



Paul Shane <pjshane@gmail.com>

Connecting - April 29, 2019

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

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Colleagues,

Good Monday morning on this the 29th day of April 2019,

The late **Jim Donna** - then director of AP Human Resources - described the retirement of **Myron Belkind** in 2004 as "an end of an era" following Myron's four-decade career with AP spent nearly entirely abroad heading the New Delhi, London and Tokyo bureaus.

Myron is the subject of our Monday profile, which Connecting is publishing to coincide with the abdication on Tuesday of Emperor Akihito of Japan. Myron and his wife Rachel met the emperor and Empress Michiko in the gardens of the Imperial Palace at the end of his AP assignment in Tokyo.

Myron recounts for us a fascinating career of service to the AP as we begin a new week.

Our newest Connecting colleague, **Vahe Gregorian** of The Kansas City Star, recently experienced what he calls one of "Life's happy little quirks."

He explains: "Waiting to board a plane, picked up a couple dollars a woman dropped and gave it back to her. She thanked me a second time as boarded plane, and I told her, "As my dad would say, buy yourself a Tootsie Roll" - his frequent words when we'd try to give him back change as kids. Even as I said the words, I was asking myself why I felt the need to put it that way. Then the woman smiled and said, "Funny you should say that," pulled out a Tootsie Roll from her purse and reached across a couple people to give it to me. First full-sized one I've had in decades.

Got a "life's happy little quirk to share? Send it along.

Have a great day!

Paul

Connecting profile

Myron Belkind



Emperor of Japan (Rachel is doing the "namaste," the traditional Indian greeting, with her hands folded), April 15, 2004, at the Imperial Palace Gardens in Tokyo.

Q. Why does the abdication of Emperor Akihito have a special significance for you?

As we neared the end of our assignment in Tokyo in the spring of 2004 and headed into "retirement," Rachel and I were honored to receive an invitation to the annual sakura, or cherry blossom, reception hosted by Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko in the gardens of the Imperial Palace. We were among more than a hundred guests and never thought we would even get close to the Japanese royals, let alone be able to talk with them. But when the emperor and empress appeared, they began mingling with the guests and before we knew it, they stopped by us, first the emperor as he walked down an informal receiving line and then a few minutes later the empress, who stopped right in front of us, perhaps because she noticed Rachel in an Indian sari in the colors of the cherry blossoms, while I wore the traditional formal morning dress.

I said to the empress that we were honored to spend the final day of our Associated Press assignment in Tokyo at the sakura reception before starting our retirement, and she replied in perfect English:

"Journalists are very important, because they perform the important task of informing the world of what is happening in our country and of creating better understanding. I wish you all success for the future."

That is a quote I often have used in speeches to journalism groups - and in my opening lecture each term at George Washington University - to illustrate how even the empress of Japan respects the role of journalists.

Q. How did you get your first job with the AP? Who hired you? What were your first days like?

While completing my studies at Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism in 1962, I received a phone call from Sam Blackman, the AP general news editor, to ask if I would be interested in a summer vacation position on the General Desk. I imagine he had heard about me from George J. Kienzle, a former AP staffer who was my mentor at the Ohio State University School of Journalism, where he was the director. Kienzle had urged me to get a master's degree from Columbia so that I would teach journalism one day. I took the subway from Columbia to Rockefeller Plaza, took the AP writing test and was offered an editor's position on the General Desk. With six weeks to go until graduation, I would spend days at Columbia and then work an evening shift until 2 a.m. at Rockefeller Place. My responsibility was to file the regional wires that went to New England and the South.

One day, in October of 1962, I heard a supervisor say to the editor filing the national AAA wire, "Make certain this story goes out without any errors. It is important."

I asked another colleague what was the "important story."

"A new AP general manager," he replied.

It was the announcement that Wes Gallagher would become the new general manager on Oct. 15, succeeding Frank Starzel.

And so began the era of Wes Gallagher, who made the General Desk his first focus to review AP operations. A few days later, we were all called to a meeting with him in his office on the Seventh Floor of Rockefeller Plaza. As the most junior member of the General Desk staff, I did not plan to say anything, until Gallagher said, "Belkind, what suggestions do you have for improving the desk?"

I replied that I felt it was important to use the regional wires only for truly regional stories and not use them as an overflow for national stories that were sometimes

diverted from the national AAA wire, a suggestion with which Gallagher concurred.

The General Desk experience at the center of AP's worldwide operations was invaluable, especially learning from such legends as Sam Blackman, Herb Barker, Ed Dennehy and Marty Sutphin.

My "first job" for AP ended at the end of 1962, a little longer than the summer vacation relief originally envisioned, and I headed to Southeast Asia to work locally for the AP while on a Pulitzer Traveling Fellowship from Columbia University. I had written ahead to Don Huth, then the chief of AP's Southeast Asian Services based in Kuala Lumpur, to explain I had my travel expenses paid (I converted the \$2,000 Pulitzer Fellowship to a round-the-world Pan Am ticket) and needed to do some writing and reporting to fulfill the terms of the fellowship.

"Come ahead to Southeast Asia," Huth replied. "We're always one person short."

Huth kept me busy for the entire year, sending me to Jakarta to cover GANEFO, the Games of the New Emerging Forces set up by President Sukarno to rival the Olympics; to Sarawak in Northern Borneo to report on a U.N. mission that interviewed the descendants of the legendary Wild Men of Borneo and other tribes to see if they wanted to join Malaysia, the new nation the British were creating out of its former colonial territories; to Burma to try to secure the release of AP correspondent Peter Boog (using a hard-to-obtain visa I had picked up in New York before leaving on my fellowship); a multinational naval exercise on the South China Sea, traveling from Singapore to Manila, and the birth of Malaysia itself on Aug. 31, 1963.

By the end of 1963, it was time to return to New York- except there was one more unexpected assignment en route. Stopping off in Israel, I traveled to Jerusalem to visit the AP bureau and was immediately sent to Nazareth to help cover the visit of Pope Paul VI in early January 1964.

Arriving at the newly renamed John F. Kennedy Airport, I headed back to Rockefeller Plaza to join the World Service Desk under the leadership of Wally Sims, who became an encouraging mentor, as I began the next phase of my AP life, except there was one more interruption, for service in the U.S. Army during 1964 and 1965 from Fort Jackson in Columbia, South Carolina for basic training to the Army Home Town News Center in Kansas City and finally, after volunteering for Vietnam when draftees were not yet being sent to the war zone, to Saigon, to work in the press office of Gen. William Westmoreland, writing daily roundups of military operations that served as a communique for the press corps, which had wanted a formal communique to supplement the separate daily political briefings. I left Army service with the rank of Army Specialist 4 and then flew once again to New York to rejoin the AP in January 1966 on the World Desk until I was sent to India in November at the start of my career in the AP foreign service.

What were your different past jobs in the AP, in order, as a foreign correspondent? Describe briefly what you did with each?

From November 1966 to August 1967, I was a correspondent in New Delhi, working for Joe McGowan, the bureau chief. The main story during that period was the Indian parliamentary elections of February 1967, when I was able to spend a day traveling with Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on her re-election campaign from Bombay to Madras and witnessing her as she spoke to several rallies in open fields in rural areas to crowds of at least one lakh (one hundred thousand).

Interviewing her aboard her propeller-driven DC-3, I said I was struck by how attentive the huge crowds were as she spoke and asked her: "Madam Prime Minister, with such a high rate of illiteracy in the country, do you feel your message is being comprehended by the rural masses?" She replied: "They may be illiterate in the dictionary sense, but politically, Indians are very literate."



Indira Gandhi (while addressing the Foreign Correspondents Association of South Asia, of which I was president, in 1972)

In August 1967, after writing a large takeout on India's 20th anniversary of Indian independence, I was sent to Kuala Lumpur, where I had previously spent a year, to be correspondent for Malaysia and Singapore, a posting the AP used to see if foreign correspondents could also handle administrative responsibilities to prepare them for future assignments as bureau chiefs.

And then came a message from Wes Gallagher 10 months later asking if I would return to New Delhi as bureau chief to succeed McGowan, who was being transferred to Lima, Peru. I accepted, of course- and the assignment changed my life professionally and personally.

Professionally, my time in New Delhi could not have been more satisfying and challenging, covering major stories throughout South Asia, including political unrest in Pakistan that focused on then opposition leader Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in the late 1960s; elections in Sri Lanka that returned Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike to power in 1970; the India-Pakistan war in 1971 that led to the birth of Bangladesh; India's first nuclear test in 1974; the campaign to eradicate smallpox in India (the last major hurdle to the successful world-wide eradication of the disease); a major famine in parts of India in 1974, and, finally, culminating in the most challenging story of my career, Prime Minister Gandhi's State of Emergency from 1975 to 1977 when civil liberties were suspended, thousands of political opponents were arrested and severe restrictions were placed on the domestic and international press.

I will never forget the night the Emergency began shortly before midnight on June 25, 1975, as reports spread of mass arrests in a country that had been considered the world's largest democracy with the world's largest free press. I was all alone in the AP bureau, punching out developments directly on to the keyboard of a leased slow-speed (16 words per minute) teleprinter circuit linked to AP London.

Throughout the night, I was fortunate to have excellent sources among Indian journalists from United News of India, the national news agency that distributed AP in the country, who kept providing me news they were unable to report, while I wove in historical background from nearly a decade in India. Then, at 8 a.m., Mrs. Gandhi made a national broadcast to announce the Emergency. A few minutes later I had a phone call from Harry D'Penha, who had retired earlier in the month as the government's principal information officer and who informed me he was now the Chief Censor and that all our stories would have to be cleared by censors. As our call ended, the leased circuit to London stopped.

At the time the Emergency began, I had two tasks: to ensure that AP's coverage was not impeded by the government and, as president of the Foreign Correspondents Association of South Asia, to get censorship on foreign correspondents lifted, which I managed to do by leading a delegation to the residence of Information Minister V.C. Shukla and explaining to him why censorship was detrimental to the international press' reporting on India. He agreed to end the censorship, but he had one key demand, that the foreign correspondents ensure their dispatches are accurate! I agreed!

Despite the censorship being lifted, I would still be called periodically to the Office of the Chief Censor.

My most memorable time was when D'Penha summoned me to have a cup of tea with him to relay the government's concern that if the AP New Delhi bureau wrote a story based on false rumors about violence between Hindus and Muslims that our stories could inflame tensions between India and Pakistan and could lead to open warfare, especially since the AP was distributed in Pakistan.

I replied: "Harry, if I report a story based on false rumors, the Indian government will expel me, but the AP will fire me." That is also a quote I use regularly in speeches and to my students to stress AP's high standards.

The Emergency ended on March 21, 1977 with the defeat of Mrs. Gandhi and her Congress Party in elections that, to her credit, she permitted to be free and fair.

(I was honored to learn while on home leave in the summer of 1976, when I visited the Columbia Journalism School to see one of my professors, John Hohenberg, that the AP had nominated me for a Pulitzer Prize for my coverage of the start of the

Emergency. Hohenberg, who was the administrator of the Pulitzer Prizes, proudly showed me the AP's submission.)

A few weeks before the Indian elections that led to the end of the Emergency, I had received a telex from New York advising that I would be transferred to AP London as assistant bureau chief to be responsible for the bureau's personnel and business operations, working with a staff of 100 in news, photos and communications and a subscriber base of all the major British print and broadcast media. My hope had been that I would be able to be in India long enough to see the end of the Emergency, and my wish had been fulfilled.

(Demonstrating the versatility that foreign correspondents have to have, I also left behind a reputation for being the only American correspondent based in India who could report on cricket, as I had to do in the absence of a sports writer on our staff. Coverage of India's favorite pastime when major international cricket teams played in the country was essential for AP's World Service.)

Onward to London in May 1977! And then, from 1980, as bureau chief and managing director of Associated Press Limited, the AP's overseas business subsidiary.



Margaret Thatcher (1980s) (with Rachel, center)

Just as my decade in India was filled with major stories-the lifeblood of journalists-so were 24 years in London.

There were the Royals, from the wedding of Prince Charles and Lady Diana on July 29, 1981, to their divorce on Aug. 28, 1996 and her death on Aug. 31, 1997; the era of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher from 1979 to 1990, and then on to Prime Ministers John Major and Tony Blair and the "Troubles" in Northern Ireland culminating in the Good Friday Agreement in Belfast on April 10, 1998 that effectively ended decades of sectarian violence. I remain grateful to the excellent news editors throughout my

time in London, including Jeff Bradley, Larry Thorson, Marcus Eliason, Kristin Gazlay and Bob Barr and all the outstanding news and photo journalists and communications staff who were part of our large AP London family.

On the business side, we achieved for the first time a subscriber base of 100 percent of the British media: all the British national newspapers published from London, all the regional newspapers served through the Press Association, the British national

news agency that relied on AP for its main source of international news and photos, and all the British broadcasters including the BBC and Independent Television News. They were all AP news and photo subscribers!

In 2001, after two decades in London, I phoned Lou Boccardi to volunteer to be the Tokyo bureau chief and to return to Asia, where my foreign career had begun. Lou agreed. I feel fortunate to have led that bureau as it moved to new offices in the Shiodome Media Tower and to have been elected president of the Foreign Correspondents Club of Japan, taking me to my retirement and our farewell meeting with Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko at the sakura reception at the Imperial Palace gardens in 2004 before moving to Washington, D.C., and two post-AP careers that continue at age 79!

Q. Tell us about your Life After AP.

Like many retirees, I put the word "retirement" in quotes, because if we are fortunate, we still can remain active professionally, hopefully imparting our experiences with AP to the next generation of journalists, as I have tried to do for the past 15 years:

-Teaching the fundamentals of news writing and reporting at the George Washington University School of Media and Public Affairs as a professorial lecturer on the adjunct faculty since 2005 to the present as well as teaching on-line writing courses from 2010 to 2015 for the Graduate School of Political Management, which was keen for its graduate students to master the techniques of clear and accurate writing.

-Traveling internationally to conduct training programs and speak about the important role of journalism to society on behalf of the State Department's Speakers Bureau, including to Serbia, Montenegro, Azerbaijan, Albania, and, just this last October, to the United Arab Emirates to speak to eight different groups in five days in Abu Dhabi and Dubai about what I call the RAF of journalism that gives our profession its credibility: Responsibility, Accuracy and Fairness. Even in societies where governments have press restrictions, I found there is great receptiveness to hearing about how journalists dedicate their lives to informing society. In Abu Dhabi, I was most touched that at a session for youth leaders held under the auspices of the National Media Council, a large group of women in traditional Muslim attire came to hear me, something the U.S. Embassy media officer said she had not witnessed before.

-Being active in the National Press Club, regenerating its international programs from 2005 to 2013, serving as president in 2014 and, since then, moderating panel discussions and speaking to visitors from other countries who want to learn about the Club's mission to campaign for press freedom worldwide.

And now for Paul Stevens' final four questions:**Q. Would you do it all over again--or what would you change?**

Growing up in Cleveland and starting out in journalism at age 11 on the junior high school newspaper under my first mentor, the late Doris Govan, I never envisioned it was possible to have such a rich life of professional experiences that I have been fortunate to have. And so the answer is, "Yes, I would do it all over again, and there is nothing I would change."

Q What's your favorite hobby or activity?

Teaching! I can't wait for every new term to begin and to meet new students eager to learn news writing and reporting. I also enjoy following sports, especially when the Cleveland Indians, the Cleveland Browns and the Cleveland Cavaliers play well (we're stilling longing for the first World Series championship since 1948, when the Indians beat the old Boston Braves and I greeted the team as it came in to the East Cleveland Railway Station as the second grade representative of my nearby elementary school).

Q. What's the best vacation trip you've ever made?

Around South America and to the Antarctic (photo at right) on a 67-day cruise in 2016 with Rachel.

**Q. Names of your family members and what they do?**



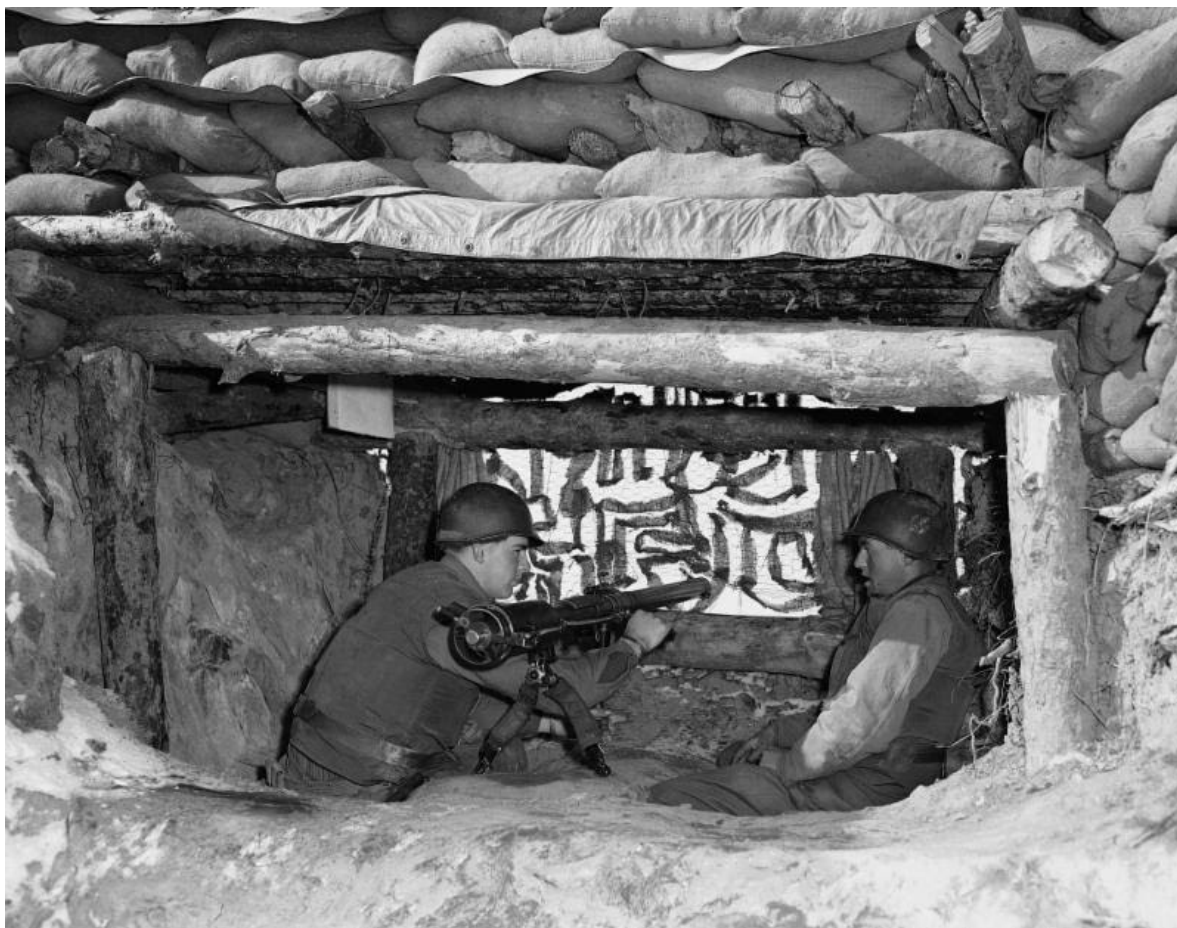
The Belkinds in front of Buckingham Palace, summer 1990, before attending the Queen's Garden Party. From left Myron and Rachel, daughter Yael, son Joshua.

I mentioned earlier that India changed my life personally. I was introduced to Rachel as she was completing her master's degree in sociology at the Delhi School of Economics. Our first date was on Aug. 15, 1968, when we attended the reception marking the 21st anniversary of Indian independence at the Rashtrapati Bhavan, the presidential palace that was once home to the British Viceroy. We were married in New Delhi on Nov. 23, 1969, and look forward to our 50th wedding anniversary later this year! We have two children, Yael and Joshua. Yael lives in Washington, D.C., working with Terry McAuliffe, as she has since he was chairman of the Democratic National Committee and, more recently, as governor of Virginia. She also worked for six years in the State Department's Office of Protocol managing Blair House, the president's official guest house, and six years on Capitol Hill. Joshua is an executive director of Standards and Practices in the Disney ABC Television Group working on live shows including American Idol, Dancing with the Stars, the Oscars and New Year's Rockin' Eve. He lives in Los Angeles with his wife Michele, who has her own veterinary practice, and their son and daughter. There is one member of the family I owe an extra special thanks, and that is to Rachel, who, like many bureau chief wives, did extraordinary duties for the AP, including when we were in London, often hosting dinners for subscribers and for visiting executives and

directors at our residence, especially on Thanksgiving, when we always had a staff celebration to say thanks to everyone for their dedication to the AP.

Myron Belkind's email is - myron.belkind@verizon.net

PBS film 'KOREA' eyes social, political tolls of Korean War



FILE - In this Jan. 5, 1953, file photo, U.S. Army Pfc. Jesse Riffle, of Morgantown, W. Va., and Cpl. James J. Harrington, of Bronx, N.Y., pass the time waiting next to their recoilless rifles in a camouflaged bunker on Old Baldy in Korea. The new PBS documentary "KOREA: The Never-Ending War" examines the lasting social and political costs of the Korean War _ a conflict largely forgotten in the U.S. (AP Photo/George Sweers,File)

By **RUSSELL CONTRERAS**

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP) - To escape the poverty of South Texas migrant camps, Homer Garza joined the U.S. Army. Months later he and his company found themselves surrounded in South Korea by an invading North Korean force.

Garza's story is one of many shared in the PBS documentary "KOREA: The Never-Ending War." The film, a production of WETA Washington, is scheduled to air on most PBS stations Monday and examines the lasting social and political costs of the Korean War - a conflict largely forgotten in the U.S. It also tells the story of a war that redefined the region from the perspective of families, U.S. veterans and journalists.

Filmmaker John Maggio said he wanted to create something that wasn't focused on solely on views of ambassadors and historians but real people affected by the war. In addition, he wanted his project to explain why tensions between North and South Korea remain nearly 70 years after a series of diplomatic blunders and violent massacres.

"I also was curious. My uncles fought in the Korean War and never talked about it," Maggio said. "My granduncles were in World War II and always talked about it."

Read more [here](#).

Nomination for AP Lead of the Day

AP FACT CHECK: Unraveling the mystery of whether cows fart



By CALVIN WOODWARD and SETH BORENSTEIN

WASHINGTON (AP) - Let's clear the air about cow farts.

In the climate change debate, some policymakers seem to be bovine flatulence deniers.

This became apparent in the fuss over the Green New Deal put forward by some liberal Democrats. More precisely, the fuss over an information sheet by the plan's advocates.

With tongue in cheek or foot in mouth, depending on whom you ask, the statement's authors said that despite the plan's proposals for strong limits on emissions over a decade, "we aren't sure that we'll be able to fully get rid of farting cows and airplanes that fast."

Airplanes don't fart. But cows?

Exasperated by merciless mocking from Republicans on this matter, Democratic Sen. Debbie Stabenow of Michigan lectured the Senate majority leader, Mitch

McConnell, on the floor of the chamber last month.

Read more [here](#). Nominated and shared by Cecilia White.

'Your hero died' - Rest in Motion, Hondo



AP file photo

Mike Tharp ([Email](#)) - My best friend Greg called early (last) Thursday morning. 'Your hero died,' he said.

He meant Hondo, John Havlicek, the Boston Celtics champion and Hall of Famer. Greg would know Havlicek was my hero. Greg and I played high school basketball together in Kansas for four years and against each other in college for four more years, 60 miles apart.

From the first time I ever saw him on the weekly black-and-white NBA telecasts in the early '60s, Hondo was the guy I patterned my game after. He was the mythic perpetual motion machine, always moving, mostly running.

He had a lean and hungry look, from the year he was a rookie coming off the bench--and inventing the role of sixth man--to when he was a perennial NBA All-Star as a starter.

You can read about his career on any sports website. In my impressionable prepubescent years, Hondo (named after a John Wayne character) represented somebody I might could maybe possibly be. He was two inches taller than my 6'3", but even I could try to imitate his constant maneuvering.

My dad, who never played a sport in his life but was a stud, first pointed him out to me. "Mike, look at how this guy runs.' I looked.

Best friend Greg noticed it in practice. So did our coach, Ken Bueltel. Running lines--sprints from the baseline to four other black lines on the court at full speed and back--I was never among the fastest, in either high school or college. But I was always in the second tranche, when it meant endurance more than speed.

In 2002 I got to interview Havlicek on the phone. He was in Boston, I was in LA. A literary agent and I had been emailing about a basketball book. I had told him that although Larry Bird was my favorite player of all time, Havlicek was my hero. He suggested 'Hondo Mojo' as a title.

During our conversation, Havlicek expressed minor interest. (He had already collaborated on a book in 1977, 'Hondo: Celtic Man in Motion,' with legendary Boston sportswriter Bob Ryan.) I told him it would be about how he made ME a basketball player.

He was semi-engaged till I told him we'd need to meet for interviews. He said, no, sorry, I don't have that kind of time.

So that was the name of that tune.

I got to see Larry Bird play live three times and interviewed him once in 1991. Never got to do that with John Havlicek.

Rest in Motion, Hondo.

Best of the Week

AP dominates all-formats coverage of historic release of Mueller report



Videojournalists photograph four pages of the redacted Mueller report on the witness table in the House Intelligence Committee hearing room on Capitol Hill in Washington, April 18, 2019. AP Photo / Cliff Owen

The AP bulletin rocketed around the world just minutes after the release of the much-anticipated report by special counsel Robert Mueller:

WASHINGTON (AP) - Mueller's report reveals Trump's efforts to seize control of Russia probe and force the special counsel's removal.

The breadth and sweep of the 17-word APNewsAlert set the tone for a day of dominant AP coverage in every format on the historic findings in the Mueller report.

The success was the result of deep knowledge of the subject matter by AP's Russia team - Eric Tucker, Mike Balsamo, Chad Day and Mary Clare Jalonick - along with lightning-fast speed and precision execution by the entire Washington bureau.

When we learned the report was being released Thursday, Tucker - who was in Europe on a family vacation - hopped on a flight and made it back to Washington in

time (after a brief delay in Iceland). Most of the team had holiday plans for Easter, but everyone canceled or delayed in a strong show of teamwork. The team was ready for several scenarios surrounding the rollout of the report - preparation that paid dividends because the Justice Department kept changing the release plan at the last minute.

In the end, they settled on a plan in which certain Justice Department reporters - Tucker and Balsamo among them - were allowed to view two binders containing the more than 400-page report over a 45-minute period. Balsamo described the scene as a bit like taking the SATs: "We were given specific instructions on when we could open the report and we couldn't leave for any reason."

As soon as they were allowed to open the binders (labeled Volume I and Volume II with a stack of papers clipped together as the appendix), Tucker and Balsamo called the Washington bureau and kept two open lines to the newsroom. Tucker knew to go directly to the section on obstruction and start feeding the section to Day in the bureau; Balsamo went right to the written answers that Trump submitted to Mueller and coordinated with Jalonick. It quickly became clear that we were getting fresh information revealing the scope of Trump's attempts to obstruct the investigation. We moved our first bulletin as White House news editor Nancy Benac - a brilliant writer who stepped in to write the running story - began crafting the story that hit the wire right after the report was posted online.

By then, the AP was off and running with outstanding all-formats coverage. Photographer Pat Semansky had photos on the wire within two minutes of the start of Attorney General William Barr's news conference earlier in the day. Washington photo editor Jon Elswick photographed many key parts of the report, moving several images within minutes of the release. His colleague Wayne Partlow, who was on vacation, jumped online and filed remotely, helping the photo desk coordinate and edit all the photos.

Our live video coverage was so strong and well-positioned throughout the day that ABC at times took AP's live coverage over their own. We had live reaction from Trump, key Democratic lawmakers and many others. Our speed was so impressive that clients were able to get a complete set of critical and comprehensive edits by mid-afternoon. Our interactive had tremendous success, being used by more than 800 sites - unheard of play for a non-election story. The Trump Investigation hub on APNews had more than 150,000 pageviews Thursday, more than double its previous high. The standout coverage was on front pages of newspapers around the country.

"While we were sending bulletins saying that Trump had tried to stop the investigation, everyone else was still saying, 'We have the report, we're reading it, we'll get back to you.'"

Sally Buzbee, executive editor

"While we were sending bulletins saying that Trump had tried to stop the investigation, everyone else was still saying, 'We have the report, we're reading it, we'll get back to you,'" executive editor Sally Buzbee said. "AP not only won the day, we informed and explained history to the world in real time."

For their efforts, Balsamo, Tucker, Day, Jalonick and Benac win AP's Best of the Week.

Best of the States

A powerful retrospective and breaking news, 20 years after Columbine mass shooting



Kacey Ruegsegger Johnson kisses her daughter, Logan, as she drops her off at her school in Cary, N.C., March 27, 2019. For Ruegsegger Johnson, who was wounded in the 1999 Columbine shooting, dropping her kids off at school used to be the hardest part of her day. She would cry most mornings as they left the car, and relied on texted photos from their teachers to make it through the day. Image from AP video / Allen G. Breed

Twenty years have passed since the Columbine high school massacre, which was, to many people, the beginning of school shootings as we know them. In those years, life has changed: Mass shootings happen again and again, schoolchildren participate in lockdowns instead of fire drills, and many reflect on a time when the world watched as frightened teens fled the school's campus, a boy fell from a window, and two young men took 13 lives with them on their suicidal quest.

The Associated Press was uniquely positioned to cover the two decades since the massacre, with journalists who were there, those who cover the Colorado community every day, and experts in polling, education and guns. Stories by Denver reporter Kathleen Foody and videojournalist Peter Banda led a deep all-formats package that told not just of the carnage but of those who survived it, their struggle, and the future.

But all the planning couldn't prepare anyone for this spot development: Early in the week, Sol Pais, a young Florida woman, prompted panic over a possible attack at Columbine, later taking her own life near the Colorado school. Reporters in Colorado and Florida jumped in to cover the news, putting AP ahead. No news outlet had any substantial interview with anyone who knew Pais, nor images of her beyond two handout photos. Miami reporter Kelli Kennedy used Instagram to track down a good friend of Pais who not only filled in personal details about her in an exclusive interview, but cast doubt on the official narrative that Pais was a risk to the community. In addition, Kennedy obtained two images of Pais: a selfie with her friend, and dining at a restaurant.

The overarching theme of the spot and enterprise coverage focused on the short and long-term mental health issues from school shootings. The result was a unique, meaningful package that included:

- An all-formats story led by Denver reporter Kathleen Foody catching up with those who survived Columbine and now have their own children in school. AP had photos of the girl in 1999 in a wheelchair after being injured in the attack, and rich video and photos today telling of how she prays for safety for her children each day before dropping them off for school.

- An all-formats story by Denver videojournalist Peter Banda about how SWAT teams who see the aftermath of the slaughter of children struggle to find mental health support, with the shocking revelation that almost the entire team that responded to Columbine is no longer on the job.

- A look at the mental health of survivors and how a school shooting haunts them for years to come.

- A poll showing that parents have little confidence in the ability of schools to stop a gunman, but most don't blame schools for shootings.

- A gallery of historic photos

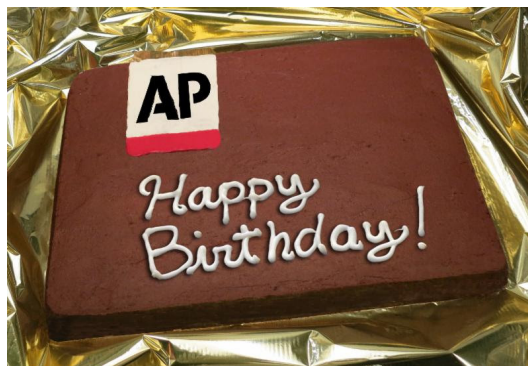
- A first-person remembrance, with online video clips, from Ted Anthony, who was at Columbine. The story moved along with the story Anthony wrote days after the shooting.

Play was impressive, with hundreds of downloads and social engagement on the stories, interest heightened by the manhunt for 18-year-old Sol Pais. The stories, both spot and enterprise, were used on hundreds of websites and ran on the front pages of newspapers in Colorado and beyond. The video was among the top-used AP videos that week.

Dozens of journalists across the AP made these stories happen, in Denver and throughout the U.S.

For their work spearheading the package, and breaking news, Foody, Banda and Kennedy win this week's Best of the States.

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



to

Dennis Gale - dgale4521@yhoo.com

Andy Lippman - alippman22@hotmail.com

Welcome to Connecting



Vahe Gregorian - vgregorian@kcstar.com

Stories of interest

Inside the Shrinking Newsroom of the Paper That Shapes the Primaries (Politico)



By TIM ALBERTA

Tony Leys is a newspaperman. He has covered murders. He has worked the copy desk. He has knocked on doors and taken verbal battering. Most reporters evolve to become editors, but Leys, bored behind a desk 20 years ago, did the opposite. After spending much of his career assigning stories-as city editor, state editor, politics editor-he returned to writing them. His beat became health care, and he owned it, reporting with soul-wringing realism on the flaws of the American medical apparatus. He has won numerous awards, including two years ago for reporting on the impact of Medicaid privatization, as told through the eyes of poor, suffering patients, and last year for authoring a stellar package of Sunday print edition stories about mental health.

There will be no such series this year. Not because Leys has lost his job, but because he's being reassigned-sort of. He'll continue to cover health-related stories. But for the next 10 months, his priority will be covering presidential politics. Leys is used to this. It happens every four years. Because this is Iowa. Because this is the Des Moines Register.

Since the dawn of the modern nominating process, no single event has done more to winnow the field of aspiring presidents than the Iowa caucuses-and no single publication has done more to capture its characters, narratives and rhythms than the Register. But the scythe of technological change and economic pressure that is killing the news industry, and especially local journalism, is coming for Iowa's paper of record, too. There are fewer and fewer political gatekeepers like the Register these days: influential publications staffed by reporters who live among the voters they cover, understanding their lifestyles and livelihoods in ways that can't be mimicked by their peers parachuting in from Washington or New York or Los Angeles.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Scott Charton, Doug Pizac, Kevin Walsh.

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A Despicable Cartoon in The Times

By BRET STEPHENS

Opinion Columnist, The New York Times

As prejudices go, anti-Semitism can sometimes be hard to pin down, but on Thursday the opinion pages of The New York Times international edition provided a

textbook illustration of it.

Except that The Times wasn't explaining anti-Semitism. It was purveying it.

It did so in the form of a cartoon, provided to the newspaper by a wire service and published directly above an unrelated column by Tom Friedman, in which a guide dog with a prideful countenance and the face of Benjamin Netanyahu leads a blind, fat Donald Trump wearing dark glasses and a black yarmulke. Lest there be any doubt as to the identity of the dog-man, it wears a collar from which hangs a Star of David.

Here was an image that, in another age, might have been published in the pages of Der Stürmer. The Jew in the form of a dog. The small but wily Jew leading the dumb and trusting American. The hated Trump being Judaized with a skullcap. The nominal servant acting as the true master. The cartoon checked so many anti-Semitic boxes that the only thing missing was a dollar sign.

Read more [here](#).

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How breaking news got panelized: On cable, journalists and pundits increasingly share space. (Washington Post)

By Paul Farhi

Within minutes of the announcement that President Trump had agreed to meet North Korean dictator Kim Jong Un, the cable news networks had their panels of talking heads assembled and ready, like SWAT teams preparing to storm a barricaded house.

On CNN, Erin Burnett queried the network's White House and foreign affairs correspondents as well as a series of non-journalists: a former Army general, a Korea specialist, and a counterterrorism analyst. The latter, Philip Mudd, bluntly voiced his doubts. "It doesn't sound to me like de-nuke," he said. "It sounds to me like freeze. And number two, what happens if [Trump] fails?"

MSNBC's "Hardball" also mixed reporters and non-reporters, including a former Obama Defense Department official and a think-tank guy who specializes in nuclear weapons. Few facts were available, but host Chris Matthews demanded to know where the summit would be held. "I wish I could give you more information on that, Chris," said reporter Hallie Jackson.

Read more [here](#).

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Report for America Announces 61 Corps Members Placed in 50 Local News Organizations

NEW YORK-After a highly competitive search, Report for America has announced the selection and placement of its 2019 class: 61 reporters in 50 local news organizations across 28 states and Puerto Rico.

Check out the corps!

Report for America is a national service program that places talented emerging journalists into local news organizations to report for one to two years on under-covered issues and communities. An initiative of The GroundTruth Project, Report for America addresses an urgent need in American journalism at a time when local news deserts threaten our democracy like never before.

The reporters, referred to as "corps members," were chosen after a highly selective national competition that drew nearly 1,000 applications. Some 70 leading journalists, editors and teachers acted as judges.

The 2019 corps, which begins reporting in June, includes 50 newly selected journalists and 11 current Report for America corps members who will continue their service for a second year.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Kendal Weaver.

Today in History - April 29, 2019



By The Associated Press

Today is Monday, April 29, the 119th day of 2019. There are 246 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On April 29, 1992, a jury in Simi Valley, California, acquitted four Los Angeles police officers of almost all state charges in the videotaped beating of motorist Rodney King; the verdicts were followed by rioting in Los Angeles resulting in 55 deaths.

On this date:

In 1429, Joan of Arc entered the besieged city of Orleans to lead a French victory over the English.

In 1861, the Maryland House of Delegates voted 53-13 against seceding from the Union. In Montgomery, Alabama, President Jefferson Davis asked the Confederate Congress for the authority to wage war.

In 1916, the Easter Rising in Dublin collapsed as Irish nationalists surrendered to British authorities.

In 1945, during World War II, American soldiers liberated the Dachau (DAH'-khow) concentration camp. Adolf Hitler married Eva Braun inside his "Fuhrerbunker" and designated Adm. Karl Doenitz (DUHR'-nihtz) president.

In 1946, 28 former Japanese officials went on trial in Tokyo as war criminals; seven ended up being sentenced to death.

In 1957, the SM-1, the first military nuclear power plant, was dedicated at Fort Belvoir, Virginia.

In 1967, Aretha Franklin's cover of Otis Redding's "Respect" was released as a single by Atlantic Records.

In 1968, the counterculture rock musical "Hair" heralding the "Age of Aquarius" opened at Broadway's Biltmore Theater following limited engagements off-Broadway, beginning a run of 1,750 performances.

In 1991, a cyclone began striking the South Asian country of Bangladesh; it ended up killing more than 138,000 people, according to the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

In 2000, Tens of thousands of angry Cuban-Americans marched peacefully through Miami's Little Havana, protesting the raid in which armed federal agents yanked 6-year-old Elian Gonzalez from the home of relatives.

In 2008, Democratic presidential hopeful Barack Obama denounced his former pastor, the Rev. Jeremiah Wright, for what he termed "divisive and destructive" remarks on race.

In 2011, Britain's Prince William and Kate Middleton were married in an opulent ceremony at London's Westminster Abbey.

Ten years ago: During a prime-time news conference marking his 100th day in office, President Barack Obama said that waterboarding authorized by former President George W. Bush was torture and that the information it gained from terror suspects could have been obtained by other means. The World Health Organization raised its alert level for swine flu to its next-to-highest notch. Twin car bombs ravaged a popular shopping area in Baghdad's biggest Shiite district, killing at least 51 people.

Five years ago: President Barack Obama ended a four-country swing through Asia and headed for home from the Philippines. Los Angeles Clippers owner Donald Sterling was banned for life by the NBA in response to racist comments he'd made in an audio recording. A botched execution using a disputed new drug combination left Oklahoma death row inmate Clayton Lockett writhing and clenching his teeth on the gurney, leading prison officials to halt the proceedings before his death from a heart attack. British actor Bob Hoskins, 71, died in London.

One year ago: Central Americans who traveled in a caravan to the U.S. border, hoping to turn themselves in and ask for asylum, were stalled at the border as U.S. immigration officials announced that the San Diego crossing was already at capacity. T-Mobile and Sprint reached a \$26.5 billion merger agreement that would reduce the U.S. wireless industry to three major players. (The deal is awaiting the approval of federal regulators.)

Today's Birthdays: Actor Keith Baxter is 86. Conductor Zubin Mehta is 83. Disgraced financier Bernard Madoff is 81. Pop singer Bob Miranda (The Happenings) is 77. Country singer Duane Allen (The Oak Ridge Boys) is 76. Singer Tommy James is 72. Sen. Debbie Stabenow, D-Mich., is 69. Movie director Phillip Noyce is 69. Comedian Jerry Seinfeld is 65. Actor Leslie Jordan is 64. Actress Kate Mulgrew is 64. Actor Daniel Day-Lewis is 62. Actress Michelle Pfeiffer is 61. Actress Eve Plumb is 61. Rock musician Phil King is 59. Country singer Stephanie Bentley is 56. Actor Vincent Ventresca is 53. Singer Carnie Wilson (Wilson Phillips) is 51. Actor Paul Adelstein is 50. Actress Uma Thurman is 49. International Tennis Hall of Famer Andre Agassi is 49. Rapper Master P is 49. Actor Darby Stanchfield is 48. Country singer James Bonamy is 47. Gospel/rhythm-and-blues singer Erica Campbell (Mary Mary) is 47. Rock musician Mike Hogan (The Cranberries) is 46. Actor Tyler Labine is 41. Actress Megan Boone is 36. Actress-model Taylor Cole is 35. Actor Zane Carney is 34. Pop singer Amy Heidemann (Karmin) is 33. Pop singer Foxes is 30. Actress Grace Kaufman is 17.

Thought for Today: "An education isn't how much you have committed to memory, or even how much you know. It's being able to differentiate between what you know and what you don't." - Anatole France, French author and critic (1844-1924).

Connecting calendar



June 20 - 25-Year Club Celebration, 5:30 - 8 p.m., AP headquarters, 200 Liberty Street, New York, NY. RSVP by May 10. RSVP online [here](#). Any questions may be directed to recognition@ap.org

August 17 - Albany AP bureau reunion (including other upstate bureaus), 1-5 p.m., Marc and Carla Humbert residence on Tsatsawassa Lake, 68 Marginal Way, East Nassau, NY. Contact: Chris McKnight ([Email](#)).

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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