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Connecting March 30, 2020

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Colleagues,

Good Monday morning on this the 30th day of March 2020,

Stories contributed by you over the weekend on the coronavirus pandemic and how it is impacting your life lead today's Connecting.

They originate from:

New York – where **Edie Lederer**, AP's chief UN correspondent and its senior staffer, celebrated her birthday in a most unusual manner;

Dubuque – where **Sister Donalda Kehoe**, known to many of us as the ultimate lover of typewriters, tells of an impact that's no Nonsense;

Florida – where **Adolphe Bernotas** and his wife are among many snowbirds ending their annual visit to sun and warmth prematurely;

Georgia, where **Chris Sullivan** tells of the distancing-safe activity of walking in the woods;

Omaha, where AP newswoman **Margery Smith Beck** is working from home after being exposed to the virus;

Milwaukee, where **Kathy Curran** relates the ironic interplay of living with a spouse with Alzheimer's and coping with the virus;

Puerto Rico, where family and friends of **Angie Lamoli Silvestry** are dealing with yet another challenge.

On a sad note, we bring you news of the death of **Marilyn E. Dillon**, an award-winning reporter and editor who mentored dozens of young journalists in her 20 years as an editor. The wife of Connecting colleague **Brian Horton**, Mars died Friday, March 27, at their home on Long Beach Island. She was 64 and had recently been diagnosed with an inoperable lung tumor.

LATEST GROUND GAME : Social distancing. Flattening the curve. A new vocabulary has surfaced in an instant--just like everything else. In this episode of the “Ground Game: Inside the Outbreak” podcast, host Ralph Russo and reporter Matt Sedensky talk about why words matter during this pandemic. Click [here](#) to listen.

Please share your own stories on living under the shadow of the coronavirus.

Here’s to a safe and healthy week ahead.

Paul

Marilyn Dillon, former managing editor of the Courier News, dies at 64



Mar and husband Brian Horton last August on Long Beach Island. Photo was made by Jenn Poggi, a former AP Photos photo editor now teaching at RIT, to mark their wedding anniversary.

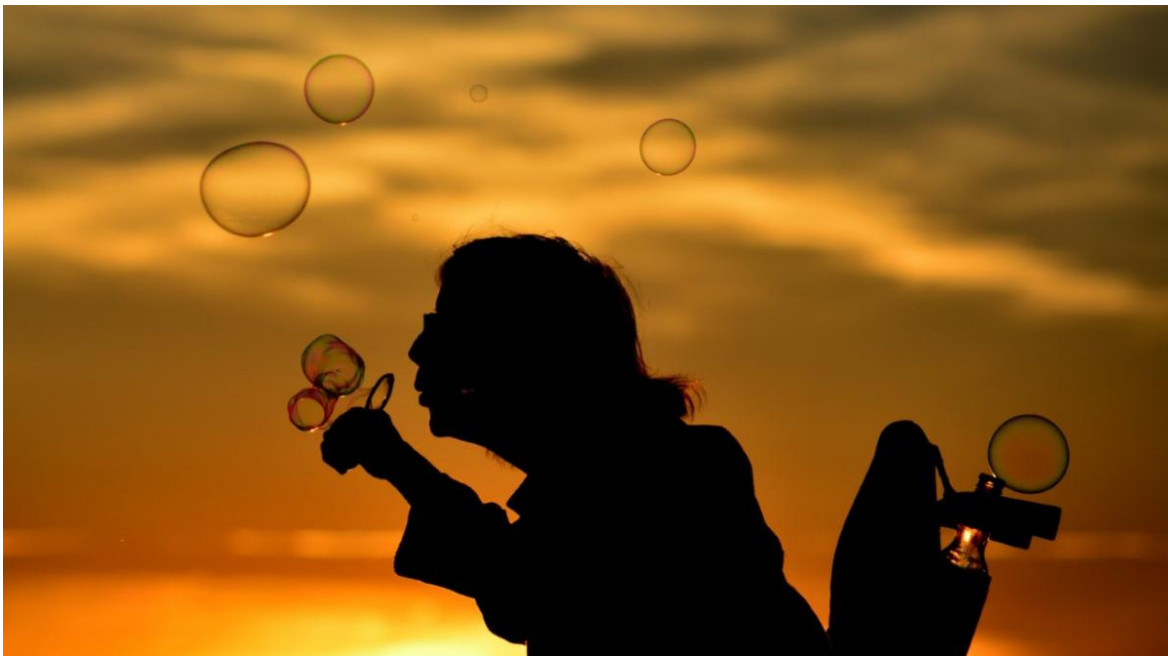
Marilyn E. Dillon, an award-winning reporter and editor who mentored dozens of young journalists in her 20 years as an editor at the Courier News in Bridgewater, died Friday, March 27, at her home on Long Beach Island.

Dillon was 64 and had recently been diagnosed with an inoperable lung tumor.

Three things topped Dillon's list of favorite things — a busy newsroom working a good story; happy hours or other celebrations with friends; and the year-round pursuit of sunny days and stunning sunsets on LBI, where she lived full-time since 2013 with Brian Horton, her husband of 37 years.

Read more [here](#) .

'Fly free, Marilyn Dillon, fly free!'



Mar blowing bubbles at sunset at the end of our street overlooking Barnegat Bay. It takes on new meaning for me now as the bubbles are free to float free, like Mar.

Brian Horton ([Email](#)) - I can't begin to thank everyone for the wonderful memories and kindnesses expressed on Facebook and in texts and messages on the death of my wife, Marilyn Dillon. Her brother, Bob, and I have spent the evening reading through them all.

She waged an amazing battle against MS for 13 years to live life as fully as possible despite all kinds of obstacles in her way. We tried to do the things we would do, and go all of the places we would go, if she wasn't in that wheelchair. And, in the end it wasn't MS but cancer that took her so suddenly from us.

She was a wonderful teacher and mentor to young journalists and she took so much pride in seeing them soar, though she hated to see them go. Journalism, and more specifically, newspapers, were her life blood. A good story made her

day. It broke her heart that she was never able to return to daily journalism, to the newsroom craziness and the pressures of deadlines. She loved all that.

And, we had the best life together. Our travels, our home at the shore, Happy Hour with friends and a pledge that we would always be there for each other.

In these past 13 years, when I would feel the weight of what was going on, I only had to think of everything she must be feeling and dealing with. That made my issues seem trivial in comparison. One of our neighbors at the shore, who had seen combat, said Mar was braver than many soldiers who had gone to war.

I will always remember her grit, determination, bravery, fun heart and that big smile with those dimples. This picture, by our friend Linda Hansen-Overly, shows Mar in her element before MS took so much from her - on the beach, a sunny day, good book. The perfect life. This is the way I will always remember her. Fly free, Marilyn Dillon, fly free!

Click [here](#) to read Brian and Mar's blog – Mar's Amazing Journey.

In sickness and in health, they were in love

Andy Lippman ([Email](#)) - I was in Cincinnati when Brian and Mar fell in love. The image of their smiles when they were together always stayed with me when I read Brian's weekly blogs. There are so many couples like them where one helps the other and makes the other better through better or worse times. In sickness and in health, they were love. I am glad for the memories that they shared with all of us, and I am glad that Mar did not have to suffer an extended bout with another horrible disease. I am also glad that I knew Mar and that I knew the love story she shared with Brian. God bless you both.

Edie Lederer's birthday during the COVID-19 pandemic



Edie Lederer ([Email](#)) - I had planned to spend my birthday in San Francisco with friends from my days at Stanford doing my MA and working for the AP from 1968 to 1972 but alas it was not to be. Suddenly, a virus that started in China and was pummeling several European countries arrived in the United States and its epicenter became New York City, where I live and work.

Three weeks ago, the United Nations asked all but essential staff to work at home. The U.N. press corps was considered essential so some of us went to work in our U.N. offices, me included. But that changed at the end of that week, especially after we learned that one of our U.N. journalist colleagues had tested positive for the coronavirus. He was a good friend of mine, and happily he is now recovering.

Even though the United Nations headquarters complex remains open, the entire press corps is working from home, many of us including me in self-isolation for two weeks because of our proximity to our colleague who tested positive. That meant sitting in front of my computer on the dining room table in my apartment for many hours because the U.N. remains quite busy and going out only to buy food, wearing my N95 mask and latex gloves.

My two-week self-isolation ended on Friday, March 27, which happened to be my birthday. But my routine remained the same.

There was a first-ever briefing by U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and the heads of the Security Council, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council for the 193 U.N. member nations from 10 a.m. until noon, followed by a video briefing by the U.N. spokesman at 1 p.m., with questions from journalists submitted in writing.

That kept me busy until 4 p.m. when one of my good friends, whom I had talked to but not seen, came to pick me up to go for a walk with a bouquet of pink roses. I met her outside my apartment building in the little park next to it. She was sitting on a bench and left the bouquet on the bench, got up and walked more than six feet away. I picked up the flowers, took them inside and left them on a counter, so the doorman could keep them while we walked.

When you walk six feet apart it isn't always easy to hear what the other person is saying, so we were shouting on occasion. The highlight of the walk for me was that Basic Hardware was open. I very rarely cook, and being forced to eat in my apartment I realized I was missing some essential items which the hardware store had. My birthday presents to myself were a wooden spoon, a large strainer to wash salad and vegetables, and a deep soup bowl because mine are very shallow.

I had thought about trying to do a virtual cocktail party but hadn't had time to figure out how to do it. Happily, the woman who organized the Zoom meeting for the U.N. Correspondents Association's executive board, which I am on, was able to quickly walk me through signing up with Zoom.

So from 6 p.m. until 8 p.m., I hosted a virtual cocktail party with friends from New York, California, Maine and Washington including Linda Deutsch and AP's deputy top story editor Maria Sanminiatielli. It was truly a memorable party with lots of renditions of Happy Birthday (without hand washing), and lots of toasts especially to good health with everybody raising their favorite tippie except the California crowd because it was a little too early for them.

On my walk, I had bought an individual cheesecake at the Amish Market, and when I told the woman behind the counter that it was my birthday cake, she taped a candle to the box. So, I lit the candle during the party, which set off another round of Happy Birthday and toasts.

The party attendees included personal friends and colleagues from the U.N. and AP, and the mix was really interesting. Everyone talked about how COVID-19 was impacting their life, and their community. We had such a good time that I am hosting another virtual cocktail party next Friday night, which turns out to be the birthday of one of my California friends.

After the party, I went back to work and wrote two stories for AP and an item for The Latest on the United Nations saying 86 staff members around the world have reported cases of COVID-19. As Secretary-General Guterres said to the virtual summit of leaders of the Group of 20 major industrialized nations on Thursday: "We are at war with a virus - and not winning it."

My birthday ended at my computer, reading the many emails I got with good wishes, often ending with the new signoff which I wish to all of you: "Stay safe. Stay healthy."

I have celebrated my birthday around the world, including in wars and political crises, but this was certainly a birthday I will never forget.

Coronavirus threat is no Nunsense



Sister Donalda and nurse Patty Bodnar at Clare House.

Sister Donalda Kehoe ([Email](#)) - Once upon a time, Nunsense was a big stage hit – the comedy focusing on a community of women religious (in full habit) solving the problem of a plethora of deaths in their community because of food poisoning. Well, with the first rumor of a potential virus, our Mt. St. Francis Complex went on lockdown.

No visitors permitted. Vendors and employees use Swipe cards. All appointments are cancelled, except for emergency (which we haven't had). Meetings are being held periodically to update us – held in a conference room where we sit with an empty chair between each person. In the dining room, we are seated two at a table for four. Sanitizers are everywhere for use. The Archbishop has cancelled all liturgies, and our confessor has cancelled the Sacrament of Penance. On Sunday we have the Liturgy of the Word, with no Holy Communion, conducted by one of the Sisters. A space is left between each Sister in chapel. Morning and evening community prayer continues as always, with the advised spacing in chapel, as elsewhere. Should a Sister feel sick, she will have been advised NOT to go to the nurse but to PHONE her and explain her symptoms, and the nurse will take over from there.

For years now, our Sisters have taken on the ministry of creating baby blankets for mothers in Haiti, once we learned that many mothers there were so poor they were wrapping their newborns in newspaper. It is from the extra pieces from cutting their blankets that face masks are also being created for employees. Very colorful.

The mailman leaves the tray of incoming mail in the entranceway and picks up the tray of outgoing mail. An employee retrieves the incoming mail tray, brings it inside, washes her hands, and the mail is left untouched for a half day for health reasons. Our institution would be similar to all such retirement homes. And there has been no sign of the virus here. Schools are closed, most every business in Dubuque is closed, but many eateries are offering pickup or carryouts.

The citizens here and elsewhere are showing their best sides, with creative solutions, and sensitive neighborliness. Even the pundits are showing up with appropriate humor. And always a reminder to wash your hands, etc.

Life isn't all that different for me, actually, as the typewriter works, I continue working over stamps, do correspondence, read, do puzzles, take walks, pray with community, and keep a diary.

Get outside – it's the best healthy option



Chris Sullivan ([Email](#)) - You encouraged reports on how we're all adjusting to the New Reality. Ours is not a dramatic story like so many of the great pieces I've read lately in Connecting, from Beijing and Rome and New York and Timor Leste. I thought I'd pass ours along partly as contrast, partly to suggest that maybe others can find a way just to get outside safely, which is definitely healthy if it's an option.

My wife Lucy and I live in a little community in north Georgia, about an hour from her hometown of Atlanta and about 10 minutes from the southern terminus of the Appalachian Trail. Generally, we've been doing what everybody else has during these times – reading more, watching movies more, paying very close attention to the news (and feeling more certain than ever that journalists are, in every sense, always but especially now, “essential workers”) and worrying about loved ones and friends in hot spots. But we've also been taking long hikes. By long, I mean, as a non-hiker, long: Lucy's Fitbit or Strava readout usually comes in at 3, 4, 5 miles, up and down trails in the spring woods.

From some naturalist friends (we keep a safe separation when we hike with them) we've learned to identify bloodroot and trout lily and trillium and ground pine and other sprouts that brighten the trails; and the other day along a trail that followed the course of a stream, we discovered the rusted remains of what we're pretty sure had been a moonshine still decades ago. Along one ridge crest, looking north across a valley toward peaks that probably span the state line of Tennessee, we stumbled upon two rustic chairs that someone had set out for anyone pausing for a rest. (Photo above). I've since learned they were made and put there years ago by a neighbor who has long since moved to Oregon, and I sent a note to thank him for his prescience (and to note that they're still upright).

All this is just to say that if you can get out for a walk in the woods (or a park, or a neighborhood street), wherever you are, we've found it a great way to get through these strange times.

Working from home, hoping exposure doesn't bring the virus



Margery Beck ([Email](#)) – breaking news staffer, AP Omaha bureau - My observations these days are coming about half a mile up the hill from the lake — the bit of it I can see from my front yard. Like many of you, I'm keeping my distance in the hopes of both not contracting and not spreading a particularly nasty virus.

As part of my job over the last month (has it only been a month? It seems so much longer), I've had to brush up on viruses and pandemics and the efforts to combat them. I know that the new coronavirus originated in animals — likely bats or an Asian armadillo-like creature called a pangolin — and at some point last year jumped to humans. It quickly adapted to spread from human to human, and some studies show it continues to morph into deadlier strains. Scientists have a word for this type of virus: slippery.

How apropos. Slippery. It so perfectly captures not only the mutating virus, but the unsure footing of our society, our economy, even our liberties, as we scramble to stop the spread.

I'd hazard a guess that most of us until this month have taken for granted the ability to browse a fully-stocked grocery store at our convenience. Or drop into a restaurant for a bite, our most pressing concern being whether we wanted burgers, Tex-Mex, Italian or fare from an endless array of ethnic offerings.

Now, many of those shelves are bare. The restaurants are closed or offering only take-out. We find ourselves essentially on lockdown, with a domino succession of states and cities issuing stay-at-home orders as officials desperately try to get a handle on a pandemic that has already slipped out of their control. On March 1, there were 75 confirmed cases in the United States, most of them on the West Coast. Today, there are some 34,000 cases across the country and 500 deaths, and those numbers are expected to grow exponentially over the coming days, maybe weeks. The World Health Organization says 20% of those who contract the virus will need to be hospitalized. Projections suggest our hospitals will become overwhelmed if we can't slow the spread by staying away from each other.

I'm all in on self-isolation. I was asked last week to stay in my home and monitor for symptoms after possibly being exposed two weeks ago. The monitoring was to last a week, but I know I'm in for a longer haul, as are we all.

Read more of her blog [here](#) .

Every day was stressful – well before coronavirus

Kathy Curran ([Email](#)) – *wife of retired AP journalist Tim Curran, from Milwaukee* - It is hard to socialize, hard to meet new friends, hard to know what to expect at any time, sad to watch things getting worse, and scared of what's ahead. Every day is stressful.

This was before coronavirus. This is living with Alzheimer's disease.

Now, with all the restrictions on us due to the pandemic, and fear for the future, I want to say, "Welcome to my world."

I don't. I am not happy to have anyone else join my world or this frightening new world of coronavirus. To the contrary, I find we gain strength and determination from all the strong and healthy people surrounding us. They hold us up and carry us when we need it.

I mourn when I learn of another person with dementia or any other illness or disability. I am saddened by this new national tragedy, this terrible epidemic, the deaths, the loss of livelihoods and all the related hardships. I am scared to death for my children and other loved ones, in particular right now, our family

living in New York, where sitting on the front step has become a luxury, after which they need to be stripped down and bathed to re-enter the house.

I do admit, however, to a small amount of comfort I have been able to take in not having the daily concerns about how our Alzheimer's journey will fit into the real world, the normal world, to not worry how our limitations will impact whatever plans are on the day's agenda, how we, as the square peg, will fit into the round hole of the universe.

Now everyone is confined to home, everyone is acting strange, dancing around with masks and rubber gloves and sanitizer wipes, not noticing the glaze in my husband's eyes and his confusion trying to keep up with conversation, his difficulty eating and dressing, his loss of social skills. I do not have to start each day stressed about where we're going, how he will be dressed to accommodate his limitations, how we'll deal with whatever comes up as we attempt to continue our participation in normal society.

We'll just be at home like everyone else is, but not as alone. It feels less like we're missing out on life.

Having said that, every day I am aware of how many others have disabilities and hardships far worse and for more of their lives, and how dangerous this pandemic is for all of us. I am heartbroken to read Karen Ball's touching story in Connecting on having to deal with her own MS and now her husband's illness possibly due to coronavirus.

I will bravely return to our own uncertain and dwindling lifestyle if this horrible pandemic will come to an end and normalcy and good health can once again be claimed by the masses.

These snowbirds are headed home

Adolphe Bernotas ([Email](#)) - I bet many fellow Connecting colleagues who spend winters in the South, so-called snowbirds or winter Texans, have been struggling about where to ride out the plague as the New York Times story details [here](#).

After dithering, delaying and denying, Marguerite and I will head from Florida to New Hampshire, hoping for open motels, otherwise sleeping in the car at Pilot gas stations.

What persuaded me was the spring break crowds that ignored social distancing and spread the virus into the country's oldest population. One of the medico-science geeks predicted Florida would become "like one of those cruise ships."

Things in Florida are probably as bizarre as elsewhere. Just about everything is closed, supermarket shelves bare of paper and other goods. Some have opened "senior hours" which compounds the problem because every old phart in Sarasota County queues into long lines before dawn and the toilet paper

and paper towels disappear even more quickly. (They also hoard water, which I don't apprehend, being a from-the-faucet drinker.)

Everything in our community is closed, including the pool, which I need as therapy for my aching back. With a group of friends and neighbors, we manage to put in a few miles on the bikes in the morning for some token exercise. Performances of concerts, ballet, opera, dances, pot lucks, happy hours etc. canceled. (Marguerite had been working hard and rehearsing line dancing in our community's theater group for a skit about "Trashy Women" -- gone; a poetry reading that I enjoy and a bass tournament in our ponds {once made second place} also gone).

We talk with family and friends on the phone and emails. That's as social as it gets.

We get tired of watching cable channels and yelling at the TV when the petulant toddler-in-chief appears. He's nuts; let's invoke the 25th Amendment and haul him away. (But then we would have to do the same with every sycophantic Republican.) "Nothing to be done until November."

Although a brief bit of cable TV was good for the soul a few days ago. I teared up when Andrew Cuomo invoked the memory and advice of his father, the late governor, during his daily New York coronavirus briefings.

Cuomo's tribute to his father brought to my memory Dec. 20, 1991 as I and hordes of reporters in Albany and Concord waited with proverbial baited breath: would Mario Cuomo arrive at the Statehouse to enter the New Hampshire Presidential Primary before the 5 p.m. deadline? Mario stayed in Albany with a budget problem, I think; I was ready to speed to the airport to meet him. (I believe Connecting colleague Mark Humbert was to accompany Cuomo to New Hampshire; am I correct, Mark?)

How can you not admire Andrew Cuomo? When I see him on TV, I think "leadership, presidential, truth teller." When I see the President, I think "mendacity, venal, corrupt" and worse. Andrew is a chip off Mario's block. Mario should have run for president.

Enough ranting. Stay calm and wash hands.

Yet another blow to Puerto Rico



Angie Lamoli Silvestry ([Email](#)) - Stressed? For perspective: My family and friends in Puerto Rico have gone through the island's economic collapse of 2014. Strict economic measures were put in place in an effort to repay the debt, causing almost the total eradication of the middle class and contributing further to the collapse of the island's infrastructure. Then, Hurricane Maria devastated the island in 2017 and the federal and state governments were so inept in their response, the number of resulting deaths is still in question and, just months ago, it was confirmed by a Yale University study that there has been a Leptospirosis outbreak after the storm which resulted in many mostly undocumented deaths. Meanwhile, Puerto Ricans have been subject to increased bigotry and discrimination under this administration, considered American stepchildren. Corruption in the local government reached its boiling point in the summer of 2019, causing hundreds of thousands to Puerto Ricans to take to the streets, eventually, without firing a shot, forcing the governor to resign with no heir apparent to the position. A reluctant secretary of justice took the position with no experience and challenges which would bring the most capable of governors to their knees. Then the earth started to shake in late December 2019, experiencing 6.4 magnitude quake on their Día de

Reyes. The earth has not stopped shaking since, deeply affecting the south and west areas of the island. In between, they had outbreaks of dengue fever, Zika, chikunkunya and the flu.

Now, they face the coronavirus pandemic with an already stressed healthcare system, little testing and resources requiring severe measures of social distancing imposed with the earth still shaking under their feet and a predicted upcoming active hurricane season. Yet, they still hold their heads high, do with what's available, armed with dignity, positive attitude and an exquisite sense of humor.

Best of the Week

AP is there: Exclusive access to the first human trial of coronavirus vaccine



A pharmacist gives volunteer Jennifer Haller the first shot in the first-stage safety study clinical trial of a potential vaccine for COVID-19 at the Kaiser Permanente Washington Health Research Institute in Seattle, March 16, 2020. “We all feel so helpless. This is an amazing opportunity for me to do something,” Haller said before getting vaccinated. AP PHOTO / TED S. WARREN

AP was there in all formats when the first shots were given in a first test of an experimental coronavirus vaccine on humans.

The world had been waiting for this moment: the start of a clinical study searching for a vaccine for the new coronavirus that sparked a pandemic.

Lots of reporting has been done on the worldwide hunt for potential COVID-19 vaccines with the U.S. National Institutes of Health as the front-runner, but no one knew when exactly the first shots would be given. When White House reporter Zeke Miller got word that the first volunteers in the clinical trial would be injected in Seattle the following day, he had the news on the wire within minutes. Meanwhile, D.C.-based medical writer Lauran Neergaard had leveraged years of source work to separately arranged exclusive access to the trial, enabling AP to have an all-formats team present at the start of the experiment.

Read more [here](#) .

Best of the States **Fast, definitive work on US price gouging complaints amid coronavirus crisis**



Complaints about price gouging quickly emerged as the coronavirus began its across the United States, accompanied by panic buying and shortages of key products. A smart coverage plan executed quickly led to AP's definitive look at how some unscrupulous people were profiteering amid the chaos.

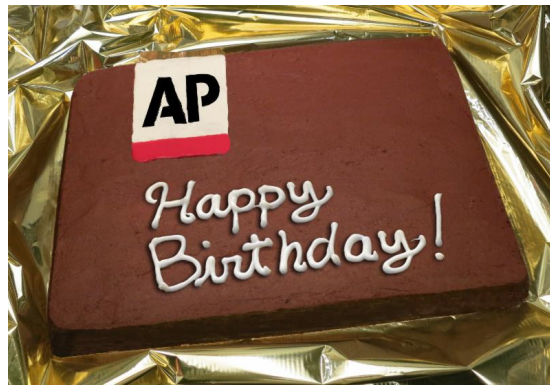
When Justin Pritchard and Reese Dunklin were asked to look into price gouging and profiteering off the coronavirus crisis, they weren't interested in doing an ordinary roundup.

Instead, the pair from the AP's investigative team sought to go deeper by employing a key part of their investigative reporting toolkit: a systematic reporting strategy.

They quickly came up with and executed a plan to question attorneys general in all 50 states that resulted in the most comprehensive look yet at the problem across the nation. And it came at a key time when the topic was on the minds of millions of Americans as lockdown orders took hold and shoppers scrambled to stock up on coveted supplies.

Read more [here](#).

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



to

Sarah Nordgren - snordgren@ap.org

Welcome to Connecting



Jennifer Grogan McDermott - jen.grogan@gmail.com

Rich Mencl - rmenc1@earthlink.net

Mark Rochester - markjrochester@gmail.com

Margery Smith Beck - missmargery@cox.net

Stories of interest

Remembering Maria Mercader, CBS News journalist for three decades (CBS News0



From left: Maria Mercader, Pat Milton and Terri Stewart. Mercader was a former Emmy award winning producer and most recently an executive at CBS News, the director of talent strategy. Stewart is vice president and national editor, CBS News. Pat Milton is senior producer the investigative unit, CBS News and a former AP journalist.

CBS News is mourning the loss of Maria Mercader, a network veteran who covered breaking news for nearly three decades and, most recently, helped shape strategy for the network's correspondents and reporters.

Maria was 54 and died from the Covid-19 coronavirus in a New York hospital. She had been on medical leave for an unrelated matter since the last week in February.

Maria fought cancer and related illnesses for more than 20 years, and was an inspiration each time she returned to work after a setback threatened to end

her life.

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

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Grieving the loss of one of our own

Pat Milton ([Email](#)) - I join my CBS News family in grieving the loss of one of our own, Maria Mercader, a dear friend, a remarkably courageous and loving woman and an Emmy award-winning producer who died from the coronavirus. I think it was Maria's deep faith in God, her profound love for her family and the support of her legion of friends that lifted her through life's challenges including numerous cancer surgeries that would have shaken the humor and compassion out of so many of us.

Maria never quit life. She had a fierce determination to fight for another day, which she viewed as a gift. She was an inspiration. A gentle soul. A caring, fun-loving friend. I will miss her terribly.

A tribute to a friend and colleague

Jerry Cipriano ([Email](#)) - I wrote this tribute to my CBS News friend and colleague Maria Mercader, who died over the week of coronavirus. It aired Sunday on the CBS Weekend News. Click [here](#) to view.

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The Fate of the News in the Age of the Coronavirus (New Yorker)

By Michael Luo

In 2009, as the economy struggled to rebound from the Great Recession, executives at the New York Times found themselves in a vigorous internal debate. They were trying to decide whether their content should go behind a paywall, making it available only to paying subscribers. There were compelling arguments on both sides. It wasn't at all clear that people would be willing to pay for news; by implementing a paywall, the Times risked cannibalizing its enormous digital audience. But advertising revenue was plummeting, both online and in print, and the newspaper desperately needed new sources of income. To study the matter, Arthur Sulzberger, Jr., the publisher at the time, convened internal committees and hired outside consultants. The Times's leadership, meanwhile, took drastic steps to stabilize the company financially,

borrowing two hundred and fifty million dollars from the Mexican billionaire Carlos Slim, trimming the size of the newsroom, and reducing a dividend paid to members of the Sulzberger family. In a final meeting of newsroom and business-department leaders, both sides presented their cases. Sulzberger cast his lot with those who favored charging for digital access.

On March 28, 2011, the Times introduced a “metered paywall.” People could read up to twenty articles a month for free; beyond that, they were required to purchase a subscription plan. In an article published in the Times just before the launch, Sulzberger and Janet Robinson, then the company’s chief executive officer, explained that they were thinking about the newspaper’s long-term future. “This is not a bet on this year,” Sulzberger told the writer, Jeremy W. Peters. “The question that remains to be answered,” Peters wrote, in turn, “is whether that bet pays off in 2015, 2020 or ever.”

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

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Bail Out Journalists. Let Newspaper Chains Die. (New York Times)

By Ben Smith

Elizabeth Green was musing the other day about buying 261 newspapers.

You could, this Sunday, purchase Gannett, the biggest newspaper chain in the country, for a mere \$261 million — about a quarter of what Michael R. Bloomberg spent on his presidential campaign.

And Ms. Green, a founder of the nonprofit education news organization Chalkbeat, is one of the few people who may be able to raise the money to pull off a deal like that.

But she quickly realized that Gannett wasn’t worth it: Buying it would mean signing up to pay off a high-interest loan from a giant New York private equity firm and relying on an advertising business model that may be in its death throes because of the coronavirus.

It’s a moment of deep crisis for the local news business, which could have been blown over by a light breeze and is now facing a hurricane. But it’s also a moment of great promise for a new generation of largely nonprofit local publications.

The time is now to make a painful but necessary shift: Abandon most for-profit local newspapers, whose business model no longer works, and move as fast as possible to a national network of nimble new online newsrooms. That way,

we can rescue the only thing worth saving about America's gutted, largely mismanaged local newspaper companies — the journalists.

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

The Final Word



Nick Ut ([Email](#)) - My first time birthday at home on Sunday, and this year no birthday party in restaurant. My family worry coronavirus.

Today in History – March 30, 2020



By The Associated Press

Today is Monday, March 30, the 90th day of 2020. There are 276 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On March 30, 1981, President Ronald Reagan was shot and seriously injured outside a Washington, D.C. hotel by John W. Hinckley, Jr.; also wounded were White House press secretary James Brady, Secret Service agent Timothy McCarthy and a District of Columbia police officer, Thomas Delahanty.

On this date:

In 1822, Florida became a United States territory.

In 1867, U.S. Secretary of State William H. Seward reached agreement with Russia to purchase the territory of Alaska for \$7.2 million, a deal ridiculed by critics as "Seward's Folly."

In 1909, the Queensboro Bridge, linking the New York City boroughs of Manhattan and Queens, opened.

In 1923, the Cunard liner RMS Laconia became the first passenger ship to circle the globe as it arrived in New York.

In 1964, John Glenn withdrew from the Ohio race for the U.S. Senate because of injuries suffered in a fall. The original version of the TV game show "Jeopardy!," hosted by Art Fleming, premiered on NBC.

In 1975, as the Vietnam War neared its end, Communist forces occupied the city of Da Nang.

In 1986, actor James Cagney died at his farm in Stanfordville, New York, at age 86.

In 1991, Patricia Bowman of Jupiter, Florida, told authorities she'd been raped hours earlier by William Kennedy Smith, the nephew of Sen. Edward Kennedy, at the family's Palm Beach estate. (Smith was acquitted at trial.)

In 1999, Yugoslav leader Slobodan Milosevic (sloh-BOH'-dahn mee-LOH'-shuh-vich) insisted that NATO attacks stop before he moved toward peace, declaring his forces ready to fight "to the very end." NATO answered with new resolve to wreck his military with a relentless air assault.

In 2004, in a reversal, President George W. Bush agreed to let National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice testify publicly and under oath before an independent panel investigating the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

In 2006, American reporter Jill Carroll, a freelancer for The Christian Science Monitor, was released after 82 days as a hostage in Iraq.

In 2009, President Barack Obama asserted unprecedented government control over the auto industry, rejecting turnaround plans from General Motors and Chrysler and raising the prospect of controlled bankruptcy for either ailing auto giant.

Ten years ago: President Barack Obama signed a single measure sealing his health care overhaul and making the government the primary lender to students by cutting banks out of the process. The world's largest atom smasher, the Large Hadron Collider in Geneva, threw together minuscule particles racing at unheard of speeds in conditions simulating those just after the Big Bang. Math teacher Jaime Escalante, who inspired the movie "Stand and Deliver," died in Roseville, California, at age 79. Morris Jeppson, a weapons test officer aboard the Enola Gay who helped arm the atomic bomb dropped over Hiroshima, died in a Las Vegas hospital at age 87.

Five years ago: German officials confirmed that Germanwings co-pilot Andreas Lubitz was once diagnosed with suicidal tendencies and received lengthy psychotherapy before receiving his pilot's license; they believed Lubitz deliberately smashed his Airbus A320 into the French Alps, killing 150 people. Former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert was convicted of unlawfully accepting money from a U.S. supporter in his retrial on corruption charges. Two men dressed as women and driving a stolen SUV ignored officers' orders at the gate to the National Security Agency in Fort Meade, Maryland; police fired on the SUV, which then rammed into a police vehicle. One man was killed. Comedy Central announced that Trevor Noah, a 31-year-old comedian from South Africa, would succeed Jon Stewart as host of "The Daily Show."

One year ago: The Rolling Stones announced that they would be postponing their latest tour so that Mick Jagger could receive medical treatment. Texas Tech reached the Final Four of the NCAA college basketball tournament for the first time in the school's history, defeating Gonzaga 75-69 in the West Regional final; Virginia advanced to the Final Four for the first time since 1984 by beating Purdue 80-75 in overtime.

Today's Birthdays: Game show host Peter Marshall is 94. Actor John Astin is 90. Actor-director Warren Beatty is 83. Rock musician Graeme Edge (The Moody Blues) is 79. Rock musician Eric Clapton is 75. Actor Justin Deas is 72. Actor Paul Reiser is 64. Rap artist MC Hammer is 58. Singer Tracy Chapman is 56. Actor Ian Ziering (EYE'-an ZEER'-ing) is 56. TV personality Piers Morgan is 55. Rock musician Joey Castillo is 54. Actress Donna D'Errico is 52. Singer Celine Dion is 52. TV personality/producer Richard Rawlings is 51. Actor Mark Consuelos is 49. Actress Bahar Soomekh is 45. Actress Jessica Cauffiel is 44. Singer Norah Jones is 41. Actress Fiona Gubelmann is 40. Actress Katy Mixon is 39. Actor Jason Dohring is 38. Country singer Justin Moore is 36. Actress Tessa Ferrer is 34. Country singer Thomas Rhett is 30. Rapper NF is 29.

Thought for Today: "We lie loudest when we lie to ourselves." [-] Eric Hoffer, American philosopher (1898-1983).

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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