

SHARE:

[Join Our Email List](#)

[View as Webpage](#)



Connecting October 22, 2021

Click [here](#) for sound of the Teletype



- [Top AP News](#)
- [Top AP Photos](#)
- [AP Merchandise](#)

- [Connecting Archive](#)
- [AP Emergency Relief Fund](#)
- [AP Books](#)



The German dirigible Hindenburg crashes to earth, tail first, in flaming ruins after exploding on May 6, 1937, at the U.S. Naval Station in Lakehurst, N.J. This photo was taken by AP photographer Murray Becker, who is profiled in an AP Images blog that we bring you in today's issue.

Colleagues,

Good Friday morning on this Oct. 22, 2021,

We bring you sad news of the death of **Rick Vernaci**, whose 17-year AP career took him from Detroit to Bismarck and onto Washington, D.C. He died Oct. 18 of complications from COVID-19, at the age of 68.

Sharing the news was his wife **Katherine Rizzo (Email)**, who also worked with AP (Detroit, Lansing, Washington over 17 years) and met Rick when they both worked in Washington. Katherine wrote his obituary, which leads today's issue of Connecting.

How did they meet? "Actually during the '88 presidential campaign," Katherine replied. "He was a snoot in Washington and I was a drone in Lansing who would chuck a middle finger during his phone calls demanding

things for 50-state projects. I shifted to Washington later that year as Ohio regional reporter and eventually, very gradually changed my opinion.”

Rick started with AP in 1982 in the Detroit bureau, where he became day supervisor, then was appointed Bismarck correspondent in 1983 and moved to Washington in 1986. Rizzo said he was the 1988 political convention delegate counter, covered Capitol Hill, efforts to repatriate the remains of Viet Nam MIAs, and was the national health policy writer when the FDA was trying to decide whether to ban silicone breast implants.



Kathy Gannon to be initial guest at Columbia's Lipman Center

Our colleague **Dolores Barclay** ([Email](#)) shares news that Columbia University's Ira A. Lipman Center of Journalism and Civil and Human Rights, of which she is manager, is hosting AP's **Kathy Gannon** as the inaugural guest. Kathy is the AP's news director for Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The date: Oct. 27 at 2:30 p.m. EDT, in a new series of dialogues, hosted by center director, **Jelani Cobb**, a J School professor, author and award-winning staff writer at the New Yorker. Click [here](#) for the Zoom webinar registration link for Kathy's chat, in case you would like to join. The Lipman Dialogues are succinct, timely discussions with people at the center of issues relating to civil and human rights.



AUTHORS ALERT! WRITTEN A BOOK IN THE PAST YEAR?

If you have written a book in the past year, Connecting would like to feature it in our annual listing of books authored by Connecting colleagues. The book issue will appear in a couple weeks – so this is an invitation to send me the following: Name of book, jpg image of the cover and your headshot, and 300 words on the book including where it can be purchased. Also, if you have a book in the works for near-future publication, include it. Send along the information soon.

I will be away with Linda for a few days in a visit to Los Angeles to see our son Jon for the first time in nearly two years – so Connecting will not return to your Inbox until next Wednesday. Continue to send your offerings and I'll play catchup upon return.

Have a great weekend – be safe, stay healthy!

Paul

Rick Vernaci – AP journalist in Detroit, Bismarck and Washington – dies at 68



Richard Louis Vernaci, 68, of Warrenton, Va., died Oct. 18, 2021, in the Haymarket Medical Center of complications from COVID.

Born Oct. 10, 1953, in St. Louis, Mo., he drew joy from fatherhood, family, writing, travel, cooking (especially braciole), and making people laugh themselves breathless.

After pursuing his intellectual curiosities at Benedictine College in Atchison, Kan., he graduated with a degree in ancient Greek, Hebrew, and Latin. His circuitous career path began with a brief stint in a Kansas restaurant and a job as a traveling Rexall Drug representative in rural Texas.

In search of his next move, he went through the Yellow Pages, and in the “N” section found a life-defining option: newspapers.



Over the next 25 years, the news business took him from the Baytown Sun to the Associated Press in Washington, D.C., with stops in Bismarck, Detroit, and Pontiac, Mich.

He reveled in getting paid to learn from experts and found it energizing to hang out with people who were brilliant and funny. He chafed at gratuitous malice and intellectual laziness. Newsrooms provided all the above. Combining his love of language and a pursuit of justice, this was a perfect fit.

He saw the Northern Lights from the top of the world, swam in a volcano-warmed stream in Africa (during a short gig teaching journalism in Ethiopia), stood on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, and in Vatican City enjoyed being saluted by the Swiss Guards so much that he turned around and came back through

the restricted entrance again just to make the guys in striped knickers salute one more time.

In addition to covering the installation of Pope John Paul II, he camped in the Arctic Circle for what became a canceled papal visit to the First Nations. His favorite quote from that assignment: “You’re from Detroit? It must be warm down there.”

Early in his career Rick was a strikebreaker hired to cross a picket line for the Oakland Press. Later, he was a Wire Service Guild shop steward known for cagy creativity. When a respected reporter was pulled off his beat to give someone else a chance, Rick staged a conversation about age discrimination. There was no lawsuit planned, but that seasoned colleague fortuitously was reassigned to the White House. Rick was less subtle on behalf of a receptionist

denied bathroom breaks and a copyboy who lost an eye after using all his sick leave for the year.

To make extra income, he pulled together the life story of the original Social Security actuary in the book "Within the System." Stuck at home after shattering his ankle on an icy driveway, he took a stab at fiction and was entertained when "Mama's Boy" earned a couple bucks in Amazon royalties.

For a few years, he tried his hand at entrepreneurship. Some of Broad Run Consulting's clients required travel to the Middle East, though the foreign trips Rick talked about the most were to Stonehenge with Andy; to Ireland with Beth, to Rome with Joe, and to Calabria with Bob. "The kids are a hoot," he wrote to a friend. "I don't know how I ever lived without them."



Rick Vernaci, delegate editor in Washington, and colleague Donna Cassata.

Photos/AP Corporate Archives

He dropped out of physical therapy after his first brain surgery, declaring that he could do better himself. He ran three times a week and for awhile recovered enough

concentration to read books, hold a part-time job as a congressional column-writer, and drive a manual-transmission Fiat through the Scilla Mountains.

By the time he needed more surgeries, Rick had run more than 3,000 miles.

He called the post-brain hemorrhage years “the bonus round,” and appreciated the friends who stuck with him as he became less able to keep up his end of the conversation.

“My family is charming and healthy, and I’m the most content I’ve ever been,” he wrote in 2013.

Rick is survived by his wife, Katherine Rizzo; their son Robert Vernaci of Fredericksburg, Va.; his children with former spouse Cecilia Vernaci: Andrew Vernaci of Lacey, Wash. and Elizabeth Vernaci of Falls Church, Va.; his siblings Jolene (Rick) Klinger of Pacific, Mo., Joseph (Charlotte) Vernaci of Washington, Mo., Antonio (Kathi) Vernaci of Rochester, Mich., and Gina (Bill Hillyard) Vernaci of Lakewood, Ohio, along with nieces, nephews, and cousins.

He was preceded in death by a son, Joseph Michael Vernaci II; parents Joseph Vernaci and Edith Iona Walton; niece Tiffany Klinger; and great-niece Jessica Klinger.

Visitation is 6-8 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 27, at Moser Funeral Home, 233 Broadview Ave., Warrenton, Va. We hope guests will be safe and masked. Requiem Mass 11 a.m. Thursday, Oct. 28, at St. John the Evangelist Roman Catholic Church, Warrenton.

In his honor, you could:

- Donate to the Fauquier County Public Library or your local library;
- Attend a minor-league baseball game;
- Listen to Vivaldi, Andrea Bocelli, Zydeco and the Beatles on the same afternoon;
- Patronize any business on Main Street in Warrenton, Va.;
- Vacation on Nantucket;
- Climb the Aventine Hill in Rome to look through the keyhole of the Knights of Malta;
- Read about antiquity;
- Eat bistecca in Florence;
- Watch the stars come out over the Blue Ridge Mountains on a summer night.

Rick had been vaccinated against coronavirus. If you’re still reluctant, please think about him. Don’t be the reason someone else gets sick.

(Written by Katherine Rizzo)

Murray Becker: A Photographer's Photographer



More than 50,000 people packed the Polo Grounds in New York, April 23, 1935, to see Babe Ruth make his debut in a National League game in his old home town. Here is manager Bill Terry of the Giants, left, as he and the Babe talked things over before the game. (AP Photo/Murray Becker)



New York Governor and President-elect Franklin D. Roosevelt is given tickets to the Press Photographers' Ball, Jan. 18, 1933, by photographers, left to right: Murray Becker of the Associated Press; Al Amy of the New York Evening Post; and Bill Greene of the New York World-Telegram (AP Photo)

AP Images Blog

Text and photo editing by Francesca Pitaro ([Email](#))

Born in Brooklyn in 1909, Murray L. Becker was introduced to news photography while working at the New York American as an office boy. One of his jobs was to lug heavy photo equipment for a staff photographer. Observing the photographer at work, Becker decided on his career and worked his way into the ranks of the news photographers. He joined AP in 1929, just a year after General Manager Kent Cooper hired AP's first photographers. In 43 years with the AP, 32 years of those as chief photographer, Becker supervised coverage of national political conventions, presidential inaugurations, sports events, and was part of the team that developed AP's space coverage in the early 1960s.

Becker was an innovator, who pioneered the development of overhead and sequence cameras for sports and news coverage. Although he was always looking for ways to improve the equipment, Becker never lost sight of the human element in photography. In 1946 he wrote: "It is no secret that the big secret of a good news photographer – above and beyond basic technical knowledge and the well-known

speed, tact, diplomacy and determination he must employ – is wrapped up in a single phrase – good timing.”

Becker was a skilled photographer who continued to shoot throughout his years at AP. He mentored many AP photographers and taught photography at the University of North Carolina. In 1970 Becker received the Joseph A. Sprague Award from the National Press Photographers Association. He was cited for “setting the highest standards in equipment, techniques and photographic coverage; for serving not only as a manager but as a lecturer, teacher and advisor to photographers around the world.”

After retiring from the AP in 1972, Becker continued to teach in Florida. He died on March 18, 1986.

Read and view more [here](#).

Remembrances of Colin Powell

Harry Moskos (Email) - Reading the interesting items about Harry Truman and Colin Powell brings back joyful personal experiences.

First Colin Powell.

Then Knoxville, Tennessee, Mayor Victor Ashe invited me to meet Colin Powell in the mayor's office in the late 1990s while I was editor of the Knoxville News-Sentinel. Powell was good friends with my brother Charlie Moskos, a professor of sociology at Northwestern University who specialized in military matters. As I introduced myself to Powell and said Charlie Moskos was my brother, Colin's face broke out in a huge smile and he replied, “And you admit that in public.” It also brought a big smile to my face. A smile that reappears every time I think of Colin Powell.

Now Harry Truman.

I was a young child in the mid-1940s when Truman came to Albuquerque for a public meeting. My father took my brother (2 ½ years older) Charlie and me with him to the rally. I would have been about 10 years old. The turnout was huge and a policeman stopped the three of us and said the gymnasium at the University of New Mexico was full and no more people were allowed in. Just then two people walked out, and my father pointed that out to the police officer and said that meant two more people could enter. The officer agreed and then let my father and Charlie enter. When I pointed out that was my father and brother, the officer then granted permission for me to enter. It was a memorable experience.

(Charlie died in 2008.)

-0-

Chick Harrity (Email) - Paul, if I'm not too late, I finally found a couple of my Colin Powell snaps from my days at U.S News.



This is Powell when he was Chairman of the Joint Chiefs and Dick Cheney was Secretary of Defense taken at an event in the White House.



And this was a cover shot from the same era.

-0-

General Colin Powell: Soldier & Statesman





Photos/David Hume Kennerly

David Hume Kennerly ([Email](#)) - *"First in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen."*

Henry Lee's eulogy honoring General George Washington could well have been written for General Colin Powell.

Our paths didn't cross in Vietnam where he pulled two tours, the first in 1962-63, and then in 1968. During that second deployment Major Colin Powell was decorated for bravery after he survived a helicopter crash and single-handedly rescued three others from the burning wreckage, including his commanding general.

I first got to know Powell in 1991 when he was chairman of the JCS shortly after the U.S. launched Operation Desert Storm against Iraq after they invaded Kuwait. I flew with him and Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney to Saudi Arabia where they met with CENTCOM commander General Norman Schwarzkopf in the war room in Riyadh. Schwarzkopf, like Powell, was another Vietnam vet who had also been wounded several times in combat. At this point the Allied forces had been bombarding the Iraqi forces from the air, and Cheney and Powell's trip was the prelude to the ground invasion that would free Kuwait from Saddam Hussein's military occupiers.

Read and view more [here](#).

Connecting mailbox

Praise for Daniel's, Bowman's stories

Linda Deutsch ([Email](#)) - There are days when I am impressed all over again by the richness of the "Connecting" newsletter. The stories of Doug Daniel's mom's encounter with Harry Truman and Bobbi Bowman's powerful collaboration with Colin Powell to correct history are extraordinary. These are things we would not read anywhere else and because they are written by AP people they are works of art. Thank you for making this daily newsletter such a unique treasure.

-0-

The good old days



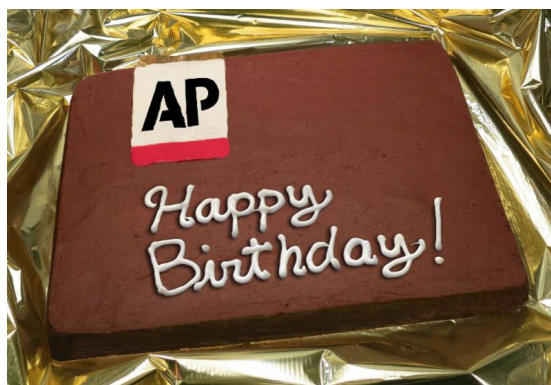
Ed Williams ([Email](#)) - Circa 1977-78, the good old days when I thought morning and afternoon newspapers would be here forever.

There's dear friend, the late great John Williams, city editor of The Montgomery Advertiser, a wise newspaperman I learned a lot from, and respected. I was a pallbearer at John's funeral.

Those were such good times. Shout out to court reporter Mary R. Hasselwander in the photo! Is that copy editor Charlie Croft in the slot in the background? We had two daily papers in the capital city, the afternoon Alabama Journal and The Montgomery Advertiser, the morning paper. I was state editor of The Advertiser. Bureau Chief Rex Thomas and The Associated Press were on the same floor with us. Yep, those were the good old days.

And what's that weird-looking contraption to the left of John's elbow, an electric typewriter?

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



John Harris - jharrisunc@yahoo.com

On Saturday to...

Steve Loeper - steveloeper@hotmail.com

On Sunday to...

John Brewer - jcbrewer8@gmail.com

On Monday to...

Marty Thompson - martythompson@hotmail.com

Welcome to Connecting



Bobbi Bowman - bobbibowman17@gmail.com

Stories of interest

Associated Press Taps Chainlink to Provide Untamperable News Data (Decrypt.com)

By JASON NELSON

The Associated Press, a collective of more than 1,300 newspapers and broadcasters, is moving further into decentralized news and publishing. Today it announced a partnership with Chainlink Labs, and the AP is now launching its own Chainlink node to provide data to blockchain services.

Starting November 2, AP says it will use Chainlink to automate actions that happen on-chain, including informing the over 15,000 outlets that use the AP's platform of election results, sports outcomes, or when a company's quarterly financials are released. All of that will now be cryptographically signed to verify the data comes from the Associated Press.

"Smart contracts need simple binary data in order to decide whether conditions are met in order to execute themselves." Dwayne Desaulniers, AP's director of blockchain and data licensing, told Decrypt. "It's much easier to push out simple data than complicated sentences that would be more challenging for smart contracts to interpret and understand."

Read more [here](#). Shared by Doug Pizac.

-0-

Trump plan for new media venture gets investors' thumbs up (AP)

By JILL COLVIN and ALEX VEIGA

NEW YORK (AP) — Some investors aren't waiting to see if former President Donald Trump's plans for a media company to challenge the likes of Facebook, Twitter and even Disney can actually become reality — they're all in.

Trump said Wednesday that he's launching Trump Media & Technology Group and a "Truth Social" app as a rival to the Big Tech companies that have shut him out and denied him the megaphone that was paramount to his national rise. The announcement came nine months after Trump was expelled from social media for his role in inciting the Jan. 6 Capitol insurrection.

Experts were split on how strong a competitor Trump Media & Technology Group can be, but the stock market reacted with exuberance.

TMTG's plan is to become a publicly listed company through a merger with Digital World Acquisition Corp., a type of company whose sole purpose is to acquire a private company and take it public. Shares of Digital World Acquisition quadrupled Thursday in what some might see as validation for Trump, even though there's a ways to go before the merger is completed.

Read more [here](#).

The Final Word



Illustration by editorial cartoonist Pat Bagley of The Salt Lake Tribune. Shared by Doug Pizac.



Celebrating AP's 175th

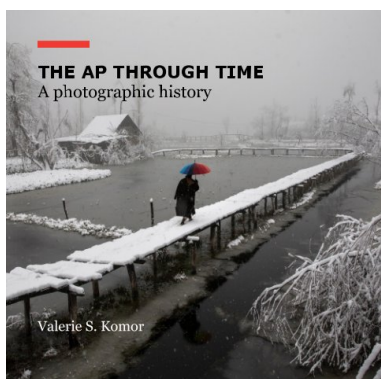
AP store for 175th, vintage merchandise



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 - Oct. 22, 2021



By The Associated Press

Today is Friday, Oct. 22, the 295th day of 2021. There are 70 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Oct. 22, 2014, a gunman shot and killed a soldier standing guard at a war memorial in Ottawa, then stormed the Canadian Parliament before he was shot and killed by the usually ceremonial sergeant-at-arms.

On this date:

In 1811, composer and piano virtuoso Franz Liszt was born in the Hungarian town of Raiding (RY'-ding) in present-day Austria.

In 1836, Sam Houston was inaugurated as the first constitutionally elected president of the Republic of Texas.

In 1906, French post-impressionist painter Paul Cezanne died in Aix-en-Provence at age 67.

In 1926, Ernest Hemingway's first novel, "The Sun Also Rises," was published by Scribner's of New York.

In 1934, bank robber Charles "Pretty Boy" Floyd was shot to death by federal agents and local police at a farm near East Liverpool, Ohio.

In 1962, in a nationally broadcast address, President John F. Kennedy revealed the presence of Soviet-built missile bases under construction in Cuba and announced a quarantine of all offensive military equipment being shipped to the Communist island nation.

In 1968, Apollo 7 returned safely from Earth orbit, splashing down in the Atlantic Ocean.

In 1979, the U.S. government allowed the deposed Shah of Iran to travel to New York for medical treatment — a decision that precipitated the Iran hostage crisis.

In 1986, President Reagan signed into law sweeping tax-overhaul legislation.

In 1995, the largest gathering of world leaders in history marked the 50th anniversary of the United Nations.

In 2001, a second Washington, D.C., postal worker, Joseph P. Curseen, died of inhalation anthrax.

In 2015, former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton battled Republican questions in a marathon hearing that revealed little new information about the 2012 attacks in Benghazi, Libya.

Ten years ago: The Obama administration pulled U.S. Ambassador Robert Ford from Syria amid what were termed “credible threats against his personal safety.” The heir to the Saudi throne, Crown Prince Sultan bin Abdel Aziz Al Saud, died in New York. (He was succeeded as crown prince by his half-brother, Prince Nayef bin Abdul-Aziz, who died in June 2012; Defense Minister Prince Salman bin Abdul-Aziz was then named the new heir to the throne.) Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal easily coasted to a second term in a landslide election.

Five years ago: Republican Donald Trump vowed to sue every woman who accused him of sexual assault or other inappropriate behavior, calling them “liars” whose allegations he blamed Democrats for orchestrating. The Chicago Cubs won their first pennant since 1945, beating the Los Angeles Dodgers 5-0 in Game 6 of the NL Championship Series.

One year ago: In the closing debate of the presidential campaign, President Donald Trump and Democratic challenger Joe Biden clashed over how to tame the raging coronavirus; Trump declared that the virus would “go away,” while Biden countered that the nation was heading toward a “dark winter.” U.S. regulators approved the first drug to treat COVID-19; remdesivir (rehm-DEH'-sih-veer), an antiviral medicine given to hospitalized patients through an IV, had been authorized for use on an emergency basis since spring. Senate Judiciary Committee Republicans advanced Amy Coney Barrett's Supreme Court nomination to the full Senate; Democratic senators boycotted the vote in protest of the GOP's rush to install Trump's nominee to replace the late Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Macy's said Santa Claus wouldn't be greeting kids at its flagship New York store due to the coronavirus, interrupting a holiday tradition started nearly 160 years ago.

Today's Birthdays: Black Panthers co-founder Bobby Seale is 85. Actor Christopher Lloyd is 83. Actor Derek Jacobi is 83. Actor Tony Roberts is 82. Movie director Jan (yahn) de Bont is 78. Actor Catherine Deneuve is 78. Rock singer/musician Eddie Brigati is 76. Former Mississippi Gov. Haley Barbour is 74. Actor Jeff Goldblum is 69. Rock musician Greg Hawkes is 69. Movie director Bill Condon is 66. Actor Luis Guzman is 65. Actor-writer-producer Todd Graff is 62. Rock musician Cris Kirkwood is 61. Actor-comedian Bob Odenkirk is 59. Olympic gold medal figure skater Brian Boitano is 58. Christian singer TobyMac is 57. Singer-songwriter John Wesley Harding (Wesley Stace) is 56. Actor Valeria Golino is 55. Comedian Carlos Mencia is 54. Country singer Shelby Lynne is 53. Reggae rapper Shaggy is 53. Movie director Spike Jonze is 52. Rapper Tracey Lee is 51. Actor Saffron Burrows is 49. Actor Carmen Ejogo is 48. Former MLB

player Ichiro Suzuki (EE'-cheer-oh soo-ZOO'-kee) is 48. Actor Jesse Tyler Ferguson is 46. Christian rock singer-musician Jon Foreman (Switchfoot) is 45. Actor Michael Fishman is 40. Talk show host Michael Essany is 39. New York Mets infielder Robinson Canó is 39. Rock musician Rickard (correct) Goransson (Carolina Liar) is 38. Rock musician Zac Hanson (Hanson) is 36. Actor Corey Hawkins is 33. Actor Jonathan Lipnicki is 31. Actor Sofia Vassilieva (vas-ihl-lee-A'-vuh) is 29. Actor Elias Harger is 14.

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
paulstevens46@gmail.com

