

Connecting - March 12, 2020

1 message

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Colleagues,

Good Thursday morning on this the 12th day of March 2020,

The Associated Press has announced work-at-home plans as concern about the global pandemic coronavirus continues to grow.

A story on the wire Wednesday by (Connecting colleague) **David Bauder** said the AP will allow employees who are able to work at home to do so with the approval of their managers, implementing the new policy on a staggered basis throughout the world through the end of next week. The Associated Press operates out of 250 locations in 100 countries. The story continued:

First in line, effective immediately, are AP staffers in offices where employees have had direct or indirect exposure to someone who has tested positive, or where the government requires people to work at home. These locations include New York, Washington, Chicago, New Orleans, Beijing, Tokyo, Seoul,

New Delhi, Singapore, Jakarta, Manila and Iran and Italy, said **Gary Pruitt**, the news service's president and CEO.

No AP employee has tested positive for the virus, Pruitt said.

AP is also stopping all non-essential travel, and told employees to avoid work dinners or conferences without approval.

"We must remain vigilant and careful over the coming weeks," Pruitt said.

We lead today's issue with Bauder's story – and we have more of your experiences to share. If you have some of your own to share, please send today.

Be safe.

Paul

CBS News shuts office after two employees get coronavirus

By **DAVID BAUDER**

NEW YORK (AP) — CBS News shut down its New York City headquarters for cleaning and disinfecting on Wednesday after two of its employees tested positive for coronavirus.

Employees will be asked to work remotely for the next two days and broadcasts moved to accommodate the cleaning, the network said. For instance, "CBS This Morning" will originate out of Washington on Thursday and Friday while the New York offices are cleaned.

People who came in contact with the sick employees will be asked to self-quarantine for the next two weeks, CBS News President Susan Zirinsky said in a memo to staff.

"At this point, we anticipate the offices will be open Monday," Zirinsky wrote.

CBS has two separate offices located across 57th Street on the West Side of Manhattan, one primarily housing the staff of "60 Minutes." Complicating the issue for the network is that the two infected workers were stationed in different buildings. The network released no details on how the staff members were infected.

Meanwhile, The Associated Press and NBC News on Wednesday announced work-at-home plans as concerns about the global pandemic grew.

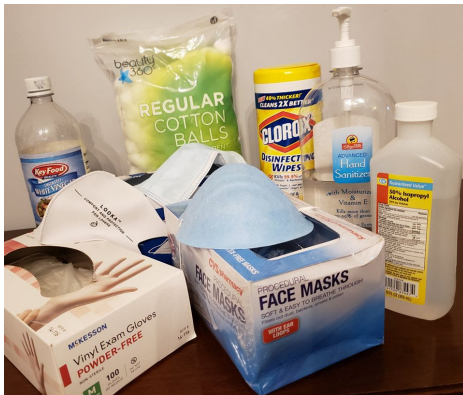
In the Bull's Eye: What do you do when you are at risk from coronavirus

Claudia DiMartino ([Email](#)) - Last week Hal and I gave up Broadway tickets and dinner with friends. I've scoured the area for alcohol, hand-sanitizers, gloves and masks, to no avail. I have a small supply that will keep me going for at least a month. My super-shopper sister managed to get her hands on some washable reusable masks.



The week before that I told folks my life wasn't going to change, but I hadn't realized how scary it was going to get out there. Since my lung transplant five years ago, I've been seriously immunosuppressed. I already use a mask and gloves when I go food shopping. I wash my raw fruit and veggies with a 15-minute vinegar and water soak. All meat is cooked to well done. I make good use of anti-bacterial wipes and wash my hands frequently.

This week after reports of community containment and social distancing, I'm asking my younger sister (we are both over 60) to take my 91-year-old dad to upcoming appointments with his cardiologist. I'm still taking my turn fixing him lunch and making out his bills.



Hal socialized with friends last week without me, but this week he gave up a brunch and a trip to Washington D.C. for fear of returning home with the virus and passing it on to me. He's within the threatened age demographic but he historically has been immune to most bugs and he's not worried for himself.

I'm not completely hunkered down, but I've greatly curtailed my movements and it may yet come to self-quarantine. I can get my medications delivered and I've used food-shopping services before, and I can again. The most difficult problem will be staying away from my dad who insists on living alone even at this advanced age. He has a few good neighbors and my sister is still able to visit with him, so if this coronavirus doesn't last too long, we can manage. Let's just hope this pandemic peters out.

AP PHOTOS: Life in the time of coronavirus



Shiite pilgrims walk outside the shrine of Imam Ali in Najaf, Iraq, Feb. 24, 2020 (AP Photo/Anmar Khalil)

By The Associated Press

As cases of the coronavirus increase in Italy, Iran, South Korea, the United States and elsewhere, AP photographers around the world are capturing the impact on daily life.

Fear of the spreading illness has led to a run on sales of face masks, empty store shelves and the disruption of travel. Despite evidence that most people who aren't sick don't need to wear them, the face masks are seen everywhere. These images highlight the widespread effects, including the temporary closure of Tokyo Disneyland and a dearth of tourists in Venice.

View more [here](#).

Jim O'Connell remembered at Big East tournament



This greeted journalists at the Big East basketball tournament Wednesday at Madison Square Garden on New York. Tom Canavan, longtime sports writer in New Jersey, shared the photo and commented, “The best welcome sign to The Big East basketball tournament.”

O’Connell, the longtime college basketball writer for AP and a member of the Hall of Fame, died in July 2018 at age 64.

More on AP ‘formula writing’

Dan Sewell (Email) – The recent posts reminded me of a classic story about legendary Miami News reporter and AP Miami federal court stringer Milt Sosin, retold in his [2000 NYT obituary](#).

Tired of editors' memos about writing shorter, punchier leads, he posted his own one-word lead: "Quit."

2nd graf: "That's what reporter Milt Sosin did today."

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Jim Hood (Email) - Paul Albright's comments about supposed AP formula writing (Connecting, March 9) were on-target but some follow-up comments blamed online publications for the current trend to back vaguely into stories without saying simply what the hell the story is about.

Personally, I think we can thank no less a journalistic light than The Wall Street Journal for this unfortunate trend.



Way back in the 1970s, it was common to find something like: "Michael Moneybags stared glumly in the mirror at his Hamptons beach house Wednesday morning, wondering if it was even worthwhile shaving on such a day. With the world stock markets losing trillions of dollars of value following the nuclear holocaust, tidal wave and virus pandemic, Moneybags was beginning to doubt the soundness of his investment

philosophy."

It's a reminder that even in pre-Internet days, print publications were at a disadvantage when news was changing quickly and a novelistic approach was seen as a band-aid. Time, as it tends to do, has only made matters more difficult. Witness the print edition of the WSJ laid elegantly on my breakfast counter at 8 a.m. today, with the online version perched atop it on my semi-smartphone.

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Charles Richards (Email) - In my beginning journalism class at Texas Tech back in the early '60s, my professor talked about the reporter who called in to dictate his story:

"God stood on a hill overlooking a residential district ravaged by Tuesday's catastrophic tornado and ..."

The desk supervisor interrupted him in mid-sentence.

"Forget the tornado!" the supervisor yelled. "Interview God!"

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Mike Harris (Email) - All this talking (writing) about AP's so-called formula stories reminded me of an incident that took place during my time as AP's Indiana Sports Editor in the 70s.

Back then, we rarely staffed the minor league Indianapolis Indians. Instead, we had the reporter from the afternoon Indianapolis News - remember afternoon papers? - string the games for us. He nearly always sent in three tight paragraphs that conformed very well to AP style.

One afternoon, I strolled into the AP office in Indianapolis and started reading through the previous day's report. When I got to the story from the previous night's Indians game, I was surprised to see it stretched out to eight paragraphs. My first thought: This must have been a helluva game.

I started reading and was struck by the fact that the game seemed to be pretty routine. Then I realized there were four extra paragraphs explaining a key play in the game, which appeared to my eyes to be a routine double play.

The same young lady who had been working the desk the night before came in for her shift a few minutes later. I asked her about the story and she said, "I asked him to explain it to me because I didn't know what he was talking about when he said double play. And, if I didn't know, how could I expect other people to know?"

I pointed out to her that people who don't know enough about baseball to know about a double play probably would not read past the first paragraph and asked that she not make those kinds of changes in sports stories without checking with me. There were no more four-paragraph double plays after that.

It was always interesting breaking in a newcomer on sports. There was also the time at a race in Rockingham, NC where a young staffer from the Raleigh bureau was assigned to help me on race day. He had never seen an auto race and was very nervous. After introducing himself, he sat quietly in the press box watching the pre-race activities. Finally, he looked around and asked, "Where's the famous pole I've heard about?"

For any others who might not know, the pole is the lead position in the race.

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Lyle Price (Email) - Re writing styles of yore in exchanges launched by Paul Albright, my memory of the way things were in the '60s and '70s in my time at AP in California is that short ledes (under 26 words) and attribution-attribution-attribution were foremost requirements.

At some time during those years I came to hear that the lede dictum had to do with the Flesch Formula, as devised by Rudolf Flesch, and I have a memory that a high-up at AP had once observed within my hearing about 1972 that AP

was encouraging and closely following Voice Recognition technology as it once had supported the Flesch research.

As to attribution, I know of no AP staffer in my time that dared leave such an item out (and don't recollect any such term as "informed sources say" as coming close to cutting the mustard). My favorite tale of that time -- perhaps apocryphal, but too delicious not to relay -- came when a notoriously sports-clueless male writer supposedly once transcribed the following as the lede to a California League baseball story: "The blank-blank Oaks defeated the blank-blank Giants 4-2 Monday night, according to manager blank-blank."

One could argue that this was unbeatable attribution, but on reflection I'd ask that if it came from the winning manager, is that an adequately disinterested source?

Harry Cabluck featured in photo video

FREE FILM: USA - THE PHOTOGRAPHERS : Harry Cabluck for Austin, TX

Harry had quite the career in photography. We met him on the first day of our Austin stop and were thrown a bookshelf worth of darkroom and photography knowledge over our stay. Here's a look into Harry's world as he shoots on the theme "red, white and blue."

Click [here](#) to view. Shared by Amy Sancetta.

Stories of interest

How Right-Wing Pundits Are Covering Coronavirus (New York Times)

By Jeremy W. Peters and Michael M. Grynbaum

Sean Hannity used his syndicated talk-radio program on Wednesday to share a prediction he had found on Twitter about what is really happening with the coronavirus: It's a "fraud" by the deep state to spread panic in the populace, manipulate the economy and suppress dissent.

"May be true," Mr. Hannity declared to millions of listeners around the country.

As the coronavirus spreads around the globe, denial and disinformation about the risks are proliferating on media outlets popular with conservatives.

"This coronavirus?" Rush Limbaugh asked skeptically during his Wednesday program, suggesting it was all a plot hatched by the Chinese. "Nothing like

wiping out the entire U.S. economy with a biothreat from China, is there?" he said.

The Fox Business anchor Trish Regan told viewers on Monday that the worry over coronavirus "is yet another attempt to impeach the president."

Read more [here](#). Shared by Dennis Conrad.

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White House press secretary Stephanie Grisham cites 'evolution' away from traditional press briefings (Washington Post)

By Erik Wemple
Media critic

Sixth in a regular series on the activities of White House press secretary Stephanie Grisham. Read the rest of the series.

If White House press secretary Stephanie Grisham would hold a traditional press briefing, she wouldn't have to deal with questions about why she isn't doing traditional press briefings. But there's a dubious anniversary afoot: It has been a year since the last formal briefing, which then-press secretary Sarah Sanders held in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room.

On that day — March 11, 2019 — Sanders shared the lectern with acting director of the Office of Management and Budget Russ Vought. When it came her time to speak, she was asked whether President Trump really believed that Democrats hate Jews, as Trump was reported to have said at a recent fundraiser. "I am not going to comment on a potentially leaked document," replied Sanders.

Perhaps that exchange explains, at least in part, why there have been no briefings over the past year. As White House officials, including Grisham, like to say, the president is a remarkably accessible politician. Stats from the indefatigable Martha Joynt Kumar back them up:

Read more [here](#). Shared by Sibby Christensen.

Today in History – March 12, 2020



By The Associated Press

Today is Thursday, March 12, the 72nd day of 2020. There are 294 days left in the year.

Today's Highlights in History:

On March 12, 1980, a Chicago jury found John Wayne Gacy Jr. guilty of the murders of 33 men and boys. (The next day, Gacy was sentenced to death; he was executed in May 1994.)

On this date:

In 1864, Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant assumed command as General-in-Chief of the Union armies in the Civil War.

In 1912, the Girl Scouts of the USA had its beginnings as Juliette Gordon Low of Savannah, Georgia, founded the first American troop of the Girl Guides.

In 1913, Canberra was officially designated the future capital of Australia.

In 1925, Chinese revolutionary leader Sun Yat-sen died in Beijing.

In 1933, President Franklin D. Roosevelt delivered the first of his 30 radio addresses that came to be known as "fireside chats," telling Americans what was being done to deal with the nation's economic crisis.

In 1947, President Harry S. Truman announced what became known as the "Truman Doctrine" to help Greece and Turkey resist Communism.

In 1955, legendary jazz musician Charlie "Bird" Parker died in New York at age 34.

In 1987, the musical play "Les Miserables" opened on Broadway.

In 1993, Janet Reno was sworn in as the first female U.S. attorney general. A three-day blizzard that came to be known as "The Storm of the Century" began inundating the eastern third of the U.S. A series of bombings in Mumbai, India, killed 257 people (the explosions were allegedly masterminded by India's most wanted man, Dawood Ibrahim).

In 1994, the Church of England ordained its first women priests.

In 2003, Elizabeth Smart, the 15-year-old girl who vanished from her bedroom nine months earlier, was found alive in a Salt Lake City suburb with two

drifters, Brian David Mitchell and Wanda Barzee. (Mitchell is serving a life sentence; Barzee was released from prison in September 2018.)

In 2009, disgraced financier Bernard Madoff pleaded guilty in New York to pulling off perhaps the biggest swindle in Wall Street history.

Ten years ago: Two suicide bombers killed 55 people in near simultaneous blasts in Lahore, Pakistan, the fourth attack in a week. Lindsey Vonn capped a historic season with her third straight overall World Cup title in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany.

Five years ago: Two Ferguson, Missouri, police officers were shot and wounded in front of the police department during a protest; U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder denounced the shooter as a “damn punk.” NASA launched its Magnetospheric Multiscale spacecraft on a billion-dollar mission to study the explosive give-and-take of the Earth and sun’s magnetic fields.

One year ago: More countries, including the entire European Union, grounded the Boeing jetliner involved in two deadly crashes or banned the plane from their airspace; leaving the United States one of the few remaining operators of the Boeing 737 Max 8. Prosecutors said Hollywood stars Felicity Huffman and Lori Loughlin were charged along with nearly 50 other people in a scheme in which wealthy parents bribed college coaches and other insiders to get their children into some of the most elite schools in the country. (Huffman pleaded guilty to fraud and conspiracy and served 12 days in a federal prison.) With just 17 days to go before Britain’s scheduled departure from the European Union, the British Parliament rejected the deal, delivering a blow to Prime Minister Theresa May’s authority as leader. (May would step down as Conservative Party leader in June.)

Today’s Birthdays: Politician, diplomat and civil rights activist Andrew Young is 88. Actress Barbara Feldon is 87. Former broadcast journalist Lloyd Dobyns is 84. Actress-singer Liza Minnelli is 74. Sen. Mitt Romney, R-Utah, is 73. Singer-songwriter James Taylor is 72. Former Sen. Kent Conrad, D-N.D., is 72. Rock singer-musician Bill Payne (Little Feat) is 71. Actor Jon Provost (TV: “Lassie”) is 70. Author Carl Hiaasen (HY’-ah-sihn) is 67. Rock musician Steve Harris (Iron Maiden) is 64. Actress Lesley Manville is 64. Actor Jerry Levine is 63. Singer Marlon Jackson (The Jackson Five) is 63. Actor Jason Beghe is 60. Actor Courtney B. Vance is 60. Actor Titus Welliver is 58. Former MLB All-Star Darryl Strawberry is 58. Actress Julia Campbell is 57. Actor Jake Weber is 57. Sen. Tammy Duckworth, D-Ill., is 52. Actor Aaron Eckhart is 52. CNN reporter Jake Tapper is 51. Rock musician Graham Coxon is 51. Country musician Tommy Bales (Flynnville Train) is 47. Actor Rhys Coiro is 41. Country singer Holly Williams is 39. Actor Samm (cq) Levine is 38. Actress Jaimie Alexander is 36. Actor Tyler Patrick Jones is 26. Actress Kendall Applegate is 21.

Thought for Today: “A proverb is a short sentence based on long experience.” [–] Miguel de Cervantes, Spanish novelist, dramatist and poet (1547-1616).

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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