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Connecting -- July 31, 2018

1 message

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Connecting

July 31, 2018

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Colleagues,

Good Tuesday morning!

Join me in wishing congratulations and great new chapters for our Connecting colleague **Mike Graczyk**, who retires today after a 46-year career with The Associated Press.

The AP wire story on his retirement leads today's issue. If you'd like to drop a note to Mike, his new non-AP email address is - mlgraczyk@aol.com

Remembrance events for **Sue Manning** were held last night in Los Angeles and look for our coverage in Wednesday's Connecting. A preview photo is above - taken by AP photographer **Reed Saxon**.

Have a great day.

Paul

AP reporter who observed 400+ executions in Texas retires



By NOMAAN MERCHANT

HOUSTON (AP) - Associated Press journalist Michael Graczyk, who witnessed and chronicled more than 400 executions as a criminal justice reporter in Texas, will retire Tuesday after nearly 46 years with the news service.

Graczyk, 68, may have observed more executions than any other person in the United States since the Supreme Court reinstated the death penalty in 1976. Millions of readers in Texas and beyond relied on his coverage of capital punishment in America's most active death penalty state.

He built a reputation for accuracy and fairness with death row inmates, their families, their victims' families and their lawyers, as well as prison officials and advocates on both sides of capital punishment. He made a point of visiting and photographing every condemned inmate willing to be interviewed and talking to relatives of their victims. Over time, he became widely known as an authority on the death penalty and a witness to history.

Even after retiring, Graczyk will continue covering executions for the AP on a freelance basis, an arrangement he suggested.

Long ago, Graczyk said, he stopped keeping count of how many executions he observed. The Texas Department of Criminal Justice's list of media witnesses includes his name 429 times, though that list is not exhaustive.

"It has given me a greater appreciation for life," he said. "You get a real sense of life and how fast it can be taken."

Read more [here](#). Shared by Diana Heidgerd.

Connecting mailbox

My jobs before journalism



Play important role

The instrumentalists in any production play a most important role in keeping the entire show moving at

a fast pace, and drummer Mark Mittelstadt of Fort Dodge does his best to keep things rolling.

Sorry, not quite as exotic as Ruth Gersh's belly dancing photo. But here's a shot of me and caption from our hometown paper (The Messenger, Fort Dodge, Iowa) rehearsing for the Iowa Central Community College Singers 1973 Spring concert Spectrum '73. The three-night show was a popular annual tradition in Fort Dodge and typically sold out.

Mark Mittelstadt ([Email](#)) - Jobs before journalism:

Paper boy

Snow shoveler

Yarb work*

Yard gaslight repair

Hamburger flipper

Stock room clerk

Drummer, country western band

Drummer, Dixieland band

Drummer, traveling theater troupe

Drummer, pop band

*Inadvertent spelling of "yard" work on application, as a seventh grader, for doing odd jobs at a new care center. Despite the misspelling, I was hired. When I left the CEO attempted to steer me into a career in health facilities management. Opportunity lost as the population ages but consumes less news? Hmmm.

-0-

Black's Law Dictionary a must for covering Manafort trial

John Wylie ([Email](#)) - In a 45-year career of investigative reporting which includes covering thousands of cases before state and federal courts and regulatory agencies in the US, Canada, Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand and who knows where else, I've worn out at least four copies of Black's Law Dictionary, which is the arbiter of word meanings so respected you'll find it quoted regularly in superb briefs by top lawyers before all tribunals including the US Supreme Court. So let's settle the issue of what collusion is or is not: "collusion, n. An agreement to defraud another or to do or obtain something forbidden by law."

Apparently a copy of this needs to be on every reporter's and editor's desk in the world, in all media, until at least the Manafort trial ends. Readers, please share. In my compact edition (3rd), it is on Page 113. Now, can we get on to debate something where there is a real question on the table?

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NLGJA Announces Karen Hawkins as First Recipient of the NLGJA Jeanne Córdova

Award

WASHINGTON, DC - Today NLGJA - The Association of LGBTQ Journalists announces that Rebellious Magazine for Women founder and editor-in-chief Karen Hawkins is the inaugural recipient of the new NLGJA Jeanne Córdova Award. The award recognizes the achievement of an LGBTQ woman for a current body of work in journalism and/or opinion, with an emphasis on, but not exclusively coverage of issues of importance to the LGBTQ community, in any medium and on any platform.

"I am honored and humbled to receive NLGJA's inaugural Jeanne Córdova Award," Hawkins said. "Her amazing legacy inspires me to continue working on behalf of our shared passion for feminist journalism and lesbian visibility. Thank you, NLGJA, for this recognition, and love and thanks to the incredible team that makes Rebellious Magazine for Women possible."



Hawkins is the Founder and Rebelle in Chief of Rebellious Magazine for Women. She is an award-winning reporter and editor whose journalism background includes positions with The Associated Press, the Windy City Times, the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel and the Palm Beach Post. She is also the former director of communications for the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Howard Goldberg, who noted Karen worked for AP Chicago in 2006-2012.

Don't enter this pond fishing for your ball



John Willis ([Email](#)) - Fotos taken early PM, 7.30 at Applewood CC about 20 miles south of Augusta, GA,

When we first saw this gator is was about three or four feet long, but has now grown to about seven feet. Notice the painted turtle about two feet from the gator's snout. He just laid there and soaked up the rays from the sun.

From a distance you can see the pond one must hit over to the green. It's a par three.

As you get a closer image the trees turn into reflections in the pond and you can see just how close the turtle is to the gator. In all the times we have watched him as we have waited and tee'd it up, he has never moved a muscle.

-0-

AP Logo police alert - a pizza box



Joe McGowan ([Email](#)) - Here is an AP "logo" I found in a pizza ad.

Some things never change - When Journalists Push To Extremes

A recent story in Connecting on the Media Spray used by White House correspondents to try to elicit an answer from the president reminded a Connecting colleague of this story by Roger Simons of The Chicago Tribune from October 19, 1987:

It was one of the most extraordinary days in the history of journalism:

The Rose Garden, Oct. 5. The President has just finished honoring a group of outstanding educators.

He turns to leave. Suddenly a reporter shouts a question at him. The President replies with a quip. Another reporter shouts a question.

The educators turn angrily on the reporters. ``You`re taking away the joy of the whole occasion from us,`` one says.

The reporters defend themselves. Emotions are raw.

“Why should this ruin the occasion for you?” Bill Plante of CBS says. “You’ve had your part of the occasion.”

“He’s a grown man and he can take care of himself,” Sam Donaldson of ABC says.

The educators are not mollified. The exchange continues. Eventually, both sides depart. But a flurry of scrutiny and self-examination is launched by the news media.

“Grown men and women are shouting at the President of the United States at the top of their lungs,” the Associated Press reports a week later. “They say they don’t like it, but it’s their job. And they say Ronald Reagan makes them do it this way.

“Demonstrators? Lunatics? Loud-mouthed boors?”

“No, the White House press corps.”

Sam Donaldson will later point out that Ronald Reagan must be questioned whenever he can be found because he has held only two news conferences this year, one in Venice.

Bill Plante, on a TV talk show, will say: “The White House is not a church. It is not a sanctuary.”

I have met Plante and Donaldson. Both are highly skilled, highly dedicated journalists. Both know they also are public figures and usually are on their best behavior.

So what is happening? Has the President forced the press into more and more extreme behavior? And if so, will this catch on with others? Where will it all end?

We can only imagine:

[Click here](#) for a link to this story.

AP**BEST OF THE STATES**

Private messaging apps used for official business test open records laws



Missouri Gov. Eric Greitens leaves the civil courts building in St. Louis, Mo., after speaking with reporters following the dismissal of a felony invasion-of-privacy case against him, May 14, 2018. Democratic lawmakers in the state introduced a bill stating that personal social media pages and messages sent through apps such as Confide and Signal are public records as long as they relate to official business. The legislation arose because of a controversy involving use of the Confide app by Greitens, who resigned in June amid a series of scandals. Photo by Robert Cohen / St. Louis Post-Dispatch via AP

Smart phone private messaging apps are great for keeping secrets.

They're especially useful for criminals, paramours and teens hiding conversations from their parents. But what about government officials and elected representatives? State Government Team reporter Ryan Foley spotted a trend of public officials increasingly using such apps for official business. It's a trend that alarms advocates for open government, who say it undermines state laws designed to ensure transparency and access to public records. The apps delete messages almost immediately and do not allow them to be saved, copied or captured with a screenshot.

A Missouri lawmaker likened the practice to conducting public business "using invisible ink."

Foley's research was based in large part on use of a new digital legislative tracking tool called the Sunshine Hub that was developed by AP Data Team members Serdar Tumgoren and Seth Rasmussen. The tool allowed Foley to see whether bills addressing the trend were being introduced in state legislatures across the country. And indeed they were. Some bills, like a failed one introduced by the Missouri lawmaker, sought to limit the practice and ensure that government business was done in public. Many other bills, however, took the opposite approach. They sought to protect lawmakers and other government officials who communicate over private messaging apps.

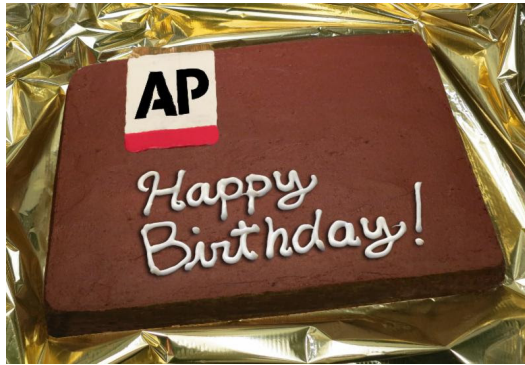
Tumgoren, the news applications team leader, and Rasmussen, news apps developer, built the Sunshine Hub over the past year in coordination with a user advisory committee of FOI advocates and editors from AP member organizations. It since has grown into a robust platform allowing reporters inside and outside AP to track government transparency legislation in all 50 states, and will become a regular feature of our Sunshine Week package.

The Sunshine Hub allows reporters to track transparency legislation in all 50 states.

The resulting story won play on more than two dozen front pages, including in The Columbus Dispatch, The Times-Picayune in New Orleans, the Ventura County Star, The Register-Guard in Eugene, Oregon, and The Gainesville Sun in Florida. It also prompted several editorials, including one in The Columbus Dispatch warning that officials' use of message-vanishing apps was the same as destroying public records. The Lancaster Media Group in Pennsylvania wrote that it was alarmed after reading Foley's story and said, "Elected officials and public employees should not comport themselves like teens on Snapchat." And a St. Joseph (Missouri) News-Press editorial said that allowing public officials to use secretive messaging apps to conduct government business "is a violation of the public's trust."

For their efforts in exposing a potentially dangerous anti-transparency trend among government officials, and developing a unique tool to track it, Foley, Tumgoren and Rasmussen win the Best of the States award.

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



To

Randi Berris - randi.berris@gmail.com

Story of interest

Newsroom employment dropped nearly a quarter in less than 10 years, with greatest decline at newspapers (Pew Research)

BY ELIZABETH GRIECO

Newsroom employment declined 23% between 2008 and 2017. Newsroom employment across the United States continues to decline, driven primarily by job losses at newspapers. And even though digital-native news outlets have experienced some recent growth in employment, too few newsroom positions were added to make up for recent losses in the broader industry, according to a Pew Research Center analysis of Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Employment Statistics survey data.

From 2008 to 2017, newsroom employment in the U.S. dropped by 23%. In 2008, about 114,000 newsroom employees - reporters, editors, photographers and videographers - worked in five industries that produce news: newspaper, radio, broadcast television, cable and "other information services" (the best match for digital-native news publishers). By 2017, that number declined to about 88,000, a loss of about 27,000 jobs.

This decline in overall newsroom employment was driven primarily by one sector: newspapers. Newspaper newsroom employees dropped by 45% over the period, from about 71,000 workers in 2008 to 39,000 in 2017.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Doug Pizac.

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Why Dean Baquet Skipped The New York Times' Meeting With Trump (Buzzfeed)

By STEVEN PERLBERG

When President Donald Trump broke an off-the-record agreement after he met with New York Times publisher A.G. Sulzberger, some wondered why Dean Baquet, the executive editor in charge of the journalism Trump has openly criticized, also didn't attend the Oval Office conversation.

The reason, Baquet told BuzzFeed News, is a matter of personal, not newsroom, policy.

"As a rule I don't go off the record with high-ranking officials, particularly the president," Baquet said in an email. "As the person overseeing coverage, I don't think officials should be able to tell me things that I can't publish. And I don't want to be courted or wooed."

Sulzberger was joined at the White House by James Bennet, the paper's editorial page editor. "The publisher and the editorial page editor have very different roles," Baquet said. "They shouldn't have to adhere to my rule, which is very personal."

Read more [here](#).

Today in History - July 31, 2018



By The Associated Press

Today is Tuesday, July 31, the 212th day of 2018. There are 153 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On July 31, 1991, President George H.W. Bush and Soviet President Mikhail S. Gorbachev signed the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty in Moscow.

On this date:

In 1777, during the Revolutionary War, the Marquis de Lafayette, a 19-year-old French nobleman, was made a major-general in the American Continental Army.

In 1919, Germany's Weimar (VY'-mahr) Constitution was adopted by the republic's National Assembly.

In 1948, President Harry S. Truman helped dedicate New York International Airport (later John F. Kennedy International Airport) at Idlewild Field.

In 1954, Pakistan's K2 was conquered as two members of an Italian expedition, Achille Compagnoni (ah-KEE'-lay kohm-pahn-YOH'-nee) and Lino Lacedelli (LEE'-noh lah-chee-DEHL'-ee), reached the summit.

In 1957, the Distant Early Warning Line, a system of radar stations designed to detect Soviet bombers approaching North America, went into operation.

In 1964, the American space probe Ranger 7 reached the moon, transmitting pictures back to Earth before impacting the lunar surface.

In 1970, "The Huntley-Brinkley Report" came to an end after nearly 14 years as co-anchor Chet Huntley signed off for the last time; the broadcast was renamed "NBC Nightly News."

In 1971, Apollo 15 crew members David Scott and James Irwin became the first astronauts to use a lunar rover on the surface of the moon.

In 1972, Democratic vice-presidential candidate Thomas Eagleton withdrew from the ticket with George McGovern following disclosures that Eagleton had once undergone psychiatric treatment.

In 1989, a pro-Iranian group in Lebanon released a grisly videotape showing the body of American hostage William R. Higgins, a Marine lieutenant-colonel, dangling from a rope.

In 1992, the former Soviet republic of Georgia was admitted to the United Nations as its 179th member. Thai Airways Flight 311, an Airbus A310, crashed while approaching Tribhuvan International Airport in Nepal; all 113 people aboard died.

In 2002, a bomb exploded inside a cafeteria at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, killing nine people, including five Americans.

Ten years ago: Scientists reported the Phoenix spacecraft had confirmed the presence of frozen water in Martian soil. Three teenagers were shot to death when a gunman opened fire on a group of young people who'd gathered to go swimming in the Menominee River near Niagara, Wis. (The gunman, Scott J. Johnson, was later sentenced to life in prison without parole.)

Five years ago: President Barack Obama's national security team acknowledged for the first time that, when investigating one suspected terrorist, it could read and store the phone records of millions of Americans. Voters in Zimbabwe went to the polls in national elections that were won by President Robert Mugabe amid opponents' allegations of fraud.

One year ago: Retired Marine Gen. John Kelly was sworn in as White House chief of staff, replacing Reince Priebus. Hours later, White House communications director Anthony Scaramucci was let go, just 11 days after he was appointed to the job. Former Arizona sheriff Joe Arpaio was convicted of a criminal charge for refusing to stop traffic patrols that targeted immigrants. (Arpaio was later pardoned by President Donald Trump.) The Trump administration slapped financial sanctions on Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro after a weekend election that gave his ruling party virtually unlimited powers. Los Angeles reached a deal with international Olympic leaders to host the 2028 Summer Games. (The games were officially awarded to Los Angeles in September.)

Today's Birthdays: Actor Don Murray is 89. Jazz composer-musician Kenny Burrell is 87. Actress France Nuyen is 79. Actress Susan Flannery is 79. Singer Lobo is 75. Actress Geraldine Chaplin is 74. Former movie studio executive Sherry Lansing is 74. Singer Gary Lewis is 73. Actor Lane Davies is 68. Actress Susan Wooldridge is 68. International Tennis Hall of Famer Evonne Goolagong Cawley is 67. Actor Barry Van Dyke is 67. Actor Alan Autry is 66. Jazz composer-musician Michael Wolff is 66. Actor James Read is 65. Actor Michael Biehn is 62. Rock singer-musician Daniel Ash (Love and Rockets) is 61. Actor Dirk Blocker is 61. Entrepreneur Mark Cuban is 60. Rock musician Bill Berry is 60. Actor Wally Kurth is 60. Actor Wesley Snipes is 56. Country singer Chad Brock is 55. Musician Fatboy Slim is 55. Rock musician Jim Corr is 54. Author J.K. Rowling (ROHL'-ing) is 53. Actor Dean Cain is 52. Actor Jim True-Frost is 52. Actor Ben Chaplin is 49. Actor Loren Dean is 49. Actress Eve Best is 47. Retired NFL quarterback Gus Frerotte is 47. Actress Annie Parisse (pah-REES') is 43. Actor Robert Telfer is 41. Country singer-musician Zac Brown is 40. Actor-producer-writer B.J. Novak is 39. Actor Eric Lively is 37. Country singer Blaire Stroud (3 of Hearts) is 35. Singer Shannon Curfman is 33. Hip-hop artist Lil Uzi Vert is 24. Actor Reese Hartwig is 20. Actor Rico Rodriguez is 20.

**Thought for Today: "The trouble with the public is that there is too much of it."
- Don Marquis, American journalist, poet and dramatist (1878-1937).**

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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