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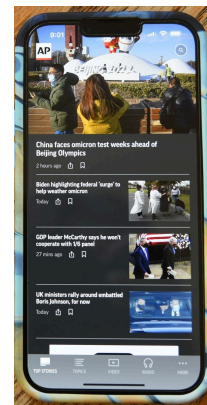
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# Connecting

April 11, 2024

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Colleagues,

Good Thursday morning on this April 11, 2024,

More memories past and present are featured in today's Connecting:

Past, the AP news tests required of applicants – and the Present, the solar eclipse that graced a swath of the United States on Monday and left memories to last a lifetime. Or at least until 2033 when the next U.S. eclipse hits Alaska or 2044 when it hits the Lower 48 States. What kind of cameras will we be using then to record history?

**KROPKO HONOR:** Former AP staffer Marv Kropko, who used a byline of M.R. Kropko, will receive the Distinguished Service Award in June from the Cleveland Chapter of the Society Journalists (SPJ). Marv worked at the AP Cleveland office for 30 years, from July 1979 to July 2009. He is the first wire service staffer to receive the DSA -- the chapter's highest honor. Details of the reception and ceremony have not been finalized. It will be on a Wednesday or Thursday night in mid- to late-June in

Cleveland. If you would like to be notified of the final event details, please send a note to [SPJCleveland@gmail.com](mailto:SPJCleveland@gmail.com) The event is open to the public. (Shared by [Jerry Masek](#))

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

Paul



## Memories of taking the AP tests

**[Jim Bagby](#)** - About my 1971 test in OKC: I remember little except that I worried about the amount of time for the writing part. My first reaction was that wasn't enough time for whatever was required. Afterward, I fretted about how I could have done a better job if I hadn't hurried so much. Then I was startled, elated and torn when the gruff voice of someone named Fred Moen, whom I came to appreciate enormously, called to offer me a job in Kansas City. Kansas City?!? I'd only been there once in my life for a brief visit and knew almost nothing about it! I guess I assumed that if I passed the test, I'd land in Oklahoma. But all these many happy years later, I'm still here.

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**[Joni Beall](#)** - When I took the test in Richmond, I ran across the vocab word - crambo. I had no idea what it was and so I said it was the latest Conan and Rambo film.

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**[David Espo](#)** - A mere 40 years later, I vividly recall taking the AP writing test. I was a reporter for the Twin Falls Times-News in Idaho, covering the statehouse and working one day a week for UPI. The AP correspondent, Bob Leeright, asked if I might be interested in applying. I said sure, so he set me up with a test in The AP's small office in the state capitol.

He handed me the material, although I found it strange that he then stood right behind me as I started in. Periodically I would feel a hard push against the back of my chair. I quickly deduced that meant I had made a mistake. Together, Bob and I passed the test with ease. I was offered a job a few weeks later in Cheyenne, Wyo., my first posting.

Bob is long gone, I'm afraid to say. But I will never forget him.

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**[Joe Frazier](#)** - I took it in 1972, nervous as could be. don't remember much but part of it was a massive pile of data we were supposed to go through, winnow out what

mattered from the chaff and libel and make a story out of it.

This was in Portland, Ore.

I remember the mention of a dog.

A staffer saw me scratching my head, walked by my desk and whispered, "Put the dog in the lead.

I did.

I passed and hung on for almost 38 years.

## More of your memories of the solar eclipse



**Patricia Casillo** - I hope I can squeeze in photos from the Solar Eclipse in our newsletter. My co-worker, Austin Cantrell – Global Salesforce Operations Manager - took these amazing pictures from our 19th floor in NYHQ. The last three moving away from the sun.

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From left: Diana Heidgerd, Marcia Dunn, Kyle Viterbo and Hugo Blanco.



From left: (other side of the table): Mary Conlon, Laura Bargfeld, Jamie Stengle and Adithi Ramakrishnan.

**Diana Heidgerd** - AP staffers around the world did a tremendous job prepping for and then covering Monday's amazing total solar eclipse. I'd especially like to recognize the AP folks who traveled to the Dallas-Fort Worth area or are based here. I'm a Dallas AP retiree and knew some of these journalists, so I was very pleased that my husband Paul and I were invited to join them Sunday night, April 7, 2024, for an eclipse-eve meal.

The gathering at a Dallas restaurant happened just hours before Marcia Dunn, Kyle Viterbo, Hugo Blanco, Mary Conlon, Laura Bargfeld, Jamie Stengle and Adithi Ramakrishnan began their multi-platform eclipse assignments ranging from

downtown festivals to exuberant children at schools to catching up with critters at the Fort Worth Zoo.

Thanks for a job well done!

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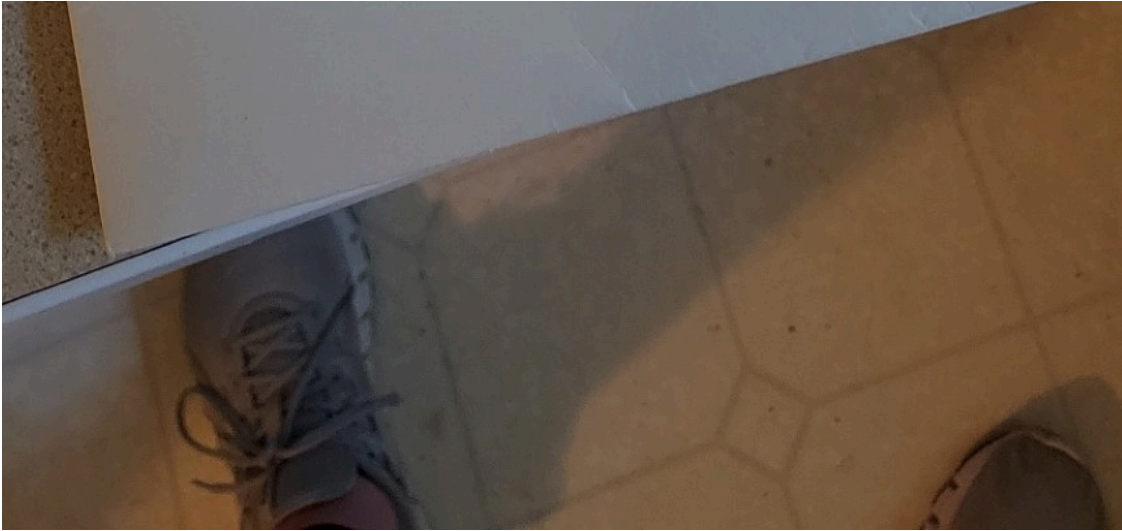












**Margaret Lillard** - Thought you might like one last eclipse perspective. This is in my neighbor's yard outside Raleigh NC.

My caption:

Moon: Look what I can do!

Colander: Hold my beer.

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**Jerry Pye** - We traveled to Texas to my brother's house in Scoggins, Texas, to get inside the area of totality. It was worth the trip to see the once in a lifetime eclipse. I bracketed all the photos from 1/3,200 down to 1/20 with an ISO 800, f5.6 with a 300 mm lens on a Canon ESO Rebel T7i. This photo is at 1/200.

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**Malcolm Ritter** - My son Scott and I traveled from New York City to northern Maine to see the total eclipse. My photos look a lot like what Connecting has already published, so here with Scott's permission I offer a sample of his.

He caught me in action during the totality phase with my tripod.

We used the store as a foreground for some shots. An employee kindly agreed to turn on the lights over the gas pumps for the 3-minute period of darkness. One thing about being able to look at the sun with the naked eye is that you realize how small it appears in the sky. Yet it illuminates and warms huge swatches of Earth.



The tiny round holes of a colander act like pinhole cameras, with each creating an image of the crescent-like appearance of the sun when it is only partially eclipsed.

Scott's dog Salami did not seem impressed.

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**Neal Ulevich** - I traveled from Tokyo to Borobudur in Indonesia to cover the June 11, 1984, solar eclipse, an especially long one of more than six minutes totality. I was with our Jakarta photographer, whose main bureau duty was receiving the daily radiophoto cast.

Borobudur...a mythic place of ancient Buddhist monuments. I set up a camera to capture the monuments below and totality high above. I gave that one to the Jakarta photog...all he had to do was press the shutter button repeatedly when totality began.

I set up a 500mm lens to do the sun's closeup, an unexciting picture but necessary, and one requiring some greater skills than the wide-angle entrusted to the Jakarta photographer.

Afterward we developed the film in a light leaky shed in the shadow of the monuments. The Jakarta photographer's film had no eclipse.

Perhaps it was a joke. Or maybe he planned to sell the film to his buddies in Jakarta.

I told him to give me the damn eclipse film or I'd hold him upside down by his heels until the film fell out of his pocket. He relented, said he'd forgotten to give me THAT roll. It was great. The image that scored fronts in papers around the world. With his credit line, of course.

Japanese TV broadcast the eclipse live from Borobudur and we took advantage of the temporarily enhanced communication to file pictures from the scene. Our work was done by the time the presses rolled around the world.

## How many times ...

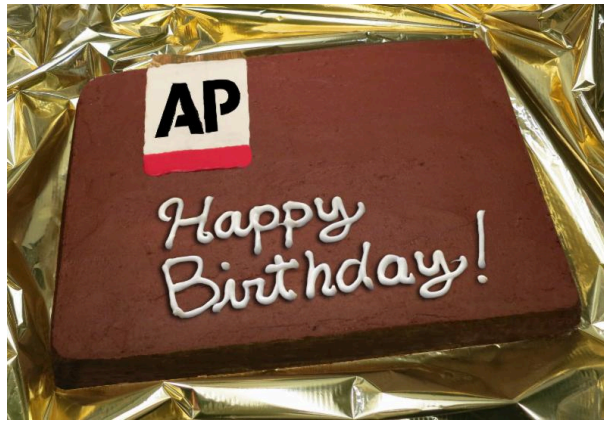
[Bruce Lowitt](#) - ... do I have to mention this?

Today in History - On April 10, 1912, the British liner RMS Titanic set sail from Southampton, England, bound for New York on its ill-fated maiden voyage.

"Ill-fated" means destined to fail, which is another way of saying predestined, which is a religious (primarily Christian) concept. "Ill-fated" is just a trite, crummy phrase that adds nothing. And being Jewish, I don't believe in predestination.

It's also just another way of saying (and I despise this, too) that "everything has a reason." Someone once suggested that I punch a guy in the stomach and then ask him, "Why did I do that?"

## Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



## [Bobbie Seril](#)

# Stories of interest

## *AI is already reshaping newsrooms, AP study finds*

(Poynter)

**By: Alex Mahadevan**

A new study from The Associated Press reveals that generative artificial intelligence is already reshaping newsroom roles and workflow.

Nearly 70% of newsroom staffers from a variety of backgrounds and organizations surveyed in December say they're using the technology for crafting social media posts, newsletters and headlines; translation and transcribing interviews; and story drafts, among other uses. One-fifth said they'd used generative AI for multimedia, including social graphics and videos.

"News people have stayed on top of this conversation, which is good because this technology is already presenting significant disruptions to how journalists and newsrooms approach their work and we need everyone to help us figure this technology out for the industry," said Aimee Rinehart, co-author and senior product manager of AI strategy at the AP.

Representatives from legacy media, public broadcasters and magazines were among the 292 surveyed, mostly based in the U.S. or Europe; more than 30% of those who responded were from newsrooms with more than 100 editorial employees.

The AP, which has been dabbling in AI for a decade, recently helped five local newsrooms develop generative AI tools.

Read more [here](#).

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## ***I've Been at NPR for 25 Years. Here's How We Lost America's Trust.***

**By Uri Berliner**

You know the stereotype of the NPR listener: an EV-driving, Wordle-playing, tote bag-carrying coastal elite. It doesn't precisely describe me, but it's not far off. I'm Sarah Lawrence-educated, was raised by a lesbian peace activist mother, I drive a Subaru, and Spotify says my listening habits are most similar to people in Berkeley.

I fit the NPR mold. I'll cop to that.

So when I got a job here 25 years ago, I never looked back. As a senior editor on the business desk where news is always breaking, we've covered upheavals in the workplace, supermarket prices, social media, and AI.

It's true NPR has always had a liberal bent, but during most of my tenure here, an open-minded, curious culture prevailed. We were nerdy, but not knee-jerk, activist, or scolding.

In recent years, however, that has changed. Today, those who listen to NPR or read its coverage online find something different: the distilled worldview of a very small segment of the U.S. population.

If you are conservative, you will read this and say, duh, it's always been this way.

But it hasn't.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Sonya Zalubowski.

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### ***NPR defends its journalism after senior editor says it has lost the public's trust*** (NPR)

**David Folkenflik**

NPR's top news executive defended its journalism and its commitment to reflecting a diverse array of views on Tuesday after a senior NPR editor wrote a broad critique of how the network has covered some of the most important stories of the age.

"An open-minded spirit no longer exists within NPR, and now, predictably, we don't have an audience that reflects America," writes Uri Berliner.

A strategic emphasis on diversity and inclusion on the basis of race, ethnicity and sexual orientation, promoted by NPR's former CEO, John Lansing, has fed "the absence of viewpoint diversity," Berliner writes.



NPR's chief news executive, Edith Chapin, wrote in a memo to staff Tuesday afternoon that she and the news leadership team strongly reject Berliner's assessment.

"We're proud to stand behind the exceptional work that our desks and shows do to cover a wide range of challenging stories," she wrote. "We believe that inclusion — among our staff, with our sourcing, and in our overall coverage — is critical to telling the nuanced stories of this country and our world."

Read more [here](#). Shared by Richard Chady.

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## ***Wall Street Journal Has Yet Another Round of Layoffs***

(Daily Beast)

### **Corbin Bolies**

Staffers at The Wall Street Journal were hit by another round of layoffs on Wednesday, multiple sources confirmed to The Daily Beast, with employees on the video and social media desks most impacted.

The number of affected employees was at least 11 people, including four producers on the visuals desk, two social media editors, two video journalists, a senior video journalist, a video producer, and one reporter, Tim Martell, the executive director of IAPE 1096, the union that represents Dow Jones publications, told The Daily Beast.

Some of the video staffers laid off include those in the Journal's Journalists as Creators program, a partnership with Google to develop YouTube channels centered around individual journalists and subject matters. Staffers were told that the agreement was not renewed and the funding for those staffers had lapsed, a Journal staffer told The Daily Beast.

The Journal declined to comment. Google did not immediately responded to a request for comment.

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

## **The Final Word**

### ***Joe Creason Lecture: Let's save journalism from the news business***

**Al Cross** - *Director Emeritus, Institute for Rural Journalism* - Last night I was privileged to give the annual Joe Creason Lecture in Journalism at the University of Kentucky, a series started by the Bingham family in honor of The Courier-Journal's most beloved journalist, Joe Creason. Several people asked that I circulate my text, so it's attached.

It's an attempt to sound a warning about the essential connection between democracy and journalism and the need to protect them both.

### **Joe Creason Lecture in Journalism, 2024**

First I want to thank our director of the School of Journalism and Media, Erika Engstrom, for asking me to give this lecture, and for some colleagues in the school, including my successor, Benjy Hamm, for suggesting that I be asked to do it. Benjy is the successor I wanted at the Institute for Rural Journalism, and he's off to a fine start.

I feel a connection to Joe Creason not only for the reasons Jennifer mentioned, but because just like Joe, I never really wanted to work outside Kentucky. And like him, I'm from one of those many little-known rural counties in the far reaches of the state, and I know how much counties like that need good journalism. That's one big reason I decided 20 years ago to conclude my career here, as an Extension professor at the state's main land-grant institution.

Another reason this is a special honor for me is that I share the spotlight with six journalists whom I have known and admired, for very different reasons, and one I never knew – but one who was a legend at The Courier-Journal and left there shortly before I arrived in 1978: Kyle Vance. He was the leading pioneer of modern investigative reporting in Kentucky.

Another C-J legend was my friend Sheldon Shafer, who is not with us tonight because he died yesterday, after a long illness. A moment of silence for him, please.

And completing the C-J's hat trick tonight is my friend Betty Bayé, who stared Kentucky's racists in the face and made - them - howl.

There's Debbie Givens, my Al Smith Communications colleague, who showed before I did that a community newspaper editor can climb the journalism academic ladder.

And I couldn't have asked for a better academic colleague than Scoobie Ryan, whose students loved her. She's not here because of an illness in her family, but the latest news on that is good.

The highest-ranking journalist with us tonight is Peter Baniak, the Kentucky editor who made the most of his newspaper in the last decade, which has been a very tough one for newspapers and the democracy they serve.

That's almost my lede – but not quite. The other Hall of Fame inductee tonight is Paul Prather, who remains in journalism but has a higher calling. Paul, your Sunday columns make this believer the closest thing he has to a pastor.

I'd like to think that the calling we journalists share with Paul is an elevated one, too: giving people the information they need to be citizens in a democracy. Bryant Williams, a great publisher from Paris, Tennessee – almost in Kentucky – said this about journalism: "The only higher calling is the ministry."

And why do we honor people such as these? Because they are good examples of our high calling. And why are you here? Because you care about them, or you care about

journalism, or both – or maybe just because you care about democracy, and perhaps you doubt that journalism isn't properly serving democracy.

Journalism is in trouble, mainly because the news business is in trouble. I think too many of us forget that journalism and the news business are not the same thing. The news business pays for journalism, which can be done for free, though usually with little impact. I like to say that *every American has the First Amendment right to commit journalism*.

Read more [here](#).

## Today in History - April 11, 2024



Today is Thursday, April 11, the 102nd day of 2024. There are 264 days left in the year.

### Today's Highlight in History:

On April 11, 1968, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed into law the Civil Rights Act of 1968, which included the Fair Housing Act, a week after the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr.

### On this date:

In 1814, Napoleon Bonaparte abdicated as Emperor of the French and was banished to the island of Elba. (Napoleon later escaped from Elba and returned to power in March 1815, until his downfall in the Battle of Waterloo in June 1815.)

In 1865, President Abraham Lincoln spoke to a crowd outside the White House, saying, "We meet this evening, not in sorrow, but in gladness of heart." (It was the last public address Lincoln would deliver.)

In 1899, the treaty ending the Spanish-American War was declared in effect.

In 1913, Postmaster General Albert S. Burleson, during a meeting of President Woodrow Wilson's Cabinet, proposed gradually segregating whites and Blacks who worked for the Railway Mail Service, a policy that went into effect and spread to other agencies.

In 1945, during World War II, American soldiers liberated the Nazi concentration camp Buchenwald in Germany.

In 1947, Jackie Robinson of the Brooklyn Dodgers played in an exhibition against the New York Yankees at Ebbets Field, four days before his regular-season debut that broke baseball's color line.

In 1961, former SS officer Adolf Eichmann went on trial in Israel, charged with crimes against humanity for his role in the Nazi Holocaust. (Eichmann was convicted and executed.)

In 1970, Apollo 13, with astronauts James A. Lovell, Fred W. Haise and Jack Swigert, blasted off on its ill-fated mission to the moon. (The mission was aborted when an oxygen tank exploded April 13. The crew splashed down safely four days after the explosion.)

In 1980, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission issued regulations specifically prohibiting sexual harassment of workers by supervisors.

In 1996, 7-year-old Jessica Dubroff, who hoped to become the youngest person to fly cross-country, was killed along with her father and flight instructor when their plane crashed after takeoff from Cheyenne, Wyoming.

In 2012, George Zimmerman, the Florida neighborhood watch volunteer who fatally shot 17-year-old Trayvon Martin, was arrested and charged with second-degree murder. (He was acquitted at trial.)

In 2013, comedian Jonathan Winters, 87, died in Montecito, California.

In 2017, David Letterman's mother, Dorothy Mengerling, a Midwestern homemaker who became an unlikely celebrity on her son's late-night talk show, died at age 95.

In 2018, Pope Francis admitted he made "grave errors" in judgment in Chile's sex abuse scandal; during a January visit to Chile, Francis had strongly defended Bishop Juan Barros despite accusations by victims that Barros had witnessed and ignored their abuse.

In 2020, the number of U.S. deaths from the coronavirus eclipsed Italy's for the highest in the world, topping 20,000.

In 2022, Mimi Reinhard, a secretary in Oskar Schindler's office who typed up the list of Jews he saved from extermination by Nazi Germany, died at age 107.

Today's Birthdays: Ethel Kennedy is 96. Actor Joel Grey is 92. Actor Louise Lasser is 85. Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist Ellen Goodman is 83. Movie writer-director John Milius is 80. Actor Peter Riegert is 77. Movie director Carl Franklin is 75. Actor Bill Irwin is 74. Country singer-songwriter Jim Lauderdale is 67. Songwriter-producer Daryl Simmons is 67. Rock musician Nigel Pulsford (Bush) is 63. Actor Lucky Vanous is 63. Country singer Steve Azar is 60. Singer Lisa Stansfield is 58. Actor Johnny Messner is 55. Rock musician Dylan Keefe (Marcy Playground) is 54. Actor Vicellous Shannon is

53. Rapper David Banner is 50. Actor Tricia Helfer is 50. Rock musician Chris Gaylor (The All-American Rejects) is 45. Actor Kelli Garner is 40. Singer Joss Stone is 37. Actor-dancer Kaitlyn Jenkins is 32.

## 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.



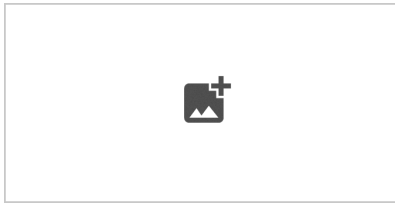
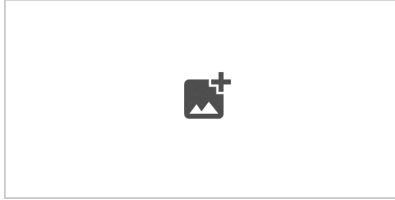
Got a story to share? A favorite memory of your AP days? Don't keep them to yourself. Share with your colleagues by sending to Ye Olde Connecting Editor. And don't forget to include photos!

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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