

SHARE:

[Join Our Email List](#)

[View as Webpage](#)



Connecting April 9, 2020

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



Zoom seder celebrating Passover as seven households gather.

Colleagues,

Our call for your stories of life changes caused by COVID-19 was answered by colleague **Beth Harpaz**, who wrote from her apartment in Brooklyn a remarkable, poignant account of life in the virus' epicenter. Her story was filed after she and her family marked the start of Passover with a seder – with a drastic change from the past.

“We usually celebrate with about 15-20 members of my husband’s family. Tonight instead we did a Zoom seder with seven households connecting by video, from Michigan, Virginia and around NYC. We took turns reading the Passover text, and sang prayers and songs together (a bit messy with the audio delay), retelling the story from Exodus of how the Jews escaped slavery after God unleashed 10 plagues on the Egyptians (those plagues included frogs and locusts but not COVID). We chatted while eating our separate meals and saluted a niece’s husband, an ER doc in DC, as well as mine for his work getting prisoners out of Rikers Island.”

Beth worked with the AP in New York from 1998 to 2018 – initially covering breaking news and politics and then serving as AP travel editor from 2003 to 2018, when she left to join City University of New York. She is the author of three books, including “The Girls in the Van,” about Hillary Clinton’s 2000 Senate run.

The annual AP 25-Year Club Celebration has fallen victim this year to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In an announcement Wednesday, **Diane Parker** of AP Human Resources said that the celebration set for June has been canceled and that “given these uncertain times, the event will not be rescheduled this year. I want to sincerely thank you for your years of service with The Associated Press and hope to see you at next year’s celebration. Please stay safe.”

Adolphe Bernotas’ wonderful account in Wednesday’s Connecting on an early return home to New Hampshire from Florida concluded with our colleague saying that he and his wife would be “downhunkered” at home – coining a wonderful new “wire-ese” word that harkens to some of the wire jargon of the past.

This didn’t escape the attention of several colleagues who offer their own thoughts. How about yours?



AP GROUND GAME : A Bronx Zoo tiger was recently diagnosed with COVID-19. So what does this mean for animal testing and virus transmission between pets and their owners and vice versa? Host Ralph Russo looks for answers. Listen [here](#) .

Here's to a safe and healthy day ahead for all,

Paul

Suddenly, I can hear the birds: A report from epicenter of a crisis



Beth Harpaz ([Email](#)) - Suddenly I can hear the birds. I live in Brooklyn, New York, under the flight path to JFK and LaGuardia airports, but there's rarely a plane in the sky now. No traffic helicopters either, even though I live near a network of highways and bridges. I do hear lots of sirens, though. I'm two blocks from a hospital, and the ambulances are busy.

New York City is the epicenter of America's COVID-19 crisis. More than 4,500 people have died in the city so far, far more than died on 9/11, with 779 dying in a single day this week. If New York were a separate country, we'd have the fifth-most deaths of any country in the world. We've also had more than 80,000

confirmed infections as of April 9, and we all know that number is a huge underestimate because tests are nearly impossible to get. My next-door neighbor, a retired man, has been sick for three weeks, coughing, weak, lost 16 pounds, and couldn't get a test.

A cousin of mine said, "There's no point in living in a city right now." What he meant was – we put up with ridiculously high costs of living and small apartments because there's usually so much to do. Restaurants, theaters, museums, live music. But no more. Now we're just stuck inside our overpriced tiny boxes with nowhere to go. I live in a 115-year-old building in a neighborhood called Park Slope, where the internet pretty much only works in the living room, and my husband and I sit there all day, complaining about each other's conference calls.

But I admit that my husband's Zoom meetings are more important than mine: He's a Legal Aid lawyer, and he's on live video every day at 10 AM with judges, trying to get prisoners out of city jails, where transmission rates for COVID are seven times higher than outside.

My job, since leaving AP in 2018, is running a website for the City University of New York. Unfortunately, with budget cuts looming as the city and state foresee drastically reduced tax revenue, I was told last week that my website will no longer be funded after Dec. 31. When I told my husband I'll be out of a job, he said: "I hope we're alive Dec. 31."

In fact we spent an hour sitting on a neighbor's front steps recently, social distancing as the neighbor, a lawyer, patiently made out our wills. We raised two kids and got through 30 years of marriage without feeling the need to codify our final wishes, but the possibility of death no longer feels so remote. Among those New Yorkers who've lost their lives: three professors at the university where I work, along with former AP colleague Nick Jesdanun.

And yet I feel relatively lucky as a healthy middle-class white woman who's, at least for now, collecting a paycheck while working in my living room. The disease is hitting black and Latinx New Yorkers much harder than white people, and it's hitting poor people harder than middle-class and rich people. Not that there are any rich people left in the city now: Seems like anyone who could leave, has, fleeing to pied-a-terres or country homes "on the Cape" (that's Cape Cod), "upstate" (Hudson Valley) or in the Hamptons. A cousin from Montreal who'd been living here the past few years went back to Canada a month ago, and as they drove away, she told her husband: "I guess we're not real New Yorkers." Well, I was born and raised here, and I'm not leaving. I'll just add this to the litany of horrors notched on my NYC belt, along with Son of Sam, blackouts, riots, the era of 3,000 murders a year, 9/11, Hurricane Sandy, and assorted other nightmares (this is my fourth stock market crash). The difference this time is that I'm sharing the nightmare with people around the world.



My tiny concrete backyard alley, now a slice of heaven

We were smart to have done a few strategic shopping trips the first week of March, so we have enough lentils, toilet paper, pasta, and other essentials to get by for a good long while. But picking up a few things for my quarantined neighbor and his family was eye-opening. Had to go to three stores to find toilet paper; snagged the last bottle of Robitussin in Rite-Aid, and finally found a can of chicken soup in a drugstore (the grocery stores were all out). There was no Tylenol to be found, though, so we gave the neighbor some from our supply. Shopping here is like a game of human billiards: Our grocery stores have aisles that are 3 feet wide, so you're constantly bouncing off other shoppers. Meanwhile, I like to keep a stash of Cold-Eeze zinc lozenges in the house, and there haven't been any in stores here in weeks – neither can one find Purell, Clorox wipes, thermometers, or masks. I finally scored some Cold-

Eeze on eBay of all places – felt like I'd hit the lottery, and I got some cloth masks on Etsy. Liquid soap is hard to come by too, so I've started saving bar soap scraps in a nylon sock – my Depression-era mom would be so proud.

My 22-year-old son lives with me. He lost his job in a restaurant in Queens a month ago and is trying to do his coursework from a community college online. But so many other students are poor, lacking laptops and internet access, that the school has suspended classes twice now trying to get those kids the tools they need to keep up. My older son works at a hotel, now empty, of course. He's part of a skeleton staff for the hotel now, getting paid for two days a week of work. He also just completed a 14-day quarantine in his own apartment because he was exposed to someone who got sick. But I really wanted him to come over for our Passover seder Wednesday night (celebrating with other relatives via Zoom), so we set him a place on the other side of our living room, and he sat alone there on a sheet thrown over the sofa, wearing a mask when he wasn't eating. No hugs allowed.

I live a block from big, beautiful Prospect Park, but it's so crowded that it's hard to stay 6 feet from people. I am lucky to have a tiny, concrete, backyard alley off my kitchen, and I'm out there every day for the one hour of sunshine it gets as the sun comes into view between the neighboring buildings. And I'm growing scallions. Stuck a couple of dried up roots from the fridge vegetable drawer into a window box two weeks ago, and darned if they aren't 6 inches tall already. So I guess we can have some scallions with our lentils one of these days ... yum yum.

Chances are, my loved ones and I will get through this OK, though any dream we had of retiring early died with the stock market. I consider myself pretty tough and generally optimistic – still keepin' an eye out for my Toyota Tercel, stolen from a Brooklyn street in 1994 – but honestly, I despair for my country. Everything just feels broken and many of those in charge are clearly incompetent. Half the country doesn't believe in science and can't tell truth from lies. Will things change when the virus finally fades away? I don't know. For now, I keep my courage up by watching Winston Churchill speeches on YouTube, but I don't think anyone will look back on this fight and say that this was our finest hour.

A memory affirmed by his boss – all these years later

Lou Boccardi ([Email](#)) - The appropriately esteemed editor of Connecting has offered me the opportunity to deny the highly inappropriate quote attributed to me by Rick Cooper in yesterday's issue of the newsletter. (Paul never checked it with me before publishing.) Rick wrote that, when I saw the dummy AP ID card he made featuring his backside instead of his face, I commented, "Well, it certainly is a picture of your better side."



For the record, let me make it clear: I did indeed say that. And, perhaps to the credit of both of us, it did not impair our working relationship in the years that followed.

(**EDITOR'S NOTE** : Lou is former president and CEO of the AP. Rick served as the Assistant Director of Employee Benefits and also was responsible for the AP's property and casualty insurance programs. Rick told Connecting. "I always said my biggest mistake was when Tom Pendergast asked me if I knew anything about insurance, I wasn't smart enough to misspell it."

‘Downhunkering’ a reminder of wire- ese terms of the past – like ‘unwomanned’

Peggy Walsh ([Email](#)) - Kudos, an oft-used AP word, to Adolphe Bernotas for his amazing saga of his two-day, 1,600-mile drive with his wife Marguerite.

It was a fascinating look at the effects of the pandemic everywhere on the eastern side of the U.S.

I'm glad they made it safely, despite the grueling long haul.

As for APisms, I volunteer "unwomanned," which I used in the late 70s when I was on the overnight and the lone staffer in the Southeast and was closing up the bureau. It seemed fair to me since I wasn't "unmanning".

-0-

Bill McCloskey ([Email](#)) - Now you've opened the floodgates. I didn't know I was elderly (75) until the coronavirus hit, now I guess I am also an oldtimer.

Storify
Unsee
soonliest
Rox (UPI's wirese for AP of Rockefeller Plaza)
downclosing
osn (opposition a.k.a. UPI)

And on the press license plate front, New York issued NYP plates to members of the press corps. Longtime APRadio staffer Mark Knoller came to Washington from New York and immediately ordered Maryland vanity plates starting with the letters NYP, so he could park unencumbered when he returned to New York to visit family.

-0-

Lyle Price ([Email](#)) - Re the Wednesday call in Connecting for old-time terms such as revived by Adolphe Bernotas, there was a predecessor to the term "unstaffing." In my experience in the 1960s and 70s at the AP's Los Angeles bureau, "un manning" was the internal term used by outlying correspondences in advising LA they were closing up shop for the day. As in "SC unmanning"). SC being Sacramento, in those days. When for the first time to the best of my knowledge about 1971 there was a female assigned there and at times became the last staffer out the door for the day, I would see nightly on the LA communication printer: "SC unwomaning."

In those pre-computer days, that communications printer, BTW, was used by all Fresno, San Diego, Sacramento, Reno, Carson City, and Las Vegas correspondents in those locations -- and was also the printer used by those sites to send copy to the Los Angeles bureau. Honolulu also sent copy to Los Angeles AP (and earlier to San Francisco before LA became a Hub Bureau in 1967 and the San Francisco bureau was cut in half staff-wise. Hula and the other correspondent points in Nevada and California lacked the ability in those pre-computer days to put anything on the California state wire or on sports, business and A wires without San Fran or Los Angeles sending it along.

Re the term downsizing, also mentioned in the Connecting piece, that wasn't the term applied when San Fran was decapitated (no staffer under 40 surviving the cut). San Fran staffer Leonard Milliman, Wire Guild founder dubbed it The Valentine Day Massacre because it happened on Valentine's Day, 1967. All staffers were offered transfers, to the best of my knowledge, and almost all of them came to LA--along with some of the teletype operators and perhaps the teletypes themselves. (LA, for instance, inherited the Tokyo Wire, which had been in San Francisco at least since WWII days.) FYI, when I had been downsized myself about a year earlier when San Francisco was cut from 27 to 26 news staffers, "Reduction in Staff" was the term used.

Speaking of ancient lingo, newsman was the term universally employed to refer to both male and female staffers for many years. At a California reunion a few years ago, a female staffer inquired when that policy had changed, and no could offer an answer. It still existed in AP-Guild contract in the middle 1970s when I departed AP, I am sure.

"Downhold" was a term I came to hear from UPI staffers in Los Angeles about 1970. The UPI Los Angeles bunch joked of a "Downhold Club," which I took to be a national thing. You didn't have to have been a RIF victim to be a member, as I understood it. Nor did it have any meetings except on an unofficial basis at watering holes. I always felt my UPI acquaintances regarded me as an honorary member.

-0-

Jim Spehar ([Email](#)) - I'm not likely to be the first to offer "upscrewed" (or perhaps its more colorful corollary) to Adolphe's reminder of unique AP linguistics. I'm occasionally surprised at how often I still revert to that backasswards lingo more than 30 years after exiting the mothership.

Newspapers in the time of coronavirus

Bob Lewis ([Email](#)) - My column in the Virginia Mercury this week was one very close to my heart: even harder times for local newspapers because of COVID-19. Reminds me of just how much I miss news people and newspapers and how much I hurt for my contemporaries still fighting the good fight and doing the Lord's work. The column:

COVID-19 is the story of this century, and many newspapers may not survive to cover it

By Bob Lewis

Every detail of the interview for my first full-time newspaper job editing a small Mississippi Delta weekly remains vivid and indelible in my memory.

The paper's owner asked me what the first duty of a newspaper was, and I was ready with a load of fresh journalism school rhetoric about being a good steward of an informed community by raising important issues to the level of public debate and ...

Wham! His palm slammed onto his cluttered desktop and he cut me off. "No, the first job of a newspaper is to make money!"

He was right – then and now. And that's the existential issue confronting local newspapers that have endured ebbing revenues for two decades only to face unprecedented business shutdowns over a global virus pandemic.

Read more [here](#) .

Cats, dogs, Quillie the hedgehog source of comfort in crisis



In this April 2, 2020 photo provided by Rachael Pavlik, the Pavlik family, Matthew, Rachael, their son Henry, hedgehog Quillie Nelson and German shorthair pointer Mudge, poses for a photo in their home in Sugar Land, Texas. Many pet owners are taking comfort in their animals as they shelter at home amid the coronavirus pandemic. (Rachael Pavlik via AP)

By ALICIA RANCILIO

NEW YORK (AP) — Lala, a 3-month-old black Lab, romped into Ufuoma George's life a few weeks ago, just as she retreated into her New York apartment in the face of the coronavirus pandemic.

Lala, she thought, would be company. But she's turned out to be so much more.

"Being alone at home kind of is hard," says George, "but with a pet you have someone to take care of, someone to play with you, someone to greet you in the morning, so it's kind of like really calming and comforting."

Whether it's a dog, a cat or, yes, a hedgehog named Quillie Nelson, pets are proving to be unexpected heroes in lockdown. They include the newly adopted and fostered like Lala; people have flooded shelters, looking for pets to fill their extra hours at home.

Read more [here](#).

Connecting mailbox

Moon over Naples



Hank Ackerman ([Email](#)) - Viewed from our place in Naples FL Tuesday evening, April 7. Things are generally tranquil here but people are awaiting the curve to ascend. Nothing like most other cities. Fortunate we are.

-0-

Uses for old newspaper boxes? Ideas?



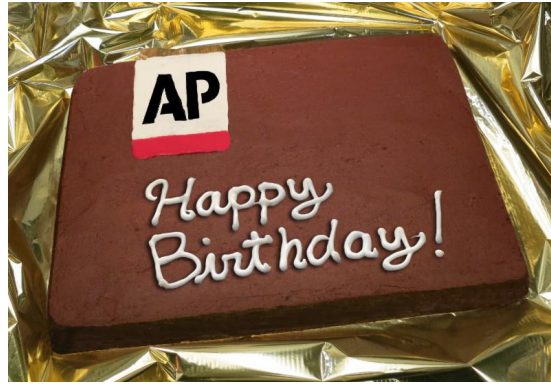
Kevin Walsh ([Email](#)) - The photo in Tuesday's Connecting taken by my good friend Jim Reindl of unused newspaper boxes in Chicago made me wonder how they might be reused.

A quick Google Images search turned up these examples -- a flower planter, lending library, record album cabinet and compost bin.

Would be very interested in any other examples or ideas turned up by Connecting readers.

Liquor cabinet? Secret hiding place for hoarding toilet paper rolls?

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



to

Len Iwanski - len_iwanski@outlook.com

Mary Sandok - mrsandok@msn.com

Stories of interest

Hearst promises journalists at its newspapers no furloughs, no pay cuts (Poynter)

By Rick Edmonds

Bucking the newspaper industry trend, Hearst Corporation has told its newsrooms there will be no layoffs, no furloughs and no pay cuts during the course of coronavirus coverage.

In fact, Hearst CEO Steven Swartz told publishers and editors in a conference call this week, the company is giving a 1% bonus to all employees, will create an added bonus merit pool later and is waiving the budget targets that determine executive bonuses.

In addition, the company is taking out six-figure TV ad buys in some markets to promote the papers and their pandemic coverage.

The conference call was internal, but summarized for Poynter from several sources who requested anonymity.

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

Under stress but seeing their work resonate, local news orgs are experimenting through the pandemic (Nieman)

By SARAH SCIRE

The coronavirus outbreak and its economic impact are forcing news organizations of every size to make life-or-death business decisions. Small independent publications, even those not chiefly dependent on advertising, are staring down short-term financial challenges and long-term uncertainty.

Still, there's a sense that there are still opportunities afoot for those nimble enough to capitalize on them. Newsrooms are keen to fortify reader-generated revenue streams and demonstrate the value of local journalism while the interest — and the stakes — are at historic highs.

That's where our friends at LION Publishers — Local Independent Online News Publishers — come in. They hosted a webinar on managing a local news business during a pandemic Friday that was aimed squarely at helping small newsrooms get through a challenge that many didn't see coming.

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

The Final Word

FREE TO A GOOD HOME

Looking to rehome my humans. They are now here 24/7 and I can't catch a wink of sleep without constant fondling. I'm going for walks multiple times a day and have had to curtail my squirrel and critter stalking at the window. They're stinking up the house with bleach and get all crazy when I bark at the UPS man. I don't want to do this but I see no other choice.

Shared by Jenny Volanakis

Today in History - April 9, 2020



By The Associated Press

Today is Thursday, April 9, the 100th day of 2020. There are 266 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On April 9, 1942, during World War II, some 75,000 Philippine and American defenders on Bataan surrendered to Japanese troops, who forced the prisoners into what became known as the Bataan Death March; thousands died or were killed en route.

On this date:

In 1865, Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee surrendered his army to Union Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox Court House in Virginia.

In 1939, singer Marian Anderson performed a concert at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., after being denied the use of Constitution Hall by the Daughters of the American Revolution.

In 1959, NASA presented its first seven astronauts: Scott Carpenter, Gordon Cooper, John Glenn, Gus Grissom, Wally Schirra, Alan Shepard and Donald Slayton. Architect Frank Lloyd Wright, 91, died in Phoenix, Arizona.

In 1963, British statesman Winston Churchill was proclaimed an honorary U.S. citizen by President John F. Kennedy. (Churchill, unable to attend, watched the proceedings live on television in his London home.)

In 1968, funeral services, private and public, were held for Martin Luther King Jr. at the Ebenezer Baptist Church and Morehouse College in Atlanta, five days after the civil rights leader was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee.

In 1979, officials declared an end to the crisis involving the Three Mile Island Unit 2 nuclear reactor in Pennsylvania, 12 days after a partial core meltdown.

In 1983, the space shuttle Challenger ended its first mission with a safe landing at Edwards Air Force Base in California.

In 1992, former Panamanian ruler Manuel Noriega was convicted in Miami of eight drug and racketeering charges; he served a 17-year U.S. prison sentence.

In 1996, Dan Rostenkowski, the once-powerful House Ways and Means chairman, pleaded guilty to two mail fraud charges in a deal that brought with it a 17-month prison term. (Rostenkowski served 15 months, and was pardoned by President Clinton in 2000.)

In 2003, jubilant Iraqis celebrated the collapse of Saddam Hussein's regime, beheading a toppled statue of their longtime ruler in downtown Baghdad and embracing American troops as liberators.

In 2005, Britain's Prince Charles married longtime love Camilla Parker Bowles, who took the title Duchess of Cornwall.

In 2009, North Korea's rubber-stamp parliament appointed Kim Jong Il to a third term as leader. Los Angeles Angels pitcher Nick Adenhardt, 22, and two others were killed in a car crash by a suspected drunken driver. (Andrew Thomas Gallo was convicted of three counts of second-degree murder and sentenced to 51 years to life in prison.)

Ten years ago: Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens announced his retirement. (His vacancy was filled by Elena Kagan.) Meinhardt Raabe, who'd played the Munchkin coroner in "The Wizard of Oz," died in Orange Park, Florida, at age 94.

Five years ago: President Barack Obama briefly visited Jamaica, where he met with Caribbean leaders and spoke at a town hall of young leaders; the president then flew to Panama City for a summit of Western Hemisphere nations and a historic encounter with Cuban President Raul Castro. Canadian-born filmmaker Paul Almond, 83, died in Los Angeles.

One year ago: Israelis voted in an election that would bring Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu a historic fifth term. Iranian lawmakers dressed in paramilitary uniforms chanted "Death to America" as they convened for an open session of parliament after the White House designated Iran's Revolutionary Guard a foreign terrorist organization. Magic Johnson abruptly quit as the Los Angeles Lakers' president of basketball operations; the announcement came before the final game of the Lakers' sixth consecutive losing season.

Today's Birthdays: Satirical songwriter and mathematician Tom Lehrer is 92. Actor Jean-Paul Belmondo is 87. Actress Michael Learned is 81. Country singer Margo Smith is 78. Country singer Hal Ketchum is 67. Actor Dennis Quaid is 66. Comedian Jimmy Tingle is 65. Country musician Dave Innis (Restless Heart) is 61. Talk show host Joe Scarborough is 57. Actress-sports reporter Lisa Guerrero is 56. Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey is 56. Actor Mark

Pellegrino is 55. Actress-model Paulina Porizkova is 55. Actress Cynthia Nixon is 54. Rock singer Kevin Martin (Candlebox) is 51. TV personality Sunny Anderson is 45. Rock singer Gerard Way (My Chemical Romance) is 43. Actress Keshia Knight Pulliam is 41. Rock musician Albert Hammond Jr. (The Strokes) is 40. Actor Charlie Hunnam is 40. Actor Ryan Northcott is 40. Actor Arlen Escarpeta is 39. Actor Jay Baruchel is 38. Actress Annie Funke is 35. Actor Jordan Masterson is 34. Actress Leighton Meester is 34. Actor-singer Jesse McCartney is 33. Rhythm-and-blues singer Jazmine Sullivan is 33. Actress Kristen Stewart is 30. Actress Elle Fanning is 22. Rapper Lil Nas X is 21. Actor Isaac Hempstead Wright is 21. Classical crossover singer Jackie Evancho (ee-VAYN'-koh) is 20.

Thought for Today: "Thinking is like loving or dying. Each of us must do it for ourselves." – Josiah Royce, American philosopher (1855-1916).

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

