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Connecting October 28, 2020

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Colleagues,

Good Wednesday morning on this the 28th day of October 2020,

The Associated Press, a global news-gathering force for nearly 175 years, may be best known in the public eye for the college football poll it has produced since 1936.

It is now the longest-running poll of those that award national titles at the end of the season. A panel of 62 sports writers and broadcasters from around the country votes on the poll weekly.



The poll makes a difference, as described in this article in Extra Points that leads today's Connecting. And while it does not decide who wins a national title – the College Football Playoff does that – writer **Matt Brown** explains in this article why “Even here,

in the Year of Our Lord 2020, I still think the AP Poll matters. Here's why." Read more [here](#). And thanks to **Dave Zelio** for sharing.

Dodgers win World Series! This one's for **Sue Manning**. Rest in Peace, Sue! (a heavenly wish to our late LA bureau friend, who bled Dodger Blue, from colleague **John Marlow**.)

Here's to a great day – be safe, stay healthy.

Paul

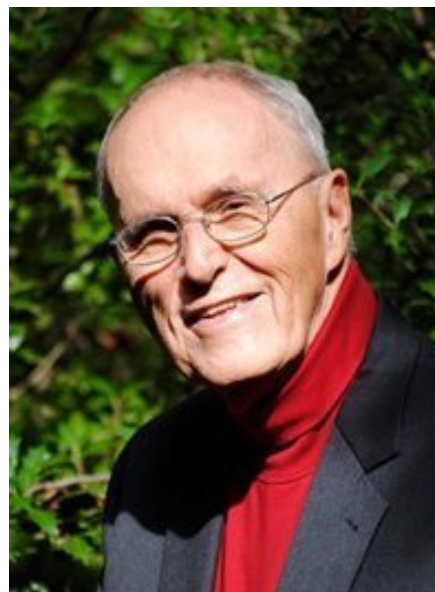
Live-streamed services to be held Sunday for Bill Neikirk

Ruth Neikirk ([Email](#)) - A Memorial Service for Bill Neikirk will be live streamed from Rock Spring Congregational United Church of Christ on Sunday, November 1, 2020, at 1:30 p.m. To watch the service, please access it through Rock Spring's Streamspot account by clicking [here](#).

If you are not able to view the service when it is live, it will be available in Rock Spring's video archives but will be password protected. The password will be FOREVER. Also, you can add or read a tribute, add or see pictures, add or read stories about Bill in our [digital scrapbook](#).

(Bill Neikirk, who worked for the AP in Kentucky, Louisiana and Washington, D.C., during the years 1961-74, before joining The Chicago Tribune's Washington bureau, died August 27.)

The Neikirk family has established a scholarship at the University of Kentucky to help deserving high school students, particularly those from Estill County, obtain a college education. The grant, intended for communication majors, is based on three factors—scholarship, financial need, and location. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be sent to the William R. Neikirk Scholarship Fund, University of Kentucky, at the Gift Receiving Office, 210 Malabu Drive, Suite 200, Lexington, KY 40502, or at <https://bit.ly/2xwienB>.



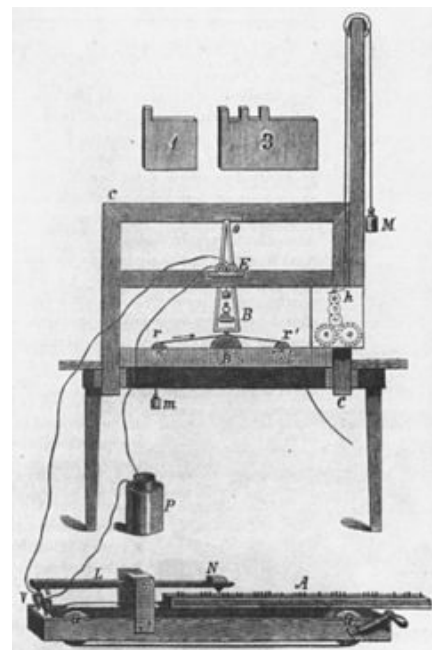
Regarding the Pony Express . . .

The Telegraph Revolutionizes News Gathering



Paul Albright (Email) - As Ye Olde Editor pointed out in "Connecting" (October 27), the transcontinental telegraph meant the end of the short-lived Pony Express mail service in 1861. However, it was 17 years earlier when Samuel Morse's telegraph revolutionized the gathering and the publication of news. And it was much more local than transcontinental.

Morse had strung a telegraph line on poles some 40 miles between Washington and Baltimore where the Whig political party nominated Henry Clay on May 1, 1844, for his third and final run for U.S. president. Morse had a colleague telegraph that breaking news from Baltimore's railroad depot to the Washington politicians who he was trying to influence to support his commercial venture.



“The whole city (Washington) was suddenly agog with news that was spread about long before the newspapers had it,” wrote Simon Winchester in “The Men Who United the States” (Harper Perennial, 2013). The result was extensive publicity for Morse’s electric device “that transmitted the first official news message ever sent at the speed of light, city to city.”

Three weeks later Morse was seated in the U.S. Capitol where he transmitted the first public telegraph message – this time to Baltimore. Surrounded by family and government officials, Morse tapped out 18 letters with the famed Biblical quotation from the Book of Numbers: “What Hath God Wrought.”

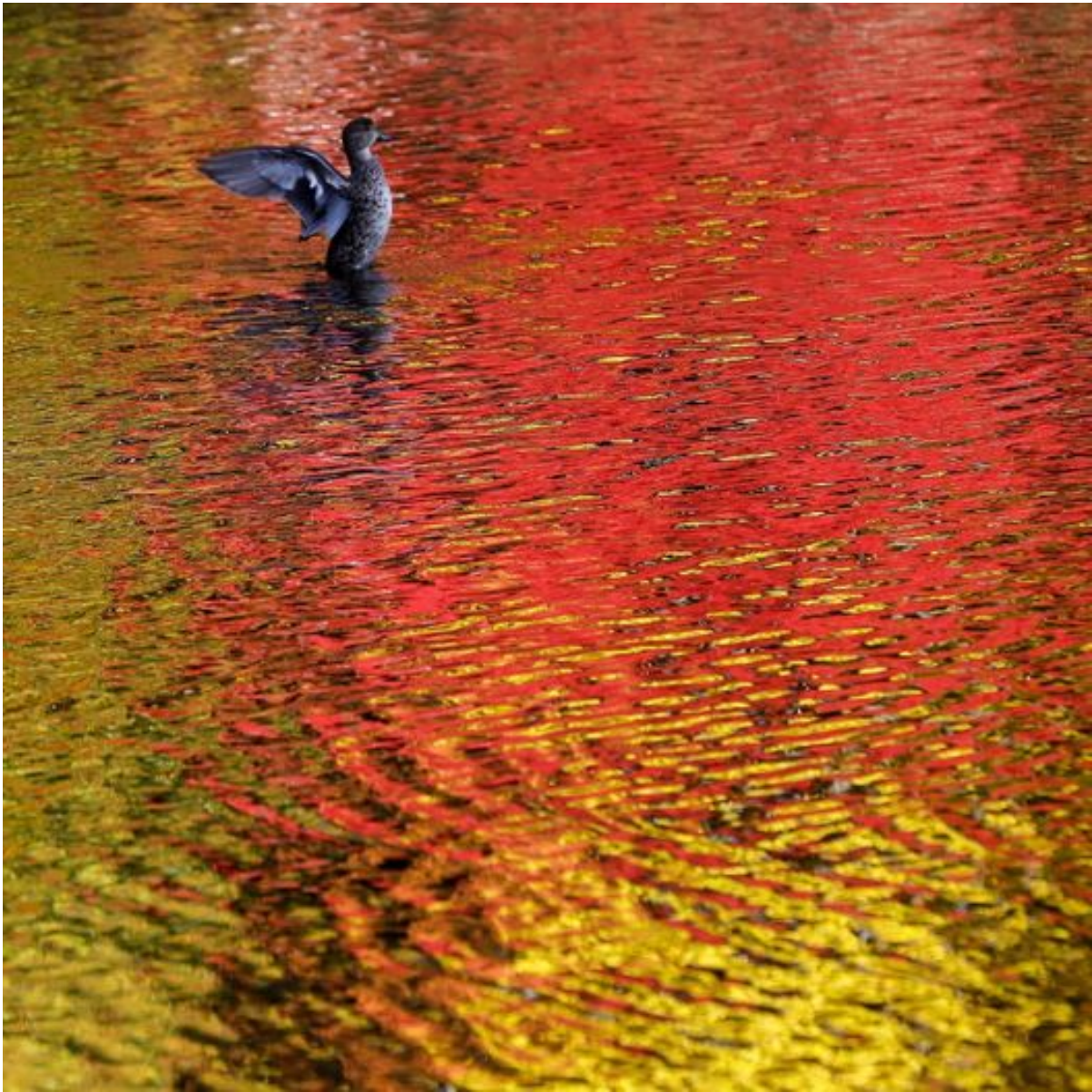
What, indeed!

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Wrote book on legends of Pony Express

Christopher Corbett ([Email](#)) - former AP news editor in Baltimore (and before that in Connecticut) - I wrote "[Orphans Preferred: The Twisted Truth and Lasting Legend of the Pony Express](#)" (Random House/Broadway Books).

Of ducks and dolphins



A duck spreads its wings in a pond as fall foliage colors are reflected on the water Tuesday, Oct. 27, 2020, in Nagano, Japan. (AP Photo/Kiichiro Sato)



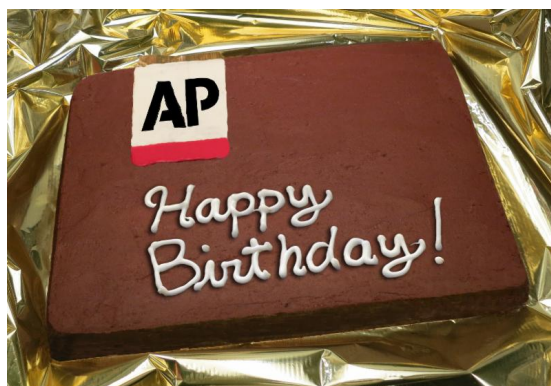
Dolphin jumping out of the Pacific Ocean water at Long Beach, California. Photo by Nick Ut.

‘Wacky Wednesday’ in the East



The East Desk gathered via Zoom for their "Wacky Wednesday," meeting, Oct. 14, 2020. This week's theme was "Hat Day." (AP Photo/Mallika Sen)

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



Andy Dalton - adalton@ap.org

Stories of interest

‘Stop doing that, or this interview will end’: How the smackdown took over cable news in 2020 (Washington Post)

By Paul Farhi

Poppy Harlow co-anchors the midmorning hours on CNN, typically one of the sleepest stretches of the cable news day. But for a few minutes last month, she was the talk of the media universe.

“Brian. Brian. Brian. Brian,” Harlow said in her combative live interview with a deputy White House press secretary on Sept. 28. The topic was President Trump’s tax returns, freshly revealed in a New York Times story showing that he had only paid \$750 in federal income tax in 2016 and 2017, but Brian Morgenstern kept dodging and weaving — and trying to change the subject to Hunter Biden’s taxes.

Harlow was having none of it. “You speak for the president so we’re going to stick on that topic. . . . How much federal income tax did the president pay in 2016 and 2017?”

Morgenstern called the Times story a “smear.” But he refused to get specific about his claim that Trump had paid “millions” in taxes and kept bringing up Hunter Biden. Harlow kept pushing and chiding (“I’m asking the questions here”), and when he accused the Times of writing the story in coordination with Democrats as a “political hit,” she laid down the law. “Brian,” she demanded, “stop doing that, or this interview will end. Stop attacking the press.”

Read more [here](#).

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Both newspapers in Utah's capital to cease daily publication

BY LINDSAY WHITEHURST

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — Salt Lake City will go from two daily printed newspapers to none after both of its major publications cut print days to once a week in unusual

moves for a large city that could portend more struggles for the country's newspaper industry.

The 170-year-old Deseret News in the state capital said Tuesday it will stop publishing daily starting next year, a disclosure that came a day after the Salt Lake Tribune made a similar announcement.

It's an unusually deep cutback in print days, even in an era of steeply declining revenue, media analyst Ken Doctor said.

"To go from seven to one just like that and to have it done by both papers in the same city shows us how deep the reckoning is for the American newspaper industry going into 2021," said Doctor, who writes the Newsonomics blog.

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

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If Trump wanted people to avoid '60 Minutes,' it didn't work

By DAVID BAUDER

NEW YORK (AP) — President Donald Trump can still be a potent television draw, although in the case of "60 Minutes" this past week, it probably wasn't what he intended.

The 17.4 million people who watched the CBS newsmagazine, featuring interviews with Trump and Democratic opponent Joe Biden, was the show's biggest audience in more than two years, the Nielsen company said. This was despite an angry president releasing an unedited version of his talk with Lesley Stahl on Facebook three days in advance because he didn't like the questions.

Since "60 Minutes" had been averaging 10.3 million viewers so far this season, clearly some people wanted to see the broadcast after hearing about the controversy, or saw the full tape and were curious about how CBS edited it.

Stahl made one reference to the dispute in her introduction, saying "we had prepared to talk about the many issues and questions facing the president, but in what has become an all-too-public dust-up, the conversation was cut short."

Read more [here](#).

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Trump admin dismantles 'firewall' for editorial independence at U.S.-funded media outlets (NBC)

By Dan De Luce

A senior U.S. official appointed by President Donald Trump has scrapped a federal regulation designed to protect the editorial independence of Voice of America and other U.S.-funded media outlets, amid accusations he is undermining the journalistic credibility of the broadcasters.

Michael Pack, CEO of the U.S. Agency for Global Media who rescinded the editorial “firewall” regulation late Monday night, said the federal rule was legally flawed, infringed on the president’s right to conduct U.S. foreign policy and was “unworkable.”

Reporters at the U.S.-funded broadcasters have accused Pack of trying to turn the service into a mouthpiece for Trump, and former executives said they expected legal challenges to the decision.

“He has blown up the firewall,” a journalist at one of the U.S.-funded outlets told NBC News.

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

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Lesley Stahl gets security protection after death threat over Trump ‘60 Minutes’ interview: report (New York Daily News)

By KATE FELDMAN

CBS hired full-time security for “60 Minutes” correspondent Lesley Stahl after a relative living in the Los Angeles area received a death threat over her interview with President Trump, it was reported Tuesday.

An unidentified suspect called one of Stahl’s relatives in Los Angeles on Thursday, just hours before the president released his own copy of the interview on Facebook, and threatened her and her family and “said something about neo-Nazis,” TMZ said.

The Los Angeles Police Department would not confirm whether an investigation has been launched.

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

Today in History - October 28, 2020



By The Associated Press

Today is Wednesday, Oct. 28, the 302nd day of 2020. There are 64 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Oct. 28, 1962, Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev informed the United States that he had ordered the dismantling of missile bases in Cuba; in return, the U.S. secretly agreed to remove nuclear missiles from U.S. installations in Turkey.

On this date:

In 1858, Rowland Hussey Macy opened his first New York store at Sixth Avenue and 14th Street in Manhattan.

In 1886, the Statue of Liberty, a gift from the people of France, was dedicated in New York Harbor by President Grover Cleveland.

In 1922, fascism came to Italy as Benito Mussolini took control of the government.

In 1940, Italy invaded Greece during World War II.

In 1976, former Nixon aide John D. Ehrlichman entered a federal prison camp in Safford, Arizona, to begin serving his sentence for Watergate-related convictions (he

was released in April 1978).

In 1980, President Jimmy Carter and Republican presidential nominee Ronald Reagan faced off in a nationally broadcast, 90-minute debate in Cleveland.

In 1996, Richard Jewell, cleared of committing the Olympic park bombing, held a news conference in Atlanta in which he thanked his mother for standing by him and lashed out at reporters and investigators who'd depicted him as the bomber, who turned out to be Eric Rudolph.

In 2001, the families of people killed in the September 11 terrorist attack gathered in New York for a memorial service filled with prayer and song.

In 2002, American diplomat Laurence Foley was assassinated in front of his house in Amman, Jordan, in the first such attack on a U.S. diplomat in decades. A student flunking out of the University of Arizona nursing school shot three of his professors to death, then killed himself.

In 2012, airlines canceled more than 7,000 flights in advance of Hurricane Sandy, transit systems in New York, Philadelphia and Washington were shut down, and forecasters warned the New York area could see an 11-foot wall of water.

In 2013, Penn State said it would pay \$59.7 million to 26 young men over claims of child sexual abuse at the hands of former assistant football coach Jerry Sandusky.

In 2016, the FBI dropped what amounted to a political bomb on the Clinton campaign when it announced it was investigating whether emails on a device belonging to disgraced ex-congressman Anthony Weiner, the estranged husband of one of Clinton's closest aides, Huma Abedin, might contain classified information.

Ten years ago: Investigators with the president's oil spill commission said tests performed before the deadly blowout of BP's oil well in the Gulf of Mexico should have raised doubts about the cement used to seal the well, but that the company and its cementing contractor used it anyway. (The cement mix's failure to prevent oil and gas from entering the well was cited by BP and others as one of the causes of the accident.) Caroline Wozniacki wrapped up the year-end No. 1 ranking after rallying to beat Francesca Schiavone 3-6, 6-1, 6-1 at the WTA Championships in Doha, Qatar. Stage and screen actor James MacArthur, who played "Danno" in the original version of television's "Hawaii Five-0," died in Jacksonville, Florida, at age 72.

Five years ago: Dennis Hastert pleaded guilty before a federal judge in Chicago to evading banking laws in a hush-money scheme. (A court filing later revealed allegations of sexual abuse against Hastert by at least four former students from his days as a high school wrestling coach; Hastert ended up being sentenced to 15 months in prison.) Jeb Bush and Marco Rubio fought for control of the Republicans' establishment wing in the third GOP debate, this one in Boulder, Colorado, as insurgent outsiders Donald Trump and Ben Carson defended the seriousness of their

White House bids. An unmanned Army surveillance blimp broke loose from its mooring in Maryland and floated over Pennsylvania for hours with two fighter jets on its tail, triggering blackouts across the countryside as it dragged its tether across power lines.

One year ago: A wildfire swept through the star-studded hills of Los Angeles, destroying several large homes and forcing LeBron James and thousands of others to flee; a blaze in Northern California wine country exploded in size. The S&P 500 closed at an all-time high for the first time in months; the Nasdaq composite was also near a record.

Today's Birthdays: Jazz singer Cleo Laine is 93. Actor Joan Plowright is 91. Actor Jane Alexander is 81. Actor Dennis Franz is 76. Actor Telma Hopkins is 72. Caitlyn Jenner is 71. Actor Annie Potts is 68. Songwriter/producer Desmond Child is 67. Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates is 65. The former president of Iran, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (ah-muh-DEE'-neh-zahhd), is 64. Rock musician Stephen Morris (New Order) is 63. Country/gospel singer-musician Ron Hemby (The Buffalo Club) is 62. Rock singer-musician William Reid (The Jesus & Mary Chain) is 62. Actor Mark Derwin is 60. Actor Daphne Zuniga (ZOO'-nih-guh) is 58. Actor Lauren Holly is 57. Talk show host-comedian-actor Sheryl Underwood is 57. Actor Jami Gertz is 55. Actor Chris Bauer is 54. Actor-comedian Andy Richter is 54. Actor Julia Roberts is 53. Country singer-musician Caitlin Cary is 52. Actor Jeremy Davies is 51. Singer Ben Harper is 51. Country singer Brad Paisley is 48. Actor Joaquin Phoenix is 46. Actor Gwendoline Christie is 42. Singer Justin Guarini (TV: "American Idol") is 42. Pop singer Brett Dennen is 41. Rock musician Dave Tirio (Plain White T's) is 41. Actor Charlie Semine is 40. Actor Matt Smith is 38. Actor Finn Wittrock is 36. Actor Troian Bellisario is 35. Singer/rapper Frank Ocean is 33. Actor Lexi Ainsworth (TV: "General Hospital") is 28. Actor Nolan Gould is 22.

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

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