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# Connecting

March 28, 2024

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Colleagues,

Good Thursday morning on this March 28, 2024,

**Bringing AP headlines to the streets** – from <u>Malcolm Ritter</u> - New York City pedestrians can glimpse AP headlines on electronic kiosks maintained by the city. See above photo. The kiosks also show public service announcements and ads, and I'm always pleased to see AP headlines pop up.

Last print run - The Olympic printing plant where the Los Angeles Times was published for more than 30 years printed the paper for the last time March 10, 2024. When Tribune Co. owned the newspaper, it sold the property, making The Times a tenant. The lease is now up and paying rent has become untenable. Going forward, the paper will be printed in Riverside by the Southern California News Group. Click <a href="here">here</a> for YouTube video. Shared by Sibby Christensen.

Correcting first bureau for Wednesday's birthday celebrant Edie Lederer — who writes, "Thank you for the lead birthday tribute — but there's one small error. I started working in New York on what was then called 'AP Local,' which was basically a city news service for the then maybe 10 newspapers in New York City (now there are three) plus the papers in New Jersey and the many radio stations in the area. At that time, we all wrote on typewriters with several carbons, and there were pneumatic tubes that carried our stories across the newsroom at 50 Rockefeller Plaza in the heart of midtown Manhattan to teletype operators. It's amazing to see how far technology has taken us — and, devastatingly, to see the death of so many newspapers during my AP career." (Connecting mistakenly listed her first bureau as San Francisco.)

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

Paul

## Déjà vu with another bridge accident



The M/V Delta Mariner after its collision with the Eggner Ferry Bridge. The vessel struck the bridge, which spans Kentucky Lake in Marshall County, KY, on 26 January 2012, causing a span to collapse onto the bow of the ship. Author: Michael Davis Photography

Chuck Wolfe - Bill Kaczor isn't the only one with Deja vu arising from the Key Bridge disaster. Eleven years ago, a cargo ship named Delta Mariner, navigating up the Tennessee River/Kentucky Lake in the dark, rain and fog with a payload for NASA, mistakenly headed into a pleasure boat channel rather than the main navigational channel beneath the Eggner Ferry Bridge. It sawed off one entire span of the bridge. I was public affairs director for the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet. My phone rang at about 2:30 in the morning, and you know that's never good! Miraculously, no fatalities. A state trooper was in the vicinity and able to throw his cruiser across the highway to halt traffic. Still, it was a couple of days before we could be certain that no one had gone into the lake in the dark. At the Coast Guard board of inquiry, the contract harbor pilot admitted he hadn't used the GPS. "I like to eyeball it," he said.

## I feel like Howard Graves today



<u>Kelly Kissel</u> - Lea Skene of the Baltimore AP office (may actually BE the Baltimore AP office) had decent play today with the bridge collapse.

Lea was my top cop reporter at the Baton Rouge newspaper and always had this annoying knack of writing so well that if you tried to tinker with her copy, you risked messing with its flow. (This is really a compliment but an editor has a gruff persona to uphold.)

I'm happy she's on the AP team now.

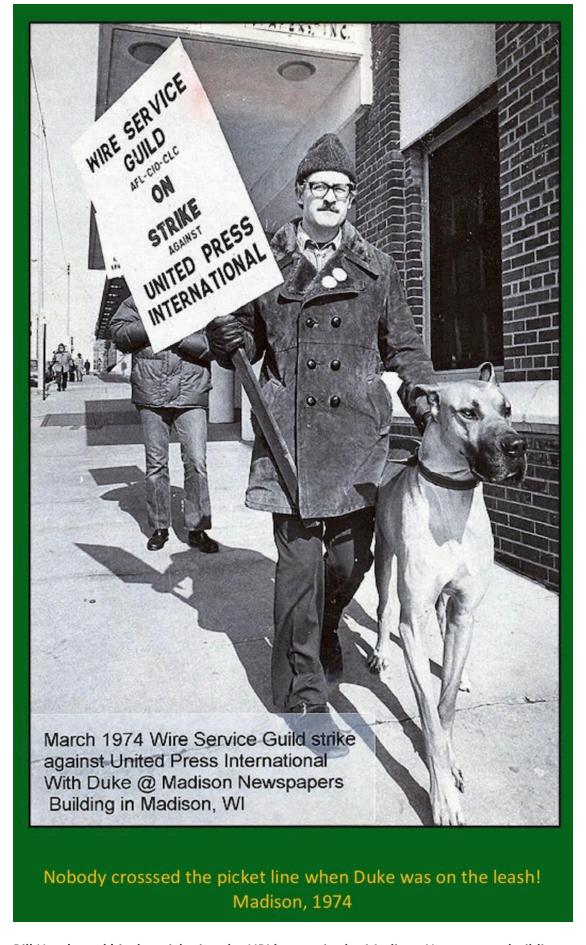
This is going out in the mail today. It's one little tribute to Howard Graves, the Unaclipper.

# 50-year anniversary of UPI strike

<u>Adolphe Bernotas</u> - Fifty years ago this week, United Press International staffers represented by Local 222 of The Newspaper Guild were in the midst of their strike against Scripps-Howard company. It was the second strike called by the Wire Service Guild and lasted 23 days. The first strike by the local was against the Associated Press five years earlier, lasting eight days. In many bureaus around the United States veterans of the AP strike and AP staffers joined their UPI brothers and sisters on picket lines.

What follows is the story of the UPI strike, told by one of its top leaders, Mike Kaeser, WSG president at the time. Mike and I spent many years as comrades-in-arms in WSG leadership.

Mike started in the Madison bureau in 1963, then Milwaukee, Lincoln, Detroit and Chicago. He left UPI in 1978, rejoined in 1982 for a stint in Dallas, San Francisco and Chicago, leaving UPI in 1985. Before he retired from the Santa Rosa Press Democrat, Mike had worked at the Florida Times-Union, Braniff and Midway airlines, and at the Los Angeles Times for the Times-Washington Post News Service as managing editor. He lives outside Sacramento.



Bill Hauda and his dog picketing the UPI bureau in the Madison Newspapers building.

## Here is Mike Kaeser's account of the strike:

In 1974, we called for a strike-authorization vote as soon as management submitted its money offer, not unheard of timing. Such votes usually pass by wide margins, but sometimes the members privately tell the negotiators "we've handed you the loaded gun, but don't pull the trigger," which makes the poker game of negotiations more tricky. This time, we had tremendous backing. After a major organizing drive, we had the highest percentage of membership in WSG history.

The one exception was the computer department in New York, which Chuck Wallace from the foreign desk focused on but could not crack. This raised the suspicions of Edna Berger, the TNG rep assigned to our negotiations, who had us ask for the months of overtime records we could get under the contract. An interesting pattern was uncovered: The lead programmer was working 80 hours a week, for months, meaning he was making 2.5 times the contract scale. The No. 2 programmer was working about 75 hours, and so on down the line. They were probably being paid the industry going rate for tech people, but UPI, being cheap, didn't want to give them permanent raises above scale, so this under-the-table scheme was used to keep vital employees keeping the computer running. I don't remember how UPI dealt with the problem.

The strike lasted 23 days. Every morning we woke up worrying whether the troops were still on the picket lines or whether the whole thing had collapsed. But out folks held strong. What they were going through made our part look easy.

Harry Culver (TNG chairperson at the time), who'd come in to do payroll analysis as only he could to cost out various pay offers, basically ran the WSG office and communicated with members around the country while the bargaining committee of Drew Von Bergen, Bruno Raniello, Karl Kramer and me was occupied at negotiations. Chris Graham from the UPI radio network provided a professional voice for the daily messages on the answering machine that updated members -- and management who also checked them. The negotiators, basically living in New York for more than two months, made a couple of trips home to meet with our members. When we were in an information blackout imposed by a federal mediator, Von Bergen went back to DC and was confronted by the legendary White House correspondent Helen Thomas, who demanded to know what was going on. When he balked, she told him, "Lyndon Johnson couldn't keep what was going on in Vietnam from me, and you're not going to keep this from me." One suspects there followed what is known in Washington circles as a conversation on "deep background."

The night the strike ended, our guardian angel Edna Berger took our committee for drinks at her apartment where her husband, Gerald Marks, serenaded us with some of the Tin Pan Alley songs he'd composed. Harry, who did not drink, had one small sherry.

When the strike ended at midnight, the pickets in Chicago went upstairs and greeted returning employees with standing ovations. I took a couple more unpaid weeks to run out my three-months of allowed Guild leave, decompress and likely keep myself from putting my fist through a computer screen if I'd gone back right away. When I

finally went in, the place erupted in applause, an honor that made me proud to have served them.

The strike may have ended but the battle soon resumed. All of our money proposals called for reducing the step-ups for the Newspersons, Photographers classification from six years to five. Amazingly, it seemed, all of UPI's offers did exactly the same thing. This was a very BFD. However, when UPI put all the pieces of the contract together into the final typed version for signing, there suddenly were two scales for that classification: a six-year one for current employees and a five-year one for new hires. That had never been put on paper by the company during negotiations, so we started litigating, which was still going on when the 1976 talks began.

UPI had been outraged and embarrassed that their major star Helen Thomas had gone out on strike. Covering the White House was so important, the magic wand was waved over Helen, who was declared manager of a separate three-person White House bureau, which made her exempt from Guild coverage. UPI had a history of sprinkling managerial titles like fairy dust, and the Guild took the issue to arbitration, which was still pending in 1976.

UPI also quietly docked all the strikers 23 days of seniority for their time on the picket line. We were off to the National Labor Relations Board with an unfair labor practice complaint.

After the strike, there was some grumbling from the ranks that we hadn't gained much over what was on the table when it began. One thing we did gain was our self-respect as a union and the respect (or fear) of management, which fell all over itself two years later to avoid a repeat and make us happy. I may be imagining this after all these years, but I believe I opened the 1976 negotiations with the words, "As we were saying..."

We went back in 1976 with the same TNG model contract all locals must submit before amending it to more practical terms. This time management was not as openly hostile and we did our part by quickly jettisoning the parts that didn't apply well to a wire service. UPI's chief spokesman again was Scripps-Howard labor lawyer Jack Novotny, a former Marine given to such verbosity, orally and in the writing of flabby contract language, that I was convinced he was being paid not by hour but by the word. He was quickly nicknamed Monotony. Trees died as we endlessly passed paper back and forth, Jack padding every paragraph, the editors on our side doing heavy editing and shoving it back.

Trying not to trigger another instant strike authorization vote, Novotny kept assuring us that the eventual company salary proposal would be "a ballpark offer," not a take-it-or-leave it one as in 1974 when UPI made it clear it would not exceed levels in the recent AP contract. By the time Novotny finally said the "ballpark" money would arrive in the next session, we were ready. Company negotiators walked in to find Walter Wisniewski, Mike Conlon, Jim Pecora and me wearing yellow and blue rugby shirts. "OK, Jack, we here to play ball," I said. We called them the bumblebee shirts, after a running SNL skit and wore them only when talking money.

Nothing signaled the difference in UPI's willingness to listen and bargain between 1974 and 1976 than a session involving the lowest-paid classification, the mail room

aides. Some of the young men came in to make a pitch for a little something extra -- a slightly higher percentage raise than other classifications might get because they were paid so pitifully little. Management brought in the mailroom foreman, George Muldowney, a former Guild officer before the management wand got waved over him. Moldy, as his staff called him, did not look comfortable on that side of the table. Monotony delivered the most condescending speech I'd heard in two negotiations, saying that UPI had only so many resources to spread around and had to put them where they would do the most good, with the editorial staff, and besides you can never grow up to be president.

The young lad next to me shot back: "Al Bock started in the mailroom." Bock was the company controller, the guy who signed the checks. Novotny was stunned. He mumbled something polite and indicated they'd see what they could do. In the end, the mailroom aides did get an extra boost.

You may have heard of that bright kid. His name is Kevin Keane and he went on to become Guild administrator.

In 1974, when we were embarrassing management with a cache of company documents and they wanted to know how we got them, Edna had said, "The Angel of Mercy left them on our doorstep at the Guild office." In 1976, the new general manager reached out to me before the talks to say that if we ever felt that our message was not getting past their negotiators (translation: Novotny) to higher management we should contact him directly. After another day of endless, unproductive haggling over a relatively minor issue involving the horse racing wire, I ended the nightly phone message cryptically: "On this issue, the Angel of Mercy has yet to hear from the Horse's Mouth." An hour later someone in management tracked us down and gave me a number to call. It's was the GM's home number. His wife answered, asked who was calling, and I said, "Tell him it's the Angel of Mercy." The result was a private rendezvous with him the next day at the Waldorf coffee shop where Wisniewski and I cleared the air on a number of issues, setting the stage for a contract deal a couple of nights later that finally resolved all three matters of dispute outstanding from 1974. The dual scale disappeared with the five-year plan prevailing; the 23 days seniority days were returned; and Helen would continue to be exempt until she left, whereupon the imaginary bureau disappear back into the DC bureau.

As a parting gift, we gave Novotny a book on how to write clear contract language. The inscription "From the Angel of Mercy" was typed, somehow, so as not to give him any clue who the original angel might or might not have been. Like Bob Woodward, I will not reveal my sources.

Over the years, I had edited any number of labor stories that used the phrase "hammered out an agreement." I considered it a cliche and would change it to "reach an agreement." One word shorter and less trite.

My opinion changed after my experience at the bargaining table. It really is incredibly hard, stressful work.

## Stories of interest

# The British royal family learns that if you don't fill an information vacuum, someone else will (AP)

### BY DAVID BAUDER

NEW YORK (AP) — A media frenzy was born on Feb. 27, when the hashtag #WhereIsKate exploded online with speculation about the whereabouts of Britain's Princess of Wales. It opened a rabbit hole of amateur detective work, memes, bizarre theories and jokes — mixed with genuine concern about Kate's health — into which thousands of people descended until her announcement last week that she was recovering from cancer.

The episode offered the royal family — and everyone else — a lesson in the modern world of online media: If your silence leaves an information vacuum, others will rush to fill it. And the results may be messy.

"The royal family's mantra is never complain, never explain," said Ellie Hall, a journalist who specializes in covering Britain's king and his court. "That really doesn't work in a digital age. It doesn't take much to get the crazy things going."

It was, in part, entertainment for some people with too much time on their hands. Except it involved real people with real lives — and, it turns out, real medical challenges.

#### ANATOMY OF AN INFORMATION VACUUM

On Jan. 17, Kensington Palace announced that Kate was in the hospital recovering from a planned abdominal surgery and would not be doing any public events until after Easter. There was relatively little online chatter, or official updates, until it was announced on Feb. 27 that her husband, Prince William, would not be attending his godfather's memorial service due to a "personal matter."

Read more here.

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## Vanderbilt Shares Media Restrictions After Arrest

(Nashville Scene)

### **ELI MOTYCKA**

Journalists must secure university approval in order to gain access to campus according to a policy shared Wednesday by Vanderbilt University. The school cites concern for campus safety and privacy, and did not share when this policy was adopted. Reporters from the Scene, the Nashville Banner, The Tennessean and WPLN confirm that they are not familiar with the policy. As of this publication, it does not appear online.

"As a matter of policy, we ask that members of the media reach out to Communications (media@vanderbilt.edu) in advance of coming to campus so we understand what you are coming to cover, as well as when you plan to arrive and when you plan to leave," the policy reads, in part. "In some cases, we may ask media to remain on the perimeter of campus to take photos/video and conduct interviews (as we have today), particularly during events where safety may be an issue."

The rules come a day after the sudden arrest of a Nashville Scene reporter covering a student sit-in at the office of Chancellor Daniel Diermeier. For more than a week, students have agitated against the university's decision to block a student government vote on a BDS referendum. The sit-in ended Wednesday morning and resulted in five arrests and 16 suspensions.

Read more <u>here</u>. Shared by Scott Charton.

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# NBC braces for the backlash to the backlash after hiring and firing top Republican (Semafor)

Max Tani, Shelby Talcott, and Kadia Goba

NBC News's dramatic hiring and firing of a former RNC chairwoman this week threatens to undo years of repositioning itself as friendly to Republican officials and viewers.

NBCUniversal's news division announced Friday it had hired Ronna McDaniel as an onair contributor who would appear on NBC and MSNBC. On Tuesday NBCUniversal News Group chief Cesar Conde announced that he'd decided to end the network's deal with McDaniel after an open revolt by his stars over hiring someone who had played a role in Donald Trump's attempt to contest the 2020 election he lost.

But while the abrupt reversal was cheered by some MSNBC staff, other NBC News journalists said they believe the move will only continue to strengthen complaints by Republicans that the network doesn't want to hear their perspectives.

AD

Now, NBC staffers are bracing for Republican backlash, fielding texts from angry GOP sources.

"Political reporters here didn't take part in the backlash, nor did they get to give input on the hire," one NBC News journalist said. "But they'll be the ones who have to pick up the pieces with sources who are now dismayed with the organization."

Read more here.

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# The Hussman J-school at UNC: Preparing students for the business of news (Editor and Publisher)

## Keldy Ortiz | for Editor & Publisher Magazine

In response to the shifting tides of journalism in the digital age, the University of North Carolina embarked on a series of adaptations to prepare students for the evolving industry landscape. They are doing this while keeping commitments to public service and traditional reporting skills intact.

Situated in Chapel Hill, a town of about 62,000, the Hussman School of Journalism and Media at the University of North Carolina was founded in 1924 and has a rich history of producing journalists dedicated to public service and excellence. Of the nearly 32,000 undergraduate and graduate students at UNC, about 1,000 are enrolled at the Hussman School. In 1950, the Department of Journalism became the School of Journalism and graduated journalists expecting to make an impact in the field.

Under the leadership of Dean Raul Reis, who took office in July 2022, the Hussman School significantly revised its curriculum, infusing courses that can assist students in excelling once they graduate — whether in journalism or other communication fields like advertising or public relations.

One notable addition to the curriculum is the introduction of specialized certificate programs, including a new course on political communication. This offering, which includes a semester-long internship in Washington, D.C., aims to provide students with practical experience in navigating the complexities of political reporting. This will add to the four existing certificates: business communication, sports communication, health communication and marketing, and fashion communication and marketing.

Read more here.

## The Final Word

# Never Have I Ever Retro Edition Give yourself I point for each thing you've NEVER done 1. Used a rotary phone 2. Used a floppy disc 3. Used a typewriter 4. Taken photos with a film camera 5. Listened to music on a CD 6. Listened to a cassette tape 7. Listened to a vinyl record 8. Listened to music on a Walkman 9. Listened to music on a boombox 10. Watched a video from a VHS tape 11. Sent or received a fax 12. Recorded music from radio to cassette tape 13. Rented a video from Blockbuster 14. Accessed the internet by dial-up 15. Used a phone book 16. Sent a postcard 17. Used a paper map to get somewhere 18. Owned a dictionary 19. Owned an encyclopedia 20. Paid with a paper check

Today in History - March 28, 2024



Today is Thursday, March 28, the 88th day of 2024. There are 278 days left in the year.

### Today's Highlight in History:

On March 28, 1979, America's worst commercial nuclear accident occurred with a partial meltdown inside the Unit 2 reactor at the Three Mile Island plant near Middletown, Pennsylvania.

#### On this date:

In 1797, Nathaniel Briggs of New Hampshire received a patent for a washing machine.

In 1854, during the Crimean War, Britain and France declared war on Russia.

In 1898, the U.S. Supreme Court, in United States v. Wong Kim Ark, ruled 6-2 that Wong, who was born in the United States to Chinese immigrants, was an American citizen.

In 1935, the notorious Nazi propaganda film "Triumph des Willens" (Triumph of the Will), directed by Leni Riefenstahl, premiered in Berlin with Adolf Hitler present.

In 1939, the Spanish Civil War neared its end as Madrid fell to the forces of Francisco Franco.

In 1941, novelist and critic Virginia Woolf, 59, drowned herself near her home in Lewes, East Sussex, England.

In 1942, during World War II, British naval forces staged a successful raid on the Nazi-occupied French port of St. Nazaire in Operation Chariot, destroying the only dry dock on the Atlantic coast capable of repairing the German battleship Tirpitz.

In 1969, the 34th president of the United States, Dwight D. Eisenhower, died in Washington, D.C., at age 78.

In 1977, "Rocky" won best picture at the 49th Academy Awards; Peter Finch was honored posthumously as best actor for "Network" while his co-star, Faye Dunaway, was recognized as best actress.

In 1987, Maria von Trapp, whose life story inspired the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical "The Sound of Music," died in Morrisville, Vermont, at age 82.

In 1999, NATO broadened its attacks on Yugoslavia to target Serb military forces in Kosovo in the fifth straight night of airstrikes; thousands of refugees flooded into Albania and Macedonia from Kosovo.

In 2000, in a unanimous ruling, the Supreme Court, in Florida v. J.L., sharply curtailed police power in relying on anonymous tips to stop and search people.

In 2012, bluegrass legend and banjo pioneer Earl Scruggs died in Nashville, Tennessee at 88.

In 2022, the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences condemned the actions of Will Smith during the previous night's Oscars and launched an inquiry into his slapping of Chris Rock. (Smith was later expelled from the movie academy received a 10-year ban from the Oscars.)

Today's Birthdays: Author Mario Vargas Llosa is 88. Country musician Charlie McCoy is 83. Movie director Mike Newell is 82. Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte is 79. Actor Dianne Wiest is 78. Country singer Reba McEntire is 69. Olympic gold medal gymnast Bart Conner is 66. Actor Alexandra Billings (TV: "Transparent") is 62. Rapper Salt (Salt-N-Pepa) is 58. Actor Tracey Needham is 57. Actor Max Perlich is 56. Movie director Brett Ratner is 55. Country singer Rodney Atkins is 55. Actor Vince Vaughn is 54. Rapper Mr. Cheeks (Lost Boyz) is 53. Singer-songwriter Matt Nathanson is 51. Rock musician Dave Keuning (The Killers) is 48. Actor Julia Stiles is 43. Singer Lady Gaga is 38. Electronic musician Clayton Knight (Odesza) is 36.

# 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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