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Connecting June 12, 2020

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Colleagues,

Good Friday morning on this the 12th day of June 2020,

What would Martin Luther King Jr. think of the protests and changes rocking the United States in the wake of the police killing of George Floyd?"



Connecting posed that question to **Gene Herrick**, who as an AP photographer covered King and the Civil Rights Movement.

Our 93-year-old colleague, whose first AP photo work was covering the Korean War, shares his thoughts in the lead story for today's issue.

We congratulate our colleague **Joni Beal** on her retirement today from the AP after a 34-year career. Her favorite AP job - being The Birthday Maven. Read on...

And we bring you more of your stories focusing on the use of the telephone in your job. Got your own phone-related story to share? Send it along.

Silver linings in the age of coronavirus? We would welcome your story.

Have a great weekend – be safe and healthy.

Paul

'I Once Led the Way - I Tried'



The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., right, accompanied by Rev. Ralph D. Abernathy, center, is booked by city police Lt. D.H. Lackey in Montgomery, Ala., on Feb. 23, 1956. (Gene Herrick/AP)

By Gene E. Herrick ([Email](#))

I can just imagine what that great orator and the founder of the Civil Rights Movement might be saying today. It could have been “I tried.” He would be talking about the recent killing of George Floyd, a black man, by a white policeman in Minneapolis, Minnesota. This killing caused the nation’s people to respond and demonstrate by the thousands – white and black – over some eight days and nights and still continuing.

With each new day, in the killing's aftermath, there seems to be a new headline about changes effected by Floyd's death that are intended to make the United States a better place to live.

That man who "Tried" was Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who elevated the conversation about race relationships in this country. Until his assassination in 1968.

In 1956, in a little church in Montgomery, Alabama, the young black preacher stood in the pulpit, and with a voice that rattled the timbers, spoke about man's inhumanity to man, and talked eloquently about the inequalities between white people and black people.





AP Photos/Gene Herrick

As an Associated Press photographer, I was there covering Rosa Parks, a black woman, being fingerprinted after she was arrested for sitting in the wrong place on a city bus. Almost immediately, King got involved, and he too was arrested. Both of these events were preceded by the killing of Emmitt Till, a 14-year-old Chicago black boy in Mississippi, and Autherine Lucy, a black woman who was removed from the University of Alabama because of the color of her skin. These three stories were in 1955.

These killings and racial treatment of these black people got the attention of the world. King spoke near and far, and with a voice and delivery that stirred the conversation about the inequality of race relationships, especially in the United States. King received the Nobel Prize for his efforts toward peace and equality.

King was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee, in 1968, by a white man, James Earl Ray. I also covered that story, but after King's body was flown to Atlanta.

In his 1968 book, *Strength to Love*, King says, "The ultimate measure of a man [or woman] is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."

Also, at that time, King said, "I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality. This is why right, temporarily defeated, is stronger than evil triumphant."

King traveled, and spoke, extensively about inequality.

Having spent some time with Rev. King, I feel that he would be very upset with the current civil rights issues and the murder of George Floyd. However, he probably would have been excited at the new opportunities and challenges. There is little doubt in my mind that he would have gone to Minneapolis and talked from the pulpit and street corners, to government officials, and to the thousands of demonstrators who turned out, day and night. King's strong and eloquent voice would have echoed through the buildings' valleys, and he espoused the expansion of the Civil Rights Movement for the equal rights of all of mankind.

I just know in my heart, that Rev. King would have stirred the emotions of mankind to join hands and hearts in the battle for legislation to protect people from police brutality and he would have spoken against a government seemingly not too interested in Civil Rights for all.

King, I think, would be angered by the current events - dismayed by how George died - but anxious to get back into the fray. His voice would be an inspiration for all.

In Memphis, the evening before he was shot and killed by one bullet to the head, he gave one of his most provocative speeches - "I've Been To The Mountain Top."

Toward the end of the speech, King refers to threats against his life and uses language that seems to foreshadow his impending death, but reaffirming that he was not afraid to die: "Well, I don't know what will happen now. We've got some difficult days ahead. But it really doesn't matter with me now, because I've been to the mountaintop. And I don't mind. Like anybody, I would like to live – a long life; longevity has its place. But I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will. And He's allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over. And I've seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the Promised Land. So I'm happy, tonight. I'm not worried about anything. I do not fear any man. Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord. "

How prophetic.

Would King be happy with the progress of civil rights since his death? Probably not. But I feel he would have been happy to continue his work to help mankind finally put an end to racism and bring civil rights to all.

Joni Beal retires today after 34-year AP career

Joni Beal ([Email](#)) - After 34 years with The Associated Press, I'm retiring today. It's been a wonderful ride.

I graduated from Shippensburg State College (now Shippensburg University) in Pennsylvania with a degree in Communication-Journalism in 1976.

I joined the news department at WINC in Winchester, Va., as a reporter for three years and was News Director for seven years. During that time, I was a frequent contributor and AP award winner. That must have caught the AP's eye because in May 1986, Dennis Montgomery, the COB of the Richmond, Va., bureau, called and asked me to apply. I still remember the test - I didn't know that crambo was a rhyming game, so I said it was the next Conan/Rambo film.



I was offered a transfer to the BNC in Washington in 1988 and began working the broadcast wire desk as a writer and editor and, during the first Gulf War, war writer. The thought of those runnings still gives me nightmares. I joined the Entertainment Department in the mid-1990s. First, I worked alongside Oscar Wells Gabriel on urban entertainment and then I was named the Entertainment Celebrity Birthday Editor – or as I prefer: The Birthday Maven. It's the job I've loved the most.

(The birthdays go to Today in History (print and broadcast), Today in Entertainment History (broadcast) and Celebrity Birthdays (print). AP entertainment writers use it for obits and for stories.)

This is my second retirement from AP. In 2012, I retired from full time. Since then, I've been working on the birthday database part time from home. I have loved my career with the AP and am proud to have worked with the best in the business.

As for my next chapter, it was supposed to be a summer of long days at the pool, throwing parties, going to hear music and a great deal of travel. So much for plans. For now, I'll be doing home projects, working on jigsaw puzzles and reading (I'm on my 15th book of the pandemic). There's always music in our house, but we sure miss going to shows, especially since my husband books bands. We are very active in our small town of Cheverly, Md, and we look forward to being able to be crazy busy again once restrictions are lifted.

As one of my favorite soul singer/songwriters, Arthur Alexander, put it: "Adios Amigo. Goodbye my friend."

Connecting series: More of your phone stories



Ron Edmonds of The Associated Press won the 1982 Pulitzer Prize in Spot News Photography for his coverage of the President Reagan assassination attempt. Ron is a Connecting colleague.

Ann Blackman ([Email](#)) - My phone story took place on March 30, 1981, in the hour after the assassination attempt on President Reagan. I was in the AP bureau when my husband, Michael Putzel, filed the first bulletin that shots had been fired at Reagan as he left a downtown hotel. No one—not even Reagan—knew yet if he had been hit. I picked up a phone at the news desk and heard Mike dictating an add, which assured me he was okay, and Evans Witt and I raced to George Washington University Hospital, only a few blocks away.

We spotted the president's armored limousine up on the curb outside the emergency room. One shot had struck the bullet-resistant glass of the limo; another ricocheted off a door. People had started to gather and were arguing over whether Reagan walked into the ER or was carried in. Was he hurt or not? This was long before cell phones, and Evans said to me, "Find a phone." I ran about 100 yards down Pennsylvania Avenue to the first public phone booth, unscrewed the microphone inside the phone and put it in my jacket pocket.

A few minutes later, White House aide Lyn Nofziger appeared at the hospital entrance and told a crowd of reporters that Reagan had been wounded, but he furnished no details, except to say the president was not in surgery at the time. It was only later we learned that as Nofziger was speaking, the president's gurney was being raced down a

corridor from the ER to the OR, where surgeons would stanch the bleeding and save his life.

I ran back to the phone booth—and found it occupied by a semiconscious drunk. There was a bar just down the street, and I dashed to it, shouted for a phone and dictated the bulletin that Reagan had actually been hit.

No idea what I ever did with the phone mic!

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Adolphe Bernotas ([Email](#)) - The telephone piece reminded me of the late Sandy Higgins, dear friend and colleague (Alexander Griswold Higgins) when it was all the two of us in the Concord AP bureau against the world and equal number of UPI staffers. Competition was fierce, especially at the Legislature, where the staffer covering XGR would phone the bureau. Whenever the UPI staffer would come into the closet of a tiny Statehouse press room, Sandy and I would switch to German, even if we were discussing Bruins or Celtics scores.

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Tom Cohen ([Email](#)) - It was in Wright City, Missouri, on the night of Oct. 2, 1986. Fugitive murderer Michael Wayne Jackson, who had been hiding out in eastern Missouri for about a week, blew his head off when cornered by police and the FBI in an abandoned barn. I got called at home and told to get out there for the FBI news conference. A big media pack gathered at the command post in town. When the agent announced Jackson was dead and identified through fingerprints, I headed out the door for the lone payphone. However, one of the two UPI guys on the story was standing in the phone booth. He wasn't talking on the phone, but he wasn't going to move. My choice was to physically pull him out, which at the very least would have delayed my ability to file, or seek another option. Down the road was a country & western bar, so I gave the UPI guy a dirty look and ran down to the bar. A very friendly waitress who was intrigued by my urgent need for a phone let me use theirs and hung around while I filed to Correspondent Mark Peterson in St. Louis. He had New York on the other line, and I remember him relaying a question from New York about how they identified Jackson, and I was able to answer with FBI agent Hal Helterhoff's quote: "Absolute positive identification through fingerprints." When the waitress offered me a drink after I hung up, I had to politely decline to head back for more reporting. It all worked out fine, as we won the AMs play (back when that sort of thing existed) by something like 12-2, and I even received a nice note from the Kansas City COB, a fellow named Paul Stevens. To this day, though, I've thought about how much I would have enjoyed grabbing that smug UPI guy by the collar to yank him out of the phone booth.

Going mobile in Hackensack



For decades The Record of Hackensack's main building was located near downtown. In June 2008 Publisher Stephen A. Borg announced the paper would join a sister publication at a commercial office tower in West Paterson, N.J. But he said most of its journalists would be "mobile," working outside of the office. The Record building was demolished 10 years later to make way for redevelopment of the 20-acre riverfront property. (July 25, 2018 file photo by Tariq Zehawi/NorthJersey.com)

Mark Mittelstadt ([Email](#)) _ Working from home has become the "new normal" for many journalists and other workers since the COVID-19 pandemic hit in March. But at one large New Jersey newspaper, it has been the mode of operation for more than a dozen years.

Some time in the early 2000s, The Record of Hackensack began assigning "mobile journalists" to report using laptops and cell phones from assignment sites or wherever else they could find space. Including home.

At the time it was a novel concept for many American newspapers wedded to the idea of reporters, photographers and other journalists considering a bureau or the main office "home." The step was taken by the Garden State's second largest newspaper ostensibly to have journalists spend more time covering news out in the field. But, many suspected, it also was done to also reduce costs and perhaps to eventually sell The Record's main headquarters near downtown Hackensack, a vibrant city a short commute from New York City.

In June 2008 Publisher Stephen A. Borg announced The Record would vacate the Hackensack building his family had owned since the 1940s and move staff to the site of its sister daily, The Herald News. The Herald News formerly had its office in a gritty

part of Passaic but by that time had relocated to a commercial office tower along an interstate in West Paterson, N.J.

In a memo to staff, Borg said the move could save \$2.4 million per year.

He told Editor and Publisher even before the move the paper had approximately 30 "mojos" who reported from outside of the main building. "The number one objective is more mobile journalism," he said. "And to take advantage of our other offices."

In his memo, he said "We are in the midst of great change. Classified advertising revenues are falling fast. Some of it is due to the economy. But much of it is secular. Ads won't return to the print newspapers even when the economy gets better."

Describing the shift to more mobile journalists who could work full-time out of the office, Borg added: "We have and will continue to have more mobile journalists. They will share desks as they are rarely in the office. The office/work concept is called 'hoteling'. Employees actually reserve desk time to cut down on the number of desks and square footage needed."

The newspaper made the move by the end of 2008. Gannett Company purchased the Borgs' media assets eight years later. In 2018 The Record building was demolished, part a years-long effort by three developers -- including Macromedia -- to redevelop the 20-acre parcel. Plans included a 600-unit luxury residential community, an outdoor public plaza and river walk, and retail.

Karen Seaton dies Wednesday at age of 77



(Karen Seaton - was the wife of Connecting colleague Edward Seaton ([Email](#)), chairman of The Manhattan (Kansas) Mercury, and the mother of Ned Seaton ([Email](#)), publisher and editor-in-chief of the newspaper. She is shown above in photo with her husband and two sons.)

Karen Seaton, 77, passed away early in the morning of Wednesday, June 10, 2020, just as the cool air moved in to Manhattan after an overnight thunderstorm. She didn't like to do anything in heat and humidity. As had been the way of her life, she managed to go exactly how she wanted, and gracefully.

Her family had gathered the previous few days, and they surrounded her at the end. She was in one of her favorite spots on earth: her "nest," as she called it, with the southwest-facing windows behind her in her home at the top of the hill on Delaware Avenue. She normally had piles of books and magazines around her there, the windows shaded by a large Chinese elm. Her last project was re-reading Audrey Topping's book about a beloved cockatoo, "Charlie's World." It was one of her favorites.

She died of pancreatic cancer, having been diagnosed 14 months before.

Read more [here](#) .

Honoring courage in the name of slain AP photographer



A woman wails while she hugs the shirt of her 14-year old brother, who was killed by Indian armed forces during clashes that erupted between them and protesters near the encounter site in Pinjoora village of south Kashmir's Shopian district. (Masrat Zahra)

By Patrick Maks

The 2020 Anja Niedringhaus Courage in Photojournalism Award, named for the Pulitzer Prize-winning AP photographer who was killed in 2014 reporting in Afghanistan, has been awarded to Masrat Zahra, a Kashmir-based freelance photojournalist.

The award, administered by the International Women's Media Foundation, recognizes the work of women photographers who put themselves at risk to report the news through images.

Zahra, born and raised in Srinagar, has documented the ongoing conflict in Indian-controlled Kashmir for four years. Her images illustrate the violent confrontations between Kashmiri protesters and Indian security forces and their subsequent toll on the community. She is one of a small number of women photojournalists working in the area.

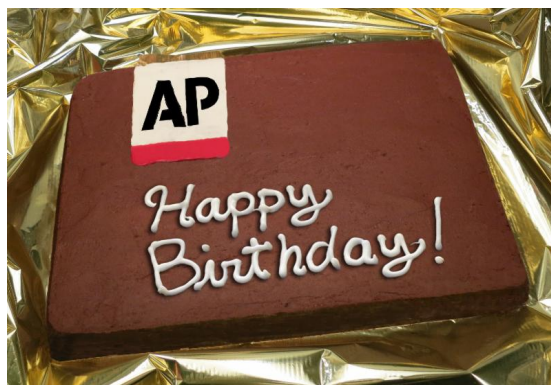
"I hope this honor will encourage me to perfect my skills and do my work more confidently," Zahra said in remarks shared by IWMF. "I also expect it to

inspire other women photographers who are working in difficult environments. This is an honor to all women who choose to work in conflict zones.”

Read more [here](#) .



Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



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Stories of interest

Wall Street Journal Staff Faults Column on Race by Former Top Editor (New York Times)

By Marc Tracy

Staff members of The Wall Street Journal sent a letter to newsroom leaders on Monday accusing the paper's former editor in chief, Gerard Baker, who has been an editor at large at The Journal since leaving the top job in 2018, of violating rules that apply to those who work on the news side.

The letter, from the board of the Independent Association of Publishers' Employees, the union that represents Journal staff members, criticized a column by Mr. Baker on race and accused him of tweeting in a way that went against the paper's social media policy.

While Mr. Baker expresses opinions in a weekly column, called Editor at Large, The Journal had classified him as a member of the news division, just as it had during his five-and-a-half-year run as the editor in chief.

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

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At Gannett's Ithaca Journal, local news staffing is down to one reporter (Poynter)

By Rick Edmonds

It's no secret that news staffing at small-market chain newspapers, Gannett's especially, has been shrinking radically.

An extreme case in point: The Ithaca Journal in upstate New York now has no locally based editor or publisher and just a single reporter. Ithaca is small, but not a dot on the map, with 30,000 residents and another 30,000 students at Cornell University and Ithaca College (each with a robust student news organization).

Amalie Nash, vice president for local news and audience development at Gannett, confirmed my read of the Ithaca Journal website showing reporter Matt Steecker as the only newsroom contact in town.

Read more [here](#) . Shared by Mark Mittelstadt.

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'Seeing it sparked something' (Poynter)

By KRISTEN HARE

Over several days, in the thick of the Missouri heat, nine reporters went into ongoing protests in Kansas City with one question: Why are you out here?

Katie Moore, a reporter covering breaking news and crime, found two threads in the 43 responses she and her colleagues collected.

"One of them was people were feeling very hopeful and this was going to bring change," she said, "and the other side of that is that people were tired."

Faces of Protest: These are the people demonstrating against police brutality in KC published in The Kansas City Star on June 5.

Read more [here](#) .

Today in History - June 12, 2020



By The Associated Press

Today is Friday, June 12, the 164th day of 2020. There are 202 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On June 12, 1994, Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Goldman were slashed to death outside her Los Angeles home. (O.J. Simpson was later acquitted of the killings in a criminal trial but was eventually held liable in a civil action.)

On this date:

In 1630, Englishman John Winthrop, leading a fleet carrying Puritan refugees, arrived at the Massachusetts Bay Colony, where he became its governor.

In 1898, Philippine nationalists declared independence from Spain.

In 1942, Anne Frank, a German-born Jewish girl living in Amsterdam, received a diary for her 13th birthday, less than a month before she and her family went into hiding from the Nazis.

In 1963, civil rights leader Medgar Evers, 37, was shot and killed outside his home in Jackson, Mississippi. (In 1994, Byron De La Beckwith was convicted of murdering Evers and sentenced to life in prison; he died in 2001.)

In 1964, South African black nationalist Nelson Mandela was sentenced to life in prison along with seven other people, including Walter Sisulu, for committing sabotage against the apartheid regime (all were eventually released, Mandela in 1990).

In 1967, the U.S. Supreme Court, in *Loving v. Virginia*, unanimously struck down state laws prohibiting interracial marriages.

In 1978, David Berkowitz was sentenced to 25 years to life in prison for each of the six "Son of Sam" .44-caliber killings that terrified New Yorkers.

In 1981, major league baseball players began a 49-day strike over the issue of free-agent compensation. (The season did not resume until Aug. 10.) "Raiders of the Lost Ark," directed by Steven Spielberg and starring Harrison Ford as Indiana Jones, was first released.

In 1987, President Ronald Reagan, during a visit to the divided German city of Berlin, exhorted Soviet leader Mikhail S. Gorbachev to "tear down this wall."

In 1997, baseball began regular-season interleague play, ending a 126-year tradition of separating the major leagues until the World Series. (In the first game played under this arrangement, the San Francisco Giants defeated the Texas Rangers 4-3.)

In 2004, former President Ronald Reagan's body was sealed inside a tomb at his presidential library in Simi Valley, California, following a week of mourning and remembrance by world leaders and regular Americans.

In 2016, an American-born Muslim opened fire at the Pulse nightclub, a gay establishment in Orlando, Florida, leaving 49 people dead and 53 wounded before being shot dead by police.

Ten years ago: A French fishing vessel rescued 16-year-old Abby Sunderland from her crippled sailboat in the turbulent southern Indian Ocean, ending the California teen's attempt to sail around the world solo. Ethnic riots wracked southern Kyrgyzstan, forcing thousands of Uzbeks to flee their homes. Daniel Nava hit the first pitch he saw as a big leaguer for a grand slam [-] only the second player to do it [-] leading the Boston Red Sox to a 10-2 rout of the Philadelphia Phillies.

Five years ago: Joyce Mitchell, a worker at the maximum-security Clinton Correctional Facility in Dannemora, New York, was arrested on charges of helping two convicted killers escape; Mitchell later pleaded guilty to promoting prison contraband and was sentenced to 2-1/3 to seven years in prison.

One year ago: President Donald Trump said if a foreign power offered dirt on his 2020 opponent, he'd be open to accepting it, telling ABC News, "There's nothing wrong with listening." (Two days later, Trump shifted gears, saying that "of course" he would go to the FBI or the attorney general to report such an offer.) Maine Gov. Janet Mills signed legislation that legalized medically assisted suicide; Maine became the eighth state to allow terminally ill people to end their lives with prescribed medication. U.S. Catholic bishops voted to create a new national sex-abuse hotline run by an independent entity; it would field allegations that bishops committed abuse or covered it up. The St. Louis Blues won their first Stanley Cup, beating the Boston Bruins 4-1 in Game 7 of the NHL finals.

Today's Birthdays: Songwriter Richard M. Sherman is 92. Jazz musician Chick Corea is 79. Sportscaster Marv Albert is 79. Singer Roy Harper is 79. Pop singer Len Barry is 78. Actor Roger Aaron Brown is 71. Actress Sonia Manzano is 70. Rock musician Bun E. Carlos (Cheap Trick) is 69. Country singer-musician Junior Brown is 68. Singer-songwriter Rocky Burnette is 67. Actor Timothy Busfield is 63. Singer Meredith Brooks is 62. Actress Jenilee Harrison is 62. Rock musician John Linnell (They Might Be Giants) is 61. Actor John Enos is 58. Rapper Grandmaster Dee (Whodini) is 58. Actor Paul Schulze is 58. Actor Eamonn Walker is 58. Actress Paula Marshall is 56. Actress Frances O'Connor is 53. Rock musician Bardi Martin is 51. Actor Rick Hoffman is 50. Actor-comedian Finesse Mitchell is 48. Actor Mel Rodriguez is 47. Actor Jason Mewes is 46. Actor Michael Muhney is 45. Blues musician Kenny Wayne Shepherd is 43. Actor Timothy Simons is 42. Actor Wil Horneff is 41. Singer Robyn is 41. Rock singer-musician John Gourley (Portugal. The Man) is 39. Actor Dave Franco is 35. Country singer Chris Young is 35. Actor Luke Youngblood is 34. Actor Ryan Malgarini is 28.

Thought for Today: "It is easier to love humanity as a whole than to love one's neighbor." [-] Eric Hoffer, American philosopher (1902-1983).

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.

Paul Stevens

Editor, Connecting newsletter

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