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## Connecting September 22, 2021

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Colleagues,

Good Wednesday morning on this Sept. 22, 2021,

The U.S. shop for AP merchandise is now open for business, and in honor of the Grand Opening, there will be a 15 percent discount on all purchases for the first two weeks.

That's the word from our colleague **Jenny Hammerton** ([Email](#)) of the London bureau, who months ago opened an merchandise store in Great Britain to which many of you placed orders. Both stores have a wide variety of merchandise, much of it tied to the AP's 175<sup>th</sup> birthday this year.

Click [Here](#) for a link to the store. **To receive the discount, click on Redeem button in the green bar before making your selections.**



Our colleague **Diana Heidgerd**, who helped engineer a most successful Connecting reunion this past weekend in Dallas-Fort Worth, urges those in other parts of the country, and world, to initiate their own. Her story leads today's issue. And, we bring you a few more photos from the reunion.

We bring you reaction to the Poynter story in Tuesday's edition on Off The Record conversations and even more memories of the famous folk you have met in an elevator. Talk about contrasts!

Have a great day – be safe, stay healthy!

Paul

## Connecting Texas reunion a success; Now how about you hosting one in your neck of the woods?



Co-hosts (L-R) Brent Kallestad, Mike Holmes and Diana Heidgerd posed for a photo during Saturday night's Tex-Mex dinner at last weekend's AP Connecting Regional Reunion in the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

**Diana Heidgerd** ([Email](#)) - Will you be the next co-host for an AP Connecting Regional Reunion?

Please?

Ye old Connecting editor Paul Stevens has asked me to write a recap about planning and results for the Sept. 17-19, 2021, event in Texas and how others might do the same for their regions.

In late June I received an email outlining how Paul, Mike Holmes and Brent Kallestad were discussing maybe holding another AP reunion in Kansas City where several have been held in the past. At some point one of the guys (I'm friends with all three) mentioned – "How about Texas?"

Then someone threw in the fateful line – "And maybe Diana would help?"

So that was my introduction to this month's reunion and planning for what we originally hoped would be a group of maybe 25 folks with ties to AP. Then more people, with all of our COVID concerns, kept emailing me for more information and saying how happy they would be to see long-ago friends. I think we might have had 100 or more folks if the pandemic wasn't still such a safety factor. We ended up with more than 70 people registered and about 60 showing up at the mainly pay-your-own way event.

We concentrated on social distancing and urged everyone to be fully vaccinated.

I planned Texas AP Broadcasters radio & TV awards conventions for literally 30 years. I'm familiar with what needs to be set up, especially to attract out-of-town attendees. Plus I'm lucky enough to know most of the people who signed up for this AP gathering in Texas. It was really a matter of finding a friendly hotel near restaurants, having some un venue nearby (such as a Texas Rangers outing) and making sure flights were easy (the group hotel had free shuttle service from Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport).

Some advice: If somebody offers a special something for the event – such as David & Ellen Sedeño hosting/picking up the tab for Friday night's BBQ meal at a restaurant their family co-owns – say yes! That was one of the weekend highlights and made way for a group photo (we had masked & unmasked versions of the image).

As for journalism.....

It was daunting to sit around and hear stories from attendees about what were daily (and often harrowing) assignments for them, and the amazing outcomes about what they wrote.

The list includes:

\_ Arnie Stapleton covering the 1991 Pan American Games (baseball) and unexpectedly meeting someone he called "Comandante" – Fidel Castro -- when Arnie forgot his lunch bag under a stadium seat where Castro happened to sit. Arnie says Castro seemed to like an American snack – granola bars – that the sportswriter shared.

\_ Julia Prodis Sulek recalled the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing and becoming sadly acquainted with parents of some of the children who were killed. She still remembers seeing a body in the gaping front of the mostly destroyed building with a victim seated in a work chair.

\_ Terry Leonard talking about covering genocide in Rwanda. Terry is now editor of "Stars and Stripes."

\_ And everyone just thrilled to see our beloved best-of-the-AP-writers Mike Cochran.

So please take a chance and volunteer to host/co-host an AP Connecting reunion in your area. I'd love to go to other parts of the country to meet/greet old/new AP friends.

It's definitely worth it.

## Your thoughts on Off The Record interviews

**Ed McCullough (Email)** - Re So was Thompson out of line or perfectly within his right to publish what Rubin sent him? (See lead story in Tuesday's Connecting.)

Perfectly within his right. Common sense. Doesn't even rise to be a topic for Journalism 101.

Whatever does OTR even mean in an email (not publishing or broadcast) context where the sender - a reporter, not a source - of uninvited comment "asks" this and then immediately proceeds to state whatever was stated without ever having received a confirmation that it would indeed be kept private.

Separately, "off the record" does indeed raise a host of ethical and publishing questions. Many are (or at least used to be) resolved by the editing and publishing process wherein an editor would demand to know the reporter's source for unattributed quotation or paraphrase; make a decision whether to publish or broadcast it; that decision sometimes or often requiring review and approval from higher up the editorial ladder.

Reporters were trained to understand what "off the record" means, including conditions and processes; and why that should be conceded only grudgingly to news sources. Editors were trained to keep OTR like any other unattributed comment generally out of news content.

The point is to reduce hearsay or "spin," that way helping news audiences arrive at their own enlightenment via unvarnished facts vs. opinion presented ostensibly as fact by news sources and these days by many reporters and, sadly, by news organizations.

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**Steven Paulson (Email)** - Regarding the article by Tom Jones on sources, most people don't understand the rules of the game between reporters and the people they cover. Sources often think everything is "Off the Record," which does no one any good. If it's off the record, a dedicated journalist will have to take the information they are given to their grave. I would only agree to go off the record if I missed a scoop and needed to know what happened so it would not happen again. I would first ask my sources if our meeting was "On the Record," which means I could quote them, or, in some cases, I would agree not to quote them, but use the information in my stories to give readers facts they needed to know, which is "background only." The other option is "not for attribution," which means I could use the information but not their name. In that case I would demand proof, and indicate where I got the information without disclosing too much that would identify them. The key here is that the reporter has to agree if a source asks to go off the record, otherwise they are on the record and can't take it back once the interview has started.

There has to be trust between a source and the reporter. I kept a toothbrush and toothpaste in my desk and a copy of a subpoena I ignored tacked to my wall at the state Capitol so my sources would know I was serious. I told them I kept those items handy because someone would have to take me away in handcuffs before I would disclose a source. In my case, the district attorney canceled the subpoena because he did not want to put me in jail.

Some reporters use these rules to skirt the issue, like the reporter who cited a high-ranking official on Henry Kissinger's plane. However, I still have a dilemma over whether editors have a right to know the identity of the source if they are going to stake the reputation of the organization on it. I had one editor demand the information, and he turned the story over to another reporter with the identity of the source. The source was furious and refused to talk to me ever again. I quit and got another job. I would like to know how other reporters and editors handle this issue.

## New-member profile: Jacob Lewis

**Jacob Lewis (Email)** - I'm joining the AP from the University of Kentucky, where I graduated in May with a bachelor's degree in integrated strategic communications and minors in psychology and criminology. During my time in school, I completed a variety of internships including at the University of Kentucky College of Pharmacy and LRT Sports, a New York-based start-up that provides college coach ratings. While at UK, I served as a student ambassador for the College of Communication and Information, and was a resident adviser. I was also able to serve as the public relations chair for UK's PRSSA chapter and was a member of the Black Student Union.



As a communications associate, I've enjoyed highlighting all the spectacular work done and being able to manage the content on InsideAP.

I'm excited to kick off my career at such a great company and look forward to connecting with you all!

## More on your elevator encounters with the famous

**Rick Cooper** ([Email](#)) - I want to add my famous person elevator encounter at 50 Rock to the Connecting list.



I was got on the "express elevator" to the seventh floor and to my surprise, I was sharing it with former New York City Mayor Ed Koch who was going to an appointment with CEO Lou Boccardi.

I said hello to the former mayor and added, " How are you doing?" Koch laughed and said, Hey, that's my line."

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**Jamie Friar** ([Email](#)) - Richard Nixon was a few months into his first year as president, the war still raged and so did the protests. Nixon was scheduled to speak at the Commodore Hotel in midtown Manhattan and a protest was planned. My roommate Howie and I decided to go, knowing the demonstrators wouldn't get within blocks of the hotel.

In those pre-9/11 days a network of pedestrian tunnels connected Grand Central Terminal and surrounding buildings including several hotels. Howie and I figured we might give the underground walkway a try.

Much to our surprise there were no cops, checkpoints or security of any kind. We just followed the signs and took the Commodore elevator from the station level to the hotel lobby. Just as our elevator door opened so did the opposite one and we were within spitting distance of Nixon.

Unfortunately, I didn't think fast enough to yell something pithy like F\*\*\* you and your F\*\*\*ing war! In an instant a linebacker-sized Secret Service agent threw me face-first against a wall and covered me with his body until the president passed.

Howie and I were hustled off to separate rooms and questioned about how we evaded security and who was the inside man. We said there was no security and the

only inside information were the signs reading "To Commodore." After about a half hour of interrogation we were told to get lost.

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**Bruce Lowitt (Email)** - In the summer of 1979, when M\*A\*S\*H was still going strong on television (and I was a huge fan of the show), Alan Alda showed up at The AP's Rockefeller Center headquarters for a radio interview promoting his latest film, "The Seduction of Joe Tynan," in which he plays the role of a U.S. senator with presidential aspirations.

I saw him pass the sports department en route to a room at the end of the hall to do the interview. I immediately tore a sheet off a yellow legal pad and, in large block letters, wrote

ALAN ALDA

TURN LEFT

and taped it to the sports department entrance.

A while later, he did. There were three or four of us working at the time. Being the veteran journalist who had interviewed national politicians in my earlier days with The AP in Los Angeles, I welcomed him by saying something like "Homina, homina ..."

He was most gracious and spent 15-20 minutes with us, talking about M\*A\*S\*H, his film career, his father, Robert Alda (whom I saw on Broadway in "Guys and Dolls" as a kid) and other showbiz stuff before his PR guy told him they had to leave.

A very down-to-earth guy with a great laugh.

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**Ray Newton (Email)** - Most memorable elevator encounter: In Brown Palace Hotel, Denver, Colorado, when a buddy and I entered. Year—1988 or 89. There was O.J. Simpson—holding hands with a gorgeous blonde woman. This was well before the well-known trial when he was accused of the murder of Nicole Brown Simpson. Cordial hello comments—and that was it.

## Remembering UN colleagues while watching Biden speech

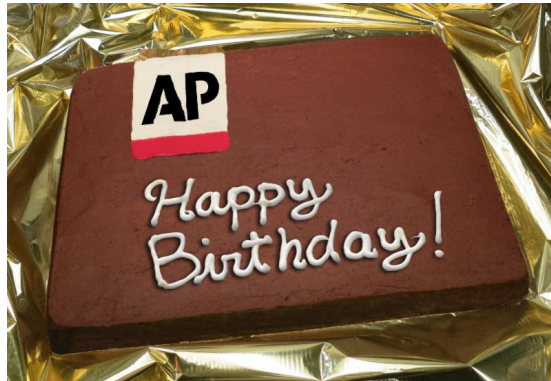
**Ford Burkhart (Email)** - We are watching President Biden give his UN General Assembly speech, and I'm recalling my legendary AP colleagues at the UN bureau. Bill Oatis comes first to mind, and not just because of his nifty bow ties. He knew everybody, and they all respected his career including a spell in prison in Prague. When I worked at AP UN, Bill had already been a correspondent there for going on 20 years. He would complete more than 30 years there. Those were the days.

And then there was the distinguished Max Harrelson, the chief correspondent in that bureau, there for more than 20 years. Whew.

On GA opening day, the Foreign Desk would loan a few extra hands. I was one, and stayed on through the end of the GA session, mainly because I could use the old technology, the typewriter, well enough to keep up with a speech by the ambassador from Austria or Australia, never much news but just keeping APW, the AP World Service wire, clients happy. A byline on the A wire, a rewrite for the PMs cycle, was always a thrill.

The foreign desk supplied a few other very talented extra hands, Shirley Christian, George Bria and others. I salute them today. It was about as much fun as you can have and call it journalism.

## Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



Deborah Mesce - [dmesce@icloud.com](mailto:dmesce@icloud.com)

Michelle Williams - [mwilliams@ap.org](mailto:mwilliams@ap.org)

## Stories of interest

***“He wanted to tell people’s stories”: Jim Sheeler, Pulitzer-winning Rocky Mountain News reporter, dies at 53*** (Denver Post)

By KIERAN NICHOLSON

James “Jim” Sheeler, a Pulitzer Prize winner for the Rocky Mountain News and journalism teacher who is remembered for his gifts as a deeply empathetic reporter and storyteller, died last week at his home in Chagrin Falls, Ohio. He was 53.



A longtime obituary writer, Sheeler championed war veterans and their families, including Coloradans who were killed in the Iraq War. His 12,000-word article “Final Salute” won the 2006 Pulitzer Prize for feature writing.

The work, hailed by the Pulitzers as a “poignant story on a Marine major who helps the families of comrades killed in Iraq cope with their loss and honor their sacrifice,” was later the basis for a book of the same name, which was a finalist for the 2008 National Book Award for nonfiction.

“Humility, compassion, curiosity — he had all the qualities that you can’t teach,” said Todd Heisler, a photojournalist, colleague and friend, whose own work on “Final Salute” earned him the Pulitzer for feature photography. “He was really a great listener. I think that’s why his work was so good, he brought that to every story he did.”

Read more [here](#). Shared by Paul Albright.

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## ***Trump sues niece, NY Times over records behind '18 tax story*** (AP)

By MICHAEL R. SISAK

NEW YORK (AP) — Former President Donald Trump on Tuesday sued his estranged niece and The New York Times over a 2018 story about his family’s wealth and tax practices that was partly based on confidential documents she provided to the newspaper’s reporters.

Trump’s lawsuit, filed in state court in New York, accuses Mary Trump of breaching a settlement agreement by disclosing tax records she received in a dispute over family patriarch Fred Trump’s estate.

The lawsuit accuses the Times and three of its investigative reporters, Susanne Craig, David Barstow and Russell Buettner, of relentlessly seeking out Mary Trump as a source of information and convincing her to turn over documents. The suit claims the reporters were aware the settlement agreement barred her from disclosing the documents.

The Times’ story challenged Trump’s claims of self-made wealth by documenting how his father, Fred, had given him at least \$413 million over the decades, including through tax avoidance schemes.

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

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## ***Troubled Nielsen to update measurements for local television*** (AP)

By DAVID BAUDER

NEW YORK (AP) — The Nielsen company, increasingly under fire from the television industry, on Tuesday said it would soon incorporate homes that have cut off cable in favor of broadband in its viewing measurements for local TV markets.

Nielsen estimates some 20% of American homes are now broadband only for onscreen entertainment. The company already includes these homes in its national TV measurements but in January will do so for local markets, giving TV stations a more complete picture of who's watching in order to sell ads.

"It's a big step to making sure that our measurement is really inclusive," said Catherine Herkovic, Nielsen managing director and executive vice president of local television.

The move comes as media companies have been more vocal in their unhappiness with Nielsen, which for decades has had a virtual monopoly on measuring television viewership, statistics used to govern billions of dollars in advertising spending.

Read more [here](#).

## More photos from Connecting reunion in Texas



Diana Heidgerd, Julia Prodis Sulek, Peter Leabo, Melissa Williams Finn & Terry Wallace gather around an old AP machine frame on Friday night, Sept. 17, 2021, during the BBQ dinner at the AP Connecting Regional Reunion.



Kelley Shannon (L) & Sylvia Wingfield





(L-R) Tex-Mex dinner with Dave Koenig, Chris Sulek, Mark Lambert & Julia Prodis Sulek





(L-R) Michael Pearson, Melissa Williams Finn, Charles "CR" Richards, Peter Leabo and Mark Lambert. Opposite side/front: Stefani Kopenec, Kelley Shannon, Barbara Richards and Greg Smith.



(L-R) Much beloved Mike Cochran, plus Rod Richardson & Charles Richards.

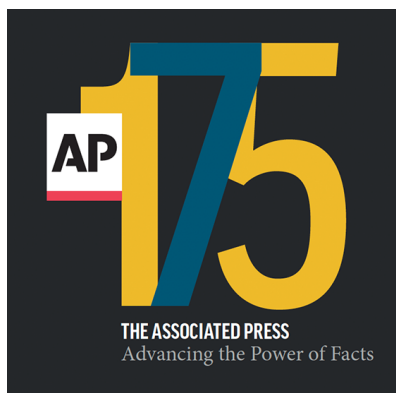




**(L-R) Texas, Oklahoma and Arkansas news editor Adam Causey, Rod Richardson and Kia Breaux at the Rangers game on Sunday, Sept. 19.**



Mark Lambert, Diana Heidgerd, Paul Heidgerd, Mike Holmes, Patty Bedlan, Mike Graczyk, Barry Bedlan & Evan Ramstad.



## Celebrating AP's 175th

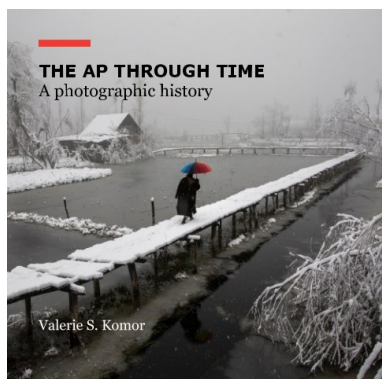
AP store for 175th, vintage merchandise



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.

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.

## Today in History - Sept. 22, 2021





## By The Associated Press

Today is Wednesday, Sept. 22, the 265th day of 2021. There are 100 days left in the year. Autumn arrives at 3:20 p.m. EDT.

### Today's Highlight in History:

On Sept. 22, 2014, the United States and five Arab nations launched airstrikes against the Islamic State group in Syria, sending waves of planes and Tomahawk cruise missiles against an array of targets.

### On this date:

In 1761, Britain's King George III and his wife, Charlotte, were crowned in Westminster Abbey.

In 1776, during the Revolutionary War, Capt. Nathan Hale, 21, was hanged as a spy by the British in New York.

In 1862, President Abraham Lincoln issued the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, declaring all slaves in rebel states should be free as of January 1, 1863.

In 1927, Gene Tunney successfully defended his heavyweight boxing title against Jack Dempsey in the famous "long-count" fight in Chicago.

In 1949, the Soviet Union exploded its first atomic bomb.

In 1950, Omar N. Bradley was promoted to the rank of five-star general, joining an elite group that included Dwight D. Eisenhower, Douglas MacArthur, George C. Marshall and Henry H. "Hap" Arnold.

In 1961, the Interstate Commerce Commission issued rules prohibiting racial discrimination on interstate buses.

In 1975, Sara Jane Moore attempted to shoot President Gerald R. Ford outside a San Francisco hotel, but missed.

In 1980, the Persian Gulf conflict between Iran and Iraq erupted into full-scale war.

In 1993, 47 people were killed when an Amtrak passenger train fell off a bridge and crashed into Big Bayou Canot near Mobile, Alabama. (A tugboat pilot lost in fog pushed a barge into the railroad bridge, knocking the tracks 38 inches out of line just minutes before the train arrived.)

In 1995, an AWACS plane carrying U.S. and Canadian military personnel crashed on takeoff from Elmendorf Air Force Base near Anchorage, Alaska, killing all 24 people aboard.

In 2017, Sen. John McCain declared his opposition to the GOP's last-ditch effort to repeal and replace "Obamacare," the second time in three months McCain had emerged as the destroyer of his party's signature promise to voters.

Ten years ago: American diplomats led a walkout at the U.N. General Assembly as Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (ah-muh-DEE'-neh-zahd) fiercely attacked the United States and major West European nations as "arrogant powers" ruled by greed and eager for military adventurism. Pope Benedict XVI arrived in Germany on his first state visit to his homeland.

Five years ago: Prosecutors charged a white Oklahoma police officer with first-degree manslaughter less than a week after she killed an unarmed Black man on a city street, saying in court documents the officer "reacted unreasonably." (Betty Shelby was acquitted in May 2017 of manslaughter in the death of Terence Crutcher.) It was disclosed that computer hackers had swiped personal information from at least 500 million Yahoo accounts in what was believed to have been the biggest digital break-in at an email provider.

One year ago: U.S. deaths from the coronavirus topped 200,000, by far the highest confirmed death toll from the virus in the world at that point, according to a count by Johns Hopkins University. The U.N. General Assembly convened for its first-ever virtual meeting, as Secretary-General Antonio Guterres urged nations to tackle the coronavirus and the "economic calamity" it had unleashed, as well as the risk of a new Cold War between the United States and China. A Louisiana state trooper, Chris Hollingsworth, died after a single-vehicle crash that took place hours after he learned he would be fired for his role in the 2019 in-custody death of a Black man, Ronald Greene, following a high-speed chase. Overriding the mayor's veto, Seattle's City Council voted to reduce the police budget and reallocate some money to community programs. Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny was released from a Berlin hospital after more than a month's treatment for poisoning. (Navalny would be arrested and jailed upon his return to Russia.)

Today's Birthdays: Dancer/choreographer/singer Toni Basil is 78. Actor Paul Le Mat is 76. Musician King Sunny Adé (ah-DAY') is 75. Capt. Mark Phillips is 73. Rock singer David Coverdale (Deep Purple, Whitesnake) is 70. Actor Shari Belafonte is 67. Singer Debby Boone is 65. Country singer June Forester (The Forester Sisters) is 65. Singer Nick Cave is 64. Rock singer Jolene Ross is 64. Actor Lynn Herring is 64. Classical crossover singer Andrea Bocelli (an-DRAY'-ah boh-CHEL'-ee) is 63. Singer-musician Joan Jett is 63. Actor Scott Baio is 61. Actor Catherine Oxenberg is 60. Actor Bonnie Hunt is 60. Actor Rob Stone is 59. Actor Dan Bucatinsky (TV: "24: Legacy") is



56. Musician Matt Sharp is 52. Rock musician Dave Hernandez is 51. Rapper Mystikal is 51. R&B singer Big Rube (Society of Soul) is 50. Actor James Hillier (TV: "The Crown") is 48. Actor Mireille Enos is 46. Actor Daniella Alonso is 43. Actor Michael Graziadei (GRAHT'-zee-uh-day-ee) is 42. Actor Ashley Eckstein is 40. Actor Katie Lowes is 39. Rock musician Will Farquarson (Bastille) is 38. Actor Tatiana Maslany is 36. Actor Ukweli Roach (TV: "Blindspot") is 35. Actor Tom Felton is 34. Actor Teyonah Parris is 34. Actor Juliette Goglia is 26. Actor Dalya Knapp is 11.

## 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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