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Connecting September 28, 2020

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Colleagues,

Good Monday morning on this the 28th day of September 2020.

Connecting wishes G'mar Hatima Tova to our Jewish colleagues as they observe Yom Kippur.

We lead with an Associated Press video presentation explaining how the company will call winners in the Nov. 3 General Election.

Also, nearly three dozen journalists from around the country gathered on a Zoom call Saturday to pay tribute to **Laura Sellers**, a friend of AP and former president of the Associated Press Media Editors. Laura died unexpectedly Tuesday at the age of 57. A video of the call is included in today's issue.

Best of the Week

Dawn Wooten, a nurse at Irwin County Detention Center in Ocilla, Ga., speaks at a Sept. 15, 2020 news conference in Atlanta, protesting medical treatment of detainees at the immigration facility. An Associated Press review



of medical records for four detained immigrant women at the detention center and interviews with lawyers have revealed growing allegations that a gynecologist performed surgeries that the women never sought or didn't fully understand. AP Photo/Jeff Amy

AP investigates medical care at immigrant detention facility after explosive allegations

The allegations were explosive: A nurse at an immigration detention facility in rural Georgia said a gynecologist she called “the uterus collector” performed mass hysterectomies without detainees’ consent.

Reaction was fast and furious, with congressional Democrats, including Nancy Pelosi and Chuck Schumer, demanding answers. More than 170 members of Congress wrote that they were “horrified.” The Associated Press, however, treated the allegations cautiously, noting the nurse’s lack of specifics, an advocacy group’s unwillingness to release her full statement to investigators and a refusal to answer questions from AP Atlanta reporter Jeff Amy at a news conference.

Read more [here](#).

Best of the States

Sharawn Vinson, front left, and family members and

friends cheer for her daughter, Maddison Washington, 11, as they watch her virtual middle school graduation in the living room of their three-bedroom apartment in the Brooklyn borough of New York, Aug. 21, 2020. After months of pandemic isolation and living with the fear of hunger as bills piled up, Vinson and her kids continued volunteering to help feed their own community. AP Photo/Jessie Wardarski



Pandemic forces family to separate

As stories with impact go, this one stands out: The lead subject of the piece, struggling to feed her family during the pandemic, was tracked down on social media and hired by a reader for a job.

The all-formats package by reporter Luis Andres Henao and visual journalist Jessie Wardarski, both of AP's religion team, chronicled the struggle of Sharawn Vinson and her Brooklyn family as they battled food shortages and myriad other crises, taking readers into the lives of a family that has little but manages to help others – even as they worry about their next meal. In addition to pandemic-driven money woes and food insecurity, the story addressed other issues confronting Americans, including racial inequality and conflict with police.

To fully understand the issue of hunger in New York City, Henao and Wardarski spent weeks speaking to everyone from people in food pantry lines to officials in charge of the crisis response. But a major challenge was finding the right subject, and the delicate task of convincing that family to give up-close access to journalists.

Read more [here](#).

Justice Ginsburg with Watergate South neighbors Myron and Rachel Belkind, at the building's Hanukkah reception in December 2019. Photo by Michelle Kim.



The Belkinds had a notorious, one-of-a-kind neighbor -- RBG (Washingtonian)

Though she was known around the world as a feminist icon, and more recently as the Notorious RBG, around Watergate South in DC's Foggy Bottom, Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg was simply a

longtime neighbor—albeit a revered one.

“We’ve lived here, my wife and I, for five years, and she always said ‘hi,’” says Henry Sondheimer, president of the Watergate South board. “She talked to everybody at the mailbox, and with the staff.”

In a remembrance emailed to neighbors, past Watergate South president Myron Belkind recalled visiting with Ginsburg at the community’s last Hanukkah reception. “I went over and thanked Justice Ginsburg for attending, thinking she might want to return to her apartment immediately,” Belkind wrote. “But with so many of her fellow Watergate South residents gathering around her to wish her well, she stayed on for some time and graciously consented to have her picture taken with her neighbors.” Belkind noted that the party was the last time many of the neighbors saw Ginsburg. (He also recalled that she declined the latkes, but did ask about having a glass of wine.)

Read more [here](#). Shared by Sandy Johnson

Connecting mailbox

More pandemic pets

Dennis Conrad ([Email](#)) _ I finally got our cat, Bianca, to pose with me for a selfie. She will be 14 years old next month and she still somehow has kept her weight down to a trim 5.5 pounds through three presidential administrations. Unfortunately for me during this year of the pandemic I have gained twice as much as Bianca’s weight. My wife, Marie, picked out Bianca as a kitten from her online photo displayed by the animal shelter in Montgomery

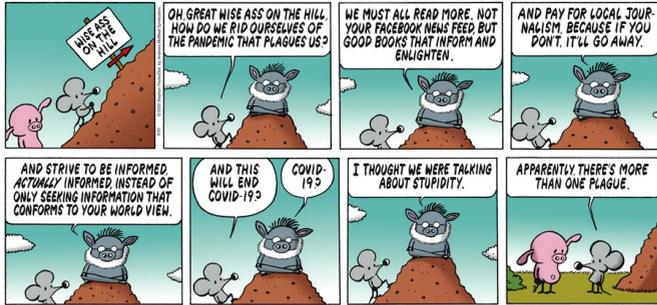


County, Md. Unlike her current roommate, Oliver, a 13-year-old Border Collie mix, who enjoys three daily walks in the great outdoors here in North Carolina, Bianca has been serving a life sentence in house detention under the care of her retiree owners. She likes to paw-pat me on the arm as I sit on the sofa watching cable TV reports on the pandemic and the usual threats from the Oval Office against civilization as we've long known it.

P.S. Oliver was featured in a dog park selfie sent earlier.

PEARLS BEFORE SWINE

BY STEPHAN PASTIS



Relevant

Linda Deutsch ([Email](#)) _ These days, the cartoons often speak truth. This one seems so relevant.

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



To

Jeff Barnard - jbarnardgp@gmail.com

Linda Sargent - lindasgt@swbell.net

Stories of interest

New York Times reports Trump paid a mere \$750 in taxes in 2016, 2017; he decries as 'fake news' (AP)

President Donald Trump paid just \$750 in federal income taxes the year he ran for president and in his first year in the White House, according to a report Sunday in The New York Times. Trump, who has fiercely guarded his tax filings and is the only president in modern times not to make them public, paid no federal income taxes in 10 of the past 15 years. The details of the tax filings complicate Trump's description of himself as a shrewd and patriotic businessman, revealing instead a series of financial losses and income from abroad that could come into conflict with his responsibilities as president. The president's financial disclosures indicated he earned at least \$434.9 million in 2018, but the tax filings reported a \$47.4 million loss.

Read more [here](#).



New York Times Editor: How we reported story (The New York Times)

By Dean Baquet

Today we are publishing the results of an examination of decades of personal and corporate tax records for President Trump and his businesses in the United States and abroad.

The records stretch from his days as a high-profile New York real estate investor through the beginning of his time in the White House.

A team of New York Times reporters has pored over this information to assemble the most comprehensive picture of the president's finances and business dealings to date, and we will continue our reporting and publish additional articles about our findings in the weeks ahead. We are not making the records themselves public because we do not want to jeopardize our sources, who have taken enormous personal risks to help inform the public.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Sibby Christensen

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

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.

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

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Media rights group denounces arrest of Pakistani journalist (AP)

ISLAMABAD (AP) — An international media rights group on Friday voiced concern over the brief arrest of a Pakistani journalist this week for allegedly carrying weapons while reporting on a court case in the capital, saying Pakistani authorities should investigate the misuse of law in order to stop the harassment of media workers. In a statement, the International Federation of Journalists said Ehtisham Kiyani was arrested Wednesday "on false charges for allegedly bearing weapons in Islamabad's High Court." Kiyani, who works for the Pakistani TV station Channel 24, denied the charges and was freed the same day following a protest from fellow journalists.

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

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State Department rescinded award to journalist for criticizing Trump, review finds (New York Times)

WASHINGTON — The State Department reversed plans to include a Finnish journalist last year among its recipients for its annual courageous women awards after officials discovered she was critical of President Trump on social media, an internal review concluded on Friday. The report by the department's Office of Inspector General noted a "broad discretion to select awardees" for its annual International Women of Courage prize, and said State Department officials were authorized to revoke their decision to honor the journalist, Jessikka Aro.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Richard Chady, Sibby Christensen

D.A. won't prosecute reporter arrested while covering shooting of deputies (New York Times)

The Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office will not pursue charges against a reporter who was accused of interfering with an arrest and thrown to the ground while covering the shooting of two sheriff's deputies on Sept. 12. The reporter, Josie Huang, who works for the public radio station KPCC and the website LAist, was arrested on charges of obstructing officers as deputies moved in to arrest a protester outside St. Francis Hospital in Lynwood, Calif., where two deputies were being treated after they were shot as they sat in a parked patrol car in Compton, Calif. Both deputies have since been released from the hospital.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Sibby Christensen

Los Angeles Times editorial reckons with its history of racism (Los Angeles Times)

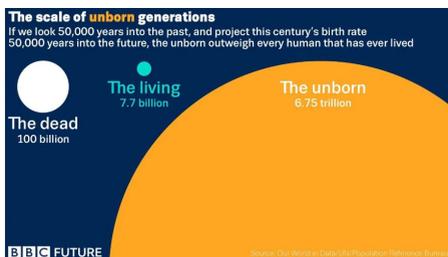
"While the paper has done groundbreaking and important work highlighting the issues faced by communities of color, it has also often displayed at best a blind spot, at worst an outright hostility, for the city's nonwhite population, one both rooted and reflected in a shortage of Indigenous, Black, Latino, Asian and other people of color in its newsroom."

Read the full editorial [here](#). Shared by Lee Mitgang

The Final Word

Are we living at the 'hinge of history'? (BBC)

What is the best word to describe our present moment? You might be tempted to reach for "unprecedented", or perhaps "extraordinary." But here's another adjective for our times that you may not have heard before: "hingey." It may not be a particularly elegant term, but it describes a potentially profound idea: that we may be living through the most influential period of time ever. And it's about far more than the Covid-19 pandemic and politics of 2020. Leading philosophers and researchers are debating whether the events that occur in our century could shape the fate of



our species over the next thousands if not millions of years. The “hinge of history” hypothesis proposes that we are, right now, at a turning point. Is this really plausible?

Full article [here](#). Shared by Campbell Gardett

Today in History - September 28, 2020



By The Associated Press

Today is Monday, Sept. 28, the 272nd day of 2020. There are 94 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Sept. 28, 1928, Scottish medical researcher Alexander Fleming discovered penicillin, the first effective antibiotic.

On this date:

In 1066, William the Conqueror invaded England to claim the English throne.

In 1781, American forces in the Revolutionary War, backed by a French fleet, began their successful siege of Yorktown, Va.

In 1787, the Congress of the Confederation voted to send the just-completed Constitution of the United States to state legislatures for their approval.

In 1850, flogging was abolished as a form of punishment in the U.S. Navy.

In 1892, the first nighttime football game took place in Mansfield, Pennsylvania, as teams from Mansfield State Normal and Wyoming Seminary

played under electric lights to a scoreless tie.

In 1920, eight members of the Chicago White Sox were indicted for allegedly throwing the 1919 World Series against the Cincinnati Reds. (All were acquitted at trial, but all eight were banned from the game for life.)

In 1962, a federal appeals court found Mississippi Gov. Ross Barnett in civil contempt for blocking the admission of James Meredith, a Black student, to the University of Mississippi. (Federal marshals escorted Meredith onto the campus two days later.)

In 1964, comedian Harpo Marx, 75, died in Los Angeles.

In 1976, Muhammad Ali kept his world heavyweight boxing championship with a close 15-round decision over Ken Norton at New York's Yankee Stadium.

In 1989, deposed Philippine President Ferdinand E. Marcos died in exile in Hawaii at age 72.

In 1995, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and PLO chairman Yasser Arafat signed an accord at the White House ending Israel's military occupation of West Bank cities and laying the foundation for a Palestinian state.

In 2000, capping a 12-year battle, the government approved use of the abortion pill RU-486.

Ten years ago: The youngest son of North Korean President Kim Jong Il, Kim Jong Un, was selected for his first leadership post in the ruling Workers Party, putting him well on the path to succeed his father. Movie director Arthur Penn ("Bonnie and Clyde") died in New York a day after turning 88.

Five years ago: President Barack Obama and Russian President Vladimir Putin, meeting at the United Nations, agreed to discuss a political transition in Syria but remained at odds about what that would mean for Syria leader Bashar Assad's future. Former prison worker Joyce Mitchell, who'd helped two murderers escape from a maximum-security lockup, said she regretted her "horrible mistake" as she was sentenced in Plattsburgh, New York, to up to seven years behind bars. Trevor Noah debuted as host of "The Daily Show" on Comedy Central. Frankie Ford, 76, a rock 'n' roll and rhythm and blues singer whose 1959 hit "Sea Cruise" brought him international fame at age 19, died in Jefferson Parish, Louisiana.

One year ago: A massive pro-democracy rally in downtown Hong Kong ended early and violently, with police firing tear gas and a water cannon after protesters threw bricks and Molotov cocktails at government buildings. Voters in Afghanistan went to the polls to elect a president for the fourth time since a U.S.-led coalition ousted the Taliban regime in 2001; the vote was marred by violence, Taliban threats and widespread allegations of mismanagement. (After

Lawmakers said Friday that the U.S. government needs to ban the import of products made with child or forced labor after an Associated Press investigation found widespread exploitation in the palm oil industry, from debt bondage to outright slavery. U.S. Sens. Sherrod Brown and Ron Wyden — who spearheaded efforts to close a loophole in a federal law that had allowed the import of products made with forced labor— also called on companies that buy goods tainted by labor abuses to be held accountable.

Read more [here](#). Share by Peg Coughlin.

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APME honors service of late president Laura Sellers-Earl

News editors across the nation gathered on Zoom Saturday to remember Laura Sellers-Earl, who died suddenly Sept. 22. Andrew Oppmann, a former member of the Associated Press Managing Editors board of directors and current vice president and spokesman at Middle Tennessee State University, reprised as the "voice" of the group, a role he adopted as the behind-the-scenes announcer at APME conferences. He was joined by Kathy Best, director of Howard Center at the University of Maryland Philip Merrill College of Journalism, and AP's APME liaison Paula Froke to honor Laura and convene friends to share their memories.

APME honors service of late President Laura Sellers-Earl



a series of delays, the country's independent election commission announced in February that Ashraf Ghani had won a second term as president.)

Today's Birthdays: Actor Brigitte Bardot is 86. Actor Joel Higgins is 77. Singer Helen Shapiro is 74. Actor Vernee Watson is 71. Movie writer-director-actor John Sayles is 70. Rock musician George Lynch is 66. Zydeco singer-musician C.J. Chenier (sheh-NEER') is 63. Actor Steve Hytner is 61. Actor-comedian Janeane Garofalo (juh-NEEN' guh-RAH'-fuh-loh) is 56. Country singer Matt King is 54. Actor Mira Sorvino is 53. TV personality/singer Moon Zappa is 53. Actor-model Carre Otis is 52. Actor Naomi Watts is 52. Country singer Karen Fairchild (Little Big Town) is 51. Singer/songwriter A.J. Croce is 49. Country singer Mandy Barnett is 45. Rapper Young Jeezy is 43. World Golf Hall of Famer Se Ri Pak is 43. Actor Peter Cambor is 42. Writer-producer-director-actor Bam Margera is 41. Actor Melissa Claire Egan is 39. Actor Jerrika Hinton is 39. Neo-soul musician Luke Mossman (Nathaniel Rateliff & the Night Sweats) is 39. Pop-rock singer St. Vincent is 38. Comedian/actor Phoebe Robinson is 36. Rock musician Daniel Platzman (Imagine Dragons) is 34. Actor Hilary Duff is 33. Actor Keir Gilchrist 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.

Paul Stevens

Editor, Connecting newsletter

paulstevens46@gmail.com

[Visit our website](#)

Thank you for your many contributions to the newsletter the past four days. **Paul Stevens** returns to the Connecting editor's chair Monday. Send stories, ideas, photos, tips to him at paulstevens46@gmail.com.

Enjoy the day! Stay safe.

- Mark Mittelstadt

Oops!

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Preparing for the Presidential election: calling the winners

Election Decision Editor Stephen Ohlemacher and Director of Global Training and Development Julie March recently discussed how calling election races works and gave an insider's understanding of how AP equips and trains its race caller network. See video above.

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Senators demand action after AP exposes palm oil abuses (AP)