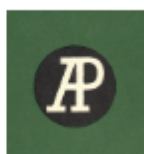


SHARE:

[Join Our Email List](#)

[View as Webpage](#)



## Connecting

June 09, 2020

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



Colleagues,

Good Tuesday morning on this the 9<sup>th</sup> day of June 2020.

Today's Connecting presents some excellent writing from your colleagues - on the coronavirus pandemic, the protests that have rocked our country - and on the lighter side, memories of playing softball for the AP.

I count myself as a very lucky editor to have a stable of journalists like you all. Got a story or photo you've been meaning to send? Now's the time to share.

Have a great day - be safe, stay healthy.

Paul

## Physically distancing in London



Physically distancing family visits London – from left, John Beard, Angus Grant, Eliza David Beard.

**Wendy Davis Beard** ([Email](#)) – Our family is physically distancing at our studio residence in Greenwich, London - where the grown children and grandchildren sit on clear days outside in the laneway, picking up their plates of food, wine and water from our front steps (our equivalent to curbside delivery!)

We continue to keep more than 3 meters between ourselves and others although depending on the British weather we now allow family into John's enormous studio to sit on the opposite end as ourselves. British scientists continue to be quoted as fearing the level of infection in the UK remains too high to warrant the UK's lifting of lockdown, with high risk of a second spike in confirmed cases. As John is deemed in the high risk category, due to age and immune-suppressing medication, we will continue to minimize our risks by keeping our social distance.

Last week our daughter and her partner tested positive for having had the virus and antibodies. Fortunately, their symptoms were minor, although still lingering, loss of taste and smell!

## E pluribus unum



**Chris Sullivan ( [Email](#) )** - The current civil war came to our county seat in north Georgia on Sunday (Note: In the real Civil War, our county, like many others in the southern Appalachian mountains, where there was no plantation society or way of life, voted against secession).

On Sunday, a day after Paris and Lisbon and Sydney marched in memory of George Floyd, a demonstration was held at the courthouse here, organized by the local

affiliate of the group Indivisible. My wife Lucy and I joined in with maybe 200 others to echo the call for simple justice that people across this country and across the world have been issuing. Somebody brought a guitar. There was no tear gas. But here, unlike in big cities, we learned that the sheriff said there would be "counterdemonstrators." And there were a few, mostly waving big American flags in a way that caused one speaker, a biracial local veteran, to ask on a bullhorn why anyone could presume to claim the flag as their private possession, excluding others.

We had made up a sign, which felt a little foolish as we held it up, saying in capital letters: "E pluribus unum." The national slogan, I told a kid in the crowd who asked: "Out of many, one." I explained I thought that was an old way of saying what we're struggling to reclaim in the turmoil of these bad days.

As we left, I noticed a solitary demonstrator at the edge of the crowd on one side of Main Street, holding up her own simple, determined sign to address, directly and firmly but respectfully, I thought, a group on the other side who brought "Trump 2020" placards and a big U.S. flag. Exactly what her sign said I don't know.

To me, the message was: We differ, we are many; is there still any chance that we can be one?

## Some perspective in troubling times



**Jim Spehar and granddaughter Ellie Pearl**

**By Jim Spehar ( [Email](#) ), Grand Junction Daily Sentinel**

“I never valued perspective much until I got some.”

Some of you have heard me say that at times in recent years. A select few among family, lifelong friends and/or longtime supporters in my public and private lives might

have muttered in response "It's about damn time."

Understandably so, I'll admit (given the benefit of perspective).

I found myself wondering this past week, as we celebrated my granddaughter's fifth birthday, how I'd explain recent events to Ellie Pearl should any interest interrupt the opening of presents and family celebrations. And mentally calculating how 73+ years of experiences might have informed any answers she'd hear.

So far, I've been spared having that conversation with a bubbly, happy five-year-old. I have considered what I might say.

Thirty-one years ago we watched horrified as Chinese tanks bore down on citizen protesters in Tiananmen Square, comfortable in the assumption that could ever happen here. But this past week we've seen tear gas and rubber bullets used in front of the White House to clear a path to a photo op for a President, holding a sacred book whose passages he's apparently unfamiliar with, in front of the nearby "president's church" he's reportedly been to only one other time since assuming office.

Those with strong stomachs could spend 8 minutes and 46 seconds watching a black man die before our eyes, the knee of an indifferent uniformed police officer shutting off precious breaths that, if allowed, could have left George Floyd still handcuffed but alive to face whatever charges might have come. If only he'd been given more humane treatment that any of us, regardless of the color of our skin, should expect from someone sworn to "serve and protect."

How would you explain two new layers of physical barriers arising overnight between citizens exercising their rights for redress of wrongs and of free speech and the "people's house" in which a selfish and egotistical "leader" temporarily resides? Or armed officers, sans identifying insignia or name tags on their riot gear, aiming lethal weapons at fellow Americans from behind that new fencing and concrete. All with the approval of an Attorney General who apparently views his role as one of a defense attorney rather than an advocate for justice and defender of our Constitution.

At the risk of eliciting "OK, Boomer" reactions, here are some events that shape the columns you've read for 17 years now, either in the Daily Sentinel or Grand Junction Free Press, and my feelings about recent tragedies.

Raised by parents and grandparents who survived the Great Depression and another nationwide pandemic a century ago, their mantra that "we're all in this together" makes sense. An uncle who won a Bronze Star for his efforts in the Battle of the Bulge, a father-in-law who piloted B-29s in the South Pacific and a brother who was a conscientious objector all demonstrated we also have shared obligations.

Seeing positive changes brought by opponents of the Vietnam War and those fighting for equal rights for blacks, farm workers and women made me a believer in protest,

free speech and a free press as tools for progress. Seeing a president and his brother assassinated, Martin Luther King killed and another president wounded by a would-be assassin engendered respect for leaders with courage, conviction and compassion. Recalling a nation rallying together after 9-11 despite fierce political differences leaves me wishing we'd find a way to do that once again.

I'd tell my granddaughter I'm left with a combination of hope and despair.

Despair because a half century after those civil rights battles there's too much still undone. Because, after hundreds of deaths in schools, movie theaters and public places, we still can't agree on sensible gun laws that would leave us safer from both criminals and ourselves. Despair that our politics have devolved to a place where we won't even have those discussions much less take action.

But I'm also hopeful. Hopeful because a handful of high ranking former military leaders, disgusted by our president's willingness to use our armed forces against us, have finally said publicly enough is enough. Because their courage is beginning to prompt a few timid enablers to question the leader of their own political party. And because protests in hundreds of communities, including our own, offer hope that "thoughts and prayers" might be replaced with actions and changes.

## Kids say the darndest things about COVID-19



**Benjamin Felblinger, age 7, shows off his new batting gloves in Anderson Township. (Photo courtesy of Dan Sewell)**

**Dan Sewell ( [Email](#) ) - Special to The Enquirer**

Seven-year-old Benjamin Felblinger of Anderson Township proudly held up his new batting gloves.



"I can wear these in baseball next year if there's no coronavirus!" he exulted.

Kids are saying the darndest things ... about COVID-19.

Kids have lots of questions.

"Will there be play again after the virus is gone?" said Everest Yasuda, age 5, of Palm Springs, California, as he views a closed park with yellow caution tape. His mother Maggie Downs, is, a former Enquirer reporter.

Like us grown-ups, children have had their worlds turned upside down by the pandemic. For many American children heading into their third months of stay-at-home restrictions, without their schools, playmates or usual outside activities, it's a lot to process.

And they have a lot of questions.

"Highlights," the magazine group geared for children, has in its seven decades always encouraged them to write letters, poems or do drawings to express themselves. The usual pace of 20,000 letters or so a year has picked up during the coronavirus crisis.

Read more [here](#) .

## Teaching at 80!



**Myron Belkind teaches students online from his residence**

*Editor's Note: Each semester Myron Belkind ([Email](#)) has taught at George Washington University's School of Media and Public Affairs starting in 2005, he has given a mock news conference for his students. Here is a report by one of his students on his most recent news conference:*

**By Abby Wilson**

“I don’t feel 80 at all,” professorial lecturer Myron Belkind stated with elation Tuesday, expressing an optimistic outlook on his career and the future of journalism.

During a news conference on May 26, he addressed his current SMPA 2110W students on the online platform Blackboard Collaborate about their progress in the course and how he sees the course, and journalism, proceeding.

In his 33<sup>rd</sup> session of teaching “Reporting and Writing News” in the School of Media and Public Affairs at the George Washington University and after 42 years of service with The Associated Press, Belkind admits that he often has considered retirement. Despite these doubts, he keeps coming back to teach because, in his belief, the importance of responsibility, accuracy, and fairness in journalism is greater now than ever. He plans to teach as long as his health permits, and as long as students are receptive to his teaching methods.

Reflecting on teaching his first full-term online course, he expressed his belief that he and his students have been able to progress through the course as normal, without any restrictions. Although happy to teach the course in either format, he sees great value in online education.

Responding to a question regarding the benefits of online education, Belkind said that online classes can often offer flexibility and financial capability to study from afar, as he learned from working with the Graduate School of Political Management at GW. He suggests that in the future, certain sections of the SMPA 2110W course could be offered in this online format alongside the regularly held in-person courses.

Belkind does admit, despite this optimism about the online format of his course, that online journalism as a whole poses some risks for the industry. He sees modern-day journalism as much more prone to errors and inaccuracy due to the instantaneous nature of online media.

He explains that he is often asked whether “it is better to be first and have errors or second and be accurate.” He asserts that, “of course,” it is better to be second and accurate when releasing news, regardless of the format.

When first addressing students during the news conference, Belkind offered a recommendation for the School of Media and Public Affairs: that a three-hour-long SMPA 2110W course be offered in the fall and spring semesters as well as during summer sessions.

After teaching 11 consecutive summer terms of the course, he sees great value in the longer class times, explaining that it offers more time for writing under deadline pressure than the traditional 75-minute format. Students could also potentially, given more time, go out on assignments during class time and return to write stories on the same day.

When a question was posed concerning keeping students' attention for a longer amount of time, per Belkind's recommendation, he responded with confidence. "The onus is on the professor...to keep those three-hour sessions alive and have the students motivated so that they do not get bored," a responsibility he is willing to take on given his success in three-hour-long courses during the many summer sessions he has taught.

As a former foreign correspondent for the AP, Belkind has spent a lot of time living and reporting around the world, and when asked about where his favorite place to live was, he responded without hesitation: India. Not only was India where he met and married his wife and had two children, but it also was the country where he had his first international AP staff assignment.

He retold the story of leading a delegation of foreign correspondents to the residence of the then information minister of India, V.C. Shukla, and convincing him to lift the censorship that had been imposed a few days earlier in June 1975. Shukla agreed to lift the censorship, only for foreign correspondents, thus adding to the vast array of Belkind's fond memories of reporting in New Delhi.

Beyond his incredible experience abroad, he expressed gratitude throughout the news conference for his teaching career and for his students. He explained his goal, which is to instill basic techniques in students that will allow them to go on to write clearly and accurately in whatever profession they enter.

Despite his appreciation for other fields of study, he does hold a firm belief in the power of journalism. As he notes in an uplifting response to a question about the future of journalism, "as long as there are journalists, there is a profession that will do its best to hold government and other organizations accountable through the telling of news, responsibly, accurately, and fairly," which is what he plans to continue teaching to GW students in the years to come.

## Connecting mailbox

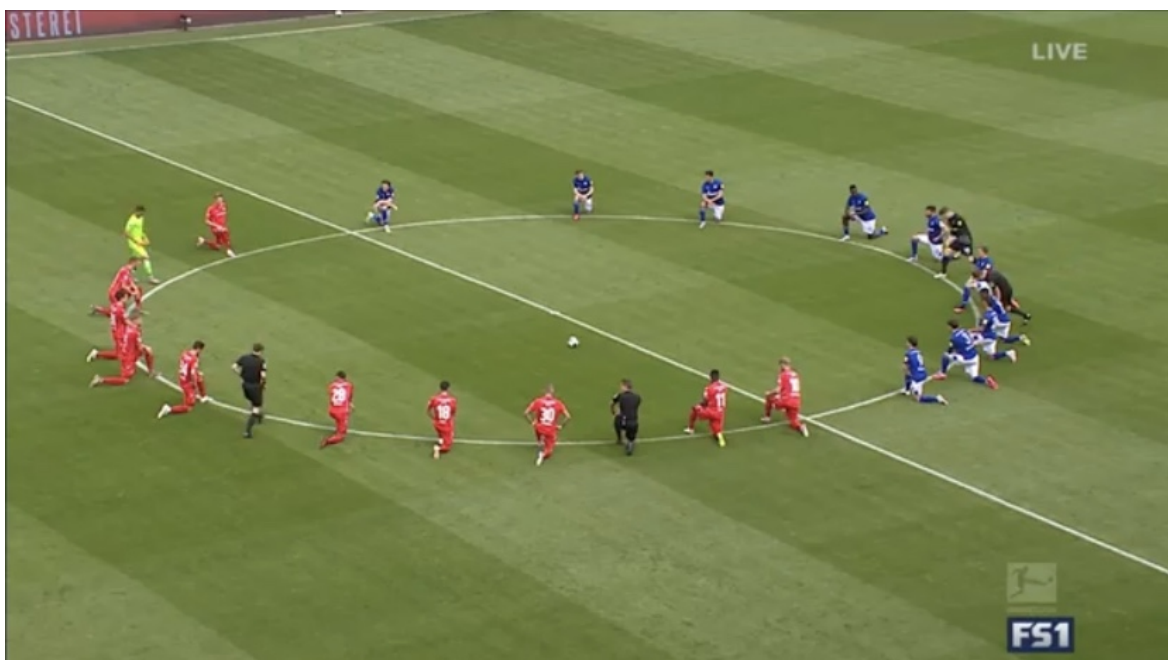
*Connecting series: You and your phone on the job*



Linda Deutsch ([Email](#)) - A telephone picture from the Manson trial 1970.

-0-

### *Taking a knee in fight against racism*



**Mark Mittelstadt ( [Email](#) )** - Germany's national soccer league, Bundesliga, was one of the first in the world to resume play in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. The matches are played in empty stadiums but televised; the broadcasts and streaming have been widely viewed around the globe in the absence of other live sports.

Before the start of Sunday's match between Union Berlin and Schalke, players and officials gathered and knelt in the center circle for approximately 30 seconds to show solidarity in the fight against racism. They were joined by coaches, technical staff and substitutes on the sideline.

-0-

## *Playing ball for the AP*



**Robert Kimball ( [Email](#) )** - The hat and jersey are from my one season playing softball for the AP in the media league. It was 1982 and my teammates included Ben Walker and Bill Barnard. I worked at 50 Rock on the broadcast wire that one year before they merged us with AP Radio on K Street in DC.

By the way, John Nelson honored my request and gave me No. 8 for Carl Yastrzemski.

-0-





**Guy Palmiotto** ([Email](#)) - Enjoyed the [SI piece](#) about the NY Press League. I re-read several times. I remember those Wednesday afternoons in Central Park, and played for the AP team from 1984-1998. We did win three Press League Championships during that time, but except 1992, the dates elude me.

## Story of interest

### *Editors Barred A Black Reporter From Covering Protests. Then Her Newsroom Rebelled* (NPR)

By DAVID FOLKENFLIK

The fight over racial justice that has sparked protests across the country is also upending some of the country's leading newsrooms.

At The New York Times, James Bennet stepped down Sunday as editorial page editor, yielding to colleagues who had protested the posting of a column by Sen. Tom Cotton, R-Ark., in which he advocated that the military help quell civil unrest.

The day before, The Philadelphia Inquirer Executive Editor Stan Wischnowski resigned. Controversy had erupted both in and outside his newsroom when the paper published the headline "Buildings Matter, Too" atop a column on rioting. Reporters there argued it equated property damage to human life.



And at the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, rank-and-file journalists are fighting back after editors banned a black reporter from covering local protests. It was retribution for writing a flippant tweet comparing looters to country music fans after a concert.

Read more [here](#).

## The Final Word

***Photographer Captures Precious Moment During Jersey City Rally*** (Pascack Valley Daily Voice)



By CECILIA LEVINE

Wendy Setzer was wandering through Pedestrian Plaza during Jersey City's peaceful protest last Tuesday when her eyes were drawn to two toddlers.

One girl is black. The other is white. Both appear blissfully unaware of the reason their parents brought them to the rally that day.

It was the first time the girls and their moms had ever met. But they were all fast friends.

The best part? Setzer got it all on camera.

"What made it a great shot is there are people looming in the background, adults with masks on, and these kids oblivious to what's going on and enjoying each other's company," said Setzer, who raised her own children in Jersey City.

"They have no awareness that they're different. They're just friends -- it's so simple."

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

## Today in History - June 9, 2020



**By The Associated Press**

Today is Tuesday, June 9, the 161st day of 2020. There are 205 days left in the year.

### **Today's Highlight in History:**

On June 9, 2004, the body of Ronald Reagan arrived in Washington to lie in state in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda before the 40th president's funeral.

### **On this date:**

In A.D. 68, Roman Emperor Nero committed suicide, ending a 13-year reign.

In 1860, what's considered the first dime novel, "Malaeska: The Indian Wife of the White Hunter" by Ann S. Stephens, was published.

In 1940, during World War II, Norway decided to surrender to the Nazis, effective at midnight.

In 1943, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Current Tax Payment Act of 1943, which reintroduced federal income tax withholding from paychecks.

In 1954, during the Senate Army-McCarthy hearings, Army special counsel Joseph N. Welch berated Sen. Joseph R. McCarthy, R-Wis., asking: "Have you no sense of decency, sir? At long last, have you left no sense of decency?"

In 1969, the Senate confirmed Warren Burger to be the new chief justice of the United States, succeeding Earl Warren.

In 1972, heavy rains triggered record flooding in the Black Hills of South Dakota; the resulting disaster left at least 238 people dead and \$164 million in damage.

In 1973, Secretariat won the Belmont Stakes, becoming horse racing's first Triple Crown winner in 25 years.

In 1978, leaders of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints struck down a 148-year-old policy of excluding black men from the Mormon priesthood.

In 1980, comedian Richard Pryor suffered almost fatal burns at his San Fernando Valley, Calif., home while freebasing cocaine.

In 1986, the Rogers Commission released its report on the Challenger disaster, criticizing NASA and rocket-builder Morton Thiokol for management problems leading to the explosion that claimed the lives of seven astronauts.

In 2008, retail gas prices rose above \$4 per gallon.

Ten years ago: The U.S. and its allies scored a long-sought victory by pushing through new U.N. sanctions over Iran's nuclear program, punishments Tehran dismissed as "annoying flies." The Chicago Blackhawks won their first Stanley Cup in 49 years, as Patrick Kane's overtime goal delivered a 4-3 win over the Philadelphia Flyers in Game 6.

Five years ago: Former U.S. House Speaker Dennis Hastert pleaded not guilty in Chicago to charges that he had violated banking rules and lied to the FBI about

promising to pay \$3.5 million in hush money to conceal misconduct from his days as a high school teacher. (Hastert later pleaded guilty to violating banking law in a case that revealed accusations of sexual abuse, and was sentenced to 15 months in prison.) President Barack Obama, addressing the annual Catholic Health Association Conference in Washington, declared his health care law a firmly established “reality” of American life.

One year ago: Former Boston Red Sox slugger David Ortiz was shot in the back in his native Dominican Republic by a man police said was a hired gunman whose intended target was supposed to be another man; Ortiz recovered after surgery in the Dominican Republic and later in Boston. Raytheon and United Technologies announced that they would merge to create a massive aerospace and defense company. “Hadestown,” a brooding musical about the underworld, won eight trophies at Broadway’s Tony Awards, including one for best new musical. Rafael Nadal beat Dominic Thiem (teem) in the men’s final for his record-extending 12th French Open championship.

Today’s Birthdays: Comedian Jackie Mason is 92. Media analyst Marvin Kalb is 90. Former baseball manager and player Bill Virdon is 89. Sports commentator Dick Vitale is 81. Author Letty Cottin Pogrebin is 81. Rock musician Mick Box (Uriah Heep) is 73. Retired MLB All-Star Dave Parker is 69. Film composer James Newton Howard is 69. Mystery author Patricia Cornwell is 64. Actor Michael J. Fox is 59. Writer-producer Aaron Sorkin is 59. Actor Johnny Depp is 57. Actress Gloria Reuben is 56. Gospel singer-actress Tamela Mann is 54. Rock musician Dean Felber (Hootie & the Blowfish) is 53. Rock musician Dean Dinning is 53. Musician Ed Simons is 50. Actress Keesha Sharp is 47. Country musician Shade Deggs (Cole Deggs and the Lonesome) is 46. Bluegrass singer-musician Jamie Dailey (Dailey & Vincent) is 45. Actress Michaela Conlin is 42. Actress Natalie Portman is 39. Actress Mae Whitman is 32. Actor Lucien Laviscount is 28.

**Thought for Today:** “Imagination was given to man to compensate him for what he isn’t. A sense of humor was provided to console him for what he is.” [-] Horace Walpole, English author (1717-1797).

## 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**

