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Connecting March 26, 2020

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Colleagues,

Good Thursday morning on this the 26th day of March 2020,

I probably have a ‘mild to moderate’ case of covid-19. I don’t think I could survive worse.



That was the headline over [a story](#) Wednesday in The Washington Post by columnist **David Von Drehle**, datelined Kansas City, whose lead said:

I am thankful for my mild to moderate symptoms.

Are they covid-19 symptoms? I certainly think so. I’ve been reading descriptions of other cases, mild to moderate — that’s what the authorities say most of us have in store — and those portraits of the novel disease involve endless fevers, shocking weakness, full-body aches, utter exhaustion, stomach distress, constant dehydration. That picture makes a pretty good match with my miserable little case.

David, one of the finest writers I know, is married to our colleague **Karen Ball**, former AP Washington newswoman (AP’s lead reporter covering Bill Clinton in the 1992 presidential campaign) who earlier was AP’s Jefferson City

correspondent. She and David and their four children make their home in Kansas City.

I asked Karen if she could share their story of probable coronavirus in their household and despite feeling a bit under the weather, she delivered a wonderful account that leads today's Connecting. (Thanks to **Sandy Johnson** for sharing David's story.)

Please share your own stories of the impact coronavirus has had on your life. And – you guessed right – we bring you even more examples of your first press pass. Maybe the most popular feature in Connecting ever.

Meanwhile, in Italy, where COVID-19 has killed more people than anywhere in the world, funerals can't be held and many are forced to grieve alone. In this episode on the "Ground Game: Inside the Outbreak" podcast, Milan Correspondent Colleen Barry talks to host Ralph Russo about how the pandemic hit Italy. Click [here](#) to listen.

I hope you have a safe and healthy day.

Paul

A household upended by probable coronavirus

Karen Ball ([Email](#)) – When coronavirus-like symptoms come to camp out at your house for a while, it really upends the order of things.

Over nearly 25 years of marriage, my husband, David Von Drehle, and I have eased into a natural division of labor. He handles most of the chores around the house and I deal with the checkbook, house and car repairs and all phone calls to insurance companies and doctors and so on. With four kids, that's a lot of phone calls.

But about 10 days ago that all changed when his nagging cough, which our internist blamed on allergies at Dave's annual check up in January, turned into something different, a hack that was deeper, dryer and more ragged. (NOTE: Family photo below from 2003.)

David usually procrastinates on things dealing with his own health but I knew this was serious when he started wearing a hoodie all the time and went to CVS and bought a thermometer scanner. For a few days we didn't have it set right, so David would zap the air in front of

someone's forehead and it always flashed 97.5. He can't have the virus if he doesn't have a fever, we told ourselves. Meanwhile he was fluctuating between burning up at night and having chills.

Generally a night owl, Dave started coming to bed at 10. It frightened me to watch him sleep. His breathing seemed off. Rattle, rattle and then from deep in his chest, almost a groan. And then it looked like he wasn't breathing at all. After a few seconds he would breathe normally for a while. This pattern repeated itself about every 30 minutes.

Usually hunched over his computer or reading silently in our library, David took to sleeping much of the day. I didn't have to wait on him because he didn't feel like eating. But I did have to wait on myself which was something I'm not used to. Because I have MS and am also recovering from a total knee replacement, it's usually Dave waiting on me. I had to shoo him out of the laundry room and the kitchen and was proud that I could balance well enough to do dishes or successfully transfer loads of laundry and get them folded.

Our two oldest are out of the house and it's strange to tell them to stay away, come raid the freezer in the garage but don't come in the house. Our two youngest daughters are home, not by choice. My college girl got kicked off campus when classes were cancelled. My high school junior, who had worked so hard for straight A's this semester, saw a spring break trip to Europe scrapped when things went south in Italy. She would have been singing pretty songs in ancient cathedrals. She even had a small solo in Ave Maria. Just when she was getting over that, the school district said don't come back 'til August, it's remote learning for the rest of the year.

Half delirious sometimes, David would say that he was worthless to our kids and unable to support the girls about their school disruptions. That he was worthless to me and couldn't help me get to PT.

I finally fired up my reporter jets and got on the phone to find out where I could get this man tested for coronavirus. It was disheartening to find that in a metro area of 2 million, no one seems to have a test. Or at least a test they were willing to give a 59-year-old otherwise healthy man. Go to the ER if you have to, I was told time and again. I finally found a hospital that said David could park in the ER lot, register by cell phone and then eventually a doctor would come out to see him. So that's what happened. A doctor and a nurse eventually appeared rolling their vitals cart and after listening to his lungs said they were not going to give him a test. They said the tests were so backed up they still didn't have results from a week before. They also said the tests were only 80 per cent accurate.

So they told him to go home and just assume he had coronavirus, since he had many of the symptoms. I hope testing gets here someday and we can find



out if he or I have it or have had it. I feel so blessed that so far neither of my daughters or my sister who was here during that week have shown any signs of this evil bug.

We like to go to church but I don't think we will be there on Easter Sunday. I know we'll get back to normal someday. David will be waiting there in the kitchen with a cup of coffee for me when I wake up.

Letter From Timor-Leste



Graca on the tarmac leaving Dili.

Jim Reindl ([Email](#)) - As the coronavirus and attending crisis engulfed the world, we were sitting in Timor-Leste, tucked out of the way at the end of the

road to nowhere. That was another life.

Now, I'm writing from a hotel room in downtown Chicago, holed up after a harrowing trip from Dili via four airplanes through four largely deserted airports in four countries with reported cases. The U.S. Embassy decided to reduce the human footprint of American employees to a skeleton crew to keep the lights on and the flag flying.

Timor-Leste reported its first case the day we left. The health care system will be overwhelmed should the outbreak be large and likely will melt down. My wife Graca and I were in the high-risk category. Medivac options have dwindled with Australia and Singapore closed to foreigners. Indonesia requires a visa and a health certificate to enter the country, even to transit and there now is only one flight a week. Those three countries normally are our only exit options. We had to go.

The trip was remarkably normal as plane travel goes. Exhausting, uncomfortable, countless starchy meals in plastic trays and the occasional crying baby. What wasn't normal was the sick feeling that we were on a flying viral incubation ward. Japanese airline ANA brought us from Tokyo to Chicago and they made a point of announcing they have the most advanced air filtration system. It exchanges the interior air every three minutes. The airlines encouraged social distancing if possible; we never shared adjoining seats, even on the more crowded flights. Generally, people seemed to be behaving normally, friendly even.

There's nothing like a pandemic to remind you the world is much more interconnected than we think. Ironically, as we sat there in the Timor-Leste sunshine, we had been feeling a bit of smug satisfaction watching CNN or reading the digital papers, smiling that we weren't "over there." Oops.

I've never been to war or a war zone and I don't feel cheated by life. Yet, this experience seemed to me to be running from a place where nobody was shooting at me into a place where everybody is shooting at everybody (given we're in Chicago, that's true on a number of fronts).

We understood the ambassador's point of view. She's a fine person, kind and warm hearted. On Friday, she and Graca broke down and cried to each other. Graca's been her chef for nearly two years and the ambassador and her husband treat her – actually, all of us there – like family. That doesn't lessen the anxiety we felt about returning to "home."

That's also a freighted word for us. We don't have a home in the States anymore. When anyone asks us where home is, we say Timor-Leste, like we said Ghana when we were there. Eventually, it's supposed to be Brazil but for now, only birds and trees have a home on the land we own there.

And as Patrick Casey so aptly said it in Friday's Connecting, we will resist that urge to freak the hell out and instead manage the challenges. There truly is no other way.

And so Wednesday, the weather was fine by Chicago standards and my younger son and I took a long walk through the lakefront park. We staged scenes for a video idea I had called “The Socially Distant Park.” My Portuguese friend still back in Dili will turn it into a video. It was a fine, fun day. His older brother showed up later. We joked and laughed, and it felt like living in another life. The day ended and I turned to walk back to the new, bewildering normal.

Life has been upended in Washington State

Hal Spencer ([Email](#)) - In Olympia, Washington State’s capital, life has been upended for a few weeks now, and the rate of infection is rising in our county 60 miles from virus-plagued Seattle. Now all but essential stores are closed and we’re under a “stay home” order. But outdoor exercise is OK and I still walk miles every day, sometimes in the middle of normally busy roads.

My wife, Donna, and I see our nearby kids and grandkids mostly via FaceTime, though we sometimes go by their house to say hello from a distance. The grandkids are troopers. Their parents, lawyers who work remotely, make sure they do their math, reading and science lessons. The kids don’t see their friends and playgrounds are cordoned off with yellow tape. The hardest separation is from our 39-year-old son, Sam, who has severe autism. He’s having a hard time with it all, his reliable routine obliterated. But we manage by phone.

It ain’t all bad. Donna is pleased that I’m finally doing a host of little fix-it things that once seemed boring and are now utterly fascinating. And I’m contemplating a book: *Misanthropy in the Age of Coronavirus*.

Some might consider our isolation overdone. But in our 70s, we know the virus can kill us and we know it’s our responsibility to give it to no one else. Good luck to all of you.

And more related to coronavirus pandemic

Staying at home, restoring vintage enlarger

Guy Palmiotto ([Email](#)) - Since we’ve had to stay at home during this coronavirus pandemic, one project that kept me busy was restoring this vintage Leitz Valoy enlarger I had found at an estate sale. Best to my knowledge it may date to the early ‘50s. Had a third-party vendor restore the wiring. Added to my antique camera collection.

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'I'm proud of the old lady (aka, AP)'



Terry Anderson ([Email](#)) - Noting John Daniszewski's explainer on numbers (in Wednesday's Connecting), I think the AP deserves a resounding "Thank you" for the outstanding way they are covering this disaster. All us old hacks have many views on how the AP has changed (mostly negative - we're old, we don't like change). But this is what the world's greatest news agency does best - swarm the big story from every aspect imaginable, from historical to medical to logistical to personal, with accuracy and thoroughness, not forgetting to show empathy for victims while pointing emphatically at our leaders' mistakes. I'm proud of the old lady.

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Sign up for Austonia.com - new digital news operation with its first focus: coronavirus

Richard Oppel ([Email](#)) - I encourage AP folks to go to austonia.com and sign up for our free newsletter if you want to see an old AP hand (1965-76, Florida & Michigan) initiating a digital news operation. Friend and CEO Mark Dewey, backed by \$900,000 raised from investors, launched this digital site March 24 to serve people who live, work or play in Austin Texas. I'm editorial advisor and part owner. We've hired an editor and two reporters, and launched early to focus on the coronavirus pandemic's impact on Austin. Long term, we plan to fill gaps in selected local coverage left open by receding traditional media.

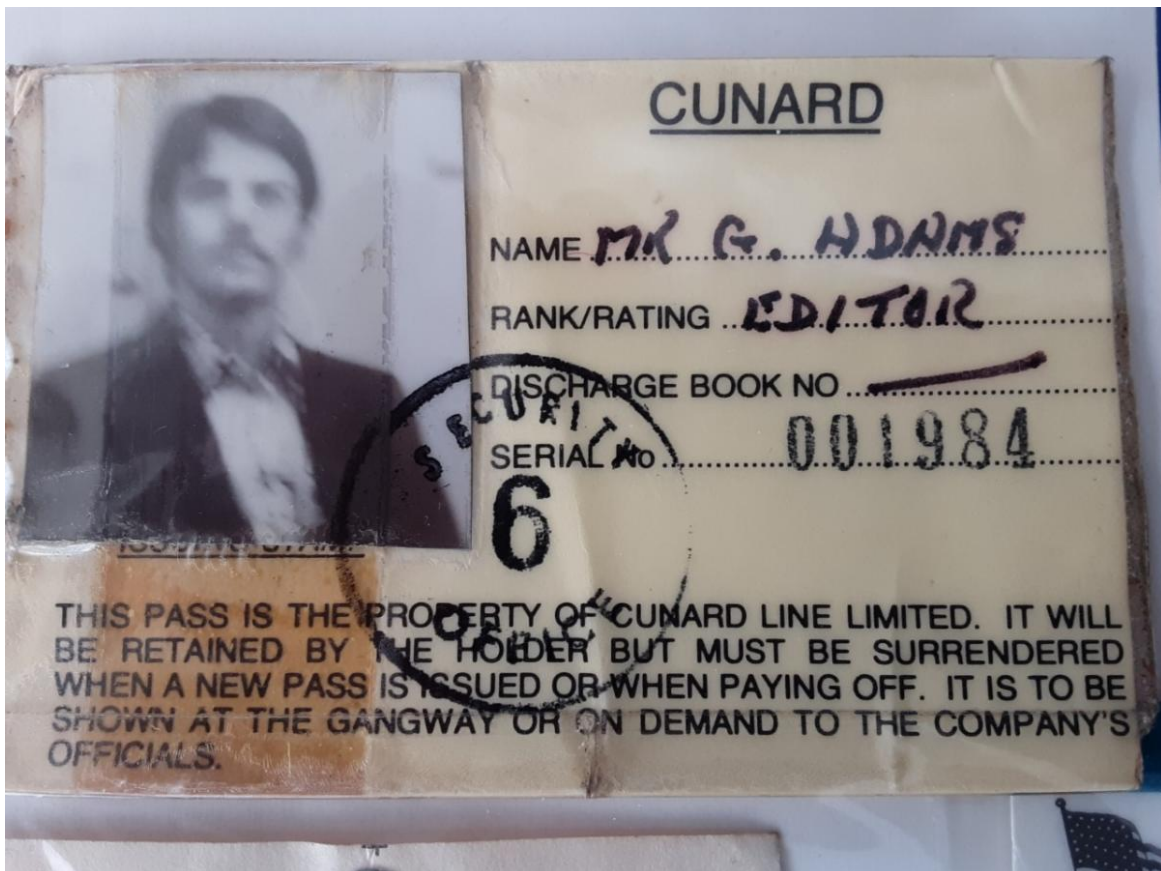
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Morale boosters



Chris Connell ([Email](#)) - Costco Home Delivery provided this morale boost for us Wednesday. No judgmental comments, please. It was out of most healthier stuff.

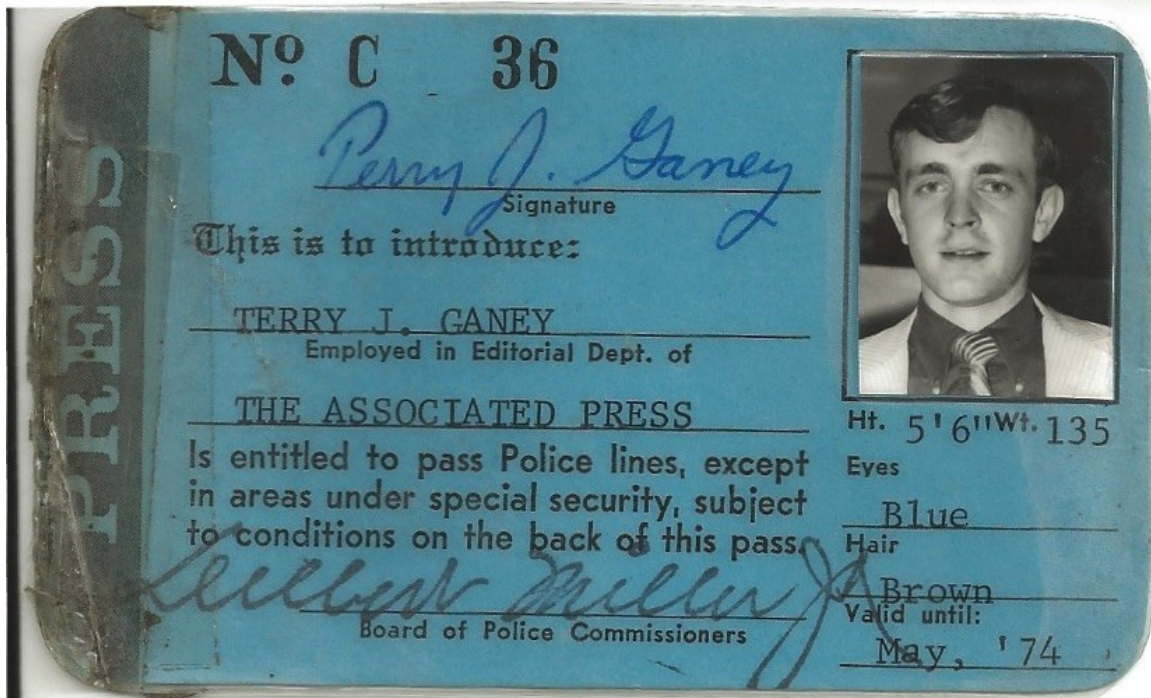
More of your early press passes



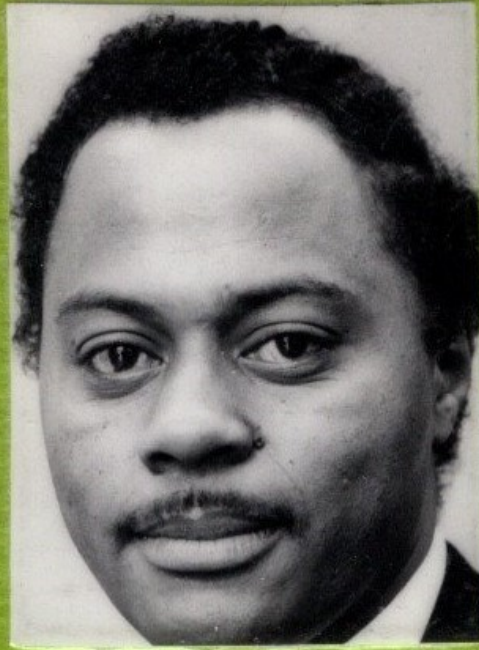
Glenn Adams ([Email](#)) - I found press passes from the 1970s. A couple are special issues to cover presidential visits (Ford) while I was working in the Philadelphia area for a suburban daily, Today's Post, and a later one from the 1984 campaign a it rolled through Maine while I was an AP staffer in Augusta. The Cunard card shown above with the blurry photo is what I used at the gangway to board the Queen Elizabeth 2, where my wife and I were editors of the daily published on board in 1979.



Mark Duncan ([Email](#)) - I found this in a box on my dresser...this was issued in Columbus when I started with the AP in 1980.



Terry Ganey ([Email](#)) – This is the press pass issued to me by the St. Louis Board of Police Commissioners when I worked in the AP bureau in St. Louis in 1974. The other side bears the signature of Kent Zimmerman, correspondent.



ROBERT E. GREENE

ASSOCIATED PRESS

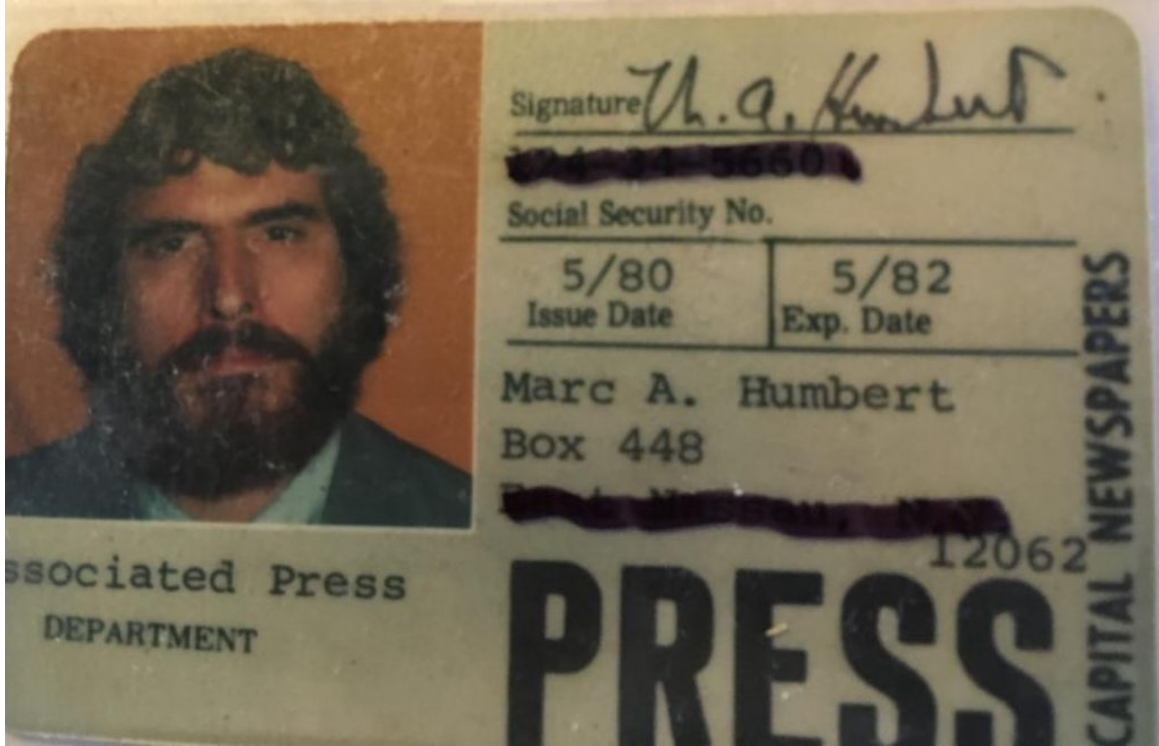
EXPIRES DECEMBER 31, 1972

No. 2326

PRESS

Metropolitan Police Department
District of Columbia

Bob Greene ([Email](#)) - There were earlier ones but this is one of the first with a picture.



Marc Humbert ([Email](#)) - 1980 - Lots of hair and it wasn't all white!



John Rogers ([Email](#)) - These are not nearly my oldest press passes but a couple I came across easily. For a time in the late '80s the LA Country Sheriff's Dept. began slapping a new date over your old pass when you renewed, to save time and money, so I believe the photo for that one was actually taken in 1987.

Connecting mailbox

RIP, Alan Finder – journalist taken by coronavirus

Marty Steinberg ([Email](#)) - CV pandemic hits too close to home. Alan Finder was a real gentleman. During my brief stint at The New York Times, he was always kind and helpful ... and sharp. May he rest in peace. Deepest sympathy to his family and friends. And thank you, former APer Rick Hampson, for this beautiful obit:



Journalist Alan Finder, 72, of Ridgewood, dies of coronavirus disease – by Rick Hampson, North New Jersey.com: Over five decades Alan Finder had a career of which young journalists dream. But when he died Tuesday at 72, several weeks after testing positive for COVID-19, his colleagues' eulogies dwelt on not his achievements – New York Times City Hall bureau chief, for one – as much as his character. He was, Times reporter Kevin Sack wrote on Twitter, “one of the menschiest guys around.” Read more [here](#) .

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Refugee AP Saigon staff after end of Vietnam War



Nick Ut ([Email](#)) – I send this picture after seeing the story in Wednesday's Connecting of the poem that Tran Mong Tu, AP Saigon bureau secretary, wrote after the coronavirus death March 16 of her sister, Chi, in Washington State. Known as Tutu by AP staff, Tran Mong Tu was among those evacuated to the U.S. at the end of the Vietnam war.

This picture taken in 1975 shows AP Saigon staff refugees at Guam after the end of the war. Left to right: Huynh Minh Trinh with his family; Tran Mong Tu next to her mother, AP Photographer Dang Van Phuoc, his wife (left) and children; Nick Ut, right with Sister In law and her daughter.

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Seeking your contributions to save the Daily Cal

Allen Matthews ([Email](#)) – I wanted to share news of a fundraising campaign for the Daily Californian. The Daily Cal is independent from UC Berkeley and relies on advertising and donations. Several AP folks cut their teeth at the Daily Cal, including Arthur Allen, Rich Jacobson, Lisa Leff and Tim Reiterman.

Dear Friend of The Daily Californian,

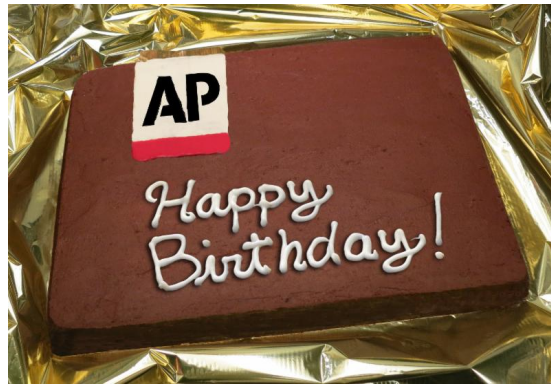
As you know, Congress has just approved the federal coronavirus relief bill. Among its many provisions, the measure provides most Americans with a \$1,200 check in the coming days. For many folks in affected businesses, the money will help keep them afloat.

Like the many restaurants effectively shuttered by the pandemic, the economic toll on the Daily Californian is severe. Earlier this month, we were planning our annual alumni event on March 14 – the largest ever – and planning to announce the campaign to raise \$1.5 million for the endowment. On March 9, we had to cancel the event, and soon we trimmed print publication to once a week. Within days, advertising revenue almost disappeared.

The Daily Californian has survived wars, earthquakes and economic disasters, but never has the Monarch of the College Dailies experienced such a dire crisis.

We, the Board of Directors, ask that you donate all or part of your bailout check to help the Daily Cal survive this dark moment. The full \$1,200 would be wonderful, but any amount is a shot in the arm. You can donate to the Daily California Education Foundation's general fund by clicking [here](#) or by sending a check to 2483 Hearst Ave., Berkeley 94709. You can contribute to the endowment by clicking [here](#).

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



To

Frank Baker – fsbaker@ap.org

Jerry Schwartz – jschwartz@ap.org

Stories of interest

Virus causes surge in WW II references, but is it merited?



AP file photo

LONDON (AP) — In the first week of June 2019, World War II was on many people's minds.

It was the 75th anniversary of D-Day, a week filled with events honoring the sacrifice and blood of tens of thousands of Allied soldiers that was spilled on the French beaches. Leaders from the United States, Britain, Canada, France — and then-foe and now ally Germany — gathered in a rare show of unity in Normandy, where the tide of the war was so decisively turned.

Now, nine months later, World War II references are once again being heard daily — because of the coronavirus.

The comparison is everywhere in recent days: The world is facing the most serious threat and challenge since the last truly global war. Various leaders have cited World War II in their virus-related remarks. There is pervasive fear that an "invisible enemy" could cause a severe escalation in deaths, ravage the global economy, hamper food supply and spark social unrest.

Read more [here](#) . Shared by Paul Albright.

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Richard Reeves, Columnist and Author on Presidents, Dies at 83 (New York Times)



Richard Reeves, author of numerous books about presidents and the internment of Japanese-Americans during World II. Credit...Patricia Williams/Simon & Schuster

By David Stout

Richard Reeves, a journalist and author who explored the presidency, the internment of Japanese-Americans during World II, the role of the media and other aspects of American history in muscular, passionate and occasionally acerbic prose, died on Wednesday at his home in Los Angeles. He was 83.

His son, Jeffrey, said the cause was cardiac arrest. Mr. Reeves had been treated for cancer.

Mr. Reeves, who was a lecturer at the Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism at the University of Southern California, wrote more than a dozen books and, from 1979 to 2014, a syndicated column that appeared in more than 100 newspapers. He was also a familiar face on public affairs programs on PBS.

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

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CNN and MSNBC Staff Push Back on Airing Trump's Coronavirus 'Lies' (Daily Beast)

By Lloyd Grove and Maxwell Tani

The nation's television news outlets, especially the three major cable-news networks, are grappling with a nagging paradox as President Donald Trump continues to orchestrate his White House briefings on the novel coronavirus pandemic.

On the one hand, their ratings have never been higher, and viewers' appetites for the live sessions have shown no signs of dwindling. On the other hand, journalists and executives at MSNBC, CNN and the often Trump-friendly Fox News—which scored an impressive 6.2 million viewers for Sunday's installment of the Trump show, according to Nielsen—are increasingly facing the likelihood that they are becoming an uncritical and unvetted transmission belt for propaganda and misinformation.

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

Today in History – March 26, 2020



By The Associated Press

Today is Thursday, March 26, the 86th day of 2020. There are 280 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On March 26, 1945, during World War II, Iwo Jima was fully secured by U.S. forces following a final, desperate attack by Japanese soldiers.

On this date:

In 1812, an earthquake devastated Caracas, Venezuela, causing an estimated 26,000 deaths, according to the U.S. Geological Survey.

In 1827, composer Ludwig van Beethoven died in Vienna.

In 1911, American playwright Tennessee Williams ("The Glass Menagerie," "A Streetcar Named Desire," "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof") was born in Columbus, Miss.

In 1962, the U.S. Supreme Court, in *Baker v. Carr*, gave federal courts the power to order reapportionment of states' legislative districts.

In 1964, the musical play "Funny Girl," starring Barbra Streisand as Fanny Brice, opened on Broadway.

In 1979, a peace treaty was signed by Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin (men-AH'-kem BAY'-gihn) and Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and witnessed by President Jimmy Carter at the White House.

In 1982, groundbreaking ceremonies took place in Washington, D.C., for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

In 1988, Jesse Jackson stunned fellow Democrats by soundly defeating Michael S. Dukakis in Michigan's Democratic presidential caucuses.

In 1992, a judge in Indianapolis sentenced former heavyweight boxing champion Mike Tyson to six years in prison for raping a Miss Black America contestant. (Tyson ended up serving three years.)

In 1997, the bodies of 39 members of the Heaven's Gate techno-religious cult who committed suicide were found inside a rented mansion in Rancho Santa Fe, California.

In 2013, Italy's top criminal court overturned the acquittal of American Amanda Knox in the grisly murder of British roommate Meredith Kercher and ordered

Knox to stand trial again. (Although convicted in absentia, Knox was exonerated by the Italian Supreme Court in 2015.)

In 2018, a toxicology report obtained by The Associated Press revealed that the late pop music superstar Prince had levels of fentanyl in his body that multiple experts described as “exceedingly high.”

Ten years ago: The U.S. and Russia sealed the first major nuclear weapons treaty in nearly two decades, agreeing to slash the former Cold War rivals’ warhead arsenals by nearly one-third. A South Korean warship exploded and sank near a disputed maritime border with North Korea, killing 46 sailors. (South Korea blamed North Korea, which denied involvement.) A truck collided with a van on I-65 in Kentucky, killing 10 Mennonites in the van and the truck driver. NBA player Gilbert Arenas was sentenced to 30 days in a halfway house for bringing guns into the Washington Wizards locker room.

Five years ago: Indiana Gov. Mike Pence signed a measure prohibiting state and local laws that “substantially burden” the ability of people to follow their religious beliefs; opponents charged the new law could legalize discrimination against gay people.

One year ago: The House failed to override President Donald Trump’s first veto, allowing him to steer billions of extra dollars to construct border barriers. The Senate defeated a motion to take up the Green New Deal, rejecting an opportunity to debate a comprehensive climate change plan offered by Democrats. Prosecutors in Chicago abruptly dropped all charges against Jussie Smollett, the “Empire” actor who was accused of faking a racist, anti-gay attack on himself; they said they still believed that Smollett had concocted the assault. (A grand jury revived the criminal case with new charges against Smollett in February 2020.) Rockland County in New York City’s northern suburbs declared a state of emergency over a measles outbreak that had infected more than 150 people; the action included a ban against unvaccinated children in public places.

Today’s Birthdays: Retired Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O’Connor is 90. Actor Alan Arkin is 86. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas is 85. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi is 80. Actor James Caan is 80. Author Erica Jong is 78. Journalist Bob Woodward is 77. Singer Diana Ross is 76. Actor Johnny Crawford is 74. Rock singer Steven Tyler (Aerosmith) is 72. Singer and TV personality Vicki Lawrence is 71. Actor Ernest Thomas is 71. Comedian Martin Short is 70. Country singer Ronnie McDowell is 70. Movie composer Alan Silvestri is 70. Rock musician Monte Yoho is 68. Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao is 67. Radio talk show host Curtis Sliwa is 66. Country singer Dean Dillon is 65. Country singer Charly McClain is 64. TV personality Leeza Gibbons is 63. Actress Ellia English is 61. Actress Jennifer Grey is 60. College and Pro Football Hall of Famer Marcus Allen is 60. Actor Billy Warlock is 59. Actor Eric Allan Kramer is 58. Basketball and College Basketball Hall of Famer John Stockton is 58. Actor Michael Imperioli is 54. Rock musician James Iha (EE’-hah) is 52. Country singer Kenny Chesney is 52. Movie director Martin McDonagh (Film: “Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri”) is 50. Actress Leslie Mann is 48. Actor T.R. Knight is 47. Rapper Juvenile is 45. Actress Amy Smart is 44. Actress Bianca Kajlich (KY’-lihk) is 43. Moderator Margaret

Brennan (TV: "Face the Nation") is 40. Actor Sterling Sulieman is 36. Actress Keira Knightley is 35. Rapper J-Kwon is 34. Actress Carly Chaikin is 30.

Thought for Today: "Life's like a play; it's not the length but the excellence of the acting that matters." [-] Seneca the Younger, Roman statesman and philosopher (3 B.C.-A.D. 65).

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