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# Connecting - November 15, 2016

1 message

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# Connecting

November 15, 2016

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# Gwen Ifill, 1955-2016



**Gwen Ifill and Senator Joseph R. Biden Jr. in October 2008 in St. Louis after a vice-presidential debate between Mr. Biden and Gov. Sarah Palin of Alaska. Ms. Ifill was the moderator. Photo by Don Emmert/Associated Press**

Colleagues,

Good Tuesday morning!

The journalism community and the world it serves mourn the death of **Gwen Ifill**, the award-winning journalist who died Monday in Washington at the age of 61. The AP and New York Times stories on her death are in today's issue.

Would you recommend journalism as a career to a young person?

Connecting colleague **Carol Stark**, editor of The Joplin (Missouri) Globe, says she would, and writes about it in an editorial that is the lead-off for today's issue of Connecting.

How would you answer the question - and what would be your reasons? Share them with your Connecting colleagues.

Paul

# 'I will tell them, for America's sake, become a journalist'

By **CAROL STARK** ([Email](#))

Editor, The Joplin (MO) Globe

I'll be greeting about 50 high school journalism students on Monday. They each work on their school's newspaper or magazine and will be looking for advice on how to find stories, write ledes and take better photos.



I can help them there. I have great staff members who will offer them their best insights.

What's going to be more difficult than ever this year is convincing these students that they should consider careers as journalists. It's hard enough to dispel their doubts about the type of future reporters face. But now, I have to help them understand that there are those who will hate them for what they do.

I offer up this past week's viral tweet: "Rope. Tree. Journalist. Some Assembly Required." Those were the words on a T-shirt worn by a man attending a Donald Trump rally in Minneapolis on Sunday, Nov. 6.

It's the old adage about killing the messenger, but in this instance - words worn across a man's back - it seems even more menacing.

I wonder if the guy in the shirt knows that the very journalists he threatens are the ones who daily defend freedom of speech. That includes his right to wear the shirt.

This week after the photo taken by Reuters photographer Jonathan Ernst took social media by storm, I thought about the people who at one time in this country really had to fear ropes and trees. And I became very angry that anyone, even satirically, could suggest this. Sure, the word "journalist" hit me hard, but it would be just as loathsome if any other word was substituted. I only reprint the photo today so you

can see it for yourself.

There is no doubt that there is a growing hostility toward journalists and the First Amendment. I will make sure that the high school students enrolled in our workshop know what's in store for them. This job has never been a popularity contest, and, for those who need to be liked, I might suggest a different line of work.



But I don't want them all to run toward the door. Among this group there will be a few who, whether they know it now or not, may already have some ink in their veins. What can I say to them?

I'll tell them the truth. Their best chances of succeeding are to continue their education, learn about media ethics, understand there are always two sides to every story and you cannot let only one voice speak. It's hard work with bad hours, mediocre pay and cold pizza. And those are the good days.

I hope they will leave understanding that THEY are not the story. They are not celebrities. Their personal feelings are not important to the news.

As a former editor once told me while I was still a reporter: "It's never about you, Carol. All that matters is what gets into the paper. If you get your feelings hurt along the way, who cares?"

He was right. No one will care.

That is, until all the good journalists set aside their keyboards and their cameras. The day they toss their list of sources into the wastebasket and walk out of the newsroom will be a sad one.

I will tell them, for America's sake, become a journalist.

(Shared by Scott Charton)

## Connecting mailbox

## ***'Crap' quote still under my skin***

**Dave Lubeski (Email)** - The voices in my head are arguing over whether I should even weigh in on this, or keep my mouth shut, but ever since I read the Jim Kennedy "crap" quote it's been under my skin. So here goes.

I agree that having baseball (and other sports) summaries converted to broadcast style by the beat writers on the scene takes up their valuable time. Even when they waste their time on it, beat writers don't really write a broadcast version. I was still at the BNC when the change was made. What we got was the AP wire writer at the game simply slicing off everything past the first 50 to 100 words of his/her initial story to produce the "abbreviated" version that went on the Broadcast Wire.

The beat writers write great game stories, but their so-called broadcast versions don't really follow the ready-to-read format established for radio and TV stations at the Broadcast News Center.

Here's a concept: Why not have the BNC be responsible for writing individual game summaries? The network and the radio wire directly serves radio and TV stations. Most of the BNC staff worked at a radio or TV station before coming to the BNC.

Oh, wait, that's exactly how it was done until a few years ago before the changes were made. We called them "game separates." They were tightly written by broadcasters for broadcasters in short, easy to read sentences and included everything pertinent to the outcome of the game. We wrote them for every MLB game, every NFL game and every NBA game.

Now the goal is to have robots write these summaries. I just hope it doesn't turn out to be crap.

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***First question, shout out from president in her final White House press conference***



Connecting colleague **Colleen McCain Nelson**, in her final White House press conference with The Wall Street Journal, asked the first question at President Obama's news conference Monday after getting a personal shout out from the commander in chief. The next job for Nelson, a Pulitzer Prize-winning editorial writer, is as vice president of The Kansas City Star's editorial board. [Click here](#) to view her question of the president.

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***Magic in the moonlight!***





**John Gaps** ([Email](#)) - Moonset from Santa Monica, CA, Monday morning, 11.14.16, around 6AM.

I made an exposure for the foreground and then one for the moon, so here's what it looked like to the naked eye.

There's magic in the moonlight!

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## ***AP's emblazoned on their tails***



**Bill Kaczor (Email)** - Air Force planes based in Pensacola, which are used for training navigators and other non-pilot flight crew members, all have AP emblazoned on their tails. A couple of them were on display at the Blue Angels' annual homecoming air show in Pensacola last weekend. One of the Air Force pilots told me that the AP stands for Pensacola. He couldn't explain why. Maybe it means "Air force Pensacola" since the training unit is stationed at a naval base. Or it could be another example of backward thinking in the military. After all, the Navy calls it Naval Air Station Pensacola, not Pensacola Naval Air Station.





# Melania Trump modeled in US prior to getting work visa

The exclusive story's foundation was laid months ago, when questions arose about Melania Trump's immigration history and AP contacted employees at the modeling firm where she worked in the 1990s. No office records from the time were found at first. But AP's questions were asked, and one ex-worker kept searching through storage.

Finally, the documents turned up, and when the worker pointed AP to them, they became the basis of a story showing that the future wife of Donald Trump, who has taken strict stands on immigration enforcement, was paid for modeling jobs worth tens of thousands of dollars before she had permission to work in the U.S.

The AP's investigation, by Alicia Caldwell, Chad Day and Jake Pearson, earns the Beat of the Week.

The story, written and transmitted before Tuesday's election, alluded to Trump's proposals to broaden use of the government's E-verify system to check whether job applicants are authorized to work, adding, "He has noted that federal law prohibits illegally paying immigrants."

It also quoted Mrs. Trump's statements that she never violated terms of her immigration status. "During the presidential campaign, she has cited her story to defend her husband's hard line on immigration," the story said.

In August, Pearson scoured old New York state court records from a 1990s-era civil lawsuit involving the business partners of the now-defunct modeling agency that facilitated the future first lady's early U.S. work. Day and AP's Jeff Horwitz contacted former employees, establishing a rapport with some. It was later, when Day and Caldwell teamed up on two stories scrutinizing Mrs. Trump's immigration timeline, that a source alerted reporter Jill Colvin and Day to documents that indicated she had worked without the proper visa.

Working with editor Ted Bridis, Caldwell, Day and Pearson conducted a rapid but thorough effort to authenticate the sensational documents, cross-referencing them against information obtained from earlier interviews with key figures and additional records from sources and court files.

They showed that she was paid for 10 modeling assignments between Sept. 10 and Oct. 15, 1996, during a time when her visa allowed her to be in the U.S. and look for work but not to perform paid work in the country. <http://apne.ws/2fJlKlY>

The AP story, published Nov. 4, was the third-highest trending topic on Twitter worldwide through the weekend, and the most-read on AP News.com across the weekend. The Nerve Center's Mark Davies said readers spent an aggregate 472,000 minutes, or 7,866 hours, actively engaged in reading the story, according to Chartbeat metrics; in social media interaction, it had 348,000 likes, shares, comments and retweets, as measured by NewsWhip.

For ferreting out decades-old documents to support strong accountability reporting, Pearson, Day and Caldwell win this week's \$500 prize.

### **Other work that impressed the judges:**

Was \$350 million experiment to replace lawns amid drought worth the cost?

Ellen Knickmeyer, reporter, San Francisco, for calculating that California water agencies spent more than \$350 million to pay property owners to remove lawns during historic drought and assessing the program's success. <http://lat.ms/2fFjTKu>

Thousands in Kashmir hide from crackdown

Aijaz Hussain, correspondent, New Delhi, for an exclusive and intimate view of India's biggest-ever crackdown on Kashmiri citizens, featuring dozens of unmatched interviews with men on the run as well as government forces deployed to hunt them down. <http://bit.ly/2fUW19d>

AP finds 'unusual,' costly employment arrangement for top aide to Pence

Brian Slodysko, statehouse correspondent, Indianapolis, for reporting that Joshua Pitcock, an aide to Indiana governor and Vice President-elect Mike Pence, was continuing to receive \$23,000 a month from Indiana taxpayers for lobbying while simultaneously working for the Trump-Pence campaign. <http://bit.ly/2fAGpEa>

Searching records, interviewing relatives, AP traces poor driving history after two-bus fatal crash

Sarah Rankin, reporter, Mid-Atlantic/Richmond, Virginia, and Brian Witte, correspondent, Mid-Atlantic/Annapolis, Maryland, for showing that the driver of a school bus that crashed into a commuter bus in Baltimore had a history of legal trouble and a spotty driving record. <http://apne.ws/2fyeRxI>

### Kenya deports South Sudan rebel official over Facebook post

Tom Odula, reporter, Nairobi, for being first with the news that Kenya had deported a South Sudanese rebel spokesman back to South Sudan, where colleagues and human rights activists fear for his life. <http://bit.ly/2fFtOIA>

### U.S., Europe at odds over Revolutionary Guard-backed airline

Vivian Salama, reporter, Washington, for pursuing the story that an Iranian airline backed by the Revolutionary Guard was flying into Europe and Asia in violation of US terror sanctions. <http://apne.ws/2eE79SG>

### AP uses public records requests to break news on California bus crash that killed 13

Elliot Spagat, correspondent, San Diego, for being first to report that no signs, lighting or reduced speed were required for utility work done on a stretch of Southern California freeway where a tour bus slammed into a truck, killing 13 people. <http://bit.ly/2eNlayX>

### Zayn, formerly of One Direction, opens up in AP interview

Mesfin Fekadu, music editor, Entertainment/New York, for getting the first interview with Zayn Malik, formerly of One Direction, in which he talked about his former band and an eating disorder. <http://wapo.st/2eNLYK9>



## Was California's \$350 million experiment to replace lawns amid drought worth the cost?

In drought-stricken California, the state and dozens of water agencies embarked upon a unique social experiment: try to break the love affair with the lawn by paying residents to rip out their turf and replace it with less thirsty landscaping.

San Francisco-based environment reporter Ellen Knickmeyer, who has been covering the state's historic five-year drought, decided to dig into the water-saving strategy and determine whether it was worth the cost.



There was no central repository of information about the money spent. Starting in 2014, the amount put into such programs shot up from millions of dollars to hundreds of millions. Knickmeyer contacted state agencies and water districts to obtain data on how much they spent on the rebate programs and how many residents took part.

Knickmeyer, for example, obtained spreadsheets of all rebates given by the state's largest water supplier, serving 17 million people in Southern California. She searched the data for patterns, using skills sharpened at a data-journalism workshop in New York in August.

She learned that residents received more than \$350 million in rebates for tearing out water-sucking lawns, and that spending by local and regional water agencies dwarfed the state's \$25 million program.

Knickmeyer discovered, too, that they were using technology, including satellite images and infrared aerial photos, to figure out not only how much lawn was removed but also whether the program succeeded in shifting tastes from lush green turf to more drought-resistant plantings.

Now, some water-district managers are concerned, fearing that the benefits won't measure up to the costs of the program at this early date.

Her comprehensive look at the experiment in social engineering resonated with customers. Major California newspapers featured the story. Among them were the websites of the Los Angeles Times, San Francisco Chronicle, Sacramento Bee, Orange County Register and the Mercury News in San Jose.

The piece, accompanied by a mobile-friendly Things to Know, was promoted on social media with photos by Eric Risberg and video shot by Knickmeyer. She was interviewed by Southern California's NPR station about her story.

For digging out a government accountability story that shed light on the centerpiece of California's drought spending, Knickmeyer wins this week's \$300 Best of the

States prize.

## Welcome to Connecting



Roger Verdon - [rogerverdon@hotmail.com](mailto:rogerverdon@hotmail.com)

## Stories of interest

### *PBS journalist Gwen Ifill dies of cancer*

NEW YORK (AP) - Gwen Ifill, co-anchor of PBS' "NewsHour" with Judy Woodruff and a veteran journalist who moderated two vice presidential debates, died Monday of cancer, the network said.

She was 61.

A former reporter for The New York Times and The Washington Post, Ifill switched to television in the 1990s and covered politics and Congress for NBC News. She moved to PBS in 1999 as host of "Washington Week" and also worked for the nightly "NewsHour" program. She and Woodruff were named co-anchors in 2013.





She moderated vice presidential debates in 2004 and 2008 and authored the book, "The Breakthrough: Politics and Race in the Age of Obama."

The president on Monday praised Ifill for informing today's citizens while also inspiring a young generation of journalists.

Read more [here](#).

[Click here](#) for The New York Times story on her death.

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## ***Editor: Breitbart plans to be 'best place for news on Trump'***

NEW YORK (AP) - Following the installation of Breitbart's chief executive to a top job in President-elect Donald Trump's administration, the news organization in its infancy when Barack Obama took office has big expansion plans and the goal of being the best source of news on the new administration.

That scares its critics, which consider Breitbart News the home of cheerleaders rather than journalists - and often offensive ones at that.

Despite the opponents, Breitbart is unquestionably on a high following the surprise election of Trump, whose candidacy the web site unceasingly backed both before and after its leader, Stephen K. Bannon, was brought in to run the general election campaign. Trump on Sunday named Bannon chief strategist and senior counselor for his administration.

Breitbart is planning a move into more spacious Washington offices, looking to add reporters in Germany, France, the Middle East and Asia, wants to add coverage of the media and technology to its conservative-framed news and hopes to produce more video, said Alexander Marlow, the site's editor in chief, on Monday. Its own cable network is a dream, but unlikely now, he said.

"We're going to be the best place for news on the Trump White House," Marlow said. "That is my intention and I have no reason to think that's not a fully attainable goal. I think a lot of the mainstream media already consider that the expectation and they're none too happy about it, which of course is a delight to me."

Read more [here](#).

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## ***Eight steps reporters should take before Trump assumes office*** (Columbia Journalism Review)

**By DANA PRIEST**

I WAS ON THE PHONE the other day with a senior US official, someone not usually eager to talk to a reporter, when the following conversation occurred:

"Is the FBI likely to follow up on tips that Trump might have some dubious connections to Russia now that he's been elected?" I asked.

"If they hadn't begun a serious investigation before the election," the official responded, "it's not likely now-unless something were to occur."

"What do you mean by, 'something were to occur?'"

"Well, that's where you all come in."

Wham! Of course.

With the two houses of Congress controlled by Republicans and a Democratic party in chaos, of course it falls on the shoulders of journalists to deepen the solid investigative work begun during the campaign.

Read more [here](#).

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## ***GateHouse Media to acquire six Harris Enterprises newspapers***

After 83 years, The Hutchinson News will have a new owner.

GateHouse Media will acquire The News and the five other newspapers of Harris Enterprises Inc., the two companies announced Monday. The new owner will take over Dec. 1.

John Montgomery has been named senior group publisher to oversee GateHouse operations in Kansas. Montgomery has been editor and publisher of The News the past 10 years.

Read more [here](#).

# **The Final Word**

## ***What the #\*&+?! Research Finds Preference for Swear Words is Regional***

You've probably never thought much about this, but across the U.S. there is a huge variation in preference for swear words, and in how frequently certain swear words are used by the population. Linguist Jack Grieve has put hard data behind what for many years has been anecdotally noted by mining Twitter for swear words and mapping the concentration of their use by location.

Grieve used statistical analysis to map the frequency of use of a variety of swear words, a couple of gendered and sexualized slurs, and a couple of "clean" alternatives to swear words, including "darn" and "gosh."

What Grieve found, among other trends, is that the word "assh\*le" is most heavily favored by people in the northeast U.S.; "sh\*t" predominates across the eastern seaboard and the south; and "darn" is a selective midwest phenomenon.

Click through the slide show to see maps of these and other words, and for some sociological insights on the trends depicted.

Read more [here](#).

## Today in History - November 15, 2016



**By The Associated Press**

Today is Tuesday, Nov. 15, the 320th day of 2016. There are 46 days left in the year.

### **Today's Highlight in History:**

On Nov. 15, 1966, the flight of Gemini 12, the final mission of the Gemini program, ended successfully as astronauts James A. Lovell and Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin Jr. splashed down safely in the Atlantic after spending four days in orbit.

### **On this date:**

In 1777, the Second Continental Congress approved the Articles of Confederation.

In 1806, explorer Zebulon Pike sighted the mountaintop now known as Pikes (cq) Peak in present-day Colorado.

In 1864, during the Civil War, Union forces led by Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman began their "March to the Sea" from Atlanta; the campaign ended with the capture of Savannah on Dec. 21.

In 1889, Brazil was proclaimed a republic as its emperor, Dom Pedro II, was overthrown.

In 1926, the National Broadcasting Company began operating its radio network.

In 1939, President Franklin D. Roosevelt laid the cornerstone of the Jefferson Memorial in Washington, D.C.

In 1942, the naval Battle of Guadalcanal ended during World War II with a decisive U.S. victory over Japanese forces.

In 1956, "Li'l Abner," a musical comedy based on the Al Capp comic strip, opened on Broadway.

In 1959, four members of the Clutter family of Holcomb, Kansas, were found murdered in their home. (Ex-convicts Richard Hickock and Perry Smith were later convicted of the killings and hanged.)

In 1979, the British government publicly identified Sir Anthony Blunt as the "fourth man" of a Soviet spy ring.

In 1986, a government tribunal in Nicaragua convicted American Eugene Hasenfus of charges related to his role in delivering arms to Contra rebels, and sentenced him to 30 years in prison. (Hasenfus was pardoned a month later.)

In 1996, former State Department official Alger Hiss, who fell from grace in a Communist spy scandal, died in New York just four days after his 92nd birthday.



Ten years ago: O.J. Simpson caused an uproar with plans for a TV interview and book titled "If I Did It," in which Simpson described how he would have committed the 1994 slayings of his ex-wife, Nicole Brown Simpson, and her friend Ronald Goldman. (The project was scrapped after an outcry condemning it as revolting and exploitive.) One of four U.S. soldiers accused of raping a 14-year-old Iraqi girl and killing her and her family pleaded guilty at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. (Spc. James P. Barker, who agreed to testify against the others, was later sentenced to 90 years in prison.) Emmitt Smith was named winner of ABC's "Dancing with the Stars" with his professional dance partner, Cheryl Burke.

Five years ago: Hundreds of police officers in riot gear raided the Occupy Wall Street encampment in New York City in the pre-dawn darkness, evicting hundreds of protesters and then demolishing the tent city. The U.S. Postal Service said it had lost \$5.1 billion in the fiscal year ending Sept. 30, 2011. The state of Ohio executed Reginald Brooks, who had shot his three sons as they slept, shortly after his wife filed for divorce. Justin Verlander of the Detroit Tigers breezed to the AL Cy Young Award in a unanimous vote. Karl Slover, 93, one of the last surviving actors who played Munchkins in the 1939 classic film "The Wizard of Oz," died in Dublin, Georgia.

One year ago: World leaders vowed a vigorous response to the Islamic State group's terror rampage in Paris as they opened a two-day meeting in Turkey, with President Barack Obama calling the violence an "attack on the civilized world" and Russian President Vladimir Putin urging "global efforts" to confront the threat. Authorities found six people shot to death at a campsite in Anderson County, Texas; William Hudson is charged with capital murder. P.F. Sloan, 70, the troubled songwriter behind such classic 1960s tunes as Johnny Rivers' "Secret Agent Man" and Barry McGuire's "Eve of Destruction," died in Los Angeles.

Today's Birthdays: Judge Joseph Wapner is 97. Actor Ed Asner is 87. Singer Petula Clark is 84. Comedian Jack Burns is 83. Actress Joanna Barnes is 82. Actor Yaphet Kotto is 77. Actor Sam Waterston is 76. Classical conductor Daniel Barenboim is 74. Pop singer Frida (ABBA) is 71. Actor Bob Gunton is 71. Former New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson is 69. Actress Beverly D'Angelo is 65. Director-actor James Widdoes is 63. Rock singer-producer Mitch Easter is 62. News correspondent John Roberts is 60. Former "Jay Leno Show" bandleader Kevin Eubanks is 59. Comedian Judy Gold is 54. Actress Rachel True is 50. Rapper E-40 is 49. Country singer Jack Ingram is 46. Actor Jay Harrington is 45. Actor Jonny Lee Miller is 44. Actress Sydney Tamiia (tuh-MY'-yuh) Poitier is 43. Christian rock musician David Carr (Third Day) is 42. Rock singer-musician Chad Kroeger is 42. Rock musician Jesse Sandoval is 42. Actress Virginie Ledoyen is 40. Actor Sean Murray is 39. Pop singer Ace Young (TV: "American Idol") is 36. Golfer Lorena Ochoa is 35. Hip-hop artist B.o.B is 28. Actress Shailene Woodley is 25. Actress-dancer Emma Dumont is 22.

***Thought for Today: "News reports don't change the world. Only facts change it, and those have already happened when we get the news." - Friedrich***

**Durrenmatt, Swiss author and playwright (1921-1990).**

## 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:

- **Spousal support** - How your spouse helped in supporting your work during your AP career.
- **My most unusual story** - tell us about an unusual, off the wall story that you covered.
- **"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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