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Connecting - November 29, 2018

1 message

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Thu, Nov 29, 2018 at 9:22 AM

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November 29, 2018

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Colleagues,

Good Thursday morning!

We lead today's issue with a look back at **AP Radio** in its early analog days.

Connecting colleague **Mark Huffman** shared some photos he took of the original newsroom in Washington from the 1970s.

And, we bring you even more memories of the worst shifts your colleagues worked at the AP. Haven't fessed up to yours? Send it along today. Try to top one from **David Green** today in which he tells how he saved HQ at 50 Rockefeller Plaza from burning down while he was serving on the overnight.

Here's to a great day ahead!

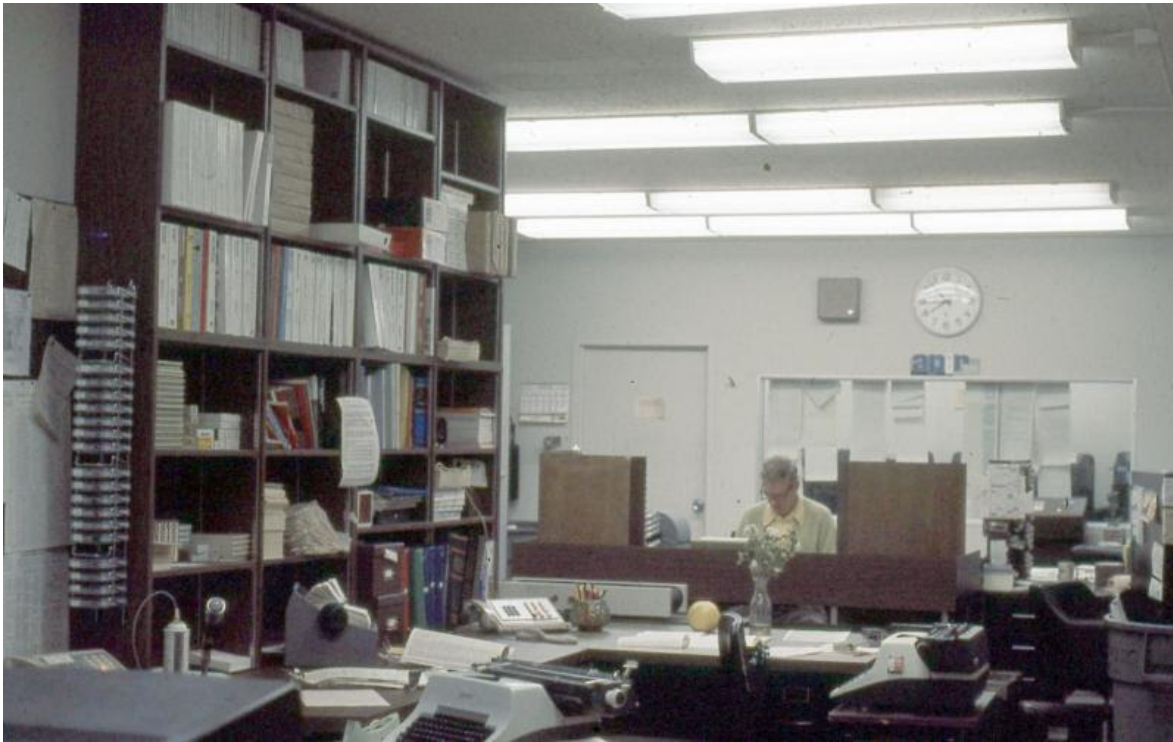
Paul

The way we were: AP Radio newsroom of the '70s

Mark Huffman (Email) - A year or so ago I digitized a lot of slides from the 1970s and found these photographs of the original AP Radio newsroom in Washington. I've included a description of each one in case you want to use them. It shows how we operated in those analog days.

On October 1, 1974, AP Radio went on the air providing news, sports and business newscasts and news actuality feeds to stations. It was launched to counter UPI's longstanding and successful UPI Audio operation, and it worked. At its zenith, it had more than 600 radio affiliates -- 1,100 if you counted AM and FM stations separately, which of course we did.

It was based at [1825 K Street NW](#) in Washington in about 1,500 square feet of space which it would occupy until August 1983, when it expanded to occupy nearly the entire sixth floor. Shortly after I arrived in March 1976, I took the following sequence of photographs on a slow Saturday evening, capturing a radio news operation in the days before digital.



Ed Kane is shown at the news anchor desk preparing an hourly newscast. He types on a manual Olympia that has been outfitted with oversize type so that the script is easier to read. In the background is a glass-enclosed, soundproof room where the massive teletype machines clattered away. In the foreground is the news desk where the editor directed coverage.

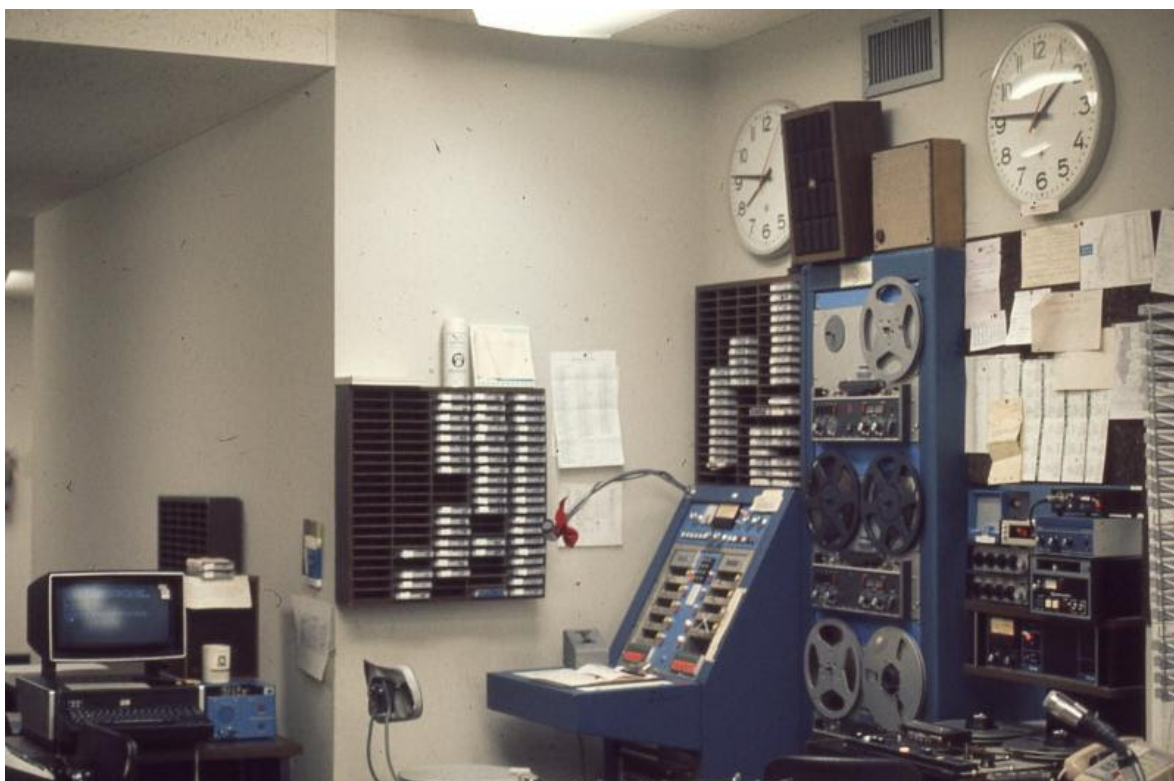




This is Edit 2. We had three edit/production booths where editors recorded voice reports and news actualities that were filed over phone lines by reporters and stringers. Wire reporters from the Washington bureau would often stop by to record radio reports on stories they had covered for the wire that day. Harry Rosenthal, George Gedda, Barry Schweid and Carl Hartman were frequent visitors.



Once radio reports and news actualities had been recorded on cartridges, an editor would type up information about them for billboards that moved once an hour on the AP Broadcast Wire. We also had a squawk box to communicate with the national broadcast desk in New York and would often send up information to be incorporated into the hourly summaries. We sometimes transcribed quotes from interviews and sent them to the General Desk.



At the bottom of each hour, we fed audio reports and actualities to the stations, playing the segments listed in the hourly billboard that had been recorded onto individual cartridges, or "carts." The large blue machine was a piece of homemade automation equipment that played the carts, and it was affectionately called "pinball." It was called other colorful names when it didn't work right, which was quite often.

The clock on the left is Eastern Time while the clock on the right is GMT, which kept us in step with the rest of the world. The foreign bureaus were a great source of foreign coverage and some of the correspondents, including George Krimsky in Moscow, Victor Simpson in Rome, Robert Reid in Brussels, and Terry Anderson in Beirut were excellent radio reporters as well.



Those of us who anchored live shows did so from a small soundproof studio using this console. The presence of both digital and analog clocks is no accident since timing had to be precise. Not only did shows have to begin and end at specific times, the five-minute newscast had as many as five time-cues within it that had to be hit so that a station could cut away and rejoin. Once you got the hang of it, it wasn't so bad but I have "newscaster nightmares" to this day.

The telephone keypad on the left side of the console generated tones that were used to control automation equipment at the stations.

Braniff Airlines occupied a large space on the sixth floor at 1825 K, and when the airline went under in 1982 AP grabbed the space. We built a new, larger newsroom to accommodate the national broadcast wire, which moved from New York in 1983.

Connecting mailbox

'Get me Rick Barry' - and he DID!

Bruce Lowitt ([Email](#)) - I don't know if this qualifies for the "favorite quotes" file but ...

In the early 1970s Bernie Beglane, a sportswriter for the Long Island Press who often doubled as a stringer for The AP in New York, occasionally took on more than one assignment and would have his son, Eddie, then a freshman in high school (or maybe still in junior high), cover one of them for us. Eddie or his father routinely covered the New York Nets of the American Basketball Association, calling in game details from which one of us in the office would write a four- or five-graf story. Rarely did we need any quotes.

One night, though, Rick Barry, who would play in the ABA and NBA in a 14-season Hall of Fame career, scored 40-something points in a Nets blowout win. I'd need quotes from him to lead the basketball roundup so I told Eddie, "Get me Rick Barry." A while later my phone rang. I picked it up.

"Bruce Lowitt, Sports."

"Hello?"

"Who's this?"

"Rick Barry."

Totally unprepared, I asked a few perfunctory 40-something point, blowout-win questions, thanked him, then said, "Is the kid there? Put him on the phone."

When Eddie Beglane got on, I said, "Look, kid, when I said, 'Get me Rick Barry, I didn't mean "Get me Rick Barry,'" and explained it meant we needed quotes from him. Lesson taught. Lesson learned.

-0-

'Brush hogs' wasn't what he thought

Jeffrey Ulbrich ([Email](#)) - Reading the contribution on ag fixtures today reminded me of the days when I first got to the Denver bureau in the early 70s. One of the many daily routines was putting out the "Brush Hogs." For the longest time I thought this was the price of a particularly hairy breed of pig. Turned out it was prices from the hog market in Brush, Colo.

More memories of your worst AP shifts

David Green ([Email](#)) - Being assigned to the worst possible schedule just after starting out on the New York General Desk actually allowed me to make my only notable contribution to the AP, which was saving 50 Rock from burning down.

When I arrived in 1980, new staffers usually had a short stint on nights before being moved to the early - 8 p.m. to 4 a.m. with Tuesdays and Wednesdays off.

Aside from killing the possibility of a social life, the early was a lot of fun due to great co-workers (Charlotte Porter and Brian Friedman among them), and the challenge of trying to freshen the report for P.M. newspapers. The exception was Saturday night/Sunday morning when two staffers were assigned to a just-in-case shift from 10 p.m.-6:30 a.m. There was no P.M.s report since there was only one Sunday afternoon member to worry about, in Westerly, R.I., and nothing, but nothing, ever happened. The only break in the boredom was editing Today in History to make sure the AP wasn't saying that a notable person was celebrating their birthday when in fact they were dead.

About 2 a.m. one Sunday, I went to the library, which if I remember correctly was a floor or two up from the General Desk, to resolve a lengthy alive-or-dead argument with my companion in boredom (can't remember who that was). I smelled smoke coming out of a closet, and when I opened the door, I found burning tangles of teletype paper and a running machine. I called 911, and then headed out the door. I stopped to pound on the heavy metal door of the Tass office to warn them about the fire, but they wouldn't open up. (I was always unclear what Tass was doing in the AP building, anyway.)

The few of us on the 4th Floor evacuated the building, and the fire department showed up quickly to take care of things.

When I arrived at work Monday night, I had a nice note from Lou Boccardi in my mailbox, which was great. Even better: there was no disapproving note from Lou about raising someone from the grave, which was lucky, since we had lost track of Today in History in all the excitement.

-0-

Mike Holmes ([Email](#)) - My worst "shift" was actually a two-day assignment that I've tried very hard to forget. It came in the late 1980s or early 90s, while I was Austin correspondent. The Texas high school sports authority (for some reason called the

University Interscholastic League) was hoping to boost attendance at the state track meet by holding it at the University of Texas stadium simultaneously with the Southwest Conference track meet.

Thus, Austin sports writer Jack Keever and I spent a long Friday and Saturday trying to cover track AND field events for five classes of high school boys, five classes of high school girls, the Southwest Conference men AND the Southwest Conference women. Of course, every member wanted full results. So Jack wrote the stories and I punched in results as fast as I could type in what we called Track Agate Festival Weekend. At 10:30 on Saturday night, I looked down from the press box and wondered aloud if anybody knew who was leading as a couple dozen young women circled the track under the lights. "Hell," came the reply from down the row, "I don't even know event that is."

-0-

Charles Richards ([Email](#)) - Worst day at work?

That would have to be in 1979 or 1980 when the power went out in Southland Life Building in downtown Dallas, where the AP bureau was on the 20th floor.

We were back in business pretty quickly in the bureau itself, but the power remained out for the building itself, including the three elevators that served the building.

We had to walk up and down 20 flights of stairs -- the first four floors in total darkness within the building itself before getting to the place where the emergency stairs began, serving the fifth floor and above. At 28 stories, the building was the tallest in Dallas from 1959 to 1964.

Going down wasn't so bad, but the trip up -- pure agony for most of us (some worse than others).

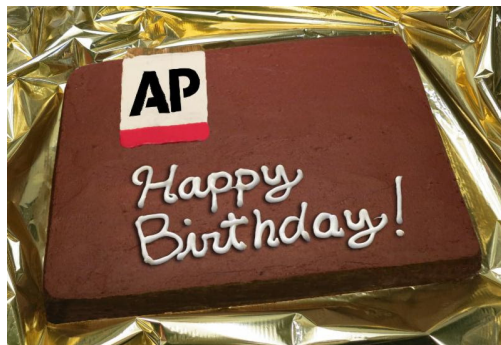
I don't remember how long it lasted, but it seems like it was more than one day.

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Mort Rosenblum ([Email](#)) - My worst shift was my first, the overnight at the Newark bureau in 1965. AP was tucked in a corner of the Newark News building, which shut its front doors at night. To get to work, we stepped over upended garbage

cans, snoozing drunks and scurrying rats in a long narrow unlit urine-scented alley to buzz at the door. Then we waited until someone buzzed us in. It wasn't much of a problem for a skinny, impoverished-looking guy like me, but, sexist as this may seem today, I worried about young female colleagues who, to their lasting credit, never voiced a peep of concern.

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



To

Mercer Bailey - mer26rose35@comcast.net

Jim Sterling - sterlingj@missouri.edu

Happy birthday, Mercer!





Connecting salutes our colleague Mercer G. Bailey on his 92nd birthday today. He was a mentor to many of us during a distinguished AP career of more than 50 years. Mercer is shown in the top photo with daughters Lynn (left) and Marci - and in the bottom photo when they were all a bit younger.

Stories of interest

Sinclair Makes 200 Local News Stations Run Segment Supporting Use of Tear Gas on

Migrants (Mediaite)

by Caleb Ecarma

As the media outrage toward the Trump administration's harsh border policies escalated this week, Sinclair Broadcast Group required their roughly 200 local news outlets to air a defense of the Border Patrol's use of tear gas against migrants crossing the border on Sunday.

"The migrant crisis on our southern border has greatly escalated," former Trump administration assistant and Sinclair political analyst Boris Epshteyn says as viewers are presented with clips of the border crisis. "Dozens of migrants attacked U.S. border enforcement by throwing rocks and bottles. Ultimately, American authorities had to use tear gas to stop the attacks."

The right-wing pundit then condemned "the left" and Rep. Maxine Waters (D-CA) for questioning "our president and his team standing up for our men and women in uniform and for our national security."

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

-0-

The Miami Herald's latest investigation 'pulls the sewer lid' off a 10-year-old story (Poynter)

By KRISTEN HARE

The retired police chief initially did not want to talk to the reporter, but not because he did not want to talk.

He feared the subject of the story had so much power that the story would get killed.

A lot of people felt that way, said Julie K. Brown, an investigative reporter at the Miami Herald.

On Wednesday, she and the Herald proved them wrong.

Brown's investigation "Perversion of Justice," reveals a wealthy Florida businessman who sexually abused and trafficked underage girls for years and the people in the criminal justice system who worked with him to help him basically get away with it, including Alexander Acosta, now President Donald Trump's labor secretary.

Read more [here](#).

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Obama says Fox News viewers, New York Times readers live in 'entirely different' realities

By Sophie Tatum, CNN

Washington (CNN) - Former President Barack Obama on Tuesday evening blamed a shifting media environment for sharpening partisan divides, saying that Fox News viewers and New York Times readers live in "entirely different" realities.

"Whether it was (Walter) Cronkite or (David) Brinkley or what have you, there was a common set of facts, a baseline around which both parties had to adapt and respond to," Obama said at Rice University.

"And by the time I take office, what you increasingly have is a media environment in which if you are a Fox News viewer, you have an entirely different reality than if you are a New York Times reader," he continued.

Obama said that because of this, "the basis of each respective party have become more ideological."

Read more [here](#).

Today in History - November 29, 2018



By The Associated Press

Today is Thursday, Nov. 29, the 333rd day of 2018. There are 32 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Nov. 29, 1890, the first Army-Navy football game was played at West Point, New York; Navy defeated Army, 24-0.

On this date:

In 1864, a Colorado militia killed at least 150 peaceful Cheyenne Indians in the Sand Creek Massacre.

In 1910, British explorer Robert F. Scott's ship Terra Nova set sail from New Zealand, carrying Scott's expedition on its ultimately futile - as well as fatal - race to reach the South Pole first.

In 1929, Navy Lt. Cmdr. Richard E. Byrd, pilot Bernt Balchen, radio operator Harold June and photographer Ashley McKinney made the first airplane flight over the South Pole.

In 1947, the U.N. General Assembly passed a resolution calling for the partitioning of Palestine between Arabs and Jews; 33 members, including the United States, voted in favor of the resolution, 13 voted against while 10 abstained. (The plan, rejected by the Arabs, was never implemented.)

In 1961, Enos the chimp was launched from Cape Canaveral aboard the Mercury-Atlas 5 spacecraft, which orbited earth twice before returning.

In 1963, President Johnson named a commission headed by Earl Warren to investigate the assassination of President Kennedy.

In 1972, the coin-operated video arcade game Pong, created by Atari, made its debut at Andy Capp's Tavern in Sunnyvale, California.

In 1981, actress Natalie Wood drowned in a boating accident off Santa Catalina Island, California, at age 43.

In 1986, actor Cary Grant died in Davenport, Iowa, at age 82.

In 1987, a Korean Air 707 jetliner en route from Abu Dhabi to Bangkok was destroyed by a bomb planted by North Korean agents with the loss of all 115 people aboard.

In 1991, 17 people were killed in a 164-vehicle pileup during a dust storm on Interstate 5 near Coalinga, California. Actor Ralph Bellamy died in Santa Monica, California, at age 87.

In 2001, George Harrison, the "quiet Beatle," died in Los Angeles following a battle with cancer; he was 58.

Ten years ago: Indian commandos killed the last remaining gunmen holed up at a luxury Mumbai hotel, ending a 60-hour rampage through India's financial capital by suspected Pakistani-based militants that killed 166 people. Architect Joern Utzon, who designed the iconic Sydney Opera House in Sydney, Australia, died at age 90.

Five years ago: A police helicopter crashed onto a pub in Glasgow, Scotland, killing 10 people. A single-engine plane crashed in remote southwest Alaska, killing four people and injuring six.

One year ago: North Korea launched its most powerful weapon yet, claiming a new type of intercontinental ballistic missile that some observers believed could put the entire U.S. East Coast within range. "Today" host Matt Lauer was fired for what NBC called "inappropriate sexual behavior" with a colleague; a published report accused him of crude and habitual misconduct with women around the office. Garrison Keillor, who'd entertained public radio listeners for 40 years on "A Prairie Home Companion," was fired by Minnesota Public Radio following allegations of inappropriate workplace behavior. President Donald Trump retweeted inflammatory videos from a fringe British political group purporting to show violence committed by Muslims. The House approved a measure requiring annual anti-harassment training for lawmakers and aides. The price of bitcoin surged through \$10,000, adding to its ten-fold jump in value during 2017.

Today's Birthdays: Hall of Fame sportscaster Vin Scully is 91. Former French President Jacques Chirac is 86. Blues singer-musician John Mayall is 85. Actress Diane Ladd is 83. Songwriter Mark James is 78. Composer-musician Chuck Mangione is 78. Country singer Jody Miller is 77. Pop singer-musician Felix Cavaliere (The Rascals) is 76. Former Olympic skier Suzy Chaffee is 72. Actor Jeff Fahey is 66. Movie director Joel Coen is 64. Actor-comedian-celebrity judge Howie Mandel is 63. Former Homeland Security Director Janet Napolitano is 61. Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel is 59. Actress Cathy Moriarty is 58. Actress Kim Delaney is 57. Actor Tom Sizemore is 57. Actor Andrew McCarthy is 56. Actor Don Cheadle is 54. Actor-producer Neill Barry is 53. Musician Wallis Buchanan is 53. Pop singer Jonathan Knight (New Kids on the Block) is 50. Rock musician Martin Carr (Boo Radleys) is 50. Actress Jennifer Elise Cox is 49. Actor Larry Joe Campbell is 48. Rock musician Frank Delgado (Deftones) is 48. Actress Paola Turbay is 48. Contemporary Christian singer Crowder is 47. Actress Gena Lee Nolin is 47. Actor Brian Baumgartner is 46. Actor Julian Ovenden is 43. Actor Chadwick Boseman is 42. Actress Anna (AH'-nuh) Faris is 42. Gospel singer James Fortune is 41. Actress Lauren German is 40. Rapper The Game is 39. Actress Janina Gavankar is 38. Rock musician Ringo Garza is 37. Actor-comedian John Milhiser is 37. Actor Lucas Black is 36. Actor Diego Boneta is 28. Actress Lovie Simone (TV: "Greenleaf") is 20.

Thought for Today: "Toleration is good for all, or it is good for none." - Edmund Burke, British statesman (1729-1797).

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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