



Paul Shane <pjshane@gmail.com>

Connecting - February 28, 2019

1 message

Paul Stevens <paulstevens46@gmail.com>
Reply-To: paulstevens46@gmail.com
To: pjshane@gmail.com

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Colleagues,

Good Thursday morning!

Mark your calendar for **Thursday, June 20**. That's the date for the 2019 25-Year Club Celebration in New York, AP's annual salute to retirees, alumni and current staff with a minimum of 25 years of AP service.

AP Human Resources said Wednesday the 25-Year Club Celebration will be held at AP's headquarters at 200 Liberty Street, located in the Brookfield Place office and shopping complex in lower Manhattan. Detailed instructions for accessing AP's floors will be emailed to all confirmed attendees prior to the event. Mingle and revisit with your former colleagues from 5:30 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. Drinks and dinner will be served. Your spouse or a guest is welcome to join you.

The AP logo consists of the letters 'AP' in a bold, black, sans-serif font. Below the letters is a solid red horizontal bar.

HR asks that you RSVP as soon as possible, but no later than Friday, May 10. You can RSVP online [here](#). Any questions may be directed to recognition@ap.org.

Today's Connecting brings you more memories of **GG LaBelle**, a 41-year veteran of the AP who spent years covering the Middle East. He died Monday at the age of 76.

Eileen Alt Powell ([Email](#)) - LaBelle's wife and a former AP journalist - said a memorial gathering - no ceremony, just fellowship and hugs - will be held from 3 to 5 p.m. on Saturday (March 2) at Duffy Funeral Home, [255 9th Street](#) in Brooklyn. In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations in GG's name to The Committee to Protect Journalists at <https://cpj.org/> or to Doctors Without Borders at <https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/>

Have a good day!

Paul

More of your memories of GG LaBelle

He helped me become what I am today...

Samir Francois Ghattas ([Email](#)) - For the record, I owe a lot to GG. When I said in my tribute that he cared about his staff it was born out of personal experience. This is one story to tell:

In 1985, during the height of the kidnappings and the violence engulfing Lebanon, with Terry Anderson held hostage and GG and the wonderful and caring Eileen moved to Cyprus for fear of suffering the same fate, I was myself pulled out of a

vehicle to be kidnapped at a militia checkpoint. The AP driver wouldn't let go and he negotiated that I be allowed to proceed. It was quite a scare and it was then, after three years of covering a lot of the "good stories" as we war-hardened journalists used to refer to tragic events, that I decided it was too dangerous to stay in Beirut.



Nate Polowetzky (1989 photo
courtesy AP Corporate Archives)

I took leave and seriously considered quitting and moving to Canada where I had some relatives. Word of my intentions reached GG, who asked me to stop by in Cyprus on my way out of Lebanon and to Canada. "No promises, but make sure to stop by at the Desk in New York and see Polowetzky," he told me before I left. No hint at all. I have met Nate Polowetzky, then the International Editor, on an earlier visit.

Nate took me to a corner room on the 4th Floor at AP HQ, asked a few questions about conditions in Lebanon and in my responses I made it clear that returning to Beirut at that stage was not an option for me. Nate abruptly stood up and with his trademark coarse voice: "Well Samir, we are not letting you go. Go visit your relatives in Canada and when you finish come back and you will work here on the desk and we will find you a place to go to."

I knew GG's good words were in that room. It was the break of my career, the break of my life. I remained a journalist, AP then Canadian Press then back with the AP in Beirut till 2009 when I moved the United Nations in Lebanon, then Libya then Iraq.

I owe a lot to GG. It was great to work with giants of the trade: Nick Tatro who hired me, Terry Anderson who pushed me to perform better, Eileen Powell who was always there to help and advise, and GG LaBelle who gave me the opportunity of a lifetime to continue doing what I liked doing most, being a reporter on the regional and international levels, and Nate who had the right pulse and final say. Without his confidence in me, without him believing in me I would not have remained a journalist for so long or become what I am today.

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GG was relentless, fearless - and his journalism reflected it

Merrill Hartson (Email) - GG LaBelle was on the 1980 presidential campaign desk with me, Lee Byrd and Robert M. Andrews. That's how I got to know what a splendid journalist he was, a man who was a great thinker, prodigious writer.

He kept us loose in those stressful times with his dry sense of humor and boundless story-telling. Like all of us, he could be taciturn at times, but I discovered that was because he often was in deep thought. I don't know if he ever accomplished one of the goals he so often stated: Writing a roundup of AP roundups. Washington frustrated Jerry, as it has most of us, and he likened covering news on the WDC National desk (In the 1980s Washington was known in the AP as WX) to "covering the world's largest city council." He longed to become a foreign correspondent, and that's where he really hit his stride. He was relentless and fearless, and the journalism he produced for the wire reflected it. In the relatively short time, we shared AP work in the same bureau, he became and remained a dear friend. He will be sorely missed.

New-member profile: John Diamond

John Diamond (Email) - joined the AP Boston Bureau in 1987, having started his career with The Patriot-Ledger of Quincy, MA. John worked at the AP Statehouse bureau, which quickly became consumed with the presidential campaign of Gov. Michael Dukakis. In 1989 John moved to the AP Washington bureau as New England regional reporter. He transferred to the national staff in 1993, covering defense issues in Congress and the Pentagon and later, the CIA. In 1999 John joined the Chicago Tribune's Washington bureau as State Department correspondent, and in 2002 was recruited by USA Today into a new position covering U.S. intelligence. His assignments took him to Bosnia, Baghdad, Beijing, the West Bank, and some 40 other overseas places that don't begin with the letter 'B'. His assignments included the U.S. role in dismantling the old Soviet nuclear arsenal in Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine, NATO intervention in Bosnia, the Camp David II peace talks, 9/11 and the Iraq War, and the restructuring of the U.S. intelligence community.



John Diamond

When John joined the AP, the bureau still had the old A20 teletype machines and New York was still putting out the AP/UPI Play Check for AMs and PMs. When he left, Bloomberg News was on the rise, Google search was coming to the fore, and the print news growth curve was starting to point sharply downward.

In 2008 John wrote a book on the history of the post-Cold War CIA, *The CIA and the Culture of Failure*, published by Stanford University Press. He has contributed chapters to two editions of *Navigating the National Security Labyrinth* published by Georgetown University Press-the 2017 edition and the 2011 edition.

For two years John was communications director for Senator Maria Cantwell, D-WA, and in 2011 he joined the World Bank Group as senior communications officer with the Global Environment Facility. Today John works for the Bank Group's Equitable Growth, Finance and Institutions vice presidency, focusing on the G20 Compact with Africa program and the Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative (We-FI). A native of Boston, John lives in Washington, DC, and is a volunteer golf coach with The First Tee of Greater Washington DC.

AP Albany plans alumni reunion in August

Marc and Carla Humbert ([Email](#)) - It has been almost six years since the first non-annual reunion of those of us who worked in and with the Albany, N.Y., bureau of The Associated Press. I think it is time for the second such event.

In consultation with 2013 reunion hosts Christine and Jim McKnight, we have set the date for Saturday, Aug. 17, from 1-5 p.m. at our place on Tsatsawassa Lake, about 30 minutes east of Albany. We hope you can join us. The address is [68 Marginal Way, East Nassau, N.Y., 12062](#). If you punch that into your GPS or Google Maps or whatever, you will find us. If you get lost, the phone is 518-766-5480.

The gathering is open to anyone who worked at the Albany bureau (or in Syracuse, Rochester or Buffalo) from about 1970 to the present, from techs to administrative staff, photographers, editors and writers. Spouses and significant others are encouraged to attend. If you have other family who enjoy an afternoon at the lake (yes, there is swimming, boating and fishing available) and are willing to hang out with old farts, please feel free to bring them.

Chris has agreed to serve as co-host for the latest reunion and to serve as our on-line coordinator. If you can make the event, please email her at trichris@nycap.rr.com

Once again, this will be a celebratory occasion - a time to reminisce and reconnect. So, please bring along memorabilia and photos. We will also salute those colleagues who are no longer with us.

While we're still sorting out some of the details, plan to bring a lunch-type dish to share and whatever you would like to drink. We will have a grill going and some burgers and dogs to put on it. But for now, the most important thing is to save the date (Aug. 17) and let Chris know if you can come.

Jack Auresto named deputy Washington bureau chief for video

Washington Bureau Chief **Julie Pace** on Wednesday announced a key appointment, sending this memo to her staff:

I'm thrilled to announce that **Jack Auresto** will assume the role of deputy Washington bureau chief for video, a new position that aims to deepen our cross-format collaboration in Washington.

Jack is a familiar face to many of you in the bureau. Since 2014, he's served as the broadcast unit manager for U.S. video, working closely with the Washington bureau on coverage of big events, breaking news and our AP Newsmaker series. Prior to joining the AP, Jack worked as an assignment manager at WHDH, the NBC affiliate in Boston, and broadcast manager at WFXT, Boston's Fox affiliate.



AP Deputy Washington Bureau Chief for Video Jack Auresto. (AP Photo/Pablo Martinez Monsivais)

What I've always appreciated about Jack is that his first instinct when confronted with a problem or challenge is to figure out how to solve it, not to declare it can't be done. He's a constant source of ideas and is eager to work closely with Washington reporters, editors and photographers.

Please join me in congratulating Jack and wishing him well in his new role.

AP Printer Sighting



Jack Walker ([Email](#)) - Caught this pic recently on HLN channel's Forensic Files series, which we watch when nothing else that interests us is available (after all, you can only take so much of current news broadcasts!).

Want to get good story play? Woof Woof!!!

Ed Williams ([Email](#)) - I used to tell my students (at Auburn University) that if they wanted to get the readers interest and attention, write a dog story.

In my first newspaper job I wrote a story about a dog named Boots that got more comments than anything else I ever wrote when I was a newspaper reporter.

Boots would leave home each morning and head to the local service station where he would spend the day.

Everybody in the little town of Jackson, Alabama, knew and loved Boots.

The folks at McGowin Service Station kind of adopted Boots, and he had a steady diet of Moon Pies, cheese crackers and pork skins that children would feed him at the gas station.

Smart as Boots was, he couldn't tell days of the week.

He would amble down to McGowin's each Sunday morning when the station happened to be closed for the day.

He would lie around for an hour or so and then head back home, waiting for Monday.

Welcome to Connecting



Samir Ghattas - samghattas@gmail.com

Grazyna Lallemand - glallemand@3ec-tv.com

Stories of interest

White House restricts press access as Kim, Trump meet



President Donald Trump has dinner with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, Wednesday, Feb. 27, 2019, in Hanoi. (AP Photo/ Evan Vucci)

By JONATHAN LEMIRE and JILL COLVIN

HANOI, Vietnam (AP) - The White House restricted press access Wednesday to portions of President Donald Trump's summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in Vietnam.

Four print reporters, including one from The Associated Press, were barred from a press availability as Trump sat down for dinner with Kim, the leader of a country where there is no press freedom. That came after two of those reporters asked questions of the president during earlier events at the summit, including one query about upcoming congressional testimony from Trump's former lawyer, Michael Cohen, that was critical of the president.

White House press secretary Sarah Sanders released a statement saying that due to the "sensitive nature of the meetings we have limited the pool for dinner to a smaller group."

The decision to bar reporters Wednesday was an abrupt change of plans. The White House had previously said that access would be granted to the usual 13-person group of reporters, known as the traveling press pool, who follow the president to every event.

AP spokeswoman Lauren Easton said the company "decries such efforts by the White House to restrict access to the president. It is critically important that any president uphold American press freedom standards, not only at home but especially while abroad."

Read more [here](#).

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North Korea media tries slicker, quicker summit coverage



In this Wednesday, Feb. 27, 2019, photo, men gather around the public newspaper posts to read about North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's visit to Vietnam for the second summit with U.S. President Donald Trump, in Pyongyang, North Korea. (AP Photo)



In this Wednesday, Feb. 27, 2019, photo, North Koreans watch news about their leader Kim Jong Un's visit to Vietnam for his second summit with U.S. President Donald Trump, in Pyongyang, North Korea. (AP Photo/Jon Chol Jin)

By ERIC TALMADGE

HANOI, Vietnam (AP) - North Koreans have been getting a quicker, more polished look at their leader as he meets with President Donald Trump in Vietnam in their second summit. But one thing hasn't changed at all - North Korea's media have one story to tell, and it's always about the infallibility of the glorious leader.

Even before his first handshake with Trump, photos of leader Kim Jong Un were featured Wednesday on the front page of the ruling party's daily newspaper, Rodong Sinmun. The news of his travels was also broadcast on nationwide television.

There appears to be an effort to present the news in a somewhat more visually appealing manner.

Man-in-the-street interviews, which have often been carefully staged and done in several takes to make sure they come out just right, are looking more casual. One woman was interviewed while riding a trolley, another at her station in a factory in a soft light.

What the people have to say, however, is as predictable as ever.

Read more [here](#).

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Court filing links spy exposed by AP to Israel's Black Cube



In this image from video, a man identified as former Israeli intelligence officer Aharon Almog-Assouline speaks during an interview at a restaurant in New York on Thursday, Jan. 24, 2019. Newly filed Canadian court documents say Almog-Assouline bears a "striking resemblance" to a spy active in Toronto in 2017. (AP Photo/Joseph Frederick)

By RAPHAEL SATTER and ARON HELLER

LONDON (AP) - A Canadian attorney says he appears to have been targeted by the same undercover operative unmasked by The Associated Press at a New York hotel last month, drawing a line between the man and the notorious Israeli intelligence firm Black Cube.

In a court filing made public last week, Toronto attorney Darryl Levitt says that the spy, whose real name is Aharon Almog-Assouline, "bears a striking similarity" to a man he identified as an alleged Black Cube operative.

Levitt says he was targeted because of his involvement in a long-running legal battle between two Canadian private equity firms, Catalyst Capital and West Face Capital. Previous media reports have hinted at a link between Almog-Assouline and Black Cube, but Levitt's Feb. 21 claim before Ontario's Superior Court of Justice is the first attempt to substantiate the connection by requesting receipts and surveillance footage.

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

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Poll: How does the public think journalism happens? (CJR)

For decades, we've known that Americans don't trust the press. What we haven't known is how people view the makings of journalism, from the use of fact checkers and anonymous sources to the question of whether money skews journalistic decision-making. This new national poll for CJR answers those questions, and points to how big the trust gap remains.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Mike Short, who said, "Most depressing finding: 60% of the more than 4,200 people polled believe that journalists are at least sometimes paid off by their sources. I don't have details of the methodology, but I'd like to see this study replicated by another organization."

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'Spanish Warren Buffett' may be key to McClatchy's Tribune bid (New York Post)

By KEITH J. KELLY

The investment manager known as "the Spanish Warren Buffett" is apparently playing a big role in McClatchy's bid to try to buy much larger Tribune Publishing Co. for around \$500 million.

Francisco García Paramés, founder of the Madrid-based Cobas Asset Management, holds an 18.4 percent stake in McClatchy, making the boutique firm the second-biggest holder of common stock.

"Cobas has been a long-term shareholder and we are pleased that they have continued to invest in MNI," a McClatchy spokeswoman said. A spokesperson for Cobas had not returned a call by press time.

Read more [here](#).

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Mapping the future of local news, together

(Poynter)

By KRISTEN HARE

In late December, I got an email from the Orange County Register's Scott Schwebke.

"Investigative reporter Joe Nelson and I have been reporting on years of sex abuse cover up in the Redlands Unified School District for the last 15 months on behalf of the Southern California News Group and the 7,000 circulation Redlands Daily Facts," he wrote. "We think this is a pretty remarkable feat for such a small paper and given the tough economic times in journalism."

I agree.

Schwebke and Nelson's investigation, "Bad Apple," led to reforms and new policies from the school district and an investigation from the state. Both reporters work for the Southern California News Group, owned by Digital First Media.

Read more [here](#).

Today in History - February 28, 2019



By The Associated Press

Today is Thursday, Feb. 28, the 59th day of 2019. There are 306 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Feb. 28, 1942, the heavy cruiser USS Houston and the Australian light cruiser HMAS Perth were attacked by Japanese forces during the World War II Battle of Sunda Strait; both were sunk shortly after midnight on March 1 with a total loss of more than 1,000 men.

On this date:

In 1844, a 12-inch gun aboard the USS Princeton exploded as the ship was sailing on the Potomac River, killing Secretary of State Abel P. Upshur, Navy Secretary Thomas W. Gilmer and several others.

In 1849, the California gold rush began in earnest as regular steamship service started bringing gold-seekers to San Francisco.

In 1911, President William Howard Taft nominated William H. Lewis to be the first black Assistant Attorney General of the United States.

In 1917, The Associated Press reported that the United States had obtained a diplomatic communication sent by German Foreign Minister Arthur Zimmermann to a German official in Mexico proposing a German alliance with Mexico and Japan

should the U.S. enter World War I. (Outrage over the telegram helped propel America into the conflict.)

In 1953, scientists James D. Watson and Francis H.C. Crick announced they had discovered the double-helix structure of DNA.

In 1958, a school bus clipped a truck near Prestonsburg, Kentucky, and plunged down an embankment into the Big Sandy River; 22 children managed to escape, but 26 other children and the bus driver drowned.

In 1975, 42 people were killed in London's Underground when a train smashed into the end of a tunnel.

In 1988, the 15th Olympic Winter Games held its closing ceremony in Calgary, Canada.

In 1993, a gun battle erupted at a religious compound near Waco, Texas, when Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms agents tried to arrest Branch Davidian leader David Koresh on weapons charges; four agents and six Davidians were killed as a 51-day standoff began.

In 1995, Denver International Airport opened after 16 months of delays and \$3.2 billion in budget overruns.

In 1996, Britain's Princess Diana agreed to divorce Prince Charles. (Their 15-year marriage officially ended in August 1996; Diana died in a car crash in Paris a year after that.)

In 2013, Benedict XVI became the first pope in 600 years to resign, ending an eight-year pontificate. (Benedict was succeeded the following month by Pope Francis.) Bradley Manning, the Army private arrested in the biggest leak of classified information in U.S. history, pleaded guilty at Fort Meade, Maryland, to 10 charges involving illegal possession or distribution of classified material. (Manning, who later adopted the female identity Chelsea Manning, was sentenced to up to 35 years in prison after being convicted of additional charges in a court-martial, but had her sentence commuted in 2017 by President Barack Obama.)

Ten years ago: Paul Harvey, the news commentator and talk-radio pioneer whose staccato style made him one of the nation's most familiar voices, died in Phoenix at age 90. Oakland Raiders linebacker Marquis Cooper, free-agent NFL defensive

lineman Corey Smith and former South Florida player William Bleakley died when their boat overturned in rough seas off the coast of Florida.

Five years ago: Delivering a blunt warning to Moscow, President Barack Obama expressed deep concern over reported military activity inside Ukraine by Russia and warned "there will be costs" for any intervention.

One year ago: Walmart announced that it would no longer sell firearms and ammunition to people younger than 21 and would remove items resembling assault-style rifles from its website. Dick's Sporting Goods said it would stop selling assault-style rifles, and ban the sale of all guns to anyone under 21. Students and teachers returned under police guard to Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School as classes resumed for the first time since the shooting that killed 17 people. President Donald Trump called for substantial changes to the nation's gun laws, criticizing lawmakers for being fearful of the National Rifle Association. Political leaders paid tribute to the Rev. Billy Graham as his casket rested in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda. West Virginia's House approved a 5 percent pay raise to end a week-long walkout by teachers. White House communications director Hope Hicks, one of President Donald Trump's most trusted aides, abruptly announced her resignation.

Today's Birthdays: Architect Frank Gehry is 90. Actor Gavin MacLeod is 88. Singer Sam the Sham is 82. Actor-director-dancer Tommy Tune is 80. Hall of Fame auto racer Mario Andretti is 79. Actor Frank Bonner is 77. Actress Kelly Bishop is 75. Actress Stephanie Beacham is 72. Writer-director Mike Figgis is 71. Actress Mercedes Ruehl is 71. Actress Bernadette Peters is 71. Former Energy Secretary Steven Chu is 71. Actress Ilene Graff is 70. Nobel Prize-winning economist Paul Krugman is 66. Comedian Gilbert Gottfried is 64. Basketball Hall of Famer Adrian Dantley is 64. Actor John Turturro is 62. Rock singer Cindy Wilson is 62. Actress Rae Dawn Chong is 58. Actress Maxine Bahns is 50. Actor Robert Sean Leonard is 50. Rock singer Pat Monahan is 50. Author Daniel Handler (aka "Lemony Snicket") is 49. Actress Tasha Smith is 48. Actor Rory Cochrane is 47. Actress Ali Larter is 43. Country singer Jason Aldean is 42. Actor Geoffrey Arend is 41. Actress Melanie Chandra (TV: "Code Black") is 35. Actress Michelle Horn is 32. Actress True O'Brien is 25. Actress Madisen Beaty is 24. Actress Quinn Shephard is 24. Actor Bobb'e J. Thompson is 23.

Thought for Today: "Who will give me back those days when life had wings and flew just like a skylark in the sky." - Marceline Desbordes-Valmore, French actress and poet (1786-1859).

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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