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Connecting - February 16, 2018

1 message

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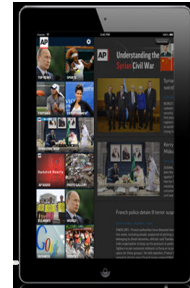
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Connecting

February 16, 2018

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Colleagues,

Good Friday morning!

Colleague **Joe Edwards** shared the belief in Thursday's Connecting that the AP was "poorer" when it long ago stopped the practice of hiring and promoting from within.

As I did so often during my bureau chief years, I went to **Margy McCay** - former AP director of personnel in the Human Resources department and a voice of wisdom and calm reason who was an invaluable resource for any type of issue for so many of us.

Like many of you who were in a hiring role during their AP careers, I looked for the best person possible for any opening, entry level or higher-level positions. And for promotions. No doubt, that practice is followed today.

Connecting would welcome your own thoughts.

On a lighter note, we bring you the first responses to the question posed by **Claudia DiMartino** in Thursday's issue: What's on the door of your refrigerator? Three of us answered the question. How about you?

Have a great weekend!

Paul

'Can't imagine any company surviving today with a strict promote-from-within approach'

Margy McCay ([Email](#)) - Yes, AP has hired and promoted from "outside" for many years. Promote-from-within was a strong tradition common in many industries and companies, particularly those that required (or thought they did) unique skills. It also was a way to continue cultures that were, well, what shall we say? "Comfortably homogeneous?"

I'd guess things began to change (oh, so slowly) in the 1960s with major societal shifts, picked up speed in the 1970s when various employment laws (and lawsuits) began to reflect those shifts, and took off in the next decades as the news industry and technology changed so dramatically.

If you look at non-editorial department heads in the early 1980s, most (Personnel, Communications, Treasury) were headed by former newsmen (and they WERE all men). Fast-forward a decade or two, and the departments bore different names and

were led and staffed by those with backgrounds not in news but in their specialty areas: HR, technology and finance.

When the AP expanded into new editorial areas (audio, video, graphics) it looked "outside" for expertise in those areas, too. I can't imagine any company surviving today with a strict promote-from-within approach.

'The need to remain agile, focused on the rapidly approaching future, is key.'

Mark Hamrick ([Email](#)) - Some observations here after seeing the thoughtful comments on staffing and promoting from the talented Joe Edwards.

As with many of your readers, I was a beneficiary of the system enabling long AP tenures. Mine was 26 years which involved taking on new responsibilities in Washington. I was a platoon leader for business news for broadcast and departed as a member of the online video team, which was a great opportunity to learn more about visual journalism. Beginning on day 1, there was a lot of learning on the job, including virtually everything related to business and financial news. I'm grateful to patient, well-qualified sources over those early years when asking the most basic questions was needed.

As if to demonstrate how much things can change, I'm now serving as the volunteer president of the Society of American Business Editors and Writers (or SABEW), as have several of our former or current AP colleagues.

Over a-quarter century, I watched the Washington broadcast operation scale up at the beginning of my tour in the mid-80s and downsizing toward the end when I departed in late 2012.

The sorting out of winners and losers is, as we are painfully aware, occurring rapidly and violently. There's more to come. One recently retired, well-respected TV news director told me recently that he believes the hit to local television is trailing newspapers by about a decade, as younger viewers turn away from TV and toward other sources of programming. This has been happening for network and local radio as well, amid the growing number of audio choices for listeners.

The Washington Post is winning, perhaps at the expense of smaller papers. When hosting the man leading the charge, Executive Editor Marty Baron for a SABEW forum a couple of years ago, I asked how hiring has changed over his career. Baron

reflected that years ago, a newspaper would hire and train new, often younger employees. He says he now seeks potential employees to bring new or better skills to the organization to help foster innovation.

On the one hand, I certainly share a sense of nostalgia for the era before the digital transition. I was mindful of that world going back to the '60s when my father was an AP "newsman" (as they were called) and a newspaper editor and publisher.

Through it all, we must adhere to the core values of journalism. On the other, nostalgia won't help employers or our fellow journalists succeed. The need to remain agile, focused on the rapidly approaching future, is key.

Candlelight vigil in Florida



A woman places a poster of shooting victim Meadow Pollack at one of 17 crosses after a candlelight vigil for the victims of the Wednesday shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, Thursday, Feb. 15, 2018. (AP Photo/Gerald Herbert)

It still works

Tammy Mitman ([Email](#)) - I've been the web editor of the Daily Hampshire Gazette, an AP member in Northampton, Mass., since last May. One part of the job I truly enjoy is selecting, preparing and then publishing AP copy on our website each morning.

On Thursday, the day after the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Florida, I was prepping two stories on the tragedy - an 11th ld-writethru of the main story and a 5th ld-writethru of a sidebar on the shooter - when I noticed that the same quote was used in both, attributed to two different people.

I called Boston and reported the problem to the reporter/editor on duty (I think it was Mark Pratt). Shortly thereafter, the AP moved a 12th ld-writethru of the main story, correcting the attribution.

It gave me a shot of happiness. A member call from Northampton to Boston corrected a Florida story, which then went out to the whole country. Despite cutbacks in newsrooms near and far, the great cooperative that is the AP still works.

It's kind of incredible that it does. We are all doing more with less, and nowhere does that seem more apparent than at the AP, to those of us who remember when bureaus had reporters, news editors, technicians, photographers and a bureau chief, too. Back in the 1980s, when I was the confidential secretary for the Concord, N.H., bureau (the hub for Northern New England), when we called Boston we'd get a Boston staffer ("Hooker here," Elaine Hooker would crisply say). Nowadays, when I pick up the phone and dial BX (I still know the number by heart), I sometimes find myself talking to a reporter in Philadelphia or an editor at a bureau even farther away.

But the AP still works. May its members make sure it always does.

The New Orleans bureau pet

Kent Prince ([Email](#)) - When the Times-Picayune kicked the AP out of the newsroom back in the 1970s, we moved into a mouse-infested high-rise across the street from the bus station. We soon learned that if we pushed aside ceiling tiles in the men's room and turned off the light, mice would fall through and we could catch them on the tiled floors. Woody Baird provided an old gerbil cage which fit nicely on the rewrite desk. We'd house the more interesting specimens and watch them run the wheel, then release them outside.

It was fun to show up for work in the morning and see what nightside had collected. We soon learned that if we gave the mice a chance, they'd escape. Not the kind of distraction you want running around the floor of a newsroom.

One morning I found the gerbil penthouse filled to overflowing with a huge rat. Several mice were cowering in the basement compartments. So I wrote out a mouse



lease: no more rats and we'd limit the occupancy to two which could stay awhile.

The landlord thought the AP was an A-1 tenant for his D-1 building, and he'd open the office door to show us off to visiting prospects. The mice did not meet with his approval and he kept the visitors peering from the distance of the hall. However, there was nothing in our lease against keeping mice and I think he knew in his heart that any kind of fuss would start with a journalistic description of how easy it was for us to corral our pets.

Wish I'd kept a journal. We had adventures galore. Turned out we were lucky in the chosen pair -- no children. Best fed mice in town, getting regular hunks of oyster and shrimp po-boys.

One occasion that I should mention: it was when a particularly curious escapee wandered around under our desks while we beavered away on something important. Candace Lee was typing furiously and - to her credit - wasn't nearly as interested in the escape as the escapee was in her. He got on the desk and was at her elbow when she barked with exasperation, never missing a keystroke, that somebody should put that thing back in his box.

Another one once crawled out of the contraption and made it to the secretary's office. We tried to surround it, but he was fast. A maintenance man saw through the glass partition that everybody was crawling around on hands and knees and he stuck his head in the door. "Shut the door! He'll get out!" we screamed. The hall helper was fast, saw what was up and stopped the poor creature's bolt to freedom with one swift stomp. He couldn't understand our response.

Bill Crider, the office poet, christened the survivor The Brute. Crider was taken with the too-obvious symbolism of the critter running like mad in that wheel and never getting anywhere. "Just like us," he'd say. The mouse lived on and finally died, fat from New Orleans food. A couple of months later a brief cropped up on the wire about a researcher who had kept a lab mouse alive for - I think - 16 months. A record. We'd had ours a lot longer than that. We were living a news story and missed it. We decided not to tell anybody.

More of your Olympics coverage stories

Jaime Aron ([Email](#)) - I was fortunate to cover seven Olympics and treasured every one. I was prompted to share a favorite story after reading Mike Tharp's post about Donnie Nelson at the 1988 Olympics ... because my tale involves Donnie and the 2008 Olympics in Beijing.

By then, he was the president of basketball operations for the Dallas Mavericks and I was the AP's Texas Sports Editor. Donnie went to Beijing as the chief advisor (GM, essentially) of China's Yao Ming-led basketball team and I was there writing roundups.

In the buildup to those Summer Games, I wrote a feature about Donnie's long history with China; when I met his mom a few years later, he introduced me as the guy who'd written that story. Anyway, we planned to meet for lunch in Beijing, and it proved to be quite the cloak-and-dagger experience.

Because of Yao's popularity, the Chinese basketball team bunked and practiced in secluded locations, moving every few days, all under the wary eye of guards. We each had Chinese cell phones, but Donnie knew his was being monitored, so he texted me from his U.S. phone. He gave me a time and intersection to meet. It took more than an hourlong cab ride from the Main Press Center to get there. (I remember Beijing being laid out in concentric circles. MPC was near the center and he was at one of the outer-most.)

I texted him once I arrived, which was his cue to elude his minders. We then hustled into the first restaurant we could find. It was around 3 p.m. and we were the only customers. We didn't speak Chinese. They didn't speak English. They just brought us a bunch of food. When it was time to pay, I handed them my wallet and trusted that they took the right amount. I seem to recall considering it cheap, at least compared to the cab ride.

The food was great, the experience/story even better. Donnie always was good for adventures; he even lured me into taking part in the [birth of a sport he conceived](#).

As for the story about his history w/China hoops, it ran as part of an exclusive pre-Olympics package of stories higher-ups conceived as a way to cash in on the Olympics. It proved so exclusive that Google has never been able to find it. However, I posted the story on [my website](#).

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Mike Harris (Email) - I was fortunate enough to work at two Olympics for the AP - the 1984 Games in Los Angeles and the 1988 Games in Seoul, Korea. The LA Games were fun and I enjoyed the experience, but Seoul was a whole different world and one of my favorite assignments in my four decades with the AP.

My sports, freestyle wrestling, didn't start until the second week of the Games, so I was an extra hand in the Main Press Center the first week. One favorite memory was walking down the street to the giant Hundai Department Store and wandering through the food market in the basement. Each day, I would buy a different flavor or two of kimchi and bring it back to the MPC for myself and others to try. That was really a cultural experience.

But my favorite non-sports memory from Seoul was an evening out with the late Marv Schneider, the late Bert Rosenthal and one other sports staffer, whom I can't remember. We were heading to a restaurant that had been recommended by one of the attendants in the press village and handed the written address to the cab starter in front of the MPC. He talked with the cab driver, handed him the paper, which he appeared to study, and all seemed right with the world. But what was supposed to be a 10-minute drive was suddenly 20 minutes and it seemed we were driving in circles.

The driver spoke no English and we didn't know much Korean. Marv thought he knew where we were supposed to go and kept yelling ``Yogi" or ``Chogi" - ostensibly right and left - but the driver was in his own world. Finally, he saw a crowd at a bus stop and got out, showing them the paper with the address. There were a lot of shrugs and he got back in the cab and started off again. Finally, he saw another cab, apparently from the same company, and hailed it. The drivers conferred and we were ushered into the second cab. We tried to pay the guy for his time, but he was embarrassed and refused.

The second cabby got us to the restaurant in a matter of minutes.

Once inside, there was another problem. No English on the menu. It was literally a mom and pop place, with the proprietors doing everything. We pointed to pictures on the menu and they smiled and nodded. Then the food started coming out, dish after dish. They apparently brought us some of everything on the menu.

It was all interesting and wonderful, but we began to get nervous about the cost. Finally the bill came. It amounted to about \$6 U.S. per person. We left a big tip.

The ride back was uneventful since every cabbie in Seoul knew where the MPC was.

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Guy Palmiotto (Email) - A photo of the team I collaborated with at the 1980 Olympics in Lake Placid. We are awaiting the AMTRAK ride home. I was part of the team that covered Luge and Bobsled held on Mt. Van Hovenburg. Tom Di Lustro was my Photo Editor on that assignment. My job was film and print handling for the wire. We needed automotive block heaters to prevent the film chemistries from freezing overnight and keeping the print chem at roughly 68 degrees. We got through it OK, but every morning was an adventure making sure we were ready for the day's events.

As for those in the photo, Tom Di Lustro wears the cowboy hat. Those at the rear of the photo, l-r, photogs Jack Smith and Tom Smart, photo tech Morris Damiano, photog Charlie Knoblock, photoed Norm Welton, photog Charles Tasnadi, Tokyo photoed Jackson, and photog Harry Cabluck with the shades, cannot remember the man in the foreground, a photoed from London. The young woman was Robin King who helped out as a film runner and messenger. Others in the photo I do not remember their names. I believe they were Tokyo staffers. Surprised I remembered that much.

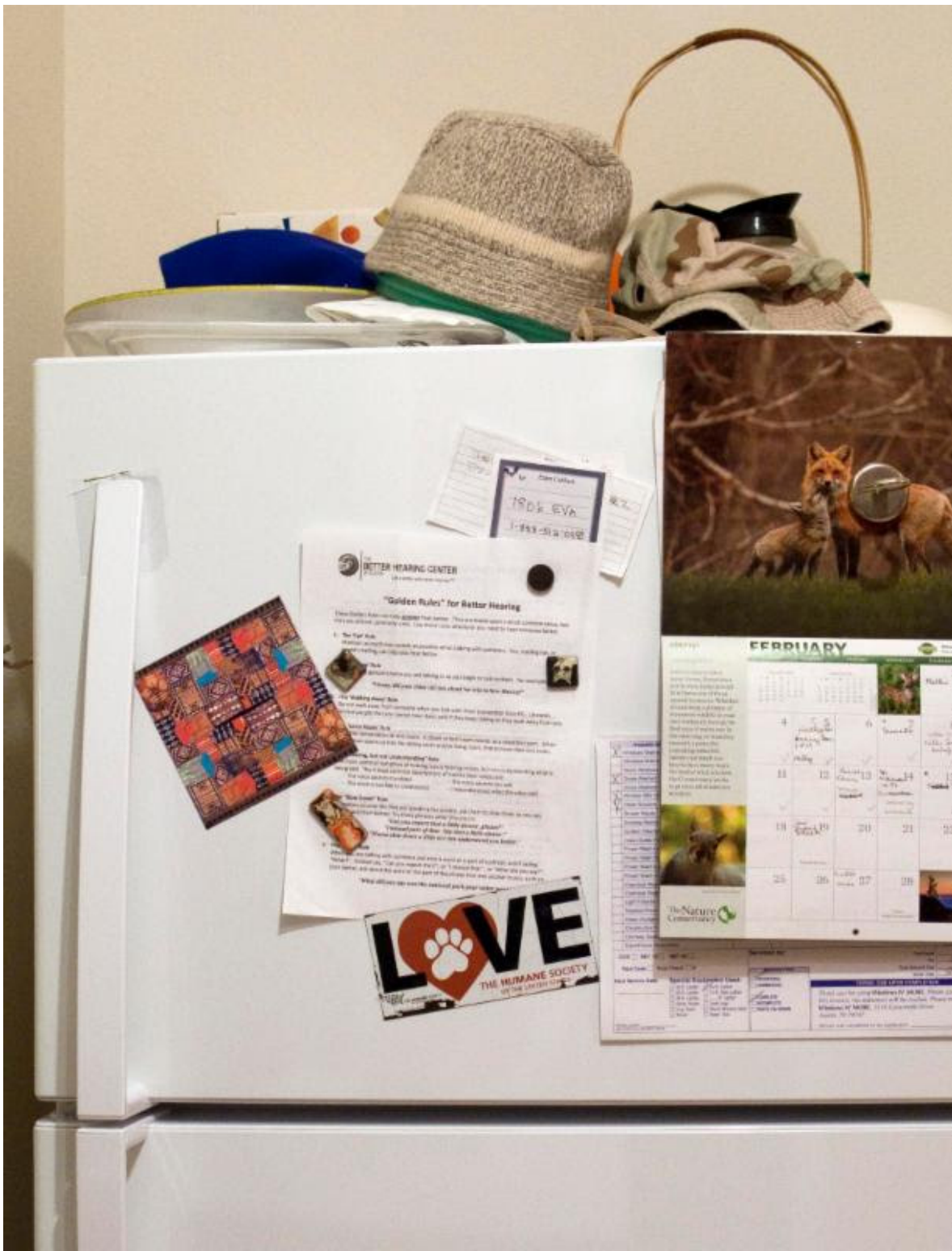
What's on your refrigerator door?



Neal Ulevich ([Email](#)) - As Claudia (DiMartino) mentions in Thursday's Connecting, I have a certain fondness for magnets, mostly making them...

And I did a book of same, which may be previewed and even purchased at [this link](#).

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Harry Cabluck



Paul Stevens

Heather Hollingsworth honored as 2017 AP Missouri-Kansas Staffer of

Year



From left: Clara Breneman, daughter of Heather Hollingsworth; Carter Breneman, Hollingsworth's son; Julie Wright, Missouri-Kansas news editor; Hollingsworth; Dave Breneman, Hollingsworth's husband; Kia Breaux, AP regional director/Midwest; and John Hanna, AP Topeka Correspondent. Photo credit/Fred Solis for KPA.

Kansas City newswoman Heather Hollingsworth was honored as the 2017 AP Missouri-Kansas Staffer of Year for her hard work and dedication as a breaking news staffer.

"Our state reports would not run without the people in Kansas City who are monitoring news and making calls, reporting rapidly on breaking news of national interest, cajoling rural sheriffs and coaxing documents out of county court clerks, often with no byline or recognition," news editor Julie Wright said in selecting Hollingsworth for the honor. "Heather is among these typically unsung journeymen and we are excited to give her a moment in the sun."

The award, which is sponsored by The Kansas City Star, was presented Feb. 9 as part of the Kansas Press Association's annual convention in Topeka.

Steve Haynes honored as 2017 AP Missouri-Kansas Member of Year



From left: Kia Breaux, AP regional director/Midwest; Steve Haynes, president of Nor'West Newspapers; and Julie Wright, AP news editor for Missouri and Kansas. (Photo by AP Topeka Correspondent John Hanna)

Steve Haynes, president of Nor'West Newspapers of Oberlin, Kansas, was honored as the 2017 AP Missouri-Kansas Member of the Year.

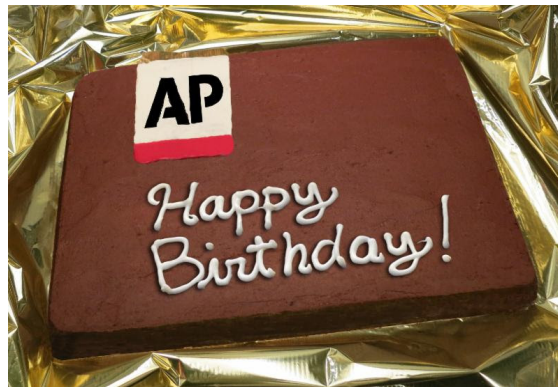
Nor'West Newspapers, which includes The Colby Free Press and several weeklies, are longtime AP supporters that regularly share news with members in the cooperative.

Haynes personally called AP Midwest regional director Kia Breaux on September 5, 2017, with a tip about a riot unfolding at the Norton Correctional Facility in northwestern Kansas. Haynes' tip enabled AP reporters to write a story the same evening for publication online and in time to be published in the next day's editions of newspapers across the state.

The riot was of high interest as it followed a week of unrest at other state prisons, many of which were understaffed.

The award, which is sponsored by News-Press & Gazette Co., of St. Joseph, Mo., was presented on Feb. 9 during the Kansas Press Association's President's Banquet in Topeka, Kan. The award was started in 2005 by David R. Bradley, Jr., Chairman and CEO of NPGCO, in honor of his late father, David R. Bradley, Sr., a former AP director who championed member sharing.

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



To

On Saturday...

Andy Waters - awaters36@gmail.com

On Sunday...

Peggy Andersen - andersenpeggy@gmail.com

Paul Caluori - pcaluori@optonline.net

Jurate Kazickas - juratekaz@gmail.com

Welcome to Connecting



John Kennedy - kennedyjohnh@gmail.com

Peggy Mooney - Peggmooney@hotmail.com

Stories of interest

The Heartbreak and Frustration of Covering One Mass Shooting After Another (New Yorker)

This week's attack at a high school in Parkland, Florida, was the third mass shooting that the twenty-three-year-old reporter Lulu Ramadan has covered. Photograph by John McCall / South Florida Sun-Sentinel / AP

By CHARLES BETHEA

Lulu Ramadan, a twenty-three-year-old from Palm Beach County, has been a breaking-news reporter at the Palm Beach Post since graduating from Florida Atlantic University, three years ago. On Wednesday, she was sitting in a Dunkin' Donuts in Boca Raton, waiting to interview a source for a story about the building of a new school, when she saw a flash on the news: someone had opened fire at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, in Parkland, Florida. Then her editor called: "Stop what you're doing and go to Broward," he said. "There's an active shooter."

"We hear false alarms a lot," Ramadan told me this morning. "Someone brings a gun to school, or a photo of someone with a gun circulates. So you give it a second

and gather details." On her drive to Parkland, she stayed on the phone with her editors, and learned that she was headed to the scene of a horrendous tragedy. She first went to a park across from a middle school, where staffers were sending parents to reunite with their kids, and spoke with parents. Then she went to a Marriott where parents were asked to pick up their children. A little after 5 p.m., she tweeted, "I envy reporters who only covered an out-of-the-blue mass shooting once upon a time. I'm 23, at a community paper & #Stoneman is my third." Eventually, she learned that the nineteen-year-old Nikolas Cruz had allegedly killed seventeen people and injured more than a dozen others.

Read more [here](#).

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Cambodia's Phnom Penh Post wanted a younger audience, so it started rapping the news. (The Splice Newsroom)

By **HOLLY ROBERTSON**

As newspaper sales stagnated, the Phnom Penh Post began looking for ways to appeal to more young Cambodians.

Koam Chanrasmey, the 28-year-old head of the newspaper's video department, searched for inspiration. He found it in online clips of newscasters rapping the news in countries like Uganda and Senegal, but felt the approach had to be carefully considered before it could be introduced to conservative Cambodia.

"Rap is not Cambodian culture, it's African-American culture," he says. "But we could see the increasing popularity of rap among young people, and felt it was a different way of engaging the young people with reading the news."

"We took that idea and [decided] let's see what we can do in Cambodia to fit the Cambodian audience."

Read more [here](#).

The Final Word

Ouch!



Jon Ralston @RalstonReports · 2h

Pro tip: On the day your huge banner headline screams "Horrific" about a mass shooting at a school, you might want to forego the gun ad right above it.



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Shared by Mark Mittelstadt.

Today in History - February 16, 2018



By The Associated Press

Today is Friday, Feb. 16, the 47th day of 2018. There are 318 days left in the year. This is the Chinese New Year of the Dog.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Feb. 16, 1968, the nation's first 911 emergency telephone system was inaugurated in Haleyville, Alabama, as the speaker of the Alabama House, Rankin Fite, placed a call from the mayor's office in City Hall to a red telephone at the police station (also located in City Hall) that was answered by U.S. Rep. Tom Bevill.

On this date:

In 1804, Lt. Stephen Decatur led a successful raid into Tripoli Harbor to burn the U.S. Navy frigate Philadelphia, which had fallen into the hands of pirates during the First Barbary War.

In 1862, the Civil War Battle of Fort Donelson in Tennessee ended as some 12,000 Confederate soldiers surrendered; Union Gen. Ulysses S. Grant's victory earned him the moniker "Unconditional Surrender Grant."

In 1868, the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks was organized in New York City.

In 1918, Lithuania proclaimed its independence from the Russian Empire. (Lithuania, which was occupied by the Soviet Union, then Nazi Germany, then the

Soviet Union again during World War II, renewed its independence in 1990).

In 1923, the burial chamber of King Tutankhamen's recently unearthed tomb was unsealed in Egypt by English archaeologist Howard Carter.

In 1937, Du Pont research chemist Dr. Wallace H. Carothers, inventor of nylon, received a patent for the synthetic fiber, described as "linear condensation polymers."

In 1945, American troops landed on the island of Corregidor in the Philippines during World War II.

In 1959, Fidel Castro became premier of Cuba a month and a-half after the overthrow of Fulgencio Batista.

In 1961, the United States launched the Explorer 9 satellite.

In 1977, Janani Luwum, the Anglican archbishop of Uganda, died in what Ugandan authorities said was an automobile accident, although it's generally believed that he was shot to death by agents of Idi Amin.

In 1988, seven people were shot to death during an office rampage in Sunnyvale, California, by a man obsessed with a co-worker who was wounded in the attack. (The gunman is on death row.)

In 1998, a China Airlines Airbus A300 trying to land in fog near Taipei, Taiwan, crashed, killing all 196 people on board, plus seven on the ground.

Ten years ago: President George W. Bush, on a six-day tour of Africa, made his first stop in Benin before flying on to Tanzania. John McCain, the presumed Republican presidential nominee, picked up a total of 50 GOP national convention delegates from Michigan and Louisiana. A car plowed into a group of street-racing fans obscured by a cloud of tire smoke on an isolated Maryland highway, killing eight people in the early morning darkness.

Five years ago: Gunmen attacked a camp for a construction company in rural northern Nigeria, killing a guard and kidnapping seven workers from Lebanon, Britain, Greece and Italy; the kidnappers later claimed to have killed the hostages. Billy Hunter was ousted as executive director of the National Basketball Players

Association by NBA players. Tony Sheridan, 72, a British singer who performed with the Beatles during their early years in Germany, died in Hamburg.

One year ago: In the first full-length news conference of his presidency, Donald Trump denounced what he called the "criminal" leaks that took down his top national security adviser, Michael Flynn. President Trump named Alexander Acosta as his new choice for labor secretary, a day after Andrew Puzder abruptly withdrew. Immigrants around the U.S. stayed home from work and school to demonstrate how important they were to America's economy, and many businesses closed in solidarity. A California man pleaded guilty in federal court in Riverside to providing the high-powered rifles used to kill 14 people in the 2015 San Bernardino terror attack (sentencing is expected later this year).

Thought for Today: "There are two ways to slice easily through life; to believe everything or to doubt everything. Both ways save us from thinking." -- Alfred Korzybski, Polish-American linguist (1879-1950).

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:

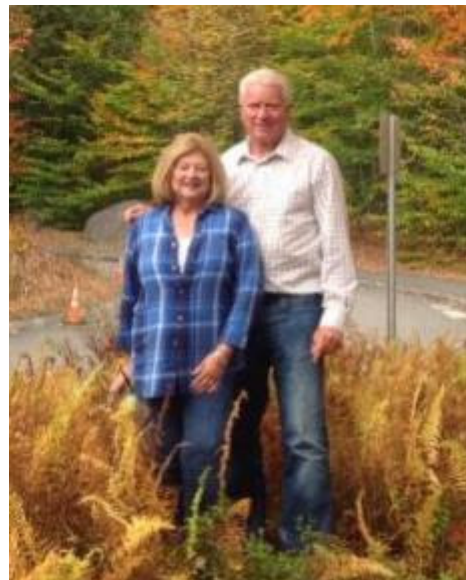
- **Second chapters** - You finished a great career. Now tell us about your second (and third and fourth?) chapters of life.

- **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.

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