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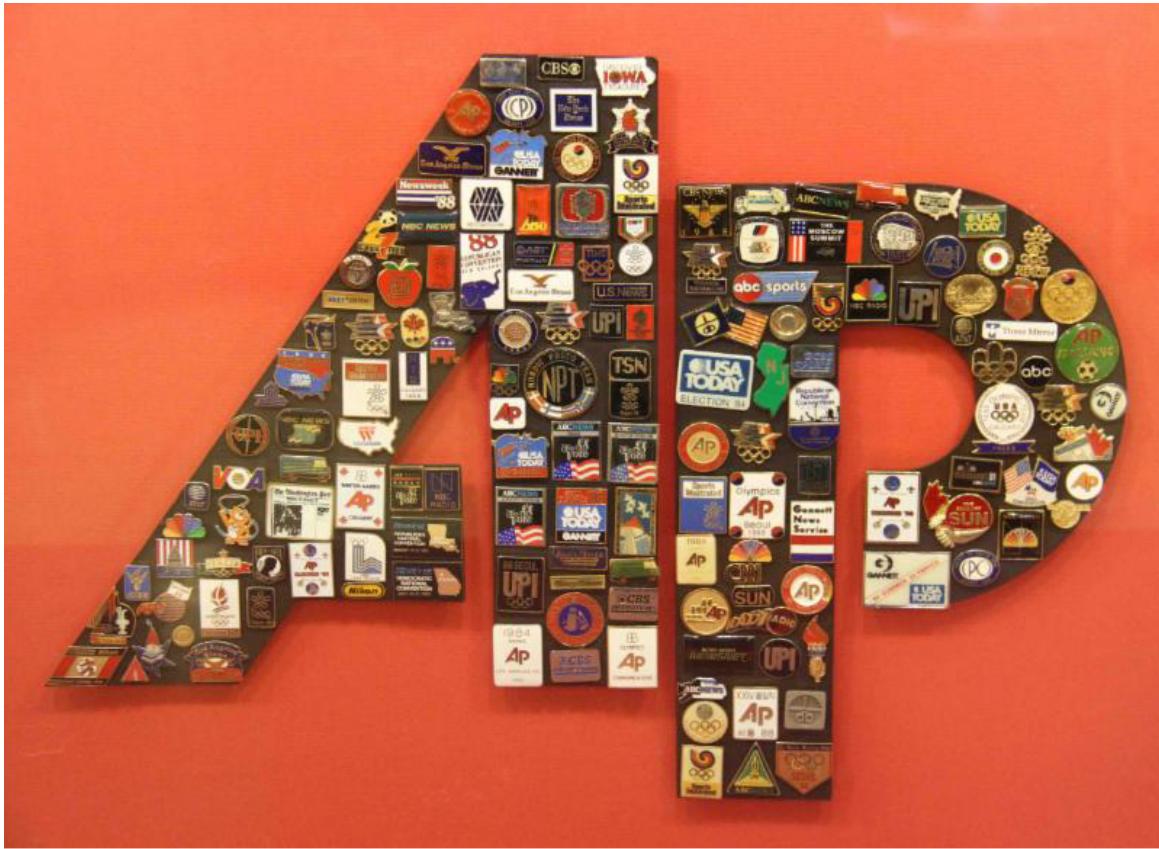


# Connecting

February 6, 2015

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of the Teletype





A collage of special event pins collected by **Bud Weydert** (story below).

Good Friday morning!

Credibility is at the heart of what powers journalism. Lose it and any message, any information, a journalist hopes to communicate is suspect.

The importance of our credibility is what has been drilled into Associated Press reporters, photographers, broadcasters, multimedia journalists and others throughout its long history, and continues to be. When a big name in U.S. journalism -- the evening news anchor of a major broadcast network -- is caught "mis-remembering" a significant war story he has told, and embellished, publicly for a dozen years, it is a matter of significant interest to many former and current AP journalists. It was no accident that former AP president and CEO **Louis Boccardi** was asked to join a former U.S. Attorney General in leading an investigation 10 years ago into questionable reporting by another TV anchor.

Today's Connecting groups the **Brian Williams** developments into a separate section, ahead of other Stories of Interest. Today's issue has more retiree reflections on service gifts and other mementos, two fascinating accounts of reporting in dangerous conditions and the topic that each day is becoming more like **Bill Murray's** experience in "Groundhog Day," Punxsatawney Phil. And, we celebrate San Antonio Correspondent **Seth Robbins**, winner of last week's Best of the States honor.

Some Connecting members have shared their thoughts on Facebook and elsewhere about Williams, whether his twisted tale was simply an "honest mistake" as he has claimed or something else, and what punishment, if any, he deserves. Doubts about the apology itself have caused some to also wonder aloud about comments Williams made about his experience covering Hurricane Katrina.

Meanwhile, a profession that already ranks near the bottom in public opinion polls of integrity took another hit this week. Connecting colleague **Larry Blasko** suggested on Facebook: "What journalism needs is an institutional Boccardi/Thornburgh Report: 'You Lie, We Fly.'"

What do you think? How badly have Williams and NBC been hurt by his acknowledgement that he was not on a helicopter that was forced down after being hit by enemy fire in Iraq in 2003? What consequences should he suffer, if any? Send your thoughts to [markmitt71@yahoo.com](mailto:markmitt71@yahoo.com) for use in Saturday's Connecting.

- *Mark Mittelstadt*

## Appreciating AP's appreciation of our service

**Hal Bock** ([E-mail](#)) - For service awards, the best I ever got (beat the letter openers) was a television set for 40 years. The day it was to be delivered we had some snow. I was at my post-AP career, teaching at Long Island University, when my wife got a phone call asking if she could pick the TV up in a nearby shopping center. No, she said, that would not be possible. The next day they figured out how to get it to my house. It sits in my guest room 11 years later, still operating.

**Sue Price Johnson** ([E-mail](#)) - I still have, and appreciate, four AP anniversary gifts. In the waning days of AP 20-year pins, I received one of those pins. I have long collected lapel pins, so that's a treasured element of the collection. At 25 years, I chose a nice set of knives. The knives are in use daily at my house. At 30, my choice was a multi-CD stereo, which is now the sound system for one of the TVs in my house. And my lovely parting gift upon my early retirement is a silver and gold Celtic design necklace. I wear it often.



*Social media exploded with satirical references to other historical stories Brian Williams may have experienced.*



**Larry Hamlin** ([E-mail](#)) - Here are pictures of a couple commemorative items and an "unofficial" AP baseball cap. The Cross pen commemorates the installation of 1,000 M-Sats. The AP logo is at the top of the clip and on the side are the words "1000th M-Sat 1984". The Swiss Army knife is from the **Dave Bowen** SATNET days. The baseball cap is a one-of-a-kind "unofficial" AP hat. The logo is a patch that staffers were given at the 1980 Lake Placid Olympics. I had mine attached to the cap after the Olympics and wore it as I traveled around the country doing 3-Meter SAT work. I got a lot of "Where did you get that?" and "I want one!" Presently it is packed away with a hundred or so other caps I accumulated during my almost 50 years with AP.

**Bud Weydert** ([E-mail](#)) - The first service award I received was a simple gold tone lapel pin with the AP logo and "20" for the number of years at that point. The second one was a western style belt buckle with the AP logo and a diamond chip. That one was for 25 years.

These were followed by the clock for 30 years and the world globe on a wooden stand for 35 years. Neither have any markings to identify them as being connected to AP. Consequently, the awards for 20 and 25 years of service are more meaningful to me because they are identified with the AP logo. With no markings to indicate otherwise, the 30- and 35-year service awards could have just as easily come from my local Wal-Mart or a neighborhood garage sale.



I've also include a collage of special events pins in the shape of an AP Logo (top of newsletter) that was made in about 1990 along with a photo of some of the AP specific special events pins I've collected over the years. I do have a few AP pins that were left over from some of the events in case any of the Connecting readers would be interested in adding to their memorabilia collection.



Lastly, I've included photos of AP promotional items that I ended up with while working in New York City. They were made as samples to be considered as gifts to be given to each member of a

delegation from Xinhua that visited AP in New York City and Chicago in 1982. Due to the cost difference, the boxed pens were what AP ended up going with.

I'm sure there is quite a variety of such items that were made over the years for state meetings, Newspaper/Broadcast conventions or other such events in which AP participated. I wonder if anyone has tried to put together a collection of them all.

## Connecting readers weigh in...

### ...on preparedness obits

**Kendal Weaver** ([Email](#)) - **Peggy Walsh** (Thursday Connecting) is correct that her instincts saved the day for us when she ordered up preparedness copy on Alabama football coach **Bear Bryant**, who seemed fit when he retired but died of a heart attack in a Tuscaloosa hospital barely a month later.

Birmingham Correspondent **Hoyt Harwell**, who wrote the preparedness, headed for Tuscaloosa after Bryant was hospitalized, but it was a young Montgomery staffer, **Marie Prat**, who had an official source in the hospital and got by phone the first on-the-record confirmation of the death, putting AP ahead at the start.

I was the Montgomery correspondent and amazed that Marie was able to get through to her source -- we really could not even make a phone call out because of all the incoming calls asking if Bryant had died. But Marie got the confirmation, Peggy had Hoyt's splendid preparedness flowing right after the bulletin material, and AP carried the play. (My recollection is the playcard had us ahead 10-0 on the first cycle and 16-3 on the next. Kind of like Bryant's Crimson Tide victory scores in those days.)

**Joe Edwards** ([Email](#)) - One of my responsibilities at the Nashville bureau was writing prepared obits. I fell into this job because I had interviewed many of the country music stars who were getting into their senior years. I recall working up prepared obits on humorist **Jerry Clower** and Grand Ole Opry star **Del Reeves**, who both died a week or so after I wrote them. Soon after that, fellow staffers asked me not to prepare their own obits.

### ...on dangerous assignments

**Joe McKnight** ([Email](#)) - Paul asked readers about dangerous or hazardous situations faced in their professional career. I don't recall ever being in danger. However, a couple of oddities:

I was working in the Birmingham, Ala., AP office in 1961 when I drove about 50 miles to report on a civil rights demonstration by students at then all-black Talladega (Ala.) College. Students were walking or marching along an unpaved street with an open ditch on both sides. I was across the ditch from the street so as to not interfere. The city decided to break up the march and brought out a fire truck with a high pressure water cannon on it. Firemen parked the truck a block ahead of the students, hooked a hose from the cannon to a fire hydrant and waited.

When marchers reached the truck, a policeman told them to go back to their campus. Their spokesman refused and the policeman waved to firemen manning the water cannon. A heavy stream of water began knocking down students as I watched from across the street. Then firemen unexpectedly swing the water cannon and before I realized it, a stream of water knocked me into the ditch. I figured it was my fault for not being more alert and quicker on my feet. After I dictated my story to AP Correspondent **Tom Dygard** in Birmingham, I drove home soaking wet to change clothes.

Three or four years later, I was correspondent at Wichita, Kan., and stopped by the U. S. Attorney's office one day to routinely ask about news. The attorney had a young black man locked in a holding cell in his office and I was told he was being held on a federal warrant from another state. I got the attorney's approval to talk with him but was cautioned to "Watch him; he's crazy."

The jailed man readily talked intelligently about himself and the injustice he faced, looking at me with a smile and and using polite grammar. Suddenly I felt my pants leg was wet and looked down to see him urinating on me. I looked up; he smiled and started moving his stream up. I quickly jumped back. The U.S. Attorney was still laughing when I left to drive home for a change of clothes.

**Gene Herrick** ([E-mail](#)) - Regarding the Feb. 3 Connecting item by **Dylan Lovan** on coverage underground in a coal mine:

During my time in Minnesota as an AP staff photographer, I found many exciting assignments, but the high-altitude balloon flights from an iron mine on the Mesabi Range near Hibbing was one of the highlights. Most of these were about 1964.

The balloon flights were the beginning of this country's space age.

Almost all of the flights were in iron mines, and about 400 feet down in an open pit mine. Most were conducted by the Navy.

AP writer **Bill Chevalier** and I would drive up from Minneapolis. It was usually cold, and always dark. The reason for the launch setting was to protect the inflating balloons from ground winds. Chevalier was a great writer, even though some comrades said he was full of hot air. He denied this.

Finally, about daylight, the balloon would launch, rise in the sky, and move eastward to catch the high-altitude winds which would bring it back across where we were and then moved westward. Bill and I would wait and then follow the balloon westward, sometimes covering a couple of days. On one of these stops, we stopped to sleep in the car, as did other journalists covering the story. On one stop, Bill and I lay down on the trunk of my car in a very small Minnesota town. We just looked skyward to see the balloon way up there. A couple of citizens walked by and viewed us with curiosity or disdain.

Another stop, another journalist was asleep on the front seat of his car with the doors opened. A friendly dog got on top of him, licked his face, and left when the journalist jumped high in the air.

But, the best part of the story happened on one of the launches. Again, it was 400 feet down in the open iron mine, chilly, and dark. It was my birthday. Unbeknownst to me, Chevalier and a couple of other newsmen from Minneapolis-St. Paul went into town, awakened a bakery shop owner, bought a cake and candles, and presented it to me, lighted at about 2 a.m. They sang Happy Birthday. The sound resonated across the open mine.

It was a couple of days later, during a stop while chasing the balloon, that I was able to offer the guys some cake. Most refused. The cake had survived the trip, riding almost unboxed on top of the Wirephoto transmitter on the back seat. The cake was a little lop-sided, and covered with red iron ore dust.

### **...on Punxsutawney Phil**

**George Zucker** ([Email](#)) - One year when the General Desk was under new management, Philly was told the A-wire was no longer a fit place for the silliness of Punxsutawney Phil. Hence there was no need to make our annual trek to that frigid backwater to cover the famed woodchuck's bogus forecast.

Reached on the road about the no-Phil edict, I knew most of our state members would beg to differ. They loved the story and on Groundhog Day had page 1 holes to fill with Phil. We were not going to disappoint them -- we would cover the event as always, but bow to NY's decree banning Phil from the general service.

As Groundhog Day drew near, members across the country began calling NY demanding a Punxsutawney Phil story. We sent up our state story with a photo of Phil and his toothy grin.

### **...on Brian Williams**

**Marc Humbert** ([E-mail](#)) - Another black eye for our profession. He should step down, immediately, or be fired. I know that if I had done anything like this when I was with AP, **Lou Boccardi** would have handed me my walking papers before the sun set, and he would have been right to do so.

### **...on Connecting**

**Ray Newton** ([Email](#)) - Just want you to know how much I am enjoying all these-and the memories they stir. Occasionally, I print some and share them with **Howard Graves**, an AP bureau chief who retired several years ago and now lives in an assisted living home.



*Gene Herrick blows out candles on his birthday cake. Bill Chevalier is in the background.*

## **Welcome to Connecting**



Frank S. Baker ([E-mail](#))

The Associated Press

California News Editor, Los Angeles

## Even as he apologized, problems for Brian Williams, NBC worsened

### [With apology, Brian Williams digs himself deeper](#)

For years, **Brian Williams** had been telling a story that wasn't true. On Wednesday night, he took to his anchor chair on "NBC Nightly News" to apologize for misleading the public. On Thursday, his real problems started. A host of military veterans and pundits came forward on television and social media, challenging Mr. Williams's assertion that he had simply made a mistake when he spoke, on several occasions, about having been in a United States military helicopter forced down by enemy fire in Iraq in 2003. Some went so far as to call for his resignation.

### [Williams' comments about dead bodies, Hurricane Katrina come into question](#)

The NBC News anchor, who apologized on the air Wednesday night for lying about an experience covering the Iraq War, is now facing scrutiny over his gripping accounts of Hurricane Katrina, the disaster that burnished his nightly news bona fides almost a decade ago. Williams' account of seeing a body float by in the French Quarter -- which remained largely dry -- and even a claim of catching dysentery from drinking Katrina floodwaters have raised eyebrows among bloggers and elsewhere since he took it on the chin this week over a claim that he rode in a helicopter that was downed by a rocket-propelled grenade in Iraq.

### [Twitter has field day with Williams' "mis-remember"](#)



*Tom Brokaw (r) reportedly wants his successor to the NBC News anchor chair fired.*



NBC Nightly News anchor **Brian Williams** dined at the last supper, fought in the American War of Independence and even landed on the moon - at least according to Twitter users. After Williams was discovered to have falsely claimed to be on a helicopter shot down during the Iraq War, Twitter users seized the opportunity to ridicule the veteran broadcaster. Using the hashtag #BrianWilliamsMisRemembers, Twitter users Photoshopped Williams into a number of historical photos and shared jokes about what other famous events he might claim to be a part of.

*Also:*

[Page Six: Brokaw wants his successor fired](#)

[Auletta: Brian Williams's mistake](#)

[The Buzz: Brian Williams story is a too-common tale in TV](#)

[The Brian Williams story is an NBC-wide scandal](#)

[Rieder: Brian Williams unmitigated disaster for NBC](#)

[The fact-check adventures of Brian Williams](#)

## **Stories of Interest**

[Privacy advocates unmask Twitter troll](#)

What happens when you troll Tor developers hard? You get unmasked. Towards the end of last week, a troll who had sent various aggressive tweets to a host of security experts and privacy advocates associated with the Tor project and browser, which enables online anonymity, had his identity exposed. To some, that may seem hypocritical. To others, it seems like justice.

[MSNBC suffers lowest ratings in a decade](#)

MSNBC registered its lowest full-day rating in nearly a decade on Tuesday, a devastatingly low benchmark that shows just how severe the network's decline has become. The liberal cable news network drew an average of 55,000 viewers in the all-important 25- to 54-year-old demo on Tuesday, its lowest full-day rating since July 2005, according to Nielsen ratings provided by an industry source. CNN had nearly three times as many viewers in the demo, Fox News nearly five times as many.

[Judith Miller turns her reporting skills on herself](#)

**Judith Miller's** publisher describes "The Story," which hits stores on April 7: She turns her journalistic skills on herself and her controversial reporting which marshaled evidence that led America to invade Iraq. She writes about the mistakes she and others made on the existence in Iraq of weapons of mass destruction.

### [Jeb Bush plays nice with the press](#)

While Gov. **Chris Christie** ignores them and Sen. **Rand Paul** scolds them, **Jeb Bush** is taking a different tack. In yesterday's Washington Post, **Nia-Malika Henderson** looks at Bush's effort to use the press to his advantage for a likely 2016 run - emailing reporters directly, granting interviews, releasing a trove of e-mails and chatting with the press after a speech in Detroit.

### [How one editor gets ready for work in less than 15 minutes](#)

Here's something about me that I'm not particularly proud of: I am not a morning person. I wish I could be one of those women who gets up at 5a.m., goes to SoulCycle, runs errands, and has a full breakfast-all before leaving for work. Maybe I was during my younger days when, twice a week, I would rise for a 5:30 a.m. Pilates class (true story). But now? Forget it. I'm lucky if I'm even remotely conscious by 9 a.m. But here's something about my lack of morning friendliness that I'm actually proud of: I have a system down pat by which I can get ready in less than 15 minutes.

## **AP Best of the States**

San Antonio Correspondent **Seth Robbins**, who joined AP just a few weeks ago, has been given the mandate to break news and develop deep enterprise. He did both with his recent story on thousands of immigrants seeking legalization through the U.S. courts who have had their hearings canceled without warning.

Robbins was searching the Twitter accounts of immigration lawyers working in the newly opened detention center in Dilley, southwest of San Antonio, when he came across an intriguing tweet: "Same in San Antonio -- cases at the Denver immigration court at a standstill." That led him to a blog post describing how non-detainee hearings for Denver immigrants were being canceled as a result of the fast-tracking of Central American families and unaccompanied minors who crossed the border last summer.



*Seth Robbins with his dog*

Robbins called the few lawyers he had met in his short time in Texas, and also lawyers in Denver, including the author of the blog post. All described having hearings canceled and not rescheduled. Most were angry because they had clients who had waited years to get in front of a judge. They were now being told that their cases were on hold indefinitely.

Seeking to quantify how big a problem this might be, Robbins contacted the Justice

Department branch in charge of immigration courts and immigration lawyers in cities most affected by last summer's surge of Central American migrants.

Immigration officials in Washington insisted they did not have statistics on the total number of canceled hearings. But they did acknowledge that about 415,000 immigrants not in detention had cases pending. Several more calls to the department followed, including one in which a spokeswoman let slip that the cancelled hearings were being rescheduled for a date in 2019 -- nearly five years away.

Robbins kept pressing to understand the scope of the problem. He surveyed immigration lawyers in New York, San Antonio, Los Angeles and Denver about how many of their cases had been canceled, and one Denver lawyer finally went on the record saying thousands of cases had been canceled in that city alone.

With that critical information giving scope to the problem, Robbins was now in need of a human story to help illustrate the impact of the delays. The same Denver lawyer put Robbins in touch with **Maximiano Vazquez-Guevara**, who'd won an appeal to become a legal permanent resident but needed to go in front of an immigration judge one last time. Yet his case had been pulled from the docket, which meant that he couldn't leave the country to visit his dying brother in Mexico.

Robbins, who speaks Spanish, interviewed Vazquez by phone. Vazquez and his wife agreed to have their photos taken, and Denver photographer **David Zalubowski** quickly scheduled a shoot, ensuring there were photos that would help report the story before competition got wind.

The story got strong web play and ran on a number of newspaper front pages throughout the country, including [The Dallas Morning News](#).

For breaking news through enterprising and aggressive work, Robbins wins this week's \$300 Best of the States Prize.

## Today in History Friday, February 6

Today is Friday, Feb. 6, the 37th day of 2015. There are 328 days left in the year.

### Today's Highlight in History:

On Feb. 6, 1952, Britain's King George VI died at Sandringham House in Norfolk, England; he was succeeded as monarch by his elder daughter, who became Queen Elizabeth II.

### On this date:



Maximiano Vazquez-Guevara has a 6-year-old daughter with his American wife, Ashley Bowen. Nevaeh will be at least 10 by the time her immigrant father's status is resolved. (AP Photo/David Zalubowski)

In 1788, Massachusetts became the sixth state to ratify the U.S. Constitution.

In 1815, the state of New Jersey issued the first American railroad charter to John Stevens, who proposed a rail link between Trenton and New Brunswick. (The line, however, was never built.)

In 1899, a peace treaty between the United States and Spain was ratified by the U.S. Senate.

In 1911, Ronald Wilson Reagan, the 40th president of the United States, was born in Tampico, Illinois.

In 1922, Cardinal Achille Ratti was elected pope; he took the name Pius XI.

In 1933, the 20th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, the so-called "lame duck" amendment, was proclaimed in effect by Secretary of State Henry Stimson.

In 1943, a Los Angeles jury acquitted actor Errol Flynn of three counts of statutory rape.

In 1958, British European Airways Flight 609 crashed on takeoff from Munich, West Germany, killing 23 of the 44 people on board.

In 1973, Dixy Lee Ray was appointed by President Richard Nixon to be the first woman to head the Atomic Energy Commission.

In 1987, Wall Street Journal reporter Gerald Seib (syb) was released after being detained six days by Iran, accused of being a spy for Israel; Iran said the detention was a result of misunderstandings.

In 1995, the space shuttle Discovery flew to within 37 feet of the Russian space station Mir in the first rendezvous of its kind in two decades.

In 1998, President Bill Clinton signed a bill changing the name of Washington National Airport to Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport. Pop music star Falco, who'd had a 1986 hit with "Rock Me Amadeus," died in a traffic accident in the Dominican Republic; he was 40.

Ten years ago: The New England Patriots won their third NFL championship in four years, defeating the Philadelphia Eagles in Super Bowl XXXIX (39) by a score of 24-21. Fans of the late reggae singer Bob Marley celebrated his 60th birthday in his birthplace of Jamaica as well as the Rastafarian holy land of Ethiopia. Eighteen people were found dead of carbon monoxide poisoning in a mountain hostel in eastern Spain. Acclaimed Russian pianist Lazar Berman died in Florence, Italy, at age 74. The animated series "American Dad!" premiered on the Fox Network.

Five years ago: Former Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin, delivering the keynote address at the first national convention of the tea party coalition in Nashville, declared, "America is ready for

another revolution." American missionary Robert Park headed home after North Korea released him from six weeks' detention for crossing its border on Christmas Day to protest religious suppression in the totalitarian regime. Jerry Rice and Emmitt Smith led a class of seven new members of the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

One year ago: House Speaker John Boehner all but ruled out passage of immigration legislation before the fall elections. A suicide bomber blew himself up at the gates of a Syrian prison and rebels stormed in behind him, freeing hundreds of inmates. Baseball Hall of Famer Ralph Kiner, 91, died in Rancho Mirage, California. Former U.S. poet laureate Maxine Kumin died in Warner, New Hampshire, at age 88. Jay Leno said goodbye to NBC's "The Tonight Show" for the second time, making way for Jimmy Fallon to take over as host.

Today's Birthdays: Actress Zsa Zsa Gabor is 98. Actor Patrick Macnee is 93. Cinematographer and filmmaker Haskell Wexler (Film: "Medium Cool") is 93. Actor Rip Torn is 84. Actress Mamie Van Doren is 84. Actor Mike Farrell is 76. Former NBC News anchorman Tom Brokaw is 75. Singer Fabian is 72. Actress Gayle Hunnicutt is 72. Producer-director-writer Jim Sheridan is 66. Singer Natalie Cole is 65. Actor Jon Walmsley is 59. Actress Kathy Najimy is 58. Rock musician Simon Phillips (Toto) is 58. Actor-director Robert Townsend is 58. Actor Barry Miller is 57. Actress Megan Gallagher is 55. Rock singer Axl Rose (Guns N' Roses) is 53. Country singer Richie McDonald is 53. Singer Rick Astley is 49. Rock musician Tim Brown (Boo Radleys) is 46. "Good Morning America" co-host Amy Robach is 42. Actor Brandon Hammond is 31. Actress Alice Greczyn (GREH'-chihn) is 29.

***Thought for Today: "Cherish your wilderness." - Maxine Kumin (1925-2014).***

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