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Connecting - April 26, 2017

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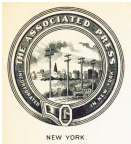

Connecting

April 26, 2017

Click here for sound of the Teletype

Top AP News

Top AP photos

AP World

AP books
Connecting Archive
AP Essentials *(Purchases benefit The AP Emergency Relief Fund)*

Colleagues,

Good Wednesday morning!

Paul Stevens returns to the editor's chair Thursday. Send stories and contributions to him at paulstevens46@gmail.com.

Enjoy the day!

- Mark Mittelstadt

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AP: Should death chambers have an open mic so witnesses can hear?

VARNER, Ark. (AP) - The nation's first double execution in more than 16 years raised a new issue involving transparency and the death penalty: Should witnesses be allowed to hear what goes on in the death chamber?

A lawyer who watched Monday's executions in Arkansas said he saw an inmate open his mouth several times when it should have been still, prompting another lawyer to claim in a court filing that Jack Jones was gulping for air after being given a sedative, the first component of a lethal injection. Other witnesses did not see it the same way. An open microphone could have settled the question.

AP News Editor Kelly Kissel discusses Monday night's executions. (Click here for video)

When the two convicted murderers were put to death, the 20 or so witnesses heard only what Department of Correction Director Wendy Kelley wanted them to hear.

A spokesman for the Arkansas prison system, Solomon Graves, said he inherited a policy that limits what can be heard from the death chamber. The standard procedure has been to turn off a microphone inside the 18-by-12-foot chamber after an inmate's last statement and turn it on again for the official pronouncement of death. Several other states have similar policies.

"There is no legitimate reason to turn off the sound," said Robert Dunham, executive director of the Death Penalty Information Center, which opposes capital punishment. "If

you're going to have public oversight and the witnesses are going to be able to do their jobs to determine whether the execution was carried out in a competent manner, if there's something unanticipated that happens, the way you tell is by what people say."

Because the microphone was off during Monday's first execution, witnesses disagreed on whether Jack Jones was struggling for air after being given 500 milligrams of midazolam. A lawyer who believed he saw Jones moving his mouth testified in a late-night court hearing Monday on whether a stay should be given to Marcel Williams, the second inmate killed Monday night, to avoid inflicting a "tortuous" death. A judge rejected his plea.

Williams, who weighed 400 pounds, probably needed a second 500 milligram dose of midazolam. An attendant could be seen mouthing the words "I'm not sure" after checking Williams' consciousness five minutes into the night's second execution. Arkansas' protocol requires that the inmate receive a second dose of midazolam if the first does not render him sufficiently unconscious.

Read AP's full roundup of the issue here.

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Have you dreamed about the time you worked at AP?

Just how "thick" is The Associated Press? Apparently for many of us "quite," judging by the response former AP Business Editor **Kevin Noblet** received when he recently shared subconscious thoughts he had one night.

"I dreamed last night that I returned to work at my longtime employer, The Associated Press," he posted on Facebook. "It was good to see old friends and colleagues there. It was also good that we didn't do any work and just lounged around."

More than 90 friends "liked" or reacted to the post, and he received at least 27 responses and replies, many of whom said they had experienced the same thing. "I've had dozens of dreams like that since I left," **Joseph Coleman** wrote. Added **Sara Frazier**: "I dream I'm back at the AP all the time!"

"Thick" refers to the mark a company leaves on its people, an allusion to a story by **David Brooks** of the New York Times. Connecting Editor **Paul Stevens** shared the story one week ago and encouraged people to share their opinion about the impression AP left on them.

Noblet left AP in March 2008 after 27 years that included assignments in New Orleans, New York and Latin America. He also served as a board member and president of the Society of American Business Editors and Writers, and worked for six years as managing editor of wealth management for Dow Jones & Co.

Despite the passage of time and new chapters, there are the nighttime thoughts for many of us about the news cooperative.

"Apparently it's a recurring dream for many AP alum, which is probably strong evidence of AP's 'thickness,'" Noblet wrote to Connecting.

The deputy Connecting editor also will acknowledge many dreams about my time at AP, most at 50 Rock but some at the 450 W. 33rd Street building. Still others take place at a version of AP headquarters looking like a modern hotel full of big glass doors and windows, shiny furniture and amenities, including a swimming pool.

How about you? Do you have dreams -- good or otherwise -- about your time with the company? Share your experiences with Paul Stevens at paulstevens46@gmail.com.

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Connecting mailbox

Putting down the reporter's notebook

Tuesday's Connecting shared the story of an AP photographer who stopped shooting while covering a protest in Kashmir in order to carry an injured girl to safety, and asked whether colleagues had similar experiences. Mike Tharp shared his.

Mike Tharp (E-mail) _ In Somalia, covering the civil war and famine, I spent a day with an Irish nurse from an NGO. Under a tarp, in sauna-like heat, she was treating dying women and children. One baby -- age unknowable -- was covered in flies and crying without sound. The mother knelt next to him. Neither she nor the nurse could get the baby to eat. I stuck my notebook in the back pocket of my jeans and dropped to my knees. Picked up the baby, swatted away the flies and stuck my finger in the bowl of gruel, then in my mouth. 'Ummm!' I purred. The baby opened his eyes. I did it again. 'Ummm!' I said, licking my finger. It tasted BAD. Coated my finger in the gruel again and put it on the baby's lips. His eyes opened wide at the big white man. Then he sucked on my finger. We did this drill for several minutes. Then the nurse took over. As I walked around the camp, some sort of sand got in my eyes.

In Bosnia, covering the civil war, I put down my notebook to play basketball with a skinny Muslim teen on an outdoor court in Travnik. Sitting on a stone bench afterwards, he told me he needed money to bribe border guards to get out of the country. As we shook hands so long, I palmed a $100 bill I'd retrieved from my money belt and gave it to him. Weeks later, he called me after I was back in California. He got out.

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Farewell etaoin shrdlu

Cecelia White (E-mail) _ What a wonderful, nostalgic 1958 film **Bob Daugherty** shared with us all today (4/25). "Etaoin Shrdlu" [The Farewell] was a mesmerizing look at the final day of hot-press printing at the New York Times, before the advent of computerized, cold-press printing. Fascinating .... flogged a few memories in us all, I'm sure, even those of us who weren't around for hot-press newspapers. Many thanks, Bob!

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What Press???

Mark Mittelstadt (E-mail) _ **Marty Steinberg's** photo in Tuesday's Connecting of a mis-decorated birthday cake brought to mind a foul ball of embroidered AP baseball caps.

In 1989, New Mexico Broadcast Editor **Matt Mygatt** and I ordered 50 baseball caps for an upcoming state broadcasters' meeting. The front of the caps were to be embroidered with the rust brown AP logo and the words underneath "ASSOCIATED PRESS."

The box with the caps arrived a day before the meeting. Eagerly opening it, our anticipation quickly turned to disappointment. The AP logo was beautiful, but underneath were the words "ASSOC PRESS." Retrieving the receipt from the box, we figured out what had happened: in writing up the order the shop owner abbreviated "ASSOCIATED" as "ASSOC."

The owner at first argued that's what we ordered, then tried to get us to take the box at a reduced price. We requested a full refund, which he reluctantly provided, and we sent the caps back. We figured they eventually ended up in some developing country, a donation to a charitable relief.

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Learning to love - or at least appreciate - those bastards from the AP

(NOTE: The author was editor of The Washingtonian magazine from 1969 to 2009 and is now a writer-at-large. He started in journalism in 1960 with United Press International, working in Minneapolis, St. Louis, and Detroit. In 1964 he became editor of the Warren (Mich.) Progress, and then became editor of the San Jose (California) Sunpapers. In 1967 he went to Washington, D.C., to start a weekly newspaper, the Washington Examiner.)

By Jack Limpert
Washingtonian

Jack Limpert

At a lunch of mostly retired journalists, the subject of the Associated Press came up. The AP had just reported its 2016 earnings:

> NEW YORK (AP) - Earnings at The Associated Press shrank substantially last year compared with 2015, when the news organization enjoyed a large tax benefit that skewed its results. Revenue also edged downward, reflecting continued contraction in the newspaper industry and a stronger U.S. dollar that reduced the value of overseas sales.
>
> Net income last year shrank to $1.6 million from $183.6 million in 2015, a 99 percent decline. The 2015 profit figure was bolstered by a one-time, $165 million tax benefit. AP's 2014 net income of $140.9 million was also boosted by a large non-recurring gain from the sale of a stake in a sports data company. In

> 2013, net income at the AP - a nonprofit news cooperative - was $3.3 million.
>
> Although AP's 2016 profit was slightly less than half that of 2013, AP chief financial officer Ken Dale said last year brought the company's net results "back to more normal levels."
>
> Dale said he was focused on other measures of the company's financial health. "We feel like we're financially stable, we have no debt and we continue to generate positive cash flow," he said. AP ended 2016 with $24.7 million in cash and equivalents, down from $50.6 million the year before.
>
> Revenue at AP, which reported its earnings Wednesday, dropped 2 percent to $556.3 million in 2016. The news agency gave some papers lower rates in exchange for longer contracts, Dale said. The number of U.S. newspaper customers didn't change much.

The five of us agreed that the AP is very important to the future of journalism. In the digital age it's the go-to source for nonpartisan, no-spin coverage and newspapers and broadcasters depend more and more on it for solid national and international coverage. And we agreed that the AP is the best hope for maintaining decent coverage of state politics. As the profits of newspapers have dropped, the first cuts often have been their coverage of state government.

The only surprising thing about these feelings might be that all five of us-Ron Cohen, Wes Pippert, Bill Mead, Mike Feinsilber, and me-once hated those bastards from the AP. We had started our careers at UPI back when it was the feisty, proud underdog. UPI was owned by Scripps-Howard and it didn't seem a fair fight to have to compete against the AP, owned by its member newspapers.

The AP bureaus usually were adjacent to the newsroom of the city's biggest newspaper, giving its staffers easy access to all that newspaper's coverage. In Detroit, where several us worked, the AP bureau was alongside the newsroom of the Detroit News while the UPI bureau was in the Detroit News parking garage.

UPI was capitalism at work-we worked hard to convince newspapers and broadcast stations to buy the UPI wire because we were better, more agile, less bureaucratic. To us that newspaper cooperative ownership seemed almost un-American.

It was a good fight for a lot of years-good for journalism, good for a lot of careers. But by the mid-80s, UPI had pretty much lost the battle, done in partly because many big newspapers which had subscribed to both wire services dropped UPI in favor of the supplemental wires that became available from the New York Times, Washington Post, Los Angeles Times, AFP, and Reuters.

Now we old UPI alums respect and admire the AP. If journalism is going to continue to do its job, the AP has to continue as its high-quality, no-spin foundation. In 2003, Joan Kroc, the widow of McDonald's Corporation founder Ray Kroc, left National Public Radio $200 million in her will, helping it to grow and improve its coverage.

It's something for the titans of the digital world, who have decimated print journalism, to think about: Some Joan Kroc-type backing would allow the AP to improve its coverage of state and national government, strengthening the foundation of nonpartisan, no-spin

journalism. Think about it, Mark Zuckerberg and Bill Gates.

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Analysis: Fact-checking President Trump's Pinocchio-laden Associated Press interview

(Washington Post)

In a wide-ranging interview with **Julie Pace** of the Associated Press on April 21, President Trump yet again made many false or misleading statements. Here's a round-up of 14 claims. As is our practice, we don't award Pinocchios in round-ups.

"I saved $725 million on the 90 planes. Just 90. Now there are 3,000 planes that are going to be ordered. On 90 planes I saved $725 million. It's actually a little bit more than that, but it's $725 million."

Trump keeps claiming he saved hundreds of millions of dollars on the cost of the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter planes by intervening in negotiations with Lockheed Martin. But Lockheed already had planned cost reductions, and Trump overstates his role.

Read full fact-check here. Shared by Arnold Zeitlin

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Connecting wishes a Happy Birthday

Richard Pyle - richarpy29@gmail.com

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Stories of interest

Wikipedia founder to fight fake news with new Wikitribune site

(The Guardian)

Jimmy Wales, the co-founder of Wikipedia, is launching a new online publication which will aim to fight fake news by pairing professional journalists with an army of volunteer community contributors. Wikitribune plans to pay for the reporters by raising money from a crowdfunding campaign. Wales intends to cover general issues, such as US and UK politics, through to specialist science and technology. Those who donate will become

Jimmy Wales, founder of Wikipedia. Photograph: Felix

Clay for the Guardian

supporters, who in turn will have a say in which subjects and story threads the site focuses on. And Wales intends that the community of readers will fact-check and subedit published articles. Describing Wikitribune as "news by the people and for the people," Wales said: "This will be the first time that professional journalists and citizen journalists will work side-by-side as equals writing stories as they happen, editing them live as they develop, and at all times backed by a community checking and rechecking all facts." Although the site is launching at the beginning of the UK general election campaign, Wales said the impetus for the project came from the US.

Full story here. Shared by Richard Chady

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New York Times journalists share experiences on 2016 election cycle, thoughts on Trump's attitudes toward press *(Duke Chronicle)*

On October 28, 2016, James Comey, the director of the Federal Bureau of Investigations, sent a letter to Congress informing them that he had reopened an investigation into Hillary Clinton's emails-the biggest story of the day in politics. For New York Times journalist Matt Apuzzo, the news struck on his day off. He was at the top of the Empire State Building with his seven-year old when he got a call from fellow Times journalist Adam Goldman about the situation. "People talk about Comey ruining the campaign, but Jim Comey ruined my day with my kid," Apuzzo said. Goldman and Apuzzo - who won a Pulitzer Prize in 2012 for their reporting on the New York Police Department's practices of spying on the Muslim community - discussed their prize-winning work on surveillance and their coverage of the 2016 election Monday at Duke. The talk occurred one day after their 8,000 word story on Comey's sway over the election splashed across the front page of the New York Times.

Read more here.

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Correspondents committee declines to credential Breitbart *(Politico)*

The Capitol Hill Standing Committee of Correspondents has voted to table Breitbart's credential process and declined to extend the organization's temporary credentials to cover Congress, which expire at the end of May.

The committee, which only permits media access to the U.S. Capitol to outlets it considers legitimate news organizations, not political advocacy or other groups, expressed frustration over Breitbart's inconsistent answers to questions about their masthead and office space, among other problems.

Breitbart CEO Larry Solov, in correspondence with the committee since their last meeting, asserted that Republican megadonor Rebekah Mercer had no editorial input, that a managing editor who also had a role in an advocacy group was no longer on the masthead, and that the site was having trouble finding office space in part because of security issues.

The committee said Breitbart could re-apply for credentials if they address the concerns. Otherwise about three staff members who currently have temporary credentials (which the site has had for more than two years) will no longer have access after May 31.

Read more here.

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Today in History - April 26, 2017

By The Associated Press

Today is Wednesday, April 26, the 116th day of 2017. There are 249 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On April 26, 1777, according to a widely accepted account from the American Revolutionary War, 16-year-old Sybil Ludington, the eldest child of Col. Henry Ludington, a militia commander in Dutchess County, New York, rode her horse into the night to alert her father's men of the approach of British regular troops who were sacking Danbury, Connecticut. (Ludington, sometimes referred to as "the female Paul Revere," was said to have covered 40 miles, more than twice the distance of the Boston silversmith's ride.)

On this date:

In 1607, English colonists went ashore at present-day Cape Henry, Virginia, on an expedition to establish the first permanent English settlement in the Western Hemisphere.

In 1865, John Wilkes Booth, the assassin of President Abraham Lincoln, was surrounded by federal troops near Port Royal, Virginia, and killed.

In 1913, Mary Phagan, a 13-year-old worker at a Georgia pencil factory, was strangled; Leo Frank, the factory superintendent, was convicted of her murder and sentenced to death. (Frank's death sentence was commuted, but he was lynched by an anti-Semitic mob in 1915.)

In 1923, Britain's Prince Albert, Duke of York (the future King George VI), married Lady Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon at Westminster Abbey.

In 1937, German and Italian warplanes raided the Basque town of Guernica during the Spanish Civil War; estimates of the number of people killed vary from the hundreds to the thousands.

In 1945, Marshal Henri Philippe Petain (an-REE' fee-LEEP' pay-TAN'), the head of France's Vichy government during World War II, was arrested.

In 1952, the destroyer-minesweeper USS Hobson sank in the central Atlantic after colliding with the aircraft carrier USS Wasp with the loss of 176 crew members.

In 1964, the African nations of Tanganyika and Zanzibar merged to form Tanzania.

In 1972, the first Lockheed L-1011 TriStar went into commercial service with Eastern Airlines.

In 1986, an explosion and fire at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in Ukraine (then part of the Soviet Union) caused radioactive fallout to begin spewing into the atmosphere. (Dozens of people were killed in the immediate aftermath of the disaster while the long-term death toll from radiation poisoning is believed to number in the thousands.)

In 1994, voting began in South Africa's first all-race elections, resulting in victory for the African National Congress and the inauguration of Nelson Mandela as president. China Airlines Flight 140, a Taiwanese Airbus A-300, crashed while landing in Nagoya, Japan, killing 264 people (there were seven survivors).

In 2000, Vermont Gov. Howard Dean signed the nation's first bill allowing same-sex couples to form civil unions.

Ten years ago: The Senate joined the House, 51-46, in clearing legislation calling for the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq to begin by Oct. 1, 2007, with a goal of a complete pullout six months later (President George W. Bush later vetoed the measure). Eight Democratic presidential hopefuls gathered in Orangeburg, South Carolina, for their first debate of the 2008 campaign, during which they heaped criticism on President Bush's Iraq policy. Former White House aide and movie industry lobbyist Jack Valenti died in Washington, D.C. at age 85.

Five years ago: Former Liberian President Charles Taylor became the first head of state since World War II to be convicted by an international war crimes court as he was found guilty of arming Sierra Leone rebels in exchange for "blood diamonds" mined by slave laborers and smuggled across the border. (Taylor was sentenced to 50 years in prison.) Pakistan's Supreme Court convicted Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani (gee-LAH'-nee) of contempt but spared him a prison term for refusing to reopen a corruption case against his boss, President Asif Ali Zardari (AH'-seef ah-LEE' zahr-DAH'-ree).

One year ago: Republican Donald Trump roared to victory in Maryland, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Delaware and Rhode Island while Democrat Hillary Clinton prevailed in four of those states, ceding Rhode Island to Bernie Sanders. Kelly Ripa returned to her daytime talk

show after time off to "gather (her) thoughts" in response to learning her co-host Michael Strahan was leaving.

Today's Birthdays: Architect I.M. Pei is 100. Movie composer Francis Lai is 85. Actress-comedian Carol Burnett is 84. Rhythm-and-blues singer Maurice Williams is 79. Songwriter-musician Duane Eddy is 79. Singer Bobby Rydell is 75. Rock musician Gary Wright is 74. Actress Nancy Lenehan is 64. Actor Giancarlo Esposito is 59. Rock musician Roger Taylor (Duran Duran) is 57. Actress Joan Chen is 56. Rock musician Chris Mars is 56. Actor-singer Michael Damian is 55. Actor Jet Li (lee) is 54. Rock musician Jimmy Stafford (Train) is 53. Actor-comedian Kevin James is 52. Record company executive Jeff Huskins is 51. Former U.S. Poet Laureate Natasha Trethewey (TREHTH'-eh-way) is 51. Actress Marianne Jean-Baptiste is 50. Country musician Joe Caverlee (Yankee Grey) is 49. Rapper T-Boz (TLC) is 47. First lady Melania Trump is 47. Actress Shondrella Avery is 46. Country musician Jay DeMarcus (Rascal Flatts) is 46. Country musician Michael Jeffers (Pinmonkey) is 45. Rock musician Jose Pasillas (Incubus) is 41. Actor Jason Earles is 40. Actor Leonard Earl Howze is 40. Actor Tom Welling is 40. Actor Pablo Schreiber is 39. Actor Nyambi Nyambi is 38. Actress Jordana Brewster is 37. Actress Stana Katic is 37. Actress Marnette Patterson is 37. Actor Channing Tatum is 37. Actress Emily Wickersham is 33. Actor Aaron Weeks is 31.

Thought for Today: "Friends may come and go, but enemies accumulate." - Dr. Thomas F. Jones, Jr., American college official (1916-1981).

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:

- Second chapters - You finished a great career. Now tell us about your second (and third and fourth?) chapters of life.

- 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.

- **Most unusual** place a story assignment took you.

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