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Connecting November 19, 2021

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Colleagues,

Good Friday morning on this Nov. 19, 2021,

A recent story in The Washington Post, [“How obituaries got a jolt of new life in the Internet era,”](#) strikes a chord that I am hoping will prompt you to share your thoughts.

The story notes that “a well-crafted obit for a prominent figure — blending history and biography, triggering nostalgia or perhaps even the reader’s own feelings of mortality — can attract enormous readership online. And now there’s a need for speed: The obit that comes out first, or at least fast, can win the day.”

News organizations stockpile pre-written obituaries, the story noted. The New York Times has 1,850 such obits, The Washington Post about 900, the Hollywood Reporter more than 800. No figure was given for the AP.

From the story: “The “morguing” of obits, in the ghoulish jargon of the trade, makes obituaries unique in journalism. No other kind of news story can be written so long before an event occurs, driven by one great certainty: At some point, the famous, the infamous and everyone else will die.”

Our colleague **Hillel Italie**, an AP reporter who has written obituaries of leading cultural figures, said in the story that baby boomer nostalgia has stoked some of the interest in the lives and deaths of the famous and that older readers have “a growing awareness of their mortality and sensitivity to the passing of those who helped define their lives.”

Connecting would like to hear your experiences in writing obituaries for the wire, on deadline, and assembling what we call preparedness obituaries – ready for use when the subject dies.

Longtime AP Hollywood reporter **Bob Thomas** died seven years ago, but one will still see his name today in the contributed section at the end of some AP obituary stories on Hollywood celebrities who have passed - and he once covered.

I hope to hear from you over the weekend with your own experiences and thoughts.

CONNECTING A FAMILY AFFAIR: Finally, the next Connecting 90s list will continue to include a Webster. Our colleague **Paul Webster** attained that birthday mark Nov. 8 but died two days later. He and his wife **Doris** used to read Connecting together every morning - and Doris wrote to ask that her email be added to our mailing list. She's 91 - and will be among Connecting family in our 90s list when it is next published.

Have a great weekend – be safe, stay healthy!

Paul

A bill giving news outlets a ‘shot in the arm’: Beware

Ed McCullough (Email) - Re "Biden bill would give news outlets 'shot in the arm,' " AP spokesperson Lauren Easton declined to comment. Interesting to see how that eventually plays out as AP scrambles for disappearing news funding - once paid by advertisers and subscriptions - as much as do local media.

In an unrelated Connecting item also yesterday (Thursday), Agence France-Presse proclaimed its "pioneering" agreement to accept funding from Google; ostensibly for rights to publish branded content in Europe.

News media used to think that funding from government coffers or contributions extracted from Big Business by political pressure would or might compromise editorial independence. These two offers come at a time Biden is struggling to convince Americans of Democrats' political agenda, while Google - along with other cash-flush social media platforms - tries to fend off government regulation. Coincidence, or quid pro quo?

The "shot in the arm" headline over the AP story connotes images of painkillers, like opiates, that temporarily relieve some problems yet bring on others.

And...

Arlon Southall (Email) - As if the media isn't leaning hard to the left already, now they are to be rewarded (by us taxpayers, of course) to continue publishing untruths!!!

Connecting mailbox

Paul Webster a mainstay with AP Credit Union

Charlie Monzella ([Email](#)) - The photo in Connecting marking the 25th anniversary of the AP Employees Federal Credit Union brought back wonderful memories of working with Paul Webster. As a fellow member of the Board of Directors, he was one of the mainstays of making sure the credit union always operated in a manner consistent with our federal charter.

Paul seemed to be able to see us through any situation that came up. His was one of the solid voices guiding the credit union. I am deeply saddened to learn of his death.

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Write on, Dan Sewell!

Cliff Schiappa ([Email](#)) - Write on, Dan Sewell! (Thursday's Connecting) The general public has a thirst for fact-based opinions that will stretch their perspective a bit.

When I left AP in 2007, I would tell friends "I can finally have a public opinion!" and with that would periodically send a letter to the editor of The Kansas City Star. The topic would be one with which I had some knowledge, often times connected to the mission of the non-profit organization where I was working at the time. One time I had a guest essay, a longer piece than a letter, about LGBT workplace issues that garnered some positive attention.

When I've led seminars for non-profit groups, I'm often asked how an organization can get more press. I would always suggest they write a letter to the editor of their local newspaper, tying in their mission with a timely news topic. It worked for me on numerous occasions.

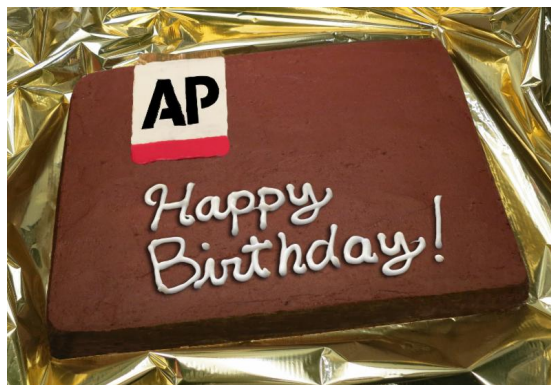
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The story behind the time zones

Chris Carola ([Email](#)) - .Leading off "On this date" in AP's Today in History for Nov. 18 was this historical nugget: In 1883, the United States and Canada adopted a system of Standard Time zones.

Who came up with the idea? [Read on](#) to find out (make sure to the end to find out the strange-but-true demise of the creator whose idea made sure the trains ran on time):

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



On Sunday to...

Bernd Helling - bhelling@optonline.net

Andrew Selsky – aselsky@ap.org

Welcome to Connecting



Derl McCrudden - DMcCrudden@ap.org

Doris Webster - websterdoris39@gmail.com

Stories of interest

The Washington Post's executive editor Sally Buzbee doesn't want to "give up on any reader" (Nieman Labs)

The Washington Post's executive editor, Sally Buzbee, became the first woman to lead the venerable newsroom when she was hired in May.

In a new episode of “Sway,” her New York Times podcast, host Kara Swisher interviewed Buzbee about her future plans for the Post, her job interview with Post owner (and richest man on Earth but also space) Jeff Bezos, and how the news organization is thinking about missteps like the newsroom’s handling of reporter Felicia Sonmez and issuing corrections to its coverage of the Steele dossier.

The Post’s newsroom has grown to 1,000 people — up from 580 in 2013 — thanks in no small part to its billionaire owner. Still, Buzbee said holding powerful people and institutions accountable is the Post’s most essential duty — and that includes Amazon and any other venture Bezos may be involved in. So how does Bezos see his role at the Post?

Read more [here](#). Shared by Myron Belkind.

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Independent websites team up to boost rural journalism (AP)

By DAVID BAUDER

NEW YORK (AP) — Several independent websites are joining forces to create a network for news about rural America, hoping to fill a void created in areas hit hard by the shrinking media industry of the past two decades.

The Rural News Network will begin early next year with collaborations on the economic problems of indigenous communities, and water and equity issues in the western U.S.

The network is being organized by the Institute for Nonprofit News, an organization that represents some 350 independent news sites across the country. Members range from well-known investigative sites like ProPublica and the Center for Public Integrity to some that focus on particular communities or neighborhoods.

More than 60 sites cover rural issues or specific rural areas. The institute has seen how many of them are covering similar issues, and thought that by working together, they could produce more powerful, impactful journalism, said Sue Cross, INN executive director and CEO.

Read more [here](#).

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Hate speech in Myanmar continues to thrive on Facebook (AP)

By SAM McNEIL and VICTORIA MILKO

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — Years after coming under scrutiny for contributing to ethnic and religious violence in Myanmar, Facebook still has problems detecting and

moderating hate speech and misinformation on its platform in the Southeast Asian nation, internal documents viewed by The Associated Press show.

Three years ago, the company commissioned a report that found Facebook was used to “foment division and incite offline violence” in the country. It pledged to do better and developed several tools and policies to deal with hate speech.

But the breaches have persisted -- and even been exploited by hostile actors -- since the Feb. 1 military takeover this year that resulted in gruesome human rights abuses across the country.

Scrolling through Facebook today, it’s not hard to find posts threatening murder and rape in Myanmar.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Mark Mittelstadt.

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Navigating turbulent times (Editor and Publisher)

Gretchen A. Peck | for Editor & Publisher

Editor & Publisher (E&P) first reported on how media companies were covering COVID-19 in February 2020. It has been a challenging, frustrating, often surreal and sometimes inspiring 21 months since. With vaccinations came the hope that the nation and world had seen the worst, but it hasn't been a smooth sail out of the storm. At press time, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that the United States has had 44,105,375 reported cases of COVID-19 since the beginning; the virus has now claimed 708,784 American lives.

News publishers have shared in the hardships along the way, struggling to balance the duty to inform the public about stats, guidelines and mandates with the need to operate responsibly and protect their employees from being harmed or from harming others, which was a concern for journalists working in the field.

E&P felt it was vital to take the industry's pulse and understand the challenges that have passed and those that linger. So we asked our readers to take a short survey to let us know about their pandemic-related policies and how they're fairing today. We had 89 publishers and media managers take time out to share their stories about how influential the pandemic has been to their businesses and among their employees.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Lindel Hutson.

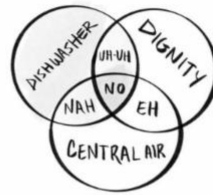
The Final Word

The ABCs of Finding an N.Y.C. Apartment (New Yorker)

By Jenny Fine

The ABCs of finding an N.Y.C. apartment

A Is for AMENITIES. Decide which ones you can't live without.



B Is for BROKER. It's a dice roll.



C Is for CASHIER'S CHECK. Expect to have to pay for something with one.



D Is for don't get DISCOURAGED if your parents aren't on board.



E Is for the crazy amount of EXERCISE you'll get.



Read more [here](#).



Celebrating AP's 175th

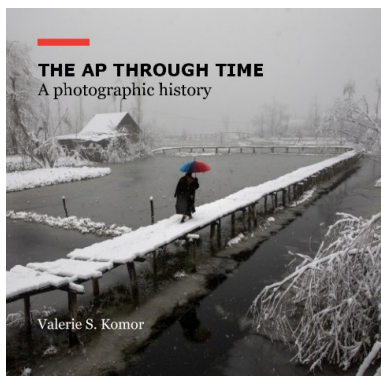
AP store for 175th, vintage merchandise



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 - Nov. 19, 2021



By The Associated Press

Today is Friday, Nov. 19, the 323rd day of 2021. There are 42 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Nov. 19, 1969, Apollo 12 astronauts Charles Conrad and Alan Bean made the second manned landing on the moon.

On this date:

In 1794, the United States and Britain signed Jay's Treaty, which resolved some issues left over from the Revolutionary War.

In 1863, President Abraham Lincoln dedicated a national cemetery at the site of the Civil War battlefield of Gettysburg in Pennsylvania.

In 1919, the Senate rejected the Treaty of Versailles (vehr-SY') by a vote of 55 in favor, 39 against, short of the two-thirds majority needed for ratification.

In 1942, during World War II, Russian forces launched their winter offensive against the Germans along the Don front.

In 1959, Ford Motor Co. announced it was halting production of the unpopular Edsel.

In 1977, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat became the first Arab leader to visit Israel.

In 1985, President Ronald Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail S. Gorbachev met for the first time as they began their summit in Geneva.

In 1995, Polish President Lech Walesa (vah-WEN'-sah) was defeated in his bid for re-election.

In 1997, Iowa seamstress Bobbi McCaughey (mihk-KOY') gave birth to the world's first set of surviving septuplets, four boys and three girls.

In 2004, in one of the worst brawls in U.S. sports history, Ron Artest and Stephen Jackson of the Indiana Pacers charged into the stands and fought with Detroit Pistons fans, forcing officials to end the Pacers' 97-82 win with 45.9 seconds left.

In 2010, President Barack Obama, attending a NATO summit in Lisbon, Portugal, won an agreement to build a missile shield over Europe, a victory that risked further aggravating Russia.

In 2017, Charles Manson, the hippie cult leader behind the gruesome murders of actor Sharon Tate and six others in Los Angeles in 1969, died in a California hospital at the age of 83 after nearly a half-century in prison.

Ten years ago: Moammar Gadhafi's son and former heir apparent Seif al-Islam was captured by revolutionary fighters in the southern desert just over a month after Gadhafi was killed, setting off joyous celebrations across Libya. (He was released from detention in 2017 and has announced his candidacy for Libya's presidential election in December 2021.)

Five years ago: President-elect Donald Trump met with 2012 Republican nominee Mitt Romney in Bedminster, New Jersey; both were positive about their sit-down, a marked shift in tone after a year in which Romney attacked Trump as a "con man" and Trump labeled Romney a "loser." The International Space Station gained three new residents, including NASA astronaut Peggy Whitson, who at 56 was the oldest and most experienced woman to orbit the world.

One year ago: Georgia's top elections official released results of a hand tally of ballots that affirmed Democrat Joe Biden's narrow lead over President Donald Trump in the state. The Wisconsin Elections Commission issued an order to recount more than 800,000 ballots cast in two heavily liberal counties; the order was required by law after Trump paid \$3 million for the recount. (The recount added slightly to Biden's 20,600-vote margin in Wisconsin.) California imposed a nighttime curfew as its coronavirus figures soared; sheriffs in some counties said they wouldn't enforce it. With the coronavirus surging out of control, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention pleaded with Americans not to travel for Thanksgiving and not to spend the holiday with people from outside their household. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo became the first top American diplomat to visit an Israeli settlement in the occupied West Bank.

Today's Birthdays: Talk show host Dick Cavett is 85. Broadcasting and sports mogul Ted Turner is 83. Former Sen. Tom Harkin, D-Iowa, is 82. Former Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy G. Thompson is 80. Fashion designer Calvin Klein is 79. Sportscaster Ahmad Rashad is 72. Actor Robert Beltran is 68. Actor Kathleen Quinlan is 67. Actor Glynnis O'Connor is 66. Broadcast journalist Ann Curry is 65. Former NASA astronaut Eileen Collins is 65. Actor Allison Janney is 62. Rock musician Matt Sorum (Guns N' Roses, Velvet Revolver) is 61. Actor Meg Ryan is 60. Actor-director Jodie Foster is 59. Actor Terry Farrell is 58. TV chef Rocco DiSpirito is 55. Actor Jason Scott Lee is 55. Olympic gold medal runner Gail Devers is 55. Actor Erika Alexander is 52. Rock musician Travis McNabb is 52. Singer Tony Rich is 50. Actor Sandrine Holt is 49. Country singer Billy Currington is 48. Dancer-choreographer Savion Glover is 48. R&B singer Tamika Scott (Xscape) is 46. R&B singer Lil' Mo is 44. Olympic gold medal gymnast Kerri Strug is 44. Actor Reid Scott is 44. Movie director Barry Jenkins (Film:

“Moonlight”) is 42. Actor Katherine Kelly is 42. Actor Adam Driver is 38. Country singer Cam is 37. Actor Samantha Futerman is 34. NHL forward Patrick Kane is 33. Rapper Tyga is 32.

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