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Connecting

Aug. 24, 2023

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Colleagues,

Good Thursday morning on this Aug. 24, 2023,

A recent Connecting story by **Scott Charton** on AP legend **George Esper** and his role in AP's coverage of the Great Floods of 1993 prompted a note to Scott from our colleague **Arnold Zeitlin**: "Thanks for the memory, Scott. George and I started with AP together in New York and stayed friends up to his end. I miss him still."

Arnold's note sparked an idea: How about sharing memories of the people you worked with in your first AP bureau, and whether you stay in touch today.

My first bureau was Albany in 1973-74 – and among those I worked with were Ed Staats (bureau chief who hired me), Charlie Hanley, Doug Kienitz, Mike Hendricks, Joe Galu – all of whom are Connecting colleagues.

Look forward to sharing your memories.

The Final Word features a story on the 150th anniversary of The Detroit News.

When I think of the News, I think of **Jon Wolman** – who served as its editor and publisher for 12 years after previous work at The Associated Press as a reporter, Detroit news editor, Washington bureau chief and executive editor over a 31-year career. Jon died in 2019 at 68; Connecting colleague David Crary wrote his [obituary](#) for the AP wire.



I asked our colleague **Charles Hill**, longtime Detroit bureau chief, for a list of others with such ties. His reply:

--The late **Walter Mears** - whose long and storied AP career included being a Pulitzer Prize-winning Washington reporter, Washington bureau chief and executive editor -- left the AP once to become Washington bureau chief for The Detroit News but rejoined the AP nine months later. Walter died in 2022 at 87. Click [here](#) for his AP obituary, bylined by Connecting colleagues Mike Feinsilber and Calvin Woodward.

--The late **Jerry Green**, the only sports writer to have covered all of the first 56 Super Bowls, worked for the AP in Detroit before joining The Detroit News. Jerry covered the 1957 Detroit Lions for the AP – the year Lions won the NFL championship by defeating the Cleveland Browns 59-14 – and said he was the last surviving Detroit sports writer who covered the Tigers, Red Wings, Pistons and Lions championships.

--The late **Joe Falls**, who was sports editor and columnist at The Detroit News after beginning as a copy boy at the AP in New York in 1945 and transferring to the Detroit AP in 1953. He is a member of the Baseball Hall of Fame. He also is a member of the Michigan Journalism Hall of Fame.

--The late **Charlie Cain**, who was Lansing bureau chief for The Detroit News, was the son of the legendary Charles Cain of the AP, who joined the AP in 1945 and served as news editor, sports editor, automotive editor and night editor. Charles Cain's wife Ruth (and Charlie Cain's mother) was also an AP staffer when the two met. The father and the son are in the Michigan Journalism Hall of Fame.

-And in the reverse direction, former Lansing AP Correspondent **Kathy Hoffman** came to the AP from the Lansing bureau of The Detroit News, and Detroit AP reporter **Corey Williams** came to the AP after working at The Detroit News.

And, of course, The Detroit News and the Detroit Free Press each had a long history of participation on the board of directors of the Michigan Editorial Association and the national APME.

Any other Detroit News-AP ties out there? Please share.

Here's to a great day ahead – be safe, stay healthy, live the day to your fullest.

Paul

New-member profile – Melinda Deslatte



Melinda Deslatte worked as an Associated Press reporter from 1999 through 2021, starting in Raleigh, N.C., but spending most of her tenure in Baton Rouge, La., based at the Louisiana Capitol.

Deslatte focused on the state budget, the governor, the state legislature, elections, redistricting, education, health care and partisan shifts in politics. She also covered hurricanes, floods, COVID-19, racial justice protests, the shooting death of Alton Sterling at the hands of local police, two serial killers and several trials of former Gov. Edwin Edwards.

Since 2022, Deslatte has worked as research director at the Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana, a nonpartisan government watchdog organization that promotes transparency in government, smart state budgeting approaches and other public policy issues. She has a bachelor's degree in mass communication from Louisiana State University and a master's degree in journalism from the University of Maryland.

AP's Richard Drew named Fellow of the Society of Professional Journalists



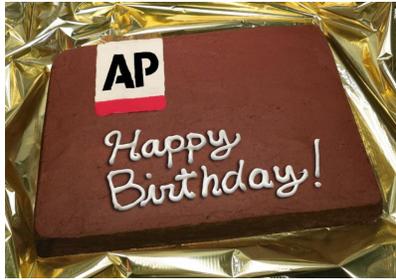
FELLOWS OF THE SOCIETY: SPJ is thrilled to welcome Richard Drew, Marvin Kalb, Soledad O'Brien, Dana Priest and Lesley Visser as Fellows of the Society, the highest professional honor awarded by SPJ for extraordinary contributions to journalism. The Fellows will be honored at the SPJ23 annual convention, Sept. 28-30 in Las Vegas, and will participate in a keynote discussion on Sept. 30. Register for a chance to meet them.

Drew has been an AP photographer in New York since 1970. His photos of The Falling Man during the 9/11 terrorist attacks remain among the most iconic images of that horrible day.

On this day, nothing happened

Bill Kaczor - Being a creature mostly of the 20th century, I had to do a double take when perusing Wednesday's "Today in History." There's nothing listed from 1939 until 2000. That's 61 years of nothing. If I'd known I would have taken Aug. 23 off back then!

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



[Dave Lubeski](#)

Stories of interest

The 'good people' finally showed up in Kansas (Kansas City Star)

MELINDA HENNEBERGER
The Kansas City Star

In the hours before 98-year-old Marion County Record coowner Joan Meyer died — of a broken heart, a lifelong friend told me in a letter — she asked her son Eric over and over again, “Where are all the good people who are supposed to stop this from happening?” Where were the good people, she wondered, who could and should have stopped a cop with something to hide from raiding her paper, seizing her possessions and attacking her purpose?

Though she didn’t live to see it, they did show up.

On the Jost Funeral Home memorial page for Mrs. Meyer, someone who identified himself only as “Above the Fold” — an old newspaper term for a story with top billing, on the top half of the front page — wrote this: “Where are the good people, she asked? We’re on the way, ma’am. Total strangers who have never heard of Marion before are mobilizing to defend your legacy. Professional journalism and a free press will soon illuminate every dark recess of your hometown. Rest easy. We got this one.”

Mrs. Meyer’s friend and former colleague David Colburn said he cried when he read that, and though I never had the pleasure of meeting her, I did, too.

In the days after the raid, free press advocates (though not the governor of Kansas, who if she’d said boo might have scared herself) roared until the prosecutor revoked the unwarranted warrant, which should never have been issued in the first place.

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

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RJI Innovation Hub launches, brings together free resources for newsrooms (Editor and Publisher)

Austin Fitzgerald

The Donald W. Reynolds Journalism Institute (RJI) has announced the launch of the RJI Innovation Hub, an interactive website where RJI's toolkits, guides and other resources for journalists and newsrooms are available in one place.

These free resources — such as Agenda Watch, a tool that gathers information from public government meetings, or a guide to sparking civic engagement with community-centered journalism — are now even more accessible through the Innovation Hub, which is designed to make a wealth of information easily digestible and navigable.

“Developing solutions to the industry’s challenges is only part of the equation; those solutions have to be easy to find and easy to use,” said Randy Picht, executive director of RJI. “The Innovation Hub is the next step in our efforts to give local newsrooms all over the country the tools to reach, engage and inform their communities.”

The Hub was designed by William Lager, a senior editor and project manager on RJI's Innovation Team, to present RJI's content in engaging and bespoke ways. The aforementioned community engagement guide, created in collaboration with hyperlocal news outlet The Green Line, takes readers on a visual journey through a new editorial practice that encourages civic engagement, while a project with CISLM explores better hiring practices as a playbook, organized to allow both hiring managers and job applicants to find the information that is relevant to them.

Read more [here](#).

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Trouble in Wyoming (Columbia Journalism Review)

By JEM BARTHOLOMEW AND DHRUMIL MEHTA

In 2018, during the Republican primary for governor of Wyoming, Matt Copeland, chief executive and editor of the nonprofit newsroom WyoFile, got a series of phone calls. They were from candidate Foster Friess, and often, he wasn't happy. Friess was a right-wing mega-donor turned political hopeful, endorsed by President Donald Trump. “He did not appreciate all of our coverage,” Copeland said. A story mentioning a Friess staffer's unsavory past irked him, Copeland said, so Friess asked Copeland directly to pull the story. Copeland refused. “He responded by letting me know, ‘Well, Matt, if we can't find a way to cooperate, I'll need to find another way for Wyoming to learn the good news about its leaders,’” Copeland recalled. Friess went on to lose the primary. Around six months later saw the launch of Cowboy State Daily, a new media organization with an apparent Republican bent. Its executive editor was Jimmy Orr, a

former White House spokesman and director of digital strategy for George W. Bush. Original funding came from Foster Friess.

Cowboy State Daily, a digital outlet and registered nonprofit, claims to be “Wyoming’s largest newspaper.” It nips at the heels of waning legacy outlets like the Casper Star-Tribune (circulation 12,000) and the Wyoming Tribune Eagle (circulation 14,000) as well as dominating nonprofits like Copeland’s WyoFile on social media (60,000 Facebook followers versus WyoFile’s 7,700) despite being founded ten years later. Like most US states, Wyoming has suffered a decline in local journalism in recent decades; this year the Casper Star-Tribune reduced its weekly print run to three days. The drop-off follows a national pattern that’s seen the US lose over 2,100 newsrooms since 2004, a trend that, Tow Center research has found, accelerated during the pandemic with at least a hundred more news organizations (local and national) closing.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Dan Elliott, who noted: "This piece from Columbia Journalism Review and the Tow Center might be of interest to Connecting readers. It strikes me as pushing a specific point of view, and it isn't the objective analysis I'd like to see, but it does shed some light on the origins and leanings of the Cowboy State Daily, which has been a significant player in the news landscape here in Wyoming."

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The Aberdeen Insider: No news desert here (Editor and Publisher)

Bob Sillick | for Editor & Publisher

The people of Aberdeen, South Dakota, were not about to allow their town to become a news desert. The local newspaper of many years, The American News, was withering on the vine. Contractions, layoffs and buyouts had reduced the staff to one reporter.

The board of the local development corporation had discussed the issue and contemplated buying The American News or starting a newspaper. Because Troy McQuillen was the publisher of the Aberdeen Magazine, many people and the development corporation thought he was best positioned to launch a newspaper — and The Aberdeen Insider was born.

“Our local newspaper was becoming less and less connected with the community. It has become invisible. The building was shut down, the press was sold, and whatever staff was left moved into an office building. The community became incredibly annoyed; people couldn’t place a classified ad or ask about a circulation issue,” McQuillen said.

Starting a newspaper from scratch is typically challenging work, but the situation at The American News made it much easier.

Elisa Sand was the last person at The American News. She has been a South Dakota newspaper reporter for over 20 years. At a local event, McQuillen approached Sand

and invited her to be the first new member of The Insider staff as reporter and associate editor.

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

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Texas Tribune holds first layoffs in 14-year history

(Poynter)

By: Angela Fu

Driven by unsteady economic conditions and changes in the media industry, The Texas Tribune executed layoffs Wednesday for the first time in its 14-year history.

In an email to staff, CEO Sonal Shah wrote that 2023 has been a particularly challenging year for the outlet, which many have come to see as a model for nonprofit journalism. At a time when newsrooms across the country are shrinking, the Tribune has maintained a largely upward trajectory, growing both its staff and budget as it expands its coverage of the state.

That momentum appeared to come to a halt Wednesday when several longtime journalists were laid off. A spokesperson for the Tribune did not answer a question about how many people were laid off, but former Tribune reporter Elise Hu posted on X, formerly known as Twitter, that two multimedia reporters were part of the cuts. Tribune copy chief Emily Goldstein also posted that the paper's entire copy desk was eliminated, and senior editor and writing coach David Pasztor shared that he and the paper's demographics and criminal justice reporters were all laid off.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Mike Holmes.

The Final Word

It's the 150th anniversary of The Detroit News



The Detroit News staff is seen here on Aug. 16, 2023. Photo by Andy Morrison, The Detroit News.

by The Detroit News

One hundred and fifty years ago, on Aug. 23, 1873, The Detroit News made a humble and low-tech debut when founder James E. Scripps rolled a few thousand copies off a small printing press in rented space on Shelby Avenue.

Scripps envisioned a newspaper for the masses. So at a time when most other papers cost a nickel and served an elite audience, he charged just two cents for The News. He ordered his staff "to write the paper as people talk in conversation."

From day one, Scripps declared his newspaper independent of all influences — except for the truth.

We've carried that commitment through 150 years, and through monumental changes in the newspaper industry and in our hometown.

For a century and a half, The News has been an everyday chronicler of the history of Detroit, and of the world.



Front page of The Evening News on Aug. 23, 1873. It was the first edition of The News.

DETROIT NEWS ARCHIVES

If you've followed our anniversary coverage over the last 150 days, as we've shared some of our favorite front pages, fun facts and newsreels, you've seen just a slice of that chronicle. Detroit News reporters were at the scene of President John F. Kennedy's assassination, embedded on battlefields as far back as the Spanish American War and on more than one expedition to Antarctica.

We've covered the triumphs and the tragedies, the heroes and the villains, the notorious and the glorious.

Read more [here](#).

Today in History - Aug. 24, 2023



By The Associated Press

Today is Wednesday, Aug. 24, the 236th day of 2022. There are 129 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Aug. 24, A.D. 79, long-dormant Mount Vesuvius erupted, burying the Roman cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum in volcanic ash; an estimated 20,000 people died.

On this date:

In 1814, during the War of 1812, British forces invaded Washington, D.C., setting fire to the Capitol (which was still under construction) and the White House, as well as other public buildings.

In 1912, Congress passed a measure creating the Alaska Territory.

In 1932, Amelia Earhart embarked on a 19-hour flight from Los Angeles to Newark, New Jersey, making her the first woman to fly solo, non-stop, from coast to coast.

In 1949, the North Atlantic Treaty came into force.

In 1954, President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed the Communist Control Act, outlawing the Communist Party in the United States.

In 1981, Mark David Chapman was sentenced in New York to 20 years to life in prison for murdering John Lennon. (Chapman remains imprisoned.)

In 1989, Baseball Commissioner A. Bartlett Giamatti (juh-MAH'-tee) banned Pete Rose from the game for betting on his own team, the Cincinnati Reds.

In 1992, Hurricane Andrew smashed into Florida, causing \$30 billion in damage; 43 U.S. deaths were blamed on the storm.

In 2006, the International Astronomical Union declared that Pluto was no longer a full-fledged planet, demoting it to the status of a "dwarf planet."

In 2016, a 6.2 magnitude earthquake reduced three central Italian towns to rubble and killed nearly 300 people.

In 2019, police in Aurora, Colorado, responding to a report of a suspicious person, used a chokehold to subdue Elijah McClain, a 23-year-old Black man; he suffered cardiac arrest on the way to the hospital and was later declared brain dead and taken off life support. (Three officers were placed on leave but returned to the force after a prosecutor found insufficient evidence to support charging them; the officers and two paramedics were later indicted by a grand jury on manslaughter and other charges following an investigation by state Attorney General Phil Weiser ordered by Gov. Jared Polis.)

In 2020, Republicans formally nominated President Donald Trump for a second term on the opening day of a scaled-down convention; during a visit to the convention city of Charlotte, North Carolina, Trump told delegates that "the only way they can take this election away from us is if this is a rigged election." Anger over the shooting of a Black man, Jacob Blake, by police spilled into the streets of Kenosha, Wisconsin for a second night.

Ten years ago: A Norwegian court found Anders Behring Breivik guilty of terrorism and premeditated murder for twin attacks on July 22, 2011 that killed 77 people; he received a 21-year prison sentence that can be extended as long as he is considered dangerous to society. The U.S. Anti-Doping Agency wiped out 14 years of Lance Armstrong's cycling career — including his record seven Tour de France titles — and barred him for life from the sport after concluding he'd used banned substances.

Five years ago: Presidential adviser Jared Kushner met with Israeli and Palestinian leaders to try to jumpstart peace talks. Former Carter administration Interior Secretary Cecil Andrus, who engineered the conservation of millions of acres of Alaska land, died at the age of 85. Mavis Wanczyk, a hospital worker from the western Massachusetts town of Chicopee, was announced as the winner of the biggest undivided lottery jackpot in U.S. history, a \$758.7 million Powerball prize; lottery officials said she chose to take a lump sum payment of \$480 million, or \$336 million after taxes.

One year ago: President Joe Biden said he would stick to his Aug. 31 deadline for completing a risky airlift of Americans, endangered Afghans and others seeking to escape Taliban-controlled Afghanistan. Kathy Hochul became New York's first female governor after the resignation of Andrew Cuomo took effect; on her first day in office, Hochul acknowledged that the state had nearly 12,000 more deaths from COVID-19 than Cuomo had told the public. Former football star Herschel Walker filed paperwork to enter the U.S. Senate race in Georgia after months of speculation; the Republican had the backing of former President Donald Trump. Rolling Stones drummer Charlie Watts died in a London hospital at the age of 80.

Today's Birthdays: Composer-musician Mason Williams is 84. R&B singer Marshall Thompson (The Chi-Lites) is 80. Actor Anne Archer is 75. Actor Joe Regalbuto is 73. Actor Kevin Dunn is 67. Former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee is 67. Actor-writer Stephen Fry is 65. Actor Steve Guttenberg is 64. Baseball Hall of Famer Cal Ripken Jr. is 62. Actor Jared Harris is 61. Talk show host Craig Kilborn is 60. CBS News correspondent Major Garrett is 60. Rock singer John Bush is 59. Actor Marlee Matlin is 57. Basketball Hall of Famer Reggie Miller is 57. Broadcast journalist David Gregory is 52. Movie director Ava DuVernay is 50. Actor-comedian Dave Chappelle is 49. Actor James D'Arcy is 49. Actor Carmine Giovinazzo (jee-oh-vihn-AH'-zoh) is 49. Actor Alex O'Loughlin is 46. Actor Beth Riesgraf is 44. Actor Chad Michael Murray is 41. Singer Mika is 39. Actor Blake Berris is 38. Actor Rupert Grint ("Harry Potter" films) is 34.

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 Central Region 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!

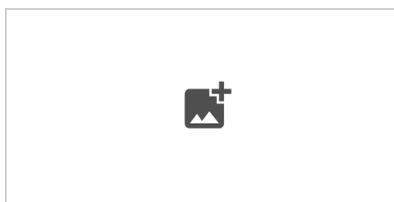
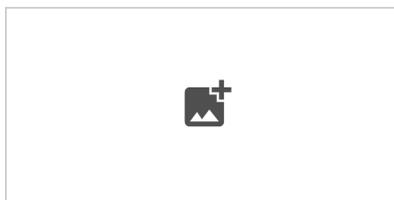
Here are some suggestions:

- **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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