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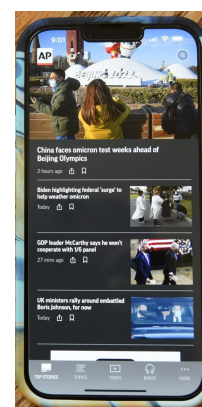
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Connecting

Aug. 11, 2023

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Colleagues,

Good Friday morning on this Aug. 11, 2023,

Cliches – ya can't live with 'em, ya can't live without 'em.

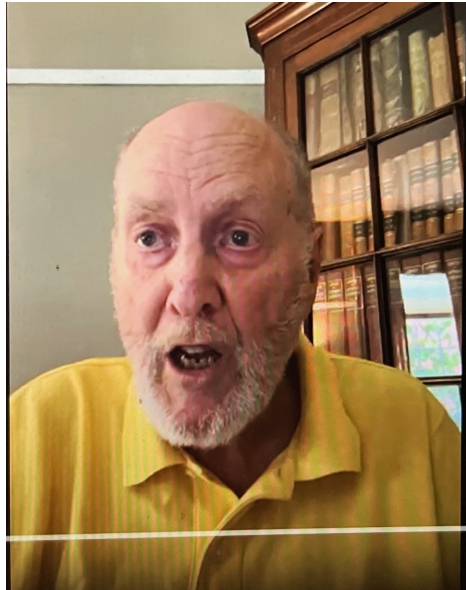
Whoops, the Cliché Police would have arrested me for that lead-in, so without further ado (I did it again!), enjoy the lead article in today's Connecting by our colleague **Mike Doan**.

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

Paul

'Cliches Up the Wazoo'

Mike Doan - When I worked at AP, cliches were strongly discouraged. Later, at U.S. News & World Report and at Kiplinger they were practically required. I have just written a song about this conflict, from the view of a cliché-hating editor and a cliché-loving writer. I think I agree with the writer. Here is [a video](#) and the lyrics.



Cliches Up the Wazoo

As a long-time editor
There is something I must say
Pull out all the stops,
Don't write that old cliché.

You're pushing the envelope.
I won't pull your leg.
These, overworked phrases...
Avoid them like the plague.

Take a tiger by the tail,
Use proper language.
Don't beat around the bush.
You've got me in anguish.

You say it's raining cats and dogs.
Don't cry about spilled milk.
I'll scream bloody murder.
I can't be with your ilk.

So grab the bull by the horns,
And think outside the box.
Remove these wicked words
Or I'll call the cliché cops!

(Change of character)

I'm just a lowly writer
But obedient I am not.
I won't listen to you.
You just don't know squat.

I hear what you say
But I'm sticking with my words.
You say you don't like cliches.
Just say "they're for the birds."

You hit the nail on the head.
You knew I'd blow a gasket

Let's take this stupid ban
And put in a casket.

Yes it's raining cats and dogs
And I can cry about spilled milk.
You can scream bloody murder
or avoid my kind of ilk.

So I'll fight fire with fire
And pull up my socks.
I'll demand my civil rights.
De-fund the cliché cops!

'Ash and debris': Journalist covering Maui fires surveys destruction of once-vibrant Hawaii town



A wasteland of burned-out homes and obliterated communities is left on Thursday, Aug. 10, 2023, in Lahaina, Hawaii, following a stubborn blaze. (AP Photo/Rick Bowmer)

BY TY O'NEIL

LAHAINA, Hawaii (AP) — I've seen my share of a wildfire's destruction on a community, but in more than eight years of covering these disasters as a video and photojournalist, the scene over Hawaii was one of the worst.

Based in Las Vegas, I'm used to being dispatched to wildfires in other places. I flew to Hawaii on Wednesday, and by Thursday morning, I was in a helicopter flying over Lahaina, a normally vibrant west Maui town that draws visitors from all over the world. What struck me the most was the lack of color of the scorched earth sandwiched between glistening blue ocean and deep green-brown mountains in the distance.

No plants or trappings of island life. Just gray.

Street after street after street was nothing but rubble and foundation. Ash and debris.

It was so one-dimensional that it was hard to imagine the scenic town that was once here. King Kamehameha III Elementary School was decimated, a mess of collapsed steel. There was a neighborhood near the water that was completely gone — not a single structure remained.

I couldn't see any active flames amid pockets of wispy smoke.

One sight made me worried and provided a grim clue of the chaos of approaching fire: Charred vehicles in the road along Front Street. They weren't parked on the side of the road. Were drivers actively trying to flee and couldn't? What happened to them?

I'm also a former wildland firefighter. I observed that the area of fire out in the trees and brush seemed very small compared to the amount of the town that was burned. What seemed to be a large majority of the fire was in the town itself. I'm used to seeing something like a 300,000 acre-fire (121,400 hectare-fire) burning down a little town. But this looked to me like a small wildland fire that exploded as it hit homes and businesses.

The fire's reach extended to the ocean. I could see burned ships out in the water, which made me ponder the force of ember-carrying winds.

From above, I also didn't expect to see people. Here and there, people were walking around, seeming to begin assessing the devastation.

Now that officials say the Lahaina fire is 80% contained, perhaps we'll start to see that more than ash gray remains.

Associated Press reporter Jennifer Sinco Kelleher in Honolulu contributed to this report.

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

More memories of Tate-LaBianca killings

[Dan Berger](#) - Linda Deutsch's recollection of the Tate and LaBianca killings brought back my own memories. Almost forgotten was what happened on that Sunday evening in the Los Feliz area of L.A. I had heard a radio report about the LaBianca killings while I was driving to the office. I drove over to the scene. I always kept high-powered binoculars in my car, and the front door of the LaBianca home was open and I could see the hand-written (in blood) scrawlings on the living room wall. I took notes and dashed to a public telephone to call the office (LA-AP). They thanked me for my efforts, but said they already had more details than I could get looking through the front door.

One of our newer staff members at the time was John Philip Sousa (Phil to all of us), who always wore impeccable suits on every shift he worked, had his silver hair scissor-manicured weekly, and drove a Mercedes Benz sports car. He had gotten to the La Bianca home just as the police were arriving, he later told me, and because of how he was dressed and his impeccable Sorbonne manner and European accent, he walked right into the home and the cops never questioned who he was.

If you have never seen a picture of the urbane Mr. Phil Sousa, he has a bit part in the film "Some like it Hot." (He's the elevator operator.)

Working with members to cover a story

[Norm Abelson](#) - Enoch "Charlie" Shenton, city editor of the Concord (N.H.) Monitor, where The AP had its office, worked to help me with coverage on two big stories. Each of them had unusual turns.

It was back sometime in the 1950s when I was awakened by the telephone ringing at three or four in the morning. It was Shenton telling me the police alerted him they had arrested a young man who, just hours before, murdered both his parents and his two siblings – and no one in the media had the story. Needless to say, I was dressed and out the door in minutes.

At headquarters, the police showed me the rifle that had been used, and then I had an exclusive, one-on-one interview with the prisoner, who calmly answered about all my questions. I phoned to AP, with a clear beat, and then filled in Shenton, who had opted to have me cover for him. The man was later found guilty, but further details are foggy.

The second instance involved an ongoing story. The Monitor's operation took all of the first floor, while the UP and AP offices were on the second floor, ours toward the back of the building, away from the street below.

My phone rang; it was Shenton. There's a bank robbery going on, he said. Where, I asked. It's at the bank right across the street, he said. By the time I – along with my pal, UP's Jack Maloy, and Monitor reporters - got there, the robbers had left the scene. But there still was a lot of confusion and interviewing to report on. Further details on this one also elude me. But talk about the story coming to the reporters.

What 40 years of AP election nights does for you...

[Dan Sewell](#) - In my retirement side hustle, I usually write a Sunday politics column for The Cincinnati Enquirer. This Tuesday night, they asked me to write a spot column on Ohio's Issue 1 vote, which would have made it much tougher to pass a November ballot issue on abortion by raising the requirement for passage from simple majority to 60%.

When voters rejected that anti-abortion effort, I had a column out in about 30 minutes.

It did really well in page views and their other metrics and drew this comment from The Enquirer editor: "You AP guys are pretty good on deadline."

That's what 40 years of AP election nights does for you...

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



[Rich Clarkson](#)

[Stephen Smith](#)

On Saturday to...

[Jim Clarke](#)

[Brad Martin](#)

On Sunday to...

[Mike Hendricks](#)

[Deb Peterson](#)

[Ed Tobias](#)

Stories of interest

Iraq bans media from using term ‘homosexuality,’ says they must use ‘sexual deviance’ (Reuters via NBC News)

By Reuters

Iraq’s official media regulator on Tuesday ordered all media and social media companies operating in the Arab state not to use the term “homosexuality” and instead to say “sexual deviance,” a government spokesperson said and a document from the regulator shows.

The Iraqi Communications and Media Commission (CMC) document said that the use of the term “gender” was also banned. It prohibited all phone and internet companies licensed by it from using the terms in any of their mobile applications.

A government official later said that the decision still required final approval.

The regulator “directs media organizations ... not to use the term ‘homosexuality’ and to use the correct term ‘sexual deviance,’” the Arabic-language statement said.

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

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Opinion | Think print is dead? Readers still have plenty to say. (Poynter)

By: Ren LaForme and Alex Mahadevan

What’s going on in Las Vegas?

In addition to the streaks of scorching weather and Donny Osmond extending his award-winning residency at Harrah’s, readers of the Las Vegas Review-Journal are heated over the newspaper removing its baseball page.

“I heard your complaints. So, resuming Thursday, the baseball page is back in the newspaper where it belongs,” executive editor Glenn Cook wrote in an email to subscribers. “I’m genuinely sorry for upsetting many of you. I’m also heartened to

know that so many readers get so much enjoyment reviewing the previous day's baseball games in the newspaper."

Cook also responded to reader feedback about the latest crossword puzzles. They're too hard, readers complained. Cook explained that the syndicate who creates the puzzles has a new editor.

"Just as I listened to your feedback on the box scores, the puzzle purveyors will work to meet players' preferences going forward," he wrote. "So please be patient."

Read more [here](#).

The Final Word (so you think you've had a bad day...)

A Woman Was Attacked by a Snake That Fell From the Sky. Then a Hawk Dived In. (New York Times)

By Chang Che

One should never get in the way of a hawk and its prey.

Peggy Jones learned that lesson in a most unwitting way on July 25 as she and her husband were finishing a day of yard work on a six-acre property that they own in Silsbee, Texas, about 100 miles northeast of Houston.

First, in an improbable occurrence, a snake fell from the clear blue sky, wrapping itself tightly around Ms. Jones's right forearm.

"I immediately screamed and started swinging my arm to shake the snake off," Ms. Jones, 64, said in an interview. "I was screaming, 'Jesus, help me, please, Jesus, help me!'"

The snake wrapped itself around her arm more tightly. It hissed and lunged at her face, at times striking her glasses. But then, Ms. Jones realized, the snake, too, was an unwitting victim.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Steve Hendren.

Today in History – Aug. 11, 2023



By The Associated Press

Today is Friday, Aug. 11, the 223rd day of 2023. There are 142 days left in the year.

Today's highlight

On Aug. 11, 1997, President Bill Clinton made the first use of the historic line-item veto, rejecting three items in spending and tax bills. (The U.S. Supreme Court later struck down the veto as unconstitutional.)

On this date

In 1860, the nation's first successful silver mill began operation near Virginia City, Nevada.

In 1919, Germany's Weimar Constitution was signed by President Friedrich Ebert.

In 1934, the first federal prisoners arrived at Alcatraz Island, a former military prison, in San Francisco Bay.

In 1949, President Harry S. Truman nominated General Omar N. Bradley to become the first chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

In 1952, Hussein bin Talal was proclaimed King of Jordan, beginning a reign lasting nearly 47 years.

In 1956, abstract painter Jackson Pollock died in an automobile accident on Long Island, New York at age 44.

In 1965, rioting and looting that claimed 34 lives broke out in the predominantly Black Watts section of Los Angeles.

In 1992, the Mall of America, the nation's largest shopping-entertainment center, opened in Bloomington, Minnesota.

In 1993, President Bill Clinton named Army Gen. John Shalikashvili (shah-lee-kash-VEE'-lee) to be the new chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, succeeding the retiring Gen. Colin Powell.

In 2014, Academy Award-winning actor and comedian Robin Williams died in Tiburon, California at age 63.

In 2016, the Obama administration said it had decided marijuana would remain on the list of most dangerous drugs, rebuffing growing support across the country for broad legalization, but said it would allow more research into its medical uses.

In 2020, Democrat Joe Biden named California Sen. Kamala Harris as his running mate; Harris was the first Black woman on a major party's presidential ticket.

Ten years ago: Israel approved building 1,200 more settlement homes and agreed to release 26 long-held Palestinian security prisoners. Suspected militants gunned down 47 worshippers as they recited their early morning prayers at a mosque in Konduga, Nigeria, and killed another 12 civilians in a nearby village. Jason Dufner won his first major title with a two-stroke victory over Jim Furyk at the PGA Championship.

Five years ago: Nobel Prize-winning novelist V.S. Naipaul died at his London home at the age of 85. President Donald Trump said former White House staffer and reality-TV star Omarosa Manigault Newman was a "lowlife"; Manigault Newman had been promoting a book in which she said Trump is a racist who had used racial slurs on the set of "The Apprentice." Republican U.S. Rep. Chris Collins of New York ended his re-election bid, days after his indictment on insider trading charges.

One year ago: The Justice Department asked a court to unseal the warrant the FBI received before searching the Florida estate of former President Donald Trump. Attorney General Merrick Garland also said he personally approved the search warrant. The top U.S. public health agency relaxed its COVID-19 guidelines and dropping the recommendation that Americans quarantine themselves if they come into close contact with an infected person. Model and actor Jerry Hall and media mogul Rupert Murdoch agreed to the terms of their pending divorce.

Today's birthdays: Rock musician Jim Kale (Guess Who) is 80. Magazine columnist Marilyn Vos Savant is 77. Country singer John Conlee is 77. Singer Eric Carmen is 74. Computer scientist and Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak is 73. Wrestler-actor Hulk Hogan is 70. Singer Joe Jackson is 69. Playwright David Henry Hwang is 66. Actor Miguel A. Nunez Jr. is 64. Actor Viola Davis is 58. Actor Embeth Davidtz is 58. Actor Duane Martin is 58. Actor-host Joe Rogan is 56. R&B musician Chris Dave is 55. Actor Anna Gunn is 55. Actor Ashley Jensen is 55. Actor Sophie Okonedo is 55. Rock guitarist Charlie Sexton is 55. Hip-hop artist Ali Shaheed Muhammad is 53. Actor Nigel Harman is 50. Actor Will Friedle is 47. Rock singer Ben Gibbard is 47. Actor Rob Kerkovich is 44. Actor Merritt Wever is 43. Actor Chris Hemsworth is 40. Rock musician Heath Fogg (Alabama Shakes) is 39. Rapper Asher Roth is 38. Actor Alyson Stoner is 30.

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.

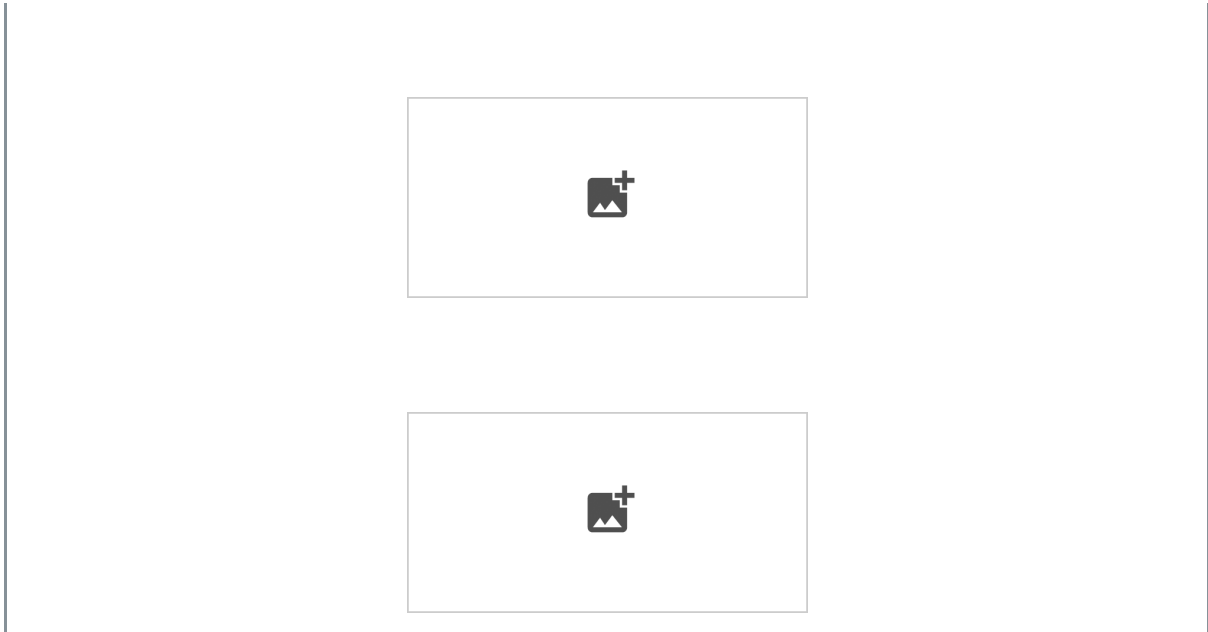


Got a story to share? A favorite memory of your AP days? Don't keep them to yourself. Share with your colleagues by sending to Ye Olde Connecting Editor. And don't forget to include photos!

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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