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## Connecting - April 17, 2019

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Wed, Apr 17, 2019 at 9:04 AM

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# Connecting

April 17, 2019

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Colleagues,

Good Wednesday morning on this the 17<sup>th</sup> day of April,

Our colleague **Warren Levinson** has retired, completing a 40-year career with The Associated Press - all in Broadcast in New York - that he calls "quite a ride."

In our lead article for today's Connecting, he tells about that "ride" that has included an array of stories touching terrorism, art, finance, politics, sports, the law and the United Nations...presidential campaigns from the first Bush to Obama...plane crashes, floods, hurricanes and prison riots all over the country...the space program...and 11 Olympic Games.

We also bring you a remarkable array of great stories on our colleague **Jon Wolman**, Detroit newspaper editor and publisher whose earlier 31-year AP career included positions as executive editor and Washington chief of bureau. If you have a memory to share of Jon, please send it along. I hope you take time to read what is published today. Remarkable.

If you would like to send a note to Jon's wife **Deborah "Debbie" Lamm**, you can reach her at: [27185 Scenic Avenue, Franklin, Michigan 48025](#).

Besides the sad news of Jon's death, Tuesday's edition contained a call on the second-year anniversary of the death of AP journalist **Jerry Nachtigal** (who died at 57) to emulate and honor Jerry by doing a random act of kindness.

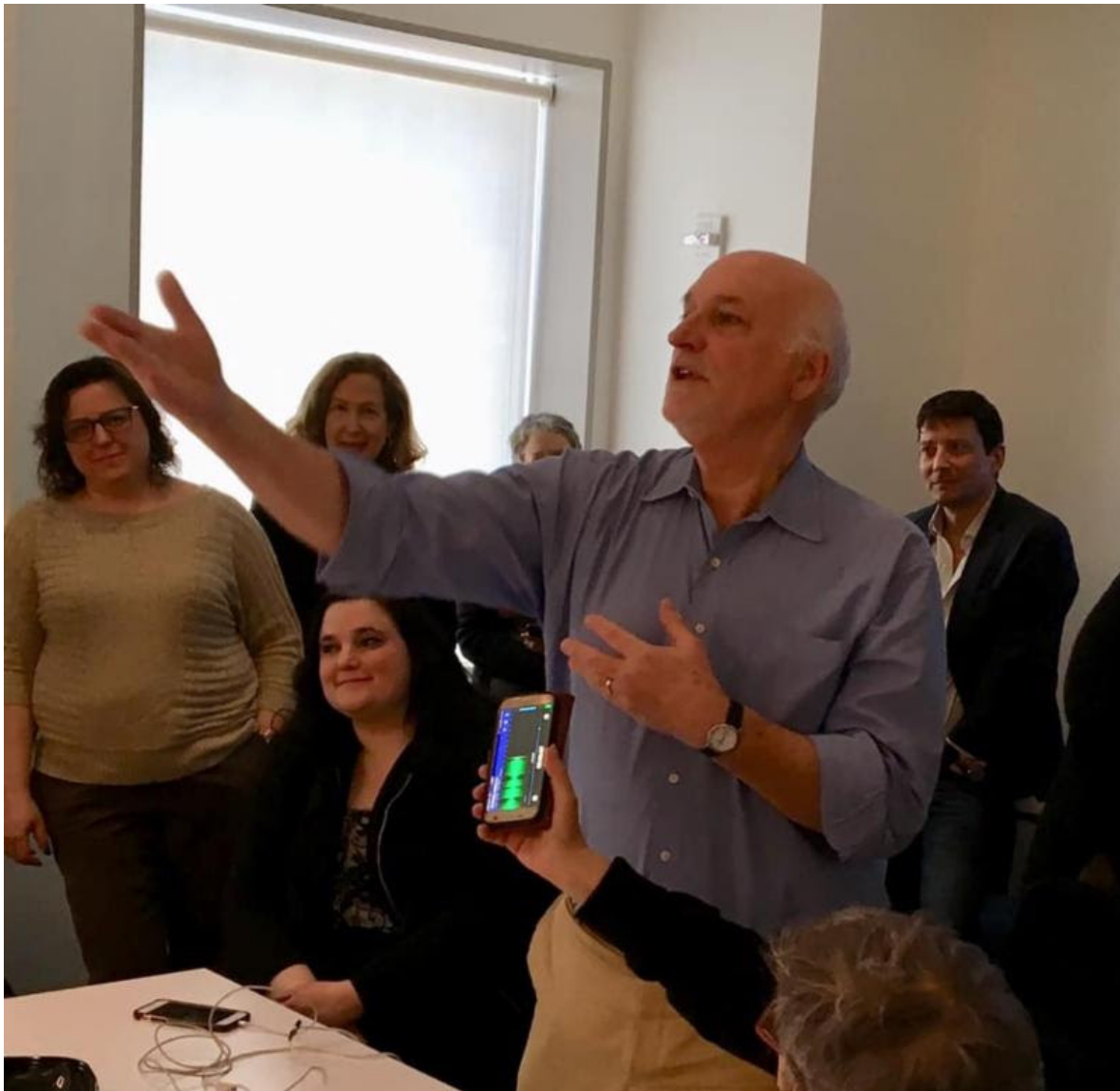
This prompted the following note - titled "Gifts from Jon and Jerry" - from colleague **Norm Abelson** ([Email](#)) -

*"I did not have the privilege to know either Jon Wolman or Jerry Nachtigal. Yet through reading the stories of their remarkable lives and untimely deaths, they gave me the gifts of remembering and honoring kindness and family. It is so easy in these difficult and confusing times to become paranoid and angry, so easy to forget the importance of valuing family and showing kindness to others. In my faith, as I am sure in others, it is said that the act is all. Therefore, all the blathering online is not equal to feeding one hungry person. Telling my son and grandchildren that I love them has the power to transform. Jon and Jerry, thank you. I will remember."*

Have a good day!

Paul

## Warren Levinson's 40-year career was 'quite a ride'

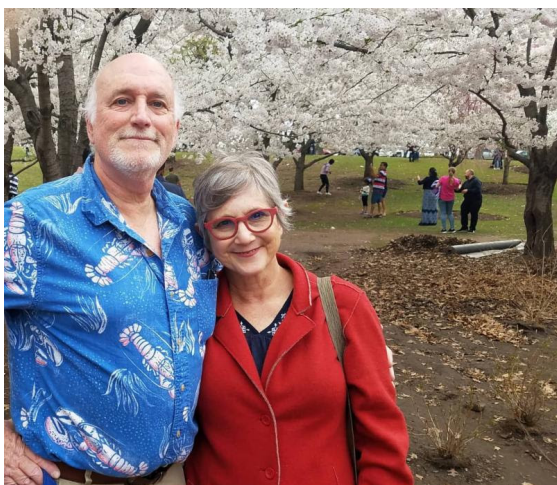


**At his New York retirement party**

**Warren Levinson (Email)** - I retired April 2 after a career of 39 years and 11 months at the AP, all of it in the Broadcast division and all of it based in New York.

The New York staff threw me a grand sendoff, complete with gifts, speeches, cake and extravagant flattery. About 40 people took part in New York. The BNC joined by Zoom video and Radio Executive Producer Greg Peppers came in person, to lend an air of moment and impress my family.

Editor and AP writing coach Jerry Schwartz told a charming story of our working together to get him produce long-ago radio pieces.



**Warren and his wife Debbie**

I covered everything in New York that was of interest outside New York, a broad array of stories touching terrorism, art, finance, politics, sports, the law and the United Nations. I traveled on presidential campaigns from the first Bush to Obama and was part of the rotating cast of drop-everything-and-go correspondents, covering plane crashes, floods, hurricanes and prison riots all over the country. Covered the space program for a few years in the mid-'80s. Dropped the occasional story in rhymed couplets - mostly year-end reviews and cute animal stories (I recited one at the retirement shindig).

And I covered 11 Olympic Games. My Olympics job was possibly the best gig in journalism. I was assigned to cover stories where the Olympics spilled over from the sports page to the news page (Think the Centennial Park bombing in Atlanta, or the murder of an American volleyball parent at the Drum Tower in Beijing). But when those things were not happening, my main job was to cover what I found interesting -- basically, the intersection of the local culture with the culture that is the Olympics.

I did some good reporting in 40 years (I will round it up if anyone asks), but what I mainly did at the AP was translate the good reporting of its talented men and women for the audience on radio and occasionally video.

Now I'm finished, but I'm not done. I'm producing and hosting the travel podcast, Get Outta Here!, begun by our former travel editor Beth Harpaz. The first episode, featuring San Juan correspondent Danica Coto, is up. Click [here](#) for the podcast. Available from your podcast app of choice.

I joined the AP in May 1979 as a writer on the National Broadcast Desk when it was still located in New York. A little less than three years later, I became the radio network's correspondent in New York, essentially a one-person correspondence at New York headquarters for radio.

And it has been quite a ride.



**Dressed for Chicago**

# Remembering Jon Wolman



**Hank Ackerman** ([Email](#)) - I feel so deeply sorry to hear this news. Jon and I had lunch in February. We had planned yet another that we had to postpone. He said upon parting, "See you in the Spring." In February, I had picked him up at the paper, and we went to the DAC - all the time talking about family, about Detroit's resurgence, about AP colleagues and the Detroit AP bureau or for some moments about politics. He seemed strong but pale. Someone had told me he had been diagnosed with cancer but I did not ask. We did not talk about illness. He opined that he didn't have any facts to back it up, but he thought the president would not be running for president in 2020. He had an intuition.

Jon was a caring guy underneath the always-questioning face and behind the deep voice he showed toward events that made the news. And, as Lou Boccardi, Terry Hunt and Sandy Johnson noted, and others mentioned in the AP article, he cared for everyone underneath. I could see that when in Membership I would visit the Washington bureau for this or that reason, When we chatted, Jon obviously really cared about his staffers' thoughts. He cared that they had backup to do their jobs. He kept up with details. He celebrated their successes with the expectation they would be repeated.

In a very unceremonious way, on a cold December night he wanted me to have dinner with him at Judson's Grill on 52nd street. It was a fairly lonely cold, snowy night for me as I would be leaving 50 Rock the next day after 10 years to start another career out in the bureaus. He had remembered when I would be leaving and set the time. It was an extremely busy time in NYC,. He didn't have to take notice. As he did there or in Washington or over the years in Detroit, he focused on his dinner

or lunch companion(s) or the events of the time. For the longest time -- until February -- he did not talk about the trials of his commuting from Washington to New York City during those years he was Executive Editor.

I admired his steadfast interest in getting things right. The story about the election call in Michigan in 2016 is poignant. I knew that from our work in the bureau that night and early morning. Noland Finley's comments were wonderfully commensurate with my feelings.

Everyone who worked with Jon or met Jon or was written about by Jon has a good, heartfelt reflection about him. One of a kind.

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**Ted Anthony (Email)** - Jon was always an enthusiastic and unswerving advocate of The Story and why it mattered. But I always admired how people-driven that view was. When I got the job leading our news coverage in China in 2002 as Beijing news editor (for which I later learned he was a strong advocate), I had just come back from several long stints in post-9/11 Afghanistan and Pakistan, and I felt overwhelmed. I called him up while pacing the streets of Beijing - literally - and he gave me some simple but wise advice that I use to this day: Manage to what the STORY needs most of the time, but be able to identify those times when you have to manage to what the WRITER needs - even if it makes the story a little less perfect on that particular day. I had never heard the tension between the trajectory of the news and journalists' own needs addressed so elegantly and succinctly, and as a then-new manager it made a huge impression on me. It is top of mind for me to this day in any news-management situations.

(I also appreciated how, long after he left AP, I'd still get notes out of nowhere about stories I had done or when things happened on my life, like when my dad died. He took care to keep on top of the lives of the people who were his colleagues.)

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**Bryan Brumley (Email)** - When I first joined the AP Washington bureau in 1977, Jon Wolman was a mysterious figure, seldom seen during daylight hours. As the recently appointed Urban Affairs writer, the bearded Wolman was away from the bureau for weeks on end, showing up from time to time, settling into his desk in the evening, when most other reporters were leaving for the day. Wearing blue jeans, he would labor through the night on his stories. It was quieter that way, he said. And I guessed that he preferred the relaxed dress code. He also ended his messages with an unusual sign-off, "Wolp," short for Wolperson, a twist on his title of "newsperson," and an early if ironic nod to gender neutrality.

Jon was without parallel as an editor and strategist. I worked closely with him when I returned to Washington in 1985, after stints overseas and in New York, and helped cover the U.S. angle on the emergence of Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev and his glasnost and perestroika. Planning for the Reagan-Gorbachev summits was a lesson in tactics and logistics. Reporters and editors would pile into his office, bat around ideas, and dash out to work on their stories. "It's like magic," Jon would say, with his characteristic wry smile. But it wasn't magic. It was Wolp. If we got beat or missed an angle, he did not yell that we needed the same story that had appeared in the Times or the Post. AP veterans may remember those occasions. Instead, the conversation was, what did the other guys get wrong and how can we get ahead on this? How can we stay ahead? Wolp had a way of melding minds with reporters that produced a forward-looking style of journalism.

As Wolp rose through the ranks, I had the privilege of continuing to work with him, from my post in Moscow and later APTN in London. As he climbed to 50 Rock, he became a little less disheveled, although never entirely sheveled. When visiting, I'd be sure to book a lunch, dinner or at least a long conversation with him. He wore a suit and tie in those days, but often padded around his corner office in socks. He'd pause, peer under his desk, choose from one of two pairs of shoes he found there, and we'd amble out, usually for buffet at the Indian place, always for an exciting conversation about politics - his lifeblood.

The last time I saw Jon, he and his wife Deborah were visiting their daughter Emma in Portland, Oregon, a few years back. After brunch, we went together to the Japanese Garden on a drizzly day. We worried a little about his health then. He seemed pale and not as energetic as before. But nothing prepared us for the shock of his early death. What a loss.

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**Bob Dobkin (Email)** - Jon Wolman was a total stranger when I checked into the Detroit bureau in 1975 as AP's national labor reporter to cover Jimmy Hoffa's sudden disappearance. I left two weeks later thinking how easy it was to collaborate with Jon, almost as if we had been longtime colleagues. With me reporting mostly from the field and working my sources and Jon managing the story and editing my copy, we garnered several banner heads in the home Detroit Press' first late-night am editions and captured the play nationally in virtually every cycle. On returning to Washington I thought how valued Jon could be to the bureau. It wasn't too long after that Jon transferred in and made his unforgettable mark.

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**Harry Dunphy (Email)** - Like many of us, I was very saddened to learn of Jon's death.

When it became time for me to come home after 25 years overseas, various domestic options were open. Jon and Sandy Johnson thought I would be a good addition to the Washington bureau and decided to take a chance on me, even though one NY executive said sometimes returning COBs did not work out coming back to reporting jobs.

Soon after my arrival John and Debbie invited Verity and me to dinner and offered any help they could provide in getting us settled for which we were very grateful. (Re-entry can be a problem for any family returning from a foreign assignment).

After I'd been in the bureau for a while, Jon said he liked the way I was pro-active in going after some stories I knew about instead of waiting for them to develop.

I think the News' Sarah Rahal (see lead of Tuesday's Connecting) got the appreciative smile just right. I've seen it.

The second half of my career was 25 years in the bureau thanks to Jon and Sandy. I was a reporter, World Service editor and sometimes an institutional memory for important international events, some of which, as my last boss Ken Guggenheim pointed out on my departure, I had experienced first-hand.

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**Mike Feinsilber (Email)** - Everyone who worked with him thought that he had a special relationship with Jon Wolman. So did I. He and I lived within a mile or so from each other, and when it was time to quit for the day, I'd ask Jon, "Going North?" - code for can I ride with you? - and he'd nod and off we'd go for another session in a non-stop seminar on AP journalism.

(And non-stop driving. Wolman was a one-of-a-kind driver and we'd zip along, as zippily as an aging Jeep can, darting, taking advantage of an empty right turn lane and getting out of it with precision, quick decisions, exactitude -just like his journalism.)

Before he left for the night, he'd saunter through the bureau, from cubicle to cubicle, look over writers' shoulders, and mumble a "hmmm" and move on. Sometimes he



used a word, "breathtaking." The writer was left wondering: Breathtakingly good? Or breathtakingly bad?

Wolman cared about people. In those pre-computer days, the bureau had a morgue - file cabinets stuffed with wire copy and two librarians who did the clipping and filing and fetching for desperate reporters. One of them, a middle-aged woman, developed cancer. Some genius in the AP decided it was time for her to go on disability and half-salary. Wolman caught wind of it. He knew what working, being with the people who knew her, meant to her. He made some calls. Quietly, before she even knew of it, the disability idea was abandoned.

Wolman had great news judgment. He hired expertly. He knew instinctively where a story was going and where it would go tomorrow. But the reason people loved working for him, and loved him, was because he treated everyone justly.

One Saturday morning, Wolman and I went to the funeral of a retired staffer. The priest who officiated conducted a by-the-books service that left no room for deviation, no time for anyone else to speak. He could have been burying a monkey. One sensed the family's disappointment: the deceased was a person, with a story that deserved to be shared. When we got back into the Jeep, Wolman muttered: "That SOB."

When I joined AP, after 25 years with the competition, UPI, Wolman bore the title "assistant news editor." But in fact the place revolved around him.

I'm long retired. When I sleep, I dream. Inevitably, my dreams are about journalism. Wolman often inhabits them. In my dreams, I'm waiting for him to peer over my shoulder. And say, "Breathtaking." Whatever that meant.

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**Marlene Johnson** (Email) - Oh, No! I am heartbroken!! I was novice reporter at AP's Detroit Bureau when Wolman arrived. It was my first job as a journalist. I was hired in what AP told me was an internship training program for minorities. Wolman taught me everything about the craft. He quickly became a desk editor and stood by me when the bureau chief decided to fire me on flimsy grounds. Wolman set the wheels in motion for the class action suit I filed on behalf of minorities and women. The result was a landmark decision against the AP and establishment of its real minority internship training program. Just today, I was speaking with a friend about writing and I recalled how Jon would scold me if I took too long to file my story. Jon knew I was a good reporter and writer, but I had a habit of rewriting my copy to perfection. So imagine my surprise hearing this sad news today some hours later. I will always remember Wolman's kindness and sense of humor. He introduced my

daughter to Raol Dahl's books, and he made the best chocolate chip cookies. And he loved to watch MASH on TV during the 3 to 11 pm shift. When we both ended up on Washington, DC, later, we would meet often for lunch. Jon Wolman was an important part of my life and I will always cherish having known him. May he now rest in peace knowing he has helped so many minorities and women in the field of journalism. Sending my condolences to his family.

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**Carl P. Leubsdorf (Email)** - People of my age (81) learn to expect periodic news of the passing of old friends and colleagues. In just the last month, two fellow journalists of my era have joined that sad parade, John Hall, with whom I covered the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and Sen. George McGovern during my AP days, and Leo Rennert, the longtime McClatchy Washington bureau chief and our tour guide on many overseas presidential trips during the Reagan and Bush presidencies.

But none so affected me as learning of Jon Wolman's death at a far too early age. Both a colleague and a friend, as well as a talented journalist, I will remember him as one of the kindest of men. When my son Ben was a fledgling reporter in Detroit, Jon reached out to him, including, as I recall, inviting him to a Detroit Lions football game. Since Ben knew no one else in Detroit outside the AP office, Jon made his stay there a little less lonely.

I met Jon when I went to Michigan in the spring of 1974 to cover what turned out to be the last political trip President Richard Nixon took to help a Republican candidate, this time in a special congressional election. The visit was also noteworthy for two other reasons: the area Nixon visited, known as the Thumb and the colorful names of its towns, Bad Axe and Ubyly; and the two young reporters from the Detroit bureau who were dispatched to assist the "Big Foot" from the Washington bureau, Jon Wolman and Owen Ullmann. Both so impressed me that, when I returned to Washington and Assistant Chief of Bureau Burl Osborne debriefed me, I recommended both to him, even though Jon had indicated at the time he was possibly interested in going overseas. I kept up with him after he arrived the following year and, when I decided to leave AP for a job at The Baltimore Sun at the end of 1975, he sent me a nice note wishing me well (the only other one I received, I recall, was from General Manager Wes Gallagher).

Talent rises to the top and so did Jon, becoming an assistant chief of bureau and then chief of bureau, after which I had the honor to co-sponsor him for membership in the Gridiron Club. I know he loved the club because, long after he had moved on to New York, Denver and finally Detroit, he always returned for not only the big Spring Dinner with the celebrities, but the smaller Winter Dinner for members and spouses. When he missed this year's dinner, I wondered why. Now, sadly, I know. Thinking of Debbie and their three children.

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**Lee Mitgang (Email)** - There will be tributes galore for Jon Wolman, I'm sure. Most, I expect, will focus on his stellar career as a bureau chief and top news exec at the AP and the Detroit News. But let's not overlook Jon's formative years at the AP as a smart, tough young reporter, and that's how I'll remember him. In the late '70s, Jon and I were members of the four-person AP's Urban Affairs Team (along with Dave Treadwell in Chicago and the late Sam Boyle in New York). Our assignment was to go deep and cover the worsening crises affecting cities across the country. Jon showed his colors as a terrific reporter covering the early, rocky years of HUD and as a collaborator on a number of series our team produced. One in particular exposed, for the first time, rampant waste in the giant federal jobs program called CETA (Comprehensive Employment and Training Act).

Along with his reporting prowess, I cherish having worked with Jon because he was a deadly serious professional who never took himself too seriously. I loved his self-chosen nickname "Wolp," short for Wol-person. And if we were talking about some real or imagined outrage unearthed in the course of our work, he'd exclaim in his Michigan twang, "I cain't staind it!"

It was great fun growing up with Jon. I feel as if a piece of my own youth has gone with him.

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**Greg Nokes (Email)** - I had coffee with Jon at Powells Books a year or so ago and at that time he was talking of moving to Portland where his daughter Emma lives. I had no idea he was ill, and his death came as an awful shock. Jon was a gentleman in every sense of the word, humble, unassuming, a good friend, and a very talented journalist. I was honored to be able to work with him at The AP in D.C. and to continue that friendship in later years.

I'm so very sorry.

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**Mort Rosenblum (Email)** - We've all worked with lots of editors over the years, happily or regrettably, and I can't remember anyone like Jon Wolman. I'll miss most Jon the person, a warm and wonderful friend. But Jon the unflappable wise old pro is a tragic loss. Detroit is off my usual route, and it's been a few years since I saw him last. We gathered with his visiting family around prime rib at El Corral in Tucson,

where he had some old roots. Same ol' Jon: wry and witty, with that slow smile that started with twinkling eyes, bristled his whiskers and then spread from ear to ear.

Remembrances on this page caught Jon the editor exactly, beaming with pleasure and modest pride as he left the 4<sup>th</sup> floor at the end of a hectic day. If that smile dimmed and, God forbid, his brow furrowed you always knew it was time to do whatever you were doing a whole lot better.

One Jon moment stands out among many. At the Sydney Olympics in 2000, I was trying to capture the elaborate opening ceremony in a mainbar. Jon watched the screen over my shoulder, hoping against hope for some deadline poetry. I was paralyzed, unable to light the pipe that (health advice be damned) makes my fingers work. Ignoring all laws and niceties, I lit up. Jon said nothing at the cloud of smoke. Some words appeared, and he grunted. Hardly poetry, but gratifying Wolman approval.

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**Sonya Ross** ([Email](#)) - Just before midnight one night in the spring of 1992, I dragged myself back into the AP Atlanta bureau reeking of tear gas and smoke. I'd spent seven hours reporting in the streets less than a mile away, blending in among Atlanta University Center students who torched their bookstore and a police car out of rage over the police acquittals in the beating of Rodney King. I was told to check my mailbox. Through wet, itchy eyes, I struggled to read the lone pink message slip inside.

Call Washington bureau chief Jon Wolman first thing tomorrow morning.

So I did.

Book a flight to Washington, Wolman told me. He wanted to interview me.

Before I really knew what hit me, Wolman - at AP he had single-name status like Oprah or Elvis - had dropped me headfirst onto AP's national staff to cover race. I took the job (I'm not crazy), but I glided into DC on gossamer wings of ambition because once I got there, I wasn't sure I could pull this off. Everyone seemed so well-read, mature and smart. I was 20-something and nervous. What if I make young, dumb mistakes?

You'll be fine, Wolman assured. Just do what you already know how to do, he said.

So I did, awed every day by the fact that Wolman had been watching me work all along and I didn't even know it.

I guess he was pleased with the results because three years later, Wolman summoned me to his office on my first day back from the black journalists convention in Philly.

"I'm sending you to the White House," he said simply.

Just like that, AP got its first black woman White House correspondent: Wolman simply decided it was time, and picked me.

This was the beauty of Wolman. He could call the correct, practical, gutsy shot at exactly the right time, as easily as if he were ordering lunch or something, a smile on his face the whole time. He had a knack for trends, for identifying talent, and he was always willing to take a chance on the young. Wolman just made you feel special, which in turn made you work harder because Lord knows you didn't ever want to disappoint him.

The news of Wolman's death today came as a hard shock. I got the word while en route to the National Coalition of 100 Black Women's legislative conference to moderate a panel discussion on the power of black women's advocacy, the type of discussion about race that Wolman would have called me in to his office to chat about and brainstorm reporting threads for follow up.

Wolman was a most excellent boss. I am proud to have worked for him and I am awash in gratitude for the boost this great man gave to my career. I do sincerely wish that he hadn't left us so soon. There was still plenty of good journalism, good ideas, gutsy decisions inside of him, enough to last another lifetime.

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**Frank Russell** ([Email](#)) - I worked in the Washington AP bureau as a photo editor and attend many of the daily news meetings that Jon held as the rep of the photo department and Jon was always interested in what the photo department and photographers were covering.

He was always a fair person to work for and always supported photos.

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**Susanne Schafer (Email)** - Jon Wolman had an uncanny ability to care for those who worked for him. Years before such a thing as parental leave for adoptive parents was available, Jon helped me string together days and days of overtime so I might step away from working as the Pentagon correspondent and tend to a newborn that suddenly came into our lives. (And great thanks to Bob Burns for taking over then, too). And Jon knew what it was like to be an overwhelmed new parent. Several weeks after our son arrived, Jon had a catered dinner delivered to the house for me and my husband. I don't know how Jon knew I would still be in my bathrobe at 5 p.m. that day, and that I would have no idea how I would ever get dinner on the table, but he did. He was amazing. I can still see him chuckling about it.

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**Neal Ulevich (Email)** - As a friend, and a journalist, and AP veteran, and UW-Madison grad, as an admirer, and in any other ways, I feel cheated by the passing of Jon Wolman. He should have been with us longer, much longer. My condolences to his family.

## Connecting mailbox

### *A gathering to remember those we've lost*



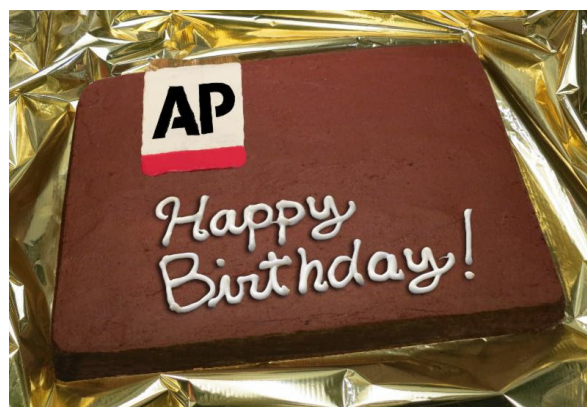
Starting several years back, the late Sally Jacobsen would bring together some of her retired, devoted AP crew for occasional lunches at Wu Liang Yi, the Chinese eatery near 50 Rock. This past Friday, a hardy band gathered again with thoughts of those we've lost. Counterclockwise: Ellen Nimmons, whose husband, AP's Jim Fitzgerald, passed away two Aprils ago, Sally's husband Pat Oster (ex-Bloomberg, ex-National Law Journal), Charlie Hanley, Larry Heinzerling, Eileen Alt Powell, widow of AP's G.G. LaBelle, who died in February, and Marcus Eliason. All except Ellen are gainfully retired. (Shared by Charlie Hanley and Marcus Eliason)

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## ***Missing from best journalism film list - Deadline - U.S.A***

**Len Iwanski** ([Email](#)) - on a recent list of Best Journalism Movies - One of my favorites didn't make this list: *Deadline - U.S.A.* (1952), starring Humphrey Bogart, Ethel Barrymore and Kim Hunter. A crusading newspaper editor exposes a gangster's crimes while trying to keep the paper from going out of business. Bogart delivers the great publish-and-be-damned line: "That's the press, baby, the press, and there's nothing you can do about it, nothing."

## **Connecting wishes Happy Birthday**



To

**Kiki Lascares Georgion - [kcgscribe@aol.com](mailto:kcgscribe@aol.com)**

**Joyce Rosenberg - [psyjourn313@gmail.com](mailto:psyjourn313@gmail.com)**

## **Welcome to Connecting**



Marta Lavandier - [MLavandier@ap.org](mailto:MLavandier@ap.org)

## Stories of interest

**Shock, sadness, but no panic: Minutes that saved Notre Dame**





**In this combination of photos, flames and smoke rise as the spire on the Notre Dame Cathedral collapses during a fire in Paris, Monday, April 15, 2019. (AP Photo/Diana Ayanna)**



In this image made available on Tuesday April 16, 2019 flames and smoke rise from the blaze as the spire starts to topple on Notre Dame cathedral in Paris, Monday, April 15, 2019. An inferno that raged through Notre Dame Cathedral for more than 12 hours destroyed its spire and its roof but spared its twin medieval bell towers, and a frantic rescue effort saved the monument's "most precious treasures," including the Crown of Thorns purportedly worn by Jesus, officials said Tuesday. (AP Photo/Thierry Mallet)

**By LORI HINNANT**

PARIS (AP) - Fueled by a lattice of centuries-old timbers, the fire moved hungrily across Notre Dame's rooftop toward the cathedral's iconic spire. It belched yellow smoke, spitting out gritty particles of wood, stone, lead and iron and wanted more. Far below, their vision obscured by fumes and tears, firefighters, priests and municipal workers passed treasures hand-to-hand, hoping the speed of desperation could outrun the flames.

They had 66 minutes.

The first alarm sounded at 6:20 p.m., silencing the priest and a few hundred worshippers and tourists inside.

"Everyone was immobilized by shock for maybe a minute," said Johann Vexo, who was in the organ loft for Monday Mass. Shock, but no panic. The rear doors opened and within a few minutes, the cathedral was empty, he told Ouest-France newspaper.

For twenty-three minutes, it seemed like a false alarm. Then at 6:43 p.m. a second smoke detector went off and the fire showed its face, flickering in the wooden timbers and visible to anyone who happened to look north from Paris' Left Bank.

Read more [here](#).

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## Columbine shooting survivors share how attack has shaped them 20 years later



In this March 27, 2019, photo, Kacey Ruegsegger Johnson poses for a portrait at her home in Cary, N.C. Ruegsegger Johnson, now a mother of four, survived a shotgun blast during the 1999 shootings at Colorado's Columbine High School that left 12 students, one teacher, and both gunmen dead. (Allen G. Breed / AP)

**By Kathleen Foody, Allen G. Breed and P. Solomon Banda**

**Associated Press**

Dropping her kids off at school used to be the hardest part of Kacey Ruegsegger Johnson's day. She would cry most mornings as they left the car, and relied on texted photos from their teachers to make it through the day.

Now, the mother of four - and Columbine shooting survivor - sees mornings as an opportunity. She wakes early, makes breakfast and strives to send a clear message before her kids leave home: I adore you.

Twenty years after teenage gunmen attacked Columbine High School, Ruegsegger Johnson and other alumni of the Littleton, Colorado, school have become parents. The emotional toll of the shooting that killed 12 classmates and a teacher has been amplified by fears about their own kids' safety, spiking each time yet another shooter enters yet another school.

"I'm grateful I have the chance to be a mom. I know some of my classmates weren't given that opportunity," Ruegsegger Johnson said, tears springing to her eyes. "There are parts of the world I wish our kids never had to know about. I wish that there would never be a day I had to tell them the things I've been through."

As the survivors of Columbine entered adulthood, they watched the attacks at their school and so many others - Virginia Tech, Sandy Hook, Parkland - alter the American classroom.

Read more [here](#).

## Today in History - April 17, 2019



**By The Associated Press**

Today is Wednesday, April 17, the 107th day of 2019. There are 258 days left in the year.

### **Today's Highlight in History:**

On April 17, 1972, the Boston Marathon allowed women to compete for the first time; Nina Kuscsik was the first officially recognized women's champion, with a time of 3:10:26.

### **On this date:**

In 1492, a contract was signed by Christopher Columbus and a representative of Spains King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, giving Columbus a commission to seek a westward ocean passage to Asia.

In 1521, Martin Luther went before the Diet of Worms (vohrms) to face charges stemming from his religious writings. (Luther was later declared an outlaw by Holy Roman Emperor Charles V.)

In 1861, the Virginia State Convention voted to secede from the Union.

In 1924, the motion picture studio Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer was founded, the result of a merger of Metro Pictures, Goldwyn Pictures and the Louis B. Mayer Co.

In 1961, some 1,500 CIA-trained Cuban exiles launched the disastrous Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba in an attempt to topple Fidel Castro, whose forces crushed the incursion by the third day.

In 1964, Geraldine Jerrie Mock became the first woman to complete a solo airplane trip around the world as she returned to Columbus, Ohio, after 29 1/2 days in her Cessna 180. Ford Motor Co. unveiled the Mustang at the New York Worlds Fair. The first game was played at New York's Shea Stadium; the Pittsburgh Pirates defeated the Mets, 4-3.

In 1969, a jury in Los Angeles convicted Sirhan Sirhan of assassinating Sen. Robert F. Kennedy.

In 1970, Apollo 13 astronauts James A. Lovell, Fred W. Haise and Jack Swigert splashed down safely in the Pacific, four days after a ruptured oxygen tank crippled their spacecraft while en route to the moon.

In 1973, Federal Express (later FedEx) began operations as 14 planes carrying 186 packages took off from Memphis International Airport, bound for 25 U.S. cities.

In 1986, at London's Heathrow Airport, a bomb was discovered in the bag of Anne-Marie Murphy, a pregnant Irishwoman about to board an El Al jetliner to Israel; she had been tricked into carrying the bomb by her Jordanian fiance, Nezar Hindawi. The bodies of kidnapped American Peter Kilburn and Britons Philip Padfield and Leigh Douglas were found near Beirut; they had been slain in apparent retaliation for the U.S. raid on Libya.

In 1991, the Dow Jones industrial average closed above 3,000 for the first time, ending the day at 3,004.46, up 17.58.

In 1993, a federal jury in Los Angeles convicted two former police officers of violating the civil rights of beaten motorist Rodney King; two other officers were acquitted. Turkish President Turgut Ozal died at age 66.

Ten years ago: A day after U.N. inspectors left North Korea, U.S. experts monitoring the communist country's nuclear program also departed after Pyongyang expelled them and threatened to restart its reactor in anger over U.N. criticism of its recent rocket launch. Richard Phillips, the cargo ship captain rescued by Navy snipers from the clutches of Somali pirates, made a triumphant return to his home state of Vermont, insisting, I'm not a hero, the military is.

Five years ago: Ukraine and Russia agreed on a tentative halt to violence and to calm tensions along their shared border after more than a month of Cold-War style military posturing triggered by Moscow's annexation of Crimea. Nobel Prize-winning author Gabriel Garcia Marquez, 87, died in Mexico City.

One year ago: Barbara Bush, who was both a first lady and the mother of a president, died in Houston at the age of 92; she was survived by her husband, George H.W. Bush, with whom she had the longest marriage of any presidential couple in American history - a marriage of more than 73 years. A Southwest Airlines jet made an emergency landing in Philadelphia after the jet apparently blew an engine, got hit by debris and lost a window; a woman sitting near the window was pulled partially out of the plane and later died. Americans were given an extra day to file their taxes after key elements of the IRS website crashed on deadline day.

Today's Birthdays: Actor David Bradley is 77. Composer-musician Jan Hammer (yahn HAH-mur) is 71. Actress Olivia Hussey is 68. Actor Clarke Peters is 67. Rapper Afrika Bambaataa is 62. Actor Sean Bean is 60. Former NFL quarterback Boomer Esiason (eh-SY-uh-suhn) is 58. Actor Joel Murray is 57. Rock singer Maynard James Keenan is 55. Actress Lela Rochon (LEE-lah rohn-SHAHN) is 55. Actor William Mapother is 54. Actress Leslie Bega is 52. Actor Henry Ian Cusick is 52. Actress Kimberly Elise is 52. Singer Liz Phair is 52. Director/producer Adam McKay is 51. Rapper-actor Redman is 49. Actress Jennifer Garner is 47. Country musician Craig Anderson is 46. Singer Victoria Adams Beckham is 45. Actress-singer Lindsay Korman is 41. Actor Tate Ellington is 40. Actor Nicholas D'Agosto is 39. Actor Charlie Hofheimer is 38. Actress Rooney Mara is 34. Actress Jacqueline MacInnes Wood is 32. Actor Paulie Litt is 24. Actress Dee Dee Davis is 23.

**Thought for Today: I think America is richer in intelligence than any other country in the world; and that its intelligence is more scattered than in any country of the world. - Will Durant, American historian (1885-1981).**

## 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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