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Connecting December 29, 2021

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Colleagues,

Good Wednesday morning on this Dec. 29, 2021,

We lead today's Connecting with a year-end message delivered Tuesday to the AP worldwide staff from **Daisy Veerasingham**, who becomes president and CEO of The Associated Press in two days - on Jan. 1, 2022.

The message from Veerasingham includes a video recapping AP coverage of events in 2021. She succeeds **Gary Pruitt**, who retires at the end of the year. A first-generation British national of Sri Lankan descent, Veerasingham is the first woman, first person of color and first international citizen to lead the AP in its 175-year history.

Here is her message:

Dear AP Staff:

As 2021 comes to a close and we look ahead to 2022, I want to thank you for

your hard work, determination and dedication to AP's mission. Each of you played a critical role in ensuring that AP told the world's stories with accuracy, fairness and facts.



From the insurrection at the U.S. Capitol to unrest in Asia, the Middle East and Latin America, to earthquakes and climate change and the second year of the global pandemic, the AP team rose to the occasion and told these stories and so many others with both empathy and humanity, firmly grounded in our news values.

I encourage you to watch [this video](#) that highlights the journalism AP produced in 2021.

For 175 years, AP has reported the facts to the world. This year has been no different. As I take the helm as president and CEO, I want to reaffirm to each of you AP's commitment to accurate, unbiased journalism. There is no organization in the world better positioned to advance the power of facts.

I wish you and your families a happy new year.

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I am proud that Veerasingham is a Connecting colleague – and that Pruitt joins former CEOs **Tom Curley** and **Lou Boccardi** on our mailing list.

We lead today's issue with New Year's resolutions from two of our 90s Club members, both active contributors to the newsletter – **Norm Abelson** and **Gene Herrick**. That's the green light for you to share your own resolutions, if you wish.

Have a great day – be safe, stay healthy!

Paul

Welcome, New Year (*with fingers crossed*)

Norm Abelson ([Email](#)) – The year 2021 draws finally to a close. It's been one that surely has had its share of woes; Alas, we've had too few highs and 'way too many lows. So now what comes tomorrow? No one really knows.

It looks like 2022 may likewise be quite fraught, with the earth an infected and overheated spot; so it's kind of hard to predict Fate's latest lot. I'll not even try to give it a single shot.

Because you see, my friends, I'm no part of a seer,
I don't have a clue about the happenings in new year.
Instead, here are my own personal solutions.
Allow me to present my new year resolutions.

I'll awaken every morning without a fret or frown,
and pledge the New York Times bad news ain't gonna weigh me down.

No matter what tough problems come, I will try to cope,
be thankful for the life I've lived, and never give up hope.

I'll work to keep our politics on a list of sheer inanities,
especially when they qualify as absolute insanities.

I'll seek the good in everyone, even anti-vaxxer minions,
though they're causing so much harm with less than bright opinions.

I'll keep my Covid mask on when I'm out among the masses,
even though the damned things always fog up my eye-glasses..

I'll do my best to live in peace with each self-righteous Babbit,
who urges me to quit my daily cigar-smoking habit.

I'll thank the lord (Paul Stevens too) each morn as I'm expecting,
the welcome words and thoughts from my colleagues on Connecting.

I'll try to meet Magdalene's reasonable, but oft' unfulfilled, wishes,
pay bills on time, turn TV sound down, cook her favorite dishes.

I'll not complain as winter snows pile up waist-high on my unpaved lane,
instead I'll thank whichever god brought me to beautiful, seaside Maine.

I'll be aware at times I've fumbled among family and friends,
and do my best for pain I've caused to make sincere amends.

Most of all, through all travail, I'll keep foremost in my heart
that giving love and being loved is life's most important part.

May the new year be as a blessing for each and every living thing.

My 2022 New Year's Resolution

Gene Herrick (Email) - I have never been big on New Year's Resolutions. I was (and am) what I am, and I seemed to be doing okay.

However, I was not, and am not, perfect, and I know it. So, instead of yearly resolutions, I do them daily.

I am also aware that I do not control things in life. There were four other planners and executors. One was the blessed man “Upstairs in Heaven.” Two others were the local Chief of Bureau, and the New York photo desk, and then, of course, was the spouse.

Who says one has control over his own life?

One can make resolutions, but it seems they become farcical.

Happy New Year!

Connecting profile – Pete Lawless



It's November 2003 and **Pete Lawless** ([Email](#)), the AP's newly minted Budget Director, is taking the helm after a series of departures within AP's financial team, and with a new AP Chief Financial Officer, he was ready for the challenge. He didn't mind the commute from Massapequa Park to mid-town Manhattan each day as the quiet train ride is welcome after growing up in Freeport, NY with 11 siblings, a German Shepard, and one working bathroom.

While holding down a demanding job at the AP for 12 years, Pete had another career serving as a naval officer in the reserve. Toward the end of his time with the AP, Pete was juggling his position on Ken Dale's finance team, studying for a second master's degree in accounting, Navy and family.

For 23 years he was away from home most of the time, primarily working or traveling and drilling with the Navy. He would deploy twice while at the AP. The first running the Navy's logistics mission at the Port of Ash Shuayba, Kuwait, and the second in Baghdad, Iraq where he and his team supplied Multinational forces with food, fuel and spare parts that kept the war machine running. While in Baghdad, he would brief logistics operations to four-star General Ray Odierno, who would become Chief of Staff of the Army. Pete's boss in Iraq was General Gus Perna, who would be the lead logistician for Operation Warp Speed, the rollout mission of the COVID-19 vaccine.

Pete's favorite line from General Perna that he'd share with Pete after a particularly bad day was, "it's all good training." Pete was most proud of his humanitarian efforts in while in Iraq. As part of the responsible drawdown, large quantities of building materials in southern Iraq needed a home. Perna gave the job to Lawless. According to his award citation, Lawless "traveled the battlespace with exposure to hostile actions by enemy forces," in order to broker a deal with an Italian Provincial Reconstruction Team in the Dhi Khar Province, one of the poorest Provinces in Iraq. Within weeks, Pete orchestrated the movement of excess building materials to a low security prison in the Dhi Khar Province where the materials were used to build school desks for local schools.

His wife of 32 years, Phyllis, reminds him often that he was not home much, so family decisions such as buying a new home, and major purchases were decided in his absence. His wife purchased their home in Massapequa Park while Pete was away and without seeing it.



Pete retired from the AP in August of 2015, but soon thereafter joined the Marine Corps as a "Civilian Marine." After his two command tours at the Naval Air Station Jacksonville, FL, he felt Jacksonville would be ideal for a Navy retiree. He was able to leverage his military skills and financial background to secure a position as Comptroller at the Marine Corps Support Facility Blount Island where the Marines run the nation's strategic Marine Corps Pre-Positioning mission – a key national defense initiative. "It's a small base, but packs a big punch," Lawless said. Pete is one of 12 principal senior leaders on the Marine Corps base located a short drive from the Jacksonville airport.

Since leaving the AP, Pete completed a second master's degree in accounting and retired from the Navy at the rank of Captain. At 63, he is currently working on his third master's degree, a Master of Arts in Human Dimensions of Organizations at the University of Texas at Austin. When introducing himself to fellow students recently in Austin, he shared that, "sure I'm older, but I've got gas in the tank!"

Pete and his wife have a daughter, Caroline who is a University of Texas alum and social worker and married to Army officer, Joey Bosarge. They have two children, Luke

and Emily.

“I loved my job at the AP and the AP’s mission. One could draw similarities between news gatherers and military service as both go into harm’s way on occasion to get the job done. That’s powerful stuff. I was honored to work with such dedicated people.”

Leavin’ on a jet plane

Charlie Hanley (Email) – Lee Siegel’s wonderful primer yesterday on how to deal with the U.S. military’s p.r. apparatus (in this case, the Oregon Air Guard’s “secret” sonic booms) may have reminded fellow Connectors of their own frustrations in reporting on our military. My personal favorite involves a guerrilla strike against a heavily armed bureaucracy.



In the mid-’80s, I needed to get to far northern Greenland, to work on an Arctic feature series ordered up by the boss. The best route: U.S. Air Force transport to Thule AFB. I enlisted the help of the redoubtable Fred Hoffman, longtime Pentagon correspondent. But Fred’s probes were beaten back by the USAF’s p.r. defenses. “No way,” he was told.

Then I got inspired: a flanking attack.

Bypassing the colonels on the Potomac, I phoned a young captain on the Mississippi, the PIO for the Military Airlift Command at Scott AFB, Illinois. You bet, he said. We’d love to have the AP on one of our beautiful planes. Soon I was headed north aboard a C-5. The Thule base itself produced a story, as it unveiled an advanced anti-missile radar. But my real story was the Inuit farther north, whom I reached after finagling logistics with the Danes.

As Lee advised, “pushy and aggressive” is the way to deal with some of our friends in uniform, remembering that military public relations can be to public relations as military music is to music.

Second chapters

Dennis Kois Sr. (Email) - Hi Paul. Happy holidays, and thanks for keeping me in the AP loop.

If I remember correctly (Alzheimer’s has something to say about that), you asked for responses about what we who left AP sooner rather than later did after we left.

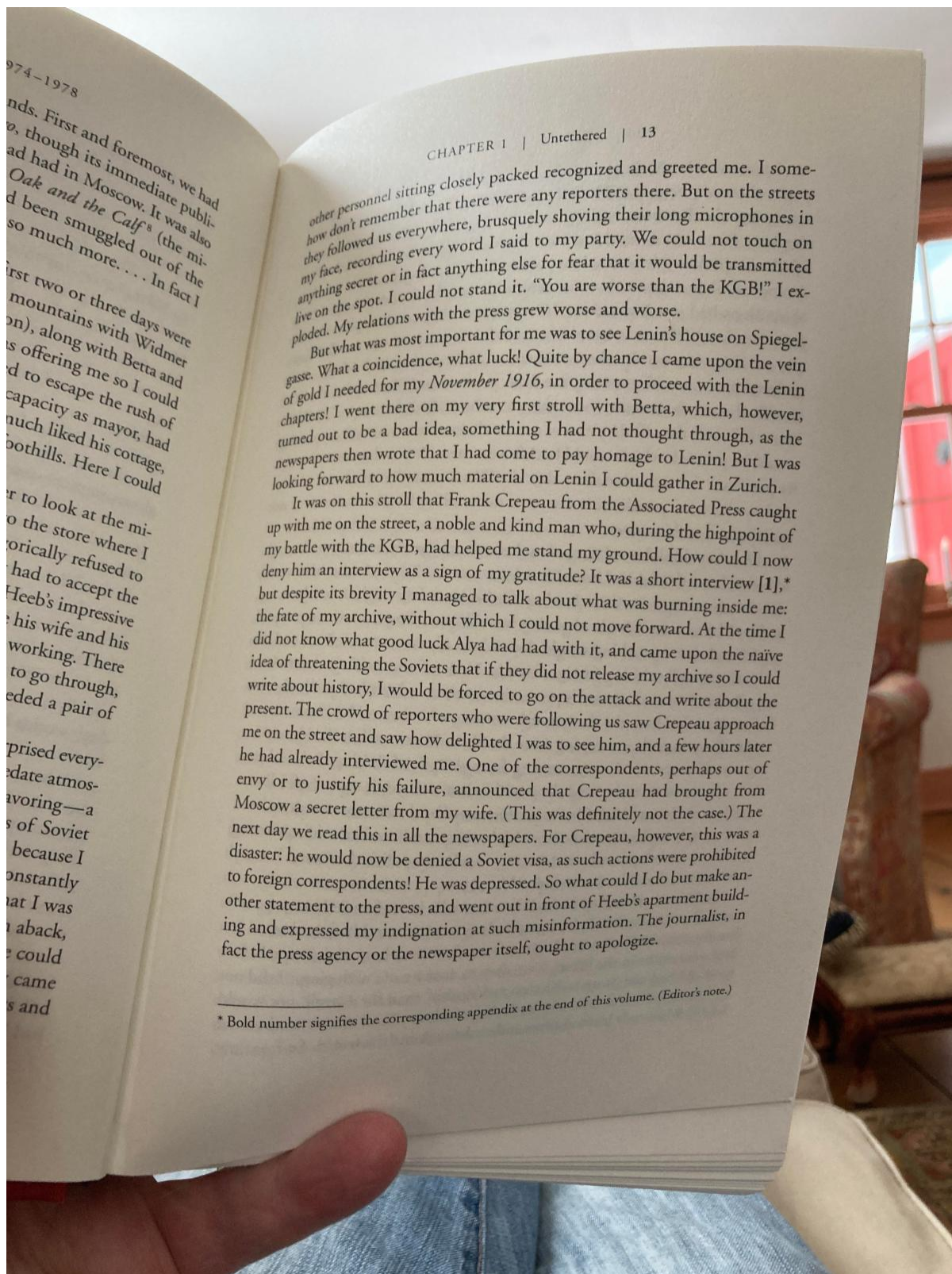
I was in the Milwaukee bureau (led then by the legendary Dion Henderson), starting while in school as a part-timer and going full time after graduation.

Headed off to a career in corporate communications after a few AP years, at WE Energies and then Johnson Controls.

A terrific second chapter that definitely built on my AP experience.

Always felt blessed that I had the chance to experience the AP world. Exciting, challenging, fun and a great next step after getting my journalism degree.

Solzhenitsyn's memoir...and AP's Frank Crepeau

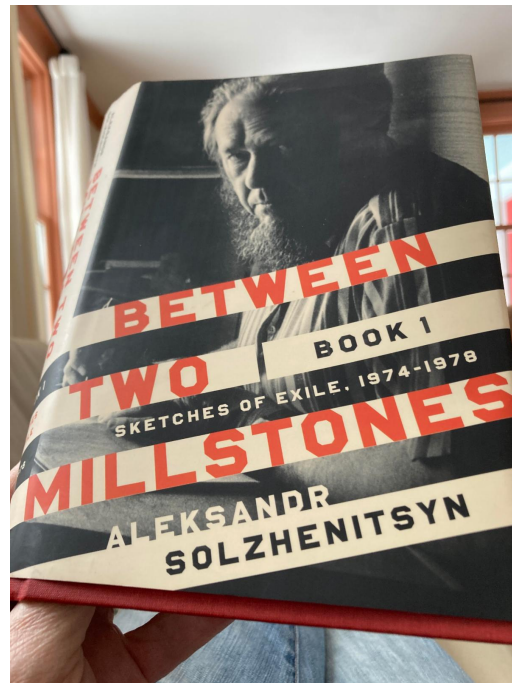


Kevin Noblet (Email) - I just started reading a memoir by Alexander Solzhenitsyn and came upon his account of how, just days after his expulsion from Russia, he granted AP's Frank Crepeau an exclusive interview in Zurich, where scores if not hundreds of journalists were trying to get to him.

In the book, “Between Two Millstones, Book 1,” the famous Russian author and dissident speaks highly of Frank, calling him “a kind and noble man who, at the high point of my battle with the KGB, helped me stand my ground.” It’s an apparent reference to another exclusive he gave Frank a year earlier in Moscow.

Frank would have been thrilled. He was very proud of his relationship with Solzhenitsyn and those interviews.

Solzhenitsyn also recounts how other reporters, jealous of Frank’s scoop in Zurich, spread a story that Frank sneaked a letter to Solzhenitsyn from his wife, who hadn’t yet been allowed to leave Russia. Solzhenitsyn says the story isn’t true.



I may be wrong but Frank wouldn’t have known about this particular memoir, written in Russian and only translated and published in English in 2018. Frank died in 2006, after a crippling stroke years earlier that forced a sudden retirement. Solzhenitsyn died in 2008.

Frank and I worked closely together for years when we were deputy editors on the International Desk in the ‘90’s at 50 Rock. His abrupt departure left me untethered—I’d relied on his wry humor and calmness to get through the hectic day there. He’d been on that desk since the 70’s, after his storied foreign career, and nothing ruffled him.

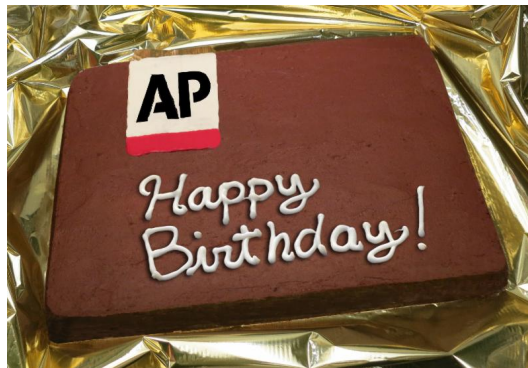
I’m attaching a copy of the book cover and pertinent page. The interview is included verbatim in the back of the book.

Connecting water shot – Maine



Malcolm Ritter ([Email](#)) - The end of a cold December workday for a Maine fisherman in Falmouth.

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



Arlon Southall

Stories of interest

John Madden, Hall of Fame coach and broadcaster, dies at 85 (AP)



FILE - Former Oakland Raiders coach John Madden gestures toward a bust of himself during his enshrinement into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in Canton, Ohio, Aug. 5, 2006. John Madden, the Hall of Fame coach turned broadcaster whose exuberant calls combined with simple explanations provided a weekly soundtrack to NFL games for three decades, died Tuesday, Dec. 28, 2021, the NFL said. He was 85. (AP Photo/Mark Duncan, File)

By JOSH DUBOW

John Madden, the Hall of Fame coach turned broadcaster whose exuberant calls combined with simple explanations provided a weekly soundtrack to NFL games for three decades, died Tuesday morning, the league said. He was 85.

The NFL said he died unexpectedly and did not detail a cause.

Madden gained fame in a decade-long stint as the coach of the renegade Oakland Raiders, making it to seven AFC title games and winning the Super Bowl following the 1976 season. He compiled a 103-32-7 regular-season record, and his .759 winning percentage is the best among NFL coaches with more than 100 games.

But it was his work after prematurely retiring as coach at age 42 that made Madden truly a household name. He educated a football nation with his use of the telestrator on broadcasts; entertained millions with his interjections of “Boom!” and “Doink!” throughout games; was an omnipresent pitchman selling restaurants, hardware stores and beer; became the face of “Madden NFL Football,” one of the most successful sports video games of all-time; and was a best-selling author.

Most of all, he was the preeminent television sports analyst for most of his three decades calling games, winning an unprecedented 16 Emmy Awards for outstanding

sports analyst/personality, and covering 11 Super Bowls for four networks from 1979-2009.

Read more [here](#).

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A local newspaper focused on the Black community is defying the odds. It's growing. (Washington Post)

By Courtland Milloy
Columnist

As owner and publisher of the Washington Informer, Denise Rolark Barnes faces many of the challenges putting local newspapers out of business: fickle revenue streams, aging readership and the rise of social media as a primary source of news, just to name a few.

Between 2005 and the start of the pandemic, about 2,100 newspapers closed their doors, according to Margaret Sullivan, media critic for The Washington Post and author of the book "Ghosting the News: Local Journalism and the Crisis of American Democracy." Since covid-19 struck, she says, at least 80 more papers have gone out of business, as have an undetermined number of other local publications.

And yet in the past five years, the Informer, which is focused primarily on the region's Black community, has been undergoing an impressive expansion. Readership for the D.C.-based weekly has nearly doubled to roughly 50,000. Unlike some local newspapers, which have shrunk to the size of a supermarket supplement, the Informer has grown from an average 36 pages per issue to 56 pages.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Bill McCloskey.



Celebrating AP's 175th

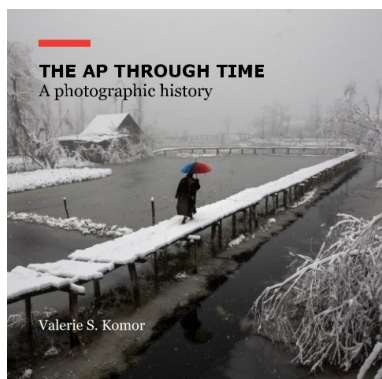
AP store for 175th, vintage merchandise



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 - Dec. 29, 2021



By The Associated Press

Today is Wednesday, Dec. 29, the 363rd day of 2021. There are two days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 29, 1940, during World War II, Germany dropped incendiary bombs on London, setting off what came to be known as "The Second Great Fire of London."

On this date:

In 1170, Thomas Becket, the Archbishop of Canterbury, was slain in Canterbury Cathedral by knights loyal to King Henry II.

In 1812, during the War of 1812, the American frigate USS Constitution engaged and severely damaged the British frigate HMS Java off Brazil.

In 1845, Texas was admitted as the 28th state.

In 1851, the first Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) in the United States was founded in Boston.

In 1890, the Wounded Knee massacre took place in South Dakota as an estimated 300 Sioux Indians were killed by U.S. troops sent to disarm them.

In 1916, James Joyce's first novel, "A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man," was first published in book form in New York after being serialized in London.

In 1972, Eastern Air Lines Flight 401, a Lockheed L-1011 Tristar, crashed into the Florida Everglades near Miami International Airport, killing 101 of the 176 people aboard.

In 1989, dissident and playwright Vaclav Havel (VAHTS'-lahv HAH'-vel) assumed the presidency of Czechoslovakia.

In 1992, New York Gov. Mario Cuomo commuted the prison sentence of Jean Harris, the convicted killer of “Scarsdale Diet” author Herman Tarnower.

In 1996, guerrilla and government leaders in Guatemala signed an accord ending 36 years of civil conflict.

In 2006, word reached the United States of the execution of former Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein (because of the time difference, it was the morning of Dec. 30 in Iraq when the hanging took place). In a statement, President George W. Bush called Saddam’s execution an important milestone on Iraq’s road to democracy.

In 2007, the New England Patriots ended their regular season with a remarkable 16-0 record following a 38-35 comeback victory over the New York Giants. (New England became the first NFL team since the 1972 Dolphins to win every game on the schedule.)

Ten years ago: Fed-up voters in Jamaica threw out the ruling party and delivered a landslide triumph to the opposition People’s National Party and its leader, former Prime Minister Portia Simpson Miller. The No. 15 Baylor Bears, led by Heisman Trophy winner Robert Griffin III, pulled out an Alamo Bowl victory in the highest-scoring regulation bowl game in history, beating the Washington Huskies 67-56 at the Alamodome in San Antonio, Texas.

Five years ago: The United States struck back at Russia for hacking the U.S. presidential campaign with a sweeping set of punishments targeting Russia’s spy agencies and diplomats. Tennis star Serena Williams announced her engagement to Reddit co-founder Alexis Ohanian — on Reddit. (The couple married on Nov. 16, 2017.)

One year ago: A Colorado National Guardsman who’d been sent to help out at a nursing home struggling with a COVID-19 outbreak was reported to be the first in the U.S. to have a new, more contagious variant of the coronavirus that had been circulating in England. Just days before he would have been sworn in as a new Republican member of the U.S. House from Louisiana, Luke Letlow died at the age of 41 from complications related to COVID-19. A statue of Abraham Lincoln with a freed slave appearing to kneel at his feet was removed from its downtown Boston perch. French designer Pierre Cardin died at 98. Phyllis McGuire, the last surviving member of the singing McGuire Sisters, died at her estate in Las Vegas at 89.

Today’s Birthdays: Country singer Rose Lee Maphis is 99. Actor Inga Swenson is 89. Retired ABC newscaster Tom Jarriel is 87. Actor Barbara Steele is 84. Actor Jon Voight is 83. Singer Marianne Faithfull is 75. Retired Hall of Fame Jockey Laffit Pincay Jr. is 75. Actor Ted Danson is 74. Singer-actor Yvonne Elliman is 70. The president of the International Olympic Committee, Thomas Bach, is 68. Actor Patricia Clarkson is 62. Comedian Paula Poundstone is 62. Rock singer-musician Jim Reid (The Jesus and Mary Chain) is 60. Actor Michael Cudlitz is 57. Rock singer Dexter Holland (The Offspring) is 56. Actor-comedian Mystro Clark is 55. Actor Jason Gould is 55. News anchor Ashleigh Banfield is 54. Movie director Lilly Wachowski is 54. Actor Jennifer Ehle is 52. Actor Patrick Fischler is 52. Rock singer-musician Glen Phillips is 51. Actor Kevin Weisman is 51. Actor Jude Law is 49. Actor Maria Dizzia is 47. Actor Mekhi Phifer (mih-KY’ FY’-fuhr) is 47. Actor Shawn Hatosy is 46. Actor Katherine Moennig is 44. Actor Diego Luna

is 42. Actor Alison Brie is 39. Country singer Jessica Andrews is 38. Actor Iain de Caestecker is 34. Actor Jane Levy is 32. Singer-actor-dancer Ross Lynch is 26. Rock musician Danny Wagner is 23.

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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