

SHARE:

[Join Our Email List](#)

Constant Contact

[View as Webpage](#)



Connecting

July 13, 2020

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



[Top AP News](#)
[Top AP Photos](#)

[Connecting Archive](#)
[AP Emergency Relief Fund](#)
[AP Books](#)



Colleagues,

Good Monday morning on this the 13th day of July 2020,

Our colleague **Steve Wilson** is a second-generation AP journalist – and he leads today's Connecting with a story on his father **Robert C. Wilson** who was part of the AP team that covered World War II.

His dad (at right, in 1990) wrote a first-person account for the AP wires of parachuting out of a burning plane shot down behind German lines – and Steve uncovered some clippings of the story while going through scrapbooks.



Steve himself experienced his own ordeal with an aircraft and also recounted it in a first-person AP story in 1984. He was among 255 passengers and crew held hostage on the plane for 20 hours by Sikh militants in his first year in India.

Today's issue brings more fascinating accounts from colleagues who answered Connecting's call for the story on how long you've been with your partner – or how long had you been, if she or he is gone? And any AP tie to meeting her or him. I know you will enjoy these stories and be prompted to share your own. Be sure to include a photo.

About that photo at the top of the page? It shows our colleague **Terry Petty** ([Email](#)) – who explains, “A guy working in his yard as I rode past on my bike yelled, ‘Thank you AP for your honest journalism! Keep it up.’ He noticed my AP jersey (sporting the old AP logo) , which I think of a few of us current and retired AP folks have.”

You had a similar experience? Please share.

Here's to a great week ahead. Stay safe, be healthy – and share your stories.

Paul

Like Father, Like Son



Steve and his dad during father-son trip to Ireland in 1991

Steve Wilson ([Email](#)) - If I've found a silver lining in the coronavirus lockdown, it's been the chance to look through some of those dusty boxes of papers, documents and photographs that have been stored away for so long.

It allowed me to retrieve the scrapbook containing newspaper clippings of AP stories written by my father, Robert C. Wilson, including his first-person account of parachuting out of a burning plane shot down behind German lines during World War II.

The scrapbook, dutifully kept and compiled by his mother, is a treasure trove tracing my father's life and career. It includes school report cards from his boyhood years growing up in Bennington, Vt., the columns he wrote for the campus paper at Duke University, and local newspaper stories charting his success and promotions.

But, most of all, the scrapbook contains clips chronicling my father's career as a professional journalist, notably as an AP war correspondent in Europe.

My father -- just "Bob" to me and his friends -- started his journalism career in 1937 with the Vermont Press Bureau in Montpelier. He also worked for the Rutland Herald and Springfield (Mass.) Union.

He joined the AP in 1941 in Albany, N.Y., and served as AP bureau chief in Syracuse. He worked on the foreign desk in New York City before being sent overseas in 1944, based in the AP bureaus in London and Paris.

One of his first assignments was interviewing Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower two days after the D-Day invasion of Normandy began.

At age 29, my father volunteered to cover the Allied airborne operations across the Rhine.

I have read the accounts of his harrowing adventure many times, but re-reading them again still brings goosebumps.

War Writer Jumped From Burning Plane, Nearly Shot

(Editor's note: Robert C. Wilson, 29-year-old Associated Press correspondent covering the Allied airborne operation across the Rhine, was aboard a plane which was shot down Saturday. Parachuting to earth from 600 feet, he fell inside German-held territory and found himself in the thick of the ground fighting. Eventually he made his way out and, still wearing his dress uniform, arrived in Paris last night and wrote the following account of his adventure.)

By **ROBERT C. WILSON**

PARIS, March 25. — (AP) — During the Allies' mighty cross-Rhine offensive I was forced to parachute at 600 feet from a burning troop carrier plane six or seven miles east of the river. Once I got on the ground, British troops in their huge gliders came banging down almost on top of my head.

On the ground I spent a brutal 24 hours. Some British troops and I were attacked by German tanks and self-propelled guns which set afire a house in which we took refuge. Then, after running a gauntlet of Nazi machinegun fire, we wandered three or four hours in the darkness, seeking friendly troops.

Our odyssey started at 9 a. m., Saturday, March 24, when the long line of C-46's, used for the first time in carrying parachutists, took off on the 200-mile trip to the drop zone across the Rhine.

600 Feet Above Ground

Three minutes after we crossed the smoke-obscured Rhine the parachute troops hurled themselves out of the plane. We were at 600 feet then, doing 110 miles per hour, and were a good target for the scores of flak guns the Germans were firing at us.

Suddenly the plane shuddered. A wing spurted flame. We had been hit. The plane shuddered again from another hit. Flames seared my eyebrows. I ran toward the tail of the plane and vanked frantically at the

weighing 36 pounds, fell off. We both jumped into space. It all happened in a few seconds. I hit the ground with a terrible jar. I was in the middle of a field all alone. There was a farmhouse 100 yards away.

The parachute troops had jumped at 10:16 a. m. Nineteen minutes later I had taken off my parachute and was crawling in a plowed field when swarms of British gliders swooped in. One struck power wires, burst into flames and crashed sickeningly. Another headed straight for me, skimmed inches overhead, and nosed into the earth 20 feet away.

I thought everyone was killed in it, but within five minutes a half-dozen Tommies spilled out and looked cautiously around. Soon they spotted me. One pointed a gun at me. I waved a white handkerchief frantically shouting, "I'm an American. Don't shoot!"

Was Almost Shot

Later Lt. James Leadson Formby, of Liverpool, told me he was just about to fire as he had figured that my unorthodox uniform was something new in German dress uniform. I was wearing U. S. "Paris-type" clothes—a dress uniform, instead of combat uniform.

At 11 a. m. the British soldiers took a house in which there were six German soldiers, two Italian workers, a German farmer and his wife, daughter and young son.

There were nearly a dozen men wounded from the landings of the gliders. These men were collected in a shed. Machineguns were chattering nervously and sniper bullets were whining sporadically.

I was with a unit of the British Sixth airborne division. We had 29 men to hold the house. Some of the British dug in around the hedges. We were about six miles from the Rhine between Hamminkeln and Rangen-burg.

Ultimately these British airborne soldiers and I had a "little Arnheim" all our own.

string which was supposed to release my chain mail flak vest. It didn't work. One of the crewmen, whom I didn't recognize in the excitement, gave a tug and the vest,	"So far there isn't much opposition, eh?" asked the platoon leader, Sgt. Richard Rolfe of Wootton-Underwood, with typical British cheerfulness.
--	---

Clipping courtesy of AP Corporate Archives

In March 1945, my father was aboard a C-46 troop carrier plane that took off on a 200-mile trip to a drop zone across the Rhine. Shortly after 26 paratroopers made their jump, the aircraft was hit by German flak while flying at about 600 feet.

With the plane in flames, my father rushed to the back of the craft, where a crewman frantically helped him out of his 36-pound chain mail flak vest. They parachuted from the doomed plane. My father landed alone in the middle of a German field.

A few minutes later, swarms of British gliders swooped into the zone, including one that struck power lines, burst into flames and crashed. A few British troops emerged from the wreckage. One pointed a gun at my father and was about to shoot until he realized he was an American.

A unit of the British Sixth Airborne Division and my father took refuge in a nearby farmhouse, which came under intense German shelling and gunfire during the night. My father managed to escape from the burning building by jumping from a back window into the darkness.

With heavy fighting all around, he crawled and ran through the fields and forests for four hours until, around dawn, he came upon a unit of American "doughboys." My father eventually made it safely back to Paris. His first-person AP story was featured in newspapers across America and the world.

Bob Wilson was awarded the European, African and Middle Eastern Campaign Ribbon for "outstanding service with the armed forces under difficult and hazardous combat conditions."

After the war, my father remained as a correspondent in the AP Paris bureau on Rue de Berri. There, he met his future wife, Huguette. He returned to the U.S., where he worked for 23 years for U.S. News & World Report in Washington, D.C. He retired in 1978 and died in 2000 at the age of 83.

The plane incident stayed with my father for life. He often suffered nightmares and he chose not to fly. Trains, not planes, were our mode of transport for long-distance family trips. To get to Europe, my father would travel by ocean liner.

It was only a few years ago, thanks to an archive search by my London AP colleague Chris Lehourites, that I realized that my father was credited with first publicizing the term "foo fighters" – later chosen as the name for the popular American rock group.

In December 1944, my father filed an AP story from a U.S. air base in France quoting pilots who recounted encountering eerie balls of fire which raced along the wings of their planes while flying night missions over Germany. They called these “f..... foo fighters.”

A 2016 article in Air & Space Magazine reported: “At the end of the year, an Associated Press war correspondent, Robert C. Wilson, celebrated New Year’s Eve with the 415th (Night Fighter Squadron). The next day, his story on the foo fighters was featured on the front page of newspapers across the country. Other squadrons had seen them, but it was the number, consistency, and impact on the 415th crews—and the fact that a reporter listened to the airmen—that finally prompted investigations into the sightings.”

Needless to say, my father's career rubbed off on me. Journalism was in my blood. He encouraged me to join the student newspaper at Tufts and to contact the AP bureau in Boston to volunteer my services as a stringer. It led to an AP career that took me around the world, including postings in Boston, Miami, New York, New Delhi, Rome and London. Through it all, my father kept close tabs on my work, offering ideas, advice and feedback. He was my role model and inspiration. There was nothing more satisfying than making him proud.



Steve (right) and an Indian journalist, Ajoy Bose, on the tarmac in Lahore, Pakistan, right after the hijacking ended.

As fate would have it, I experienced my own scary plane ordeal – though much less terrifying than my father’s -- and recounted it in a first-person AP story.

In 1984, my first year in India, I was traveling back to New Delhi on an Indian Airlines flight from Srinagar, Kashmir, when nine Sikh militants took over the plane, firing two shots through the cockpit door and forcing the pilot at gunpoint to land in Lahore, Pakistan. The hijackers were protesting the Indian Army attack on the Golden Temple in Amritsar.

I was among 255 passengers and crew held hostage on the plane for 20 hours. Using my reporter’s instincts, I scribbled notes in the margins of a newspaper when the hijackers weren’t looking, keeping a detailed timeline of events.

At one point, the hijackers told us we had five minutes to say our final prayers before the plane would be blown up or set ablaze. The threat was never carried out (it turned out there was no bomb) and the hijackers eventually let us go and surrendered. Several passengers and crew were injured during the hijacking, but no one was killed. As we left the plane, I managed to interview some of the hijackers and crew.

AP Radio in Washington somehow was able to get a call through to me at the airport in Lahore, where I provided details of the hijacking and its conclusion. Later, I was allowed to go to the U.S. Consulate in Lahore and I called the AP desk in New York to further update the breaking story.

We flew back to New Delhi that evening. I went straight to the tiny AP office in Narendra Place, where I was welcomed by Bureau Chief Vicky Graham and others. Exhausted but safe, I typed out a first-person account of the plane drama which – just like my father’s story four decades earlier – was published in papers across the U.S. and the world.

Like father, like son.

(Steve Wilson, a native of Washington D.C., started his AP career as a news and sports stringer and summer relief staffer in the Boston bureau while an undergraduate at Tufts University. He joined the AP fulltime in Miami upon graduation in 1979. He returned to the Boston bureau in 1980 before going on to the World Desk in New York. He was posted in New Delhi from 1983-86, and Rome from 1986-91, covering the Vatican and foreign travels of Pope John Paul II. He served as London-based European Sports Editor and Olympic correspondent from 1991-2017. He covered 14 Summer and Winter Olympic Games and nearly 30 Wimbledon championships. Following a stint as Communications Director of the International Tennis Federation, he has been working as an Olympic consultant, mentor for the IOC Young Reporters

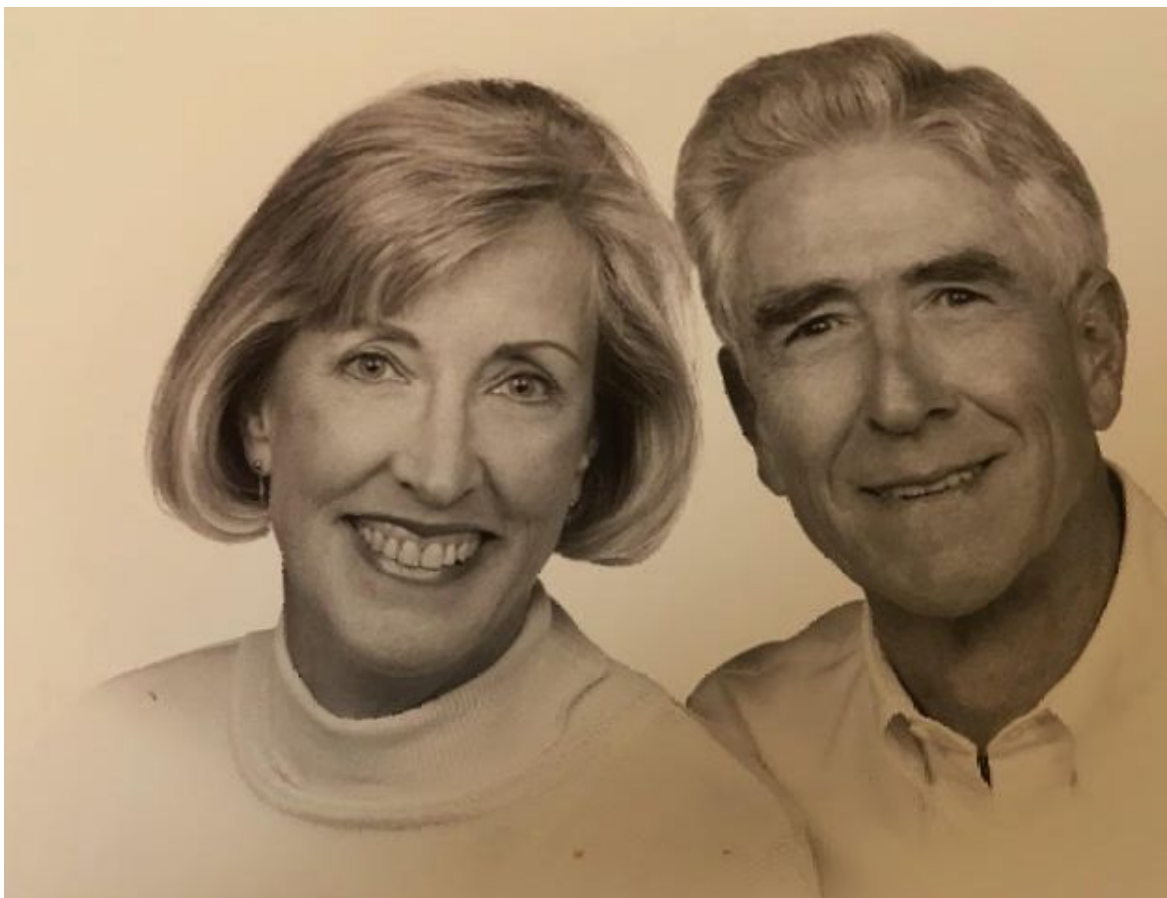
Program and freelance writer. He is married with two children, Peter, 24, and Alexandra, 18.)

Connecting series:

Oh, the places you'll go - with that special person you met

Henry and Monica...





Henry Bradsher ([Email](#)) - On the subject of marriages, I owe mine to a direct connection from AP New York.

As a young AP newsman about 1940, Fred Pannwitt shared an apartment in Detroit with another AP man, Stan Swinton. Fred later became the chief editorial writer for the Chicago Daily News, and Stan became the head of AP World Services.

Fred's daughter, Monica, graduated in 1963 from Swarthmore College with high honors and a Phi Beta Kappa key. Then she was going out to India as a Fulbright scholar in preparation for an academic career in South Asian studies. Fred wrote to Stan asking if the AP bureau chief in New Delhi might help her, perhaps by introducing her to some interesting people. Stan forwarded the letter to me.

In the same mail, I received an invitation to U.S. Ambassador John Kenneth Galbraith's farewell dinner dance before returning to Harvard. After checking with his social secretary about bringing a date, I phoned the student hostel where the recently arrived Fulbright scholars were being acclimatized. Would Monica like to attend the dinner dance the following night, formal?

Shocked, and not having come to India with a formal wardrobe, she hesitated. I assured her that any frock would do. Also, her mental image of AP bureau chiefs, she told me later, was short, fat and 40ish (I was tall, slim and 32). But she wanted to meet Galbraith, so she accepted.

The party was on Tuesday, July 2, 1963. Tall and blonde, she was lovely in a dusty-rose dress. I had a prior commitment for Wednesday evening, but took Monica on Thursday to the Fourth of July picnic at the U.S. embassy residential area. On Friday and Saturday, the Fulbright group went down to Agra to see the Taj Mahal. When they returned, I took her out to dinner again Sunday evening.

Over dinner Monday, our fourth date, I told her every cautionary thing I could think of about my family and myself and then said that the following evening I was going to ask her to marry me. She should think about it.

On Tuesday evening July 9, I asked her. She accepted, throwing away her Fulbright and academic plans. I had to repay the U.S. Educational Foundation in India for her plane fare out and her acclimatization expenses.

When I wrote to my family, my brother in New York got the letter first. He knew of Wally Sims, my first Delhi bureau chief who was then AP's world services editor in New York, and phoned the news to him. Wally told Stan. Stan phoned Fred to congratulate him. What? Fred hadn't yet gotten letters from Monica or me.

We waited two weeks to see if her parents could fly out for the wedding. Lacking passports, they wished us the best. So we got married in Old Delhi on July 25.

During my 1968-69 Nieman year at Harvard, Monica earned a master's degree in education. She taught in Hong Kong and Washington, and then at the National Geographic Society won national educational prizes for developing materials used in schools worldwide.

The old saying is "marry in haste, regret in leisure." For 57 wonderful years, we've been too busy to have any leisure, and no regrets.

-0-

Bill and Gerri...



Bill Chevalier ([Email](#)) - Funny how you chose July 10 to ask Colleagues for stories on marriage. OK, here's one: On July 10, 1954, 66 years ago earlier, Gerri and I were married in Watertown SD, just a half year before joining The AP in Minneapolis. I was a fledgling newsman, Gerri a registered nurse. I had the privilege of working with characters like Gene Herrick with whom I still carry on irreverent e-mail nonsense.

After five years with The AP, I joined the advertising world and ended up owning an ad agency in Portland OR. Gerri and I produced five babies, the oldest and youngest born on May 11. How's that for planning? The stint with The AP lasted only five years, but Gerri and I, thank God, are still kickin'.

I was barely out of U of Minn J-School and starting my first job at the Watertown SD Public Opinion when I accidentally met Gerri Klippstein at a beer party. I sort of remember interrupting my crawl behind a couch with beer can in hand to suddenly spy this beautiful dark-haired girl trying to ignore me and my antics. I was extremely lucky a few days later to arrange my first date with Gerri, my future wife of 66 years!

Being new at this 6-day-a-week daily. I was assigned the prestigious job of movie editor. I got to read all the advance sheets for all the movies at Watertown's three theaters and write a weekly column about films I had never seen. The good news was that Gerri and I had free movie passes which almost guaranteed nightly dates embellished by popcorn purchased with my last quarter.

Usually after the movie date, we would park in front of her house for a while. We waited for the headlights of our favorite squad car to pull up next to us and shine their police spotlight into our car, accompanied by a pair of big toothy grins. This time, though, I had the office Speed Graphic along in the back seat, with the big Heiland flash gun detached. I grabbed the flash and set it off through the open window. They told me they had spots before their eyes all night, but were mostly worried I would run their goofy photo in the paper. I had no photo, but never told them. The following Monday night I had to go the City Council meeting. Heading home I started my car, followed by WHEE-SCREECH-BOOM-SMOKE from under the hood.

We learned about money in Watertown. My starting pay at the paper was \$52.50 a week, which beat the \$50.00 offer from a Minnesota paper. One weekend I wanted to take Saturday off to visit my folks in St. Paul. My paycheck the next week was only \$40. The other \$12.50 was for overtime pay for Saturday. Live and learn.

We were married on a 107-degree day after we saved, borrowed and scraped enough for a nice honeymoon. A couple weeks before the wedding, my Oldsmobile Rocket 88 coupe had a blowout and I couldn't afford a new tire. So they cemented a boot into the tire, added a new inner-tube and wished me luck. The tire survived 3,000-plus miles through Glacier Park and several points north into Canada.

That fall we received a big surprise when my city editor recommended me for an opening at The AP Bureau in Minneapolis. Of course, I jumped at the chance and started getting ready for the move in early February,

As moving day approached, Gerri found herself to be a very sick patient in the hospital where she worked for several years, covered from head to toe with the chicken pox she had never had as a kid. A buddy helped me load a small trailer with our meager belongings which I towed through a blizzard to Minneapolis so I could start work at 11 that night. She looked in the mirror and told me she thought I'd never return to pick her up. But I did and we drove back to Minneapolis over ice covered roads.

It was all a good start to a great adventure at The AP and beyond!

-0-

Mark and Terry...

Mark Duncan ([Email](#)) - Starting my freshman year at the University of Dayton, I quickly became friends with a computer science major, Bob Mellinger, in our calculus class. Bob was from Philadelphia and a budding photographer. He invited me to work in the photo department at Student Publications to provide photos for the twice-weekly "Flyer News" and the "Daytonian" yearbook. Later I was named as yearbook co-editor and later Chief Photographer.

One of the other photographers was Theresa McCarren, a "townie" like me. I was a bit jealous of her because she had a Leicaflex SLR, while I was still rocking a Leica M3. She was dating Bob and I was dating a fellow chemistry major, Kathy, from Cleveland. We went on several double dates during the rest of freshman year. Then, Bob went home to Philly and Kathy back to Cleveland.

Early during summer break, Terry called me and we had our first date, walking the trails at John Bryan State Park near Yellow Springs, Ohio.



First date - John Bryan State Park, June 1973.

Terry had a part-time job as the Sports Editor of a suburban weekly "The Huber Heights Courier" which not only required her to cover high school games with stories and photos, but lay out her pages every week. I began submitting photos to the paper (for free, of course) and helping her paste stories and photos to the pages every Thursday night. I had by then acquired a Leicaflex SL and an assortment of lenses.

Once classes began in the fall Bob was toast as far as Terry was concerned. We remained good friends throughout college and still stay in touch.

Terry and I continued dating and early in 1974, we were in the darkroom at UD working on prints and just decided we should just get married. We broke the news to Terry's parents while watching Notre Dame play Dayton in March at her home. Her parents gave their blessing and UD beat Notre Dame. Then I drove to campus to cover a mini riot of students celebrating the Flyer's win.

We married in August 1974 and both graduated early in December 1975. We will celebrate our 46th anniversary this August.

After part-time jobs with the Dayton Journal Herald and Dayton Daily News, I was hired full time by the Dayton Daily News in 1978 and Joined the AP in Cleveland in November 1980 - retiring in April 2015. Terry did two stints with the Social Security Administration (taking six years off after the birth of our second son) and took early retirement in 2012.

Terry has been the best partner I could imagine. Taking care of our two sons (Matt, now 40, and Ian, 35) by herself while I was off on assignments wasn't easy. Even while working we still managed to take semi-annual road trips with the boys each summer and later just the two of us after they moved out.



Now we are pretty much confined to the house due to COVID-19. Vacations on hold for now, but hopefully 2021 will bring better things.

-0-

Molly and Richard...



From the first "Black Tie or Black Bowling Shirt Party" in Richard Drew's Brooklyn apartment in 1983 (or was it 1984?) -- with AP photographers Ron Frehm , Richard Drew , and Ray Stubblebine -- and Molly Gordy with the champagne?

Molly Gordy ([Email](#)) - On Dec. 16, 1983, Ula Ilnitsky assigned me to cover Jesse Jackson speaking at midnight at a housing project on the border of Queens and Long

Island. I knew there was no way a taxi would take me there much less wait so I begged to go with a photographer with a car. "We only have one on duty, and it's so quiet I've just let him go home early," night photo assignment editor Harris MacBeth told me, "but if you can catch him, he's all yours."

I ran downstairs to 51st St, saw a guy loaded down with cameras, caught him by the arm and said, "Am I glad I found you!" Richard Drew and I have been together continuously since that moment, including 34 years of marriage and raising three kids.

And I am gladder than ever!

-0-

Mike and Judy...





Mike Harris ([Email](#)) – Judy Rosee was born in Chicago and raised in suburban Skokie, IL. She almost went to the University of Illinois, but wound up, thankfully, at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, WI. Still, even being on the same campus, our paths would likely never have crossed if not for Judy's constant curiosity about everything.

She was living in a dormitory, where she ate breakfast in the cafeteria. Each school day, she would sneak two pieces of bread and some peanut butter out to make a sandwich for lunch. Then she would find a quiet place to study and eat between classes.

For a while, that quiet place was an empty classroom in North Hall on Bascom Hill. But, at the end of the first semester of her sophomore year, she found a lot of very big guys walking into the classroom as she arrived for her daily ritual. It was a physical education class for coaching majors on football analysis and strategy taught by Art "Dynie" Mansfield, the UW baseball coach and former assistant football coach.

Dynie, who was a wonderful guy and a bit of a character, shooed Judy out of the classroom and she found a chair just outside the open door. Being Judy, she couldn't help but listen to the conversation going on inside the room. At the end of that first class, she walked in and asked Dynie some questions about what he had been teaching.

"If you're listening to my class, you'd better be in the room," he told her. From that day on, she found herself auditing a class on a sport she knew absolutely nothing about. There were daily questions, which Dynie answered patiently and with a smile. Eventually, he told her it was time for some practical experience and sent her off to watch spring football practice.

By that time, I was the head football manager and had a lot of responsibility. Still, I couldn't help but notice this cute girl standing on the sidelines all by herself. I decided she must be a player's girlfriend. But, by the third day she showed up, I realized she hadn't made contact with anyone on the team.

I was playing catch before practice and told one of the other managers to toss the ball to me near the young lady. I caught the ball, bumped into her - not part of the plan - and said, "Hi." Very suave! NOT!

She was even more cute up close. I nervously struck up a conversation and, though I could see she was a bit uncomfortable, I eventually pushed my luck and asked her if she was busy on Saturday night? She said no and I had a date and, though I didn't know it yet, a future.

Later, she said that, being a very honest person, she grudgingly admitted she wasn't busy on Saturday night, fearing that I was a jock and not really her type. Had I phrased the question differently, asking her if she wanted to go out with me, she told me she would have said no.

Sometimes, you just get lucky.

We went out that weekend. It was shortly before a friend's birthday party and my unabashed pals asked her if she was coming to the party with me. Embarrassed, I had to tell her I already had a date with a girl from Milwaukee who I had been seeing for a while.

The next day I called the other girl and broke our date, telling her, "I think I just met the girl I'm going to marry."

Judy went with me to the party and we've been together ever since, celebrating our 52nd anniversary on July 3.

As for the AP connection, I could not have had the 41-year wire service career that I enjoyed without Judy's support and encouragement.

Best of the Week

AP Exclusive: China forces Uighurs to cut births with IUDs, abortions, sterilization



AP Photo/Mukhit Toktassyn

An unnamed AP reporter exposes another source of anguish for China's Uighurs: forced population control. Some experts say China is practicing a form of "demographic genocide" against the Muslim minority.

The story shocked people around the world and exposed a serious human rights issue: that the Chinese government has used its power to force the use of IUDs, abortions and sterilization on members of China's Muslim minority in an apparent effort to reduce its population.

The piece, which ran without a byline for security reasons, established that China is imposing birth control on Uighurs and other Muslims in a far more widespread and

systematic way than previously known.

Read more [here](#).

Best of the States

Joint investigation details hollowed-out US public health departments



Photo/Jennifer Gottschalk via AP

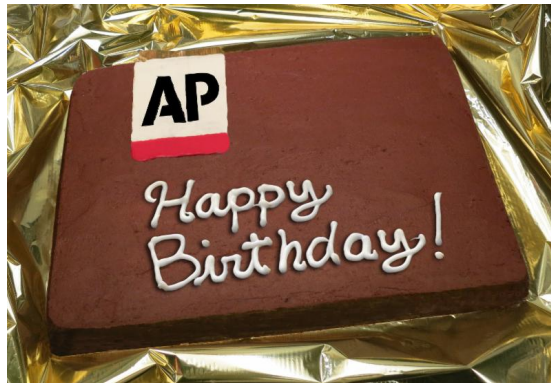
An Associated Press-Kaiser Health News joint investigation pulled together data from disparate sources, as well as interviews with more than 150 people in the field, to create a comprehensive picture of how cuts to state and local public health budgets and staffing have left them unprepared for the worst health crisis in a century.

AP's Michelle Smith paired with KHN's Lauren Weber, Laura Ungar, Hannah Recht and Anna Maria Barry-Jester to take a definitive look at state and local public health. While many people understood public health in general had suffered budget cuts over the years, the collaborative team used data to show exactly how expansive those cuts have been. They used deep reporting to show the impact those cuts have had over time. They painted a picture of a system starved of money and staff for years, facing more cuts amid a pandemic. With no single source of data, Recht pulled from more than a dozen sources, and worked with AP data editor Meghan Hoyer and KHN's Liz Lucas. Weber, Ungar, Smith and Barry-Jester interviewed more than 150 people who

told them of the burnout, low pay, threats and frustrations among public health workers.

Read more [here](#).

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



Doug Anstaett – danstaett@kspress.com

Stories of interest

The Last Reporter in Town Had One Big Question for His Rich Boss (New York Times)



By Dan Barry

POTTSTOWN, Pa. — An essential worker drove his cluttered Toyota Corolla through the early spring emptiness, past a sign outside a closed parochial school asking people to pray. Time to bear witness in a pandemic.

He pulled up to the closed Lower Pottsgrove Elementary School, where masked employees were distributing bags and boxes of food. Dozens of cars waited in line for curbside pickup, many with children eager to spot their teachers.

In the global context of the coronavirus, the moment was small. But to those who live around a Pennsylvania place called Pottstown, the scene reflected both the dependence on subsidized school meals and the yearning to connect in an unsettling time of isolation. It was a story.

Evan Brandt, proud reporter for a once-proud newspaper — The Mercury — emerged from his Toyota with press identification dangling from his neck, the photo old enough to be of someone else. The newspaper's last staff photographer left years ago, and Mr. Brandt, grayer and heavier at 55, had not updated his image.

Read more [here](#) . Shared by Linda Deutsch, Craig Klugman, John Willis, Richard Chady, Adolphe Bernotas.

-0-

Chatham announces plan to buy newspaper publisher McClatchy



By TALI ARBEL

NEW YORK (AP) — Hedge fund Chatham Asset Management plans to buy newspaper publisher McClatchy out of bankruptcy, ending 163 years of family control.

The companies did not put a price on the deal in an announcement Sunday. The agreement still needs the approval of a bankruptcy judge; a hearing is scheduled for

July 24.

McClatchy is one of the largest newspaper companies in the U.S. It owns 30 papers including the Miami Herald, the Charlotte Observer and the Sacramento Bee. It filed for bankruptcy protection because of a heavy debt load stemming from its \$4.5 billion purchase of the Knight-Ridder newspaper chain in 2006, just as the newspaper industry went into steep decline.

Chatham was McClatchy's largest shareholder and debt holder. It beat out a bid from Alden Global Capital, another hedge fund that has taken a leading role in the U.S. newspaper business.

Read more [here](#) . Shared by Valerie Komor.

-0-

The coronavirus has closed more than 50 local newsrooms across America. And counting. (Poynter)

By KRISTEN HARE

In many places, it started with a cut in print days. Furloughs. Layoffs. Just to get through the crisis, newsroom leaders told readers.

In some places, none of it was enough.

Now, small newsrooms around the country, often more than 100 years old, often the only news source in those places, are closing under the weight of the coronavirus. Some report they're merging with nearby publications. But that "merger" means the end of news dedicated to those communities, the evaporation of institutional knowledge and the loss of local jobs.

At least 14 of the newsrooms now gone are owned by CNHI. Several are owned by Forum Communications Company. And a few are — were — owned by local families.

Since 2004, about 1,800 newspapers have closed in the United States, Penny Abernathy reported in her research on news deserts. 1,700 are weeklies. The pace of closures, up till now, has been about 100 a year, said Abernathy, a professor at the University of North Carolina's Hussman School of Journalism and Media.

Read more [here](#) . Shared by Carol Riha.

-0-

How Can the Press Best Serve a Democratic Society?

(New Yorker)

By MICHAEL LUO

Henry R. Luce, the publisher of Time Inc., first proposed engaging a panel of scholars on the state of the American press in December of 1942. He suggested the idea to his friend Robert Maynard Hutchins, a legal and educational philosopher who, just over a decade earlier, at the age of thirty, had become the president of the University of Chicago. With the country mobilized for the fight against totalitarianism, Luce envisioned a philosophical inquiry that would reaffirm the foundations of freedom in the United States. Distrust of the media had become pervasive, and Luce believed that the public needed to better understand the purpose and function of the press. At first, Hutchins demurred, contending that the project would be too difficult to organize. Finally, in the fall of 1943, after months of Luce's cajoling, he agreed to lead the effort.

On December 15, 1943, a group of academics and policymakers gathered for the first time at the University Club, in New York. Luce's initial idea had been to enlist the University of Chicago's philosophy department, but Hutchins went in a different direction, selecting luminaries from a range of disciplines. The group included Reinhold Niebuhr, the theologian and ethicist; Charles E. Merriam, one of the nation's leading political scientists; Arthur M. Schlesinger, Sr., a Harvard historian; Archibald MacLeish, the librarian of Congress and a Pulitzer Prize-winning poet; and William Ernest Hocking, a renowned philosopher of religion. None were journalists; Hutchins believed that the industry needed to be excavated by outsiders. The thirteen Americans and four international advisers, whom Hutchins called the Commission on the Freedom of the Press, would spend nearly three years evaluating American journalism. In a statement of principles, Hutchins told them that their purpose was to answer three questions: "What society do we want? What do we have? How can the press . . . be used to get what we want?"

Read more [here](#) . Shared by Bob Daugherty.

-0-

Tucker Carlson's top writer resigns after secretly posting racist and sexist remarks in online forum (CNN)

By Oliver Darcy

Editor's note: This article (from last Friday) quotes racist, homophobic and sexist language, much of which has not been censored.

The top writer for Fox News host Tucker Carlson has for years been using a pseudonym to post bigoted remarks on an online forum that is a hotbed for racist, sexist, and other offensive content, CNN Business learned this week.

Just this week, the writer, Blake Neff, responded to a thread started by another user in 2018 with the subject line, "Would u let a JET BLACK congo n****er do lasik eye surgery on u for 50% off?" Neff wrote, "I wouldn't get LASIK from an Asian for free, so no." (The subject line was not censored on the forum.) On June 5, Neff wrote, "Black doods staying inside playing Call of Duty is probably one of the biggest factors keeping crime down." On June 24, Neff commented, "Honestly given how tired black people always claim to be, maybe the real crisis is their lack of sleep." On June 26, Neff wrote that the only people who care about changing the name of the NFL's Washington Redskins are "white libs and their university-'educated' pets."

Read more [here](#) .

Today in History - July 13, 2020



By The Associated Press

Today is Monday, July 13, the 195th day of 2020. There are 171 days left in the year.

Today's highlight:

On July 13, 2013, a jury in Sanford, Florida, cleared neighborhood watch volunteer George Zimmerman of all charges in the shooting of Trayvon Martin, the unarmed Black teenager whose killing unleashed furious debate over racial profiling, self-defense and equal justice.

On this date:

In 1787, the Congress of the Confederation adopted the Northwest Ordinance, which established a government in the Northwest Territory, an area corresponding to the present-day Midwest and Upper Midwest.

In 1863, deadly rioting against the Civil War military draft erupted in New York City. (The insurrection was put down three days later.)

In 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson nominated Thurgood Marshall to be U.S. solicitor general; Marshall became the first Black jurist appointed to the post. (Two years later, Johnson nominated Marshall to the U.S. Supreme Court.)

In 1973, former presidential aide Alexander P. Butterfield revealed to Senate Watergate Committee staff members the existence of President Richard Nixon's secret White House taping system. (Butterfield's public revelation came three days later.)

In 1985, "Live Aid," an international rock concert in London, Philadelphia, Moscow and Sydney, took place to raise money for Africa's starving people.

In 2018, a grand jury indictment, sought by special counsel Robert Mueller, alleged that the Russian government was behind a sweeping conspiracy to interfere in the 2016 U.S. presidential election; the grand jury indicted 12 Russian military intelligence officers on charges that they had hacked Hillary Clinton's campaign and the Democratic Party.

Ten years ago: Vernon Baker, a Black U.S. soldier who belatedly received the Medal of Honor for World War II valor in 1997 after historians concluded he'd been wrongly denied the award because of his race, died at his home near St. Maries, Idaho; he was 90.

Five years ago: New York City reached a \$5.9 million settlement with the family of Eric Garner, a Black man who died after being placed in a white police officer's chokehold.

One year ago: A power outage crippled the heart of Manhattan just as Saturday night Broadway shows were set to go on, sending theatergoers into the streets and bringing subways to a near halt; electricity was restored by about midnight.

Today's Birthdays: Game show announcer Johnny Gilbert (TV: "Jeopardy!") is 96. Actor Patrick Stewart is 80. Actor Robert Forster is 78. Actor Harrison Ford is 78. Singer-guitarist Roger McGuinn (The Byrds) is 78. Actor-comedian Cheech Marin is 74. Rock musician Mark "The Animal" Mendoza (Twisted Sister) is 64. Actor-director Cameron Crowe is 63. Bluegrass singer Rhonda Vincent is 58. Actor Ken Jeong is 51. Actress Ashley Scott is 43. Rock musician Will Champion (Coldplay) is 42. St. Louis Cardinals catcher Yadier Molina is 38. Actor Colton Haynes is 32. Soul singer Leon Bridges is 31. Actress Hayley Erin ("General Hospital") is 26. Actor Kyle Harrison Breitkopf is 15.

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