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Connecting

January 28, 2021

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Colleagues,

Good Thursday morning on this the 28th day of January 2021,

The AP bids a fond farewell to our colleague **Diane Parker**, who leaves the cooperative at the end of this week to begin a new position with the Meredith Corporation.

Diane has touched thousands of lives and made the AP world a much better place in her 20 years in the Human Resources department where she serves as Director of Staffing, Global Diversity & Inclusion.

I was serving as Kansas City chief of bureau when Diane joined the AP in January 2001 and found her a quick study in learning about the unique structure of our company and

bringing her HR expertise to assist staff throughout the AP. We've remained friends since and while I'm sorry she is leaving AP, I know she made the cooperative a better place and I am excited for her new chapter of life.

Diane noted in a LinkedIn post: "My mother taught me that one person can make a difference. I am grateful The Associated Press gave me the opportunity to make a difference for 20 years."

If you have a favorite memory of working with Diane, please send it along.



Wednesday's Connecting featured colleague **Deb Riechmann** and her retirement from the AP after a 36-year career, and prompted this response from **Jon Gambrell** ([Email](#)), AP's Gulf and Iran News Director:

"I met Deb while on a temporary assignment in 2011 at our Kabul bureau in Afghanistan. I had just come in from Nigeria and while I had experienced a bit of chaos there, Afghanistan represented a whole new slew of challenges. I really appreciated Deb's professionalism and ability to explain to me what was going on, especially with the scandal surrounding the Central Bank at the time. Working with Amir Shah, Rahim Faiez, Patrick Quinn (now in Bangkok) and Deb there really was a highlight in my career so far. I was lucky to work with them all in Cairo on the Middle East Desk and later on in my position here in Dubai."

Have a good day – be safe, stay healthy.

Paul

Farewell, Diane Parker – you helped make AP a better place



Staffing, Diversity and Inclusion Director Diane Parker, left, poses for a photo with Alicia Chang, deputy editor of storytelling, health and science, at NYU's Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute Career Fair in New York, March 1, 2019. (AP Photo/Wyllis McEwan)

Diane Parker, who with her tireless energy, skills and megawatt smile worked for two decades to improve the diversity of Associated Press staff worldwide, is leaving the cooperative.

She was named Vice President of Diversity and Inclusion for the Meredith Corp., a multi-platform media company based in Des Moines, Iowa. Parker, who will remain in the New York City area, will lead Meredith's diversity and inclusion initiatives and programming across all locations and businesses, the company said in a [news release](#) Tuesday.

Parker, the AP's Director of Staffing, Global Diversity & Inclusion, will leave AP at the end of January.

"Diane is a proven leader in diversity, equity, and inclusion work and will be an outstanding addition to our team," said Dina Nathanson, Meredith's Senior Vice President of Human Resources. "Making Meredith a more diverse and inclusive workplace is a top priority for the organization. Diane has expertise in recruitment, talent retention, employee experience, and partnering with content creators. Her experience at the Associated Press made her a perfect fit. I am excited to partner with her as we continue to move our D&I program into the future."

Two decades ago, Parker was among a group of Human Resources professionals hired into the AP to become "change agents," said one of that group, Jessica Bruce, who rose to

become AP's senior vice president for HR and Corporate Communications.

"In the late 1990s the AP began to do something brand new," she said. "Jim Donna was put in charge of HR and he did this crazy thing – he hired HR professionals to work in HR. Now the people who had run HR previously did a fine job, don't get me wrong. We're all still in touch and probably all subscribers to this newsletter. But AP needed to change, and Jim hired some change agents.



"There were a whole class of us that had joined the AP from different industries all with very specialized human resources experience. Cindy (Allaf, now Prater), Clotilde (Ibarra Dillon), Madhu (Krishnappa Maron), me and Diane. Diane was an exciting hire from the minute she walked in the door. She's been a fantastic change agent ever since. She's been a creative thinker for the AP. She's been a brave leader for AP in the face of some pretty challenging events over the last 20 years. She's been a strong voice for many people working for AP who did not feel heard. She was instrumental as the executive director of AP's first diversity council. She ran a very successful mentor program. She worked with Photos on Diverse Visions. She worked with News on the future leaders programs. She started AP's Toastmaster's program, a public speaking training and development program. The list goes on and on. Most recently she's been running a critically important series of diversity and inclusion and coping sessions open to all staff globally, and regularly attended by hundreds (yes, hundreds) of staff."

Bruce said a search for her successor is under way: "The work is critical to the success of the AP."

Two of Parker's biggest fans expressed appreciation for her work.

"Diane Parker is irreplaceable," said Kia Breaux, AP regional director based in Kansas City whose two sons took part in a recent production by New Jersey Creative Arts Collaborative, directed by Parker, that honored Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s legacy. "She brought an unparalleled passion for diversity, equity and inclusion. She has used her dynamic skills and talents to inspire us to make the AP better."

AP Global Sports Editor Michael Giarrusso, a member of the AP intern class of 1992, said Parker "has been responsible for building more relationships between the AP and journalists of color than any other person over the past 20 years. She was our representative and our leader at minority journalism meetings around the country, and she always promoted the AP to students, young journalists and those deeper into their careers. It is impossible to calculate the good she did bringing in talented people,

keeping existing AP staffers engaged and maintaining contact with former AP people – many of whom returned to the AP years later after hearing about an opportunity from Diane."

Before joining the AP, Parker served as a human resources manager for both Harrah's Entertainment and BJC Healthcare in the St. Louis area.

Parker received her master's degree in human resource management and BA in mass communication from Lindenwood University. She is a proud alumna of the Stella Adler/Billie Holiday Theatre Black Arts Institute.

"She will leave a pretty incredible legacy behind as she moves on to her new opportunity," Bruce said. "She's been a pleasure to work with for the last 20 years and I look forward to continuing my professional networking relationship - and friendship - with her for the next 20+ years."

Diane Parker's email is - diparker79@optonline.net

Praise for creation of resource group for LGBTQ staffers at AP

Cliff Schiappa ([Email](#)) – Great news in Monday's Connecting about the creation of an Employee Resource Group for LGBTQ staffers at AP. I applaud Diane Parker, Florimond Collet and any others who had a role in making it happen.

As one who started at AP in 1984 and deeply in the closet, I just wish it happened decades sooner, and frankly I'm a tad surprised it took until 2021 to become reality.

I learned early on it was best to keep my true self to myself when I started getting chosen for out-of-town news and sporting events. I figured if anyone knew I was gay, nobody would want to share a hotel room with me, and I'd never get called for major events.

Admittedly, I don't recall anyone within AP ever making disparaging remarks to me or intentionally making me feel unwelcome. But I do know not being out had a direct effect upon how I covered stories involving the LGBTQ community. And as anyone who's been there will affirm, trying to hide is an exhausting and time-consuming effort that serves no good purpose.

One of the first AP colleagues I came out to was Paul Stevens, who of course took it all in stride. I'll always remember the day we were returning from member visits on Valentine's Day, driving in the Flint Hills on the Kansas Turnpike and we both were

calling florists to order flowers... he for his wife Linda, and me for my partner Brad. It seemed so natural and liberating.

Having an LGBTQ ERG makes perfect business sense for current and prospective employees as it sends a signal that AP takes equality and equity seriously for all members of society. Next step should be a listing in the Corporate Equality Index maintained by the Human Rights Campaign. Take a look [here](#).

The world is a better place because Hank Aaron boarded that train



Doug Tucker ([Email](#)) - When Hank Aaron came to Kansas City in 1999, I was more than just a little excited.

This kid still had the bat The Hammer hit a home run with in an Oklahoma City exhibition game in 1956. Little did I know his brief visit would turn into one of the most interesting days of my career, maybe of my whole life.

The afternoon before his evening event, as supremely honored guests, Hank and his wife were given a personal tour of the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum by its director, Bob Kendrick.

And to my great delight, Bob let me tag along. But on one condition - I would be there as a friend of the museum, not an AP sportswriter.

He wanted Hank relaxed and at ease, out of the spotlight. He wanted him feeling free to share any thoughts or memories that might spring to mind as the home run king made his way through the museum's richly textured history of black baseball, 1860s to 1960s.

The museum is cleverly laid out. Its saga is told chronologically. First up is a life-sized photo of a strikingly handsome young man, a well-tailored baseball uniform clinging to his boxer-like physique. Nobody knows his name. Nobody knows his story. They do know the photo was taken around 1869 or 70, meaning he was probably just a few years away from being enslaved. Was there a flicker of emotion in Hank's face as he gazed upon the young man? I could not tell.

Throughout the 90 minutes or so that we strolled along together, I ached to engage the remarkable athlete in conversation. But I'd made a promise. So I kept up my best imitation of a fly on the ceiling and waited for the media session scheduled later.

As AP's Kansas City sportswriter I had visited the museum on several occasions, of course, and written of it extensively. I had also taken my wife, a lifelong baseball fan, through the fascinating two-story building in the heart of Kansas City's historic 18th and Vine district.

But I learned that day that there's only one way to do a museum: alongside the executive director while he relates the intriguing back story of various displays and exhibits to a visitor who happens to be one of the greatest figures the museum seeks to honor!

Believe me, you learn more.

One small artifact proved particularly interesting to our little group. The faded photograph showed a husky teenager standing on a railroad platform. In his hand is a battered old suitcase. On his face is an expression of sheer fright.

"You look like one scared child," Mrs. Aaron said with a chuckle.

Replied Hammerin' Hank, "I was a scared child. I didn't know if I should get on that train or not."

It was taken in 1952 just as 18-year-old Hank Aaron was leaving home to play for the Negro League's Indianapolis Clowns, where he would stay for about three months until the Boston Braves made him their own.

It is a snapshot of the opening minutes of a brilliant career of record-breaking achievement and inspirational courage, a journey that surpassed baseball while helping change the trajectory of American history.

RIP, Hank. We're mighty glad you boarded that train. It's a better world because you did.

Trips We Are Missing



February 2020 trip: Rocking out after seeing "Tina: The Tina Turner Musical" with (left-right)/front: Amanda Barnett, Diana Heidgerd and Sylvia Wingfield. Back row: Stephanie Nano, Karen Lieberman and Marcia Dunn.

Diana Heidgerd ([Email](#)) - Many treasured trips have gotten nixed due to the pandemic.

My friend Sylvia Wingfield, formerly of Dallas AP before working in Boston, recently described it to me as “Trips We Are Missing” as we all await vaccination.

Maybe you had an unusual, exotic or otherwise superb adventure (especially with an AP angle) that you planned to repeat but had to postpone due to COVID-19.

Here’s an update to something that I’ve shared before via Connecting.

The coronavirus has canceled my annual winter AP Gals Trip to New York City. My NYC trip, for years, was on specific weekends in February for three important reasons:

1. Watching the Academy Awards show together on TV (a great excuse for a Sunday night party)
2. Celebrating Sylvia’s birthday
3. Frigid late February means much cheaper rates at pricey NYC hotels

End of the Bernie meme



Mark Mittelstadt ([Email](#)) - A friend posted this on Facebook with the caption "Bye, bye, Bernie!" I'd say it's the perfect end to the meme.

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



Christopher Bacey - cbacey@gmail.com

Vahe Gregorian - vgregorian@kcstar.com

Robert Kimball - rkimballdc@aol.com

Welcome to Connecting



David Caruso – dcaruso@ap.org

Stories of interest

How did Trump change American journalism? (Berkeley News)



Former president Donald J. Trump talks to members of the press on the South Lawn of the White House Oct. 27, 2020. Berkeley Journalism Dean Geeta Anand says Trump's presidency changed the way reporters and editors covered the White House. (Official White House Photo by Joyce N. Boghosian)

By Ivan Natividad

Donald Trump is no longer president. But his administration's combative nature with the media over the past four years — of which the terms “fake news” and “alternative facts” were used to describe factual reporting — has exacerbated the public's distrust of American journalists.

But the media is also to blame for that distrust, said UC Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism Dean Geeta Anand. More particularly, the failure of the local news model, and the lack of diversity in the industry, has allowed important reporting and coverage to fall through the cracks.

“The perception of the media has become that it is this mystical, evil, distant, elitist, judging institution that annoys people,” said Anand. “American journalists do not represent the face of America, ... so we've missed the story of the alienated rural white voter, and also much of Black America. We've lost the trust there. ... We need to change the face of journalism.”

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

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Pakistani suspect admits to role in Daniel Pearl's beheading (AP)

By KATHY GANNON

SLAMABAD (AP) — After 18 years of denial, the Pakistani suspect convicted and later acquitted in the 2002 beheading of American journalist Daniel Pearl has told a court he played a “minor” role in the killing, the Pearl family lawyer said Wednesday.

A letter handwritten by Ahmad Saeed Omar Sheikh in 2019, in which he admits limited involvement in the killing of the Wall Street Journal reporter, was submitted to Pakistan's Supreme Court nearly two weeks ago. It wasn't until Wednesday that Sheikh's lawyers confirmed their client wrote it.

The stunning turn of events came as a Pakistani high court is hearing an appeal of a lower court's acquittal of Sheikh, who was initially charged with murder in the beheading of Pearl. The appeal was filed by Pearl's family and the Pakistan government.

Nowhere in the three-page letter addressed to the Sindh High Court did the British-born Sheikh elaborate or say exactly what his allegedly “minor” role in Pearl’s slaying involved.

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

The Final Word

How Horace Greeley Turned Newspapers Legitimate and Saved the Media From Itself (Smithsonian Magazine)



Silhouette of Horace Greeley made by profile artist William H. Brown in 1872, the year Greeley died. Greeley changed journalism in America, considering himself to be a “Public Teacher” who exerted “a resistless influence over public opinion ... creating a community of thought of feeling ... giving the right direction to it.” (Library of Congress)

By James M. Lundberg, Zócalo Public Square
SMITHSONIANMAG.COM

December 3, 1840, a Thursday. A bank president in New Jersey goes missing in broad daylight, leaving his office in New Brunswick around 10 a.m. He is never again seen alive. Some say he's gone to Texas, others say Europe. There are no leads, one way or another, for six days. Then, an impecunious carpenter is seen with a "handsome gold watch," "unusually flush with money," boasting of newfound liberation from his mortgage. The trail leads to his home, down the steps into his cellar, under hastily laid floorboards, and into the dirt beneath. There, in a shallow ditch, rests the lost banker, fully clothed, watch missing, skull split from a hatchet blow.

Details of the story are familiar. We know them from Edgar Allan Poe's 1843 gothic horror, "The Tell-Tale Heart," in which a murderer is tormented by the ceaseless pounding of the victim's heart he's buried under his floor. Poe knew the story because he read newspapers. If you were alive, literate, or just vaguely sentient in New York or Philadelphia (where Poe lived) in 1840 and 1841, you probably knew the story, too. You knew it because cheap newspapers covered it in all its gory details for months—covered it with the relentless persistence of the beating heart beneath the floor in Poe's tale. Daily papers needed readers to survive, after all, and murders—the more shocking, the more grisly, the better—brought readers.

But there was one American editor who turned his gaze the other way, hoping to elevate rather than titillate. Horace Greeley thought he could fix American newspapers—a medium that had been transformed by the emergence of an urban popular journalism that was bold in its claims, sensational in its content, and, in Greeley's estimation, utterly derelict in its responsibilities.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Claude Erbsen.

Today in History - Jan. 28, 2021



By The Associated Press

Today is Thursday, Jan. 28, the 28th day of 2021. There are 337 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Jan. 28, 1986, the space shuttle Challenger exploded 73 seconds after liftoff from Cape Canaveral, killing all seven crew members, including schoolteacher Christa McAuliffe.

On this date:

In A.D. 814, Holy Roman Emperor Charlemagne died in Aachen in present-day Germany.

In 1547, England's King Henry VIII died; he was succeeded by his 9-year-old son, Edward VI.

In 1911, the notorious Hope Diamond was sold by jeweler Pierre Cartier to socialites Edward and Evalyn McLean of Washington, D.C., for \$180,000.

In 1915, the American merchant vessel SS William P. Frye, en route to England with a cargo of wheat, became the first U.S. ship to be sunk during World War I by a German cruiser, the SS Prinz Eitel Friedrich, even though the United States was not at war.

In 1916, Louis D. Brandeis was nominated by President Woodrow Wilson to the Supreme Court; Brandeis became the court's first Jewish member.

In 1939, Irish poet-dramatist William Butler Yeats died in Menton, France.

In 1956, Elvis Presley made his first national TV appearance on "Stage Show," a CBS program hosted by Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey.

In 1973, a cease-fire officially went into effect in the Vietnam War, a day after the signing of the Paris Peace Accords by the United States, North Vietnam and South Vietnam.

In 1977, actor-comedian Freddie Prinze, 22, co-star of the NBC-TV show "Chico and the Man," shot and mortally wounded himself at the Beverly Comstock Hotel (he died the following day).

In 1980, six U.S. diplomats who had avoided being taken hostage at their embassy in Tehran flew out of Iran with the help of Canadian diplomats.

In 1982, Italian anti-terrorism forces rescued U.S. Brig. Gen. James L. Dozier, 42 days after he had been kidnapped by the Red Brigades.

In 1985, the charity supergroup USA for Africa recorded the Michael Jackson-Lionel Richie song "We Are the World" at A&M Studios in Los Angeles.

Ten years ago: Chaos engulfed Egypt as protesters seized the streets of Cairo, battling police, burning down the ruling party's headquarters and defying a military curfew. The nation's largest cable TV company, Comcast Corp., took control of NBC Universal, capping a 13-month bid.

Five years ago: With Donald Trump absent because of a feud with Fox News Channel, the other Republican presidential candidates strained to take advantage of a rare opportunity to step out of the front-runner's shadow during a debate in Des Moines, Iowa. Dozens of educators who competed alongside Christa McAuliffe to become the first teacher in space gathered to remember the seven astronauts who perished aboard Challenger 30 years earlier. Death claimed Paul Kantner, a founding member of the Jefferson Airplane rock group, and former Providence, Rhode Island, mayor Buddy Cianci; both were 74.

One year ago: The United States and several other nations prepared to airlift citizens out of the Chinese city at the center of a virus outbreak that had killed more than 100 people. With Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu standing beside him at the White House, President Donald Trump unveiled his long-awaited Middle East plan, one that strongly favored Israel; it called for the eventual creation of a Palestinian state but would leave sizable chunks of the occupied West Bank in Israeli hands. Palestinians reacted angrily to the plan. Trump's lawyers finished making their case for a speedy acquittal at his Senate impeachment trial.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Nicholas Pryor is 86. Actor Alan Alda is 85. Actor Susan Howard is 79. Actor Marthe (cq) Keller is 76. Sen. Jeanne Shaheen, D-N.H., is 74. Actor-singer Barbi Benton is 71. Evangelical pastor Rick Warren is 67. Former French President Nicolas Sarkozy (sahr-koh-ZEE') is 66. Actor Harley Jane Kozak is 64. Movie director Frank Darabont is 62. Rock musician Dave Sharp is 62. Rock singer Sam Phillips is 59. Rock musician Dan Spitz is 58. Gospel singer Marvin Sapp is 54. Singer Sarah McLachlan is 53. Rapper Rakim is 53. DJ Muggs (Cypress Hill) is 53. Actor Kathryn Morris is 52. Humorist Mo Rocca is 52. Rock/soul musician Jeremy Ruzumna (Fitz and the Tantrums) is 51. R&B singer Anthony Hamilton is 50. Supreme Court Justice Amy Coney Barrett is 49. Singer Monifah is 49. Actor Gillian Vigman is 49. Retired MLB All-Star Jermaine Dye is 47. Actor Terri Conn is 46. Singer Joey Fatone Jr. ('N Sync) is 44. Rapper Rick Ross is 44. Actor Rosamund Pike is 42. Actor Angelique Cabral is 42. Singer Nick Carter (Backstreet Boys) is 41. Actor Vinny Chhibber is 41. Actor Elijah Wood is 40. Rapper J. Cole is 36. Actor Alexandra Krosney is 33. Actor Yuri Sardarov is 33. Actor Ariel Winter is 23.

Got a story or photos to share? (And oh yes, Go Chiefs!)

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

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