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Connecting September 18, 2020

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Colleagues,

Good Friday morning on this the 18th day of September 2020,

Working the overnight shift back in their AP bureau days has struck a memory chord.

Connecting brings you a batch of great memories from your colleagues on a shift that was a rite of passage for some and a full-time career for others who chose to work it exclusively – for a regular schedule, the independence to call your own shots, or many other reasons.

Got your own story to share? Please send it along.

Hope you have a great weekend – be safe, stay healthy.

Paul

Welcome to the Overnight Shift



Editing the AAA big deal for newcomer like me

Arnold Zeitlin ([Email](#)) – Henry Bradsher’s memories in Thursday’s Connecting brought back memories of my own late-night experience at 50 Rock, not necessarily on the overnight. When I started on the general desk in 1956 while attending Columbia Journalism school, I worked the 5.30 pm-2 am shift, while attending classes from 9 am until 5 pm. After I was graduated in June 1956, Herb Barker, the day supervisor, put me on a 7.30 am to 4 pm schedule. He thought he was doing me a favor. He came over to me with a big smile and asked how I liked working the dayside. I told him that when I got to the office at 7.30 am I really didn't wake up until about 2 p.m. I preferred the nightside. He put me right back working nights.

I occasionally did the overnight, editing the AAA wire, a big deal for a newcomer like me. To go home to my pad in the Bronx, I occasionally walked down to Times Square to get the subway. I remember at least once coming to Times Square after 2 am and finding myself the only person there, a remarkable experience for a New Yorker.

Working the overnight ‘trick’ – whoops!

Peggy Walsh ([Email](#)) - When I joined AP, Atlanta was the hub bureau for eight southern states. Mike Barron, who regularly worked the overnight, was famous for his

wry sense of humor and the "carryover" notes he wrote for the next shift.

Other staffers filled in two days a week and when Mike was on vacation.

Many nights were blissfully quiet. I read and reorganized the bureau news clip files. But when you're the only person answering for the region, there were nights you could barely find time for a bathroom break.

I remember tornadoes and rumors that someone had tried to kill presidential candidate Jimmy Carter in another southern state, a rumor that took awhile to knock down.

One memory makes me laugh to this day. As a new staffer I proudly adopted all the AP lingo.

As I arrived home when others in my apartment complex were leaving for work, a neighbor I thought was particularly cute introduced himself and asked what I was up to.

So proud was I of my new job and vocabulary I answered that I had just worked the overnight trick, as it was then known.

The horrified look on his face made me quickly realize that he assumed I was part of the world's oldest profession. Embarrassed, I babbled an explanation and fled. We became good friends - but he never let me forget.

Spending the night with Desi

Mark Mittelstadt ([Email](#)) - As was likely the case in many bureaus, sticking a new staffer on the overnight was a rite of passage in Des Moines.

After the first couple weeks of working with the news editor or another experienced desk editor during the day -- learning AP's practices, style, computer system, editing terminals, filing, etc. -- the rookie would be scheduled at night. It was a chance to learn more from a veteran night supervisor and to really get tossed into the mix of covering news for AP and filing state and regional wires. Duties included reporting and writing news that after dark, arranging for photo coverage as needed; "turning" for broadcast late stories filed by writers at the Statehouse or covering major college sports; literally taking by telephone hundreds of high school football, boys and girls basketball scores and compiling brief stories on small college night sports.

I started in DC in 1980. For the first several years one bureau chore during the day and at night was manually re-typing fixtures (forecasts, advisories, watches) received on a separate Weather Service printer and sending them to our broadcast clients.

Eventually those items were routed directly into the bureau's Desi Mouse computer but it still was necessary to copy and paste them into a template and manually send. During tornado season or when a major winter storm was blowing through the Midwest, there were nights when all you did was open, save and send weather advisories, watches and warnings. Gradually weather fixtures were filed directly to AP's wires, removing a major time consumer.

The Des Moines night shift was not a true "overnight." It started in the early evening (if memory serves at 6 p.m.) and ended at 2:30 a.m. The night supervisor typically left at midnight, so you were alone for the last two-and-a-half hours to wrap up and close the bureau. Some new employees with families or accustomed to working during the day had difficulty adjusting to night hours, and a few outright hated it. I had been the editor of a small daily AMer in Cedar Falls before joining AP so I was used to getting home at midnight or 1 a.m., especially if our young staff decided to walk across the street to the Viking bar for pitchers of beer and frozen pizza.

I learned early on that in the world of AP, there was no sense slacking or resisting an assignment. "It's like the military," the night supervisor once told me. "They'll make you keep doing it until you learn to do it well."

This was well before the advent of the Internet or e-mail (other than interbureau messages sent over private AP circuits.) Besides stories from AP staff, news at night largely came from exchange newspaper clips left from the day, contributions from radio stations, significant stories we'd catch on 10 p.m. newscasts or the occasional call from an AM newspaper. Somewhere around 11 p.m. a carrier would deliver three copies of the early edition of the Des Moines Register, which was printed just two blocks down the street. Gradually AP developed a system of "electronic carbons" in which newspapers could send stories directly into the bureau computer via telephone lines. Only three or four of Iowa's newspapers beyond the Register were AMs at that time, meaning a relatively small number of member stories available at night that could be candidates for rewriting and use by AP. And it always meant a call or two late in the evening to the few members still alive at that hour to see what news they had and if they could send it to us. Gradually the number of "carbon" points increased over the years as more papers switched to a night news cycle for morning delivery.

I didn't mind working the overnight, although I was glad to get moved to days and then named news editor a short time later. It was a valuable experience in many ways: learning more about how AP worked; coordinating with New York desks or other bureaus to produce or receive stories; working alone or perhaps with one other person when the bullets started flying on hectic nights; dealing with and getting to know member newspaper editors around the state.

With background as a "print" journalist writing in newspaper style, compiling countless "news splits" and separates for broadcast forced me to sharpen my prose and (hopefully) make it easier to read. The last task before "spiking" the day's news reports into a binder and turning out the lights was to write four "takes" of four or five short stories each to send by 2 a.m. to broadcast stations in Iowa and around the Midwest.

On the drive home in the wee morning darkness it was fun to hear read on Des Moines' clear channel AM radio station WHO the news I had just written 30 minutes earlier. "Yeah, that was pretty good," I might say to myself. Other times, hearing the voice behind the radio mic stumble over my words, I also realized, "Shoot, that could have been better."

Volunteering for overnight a terrible, and wonderful, decision

Larry Margasak ([Email](#)) - When I transferred into the Washington bureau in 1977, new staffers were supposed to spend two years on the editing desk before applying for a reporting beat. And one of those lucky new staffers would get the overnight. So when my number came up, another new staffer and I had choices to make. One of us would get the overnight, and one would get the swing shift, combining three night desk shifts and two overnights. I figured the overnight would be better, since you worked the same steady hours, so I volunteered. It turned out to be a terrible and wonderful decision at same time. Terrible in that I discovered I could not sleep in the daytime, and often started the shift feeling like a Zombie. I learned, however, that I was able to finish getting all the PMs on the wire and then napping in place, so I never would miss the phone ringing. The shift, however, introduced me by phone to some wonderful people in headquarters. I had previously worked the overnight in Philadelphia, a shift that allowed me to get to know general desk legend Ed Dennehy and fabulous sports staffers Shelly Sakowitz and Marv Schneider. I also worked with some great some great punchers (remember them?) in both bureaus. I wasn't disappointed when Washington ACOB Reid Miller sent a note asking if I could stand working daylight hours. It was, as I recall, a long nine months. But I still can laugh at the requests from a bureau elsewhere in the world asking for me to get a comment or check something out - not quite understanding that it was 3 a.m. in D.C.

Recalling Harris Jackson, Ed Dennehy

Joe McGowan ([Email](#)) - Like Henry Bradsher, I worked the overnight on the cable (foreign) desk, a few years after him.

I had a young son, so when I got to our apartment in Forest Hills, I would sleep a couple hours. Then, I would play with my son until early evening when I would take a nap before heading to work at 50 Rock.

The cable desk supervisor was Harris Jackson. Vietnam was the prime story at that time and leads from Saigon came in on the overnight shift. Often, the general desk supervisor, Ed Dennehy, would come over and gruffly ask Jackson "where is the Vietnam lead?" The reply was something like "You'll get it when it is ready." Dennehy would mutter something and storm off.

Like Bradsher, from the cable desk I went to India.

Some NY staffers unaware that ‘Washington’ was a single person

Tom Kent (Email) - Merrill Hartson’s tale of his life on the Washington overnight (in Thursday’s Connecting) gracefully omits the calls from New York that were also part of his daily reality. The bigger the story he was handling, the more we in NY felt a need to “call Washington” – with some staffers unaware that “Washington” was a single person. As one of the NY callers from time to time, I can testify that Merrill was unfailingly friendly, efficient and responsive. I’ll never know how much he bit his tongue during our sometimes unnecessary calls, but it was terrific to work with him.

‘You don’t work for AP, you belong to them’

Gene Herrick (Email) - Working the overnight trick for The Associated Press is something different for everyone.

For the AP, it means a wonderful training ground, one to test your mettle, your ability for discipline, and fortitude. To the staffer it often meant being far from the daytime bosses and fly-specking, and the insistent rattling of the telephone.

My “Early” experience came when I was an office boy in the Columbus bureau. I worked from 12 midnight until 8 a.m., six days a week. After work in the morning, I would attend high school and then rush (on a streetcar) home and sleep fast until the next trick. I thought it was learning and exciting. Gosh, the noise, keeping busy taking copy off the teletypes, and distributing the copies, learning to “read” teletype tape (the ones with five holes vertically), manning the office alone when the editor and operator went to lunch, and making the office “Swap” from the night office to the day office, and “running” the office by myself for a couple of hours. Ah, yes, those were wonderful days. As they used to say, you don’t work for AP, you belong to them!”

AP photographers however, work shifts that include the “Early.” There are no time clocks, or meaningful schedules. They are not relevant. The emergency bell has no limits as to time, day, week, or one’s desires. It is now. In fact, a photographer’s length of day, and that of an AP reporter on disaster assignment go until the story is wrapped up. My longest without sleep was the birth of the Fischer quintuplets in Aberdeen, S.D., in September 1963. With only two hours sleep, the Chicago photo desk awakened me, made me go to the door to check to see if the newspaper had arrived (to make certain I was awake), and then told me about the birth and my need to get there as fast as possible. I worked that story for three days and nights, and without sleep.

Working the photo desk in Seattle alongside Jack Collins from the New York photo desk, and reprocessing all of the incoming film and prints from the on-going Korean War, kept us working many, many straight hours with most of them overnight.

I am not alone. AP journalists do this all of the time.

Thanks to the overnight, I'm a coffee drinker for life

Mike Harris (Email) - I worked the overnight at two different bureaus early in my AP career.

The first was a three-month gig during my probationary period in the Chicago bureau in 1969. It was interesting, particularly filing the Interbureau Wire, but I never really got used to the hours and was tired all the time. Worse, my mother-in-law didn't seem to understand - or care - that I had just worked all night and was sleeping during the day. Invariably, she would call sometime around 10 a.m. and say brightly, "What are you doing today?" I was still a newlywed (my wife was at work) and didn't want to offend her, so I'd simply say, "Ma, I'm sleeping. I just got home an hour ago." Her response: "Oh, sorry. Go back to sleep." To this day, I don't understand this ritual, but my wife speculates that her mom couldn't believe anybody could work all night.

My next overnight stints came in the early 1970s in the Indianapolis bureau. Several of us took turns covering regular overnight man Marty Anderson's days off. When you were relieving Marty, it was a pretty crazy schedule - two midnight to 8 shifts, two 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. shifts and one 4 p.m. to midnight. And the non-overnight shifts could be on the broadcast desk or the news desk, depending on what was needed.

I particularly remember one Sunday morning shift - starting at midnight Saturday - that had a profound effect on my life.

There was absolutely nothing going on. There were no stories to rewrite from the final edition of the Indianapolis Star, the weather was calm and the phones weren't ringing. We had a TV set, but there was nothing worth watching that morning. The only thing I had to do was rewrite the hourly broadcast headlines. By 3 a.m. I was stir-crazy.

I wound up pacing around the office like a crazy person. As I walked through the area inhabited during the day by our techs, I noticed a coffee maker. I was 30 years old and had never drank coffee. But I knew it was supposed to help you stay awake and thought, "Why not?"

There was a bag of grounds and I figured out how to set it up, although I wasn't sure how much to use. I probably overfilled it and made it way too strong. But, all of a sudden, there was a pot filled with brown, strong-smelling liquid. I took a drink and found it wasn't bad. By the end of my shift, the entire pot was empty and I've been a coffee addict the rest of my life. So, thanks to the overnight for one of my bad habits.

Showing up for early in jacket, shirt and tie – Bly changed that

Harry Dunphy (Email) - Henry Bradsher and I had somewhat similar experiences on the early.

I worked on cables, as the international desk was then called, with Harris Jackson, one of the AP's great editors, for 18 months, eventually taking his supervisor job on Saturdays and Sundays.

Days off were Monday and Tuesday and at one point I was lucky to find a sideline that took me to the Princeton University library to do research for an author who was working on a travel book. The job got me out of the city and provided time to get to know the college town.

My only previous "Jersey" experience was a couple of summer vacation trips as a kid to Lake Hopatcong.

Among contemporaries on the early were Holger Jensen, Michael Putzel, Terry Wolkerstorfer and Richard Blystone. John Vinocur worked the late AM as we came in. Shirley Christian was a few feet away on the APW desk. Ed Butler opened up in the morning.

Usually on Friday mornings some of us would adjourn to Hurley's, a bar on 6th Avenue whose owner was the only holdout when Rockefeller Center was being built and he kept his corner building. Some of the people we shared bar stools with were producers and writers of the NBC "Today" show who worked similar shifts.

Hurley mixed us lethal Bloody Mary's after which somehow we found our way home to apartments in Brooklyn Heights.

Proper attire for work, my father had taught me, was jacket, shirt and tie and that's how I showed up for the early. Bly changed my thinking, showing up in jeans and a shirt, telling me it was ridiculous to be well-dressed for a job that started at 11 p.m.

I think experience on the early was a great benefit in my career. Harris made me a better writer and editor and handing fast breaking news daily and writing digest budget lines served me well when I went on to overseas postings in Beirut, Cairo, Moscow and Paris.

At the start, I had my doubts wondering whether the move to NY was the right one after Harris threw a brief on South Korea back to me three times to rewrite.

Some good people worked the early, among them Ed Dennehy who was the General Desk PMs supe. He understood the time differences involved in dealing with overseas news and was always ready for late AMs “slipper inners,” as he called them, to get Asia stories to West Coast newspapers.

But he did not like to break into fixtures, such as Cynthia Lowry’s television column that moved just after midnight because some editors always asked for repeats.

Also some of the gruff NY Gen Desk editors I had dealt with while in Denver turned out to be decent people with whom I became friends and who visited me overseas.

As for the after-work routine, I’d find someplace to have breakfast, Shraft’s on 53rd St. or the basement at Rock Center, then head to Central Park’s Wolman rink to ice skate, maybe catch an early morning flick at an East Side art house, then go home to sleep.

I dated a girl once, dropping her off at her apartment and telling her I had to be at work by 11. She later told me she thought it was a lame excuse and had spent an hour wondering why the date had gone wrong.

Memories of KC’s Wes Cook, Ray Stephens

Roy Bolch ([Email](#)) - I was Wes Cook and Ray Stephens copy/office boy when I started with the AP in 1958.

He was a pleasure to work with. Among all of Wes activities, he also went to Rockhurst College and studied for his BS degree.

New-member profile – Perry Flippin

Perry Flippin ([Email](#)) - 76, is retired from a 43-year career in newspapers. He lives with his wife Sharon in San Angelo, Texas. Perry was born in Altus, Okla., grew up on a cotton farm at Tahoka, Texas and graduated from Abilene Christian College. He edited the Booneville (Ark.) Democrat for a year before enlisting in the U.S. Army. In Germany, he joined the Stars & Stripes and became Pentagon correspondent. As a civilian, he returned to Texas and joined the staff of the Lubbock Avalanche-Journal, then edited the Sherman (Texas) Democrat and later the Hemet (Calif.) News. In 1992, he became news editor of the Las Vegas (Nev.) Review-Journal. Three years later, he was named vice president for news of Stephens Media Group in Fort

Smith, Ark. In 2000, he was named editor of the San Angelo Standard-Times, where he retired eight years later. He won a dozen writing awards in Texas and California. His blended family includes three daughters and a son as well as six grandchildren.

Connecting mailbox

My fault for reading AP tweet to Kudlow

Steve Herman ([Email](#)) - White House Bureau Chief, Voice of America - It's all my fault for reading White House economic advisor Larry Kudlow an AP tweet this (Thursday) morning.



Click [here](#).

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Fond memories of Milwaukee Journal rekindled



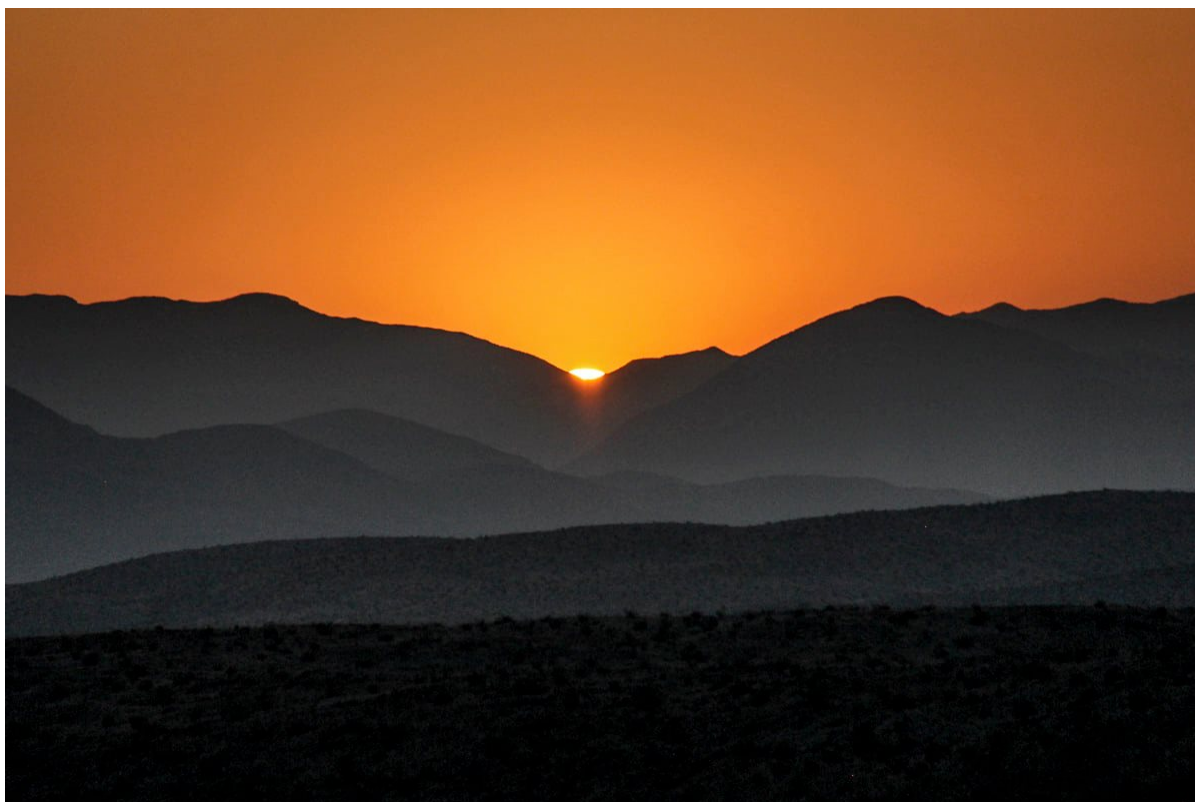
Neal Ulevich ([Email](#)) - Greatly enjoyed Bob O'Meara's memories of the Milwaukee Journal in its heyday (see Thursday's Connecting). While a university student at Madison I'd often put film of the sometimes chaotic campus scene on a bus for

Milwaukee, where it landed in the care of photo editors Chuck Scott or George Lockwood, both of whom were signally helpful in this neophyte's career. I was also stringing for AP, bureau in the Journal building, where I met Bob.

Occasionally I'd wander into the Journal press room attracted by the roar of the giant letterpress. I made this image more than a half century ago, in December 1966, in the Journal press room. The mark of a real printer: Knowing how to make the newsprint hat.

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Connecting sky shot – Desert Hot Springs



Cliff Schiappa ([Email](#)) - The sun makes its debut Thursday morning during an early morning hike in the Coachella Valley near Desert Hot Springs. Smoke from California wildfires creates a haze that settles in the desert but makes for a more visually vibrant start of the day.

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



To

Joe Somma – joesomma82@gmail.com

On Saturday to...

Karen Ball – kjanball@aol.com

John Hartzell - jchartzell@mac.com

On Sunday to...

Julie Inskeep – jinskeep@jg.net

Terry Petty – tcraigpetty@outlook.com

Teresa Walker - tessandruss@bellsouth.net

Stories of interest

Reporters Committee letter condemns arrest of journalist Josie Huang, calls for LA County Sheriff's Department to drop obstruction charge

Update (Sept. 17, 2020): In response to the media coalition, Los Angeles County Sheriff Alex Villanueva said in a Sept. 16 letter to Reporters Committee Executive Director Bruce Brown that KPCC reporter Josie Huang “became part of the problem by inserting herself too close to the situation” as she reported on the arrest of protesters. He said the sheriff’s department is opening an internal investigation into Huang’s arrest.

Today the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press and a coalition of 64 media organizations called on the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department to drop all charges against Josie Huang, a journalist for the National Public Radio member station KPCC, who was violently arrested while she was reporting on a Sept. 12 protest. The media coalition also urged the department to take immediate steps to prevent such an arrest of a member of the news media from occurring again.

In a letter sent to Sheriff Alex Villanueva on Sept. 16 condemning the actions of Los Angeles County Sheriff's deputies, Reporters Committee attorneys note that Huang was arrested and cited for obstruction despite wearing a visible press lanyard and badge, as well as verbally identifying herself as a journalist who works for KPCC multiple times.

Read more [here](#).

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Macomb Township pastor faces backlash for email sent to journalist (ClickOnDeroit)

MACOMB TOWNSHIP, Mich. – A Macomb Township pastor is facing backlash online over an email he sent to a journalist in response to a quote attributed to the woman that was later identified as fake.

The email Rev. Dave Muns sent to journalist Sarah Jeong was posted on Jeong's Twitter account Tuesday afternoon.

"How about if we took all the little bitter Asian woman and had a lottery and cut their (explicit) like the Muslims do. Not a very classy position is it, neither is your trashy little bitter personality towards white men. Only in a world where journalism is controlled by brain dead Liberals do you people even have jobs," read Muns' email.

Read more [here](#).

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Meet the Alabama man who makes old typewriters new again (AL.com)



William Lee, one of the last of what he calls "a dying profession," has been repairing typewriters since 1973. Lee owns American Typewriter Co. in Montgomery, Ala. (Photo/Bob Carlton)

By Bob Carlton

The hypnotic rhythm of an old manual typewriter going clack-clack-clack-clack-ping! clack-clack-clack-clack-ping! is like a long-ago song that Montgomery's William Lee never tires of hearing.

"Manual typewriters have a different sound than most other typewriters," he says. "Most of them have a distinctive sound."

Lee has such a good ear for that sound, he says with a hint of hyperbole, that he can sometimes tell, say, a Royal typewriter from an Underwood, just by listening to the patter of the letters striking the paper as they tap-dance across the page.

After selling and repairing typewriters for nearly 50 years, it is a sound that the soft-spoken Lee probably hears in his sleep.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Ed Williams.

The Final Word

Hemingway's favorite Key West bar reopens from virus closure



In this photo provided by the Florida Keys News Bureau, Ernest Hemingway look-alikes, including from left, Dusty Rhodes, Tim Stockwell and Charlie Boice chat with bartender Lou Gammel, right, at Sloppy Joe's, Thursday, Sept. 17, 2020, in Key West, Fla. The iconic Florida Keys bar reopened Thursday after being sidelined by the coronavirus pandemic, with the annual Hemingway Look-Alike Contest, that was to mark its 40th anniversary and take place in July, a highlight of Key West's Hemingway Days festival. Boice won the contest in 2015. (Rob O'Neal/Florida Keys News Bureau via AP)

KEY WEST, Fla. (AP) — Sloppy Joe's, the iconic Key West bar that Ernest Hemingway frequented during the 1930s, reopened Thursday after closing six months ago because of the coronavirus pandemic.

By noon, the bar had already reached the 50% capacity allowed by law, including three Ernest Hemingway look-alikes. Concerns about COVID-19 had forced cancellation of the 40th Ernest Hemingway Look-Alike Contest held at Sloppy Joe's each July during the subtropical island's annual Hemingway Days festival.

Charlie Boice, who won the contest in 2015, traveled nearly 250 miles (400 kilometers) from Jupiter, Florida, to attend the reopening.

“Coming back to Sloppy Joe’s is a wonderful thing,” Boice said. “For most people, it’s just a destination on a cruise or a destination on vacation. But for the Papas, this is home.”

Read more [here](#).

Today in History - September 18, 2020



By The Associated Press

Today is Friday, Sept. 18, the 262nd day of 2020. There are 104 days left in the year.

Today’s Highlight in History:

On Sept. 18, 1850, Congress passed the Fugitive Slave Act, which created a force of federal commissioners charged with returning escaped slaves to their owners.

On this date:

In 1759, the French formally surrendered Quebec to the British.

In 1793, President George Washington laid the cornerstone of the U.S. Capitol.

In 1927, the Columbia Phonograph Broadcasting System (later CBS) made its on-air debut with a basic network of 16 radio stations.

In 1947, the National Security Act, which created a National Military Establishment and the position of Secretary of Defense, went into effect.

In 1959, during his U.S. tour, Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev visited Wall Street, the Empire State Building and the grave of President Franklin D. Roosevelt; in a speech to

the U.N. General Assembly, Khrushchev called on all countries to disarm.

In 1961, United Nations Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld (dahg HAWM'-ahr-shoold) was killed in a plane crash in northern Rhodesia.

In 1965, the situation comedies "I Dream of Jeannie" and "Get Smart" premiered on NBC.

In 1970, rock star Jimi Hendrix died in London at age 27.

In 1975, newspaper heiress Patricia Hearst was captured by the FBI in San Francisco, 19 months after being kidnapped by the Symbionese Liberation Army.

In 2001, a week after the Sept. 11 attack, President George W. Bush said he hoped to "rally the world" in the battle against terrorism and predicted that all "people who love freedom" would join. Letters postmarked Trenton, N.J., that later tested positive for anthrax were sent to the New York Post and NBC anchorman Tom Brokaw.

In 2007, O.J. Simpson was charged with seven felonies, including kidnapping, in the alleged armed robbery of sports memorabilia collectors in a Las Vegas casino-hotel room. (Simpson, sentenced to nine to 33 years in prison, was released on parole in October 2017.)

In 2014, voters in Scotland rejected independence, opting to remain part of the United Kingdom in a historic referendum. The Royal and Ancient Golf Club at St. Andrews, Scotland, ended years of male-only exclusivity as its members voted overwhelmingly in favor of inviting women to join.

Ten years ago: Despite Taliban rocket strikes and bombings, Afghans voted for a new parliament in the first election since a fraud-marred ballot cast doubt on the legitimacy of the embattled government. During his visit to Britain, Pope Benedict XVI apologized to five people who'd been molested by priests as children in his latest effort to defuse the sex abuse crisis shaking the Roman Catholic Church.

Five years ago: The Environmental Protection Agency said Volkswagen had intentionally skirted clean air laws by using software that enabled about 500,000 of its diesel cars to emit fewer smog-causing pollutants during testing than in real-world driving conditions; the EPA ordered VW to fix the cars at its own expense. President Barack Obama announced he would nominate longtime Pentagon official Eric Fanning to be the Army's new secretary; Fanning became the nation's first openly gay leader of a military service.

One year ago: President Donald Trump named Robert O'Brien, his chief hostage negotiator, as his new national security adviser; O'Brien became the fourth person in two years to hold the job. President Donald Trump said his administration was revoking California's authority to set auto mileage standards stricter than those issued

by federal regulators; the state challenged the decision in court. Figures released by the Guttmacher Institute, a research group that supports abortion rights, showed that the number and rate of abortions across the United States had plunged to their lowest levels since the procedure became legal nationwide in 1973.

Today's Birthdays: Singer Jimmie Rodgers is 87. Actor Robert Blake is 87. Gospel singer Bobby Jones is 82. Singer Frankie Avalon is 80. Actor Beth Grant is 71. Rock musician Kerry Livgren is 71. Actor Anna Deavere Smith is 70. The U.S. Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, Ben Carson, is 69. Basketball Hall of Fame coach Rick Pitino is 68. College Football Hall of Famer and retired NFL player Billy Sims is 65. Movie director Mark Romanek is 61. Baseball Hall of Famer Ryne Sandberg is 61. Alt-country-rock musician Mark Olson is 59. Singer Joanne Catherall (Human League) is 58. Actor Holly Robinson Peete is 56. Rhythm-and-blues singer Ricky Bell (Bell Biv Devoe and New Edition) is 53. Actor Aisha Tyler is 50. Former racing cyclist Lance Armstrong is 49. Opera singer Anna Netrebko is 49. Actor Jada Pinkett Smith is 49. Actor James Marsden is 47. Actor Emily Rutherford is 46. Actor Travis Schuldt is 46. Rapper Xzibit is 46. Comedian-actor Jason Sudeikis is 45. Actor Sophina Brown is 44. Actor Barrett Foa is 43. Talk show host Sara Haines (TV: "GMA3: Strahan, Sara & Keke") is 43. Actor/comedian Billy Eichner is 42. Actor Alison Lohman is 41. Designer Brandon Maxwell is 36. Congressman and former NFL player Anthony Gonzalez, R-Ohio, is 36. Actors Brandon and Taylor Porter are 27. Actor Patrick Schwarzenegger is 27. Country singer Tae Dye (Maddie and Tae) is 25. Actor C.J. Sanders is 24.

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

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