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Air Force Mortuary Affairs Operations Senior Chaplain David Sparks pauses for a quiet moment at Dover Fisher House at Dover Air Force Base, Del., Monday, June 21, 2021. Dover Fisher House provides short-term, on-base lodging to families who travel to Dover Air Force base to witness the dignified transfer of their loved ones. (AP Photo/Carolyn Kaster)

Colleagues,

Good Monday morning on this Aug. 1, 2021,

Should journalists be allowed to protest? NPR tries to address the issue

That's the headline on a [Poynter story by Tom Jones](#) that explores a new ethics policy by National Public Radio that, Jones wrote, goes farther than most of the traditional mainstream media organizations have gone in cracking open the door to allow journalists more freedom away from work."

He wrote:

Let's say you work for a news organization and there's a march or rally in town — a march for, say, women's rights. Or to raise awareness for LGBTQ+ issues. Or a Black Lives Matters protest. Or a rally to protest an injustice, either locally or nationally.

Should you be able to go? Should you be able to march, hold up a sign, use your voice?

That has been a long-debated topic in newsrooms around the country — whether journalists can participate in rallies, marches, protests and causes and still be able to do their jobs effectively.

More recently, the tug of war has intensified. On one side: old-school journalists and leadership who believe that journalists should never show their political or social leanings. Pulling the rope from the other side: those who believe their professional and personal lives are separate and that they should be judged by their work.

That has been one issue.

But there has also been another: vague and/or inconsistent policies of news organizations about what journalists can and cannot do when not working.

Essentially, up until now, the message in many places has been: Be smart and don't do anything to compromise the public's trust. Yet, controversies happen everywhere, such as the Associated Press writer fired for her tweets about Israel and Palestine, a Pittsburgh Post-Gazette reporter banned from covering race protests because of a sarcastic tweet and a Washington Post reporter temporarily banned from writing stories about sexual assault because she is a vocal sexual assault survivor.

Many news organizations still are using policies created years ago, well before the rise of social media. And journalists are becoming more outspoken about what they believe is their right to stand up for causes that impact their lives and their communities.

But one big news organization is taking a step in an effort to see that their policies at least try to change with the times.

This week, NPR came out with a brand new ethics policy that goes farther than most of the traditional mainstream media organizations have gone in cracking open the door to allow journalists more freedom away from work.

Last week Connecting published [this story](#) from the NPR public editor, titled, "New NPR Ethics Policy: It's OK For Journalists To Demonstrate (Sometimes)."

Give the stories a good read and then let your Connecting colleagues know what you think.

Congratulations to our colleague **Matt Sedensky** ([Email](#)), AP national writer, who teamed with New York video journalist **Jessie Wardarski** and Washington photographer **Carolyn Kaster** for the wrenching story of a Dover Air Force Base chaplain who received thousands of bodies of U.S. troops killed in Afghanistan. The chaplain, David Sparks, had been called to active duty on 9/11, assigned to the mortuary, and had been there ever since.

Veteran journalist **Gregg Favre** tweeted that "This may be the most powerful article that I've read this year. Chap's story - and those of his mortuary colleagues at Dover - is extraordinarily important. To be sure, their calling & ministry is of the highest order."

The story won Best of the States honors this past week and is featured in today's issue.

Here's to the new month – be safe, stay healthy!

Paul

A divided USA and the media

Lyle Price ([Email](#)) - This is to chip in with some observations that I have re media credibility and honest fact-finding based on my own observations starting in high school writing up evening sports events for the Bellingham (Wash.) Herald in the mid-1950s and a dozen years at AP in California from 1964-1976 to my retirement from journalism in the Seattle area in 1995. The first thing I would say is that to my eye, mainstream journalism is more careful with facts and more fair-minded than ever. (And, due to worldwide violence, a whole lot less safe other than reporting from a war zone than when I tracked down stories). Re journalistic carefulness, for many years in my career I never saw a correction being made by a newspaper--which isn't to say papers at one time were without error! Re media thoroughness, investigative reporting wasn't a term used at the U of Washington J-School in the early 1960s when I was there--or perhaps anywhere pre-Woodward and Bernstein in the early 1970s. And "in-depth reporting" was a term so new as to be a fad in the early 1960s when I heard it at the UW.

At the Aberdeen Daily World, City Editor Dave Webster told me that at a 1964 AP meeting of 30 or so news editors and city editors from dailies in Washington State he was the only one to raise his hand when AP inquired how many editors liked "in depth" stories. The editor said he did so based on the three-part series I did on how a dozen vessels had been tied up for a week or so without being unloaded at the Port of Aberdeen, Wash., due to a West Coast-wide agreement between the union and management on when or where longshoremen would work. (Aberdeen finally got extra "gangs" because, as the local union head told me, "Harry Bridges (the leader of the West Coast union) doesn't want to see any more of your stories.") FYI, Aberdeen had been where the first convention of the union was held after its formation in the 1930s.

Due to some pressing things on my agenda, this is the soonest I felt able to offer these thoughts since the interesting exchange on journalistic integrity and the fading public popularity of newspapers ran in Connecting a number of weeks ago.

Let me jump to one over-riding opinion of my part: Given the obvious sharp political division between the Left and the Right in the USA, I see a fair-minded analysis and tough questioning approach on the part of journalists as exactly what the ideologues on either side don't want to see being aimed at them. That being the case, how can what I personally rate as in my lifetime being the all-time best-researched and best thought-out products at the AP and the New York Times et al ever be sufficient for partisan ideologues? I'd like to think there are moderates and some partisans on both sides that are eager to find out about the facts and truth as journalists can best ascertain those things. But I don't think such readers and TV viewers are very vocal on the media's behalf--and, sadly, perchance not that numerous.

In the case of hard-core ideologues, I don't think the Left will ever like Fox News' opinion types; nor do I think the Right will applaud the New York Times or the Washington Post. So in light of such a division why would the media get any better

ratings than Congress? Put another way, it's great to urge the media to be as perfect as possible--but don't expect that to be good enough for the type of ideologues that stormed the Capital on Jan. 6, 2021, and those that shrug them off as enthusiastic sightseers!

To help me put present-day reality into perspective, I just today re-read an essay by one of the authors in a book containing essays published by the New York Times in *The Stone*. The title is, "Modern Ethics in 77 Arguments." The author, Adam Etinson, a philosophy professor at a university in Scotland, examines "ethnocentrism" (in current lingo, tribalism) as being so compelling as to make it impossible for any logic or reasoning to shake its grip. Etinson credits author Jonathan Haidt for bringing this to public attention in his book "The Righteous Mind." (I have it at my elbow as I type now and consider it enlightening in the tradition "The True Believer," a 1950ish book written by a self-educated longshoreman, Eric Hoffer - and once favorably commented on by President Dwight D. Eisenhower, a now out-of-fashion moderate Republican).

This political split in the nation isn't that that new--although I see it as a wider division than even during the Vietnam War, which I never imagined would be topped. The first I heard of the way in which the USA political split could impact the media was articulated by Professor Benson, a UW journalism instructor who owned two weekly newspapers and had a law degree. He once told a class I attended circa 1960: "I used to think that a fact was a fact. Now I have come to believe there are Republican facts and Democratic facts."

AP fair in coverage of Ben & Jerry's decision, but...

Robert Egelko ([Email](#)) - I think the AP has been fair and very informative in most of its coverage of Ben & Jerry's decision to stop selling ice cream in the occupied West Bank territories and the ensuing backlash. But a July 28 piece by political writer John O'Connor referred to the lands not as occupied, which is how the international community classifies them, but with a phrase (Palestinian-sought territories) that read to me as if it had been written by the Israeli government. I wish it had been edited out.

From the story:

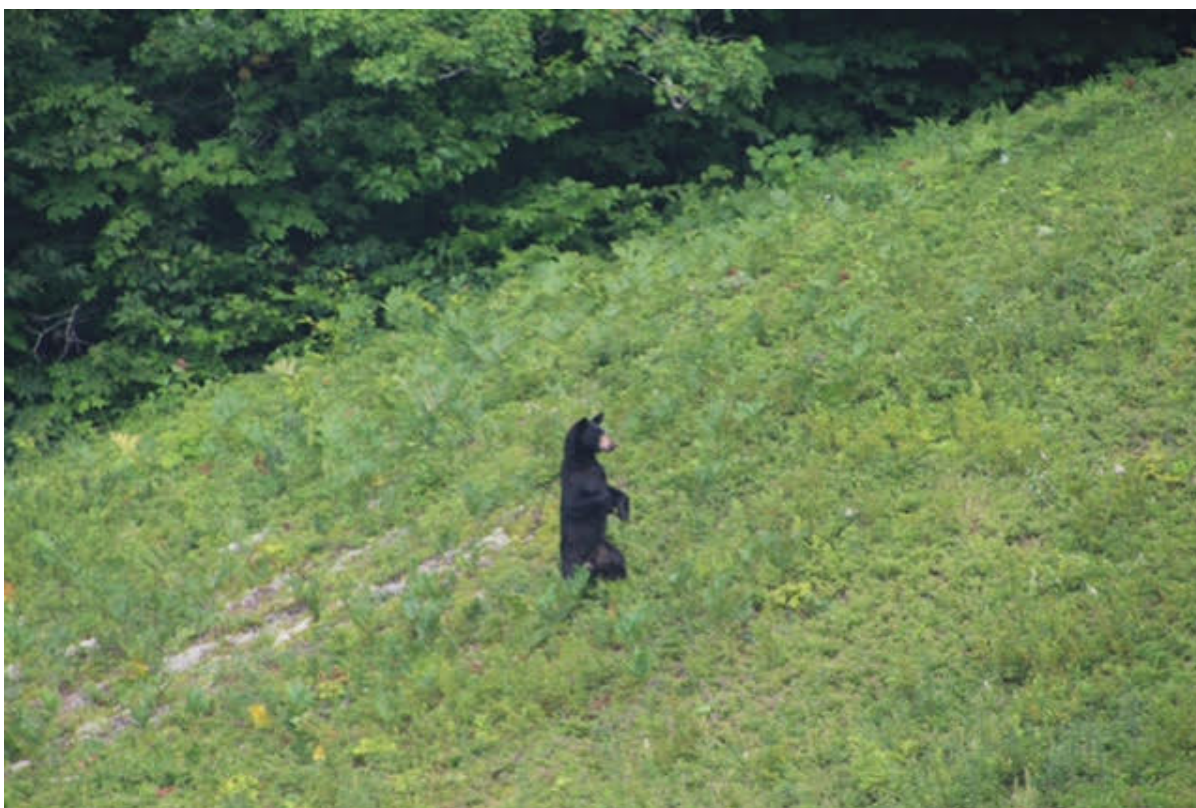
There is no date set for the meeting but it will be called specifically to address the July 19 announcement by the Vermont-based confection-maker that continuing to market its product in Palestinian-sought territories is "inconsistent with our values."

Time for a new AP mug?



Nora Raum ([Email](#)) - I'm thinking it's time to buy a new mug. I worked at AP Radio in the seventies and eighties and my late husband, Tom Raum, worked on the wire side for 44 years.

Blue-beary picker



Steve Hendren ([Email](#)) – Our neighbor in rural New Hampshire, Yogi, is winning the blueberry picking competition here. One of his several advantages is that he is more comfortable than we are on all fours...

Best of the Week

AP gets first look inside China's largest detention center, breaks news on Uyghur incarceration



Guard towers stand atop the perimeter wall of the Urumqi No. 3 Detention Center in Dabancheng in western China's Xinjiang region, April 23, 2021. The facility is the largest of its kind in the country and possibly the world, with a complex that sprawls over 220 acres. A sign at the front identified it as a “kanshousuo,” a pre-trial detention facility. AP estimates it can hold some 10,000 people — or more. AP PHOTO / MARK SCHIEFELBEIN

The Urumqi No. 3 Detention Center in Xinjiang, China, has long been a source of fascination. It is the largest such facility in China (possibly the world), sprawling across an area twice as large as Vatican City and embodying the plight of the Uyghurs and other mostly Muslim minorities. But Western news organizations have only been able to report from outside.

Until now.

The Beijing-based team of global enterprise journalist Dake Kang, photographer Mark Schiefelbein and Greater China news director Ken Moritsugu managed to get a tour of the facility, arranged by Moritsugu over the course of multiple meetings, making The Associated Press the first Western news organization to report from inside the center.

Kang's piece, along with his client video and Schiefelbein's images, created a vivid portrait of life inside the Dabancheng detention center, from numbered and tagged Uyghurs sitting ramrod straight in line to the instructions on force-feeding in the medical room.

Read more [here](#).

Best of the States

Only on AP: 20 years later, chaplain's litany of prayers for US troops killed in Afghanistan finally comes to an end



AP Photo/Carolyn Kaster

With the end of the war in Afghanistan looming, national writer Matt Sedensky was searching for a compelling way to humanize America's longest war — and he found it.

Nearly all the American troops killed in the war had their remains returned to Dover Air Force Base in Delaware, where the military runs a mortuary. Sedensky went about interviewing workers there, searching for the right subject to convey the somber work of identifying, autopsying and preparing the dead for burial. The intensity of the work means many are deployed to do it for just months, and few stay longer than a couple of years. Eventually, though, Sedensky learned of a chaplain in the Air Force Reserves, David Sparks, who had been called to active duty on 9/11, assigned to the mortuary, and had been there ever since.

Sparks was a reluctant subject, uneasy about being the focus of any story and reserved in talking about his life in the mortuary. But in a series of multihour phone interviews and over the course of three days shadowing him on base, Sedensky slowly pieced together Sparks' experience: writing hundreds of prayers for the dead, standing beside their disfigured remains and ministering to their broken families.

Joined by New York video journalist Jessie Wardarski and Washington photographer Carolyn Kaster, the team had access to parts of the base hidden far from public view — the medical examiner's autopsy suite, the complex where soldiers' personal possessions are processed, the room where the deceased are dressed in uniform one final time, facilities for the family members of fallen troops and the flight line itself, where Sparks stood aboard or beside aircraft praying for the dead.

Read more [here](#).

Connecting Regional Reunion: September in Texas

- Group hotel rate good through today!

You are invited to attend the Sept. 18-19, 2021, AP Connecting Regional Reunion in the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

Co-hosts are Mike Holmes of Omaha, Brent Kallestad of Tallahassee and Diana Heidgerd of Dallas. To register, email Diana at heidgerd@flash.net

Please register by today -- Monday, Aug. 2 -- which is also the deadline to get the reduced AP Connecting Reunion rate at the group hotel (see below). Pay your own way for events Saturday, Sept. 18, and Sunday, Sept. 19.

There's also a generous bonus event, hosted by David and Ellen Sedeño, on Friday night, Sept. 17 (see below). All events are casual attire.

WHO'S ATTENDING: Registration list so far (please register by today/Aug. 2)

- Jaime & Lori Aron
- Amanda Barnett
- Barry Bedlan
- Betsy Blaney
- Joei Bohr & Mark Woolsey
- Jeff Carlton
- Sally Carpenter Hale & Rick Hale
- Adam Kealoha Causey & guest
- Carol Cirulli Lanham
- Mike & Sondra Cochran
- Pam & Frank Collins
- Schuyler Dixon
- Katie Fairbank
- Denne & Judy Freeman
- Mike Graczyk
- Stephen & Andrea Hawkins
- Ron & Sue Heflin

- Diana & Paul Heidgerd
- Mike Holmes
- Brent Kallestad
- Doug Kienitz
- David & Darlene Koenig
- Mark Lambert
- Terri Langford
- John & Eileen Lumpkin
- Scott McCartney
- John McFarland
- Steve & Teri Mace
- Julia Prodis Sulek & Chris Sulek
- Evan Ramstad
- Charles & Barbara Richards
- Rod Richardson & Kia Breaux Richardson
- David & Ellen Sedeño
- Kelley Shannon
- Greg Smith
- Ed & Barbara Staats
- Jamie Stengle
- Linda Stewart Ball
- Pat Sullivan
- Laura Tolley
- Terry Wallace & Liz Eaton
- Sylvia & Will Wingfield

Group Events: A Tex-Mex dinner Saturday night, Sept. 18, and going to the Texas Rangers vs. Chicago White Sox game on Sunday afternoon, Sept. 19, at retractable-roof Globe Life Field in Arlington. Baseball tickets are \$45 each and must be reserved in advance via Diana. Details on the registration form.

Bonus Event! Friday night, Sept. 17:

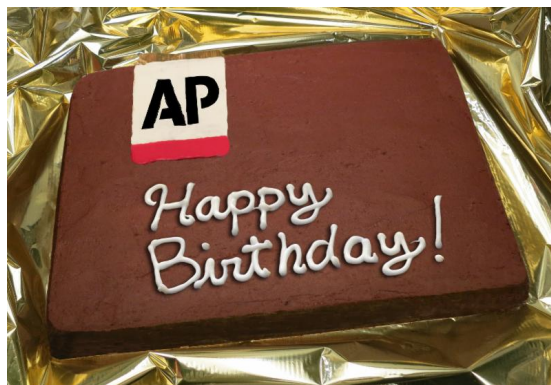
David and Ellen Sedeño of Dallas have graciously offered to host and pick up the tab (for reunion early arrivals or those who live in the Dallas-Fort Worth area) for dinner Friday night at their family's BBQ restaurant: Meat U Anywhere BBQ in nearby Grapevine. For more information or to confirm for Friday night, email david@meatuanywhere.com

Group Hotel:

SpringHill Suites Dallas DFW Airport South/CentrePort, rates \$109-\$114 per night, plus taxes & fees, AP Connecting Reunion rate is available Sept. 15-20. Please make your reservation by Aug. 2. Details on the registration form.

See you in September!

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



Dave Berry - dberry08@gmail.com

Doug Rowe - djrowe.rowe@gmail.com

Stories of interest

Body of Reuters Photographer Was Mutilated in Taliban Custody, Officials Say (New York Times)

By Mujib Mashal

NEW DELHI — The body of Danish Siddiqui, a Pulitzer Prize-winning Reuters photojournalist who was killed in Afghanistan this month, was badly mutilated while in the custody of the Taliban, officials said this week.

The revelation comes amid concern that the fighting in Afghanistan, where the Taliban have carried out an aggressive military offensive since the United States withdrew nearly all its troops, has become increasingly brutal as peace talks have stalled.

Mr. Siddiqui, 38, an Indian national who took some of the most memorable news photographs from South Asia in recent years, was killed on the morning of July 16, when Afghan commandos he had accompanied to Spin Boldak, a border district recently captured by the Taliban, were ambushed. Initial photographs from the scene showed Mr. Siddiqui's body with multiple wounds but fully intact.

But by that evening, when the body was handed over to the Red Cross and transferred to a hospital in the southern city of Kandahar, it had been badly mutilated, according to two Indian officials and two Afghan health officials there. The mutilation was reported by an Indian website, Newslandry, in the days after Mr. Siddiqui's killing.

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

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On-screen Stereotypes of Female Journalists Feed a “Vicious Cycle” of Sexism (UF News)

This story, written by Alisson Clark, originally appeared in UF News on June 10, 2021. Illustration by Allie Schutt.

When a fictional female journalist appears on screen, chances are she’s about to sleep with one of her sources. It’s a trope that infuriates actual women in news media — and it can have real-life consequences, says University of Florida researcher Frank Waddell, Ph.D.

In shows like “House of Cards” and movies like “Thank You for Smoking,” female reporters are quick to trade sex for information. Even when sex with sources has nothing to do with ambition — such as the hookups in “Sharp Objects,” “Top Five,” “Trainwreck,” and the “Gilmore Girls” reboot, to name a few — it still portrays unethical behavior.

“In the past 20 to 30 years, Hollywood has really latched on to this. It’s incredibly consistent,” Waddell said.

At the same time, threats to female journalists have increased. A UNESCO study of 901 journalists from 125 countries shows that 73% experienced online harassment. And in a 2019 survey of women and gender non-conforming journalists in the United States and Canada, 70% experienced threats and 85% felt they had become less safe in past five years.

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

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How Local Media Spreads Misinformation From Vaccine Skeptics (New York Times)

By Sheera Frenkel and Tiffany Hsu

The Freedom’s Phoenix, a local news site in Phoenix, and The Atlanta Business Journal, a news site in Atlanta, both published the same article about coronavirus vaccines in March.

The author was Joseph Mercola, who researchers and regulators have said is a top spreader of misleading Covid-19 information. In the article, Dr. Mercola inaccurately likened the vaccines to “gene therapy” and argued against their usefulness.

A month later, The Freedom’s Phoenix and The Atlanta Business Journal also published another article by Dr. Mercola. This time, he blamed the billionaire Bill Gates for the pandemic, claiming Mr. Gates had “shadow control” of the World Health Organization.

Facebook and other social platforms have in recent weeks attracted attention for vaccine misinformation, as Covid cases surge from the infectious Delta variant and vaccination rates slow. But The Freedom's Phoenix and The Atlanta Business Journal are two small publications — along with dozens of radio and television stations, and podcasts aimed at local audiences — that have also become powerful conduits for anti-vaccine messaging, researchers said.

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



Celebrating AP's 175th

175th anniversary Polo shirts



AP is offering a variety of 175th anniversary merchandise, but one item that isn't available and that many staffers like is a Polo shirt. Adam Yeomans, AP's regional director for the South, has taken care of that. He recently ordered Polos for AP staffers in the South, a few members and retirees, other AP fans. Now you have the opportunity to order one of these limited-edition shirts emblazoned with the AP's 175th anniversary logo. The cost is \$30 per shirt, including shipping. Adult sizes are S, M, L, XL and XXL. The Navy Blue shirts are a 50/50 blend and tend to run a little large. If you'd like to order one, please email Adam Yeomans at adamyeomans@yahoo.com with your name, phone number, home address, and the size(s) and quantity by July 30. Adam says he will collect payment once the shirts are ready for shipping. He's trying to cover his cost; if there's anything left, he says he will donate it to the AP Employee Relief Fund.

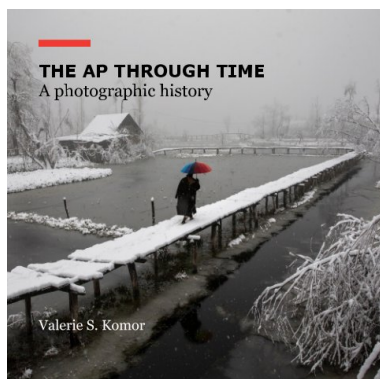
AP store for 175th, vintage merchandise



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.

Click [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!

The embed code for this video is not valid.



Today in History - Aug. 2, 2021



By The Associated Press

Today is Monday, Aug. 2, the 214th day of 2021. There are 151 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On August 2, 1939, Albert Einstein signed a letter to President Franklin D. Roosevelt urging creation of an atomic weapons research program.

On this date:

In 1610, during his fourth voyage to the Western Hemisphere, English explorer Henry Hudson sailed into what is now known as Hudson Bay.

In 1776, members of the Second Continental Congress began attaching their signatures to the Declaration of Independence.

In 1862, the Ambulance Corps for the Army of the Potomac was created at the order of Maj. Gen. George McClellan during the Civil War.

In 1873, inventor Andrew S. Hallidie (HAH'-lih-day) successfully tested a cable car he had designed for the city of San Francisco.

In 1921, a jury in Chicago acquitted several former members of the Chicago White Sox baseball team and two others of conspiring to defraud the public in the notorious "Black Sox" scandal. Opera singer Enrico Caruso, 48, died in Naples, Italy.

In 1922, Alexander Graham Bell, generally regarded as the inventor of the telephone, died in Nova Scotia, Canada, at age 75.

In 1923, the 29th president of the United States, Warren G. Harding, died in San Francisco; Vice President Calvin Coolidge became president.

In 1934, German President Paul von Hindenburg died, paving the way for Adolf Hitler's complete takeover.

In 1945, President Harry S. Truman, Soviet leader Josef Stalin and Britain's new prime minister, Clement Attlee, concluded the Potsdam conference.

In 1980, 85 people were killed when a bomb exploded at the train station in Bologna, Italy.

In 1985, 137 people were killed when Delta Air Lines Flight 191, a Lockheed L-1011 Tristar, crashed while attempting to land at Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport.

In 1990, Iraq invaded Kuwait, seizing control of the oil-rich emirate. (The Iraqis were later driven out in Operation Desert Storm.)

Ten years ago: The Senate passed, and President Barack Obama signed, legislation to avoid an unprecedented national default. New York Yankees first baseman Mark Teixeira set a major league record when he homered from both sides of the plate for the 12th time in his career during a 6-0 win over the Chicago White Sox.

Five years ago: President Barack Obama castigated Donald Trump as "unfit" and "woefully unprepared" to serve in the White House, and challenged Republicans to withdraw their support for their party's nominee, declaring "there has to come a point at which you say 'enough.'"

One year ago: Lord & Taylor, America's oldest retailer, joined the list of retail companies seeking bankruptcy protection after faltering during the pandemic. Florida's east coast was pounded by heavy rain from Tropical Storm Isaias, as state officials dealt with surging cases of the coronavirus. Closing out a test flight by Elon Musk's SpaceX company, two NASA astronauts returned from the International Space Station with a retro-style splashdown, as their capsule parachuted safely into the Gulf of Mexico.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Nehemiah Persoff is 102. Rock musician Garth Hudson (The Band) is 84. Singer Kathy Lennon (The Lennon Sisters) is 78. Actor Joanna Cassidy is 76. Actor Kathryn Harrold is 71. Actor Butch Patrick (TV: "The Munsters") is 68. Rock music producer/drummer Butch Vig (Garbage) is 66. Sen. Jacky Rosen, D-Nev., is 64. Singer Mojo Nixon is 64. Actor Victoria Jackson is 62. Actor Apollonia is 62. Actor Cynthia Stevenson is 59. Actor Mary-Louise Parker is 57. Rock musician John Stanier is 53. Writer-actor-director Kevin Smith is 51. Actor Jacinda Barrett is 49. Actor Sam Worthington is 45. Actor Edward Furlong is 44. TV meteorologist Dylan Dreyer (TV:

"Today") is 40. Actor Marci Miller is 36. Singer Charli XCX is 29. Actor Hallie Eisenberg is 29.

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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