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Connecting - September 23, 2019

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Mon, Sep 23, 2019 at 8:59 AM

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Connecting

September 23, 2019

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Colleagues,

Good Monday morning on this the 23rd day of September 2013,

Connecting's Monday Profile focuses on our colleague **Karen Ball**.

Karen was the AP's lead reporter covering Bill Clinton in the 1992 presidential campaign after earlier assignments as statehouse correspondent in Jefferson City, Missouri, and

newswoman in Kansas City. She and her husband **David Von Drehle**, a columnist for The Washington Post, and their children make their home in Kansas City.

I had the pleasure of working with her as Kansas City chief of bureau, from the time of her two internships in Jefferson City and Topeka, her news work in Kansas City and her service as our Jefferson City Correspondent - and treasure our friendship today.

Here's to a great week ahead. And if you'd like to be profiled in our Monday edition, please drop me a note.

Paul

Connecting profile

Karen Ball



Karen Ball - Before tweets, the internet and 24-hour cable, when cell phones were the size of a shoe, I was one of the lucky "girls on the bus." Not just any girl but the AP's lead reporter on Bill Clinton in 1992. I don't say that in a big-headed way, but it was a tremendous and sometimes terrifying responsibility. I had the time of my life.

"Hey, Karen, what's the lead?" other reporters would call out, a respectful nod to the mighty Walter Mears, AP's longtime top political writer.

For this old-timer, I feel blessed to have covered a campaign before social media. We had so much access and the candidates needed the press to get their message out - they couldn't just tap out their thoughts or an announcement on a cell phone.

I was born in Kansas City and always dreamed of a big-city newspaper job. Serendipity had its own timeline. The Missouri j-school was just two hours away and student loans made it affordable. As a senior at Mizzou, I picked the legislative beat, calculating it was the fastest route to the most bylines. Then Jefferson City AP correspondent Jim Willis liked my work and gave me a relief job. That led to a relief job in Topeka, where I got to learn from the legendary Lew Ferguson.

I transferred to the AP's Kansas City bureau for a year, and what a year it was for a lifelong baseball fan. I jumped at the chance to help cover the AL playoffs and the World Series. While I was shagging quotes in the locker room, most of the players-including the great George Brett-were dignified and kept their clothes on. But Bret Saberhagen and Buddy Biancalana pranced around in the nude. I think there was only one other woman in the locker room with me that day. Fortunately, I assume that's a different scene now.

I returned to Jeff City when the No. 2 job opened, and when Willis unexpectedly left the industry, Kansas City COB Paul Stevens entrusted me to run the statehouse bureau at age 26. It was a fantastic job. "The governor needs to see you," an aide might whisper in my ear during the legislative session. The post also gave me freedom to cover murders, manhunts and the oddball feature in outstate Missouri. Every August, someone drew the short straw to go find a story at the State Fair in Sedalia. How fun when the St. Louis Post-Dispatch gave me a front-page byline for my story on belly dancers performing at the GOP fairgrounds tent!

By now I had my heart set on Washington. With strong backing from Stevens, I got an interview with the late Jon Wolman, then Washington bureau chief. After talking politics for an hour, he offered me a job on the national desk.

Wolman liked to groom political reporters by putting them on the Labor beat. So I found myself studying union intrigue, covering national strikes and trying to decipher federal jobs' statistics. Thank heavens my desk mate was the AP's gifted economics writer Marty Crutsinger, with Dave Skidmore just across the aisle. We called it the "poets' corner," since we dealt with dry numbers and charts. It always floored me when an unemployment report was so newsworthy that my name was atop the economic roundup to lead the national digest.

Meanwhile, I jumped at every chance to take a White House pool, following the elder President Bush to Camp David, to the theater, or fishing on the Potomac. Some people found protective duty a bore, but to me, motorcades were thrilling.



Karen and others reporting colleagues on campaign trail in 1992

In early 1992, before Clinton secured the nomination, I also followed Bob Kerrey, Paul Tsongas and Jerry Brown in the early voting states. Brown, then a bachelor and former California governor, was the only candidate who was ever remotely flirtatious. "So, have you been on any dates since I saw you last?" he asked once. Covering Clinton was a sprint and marathon all at once. If he was awake, I was awake. That meant some days went from 5 a.m. until 2 a.m. the next day. Fueled by caffeine and adrenaline, I was with him wall-to-wall as he crisscrossed the nation, often hitting multiple states in a day.

Because I was always in the pool of reporters with Clinton, my newspaper colleagues let me be one to follow Clinton along rope lines, my trusty Sony tape recorder in hand as he chatted with supporters. I caught every word and typed up pool reports if anything interesting was said. Those were frantic days, filing both for the AM and PM cycle, until midsummer when Steve Komarow rode to the rescue. He was senior to me and could have bigfooted me off the AM cycle, but he was far too classy for that. Sadly, Komarow passed away a year ago.

Occasionally on a long flight, a Clinton aide would pull the Washington Post's David Maraniss and me to the front cabin to join the candidate for a game of hearts. These were off-the-record events, but I always hoped Clinton might say something telling. No such luck. He took his card games deadly seriously, so there wasn't a lot of chit-chat. Clinton was usually of good humor but you could see disappointment cross his face if another player missed a move that could have helped to destroy whoever was winning at the moment.

Pool duty wasn't always fun. It meant long hours cramped in a van behind the governor's mansion in Little Rock, or sitting outside a private ballroom fundraiser. There were pay-offs - Clinton stayed at the Hotel del Coronado whenever he was in San Diego, so we did, too. Have you tried the St. Regis in New York? That is one swell hotel!



Filing from the campaign trail, 1992.

I had the 3 a.m. bulletin out of Little Rock when Clinton asked Al Gore to be his running mate. That was the biggest scoop of my AP career. But just as fun and gratifying was covering the daily rallies, especially as the crowds grew. Some of you will remember that back then, reporters were mostly viewed with respect. Clinton usually ran late. So by the time he arrived there had to be a path created through the crowd for the traveling press to get to the risers. It was both discomfiting and heady to feel the gaze of thousands of curious eyes on us as we hustled by laden with laptops slung over our shoulders, our beepers and press tags dangling around our necks.

I spent a couple of days on President Bush's campaign to see how that side worked. My two big memories: Mary Matalin saw me kneeling in a hotel lobby tapping on my keyboard and said, "Gawd, your job is worse than mine." And the ride in the chase helicopter behind Marine One. The back doors were open and it was raining. I got as close to that open door as I could, sitting next to the big guys with guns to watch the landscape passing below. I remember the mist spraying my face and thinking I had the best job in the world.

After Clinton won, I was desperate for the White House beat. But Wolman wanted me on the Hill, so I spent a year learning from the best of the best - Komarow, Merrill Hartson and others. I think the relatively normal hours also gave me a chance to nurture a budding romance. I had fallen for a Washington Post reporter's writing long before I met him when he turned up on the Clinton plane before Super Tuesday. David Von Drehle asked me out at an inauguration party in 1993, and we've been together ever since.

With a lot of trepidation and only after consulting journalistic icons like Ben Bradlee, I left the AP in January 1994 because the New York Daily News offered me a huge pay bump to cover the White House. They sweetened the offer by telling me I'd be on Air Force One to Russia right away. I was worried about the screaming tabloid headlines, but Bradlee was unfazed. "They gotta sell papers!"

Traveling the world with a President was a priceless adventure. I had a front row seat on scenes like Clinton's peacemaking trip to Northern Ireland, his walk along Omaha Beach on the 50th anniversary of D-Day, and the funeral of assassinated Israeli leader Yitzhak Rabin, to name just a few big moments.

But after three years, I grew weary of the tabloid wars and all the travel. I wanted a family. I left the Daily News and had a pretty good freelance operation launched when my son arrived. Von Drehle and I decided we could afford for me to stay home. Three daughters soon followed.



Karen and David in 2003 when their children were between 5 years and 5 months.

We left D.C. 12 years ago to get closer to family. Fortunately, The Washington Post likes having a columnist out here in the "real world." In my spare time. I've done some freelancing and ghostwriting on a few book projects. But mostly, I've used my AP skills- never afraid to bat out a letter or ask a tough question! - in raising money for public schools and city parks. I haven't counted, but Von Drehle says I've raised well over \$1 million. I also volunteer for my local high school's journalism program, critiquing stories and offering feedback to students.

Keep writing, I tell them. No matter how the business changes, the world will always want solid information and yearn for a good narrative tale.

Karen Ball's email is - kjanball@aol.com

Remembering Cokie Roberts and Jean Carnahan - bonded by family tragedies

Scott Charton (Email) - In the aftermath of the Oct. 16, 2000, plane crashed that killed Missouri Gov. Mel Carnahan, his pilot son Randy and aide Chris Sifford, state politics was turned upside down with no playbook. Carnahan, a Democrat, was in the closing days of a competitive challenge to freshman GOP Sen. John Ashcroft. It was too late to change the ballots, which had been mailed out weeks earlier. But Ashcroft still effectively had a living election opponent as well as a deceased one. Replacement Gov. Roger Wilson declared that if voters posthumously elected Mel Carnahan, he would appoint the widowed First Lady Jean Carnahan to fill the Senate vacancy. Mrs. Carnahan emerged from private mourning to say she would accept Wilson's offer. She did one interview before the election but not with Missouri media. She chose a sit-down with ABC's Cokie Roberts, who died last week.



Cokie Roberts

In a tribute to Cokie Roberts, Mrs. Carnahan diverted from her personal blog's usual topics - good food and home cooking - to explain her special bond with the acclaimed journalist:

"In 2000, following the plane crash, when requests for interviews poured in from around the country, I did only one. It was with ABC's Cokie Roberts. It made sense to me. Her father, Louisiana congressman

Hale Boggs, died when his plane disappeared in Alaska on October 16, 1972. Ironically, it was the same month and day on which our plane went down and a similar aircraft.

"I recall the day Cokie showed up at the farm with a film crew on the Friday before the election. At my request, we did the interview outdoors on the deck. I felt that the brisk autumn air would help fortify me as I laid bare my feelings. I think Cokie would have preferred the indoors, but she gamely went along. (I cover the interview on page 29 of my book *Don't Let the Fire Go Out.*)

"Lindy Boggs took her husband's place in the Congress and remained there for 17 years. Cokie recalled, 'It was the best thing that happened to my mother, because it was an outlet for her grief. It gave her an opportunity to do something positive.' Serving in the U.S. Senate in my husband's place, I would come to understand the sentiments that Cokie was sharing with me.

"Following our visit, Cokie sent me a copy of her mother's book Washington through a Purple Veil. I would later meet the vivacious Lindy Boggs, who, at age 85, had just finished a three-year tour as ambassador to the Vatican for President Clinton.

"Over the years our paths would occasionally cross, always with warm memories of our shared experiences. Cokie wrote a blurb for my book, The Tide Always Comes Back, where she speaks of making lemonade out of life. It was a venture that both she and her mother undertook with great gusto."

Click [here](#) for Jean Carnahan blog

Connecting mailbox

Life of John Milne to be celebrated October 26

Adolphe Bernotas ([Email](#)) - The life of John Milne, whose 40 years in journalism included service as manager of UPI's Concord bureau, will be celebrated on Saturday, October 26th, 2 p.m. - 6 p.m. at Mechanics Hall, [519 Congress St., Portland, Maine](#).

Lisa Milne says all are welcome to come and asks that RSVPs be sent to her (lbmilne1@gmail.com) for a ballpark figure for the caterer.

-0-

Honor system in the Oregon countryside



Andrew Selsky (Email) - I took this photo while returning home from an interview I did in the countryside of Oregon. I saw a sign for a covered bridge near the town of Silverton that was a short detour off my route. Right near the bridge I found the fruit stand.

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Well done, Dan Elliott

Peter Prengaman (Email) - U.S. West News Director, Phoenix - I am sharing the bittersweet news that today (last Friday) was Dan Elliott's last day in the Denver bureau after 20 years with the AP, following an even longer career at the Rocky Mountain News.

As AP staff and competing reporters saw time and again, Dan frequently broke news while also reporting thoughtful, in-depth stories that nobody could match on his environmental and military beats. Even as he was preparing for retirement, Dan was still swinging for the fences. In the last couple months, on top of many spot stories, he produced an eye-opening look at former weapons plants being turned into wildlife refuges and an examination of how farmers are using new technology in

the face of climate change that has led to water shortages in the half-dozen states that depend on the Colorado River.

But Dan will likely be remembered most by his Denver colleagues and in the West as an essential team player. Even today, when he could have just been taking a victory lap, Dan was working with colleagues to share contacts on his beats and talk about stories, sharing one more time the way he has each day the last two decades.

About a month ago, I visited the Denver bureau and had the opportunity to meet Dan in person. Chatting with him and watching him work with others, it was clear that he intuitively knows when to step in and what's needed in just about any situation, whether it's jumping in on breaking news, giving a story big-picture writing polish or helping younger reporters build sources.

His experience, calm demeanor and sense of humor, even in times of chaos, made him a go-to reporter for just about anything. Losing him will leave a big hole in Denver, but the AP is better for all Dan has contributed.

Please join me in thanking Dan and wishing him the best in his well-deserved retirement. And to stay in touch, here is Dan's personal email:
peak14259@gmail.com

Best of the Week:

AP offers compelling takes on two oft-reported crises: Migrant rescues and opioid trafficking



Mouctar Diallo, from Guinea, looks at himself in the mirror as he gets his hair shaved aboard the Ocean Viking humanitarian rescue ship, in the Mediterranean Sea, Sept. 13, 2019. Diallo was rescued at sea five days earlier on his birthday, in his fifth attempt to reach Europe from Libya. His previous four tries had been foiled by gangs who returned him to Libya where he was detained and beaten. Of his fifth attempt, "We said 'Even if the water is not good, today we will go to Europe, or we die'". (AP PHOTO / RENATA BRITO)

They are crises that have received significant attention and while playing out in different parts of the world, but the efforts of a trio of AP journalists have shed new light on both the perilous journey of migrants in the Mediterranean and the opioid epidemic in America.

The work of the journalists, Renata Brito aboard the Ocean Viking humanitarian ship sailing in the Mediterranean Sea, and Lindsay Whitehurst and Claire Galofaro in the U.S., tells the respective stories with such captivating clarity that they earned a rare tie in the Best of the Week contest. Each story demonstrated the profound storytelling power the AP can bring to complex stories with ingenuity, smart planning and teamwork.

Barcelona-based Brito wins for a story that she's still living, and telling, from the Ocean Viking. Embedded with a ship that last week rescued 50 migrants fleeing violence in Africa, Brito continues filing photos, video and text that have resonated with audiences. Her dispatch, "Migrant escaping Libya torture: We will go to Europe or die," showed in stark terms the journey that for many has ended in death. She focused on Mouctar Diallo, a Guinean man who's been stabbed, shot and endured other violence trying to make it to Europe - and who was rescued by the Ocean Viking on his 28th birthday.

Brito, who is staying in a cabin and sending her dispatches amid occasionally rough seas and slow Wi-Fi, has scored other personal stories, including the successful evacuation of a pregnant woman and Italy's decision to take 41 migrants rescued by the humanitarian vessel. The voyage benefited from good timing: When Italy's government collapsed, Brito and editors in Europe realized that embedding on the Ocean Viking would likely mean it would be the first humanitarian ship to try to dock in Italy under the new government. The stories have provided a human side to the story that often goes missing in coverage that relies on handouts and information from authorities, and conveyed the suffering that migrants endure at the hands of traffickers in Libya.

Filing under difficult conditions has meant photo and text colleagues in Rome have been receiving her dispatches, often late at night, and getting them to customers. Athens newsperson Derek Gatopoulos created social media promos and a hub for her work, while Brito's video has been fed to London.

A video profile of migrants on the ship got nearly 800 broadcast hits, including from top European outlets like Spain's TVE, Italy's RAI, France 24 and Euronews. Her photos have been showcased by numerous Italian newspapers, including La Repubblica, Corriere Della Sera, La Stampa and Il Messaggero.

Galofaro and Whitehurst, meanwhile, share the week's honors with a very different but no-less-gripping tale: "The rise and fall of an Eagle Scout's deadly fentanyl empire," about a millennial who built a mail-order empire of fentanyl-laced pills that made him a millionaire.

Prosecutors linked several deaths to Aaron Shamo's operation, which sold counterfeit oxycodone pills. In just one day of cooperation from one of Shamo's collaborators, authorities intercepted packages with nearly 35,000 fentanyl pills destined for homes in 26 states. That was in 2016, and as the story noted, the fentanyl trade has only grown larger, with drug cartels entering the market while smaller operations like Shamo's continue to set up shop.

Their story was the result of close teamwork on a story that Whitehurst first pitched in 2017. Galofaro brought her knowledge of the overall opioid crisis and its global impact to the story, sitting in on the start of Shamo's trial. From there, Whitehurst followed the trial and worked sources, including Shamo's father, to provide details like Shamo's Eagle Scout rank. Whitehurst juggled the demands of daily trial coverage and developed strong relationships with both prosecutors and the defense team. Photographer Rick Bowmer spent hours outside the courtroom catching key players headed into the trial, and shot portraits of the parents of one man who is believed to have overdosed on pills purchased from Shamo's site.

As Whitehurst noted, the collaboration with Galofaro was key: "Claire's deep expertise on the opioid crisis, background as a federal court reporter and immense writing talent, combined with my years of sourcing and coverage of this case, came together to create something really compelling." The story was among the AP's most-read over the weekend,

engaging readers with its mix of courtroom reporting, human consequences and broad perspective on the opioid crisis that is rapidly expanding beyond the U.S.

For telling stories that brought new insight and perspective to heavily covered stories that have significant global impact, Brito, Galofaro and Whitehurst win AP's Best of the Week honors.

Best of the States

Going to extremes to tell the story of sexual violence and shortcomings of enforcement



Deidre Levi sits at the table of her grandmother's home in the Native Village of St. Michael, Alaska, Feb. 16, 2019. Frustrated with the police response when she reported a sexual assault, Levi took her story to social media. Survivors and advocates contend that Nome police pay less attention and investigate less aggressively when sexual assaults are reported by Alaska Native women. (AP PHOTO / WONG MAYE-E)

In western Alaska, rape survivors and their supporters say Nome's police department has often failed to investigate sexual assaults, especially when the victims are Alaska Native women. AP freelance correspondent Victoria McKenzie verified these claims with shoe leather source reporting and by obtaining key law enforcement and hospital records. Nome police data show that from 2008 through 2017 just 8% of calls about sexual assaults against adults resulted in an arrest.

Through powerful photos and text, Mckenzie and enterprise photographer Maye-E Wong told a story that hasn't gotten much attention amid the celebrity-driven sex scandals of the #MeToo era - how average Americans in small communities are struggling with issues of sexual violence and law enforcement. The story made clear that Nome's struggles don't represent an isolated case; it is a microcosm of how police and towns and cities across the U.S. have failed survivors of sexual assaults.

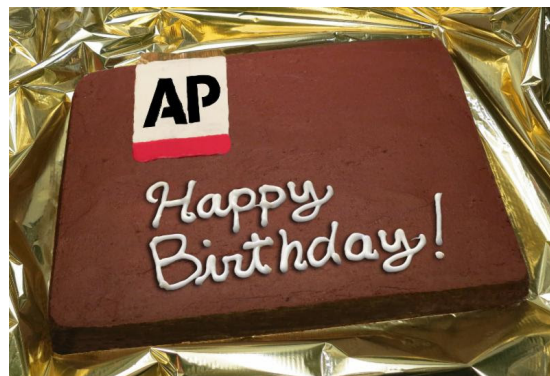
This was an immensely challenging story to report and photograph. The only way to get to Nome - and get from Nome to surrounding villages - was by costly flights. Key sources for the story were people who had suffered profound trauma, not only because of actual assaults but also because, they said, of official indifference. Getting them to talk, and to allow themselves to be photographed, required extensive reporting, networking and emotional intelligence.

Mckenzie moved to Nome for three months, renting a room in a mobile home during a time when temperatures there were as low as minus-29 degrees. In all, Mckenzie interviewed more than 150 people, including sexual assault survivors and their family and friends, police, politicians, bureaucrats, Native Alaska leaders, cultural and law enforcement experts and others. Wong, who ultimately joined Mckenzie in the same accommodations, grappled with many of the same challenges that Mckenzie faced, portraying with sensitivity a victim of assault while vividly capturing the flavor and harsh conditions of western Alaska in February.

The story received more than 350 online pickups from customers, nearly 15,000 Facebook engagements and more than 60,000 views on AP mobile and APnews.com.

For going to extremes - literally and figuratively - to shed light on a remote corner of the national and global issue of sexual violence and enforcement, Wong and Mckenzie share this week's Best of the States award.

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



to

Joni Beall - jbeall@ap.org

Trenton Daniel - tdaniel@ap.org

Kristin Gazlay - kgazlay@gmail.com

Tom Leone - tleone@ap.org

Jon Rust - jrust@semissourian.com

Welcome to Connecting



Matt Volz - mvolz@ap.org

Story of interest

Wyoming is ground zero for media mistrust. These journalists went there hoping to make it better. (Washington Post)

By Margaret Sullivan

Media columnist

Rod Hicks has spent 30 years as a journalist in seven newsrooms across the country. He's been a reporter at the Anniston Star in Alabama, an editor for the Associated Press in Philadelphia and has worked in Detroit, St. Louis and Birmingham, Ala.

But before this year, he had never set foot in Wyoming - where residents give the rock-bottom ranking to the news media for trustworthiness, according to a 2017 Gallup poll: Only 25 percent of Wyoming citizens have a great deal or a fair amount of trust in news sources. (The runners up are all red states, too: Nebraska, Utah, North Dakota and Idaho.)

Enter the Casper Project, a journey by the Society of Professional Journalists organization into the heart of media mistrust. For about six months, media people and 36 Casper-area citizen volunteers met on several occasions to try for some mutual understanding.

Read more [here](#).

Today in History - September 23, 2019



By The Associated Press

Today is Monday, Sept. 23, the 266th day of 2019. There are 99 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Sept. 23, 1806, the Lewis and Clark expedition returned to St. Louis more than two years after setting out for the Pacific Northwest.

On this date:

In 63 B.C., Caesar Augustus, the first Roman emperor, was born.

In 1780, British spy John Andre was captured along with papers revealing Benedict Arnold's plot to surrender West Point to the British.

In 1846, Neptune was identified as a planet by German astronomer Johann Gottfried Galle (GAH'-luh).

In 1926, Gene Tunney scored a ten-round decision over Jack Dempsey to win the world heavyweight boxing title in Philadelphia.

In 1949, President Harry S. Truman announced there was evidence the Soviet Union had recently conducted a nuclear test explosion. (The test had been carried out on Aug. 29, 1949.)

In 1952, Sen. Richard M. Nixon, R-Calif., salvaged his vice-presidential nomination by appearing on television from Los Angeles to refute allegations of improper campaign fundraising in what became known as the "Checkers" speech.

In 1955, a jury in Sumner, Mississippi, acquitted two white men, Roy Bryant and J.W. Milam, of murdering black teenager Emmett Till. (The two men later admitted to the crime in an interview with Look magazine.)

In 1957, nine black students who'd entered Little Rock Central High School in Arkansas were forced to withdraw because of a white mob outside.

In 1987, Sen. Joseph Biden, D-Del., withdrew from the Democratic presidential race following questions about his use of borrowed quotations and the portrayal of his academic record.

In 2001, President George W. Bush returned the American flag to full staff at Camp David, symbolically ending a period of national mourning following the 9/11 attacks.

In 2002, Gov. Gray Davis signed a law making California the first state to offer workers paid family leave.

In 2005, Hurricane Rita, down to Category 3, steamed toward refinery towns along the Texas-Louisiana coast, creating havoc even before it arrived; levee breaks caused new flooding in New Orleans, and 23 people were killed when a bus carrying nursing-home evacuees caught fire in Texas.

Ten years ago: President Barack Obama addressed the U.N. General Assembly, where he challenged world leaders to shoulder more of the globe's critical burdens, warning they could no longer castigate the U.S. as a go-it-alone bully while still demanding it cure all ills.

Five years ago: In the first international test for his climate-change strategy, President Barack Obama pressed world leaders at the United Nations to follow the United States' lead on the issue. The U.S. struck the al-Qaida-linked Khorasan group with Tomahawk missiles and other ordnance near Aleppo in northwestern Syria based on fears it was planning terrorist attacks on the U.S. and Europe. A man wearing his work uniform opened fire inside a UPS sorting facility in Birmingham, Alabama, a day after he was fired from the company, killing two supervisors before committing suicide.

One year ago: As negotiators reached agreement on a hearing at which Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh and the woman accusing him of sexual assault, Christine Blasey Ford, would testify, there was a second allegation of sexual misconduct by Kavanaugh; the second accuser said it took place during Kavanaugh's first year at Yale University. More than a week after Hurricane Florence slammed into the Carolinas, rivers continued to rise, with thousands of coastal residents being warned that they may need to leave their homes. Capping a comeback from four back surgeries, Tiger Woods won the Tour Championship in Atlanta, the 80th victory of his PGA Tour career and his first in more than five years.

Today's Birthdays: Singer Julio Iglesias is 76. Actor Paul Petersen (TV: "The Donna Reed Show") is 74. Actress-singer Mary Kay Place is 72. Rock star Bruce Springsteen is 70. Director/playwright George C. Wolfe is 65. Rock musician Leon Taylor (The Ventures) is 64. Actress Rosalind Chao is 62. Golfer Larry Mize is 61. Actor Jason Alexander is 60. Actor Chi McBride is 58. Country musician Don Herron (BR549) is 57. Actor Erik Todd Dellums is 55. Actress LisaRaye is 53. Singer Ani (AH'-nee) DiFranco is 49. Rock singer Sam (formerly Sarah) Bettens (K's Choice) is 47. Recording executive Jermaine Dupri is 47. Actor Kip Pardue is 43. Actor Anthony Mackie is 41. Pop singer Erik-Michael Estrada (TV: "Making the Band") is 40. Actress Aubrey Dollar is 39. Actor Brandon Victor Dixon is 38. Actor David Lim is 36. Pop singer Diana Ortiz (Dream) is 34. Actress Cush Jumbo is 34. Actor Skylar Astin is 32. Tennis player Melanie Oudin (oo-DAN') is 28.

Thought for Today: "I cannot endure to waste anything as precious as autumn sunshine by staying in the house." - Nathaniel Hawthorne, American author (1804-1864).

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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