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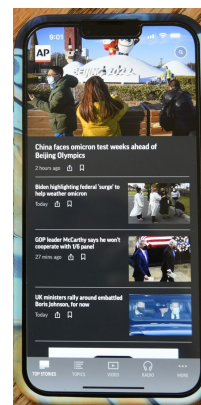
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Connecting

April 20, 2023

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Colleagues,

Good Thursday morning on this April 20, 2023,

They were among a group of 20-somethings in the 1980s whom veteran Kansas City assistant bureau chief **Mercer Bailey** called the “Young Turks” – three AP reporters just getting their careers off the ground and learning the ropes on the night shift of a major control bureau.

A day after Connecting’s retirement profile for one of them, Washington newsman **Doug Daniel**, another of Kansas City’s Young Turks, our colleague **Kevin Walsh**, recalls their time on the desk together in the late 1980s along with another young newsman **Jerry Nachtigal**.

All three would go places in the AP and beyond. Walsh served 31 years in positions including regional vice president and bureau chief when he retired in 2015; in retirement, he and his wife Lisa have traveled to 84 countries. Daniel had a distinguished AP career, interrupted only for work in journalism education and book writing. And Nachtigal worked 18 years in AP’s Kansas City, Springfield (Mo.) and

Phoenix bureaus before serving in state government in Missouri and South Dakota and as a senior vice president for Citibank. He died, too young, from cancer in 2017 at the age of 57.

We lead today's issue with Walsh's recollection of those days – a recollection that no doubt is shared by most of us from our own first bureau work. Got a similar story to tell? Please share.

DENNY VOHAR DEATH: Connecting received word that former AP audio engineer Denny Vohar has passed away due to heart failure. Denny worked at AP for 38 years, all in the AP's Washington bureau. We will provide an obituary story when available.

Have a great day – be safe, stay healthy!

Paul

'Young Turks' developed lifelong friendships from their first days in AP



1988 road trippers – from left, Jerry Nachtigal, Doug Daniel, Kevin Walsh

Kevin Walsh - I enjoyed reading Wednesday's Connecting story and Q&A with Doug Daniel on his retirement. The accolades are richly deserved. Doug has had an incredible career – with the AP, in academia and as an author.

I can't let this opportunity pass without mentioning at least part of "the rest of the story." Doug was our first friend when I started with the AP in Kansas City in 1984. Among Doug's most dubious achievements was training me on the night desk. He was also the first person besides me and my wife, Lisa, to hold our newborn son.

The "young turks" Doug said Assistant Chief of Bureau Mercer Bailey referred to working nights back in the 80s also included our great friend, Jerry Nachtigal. Doug and Jerry delighted in impersonating Mercer's very distinctive accent and calling me at home to demand that I immediately return to the bureau or fill in for someone out sick. The night shift in Kansas City back then was great fun. Paul Stevens will be relieved to hear we also occasionally got some work done.

When Doug left for academia in 1988, I replaced him as night supervisor (although the night shift was never as fun as it was with him leading the crew). But before we all went our separate ways, Jerry and I helped move Doug to Ohio. One last road trip for three close friends in my 1976 Ford LTD, towing a U-Haul full of Doug's belongings. Life, and the old car, were never the same again.

Congratulations, Doug, on closing out this chapter of a great career. You've touched many lives, including mine and Lisa's, along the way.

New-member profile: Dick van Halsema



Dick van Halsema (right) and Bill Sikes at a meetup in Michigan last summer.

[Dick van Halsema](#) - I graduated from the University of Missouri School of Journalism in photojournalism. Many of my Missouri peers went on to work with the AP: Cliff Schiappa, Sally Stapleton, Stephan Savoia, Rogelio Solis to name a few.

I was named the College Photographer of the Year when I graduated and interned at National Geographic. My first newspaper photographer job was at The Florida Times-Union and Jacksonville (FL) Journal. Bill Sikes, another Missouri classmate and future AP photographer in Buffalo and photo editor in Boston, was one of my supervisors.

I joined The San Diego News-Tribune in the fall of 1984 as a picture editor. The AP's Lenny Ignelzi had his office in the paper's building and became a good friend.

Knight-Ridder's The Charlotte Observer was my next career stop. I started as AME Graphics but shifted into news editing and later, newsroom publishing systems management. AP Carolinas team members Estes Thompson, Bob Jordan, Chuck Burton and others were good acquaintances in those years.

The early 1990s were pre-Internet for newspapers, but there were still plenty of new digital technologies emerging in my management area. The Observer's AME Bob DePiante and AP's Hal Buell had a long-running friendship, and The Observer was among the early member adopters of the AP's original Leaf Desk digital photo system. Our sister paper the San Jose Mercury News started Mercury Center in partnership with dial-up giant AOL. And at papers like The Observer, we were launching dial-up community bulletin board systems to connect with readers via modem.

As the Netscape browser became publicly available in 1994, each Knight-Ridder newspaper was pursuing its own online strategy. But then the corporation decided to combine papers' online operations into a separate business unit, Knight Ridder Digital (KRD). I was one of KRD's original regional VPs in 1999; and was its national VP for local market operations in the early 2000s.

Our KRD years at the turn of the century saw many first-ever things happen in our industry: Knight-Ridder partnered with Gannett and Landmark as owners of Infnit, a telecom company selling dial-up Internet and web hosting; Knight-Ridder partnered with Gannett and Tribune to launch online brands like Careerbuilder.com, Cars.com and Apartments.com; and Knight-Ridder/KRD invested in and launched an online listings startup called Zip2.com founded by a then-unknown South African from Canada, Elon Musk. I worked on this project with Musk and his team – which included a new college grad named Owen Van Natta who later was Facebook's COO.

I left the corporate digital world in 2008, shortly after McClatchy acquired Knight-Ridder. I worked as a consulting digital project leader for Cox Media, Gannett, Media General and other holding companies. During this time, McClatchy CEO Gary Pruitt became AP's chief executive.

I built that original consulting business into what is now known as OpsCo, one of Google's nine global reseller partners for its enterprise-level ad-serving technology. Our team provides many media holding companies in the U.S. and Canada with advertising technology and digital monetization services.

I have four adult daughters and I split my living time between Florida where OpsCo is located and my native Michigan.

Honor memory of Mason McFarland with gift to homeless, those with autism



Longtime Dallas AP staffer John McFarland's family is honoring their son's memory by helping people who are homeless and people with autism.

The Mason's Gift event is scheduled from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. May 4 -- Mason McFarland's birthday -- at the RoughRiders Ballpark in Frisco, Texas. Mason was a longtime employee of the minor league team before his death Jan. 21, 2021. He was 21.

This will be the third Mason's Gift event, and the McFarland family is extremely grateful for the AP family's support and care. A lot of good things have happened in Mason's memory thanks to you.

You can find the [list of foods and supplies](#) to bring to the event on the [Mason's Gift Facebook page](#).

If you can't make it, you can still help by giving to the organizations below, or simply with an act of kindness in Mason's memory.

[Vogel Alcove](#), which supports families who are homeless

[The Bridge Homeless Recovery Center](#)

[The Mason McFarland Memorial Scholarship](#), awarded to a student who has autism or another learning disability

[Autism Speaks](#)

[214EA](#), Mason's friends who provide food and supplies to people who are homeless in Dallas

You can learn more about Mason's life [here](#).

If you have any questions or would like more information, contact John at mcfarland7802@gmail.com.

'We knew we could count on Doug Daniel to make us look good'

Robert Glass - For most of my time in the Washington bureau, I was the night supervisor and Jay Arnold ran the PMs report. Doug (Daniel) was a regular on the night desk and overlapped our two cycles. Jay and I often talked about what an asset he was. Whether it was breaking news, obits cobbled together on the run or stories for the PMs budget, we knew we could count on Doug to make us look good. I especially admired his light touch. Only an editor with his talent would think to add a "Just saying" to dress up a lede. Because of his almost complete lack of swagger, you might not suspect Doug of also having a wicked sense of humor. I wish I could repeat some of his best lines here, but, alas, this is a family-friendly newsletter.

More on graphic photos



A paving machine striped right over this dog in 1978.

The most famous picture we ever ran

It was 10 years ago that the Advertiser-Gleam ran a photograph that caused more comment than any other picture that's ever been in the paper.

It showed a dead dog in the road, with a center-line stripe that had been painted over him. It was on Hwy. 431 at Claysville, when that was a 2-lane road.

Several readers wrote in to protest that we shouldn't have printed such a gross picture. Others said we were right. They said it was something that happened and that we should

have let people know about it.

We still get asked about it pretty often. A good many people have asked if we still have extra copies of that issue. We don't.

The picture here isn't quite as clear as the one in 1978. That's because we had to reprint this one from the paper, rather than from the photograph itself. There was only one copy of the picture because it was a Polaroid. The editor's son sent it off to the National Lampoon hoping they would pay him \$15 for running it in their magazine. They didn't use it and he didn't get the picture back.

Some people have heard that the picture was sent to papers all over the country by the Associated Press, but that wasn't the case. About the same time that we ran this picture, we ran a picture of a wavy stripe in the middle of Gunter Avenue. A photographer from the Birmingham Post-Herald made a picture of the same wavy stripe, and that was the one that was sent around the country. It didn't have a dog in it.

THE ADVERTISER-GLEAM
Guntersville, Ala., July 19, 1989

From The Advertiser-Gleam, a weekly in Guntersville, Alabama. Shared by Ed Williams

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Joe Galu - The discussion of horrific photos needs to be divided. There are terrible accidents and explosions. And there are deliberate abuses such as mass shootings and the decapitation of small children. We live in horrific times when six-year-old children talk about being afraid to go to school, because they do not want to be blown apart by an AK-15. It is not my fault that we live in horrific times or the fault of newspaper editors, but isn't it the purpose of newspapers to print and illustrate the news? Horrific or not, print the photos and the American people in their corporate wisdom will make their own informed decisions about whether they approve of AK-15s or not.

A photo of a first responder holding a terribly injured or even killed child in beautiful, loving, caressing body language is extremely touching and sorrowful. I recall a local photo of an older craggy firefighter facing a late-middle-aged black man with an obvious tear streaming down his face. The firefighter was telling the man that his mother had died in a fire. I think Ray Hoy, an AP stringer, caught that scene. I'll never forget it.

A tale of Return and Enter keys



Steve Graham - I think my last AP trip to the Dallas bureau was in the late '80s or maybe early '90s.

Texas is well-known for high school football fever and keeping track of the scores dominated Friday evenings at the Dallas bureau. (One site lists 1,500 Texas high schools that play football).

We were on the cusp of the technology revolution and had replaced the old editing terminals with PCs, which we could program. Unfortunately, computer familiarity was not as widespread as it is today.

One of the first things the New York programming folks tackled on behalf of bureaus was the creation of software to keep track of and easily handle Texas high school football frenzy.

We sent the program down to Dallas (on a floppy disk, of course) but then we got an urgent message that it wasn't working. Since it was the end of the week, I couldn't find anyone in NY who wanted to dig into their weekend, so I hopped a plane to DFW since the software was working perfectly in New York.

When I got there, I was told that the problem was that the instructions sent along with the software said to hit the "Return" key after entering data -- and there was no "Return" key on the keyboards.

Well, early PC keyboards had keys marked "RETURN" but later ones with the same function were inscribed "Enter." It never occurred to whoever wrote the instructions (or to me, for that matter) that it would cause confusion and had just used "Return" in the instructions.

I just advised the Dallas staff and all went well.

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



[Bob Beardsley](#)

[Larry Ryckman](#)

Marc Wilson

Stories of interest

How man on European cruise helped Fox, Dominion reach \$787M deal (AP)

By DAVID BAUDER

NEW YORK (AP) — Before pulling back from the brink of a trial, Fox News and Dominion Voting systems faced a stern deadline — not from an impatient judge or jury, but from a man on a Danube River cruise with his wife half a world away.

A mediator hired late Sunday pushed the two sides toward a \$787 million settlement that brought a stunning end to the most-watched media libel case in decades, one that sought to put a price on lies told about the 2020 presidential election on conservative America's most popular news outlet.

"It's a deadline that I always impose because I know that once a jury is empaneled and opening statements are made, then one or other of the parties will dig into their positions," Jerry Roscoe, of the Washington-based JAMS mediation service, said Wednesday. "It makes negotiations much more difficult."

As the haggling went on, over the phone and in back rooms of a Delaware courthouse, lawyers, journalists and spectators waited as a scheduled 1:30 p.m. start of the trial came and went Tuesday.

Finally, two minutes before 4 p.m., Superior Court Judge Eric Davis emerged with an almost matter-of-fact announcement, given the stakes.

"The parties have resolved their case," he said.

Read more [here](#).

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There are even more 2020 election defamation suits beyond the Fox-Dominion case (NPR)

By Lisa Hagen

While the newly settled defamation suit by Dominion Voting Systems against Fox News may be the highest-profile case about lies and conspiracy theories spread about the 2020 presidential election, more than a dozen similar cases are also making their way through the legal system.

PI in one, an Erie, Pa., postmaster was harassed and chased from his home after a conservative media outlet aired false claims that he altered mail-in ballots to favor Democratic candidate Joe Biden. In Georgia, a voter faced violent threats after the filmmakers behind the debunked 2000 Mules documentary falsely claimed he had illegally deposited multiple ballots into a drop box. Also in Georgia, two election workers were falsely accused of ballot fraud by two right-wing media outlets and former New York City mayor and Trump campaign adviser Rudy Giuliani.

An even larger \$2.7 billion lawsuit filed by another voting machine company awaits Fox News in New York. All of these lawsuits aim to hold a range of conservative figures and media outlets, including former President Donald Trump, accountable for damaging election lies.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Peg Coughlin.

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Oklahoma official who discussed killing reporters resigns (AP)

By SEAN MURPHY

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — A county commissioner in far southeast Oklahoma who was identified by a local newspaper as one of several officials caught on tape discussing killing reporters and lynching Black people has resigned from office, Gov. Kevin Stitt's office confirmed Wednesday.

Stitt spokesperson Carly Atchison said the office received a handwritten resignation letter from McCurtain County Commissioner Mark Jennings. In it, Jennings says he is resigning immediately and that he plans to release a formal statement "in the near future regarding the recent events in our county."

The threatening comments by Jennings and officials with the McCurtain County Sheriff's Office were obtained following a March 6 meeting and reported by the McCurtain Gazette-News earlier this week in its weekend edition. They have sparked outrage and protests in the city of Idabel, the county seat.

In a post on the sheriff's office Facebook page on Tuesday, officials did not address the recorded discussion but claimed the recording was illegally obtained.

Also on Wednesday, the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation confirmed it has launched an investigation into the matter at the request of the governor.

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

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OPINION: Fox News Remains an Aberration in American Journalism (New York Times)

By David Firestone

Mr. Firestone is a member of the editorial board.

The decision by Dominion Voting Systems on Tuesday to settle its defamation suit against Fox News is no doubt a disappointment to the many people who have been viciously demeaned and insulted by the network's hosts over the years and who now won't get to see those hosts writhe on the witness stand as they are forced to admit their lies. But the settlement is also a lost opportunity for the profession of journalism.

A six-week trial, especially if it ended in a victory for Dominion, could have demonstrated to the public in painstaking detail what an abject aberration Fox has become among American news organizations. In-person testimony would have illustrated what the pre-trial evidence had begun to show: that Fox hosts and executives knew full well that the conspiracy theories they peddled about the outcome of the 2020 election were false, but they broadcast them anyway to hang on to viewers who didn't want to hear the truth. A loss by Fox, with a staggering damage award, would have demonstrated that its behavior was so exceptional and outrageous that it had to be punished.

People inclined to believe that all news organizations deliberately lie to build their audience may not consider Fox's actions to be the least bit aberrant. But if that were true, there would be a lot more trials like the one that almost happened in this case. In fact, there have been very few media trials in recent years — usually in the single digits each year, according to one study — compared with the thousands of civil trials each year. Most defamation cases are dismissed before they ever get near a trial, in part because the plaintiff could not come close to proving a news organization met the “actual malice” standard set out in the landmark *New York Times v. Sullivan* case of 1964, but also often because the plaintiff couldn't even convince the judge that the defamatory material was false. News organizations also win dismissals by persuading judges that the material at issue was a legitimate opinion or was a “fair report” of allegations made at a public meeting or trial.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Sibby Christensen.

Today in History - April 20, 2023



Today is Thursday, April 20, the 110th day of 2023. There are 255 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On April 20, 2010, an explosion on the Deepwater Horizon oil platform, leased by BP, killed 11 workers and caused a blow-out that began spewing an estimated 200 million gallons of crude into the Gulf of Mexico. (The well was finally capped nearly three months later.)

On this date:

In 1812, the fourth vice president of the United States, George Clinton, died in Washington at age 72, becoming the first vice president to die while in office.

In 1861, Col. Robert E. Lee resigned his commission in the United States Army. (Lee went on to command the Army of Northern Virginia, and eventually became general-in-chief of the Confederate forces.)

In 1912, Boston's Fenway Park hosted its first professional baseball game while Navin (NAY'-vihh) Field (Tiger Stadium) opened in Detroit. (The Red Sox defeated the New York Highlanders 7-6 in 11 innings; the Tigers beat the Cleveland Naps 6-5 in 11 innings.)

In 1916, the Chicago Cubs played their first game at Wrigley Field (then known as Weeghman Park); the Cubs defeated the Cincinnati Reds 7-6.

In 1971, the Supreme Court unanimously upheld the use of busing to achieve racial desegregation in schools.

In 1972, Apollo 16's lunar module, carrying astronauts John W. Young and Charles M. Duke Jr., landed on the moon.

In 1986, following an absence of six decades, Russian-born pianist Vladimir Horowitz performed in the Soviet Union to a packed audience at the Grand Hall of the Tchaikovsky Conservatory in Moscow.

In 1999, the Columbine High School massacre took place in Colorado as two students shot and killed 12 classmates and one teacher before taking their own lives.

In 2003, U.S. Army forces took control of Baghdad from the Marines in a changing of the guard that thinned the military presence in the capital.

In 2008, Pope Benedict XVI celebrated his final Mass in the United States before a full house in Yankee Stadium, blessing his enormous U.S. flock and telling Americans to use their freedoms wisely.

In 2016, five former New Orleans police officers pleaded guilty to lesser charges in the deadly shootings on a bridge in the days following Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

In 2020, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said reports of accidental poisonings from cleaners and disinfectants were up about 20 percent in the first three months of the year; researchers believed it was related to the coronavirus epidemic.

Ten years ago: A magnitude-7.0 earthquake struck the steep hills of China's southwestern Sichuan province, leaving nearly 200 people dead. Five snowboarders were killed in a backcountry avalanche on Colorado's Loveland Pass. Search and rescue crews recovered the bodies several hours after the slide, which was about 600 feet wide and eight feet deep. It was among the deadliest U.S. avalanches in decades. Deanna Durbin, an actor who was among the biggest box office draws of Hollywood's Golden Age, died on or around this date in a village outside Paris where she had lived out of public view for more than six decades. She was 91.

Five years ago: U.S. health officials told consumers to throw away any store-bought romaine lettuce and warned restaurants not to serve it amid an E. coli outbreak that had sickened more than 50 people in several states. Wells Fargo agreed to pay \$1 billion to federal regulators to settle charges stemming from misconduct at its mortgage and auto lending businesses; it was the latest punishment levied against the banking giant for widespread customer abuses. The Democratic Party filed a lawsuit accusing the Donald Trump presidential campaign, Russia, WikiLeaks and Trump's son and son-in-law of conspiring to undercut Democrats in the 2016 election by stealing tens of thousands of emails and documents.

One year ago: Russian forces tightened the noose around die-hard Ukrainian defenders holed up at a Mariupol steel plant amid desperate new efforts to open an evacuation corridor for trapped civilians in the ruined city, a key battleground in Moscow's drive to seize the country's industrial east. An unexpected drop in subscribers sent Netflix shares into freefall, forcing the company to consider experimenting with ads and cracking down on millions of freeloaders who use passwords shared by friends or family. New Mexico workplace safety regulators imposed the maximum possible fine against a film production company for firearms safety failures on the set where actor Alec Baldwin fatally shot a cinematographer.

Today's Birthdays: Former Sen. Pat Roberts, R-Kan., is 87. Actor George Takei is 86. Singer Johnny Tillotson is 85. Actor Ryan O'Neal is 82. Bluegrass singer-musician Doyle Lawson (Quicksilver) is 79. Actor Judith O'Dea is 78. Rock musician Craig Frost (Grand Funk Railroad, Bob Seger & the Silver Bullet Band) is 75. Actor Jessica Lange is 74. Actor Veronica Cartwright is 74. Actor Clint Howard is 64. Actor Crispin Glover is 59.

Actor Andy Serkis is 59. Olympic silver medal figure skater Rosalynn Sumners is 59. Actor William deVry is 55. Country singer Wade Hayes is 54. Actor Shemar Moore is 53. Actor Carmen Electra is 51. Reggae singer Stephen Marley is 51. Rock musician Marty Crandall (The Shins) is 48. Actor Joey Lawrence is 47. Country musician Clay Cook (Zac Brown Band) is 45. Actor Clayne Crawford is 45. Actor Tim Jo is 39. Actor Carlos Valdes (TV: "The Flash") 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.

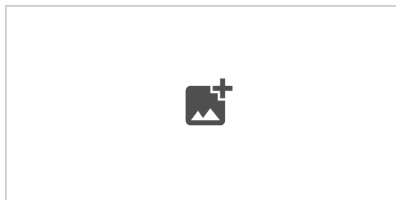
- **First job** - How did you get your first job in journalism?

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

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