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Connecting -- July 12, 2018

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Colleagues,

Good Thursday morning!

Alligator clips, tape recorders and landline phones. The Denny Phone.

Tools of the trade, back in the day, and they are remembered fondly by AP Broadcast veteran **Mark Hamrick** in our leadoff story for today's Connecting.

Have a great day!

Paul

Recalling some tools of the broadcast trade - long before digital

Mark Hamrick ([Email](#)) - It has been a long road, both in terms of time and miles traveled, since my teenage days in Coffeyville, Kansas working at KGGF Radio in 1976. That was when the sometimes cigarette-smoke filled newsroom was filled with the sound of teletype machines, typewriters and ringing multi-line telephones connected by copper wire.

Along the way, I spent 26 years working for AP beginning in the Dallas bureau housed atop the old Southland Life Building. While the bulk of my very early work as for AP Radio and the now-defunct Texas AP Radio Network, breaking news would also require dictating for the wire including on big stories. Those included when Sen. John Tower was named to lead President Reagan's panel investigating the Iran-Contra Affair and the Southern Methodist University football program scandal and the remarkable "death penalty" ordered for the program. Ultimately, however, most of my AP years were spent in Washington in the broadcast business news for realm, for which I'm grateful.



Mark Hamrick at KGGF in late 1970s

My reason for "connecting" here is spurred by the compelling memories provided by Gene Herrick who described the difficulties of working in the field as a photographer long before digital technology. That got me to thinking how we used to get our own voices and other content including natural sound and interview soundbites on-the-air both working for radio stations, stringing for the networks and, of course, to AP Radio as a staffer.

Alligator clips, tape recorders and landline phones

Filing from the field for radio, most often we would unscrew the mouthpiece (sometimes breaking a seal) on traditional landline telephones and connect "alligator clips" to 2 wires or metal components with a patch cord from the old Marantz and Sony cassette tape recorder headphone or "external" outputs. That was so we could report either live or on-tape with soundbites.

Traveling out of the Dallas bureau, I carried a small suitcase purchased at my own expense with all of the audio equipment needed. There was also a heavy and cumbersome early-generation cellular telephone which included a heavy battery allowing us to file from truly remote locations. In that case, we couldn't use the alligator clip method. The less-than-optimal compromise filing recorded sound over cellular was putting the microphone against the tape recorder speaker and hitting "play," or releasing the "pause" button.

Because failure wasn't an option when it came to tools and methods, I typically had back-ups for my back-ups. I think most, if not all, of my colleagues were also constantly focused on redundant options anticipating challenges and breakdowns along the way.

Innovation: The Denny Phone

The process was refined later when a tech staffer, Denny Vohar, created a phone with a jack input which could be connected with a single patch cord to the tape recorder. The so-called "Denny Phone," as we liked to call them, was then plugged into a standard phone wall jack for filing, including for going live.

Someone else is now doing the "heavy lifting"

These days, my work with Bankrate.com allows me to do the talking, not the questioning, during interviews for radio and TV as well as our friends in the text/print journalism world. I'm glad that someone else has to worry about the technology. Although, it is surprising how often we're still doing interviews with radio stations or networks over landlines or cellphones. Skype is used more often now when chatting with the ABC or CBS Radio Networks, but only for the clean audio. Similarly, I'm often asked to record myself using the iPhone Voice Memo app during a "taped" interview so they can have something that is almost studio quality. It still



requires another phone to conduct the conversation so I can hear the questions.

Hamrick being interviewed in New York in his current post as Washington Bureau Chief, senior economic analyst, for Bankrate.com.

After we're done chatting, I send the audio file with my voice via email, text message or shared drive.

Savoring the analog memories

All of these things serve constant reminders that the successor technology generally can now be managed much more simply, including with an iPhone or a Mac. For example, I now record network radio features for CBS Radio Network stations using an iPad, an external microphone and headphones. And that's in my office, not in a studio.

Still, I occasionally have dreams about those analog radio days back in Coffeyville, Kansas when we were spinning 33 or 45 rpm records, using reel-to-reel tape decks and sending the less-than-perfect signal, with its static, crackling and popping sounds, out over the AM radio band. Did I mention that my dad, former AP Correspondent Dan Hamrick ran the newspaper next door? Oh, well that's another story.

A Moving Geezer Migration Story

Larry Blasko ([Email](#)) - Those AP staffers who were stressed by the many bureau moves I ran as Director of Administrative Services got their revenge June 22, when Helen and I pulled up stakes after 41 years in Summit, NJ and moved to Libertyville, IL.

Why? The defense pleads "six grandchildren," which is the same as "insanity" but with lots more fun and love.

And yes, moving is stressful. Every cheerful platitude I spouted to skeptical staffers now haunts me. Karma! Some samples:

Platitude One: "Careful planning will bring an easy move." That's right up there with "This won't hurt a bit." Moves --especially from long-held quarters --are inherently disruptive, and the longer you've been settled, the more disruptive they are.

Platitude Two: "Moving is an excellent opportunity to reorganize and clear out anything old, useless, worn-out and not performing." My long-suffering wife, Helen, embraced this enthusiastically --which made me nervous! Besides, if more than one person is involved in a move, stuff that one puts in the "Toss" bin will inevitably get moved to the "Save" bin by another.

Platitude Three: "The new place will be so much better!" That's where we learn that "better" and "different" are not synonyms. I also learned that when you get up in the middle of the night in a strange room, Google Maps is worthless for finding the bathroom.

Platitude Four: "You'll get settled in no time." Only if there's a time/space warp handy. Whatever you want inevitably hasn't been unpacked, or if it has, you can't remember where you put it.

All that said, there are six positives about a late-life disruption. Their names are Lydia, Carl, Miriam, Katie, Kieran and Nolan. Having the grandchildren nearby brings joy and a glimpse of the future that more than compensates for being unable to find the damned socks!

New-member profile - Ken Hare

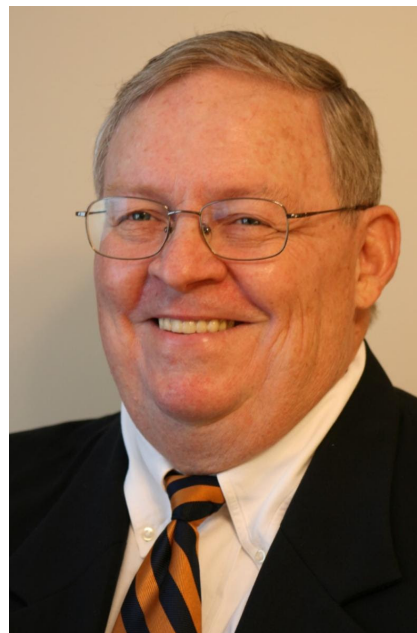
Ken Hare ([Email](#)) - I've never worked for AP, other than a couple of minor freelance pieces. But I've long admired the work of AP staffers, who produced some of the best journalism around during my stints at newspapers in South Carolina and Alabama. As an editorial writer, I knew that editorials were only as good as the news upon which they were based, and AP reports usually provided the best, most unbiased background I could find.

A native South Carolinian, I graduated from the University of South Carolina. I worked as a state government reporter for The State newspaper in Columbia; was editor of the Myrtle Beach Sun News; assistant managing editor of the Greenville (S.C.) News; and managing editor of the Montgomery Advertiser. I was editorial page editor of the Montgomery Advertiser for 28 years. I also taught journalism courses as a part-time instructor at six different colleges in South Carolina and Alabama and wrote one book: "They Walked to Freedom; the Story of the Montgomery Bus Boycott."

After retiring from the newspaper, I worked part-time for WSFA-TV in Montgomery as a political consultant. But as this year's election season approached, I realized I just no longer had the heart to interview politicians. So now I concentrate on spending time with my two "grandgirls," ages 3 and 6, and with my new hobby --

birding and bird photography. My wife Julie, a former reporter, and I also travel as much as possible, mostly to areas where we can enjoy nature.

Another highlight of retirement is a weekly get-together for cocktails with former AP staffers Kendal Weaver and Phil Rawls and retired newspaperman Skip Tucker. Kendal has written a book, "Ten Stars: The African American Journey of Gary Cooper." Phil has embarked on a new career teaching journalism at Auburn University.



Connecting sky shot - New Rochelle



Sibby Christensen ([Email](#)) - We have great cloud formations over the Long Island Sound, seen here from Davenport Park in New Rochelle, NY. Thin strip at the horizon shows the Port Washington/Glen Cove area across the water. I go out there most days to walk a bit and read the news in print.

Welcome to Connecting



Jan Thomas Johnson - jantjohnson@gmail.com

Stories of interest

Media Meltdown: If San Antonio's Old-line News Organizations Are in Free Fall, What Replaces Them? (San Antonio Current)

By Sanford Nowlin

Far from its glory days as a two-newspaper town, San Antonio sometimes looks like it's barely hanging onto the one it has left.

In May, the San Antonio Express-News laid off 14 senior staffers, bringing the head count in its newsroom to a little more than 100 - a far cry from the 230 it boasted prior to a series of painful layoffs that started in 2009.

It's a story that's played out in virtually every big U.S. city as papers faced the one-two punch of diminishing subscriptions and the flight of advertising to online sources. Along the way, experts predicted the Internet revolution would help offset the losses, fueling new and disruptive media that rely on multimedia storytelling and citizen journalism to shake things up.

Problem is those alternative news sources aren't immune to the same turmoil roiling the legacy media groups. What's more, there are serious doubts whether they'll ever grow robust enough to cover the gaps left as traditional media contracted.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Susana Hayward.

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YouTube Launches Initiative to Fight Fake News, Pledges \$25 Million to Support News Orgs (NPR)

By TODD SPANGLER

You can't always trust the veracity of stuff posted online - and obviously YouTube is no exception.

On Monday, Google's YouTube announced that it is committing \$25 million to help support legitimate news organizations, and also detailed new features intended to flag misinformation and highlight authoritative news sources.

YouTube's role in promoting conspiracy theories has flared up in recent months. In February, for example, a YouTube video suggesting that one of the high-school students who survived the mass killing in Parkland, Fla., David Hogg, was an actor hired by gun-control advocates briefly became YouTube's No. 1 trending video. YouTube removed the clip within a few hours, citing violation of its policy on harassment and bullying.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Richard Chady.

-0-

The Personal Business of Being Laid Off (Hazlitt)

BY SARAH HAGI

When I need comfort and familiarity, I cycle through five or so different movies I've seen at least a half dozen times each. Nora Ephron's 1998 classic *You've Got Mail* is a frequent go-to. Watching Joe Fox (Tom Hanks), a smug but charming business man, destroy Kathleen Kelly's (Meg Ryan) livelihood by opening a big chain bookshop beside her tiny independent while they fall in love anonymously online is somehow the perfect romantic comedy.

On my most recent watch, though, I found myself emotional over one particular exchange. Joe visits Kathleen in a bid to win her over romantically and begins telling her that destroying her business wasn't personal. In response, she tells him, "I am so sick of that. All it means is that it's not personal to you, but it's personal to me. Whatever else anything is, it ought to begin by being personal."

"It's not personal, it's just business" is a film and television trope so pervasive that up until recently I didn't question its truth. When I was laid off from what I thought was my dream job, nearly a year ago, some version of it was repeated by almost everyone who talked to me.

Read more [here](#).

The Final Word

Cliff's not in Kansas anymore!



Cliff Schiappa ([Email](#)) - I had painters over to my Palm Springs condo Wednesday, so I decided to take a day trip into the San Jacinto mountains and visit the town of Idyllwild. Not only did I experience a 35 degree drop in temperature at 5,000 feet above the desert floor, I also enjoyed the amazing winding roadways that would have been great on my motorcycle if it still wasn't in the shop in Amarillo, Texas. Along the main roadway in Idyllwild I came upon this sign warning motorists of pedestrians. Being in the mountains, it's only appropriate that Sasquatch be imagined as the one to watch out for.

Today in History - July 12, 2018



By The Associated Press

Today is Thursday, July 12, the 193rd day of 2018. There are 172 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On July 12, 1909, the House of Representatives joined the Senate in passing the 16th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, allowing for a federal income tax, and submitted it to the states. (It was declared ratified in February 1913.)

On this date:

In 1543, England's King Henry VIII married his sixth and last wife, Catherine Parr.

In 1812, United States forces led by Gen. William Hull entered Canada during the War of 1812 against Britain. (However, Hull retreated shortly thereafter to Detroit.)

In 1817, author, poet and naturalist Henry David Thoreau was born in Concord, Massachusetts.

In 1862, during the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln signed a bill authorizing the Army Medal of Honor.

In 1957, President Dwight D. Eisenhower was flown by helicopter from the White House to a secret mountaintop location as part of a drill involving a mock nuclear attack on Washington.

In 1960, the Etch A Sketch Magic Screen drawing toy, invented by French electrician Andre Cassagnes, was first produced by the Ohio Art Co.

In 1962, The Rolling Stones played their first-ever gig at The Marquee in London.

In 1967, rioting erupted in Newark, New Jersey, over the police beating of a black taxi driver; 26 people were killed in the five days of violence that followed.

In 1977, President Jimmy Carter defended Supreme Court limits on government payments for poor women's abortions, saying, "There are many things in life that are not fair."

In 1984, Democratic presidential candidate Walter F. Mondale announced his choice of U.S. Rep. Geraldine A. Ferraro of New York to be his running-mate; Ferraro was the first woman to run for vice president on a major-party ticket.

In 1994, President Bill Clinton, visiting Germany, went to the eastern sector of Berlin, the first U.S. president to do so since Harry Truman.

In 2001, Abner Louima (loo-EE'-mah), the Haitian immigrant tortured in a New York City police station, agreed to an \$8.7 million settlement with the city and its police union.

Ten years ago: Former White House press secretary Tony Snow died in Washington, D.C. at age 53. Former All-Star outfielder and longtime Yankees broadcaster Bobby Murcer died in Oklahoma City at age 62. Angelina Jolie gave birth at a hospital on the French Riviera to twins Knox and Vivienne, making a family of eight with Brad Pitt.

Five years ago: Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano announced her resignation. A train carrying hundreds of passengers derailed and crashed outside Paris; at least six people were killed and dozens injured. NSA leaker Edward Snowden emerged from weeks of hiding in a Moscow airport, meeting with Russian officials and rights activists. The Texas Senate passed sweeping new abortion restrictions, sending them to Gov. Rick Perry to sign into law after weeks of protests and rallies that drew thousands of people to the Capitol.

One year ago: President Donald Trump's nominee to lead the FBI, Christopher Wray, told a Senate panel that he did not believe that a special counsel investigation into possible Russian ties between Russia and the Trump campaign was a "witch hunt," as Trump had characterized it. Former Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva was found guilty of corruption and money laundering and sentenced to almost 10 years in prison.

Today's Birthdays: Movie director Monte Hellman is 89. Actor-comedian Bill Cosby is 81. Singer-musician Christine McVie is 75. Actress Denise Nicholas is 74. Singer-songwriter Butch Hancock is 73. Fitness guru Richard Simmons is 70. Singer Walter Egan is 70. Writer-producer Brian Grazer is 67. Actress Cheryl Ladd is 67. Country singer Julie Miller is 62. Gospel singer Sandi Patty is 62. Actress Mel Harris is 62. Actor Buddy Foster is 61. Rock guitarist Dan Murphy (Soul Asylum) is 56. Actress Judi Evans is 54. Rock singer Robin Wilson (Gin Blossoms) is 53. Actress Natalie Desselle Reid is 51. Actress Lisa Nicole Carson is 49. Olympic gold medal figure skater Kristi Yamaguchi is 47. Country singer Shannon Lawson is 45. Rapper Magoo is 45. Actress Anna Friel is 42. Rhythm-and-blues singer Tracie Spencer is 42. Actress Alison Wright is 42. Actor Steve Howey is 41. Actor Topher Grace is 40. Actress Michelle Rodriguez is 40. Actress Kristen Connolly is 38. Country singer-musician Kimberly Perry (The Band Perry) is 35. Actor Matt Cook (TV: "Man With a Plan") is 34. Actress Natalie Martinez is 34. Actor Bernard David Jones is 33. Actress Ta'Rhonda Jones is 30. Golfer Inbee Park is 30. Actress Rachel Brosnahan is 28. Actor Erik Per Sullivan is 27. Olympic gold medal gymnast Jordyn Wieber is 23. Nobel Peace laureate Malala Yousafzai (mah-LAH'-lah YOO'-suhf-zeye) is 21.

Thought for Today: "The tragedy is not that things are broken. The tragedy is that they are not mended again." - Alan Paton (PAYT'-uhn), South African author (1903-1988).

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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