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Connecting

June 04, 2020

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Demonstrators lie face down depicting George Floyd before he was killed by police during a protest against police brutality on Boston Common, on Wednesday, June 3. Steven Senne/AP Photo

Colleagues,

Good Thursday morning on this the 4th day of June 2020,

Is it too much about us? - the stories we write about police violence against journalists covering nationwide protests following the killing of George Floyd?

That's a question Amanda Darrach takes on in an opinion piece for the Columbia Journalism Review, and Connecting would like to hear your opinions.

When Connecting led with an AP story Wednesday about AP journalists being cursed and shoved by New York City police, I got one reader reaction stating – “Pu-leeze, none was seriously injured” and another asking why the AP president wasn’t on the phone at midnight that night to the New York City mayor or 1 Police Plaza reminding them of First Amendment rights.

What do you think?

COVERING PROTESTS: A WEBINAR : A webinar, “Strategies for Safely Covering Protests,” will be held today at 11 a.m. Eastern. It is hosted by the International Women’s Media Foundation (IWMF) and the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ). Click [here](#) for further information. (Shared by Richard Chady)

Several of our Connecting themes of late are continued in today’s issue:

Mike Harris , interviewing his grandkids for their thoughts on coronavirus and how it has changed their lives;

Lyle Price , on his memories of covering protests and riots while an AP newsman in California;

And **Mark Mittelstadt** and **Hal Bock** , on the use of phones in their working days.

Have a great day – be safe, stay healthy.

Paul

The uprising against police brutality is not about journalists

By **Amanda Darrach**, **Columbia Journalism Review**

The violence American police are inflicting on those protesting police violence extends to journalists, too.

Freelance photojournalist Linda Tirado was permanently blinded in one eye by what she believes was a rubber bullet. Detroit police demanded a Free Press journalist show his press pass, and tear gassed him as he searched for the credential. Michael Adams of Vice filmed on his phone as Minneapolis police told him to lie down on the ground of a local gas station—which he did,

clutching his press pass and repeating the words “I am press”—and then soaked his face in pepper spray.

“I’ve covered protests for 15 years across the US,” tweeted CBS news correspondent Michael George on Sunday. “This is the first time I’ve ever seen police actively and intentionally target the press with rubber bullets, tear gas, and arrests.”

The presumption is that we’re being targeted, because being targeted means we’re important. The simple truth is that in a crowd, journalists are not separate. We’re not protected. We’re subject to the same soup of adrenaline, and rage, and terror as anyone else.

We must stop focusing on ourselves. The journalist breathlessly detailing their own victimhood has become a sub-genre of a story that is, and should be, about the killing of George Floyd, its systemic causes, and the chaotic hostility of a president who fetishizes violence perpetrated by the strong over the weak (from the safety of his bunker).

We are not worthier victims just because the fourth estate works to uphold democracy. It’s our job. And we’d do well to focus on those who don’t have the opportunity to write 800 words about their own importance afterward.

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

Your grandkids and their thoughts on coronavirus



Mike Harris ([Email](#)) - My grandkids came over a few days ago for a socially distant game of whiffle ball and I took the opportunity to interview them separately about their thoughts and feelings regarding the Coronavirus and the quarantine. Liliana is 10 and Milo is 7 and both of them have opinions and ideas about most things. They were cutting up a bit for the above photo, but both of them gave me thoughtful answers to my questions.

What is your opinion of COVID-19?

Liliana: I don't like it. I know it's serious, but I don't really have anything to do.

Milo: Boo!

What do you miss most about your life before COVID-19?

Liliana: Mom was going to take me to a tea party place and now we can't go. It's just that we can't do a lot of things we like to do.

Milo: I can't see my friends or go to their houses for play dates.

What new things have you been doing since COVID-19?

Liliana: I'm on the computer like eight hours a day. I usually finish my school work in about two hours and then I'm on my Kindle, playing games or reading articles.

Milo: I'm playing on my Kindle a lot, playing Mine Craft.

Did you like school being at your home? Why or why not?

Liliana: I'd rather be in school. It's harder to concentrate on school at home. And it can get boring.

Milo: It's okay. But I'd rather be in school with my friends and go out to play soccer at lunch and in Plowshares (the after school program).

Do you see a way you can help others during COVID-19?

Liliana: We made some masks and we took some food to people who need it

Milo: Mostly, we stay at home and have to wear masks when we go out. But that keeps the other people safer.

How have your parents handled the changes brought on by COVID-19?

Liliana: They have to do a lot of work at home and they tell us not to bother them. And we bother them anyway.

Milo: They make us go outside a lot.

Covering protests, riots in California

Lyle Price ([Email](#)) - I can speak with first-hand knowledge of California-based protests and riots from the start of the Free Speech Movement at Berkeley in fall 1964 to the end of US military involvement in Vietnam in 1972, having been an AP editor first in San Francisco and then Los Angeles during all of that period. Basically, what I think of as protests involved speaking and shouting, typically involving eagerly offered messages aimed for media consumption. What I characterize as riots involved violence, destruction, and sometimes injury or loss of life.



The mass antiwar protests involved huge marches which followed the non-violence pattern set down by Martin Luther King in the civil rights marches prior to Vietnam--a pacifism that is much to the antiwar movement's credit. Soon after joining the AP San Francisco bureau in late August of 1964, the Free Speech Movement broke out in Berkeley at the University of California. I wrote AM and PM stories starting with day one, after the night city editor said he'd gotten wind of a disturbance at the campus and told me to check it out by phone. I did--and the story remained in my hands Monday through Friday until it ended with complete success for the protesters months later. Since I was a rookie still on probation, I chalk up my assignment to the story either as tribute that I was handling things okay or that no one else in the bureau wanted to be bothered. Actually, I suspect both factors were in play.

The Free Speech Movement has been credited with bringing about a seminal change in how American campuses operated and was the springboard for Jerry Rubin and others that spurred the first major antiwar marches in the San Francisco area. Although I wrote a 400- or 500-word take (I forget which it was) on the A wire for PM afternoon papers with a 400- or 500-word add for the California state wire version along with breaking copy of a few hundred words for AMs. My shift started at 3:30 pm., when I would immediately start to work the phones to call sources--only once did I actually go the scene--and

examine carbon copies supplied to AP by the San Francisco Chronicle, plus pick the brains of photographer Bob Klein, who went to Berkeley on a daily basis for the length of the movement.

In retrospect, the New York desk might have wished it hadn't started to chronicle an A wire story that sounded much the same for day after day-- except for the time authorities arrested 800 protesters and the occasion when leader Mario Savio and a dozen or other key student activists got expelled from UC. They were all later reinstated, fyi, and I don't believe any of the 800 were convicted of anything. The protest was all about whether two dozen tables could legally exist set up by student groups that included all sorts of groups including political parties and Young Americans for Freedom (a conservative outfit). The UC administrators asserted they hadn't realized the tables at Sather Gate on the southern edge of the campus was on UC property rather than city of Berkeley property -- and that the campus groups weren't allowed at UC. I think such groups were common at some other colleges, including the two colleges I had attended: the University of Washington and Western Washington College. At the latter, I was in a religious group that met on campus. So such a prohibition struck me as strange, although I never mentioned polices elsewhere. I did continually (at the general desk's instance in NY) note that the protest actively seemed to involve no more than a couple of thousand (judging by the crowds at speeches) on a campus of about 25,000 students.

Further, re NY general desk, I recollect that one-time San Francisco AP night editor Roy Roberts said "NY wants to talk to you." I said, "You're in charge; why would they want to talk to me?" "They just do." "This in Lyle Price." "Are you the one writing the stories about the Berkeley fuss?" "Yes, I am." "When is that thing ever going to end?" "I don't know." The general desk guy then hung up. (I don't know if that was Ed Dennehy, who I'd later come to chat with from time to time in both San Fran and LA , and I regarded as a prince of a man and a fine newsperson.)

Owing to the antiwar marches being non-violent, I never had any trepidation about covering those events. I saw (but didn't write about), the first supposed major national antiwar marches that Google says had 1,000 people in FX--and which I witnessed from a window in the AP office then in the San Francisco Chronicle Building in early 1965. The marchers shouted over and over, "Hey, hey, LBJ. How many babies you killed today?" I always personally considered that comment tasteless and arguably unfair. I also don't think I ever quoted it.

In LA at AP, I covered at least three massive antiwar marches, including one led by Jane Fonda. One of the good-natured features in the LA marches would

be the appearance in outlandish costumes of one man billing himself as General Hershey Bar and another guy as General Wastemoreland, typically both hovering in the same general area. I Googled out info today on General Bar but find no reference to the other character. Their non de plumes were takeoffs on the real General Hershey, who was head of Selective Service (the draft), and on General Westmoreland, the top commander in Vietnam for a good while.

Riots were another thing. Early on, I swiped an AP logo (which I still have) off of a teletype machine and carried it on my clipboard along with an attorney-style yellow note pad. I flashed that logo faithfully at police and National Guard checkpoints -- as well as when approaching obvious hot spots. The hot spots involved tear gas once that got in my lungs, but I was never at the scene of active fires or explosions. So, consequently, whether wisely or not, the concept of fear didn't enter my head -- although being cautious did.

I know of two grievous happenings involving news people. One was a head injury that ended the career of Bob Klein, my good pal who'd been the San Francisco AP photographer to fill me in so well on the daily doings of the Free Speech Movement. I was told It took place during at disturbance that brought police to the scene in the San Francisco area after I had been transferred to the bureau in LA. I don't recollect what the disturbance involved. The other was a riot in East Los Angeles about 1971 in which a Los Angeles Times reporter was killed. That riot was in the Hispanic section of LA and the smartest thing I did was during the relative safety of the daytime (riots like to take place amid darkness, as the current national troubles demonstrate) to borrow Rueben Triviso, a Spanish-speaking copyboy who had been a squad leader in Vietnam, to accompany me as my translator (and my foot in the door) to interview people in houses and on the street for an AP story about what was behind the fuss.

The worst thing that ever happened to me was at the Isla Vista riots just off the campus of the Santa Barbara campus of the University of California, a bit over 100 miles from Los Angeles. I was interviewing a protester in a coffee shop when someone tossed in a tear gas canister. When I and the protestor ran outside, I muttered "who would throw a tear gas grenade into a coffee shop?" The protestor's droll response was "I don't know anyone besides the police that have tear gas." Actually, a day after I was there the National Guard showed up, with rifles capped by fixed bayonets. I was night city editor that day and dispatched a reporter there. A sheriff's deputy was killed, but no news people were hurt that I ever heard of. That was about 1972 or so.

In the Watts Riot of 1965, I was still in the San Francisco bureau. Some time after I transferred to LA in 1966, I learned that the media had been roundly criticized for being caught flatfooted about any feeling of discontent in Watts and that several outlets. In 1970, on the fifth anniversary, the media outlets that had been set up right after the riot seemed to have all disappeared. So had anyone at AP in LA assigned to its coverage, hence news editor Jack Quigg (who had been there and had ramrodded coverage, so I was told) tapped me to write a five-years-later status report. My story (which ran on the A wire and on page 18 of the Los Angeles Times) reported on a man sitting on an apple box in the middle of the riot's center who looked around and noted there was still something of a combination of mess and vacant lots and little or no sign of the once-promised improvements. I heard that a major hospital did eventually get built later.

Recalling the good old days of Central Park Press League softball



The AP's 1992 title-winning team. Back row, from left: Bill Barnard, Jimmy Colton, Bill Pilc, Fred Lief, Paul Montella, Gregg Stein, Paul

Reinhartsen, John O'Connell, Sean Silleck. Front row, from left: Allan Kreda, Norm Goldstein, Luis Rodriguez, Ben Walker. Courtesy of Jim Colton



The AP's John Kekis crosses the plate in a 1985 semifinal win over McMane's (left) UPI. Courtesy of Jim Colton

Gregg Lemos-Stein ([Email](#)) - Several old AP friends and I have been enjoying the following article published this week by Sports Illustrated about the Press League softball game in Central Park. Many great photos of APers inside. Click [here](#) to view.

It's a long, fun history of the league and great diversion from more serious and weighty matters these days.

Thought for Today not unnoticed in current climate

Kelly Kissel ([Email](#)) - The Today in History feature on Wednesday ended with a quote from Jefferson Davis. It did not pass unnoticed in the current climate.

Thought for Today: “Never be haughty to the humble; never be humble to the haughty.” [-] **Jefferson Davis, Confederate president (1808-1889).**

I wonder if, a century from now, AP will be using Trump in Thoughts for Today. The quotable president will be remembered for saying there were good people on both sides at a white-supremacist rally and that we are the enemy of the people.

You and your phones on the job





Mark Mittelstadt ([Email](#)) - As a newsman in Des Moines I was assigned to cover widespread flooding in southwestern Iowa in the early 1980s. Riding with photographer Bob Jarboe, I used a pay phone along a highway outside of Atlantic to call in updates. Bob got a kick out of me having to stand on the narrow base to try to stay dry and snapped the photo. Water in the gravel pull-off was from heavy rain.

Bob was one of the best travel buddies a reporter could have. On the way home from the flooding story we came across a large circular saw blade sticking out of the highway pavement. A road worker with a warning flag stood by. Bob pulled over to take a photo. "Man, he really boogered that thing up," he chuckled as he got back in the car. Two men had been working to cut out a piece of broken pavement when the blade got stuck. The man's colleague had to return to their shop to find something to free the blade. And come back with a new one.

Covering a protest march



AP Photographer Matt Slocum captures protesters marching in Philadelphia, June 1, 2020. (AP Photo/Matt Rourke)

Remembering his mom – a woman of the world

Andrew Selsky ([Email](#)) - Last week, Paul, Laura, Ellen and I lost our Mom. She was amazing. We miss her terribly and are trying to cope with the fact that she's gone, though she lives on in us, her grandchildren and great-grandchildren. She had an interesting life. She was born in Vladivostok, and grew up in Manchuria and New York City. My mother was very proud of my service and travels with the AP.

Click [here](#) for her obituary, which begins:

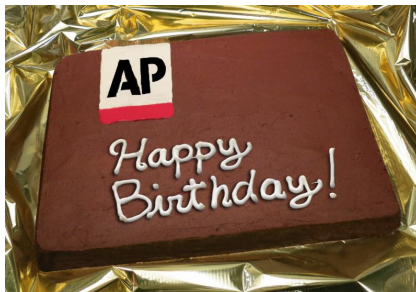
Irene Selsky, 91, of Bailey's Crossroads, Va., passed away on May 28, 2020, in Bailey's Crossroads.

She was truly a woman of the world. Born in Vladivostok, Russia, to Valentina and Peter Jernakoff on Dec. 12, 1928, Irene was carried in her mother's arms to Harbin, Manchuria, as a toddler to escape Stalinist repression. Peter had gone ahead to Harbin to arrange for the family's arrival but before he left he split up a pair of gloves, taking one and telling Valentina that he would send it along with a messenger to let her know the messenger was legitimate. After a tense wait, one "messenger" arrived, but with no glove. Finally, a legitimate messenger arrived with the glove, and Valentina, her son George and Irene set off for Harbin, mostly on foot. On the way, they were abducted by "khunkhuzy"-- bandits -- and were released only through their guide's negotiations. The trip was so arduous that Valentina suffered a nervous breakdown upon their arrival in Harbin, but recovered.



The Jernakoffs left almost everything behind, including beloved relatives whom they would never hear from again. Irene described Harbin as a bit of heaven in the middle of China for Russian emigres. The city was built by Russian railroad engineers in the late 1800s as an important center on the Chinese Eastern Railroad. There were Russian schools, Russian theater, hospitals and businesses.

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



Sue Cross – sue@inn.org

Welcome to Connecting



Cyma Rubin - cymarubin@gmail.com

Stories of Interest

Journalists wage legal fights after facing protest attacks

By DAVID BAUDER

NEW YORK (AP) — Journalists alarmed by dozens of incidents where reporters were shot at, manhandled, gassed or arrested while covering demonstrations touched off by the death of Minnesota man George Floyd are fighting back legally.

A freelance journalist, backed by the American Civil Liberties Union, filed a federal lawsuit Wednesday against the city of Minneapolis, and dozens of news organizations urged Minnesota authorities to let journalists work unimpeded.

Protests have spread across the country following Floyd's death last week after a Minneapolis police officer pressed his knee into his neck for several minutes.

One organization has logged more than 230 incidents targeting journalists since Floyd's death. The Associated Press captured film of New York police shoving and swearing at two of its journalists while documenting arrests Tuesday night after a curfew went into effect. Journalists covering the story are exempt from the curfew.

"The press is under assault in our country," freelance photographer Jared Goyette said in the ACLU lawsuit.

Read more [here](#) .

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Activists Against Digital Lies (The American Interest)

By **THOMAS KENT**

Scrappy, resourceful civil society activists in Europe are becoming a powerful tool for fighting disinformation online.

When COVID-19 swept into Lithuania, conspiracy-oriented Facebook groups bulged with disinformation: U.S. soldiers brought the virus to Lithuania, dark forces invented the virus to dominate the world, vaccines will contain nanochips to let people be controlled by 5G cellphone signals.

Then something happened.

New people suddenly started filtering into the Facebook groups, attacking the conspiracy theories. Group administrators blocked them. But the interlopers kept coming. New names and accounts kept appearing, each fighting the false narratives in its own way.

There was nothing accidental about the arrival of these new voices. Behind them was a coordinated effort by the "elves," a team of Lithuanian activists who have been fighting disinformation for six years. Team members worked together to penetrate the groups. They reported to each other who had been blocked and deployed new assets as needed, a team spokesman said.

Read more [here](#) .

The Final Word

PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



(Shared by Adolphe Bernotas)

Today in History - June 4, 2020



By The Associated Press

Today is Thursday, June 4, the 156th day of 2020. There are 210 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On June 4, 1998, a federal judge sentenced Terry Nichols to life in prison for his role in the 1995 bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City.

On this date:

In 1812, the Louisiana Territory was renamed the Missouri Territory, to avoid confusion with the recently admitted state of Louisiana. The U.S. House of Representatives approved, 79-49, a declaration of war against Britain.

In 1919, Congress approved the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, guaranteeing citizens the right to vote regardless of their gender, and sent it to the states for ratification.

In 1939, the German ocean liner MS St. Louis, carrying more than 900 Jewish refugees from Germany, was turned away from the Florida coast by U.S. officials.

In 1940, during World War II, the Allied military evacuation of some 338,000 troops from Dunkirk, France, ended. British Prime Minister Winston Churchill declared: “We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender.”

In 1942, the World War II Battle of Midway began, resulting in a decisive American victory against Japan and marking the turning point of the war in the Pacific.

In 1944, U-505, a German submarine, was captured by a U.S. Navy task group in the south Atlantic; it was the first such capture of an enemy vessel at sea by the U.S. Navy since the War of 1812. The U.S. Fifth Army began liberating Rome.

In 1972, a jury in San Jose, California, acquitted radical activist Angela Davis of murder and kidnapping for her alleged connection to a deadly courthouse shootout in Marin County in 1970.

In 1985, the Supreme Court upheld a lower court ruling striking down an Alabama law providing for a daily minute of silence in public schools.

In 1986, Jonathan Jay Pollard, a former U.S. Navy intelligence analyst, pleaded guilty in Washington to conspiring to deliver information related to the national defense to Israel. (Pollard, sentenced to life in prison, was released on parole on Nov. 20, 2015.)

In 1989, a gas explosion in the Soviet Union engulfed two passing trains, killing 575.

In 1990, Dr. Jack Kevorkian carried out his first publicly assisted suicide, helping Janet Adkins, a 54-year-old Alzheimer's patient from Portland, Oregon, end her life in Oakland County, Michigan.

In 2000, President Bill Clinton and Russian President Putin (POO'-tih-n) ended their summit by conceding differences on missile defense, agreeing to dispose of weapons-grade plutonium and pledging early warning of missile and space launches.

Ten years ago: On his third personal trek to the Gulf disaster, President Barack Obama said that he saw some progress in fighting the enormous oil spill but that it was "way too early to be optimistic." The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission announced a voluntary recall of 12 million U.S.-made "Shrek" drinking glasses sold by McDonald's which were found to be tainted with cadmium. Fourteen-year-old Anamika Veeramani (AHN'-uh-MEEK'-ah VEER'-ah-MAHN'-ee) of North Royalton, Ohio, won the Scripps National Spelling Bee in Washington D.C., correctly spelling the medical term "stromuhr." Death claimed postmodern author David Markson, 82; legendary basketball coach John Wooden, 99; and Jack Harrison, 97, survivor of the Great Escape plot by Allied prisoners in World War II.

Five years ago: The Department of Homeland Security announced that hackers had broken into the U.S. government personnel office and stolen identifying information of at least 4 million federal workers. (The breach was later said to have totaled 21.5 million current and former federal employees and job applicants; Chinese hackers were suspected of being behind the cyberattack.) Former Texas Gov. Rick Perry opened his second bid for the Republican presidential nomination. A huge explosion at a gas station in Ghana's capital of Accra left at least 160 people dead.

One year ago: Thousands of protesters crowded London's government district while President Donald Trump met Prime Minister Theresa May nearby. The White House instructed former aides Hope Hicks and Annie Donaldson to defy subpoenas and refuse to provide documents to the House Judiciary Committee. Florida deputy Scot Peterson, who knew a gunman was loose at a high school in Parkland in February, 2018, but failed to go inside to confront the assailant, was arrested on 11 criminal charges related to his inaction during the massacre that killed 17 people. The Trump administration ended the most

popular forms of U.S. travel to Cuba, banning cruise ships and a heavily-used category of educational travel. New York legislators approved what would be the first statewide ban on the declawing of cats. (Gov. Andrew Cuomo signed the measure in July.) The Maine Legislature voted to legalize assisted suicide. (Gov. Janet Mills signed the measure into law the following week.)

Today's Birthdays: Sex therapist and media personality Dr. Ruth Westheimer is 92. Actor Bruce Dern is 84. Musician Roger Ball is 76. Actress-singer Michelle Phillips is 76. Jazz musician Anthony Braxton is 75. Rock musician Danny Brown (The Fixx) is 69. Actor Parker Stevenson is 68. Actor Keith David is 64. Blues singer-musician Tinsley Ellis is 63. Actress Julie Gholson is 62. Actor Eddie Velez is 62. Singer-musician El DeBarge is 59. Actress Julie White is 59. Actress Lindsay Frost is 58. Actor Sean Pertwee is 56. Former tennis player Andrea Jaeger is 55. Opera singer Cecilia Bartoli is 54. Rhythm and blues singer Al B. Sure! is 52. Actor Scott Wolf is 52. Actor-comedian Rob Huebel is 51. Comedian Horatio Sanz is 51. Actor James Callis is 49. Actor Noah Wyle is 49. Rock musician Stefan Lessard (The Dave Matthews Band) is 46. Actor-comedian Russell Brand is 45. Actress Angelina Jolie is 45. Actor Theo Rossi is 45. Alt-country singer Kasey Chambers is 44. Actor Robin Lord Taylor is 42. Rock musician JoJo Garza (Los Lonely Boys) is 40. Country musician Dean Berner (Edens Edge) is 39. Model Bar Refaeli (ruh-FEHL'-lee) is 35. Olympic gold medal figure skater Evan Lysacek is 35. Americana singer Shakey Graves is 33. Rock musician Zac Farro is 30.

Thought for Today: "If America forgets where she came from, if the people lose sight of what brought them along, if she listens to the deniers and mockers, then will begin the rot and dissolution." [-] Carl Sandburg, American writer (1878-1967).

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

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