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Connecting - December 20, 2017

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December 20, 2017

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Colleagues,

Good Wednesday morning!

Today's issue brings a mailbox-full of your thoughts and memories.

A longtime good friend of mine, **Bruce Buchanan**, recently completed a 36-year career in newspapering and I asked him to share his thoughts on his career and the state of the industry, and where it is headed.

Like me, Bruce is the son of a small-town newspaperman. We worked together for more than three decades, Bruce as a Kansas publisher and group executive and me as AP's Kansas City bureau chief and regional vice president. During that time, we wrestled with a changing business model for both our organizations, seeking solutions while sharing laughs and friendship along the way.

Bruce's sister **Jean Buchanan** is a friend as well, from the time we met when she was managing editor of the Atchison (Kansas) Daily Globe. She's been at the St. Louis Post-Dispatch for the past 13 years where she is AME/Projects.

I appreciate Bruce sharing his thoughts and I hope you will, too.

Have a great day!

Paul

**A journey through newspapering -
from sweeping sidewalks at 5, to
publisher and group executive**



A Newspaper Family: The photo was taken in our back yard in Washington in 1964. I'm the one in the sunglasses, which is probably the last time I looked cool. Jean is holding little sister. This might be the only photo that exists of all seven of us.

By Bruce Buchanan ([Email](#))

When I was a young and inflamed journalist, I worked for my parents on their small weekly newspaper in rural Kansas.

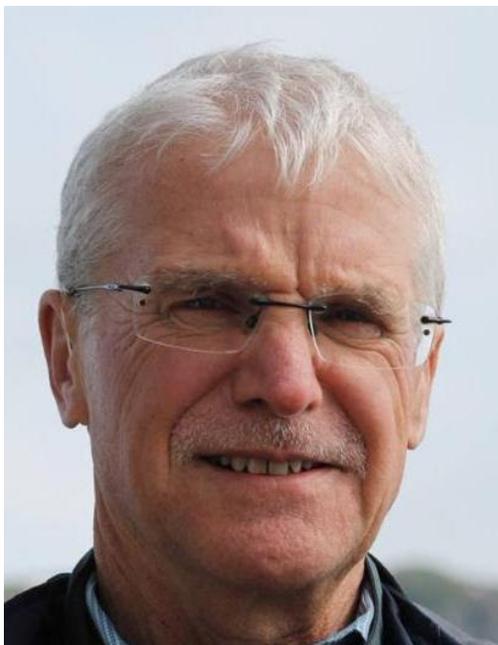
As with most of us who worked on papers that size, we both covered the news and wrote editorials.

The most important lesson I learned in those early days came from my father, Buckshot. He had written an editorial praising some small action of the local sheriff. I thought the sheriff was an idiot and told Dad so.

His response, which was much more eloquent than my dim memory allows: I think he is, too, but it's easier to throw stones if you sometimes provide praise.

It was a lesson I tried to carry, not always successfully, through my 40 years in this business.

I often wonder what Buckshot, who wrote a weekly column for more than 20 years after he and Mom sold the newspaper in 1981, would think about the state of the industry today.



When I took over as president of Harris Enterprises, a small newspaper holding company based in Hutchinson, Kan., in 2006, I told our publishers that the company was ours to lose.

"The stockholders have no interest in selling," I told our publishers. "They have confidence that the bright minds around this table will figure out a way out of this mess."

This mess, of course, was the internet and the digital revolution that by then was already claiming large shares of what had been our advertising and audience.

We convinced our board to establish an internal venture capital fund, we invested in new ways of gathering and delivering the news. While we (I) made lots of mistakes, we did a lot of things right.

In retrospect, though, and at the risk of sounding too self-forgiving, I'm not sure we ever had a chance.

The forces arrayed against our industry were almost overwhelming. And, anti-trust laws and the industry's ardent independence prevented us from teaming together in a way that might have staved off the inevitable.

(Our group had its own independence issues. Until UPI fell under the spell of the Moonies, we had seven papers in Kansas contracting with UPI and one with the AP. The publisher of that paper said he didn't care which news service he had as long as it was not the same one as his competitive sister newspaper.)

So, with Google and Facebook siphoning off most of the money in the digital world, with readers abandoning us in hordes and with advertisers under their own pressures from Amazon, I'm just not sure the newspaper industry has much of a future.

That's tragic.

While those who cheer our demise might view the decline of the Lamestream Media as a blow for freedom, I shudder at the future it could bring.

We have a president who lies in what seems like 99 out of 100 times he opens his mouth or Twitter feed, and who has been on every side of almost every issue. But, his defenders stubbornly cling to the belief that he does what he promises.

When a prominent news organization makes a major mistake in one out of 100 stories, it is proof that it is biased and no longer relevant, at least in the minds of those who believe their reality is the only one of importance.

When dictators around the globe mimic the president's claims of fake news as they call into question important investigations into their most nefarious acts, we all should shudder, for there is an insidious evil lurking in our midst.

Using news outlets to promote party and ideology is nothing new. Hearst, Pulitzer and many other predecessors in our business used their newspaper in odious ways, including starting wars. The late Bill Brown, my journalism adviser at Kansas State University and a former Harris publisher, claims his first job was at a small newspaper in Missouri. He went to work for the Democratic newspaper. The Republican newspaper was located on the other side of the street. "The truth," Brown said, "was somewhere out in the middle."

The mythical concept of objectivity and the more attainable standard of fairness are relatively new concepts. Outside the AP, those customs mostly arose with the demise of multiple-newspaper cities.

But now, we have readers and watchers who believe every kooky conspiracy they read. We have websites, apparently quite popular, that take delight in spreading obvious lies. And they never apologize when they are exposed.

At least in the old days, we had some shared notion of the facts. Today, we have alternative facts and a lack of understanding of the difference between facts and opinion.

Let us hope we are at the nadir of one of the great swings of American culture. We did, after all, survive the Know Nothings of the mid-1800s. Surely we can survive the Know Nothings of the current day.

Part of the solution is to support good journalism. While I will always savor reading a newspaper on newsprint the way it is meant to be consumed, I have learned in this digital age that good journalism is - to paraphrase Arthur Sulzberger, Jr. - agnostic as to platform.

There is lots of great reporting out there, and a lot of it is in the long form corporate experts have told us readers don't want.

The great news organizations of our day must re-establish the firm wall between news and opinion. They need to stop their reporters from writing and tweeting opinion disguised as fact.

And those of us who are now only consumers of the news need to push back strongly on those who repeat lies. At the same time, we need to open our minds so public discourse can return to a civic level, even on college campuses, where intolerance of mostly conservative views has become an embarrassment to the institutions and the students. Those who disagree with us aren't necessarily evil.

I know, there's nothing earthshattering in my recommendations, and I'm only half convinced they will work. But, trying beats the hell out of surrender.

And, I'm sure it is what Buckshot would recommend.

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My parents owned and operated a small weekly newspaper in rural Kansas all the years I was growing up. Even though I thought what Mom and Dad every week was fascinating, I never intended to follow them into the business.

It just sort of happened.

My first paying job was sweeping the walk in front of the Washington County News office for 10 cents a week. I was five. I later graduated to cleaning under the Linotypes, a much dirtier job, and eventually started stuffing the inserts from two locally owned grocery stores into the weekly newspaper edition.

After taking a photography course in high school, I had no clue what I wanted to do or where I wanted to go to college. So, I became the staff photographer and graphic arts darkroom operator for Mom and Dad. I spent a full year doing that, and even continued after I started school at Kansas State University. I would drive the 65 miles home Monday night, spend all day working for the paper, then drive back to school Tuesday night.

It was a great education.

But, even though I was majoring in journalism, my ultimate goal was law school and then probably politics.

By the time I graduated, though, I was tired of being broke and decided to work for a while before continuing my education, decided to take a job at the Hutchinson (Kansas) News, a legendary Pulitzer Prize-winning newspaper owned by the renowned Harris group. I started working as reporter three night a week and working the copy desk three nights a week. I soon graduated to a full-time editing position before being accepted into the group's management training program, which attempted to educate our group's future leaders about every aspect of the business.

Within a short time, I was sold on the idea of sticking with the group.

At the ripe old age of 28, the group's executives put me in charge of the Parsons (Kansas) Sun, a newspaper in the southeast corner of the state. I ran it for six years, writing almost daily editorials, weekly columns, getting involved in the community and even finding a spouse. Even with the severe economic challenges in that part of the state, I thought it was about as close to nirvana as anyone could offer.

In late 1990, I took over what was then the Olathe (Kansas) Daily News. It was a suburban newspaper operating under the ominous shadow of the mighty Kansas City Star. We sold that newspaper in early 1995, and I took a rather ill-defined corporate position. In late 1996, I got my dream job as editor and publisher of the Hutchinson News, the largest of our newspapers, and in 1997 I became a full-time blood-sucking corporate tick.

As my journalist sister at the St. Louis Post-Dispatch (Jean Buchanan, AME/Projects) would say, I was no longer a journalist.

I spent 10 years as vice president, then became president in 2006. In early 2016, facing rapidly declining advertising and readership, I met with our board and stockholders, mostly family members whose ancestors bought their first newspaper in 1907.

I told them the threats to our business were increasing almost daily, and it was time, finally, to consider alternatives. Late last year, we sold our newspapers to GateHouse.

We all shed and shared lots of tears.

Connecting mailbox

Without help of David Liu, I would have been lost

Marty Thompson ([Email](#)) - Reconnecting with David Liu via recent editions of "Connecting" brings back pleasant memories.

David's knowledge and understanding of Asian customs and business thinking were a valuable asset for a San Francisco chief of bureau. He was always a resource on the phone, and on visits he took the lead working with foreign language newspaper executives and editors. They clearly liked him.

Without David, I would have been lost. He not only new the customers in the Bay area, but often also a newspaper's owners in Shanghai or Hong Kong.

Quick with a smile, he was a welcome and valuable ally and a fine representative of the AP, one whom I still think of as a friend.

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Awaiting further disclosures of nefarious plots by reporters

Chuck McFadden ([Email](#)) - This set me off Tuesday morning. From an editorial in the Dec. 19 NY Times:

"Taking a page from Mr. Trump's playbook, the E. P. A. has targeted by name journalists whose coverage is critical of the agency, at one point issuing a press release calling a factually accurate Associated Press report of damage to Texas Superfund sites after Hurricane Harvey 'an attempt to mislead Americans."

Right. The evidence-based record shows that rascals like Lou Boccardi, Walter Mears, George Zucker, Nick Ut, Marty Thompson, Mike Rubin, Linda Deutsch, Paul Stevens, Gene Herrick, Chris Connell and the rest of them have been misleading Americans for years. Not only that, Science-based investigations by the Trumpers

prove The Associated Press has - horrors - diversity in its ranks and consequently may be vulnerable to further criticism.

We await further disclosures of nefarious plots by reporters. Some of them may even claim that the Earth is round.

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A Christmas morning without peace on earth

Bill Kaczor (Email) - I had stayed up past midnight assembling a tricycle for my daughter, then 3, so I hadn't been asleep too long when the phone rang about 4 a.m. on Christmas Day 1984. It was just six months after I began as AP's correspondent in Pensacola, Fla. An editor at the Pensacola News Journal called to tip me off to the first installment of the anti-abortion violence that eventually consumed a big part of my 21 years in Pensacola.

Explosions from black powder pipe bombs in succession had ripped through an abortion clinic and two doctors' offices where abortions were performed. The bombs had gone off on succession over about a 15-minute span starting around 3:30 a.m. I immediately drove very slowly to each of the three bombing sites because the fog was so thick I could barely see beyond the hood of my car. One doctor's office was totaled and the other two facilities were damaged. Fortunately, no one was injured or killed. At the office that was destroyed I interviewed a volunteer fire chief whose name was similar to mine - Bill Kaser. (Mine's pronounced "Kay-zor," his is "Kay-ser")

"It was completely gutted," Kaser said.

Also that Christmas morning I interviewed Pensacola's leading anti-abortion activist, John Burt, who said "I don't approve of what was done, but I'm glad the killing has been stopped and nobody was hurt."

Ironically, the FBI announced it didn't consider the bombings to be terrorist acts, although a prosecutor later labeled them as such in court, because they weren't aimed at the government. Thus, the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms took the lead in the investigation.

The victims, though, were clearly terrorized. The two local doctors stopped doing abortions, but the abortion clinic, one of two then in Pensacola, continued. Both clinics relied on out-of-town doctors. Two of the visiting physicians and a local clinic escort subsequently were murdered in a pair of separate shootings as they arrived

outside each of the clinics. One of the killers was executed and the other is serving a life prison term. Neither killer was involved in the bombings.

It took ATF just four days to make the first arrest in the Christmas attacks after checking with local retailers on pipe sales. Clerks at a supply house remembered one of the bomb makers because of confusion over his order. He eventually had to come in four times before getting what he wanted. Four young people in their late teens and early 20s eventually were arrested. The suspects, a married couple and an engaged couple, were members of an evangelical church that preached against abortion.

A defense psychiatrist testified that the bombers, who dubbed their crime "the Gideon Project," suffered from "abortion-mania." All four, though, were convicted on federal conspiracy charges. The two men, also convicted of making and setting off the bombs, wound up serving only about half of their 10-year sentences while the women, both 18 at the time, were placed on probation.

At a news conference shortly after the arrests one of the young women, released without bond pending trial, called the Christmas Day bombings "a gift to Jesus on his birthday."

It was a Christmas, though, without peace on Earth and one that I will never forget.

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A brush with Katherine Graham during my AP career

Arnold Zeitlin ([Email](#)) - Your references to Katherine Graham, Paul, reminded me she sort of brushed past me once during my AP career. When I was bureau chief in the mid-70s in the Philippines, the foreign editor of the Washington Post, a nice guy whose name i can't recall (his brother was a well-known correspondent in Asia, primarily in Vietnam; maybe someone on this list can remember names), asked if I would write occasional stories for the Post. I told him I couldn't do that while I worked for AP, "Why don't you hire me?", I asked. He said the Post didn't have the money. Instead, he went to Graham, who went to Wes Gallagher, then AP president, with a request that I be allowed to write special articles only for the Post. Gallagher was not going to say no to Katherine Graham, so I got the word that I could write for the Post while reporting from Manila as part of my regular job for AP. I never did it. If I had a good idea for a story, I couldn't bring myself to write it for the Post. it always went to AP.

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A Christmas poem, from real life experience

Harold Waters (Email) - T'was the day after Christmas, we all had a blast!

The guests had gone home, it was quite at last.

Dirty dishes were stacked on the counter so neat.

" Would someone please wash them to make things complete?"

Paper and tinsel all over the floor,

Boxes stacked high just outside the door!

"The fun is now over", I said with a tear.

I hope we're cleaned up in time for next year!

(My Christmas contribution, from real life experience!)

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'Jingle Bells' on the old msg wire

Joe Galu (Email) - In addition to teletype art, Marie Randio of Albany, NY, used to play Jingle Bells on the OOOLD msg wire.

The computerized msg wire was a wonderful step forward and eliminated contention to get on the often-clogged msg wire. There were times when the General Desk or some entity reserved the wire for the Northeast for 15 minutes, then the South, then the Central states and finally the West when people started breaking each other's msgs.

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Thanks for including 'some of us old UPI people' in Connecting

Jack Limpert ([Email](#)) - Many thanks for again including some of us old UPI people in Connecting. Bill, Mike Feinsilber, and I have been having old journalist lunches for several years in Washington, with a lot of wire service veterans included. Bill, Mike, and I were born within weeks of each other in 1934 and got our start in journalism about the same time so we had a lot of talk about and stories to tell.

Bill's wife Jenny, in telling friends that he had died. ended her email by saying "He was so much fun to live with." Hard to beat that as final words.

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday

To

Rik Stevens - rikstevens1220@gmail.com

Lynn Elber - lelber@ap.org

Welcome to Connecting



Paul Colford - pdcolford@comcast.net

Stories of interest

Mexican journalist shot dead at primary school holiday party

By LEV GARCIA FLORES

XALAPA, Mexico (AP) - Attackers burst into an elementary school where a Christmas party was taking place and shot reporter Gumaro Perez to death Tuesday, making him at least the 10th journalist slain in Mexico this year in what observers have called a crisis of freedom of expression.

The Veracruz state security coordinator said in a statement that dozens of parents and children were present when the unidentified attackers shot Perez, whose own child attends the school in the city of Acayucan.

Perez, 34, covered crime for a number of local outlets, had founded the online news site La Voz del Sur and also worked for the local government in some capacity.

He was part of a state program designed to protect journalists as they carry out certain "high-risk" coverage, separate from a federal government program known as "the mechanism" that offers reporters measures like panic buttons on their cellphones and home security.



Read more [here](#).

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Arizona Republic Publisher Joins ASU as First Sue Clark-Johnson Professor

Arizona Republic Publisher Mi-Ai Parrish, an award-winning journalist and media executive, will be the inaugural Sue Clark-Johnson Professor in Media Innovation and Leadership at the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication, Arizona State University announced today.

Parrish will step down from her post as president and publisher of Republic Media, which operates The Arizona Republic, azcentral.com and La Voz as part of the USA Today Network, and join Cronkite on Jan. 1.

"I'm thrilled to be joining the most innovative university in America to partner internationally on re-imagining the future of media," Parrish said. "I'm incredibly grateful to and proud of the talented team at Republic Media, but this was an opportunity I couldn't pass up."

The new Sue Clark-Johnson professorship honors the late pioneering media executive who served as president of the newspaper division of Gannett Co. and earlier as Arizona Republic publisher. Following her 41-year career in the news industry, Clark-Johnson served as a professor of practice at the Cronkite School from 2010 until her death in January 2015.



Sue Clark-Johnson

Read more [here](#).

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This anonymous Maine 'news' site may have tipped a big election (Bangor Daily News)

By **MICHAEL SHEPHERD**

LEWISTON, Maine - As he greeted voters at Longley Elementary School, Ben Chin was hearing all about his emails as Lewiston residents walked out of the polling place during last week's mayoral runoff election, but it was too late.

The progressive activist lost by 145 votes to Mayor-elect Shane Bouchard, a Republican, after he was rocked during the last nine days of the race by seven stories from a new website that caught fire on social media with help from the Maine Republican Party.

One Maine Examiner headline said "Leaked Email: Ben Chin Says Lewiston Voters 'Bunch of Racists'" and featured a real email that apparently forwarded out of a group of campaign operatives. In it, Chin describes a day of canvassing when he had positive interactions but also ran into "a bunch of racists."

On Election Day, a middle-aged man leaving the polls said goodbye to Bouchard. To Chin, he said "not a racist" and refused to talk to a reporter.

Chin may be the first Maine politician derailed by a new phenomenon: anonymous conservative "news" websites whose most effective pieces blend a kernel of truth from opposition research with large factual and rhetorical leaps traditional media ethics would prohibit.

Read more [here](#).

Today in History - December 20, 2017



By The Associated Press

Today is Wednesday, Dec. 20, the 354th day of 2017. There are 11 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 20, 1803, the Louisiana Purchase was completed as ownership of the territory was formally transferred from France to the United States.

On this date:

In 1790, the first successful cotton mill in the United States began operating at Pawtucket, Rhode Island.

In 1812, German authors Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm published the first volume of the first edition of their collection of folk stories, "Children's and Household Tales."

In 1860, South Carolina became the first state to secede from the Union as all 169 delegates to a special convention in Charleston voted in favor of separation.

In 1864, Confederate forces evacuated Savannah, Georgia, as Union Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman nearly completed his "March to the Sea."

In 1924, Adolf Hitler was released from prison after serving nine months for his role in the Beer Hall Putsch.

In 1945, the Office of Price Administration announced the end of tire rationing, effective Jan. 1, 1946.

In 1946, the Frank Capra film "It's A Wonderful Life," starring James Stewart and Donna Reed, had a preview showing for charity in New York, a day before its official world premiere.

In 1963, the Berlin Wall was opened for the first time to West Berliners, who were allowed one-day visits to relatives in the Eastern sector for the holidays.

In 1976, Richard J. Daley, the mayor of Chicago since 1955, died in office at age 74.

In 1987, more than 4,300 people were killed when the Dona Paz, a Philippine passenger ship, collided with the tanker Vector off Mindoro island.

In 1989, the United States launched Operation Just Cause, sending troops into Panama to topple the government of Gen. Manuel Noriega.

In 1995, an American Airlines Boeing 757 en route to Cali, Colombia, slammed into a mountain, killing all but four of the 163 people aboard. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, NATO began its peacekeeping mission, taking over from the United Nations.

Ten years ago: Police used chemical spray and stun guns on protesters outside a New Orleans City Council meeting where members unanimously supported demolition of 4,500 public housing units for post-Hurricane Katrina redevelopment. Thieves broke into the Sao Paulo Museum of Art in Brazil and made off with two paintings, one by Pablo Picasso and the other by Candido Portinari. (The works were recovered in January 2008.) Utah opened the bowl season with a wild 35-32 victory over the Navy Midshipmen in the Poinsettia Bowl.

Five years ago: The State Department acknowledged major weaknesses in security and errors in judgment exposed in a scathing independent report on the deadly Sept. 11, 2012 assault on a U.S. diplomatic mission in Libya. The National Hockey League, in a labor fight with its players, announced the cancellation of the 2012-13 regular-season schedule through Jan. 14, 2013. Michael Phelps was named The Associated Press male athlete of the year. Three-time Olympic runner Suzy Favor Hamilton acknowledged working as an escort following a report on The Smoking Gun website about her double life.

One year ago: President Barack Obama designated the bulk of U.S.-owned waters in the Arctic Ocean and certain areas in the Atlantic Ocean as indefinitely off limits to future oil and gas leasing. A deadly chain-reaction explosion ripped through Mexico's best-known fireworks market on the northern outskirts of the capital, killing at least 36 people. Two-time Wimbledon champion Petra Kvitova was injured in her playing hand by a knife-wielding attacker at her Czech Republic home and underwent surgery (the attacker remains at large).

Today's Birthdays: Original Mouseketeer Tommy Cole (TV: "The Mickey Mouse Club") is 76. Rhythm and blues singer-musician Walter "Wolfman" Washington is 74. Rock musician-music producer Bobby Colomby is 73. Rock musician Peter Criss is 72. Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue is 71. Psychic/illusionist Uri Geller is 71. Producer Dick Wolf ("Law & Order") is 71. Rock musician Alan Parsons is 69. Actress Jenny Agutter is 65. Actor Michael Badalucco is 63. Actress Blanche Baker is 61. Rock singer Billy Bragg is 60. Rock singer-musician Mike Watt (The Secondmen, Minutemen, FIREHOSE) is 60. Actor Joel Gretsch is 54. Country singer Kris Tyler is 53. Rock singer Chris Robinson is 51. Actress Nicole deBoer is 47. Movie director Todd Phillips is 47. Singer David Cook ("American Idol") is 35. Actor Jonah Hill is 34. Actor Bob Morley is 33. Singer JoJo is 27.

Thought for Today: "It's the friends you can call up at 4 a.m. that matter." - Marlene Dietrich, German-born actress (1901-1992).

Got a story or photos to share?

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:

- **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.

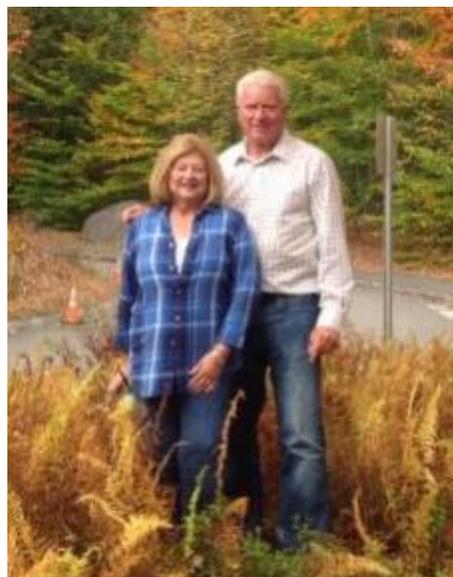
- **Multigenerational AP families** - profiles of families whose service spanned two or more generations.

- **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?

- **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.

- **Most unusual** place a story assignment took you.



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