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## Connecting

June 24, 2021

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Colleagues,

Good Thursday morning on this the 24<sup>th</sup> day of June 2021,

I feel lucky. Connecting is blessed with a host of great journalists who regularly contribute their stories and their photos with colleagues around the globe, and for the past eight years our newsletter has been the vehicle to share them.

One of our finest writers is **Norm Abelson**, who turned 90 not long ago, and he shared a remembrance of his wife **Dina** that touches the soul with the life's lessons it brings from a woman who survived the depths of despair and brought light to our world during her years on Earth.

It has been 20 years since Dina's death. The tragedy she encountered in her youth, Norm wrote, in a Polish ghetto and at the Auschwitz concentration camp did nothing to diminish her zest for life or the sweetness of her soul.

May that rub off on all of us!

Another of our great contributors and writers, **Gene Herrick**, also in his 90s, tells today why he is such a fan of our **Sister Donalda Kehoe**, also in HER 90s, and what she brings to his life since they became pen pals through Connecting.

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

Paul

## Memories of Dina: *'Life is the sweetest thing'*



Norm and Dina, at his going-away party, leaving Washington to return to Concord in 1968.

**Norm Abelson (Email) - Twenty years ago**, on a summer day in Concord, New Hampshire, the kind and gentle life of a truly extraordinary woman came to an end. It was my great good fortune to have shared nearly a half-century of that life with Dina Lipson Abelson.

Her voice was soft, but her words were as pearls of wisdom. Her love of art, literature and learning were deep and endless. Her quest for knowledge was palpable. Her intelligence glittered though her modesty. Her love and kindness in bringing up our two sons were magical. And, oh, how much she taught me.

The tragedy of her youth – in a Polish ghetto and at Auschwitz - did nothing to diminish her zest for life or the sweetness of her soul. In all our time together, she never once raised her voice in anger. Through all the years of fright-filled nightmares and the debilitating times of depression, she refused ever to be a burden, ever to complain. Love and empathy, caring, patience and understanding; those were the roadways she chose. What a quiet but complete victory over the cruelty and brutality that had scarred her. It is no exaggeration to say that to know Dina was, inevitably, to love and admire her.

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**February 6, 1953.** In my small room at the Winsor, a run-down Concord residence hotel that was all a first-year Associated Press reporter could afford, I was dressing up for a blind date. It had been arranged by the hotel manager, who had become my friend. Fate took a hand when it turned out he also managed the nearby house where the young woman I was to meet lived and cared for her father.

“How would you like a date with a special young woman?” Roy asked, once he had determined I was a decent enough guy for her, and got her permission for the meeting. “A single young woman, up here in Concord,” I replied incredulously. But, true to his word, once we arrived at the house, Roy introduced me to Israel, also an Auschwitz survivor, and his daughter, Doris (who years later took her Hebrew name, Dina).

Of all the unlikely places for a first date, Roy had arranged for us to attend a Concord High basketball game! True to who she was, Dina kindly feigned interest, asking questions, even joined in the cheers. She was no less kind, or any more informed, when, years later, she joined me at, for her, an equally confusing Dartmouth College football game.

It didn't take me very long to recognize a treasure, this attractive, auburn-haired woman with a charming accent. Almost from the first meeting I was deeply in love, so just five nights after we met, having seen each other every day, I asked if she would marry me. I didn't get a “yes,” but she did say she would like us to get to know each other better. And we did. Apparently Israel, a man I also came to love, had decided I was acceptable as a possible future son-in-law. So I was invited as a dinner guest every night from then on. Three months later, on May 30, Dina accepted an engagement ring.

On November 6, there was a very traditional wedding ceremony, presided over by three Orthodox rabbis. It

was followed by a lavish dinner party for some 200 guests. Then a dream of a honeymoon on Miami Beach, a return to a cozy three-room apartment in Concord, and we were off on our adventure.

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**Washington, D.C. years, 1963-1968.** I was 13 years into my career at The AP when I received a surprising call from a newly elected United States senator, offering me a job in Washington as his press secretary. Dina and I had just purchased our first house, a little bungalow at the edge of a wooded area. Our sons were still young, David about 5,



Michael still a baby. We had many close friends and lived near family. Dina loved living in the community. When I asked her opinion about the move, she answered as she always did throughout our life together when change was in view. She could do either, she told me, continue to live in contentment or take on a new and challenging opportunity. With all the excitement of the Kennedy era, we both opted for change. And, boy, did she fit into our new environment.

I still can picture this one night...Dina was an absolute knock-out in her black satin evening dress, accented by a single string of pearls, her long hair twisted in a stunning up-do. We were on our way to some embassy party where she would, as usual, be right at home, and soon be surrounded by admiring young men.

Dina was surprisingly at ease with just about anyone – including at her personal introductions to President Johnson, Vice President Humphrey and a batch of other D. C. notables. Not only that. She charmed each and every one.

Her life's journey was marked by tragedy and renewal – the Polish town of Radom, the ghetto, Auschwitz, Sweden, a German DP camp, New York City, Concord, N.H., to suburban Maryland. Shouldn't such a person be suspicious, watchful, and with only four years of schooling, uncertain? Not Dina. In all the years I knew her, she seemed never at a loss, never out of place. Where this ability, this calmness, this charm emanated from has remained always a mystery to me.

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**Return to Concord, 1968 – 2001.** Several years after our return from Washington our son, David, told Dina his elementary school had decided to start a library. Dina applied for and was named school librarian, at first occupying only a small corner, with few books, in the basement. She started as a volunteer, but soon was earning a princely two dollars an hour. By the time she retired some 25 years later, through her efforts the library took up about half of the school's second floor, filled to bursting with books of her choice,

She was known, far and wide, as “The Book Lady,” and was beloved by the hundreds of her past students. So many would tell us when we met them how Dina had made them book lovers, and how they were passing that love down to their children. Also, hers was the only school library in town that had a sofa, a place where troubled kids would come, often in tears, to be comforted by Dina. Additionally, each day a line-up of youngsters would gather outside her library door for their morning hugs.

At her retirement party, the students, having learned of the Nazis' book burning, each presented her with a brief book they had written. In her honor, the library was officially christened “The Dina Abelson Media Center.” Could she, all those years before in Radom, huddled with sister Mira under the bed covers with a flashlight, reading a book well beyond their years, ever have imagined such a thing?

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**Dina (right) with sister, Mira, in Sweden after rescue from Auschwitz.**

**Dina never would discuss the Holocaust or Auschwitz** until our kids were older. The local newspaper had been after her to tell her story for years. Finally, the children grown, she agreed to be interviewed. Her narrative was so moving and articulate, the editor decided to run the four-part series almost entirely using just Dina's own words. Later, the paper produced thousands of re-prints that made their way all over the country.

Dina also began to travel to a number of schools to tell her story, as only she could. I remember once at a high school she was asked by a student why she never had considered suicide inside Auschwitz. "Because you never know what tomorrow may bring," she replied. Before we left, a young woman approached us. "Mrs. Abelson," she said softly, "I have been so depressed and unhappy, and considering suicide, but because of what you said, I will not do it."

The Polish-born Auschwitz survivor saving a life in a small New Hampshire town.

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**At first the doctor's words did not register.** After all, she had only performed a few perfunctory tests, like having Dina walk and speak. But Julie was also a specialist and our friend; we trusted her. And we were there because Dina had experienced increasing problems with speech and locomotion.

"I'm so sorry, Dina. I'm afraid you have Parkinson's disease."

That one sentence, in frightening and frightful ways, colored the remainder of our lives together. One thing, however, did not change: Dina's quiet courage. Never ever a complaint. Always worrying about the effects on me, about not becoming a burden. The endless pain; her last year in a nursing home, confined to a wheel chair. Never a complaint.

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**Just a month before her death,** and gravely ill, Dina bravely assented to a birthday party, a decision she made more for those of us who loved her, than for herself. The gifts reflecting that love piled up, mostly small things she was known for, like brightly colored scarfs. She even tried to take a small bite of her favorite chocolate cake.

Toward the end, I was sleeping each night in her hospital room. But she would not let go of life until a day when I was away from the hospital. I am certain she wanted to save me from the pain of being there at the last. She remained who she was to the end.

Among Dina's last words to me, engraved now on her cemetery marker, were these:  
"Life is the sweetest thing."

## Vietnam War came roaring back into his life

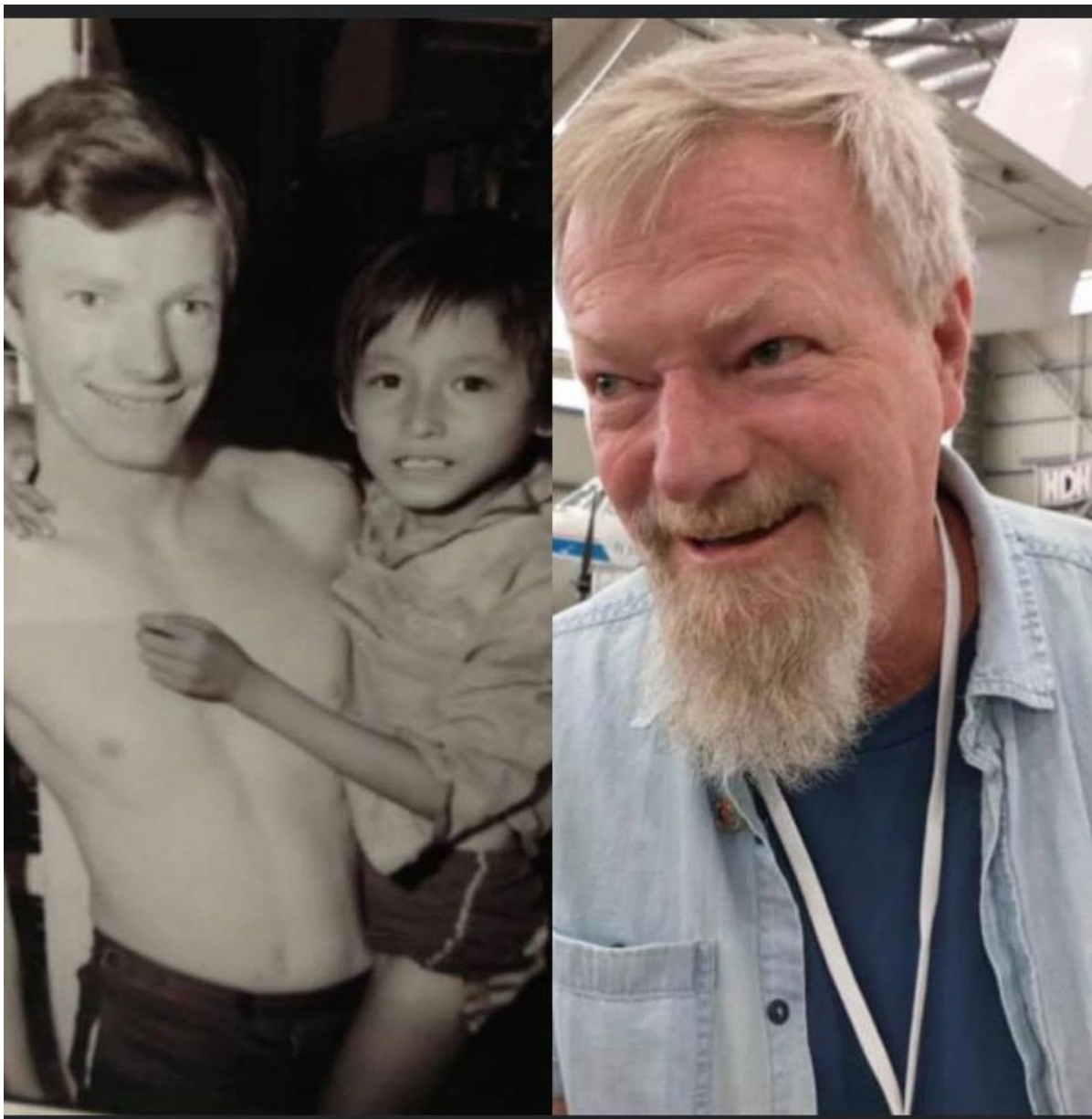






**Kim-Dung and Carl Robinson interviewed by Vietnam Museum of Australia.**

Connecting's Down Under Correspondent **Carl Robinson** ([Email](#)) has Vietnam in his blood since arriving in Saigon in early 1964 as a 20-year old university student and, after a stint as a US aid worker and meeting his future wife, with AP from '68 until the Fall of South Vietnam in April 1975. Two years later, Carl and Kim-Dung moved to Australia and have watched its Vietnamese community grow over the decades from boat people and migration. Last year, they shifted to their semi-rural retirement home south of Sydney where - as a life-long aircraft consumer and enthusiast - Carl joined the nearby HARS (Historical Aircraft Restoration Society) Aviation Museum with its magnificent collection of more than 50 old commercial and military aircraft, many still operational, and helping on media, including creating a new YouTube Channel.



**Jim Broomhall, RAN., then (with Vietnamese refugee) and now.**

Then, in a remarkable string of coincidences since January, Vietnam came roaring back with the discovery in the Museum of Grumman S-2G Tracker 851 who'd spotted a boatload of 99 Vietnamese refugees in distress in the South China Sea on its last patrol of the day off the aircraft carrier HMAS Melbourne nearly 40 years ago. As New Zealand-based maritime artist Darrell White began work on a commemorative painting, Carl began rounding up Royal Australian Navy (RAN) sailors in dramatic pictures from the little-known rescue and worked closely with the Vietnamese refugees - known as MG99, for Melbourne Group - and HARS to stage and host an amazing reunion of over 300 rescuers and rescued in a Museum hangar last Sunday, 20 June and coincidentally World Refugee Day.

"Amazing how Vietnam just keeps circling around and biting you in the bum," Carl says. "As Horst Faas used to say, nobody walks away from Vietnam."

# A reminder of how their paths crossed

**Adolphe Bernotas (Email)** - Dusko Doder's June 22 [USA Today op-ed](#) reminds me of how our paths crossed more than a half-century ago.

The gist of Dusko's piece is that while he was neither imprisoned nor killed for doing his job as journalist, he was harassed in the courts, even by journalism peers at Time.

I was, in AP parlance, Dusko's numerical replacement when he left and I showed up in the Concord Bureau in March of 1967. (Those AP types are everywhere). I stayed at the bureau 39 years; Dusko became Washington Post Moscow bureau chief, and author/chronicler/biographer/expert on Eastern Europe and its famous and infamous leaders from Gorbachev to Milosevic.

We also share a similar journey as World War II refugees who sought better lives in the United States and become reporters in our non-native language, English.

Dusko's family fled his native Yugoslavia, a Balkan country ravaged by Nazi armies, their sympathizers and Communist partisans during a civil war among ethnic adversaries.

My family fled my native Lithuania, a Baltic country ravaged in the seesaw occupations of the nation by Communist Red Army and Hitler's Nazi Wehrmacht forces.

## A Pretty Lady, With A Pretty Habit

**Gene Herrick (Email)** - This pretty lady wears a long black Habit, and lives in a convent in Dubuque, Iowa.

This lady may be slightly isolated and confined but she has more get-up-and-go, energy, and intelligence than many ladies of the world. She reads a lot – and not trash, but literary writings by deep, and thoughtful “Well quoted authors of the past and present.”

This lovely lady is Sister Donalda Kehoe, who lives in Clare House. And, she is what we call “A Senior Citizen, who tops the calendar at age 94. However, this is a woman who acts like a “Chick” of 70. She takes long walks, explores the woods and water areas nearby, takes part in the life at the convent, reads, writes, especially to some folks like me. She thinks I am “Neat,” and well-traveled. I think she is great, and one of the most well-founded people I know.

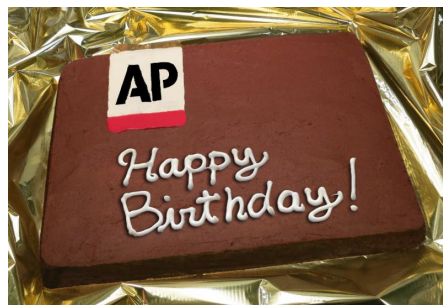
Sister Donalda likes to exchange ground mail, rather than e-mail. It is more personal. Her letters are an adventure to read, because they cover so many thoughts and ideas, including poetry, philosophical thoughts of hers, and those of famous authors. She devises crossword puzzles, and other mind-ticklers.



Sister Donalda was active in other professions, including writing for publications, etc., etc., and in places around the country before becoming a Nun.

I just wanted to tip my hat to this special lady. (Sister: my letter is finally in the mail).

## Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



Cynthia Rawitch - [cynthia.rawitch@csun.edu](mailto:cynthia.rawitch@csun.edu)

## Stories of interest

*Hong Kong's last pro-democracy paper sells out final edition* (AP)



Last issue of Apple Daily arrive at a newspaper booth in Hong Kong, early Thursday, June 24, 2021. Hong Kong's pro-democracy Apple Daily newspaper will stop publishing Thursday, following last week's arrest of five editors and executives and the



## freezing of \$2.3 million in assets under the city's year-old national security law. ( AP Photo/Vincent Yu)

By ZEN SOO

HONG KONG (AP) — The final edition of Hong Kong's last remaining pro-democracy paper sold out in hours Thursday, as readers scooped up all 1 million copies of the Apple Daily, whose closure was yet another sign of China's tightening grip on the semi-autonomous city.

Across the densely populated metropolis, people lined up early in the morning to buy the paper, which in recent years has become an increasingly outspoken critic of Chinese and Hong Kong authorities' efforts to limit the freedoms found here but not in mainland China. The paper was gone from newsstands by 8:30 a.m.

The newspaper said it was forced to cease operations after police froze \$2.3 million of its assets, searched its office and arrested five top editors and executives last week, accusing them of foreign collusion to endanger national security.

"This is our last day, and last edition, does this reflect the reality that Hong Kong has started to lose its press freedom and freedom of speech?" an Apple Daily graphic designer, Dickson Ng, asked in comments to The Associated Press. "Why does it have to end up like this?"

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

## *And...*

### *How Press Freedom Is Being Eroded in Hong Kong*

(New York Times)

By Jennifer Jett

Hong Kong's raucous and politically diverse news media, though free from the constraints placed on journalism next door in mainland China, has contended with various threats over the years. But after a draconian national security law went into effect a year ago, those challenges have multiplied dramatically.

The growing pressure on the media was underscored on Wednesday when Apple Daily, a pro-democracy tabloid that is often critical of the Chinese and Hong Kong governments, said it had no choice but to close. The newspaper, which had been one of the most widely read in Hong Kong, is the subject of a national security investigation that has also imprisoned its founder, Jimmy Lai.

Despite having the right to free speech enshrined in its local Constitution, the Chinese territory is now ranked 80th out of 180 countries and regions on the World Press Freedom Index, down from 18th when Reporters Without Borders first published the index in 2002.

“There is no doubt it is the worst of times,” Chris Yeung, chairman of the Hong Kong Journalists Association, told The New York Times last month.

Here are some of the ways press freedom in Hong Kong is being eroded.

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

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## ***Jury selection begins in newspaper shooting case*** (AP)

By BRIAN WITTE

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (AP) — A Maryland judge carefully focused on asking potential jurors Wednesday whether they believed they could be fair and impartial in weighing the plea of guilty but not criminally responsible by a man who killed five people at the Capital Gazette newspaper nearly three years ago.

Judge Michael Wachs said his goal was to have a jury empaneled on Friday in the high-profile case that traumatized the community in Maryland’s state capital.

The judge emphasized that Jarrod Ramos already pleaded guilty to all 23 counts against him in 2019, but he has pleaded not criminally responsible due to his mental health.

Jurors in the second phase of his trial will be asked to determine whether Ramos lacked substantial capacity to appreciate the criminality of his conduct in a case that will be based largely on testimony from mental health experts.

Read more [here](#).

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## ***Journalist killed in northern Mexico, 4th this year*** (AP)

MEXICO CITY (AP) — A journalist was found stabbed to death Tuesday in the northern Mexico city of Ciudad Acuna, across the border from Del Rio, Texas.

Saul Tijerina Rentería was the fourth journalist killed in Mexico so far this year.

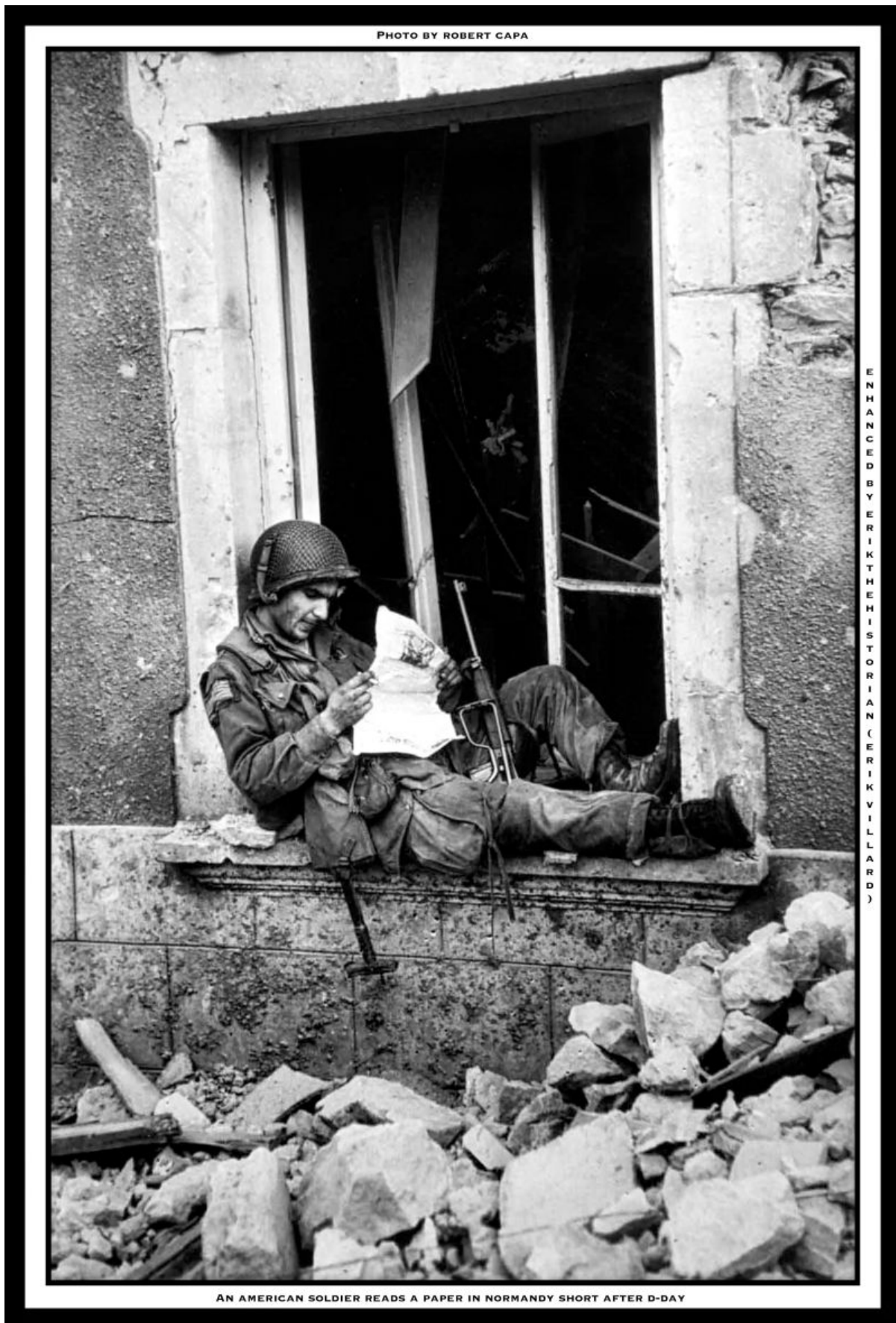
Tijerina Rentería reported for various web-based news outlets, including La Voz de Coahuila.

La Voz reported that Tijerina Rentería went missing after leaving his job at a maquiladora assembly plant in the pre-dawn hours Tuesday. His body was later found stabbed to death in the trunk of a car. Journalists in provincial Mexico make so little money that many work other jobs.

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

# The Final Word

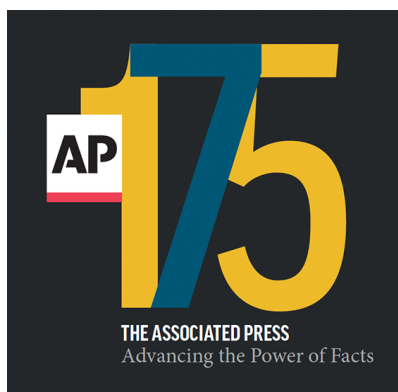
*Time out from battle to read a newspaper*



**Erik Villard**, shared on LinkedIn: Another rare Robert Capa photo. An American soldier reads a newspaper in Normandy shortly after D-Day. Enhanced by erikthehistorian (erik villard). One of the respondents to the post, retired four-star



Gen. Barry McCaffrey, said: "Hoped this was Stars and Stripes! So comforting to get a copy to pass around the company. Actually this may be a poster of some sort. He's got a cigarette, reading material, and off his feet. Pretty happy soldier."



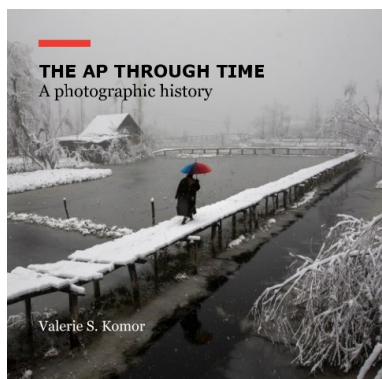
## Ccelebrating AP's 175th

AP store for 175th, vintage merchandise



The AP has created a store with 175th anniversary merchandise available for purchase, as well as items branded with some of AP's most historic logos. The site can be reached by clicking [here](#).

## AP Through Time: A Photographic History



AP Through Time: A Photographic History" - created by Director of Corporate Archives, Valerie Komor, is a keepsake commemorating AP's 175th year. Small in size

(6 ¾ x 6 ¾ in.), it is organized chronologically in eight segments that trace the broad outlines of AP's development from 1846 to the present: Beginnings, Evolution, New Century, Modernity, Expansion, One World, Speed, and Transformation. Click [here](#) to view and make an order.

## AP at 175 video

This video celebrates the unique role AP has played since 1846.

# Oops!

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## Today in History - June 24, 2021



**By The Associated Press**

Today is Thursday, June 24, the 175th day of 2021. There are 190 days left in the year.

**Today's Highlight in History:**

On June 24, 1948, Communist forces cut off all land and water routes between West Germany and West Berlin, prompting the western allies to organize the Berlin Airlift.

**On this date:**

In 1497, the first recorded sighting of North America by a European took place as explorer John Cabot spotted land, probably in present-day Canada.

In 1807, a grand jury in Richmond, Virginia, indicted former Vice President Aaron Burr on charges of treason and high misdemeanor (he was later acquitted).

In 1880, "O Canada," the future Canadian national anthem, was first performed in Quebec City.

In 1940, France signed an armistice with Italy during World War II.

In 1947, what's regarded as the first modern UFO sighting took place as private pilot Kenneth Arnold, an Idaho businessman, reported seeing nine silvery objects flying in a "weaving formation" near Mount Rainier in Washington.

In 1957, the U.S. Supreme Court, in *Roth v. United States*, ruled 6-3 that obscene materials were not protected by the First Amendment.

In 1964, AT&T inaugurated commercial "Picturephone" service between New York, Chicago and Washington, D.C. (the service, however, never caught on).

In 1973, President Richard Nixon concluded his summit with the visiting leader of the Soviet Union, Leonid Brezhnev, who hailed the talks in an address on American television.

In 1983, the space shuttle Challenger — carrying America's first woman in space, Sally K. Ride — coasted to a safe landing at Edwards Air Force Base in California.

In 1992, the Supreme Court, in a 5-4 decision, strengthened its 30-year ban on officially sponsored worship in public schools, prohibiting prayer as a part of graduation ceremonies.

In 2015, a federal judge in Boston formally sentenced Boston Marathon bomber Dzhokhar Tsarnaev (joh-HAHR' tsahr-NEYE'-ehv) to death for the 2013 terror attacks. (A federal appeals court later threw out the sentence; the Supreme Court this fall will consider reinstating it.) Alabama Gov. Robert Bentley became the first southern governor to use his executive power to remove Confederate banners, as four flags with secessionist symbols were taken down from a large monument to rebel soldiers outside the state capitol in Montgomery.

In 2018, women in Saudi Arabia were able to drive for the first time, as the world's last remaining ban on female drivers was lifted.

Ten years ago: A defiant U.S. House voted overwhelmingly to deny President Barack Obama the authority to wage war against Libya, but Republicans fell short in an effort to actually cut off funds for the operation. New York State legalized same-sex marriage.

Five years ago: President Barack Obama created the first national monument to gay rights, designating the site of the 1969 Stonewall riots in Manhattan. Republican Donald Trump, visiting Scotland, hailed Britain's vote to leave the European Union, drawing parallels to the anger driving his own presidential campaign.

One year ago: Three white men were indicted on murder charges in the killing of Ahmaud Arbery, a Black man who was shot while running in a neighborhood near Georgia's coast. Wisconsin's governor activated the National Guard to protect state properties after a night of violent protests that included the toppling of two statues outside the state Capitol. The city of Charleston, South Carolina, removed a statue honoring John C. Calhoun, an early U.S. vice president and defender of slavery. The U.S. recorded a one-day total of 34,700 new confirmed COVID-19 cases, the highest level since late April, according to a count kept by Johns Hopkins University. Party officials confirmed that Democrats would hold an almost entirely virtual presidential nominating convention in Milwaukee in August. A divided federal appeals court ordered the dismissal of the criminal case against President Donald Trump's former national security adviser Michael Flynn, finding that the Justice Department's move to abandon the case settled the matter. (Flynn had pleaded guilty to lying to the FBI about conversations with the Russian ambassador.)

Today's Birthdays: Rock singer Arthur Brown is 79. Actor Michele Lee is 79. Actor-director Georg Stanford Brown is 78. Rock musician Jeff Beck is 77. Rock singer Colin Blunstone (The Zombies) is 76. Musician Mick Fleetwood is 74. Actor Peter Weller is 74. Rock musician John Illsley (Dire Straits) is 72. Actor Nancy Allen is 71. Reggae singer Derrick Simpson (Black Uhuru) is 71. Actor Joe Penny is 65. Singer-musician Andy McCluskey (Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark) is 62. R&B/pop singer-songwriter Siedah (sy-EE'-dah) Garrett is 61. Actor Iain Glen is 60. Rock singer Curt Smith is 60. Actor Danielle Spencer is 56. Actor Sherry Stringfield is 54. Singer Glenn Medeiros is 51. Actor Carla Gallo is 46. Actor Amir Talai (TV: "LA to Vegas") is 44. Actor-producer Mindy Kaling is 42. Actor Minka Kelly is 41. Actor Vanessa Ray is 40. Actor Justin Hires is 36. Actor Candice Patton is 36. Singer Solange Knowles is 35. Actor Max Ehrich is 30. Actor Beanie Feldstein is 28.

## 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**  
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