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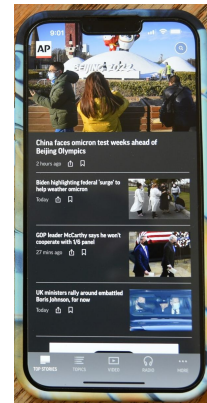
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Connecting

Nov. 7, 2023

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Colleagues,

Good morning on this Nov. 7, 2023.

Christopher Connell and **Jeff Donn** were first to answer Connecting's call asking how they use artificial intelligence. Suggesting so-called AI was the "next Big Thing," colleague **Ed Staats** wondered in Monday's issue what applications it might have in the lives of readers of this newsletter. As we think about it, there likely are many, many ways we use software or machine intelligence to supplement our own.

How do you use AI? Send your contributions to markmitt71@yahoo.com

The vital role an 86-year-old group of editors played in helping to shape the news and photo reports of The Associated Press has been highlighted over the past several days. This coming after word that an association created out of the merger of the Associated Press Managing Editors and another editors' group had voted to dissolve. **John Marlow** shares his experience with his state's APME's leadership, which included many editors who went on to serve in the national APME.

We lead today's issue with a contribution by colleague **Arnold Garson**, a friend in his 47-year career at newspapers in Omaha, Des Moines, San Bernardino County, Sioux Falls and Louisville. He is well underway with his second chapter, serving on the faculty of a writer's retreat at beautiful Lake Okoboji in northwest Iowa, writing a Substack column and researching and composing long-form family histories and other specialized histories for clients.

Paul Stevens, pictured above, has been enjoying a few days with family on the West Coast. He returns to the Connecting editor's chair Wednesday. Meanwhile send

stories, thoughts, ideas, photos to markmitt71@yahoo.com.

Enjoy the day!

- Mark Mittelstadt

Second Chapter



Arnold Garson (left) with Joe Alexander, 100, Holocaust survivor, subject of one of Garson's columns as he was speaking in Sioux Falls, S.D. Photo shared by Arnold Garson.

[Arnold Garson](#) _ After reading the list of topics on which you invite contributions over the years, I finally decided to update my Second Chapter.

I retired from my newspaper career almost 12 years ago. Like many others, I have discovered that there's no shortage of things to keep me busy after a 47-year career in newspapers -- Omaha World-Herald, The Des Moines Register, The San Bernardino County Sun, Sioux Falls Argus Leader, and the Louisville Courier-Journal.

My latest self-imposed additional assignment is a Substack column through the Iowa Writers' Collaborative. I have served on the faculty of the Okoboji Writer's Retreat each year, which is produced by Julie Gammack, founder of the collaborative, so I know and respect many of the writers involved in this.



Setting for the the Okoboji Writer's Retreat in northwest Iowa.

My column will be roughly weekly with a few gaps here and there. The focus is wide-ranging -- from public affairs to Okoboji history. Among my first columns, the subject matter has included the current situation in Israel, Hamas's 40-year campaign to build pro-Palestinian support on America's college campuses, the Holocaust, how the early steamers on Okoboji helped transform the area into a resort mecca, and an outrageously over-budget jail construction project in Sioux City. Coming soon: A Brief History of U.S. immigration Policy; Not America's Finest Hour.

Subscribe via arnoldgarson@substack.com.

Other things --

Family Stories by Arnold Garson is a small business through which I research and write long-form family histories and other specialized histories for clients. Stories in the range of 50,000-60,000 words. It could easily become full-time work with employees if I wanted to do that. Most recent project: Clients have included individuals, families, and corporations from across the country.

I am also a founding director of South Dakota News Watch, a digital non-profit news site that now has the largest news readership in the state, thanks to a partnership with newspapers and TV stations and their websites. The two principal founders of this group also are retired newspaper guys -- Jack Marsh and Randell Beck. Staffing now includes a CEO (Carson Walker, formerly AP), two full-time reporters, interns, and freelancers. News Watch produces two major project-type stories almost every week. Happy to have more readers. sdnewswatch.org

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Artificial intelligence: how we're using it

Godsend for transcribing interviews

[Christopher Connell](#) _ The Otter AI app is a godsend for anyone who relies on transcripts of interviews, as I do.

It is remarkably accurate and extremely easy to clean up, since you can roll back precisely to the missed or mangled words and hear them again. It's free if you only transcribe 300 minutes of interviews each month ("Basic") and \$130 a year after a recent price hike for the Pro plan of 1,200 minutes per month.

(Each Basic transcription cuts off after 30 minutes, but you can simply start a new one if you're worried about missing any pearls of wisdom.) My only regret is that I didn't discover the app five years ago when it was rolled out. I learned of it from a small town newspaper editor who before each supervisors' meeting turns on the closed circuit TV channel at home with Otter AI running before he heads off to cover their doings in person.

Single most useful technological tool for a single purpose since invention of the telephone

[Jeff Donn](#) _ As a traveling AP writer, I was married to my GPS long before retirement (but after my wife). In my opinion, it is the single most useful technological tool for a single purpose since the invention of the telephone.

Yesterday, my wife and I were visiting Arches National Park in Utah during a trip to the Southwest. There was no WIFI network or data signal for our phones, so we resorted to following the park map handed to us by a ranger at the entrance. It worked fine, and we didn't smack into any arches or drive off any cliffs. And it was fun in a quaint sort of way to follow a physical map. We felt a bit like Lewis and Clark (minus the discomfort and plus a Chevrolet sedan).

When we returned to the flatlands, though, it was getting dark, and we needed to find a restaurant and lodging. It was no time for child's play. Thank God for our GPS!

By the way, our daughter is a scientific researcher who created an artificially intelligent computer model that analyzes remote sensing data to locate things of interest to archaeologists and other scientists. But she still studies a GPS to figure out where the hell SHE is.

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Letters

When 'Kip' spoke, others listened

[Sandy Johnson](#) _ I am glad to hear about Rob Wells' book on the Kiplinger dynasty (Monday Connecting).

I worked with Austin Kiplinger for many years in my roles at the National Press Foundation, first as board member, then chairman, then president & COO. All eyes

would turn to "Kip," as he was known, when he had something to contribute to the board deliberations.

Kip always carried a buckeye in his pocket, true to his Ohio core. The Great Recession and then the slow pivot to the Internet undermined this jewel of business journalism. It was a sad day when the family decided to sell its historic offices on H Street, which were filled with original artwork.

APME had the back of AP state journalists

[John Marlow](#) _ So, so sorry to hear about APME. In the days when the state news report was considered as important as the national report (many, many years ago), the state APME always had our back, as news editor and bureau chief.

When I needed help, APME state presidents such as Jack Howey, Jack Powers, Harold Trulock, Wendell Philippi etc. (forgive me for not remembering many of the others, not because of their contributions but because of my lousy memory) were always there to encourage AP membership participation a major responsibility in a truly statewide news report! It was the same in Washington state under Wick Temple, John Brewer, Tom Slaughter and all their successors.

I can't imagine an AP without the APME.

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BEST OF THE WEEK - FIRST WINNER

New England staff, Investigations join forces to cover tense search for a killer in Maine

NEW ENGLAND STAFF AND THE INVESTIGATIONS TEAM



Gov. Janet Mills speaks during a news conference in the aftermath of a mass shooting, in Lewiston, Maine, Friday, Oct. 27, 2023.

It started as a vague alert of a shooting in Maine. But within minutes of learning about it, Portland-based correspondent David Sharp had guidance that at least 16 people were dead. He knew that would make it the state's deadliest shooting by far.

Even before the first AP alert went out, Sharp and Robert Bukaty were headed to Lewiston, where a gunman had opened fire in a bowling area and bar and then vanished into the night. They were the first national news crew to arrive, coming up live for video and filing the first images of the aftermath.

Sharp's video interview with a shoeless man who hid in the machinery of the bowling alley as people died around him was among the first eyewitness accounts, getting wide usage by clients including The New York Times.

Ultimately, 18 people would die, and residents would stay locked inside their homes for days. Throughout the following days, a crew of journalists shared responsibilities and information in Lewiston and beyond, including AP's breaking news investigations team of Bernard Condon and Jim Mustian who exclusively reported that Maine police were alerted as recently as September to "veiled threats" by the U.S. Army reservist.

AP's story, which was matched — with credit — over the next day by both The New York Times and CNN, marked the most detailed reporting yet on the contact law enforcement had with the gunman, who killed himself.

The cross-format, cross-department collaboration on this story was flawless and a demonstration of AP at its best. For aggressive breaking news reporting and investigations, we are delighted to award New England's staff,

Mike Balsamo, Alanna Durkin Durkin Richer, Lindsay Whitehurst, Condon and Mustian for the Best of the Week Award — First Winner.

Read more [here](#).

BEST OF THE WEEK - SECOND WINNER

AP out front on flow of Chinese asylum-seekers entering U.S. from Mexico

ELLIOT SPAGAT, GREG BULL, DIDI TANG AND EUGENE GARCIA



A group of people, including many from China, walk along the wall after crossing the border with Mexico to seek asylum, Tuesday, Oct. 24, 2023, near Jacumba, Calif. AP PHOTO / GREGORY BULL

During one of his reporting trips to the border between southern California and Mexico, San Diego correspondent and Immigration team leader Elliot Spagat was struck by the number of migrants crossing the border who originated not from Mexico or even Central or South America, but from China.

While no stranger to meeting asylum-seekers from around the world along the border, Spagat quickly recognized a notable shift. A close look at Customs and Border Patrol numbers would confirm a nearly seven-fold increase in the number of Chinese migrants arrested by the agency compared to a year prior, with no sign of abating.

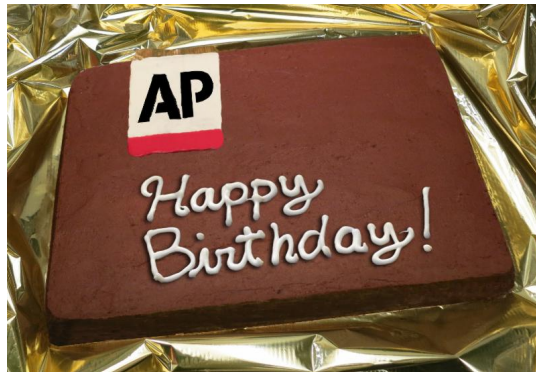
Spagat reached out to colleagues in Asia who connected him with Asian Affairs correspondent Didi Tang in Washington. Tang eagerly jumped in with fascinating context about the influx, the economic reasons behind it and the perilous journey migrants were choosing via the increasingly popular Darien Gap.

Putting faces and places to the stories of the emigrants were San Diego photographer Greg Bull and Los Angeles video journalist Eugene Garcia. The complete all-formats endeavor took final shape with the guiding hand of Amy Shafer, a U.S. desk editor and fellow on the Top Stories Hub.

For shining a light both on a new influx at the border and the factors in China driving this migration, Spagat, Tang, Bull and Garcia are Best of the Week — Second Winner.

Read more [here](#).

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



[Larry McShane](#)

Stories of interest



"We're going to get our swagger back," said William Lewis, who begins as The Washington Post's CEO and publisher on Jan. 2. (Matt McClain/The Washington Post)

Washington Post's new CEO has faced big stories and corporate drama

(The Washington Post)

By Elahe Izadi and Karla Adam

Within a handful of days, William Lewis was both knighted by British royalty and hired by one of the richest men in the world as CEO and publisher of The Washington Post.

One role, ceremonial with few responsibilities or expectations. The other, quite the opposite.

In an interview Sunday, the London-born veteran media executive acknowledged the challenges of the job ahead — a softening ad market, a shrinking and distracted audience, a staff coping with anticipated cuts — while professing optimism about the institution he’s joining.

“We’re going to expand. We’re going to get our swagger back,” Lewis said, echoing a word that Jeff Bezos, the founder of Amazon, has used about the news organization he bought a decade ago. “I know that right now is not our greatest time, but we’re going to grow again. And we’re going to get that confidence back and that swagger back. I can tell you that with absolute confidence.”

Read more [here](#).

Inside the shocking layoffs that WaPo's new chief must navigate

(The Messenger)

By Lily Meier

Washington Post CEO and Publisher William Lewis, whom owner Jeff Bezos announced he had hired in an email to staff late Saturday, is coming on board as the paper faces a round of layoffs that will cut its staff of 2,500 by about 10%.

The Post announced last month that it plans 240 jobs reductions, offering buyouts to about 520 employees. They have until Dec. 15 to decide whether to take the separation package.

The buyouts, include non-news departments such as clients solutions and data & analytics, as well as the news and editorials desks, according to details obtained by The Messenger. Some sections and coverage areas were prioritized over others, with the paper’s health and national political reporters protected from the biggest cuts, a source close to the matter told The Messenger.

“We don’t want to lose those people,” the source said. “That's what we are emphasizing as a newspaper.”

Read more [here](#).

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Reporting Israel-Hamas war, accuracy is essential

(Los Angeles Daily News)

By Bob Rawitch

The war raging in the Mideast obviously has vast international implications. Opinions are largely based on reporting by the national television and cable networks and a handful of national news outlets like The New York Times, Washington Post, Wall Street Journal and the Associated Press.

Getting at the full truth of what is happening in any war is impossible. Aside from the limited access reporters have to wartime operations, there is the expanse of the geography that precludes reporters having first-hand access to some events. Seeking to get the truth to pass along to readers and viewers, skilled reporters are trained to be skeptical of news sources. Reporters know that advocates for one side or the other will lie to them, no doubt justifying some greater good, particularly in war time.

So, what's a reporter to do when he or she can't independently verify what a source is saying?

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

With the world on fire, a cowardly, timid news media is a threat to U.S. democracy

(The Philadelphia Inquirer)

By Will Bunch

There was a shocking and incredibly important story on the front page of the New York Times last week. As reported by an A-team of journalists including two Pulitzer Prize winners, the Times warned its readers that Donald Trump — if returned to the White House in 2025 — is grooming a new team of extremist government lawyers who would be more loyal to their Dear Leader than to the rule of law, and could help Trump install a brand of American fascism.

You say you didn't hear anything about this? That's not surprising. The editors at the Times made sure to present this major report in the blandest, most inoffensive way possible — staying true to the mantra in the nation's most influential newsroom that the 2024 election shouldn't be covered any differently, even when U.S. democracy is on the line.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Rich Kirkpatrick

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Broadcast, audio companies will be eligible for Pulitzer Prizes, for work on digital sites

(AP)

By David Bauder

NEW YORK (AP) — The Pulitzer Prizes, considered the premier award for print journalists, are opening eligibility to broadcast and audio companies that also offer digital news sites.

But the work these companies can submit for prize consideration must primarily be written journalism, the Columbia University-based Pulitzer Prize Board said on Monday.

Broadcast news outlets were historically prohibited from entering work in the Pulitzer competition because they produced little text-based journalism. Other competitions, like the Emmys and the duPont-Columbia Awards, honor broadcast journalism.

But television and audio companies like CNN, NPR and broadcasters like ABC, CBS and NBC have robust digital sites.

Read more [here](#).

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Does an AI tool help boost adoptions? Key takeaways from an AP Investigation

By Sally Ho and Garance Burke

Former social worker Thea Ramirez has developed an artificial intelligence -powered tool that she says helps social service agencies find the best adoptive parents for some of the nation's most vulnerable kids.

But an Associated Press investigation has found that the Family-Match algorithm has produced limited results in the states where it has been used, raising questions about the ability of artificial intelligence to solve such enduring human problems.

Two states dropped the tool with only a few adoptions at the end of their initial pilots. Social workers in Florida, Georgia and Virginia told AP that Family-Match wasn't useful and often led them to unwilling families. Florida agencies, on the other hand, reported a more positive experience with the algorithm, saying that it assisted them in tapping into a broader pool of prospective parents.

Read more [here](#).

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CBS launches fact-checking news unit to examine AI, deepfakes, misinformation

(Variety)

By Brian Steinberg

CBS' news-and-stations division will launch a new unit to examine misinformation and so-called "deepfakes," or false videos that can often be generated via artificial intelligence. The new unit, called "CBS News Confirmed," will be led by Claudia Milne,

senior vice president for CBS News and Stations and head of standards and practices, along with Ross Dagan, executive vice president and head of news operations and transformation for CBS News and Stations.

“Technology is changing at an unprecedented pace,” said Wendy McMahon, CEO of CBS’ news, stations and media ventures operations, in a memo to staff. “And the challenges created by the rise of generative AI, fake videos, and misinformation are too great for us not to meet head-on.”

Read more [here](#).

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How big a threat does misinformation pose to democracy?

(NiemanLab)

By Joshua Benton

“Epistemic” is a good five-dollar word. It means, roughly, “of or relating to knowledge or knowing.” Or “relating to knowledge or the study of knowledge.” (Think epistemology, fellow liberal-arts graduates.)

The first time I remember encountering it in mainstream usage was during the early days of the Obama administration, when some of the internal intellectual bonds within the Republican Party were beginning to fracture. For those conservatives skeptical of the growing Tea Party/talk radio/Fox News wing of the party, a key phrase was “epistemic closure” — the idea that some of their fellow partisans had shut themselves off from the reality-based world.

Liberals, of course, were then happy to wield the phrase in turn — a rhetorical update on “reality-based community.” Thankfully, soon after that, everyone agreed that fantastical beliefs based on misinformation were bad and politics got normal again. (Wait, what’s that? You’re telling me that then Donald Trump became president?)

Read more [here](#).

Final Word



Shared by Doug Pizac

Today in History - Nov. 7, 2023



Today is Tuesday, Nov. 7, the 311th day of 2023. There are 54 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Nov. 7, 2013, shares of Twitter went on sale to the public for the first time; by the closing bell, the social network was valued at \$31 billion. (The company would go private again in October 2022 after Elon Musk purchased it for \$44 billion.)

On this date:

In 1917, Russia's Bolshevik Revolution took place as forces led by Vladimir Ilyich Lenin overthrew the provisional government of Alexander Kerensky.

In 1940, Washington state's original Tacoma Narrows Bridge, nicknamed "Galloping Gertie," collapsed into Puget Sound during a windstorm just four months after opening to traffic.

In 1944, President Franklin D. Roosevelt won an unprecedented fourth term in office, defeating Republican Thomas E. Dewey.

In 1972, President Richard Nixon was reelected in a landslide over Democrat George McGovern.

In 1973, Congress overrode President Richard Nixon's veto of the War Powers Act, which limits a chief executive's power to wage war without congressional approval.

In 1989, L. Douglas Wilder won the governor's race in Virginia, becoming the first elected Black governor in U.S. history; David N. Dinkins was elected New York City's first Black mayor.

In 1991, basketball star Magic Johnson announced that he had tested positive for HIV, and was retiring.

In 2001, the Bush administration targeted Osama bin Laden's multi-million-dollar financial networks, closing businesses in four states, detaining U.S. suspects and urging allies to help choke off money supplies in 40 nations.

In 2011, a jury in Los Angeles convicted Michael Jackson's doctor, Conrad Murray, of involuntary manslaughter for supplying a powerful anesthetic implicated in the entertainer's 2009 death. (Murray was sentenced to four years in prison; he served two years and was released in October 2013.)

In 2012, a magnitude 7.4 earthquake killed at least 52 people in western Guatemala.

In 2013, shares of Twitter went on sale to the public for the first time; by the closing bell, the social network was valued at \$31 billion.

In 2015, the leaders of China and Taiwan met for the first time since the formerly bitter Cold War foes split amid civil war 66 years earlier; Chinese President Xi Jinping and Taiwanese President Ma Ying-jeou hailed the meeting in Singapore as a sign of a new stability in relations.

In 2017, Twitter said it was ending its 140-character limit on tweets that had defined the social media outlet for its first decade, and would allow nearly everyone 280 characters to get their message across.

In 2018, a gunman killed 12 people at a country music bar in Thousand Oaks, California, before taking his own life as officers closed in.

In 2020, Democrat Joe Biden clinched victory over President Donald Trump as a win in Pennsylvania pushed Biden over the threshold of 270 Electoral College votes. Trump refused to concede.

Today's Birthdays: Former U.S. Sen. Rudy Boschwitz of Minnesota is 93. Actor Dakin Matthews is 83. Singer Johnny Rivers is 81. Former supermodel Jean Shrimpton is 81. Singer-songwriter Joni Mitchell is 80. Former CIA Director David Petraeus is 71. Jazz singer Rene Marie is 68. Actor Christopher Knight (TV: "The Brady Bunch") is 66. Rock musician Tommy Thayer (KISS) is 63. Actor Julie Pinson is 56. Rock musician Greg

Tribbett (Mudvayne) is 55. Actor Michelle Clunie is 54. Documentary filmmaker Morgan Spurlock is 53. Actor Christopher Daniel Barnes is 51. Actors Jeremy and Jason London are 51. Actor Yunjin Kim is 50. Actor Adam DeVine is 40. Rock musician Zach Myers (Shinedown) is 40. Actor Lucas Neff is 38. Rapper Tinie (TY'-nee) Tempah is 35. Rock singer Lorde is 27.

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.

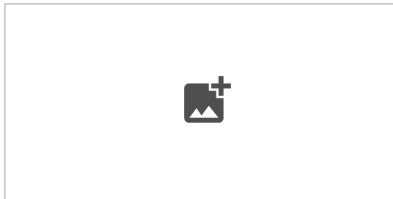
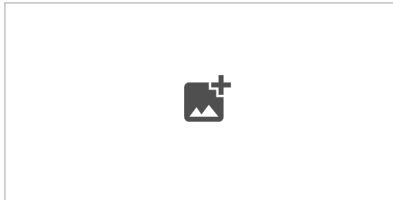
- **Multigenerational AP families** - profiles of families whose service spanned two or more generations.

- **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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