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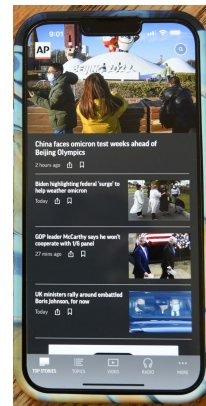
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Connecting

Aug. 9, 2023

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Colleagues,

Good Wednesday morning on this Aug. 9, 2023,

Connecting extends congratulations to **Kat Stafford**, a national investigative writer with The Associated Press, who has been named the recipient of the National Press Club Journalism Institute’s 2023 Neil and Susan Sheehan Award for Investigative Journalism.

And we extend thanks to **Dorothy Abernathy**, longtime AP Richmond chief of bureau, for getting the ball rolling with her memory of a great example from her working days of AP staff and members worked closely together in covering major stories. We look forward to your own story.

In my Spotlight column last Saturday in my hometown newspaper, The Messenger, I focused on three family-owned jewelry businesses that once thrived for decades in downtown Fort Dodge, Iowa. The last of the three to remain open is closing its doors any day now. The story brought back waves of nostalgia among readers of Fort Dodge Facebook sites. Click [here](#) to view.

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

Paul

An AP member going above and beyond to get a story to the world

[Dorothy Abernathy](#) - Back in the late 80s, I was sent to cover a plane crash in a wilderness area of Shenandoah National Park. Fourteen people died. AP Photographer Steve Helber of Richmond had a strong relationship with the photo staff of the newspaper in the area – the Daily News Record of Harrisonburg. The Harrisonburg staff also wanted to get to the site and was happy to work with us.

The newspaper hired someone familiar with the area to guide us to the site, which was up a mountain. This was pre-cell phones, but one of the newspaper's photographers had a walkie talkie that he could use to communicate with the paper's circulation department. We began our hike in the middle of the night and got to the site before dawn. Law enforcement authorities were stunned when we arrived. I was able to borrow the walkie talkie and dictate a story to someone in the paper's circulation department. She, in turn, called the Richmond bureau and read my story to a member of the Richmond staff, who took it down. There was only one error in the dictation. The first letter of a state trooper's last name was wrong. (As I recall, a "b" was thought to be a "v," or vice versa.)

It was an absolutely incredible example of member cooperation. It was inconceivable at that time to be able to dictate a story from a mountaintop. There was no way we would have gotten to the site without Harrisonburg's photo staff, and we couldn't have gotten the story on the wire without help from the circulation department employee.

**Kat Stafford of The Associated Press
honored with Sheehan Award for
Investigative Journalism from National
Press Club Journalism Institute**



National Press Club Journalism Institute news release

Kat Stafford, a national investigative writer with The Associated Press, will receive the National Press Club Journalism Institute's 2023 Neil and Susan Sheehan Award for Investigative Journalism.

Stafford is a leading voice on representation and equity; her investigative work analyzes how structural racism has fueled inequity through the lens of politics, government, health, and environmental justice. Among her journalistic work this year, she reported and published a series exploring how the legacy of racism in America has laid the foundation for health inequities Black people face throughout their lives.

"The Institute is pleased to recognize such deep reporting that puts a face on racial equity issues that so many people seem to want to brush aside," Journalism Institute President Gil Klein said. "Kat's vision and reporting in this year's 'From Birth to Death' series, which examined health care inequities for Black families in five communities throughout the country, added to her career accomplishments representing the best of investigative journalism."

Stafford joined the AP in February 2020 to cover the intersection of race and politics. Two weeks into her new role, COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic, transforming her work to look at the pandemic's disparate impact on Black and other communities of color, the racial justice movement, and the presidential election.

Prior to joining the AP, Stafford was an investigative reporter at the Detroit Free Press. Her reporting there prompted city legislation, policy changes, congressional reviews, and federal and state investigations. She is a 2021-22 University of Michigan Knight-Wallace Fellowship alumni; a 2019 Ida B. Wells Investigative Fellow; and a 2016 Fellow of the Loyola Law School, Los Angeles' Journalist Law School.

"I am thrilled and honored to receive this incredible award," Stafford said. "Throughout my career, I have worked to shed light on structural racism and inequities that continue to impact Black Americans and people of color across our nation. This honor reaffirms the vital need for investigative journalism to remain committed to telling these truths in an unflinching, truthful manner."

Since publication, Stafford's five-part, multiformat project has received widespread praise from readers, medical professionals, journalists, and more. The project was also published and featured prominently in newspapers across the country by AP newsroom customers. Stafford has been featured in several TV and radio interviews, including NPR's Morning Edition show and BBC News. The families featured throughout the project heralded the series, sharing that for the first time in their lives, they "felt seen" through Stafford's work.

"Kat has long been a leader in using the power of investigative reporting to tell the stories of the marginalized, from the disproportionate impact of the COVID pandemic on communities of color to how structural racism continues to impact the everyday lives of these communities — in everything from the military to the health care system," said Ron Nixon, AP Vice President, News and Head of Investigations, Enterprise, Partnerships and Grants. "We are honored to see her work recognized by the National Press Club Journalism Institute with the Neil and Susan Sheehan Award for Investigative Journalism."

Stafford's history of service to representation in journalism and investigative reporting includes leadership roles with the Investigative Reporters and Editors' Board of Directors, the National Association of Black Journalists, the SPJ Detroit chapter, and the board of Eastern Michigan University's student newspaper, The Eastern Echo. Stafford has made several television appearances and regularly hosts panel discussions and trainings about race in America.

Each year, the Neil and Susan Sheehan Award for Investigative Journalism recognizes work that best reflects the Sheehans' extraordinary commitment to the principle that a vibrant democracy depends on an informed citizenry and a free press. The award promotes the practice of investigative journalism exemplifying compassion, courage, and integrity.

The Institute will confer the 2023 Sheehan Award during its annual Fourth Estate Award Gala later this fall.

The gala is a fundraiser for the Journalism Institute, the nonprofit affiliate of the National Press Club. Financial support for the Sheehan Award is provided by a generous endowment from long-time friends of the Sheehans who wish to remain anonymous. Neil Sheehan was the author of "A Bright Shining Lie," which won the National Book Award and the Pulitzer Prize for nonfiction in 1989. Susan Sheehan was the author of eight works of nonfiction. In 1983, she received a Pulitzer Prize for "Is There No Place on Earth For Me?"

The Sheehan Award was given in 2022 to PBS FRONTLINE's Local Journalism Initiative, in 2021 to The Marshall Project, a nonprofit news organization covering the U.S. criminal justice system; and in 2020 to Ed Yong, the staff writer at The Atlantic who has shaped our collective understanding of the coronavirus and its impact.

The National Press Club Journalism Institute promotes an engaged global citizenry through an independent and free press, and equips journalists with skills and standards to inform the public in ways that inspire a more representative democracy. As the nonprofit affiliate of the National Press Club, the Institute powers journalism in the public interest.

Click [here](#) for link to this story. Shared by Myron Belkind.

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.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: This item repeated from Tuesday to include photo.)

Nomaan Merchant named US politics editor

In a memo to staff on Tuesday, Washington Bureau Chief Anna Johnson and Deputy Washington Bureau Chief Steven Sloan announced a key appointment:

We are thrilled to announce that Nomaan Merchant will take on a new assignment as U.S. politics editor, a role that is central to the AP's mission of providing comprehensive, nonpartisan coverage of U.S. politics and elections.

Nomaan is well known inside the AP, where he's held a variety of critical reporting roles over the past decade. He's covered law enforcement in Dallas and worked as a general assignment reporter in Beijing. He returned to Texas to cover immigration and border affairs from Houston. More recently, he has worked in the Washington bureau since 2021, focusing on intelligence and national security reporting.



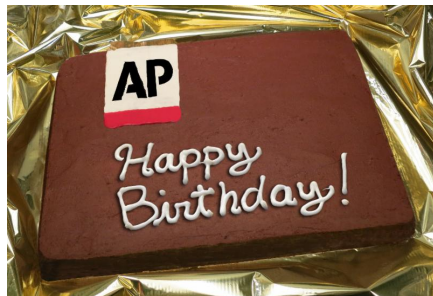
This blend of domestic and international experience puts Nomaan in a strong position to tackle this challenging assignment: helping shape coverage of U.S. politics heading into next year's presidential election. In this role, he will work closely with teams in Washington, U.S. News and international bureaus to produce a newsy, sophisticated political report.

Nomaan joins a team of strong politics editors, including Ashley Thomas, who will continue her focus on breaking news and explanatory journalism, and Tom Verdin, the democracy news editor. Deputy Washington Bureau Chief Steven Sloan will continue to oversee the AP's coverage overall of U.S. politics, elections and democracy.

Please join us in congratulating Nomaan on his new role! He will start on Aug. 21.

Click [here](#) for link to this story.

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



[Mark Elias](#)

Stories of interest

Over 90 Reporters Questioned Or Arrested In Iran Since Protests: Media (AFP via Batton's)

By AFP - Agence France Presse

Iranian authorities have questioned or arrested over 90 journalists since nationwide protests rocked the Islamic republic last year, local media reported Tuesday.

Mass demonstrations erupted in September 2022 following the death in custody of 22-year-old Iranian-Kurd Mahsa Amini, who was arrested for allegedly breaching the Islamic republic's strict dress code for women.

Hundreds of people including security forces were killed and thousands arrested over their participation in what the authorities have described as "riots" fomented by the West.

"More than 90 journalists have been arrested or summoned over the past 10 months in different cities" across the country, according to the reformist Shargh daily, quoting a report by a local committee that supports detained journalists.

Most have been released on bail or granted amnesty, but the fate of 11 journalists, including six detained and five others awaiting verdicts, "is still unknown", said the report published on Iran's National Journalists' Day, celebrated on August 8.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Doug Pizac.

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ESPN strikes \$1.5B deal to jump into sports betting with Penn Entertainment (AP)

BY DAVID HAMILTON

You know ESPN the sports media giant. Now brace yourself for ESPN Bet, a rebranding of an existing sports-betting app owned by Penn Entertainment, which is paying \$1.5 billion plus other considerations for exclusive rights to the ESPN name.

The deal, announced Tuesday, could take Walt Disney Co.-owned ESPN into uncharted waters. Disney is fiercely protective of its family-friendly image, not typically associated with the world of sports gambling.

Penn will operate ESPN Bet, which ESPN has agreed to promote across its online and broadcast platforms in order to generate "maximum fan awareness" of the app. ESPN Bet will also have unspecified "access" to ESPN talent, the companies said.

Penn's rights to the ESPN brand will initially run for a decade and can be extended for another decade by mutual agreement. In addition to the \$1.5 billion licensing deal, which will be paid out over a decade, Penn will also grant ESPN rights worth about \$500 million to purchase shares in Penn.

Read more [here](#).

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Dr. Ray Hiebert, Founding Dean of Merrill College, Passes Away at Age 91

Dr. Ray Eldon Hiebert, founding dean of the University of Maryland's Philip Merrill College of Journalism and an expert on international communication, died Aug. 5 in Carmel, California. He was 91.

The University of Maryland recruited him in 1968 to revamp its journalism department. Four years later, the program was elevated to college status and Hiebert became its first dean. In the following years as a professor, he concentrated on working with graduate students and served as chair or committee member of dozens of master's theses and doctoral dissertations. He continued as dean until 1980. He remained on the faculty until his retirement in 1998 and taught another 10 years on a part-time basis. He was inducted into the Merrill College Hall of Fame in 2023.

"Ray was critical to getting Merrill College to where it is today, and he remained involved, interested and passionate about its mission throughout his life," Merrill College Dean Rafael Lorente said. "I remember Ray as someone who cared deeply about teaching and positioning graduate students to be the journalism educators of the future."

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

-0-

Norway To Fine Meta Nearly \$100,000 A Day For Defying Data Use Ban (NDTV)

Oslo: Norway's data protection agency said Tuesday it would start fining Facebook and Instagram owner Meta nearly \$100,000 per day for defying a ban on using users' personal information to target ads.

The Norwegian watchdog, Datatilsynet, said Meta would be fined one million kroner (\$97,000) per day, starting August 14.

Tobias Judin, head of Datatilsynet's international department, said the fine related to a decision made on July 14, where the agency had temporarily "imposed a ban on behavioural advertising on Facebook and Instagram."

"Meta's behavioural advertising entails intrusive surveillance of its users, negatively impacting their right to data protection and freedom of information," Judin told AFP in an email, adding that there were many vulnerable groups on the platforms, such as "young people, the elderly and people with cognitive disabilities."

Read more [here](#). Shared by Doug Pizac.

Today in History - Aug. 9, 2023



By The Associated Press

Today is Wednesday, Aug. 9, the 221st day of 2023. There are 144 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Aug. 9, 1974, Vice President Gerald R. Ford became the nation's 38th chief executive as President Richard Nixon's resignation took effect.

On this date:

In 1854, Henry David Thoreau's "Walden," which described Thoreau's experiences while living near Walden Pond in Massachusetts, was first published.

In 1934, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed an executive order nationalizing silver.

In 1936, Jesse Owens won his fourth gold medal at the Berlin Olympics as the United States took first place in the 400-meter relay.

In 1944, 258 African-American sailors based at Port Chicago, California, refused to load a munitions ship following a cargo vessel explosion that killed 320 men, many of them Black.

In 1945, three days after the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, Japan, a U.S. B-29 Superfortress code-named Bockscar dropped a nuclear device over Nagasaki, killing an estimated 74,000 people.

In 1969, actor Sharon Tate and four other people were found brutally slain at Tate's Los Angeles home; cult leader Charles Manson and a group of his followers were later convicted of the crime.

In 1982, a federal judge in Washington ordered John W. Hinckley Jr., who'd been acquitted of shooting President Ronald Reagan and three others by reason of insanity, committed to a mental hospital.

In 1988, President Ronald Reagan nominated Lauro Cavazos to be secretary of education; Cavazos became the first Hispanic to serve in the Cabinet.

In 1995, Jerry Garcia, lead singer of the Grateful Dead, died in Forest Knolls, California, of a heart attack at age 53.

In 2004, Oklahoma City bombing conspirator Terry Nichols, addressing a court for the first time, asked victims of the blast for forgiveness as a judge sentenced him to 161 consecutive life sentences.

In 2014, Michael Brown Jr., a Black 18-year-old, was shot to death by a police officer following an altercation in Ferguson, Missouri; Brown's death led to sometimes-violent protests in Ferguson and other U.S. cities, spawning a national "Black Lives Matter" movement.

In 2016, at the Rio Games, Michael Phelps earned the 20th and 21st Olympic gold medals of his career as he won the 200-meter butterfly and anchored the United States to victory in the 4x200 freestyle relay. Katie Ledecky earned her second gold in Rio by winning the 200-meter freestyle. The U.S. women's gymnastics team won gold for a second consecutive Olympics.

Ten years ago: President Barack Obama promised to work with Congress on “appropriate reforms” for the domestic surveillance programs that stirred criticism at home and abroad. President Obama signed into law a measure restoring lower interest rates for student loans. Infamous drug lord Rafael Caro Quintero walked free after 28 years in prison when a Mexican court overturned his 40-year sentence for the 1985 kidnap and killing of U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency agent Enrique Camarena.

Five years ago: Vice President Mike Pence announced plans for a new, separate U.S. Space Force as a sixth military service by 2020. The parents of first lady Melania Trump were sworn in as U.S. citizens; they had been living in the country as permanent residents. Player demonstrations again took place at several early NFL preseason games, with two Philadelphia Eagles players raising their fists during the national anthem. Evacuation orders expanded to 20,000 as a wildfire that had been intentionally set moved perilously close to homes in Southern California.

One year ago: Powerful explosions rocked a Russian air base in Crimea and sent towering clouds of smoke over the landscape in an escalation of the war in Ukraine. Authorities said at least one person was killed and several others were wounded. Police detained what they called a primary suspect in the killings of four Muslim men in Albuquerque, New Mexico, whose deaths sparked fear in Muslim communities nationwide. Mario Fiorentini, Italy’s most decorated resistance fighter during World War II, died at age 103.

Today’s Birthdays: Basketball Hall of Famer Bob Cousy is 95. Tennis Hall of Famer Rod Laver is 85. Jazz musician Jack DeJohnette is 81. Comedian-director David Steinberg is 81. Actor Sam Elliott is 79. Singer Barbara Mason is 76. College Football Hall of Famer and former NFL player John Cappelletti is 71. College Football Hall of Famer and former NFL player Doug Williams is 68. Actor Melanie Griffith is 66. Actor Amanda Bearse is 65. Rapper Kurtis Blow is 64. Sen. Roger Marshall, R-Kan., is 63. Hockey Hall of Famer Brett Hull is 59. TV host Hoda Kotb (KAHT’-bee) is 59. Pro and College Football Hall of Famer Deion Sanders is 56. Actor Gillian Anderson is 55. Actor Eric Bana is 55. Producer-director McG (aka Joseph McGinty Nichol) is 55. NHL player-turned-coach Rod Brind’Amour is 53. TV journalist Chris Cuomo is 53. Actor Thomas Lennon is 53. Rapper Mack 10 is 52. Actor Nikki Schieler Ziering is 52. Latin rock singer Juanes is 51. Actor Liz Vassey is 51. Actor Kevin McKidd is 50. Actor Rhona Mitra (ROH’-nuh MEE’-truh) is 48. Actor Texas Battle is 47. Actor Jessica Capshaw is 47. Actor Ashley Johnson is 40. Actor Anna Kendrick is 38.

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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