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Connecting - December 10, 2019

1 message

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Tue, Dec 10, 2019 at 8:54 AM

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Connecting

December 10, 2019

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U.S. Army personnel board a plane for a deployment to Afghanistan from Fort Campbell, Ky., on Nov. 6, 2014. (Washington Post photo by Matt McClain)

Colleagues,

Good Tuesday morning on this the 10th day of December 2019,

A report by The Washington Post released Monday - The Afghanistan Papers: A secret history of the war - AT WAR WITH THE TRUTH - shows that the U.S. government misled the public about failures in the Afghanistan war, often suggesting success where it did not exist. It was based on thousands of pages of documents obtained by the Post.

Few reporters know the war better than our colleague **Kathy Gannon** ([Email](#)), who shared these thoughts:

I remember being in Lashkar Gah in Helmand provincial capital during the U.S.-led ground offensive operation in Marjah in Helmand when reports of massive successes were coming out and reporting a very different story, a cautionary tale of villagers saying the Taliban were slipping into nearby villages, to return later, civilians/farmers not Taliban targeted that 80 per



cent of districts mostly under Taliban control; or following the 2001 Bonn agreement writing of the histories of many of the participants, of the corruption and violence that had characterized their previous rule between 1992-96; my book "I is for Infidel" criticized as too critical of US and coalition partners policies post 2001. I only mention to say stories and information are and have been out there but writing from a narrative from the ground and not from world capitals is often not given the same weight and importance by readers and "experts".

Gannon, AP's senior correspondent for Afghanistan and Pakistan, has covered the region for the AP as a correspondent and bureau chief since 1988, a period that spans the withdrawal of Russian soldiers from Afghanistan, the assassination of Benazir Bhutto, the bitter Afghan civil war between Islamic factions and the rise and fall of the Taliban. Gannon was the only Western journalist allowed in Kabul by the Taliban in the weeks preceding the 2001 U.S.-British offensive in Afghanistan. In 2005 Gannon authored "I is for Infidel: From Holy War, to Holy Terror, 18 Years Inside Afghanistan", an examination of the Taliban and post-Taliban period, published by Public Affairs.

In April 2014 Gannon was seriously wounded while covering preparations for Afghan national elections when an Afghan police officer opened fire on the car in which she was riding. Her colleague and close friend, AP photographer **Anja Niedringhaus**, was killed in the attack.

Click [here](#) to view the Post story by **Craig Whitlock** and click [here](#) for the AP story summarizing it.

If you were involved in AP's coverage of the Afghanistan war, I hope you will share your thoughts.

Finally, I hope you take time to read The Final Word and learn **about the 20 brutal truths that every single person needs to hear**. I found the essay compelling. And I would welcome your own thoughts on what the author has to say, and more importantly, what you believe about this business of living life.

Here's to a great Tuesday!

Paul

Remembering the Babylift crash in final days of Vietnam War



AP photographer Neal Ulevich shot this photo - Naomi Bronstein is at right.

Neal Ulevich (Email) - Jim Hood's reminiscence (in Monday's Connecting) of covering the Colorado aspect of the horrendous C5-A 'Babylift' crash in the closing days of the Vietnam War brings back memories of that terrible day. I was in the Saigon bureau when a report, little more than a rumor at first, indicated a C5-A crash, the huge aircraft full of Vietnamese orphans and other children, and many US government types as well - the flights were ostensibly for orphans, but served as quiet cover for getting as many official Americans out of country as well.

Other photographers went to the crash site. I went to the Adventist Hospital, successor to the US 3rd Field Hospital. The scene there was beyond horrific: A stream of injured and dead, many mangled, many dead babies and young.

A woman with her face utterly contorted in anguish emerged from the hospital, carrying one or two babies who survived the crash. The woman's name, I learned later, was Naomi Bronstein, a Canadian and an organizer of the flight. The photo was No. 37 on a 36-exposure roll of Tri-X - there was just enough film remaining on

the roll for this image. It was one of the many images we sent by radiophoto that day.

The hour I spent at the hospital was one of the worst of my years in the Indochina War.

I find only a single small image of this photo on the internet, possibly cropped, although memory of that long-ago moment does not make me sure of that. Ms. Bronstein, who died some years ago, spent much of the rest of her life in Latin America working with the underprivileged and poor. She is fondly remembered in Canada, sometimes referred to as Canada's Mother Teresa.

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Wendy Davis Beard ([Email](#)) - Whilst I was in high school in Wilmington, Del., one of my classmate's fathers, Dr. John Levinson, an OB GYN, was volunteering in a Saigon maternity ward.

When Saigon was about to fall, he organized the baby lift to America (and Australia). I only learned of the Australian connection recently from a retired Australian midwife who helped took after many of the orphan babies and toddlers after they arrived in Sydney!

Years later, Dr. Levinson entered a map shop in New York and asked for the most recent map of Vietnam. The shop assistant engaged the former doctor in conversation about Vietnam as she was Vietnamese and had been delivered in the very maternity ward where Levinson had worked. They developed a friendship through the post over several years and Doctor Levinson was able to help the young woman's partner in his application to study medicine in America.

For more information you can google Dr. Levinson's obituary in the NYTimes. I know he was a friend of the Kennedys in the '60s and was awarded the highest civilian honor an American citizen can achieve. His son John is credited with developing the original hedge fund. My friend Mark Levinso also works in finance. He lives in Sydney with his wife and children and has continued in his father's footsteps as an Explorer club member - his father was President of the Explorers Club in NY for several years.

My first AAA byline:

Expected a Chewing Out, but Got a Bouquet

Gene Herrick (Email) - It was a chilly, dark night aboard the Battleship USS Missouri, as she split the waters of the Sea of Japan off the North Korean East coast. As an Associated Press War Correspondent photographer, I was basically aboard to cover an amphibious attack on the city of Wonsan.



(NY6-OCT.12)--AT CHONGJIN--AP
Photographer-Correspondent Gene
Herrick (above) is aboard the
U.S. Battleship Missouri, leader
of United Nations sea assault on
Chongjin, North Korean port city
near Manchuria and Soviet Siberia
P Wirephoto)(pjm51005f1s) 1950

I had been in Tokyo to have a rotted toenail removed. Chief of Bureau Russ Brines told me to get out of bed and go on the "MO," for an attack. He said all of the other correspondents would be aboard the Mt. McKinley communications ship, but he said he wanted me aboard the fleet command ship. He said I could take pictures as well as write, so I would be an insurance policy operating on the battleship.

Suddenly, on the night of October 11, or 12, 1950, I was told that we were going to attack Chongjin, a North Korean city only 120 miles from Vladivostok, Russia. I went up on the deck, and observed while the ship shot some rounds of 16-inch shells onto the town.

I went down to my quarters and the Hermes typewriter, and whipped out some 600 words about the unusual night assault, and as directed by Brines, I handed the copy to a Navy radioman and casually asked: "How much will this cost." He replied: "Five cents per word, sir." What a quandary. New York will die at that bill.

However, I immediately sat down and whipped out a 599-worder for the next cycle.

The next evening I was viewing a movie when a messenger came and gave me a radiogram from General Manager Frank Starzel, telling various bureaus about the 8-hour, world-wide beat on the story. Wow. No chewing out: just kudos. Found out later I had a worldwide (Plus AAA) wire by-line and a

picture of me to go with the story.

Found out later that the communications ship was on "Radio Silence." The correspondents there were really ticked off.

That was my first AAA wire byline, and was I proud.

Connecting mailbox

'Our kids still remember sitting in Big Bird's nest'

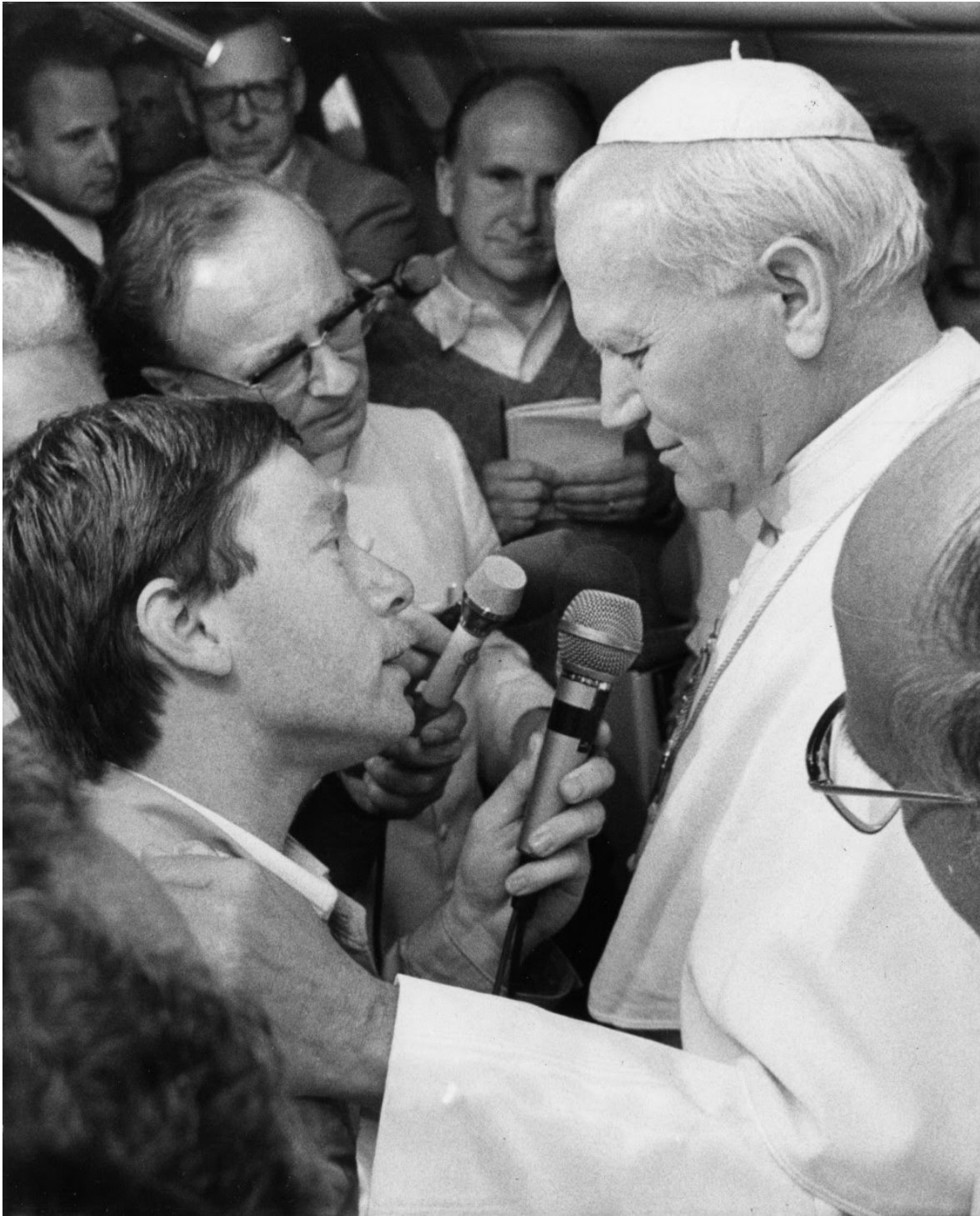


Ann Blackman ([Email](#)) - When Sesame Street turned 15, the AP sent me to New York to do an anniversary piece. Although the show did not have a studio audience, they allowed me to bring our children, Leila, who was six and Christof, three. It was the day before they were filming the death of Mr. Hooper as a way to teach children about dying, and the cast was sad, as well as nervous. Our kids still remember sitting in Big Bird's nest!

My Dad went with us and took us afterward to Windows on the World for lunch!

-0-

Papal trips were highlight of my time in London



Brad Kalbfeld (Email) - I enjoyed John Miller's photo from the 1986 papal trip to India, but, alas, that's not me holding the mic next to him. (See Monday's

Connecting.) I'd transferred to Washington by that time, and my guess is that it's the inimitable Steve Katz holding the AP mic.

Papal trips were a highlight of my time in London, both because I got to see some amazing places and events (such as more than a million people attending an open-air mass in Krakow) and to work with the fantastic reporters and photographers in Rome, John among them.

I was also lucky enough to get a papal picture that added a gloss of reverence to the circumstances. During a trip to Korea, Papua New Guinea, and Thailand in 1984, John Paul II made his customary rounds of the press cabin. I kneeled on a seat, facing the aisle, and got in a question about whether His Holiness might like to visit the Soviet Union. I got a "yes," some good sound bites, and a story. And a photo, thanks to Rome's Massimo Sambucetti, whose incredible skills are on full display.

When I got home, I showed the picture to London COB Myron Belkind, who offered to post it in the bureau alongside his cherished photo with Billy Graham in India. He said he'd caption the set "Two Jewish Boys Make Good."

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It's 73, not 73s

Ed Tobias ([Email](#)) - OK, now that I've seen it twice my ham radio antenna has begun to twitch.

It's "73," not "73s." "Seventy-three" means "best wishes." Thus, "73s" would be "best wishess."

73,

Ed, KR3E

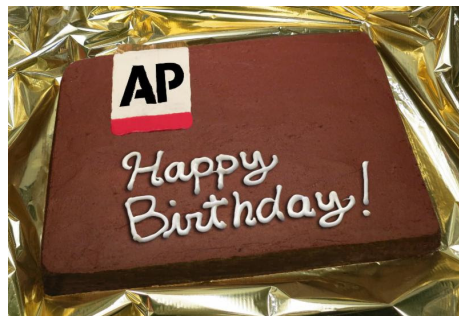
-0-

Newspapers in art



Kevin Walsh ([Email](#)) - "Still Life." Alexander Exter. 1913. Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum. Madrid, Spain.

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



To

Rachel Ambrose - rambrose@rocketmail.com

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Stories of interest

Intl journalist group: fewer media staff killed this year

By RAF CASERT and MARK CARLSON

BRUSSELS (AP) - Deaths among journalists killed in the line of duty are lower this year, but a journalism advocacy group said Monday that one reason appears to be that media workers are refraining from going to the most dangerous areas.

The International Federation of Journalists said that 49 journalists have been killed so far this year, down from 95 deaths last year. The group said that even if journalists are showing more caution, it also means the public is less informed about some of the most deadly conflicts and human rights abuses. Another reason for the lower number of deaths is decreased fighting in Iraq and Syria.

"Although we welcome the fewer losses of lives that we have recorded, we mourn the fact that these conflicts are no longer properly covered by professionals," the IFJ's head of human rights and safety Ernest Sagaga told The Associated Press.

Mexico is the most dangerous place for a journalist to work, with 10 on-the-job slayings that account for more than half of Latin America's 18 killings this year. The Asia Pacific region had 12; and Africa, nine. The figures may still slightly rise in the last weeks of the year, Sagaga said. It will likely remain the lowest year since 2000 when 37 media staff were killed.

Read more [here](#).

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Clint Eastwood's 'Richard Jewell': Atlanta Newspaper Demands Disclaimer on Depiction of Female Reporter (Variety)

By **BRENT LANG**

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution is asking Warner Bros. and the makers of "Richard Jewell" to release a statement acknowledging it took dramatic license when it portrayed journalist Kathy Scruggs as trading sex for tips.

The Clint Eastwood film looks at the media circus that broke out around Jewell, a security guard who came under suspicion for orchestrating the Centennial Olympic Park bombing before being exonerated. Scruggs, an employee at the paper, broke the story that Jewell was under investigation by the FBI. The film shows Scruggs, portrayed by Olivia Wilde, sleeping with an FBI agent (Jon Hamm) to get the story. Scruggs died in 2001 at the age of 42. The paper has maintained that there is no evidence that Scruggs slept with anyone involved in the Jewell investigation.

"We hereby demand that you immediately issue a statement publicly acknowledging that some events were imagined for dramatic purposes and artistic license and dramatization were used in the film's portrayal of events and characters," the letter, sent to Warner Bros., Eastwood, and screenwriter Billy Ray, reads. "We further demand that you add a prominent disclaimer to the film to that effect."

Read more [here](#). Shared by Dennis Conrad, Richard Chady.

-0-

A reporter blasted the runner who 'smacked my butt on live TV.' Now he's banned from future races. (Washington Post)

By KATIE METTLER

Dressed in a neon-yellow shirt with microphone in hand, Alex Bozarjian stood along the Savannah Bridge Run route Saturday morning and described the race on live TV to viewers watching from home.

Enthusiastic runners passed by, whooping and cheering in the background of her live shot for NBC affiliate WSAV-3 in Savannah, Ga. She laughed as one person, dressed in a gorilla costume, swooped into view and kept running. "Whoa," she said, smiling. "Not expecting that."

But she did not smile, and she did not laugh, at the next person who interrupted her reporting.

Just seconds later, a man wearing sunglasses and a blue long-sleeve shirt ran past Bozarjian and smacked her lower half. Shocked, her face dropped and she stuttered over her words before quickly recovering to continue reporting.

The moment, which illustrates the kind of sexual harassment TV reporters face on the job, was captured on video and posted to social media. On Saturday afternoon, after covering the race, Bozarjian shared it alongside a firm message.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Dennis Conrad.

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Column: Orange County was once a battleground for an epic newspaper war. Now, journalism is fading fast (Los Angeles Times)

By JULIA WICKSTAFF WRITER

Gabriel San Roman was driving in Anaheim when his phone pinged with a text message just after 6 p.m. two Sundays ago.

It was from his editor at the OC Weekly, where San Roman had freelanced since 2006 and been a staff writer for the last three-and-a-half years.

"Mandatory meeting 9 a.m. Monday in the fish bowl," it said, referenced a nickname for the conference room in their Fountain Valley offices.

The text had been sent to the whole staff. No one expected good news from the all-hands meeting, especially following the last round of cuts at the alt weekly in October, and the general climate in an industry wracked by existential questions about profit and survival. Still, San Roman wasn't expecting an immediate end for the outlet, which had been raising hell and breaking news in Orange County for nearly a quarter-century.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Doug Pizac.

The Final Word

20 Brutal Truths About Life No One Wants to Admit (Inc.com)

By **MATTHEW JONES**

It's much easier to talk about the weather, sports, and celebrities than your fear of mortality.

Unfortunately, the more time you spend pretending that ultimate truths don't exist, the more time you waste not being your authentic self and getting the most out of every precious second.

Time, not money, is your most valuable asset. Allow the list below to ignite the spark of motivation you need to make better use of the time you have on this planet.

Sometimes we need to head into the storm to appreciate the light and have a renewed passion for the beauty of life.

Here are 20 brutal truths that every single person needs to hear.

1. You're going to die and you have no idea when.

Stop pretending that you're invincible. Acknowledge the fact of your own mortality, and then start structuring your life in a more meaningful way.

2. Everyone you love is going to die, and you don't know when.

This truth may be saddening at first, but it also gives you permission to make amends with past difficulties and re-establish meaningful relationships with important figures in your life.

Read more [here](#).

Today in History - December 10, 2019



By The Associated Press

Today is Tuesday, Dec. 10, the 344th day of 2019. There are 21 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 10, 1994, Yasser Arafat, Shimon Peres and Yitzhak Rabin received the Nobel Peace Prize, pledging to pursue their mission of healing the anguished Middle East.

On this date:

In 1817, Mississippi was admitted as the 20th state of the Union.

In 1861, the Confederacy admitted Kentucky as it recognized a pro-Southern shadow state government that was acting without the authority of the pro-Union government in Frankfort.

In 1869, women were granted the right to vote in the Wyoming Territory.

In 1905, the O. Henry short story "The Gift of the Magi" was published in the New York Sunday World Magazine under the title "Gifts of the Magi."

In 1948, the U.N. General Assembly adopted its Universal Declaration on Human Rights.

In 1964, Martin Luther King Jr. received his Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo, saying he accepted it "with an abiding faith in America and an audacious faith in the future of mankind."

In 1967, singer Otis Redding, 26, and six others were killed when their plane crashed into Wisconsin's Lake Monona; trumpeter Ben Cauley, a member of the group the Bar-Kays, was the only survivor.

In 1987, President Ronald Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail S. Gorbachev concluded three days of summit talks in Washington. Violinist Jascha Heifetz died in Los Angeles at age 86.

In 1995, the first group of U-S Marines arrived in the Bosnian capital of Sarajevo to join NATO soldiers sent to enforce peace in former Yugoslavia.

In 1996, South African President Nelson Mandela signed the country's new constitution into law during a ceremony in Sharpeville.

In 2007, suspended NFL star Michael Vick was sentenced by a federal judge in Richmond, Virginia, to 23 months in prison for bankrolling a dogfighting operation and killing dogs that underperformed (Vick served 19 months at Leavenworth). Former Vice President Al Gore accepted the Nobel Peace Prize with a call for humanity to rise up against a looming climate crisis and stop waging war on the environment.

In 2013, South Africa held a memorial service for Nelson Mandela, during which U.S. President Barack Obama energized tens of thousands of spectators and nearly 100 visiting heads of state with a plea for the world to emulate "the last great liberator of the 20th century." (The ceremony was marred by the presence of a sign-language interpreter who deaf advocates said was an impostor waving his arms around meaninglessly.) General Motors named product chief Mary Barra its new CEO, making her the first woman to run a U.S. car company.

Ten years ago: President Barack Obama accepted the Nobel Peace Prize with a humble acknowledgment of his scant accomplishments and a robust defense of the U.S. at war. James Cameron's 3-D film epic "Avatar" had its world premiere in London.

Five years ago: Current and former CIA officials pushed back against the Senate Intelligence Committee's report released the day before which concluded that the United States had brutalized scores of terror suspects during interrogations, calling the report a political stunt by Senate Democrats which tarnished a program that saved American lives. NFL owners moved quickly and unanimously to change the league's personal conduct policy, announcing it would hire a special counsel to oversee initial discipline.

One year ago: Facing almost certain defeat, British Prime Minister Theresa May postponed a vote in Parliament on her Brexit deal, saying she would go back to EU leaders to seek changes to the divorce agreement. In a televised address, French President Emmanuel Macron broke his silence on the increasingly violent protests in Paris and elsewhere, pleading for a return to calm and offering tax relief for struggling workers and pensioners.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Tommy Kirk is 78. Actress Fionnula Flanagan is 78. Pop singer Chad Stuart (Chad and Jeremy) is 78. Rhythm-and-blues singer Ralph Tavares is 78. Actress-singer Gloria Loring is 73. Pop-funk musician Walter "Clyde" Orange (The Commodores) is 73. Country singer Johnny Rodriguez is 68. Actress Susan Dey is 67. Former Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich is 63. Jazz musician Paul Hardcastle is 62. Actor John York (TV: "General Hospital") is 61. Actor-director Kenneth Branagh (BRAH'-nah) is 59. Actress Nia Peeples is 58. TV chef Bobby Flay

is 55. Rock singer-musician J Mascis is 54. Rock musician Scot (cq) Alexander (Dishwalla) is 48. Actress-comedian Arden Myrin is 46. Rock musician Meg White (The White Stripes) is 45. Actress Emmanuelle Chriqui is 44. Rapper Kuniva (D12) is 44. Actor Gavin Houston is 42. Actor Alano Miller is 40. Violinist Sarah Chang is 39. Rock musician Noah Harmon (Airborne Toxic Event) is 38. Actor Patrick John Flueger is 36. Country singer Meghan Linsey is 34. Actress Raven-Symone is 34. Actress/singer Teyana Taylor is 29. Actress Kiki Layne is 28.

Thought for Today: "You can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving." [-] Amy Carmichael, American missionary (1867-1951).

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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