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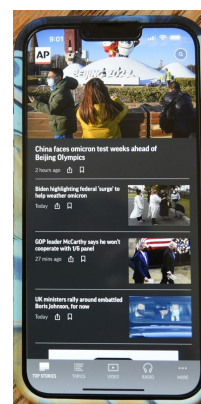
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Connecting

March 15, 2023

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Colleagues,

Good Wednesday morning on this March 15, 2023,

Few would argue that being a reporter is not without its dangers – and in another in a series of stories on colleagues who were placed in potentially life-threatening situations, our colleagues **Marc Wilson** reports on such an experience as an AP journalist in Mexico and **Steve Paulson** recalls staring down the barrel of a .45.

Our call in Tuesday’s Connecting for a story on your favorite cap brought a first response. Thank you, **Dennis Conrad**. Don’t put a lid on your own story – share with the rest of us.

Connecting won’t become a medical forum, but I thought a query forwarded by colleague **David Morris** was worth a share because carpal tunnel is somewhat common among those of us who use a keyboard for our work. David writes:

Greetings, Connecting colleagues. More than 45 years of typing and 15 years of playing the upright bass have caught up with my hands. I'm having carpal tunnel release surgery on my left hand in late April, and the right a month later. Hoping to hear from others about what to expect from the surgery and recovery. I'm not a candidate for an arthroscopic procedure, so conventional surgery is in order. I've opted not to be put under, just local numbing of the hand and wrist. Anyone else go that route? Am I crazy (just on that question, please)?



Got any advice for David? Drop him a note at djmorris55@comcast.net

Have a great day – be safe, stay healthy!

Paul

Getting run out of Mexico at gunpoint

Marc Wilson - I got run out of Mexico at gunpoint while working for the AP.

I was covering the statehouse in Little Rock in 1975 when I got a call from Lou Uchitelle, then the head of AP Newsfeatures.

“Got any great story ideas?” he asked.

“The Arkansas Attorney General just issued a warning advising people not to go to Mexican border towns for arthritis treatments,” I answered.

“Sounds like a great story. Can you do it?”

“Actually, Lou, I’m in Little Rock and that’s a long way from Mexico. Maybe somebody from our San Diego or Texas bureaus could handle the story.”

“No, no,” Lou said. “I want you to do it. If I give you a budget of \$500 is that enough?”

I told Lou I’d check with Chief of Bureau John Robert Starr.

“That’s ridiculous!” a furious Starr responded.

He stood up from his desk, red in the face, and stomped out of the bureau in the middle of the day, muttering “\$500 is more than my entire travel budget for the year!”

The next day Starr returned, slightly calmer.

“OK, Wilson, you can have two enterprise days, and you can back them up with your two days off,” Starr said. “What a stupid company.”

I made a few calls. The Arkansas AG's office said the Mexican clinic he was most concerned with was in Mexicali, Mexico.

I called the clinic and got through to the doctor who owned it.

"Don't come! I hate American reporters!" he said and hung up.

Not deterred, I made a plane reservation to San Diego, rented a car and drove to Calexico, Calif., just across the border from Mexicali.

I stayed at an ancient motel that was filled with Americans who had come from all over the U.S. to go to the clinic. Several nearby motels, equally as old, also were filled with Americans heading to the Mexican clinic.

Universally, the American patients praised the Mexican doctor.

"First time I came here I was in a wheelchair. The doctor gave me a prescription and that night I went dancing!" one returning patient, a 70-ish woman from Minnesota, told me. The patients came every six months to fill prescriptions, all supplied by a pharmacy also owned by the Mexican doctor.

The American patients explained that they had to line up outside the clinic – about 200 to 300 yards from the border – at 5 a.m. to schedule an appointment sometime later in the day.

The next day, carrying my 35-millimeter Konica camera, I got up about 4 a.m. and walked with about two dozen Americans and crossed the border into Mexicali, a city of some one million people that is the capital of the Mexican state of Baja California.

A line had already formed outside the one-story clinic. By the time the clinic doors opened – 6 a.m. – there were close to 200 Americans waiting. As I took photos and notes, all again told me great things about the doctor and his clinic.

At 6 a.m., a grim-looking woman in a white nurse's uniform came outside and told me, "The doctor will see you."

"He told me on the phone that he wouldn't see me."

"He wants to see you," she said and led me inside.

The waiting room was a plain cement block room with benches on all sides. About 50 Americans followed me inside and took seats while the rest waited outside.

Many of the patients gave me thumbs up signs and several said, "You'll love this doctor."

The same woman in the nurse's uniform came to me and said, "The doctor will see you now."

"I don't mean to cut in front of all his patients," I said.

"He wants to see you now."

I followed her to a small office. She opened the door and gestured to me to enter. Behind me, all the Americans were quietly cheering me on.

The door closed behind me.

"Goddamit, I told you not to come!" the doctor said. "I told you I hate American reporters."

He then started using every curse word I'd ever heard.

I told him I hadn't planned to come inside, but his nurse had all but insisted. "And everyone I've talked to raves about how great your treatments are."

He wasn't mollified.

Instead – and still cursing -- he opened a desk drawer and pulled out a large brown pistol.

And pointed it at me.

"Give me your camera, you MotherF.....r."

With 50 or so Americans sitting on the other side of the door, I wasn't frightened.

I stood up and stepped toward the door.

"Take one more step and I'll shoot, you motherf.....ing asshole! Give me your camera now!"

I didn't want to give him my camera.

Seeking a compromise, I asked, "How about just the film?"

I handed it to him, and he tore open the back of the camera and ripped out the film.

Still cursing and still pointing the pistol at me, he led me to a back door, opened it and ordered me out into an alley.

About a dozen tough-looking teen-aged boys waited.

Now I'm frightened.

"Take him to the border!" the doctor ordered.

They didn't have guns, but I figured they'd happily break a limb for 10 pesos.

My escorts left me at the border.

A U.S. Border Patrol agent asked if I had a work permit to go into Mexico.

“No.”

“Can’t help you then.”

I spent a sleepless night in Calexico before returning to Little Rock the next day.

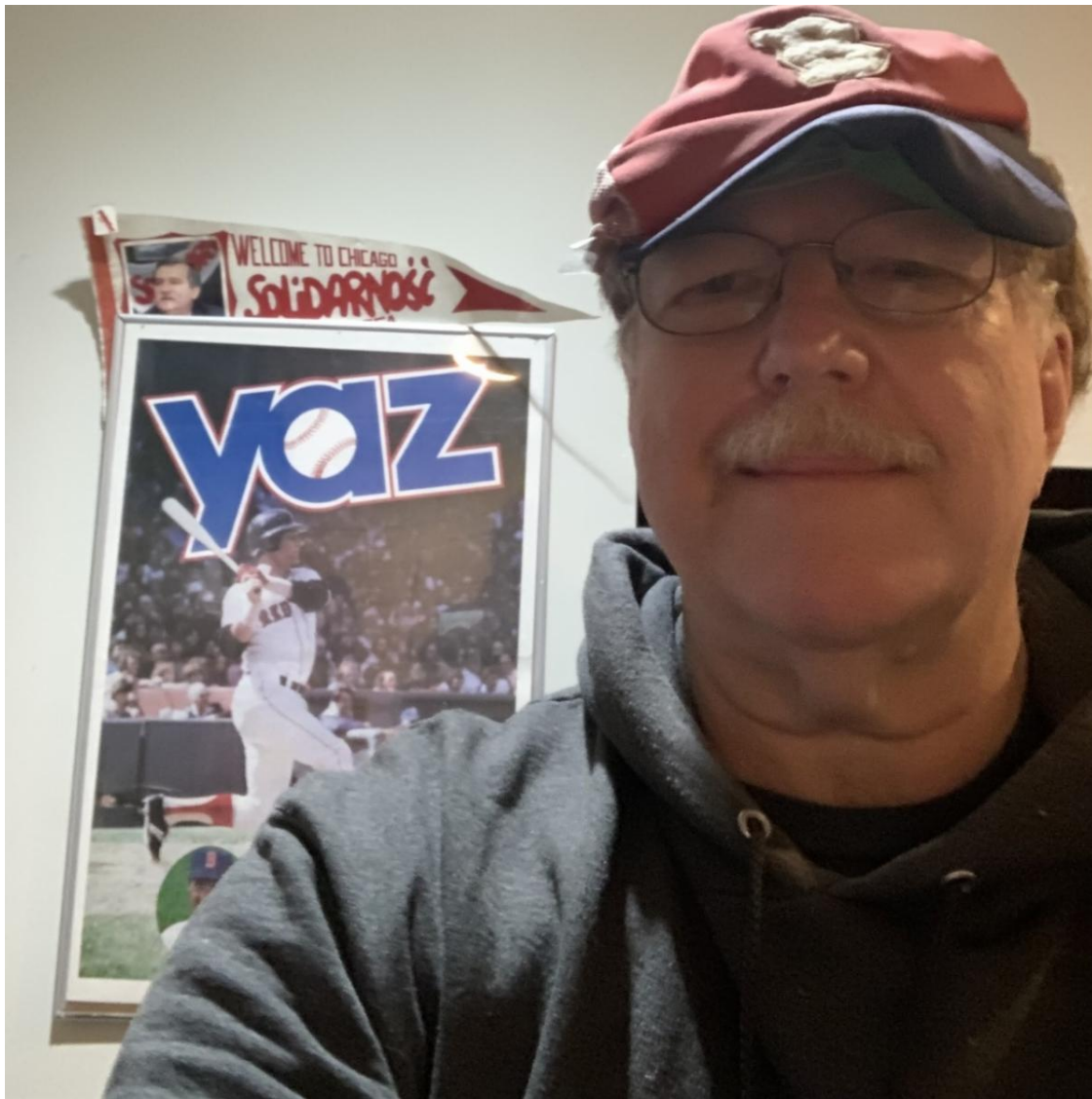
Staring down barrel of a .45



[Steve Paulson](#) - Re guns, I was a photographer at the Orlando Sentinel when I stumbled into a bank robbery. The gunman demanded a car and when he emerged

from the bank with his hostage, he saw me and took a shot at me. The photo showed me staring down the barrel of a .45 just before he fired. It is that black dot next to the hostage.

All in for the favorite cap challenge



Dennis Conrad - I am all in for the cap challenge.

My current collection totals 19.

Sadly, two others fell victim to early signs of dementia in recent years as in each case I failed to take my authentic MLB Boston Red Sox fielder's cap off the top of my car upon entering it and driving off.

Most of my caps are tied to AP or the Red Sox, the team I have followed since Little League in 1963 when I read in the San Francisco Chronicle that one of Boston's players, fellow Polish-American Carl Yastrzemski, was leading the American League in hitting.

My interest was only heightened as I cut out daily box scores in the Orlando Sentinel following Yastrzemski's Triple Crown "Impossible Dream" season in 1967 and he appeared on the covers of Newsweek and LIFE and led the team in winning the AL pennant.

And my loyalty was no doubt sealed for a lifetime as I caught a foul ball behind home plate off the bat of Boston outfielder Reggie Smith in spring training at Winter Haven, Florida, in 1968.

Here, I am wearing the oldest Sox cap I have - but just for you!

It has fallen apart over the years. Not visible in this photo are white spots resulting from my wearing it while painting my first home in Florida some 40 years ago.



The last time I can recall taking it to a Red Sox game was maybe 15 years ago when they were in Baltimore. I was approached as if I were an aging rock star by a throng of young Boston fans asking me where in the world did I get that old hat.

What do I normally wear virtually every day wherever I go?

Take a guess.

Let's go Red Sox!!!

P.S. I just realized that I failed to include two other caps/hats on my list: the Air Force cap my father wore when he retired in 1967 with 30 years' service begun with his 1937 enlistment in the Army Air Corps, and the Orlando Police Department hat that he wore in the years after his military career. Today, 42 years ago, was the last day I saw him alive. He died March 15, 1981, and was buried four days later at Arlington National Cemetery.

Keeping my word



Phil Sandlin - Around the mid '60s or so I decided to take a day off and go to Fort Lauderdale and take some pics of the New York Yankees in Spring training camp for myself.

I made my way out to the field and stood in the team's dugout and stood in the shade, holding one camera on my shoulder and the other in my hand. I watched as the team began infield practice, not looking around so I wouldn't be too visible and be asked to leave - not realizing I was standing almost in front of two players, Micky Mantle and Joe Pepitone.

I was busy shooting the field action but couldn't help but hear the two players talking to each other about who I was there to photograph working first base - each boasting he was my subject.

I was young and easily distracted and got ticked as I tried to keep my attention on the players working the field when I heard one of the two call out "hey kid, get this."

I spun around with my Leica already up to my eye and pressed the shutter, not really knowing what I was going to see in that 1/500th of a second. Here was a laughing Mantle and Pepitone with their fingers up the other's nose.

Mantle turned to me and with a squint in his eyes said, "I don't want to ever see that in print". All I could reply was a weak "yes sir".

The image has never been published as long as either player was alive.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Mickey Mantle died in 1995 and Joe Pepitone died earlier this week at the age of 82. Click [here](#) for AP story by Ronald Blum.

Remembering Robert Blake



[Nick Ut](#) – Here is my picture of actor Robert Blake after his acquittal in 2005 for his wife’s murder. (Blake died last week at the age of 89.)

Meeting up in chilly Washington



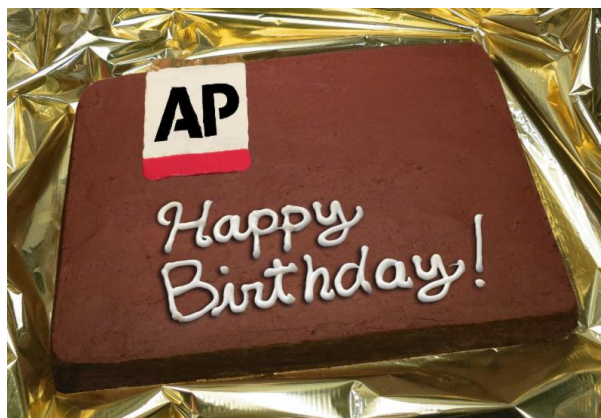
Robert Reid - On a chilly sidewalk in Georgetown with esteemed author and former J-School professor turned AP Religion Writer **Giovanna Dell'Orto** – both Connecting colleagues.

Hoan Kiem Lake, Hanoi



Nick Ut – Picture from Hanoi of Vietnamese dancing before they go to work.

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



[Jack Limpert](#)

[Janis Magin](#)

Welcome to Connecting



[Robert Cox](#)

Stories of interest

A 2nd wave of layoffs at Meta; 10,000 jobs are cut (AP)

Associated Press

Facebook parent Meta is slashing 10,000 jobs, about as many as the social media company announced late last year in its first round of cuts, as uncertainty about the global economy hits the technology sector particularly hard.

The company announced 11,000 job cuts in November, about 13% of its workforce at the time. In addition to the layoffs, Meta said Tuesday that it would not fill 5,000 open

positions.

"This will be tough and there's no way around that," said CEO Mark Zuckerberg.

Meta and other tech companies have been hiring aggressively for at least two years and in recent months have begun to let some of those workers go. Hiring in the U.S. is still strong, but layoffs have hit hard in some sectors.

Early last month, Meta posted falling profits and its third consecutive quarter of declining revenue. On the same day, the company said that it would buy back as much as \$40 billion of its own stock.

Read more [here](#).

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Rebuild Local News Coalition asks regulators to reward banks' support of local news with Reinvestment Act scores (The Rural Blog)

By AL CROSS

The effort to shift government policies to help local news survive has a new tack: asking federal regulators to give banks better Community Reinvestment Act evaluations if they lend to news outlets.

The pitch is made in an opinion piece for American Banker by Steven Waldman, founder and CEO of the Rebuild Local News Coalition, and one of his board members, Julie Sandorf, president of the Charles H. Revson Foundation. They argue, "Community news organizations are often integral to the vitality of a community. Studies, and common sense, have indicated that communities that lack good local news have less civic involvement, more corruption, higher taxes and lower voter turnout. So, isn't it about time for the government to encourage banks to treat local news as an essential community service?"

Waldman and Sandorf note that banking regulators are considering changes to regulations governing the CRA, which Congress passed in 1977 to remedy the discrimination against low- and moderate-income communities, and said a bank has an obligation to "meet the credit needs of its entire community." Regulations enacted in 1995 require CRA performance reviews to consider banks' responsiveness to needs for community investment and community development.

Read more [here](#).

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'Nazi' references: BBC sportscaster's tweet revives debate (AP)

By HILLEL ITALIE

NEW YORK (AP) — The references seem endless, and they can come from anywhere. In recent days, Pope Francis compared Nicaragua's repression of Catholics to Hitler's rule in Germany. In Britain, a BBC sportscaster likened the nation's asylum policy to 1930s Germany, resulting in his brief suspension and a national uproar.

For Holocaust and anti-Nazi scholars and organizations, the two sentiments were understandable — but concerning. Invoking Hitler and Nazi Germany, they warn, often serves to revive a familiar and unwelcome line of argument.

"We have to be aware of, and confront, contemporary instances of discrimination, hate speech and human rights abuses across the world," says Rafal Pankowski, a Polish sociologist who heads the anti-Nazi NEVER AGAIN Association. But he added: "Of course, the historical analogies must not be overused and devalued. The label 'Nazi' should not be trivialized and reduced to a term of abuse against anybody we don't like."

Read more [here](#).

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BBC Fails With Late Bid To Halt Staff Strike After Chaotic Walkout Over Gary Lineker's Suspension

(Deadline)

By Jake Kanter

UPDATE: BBC employees will stage their biggest strike in 13 years on Wednesday after eleventh-hour talks with management failed. The walkout will force coverage of the UK government's Budget off air and heap more embarrassment on Director-General Tim Davie, who has apologized for scheduling chaos over the Gary Lineker saga.

PREVIOUS EXCLUSIVE: The BBC has scrambled to avoid further disruption to its schedules after a walkout over Gary Lineker's suspension canceled Premier League output.

The British broadcaster has been involved in last-ditch talks with trade union leaders to halt the biggest staff strike since 2010 over changes to local programming in England.

Read more [here](#)

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The Prison Newspaper Directory finds that the number of prison-based papers is growing (Nieman Lab)

By HANAA' TAMEEZ

The local newspaper industry has seen better days (though not so much in my lifetime). One growth spot, however, is where you might not expect it: Behind bars.

According to the newly launched Prison Newspaper Directory by the Prison Journalism Project, there are 24 prison-based newspapers in 12 states. At least four of the papers were launched in the last year.

The directory is part of PJP's larger Prison Newspaper Project, which provides a short overview of the history of the prison press and republishes stories from prison papers so that they can reach a wider audience. The Prison Journalism Project overall provides training and resources to incarcerated journalists who want to tell stories from inside their correctional facilities.

The idea for the directory came out of San Quentin News, one of the oldest and most established prison newspapers, at the San Quentin State Prison in Northern California. Kevin Sawyer, a formerly incarcerated journalist and a contributing editor to PJP, had started doing his own research about other prison newspapers while he was the associate editor of the San Quentin News. Sawyer shared his findings with PJP, according to Kate McQueen, the project's editor, and PJP was able to advance the research and put together a directory.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Mike Holmes.

Today in History - March 15, 2023



Today is Wednesday, March 15, the 74th day of 2023. There are 291 days left in the year.

Today's highlight in history:

On March 15, 44 B.C., Roman dictator Julius Caesar was assassinated by a group of nobles that included Brutus and Cassius.

On this date:

In 1493, Italian explorer Christopher Columbus arrived back in the Spanish harbor of Palos de la Frontera, two months after concluding his first voyage to the Western Hemisphere.

In 1820, Maine became the 23rd state.

In 1917, Czar Nicholas II abdicated in favor of his brother, Grand Duke Mikhail Alexandrovich, who declined the crown, marking the end of imperial rule in Russia.

In 1919, members of the American Expeditionary Force from World War I convened in Paris for a three-day meeting to found the American Legion.

In 1944, during World War II, Allied bombers again raided German-held Monte Cassino.

In 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson, addressing a joint session of Congress, called for new legislation to guarantee every American's right to vote; the result was passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

In 1972, "The Godfather," Francis Ford Coppola's epic gangster movie based on the Mario Puzo novel and starring Marlon Brando and Al Pacino, premiered in New York.

In 1977, the situation comedy "Three's Company," starring John Ritter, Joyce DeWitt and Suzanne Somers, premiered on ABC-TV.

In 2005, former WorldCom chief Bernard Ebbers was convicted in New York of engineering the largest corporate fraud in U.S. history. (He was later sentenced to 25 years in prison.)

In 2011, the Syrian civil war had its beginnings with Arab Spring protests across the region that turned into an armed insurgency and eventually became a full-blown conflict.

In 2019, a gunman killed 51 people at two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, streaming the massacre live on Facebook. (Brenton Tarrant, an Australian white supremacist, was sentenced to life in prison without parole after pleading guilty to 51 counts of murder and other charges.)

In 2020, the Federal Reserve took massive emergency action to help the economy withstand the coronavirus by slashing its benchmark interest rate to near zero and saying it would buy \$700 billion in treasury and mortgage bonds. After initially trying to keep schools open, New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio said the nation's largest public school system would close in hopes of curbing the spread of the coronavirus.

Ten years ago: The Pentagon announced it would spend \$1 billion to add 14 interceptors to an Alaska-based missile defense system, responding to what it called faster-than-anticipated North Korean progress on nuclear weapons and missiles. The chief of Syria's main, Western-backed rebel group marked the second anniversary of the start of the uprising against President Bashar Assad by pledging to fight until the

“criminal” regime was gone. Canadian Patrick Chan won his third title at the World Figure Skating Championships in London, Ontario.

Five years ago: A pedestrian bridge that was under construction collapsed onto a busy Miami highway, crushing vehicles beneath massive slabs of concrete and steel; six people died and 10 were injured. The Trump administration accused Moscow of an elaborate plot to hack into America’s electric grid, factories, water supply and even air travel; the U.S. also targeted Russians with sanctions for alleged election meddling for the first time since President Donald Trump took office. Federal health officials took the first step to slash levels of addictive nicotine in cigarettes, a move designed to help smokers quit and prevent future generations from getting hooked. All seven service members aboard a U.S. helicopter were killed when the aircraft crashed in Iraq; officials said there were no indications that the crash had been caused by hostile fire.

One year ago: Russia stepped up its bombardment of the Ukrainian capital Kyiv, while an estimated 20,000 civilians fled the desperately encircled port city of Mariupol by way of a humanitarian corridor. A man suspected of stalking and shooting homeless people asleep on the streets of New York City and Washington was arrested. The AP All-America college basketball team was announced, with first-team players Keegan Murray of Iowa, Kofi Cockburn of Illinois, Johnny Davis of Wisconsin, Oscar Tshiebwe of Kentucky and Ochai Agbaji of Kansas.

Today’s Birthdays: Actor Judd Hirsch is 88. Jazz musician Charles Lloyd is 85. Rock musician Phil Lesh is 83. Singer Mike Love (The Beach Boys) is 82. Rock singer-musician Sly Stone is 80. Rock singer-musician Howard Scott (War; Lowrider Band) is 77. Rock singer Ry Cooder is 76. Actor Frances Conroy is 70. Actor Craig Wasson is 69. Rock singer Dee Snider (Twisted Sister) is 68. Actor Joaquim de Almeida is 66. Actor Park Overall is 66. Movie director Renny Harlin is 64. Model Fabio is 62. Singer Terence Trent D’Arby (AKA Sananda Maitreya) is 61. Rock singer Bret Michaels (Poison) is 60. R&B singer Rockwell is 59. Actor Chris Bruno is 57. Actor Kim Raver is 56. Rock singer Mark McGrath (Sugar Ray) is 55. Rock musician Mark Hoppus is 51. Country singer-musician Matt Thomas (Parmalee) is 49. Actor Eva Longoria is 48. Rapper-musician will.i.am (Black Eyed Peas) is 48. Rock DJ Joseph Hahn (Linkin Park) is 46. Rapper Young Buck is 42. Actor Sean Biggerstaff is 40. Actor Kellan Lutz is 38. Actor Caitlin Wachs is 34.

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

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