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Connecting

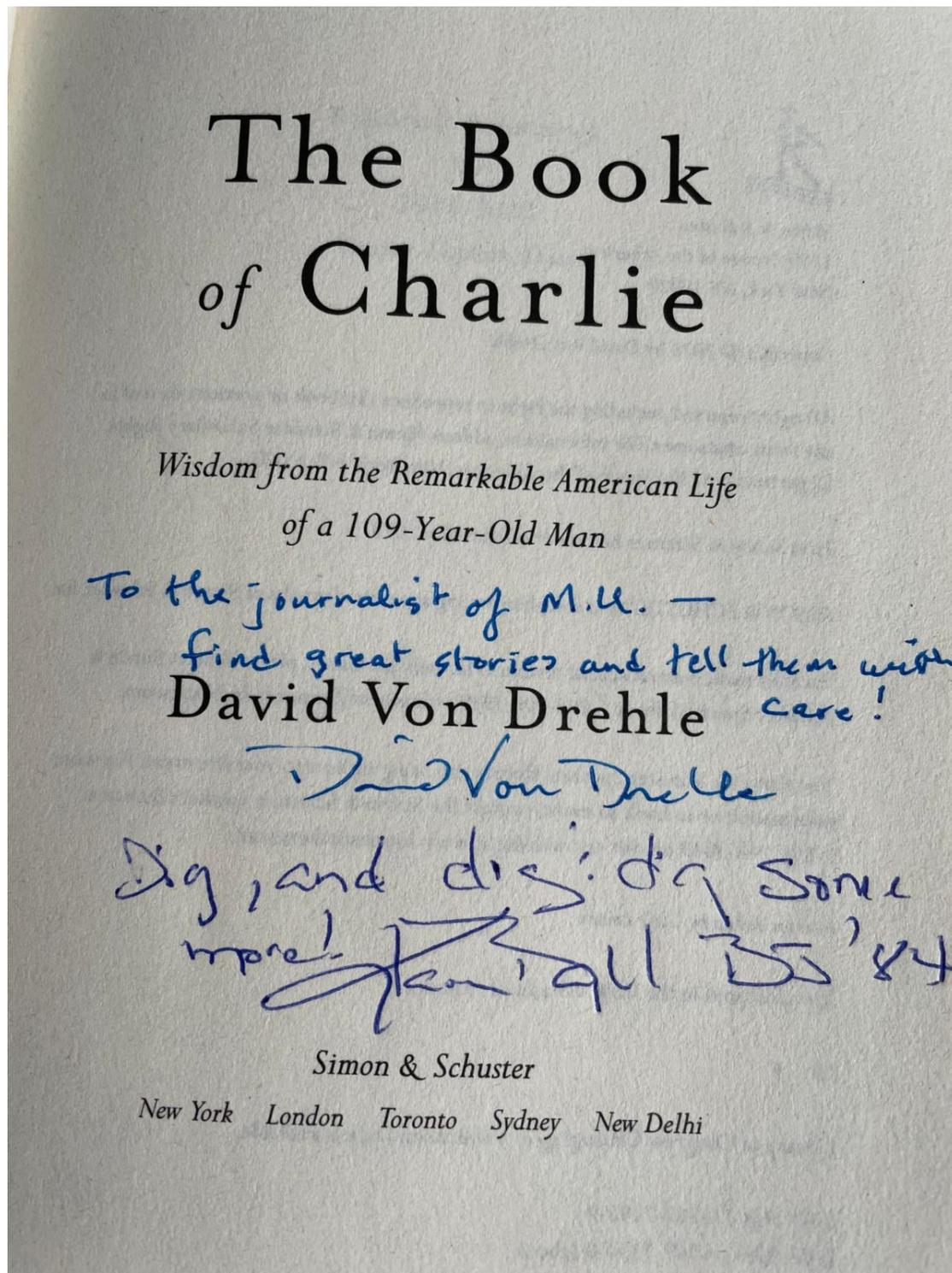
Dec. 1, 2023

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Colleagues,

Good Friday morning on this Dec. 1, 2023,

These inspirational messages from Karen Ball and her husband David Von Drehle were aimed toward Missouri School of Journalism students in the best-selling book that they both worked on - [The Book of Charlie: Wisdom from the Remarkable American Life of a 109-Year-Old Man](#). They discussed the book at Columbia's Skylark Bookshop in early October - and the one they inscribed is now in the library of the Reynolds Journalism Institute in Columbia.

Karen, whose AP career took her from Missouri Statehouse correspondent to Washington and covering the presidential campaign of Bill Clinton, died Nov. 24 at their home in Prairie Village, Kan. She was 62. David is deputy opinion editor and columnist for The Washington Post. The book spent seven weeks on the New York Times bestseller list.

AUTHORS! AUTHORS! – This is to announce the annual Connecting issue featuring books published in the past year that were written by Connecting colleagues. I will be aiming to publish the listing during the second week of the month.

So...if you have written a book in the past year, please send me: 350-word summary of the book and a jpg image of the cover, and a jpg headshot image of you. **DEADLINE is next Friday, Dec. 8.**

I look forward to hearing from you.

Meantime, Connecting has received first responses from colleagues on a request for favorite memories involving the New York Bureau operation. I look forward to your responses over the weekend.

And...this correction – the name of one of our newest readers was misspelled in Thursday's edition. My apologies to **John Kreiser**, and I am repeating his New-Member Profile with the correct spelling of his name.

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

Paul

New-member profile: John Kreiser

John Kreiser - With some help from college friend and sports clerk Tom Canavan (the longtime AP Sports Writer in Newark), I joined the AP as a baseball dictationist in March 1977, moved to Broadcast (then in NYC) in October of 1977 but left in September 1983 when the department moved to Washington (partly because the late Virginia Byrne, a buddy from Broadcast, had introduced me to my future wife; Helen and I have five grown children and two grandchildren).

I rejoined the AP in November 1985 and remained for almost 10 years, splitting time between Special Services and Sports. I left to join InformationWeek (a biz-tech magazine on Long Island) in 1995 and rode the tech boom as copy chief before leaving in 2004. I spent 18-month stints at Sports Illustrated For Kids



(copy chief) and CBSNews.com (copy editor) before joining NHL.com as managing editor in 2007, and stayed there until retiring at the end of 2020.

We lived in Floral Park (the Nassau County side) for 35 years before moving to Dunedin, Florida, in mid-2021. I'm now semi-retired -- but proving that, as Harry Chapin sang, "All my life's a circle," I have become the AP's backup stringer for Tampa Bay Lightning coverage, doing 10-12 games a season. I've also authored several books on hockey, as well as numerous magazine and online pieces.

Your memories of New York Bureau

[Lou Boccardi](#) - Connecting's recent references to the New York bureau reminded me of my first connection to AP.

Back then, there was a co-op within the AP cooperative, called AP Local. The New York daily newspapers (there were seven (7!) then, and they relied on AP Local to provide them nitty gritty city coverage-- cops, fire, courts, etc. It operated alongside the New York bureau but had a structure and turf of its own. And its own board, completely apart from the lofty and prestigious AP Board of Directors. (You'd never mistake one for the other.)

The Local board met periodically in the dining room at 50 Rock, presided over by Sam Blackman, whose title was general news editor. AP had for a time abandoned the title of executive editor. (Sam would later be my first AP boss. Who knew?) I'm going on unverified memory from half a century ago but I think I remember Doug Lovelace and later Pierce Lehmbeck as part of the Local picture.

You can imagine the competitiveness among those who gathered. I was there as the assistant managing editor representing my afternoon paper, the Scripps-Howard owned New York World-Telegram and Sun. The city competition was fierce-- seven dailies, four morning papers, three PMers, with the lion's share of the circulations coming from street sales. We came to work every day envious of what the bigger, richer AMers could do but determined to stand out on the newsstand, where we lived or died.

There were never any fisticuffs at our Local board meetings but one wasn't above taunting a competitor over a story on which your paper had led the way and the other guy's paper had trailed.

I remember one moment when the managing editor of one of the afternoon papers (not mine) complained to the Times representative that the Times was making too many mistakes in its obits and the PMer, having helped itself to some of what was in the morning Times, was getting complaints from its readers.

Accusations of thievery and a loud lecture on ethics followed-- all in a night's work.

I mentioned above that my paper was owned by Scripps-Howard, which also owned UPI in those days. And, to the extent that I ever thought of working for a wire service, I thought it would inevitably be our sister company, UPI. I knew dozens of managers and staffers there, and very few at AP except for Sam.

Just call me lucky.

-0-

Frank Hawkins - During the months at Ft. Bragg, it was time to find a job. I set up interviews with The Associated Press, UPI, The Washington Post and National Geographic. I had flirted with dreams of becoming a photographer for National Geographic but during the interview they politely told me they didn't hire photographers with such a thin resume. The interview with the Washington Post went well. I told them I wanted to be a foreign correspondent. They said they would get back to me. In New York, my interview with UPI also went well. I asked for an assignment to the San Francisco bureau, which they offered. At the AP, after a few initial interviews, a large, jolly man named Doug Lovelace, chief of the New York bureau, waddled up to me. He said he wanted me in the New York bureau.

I was torn. I had this dream of working with an old Cornell friend at UPI and going back out to California where I had studied German at the Defense Language Institute. At that moment my dad gave me the most important advice of my career. He pointed out that the AP was a stronger organization than UPI and would likely pay better. (Which was true.) He also stressed that if I wanted to be a foreign correspondent, it would be useful to be in New York where I could get to know the people who handed out those assignments. That did it. Pop's logic was inescapable.

Founded in 1846, The AP was a not-for-profit cooperative news agency headquartered in New York City. Its members were the wealthy U.S. newspapers and broadcasters. AP news reports were produced in multiple languages. It was widely regarded as the greatest news gathering organization in the world. More importantly, for me, it had bureaus and American correspondents in all of the world's major capitals and many minor ones. In 1906 Mark Twain saw it this way: "There are only two forces that can carry light to all the corners of the globe, the sun in the heavens and the Associated Press down here."

It was the beginning of a 13-year experience that could only be described as the gift of a lifetime. The AP gave me the life I dreamed of as a foreign correspondent. It opened doors I didn't even know existed. It enabled me to meet and get to know many interesting and amazing people, some of them important and quite famous. It was a journey that took me to exotic and wonderful places all over the world – many of them places most Americans have never heard of and will never see. Best of all there was travel, travel, travel, most of it first class and paid for by the AP. How could it have been any better?

In July 1967, Inge and I moved to New York. The first two days we stayed at the Hotel Chelsea, famous for its long list of writers and celebrity guests. Built between 1883 and 1885, the 250-unit hotel at 222 West 23rd Street is where Arthur C. Clarke wrote "2001: A Space Odyssey." Poets Allen Ginsberg and Gregory Corso hung out there and Dylan Thomas was staying there when he died. Arthur Miller wrote a short piece, "The Chelsea Affect," describing life at the Chelsea Hotel in the early 1960s.

But for us, it did not live up to its billing. It may have been famous, but the place was dirty in a very New York City kind of way. Cockroaches were running wild in the

kitchenette. No respectable German woman could put up with that. We moved to a more expensive Holiday Inn and quickly had to find an apartment I could afford in Rego Park. It was a ground floor, two bedroom, one bath in the Oregon Apartments building. It was a true Queens special, not far from the old family home in Jackson Heights, at \$145 a month. The subway that took me into work was only a few yards away, highly convenient for the 25-minute ride to the Associated Press Building at the prestigious address of 50 Rockefeller Plaza.

The New York bureau covered all the daily happenings of the city. A number of people who were later quite successful were on the desk with me including Nick Pileggi, an author, producer and screenwriter best known for writing the non-fiction book *Wiseguy* and co-writing the screenplay for *Goodfellas*. He was married to Nora Ephron who wrote the screenplays for the movies *Sleepless in Seattle*, *When Harry Met Sally* and *You've got Mail* among many others. Also on the desk with me was Tom Harris who went on to write several books that became major movies including *Black Sunday* and *Silence of the Lambs*. The environment was much richer than I appreciated at the time.

The bureau introduced me to how news in America really works. There is no end to politicians, celebrities, organizations and causes who want and demand attention. Every day the bureau was besieged, bombarded with requests from those pleading for coverage of whatever they were doing or advocating. One day, I covered a minor Halloween-themed demonstration somewhere in mid-town of a group that had been harassing us for coverage. Apparently spotting my AP credentials, a young boy came up to me and asked if I was a reporter. I acknowledged that I was. He said, "Wow, you must have a real nose for news."

I had only been at the AP for a week or so when I received a call from the Washington Post offering me a job as a reporter. Already settled at the AP, I said I would take it if they would guarantee me I would be sent overseas within a year or so. They said they couldn't do that. That was the end of that. I never looked back.

My initial AP year spent in the New York bureau included several out-of-office assignments to the state capital in Albany to help cover the legislature and the activities of Gov. Nelson Rockefeller. One big story was his announcement that he was running for president. That was the day I saw Charlie Dumas in action. It was truly unforgettable. Charlie was assigned to cover the Rockefeller announcement. From the bureau in the Capitol building, I walked down to the event hall with Charlie who was holding a copy of the announcement to be read by Rockefeller. As soon as Rockefeller started speaking and Charlie had determined that the copy of the announcement he was holding was what Rockefeller was reading, he dashed up the stairs to the bureau. He sat down at one of the teletype terminals and typed his story, without error, directly onto the A Wire. I must confess I am still in awe of that moment. For me it was the AP at its best in covering spot news.

During that year Bobby Kennedy was assassinated in California. I was part of the team coverage of his New York funeral tasked with shadowing Teddy Kennedy.

One day, while based at JFK airport, I covered the departure of Jackie Kennedy, probably on her way to marry Aristotle Onassis. What a zoo as the photographers pushed and cursed each other trying to get the best angle. She was obviously used to

it. I found it embarrassing. Another time, I covered an event with movie star Joan Crawford. I was amused when she sent me a personally signed best friend note that read, "My Dear Frank. It was good of you to take time to go to Kennedy Airport on the day that 'Miss America' and the five past state winners left for Vietnam. It was a great joy to talk to you and I am so grateful for your helpfulness to all of us. I hope you were able to get a nice story for AP and that you found the incident interesting. Bless you, and all good wishes to you. And all my thanks for your kindness to a very grateful (signature) Joan Crawford."

There were other interesting times including a day spent with Muhammad Ali and another important day spent with Malcolm Browne. It was all good.

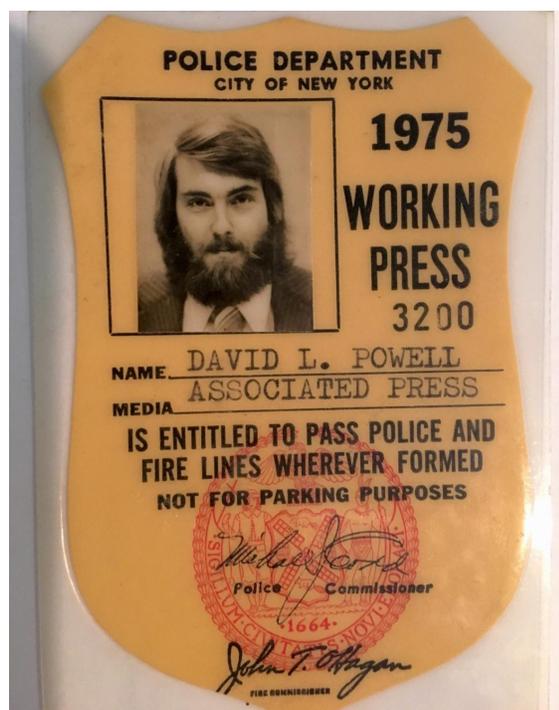
After a year in the bureau, I got the transfer I wanted to the Foreign Desk. And a year after that, I was on my way to New Delhi and the start of my international career. Such wonderful moments.

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David Powell – My first gig with the Associated Press was in 1975 in the New York Bureau, which in those days was located a few feet from the General Desk on the fourth floor of AP headquarters in a classic Art Deco building at 50 Rockefeller Plaza. After graduating from the Columbia Journalism School in 1975, I was hired as a four-month vacation relief staffer in the bureau with the incentive that if I did well, the AP would try to find an entry-level job for me somewhere, although not in New York. The national economy was in the doldrums in 1975, so I was fortunate to get the offer.

My first two weeks were on the dayside shift, and I got a lot of practical advice from the veterans, like always tear the wires and do the necessary tidying up at the start of your shift because you won't have enough time later to catch up. Those first two weeks were unremarkable, getting acquainted with the routine and staff and doing some deskwork.

The big change came in the third week. I was assigned as the third person on the overnight shift, which was supervised by the veteran Samuel Maull. (Some years before, Sam had started writing a thriller with fellow staffers Thomas Harris and Dick Riley about a terrorist plot to hijack the Goodyear Blimp and crash it into the Superbowl. Harris left the AP in 1974 to finish the book, which was published in 1975 as "Black Sunday," later made into a film with Robert Shaw and Bruce Dern. Harris' later books included the bestseller "Silence of the Lambs" and its sequels featuring Hannibal Lecter. I enjoyed Harris' books and wish I had met him.)



After a few weeks on the overnight, I asked Sam what I had done wrong to be punished with the overnight assignment. He laughed and said I didn't understand; it was a vote of confidence from my dayside supervisors because the bureau's overnight staff was so lean. No doubt it also saved others on the staff from having to disrupt their lives by working through the night. I stayed on the overnight until I finished the gig in September.

Working the overnight shift turned out to be a great assignment for a rookie because New York is a great news town. We frequently wrote for the General Desk and got pieces on the "A" wire.

New York was plagued by several crises during the summer of 1975. One night we got a call that a bomb had gone off at the Venezuelan consulate in midtown Manhattan; Sam sent me to the scene to get the story. Cuban exile groups claimed responsibility. Later that summer, a bomb went off with a loud "BOOM!" at a Puerto Rican bank across the street from 50 Rock, rattling the bureau's windows. Everyone on the fourth floor ran to the windows to see what had happened. Again, Sam sent me to get the story. This time, a Puerto Rican nationalist group claimed responsibility.

The biggest local stories that summer were caused by New York's civic ills. Every night we wrote PM stories about the latest developments in the city's long-running fiscal crisis, which ultimately resulted in the state taking charge of municipal finances because, after years of mismanagement, the city struggled to pay its bills and raise money in the capital markets by selling bonds.

Other calamities magnified the consequences of the fiscal crisis. That summer an epidemic of fires broke out in the Bronx—some the result of arson—just as the Fire Department finished a years-long belt-tightening that resulted in the closing of many firehouses. At night, the city seemed to be ablaze with hundreds of fires.

When public schools started in September, almost 60,000 teachers went on strike and left more than 1 million pupils without classes to attend. Each morning as my time on the overnight shift ended, I was dispatched to start the daily coverage of the teachers strike. It was my last reporting assignment in the bureau before moving to a regular position in the Miami Bureau, another great news town. I stayed in Miami for a year then transferred to the Tallahassee Bureau, later serving as correspondent from 1979 to 1981.

New York is more than a great news town; it's a tough news town. In those days the city had a cadre of highly competitive reporters. My experience in the New York Bureau as a rookie gave me the confidence that I could handle major breaking news in a competitive environment. That experience was due largely to my being assigned to the overnight shift, where there weren't many reporter mouths to feed.

The city's famous anthem, "Theme from New York, New York," has that wonderful line, "I want to wake up in a city that never sleeps." I think about my nights in the New York Bureau every time I hear that song. Most New Yorkers got their nightly sleep during the summer of 1975. I didn't, but working the overnight in the New York Bureau was a great way to start my years with the AP.

Conflicted after Oct. 7 attack, he found journalistic compromise through analysis columns



Ohad Munder is reunited with his father and brother after his release from Gaza, November 25, 2023. He was a classmate of Aron Heller's daughter. (Schneider Children's Hospital)

Aron Heller - *AP Correspondent, Jerusalem, 2005-2020* – In the aftermath of the devastating Oct. 7 attack against Israel, I found myself conflicted. As a retired AP correspondent, I had an inkling to get back into the action and with the international media firmly focused on this region there were plenty of options around. But I also had a family, a wife and three young daughters, who were deeply shaken by the upheaval we were experiencing as individuals and as a nation. Ultimately, that took precedence, and I chose to prioritize home life over diving full on into covering yet another bloody Israel-Gaza war (I'd already had three of those under my belt.)

The compromise I found, though, was to publish a series of analysis columns. These looked at how Oct. 7 was the deadliest day for the Jewish people since the Holocaust, how the shocking attack stoked an unprecedented national sense of trauma and how Israel had to look ahead toward what kind of country it would become in its wake. I also briefly came out of AP retirement to file two stories of personal significance to me: the first was about Associated Press cameraman Yaniv Zohar, a long-time colleague of mine who was murdered with his family, and the second was about Ohad Munder-Zichri, a classmate of my eight-year-old daughter who was abducted to Gaza.

Eventually, The Canadian Jewish News tracked me down and, tugging on my Canadian heartstrings, asked me to submit a first-person account of our first month at war.

Much of this still holds true; it's still far too early to understand the full ramification of what we have experienced. In the meantime, we are taking solace in the small miracles of these dark times. This week, 9-year-old Ohad was freed from captivity along with his mother and grandmother. They have a long recovery ahead, as does the country. But watching Ohad reunite with his father gives us hope.

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Heller is asking himself existential questions about the future



**By Aron Heller
For The Canadian Jewish News
November 10, 2023**

The CJN is publishing dispatches from Canadians currently in Israel. Submissions can be sent for consideration to Lila Sarick at info@thecjn.ca.

When the wailing air-raid sirens woke me in the early morning hours of Oct. 7 and sent me stumbling to the safe room of our apartment in central Israel, my initial instinct was rather benign. Another rocket attack from Gaza, I figured, been there, done that.

You see, once you've lived in Israel long enough you start getting the feeling that you've seen it all. This is a nation where news comes at you at breakneck speed,

where crises abound regularly and where the rapid swings between highs and lows come fast and furious. After a while, you tend to become inured to it all.

But it quickly became apparent that this time would be different.

The news reports were jarring. It wasn't just a barrage of rockets this time, it was an infiltration. It wasn't just a few Hamas fighters, it was a full-on invasion. As the day wore on, we watched in disbelief as the climbing count of casualties mounted to unthinkable tallies. The harrowing TV testimonies of petrified residents pleading for help made it abundantly clear: this was something we had never seen before.

Read more [here](#).

Memories of Henry Kissinger

[Frank Aukofer](#) - I had an encounter once with Henry Kissinger when he was the national security adviser to Nixon. We were at a cocktail party and unaccountably wound up talking to each other. I didn't know how to make conversation with the famous statesman, so I asked a reporter's questions, based on the current news, as if I'd been interviewing him. I don't believe I expressed a single thought or an opinion.

This went on for maybe 10 minutes or so; then Kissinger decided he had to move on. He shook my hand and said he had enjoyed our conversation. "It's rare to encounter somebody with your grasp of the issues," he said.

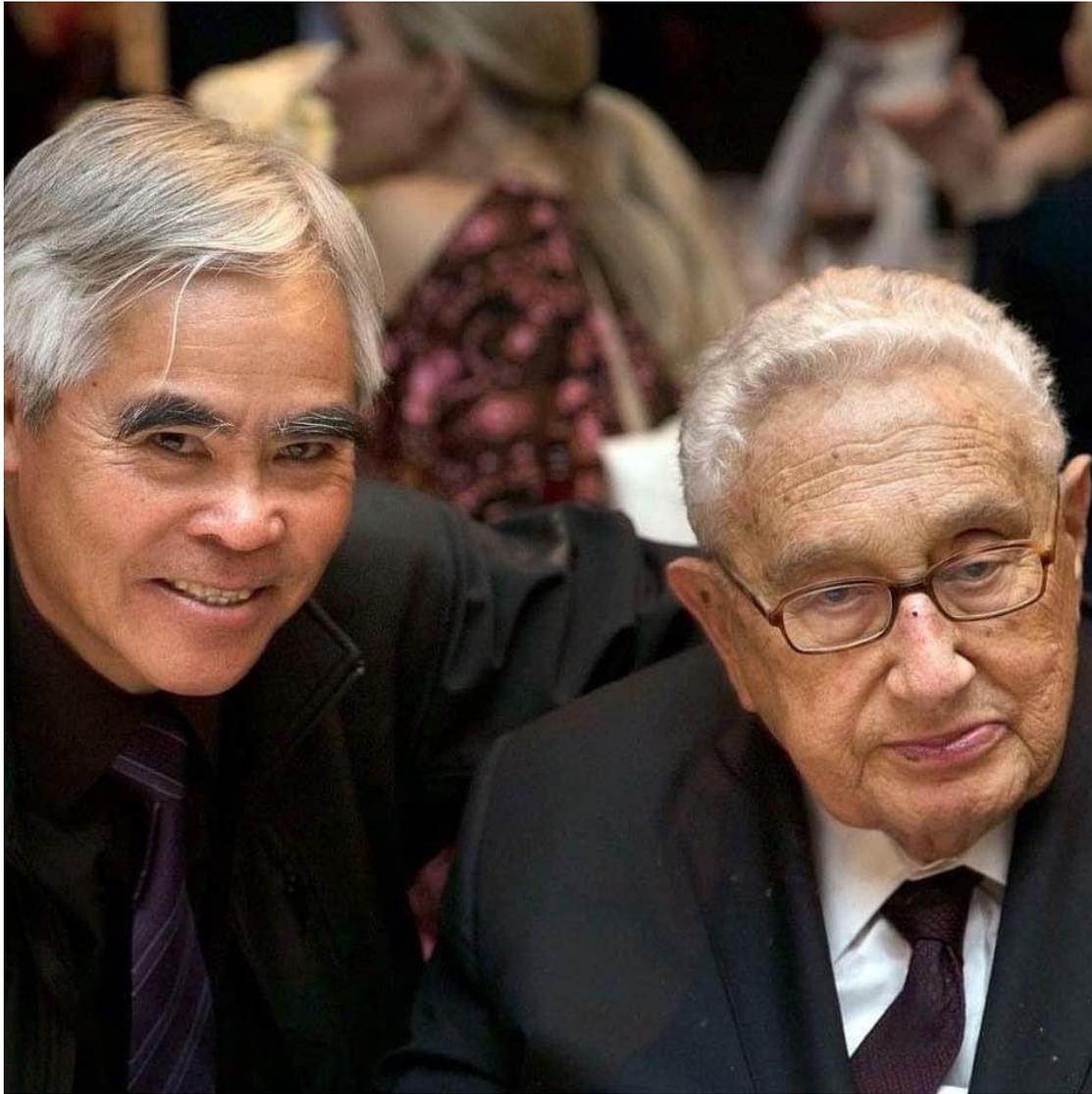
Kissinger had been listening to himself.

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Myron Belkind - Henry Kissinger meets AP New Delhi bureau chief Myron Belkind and his wife Rachel at a dinner in New Delhi in July 1971 on the eve of his traveling to Pakistan, from where he made his secret visit to Beijing to begin opening ties to China.

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Nick Ut – AP’s Nick Ut with Henry Kissinger at the Vietnam War Summit at the Lyndon B. Johnson Library in Austin, Texas. Photo by David Kennerly.

Connecting sky shot – Tucson



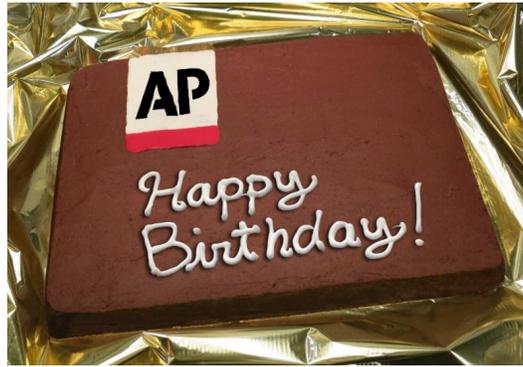
Mark Mittelstadt - With clouds hanging over the Santa Catalina mountains in the background and temperature in the mid-50s, it was a great morning for high school soccer on the last day of November in Tucson. I worked with two colleagues in a tournament at the professional grade Kino Sports Complex.

AP Sighting



Shared by [Marty Steinberg](#).

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



A day late to...

[Chris Pederson](#)

Today...

[Amanda Barrett](#)

[Kathy Rizzo](#)

On Saturday to...

[John Miller](#)

[Jerry Pye](#)

[Nancy Shipley](#)

[Doug Waggoner](#)

[Barbara Worth](#)

On Sunday to...

[Merv Hendricks](#)

Stories of interest

Poynter Institute to run respected 45-year-old journalism contest, now renamed The Poynter Journalism Prizes

By: Jennifer Orsi

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (Nov. 30, 2023) – The Poynter Institute announced Thursday that it will become the new home for the prestigious awards contest honoring the best journalism in the United States that previously was run by the News Leaders Association.

The awards will be renamed The Poynter Journalism Prizes.

The NLA has transitioned stewardship of its contest, which includes awards and cash prizes for local accountability reporting, distinctive writing, diversity, innovation, commentary, editorials and more, to Poynter as the NLA winds down operations.

Poynter will administer the 2024 contest covering work from 2023, with plans to open the awards for entries in January, close entries in mid-February and name winners in April.

“Poynter is honored to be the new home of one of the most respected contests in journalism. These awards have a rich history of recognizing excellence in writing and reporting, and we are excited to continue a tradition that showcases quality journalism that is serving democracy in vibrant and vital ways,” said Poynter President Neil Brown. “We appreciate the NLA’s choosing Poynter to safeguard the legacy of these distinguished prizes.”

“NLA is grateful these awards, which have such a storied history and celebrate the best of American journalism, will be stewarded by the Poynter Institute, a deeply respected journalism organization with enormous reach,” said Alison Gerber, NLA president and editor of the Chattanooga Times Free Press.

Read more [here](#).

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MSNBC draws backlash for canceling Mehdi Hasan show (Washington Post)

By Jeremy Barr

MSNBC faced a blizzard of backlash Thursday after announcing that popular liberal host Mehdi Hasan would lose his Sunday-night show as part of a broader restructuring of the network’s weekend lineup.

The network said the changes, which include a new weekend panel show, were made with 2024 election coverage in mind. But fans and prominent liberals questioned

whether Hasan, one of the few Muslim hosts in cable news, was being penalized for his criticism of the Israeli government's actions in Gaza and strong support for the Palestinian people.

Although Hasan was not among MSNBC's top-rated stars, his segments often went viral on social media, where users celebrated his takedowns of conservatives such as former Trump adviser John Bolton and Israeli government adviser Mark Regev. During a Nov. 16 interview on his show for NBC's Peacock streaming service, Hasan pressed Regev on the children killed in Gaza by Israeli strikes. When Regev said that Hasan had seen photos of dead children "because they're the pictures Hamas wants you to see," the host responded, "and also because they're dead, Mark. They're also people your government has killed."

Read more [here](#).

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NFL suspends cameraman 'possibly for good' over Tyreek Hill celebration (New York Post)

Justin Terranova

Tyreek Hill's phone flip celebration was costly for one NFL employee.

Cameraman Kevin Fitzgibbons says the league suspended him for the season and "possibly for good" for allowing Hill to use his camera as part of the theatrics.

The celebration, during the Dolphins' Week 6 win over the Panthers, instantly went viral.

The NFL confirmed to The Post that Fitzgibbons had his credential pulled for the rest of the season.

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

Today in History - Dec. 1, 2023



Today is Friday, Dec. 1, the 335th day of 2023. There are 30 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 1, 1991, Ukrainians voted overwhelmingly for independence from the Soviet Union.

On this date:

In 1824, the presidential election was turned over to the U.S. House of Representatives when a deadlock developed among John Quincy Adams, Andrew Jackson, William H. Crawford and Henry Clay. (Adams ended up the winner.)

In 1862, President Abraham Lincoln sent his Second Annual Message to Congress, in which he called for the abolition of slavery, and went on to say, "Fellow-citizens, we can not escape history. We of this Congress and this Administration will be remembered in spite of ourselves."

In 1941, Japan's Emperor Hirohito approved waging war against the United States, Britain and the Netherlands after his government rejected U.S. demands contained in the Hull Note.

In 1942, during World War II, nationwide gasoline rationing went into effect in the United States; the goal was not so much to save on gas, but to conserve rubber that was desperately needed for the war effort by reducing the use of tires.

In 1952, the New York Daily News ran a front-page story on Christine Jorgensen's sex-reassignment surgery with the headline, "Ex-GI Becomes Blonde Beauty".

In 1955, Rosa Parks, a Black seamstress, was arrested after refusing to give up her seat to a white man on a Montgomery, Alabama, city bus; the incident sparked a year-long boycott of the buses.

In 1965, an airlift of refugees from Cuba to the United States began in which thousands of Cubans were allowed to leave their homeland.

In 1969, the U.S. government held its first draft lottery since World War II.

In 1974, TWA Flight 514, a Washington-bound Boeing 727, crashed in Virginia after being diverted from National Airport to Dulles International Airport; all 92 people on board were killed. On the same day, Northwest Orient Airlines Flight 6231, a Boeing 727, crashed near Stony Point, New York, with the loss of its three crew members (the plane had been chartered to pick up the Baltimore Colts football team in Buffalo, New York).

In 2005, a roadside bomb killed 10 U.S. Marines near Fallujah, Iraq.

In 2009, President Barack Obama ordered 30,000 more U.S. troops into the war in Afghanistan but promised during a speech to cadets at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point to begin withdrawals in 18 months.

In 2012, Kansas City Chiefs linebacker Jovan Belcher fatally shot his girlfriend, Kasandra Perkins, then drove to Arrowhead Stadium and took his own life in front of the team's coach and general manager.

In 2013, a New York City commuter train rounding a riverside curve derailed, killing four people and injuring more than 70.

In 2017, retired general Michael Flynn, who served as President Donald Trump's first national security adviser, pleaded guilty to lying to the FBI about reaching out to the Russians on Trump's behalf. (Trump would later pardon Flynn.)

In 2020, disputing President Donald Trump's persistent, baseless claims, Attorney General William Barr told The Associated Press that the U.S. Justice Department had uncovered no evidence of widespread voter fraud that could change the outcome of the 2020 election.

In 2021, the U.S. recorded its first confirmed case of the omicron variant of the coronavirus, in a vaccinated traveler who returned to California after a trip to South Africa.

In 2022, legislation to avert what could have been an economically ruinous freight rail strike won final approval in Congress as lawmakers responded to President Joe Biden's call for federal intervention in the long-running labor dispute.

Today's Birthdays: Actor-director Woody Allen is 88. World Golf Hall of Famer Lee Trevino is 84. Singer Dianne Lennon (The Lennon Sisters) is 84. Television producer David Salzman is 80. Rock singer-musician Eric Bloom (Blue Oyster Cult) is 79. Rock musician John Densmore (The Doors) is 79. Actor-singer Bette Midler is 78. Singer Gilbert O'Sullivan is 77. Former child actor Keith Thibodeaux (TV: "I Love Lucy") is 73. Sen. Rick Scott, R-Fla., is 71. Country singer Kim Richey is 67. Actor Charlene Tilton is 65. Actor-model Carol Alt is 63. Actor Jeremy Northam is 62. Actor Katherine LaNasa is 57. Producer-director Andrew Adamson is 57. Actor Nestor Carbonell is 56. Actor Golden Brooks is 53. Actor-comedian Sarah Silverman is 53. Actor Ron Melendez is 51. Contemporary Christian singer Bart Millard (MIL'urd) is 51. Actor-writer-producer David Hornsby is 48. Singer Sarah Masen is 48. Rock musician Brad Delson (Linkin Park) is 46. Actor Nate Torrence is 46. Rock/Christian music singer-songwriter Mat Kearney is 45. Actor Riz Ahmed is 41. Actor Charles Michael Davis is 39. Actor Ifenesh Hadera is 38. R&B singer-actor Janelle Monae is 38. Actor Ashley Monique Clark is 35. Pop-rock-rap singer Tyler Joseph (Twenty One Pilots) is 35. Actor Zoe Kravitz is 35. Pop singer Nico Sereba (Nico & Vinz) is 33. Actor Jackson Nicoll is 20.

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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