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Connecting - December 03, 2019

1 message

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Tue, Dec 3, 2019 at 8:46 AM

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Connecting

December 03, 2019

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Colleagues,

Good Tuesday morning on this the 3rd day of December 2019,

Walter Mears' remarkable profile in Monday's Connecting sparked great responses from two of his former Washington bureau colleagues - **Chris Sullivan** and **Carl Leubsdorf** - and I'm guessing there are more WRM memories out there that ought to be shared.

Speaking of sharing, our 88-year-old colleague **Norm Abelson** tells you how important it is to share your own stories in an essay that leads today's issue. Ye Olde Connecting Editor thanks him for his thoughts - and hopes you will heed his call.

Finally, congratulations to our colleague **Andale Gross** ([Email](#)) on being named the new editor of an AP team that covers race and ethnicity in America. Gross and the AP's Race and Ethnicity team will be heavily engaged in coverage of the 2020 U.S. presidential campaign, while also working with AP bureaus in Washington, D.C., across the country and around the world to deliver standout coverage of breaking news and enterprise on the topics of race and changing demographics.

Have a great day!

Paul

How important is Connecting?

Norm Abelson ([Email](#)) - How important is Connecting?

If it is important to keep memory alive, to tell and re-tell true history from the people who reported it, while faux news washes over truth, and to help keep press freedom at the forefront - then Connecting is damned important.

In a time of so much negativity and despair, it is also important to tell the light and amusing stories, to remember our sisters and brothers who have passed on, to celebrate their honors and get-togethers, to see the photos they took - and continue to take - heroically in times of destruction and war.

The marvelous AP Archive in New York (in which I am proud to have a tiny trove of my "stuff" quartered) is like a historic library of The Associated Press, much in the mode of a presidential collection.

I like to think of Connecting as a living archive. And Paul Stevens is our chief archivist. What a grand report he turns out each weekday. Some of the contributions bring smiles - others, tears. How much I learn from it. How much it makes me feel proud to be a member of a great (and important) family of folks who, collectively, reflect a profession that, at its best, helps defend and protect this democracy.

Harry Truman once said, "There is nothing new in the world except the history you do not know."

Connecting tells the history its contributors do know, have lived and shared. And if that ain't important then I do not know what is.

Some memories of Walter Mears from the Washington days

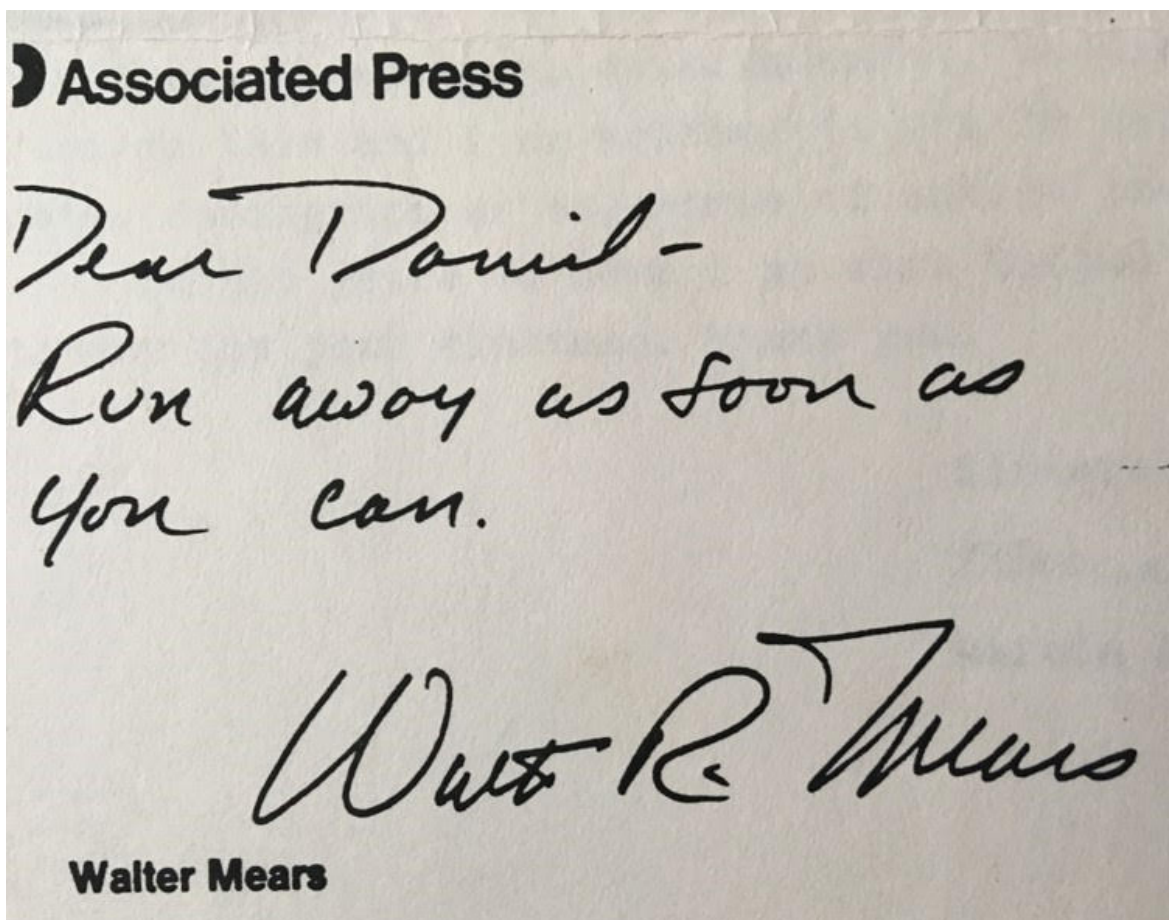
Chris Sullivan ([Email](#)) - The interesting Q&A with Walter Mears on Monday prompted me to pull out a file of quirky bits of writing that, for some reason, I've collected over the years.

On the old General Desk, someone used to bind up and circulate various memos, directives, inter-bureau commentary, quibbles from member editors, etc., that we were encouraged to peruse when we had a moment, presumably to let us glean bits of AP thinking from here and there.

One day, this cache included a typed form letter that had been written by a woman in Florida, beginning, "My son, Daniel, has just been born," and noting that she and her husband had amassed newspapers, magazines and books published at the time of his birth, to present to him at the right time. As further encouragement for Daniel's future greatness, she said, "We also wish to collect for him the autographs of a selected group of the world's leaders in government, science, the arts, literature, entertainment, business and sports. Towards this end I am writing to you to request ... any words of advice you might have for him."

It wasn't clear how many had been asked to swell the bulging mailbag that Daniel would one day confront. But penciled in at the top of the photocopied form letter was, "Dear Mr. Mears."

I copied the response (which I'm guessing was not really sent but just intended to bring a smile to the drudges stuck reading the cache of memos). Here it is:



And...

Carl P. Leubsdorf ([Email](#)) - Reading the interview with Walter Mears was sort of bittersweet. It reminded me of our days together at the AP more than four decades ago, but I know it must bother Walter to be unable to hit the links regularly. Aside from marveling at his speed on the typewriter and the flawless prose he managed to produce with great alacrity, I'm reminded of two ways in which Walter helped me, one inadvertently, the other deliberately. When we covered the Senate together, along with four others, Walter used to take Thursday off so he could play golf. That left a void in doing some of the routine work such as making committee assignments, and I was only too happy to volunteer myself to fill it, something that I'm sure helped when I was named as Walter's successor when he became assistant chief of bureau. Later, when he returned to The AP after a brief stint at The Detroit News, he made clear that we would resume working together as we had before his departure, something that meant a lot to me. My subsequent departure for The Baltimore Sun (and then The Dallas Morning News) had a lot more with my desire to become a columnist than unhappiness at the AP, and Walter understood that. Besides, there was no way I could do what he did so well; for one thing, I never learned to type well enough.

Getty Images Undertakes Image Repair

Jim Hood ([Email](#)) - Monday's (Dec. 2) Connecting brought the welcome news (via a Seattle Times excerpt) that some of the air is beginning to leak out of Getty Images' balloon.

Though it likes to portray itself as an enterprise dedicated to preserving great photography, many of us in the small-time publishing business see Getty as something a bit more mercenary. It has, after all, been owned by a private equity firm until recently. Now, new management is on board and is pledging to take a somewhat gentler approach.

My first encounter with Getty came a few decades ago, when I was running ConsumerAffairs.com out of my basement. Beset with lawsuits from aggrieved businesses and lacking any real source of income, we nevertheless coughed up a hefty monthly fee to subscribe to one of Getty's stock photo libraries.

It was therefore surprising when we received a sternly worded demand for \$35,000 from Getty, which alleged that we had used a photo from one of Getty's other libraries -- you know, the one we didn't know existed and hadn't subscribed to. I turned to my lawyer-spouse for help and she drafted an equally stern response. We eventually settled for \$3,500, more than ConsumerAffairs' annual revenue that year. (People have asked how many lawyers I interviewed before proposing to my wife but that is a question that counsel has recommended I not answer).

Bitter lesson learned, I was very careful thereafter with stock images. I invested in a few Nikons and built up a collection of "staff" shots. Needless to say, I dropped my Getty subscription and switched to Adobe, iStock and other established services.

No protection plan is perfect, though. On one occasion, I used a Google Earth shot of a large hole in the ground to illustrate a story about some environmental outrage. A few days later, in comes a demand letter from a photographer claiming it was his photo and expressing indignation that I would take bread from his table. My response to him was a suggestion that he read the photo caption, which clearly credited the source and noted Google's copyright.

A bit of time passed and I unloaded ConsumerAffairs and turned my attention to FairfaxNews, a local news site that had been long starved for attention under my careless tutelage. It wasn't long before allegedly aggrieved lensmen launched a fusillade of demands.

The most annoying concerned a photo -- more of a snapshot really -- of a bank of farecard machines at a Metro stop. I had downloaded it from the Metro site and cropped it rather drastically (Fair Use and all that). Nevertheless, a supposed law firm which claimed to represent the photographer demanded \$3,500. Why "35" seems to figure in all these demands is a mystery to me but perhaps it is some kind of f-stop setting.

By this time, my wife had resigned as my in-house counsel but I was able to enlist my son, the family's youngest attorney, to joust with the intruders. His first discovery was that the "law firm" that sent the demand letter was not, in fact, a law firm. It was just a couple of guys with an internet connection claiming to represent struggling professional photographers.

He confirmed that the photo had been produced with taxpayer dollars and that it was public domain. Nevertheless, the bogus law firm continued sending canned emails threatening legal mayhem. We then made an interesting discovery about the identity of the photographer and his employer (hint: a public transit agency).

Taking our cue from the years-earlier go-round with Getty, we agreed to pay not \$3,500 but \$35 in exchange for a full release. The phony lawyers didn't know what a full release was but we sent them the money anyway and told them if we ever saw them again, they would regret it.

This is not all fun and games, though. There are a lot of small local news sites out there and many of them are being regularly shaken down by questionable photographers, according to a couple of newsletters I keep track of.

There may not be much sympathy for local news sites among Connecting readers but many of them are the last line of defense in their news-starved communities (Yes, the Washington Post covers Fairfax but understandably skips a lot of small stories). Photographers certainly deserve to be paid for their work but the phenomenon of scam artists trying to collect for the work of others is potentially the last straw for many small publishers. It was for me.

I decided to shutter FairfaxNews a few months ago not just because of phony demands for payment but also, frankly, because local news just isn't what it used to be. My site reported a lot of cops-and-robbers stuff, which readers crave and respond to but which big-J journalists look down on these days, preferring instead to do "community" news, much of which seems to me to be mostly about recruiting advertisers.

One of my competitors ran a story one day headlined: "Vienna Man Opens Nail Salon on Maple Avenue," a terminally congested street already awash in nail salons. "That's it," I said. "If that's news, I'm in the wrong business."

My next venture, ContinentDivided.com, concerns a cross-country tour by two acclaimed news photographers seeking to get a snapshot of America in the days leading up to the 2020 election. All photos will be staffed -- and don't you dare steal any of them or you'll hear from our attorneys.

Andale Gross named head of Race and Ethnicity team



NEW YORK (AP) - The Associated Press has named Andale Gross as the new editor of a team that covers race and ethnicity in America.

Gross and the AP's Race and Ethnicity team will be heavily engaged in coverage of the 2020 U.S. presidential campaign, while also working with AP bureaus in Washington, D.C., across the country and around the world to deliver standout coverage of breaking news and enterprise on the topics of race and changing demographics.

"Andale brings a wealth of experience, leadership and expertise on a beat that is one of the AP's top journalistic priorities, especially in an election year. We are excited to have him take on this new position to execute our vision for distinctive coverage of race in America," said Noreen Gillespie, deputy managing editor for U.S. News.

Gross has worked at the AP since 2006, as a reporter in Kansas City and an editor based in Chicago for the last 10 years. He's also been a vital contributor to the Race and Ethnicity team and was dispatched to Ferguson, Missouri, in 2014 to cover the unrest after a grand jury decided not to indict a white police officer in the shooting death of unarmed black teenager Michael Brown.

Gross is an active member of the National Association of Black Journalists and has a bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Missouri.

The team includes journalists based across the United States. The AP will also be hiring another reporter to add to the team, and will add a six-month intern focused on the subject in 2020.

Click [here](#) for a link to this story.

AP 'Logo' Sightings



From the top of a London bus spotted this AP food on Westminster Bridge Road south of the River Thames Sunday night. **(Spotted and shared by Robert Meyers)**



(Spotted and shared by Claude Erbsen)

Best of the Week

As women take to the streets, an in-depth look at domestic violence in France



Photo/KAMIL ZIHNIOLU

AP drew international attention to France's unusually high rate of women killed by their partners, by winning the trust of domestic violence victims and following activists by night as they plastered Paris with signs crying for help

Kamil Zihnioglu has seen lots of protests while working as a photo stringer for The Associated Press in Paris, but these campaigns were different, focused on a dark, unreconstructed side of an otherwise progressive France.

Every time a woman is killed by her partner, hundreds of domestic violence victims and other activists take to the streets under cover of night to plaster signs decrying the deaths and pleading for government action. More than 130 women have died in this year alone, according to activists who track the deaths.

Read more [here](#).

Best of the States

AP Investigation: Catholic review boards often fail sex abuse survivors



AP Photo/Gregory Bull

The AP was the first media outlet to conclude that review boards across the country, hailed by the Catholic Church as a key reform, were routinely failing victims of sex abuse.

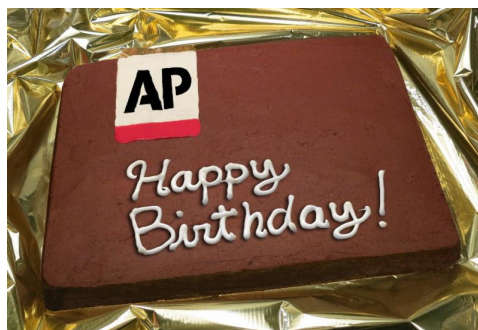
In addressing its clergy sex abuse crisis, the Catholic church has touted a key reform: independent review boards with lay people.

But an exhaustive investigation by the AP team of Reese Dunklin, Dallas; Matt Sedensky, New York; and Mitch Weiss, Charlotte, N.C., methodically discredited that claim.

They checked all the roughly 180 dioceses in the U.S. for information, reviewed thousands of pages of church and court records, and interviewed more than 75 abuse survivors, board members and others. The team found and documented how bishops held the reins of power at every stage, from picking board members, to screening the evidence they saw, to choosing whether to accept the boards' recommendations.

Read more [here](#).

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



To

Jeanny Sharp - jeanny.sharp61@gmail.com

Welcome to Connecting



Ron Lizik - rclizik@gmail.com

Stories of interest

Trump Bars Bloomberg News Journalists From Campaign Events (New York Times)

By Michael M. Grynbaum

President Trump's re-election campaign said on Monday that it would bar Bloomberg News journalists from attending its rallies and political events, an attempt to retaliate against the news organization's decision to cease investigating Democratic candidates in the wake of its billionaire owner's entry into the 2020 presidential race.

The Trump campaign broke from years of precedent in 2016 by revoking the press credentials of journalists from outlets like The Washington Post, Politico and BuzzFeed News, an early sign of the efforts to demonize the news media that have become a hallmark of the Trump presidency.

But Bloomberg News is facing a fraught situation, too. After the company's owner, Michael R. Bloomberg, decided last month to pursue the Democratic nomination, editors at the news outlet instructed their reporters to avoid "in-depth investigations" of Mr. Bloomberg or any other Democratic candidate. It was an attempt at fairness that some journalists called stifling.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Sibby Christensen.

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Publisher says he's hearing interest in nonprofit turn

By DAVID BAUDER

NEW YORK (AP) - The publisher of the nation's first daily newspaper to be granted nonprofit status says he's since heard from a "few dozen" lawyers and news executives curious about whether the Salt Lake Tribune's approach could work elsewhere.

Tribune publisher Paul Huntsman learned earlier this month that the Internal Revenue Service had approved the paper's plan to become a public charity, which lets people claim tax deductions for donations to support its journalism.

It's an intriguing new option for newspaper owners laid low by the industry's financial struggles, although there's some question about how widely the idea can spread.

"I'm surprised, quite frankly, that I'm the first one doing this," Huntsman said. "I'm not a journalist. I saw how broken the model really was. I was wondering, why isn't there anybody doing something about this, instead of waiting for someone to come in and rescue us?"

Read more [here](#). Shared by Paul Albright.

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World's 10 Most Powerful News Outlets

At the start of the decade, news organizations began transitioning into the digital age, not knowing where journalism may lead to. Throughout the 2010s, a precipitous decline in print circulation and digital advertising revenue paved the way for the closure of countless prominent news outlets.

Entering a new decade, the inconceivable transpired through our polarizing climate in politics and mass public assimilation of disinformation. Journalists are now left wondering: what will instill over the next few decades? Will the succeeding decade be the end for independent, quality journalism?

As some attributed the conversion into the digital age as the death of journalism, many will continue to advocate good journalism, even as newspapers will soon be a story of the past and artificial intelligence a jeopardization to media freedom.

Since the transition into the digital age, there's been a substantive rise in online-based news outlets and blogs. In this excerpt, we compiled a list of some of the most renowned online-based news outlets.

Here are the world's ten most powerful news outlets on the web.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Paul Shane.

The Final Word

Today in History - December 3, 2019



By The Associated Press

Today is Tuesday, Dec. 3, the 337th day of 2019. There are 28 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 3, 1979, 11 people were killed in a crush of fans at Cincinnati's Riverfront Coliseum, where the British rock group The Who was performing.

On this date:

In 1818, Illinois was admitted as the 21st state.

In 1828, Andrew Jackson was elected president of the United States by the Electoral College.

In 1960, the Lerner and Loewe musical "Camelot," starring Julie Andrews as Guenevere, Richard Burton as King Arthur and Robert Goulet as Lancelot, opened on Broadway.

In 1964, police arrested some 800 students at the University of California at Berkeley, one day after the students stormed the administration building and staged a massive sit-in.

In 1967, a surgical team in Cape Town, South Africa, led by Dr. Christiaan Barnard (BAHR'-nard) performed the first human heart transplant on Louis Washkansky, who lived 18 days with the donor organ, which came from Denise Darvall, a 25-year-old bank clerk who had died in a traffic accident.

In 1980, Bernadine Dohrn, a former leader of the radical Weather Underground, surrendered to authorities in Chicago after more than a decade as a fugitive.

In 1984, thousands of people died after a cloud of methyl isocyanate gas escaped from a pesticide plant operated by a Union Carbide subsidiary in Bhopal, India.

In 1991, radicals in Lebanon released American hostage Alann Steen, who'd been held captive nearly five years.

In 1992, the first telephone text message was sent by British engineer Neil Papworth, who transmitted the greeting "Merry Christmas" from his work computer in Newbury, Berkshire, to Vodafone executive Richard Jarvis' mobile phone. The Greek tanker Aegean Sea spilled more than 21 million gallons of crude oil when it ran aground off northwestern Spain.

In 1999, Tori Murden of the United States became the first woman to row across the Atlantic Ocean alone as she arrived at the French Caribbean island of Guadeloupe, 81 days after leaving the Canary Islands near the coast of Africa.

In 2001, in the wake of bombings that had killed 26 Israelis, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon declared a war on terror. Homeland Security Director Tom Ridge asked Americans to return to a high state of alert, citing threats of more terrorist attacks.

In 2002, thousands of personnel files released under a court order showed that the Archdiocese of Boston went to great lengths to hide priests accused of abuse, including clergy who'd allegedly snorted cocaine and had sex with girls aspiring to be nuns.

Ten years ago: President Barack Obama hosted a White House-sponsored jobs forum, where he said he'd heard many "exciting ideas" and proposals and expressed hope some could be put into action quickly. Pope Benedict XVI and visiting Russian President Dmitry Medvedev (dih-MEE'-tree med-VYEH'-djev) agreed to upgrade Vatican-Kremlin ties to full diplomatic relations. Comcast and GE announced joint venture plans, with Comcast owning a 51 percent controlling stake

in NBC Universal. British actor Richard Todd died in Little Humby, Lincolnshire, England, at age 90.

Five years ago: A Staten Island, New York, grand jury declined to indict police officer Daniel Pantaleo in the July 2014 chokehold death of Eric Garner, an unarmed black man stopped on suspicion of selling loose, untaxed cigarettes. Herman Badillo (bah-DEE'-yoh), a Bronx politician who was the first person born in Puerto Rico to become a U.S. congressman, died at age 85.

One year ago: President Donald Trump made it clear that he was closely watching those who turned on him in the Russia investigation; he tweeted that his former lawyer, who cut a deal with prosecutors, should go straight to prison, but Trump praised a key witness for having the "guts" not to testify against him. A casket containing the body of former President George H.W. Bush was flown from Texas to Washington to lie in state at the U.S. Capitol. At the U.N.'s annual climate summit in Poland, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres issued a dramatic appeal to world leaders to take global warming seriously, calling it "the most important issue we face." After a two-year chase, a NASA spacecraft arrived at the ancient asteroid Bennu, some 76 million miles from Earth; the goal is to grab gravel samples in 2020 for return to Earth in 2023.

Today's Birthdays: Movie director Jean-Luc Godard is 89. Singer Jaye P. Morgan is 88. Actor Nicolas Coster is 86. Actress Mary Alice is 78. Rock singer Ozzy Osbourne is 71. Rock singer Mickey Thomas is 70. Country musician Paul Gregg (Restless Heart) is 65. Actor Steven Culp is 64. Actress Daryl Hannah is 59. Actress Julianne Moore is 59. Olympic gold medal figure skater Katarina Witt is 54. Actor Brendan Fraser is 51. Singer Montell Jordan is 51. Actor Royale Watkins is 50. Actor Bruno Campos is 46. Actress Holly Marie Combs is 46. Actress Liza Lapira is 44. Actress Lauren Roman is 44. Pop-rock singer Daniel Bedingfield is 40. Actress/comedian Tiffany Haddish is 40. Actress Anna Chlumsky (KLUHM'-skee) is 39. Actress Jenna Dewan is 39. Actor Brian Bonsall is 38. Actress Dascha Polanco is 37. Pop/rock singer-songwriter Andy Grammer is 36. Americana musician Michael Calabrese (Lake Street Dive) is 35. Actress Amanda Seyfried is 34. Actor Michael Angarano is 32. Actor Jake T. Austin is 25.

Thought for Today: "Facing it, always facing it, that's the way to get through. Face it." [-] Joseph Conrad, Polish-born English novelist (born this date in 1857, died 1924).

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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