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Connecting

Sept. 11, 2023

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AP World cover photo by Marty Lederhandler. Marty took this photo of the burning towers of the World Trade Center juxtaposed against the Empire State Building. He was a photographer for the Associated Press for 66 years, making him the longest-serving AP staff member. Marty retired later in 2001. He died in 2010 at the age of 92. (Shared by Patricia Casillo)

Colleagues.

Good Monday morning on this Sept. 11, 2023,

Today is the anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks - and Connecting believes that even 22 years later, it is worth reminding our readers how The Associated Press covered the events of that day.

It is a tradition we're proud to continue.

We present you this recap written by colleague [Mark Mittelstadt](#) that appeared in the quarterly APME News magazine months after the attacks. AP was headquartered at 50 Rockefeller Plaza at the time - 4.7 miles from the twin towers of the World Trade Center. Today, AP headquarters rests right next door to where the towers once stood. Click on this link to view the story:



[AP coverage of Sept. 11.](#)

One of the most poignant stories on 9/11 came from Esquire's Tom Junod, "[The Falling Man. An Unforgettable Story.](#)" It focused on photos taken at the Twin Towers by AP photographer **Richard Drew** (a Connecting colleague who is still taking photos for the AP/New York).

Richard's wife **Molly Gordy**, also a Connecting colleague, shared in a Facebook post this morning:

"Today I give thanks for the 11,563,200 bonus minutes I have had with my husband since he was delivered back to me at 11:12 pm on 9/11, after a day envisioning widowhood. A special prayer of blessing going out to those who lost a spouse or parent 22 years ago."

If you would like to share your thoughts on 9/11, whether or not they relate to a journalistic role you had that day, please send along. Has it impacted your life today, and how?

GETTING INVOLVED IN A STORY: When is it appropriate for a journalist to get involved in a story? That question was posed in Friday's issue and I thank colleague **Ron Fournier** for sharing his story which we bring in today's issue. The question came after a report by Anna Goni-Lessan in the Tallahassee Democrat on two USA Today Network reporters covering the aftermath of Hurricane Idalia who stopped reporting and tried to put out a fire. I hope you will share your own story this week.

Here's to a great week ahead – be safe, stay healthy, live each day to your fullest!

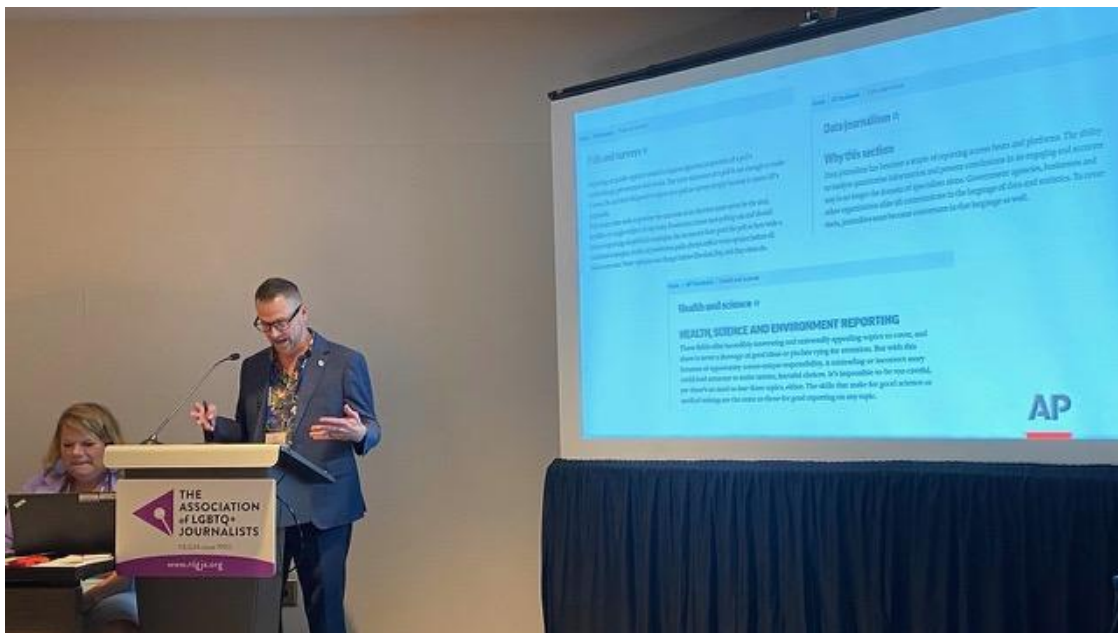
Paul

Connecting series:

Carrying a memory for a lifetime, but glad he helped

Ron Fournier - I wish I had Ana's wise guidance nearly 40 years ago when, a few days before Christmas, on one of my first assignments for the Hot Springs Sentinel-Record, I was assigned to accompany a search-and-rescue boat team. They were looking for a young boy, presumed drowned. I was asking questions and taking notes when one of the middle-aged deputies said, "I got something." Two beats and a mourner's tone: "Dear God. I need a hand." I didn't have the time or experience to think through the ethical implications, so I set down my pencil and pad and helped pull the body in. To this day, I wish I was never there. I wish I didn't have that memory to carry for a lifetime. But I'm damn glad I helped – that I did what little I could.

AP Style: A Tool Book Not a Rule Book





Photos by Howard Goldberg

[Howard Goldberg](#) - one of the popular sessions at this past weekend's national convention of The Association of LGBTQ+ Journalists was titled "AP Style: A Tool Book Not a Rule Book."

AP newsperson Jeff McMillan (standing at lectern in above photo) moderated the panel, which explained how the constantly updated digital version of the Stylebook addresses standards around gender, sexual orientation, race and ethnicity, disabilities, and other matters of inclusivity and accuracy.

In the panel photo, retired enterprise editor Jerry Schwartz speaks as current AP news managers Amanda Barrett, Pia Sarkar, Paula Froke and Anna Jo Bratton look on. Sitting next to Jeff, Bethany Grace Howe, a communications specialist for Oregon's Department of Human Services, demonstrated how users can customize the Stylebook for their specialized needs.

AP alums attend Gene Lahammer's services



From left: Steve Karnowski, Rochelle Olson, Amy Kuebelbeck, Jeff Baenen, Laura Baenen, Mary Sandok, Karren Mills and Pam Schmid. Photo by Mary Lahammer.

Steve Karnowski - There was a good showing of AP alumni at the funeral Friday for Gene Lahammer, longtime Minnesota AP political reporter.

Gene, who worked for the AP for 34 years, died on Sept. 4 at the age of 90.

Former State Sen. Dean Johnson, a Lutheran pastor, led the service. We heard lots of great stories about Gene's AP days and how he set the standard for everyone. Several other politicians and journalists from Gene's day were there, too, as well as U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar.

Further on those from AP in attendance: Steve Karnowski, current AP Capitol reporter in St. Paul; Rochelle Olson, former AP Capitol reporter, now a Capitol reporter for the Star Tribune of Minneapolis; Amy Kuebelbeck, former AP Capitol reporter, now a copy editor for the Star Tribune; Jeff Baenen, retired Minneapolis newsperson and broadcast editor; Laura Baenen, former Minneapolis newsperson, now Senior Communications Specialist for Metro Transit; Mary Sandok, retired former AP Capitol reporter; Karren Mills, retired Minneapolis newsperson, and Pam Schmid, former Minneapolis newsperson.

The photo was taken by Mary Lahammer, Gene's youngest daughter, who is the Capitol correspondent for Twin Cities Public Television.

Retired high school history teacher finds film footage of US GIs liberating Jews from Nazi train

[Chris Carola](#) - This New York Post headline that popped up on my Twitter feed early last month immediately caught my attention:

US soldiers seen liberating thousands of Jews from Nazi train: Found video

Could the found footage mentioned in the headline be from the same dramatic rescue of concentration camp prisoners by American GIs that I first wrote about for AP 16 years ago? The answer was in the third paragraph, which quoted retired upstate New York history teacher Matthew Rozell.

In September 2007, I was the first journalist to report on a reunion Rozell had organized for one of the American liberators and three of the Jewish prisoners, who were children when they and about 2,500 other prisoners – mostly women and children -- were rescued in April 1945. [My story](#) was sent on AP's national and international wires. Rozell credited the story with starting a flood of phone calls and emails from people in Israel and elsewhere who had been on that Nazi train or whose parents had been on it.

[A story I wrote in 2009](#) on a second reunion of liberators and train survivors resulted in more survivors coming forward, Rozell said.

Rozell had been researching the train rescue for more than two decades and had found black-and-white US Army photos of the incident, but hadn't come across any film footage. That changed earlier this year, when a tip led him to the National Archives and Records Administration, where he discovered a three-minute Army Signal Corps film showing the train passengers immediately after being liberated by GIs on April 13, 1945.

An Israeli TV station was the first to report on Rozell's discovery. The story included an interview with a 90-year-old Israeli man who spotted his 12-year-old self and his mother and sister in the footage. Other Israeli media outlets pickup the story, followed by several outlets in the United Kingdom, and on Aug. 3, [the NY Post](#).

As a favor to Rozell, I reached out to acquaintances at two Albany-area media outlets to let them know about the local connection to this international story, resulting in stories by [WNYT-TV, an NBC affiliate](#) and on page one of the [Albany Times Union](#).

Small-world moment at high school class reunion



Doug Jennings

Latin accents

Dan Sewell - Found out at my high school class' 50th reunion Saturday night that classmate Calvin Smith and I could have marked our tenth in Grenada.

Calvin was in the Fort Bragg-based 82nd Airborne's artillery division. So he might have been within a few hundred yards of me in this Oct. 27, 1983, photo, as it appeared in AP World.



Calvin recounted that Cuban construction workers building Grenada's new airport had parked bulldozers and trucks on the runway to prevent U.S. landings, so 82nd Airborne engineers under fire hot-wired the vehicles to clear the way for transport planes carrying howitzers and vehicles.

He's now retired from the Army. We hadn't had a reunion in 20 years and this was the first he was able to attend.

BEST OF THE WEEK — FIRST WINNER

Reporting raises questions about abortion story told during GOP debate, scores several firsts



MIRIAM "PENNY" HOPPER VIA AP

It was among the most puzzling moments of the first Republican presidential debate: Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis refused to answer a question about supporting a national abortion ban and instead offered a story about a woman he met who had survived “multiple abortion attempts” and was saved after being “discarded in a pan.” The tale was clearly meant to curry favor with the conservative voters who decide GOP primaries, but was it true?

Dogged reporting over several days by a team of three reporters — democracy team misinformation reporters Ali Swenson and Christine Fernando, and Miami-based national political reporter Adriana Gomez Licon — found that the woman did exist but that her birth story was far more complicated than the version described by DeSantis. While other outlets also pursued DeSantis’ story, the AP team had several significant firsts: They were the first to interview the woman and get her story first hand; the first to surface newspaper stories from the 1950s that offered a much different version of events; and the first to get historical photos from the time she was born, including one showing her as a baby being discharged from the hospital. These allowed AP to distinguish its coverage of a nationally significant moment in the GOP presidential primary.

After DeSantis told the story during the televised debate, the AP’s news verification team in New York alerted Swenson that it was generating comments online from people thinking it wasn’t true. She quickly found a few old news articles about the woman and two YouTube videos that featured her telling her story for anti-abortion advocacy groups. Swenson then looped in Gomez Licon asking if the story seemed familiar to her based on her years covering DeSantis in Florida and then reached out for additional help from Fernando, who had covered the national abortion debate extensively in her previous job.

Read more [here](#).

BEST OF THE WEEK — SECOND WINNER**AP stands out in covering the first trip to Mongolia by a pope**

A cross-format team of AP journalists captured the deeper complexities of Pope Francis's visit to one of the world's smallest Catholic congregations, a mere 1,450 people in the landlocked country of 3.3 million sandwiched between China and Russia.

Planning began months ahead with Rome and Beijing bureau members working around summer leaves, calling in from holiday throughout August to ensure previews planning and logistics.

Along with meticulous planning, deployments from Rome, Beijing, Hong Kong and Bangkok ensured cameras were in place in each location of Francis' arrivals and departures and working with three Live-U units on the ground for aggressive live video offerings.

Rome-based video producer Maria Grazia Murru and Bangkok producer Annika Wolters, along with London output producers, produced swift turnarounds of a variety of incoming footage, including AP self-shot lives from the field, host country broadcast material and traveling pool footage.

Beijing-based videographer Wayne Zhang and freelance video producer Saruul Enkhbold from Mongolia drove the key setup story about how small the community is, with voices from the Mongolian Catholic community and tenaciously pursuing interviews.

Team members on the ground included Rome-based reporter Nicole Winfield and Rome photographer Andrew Medichini; photographer Han Guan Ng of Beijing and Louise Delmotte of Hong Kong; Murru and videographers Zhang of Beijing, Tian Ji Macleod of Bangkok and video producer Enkhbold from Mongolia.

Read more [here](#).

Stories of interest

Local news under siege. International news outlets rally behind The Marion County Record as questions of government overreach loom large (Editor and Publisher)

Gretchen A. Peck | for Editor & Publisher

September 15 is International Democracy Day, but in the month leading up to the holiday, democracy itself seemed under attack — acutely in the small town of Marion, Kansas.

According to the 2020 U.S. Census, Marion has a population of 1,922 residents, and those residents found themselves amidst a flashpoint for a First Amendment fight.

On Friday, Aug. 11, the full arm of the law came down on the local newspaper, the Marion County Record, and its family owners. While executing a search warrant signed by Marion County District Court Magistrate Judge Laura Viar, local police officers and sheriff's deputies entered the newspaper's offices and the homes of its owners, the Meyer family, as well as the home of city councilwoman Ruth Herbel. They confiscated computers, mobile phones, servers and documents — in effect, shutting down the news operation.

Publisher Eric Meyer co-owned the Record with his 98-year-old mother, Joan Meyer. Her late husband, William, started working for the paper in 1948, and she joined the staff in the 1960s. Over the course of 60 years, she worked as a reporter, columnist, editor and associate publisher, according to her New York Times obituary, beautifully written by Clay Risen.

Read more [here](#).

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BBC Disinformation Correspondent Marianna Spring Accused Of Lying On Her Resume (Deadline)

By Jake Kanter

The BBC's first disinformation correspondent has apparently been caught in a lie.

Marianna Spring, one of the BBC's fastest-rising stars, reportedly embellished the truth on her resume while applying for a job before she joined the broadcaster in 2018.

The New European, a British newspaper, has seen emails between Spring and Natalia Antelava, the editor-in-chief of U.S. publication Coda Story.

Spring was looking for work as a Moscow stringer and is reported to have said on her resume that she worked alongside BBC Eastern Europe correspondent Sarah Rainsford.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Scott Charton.

-0-

Fourth man charged for targeting two NH journalists

(AP)

By HOLLY RAMER

CONCORD, N.H. (AP) — A fourth man has been charged in connection with threats and vandalism targeting public radio journalists in New Hampshire.

Eric Labarge, 46, of Nashua, was arrested Friday, according to the U.S. attorney's office in Massachusetts. He and three others who were previously arrested have been indicted on federal charges of conspiracy to commit stalking through interstate travel.

Prosecutors allege the men were involved in a plot to vandalize homes associated with New Hampshire Public Radio reporter Lauren Chooljian and news director Daniel Barrick in retaliation for a report detailing sexual misconduct allegations against a prominent businessman.

In six incidents in April and May 2022, the journalists' homes and the home of the reporter's parents were hit with bricks, rocks and red spray paint. In one incident, a brick was thrown through a window at Chooljian's home, and the phrase "JUST THE BEGINNING!" was spray-painted on the front of her home.

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

Today in History - Sept. 11, 2023



By The Associated Press

Today is Monday, Sept. 11, the 254th day of 2023. There are 111 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Sept. 11, 2001, nearly 3,000 people were killed as 19 al-Qaida hijackers seized control of four jetliners, sending two of the planes into New York's World Trade Center, one into the Pentagon and the fourth into a field in western Pennsylvania.

On this date:

In 1789, Alexander Hamilton was appointed the first U.S. Secretary of the Treasury.

In 1814, an American fleet scored a decisive victory over the British in the Battle of Lake Champlain in the War of 1812.

In 1936, Boulder Dam — later renamed the Hoover Dam — began operation as President Franklin D. Roosevelt pressed a key in Washington to signal the startup of the dam's first hydroelectric generator.

In 1941, groundbreaking took place for the Pentagon. In an anti-Semitic speech, Charles A. Lindbergh told an America First rally in Des Moines, Iowa, that "the British, the Jewish and the Roosevelt administration" were pushing the United States toward war.

In 1954, the Miss America pageant made its network TV debut on ABC.

In 1967, the comedy-variety program "The Carol Burnett Show" premiered on CBS.

In 1972, the Munich Summer Olympics, where 11 Israeli athletes and several others were killed, ended.

In 1973, Chilean President Salvador Allende (ah-YEN'-day) died during a violent military coup.

In 1997, Scotland voted to create its own Parliament after 290 years of union with England.

In 2006, in a prime-time address, President George W. Bush invoked the memory of the victims of the 9/11 attacks as he staunchly defended the war in Iraq, though he acknowledged that Saddam Hussein was not responsible for the attacks.

In 2008, presidential candidates John McCain and Barack Obama put aside politics as they visited ground zero together on the anniversary of 9/11 to honor its victims.

In 2012, a mob armed with guns and grenades launched a fiery nightlong attack on a U.S. diplomatic outpost and a CIA annex in Benghazi, Libya, killing U.S. Ambassador Chris Stevens and three other Americans

In 2016, Hillary Clinton abruptly left a 9/11 anniversary event at ground zero in New York after feeling "overheated," according to her campaign, and hours later her doctor disclosed that the Democratic presidential nominee had pneumonia.

In 2022, Javier Marías, Spain's most prestigious novelist for most of his life, died at age 70.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Earl Holliman is 95. Comedian Tom Dreesen is 84. Movie director Brian De Palma is 83. Singer-actor-dancer Lola Falana is 81. Rock musician Mickey Hart (The Dead) is 80. Guitarist Leo Kottke is 78. Actor Phillip Alford is 75. Actor Amy Madigan is 73. Rock singer-musician Tommy Shaw (Styx) is 70. Sports reporter Lesley Visser is 70. Actor Reed Birney is 69. Former Homeland Security Secretary Jeh (Jay) Johnson is 66. Musician Jon Moss (Culture Club) is 66. Actor Scott Patterson is 65. Rock musician Mick Talbot (The Style Council) is 65. Actor/director Roxann Dawson is 65. Actor John Hawkes is 64. Actor Anne Ramsay is 63. Actor Virginia Madsen is 62. Actor Kristy McNichol is 61. Musician-composer Moby is 58. Syrian President Bashar al-Assad is 58. Business reporter Maria Bartiromo is 56. Singer Harry Connick Jr. is 56. Actor Taraji (tuh-RAH'-jee) P. Henson is 53. Actor Laura Wright is 53. Rock musician Jeremy Popoff (Lit) is 52. Blogger Markos Moulitsas is 52. Singer Brad Fischetti (LFO) is 48. Rock musician Jon Buckland (Coldplay) is 46. Rapper Ludacris is 46. Rock singer Ben Lee is 45. Actor Ariana Richards is 44. Country singer Charles Kelley (Lady A) is 42. Actor Elizabeth Henstridge is 36. Actor Tyler Hoechlin (HEK'-lihn) is 36. Actor Mackenzie Aladjem is 22.

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:

- **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?

- **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.

- **Most unusual** place a story assignment took you.

Paul Stevens

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