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Connecting April 8, 2020

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Colleagues,

Good Wednesday morning on this the 8th day of April 2020,

We lead today's Connecting with a note of thanks from the family of **Nick Jesdanun** – the first AP journalist to die from COVID-19.

In their note, Nick's brother and cousin suggest that instead of sending a card, you can send kind words, memories or photos to this email address - memories4nick@gmail.com – and that a memorial service will be planned sometime near the first anniversary of his death.

We also bring you stories from **Adolphe Bernotas**, on a return to home in New Hampshire after cutting short his and wife **Marguerite**'s annual trip to Florida because of the coronavirus pandemic, and from **Joe McGowan** on his wife **Babette André**'s reporting work during the Vietnam War.

I look forward to hearing from you on your own coronavirus-related story on how it is impacting your life. As to Adolphe's piece, he has borrowed from the past a word to use in the present - downhunkered. It will bring a smile to those oldsters like me who recall wire terms like downhold or unstaffing. Got any others in mind?

Today, there are even more of your early press passes - the Connecting series that, like the Energizer Bunny, keeps going on and on and on. To the delight of all of us!



AP GROUND GAME : Police departments keep patrolling amid the COVID-19 outbreak. Now officers are catching the virus and calling out sick. AP law enforcement reporters Colleen Long and Mike Balsamo tell us what that looks like.

Listen [here](#) .

PULITZERS DELAYED : The Pulitzer Prize Board will postpone the announcement of this year's winners because some board members have been busy covering the global coronavirus outbreak, the organization announced Tuesday. The announcement of Pulitzer winners in journalism and the arts will be postponed from April 20 to May 4, the board said.

Be safe, healthy and stay optimistic.

Paul

Wonderful to see how close-knit the AP community is



Nick at the NYC Marathon in 2017 (Photo by Risa Harms)

EDITOR'S NOTE: Two members of Nick Jesdanun's family – his brother **Gary Jesdanun** ([Email](#)) and cousin **Prinda Mulpramook** ([Email](#)) – asked to extend their gratitude on behalf of all his family for the outpouring of support following Nick's death due to COVID-19 last week, the first AP journalist to die from the virus.)

We appreciate from the bottom of our hearts what a gift everyone at the AP has blessed us with ... from your special Saturday edition of Connecting, to Ted Anthony's beautifully written tribute piece, to all of the individual emails

that have been pouring in from Nick's past and present colleagues with their kind words and thoughts. We've found the overwhelming response to be completely heartwarming and an amazing resource in helping us navigate this difficult time.

This is probably more attention than he would have been comfortable with, but Nick deserves it, and we're glad he's getting it.

It's also really wonderful to see how close-knit the AP community is, and gives us a lot of joy to know that Nick was part of such a warm and loving community for so many years. As you probably know, Nick's entire professional career was with the AP, and we're sure he would have been there until he retired.

Some people have asked about how they can share condolence cards... we think that Nick would be very uncomfortable with people going out of their way to send a card, especially if it meant they would put themselves at risk to get to a store or a post office. Instead, we've set up an email address - memories4nick@gmail.com - where people can send their kind words, fun memories and photos. We will likely hold a memorial service for him sometime near the first anniversary of his death. We hope to use these materials to make a tribute book to distribute at that future date, so that he can have his name in print one more time.

As our last thoughts to you, we ask that everyone continues to heed Nick's story as a cautionary tale. Let's make sure we are isolating as much as possible. For those who have to go outside, please take every precaution in doing so. None of us is invincible. We will only get through this time of crisis together, and we must all play our part.

'Downhunkered' at home after 1,600-mile drive from Florida



Adolphe Bernotas ([Email](#)) - Marguerite and I determined that the Petri dish of plague would be safer in New Hampshire than in Florida and left our Sunshine State community weeks ahead of schedule.

We are home after driving almost 1,600 miles in two days through 10 states and the District of Columbia.

Discovered that the E-Z Pass transponder's battery had died and we will be getting bills in the mail from several toll authorities. (On the Thomas E. Dewey Threwey, a toll tender demanded \$1.50 in cash; I slapped two dollar bills into his latex-gloved hand and Marguerite told him to keep the change; first time we "tipped" a public servant.

We left Florida on Sunday, got home to Kawn-kidd yesterday, Monday -- (a ridiculous number of miles for old people to be driving). Hit the road by 4:30 a.m. and drove at least 12 hours each day. Cheap gas prices, as low

as \$1.45 the gallon. (We wore gloves and masks while pumping fuel).

Very few cars along the way, except in D.C., where traffic was as furious, overwhelming and bewildering as ever (apparently everyone there is essential). All states except Connecticut had overhead electronic signs telling drivers to stay home or for visitors to quarantine for 14 days. We saw no impediments to travel other than the usual cops stopping speeders. (We did witness Florida-bound cars funneled into the welcome center a brief distance from Georgia where state troopers apparently were checking for Typhoid Mary contraband in vehicles with New York license tags).



We felt somewhat spooked at eerily empty I-95 welcome centers and Jersey Turnpike rest areas, only Drunkin' Donuts open to offer bagel and doughnut takeout.

We carried our own food. Marguerite had assembled the provisions in the cooler. We stopped only for gas and toilet breaks. (Entry to most male stalls/urinals barred with yellow police tape.)

We ate in the moving car. Breakfast was boiled egg sandwiches and granola bars; lunch, broiled chicken sandwiches and oranges. Had a fine supper of our home-made stuffed cabbage at the hotel. By the second evening we were at home and had dinner of something we couldn't remember eating for many years -- a delivered-at-the-door fresh mushroom and fresh mozzarella pizza from a Main Street non-franchised pizzeria, washed down with Sauvignon Blanc. (No beer in the fridge).

At the Holiday Inn in Richmond we wiped down everything in the room repeatedly with Lysol wipes. Now that we have resupplied the larder in Concord, restored home delivery of newspapers, internet and cable TV, we plan to downhunker except for the jaunts to the back yard clothesline, sidewalk to put out trash and recyclables and bike rides in the neighborhood at proper physical distances once we get re-accustomed to the New Hampshire April weather.

Taking a different route to cover Vietnam War



Babette interviewing Nguyen Van Be. On the desk in front of them is a North Vietnamese paper with his picture and a story saying this Viet Cong has been killed and is a hero!! Actually, he had defected to the American side.

Joe McGowan ([Email](#)) - I enjoyed reading the Vietnam exploits of the women correspondents. Fortunately, most of them seem to have had the backing of major news organizations such as AP and UPI.

My wife, Babette André, took a different route. She had gone all through the grades, including two years of college, in Honolulu. So, she decided she wanted to go to Vietnam and contacted the editor of the Honolulu Star-Bulletin. He said they would be happy to receive her dispatches, but that she would be working as a free-lancer.

So in 1967, Babette flew to Tokyo, then Tan Son Nhut, arriving with a TOURIST VISA! She spent about two weeks in Saigon, rooming at the Caravelle Hotel, where the press room was located. She managed to get a CBS sticker, which she applied to her hand carries.

Then she accompanied a group of missionaries to Dalat in the Central Highlands, reporting from there for about three days. They hitch-hiked to Dalat on Air America, reportedly a CIA transport.

From Dalat she flew back to Saigon and filed several stories, including what she calls a “neutral” story about the Saigon marketplace.

She then hitched to the Mekong Delta with a U.S. Army convoy and saw and heard lots of damage from the IEDs, (Improvised Explosive Devices) which the communists buried in or near roads where American forces traveled.

The craters in the road and sound of artillery brought home the horror and severity of war.

After several other harrowing experiences, she evacuated the war scene, continued west around the world to finish her French teaching contract at Punahou Academy in Honolulu.

Add this experience to the two years she spent as a Peace Corps volunteer in Cameroun, Africa, and she has had an exciting life. Of course, her lifetime career as a pilot and flight instructor provided more years of excitement.

Connecting mailbox

Press plates seemed like good idea, but they made for ‘pretty pickings’



Doug Pizac ([Email](#)) - Back in the '80s when I was stationed in the Los Angeles bureau, the state of California came up with a specialized vehicle license plate for “Press Photographers” that had a PP inside a triangle. See above. The purpose was to let law enforcement at an accident or crime scene know that a news media’s car was approaching the scene and could theoretically be let through without stopping -- NOT.

I never got one but had photographer colleagues who did. Either the police officer didn't know about the plates and stopped you for ID, or they stopped you anyway to make sure you were the owner of the vehicle with the PP plate.

Then came the NFL season where the L.A. Rams played at the Coliseum in not the best part of the city. Initially, one car with a PP plate was broken into in the parking lot and all the left-behind camera gear was stolen while the photographer was inside shooting the game. Thieves quickly learned what PP plates stood for -- Pretty Pickings. At the next home game other vehicles with PP plates were robbed, including the first photographer who replaced his gear with brand new.

By the third game photographers either left nothing in their trunks or got rid of the PP plates altogether. I don't remember seeing a single PP plate for the rest of the time I was there before transferring to Salt Lake City. The plates are still

available for purchase by newspaper, newsreel, television photographers and camera operators.

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Nick was active union leader

Adolphe Bernotas ([Email](#)) - Nice takeout in Saturday's Connecting on Nick Jesdanun. It should be mentioned that he was a union leader at AP, having served on the News Media Guild's legislative body, the Representative Assembly.

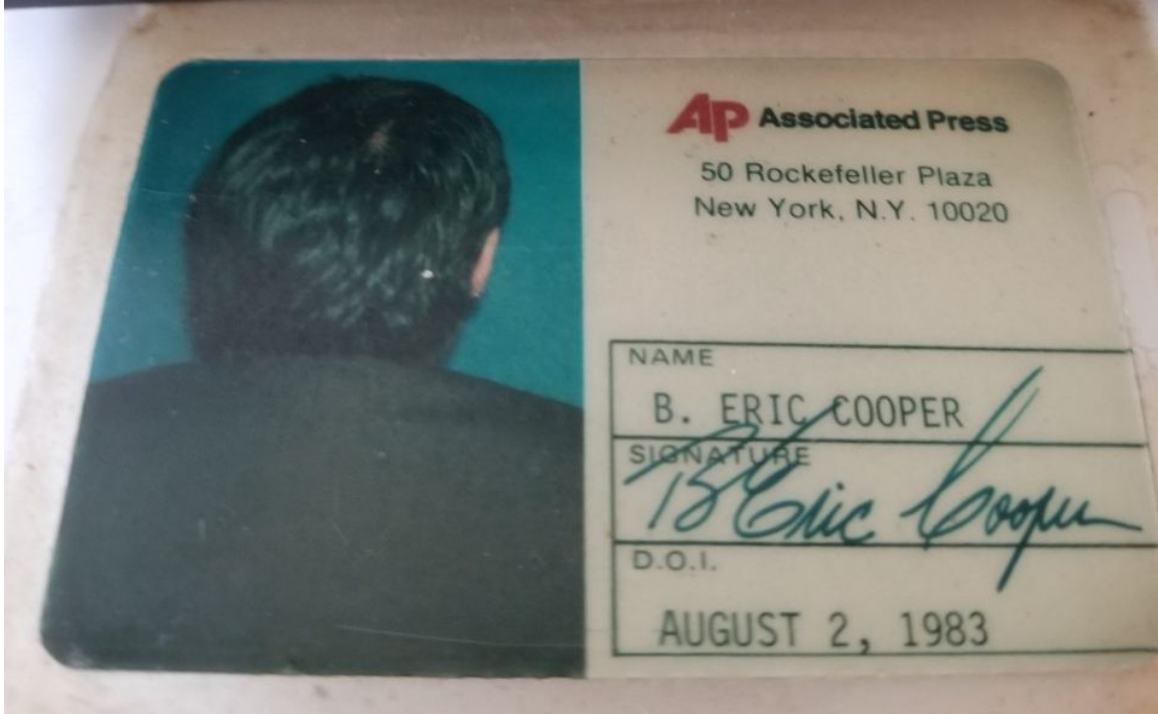
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Inside ICU in Spain



AP photographer Felipe Dana carries his camera inside an intensive care unit for COVID-19 patients in Badalona, Spain, April 1, 2020. (AP Photo/Renata Brito)

More of your first press passes



Rick Cooper ([Email](#)) - The story behind this press card: Human Resources at 50 Rock was put in charge of issuing ID cards to staffers as a precursor to implementing access control beyond the computer spaces after several incidents where outsiders were found to be in places they shouldn't. As we were learning to use the equipment the thought popped into my mind, why not a two-sided ID. As a lark I had one of the department Administrative Assistants take the picture of me sitting backward and laminate it into an ID card.

It sat in my wallet for a couple of years until Wick Temple, who had become the head of AP's HR department, found out about it during a discussion about horrid Drivers License and ID card photos. Wick, who was known for his sense of humor, had to show it to LDB (President Lou Boccardi). Lou took a look at it and in his typically understated way said to me, "Well it certainly is a picture of your better side."



Steven Herman ([Email](#)) - My career began in the late 70's in Las Vegas during the wane of mob control of the casinos. LVMPD allowed us pretty decent access to crime scenes and the homicide detectives enjoyed being on the airwaves and seeing their names in the three local dailies.

When the state began issuing vehicle tags for the media, I raced to get a low number. I believe the first one (101) was acquired by the dean of Nevada journalism — UPI Bureau Chief Myram Borders. She gave AP fits for decades as she was deeply sourced and had gone to Las Vegas High School with many who became powerful, including governors and senators.



Karol Stonger ([Email](#)) - I have many credentials, but I chose the '72 Munich Olympics because it was to be a time to celebrate some of the world's best athletes with pageantry and good will. Instead it was the scene of brutality never before seen in the modern games. I was to start the day of Sept . 5 with Mark Spitz's news conference after he won his 7th gold medal the night before. Instead, he was whisked out of the country for his protection. And I raced to the Israeli compound before the athletes' village was locked down. It was eerily quiet until late afternoon when hostages and captors left in a helicopter after officials offered the Palestinians safe passage. It was a trap. There was a shootout. There was fire. Both captors and captives died.



Bud Weydert ([Email](#)) - I was going through the credentials I've saved from the special events I did for AP starting with the 1984 Democratic National Convention in San Francisco and ending with the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver, Canada. Was thinking of having them framed in one display but it would end being about 4' x 6' so I'm not sure that's a good idea.

No. 2178



**NEWS
MEDIA**

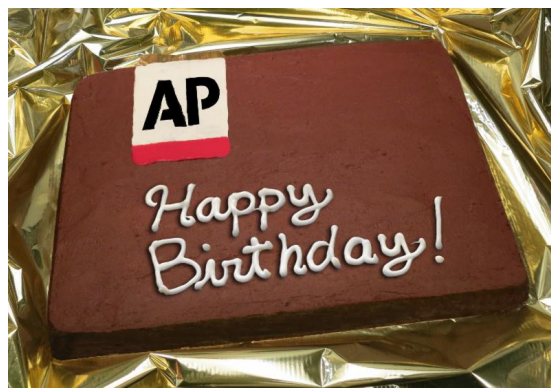
JAMES ROWLEY

ASSOCIATED PRESS

METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Jim Rowley ([Email](#)) - I joined AP WX in May 1983 and this is one of the earliest D.C. Police press IDs from my 15 1/2-year stint in the bureau. It's probably the first photo the bureau took of me soon after I got off the turnip truck.

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



to

Deborah Hastings - dah4859@aol.com

Stories of interest

Trump shakes up press team as White House deals with virus



In this Thursday, Jan. 16, 2020, photo, Kayleigh McEnany speaks during a Women for Trump event at the Holiday Inn in Des Moines, Iowa. McEnany, a top Trump campaign spokeswoman, will take over as Trump's fourth press secretary, the White House announced Tuesday, April 7, 2020. (Zach Boyden-Holmes/The Des Moines Register via AP)

By ZEKE MILLER and JILL COLVIN

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump shook up his communications team on Tuesday, replacing his press secretary and adding new staffers as he grapples with the coronavirus pandemic.

Stephanie Grisham, who had held the titles of press secretary and White House communications director since last June, is out after never holding a formal press briefing. She will be rejoining the first lady's office in a new role as Melania Trump's chief of staff.

Kayleigh McEnany, a top Trump campaign spokeswoman, will take over as Trump's fourth press secretary. Also heading to the White House: Pentagon spokeswoman Alyssa Farah. She will lead strategic communications, according to a senior administration official familiar with the moves who spoke on condition of anonymity because the decisions had not been formally announced.

Read more [here](#) .

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Trump taunts media as mutual disgust reaches new depths (Fox News)

By HOWARD KURTZ

President Trump found something to briefly celebrate Monday, some bad news for what are emerging as his biggest detractors during the virus crisis: the media.

“Advertising in the Failing New York Times is WAY down. Washington Post is not much better,” he tweeted. “I can’t say whether this is because they are Fake News sources of information, to a level that few can understand, or the Virus is just plain beating them up. Fake News is bad for America!”

Whatever the merits of Trump's dissatisfaction with the two papers, it's clear that advertising has plunged because some companies are shut down while others are slashing spending while most of their customers are stranded at home.

As America's coronavirus death toll exceeds 10,000, two clashing narratives have come to define the president's handling of the pandemic. Trump is courageously leading the country with a disruptive approach despite the naysayers, according to his supporters, or, from a press perspective, he is royally botching the emergency because of severe character limitations.

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

Drop the Curtain on the Trump Follies (New York Times)

By Michelle Cottle

Ms. Cottle is a member of the editorial board.

Even as the Trump administration slowly finds its footing in the war against Covid-19, one high-profile element of its response remains stubbornly awful: President Trump's performance in the daily news briefings on the pandemic.

Early on, Mr. Trump discovered that he could use the briefings to satisfy his need for everything to be all about him. As the death toll rises, that imperative has not changed. Most nights, he comes before an uneasy public, typically for an hour or more, to spew a thick fog of self-congratulation, political attacks, misinformation and nonsense.

Since Mr. Trump took office, a debate has raged among the news media about how to cover a man-child apparently untethered from reality. But with a lethal pandemic on the prowl, the president's insistence on grabbing center stage and deceiving the public isn't merely endangering the metaphorical health of the Republic. It is risking the health — and lives — of millions of Americans. A better leader would curb his baser instincts in the face of this crisis. Since Mr. Trump is not wired that way, it falls to the media to serve the public interest by no longer airing his briefings live.

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

The Final Word

Those delivery-room masks now have a purpose



Paul Stevens ([Email](#)) – I knew there was a reason to save each mask provided me to be in the delivery room with Linda for the births of each of our kiddos - from Bellevue Maternity Hospital in Schenectady NY (Jenny, 1974), Wesley Med in Wichita (Molly, 1977) and Shawnee Mission Med in Kansas (Jon, 1985).

Today in History - April 8, 2020



By The Associated Press

Today is Wednesday, April 8, the 99th day of 2020. There are 267 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On April 8, 1864, the United States Senate passed, 38-6, the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution abolishing slavery. (The House of Representatives passed it in January 1865; the amendment was ratified and adopted in December 1865.)

On this date:

In 1513, explorer Juan Ponce de Leon and his expedition began exploring the Florida coastline.

In 1904, Longacre Square in Manhattan was renamed Times Square after The New York Times.

In 1911, an explosion at the Banner Coal Mine in Littleton, Alabama, claimed the lives of 128 men, most of them convicts loaned out from prisons.

In 1913, the 17th Amendment to the Constitution, providing for popular election of U.S. senators (as opposed to appointment by state legislatures), was ratified. President Woodrow Wilson became the first chief executive since John Adams to address Congress in person as he asked lawmakers to enact tariff reform.

In 1952, President Harry S. Truman seized the American steel industry to avert a nationwide strike. (The Supreme Court later ruled that Truman had overstepped his authority, opening the way for a seven-week strike by steelworkers.)

In 1973, artist Pablo Picasso died in Mougins (MOO'-zhun), France, at age 91.

In 1974, Hank Aaron of the Atlanta Braves hit his 715th career home run in a game against the Los Angeles Dodgers, breaking Babe Ruth's record.

In 1990, Ryan White, the teenage AIDS patient whose battle for acceptance had gained national attention, died in Indianapolis at age 18.

In 1993, singer Marian Anderson died in Portland, Oregon, at age 96.

In 1994, Kurt Cobain, singer and guitarist for the grunge band Nirvana, was found dead in Seattle from an apparently self-inflicted gunshot wound; he was 27.

In 2003, kidnapper-rapist John Jamelske, who had imprisoned five women and girls, one after another, as sex slaves inside a makeshift dungeon in his DeWitt, New York, home, was arrested. (Jamelske, who pleaded guilty to five counts of first-degree kidnapping, is serving an 18 years-to-life sentence in a maximum-security prison.)

In 2009, Somali pirates hijacked the U.S.-flagged Maersk Alabama; although the crew was able to retake the cargo ship, the captain, Richard Phillips, was

taken captive by the raiders and held aboard a lifeboat. (Phillips was rescued four days later by Navy SEAL snipers who shot three of the pirates dead.) A Russian spacecraft carrying a crew of three, including U.S. billionaire space tourist Charles Simonyi, landed safely in Kazakhstan.

Ten years ago: President Barack Obama and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev signed the New START treaty in Prague. Authorities in Cancun, Mexico, found the body of Monica Beresford-Redman, the wife of “Pimp My Ride” and former “Survivor” producer Bruce Beresford-Redman, who was convicted by a Mexico court in March 2015 of murdering her and sentenced to 12 years in prison (he was released in 2019.) Malcolm McLaren, 64, former manager of the Sex Pistols, died in Switzerland. Bishop Abel Muzorewa, the first black prime minister of an interim white-dominated government before Zimbabwe’s independence, died six days before his 85th birthday.

Five years ago: Dzhokhar Tsarnaev (joh-HAHR’ tsahr-NEYE’-ehv) was convicted by a federal jury on all 30 charges against him in the Boston Marathon bombing and found responsible for the deaths of the three people killed in the 2013 attack and the killing of an MIT police officer three days later. (He was sentenced to death the following month.)

One year ago: The United States designated Iran’s Revolutionary Guard Corps as a foreign terrorist organization, an unprecedented declaration against a foreign government. Two U.S. soldiers and a Marine were killed in a Taliban roadside bomb attack near the main American base in Afghanistan. After squandering a 10-point lead, the Virginia Cavaliers pulled away in overtime for an 85-77 victory over Texas Tech in the final game of the NCAA college basketball tournament. Chris Davis of the Baltimore Orioles set a major league record by going 49 at-bats without a hit, a streak that extended back to mid-September.

Today’s Birthdays: Comedian Shecky Greene is 94. Author and Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter Seymour Hersh is 83. “Mouseketeer” Darlene Gillespie is 79. Singer Peggy Lennon (The Lennon Sisters) is 79. Songwriter-producer Leon Huff is 78. Actor Stuart Pankin is 74. Rock musician Steve Howe is 73. Former House Republican leader Tom DeLay is 73. Movie director John Madden is 71. Rock musician Mel Schacher (Grand Funk Railroad) is 69. Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Wis., is 65. Actor John Schneider is 60. “Survivor” winner Richard Hatch is 59. Rock musician Izzy Stradlin is 58. Singer Julian Lennon is 57. Actor Dean Norris is 57. Rock singer-musician Donita Sparks is 57. Rapper Biz Markie is 56. Actress Robin Wright is 54. Actress Patricia Arquette is 52. Actor JR Bourne is 50. Rock singer Craig Honeycutt (Everything) is 50. Rock musician Darren Jessee is 49. Actress Emma Caulfield is 47. Actress Katee Sackhoff is 40. Actor Taylor Kitsch is 39. Rock singer-musician Ezra Koenig (Vampire Weekend) is 36. Actor Taran Noah Smith is 36. Actress Kirsten Storms is 36. Rock musician Jamie Sierota is 27. Actress Sadie Calvano is 23.

Thought for Today: “The world has achieved brilliance without conscience. Ours is a world of nuclear giants and ethical infants.” – Gen. Omar N. Bradley (1893-1981).

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

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