



Paul Shane <pjshane@gmail.com>

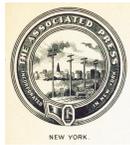
# Connecting - December 18, 2019

1 message

**Paul Stevens** <paulstevens46@gmail.com>  
Reply-To: paulstevens46@gmail.com  
To: pjshane@gmail.com

Wed, Dec 18, 2019 at 8:50 AM

Having trouble viewing this email? [Click here](#)



# Connecting

December 18, 2019

Click [here](#) for sound of the Teletype



[Top AP News](#)  
[Top AP photos](#)

[AP books](#)  
[Connecting Archive](#)  
[The AP Emergency Relief Fund](#)

Colleagues,

Good Wednesday morning on this the 18<sup>th</sup> day of December 2019,

Thirty years ago, the people rose up against Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceausescu, leading to his execution and setting the country on a path to democracy.

The Romanian Revolution was a period of violent civil unrest during December 1989 as a part of the uprisings that ended communist rule that year all over the former Warsaw Pact countries.

Connecting colleague **Dan Perry** started with the AP as Bucharest correspondent in 1990 in the days after the anti-Communist revolution, a position from which he helped cover the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Yugoslav war as well. Perry retired from AP in 2018 after six years as Middle East Editor based in Cairo, and earlier work as London-based Europe-Africa Editor, bureau chief in the Caribbean and bureau chief in Jerusalem.

He shares his memories in today's issue.

Have a great day!

Paul

## The Salad Days Of Bucharest

**Dan Perry** ([Email](#)) - The upcoming 30th anniversary of the Romanian revolution that toppled the country's communist regime also marks the beginning of my AP career. And so my spirit grows nostalgic, and the feeling bittersweet.

It started when the dictatorial duo of Nicolae and Elena Ceausescu were shot to death by kangaroo court in a military base on Christmas Day of 1989 as mobs overran their palaces in nearby Bucharest. Like with other revolutions, including the more recent Egyptian one of 2011, it was basically the military abandoning a leader who had ruled by the sword, yielding a combination coup-uprising.

In Romania's case, unexplained fighting in the streets continued for some days resulting in 1,000 deaths which were never properly explained and convinced many that the new government staged everything to create the impression of a revolution. Unusually for conspiracy theories, serious people did not rule this out.



**Dan Perry**

Luckily, I was available and applying for a job with Tom Kent. I spoke Romanian due to my parents' Jewish Romanian origins, and within weeks I found myself in Bucharest being trained by the formidable Edie Lederer. Eventually she departed, leaving matters in my hands. At the airport she assured me in her inimitable tones while struggling with her coat and fussing with bag: "I'm sure you'll be successful!" At what exactly, Edie did not elaborate.

With permission from Vienna COB Alison Smale, I hired a few local journalists and we were off to the races, mostly covering protests against the new government of President Ion Iliescu's National Salvation Front. One day police moved in and arrested a bunch of them, including me as I was trying to walk into my apartment nearby. They ripped my shirt to shreds and smacked me on the head with batons, then nearly broke my leg as I was thrown into a windowless van while shouting "I'm an American correspondent" in vain. I felt the van bouncing over potholes and lurching this way and that, and in the darkness enjoyed pungent fumes of alcohol and other fragrances courtesy of my fellow detainees.

"What did you do?" asked one of them. "Nothing!" I replied in Romanian, forgetting to abandon my usual effort to effect a local accent. "I'm just an American correspondent." My new friends found this hilarious and began to chant as one: "We're all just American correspondents!" I realized a new approach was needed.

At the station, the detainees one-by-one dismounted the van and submitted to being bashed on the head by more cops with batons. I walked around that scene like a lord, entered the office of the chief of station, presented my bona fides and was soon released to attend a foreign press party where I had a pretty good story to tell. I harbored no regrets, especially after AP ran a photo of me with my ripped-up shirt. Youth can overcome a few blows from a baton.



The NSF were no experts at media relations or PR, but they knew enough to be embarrassed by this turn of events. It was perhaps as compensation for it that I soon received a summons to interview the president at Cotroceni Palace. As we settled onto absurdly ornate chairs, a huge TV camera was wheeled into the room. AP had no TV service then, of course, and I asked the president what on earth was going on. "Nothing," Iliescu replied. "It is for the presidential video archive." The interview commenced.

I asked Iliescu how it could be no one had been prosecuted for the 1,000 killings and that mystery still prevailed. "The assassination of John Kennedy remains a mystery as well," he smoothly replied. "If America, with all its resources, cannot solve the murder of one man in almost 30 years, how can we possibly solve 1,000 deaths in just two?" In a TV interview, you challenge nonsense to register your protest; I might have noted that logic goes the other way, as a massacre is in fact harder to cover up than a murder. But this was an interview for text purposes only, and our time was limited, and so I let it go.



**Dan Perry interviews Ion Iliescu, 1991 (Martin Nangle photo)**

The entire interview was broadcast that night on the only TV channel in the land, and the whole country saw me appearing to accept this spin and even nodding, as you do when you're a journalist. I looked like a idiot; but on the other hand for months I was mistaken for an associate of the president, and that was fun. These were the early years of democracy, when the role of journalists was not so clear to people. I was approached in the street or at the laundry by every kind of supplicant asking for the brokering of favors from Iliescu.

Thirty years have passed. I was indeed reasonably successful, for a time and in a way. I held various interesting and sometimes senior AP roles in a range of fascinating places. I met other presidents and paupers and thugs and princes (and was personally threatened by the Emperor of All The Gypsies). I hosted panels and attended Tom Curley-ian strategy offsites and witnessed some things. I mostly loved my colleagues and only rarely felt let down. Mainly I enjoyed the spectacular privilege of helping lead brave journalists doing wonderful journalism like Yemen's Dirty War that last year won the Pulitzer Prize.

For all that, I am unlikely to ever again experience anything as electrifying as those salad days of Bucharest, covering the country of my family's provenance, where I had never before been, yet whose language I spoke well. The shelves were empty but everything was (for a Westerner) basically for free. Phones didn't work much so life was simpler and less stressful. The product was not as good but the industry far more of a business than today. Almost everyone believed in the same set of facts,

and there was the credible promise, in Romania as in much of the world, for a better tomorrow than today.

We did not appreciate it for the rare moment that it was, just as youth everywhere and always tends to take its joys for granted. It would be ever so excellent to capture that feeling once again.

## Learning the art of 'Wirespeak'

**Charles Richards** ([Email](#)) - On a Monday morning five and a half decades ago, in February 1964 - fresh out of journalism school at Texas Tech - I walked into the Journal/Tribune building in downtown Albuquerque for my first day as a newsman with UPI.

It didn't take long before I had my "Toto, I've a feeling we're not in Kansas anymore" moment.

Along one wall were teletype machines clacking away in all-caps at 60 words per minute. I was intrigued by one machine in particular - a "message wire" used for inter-bureau private communications.

Bureaus across the country competed to get on and off, and time and space was at a premium. The idea was to reduce the number of words and shorten the message.

A typical message - written in "wirespeak, or wire service jargon - looked something like this:

"AQ

APPC MATCHER SAPPEST ROX STY ON SOCORRO UFO. CLI PRESSING.  
CNFM U ONWORKING.

NX-GEN cr148pcs 12/17"

Translation: "UPI Albuquerque: Would appreciate a match as soon as possible of an AP story out of Socorro, N.M., on the reported sighting of an unidentified flying object. Client is pressing. Please confirm you are on this. General Desk, New York."

UPI referred to its opposition as "Rox," apparently because of the AP's then-headquarters at Rockefeller Plaza in New York.

The key was thinking in terms of abbreviations. POX=Police. Scotus=Supreme Court of the United States. XGR=Legislature. ELN=election. PLS=please. SAP=Soon As Possible. Messages were shortened by combining words - uppick, offput, outcheck, infone.

(Once you "learned the code," you could delight in making fun of later newbies who struggled with it.)

Every message, every story, was ended with a "timeoff" - the initials of the sender and the time of day. In replying, the Albuquerque bureau might reply, "Efforting ur 148p."

Every bureau, then as now, had its own two-digit call letters.

Some UPI bureaus had the initials of the city - as AQ for Albuquerque, DA for Dallas, RV for Richmond, Va., PS for Pittsburgh. Some call letters were named for newspapers (Miami is MH, for the Miami Herald). Some call letters were for named for publishers (Santa Fe, N.M., is FR for Frank Rand.) Some call letters were picked up from telegraph usage - NX for New York, HX for Chicago, SX for San Francisco, KO for Oklahoma City.

For those same cities, the AP call letters were sometimes the same, sometimes different; i.e., AQ=Albuquerque, DN=Dallas, RM=Richmond, PG=Pittsburgh, MH=Miami, SF=Santa Fe, CX=Chicago, FX=San Francisco, KO=Oklahoma City.

## Connecting mailbox

### *Looking through the viewfinder*



Photographer Altaf Qadri lets displaced Afghan children look through the viewfinder of his camera while on assignment at a garbage dump in Kabul, Afghanistan, Dec. 15, 2019. (AP Photo/Ahmad Nazar)

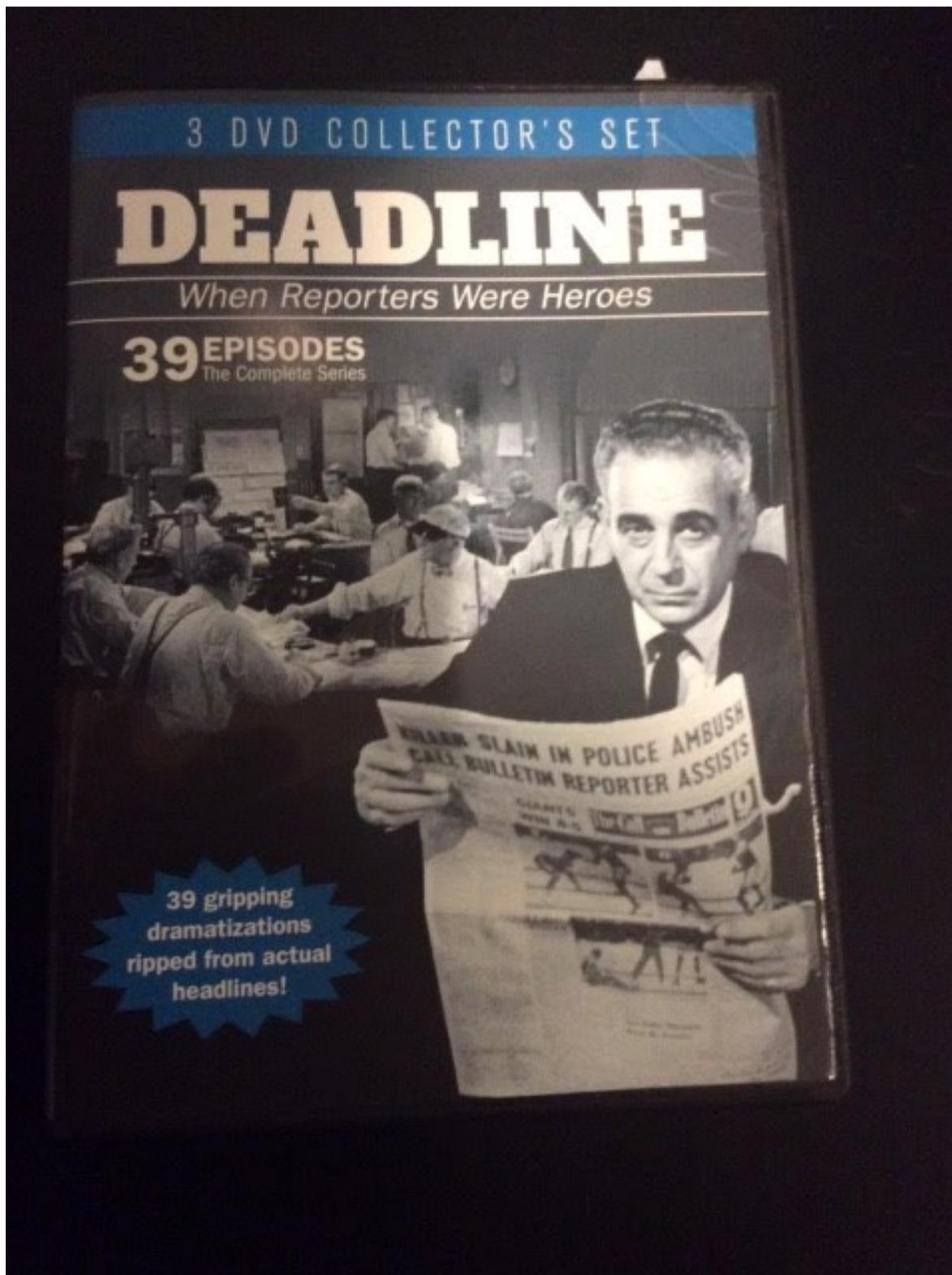
-0-

## ***Two Alaska visits to papers in Loh's poem***

**Hal Spencer** ([Email](#)) - I visited the Sitka Sentinel and the Nome Nugget many times, both vital AP friends in my day.

-0-

## ***My gift to me - TV series that portrayed reporters favorably***



**Dennis Conrad** ([Email](#)) - I ordered myself a Christmas present on Amazon that I thought was appropriate for 2019...a 60-year-old tv series that portrayed reporters as something other than enemies of the American people. I missed this one as a kid. Supposedly it was based on some true stories.

-0-

## ***Winter emotions***



**Gene Herrick** ([Email](#)) - This scene, a lonely barren tree, surrounded by fog, is the view of the day today as I awakened, looked out of the window, and decided to return

to the bed in Rocky Mount, VA.

This scene, to someone who long-ago learned to dislike winter, especially after a winter in North Korea, where the temp was 20-below-zero, and a stint in Minneapolis, where warm weather seemingly is the 4th of July.

-0-

## ***Copy editor, where art thou? (again)***

**Dick Lipsey** ([Email](#)) - No doubt you've been inundated by Connecting subscribers pointing out yet another paper that fired one too many copy editors, in this case the Washington Post (!):

**Netflix sends journalists on pricey trips, raising questions and angering rivals**  
(Washington Post)

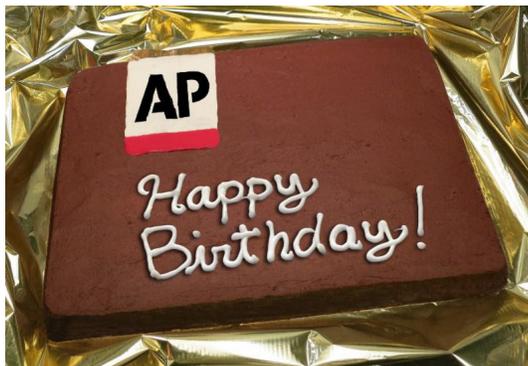
**By Steven Zeitchik**

2nd graf:

Netflix received 61 film and television nominations, nearly double the AMOUNT of its nearest competitor. The streaming giant also had the movie with the most nominations, Martin Scorsese's "The Irishman," and nearly half of the film best-actor field.

Of course, it should be number, instead of amount.

# **Connecting wishes Happy Birthday**



To

Hillel Italie - [hitalie@ap.org](mailto:hitalie@ap.org)

Will Lester - [wjlester@aol.com](mailto:wjlester@aol.com)

## Welcome to Connecting



Tom Young - [tyoungauthor@gmail.com](mailto:tyoungauthor@gmail.com)

## Stories of interest

***4 Times Journalists Tell Their Story of Impeachment (the One in the '90s)*** (New York Times)

*The House is expected to vote on Wednesday on two articles of impeachment against President Trump, most likely making him the third president in the nation's*

*history to be impeached. Four of the current New York Times journalists who covered President Bill Clinton's impeachment reminisce about that time and how it echoes in today's coverage.*

PETER BAKER, currently the chief White House correspondent: We thought it was the most partisan, most divisive era we could ever imagine. Today, that seems almost quaint.

After his re-election, President Bill Clinton had talked in his inaugural address about using his second term to become the "repairer of the breach," quoting Isaiah, and he had told John Harris (my partner on the White House beat) and me a couple of days earlier that he wanted to "flush the poison from the atmosphere." Instead, the breach became wider than ever before and the poisons more toxic. Little did we realize how much more so it could become.

ALISON MITCHELL, currently an assistant managing editor for The New York Times: I also remember being shocked by the intense partisanship - that Clinton's sex life had been investigated in such detail. Then so many Republicans found their sex lives investigated by the press and opposition researchers. It felt like the two parties were practicing mutually assured destruction. It was brutal and so far from governing.

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

-0-

## ***Washington's Newseum Offered a Lot, but Was Flawed from the Start*** (National Review)

By **JIM GERAGHTY**

Over in the Los Angeles Times, Michael Hiltzik points out what didn't work about the soon-to-close Newseum in Washington, D.C., which will close its doors permanently January 1.

Johns Hopkins University purchased the property for \$372.5 million as a new home for its graduate programs, and the Newseum was unable to find a new site for its collection. The closure is largely being treated as a tragedy for journalism, but the museum - which never broke even in any of its twelve years in Washington - suffered from some fundamental flaws from the start.

First and foremost, it is hard to imagine a worse combination of price and location: \$25 per adult, \$15 for kids from seven to 18, right next to all of the free Smithsonian museums on the mall. The Newseum built an extremely impressive facility . . . across the street from the National Gallery of Art, a block away from the National Archives, and four blocks from the National Museum of American History. They were asking a family of four to shell out \$80 when they were almost literally surrounded by world-class museums that cost nothing. It's amazing they ever had any visitors, really.

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

-0-

## ***A newsroom's sounds -- and smells -- when a story breaks*** (Daily Herald)

By **JIM SLUSHER**

It is 12:01 p.m. last Thursday. Excited twitters and laughter spill into the newsroom as co-workers from all departments begin to gather in the break room for a holiday buffet luncheon. I am at my desk and expect to join them shortly but want first to finish trimming a syndicated column to fit the space available on the Opinion page. Around me, a different kind of conversation builds.

Pete Nenni, deputy managing editor, to my left, is talking about a story with senior deputy managing editor Diane Dungey over the cubicle panel that separates their desks. His phone rings. Moments later, he slams the receiver into its cradle.

NENNI, to the editors at their desks around him: "Cunningham just pleaded guilty to first-degree murder."

DUNGEY: "Did we have anyone there?"

NENNI: "Mick [Zawislak, staff writer] said something popped up unexpectedly on the court calendar today, so he decided to go to court and see what was happening."

Read more [here](#).

-0-

## ***A tweet gave a journalist a seizure. His case brings new meaning to the idea of 'online assault.'*** (Washington Post)

**By Reis Thebault**

Kurt Eichenwald sat down at the desk in his Dallas home office and logged onto Twitter. The prominent journalist and author was used to Internet invective - especially then, in the weeks after he posted a particularly inflammatory tweet about President Trump.

More than 170 notifications awaited him when he signed on that evening, Dec. 15, 2016.

But he didn't make it past the first one: A GIF that strobed violently across his computer screen, flashing a red, yellow and blue geometric pattern behind the words "YOU DESERVE A SEIZURE FOR YOUR POSTS."

Within seconds, Eichenwald, who has epilepsy, suffered a seizure. He would have died, he has said, if his wife hadn't walked into the study and found him.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Scott Dine.

## **The Final Word**

**How to frighten the new generation:**

**Put them in a room with a rotary phone, an analog watch, and a TV with no remote. Then leave directions on how to use in cursive.**

**Today in History - December 18, 2019**



## By The Associated Press

Today is Wednesday, Dec. 18, the 352nd day of 2019. There are 13 days left in the year.

### Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 18, 2000, the Electoral College cast its ballots, with President-elect George W. Bush receiving the expected 271; Al Gore, however, received 266, one fewer than expected, because of a District of Columbia Democrat who'd left her ballot blank to protest the district's lack of representation in Congress.

### On this date:

In 1787, New Jersey became the third state to ratify the U.S. Constitution.

In 1865, the 13th Amendment to the Constitution, abolishing slavery, was declared in effect by Secretary of State William H. Seward.

In 1916, during World War I, the 10-month Battle of Verdun ended with French troops succeeding in repulsing a major German offensive.

In 1917, Congress passed the 18th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution prohibiting "the manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquors" and sent it to the states for ratification.

In 1940, Adolf Hitler signed a secret directive ordering preparations for a Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union. (Operation Barbarossa was launched in June 1941.)

In 1944, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the government's wartime evacuation of people of Japanese descent from the West Coast while at the same time ruling that "concededly loyal" Americans of Japanese ancestry could not continue to be detained.

In 1956, Japan was admitted to the United Nations.

In 1957, the Shippingport Atomic Power Station in Pennsylvania, the first nuclear facility to generate electricity in the United States, went on line. (It was taken out of service in 1982.)

In 1969, Britain's House of Lords joined the House of Commons in making permanent a 1965 ban on the death penalty for murder.

In 1972, the United States began heavy bombing of North Vietnamese targets during the Vietnam War. (The bombardment ended 11 days later.)

In 1998, the House debated articles of impeachment against President Bill Clinton. South Carolina carried out the nation's 500th execution since capital punishment resumed in 1977.

In 2003, two federal appeals courts ruled the U.S. military could not indefinitely hold prisoners without access to lawyers or American courts.

Ten years ago: The infamous iron sign bearing the Nazis' cynical slogan "Arbeit Macht Frei" (Work Sets You Free) that spanned the main entrance to the former Auschwitz death camp in Poland was stolen. (The sign was later recovered; six suspects in the theft were later jailed.) Jon and Kate Gosselin officially divorced after 10 years of marriage, eight children and a year of tabloid headlines.

Five years ago: Sternly warning the West it could not defang the metaphorical Russian bear, President Vladimir Putin promised to shore up the plummeting ruble and revive the economy within two years. Mandy Rice-Davies, 70, a key figure in the "Profumo Scandal" that rocked Cold War Britain, died in London. Actress Virna Lisi, 78, died in Rome. "The Colbert (kohl-BEHR') Report" came to an end after nine

years on Comedy Central (host Stephen Colbert went on to become the host of CBS' "Late Show.")

One year ago: President Donald Trump's charitable foundation reached a deal with New York's attorney general for the foundation to go out of business, even as Trump continued to fight allegations that he misused the foundation's assets. (In November 2019, a New York state judge ordered Trump to pay \$2 million to an array of charities as a fine for misusing his foundation to further his political and business interests.) The Trump administration banned bump stocks, the firearm attachments that allowed semi-automatic weapons to fire like machine guns, and gave gun owners until late March to turn in or destroy the devices. The president authorized the Defense Department to create a new Space Command, an effort to better organize and advance the military's operations in space. Arizona's governor appointed U.S. Rep. Martha McSally to replace Sen. Jon Kyl in the seat that had belonged to the late John McCain, sending the GOP congresswoman back to Washington just a month after she lost a tight race for the state's other U.S. Senate seat.

Today's Birthdays: Actress Cicely Tyson is 95. Former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark is 92. Actor Roger Mosley is 81. Rock singer-musician Keith Richards is 76. Writer-director Alan Rudolph is 76. Movie producer-director Steven Spielberg is 73. Blues artist Rod Piazza is 72. Movie director Gillian Armstrong is 69. Movie reviewer Leonard Maltin is 69. Rock musician Elliot Easton is 66. Actor Ray Liotta is 65. Comedian Ron White is 63. R&B singer Angie Stone is 58. Actor Brad Pitt is 56. Professional wrestler-turned-actor "Stone Cold" Steve Austin is 55. Actor Shawn Christian is 54. Actress Rachel Griffiths is 51. Singer Alejandro Sanz is 51. Actor Casper Van Dien is 51. Country/rap singer Cowboy Troy is 49. Rapper DMX is 49. International Tennis Hall of Famer Arantxa Sanchez Vicario is 48. DJ Lethal (Limp Bizkit) is 47. Pop singer Sia is 44. Country singer Randy Houser is 43. Actor Josh Dallas is 41. Actress Katie Holmes is 41. Actor Ravi Patel is 41. Singer Christina Aguilera is 39. Christian rock musician Dave Luetkenhoelter (Kutless) is 37. Actress Ashley Benson is 30. NHL defenseman Victor Hedman is 29. Actress-singer Bridgit Mendler is 27. Atlanta Braves outfielder Ronald Acuna Jr. is 22. Electro-pop singer Billie Eilish is 18. Actress Isabella Cramp is 15.

**Thought for Today: "Whoever wants to be a judge of human nature should study people's excuses." [-] Christian Friedrich Hebbel, German poet and dramatist (1813-1863).**

## 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.



**Paul Stevens**  
**Editor, Connecting newsletter**  
[paulstevens46@gmail.com](mailto:paulstevens46@gmail.com)

Connecting newsletter, [14719 W 79th Ter, Lenexa, KS 66215](#)

SafeUnsubscribe™ [pjshane@gmail.com](mailto:pjshane@gmail.com)

[Forward this email](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [About our service provider](#)

Sent by [paulstevens46@gmail.com](mailto:paulstevens46@gmail.com) in collaboration with

**Constant Contact** 

Try email marketing for free today!

