories of him, reflecting that Ed treated each of us as an individual. Unlike some other AP general desk legends, Ed never followed ideas out a window. With me, he did what he called "corner jobs." That means we would stand somewhere out of the earshot of others and he would tell me what he thought a story needed to boost it. Often this included advice on how to talk to the writer who had sent it to the general desk. Sometimes top reporter/writers with far more experience than I had were involved. They always were quick to accept what Ed proposed. And that reflects their respect for him. As for Brian, while I was on the desk serving under Ed's leadership, his son was playing the bad guy in the first Rambo movie.

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Hal Bock - I was saddened to read of the passing of Ira Rosenfeld. He was a really good guy and a crackerjack newsman. He was also caught in the World Trade Center bombing in 1993 and that affair took a lot out of him. RIP.

Regarding Ed Dennehy, I think I may have shared this before but when I was starting out at the AP, I was the lone wolf in the overnight in the sports department. Ed, who supervised the overnight general desk, would go to the cafeteria for coffee every night at about 3 a.m. He would pass by sports on his way back to the general desk and he would always pop in and ask if everything was OK. It was a good feeling to know he cared, a kind of safety net in case I screwed anything up. Another terrific guy.

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Shirley Christian - Recalling Ed Dennehy: When I arrived in New York in December 1968 to work on the World Services Desk, coming off a year's post-graduate fellowship in Chile, probably the first from outside the international area of the AP to welcome me was the teddy-bear-like Ed Dennehy. He wanted to tell me that he and his family had hosted an exchange student from Chile for a year and remained in touch with the young man and his family. Ed also told me how proud he was of a linguistically talented son who spoke excellent Mandarin and was an FBI agent in Chinatown. With a raising of his eyebrows, he also mentioned having another son who was struggling to succeed as an actor. Years later, I was thrilled to hear that Ed had seen the beginning of Brian's success before passing.

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Mercer Bailey - I mentioned earlier that Ed recruited me to transfer to the NY

General Desk in 1963. Before my family joined me, Ed invited me to a Sunday lunch. His son, Brian, and one of his friends joined us. Ed told me later as they were walking away that they were trying to break into acting as a career. Don't know about the friend but Brian certainly made it. I am a Westerns fan and over the years have watched Silverado several times. Brian had a major role in that, but he was a bad guy and got killed in the end.

Connecting mailbox

One time when it better to team up rather than compete

Doug Pizac - Back in 1977 a few months after starting to string for AP fresh out of college I was sent to cover the film premier of Russian ballet dancer Mikhail Baryshnikov. Also there was veteran UPI photographer Glenn Wagner. Both our agencies were promised by the PR person that if we covered the event we would be granted exclusive inside access. It didn't take long after arriving that we realized we had been baited. Instead of competing we decided to band together. We approached the flak asking about our promised access and she said to wait where we were which was away from the red carpet area.

We stood and watched as Mikhail arrived and walked the gauntlet of local newspaper photographers before going inside for a private reception. Afterwards the PR person came to us asking if we got good shots of the star's arrival. Knowing the head of NYC's American Ballet Theater was in close proximity we raised our voices enough to be heard telling the flak that we didn't make a single photo as we were promised inside access by her company, and since we were being kept outside that no photos would be sent to the NY Times, Europe and Russia. The ballet head heard us, came over, and after we explained what we were told to get us there he personally escorted Glenn and me inside to make some really nice pictures that were much better than any red carpet. We learned later it didn't fare so well for the flak who tried to trick us.

Some times like this it was better to team up rather than compete.

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War, Revolution, and Two Dogs Almost Left Behind

Jack Limpert - One of my favorite Washingtonian stories came close to not being published. In 1981 the magazine was growing fast, we all seemed overworked, and sometimes I'd see the stack of unsolicited manuscripts getting too high and ask someone on the staff to send back stories that had no hope of being accepted. One day my assistant, Brenda, was about to mail back a stack of rejections and I said, "Let me take a quick look."

Among the rejections was a short piece, "My Dog Was an Iranian Hostage."

The hostage crisis had ended earlier that year. The Iranians had held 52 American diplomats and citizens for 444 days; they were released on January 20, 1981, as President Reagan took the oath of office.

It took about two minutes to read the dog story and call the author, Andrew Sens, a foreign service officer. We bought the story, probably for $100, and slipped it into the January 1982 issue as a front-of-the-book one-page feature.

Why bring it up now?

I recently watched a documentary film, The Last Days of Vietnam; it was an emotional, eye-opening look at how that war ended. The Rory Kennedy film shows the chaos at the American embassy in 1975 as it becomes clear that the North Vietnamese army is overrunning Saigon.

Helicopters airlift American personnel, including journalists, off the embassy roof to U.S. Navy ships in international waters. Several thousand South Vietnamese allies had taken refuge in the embassy and many were airlifted out; about 500, including many women and children, were left behind on the embassy grounds when the last helicopter took off.

Michael Putzel covered the Vietnam war for the AP and has a new book, The Price They Paid: Enduring Wounds of War, about the aftermath of that war. I sent him a note about how much I liked the Rory Kennedy documentary. He responded:

"I thought Kennedy's history of how we got to the last days was flawed on several counts, but the story of the evacuation itself was amazingly effective. She had film I never knew existed and added tremendously to the drama of those last hours and days.

"Ambassador Graham Martin got what he deserved, but she missed one factoid: His personal secretary, Eva Kim, was married to George McArthur of the Los Angeles Times. When Martin finally capitulated and headed for the chopper, he left his pet dog behind in the embassy. McArthur, who was in the building with Eva waiting to go out with the ambassador on the last flight, spotted the abandoned pet, scooped it up, and held it in his lap until they were safely aboard the ship. I guess Martin got it back, but I've never known for sure."

Who would leave his dog behind? Here's George McArthur in an oral history describing the evacuation of the embassy:

"Graham Martin's poodle is tied up in there and I'd learned to like the poodle a little bit, named Nit Noi....That son of a bitch Graham was going to leave Nit Noi there. He denies it, but I knew he was going to leave Nit Noi there. I said do you want me to take the dog out? He said, "I'd sure appreciate it." So I got Nit Noi on the leash and-I didn't feel bad about

displacing somebody else. I knew that the doctor downstairs had a miniature doxy he had put in his bag and he kept the little miniature doxy doped up all day long because he didn't know when he was going to have to leave and they didn't want the dog barking. So the little doxy was sleeping in the bag....Slept right through the evacuation. When we want through the chain and finally got up and aboard our helicopter...I was holding Nit Noi in my lap....They didn't even see Nit Noi. I mean I could have carried a 105 howitzer on there. People did not see details at that moment. I could have carried your mother-in-law, I could have carried an elephant on there...It was just get aboard that chopper and get out. So taking out the Ambassador's dog, which caused me grief on the carrier, but that's something else again."

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Back to "My Dog Was an Iranian Hostage" and the dog named Tom in the January 1982 Washingtonian. You can read the story here.

What happened to Tom after he got home? Here's how Andrew Sens, who now lives in Washington, D.C., describes the aftermath of the hostage crisis and Tom's eventual rescue:

"Tom survived his two years in Iran in more than good form thanks to the German wife of an Iranian staff person, a cook, on the Embassy compound. As I explained in the Washingtonian article, the cook's wife saw Tom tied up somewhere on the compound without water and asked the Embassy's occupiers if she could take him home.

"As I recall from the letters she sent quite a bit later from Germany, whomever she spoke to allowed her to untie Tom and take him off the compound. She and her husband kept him for some time, about a year, until things get sufficiently severe in Teheran that she and her husband opted to go to Germany, leaving Tom with her Iranian mother-in-law, who by then had become very fond of him.

"When her mother-in-law also felt she needed to leave Teheran, she tried to take Tom with her, even looking into a bus ticket that would have brought her to Turkey with Tom overland. I had shared our German friend's letters with the State Department's Iran Working Group, of which I was deputy director, because they gave us some insight into what was happening in Iran at the time. Someone in the Swiss Embassy here in Washington apparently mentioned the letters to a colleague in Bern or perhaps directly in Teheran where the Swiss were representing U.S. interests during the hostage crisis, as they still represent our interests today.

"How or exactly when it happened I do not know but Tom was picked up from his protector in the nick of time as she was very anxious to leave and staying only because she didn't know what to do with Tom. Then, some weeks after the hostages were released, my wife and I got a note from the Swiss ambassador in Teheran to let us know that Tom was safe and that he would ship him back to us once air links between Iran and the rest of the world were restored. About seven months later we got a cable saying Tom would be arriving on a flight from Zurich to JFK. He arrived just as I described him in the Washingtonian article.

"Tom lived very happily with us for another two years in Washington as I continued on as a

member of the Washington team negotiating the crisis aftermath, in the Hague primarily, and then moved with us to Islamabad where he was a very active member of the household-and local community-for nearly four years. Our son Drew was with us for the first year in Islamabad and then in college in the States, though he came home at Christmas and each summer.

"Tom died at the age of sixteen just before the end of our tour in Pakistan. He is fondly remembered and much missed by all three of us to this day."

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Graham Martin died in 1990 at the age of 77 in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, and is buried in Arlington National Cemetery. A career diplomat, he became U.S. ambassador to South Vietnam in 1973 and was the last person to hold that position. George McArthur died in 2013 at the age of 88 in Fairfax, Virginia.

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Communications chiefs - 1989

AP Chiefs of Communications in 1989 -- A-Russ Thomas;B-Charlie Bruce;C-Bobby Baker;D-Charlie Price;E-Jerry Jabes;F-Jim VanSickle;G-Tom Leone;H-Larry Stephens;I-Cliff Little;J-Lou Boccardi;K-Bill Dawson;L-Otis Herring;M-Jack Walker;N-Pat Bradshaw;O-Tom Dallas;P-Ron Mulnix;Q-Dane Taylor;R-Bill Caddell;S-Ken Berger;T-Ray Goergen;U-Lou Tipping;V-Bill Knox;W-Don Barry;X-Herb Mundt;Y-Ray Hudson;Z-Steve Salerno;A1-Dave Young;B1-Don Evans;C1-Bob Young;D1-Steve Hilton;E1-Billy Pratt;F1-Les Hawes;G1-Lloyd Swann;H1-Gary Theis;I1-Bill Welsh;J1-John O'Connell Sr.

Joe McKnight shares this photo from an AP chief of communications meeting in New

York in 1989. Some familiar faces to us all. (I could not enlarge this photo any more and still fit in the Connecting format, so if you'd like me to send it to you separately, drop me a note. Paul)

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No way to treat local affiliate

Dave Tomlin - The Mike Oreskes apology last week to NPR member station news directors for the network's arrogant treatment of their work reminded me of something I once saw an NBC cameraman do to an affiliate reporter.

It was November 1979, and I was in the home of Iran hostage Kathy Gross in Cambridge Springs, PA. She and a dozen others were released shortly after radicals took over our embassy in Tehran, and I was part of a small media pack assigned to cover her first call to her parents from Germany.

Nobody knew exactly when the call would come, so Ms. Gross's parents ended up treating us to pizza and letting us all sleep on their living room floor while we waited. By the next morning we were all a little rough around the edges, but nobody was rougher than the NBC camera crew in their torn jeans, heavy metal t-shirts and scraggly beards.

As we waited for our instant coffee from the Gross kitchen, there were some late arrivals, a perky young reporter and cameraman from nearby Erie. They looked fresh, eager and very sharp in their crisp station blazers, and they were instantly awed when they saw the hard-bitten network pros.

One of the NBC crew was fiddling with his video recorder and commented to his producer, "We're getting low on tape. If the phone call goes longer than 10 or 12 minutes, we're in trouble."

"Our station is only a few miles away," piped the Erie reporter. "I'm sure they'd be willing to lend you a cassette if you need one."

The network guy didn't even look up from his knobs and dials. "Kid," he said, "if I need a cassette I'm just gonna take yours."

The locals retreated quickly to their corner of the room, and the rest of us considered privately what we might do if push came to shove with this jerk. Mercifully, it never did.

Several years later I was at a state broadcast meeting in South Carolina where a visiting network speaker was scolding his audience for not doing more for the national report. During the Q and A, I told my Cambridge Springs story and the room erupted in applause.

The speaker gave me an excellent stink-eye. Sounds like Mike O's new world hasn't changed much from the one I remember.

AP records a moment in history

A member of an honor guard from the South Carolina Highway patrol carries a Confederate battle flag as they remove it from the Capitol grounds Friday, July 10, 2015, in Columbia, S.C. The Confederate flag was lowered from the grounds of the South Carolina Statehouse to the cheers of thousands on Friday, ending its 54-year presence there and marking a stunning political reversal in a state where many thought the rebel banner would fly indefinitely. (AP Photo/John Bazemore)

AP BEAT OF THE WEEK

The Associated Press has stunned people around the world with reports that thousands of men have been enslaved in Southeast Asia for the benefit of the seafood industry, forced to perform back-breaking labor to supply fish to major supermarkets and stores worldwide.

But what is it like to be held captive indefinitely, brutally, with little hope of seeing loved ones again?

This was Myint Naing's life. And by telling the story of that life, Jakarta-based writer **Margie Mason** brought home the brutality and inhumanity in this industry. It is an extraordinary tale leavened by an extraordinarily happy ending, and it is this week's Beat of the Week. http://yhoo.it/1C9q6ak

After the AP's previous slavery stories published in March, more than 800 current and former slaves were repatriated. More than 300 men were rescued by the Indonesian government from the island of Dobo and resettled, at least temporarily, at the government-run port of Tual. Mason traveled there to learn more about their lives in bondage, circulating surveys in three languages.

About 45 percent of the Burmese slaves said they were beaten themselves or saw someone else beaten on the boats. A quarter of the Cambodians saw someone die -- either killed, dead from illness or floating in the water. Some were kicked in the face and had teeth knocked out; others were whipped with stingray tails that injected neurotoxins into broken skin and made the men feel like they had malaria for days.

With the aid of a smart and resourceful Burmese former slave, Mason sought out subjects for a story that would focus on a single captive. She talked with a man whose face was scarred by a machete wielded by a captain's son. Another was enraged by the death of a fellow slave because his captain had refused to give him medicine.

Then there was Myint.

"He was soft spoken, and right away I picked up on a sweetness about him," Mason recalls. "When he told me he had been in Indonesia since 1993, I couldn't believe it. It's the year I graduated from high school. I couldn't imagine being a slave away from home for all this time."

Then he pulled back the hair on top of his head to show Mason his scar. He recalled how he had asked to go home, and an officer had responded by bringing down his helmet on Myint's head, cracking his skull.
Mason gained Myint's trust gradually, over a series of interviews. She took pictures of him; when he would not smile, she got other Burmese former slaves to razz him until he did. When he was feeling ill, she took him to see a doctor brought in by the Indonesians.

Myint boarded the first of four planes that took former slaves back to Burma. When he arrived in Yangon, he was greeted at the airport by Mason, Myanmar reporter Esther Htusan, photographer Gemunu Amarasinghe and videographer Mung Ra. They followed him as he boarded an overnight bus with other men from Mon state, and then in a car that took him to the village he'd left behind more than two decades ago.

There, they watched as he embraced his sobbing baby sister. Then, a small, frail figure ran toward him. He fell into the arms of his mother.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pIVPKQV40G4

Myint's story would find a huge audience; it was the week's top story on AP Mobile, and the text, video and striking interactive (by Nathan Griffiths and Pete Santilli) would be tweeted and retweeted thousands of times. "The AP is playing an essential role in bringing stories like this to light," said Rep. Sean Maloney, D-NY, promising supply chain transparency legislation within a week.

But at that moment when a man and his mother were reunited, the AP crew at the scene choked up. As Mung Ra and Amarasinghe recorded the end of Myint's odyssey, Mason and Htusan hugged. This was a very personal, very gratifying outcome to the AP's investigation into an industry that enslaves.

"It was amazing to see," Mason says, "but even more amazing because we helped make it happen."

For making it happen, and reporting and writing it so well, Margie Mason wins this week's $500 prize.

(Shared by Valerie Komor)

Even after South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley joined the call to remove the Confederate battle flag flying at the Statehouse, the question remained: Would enough lawmakers have the political will to get it done?

By law, both chambers of the Legislature had to approve the move by a two-thirds majority. That approval was anything but certain, despite the pressure arising from the killing of nine people at a historically black church in Charleston.

Lawmakers weren't due back in Columbia for days. So news editor Tim Rogers and South enterprise editor Joe Danborn decided not to wait.

With statehouse reporter Seanna Adcox taking the lead, the AP and the South Carolina Press Association emailed a brief survey to every state senator and representative to get their positions on the record ahead of the vote.

The Post and Courier newspaper had already launched a similar effort, sending reporters out to track down lawmakers for their responses and posting those responses online. We quickly combined forces and found ample support among senators, whose colleague, Sen. Clementa Pinckney, was pastor of the church and among the dead.

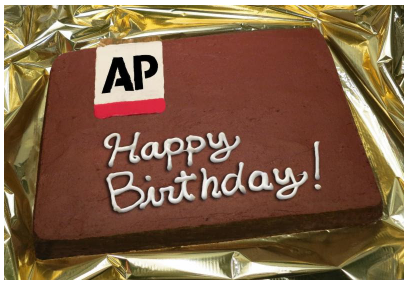
It came down to the House, where the survey responses stalled two "yes" votes short of the two-thirds threshold. Adcox rechecked the math and realized that with one seat vacant, only one more member of the House needed to come out against the flag to get it removed.

Comparing her notes against those of the newspaper team's, she found that vote: a lawmaker who had declined to take a position when he spoke with the paper told Adcox -- grudgingly but clearly -- he would vote to remove the flag.

The AP's NewsAlert broke the news that the anti-flag push had the support to succeed. The Post and Courier followed with its own treatment, and the press association provided its member news organizations with Adcox's story, along with the individual survey responses and comments, allowing outlets across the state to easily localize it for their audiences.

For partnering with members in her state to push South Carolina lawmakers to take a position on an issue the whole country was watching, Adcox wins this week's $300 Best of the States prize.

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



To

Kelly Kissel (Email)

Steve Stibbens (Email)

Stories of interest

Chinese Employee of German Weekly Is Freed After 9-Month Detention
(New York Times)

HONG KONG - A Chinese news assistant for the influential German weekly Die Zeit was freed on Thursday, her lawyer said, nine months after the police in Beijing detained her after she had returned from helping to report on pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong.

The news assistant, Zhang Miao, was released from a detention center in eastern Beijing, her lawyer, Zhou Shifeng, said by telephone after meeting Ms. Zhang at the detention center gates. She then left with friends for a celebratory dinner, he said.

"She's been released, as far as I know, without any conditions," Mr. Zhou said, citing a notice from the prosecution office. "I think the prosecution wouldn't accept the public security's claim that she'd committed a crime, but they delayed making a decision until now."

Click **here** to read more. Shared by Sibby Christensen.

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At Bloomberg, John Micklethwait channels an ancient ancestor (Capital)

John Micklethwait's Bloomberg L.P. career kicked off with a good old-fashioned turf war.

It was late February, and the 51-year-old British journalist and former Economist editor in chief had landed at Bloomberg with that same title.

His new job was an expanded version of the one held for 25 years by Matt Winkler, the perpetually bow-tied newsman who had run Bloomberg's flagship wire service with a certain draconian charm since its founding in 1990, and who was now moving on to become an editor emeritus within Michael Bloomberg's $9 billion-a-year financial news and information machine.

Bloomberg, not long after he resumed day-to-day leadership of the enterprise he'd founded in 1981, had announced in December that Micklethwait would "oversee editorial content across the company, including our news, newsletters, magazines, opinion, television, radio and digital properties," and that he would "work closely with Justin Smith, CEO of the Bloomberg Media Group, who will continue to report directly to me on all business and strategy matters across Bloomberg's diverse media properties."

Click **here** to read more.

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Post-Dispatch staffers resign, rescuing jobs of 4 staffers (Poynter)

Nine staffers at the St. Louis Post-Dispatch are accepting severance packages from the newspaper, effectively saving the jobs of four employees who would have been laid off.

That's the word from The Riverfront Times, an alt-weekly in St. Louis, which last evening reported that the employees leaving the paper include popular columnist Bill McClellan, five reporters, two editors and a paginator. Among the reporters leaving is Virginia Young, a longtime statehouse reporter who recently broke a controversial story that named a woman who asked police to investigate whether she'd been sexually assaulted.

The resignations came at the end of a months-long negotiation process, according to a statement from the United Media Guild, a union representing the Post-Dispatch newsroom employees. Earlier in the year, managers at the newspaper vacillated about whether they would lay off employees or offer long-term employees buyouts. After some back-and-forth, the newspaper first announced it was laying off four employees, but ultimately agreed to take nine volunteers and grant them severance.

Click **here** to read more. Shared by Scott Charton.

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Prince Philip lets fly with F-word during Battle of Britain event (Guardian)

The Duke of Edinburgh, an old Naval hand, appeared to revert to some salty language during an overlong photocall at events to mark the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Britain.

Losing patience as a photographer dithered, the famously straight-talking Prince Philip, 94, seemingly commanded: "Just take the fucking picture!"

His exasperation erupted during a photocall at the RAF Club, which Philip attended with the Duke of Cambridge and the Earl and Countess of Wessex.

The moment was caught on video by TV cameras during a day of events commemorating the start of the Battle of Britain in July 1940, which earlier had featured senior members of the royal family, including the Queen, watching an RAF flypast from the balcony of Buckingham Palace.

As they say, you can take the man out of the Navy ...

Click **here** for link to the story and a video. Shared by Bob Daugherty.

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What journalist's skill do the best bosses employ? They talk with people. (Poynter)

When I look back at the columns I've written over the past 10 years, a consistent theme emerges:

Bosses need to talk with people.

That would seem pretty obvious, especially for newsroom managers. After all, journalists know their success depends on how well they talk with people.

And when I ask journalists-managers and their staffs alike-about the bosses they most admire, they use descriptors like "great listener," "accessible" and "collaborator."

But clearly, many managers have not carried that skill set into their supervisory jobs.

Listen to their staffs:

Click **here** to read more.

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White House to make public records more public (Washington Post)

The law that's supposed to keep citizens in the know about what their government is doing is about to get more robust.

Starting this week, seven agencies - including the Environmental Protection Agency and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence - launched a new effort to put online the records they distribute to requesters under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

So if a journalist, nonprofit group or corporation asks for the records, what they see, the public also will see. Documents still will be redacted where necessary to protect what the government decides is sensitive information, an area that's often disputed but won't change with this policy.

Click **here** to read more.

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News outlets vie for global audiences with translated stories (Poynter)

In May, after more than a year of planning, investigating, writing and editing, The New York Times was almost ready to publish an investigation from reporter Sarah Maslin Nir that would reveal ghastly working conditions in nail salons throughout New York City. Almost.

It was the eve of publication. Elisabeth Goodridge, the deputy editor for the paper's metro section, was lingering in the newsroom, waiting for the last elements of the story to come in. The article had been translated into three languages - Korean, Chinese and Spanish - but Goodridge had not yet received everything required for the finished product. She finally left The Times' Manhattan headquarters at around 10 p.m. and returned early the next day to await their arrival. That morning, Metro Editor Wendell Jamieson sent his deputy Michael Luo an email checking on the project.

"He said he was about to have a heart attack," Luo said. "Because you know, this was a gigantic project for Sarah, for the metro desk, and we wanted to hit the window of big traffic. And every minute that it delayed getting up, we were worried, because this was our one shot at getting big numbers for it and getting big impact."

Click **here** to read more.

Today in History - July 11, 2015

By The Associated Press

Today is Saturday, July 11, the 192nd day of 2015. There are 173 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On July 11, 1955, the U.S. Air Force Academy swore in its first class of cadets at its temporary quarters at Lowry Air Force Base in Colorado.

On this date:

In 1767, John Quincy Adams, the sixth president of the United States, was born in Braintree, Massachusetts.

In 1798, the U.S. Marine Corps was formally re-established by a congressional act that also created the U.S. Marine Band.

In 1804, Vice President Aaron Burr mortally wounded former Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton during a pistol duel in Weehawken, **New Jersey**.

In 1864, Confederate forces led by Lt. Gen. Jubal Early began an abortive invasion of Washington D.C., turning back the next day.

In 1915, the Chicago Sunday Tribune ran an article titled, "Blues Is Jazz and Jazz Is Blues." (It's believed to be one of the earliest, if not the earliest, uses of the word "jazz" as a musical term by a newspaper.)

In 1922, the Hollywood Bowl officially opened with a program called "Symphonies Under the Stars" with Alfred Hertz conducting the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

In 1937, American composer and pianist **George Gershwin** died at a Los Angeles hospital of a brain tumor; he was 38.

In 1952, the Republican National Convention, meeting in Chicago, nominated Dwight D. Eisenhower for president and Richard M. Nixon for vice president.

In 1960, the novel "To Kill a Mockingbird" by Harper Lee was first published by J.B. Lippincott and Co.

In 1979, the abandoned U.S. space station Skylab made a spectacular return to Earth, burning up in the atmosphere and showering debris over the Indian Ocean and Australia.

In 1989, actor and director Laurence Olivier died in Steyning, West Sussex, England, at age 82.

In 1995, the U.N.-designated "safe haven" of Srebrenica (SREH'-breh-neet-sah) in Bosnia-Herzegovina fell to Bosnian Serb forces, who then carried out the killings of more than 8,000 Muslim men and boys. The United States normalized relations with Vietnam.

Ten years ago: A top al-Qaida lieutenant and three other terror suspects escaped from a U.S. military jail in Afghanistan. (The identity of Omar al-Farouq wasn't acknowledged by the U.S. until November 2005; he was shot and killed by British forces in Basra, Iraq, in October 2006.)

Five years ago: Over the din of vuvuzela horns in Johannesburg, **South Africa**, Spain won soccer's World Cup after an exhausting 1-0 victory in extra time over the Netherlands. Police in the Bahamas arrested 19-year-old Colton Harris-Moore, the American fugitive known as the "Barefoot Bandit." The Rev. Robert H. Schuller, founder of Southern California's Crystal Cathedral megachurch, announced he would retire after 55 years in the pulpit. Paula Creamer won her first major tournament, shooting a final-round 2-under 69 for a 3-under 281 at the U.S. Women's Open in Oakmont, Pennsylvania.

One year ago: House Appropriations Chairman Hal Rogers, R-Ky., said that President Barack Obama's $3.7 billion emergency request to deal with tens of thousands of unaccompanied children arriving at the U.S.-Mexico border was too big to get through the House, as a growing number of Democrats rejected policy changes Republicans were demanding as their price for approving any money. Tommy Ramone, 65, a co-founder of the seminal punk band the Ramones and the last surviving member of the original group, died in New York.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Tab Hunter is 84. Actress Susan Seaforth Hayes is 72. Singer Jeff Hanna (Nitty Gritty Dirt Band) is 69. Ventriloquist-actor Jay Johnson is 66. Actor Bruce McGill is 65. Singer Bonnie Pointer is 65. Actor Stephen Lang is 63. Actress Mindy Sterling is 62. Boxer Leon Spinks is 62. Actress Sela Ward is 59. Reggae singer Michael Rose (Black Uhuru) is 58. Singer Peter Murphy is 58. Actor Mark Lester is 57. Jazz musician Kirk Whalum is 57. Singer Suzanne Vega is 56. Rock guitarist Richie Sambora (Bon Jovi) is 56. Actress Lisa Rinna is 52. Rock musician Scott Shriner (Weezer) is 50. Actress Debbe (correct) Dunning is

49. Actor Gred Grunberg is 49. Wildlife expert Jeff Corwin is 48. Actor Justin Chambers is 45. Actress Leisha Hailey is 44. Actor Michael Rosenbaum is 43. Pop-rock singer Andrew Bird is 42. Country singer Scotty Emerick is 42. Rapper Lil' Kim is 40. Rock singer Ben Gibbard is 39. Rapper Lil' Zane is 33. Pop-jazz singer-musician Peter Cincotti is 32. Actress Serinda Swan is 31. Actor Robert Adamson is 30. Actor David Henrie is 26. Actor Connor Paolo is 25. Tennis player Caroline Wozniacki is 25.

Thought for Today: "Life is a lot like jazz - it's best when you improvise." - George Gershwin (1898-1937).

Got a story to share?

Got a story to share? A favorite memory of your AP days? Don't keep them to yourself. Share with your colleagues by sending to Ye Olde Connecting Editor. And don't forget to include photos!

Here are some suggestions:

- "My boo boos - A silly mistake that you make"- a chance to 'fess up with a memorable mistake in your journalistic career.
- Multigenerational AP families - profiles of families whose service spanned two or more generations.
- Volunteering - benefit your colleagues by sharing volunteer stories - with ideas on such work they can do themselves.
- First job - How did you get your first job in journalism?
- Connecting "selfies" - a word and photo self-profile of you and your career, and what you are doing today. Both for new members and those who have been with us a while.
- **Life after AP** for those of you who have moved on to another job or profession.
- **Most unusual** place a story assignment took you.

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