



Paul Shane <pjshane@gmail.com>

## Connecting - June 14, 2017

1 message

**Paul Stevens** <paulstevens46@gmail.com>  
Reply-To: paulstevens46@gmail.com  
To: pjshane@gmail.com

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# Connecting

June 14, 2017

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Colleagues,

Good Wednesday morning!

The appointment of **Julie Pace** as the new AP Washington bureau chief got extensive coverage in Tuesday's issue of Connecting.

And the fact she will continue her news reporting and analysis on Washington and American politics, while directing the AP's largest bureau, reminded me of someone else who served in that dual role - our Connecting colleague **Walter Mears**. Walter won the Pulitzer Prize for his reporting of the 1976 presidential election and then served as Washington bureau chief from 1977-83.

That's pretty heady company for Julie, huh? I am betting she is up for the challenge.

But enough of the important stuff of journalism! Our pets in the AP workplace series has a new entry - one of an exotic-dateline kind, from Moscow, written by one of AP's finest reporters, **Ann Blackman** - a national reporter for AP for 15 years and a reporter for Time Magazine for 16 years, as well as the author of books.

Did I mention her weakness for dogs? Well, read all about it in our lead-off article for today's issue.

Paul

## **The tale of Flash - an ice-breaker in Moscow**



**Ann Blackman (Email)** - Our family moved to Russia in 1987 when (AP President and CEO) Lou Boccardi appointed Mike (Putzel, Ann's husband) COB in Moscow. One of my contingencies for going (there were many) was that Flash, our Golden retriever, must go, too. The Soviet Union was just beginning to open up with Gorbachev's glasnost, but most Russians were still afraid to talk to foreigners. Flash proved to be an ice-breaker. Russians love dogs and couldn't resist asking, "Kakaya paroda?" What breed?

There were no other Golden retrievers in the USSR at that time, and Soviet customs officers didn't know how to list him on the form. After much discussion at the airport, they made it official: He would be called a "Yellow Hunter."

Flash commuted regularly between our AP apartment and the AP bureau two floors above us, where he liked to hang out in the lunch room. He often went with me to the Time office across the street, where he would chase the bureau cat and then sleep under my desk. Flash was trained to both voice and hand signals. It never failed to impress people when we barked the Russian word for, "Down" or "Sit," and he would obey. No one noticed our hand signals. His reputation was further enhanced by the brass name tag and American rabies license that jangled from his collar. Russians thought they were prizes for obedience.

One day Flash disappeared—we think he was stolen—but as the only Golden in the country, all the militiamen had to do was call around to colleagues. A few hours later, we received a phone call from someone who said only that the dog was outside and abruptly hung up. We found Flash tied to a post—filthy, exhausted but very happy to see us. He occasionally did run away, and at least once dashed out of the foreigners' compound where we lived and across the eight lanes of busy Kutuzofsky Prospekt to reach the bank of the Moscow River. A Russian man found him and identified him by his name tag, which had the AP bureau's phone number and address engraved on one side in English and the other in Russian.

A pushy woman tried to convince Mike and me to meet her alone in the park at night, allegedly so Flash could run free without scaring children. Our KGB antenna went up! We decided quickly that meeting alone in a park at night with a Soviet woman we didn't know was not a good idea.

One weekend when Time bureau chief Strobe Talbott and his friend Richard Holbrooke were visiting Moscow, I drove them out to Peredelkino, a community of artists and writers set in a beautiful birch park, one of the few places where we could walk for miles and talk without the constant company of the KGB. Flash had a fine romp, but he also rolled in a dead bird. The trip home was particularly long because a weak-stomached Holbrooke insisted on stopping the car every few miles so he could get out for fresh air.



**The Putzels**

Our daughter and son took music lessons from Russian instructors who came to the apartment. Leila played the piano and Christof the clarinet. Whenever they practiced, Flash howled along. We thought it hilarious; the Russian teachers did not.

The dog was chasing crows in a city park one day and stepped on a broken vodka bottle, puncturing a blood vessel in his right hind leg. Blood spurted everywhere. I tried stanching the flow by turning my jacket into a tourniquet, but it didn't work. We needed a vet.

A Soviet dog lover had the answer: Call one. In Russia, vets make house calls. Could this be possible?

Over the phone, we explained that our "yellow hunter" was in trouble. Within an hour, the apartment buzzer sounded. We opened the door to find not one vet, but

two, smartly dressed in white smocks and tall white hats. They sized up the situation, hoisted Flash onto the dining room table, tied his muzzle with gauze and opened their little black bag.

The chief vet shouted orders - "Scissors!" "Scalpel!" "Needle!" - while the other assisted. They gave him a shot of novocaine and another of antibiotics and proceeded to sew him up. Through it all, Flash lay silently on the table, raising his head only once to roll his eyes, as if to say, "Who knew?"

The vets bandaged the leg, ordered rest for the patient and announced they would be back in ten days to remove the stitches. The bill: ten rubles, or in those days, about 16 bucks.

Every summer, when we returned to the U.S. for vacation, we needed to a stamped letter from a Russian vet to show U.S. Customs that Flash was in good health. The first year, the Time bureau driver took him to the vet, along with a bottle of Scotch and returned with an official letter saying "One brown dog: healthy." By the end of the third year, we just sent the Scotch.

Flash crossed the Atlantic Ocean 6 times. He died in 1994 at 12. One great dog.

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## **New book by AP veteran Harold Olmos tells story of bloody crime in Bolivia**

Connecting colleague **Harold Olmos** ([Email](#)) - has a new book out, called *Sown* (sculpted or carved, literal trans of Labrado) on memory (or the memory). The rollout occurred June 3 in a tightly full room at the Santa Cruz International Book Fair. An English version is not yet available.

He shares:

This book tells the story and sequels of a bloody crime that took place in Bolivia in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, where I live since my retirement from AP back in 2007.

It tells episodes about the most outstanding penal case in Bolivian history (and probably among the world's few in modern times): eight years, and still counting, since its outset in April 2009. A squad police unit surrounded a downtown hotel at predawn hours and killed three guests -a Bolivian-Croatian, a Hungarian, and an Irishman. All, plus two survivors of the attack and three dozen citizens were charged of plotting to kill President Evo Morales, ignite a terrorist war and split the country with the rich Eastern region seceding to create a new nation right in the center of South America. But it was easier to charge than prove. After four years of oral trial, there are no sentences. And although some pleaded guilty in trade for short sentences the bargain took place after at least after six years in prison. The trade-off was seen by some analysts as reminiscent of the Moscow Trials of the 1930s under Stalin. They acknowledged crimes they had denied consistently for years. Other defendants have refused to accept charges and the trial is still on. Among those tried is Gen. Gary Prado Salmón, who as a Ranger unit commander defeated guerrilla champion, Argentinian-Cuban Ernesto Che Guevara in the jungle of Southeastern Bolivia. A year ago, he was excluded from the trial, although not of charges, because of health problems.

Defendants have denied the charges all along, claiming that they resulted from a plot mounted by the government to repress political opposition in the country's Eastern region, Bolivia's richest, and, in addition, revenge Che's defeat and his death.

## Connecting mailbox

### ***Praise for Betsy Blaney's story of successful job search***

**Rod Richardson** ([Email](#)) -I really enjoyed reading Betsy Blaney's story Tuesday. She was always one of my favorite AP people so I was thrilled to learn she'd found a job so quickly. Plus, I think it's one she'll enjoy. Thanks to Connecting, I was able to stop what I was doing and craft a congratulatory note that I hope will encourage and inspire her. It's always a bit daunting to branch out of our comfort zones, but that's the world we're living in so we may as well embrace it.

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### ***For one shining moment, he was an NBA writer - for a day***

**Bill Schiffmann (Email)** - More than 40 years ago, for one brief shining moment, I was an NBA writer, covering the Golden State Warriors for one game in their 1975 championship sweep of the Washington Bullets.

I had never covered basketball before, and would never cover a game again. Shows you how the NBA has grown and prospered.

I was two years into my career as an AP journalist, working in the Fresno, CA, bureau with Correspondent Joe Bigham. One day he got a phone call. He hung up and turned to me and I think he said something like this - "You like basketball, right? Eric Prewitt can't cover the next championship game, so pack a bag. They need you up there."

The series was notable for being the first time in any of the four major sports in which both playoff teams featured African-American coaches, Al Attles for the Warriors and K.C. Jones for the Bullets. Also, Warriors' home games were held not at their home in Oakland but at the ancient Cow Palace in Daly City because of scheduling conflicts. The series opened with a Warriors victory in Landover, MD. I covered the third game, a 109-101 Warriors victory.

Arriving in San Francisco, I got a quick briefing on what to do, where my seat was and how to get in the arena. I read everything that had been written about the Warriors season and the preceding games. I was so not ready, but off I went. I had asked about using the AP Sports Writer byline, but was advised in no uncertain terms that I wasn't one and would use my normal Associated Press Writer tag.

Watching finals MVP Rick Barry in person was a treat. Nobody in New York yelled at me.

I counted it as a win.

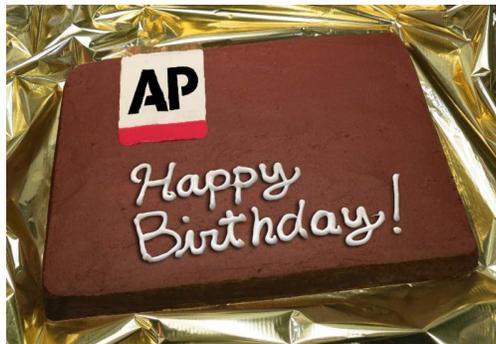
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***Connecting sky shot - Baltic Sea***



**Kevin Walsh** ([Email](#)) shares this sky shot taken on the Baltic Sea, between Helsinki, Finland and Stockholm, Sweden.

## Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



To

Bill Handy - [bhmedill@gmail.com](mailto:bhmedill@gmail.com)

## Stories of interest

## ***Megyn Kelly, Alex Jones and how to interrogate a liar without getting played*** (Poynter)

Megyn Kelly and NBC News are standing by their decision to give airplay to crank conspiracy theorist Alex Jones, despite an ad boycott by J.P. Morgan Chase and an outcry from defenders of Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting victims whose memory Jones has defiled by claiming their murders were staged to undermine gun rights.

Jones is notorious for riling up his anti-government followers with doctored videos and elaborate lies, among them that the 9/11 and Oklahoma City attacks were "inside jobs," massacres at Sandy Hook and Orlando were "hoaxes," Hillary Clinton was running a satanic pedophile ring in a pizza parlor, government bombs have turned frogs gay, and a yogurt company was employing migrant rapists.

Read more [here](#).

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## ***We took major heat for backing Trump; here's what we think now*** (Star Tribune)

By **GARY ABERNATHY**

HILLSBORO, Ohio - As publisher and editor of the Times-Gazette, a small daily newspaper in this southwest Ohio town (pop. 6,600), I thought our endorsement of Donald Trump for president last year seemed innocuous enough. Then someone said to me, "Did you see that Rachel Maddow mentioned the Times-Gazette last night?"

Seriously?

Next, Politico called. I soon discovered that our two-sentence endorsement was being reported - and often ridiculed - far and wide. The nearby Cincinnati Enquirer



produced a post headlined "This Ohio paper is one of only six to endorse Donald Trump." Not one of six in Ohio - one of six in the entire nation.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Mike Holmes.

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## ***7 graduation speeches that will renew your faith in journalism*** (Poynter)

By DANIEL FUNKE

As a recent college graduate, I can attest that it's been a busy - albeit exciting - couple of months. And some journalists and media executives have been getting in on the action.

Several prominent national journalists, editors and media executives, including Marty Baron of The Washington Post and Nikole Hannah-Jones of New York magazine, have addressed the newest batch of college graduates over the past few weeks. While the speeches vary in tone and subject, they all share a reverence for facts and responsible storytelling.

Here are a seven of the most notable and inspiring 2017 graduation speeches.

Read more [here](#).

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## ***Is Facebook serious about helping publishers find subscribers? Industry leaders are watching carefully*** (Poynter)

The Holy Grail of the news business these days is figuring out how to turn the droves of readers who swipe past stories on social media into a reliable stream of

revenue.

As more and more users flock to monoliths like Facebook, Snapchat and Instagram and away from publishers' websites, many news organizations have been hard-pressed to cash in on these "distributed" audiences.

But there was a rare break in the clouds Monday afternoon when The Wall Street Journal reported that Facebook is building a tool that will allow users to subscribe to news publications directly within the mobile app, in a move that could provide a long-sought money-making avenue on the world's most popular social media network.

Read more [here](#).

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## ***The Japan Times sold to Tokyo-based PR company*** (Nikkei Asian Review)

TOKYO -- Japanese autoparts maker Nifco has decided to sell The Japan Times, an English-language daily newspaper, to Tokyo-based public relations company News2u Holdings for an undisclosed amount at the end of June.

Nifco purchased the paper in 1996 because its U.S.-educated founder and president at the time, Toshiaki Ogasawara, wanted to bring news from Japan to the world. But following Ogasawara's death last year, the company decided the time was right to sell The Japan Times.

It was always more of a pet project than a business investment, with a Nifco official saying, "We didn't expect synergies with our core businesses."

Read more [here](#).

## **The Last Word**

## ***Rude Things You Should Never Say*** (The Spruce)

Have you ever heard someone say something rude that had you wondering what they were thinking? Have you ever blurted a rude comment that made you wish you'd kept your mouth shut?

People say rude things all the time, but that doesn't make it okay. Learn to be a good conversationalist and avoid saying things that are snarky, nosy, gross, sarcastic, or downright mean.

If you have a tendency to stick your foot in your mouth and say the wrong thing or have bad timing with comments, make a concerted effort to change your behavior. Study a list of conversation starters before going to a party or have a friend nearby to give you a sign that you're heading into dangerous territory with your comments.

Read more [here](#).

## **Today in History - June 14, 2017**



**By The Associated Press**

Today is Wednesday, June 14, the 165th day of 2017. There are 200 days left in the year. This is Flag Day.

**Today's Highlight in History:**

On June 14, 1777, the Second Continental Congress approved the design of the original American flag, declaring: "Resolved, that the Flag of the thirteen United States shall be thirteen stripes, alternate red and white; that the Union be thirteen stars, white on a blue field, representing a new constellation."

**On this date:**

In 1775, the Continental Army, forerunner of the United States Army, was created.

In 1801, former American Revolutionary War general and notorious turncoat Benedict Arnold died in London.

In 1922, Warren G. Harding became the first president heard on radio, as Baltimore station WEAR broadcast his speech dedicating the Francis Scott Key memorial at Fort McHenry.

In 1934, Max Baer defeated Primo Carnera with an 11th round TKO to win the world heavyweight boxing championship in Long Island City, New York.

In 1940, German troops entered Paris during World War II; the same day, the Nazis began transporting prisoners to the Auschwitz (OWSH'-vitz) concentration camp in German-occupied Poland.

In 1943, the U.S. Supreme Court, in *West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette*, ruled 6-3 that children in public schools could not be forced to salute the flag of the United States.

In 1954, President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed a measure adding the phrase "under God" to the Pledge of Allegiance.

In 1967, the space probe Mariner 5 was launched from Cape Kennedy on a flight that took it past Venus. California Gov. Ronald Reagan signed a bill liberalizing his state's abortion law. The movie "To Sir, with Love," starring Sidney Poitier, was released by Columbia Pictures.

In 1972, the Environmental Protection Agency ordered a ban on domestic use of the pesticide DDT, to take effect at year's end.

In 1982, Argentine forces surrendered to British troops on the disputed Falkland Islands.

In 1985, the 17-day hijack ordeal of TWA Flight 847 began as a pair of Lebanese Shiite (SHEE'-eyet) Muslim extremists seized the jetliner shortly after takeoff from Athens, Greece.

In 1992, Mona Van Duyn became the first woman to be named the nation's Poet Laureate by the Library of Congress.

Ten years ago: Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas declared an emergency after the Hamas militant group effectively took control of the Gaza Strip. James Ford Seale was convicted of kidnapping Charles Eddie Moore and Henry Hezekiah Dee, two black teenagers who were drowned by the Ku Klux Klan in Mississippi in 1964. (Seale, sentenced to life, died in prison in 2011 at age 76.) Ruth Graham, the wife of evangelist Billy Graham, died in Montreat, North Carolina, at age 87. Former U.N. Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim died in Vienna at age 88. The San Antonio Spurs won their fourth NBA title in nine years as they defeated the Cleveland Cavaliers 83-82 in Game 4.

Five years ago: In dueling speeches in the battleground state of Ohio, Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney, speaking in Cincinnati, described the Obama administration as the very "enemy" of people who create jobs; President Barack Obama, going second in Cleveland, asked the nation to buy into his vision for four more years or face a return to the recession-era "mistakes of the past."

One year ago: President Barack Obama angrily denounced Donald Trump's anti-Muslim rhetoric in the wake of the Orlando nightclub shooting, blasting the views of the presumptive Republican presidential nominee as a threat to American security; Trump responded by suggesting that Obama seemed angrier at him than he was at the gunman. Democrat Hillary Clinton brought a close to the presidential primary season with a win in the District of Columbia. A 2-year-old boy was dragged into the water by an alligator near Disney's upscale Grand Floridian Resort & Spa; the child's remains were found the following day. Actress Ann Morgan Guilbert (Millie Helper on "The Dick Van Dyke Show") died in Los Angeles at age 87.

Today's Birthdays: Actress Marla Gibbs is 86. House Minority Whip Steny Hoyer, D-Md., is 78. Writer Peter Mayle is 78. Actor Jack Bannon is 77. Country-rock musician Spooner Oldham is 74. Rock singer Rod Argent (The Zombies; Argent) is 72. President Donald Trump is 71. Singer Janet Lennon (The Lennon Sisters) is 71. Rock musician Barry Melton is 70. Rock musician Alan White (Yes) is 68. Actor Eddie Mekka is 65. Actor Will Patton is 63. Olympic gold-medal speed skater Eric Heiden (HY'-dun) is 59. Jazz musician Marcus Miller is 58. Singer Boy George is 56.

Rock musician Chris DeGarmo is 54. Actress Traylor Howard is 51. Actress Yasmine Bleeth is 49. Actor Faizon Love is 49. Actor Stephen Wallem is 49. International Tennis Hall of Famer Steffi Graf is 48. Actor Sullivan Stapleton (TV: "Blindspot") is 40. Screenwriter Diablo Cody is 39. Actor Lawrence Saint-Victor is 35. Actor Torrance Coombs is 34. Actor J.R. Martinez is 34. Actor-singer Kevin McHale is 29. Actress Lucy Hale is 28. Pop singer Jesy Nelson (Little Mix) is 26. Country singer Joel Crouse is 25. Actor Daryl Sabara is 25.

***Thought for Today: "I am not the flag; not at all. I am but its shadow. I am whatever you make me, nothing more. I am your belief in yourself, your dream of what a People may become." - From a Flag Day address by U.S. Interior Secretary Franklin Knight Lane (1864-1921) recounting what Old Glory "said" to him.***

## Got a story or photos 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.

**Paul Stevens**  
**Editor, Connecting newsletter**  
[paulstevens46@gmail.com](mailto:paulstevens46@gmail.com)

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