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## Connecting April 14, 2020

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Colleagues,

Good Tuesday morning on this the 14<sup>th</sup> day of April 2020,

*“We buried my mother today. No funeral. COVID-19, you know.*

*“Still, given the refrigerated trucks and temporary burials across the river in New York, we were relieved to have the chance to slip her into her permanent resting place, near her two adored husbands and the rest of the family.”*



That is how our colleague **Warren Levinson** began the story of interment services for his mother, **Roslyn Bell Levinson Wellner**, that were held last Saturday, April 11, at King Solomon Memorial Park in Clifton, N.J. – three days after she died, at 89, in her home in Manchester, N.J.

We lead today’s issue with the story he wrote about her (photo above, skiing was one of her loves) and the interment that appeared in his wife’s website **[Pandemic Diaries](#)**, which he commends to his Connecting colleagues, and suggests that they offer their own stories (and offering them for Connecting use as well).

Warren joined The Associated Press in New York in 1979. He was a writer and editor on the National Broadcast Desk and became New York radio correspondent in 1982, a position he held until his retirement in 2019. Since his retirement, he has produced and hosted the (now-suspended) AP travel podcast [Get Outta Here! Get Outta Here!](#) on Apple Podcasts. He still edits Ralph Russo's [AP Top 25 College Football podcast](#) .

“She liked hearing me on the radio, but even better liked hearing friends and far-flung relatives tell her they had heard me,” he said. “I used to use her as a proxy for how the audience perceived news stories. She was smart and interested, but not so deeply engaged that she was going to spend a lot of time trying to suck every bit of nuance out of a story. A valuable lesson for a broadcast person: the audience is interested, but not always a thousand words -- or even six hundred words -- interested.”

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## ***Riding the streets of New York City on motorcycles, chronicling impact of coronavirus***

AP video Photojournalist **Wong Maye-E** and Global Enterprise photo editor **Enric Martí** traveled the empty streets of New York City on a motorcycle to document life during the time of coronavirus. The AP Video was by **Nat Castañeda** ). Click [here](#) to view.

Poynter’s **Tom Jones** noted that the superb video with narration from the two photojournalists was shot on 12 different rides all over New York — from Greenwich Village to Harlem to Brooklyn, Queens and the Bronx. “What’s especially interesting,” he said, “as the two describe, is how in sync they were with each other as photographers. As an example, Martí, driving the motorcycle, would point to a shot only to find out that Wong already had her camera pointed there. The 4-minute video is well worth your time.”



**AP GROUND GAME:** The wail of ambulance sirens has been a nerve-wracking constant since the COVID-19 outbreak began. But what are the other sounds that make up a pandemic? Host Ralph Russo and reporter Leanne Italie discuss.

Listen [here](#) .

Be safe and healthy – and share your stories of life in this era of coronavirus.

Paul

# **Wham Bam Thank You Mom**



Son Noah outside the cemetery

**By Warren Levinson ( [Email](#) )**

We buried my mother today. No funeral. COVID-19, you know.

Still, given the refrigerated trucks and temporary burials across the river in New York, we were relieved to have the chance to slip her into her permanent resting place, near her two adored husbands and the rest of the family.

A brief graveside service, limited to five mourners, six feet apart: my wife, my brother, our son, and Harvey, Mom's companion for the last decade. The rest follow along on Zoom. Margot desperately wanted to be there to see Grandma off, but we didn't want her taking the chance on public transit to and from Brooklyn. Noah came by bicycle from Jersey City, getting pulled over en route by a sheriff's officer who threatened him with a thousand dollar fine for riding in a closed public park. Their approximate exchange:

NOAH: Please don't. I'm going to my grandmother's funeral.

COP: Not dressed like that you're not.

NOAH: I have a suit in the pannier.

COP (irritated): Show me.

He really wanted someone to punish, but let him off with a warning, after Noah pulled out a dress shoe. It's like the Maurice Chevalier scene in the Marx Brothers' Monkey Business. (Go find it. I guarantee you don't have anything better to do.)

We are in gloves and masks. We keep our breath, our hands and our tears to ourselves. Though in handing me the papers to sign, the cemetery rep moistens the index finger on his (bare) hand to find the right page, which freaks me out a little.

Per instructions, we have brought our own shovel for the traditional dropping of dirt on the casket. A custom, the rabbi says, born of the idea that it's the one favor you can't repay.

The rabbi is good. Thorough. A day earlier, he assembled about a dozen of us (via Zoom again) to get stories for a eulogy. He hoovered up some of the best, so I edit on the fly, paring my own eulogy down to the basics to avoid repetition. That she was smart, funny and athletic. That she wasn't such a fan of children in general, but still had four of her own, whom she loved deeply and imperfectly. That she taught by example that the bonds with siblings and cousins endure, regardless of time, distance and disagreement. That a wisecrack represents the highest form of human expression.

Then Kaddish (I still use the Ashkenazic pronunciations; all the dead people I know would think I had developed a speech impediment if I started using the Sephardic).

And then it was over. Like Mom's eighty-nine and a half years, too soon. But the cemetery's pandemic rules limit the grounds to one funeral at a time, so we have to make way for the next one. And maybe it's a relief, given the bitterly cold wind. We take a quick glance at the graves of the other family members, but can't even afford the time to drop stones on their markers.

Shiva Sunday. Zoom again.

Click [here](#) for a link to this story.

**Warren also shared the eulogy he presented at her services:**

*So this was my mother.*

*She was funny. You've heard me say it 'way too many times. I was raised to believe the wisecrack is the highest form of human expression. I got that from her. I learned early on to go for that almost guilty laugh she had – the one that said I shouldn't be laughing at this, it only encourages him – but that was funny.*

*She was smart. She love love loved school. Graduated at the top of her high school class at 16, fought her way*

*through family financial reverses that ended her time at the University of Chicago -- something she held against the city of Chicago for decades, and through the exigencies of life to work at Dumont Labs at night and get her degree at NYU, at a time when the world, while no longer against girls in college, was pretty much indifferent to them. In a different time, she probably would have made a good lawyer.*



*The probably won't come as a surprise to the grandchildren and great grandchildren she loved and terrorized, but children in general she was not a big fan of.*

*Still, she had four of us and loved us deeply and imperfectly, always insisting we learn to do things for ourselves. We were going to be independent one day, and we might as well get on with it. As much as she took care of us, she craved adult conversation, and she was eager to get us there to contribute.*

*She taught a lot. Not by lecture – she didn't lecture, though she could rant, especially if you were a company that treated its clients badly – I'm looking at you, Comcast – but she taught by example. Through Frieda and Bill and Hesh and Cele, how you keep a strong bond with your brothers and sisters, and their children, regardless of time or distance or disagreements, which are always temporary.*

*She was a success in business. Started working for others, but ended up working for herself, because she didn't want some clueless honcho telling her what to do.*

*She was a wise counselor to her nieces and nephews. I keep hearing from my cousins about the good advice she gave them on matters that were too hard to bring up with parents.*

*She loved our dad, the father of her children. She loved Kermit, the 50-year old bachelor she married after dad died, and watched him turn into a quirky stepfather and adoring grandpa. And she loved Harvey, who's been a loving and loyal companion for the last decade and more. He Googled her after they met, and discovered she'd spent a winter teaching English to kids in Netanya. Education again. He was impressed. They were a lovely complement to each other. He is quiet and patient. She was not always patient.*

*She was not perfect. She could nurse her grudges. She was in the hospital during the French Open last year, and I suggested we watch some to amuse ourselves. She said No. If I can't play, I don't want to watch anymore.*

*She did love activity. She loved motion. She loved to dance. And she loved her sports. First tennis. She had the court built by a sculpture professor at the house in Windham. The early spring day when she called us out to crawl around and hammer a million tiny nails into the clay to put the lines down for the new year – that was like the opening day of the baseball season.*

*She loved her skiing, thanks to Kermit. He got her to ski, at what seemed to me at the time as the terribly advanced age of 46; she got us all to ski. And the motorcycles. I'm not going to say anything about the motorcycles. But Kerm got the rabbi to mention them in the ceremony when they got married, so they deserve a mention here.*

*And finally, the golf. That was one of Harvey's gifts to her. Another reason to be physically active.*

*And so the last year was really hard for her. That she couldn't get out and run or walk anymore; in the last months that she couldn't even really get out of bed. But she hung in. I'm relieved the pain of the last months is finally over. We had our time with her. We got to say our goodbyes. Whatever we left unsaid wasn't worth saying. We had her for eighty-nine and a half years. But – this just in – it wasn't enough.*

## **The Amish and coronavirus**

**Ed Williams** ([Email](#)) - I got a fellowship from the American Press Institute in the summer of 1997 to work at a daily newspaper, and I was assigned to The Chronicle-Telegram in Elyria, Ohio, in northeast Ohio.

This lifelong Southerner spent the summer in Lorain County, Ohio, and observed that it was much like working at the community newspapers in Alabama where I got my newspaper experience. I had been around Mennonites in Alabama, but had no experience with the Amish, however.

In the afternoons after work, I enjoyed exploring the highways, byways and dirt roads of the Amish country just south of Elyria and Lorain County.

Some of the largest Amish populations in the country were located in Wayne and Holmes counties mentioned in this New York Times piece (see below).

I often stopped at farmhouses and produce stands and bought cookies, strawberries and jelly just for a chance to converse with the Amish.

One day at a produce stand I talked with an Amish man with one arm named Peter Hershberger.

“Where are you from?” he asked. I told him Alabama.

“Ah Alabama. There was a family here last week from Alabama. I wish I could remember their name. You might know them.”

I wish that I had one of those Amish masks.

## In Ohio, the Amish Take On the Coronavirus



**By Elizabeth Williamson**  
**The New York Times**

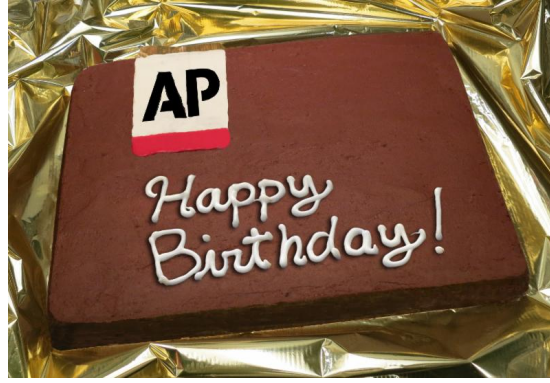
SUGARCREEK, Ohio — On April 1, John Miller, a manufacturer here with deep connections to the close-knit Amish community of Central Ohio, got a call from Cleveland Clinic. The hospital system was struggling to find protective face masks for its 55,000 employees, plus visitors. Could his team sew 12,000 masks in two days?

He appealed to Abe Troyer with Keim, a local lumber mill and home goods business and a leader in the Amish community: “Abe, make a sewing frolic.” A frolic, Mr. Miller explained, “is a colloquial term here that means, ‘Get a bunch of people. Throw a bunch of people at this.’”

A day later, Mr. Troyer had signed up 60 Amish home seamstresses, and the Cleveland Clinic sewing frolic was on.

Read more [here](#) .

## Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



to

Dennis Ferraro - [drferraro@aol.com](mailto:drferraro@aol.com)

Ron Harrist - [ralvinharrist@yahoo.com](mailto:ralvinharrist@yahoo.com)

Melissa Jordan - [melissajordan@gmail.com](mailto:melissajordan@gmail.com)

## Stories of interest

***As the coronavirus continues to spread across the U.S., weekly newspapers mobilize to support their communities*** (Poynter)

By Barbara Selvin

Editors of community newspapers, an often overlooked but critically important element of the U.S. media ecosystem, are front-line responders in the coronavirus crisis.

The nation's 7,000 non-daily community newspapers have been hit just as hard as daily papers and online news sites as the global economy shudders to a halt and advertising evaporates.

Some have suspended their print editions or sharply trimmed their print runs. Publishers have reluctantly laid off longtime staffers. But the mission, to inform communities and keep them safe, has never been more crucial.

"It's a double whammy," said Bill Reader, the co-author of "Foundations of Community Journalism" and a journalism professor at Ohio University. Weekly newspapers "are busier than they've ever been covering local edicts, local closures, providing essential information — and at the same time, getting almost no revenue."

As the aridity of news deserts — communities entirely lacking in local reporting — spreads across the country, weekly papers have increasingly become the



sole source for that essential information, especially in rural communities — areas that often have spotty broadband access and elderly populations, making the idea of cutting costs by moving entirely online a nonstarter, Reader said.

Read more [here](#) .

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## ***The Pandemic Is Crushing The Journalism Industry. The Government Could Save It.***

(Huffington Post)

**By TRAVIS WALDRON**

Three years ago, Matt DeRienzo surveyed America’s journalism landscape and issued a dire warning that most reporters didn’t want or need to hear.

“The last recession was brutal for newspapers and local news,” wrote DeRienzo, who at the time was the director for a nonprofit organization that supported local online news outlets. “The next one could be an extinction-level event.”

The next one is here now, thanks to the economic crunch brought about by the novel coronavirus outbreak. The sudden shock has clobbered an industry that had already lost nearly 30,000 jobs — roughly a quarter of its reporters — over the last decade, as its advertising-based revenue model proved anachronistic in the age of the internet. City- and statewide lockdowns have further reduced revenues, even as readership soars, so each day now brings news of another round of layoffs, furloughs or pay cuts from somewhere in the beleaguered industry.

“It’s even worse than I thought it’d be,” DeRienzo said last week, “because no one predicted this.”

Read more [here](#) . Shared by Adolphe Bernotas.

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## ***The Times Took 19 Days to Report an Accusation Against Biden. Here’s Why.*** (New York Times)

**By Ben Smith**

On March 25, Tara Reade, a former Senate aide for Joseph R. Biden Jr., alleged in an interview on a podcast that Mr. Biden, the presumptive Democratic presidential nominee, had sexually assaulted her in 1993.

The New York Times did not immediately report the allegation.

More than two weeks later, on April 12, The Times published an article by Lisa Lerer and Sydney Ember that included an interview with Ms. Reade detailing her claims. The article reported that a friend said that Ms. Reade had recounted the details of the alleged assault to her at the time, and that former Senate colleagues of Ms. Reade said they did not recall any talk of the episode. In the course of their reporting, the authors said, “The Times found no pattern of sexual misconduct by Mr. Biden.”

The timing of the article has been questioned by critics who say that a delay was a way to play down allegations against Mr. Biden in the midst of a race for the Democratic presidential nomination. Mr. Biden’s allies, who strenuously deny Ms. Reade’s accusation, believe her allegation is not supported strongly enough to publish at all.

I asked Dean Baquet, the executive editor of The Times, about the decision to wait, and the decision to publish.

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

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## ***CNN, MSNBC Cut Away From Donald Trump’s Coronavirus Briefing As Anchors Protest Airing Of “Propaganda” Video***

(Deadline.com)

**By TED JOHNSON**

CNN and MSNBC cut away from Donald Trump’s coronavirus press briefing on Monday, with anchors protesting that the White House was using the time to air a campaign-style “propaganda” video to defend and praise the president’s response to the crisis.

“We are going to avoid airing any more of this White House briefing until it returns to what it was supposed to be, which was the Coronavirus Task Force briefing providing medical information,” said Ari Melber on MSNBC, who called the video “some kind of backward looking edited video propaganda.”

On CNN, John King said, “To play a propaganda video at taxpayer expense in the White House briefing room is a new — you can insert your favorite word here in this administration.”

## Today in History - April 14, 2020



### By The Associated Press

Today is Tuesday, April 14, the 105th day of 2020. There are 261 days left in the year.

#### Today's Highlight in History:

On April 14, 1865, President Abraham Lincoln was shot and mortally wounded by John Wilkes Booth during a performance of "Our American Cousin" at Ford's Theater in Washington.

#### On this date:

In 1759, German-born English composer George Frideric Handel died in London at age 74.

In 1902, James Cash Penney opened his first store, The Golden Rule, in Kemmerer, Wyo.

In 1912, the British liner RMS Titanic collided with an iceberg in the North Atlantic at 11:40 p.m. ship's time and began sinking. (The ship went under two hours and 40 minutes later with the loss of 1,514 lives.)

In 1935, the "Black Sunday" dust storm descended upon the central Plains, turning a sunny afternoon into total darkness.

In 1939, the John Steinbeck novel "The Grapes of Wrath" was first published by Viking Press.

In 1956, Ampex Corp. demonstrated the first practical videotape recorder at the National Association of Radio and Television Broadcasters Convention in Chicago.

In 1965, the state of Kansas hanged Richard Hickock and Perry Smith for the 1959 “In Cold Blood” murders of Herbert Clutter, his wife, Bonnie, and two of their children, Nancy and Kenyon.

In 1970, President Richard Nixon nominated Harry Blackmun to the U.S. Supreme Court. (The choice of Blackmun, who was unanimously confirmed by the Senate a month later, followed the failed nominations of Clement Haynsworth and G. Harrold Carswell.)

In 1981, the first test flight of America’s first operational space shuttle, the Columbia, ended successfully with a landing at Edwards Air Force Base in California.

In 1994, two U.S. Air Force F-15 warplanes mistakenly shot down two U.S. Army Black Hawk helicopters over northern Iraq, killing 26 people, including 15 Americans. Turner Classic Movies made its cable debut; the first film it aired was Ted Turner’s personal favorite, “Gone with the Wind.”

In 1999, NATO mistakenly bombed a convoy of ethnic Albanian refugees; Yugoslav officials said 75 people were killed.

In 2004, in a historic policy shift, President George W. Bush endorsed Israel’s plan to hold on to part of the West Bank in any final peace settlement with the Palestinians; he also ruled out Palestinian refugees returning to Israel, bringing strong criticism from the Palestinians.

Ten years ago: A magnitude-7 earthquake in a remote Tibetan region of China killed some 2,700 people and injured more than 10,000. The Eyjafjallajökull (ay-yah-FYAH’-lah-yer-kuhl) volcano in Iceland erupted, sending out an ash plume that led most northern European countries to close their airspace between April 15 and 20, grounding about 10 million travelers worldwide.

Five years ago: The White House announced that President Barack Obama would remove Cuba from the list of state sponsors of terrorism, a key step in his bid to normalize relations between the two countries. Percy Sledge, 74, who soared from part-time singer and hospital orderly to lasting fame with his aching, forlorn performance on the classic “When a Man Loves a Woman,” died in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

One year ago: Pete Buttigieg, the little-known mayor of South Bend, Indiana, made his official entrance into the 2020 Democratic presidential race. Rep. Ilhan Omar said she had faced increased death threats since President Donald Trump spread around a video that purported to show her being dismissive of the 2001 terrorist attacks; House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said she had taken steps to ensure the safety of the Democratic Muslim lawmaker from Minnesota. After going nearly 11 years since he won his last major tournament, Tiger Woods rallied to win the Masters for the fifth time, closing with a 2-under-par 70 for a one-shot victory.

Today's Birthdays: Country singer Loretta Lynn is 88. Actress Julie Christie is 80. Retired MLB All-Star Pete Rose is 79. Rock musician Ritchie Blackmore is 75. Actor John Shea is 72. Actor Peter Capaldi is 62. Actor-turned-race car driver Brian Forster is 60. Actor Brad Garrett is 60. Actor Robert Carlyle is 59. Rock singer-musician John Bell (Widespread Panic) is 58. Actor Robert Clendenin is 56. Actress Catherine Dent is 55. Actor Lloyd Owen is 54. Baseball Hall of Famer Greg Maddux is 54. Rock musician Barrett Martin is 53. Actor Anthony Michael Hall is 52. Actor Adrien Brody is 47. Classical singer David Miller (Il Divo) is 47. Rapper DaBrat is 46. Actor Antwon Tanner is 45. Actress Sarah Michelle Gellar is 43. Actor-producer Rob McElhenney is 43. Roots singer JD McPherson is 43. Rock singer Win Butler (Arcade Fire) is 40. Actress Claire Coffee is 40. Actor Christian Alexander is 30. Actor Nick Krause is 28. Actress Vivien Cardone is 27. Actor Graham Phillips is 27. Actress Skyler Samuels is 26. Actress Abigail Breslin is 24.

**Thought for Today: "I am a man of fixed and unbending principles, the first of which is to be flexible at all times." – Everett Dirksen, American politician (1896-1969).**

## 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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