



Paul Shane <pjshane@gmail.com>

Connecting - March 27, 2018

1 message

Paul Stevens <paulstevens46@gmail.com>

Tue, Mar 27, 2018 at 9:02 AM

Reply-To: paulstevens46@gmail.com

To: pjshane@gmail.com

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Connecting

March 27, 2018

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Colleagues,

Good Tuesday morning!

Our colleague **Mike Feinsilber** is a regular contributor to Connecting and to a blog done by another of our colleagues, **Jack Limpert**, called "[About Editing and Writing.](#)"

Mike attended Saturday's March for Our Lives in Washington, and said he "was in awe at the creativity shown in the signs carried on the streets. The terseness and punch packed into these five- or 10-word editorials demonstrated powerful editing and writing."

His story that leads today's issue was written in Jack's blog and shared with Connecting.

A couple notes from colleagues on stories in Monday's issue:

Bob Daugherty - I believe the vintage pool car (in the Air Force One photo) is a Chrysler product. And kudos to Carolyn Kaster for a nice pix.

Ray Newton - My hope, Paul, is that these students will continue with their stated mission. They can make some politicians squirm, I venture, especially this year, when they register to vote. Reminds me of the days in the late 60s, early 70s. I was in Chicago-1968. That was memorable.

Have a great day!

Paul

'America: We Have a Problem'-The Signs at the March for Our Lives



Jennifer Hudson and the DC choir perform "The Times They Are A Changin'" during the "March for Our Lives" rally in support of gun control, Saturday, March 24, 2018, in Washington. (AP Photo/Alex Brandon)

By Mike Feinsilber ([Email](#))

The women marching the day after President Trump's inauguration were ironic, defiant, sarcastic, even funny on the signs they carried, but there was nothing funny about the "March for Our Lives" which filled the ceremonial streets of Washington on Saturday. These marchers were here to change a country and prevent another massacre. The signs they carried conveyed their anger and their purpose.

Jammed in on Pennsylvania Avenue, across from the FBI Building, unable to move forward, backwards, or sideways, I jotted down the sermons on some of the homemade signs that were within eyesight. As much as the day's oratory, they conveyed urgency. Here's a sampling:

AM I NEXT?

What About My Inalienable Rights?

My Kids Survived High School.

What About Yours?

Arms Are For Hugging

The Only Thing You Can Buy Easier
Than a Gun Is a Republican Senator

Congress: Are You Smarter Than a 5th Grader?

Dear Congress: Our Lives Matter More Than Your Guns

Why Are Students Doing the Jobs of Senators?

Read more [here](#).

How one AP veteran exposes corruption in Illinois

By **JACKIE SPINNER**

Columbia Journalism Review

IN HIS 20 YEARS as an Illinois statehouse reporter, the Associated Press' John O'Connor has exposed corruption at nearly every level of Illinois government. His reporting on lies and government waste across five administrations have been one of few constants in a statehouse press corps that, like most others, is a shell of what it was a decade ago. There are fewer than 20 full- and part-time statehouse correspondents now, down from 42 in 2006. Lee Enterprises and the suburban Daily Herald in Arlington Heights both shuttered their statehouse operations in recent years. In December 2016, O'Connor became the AP's lone statehouse reporter.

O'Connor first used the state's Freedom of Information laws in 1996 to report on spending excesses at the State Board of Education—a story that led to the superintendent's resignation. Since then, he has used documents to expose a prison director who flew in a taxpayer-funded plane for personal use, "midnight" raises for transportation department employees from outgoing Governor Rod Blagojevich, and under-the-table funding cuts for domestic violence programs,

among other stories. O'Connor's work is distributed by the AP throughout the state-via the Southern Illinoisan, the Peoria Journal-Star, the Rock River Times and more-which enables access to state government for those Illinois residents that would not otherwise know what their elected officials are (or are not) up to.



Already this year, O'Connor has used documents as the foundation for two blockbuster stories. In January, while searching the governor's schedule, O'Connor discovered evidence of a 2015 meeting between Bruce Rauner and a former business partner at the governor's mansion in Springfield, which contradicted Rauner's claim that he had ceased his involvement in business dealings after his election. (Rauner refused questions about the discrepancy and avoided reporters after O'Connor's story was published.)

In February, O'Connor reported on cost disparities attached to a plumbing problem at a veterans home in Quincy whose residents suffered through an outbreak of Legionnaires' disease. O'Connor obtained through a FOIA request an August 2016 report that put state estimates for a plumbing repair at \$8 million-far less than the \$30 million estimate previously shared by the state's head of veteran affairs. The chair of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee credited O'Connor's work with spurring a meeting on the matter, and with surfacing copies of the 2016 report for lawmakers.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Paul Colford.

Connecting mailbox

A family murdered

Norman Abelson (Email) - The phone rang insistently about three or four a.m. I stumbled out of bed to answer it. On the other end was Charlie Shenton, city editor of the Concord Monitor, where my AP office was located.

He told me he had just had a call from the local police, tipping him they had arrested and jailed a young man who shortly before had murdered his entire family - both parents and two siblings. In return for giving me a heads-up, I promised to cover for him.

Our newly purchased home was located in the New Hampshire countryside, several miles from the jail. Daylight was dawning as, still not fully awake, I climbed into my 1960 Rambler and headed into town. Just about half-way there, my car alone on the road, I spotted a young woman leaning against a tree. Behind her was a car crashed into a metal fence.

I stopped and went over to her. Bleeding from the side of her face, she told me she was in great pain. I led her into my car and took her to the Concord Hospital, a few miles out of my way.

Then I zipped down to the jail, wondering whether the delay had cost me a beat on the interview. It hadn't. The cops told me I was the first one to show up.

The 17-year-old in custody, with a history of mental problems, had killed his two younger brothers with his hunting rifle as they slept. When his parents arrived home sometime later, he shot them both to death. He then drove the family car some 40 miles south to the state mental hospital in Concord, where he had been treated as an out-patient. He confessed to a nurse, was nabbed by the police and taken to the local jail.

The police allowed me to interview him from outside his cell. He seemed calm, and readily admitted to the killings. I asked him why he had done it, but got no intelligible reply to that question. I quickly phoned in a lead piece, and headed for the office to fill in the Monitor, and write the remainder of the bizarre event.

As time went by, the story got even more bizarre. The court found the young man had experienced a "psychotic break," and ruled him insane. He was sentenced to life in the very same state hospital. After ten years of on-and-off good behavior, punctuated with occasional drug abuse, he was allowed more freedom to be alone out on the grounds.

One August day in 1974, he just walked away. Despite a number of tips and leads over the years, he has never been found.

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A chair and cigar box newspaper honor system that ought to end up in Smithsonian or

Newseum



Ed Williams ([Email](#)) - The Evergreen Courant's famous chair and cigar box newspaper honor system ought to end up in the Smithsonian or Newseum someday.

No story about this south Alabama county seat weekly paper would be complete without mention of the old wooden chair that has "sold" thousands of newspapers for decades from its spot just outside The Courant's office on Rural Street in Evergreen.

No one's exactly sure when the chair was first used for this purpose, but folks agree it has been selling papers since World War II.

Somebody suggested to Robert G. Bozeman III, The Courant's third-generation editor and publisher, about maybe putting a recliner next to the stack of weekly papers for eager Conecuh Countians who can't wait to get home to read their hometown paper.

Alabama newspaper man Bill Beckner even suggested adding a coffee pot. "Nothing better than a weekly newspaper hot off the press," said Beckner, former senior vice president of Boone Newspapers Inc. "Maybe add a coffee pot."



Evergreen Post Office worker Gilbert Harden drops 50 cents into the cigar box in exchange for a copy of The Evergreen Courant.

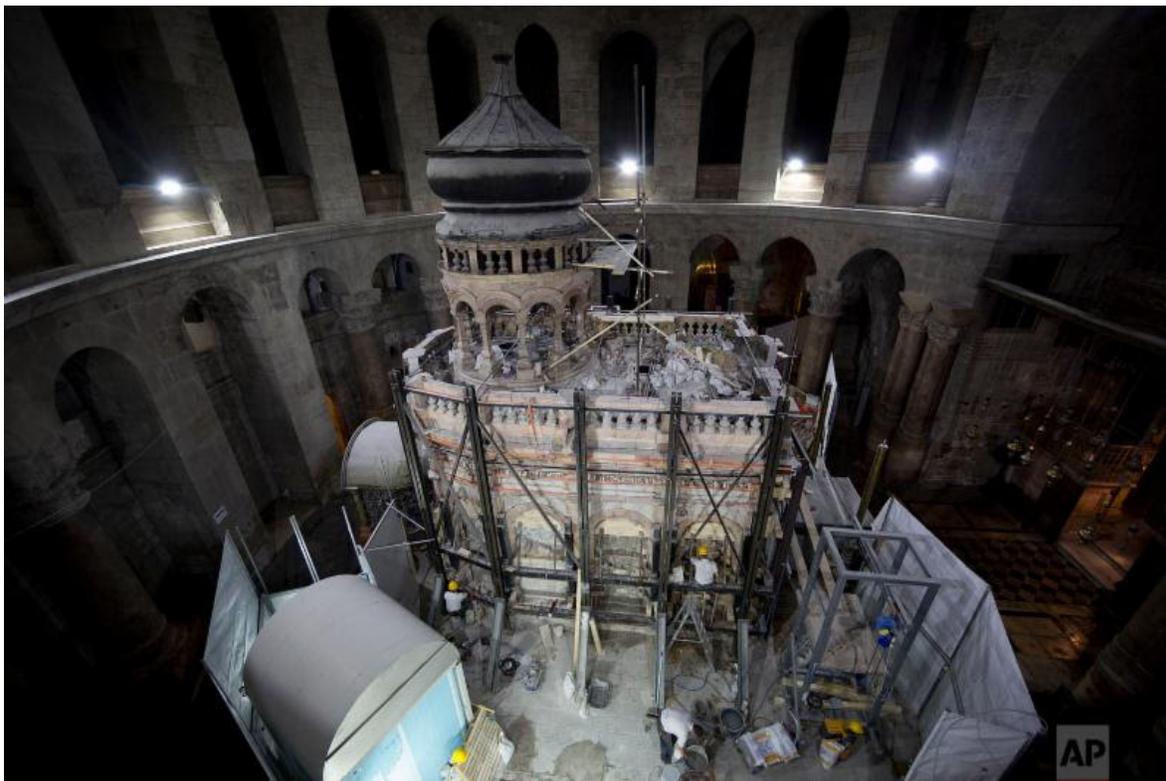
Robert Bozeman III is the third generation to own and run the south Alabama weekly newspaper in Conecuh County. He follows in the footsteps of his father, Bob, and grandfather, Gaston. Says Robert III: "All I know is that the chair was there when I was born and before so I would say it's at least 60 to 70 years old."

Longtime Conecuh Countians say "the chair in front of The Courant" has been an Evergreen, Alabama, icon forever. Local artist Joy L. Wilson even did a watercolor of the chair.

Says Ed Williams, retired Auburn University journalism professor and native of Conecuh County: "I will be 65 this year, and that chair has been a fixture at The Evergreen Courant for as long as I can remember."

"Community journalism is the best," said Williams, who worked at weekly papers before teaching journalism for 30 years "Long may it live."

Renovation of church sheds light on ancient mysteries



In this 2016 photo, a Greek conservation team renovate the Tomb of Jesus in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem's Old City. (AP Photo/Oded Balilty)

AP Images Blog

In the innermost chamber of the site said to be the tomb of Jesus, a restoration team revealed what it believes is the original rock surface where Jesus' body was laid.

Jerusalem's Church of the Holy Sepulchre is where many historians have long believed that the original cave, identified a few centuries after Jesus' death as his tomb, was obliterated ages ago.

But an archaeologist accompanying the restoration team said ground penetrating radar tests determined that cave walls are in fact standing - at a height of six feet and connected to bedrock - behind the marbled panels of the chamber at the center of Jerusalem's Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

"What was found," said National Geographic archaeologist Fredrik Hiebert, "is astonishing."

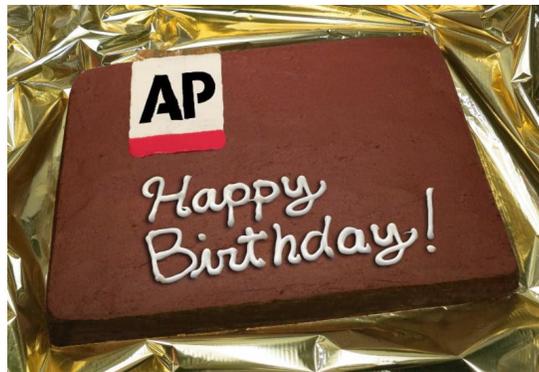
National Geographic partnered with Greek restoration experts to document the work in 2016 and 2017.

A 12th-century building sitting on 4th-century remains, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is the only place where six Christian denominations practice their faith at the same site. The church was recently closed and reopened due to a dispute over taxes.

AP photographer Oded Balilty covered the restoration for National Geographic.

[Click here](#) for a link to the blog.

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



To

Edie Lederer - elederer@ap.org

Welcome to Connecting



Nancy Benac - nbenac@ap.org

Stories of interest

Can 27,000 American lives be saved each year? The Boston Globe has a plan. (Poynter)

By DAVID BEARD

Ahead of Saturday's March for Our Lives, the Boston Globe published an ambitious interactive editorial that shows how many lives a year would be saved - 27,000 - if the rest of the nation had Massachusetts' rate of gun deaths. The editorial also allows readers to check, state by state, what their state's toll would be.

There are also proposed solutions, seven of them. The package follows the Globe's eye-opening editorials in 2016 on gun control, entitled Make It Stop.

The Globe's deputy Ideas editor, Alex Kingsbury, and Heather Ciras, the senior editor for audience engagement, answered our questions about the effort.

Read more [here](#).

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This Is What I Do When I Hear the Bombs Explode (New York Times)



Fatima Faizi at The New York Times bureau in Kabul. Photo/Erin Trieb for The New York Times

By FATIMA FAIZI

KABUL, Afghanistan - Whenever I hear a blast go off in my hometown the first thing I do is call my little brother.

Ehsan, 17, is the kind of kid who's always out - riding his bicycle with a pack of friends, playing pickup soccer on one of Kabul's dirt fields (grass is a luxury here). My parents and I are always trying to restrain him, warning him to stick to safe places. But he refuses. "Where is there any safe place here? Can you show me? If you can, I will go there."

So when another bomb went off on Wednesday - on Nowruz, our Persian New Year holiday - my first instinct was to call him. Then I remembered: I had the day off from my job as a reporter in the Kabul bureau of The New York Times, so I was home, and so was my brother. I did a quick mental inventory of my other relatives and my closest friends; everyone was likely safe.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Sibby Christensen.

The Final Word

The Bike-Share Oversupply in China: Huge Piles of Abandoned and Broken Bicycles (Atlantic)



A worker rides a shared bicycle past a huge pile of unused shared bikes in a vacant lot in Xiamen, Fujian province, China, on December 13, 2017. Reuters photo

By ALAN TAYLOR

Last year, bike sharing took off in China, with dozens of bike-share companies quickly flooding city streets with millions of brightly colored rental bicycles. However, the rapid growth vastly outpaced immediate demand and overwhelmed Chinese cities, where infrastructure and regulations were not prepared to handle a sudden flood of millions of shared bicycles. Riders would park bikes anywhere, or just abandon them, resulting in bicycles piling up and blocking already-crowded streets and pathways. As cities impounded derelict bikes by the thousands, they moved quickly to cap growth and regulate the industry. Vast piles of impounded, abandoned, and broken bicycles have become a familiar sight in many big cities. As some of the companies who jumped in too big and too early have begun to fold, their huge surplus of bicycles can be found collecting dust in vast vacant lots. Bike sharing remains very popular in China, and will likely continue to grow, just probably

at a more sustainable rate. Meanwhile, we are left with these images of speculation gone wild-the piles of debris left behind after the bubble bursts.

Read more [here](#). Shared by John Willis.

Today in History - March 27, 2018



By The Associated Press

Today is Tuesday, March 27, the 86th day of 2018. There are 279 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On March 27, 1968, Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin (gah-GAH'-rihn), the first man to orbit the Earth in 1961, died when his MiG-15 jet crashed during a routine training flight near Moscow; he was 34.

On this date:

In 1513, Spanish explorer Juan Ponce de Leon (hwahn pahns duh LEE'-ohn) sighted present-day Florida.

In 1625, Charles I acceded to the English throne upon the death of James I.

In 1794, Congress approved "An Act to provide a Naval Armament" of six armed ships.

In 1884, the first telephone line between Boston and New York was inaugurated.

In 1912, first lady Helen Herron Taft and the wife of Japan's ambassador to the United States, Viscountess Chinda, planted the first two of 3,000 cherry trees given to the U.S. as a gift by the mayor of Tokyo.

In 1933, Japan officially withdrew from the League of Nations.

In 1942, during World War II, Congress granted American servicemen free first-class mailing privileges.

In 1958, Nikita Khrushchev became Soviet premier in addition to First Secretary of the Communist Party.

In 1964, Alaska was hit by a magnitude 9.2 earthquake (the strongest on record in North America) and tsunamis that together claimed about 130 lives.

In 1977, in aviation's worst disaster, 583 people were killed when a KLM Boeing 747, attempting to take off in heavy fog, crashed into a Pan Am 747 on an airport runway on the Canary Island of Tenerife (ten-uh-REEF').

In 1980, 123 workers died when a North Sea floating oil field platform, the Alexander Kielland, capsized during a storm.

In 1998, the Food and Drug Administration approved the drug Viagra, made by Pfizer, saying it had helped about two-thirds of impotent men improve their sexual function.

Ten years ago: The Pentagon said Defense Secretary Robert Gates had ordered a full inventory of all nuclear weapons and related materials after the mistaken delivery of ballistic missile fuses to Taiwan.

Five years ago: Lawyers for Colorado theater shooting suspect James Holmes said he would plead guilty to the attack that killed 12 people and serve the rest of his life in prison to avoid the death penalty. (Prosecutors rejected the offer, but Holmes ended up being sentenced to life in prison anyway.) Former South African President Nelson Mandela was admitted to a hospital for pneumonia (he was discharged 10 days later).

One year ago: U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions warned so-called "sanctuary cities" they could lose federal money for refusing to cooperate with immigration authorities; city leaders vowed to intensify their fight against the promised crackdown despite the financial risks. NFL owners meeting in Phoenix approved the Oakland Raiders' move to Las Vegas 31-1; Miami was the lone dissenter.

Today's Birthdays: Dance company director Arthur Mitchell is 84. Actor Julian Glover is 83. Actor Jerry Lacy is 82. Hall of Fame racer Cale Yarborough is 79. Actor-director Austin Pendleton is 78. Actor Michael York is 76. Rock musician Tony Banks (Genesis) is 68. Rock musician Andrew Farriss (INXS) is 59. Jazz musician Dave Koz (kahz) is 55. Movie director Quentin Tarantino is 55. Rock musician Derrick McKenzie (Jamiroquai) is 54. Rock musician Johnny April (Staind) is 53. Actress Talisa Soto is 51. Actor Ben Koldyke is 50. Actress Pauley Perrette is 49. Singer Mariah Carey is 48. Rock musician Brendan Hill (Blues Traveler) is 48. Actress Elizabeth Mitchell is 48. Actor Nathan Fillion is 47. Hip-hop singer Fergie is 43. Actress Emily Ann Lloyd is 34. Actress Brenda Song is 30. Pop singer-songwriter Kimbra is 28. Actress Taylor Atelian is 23. Classical crossover singer Amira Willighagen (TV: "Holland's Got Talent") is 14.

Thought for Today: "A sheltered life can be a daring life as well. For all serious daring starts from within." - Eudora Welty, American author (1909-2001).

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.

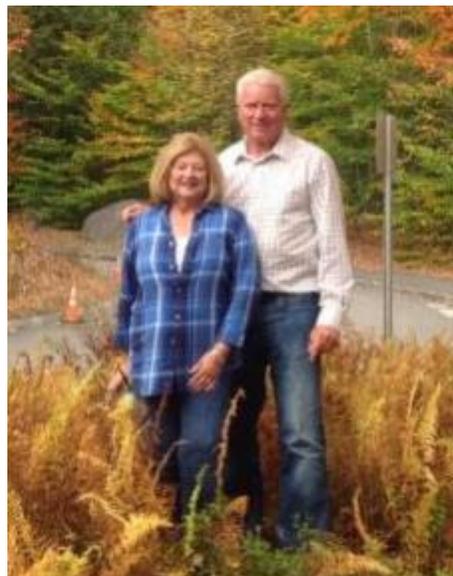
- **Multigenerational AP families** - profiles of families whose service spanned two or more generations.

- **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

Connecting newsletter, [14719 W 79th Ter, Lenexa, KS 66215](#)

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