

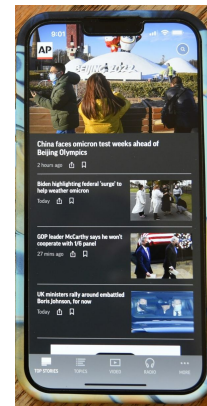
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# Connecting

Aug. 8, 2023

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Colleagues,

Good Tuesday morning on this Aug. 8, 2023,

**Did you know retired AP writer Vedder Stevens?**

Connecting received this email from Ivan Kent Steinke of Alliance, Neb.:

I am working on a writing project about the life of my grandfather's cousin, Willam Vedder Stevens. Vedder Stevens first worked as personal assistant to NBC sportscaster Bill Stern in the 1940s, and then in the early 1950s came to work in the New York bureau of the AP. If I understand correctly, cousin Vedder worked for the AP from the early 50s to the early 1970s. I would like to find individuals who worked with Vedder, who knew him, and who could share memories of his life and career.

If you knew him and can help, contact Steinke at - [thelmarosedog@yahoo.com](mailto:thelmarosedog@yahoo.com)

The lead story in today's Stories of Interest covers the death of **Bob Giles**, longtime Detroit News editor and publisher and a former president of the Associated Press

Managing Editors. If you have a favorite memory of Bob, please share.

**WORKING WITH MEMBERS:** In his look-back at covering a tragic Nebraska accident 47 years ago, our colleague **John Willis** mentions covering the story with an AP member from the McCook newspaper. Got an experience to share in teaming with members to get the story told? It was something that made AP unique, that teamwork that happened so often (long ago?). I hope you will share.

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

Paul

## More on web sites

[Robert Ingle](#) - Jerry Cipriano's question (in Monday's Connecting) about who writes headlines for social media accounts for major news outlets and are there editors rings true for me.

The "wing" example he gives questions objectivity. I see errors in grammar, spelling and basic journalism— like calling a homicide "murder" before any trial is held.

Since there are plenty of unemployed writers and editors who want to work and have experience to contribute, why these organizations tolerate the amateurish performance in their name is a mystery. Maybe the people running them don't know any better.

## Remembering a tragic accident in Nebraska - 47 years ago today

[John Willis](#) - It's been 47 years, but I still remember most of what happened on this date in 1976, and it was not a good day. It was before the advent of cell phones and laptops, so things were tougher to cover, but we did it just the same.

We lived in Omaha, where I was the state editor. As I got up that Sunday morning, nothing seemed unusual. What I didn't know was that I would not sleep in my own bed again for another five days and nights.

That afternoon my wife and I got into a terrible argument about something. Oddly, I don't remember what it was about, but I left the house with my golf clubs and tried to calm myself by taking it out on golf balls at an executive course near our house.

As I played the sixth or seventh hole, I was feeling kind of bad about what had happened when I saw a woman and a child running up the fairway towards me. At first, I thought it was my wife, but as they got closer I saw that it was my boss' wife, Marles Nicholls and their daughter, Lisa Jule.

All I could think was something awful happened to my wife and two children. Something awful happened alright, but it was not at my house. It was in Stratton, Nebraska, that morning.

A church school bus headed for Sunday school in that tiny town was crossing a railroad when it was hit by a unit train carrying coal from Wyoming.

I rushed with Marles and Lisa Jule and got home to find my wife had packed a bag for me, and I grabbed a carton of Marlboros. It was going to be a day like no other, and I was going to need those smokes to help me through.

Ed Nicholls, Omaha correspondent, had chartered a private plane for me to fly to McCook, Neb., where a rental car was waiting, along with a reporter for the AP member newspaper, McCook Gazette.

We went directly to the site of the accident, which had been cleaned up by then, so I didn't have to stomach the pain of seeing dead children and a mangled bus. The pain would come later as I talked with many residents. In a small town like that, about 500 residents back then and fewer than 400 today, everyone knows everyone, so the accident was felt by all. For the first time in my life, I had to cover the funerals of all the victims, and the tiny caskets in the local school gym brought tears to my eyes.

The story from the AP's AAA wire, which is the main wire for national and international news to newspapers and other associate members, got front page play in the Lincoln Star on Aug. 9, 1976.

Click on [this link](#) to see and read the story. If it is not readable, click the link at the bottom of the page to "read the story." When that comes up there are buttons in the upper right corner that allow you to enlarge the story to more easily read it and you can navigate with your cursor.

I also found this [blog link](#) written in 2015 as a memoir. The author had access to the hearings which were held to determine the cause of the accident, so the testimony long after the accident could be added. The most "local color" I could get for the story the day of the accident was the bright sun shining off the cellophane wrapping of red, green and yellow lollipops from the bus that were strewn along the tracks.

## Rockin' After Retirement



**Jeff Baenen performing on keyboards at Rock Camp Experience Rockabilly Camp at Outtakes Bar & Grill in New Hope, Minnesota, on April 16, 2023. He is on the left in above. Photos by Laura Baenen.**

**Jeff Baenen** - Sept. 1 marks three years since I retired after 42 years with AP. One of my goals in retirement is to do things I never had time for while I was working. This spring, I scratched my itch to play in a rock band, something I had not done since my garage band days.



At AP I wrote about Rock Camp for Dads (now known as The Rock Camp Experience (RCX) <https://rockcampexperience.com>), which allows you to unleash your Inner Hendrix (my AP video is on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CWjU9hzdaYo>). You are thrown together with other amateur musicians at the same skill level in a four-week camp at the soundproof RCX building in a Minneapolis suburb. I auditioned on keyboards and electric guitar and was found to be at mid-level on keys. I joined the Rockabilly Camp and after four weekly rehearsals, my fellow campers and I were on stage at a Twin Cities cinema bar and grill, playing a free gig on April 16.

We played a brisk set including the Stray Cats' "Rock This Town," Jerry Lee Lewis' "Breathless" and Queen's "Crazy Little Thing Called Love." Two other acts followed us.

We got a good reception, and my 91-year-old mother-in-law who attended said I was excellent.

I had not been on a musical stage for years, and enjoyed the chance to step outside my comfort zone. I encourage all AP retirees to do the same!

Click [here](#) for a video taken by Laura Baenen of the performance.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This story is repeated from Monday's issue to correct spelling of Baenen.

## Paul McCartney - Washington, D.C.

[Robert Meyers](#) - I was in London last Tuesday before flying back to the States on Wednesday and went to see the [Paul McCartney photo exhibit](#) at the National Portrait Gallery.

There were a lot of great behind-the-scenes shots of the very young men from Liverpool at the start of their global rise to stardom. I was particularly intrigued by Paul's shots of New York and Miami but I stopped and studied the shots of Washington, D.C., where I've lived since transferring from AP Photos in London to the State Photo Center in Washington in June 1997.

There was a shot of the White House in snow taken from a car when you could drive down Pennsylvania Avenue (you're lucky if you can walk by these days as the area is regularly closed). One frame is a street scene with a man leaning out the window of a car with camera pointed at the viewer. I recognized the tall smokestack and the towers of Georgetown University and the gas station at left. Out for a bicycle ride on Sunday, I went to the area and found the general location of the shot on Virginia Avenue near the Watergate. In Paul's frame, it hadn't been built yet. I rode past this location hundreds of times commuting to and from the AP office on K Street as crossing Virginia Avenue and turning left picked up the path in front of the Kennedy Center crossing the Roosevelt Bridge on out to Virginia. If I'm around, I'll go back in the winter and move back up the hill to where the smokestack and towers line up.

Perhaps some Connecting colleagues who were in D.C. in 1964 might remember something from the Beatles first concert in the U.S. at the Coliseum, now an REI store under NY Avenue flyover.

## Watch the teeth





[Jeff Widener](#) - IQUITOS, Peru August 6, 2023 - Before taking a longboat to our jungle lodge at the Amazon River, Corinna and I went piranha fishing on one of the tributaries. Right after this photo, the little carnivore slipped off the line and flopped around between my legs. Screams were heard across the river and even Corinna was scared.

## Today's Headline

GREAT FALLS TRIBUNE

# Black bear shot and killed by man in his living room

Shared by Len Iwanski

## Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



[Jeff Baenen](#)

[Steve Crowley](#)

## Stories of interest

*Former Detroit News editor and publisher Bob Giles, who led paper to a Pulitzer, dies at 90* (Detroit News)





**By Mark Hicks**

Former Detroit News editor and publisher Bob Giles — who led the paper to a Pulitzer Prize, the highest honor in journalism, and spent decades shaping newsrooms across the country — died Monday, his daughter said. He was 90.

Giles, who died in a hospice facility in Traverse City, had been battling metastatic melanoma, his family said.

"My dad loved The Detroit News and all his colleagues," Mr. Giles' daughter, Megan Cooney, said Monday. "In fact, he asked to wear his Detroit News watch at the end. ... He will be sadly missed."

Mr. Giles spent 11 years at The Detroit News, from 1986-97, and left an indelible mark as well as having an impact on hundreds of journalists across the country and world after he left the newspaper and led nonprofit free speech and journalism programs.

In 1994, Lansing Bureau reporters Jim Mitzelfeld and Eric Freedman won the Pulitzer Prize in beat reporting for exposing embezzlement and nepotism in the Michigan Legislature's House Fiscal Agency. The scandal led to 10 criminal convictions in state and federal court.

Detroit News stories revealed political influence in the award of state contracts and led to tougher oversight of the nonpartisan agency that analyzes tax, budget and other issues for the state House of Representatives.

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

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## ***Daily Herald (Provo, Utah) celebrates 150 years of daily newspaper publishing*** (Editor and Publisher)

By Genelle Pugmire

It is not often a newspaper, or any business for that matter, can celebrate 150 years of consecutive service to its community, but now the Daily Herald can.

“Through all the diversity that newspapers have gone through over the past years, the Daily Herald has continued to cover the news of Provo and Utah County with professionalism and with great effort to keep our communities informed and entertained. We are proud, after 150 years, to still be a part of this thriving community,” said Jim Konig, publisher.

The paper, then known as the Daily Times, was first published Aug. 1, 1873, and was the first paper in Provo, a part of the Utah Territory. For perspective, the Daily Herald started printing just about three years before Custer’s Last Stand and two years before the Brigham Young Academy opened.

The Daily Times was founded by R. G. Sleater, Robert T. McEwan, Oscar F. Lyons and Joseph T. McEwan. The Daily Herald is the second-oldest business still running in Provo; only Berg Mortuary is older.

The publication went through a variety of names through the end of the 1800s and early 1900s. It became the Daily Herald when James G. Scripps, eldest son of newspaper magnate E.W. Scripps, purchased it in 1926. Scripps held ownership until 1996 when it was purchased by Pulitzer. In 2005, it was purchased by Lee Enterprises and it was then sold in 2016 to current owner Ogden Newspapers Inc. based in Wheeling, West Virginia.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Linda Deutsch.

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## ***New York Times is investigating its Baghdad bureau chief*** (Semafor)

By Max Tani

The New York Times fired its second Baghdad bureau chief in five years in a bizarre saga that has infuriated some of the paper’s staff in the Middle East.

Three people with knowledge of the situation told Semafor that Jane Arraf was put on leave earlier this year amid an investigation by the paper into whether she misused the bureau’s funds. Two people with knowledge of the situation said that among the issues the Times examined was Arraf’s decision to pay non-US journalists over the paper’s \$150 a day limit, a cap that has prompted grumbling in at the Times’ foreign

bureaus in recent years, including at its office in Baghdad. Arraf has privately disputed that her spending within the bureau was improper.

Arraf is a veteran of the CNN Iraq bureau, who began work there in 1998 and was for a time the only Western correspondent in the country. She joined the Times in 2020, but clashed with management when the paper ordered her to cut costs by firing some non-US staff working in the bureau.

Arraf pushed back against the moves, and according to two people with knowledge, even suggested to some bureau staff that they look into whether the Times' decision may have violated local Iraqi laws.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Richard Chady, Len Iwanski.

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## ***Held Together - A filmmaker was producing a documentary series on the Iran hostage crisis. Then her father went missing overseas.*** (Atavist Magazine)

By Lucy Sexton and Joe Sexton

Lucy:

I am the daughter of a newspaperman.

Throughout my life, I've used a version of this sentence to talk about myself: in college application essays and internship cover letters, on first dates, and now in this story. At 32 years of age, my pride in stating what is a core fact of my existence hasn't diminished.

My dad, Joe Sexton, began his career as a sportswriter at the City Sun in Brooklyn, New York. One of his earliest stories was about the Rikers Island Olympics. He later covered a young Mike Tyson; he sat ringside, and had the blood on his clothes to prove it. When he made it to the sports desk at The New York Times, he spent years terrorizing the Mets and their ownership for crimes of mediocrity and incompetence.

Then, at 34, Joe was suddenly a single father of two daughters. I was just shy of three at the time. If memory can be trusted, I have a few vivid images—random snapshots captured through my toddler's eyes—of the good and the bad: my tiny cowboy boots against shimmering asphalt; a stash of candies in a porcelain pitcher; being in a dark, frightening hotel room. When it became clear that my mother had demons she would need to wrestle with alone, Joe gained custody of me and my sister.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Richard Chady.

## **Today in History - Aug. 8, 2023**



### By The Associated Press

Today is Tuesday, Aug. 8, the 220th day of 2023. There are 145 days left in the year.

#### Today's Highlight in History:

On Aug. 8, 1974, President Richard Nixon, facing damaging new revelations in the Watergate scandal, announced he would resign the following day.

#### On this date:

In 1814, during the War of 1812, peace talks between the United States and Britain began in Ghent, Belgium.

In 1815, Napoleon Bonaparte set sail for St. Helena to spend the remainder of his days in exile.

In 1861, biologist William Bateson, founder of the science of genetics, was born in Whitby, Yorkshire, England.

In 1911, President William Howard Taft signed a measure raising the number of U.S. representatives from 391 to 433, effective with the next Congress, with a proviso to add two more when New Mexico and Arizona became states.

In 1942, during World War II, six Nazi saboteurs who were captured after landing in the U.S. were executed in Washington, D.C.; two others who cooperated with authorities were spared.

In 1945, President Harry S. Truman signed the U.S. instrument of ratification for the United Nations Charter. The Soviet Union declared war against Japan during World War II.

In 1953, the United States and South Korea initialed a mutual security pact.

In 1963, Britain's "Great Train Robbery" took place as thieves made off with 2.6 million pounds in banknotes.

In 1973, Vice President Spiro T. Agnew branded as “damned lies” reports he had taken kickbacks from government contracts in Maryland, and vowed not to resign — which he ended up doing.

In 1994, Israel and Jordan opened the first road link between the once-warring countries.

In 2000, the wreckage of the Confederate submarine H.L. Hunley, which sank in 1864 after attacking the Union ship Housatonic, was recovered off the South Carolina coast and returned to port.

In 2009, Sonia Sotomayor was sworn in as the U.S. Supreme Court’s first Hispanic and third female justice.

Ten years ago: The U.S. sharply escalated its drone war in Yemen, with military officials in the Arab country reporting three strikes that left a dozen dead. Actor Karen Black, 74, who was featured in such counterculture favorites as “Easy Rider,” “Five Easy Pieces” and “Nashville,” died in Los Angeles. Opera singer Regina Resnik, 90, died in New York.

Five years ago: The United States announced that it would impose new sanctions on Russia for illegally using a chemical weapon in an attempt to kill a former spy and his daughter in Britain. Australian golfer Jarrod Lyle died at the age of 36 after a long battle with cancer. A Montana coroner said the death of “Superman” actor Margot Kidder had been ruled a suicide from a drug and alcohol overdose.

One year ago: Former President Donald Trump said the FBI conducted a search of his Mar-a-Lago estate as the Justice Department investigated the discovery of boxes of records containing classified information that were taken to Mar-a-Lago after Trump’s presidency ended. The white father and son convicted of murder in Ahmaud Arbery’s fatal shooting after they chased the 25-year-old Black man through a Georgia neighborhood were sentenced to life in prison for committing a federal hate crime. The killing in February 2020 had become part of a larger national reckoning over racial injustice. Olivia Newton-John, the Grammy-winning superstar who reigned on pop, country, adult contemporary and dance charts with such hits as “Physical” and “You’re the One That I Want,” died at age 73.

Today’s Birthdays: Actor Nita Talbot is 93. Actor Dustin Hoffman is 86. Actor Connie Stevens is 85. Country singer Phil Balsley (The Statler Brothers) is 84. Actor Larry Wilcox is 76. Actor Keith Carradine is 74. Movie director Martin Brest is 72. Radio-TV personality Robin Quivers is 71. U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin is 70. Percussionist Anton Fig is 70. Actor Donny Most is 70. Rock musician Dennis Drew (10,000 Maniacs) is 66. TV personality Deborah Norville is 65. Rock musician The Edge (U2) is 62. Rock musician Rikki Rockett (Poison) is 62. Rapper Kool Moe Dee is 61. Middle distance runner Suzy Favor Hamilton is 55. Rock singer Scott Stapp is 50. Country singer Mark Wills is 50. Actor Kohl Sudduth is 49. Rock musician Tom Linton (Jimmy Eat World) is 48. Singer JC Chasez (’N Sync) is 47. Actor Tawny Cypress is 47. R&B singer Drew Lachey (lah-SHAY’) (98 Degrees) is 47. R&B singer Marsha Ambrosius is 46. Actor Lindsay Sloane is 46. Actor Countess Vaughn is 45. Actor Michael Urie is 43. Tennis player Roger Federer is 42. Actor Meagan Good is 42. Actor Jackie Cruz (TV:

"Orange is the New Black") is 39. Britain's Princess Beatrice of York is 35. Actor Ken Baumann is 34. New York Yankees first baseman Anthony Rizzo is 34. Pop singer Shawn Mendes is 25.

## 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.



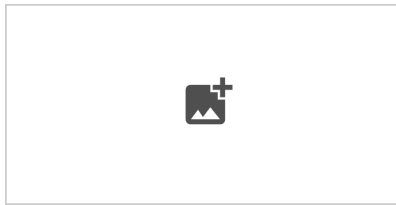
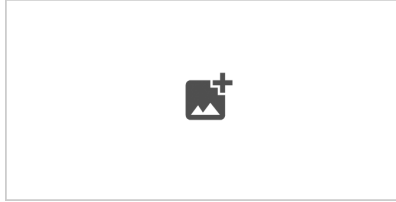
Got a story to share? A favorite memory of your AP days? Don't keep them to yourself. Share with your colleagues by sending to Ye Olde Connecting Editor. And don't forget to include photos!

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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