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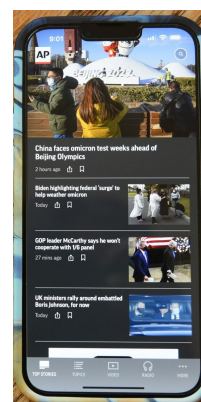
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Connecting

June 28, 2022

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Good Tuesday morning on this June 28, 2022,

We're sorry to share news of the death of our colleague **Marcia Budd**.

Claude Erbsen, who shared the news, said Marcia – who worked as his administrative assistant at 50 Rock in in the 1970s and 1980s - passed away this past weekend after a valiant 5-plus-year battle against cancer.

Her funeral will be this morning at 10am Eastern and will be on Zoom.

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/79915315045?pwd=gyaJrCoTWL-Q3lZAJwsxkkGnjA3NX5.1>

Meeting ID: 799 1531 5045

Passcode: VZ047i

Connecting will bring you an obituary when it comes available.

We lead today's issue with a Connecting Profile on longtime AP sports columnist **Jim Litke** of Chicago – who retires on Thursday after a 44-year AP career – 33 of them as a columnist whose byline was a fixture in sports pages all over the world.

Asked for immediate plans after June 30, he responded: “Let me quote legendary Oilers coach Bum Phillips, who said, ‘I don’t do nothin’ and I don’t do before noon.’”

Last week, we profiled another AP sports columnist, **Tim Dahlberg** of Las Vegas, who is also retiring on Thursday, June 30.

Have a great day – be safe, stay healthy!

Paul

Connecting Profile

Jim Litke



Jim Litke and his wife Nancy in Paris last month at Monet's garden at Giverny.

What are you doing these days?

Less than I was doing before. To say I've eased into retirement would be an understatement. Career-wise, I've been about as lucky as you can at every step of the way.

How did you get your first job with the AP? Who hired you? What were your first days like?

I was hired as a summer replacement in the Chicago bureau in August 1978. Tom Dygard, a solid newsman, was the COB. The starting schedule back then was six months solid 4p-12, then six months 6-2a, then six months overnight. Once you "turned" a handful of AMs, the rest of the time was yours. I grew up here, always stayed up late and had a million ideas (at the start, anyway) and turned a few of them into a-wire budgets early on and got noticed. I loved the place. The "el" train rumbled past the corner windows a few times every hour. It was a fire hazard, too. I later learned the set for the TV show "The Night Stalker," where Darrin McGavin (I think) played a wire-service reporter hunting supernatural beings, was modeled on that office.



First is me cutting my hair (can't remember why) while Howard Ulman did the work for both of us in the Chicago bureau, circa 1978.

What were your different past jobs in the AP, in order? Describe briefly what you did with each? And tell me about your jobs post AP?

Did a little bit of everything. News, sports, cops, fires, state and federal courts, city features, desk supervisor -- and then we had kids. I noticed the commodity writer worked M-F, made a half-dozen phone calls and went home every day at 3pm -- not long after the markets closed -- come hell or high water. I learned the beat and filled in on every one of his vacation shifts soon after. I covered Chicago mayoral and Illinois congressional races, helped out on a few national political stories during two presidential campaigns and at least a half-dozen major disasters (Sioux City plane crash and publishing heir Stephen Small's kidnapping/murder come to mind). I became the national sports columnist in 1989 and nearly every one of those stories gave me a skillset that came in handy later on. Especially after sports editor Terry Taylor volunteered Tim Dahlberg and I for duty in New Orleans in the days after Hurricane Katrina went through. That assignment, in turn, was good practice for a podcast I did with Dahlberg from 2017-19. I had to turn him upside-down on occasion to get something interesting to fall out.



Jim Litke with Doug Ferguson (left), one of his favorite people in the world, and some guy named Tiger.

What was the biggest story or stories you covered or handled?

Michael Jordan, but the job came with an embarrassment of riches; at the risk of sounding like an idiot, too many other great stories to narrow it to a few. My heart was pounding dozens of times on the job every year -- mostly because of deadlines I'd blown -- but sometimes just because of the beautiful/sorrowful/incredible/joyous things that unfolded in front of me. The first time I knew it was a BIG story was the 100-meter duel between Ben Johnson and Carl Lewis at the 1988 Seoul Olympics. I

went down from the press box to the photographer's pit at track level, then crawled out onto the track and perched on one knee no more than 20 yards from the racing strip. The stadium wasn't just at capacity; every step in every aisle had somebody sitting on it. The starting gun fired, everyone held their breath until "9.79" flashed on the board, then exhaled as one. At the moment, I thought, "How the f--k are you going to do this justice?" Fortunately, I kept breathing. I've always marveled at the way Doug Ferguson knocks so many big stories out of the park. To paraphrase, he just pretends they aren't big stories and carries on from there. Wish I'd thought of that.

Who played the most significant role in your career and how?

Terry Taylor (former AP sports editor). In a thousand ways, over nearly two decades. She made the work matter and made sure the rest of it was (mostly) easy. She was the deputy SE and in charge during the earthquake-rocked 1989 World Series in San Francisco, and the smart/fast/use-your-eyes reporting and writing she coaxed from the crew became the template for a lot of the work afterward. Darrell Christian would be 1A. An inspired editor with sharp elbows. I learned a lot, and we've stayed good friends, from the beginning all the way to today. But if newsrooms had penalty boxes ...

Would you do it all over again- or what would you change?

Absolutely, and nothing. Easy to say now because I don't have to.

What's your favorite hobby or activity?

Again, a little of everything. I exercise a lot, cook some and find countless ways -- travel, golf, live entertainment, bookstores -- to amuse myself (and sometimes my wife). Being in Chicago helps. Ron Blum from AP Sports just got to town this morning to interview Chicago Symphony Orchestra conductor Riccardo Muti (an eminence in the music biz) and I tagged along to watch a rehearsal. Spectacular. We also do a lot of dog-sitting (though I'm increasingly suspicious it might be a Shetland pony and not a dog) for our older son, who lives nearby.

What's the best vacation trip you've ever made?

Italy. Every time. Every part of it. My wife reconnected with a cousin in Milan after the 2006 Winter Olympics and we have two other couples who are good friends living there. We're going again in September to Lake Maggiore for a wedding (her cousin's granddaughter) and then to Sicily -- two places we've never been. I keep threatening to move there. My wife says she'll miss me.

Names of your family members and what they do?

My wife is Nancy; after founding, running and some 20 years later, retiring from the Learning Support Center at Roosevelt University, she consults for a non-profit housing organization works as takes as many referrals as she can balance as a private tutor. She's the reason our family has a 5-star rating on Yelp.

Our older son, Matt, 41, spent 10 years at CBS College Sports in NYC, then returned to Chicago as a freelancer with an extensive network of contacts. Like a lot of people, he

was out of work during the pandemic and got a shelter dog (the aforementioned 105-pound dog/pony) in December 2020. Since TV sports returned roughly a month later, he's been very busy (and did I mention that we live nearby and have been dog-sitting a lot?).

Our younger son, Brian, 37, is working for an employment software development company. He graduated college into the teeth of the Great Recession (the last one, anyway), filled up two years working part-time and getting an M.A. and finally a real job at Groupon. That was his first start-up; this is his fourth. Different world. He got married in 2019 to Lindsay, who immediately became the family's Opening Day pitcher. Two weeks ago, we went to a hooding ceremony (relax) at Northwestern University, where she got the hood -- it's more like a scarf -- and her Ph.D in public health. One of only two in the class of 300 -- including every grad program except the business school -- named a Presidential fellow. My wife and I took turns wearing the medal at her birthday party the next night like we'd won it.

If you think of another good question for me to ask, include and then answer it.

I'd ask the obligatory "What will you miss?" The "people" is a no-brainer, and true, but I'll find a way to see everyone I'm looking for or vice-versa. Watching the rehearsal today at Orchestra Hall reminded me how much I'll miss a seat behind the scenes.

Jim Litke's email - jalitke@gmail.com

Using pay phone to cover the news

Margaret Lillard - Here's my small contribution to the pay phone thread, from my pre-AP days as a green UPI reporter in Nashville, Tenn. I joined UPI less than two years out of college and fresh from a 7,000-circulation weekly in the coal-mining country of East Tennessee.

I was a diligent reporter and a good writer, but I had a lot to learn about strategy. This lesson came from my then-competitor, later colleague in AP-Tennessee and on the GEN desk, **Leanne Waxman (now Leanne Italie)**. We were covering the sentencing hearing for one of the infamous Butcher brothers in a federal courthouse notorious for having only one pay phone. I sat on the aisle, midway between the door and the judge, so I could accurately capture the sentence and then bolt for the door and the phone. As soon as I stood up, Leanne - seated several rows behind me, having followed me into the courtroom - got up herself, looked me dead in the eye, and hit the door. I wasn't too far behind on my story, thanks to a sympathetic clerk in a nearby office, but I was behind, period.

From then on, I made it a point to be the nearest reporter to the door. Thanks, Leanne - glad we ended up on the same team.

Connecting news multigenerations:

Getting thrown into deep end of the pool

Karen Ball - Adeline Von Drehle, daughter of a former AP Washington writer (me) and a Washington Post columnist (David Von Drehle), has always loved research and writing, but she never caught the news bug. This summer, however, she has been thrown into the deep end of the pool.

As an intern at Real Clear Politics, Addie was on the scene last week to cover public reaction to the Supreme Court's history-making abortion decision. Earlier in the week, the student of history, philosophy and politics at the University of Missouri turned around **a quick analysis** of the high court's decision giving religious schools access to the same public funds provided for secular private schools. And she profiled the new White House press secretary.



"I've been surprised by how much I enjoy writing on deadline, considering how long it normally takes me to perfect my long form writing," said Addie, 21.

Von Drehle originally went to Mizzou (my alma mater) on a journalism scholarship after editing her high school's award-winning yearbook. Now she is on track to graduate from MU's Kinder Institute on Constitutional Democracy. She has been selected as the Kinder Oxford Scholar to study history at Corpus Christi College this coming year. Studying at Oxford has been a lifelong dream, after hearing her dad's stories of his time there.

Go see 'Elvis' – recommendation from one of his biggest fans



Priscilla Presley with Linda Deutsch; they've become friends in recent years, encountering each other at events honoring Elvis.

Linda Deutsch - When I first heard a few years ago that a new movie was in the works on the life of my idol, Elvis Presley, I have to admit I was skeptical. There have been so many efforts to capture the life of the King of Rock and Roll on film and most of them failed. So it was with trepidation that I went to an early screening of Baz Luhrmann's "Elvis" last week. Wow, was I stunned. I can hardly find the words to express my delight. In the history of Elvis biopics, I have seen them all. And I am convinced this one is the masterpiece.

For the uninformed – meaning those who never encountered my dedication to Elvis - I should explain. Anyone who worked with me at the AP was long aware that Linda and Elvis went together. When I retired, there was an Elvis impersonator at my farewell party.

Ask how this began and I will gladly recount the story. Or you can look at the Elvis section on my [website](#) and learn every colorful detail.

Briefly, I was 12 years old in 1956 when I heard a song on the radio: "Heartbreak Hotel." It was by an unknown singer named Elvis Presley and the DJ kept playing it again and again. I was entranced with the sound and immediately ordered the record. Eventually I SAW Elvis perform on TV and I was a goner. I rallied two school friends in New Jersey, and we started one of the first Elvis fan clubs in the country. I published an Elvis newspaper (the start of my career) and got to see him in person when my

girlfriends and I convinced a mother to take us by bus to a sold-out Elvis concert in Philadelphia. It was exciting, glitzy and chaotic.

Watching the “Elvis” movie brought back that experience and many others. We were there at the start, and I wondered if that excitement could possibly be captured. Indeed, it has. The colors, the music, the costumes, all of it is exquisite. And then there is Austin Butler, the young actor who was born to play this role. His transformation to Elvis with smoky blue eyes, black hair and southern accent is perfect.

With Tom Hanks as the crass manager who exploited Elvis’ talent, the story has a painful arc that will be familiar to those who know the story.

Baz Luhrmann's production is nothing short of spectacular and will bring a new audience to the magical world of Elvis. It's exciting, glitzy, glamorous and touching and there was not a moment of the two and a half hours when I wasn't enthralled.

In the world of Elvis fans, I have made many unique friends. Recently I have been fortunate enough to share memories of Elvis with Priscilla Presley, whom I credit with saving Elvis’ legacy with her preservation of Graceland. She also gave her blessing to the movie and went with it to the Cannes Film Festival where it was given a prolonged standing ovation.

I also have discovered that a friend who is a voice coach for many actors was Austin Butler’s inspiration. Bruce Eckstut urged him to go for the role and worked with him preparing for the audition of a lifetime.

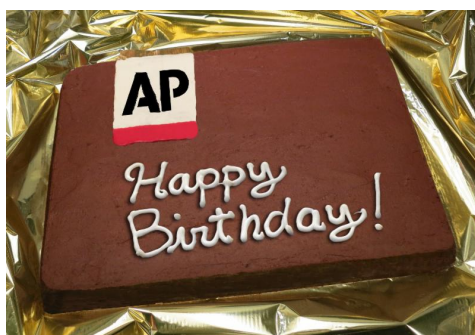
Whether you are a fan like me, want to learn more about Elvis or just want a to see an extraordinary movie, “Elvis” is a special treat.

Connecting sky shot – Kansas City



[Brad Martin](#) - For all you camera buffs out there like me, this was taken with an iPhone 12 using IOS 15.5! How's that for photographic detail?

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



[Patrick Casey](#)

[Jesse Holland](#)

Welcome to Connecting



Ross Sneyd

Stories of interest

No reruns: Committee tries new approach to break through (AP)

By DAVID BAUDER

NEW YORK (AP) — As television programming goes, expectations were widespread that the Jan. 6 committee hearings would essentially be reruns. Instead, they have been much more.

The five sessions have revealed a storyteller's eye, with focus, clarity, an understanding of how news is digested in modern media, and strong character development — even if former President Donald Trump's allies suggest there aren't enough actors.

After initially saying the hearings would pause for a break until next month, the Jan. 6 committee on Monday announced a surprise session will be held Tuesday to present new evidence.

As seen during Trump's impeachments, modern congressional hearings tend to produce more heat than light. That was part of why the Jan. 6 committee faced low expectations, along with the sense — 18 months after the insurrection, an event that played out on live television — that there may be little new to learn.

Read more [here](#).

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MSNBC appoints Alex Wagner as 4-night prime-time anchor (AP)

By DAVID BAUDER

NEW YORK (AP) — MSNBC on Monday solidified its prime-time lineup by appointing Alex Wagner to fill Rachel Maddow's time slot four nights a week, Tuesday through Friday.

Wagner, who has worked at CBS News, as a co-host of Showtime's "The Circus" and as an editor at The Atlantic, is on her second stint at MSNBC. She rejoined MSNBC in February after hosting a show on the network a decade ago.

Maddow will continue to work in her 9 p.m. Eastern time slot on Monday nights, MSNBC said.

"I'm honored to be anchoring a key hour of television in such a critical time for American democracy," Wagner said.

It's an important move for the liberal-leaning news network and its president, Rashida Jones. Maddow has been MSNBC's most popular personality, and her decision earlier this year to step back from a weeknight show that was a linchpin of the network's schedule was a blow.

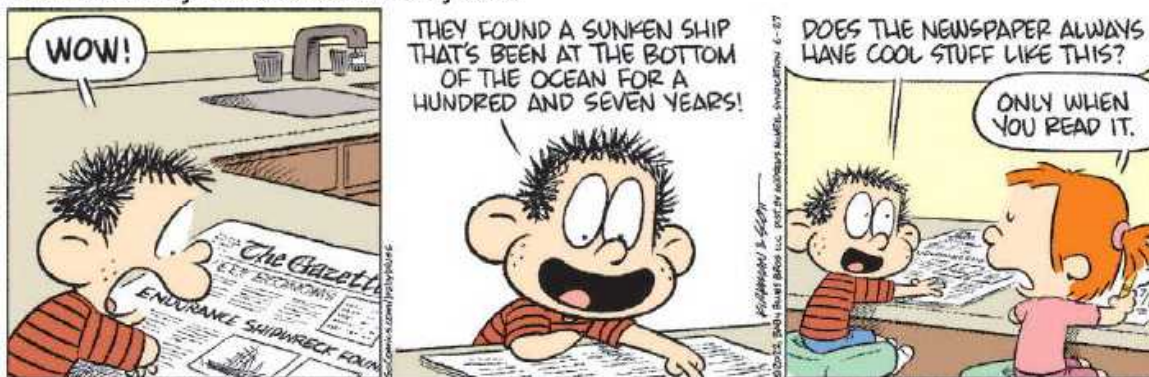
Read more [here](#).

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"Endangered" debuts Tuesday (CNN Reliable Sources)

"Endangered" is the title of a new HBO documentary that "chronicles a year in the life of four journalists" in democratic but increasingly hostile environments. Exec producer Ronan Farrow told me in a text message that he wanted to explore "the minefield of misinformation," authoritarian politics that cast the press as the enemy, and "faltering media business models that reporters around the world navigate to bring us the truth." That's exactly what directors Rachel Grady and Heidi Ewing have done; the film premieres Tuesday at 10:30pm on HBO...

The Final Word

BABY BLUES By Rick Kirkman and Jerry Scott

Shared by Adolphe Bernotas, Paul Albright

Today in History - June 28, 2022



By The Associated Press

Today is Tuesday, June 28, the 179th day of 2022. There are 186 days left in the year.

Today's Highlights in History:

On June 28, 1919, the Treaty of Versailles (vehr-SY') was signed in France, ending the First World War.

On this date:

In 1838, Britain's Queen Victoria was crowned in Westminster Abbey.

In 1863, during the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln appointed Maj. Gen. George G. Meade the new commander of the Army of the Potomac, following the resignation of Maj. Gen. Joseph Hooker.

In 1914, Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria and his wife, Sophie, were shot to death in Sarajevo (sah-ruh-YAY'-voh) by Serb nationalist Gavrilo Princip (gavh-REE'-loh PREEN'-seep) — an act that sparked World War I.

In 1939, Pan American Airways began regular trans-Atlantic air service with a flight that departed New York for Marseilles (mar-SAY'), France.

In 1940, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Alien Registration Act, also known as the Smith Act, which required adult foreigners residing in the U.S. to be registered and fingerprinted.

In 1950, North Korean forces captured Seoul (sohl), the capital of South Korea.

In 1978, the Supreme Court ordered the University of California-Davis Medical School to admit Allan Bakke (BAH'-kee), a white man who argued he'd been a victim of reverse racial discrimination.

In 1994, President Bill Clinton became the first chief executive in U.S. history to set up a personal legal defense fund and ask Americans to contribute to it.

In 2000, seven months after he was cast adrift in the Florida Straits, Elian Gonzalez was returned to his native Cuba.

In 2010, the Supreme Court ruled, 5-4, that Americans had the right to own a gun for self-defense anywhere they lived.

In 2013, the four plaintiffs in the U.S. Supreme Court case that overturned California's same-sex marriage ban tied the knot, just hours after a federal appeals court freed gay couples to obtain marriage licenses in the state for the first time in 4 1/2 years.

In 2019, avowed white supremacist James Alex Fields, who deliberately drove his car into a crowd of counterprotesters in Charlottesville, Virginia, killing a young woman and injuring dozens, apologized to his victims before being sentenced to life in prison on federal hate crime charges.

Ten years ago: The Affordable Care Act narrowly survived, 5-4, an election-year battle at the U.S. Supreme Court with the improbable help of conservative Chief Justice John Roberts. Attorney General Eric Holder became the first sitting Cabinet member held in contempt of Congress, a rebuke pushed by Republicans seeking to unearth the facts behind a bungled gun-tracking operation known as Fast and Furious. (The vote was 255-67, with more than 100 Democrats boycotting.) Katie Holmes filed for divorce from Tom Cruise after five years of marriage.

Five years ago: Republican donors paid \$35,000 apiece to hear a familiar message from President Donald Trump: that the media, particularly CNN, kept trying to take him down, and yet Republicans just kept on winning elections. ABC and a South Dakota meat producer announced a settlement in a \$1.9 billion lawsuit against the network over its reports on a beef product that critics dubbed "pink slime."

One year ago: Temperatures in parts of the Pacific Northwest wiped out records that had been set the day before, with Seattle reaching 108 degrees by evening; meteorologists said the record-breaking heat was caused by a dome of high pressure, and worsened by human-caused climate change. Big-wave surfer Greg "Da Bull" Noll died at 84; he'd become a surfing legend by combining an outsized personality with

the courage and skill to ride bigger, more powerful waves than anyone had attempted before.

Today's Birthdays: Comedian-movie director Mel Brooks is 96. Comedian-impressionist John Byner is 85. Former Defense Secretary Leon Panetta is 84. Rock musician Dave Knights (Procul Harum) is 77. Actor Bruce Davison is 76. Actor Kathy Bates is 74. Actor Alice Krige is 68. College and Pro Football Hall of Famer John Elway is 62. Jazz singer Tierney Sutton is 59. Actor Jessica Hecht is 57. Rock musician Saul Davies (James) is 57. Actor Mary Stuart Masterson is 56. Actor John Cusack is 56. Actor Gil Bellows is 55. Actor-singer Danielle Brisebois is 53. Actor Tichina Arnold is 53. Actor Steve Burton is 52. Entrepreneur Elon Musk is 51. Actor Alessandro Nivola (nih-VOH'-luh) is 50. Actor Camille Guaty is 46. Rock musician Tim Nordwind (OK Go) is 46. Rock musician Mark Stoermer (The Killers) is 45. Country singer Big Vinny Hickerson (Trailer Choir) is 39. Country singer Kellie Pickler is 36. Jamaican Olympic track star Elaine Thompson-Herah is 30.

Got a story or photos to share?

Connecting is a daily newsletter published Monday through Friday that focuses on retired and former Associated Press employees, present-day employees, and news industry and journalism school colleagues. It began in 2013 and past issues can be found by clicking Connecting Archive in the masthead. Its author, Paul Stevens, retired from the AP in 2009 after a 36-year career as a newsman in Albany and St. Louis, correspondent in Wichita, chief of bureau in Albuquerque, Indianapolis and Kansas City, and Midwest vice president based in Kansas City.

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:

- **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.
- **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?

- **Most unusual** place a story assignment took you.

Paul Stevens

Editor, Connecting newsletter

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