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Connecting November 20, 2020

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Colleagues,

Good Friday morning on this the 20th day of November 2020,

Few things warm the heart like puppies – and we all need a bit of heart-warming these days. Which is why today’s Connecting leads with a wonderful account from our colleague **Devlin Barrett**, a Washington Post reporter who earlier worked for the AP.

We bring you more of your colleagues’ stories of covering news under danger and of the home offices they occupy during the pandemic.

Hope you have a great weekend – be safe, stay healthy.

Paul

Pandemic Puppies

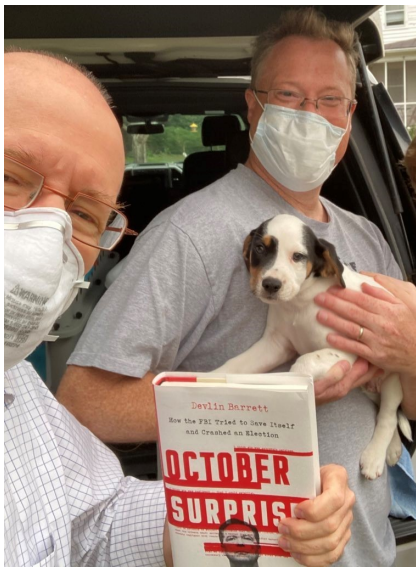


Devlin Barrett ([Email](#)) - When the Washington Post newsroom shut down in March, my wife Miranda and I packed up our car with our two sons and headed for what my grandfather called the “paternal acres” – a family farm in rural Virginia that had, through unexpected twists, passed down to me.

With no school and two kids to entertain, we quickly added chicks to my great-great grandmother’s long-empty chicken coop, and goats and ducks to the yard. In the fall, as I geared up for publication of my book “October Surprise,” Miranda had the idea to add a foster dog from a local rescue organization.



Surprise! That sweet dog came to us pregnant, and pretty soon nine newborn creatures were in our house, squealing and squirming for attention. In honor of the season, we gave them temporary names based on different kinds of Halloween candy.



The boys watched the pups being born, watched them grow from blind little lumps into bouncy, wide-eyed goofballs, and learned just how difficult it is to herd puppies or keep them clean. If the smells were sometimes bad, the sounds were wonderful. Working from home I occasionally caught a glimpse of the puppies in the yard, crawling over my children, chewing our porch screens, or stalking a pile of leaves.

Science and common sense told us this year that to be safe we have to cut ourselves off from a wide range of human interactions, including the kind that often mean the most. The long months of isolation have been hard on everyone, but our family had the

puppies and their endless energy, curiosity, and joy. They did far more for us than we did for them.

Now that we have found loving homes for all nine, the time we had with them seems far too short. We are admittedly a bit adrift with each puppy departure, and my wife has contemplated fostering an alpaca or two to spice the place up. In the world beyond the farm, I hope everyone finds what they need to survive and thrive in this weird moment, and if your home is too quiet, consider fostering an animal. Dogs are pack animals, but so are humans.

Devlin Barrett is a former AP reporter (2003-2010, covering NY federal courts, Congress and DOJ). He now works for The Washington Post, writing about the FBI and the Justice Department, and is the author of "October Surprise: How the FBI Tried to Save Itself and Crashed an Election."

Robert Kerr, AP reporter for 27 years, dies at age of 84

[Here](#) is an obituary for Robert Thomas Kerr:

On Saturday, November 14, Robert Thomas Kerr of Brownwood, Texas passed away.

Robert was born August 23, 1936 in Seminole, Oklahoma to Eva and John Kerr. He attended school in Brownwood and Coleman, Texas and graduated from Texas A&M, class of 1958 with a degree in Journalism which became his lifetime work. While attending Texas A&M he was editor of the school magazine, the Commentator. Upon graduation, he taught journalism and English at West Texas A&M University and East Texas State

University, and served as editor of Amarillo Globe News for several years. In 1967, Robert and his family moved to Los Angeles, California, where he joined the Associated Press as a reporter, a position he held for 27 years, both in Los Angeles and later in Boulder, Colorado. In 1994, he retired to ranch in the Trickham area, fulfilling a lifelong dream.



Robert was the beloved husband to his wife, Marilyn Kerr, and the proud father to sons John Kerr and wife Jane of Monument, Colorado, James Kerr and wife Deborah of Westminster, Colorado, and William Kerr of Fredericksburg, Texas, and loving grandfather to granddaughters Julia, Emma, and Dena. He is also survived by his sister Kathryn and husband Harold Dotson, and nieces and nephews.

Known for his intellect and wit, Robert enjoyed his final 25 years on his Trickham ranch surrounded by his family, his books and his animals.

His family wishes to thank Dr. Amy Tindol for her many years of care, Solaris Hospice and Oak Ridge Manor.

Final arrangements for Robert Thomas Kerr are under the direction of the Davis-Morris Funeral Home.

(Shared by Francesca Pitaro)

Connecting series:
A look at your home office





Mike Harris ([Email](#)) - My office is tucked in a small room behind our kitchen. I've filled the walls with awards and memories from my life and career. It's cozy and pleasant and a great place to work. And the room, as you can see, is also a bit of a catch-all.



Nolan Kienitz ([Email](#)) - Image (dated April-2020) of my home office (ham radio shack) where I spend many hours "on the air" and also doing development on an APP called: Log4OM V2. URL: <https://www.log4om.com/> I'm on the Alpha Support Team that spans the globe and we're on Skype daily going over new items. Beard has since been trimmed a tad.

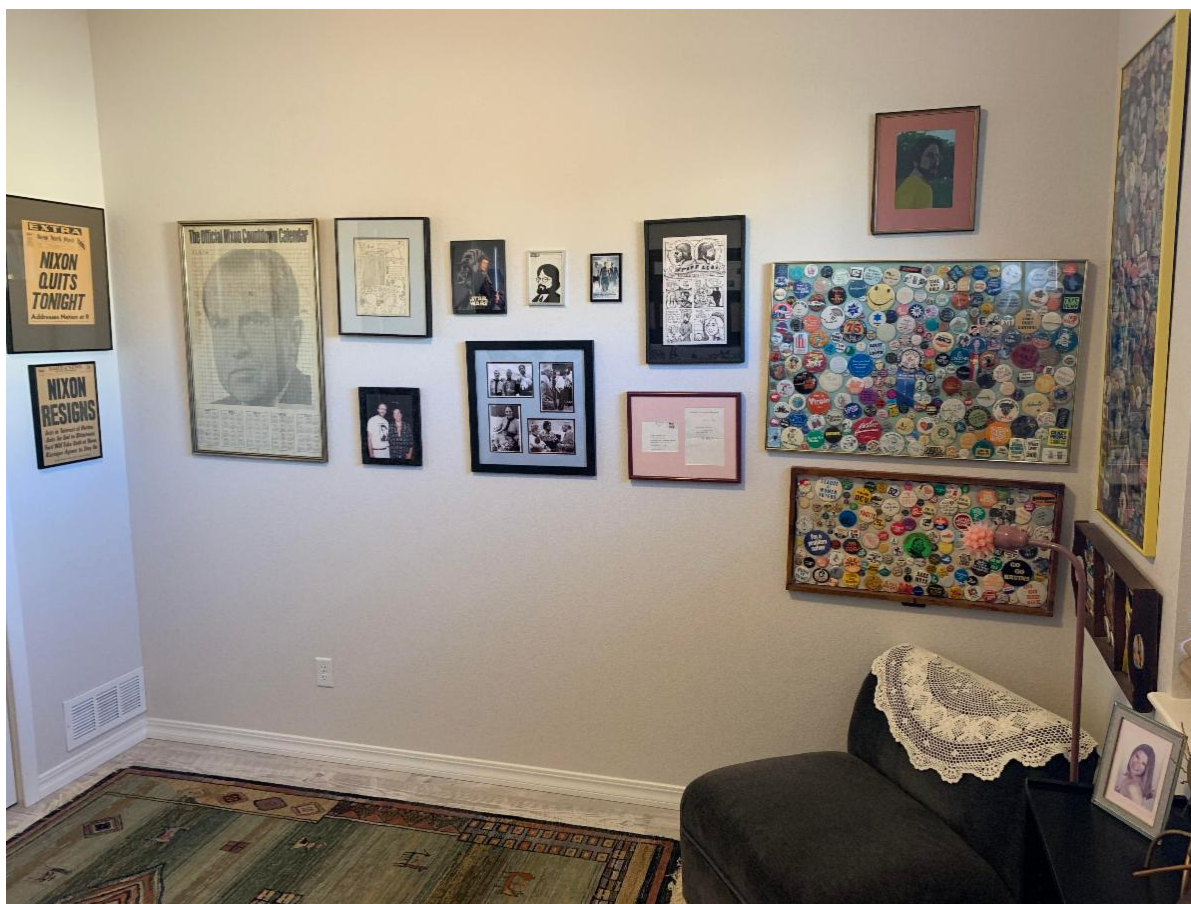


Mark Lavie (Email) - Retired AP writer/editor/broadcaster Mark Lavie works in his backyard office south of Tel Aviv, giving his wife a break from his helpful hints.



Jim Reindl (Email) - My home office in Sarajevo is a work in progress since we only recently moved into our apartment downtown and none of our household goods have shown up yet. Still, I've managed to clutter the desk as if I've been working here the past 10 years. Never fails. And, yes, that's Connecting open on the screen. You're welcome, Paul.





Michael Weinfeld (Email) - My office in Monument, Colorado, contains my late father-in-law's antique roll top desk and memorabilia from my job as AP Broadcast Entertainment Editor, my button collection and evidence of my obsession with the Boston Red Sox. The wall I face when I work at the desk has framed articles and photos of when I won the Gramling Journalism Award in 2001. Also framed evidence of when the Red Sox broke the curse and won the World Series in 2004. On the bookshelf to the left is my Red Sox shrine equipped with a replica of the brick our family bought that's installed at Fenway Park and a lucite stand with dirt from the Fenway warning track encased inside. On the opposite wall is my button collection with buttons bought at the political conventions I covered for AP and plenty of Red Sox and entertainment buttons. Next to that is a signed letter Katharine Hepburn wrote to me confirming our interview at her NYC townhouse in 1990 and photos of me with Paul Newman and Bruce Springsteen (not at the same time). Finally, my 1974 Nixon Countdown calendar that I used to write in Watergate developments each day until he resigned, and two framed photos of Nixon's resignation on the covers of the New York Post and Daily News. It's amazing I get any work done with such interesting tchotchkes around.



Tom Young ([Email](#)) - Here's the study in my new Alexandria, VA townhouse. I wrote most of my books at this desk. They include my recent WWII novel, *SILVER WINGS*, *IRON CROSS*, and another upcoming WWII story, *THE MAGNIFICENT RESCUE*. I moved this desk from another home in Alexandria about a year ago. You can imagine what a chore it was to get this thing onto and off of a truck.

Connecting series:

Your experiences with receiving threats while on the job

Washington in wake of MLK assassination

Malcolm Barr Sr. ([Email](#)) - Four months following my transfer from Honolulu (Hula) to the Washington, D.C. (WX) bureau I was assigned to the night desk supervised by the late Sid Roberts at the time of the Martin Luther King assassination. The city was under curfew from 8 p.m. due to serious street riots and burning of buildings. On the Mall, Black demonstrators had settled in to what was called Resurrection City, a tented community book ended by the Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial.

Supporting the night shift (4 - 1130 p.m.) were two to three women "dictationists" kept busy by reporters calling in their stories from around the city, their shifts normally ending before the curfew. On this night, one of them, a Black woman, was kept overtime on a busy weekday evening. Sometime after curfew, Sid called for a volunteer to drive the young lady home. I put up my hand. "Where to?" I asked as we got into my ancient Renault car parked on the deserted street outside the AP office. "Southeast," she responded, referring to the mostly Black section of Washington. It was about a 25-minute, uneventful, drive to her home through quiet streets, carefully avoiding known trouble spots. It was on my return journey that I ran into trouble. Within five minutes of being back at the K Street bureau I spotted a block or so over a roving group of Black demonstrators. Foolishly, I stopped at a stoplight and was almost immediately surrounded by a group of about 20 angry young men several of whom descended on my car, slapped and banged on the roof, then began rocking the vehicle, at the same time trying to open the locked door. It took me just two or three scared spitless seconds to stamp on the gas and successfully get out of there without any further harm to me, my car, or any of the gang around me.

Never been so scared in my life until...a few days later, I was working days on the Justice Department beat, when I was assigned to walk over to Resurrection City (in the rain) where a press conference was to be held. To get to where I was going, you had to walk along wooden sidewalks between the tents and shacks where people - demonstrators - lived. Briefly, as I left the meeting, I met a group of teenagers that decided to block my exit, knocking me into the muddy slush of the occupied Mall. It was scary but I was otherwise unharmed. It took me a few weeks to persuade Assistant Bureau Chief Marv Arrowsmith to approve an expense claim for cleaning my pants and sport jacket!

Staring down barrel of a pistol

Jeffrey Ulbrich ([Email](#)) - Anyone who has ever covered armed conflict for a length of time has no doubt had the occasion to stare down the barrel of a pistol being pushed into his or her face, or felt a sharp pain from a rifle shoved between the shoulder

blades, or tried to negotiate his way through a roadblock with a couple of machete-wielding gentlemen wearing evil grins and with no common language, or, horrors, prepared his stomach to drink a glass of slivovtz at 7 a.m. as an unsmiling Bosnian Serb watches for any sign of a grimace.

All these things are, of course, much more amusing when recounted later over dinner with friends in Paris than they are at the time they are actually happening.

Connecting mailbox

Raising money for student journalism

Allen Matthews ([Email](#)) - The Daily Cal/Stanford Daily is one of the oldest college newspaper rivalries west of the Mississippi. Here's a fun event that will also raise money for student journalism.

Daily Cal Live Features Trombone Player from 'The Play'

You know it's a year like no other when Cal's home opener is The Big Game against Stanford. "Daily Cal Live," the streaming news program that features alumni, will have a special segment this Sunday that's all about the 123rd edition of this storied Bay Area event.

SFGate Managing Editor Katie Dowd and bestselling author Gary Pomerantz will discuss the ethics of college sports during COVID. In what promises to be almost as exciting as the 1982 game, L.A. Times reporter Jim Rainey will interview Stanford trombonist Gary Tyrrell, the man famously run over 38 years ago at the end of "The Play." Tyrrell will talk about what it felt like then, what happened to his trombone and his ongoing relationship with Kevin Moen, the Cal player who ran him over.

Every year, the staffs of the Daily Cal and the Stanford Daily have clashed on Big Game day in the Ink Bowl, an annual touch football game punctuated with humor, trickery and cunning. The Ink Bowl takes a different form this year, with the two storied newspapers competing to see which can raise the most money to keep journalism training alive. You'll be able to donate to either or both if you attend. To sign up, click [here](#).

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Picturesque Florida walk



Jo Steck ([Email](#)) – I thought I would share my morning walk in beautiful Ponce Inlet!

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AP's 50 Rock headquarters and Washington bureau honored as historic sites in 1967



● Floyd Fleetham (left) lets Nick Carter try his hand at working the wire. At right are AP General Manager Wes Gallagher and AP President Paul Miller, speakers on the occasion.

Plaque Is Unveiled Marking 92d Year Of Wire for News

A bronze plaque commemorating the establishment of the first private leased wire for news transmission 92 years ago was unveiled here yesterday at the Associated Press Building in Rockefeller Center.

Sigma Delta Chi, the professional journalistic society, presented the plaque. It said that the wire, set up between New York and Washington on Nov. 29, 1875, was "the forerunner of today's mass communications networks."

A similar plaque was unveiled in Washington.

At the ceremony here Staley T. McBrayer, national president of Sigma Delta Chi, called the wire a feat that "dipped into

the 20th century of journalism."

Standing next to him in the marbled lobby of the building was Paul Miller, president of The Associated Press, and Wes Gallagher, its general manager.

The event was sponsored by an honorary committee headed by Turner Catledge, executive editor of The New York Times.

A report by Sigma Delta Chi's national historic sites committee said the wire "was one of the historic milestones of journalism, ranking with the invention of the typesetting machine and the rotary press."

The report noted that before the wire was set up "news items had to move as brief regular commercial messages, and had to take their turn with other business on the fledgling telegraph lines. . . . On some days no news at all got through."

At a luncheon later at the Overseas Press Club, 54 West 40th Street, Floyd Fleetham, an old-time Morse operator, re-

sent some of the original news dispatches over a special wire to Washington.

One of the messages he retransmitted was a page one story from The New York Times of Nov. 29, 1875, dealing with the expulsion of students from Princeton for belonging to secret societies.

The news from Washington where another telegrapher, Gardner Bridge, was manning the key, came clattering back over Mr. Fleetham's receiver. It dealt with speculation over whether President Grant would run for a third term.

Bill McCloskey (Email) - Since 1942, the Society of Professional Journalists (nee Sigma Delta Chi) has named Historic sites in Journalism. AP in Washington and New York were honored in 1967. Click [here](#).

Sigma Delta Chi unveiled plaques at both locations describing AP's 1875 circuit between New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington as "the world's first private leased wire for news transmission." At the dedications, speakers said it revolutionized newspaper publishing and became the basis for the present-day system of mass news distribution.

Francesca Pitaro of AP Corporate Archives shared the Nov. 30, 1967, article above from The New York Times and the photo from a celebration of the event.

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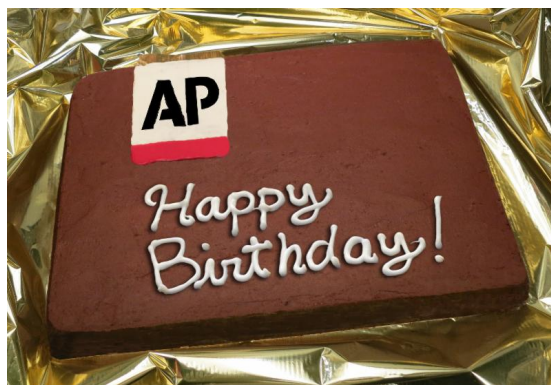
AP sighting – post-WWII Germany

Dick Lipsey (Email) - Here is an AP sighting from a book published in 1948, "Hesse: A New German State," by Dexter L. Freeman. The book is a study of the American occupation of Hesse (whose major city was Frankfurt) from the end of the war in 1945 through the end of 1947. The economy was in ruins; the state, or Land, was flooded with hundreds of thousands of refugees, Displaced Persons, and demobilized soldiers; and food shortages were widespread.

Almost a year after the end of the war: "In April, 1946, a group of American editors and publishers spent a day in Wiesbaden as guests of Military Government. At a luncheon given by the MG Director of Hesse, the newspapermen were served a typical German ration --nothing extra. The following Associated Press dispatch describing the event appeared in the United States the next day:

"WIESBADEN, April 21(AP)--Fourteen American editors and publishers touring occupied Germany ate the lightest, most tasteless meal of their journey yesterday, with assurances that it represented an entire day's ration for a German civilian. "... the visitors settled down to a meal consisting of a tiny corned beef pattie and small quantities of beans , potatoes, black bread, jam, margarine and ersatz coffee. There was no sugar, cream or salt. "...Glen Neville, managing editor of the New York Daily Mirror, said: 'We had better pay a lot more attention back home to the situation over here.'"

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



On Saturday to...

Bernd Helling - bhelling@optonline.net

On Sunday to...

Ron Johnson - ronjohnson77@gmail.com

Tod Megredy - tmegredy@gmail.com

Andrew Selsky - aselsky@ap.org

John Strauss - johncstrauss@gmail.com

Stories of interest

AP Explains Calling Arizona For Biden Early, Before It Got Very Close (NPR)

By DOMENICO MONTANARO

Just before midnight on the East Coast on election night, Fox News called Arizona for Democrat Joe Biden.

It was a bold call. It opened up a wider path for Biden to win the presidency after a night that began with a lot of bad news for the former vice president. Florida had been called for President Trump, and other states went for the president by wider margins than expected.

When Fox made its call, Biden was up 9 percentage points in Arizona, a state no Democrat had won in more than 20 years. Almost three hours later, with Biden up 5, The Associated Press followed suit, and because NPR relies on the AP for election results, it meant we too were reporting that Biden had won Arizona.

At that point, an estimated 80% of the vote was in, and Biden was up by a margin of 136,000 votes.

"It was a very comfortable Biden margin," AP political editor David Scott said, noting that Arizona reported about two-thirds of its total vote shortly after 10:30 p.m. ET. "We wanted to see more before moving ahead with a call, so we waited several hours."

Read more [here](#). Shared by Mike Holmes.

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In the waning days of Trump's presidency, White House press pool reports are getting snarkier (Washington Post)

By Paul Farhi

The pool reports White House correspondents share can be as mundane as a grocery list and about as informative — the who, what and when of the president's daily comings and goings, as recounted by a reporter who travels with the president for a day and relays it all to the rest of the press corps.

At least that's the way it used to be. In the Trump era — or, more precisely, in the waning days of the Trump administration — press pool reports have taken on a more

cutting edge.

“The president has nothing on his public schedule today,” began HuffPost reporter Shirish Date’s pool report Tuesday. “He also has not posted any falsehoods on Twitter about winning the election or fraud or anything else, for that matter, in more than 11 hours. The day, however, is young.”

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

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California journalist who pushed for public information dies (AP)

By JANIE HAR

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Tim Crews, a longtime Northern California newspaperman who relentlessly filed public records requests and even did a five-day stint in jail rather than give up anonymous sources, has died at age 77.

Crews died Nov. 12 at Shasta Regional Medical Center in Redding, after weeks in the hospital. The cause of death was sepsis, said his wife, Donna Settle.

Tributes poured in on the Facebook page of The Sacramento Valley Mirror, a twice-weekly newspaper in Glenn County that Crews founded, published and wrote for, even delivering copies. It has no online presence other than on Facebook.

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

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Cameraman Gets Rammed in the Groin by an Angry Sheep (PetaPixel)



By MICHAEL ZHANG

If you ever find yourself getting low to the ground to try and get the perfect shot of a horned animal, be sure to protect what's valuable to you. A BBC cameraman found out what can happen if you don't, as you can see in this short viral clip above.

The cameraman was shooting a story last year on Cameroon sheep — a domestic sheep that's one of the world's rarest breeds — when one of the “angry” males approached him and stopped with its head inches away from the man's groin.

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

Today in History - Nov. 20, 2020



By The Associated Press

Today is Friday, Nov. 20, the 325th day of 2020. There are 41 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Nov. 20, 2000, lawyers for Al Gore and George W. Bush battled before the Florida Supreme Court over whether the presidential election recount should be allowed to continue.

On this date:

In 1620, Peregrine White was born aboard the Mayflower in Massachusetts Bay; he was the first child born of English parents in present-day New England.

In 1945, 22 former Nazi officials went on trial before an international war crimes tribunal in Nuremberg, Germany. (Almost a year later, the International Military Tribunal sentenced 12 of the defendants to death; seven received prison sentences ranging from 10 years to life; three were acquitted.)

In 1947, Britain's future queen, Princess Elizabeth, married Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, at Westminster Abbey.

In 1962, President John F. Kennedy held a news conference in which he announced the end of the naval quarantine of Cuba imposed during the missile crisis, and the signing of an executive order prohibiting discrimination in federal housing facilities.

In 1967, the U.S. Census Bureau's Population Clock at the Commerce Department ticked past 200 million.

In 1969, the Nixon administration announced a halt to residential use of the pesticide DDT as part of a total phaseout. A group of American Indian activists began a 19-month occupation of Alcatraz Island in San Francisco Bay.

In 1975, after nearly four decades of absolute rule, Spain's Generalissimo Francisco Franco died, two weeks before his 83rd birthday.

In 1984, pop star Michael Jackson was inducted into the Hollywood Walk of Fame with the unveiling of his star in front of a horde of screaming fans.

In 1985, the first version of Microsoft's Windows operating system, Windows 1.0, was officially released.

In 2003, Michael Jackson was booked on suspicion of child molestation in Santa Barbara, Calif. (Jackson was later acquitted at trial.) Record producer Phil Spector was charged with murder in the shooting death of an actor, Lana Clarkson, at his home in Alhambra (al-HAM'-bruh), California. (Spector's first trial ended with a hung jury in

2007; he was convicted of second-degree murder in 2009 and sentenced to 19 years to life in prison.)

In 2009, holding back tears, Oprah Winfrey told her studio audience that she would end her talk show in 2011 after a quarter-century on the air.

In 2012, former boxing champion Hector “Macho” Camacho was shot while sitting in a car in his hometown of Bayamon, Puerto Rico. (Camacho died four days later after doctors removed him from life support.)

Ten years ago: In comments released by the Vatican, Pope Benedict XVI opened the door on the previously taboo subject of condoms as a way to fight HIV, saying male prostitutes who used condoms might be beginning to assume moral responsibility. Notre Dame returned to the Bronx for the first time in 41 years and sent the subway alumni home happy as the Irish beat Army 27-3 in the first football game at the new Yankee Stadium. Former Milwaukee police officer and onetime Playboy Club bunny Laurie “Bambi” Bembenek, who escaped from prison after she was convicted of murder, died at a hospice in Portland, Oregon, at age 52.

Five years ago: Islamic extremists shot up a luxury hotel in Mali’s capital frequented by diplomats and businessman, killing 20 people in an attack blamed on Islamic extremists. A week after the deadliest attacks on France in decades, shell-shocked Parisians honored the 130 victims with candles and songs. Jonathan Pollard, a former U.S. Navy intelligence analyst, was released from prison after 30 years behind bars for spying for Israel. Actor Keith Michell, remembered for his portrayals of England’s King Henry VIII, died in London at age 88.

One year ago: Gordon Sondland, the U.S. ambassador to the European Union, told House impeachment investigators that President Donald Trump and his lawyer Rudy Giuliani explicitly sought a “quid pro quo” with Ukraine, leveraging an Oval Office visit for political investigations of Democrats; he said it was his understanding that the president was holding up nearly \$400 million in military aid. Former Baltimore Mayor Catherine Pugh was charged with fraud and tax evasion involving sales of her self-published children’s books to groups that did business with the government. (Pugh pleaded guilty to federal conspiracy and tax evasion charges and was sentenced to three years in prison.) Singer-rapper Lizzo scored eight Grammy nominations; other new artists, including Billie Eilish and Lil Nas X, also dominated the list of nominees. Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe made history by becoming Japan’s longest-serving political leader; he marked his 2,887th day in office.

Today’s Birthdays: Actor Estelle Parsons is 93. Comedian Dick Smothers is 82. President-elect Joe Biden is 78. Singer Norman Greenbaum is 78. Actor Veronica Hamel is 77. Broadcast journalist Judy Woodruff is 74. Actor Samuel E. Wright is 74. Singer Joe Walsh is 73. Actor Richard Masur is 72. Opera singer Barbara Hendricks is 72. Former national security adviser John Bolton is 72. Actor Bo Derek is 64. Former NFL player Mark Gastineau is 64. Reggae musician Jimmy Brown (UB40) is 63. Actor Sean Young is 61. Pianist Jim Brickman is 59. Actor Ming-Na is 57. Actor Ned Vaughn is 56. Rapper Mike D (The Beastie Boys) is 55. Rapper Sen Dog (Cypress Hill) is 55. Actor

Callie Thorne is 51. Actor Sabrina Lloyd is 50. Actor Joel McHale is 49. Actor Marisa Ryan is 46. Country singer Dierks (duhkr) Bentley is 45. Actor Joshua Gomez is 45. Actor Laura Harris is 44. Olympic gold medal gymnast Dominique Dawes is 44. Country singer Josh Turner is 43. Actor Nadine Velazquez (veh-LAHZ'-keh) is 42. Actor Jacob Pitts is 41. Actor Andrea Riseborough is 39. Actor Jeremy Jordan is 36. Actor Dan Byrd is 35. Actor Ashley Fink is 34. Rock musician Jared Followill (Kings of Leon) is 34. Actor Jaina Lee Ortiz is 34. Actor Cody Linley is 31. Pop musician Michael Clifford (5 Seconds to Summer) 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.



Paul Stevens
 Editor, Connecting newsletter
paulstevens46@gmail.com

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