

SHARE:

[Join Our Email List](#)[View as Webpage](#)

Connecting

June 15, 2020

Click [here](#) for sound of the Teletype

Colleagues,

Good Monday morning on this the 15th day of June 2015,

We lead today's Connecting with a status report on The Associated Press – in this challenging age of Covid-19 and protests spread throughout the country in the wake of the killing of George Floyd by a white policeman in Minneapolis.

Gary Pruitt, AP's president and CEO, reported to the AP global staff on Friday with a thank you for its work and updates about the cooperative's business operations, plans on returning to offices and AP's efforts to be a more diverse news organization. Pruitt shares his report with his Connecting colleagues.

"AP is in a position of strength because of the hard work of all of you to advance the power of facts" Pruitt said. "That work is paying dividends for us now. We will withstand these difficult times and fulfill our important mission, secure in our jobs and in the fact that what we are doing is vital."

JONI BEALL WRITETHRU - In today's issue is a 1st Ld-Writethru of a story from Friday's issue on the retirement from the AP of our colleague **Joni Beall**. I misspelled her name – one L, not two – and apologize to AP's former Birthday Maven for the error.

AN IDEA FOR FATHER'S DAY : One of our Connecting colleagues, **Steve Hendren** , has two sons – and he has suggested that this Father's Day, in lieu of a gift to their dad, they consider giving to the support of one of the many black organizations that are leading the fight for equality. One he recommends is the [NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund](#) , led by Sherrilyn Ifill, its President and Director-Counsel, and a cousin of one of his favorite journalists, the late PBS Newshour anchor Gwen Ifill.

NOT IN TODAY IN HISTORY but the most significant date in the life of Ye Olde Connecting Editor - 52 years ago today, Linda Carolyn Saul married Paul Henry Stevens in a Mass at Corpus Christi Church in Fort Dodge, Iowa. Careers in nursing, health care and journalism ensued in the 11 moves along the way - and most importantly, three children and four grandchildren.



Have a great day – and be safe, be healthy.

Paul

'Let's support each other in these difficult times'

AP President and CEO **Gary Pruitt** provided this update last Friday to the global staff of The Associated Press:

Dear AP Staff,

The year 2020 had a nice ring to it. But nearly halfway through, that ring has proved hollow.

We have had to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic which has sickened millions and killed hundreds of thousands. Both numbers continue to climb.

Countries around the world are mired in recession as economies shut down in an effort to slow the spread of COVID-19. Full economic recovery is likely years away.

Police in Minneapolis, Minnesota, killed George Floyd, a black man, by pressing a knee on his neck. That horrible event has sparked protests worldwide. Racial injustice and police brutality are hardly new issues in the United States. The



hope is that this time it will serve as a catalyst for reforms and greater social justice.

All of this comes on top of the pressures and stress of our daily lives and jobs. Many of you are having to cover stories that are dangerous or that hit home personally, at the same time upholding AP's critically important news values. Life is confronting us with an awful lot right now. Please take time to take care of yourselves. I urge you to reach out for help when you need it. There are resources available to all AP employees, including biweekly webinars on coping in uncertain times and our free Employee Assistance Program. You can find out more about these programs on InsideAP.

Let's support each other in these difficult times.

I thought I would take this opportunity to update you on a few other key issues that may be on your minds.

Business Update

AP's business is hanging in there pretty well, especially considering the punishing economic environment.

In my April video message, I walked you through our plan to meet the challenges posed to our business by the economic impact of the pandemic. Generally, things are playing out as we expected.

Revenue continues to decline, to be sure. But our numbers haven't cratered like many other media companies. Our subscription-based business model, which largely relies on longer term contracts, is providing AP with a degree of protection. Media companies more dependent on advertising are experiencing steeper revenue declines with many making dramatic expense cuts.

In the near term, we continue to enjoy significant – but temporary – expense savings. With very few sports, political or entertainment events, our coverage expenses are lower than they would be normally. We will use these savings to build our strength to withstand the economic downturn. Think of it as building our immunity.

I want to reinforce what I told you two months ago: There are no plans for layoffs, furloughs or pay cuts in response to the pandemic. Still, this is a very challenging time for AP. We must operate as efficiently as possible while fulfilling our news mission.

Returning to the Office

We plan to return to our offices, but we are in no hurry to do so. And when it comes to making those plans, the health and safety of employees remains paramount.

AP has a long history of remote work. We have operated out of more than 200 locations for decades and learned to coordinate the efforts of a dispersed staff. But this is the first time in AP's history that the vast majority of our staff have been working remotely and we're doing it well – thanks to all of you.

So why return to our offices at all? Overall, we are a work culture enhanced by in-person collaboration. While some work can be done well from home, other work – especially project-based group work and, of course, field journalism – cannot. Some staffers from various departments must work in the office and have done so despite offices being otherwise closed. In addition, remote work creates greater cyber security risks and stresses our ability to edit and distribute the news – particularly our video content. Much of AP's core work is handled more effectively, efficiently and reliably from the office.

However, the fact that we are having success with a remote workforce gives us the luxury of taking a measured and careful approach to reopening our offices. Any move to reopen our AP offices will be guided by public health directives and solid scientific information. We will learn from other organizations that return to their offices sooner; we will incorporate best practices.

AP is a complex organization and the needs of each of our hundreds of offices will be different, which means they will reopen at different times. When we do reopen an office and ask employees to return, we will give employees plenty of notice – at least three weeks. We will work to accommodate those of you with special circumstances including family care, health needs and other considerations. We will factor in concerns about community spread and public transportation. And, of course, we will make sure our workplaces are safe. We have a cross-departmental team working on just that and you will continue to hear more about this from the team leader, Jessica Bruce, our senior VP for Human Resources. If you have any questions in the meantime, please contact your HR representative.

Diversity and Inclusion

The death of George Floyd has sparked conversations across the globe concerning inclusion in society and in the workplace. Diversity and inclusion are core values at the AP. We are strongest when we include the different perspectives of our diverse workforce. This is true in News, in Revenue and in all of our operations.

We would like AP to reflect all of the communities it covers, and we certainly have more work to do to make that a reality. Our managers have broadened their recruiting efforts to include wider, more diverse candidate pools for every position we post. And we continue to work to develop the careers of our existing diverse staff.

Each of you should be proud of the role you play at the AP. Our coverage of COVID-19, of the pandemic's economic impact and of the protests against racism that have rocked the world are a testament to the tenacity and skill of our colleagues and a reminder of the importance of AP's critical mission. When the coronavirus forced so many people to step away, AP has stepped up. Media around the world are relying on AP in this moment.

The good work stretches beyond News. Finance is reworking targets and staying on top of our results and cash in this new economic reality; our sales teams are finding new customers who understand the value of our work. Technology has kept us connected from thousands of different locations. Our legal department is defending the rights of journalists to cover stories; our strategy department has kept us focused on the future; and our human resources, corporate communications and global security departments have kept us safe, informed and connected to the services and people we need to thrive.

AP is in a position of strength because of the hard work of all of you to advance the power of facts. That work is paying dividends for us now. We will withstand these difficult times and fulfill our important mission, secure in our jobs and in the fact that what we are doing is vital.

Thank you and please stay safe.

An apology for an item in Today in History – and a change

Sally Buzbee, executive editor of The Associated Press, in a note to AP staff Friday:

I want to let you know about something that has occurred that I want to be entirely transparent about.

Each day AP moves a text fixture called Today in History. In the past, each day it included a quote, or “thought of the day,” at the end. The fixture is put together 4-5 weeks ahead of time, by a News Department employee, and is filed to customers a week in advance, then re-filed to customers spot.

The Today in History for June 3, 2020, contained a quote from Jefferson Davis, the president of the Confederacy. As soon as we were made aware of that, through a customer complaint that day, we immediately corrected it. The Davis quote was eliminated and a quote from Franz Kafka was subbed into the fixture.

Subsequent review found that the same quote from Davis had appeared in the Today in History fixture for the date June 3 in the years 2008, 2012 and 2016.

To be clear, it was never appropriate for the AP to include a thought of the day from Jefferson Davis in any of those years. We have addressed the issue with the person involved and changed procedures. I am personally mortified we sent this quote to our customers, and I apologize.

Starting with the Today in History that we send to customers Monday, June 15, for use Monday June 21, the Today in History fixture will no longer contain a "thought of the day."

I am sorry this happened. We must think deeply and sensitively about everything we do. I am happy to answer any questions.

Connecting mailbox

On memories of Martin Luther King Jr.

Hank Ackerman ([Email](#)) - As a companion to Gene Herrick's fine remembrance of Martin Luther King, Jr., in Friday's Connecting, Kathryn Johnson's "My Time with the Kings" sheds some poignant light on a reporters' relationship to him, to the movement, to protests, policing. Alan Breed's [obituary](#) of Johnson gives a glimpse on her life and her interaction with the Kings and with a generation of AP folks who documented the Civil Rights journey of so many people.

-0-

Plaudits for Herrick, Blackman stories

Norm Abelson ([Email](#)) - What a privilege to read Connecting on Friday.

Gene Herrick's historic photos and current commentary about his coverage of Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. brought a sense of immediacy to the memory of that great man, and the tragic loss his death continues to be for all of us.

Ann Blackman's stirring memories of the Reagan assassination attempt likewise brought my own memories of that unhappy event back into sharp focus, and re-awakened my sense of all the tragic and useless killing that goes on to this day.

Harry Truman once said, "There is nothing new in the world except the history you do not know."

Thank heavens for journalists like Herrick and Blackman, and all the others who recall on Connecting their reporting of historic events. They are keeping memory alive.

-0-

On the Continental Congress

Bruce Lowitt ([Email](#)) - Based on the June 11 Highlight in History, it took the Continental Congress 24 days to form a committee to draft the Declaration of Independence, create the final draft, write it, date and (with at least most of the signatures by July 4) sign it.

I have no doubt that if the Continental Congress had operated the way this one does, it would have taken more than 24 days to work out the makeup of the committee, plus at least a month to decide the exact wording of the document, two months to fight over the amendments and three months before failing to come up for a vote - and today we'd all be speaking English English.

-0-

Beating competition when police chief thought he was FBI agent

Mike Rouse ([Email](#)) - I enjoyed the accounts by Carl Leubsdorf Jr. and Mike Putzel of how they beat the opposition on particular stories. And I couldn't resist sending one of my own.

I was covering several days of racial unrest in Monroe, N.C., in 1961. One night I was in Monroe's police station talking with some FBI agents. One especially was a very good source.

The police chief walked in and told the agents he wanted to speak privately with them. He asked them to go with him to the back of the building and into a jail cell. My FBI friend motioned me to come along, walking beside him. The chief thought I was another agent.

In the cell, the chief told the agents that an African American activist had called him to say that he and his compatriots had kidnapped an elderly white couple after stopping their car. He said they would hold the couple until law enforcement released several "freedom riders" who had been arrested at demonstrations earlier in the day and were awaiting their first court appearance.

When the conference ended I headed for a phone booth on a corner just outside of the police station and called the Charlotte bureau. The editor on duty told me he

didn't think we should use the story because of the sneaky way in which I got it. I told him I'd call him right back.

Then I called the boss, Chief of Bureau Tim Parker at home. I related what had happened and he told me to wait five minutes and call the bureau again, which I did.

The editor, a very nice man but extremely conservative, took my dictation and we moved a bulletin and adds. I don't remember exactly how far behind the opposition was but I remember it was a long way.

That editor--I won't tell his name--might have kept us out of trouble more than once with his caution. But I'll never forget how happy I was that Tim Parker was available that night.

Incidentally, I talked with the police chief several times as the story continued to develop and he never mentioned my failure to identify myself that night.

Joni Beall retires after 34-year AP career

Joni Beall ([Email](#)) - After 34 years with The Associated Press, I'm retiring today (last Friday). It's been a wonderful ride.

I graduated from Shippensburg State College (now Shippensburg University) in Pennsylvania with a degree in Communication-Journalism in 1976.

I joined the news department at WINC in Winchester, Va., as a reporter for three years and was News Director for seven years. During that time, I was a frequent contributor and AP award winner. That must have caught the AP's eye because in May 1986, Dennis Montgomery, the COB of the Richmond, Va., bureau, called and asked me to apply. I still remember the test - I didn't know that crambo was a rhyming game, so I said it was the next Conan/Rambo film.

I was offered a transfer to the BNC in Washington in 1988 and began working the broadcast wire desk as a writer and editor and, during the first Gulf War, war writer. The thought of those runnings still gives me nightmares. I joined the Entertainment Department in the mid-1990s. First, I worked alongside Oscar Wells Gabriel on urban entertainment and then I was named the Entertainment Celebrity Birthday Editor – or as I prefer: The Birthday Maven. It's the job I've loved the most.



(The birthdays go to Today in History (print and broadcast), Today in Entertainment History (broadcast) and Celebrity Birthdays (print). AP entertainment writers use it for obits and for stories.)

This is my second retirement from AP. In 2012, I retired from full time. Since then, I've been working on the birthday database part time from home. I have loved my career with the AP and am proud to have worked with the best in the business.

As for my next chapter, it was supposed to be a summer of long days at the pool, throwing parties, going to hear music and a great deal of travel. So much for plans. For now, I'll be doing home projects, working on jigsaw puzzles and reading (I'm on my 15th book of the pandemic). There's always music in our house, but we sure miss going to shows, especially since my husband books bands. We are very active in our small town of Cheverly, Md, and we look forward to being able to be crazy busy again once restrictions are lifted.

As one of my favorite soul singer/songwriters, Arthur Alexander, put it: "Adios Amigo. Goodbye my friend."

More of your telephone stories covering the news

Owen Ullmann ([Email](#)) - In 1975, I was an AP reporter in Detroit when a huge story broke in our backyard: the disappearance of ex-Teamsters president Jimmy Hoffa on July 30. The mystery drew international attention and we threw everything we had at it under the leadership of then Bureau Chief Rich Opel and News Editor Jon Wolman, both of whom went on to distinguished careers as giants of journalism.

Covering the Hoffa family in the days after his disappearance proved to be a challenge because they lived in an isolated compound in a rural area outside Detroit. This was well before cell phones and the Internet, so there were no nearby phones to call in after a family news conference or remarks by law enforcement officials on the property.

Interest in the story was so intense that someone--probably Rich--came up with the idea of having the phone company run a line from the nearest telephone poll to a tree near where family members came out to speak to the throng of reporters camped outside their gate. We installed a phone on the tree so we could call in alerts within minutes of a news conference.

To keep competitors from using the phone when we weren't there, we placed a lock in one of the holes of the rotary dial (remember them?) so no one could dial out without the key. When I was on Hoffa duty, the phone key was the most precious article I carried with me.

I remember there were so many reporters and pressure from their editors to file stories, several wrote accounts about the AP's "tree phone." I'm sure some enterprising AP reporter out there can find one of those stories.

-0-

Mike Holmes ([Email](#)) - My phone story comes from the Texas Capitol, where a bank of wooden phone booths stood along a wall directly outside the House chamber. Since the Capitol Press Room was on the same floor, we seldom if ever use the pay phones. But the 800-plus lobbyists practically lived in them when the Legislature was meeting. Some even decorated the booths the last few days of the biennial session.

Then in the mid- to late 1980s, Motorola came out with a "mobile" phone. The first one I saw in use belonged to a well-heeled lobbyist whose high-dollar clients included oil companies and airlines. He was the just kind of guy populist Agriculture Commissioner Jim Hightower would describe as, "Gucci-wearing, Cabernet-sipping, yacht-clubbing." His portable phone was the size of a brick, so the lobbyist paid a young assistant to lug the thing around for him.

When a reporter asked why he used a phone that cost \$2,000 and required a second person to carry it when the pay phones were so handy, he just grinned and said:

"I don't carry quarters."

-0-

Bill McCloskey ([Email](#)) - A sidebar to Ann Blackman's report on finding a phone near George Washington Hospital on the day President Ronald Reagan was shot.

Inside the hospital that day, Dr. Arthur Kobrine was doing surgery on severely wounded White House Press Secretary Jim Brady. The surgery was successful and Brady lived. Years later my personal physician said Kobrine was the best in the city when I needed a cyst removed from my lower spine. Arriving at his office for evaluation, I was greeted by framed newspaper clippings recounting his life-saving procedure on Brady. When getting my history, he asked my profession and I mentioned working for AP. He asked if I knew Mike Putzel, Ann Blackman's husband. Mike had been one of his patients.

Small world.

-0-

John Willis ([Email](#)) - I got a kick out of Carl Leubsdorf's pay phone story from the 68 Democratic Convention in Chicago. Oddly, I was home from college in the western Chicago suburb of Hinsdale during those hectic summer days.

My telephone tale also involved a pay phone and a similar trick at the federal building in Omaha.

A lot of news was coming from the US District Court and the bankruptcy court in Omaha after American Beef Packers went belly up. I was spending a lot of my time in the courtroom. and there were only three or four pay phones in the hallway, outside. Many times that was not enough to take care of all the reporters who were covering the various hearings.

I don't remember how, but one day I realized that I could unscrew both the listening and talking ends of the pay phone receiver, and that the little whatever it was inside would come out in my hand. It simply sat on some sort of connector, and was not wired.

On busy court days I would arrive early and unscrew the talking end of the receiver on one of the pay phones. The little piece went into my pocket.

I never took the piece out of the building. When I needed the phone I had it, and when I didn't, no one else could use it. After each day's session ended, I carefully put the piece back in the phone.

In late May, 1975, I was spending almost all day, every weekday in the main courtroom as US District Judge Robert Denney heard arguments in a lawsuit by cattle raisers against the Department of Agriculture's plan to change its beef grading guidelines. The department wanted to insert a "USDA Select" grade in between the "USDA Choice" and "USDA Good" grade standards for cattle carcasses. The hearings went on for weeks and my wife, Connie, was due to deliver our second child at any time.

There were no cell phones for regular folks in those days, and we wouldn't have been allowed to use them in the courtroom, any way. I couldn't be calling home every half hour or so. I was usually the only reporter covering those hearings, so I didn't need to use my trick to assure a pay phone. The World-Herald used our coverage, which freed up one of their best reporters to do other things.

Judge Denney gave me permission to arrange to have my wife or mother-in-law call his office if I was needed while court was in session. His secretary would come quietly into the courtroom and signal me to get going. I planned a quiet exit, alerting the bureau, and then racing to the house to get Connie.

On June 2, 1975, I went to the bureau in the Omaha World-Herald as usual, and planned to spend most of the day in court. It was a normal Monday, as Sgt. Joe Friday

might say, and just as I sat down at my CRT, the phone rang and my mother-in-law said. "It's time!"

Millie Hollingsworth (day radio editor) and correspondent Ed Nicholls wished me good luck and sent me on my way.

Our daughter was born late that afternoon after many, many laps around the maternity floor at Nebraska Methodist Hospital. We had not agreed on a name, but we had the list narrowed.

The next morning I was back in the courtroom and Judge Denney, noticing my absence the day before, assumed that I was a new father. He congratulated me. I thanked him, and told all in the courtroom that I had a new little girl to take home in a day or two. That evening I visited my wife and daughter, and she got her name, Kelley Suzanne Willis.

We quietly celebrated her birthday and our youngest grandson's high school graduation at her house in suburban Augusta, GA, a couple of weeks ago. All of us, including my son and grandsons, were to be on Lake Ogascanan, Quebec, all this week. It's in the bush country about 275 north of Toronto and the camp is about 50 miles from the nearest paved road. Great walleye, northern pike and lake trout fishing, and half the fun is getting there.

The US/Canadian border is closed, however. to all but "essentials" due to the virus, so we're at home with our masks.

GWU's School of Media & Public Affairs Welcomes Two New Faculty Members



The School of Media & Public Affairs of George Washington University is thrilled to announce two new faculty members that will join the team this fall: Efrat Nechushtai and Jesse J. Holland! They both bring extensive knowledge to SMPA that will help students gain the critical skills they need in journalism.

Dr. Nechushtai received her Ph.D. from the Columbia Journalism school this past April and she is a Knight News Innovation Fellow at the Tow Center for Digital Journalism and an Andrew Wellington Cordier Teaching Fellow at the Columbia School of International and Public Affairs. Her research focuses on the impact of platformization and political polarization on journalism, both in the United States and internationally.

Beginning this fall, Dr. Nechushtai will be bringing her experience as a professional journalist, working as an editor and staff writer for Haaretz, into the classroom by helping students understand the challenges they might face in the media today. She has published qualitative and quantitative pieces in journals such as *Journalism*, *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, *Computers in Human Behavior*, *Journalism Studies*, and *Information & Culture* and you can find more of her work on her Google Scholar page.

Jesse J. Holland is coming to SMPA as an award-winning journalist, author, and television personality. He is currently serving as a Distinguished Visiting Scholar In Residence at the John W. Kluge Center of the Library of Congress and weekend host for C-SPAN Washington Journal. This comes after a quarter-century of working for The Associated Press as a White House, Supreme Court, and Congressional reporter, and most recently as a Race & Ethnicity Reporter. He is a graduate of the University of Mississippi and is a Saturday host for C-SPAN Washington Journal.

Mr. Holland is the author of the best-selling *Black Men Built the Capitol: Discovering African American History In and Around Washington, D.C. on the slaves that built the U.S. Capitol* and *The Invisibles: The Untold Story of African American Slaves in the White House*; the latter was honored at the Independent Publisher Book Awards and by Smithsonian.com. He is also the author of *Black Panther: Who Is the Black Panther?*, the novel Marvel Entertainment commissioned for the hit *Black Panther* film. He has been working on a book about the life and times of the lost African American town of Freedmen's Village, a settlement of freed slaves that sat on parts of what is now Arlington National Cemetery outside of Washington, D.C. and how it helped shape race relations in the nation's capital. Mr. Holland's journalistic experience, as well as his research and writing on race in America, comes at an especially important time as the country - and those of who study and practice journalism - confront systemic racism and the growing Black Lives Matter movement.

Read more [here](#) . Jesse Holland ([Email](#)) is a Connecting colleague.

Connecting sky shot – Santa Catalina Mountains



Mark Mittelstadt ([Email](#)) - A tandem-rotor helicopter drops water Thursday morning on a growing wildfire in the Santa Catalina Mountains northeast of Tucson. The helicopter was one of three pressed into service along with more than 100 firefighters to battle the blaze, caused by lightning from an isolated thunderstorm a week ago. The fire has spread to nearly 5,000 acres and as of mid-day was only 10 percent contained.

The helicopters were refilling buckets from a temporary water tank set up on the athletic field of a nearby high school and continually fed by a hose from a hydrant.

Arizona and New Mexico were designated in the top two of national firefighting sites Thursday, behind Alaska. Calls went out to fire crews in other states for help.

Rough terrain, hot weather, dry underbrush and wind has hindered efforts to extinguish. Officials have said the fire, so far restricted to the Coronado National Forest, doesn't pose immediate danger to homes. But Thursday they ordered the evacuation of neighborhoods at the base of the mountain as a precaution and directed amateur photographers and "looky-loos" to stay away. At times smoke from the fire has spread across large parts of Tucson; officials encouraged the elderly and people with respiratory problems to stay indoors.

For my journalistic efforts I knocked the passenger side mirror off my truck and lightly scratched a door when I hit the edge of a metal gate leaving the school parking lot. Unfortunately I am now self-insured and cannot expense the damage!

Best of the Week

AP Exclusive: WHO's behind-the-scenes frustration to get virus info from China



Shi Zhengli, left, works with other researchers in a lab at the Wuhan Institute of Virology in central China's Hubei province, Feb. 23, 2017. On Dec. 30, 2019, Shi, a renowned virus expert, was alerted to the new coronavirus, and by Jan. 2, her team had fully decoded its genome. But China's top medical authority, the National Health

Commission, issued a confidential order that barred Shi's lab from publishing the sequence or warning of the possible danger. CHINATOPIX VIA AP

AP broke "a hell of an investigative story," drawing on internal recordings, documents, emails and interviews to tell the definitive story of what really happened between the World Health Organization and China in the early days of the pandemic.

China and the Trump administration had opposing narratives about the early days of the new coronavirus epidemic: China bragged about quickly providing information to the world through the World Health Organization, while the Trump administration accused China and WHO of colluding to hide information.

It took The Associated Press to step in and show the facts: Rather than colluding with China, WHO itself was being kept in the dark, and praised China in public to shake loose information while expressing considerable frustration in private.

Read more [here](#) .

Best of the States

AP Analysis: After previous police killings, states slow to reform use-of-force



A demonstrator holds a sign bearing the likeness of Eric Garner and Michael Brown before a march to protest the death of Garner, in the Staten Island borough of New York, Aug. 23, 2014. The city medical examiner ruled that Garner, 43, died as a result

of a police chokehold during an attempted arrest. The 2014 deaths of Garner in New York, Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, and 12-year-old Tamir Rice in Cleveland brought calls for police reform, but an AP analysis has found that most states failed to take action on one of the core issues: police use of force. AP PHOTO / JOHN MINCHILLO

A national review by AP finds that six years after a wave of police killings of black men, most states still have not addressed what is perhaps the most pressing issue: police of use-of-force.

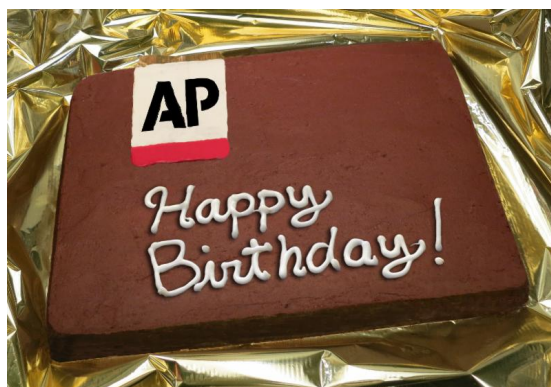
Calls for police reforms after George Floyd's death in Minneapolis were reminiscent of the calls to action after three black men were killed by police in 2014.

So what happened after those killings?

Ohio statehouse reporter Julie Carr Smyth, working with her statehouse colleagues around the country, found that while nearly half the states enacted some type of reforms in the years since, most failed to take action on one of the core issues: police use of force.

Read more [here](#).

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



To

Tom Larimer – tom@arkansaspress.com

Stories of interest

"I Have Struggled": Black TV Journalists Talk George Floyd Coverage, Industry Diversity (Hollywood Reporter)



Clockwise from top left: Blayne Alexander (NBC News), Trymaine Lee (MSNBC), Sara Sidner (CNN), Omar Jimenez (CNN), Fredricka Whitfield (CNN), Rachel Scott (ABC News), Jericka Duncan (CBS News), Alex Perez (ABC News), Antonia Hylton (NBC News) and Victor Blackwell (CNN).

By **JEREMY BARR**

Ten Black journalists speak about how they have covered the protests, the hurdles and dilemmas they face, and why their industry still has work to do.

Alex Perez had the N-word yelled at him while filming a television segment in Missouri.

Rachel Scott was confused for a hotel maid (and asked for more towels) while reporting on President Trump's trip to Florida.

Fredricka Whitfield was stopped by a police officer who was suspicious of her high-end loaner car.

And Omar Jimenez was arrested live on the air as the world watched.

Reporting while Black in the United States can mean navigating a daily minefield, and yet the country's top television news journalists of color have persisted, tasked now with covering a country on fire following the police's killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis.

Read more [here](#) .

-0-

'To Say That She's An Abusive Figure Is An Understatement': At ABC News, Toxicity Thrives

(Huffington Post)

By YASHAR ALI

In 2018, Barbara Fedida, a senior ABC News executive in charge of talent, was sitting in a meeting with colleagues discussing fraught contract negotiations with one of ABC's biggest stars, "Good Morning America" anchor Robin Roberts.

Roberts, a Black woman who has co-anchored "Good Morning America" since 2005, wanted more money as part of a contract renewal, and Fedida felt that Roberts had gotten enough. Fedida then asked what more Roberts could want and said it wasn't as if the network was asking Roberts to "pick cotton," according to one source who was in the room and witnessed the exchange. Two other sources who were not present but were told about the incident soon afterward confirmed the account to HuffPost.

That remark is part of a long pattern of insensitive statements, including racist comments, made by Fedida to people who report to her, according to the sources who spoke to HuffPost. Fedida has been the subject of more than a dozen human resources complaints and was the subject of a human resources investigation in 2016 that led ABC News to hire an executive coach for her, sources said. Staffers at ABC News who knew about the investigation told HuffPost they were stunned that it did not end in her dismissal.

Read more [here](#) . Shared by Doug Pizac.

-0-

Inside one reporter's experience from Ferguson to Floyd (CNN)

By Sara Sidner, CNN

CNN National Correspondent Sara Sidner has led the network's coverage from Minneapolis after the killing of George Floyd, and from Ferguson after the death of Michael Brown in 2014, and investigates hate in America.

Minneapolis (CNN) - When I first saw the video, my head turned away. It was a visceral and uncontrolled physical reaction. I couldn't stomach seeing a man gulping air like a fish — his face pushed flat on the hot, dirty pavement with a knee bearing down on his neck. It was painful to watch. Though of course nothing like the pain of the man experiencing such an act of sanctioned violence. That man was 46-year-old George Floyd.

But I'm a reporter and so I forced myself to watch it again and again. I did so a dozen times. I was trying to get all the words that were being said. I was counting the number of times Floyd told the officer, "I can't breathe." The number of times bystanders begged police to get off his neck. The number of times he said, "They gonna kill me." The one time he called out to his dead mama.

My job that day was to tell people about Floyd's final moments so I had to make sure I had the details right. But I hated doing it because I knew I was searing those images into my brain forever. Watching someone be tortured leaves you with a unique helplessness, especially when you know the ultimate outcome. Bile rose in my throat more than once. I retched as I watched.

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

-0-

'I'm 65 and we're talking about problems we talked about in 1954' | Art Holliday on today's America (KSDK)

By Art Holliday

I'm extremely uncomfortable being the story, although I've loved every minute of telling thousands of stories at KSDK over the past 40-plus years. My news director asked me to tell my story and share my opinions because she believes I have something valuable to add to the difficult conversations going on right now. I suppose you'll be the judge of that.

"I wish America loved black people as much as it loves black culture."

That was the Twitter wish of actress Niecy Nash in the wake of yet another unarmed black man killed by a police officer. I don't know if Nash was the first to express that wish, but it reminded me of a scene from one of my favorite movies, Spike Lee's racial tour de force "Do The Right Thing" (should have won Best Picture). Remember when John Turturro's character, Pino, and Spike's Mookie are having a heated conversation about race? Despite Pino's dislike of African Americans, his favorite basketball player was Magic Johnson, his favorite actor was Eddie Murphy, and according to Mookie, Pino was a fan of Prince, although Pino claims he prefers Bruce Springsteen. Yet somehow, Pino does not consider Magic, Eddie, or Prince black because he idolizes them.

America loves our athletes and performers, our style, dances, music, and artwork. Our cool, our swagger.

Until it's time to act right.

Read more [here](#) . Shared by Scott Charton.

Today in History - June 15, 2020



By The Associated Press

Today is Monday, June 15, the 167th day of 2020. There are 199 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On June 15, 1775, the Second Continental Congress voted unanimously to appoint George Washington head of the Continental Army.

On this date:

In 1215, England's King John put his seal to Magna Carta ("the Great Charter") at Runnymede.

In 1836, Arkansas became the 25th state.

In 1864, Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton signed an order establishing a military burial ground which became Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia.

In 1904, more than 1,000 people died when fire erupted aboard the steamboat General Slocum in New York's East River.

In 1934, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed an act making the National Guard part of the U.S. Army in the event of war or national emergency.

In 1944, American forces began their successful invasion of Saipan (sy-PAN') during World War II. B-29 Superfortresses carried out their first raids on Japan.

In 1955, the United States and Britain signed a cooperation agreement concerning atomic information for "mutual defence purposes."

In 1969, the variety show "Hee Haw," a fast-paced mixture of country music and comedy skits, debuted on CBS-TV.

In 1991, Mount Pinatubo in the northern Philippines exploded in one of the biggest volcanic eruptions of the 20th century, killing about 800 people.

In 1993, former Texas Gov. John Connally, who was wounded in the gunfire that killed President John F. Kennedy, died in Houston at age 76.

In 1996, Ella Fitzgerald, the "first lady of song," died in Beverly Hills, California, at age 79.

In 2003, with a deadline passed for Iraqis to hand in heavy weapons, U.S. forces fanned out across Iraq to seize arms and put down potential foes.

Ten years ago: In his first Oval Office address, President Barack Obama promised that "we will make BP pay for the damage their company has caused," describing the massive oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico as a "siege" on the shores of America. Mexican President Felipe Calderon appealed to his fellow citizens to support the fight against organized crime just hours after troops killed 15 suspected gang members.

Five years ago: Former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush entered the 2016 presidential campaign with a rally and speech at Miami Dade College, joining 10 other Republicans already in the race for the party's nomination. Rachel Dolezal resigned as president of the NAACP's Spokane chapter just days after her parents said she was a white woman posing as black. American businessman Kirk Kerkorian, 95, died in Beverly Hills, California. Burlesque icon Blaze Starr, 83, died in in Wilsondale, West Virginia.

One year ago: Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris held its first Mass since the devastating April 15th fire that ravaged its roof; the archbishop of Paris wore a hard-hat helmet and only about 30 people were allowed inside. Italian director Franco Zeffirelli, known for extravagant productions like the 1968 film "Romeo and Juliet," died in Rome at the age of 96. A Babe Ruth road jersey dating to 1928-1930 sold at auction for \$5.64

million; the auction was conducted at Yankee Stadium, and the jersey was part of a collection that Ruth's family put up for sale.

Today's Birthdays: Rhythm and blues singer Ruby Nash Garnett (Ruby and the Romantics) is 86. Funk musician Leo Nocentelli (The Meters) is 74. Actor Simon Callow is 71. Singer Russell Hitchcock (Air Supply) is 71. Rock singer Steve Walsh is 69. Chinese President Xi Jinping (shee jihn-peeng) is 67. Actor-comedian Jim Belushi is 66. Country singer Terri Gibbs is 66. Actress Julie Hagerty is 65. Actress Polly Draper is 65. Rock musician Brad Gillis (Night Ranger) is 63. Baseball Hall of Famer Wade Boggs is 62. Actress Eileen Davidson is 61. Bluegrass musician Terry Smith is 60. Actress Helen Hunt is 57. Rock musician Scott Rockenfield (Queensryche) is 57. Actress Courteney Cox is 56. Country musician Tony Ardoin is 56. Country musician Michael Britt (Lonestar) is 54. Contemporary Christian musician Rob Mitchell is 54. Rock musician Jimmy McD is 52. Actor-rapper Ice Cube is 51. Actress Leah Remini is 50. Actor Jake Busey is 49. Bluegrass singer-musician Jamie Johnson is 48. Rock musician T-Bone Willy (Save Ferris) is 48. Actor Neil Patrick Harris is 47. Actor Greg Vaughan is 47. Actress Elizabeth Reaser is 45. Rock singer Dryden Mitchell (Alien Ant Farm) is 44. Former child actor Christopher Castile is 40. Rock musician Billy Martin (Good Charlotte) is 39. Actor Jordi Vilasuso is 39. Rock musician Wayne Sermon (Imagine Dragons) is 36. Actor Denzel Whitaker is 30. Olympic gold medal gymnast Madison Kocian is 23. Actress Sterling Jerins is 16.

Thought for Today: "The times are not so bad as they seem; they couldn't be." [-] John Franklin Carter, American commentator and author (1897-1967).

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

Editor, Connecting newsletter

paulstevens46@gmail.com