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## Connecting December 28, 2020

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Colleagues,

Good Monday morning on this the 28<sup>th</sup> day of December 2020

I hope you had a wonderful Christmas – with loved ones, virtually or together safely.

Today's issue, as we begin the final week of a memorable year, brings thoughts from your colleagues on their 2020 and a few Christmas-related stories. How about sharing yours - including thoughts and hopes for the coming year.

In the Final Word, we bring you **Dave Barry's** annual review of the previous year. This year, he offers this caveat:

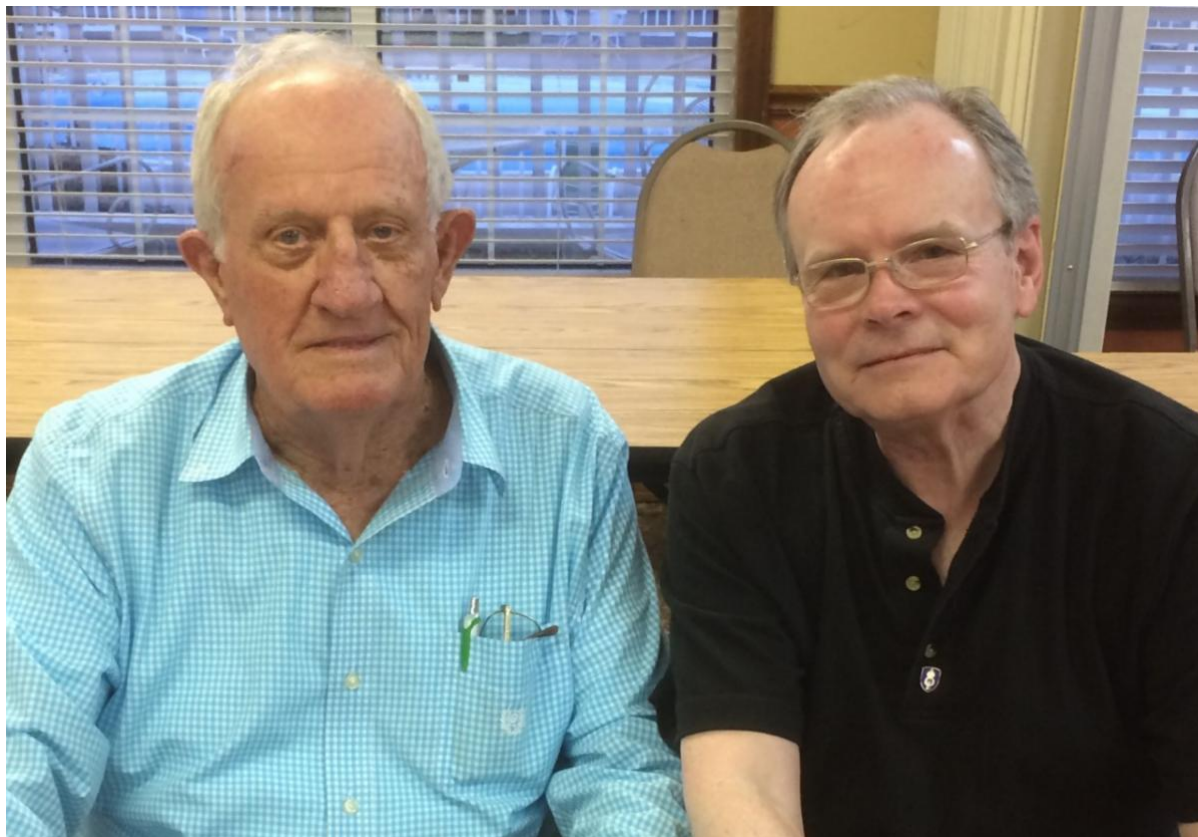
We sincerely don't want to relive this year. But our job is to review it. If you would prefer to skip this exercise in masochism, we completely understand.

If, however, you wish, for some sick reason, to re-experience 2020, now is the time to put on your face mask, douse your entire body with hand sanitizer and then — to be safe — don a hazmat suit, as we look back at the unrelenting insanity of this hideous year, starting with ...

Have a great day – be safe, stay healthy.

Paul

## How the virus in 2020 affected my year



**Lubeski with Col. Blake at the Branson army reunion in 2018.**

**Dave Lubeski (Email)** - The first notable disruption caused by Covid came early in the year when my army reunion gathering in Branson, Mo., was called off. It is held in early May every other year. Our battalion commander is always the headliner. The Colonel and a 1st Sgt are honored guests of a group of about 25 or 30, not including wives. The Colonel, who is now 97 years old, has recently been diagnosed with kidney failure and is in hospice care. Two of my closest friends from our service in 1967-68 are now dealing with cancer. I see the cancelled reunion as a missed opportunity to spend some time, maybe for the last time for some, with my fellow veterans.

On the home front, my Son Ben's high school year eventually included two days a week in the classroom, but the spike in cases forced a change and now all classes are on Zoom or online.

Ben also had another year of age eligibility in the Flint Hills Summer Baseball program, but the season was cancelled. Many phone calls later we were able to get him on a team in the 3&2 league in the KC suburb of Lenexa, Kan., which is 65 miles from our front door in Topeka.

Throughout the year we avoided eating in restaurants, going to movie theatres and any other mass gatherings.

We did go to the annual Memorial Day family get-together at the Little House on the Prairie site (owned by my wife's family) in Southeast Kansas, but it was all outdoors and included wearing masks.

Ben and I donned masks and sat outside in the driveway with bags of candy for Halloween. What is usually a mob scene in our neighborhood turned out to be no more than a couple dozen kids trick or treating.

Thanksgiving dinner, which usually meant family members around the table, was just three people this year. My wife, our son and me. My youngest daughter who lives a few miles away, stayed home sick while waiting on a test result to see if she had the Covid virus. She did not.

For Christmas, the annual visit by my oldest daughter in North Carolina was called off. So was the annual gift exchange with my in-laws and we have downsized on decorating, indoors and outdoors, for this year's holidays.

The year 2020 ends on a hopeful note with the approval of the Covid vaccine. As a hospital volunteer I am eligible with other health care workers to be vaccinated ahead of the general population. I've already received the first of the two inoculations.

## Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas... Next year all our troubles will be miles away

--Martin & Blaine

**Chris Connell** ([Email](#)) - I've spent a great deal of time this fall editing a 500-page yearbook for my college class, which in May 2021 is due to celebrate in grand style the 50th anniversary of our graduation. That celebration, of course, is extremely unlikely to be held under black-and-orange tents at Princeton, lest it turn into another Sturgis Motorcycle Rally. Will we Zoom and raise a glass remotely instead? Almost certainly. We'll take it.

A yearbook is a trip into the past. We've taken extra care to share the stories of those who are gone, some recently and others long ago, including a young Air Force captain killed when his fighter jet crashed in England and several who perished at the height of the AIDS epidemic.

But a yearbook is also a look into the future for us septuagenarians (there's no concealing your age among schoolmates). Everyone, of course, has one thing on his or her mind. Among the nearly 500 who answered the class survey, only a handful had themselves contracted COVID-19; two dozen had lost relatives or friends. For most, the biggest disruptions to our very fortunate lives are not being able to hug our grandchildren and to travel. For, the problem is one and the same since Ciara, three years old on Christmas Day, is in Geneva with Sarah and James. FaceTime helps.

Many, many classmates expressed deep concerns about the rancorous political divisions and racial injustice in America. Fifty years on, in some ways it seems we're back in the late 1960s.

Perhaps in six months we'll all be vaccinated and our topsy turvy lives will start returning to normal. Perhaps not, but let's not dwell on that. (As I do not hesitate to tell even strangers, Anthony Fauci, M.D. – 80 on Christmas Eve – is an alumnus (1958) of my alma mater, Regis High School.)

We are blessed with Matt and Eduardo and our grand dogs, Kojiro and Pigsley, in San Diego; Ellen in a nearby Arlington condo with her newly adopted hound, Charlie, our third grand dog; and with our expat trio and Freddie and Millie (I'm unsure whether cats accept grand cat designation) in Switzerland. Nancy and I are hunkered down, missing our Silver Sneakers exercise classes at Gold's Gym but making up for it with a lot of walking – eight miles many days for Nancy, who if she doesn't hit her target in daylight, achieves it at night in loops around the basement. We are grateful not only for the heroic health care workers, but for the young grocery workers who shop for us, retrieve our prescriptions and bring it all out to the curb so we don't have to venture inside.

We hope you and yours are holding up well, too. As Judy Garland sang in 1944 when the outcome of World War II still hung in the balance, Next year all our troubles will be miles away.

## Here's to Dr, Fauci's 80th – and to journalists around the world

**Michael Rubin (Email)** - There's something to be said that today (Dec. 24) is Dr. Anthony Fauci's 80th birthday. He's in our prayers all the time. Same for journalists around the world.

Separately, I was gone from the AP/LA bureau when Andy Lippmann became bureau chief and started his Christmas dinner tradition. (I remember when he was Tucson correspondent and occasionally called LA if Phoenix was unstaffed.)

But when I had my big break in journalism as a copyboy at the LA Times, John Strobel – yes, the son of AP/LA photo chief Dick Strobel, brought in a beautiful full



Thanksgiving dinner for myself and the other copy person working that day. The aroma brought editors into our little corner in the wire room, where a couple of dozen teletypes clicked away at 66wpm. This was around 1966.

Thanks to that job I switched my college major from pre-law to journalism. I always thought being hired at the LA Times was some form of Divine intervention.

After leaving the Navy in Fall 1967, I was looking for a job and applying at various newspapers, for PR training jobs and so on. While on campus at Cal State LA. I ran into Dan Berger, who had graduated earlier and had started as a sports writer with Associated Press. He told me AP was looking for someone to fill an entry level spot and urged me to apply.

I did, took the writing test, interviews, etc. A couple of weeks later the news editor, Jack Quigg, called and said the position was mine if I still was interested. (Of course!) He said one of my former professors, who was a desk editor in the bureau, had also recommended me, which came as a surprise because I didn't know Don Horine had left the faculty and joined AP.

Thus started 10 years with The Associated Press and I relish the experiences and the terrific people I worked with.

## Christmas arrived early – thanks to special gift





**Bill Vogrin ([Email](#))** - Christmas arrived two days early for me this year.

Frankly I'm still in shock over the whole thing.

Some of you know I'm red-green colorblind. I read traffic signals by position, not color. (In grade school, teachers thought I was

color stupid because I colored the grass red.)

Anyway, I adapted. But Anna has wanted me to get those glasses that claim they correct for colorblindness.

I never did because I didn't believe they would work. And they were crazy expensive.

So Anna, being my daughter, got my eyeglass prescription and ordered me a pair!

Even better, she and Micah flew up from Orlando, arriving at midnight, to deliver them to me this evening in a massive surprise!!

Of course, she couldn't pull this off without help from her mother, Marita. Peter, Ben and Cary were in on it, too.

I was shocked when Marita pulled up and Anna and Micah got out of the vehicle with a bouquet of brightly colored balloons and handed me the glasses.

The photos and video tell the rest of the story. I had trouble seeing the amazing spectrum of colors in the balloons and the sunset at the Garden of the Gods through my misty eyes.

The only sad thing is that Anna and Micah fly back to Orlando tomorrow on a noon flight.

I am so blown away by the whole thing and thank all of them for this incredible Christmas present.

## A birthday conversation with Nacho





**Greg Halling (Email)** - "Oh, Nacho!"

"You called, sir?"

"Indeed I did, my good man. Linger with me a moment as the December light fades from salmon to slate."

"Sheer poetry, sir."

"Yes, well. One does not spend eight years completing a master's degree in English literature without picking up a few tricks."

"I am most certain."

"Nacho, it was a glorious Yuletide, was it not?"

"Of biblical proportions, one might say."

"Exactly, Nacho! You always seem to find ... to find ..."

"The right words, sir?"

"The right words!"

"I do what I can, sir."

"Nacho, as you may know, today is my birthday. The day of my birth."

"A day circled in red in my calendar."

"Let's celebrate, shall we? Mix me something that lights birthday candles in the old brain pan. Something as crisp and biting as a late December day."

"Something like this, sir?"

"Is that what I think it is?"

"A Bombay Sapphire martini, exceedingly dry."

"Nacho, you've outdone yourself again! This is a cocktail that makes me glad to be alive!"

"Happiest of birthdays, sir."

(Greg Halling is executive editor of the Yakima (Wash.) Herald-Republic)

## Happy New Year from the Clarks





**Gary Clark** – Happy New Year from the Clarks in Tallahassee, Fay and Gary. 2021 can't come fast enough! (If you want to drop a note to the Clarks - [clarkfay@hotmail.com](mailto:clarkfay@hotmail.com))

**'Writing, not reading'**

**Mary Lou Howey** ([Email](#)) - Merry Christmas! Jack and I also did family cards. An early one showed daughter Elisa, then about 5, writing a letter to Santa. Asked what she was requesting, she replied, "I don't know. I'm writing, not reading."

## Connecting sky shot – Hatteras Island



**Joe Macenka** ([Email](#)) - You spend the last few hours of a late December afternoon surf fishing on Hatteras Island, and when the fading light has finally reached the point where you can no longer see your line, you turn to walk out of the surf up to your truck -- and are greeted by the catch of the day.

## Final goodbye: Recalling influential people who died in 2020





**FILE -** In this July 19, 2020, file photo, people gather at a makeshift memorial near the home of Rep. John Lewis, D-Ga., in Atlanta. Lewis, who died Friday at age 80, was the youngest and last survivor of the Big Six civil rights activists who organized the 1963 March on Washington, and spoke shortly before the group's leader, Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., gave his "I Have a Dream" speech to a vast sea of people. (AP Photo/Mike Stewart)

**By BERNARD MCGHEE**  
The Associated Press

In a year defined by a devastating pandemic, the world lost iconic defenders of civil rights, great athletes and entertainers who helped define their genres.

Many of their names hold a prominent place in the collective consciousness — RBG, Kobe, Maradona, Eddie Van Halen, Little Richard, Sean Connery, Alex Trebek, Christo — but pandemic restrictions often limited the public's ability to mourn their loss in a year that saw more than a million people die from the coronavirus.

U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg — known as the Notorious RBG to her many admirers — was one of the many noteworthy figures who died in 2020.

In a court known for solemn legal proceedings, Ginsburg became a cultural and social media icon whose fierce defense of women's rights earned her a devoted following. She died in September after 27 years on the country's highest court. Making few concessions to age and health problems, she showed a steely resilience and became the leader of liberal justices on the court.

Read more [here](#).

## *Best of the Week*

# The Pandemic Atlas: AP's comprehensive global look at how the virus upended 2020



In the year since COVID-19 surfaced, journalists for The Associated Press have produced an impressive array of stories documenting its grim march around the world. Conveying the extent of disruption and death wrought by the virus in 2020 warranted a marshaling of AP's global resources, expertise and storytelling for a one-of-a-kind project: the Pandemic Atlas.

Profiles of 13 countries were included, marrying statistics on the number of infections and deaths with details that explained how each country was weathering the pandemic. The compendium became a clear and concise all-formats effort revealing how various nations grappled with the coronavirus, from Peru, where decades of underinvestment in public health led to mass infections to Japan, which has been spared the dangerous surges seen in the United States and Europe.

Read more [here](#).

## *Best of the States*



# Joint investigation reveals 'leadership vacuum' after backlash against public health officials



**Tisha Coleman, public health administrator for Linn County, Kansas, poses for a portrait outside the Linn County courthouse in Mound City, Dec. 7, 2020. Coleman has been harassed and sued and vilified over her health recommendations to take precautions against COVID-19, even as cases rise. Across the United States, state and local public health officials such as Coleman have found themselves at the center of a political storm during the worst pandemic in a century. AP PHOTO / CHARLIE RIEDEL**

AP Providence, Rhode Island, reporter Michelle Smith was working on another project in June when she created a spreadsheet with the names of a dozen or so public health officials who had quit, retired or been fired. Sensing a trend, Smith and reporters Anna Maria Barry-Jester, Hannah Recht and Lauren Weber at Kaiser Health News continued to track those departures as the pandemic worsened and the backlash against public health restrictions became more strident.

With yearend approaching and pandemic deaths mounting even as vaccines were arriving, the reporting team dove deep to take measure of how the U.S. public health system was holding up — or whether it was even sustainable.

Read more [here](#).

## Stories of interest

*The Post says: Give it up, Mr. President — for your sake and the nation's*



By New York Post Editorial Board

Mr. President, it's time to end this dark charade.

We're one week away from an enormously important moment for the next four years of our country.

On Jan. 5, two runoff races in Georgia will determine which party will control the Senate — whether Joe Biden will have a rubber stamp or a much-needed check on his agenda.

Unfortunately, you're obsessed with the next day, Jan. 6, when Congress will, in a pro forma action, certify the Electoral College vote. You have tweeted that, as long as Republicans have "courage," they can overturn the results and give you four more years in office.

In other words, you're cheering for an undemocratic coup.

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

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## ***Journalism got more dangerous in 2020 — including in the United States*** (Washington Post)

### **Opinion by Editorial Board**

JOURNALISM IS becoming a steadily more dangerous profession around the world, including in the United States. The year 2020, with its global pandemic and widespread social unrest, continued the trend. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists' annual survey, more journalists were in prison on Dec. 1 — 274 — than in any previous year.

Covid-19 was a large factor in the increased repression. A number of journalists were arrested for reporting on the pandemic, and at least two died after contracting the disease while in detention, according to the CPJ's report. Meanwhile, political upheavals led to the jailing of at least 10 journalists in Belarus and at least seven in Ethiopia. In the United States, an unprecedented 110 were arrested or criminally charged and about 300 were assaulted. In many cases, reporters and photographers were attacked by police while covering Black Lives Matter protests, according to the U.S. Press Freedom Tracker. Though no American journalists were imprisoned at the time of the survey, a dozen still face criminal charges.

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

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## ***Host of 'The Daily' Clouds 'N.Y. Times' Effort To Restore Trust After 'Caliphate'*** (NPR)

By DAVID FOLKENFLIK

Late last week, The New York Times issued one of its biggest mea culpas in years. The nation's leading newspaper returned a Peabody award and a citation as a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize after retracting the core of its hit podcast series Caliphate.

In seeking to restore faith in its journalism, however, The Times may have demonstrated the persistence of some of the problems at the heart of this scandal. The paper's top editor participated in a podcast to help correct the record and to say, as he put it, "we got it wrong."

Yet The Times' 30-minute corrective podcast was hosted by its leading audio star, who was, away from the microphone, simultaneously doing damage control on a

controversy that proved close to home.

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

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## ***How Do You Feel About Nikon Closing in Japan? Here's How Japanese People Have Reacted*** (Fstoppers)

by Iain Stanley

Shockwaves spread throughout the camera world this week when it was reported that Nikon would end 70 years of camera production in Japan and move manufacturing to Thailand. How do you feel about this? And how do Japanese people feel about this?

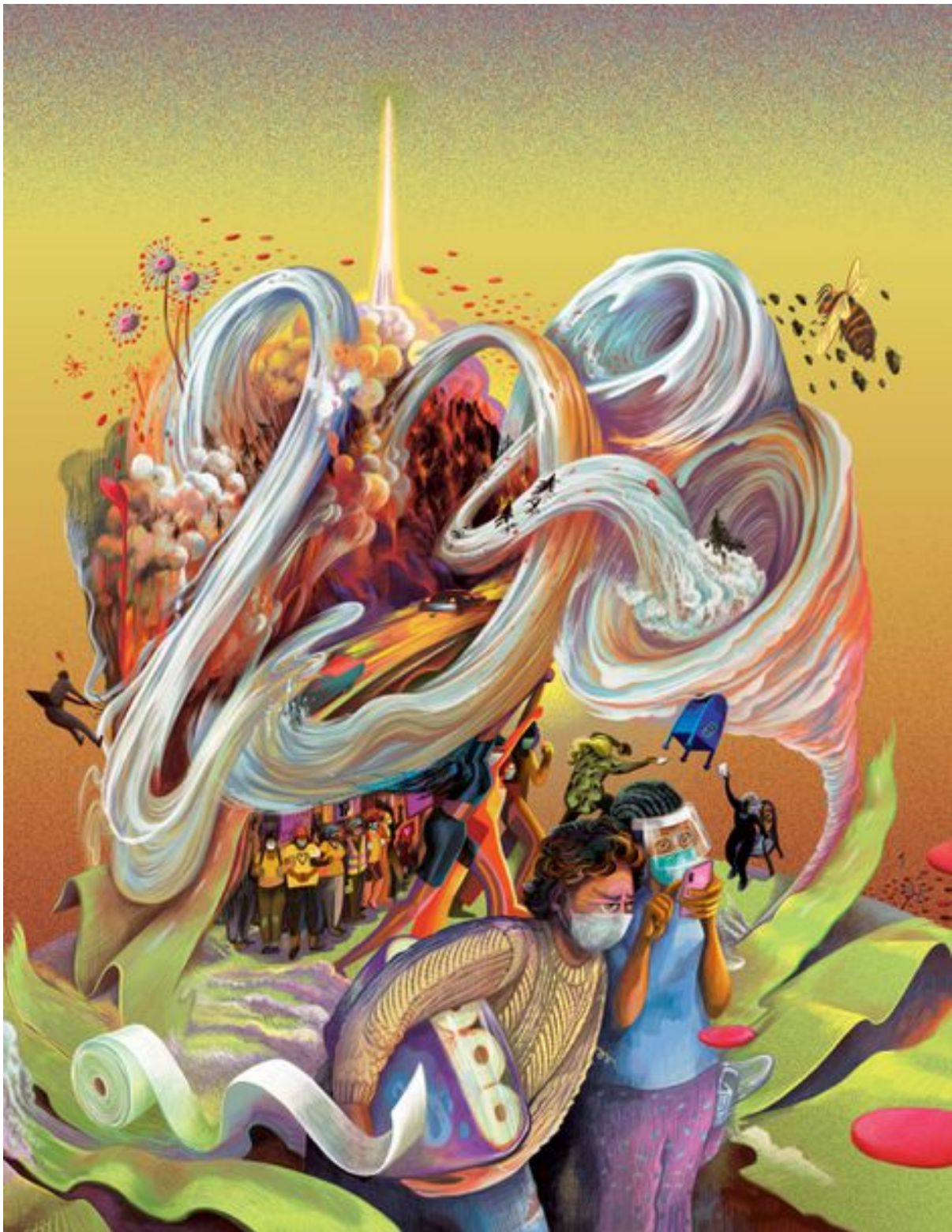
When you think of the big camera companies in existence today, Nikon will almost certainly be a part of the conversation alongside the likes of Canon, Sony, Panasonic, and others. However, financially, things haven't been going too well for Nikon in recent times and reports out this week suggest that Nikon is taking itself out of Japan and moving its camera production division to Thailand. There are a number of reasons for this, including the most obvious: economics. Wages, taxes, production costs, and so forth will no doubt be cheaper in Thailand. Thus, when you're struggling financially, it makes sense to find ways to cut costs.

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

## **The Final Word**

***Dave Barry's Year in Review 2020*** (Washington Post Magazine)





**By Dave Barry**

We're trying to think of something nice to say about 2020.

Okay, here goes: Nobody got killed by the murder hornets. As far as we know.

That's pretty much it.

In the past, writing these annual reviews, we have said harsh things about previous years. We owe those years an apology. Compared to 2020, all previous years, even the Disco Era, were the golden age of human existence.

This was a year of nonstop awfulness, a year when we kept saying it couldn't possibly get worse, and it always did. This was a year in which our only moments of genuine, unadulterated happiness were when we were able to buy toilet paper.

Which is fitting, because 2020 was one long, howling, Category 5 crapstorm.

Read more [here](#).

## Today in History - Dec. 28, 2020



### By The Associated Press

Today is Monday, Dec. 28, the 363rd day of 2020. There are three days left in the year.

#### Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 28, 1612, Italian astronomer Galileo Galilei observed the planet Neptune, but mistook it for a star. (Neptune wasn't officially discovered until 1846 by Johann Gottfried Galle.)

#### On this date:

In 1832, John C. Calhoun became the first vice president of the United States to resign, stepping down because of differences with President Andrew Jackson.

In 1908, a major earthquake followed by a tsunami devastated the Italian city of Messina, killing at least 70,000 people.

In 1912, San Francisco's Municipal Railway began operations with Mayor James Rolph Jr. at the controls of Streetcar No. 1 as 50,000 spectators looked on.

In 1945, Congress officially recognized the Pledge of Allegiance.

In 1972, Kim Il Sung, the premier of North Korea, was named the country's president under a new constitution.

In 1973, the Endangered Species Act was signed into law by President Richard Nixon.

In 1981, Elizabeth Jordan Carr, the first American "test-tube" baby, was born in Norfolk, Virginia.

In 1987, the bodies of 14 relatives of Ronald Gene Simmons were found at his home near Dover, Arkansas, after Simmons shot and killed two other people in Russellville. (Simmons, who never explained his motives, was executed in 1990.)

In 2001, the National Guard was called out to help Buffalo, New York, dig out from a paralyzing, 5-day storm that had unloaded nearly 7 feet of snow.

In 2007, Pakistani opposition leader Benazir Bhutto was laid to rest as the country's army tried to quell a frenzy of rioting in the wake of her assassination.

In 2014, the war in Afghanistan, fought for 13 bloody years and still raging, came to a formal end with a quiet flag-lowering ceremony in Kabul that marked the transition of the fighting from U.S.-led combat troops to the country's own security forces.

In 2016, Actor Debbie Reynolds, who lit up the screen in "Singin' in the Rain" and other Hollywood classics, died at age 84 a day after losing her daughter, Carrie Fisher, who was 60.

Ten years ago: Eight young people were killed in a fire that swept through an abandoned New Orleans warehouse (some of the victims were squatters who had been living inside the building). Agathe von Trapp, the real-life inspiration for eldest daughter Liesl in the musical "The Sound of Music," died in Towson, Maryland, at age 97.

Five years ago: A grand jury in Cleveland declined to indict a white rookie police officer in the killing of 12-year-old Tamir Rice, a Black youngster who was shot while playing with what turned out to be a pellet gun. Iraqi forces backed by U.S.-led airstrikes drove Islamic State militants out of the center of Ramadi and seized the main government complex there. Ian "Lemmy" Kilmister, 70, the singer and bassist who founded Motorhead in 1975, died in Los Angeles.



One year ago: A man armed with a machete stabbed five people at a Hanukkah celebration in a rabbi's home in suburban New York; the most critically injured victim, 72-year-old Josef Neumann, died three months after the attack. (Grafton Thomas has pleaded not guilty; the charges include federal hate crimes.) A truck bomb attack at a busy checkpoint in the Somali capital of Mogadishu left 79 people dead; Somalia's al-Shabab Islamic extremist rebels claimed responsibility. Five people were killed in the crash of a small plane in Lafayette, Louisiana, as they headed to the Peach Bowl in Atlanta to see LSU play Oklahoma; the victims included local TV reporter Carley McCord, the daughter-in-law of LSU's offensive coordinator. Tennis star Serena Williams was voted the AP's Female Athlete of the Decade. U.S. astronaut Christina Koch set a record for the longest single spaceflight by a woman, breaking the old mark of 288 days.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Nichelle Nichols is 88. Actor Dame Maggie Smith is 86. Former Sen. Johnny Isakson, R-Ga., is 76. Former Sen. Tim Johnson, D-S.D., is 74. Rock singer-musician Edgar Winter is 74. Actor Denzel Washington is 66. TV personality Gayle King is 66. Actor Chad McQueen is 60. Country singer-musician Marty Roe (Diamond Rio) is 60. Actor Malcolm Gets is 57. Actor Mauricio Mendoza is 51. Actor Elaine Hendrix is 50. Political commentator Ana Navarro is 49. Talk show host Seth Meyers is 47. Actor Brendan Hines is 44. Actor Joe Manganiello is 44. Actor Vanessa Ferlito is 43. Rhythm-and-blues singer John Legend is 42. Rapper-musician-producer Terrace Martin is 42. Actor Andre Holland is 41. Actor Sienna Miller is 39. Actor Beau Garrett (TV: "The Good Doctor") is 38. Pop singer Kasey Sheridan (Dream) is 34. Actor Thomas Dekker is 33. Actor Mackenzie Rosman is 31. Pop singer David Archuleta is 30. Actor Mary-Charles Jones (TV: "Kevin Can Wait") is 19. Actor Miles Brown is 16.

## 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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