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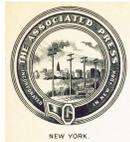
Connecting - May 05, 2017

1 message

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Colleagues,

Good Friday morning!

Today's issue contains more of your "First Byline" memories, and in the case of one of our colleagues, **Jim Hood**, an account of what was nearly his last byline.

We lead with a story on Fake News and how to avoid its spread. AP's director of social media, **Eric Carvin**, lists six ways to do so.

Enjoy your weekend!

Paul

6 Ways to Fight the Spread of Fake News from AP's Fact Check Team



By **ALEXA HOFFMAN, PR Newswire**

Information is everywhere. How is the average news consumer supposed to separate fact from fiction?

That's where the Associated Press steps in.

The AP has been a paragon of neutrality and fact-based content for 171 years, but only recently has it gotten attention specifically for the work it's doing to rid the world

of misinformation.

What started as a fact-checking mission to validate information presented by newsmakers - like elected officials' campaign ads, speeches, and debates - has migrated into an organization-wide effort to verify reported or shared news stories that appear to have bad information, says Eric Carvin, AP's social media editor.

Carvin is the point person in a partnership that began in December 2016 between the AP and Facebook, and illustrates some of the efforts the AP is undertaking to scrub misinformation from readers' views.

"Fake news is not strictly new," Carvin says. "There was a time, not long ago, when we would handle these things by ignoring them. If we wrote about false information, we worried we'd help disseminate it. The rise of the social platform has changed the calculus on this. Now, misinformation can spread like wildfire."

Any solution to stopping the spread of misinformation, he added, would have to involve social platforms, because that's where much of the false information is gaining traction.

Read more [here](#) - including these six steps from Eric Carvin:

1. Be clear about what is known, and what isn't.

The facts are the star of the show - build your stories around them, but also be honest about what isn't known or knowable.

2. Show your work.

Debunking a piece of misinformation? Be exceedingly clear about how you came to your conclusions. Cite specific, reliable sources of information and credible experts. The more you can say about how you did your reporting, the more effective your fact-checking will be.

3. Listen to your audience.

Come up with ways to let the public come to you with questions about suspicious content online - then provide detailed answers, and thank them for being part of the

process.

4. Avoid being insulting.

No matter how preposterous a false story may seem to you, don't talk down to the people who shared it or believed it. When possible, even acknowledge why someone may have found something believable. Then let facts rule the day.

5. Experiment with format and form.

A traditional text story may not be the best way to engage your audience around the truth. Experiment with video and with different text forms that connect people with information quickly. Varying your approach keeps the audience on its toes, and makes them more likely to pay attention.

6. Always be fact-checking.

Don't just focus on fake news debunks, or on distinct fact-checking items. Whenever you produce anything that shares information from a newsmaker, fact-check what they say immediately, and include what you find out right there in your reporting. If someone says something particularly egregious, don't even get to the end of the sentence without bringing in a reality check.

Your memories continue of that first byline

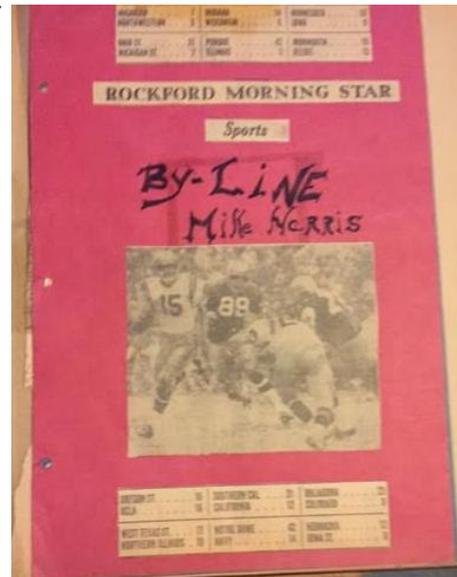
Al Cross ([Email](#)) - I got my first byline at 11, over a roundup of Little League and Babe Ruth League games in Albany, Ky., where I had just become the official scorer and agreed to take on the extra task of writing up the games for the Clinton County News. Keeping the scorebook was good training for journalism; both sides want a close call to be a hit, not an error. Some of the older players grumbled about being judged by a pipsqueak who didn't even play, and I mentioned that to one of the coaches, Joe Talbott. He replied, "You just call 'em like you see 'em." I remembered that years later, as I was covering politics for The Courier-Journal, and it became my motto as a columnist.

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Mike Harris (Email) - My first byline came in the fall of 1968 when I was working for the Rockford, Ill., Star and Register Republic, a combined AM-PM daily on the northern edge of Illinois. I was sent to cover a football game between Beloit College and St. Olaf College just over the Wisconsin border in Beloit. I was a big nervous and very excited to be sitting in that little, rickety wooden press box in that tiny stadium and meticulously taking notes at my first "real" assignment. I don't remember much about the game, but I do know I made sure my parents, who lived in nearby Madison, Wis., were aware of my big day.

I bought them a mail subscription to the newspaper so they could keep track of what I was doing. The paper would arrive a day or two late, but they were fine with that.

My father decided to keep a scrapbook of my work. At first, he carefully cut out every bylined story and pasted them in the huge scrapbook. My first time home, he proudly showed me the book, complete with artfully done title page. I was impressed and gratified. The next time I came home, besides my stories, there were a few photographs he liked. The next visit, most of my latest stories were in a pile, tucked between the pages of the scrapbook.



I said, "Dad, what's the deal? I thought you were going to keep a scrapbook for me." He just shook his head and replied: "I'm proud of you, but you write too damn many stories."

That was the end of the scrapbook which, by the way, I still have.

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Mike Tharp (Email) - While a 16-year-old copyboy and darkroom boy at the Topeka Capital-Journal, I was asked to write a weekly column. It was to be news from the city's five high schools and to run on Sundays. I lined up kids at each school as 'reporters' and called 'em every Friday. I wrote the first one in September 1961. My mugshot ran with the column. It was called The Teen Scene. My best friend, Greg Bien, a high school basketball teammate, still calls me 'Scene.'

And a byline that was nearly his last...

Jim Hood ([Email](#)) - A few days ago, Paul Stevens was asking for examples of first bylines. I can't remember my first but I remember the one that was nearly my last.

I was the editor of *The Current*, a struggling weekly competing against the much larger *Southern Illinoian* in -- where else? -- Southern Illinois. After purchasing many rounds of refreshments for sources at the courthouse, I had just published a story saying the state's attorney planned to seek indictments against a certain local gangster whose name I still cannot bring myself to type.

The indictments had to do with a rash of fires at "roadhouses" -- bars plopped down way out yonder in the county, far beyond city and township laws and closing hours. Besides drinks, the roadhouses featured slot machines, numbers games, off-track betting and other somewhat slatternly fare.

I was having coffee at Tiny's Diner, being feted by the patrons for my scoop when Tiny lumbered over. "Hey Jim, there's a phone call for you," he said. "Sounds important."

It was Richard, a lawyer friend who specialized in wearing expensive cufflinks and defending mobsters. "Jim, you're in trouble. You'd better get over to my office right away," he said. I hustled across the street, fearing I was being sued but it turned out to be much worse.

There in Richard's office sat the thug himself.

"Jim, my client is very unhappy with your story," Richard said. "You imply he burned those roadhouses down because they were competing with his bars."

"Well ..." I stuttered.

"That's not why he burned them down and he's insulted anyone would think those dumps were any kind of threat to his business. They weren't using his slot machines and number punchers is all it was," Richard said.

"Listen kid," the mobster interrupted. "I don't like you and I think you ought to grab your stuff and get the hell out of town. If I see you here tomorrow, it's not going to end well. I know where you live."

Where I lived was a downtown hotel (right) recently renovated at great expense. Its owner had been found beaten, gassed and shot to death a few weeks earlier. The front desk clerk, a bent-over wreck of a person, had previously been a reporter who "accidentally" fell down two flights of stairs. (The hotel itself "mysteriously" burned to the ground not too much later).

I mentally reviewed my many clippings that mentioned my gangster friend as a "person of interest" in various fires and beating and shooting deaths, and ruminated briefly on Southern Illinois' long history of thuggish behavior. "You got to get in line to commit a crime in E. St. Louis," seemed to be our motto, sort of our version of "Virginia is for lovers."

After thinking about it for a few seconds, I walked over to the hotel, grabbed my stuff and, as recommended, got the hell out.

I took refuge in a nearby mobbed-up town where I landed a gig doing news at what passed for the local radio station. I rented a room in a mobile home from a guy who worked at the Kelvinator plant and hoped the draft board would find me soon.

One day a call came into the newsroom.

"Are you the guy that just did the 2 o'clock news?" the caller asked.

"Uh, maybe," I said. "Who wants to know?"

It turned out the caller ran a rock 'n roll radio station in Tucson, Arizona, and said he wanted to hire me to do news there. I didn't care too much for rock 'n roll (or radio for that matter) and knew nothing about Arizona but it sounded better than living down the road from the Kelvinator plant and looking under my car each morning.

A few days later, I rolled into Tucson and ambled over to the Bank of America to open a checking account. To my horror, the guy standing in line in front of me was wearing a huge Colt 45 on his belt.

"My god, now I'm in the middle of a bank robbery," I thought. "But wait, a bank robber wouldn't stand in line, would he?"

I swallowed hard and asked the guy why he was packing heat, and so much of it.

"Snakes," he said, squinting meaningfully. I wouldn't want to try shooting a snake with a pistol but didn't want to press the matter with him.

My "vacation" from mob activity didn't last long. One of the first stories I covered in Tucson was a bombing at the home of Joe Bonanno, who was having something of a tiff with Peter Licavoli. The local myth was that although mobsters wintered in Tucson they did their business elsewhere, although there certainly seemed to be a lot of car bombs, odd fires and people jumping off tall buildings.

I heard the same thing after moving to Phoenix, until I ran into Arizona Republic reporter Don Bolles, who warned me not to believe that Arizona was immune from mob violence and to be careful what I wrote.

"These guys will kill you without even thinking about it," he said.

He was, of course, tragically correct.

Nightmares on being unable to get a story published

Henry Bradsher ([Email](#)) - Off and on for years after I retired from journalism, I had recurrent nightmares about being unable to get a story published.

Getting a story distributed was never a problem with AP, of course. Nor was it a problem after I left AP in 1969 (in frustration because Keith Fuller kept putting me off about a new assignment after a Nieman year). While reporting from Asia for the Washington Star for more than five years, I could get everything into the paper (and some of it distributed by The NY Times news service, which had a tie-in with the Star) - even things that, on three occasions, Henry Kissinger tried to get my editor to kill because they contradicted erroneous lines that he had political reasons to peddle.

In the last six plus years before the Star folded in 1981, I was from Washington traveling a lot to report from every continent except Antarctica. Usually I telexed stories back from abroad, but toward the end of trips some stories were brought home for publication.

For years after the Star folded in 1981 and I went into government work, I had occasional variations of a dream involving covering a good story in some foreign country. One variation was trying to get a telex connection to the Star but getting no response. A more frequent variety, however, was coming back to the Star building in southeast Washington and finding it empty, or finding what had been the newsroom occupied by people who did not recognize me and had nothing to do with publishing a newspaper.

Such nightmares must have occurred periodically for at least a decade after I quit reporting. But I still recall with pleasure my years of reporting for AP and the Star - and getting into print.

Connecting profile - Jason Lockwood

Jason Lockwood ([Email](#)) - Some say it was inevitable. Some say it was in my blood. I say it was encouraged from when I was a small boy, but then left up to me to decide. I'm talking about writing, and I grew up in a family of writers, but in particular my late father George, and my mother Eileen.

George Lockwood is a name well-known in AP circles - or at least, I think it is. He spent his entire career as a journalist, and a fine one, at that. He received awards and accolades for his work over the decades. He wrote two books - and he was my dad.



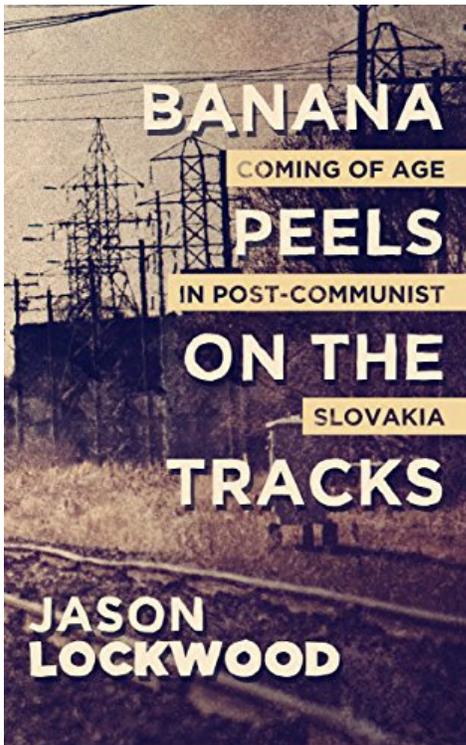
Eileen Lockwood is my mother, and an exemplary writer and editor in her own right. She was no shadow to my father; she was his complement. Together they forged a life together for nearly six decades, and would have continued to do so had ALS not claimed my dad's life at age 81, in 2013.

I am their youngest son. I don't know if I've ever believed in the importance of birth order, though. What they both gave me, irrespective of where I sit in the family pecking order, is a curiosity about people and the world they inhabit. They taught me to ask questions, and to seek the answers. They told me I should never take anyone's say-so as the final word on any topic, whether the words came from the mouth of a close friend, or from a revered journalist's pen. *Think for yourself*, they insisted.

As a teenager, I left the United States for the first time and spent a year in Belgium. Then I moved to Quebec City at age 20 to complete my degree at the Université Laval. A few years after that, I packed up my life again and moved to Slovakia to teach English for a year. It was this year that motivated me to join the fray as a writer, albeit a generation later.

Soon after my father's passing, I took it upon myself to tell my story of the intrepid young English teacher in former Communist Slovakia, circa 1992-93. My dad had happily finished his memoir, entitled *Peanuts, Pogo, and Hobbes*, and it got me thinking that I could relate a

few interesting tales about my experiences in a strange little country struggling to recover from decades of oppression.

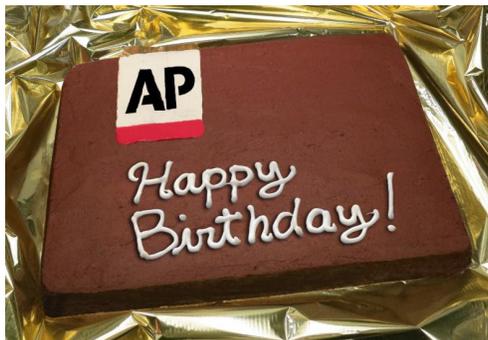


The result, after two years of work, was my self-published memoir entitled *Banana Peels on the Tracks: Coming of Age in Post-Communist Slovakia* (available from Amazon [here](#)). It's a labor of love, to be sure, but it was also my writerly coming out party. I dedicated the book to my dad, of course, but it was my mother who did a thorough editing job of the manuscript. Though it is my book, and my story, my parents run throughout it, if not explicitly, then behind the words, or perhaps even beside them, like comments scrawled in the margins of a beloved novel.

These days, I help other self-published authors deliver their stories to the world, through my small business *Bloomwood Media* (bloomwood.com.au), based in Sydney, Australia, which I run with my partner Steven Bloom. Our tagline is: *The Self-Publisher's Publisher*.

I'm also hard at work on a novel, set partially in Slovakia, Australia, and the U.S., which I've titled *The Journalist's Son*. It's not an autobiographical story, despite its title, but journalism has informed my life for so long that I thought I just *had* to create a story set in that world. Stay tuned.

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



On Saturday to...

Greg Nokes - g_nokes@yahoo.com

On Sunday to...

Mike Feinsilber - mikefeinsilber@gmail.com

Bud Hunt - budhunt72@gmail.com

Roy Wenzl - rwenzl@wichitaeagle.com

Stories of interest

AP and other news organizations call for press freedom in Bahrain

The Associated Press has joined with other news organizations in signing a letter to King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa of Bahrain, calling on him to instruct his government to allow journalists to freely operate in the country.

"Recent actions have had a chilling effect on the media's ability to cover Bahrain at a time when the country faces a growing set of challenges," says the letter dated April 27 and released today.

Read more [here](#).

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Hands across America: How to make local/national journalism collaborations work (Nieman)

If you're a journalist at a national news organization, you're struggling with big, meaty questions right now about trust, power and access. You've just been through the most unique election in American history and you're feeling disconnected from big swaths of the country.

If you're a journalist at a local news organization, you're dealing with an incredibly unforgiving marketplace. For so-called "legacy" newsrooms, you're doing more with less; for startups and newer digital enterprises, your small team is likely fighting for sustainability.

What if there were creative ways to give both national and local news orgs access to some of the resources they lack and, in turn, help produce more meaningful journalism that reaches broader audiences? Such is the goal of the local/national news partnerships initiative by the Center for Cooperative Media (graciously funded by the Democracy Fund and the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation): to evaluate and foster more and better collaboration between national and local news organizations.

Read more [here](#).

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Death by 1,000 paper cuts (Nieman)

As long as there have been big corporate newspaper chains answering to the stock market rather than independent, family ownership, newsrooms have braced for "layoff season" - coming right before the start of a new fiscal year, or immediately following.

A far more brutal round of layoffs comes after a local, family-owned newspaper is acquired by one of these companies. And that's happened at increasing frequency over the past few years as Gannett and Gatehouse have gone on buying sprees.

But also in the past few years, we've seen "layoff season" become year-round.

Read more [here](#).

Today in History - May 5, 2017



By The Associated Press

Today is Friday, May 5, the 125th day of 2017. There are 240 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On May 5, 1862, Mexican troops defeated French occupying forces in the Battle of Puebla.

On this date:

In 1494, during his second voyage to the Western Hemisphere, Christopher Columbus landed in Jamaica.

In 1821, Napoleon Bonaparte, 51, died in exile on the island of St. Helena.

In 1892, Congress passed the Geary Act, which required Chinese in the United States to carry a certificate of residence at all times, or face deportation.

In 1942, wartime sugar rationing began in the United States.

In 1945, in the only fatal attack of its kind during World War II, a Japanese balloon bomb exploded on Gearhart Mountain in Oregon, killing the pregnant wife of a

minister and five children. Denmark and the Netherlands were liberated as a German surrender went into effect.

In 1955, West Germany became a fully sovereign state.

In 1961, astronaut Alan B. Shepard Jr. became America's first space traveler as he made a 15-minute suborbital flight aboard Mercury capsule Freedom 7.

In 1973, Secretariat won the Kentucky Derby, the first of his Triple Crown victories.

In 1981, Irish Republican Army hunger-striker Bobby Sands died at the Maze Prison in Northern Ireland in his 66th day without food.

In 1987, the congressional Iran-Contra hearings opened with former Air Force Maj. Gen. Richard V. Secord the lead-off witness.

In 1994, Singapore caned American teenager Michael Fay for vandalism, a day after the sentence was reduced from six lashes to four in response to an appeal by President Bill Clinton.

In 2007, Kenya Airways jet crashed in southern Cameroon, killing all 114 people on board.

In 2012, five Guantanamo Bay prisoners, including Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the self-proclaimed mastermind of the Sept. 11 attacks, were arraigned in a proceeding that dragged on for 13 hours due to stalling tactics by the defendants.

In 2016, former Los Angeles trash collector Lonnie Franklin Jr. was convicted of 10 counts of murder in the "Grim Sleeper" serial killings that targeted poor, young black women over two decades. President Barack Obama commuted the prison sentences of 58 federal convicts, part of a broader push to ease punishments for nonviolent drug offenders.

Today's Birthdays: Actress Pat Carroll is 90. Former AFL-CIO president John J. Sweeney is 83. Saxophonist Ace Cannon is 83. Country singer-musician Roni Stoneman is 79. Actor Michael Murphy is 79. Actor Lance Henriksen is 77. Comedian-actor Michael Palin is 74. Actor John Rhys-Davies is 73. Rock correspondent Kurt Loder is 72. Rock musician Bill Ward (Black Sabbath) is 69. Actress Melinda Culea is 62. Actress Lisa Eilbacher is 60. Actor Richard E. Grant is

60. Former broadcast journalist John Miller is 59. Rock singer Ian McCulloch (Echo and the Bunnymen) is 58. NBC newsman Brian Williams is 58. Rock musician Shawn Drover (Megadeth) is 51. TV personality Kyan Douglas is 47. Actress Tina Yothers is 44. Rhythm and blues singer Raheem DeVaughn is 42. Actor Santiago Cabrera is 39. Actor Vincent Kartheiser is 38. Singer Craig David is 36. Actress Danielle Fishel is 36. Actor Henry Cavill is 34. Actor Clark Duke is 32. Soul singer Adele is 29. Rock singer Skye Sweetnam is 29. Rhythm-and-blues singer Chris Brown is 28.

Thought for Today: "It is quite true what philosophers say: that Life must be understood backwards. But that makes one forget the other assumption: that it must be lived forwards." - Soren Kierkegaard, Danish philosopher (born this date in 1813, died 1855).

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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