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Connecting

October 08, 2021

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Colleagues:

Hello again on this Friday morning, Oct. 8, 2021.

Connecting leads today with AP's coverage of the Great Chicago fire from Oct. 8-10, 1871. The story's file photo notes that AP's photo archive has added numerous images from the public domain from before AP had its own photographers. According to "Flash! The Associated Press Covers the World," AP's photo service began in 1927. By 1935, AP had pioneered the sending of photos via wire.

Also, here's mine about the Final Word: Obits - "preparedness" as colleague [Polly Anderson](#) at one time or another assigned to many of us.

I started mine at the start of this year, after helping write those of two relatives who died of Covid-19 during the extended post-General Election tabulation last November. It was a stressful time for many reasons, including the "just the facts" mortuary writeups when my uncle's and cousin's lives and deaths deserved so much more. Akin to writing my dad's obituary the day after his death, amid grief and chaos.

I cannot think of many things better – as a trained collector of information and wordsmith - to leave my loved ones than my preparedness. (They may say money, but I know better.)

Be well, and have a great weekend.

Peg
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AP was there:

Great Chicago fire, Oct. 8-10, 1871



FILE – This general view shows the Chicago courthouse and downtown area in the aftermath of the fire in Chicago, 1871. AP did not have photographers at the time but has since added photos like this one in the public domain to its photo archive. (AP Photo, File)

CHICAGO (AP) — Editor's note: It was 150 years ago that the Great Chicago Fire ignited, eventually killing about 300 people and consuming a major portion of the city over three days.

The Associated Press, just 25 years old then, sent dispatches first from its office in the Chicago Tribune building before staff fled to a Western Union office, where they filed before fleeing again because of the approaching fire.

The accounts vividly showed the fire's chaos and destruction, work that AP's member news organizations praised then, including this from the Fort Wayne Daily Gazette in Indiana:

"Most heartily do we agree with the Terre Haute Express that the 'General Agent of the Western Associated Press, Hon. W.H. Smith, deserves the thanks of the country for the splendid manner in which he performed his duties at Chicago last week.' With the telegraph buildings burned, and everything in the worst confusion, the most graphic and accurate reports were sent out promptly to all parts of the country."

Read more [here](#).

German museum to be named after Anja Niedringhaus

A new photography museum in Germany will be named after slain AP photographer Anja Niedringhaus. Kathy Gannon, news director for Afghanistan and Pakistan, and members of Niedringhaus' family are on the advisory board.

“Anja always said that she told the story of other’s courage with her lens and with her heart,” Gannon said. “Anja’s profound legacy is a collection of truly stunning images that reach deep into the soul of those she photographed because Anja truly saw everything and everyone with her heart. She is forever missed.”



Accounting and Accountability: AP follows the money, finds most “rescue” funds unspent

An AP review finds that despite their urgent pleas, most U.S. states and large cities have yet to spend a penny of the funds funneled to them from the \$350 billion American Rescue Plan. The pandemic relief bill signed by President Joe Biden this past spring sent \$350 billion — an astounding amount — to states and local governments in what was labeled a “rescue” plan.

Officials across the country had urged immediate action as Congress debated the measure.

But as AP State Government Team reporter **David Lieb** pored over reports recently filed with the federal government for every state and nearly 100 of the largest U.S. cities, he discovered little

that met the definition of rescue from a fiscal cliff: The cities had spent just 8.5% of their federal relief and the states even less — just 2.5%.

Pittsburgh was among many cities that reported spending none of its funding yet. This despite the mayor joining a chorus of other Pennsylvania mayors last February: "Our communities cannot wait another day," they wrote.

Further, while states and cities were given about two more years to allocate the funds, Lieb found that the state and local governments were reporting future spending plans for just 40% of the money, begging the question of how urgently it was needed.

As Lieb gathered and analyzed the reports, data journalist **Camille Fassett** prepared a data drop that AP customers could use to localize their own reporting. The pair's work was the latest in an ongoing series of accountability stories being led by AP's state government and data teams tracking the hundreds of billions of dollars the federal government has sent to states, local governments and school districts since the virus outbreak in the U.S.

Lieb's reporting also revealed an issue of transparency: Although the U.S. Treasury Department required governments to account for the funds on a prominent, public-facing web page, some states didn't post at all, and some cities told him he would have to file a formal records request to get the data.

The work was the latest in an ongoing series of accountability stories led by AP's state government and data teams tracking federal pandemic-related aid.

Play for the story was outstanding. It landed on the front pages of dozens of AP's biggest customers, online and print, and drew readership on AP News.

For distinctive accountability journalism that delivered on both the national and local level, Lieb and Fassett earn AP's Best of Week — First Winner.

Connecting mailbox

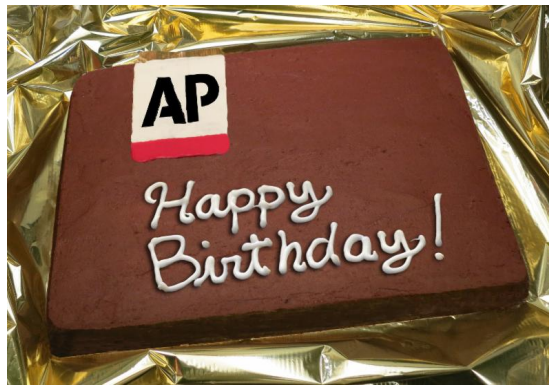
Careful what you wish for

Eric Quiñones (email) - Molly Gordy's tale of supervising the AP foreign desk on the night of Anwar Sadat's assassination reminded me of a lesson learned years later from Rick Gladstone, who was Molly's deskmate that fateful night.

Rick was my boss on the Biz desk in the mid '90s. One evening, a couple of hours after I settled into the night supervisor's chair, Rick was getting ready to leave the office and asked me how things were going. I told him it was slow and I hoped things would pick up. In his typically dry manner, Rick said, "I once said the same thing on the overnight on the foreign desk. Then Anwar Sadat got shot."

Rick's point was clear: Careful what you wish for, kid. I tried never to complain about a slow night again.

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



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Stories of interest

Nobel Peace Prize awarded to journalists Ressa, Muratov

By KIKO ROSARIO, FRANK JORDANS and VANESSA GERA
 The Associated Press

FILE - A combo of file images of Novaya Gazeta editor Dmitry Muratov, left, and of Rappler CEO and Executive Editor Maria Ressa. On Friday, Oct. 8, 2021 the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to journalists Maria Ressa of the Philippines and Dmitry Muratov of Russia for their fight for freedom of expression. (AP Photo/Alexander Zemlianichenko and Aaron Favila, File)

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — Journalists Maria Ressa of the Philippines and Dmitry Muratov of Russia won the 2021 Nobel Peace Prize on Friday for their fight for freedom of expression in countries where reporters have faced persistent attacks, harassment and even murder.

“Free, independent and fact-based journalism serves to protect against abuse of power, lies and war propaganda,” said Berit Reiss-Andersen, chair of the Norwegian Nobel Committee, explaining why the prize went to two journalists.

“Without freedom of expression and freedom of the press, it will be difficult to successfully promote fraternity between nations, disarmament and a better world order to succeed in our time,” she said.

The Nobel committee noted that Ressa in 2012 co-founded Rappler, a news website that has focused critical attention on President Rodrigo Duterte’s “controversial, murderous anti-drug campaign” in the Philippines.

She and Rappler “have also documented how social media is being used to spread fake news, harass opponents and manipulate public discourse.”

Muratov was one of the founders in 1993 of the independent Russian newspaper Novaya Gazeta, which the Nobel committee called “the most independent newspaper in Russia today, with a fundamentally critical attitude towards power.”

“The newspaper’s fact-based journalism and professional integrity have made it an important source of information on censurable aspects of Russian society rarely mentioned by other media,” it added.

Ressa, the first Filipino to win the peace prize and the first woman to be honored this year with an award by the Nobel committee, was convicted last year of libel and sentenced to jail in a decision seen as a major blow to press global freedom.

Read more [here](#).

The Final Word

Shared by **Bruce Handler**.



Celebrating AP's 175th

AP store for 175th, vintage merchandise

