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Connecting September 03, 2020

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Colleagues,

Good Thursday morning on this the 3rd day of September 2020,

COVID-19 has claimed the life of another member of the AP family.

Tom Vint, who retired from the AP in 2005 after sports writing and other roles in the Omaha bureau, battled the virus for a month before he died Wednesday at the age of 72.

His former colleagues remembered him for being unflappable under deadline pressure and patient when training new staffers. Family and friends knew Vint for his willingness to help others and his passion for coaching youth sports.

Beyond his journalistic accomplishments, Vint was a lover of dogs, particularly Labradors, and wrote a book in 2011, “[Walking With Dog](#),” that showed what dogs can teach their owners about the ways of God.



Drop a note to Connecting if you'd like to share a favorite story of working with Tom. And if you'd like to send condolences to his family, let me know and I'll provide contact information.

APOLOGIES for the incorrect date of Today in History that was published in Wednesday's edition. Silver lining on the latest Faux Paul? Many of you read it daily.

Have a good day – be safe, stay healthy.

Paul

Tom Vint, retired AP sports writer, dies of COVID-19 at 72

By ERIC OLSON

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — As much as Tom Vint loved writing about sports, he might have loved playing and coaching sports more.

Vint, who covered the dominant Nebraska football teams of the 1980s and '90s as an Associated Press sports writer, died Wednesday after a monthlong battle

with COVID-19, his daughter Mandy Troia said. He was 72.



Vint retired from the AP in 2005 after 25 years working in multiple roles in the Omaha bureau.

Former colleagues remembered Vint for being unflappable under deadline pressure and patient when training new staffers. Family and friends knew Vint for his willingness to help others and his passion for coaching youth sports.

A native of Marshalltown, Iowa, he played baseball for the city's community college before moving on to Iowa State and graduating in 1970 with a bachelor's degree in journalism and mass communications. An Army veteran, he

worked for the Cedar Rapids (Iowa) Gazette and then landed a job as the outdoors writer for the Lincoln (Nebraska) Journal Star.

He joined the AP in 1980 and covered Nebraska teams that annually were ranked among college football's best and broke through with Tom Osborne's first national championship in 1994. Vint found a common bond with Osborne.

"As I remember, he was something of a fisherman and we occasionally visited on that topic," Osborne said. "He was a nice guy, and I appreciated his service as a reporter."

Read more [here](#).

Your memories of George Mikulec

Rick Cooper (Email) - When I first went to work at 50 Rock, Bruce Richardson gave me a list of people on the fourth floor I should get to know. Of course, George's name was high up on that list.

George was one of those iconic fourth floor denizens at 50 Rock who you could always count upon to go out of his way to help when you needed it.

I'm sorry to hear of his passing.

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Herb Hemming (Email) - George is one of those people you only run across a few times in your life. I worked with George off and on over a period of 26 years. George was funny, nice, smart, fair. I don't recall George ever speaking unkindly of anyone. When I was having trouble adjusting to New York City, George had me to dinner at his apartment several times, including several holidays. I came to New York City after growing up in California and going to school in Missouri. George was exactly what I thought a New Yorker would be like. I am very grateful to George for helping me through a period that could have had a much worse outcome. RIP George and thank you for being my friend.

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David Tenenbaum (Email) - I learned many things from George, prime among them was (because of his background coming from the AP Library) his terrific way of augmenting the report on a breaking story with photos of relevant past events, of locator maps, framing the story with rich perspective much more than others on the desk who tended to limit coverage to breaking images. I never forgot the skill with which he let members connect the dots and have a deeper understanding of what was happening, from the first minute of a hot story.

At one point during severe unrest in Haiti, George called me at home in Boston, told me they had not heard from Scott Applewhite in Port au Prince in a couple days, and would I go to help out? I asked if I could call him back in five minutes after thinking it out, and when I did and said I was packing he was a bit surprised. Of course, Scott was just fine, off in the boondocks, and when the story was over and I next talked to George, he expressed how relieved he was. It seems no one in NY had remembered to activate some form of hazardous duty insurance while we were down there....

I will miss George. He was a terrific mentor for photo editors and photographers, and a kind and good man.

Connecting series: Two-finger (and one) typists

Paul Albright (Email) - How about a one-finger typist? David Stolberg was statehouse reporter and later city editor of the Rocky Mountain News in Denver when I was breaking into the newsroom in the 1950s. I marveled at Stolberg's typing skills. He used only the index finger of his right hand to pound away on his Underwood manual typewriter. Dave kept the index finger of his left hand poised atop the shift keep and would depress it whenever a capital letter or some punctuation mark was needed. Otherwise, he used only the index finger on his right hand flying across the keyboard as he wrote the latest news.

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Adolphe Bernotas (Email) - I took typing in high school, but was asked to leave the class because I lacked proper attitude.

In college, did my work at The Connecticut Daily Campus and Hillside Highlights with two fingers. Similarly got by at the Naugatuck (Conn.) Daily News and later at the Bayonne (N.J.) Times and The Jersey (N.J.) Journal.

Got to AP in Concord in 1967 and Correspondent Carl Clement Craft, the nicest human being I ever met, sent me to evening typing class. I dutifully drove 20 miles round trip to the New Hampshire College of Commerce and Accounting (now Southern New Hampshire University), did the exercises and was a good student with repaired attitude.

However, when I opened the bureau around 4:00 a.m. the next day and had to file radio splits at 25 minutes after the hour, 10-finger typing slowed me down. The rip-and-readers went bonkers when little local stuff got on the radio wire.

A return to two-finger punching two days later calmed the uprising.

I remain a proud two-finger typist.

Connecting series: Your pets and the pandemic



Dan Day ([Email](#)) - Although we don't have any critters inside at our New Jersey home, my wife and I consider the many visitors to our yard as our pets. We get a wide variety, including the regal red-tailed hawks and striking red foxes that live on the golf course adjoining our property. Alejandro and Joaquin are our resident groundhogs.



Squirrels provide much of the entertainment, chasing each other across the lawn and racing around the trees. One squirrel, whom I call McCovey, likes to stretch out on the stoop outside our back door. I find him there from time to time as I go out to water the garden.

The birds are a continuous source of joy and wonder: the house sparrows stuffing themselves all day at the main feeder, their cousin song and chipping sparrows occasionally dropping by, the house finches and American goldfinches chowing down at the niger seed tube.

We welcome rare, seasonal visitors, such as rose-breasted grosbeaks, wood ducks and, just the other day, a magnificent pileated woodpecker.

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Guy Palmiotto ([Email](#)) - Here is a photo of Taylor, our oldest of three cats. He was living at an off-campus house where my son Nicholas lived while attending college. Brought home to us as a kitten on Thanksgiving 2007. He was so tiny as to fit in the palm of your hand, and endured the four-hour drive from Providence, RI. He is the absolute love of our household, and my wife Carmela and I spoil him as we did our children. He returns our affections in kind by licking our hands as we stroke his fur, and holds a specific corner of our bed each night. He has an endless appetite will beg for food during dinner and at times is successful when we grill salmon. I captured him as he awakened from a nap in this photo.

Paul, I say Thank You to you and Diana Heidgerd for this fun project. Like the favorite rides piece, it has gained traction.

Regarding Marcus Eliason's about 'solon'

Adolphe Bernotas (Email) - I don't see it as an archaism, but as fingernails-on-the-blackboard journalism cliché, of which there are many (bad enough in heads, more painful in copy).

Here's what happened. In 765 Anno Domini, a headline writer needed a shorter word than **legislator** or **lawmaker**, looked in the dictionary and found that the 457th entry was **solon**; cub reporters began to ape the headline writer and **solon** established itself in their brains for the rest of their journalism lives. That's how we get **inked the pact**, rather than the normal human **signed the contract**.

Here are some relatives:

fled on foot instead of **ran away**

firefighters sifted ashes for clues (needs art of the electric sifters)

Other favorites: **full force; full swing; high gear; meme; paradigm; trope; silly season; cobbled thick black smoke; beefed up; swing into action; outside the box; push the envelope; sigh of relief; shroud (or blanket) of secrecy; concerned citizens; closure; disturbing details; reeling**

Sports: (Why say **pitcher** when you can say **hurler**; why say **kicked** when you can say **booted**?).

The **combed** construction gets extra points: Why say **rescuers searched the woods for the lost boy**, when you can say **rescuers combed the wooded area on foot for the boy who went missing**. (Needs pictures of the heavy-duty industrially rated combs.) Another: **phones rang off the hook**, even though the last telephone that hung on a hook was made in 1208. And there's the good old **the switchboard lit up like a Christmas tree**, plus the perennial **it looks like a war zone, snail's pace, hear a pin drop, lucky to be**

alive and the barfukeworthy **it's official**. (**it's official** should be an indictable felony)

Another: **cinder block** rather than **concrete block** (even though cinder blocks were abandoned in the construction industry about 100 years ago)

Don't say **cameras flashed** when you can say **flashbulbs popped** (even though flashbulbs haven't been used in cameras in at least 60 years)

Enough, but you got me started.

Connecting mailbox

Mourning loss of Bill Neikirk

Bob Dobkin ([Email](#)) – I'm sad to be mourning the loss of Bill Neikirk, who became a dear friend and colleague when he joined the Washington Bureau in 1969. Always with a smile, a friendly gesture and a relaxed demeanor, Bill quickly proved to be a tough reporter and gifted writer, especially when dealing with complex issues. In writing about the economy, which became his specialty, Bill had a knack for making his stories easily understandable to the Kansas City milkman.

RIP, Bill.

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'APers United for Ed Kennedy'

Ray March ([Email](#)) - Ed Kennedy was AP's Paris Bureau chief when the Germans surrendered, ending WWII in Europe. Temporarily stymied by Eisenhower's embargo on the release of the news that Germany had signed an armistice agreement, Kennedy found a way to get his story

to the London bureau and then New York -- it was a major scoop. But he paid dearly for his work. AP fired him. He went to the Monterey Peninsula Herald in California where as a rookie I first met him in 1961. In 2012 Kennedy received his rightful due as a courageous protector of our First Amendment when AP President and CEO Tom Curley said Kennedy had done everything right.



My committee--the Ed Kennedy Pulitzer Project--is now trying to right the wrongs Kennedy endured all those years by seeing a special Pulitzer award be given in his name. We would love to have more signatures on our application. Please contact me if you'd like to take part.

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Goodbye, Coco – best lap cat we ever owned



Paul Albright (Email) - Our Coco passed over the rainbow on August 18. My wife and I miss our feline friend, a Sealpoint breed that was the best lap cat we ever owned. Losing a pet always breaks your heart, and we have had several heartbreaks in the past half-century. Apparently abandoned in the Colorado mountains in 2008, Coco was holed up under a neighbor's house near our log cabin retreat. Although she would have nothing to do with our neighbors, Coco arrived at our cabin one summer morning, jumped into my wife's lap, and adopted us as her new family. Even though she came to us as a "mountaineer," she turned out to be 100 percent an indoor cat, never once venturing outside even when there might be an open door at our house.

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Retired AP reporter Michael Graczyk discusses executions in NPC podcast

Mark Hamrick (Email) - The National Press Club's Broadcast Podcast committee, which I chair, interviewed Mike Graczyk about his remarkable run covering more than 400 executions in Texas.

The podcast, named Update-1, provides content consistent with the mission of the Club itself, often focusing on newsworthy events and topics, newsmakers and others, entirely produced by members who are volunteers. The podcast team leader is Mike Hemen, a long-time broadcast supervisor in the Washington AP bureau, himself a long-time Club member.



When I heard that a team member wanted to explore capital punishment, Graczyk was the first person I thought of, harkening back to my short time working in the Dallas bureau in 1986 and '87. Part of my routine, as it was for my colleagues, was creating radio content by speaking with Graczyk over the phone. Executions in Texas were commonplace then. It was necessary to have some kind of broadcast presence on these stories and he was the indispensable person for the job, which in this case was even more remarkable given the grim nature of the event and process. I'm pleased that in some small way, the Club can shine a

bit of a spotlight on his body of work.

Click [here](#) to listen to the podcast.

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One time when I violated no-ask-for-autographs rule

Bruce Lowitt ([Email](#)) - Hal Bock's exception to his no-autograph rule reminded me of the one time I violated mine.

In 1990 the Chicago Bulls played an exhibition game against the Seattle SuperSonics in the Florida Suncoast Dome (later the Thunderdome and now Tropicana Field). When Adam, my 10-year-old son, heard I was covering it he asked me to get him Michael Jordan's autograph.

I told him I couldn't, that it wouldn't be fair for me to be able to ask him for one while other fans would have to hope he would be signing them after the game and they would have to hope he'd be close enough to give one, and so on.

Well, before the game, as the other writers and players filed out of the locker room, I found myself alone with Jordan for a moment. I decided, what the hell. So I said to him, "Listen, this is totally against the rules, but ..." Jordan interrupted me, smiled, and asked, "Who's it for?" I told him, he grabbed a program, took my pen and scrawled, "To Adam, best wishes," and either his signature or initials and number, something like that.

When I gave it to Adam he was ecstatic. A week or so later I needed something out of his desk. When I opened the middle drawer I found the program jammed in the back, crumpled, torn and filled with crayon and pencil smudges. I threw it away.

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'Read all about it' mask



Linda Deutsch ([Email](#)) - This cute mask called “Read All about It” is part of a collection by the Daughter-in-law of a fellow newsie, Roberta Wax, a UPI vet. It’s a great conversation starter and very comfy. The link to the site is - www.FromFirst2Wax.com

Stories of interest

Presidential debate commission announces moderators for fall contests (Politico)

By CAITLIN OPRYSKO

The Commission on Presidential Debates on Wednesday announced the slate of moderators for all three presidential debates and the vice presidential debate.

The first debate between Donald Trump and Joe Biden, set for Sept. 29 in Cleveland, will be hosted by “Fox News Sunday” anchor Chris Wallace, who in 2016 became the first journalist from his network — known for its primetime lineup of Trump-friendly hosts — to moderate a general election debate.

Steve Scully, senior executive producer and political editor for C-SPAN, will moderate the second debate, a town-hall style event set to take place on Oct. 15 in Miami.

The final debate between Trump and Biden will be moderated by NBC News White House correspondent and weekend “Today” show co-anchor Kristen Welker. That debate is scheduled for Oct. 22, in Nashville, Tenn., less than two weeks before voters head to the polls.

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

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Zimbabwean journalist released on bail after 6 weeks in jail

By FARAI MUTSAKA

HARARE, Zimbabwe (AP) — Zimbabwean journalist Hopewell Chin’ono walked out of prison Wednesday saying that he had been “strengthened” by the nearly six weeks he was jailed, saying he remains committed to exposing corruption.

Chin’ono, 49, was released on bail Wednesday pending trial on charges of inciting public violence for tweeting his support for an anti-government demonstration. It was his fourth attempt at getting bail, after the first three were rejected.

He denounced the conditions in Chikuribi prison.

“People are living like they are in a concentration camp. The majority of people don’t have masks, people don’t have soap, water and there is no social distancing,” said Chin’ono, saying that a cell meant for 16 people holds up to 45 prisoners.

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

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New Voice of America overseer called foreign journalists a security risk. Now the staff is revolting. (Washington Post)

By Sarah Ellison and Paul Farhi

Since becoming the overseer of Voice of America in June, Michael Pack has fired subordinates, disbanded advisory boards and declined to renew the visas of foreign journalists who work under him.

Political appointees frequently make personnel changes when they take on a new role. But Pack, who heads the U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM), has offered a unique justification for his actions: He is rooting out potential spies.

In a memo to staff last month, Pack suggested that his purges are part of an effort to shore up lax personnel standards that have left VOA vulnerable to foreign espionage. His predecessors “ignored common national security protocols and essential government human resources practices,” he wrote. He put it more bluntly last week in an interview with the Federalist, a conservative commentary site: “It’s a great place to put a foreign spy.”

Read more [here](#). Shared by Len Iwanski.

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ASU Student Radio Journalist Won't Back Down After Jacob Blake Tweet (Phoenix New Times)

By RAY STERN

An Arizona State University journalism student is refusing to bow to pressure to resign from her job at a student-run radio station because of a pointed tweet about Jacob Blake that offended Black Lives Matter supporters.

The decision by The Blaze station manager Linda Rae'Lee Klein to stand firm against the Blaze's board of directors and members who want her ousted puts ASU's Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communications, still recovering from a racially charged scandal earlier this summer, in the delicate position of having to choose whether to remove her or not.

Interim Dean Kristin Gilger didn't return a message. Spokesperson Karen Borderleau released a brief response to Phoenix New Times' request for comment on Tuesday: "Cronkite leadership is working with Blaze students to try to resolve the situation."

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

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Belarusian journalists face charges for covering protests

By YURAS KARMANAU

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Dozens of journalists gathered Wednesday outside a police station in the capital of Belarus to protest the detention of colleagues covering a demonstration against the nation's authoritarian president and an election the opposition sees as rigged.

Police detained several journalists from Belarusian news outlets Tuesday on charges of taking part in an unsanctioned demonstration. They could receive fines or jail sentences of up to 15 days, if charged and convicted.

"We are witnessing the lawless action of law enforcement agencies, which are muzzling journalists without bothering about methods," Olga Loiko, a journalist with Belarus' popular online news outlet tut.by.

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

Today in History - September 3, 2020



By The Associated Press

Today is Thursday, Sept. 3, the 247th day of 2020. There are 119 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Sept. 3, 2005, President George W. Bush ordered more than 7,000 active duty forces to the Gulf Coast as his administration intensified efforts to rescue Katrina survivors and send aid to the hurricane-ravaged region in the face of criticism it did not act quickly enough.

On this date:

In 1609, English explorer Henry Hudson and his crew aboard the Half Moon entered present-day New York Harbor and began sailing up the river that now bears his name. (They reached present-day Albany before turning back.)

In 1861, during the Civil War, Confederate forces invaded the border state of Kentucky, which had declared its neutrality in the conflict.

In 1939, Britain, France, Australia and New Zealand declared war on Germany, two days after the Nazi invasion of Poland; in a radio address, Britain's King

George VI said, "With God's help, we shall prevail." The same day, a German U-boat torpedoed and sank the British liner SS Athenia some 250 miles off the Irish coast, killing more than 100 out of the 1,400 or so people on board.

In 1943, Allied forces invaded Italy during World War II, the same day Italian officials signed a secret armistice with the Allies.

In 1967, Nguyen Van Thieu (nwen van too) was elected president of South Vietnam under a new constitution.

In 1970, legendary football coach Vince Lombardi, 57, died in Washington, D.C.

In 1976, America's Viking 2 lander touched down on Mars to take the first close-up, color photographs of the red planet's surface.

In 1978, Pope John Paul I was installed as the 264th pontiff of the Roman Catholic Church.

In 1995, the online auction site eBay was founded in San Jose, California, by Pierre Omidyar under the name "AuctionWeb."

In 1999, a French judge closed a two-year inquiry into the car crash that killed Princess Diana, dismissing all charges against nine photographers and a press motorcyclist, and concluding the accident was caused by an inebriated driver.

In 2003, Paul Hill, a former minister who said he murdered an abortion doctor and his bodyguard to save the lives of unborn babies, was executed in Florida by injection, becoming the first person put to death in the United States for anti-abortion violence.

In 2012, Sun Myung Moon, 92, a self-proclaimed messiah who founded the Unification Church, died in Gapeyeong, South Korea. Prolific character actor Michael Clarke Duncan, 54, died in Los Angeles.

Ten years ago: Defense Secretary Robert Gates toured U.S. bases and war zones in Afghanistan, saying he saw and heard evidence that the American counterinsurgency strategy was taking hold in critical Kandahar province. The Fox network announced that Kara DioGuardi was stepping down as one of the judges on "American Idol," following the departures of Simon Cowell and Ellen DeGeneres.

Five years ago: A federal judge jailed Rowan County, Kentucky, Clerk Kim Davis for refusing to issue marriage licenses to gay couples, but five of her deputies agreed to issue the licenses themselves, potentially ending the church-state standoff. (Davis was freed five days later.) Tom Brady had his four-game “Deflategate” suspension lifted after U.S. District Judge Richard M. Berman criticized NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell for dispensing “his own brand of industrial justice.” Judy Carne, 76, a star of the comedy show “Rowan & Martin’s Laugh-In,” died at Northampton General Hospital in England.

One year ago: Relief officials reported scenes of utter ruin in parts of the Bahamas from Hurricane Dorian, the most powerful storm on record ever to hit the islands. Walmart said it would stop selling ammunition for handguns and short-barrel rifles, and the store chain requested that customers not openly carry firearms in its stores; the announcement followed a shooting at a Walmart store in Texas that left 22 people dead. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson suffered a major defeat in Parliament as rebellious lawmakers voted to seize control of the Brexit agenda; they sought to keep Britain from leaving the EU without a deal in place.

Today’s Birthdays: Actor Pauline Collins is 80. Rock singer-musician Al Jardine is 78. Actor Valerie Perrine is 77. Rock musician Donald Brewer (Grand Funk Railroad) is 72. Rock guitarist Steve Jones (The Sex Pistols) is 65. Actor Steve Schirripa is 63. Actor Holt McCallany is 56. Rock singer-musician Todd Lewis is 55. Actor Costas Mandylor is 55. Actor Charlie Sheen is 55. Singer Jennifer Paige is 47. Dance-rock musician Redfoo is 45. Actor Ashley Jones is 44. Actor Nichole Hiltz is 42. Actor Joel Johnstone is 42. Actor Nick Wechsler is 42. Rock musician Tomo Milicevic (30 Seconds to Mars) is 41. Bluegrass musician Darren Nicholson (Balsam Range) is 37. Actor Christine Woods is 37. Actor Garrett Hedlund is 36. Olympic gold medal snowboarder Shaun White is 34. Hip-hop singer August Alsina is 28.

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.



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