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Connecting

November 03, 2020

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Colleagues,

Good Tuesday morning on this the 3rd day of November 2020,

It's Election Day - AT LAST!

I know you join me and all retired and former AP colleagues in wishing the best to the staff of The Associated Press today, tonight and perhaps the next few days as it fulfills

what may be its most fundamental role.

Toward the end of our lead article on the AP's role in election tabulation, by The New York Times:

Because of the pandemic, most of The A.P.'s staff members have been working remotely since March. On Tuesday, about 50 of "the core folks" will work in the Washington bureau, rather than the usual crew of 200 journalists, Ms. Buzbee said. Instead of the usual shared pizzas, there will be boxed dinners.

No election-night pizza? Note The Final Word.

And ... as you watch today's results come in, take a look at [Explaining Election 2020](#) – produced by the AP.

Have a great day – be safe, stay healthy.

Paul

In a Hot Election, the Cool-Headed Associated Press Takes Center Stage

At the end of a turbulent campaign, the global news organization has a big role to play, with 4,000 reporters collecting vote counts from county clerks in 50 states.



An Associated Press staff member reading copy from the election tabulator in November 1936. Photo/Associated Press

**By Katie Robertson
The New York Times**

The Associated Press will not predict a winner of the presidential election. It will not even name an apparent or likely winner. The A.P. will make the call only when it is certain — just as it has in every U.S. election since 1848, when Zachary Taylor won the White House.

“If there’s no way for the trailing candidate to catch up, no legal way, no mathematical way, then the race is decided, essentially,” Sally Buzbee, The A.P.’s executive editor, said in an interview. “And if there is any uncertainty, or if there are enough votes out to change the result, then we don’t call the race.”

As The A.P. tracks the contest between President Trump and Joseph R. Biden Jr., as well as 35 Senate, 11 gubernatorial, 435 congressional and more than 6,000 down-ticket races, its determinations will not be swayed by outside forces.

“Race calls made by other organizations have no bearing on when AP declares a candidate the winner,” The A.P. said in an article on its website. “Our decision team does not engage in debate with any campaign or candidate.”

That stance may prove crucial in a turbulent election in which more than 90 million Americans cast their ballots before Election Day on Tuesday because of the coronavirus pandemic — an election further complicated by widespread misinformation and Mr. Trump’s false claims that the vote has been “rigged.”

The A.P. bases its determinations on the work of more than 4,000 freelance local reporters who collect vote counts from clerks in every county of the 50 states. Those local reporters phone the results to The A.P.’s vote entry centers, which are virtual this year because of the pandemic. More than 800 vote entry clerks assess the data, checking with the reporters about any anomalies, before entering it into the A.P. system.

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

Remembering Dennis Montgomery

Terry Ganey (Email) - I was saddened to learn of the sudden death of Dennis Montgomery. In September of 1974, when he was the correspondent in Centralia, IL and I was a newsman in the St. Louis bureau, we collaborated on a story about the return of a 5-year-old Southern Illinois girl who had been kidnaped. It was during the pre-cell phone era when one reporter gathers quotes in the field while another works the story by telephone from an office. It was a scramble with UPI on a very competitive story. He was a real pro. I learned a lot working with him.

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Bill Wertz (Email) - So sorry to read about Dennis Montgomery. I had the good fortune to work with Dennis in Illinois during the 1970s. I was the correspondent in Springfield and later news editor in Chicago, while Dennis was based in Centralia. In those days Dennis and Charlie Chamberlain in the Chicago bureau were masters of the short, quirky and heart-warming feature stories that the general desk was eager to grab for the A-wire. Dennis and Charlie had a spirited competition to see who could generate more in a given week. Southern Illinois and Chicago might as well have been on different planets in those days, but both were fertile ground for Dennis and Charlie, who could spot off-beat incidents and colorful characters in member newspapers and draw out touching stories often with just a phone call or two. The AP had many fantastic feature writers, but Dennis was one of the best.

The saga of Tallahassee 2000

Linda Deutsch (Email) - I know that several colleagues have already weighed in on AP’s unique role in covering the contested 2000 Bush v. Gore election in Florida. Just thought I would add a few unforgettable moments from that unusual assignment. It

was one of the few times that my career in covering legal matters and trials crossed over into politics.

When it began to look like the election challenge was definitely a legal story involving many lawsuits, I was dispatched to join the crew already in Tallahassee under the guidance of Brent Kallestad. There were some AP colleagues there whom I already knew, but I definitely made new friends. It was an extraordinarily challenging workload. As I recall, Florida's sunshine laws allowed us to see every legal paper that was filed and messengers would arrive at the bureau from the courts, their arms loaded with legal documents to be sorted for newsworthy information.

AP became a source for other media on issues such as the meaning of the "hanging chads," a quirk of Florida ballots that rendered some votes unusable. One of our young reporters was interviewed about this so often on TV that we called him "The chad lad. "

I wrote countless leads and raced to the courthouse for numerous press conferences. I will always be able to spell Tallahassee without any hesitation.

But my most unique contribution came on the day when Florida election officials ordered thousands of ballots to be trucked to Miami-Dade for recounting. Helicopters followed the trucks along highways and more than one commentator said it looked like the O.J. Simpson Bronco chase.

That's when I got an idea. I murmured aloud, "Maybe I should call O.J. about this." I remember colleagues looking at me as if I had lost my mind.

But O.J. was living in Florida and I had his cell phone number. He was a frequent source for my stories after his trial. I punched his number into the phone and he answered on the first ring. It turned out that he had been watching the election coverage and he gave me some great quotes (which I can't remember right now). I filed a quick lead and within minutes, the TV stations were interrupting their broadcasts with breaking news.

"You'll never guess who has decided to weigh in on the election: O.J. Simpson," gushed one broadcaster. I smiled.

A few weeks into the story, we realized that those of us who had parachuted in were going to be there for Thanksgiving. We would miss our family gatherings. But there was no need to worry. The bureau's courts reporter, Jackie Halifax, arranged a bountiful Thanksgiving dinner for all of us at her Tallahassee home. Of course we had to come in shifts because work at the bureau continued.

I think I stayed for about three weeks and left only when it was announced that the case was going to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Now, 20 years later, I was watching an HBO special called "537 Votes" and realized that with all our work, there was an important factor in the election that none of us saw. Voters in Florida were still upset over the case of Elian Gonzalez, the five-year-old Cuban boy who had been shipwrecked in Fort Lauderdale as his family sought refuge. Oddly, he had landed as the lone survivor of their group on Thanksgiving Day, 1999, exactly one year before the election debacle.

The HBO special, which I highly recommend, looks at the impact of that event on the Cuban community and the battle over whether he would remain with relatives in Florida or return to his father in Havana. The courts weighed in and he returned to Cuba. But the story is fascinating. My friend Anne Louise Bardach wrote a book about it: "Cuba Confidential," and she helps narrate the story and explain how the result of that presidential election may have been determined by the fate of a five-year-old boy.

Oh and one other person was involved. His name was Roger Stone. Sound familiar?

Praise for Schiappa story on ailing staffer

Monday's Connecting really shows that AP is truly a family

Mark Mittelstadt ([Email](#)) - Cliff Schiappa's telling of coming to the aid of a sick staffer at the start of a busy 2000 election night in the Kansas City bureau was sad and at the same time inspiring (The Final Word, Monday Connecting). Cliff, then the new assistant chief of bureau, clearly was not only a perceptive and caring supervisor but an even better friend to realize Craig Horst was suffering serious health issues that day and needed help, his reluctance to seek it notwithstanding.

Cliff got the staffer to the hospital, made arrangements for his two Airedale Terriers and then contacted Horst's family, contrary to what the staffer vocalized but was understandable and necessary under the circumstances. Sadly, Horst -- a respected reporter and writer -- left life far too early two and a half weeks later at the age of 46. But not without the love of family, co-workers and friends. And the concern of his bosses, Cliff and Chief of Bureau Paul Stevens.

Some things are bigger than politics and presidential elections. Cliff and Paul readily recognized that and responded appropriately.

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Ray Newton ([Email](#)) - Well-told piece—Craig Horst anecdote.

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Roger Wallace (Email) - Monday's Connecting really shows that AP is truly a family. We are connected through our careers and really become deeply ingrained in our coworkers lives for the better.

Cliff's story was very enlightening. It brought a tear to my eye. Especially when Cliff mentioned he counselled with you about what to do. The KX buro had become a family for Craig Horst.

Carrie Antlfinger's dispatch on COVID-19 was truly an eye opener.

Keep up your most excellent work.

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Kevin Walsh (Email) - It was very moving for me to read Cliff Schiappa's tribute to Craig Horst and the actions he took when Craig fell ill on Election Day 2000.

Craig was one of my favorite co-workers from the time I started with the AP in Kansas City in August 1984 until I moved on to the Baltimore bureau six years later.

I knew about Craig's death, but not the details of his final days. He truly was blessed to have Cliff as his friend and colleague.

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John Willis (Email) - Thanks for sharing Cliff Schiappa's story about Craig Horst. Along with Norm Abelson's essay, the essay by the AP newswoman in Milwaukee and Sally Buzbee's interview with Poynter, today's Connecting is a marvelous read that makes one sit back and think about a lot of things.

Connecting photo gallery



Andy Lippman (Email) - Here's the new addition at my house. Scout is a spaniel mix rescued from a shelter. He's now sleeping at my feet as I write this note. (Photo by Lisa Greathouse)



Norman Black ([Email](#)) - If you need a happy picture this week, here's sunset on Kiawah Beach South Carolina.



Jim Reindl ([Email](#)) - Sarajevo by full moon light Nov. 1, 2020



Nick Ut ([Email](#)) – An abandoned house in Victorville California.

Buncombe's COVID-19 numbers spike — Page 2020 - A7

Daily Planet

ASHEVILLE
ASHEVILLE'S GREATEST NEWSPAPER

Nov. 1-14, 2020 Vol. 16, No. 18 An Independent Newspaper Serving Greater Asheville www.ashevilledailyplanet.com FREE

\$650M project with 800-plus jobs announced for area near Arboretum

Marks largest investment, new jobs announcement in WNC's history

From Staff Reports

An aerospace company announced plans Oct. 22 to invest about \$650 million through 2027 in a new Buncombe County manufacturing facility. What's more, the multi-stage investment by Pratt & Whitney to new building, technology, machinery and equipment is intended to create 800 new positions through 2027 including career opportunities in engineering, technology, production and management, a company press release stated. Pratt & Whitney is a division of Raytheon Technologies Corp.

The planned investment and projected new jobs rank as records for a single project in Western North Carolina history. The company's announcement was made in conjunction with the Buncombe County Board of Commissioners and the Economic Development Coalition for Asheville-Buncombe County.

"Pratt & Whitney is a world leader in the design, manufacture and service of aircraft and helicopter engines, and auxiliary power units," the press release noted. "Raytheon Technologies Corporation is an aerospace and defense company that provides advanced systems and services for commercial, military and government customers worldwide."

Chris Galin, president of Pratt & Whitney, was quoted in the release as saying, "This investment will enable Pratt & Whitney to continue to modernize and transform its operations with cutting-edge technologies. Turbine airfoils are a critical component across our engine portfolio and demand will increase significantly as the market recovers over the next several years."

See \$650M PROJECT, Page A9

APD ramps up security; extra officers to work on Election Day

From Staff Reports

The Asheville Police Department has announced that it will schedule extra officers to work on Election Day (Nov. 3) for those worried about security during a highly charged political season, with some pundits predicting that civil unrest and violence — perhaps even a civil war — could break out in the aftermath.

"We received emails from numerous members of the public, and from different political perspectives might show up at the polls and attempt to influence their vote or perhaps limit their access to the polls," APD Deputy Chief Mike Yelton told Asheville television station WLOS (News 13) in a report broadcast Oct. 23.

Because of those worries, Yelton said voters will see more uniformed officers patrolling dozens of Asheville polling places on Election Day.

See APD RAMPS UP, Page A4

Harris stresses importance of N.C. as swing state; says, 'We cannot spare a minute'

From Staff Reports

Just over a week after the campaign had to cancel a visit after two individuals involved with the campaign tested positive for COVID-19, Democratic vice presidential nominee Kamala Harris finally arrived in Asheville on Oct. 21.

On the same day, Harris later traveled to Charlotte. Both events were set up to allow Harris to participate in early vote mobilization events.

Her Charlotte visit occurred just hours before President Donald J. Trump held a rally there that evening. Trump is the Republican opponent to her running mate, the Democratic presidential challenger Joe Biden.

Speaking to a crowd at UNCA Asheville, Harris said the outcome of the election could, "in many ways," be decided by North Carolina.

"The choices and the decisions you are making will impact people around the country. In that way, what you are doing to vote and vote early is going to impact people that you may never meet," she told the crowd.

The left-leaning PBS stated of Harris' two Oct. 21 visits, "North Carolina and its 15 electoral votes are highly sought after in the presidential campaign, and Trump has a more difficult electoral path if he can't pull off a win there."

See HARRIS, Page A9



Democratic vice presidential candidate Kamala Harris addresses a gathering at UNCA on Oct. 21.

COMING UP ON ABCNEWSLIVE.COM

SEN. K. HARRIS HARRIS CAMPAIGNS IN ASHEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA

Facebook photo

Daily Planet appears early pre-election 'extra' edition to be published on Nov. 6

This edition of the Daily Planet, dated Nov. 1-14, is appearing only so that the latest news and ads are available before Election Day on Nov. 3.

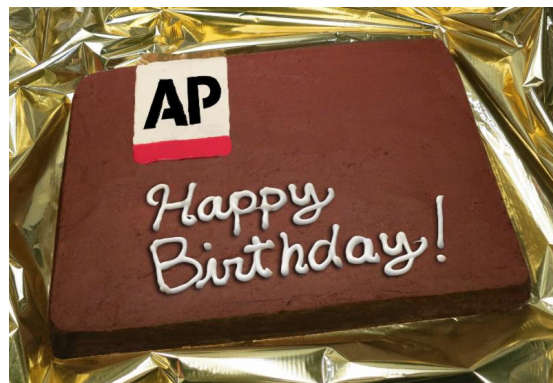
Also, for the first time in its history, the newspaper will print an "extra" edition, featuring election news and commentary, on Nov. 6. Letters to the editor for the "extra" must be received by noon Nov. 5.

Kevin Walsh (Email) – The Daily Planet -- In Asheville, N.C., Not Metropolis.



Cecilia White ([Email](#)) - Whether "blue" or "red," weary American voters head to the polls today following a bruising presidential race unlike any other in the country's history.

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



Dena Sattler - denas@gctelegram.com

Stories of interest

How is TV news going to cover the weirdest, most fraught election in history? All of your questions answered. (Washington Post)

By Sarah Ellison and Jeremy Barr

Whether it was CNN beaming holograms of its far-flung correspondents onto the set, or Dan Rather's folksy play-by-play ("This race is shakier than cafeteria jello"), election night was once an occasion that TV news greeted with giddy, self-promoting flair.

Not this year.

Amid projected historic turnout — and historic national anxiety — media organizations plan to strike a more somber, deliberate tone. They will contend with staffs dispersed by the coronavirus shutdown, ballot-counting rituals upended by a tsunami of early and mail-in votes, and a polarized climate in which President Trump has attempted to sow doubt about the integrity of the process. In conversations over the past week, top officials at ABC News, NBC News, CBS News, CNN, Fox News and the Associated Press answered our questions about following the election results with them this year.

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

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EXPLAINER: From the 2020 election, some new political terms (AP)

By DEB RIECHMANN

WASHINGTON (AP) — "So 2020" is a new phrase that made its way into America's political lexicon this year.

It has come to describe all things unexpected, unsettling and unprecedented.

This includes the vitriolic political discourse that has deepened the partisan divide, the coronavirus pandemic, economic woes, social upheaval after police killings of Black people, massive protests, smashed up storefronts.

Here are two political terms — "cancel culture" and "QAnon" — that are "so 2020" themselves. What do they mean?

Read more [here](#).

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Johnny Depp Plays Photographer W. Eugene Smith in 'Minamata' (PetaPixel)

By ALLEN MURABAYASHI

Deadline reports that MGM has acquired the rights for the Johnny Depp drama “Minamata” – chronicling W. Eugene Smith’s last photo essay on the horrific mercury poisoning in Minamata, Japan.

For decades, Japan’s Chisso Corporation dumped methylmercury and other heavy metals into wastewater that exited into Minamata Bay, a by-product of their chemical manufacturing. The highly toxic compound was absorbed by sea life, and subsequently eaten by locals, which led to horrific birth defects. After years of tireless work by Japanese activists, the government finally acknowledged the cause of the problem in 1968.

In 1971, famed photojournalist W. Eugene Smith traveled to Japan with his second wife Aileen Mioko Smith at the behest of one of the activists. Before heading south to Minamata, Smith was walking around Tokyo when a recent college graduate recognized him from his textbooks. The serendipitous meeting led to Smith hiring Takeshi Ishikawa as an assistant.

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

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NOTE TO READERS: Today marks the Gazette’s return to The Associated Press (Schenectady Gazette)

By Miles Reed, Editor

Normally we don’t like to make news ourselves, especially on the front page, but today is an exception.

Starting with this edition, we’re returning to The Associated Press as our primary wire service after a four-year hiatus from the non-profit news agency.

It's big news for us, months in the making, and we're delighted to share it with you.

The Associated Press is one of the top news agencies in the world, with approximately 250 bureaus in about 100 countries. If there's important news somewhere in the United States or around the globe, the AP is on it.

Our return to the venerable news agency as our main wire service means that we'll simultaneously begin to phase out the wire services that we've used since 2016 — most notably The New York Times and Washington Post news services. We're fortunate to go back to the AP's unparalleled report, and we are grateful for the outstanding journalism we've relied on from both the Times and Post.

The timing of our shift back to The Associated Press is especially fortuitous given the upcoming national election on Tuesday. The AP is known for its stalwart coverage of national politics, especially presidential races. On presidential election nights, the AP is the news source that all others watch for a declaration of a winner, if one emerges that night.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Chris Carola.

The Final Word



Ron Fournier ✓
@ron_fournier



Saddest [@ap](#) sentence ever?

"Instead of the usual shared pizzas,
there will be boxed dinners."



In a Hot Election, the Cool-Headed
Associated Press Takes Center Stage
[nytimes.com](https://www.nytimes.com)

8:27 PM · 11/2/20 · [Twitter for iPhone](#)

Tweet from Ron Fournier, former AP Washington bureau chief, spotted by Scott Charton.

Today in History - November 03, 2020



By The Associated Press

Today is Tuesday, Nov. 3, the 308th day of 2020. There are 58 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Nov. 3, 1936, President Franklin D. Roosevelt won a landslide election victory over Republican challenger Alfred "Alf" Landon.

On this date:

In 1900, the first automobile show in the United States opened at New York's Madison Square Garden under the auspices of the Automobile Club of America.

In 1911, the Chevrolet Motor Car Co. was founded in Detroit by Louis Chevrolet and William C. Durant. (The company was acquired by General Motors in 1918.)

In 1960, President John F. Kennedy established the U.S. Agency for International Development.

In 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson soundly defeated Republican Barry Goldwater to win a White House term in his own right.

In 1970, Salvador Allende (ah-YEN'-day) was inaugurated as president of Chile.

In 1979, five Communist Workers Party members were killed in a clash with heavily armed Ku Klux Klansmen and neo-Nazis during an anti-Klan protest in Greensboro, North Carolina.

In 1986, the Iran-Contra affair came to light as Ash-Shiraa, a pro-Syrian Lebanese magazine, first broke the story of U.S. arms sales to Iran.

In 1992, Democrat Bill Clinton was elected the 42nd president of the United States, defeating President George H.W. Bush. In Illinois, Democrat Carol Moseley-Braun became the first Black woman elected to the U.S. Senate.

In 1994, Susan Smith of Union, South Carolina, was arrested for drowning her two young sons, Michael and Alex, nine days after claiming the children had been abducted by a Black carjacker.

In 2004, President George W. Bush claimed a re-election mandate a day after more than 62 million Americans chose him over Democrat John Kerry; Kerry conceded defeat in make-or-break Ohio rather than launch a legal fight reminiscent of the contentious Florida recount of four years earlier.

In 2017, Army Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl, who walked away from his post in Afghanistan and triggered a search that left some of his comrades severely wounded, was spared a prison sentence by a military judge in North Carolina; President Donald Trump blasted the decision as a “complete and total disgrace.”

In 2014, 13 years after the 9/11 terrorist attack, the resurrected World Trade Center opened for business, marking an emotional milestone for both New Yorkers and the nation.

Ten years ago: President Barack Obama acknowledged that Democrats had taken “a shellacking” in midterm elections. The Federal Reserve announced a plan to buy \$600 billion in Treasury bonds over the next eight months in an attempt to boost lending and stimulate the economy. Former Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin died in Moscow at age 72.

Five years ago: Ohio voters rejected a ballot proposal that would have legalized both recreational and medical marijuana. U.S. auto safety regulators fined Japan’s Takata Corp. \$70 million for concealing evidence for years that its air bags were prone to explode with potentially deadly consequences. Online retail giant Amazon opened its first brick-and-mortar bookstore, located in Seattle, two decades after it began selling books over the Internet. Ahmad Chalabi, a prominent Iraqi politician who helped persuade the Bush administration to invade Iraq and overthrow Saddam Hussein in 2003, died in Baghdad.

One year ago: Authorities in Southern California lifted all evacuation orders as firefighters made progress on a large blaze that sent thousands fleeing homes and farms northwest of Los Angeles. Geoffrey Kamworor of Kenya won his second men’s title in three years at the New York City Marathon; in the women’s race, Kenyan Joyciline Jepkosgei powered away from four-time winner Mary Keitany in her first marathon.

Today’s Birthdays: Actor Lois Smith is 90. Actor Monica Vitti is 89. Former Massachusetts Gov. Michael S. Dukakis is 87. Actor Shadoe Stevens is 74. Singer Lulu is 72. “Vogue” editor-in-chief Anna Wintour is 71. Comedian-actor Roseanne Barr is 68.

Actor Kate Capshaw is 67. Comedian Dennis Miller is 67. Actor Kathy Kinney is 67. Singer Adam Ant is 66. Sports commentator and former quarterback Phil Simms is 65. Director-screenwriter Gary Ross is 64. Actor Dolph Lundgren is 63. Rock musician C.J. Pierce (Drowning Pool) is 48. Actor Francois Battiste (TV: "Ten Days in the Valley") is 44. Olympic gold medal figure skater Evgeni Plushenko is 38. Actor Julie Berman is 37. Actor Antonia Thomas (TV: "The Good Doctor") is 34. Alternative rock singer/songwriter Courtney Barnett is 33. TV personality Kendall Jenner (TV: "Keeping Up with the Kardashians") is 25.

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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