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Connecting -- June 21, 2018

1 message

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Thu, Jun 21, 2018 at 9:11 AM

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Connecting

June 21, 2018

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Colleagues,

Good Thursday morning!

Our Connecting series on "Who was your first bureau chief?" - the person who hired you into the AP - has struck a chord since introduced two weeks ago - and today's issue has yet another fascinating memory, this one from our colleague **Bruce Lowitt**.

The mailbox is full, so with no further adieu...

Have a great first day of summer! (And if you have a summer reunion with colleagues, share a photo with Connecting.)

Paul

Connecting series - My first bureau chief: **Hired (sort of) by Hub Keavy, Los Angeles**

Bruce Lowitt ([Email](#)) - To understand this, you have to know a bit about LA geography. There are two communities in the greater Los Angeles area, Westchester and Inglewood, on either side of the 405 Freeway near the airport.

It was December 1966 and I was working my first newspaper job at the now-defunct Port Chester, N.Y., Daily Item, in Westchester County, just north of New York City. A friend and I were huddled in my apartment watching the second half of a Sunday NFL doubleheader, a Rams game, sun-glassed fans in short sleeves in the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum. Snow was blowing sideways outside my window and the window, having been painted many times, couldn't be entirely closed. So wind was whistling through the quarter-inch space into my living room.

"I've got to get to California," I muttered in frustration.

"I'll miss you," my friend said.

I forgot about it for a month or two. Then one afternoon I heard Surfer Girl by the Beach Boys on the radio. That night I composed an ad for Editor & Publisher which began, "California city, coastal city preferred ..."

I received replies to my E&P box number from the San Pedro News Pilot, a small community (pronounced San Pee-dro) at the Port of Los Angeles, from a couple of other publications whose names I forget, and from the Stockton Daily Evening Record, Stockton being an inland port 80 miles east of San Francisco. One thing I

remember about that newspaper: it had the most godawful look, as many as a dozen stories on the front page, some of them two grafs before jumping inside.

I began conversations with someone at the Record, but each time I said the job sounded interesting he said he'd get back to me, then would call to say the hours wouldn't be as good as they'd said or the salary might be a bit lower. I said it probably would work and he said he'd get back to me.



Hub Keavy, in 1958. Photo by John Rooney courtesy of AP Corporate Archives

Then a letter from Hub Keavy, The Associated Press bureau chief in Los Angeles, arrived.

I waited until 6 p.m., when the long-distance rates dropped, and called him. After a few perfunctory exchanges of comments about me he asked where I worked. Figuring he wouldn't know Port Chester, and thinking I had mentioned New York at some point, I said, "Westchester."

He said, "Why don't you come in tomorrow and ..."

I said, "No, Westchester."

"Right. Near Inglewood."

"No. Not New Jersey." (There's an Englewood, N.J., just north of the George Washington Bridge).

"Where do you work," Keavy asked, frustration creeping into his voice.

"The Port Chester Daily Item."

"Where's that?"

"Just outside New York City."

"Then why are you calling me? Call Keith Fuller's office in New York and tell him you spoke to me."

He gave me the phone number and hung up while I was thanking him. I called the next day, made the appointment, did the interview, took the test, got hired and in April of 1967 drove cross country to start my 19-year career with The AP in LA (1967-70) and New York Sports (1970-86).

Two postscripts:

The editor of the Stockton Daily Evening Record called The AP in LA shortly after I started working to say I had reneged on an agreement to work there. Keavy called me into his office to ask if I'd accepted their offer. I told him about the series of phone calls, he called the editor and asked about them. It turns out I was being played against another candidate and the paper was trying to see who it could get for less money.

The reason The AP was looking at E&P ads and elsewhere for writers, I later discovered, was that it had decided to shrink the San Francisco bureau (okay, buro) and move a bunch of its writers to LA. But some of them decided to leave The AP and stay in San Francisco rather than transfer south, and suddenly the LA buro had openings and no one to fill them.

Timing in life is everything. Had I put my ad in E&P a few weeks earlier or later, I suspect I would have gone to work in Stockton. Whew!

Connecting mailbox

Thoughts on Mike Graczyk - a complete and courageous reporter

John Lumpkin ([Email](#)) - Mike Graczyk was and is so much more than the go-to description of his career in Houston covering Texas' executions (e.g., the somewhat limited story in the NY Times).

He is as complete and courageous reporter as I knew in my days as CoB in Texas alongside others with equally amazing pure reporting talents - Scott McCartney,

Mike Cochran, Mike Holmes, Sharon Herbaugh, Pauline Arrillaga, Denne Freeman (who as Texas AP Sports Editor won a Texas Headliners against the top metros in the state for spot reporting), among others, with apologies to all the others.



Mike Graczyk

What is also distinctive about Mike's work in Houston for the two decades we worked together - Houston correspondent and CoB - is that AP asked in those days more of a so-called "supervisory correspondency" in big cities like Houston than just to cover the news of the day.

It was not lost on me that Mike's first love was reporting when he arrived from Detroit, compliments of Jim Wilson. But he believed he had a job to do in an era

where there were two major competing metro newspapers (the Post and the Chronicle) with hard-ass pressures on the Houston AP bureau to accommodate them and not their opponent.

He also had to deal first-hand with personnel issues - not for this space to detail those, but they were serious and could have resulted in unfortunate precedents without his deft and focused approaches.

He had to help with what now is the quaint notion of "Membership" - building the bonds of numerous AP-owner newspapers in the Houston bureau realm. They cared more about the PMer for the Houston Astros than what we might know about the inside baseball of Washington, D.C., but they also were the first line of breaking news outside the vast Houston metro area - fourth most populous in the nation and the largest by far that didn't serve as an AP control bureau.

Some might be dismissive of dual responsibilities for such a newsperson but he wasn't. Our future as a premier news organization was likely, but not a foregone conclusion at that time, with considerable member revenue at stake. Moreover, the cooperative mission of AP was more of a priority than it came to be later.

Mike was "Mr. Hurricane" as well. That started with Alicia in 1983 when his family was still unpacking boxes on their move from Detroit and he had to leave to cover the storm headed for downtown Houston.

That goes until this day, with the historic onslaught of Harvey. He covered and contributed to supervision of coverage of two Space Shuttle disasters. It's incredible to recall how national newspapers sent a bureau-sized staff to the meltdown of

Enron, and our Houston bureau broke stories with sometimes less than a full staffer available on a daily basis.

He won a Texas Star Reporter of the Year Award from the Headliners Foundation of Texas, in which AP competed against the top reporters from the metros. Key in the portfolio we entered was his coverage of the horrific racially motivated dragging death in Jasper, Texas.

To be with him on assignment was a journalistic tutorial. I was in the background a couple of times, watching him effortlessly glide through questions, take notes on AP standard notepads while looking straight at the source and not down at his handwriting. You could read what he transcribed. Using those notes, he was a master of dictation - so much so we held APME sessions for members with him as instructor.

He withstood pressure in attacks on his credibility by officials at Texas A&M University in his source-based coverage of the collapse of the traditional Aggie bonfire during its construction in 1999. Twelve Aggies died.

What the Times didn't say about Mike's work on Texas' Death Row was his meticulous preparation, including weekly journeys to interview the inmates for future reference. He also researched the crimes and, without fail, reached out to the victims' families. He believed in what I would call 360-coverage, including the continuing controversy about the death penalty's validity in our society, but not to the exclusion of other threads.

And I still don't know what Mike's personal convictions are on capital punishment.

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Funding help sought for book being planned on photos of Priya Ramrakha

Arnold Zeitlan ([Email](#)) - I'm passing along this message because Priya Ramrakha, at the time of his death, also was working for the Associated Press in Nigeria. I was the AP correspondent in West Africa at the time, based in Lagos, Nigeria.

Priya was with the Nigerian army at a remote spot in Nigeria when he was caught, so the story goes, in a cross fire. There was no medical facility available and he bled out, dying in the arms of another member of the journalism party, Morley Safer of CBS. I once asked Morley about the episode and he was reticent to talk about it.

From Shravan Vidyarthi: I've just launched a Kickstarter to fund a photography book that I've been working on for a long time - and I'd love your support.



I've collected the unseen photos of one of Kenya's first photojournalists, Priya Ramrakha, which form an extraordinary record of Africa and the USA in the 1950s and 60s. After Priya was killed covering the Nigerian Civil War in 1968, his work was lost-until I discovered his prints buried in a dusty Nairobi garage. For the last decade I've edited the archive, designed a 200-page book, and found a publisher.

Now I'm raising funds to publish the book by pre-selling copies and some amazing prints [here](#).

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The traveling Tomlins



Dave and Pam Tomlin and their daughter Elizabeth made a trip from their home in Ruidoso, New Mexico, with their trusty Airstream to visit a longtime friend at her home in Des Moines, where Dave was once AP chief of bureau for Iowa and Nebraska, and along the way, they found time to visit some old AP friends.

The top photo shows Dave (left) with Chuck and Pam Schoffner in Des Moines and the photo below shows the three Tomlins with Linda and Paul Stevens in Kansas City.

The Tomlins missed by a day seeing friends Dan and Becky Day in Dodge City, Kansas, Becky's home.



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A lunch gathering of Concord AP/UPI gang



Adolphe Bernotas (Email) - Per your request here's a picture of the Concord AP-UPI gang on Wednesday during one of its more-or-less monthly lunch gatherings.

Small turnout but we covered lots of topics -- Pulitzer Prize, sad shape of newsbiz, refugees, Trump, UPI, AP, Arizona, Florida, New Zealand, Australia, Boston Herald, Cross-country bicycle ride, Concord Monitor, Union Leader, Dover Democrat, sports pages, Lowell Sun, Juneteenth, Citizens United, state of our republic, New Hampshire, Maine, Massachusetts and national politics, books, health care, Lowell, Mass., renaissance, national parks, Medicare and more. Nonetheless we didn't solve any problems.

From left, those with AP histories -- Joe Magruder, Jane Harrigan, Adolphe Bernotas; George Geers, ex-publisher of The Telegraph, Nashua, N.H.; and UPI laureate John Milne.

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Look what I saw while picking up Plain Dealer from my driveway



Mark Duncan ([Email](#)) - I spotted these white-tailed deer bucks in velvet walking up my tree lawn (along with a third sporting much smaller headgear) when I went out to get the newspaper this morning. We live in Olmsted Falls, OH (suburban Cleveland) and we still get the print edition of the Plain Dealer, but home delivery only four days a week.

Stories of interest

Newsonomics: GateHouse's Mike Reed talks about rolling up America's news industry (Nieman)

By **KEN DOCTOR**

The news shocked long-time newspaper observers two months ago: "Tampa Bay Times to be sold to GateHouse Media in \$79M deal."

Had GateHouse devoured yet another storied publisher? No: It was a FloridaPolitics.com April Fool's prank played out to a near-incredulous audience. Mike Reed, the CEO of the New Media Investment Group that runs GateHouse,

spent much of his April 1 responding to the confusion among the company's shareholders and employees.

The news wasn't real, but it was believable: GateHouse's acquisition appetite has seemed insatiable. The company now owns more daily titles than any other U.S. publisher, or for that matter, any newspaper publisher anywhere. In total, it owns 146 dailies - more than 10 percent of the U.S. total. That total itself may amaze some, though it well could be doubled, creating the first real national roll-up of U.S. dailies. In fact, with Patrick Soon-Shiong finally closing Monday on his deal to buy the Los Angeles Times and San Diego Union-Tribune from Tronc, the rest of Tronc's properties could soon hit the market, accelerating more consolidation. Could GateHouse be interested in any of those properties? GateHouse has long eschewed larger metro properties, so the company is highly unlikely to bid for the new Tronc overall. Yet, if Tronc's Sun-Sentinel in south Florida were to be sold singly, regional efficiencies could drive a GateHouse deal. In fact, GateHouse is one of the very few companies mentioned in any conversation about newspaper buying. The reason is obvious: The pace of GateHouse buys just this year have been head-turning.

Read more [here](#).

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Richard Valeriani, Veteran NBC News Correspondent, Dies at 85 (New York Times)

By Jaclyn Peiser

Richard Valeriani, an NBC News correspondent who was a familiar presence on television for more than three decades, covering events like the civil rights movement, John F. Kennedy's assassination and Henry A. Kissinger's globe-trotting diplomatic missions, died on Monday at his home in Manhattan. He was 85.

His wife of 38 years, Kathie Berlin, said the cause was chronic heart failure.

Mr. Valeriani joined NBC in the early 1960s. He was hired away from The Associated Press while covering the disastrous Bay of Pigs invasion in



Richard Valeriani in 1985.

Cuba, where his proficiency in speaking Spanish with a Cuban dialect proved vital.

Credit Al Levine/NBC News/NBCU Photo Bank, via Getty Images

He went on to become a correspondent for "NBC Nightly News" and, for a few years in the 1970s, a co-anchor of "Today" from Washington.

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

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Meet the Woman Who 'Really Runs' the New York Times Newsroom (New York Times)



By Katie Van Syckle

On the eve of the 2016 Republican National Convention, Juanita Powell-Brunson, The New York Times's deputy director of newsroom operations, was driving through downtown Cleveland with a trunk full of gas masks and bulletproof vests.

Ohio is an open-carry state, and if violence erupted, as some reports suggested was possible, Ms. Powell-Brunson was ready to outfit Times staff members with riot gear. She was, she admitted, a little nervous.

At home in New Jersey, Ms. Powell-Brunson's husband was also worried - about the possibility that she would get pulled over, she said, "and the cops would think I'm trying to commit a crime."

Ms. Powell-Brunson, 42, has worked at The Times for 18 years, and her responsibilities are vast and varied. She oversees operations for two of the paper's most logistically complicated sections - National and Politics - where reporters crisscross the country to cover primaries, fires, erupting volcanoes and the president. She is also in charge of the national bureaus and manages 11 desk administrative managers and two confidential administrative assistants.

Read more [here](#).

The Final Word

What kind of bird is that?



Peggy Andersen ([Email](#)) - Laddie was billed as a wolf-Malamute mix though I think there may be a water dog in there somewhere.

Today in History - June 21, 2018



By The Associated Press

Today is Thursday, June 21, the 172nd day of 2018. There are 193 days left in the year. Summer begins at 6:07 a.m. Eastern time.

Today's Highlight in History:

On June 21, 1788, the United States Constitution went into effect as New Hampshire became the ninth state to ratify it.

On this date:

In 1377, King Edward III died after ruling England for 50 years; he was succeeded by his grandson, Richard II.

In 1834, Cyrus Hall McCormick received a patent for his reaping machine.

In 1932, heavyweight Max Schmeling lost a title fight rematch in New York by decision to Jack Sharkey, prompting Schmeling's manager, Joe Jacobs, to exclaim: "We was robbed!"

In 1942, German forces led by Generaloberst (Colonel General) Erwin Rommel captured the Libyan city of Tobruk during World War II. (Rommel was promoted to the rank of Field Marshal; Tobruk was retaken by the Allies in November 1942.) An Imperial Japanese submarine fired shells at Fort Stevens on the Oregon coast, causing little damage.

In 1943, Army nurse Lt. Edith Greenwood became the first woman to receive the Soldier's Medal for showing heroism during a fire at a military hospital in Yuma, Arizona.

In 1948, the Republican national convention opened in Philadelphia. (The delegates ended up choosing Thomas E. Dewey to be their presidential nominee.)

In 1963, Cardinal Giovanni Battista Montini was chosen during a conclave of his fellow cardinals to succeed the late Pope John XXIII; the new pope took the name Paul VI.

In 1964, civil rights workers Michael H. Schwerner, Andrew Goodman and James E. Chaney were slain in Philadelphia, Mississippi; their bodies were found buried in an earthen dam six weeks later. (Forty-one years later on this date in 2005, Edgar Ray Killen, an 80-year-old former Ku Klux Klansman, was found guilty of manslaughter; he was sentenced to 60 years in prison, where he died in January 2018.)

In 1977, Menachem Begin (men-AH'-kem BAY'-gihn) of the Likud bloc became Israel's sixth prime minister.

In 1982, a jury in Washington, D.C. found John Hinckley Jr. not guilty by reason of insanity in the shootings of President Ronald Reagan and three other men.

In 1988, "Who Framed Roger Rabbit," a comedy fantasy starring Bob Hoskins that combined live action and legendary animated cartoon characters, premiered in New York.

In 1989, a sharply divided Supreme Court ruled that burning the American flag as a form of political protest was protected by the First Amendment.

Ten years ago: The ferry Princess of the Stars, carrying more than 800 people, capsized as Typhoon Fengshen battered the Philippines; only some four dozen people survived. Scott Kalitta died when his Funny Car burst into flames and crashed at the end of the track during the final round of qualifying for the Lucas Oil NHRA SuperNationals at Old Bridge Township Raceway Park in New Jersey.

Five years ago: A one-page criminal complaint unsealed in federal court accused former National Security Agency contractor Edward Snowden of espionage and theft of government property in the NSA surveillance case. President Barack Obama

nominated James Comey, a top Bush-era Justice official, to head the FBI, succeeding Robert Mueller. The Food Network said it was dropping Paula Deen, barely an hour after the celebrity cook posted the first of two videotaped apologies online begging forgiveness from fans and critics troubled by her admission to having used racial slurs in the past.

One year ago: A man armed with a knife wounded a police officer at Flint International Airport in Michigan; a Tunisian-born Canadian resident has been charged in the attack. Edmonton's Connor McDavid won the Hart Trophy as the NHL's most valuable player at the league's postseason awards show in Las Vegas.

Today's Birthdays: Composer Lalo Schifrin is 86. Actor Bernie Kopell is 85. Actor Monte Markham is 83. Songwriter Don Black is 80. Actress Mariette Hartley is 78. Comedian Joe Flaherty is 77. Rock singer-musician Ray Davies (The Kinks) is 74. Actress Meredith Baxter is 71. Actor Michael Gross is 71. Rock musician Joe Molland (Badfinger) is 71. Rock musician Don Airey (Deep Purple) is 70. Rock musician Joey Kramer (Aerosmith) is 68. Rock musician Nils Lofgren is 67. Actress Robyn Douglass is 66. Actor Leigh McCloskey is 63. Cartoonist Berke Breathed is 61. Country singer Kathy Mattea is 59. Oregon Gov. Kate Brown is 58. Actor Marc Copage (koh-PAJ) is 56. Actress Sammi Davis is 54. Actor Doug Savant is 54. Country musician Porter Howell is 54. Actor Michael Dolan is 53. Writer-director Lana Wachowski is 53. Actress Carrie Preston is 51. Actress Paula Irvine is 50. Rapper/producer Pete Rock is 48. Country singer Allison Moorer is 46. Actress Juliette Lewis is 45. Actress Maggie Siff is 44. Musician Justin Cary is 43. Rock musician Mike Einziger (Incubus) is 42. Actor Chris Pratt is 39. Rock singer Brandon Flowers is 37. Britain's Prince William is 36. Actor Jussie Smollett is 36. Actor Benjamin Walker is 36. Actor Michael Malarkey is 35. Pop singer Kris Allen (TV: "American Idol") is 33. Pop/rock singer Lana Del Rey is 33. Actor Jascha Washington is 29. Country musician Chandler Baldwin (LANCO) is 26. Pop singer Rebecca Black is 21.

Thought for Today: "It is only on paper that one moralizes - just where one shouldn't." - Richard Le Gallienne, English poet and essayist (1866-1947).

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.

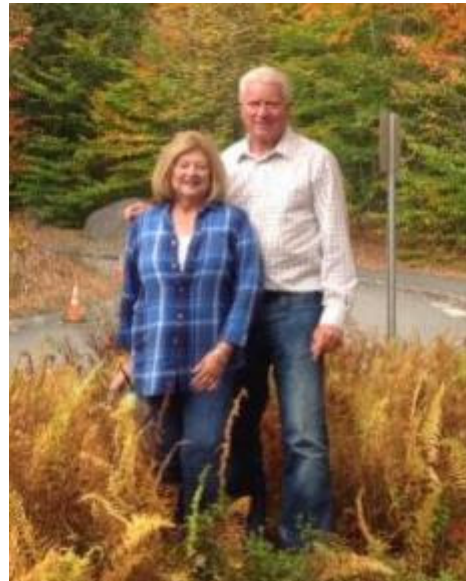
- **Multigenerational AP families** - profiles of families whose service spanned two or more generations.

- **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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