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Connecting

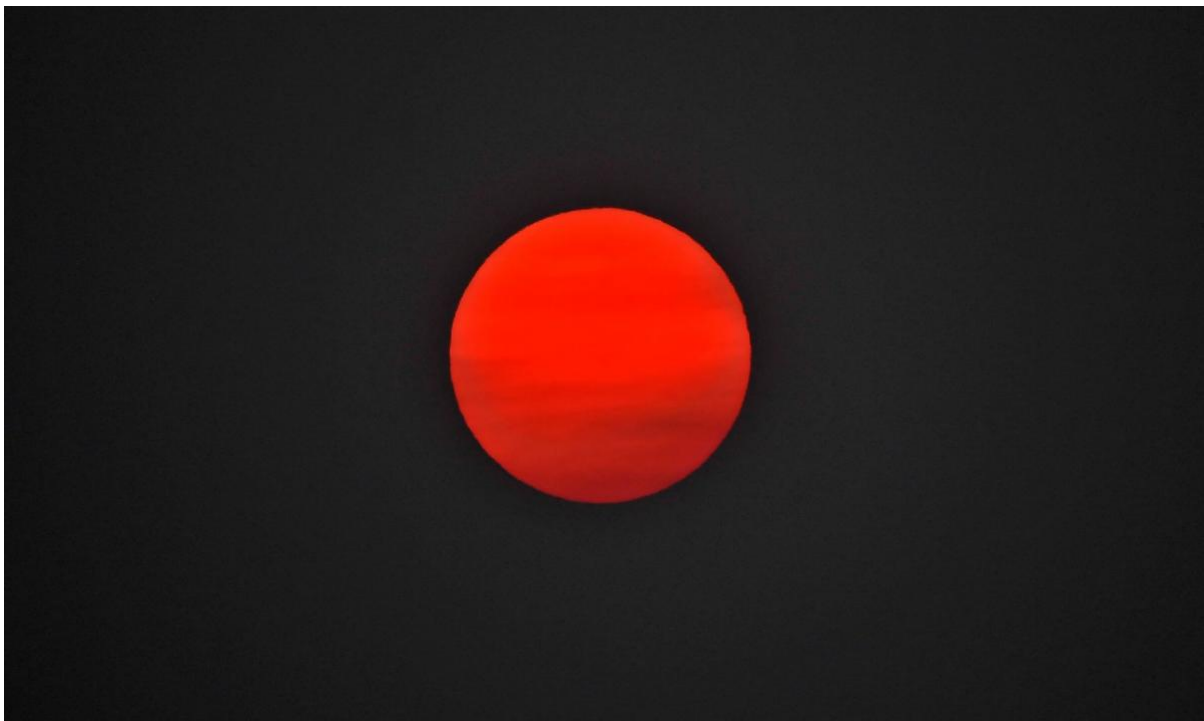
September 08, 2020

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Los Angeles sun - trying to break through smoke from wildfires. Photo/Nick Ut

Colleagues,

Good Tuesday morning on this the 8th day of September 2020,

Stories about computer glitches, your pets in the pandemic and two-finger typing highlight today's post-Labor Day edition.

I look forward to your story contributions on these and any other subjects on your mind.

CORRECTION: In a cutline in Monday's The Final Word, it was stated that the St. Mary's River connects Lake Huron and Lake St. Clair, the sixth Great Lake. It is the St. Clair River that connects Lakes Huron and St. Clair. The St. Mary's River is up north and runs from Lake Superior to Lake Huron.

Have a great day - be safe, stay healthy.

Paul

Ever hear of the C-NILE VIRUS?

John Terino ([Email](#)) - Even the most advanced computer programs from Norton, McAfee, and others cannot take care of this one. It appears to target those who were born prior to 1955. The lockdown seems to be increasing the chances of being affected!

Virus Symptoms

1. Causes you to send the same e-mail twice. (Done that)
2. Causes you to send a blank e-mail. (That too)
3. Causes you to send an e-mail to the wrong person. (Yup)
4. Causes you to send it back to the person who sent it to you. (Ah-ha)
5. Causes you to forget to attach the attachment. (Done that)
6. Causes you to hit SEND before you've finished. (Oh no, not again)
7. Causes you to hit DELETE instead of SEND. (Hate that)
8. Causes you to hit SEND when you should DELETE. (Heck, now what?)

A lot of us have already been inflicted with this deadly disease and as we age it gets worse.

If you can't admit to doing any of the above, you've obviously caught the D-NILE virus.

Memory of a computer glitch

Mike Harris ([Email](#)) - The AP was in the midst of computerization in 1973. I was working in the Indianapolis bureau, which had one computer terminal. All of our copy at that point was routed through the control bureau in Columbus, Ohio.

When we left the office on assignment, the only way to get our stories onto the wire was to dictate to someone on that lone terminal.

Every once in a while, someone would be working at the terminal and suddenly all the characters on the screen would make a mad dash for one of the corners and the screen would suddenly be blank. There was no autosave function, so the writer would simply have to start over. It was very frustrating.

In October of 1973, I was in South Bend to cover a football game between Navy and Notre Dame. The Midshipmen were tremendously overmatched and the score was 28-0 at the half. It could easily have been a lot worse, but Notre Dame coach Ara Parseghian was doing everything he could think of to keep from embarrassing Navy. He was substituting liberally and even punting on third down at times.

I wrote a lede at the half and called the Indy bureau to dictate it to Steve Herman. I told Steve I would call him back near the end of the game and do a quick update with the second half scoring and any key stats.

After updating the story briefly - it was now 44-7 - I said to Steve, "There's less than a minute left. I'll just stay on the phone. As the final seconds wound down, I counted aloud: '10-9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1. Send.' "

From the other end of the phone I heard Steve bark an expletive and I immediately knew what had happened. He said, "Start dictating." My heart sank but I did just that.

Thankfully, I had a very good memory and was able to reconstruct the story quickly. But, still, it didn't make it onto the wire until an extra 10 or 15 minutes had passed - an eternity in wire service time.

A week or so later, one of our techs came up with the answer. He figured out it was a static electricity problem and put a steel plate on the floor beneath the terminal. There were no more lost stories.

Your pets and the pandemic

Meet Nameless Cat



Doug Tucker ([Email](#)) - The first time I saw him, my nameless cat was about to die.

Two boys about 13 or 14 had trapped the terrified little stray against a wooden wall outside my apartment complex and were hurling rocks. Big ones. As hard as they could.

“What are you doing to my cat?” I said, moving quickly to stand in their way. My anger must have showed because the young punks dropped their rocks and walked away smirking without a word.

A dangerous winter storm was rolling in a few days later when I got home late and found him huddled in a corner of the second-floor landing.

He was shivering and miserable, homeless and hungry. I held open my door.

“You want to come in? I promise nobody in here will throw rocks at you.”

He paused and stared for a minute as if weighing the possibilities, and then, very cautiously, came into my home, my life and my heart.

This was many years before our pets would help us through this damnable COVID-19 lockdown. But since Connecting's been on the subject of favorite fur babies, Ye Olde Connecting Editor says it's OK to speak of my wonderful, incredible, beautiful Nameless Cat.

I called him Nameless because he must have had a name before a cruel and mysterious fate turned him into a bewildered little outcast. I just didn't know what it was. When I took him in for a bath and a health checkup, the vet said he was neutered and perhaps five years old. Also, from all appearances, he'd been well cared for.

Knowing very little about pets of any kind, I would realize only later what a truly amazing cat Nameless was. You see, I grew up in the home of an ill-tempered grandfather who had a strict, unbendable rule of no cats, no dogs, no animals of any kind. This was burned into me when I was only about 6 or 7 and came home with a puppy. I was watching him lap up a bowl of milk on the front porch when my grandfather stomped him to death.

An ugly memory. But one that Nameless seemed to flick away with one swipe of his playful paw. In my mid-40s, I finally had an animal to take care of. Nameless was funny, affectionate and responsive to everything I would say or do. I decided that he realized I had saved his life.

Cats aren't that smart, you say? Keep reading.

Plus, he was so beautiful. His long blond fur was smooth and silky. His eyes were Paul Newman blue. Several women in the waiting room crowded in for a closer look the first time I took him to the vet.

“What a gorgeous cat,”” one lady cooed. “Have you ever shown him?”

But I was not the only one who fell in love with Nameless.

So did Phyllis.

She and I had become quite close. We were even starting to talk marriage. But we both had been single our whole lives and felt quite comfy in our deeply rutted comfort zones. So we decided to back away for a few weeks or months and see how we felt then.

A once-promising relationship was starting to teeter.

But I was also leaving town for a couple of weeks and fretting over what to do with Nameless. I hated to board him where he'd be looked after by complete strangers and surrounded by who knows what sort of animal riffraff. I couldn't stand the thought of him lying in a small cage all day and all night fearing I had abandoned him.

Would Phyllis be willing to take care of him for me?

I called her the first night I was gone. Had to check on Nameless, didn't I? He was fine, she said. He was also fine when I called again two nights later, still fine the day after that, and the day after that.

Near the end of my absence she asked, "When you get back and pick up Nameless, how does a homemade spaghetti dinner sound?"

Not long after that we were married in the elegantly decorated back yard of our friends Brad and Marcia Martin. It is a happy union, to say the least.

But without Nameless Cat drawing us back, would we have kept drifting apart?

Maybe. Maybe not.

Nobody can say. But nobody can say Nameless did not have a big hand - excuse me, a big paw - in what everybody says was the best decision of our lives.

Bringing two people together to a happy marriage was enough in itself to put Nameless in the House Cat Hall of Fame.

But then I came home one evening unable to swallow. At lunch a piece of meat had lodged at the bottom of my esophagus and for about eight anguished hours I'd been trying in vain to get it down.

I learned later this is not an uncommon occurrence and happens mostly to middle-aged males. In some of us, the esophagus imperceptibly narrows over time. Then a big bite, or something too hastily gulped down, sticks at the bottom. The muscles lock into place, the piece of food won't budge, and it's hello, misery city.

You can breathe OK. But the discomfort and the sense that something is terribly wrong astonishes. Also, after a couple of hours, a powerful thirst starts to build. And

then there's the problem of saliva. In this condition, saliva pools at the bottom of the throat. Every half hour or so, I was kneeling at the toilet coughing and gagging it up.

Phyllis kept saying I should let her drive me to the emergency room but I kept not having enough sense to listen. When I finally did, the doctor had little trouble poking the obstruction into the stomach with a long, thin probe. But that would come later.

By this time, we had become a multi-critter family with a sweet-natured pit bull who loved everybody and a second cat who didn't like anybody very much, both rescues. Despite my distress, those two just ignored me. They were perfectly content to eat supper and drowse near the fire.

But Nameless would not leave my side. About the third time I went up to cough up and retch up saliva, I noticed him in the bathroom doorway. He was watching intently.

Finally, I went upstairs and laid down, hoping perhaps that might clear this awful obstruction. Nameless immediately jumped onto the bed. He struggled over the covers to my bare chest. Then I felt that raspy little tongue gently licking my bare chest - on the exact spot where the meat was lodged.

In other words, he knew I had a problem. He knew where the problem was. And he tried to help.

I loved my Nameless Cat. My Nameless Cat loved me, too.

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Meet Moby Squirrel



Henry Bradsher ([Email](#)) - Dan Day's recent contribution to the series on pets, with a report on being entertained by squirrels' chasing each other, is like our situation in Baton Rouge. We've never had a pet dog or cat, much as my wife would like one, because our son Keith, now the only NY Times correspondent in mainland China, was extremely allergic to them as a boy.

What we do have are the usual Eastern Gray Squirrels chasing around the yard and the trees in our acre. But most interesting is a white squirrel – not a pink-eyed albino but a genetic anomaly due to a mutated gene. My wife calls the local white one Moby Squirrel, after the whale in “Moby-Dick.” Here he is eating seeds at one of the dishes that our part-time helper puts out for all the squirrels.

And for a couple of pairs of cardinals that come eat when the squirrels are not there. And sometimes at night, we see a raccoon or an opossum snuffling around the dishes for anything eatable. But the occasional coyote is not interested in seeds. One has run down neighbors’ cats in our yard and eaten them.

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Meet Luke



Mark Thayer ([Email](#)) - uke is mostly Pit Bull and was rescued from a North Carolina dog fighting ring. He made a very circuitous journey to Sonoma County, California, thanks to "Just a Girl Moving Dogs" and "Green Dog Rescue."

Green Dog Rescue has been saving as many worthy animals as possible for more than ten years. A supporter in Beverly Hills got wind of Luke's plight as a "Bait Dog" in North Carolina and asked Colleen Combs, founder of the organization, if she could help. Luke was out of time in a shelter that was going to end his life and because good people stepped up, he has been saved by a rescue all the way across the U.S. (see original plea for help below)



Luke was mutilated and then dumped at the shelter, spikes were driven into his face and there are rope burns on his feet from being tied up. The challenge: getting Luke from North Carolina to Sonoma County.

That's when "Just a Girl Moving Dogs" stepped in. This national organization put together a relay of more than 40 members to pass Luke from North Carolina to California in eight days, including a four-day stop in Kansas City to be fixed and enjoy a spa treatment including a nail clipping.

On his arrival in California, it was discovered that not only had Luke been a Bait Dog for the fighters; he also had been a mule for drug traffickers as witnessed by the scars on his stomach.

My wife, Jean Herschede, and I lost our dog about 10 years ago and have not replaced her due to our robust travel plans. But sheltered in place seemed like a good time to be foster parents while an animal awaited its Forever Home.

When Luke arrived, he paced around the living room, dining room and kitchen before settling in front of a sliding glass door where he could keep an eye on our backyard and the hillside beyond.

Adoption takes place on Thursday through Saturday and we returned him to kennel where there were a couple of false adoption starts including close friends who took Luke home only to find that their cat and he did not get along.

Along came Dan and his wife who recently lost their pet. He's the general manager and winemaker at a prominent winery in the Carneros region of California and were looking for a replacement to hang out with him at home and at the winery. The photos show Luke helping me do a project and Luke and Dan out in the vineyard.

Jean and I were very happy to help Luke on his way.

The Original Plea for help:

“Apologies for starting folks day on a depressing note. I cannot leave work to transport this week, but a sweet boy urgently needs transit from Gaston, N.C. to placement in Windsor, CA. Four-year-old Italian greyhound/bully mix. Found tied by back legs, burned on legs and rump, heartworm positive with spikes driven into face (since removed) He’s traumatized but very sweet and has rescue placement assuming we can get him there”

-0-

Meet Maybelle Kitty



Ed Williams ([Email](#)) - Somebody tossed her out at my mom’s house in May — she was wild as a squirrel, but I tamed her and decided to keep her.

I had her spayed at Andalusia Animal Clinic last week and went yesterday to have stitches removed. The receptionist said that the vet Dr. Toby Atkinson wanted to meet me. He said that he had googled me on the Internet and saw that I taught at Auburn. He went to Auburn in 1983 as a student, and I went to Auburn in 1983 as a faculty member.

He had a resident cat named Bo Jackson.

The 2-fingered typist file

John Nolan (Email) - ah, the two-fingered typist. I've been a member of that fraternity for decades.

For me, it dates to my seventh-grade typing class, where wooden desks opened with high lids that conveniently screened back-row students like me from the teacher's view. I and a neighboring student had concluded, to the teacher's dismay, that it was easier to control two fingers than 10.

Years later, in 1974, I applied for my first journalism position as a reporter for The Advocate, the daily newspaper in Stamford, Conn.

I had been told to expect a test of vocabulary and spelling skills. Completing those sections, I stood up and prepared to leave. That's when the editor administering the test told me there was one more part: a timed test of typing ability.

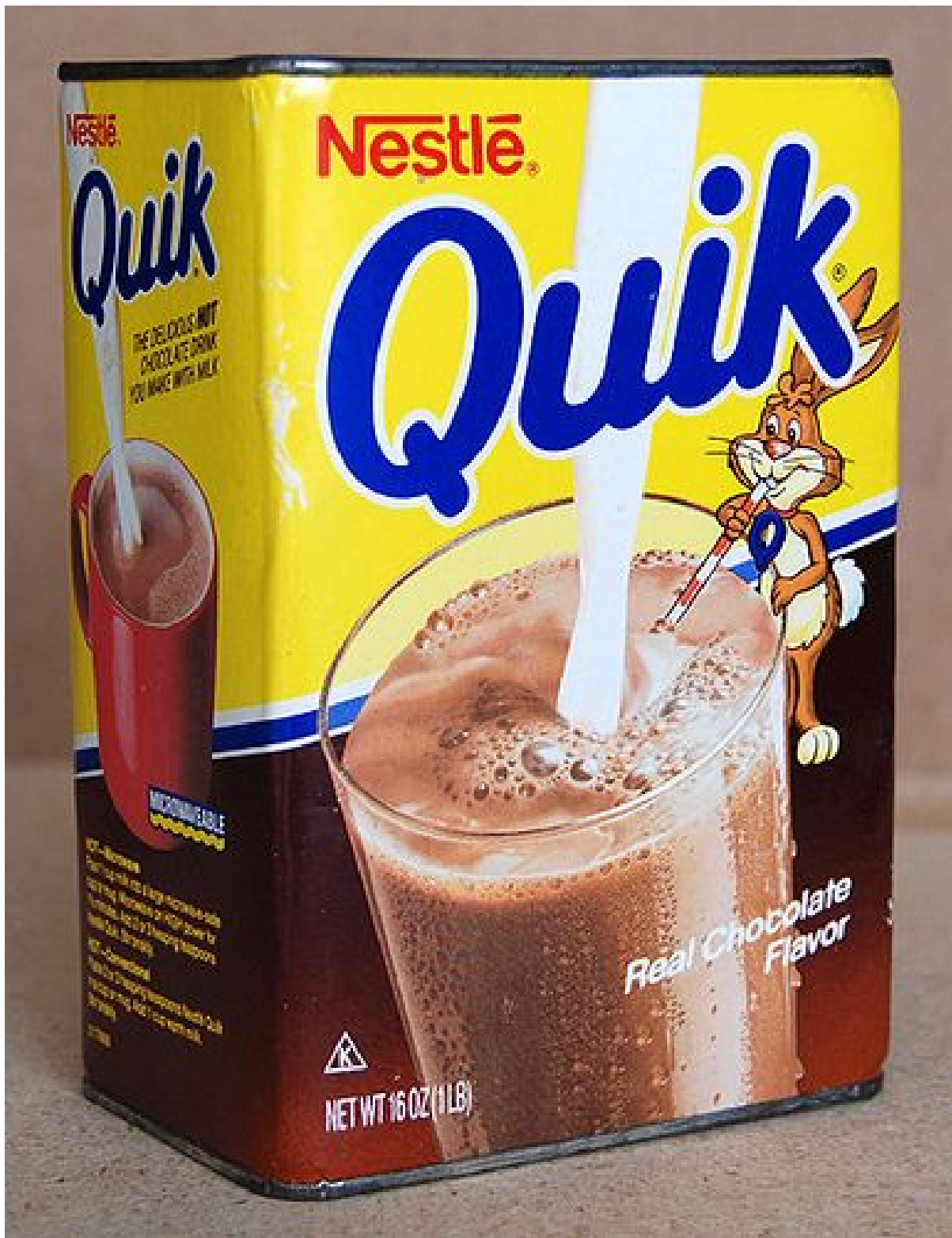
I remember mumbling words to the effect, "Uh, I won't waste your time. I'm a terrible typist. I use two fingers."

Fortunately, the editor seemed to like me. We had exchanged stories about our prior experiences as radio announcers. He already had looked over my vocabulary and spelling results, and evidently concluded I was worth a hiring gamble.

I'm convinced to this day that he gave me five or so additional minutes before he started the clock to time my typing. That upgraded my result to perhaps marginally acceptable, rather than downright miserable.

God bless him.

Real quik - not an idiom



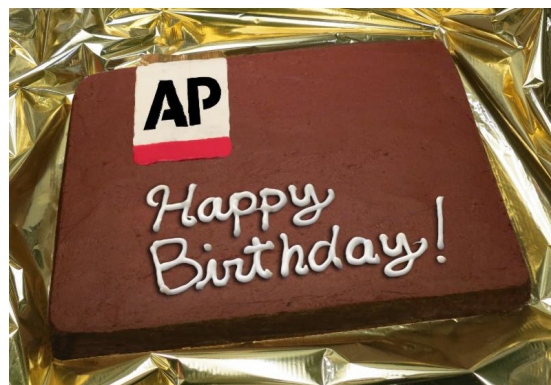
Shared by Steve Graham

Cameron Peak Fire



Marc Wilson ([Email](#)) - About 40 miles from our home in Loveland Colorado. Fire blew up Sunday with high 90 temperatures and gusty winds. Rain and snow forecast beginning late Monday night. Hope rain/snow will help contain 30,000-plus acre fire.

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



to

Steve Paul - stevepaul92@gmail.com

Glenn White - gcwhite1@gmail.com

Stories of interest

Here's why you should be willing to believe anonymous sources (Poynter)

By TOM JONES

The biggest news story of the past few days was based on anonymous sources.

The Atlantic editor-in-chief Jeffrey Goldberg wrote how President Donald Trump has little regard for veterans and military members, calling them “losers” and “suckers” for getting killed in battle and/or volunteering for something bigger than their personal well-being.

Other news outlets, including the Associated Press and Fox News, have done their own reporting to confirm The Atlantic's story, while Trump and his team have vehemently denied it. Critics of The Atlantic story are lashing out at its use of anonymous sources.

“We all have to use anonymous sources, especially in a climate where the president of the United States tries to actively intimidate,” Goldberg told CNN's Brian Stelter on this weekend's “Reliable Sources.” “These are not people who are anonymous to me.”

In the same episode, famed Washington Post reporter Carl Bernstein, who worked with Bob Woodward to break many of the Watergate stories, told Stelter, “Almost all 200 of our stories about Watergate were based on anonymous sourcing.”

Read more [here](#).

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Last 2 journalists working for Australian media leave China

By ROD McGUIRK

CANBERRA, Australia (AP) — The last two journalists working for Australian media in China have left the country after police demanded interviews with them, the Australian government and Australian Broadcasting Corp. reported on Tuesday.

ABC's Bill Birtles and The Australian Financial Review's Michael Smith landed in Sydney after flying from Shanghai on Monday night, ABC reported.

Both had sheltered in Australian diplomatic compounds in recent days.

Chinese police arrived at Birtles' doorstep last week, demanded he submit to questioning and told him he was banned from leaving the country, the ABC reported.

Read more [here](#).

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Publisher locks Capital Gazette staff out of their building in Annapolis (Washington Post)

By Tom Jackman

In Annapolis, the roots of the Annapolis Capital and Maryland Gazette newspapers date to the Gazette's founding in 1727. The Gazette was one of the first papers to publish the Declaration of Independence in July 1776, though the paper still proudly notes that it was placed on Page 2 — Page 1 was reserved for local news.

Those roots were damaged when a gunman burst into the Capital Gazette newsroom in June 2018 and killed five staff members. The paper won a Pulitzer Prize for its work through that horrific trauma, and a new, specially designed newsroom was opened for the journalists a year later. Reporters and editors said it provided a feeling of safety, with enhanced security and bulletproof walls.

Now the coronavirus pandemic and the newspapers' owner have dealt another traumatic blow. Last month, Tribune Publishing announced that it would permanently close the Annapolis newsroom, along with the newsrooms elsewhere of four other newspapers, while continuing to publish print and online editions as their staffs worked from home.

Read more [here](#). shared by Sibby Christensen, Dennis Conrad.

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Saudi court issues final verdicts in Khashoggi killing

By AYA BATRAWY

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — A Saudi court issued final verdicts on Monday in the case of slain Washington Post columnist and Saudi critic Jamal Khashoggi after his son, who still resides in the kingdom, announced pardons that spared five of the convicted individuals from execution.

While the trial draws to its conclusion in Saudi Arabia, the case continues to cast a shadow over the international standing of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, whose associates have been sanctioned by the U.S. and the U.K. for their alleged involvement in the brutal killing, which took place inside the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul.

The Riyadh Criminal Court's final verdicts were announced by Saudi Arabia's state television, which aired few details about the eight Saudi nationals and did not name them. The court ordered a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison for the five. Another individual received a 10-year sentence, and two others were ordered to serve seven years in prison.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Adolphe Bernotas.

Today in History - September 8, 2020



By The Associated Press

Today is Tuesday, Sept. 8, the 252nd day of 2020. There are 114 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Sept. 8, 1974, President Gerald R. Ford granted a "full, free, and absolute pardon" to former President Richard Nixon covering his entire term in office.

On this date:

In 1565, a Spanish expedition established the first permanent European settlement in North America at present-day St. Augustine, Fla.

In 1664, the Dutch surrendered New Amsterdam to the British, who renamed it New York.

In 1761, Britain's King George III married Princess Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz a few hours after meeting her for the first time.

In 1892, an early version of "The Pledge of Allegiance," written by Francis Bellamy, appeared in "The Youth's Companion." It went: "I pledge allegiance to my Flag and the Republic for which it stands, one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

In 1900, Galveston, Texas, was struck by a hurricane that killed an estimated 8,000 people.

In 1935, Sen. Huey P. Long, a Louisiana Democrat, was shot and mortally wounded inside the Louisiana State Capitol; he died two days later. (The assailant was identified as Dr. Carl Weiss, who was gunned down by Long's bodyguards.)

In 1941, the 900-day Siege of Leningrad by German forces began during World War II.

In 1943, during World War II, Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower announced Italy's surrender; Nazi Germany denounced Italy's decision as a cowardly act.

In 1964, public schools in Prince Edward County, Virginia, reopened after being closed for five years by officials attempting to prevent court-ordered racial desegregation.

In 1986, "The Oprah Winfrey Show" began the first of 25 seasons in national syndication.

In 2005, Congress hastened to provide an additional \$51.8 billion for relief and recovery from Hurricane Katrina; President George W. Bush pledged to make it "easy and simple as possible" for uncounted, uprooted storm victims to collect food stamps and other government benefits.

In 2014, Ray Rice was let go by the Baltimore Ravens and suspended indefinitely by the NFL after a video was released showing the running back striking his then-fiancee, Janay Palmer, in an elevator. (A neutral arbitrator vacated the suspension two months later, but Rice never played in the NFL again.) S. Truett Cathy, the billionaire founder of the Chick-fil-A restaurant chain, died in suburban Atlanta at age 93.

Ten years ago: BP took some of the blame for the Gulf oil disaster in an internal report, acknowledging among other things that it had misinterpreted a key pressure test of the well, but also assigned responsibility to its partners on the doomed rig.

Israel Tal, a decorated war hero and creator of Israel's renowned "Merkava" tank, died at age 86. Allen Dale June, one of the 29 original Navajo code talkers of World War II, died in Prescott, Arizona, at age 91.

Five years ago: After resisting apologizing for using a personal email account run on a private server to conduct government business as secretary of state, Hillary Clinton shifted course, telling ABC News, "That was a mistake. I'm sorry about that. I take responsibility." Kim Davis, the Rowan County, Kentucky, clerk jailed for refusing to issue marriage licenses to gay couples, was released after five days behind bars, emerging to a hero's welcome from thousands of supporters.

One year ago: Dorian, the storm that had walloped the Bahamas and North Carolina, lashed at far-eastern Canada with hurricane-force winds, knocking out power to hundreds of thousands before weakening and heading into the North Atlantic. Former South Carolina governor and congressman Mark Sanford joined the Republican race against President Donald Trump, saying that there needed to be "a conversation about what it means to be a Republican." (Sanford ended his bid two months later.) Rafael Nadal held off a strong comeback bid to win his 19th Grand Slam title in a five-set U.S. Open final against Daniil Medvedev.

Today's Birthdays: Ventriloquist Willie Tyler is 80. Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., is 79. Actor Alan Feinstein is 79. Pop singer Sal Valentino (The Beau Brummels) is 78. Author Ann Beattie is 73. Former Secretary of Defense James Mattis is 70. Cajun singer Zachary Richard (ree-SHARD') is 70. Musician Will Lee is 68. Actor Heather Thomas is 63. Singer Aimee Mann is 60. Pop musician David Steele (Fine Young Cannibals) is 60. Actor Thomas Kretschmann is 58. Rhythm-and-blues singer Marc Gordon (Levert) is 56. Gospel singer Darlene Zschech (chehk) is 55. Alternative country singer Neko (NEE'-koh) Case is 50. TV personality Brooke Burke-Charvet is 49. Actor Martin Freeman is 49. Actor David Arquette is 49. TV-radio personality Kennedy is 48. Rock musician Richard Hughes (Keane) is 45. Actor Larenz Tate is 45. Actor Nathan Corrdry is 43. Rhythm-and-blues singer Pink is 41. Singer-songwriter Eric Hutchinson is 40. Actor Jonathan Taylor Thomas is 39. Rapper Wiz Khalifa is 33. Actor Gaten Matarazzo (TV: "Stranger Things") is 18.

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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