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# Connecting - April 10, 2019

1 message

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# Connecting

April 10, 2019

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Colleagues,

Good Wednesday morning on this the 10<sup>th</sup> day of April (and the 100th day of 2019),

Today's issue brings news of the death of **Marie McConnell**, who as administrative assistant in the AP's Hartford bureau was admired and highly valued by those who worked with her during her 21-year career.

Marie was a big Boston Red Sox fan, and former Hartford staffer **Donna Tommelleo** recalls how Marie and her husband almost popped the cork on a bottle of champagne in 1986 when the Red Sox let the World Series slip away.

Have a great day!

Paul

## Marie McConnell, former Hartford admin assistant, dies at 76

Marie McConnell, administrative assistant in the AP's Hartford bureau for 21 years, died on Sunday, April 7, after a long struggle with lung disease. She was 76.

"Marie was one of a kind," said former Hartford bureau chief Elaine Hooker. "She knew everyone -- and was kind to everyone - and knew everything that was going on in the bureau. With her outgoing personality, she was a natural to work with members, and she was indefatigable in setting up meetings of New England editors. Her love of the Boston Red Sox was legendary, not to mention her love of ice cream and lobster. It was a major loss to the AP when she retired, and it is another major loss that she passed away."



McConnell's family will receive relatives and friends on Friday, April 12, from 4 to 7 p.m. at Browne Memorial Chapels, Enfield, CT. A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated on Saturday, April 13, at 11 a.m. in St. Mary's Church, Longmeadow, MA. Interment will follow in the Hazardville Cemetery, Enfield. In lieu of flowers, contributions in Marie's memory may be made to the Little Sisters of the Poor [1365 Enfield St. Enfield, CT 06082](#) or charity of the donor's choice. Click [here](#) for a link to her obituary.

McConnell was hired into the AP in 1983 by then-CoB John Reid, whom Hooker succeeded, and she worked there until her retirement in 2004.

Her love of the Red Sox was recalled by former Hartford newswoman Donna Tommelleo, who worked there 14 years as night supervisor and sports editor. Tommelleo recalled:

*Marie was a sports fan of all things UConn and Boston. The UConn women's basketball team brought her great pride and joy year after year. And the Boston Red Sox - well, brought her agita for a while. The year was 1986 and the Sox were one out away from breaking the curse and winning their first World Series title in 86 years. Marie and her husband, Bill, had a bottle of champagne chilling in their refrigerator. They couldn't wait to pop it and enjoy the sweet taste of victory. With one out remaining, Bill turned to Marie and asked, "should we get the champagne ready."*

*"Let's wait till it's over," I recalled her telling me. She didn't want to jinx it. But they did go as far as taking the bubbly out of the fridge and removed the foil from the top. They were so close.*

*And then Mookie Wilson hit a pitch down first base line and, well, everyone knows what happened. Back went the bottle into the fridge and it stayed there for years.*

*When the Sox finally won it all in 2004, I'm sure with all that extra "aging," never tasted so good.*

*I was so happy that she and Bill got to revel that moment. She absolutely deserved it.*

(Thanks to Lisa Marie Pane for providing first word.)

## Connecting mailbox

**Connecting series:**  
***Remembering my first flight***



**George Zucker (Email)** - I remember my first airplane ride. It was one of those soft Florida mornings, the kind that barely rustled the palm trees. The windsock atop the Miami airport control tower was limp, not a good sign since planes take off against the wind and land into it. But the sky was bright and clear.

"It's a good day for flying," the colonel said. My Air Force ROTC squadron from the University of Miami stood at attention beside an old C-119, a huge twin-engine cargo plane used to deliver paratroopers. On this windless morn in 1953, the grim aircraft had been commissioned to fly our squadron down to Key West and back. It was part of the curriculum.

The adventure supposedly would light our love of the wild blue yonder and thereby stiffen our resolve to become Air Force pilots in what was then called the Korean conflict. I didn't begin to worry until they passed out the parachutes. The crew chief handed me one and said it worked OK the last time it was used.

Paratroopers did not enjoy many amenities in the air. We sat in two rows facing each other on canvas seats. The view from the door was great. The plane took off with the door open. Someone yelled, "Hey, shut that door - it's drafty in here!"

Everyone laughed. There was no door to shut, just a gaping space with the Florida landscape dropping away. I tightened the straps on my parachute until they bent me over. No one knew this was my first airplane ride.

After we leveled off at 10,000 feet, the colonel got up and walked to the open door with the nonchalance of a man in a parachute. He held on to a handle and looked out, the wind whipping his white silk scarf. It seemed a foolhardy thing to do, but it showed the suction effect at the open door was not that great.

Several cadets went to the door for a better look. I sat there, coping with the high anxiety of my first plane ride, something I expected to do with the door closed. The colonel shouted against the wind and the roar of the engines. "At this height," he said, "it would take less than a minute to reach the ground. It takes a little longer if the chute opens!"

Among the cadets, it was deemed a badge of courage to help the old colonel earn his flight pay. So the following Saturday, three fellow platoon leaders and I trooped back to the airport to help the colonel stay current on multi-engine aircraft. The silver plane reserved for us was a twin-engine, six-passenger job the Air Force used to ferry brass to Washington, D.C.

Again we were handed parachutes. "Don't put them on," the colonel said. "Just carry them inside and keep them handy. But take your shoes off."

The colonel had learned the flight the week before had been my first. He told me to sit next to him in the co-pilot's seat. We bounced into the air and climbed to 5,000 feet. "Take over the controls," the colonel ordered.

The plane banked sharply and dropped 200 feet when I grabbed the controls too roughly, kicking the rudders with my stockinged feet. "Try to keep the plane lined up with the horizon," the colonel said.

He began to cut back on the throttle. The plane fell as we lost power. "Keep it at the same altitude," the colonel commanded, some anger in his voice. "Just pull back a bit on the wheel!"

It was almost against my chest when the engines stalled. The nose dropped dizzily and the ground seemed too close. But the colonel got the engines restarted before we scrambled for our parachutes. "OK, you can swap seats with Joe back there," the colonel told me, his voice more relaxed.

Moments later, when the plane began to sputter and fall, I assured the other cadets that all was well. "That's just Joe up there flying," I said.

"He needs a lighter touch on those controls."

My dreams of flying in the wild blue yonder crashed when I tested positive for color blindness. I was assigned to the base newspaper instead of flight school, as a reporter instead, the first step in a 50-year career.

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***My most unusual AP story***

**Norm Abelson (Email)** - I first met her on a chill New Hampshire day in February 1956, this quiet and modest woman, who was planning the adventure of a lifetime on a tiny Pacific island half a world away.

How Blanche E. Walker had connected up with and was now to visit Pitcairn Island, whose 130 residents were descendants of the storied mutineers of H.M.S. Bounty, was the tale I was to tell.

She was a middle-aged, single woman who had worked routine jobs for 37 years at the Rumford Press, a large company in Concord, N.H., that printed major national magazines.

The story itself had turned on a simple request in 1937 from her stamp-collecting nephew for a stamp from Pitcairn. As she went through her job of sorting magazines, she began the search. Her life, she said, had been rather uneventful until one special day

"I came across the name Mrs. Lucy Christian, Pitcairn Island," she told me. "I wrote to her and have been corresponding with the islanders ever since." Lucy's husband was the great-great-grandson of Fletcher Christian, the leader of the Bounty rebellion. In 1790, he led his crewmen, along with 18 Polynesian men and women, to the isolated islet where they settled after scuttling the Bounty.

Over the next two decades, Miss Walker continued the correspondence. Also, she began sending clothing and other necessities to the impoverished islanders; they, in return mailed her locally-made items that she sold and sent them the money she made. She showed me the prized gift she had received from them - a sliver of wood from the Bounty's rudder, which was recovered in 1933

She complained of the red tape to get permission to visit Pitcairn, then a British possession closed to visitors, unless invited by an islander. "Mrs. Barbara Fern Warren invited me to the island," she said. "She says I'm just like a mother to her. Her three little girls - they call me Aunt Blanche - asked me to bring some bubble gum for them."

It was not easy to get to the island. She would have to fly to Panama, and board a New Zealand-bound ocean liner with a stop at Pitcairn. If the weather was stormy, the liner might by-pass the island and land her in New Zealand. But, as she told me excitedly those months before she left, "it's a chance worth taking." As it turned out, Miss Walker had to exit the liner, and land on the wave-splashed, rocky shore aboard a much smaller craft for her six-week stay.

I received a call from her after she returned to Concord, inviting me for tea at her small apartment. She thanked me for the story I wrote, which AP Features ran, and presented me with a gift I have kept to this day: a small piece of coral from Pitcairn Island.

Although I'm pretty sure I wrote a follow-up story, any memory of it eludes me. But Blanche Walker and her remarkable story, remain bright and clear.

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## ***Recalling the sounds of the newsroom***

**Gene Herrick** ([Email](#)) - Rickity-tick, Ding, Ding

As an aging AP retiree, I now have more time to meditate and remember the newsroom sounds of yore.

I miss the sounds of the old typewriters, bang-banging, the metallic sound of the carriage return, all while hearing the telephones going off, and my compatriots yakking on the old upright phones. Ah Yes, and the constant clickity-clack of the teletypes pounding away, with the bells ringing, and that funny sound of the paper on the teletypes leaping up. And then, of course, the swearing of the office boy when the paper jammed.

In some bureaus one could also hear the sounds of the Wirephoto speaker with either the voices of people around the country, and the constant high-pitched sound of the picture being transmitted. Some bureaus, and the local members, still had the sounds of the old telegraph key.

The sounds, working together, were melodic, somehow soothing, and a stage show of the times.

Yes, those were the days and nights I vividly remember. One of the biggest shocks I had was when I made a trip to the New York AP office, and went into the newsroom only to hear nothing! Times had changed - the new era of computers had arrived, and there were NO sounds.

I did accept the newsroom changes, and the revolution of new cameras, leaving behind the earlier models of cameras with film, 4x5 Speedgraphics, 120 film format, then into 35mm, and then into the new era of digital photography. What a transition.



I'm still in the present, but the past was an emotional memory.

## New-member profile: Jim Willis

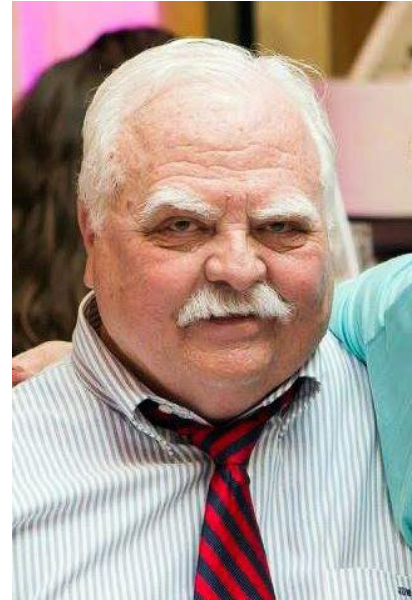
**Jim Willis** ([Email](#)) - When I retired 12 years ago, my wife told me it wasn't in her contract that I would be home for lunch every day, so my "retirement" keeps me out of the house on a variety of activities.

I've taken up wildlife photography. We also do volunteer work at a local soup kitchen and operate an online news site to keep residents in our small town up to speed on the town and its people.

I started my news career as a film runner for NBC News during the '60s while studying journalism at Memphis State University, now the University of Memphis. Even managed to get arrested along with an NBC film crew for "taking pictures on Sunday" when we tried to cover an attempt to integrate the First Baptist Church in Grenada, MS.

After serving four years in the USAF, I worked at the Memphis Press-Scimitar as a reporter and was city editor when the newspaper ceased publication in 1983.

Thereafter, I was an assistant managing editor at The Commercial Appeal, managing editor and then editor/president at the Birmingham Post-Herald. When the Post-Herald was closed, I returned to The CA for a little over a year as an associate publisher/editor, retiring in 2007.



## The AP isn't abandoning its fact-checking partnership with Facebook. It's expanding it.

By Daniel Funke, Poynter



Two months after it was rumored to be quitting, the Associated Press has expanded its fact-checking partnership with Facebook.

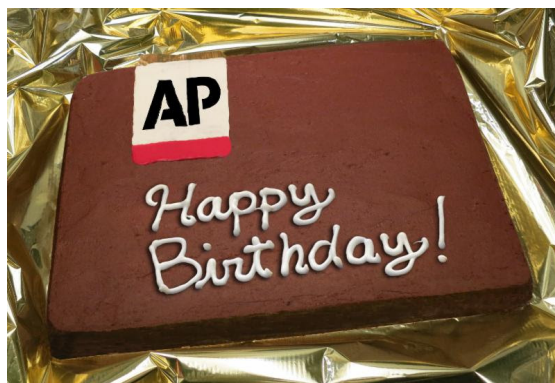
In a press release sent to Poynter on Tuesday, the wire service announced that it will start debunking false content in Spanish for its American audience. The outlet will also publish corresponding fact checks in Spanish, making it the first of Facebook's American partners to do so, according to the release.

The AP, along with fact-checking sites like (Poynter-owned) PolitiFact, Snopes and Factcheck.org, partnered with Facebook in December 2016 to find and debunk false news stories on the platform. Once a hoax is flagged as false, its future reach in the News Feed is decreased and a fact check is appended to it. (Disclosure: Being a signatory of the International Fact-Checking Network's code of principles is a necessary condition for joining the project.)

Since then, the project has expanded to include false images and videos. And the program has had its shares of ups and downs.

Read more [here](#). Shared by John Hartzell.

## Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



To

Ed Breen - [ebreen@indy.rr.com](mailto:ebreen@indy.rr.com)

## Welcome to Connecting



Sherry Skufca - [sskufca@jg.net](mailto:sskufca@jg.net)

## Stories of interest

### ***Dropped Hyphens, Split Infinitives, and Other Thrilling Developments from the 2019 American Copy Editors Society Conference*** (New Yorker)

By MARY NORRIS

Several hundred copy editors descended on Providence, Rhode Island, this past weekend for the annual conference of the American Copy Editors Society (aces), now trending on Twitter as #ACES2019. (We can dream, can't we?) If you have ever been a copy editor among copy editors, you know the joy of being in the company of your fellow-nerds, and hearing them speak out loud of things that normally stay inside your head: arguments about the singular "they," musings about whether to capitalize a proper name that begins with a lowercase letter (d'Anjou, for instance) if it occurs at the beginning of a sentence. (I say yes, but perhaps I am insensitive.) When I first became aware of aces, in 2014, the organization was holding its conference in Las Vegas, and I pictured copy editors at play, pulling the arms of slot machines that featured rows of commas instead of cherries. At this year's opening reception, the entertainment was a pencil embosser—both a machine and a man feeding it handfuls of pencils, which came out saying things like "i think, therefore i edit."

Read more [here](#).

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## ***More than 30 media companies have unionized in the past 2 years*** (Axios)

Dozens of media companies have unionized over the past 2 years in an effort to weather the turbulent economic environment for the content industry. Meanwhile, Hollywood writers are fight waging war with talent agents who, writers claim, are taking an unfair cut of their profits.

Why it matters: Content creators have become collateral damage in a power struggle between the media industry and technology-driven business disruptions. Now, the talent is trying to fight back.

Read more [here](#).

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## ***Ex-Sun editor Kathy Best named first director of investigative journalism center at Maryland's Merrill College*** (Baltimore Sun)

**By Baltimore Sun staff**

Kathy Best, a former assistant managing editor of The Sun, will be the first director of the Howard Center for Investigative Journalism at the University of Maryland Philip Merrill College of Journalism, the school announced Monday.



Best, currently editor of The Missoulian in Missoula, Mont., will join Merrill College this spring. She'll help launch the Howard Center, a multidisciplinary program funded by the Scripps Howard Foundation in honor of Roy W. Howard that seeks to tell

stories of national and international importance while training the next generation of watchdog reporters.

Best started her career as a reporter, covering Washington for the St. Louis Post-Dispatch after covering the Illinois legislature and state politics in Springfield and Chicago.

Read more [here](#).

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## ***Christiane Amanpour Explains How President Trump Made Journalism Even More Dangerous***

(Variety)

By **HENRY CHU**

The urge to become a journalist bearing witness to the events around her was born in Christiane Amanpour out of a family calamity, and also a failed med school application.



As a teenager in her native Iran, she watched the buildup to the Islamic revolution that toppled the shah in 1978 and that eventually forced her and her parents to flee the country. Despite the personal upheaval, Amanpour was fascinated by the history unfolding before her.

"I really liked the pictures and the photojournalism and the stories that I was reading in the paper, as well as what I was seeing and witnessing with my own eyes," she says. "And I actually thought that this was a great way to make a living, to be out there seeing these world-shaking events."

Read more [here](#).

# Today in History - April 10, 2019



## By The Associated Press

Today is Wednesday, April 10, the 100th day of 2019. There are 265 days left in the year.

### Today's Highlight in History:

On April 10, 1865, Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee, a day after surrendering the Army of Northern Virginia at Appomattox Court House, said farewell to his men, praising them for their "unsurpassed courage and fortitude."

### On this date:

In 1866, the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals was incorporated.

In 1912, the British liner RMS Titanic set sail from Southampton, England, on its ill-fated maiden voyage.

In 1916, the Professional Golfers' Association of America was founded in New York.

In 1925, the F. Scott Fitzgerald novel "The Great Gatsby" was first published by Scribner's of New York.

In 1932, German President Paul Von Hindenburg was re-elected in a runoff, with Adolf Hitler coming in second.

In 1947, Brooklyn Dodgers President Branch Rickey purchased the contract of Jackie Robinson from the Montreal Royals.

In 1962, Stuart Sutcliffe, the Beatles' original bass player, died in Hamburg, West Germany, at age 21.

In 1968, "In the Heat of the Night" won best picture of 1967 at the 40th Academy Awards; one of its stars, Rod Steiger, was named best actor while Katharine Hepburn was honored as best actress for "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner."

In 1971, a table tennis team from the United States arrived in China at the invitation of the communist government for a goodwill visit that came to be known as "ping-pong diplomacy."

In 1981, imprisoned IRA hunger striker Bobby Sands was declared the winner of a by-election to the British Parliament.

In 1998, the Northern Ireland peace talks concluded as negotiators reached a landmark settlement to end 30 years of bitter rivalries and bloody attacks.

In 2010, Polish President Lech Kaczynski (lehk kah-CHIN'-skee), 60, was killed in a plane crash in western Russia that also claimed the lives of his wife and top Polish political, military and church officials.

Ten years ago: Police in Tracy, California, arrested Sunday school teacher Melissa Huckaby in connection with the death of 8-year-old Sandra Cantu, whose body had been found in a suitcase. (Huckaby eventually pleaded guilty to kidnapping and murdering her daughter's playmate; she was sentenced to life without parole.) French Navy commandos stormed a sailboat held by pirates off the Somali coast, freeing four hostages; however, one hostage was killed in the operation.

Five years ago: A bus carrying 44 students from Southern California for a free tour of Humboldt State University on the state's far north coast collided with a FedEx tractor-trailer near Orland; five students and three adult chaperones died, along with the drivers. A woman was taken into custody after throwing a shoe at Hillary Clinton as the former secretary of state began a Las Vegas convention keynote speech; the

shoe missed. KISS, Nirvana and Bruce Springsteen's E Street Band were ushered into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame at Brooklyn's Barclays Center. CBS named Stephen Colbert to succeed the retiring David Letterman as host of the "Late Show."

One year ago: During five hours of questioning from a U.S. Senate panel, Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg batted away accusations that he had failed to protect the personal information of millions of Americans from Russians intent on upsetting the U.S. election, though he conceded that Facebook needed to work harder to make sure the tools it creates are used in "good and healthy" ways. The international chemical weapons watchdog said it was sending a fact-finding mission to a Syrian town where a suspected chemical gas attack had taken place over the weekend.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Max von Sydow is 90. Actress Liz Sheridan is 90. Football Hall of Famer John Madden is 83. Reggae artist Bunny Wailer is 72. Actor Steven Seagal is 67. Folk-pop singer Terre Roche (The Roches) is 66. Actor Peter MacNicol is 65. Actress Olivia Brown is 62. Rock musician Steven Gustafson (10,000 Maniacs) is 62. Singer-producer Kenneth "Babyface" Edmonds is 61. Rock singer-musician Brian Setzer is 60. Rock singer Katrina Leskanich (les-KAH'-nich) is 59. Actor Jeb Adams is 58. Olympic gold medal speedskater Cathy Turner is 57. Rock musician Tim "Herb" Alexander is 54. R-and-B singer Kenny Lattimore is 52. Actor-comedian Orlando Jones is 51. Rock musician Mike Mushok (Staind) is 50. Rapper Q-Tip (AKA Kamaal) is 49. Former Missouri Gov. Eric Greitens is 45. Actor David Harbour is 44. Blues singer Shemekia Copeland is 40. Actress Laura Bell Bundy is 38. Actor Harry Hadden-Paton is 38. Actress Chyler Leigh is 37. Pop musician Andrew Dost (fun.) is 36. Actor Ryan Merriman is 36. Singer Mandy Moore is 35. Actor Barkhad Abdi (BAHRK'-hahd AHB'-dee) is 34. Actress Shay Mitchell is 32. Actor Haley Joel Osment is 31. Actress Molly Bernard (TV: "Younger") is 31. Country singer Maren Morris is 29. Actor Alex Pettyfer is 29. Actress-singer AJ (AKA Amanda) Michalka (mish-AL'-kah) is 28. Actress Daisy Ridley is 27. Singer-actress Sofia Carson is 26. Actress Audrey Whitby is 23. Actress Ruby Jerins is 21.

**Thought for Today: "Work is something you can count on, a trusted, lifelong friend who never deserts you." - Margaret Bourke-White, American photojournalist (1904-1971).**

## Connecting calendar





**June 20** - 25-Year Club Celebration, 5:30 - 8 p.m., AP headquarters, 200 Liberty Street, New York, NY. RSVP by May 10. RSVP online [here](#). Any questions may be directed to [recognition@ap.org](mailto:recognition@ap.org)

**August 17** - Albany AP bureau reunion (including other upstate bureaus), 1-5 p.m., Marc and Carla Humbert residence on Tsatsawassa Lake, [68 Marginal Way, East Nassau, NY](#). Contact: Chris McKnight ([Email](#)).

## 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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