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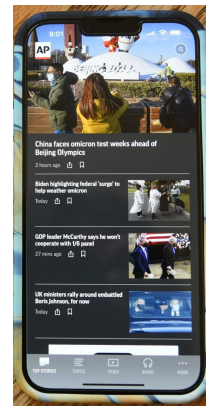
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# Connecting

Aug. 4, 2023

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Colleagues,

Good Friday morning on this Aug. 4, 2023,

The AP announced Thursday that the annual **25 Year Club celebration** will be held at 10 a.m. ET on Sept. 7. Connecting will provide more details when available.

The AP has hired **Khaing Sithuu Tindianos** is as the new director of global diversity and inclusion. In an announcement Thursday, the AP said Tindianos will lead the development of AP’s diversity and inclusion strategy to support the business and provide subject matter expertise on inclusion practices globally. She will also work closely with AP’s employee resource groups to support their initiatives. Prior to AP, Tindianos was the associate director of diversity, equity and inclusion at IPG Mediabrands.

Have a great weekend – be safe, stay healthy, live each day to your fullest.

Paul

## John Flesher: Simply one of AP's very best

[Charles Hill](#) - John Flesher is everything Roger Schneider said he was in his excellent description of John's career.

John and I worked together for all of my years as Michigan AP bureau chief, from 1991 to 2012. I was fortunate to have inherited John as Michigan's Washington regional writer, a very important and newsy position, especially because of the auto industry.

Then-Michigan AP News Editor Paula Froke and I were delighted when John agreed to become Traverse City correspondent after deciding to leave Washington. John was only the second person to hold that job and soon made it his own, quickly expanding on the versatility and excellence he had shown earlier in his AP career.

We knew we could count on John for anything we needed him to do, and he more than came through, deftly handling political reporting, feature writing, projects and breaking news. He was quick to adapt. John developed his environmental beat long before the AP's increased emphasis on beats, and he was among the first to embrace taking his own photos, which was especially valuable given the huge geographic area of his territory.

John's work commanded the respect of all of our member newspaper colleagues. His quiet but fun demeanor and gentlemanly ways additionally earned him admiration and affection from members who counted on him not only as a news provider and link to the AP but also as a trusted adviser, confidant, mentor and friend.

The editors and staff at his host newspaper, the Traverse City Record-Eagle, had a special relationship with John. The paper sometimes would use his stories even when they were in their own backyard. They trusted him and came to think of him as one of their newsroom colleagues as he shared their roof and so many of their experiences.

John was almost always many miles from other AP colleagues but it never felt that way. He always was an important part of the team, staying in close touch despite the miles and building AP relationships that lasted for years.

It was a pleasure to work with John, who simply was one of the very best in the AP.

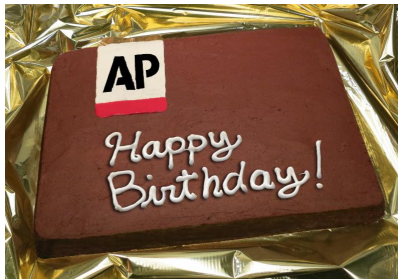
(EDITOR'S NOTE: Thursday's Connecting led with word that John is retiring at the end of this month after a 44-year AP career.)

## Connecting sky shot – Oregon



Starfish Cove, Yaquina Head, Oregon. Shared by Lee Siegel.

## Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



*On Saturday to...*

[James Rowley](#)

*On Sunday to...*

[David Seden](#)

## Stories of interest

## ***Texas A&M reaches \$1 million settlement with Black journalism professor*** (AP)



**FILE - Kathleen McElroy poses Tuesday, June 13, 2023, in College Station, Texas. Texas A&M University reached a \$1 million settlement Thursday, Aug. 3, 2023, with McElroy, a Black journalism professor, after botched attempts to hire her unraveled after pushback over her past work promoting diversity. (Meredith Seaver/College Station Eagle via AP, File)**

**BY JIM VERTUNO**

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Texas A&M University reached a \$1 million settlement Thursday with a Black journalism professor whose hiring was sabotaged by backlash over her past work promoting diversity.

The nation's largest public school agreed to pay Kathleen McElroy and apologized to her while admitting "mistakes were made during the hiring process."

Texas A&M, which is located in College Station, about 90 miles (144 kilometers) northwest of Houston, initially welcomed McElroy with great fanfare to revive its journalism department in June. A former New York Times editor and Texas A&M alum, McElroy had overseen the journalism school at A&M's rival — the more liberal University of Texas at Austin.

But McElroy told the Texas Tribune last month that soon after her hiring, she learned of emerging internal pushback from then-unidentified individuals over her past work to improve diversity and inclusion in newsrooms.

According to investigation documents released Thursday, those individuals included at least six board of regents members who began “asking questions and raising concerns about McElroy’s hiring” after Texas Scorecard, a right-leaning website, highlighted her past diversity, equity and inclusion work.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Mark Mittelstadt.

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## ***She paid a fortune for her town’s paper. Years of turmoil followed.*** (Washington Post via MSN)

**By Paul Farhi**

For two decades, the strong-willed and litigious McCaw battled politicians and bureaucrats, local merchants, a former lover and even her own journalists. The paper’s demise is “the loudest and most self-inflicted death rattle in journalistic history,” wrote Nick Welsh, the longtime columnist for the weekly Santa Barbara Independent. McCaw once sued the Independent, too. (She received an undisclosed settlement for a copyright infringement claim.)

Santa Barbarans barely knew McCaw when she paid a reported \$110 million to buy the News-Press from the New York Times Co. Photos of her were rare. Until she emerged as a bidder against three corporations, the newspaper hadn’t written a word about her.

Within months, however, she was making news for a legal squabble with her former fiancé and business partner, Gregory Parker, who claimed she had reneged on a financial agreement after he began a relationship with another woman. (An arbitrator ordered McCaw to pay \$14.9 million; a court later slashed the award to \$2 million.) McCaw also launched a protracted fight with the California Coastal Commission, which pressed her to open public access to a beach beneath her bluff-top estate in the exclusive Hope Ranch area. (She appealed its decisions up to the Supreme Court; she lost).

Despite pledging to preserve the paper’s independence and integrity, McCaw quickly turned its moderate editorial pages — which had won a Pulitzer Prize in 1962 for exposing the extremism of the John Birch Society — into a forum for her libertarian politics and private crusades. The paper inveighed against the Coastal Commission and elected officials who had crossed her. One editorial described three Democratic women who were elected to office as the “Twisted Sisters.” Another advocated a pet cause for McCaw, a committed vegetarian and animal rights activist: replacing turkey on Thanksgiving with rice and beans.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Mike Feinsilber, Doug Pizac, Scott Charton.

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## ***Agence France-Presse news agency sues Elon Musk's X for refusing to pay*** (Washington Post)

By JULIAN MARK

Agence France-Presse, the French news service, said Wednesday that it is taking legal action against Elon Musk's X, alleging that the social media company, formerly known as Twitter, is refusing to negotiate payment terms for the agency's news content.

In 2019, France adopted sweeping European Union copyright rules that force social media companies to pay publishers for certain types of content. Google has agreed to pay French publishers for news content after months of negotiations.

"These rights were established to enable news agencies and publishers to be remunerated by digital platforms which retain most of the monetary value generated by the distribution of news content," the agency said in its statement.

In a tweet on Wednesday, Musk called the lawsuit "bizarre."

"They want us to pay \*them\* for traffic to their site where they make advertising revenue and we don't!?" he wrote on the platform, which he purchased in October.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Lindel Hutson.

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## ***Interviewing Netanyahu is a unique challenge***

DAN PERRY

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has been on a blitz of foreign media interviews in recent days, appearing on CNN, NBC, ABC and Fox. The purpose has been to diminish global shock at his project of turning Israel into an authoritarian democracy where rights, contracts, and due process exist at the will of the executive.

It has been a stunning display of mendacity that clearly assumes ignorance on the part of faraway interviewers, as Netanyahu avoids local media and foreign correspondents based in Israel.

Netanyahu's fundamental narrative is that it is no big deal to remove the Supreme Court's ability to carry out judicial oversight of government actions based on the long-established "reasonableness" standard—that this was a tweak, almost cosmetic and practically benign, aimed at restoring "balance" between the executive and the judiciary that had gone haywire (a "minor correction," he called it on ABC).

The truth is that the reasonableness standard, a cornerstone of the legal systems in countries with Common Law judicial traditions from Great Britain to New Zealand (including India, Singapore, South Africa, and others), is critical to discouraging rampant corruption, cronyism and patronage of the kind Netanyahu's coalition barely

hides its plans for. And the law passed went much farther than even the harshest critics of the Supreme Court ever imagined: instead of trimming away judicial intervention in policy issues thought best left to the Cabinet, or appointment of ministers, the law simply eliminated the reasonableness standard, period.

Read more [here](#).

## Today in History - Aug. 4, 2023



By The Associated Press

Today is Friday, Aug. 4, the 216th day of 2023. There are 149 days left in the year.

### Today's Highlight in History

On Aug. 4, 1944, 15-year-old diarist Anne Frank was arrested with her sister, parents and four others by the Gestapo after hiding for two years inside a building in Amsterdam. (Anne and her sister, Margot, died at the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp.)

### On this date:

In 1790, the U.S. Coast Guard had its beginnings as President George Washington signed a measure authorizing a group of revenue cutters to enforce tariff and trade laws and prevent smuggling.

In 1830, plans for the city of Chicago were laid out.

In 1916, the United States reached agreement with Denmark to purchase the Danish Virgin Islands for \$25 million.

In 1936, Jesse Owens of the United States won the second of his four gold medals at the Berlin Olympics as he prevailed in the long jump over German Luz Long, who was the first to congratulate him.

In 1964, the bodies of missing civil rights workers Michael Schwerner, Andrew Goodman and James Chaney were found buried in an earthen dam in Mississippi.

In 1972, Arthur Bremer was convicted and sentenced in Upper Marlboro, Maryland, to 63 years in prison for his attempt on the life of Alabama Gov. George C. Wallace (the sentence was later reduced to 53 years; Bremer was released from prison in 2007).

In 1977, President Jimmy Carter signed a measure establishing the Department of Energy.

In 1987, the Federal Communications Commission voted 4-0 to abolish the Fairness Doctrine, which required radio and television stations to present balanced coverage of controversial issues.

In 1993, a federal judge sentenced Los Angeles police officers Stacey Koon and Laurence Powell to 2 1/2 years in prison for violating Rodney King's civil rights.

In 2009, North Korean leader Kim Jong Il pardoned American journalists Laura Ling and Euna Lee for entering the country illegally and ordered their release during a surprise visit by former U.S. President Bill Clinton.

In 2019, a masked gunman fired on revelers enjoying summer nightlife in a popular entertainment district of Dayton, Ohio, leaving nine people dead and 27 wounded; police said officers shot and killed the shooter within 30 seconds of the start of his rampage.

In 2020, nearly 3,000 tons of ammonium nitrate that had been improperly stored for years in the port of Beirut, Lebanon, exploded, killing more than 200 people, injuring more than 6,000 and devastating nearby neighborhoods; it was one of the largest non-nuclear explosions ever recorded.

Ten years ago: Security forces closed roads, put up extra blast walls and increased patrols near some of the more than 20 U.S. diplomatic missions in the Muslim world that Washington had ordered closed for the weekend following warnings of a possible al-Qaida attack. Missy Franklin claimed her record sixth gold medal on the final day of the world championships in Barcelona, becoming the most successful female swimmer ever at a world meet. American Stacy Lewis won the Women's British Open, finishing with a pair of birdies and closing with an even-par 72. Pro Football Hall of Famer Art Donovan, 89, died in Baltimore.

Five years ago: A utility worker was killed in a vehicle-related accident near a Northern California wildfire, becoming the seventh person to die amid the immense blaze that had been burning for two weeks near Redding. Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro dodged what officials described as an assassination attempt when drones armed with explosives detonated as he delivered a speech to hundreds of soldiers.

One year ago: A Texas jury ordered conspiracy theorist Alex Jones to pay more than \$4 million in compensatory damages to the parents of a 6-year-old boy who was killed in the 2012 Sandy Hook Elementary School massacre over the Jones' repeated public claims that the attack was a hoax. The jury's decision marked the first time the



Infowars host had been held financially liable for falsely claiming that the attack that killed 20 children and six educators in Newtown, Connecticut, was staged. U.S. basketball star Brittney Griner was convicted in Russia of drug possession and smuggling, and was sentenced to nine years in prison in a politically charged case. (Griner would be released in a prisoner exchange four months later.)

Today's Birthdays: Actor-singer Tina Cole is 80. Football Hall of Famer John Riggins is 74. Former Attorney General Alberto Gonzales is 68. Actor-screenwriter Billy Bob Thornton is 68. Actor Kym Karath (Film: "The Sound of Music") is 65. Hall of Fame track star Mary Decker Slaney is 65. Actor Lauren Tom is 64. Former President Barack Obama is 62. Retired MLB All-Star pitcher Roger Clemens is 61. Actor Crystal Chappell is 58. Author Dennis Lehane is 58. Actor Daniel Dae Kim is 55. Actor Michael DeLuise is 54. Former race car driver Jeff Gordon is 52. Rapper-actor Yo-Yo is 52. R&B singer-actor Marques Houston is 42. Britain's Duchess of Sussex, the former actor Meghan Markle, is 42. Actor Abigail Spencer is 42. Actor/director Greta Gerwig is 40. Country singer Crystal Bowersox (TV: "American Idol") is 38. Actors Dylan and Cole Sprouse are 31. Singer Jessica Sanchez (TV: "American Idol") is 28.

## Got a story or photos to share?

Connecting is a daily newsletter published Monday through Friday that reaches more than 1,800 retired and former Associated Press employees, present-day employees, and news industry and journalism school colleagues. It began in 2013. 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:

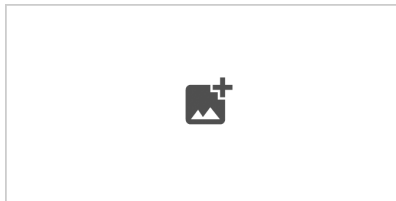
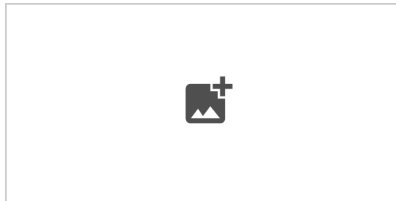
- **Connecting "selfies"** - a word and photo self-profile of you and your career, and what you are doing today. Both for new members and those who have been with us a while.

- **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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