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Connecting - January 21, 2020

1 message

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Connecting

January 21, 2020

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Colleagues,

Good Tuesday morning on this the 21st day of January 2020,

One of the many benefits I gained from asking you last week how to improve this Connecting newsletter was to hear some ideas for subjects that would elicit comment from the group.

Lyle Price posed the question: "What was your first day at AP like and who in your office do you particularly remember seeing that day?" - and then proceeded to answer it. His interesting first days lead today's issue.

On a more specific topic, **Mike Holmes** thought The New York Times' "um, unusual" - decision to endorse two presidential candidates might make for some lively discussion among Connecting readers. **The Times said** that in "a break with convention, the editorial board has chosen to endorse two separate Democratic candidates for president" - Amy Klobuchar and Elizabeth Warren.

Tom Jones, in today's The Poynter Report, explains the situation and asks, "But isn't endorsing two candidates a cop out? What's the point of endorsing two when only one can actually become the nominee? If you're going to endorse someone, shouldn't it be someONE?" Click [here](#) to read the report.

So, now it's up to you to respond to one or both. Or share an idea for a topic of your own.

Have a great day!

Paul

What was your first day at AP like and who in your office do you particularly remember seeing that day?

Lyle Price (Email) - I can't recollect what I did on Day One, which wasn't supposed to be my first day. I had dropped by the AP bureau in San Francisco in midday of Aug. 27, 1964, and told News Editor Paul Lee that I had arrived from Aberdeen, Wash., and was ready to come in as scheduled the next day. "Now that you're here, we might as well put you to work," Lee replied. About all I can remember for the rest of that day was that Lee told me to come in the next day at 3:30 p.m. for the evening shift. I also was introduced to staffers at the City Desk complex of four desks (which included Lee's desk as well as the City Editor's desk) and to others in the office.

I remember Day Two better: I came in at 3:30 and was told there was no desk or chair for me until someone left at 4:30 pm. I walked around the office, found no

place to logically observe things or hover, told Paul Lee I was going to the coffee shop downstairs and would be back by 4:30. I was, and Lee didn't say a word when I announced my leave-taking or came back -- other than to point at the vacant chair at the City Desk complex and say I could sit there. Every time thereafter I always had a desk and chair on any shift until I left AP a dozen years later. BTW, it occurred to me after a while that announcing on my second day of work that I was taking an hour-long unauthorized coffee break mightn't have been the most politic way to start out, but it made good sense to me at the time. Nor did anyone at AP ever kid me about it. Later, I would discover there were usually open chairs and desk in the photo department across the hall, and wished I'd been directed there for an hour.

Photog Bob Klein would become my best friend in the bureau and I always liked to keep in touch with the photo gang - particularly as they got out to see things more often than the news staff did and I liked to pick their brains. Anything worth a photo is worth a story, it strikes me; but I'm not at all sure the reverse is true! Also: I have a good memory of many things I wrote or edited at AP, but zero of any story I or others worked on my first two days. But there was never a day that I didn't get assigned something to edit or write (or track down something myself as enterprise), so I am absolutely sure I just didn't sit around and answer the phone on Day #1 and #2!

Editors on General Desk had no easy chore delivering 'impactful news from every corner of the Earth to millions of people every day'

Dale Leach ([Email](#)) - I've read the postings in recent days about the frustrations of sending a story to the General Desk, only to have it ignored until the same story appeared elsewhere - usually The New York Times - and a matcher became necessary.

I frequently shared that frustration but would like to offer a defense for those among our group who once worked on the General Desk (I am not among them).

First, they were overwhelmed by incoming copy - much of it unworthy of the national wire. And secondly, many of the stories that did have national potential had been written for a state audience and had neither the polish nor scope necessary to grab the attention of an overwhelmed national desk editor.

I recall my first visit to headquarters in the 1980s, when my wife and I made a personal long weekend trip to New York City. Out of a sense of pride as a new AP employee - and to satisfy my professional curiosity - I stopped by 50 Rock.

Expecting to see a cadre of folks working the General Desk, I was taken aback when I witnessed three people sharing the responsibility for filing America's premier news wire. The desk supervisor had a pile of incoming copy from the bureaus that I found breathtaking in its volume - and the pile only grew in size while I was there. It quickly occurred to me that the only stories that merited more than a few seconds of attention were those that a) had been flagged by a phone call, b) came from a reliable writer of sound reputation or c) had a gripping lede and understandable nut graf that told a busy editor why he or she should care.

I wish I could say that the experience transformed the way I approached sending stories to New York. But it didn't - not consistently, at least. I often failed to follow up with a phone call or sent a story that I knew needed some tweaking to make it interesting for a global audience. But those of us in the states were busy, too, fielding calls from member editors and passing member stories whose potential we didn't recognize because - like much of the copy we sent to New York - they were written for a local audience and didn't offer the context that would make them stand out from the crowd of incoming copy.

It was an imperfect system, to be sure. But it was a system that - despite its imperfections - still managed to deliver impactful news from every corner of the Earth to millions of people every day. We should all be proud of our small role in that process.

On 'shooting' pictures or people

Gene Herrick ([Email](#)) - I would like to respond to Steve Wolgast's take (in Monday's Connecting) on using the word "Shooting" pictures, or people.

It seems that today we strive so hard to be correct. Just because the audience laughed, doesn't make it bad. In fact, they thought it funny and laughed. The speakers could take advantage of this.

It's an opportunity to explain, and give them the privilege of hearing about the "tricks of the trade." Journalists are unique; let's keep it that way.

The way we were...



For her Connecting Profile in Monday's issue, **Sandy Johnson** shared with me this photo of AP chiefs of bureau who gathered outside AP headquarters at 50 Rockefeller Plaza during a bureau chiefs meeting in the late 1980s. That's Sandy at far left, front row, and in the middle, front row, President and CEO **Lou Boccardi**. Ye Olde Connecting Editor, shown in back row, thought it worth a share as a memory of those days and as a salute to those in the photo no longer with us.

A journalist becomes a teacher

Charles McFadden (Email) - My part-time teaching career came after my time at AP covering politics in Sacramento. The journalism department at California State University, Sacramento in 1984 needed someone to teach beginning journalism, and none of the regular profs wanted to do it (probably figuring it wasn't challenging enough.) So they abducted me from my regular post guiding public opinion as director of media relations to teach one class per semester. It was enlightening, to say the least. I found myself really teaching elementary English. No one wanted to be anything but a TV anchor. So what I had the class do was (grudgingly) write, write, write. I sat at the dining room table at night correcting papers. I really did enjoy it all, and the students for the most part were great, although a little naive - but that's expected. I had my close friend Doug Willis, the longtime California AP political writer, come as a guest lecturer. Doug launched into a talk about how you really

didn't need to take journalism because you could learn it all better with a liberal arts education and on-the-job training. Oh, well. The late Sandy Barkdull, Vice President for academic affairs, had one piece of advice: "Just be sure your fly is zipped."

Rare Aim or Rare Sermon

REVIEW

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL WEEKEND

SELENA GOMEZ
WSJ. MAGAZINE

SATURDAY/SUNDAY, JANUARY 18 - 19, 2020 - VOL. CCLXXV NO. 15

WSJ.com ★★★★★ \$5.

Iran's Supreme Leader Takes Aim at U.S. in Rare Sermon



Boeing Finds Another Software Problem

Glitch adds to string of technical issues delaying return of 737 MAX to service

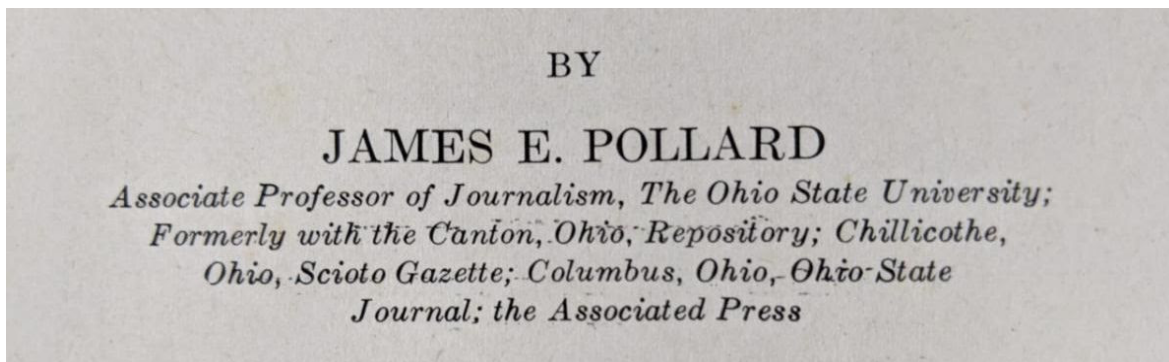
BY ANDY PASZTOR

Boeing Co. is grappling with still another software problem that has cropped up in an effort to fix its 737 MAX. The glitch, adding to technical issues that have complicated the grounded fleet's return to service over many years, Boeing said Friday it was working to correct, prevent

FIANT: Ayatollah Ali Khamenei led Friday prayers in Tehran for the first time in eight years. The cleric, Iran's highest

Hank Ackerman ([Email](#)) - Just a thought about headlines. In the era of tweets, headlines continue to be influential even if a bit off base!

Spotted on a bookshelf in Bogota



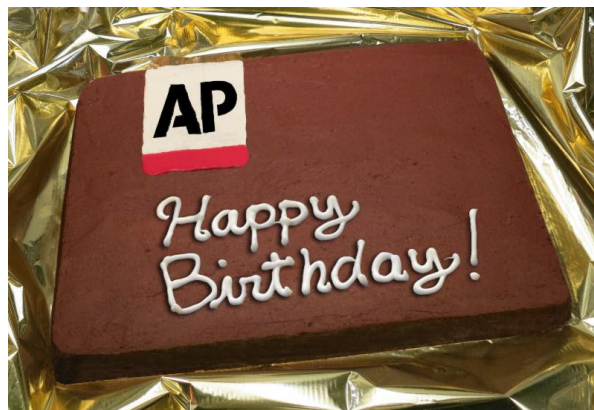
Kevin Walsh (Email) - I was scanning the bookshelf at our hotel in Bogota, Colombia, and spotted this English title published in 1937. As I opened the book and read the preface, I felt more than a little sense of irony (see below).

The author, James E. Pollard, later became director of the journalism department at Ohio State University. There is a mention of an affiliation with the Associated Press, although it's not clear in what capacity. Just inside the cover. Before the preface.



One more thing. The hotel we stayed in was the home of Jose de la Vega Velez, a politician, journalist, author and co-founder of "The Colombian Magazine" and the newspaper "El Siglo." So, it was likely the book was acquired by him.

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



To

Byron Yake - byron.yake@gmail.com

Stories of interest

Chicago Tribune staffers seek new owners amid fears of hedge fund takeover: 'We're doing everything in our power to try to stop them' (CNN)

By **BRIAN STELTER**

New York (CNN Business) - Reporters at the Chicago Tribune are trying to find a new owner for their newspaper.

They're doing it because they're afraid of Alden Global Capital's plans for all of the papers owned by Tribune Publishing.

Alden, a New York-based hedge fund, recently became the largest shareholder in the struggling publishing company. Alden has a terrible reputation in the newspaper industry due to its history of slashing jobs and sucking up short-term profits from other papers it controls.

"We're doing everything in our power to try to stop them," Gary Marx, a 31-year veteran of the Chicago Tribune, told CNN Business.

Read more [here](#).

And...

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Will The Chicago Tribune Be the Next Newspaper Picked to the Bone? (New York Times)

By David Jackson and Gary Marx

The writers are investigative reporters at The Chicago Tribune.

CHICAGO - We are investigative reporters in a great American city infamous for its corruption and murders.

In recent years, we and our colleagues have exposed rapes and assaults inside nursing homes, deadly hazards in children's toys, the staggering prevalence of sexual violence in Chicago's public schools, grievous failure in America's extradition system, mercury in store-bought tuna fish, prostitution schemes in residential treatment centers for foster children and rampant corruption at the highest levels of Illinois government.

Spurred by this reporting, federal, state and local legislators have changed laws in ways that have made people safer and our notoriously crooked government a little cleaner.

But now that type of journalism faces an urgent threat.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Sibby Christensen, Dennis Conrad, Paul Albright.

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***Once again, Tribune wants veteran journalists to leave. Here's why we haven't ... yet. |
Commentary***

By SCOTT MAXWELL

ORLANDO SENTINEL

I've lost count of how many times my company has offered me a lot of money to walk away from my job.

Six? Seven? Who knows?

In a digital age, when newspapers are reeling from economic pressures - and when the hedge funds taking control of newspaper chains are usually more interested in turning quick profits than producing good journalism - buyouts have been near-annual rituals.

The goal is to shed the veteran salaries ... and the experience that goes along with them.

Replace the veterans with cheaper talent. Or don't replace them at all.

A newsroom staff of 250 becomes 150 becomes 75.

The latest offer came Monday.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Peggy Walsh.

The Final Word



(Shared by Larry Blasko)

Today in History - January 21, 2020



By The Associated Press

Today is Tuesday, Jan. 21, the 21st day of 2020. There are 345 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Jan. 21, 1861, Jefferson Davis of Mississippi and four other Southerners whose states had seceded from the Union resigned from the U.S. Senate.

On this date:

In 1793, during the French Revolution, King Louis XVI, condemned for treason, was executed on the guillotine.

In 1908, New York City's Board of Aldermen passed an ordinance prohibiting women from smoking in public establishments (the measure was vetoed by Mayor George B. McClellan Jr., but not before one woman, Katie Mulcahey, was jailed overnight for refusing to pay a fine).

In 1924, Russian revolutionary Vladimir Lenin died at age 53.

In 1950, former State Department official Alger Hiss, accused of being part of a Communist spy ring, was found guilty in New York of lying to a grand jury. (Hiss, who proclaimed his innocence, served less than four years in prison.)

In 1954, the first atomic submarine, the USS Nautilus, was launched at Groton (GRAH'-tuhn), Connecticut (however, the Nautilus did not make its first nuclear-powered run until nearly a year later).

In 1976, British Airways and Air France inaugurated scheduled passenger service on the supersonic Concorde jet.

In 1977, on his first full day in office, President Jimmy Carter pardoned almost all Vietnam War draft evaders.

In 1982, convict-turned-author Jack Henry Abbott was found guilty in New York of first-degree manslaughter in the stabbing death of waiter Richard Adan in 1981. (Abbott was later sentenced to 15 years to life in prison; he committed suicide in 2002.)

In 1994, a jury in Manassas, Virginia, found Lorena Bobbitt not guilty by reason of temporary insanity of maliciously wounding her husband John, whom she'd accused of sexually assaulting her.

In 1997, Speaker Newt Gingrich was reprimanded and fined as the House voted for the first time in history to discipline its leader for ethical misconduct.

In 2003, the Census Bureau announced that Hispanics had surpassed blacks as America's largest minority group.

In 2007, Lovie Smith became the first black head coach to make it to the Super Bowl when his Chicago Bears won the NFC championship, beating the New Orleans Saints 39-14; Tony Dungy became the second when his Indianapolis Colts took the AFC title over the New England Patriots, 38-34.

Ten years ago: A bitterly divided U.S. Supreme Court, in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*, vastly increased the power of big business and labor unions to influence government decisions by freeing them to spend their millions directly to sway elections for president and Congress. Former Democratic presidential candidate John Edwards finally admitted fathering a daughter during an affair before his second White House bid. Toyota recalled 2.3 million U.S. vehicles to fix accelerator pedals.

Five years ago: Defying President Barack Obama, House Speaker John Boehner (BAY'-nur) announced that he'd invited Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to stand before Congress and push for new sanctions against its archenemy Iran.

(Netanyahu addressed Congress on March 3, 2015.) In an embarrassing setback, House Republicans abruptly decided to drop planned debate of a bill criminalizing virtually all late-term abortions after objections from GOP women and other lawmakers left them short of votes.

One year ago: A light aircraft carrying Argentine soccer player Emiliano Sala to his new team in Wales went missing over the English Channel; Sala's body was recovered from the wreckage two weeks later. Security forces in Venezuela put down a pre-dawn uprising by national guardsmen that triggered violent street protests; the move came as opposition leaders regained momentum in their efforts to oust President Nicolas Maduro. First-term senator and former California attorney general Kamala Harris entered the Democratic presidential race. (Harris would withdraw from the race in December.) Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist and author Russell Baker died at the age of 93. Former Sen. Harris Wofford of Pennsylvania, a longtime civil rights activist, died at the age of 92. Comedian and singer Kaye Ballard, who starred with Eve Arden in the 1960s TV sitcom "The Mothers-In-Law," died at her California home; she was 93.

Today's Birthdays: World Golf Hall of Famer Jack Nicklaus is 80. Opera singer-conductor Placido Domingo is 79. Singer Mac Davis is 78. Actress Jill Eikenberry is 73. Country musician Jim Ibbotson is 73. Singer-songwriter Billy Ocean is 70. Former U.S. Ambassador to China Gary Locke is 70. Former U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder is 69. Actor-director Robby Benson is 64. Actress Geena Davis is 64. Sen. Kevin Cramer, R-N.D., is 59. Basketball Hall of Famer Hakeem Olajuwon is 57. Actress Charlotte Ross is 52. R-and-B singer Marc Gay is 51. Actor John Ducey is 51. Actress Karina Lombard is 51. Actor Ken Leung is 50. Rapper Levirt (B-Rock and the Bizz) is 50. Rock musician Mark Trojanowski (Sister Hazel) is 50. Rock singer-songwriter Cat Power is 48. Rock DJ Chris Kilmore (Incubus) is 47. Actor Vincent Laresca is 46. Singer Emma Bunton (Spice Girls) is 44. Actor Jerry Trainor is 43. Country singer Phil Stacey is 42. Rhythm-and-blues singer Nokio (Dru Hill) is 41. Actress Izabella Miko (MEE'-koh) is 39. Actor Luke Grimes is 36. Actress Feliz Ramirez is 28.

Thought for Today: "I honestly think it is better to be a failure at something you love than to be a success at something you hate." [-] George Burns, American comedian (1896-1996).

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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