



Paul Shane <pjshane@gmail.com>

# Connecting - January 08, 2020

1 message

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

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# Connecting

January 08, 2020

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Colleagues,

Good Wednesday morning on this the 8<sup>th</sup> day of January 2020,

The quarterly listing of Connecting's 80s and 90s Club in Tuesday's edition missed four of our colleagues who are now in their 80s: **Harry Atkins, Steve Graham, Mike Rouse, Ed Staats** - and **David Liu** (in a few weeks on the solar calendar, already there on the lunar calendar!)

Connecting brings news that our colleague **Sandy Johnson** ([Email](#)) plans to retire as president and COO of the National Press Foundation. She is being succeeded by longtime Los Angeles Times journalist **Sonni Efron** who worked for the AP in Boston before joining the Times. Johnson was AP's Washington chief of bureau from 1998 to 2008.

Our colleague **John Lumpkin** came upon a treasure recently while doing some house cleaning. It was a letter written to each AP staffer in 1972 by General Manager Wes Gallagher - and we think you'll enjoy reading what he had to say.

John's account leads today's issue. You recall the days when you were asked, upon completion of your probationary period, to write a letter to the general manager about yourself and your thoughts on AP and your goals? Share the experience with your colleagues.

Have a great day!

Paul

## A letter from the AP General Manager, unearthed 38 years later

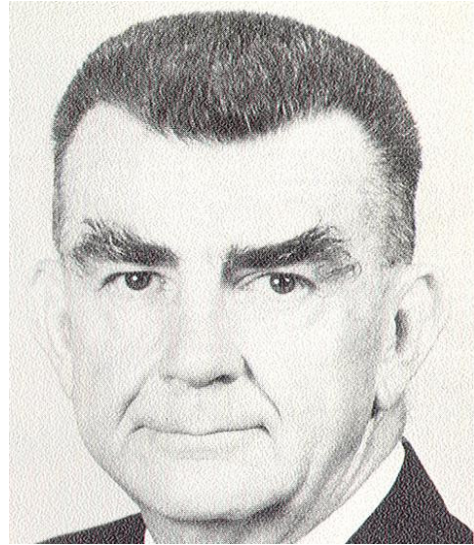
**John Lumpkin** ([Email](#)) - Be careful when you dive into closets and open boxes to clear more space for new stuff as the holidays unwind. Such is the residue of decades of files that were moved from place to place, bundled and then stored - pushed further back from ready access as years pass.

Such was the case at our house, with some nice surprises, including a moving, transcendent word from a long-ago AP CEO that (you be the judge) has as much relevance today as it did in 1972, a year after I joined AP.

### LETTER FROM THE "GENERAL MANAGER"

Context:

The AP didn't have CEOs in those days - the top job's title was "General Manager." In 1972, that person was Wes Gallagher, a stoic, reticent and, some would say, stern leader - maybe grumpy. As was the practice at the time, AP leadership went to someone with news experience, even though such a person would direct worldwide multi-million dollar business operations.



**Wes Gallagher**

Gallagher was a World War II correspondent. As a rookie who was summoned to meet him at 50 Rockefeller Plaza, I was told his demeanor might have been influenced by chronic back pain from being thrown off a Jeep in the WWII European theater. I suspect some truth in that.

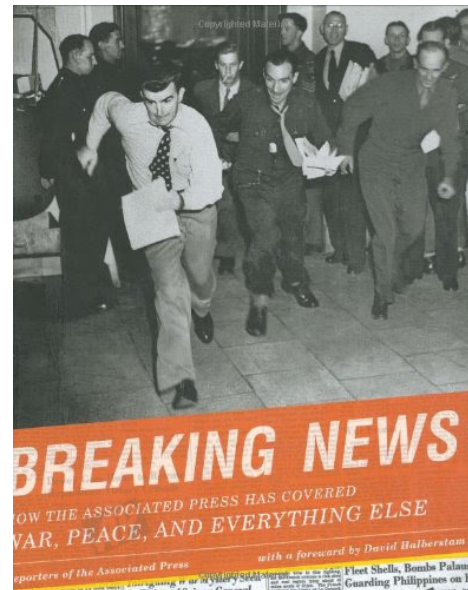
This weekend, I came across a six-page single-spaced letter that he sent to every AP staffer's home address on October 12, 1972. I won't attempt to summarize so you can judge for yourself how prescient it was about news reporting and objectivity, though some might think much of it anachronistic. For sure, when he says "AP men," that was not "woke," but he does address lack of diversity even in those days.

What is somewhat quaint is the background for why he was writing - letters he received from new AP hires about the AP's position on "objectivity." Yes, for those of us from that era, we recall the requirement to write the General Manager (later CEO) a personal letter when we passed a mandatory six-month probation, telling about yourself, your impressions of the AP and your career goals. Gallagher responded to every one - in my case, two pages -and I found that in a box this past weekend as well.

An excerpt from Gallagher's 1972 all-staff missive:

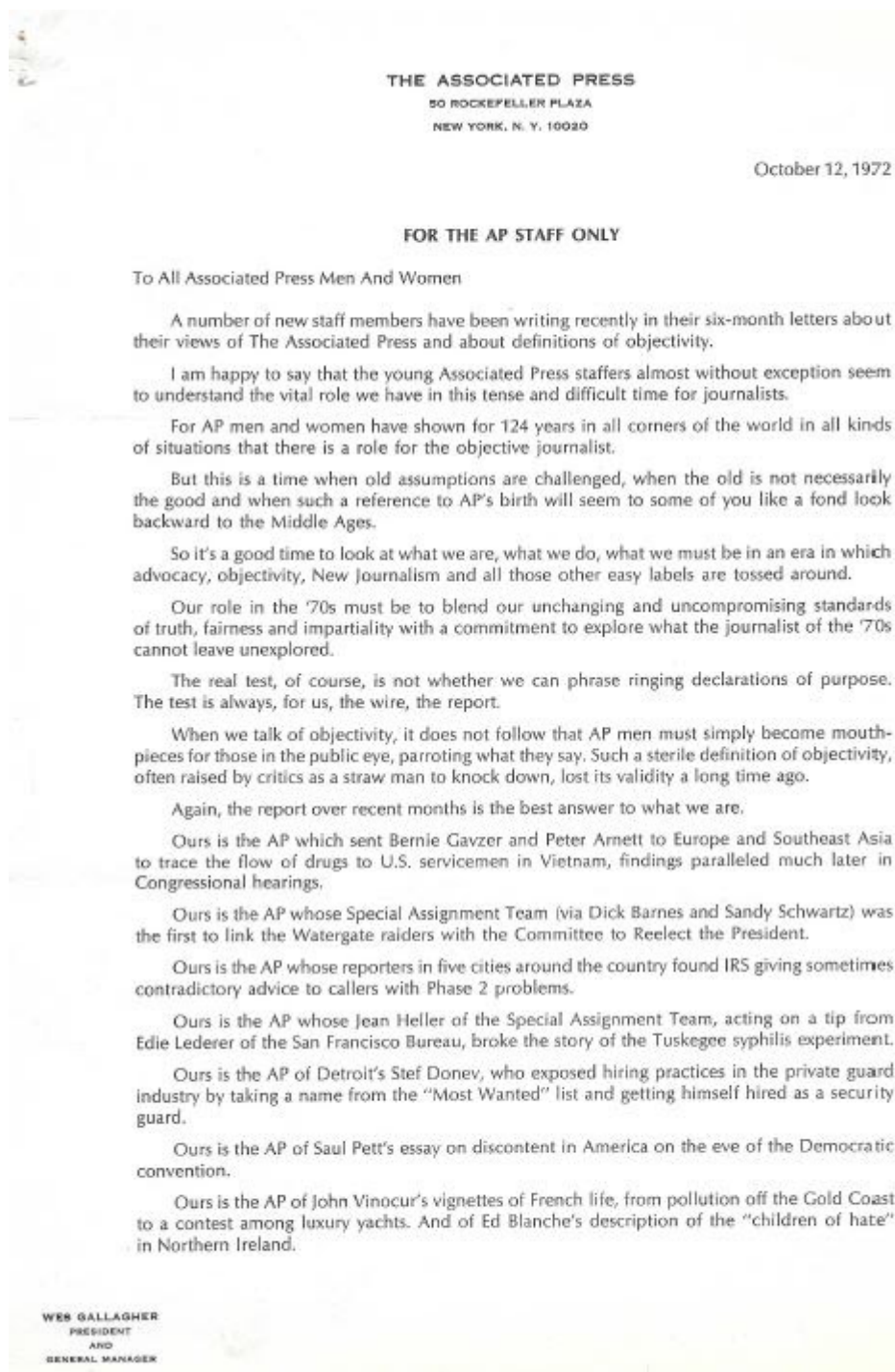
"So it's a good time to look at what we are, what we do, what we must be in an era in which advocacy, objectivity, New Journalism and all those other easy labels are tossed around.

"Our role in the '70s must be to blend our unchanging and uncompromising standards of truth, fairness and impartiality with a commitment to explore what the journalist of the '70s cannot leave unexplored."



**Wes Gallagher dashing for the phone to report the verdict at the Nuremberg war crimes trials on October 1, 1946.**

Here is a scan of the Gallagher letter to all staffers of the time:



Click on image above for .PDF of full five-page letter to AP staff from former president and general manager Wes Gallagher.

***Sonni Efron succeeds Sandy Johnson***

# National Press Foundation Selects New President

The National Press Foundation today (Tuesday) announced the appointment of veteran journalist Sonni Efron as president and chief operating officer.

"Sonni Efron combines wide-ranging experience with a deep commitment to journalistic excellence and media freedom," said Kathy Gest, chair of NPF's board of directors. "From Moscow and Tokyo to Washington, she has demonstrated leadership, creativity, and an ability to conceive and implement innovative ideas. Our board is eager to work with her to advance NPF's mission of educating and training journalists on critical issues to improve public knowledge and understanding."



**Sonni Efron**

Efron worked at The Associated Press in Boston, followed by 20 years at the Los Angeles Times. She was a political campaign reporter, foreign correspondent in Moscow, Tokyo bureau chief, State Department correspondent in Washington, assistant op-ed editor, and editorial writer on national security. She was also a speechwriter and senior policy advisor at the State Department, where she launched the "Free The Press Campaign," and writer in residence at the RAND Corporation, where she wrote about the declining role of facts and evidence in public discourse.

Efron will succeed Sandy K. Johnson, who has served in leadership roles at NPF for nearly two decades. Johnson joined NPF's Board of Directors in 2001, served as board chair from 2007-2008 and was named president and COO in 2014.

"I'm delighted that Sonni has been selected to lead NPF," Johnson said. "She has covered conflicts from Chechnya to Cambodia and spotlighted threats to democracy and media freedom around the world. She has helped the public understand how emerging technologies will affect them. She will bring this experience and passion to NPF. I look forward to working with her during the transition."

Efron will be introduced at NPF's annual journalism awards dinner on Feb. 13, and will become president and COO effective Jan. 29.



"I am deeply honored to pick up the mantle from Sandy Johnson and lead an organization that has been serving journalism since 1976," Efron said. "At a time when the media are under intense pressure and millions of Americans are losing their news providers, journalists of all types need free access to the tools and training that NPF offers."

## Connecting mailbox

### *Fuson's self-written obit a wonderful read*

**Bob Seavey** ([Email](#)) - Thanks to Randy Evans for sharing his friend Ken Fuson's self-written obit (in Tuesday's Connecting). A wonderful read and the poignant video added to it. I wish I had known him.

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### *Thanks for the tributes*

**David Tirrell-Wysocki** ([Email](#)) - Wow!

I opened the newspaper the other day and saw my mug staring back at me.

I opened Connecting yesterday and there I was, again.

Thank you, Adolphe Bernotas, my former Concord colleague, for sharing the NH Union Leader tribute on my retirement as director of the Nackey S. Loeb School of Communications. (See Tuesday's Connecting.)

I was very fortunate to have been involved with the school before the AP offered early retirement in 2009. I took the retirement and spent most of my working time since as director at the school, helping kids and adults learn more about communicating through writing, photography, public speaking, social media, video, whatever.

The core message I impressed on students and the school's instructors was that no matter the method of delivering a message, there had to be a message to deliver. That meant being able to put words together in a way that presented a message or told a story clearly, concisely and accurately.

It's the core lesson we all learned at the AP. It's also a core life lesson, for which I am grateful.

During my second retirement, I will spend more time freelance writing. Presumably, that will leave more time to welcome any wayward Connecting colleagues who find themselves in central NH. Let me know if you are in the area.

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## ***Golf, in Iowa, in January?***

**John Lumpkin** ([Email](#)) - In Tuesday's Connecting, the weather story from Des Moines (by the late Ken Fuson) about a March day in the 70s brought back some memories. The last spring I was there, I was a director of local Little League scheduling "clean-up" Saturday in late March/early April of the field we used. I recall we were snowed out twice. But there was the famed January thaw that came some but not most years, one in which I played golf on a Saturday when a local course opened because of a rapid snow melt. No balls plunked in the water - the ponds were still frozen.

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## ***Meeting Richard Simmons in workout gear at 50 Rock***

**John Rogers** ([Email](#)) - I was the late AMs supervisor on the General Desk one night when one of the overnight people showed up all excited, saying, "You won't believe who I rode up in the elevator with." It was Richard Simmons. I jokingly asked if he was wearing his goofy Richard Simmons workout clothes and she said, "He sure was." He was in town for the daytime Emmys and he'd shown up afterward for a photo shoot.

A few minutes later, there he was right in front of me, in full Richard Simmons' regalia, bellowing out that he told the photo people he wanted to see where all the news came from and they told him this was it. It happened that we'd ordered out that night from the Jackson Hole Wyoming burger place on the Upper West Side, which produced burgers the size of hubcaps. He took one look at them and began berating us for our late-night diet. After dishing on Susan Lucci and other daytime TV stars he eventually asked where the bathroom was; we showed him and then he left. He never dropped that Richard Simmons over-the-top persona the whole time he was there, leaving me to believe maybe it wasn't an act.

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# I made Page One of the New York Times - as story subject

**Mike Graczyk (Email)** - I too made the front page of The New York Times although in a different way: I was the subject of a P1 story a decade ago about Texas death penalty coverage and how The AP was alone in covering each execution here. The jump used a bylined AP Photo by Pat Sullivan.

The ego-stroking certainly was nice, even if I had some misgivings. I was around long enough and had enough battle scars to know the newspaper over the years had been the source of frequent irritation for those of us west of the Hudson River. A perfectly good day could go south very quickly after a GEN Desk request to match a story in "The Times" (some there rarely used the city name, prompting my passive-aggressiveness to surface with an occasional reply: Which Times? Clearly not a good way to start the conversation.)



The other response to GEN from here in flyover country could be equally snarky: We had this two days ago, moved on our state lines which is where The New York Times got it and y'all passed it. Again, digging a deeper hole.

Inevitably, you did the matcher. Often you'd be asked to provide the obligatory paper trail to show the story really did get sent two days earlier to GEN. And then you



needed to show whether you may or may not have backed up the offering with a phone call alerting the overwhelmed NY GEN editor monitoring the incoming stuff that this really was a decent story worth national attention.

One thing the NYT story about me did was reinforce the notion that they set the news agenda for a whole lot of people. I got inundated for days with media calls for interviews. My takeaway was that it's much easier to ask questions than answer them.

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## ***Some candida from around the AP world***



Taliban prisoner Maulvi Niaz Mohammad, second from right, speaks during an interview with Senior Correspondent for Pakistan and Afghanistan Kathy Gannon, left, inside the Pul-e-Charkhi jail in Kabul, Afghanistan, Dec. 14, 2019. (AP Photo/Rahmat Gul)



News staff in New York headquarters pose for a photo after an ugly sweater contest at a holiday potluck, Dec. 16, 2019. (Photo courtesy Lisa Gibbs)



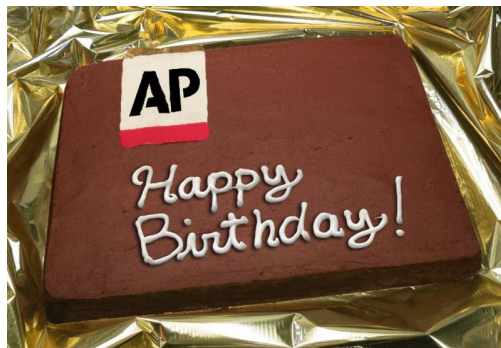
After 40 years at the AP, Assistant Payroll Manager Linda Harrell celebrates her retirement in New York headquarters alongside her Payroll colleagues, Jan 3, 2020. From left: Payroll manager Ann Sutherland, finance director Lou Piezzo, Harrell, payroll administrator Peggy Giordano and payroll clerk Christina Lee. (AP Photo/Sandro Solon)





Photographer Andrew Harnik works on photos at the Capitol in Washington, Dec. 18, 2019, after the U.S. House voted to impeach President Donald Trump. (AP Photo/Matt Rourke)

## Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



To

Latrice Davis - [ldavis\\_76@hotmail.com](mailto:ldavis_76@hotmail.com)

Brian Skoloff - [bskoloff@ap.org](mailto:bskoloff@ap.org)

## Welcome to Connecting



Merv Hendricks - [merv\\_hendricks@yahoo.com](mailto:merv_hendricks@yahoo.com)

George Rishmany - [rishmany@yahoo.com](mailto:rishmany@yahoo.com)

## Stories of interest

### ***Tucker Carlson Dissents as Right-Wing Media Weighs Trump's Iran Strike*** (New York Times)

By Michael M. Grynbaum

It was the kind of full-throated critique of President Trump familiar to MSNBC viewers, yet transplanted to the heart of Fox News: Tucker Carlson, the network's conservative 8 p.m. host, upbraiding the White House for its attempts to justify the killing of a top military commander in Iran.

"It's hard to remember now, but as recently as last week, most people didn't consider Iran an imminent threat," Mr. Carlson said at the start of his Monday show, going on to mock Mr. Trump's secretary of state, Mike Pompeo, for saying intelligence agencies had identified an undefined Iranian threat.

"Seems like about 20 minutes ago, we were denouncing these people as the 'deep state' and pledging never to trust them again without verification," Mr. Carlson told viewers, eyebrow arched. "Now, for some reason, we do trust them - implicitly and completely."

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

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## ***NOT REAL NEWS: Finland is not launching 4-day working week***

**By JARI TANNER**

HELSINKI (AP) - The Finnish government on Tuesday squelched a story spreading in international media about the Nordic nation's plans to reduce the average working time for full-time employees to 24 hours a week, or four six-hour days.

Newspapers and news sites in Britain, the United States, India, Pakistan, Russia and Australia were among the outlets that on Monday credited Finnish Prime Minister Sanna Marin as the person responsible for the shorter work week plan.

But government spokeswoman Paivi Anttikoski says Marin floated the idea of Finland some day adopting either a four-day work week or six-hour work days - not both - months before the 34-year-old became the world's youngest head of government in December.

Marin "envisioned the idea briefly in a panel discussion last August while she was the minister of transport, and there hasn't been any recent activity" to push the initiative forward, Anttikoski said Tuesday.

Neither the agenda of the five-party coalition government Marin leads nor the meeting plans of her Cabinet mention a working hour proposal, the spokeswoman said.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Adolphe Bernotas.

## **The Final Word**





## Today in History - January 8, 2020



## By The Associated Press

Today is Wednesday, Jan. 8, the eighth day of 2020. There are 358 days left in the year.

### Today's Highlight in History:

On Jan. 8, 1815, the last major engagement of the War of 1812 came to an end as U.S. forces defeated the British in the Battle of New Orleans, not having gotten word of the signing of a peace treaty.

### On this date:

In 1918, President Woodrow Wilson outlined his Fourteen Points for lasting peace after World War I. Mississippi became the first state to ratify the 18th Amendment to the Constitution, which established Prohibition.

In 1935, rock-and-roll legend Elvis Presley was born in Tupelo, Mississippi.

In 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson, in his State of the Union address, declared an "unconditional war on poverty in America."

In 1968, the Otis Redding single "(Sittin' On) The Dock of the Bay" was released on the Volt label almost a month after the singer's death in a plane crash.

In 1973, the Paris peace talks between the United States and North Vietnam resumed.

In 1982, American Telephone and Telegraph settled the Justice Department's antitrust lawsuit against it by agreeing to divest itself of the 22 Bell System companies.

In 1987, for the first time, the Dow Jones industrial average closed above 2,000, ending the day at 2,002.25.

In 1998, Ramzi Yousef (RAHM'-zee YOO'-sef), the mastermind of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, was sentenced in New York to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

In 2004, A U.S. Black Hawk medivac helicopter crashed near Fallujah, Iraq, killing all nine soldiers aboard.

In 2006, the first funerals were held in West Virginia for the 12 miners who'd died in the Sago (SAY'-goh) Mine disaster six days earlier.

In 2008, Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton powered to victory in New Hampshire's 2008 Democratic primary in a startling upset, defeating Sen. Barack Obama and resurrecting her bid for the White House; Sen. John McCain defeated his Republican rivals to move back into contention for the GOP nomination.

In 2011, U.S. Rep. Gabrielle Giffords, D-Ariz., was shot and critically wounded when a gunman opened fire as the congresswoman met with constituents in Tucson; six people were killed, 12 others also injured. (Gunman Jared Lee Loughner (LAWF'-nur) was sentenced in November 2012 to seven consecutive life sentences, plus 140 years.)

Ten years ago: Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab (OO'-mahr fah-ROOK' ahb-DOOL'-moo-TAH'-lahb), accused of trying to blow up a U.S. airliner on Christmas, appeared in federal court in Detroit; the judge entered a not-guilty plea on his behalf. (Abdulmutallab eventually pleaded guilty and is serving a life prison term.) Vice President Joe Biden's mother, Jean Biden, died in Wilmington, Delaware, at age 92.

Five years ago: Three dissidents were abruptly released in what a leading human rights advocate said was part of Cuba's deal with Washington to release 53 members of the island's political opposition. Sen. Barbara Boxer, D-Calif., a tenacious liberal whose election to the Senate in 1992 heralded a new era for

women at the upper reaches of political power, announced she would not seek re-election. During a daylong meeting at the Denver airport, U.S. Olympic Committee board members chose Boston over Los Angeles, San Francisco and Washington, to bid for the 2024 Summer Olympics. Gospel singer Andrae Crouch, 72, died in Los Angeles.

One year ago: In a somber televised address, President Donald Trump urged congressional Democrats to fund his border wall and end the stalemate that had shut down much of the government for 18 days; the speech offered little in the way of concessions. Mayor Bill de Blasio said New York City would spend up to \$100 million per year to expand health care coverage to people without health insurance, including immigrants in the country illegally.

Today's Birthdays: Actor-comedian Larry Storch is 97. CBS newsman Charles Osgood is 87. Singer Shirley Bassey is 83. Game show host Bob Eubanks is 82. Country-gospel singer Cristy Lane is 80. Rhythm-and-blues singer Anthony Gourdine (Little Anthony and the Imperials) is 79. Actress Yvette Mimieux is 78. Singer Juanita Cowart Motley (The Marvelettes) is 76. Actress Kathleen Noone is 75. Rock musician Robby Krieger (The Doors) is 74. Movie director John McTiernan is 69. Actress Harriet Sansom Harris is 65. Actor Ron Cephas Jones is 63. Education Secretary Betsy DeVos is 62. Singer-songwriter Ron Sexsmith is 56. Actress Michelle Forbes is 55. Actress Maria Pitillo (pih-TIHL'-loh) is 54. Singer R. Kelly is 53. Rock musician Jeff Abercrombie (Fuel) is 51. Actress Ami Dolenz is 51. Reggae singer Sean Paul is 47. Actor Donnell Turner is 47. Country singer Tift Merritt is 45. Actress-rock singer Jenny Lewis is 44. Actress Amber Benson is 43. Actor Scott Whyte is 42. Singer-songwriter Erin McCarley is 41. Actress Sarah Polley is 41. Actress Rachel Nichols is 40. Actress Gaby Hoffman is 38. Rock musician Disashi Lumumbo-Kasongo (dih-SAH'-shee LUHM'-uhm-boh kuh-SAHN'-goh) (Gym Class Heroes) is 37. Actress Cynthia Erivo is 33. Actor Freddie Stroma is 33.

**Thought for Today: "Anxiety never yet successfully bridged over any chasm."  
[-] Giovanni Ruffini, Italian writer (1807-1881).**

## 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)

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