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Connecting

October 01, 2020

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Colleagues,

Good Thursday morning on this the first day of October 2020,

The AP Elections Team is still looking for help with its election night tabulation operation. AP Elections has gone from physical to virtual vote entry centers because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Anyone interested in assisting - working from home, inputting votes into AP's election night reporting system from stringers and websites across the country – please contact our Connecting colleague **Peg Coughlin** at pcoughlin@ap.org These are paid positions.

Today's Connecting brings more comments from your colleagues on Tuesday night's presidential debate and the role of moderator Chris Wallace. And more of your thoughts on cliches.

It's the start of a new quarter and time to publish the latest Connecting 80s and 90s list of colleagues who are in those age ranges. If you have turned 80 or 90 in the past

few months, or have been omitted from past lists and want to be included in this list of honor and longevity, drop me a note so I can be sure you're included.

Have a great day - be safe, stay healthy.

Paul

AP's top editor: We must 'stand up for facts'

By PATRICK MAKES

At the [International Press Institute's World Congress](#) on Tuesday, AP Executive Editor Sally Buzbee stressed the importance of factual journalism in the 2020 U.S. presidential election.

During a wide-ranging conversation, Buzbee explained how facts guide AP's election coverage and its longstanding role in **counting the vote and declaring election winners**.

"We have an enormous responsibility as American journalists to stand up for facts, whatever those facts are," Buzbee said. "We will make our decisions and our journalism based on facts, and people need to seek out credible sources of factual journalism."

Buzbee addressed polarization among the American electorate, explaining that AP's role is to deliver unbiased, fact-based information and not be partisan.

"We face an enormous burden of people who think that, if we're from one side or the other, they're just going to tune and not pay attention to the world's best journalism," she said.



Buzbee also stressed the importance of issue-based reporting in the presidential election and the need for real-time fact checking that holds candidates accountable.

"We have to actually shove the facts into everything we're doing and that's hard," she said. "It's changing how we work. We're trying to figure out solutions in real time."

AP is committed to reporting extensively on how the 2020 presidential election will work and why results may be delayed.

“The level of explanatory journalism we need to do is intense, both before Election Day after Election Day,” Buzbee said.

Buzbee was joined by Tia Mitchell, Washington correspondent for The Atlanta Journal Constitution, and Stephen Engelberg, ProPublica editor-in-chief. John Mulholland, Guardian US editor-in-chief, moderated the conversation.

Click [here](#) for a link to this story.

More of your thoughts on debate and its moderator



Democratic presidential candidate former Vice President Joe Biden gestures as President Donald Trump walks onto stage for the first presidential debate Tuesday, Sept. 29, 2020, at Case Western University and Cleveland Clinic, in Cleveland. (Olivier Douliery/Pool vi AP)

Norm Abelson (Email) - There can be little debate that the “debate” that occurred Tuesday night was anything but a debate. You know, “a formal discussion on a particular topic,” where the participants “argue for opposing viewpoints.”

The very idea of even referring to that TV reality debacle as a “debate” is painful to those who live by and respect words and their meanings. Then attaching that sorry event to what is clearly one of the most meaningful elections of the last several decades, rises to the level of both the dangerous and the ludicrous.

The last true TV debates I recall were many years ago on the show of William F. Buckley Jr., a man whose politics I disagreed with and whose intellect I admired. Two people with opposing views calmly, rationally and respectfully (most of the time) made their cases. Oh, and the opponents actually listened to each other and, at times, agreed.

Current debates reflect just how terribly wrong American politics and governing have gone. Before future debates of any kind, we need first to re-learn how to talk to each other.

Until we do, to use a cliché, dump the debates.

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Bob Daugherty ([Email](#)) - Regarding the ‘debate’, if it was a boxing match, the referee would have stopped it in the early rounds.

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Doug Pizac ([Email](#)) - And here’s my response to David Briscoe’s take on the debate:

“The lesson: don’t send a principled journalist to a pissing match. He’ll surely get wet.” is prized phrasing that needs to be taught in journalism schools. Brilliant writing.

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Bruce Lowitt ([Email](#)) - Chris Wallace lost control of the debate at the outset. President Trump's plan, it seemed, was to simply steamroller him and Joe Biden. I suggest the remaining moderators be given a microphone kill switch, an air horn or a fire hose to prevent similar shenanigans in the future.

I'd love to give you my opinion on the debate but I was experiencing such an adrenalin rush of anger within a few minutes at the outset that we changed the channel and watched an episode of "Last Tango in Halifax."

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Chris Sullivan ([Email](#)) - Re. Chris Wallace’s performance as moderator of the so-called debate:

While it's certainly true that the irritating cross-talk quickly and permanently got out of hand, it might be said in Wallace's defense that you can't steer a train wreck back onto the rails. That said, I've been trying to imagine a past moderator, or any news professional, who would have done better.

Think of Walter Cronkite. As Donald Trump often (and Joe Biden sometimes) shouted, Cronkite's authoritative voice and reputation as the conscience of the nation would have failed us. His natural decorum would have been a liability.

Think of Edward R. Murrow or Bernard Shaw or Jim Lehrer. Same thing.

The volume might have been turned up if the moderator had been a Megyn Kelly or a Sam Donaldson, but that would only have meant that we in the audience would have heard even less.

It is impossible to imagine who could have moderated that thing effectively.

As my mind has wandered in vain to conjure a referee, it has also (though you did ask for this) tried to imagine any presidential candidate of the past standing in Biden's place. Again, the natural decorum that this situation calls for would have been a liability. Maybe a John F. Kennedy would have managed to dart in between the shouts with a memorable quip; maybe Ross Perot could have pulled off one high-pitched soundbite. But in your mind, put them or Ronald Reagan or Franklin Roosevelt in Biden's spot. They were capable of zingers, of course, but operating effectively in an actual debate presumes that there are pauses, moments of silence and attention, real responsiveness and at least a show of respect. None of those were features of that sorry spectacle in Cleveland.

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Ed Tobias ([Email](#)) - Two more presidential debates? What's the point?
Fuhgeddaboutit!

And more of your thoughts on cliches

Adolphe Bernotas ([Email](#)) - I still keep a "Contrarian Grammarian Hints" list assembled over the years that I shared with humor and irony in the newsrooms where I worked.

Here's the entry on "transported to the hospital," which originates from reporters aping first-responder lingo:

– Don't say taken to the hospital when you can say transported to the hospital – a favorite in police and fire reports. (But be sure to specify whether transport was by

UPS, FedEx or other common carrier.)

"Traded barbs," is coming aboard: (Are barbs traded on NASDAQ?)

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Hal Bock (Email) - Two sports favorite clichés:

Backs to the wall

There's no tomorrow

Here's a giant "Ughh" to them both.

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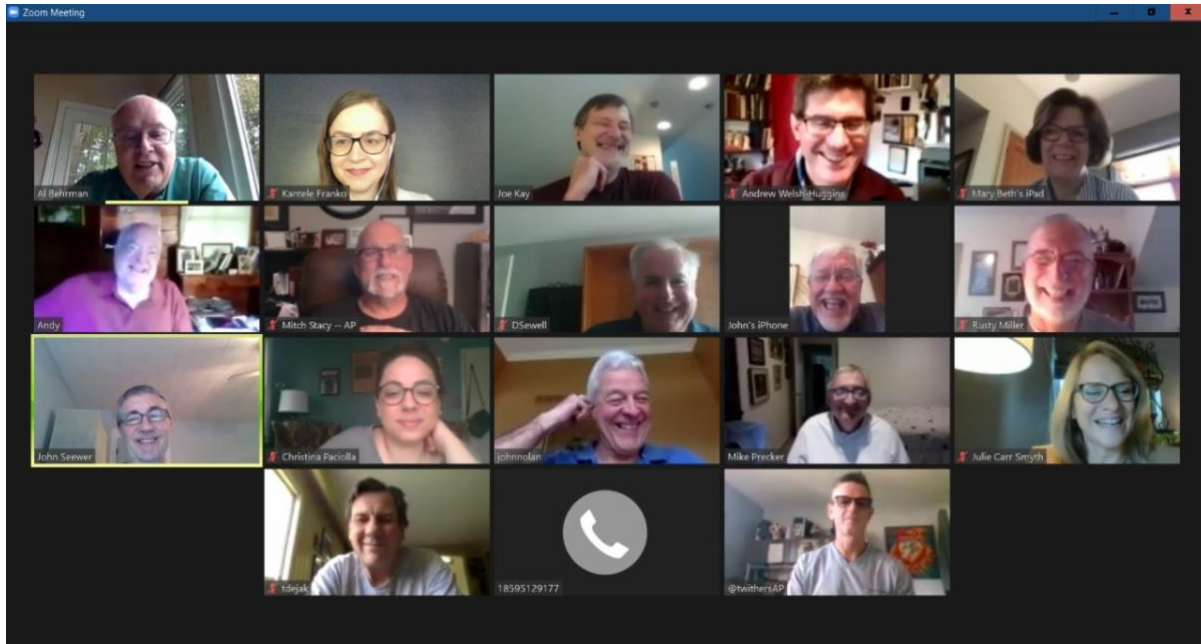


Steve Graham (Email) - I took this a few years ago for a language web site I frequent.

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Bruce Lowitt (Email) - Unless you believe in predestination and can prove its existence, don't use "Ill-fated".

A farewell through Zoom to AP Cincinnati sports writer Joe Kay



Start each row from left: retired AP photographer Al Behrman, staffer and ex-Postie Kantele Franko, the man of the hour, Andrew Welsh-Huggins, Mary Beth, Andy Lippman, sports writer/Postie Mitch Stacy, Dan Sewell, longtime TV writer John Kiesewetter, retired AP Ohio sports editor Rusty Miller, Toledo correspondent John Seewer, Ohio/Pennsylvania/New Jersey news editor Christina Paciolla, former Cincy correspondent John Nolan, retired journalist/Postie Mike Precker in Texas, Statehouse correspondent Julie Carr Smyth, Cleveland photo Tony Dejak, Lisa Cornwell's phone and Cleveland sports writer Tom Withers. Photo/Kantele Franko

Dan Sewell (Email) - AP colleagues, fellow Ohio University alums and the Cincinnati Reds said good-bye to Cincinnati sports writer Joe Kay this past week. Joe retired Wednesday after 40 years, 4 months with AP in Cincinnati, where he was hired away from UPI by then-correspondent Andy Lippman.

With pandemic restrictions preventing any major in-person get-togethers, Zoom calls took over.

The Reds surprised Joe at his last game, Sept. 24, by putting him on the big board and playing a video of tributes to him from Reds current, including stars Joey Votto and Eugenio Suarez, and past, including Hall of Famers Johnny Bench and Barry Larkin. Houston Astros manager Dusty Baker, a former Reds manager, capped the video.

AP Sports Editor Michael Giarrusso led a Zoom call the next day with more than 200 participants, including Executive Editor Sally Buzbee, who praised Joe as an exemplary AP staffer.

A surprise guest was NBC (former Sports Illustrated) NFL guru Peter King, a staffer with Joe at the Ohio U Post, and another of Andy's Cincinnati interns from his Ohio U pipeline. Top Stories Desk editor Brian Friedman and I are among others Andy helped get started with The AP.

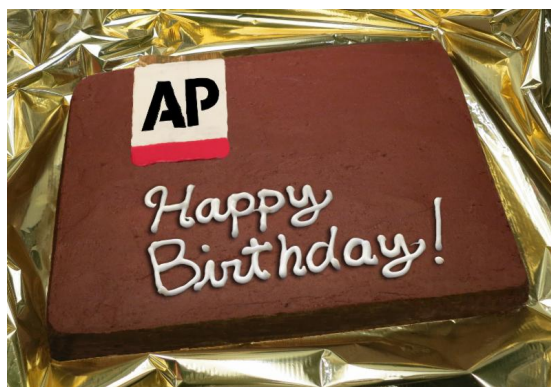
AP Ohio did a Zoom call Tuesday, with a "This Is Your Life" format.

Mary Beth Bardin (Sofranec), who was associate Post editor while Joe was managing editor and I was editor, called in from her Texas home, Andy joined in from LA, retired AP Cincinnati photographer Al Behrman, retired correspondent John Nolan and retired Cincinnati newswoman Lisa Cornwell took part, as did retired Ohio sports editor Rusty Miller.

Kantele Franko and Mitch Stacy of AP in Columbus added to the Ohio U Post alumni, and so did Mike Precker, a retired journalist in Texas who was a two-time Cincinnati intern for Andy, and John Kiesewetter, retired Cincinnati Enquirer TV columnist and a former Post editor for Joe.

Joe plans to enjoy life without Cincinnati's "Bungling Bengals" with his friend Gloria and church activism, but AP editors are already lining up with potential free-lance work. His email - joekay617@aol.com

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



To

Steve Graham – sdgraham@duckswild.com

Libby Quaid – libbyquaid@yahoo.com

Stories of interest on debate

Debate commission says it will make changes to format

By DAVID BAUDER

NEW YORK (AP) — The presidential debate commission says it will soon adopt changes to its format to avoid a repeat of the disjointed first meeting between President Donald Trump and Democrat Joe Biden.

The commission said Wednesday that the debate “made clear that additional structure should be added to the format of the remaining debates to ensure a more orderly discussion of the issues.”

One possibility being discussed is to give the moderator the ability to cut off the microphone of one of the debate participants while his opponent is talking, according to a person familiar with the deliberations who was not authorized to discuss the matter publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

The next presidential debate is a town hall format scheduled for Oct. 15 in Miami.

Meanwhile, the Nielsen company said that 73.1 million people watched the debate on television, where it was shown on 16 networks. That’s more than any other television event since the Super Bowl, even if it fell short of the 84 million who watched the first debate between Trump and Hillary Clinton in 2016. That was the most-watched presidential debate ever.

Read more [here](#).

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Chris Wallace Calls Debate ‘a Terrible Missed Opportunity’

By Michael M. Grynbaum
The New York Times

“I’m just sad with the way last night turned out.”

Chris Wallace, the “Fox News Sunday” anchor and moderator of Tuesday’s melee of a debate between President Trump and Joseph R. Biden Jr., was on the phone Wednesday from his home in Annapolis, Md., reflecting on — his words — “a terrible missed opportunity.”

“I never dreamt that it would go off the tracks the way it did,” he said.

In his first interview since the chaotic and often incoherent spectacle — in which a pugilistic Mr. Trump relentlessly interrupted opponent and moderator alike — Mr. Wallace conceded that he had been slow to recognize that the president was not going to cease flouting the debate’s rules.

“I’ve read some of the reviews. I know people think, well, gee, I didn’t jump in soon enough,” Mr. Wallace said, his voice betraying some hoarseness from the previous night’s proceedings. “I guess I didn’t realize — and there was no way you could, hindsight being 20/20 — that this was going to be the president’s strategy, not just for the beginning of the debate but the entire debate.”

Read more [here](#).

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Trump continues jabbing at moderator Wallace in debate's wake

By NICK NIEDZWIADK
POLITICO

President Donald Trump complained Wednesday morning that moderator Chris Wallace “had a rough night” at Tuesday’s debate, lashing out at the veteran Fox News journalist who struggled to contain the president’s efforts to control the on-stage discussion.

“Two on one was not surprising, but fun,” Trump wrote on Twitter Wednesday morning, apparently accusing Wallace of siding with Biden during the debate. The president’s post was accompanied by a link to a New York Times story focusing on Wallace’s struggles to keep things orderly.

Wallace, a longtime Fox News host and one of its most respected news-division journalists, faced a fusillade of criticism for his handling of the debate, though some noted the difficulty of his task.

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

The Final Word

Dog's Heartfelt Obituary Goes Viral: 'He Was Best At Unconditional Love' (Huffington Post)

Remembering Charlie

by Sallie Gregory Hammett



Charlie James Gregory-Hammett crossed the rainbow bridge Sunday, September 13th peacefully in the arms of his mom.

Born July 15th, 2013, in Easley, South Carolina, Charlie was the son of Sallie Gregory Hammett, and four years later was also adopted by his

loving dog dad, David Hammett. He is survived by his grandparents, four aunts and uncles, and his adored cousin Captain. He was predeceased by his sister's Gracie and Scout Gregory (who welcomed him cheerfully on the other side).

Charlie's favorite activities were walking, stick collecting, swimming, smiling, and snoozing. If we're being honest, Charlie loved everything life had to offer (except stairs. He hated stairs). Charlie loved the beach, car rides, bananas, and socks. Charlie always loved going to his Grandma and Grandpa's house, where he could get treats, chase squirrels, and pee everywhere cousin Captain peed. Charlie went tailgating, camping, hiking, and fishing. He lived the very best life.

More than anything else, Charlie loved his mom. He was always there to greet her with some kisses and a firm grip on her arm. He was her constant companion. There through heartache, moves, grief, and joy. He

was good at a lot of things, but he was best at unconditional love. He taught everyone he met about loving people, and always seeing the good in everyone.

Charlie lost a hard fought battle with lymphoma after five months of bravery. Charlie spent his last days in his favorite place, the beach. He relaxed in the Charlie-sized holes he dug himself, and dove straight into the oncoming waves. His last days were so happy and will be cherished forever.

We will think of him every time we open the peanut butter. We will miss him every time we see a sock on the floor or pass a stick on a walk. We will carry him with us everywhere.

He will be forever missed and forever remembered, but he left behind his fierce love, which never wavered. In lieu of flowers, the family asks that you give all your pups some extra love in honor of Charlie.

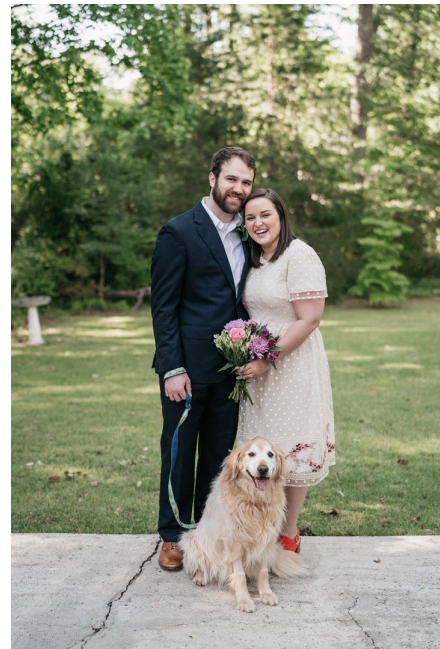
At right: David and Sallie Gregory-Hammett with Charlie on their wedding day.

By Elyse Wanshel

A very good dog got one last special treat from his favorite human.

Charlie, a beloved golden retriever, was the first dog Sallie Gregory-Hammett of Greenville, South Carolina, ever had on her own. Gregory-Hammett, 30, got Charlie when she was 23, single and had just moved to a new city.

"I know it's cliché but he was my best friend," Gregory-Hammett wrote to HuffPost. "He went with me everywhere —work, hiking, trips to Home Depot. He was just a constant



source of comfort and companionship and joy. Everyone that knew me knew Charlie and knew how much I loved him.”

She even jokingly added: “Whenever I would start dating someone, people would always say, ‘Does Charlie like him?’ But Charlie loved everyone, so that was never the question.”

This included Gregory-Hammett’s now-husband, David, whom she married in May in a tiny backyard ceremony.

“When I saw David interact with Charlie I just knew he was the one, because he loved Charlie as much as I did,” she said.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Jenny Volanakis.

Today in History - October 01, 2020



By The Associated Press

Today is Thursday, Oct. 1, the 275th day of 2020. There are 91 days left in the year.

Today’s Highlight in History:

On Oct. 1, 2017, a gunman opened fire from a room at the Mandalay Bay casino hotel in Las Vegas on a crowd of 22,000 country music fans at a concert below, leaving 58 people dead and more than 800 injured in the deadliest mass shooting in modern U.S. history; the gunman, 64-year-old Stephen Craig Paddock, killed himself before officers arrived.

On this date:

In 1908, Henry Ford introduced his Model T automobile to the market.

In 1910, the offices of the Los Angeles Times were destroyed by a bomb explosion and fire; 21 Times employees were killed.

In 1937, Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black delivered a radio address in which he acknowledged being a former member of the Ku Klux Klan, but said he had dropped out of the organization before becoming a U.S. senator.

In 1949, Mao Zedong proclaimed the People's Republic of China during a ceremony in Beijing. A 42-day strike by the United Steelworkers of America began over the issue of retirement benefits.

In 1957, the motto "In God We Trust" began appearing on U.S. paper currency.

In 1961, Roger Maris of the New York Yankees hit his 61st home run during a 162-game season, compared to Babe Ruth's 60 home runs during a 154-game season. (Tracy Stallard of the Boston Red Sox gave up the round-tripper; the Yankees won 1-0.)

In 1962, Johnny Carson debuted as host of NBC's "Tonight Show," beginning a nearly 30-year run.

In 1971, Walt Disney World opened near Orlando, Florida.

In 1982, Sony began selling the first commercial compact disc player, the CDP-101, in Japan.

In 1987, eight people were killed when an earthquake measuring magnitude 5.9 struck the Los Angeles area.

In 1994, National Hockey League team owners began a 103-day lockout of their players.

In 1996, a federal grand jury indicted Unabomber suspect Theodore Kaczynski in the 1994 mail bomb slaying of advertising executive Thomas Mosser. (Kaczynski was later sentenced to four life terms plus 30 years.) The federal minimum wage rose 50 cents to four dollars, 75 cents an hour.

Ten years ago: White House Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel, planning an ultimately successful Chicago mayoral run, relinquished his post to Pete Rouse. Georgy Arbatov, 87, a foreign policy adviser to Soviet presidents and the Kremlin's top America watcher, died in Moscow.

Five years ago: A gunman opened fire at Umpqua Community College in Roseburg, Oregon, killing nine people and then himself. Officials in Michigan declared a public health emergency over the city of Flint's water in response to tests that showed

children with elevated levels of lead. Oregon marijuana shops began selling for the first time to recreational users.

One year ago: The Trump administration resisted efforts by Congress to gain access to impeachment witnesses; Secretary of State Mike Pompeo sought to delay five current and former officials from providing documents and testimony. Ukraine's president, Volodymyr Zelenskiy, dismissed suggestions that President Donald Trump froze military aid to pressure Ukraine to investigate Joe Biden; the Ukrainian leader said no one explained to him why the aid was being delayed. Democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders was diagnosed with a heart attack at a Las Vegas hospital, where he'd been taken after experiencing chest discomfort at a campaign event; doctors inserted two stents to open up a blocked artery. A white former Dallas police officer, Amber Guyger, was convicted of murder in the shooting death of her Black neighbor, Botham Jean; Guyger said she had mistaken his apartment for hers. Jimmy Carter celebrated his 95th birthday, becoming the first U.S. president to reach that milestone.

Today's Birthdays: Former President Jimmy Carter is 96. Actor-singer Julie Andrews is 85. Actor Stella Stevens is 82. Rock musician Jerry Martini (Sly and the Family Stone) is 77. Baseball Hall-of-Famer Rod Carew is 75. Jazz musician Dave Holland is 74. Actor Yvette Freeman is 70. Actor Randy Quaid is 70. Rhythm-and-blues singer Howard Hewett is 65. Former British Prime Minister Theresa May is 64. Alt-country-rock musician Tim O'Reagan (The Jayhawks) is 62. Singer Youssou N'Dour is 61. Actor Esai Morales is 58. Retired MLB All-Star Mark McGwire is 57. Actor Christopher Titus is 56. Actor-model Cindy Margolis is 55. Producer John Ridley is 55. Rock singer-musician Kevin Griffin (Better Than Ezra) is 52. Actor Zach Galifianakis is 51. Singer Keith Duffy is 46. Actor Sherri Saum is 46. Actor Katie Aselton is 42. Actor Sarah Drew is 40. Actor Carly Hughes is 38. Actor-comedian Beck Bennett is 36. Actor Jurnee Smollett-Bell is 34. Actor Brie Larson is 31. Singer/songwriter Jade Bird is 23. Actor Priah Ferguson is 14. Actor Jack Stanton is 12.

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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